

WARM BUT WINDY...ANGLERS STILL WAITING ON WEATHER

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Kentucky Lake's fishing scene finally got a reprieve from the cold and brutal weather this week but the honeymoon with warm weather was short. It has been a warm and windy week for most fishermen with the exception of Wednesday when nice temperatures and light breezes stimulated activity.

By Thursday's warm-up when temperatures climbed to the 70-degree mark across the region optimism was greeted with the threat of thunderstorms and wind warnings on area lakes. In fact, gale force winds diminished plans for bass and crappie anglers hoping to partake of the spring like conditions.

Although everyone welcomed the warming trend, it's not unusual for breezy conditions to accompany south winds this time of year. When dramatic temperature increases enter the forecast during winter months you best batten down the hatches!

And how has the recent warm spell affected overall fishing conditions? Surface temperatures responded sluggishly to the warm days and rose from the 35 to 37 degree range last week to cross the 40-degree threshold this week. Readings were in the 42 to 44 degree range by Thursday.

Water color has remained pretty good across the Paris Landing sector of Kentucky Lake with some stain present in the main Tennessee River channel. Most of Big Sandy embayment is sporting a good color for fishing.

Lake levels have been falling slowly all week. The reservoir was getting back down near its winter pool mark on Thursday but TVA was likely pulling water in anticipation of some thunderstorms that were forecast to drench an already wet region.

Projections for the weekend at Kentucky Dam indicate elevation will be in the 355.1 range. Upstream at New Johnsonville Steam Plant TVA's forecast shows lake levels will be in the 355.3 range as the weekend approaches.

Those projections could change if heavy downpours occur as the area is still wet and a lot of runoff is likely.

Crappie anglers have been anxious to get back out on main lake drop-offs and ledges as winter winds have not allowed much activity there. Typical winter patterns find most of the fish relating to deeper water and favoring the deep side of drop-offs where depths of 18 to 25 feet are often productive.

Reports at midweek indicated those that ventured out to the open water were having trouble finding fish. Success rates were slow for most anglers who were using jigs or live minnows on

bottom bumping rigs or just plain tightlining jigs in the 1/8 to 1/4-ounce size. Some were tipping jigs with minnows in hopes of enticing finicky fish.

Overall action was slow for the bulk of boaters who were questioning whether winter shad kills had provided too much competition. Others found a few scattered fish but not concentration.

Normally winter crappie will school around deep structure and stay hot on the trail of threadfin shad that ride out cold weather in the deeper venues of the main lake. Unfortunately, most anglers were struggling at midweek to find any concentration of fish.

A spot check of some fishermen working midrange brushpiles and stakebeds back in bigger bays in 8 to 12 foot depths were not bragging either. Those anglers reported tough sledding as well.

With only one decent day to fish this week anglers have been limited on their ability to move about and search different areas. It appears some cooler weather will return by this weekend and early next week, although no severe cold fronts are forecast like those endured earlier in the month.

Bass fishermen were not faring any better than crappie anglers either. Most got a lot of reeling practice lately but the bite was not on for most.

Warmer weather sure helped fishing fever rise but surface temperatures have been somewhat reluctant to climb into the mid 40's, a threshold where bass become more active.

Anglers were keying in on steep rock bluffs in hopes of finding some suspended fish staging out away from the banks and waiting on warmer weather. Popular lure selections have been suspending jerkbaits and crankbaits, along with some jigging spoons and jig and pig combos. A few anglers are tossing the Alabama rig too.

A few bass have been caught in the midday or later afternoon periods but the overall scenario has been pretty tough for bass fishermen hoping to advance the throttle on spring fishing despite winter's position on the calendar remaining for a few more weeks.

Watch for things to improve in the next week to ten days if another warm spell enters the picture. A lot of boats headed to the lake this week in hopes of treating their fishing pox but it may take another warm spell to really get things going.