

May 17, 2012

Kentucky Lake: Water Level at Kentucky Dam - 357.18 Surface Temperature - 73
Lake Barkley: Water Level at Barkley Dam - 357.25 Surface Temperature - 73

Both lakes are two feet below summer pool and on a slow rise. The water levels are finally rising after some heavy rains in the upper Tennessee River Valley. The lakes have been rising a few inches each day this past week due to the inflow of this runoff from up river. Not really sure when or even if the lakes will reach summer pool but at least we have a little more water than we have had all spring. With the rising water this week, there is some wood debris scattered around the creeks and main lakes so be careful when running to avoid these hazards. Of course, remember we are still not at summer pool levels so take this into consideration when running the lakes and use the navigation lanes unless you are positive you are in safe water. Kentucky Dam has been generating around 6800 cfs during the morning hours and stepping up the flow to around 28,000 cfs during the early afternoon and evening hours. Barkley Dam has been alternating the flow there with 3 hour periods at 6500 cfs and then 3 hour periods of 0 flow around the clock. The latest lake levels, current flows and forecasts for all the TVA lakes can be found at www.tva.com/river/lakeinfo/index.htm.

The weather this week has been beautiful with post frontal conditions following the frontal passage last Sunday that brought some rain. The forecast for tomorrow and through the weekend is for daytime highs around 90 and night time lows in the mid 60's. Another weak front is forecasted to move through the area on Monday with only a slight chance of rain. The forecast next week is for daytime highs in the low to mid 80's on Monday and Tuesday and then a rebound to high's around 90 for the remainder of the work week.

Largemouth Bass: Largemouth Bass are being taken on the old river and creek channel ledges on the main lakes as well as the old creek channel ledges around the mouths of the creeks and bays. Deep diving crankbaits, Carolina rigged creature baits, Texas rigged large worms and dragging football head jigs are taking fish. Our most productive technique this past week has been dragging football head jigs and Carolina rigging creature baits. Some Largemouth are also being taken on primary points as well as secondary points and channel banks in the front halves of the creeks and bays. These fish are being taken on deep and medium running crankbaits, Carolina rigged creature baits, jigs and shaky heads. I have had a couple of reports of Largemouth being taken early in the morning in the backs of the creeks and bays where fish are feeding on schools of fry. These fish are being taken on topwater lures, spinnerbaits, lipless crankbaits and swim baits.

Smallmouth Bass: Smallmouth Bass are being taken on the old river and creek channel ledges on the main lakes as well as on main lake points. These fish are being taken on Carolina rigged creature baits, tube jigs and jigs. We have had a few single nice fish but no appreciable numbers.

Some of the productive lures reported this week are: Strike King series 6 and series 6xd crankbaits in sexy shad and chartreuse sexy shad, Rapala DT16 in parrot, Bag 5 custom painted medium running crankbaits in green gizzard shad, Bandit 300 series crankbaits in rootbeer/chartreuse, Lucky Craft Sammy in ghost pearl lemon, Slong's spinnerbaits in blue glimmer, Charmer timber pups in green pumpkin and watermelon/purple, Strike King rodent in Amistad special, Charmer shaky head worms in green pumpkin and green pumpkin candy on D&L and Slong's shaky head jigs, D&L football head jigs in "oops" and Missouri craw patterns.

Crappie: Crappie are being taken on post spawn brush piles around the mouths of the creeks as well as on the main lakes in 15-20 ft of water by vertically fishing with small jigs and minnow jig combinations. Some scattered Crappie are still being taken around brush piles in 6-8 ft of water in the creeks and bays. These fish are being taken with small jigs and minnows under bobbers.

White Bass: White Bass are now being taken along the old river channel ledges by vertically fishing with inline spinners and small spoons. Some nice catches have been reported but I have not seen nor had any reports of surface feeding Whites yet.

Bluegill/Red Ears: Bluegills are being taken in 5-6 ft of water off the banks in the backs of the creeks and bays. These fish are being taken on worms and crickets fished under bobbers and on split shot rigs baited with small creature jigs tipped with worms. Red Ears have been reported to be in similar depths but located off gravel bars more toward the front halves of the creeks and bays and on the main lake. These fish are being taken on split shot rigs baited with creature jigs tipped with worms and crickets.

Catfish: Channel Catfish are still being taken on rocky shorelines, rocky bluffs and rocky flats by fishing with night crawlers fished under bobbers and on bottom rigs.

If you are coming to the lakes area to enjoy our great fishing, let me recommend you stop and spend some time in one or both of the area's top bait and tackle shops:

The Cabin Bait and Tackle is located in Kuttawa on U.S. 62 about one mile west of the I-24/U.S. 62 interchange. The Cabin Bait and Tackle has a great selection of the latest in rods, reels, lures for you bass anglers and also a great selection of tackle for the panfish anglers to include live bait. The Cabin also has a great delicatessen where you can get that early morning breakfast sandwich or enjoy a delicious lunch. **Phone: 270-388-6440**

Fisherman's Headquarters is located in Draffenville at the U.S. 68/U.S. 641 triangle. Fisherman's Headquarters also boasts a great selection of the latest in rods, reels and lures for the bass anglers and now has a really good selection of Crappie fishing tackle featuring Wally Marshall "Mr Crappie" rods, reels, lures and line as well as live baits. You can also find the custom painted Bag 5 crankbaits you have seen mentioned in my report this spring. **Phone: 270-527-5938.**

Jet-A-Marina: If you have a problem with your boat while you are visiting our great fisheries, let me recommend you have the folks in the service department at Jet-a-Marina check it out. These folks have a well known reputation for trying to keep our visitors on the water while they are here if they can possibly do so, especially you tournament anglers. Hopefully you will not need this kind of assistance but if you do, you can find Jet-a-Marina located on U.S. 62 in Calvert City, just a couple of miles north of Kentucky Dam. Jet-a-Marina also has a great showroom for all your boating accessories and check out the new Ranger and Stratos bass boats too as well as bulk oil at rock bottom prices for your engine. **Phone: 270-395-4030**

LEDGE FISHING:

Now is the time to make your reservations to learn how to fish the ledges. I offer a focused teaching trip on how to fish the ledges. This trip consists of a class on how to eliminate the water on your topo map before you leave home so that you can concentrate your time on only the highest percentage ledges while on the water as well as some time on the water to learn how to use your electronics on the ledges, set up on the ledges and learn the techniques used to fish the ledges. This teaching trip has been very popular over the past few years since I started offering it as it will teach you how to go out and find and fish those ledges on your own. To book one of these trips, all you have to do is give me a call or drop me an email to book one of my open dates.

GUIDE SERVICE: For those of you that may not be familiar with my service: I am a full time catch and release bass fishing guide. I only guide for bass. If you want a panfish guide, I would be happy to recommend one but if you want bass, that is what I do. If you book with my service, you will have me as your guide and you will be guided in the comfort of a late model Z522 Ranger Comanche. I provide just for fun bass fishing trips, tournament preparation trips, focused teaching trips and technique instruction. If you are in need of a bass fishing guide, give me a call or drop me an email.

I have the following dates still available in May, June and July for guided trips:

May: Sorry, I am booked up.

June: 29

July: Plenty of dates available. Give me a call or drop me an email to book your trip. July is a great time to learn how to fish the ledges.

Of course I am taking booking for the rest of the season also through the end of November.

Captain Dave Stewart
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"Fish With a Professional"