

FINICKY CRAPPIE FOOLING SOME ANGLERS...LAKE APPROACHES SUMMER POOL

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Anglers finally got to shed the thick coats this week as some warm spring days dominated the fishing scene. Despite the warm-up there were a few days at midweek where those annoying north to northeast winds curtailed activity for bass and crappie anglers as the fish had another mood swing.

Catch rates diminished this week for most crappie anglers after a pretty good Easter weekend bite. Although a few boats long-lining and spider rigging are still managing to find scattered and suspended fish up Big Sandy, a lot of anglers fishing deep ledges or vertical jigging over manmade fish attractors are having tough luck in the Paris Landing sector.

This spring's unusual weather continues to have lingering effects on the whereabouts and behavior of the area's most popular panfish. While some have scored decent catches the overall picture has been one of inconsistency with many traditional areas proving to be unproductive.

Surface temperatures warmed to the mid 60's earlier this week and were even warmer up Big Sandy and in the backs of shallow bays. Water color remains quite clear in the Paris Landing area with slight stain up Big Sandy and West Sandy.

Lake levels continue to rise this week and are above TVA's curve. Elevation going into the weekend will be 358.9 for Kentucky Dam and 358.7 at New Johnsonville. Normal summer pool is 359 so the reservoir is on the threshold. Under normal conditions TVA targets the date of May 1 for summer pool.

A few anglers are finding some shallow fish this week in the upper end of Big Sandy in depths of 3 to 6 feet. Reports have come in from some stringers taken by anglers casting curly tail jigs or Road Runners around shallow structure as clear conditions make it tough to get on top of the fish without spooking them.

Still somewhat confusing to a lot of anglers is the mood swing of crappie lately as the fish have never really sprinted toward structure as is usually the norm at peak spawning time. A few fish headed toward cover two weeks ago but never really blitzed in big numbers, choosing to stay deep and suspended.

Most of the fish are being taken by multi-pole trolling techniques in depths of 10 to 14 feet and often out over deeper water. In the early morning and late afternoon hours the fish are moving up toward shallow flats and backing off once bright conditions enter the picture. No doubt this spring's clear water has been a factor.

A daily check at the fish cleaning tables indicates a lot of fish have already spawned. There's always a few late spawning attempts so it's that time of the year when a few have and a few have

not.

As surface temps continue to warm watch for increased activity from bluegill and shellcracker next week. Several small fish began biting last week as they migrated into shallow crappie beds and played tag with crappie jigs.

Once surface temps reach the low 70's bluegill and shellcracker action will heat up so better get the light tackle ready and dust off the cricket boxes. Bedding hasn't started yet but things will happen fast if warm weather lingers into next week.

Decent bass stringers continue to come in as anglers are tossing spinnerbaits, Texas rigged worms, craws and lizards just off the shallow shorelines. Water wasn't up in weeds or bushes this week but the fish were hanging just off the banks and ready to move up.

Anglers were laying off the banks as fish were staging on shallow flats and enjoying the warmer surface temperatures in their prespawn phases. Watch for some early bedding activity in the days ahead if not already underway.

The shallow bite should really turn on in the days ahead with more topwater entering the picture along with shallow running crankbaits too. Once the lake climbs to summer pool look for those yellow flowers and various weedbeds to produce a lot of fish as will willows and outside buck bushes.

Hopefully spring weather is here to stay. It's time for normalcy to return!