



Fishing action improving at Corps Lakes

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It seems to happen virtually every spring and this year is no exception.

Each time spring fishing seems to really turn on, another cold front arrives and slows things down again. This has been the story thus far at each of our area's large Corps of Engineer reservoirs. At some point, however, springlike conditions will arrive and stay bringing promise that good action will resume.

Depending upon the specific lake, anglers are currently reporting fair to good fishing for crappie. Once good weather arrives and stays, actopn for largemouth bass, sauger, white bass and even channel catfish will quickly follow.

As most often happens during the early weeks of spring, Rend Lake situated in the southern reaches of the state is currently the best bet for good angling action. The lake is approximately three feet above normal for this time of year, slightly murky and shows water temperatures in the lower to mid-forties. Crappie are currently providing the most action.

Rend Lake anglers are finding good fishing for the smaller male crappies. Most anglers are fishing with minnows or jigs in four to 13 feet of water.

Much of the better crappie action is found in the south-facing coves. Here, warmer waters are bringing in spawning fish.

Largemouth bass action is also improving, but still rated slow. Occasional catches are currently being reported. Though there seems to be no particularly hot spot, most fish are coming on jig and pork combinations or slow-rolled spinnerbaits fished near creek channels or drop-offs.

Channel catfish and bluegill action remains slow at Rend Lake. What little action being found is coming along the Route 154 shoreline and the bridge on Route 37. Redworms and crickets have been the top bluegill baits, while chicken livers, nightcrawlers and large minnows are producing the best catfish action.

Anglers should soon find occasional spurts of good fishing for crappie in the Rend Lake tailwaters. Here, minnows have been the most productive baits.

Similar reports of improved crappie action were coming from nearby Mark Twain Lake in Missouri. Prior to the recent cold front, anglers were finding some very good early action for quality crappie.

While this has undoubtedly slowed since the arrival of cooler temperatures, the good action will quickly resume once springlike conditions return.

Though the fishing is just now turning on in the main body of Carlyle Lake, action is certain to improve. Oddly, tailwater anglers have found only fair action for several weeks. The main lake is murky with water temperatures near the 50-degree mark. Still, fair to good catches of various species are being taken on a variety of baits and lures.

Crappie fishing is slightly better for anglers fishing in the Carlyle tailwaters. Fair numbers of crappie are coming from this popular shoreline fishing area. Similar reports of good crappie action are now coming from the main lake, as well. The Peppenhorst and Allen branches are among the better locations at this time.

Bluegill, catfish and sauger are rated only fair at best in the tailwaters. Live baits are working best for the bluegill and catfish while small jigs are producing the majority of sauger.

White bass anglers are finding periods of fair fishing in the tailwaters.

Though water levels have finally fallen to average winter pool, Lake Shelbyville crappie anglers are reporting that crappie action is heating up.

Thus far, crappie have been the best bet with largemouth bass also providing some action. Though many of the crappie have been small (below the 10-inch minimum length limit), anglers are finding occasional catches of keeper-size fish.

Most of the better crappie are stumps located in four- to five-feet of water. Hot spots have been the Wilborn Creek area, the Campfield arm and the Lithia Springs cove.

Tailwater anglers are enjoying occasional catches of crappie, as well. Minnows and tube jigs are producing the best catches at this time.

Walleye and white bass, though only fair at best, are also providing limited action in the Lake Shelbyville tailwaters and main lake. On the lake, windy shorelines seem to be producing the better catches.

With more warm weather predicted fairly soon, many anglers are expecting even better fishing ahead.