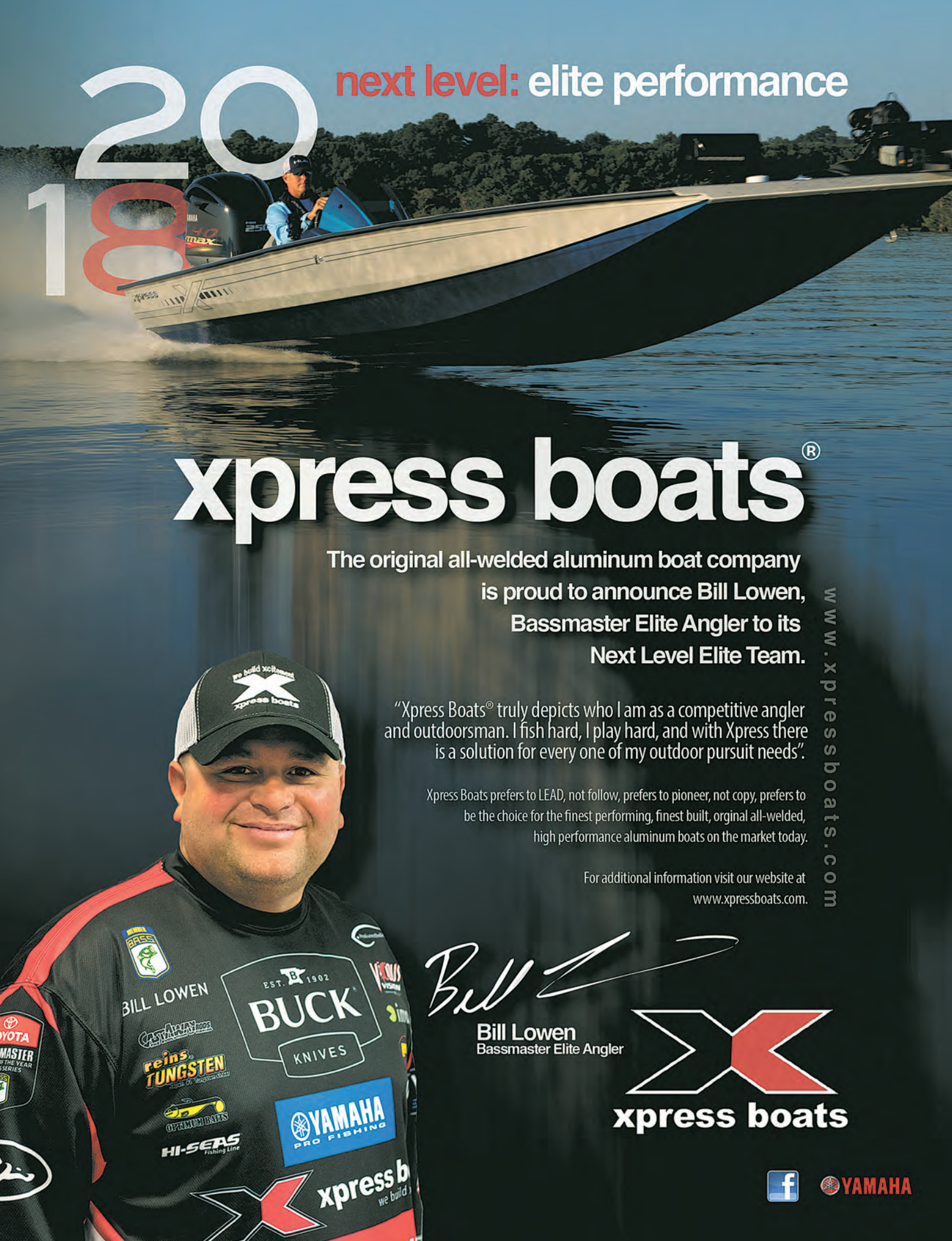

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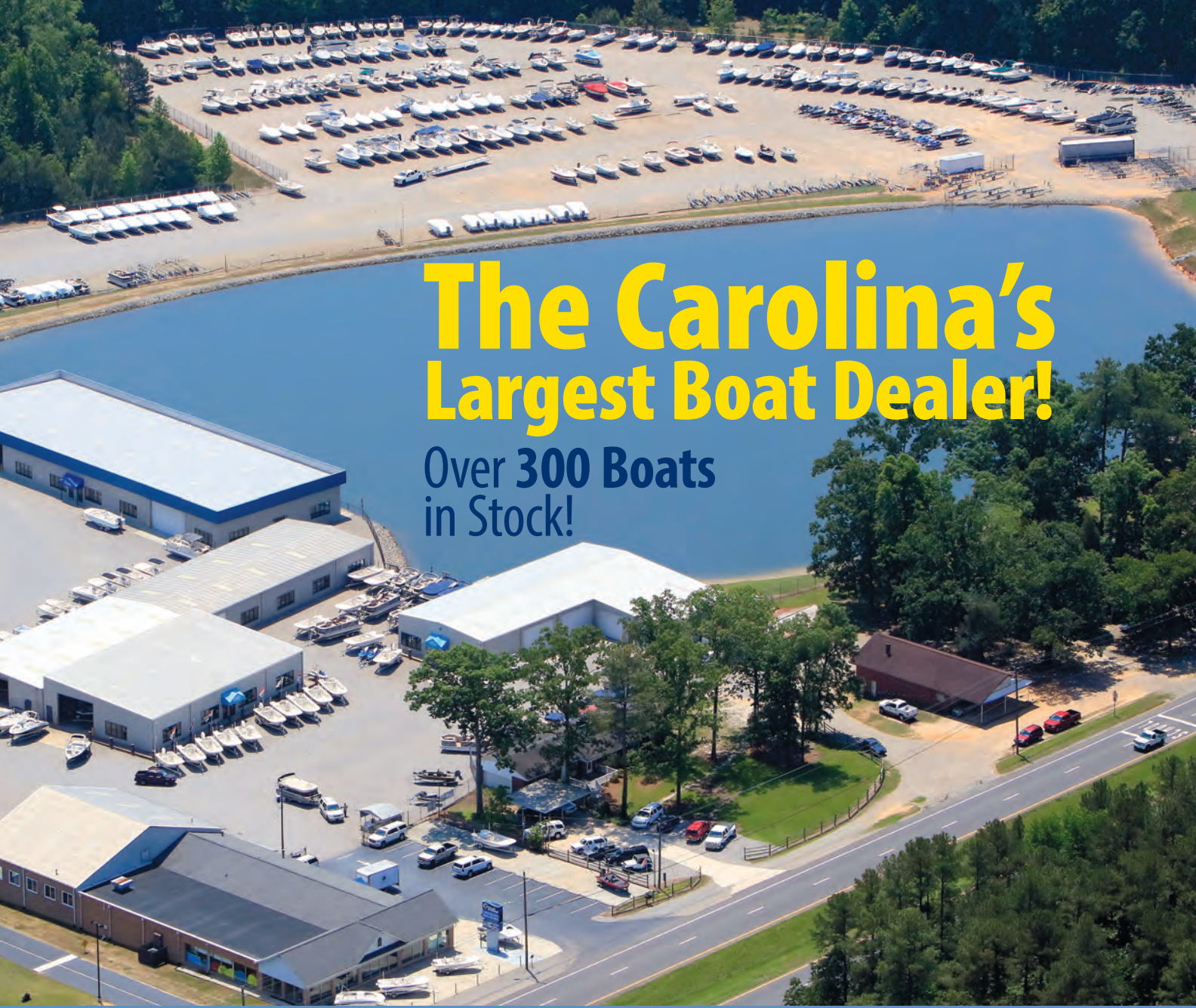
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Outdoor UPDATE with Dan Kibler



Guide David Hilton shows off a keeper striper caught on a Lake Marion trip in mid-November 2017. He'll have a 23- to 25-inch slot limit to deal with from Oct. 1 to June 15 annually, with one larger fish allowed in a three-fish daily creel limit.

Dan Kibler *of Winston-Salem, N.C., is managing editor of Carolina Sportsman magazine. He has been covering outdoors issues since 1985.*

Dan Kibler

NEW REGS: SC REDS, SANTEE BLUES

NEW LIMITS ADDRESS IMPROVEMENT OF SANTEE CATS, DROP IN RED NUMBERS

South Carolina's legislature took measures to support two popular fisheries in May, one of which was thriving, the other, not so much.

On May 3, Gov. Henry McMaster signed into law legislation changing size limits and the timing of harvest for striped bass in the Santee Cooper system.

The legislation extended the "keeper" season on stripers in Lake Moultrie, Lake Marion and their tributaries, from June 1 to June 15. Fishing will be catch-and-release only until Oct. 1.

The daily creel limit on Santee Cooper stripers will remain at three per angler, but no longer will anglers be allowed to keep only stripers 26 inches or longer. Under the new regulations, anglers can keep three fish in a 23- to 25-inch slot limit, or they can keep two fish in the slot and one 26 inches or longer.

The regulations replace regulations that were put in play in 2008 to reduce the stress-related mortality of striped bass during the summer. The 26-inch minimum size limit has increased the number of fish reaching minimum spawning size and age.

Ross Self, fisheries chief for the S.C. Department of Natural Resources, said, "The limits and restrictions imposed on the fishery in 2008 had a significant impact on increasing the numbers of stripers in the lakes. This new change will focus harvest on the size fish that are most abundant in the system, provide increased protection for stripers in the reproductive sizes while still allowing anglers to keep a bigger, memorable fish. We expect this change to provide addition improvements for the striped bass fishery, and SCDNR staff will continue to monitor the progress of the population's recovery."

Twelve days later, McMaster signed into law a bill that lowered the daily creel limit on redfish from three to two fish per angler and instituted a six-fish limit per boat. The 15- to 23-inch slot limit remains in place.

Redfish numbers in South Carolina have been dropping for a handful of years, and plenty of fishermen had noticed.

"It's a good bill, and it is something we've needed," Scott Whitaker, executive director of the Coastal Conservation Association-South Carolina, told Brian Cope of www.CarolinaSportsman.com.

Guide Fred Rourk of Sweet Tea Charters in Georgetown told Cope that the change in regulation has plenty of support from both fishermen, guides and biologists.

"Guide input is frontline information, not scientific, but in this case, guide input has matched biologist data.... None of this is based on feelings; it's all backed by science," said Rourk, a member of the S.C. Department of Natural Resources' Marine Advisory Committee. ▪

SLING BOW TAKES BIG TOM

Dan Kibler of Winston-Salem, N.C., managing editor of Carolina Sportsman, filed this report April 29 on CarolinaSportsman.com

Sandy Brady of Reidsville, N.C., has been bitten by an incurable bug over the past couple of years: the sling-bow bug.

Brady set out this year with one goal in mind: to kill a turkey gobbler with a sling bow — a weapon that looks like an old Wrist Rocket slingshot, only bigger and more powerful — and to get the kill on video.

He reached his goal last Wednesday, April 25 — and then some.

Sharing a blind with call-maker Kimmy Hanks of Hanks Game Calls, Brady drew down on a big Rockingham County gobbler at 9 yards, killed him, then found out exactly how big the bird was.

Weighing 23½ pounds, with an 11¼-inch beard and spurs measuring 1⅝ and 1⅜ inches, the bird scored 76 points on the National Wild Turkey Federation's scoring system.

According to Brady, officials with Chief AJ's — manufacturer of sling bows, including the one he was shooting — said that's the biggest gobbler ever taken with that weapon by a full 10 inches.

"Out of 42 years of hunting, I've never been this excited about accomplishing something," said Brady, who had taken one previous gobbler with a sling bow.

"Kimmy has been pushing me to get a good kill with a sling bow on film," Brady said. "We went to a place that we hadn't hunted before, but we'd been in there and heard one gobbler two days before — a cut cornfield. We set up a blind.

"We got in Wednesday about 45 minutes before normal time to set out our decoys. We were hoping to get a bird close at daybreak, but we had one about 300 yards behind us.



Sandy Brady of Reidsville, N.C., killed this 23½-pound gobbler on April 25, the largest ever killed with a sling bow.

"We heard a hen, and she started cutting, and we mimic'd everything she said. She flew into us, and it was a smoke-phase hen. She came within 3 yards of us.

"Then, the next thing I knew, Kimmy hit me on the knee and said, 'I hear him drumming.' I looked to my right, and I saw him step into the field, in full strut. He headed straight for the decoy and went around him twice. When he went behind the decoy the second time, I drew back.

"I really respect these birds, and he gave me the shot I wanted. He didn't go 10 feet." ▪

more updates...



Sailor Reardon, 13, of Murrells Inlet, S.C., killed these two gobblers with one shot from her crossbow on March 24 in Horry County.



Tim Warren killed this 4-bearded gobble in Caswell County, N.C., on May 2. The four beards measured 11 5/8, 9½, 8½ and 7 3/8 inches, but more impressive were its 1¾-inch spurs, the second-longest on record in North Carolina, according to National Wild Turkey Federation records.

ISLE OF PALMS ANGLER CATCHES SC RECORD GAG GROUPER

Web editor Brian Cope of Edisto, S.C. filed this report May 8 on CarolinaSportsman.com

Jim Lasher of Isle of Palms, S.C., was enjoying a good day of dolphin fishing out of IOP Marina with some coworkers and guide Ben Floyd of Charleston Fish Finder on May 1, the opening day of grouper season, when Lasher asked Floyd if he thought they'd get a chance to try for bottomfish. Not long after, Lasher landed the new state-record gag grouper, a 54-pound, 4-ounce beast that put up quite a tussle.

"We were having a great day with the Mahi-mahi, and I just put a bug in Ben's ear about trying for grouper before we went in. He said if we saw anything worthwhile, we'd give it a try," said Lasher.

"We're all good friends with Capt. Ben; we fish with him a couple of times a year. He's really good at finding structure and positioning the boat, and it really paid off as we were heading back in."

Around 2 p.m., Floyd was checking his electronics as they headed in, and he noticed some structure in about 160 feet of water and told his anglers to give it a shot. Lasher dropped down a 6-ounce Spro Bucktail Jig with a small piece of cut bait, jigged it once or twice, and he was hooked up.

"We didn't even anchor. Ben just swung the boat on top of the structure when he saw it," Lasher said. "Once I was hooked up, I reeled in about 30 feet of line, but the fish decided he didn't like that, so he peeled it back off and got into the structure. I thought I was done for."

With the fish pinned into the structure, it became a standstill. Floyd swung the boat around, Lasher gave the fish some slack, and luckily the grouper swam out. The fight was back on.

"It doesn't always work out, but sometimes your only shot is to give the fish some slack and hope it relaxes. The fish had worn himself out, but even then he still had some fight left in him. Once we got it on the boat, we were pretty sure we had something special, so we headed in," Lasher said.



Jim Lasher's 54-pound, 4-ounce gag grouper broke South Carolina's state record by almost six pounds.

After weighing the fish at the IOP Marina, and then again at Haddrell's Point Tackle, Lasher called the SCDNR, but it was too late in the day to get someone to check the fish out, so they met Lasher the next morning and officially weighed and certified the grouper at 54 pounds, 4 ounces, shattering the previous record of 48 pounds, 8 ounces. ▪

SC SPECKLED TROUT OUTLOOK IMPROVED

Biologists with the S.C. Department of Natural Resources reported in early May that the state's speckled trout population is a little better off than originally anticipated after cold-stun kill events in early January.

An SCDNR report indicated that residents provided 164 reports of cold-stun fish kills from Little River to Hilton Head Island the first week of January, after which the agency urged anglers to practice catch-and-release of trout through September to protect the remaining spawning population.

When SCDNR began running trammel nets in January, the number of trout they captured was well below normal, but in March, the numbers were much better, but still below-average. SCDNR said the population entering the spring was better than after the 2000-2001 and 2010-2011 winter kills.

Also, SCDNR found that larger trout, those bigger than 15 inches, were found in good numbers, allaying angler fears that big trout were affected in disproportionately large numbers.

"Given the severity of the winter, we're pleasantly surprised with the apparently active state of the spotted seatrout resource based on the March catches," said Dr. Joey Ballinger, head of SCDNR's inshore fisheries section. "It doesn't seem to be as significant an event as we observed in 2000-2001 and 2010-2011. But because the picture's still incomplete, we're still exercising caution."

SCDNR did report that most of the white shrimp that overwinter in South Carolina waters were killed, and the trawling season was closed in state waters. However, brown shrimp, which are commonly harvested during the summer, were not likely impacted by the January cold. ▪

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Black sea bass season opened May 15 in North Carolina waters north of Cape Hatteras.

Brian Carroll

NC OPENS BLACK SEA BASS SEASON NORTH OF HATTERAS

The N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries opened fishing for black sea bass north of Cape Hatteras on May 15, in compliance with management plans of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and Atlantic States fMarine Fisheries Commission.

Anglers can keep 15 fish per day, with a 12½-inch size minimum through Dec. 31, when the season will close.

South of Cape Hatteras, the season for black sea bass opened April 1, with a seven-fish creel limit and 13-inch size minimum. ▪

LITTLE GIRL, BIG CATFISH



Lindsey Edge, 6, from Laurel Hill, N.C., caught this 71-pound blue catfish in the Pee Dee River tailrace below Blewett Falls Dam on May 10. She was fishing with her father, Ira Edge, when the big fish hit a live gizzard shad. The catch was reported May 17 by field reporter Jeff Burleson of Myrtle Beach, S.C., on www.CarolinaSportsman.com. ▪


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GET IN THE SUMMER SWIM

By Dan Kibler

Soft-plastic swimbaits can be great summer baits for bass, if you know how to rig them and fish them. Here's how....

A soft-plastic swimbait may not be the artificial lure that a lot of bass fishermen identify as their "go-to" bait during the summer, but they've never been in the shoes of young bass pro Dylan Fulk of Concord, N.C.

He throws it as his primary summer bait — because everybody else in his neighborhood is throwing something else.

"A swimbait is a good way to cover a lot of water in the summer, and it's not a crankbait," he said. "Everybody in North Carolina throws a crankbait, and nobody really throws a swimbait. A swimbait will get you a bigger bite, because it's a more natural, bigger bait.

"I like to start on 'em with a swimbait, because if you hook a fish, you don't bring the whole school with it like you do with a crankbait. You don't educate 'em like you do with a crankbait. A swimbait doesn't have rattles or a treble hook banging around like a crankbait.

"I think bass get educated and quit biting, so you want to catch the biggest fish in a school early, and that's what a swimbait does. After you catch a few fish out of a school, it's hard to get a bigger, mature fish to bite, so you want to catch that big fish first, and a swimbait is the bait to do it with."

Fulk's swimbaits of choice are two 5-inch soft plastics: Yum's Money Minnow and Pulse Shad. He can rig either bait a handful of different ways, but he fishes them all the same way.

>



Dan Kibler



Dylan Fulk of Mount Pleasant, N.C., targets summer bass holding in deep water with soft-plastic swim baits.

>

"A Money Minnow has a real, tight action, and a Pulse Shad has a skinny rear end and a real big tail kick. I've gotten bites on both of them. You just figure which one the fish want," he said.

"I will throw it and let it sink all the way to the bottom, then give it a good pop to get it off the bottom and start reeling them slowly. A common misconception a lot of people have is that you work a swimbait along the bottom. The advantage of a swimbait is that it looks natural — and it's not natural for a baitfish to go run its head into a bunch of rocks on the bottom.

"I'll throw, let it hit bottom, pop it off and get started with a slow wind. When I'm winding, I'll quit winding, and if the bait hits the bottom in a second, I'm confident that the bait is working just off the bottom where it should be."



Bass pro Dylan Fulk said a big swimbait will catch the bigger fish in a school right away without spooking the rest of the fish.

Fulk said he'll fish a swimbait anywhere from 10 to 30 feet deep, depending on the lake he's fishing and where bass are hanging out. He likes to fish it on a ¾-ounce jighead, on a 7-foot-3, heavy action Falcon Cara rod with a lot of backbone, mated with an Ardent Apex Elite bait casting reel.

"Anything that weighs ¾-ounce, with a lot of rods, you'll have to lob it when you cast, but that rod has enough backbone to cast a heavy bait and load up when a fish hits," he said. "The reel is important for a number of reasons. You need to be able to make long casts, and it has really big handles, which allows me to have more control over the fish when I get him on. And I never set the hook on a swimsuit fish. I just reel down on him like you would a crankbait bite." ▪

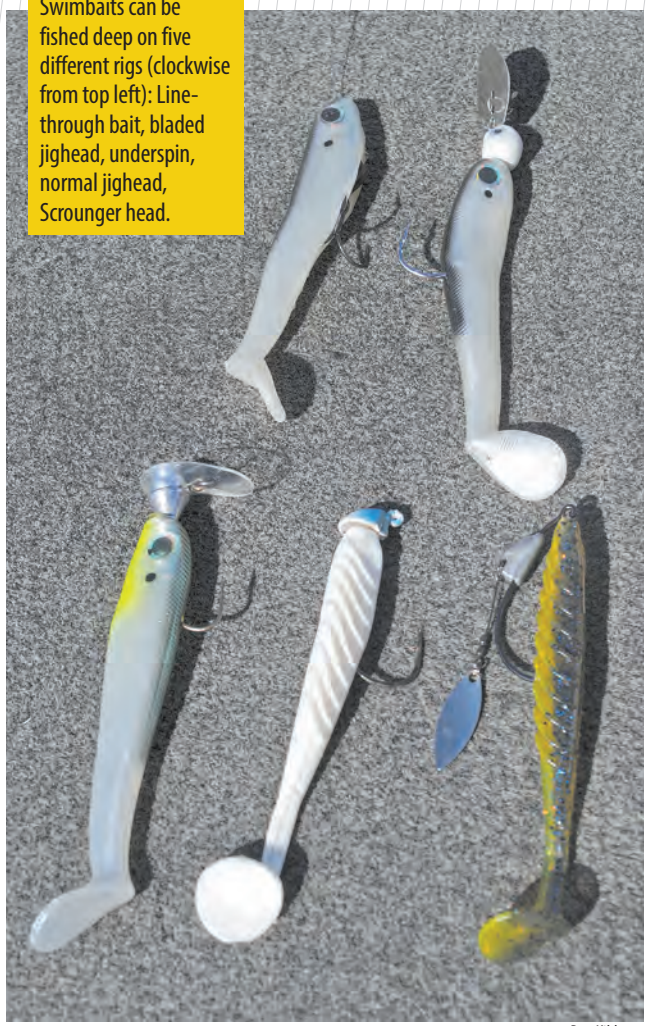
Five choices for rigging swimbaits

Bass pro Dylan Fulk said swimbaits are fairly simple baits to fish, but there are a number of options for rigging them. He has rigged them five different ways:

- Threaded on a standard, ¾-ounce jighead;
- Threaded on a 1-ounce bladed jighead without a skirt;
- Threaded on a Scounger head;
- Threaded on a spinhead or underspin jig;
- Rigged with the line through the bait.

Fulk likes through-bait rigging when fishing gets particularly tough during the summer, especially when he winds up fishing for suspended bass.

"A lot of times during the summer, when fish are under a lot of pressure, they'll pull off the bottom, and it's hard to get 'em to bite. I catch them a lot 10 feet off the bottom in, say, 30 feet of water," he said. "It's hard to get 'em to bite, and it's hard to get 'em to commit enough to get that big bait bait in their mouth to get a hook on a regular jig."



Swimbaits can be fished deep on five different rigs (clockwise from top left): Line-through bait, bladed jighead, underspin, normal jighead, Scrounger head.

Dan Kibler

Fulk takes a hollow, plastic coffee stirrer and pushes it up through the bait's belly and out its nose, then clips off the exposed ends. Next, he runs the line through the straw from nose to belly and threads a standard bullet-shaped worm weight on — backwards.

"If you slide the weight on the normal way, the tip of the weight will dig into the plastic coffee stirrer and crack it," he said, explaining that the weight will fit nicely into the belly hole. A 5/0 treble hook is tied on so it slides up against the tip of the weight when retrieved. That way, all they've got to do is hit at it and they'll get hooked." ■



Dan Kibler *of Winston-Salem, N.C., is managing editor of Carolina Sportsman. He has been writing about the outdoors since 1985 in newspapers and magazines.*







To rig a swimbait through its belly, push a coffee-stirring straw from the belly through the head of the bait, run it out its nose (top left), then clip the exposed ends (top right). Run the line through the straw, thread on a bullet weight backwards and tie on a treble hook (left).





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Flounder and gray trout make a summer fishing trip to nearshore structure out of Wrightsville Beach or Carolina Beach a good idea, if you know these particulars.

By Mike Marsh

A flat, GRAY BITE

Mike Marsh

Rennie Clark piloted his boat

out of North Carolina's Masonboro Inlet, nosing the bow through the rolling waves.

Clouds in the overcast sky threatened rain, but the wind was calmly whispering out of the southwest, which made the seas nearly flat.

"If we can catch a break with the weather, we can also catch some nice fish on the reefs and ledges," he said. "The flounder and gray trout have been biting."

Clark, 42, who operates Tournament Trail Charters, has been guiding for a number of different species between Topsail Beach, N.C., and Southport, N.C., over the past 10 years, while fishing in a dozen redfish tournaments on several trails every year.

"During the summer, the fish really congregate on the nearshore structure just off the beaches," he said. "The artificial reefs fill up with flounder and gray trout, and they can fill up with anglers, too. The best bet is fishing during the week when the waters are not as crowded. The other thing you can do is find the little rocks and lesser-known wrecks away from the larger artificial-reef structure marked on maps. You can have those places all to yourself."

> *"During the summer, the fish really congregate on the nearshore structure just off the beaches."*

For whatever reason, when Clark reached the destination he had plotted in his GPS unit, no other boats were in the area.

Before leaving the Intracoastal Waterway, Clark uses a cast net to fill his livewell with finger mullet. He may hit Masonboro Inlet's rock jetties or sandbars around Carolina Beach Inlet with a few casts for red drum using Carolina rigs baited with mullet. Then, he heads out to fish the ledges and reefs.

It didn't take Clark long to find the right spot. Hovering over the baitfish and hard structure he saw on the screen of his depth finder, he dropped a mullet to the bottom on a Carolina rig. In a few moments, a flounder struck, and he reeled the fish to the boat and netted it. After his initial success, however, the bait stealers moved in, making short work of the live baits intended for flounder.

"Pinfish, croakers, pigfish, toadfish and sharks can swarm the structure when the water heats up," he said. "You have three choices. You can continue to feed the fish until the right one comes along, which empties your livewell quickly. You can move, or you can switch to an artificial lure. I prefer to try a jigging spoon."

continues on page 26 >



Mike Marsh

Finger mullet caught inshore in a cast net are Rennie Clark's primary live bait for nearshore flounder.

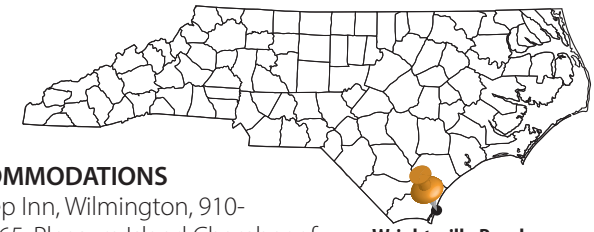
DESTINATION INFORMATION

HOW TO GET THERE — The Wrightsville Beach/Carolina Beach area is reached from most places in North Carolina through WIlmington, via I-40, US 421 or US 17. Popular public boat ramps are at the base of the US 74 bridge across the ICW in Wrightsville Beach, and at Snow's Cut off US 421 at Carolina Beach. For a list of artificial reefs, visit http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/artificial-reefs-program.

WHEN TO GO — June, July and August are prime months to catch flounder and gray trout on nearshore structure.

BEST TECHNIQUES — Live bait and jigs or spoons are the most-productive lures for flounder and gray trout around near-shore wrecks and reefs. Stingsilvers are particularly productive in blue/white, blue/silver and pink. Go with 7-foot, medium-action spinning rods mated with reels spooled with 50-pound braid.

FISHING INFO/GUIDES — Rennie Clark, Tournament Trail Charters, 910-465-8943. See also Guides & Charters in Classifieds.



ACCOMMODATIONS — Sleep Inn, Wilmington, 910-313-6665; Pleasure Island Chamber of Commerce, www.pleasureislandcham-bernc.org.

MAPS — Maps Unique, 910-458-9923, www.mapsunique.com; GMCO Maps, GMCO's Chartbook of North Carolina, 888-420-6277, www.gmcomaps.com.


Mike Marsh

A triangle of three dark, eye-like spots identifies this flatfish as a Gulf flounder.

Count to three to ID **gulf flounder**

Of the three flounder species that inhabit waters off the North Carolina coast — summer, southern and Gulf — the Gulf flounder is the least plentiful.

Anglers seldom encounter them inside, in coastal sounds, creeks and rivers, but they catch them around inlets, ledges and artificial reefs. They make up about 5 percent of the total flounder catch in North Carolina's ocean waters.

Anglers can identify a Gulf flounder by its three eye-like spots, aka ocelli. They are dark in the center with distinct rings, and they form a triangle with the apex located on the fish's body near the base of the tail. The two other spots are a bit less than halfway down the body from the back of the head. In younger or juvenile fish, the ocelli are more distinct, and smaller fish lack many any other indistinct blotches and spots, giving them an overall gray appearance except for the three prominent spots. That makes the identification of the younger fish much easier. ▪

Tote home **a toad**

The oyster toadfish is a common catch for anglers who fish nearshore ledges and reefs for flounder, gray trout and other species. They will hit spoons and jigs but are more likely to strike live and cut baits.

The toadfish is not pleasant to look at; most anglers say it's downright ugly. However, anglers can clean a toadfish the same way they clean a catfish: using a sharp knife to cut around the body just behind the head and skinning the fish using a strong grip and pliers. Locking pliers do the best job of holding the slippery skin securely. Once the fish is skinned, the meat can be filleted from the backbone and cooked in strips using any recipe for catfish; they are excellent eating when fried.

Anyone handling a toadfish should be aware that its powerful jaws and strong teeth can cause serious injury to hands or fingers. They also flip around when hooked, and the slime can cause eye irritation, so leave your sunglasses on whenever you unhook them. ■



Oyster toads are unwelcome visitors to a lot of anglers' boats, but they are a tasty addition to a day's catch fishing nearshore reefs.

Mike Marsh




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continued from page 22

Clark said a jigging spoon is much more durable than a jighead and an artificial trailer or a live minnow impaled on its hook. Plenty of small mouths can nibble away the dressing of a jig or added soft trailers, but they won't harm a metal spoon.

"I use Stingsilvers or other heavy spoons," he said. "One thing I do improve them is remove the treble hook. I replace the treble with a single VMC circle hook of the appropriate size. The chemically sharpened hook will catch anything that gets near it, and with its larger bend, it digs farther back into a fish's mouth without tearing out. That is especially important if you are after gray trout. In summer, the reefs and ledges are full of them."

Clark said that the one-fish creel limit for gray trout is hardly enough incentive for anglers to plan an outside-the-inlet trip, but two anglers with two of the nice gray trout usually available will have the ice in their cooler covered up before any flounder comes onboard.

> *"The gray trout have been getting bigger over the years since the creel limit fell to one fish. Two-pounders are common and it is not unusual to catch one that weighs 4 to 6 pounds."*

"The gray trout have been getting bigger over the years since the creel limit fell to one fish," he said. "Two-pounders are common, and it is not unusual to catch one that weighs 4 to 6 pounds."

Clark dropped the spoon, letting it free-fall until the instant it hit the bottom. Then, he immediately turned his reel handle two or three times.

"If you try to bump it up and down, hitting the bottom every time, you are going to hang up a lot of spoons and break them off," he said. "That can get expensive, and you can also run out of your favorite colors if you only have a few of them along. Flounder will come up off the bottom several feet to strike a spoon. If you look at your depth finder, you can usually spot gray trout or the baitfish they are feeding on, and they may be quite a distance off the bottom."▪



Mike Marsh *is a freelance outdoor writer in Wilmington, N.C. His latest book, Fishing North Carolina, and other titles, are available at www.mikemarshoutdoors.com.*




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BLACKFIN BLACKOUT

With yellowfin tuna missing from most of the Carolinas' offshore waters during the summer, bluewater fishermen are learning that blackfin tuna aren't such a bad substitute.

By Dan Kibler

Four hours after leaving Hatteras Landing Marina, Bruce Armstrong Jr. saw something from the bridge of his charter-boat, the *Sea Angel*. Birds were circling about a half-mile off the stern of another boat.

"That's tuna," Armstrong shouted, and turned the boat's wheel to head in the direction of the birds. Before he got there, he instructed the anglers in the boat's cabin to get ready for action.

Fifteen minutes later, a half-dozen blackfin tuna were in the fish box, and Armstrong was trolling back and forth over what he determined to be an underwater rock pile about 70 feet in elevation, picking up a fish or two on every pass.

Two hours after the action started, Armstrong pointed the Sea Angel back toward Hatteras Inlet with 27 blackfin tuna and a couple of stray dolphin on ice. A great spring or fall day in the bluewater.

Except that it was in the dead of July, a month that's not normally considered a can't-miss fishing time for offshore anglers, even off North Carolina's famed Outer Banks.

>

Dan Kibler

And for that, we can thank the blackfin tuna,

the football-shaped and football-sized cousin of the more popular yellowfin: the tuna of choice along the North Carolina coast.

Except that for the past 10 years of so, yellowfins have rarely ventured south of Diamond Shoals off Hatteras, especially after Memorial Day.

"The yellowfins are here in April and early May, but after Memorial Day, south of the shoals, you don't catch yellowfin all summer except for an occasional fish. The yellowfins get north of the shoals, in that blended (Labrador current/Gulf Stream) water," said Armstrong, who took over running the *Sea Angel* several years ago from his father. "The blackfin show up in April; the biggest ones come earlier in the year, but the smaller ones stay here all summer, up to 15 pounds.

"They have replaced yellowfins as our summertime tuna. Hatteras has always been known for dolphin and always will be, but these tuna are great for our fishery."

Armstrong and captains out of a handful of Hatteras marinas have made blackfin tuna a big part of their summer plans. Armstrong spends a lot of time 35 to 40 miles south of Hatteras Inlet, fishing around popular offshore spots like the Rockpile and Triple Zeros, and along spots identified by old LORAN coordinates: the 890 rocks, the 980 and 990 lines.

"You usually find them around some kind of bait, probably flying fish. You'll also catch some skipjack tuna mixed in with them, especially around rocks," Armstrong said. "You can watch and see 'em busting in front of the boat or to the sides."

Armstrong normally trolls a mixed spread of ballyhoo and sea witches, plus some squid and teasers. When he knows blackfin are around, he'll replace every lure in his spread of seven or eight rods with Green Machines: small, green artificial squid, fished behind trolling birds. Behind the biggest birds, he'll run two Green Machines, calling it a "Double Trouble" rig.



Dan Kibler

A bird trolled along the surface, trailed by Green Machines, will take plenty of blackfins.



Dan Kibler

Blackfin tuna aren't as big as their yellowfin cousins, but they provide plenty of blue-water action during summer off the Carolinas.



DESTINATION INFORMATION

HOW TO GET THERE — Hatteras is on NC 12 at the southern end of the Outer Banks, just across Hatteras Inlet from Ocracoke Island, about 50 miles south of Nags Head.

WHEN TO GO — Blackfin tuna, along with dolphin, make up the lion's share of the summer offshore catch out of Hatteras. The biggest fish are around in late spring, along with bigger yellowfin tuna, which virtually disappear south of Diamond Shoals, after Memorial Day. Plenty of 6- to 12-pound school tuna are caught through the summer.

BEST TECHNIQUES — Troll with a spread of small Green Machines behind a trolling bird or a squid chain. Add in ballyhoo on bright-colored sea witches to tempt any dolphin you run into.

FISHING INFO/GUIDES — Bruce Armstrong, Sea Angel (252-904-7385); Hatteras Landing Marina, 252-986-2077; Hatteras Harbor Marina, 252-986-2166; Teach's Lair Marina, 252-986-2460; Oden's Dock, 252-986-2555. See also Guides & Charters in Classifieds.

ACCOMMODATIONS — Dare County Visitors Bureau, 877-629-4386, www.outerbanks.org.

MAPS — Capt. Segull's Nautical Charts, 888-473-4855,www.captainsegullcharts.com ; Sealake Fishing; Guides, 800-411-0185, www.thegoodspots.com; Maps Unique, 910-458-9923, www.mapsunique.com.

"I will use small, medium or large Green Machines behind birds or squid chains," Armstrong said. "The biggest bird, 15 inches, I'll drop off two leaders of 100-pound fluorocarbon, 6- and 10-foot leaders, and clip them to the back of the birds. We catch a lot of doubles that way.

"I'll troll at about 5 knots. If I'm going against the current, I might be only moving 3 knots. When we get one (blackfin) on, I'll slow down, and I'll have the fishermen jig all the rods and get the rest of them up to the surface. It's bet to keep the boat moving and leave the rod holders when they start popping up."

Armstrong said most of the summer blackfin are literally "football tuna" — anywhere from 6 to 10 pounds. About one out of every half-dozen or so will be bigger, pushing 15 or 20 pounds. ▪



Dan Kibler *of Winston-Salem, N.C. is managing editor of Carolina Sportsman. He has been covering outdoors issues in the Carolinas since 1985.*

BLACKFIN MOVE CLOSER TO SC BEACHES IN SUMMER UP NEXT >

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Blackfin move closer to SC beaches in summer

Blackfin tuna are not quite as numerous in South Carolina's offshore waters during the summer, but along with Mahi-mahi, they make up the majority of bluewater catches through the hotter months.

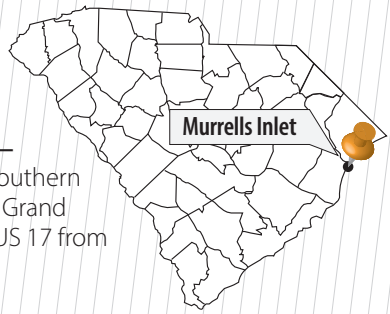
Ned Campbell, a charter captain who owns Murrells Inlet Outpost, said prime time for blackfin is usually April and May, but anglers have to head a long way offshore to find them. During the summer, fish aren't as numerous, but they tend to be closer to shore.

"In the spring, we catch most of them out in deep water, along the Break, along the edge of the Gulf Stream," he said. "By summer, you can get lucky and find them in 140 feet of water. The water temperature is so similar from the beach to the Gulf Stream; the water is all 80 degrees. The fish disperse, and it's hard to get the numbers, but you see them. We've caught them at the Parking Lot, the Jungle and Belkie Bear."

Campbell said trolling small ballyhoo behind sea witches is the most-productive way to find blackfin — and Mahi-mahi — but Green Machines trolled behind Boone birds and chugging-style plugs also account for some fish.

"Those chuggers put off the right bubble trail for tuna," he said. "An Ilander chugger will work, or a Blue Water Candy with a chugger head. I've caught 'em on all kinds of rigs, and a cedar plug works, too." ▪

DESTINATION INFORMATION



HOW TO GET THERE — Murrells Inlet is at the southern end of South Carolina's Grand Strand, accessed from US 17 from north and south.

WHEN TO GO — Blackfin tuna fishing peaks in late April and May, but bluewater captains continue to catch fish through the summer.

BEST TECHNIQUES — Troll small ballyhoo behind sea witches (blue/white, pink/white, pink/blue) or Green Machines behind Boone birds.

FISHING INFO/GUIDES — Ned Campbell, Murrells Inlet Outpost, 843-651-6602. See also Guides and Charters in Classifieds.

ACCOMMODATIONS — Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, www.visitmyrtlebeach.com/plan/about-us/cities-towns/murrells-inlet/.

MAPS — Capt. Segull's Nautical Charts, 888-473-4855,www.captainsegullcharts.com ; Sealake Fishing; Guides, 800-411-0185, www.thegoodspots.com; Maps Unique, 910-458-9923, www.mapsunique.com.

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THE SPANISH OF SUMMER

Fishermen along South Carolina's Grand Strand have plenty of opportunities to mop up on mackerel, trolling or live-baiting, as the heat peaks.

By Jeff Burleson

As July rolls around, the fireball in the sky continues to bake South Carolina's Grand Strand, bringing temperatures in nearshore waters closer to their summer peaks. And the peak of the sizzlin' summer is a great time for anglers with an affinity for Spanish mackerel to target these yellow-spotted firecrackers.

The ocean is one massive food pyramid, with lots of players on both ends of the ladder. Twice a day, the tides suck water out of the inshore nursery grounds, bringing a fresh buffet to lots of hungry predators, and Spanish mackerel are among them.

During the summer, beaches and inlets are chock full of bait: mullet, menhaden, croaker and more. But while some top predators move out to deeper, cooler water when it gets hot inshore, Spanish mackerel are quite tolerant of the 88-degree water and make the Grand Strand their summer home.

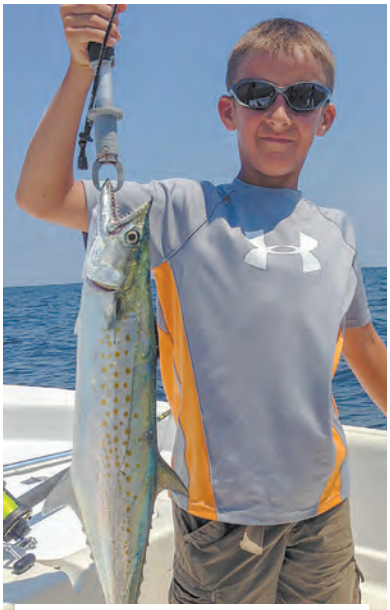
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Jason Burton

Spanish schools are abundant along the beach during the summer. They arrive in April and are a good species to target until the early fall cool down," said Tom Cushman of Captain Cush Charters in Little River, S.C. "Spanish fuel up on bait all summer long, and it doesn't take long to get a 15-fish limit when you get into them."

Spanish might be anywhere from the beachfront out to 40 feet of water, he said. Structure — or anything else that congregates baitfish — will attract schools of Spanish.

"We troll small spoons along the beaches for Spanish and around the nearshore reefs. There is usually plenty of bait along the beach and at the reefs that attracts them," Cushman said.



Aggressive Spanish mackerel will chase baits throughout the summer, even in the warmest of nearshore waters.

Clark spoons are the norm for fooling Spanish mackerel, which are lightning-fast feeders that slash through schools of bait and come back through to clean up the bloody morsels. Cushman prefers to troll Nos. 00 and 1 Clark spoons at speeds of up to five knots. While he pulls some at the surface a considerable distance behind the boat, a small planer or trolling weight can usually bring more success.

"Even though fish are feeding near the surface, the weighted lines can get hit more than the flat lines, especially the planers," he said.

Cushman will change the sizes of spoons and the length of the leader, depending on the water clarity. And at the peak of the summer heat, nearshore waters are usually relatively clear. Spanish feed purely based on sight and will quickly lose interest in a lure when leaders are too short, revealing their supportive hardware, including swivels. Cushman prefers to use a 30-foot section of 20-pound monofilament or fluorocarbon for leader.

"Spanish are shy of hardware. We may add more leader if they aren't cooperating," he said.

Adam Goodwin of Reel Fly Girlz Fishing Charters also tags Spanish as one of his top summer target species for his customers out of Murrells Inlet.

"Spanish fishing can be epic in the mornings during the summer," Goodwin said. "The bigger fish start moving in later in the summer, and we change up our tactics some."

Not only does Goodwin troll for Spanish with hardware, he will fish stationary with live bait in hopes of landing some of the bigger Spanish that show up later in the summer.

"I like to start a feeding frenzy first by throwing out handfuls of bait from the livewell," he said.

Goodwin will fill his livewell early in the morning with finger mullet and then head out.

"I will scoop them out eight to 10 at a time and toss them out around a feeding school. They start crushing them quickly and get used to feeding close to the boat," he said.

Then, it's time for the bait-and-switch move. Goodwin nose-hooks a finger mullet on a No. 1 or 2 size treble hook with a 3-foot leader of 15-pound wire and pitches it into the crowd.

continues on page 39

DESTINATION INFORMATION

HOW TO GET THERE — The Grand Strand spans a 60-mile section of the coast from Little River near the North Carolina-South Carolina border south to Georgetown, S.C. Popular public boat accesses are on either side of the US 17 bridge over the ICW in Cherry Grove/North Myrtle Beach, on US 17 Business in Murrells Inlet and East Bay Park, the Carroll Campbell complex and South Island Landing in Georgetown.

WHEN TO GO — Spanish mackerel first arrive off the Grand Strand in late April, mostly smaller fish between 15 and 16 inches long. As more baitfish arrive in May and June, bigger fish show up, with the peak beginning in July and extending through the fall. Spanish will be along the beachfront and around nearshore reefs, including the Paradise Reef, Pawley's Reef, North Inlet Reef, 10-Mile Reef and 11-Mile Reef.

BEST TECHNIQUES — Spanish are caught on both artificial lures and live bait. Most fall to fast-trolling with No. 00 Clark spoons pulled behind a No. 1 planer. Small Yo-Zuri Crystal Minnows and casting spoons that can be retrieved at high speeds will draw strikes. For live bait, small menhaden or finger mullet are preferred, rigged on a small live-bait rig consisting of a short section of 10- to 15-pound steel leader and a single treble hook. Live bait typically catches bigger Spanish.



FISHING INFO/GUIDES — Adam Goodwin, Reel Fly Girlz Fishing Charters, 843-789-9100, www.reelflygirlzfishingcharters.com; Tom Cushman, Captain Cush's Charters, 843-997-5850, www.captcush.com; Baisch Boys Bait & Tackle, Murrells Inlet, 843-651-1915; Perry's Bait & Tackle, 843-651-2895. See also Guides & Charters in Classifieds.

ACCOMMODATIONS — Myrtle Beach Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, www.visitmyrtlebeach.com; S.C. Association of VIsitors Bureaus, www.discoversouthcarolina.com.

MAPS — Navionics, 800-848-5896, www.navionics.com; Waterproof Charts No. 98, 800-423-9026, www.waterproofcharts.com; SeaLake Fishing Guides, 800-411-0185, www.sealakeusa.com.

CAST HARD BAITS FOR MACKEREL



Yo-Zuri's Crystal Minnow is an alternative to trolling or casting spoons where Spanish mackerel are concerned.

Spanish mackerel are a species that relies on its vision to find food, primarily small baitfish that are doing everything they can to avoid becoming dinner. And a mackerel's vision, paired with excellent swimming speed, is usually too much for most baitfish.

While most anglers chose to troll hard baits behind the boat or free-line live baits, those aren't the only ways to rev up a Spanish mackerel's appetite. If anglers have quick wrists, they can be successful at catching Spanish on spinning gear.

Spanish are accustomed to their prey fleeing at high speed, even darting side to side. Casting spoons like a Sea Striker Jig Fish or a Kastmaster are weighted just enough to allow anglers to cast them exceptional distances. They can be ripped back to the boat at high speeds to mimic a fleeing baitfish, speeds required to get Spanish to respond.

Casting spoons to actively feeding fish can be a great way to catch Spanish mackerel during the summer, but sometimes, when baitfish are in the middle of a feeding frenzy, they will flee in different directions. In these instances, Got-Cha plugs can be very effectively; their side-to-side darting action imitates baitfish fleeing an ambush.

While there are some other baitfish imitations available, these are generally the best choices for Spanish mackerel. Most other hard baits, especially diving baits, can't be retrieved fast enough to get a Spanish chasing, with the exception of a Yo-Zuri Crystal Minnow.

Hard baits come in a variety of colors from pink, green and blue to silver and gold. The best paint jobs should be predominantly base colors of silver or gold because they give off the most flash and will draw the most strikes. ▪



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FOLLOW THE GULLS

Spanish mackerel travel in schools, and when they feed, they aren't secretive by any means, often feeding in a frenzy.

When a baitfish school is ambushed by a school of mackerel, the baitfish don't have many places to flee, and it is usually to the surface. That attracts many free-loaders, especially those of the avian persuasion. But birds can be a big help for anglers searching for Spanish.



Seagulls and other diving birds will give away the presence of Spanish mackerel feeding on baitfish at the surface.

Jeff Burleson

Seagulls have been documented to detect objects up to a mile away. Even though humans can see great distances, seagulls are known to have better vision than humans. Additionally, birds have more-acute sound recognition ability than humans; they are extremely sensitive to pitch and tone.

When a school of Spanish mackerel pushes bait to the surface, not only will the birds see the action, they will be able to hear it, too. Anglers need to pay close attention to bird activity if they want to fill their fish box with fresh Spanish mackerel fillets. ▪

continued from page 36

"If you can get them into a feeding frenzy, they will not think twice about smashing the one with a hook in its mouth, as long as it is swimming freely," he said. "That's why I like to nose-hook them over hooking them in back. It needs to swim naturally, and when it does, they will hit it at 20 miles per hour and never look back."

Goodwin will often vary the length of his leader length depending on how good the bite is, but he typically uses a 3-foot section.

While trolling can be effective anywhere from the beachfront to the jetties and to the nearshore reefs, the stationary method should be utilized in a place where the bait and Spanish are known to congregate.

"I like to free-line live bait at the nearshore reefs, and while we are there, we can also bottom-fish for other species," he said.

Several reefs within sight of Grand Strand beaches offer opportunities to live-bait for Spanish. Out of Little River, the Jim Caudle Reef and the Ron McManus Memorial Reef are just a few miles from the sea buoy. And on the south end, out of Murrells Inlet, the Paradise Reef, Grand Strand Saltwater Anglers Reef, HB Springs Reef and Winston Perry reef are all just a few miles from the inlet.

In addition to the reefs, Spanish will congregate around the tips of the jetties at Murrells Inlet and at Little River, especially during the falling tides when baitfish get swept out of the estuaries and into the ocean. The Spanish will congregate between the rocks and the sea buoy, as well as several hundred yards away from the jetties along the current break or tide lines. ▪



Jeff Burleson is a native of Lumberton, N.C., who lives in Myrtle Beach, S.C. He graduated from N.C. State University with a degree in fisheries and wildlife sciences and is a certified biologist and professional forester for Southern Palmetto Environmental Consulting.



Bigger Spanish mackerel show up in nearshore waters off the Grand Strand later in the summer.

Jeff Burleson



Summer bass fever:

LAKE NORMAN SPOTS

By Dusty Wilson

One bass pro has a two-pronged approach for catching schooling bass during the summer's hottest days.



Bass pro Bryan Thrift targets spotted bass on summer trips to Lake Norman, but he still catches an occasional largemouth.

FLW Outdoors Photo



With the sweltering heat of July comes a waterborne epidemic that sweeps through fishermen on Lake Norman: spotted fever. Spotted bass, that is.

Technically, the stricken may still go about their normal daily activities, but with action this hot, it isn't advised. As large schools of bass huddle up on main-lake points, the best remedy is to follow the counsel of a professional, like pro bass angler Bryan Thrift of Shelby N.C. Take two baits and go fishing in the morning.

According to Thrift, the morning is a great time to start, but Lake Norman's nomadic spots stay aggressive and hungry throughout the day, ready to pounce on a topwater walking bait or drop-shot rig.

"You can throw topwater all day at Norman," said Thrift, one of the nation's top-ranked bass pros. "Those spots get out there and suspend over 20 to 30 feet of water, but they'll only be 10 or 15 feet deep. The water is so clear, you can call them to the top all-day long. They can school and come up anytime, anywhere. I use the drop-shot to catch the fish under the boat that I see on my graph."

Best of all, this isn't the typical, slow grind of summer most anglers are accustomed to when targeting largemouth bass. Spots are a bit of a different breed. They are less affected by hot water and more inclined to school than largemouths. Spots will inhabit Norman's open water in the summer and are likely to caught alongside the stripers and hybrid bass that they mimic.

While sometimes confused with largemouths, spots exhibit a number of distinguishing features. The first giveaway is a noticeably smaller mouth, which, when closed, does not extend beyond the eye. Often longer and more slender than a largemouth, a spotted bass sports numerous distinctive spots on the lower side of the body. The best method for making a positive ID is to feel for the sandpaper-like tooth patch that largemouths don't have.

Although a shade on the leaner side compared to their largemouth cousins, spots make up for it with tenacity and numbers. "The average size of a spot on Lake Norman is 1½ to 2½ or 3 pounds," Thrift said. "Every once in awhile, you'll catch a 4-pounder. Most are in that good, keeper-size range, 14 to 18 inches, but you can set up and work a point and catch 25 to 30 fish. It's a lot of fun."

Thrift's gameplan when approaching a promising main-lake point likely to be occupied by spots is to wake up the neighborhood.

"Most of the points that have spots will have a lot of bait around them," he said, "and that little bit of water movement when you set the boat down will make that bait move around. That will get them fired up for the first several minutes.

"I'll pull up and throw topwater instantly," he said. "I like to use a Damiki Rambler 120 in the real shad color. It's a walking-style bait. Throw it out and walk it as fast as you can back to the boat. But I always have the drop-shot tied on. When I see one on the graph, I'll have it ready."

After the burst of topside activity, Thrift gets down to serious business, keeping one eye on his topwater and the other on his electronics as he dissects the point.

"I basically troll around," he said. "I put my trolling motor on 30 to 40 percent and move around until I see them."

With a target in his crosshairs, Thrift hovers above his quarry and sends his offering straight to the bottom.

"Most of the time they'll follow it down, and I would say 70 percent of them will bite it on the drop. I use a Damaki 4-inch soft-plastic Stinger and hook it on a 1/0 drop-shot hook using 8-pound fluorocarbon. Depending on depth, I'll use a 3/16- or a ¼-ounce weight about a foot below the hook. I only use two colors: watermelon candy and baby bass."

At more than 32,000 acres, Lake Norman is a handful in terms of picking apart profitable locations, but Thrift keys on the lower third of the lake — because it's deeper. Here, he hones in on main lake points in the 20 to 40 feet ranges.

"They'll be on the points that run out the farthest," he said, "the most prominent and obvious points (and) particularly those around Davidson and Ramsey creeks." ▪



Dusty Wilson of Raleigh, N.C., is a lifelong outdoorsman. He is the manager of Tarheel Nursery in Angier, N.C., and can be followed on his blog at InsideNCFishing.com.



Spotted bass provide bass fishermen with a decent topwater bite in summer.

FLW Outdoors

DESTINATION INFORMATION

HOW TO GET THERE — Less than 20 miles north of Charlotte, N.C., Lake Norman is sandwiched between east-west I-40 at its extreme northern end and 1-77 running north-south along its eastern banks. Plenty of boat ramps line its shores, including McCrary Creek Access and Pinnacle Access on NC 150, which crosses at mid-lake, Blythe Landing off NC 73 near the dam, and Beatty's Ford and Little Creek on the western side of the lake.

WHEN TO GO — Spots behave in a similar fashion to largemouth in the spring, spawning around boat docks and keeping to the creeks. But as the water temperature climbs, most spots will leave the creeks and mingle with the hybrid bass and huge bait schools found in the main lake. By July and through early fall, spots will be found in the heaviest concentrations on the lower third of the lake. However, hardy spotted bass are also a hot winter target at Norman.

BEST TECHNIQUES — Topwater walk-the-dog baits will call spotted bass out of deep water around points; bass pro Brian Thrift fishes a Damiki 120 in real shad color on a medium-heavy bait casting outfit spooled with 15-pound fluorocarbon. A drop-shot rig and soft-plastic Damiki Stinger in watermelon candy or baby bass is another alternative, fished on a medium-light spinning outfit.

FISHING INFO/GUIDES — Capt. Craig Price, Fish On! Guide Service, 704-996-0946, www.fishonlakenorman.com; Lake Norman Bait and Tackle, 704-658-1113, www.lakenormantackle.com; See also Guides & Charters in Classifieds.

ACCOMMODATIONS — Clarion Inn, Cornelius, 704-896-0660; Holiday Inn Express and Suites, Huntersville, 704-892-9487; Sleep Inn and Suites, Huntersville, 704-766-2500.

MAPS — FHS Maps, 800-ALL-MAPS, www.fishinghotspots.com.

For a kicker fish at Lake Norman, try fishing a jig around brush piles, including those around docks.



Dan Kibler

HOW TO ADD THAT KICKER LARGEMOUTH

Although they're an elusive target at Norman in the summer, when pro angler Bryan Thrift is fishing a dog-days tournament there, largemouth bass are not off the menu. To catch his kicker fish, Thrift takes advantage of the overabundance of sunken brush piles provided by crappie fishermen.

"It's hit or miss in July," he said, "but, if I catch a 12- to 13-pound limit of spots fairly quickly, that's when I'm going to run my brush piles to look for a bigger largemouth and throw a jig. You won't catch them when you're fishing main-lake points for spots.

"It's not hard to find a brush pile at Norman. Crappie fishermen will put them out around their docks and on structure breaks. I'll fish main-lake brush and creek brush. Most will be in the 15- to 25-foot range. You can catch spots around them, too."

To catch a bruiser buried in a sunken bush, Thrift fishes a streamlined, ½-ounce Damiki Mamba 2 jig in brown/black or blue/black on 17- to 20-pound fluorocarbon. ▪



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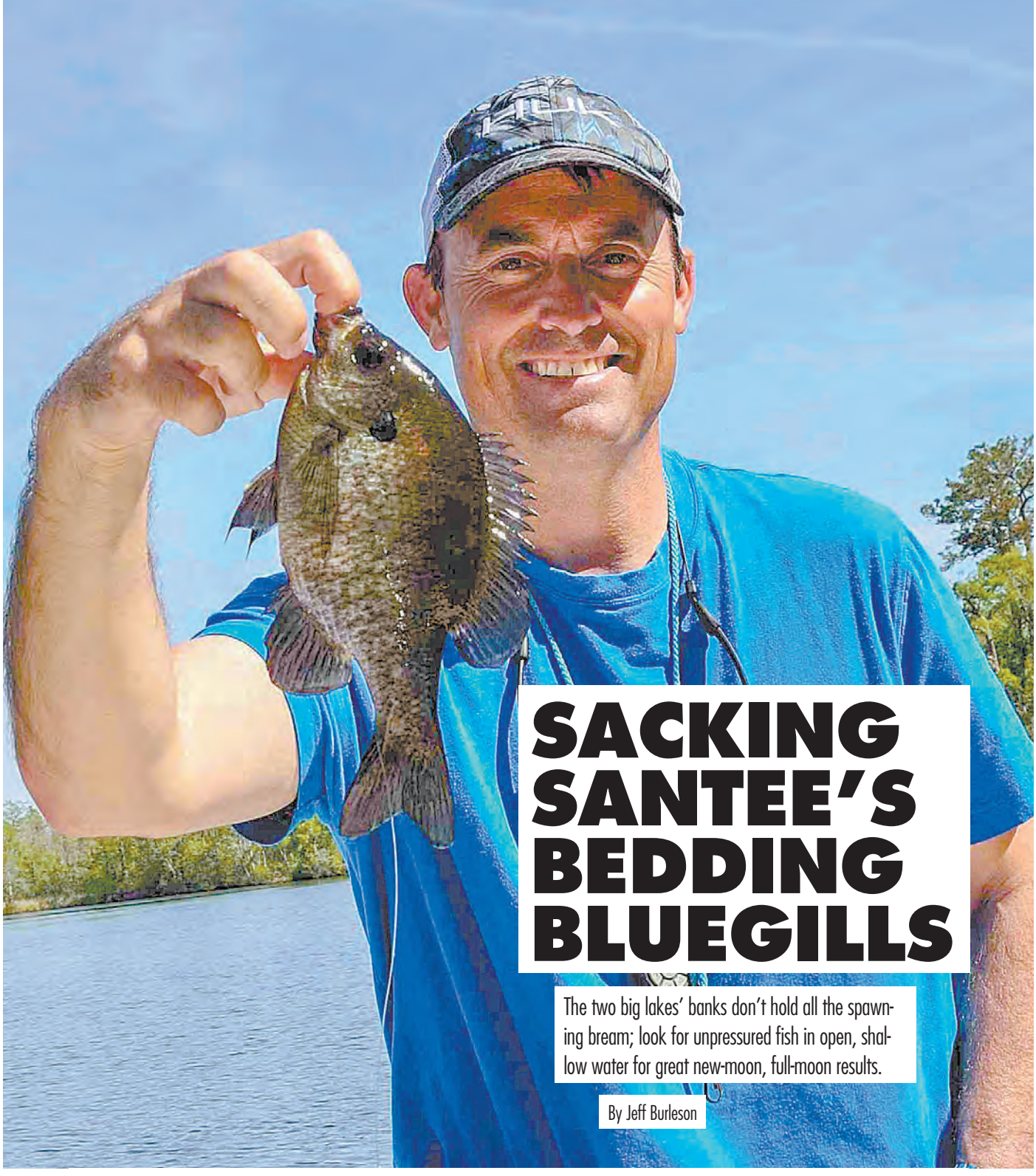
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SACKING SANTEE'S BEDDING BLUEGILLS

The two big lakes' banks don't hold all the spawning bream; look for unpressured fish in open, shallow water for great new-moon, full-moon results.

By Jeff Burleson

The Carolinas are blessed with numerous lakes and rivers, and a spectacular coast packed with seemingly endless opportunities to wet a hook. But as far as fishing opportunities, it's usually the big red drum, doormat flounder, chunky largemouth bass and hefty striped bass that bring anglers out of hiding.

One of the most-overlooked fisheries is big bluegill, and summer is prime time to put a Bream Buster to work on bedding bluegills on one of South Carolina's Santee Cooper lakes.

Bluegill are most anglers' "first fish" — before they often move on to other, more-exciting fish that show up more often in the press. But they are powerful for their size and can be an exciting species to target with light tackle in shallow water. Summer is a great season to find a congregation on their spawning grounds, and while Lake Marion and Lake Moultrie are known more for world-record catfish and slab crappie, their 170,000 acres hold healthy populations of pound-plus bream.

>

Bluegills are a member of the sunfish family and are found in lakes, rivers, creeks and just about anywhere in North America. During the summer, schools of fish slide onto their spawning grounds and create a colony. Just like largemouth bass, males construct the beds by fanning away the bottom substrate, creating a circular depression to hold eggs. Around the full and new moons, females arrive, packed to the brim with eggs. They soon drop them in the center of the beds and head back to deep water, leaving the males behind to guard the nest.

Typically, most beds are found in shallow water along the rim of the lakes or edge of the incoming rivers that are often covered in woody and weedy vegetation. But guide, T.C. Lloyd of Southern Angling in Hartsville, S.C., ignores the lakeside border retreats at Santee and finds massive schools of bluegill bedding practically in another zip code.

Lloyd spends many days on the water chasing slab crappie in tournaments across the country, but when summer arrives, he trades minnows for crickets and finds bluegills in places most anglers would never consider even looking.

"I fish Santee Cooper a lot for bluegill, and I find them in unusual places," Lloyd said. "I find them on main-lake flats and humps sometimes 1,000 yards away from the bank."

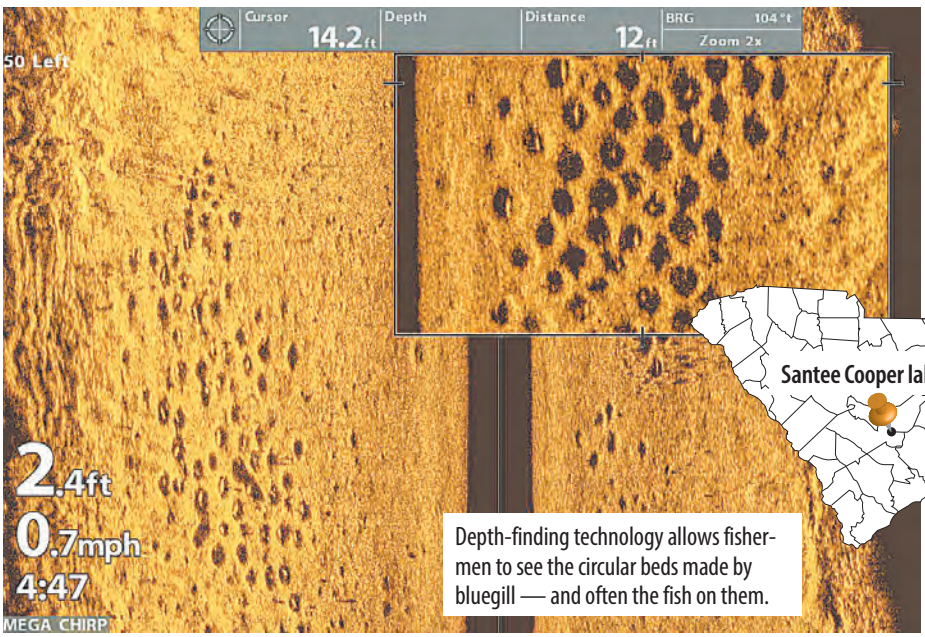
While bluegills prefer to have some cover around their bedding sites to protect their fry, it's not required.

"Bluegill will bed around scattered logs and some vegetation on these flats, but most of these flats are bare. They don't seem to care if they are bedding in the middle of the lake or on the bank. They get little pressure out here, too," said Lloyd, who finds summer bluegill beds in open water between 3 and 6 feet deep.

Often, he finds the fish bedding in the same places each year, but it's not always that way. If it wasn't for his high-tech electronics, they would be nearly impossible to locate, especially the ones in deeper water.

"I couldn't find them without my Humminbird Helix Mega side-imaging. I set my unit to 100 feet out each side of the boat, and I don't stop until I find them. The beds show up on the screen like a honeycomb on the bottom of the lake. You can even see the fish on the beds, too," he said.

The side-imaging unit shoots sonar waves horizontally out each side of the boat and picks up those bottom contours instead of just below the boat as most traditional down-scanning units do. Lloyd said fish will show up as little,



Depth-finding technology allows fishermen to see the circular beds made by bluegill — and often the fish on them.

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DESTINATION INFORMATION

HOW TO GET THERE — The Santee Cooper lakes, Marion and Moultrie, are just north of I-26, between Columbia and Charleston. I-26, I-95 and US 52 provide good driving access to both lakes, which are connected by the Diversion Canal. Both lakes can be accessed from fish camps along the Canal, and dozens of public boat ramps are scattered around the two reservoirs, which cover a total of 177,000 acres. For a complete list, visit www.santeecoopercountry.org/listing-item/?type=Lakeside%20Facilities

WHEN TO GO — Bluegills begin spawning in late May and continue through the end of August. The peak spawning period is anytime between June to late July. Three days before and three days after the full and new moon peak is the ideal time to catch bluegills on the beds.

BEST TECHNIQUES — Crickets or worms fished on small hooks under a float or on a bottom rig are hard to beat, but small Beetle Spins or jigs can also fool bedding fish. Fish slowly and cast from a distance. The best rods are small ultralights or fly rods with spinning reels attached. Also, 8- to 9-foot Bream Busters can be used as well. Generally, 6-pound monofilament is about all that is needed to get the fish into the boat without a breakage.

FISHING INFO/GUIDES — T.C. Lloyd, Southern Angling Guide Service, 843-307-6678, www.southernangling.com; Kevin Davis, Black's Camp, 843-753-2231, www.blackscamp.com. See also Guides & Charters in Classifieds

ACCOMMODATIONS — Black's Camp, 843-753-2231, www.blackscamp.com; Santee Cooper Country Visitors Bureau, 803-854-2131, www.santeecoopercountry.org.

MAPS — Delorme's South Carolina Atlas & Gazetteer, 207-846-7000, www.delorme.com; Atlantic Mapping, www.fishingGPSmaps.com.



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Bluegills will concentrate their spawning efforts under a full or new moon.

CHECK THE MOON

Who would have thought that a ball of rock 238,000 miles away would have such an impact on life on earth?

While it seems ridiculous, Earth's moon has a dramatic impact on all living things. For fish, the full and new moon phases direct spawning efforts, and bluegills are not excluded. They will spawn around the moon peaks.

Guide T.C. Lloyd of Hartsville, S.C., starts fishing for crappie in the winter and spring, then transitions to bluegill on the Santee Cooper lakes during the summer. Moon phases are critical knowing when to trailer to the lake to find bedding fish.

"Bream are bedding from late May through August and sometimes into September," Lloyd said. "While I prefer the full moons, I also will catch them on the new moons."

Full and new moons occur every month and are separated by two weeks. Male bream will begin to build beds a few days before the moon peaks and will sit on the beds several days after females drop eggs on the day of the moon peak. Lloyd prefers to fish that day, but he will often schedule a few extra days in there too.

"As a rule of thumb, it can be good three days before and after. Sometimes it is better on front end, and other times it is better on the back end," he said. ■





continued from page 48

bright-colored marks in the darker, circular depressions.

"We used to drive around on calm, sunny days in the clearest water we could find, standing on seats and the console looking into the water for beds, but side-imaging makes it a whole lot easier and efficient for us to find these beds. It's almost too easy now to find the fish," he said.

Finding the beds is 95 percent of Lloyd's game, leaving the catching part up to his box of crickets.

"I use crickets mostly. I have caught plenty on jigs and Beetle Spins, but crickets are cheap, and they will hit a cricket every time," he said.

Tackle for fishing crickets is about a simple as it gets. Lloyd ties on a small bream hook and squeezes on just enough split shot to sink the cricket to the bottom. For the most part, the large males, aka copperheads, guard the eggs and will attack anything that tries to eat the eggs. They become very aggressive, so small spinners and jigs worked slowly through beds are great candidates for getting an instant response.

The choice of bait or lures is less important to Lloyd than boat positioning. He urges anglers to keep their distance from an active bed, because these fish can be spooked easily.

"Even though these beds on the open lake are unpressured, bluegills can still be spooky. Don't cast shadows on them. I keep my distance and cast past the beds and retrieve it back into them," he said. ▪



A cage full of lively crickets is a big step toward a limit of pretty, Santee Cooper bluegill in July.



Jeff Burleson is a native of Lumberton, N.C., who lives in Myrtle Beach, S.C. He graduated from N.C. State University with a degree in fisheries and wildlife sciences and is a certified biologist and professional forester for Southern Palmetto Environmental Consulting.



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Summer stripers and hybrids means deep-water fishing, and getting your baits deep means using 'down rods.' Here are the basics....

THE LOWDOWN ON DOWN RODS

By Phillip Gentry



During the summer months, down-rodding live bait for striped bass is the go-to tactic for fishing guide Chip Hamilton and anglers of all ages.

Chip Hamilton

It's hard to say for every species of fish that when a particular pattern is really working, that it's the way those fish **have** to be fished for.

Take for instance, you decide you want to fish for striped bass — or their hybrid cousins — this month. Unless your favorite lake has some sort of cold-water discharge area, you're going to have to fish in deep water.

To target stripers in deep water, you're going to have to fish deep, and aside from a handful of heavy metal trolling or jigging tactics, you're going to have to master the use of the down rod. Down-rod fishing for striped bass involves simple tools that have to be used together in a precise order to be consistently successful.

A down rod is basically a medium to medium-heavy action rod spooled with 15- to 20-pound monofilament. On the business end is a basic Carolina rig: a heavy weight, a barrel swivel and a 2- to 3-foot length of leader — mono or fluorocarbon — tied to a live-bait hook.

Chip Hamilton, who guides on South Carolina's Lake Hartwell, seconds the idea that unless you're fishing some type of cooler, river system, down rods are about the only way to catch mid-summer stripers. To break that down even further, Hamilton has two basic patterns he follows to put his clients on fish.

"Most of the year, you'll find hybrids and stripers schooling together, but the exception is in July when they tend to separate for a time," he said. "Most of the striped bass are going to head for the main-lake basin to find that deeper water, but because the hybrids tolerate warmer water a little better, they don't always follow."

Hamilton's first tactic is to look for fish holding on a bare hump in deep water; in Hartwell, that's 45 to 70 feet. Long points are typically placed in this category, but Hamilton prefers a strict hump, perhaps an old river-bend ridge or just a high spot surrounded by deeper water.

"These locations have good oxygen at those depths, and it's a good place to feed," said Hamilton, who compares the scenario to a clearing in the woods where deer congregate to feed. When he marks fish on his graph, he drops live bait to the bottom on a Carolina rig and turns the handle of his reel about three times.

"We put the rods in the rod-holders, and I hold the boat still or maybe just bump around with the trolling motor," he said. "When one fish commits to a bait and we get hooked up, the action is usually fast and furious until the school moves back off the hump. By then, we're well on our way to a limit."

>

Hamilton's second scenario is similar but involves much deeper water. He looks for a break in the bottom structure into which fish will move.

"In a lot of impoundments — and this includes Hartwell — they didn't cut the timber; they just topped it off at certain depths, so you might be in an area that's 100 feet deep, but the trees come all the way up to 40 feet," he said.

In this situation, he looks for a low spot, or even a bare spot, in that old, submerged forest. If he finds a low spot where trees were cut 20 feet instead of 50 feet off the bottom, he'll put his baits in the hole while keeping them out of the structure on the bottom.

"It's the same principle. I'm looking for an open spot, in this case a low spot or a bare spot in the surrounding forest of trees," he said. "The baits are even with the surrounding trees, and stripers will swim out of the trees into the open area to eat the baits."

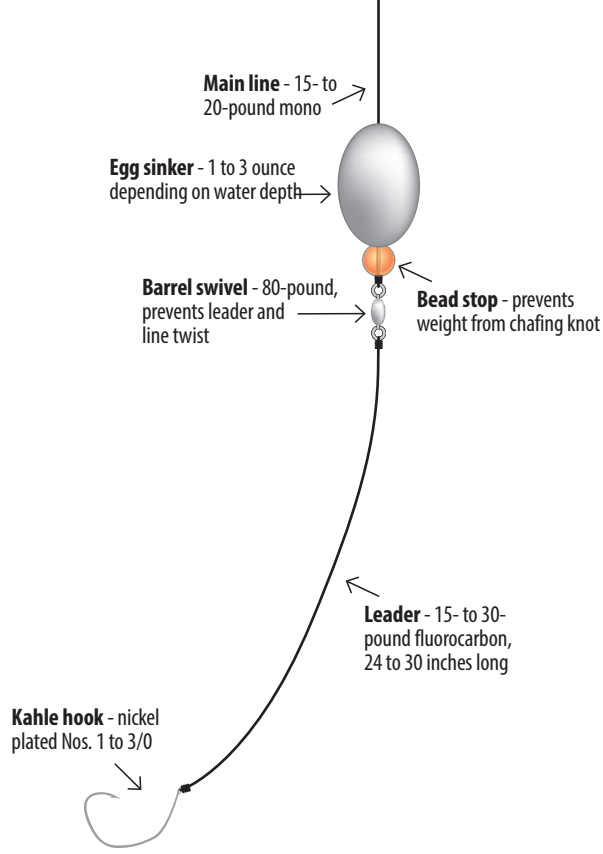
Hamilton uses only live blueback herring for baits, opting against gizzard and threadfin shad or bait-shop shiners.

"I can remember fishing in Hartwell with my dad when I was a kid, before there were herring in here," he said. "The stripers would school up out of deep water, but they were the poorest fish you'd ever seen — long and skinny and no meat on them. They looked like they were starving."

The introduction of blueback herring presented striped bass and other predator fish with an alternative, a forage bait that preferred to stay in deeper water and showed a similar intolerance of warm, low-oxygenated water.

"In lakes where a solid thermocline forms, all of these fish — the stripers and the herring — will be right in the top of the thermocline," he said. "That's not always a hard and fast rule on Hartwell because of how they pull water, but it does mean a much healthier striper on the end of your line." ▪

Phillip Gentry *of Simpsonville, S.C., is host of "Upstate Outdoors," a weekly radio show that can be heard on Saturdays at noon on WORD 106.3 FM.*



The introduction of blueback herring into many Carolina impoundments has provided food to keep striped bass and hybrids healthy and fat through the summer months.



Phillip Gentry

A livewell with a good filtration and circulation system is a prime factor in summer striper success because it keeps baitfish fresh and lively until they're needed.

Take care of your bait, and it will **take care of you**



Phillip Gentry

Keeping live bait alive and healthy during summer is more than a challenge. Understanding what baitfish need and how to provide it takes away much of the risk of losing bait to less-than-ideal water conditions.

Temperature. The water temperatures in your bait tank or livewell should be less than 70 degrees. This can be accomplished by filling your tank with water from your bait shop's tanks if you buy bait, or cooling your tank with non-chlorinated ice.

Air/Oxygen. Even with cooler water, baitfish won't survive long without oxygen. Supplying oxygen can be as simple as using an air stone on a battery-powered pump or an integrated venture system built into the tank's circulation system. The smaller the bubbles and the deeper they are produced into the tank, the better, as large bubbles can unnecessarily jostle fish and lead to the next problem.

Nitrogen. When baitfish are handled, they become stressed. Stressed fish release nitrogen into the water, and nitrogen contaminates the water and must be removed either by filtration or by periodically replacing old water with fresh water. Adding salt and or bait saver can help offset nitrogen contamination.

Space. Baitfish won't survive in a crowded space. Putting too many baits in a small tank reduces oxygen and increases nitrogen. Veteran striper fishermen recommend a rounded bait tank to prevent baitfish from herding into a corner and creating overcrowding. A good rule of thumb is no more than two herring per gallon of water. Providing flow to the water will help baitfish swim in place, which requires less room than making them swim back and forth across the tank to oxygenate their gills.

Rapid temperature change. This is also a killer. Make sure your bait tank water is no more than 5 degrees warmer or colder than the baitshop's water, if you buy bait. When fishing, get your hooked baits down quickly. Allowing a bait to wallow in 85-degree surface water will cause shock. Change baits frequently during the summer. ▪



Brian Cope



With no need for keeping water in a cooler, keep your insulated water bottles in a drawstring bag where they're easily accessible for use during summer fishing trips.

KEEP YOUR TRIP WATER COOL

INSULATED WATER BOTTLES CAN DO WONDERS FOR A HOT, SUMMER FISHING EXCURSION

Brian Cope

During a long day of fishing in the summer, all I want to drink is cold water; nothing quenches thirst like it. I'm a big fan of sweet tea and Pepsi, but when I'm genuinely hot and thirsty, they won't do. A good, cold bottle of H_20 goes down easy, keeps the body hydrated and leaves no aftertaste.

I have several problems with drinking cold water while fishing, however. I have a small boat, so I'm limited to one cooler that holds my drinking water and any fish I decide to keep for supper. And once I've got a keeper redfish in the cooler, my water bottles are all slimy, and I'm reluctant to drink from one. If a sheepshead goes in the cooler, I've got to fish out a water bottle without getting finned.

Even worse — it's happened more often than I care to admit — I'll open the cooler to reach for water, and one of my fish will spring to life and jump out of the cooler to freedom, leaving me with slimy water bottles and nothing to show for it.

And the trash! Cleaning up after fishing trips, I'll often throw away a dozen plastic water bottles, and because I don't want to deal with fish-slimed bottles, I am guilty of throwing away some unopened and/or half-empty bottles from time to time, which is wasteful.

But just as the high-performance cooler craze has folks keeping things cold for days at a time, insulated, stainless steel vacuum water bottles are helping outdoorsmen stay hydrated without the need for plastic bottles or coolers at all. And they work for sweet tea and Pepsi too, if you're into drinking those.

Many companies make stainless steel drinking containers in many sizes, but I've found one that has me leaving the other brands home, especially on longer fishing trips. The GSI Outdoors Microlite bottles hold ice and keep drinks cold for longer than any I've tried, and I've tried all the major brands.

After using a GSI Outdoors bottle on shorter outings, I felt like it was holding ice much longer than I expected. On the next several longer trips I took, I decided to take a Yeti bottle of comparable size along as well. With them both prepped the same way and holding the same amount of ice and water, I was surprised at the results.

ICE IS NICE

The Yeti bottle did what it said it would do: keep my water cold and retain a small amount of ice about six hours into a trip on a 95-degree day. The GSI Outdoors bottle, on the other hand, had almost as much ice at the end of the day as it had at the beginning. Ice wasn't even floating in the water; the bottle still had a huge amount of ice that had formed into a connected mass, keeping the water as cold as possible.

At the end of the trip, I couldn't help but show my fishing partner how much ice

was in the bottle. He looked confused, then laughed, looked around my boat, and noticing I didn't even have an ice chest, then he asked me where I got the replacement ice.

Another great feature of these bottles is how lightweight they are. Though they are double-walled, they are lighter than most single-walled bottles. They are available in a variety of sizes and colors, and unlike most manufacturers, the GSI Outdoors bottles can be purchased with either twist-on or pop-up caps.

The bottoms also have rubberized coatings, so they won't slide on or scratch smooth surfaces.

Just like high-performance coolers, these bottles come at a premium price, no matter which company you purchase one from, but I can only imagine how much money I have spent on bottled water over the years. And since I've already got water at home, the bottles will pay for themselves in time.

For convenience, I use a small, drawstring bag to carry several of the bottles with me on fishing trips, and they're always in easy reach.

And gone are the days of me failing to drink enough water because I don't like fish-slimed bottles, because I'm afraid of a sheepshead finning me, or because I'm scared of a keeper fish springing free when I open the cooler. ▪



Brian Cope *of Edisto, S.C., is a retired Air Force combat communications technician. He has a B.A. from the University of South Carolina and has been writing about the outdoors since 2006. He's spent half his life hunting and fishing. The rest, he said, has been wasted.*





Davy Hite



A jig and soft-plastic trailer in bluegill colors (greens, oranges, browns) can be a killer bait when bass are feeding shallow on bream that are feeding on mayflies.

JULY MEANS BREAM, MAYFLIES AND BASS

TARGET BEDDING BREAM, OR TARGET BASS EATING BREAM EATING MAYFLIES AT PEAK OF THE INSECT HATCH

Dan Kibler

Fishing can be tough in July, and I'll admit, if I'm not fishing at night, my fishing will center on bream. I'm either fishing for bream, or I'm fishing for bass that are eating bream.

I like to target bream that are bedding, and I like to fish for bream that are feeding on the mayfly hatches that take place on lakes across the Carolinas. And I like to fish for bass around the mayfly hatches, because they're up in the shallows eating the bream, which are eating the mayflies — sort of like the circle of life.

Bream are going to be in different places when they're bedding than when the mayfly hatch takes place. When bream are bedding, they're going to pick out certain places, places with a certain type of bottom: a mixture of sand and gravel, with a certain amount of cover — and a lot of sunlight. You look for that combination. And bream are going to be a little deeper when they're bedding than when they're feeding on mayflies; that happens right up on the bank.

When I get on a good set of bream beds, and the fish are in there, I'll pull out a fly rod. I'm by no means an expert fly fisherman, but I love to use a fly rod and fish a popping bug when bream are bedding. I guess I just like that topwater bite, that action. I'll fish a Beetle Spin or a small spinner, too, but this is a different kind of fishing than when I'm bass fishing in a tournament, and I'm trying to catch the five biggest fish I can. This is for fun.

When it comes to bream feeding on mayflies, you can really catch the bream, because they're feeding so aggressively. You've just got to find them.

DOWNWIND BANKS

I think the wind plays a really big role on where you can find mayflies hatching. I look on downwind banks; they seem to be really productive, especially if there's a group of willow trees on that bank. You've got places like that at most of our lakes in South Carolina: Greenwood, Murray, Clarks Hill and Santee.

Somehow, it seems like everything in nature knows when and where these things are about to take place. It's like when we had the 17-year locusts a few years ago, all the fish and wildlife knew that hatch was about to take place, and they were ready to feed on them.

Everything eats mayflies — I even ate



NO FLIES ON US:
Mayflies are aquatic insects of the order Ephemeroptera. There are more than 3,000 species. They live under the water in the form of nymphs before hatching and coming to the surface, where they emerge, mate and lay between 300,000 and 400,000 eggs.

a mayfly sandwich one time on a Bassmaster TV show — so when the hatch begins, everything shows up in that extremely shallow water along the bank, around those bushes.

I like to catch bream around mayflies, but what I really like to do is work on the bass that show up. Some bass will eat the mayflies, and I've heard other guys say they've seen bass eat some of the birds that show up to eat the mayflies — birds sitting on limbs right on the surface — but I've never seen that happen.

But I fish around the mayflies to catch the bass that show up to eat the bream that show up to eat the mayflies.

I target these bass with two different lures: a topwater bait and a jig. The topwater bait works because the bream are coming up to the surface to feed on the mayflies and making plenty of noise, and the bass will pick them off. But I probably catch just as many by throwing a jig up there right next to the bank and swimming it off. I like a green pumpkin Mop Jig with a little orange on it or the trailer that makes it look more like a bluegill. You can swim that off the bank out a few feet, and the bass will really grab it.

So don't shy away from fishing in July just because it's so hot. The bream spawn and the mayfly hatch are perfect examples of taking advantage of what nature has to offer. ▪



Davy Hite *of Ninety Six, S.C., is a two-time BASS Angler of the Year who won the1999 Bassmasters Classic. He is sponsored by Phoenix, Evinrude, Lews, Rapala, Buckeye, VMC Humminbird, War Eagle and Yamamoto.*





Jeff Burleson



Public-hunting opportunities abound in both Carolinas for deer hunters who don't have access to private land through a lease or a hunt club.

DON'T PASS UP PUBLIC HUNTING

CAROLINAS BOAST MORE THAN 3 MILLION ACRES IN GAME LANDS, WMA MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Jeff Burleson

Deer hunting and habitat-management activities can go hand in hand, but not every hunter gets the opportunity to own land or lease land and practice land-manipulation techniques.

Luckily, hunters don't have to own or lease land to be able to harvest a deer, and frankly, private-land opportunities are shrinking every day.

Urban and suburban sprawl continues to gobble up wildlife habitat and hunting opportunities on privately held properties. Fortunately, through industry tax-sheltered appropriations and public-land purchases, private land is steadily being deeded over to agencies and conservation organizations and becoming available. Hunters across both Carolinas should consider public-land options, because most of these public parcels are underused.

Private land available for hunting is becoming more limited, with land conversion to suburban development growing fast. And the price of hunting leases and recreational real estate continues to skyrocket, further handicapping an average hunter's opportunity to take a deer.

Public hunting opportunities are overflowing in every corner of North Carolina and South Carolina. Out of North Carolina's 33.7 million areas, more than two million acres are part of the game lands system, and South Carolina hunters have more than one million acres of public land to hunt.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reports that 25 percent of America's hunters use public land, but the statistics for the Carolinas tell a different story.

Public land is underused in the Carolinas, because many hunters prefer to have security and a little more control over their wildlife-management and land-management activities. There is nothing wrong with hunting on private land through a lease or hunt club. In fact, hunting on private land gives hunters the opportunity to make significant changes to the landscape in the form of food plots, nutritional supplements, and permanent stand erection.

Fortunately, most public properties are enrolled in a wildlife- and habitat-management plan in which the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission and/or S.C. Department of Natural Resources conduct land-management activities on a regular basis to promote habitat and sustainable wildlife populations. In some cases on certain public parcels, the agencies will even establish harvest and hunting restrictions to promote quality deer management and bigger bucks.

For instance, in South Carolina, the Santee WMA and Liberty Hill WMA both have quality deer management restrictions; harvested bucks must have four points on one side and a 12-inch inside spread.

However, public parcels do have their access challenges for some. Most of the interior access roads are closed to vehicles, but closed gates create more opportunities for the adventurous and dedicated hunter. Limiting access can boost the odds of taking a mature animal. Highly accessible tracts will receive a substantial level of hunting pressure around the edges, pushing deer into the interior of the tracts. Traveling to remote areas, off the beaten path, will help hunters find mature animals seeking refuge away from public right-of-ways.

The bottom line is, public hunting grounds are wonderful places to harvest



Jeff Burleson

POKEWEED: BAD FOR YOU, GREAT FOR THE DEER

Every hunter in the Carolinas has come across pokeweed from time to time. Pokeweed thrives in many landscapes across the region, with its bright, purple berries, purple stems and luscious green foliage. Pokeweed is not a food fit for humans; it is fatally toxic, but it is a delicacy for deer, because they show significant immunity to the toxins. Deer and can take advantage of the carbohydrate-rich berries and the high-protein foliage — 30 percent protein.

Pokeweed is a very common, perennial plant found throughout the Carolinas. It thrives in disturbed areas where disking and burning techniques are frequent. During the summer, pokeweed grows rapidly, providing deer with abundant nutrition. When pokeweed shows up along power-line right-of-ways, edges of food plots or anywhere else, let it grow. It may even be a good place to hang a stand for early deer season.

Remember this; don't collect any berries for a cobbler, because it might just be the last thing you ever eat.

deer — and good deer at that. Less pressure on a public hunting property can allow bucks to grow a few extra years to maturity, creating true wall-hangers.

Without the need for expensive, private-land leases and hunt-club memberships, North Carolina hunters who hold a $15 Game Lands license or South Carolina hunters with a $30.50 WMA permit will gain access to the three million acres of deer habitat. Virtually every county and wildlife district or zone has

continues on page 62





public land set aside for hunting. With only one deer killed per 300 acres of public land, hunters should have ample opportunity to take a deer on one of the many public-hunting areas in the Carolinas.

For a complete list of all available public hunting properties with aerial maps, in North Carolina visit www.ncwildlife.org/Hunting/Where-to-Hunt/Public-Places, and in South Carolina visit www.dnr.sc.gov/wma/.▪



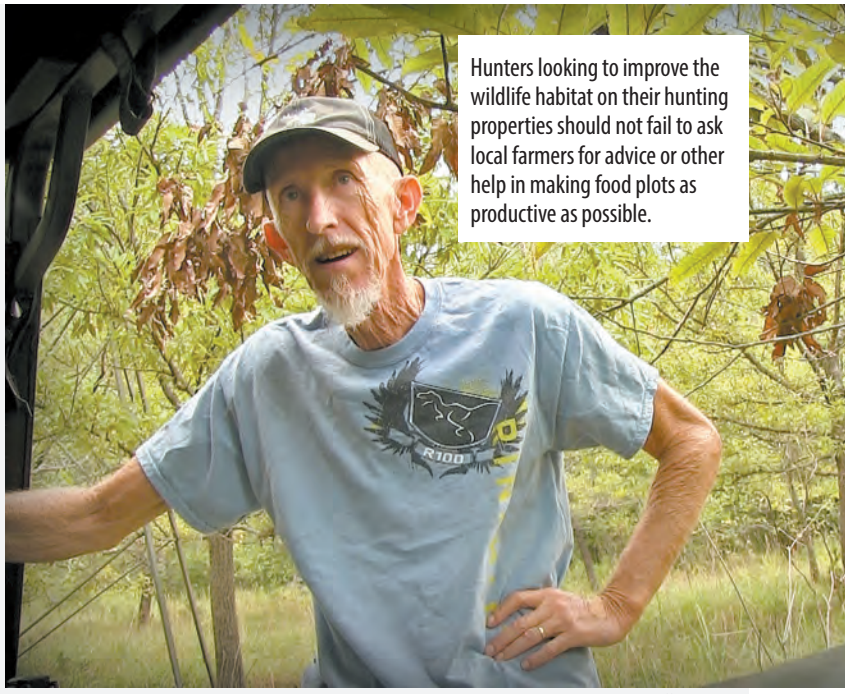
Jeff Burleson *is a native of Lumberton, N.C., who lives in Myrtle Beach, S.C. He graduated from N.C. State University and is a certified biologist and professional forester for Southern Palmetto Environmental Consulting.*

ASK A FARMER

With planting season arriving in the next few months, hunters wanting a good fall food plot need to get their ducks in a row. While they can read books and articles and scan the internet for a planting guide, it will never take the place of advice from an experienced, local farmer.

Farming in the Carolinas dates to the beginning of settlement, and most farm families are generational farmers with more than 200 years of experience growing crops for market. Even though most food-plot plants tend to appear specific for wildlife, they are commercially grown throughout the nation for some sort of global use. And farmers can tell hunters what to do to make their food plots a bigger success.

Farmers have a wealth of knowledge beyond what is written on the label of a bag of fertilizer, seed or herbicide. Never be scared to consult with a local farmer, because it might be the best advice you ever get. ▪



Hunters looking to improve the wildlife habitat on their hunting properties should not fail to ask local farmers for advice or other help in making food plots as productive as possible.

Jeff Burleson



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Phillip Gentry



Flounder are among a handful of inshore fish that provide plenty of summer action for kayak-bound fishermen.

Phillip Gentry

SUMMER OF THE YAK:

LOOK FOR COOLER, DEEPER WATER WHEN YOU'RE PADDLING SALTWATER FOR HOMEGROWN OR MIGRATORY TARGETS

For anglers who love to fish when the mercury starts to rise in earnest, there's no better place to be than on the water in a kayak.

July is one of the best months to fish from a kayak in saltwater, with inshore, nearshore and even offshore fishing — if you have means to piggyback — for most of the usual species plus the migrants who visit during the summer months.

While puppy drum and speckled trout may be harder to come by in the marshes, there are still enough of them, plus flounder, to make an outing interesting. Outside of the big three, other species like ladyfish, sheepshead whiting and sharks are there for the taking.

On the freshwater side, fish have headed for deeper water during the day, but by fishing early and late — and maybe even some nights — plenty of fish are there to be caught.

If you're fishing inland, a great tactic is to search for inflows of cooler water, especially those originating from water releases from an upstream reservoir. Fishing in a tailrace may be good around the clock, but it gets immeasurably better once water begins to be released. Such inflows make for a good one-way float trip, but caution is urged if your plan is to fish close enough to the dam that the current presents a hazard.

Whether you are casting artificial baits into rips and cuts caused by moving water from the tide or from water release or setting up to soak live bait in a deep hole, boat positioning is a critical factor. The beauty of moving water is that you can scull or steer the boat into position, drop anchor or stake out and fan-cast the area thoroughly.

In a conventional boat on flat water, dropping anchor is relatively simple; the boat settles into place, and you adjust your fishing location inside the boat and start fishing. As your position within a kayak is relatively fixed — you can't get up and move to the other side, installing an anchor-trolley system allows you to position the anchor point on the kayak so the boat settles out in the current with you facing in the desired direction.

The trolley is a ring or connection point that adjusts from the bow to the stern of the kayak or any point in between.

For anglers wanting to take advantage of the low-light and after-dark hours to fish from your kayak, what could be better than throwing a stowable hammock tent in one of your compartments and grabbing some shuteye right there on the edge of the water?

Hammock camping and kayaking go hand-in-hand, allowing the kayaker who's on an overnight excursion or just wanting to be close to the lake in time to catch the early morning bite an alternative to waking up an extra two hours early and packing everything to the water. Portable hammock tents are also great for catching a mid-day nap when the fishing slows.

JIGGING SHEEPIES

An 8- to 10-foot jig pole might seem more at home in a crappie-fishing boat than in a saltwater kayak, but for inshore anglers looking to do some perch-jerking, borrowing this freshwater tactic works pretty well.

Sheepshead are well known for holding around vertical cover, light biting, and gravitating to the bottom when it comes to feeding. Like crappie fishing, presenting a bait vertically helps to defeat many of a sheepshead's defenses.

I once saw a youngster jigging vertically while walking around the base of a bridge and the jetties beside the bridge. He had a cricket tube full of fiddler crabs on his belt and a jig pole in his hand. He wore high-top tennis shoes and would perch on a rock, reach out with a simple split-shot rig on the jig pole and ease the crab to the bottom. By the time he caught his third 2-pound sheepie, I had made up my mind I was bringing a crappie rod the next day.

To compensate for the oyster-lined rocks, I spooled a spinning reel with 20-pound mono and used a No. 2 Kahle hook on the end of the line. Several times, I was tempted to complete the rig with a ⅛-ounce jighead to present the crab, but I never got further than adding a heavy split-shot 6 inches from the hook.

Though I was not nearly as successful as the youngster I had seen the day before, my kayak/sheepshead connection had a new weapon. One tip that did take a little getting used to was fishing under overhead structure while sitting low to the water in the kayak. Not unlike crappie fishing around boat docks when jigging, the hookset with the long rod needs to be out and away from the structure to keep from slapping the tip on the underside of the dock or pier and damaging the rod. ▪

continues on page 66



Phillip Gentry

Sheepshead offer kayak-bound anglers plenty of opportunities during the summer when they're hanging around pier posts or rock jetties.



SMALL CRAFT ADVISORY

continued

JULY'S BEST BETS

NORTH CAROLINA

WHAT — Bluefish, Spanish mackerel, red drum, bottomfish

WHERE — Northern Outer Banks, Kitty Hawk to Hatteras

HOW — Too many options off the beach to name all the tactics. Because most of the kayak fishing tends to be float trips up or down the beach, carry a variety of baits to cover middle depths and bottom-bouncing, plus some live bait like squid or shrimp for bottom-fishing structure.

LAUNCH — Just about anywhere you can park a vehicle, you can drag a kayak to the water. Launching near inlets or other visible structure will give you a head start on fishing.

INSIDER TIP — Check the currents. It's much easier to fish with a buddy and drop a vehicle somewhere down the beach than to spend all day paddling against the current.

SOUTH CAROLINA

WHAT — Largemouth bass, rainbow trout, striped bass

WHERE — Lake Hartwell tailrace, upper Savannah River in Lake Russell

HOW — Trout lures and lures that imitate blueback herring work best. When current is running, the edges of the river hold more fish. Fish hold around rocks or other structure out of the current and dart out to ambush prey. Cast out and work the lure parallel to the structure.

LAUNCH — Smith McGee Ramp, SC 181, Iva, SC.

INSIDER TIP — Contact Lake Hartwell Dam, 888-893-0678 for water-generation schedules.



Phillip Gentry *of Greenville, S.C., is host of "Upstate Outdoors," a weekly radio show that can be heard on Saturdays at noon on WORD 106.3 FM.*

YAK-GEAR DELUXE ANCHOR TROLLEY KIT

The Deluxe Anchor Trolley will help you stop being a victim of changing winds and currents while fishing on anchor. Yak Gear's product kit allows deployment of any anchor, drift chute or stake-out pole before judging the current and wind, while still remaining in a favorable fishing position.



Without a trolley, you are limited to anchoring to where you can reach, causing your boat to swing back and forth. Mounted off one gunwale of any paddle craft, the Deluxe Anchor Trolley kit uses a nylon pulley system to select a desirable position anywhere from bow to stern, then maintains the positioning through the use of a 2⅝-inch mini zig-zag cleat.

The system uses Harken pulleys to seamlessly pass trolley rope from bow to stern without the rubbing of rope along slightly less smooth pad eyes. The mounted pulleys are raised off he boat enough to eliminate any unnecessary rubbing or scratching.

This complete kit comes with all stainless-steel installation hardware, installation instructions and rigging tips from Yak Gear. A waterproof, silicone and anchor is recommended, but not included. These features are included:

- Deluxe anchor trolley system with Harken pulleys, allows the bow of your vessel to turn in to the current for a smoother experience;
- Mini zig-zag cleat to maintain stable positioning;
- Installation instructions and hardware;
- Thirty feet of rope.

MSRP is $32.99. More info at yakgear.com.

ENO'S DOUBLE DELUXE, PORTABLE HAMMOCK FOR 2

The word "hamping" arose years ago when tent flies, zip-in bug nets and chill pads were paired with a hammock made from lightweight but strong parachute material. Eagle Nest Outfitters was one of the original manufacturers to capitalize on lightweight tents for hikers and backpackers. The idea soon caught on with paddlers, who were travelling blue trails instead of green ones.

ENO's newest Double Deluxe hammock is 26 inches wider than the company's popular DoubleNest hammock, providing ample space for two or more people to sway in comfort on a summer night. The Double Deluxe Hammock features 70D, high-tenacity breathable nylon taffeta and triple-interlocking stitching. It is designed to safely support a 400 pounds. Hammock suspension straps are sold separately.

Big enough for two and spacious for one, the Double Deluxe manages to stuff easily into a compression stuff sack, compacting down to the backpack-friendly size of a grapefruit.

The Double Deluxe also includes aluminum wire-gate



carabiners and nautical grade line to quickly and safely secure it to trees, poles, boat masts, or even a solid wall.

The Double Deluxe is versatile, durable and compact making it ideal for hiking, camping, kayaking, traveling, back-yarding, or just relaxing.

MSRP is $50.93 to $84.95. More info at eaglesnestoutfittersinc.com.


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COOKING ON THE WILD SIDE

Jerry Dilsaver

MANGO BARBECUE SHRIMP

HERE'S A NEW TAKE ON "SHRIMP ON THE BARBIE"

If you haven't been outside for a while, let me warn you, the temperature is leaning heavily toward the hot side. Cool days are in the mid-80s, and hot days steam into the 90s, with humidity numbers almost as high. Still, it's comfortable most evenings to cook on your deck or patio.

A meal of fresh, tasty seafood, especially prepared outside, is the ideal summer food, and this recipe fills that bill. Shrimp are considered by many to be the tastiest crustacean, and they tend to make a good showing during July. It's is a good time to enjoy them, whether caught on your own or purchased from your favorite fishmonger, whose prices are typically pretty fair.



This is a simple and tasty way to enjoy a meal of shrimp. They've been growing for a while deep in the creeks in estuaries and are moving out into open water and heading for the ocean. This movement is a signal that it's time to begin harvesting some of them, and shrimpers in both states happily oblige. Every shrimp boat and seafood market will have fresh-caught local shrimp just waiting for you.

As Bubba Blue so eloquently acknowledged in the movie *Forrest Gump*, there are numerous ways to enjoy shrimp. Whenever the weather allows, the ideal preparation involves being outdoors. That brings grills, smokers, campfires and more into play, and each outdoor gourmand has his or her preferred way of preparing shrimp. This one is a play on the idea of "shrimp on the barbie", but introduce the barbecue flavor to the shrimp in a unique fashion. It may not replace everyone's favorite recipe, but I'll bet anyone that tries it will prepare it again.

A word to all who prepare this is to have your favorite beverage ready before you get near the grill. Once the shrimp reach the grill, they cook quickly and it's soon time to eat. ▪

TIP!

If you like your barbecue shrimp crunchy, pull them off the grill and finish them by broiling in the oven for about two minutes.

When hot summer days give way to cooler evenings, it's time to fire up the grill and barbecue some fresh shrimp for a tremendous meal. **INSET:** Marinate shrimp for four hours in Caribbean Mango.

MANGO BARBECUE SHRIMP

INGREDIENTS:

2 pounds shrimp
Caribbean Mango marinade
1 large bag barbecue potato chips
Grill tray
Non-stick cooking spray
Sea salt and coarse ground pepper
Ground Chipotle pepper (optional).

This recipe came to be from a "What if?" conversation. Everyone likes shrimp cooked on their grills, but it was time for a new flavor and a new preparation. This recipe is for the mildest version to satisfy the mildest palates. There are numerous ways to kick it up a notch, and I find the easiest is to sprinkle it lightly with powdered chipotle peppers. They have a smoky flavor that doesn't overpower the mango marinade unless you get really heavy handed.

I begin with fresh, local shrimp, and I don't particularly care for the largest ones, which tend to get a little chewy when cooked. Nice shrimp, like in the 21- to 25-count (per pound) size are easy to clean — they must be shelled and deveined — make a nice presentation, hold the right amount of barbecue chips to get the right flavor and remain tender when cooked. I plan this allowing a half-pound of shrimp per person.

I have done this with several mango marinades but prefer Taste of Inspirations' Caribbean Mango. This is a Food Lion house brand and compliments its light, sweet flavor with an inexpensive price. It is pretty low in salt, and I don't add any, but you may like a little more. I add enough coarse-ground black pepper to see a few specks, and if you would like to add ground chipotle peppers, this is the time to do it.

After marinating the shrimp, add the crushed barbecue potato chips. I was a little surprised at first, but how you add them affects the flavor. If the shrimp are rolled or dredged in the crushed chips, the barbecue flavor is a little more pronounced, but the cooked shrimp aren't as crispy. If you are going to add the crushed chips this way, I suggest crushing them in small amounts and storing them in Ziplock bags and using them one bag at a time. The marinade wets the chips, and they don't bind to the shrimp as well after a while. I hold some of the ground chips in my hand and roll the individual shrimp in them, then get more chips when it becomes moist and doesn't stick as well.

Putting the shrimp on the grill tray and sprinkling them with the crushed chips keeps them crispier, but the barbecue flavor isn't as pronounced. It doesn't get into the marinade and flavor the shrimp while they are cooking but is an external flavor.

This is a different take on preparing "shrimp on the barbie." We enjoy it and think you will also. The most-difficult and time-consuming part is peeling and deveining the shrimp, but it's worth it. Some seafood markets will do that for you if you like. After the shrimp are peeled and deveined, it's easy sailing

One thing to remember is that all seafood dishes are best with fresh seafood, especially if caught the same day.

Enjoy! ▪





Barbecue potato chips are a key element in this shrimp recipe, and corn on the cob is a great addition.

PREPARATION:

Peel and devein shrimp. Salt and pepper to taste. Put shrimp in Ziplock bag and cover liberally with Caribbean Mango marinade. Allow to marinate in refrigerator for 4 hours.

Preheat grill to low/medium. My grill is a bit hot, and this works well on low. Put corn on grill in husks. It needs to cook 10 to 15 minutes depending on grill temperature and to be turned halfway through. Crush the potato chips finely, but not to powder. Spray the grill tray with non-stick cooking spray.

This is where you decide if you would like this with more crunch or spicier. For a spicier taste, pick up a little of the crushed potato chips and roll each shrimp in it before putting them on the grill tray. For a crunchier taste, arrange the shrimp on the grill tray and then sprinkle them with the crushed potato chips.

Cook 3 to 5 minutes, depending on grill temperature, and do not turn. Do not overcook. The little parts of the shrimp you can see will turn reddish pink when it is ready. Don't be afraid to taste one to check how well it's done. That's the reward for being the cook. If you want the crunchiest shrimp possible, this is the time to remove the not quite done shrimp from the grill and finish them for a couple of minutes under the broiler in the oven.

Serve while warm.

I serve this with grill roasted corn on the cob and creamy rough cut slaw. Some of my friends like dipping sauces. I don't care for cocktail sauce with this, but it works with tartar sauce and sriracha sauce. For tartar sauce with a little more spice, but not the heat of sriracha sauce, mix some tartar sauce with your favorite hot sauce. ▪



Jerry Dilsaver *of Oak Island, N.C., is a freelance writer, as well as a former national king mackerel champion fisherman. Readers are encouraged to send their favorite recipes and a photo of the completed dish to possibly be used in a future issue of the magazine. E-mail the recipes and photos to Jerry Dilsaver at captainjerry@captainjerry.com.*

Sammy Romano



Garmin's Xero Bow Sight combines a rangefinder and a bow-sighting system.

GET A GOOD LOOK AT THIS NEW SIGHT

GARMIN PRODUCT IS RANGEFINDER, LASER SIGHTING SYSTEM FOR BOWHUNTERS

Each year at the Archery Trade Association's trade show, there is ordinarily one new product that has the most "buzz" going around the show.

No matter where you go at the show, this "buzz-worthy" product enters the conversation; you can hear people talking about it as you walk up and down the aisles.

Usually, it's the hottest new compound or crossbow, but at the most-recent show, all eyes were on the new Garmin Xero Bow Sights. This sight has features and advantages never before offered in the archery world, and many archers were quick to take notice. Garmin has long been a magnum force in electronics and GPS technology, and now it brings this experience into our industry. As always, Garmin has produced a high-quality, user-friendly product.

FIRST OF ITS KIND

Garmin's Xero Bow Sight is the first bow-mounted, laser rangefinder and sighting system that measures the angle compensated distance to the target and then provides an exact LED sight pin for the shot. This offers several advantages over previous technology, one of which is less movement due to no longer needing to raise a rangefinder to your eye, lower it and then draw your bow.

A typical shot scenario will go something like this: When a shot at an animal or target is presented, the archer simply squeezes the grip mounted pressure switch, which illuminates an LED ranging dot in the sight. The archer then places that dot on the animal's vitals — or the target — and releases the pressure switch. At this point, the LED will move to the correct aiming point, and the archer uses that LED as a sight pin.

There is no need to consciously choose a correct pin; the Xero sight automatically adjusts for distance. Another huge advantage is a shorter shot time. Many times, I have ranged an animal, only to have it turn to an unfavorable shot angle while I am trying to get drawn.

Also, because there is only one pin displayed at a time, the archer's sight picture is much less cluttered. I especially appreciate this fact as I age and multiple pins begin to blur together for me.

In the past, bow-mounted rangefinders have been extremely heavy, adding a lot of weight to the setup and drastically affecting its balance. When I first held the Xero sight, I was immediately impressed with its relatively light weight. At slightly less than 15 ounces, it is lightweight and feels great on my Mathews Halon 6. It must be calibrated to your individual bow, but setup is menu-driven and prompts you throughout the process. Brightness of the LED pins is easily adjusted to an archer's eyesight for precise crisp aiming points that are easily visible. Within 30 minutes, this sight can be set up and sighted in out of the box on most setups. Range to target is clearly displayed at the top of the sight on an LCD screen, but it is not necessary to read this because the correct pin is automatically illuminated.

TWO MODELS

The sight comes in two models, the Xero A1 Bow Sight and the Xero A1i Bow Sight. Both offer the same basic functionality, but the Xero A1i offers

several advanced features, including dual-color (red or green) LED pins, multiple arrow profiles, and a laser-locate function. I believe the green LED pins (A1i only) will offer an advantage, because it differentiates them from the initial ranging pin (which is red).

The ability to store and shoot multiple arrow profiles will only be used by more advanced archers but is a nice option as well. Laser locate enables the user to "project" a waypoint to where the animal was standing at the shot, as well as where it was last seen or entered cover, and sync this with some handheld Garmin GPS units or the Garmin watch.

If there are any drawbacks to the new sight, they are the cost and legality. Suggested retail for the Xero A1 is $799.99, and the Xero A1i is $999.99. Also, it is currently not legal in every state, so check regulations where you will be hunting before purchasing one.

That being said, the simplicity, clear sight picture, quicker target ranging and shorter shot time, coupled with less movement, make this product a game-changer, especially for spot-and-stalk hunting out West. Stop by your local Garmin dealer and check one out. ▪



Sammy Romano *is a lifelong hunter who has worked in the archery industry for more than 24 years. His expertise includes compounds and crossbows. He can be reached at samboka31@aol.com.*

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SANTEE STRINGER

Terry Madewell



Anglers fishing the Santee Cooper system will have to be more careful measuring stripers with a new slot limit in effect.

NEW STRIPER REGS PROMISE PLENTY

ANGLERS CAN KEEP FISH, FISHERY CAN PROSPER

Terry Madewell

The new striped bass regulations approved by the South Carolina legislature and signed into law by Gov. Henry McMaster on May 3, 2018, became effective immediately, much to the delight of many Santee Cooper striper fishermen.

The new regulations stipulate that within the boundaries of the Santee River system, which includes Lake Marion and Lake Moultrie, from Oct. 1 through June 15, it is "unlawful to take or possess a striped bass less than 23 inches or greater than 25 inches, provided that one striped bass taken or possessed may be greater than 26 inches."

For fishermen, the legal-speak is interpreted to mean that fish between 23 and 25 inches are legal, and one fish longer than 26 inches in length can be kept. That's the same three-fish creel limit that's been in effect for years, and all three fish kept by an angler can be in the 23- to 25-inch size class, but the option exists to keep two fish within the slot-limit and one that is at least 26 inches or longer.

Although the 2018 keeper season closed on June 16 and will be closed through the end of September, the regulations were instituted early enough that anglers were able to utilize the new regulations for several weeks. According to numerous fishermen and landing owners, the feedback was extremely positive.

Scott Lamprecht, regional fisheries biologist for the S.C. Department of Natural Resources for the Santee Cooper system, said he's heard from "very happy" fishermen.

Lamprecht said that the legislation passed was the result of some compromises, and that while not everything is ideal for the fishery and fishermen, it's a very workable plan.

"I think we're all very happy to see the bill passed, and I think it will enable the fishery to continue to thrive," he said. "We've done extensive modeling on the striper fishery in Santee Cooper and feel confident that the slot limit of anglers keeping some 23- to 25-inch fish should not be a detriment to the long-term sustainability of the fishery. This enables angler to utilize fish for consumption as well as recreation."

Lamprecht said SCDNR's original proposal on keeping one large fish daily as part of the new limit was a 36-inch minimum length. The intent was to ensure plenty of larger fish with superior genetics surviving for potential spawning and natural recruitment.

"I would have liked to have seen the size set at around 28 to 30 inches to protect more big fish," he said. "Our modeling that included harvest, mortality and other data showed the fishery would thrive with bigger fish protected and slot limit-size fish harvested. To really retain the best mixture of genes, we need to maintain a 'file cabinet' of multiple-age classes of spawners. These are the fish longer than 26 inches. But it was important to get this legislation approved, and compromise from various perspectives occurred."

The launch of the new regulations created a couple of interesting issues anglers need to know. One is the one-inch "no-fry" zone for stripers between 25 and 26 inches.

Lamprecht said no fish in this size can be kept; they must be released immediately.

"This may be an enforcement challenge, but in one sense, this will preserve some of the fish in that size class to continue to grow to the larger, genetically superior stripers," he said.

Lamprecht said a second consideration for anglers is the regulatory difference between the Santee and Cooper rivers. The initial legislation included the Cooper River, but in the final bill, the Cooper River portion was omitted.

This means the striper regulations for the Cooper River, below Pinopolis Dam, remains a creel limit of three, with a 26-inch size minimum.

"The Santee River is included in the legislation because it is in the Santee River basin, so the slot limit is in effect," Lamprecht said. "In both the Santee and Cooper rivers, the fishing season now extends through June 15."

The new legislation requires SCDNR to report impacts on the fishery to the legislature after three years.

"We make extensive annual reviews as part of our management program." Lamprecht said. "We have a 30-year winter sampling program that we use to evaluate the fishery. At the end of the three years, we'll have ample data to make a detailed report, with any new trends in the fishery hopefully emerging by then. The goal of the overall process is to sustain the fishery at a high level for both anglers and this valuable resource.

Lamprecht said anglers can help this cause by carefully releasing fish not meeting legal-size regulations. He said the new legislation allows for a fish longer than 26 inches to be kept but doesn't require it.

"During the cooler months, these larger fish can still be caught and enjoyed, but released with an extremely high probability of surviving," he said. "Three fish within the slot limit can be kept for consumption without harming the overall fishery. Releasing the larger fish is optional, of course, but has long-term benefits for the overall fishery."

The keeper season for Santee Cooper stripers reopens on Oct. 1, with the new regulations. ▪



Terry Madewell, *of Ridgeway, has been an outdoors writer for more than 30 years. He has a degree in wildlife and fisheries management and has a long career as a professional wildlife biologist/natural resources manager.*

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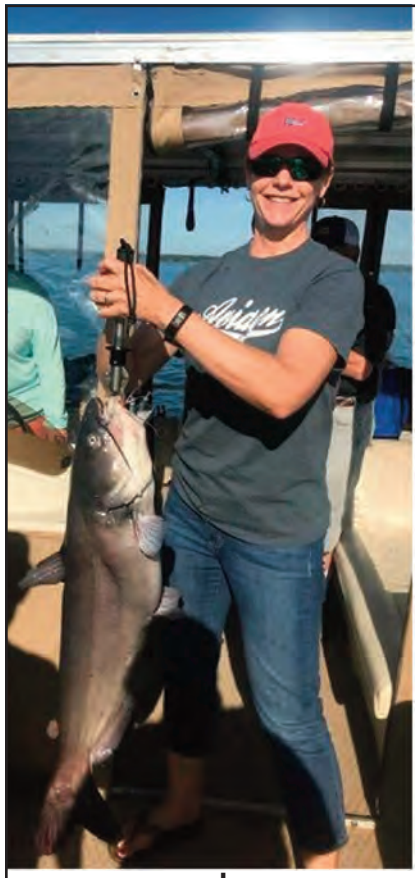
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For our *2018 Visitors Guide* call us at (803) 854-2131, email: tourscc@oburg.net or visit our website. The guide contains all the information you will need to catch your next fishing memory.

Photo: Cajun Guide Service

www.santeecoopercountry.org

Robert Satterwhite



FIND YOUR SUMMER TROUT STRATEGIES

PLAN FOR THE PROBLEMS THAT HOT-WEATHER CONDITIONS PRESENT AND HEAD TO THE RIGHT STREAM

Summer conditions aren't the greatest for catching mountain trout, but with a few choices, you can put yourself in position for some great trips.

Bob Satterwhite

Summer can be a frustrating time for trout fishers, no matter their skill level or level of dedication. High temperatures, low water and an absence of major insect hatches do not make for ideal trout fishing conditions. But with a slight change of tactics, selective stream choices and a tad more patience, summer trout fishing can be as rewarding as it is any other time of the year.

One big plus for fishing this summer is that streams in North Carolina, South Carolina and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park are in excellent condition due to spring rains, especially deluges resulting from Tropical Storm Alberto in late May. Streams were so high that the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission had to delay stockings for the opening of the catch-and-keep season on delayed-harvest waters.

Marc Hipp, a lifelong trout fisher, and guide who is manager of Brookings Anglers in Cashiers, N.C., offered these ideas for summer trout fishing.

BE SELECTIVE

Avoid valley streams that tend to warm up faster and stay warm on hot summer days. If the water feels like bath water, it's too warm for a trout. Carry a thermometer and check the water temperature frequently. If it is in the high 60s, move until you find a spot that reads in the mid- or low-60s. High-elevation streams and mid-level streams — if they have sufficient cover — generally stay cool no matter what the temperature is. The trout may be smaller on these streams, but they are always feisty.

The best high-gradient and mid-level streams are in the Nantahala, Pisgah and Sumter national forests, and in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Other ideal streams are in the Jocassee Gorges and Mountain Bridge Wilderness Area, both in upstate South Carolina.

FLY SELECTION

Fewer hatches mean fewer choices. For best results, carry dry flies, nymphs and terrestrials. A few of each kind will serve you well.

Dry flies: Yellow Sally (Nos. 16-12), Yellow Stimulator (Nos. 14-12), Parachute Adams (Nos. 18-12), and a parachute black or cinnamon ant (Nos. 18-14).

Nymphs: Greenie Weenie (Nos. 16-12), Pheasant Tail (Nos. 18-14), Hare's Ear (Nos. 18-14), and a partridge or yellow Soft Hackle (Nos. 18-14).

Terrestrials: ants, oak grubs, beetles and inchworms. Their size should approximate the real insect. The sizes of dry flies and nymphs will depend on water levels and conditions.

GEAR

Hipp uses either a 7½- or 9-foot fly rod (No. 3 or No. 5 weight) no matter the size of the stream.

"Longer rods cast a lot better and more precisely than shorter rods," he said, recommending a 7-foot, 5X tippet. "I use fluorocarbon line because it's less reflective than nylon line, and I often carry two rods: one rigged for nymph fishing, the other one rigged for dry flies."

TECHNIQUE

For best results, fish upstream.

"Work pocket water, because nine times out of 10, that's where trout will be feeding," Hipp said. "Fish the tail-outs that have enough current to carry food to a trout. Fish shaded undercuts along

stream banks. That's where bigger fish often hide.

"Make every cast count. Wild trout are easily spooked, so if you make a sloppy cast and disturb the water, move to another spot.

"If you see a trout approach your fly and not take it, scale down to a smaller fly or change patterns.

"Fish with a dropper to give the fish an option and improve your chances of catching a fish."

Ideal dropper length is about 14 inches for most water conditions. Use a shorter dropper for shallow water. The dropper nymph should be light enough that it doesn't pull the dry fly down.

"Don't be hesitate to experiment with different flies," Hipp said. "I sometimes tie on two dry flies of different patterns to see what the fish are hitting."

BE PREPARED

Summer weather conditions can change quickly and dramatically in the mountains. Carry a rain jacket, dry socks and extra clothing, if you have the space. If a thunderstorm comes up, get off the water and find shelter.

Carry a bottle of water or a water filter and stay hydrated. Also carry some snacks — fruit, trail mix, energy bars — to keep your energy up. Fishing, especially in the high country, can be physically challenging. A small first-aid kit also should be included in your gear.

Keep an eye out for snakes and hornets nests, often building their nests in overhanging bushes and trees.

If you get tired, find a big tree, sit down, lean back and take a nap. The fish will still be in the same places when you're rested. ▪



Bob Satterwhite *has been writing about the outdoors, particularly trout fishing, for more than 25 years. A native of Morganton, N.C., he lives in Cullowhee, N.C., close to the Tuckasegee River, Caney Fork, Moses Creek, and several other prime trout streams.*



Bob Satterwhite

FAST IS BEST:
Pocket water is the best place to look for feeding trout in mountain streams when the mercury climbs to unpleasant levels, because the fast water, sluicing over and around mid-stream obstacles like boulders, is better oxygenated and provides fish with both hiding spots and current that brings food into their lairs.





COOALLA COOLERS

The designers at Cooalla Coolers noticed most conventional coolers — even soft-sided ones — were bulky, clumsy to carry and took up too much space.

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And the fashionable exterior is constructed from durable, sweat-proof limestone-based neoprene sandwiched with advanced micro-cell insulation.

Its surprisingly large capacity is lined with a welded, puncture resistant, high-grade thermo material that virtually eliminates leaks and locks in the cold. The cooler also features rust-proof hardware, one-handed zipper technology, a textured, padded shoulder strap with a low-profile Velcro handle wrap, a convenient outside pocket with magnetic closure, and two-layer nylon webbing with daisy chain stitching for comfort and extra strength.

Cooalla Coolers are available in a range of colors and retail for $179.

More Info: www.cooalla.com



FIELD & STREAM

Field & Stream has added some lightweight hunting clothes to its product line, and although two particular items were designed for turkey hunters, they should be big hits for early-season archery hunters across the Southeast.

The Men's Insect Repellent balaclava long sleeve shirt features a trademarked insect repellent, No Fly Zone, thumb holes in the sleeves and a built-in balaclava with options for an adjustable hood and facemask — perfect in Realtree Edge camo for coolness, concealment and a bug-free hunt.

The Every Hunt lightweight cargo hunting pants are light, that's for sure, made with polyester ripstop material good for wicking away perspiration to keep hunters dry and comfortable. They feature plenty of pockets for accessories and an elasticized waist with belt loops.

No Scent C3 scent control is built into both shirts and pants, which retail for $49.99 each.

More Info: www.fieldandstreamshop.com and www.dickssportinggoods.com



COSTA DEL MAR

Costa Del Mar targets fishermen with a large percentage of their sunglasses, and two of their latest offerings, the Cape and Montauk, are perfect examples.

Introduced in March, both new styles feature wraparound frames that feature temple ventilation ports to make it tougher for the lenses to fog, and also help wick away sweat.

The ultra-wide nature of the frames and the ear pieces in the temple area block peripheral light, a key when looking through the surface for fish. Both styles feature Costa's 580 lens technology that provides 100-percent UV protection and polarization, and they're available in both polycarbonate and glass.

Capes are available in four frame colors and seven lens colors; Montauks are available in three frame colors and seven lens colors.

More Info: www.costadelmar.com



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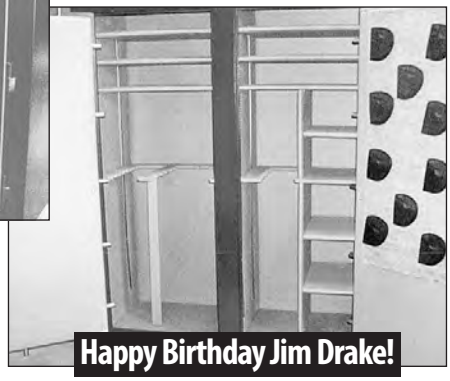
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Hunting/Fishing SCRAPBOOK



Katie Hough of New Ellenton, S.C., who fishes several tournament trails in South Carolina, shows off a nice bass.



Maddox Barbee, 5, from Albemarle, N.C., caught his first crappie at Lake Tillery on March 21, 2017.

GOT PHOTOS? WE WANT 'EM

Send us your photos, and you may appear on the pages of Carolina Sportsman magazine. Send clean, sharp shots of you with your fish, deer, ducks, rabbits, squirrels, doves, etc. to

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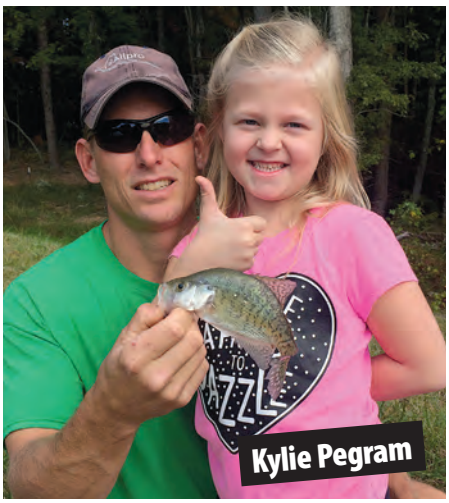
Tim Faucette caught this 3-pound Kerr Lake crappie in March 2017. The fish was 17½ inches long.



Ava Parks, 5, caught this 32-pound blue catfish out of North Carolina's Blewett Falls Lake in late February 2017.



Aden Pullano, 8, from Red Oak, N.C., landed this 6.9-pound bass from a local farm pond in March 2017.



Kylie Pegram, 6, of Stokesdale, N.C., caught this nice crappie last spring.



Chuck Stewart of Stem, N.C., and Carlos Bundick caught these nice white bass at Falls of Neuse Lake on March 25, 2017.



Hunter Ashley, 11, from Wake Forest, N.C., killed his first turkey on April 14, 2017, hunting in Granville County near Wilton, N.C.



Ross Howard caught this nice red on the Charleston 60 offshore reef on June 10, 2017.



Brady Carroll of Smithfield, N.C., caught this 9-pound bass on a topwater frog bait on last April 21 on Holt Lake.



Tamara Paige's first flounder-fishing trip, to Murrells Inlet, S.C., last fall, produced these beauties: 19 and 25 inches long.



DeeDee Crews of Leasburg, N.C., caught this 9½-pound bluefish in the surf Emerald Isle on April, 28, 2017.



Wesley Stewart killed his first deer last Oct. 12 in Lancaster County, S.C., hunting with dad, Jeffrey Stewart.



Jeremy Spencer of Mooresville, N.C., caught this nice crappie on March 11, 2017, off a Lake Norman boat dock.



Kennedy Fitzgerald of Charleston, S.C., gigged this 29-inch, 10-pound flounder at Murrells Inlet, S.C., last fall.

Hunting/Fishing SCRAPBOOK



Cole McIntyre, home on a recent break from the U.S. Navy, shot this hog in Moore, S.C.



Jeff Page caught this nice speckled trout at Murrells Inlet, S.C.



Steve Fisher caught these two 5-pound hybrid bass on Jan. 21, 2017, on North Carolina's Lake Norman.



Tara Hughes of Kinston, N.C. boated this wahoo on Sept. 24, 2016, fishing near the Big Rock on the "Maverick."

GOT PHOTOS? WE WANT 'EM

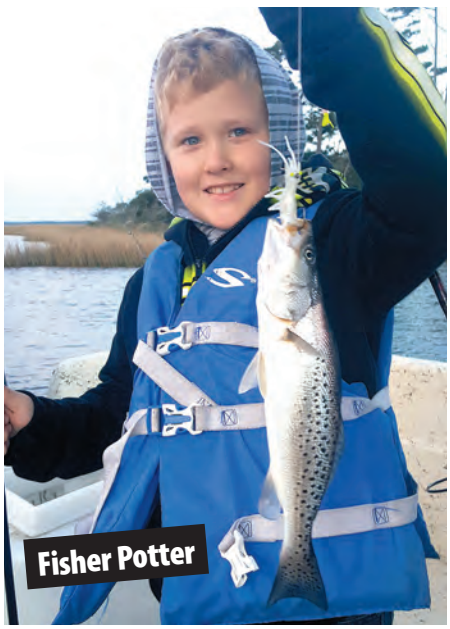
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or to dank@carolinasportsman.com

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Braxton Cole Vaughan, 10, killed this unique 7-point buck near Leggett, N.C.



Fisher Potter, 7, wore out the speckled trout in the Newport River's Haystacks marshes on Nov. 13, 2016.



Matt Guffey and Joe Anders caught these nice Lake Keowee bass on Jan. 6, 2017.



A 2018 Youth Day hunt in Barnwell County, S.C., worked out for Cole Creech, Connor Clamp, Caden Clamp and Reagan Martin.



Austin Adams, 12, of Washington, N.C., tagged this nice gobbler during Youth Season 2017 in Franklin County.



Bryan Buckner of Saluda, N.C., caught this 7½-pound bass on a crappie minnow.



Caleb Johnson of Fuquay-Varina, N.C., killed this tundra swan on Feb. 4, 2017, in Halifax County.



Cody Robinson caught this nice redfish on Nov. 27, 2016, near Isle of Palms, S.C., fishing with guide Garrett Lacy.



This 22-inch flounder anchored a limit caught by Theresa McCullough of Rocky Mount, N.C., in Bogue Sound in May 2016.



Charles Stewart and Jeramy Roberts boated these twin 16-pound blue catfish from Lake Gaston on Jan. 4, 2016.



Paula McCoy caught her first bull red last fall fishing with Capt. Tommy Scarborough out of Georgetown, S.C.

2018 NORTH CAROLINA FISHING REGULATIONS

Not an official document.
Refer to official fishing regs at NCWRC and NCDMF websites.

SALTWATER

STATE COASTAL WATERS REGULATIONS (0 - 3 miles)

FISH SPECIES	Minimum Lengths	Creel Limit (per person)
Greater amberjack	28" FL	1/day
Blue marlin	99" LJFL	1/vessel/trip
White marlin	66" LJFL	1/vessel/trip
Sailfish	63" LJFL	1/day
Sharks	%	%
Cobia (opens May 1)	36"	1/day&
Bluefish	5 longer than 24" TL	15/day
Red drum (channel bass, puppy drum)	18" min., 27" max.	1/day
Black drum	14" min., 25" max.	10/day
Flounder	15" TL	4/day
Dolphin (mahi-mahi)	none	10/day
Groupers (black and gag)	24" TL	1/day
Red, scamp, yellowfin, yellowmouth	20" TL	3/day
Speckled hind/Warsaw Grouper	closed	closed
Wahoo	none	2/day
Red porgy (aka silver snapper, pinky)	14" TL	3/day
King mackerel	24" FL	3/day
Spanish mackerel	12" FL	15/day
Sea bass (north of Hatteras)	12.5" TL	15/day
Sea bass (south of Hatteras)	13" TL	7/day
Yellowfin/Bigeye tuna	27" CFL	3/day
Bluefin tuna	Contact NMFS (http://www.nmfspermits.com)	
Spotted sea trout (speckled)	14"	4/day&
Weakfish (gray trout)	12" TL	1/day
Snappers: Gray (mangrove), yellowtail, queen, cubera, dog, mahoghany, schoolmaster	12" TL	10/day in federal waters
Sheepshead	10"	10/day
Red snapper	closed	closed
Mutton snapper	16" TL (federal waters)	10/day
Vermillion snapper	12" TL	5/day
Striped bass ^	28" TL or more (ocean waters)	1/day
Hickory shad	None	10/day
American shad	closed	closed

^ see NCWRC/NCDMF regs for inshore Management Area limits. % Contact NMFS Highly Migratory Species, 888-872-8862, visit hmspermits.noaa. Cobia limit is 1 per person, 2 per day private boats, 1 per person, 4 per day charter boats until June 1, then 2 per day per charter boat. % Season opened June 15.

FRESHWATER

FISH Species (Inland waters)	Minimum Size Limit	Creel Limit (per day)
Crappie +	None +	None +
Largemouth, smallmouth, spotted bass +	14" (2-fish exception)	5
Channel catfish	No restrictions	None
Blue/Flathead catfish	No restrictions	None
Striped bass, hybrid (Bodie) %	20"	4 %
Sauger	15"	8
White bass	None	25
Walleye#	None	8
Muskellunge	42"	1
Kokanee salmon	None	7
Red drum	18" min., 27" max.	1
American and hickory shad	None	10 (1 American shad)
Spotted sea trout	Closed	Closed until June 15
Flounder	15"	4/day@

TL=Total Length; LJFL=Lower jaw to middle of fork in tail; FL=Fork Length (tip of snout to middle of fork in tail); CFL=Curved Fork Length (measure of a line tracing contour of body from tip of upper jaw to fork of the tail)

+ See specific lake exceptions in NCWRC regulations digest or www.ncwildlife.org

% Striped bass creel limits and size minimums vary by lake. See NCWRC regulations digest or www.ncwildlife.org.

Lake James, minimum size is 15 inches. Lake Gaston, minimum size is 18 inches, creel limit 5.

@ Hook-and-line and flounder giggers restricted to 4 fish per day per trip, 15-inch size minimum.

2018 SOUTH CAROLINA FISHING REGULATIONS

Not an official document.
Refer to SCNDR's official fishing regulations pamphlet or www.dnr.sc.gov.

SALTWATER

STATE COASTAL WATERS REGULATIONS (0 - 3 miles)

FISH SPECIES	Minimum Lengths	Creel Limit (per person)
Greater amberjack	28" FL	1/day
Blue marlin	99" LJFL	1/day
White marlin	66" LJFL	1/day
Sailfish	63" LJFL	1/day
Sharks	%	%
Cobia	36" FL	1/day&
Bluefish	None	15/day
Black drum	14" minimum 27" maximum TL	5/day
Redfish (red drum, channel bass)	15" minimum 23" maximum TL	2/day#
Flounder (state waters)	14" TL	10/day
Groupers (black and gag)	24" TL	1/day
Red, scamp, yellowfin, yellowmouth	20" TL	3/day
Speckled hind/Warsaw grouper	closed	closed
Red porgy (aka silver snapper, pinky)	14" TL	3/day#
King mackerel	24" FL	3/day
Spanish mackerel	12" FL	15/day
Sheepshead	14"	10/day (30 per boat)
Spadefish	None	20/day (agg. grouper)
Black sea bass	13"	7/day
Dolphin	20" FL	10/day (60 per boat)
Yellowfin tuna	27" CFL	3/day
Bluefin/Bigeye tuna	Contact NMFS (http://www.nmfspermits.com)	
Tarpon	77" FL	1/day
Spotted sea trout (speckled)	14"	10/day
Weakfish (gray trout)	12"	1/day
Wahoo	None	2/day
Gray, yellowtail, queen, cubera, dog, mahoghany, schoolmaster snapper	12" TL	10/day#
Red snapper	closed	closed
Mutton snapper	16" TL (federal waters)	10/day
Vermillion snapper	12" TL	5/day

% For shark seasons, bag and size limits, contact NMFS Highly Migratory Species Division, 888-872-8862 or hmspermits.noaa.gov. # For grouper/snapper, check with the SAFMC at www.safmc.net or 843-571-4366. & Cobia, 1 per person per day up to 6 per boat. Closed May 1-31 south of Jeremy Inlet, 1 per person, up to 3 per boat, after June 1 south of Jeremy Inlet. # No more than 6 redfish per boat.

FRESHWATER

FISH Species (Inland waters)	Minimum Size Limit	Creel Limit (per day)
Crappie/Panfish +	None	30 bream (15 red breast), 20 crappie
Largemouth, smallmouth, spotted, redeye, bass%	none largemouth 12" smallmouth	5 lg/sm/r, 15 spots
Channel catfish	No restrictions	None
Blue catfish	No restrictions=	None=
Flathead catfish	No restrictions	None
Striped bass or hybrid bass	Varies by location&%	Varies by location&%
Mountain Trout	+	5
White bass	None	10 (except Sav. River)
Walleye and sauger+	None	8

TL=Total Length; LJFL=Lower jaw to middle of fork in tail; FL=Fork Length (tip of snout to middle of fork in tail); CFL=Curved Fork Length (measure of a line tracing contour of body from tip of upper jaw to fork of the tail).

+ See specific lake and river exceptions in SCDNR's Regulations Digest

= In the Santee Cooper system, only two over 32 inches with daily possession limit of 25 fish. In Congaree/Wateree rivers, no possession limit.

% For lake-specific regulations, see the SCDNR's Regulations Digest or visit www.dnr.sc.gov. Keeper season in the Santee Cooper system is Oct. 1-June 15.

& In Lake Russell and its tributaries, the daily creel limit is two fish, only one of which may be more than 34 inches long.

ASTRO TABLES

Astro Tables is far more effective than "moon tables," because it takes into account critical solar energies as well as lunar.

• The "Best Days" column is based on the ever-changing positions of the sun and the moon, rating each day on a scale of 0 to 100. The higher the number, the more solar/lunar influence that day is experiencing (see "Value" column or corresponding black bars).

• The two Primary periods (Moon Overhead and Moon Underfoot) vary in length from one hour to three-and-one-half hours, depending on a number of important lunar cycles, such as how close the moon is to the earth that day and how high its orbit is. The solar symbols alert you to when a Primary period overlaps a major solar period (eg: Dawn, High-Noon, and Dusk). The secondary periods of Moonrise and Moonset last about one hour each . . . 30 minutes before and after the listed time. (See key at bottom of each month for more detail.)

• **Astro Tables** is a quick-reference version of its parent publication, the **PrimeTimes Wall Calendar**, which is recommended for those wishing more complete data on the best days and times to go fishing and hunting for the entire year (see "Available Products" below).

• **PrimeTimes'** forecasts are based on solar/lunar research at a leading college of astrophysics and our own research pond/wildlife area. Annual data is supplied by the U.S. Naval Observatory. All times are adjusted to the center of your time zone and for Daylight Saving Time.

AVAILABLE PRODUCTS:

The 2018 PrimeTimes Wall Calendar. **$12.95** (plus $4 s&h). Know the best days, best times, and their relative strengths for all of 2018 with this information-packed, full-color, 11-inch by 17-inch, graphic peaks-and-valleys forecaster. Includes rise and set times for the sun and moon, space to log your catches, "Timely Tips," plus fish and game symbols showing you each month's don't-miss periods. Also includes exclusive summary charts revealing the best and worst days of 2018, the year's best periods, a look ahead at 2019, and more. Comes with FREE 2018 Astro Tables pocket calendar, which sells separately for $7.95, plus $3 s&h.

Book: ***"How to Know When to Go" by Rick Taylor.*** **$14.95** (plus $4 s&h). 100 pages, 43 illustrations. A comprehensive look at the main factors influencing fish and game activity periods, plus how to devise an effective when-to-go game plan using any year's PrimeTimes calendars. Individual assessments of bass, panfish, deer, turkey, and more.

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2018 JUL

	BEST DAYS VALUE	MOON RISE	PRIMARY MOON OVERHEAD	MOON SET	PRIMARY MOON UNDERFOOT	
Sun 1	33	11:01 pm	3:02 am - 4:18 am	9:01 am	3:27 pm - 4:43 pm	
Mon 2	34	11:35 pm	3:45 am - 5:07 am	9:56 am	4:10 pm - 5:32 pm	
Tue 3	37		4:23 am - 5:59 am	10:51 am	4:48 pm - 6:24 pm	
Wed 4	40	12:07 am	5:00 am - 6:48 am	11:47 am	5:25 pm - 7:13 pm	
Thu 5	48	12:39 am	5:37 am - 7:39 am	12:44 pm	6:02 pm - 8:04 pm	
Fri 6	61	1:10 am	6:14 am - 8:32 am	1:43 pm	6:39 pm - 8:57 pm	HALF
Sat 7	55	1:43 am	6:52 am - 9:28 am	2:44 pm	7:17 pm - 9:53 pm	
Sun 8	53	2:18 am	7:34 am - 10:24 am	3:48 pm	7:59 pm - 10:49 pm	
Mon 9	67	2:58 am	8:20 am - 11:26 am	4:54 pm	8:45 pm - 11:51 pm	
Tue 10	78	3:43 am	9:12 am - 12:28 pm	6:02 pm	9:37 pm - 12:53 am	
Wed 11	90	4:35 am	10:10 am - 1:32 pm	7:09 pm	10:35 pm - 1:57 am	HIGH
Thu 12	96	5:35 am	11:13 am - 2:35 pm	8:13 pm	11:38 pm - Midnight	NEW
Fri 13	87	6:41 am	12:18 pm - 3:38 pm	9:10 pm	Midnight - 3:00 am	Perigee
Sat 14	74	7:51 am	1:24 pm - 4:34 pm	10:01 pm	12:43 am - 4:03 am	
Sun 15	61	9:02 am	2:29 pm - 5:25 pm	10:45 pm	1:49 am - 4:59 am	
Mon 16	53	10:11 am	3:31 pm - 6:13 pm	11:24 pm	2:54 am - 5:50 am	
Tue 17	49	11:17 am	4:30 pm - 6:56 pm	12:01 am	3:56 am - 6:38 am	
Wed 18	49	12:21 pm	5:28 pm - 7:34 pm		4:55 am - 7:21 am	
Thu 19	56	1:23 pm	6:22 pm - 8:14 pm	12:34 am	5:53 am - 7:59 am	HALF
Fri 20	43	2:22 pm	7:17 pm - 8:53 pm	1:08 am	6:47 am - 8:39 am	
Sat 21	35	3:20 pm	8:08 pm - 9:34 pm	1:42 am	7:42 am - 9:18 am	
Sun 22	33	4:17 pm	9:00 pm - 10:16 pm	2:18 am	8:33 am - 9:59 am	
Mon 23	31	5:12 pm	9:52 pm - 11:00 pm	2:56 am	9:25 am - 10:41 am	
Tue 24	39	6:05 pm	10:43 pm - 11:45 pm	3:38 am	10:17 am - 11:25 am	
Wed 25	48	6:55 pm	11:32 pm - Midnight	4:23 am	11:08 am - 12:10 pm	LOW
Thu 26	56	7:41 pm	Midnight - 12:34 am	5:11 am	11:57 am - 12:59 pm	Apogee
Fri 27	61	8:23 pm	12:18 am - 1:24 am	6:02 am	12:43 pm - 1:49 pm	FULL
Sat 28	52	9:01 pm	1:02 am - 2:14 am	6:56 am	1:27 pm - 2:39 pm	
Sun 29	44	9:37 pm	1:45 am - 3:03 am	7:51 am	2:10 pm - 3:28 pm	
Mon 30	37	10:10 pm	2:23 am - 3:55 am	8:46 am	2:48 pm - 4:20 pm	
Tue 31	35	10:41 pm	3:00 am - 4:46 am	9:42 am	3:25 pm - 5:11 pm	

POOR FAIR GOOD EXCL

25 50 75 AVERAGE

LUNAR PERIODS — TIMES OCCURRING AT NIGHT ARE SHADED

ANY LUNAR PERIOD IS ENHANCED WHEN IT OVERLAPS A KEY SOLAR PERIOD. THE BEST OF THESE OVERLAPS ARE DESIGNATED BY THE SUN SYMBOLS: = DAWN = HIGH NOON = DUSK

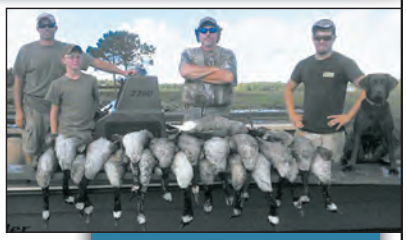
WHILE THE LESSER **MOONRISE** AND -**SET** OVERLAPS (ABOUT 30 MIN. BEFORE AND AFTER THE LISTED TIME) ARE DESIGNATED BY **BOLD BLACK TYPE**.

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FRANKLIN CO. – 79+/- ac Excellent road frontage, 2+ acre lake, internal roads, planted pine timber, hardwoods, gated entrance, privacy - $235,000 NEW

MOORE CO. – 50.9 ac pine timber, residential potential, creek, cell phone tower to be sold with property - $450,000 NEW

GRANVILLE CO. – 275 acres, excellent timber, abundant wildlife, Tar River frontage, hardwoods, excellent road frontage, - $1,600,000 PENDING

ORANGE CO. – 36+/- acres with Corp of Engineers land on Falls Lake bordering two sides, privacy, timber, residential use, wildlife, frontage, - $290,000 NEW

CASWELL CO. - 72 ac Long distance views on Farmer Lake, well suited for subdivision, excellent road frontage, wildlife - $360,000



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How to use the **SPORTSMAN** Tide Guide

Fish feed most actively when the tide is moving. The Sportsman has made it simple to spot the most active feeding periods each day in the TIDE GUIDE. To find the best time to fish your favorite honey hole, locate the spot under Tide Corrections that is closest to the area and add or subtract the time from the corresponding daily prediction.

Tide Corrections

Atlantic Beach, Ocean	**HIGH**	**LOW**
Cape Lookout Outer Coast	-0.02	0:10
Shell Point Harkers Island	2:07	2:45
Harkers Island Br. Outer Coast	2:23	2:42
Channel Mkr.Lt. #59 Outer Coast	1:40	1:38
Lenoxville Point Outer Coast	1:29	1:23
North River Bridge Outer Coast	1:24	3:19
Beaufort In. Ch. R. Outer Coast	0:22	0:22
Beaufort Duke Marine Lab	0:57	0:50
Gallant Channel Outer Coast	1:04	0:55
Newport River Outer Coast	1:25	1:40
Core Creek Bridge Outer Coast	1:41	1:57
Fort Macon USCG Station	0:32	0:29
Morehead City Outer Coast	0:41	0:38
Atlantic Beach Outer Coast	0:00	0:00
Triple ESS Marina Bogue Sd	0:50	0:39
Atlantic Beach Outer Coast	1:03	1:13
NC State Fisheries Outer Coast	1:20	1:43
Coral Bay Atl. Beach Outer Coast	2:02	2:25
Spooner Creek Outer Coast	2:35	2:55
Bogue Inlet Outer Coast	0:28	0:26
New River Inlet Outer Coast	0:31	0:28
New Topsail Inlet Outer Coast	0:35	1:11

Oregon Inset, USCG Station	**HIGH**	**LOW**
Currituck Beach Lt. Outer Coast	-0:06	0:14
Nags Head Area All Ocean Front	-0:22	0:34
Kitty Hawk (ocean) Outer Coast	-0:10	0:18
Jennetts Pr. (ocean) Outer Coast	-0:14	0:19
Roanoke Sound Chan. Outer Coast	2:07	2:08
Oregon Inlet Marina Outer Coast	1:02	1:57
Oregon Inlet Outer Coast	0:27	0:24
Oregon Inlet Bridge Outer Coast	0:13	0:04
Oregon Inl. Channel Outer Coast	0:21	0:17
Old House Channel Outer Coast	1:04	1:19
Oregon Inlet (USCG Station)	0:00	0:00
Davis Slough Outer Coast	0:39	0:50
Cape Hatteras Outer Coast	-0:14	0:34
Hatteras (ocean) Outer Coast	-022	0:34
Hatteras Inlet Outer Coast	0:01	0:08
Ocracoke Inlet Outer Coast	0:02	0:10
Ocracoke Ocracoke Inlet	0:17	0:31
Cape Lookout Outer Coast	-0:24	0:42

Southport, Cape Fear River	**HIGH**	**LOW**
Masonboro Inlet Outer Coast	-0:14	0:06
Wilmington Beach Outer Coast	-0:48	0:49
Cape Fear Outer Coast	-0:33	0:39
Bald Head Cape Fear	-0:17	0:22
Fort Caswell Cape Fear River	-0:12	0:16
Southport Cape Fear River	0:00	0:00
Reaves Point Cape Fear River	0:15	0:34
Yaupon Beach Outer Coast	-0:39	1:00
Lockwoods Folly Int Outer Coast	-0:29	0:23
Shallotte Inlet (Bowen Point)	0:10	0:17
Tubbs Inlet Outer Coast	-0:19	0:23

Atlantic Beach Ocean

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 4:54 am 0.2 L 10:49 am 2.3 H 4:28 pm 0.3 L 11:04 pm 3.1 H	**2** 5:30 am 0.3 L 11:30 am 2.3 H 5:09 pm 0.4 L 11:42 pm 3.0 H	**3** 6:07 am 0.3 L 12:12 pm 2.3 H 5:54 pm 0.5 L	**4** 12:22 am 2.8 H 6:45 am 0.3 L 12:58 pm 2.4 H 6:44 pm 0.6 L	**5** 1:05 am 2.7 H 7:25 am 0.3 L 1:48 pm 2.5 H 7:39 pm 0.7 L	**6** LQ 1:53 am 2.6 H 8:09 am 0.2 L 2:41 pm 2.6 H 8:41 pm 0.7 L	**7** 2:46 am 2.5 H 8:57 am 0.1 L 3:37 pm 2.9 H 9:46 pm 0.6 L
8 9:43 am 2.5 H 9:49 am 0.0 L 4:34 pm 3.1 H 10:50 pm 0.4 L	**9** 4:43 am 2.5 H 10:43 am -0.2 L 5:30 pm 3.4 H 11:51 pm 0.1 L	**10** 5:42 am 2.5 H 11:38 am -0.4 L 6:26 pm 3.7 H	**11** 12:49 am -0.1 L 6:40 am 2.6 H 12:33 pm -0.6 L 7:20 pm 3.9 H	**12** NM 1:43 am -0.3 L 7:37 am 2.7 H 1:28 pm -0.8 L 8:13 pm 4.1 H	**13** 2:36 am -0.5 L 8:32 am 2.8 H 2:24 pm -0.8 L 9:06 pm 4.1 H	**14** 3:28 am -0.6 L 9:28 am 2.9 H 3:19 pm -0.8 L 9:58 pm 4.0 H
15 4:20 am -0.6 L 10:23 am 3.0 H 4:16 pm -0.7 L 10:51 pm 3.9 H	**16** 5:11 am -0.6 L 11:20 am 3.0 H 5:14 pm -0.4 L 11:44 pm 3.6 H	**17** 6:03 am -0.5 L 12:19 pm 3.0 H 6:15 pm -0.2 L	**18** 12:38 am 3.3 H 6:55 am -0.3 L 1:19 pm 3.0 H 7:19 pm 0.1 L	**19** FQ 1:34 am 3.0 H 7:49 am -0.2 L 2:21 pm 3.0 H 8:26 pm 0.4 L	**20** 2:33 am 2.7 H 8:43 am 0.0 L 3:24 pm 3.0 H 9:34 pm 0.5 L	**21** 3:33 am 2.5 H 9:37 am 0.1 L 4:23 pm 3.0 H 10:40 pm 0.6 L
22 4:33 am 2.3 H 10:30 am 0.2 L 5:19 pm 3.1 H 11:39 pm 0.6 L	**23** 5:29 am 2.3 H 11:20 am 0.2 L 6:08 pm 3.2 H	**24** 12:31 am 0.5 L 6:20 am 2.3 H 12:07 pm 0.2 L 6:54 pm 3.2 H	**25** 1:17 am 0.4 L 7:06 am 2.3 H 12:50 pm 0.2 L 7:35 pm 3.3 H	**26** 1:58 am 0.4 L 7:48 am 2.3 H 1:32 pm 0.2 L 8:14 pm 3.3 H	**27** FM 2:36 am 0.3 L 8:27 am 2.4 H 2:11 pm 0.1 L 8:51 pm 3.3 H	**28** 3:12 am 0.2 L 9:06 am 2.4 H 2:49 pm 0.2 L 9:26 pm 3.3 H
29 3:47 am 0.2 L 9:43 am 2.5 H 3:27 pm 0.2 L 10:01 pm 3.2 H	**30** 4:20 am 0.2 L 10:20 am 2.5 H 4:06 pm 0.3 L 10:36 pm 3.1 H	**31** 4:54 am 0.2 L 10:58 am 2.6 H 4:46 pm 0.4 L 11:11 pm 3.0 H				

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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 3:40 am -0.1 L 9:59 am 3.2 H 3:19 pm 0.1 L 10:05 pm 4.4 H	**2** 4:17 am -0.1 L 10:41 am 3.2 H 4:02 pm 0.1 L 10:44 pm 4.2 H	**3** 4:56 am -0.1 L 11:27 am 3.2 H 4:49 pm 0.1 L 11:27 pm 4.0 H	**4** 5:36 am -0.1 L 12:13 pm 3.4 H 5:40 pm 0.2 L	**5** 12:13 am 3.8 H 6:17 am -0.1 L 1:01 pm 3.6 H 6:36 pm 0.2 L	**6** LQ 1:01 am 3.8 H 7:02 am -0.1 L 1:53 pm 3.8 H 7:39 pm 0.2 L	**7** 1:54 am 3.6 H 7:53 am -0.1 L 2:51 pm 4.2 H 8:46 pm 0.2 L
8 2:54 am 3.6 H 8:47 am -0.1 L 3:50 pm 4.6 H 9:49 pm 0.1 L	**9** 3:58 am 3.6 H 9:41 am -0.1 L 4:46 pm 5.0 H 10:47 pm 0.0 L	**10** 4:59 am 3.6 H 10:34 am -0.1 L 5:40 pm 5.4 H 11:44 pm -0.1 L	**11** 5:58 am 3.8 H 11:29 am -0.2 L 6:35 pm 5.8 H	**12** NM 12:40 am -0.1 L 6:57 am 4.0 H 12:25 pm -0.3 L 7:28 pm 6.0 H	**13** 1:33 am -0.2 L 7:54 am 4.2 H 1:21 pm -0.3 L 8:19 pm 6.0 H	**14** 2:24 am -0.3 L 8:48 am 4.4 H 2:16 pm -0.2 L 9:10 pm 6.0 H
15 3:13 am -0.3 L 9:43 am 4.4 H 3:10 pm -0.2 L 10:01 pm 5.6 H	**16** 4:04 am -0.3 L 10:42 am 4.4 H 4:08 pm -0.1 L 10:55 pm 5.2 H	**17** 4:55 am -0.2 L 11:42 am 4.4 H 5:09 pm 0.0 L 11:50 pm 4.8 H	**18** 5:47 am -0.2 L 12:42 pm 4.4 H 6:11 pm 0.1 L	**19** FQ 12:46 am 4.4 H 6:38 am -0.1 L 1:43 pm 4.4 H 7:18 pm 0.2 L	**20** 1:43 am 4.0 H 7:32 am -0.1 L 2:46 pm 4.4 H 8:29 pm 0.2 L	**21** 2:49 am 3.6 H 8:28 am 0.0 L 3:47 pm 4.4 H 9:36 pm 0.2 L
22 3:55 am 3.4 H 9:22 am 0.0 L 4:41 pm 4.6 H 10:32 pm 0.2 L	**23** 4:53 am 3.2 H 10:10 am 0.1 L 5:29 pm 4.6 H 11:22 pm 0.1 L	**24** 5:44 am 3.2 H 10:55 am 0.1 L 6:13 pm 4.6 H	**25** 12:09 am 0.1 L 6:31 am 3.2 H 11:38 am 0.0 L 6:53 pm 4.6 H	**26** 12:51 am 0.1 L 7:13 am 3.2 H 12:21 pm 0.0 L 7:29 pm 4.8 H	**27** FM 1:28 am 0.0 L 7:50 am 3.4 H 1:02 pm 0.0 L 8:01 pm 4.8 H	**28** 2:03 am -0.1 L 8:24 am 3.4 H 1:41 pm 0.0 L 8:32 pm 4.8 H
29 2:35 am -0.1 L 8:56 am 3.6 H 2:19 pm 0.0 L 9:04 pm 4.6 H	**30** 3:08 am -0.1 L 9:31 am 3.6 H 2:58 pm 0.1 L 9:38 pm 4.6 H	**31** 3:42 am -0.1 L 10:09 am 3.8 H 3:38 pm 0.1 L 10:15 pm 4.4 H				

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Southport Cape Fear River

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 4:42 am 0.1 L 10:45 am 3.7 H 4:29 pm 0.3 L 10:55 pm 4.3 H	**2** 5:17 am 0.2 L 11:18 am 3.6 H 5:03 pm 0.3 L 11:15 pm 4.3 H	**3** 5:50 am 0.2 L 11:45 am 3.7 H 5:41 pm 0.4 L 11:45 pm 4.2 H	**4** 6:25 am 0.1 L 12:21 pm 3.8 H 6:27 pm 0.4 L	**5** 12:30 am 4.1 H 7:05 am 0.1 L 1:10 pm 3.9 H 7:27 pm 0.5 L	**6** LQ 1:23 am 4.1 H 7:53 am 0.0 L 2:07 pm 4.0 H 8:40 pm 0.6 L	**7** 2:23 am 4.0 H 8:50 am 0.0 L 3:08 pm 4.2 H 9:51 pm 0.5 L
8 3:28 am 4.0 H 9:52 am -0.1 L 4:13 pm 4.5 H 10:57 pm 0.4 L	**9** 4:35 am 4.0 H 10:54 am -0.2 L 5:17 pm 4.7 H 11:59 pm 0.2 L	**10** 5:41 am 4.0 H 11:54 am -0.2 L 6:19 pm 4.9 H	**11** 12:57 am 0.0 L 6:42 am 4.1 H 12:54 pm -0.3 L 7:17 pm 5.0 H	**12** NM 1:53 am -0.1 L 7:41 am 4.2 H 1:52 pm -0.4 L 8:13 pm 5.1 H	**13** 2:47 am -0.3 L 8:38 am 4.3 H 2:47 pm -0.5 L 9:08 pm 5.1 H	**14** 3:38 am -0.4 L 9:36 am 4.4 H 3:42 pm -0.5 L 10:04 pm 5.1 H
15 4:29 am -0.5 L 10:35 am 4.4 H 4:35 pm -0.4 L 11:00 pm 5.0 H	**16** 5:18 am -0.5 L 11:35 am 4.4 H 5:29 pm -0.3 L 11:56 pm 4.9 H	**17** 6:08 am -0.5 L 12:34 pm 4.5 H 6:24 pm -0.1 L	**18** 12:50 am 4.7 H 6:59 am -0.4 L 1:30 pm 4.5 H 7:21 pm 0.0 L	**19** FQ 1:43 am 4.5 H 7:51 am -0.4 L 2:24 pm 4.5 H 8:20 pm 0.1 L	**20** 2:34 am 4.3 H 8:43 am -0.3 L 3:17 pm 4.6 H 9:17 pm 0.1 L	**21** 3:26 am 4.2 H 9:35 am -0.3 L 4:09 pm 4.6 H 10:13 pm 0.1 L
22 4:18 am 4.1 H 10:26 am -0.3 L 5:00 pm 4.6 H 11:07 pm 0.1 L	**23** 5:10 am 4.0 H 11:15 am -0.2 L 5:51 pm 4.7 H 11:58 pm 0.1 L	**24** 6:01 am 4.0 H 12:03 pm -0.2 L 6:39 pm 4.7 H	**25** 12:46 am 0.0 L 6:50 am 4.0 H 12:49 pm -0.1 L 7:24 pm 4.8 H	**26** 1:32 am 0.0 L 7:36 am 4.0 H 1:33 pm 0.0 L 8:07 pm 4.8 H	**27** FM 2:16 am 0.0 L 8:20 am 4.0 H 2:15 pm 0.0 L 8:48 pm 4.7 H	**28** 2:57 am 0.1 L 9:01 am 3.9 H 2:55 pm 0.1 L 9:25 pm 4.6 H
29 3:36 am 0.1 L 9:39 am 3.9 H 3:33 pm 0.2 L 9:57 pm 4.5 H	**30** 4:11 am 0.2 L 10:10 am 3.9 H 4:09 pm 0.3 L 10:20 pm 4.4 H	**31** 4:44 am 0.2 L 10:28 am 3.9 H 4:45 pm 0.3 L 10:37 pm 4.4 H				

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How to use the SPORTSMAN Tide Guide

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Tide Corrections

	HIGH	LOW
Cherry Grove(inside)	0:24	0:04
Springmaid Pier Outer Coast	-0:07	-0:30
Murrells Inlet Outer Coast	0:12	0:12
Pawley's Island Outer Coast	-0:10	-0:33
North Inlet Outer Coast	0:03	-0:08
Ent. (south jetty) Winyah Bay	-0:07	-0:36
S. Is. Ferry Winyah Bay	1:08	1:13
Georgetown Pee Dee River Br.	1:55	2:27
Black River (south of dunbar)	3:33	3:57
Sandy Island Thoroughfare Crk.	2:51	3:12
N. Santee Brg. Outer Coast	1:23	1:42
Brown Island S. Santee River	0:41	1:19
McClellanville Jeremy Creek	0:36	0:40
Dewees Inlet Outer Coast	0:07	0:03
Breach Inlet Outer Coast	0:05	0:01
Fort Sumter Charleston Harbor	0:07	0:06
Gen. Dynamics Pier Cooper River	1:50	1:42
Horlbeck Creek Cooper River	0:52	0:43
Big Paradise Island Wando River	1:35	1:08
Wappoo Crk. Br. Ashley River	0:38	0:41
Folly Island Outer Coast	0:01	0:01
Folly River (below bridge)	0:29	0:10
Elliott Cut Stono River	1:04	1:08
Limehouse Bridge Outer Coast	1:52	1:49
Rockville Bohicket Creek	0:28	0:22
Dawho Bridge North Edisto River	1:05	1:01
Edisto Marina Big Bay Creek	0:06	0:25
Willtown Bluff S. Edisto River	1:45	2:38
Eddings Point Crk. St. Helena Sound	0:29	0:22
Fields Point Combahee River	0:42	0:59
Highway Bridge Combahee River	1:56	2:34
Summerhouse Point Bull River	0:59	0:43
Fripp Inlet Bridge St. Helena Sound	-0:09	-0:20
Broad Creek Port Royal Sound	0:36	0:25
Station Creek Port Royal Sound	0:24	-0:13
Trenchards Inlet Port Royal Sound	0:15	-0:14
Parris Island Beaufort River	0:37	0:33
Beaufort Beaufort River	1:07	0:59
Victoria Bluff Colleton River	1:01	0:47
Hilton Head Island Braddock Point	0:05	0:05
Bluffton May River	0:52	0:31
Daufuskie Landing New River	0:21	0:34

Dunn Sound Little River Inlet

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 5:04 am 0.2 L 10:30 am 3.9 H 5:04 pm 0.5 L 10:55 pm 4.7 H	**2** 5:42 am 0.2 L 11:12 am 3.8 H 5:44 pm 0.6 L 11:37 pm 4.6 H	**3** 6:20 am 0.3 L 11:58 am 3.8 H 6:27 pm 0.6 L	**4** 12:21 am 4.5 H 7:00 am 0.3 L 12:46 pm 3.9 H 7:12 pm 0.7 L	**5** 1:08 am 4.3 H 7:43 am 0.3 L 1:35 pm 4.1 H 8:05 pm 0.8 L	**6** LQ 1:56 am 4.3 H 8:30 am 0.2 L 2:24 pm 4.4 H 9:05 pm 0.8 L	**7** 2:46 am 4.2 H 9:22 am 0.2 L 3:16 pm 4.6 H 10:09 pm 0.6 L
8 3:39 am 4.3 H 10:18 am 0.0 L 4:10 pm 5.0 H 11:13 pm 0.5 L	**9** 4:36 am 4.3 H 11:15 am -0.2 L 5:06 pm 5.4 H	**10** 12:13 am 0.2 L 5:34 am 4.5 H 12:11 pm -0.4 L 6:03 pm 5.7 H	**11** 1:09 am -0.1 L 6:33 am 4.6 H 1:07 pm -0.6 L 6:59 pm 6.0 H	**12** NM 2:04 am -0.3 L 7:29 am 4.8 H 2:02 pm -0.7 L 7:53 pm 6.2 H	**13** 2:58 am -0.5 L 8:25 am 5.0 H 2:58 pm -0.8 L 8:46 pm 6.3 H	**14** 3:51 am -0.6 L 9:20 am 5.1 H 3:54 pm -0.8 L 9:40 pm 6.2 H
15 4:43 am -0.6 L 10:16 am 5.1 H 4:49 pm -0.6 L 10:35 pm 5.9 H	**16** 5:35 am -0.6 L 11:16 am 5.1 H 5:45 pm -0.5 L 11:32 pm 5.6 H	**17** 6:26 am -0.4 L 12:17 pm 5.0 H 6:42 pm -0.2 L	**18** 12:30 am 5.2 H 7:18 am -0.2 L 1:17 pm 5.0 H 7:41 pm 0.1 L	**19** FQ 1:28 am 4.8 H 8:13 am -0.1 L 2:15 pm 5.0 H 8:45 pm 0.4 L	**20** 2:23 am 4.6 H 9:09 am 0.1 L 3:10 pm 5.0 H 9:51 pm 0.6 L	**21** 3:17 am 4.3 H 10:07 am 0.2 L 4:04 pm 5.0 H 10:53 pm 0.6 L
22 4:10 am 4.1 H 11:01 am 0.3 L 4:55 pm 4.9 H 11:48 pm 0.6 L	**23** 5:03 am 4.0 H 11:50 am 0.3 L 5:45 pm 5.0 H	**24** 12:37 am 0.6 L 5:54 am 3.9 H 12:36 pm 0.3 L 6:32 pm 5.0 H	**25** 1:20 am 0.5 L 6:43 am 4.0 H 1:19 pm 0.3 L 7:15 pm 5.1 H	**26** 2:01 am 0.4 L 7:26 am 4.1 H 2:00 pm 0.2 L 7:55 pm 5.2 H	**27** FM 2:41 am 0.3 L 8:07 am 4.1 H 2:41 pm 0.2 L 8:33 pm 5.2 H	**28** 3:19 am 0.2 L 8:45 am 4.2 H 3:21 pm 0.2 L 9:10 pm 5.1 H
29 3:57 am 0.2 L 9:21 am 4.2 H 4:00 pm 0.3 L 9:46 pm 5.0 H	**30** 4:34 am 0.2 L 9:59 am 4.2 H 4:40 pm 0.4 L 10:24 pm 4.9 H	**31** 5:11 am 0.2 L 10:38 am 4.2 H 5:19 pm 0.5 L 11:03 pm 4.7 H				

Charleston Customhouse Warf

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 4:53 am 0.3 L 10:44 am 4.5 H 4:41 pm 0.5 L 11:09 pm 5.4 H	**2** 5:30 am 0.4 L 11:23 am 4.5 H 5:21 pm 0.7 L 11:46 pm 5.3 H	**3** 6:08 am 0.4 L 12:04 pm 4.6 H 6:04 pm 0.8 L	**4** 12:24 am 5.2 H 6:49 am 0.4 L 12:49 pm 4.7 H 6:52 pm 0.9 L	**5** 1:06 am 5.0 H 7:32 am 0.3 L 1:37 pm 4.8 H 7:47 pm 0.9 L	**6** LQ 1:54 am 4.9 H 8:20 am 0.2 L 2:30 pm 5.1 H 8:48 pm 0.9 L	**7** 2:48 am 4.9 H 9:13 am 0.0 L 3:26 pm 5.4 H 9:53 pm 0.7 L
8 3:46 am 4.9 H 10:08 am -0.2 L 4:24 pm 5.7 H 10:57 pm 0.5 L	**9** 4:46 am 4.9 H 11:05 am -0.4 L 5:23 pm 6.1 H 11:59 pm 0.2 L	**10** 5:46 am 5.0 H 12:02 pm -0.6 L 6:22 pm 6.4 H	**11** 12:57 am -0.1 L 6:46 am 5.1 H 12:59 pm -0.9 L 7:20 pm 6.7 H	**12** NM 1:53 am -0.4 L 7:45 am 5.3 H 1:55 pm -1.0 L 8:17 pm 6.8 H	**13** 2:47 am -0.6 L 8:44 am 5.4 H 2:50 pm -1.1 L 9:12 pm 6.9 H	**14** 3:40 am -0.7 L 9:42 am 5.5 H 3:45 pm -1.0 L 10:07 pm 6.8 H
15 4:32 am -0.7 L 10:40 am 5.6 H 4:41 pm -0.9 L 11:01 pm 6.6 H	**16** 5:24 am -0.7 L 11:38 am 5.6 H 5:37 pm -0.6 L 11:55 pm 6.3 H	**17** 6:16 am -0.5 L 12:36 pm 5.6 H 6:34 pm -0.3 L	**18** 12:48 am 5.9 H 7:08 am -0.4 L 1:33 pm 5.6 H 7:33 pm 0.1 L	**19** FQ 1:41 am 5.6 H 8:01 am -0.2 L 2:31 pm 5.6 H 8:34 pm 0.3 L	**20** 2:34 am 5.3 H 8:54 am -0.1 L 3:27 pm 5.6 H 9:34 pm 0.5 L	**21** 3:27 am 5.0 H 9:47 am 0.1 L 4:21 pm 5.6 H 10:32 pm 0.6 L
22 4:19 am 4.8 H 10:39 am 0.2 L 5:12 pm 5.7 H 11:26 pm 0.6 L	**23** 5:10 am 4.7 H 11:29 am 0.2 L 6:01 pm 5.7 H	**24** 12:17 am 0.5 L 6:00 am 4.7 H 12:16 pm 0.2 L 6:47 pm 5.8 H	**25** 1:04 am 0.4 L 6:48 am 4.7 H 1:01 pm 0.2 L 7:31 pm 5.9 H	**26** 1:48 am 0.4 L 7:33 am 4.8 H 1:43 pm 0.2 L 8:13 pm 5.9 H	**27** FM 2:29 am 0.3 L 8:17 am 4.8 H 2:23 pm 0.3 L 8:53 pm 5.9 H	**28** 3:08 am 0.3 L 8:58 am 4.8 H 3:02 pm 0.3 L 9:31 pm 5.8 H
29 3:45 am 0.3 L 9:38 am 4.8 H 3:40 pm 0.4 L 10:07 pm 5.7 H	**30** 4:22 am 0.3 L 10:16 am 4.8 H 4:18 pm 0.5 L 10:41 pm 5.6 H	**31** 4:57 am 0.3 L 10:52 am 4.9 H 4:57 pm 0.6 L 11:14 pm 5.4 H				

Harbor River Bridge

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 5:02 am 0.4 L 10:58 am 5.4 H 4:56 pm 0.7 L 11:20 pm 6.1 H	**2** 5:38 am 0.4 L 11:40 am 5.4 H 5:35 pm 0.8 L	**3** 12:01 am 5.9 H 6:17 am 0.5 L 12:25 pm 5.4 H 6:17 pm 0.9 L	**4** 12:43 am 5.8 H 6:58 am 0.5 L 1:12 pm 5.5 H 7:04 pm 1.0 L	**5** 1:29 am 5.7 H 7:43 am 0.5 L 2:01 pm 5.6 H 7:58 pm 1.1 L	**6** LQ 2:18 am 5.6 H 8:34 am 0.4 L 2:51 pm 5.9 H 8:59 pm 1.0 L	**7** 3:10 am 5.6 H 9:28 am 0.2 L 3:44 pm 6.2 H 10:03 pm 0.9 L
8 4:04 am 5.7 H 10:25 am 0.0 L 4:39 pm 6.6 H 11:06 pm 0.6 L	**9** 5:02 am 5.8 H 11:22 am -0.3 L 5:36 pm 7.0 H	**10** 12:07 am 0.2 L 6:01 am 5.9 H 12:19 pm -0.6 L 6:33 pm 7.3 H	**11** 1:05 am -0.1 L 7:00 am 6.1 H 1:16 pm -0.9 L 7:30 pm 7.6 H	**12** NM 2:02 am -0.5 L 7:57 am 6.2 H 2:12 pm -1.0 L 8:25 pm 7.7 H	**13** 2:57 am -0.8 L 8:54 am 6.4 H 3:07 pm -1.1 L 9:20 pm 7.8 H	**14** 3:50 am -0.9 L 9:50 am 6.4 H 4:02 pm -1.1 L 10:14 pm 7.7 H
15 4:41 am -0.9 L 10:48 am 6.5 H 4:55 pm -0.9 L 11:10 pm 7.5 H	**16** 5:31 am -0.9 L 11:47 am 6.4 H 5:49 pm -0.7 L	**17** 12:06 am 7.1 H 6:22 am -0.7 L 12:47 pm 6.4 H 6:44 pm -0.3 L	**18** 1:01 am 6.8 H 7:13 am -0.4 L 1:45 pm 6.4 H 7:42 pm 0.1 L	**19** FQ 1:56 am 6.4 H 8:07 am -0.1 L 2:40 pm 6.4 H 8:43 pm 0.5 L	**20** 2:48 am 6.2 H 9:02 am 0.1 L 3:34 pm 6.4 H 9:45 pm 0.7 L	**21** 3:39 am 5.9 H 9:57 am 0.3 L 4:25 pm 6.4 H 10:44 pm 0.7 L
22 4:30 am 5.7 H 10:50 am 0.3 L 5:16 pm 6.4 H 11:38 pm 0.7 L	**23** 5:21 am 5.6 H 11:39 am 0.4 L 6:06 pm 6.4 H	**24** 12:27 am 0.7 L 6:12 am 5.5 H 12:26 pm 0.4 L 6:54 pm 6.5 H	**25** 1:13 am 0.6 L 7:01 am 5.6 H 1:11 pm 0.4 L 7:39 pm 6.6 H	**26** 1:57 am 0.5 L 7:47 am 5.6 H 1:54 pm 0.4 L 8:21 pm 6.6 H	**27** FM 2:39 am 0.4 L 8:30 am 5.7 H 2:36 pm 0.4 L 9:01 pm 6.6 H	**28** 3:18 am 0.3 L 9:11 am 5.7 H 3:16 pm 0.4 L 9:39 pm 6.5 H
29 3:56 am 0.3 L 9:50 am 5.7 H 3:55 pm 0.5 L 10:16 pm 6.4 H	**30** 4:33 am 0.3 L 10:29 am 5.7 H 4:33 pm 0.6 L 10:51 pm 6.2 H	**31** 5:09 am 0.3 L 11:08 am 5.7 H 5:12 pm 0.7 L 11:28 pm 6.1 H				



Tarpon migrate into South Carolina waters in the summer, and Georgetown is a hot spot.

Sportsman FISHING HOTSPOTS

SILVER KINGS INVADE GEORGETOWN WATERS

Find schools of baitfish, and you're on the way to tarpon heaven

While South Carolina's tarpon fishery may not compare the Florida Keys, its popularity is increasing every year.

Actually, the tarpon that Key West anglers catch are some of the same that show up along South Carolina's coast, migrating northward to spend the summer in cooler water. The first real push begins in July, and they arrive ready to eat anything they can find.

The waters around Georgetown, S.C. — encompassing everything from North Inlet at Debordieu Island south to Cape Romain — are practically a buffet table, and tarpon return every year, taking advantage of huge schools of menhaden and mullet that utilize the area.

Jordan Pate of Carolina Guide Service is one of only a few area captains who specifically target tarpon, a fish he considers one of his specialties.

"July can be a good time. I typically start to see a few good pushes of tarpon in early July," said Pate (843-608-8307). "Many of our July tarpon are still in migration mode, so they can be here one day and gone the next.

"The fishing becomes more consistent towards the end of the month."

When they do arrive, tarpon usually show up with a whale of an appetite, which helps anglers find out where to find these fish.

"Just like any gamefish, the key to locating tarpon is to locate the baitfish, which happens to be menhaden this time of year," he said.

During the summer, menhaden congregate along the beachfront or between the Intracoastal Waterway and the inlets. Pate

likes to run the beachfront, looking for large congregations of bait.

"The tarpon will find the bait, no matter where it is, and if I see tarpon surfacing in the bait, we will stop and fish," he said.

But the tarpon will also set up on current breaks, ledges and current rips in ambush mode to snag an easy meal. If Pate doesn't see any fish, he will set up on ledges adjacent to 20- to 30-foot water or other places where a large fish would typically ambush a school of menhaden.

In places along the beach where a lot of menhaden pods present, he will slow-troll live bait.

"More often than not, I am slow-trolling live baits in places where I have seen tarpon lately or anchored down," he said.

When slow-trolling or anchored, Pate will have a pitch rod rigged with a D.O.A. Swimming mullet or an 8-inch Hogy jig, because a tarpon can show up without any notice, and they aren't afraid to take an artificial lure when they are ready to eat.

Tarpon will travel long distances in a short time, and the fish that show up along the South Carolina coast are adults with more than 10 years under their belts, very educated to dangers. Pate offsets these inhibitions with a stealthy approach.

"Tarpon are very sensitive to boat traffic, so minimizing boat noise can make the difference between seeing a fish and getting a bite," he said.

While anglers may not get the volume of bites that anglers do in Key West during the spring migration, Georgetown anglers can have a good opportunity at hooking with one of these beasts if they play their cards right. ▪

— Jeff Burleson

AVOID WEEKENDS

for best bass action on Lake Keowee

Guide Brad Fowler of Pendleton, S.C., said there is one major rule to follow when fishing for bass on Lake Keowee in the heat of summer: don't even think about going on weekends.

"In the summer, the boat traffic is so bad on weekends that you are just wasting your time," Fowler said. "It's not safe to be out there in a bass boat. You have to worry about getting run over."

Not only is the boat traffic so heavy on weekends that it's impossible to fish, it affects fishing the rest of the week, he said.

"That time of year, you don't see them on the surface, and you don't find them on the points," he said. "You see them out in 100 feet of water. I think the boat traffic drives them out to the middle of nowhere during the summer."

That said, bass can be caught during the middle of the week on Keowee in July and August, but things have to fall into place, he added.

"You need for everything to work out in your favor to get them to commit this time of year. I try to capitalize on a little early bite on points around daylight when they are catchable," he said. "There is a real short window early in the morning when you can catch them on topwater plugs around rock in shallow places."

One factor has aided the shallow-water bite this summer: exceptionally high water. Keowee's water is as high as it has ever been and due to heavy late-spring rains, Lake Hartwell is full so there is no place to dump excess water.

"With the water so high, you have to figure out some things for the shallow bite, but Keowee is still a tough lake to fish shallow up in the day," said Fowler (www.fowlerfishing.com).

Once that shallow bite is over, Fowler said, he moves out to deeper water off points and does a lot of looking with his electronics for schools of mostly spotted bass. Fish will usually be suspended at 25 to 35 feet below the surface, he said.

"You don't have to get back right over the top of them," he said. "I like to throw a Fish-head Spin or a drop-shot to them. You might just pull up on a school that is feeding."

Although the situation is different at both ends of the lake, the same tactics are in play, he said.



Brad Fowler

Spotted bass are the main summer targets among Lake Keowee's bass, but you'd do better to fish during the week and avoid weekend boat traffic.

"You are not going to avoid boat traffic at either end, but each end has its plusses," he said. "On the lower end, you have more wide-open water and more area to fish, while in the upper end if they are generating water, the current sometimes helps the bite. You don't have as much room to get away from interference in the upper end, but you might catch the fish feeding better because of that current."

Historically, the summer pattern lasts into early September, Fowler said, but in recent years, most of September has been just as hot as July and August. The latter part of the month should provide some relief when fish transition to fall patterns. ▪

— Pat Robertson

Lake Gaston up next >

BIG GASTON BLUES

will be plenty hungry in July after spawning

While many fish species lay low when summer temperatures skyrocket, blue catfish will be turning up the heat themselves.

According to guide Zakk Royce, the blues in Lake Gaston on the North Carolina-Virginia border will be fresh off the spawn this month and in hot pursuit of baitfish on main-lake points and the river channel just above the thermocline.

"July is an excellent time to fish for blues of all sizes," said Royce (252-398-7192), who runs Blues Brothers Catfishing Guide Service. "If I had to pick one time of the year to fish, it would be the middle of summer — just because of how aggressive the fish are. They're making up for lost time when they haven't been feeding as much during the spawn. Their metabolism will be way up, and it will make for a really consistent bite."

Royce's key to summer catfishing is to keep an eye on the thermocline, a spot where cooler and warmer water meet and which is often depicted on a depth finder as a distinct line well above the bottom. Blues typically stay slightly above it because it contains the coolest water that is still well oxygenated.

His first approach is to target main-lake points at creek mouths and humps that rise above this depth — 20 feet or less. Mussel beds that provide additional forage in these areas are a major plus. Next, Royce heads to the main-river channel, often choosing areas with a sharp bend or junction with an old creek bed. Although depths here may reach 30 to 40 feet, Royce will suspend his baits at or above the thermocline, which will normally hover in the 15-foot range.

"I like to troll (with) slip floats in July," he said. "One will run off each corner of the stern, and one will run off each side of the boat, spread out by planer boards. I'll stagger the depths above the thermocline, but if one or two gets hammered consistently, I'll adjust the others. Two or three feet can make a big difference. Anything between the thermocline and the surface is fair game."

Royce trolls between .5 and 1 mph with cut shad, white perch or bluegill under a 3-inch, round slip float, but he has caught fish going as fast as 2 mph. He uses a 7/0 or 9/0 circle hook, tied to a 60-pound mono leader of 12 to 24 inches. A 3- to 4-ounce egg sinker rides above the swivel tied to 30-pound mono main line. ▪

— Dusty Wilson



Do big blue cats bite during the summer? Guide Zakk Royce caught this 102-pound Lake Gaston monster in July 2017.

FALLS OF NEUSE'S JULY BASS CAN BE DEEP OR SHALLOW

Guide Joel Munday said largemouth bass can be caught shallow and deep this month on Falls of the Neuse Lake, a 12,410-acre fishing playground north of Raleigh and Durham, N.C.

"I've caught as many bass in 5 feet of water or less as I have in 10 to 20 feet of water," said Munday (919-669-2959), of Outdoor Expeditions Guide Service. "It depends upon the water level and water color."

If the lake is full, Munday flips and pitches jigs and plastics into brush or tree laps along the shoreline or creek backs. He also fishes shallow after heavy rains that dingy the water.



The water level determines whether guide Joel Munday fishes shallow or deep on Falls of Neuse Lake this month.

Tony Garitta

Much of the shallow fishing takes place in the upper end of the lake, west of the NC 50 bridge where the water is rarely deeper than 12 feet except in the old river channel.

Once the water level drops, fish move to deep structure, including drops, points and ledges. Munday keys on structure based upon its relationship to the thermocline, which dictates the depth of the fish.

"At Falls, the thermocline usually develops somewhere between 10 and 25 feet," Munday said. "Once I find the thermocline (with his electronics), I search for forage, fish and structure in relationship to the thermocline."

Most of Falls of Neuse's best deep structure is on the lower half of the lake, downstream from the NC 50 bridge, where depths of 30 feet are commonplace, forming numerous drops, ledges and channel bends. Any stumps or brush situated around these places are a bonus. When he's fishing deep, Munday uses deep-diving crankbaits, Texas- and Carolina-rigged plastics, heavy jigs, blade baits and big, flutter spoons.

Munday said proper boat positioning is important, enabling him to make long casts so he can get his crankbaits deep enough to reach the fish.

Munday said during a 6-hour guide trip in July, clients usually catch 8 to 10 bass ranging from 3 to 5 pounds. Occasionally, they'll hook a trophy bass weighing 7 pounds or more. ■

— Tony Garitta

CHANNEL CATFISH: TAKE A STROLL

High Rock Lake produces plenty of quality July cats

Maynard Edwards, a retired fishing guide from Lexington, N.C, was known for "strolling" — aka slow-trolling — for channel catfish on High Rock Lake. He said most fishermen can enhance their catches by taking a piscatorial stroll.

"There's more to catfishing than chucking out some cut bait and hoping for the best," Edwards said. "Over the years, I've refined a trolling technique — right down to the weight and hook — that's designed to catch channel cats."

For strolling, Edwards sets out six medium-heavy, 7-foot fiberglass rods with flexible tips.

"The rod tip needs to give a little when a cat strikes or you'll tear the hook out of its mouth upon setting the hook," he said. "Channel cats usually set the hook upon striking, but many fishermen can't resist flexing their muscles and striking back."

The rods are mounted at the stern of his boat, with two at the corners opposite one another, pointed out at angles.

"I cast to let the lines out and stagger my casts, with each cast being at different distances to prevent tangles while strolling,"

continued on page 90 >





High Rock Lake continued

Edwards said. "The corner rods hold planner boards for probing shallow water. The other rods employ Santee rigs, which are basically Carolina rigs with an in-line float on the line about 3 to 6 inches above the hook to keep the baits off the bottom."

Edwards uses Browning baitcasting reels filled with 20- to 25-pound monofilament; He dislikes fluorocarbon because its tendency to sink makes snagging more likely.

With planer boards, he favors No. 8/0 circle hooks so fish will hook themselves.

"There's too much slack to set the hook with a planer board," said Edwards, who uses No 5/0 to 6/0 Kahle hooks with the Santee rigs, running the hook through the eyes or backs of cut shad, depending upon which segment of the bait he's using.

"I use the head and middle section of a 6-inch gizzard shad — not the tail portion, because it twists the line," said Edwards, whose rig features a homemade sinker that's virtually snag-proof.

In July, Edwards strolls the backs of creeks and the river section of High Rock in 3 to 5 feet of water, gradually moving to flats and humps off the main river or major creeks in 12 to 16 feet of water until he gets bites.

During a 5-hour guide trip, Edwards said his clients catch about 20 channel cats, with most ranging from 3 to 4 pounds. Fish from 6 to 8 pounds are plentiful with trophy cats weighing 10 to 12 pounds a possibility.

"The fishing for channel cats gets better every year," he said. ▪

— Tony Garitta



High Rock Lake is full of channel catfish weighing 3 to 4 pounds, with a few bigger specimens showing up on occasion.

TWO TRICKS FOR SPANISH

Lowcountry anglers will get plenty of nearshore action this month

The weather is hot this time of year, and so is fishing or Spanish mackerel in South Carolina's Lowcountry, especially in the Port Royal Sound and Hilton Head areas. Rick Percy of Reel Chance Charters said he catches them consistently in July using two different tactics that can be equally effective.





Trolling with bucktails or live-baiting with menhaden will help you fill your Lowcountry fish box with Spanish mackerel this month.

Dan Kibler

"We've got two sandbars on both sides of Port Royal Sound near a wreck that's called 'the Boiler,'" Percy said. "On the high to falling tide, trolling with a ¾-ounce bucktail on the edge of those

bars and the edge of the breakers is very effective."

But Percy (803-535-6166) does make a small adjustment to those bucktails, and he said that makes a big difference. He trims back the hair so that it is even with the hook. Also, he does not add a trailer. And when it comes to trolling speed, he has a good tip that he's learned through his experience on the water.

"The bluefish and Spanish are thick here this time of year, and they'll both hit these bucktails, but trolling at the right speed will produce more of one species over the other," he said. "Trolling at 3 to 5 knots, you'll catch a lot of bluefish, but if you're trolling at 6 to 8 knots, that's when you're catching Spanish."

The second tactic Percy uses in July is free-lining menhaden over the Fish America Reef just off of Hilton Head Island's beaches. He said plenty of bigger Spanish mackerel stack up in this area, and they are suckers for menhaden.

"I use a hook with no weight, and you don't even have to cast," Percy said. "Once I'm anchored down over the reef, I just open the bail and drop the menhaden right behind the boat, peel a little bit of line off, then let the current carry the bait.

"On some days, you'll have to weed through some sharks, but the Spanish are there and are easy to catch this way."

While some fishermen insist on using wire leaders when targeting Spanish, Percy said he gets far more bites — and lands more fish — with 30-pound monofilament leaders. He said they are tough enough to take lots of nicks from these toothy fish. He starts with a leader about 4 feet long, watches for nicks in the line, and cuts the nicked portions of leader down as the day goes on.

No matter which tactic he chooses, Percy pairs 2500 to 3000 series spinning reels with 7-foot, medium-light rods, and he always connects his leader material to his braided mainline with a surgeon's knot, which he said is easy to tie and extremely strong. ▪

— Brian Cope

Morehead up next >







MOREHEAD FLOUNDER

give summer anglers plenty to look forward to



Flounder in the inshore waters around Morehead City, N.C., are a popular target during the summer.

Craig Holt

Maybe it's the difficulties in safely navigating inshore waters that push some flounder fanatics to the ocean when summer arrives in the Atlantic Beach, N.C., area.

Because of sand migration, channels through the marsh behind Morehead City and Beaufort change faster than a nervous person with a TV remote. Wanna lose a prop or lower unit before you can say "oyster reef"? Just throttle up in a creek close to low tide. Back there, anglers putter along at 3 to 4 mph — unless they own a jet-drive or flats boat.

Besides being hard to reach, inshore flounder have been hammered for years by fishermen and netters alike. Guide Joe Shute said anglers who enjoy catching a legal inside flounder can still do so, but it takes effort. Anglers have to learn where and when to go and best techniques.

"Only a handful of people fish for flounders at inside waters anymore around here," said Shute, who owns Cape Lookout Fly Shop in Atlantic Beach (252-240-1427). "Ninety percent drift live baits for trout and red drum and might pick up a flounder here and there."

One of the better flounder-fishing spots once existed 5 minutes behind Morehead City in a large flats area called "The Haystacks".

"There's been a lot of sand migration and fill-ins in the Haystacks, and some channels have gotten real shallow, too skinny for most V-hulls, especially at low tides," Shute said. "People go in there and get stuck."

However, the Newport River, a few hundred yards north of the Haystacks, is different. It's a large bay, deep enough to handle bigger boats that ply the channel to access Adams Creek and points north. The cut flows from the town of Newport to the northwest and joins the ICW at Adams Creek.

"Best baits are live finger mullets or mud minnows," Shute said. "Flounder prefer mullets, I think, because they're a little bigger meal."

Shute accidentally discovered a Newport River flounder hot spot where a shoreline flat dropped from 1 to 2 feet deep.

"Flounder were on the 45-degree angle in 2 feet of water and waiting for minnows to come over the edge," Shute said. "We were fishing for redfish and saw something jumping out of the water, went over there and flounder were launching themselves into the air, blasting minnows at that ledge. Never seen it anywhere else. We caught 18- to 20-inch flounder there."

North Carolina anglers are allowed to keep four flounder per day, with a 15-inch minimum size.

Shute's preferred tackle includes a 7-foot medium-action spinning rod and 2500 series reel spooled with 12- to 15-pound-test monofilament tied to a 2½-foot leader of 30-pound mono below a ½-ounce flat no-roll sliding sinker with a 1/0 or 2/0 Kahle or octopus hook at the end.

"The biggest flounders are at the (state) port wall or Radio Island terminal port," Shute said. "You should fish (the port wall) around the eastern corner when the tide's not fast so you won't get hung up so much. Still, you'll need a 2- to 3-ounce (barrel) sinker to get to the bottom. You want to keep your bait on the bottom as long as possible."

Shute caught his largest flounder, 10½ pounds, at the port wall using a bucktail tipped with a live shrimp. Each summer, anglers pull 10-plus pounders from the waters around the wall. ▪

— Craig Holt

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Reefs, wrecks and hardbottom areas off North Carolina's southern coast fill up with flounder in the summer.

Chad Chastain

FLOUNDER ARE REEF, WRECK REGULARS off SENC coast

As the temperature rises, so does the number of flounder around nearshore ocean artificial reefs, hardbottom/livebottom areas and shipwrecks off North Carolina's southern coast.

Some artificial reefs, like Yaupon Reef (AR 425) off 0ak Island, are known as flounder havens. Their locations are available on N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries' website, www.ncdmf.net. Some of the other spots are well known, others are approximately located on nautical charts, and many are secret or semi-secret locations only occasionally shared with family and fishing buddies.

Eleven artificial reefs are within 5 miles of the beach between Rich's Inlet and the South Carolina state line. A conservative guess would be that 50 shipwrecks are in this same section of ocean, and hundreds of small sections where rocky or live growth pokes through the sand or mud on the bottom. The bottom line is, an abundance of structure is available, and much of it attracts flatfish. Flounder numbers are usually highest in July and August.

Fishermen target flounder around this kind of structure in two different ways. The oldest is by dropping live baits to the bottom and waiting for flounder to find them. The newer method is vertical jigging, which has become popular in the past 20 years or so and is surprisingly productive at times.

Live baits fished in and adjacent to the structure produce flounder, but also result in a lot of lost rigs and fish. A Carolina rig made with 30-pound monofilament or flourocarbon helps prevent this. Most guides suggest keeping the leader short to prevent the bait from hiding in the structure to avoid being eaten. Flounder must turn live baits to swallow them headfirst, and they are sensitive to pressure on the line while doing this. Setting the hook too early or waiting too long can both result in missed fish.

The primary method for jigging is to work the lure vertically so it doesn't hang up. However, if you don't occasionally get hung, you probably aren't fishing deep enough in the structure. The preferred lure is a 2- to 4-ounce bucktail with a trailer that can be a strip of natural bait or a soft-plastic strip, and many fishermen prefer a 4-inch, scented soft-plastic lure. The big plus of jigging is that when they are felt, the hook can be set immediately. ▪

— Jerry Dilsaver

SHEEPSHEAD FILL UP JETTIES AT LITTLE RIVER

Crustaceans are No. 1 on the menu for inshore battlers

The middle of another Carolina summer is upon us, and while plenty of offshore and inshore options exist, it's prime time to catch sheepshead around the rock jetties scattered up and down the coast.

The rock jetties that straddle Little River Inlet along the border between the two Carolinas are among the best places to find sheepshead during the heat of the summer.



The jetties that line Little River Inlet fill up with sheepshead as the peak of summer arrives.

Jeff Burleson

Little River Inlet is sandwiched between two uninhabited, barrier islands, Waties Island to the west and Bird Island to the east. Unlike many jetty systems, Little River transports flow from much more than just Dunn Sound and the Calabash River; it receives substantial flow from the Waccamaw River through the Intracoastal Waterway.

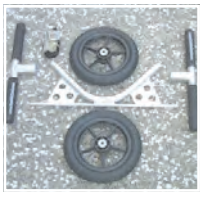
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Little River continued

Not only does the Waccamaw provide a black, tannic tinge to the ocean, these waters transport nutrient-rich flows that enhance growth in this tiny estuary and along the giant, granite boulders protecting Little River Inlet. Sheepshead and an entire host of familiar finned critters gravitate to this system to feast.

Sheepshead will eat a variety of foods, but they prefer barnacles, mussels, shrimp and other hard-shelled creatures. The jetties provide a perfect dinner table that can support a large population of hard-shelled delicacies. But these jetties can bring swift currents and dangerous conditions for boaters. It takes an experienced angler to navigate these perilous areas and catch good fish.

Mitch Stines of Camden, S.C., is one of those fishermen who knows how to navigate the jetties, and sheepshead are undoubtedly his favorite marine fish to target.

"I first started fishing for sheepshead in 2006, and I have been hooked on it ever since," Stines said. "We catch plenty of fish during the middle of the summer when it's hot. I am still trying to beat my 11-pound personal best from the jetties at Georgetown, and I have caught several that have come close."

Stines has fished for sheepshead around just about every kind of hard structure, but he prefers the jetties because the window of opportunity is so much longer than inshore — and there are just more fish out there.

"You can catch sheepshead on pilings, but the best bite only lasts around 30 minutes," he said. "At the jetties, you have a lot more structure for the sheepshead to be around and a much-longer interval to fish when conditions are best. I like to fish the incoming tide best, and the more water over the rocks, the better the bite will be."

As the tide rises, sheepshead begin to feed upward on the structure as it gets flooded. Stines will fish on both jetties and on both sides of the jetties, depending on the current. He likes to set up with his boat tight to the rocks, choosing the side with the calmest conditions.

"The fish are right in the rocks feeding, so that's right where I fish," he said. "You may lose some tackle or a lot of tackle, but that is where the fish are."

Stines uses light tackle to give him a direct link to the sheepshead, along with 10-pound line and a drop-shot rig with a small hook. The bite is typically characterized by a subtle tap.

"Unlike the typical Carolina rig people use, you can feel every bite with the drop-shot rig on light line," he said.

Fiddler crabs are his staple bait; he will make sure he has more than enough to fill out a day, because when the fish start biting, he will go through a bucket of crabs in a hurry. He usually doesn't mind, because he will normally boat several dozen sheepshead in exchange.

"When you are losing bait, you are usually catching fish. It's a good trade off," he said.

While the summer is the best time of year for sheepshead at the jetties, they will be chewing away crustaceans and mollusks off the boulders well into the fall. ▪

— Jeff Burleson



Big stringers of catfish are commonplace on Lake Monticello during the summer for anglers who free-line a variety of baits.

William Attaway

FREE-LINE FOR CATFISH

on Lake Monticello summer days

There is one way to just about guarantee putting catfish in the boat during July and August on South Carolina's Lake Monticello, according to guide William Attaway of Pomaria, S.C.

"The best bite I know of is free-lining. It pays off good this time of year for numbers of fish and sometimes big fish," he said. "You can anchor and catch a big fish, although you might only catch one or even none, but this pretty much guarantees you will get fish into the boat."

Free-lining works in the summer because fish are usually

suspended from 5 to 20 feet below the surface, he said. They get active because of the pump-back operation pulling water back into the lake from the Broad River for the operation of the nuclear plant, and that stirs up the bait.

The hottest bite, he said, occurs when freshwater mussels, which are common in the lake, die due to the heat and float to the surface. The catfish gather in packs to feed on the mussels.

"It's not complicated. I use cut bait, chicken thighs mostly, cut in small chunks to simulate a mussel floating in the water," said Attaway (803-924-0857), who prefers fresh chicken and likes the thigh meat better than the breast because it is a little tougher and dispenses a little natural oil in the water. Sometimes he spikes the flavor with garlic salt or garlic powder and even soaks it in cherry Kool-Aid.

"I think this bite is based on sight. Not to say the scent hurts it, but I think it is based on sight because it is so shallow," said Attaway, who also uses cut gizzard shad, white perch and bream for bait.

Attaway threads chunks of bait — an inch square of smaller — on 8/0 Gamakatsu hooks with a 50-pound leader tied to 40-pound line on his reel. Six rods drift bait behind the boat, with the longer lines out pulling a little deeper beneath the surface.

"The fish like it slow. If they are down deep I try to go slower and if they are up close to the top I go a little faster," he said. "A lot depends on the wind. If there is a 5 mph wind, I put out two 6-foot drift socks and use the trolling motor, and if there is no wind, I just use the trolling motor."

The best times to fish, he said, are early morning, late afternoon and at night.

"When it is hot, I prefer to fish at night. Most of the time I will be in 100-plus feet of water over trees, but at nighttime I go up in the shallows, 30 feet of water or less and fish the same way," he said. "We are mostly catching small blues, and on a good night we will have anywhere from 20 to 50 fish."

The average-size catfish runs from 1½ to about 3 pounds, he said, but sometimes the catch will be supplemented with a bonus fish of 20 to 30 pounds.

The best fishing is when the mussels are dying, Attaway said, but when there is a major die-off and the top of the lake is covered with them, the catfish gorge themselves, and in about a week or so, the bite goes away. ▪

— Pat Robertson

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