

SURFACE TEMPS FALL IN AFTERMATH OF COOL FRONT...FALL WEATHER RETURNS

By Steve McCadams

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Fall weather is in the process of returning in the aftermath of a cool front that brought rain to the Kentucky Lake area at midweek. Most of last week delivered above average temperatures after a cold front that lingered into this week but things were changing fast as this report was updated.

North winds entered the picture on Wednesday and brought cooler conditions to the region as highs will only be 70 to 72 degrees by this weekend with nighttime temps falling into the mid 40's. Anglers will have to dig out the overcoats for a day or two but it appears normal fall weather will take over soon and some foggy mornings may be instore.

Lake levels have been falling slowly this week and were down to winter pool on Thursday. Projected elevation for the weekend at Kentucky Dam will be in the 354.6 and around the 354.7 range upstream at New Johnsonville. Those readings are down a few inches from last week at this time.

Boaters are reminded once again to pay close attention to channel markers and resist the temptation to take shortcuts across open lake sandbars and flats enroute to their favorite fishing holes. It's that time of year when caution is advised as there are still enough stumps and shallow gravel bars to damage your boat's hull or the outboard's lower unit and prop.

Surface temperatures have been in the 73 to 75 degree range most of this week but will fall back into the upper 60's and low 70's by this weekend. Water color remains clear across most of the reservoir despite recent rains.

Bass anglers have been scoring some decent catches lately but struggling somewhat as to the whereabouts of bigger fish. A lot of bass in the 2-pound plus range were showing up in a variety of areas but most all patterns were having trouble putting big fish in the boat.

Good catches are coming in from anglers working milfoil grassbeds with topwater, spinnerbaits, and Texas rigged worms. The lower lake levels are exposing more patches of grass and weedless frogs, rats, and floating fluke style worms have worked well.

Most of the aquatic vegetation is south of the Paris Landing area by several miles and starts showing up around the Leatherwood and Lick Creeks areas. From those bays further south toward New Johnsonville is where most of the grass is showing up around river islands, flats and in the backs of some bays.

Around the parameters of grass matts anglers were tossing spinnerbaits and worms where baitfish were present and scoring pretty good. Buzzbaits have worked well in lowlight conditions as have some jerk baits.

Other patterns producing have been schooling activity over shallow flats in open water where schools of shad have been roaming. A lot of fish have been busting on top at times and the gull activity will help you find the surface feeding frenzies.

There's a lot of Asian carp activity on those shallow flats and grassbeds too but most of those flushing sounds from big fish are coming from startled carp.

Popular choices around the open water schooling fish been shallow running crankbaits, Rattle Trap style lures and some swim baits. A few chugger style topwater plugs have also been producing.

Some boats are working gravel points and dropping back at midday with Carolina rigged craws and crankbaits when high sun has pushed the fish back deeper.

Still worthy of consideration has been the main lake ledge pattern where big deep diving crankbaits, Texas rigged worms, and some Carolina rigs and Alabama rigs were working. That summer pattern often lingers well into fall as to dividends.

Crappie activity seemed to diminish late last week and earlier this week as fish pulled out of some shallow areas. Warm weather and falling lake levels likely contributed to that but fish took on a sluggish mood and bites were light.

Fish had a finicky mood for several days and improved as cloud cover and rainy conditions entered the picture at midweek. However, the back side of the cool front may prove challenging for a few days if high skies and northeast winds linger.

Depths of 14 to 17 feet were holding decent number of crappier earlier this week. Anglers working the deeper sides of drop-offs were finding a few fish relating to deeper structure. Popular bait choices have been live minnows and jigs tipped with minnows or Berkley Power Bait.

A few scattered fish were relating to stakebeds and brushpiles in 9 to 13 foot depths but it appeared more fish were choosing deep water. That could change as the cool front will lower surface temps and likely push some fish back to shallow and midrange depths in the days ahead.

Most anglers were using bottom bumping double hook rigs or tightlining a jig in the deep, submerged structure. However, a cloudy, rainy day will see crappie action improve quickly around shallow structures this time of year.

Catfish were hitting pretty good along the main Tennessee River channel again this week. Depths of 35 to 40 feet were giving up decent numbers. A slow current had been present for several days and that worked in favor of catfish anglers working the river channel banks.

There some catfish moving up to shallow areas as well. Crappie fishermen are tying into some nice ones on a daily basis while fishing midrange cover as the cats love to prowl around

stakebeds and brushpiles this time of year.

Fall conditions have returned and cooler surface temps will enter the fishing scene this next week. That will increase the comfort zone for fish in shallow areas.