

WILD WEATHER WEEK FADES BACK TO FALL

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Kentucky Lake's fishing scene had a wild ride earlier this week when a cold front, preceded by some heavy rain, roared in the door last weekend. By Monday morning a brisk north wind put a chill in the air when high skies dominated.

Anglers were digging deep in the closet for heavy jackets too and by Tuesday a mean northeast wind thrust its force on the backside of the cold front. For most anglers fishing really fell off for a few days as bass, crappie and catfish seemed to have a mood swing that went in the wrong direction.

Fall is normally a season of stability. However, this week got off to an unusual start due to inclement weather but by midweek temperatures had rebounded with light winds and sunny days returning to the fishing scene.

It appears nice weather will remain in the forecast as the weekend approaches with warmer temperatures expected through next week.

Surface temperatures responded to the cool snap and fell a few degrees earlier this week. Readings dropped to the 71 to 73 degree range earlier in the week but were climbing slowly toward the 75 degree reading at midweek.

Water color was dingy in the upper end of some bays after the heavy rains on Sunday sent muddy runoff into the reservoir. At midweek dingy water was clearing in the backwaters while the main lake area of Big Sandy remained clear. A slight stain is present in the main Tennessee River channel but it's a good color for fishing.

Lake levels rose a few inches in the aftermath of the heavy rains but were stable at midweek. TVA's projection for the weekend shows an elevation of 355.1 at Kentucky Dam and upstream at New Johnsonville, which is about normal for this time of year.

Boaters are reminded to follow channel markers this time of year and resist the temptation to take shortcuts across shallow flats like they did back in the summer. Once Kentucky Lake nears its low ebb of winter pool elevation there's an abundance of shallow sandbars that can play havoc with your lower unit and boat hull.

Crappie took a roller coaster ride this week as the weather change seemed to have a negative impact for a few days. It's normal to see action decrease once a cold front arrives and passes through and that's just what happened as fish turned off on Monday and Tuesday when high barometric pressure teamed with stubborn north winds that switched to northeast at times.

Fish had been hitting pretty good in midrange depths but backed off for a few days until winds switched back to the south on Wednesday and stimulated activity. At midweek crappie were

hitting pretty good as some good stringers were taken in stakebeds and brushpiles in a variety of depths.

I found increased numbers of fish at midweek choosing main lake ledges in the 14 to 16 foot depths. It appeared some of the shallow crappie had moved back to deeper water for a few days as fish were taking minnows and jigs fished on double hook bottom bumping rigs.

There are still some scattered fish occupying those midrange structures, however. Depths of 8 to 13 feet were producing a few fish and more fish will return to those areas on days when cloud cover returns or rainy days return to the fishing scene.

Popular jig colors were gold or silver with sparkle, motor oil and some white/orange, black/chartreuse and red/black just to name a few. Tipping jigs with Berkley Power Bait nibbles in chartreuse or white have worked well but adding a minnow at times has enticed some finicky fish to bite as well.

Bass action diminished too during the height of the cold front earlier this week as those northeast winds seemed to deal a devastating blow for a few days. By midweek bass rebounded too and showed some interest as fish were chasing shad over shallow flats on the main lake.

Activity improved on some of the main lake ledges where anglers were tossing Texas rigged worms and crankbaits and scoring consistent catches, although bigger fish have been hard to come by.

Shad seemed to return to shallow flats at midweek and were schooling and some surface action was underway from aggressive bass. Tossing Rattle Trap style crankbaits was working well as was some topwater at times.

The bite resumed in grassbeds at midweek as well after a short hiatus earlier in the week when the high skies seemed to send the bass deep in the grass with a lethargic mood. Minnows were more active and bass were feeding on them around the parameters of grassbeds.

Catfishing showed signs of improvement the last few days with more fish biting in the 35 to 40 foot depth range along the main river channel. Some decent stringers were caught by anglers using nightcrawlers and cut shad.

It appears the cold front has come and gone and mild to warm weather will dominate the fishing scene for the next week. It was a mean start to a week that has turned out to be pretty nice.