

Carolina

SPORTSMAN[®]



www.CarolinaSPORTSMAN.com

OCTOBER 2020

PREVIEW THE PRE-RUT

- › **TACTICS FROM TOP CAROLINA HUNTERS**
- › **OCTOBER SUCCESS STORIES**

**DON'T MISS
FALL KINGS**

**WAYLAY
WYLIE CATS**

**CRANKBAIT
TIME'S HERE**

**SACK SANTEE'S
STRIPED BASS**

**PLUS:
TIPS FOR CHOOSING
YOUR FIRST KAYAK**

**RIVER-RUN
SPECKLED
TROUT TIPS**

\$2.99 OCTOBER 2020





THE ORIGINAL ALL-WELDED ALUMINUM SKIFF IS FAST, TOUGH AND SHALLOW!



SKIFF 185
Shown With Optional Appearance Package

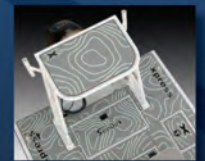
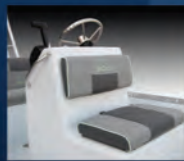


XPRESS SKIFF

FLATS STEALTH WITH BIG WATER DURABILITY



The Xpress Skiff enhances incredible opportunities for any shallow water fishing fanatic. The Skiff Hull offers a supreme level of buoyancy allowing you to quietly pole in just inches of water. The all-welded aluminum construction, supported by the longitudinal rib system and unibody injected foam, makes this the most durable platform on the market. The beautifully blended combination of shallow draft, fishability, innovative design and stealth-like properties on the Xpress Skiff will get you hooked up and ready for your next shallow water showdown. This is the boat most glass manufacturers hoped we would not introduce or perfect! No apologies necessary, no apologies needed, it is an epic craft. Whether running rivers, bays or across oyster bars, why settle for anything less than Xpress!



Available option on the Xpress Skiff

199 Extrusion Place, Hot Springs, AR 71901

xpressboats.com

220 BaySport Creek Cruising



For more information, go to PioneerBoats.com
or call **843-538-6604**
or like us on Facebook at Pioneer Boats
for the latest available information.



Avenger



Born on the
Bayou of Louisiana,
Raised in the
Lowcountry of
South Carolina



For more information, go to
AvengerBayBoats.com
or call **843-538-6604**
or like us on
Facebook at
Avenger Bay Boats
for the latest available information.



MODEL 2400

From The
Back Water
To The
Blue Water



For more information, go to
BullsBayBoats.com
or call **843-538-6604**
or like us on
Facebook at
Bulls Bay Boats
for the latest available information.



The Carolina's Largest Boat Dealer!

Over 300 Boats in Stock!

- On site test lake
- Over 70,000 sq ft of inside showrooms
- 9 full time sales and finance experts
- 8 factory trained service techs

**CALL US BEFORE YOU BUY...
WE WILL SAVE YOU MONEY!**

- **Huge selection to choose from!
All the best brands**



Sanford, NC
919-775-7259
chatleeboats.com

Powered by



MAKAIRA

OFFSHORE HYBRID

BLUE WAVE

BOATS



Get to know MAKAIRA, the offshore hybrid from Blue Wave Boats. Built to take up to 600hp and 135 gallons of fuel this boat will get you to the fishing ground and back. The shallow draft will also allow you to rule the bay when you want to stay near-shore.

405.382.0349 | www.bluewaveboats.com

Your Blue Wave Boats dealer in the Carolinas is...

Doss Marine: Chapin, South Carolina

Performance East: Goldsboro, North Carolina





Carolina SPORTSMAN CONTENTS

Volume 27 | Number 10 | October 2020

FEATURES:

11 DON'T WAIT FOR THE RUT

The weeks before peak whitetail breeding often provides the most buck movement and best chances to wrap your tag around a big set or horns. Take advantage of the pre-rut.

> By Terry Madewell **COVER STORY**

17 'HUNTING MOON' WHITETAIL TACTICS

When October arrives, it takes a special hunter to tag a big buck. Here's how a handful of North Carolina hunters made for a happy Halloween.

> By Craig Holt

29 FOLLOW THE SALT, FIND THE SPECKS

Fall rainfall can be a deciding factor on where you ought to fish in Carolinas estuaries, especially if they're fed by a river. Learn how and where to move when a storm arrives.

> By Jeff Burleson

35 WAYLAY WYLIE'S WILEY CATS

Blues or flatheads? It doesn't matter. Here are a guide's tips for catching both species as fall arrives on this border lake.

> By Phillip Gentry

43 THE KINGS' THRONE ROOM

The waters off Oak Island are the place where the fall king mackerel bite, especially big kings, takes off when October approaches the North Carolina coast. Here's how to extinguish a smoker.

> By Jeff Burleson

OUTDOOR UPDATE:

8 IT'S A (DUCK) DOG'S LIFE

COLUMNS:

22 STICKS & STRINGS

By Sammy Romano

24 GREENER PASTURES

By Jeff Burleson

26 COOKING ON THE WILD SIDE

By Capt. Jerry Dilsaver

50 SOUND & SEA

By Brian Cope

52 LUNKER LINES

By David Fritts

54 SMALL CRAFT ADVISORY

By Phillip Gentry

56 SANTEE STRINGER

By Terry Madewell

58 HEAD FOR THE MOUNTAINS

By Bob Satterwhite

DEPARTMENTS:

16 Hunting/Fishing regs

42 Hunting/Fishing Scrapbook

53 Astro Tables

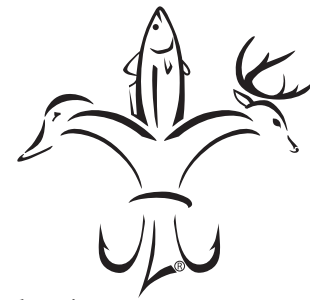
60 Fishing Hot Spots

68 Advertiser Index

ON THE COVER:



Big bucks will be on the move in October, leaving for good their summer patterns and heading, at an increasing speed, toward the rut. Photo by Rick Small.



Carolina SPORTSMAN

www.CarolinaSPORTSMAN.com

PUBLISHER: Lisa Lottinger Cuccia, lisac@lasmag.com

MANAGING EDITOR: Dan Kibler
336.416.9631/dank@carolinaspportsman.com

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR: Jeff Caldwell

ASSISTANT PRODUCTION MANAGER:
Desiree P. Lewis

ART DIRECTOR: Kevin Orgeron

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS:
Jeff Cashio, Alissa Zeringue

CONTROLLER: Juanita Guidry

SALES DIRECTOR: Jay Forrest
225.278.0258/jayf@lasmag.com

NC ADVERTISING SALES REP: Mitch Eby
919.602.3862, mitchebync@gmail.com

SC ADVERTISING SALES REP: Bret Holten
843.442.7250, breth@carolinaspportsman.com

ADVERTISING SALES:
Asa Faulkner, Mark Boyd, Burton Angelle and Mark Hilzrim (National Sales)

CIRCULATION DIRECTOR:
Ricky Naquin 985.859.7744/rickyn@lasmag.com

CIRCULATION FIELD MANAGER:
Mitch Eby 919.602.3862/mitchebync@gmail.com

ADVERTISING INQUIRIES:
Jay Forrest, jayf@lasmag.com/225.278.0258

FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS OR SUBSCRIPTION ISSUES, CALL 1.855.224.1667

Monday thru Friday, 7 am to Midnight
Saturday & Sunday, 9 am - 6 pm EST

CAROLINA SPORTSMAN (USPS #012969) is published monthly by Carolina Publishing Inc., Allen J. Lottinger, President. 14236 Highway 90, P.O. Box 1199, Boutte, LA 70039. Mailed at periodicals postage rates and paid at Boutte, La., and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Carolina Sportsman, PO Box 433294, Palm Coast, FL 32143. All rights reserved. Reproduction of contents is strictly prohibited without permission of Carolina Sportsman. **EDITORIAL** information number is 336.376.5101. Editorial guidelines can be obtained by writing Carolina Sportsman, 433 Holinswood Ave., Winston-Salem, N.C. 27103. Carolina Sportsman is not responsible for the loss of queries, manuscripts or other materials.

P.O. Box 1199, Boutte, LA 70039-1199
800.538.4355

Volume 27 | No 10

NEW MirrOlure® Mullet SKIN Series



MirrOmullet
CS16MR-Mullet
3" Long, 3/8 Oz.

"Surface Walker"

MirrOlure expands its Skin Series with four NEW Mullet Patterns.

Available in popular MirrOdine, MirrOdine XL, MirrOmullet and Catch JR models.



Catch Jr.
CS22MR-Mullet
3" Long, 3/8 Oz.

"Suspending Twitchbaits"



MirrOdine®
CS17MR-Mullet
2-5/8" Long, 3/8 Oz.

MirrOdine® XL
CS27MR-Mullet
3-1/8" Long, 9/16 Oz.



ORIGINAL **MirrOlure**

L&S Bait Company
1415 East Bay Drive • Largo, Florida 33771
Tel 727-584-7691 • www.mirrolure.com

LOW-FREQUENCY

SOUTHERN LAND SOLUTIONS, LLC



- REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENTS
- RESIDENTIAL LOT CLEARING
- SHOOTING AND FIRE LANES
- TRAIL BUILDING
- WILDLIFE HABITAT RESTORATION
- FORESTRY SITE PREP
- UTILITY RIGHT-OF-WAY CLEARING
- POND CONSTRUCTION

FOR ALL YOUR BRUSH SHREDDING NEEDS
 WATCH US ON  AND CALL TODAY!
BULLDOZER • MULCHING • TRACKHOE WORK
843-353-7375
 BRANNON TURBEVILLE - OWNER

THE CAROLINA'S LAND MANAGEMENT COMPANY

Outdoor UPDATE

with
Dan Kibler



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

Dan Kibler

IT'S A (DUCK) DOG'S WORLD NC'S EARLY SEASON IS ALWAYS CIRCLED ON OUR FAMILY'S CALENDAR

I literally cannot wait for October to get here. Yeah, I know, most people who love being outdoors do, because summer's heat is behind us, and there are plenty of things to do that involve a gun or a rod. I love catching speckled trout and bass and crappie, but it's something else altogether that cranks my engine.

two off before they pitch in with a splash.

And at least once every October, Buckshot makes some kind of great retrieve. He found one duck last opening day that a buddy shot at the crack of dawn; we heard the bird hit the dark water more than we saw him. It must have paddled to the end of a tree lap and hid in the leafy branches, a good 20 yards from where it fell, but Buckshot found him in good order.

One year, a crippled woody tried to lose Buckshot in the limbs at the top of an oak that had fallen in the pond. He waited until it came around on the other



North Carolina anglers had only three days to catch and keep red snapper in 2020, but Bill Zeron took advantage, catching this nice fish the final day, July 12, out of Southport.

It's the four days early in the month that have become very special around our place: North Carolina's early duck season, set this year for Oct. 7-10. Lots of guys circle certain days on the calendar: opening day of seasons like dove, deer, squirrel and rabbit. I circle

all of early duck season. I will not miss it.

This will be the fifth year that we've carried Buckshot, the world's greatest black Lab — hey, it's my story; I'm sticking to it — to a little wood duck hole deep in the woods in Yadkin County. There aren't a whole lot of ducks around, but it seems like a fair amount of them use this little pond, especially if acorns are dropping from the oak trees that surround it.

We usually hunt at least two of the four mornings, getting out way before sunrise and letting the world wake up around us. Right as legal shooting time arrives, so do the wood ducks, coming in fast as fighter jets, low to the water. If we're extremely lucky — it's still dark — we see or hear them in time to get a shot or

side, climbed upon the trunk and was waiting when the duck re-appeared. Surprise!

Buckshot's year-old yellow Lab puppy, Boone, might join us this year. After all, it's a few days that have become a family tradition — dogs and all. ■

Bag-A-Buck Contest underway



Don't forget to post photos of your bucks in Carolina Sportsman's Bag-A-Buck Contest to be eligible to win monthly prizes of great Sportsman swag from the online Sportsman Store.

To enter or see deer that have been entered, log onto <https://www.carolinasportsman.com/bag-a-buck/>

SHARK-FISHING FAMILY BEACHES A SURPRISE: HUGE TARPON

When people on the beach complain about him shark-fishing from the surf, Jared Beard of Wilmington, N.C., likes to tell them that he's really trying to catch a tarpon, cobia or big redfish..

Beard found his words turned inside out on Aug. 9, on the beach at Fort Fisher south of Wilmington, when he, his father Ron of Burlington and brother Jonathan of Wilmington hooked and beached a tarpon that was 1½ inches longer than 6 feet and weighed at least 150 pounds.

"I usually shark-fish down there, and it had been a little slow," said Beard, 34, who works for a pond-management company. "We had to get off the beach by 3 o'clock because somebody had to get to work.

"It was slack high tide, about 12:45, and there was nothing really going on. I changed out baits, and the last bait I put out, it took off, and I ended up with a 6½-foot blacktip. I pulled him in, got him off, tagged and released him, and I paddled another bait out about 200 yards. There was a school of menhaden out there the size of a house, so I put it out there."

Beard dropped the bait, a huge chunk of king mackerel, impaled on a hook he remembers as being "at least a 14/0" and paddled his kayak back into the beach.

"By the time I had paddled in and dragged the kayak up, (a fish) came flying out of the water. I thought it had to be on

Jonathan Beard, Ron Beard and Jared Beard landed this 73½-inch tarpon in the surf at Fort Fisher on Aug. 9.



the bait I had put out, but the rod, nothing moved, like nothing was happening," he said. "Then, all of the sudden, he's on, and the rod is bent over, and he's taking drag, jumping all over the place."

Beard's father and brother took turns on the Okuma rod and 50W Avet reel, working on the fish, which Beard said jumped five or six times during the 10-minute fight.

"I sure wasn't expecting a tarpon," he said. "When he first jumped, we didn't know what it was; we just saw a big flash of white. I had turned around and missed one jump, and my dad and brother said it didn't look like a shark, that it looked like a tarpon. I said, 'No way.'"

When father and son Beard wrestled the big fish closer to the beach, Jared Beard waded out, grabbed the leader, and taking advantage of the waves, he pulled the tarpon ashore and beached it.

"There was a dropoff where the water went from about shin deep to neck deep,"

he said. "I just got my hand on the leader and pulled him in with the waves."

The Beards didn't waste much time, taking only a few photos of the fish, then putting a tape measure on it. The beast's fork length was 73½ inches. Had they taken a girth measurement, they would have been able to use a formula that fishermen use to closely estimate a tarpon's weight. A chart developed by a professor at the University of Miami, estimates that a 73½-inch tarpon with a 30-inch girth would weigh around 155 pounds. A fish of the same length with a 40-inch girth would weigh around 210 pounds.

North Carolina's state-record tarpon weighed 193 pounds, 5 ounces, and was caught in 2008 from Topsail Beach's SeaView Pier by Malcolm Condie. This fish, had the Beards kept it and gotten an official weight, would not have been eligible for the record because more than one fishermen fought it. ■

DEADLINE FOR SEVERAL SC LOTTERY HUNTS IS OCT. 15

The S.C. Department of Natural Resources is accepting applications for waterfowl lottery hunts on public lands and a lottery quail hunt on McBee WMA through Oct. 15 at 5 p.m.

A non-refundable fee of \$20 is required of all applicants for the multi-site waterfowl lottery hunt and \$5 per youth applicant for the youth multi-site waterfowl Hunt. Youth must be 17 years of age or younger to apply for the youth hunt. The fee for the quail hunt is \$5. Youth may apply if they are at least 10 years old.

After the selection process occurs, only the primary applicant will receive email notification of the drawing's completion.

The following hunt locations will not be available in the Waterfowl Lottery Hunt this year due to extensive and ongoing property renovations: Santee Delta, Wateree Heritage Preserve WMA,

Samworth and Clemson.

Applicants for both the waterfowl hunts also have the ability to opt-in for second-chance waterfowl hunting opportunities being offered by private landowners.

There is no additional cost to the applicant, and SCDNR preference points are not affected by any second chance draw hunt opportunity offered by the South Carolina Wildlife Partnership (SCWP) or the Pintail Partners (for youth hunters).

You must apply for the SCDNR waterfowl lottery hunt to participate in any second chance hunt opportunity and complete the opt-in form so that your information can be sent for the second chance drawing.

Quail hunt dates are: Nov 23-24, Nov 27-28, Dec 4-5, Dec 11-12, Dec 18-19, Dec 26, Jan 1-2 and Jan 8-9. ■



Tyler Pearson of Gilbert, S.C., got South Carolina's 2020 deer season off with a bang on Aug. 18, when he killed this 180-pound, 10-point buck in full velvet on an afternoon hunt in Lexington County. The buck's inside spread was 18 inches.

BIG DOINGS

Jason Ceisner of Raleigh, N.C., greeted North Carolina's six-week flounder season on Aug. 16, opening day, landing this monster while fishing in Carolina Beach. He used a live mullet on a Carolina rig to catch the 10-pound, 11-ounce flattie.



ATTENTION
Mine Operators &
Independent Contractors

**Your Complete
Mine Safety And
Compliance Resource**

- MSHA Training
- Compliance Audits
- First Aid/CPR Training
- Respirator Fit Testing


FIRST AID


CPR


OSHA


U.S. Department of Labor
MSHA
Mine Safety & Health Administration

Palmetto State Training
843-569-6872
When You Need it...Where You Need it.
www.PalmettoStateTraining.com

**Call Now to Schedule
Your Trailer Maintenance... Don't Wait!**



**Boat • Dump • Enclosed
Equipment • Utility**

Hwy. 70E, Dover (5 miles east of Kinston), NC • 252-523-1038



**All Aluminum Construction, Lightweight,
Maintenance Free, Torsion Axles, LED Lighting
Trailers for ATV, Equipment, Car Hauler,
Utility, Jet Skis and so much More**



**Your Eastern NC
Trailer Headquarters!**

The “pre-rut” is an often-discussed but sometimes overlooked, short window of opportunity for targeting big bucks. While the rut is the focus for many, and rightly so, the pre-rut has some distinct advantages for those willing to learn when it occurs on the land they hunt.

The key to taking advantage of this time of the season is knowing when it occurs; one veteran deer hunter said that process occupies a short niche of time just prior to the rut.

Steve Cobb of Union, S.C., a pro-staff member for Hunter Specialties for 25 years, specifically targets this short window of opportunity for big bucks.

“The pre-rut is all about the buck and doe ratio in terms of how many does are ready to breed compared to bucks ready to mate,” Cobb said. “I’ve tracked the pre-rut and rut for many years, and in the Carolinas, we have what I call a trickle rut. Out west, I’ve experienced times when almost overnight, the vast majority of does are in estrus, and the hunting goes wild, literally overnight. Here, in the time between early season hunting and the actual rut, a few does go into estrus, but almost all the bucks are ready to breed. That’s a numbers game that works to the advantage of hunters with a good plan.”

THE WEEKS BEFORE PEAK WHITETAIL BREEDING OFTEN PROVIDES THE MOST BUCK MOVEMENT AND BEST CHANCES TO WRAP YOUR TAG AROUND A BIG SET OR HORNS. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE PRE-RUT.

■ By Terry Madewell



DON'T WAIT FOR THE RUT

Bucks are pushing does almost around the clock during the pre-rut, Cobb said. With only a few does in estrus, bucks are almost frantically looking for the receptive ones and may move even more than they do when the rut is full-on.

“During the rut, enough does are in estrus where a dominant buck can find one fairly quickly, and that buck may be locked up and can be harder to effectively hunt,” he said. “During pre-rut, the bucks may travel long distances, scouring the woods, fields and food sources, often chasing multiple does before finding one ready to breed. This large travel zone is the ideal time to hunt.”

Cobb begins his quest for pre-rut bucks during the pre-season and early in the season. He employs trail cameras before the season to find areas where deer are congregated on the places he hunts. Then he'll hunt and scout early in the season to try to kill a big buck, but he's also tracking their pre-rut status.

“The pre-rut phase varies throughout the Carolinas,” he said, “but when I begin seeing scrapes and rubs, I know it's getting close. My trail cameras will also begin picking up a lot more buck movement during daylight hours — and around the clock, actually.”

In addition to paying attention to buck sign, Cobb also listens for bucks fighting just before the pre-rut.

“Bucks fight to establish dominance for breeding season, and this fighting produces a good opportunity for hunting. It also signals pre-rut is imminent, if not already started,” he said. “Cool snaps at this time also jump-start the big-time buck movement.”

This is when Cobb focus on pre-rut hunting areas; he said the weapon of choice impacts where they should hunt.

“I'm going to hunt food sources, because I'm primarily a bowhunter,” he said. “Muscadines and persimmons are premium targets for hunting pre-rut, because both are available and are prime food sources and are usually found in habitat conducive to bowhunting.

“Bowhunters have to get close to the food source or hunt on highly used trails entering food plots, because they must be close to the deer,” he said. “Oak hollows are another favorite for pre-rut hunting.”

Cobb said when hunting acorn hollows, the white oak is king. He'll scout acorn hollows, and if he finds acorns abundant, especially white oak acorns, he knows he's in the right area. Red oaks will do if white oaks are not available or not producing.

“My go-to tactic to determining if I'm in the right area is to find white oak acorns and squirrels,” he said. “Squirrels will find the best acorn food source before deer.

“When I go into an area that has a lot of acorns and plenty of squirrels in the woods, I'm going set up a pre-rut deer stand,” he said. “I typically use climbers for mobility and the ability to pick just the right spot with wind considerations.”

Cobb said it may be hard to find, but his absolute prime pre-rut bow stand situation is to have a 3- to 5-year-old clear-cut, regrowth area adjacent to acorn-bearing white oaks. An agriculture field adjacent to oaks is another good option.



Locating areas holding does is a key to putting the squeeze on a pre-rut buck. He'll be testing the wind to see if any doe is approaching estrus.

"The regrowth in the clear-cut is prime bedding area, and the woodline adjacent to it can be a prime feeding area," he said. "Ideally, a big white oak tree on the edge of the woods and clear-cut will enable me to get back in the woods about 20 yards and set up a bow stand."

If carrying a gun, a hunter can set up further away, as long as a good sight line to the target exists. Cobb said gun hunters can also hunt large agriculture fields, such as soybeans. In this situation, he'll set up at a much-longer distance since he's using a high-powered rifle and quality scope to cover a lot more territory.

"The pre-rut affords a rifle hunter a great opportunity, because with the right setup, they can cover a significantly larger, productive area," he said. "For example, they can simply set up high and overlook a large clear-cut and likely see bucks pushing does in the interior of the field, while also watching the edge of the field and woods."

**HUNTING
SEASON
IS HERE!**



Let's Take It Outside

**Hunting • Fishing • Archery
Feed • Seed • Hunting Carts
Clothing • Footwear • Knives
Wild Game Processing
And So Much More!**



**OPEN
Tuesday – Sunday
Closed on Mondays**

**(803) 327-0500
Processing One
Deer at a time!**

**1980 MT. HOLLY ROAD
ROCK HILL, S.C. 29730
I-77, EXIT 73
(803) 328-9792
WWW.NICHOLSSTORE.COM**



DON'T WAIT FOR THE RUT

A hunter carrying a rifle can also effectively hunt other situations, including woods roads, powerlines, beanfields and large food plots to watch for bucks seeking does. But finding the exact spot to set up is only part of the challenge, Cobb said. Whether bowhunting or hunting with a gun, having the wind in your face while watching your target is imperative. “During pre-rut, bucks are focused on does, but they generally don’t get stupid,” he said. “I can fool a deer’s eyes with good camouflage. I can fool his ears at times with vocalization, because pre-rut is prime time for vocalization and rattling. But his nose is hard to beat, other than by playing the wind perfectly. I cannot stress that enough. I play the wind right, even if I’m 100 yards or more from my target. I’ll still use a cover scent such as Hunter Specialties’ Earth Wafers.

Cobb said the pre-rut transitions directly into the rut, accepted by most as prime time for hunting. But taking advantage of the pre-rut usually affords more than just a prime opportunity to see or harvest a trophy buck; it also allows him to see lots of bucks of all ages and sizes.

“Along with my trail cameras, it enables me to know what’s available on the land I hunt in terms of potential trophy bucks,” he said. “I can make a hit-list of bucks I want to target and can identify bucks I’ll pass to let them grow for future seasons.”

“The pre-rut is not only an exceptional hunting opportunity, it prepares me for the next major segment of the hunting season, the rut.” ■



Terry Madewell of Ridgeway, S.C., 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.

Persimmons are a favorite food of deer when they begin to ripen, usually in late September into October. Find them, hunt around them. **BOTTOM:** Those bucks you caught on trail cameras before or early in the season? You might see them in pre-rut.



THE BIOLOGY OF THE PRE-RUT

Getting close to a nice, pre-rut buck is the result of having a good plan.



Biologist Charles Ruth of the S.C. Department of Natural Resources, has studied thousands of harvested deer and has done so over a period of many years. He said a short period of time between summer deer patterns and the full rut typically represent very active deer movements that hunters typically refer to as “pre-rut.”

Ruth said biological changes in deer, particularly bucks, from the early season to the rut creates a prime hunting opportunity. “Specific times vary throughout (South Carolina), but generally, toward the end of September into early October, hormonal changes begin to occur in deer,” he said. “Physiologically, bucks are ready for reproduction when they shed their velvet, and at the same time, their coats being to change and bachelor groups are abandoned.

“Bucks muscle up in response to increases in testosterone as their body transforms for the rut. They begin to strive for dominance, and they leave more sign in the woods with rubs and scrapes. By late September, when hunters begin to see fresh scrapes, it’s a sign bucks are actively looking for receptive does, but the fact is, only a few does are receptive at this time, so competition is great and movements by bucks increase.”

Ruth said cooler weather has a real impact on deer behavior during pre-rut, and the cooler days in late September and early

October help put deer on the move.

“Bucks are searching for does, and this large amount of moving makes them vulnerable to hunters who have done their homework and are set up in the right place,” he said.

“As the peak of the rut nears, more and more bucks are staying with the does that are ready to breed, and that often leaves hunters to see fewer bucks moving,” he said. “The last part of September and the early part of October is an excellent time to hunt because bucks are searching for limited numbers of does and are covering a lot of territory. If I could pick and choose a short window of time when I would do a lot of my hunting the pre-rut would be that time period.” ■

NORTH CAROLINA LAND IS IN DEMAND



2020 NC LAND MARKET UPDATE*

63
SOLD
LISTINGS

125
ACTIVE
LISTINGS

44
UNDER
CONTRACT



WHITETAIL PROPERTIES REAL ESTATE

HUNTING | RANCH | FARM | TIMBER

WHITETAILPROPERTIES.COM

\$1.3 BILLION
344,000 ACRES
sold company wide
in 2019



Whitetail Properties Real Estate, LLC - DBA Whitetail Properties | In the States of Nebraska & North Dakota - DBA Whitetail Trophy Properties Real Estate LLC | Licensed in IL, MO, IA, KS, KY, NE & OK - Dan Perez, Broker | Licensed in AR, CO, GA, MN, ND, SD, TN & WI - Jeff Evans, Broker | Licensed in FL, OH, NY & PA - Jefferson Kirk Gilbert, Broker | Licensed in TX & NM - Joey Bellington, Broker | Licensed in IN - Bill Minor, Broker | Licensed in AL, GA, LA, & MS - Sybil Stewart, Broker | Licensed in TN - Chris Wakefield, Broker | Licensed in TN - Bobby Powers, Broker | Licensed in AR - Anthony Orsico, Broker | Licensed in SC, NC & VA - Chip Camp, Broker | Licensed in NC - Rich Baugh, Broker | Licensed in MI - Edmund Joel Nigro, Broker | Licensed in WY - Debbie S. Laux, Broker | Licensed in ID, MT, OR & WY - Aaron Milken, Broker

*These numbers are in reference to the inventory totals for Whitetail Properties Real Estate in North Carolina as of August 1, 2020.



HUNTING SEASONS

DEER

Region	Method	Season Dates
Western	Bowhunting	Sept. 12-27
		Oct. 11-Nov. 22
	Muzzleloader	Sept. 28-Oct. 10
Northwestern	Bowhunting	Dec. 12-Jan. 1, 2021 (bucks only)
		Nov. 23-Dec. 12
	Muzzleloader	Sept. 12-Nov. 6
Central	Bowhunting	Nov. 7-20
		Nov. 21-Jan. 1, 2021
	Muzzleloader	Sept. 12-Oct. 30
Northeastern/ Southeastern	Bowhunting	Oct. 31-Nov. 13
		Nov. 14-Jan. 1, 2021
	Muzzleloader	Sept. 12-Oct. 2
	Gun	Oct. 3-16

BEAR

Oct. 12-Nov. 21 & Dec. 14-Jan. 1, 2021:	In and west of Surry, Wilkes, Caldwell, Burke and Cleveland counties
Nov. 14-Jan. 1, 2021:	Alamance, Anson, Cabarrus, Caswell, Chatham, Davidson, Durham, Granville, Guilford, Lee, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Orange, Person, Randolph, Rockingham, Rowan, Stanly, Union counties
Oct. 17-Jan. 1, 2021:	Franklin, Harnett, Hoke, Johnston, Moore, Richmond, Scotland, Vance, Warren, Wake counties
Nov. 21-Jan. 1, 2021:	Alexander, Catawba, Davie, Forsyth, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Stokes, Yadkin counties
Nov. 11-Jan. 1, 2021:	Bladen, Brunswick, Carteret, Columbus, Cumberland, Duplin, New Hanover, Onslow, Pamlico, Pender, Robeson, Sampson counties
Nov. 14-29, Dec. 12-27:	Dare, Hyde, Tyrrell counties
Nov. 14-22, Dec. 12-27:	Beaufort, Bertie, Craven, Hertford, Jones, Martin, Washington counties
Nov. 14-22, Dec. 12-27:	Camden*, Chowan*, Gates, Pasquotank*, Perquimans (*Seasons open Nov. 13 by local laws)
Nov. 21-Dec. 20:	Edgecombe, Greene, Halifax, Lenoir, Nash, Northampton, Pitt, Wayne, Wilson counties

SQUIRREL

Oct. 124-Feb. 28, 2021 (gray & red)
Oct. 11-Jan. 31, 2021 (fox)

RABBIT

Oct. 12-Feb. 28, 2021

RACCOON, OPOSSUM

Oct. 12-Feb. 28, 2021

QUAIL

Nov. 21-Feb. 28, 2021

GROUSE

Oct. 12-Feb. 28, 2021

RAILS

Sept. 1-Nov. 20

(KING, SORA, VIRGINIA, CLAPPER)
(GALLINULES, MOORHENS)

CANADA GEESE

Resident zone, Oct. 7-17, Nov. 7-28,
Dec. 19-Feb. 13, 2021
Statewide: Sept. 1-30; NE Zone, Jan. 15-30, permit only

SNOW, BLUE, ROSS GEESE

Oct. 13-Feb. 13, 2021, Feb. 15-March 31, 2021, permit

DUCKS

Oct. 7-10, Nov. 7-28, Dec. 19-Jan. 30, 2021

EARLY TEAL

Sept. 12-30 (east of US 17 only)

SEA DUCKS

Nov. 23-Jan. 30, 2021

BRANT

Dec. 19-Jan. 30, 2021

DOVE

Sept. 5-Oct. 10, Nov. 14-28, Dec. 12-Jan. 31, 2021

TUNDRA SWAN

Nov. 7-Jan. 30, 2021. Bag limit 1, by permit only.

WOODCOCK

Dec. 10-Jan. 30, 2021

WILD TURKEY (Youth)

April 3-9, 2021
April 10-May 8, 2021

HUNTING SEASONS

SPECIES	SEASON DATES (PRIVATE LAND)	BAG LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMIT
Doves	Sept. 5-7, Sept. 8-Oct. 11 Nov. 14-28, Dec. 25-Jan. 31, 2021	15	45
Crow	Nov. 1-March 1, 2021	No limits	
Quail	Nov. 23-March 1, 2021	12	36
Rabbit	Nov. 26-March 1, 2021	5	15
Squirrel	Oct. 1-March 1, 2021	10	30
Fox	Nov. 26-March 1, 2021	No limits	
Grouse	Nov. 26-March 1, 2021 (Game Zone 1 only)	3	9
Raccoon	Sept. 15-March 15, 2021 (statewide)	3 raccoons per party	
Opossum	Sept. 15-March 15, 2021	No limits	
Other furbearers	Nov. 26-March 1, 2020 (bobcat, otter, weasel, mink, muskrat, skunk)	No limits	
Bear	Game Zone 1 Game Zone 2 Game Zone 2 (Georgetown, Horry, Marion and Williamsburg counties)	Oct. 17-23 (still hunting only) Oct. 24-30 (dogs) Oct. 17-30 (still hunting only) Oct. 17-30 (still hunting only)	
Rails	Sept. 15-20, King & Clapper Sora & Virginia Gallinules (common/purple)	15 25 15	45 75 45
Snipe	Nov. 14 - Feb. 28, 2021	8	24
Woodcock	Dec. 18 - Jan. 31, 2021	3	9
Wild Turkey	March 22-April 30, 2021 (Game Zones 3&4) April 1-May 10, 2021 (Game Zones 1&2)	3 3	

DEER SEASON

ZONE	ARCHERY ONLY	PRIM WEAPON	GUNS
1		Oct. 1-10	Oct. 11-Jan. 1, 2021
2	Sept. 15-30	Oct. 1-10	Oct. 11-Jan. 1, 2021
3			Aug. 15-Jan. 1, 2021
4	Aug 15-31		Sept. 1-Jan. 1, 2021
Youth Days: Game Zone 1, Sept. 26, Jan. 2; Game Zone 2: Sept. 12, Jan. 2; Game Zone 3: Aug. 8, Jan. 2; Game Zone 4: Aug. 8, Jan. 2.			

WATERFOWL SEASONS

SPECIES	DATES	BAG LIMIT
Duck	Teal only: Sept. 11-26 Nov. 21-28, Dec. 12-Jan. 31, 2021	6 6
Canada geese	Sept. 1-30, Nov. 21-28, Dec. 12-Jan. 31, 2021, Feb. 14-March 1, 2021	15 (Sept.) 5 (Others)
Blue/snow (light) geese	Nov. 21-28, Dec. 12-Jan. 31, 2021, Feb. 14-March 1, 2021	25
Brant	Dec. 13-Jan. 2-31, 2021	2
Sea ducks	Nov. 21-28, Dec. 12-Jan. 31, 2021	6
Mergansers	Nov. 21-28, Dec. 12-Jan. 31, 2021	5 (1 hooded)
Coots	Nov. 21-28, Dec. 12-Jan. 31, 2021	15



WHEN OCTOBER ARRIVES, IT TAKES A SPECIAL HUNTER TO TAG A BIG BUCK. HERE'S HOW A HANDFUL OF NORTH CAROLINA HUNTERS MADE FOR A HAPPY HALLOWEEN.

'HUNTING MOON'

By Craig Holt

WHITETAIL TACTICS

October is called the “hunting-moon” month, because deer become active and more visible to humans.

Whitetail bucks seek food to increase body weight; they make scrapes, rub trees with their antlers, fight rivals for does and begin to seek mates.

Those behavioral changes influence how to pattern deer movements, but like a jazz ensemble, North Carolina hunters often improvise old strategies to get within bow, muzzleloader, rifle or shotgun range.

Here are some lessons from hunters who adapted tactics to bag some of October 2019's finest bucks.

WAKE COUNTY MONSTER >

WAKE COUNTY MONSTER

Todd Faucette, 57, of Harnett County, began learning about whitetails in 1981 as an 18-year-old, charter member of the Wake County Wildlife Club.

After 39 years of rubbing shoulders with experts, he has a master's degree in pursuing deer. October is his favorite month to stalk wall-hanger bucks, because, he said, conventional wisdom is wrong about the 10th month.

"People talk about the 'October lull', but it's a good time to kill a big deer," he said. "I think many people don't have enough places to hunt, so they overhunt their places."

Faucette and his friend, Jay Adcock, tag-team whitetails. Also a Wake County Wildlife Club member, Adcock "probably has killed more big bucks than anyone in North Carolina," Faucette said. "(Successful hunting) is 'we, we, we,' not 'me, me, me.'"

Both favor archery equipment because it requires getting close to deer.

Their secrets for success include scouting near suburbs, gaining access to land, using trail cameras to find hot trails, creating bait piles as early as July, tree-stand camouflage and wind-direction awareness.

"Trail cameras let us know what's there or isn't; that's more important than anything," said Faucette, whose strategies paid off last Oct. 16 when he drilled a 10-pointer that scored 153% gross and 150% net inches. A trail cam snapped an image five days before Faucette downed the buck.

"We set 25 Covert trail cameras in 20 counties at corn piles," he said. "We rarely get turned down by landowners. They might look funny at bowhunters, but they don't like guns going off on their property."

Faucette tagged his buck near a trail that meandered across a pine ridge and dropped into a Wake County creek bottom.

"We're fanatical about camouflaging tree stands, not so much scent (control)," he said. "A downwind deer will smell you."

"If (cover scents) worked, no one would get busted. Even guys who promote that stuff on TV admit it's not fool-proof. But if you're well hidden, you're ahead of the game."

NON-TYPICAL MEETING

At the other end of the spectrum, 54-year-old Tracy McCorkle of Mecklenburg County did an October favor for a tree farmer and earned a No. 1 spot in North Carolina's all-time record book with the biggest non-typical ever taken with a crossbow.



Todd Faucette had a trail-cam photo of his big buck five days before he killed him with a bow.

The landowner gave McCorkle permission to hunt bucks that were shredding his decorative crepe myrtles and holly trees. He scouted one October day, and the next, using a Mathews MXB Mission 320 crossbow he'd never fired at a deer, killed a top-ranked buck.

Scored at the 2020 Dixie Deer Classic, the whitetail's 24-point rack taped 195% net inches (205% gross) to eclipse Shane Phillips' 179%-inch Rockingham County monster, taken in 2015.

McCorkle's one-day scouting trip to the 15-acre tree farm revealed a hardwoods funnel with a deep-rutted deer trail and large rubs.

"I set up a ground blind next to the path that came from a

Tracy McCorkle's Mecklenburg County buck, taken last October, is the biggest non-typical ever taken in North Carolina with a crossbow.



neighbor's property," said McCorkle, whose blind was a hole at the base of a decaying tree trunk. McCorkle camouflaged the spot with dead limbs and cut cedars.

"No one had hunted there a long time," he said. "Deer probably were coming through because they weren't pressured."

The next day, he drilled the buck at 5 p.m. as it walked within 15 yards, following a doe. McCorkle's bolt sliced through the deer, which ran 60 yards, stopped, looked back and fell dead. The shaking hunter waited 10 minutes then walked to his prize.

"The closer I got, I couldn't believe what I was seeing," McCorkle said. "I'll never see a deer like that again."

Even with little preparation, he recognized buck sign — a hot deer trail and large rubbed trees — then cobbled together a ground blind and downed one of North Carolina's biggest all-time bucks.

A WAITING GAME >

MEAN GREEN MACHINE



GAS-LESS INERTIA OPERATING SYSTEM

GREEN CERAKOTE FINISH

28 INCH BARREL

5 EXTRA LONG CHOKES

OVERSIZED AMBIDEXTROUS CONTROLS

4 + 1 CAPACITY

CZ 1012 ALL-TERRAIN

CZ-USA.COM

A WAITING GAME

Matthew Daughtry of Smithfield proved that patience is a virtue by waiting three years to pull the trigger on a huge buck last October.

His Johnston County whitetail, shot last Oct. 13, had a nearly-perfect 5x5 rack that taped 158 $\frac{5}{8}$ gross and 153 $\frac{3}{8}$ net inches. An employee of the N.C. Department of Agriculture, Daughtry found shed antlers in 2017 and 2018.

In 2017, Daughtry, 30, had early trail-cam photos of the buck, but the deer disappeared after the rut.

"In 2018, I didn't get any pictures, but I wouldn't have shot him; he still had potential," he said. "But I worried until my uncle found a shed horn."

Daughtry had placed bow stands in oak woods and rifle stands at the north and south sides of cutovers and bean fields. Archery season offered no shots, then Daughtry twice passed up 300-yard rifle shots on Oct. 12.

"I came back the next morning, passed up another long shot,"



Matthew Daughtry hunted this huge, Johnston County 10-pointer in 2017 and 2018 before killing him last Oct. 12.



John Henderson of Durham killed this huge Warren County buck last October by guessing correctly where the deer would head when being chased by dogs.

he said. "I came back that afternoon, and he walked into the field at 3:30 p.m."

With the deer 150 yards from his tree stand, Daughtry settled the crosshairs of a Vortex scope, mounted on a Winchester Model 70 .30-06, on the buck's shoulder and squeezed the trigger. The deer ran 30 yards and piled up.

"I don't worry about scent control during bow season because my stands are 25 feet high," he said. "But I don't ignore wind direction; I hang lots of stands."

So trail-cam photos, high stands, hunting seasonal food sources, awareness of wind direction and patience are Daughtry's hunting secrets.

KNOW A DEER'S TRICKS

Solo hunters in tree stands or ground blinds harvest the majority of North Carolina deer take every year, but sometimes old-school tactics work.

Durham's John Henderson dropped a Warren County 12-pointer during October 2019 that sported 156% net and 165% gross inches and was the biggest typical buck taken by a North Carolina gun hunter in 2019, according to the Dixie Deer Classic's big-buck contest.

A former Burlington Industries employee who teaches school-bus safety in Virginia, Henderson, 71, is the oldest member of

the Axtell Hunt Club in Warrenton, N.C.

"I'm part of a dying sport: deer-dog hunters," he said.

Trail cameras had captured a large buck's image on the club's hunting property. The club released 15 hounds near the buck's woodlot home when the season opened Oct. 17.

"When they jumped him, he ran toward a big highway," Henderson said.

Knowing deer often circled back via a wooded funnel after they reached the road, Henderson walked to the hardwoods strip and waited.

"After 10 minutes, I saw him running straight at me," he said.

When the buck got to 35 yards, Henderson shot twice with his buckshot-loaded, 12-gauge autoloading shotgun.

"The second one put him down," he said. "I had no idea his rack was that good."

The buck's rack had no abnormal points and only 8⁵/₈ inches of asymmetrical deductions.

"I've been a deer-dog hunter for 45 years, and this was my best buck," Henderson said.

Henderson proved an old dog with local knowledge could take a trophy whitetail. ■



Craig Holt of Snow Camp, N.C., has been an outdoor writer for almost 40 years, working for several newspapers and magazines before becoming a full-time freelancer in 2009.

STICKS & STRINGS ➤

THE NEW 2021 HUNTMASTER IS HERE.



GO ANYWHERE



When outdoor enthusiast and amphibious machine team up, it's a game changer for the sport, and for those stories back at camp.

Visit **BOST ARGO ATV SALES**

6540 Hwy 152 East • Rockwell, NC 28138 • 704-279-5736 • www.atvargo.com

© 2021 ARGO XTV. Riders must wear an approved helmet, eye protection, protective clothing and when operating in water always wear a personal floatation device. Use handholds and stay completely inside the vehicle. Never engage in stunt driving. Along with concerned conservationists everywhere, ARGO® urges you to respect public and private lands. Ride only on designated areas or trails. Preserve your future riding opportunities by showing respect for the environment, local laws and the rights of others when riding.

SAILING BROADHEADS: WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

WHEN YOUR FIELD POINTS SHOOT STRAIGHT, BUT YOUR BROADHEADS WON'T GROUP, EXAMINE YOUR BOW'S SETUP

Even though it was more than 30 years ago, I still remember the first arrow I ever shot at a deer like it was yesterday.

Deer were scarce where I hunted, and my mouth hung open as I watched my arrow shave the white hair from her belly at only 15 yards away. Other than her new haircut, that doe was no worse for the experience, but I was devastated and confused, having just blown a golden opportunity.

My mistake was not shooting my broadheads before hunting. Had I done so, it would have revealed that they were flying poorly and hitting the target 12 to 18 inches low at 20 yards. I learned a hard lesson that day, which is that fixed-blade broadheads always tell the truth, quickly revealing any flaws in the setup of your bow. I vowed to never let it happen again, and it instilled a desire to settle for nothing less than perfect arrow flight.

Fast forward to a recent Tuesday, just after 8 a.m. I had already been at work for several hours, tuning customers' bows, when I received a text message from an unknown phone number asking if I would be at the shop that morning. Since I'm famous for losing/destroying cell phones, I figured it was someone I knew who was no longer programmed in my contacts, so I answered the text.

When the customer arrived just as we opened, I realized I had never met him. He explained that he got my number from a mutual acquaintance, and he had just driven 3 hours seeking my help with a bow-tuning issue. He took a chance that I would be at work, texting me at the halfway point and planning to turn around if I wasn't going to be available.

TAKE NO CHANCES

You might wonder what would make someone so desperate. He had drawn a coveted elk tag in a unit of Wyoming after a 12-year wait. Once he drew the tag, he left nothing to chance; he purchased a new, flagship bow from an archery shop in his hometown, and it shot awesome — with field tips. But when he switched to fixed-blade broadheads, his arrows wouldn't even group at 20 yards and were flying spastically. He returned to the shop where he purchased the bow, but the answer there was "It left here paper-tuned."

Although I was way behind and already had a full schedule, since he was desperate and had driven 3 hours, I agreed to help. I adjusted his bow back to specs, resetting the wheel timing



and arrow rest to the proper alignment and paper tuning it, but his broadheads still flew wildly. After some thought, I decided his arrows were improperly spined and slightly too stiff. He told me that he had called the manufacturer, and they told him which arrow to shoot, which, according to their charts, was correct. But as I said earlier, broadheads will ultimately tell the truth, often hurting your feelings in the process, and this case was no exception.

I cut him six new arrows, and they immediately solved the problem, with tight groupings of both field points and broadheads to the same point of impact. After some quick sight adjustments, he left satisfied and headed home to shoot at longer ranges. I received a text from him several days later; he was shooting tight groups all the way out to 60 yards.



Sammy Romano is a lifelong hunter who has worked in the archery industry for more than 25 years. His expertise includes compounds and crossbows. He can be reached at samboka31@aol.com.

COMMON PROBLEM

Although it inspired this month's topic, his story is by no means unique. Almost daily this time of year, I have a customer come in distraught because their broadheads do not shoot like their field tips. Although they may weigh the same amount, leading to identical ballistics, the fixed-blade broadhead differs a great deal aerodynamically, because its exposed blades acting as a planing surface, magnifying any arrow flight deviations.

Poor broadhead flight is often a symptom of a larger problem in the setup of your bow, your form, or both. In a pinch, mechanical broadheads can be a Band-Aid on a bullet wound, but given time, it is always best to fix the underlying issues with your setup.

SYMPTOM, SOLUTION

Other than the obvious problems of improper center shot, nock height, wheel timing and rest timing, arrow spine is probably the No. 1 gremlin when it comes to achieving field point-like accuracy shooting fixed-blade broadheads. Whenever I set up my personal bows, I start with the arrow first, only cutting a couple of shafts. After achieving a good paper tune, I sight the bow in with field tips. Once these are sighted in, I switch to a broadhead target and shoot a fixed-blade head. Assuming it hits close to center, I then "chase it" with a field-point arrow.

If both the broadhead and the field point tipped arrows don't group tightly together, I go back to the drawing board, adjusting and trying different spines until they do. This is the best method I have found. If the two arrows are impacting the target close to each other — within a few inches — but not quite the same, you can make small adjustments by moving your bow's nocking point or center shot slightly towards the broadhead-tipped arrow's point of impact, as compared to the field point arrow. Make sure this doesn't cause the arrow to be drastically out of level or center shot, however, as these can lead to other issues.

Once you have your bow shooting fixed-blade broadheads accurately, then and only then are you truly ready to hunt. A bow that will do this will be more forgiving and shoot any tip you choose to point of impact. Although this often requires a lot of work, the results are more than worth the effort. Archery is a mental game, first and foremost, and knowing that your broadheads will shoot exactly where you point them is key to confidently taking a shot at a trophy animal. ■

GREENER PASTURES >

CHEROKEE RUN
Hunting Lodge
Hunt deer, wild boar & turkey in the wilds of South Carolina

Trophy Managed
Whitetail on the
Great Pee Dee River

HOME OF THE 600 LB
"GREY GHOST"

NIGHT HOG: JAN 1 - AUG 31
SC RIFLE DEER: SEP 1 - JAN 1
SC WILD BOAR: YEAR-ROUND SEASON
SC TURKEY: MAR 22 - APR 30
DEER/BOAR OR TURKEY/BOAR COMBOS

Located on the border in beautiful Chesterfield County SC, one hour from Charlotte, NC. Comfortable lodging including satellite TV, pool table, bass ponds, rifle & 3-D archery range.

704-301-7950 • eatsleephunt.com

CROSS CREEK OUTDOOR SUPPLIES
252-492-9770
537 Cross Creek Rd. • Henderson, NC 27536

THE HUNT ENDS HERE FOR ALL YOUR

- Safes-**
Superior Safe Company
Champion
Browning
- Firearms-**
Browning
Beretta
CZ-USA
Colt
Smith & Wesson
Sig Sauer
Bushmaster
- Clothing-**
Browning
Carhartt
Dan's Hunting Gear
- Archery-**
Mathews
Mission

Over 5000 sq. ft. of Outdoor Supplies!

Scan

www.crosscreekoutdoorsupply.com find us on

GREENER PASTURES

Jeff Burleson

If you've gotten a late start on putting your fall food plot in the ground, don't give up; legumes and cereal grains can still give deer a place to visit and feed.

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

OCTOBER FOOD-PLOT PLANTINGS CAN BE WINNERS

For most hunters in the Carolinas, deer season is up and running in one form or another, either under a primitive-weapons option or a regular firearms season, October offers hunters an opportunity to take down Bambi right when the seasonal cooldown takes effect.

While many food plots are flourishing and being hammered by deer, some hunters are still behind the 8-ball, trying to get their ducks in a row to have a hot food source for the season. It is not too late to plant something that will quickly bring deer in by the dozen.

Whether considering time, energy or flat-out cash money, food plots are investments for hunters. The best plots result from forward thinking many months before the season with soil tests and a series of land applications over time. But life can get in the way, forcing some hunters to mobilize at the last minute. Luckily, they can quickly turn some dirt and plant a last-minute crop to get quick attention from the local villagers.

You can still prepare a quick kill plot, but there is no time for procrastination; seeds need to get buried now for the best

opportunity to take advantage of the upcoming rut.

WHAT TO PLANT?

So, what is the best thing to plant? Each food-plot variety or seed mix will have a wide range of maturity schedules and a timetable for when deer prefer to eat them. Obviously, something that takes 120 days to mature before the first frost is probably going to be out for an October planting, unless the chosen crop is highly attractive during the days just after planting and the growth/palatability meets the short-term objectives.

Bottom line, the objectives of the plot should be considered, and most fall plots are designated as kill plots or to attract deer into an area. Even when some plots are intended for short use, some plot species can withstand heavy browsing and flourish through the cooler months, offering a long feeding opportunity.

If a hunting plot is the immediate objective — and it normally is when plots are getting planted in October — there are more options out there than most hunters can imagine for a late-season planting. In fact, plantings that struggle

with premature browsing are excellent candidates for October planting if the user understands the probable results.

LEGUMES WORK

Most legumes can be excellent choices because they are typically highly palatable as soon as they erupt from the soil's surface. Austrian winter peas, iron clay peas (or cow peas), and soybeans are immediately palatable and highly attractive to deer at any time of year. Deer absolutely love these plants, but they will barely see the light of day because; deer will hammer them as soon as they sprout. If the objective is to grow them out to maturity, that's a bad thing, but if the objective is to hunt over something deer love and will eat as fast as possible, that sounds like a good place to hunt over in late October.



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.

Donna Brookshire

RESTRICT ACID BUILDUP IN SOIL

Most forest soils in the Southeast are naturally acidic, and farming practices can also lead to acidification. However, fertilizer is a necessary step in the farming business, and for landowners looking to improve the growth of their prized food plots. In most food plots, a near neutral pH is preferred for nutrient conversion and optimum growth.

Over time, prepared soils in fields can become more acidic from rainfall leaching, organic matter buildup and intensive agriculture practices to include addition of certain fertilizers.

Acidic soils are counterintuitive for planting most food-plot varieties. Soils are able to convert fertilizers into usable compounds when soil pH is approaching 7.0, a neutral pH. That's not to say lower pH levels can't produce good crops, but a higher pH provides a more accepting environment for conversion of critical elemental compounds.

Landowners who plant food plots can reduce acidification by using fertilizers that don't acidify soil as much as others. Some can even contribute towards alkalinity and counteract the acidity of other fertilizer compounds.

Fertilizers are primarily made up of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, and a long list of necessary micro-nutrients. For



Getting the soil in a prospective food plot into the right pH range will spur plant growth.

Jeff Burleson

starters, potassium fertilizers have little effect on pH unless combined with an acidic mix of other fertilizer compounds. Nitrogen on the other hand, can have a dramatic effect on pH.

Nitrogen is a critical component to most plant-growth potential, and all plants need nitrogen in one form or another. Nitrogen comes in two basic forms: nitrate-based or ammonium-based fertilizers. Nitrate-based fertilizers, such as calcium nitrate, are the least acidifying among nitrogen fertilizers. Ammonium-based fertilizers, such as ammonium nitrate or ammonium sulfate, have the greatest potential to lower the pH in soils when used over time.

Phosphorus will have a lower impact on soil pH in a negative way, unless phosphoric acid is used. Typically, most

phosphorus used for agriculture production originates from phosphorus rock and is slow to act unless mixed with phosphoric acid, aka triple superphosphate. But triple superphosphate can contribute to acidifying the soils. A better option can be to use calcium phosphate, which is more soluble in soil and can actually increase pH under certain conditions and in certain soil types.

Lime applications can always be used in the offseason to offset acidic conditions, but proper soil pH alteration can be a slow process, and anything that can prevent acidification can always help. When choosing fertilizers for fall or spring applications, try to choose mixtures that reduce any acid buildup in the soils. ■

OCTOBER OPTIONS

A plot of peas and soybeans can be seeded at a high rate because of the short duration of expected use. Just be ready when they are planted, because the deer will show up with a fork and knife as soon as these green sprouts emerge. If these plants are able to survive and withstand heavy browsing, the forage is full of protein and highly palatable, so they can provide an extended forage base.

Another option, and probably a longer-lasting plan, is cereal grains like triticale, wheat, rye and oats. They are highly attractive shortly after planting and can provide forage throughout the winter, even when temperatures plummet to seasonal lows. And they can withstand heavy browsing pressure as well.

The last and best option is to plant a mix of all of the above: a bag or two of peas and beans and then a bag of cereal grains. These mixes can provide immediate use, and anything that can make it through the heavy browsing and cool weather will provide a longer-lasting forage base.

These October plantings may not provide a field of dreams, with chest-high soybeans and peas, but hunters can sure count on an attractive food plot to overlook when the rut is in full effect.

For best results, a nearly neutral pH is preferred, where the

food plot's rapid growth can be rocket-fueled with fertilizers loaded with heavy concentrations of nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium. The closer to a neutral pH, the more effective fertilizers can be. A fertilizer heavy to nitrogen should be used for these types of plots to fuel immediate growth, regardless of whether legumes are being planted. ■

COOKING ON THE WILD SIDE ➤

for **ALL** the roads you travel

Bill Carone
Chevrolet-Buick-GMC-Ford
BillCaroneCars.com
Wallace, NC
910-285-7151

ROXOR

The **Ultimate** UTV

Carolina Outdoor Products.Com
482 Stallings Rd., Wallace, NC 910-290-1483



COOKING ON THE WILD SIDE

Jerry Dilsaver

STUFFED VENISON BURGERS

BACON, CHEESE MAKE FALL COOKOUTS A TREAT

Jerry Dilsaver

Welcome to fall. Whether you prefer hunting or fishing, this is absolutely the best season for sportsmen in the Carolinas. If you enjoy both, you may miss some days at work, because both are so good it's difficult to choose which one to enjoy on only a day or two off each week.

Other seasons are good, but fall is when the outdoors calls the loudest and strongest. Deer season is one of the most-anticipated hunting seasons, and by October, it is open in some form from the mountains to the coast. Fishing is also top-notch from small streams way up in the mountains to the depths of the Gulf Stream.

Fall weather is excellent for having a cookout. If you cook for lunch, you'll probably be more comfortable in shirtsleeves, but as the sun begins to set, the air usually cools enough for an overshirt or light jacket. This is prime time to cook outside. You might even want a small fire in an adjacent fire pit.

Venison is an excellent choice for firing up the grill. It may be fresh venison, or it could be time to prepare the last from the previous season before filling the freezer again. We like

burgers, but sometimes we like to fancy them up a bit. This is especially true when it is burgers made from game.

We are fortunate to be able to enjoy a variety of game and fish, but it's still special. This recipe is for bacon- and cheese-stuffed venison burgers. It is a bit different than laying a slice of cheese and a couple of strips of bacon on top of a burger. We like that, too, but this puts the bacon and cheese inside the burger, and it's different. I believe you'll see.

If you want, you can also melt a slice of cheese on top and even add more bacon. You don't need to, but you can if you like. Bacon and cheese are two things that only your doctor thinks you can enjoy too much.

This is a meal to enjoy outside, especially during the fall. Whether in your back yard or on a deck or patio, there is something special about eating outside, and these venison burgers add to that. Have them on buns if you like, but be prepared to lick your fingers and use a lot of napkins. I like them served hot off the grill on a plate like a hamburger steak with the melted cheese oozing out. It's good both ways, so have it your way. ■

OPPOSITE: Why just put bacon and cheese on top of a burger after it's cooked? Try stuffing your favorite extras and cook them in.

STUFFED VENISON BURGERS

Most folks like burgers, and this is a way to enjoy them with your favorite fixins — on the inside. They're big, a half-pound or more, but they're good. This is a simple version, as most folks like bacon and cheese, but the list of ingredients you can add is very long. If there is something you like, give it a try. One of my favorites is taco burgers stuffed with salsa and cheese. Maybe we'll give that a shot later, but I wanted to show something simple that appealed to a lot of people.

I started stuffing burgers when my mother-in-law gave me a burger press for Christmas. It helps when making super burgers like this, but they can be formed by hand. There are multiple videos on using a burger press. I've watched plenty, and this draws a little from several of them.

Most instructions say to oil the surfaces of the press that will be touching the burger; it will come out easier; that's good. I line the press with the press-and-seal version of plastic wrap. It isn't as foldy and clingy as regular plastic wrap and holds its shape a little better. I turn the sticky side up towards the burger and push the smooth side down into the press, leaving some hanging out all around. It allows the burger to form to the shape of the press, and when the burger is finished, you lift the wrap and it comes right out. Use the same piece of wrap for all your burgers.

Some versions of the recipe don't use onions or mixes them in the cavity with the bacon and cheese. I wanted to spread the taste throughout, especially since I was sautéing them in the bacon grease. That's why I chop the onions

PREPARATION:

Chop the onion pretty fine. Fry the bacon softly done, remove it from the pan and crumble. Drain the bacon grease until it's barely covering the bottom of the pan. Lightly sauté the onion to break its glaze. Beat the eggs. Mix the venison, egg, bread crumbs, onion, Liquid Smoke, salt and pepper.

Form the bottom half of the burger using a burger press with a stuffed burger adapter. If you do not have a burger press, make an approximate ½-pound burger with an approximate ½-inch deep cavity that runs to within a half-inch of the outer wall. Fill the cavity with bacon crumbles and shredded cheese.

Form another thin burger the same diameter using the burger press or by hand. Place the second burger over the burger with the filled cavity and press the burgers together into a single burger.

Spray the grill grate or a grill tray liberally with non-stick cooking spray. Preheat the grill to medium. Place the burgers on the grill and lay a sheet of aluminum foil over them. Cook the burgers until the bottoms are almost done and the tops is beginning to show it is cooking. This is 10 to 12 minutes on my grill for a medium doneness. Turn the burgers and cook the second sides, again with the sheet of aluminum foil laying over them. This should not take as long as the first sides. This is 8 to 10 minutes on my grill for a medium doneness. Less cooking time will make the burger more rare and more cooking time will take it to well done. Remove the burgers and serve them hot.

You can make these burgers a bit thinner so they can be served

finer and mixed them in.

Speaking of fine chopping, I use an Ulu to chop them. An Ulu is a curved-blade knife used by the Inuit, Yupik and Aleut peoples of the Alaskan and Arctic regions. I saw one used in Alaska years ago, and I picked one up. It's amazing, and I'm learning more about it every time I use it.

I rarely suggest adding salt, but this recipe can use a little. I am heavy on the pepper; I think it sets off the bacon taste. As with any recipe offered, use ingredients to your personal taste. This is simply a good basic recipe to get you to try this.

The ingredients list includes a half-cup of shredded cheese and doesn't specify which. Use your favorite. I used cheddar cheese on two burgers and pepper jack on a third. It isn't on the ingredients list, but the one with pepper jack got a shot of Texas Pete Cha Sauce before being closed up.

Make these burgers to your personal preference. It easy to tailor them to individual tastes. Experiment, have fun and enjoy! ■

TIP!

Try covering a burger with a sheet of aluminum foil on the grill, not wrapped, but laid over it. It will cook throughout without charring the ends.

INGREDIENTS:

2 pounds ground venison

2 eggs

4 to 6 pieces of bacon

½ sweet onion

½ cup shredded cheese (your choice of flavor or multiple flavors)

½ cup plain bread crumbs

½ tsp Liquid Smoke

Salt and pepper (to taste)

Aluminum foil

The finished product is a tasty, fall treat.



Jerry Dilsaver

on buns, but if you eat them while they're good and hot, they may be a little runny from the melted cheese. They are fun to eat but can be messy. They are easier served on a plate as a hamburger steak, and you can add your favorite steak sauce or a dollop of ketchup. A salad or lettuce wedge is a good way to begin and corn on the cob, a baked potato or mashed potatoes are good choices for a side. ■

**SPORTSMAN
SHOWCASE >**



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.

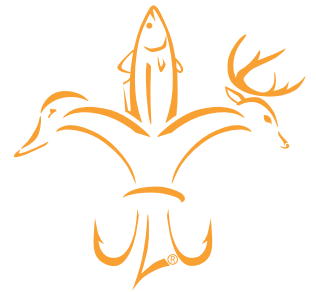
GAMAKATSU STAINLESS STEEL PLIERS



When a serious fisherman finds a pair of pliers that he likes and trusts, he'll guard them almost as much as he guards his favorite crankbait. Gamakatsu, the fish-hook people, have given anglers one more item to like and trust with their 6- and 7-inch stainless steel fishing pliers, which debuted this past summer. Featuring non-slip grips, the pliers come with a sheath that allows you to keep them on your belt, close at hand, while fishing. There's no

worry about them heading overboard because of a lanyard attached to the handle. The pliers can do a lot of things. They have a split-ring feature for quick hook changes, crimping jaws and a cutting feature that will easily clip monofilament, braid and fluorocarbon. Gamakatsu was added a PTFE coating to aid against corrosion and rust.

MSRP: Starting at \$25.24.
For more info, visit: www.gamakatsu.com



SPRO POWER BUCKTAIL HD

SPRO has long produced excellent baits for fishermen of all backgrounds, and its recent offering of a beefed-up bucktail jig, the Power Bucktail HD, brings even more great features to the fishing world.

Previous models were designed to be trolled for striped bass or jigged for flounder, but a bigger, stronger hook gives anglers another weapon to drop down on a deep rockpile to try and fool a grouper, or to cast at a curious cobia that's pushing 50 pounds.

Made in sizes from ¼ to 8 ounces, the Power Bucktail HD features a 4X-strong Gamakatsu O'Shaughnessy hook that will penetrate even the toughest mouths. It comes in two colors: white and crazy chartreuse.

The semi-flat face of the jig allows it to work equally well being trolled or jigged vertically. A prominent eye is a focal point for predators. In addition, more bucktail has been added to the jig to give it a bigger profile to attract bites from bigger fish.

MSRP: \$11.12.
For more info, visit: www.spro.com



STYRKA S3 RED DOT

Styrka's top-drawer optics have been updated by a pair of new red-dot offerings, the S3 Open Style and S3 Tube Style scopes.

Perfect for mounting on shotguns for turkey or deer hunting, or on pistols for hunting or target shooting, these are reflex sights with 1 MOA adjustments, good eye relief and 1X magnification, and 10 brightness settings.

The S3 Red Dots include a riser mount for mounting on most AR platforms and most types of firearms with a Picatinny style rail/base. The body is constructed of aircraft grade aluminum alloy for durability

and strength.

The S3 Tube Style Red Dot sight features a unique double-lens optical system which, coupled with dot color indexed coatings, virtually eliminates parallax and point-of-aim errors.

The red dots are available in a 2.5 MOA red dot model, a 5 MOA red dot and a 5 MOA green dot. All three models have a 21mm objective lens and weigh less than 6 ounces

MSRP: \$289.95, \$329.95.
For more info, visit: www.styrkastrong.com.

A man wearing a grey baseball cap with a logo, glasses, and a neon yellow long-sleeved shirt is smiling and holding a large speckled trout. The fish is held vertically, showing its characteristic dark spots. The background is a blurred outdoor setting, likely a boat deck or pier.

FOLLOW
THE **SALT,**
FIND THE
SPECKS

**FALL RAINFALL CAN BE
A DECIDING FACTOR ON
WHERE YOU OUGHT
TO FISH IN CAROLINA
ESTUARIES, ESPECIALLY
IF THEY'RE FED BY A
RIVER. LEARN HOW AND
WHERE TO MOVE WHEN
A STORM ARRIVES.**

■ By Jeff Burleson

Jeff Burleson

The long wait through the sweltering summer heat is finally over. Temperatures fall into a comfortable range, and fish begin feeding like mad. The change of seasons in the fall is such a welcome event for residents of the Carolinas, who love cool, brisk mornings on the water.

Not only do anglers enjoy the cooler weather, so do the fish,
ESPECIALLY SPECKLED TROUT.

These fish move around, looking for optimal feeding opportunities in the fall, the way they do much of the year. Their waters are directly affected by river systems, so rain-fall can have a drastic impact on where anglers need to cast their lures to bring home a limit of these tasty critters.

Most coastal estuaries along the Atlantic seaboard are not only fed by ocean water, but freshwater from rivers. Of the 17 river basins in North Carolina and eight in South Carolina, rainwater and natural springs fuel the water resources. Twenty of these rivers flow across the Carolinas and empty in to the Atlantic. As they approach saltwater, the landscape changes quickly and directly benefits the many creatures flourishing in these brackish and estuarine environments.

Speckled trout are among the predators that champion these waters in the fall, making a dent in the shrimp and mullet populations. As these areas receive patterned or sporadic rainfall, their salinity can quickly change, especially along the freshwater-saltwater dividing line, and that can make a dramatic impact on where fall trout are found.

Brandon Huskins of Any Tide Fishing Charters fishes the Little River area along the North Carolina/South Carolina border. The Waccamaw

Heavy rains in late summer and early fall will put plenty of fresh or brackish water in coastal rivers and cause speckled trout to change locations to keep up with food.



Jeff Burleson

River has a direct impact on the waters he fishes around the Little River area, because Little River is connected to the tannic Waccamaw system through the ICW. The level of rainfall in the area will directly impact the salinity and the location of bait and speckled trout in the estuary.

“Speckled trout are my favorite species to target in the fall, especially in October,” said Huskins (843-877-7068). “If you can find good conditions, you can find the fish. I prefer places with that copper-colored water.”

The tannins from the blackwater Waccamaw change the water in the Little River area to a stained, copper color. During periods of heavy rainfall, the dark waters infiltrate the saltwater estuaries, bringing freshwater into the picture. Water color is generally a good indicator of salinity in areas where estuaries are fed by tannic river systems.

“The blacker the water is, the fresher water that is in it. You can also usually taste the difference,” he said.

While changes in salinity have little effect on some sea life, other saltwater creatures are influenced by changes in salinity.

“Shrimp are extremely sensitive to salinity content, and periods of heavy rain can push these shrimp schools down the waterway and closer to the inlets,” he said. “The large groups of schooling trout in the 15- to 18-inch range we see in the fall will be hanging close to these massive schools of shrimp.”

Extensive rainfall can push these trout into more salty places, as they follow the shrimp. But other forage species, including mullet and menhaden, will not move around as much when salinity changes, which will usually keep the larger, more-mature gator trout fat and happy.

Conversely, lack of fall rainfall can push the saltwater wedge further up the waterway or further upstream into rivers.

Resident and migrating speckled trout are accustomed to venturing upstream in fall to take advantage of the conditions and feeding opportunities.

V

Precision Marine Inc.

GREAT DEALS WHILE THEY LAST!



210 BAYRUNNERS NOW IN STOCK!



BIGGEST SELECTION OF SEA ARK BOATS IN NC!

All New Bayrunner 210



RX1860 SIDE CONSOLE

STARTING AT \$215/mo*

Lowe RX1860 SC



961 BLACKHAWKS ALSO IN STOCK!

AS LOW AS \$265/mo*

2170 Blackhawk w/115 4-stroke & aluminum tandem axle trailer

Powered by



WE SELL & INSTALL



FIND US OFF HWY 70 BYPASS AT EXIT #369 FROM RALEIGH/EXIT #370 FROM KINSTON!

919-751-1199

*with approved credit

8:00 - 5:00 Monday - Friday
After hours by appointment



WHERE GREAT SERVICE GOES ALONG WITH THE SALE!

WWW.PRECISIONMARINEINC.COM

FOLLOW THE SALT,
FIND THE SPECKS

Nice specks like this one caught by the author will relate to any kind of structure along the ICW that provides an ambush spot.

“**T**ROUT begin moving up the rivers in the fall because the water cools off first in the river, as opposed to the places near the ocean. Plus, bait is usually very abundant upstream,” he said.

Little River’s upstream area is typically referred to as the ICW, basically a colossal ditch lined with docks, marinas and miles of mud flats littered with oysters and scattered grassy shorelines. Huskins fishes the waterway from the state line all the way south to beyond the Little River swing bridge.

The ICW’s layout takes away some of the mysteries, since there aren’t any fingers to venture up or points to target. But even in a natural river system with branches, points and larger tributaries, early fall trout will generally remain in the river’s main stem, stopping along points, creek mouths and places that concentrate baitfish in opportunity areas.

Huskins is a major fan of fishing current seams and places that create ambush opportunities for trout in the fall months.

“When I target trout in the fall, the No. 1 combination I look for is a healthy current rip (and) clear, copper-colored water,” he said. “I seem to spend more time looking at the sky, the water and the weather than you do looking for the fish. But if you find the right conditions up the river, the trout will usually be there.”

Little River may be influenced by the tannic Waccamaw River, making it easy to recognize when freshwater is abundant, yet these same tactics can apply to any river-fed estuarine system across the coast.



Jeff Burleson

The tannic water may not always be there, but freshwater contributions are a given, and anglers can expect speckled trout to venture up the rivers when the water temperatures begin to fall. In some systems like the Neuse, Pamlico, Cape Fear and New rivers, the fall speckled trout run can push these fish many miles upstream and far away from the inlets and the mighty Atlantic. ■

FOR BIG TROUT, USE BAITFISH IMITATIONS >



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.



PG AND BOATGIRL
OUTDOORS
PODCAST

PGANDBOATGIRL.COM



PG and Boatgirl Outdoors

Outdoor News, Talk, &
the latest hunting/fishing reports

Available at Apple, Google Play, Spotify or
pgandboatgirl.com

Download the
PG and Boatgirl Outdoors podcast today!!!



BROUGHT TO YOU BY:
palmettoboatcenter.com



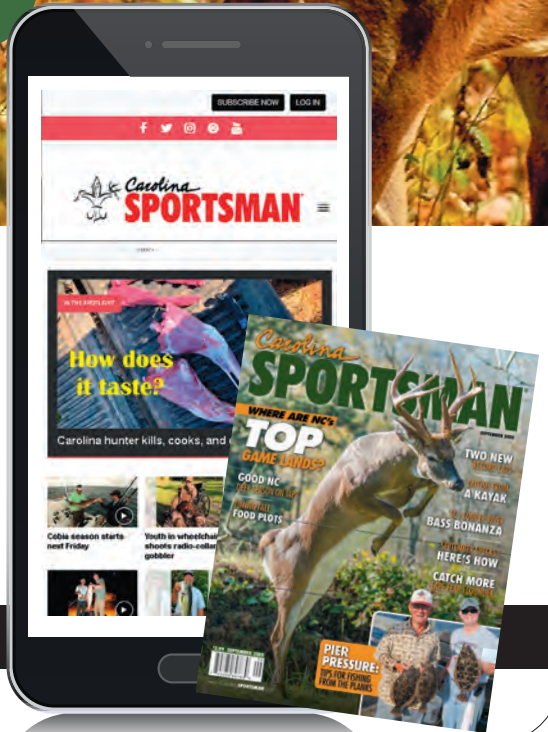
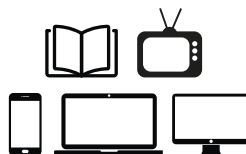
JOIN THE CLUB

Become a member at CarolinaSportsman.com



\$2.99 PER MONTH

Become a member and get FULL web access on all your smart devices and our monthly print magazine



VISIT: WWW.CAROLINASPORTSMAN.COM/SUBSCRIBE

FOLLOW THE SALT,
FIND THE SPECKS

Artificial baits that imitate baitfish are a good choice in the fall if you're targeting better-than-average sized speckled trout.

FOR BIG TROUT, LEAN TOWARD BAITFISH IMITATIONS

Speckled trout feed on a variety of forage species throughout the year. While many trout and other fish eat pounds and pounds of shrimp, baitfish of all sizes end up inside their bellies on a consistent basis. Anglers need to be ready to present the right bait or lure to get the most out of a fishing trip.

Few speckled trout will ever turn down a live shrimp, which is why an artificial shrimp can produce strikes in most waters, but sometimes baitfish patterns may bring the bigger and better fish to the table.

Brandon Huskins of Any Tide Fishing Charters uses both live and artificial options throughout the year in his home waters of Little River along the North Carolina-South Carolina border, but he prefers to throw soft plastics in the fall. He believes lures imitating baitfish can be more productive than shrimp lures on larger fish up the rivers and near the freshwater-saltwater dividing line.

"For big trout, baitfish patterns are more productive on these bigger fish than shrimp patterns," Huskins said. "Mature trout will eat shrimp like anything else, but these bigger fish want bigger baits. I like a lure that mimics a large finger mullet."

Huskins uses swimbaits and paddletails like the 5-inch, Z-Man



Jeff Burleson

Diezel MinnowZ or Swimming Trout Trick — or a suspending or sinking hard bait like a MirrOlure 18MR or 52M.

Anglers will use both live bait and artificial lures to dupe trout throughout the year. A live shrimp under an adjustable float at the Little River Inlet jetties will surely attract the attention of a gator trout, but artificial lures that resemble a nice, juicy mullet can be the true solution to fooling a big trout lurking in the river water. ■

Prothro Chevrolet

Your *Family Owned*
Hometown Dealer for
90 years!

www.prothrochevy.com

452 N. Brooks St. • Manning SC • 803-433-2535 • 1-800-968-9934





BLUES OR FLATHEADS? IT DOESN'T MATTER. HERE ARE A GUIDE'S TIPS FOR CATCHING BOTH SPECIES AS FALL ARRIVES ON THIS BORDER LAKE.

■ By Phillip Gentry

Waylay Wylie's WILY CATS

Dieter Melhorn knows plenty about catfishing, being a guide and producing a fishing series, "Dieter Melhorn Fishing" on YouTube. But when asked which species of catfish was the easiest to pattern and catch during October on Lake Wylie, he had to stop and think for a minute.

"I'd say it's easier to catch flatheads on Wylie this time of year," he said. "It's almost like they tend to drop their solitary ways and school up, but October is also a good time to catch numbers of decent-sized blues."

Melhorn, who grew up in Cramerton, N.C., several miles upstream from Wylie on one of its major tributaries, the South Fork Catawba River, said the better fishing for trophy blues occurs during November and December, but he never rules out the chance of catching a trophy blue on Wylie this time of year.

"The blues and flatheads are not necessarily on different patterns now; they're both keying on baitfish in less than 30 feet of water," he said. "Early morning and into the evening, that means they could be in as little as 5 feet of water, but it's the baitfish that gets them there."

Melhorn said all standard catfish tactics will catch fish on Wylie this month, but his preference is to troll for blue catfish and anchor up and put out static lines for flatheads.

"The flatheads will get on a ledge, a point or some odd piece

of topography," he said. "Even just a washout — a deeper area along a creek channel — will hold flatheads, and if you catch one, you need to keep fishing, because it's very likely there will be several more in that same spot."

Melhorn said blues can also be pin-pointed and anchored over, but he prefers to troll for them.

"Drag, drift, troll — whatever you want to call it," he said. "I'll go about halfway to the back of a creek that's holding bait, and I'll troll at around a half-mile an hour, moving out toward the mouth of the creek. Sometimes, I may stop halfway and go toward the back, but most of the time, I go shallow to deeper."

Like most veteran catfish anglers, Melhorn uses a variation of a catfish trolling rig that incorporates a 6- to 8-inch slinky weight designed to pull across bottom structure without snagging and a small, brightly colored crappie float to float the bait up above the weight, just off the bottom.

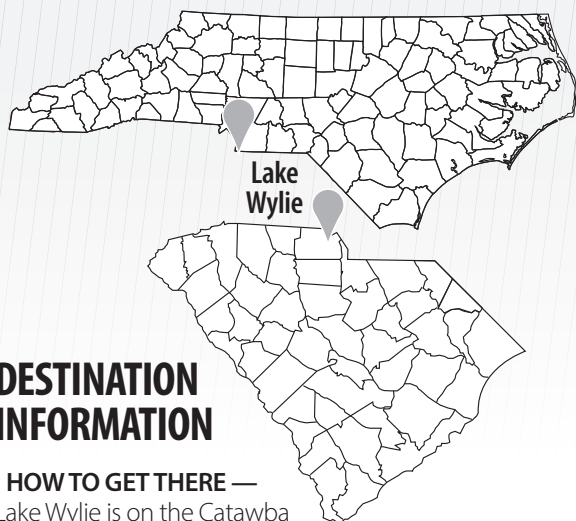
"In the fall, my bait choices change over from cut bream to white perch and even chunks of gizzard shad," he said. "I also start upping the bait size; I want to make sure I have at least a couple of nearly hand-sized baits in my six-rod spread."

Because catfish, particularly blue catfish, are keying on baitfish migrations, Melhorn does not put as much emphasis on marking catfish on his sonar as he does marking baitfish. He said catfish are typically spread out throughout an area, looking for an opportunity to eat something.



Dieter Melhorn will slow-troll when he's targeting big, blue catfish on Lake Wylie; he's more likely to anchor up and put out baits for flatheads.

LAKE WYLIE'S Top Fall Catfish Locations



DESTINATION INFORMATION

HOW TO GET THERE —

Lake Wylie is on the Catawba River chain, southwest of Charlotte, N.C., and north of Rock Hill, S.C. It is easily accessed from I-85 and I-77. Buster Boyd and Copperhead ramps at mid-lake are popular public boat landings. On the lower end, Allison Creek, Nivens Creek and Ebenezer Park give anglers access to that half of the 13,400-acre lake

WHEN TO GO — October kicks off good fishing for flathead and blue catfish on Lake Wylie. The action can last through December.

BEST TECHNIQUES — Drifting around schools of bait for blues or anchoring around deep cover for flatheads are proven techniques. Use cut white perch or gizzard shad for baits, and go big.

FISHING INFO/GUIDES — Dieter Melhorn Fishing, 704-813-3891, www.dietermelhornfishing.com. See also Guides & Charters in Classifieds.

ACCOMMODATIONS — Lake Wylie Chamber of Commerce, 803-831-2827; York County Visitors Center, 803-329-5200, www.visitryorkcounty.com; Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority, 704-339-6040 www.charlottesgotalot.com.

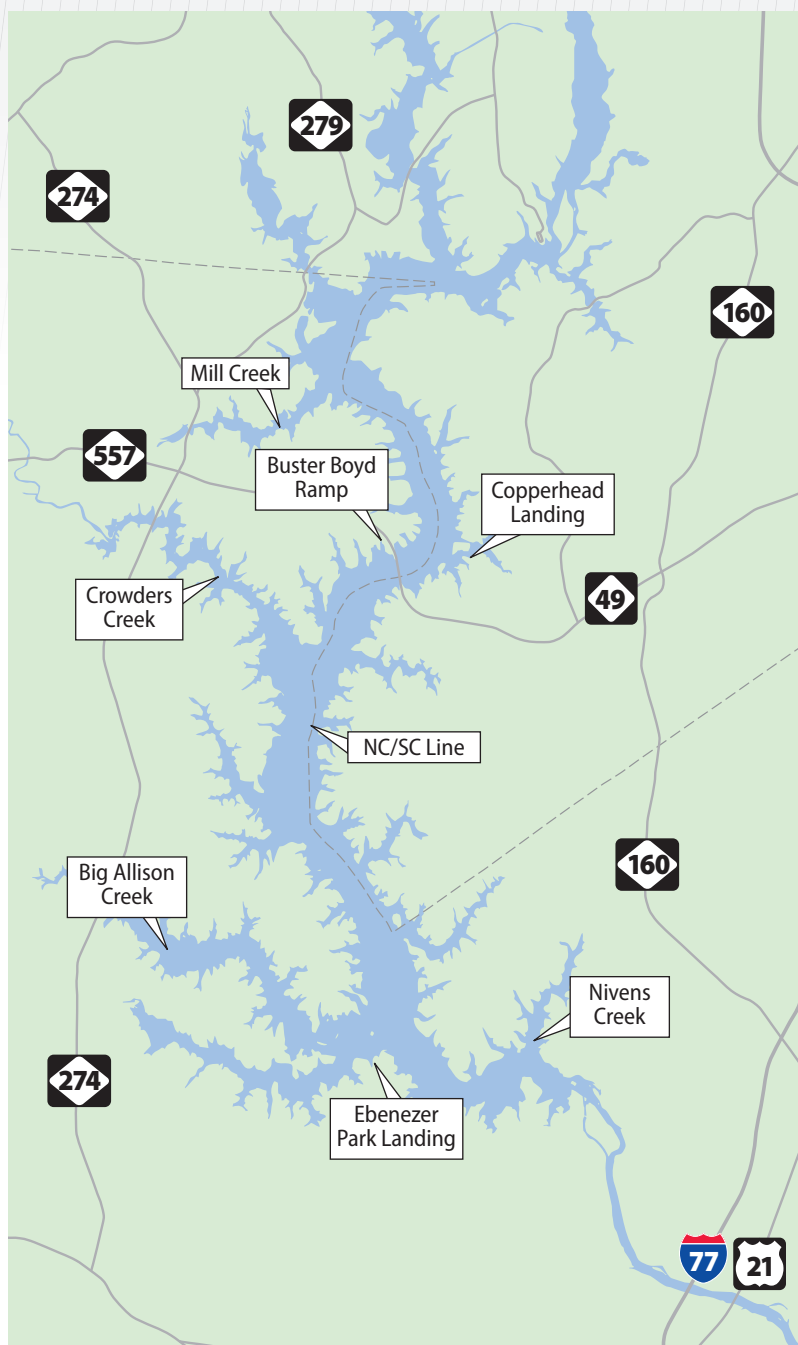
MAPS — Kingfisher Maps, 800-326-0257, www.kfmaps.com.

Crowders Creek: From the second power line to the main lake

Nivens's Cove: From the shoal out to the mouth of the cove

Allison Creek: Gets better as the water cools due to the thermal discharge in the creek

Mill Creek: From the White House out



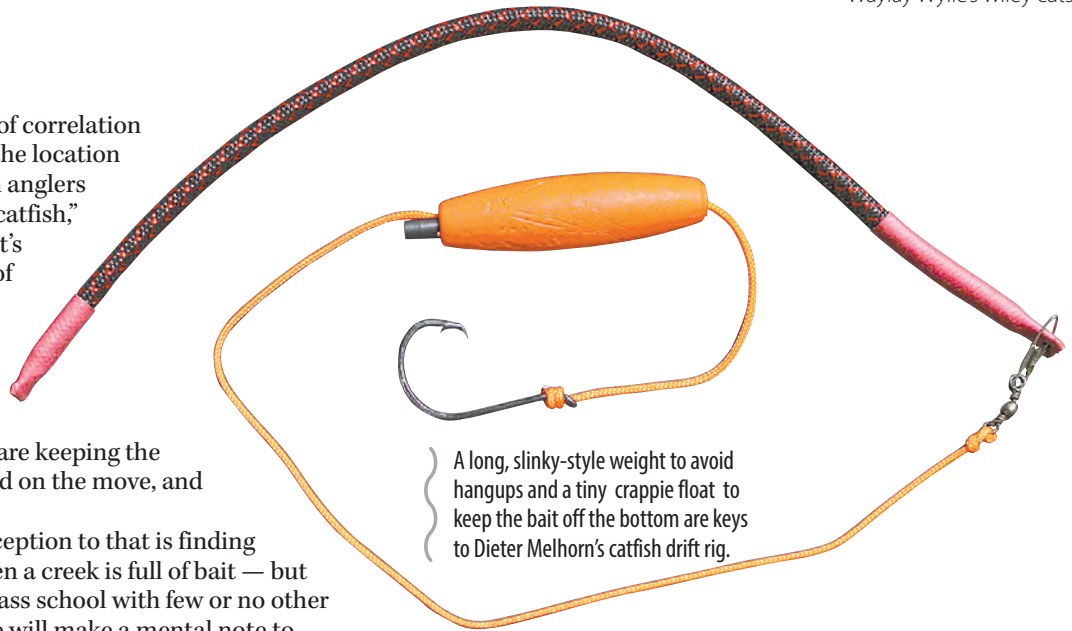
“I find a lot of correlation between the location of panfish anglers and blue catfish,” he said. “It’s a matter of

who’s eating who below the surface, but the panfish guys are trolling for crappie and perch, which are also moving with baitfish schools.

The crappie and white perch are keeping the baitfish schools broken up and on the move, and that’s good for catfishing.”

Melhorn said the one big exception to that is finding too much bait in a creek. When a creek is full of bait — but they’re all lumped into one mass school with few or no other predators moving about — he will make a mental note to check back later, but he’ll go look for another place to fish.

“I typically either net shad or catch perch a day or so before my fishing trips, but I also keep a double-hook rig out when I’m trolling for catfish,” he said. “It’s baited with live crappie minnows, and I work it just off the bottom. Not only does it catch me a few fresh baits while I’m catfishing, it’s also a good barometer of what’s happening below the boat. If I’m pulling through loads of bait with no perch bites. It’s likely there are no catfish around, either.”



A long, slinky-style weight to avoid hangups and a tiny crappie float to keep the bait off the bottom are keys to Dieter Melhorn’s catfish drift rig.

When anchored up and fishing for flatheads, Melhorn forgoes the typical live-bait requirement that most flathead anglers follow.

“I use cut bait for flatheads, particularly on Lake Wylie, for two reasons” said Melhorn. “The first is that for some reason, channel catfish usually find a live bait before a flathead does and they will kill it, just nail it and rarely get the hook and leave the bait dead on the bottom. So second, if I’m going to

be fishing with dead bait, by choice or not, I’d prefer to have something that is going to leave scent in the water and make it easier for a big flathead to find.”

Melhorn said reservoir flatheads are much different, in his experience, from river flatheads. He said using anything but fresh, live bait in a river is unthinkable, but he has caught a lot of flatheads in reservoirs on cut bait. He relies on wind or boat-wake current to spread the scent as well as turning the reel handle a few cranks every 10 minutes or so to drag the bait across the bottom and disperse more scent. ■

Your Pontoon Restoration Specialist

TOON TIME, LLC

Ryan Stewart
366 Neeley St.,
Sumter, SC 29150
803-720-4105
www.ToonTimeSC.com
rstewart@toontimesc.com
f @ToonTimeSC

Removes Black Mold & More!

ProClean MARINE™
PROFESSIONAL GRADE CLEANER

FREE SHIPPING

Learn More at **ProcleanMarine.com**
MADE IN THE USA SAVE \$10 per gallon USE CODE SAVE10

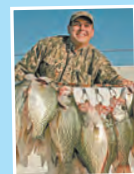
Black’s Camp
on the
Santee Cooper Lake System

Deer Water Access to Diversion Canal and Both Lakes... Boat Launch is Protected From Wind and Current

Bait, Ice & Fuel Available



FOOD TO GO, ORDER ONLINE



Please Call Us For Campground Lodging & Guide Service Availability

Cross, South Carolina 29436
(843) 753-2231
www.blackscamp.com



Phillip Gentry of Waterloo, S.C., is host of “The Outdoor Show,” a weekly radio podcast that can be seen at www.pgandboatgirl.com.

CATCHING catfish bait

Guide Dieter Melhorn said catching the right bait for successful catfish outings is half the battle. He targets two main species during the fall — gizzard shad and white perch — and has different methods for acquiring each.

“White perch will school heavily in the fall, especially on a secondary point in 15 to 20 feet of water,” he said. “Sometimes, there will be a piece of structure like a brush pile or some stumps that they congregate around, but most times, it’s just a holding spot, waiting on the next school of threadfin shad to wander by.”

When he can get on top of a school of perch, a Sabiki rig with No. 6 or smaller hooks can be dropped and jigged vertically to catch the perch.

“When you feel one hit, just keep jigging and wait for the other hooks to load up,” he said. “I end up catching five to seven fish at a time doing this. It’s a lot of fun and will fill the bait bucket in a hurry if you can get on them like this.”

Melhorn said cast-netting gizzard shad is the best way to stock up on what he considers a great fall catfish bait. He admits that Lake Wylie has a good population of gizzard shad, but it is not



A few drops with a Sabiki rig over a school of white perch will give you plenty of fresh catfish bait.

Phillip Gentry

the best place to net them.

Instead, he heads down to nearby Lake Wateree in South Carolina and will spend the last couple of hours before dark in a creek looking for dimpled water in 3 to 5 feet of water and usually has all he wants before sunset. ■

BAY RUNNER 210

\$33,495

BOAT, MARINE MASTER ALUMINUM TRAILER, SUZUKI 150 ATX MOTOR, HUMMINGBIRD HELIX 5, AND MIN KOTA 70 1LB THRUST TROLLING MOTOR INCLUDED!

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL DEALER FOR MORE INFORMATION.

BOAT MAY BE SHOWN WITH OPTIONS THAT ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL ADVERTISED PRICING.

SEE YOUR LOCAL DEALER FOR SPECIALS OFFERED BY



ANGLERS MARINE NC
842 Ocean Hwy West
Supply, NC 28462
910-755-7900
anglersmarinenc.com

ANGLERS MARINE NC
13578 US-70 Bus
Clayton, NC 27520
919-585-7900
anglersmarinenc.com

BAY RACER MARINE
213 US Highway 70 West
Havelock, NC 28532
252-447-2277
bayracermarine.com

BERKELEY OUTDOORS
2955 S. Live Oak Dr
Moncks Corner, SC 29461
843-761-2628
803-333-9992
803-505-8727
berkeleyoutdoors.com

BOAT DOCK MARINE
5981 NC Hwy 8
Lexington, NC 27292
(336) 357-5906
boatdockmarinenc.com

BRAZDA MARINE
2645 Highway 24
Newport, NC 28570
252-240-1600
brazdamarine.net

BROAD CREEK MARINA
18 Simmons Road
Hilton Head Island, SC. 29926
843-681-3625
broadcreekmarinahh.com

BROWN'S MARINE INC
1825 Anthony Rd
Burlington, NC 27215
336-229-5784
brownsmarine.net

BROWN'S RV SUPERSTORE
30049 Hwy 151
McBee, SC 29101
(833) 209-7274
brownsvsuperstore.com

CAPE ROMAIN MARINE
10129 Hwy. 17 N.
McClellanville, SC 29458
843-887-3330
caperomainmarine.com

**CAROLINA BOATWORKS
OF COLUMBIA, LLC**
181 Pontiac Business Center Dr
Elgin, SC 29045
803-736-0035
cbwofcolumbia.com

CAROLINA INBOARD
1225 Bickley Road
Irmo, SC 29063
803-781-1024
carolinainboard.com

CAROLINA OUTBOARD
220 NC Hwy 210 West
Hampstead, NC 28443
910-319-0506
carolinaoutboard.com

**CAROLINA WATERSPORTS
AND MARINE**
114 Days Inn Dr.
Moorestville, NC 28117
704-663-4500
carolinawatersportsmarine.com

CHARLOTTE SKI BOAT
1206 Brawley School Rd
Moorestville, NC 28117
704-525-6006
charlotteskiboats.com

CHATLEE BOAT & MARINE
2615 Jefferson Davis Hwy.
Sanford, NC 27330
919-775-7259
chatleeboats.com

COASTLINE RV & MARINE
2340 S. Highway 17
Murrells Inlet, SC 29576
843-458-3999
coastlinervrentals.com

COLLINS INC.
4620 US 70 Bus Hwy East
Smithfield, NC 27577
919-934-3143
Collinsboating.com

COVE 2 COAST MARINE
1821 Lake Murray Blvd.
Columbia, SC 29212
803-814-1514
cove2coastmarine.com

COVE 2 COAST MARINE
2476 savannah hwy.
Charleston, SC 29407
843-212-3915
cove2coastmarine.com

DOSS MARINE
1720 Chapin Road
Chapin, SC 29036
803-345-1001
dossmarine.com

DOWN EAST MARINE
455 Highway 70 Otway
Beaufort, NC 28516
252-728-5817
downeastmarine.com

ED WATKINS MARINE
3333 Hwy 16N
Denver NC 28037
704.483.2628
edwatkinsmarine.com

FORT MACON MARINA INC
417 E FT Macond Rd Pob 370
Atlantic Beach, NC 28512
252-726-2055
fortmaconmarina.com

FOUR SONS MARINE
855 Causey Rd
Fair Bluff, NC 28439
910-649-5755
foursonsmarine.com

GRAHAM MARINE
318 W Harden St
Graham, NC 27253
336-227-8711
grahammarinesales.net

GREENVILLE MARINE
3600 Greenville Blvd. N.E.
Greenville, NC 27834
(252) 758-5938
greenvillemarine.com

GREG'S OUTBOARD CTR INC
1105 E Ocean Rd
Holly Ridge, NC 28445
910-329-0040
gregsoutboard.com

GUNNELLS MARINE
102 Rock Church Rd NW
Greenwood, SC 29649
864-223-2275
gunnellsmarine.com

HUNTLEY MARINE
307 N. Polk St.
Pineville, NC 28134
704-889-2111
huntleymarine.com

J & J MARINE
2530 Badin Road
Albemarle NC 28001
704-983-867
jandjmarinesales.com

**JET JOE'S MARINE
SALES AND SERVICE**
565 Satterwhite Point Rd.
Henderson, NC 27537
252-430-6209
jetjoesmarine.com

JIMMY'S MARINE
6685 Beach Drive SW
Ocean Isle Beach, NC 28469
910-575-3600
jimmysmarine.com

JOHNSON'S MARINE & OFFROAD
1782 Old Edisto Dr.
Orangeburg, SC 29115
(803) 531-1655
johnsonmarineandoffroad.com

LEWIS MARINE SUPPLY
3601-B Meeting Street Rd.
Charleston, SC 29405
843-554-3732
lewismarine.com

LEWIS MARINE SUPPLY
220 SW 32nd Street
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33315
954-523-4371
lewismarine.com

LONG'S FISHING & MARINE
5401 HWY 24
Anderson, SC 29625-6020
864-287-9064 • Fax 864-287-2965
longs-marine.com

LONG ISLAND MARINA
8400 Long Island Road
Catawba, NC 28609
828-241-4877
longislandmarina.com

MARINE 360
1925 Johnson Marina Rd
Chapin, SC 29036
803-749-2360
marine360sc.com

MARINE SERVICE PRO, INC.
8210 River Road SE
Southport, NC 28461
910-363-4725
marineserviceproinc.com

MARINE WAREHOUSE
6921 Market Dt
Wilmington, NC 28411
910-799-1277
marinewarehousecenter.com

MARINE WAREHOUSE CENTER
3881 Savannah Highway
Johns Island, SC 29455
843-974-5353
marinewarehousecenter.com

MARTIN'S PERFORMANCE BOATING
9345 Macedonia Church Rd
Prosperity, SC 29127
803-364-2162
martinsmarine.com

MERRITT MARINE
1804 NC-86
Hillsborough, NC 27278
919-732-7377
merrittmarine.com

MIRAMAR BOATS LLC
209 Arendell St
Morehead City, NC 28557
252-726-7678
portsidemarina.com

NORTH POINT WATERSPORTS
112 Doolie Rd.
Moorestville, NC
704-799-1994
northpointwatersports.com
info@npwatersports.com

PERFORMANCE EAST
604 Corporate Drive
Goldsboro, NC 27530
888-503-8900
ncpowersports.com

PRECISION MARINE INC
5201 US Hwy 70 E
Goldsboro, NC 27534
919-751-1199
precisionmarineinc.com

ROCK OUTDOORS
7400 NC Hwy 8
Lexington, NC 27292
336-793-8710
rockoutdoors.com

**ROGUE MOTION BOAT SALES,
SERVICE & STORAGE**
65 Sycamore Ave
Charlesont, SC 29407
(843) 633-1433
roguemotion.com

SEA ISLAND MARINE
1105 Rodgers Street
Beaufort, SC 29902
843-524-7272
seaislandmarinebeaufort.com

SEEL'S OUTBOARD, INC.
1937 Savannah Highway
Charleston, SC 29407
(843) 556-2742
seelsoutboard.com

SOUTHPORT MARINE MART
4711 Long Beach Rd
Southport, NC
910-457-6350
marinemartnc.com

SOUTHPORT WATERSPORTS
4888 Coastal Drive
Southport, NC 28461
910-477-6681
southportwatersports.com

SOUTHSIDE OUTDOORS
1077 Clarence Coker Hwy
Turbeville, South Carolina 29162
(843) 659-2628
southsideoutdoors.com

STRICKLAND MARINE CENTER
4520 Hwy 24
Anderson, SC 29626
864-225-0145
stricklandmarine.com

STROUD AND SON MARINE SALES
1897 Ocean Hwy
Edenton, NC 27932
252-482-8938
stroudandson.com

SUTTON MARINE
914 park avenue southeast
aiken, sc 29801
803-648-6141
suttonmarine.com

THE BOAT RACK
7665 E NC 150 Hwy
Sherrills Ford, NC 28673
(828) 478-2222
theboatrack.com

THE GREAT OUTDOORS
112 A North Cherry St.
Cherryville, NC 28021
704-445-8848
teagreatoutdoors.com

TRI-COUNTY MARINE
1203 Premier Road
Granite Falls, NC 28630
828-728-4845
tricityboats.com

TWIN LAKES MARINE, INC
265 Satterwhite Point Rd
Henderson, N.C. 27537
252-431-0416
twinlakesmarinenc.com

UNIVERSAL MARINE
144-A Wayne Drive
Morehead City, NC 28557
252-723-1577
universalmarinenc.com

WACCA WACHE MARINA
1950 Wachesaw Road
Murrells Inlet, SC 29576
843-651-2994
waccawachemarine.com

WEBSTERS MARINE INC
5974 N Okatie Hwy
Ridgeland, SC 29936-8248
843-987-6663 • Fax 843-379-2628
webstersmarine.com

YOPP BROTHERS INC
883 Hwy 210 W Pob 849
Sneads Ferry, NC 28460
910-327-2831
yoppbrothersmarine.com

Not all North Carolina and South Carolina American Suzuki Motor of America Inc. marine dealers are represented in this advertisement.

Fall Specials from Suzuki Marine



Fish On! Make sure you don't miss a single bite this fall. Reel in a super low finance rate from Suzuki Marine or hook a select model and get instant savings.



Now bring it home with Gimme Six, get six years of protection without paying extra!



Gimme Six Extended Protection promotion applies to new Suzuki Outboard Motors from 25 to 350 HP in inventory which are sold and delivered to buyer between 10/01/20 and 12/31/20 in accordance with the promotion by a Participating Authorized Suzuki Marine dealer in the continental US and Alaska to a purchasing customer who resides in the continental US or Alaska. The Gimme Six Promotion is available for pleasure use only, and is not redeemable for cash. Instant Savings applies to qualifying purchases of select Suzuki Outboard Motors made between 10/01/20 and 12/31/20. For list of designated models, see participating Dealer or visit www.suzukimarine.com. Instant Savings must be applied against the agreed-upon selling price of the outboard motor and reflected in the bill of sale. There are no model substitutions, benefit substitutions, rain checks, or extensions. Suzuki reserves the right to change or cancel these promotions at any time without notice or obligation. * Financing offers available through Synchrony Retail Finance. As low as 5.99% APR financing for 60 months on new and unregistered Suzuki Outboard Motors. Subject to credit approval. Not all buyers will qualify. Approval, and any rates and terms provided, are based on creditworthiness. \$19.99/month per \$1,000 financed for 60 months is based on 5.99% APR. Hypothetical figures used in calculation; your actual monthly payment may differ based on financing terms, credit tier qualification, accessories or other factors such as down payment and fees. Offer effective on new, unregistered Suzuki Outboard Motors purchased from a participating authorized Suzuki dealer between 10/01/20 and 12/31/20. "Gimme Six", the Suzuki "S" and model names are Suzuki trademarks or ®. Don't drink and drive. Always wear a USCG-approved life jacket and read your owner's manual. © 2020 Suzuki Motor of America, Inc.



Brittney Olney

Brittney Olney boated this 52-inch, 28-pound king mackerel on an offshore trip out of Murrells Inlet, S.C.



Austin Lancaster

Austin Lancaster boated this 84 1/2-pound wahoo at the Same Ol Hole offshore out of Wilmington, N.C., on May 5.



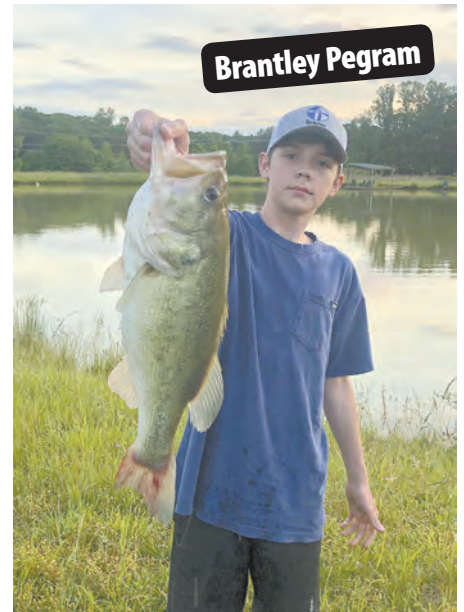
Cyrus Gentry

Cyrus Gentry killed this nice 8-point buck in Johnston County, N.C. It was his biggest ever.



Brooke Bass

Brooke Bass killed her first-ever deer, this nice buck, last Oct. 27 in Wilson County, N.C.



Brantley Pegram

Brantley Pegram caught this 5-pound, 9-ounce bass on a 1/2-ounce football jig in a Stokesdale, N.C., pond



Conrad Riewestahl

Conrad Riewestahl, 7, took this doe on a Harnett County, N.C., farm on North Carolina's 2019 Youth Day.

Take your camera **TO THE WOODS!**

Send us your photos, and you may appear on the pages of the most widely read outdoor magazine in the Tarheel State. Send clean, sharp shots of you with your deer, ducks, rabbits, squirrels, doves, etc. to

**Hunting/Fishing Scrapbook,
Carolina Sportsman,
433 Hollinswood Ave.,
Winston-Salem, N.C. 27103
or to images@CarolinaSportsman.com**

But hang on to the negatives, because the photos cannot be returned.



THE KINGS' THRONE ROOM

■ By Jeff Burleson

THE WATERS OFF OAK ISLAND ARE THE PLACE WHERE THE FALL KING MACKEREL BITE, ESPECIALLY BIG KINGS, TAKES OFF WHEN OCTOBER APPROACHES THE NORTH CAROLINA COAST. HERE'S HOW TO EXTINGUISH A SMOKER.

Fall fishing in southeastern North Carolina would not be complete without the arrival of king mackerel tournaments. The fall bite can be literally explosive, and few diehard anglers will avoid hitting the ocean to get in on the action.

Tournaments are a popular way for many anglers to fish with a purpose besides putting meat on the table, and finding the heavy hitters that rise to the top of the leader boards is an art, well performed by many top-tier performers.

The most-popular tournament is the U.S. Open, headquartered in Southport. For 42 years, it has brought hundreds of anglers to the coast to test their skills, and it is not just one of the typical king mackerel tournaments held up and down the eastern seaboard. In addition to the regular tournament fishermen, the U.S. Open brings dozens of local and amateur king mackerel anglers to the table. And what better resource would be the top-tiered tournament teams that always show up in the top 10 on the leader boards.

One of the most-decorated king mackerel anglers is Kevin Sneed of Rigged and Ready Charters of Holden Beach, N.C. For nearly 20 years, he has trolled the Atlantic for every pelagic fish around and has fished hundreds of king tournaments, winning his share and winding up near the top of the leader board plenty of times.

For Sneed, who also owns Rigged and Ready Fishing Center in Holden Beach, king mackerel fishing in the fall is explosive and one of his favorite times to fish for these toothy critters.

"In October, we get cool nights, and the water temperature falls; that makes the bite really good," said Sneed (910-448-3474). "The fish start feeding real heavy to fatten up for the winter, and there is food all over the place."

The cool weather brings the ocean water temperatures along the beach into the low 70s and upper 60s, and baitfish cover up nearshore places. Menhaden and mullet are abundant, and kings and other predators are flush with feeding opportunities. With fresh bait, catching them can be an easy task, but catching big kings, aka "smokers," is something that can be a little more difficult. Some might say it's luck, but tournament leader boards tell a different story, with the same teams regularly occupying the top spots.

Sneed said some specific techniques and locations make catching larger fish more likely.

"Just about every year, the U.S. Open is won within sight of the Caswell Beach lighthouse," he said. "You can catch kings from the beachfront in shallow water and out at the Shark Hole and the Jungle in deeper water. Essentially, you will get more bites in deeper places and fewer bites in shallower spots nearshore, but the larger fish are nearshore."

◇ In October, kings venture so close to the beach that the high-rises on the shoreline are easily visible from prime waters.





Gear Up for HUNTING SEASON

sportsman
gear

Fishing & Hunting Apparel

www.SPORTSMANGear.com

It is not uncommon in fall to get dozens of bites in deeper spots just offshore, with 15- to 25-pound fish common. The larger fish are hovering around near-shore places where the bait is thick, where they have to spend minimal effort to fill the tank every day. “We target places in close that congregate bait,” Sneed said. “We like Lockwood Folly Inlet, Shallotte Inlet, Lighthouse Rock, Yaupon Reef, and any livebottom and ledges nearshore and also tidelines,” he said.

Typically, Sneed will slow-troll live menhaden or mullet around these features and stick around when the action takes off. But he will also anchor up over some of these places, especially during a north wind.

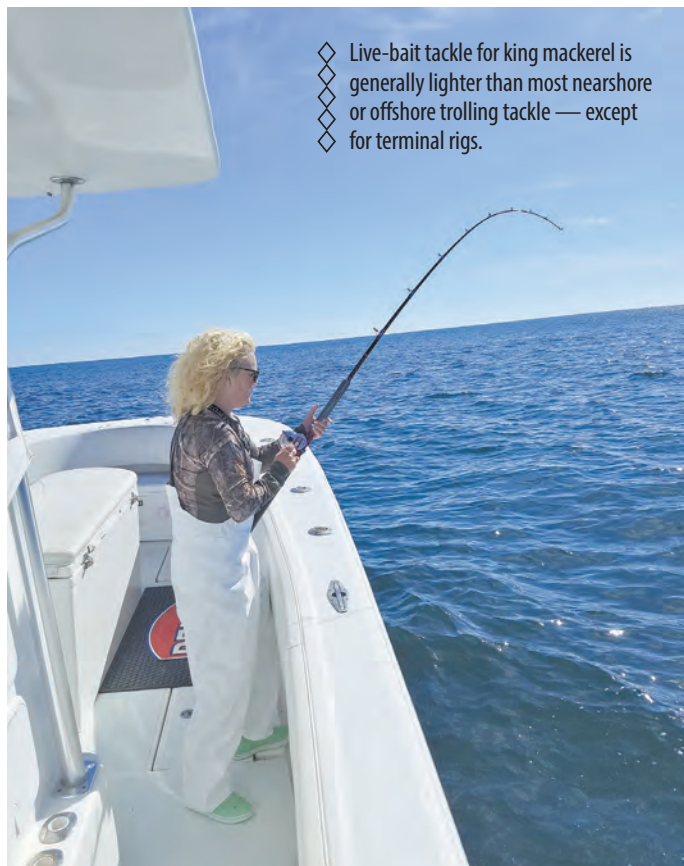
“When the fall weather hits, we typically get north winds, and stationary methods seem to work better for bigger fish,” he said. “We anchor up, chum real heavy and use kites and a standard balloon rig with large baits.”

North winds along North Carolina’s southern coastline of produces calm seas nearshore along Oak Island, making it a perfect place for anglers looking to score on a big king in fall.

King mackerel fishing can be quite productive in the fall; the bite is good, and the area generally has plenty of takers. But catching a big king — for fun or to grab a chunk off prize money — can be a little more challenging, and somebody wins every time. ■



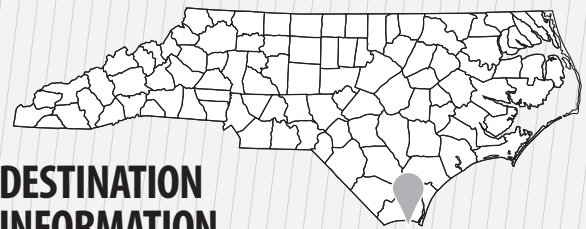
Jeff Burleson is a native of Lumberton, N.C., who lives in Myrtle Beach, S.C. He graduated from N.C. State University with a degree in fisheries and wildlife sciences and is a certified biologist and professional forester for Southern Palmetto Environmental Consulting.



◆ Live-bait tackle for king mackerel is generally lighter than most nearshore or offshore trolling tackle — except for terminal rigs.



◆ Northerly winds, the October norm, will flatten out ocean waters off Brunswick County beaches.



Oak Island

DESTINATION INFORMATION

HOW TO GET THERE — Southport, N.C. is on the mainland, close to the inlet where the Cape Fear River pours into the Atlantic Ocean at the east end of Oak Island. Holden Beach, N.C. is several miles to the west, close to Lockwood Folly Inlet on the west end of Oak Island. US 17 parallels the coast, with NC 133, NC 211 and NC 130 bringing anglers to the coast.

WHEN TO GO — The big fall king bite usually kicks off in late September, with early October the peak. Fishing can be good into November.

BEST TECHNIQUES — Slow-troll big, live baits (mullet, menhaden, bluefish) over livebottom, ledges and artificial reefs outside of ocean inlets.

FISHING INFO/GUIDES — Kevin Sneed, Rigged and Ready Fishing Charters, 910-448-3474, www.holdenbeachcharter.com; Rigged and Ready Fishing Center, 910-842-3474, www.riggedandreadybaitandtackle.com. See also Guides & Charters in Classifieds.

ACCOMMODATIONS — Brunswick County Chamber of Commerce, www.brunswickcounty-chamber.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. GMCO’s Chartbook of North Carolina, 888-420-6277, www.gmcomaps.com.

◇ Bigger baits like this foot-long mullet will often prove deadly on big king mackerel.

Dan Connelly

BIG BAIT PRODUCE BIG FISH

King mackerel fishing is not too different from many other ways fishermen target apex predators. Live bait presented in front of these fish will generally produce a quick bite and good results.

But the way to target bigger fish is somewhat controversial when it comes to bait size — and even bait type.

Kevin Sneed of Rigged and Ready Fishing Charters said big baits are a good way to dupe a large fish into eating something laced with sharp hooks.

“There is a famous saying that elephants eat peanuts. Surely, you can catch big fish on small baits, because we do it all the time,” Sneed said. “But some of the biggest kings I have ever caught were on huge, 15- to 18-inch mullet.”

Large and small baits can catch different-sized fish. Large baits will not stop a smaller king from taking a swing at it, but one may stand out and be just enough to encourage a 45-pound mackerel to strike when he’s passed by plenty of smaller baits.

“When you fish with large baits, you are really just looking for one bite from the largest fish in the area,” he said.

Typically, Sneed will use large mullet, but he also likes to use large lizard fish or ribbonfish. They provide a larger presentation that can push a big king mackerel into committing. And after one of these monstrosities commits to eating, its on, and the reward can be a big payout.

Elephants may eat peanuts, but 50-pound king mackerel eat 18-inch meals in one bite. ■



**REMOVABLE
SAND BAG
WEIGHTS
AVAILABLE**

**ON A
TRAILER
OR LIFT...
WE KEEP
YOU
COVERED!**



1-800-334-8277
2330 Womble-Brooks Rd.
Wilson, NC 27893



**KING MACKEREL
HOTSPOTS >**



FALL RUN OF KINGS takes top billing around Cape Fear

King mackerel are truly kings in along North Carolina's southern coast this month. They are chased by fishermen all year, but when they move close to the beach at the end of September, they get everyone's attention for a few weeks.

There are big kings and lots of them. The action gets hot and many are caught from the ocean piers and by fishermen in any seaworthy boat from kayaks to large sportfishermen.

When king mackerel move close to the beach in the fall, they are feeding hard, which makes them easy to catch. Most fishermen use live baits, but they will also hit rigged natural baits, swimming lures and spoons. Menhaden, locally called pogies, are the prime forage for kings, and they are just off the beach in large schools. Some fishermen take the extra time to catch live bluefish for bait, saying they stand out in all the pogies like a filet mignon on a plate of sirloins.

Brad Honeycutt heads the Unplugged Fishing Team, from Oak Island, N.C. He pays special attention to where the big kings are. "(We) have good king mackerel fishing most of the year, but in the fall, it moves to another level," Honeycutt said. "There are lots

The fall run of king mackerel off Cape Fear puts a lot of big fish within range of a lot of boats — plus anglers on piers.

of kings, and they are biting from just off the beach out to 100 feet of water. They like live baits, pogies and bluefish, which are usually right outside the inlets in good schools.

"We pen baits in advance to have some early and relieve the stress of looking for bait with the crowd. This puts us in position to be fishing early. Still, we make a quick pass to see if there is bait and if we can catch some real quick. We catch fish on our penned baits, but I believe we get more strikes on fresh baits."

The popularity of the fall king run comes from there being so many large fish close in. If you don't have a favorite rock, wreck or artificial reef, slow-trolling a spread of live baits around a school of bait will usually produce strikes. The sea buoys at Carolina Beach, Cape Fear, Lockwood Folly and Shallotte Inlets are all known to hold kings. Artificial Reefs 370, 372, 378, 420, 425, 430, 440 and 460 are all just a few miles off the beach, and local hotspots like 10 Mile Rock, Lighthouse Rocks and the 90/90 are inside the horizon. ■

— Jerry Dilsaver

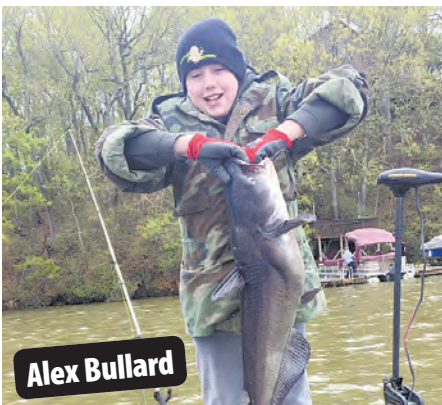


Hunting/Fishing SCRAPBOOK



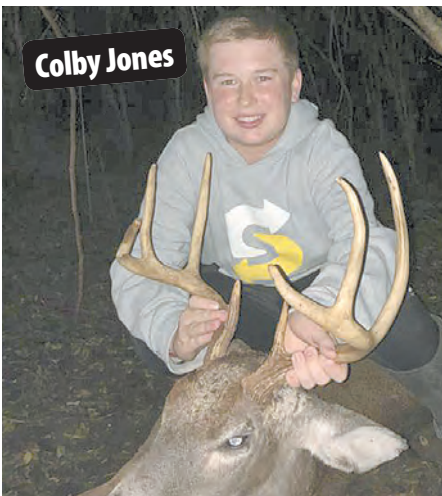
Matt Thompson

Matt Thompson caught this giant blue cat from North Carolina's Badin Lake this past spring.



Alex Bullard

Alex Bullard decked this 20-pound blue catfish on April 1 in North Carolina's Badin Lake.



Colby Jones

Colby Jones, 13, killed this nice buck last season in Onslow County, N.C.



Tess McMichael

Tess McMichael, 9, of Reidsville, N.C., caught and released this 2-pound bluegill on May 24 in a local farm pond.



Andy Nelms

Andy Nelms of Mount Pleasant, S.C., caught this nice yellowfin tuna on a spring trip out of Oregon Inlet.

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

**Hunting/Fishing Scrapbook,
433 Hollinswood Ave.,
Winston-Salem, N.C. 27103
or to images@CarolinaSportsman.com**

Digital images must be at least 200KB and in jpeg format. Print photos cannot be returned.



Lucas Emory

Lucas Emory, 6, caught this catfish on a trip to South Carolina's Lake Marion with his grandfather, James Emory.



Joey, Tim, Sam, Brody, Tyson Price

Joey Price of Zebulon, N.C., his brother, Tim, from Wilmington, and sons Sam, Brody and Tyson, had a great day dolphin fishing on June 27 out of Beaufort Inlet.



TIME FOR THE INSHORE SLAM

OCTOBER CAN'T BE BEAT FOR THE TROUT, FLOUNDER, REDFISH TRIUMVERATE

October is a big transition month for fish along the coastlines of both Carolinas. Shrimp, baitfish and gamefish are plentiful in inshore waters, but in most years, it's the last full month of such abundance until late spring. It's the perfect month for the inshore slam.

In the Carolinas, the inshore slam consists of redfish, speckled trout and flounder. Bag at least one of each species on the same trip, and you've completed the slam. Anglers catch the slam throughout the year, but October is probably the easiest month to do it consistently.

Shrimp are inshore, and the baitfish that have been around all summer are still here. Soon, however, the vast majority will head offshore for the winter. Many species of fish, especially the bigger ones, will follow them out there.

So fish will head out to sea soon, knowing it's time to feed up for their big move. Those fish staying behind sense the change of season and know the majority of baitfish and shrimp will soon be gone. And they feed up, getting their fill while

the getting is good.

Because of the large presence of baitfish and shrimp in inshore waters right now, live bait is tough to beat. Charlie Beadon of Beaufort (S.C.) Sport Fishing (843-592-0897) said anglers can catch the slam with nothing more than some live shrimp and a popping cork.

POP A CORK NOW!

"On an incoming or even a high tide, using a popping cork with a live shrimp over a flooded oyster rake will catch speckled trout consistently this time of year," he said. "The same setup along the edges of grass lines and around deeper holes in inshore creeks will also catch specks. And you've always got the chance to catch a redfish in those same areas."

Beadon said anglers can eliminate the popping cork from the equation when targeting flounder. He said some anglers prefer to keep the cork on and work it much more slowly over suspected flounder havens. The cork keeps your hook from getting hung up on oyster shells and other bottom structure as you

The three most-prized inshore gamefish in the Carolinas — redfish, flounder and speckled trout — are all within range of most anglers this month, and they're hungry.

slowly work the shrimp. Just make sure your bait is gliding ever so slightly off the bottom, in easy reach of flounder lying in wait for an easy meal.

Beyond the breakers, areas with wrecks very close to the beach are good spots to target the inshore slam this time of year. Guide Dennis Barbour at Island Tackle & Hardware said the wrecks just off Carolina Beach, N.C., hold numerous species, and these wrecks are so close to the beach, you can just about have a conversation with anyone standing on the sand.

"You can certainly catch the inshore slam on any of these wrecks, and you can catch some bonus species like black drum and sheepshead, too," said Barbour (910-470-5041), who chooses live bait for most October trips.



Brian Cope of Borden, S.C., is a retired Air Force combat communications technician. He has a B.A. in English Literature 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.

“You really can’t go wrong with live shrimp or baitfish,” he said. “Speckled trout, redfish and flounder are all here, and they’re feeding. It’s all a matter of putting some bait in front of them.”

Just remember, in North Carolina waters, you can’t keep a flounder after Sept. 30, when the six-week keeper season ends.

ONE AT A TIME

For more adventurous anglers who want to target the three inshore slam species individually, guide Addison Rupert of Lowcountry Outdoor Adventures in Charleston, S.C., said to try them one at a time.

“You can certainly catch them all on the same bait, and in the same general areas, but if you really want to target them individually, you can tick them off your list one at a time with a more specific approach,” he said.

“I’d go for the flounder first, preferably at high tide. In terms of the inshore slam species, flounder usually take the most work. Whether you’re using a popping cork or not, it’s best to concentrate on the shallows at high tide, working a mud minnow or shrimp slowly along the bottom. If I find docks in shallow water with hard-packed bottom, I try fishing around them. Just take it slow, be patient, and pay close attention to subtle bites.”

“You can certainly catch the inshore slam on any of these wrecks, and you can catch some bonus species like black drum and sheepshead too.”

Once he’s boated his share of flounder, Rupert (843-557-3476) likes to concentrate on the speckled trout. He finds a lot of them on the outgoing tide where small creeks are emptying into a main creek.

“Really, any place you’ve got a current of water moving in at a different angle than the current in the main creek is a good spot,” he said. “Here, I use a popping cork with live shrimp and cast across that smaller, moving water. Then, I just pop it back through that current. You can catch a lot of fish quickly that way when the tide is just right.”

After that, it’s time to target redfish. Rupert likes to anchor down, positioning his boat upcurrent of deep holes or structure like bridge pilings. He prefers quartered blue crabs for bait but said live shrimp, dead shrimp or any baitfish will do. Then, it’s time to kick back and wait on a bite.

This time of year, all three species are biting strong. It’s a great time to catch the inshore slam,” he said. ■

PRECISION MARINE INC.
NEWEST NauticStar DEALER!
BOATS

215 XTS



211 HYBRID



227 BAY



203 SC



POWERED BY **YAMAHA**

Find us off Hwy 70 bypass at Exit #369 from Raleigh/Exit #370 from Kinston!
8:00 - 5:00 Monday - Friday
After hours by appointment **919-751-1199**
www.PRECISIONMARINE.COM

LUNKER LINES

David Fritts



CRANK UP AN OCTOBER BASS

Brian Cope

HOW TO PICK THE RIGHT CREEK FOR THE BEST ACTION THIS MONTH

I love October; there's no way around it. I've probably won more tournaments in October than any other month, and the fish just seem to be set up for the kind of fishing I like to do.

The crankbait bite is usually happening, and you can catch bass on a number of different patterns. They're normally off the bank a good ways, and that used to be a big advantage for me — before we had these TV sets for depth finders.

It might be best to divide October up into two parts: early and late. The fish change so much over those 30 days, and they are doing things so different in different places. If you're fishing around Charlotte — Lake Wylie or Lake Norman — they'll be doing one thing, but in the

lakes up on the Virginia border — Buggs Island and Gaston — they will be doing something else.

Usually, by the first of October, fish will be getting back in the creeks real good, following the bait. I like to try and find them on medium-depth structure, but if the water conditions permit it, you can catch them up in 2 or 3 feet of water, especially by the end of the month.

PICK A CREEK

Before you try to catch them, you have to figure out where they're going to be. In October, baitfish and bass will go up most of the creeks that feed a big lake, but the best creeks are going to be the ones with the most water flow. You can

go in smaller creeks and catch bass, but you need to be in a big creek because of the water flow.

There are two ways to pick the right creek. The creeks on a lake that get muddy the quickest, that get the muddiest and are the last to clean up, they've got the most flow. On Lake Norman, that would be Davidson and Mountain creeks. On Lake Wylie, it would be the



David Fritts is a 63-year-old pro bass fisherman from Lexington, N.C. He won the 1993 Bassmasters Classic championship and the 1997 FLW Tour Championship, and he was the 1994 BASS Angler of the Year. He is sponsored by Ranger boats, Lews, Lowrance, Power Pole and Berkley.

OPPOSITE: Big bass like this one from Lake Wylie will start moving into creeks in October and should be feeding heavily.

South Fork. That's one way to choose a creek. The other way is to look at the mapping feature on your GPS, look at the back of the creek and see how wide it is in the back and how far back the map shows it going. Some of them will be just a little, bitty line, but some of them will look like a small river. Those are the ones to fish.

BAIT IS THE DEAL

Once you're in a creek, you have to find the bait. Where there's a lot of bait, there's a lot of fish. You hear people say that where there's a lot of bait, it's hard to catch fish. That's wrong. Where there's a lot of bait, there's also a lot of bass, and they'll bite.

Early in October, I'll generally go back about a fourth of the way into a creek, and I'll fish back to about mid-way back. Later in October, I'll start halfway back and fish all the way to the back. That's pretty much the deal on these places. There will always be a few fish on the main lake or in the river, but the biggest concentrations are going to be back in the creeks, and the better fish will get back there.

When you have that taken care of, it's time to get specific. I really like to fish roadbeds, anything with a sharp break. They get on creek channels, and they'll get on wood. It doesn't matter what kind of wood it is — brush or stumps — but wood is your No. 1 cover. They will really get on brush in September and October, and a lot of times, isolated stumps. Places there's one here and one there, not a big stump field, will hold really big fish.

Fish like those big drops; they like to be on edges. One of my favorite places to fish on Buggs Island is a place where, when the water is down a couple of feet — like it gets in the fall — I can barely see the tops of the stumps. But if I turn my boat around, I'll be sitting in 20 feet of water. That place has everything they like in the fall: a sharp drop, and wood.

CRANKBAIT PICKS

Now, I am going to pick up a crankbait first and fish it a majority of the time, because the bass will be biting it. The first of the month, you can catch 'em on a Berkley Dredger 14.5, 17.5 or 20.5. By the end of the month, you don't need anything deeper than the 14.5, and the Frittsides, a flat-sided bait, that will really come into play. It's got that hard roll, which is good in the fall, especially when you get that milky color when the lake is turning over.

Colors? Two of the best are brown/yellow and what we call oatmeal cream pie. It used to be called carp color.

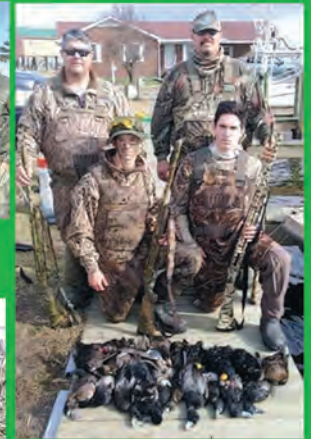
So, if you can wait until November to start climbing into your deer stand, October is a great month to stay on the lake and catch some nice bass. They'll be hungry and biting, and they won't be tough to find. ■

CAPTAIN FROGGY'S GUIDE SERVICE

(252) 661-7222



OPEN WATER HUNTS
ON THE PAMLICO
SOUND



\$125 PER GUN
MIN 3 HUNTERS



WWW.DUCKHUNTINGNC.COM

HELP WANTED

We are looking for drivers to deliver the
Carolina **SPORTSMAN** Magazine in both
North and South Carolina.

If You Love to Fish, Hunt and Meet People You Qualify!

Circulation experience helpful but not necessary. Dependable vehicle with insurance & a valid NC and / or SC drivers license a must. If you have 2-3 days a month to help spread the word I would like to hear from you!

Please Contact: Mitch Eby,

Circulation Manager @ 919-602-3862 -or- mitchebync@gmail.com

Carolina
SPORTSMAN[®]

SMALL CRAFT ADVISORY

Phillip Gentry

Many seasoned anglers are looking for stability in a kayak, not for fear of tipping over, but for the ability to stand while fishing.



PICK THAT FIRST KAYAK

HERE'S HOW TO KNOW YOUR OPTIONS AND WHAT THEY MEAN

Phillip Gentry

Most anglers get into the sport of kayak-fishing through introduction by a friend, seeing another angler in person or some type of media and decide they'd like to give it a try.

Devotees often reminisce about the first fish they caught or the first time they set out on the water with nothing but a paddle and a rod and the world of fishing became new all over again.

Kayak anglers probably remember the "feeling" of the proximity to the water, the feel of the waves and the excitement of that first tug on the line more than they remember the specific watercraft in which they were seated at the time.

It's only after the newness of the experience starts to become more familiar that anglers look to enhance that experience with different gear, boats and so on.

That's what makes it so hard to answer the question: "What's a good kayak to get started fishing in?" It's not that most anglers aren't full of suggestions and opinions, it's that each paddler must begin his or her own experience in their own way and see where it takes them.

All ethereal comments aside, you can make a better decision based on infor-

mation, so here's a rundown of considerations to help you make an informed decision when it comes time to pick.

SIT-IN OR SIT-ON

All kayaks were sit-inside, cockpit-style boats when first designed eons ago. This style later evolved into the sit-on-top, which allowed water to wash over the side of the boat and drain away through scupper holes molded in the deck.

The on-deck version allowed more freedom of movement and more room for gear. Some manufacturers have capitalized on this idea by integrating storage compartments into the gunwales and decks, and sit-on-tops have become the market leader for fishing kayaks.

STABILITY

The rule of thumb is, the wider the boat, the more stable it is on the water. A novice's first concern is usually in the arena of "I don't want to fall out." Later on, the seasoned kayak angler wants enough stability to stand while fishing — or even throwing a cast net.

Less-expensive boats tend to have more rounded hulls, while more expensive versions have channels and/or are divided,

similar to the hull of a motor boat, to allow full width touching the water at rest or slow speeds and track up, allowing the boat to glide smoothly through the water when underway.

SPEED

Faster kayaks are usually longer kayaks. The boat's width comes into play, but the speed vs. stability factor boils down to hull design. Most anglers are not overly concerned with how fast they can paddle or peddle, but then again, there is a whole contingent of bass-fishing kayak anglers who want the fastest boat they can find to beat all the other tournament guys to the best spots.

PROPULSION

While kayaking used to mean paddling, end of story, it now may include pedaling in bicycle fashion, paddling in traditional fashion, or even using a small gas or elec-



Phillip Gentry of Waterloo, S.C., is host of "PG & Boatgirl Outdoors," a weekly podcast that can be seen at www.pgandboatgirl.com.

tric motor to propel the boat.

Further trends in pedaling circles are steering capabilities while pedaling, including allowing the kayak to move in reverse, either by adjusting gears on the drive or reversing the direction you're pedaling.

STORAGE

As mentioned, sit-on-tops typically offer the most storage. Compartments are molded into the hull with water shields or sealed hatches to keep cargo dry.

The counter side of this in the cockpit style boat is a spray skirt that goes around the paddler and the lip of the cockpit opening. While this is more practical for whitewater applications, some sit-insides still offer this feature, which effectively turns the whole boat into dry storage with limited accessibility.

PORTABILITY

The trend in the modern era of kayak angling is to keep the boat upright, as you would do any boat, to keep stuff from falling out. Transporting a kayak in this fashion usually requires more space in the bed of a truck or on a separate trailer, rather than being able to attach the boat to most any vehicle capable of supporting a carry rack system.

Some anglers have made a whole new science of converting a jet ski trailer or other small-boat trailer into a kayak fishing/utility/storage trailer.

CONSTRUCTION

Rotomolding has had great influence on the kayak industry. It allows the entire hull to be made in one piece, giving kayaks a uniform and seamless construction. Cheaper construction methods created kayaks in two pieces — the top and bottom half — and these two were bolted, glued or plastic welded together and usually leaked over time.

Two-piece construction had become the hallmark of lower-end, less-expensive boats. Today, even economy-line kayaks are rotomolded, giving the budget-conscious consumer a choice of one-piece construction.

COST

Probably the biggest factor to all kayak anglers is cost. New fishing kayaks can be purchased in department stores today for \$100 to \$200, while other models, usually ordered direct from the manufacturer or purchased from a specialty retailer can top \$4,000.

Probably the best piece of advice in choosing a kayak is to buy what you can afford now, with the knowledge that as your experience level grows, so will your budget and the boat you are in today will probably not be the boat you're in tomorrow due to upgrades. ■

BEST BETS

NORTH CAROLINA

WHAT — Striped bass.

WHERE — Neuse River

HOW — Watch for birds diving on baitfish, and striped bass are typically not far away.

LAUNCH — www.ncwildlife.org/boating/where-to-boat/

INSIDER TIP — The Neuse River falls in the Central Southern Management Area so harvest of striped bass is prohibited.



Mike Curtis

SIT-INSIDES: A COMEBACK?

Ease of use, lighter weight, and a focus on fun is helping trend a surge in sit-inside kayaks for fishing.

When the kayak-angling era began to boom in the late 1990s, it did so on the heels of manufacturers who began designing, making and selling sit-on-top kayaks that appealed to the angler and not just the paddler. However, chances are your first attempt at paddling a kayak was in a cockpit-style boat, because cockpits dominated the touring or recreational paddling market, so the chances of "just trying one" were greater to be a sit-inside.

Today, a few manufacturers have toyed with trying to create a niche market within the kayak-fishing industry. One of the first was Bona Fide Kayaks, with a new spin on the SIK model. Other manufacturers have foregone the hype and drama and made or marketed simple paddling kayaks that you sit inside but can also fish from.

"Everyone in my family fishes from a sit-inside kayak," said Mike Curtis, a kayak angler from North Carolina. "It's just easier. We each fish with one or maybe two rods, at the most, and the focus is on fun."

It's hard to argue with simplicity, which also carries a price tag of almost one-third to one-half off more expensive sit-on-tops. Other advantages to cockpit-style boats are: less weight and ease of transport, especially with multiple boats, and closer to the water. ■

SOUTH CAROLINA

WHAT — Speckled trout

WHERE — Charleston area.

HOW — Cast anything that resembles a shrimp around areas of moving clear water. Pay particular attention to seams created by points, rocks, or oyster rakes.

LAUNCH — www2.dnr.sc.gov/ManagedLands/boatramp/boatrampsearch

INSIDER TIP — Slow-rolling a soft plastic like the Z-Man ShrimpZ on a ¼-ounce jighead around drop-offs is a great way to land an inshore slam from the yak.

SANTEE STRINGER

Terry Madewell

Guides Bobby Winters and Leroy Suggs caught these slot-sized strippers from Lake Moultrie last October.



IT'S STRIPER TIME ON SANTEE LAKES

LATEST REGULATION SHOWING GOOD, EARLY RESULTS

Terry Madewell

As opening days for fishing seasons go, the opening of the Santee Cooper stripper fishing season on Oct. 1 ranks high and is eagerly anticipated by anglers.

The stripper fishing was absolutely wild last October, despite unseasonably hot weather. The heat didn't slow the activity, with guide boats and other anglers catching and releasing scores of strippers, while often keeping limits of fish within the legal slot limit.

STRIPERS ON LURES

Bobby Winters, who guides out of Blacks Camp, said that while some surface schooling activity occurs early and late in the day in early October, the best is yet to come, later in the month and through November.

"But the good news is that strippers

are schooled up in big bunches and are very active," he said. "Even if they're suspended and not schooling on the surface in early October, we'll spot them on the graph and can use different artificial lures to catch them. White bucktails in ½- to 1-ounce sizes are always an excellent choice, and spoons jigged at the depths fish are marked on the graph are another highly productive option."

On a trip with Winters early last October, we jigged LiveTarget spoons to catch multiple strippers in and around the 23- to 25-inch slot limit, plus a few bigger than 26 inches — one fish that size is allowed per day. The early October action is usually fast-paced, with multiple anglers hooked up at any given time.

Stripers were also surface schooling in the late evenings and were highly susceptible to these same artificial offerings.

Winters (843-751-3080) said Lake Marion and Lake Moultrie are full of strippers in the slot limit, and using the graph is the key to finding the strippers when they aren't feeding on the surface.

LIVE BAIT IS LETHAL

If you're not into slinging artificial lures, the live-bait fishing for strippers is also excellent during the entire fall, from opening day through the end of the calendar year.

Guide Leroy Suggs often prefers artificial lures early in October, but he said



Terry Madewell, of Ridgeway, S.C., 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.

having plenty of blueback herring is never a bad idea.

“Forage is highly abundant in October, and stripers are feeding heavily, making the use of artificial lures very productive,” Suggs said. “The air is usually cooler in October, but the water is still warm, and the striper bite is usually aggressive.”

Suggs (910-995-1168) said fishing live herring, suspended at the depth fish are marked on the graph, is productive.

“Live bait or artificial lures will get you hooked into some great striper action once you find the fish,” Suggs said.

STRIPER REGS WORK

Levi Kaczka, regional fisheries biologist for the S.C. Department of Natural Resources, said the agency is happy with what is happening with the striper population in the Santee Cooper system.

“After two full seasons with the new regulations, we gathered enough data to see some trends,” he said. “Our catch rates from the past two seasons have been among the highest since the early 2000s.

“Another good sign is we’re seeing older fish as well. The proportion of older fish in our sample (6 to 8 years) has increased the past two years. One of the goals of the most-recent regulation change was to balance the need to keep fish in the system long enough to reach maturity and have the chance to spawn, while also providing the opportunity to catch harvestable size fish.”

Kaczka said, based on the last two years of data, only about 4% to 5% of the annual catch was of a size that anglers could harvest under the previous, 26-inch size minimum. Under our current regulations, 15% to 25% of the annual catch is of a harvestable size. So, knowing we’re keeping fish in the system longer, while also seeing large increases in the numbers of harvestable-sized fish, is a positive.

“We’ve come to realize our hatchery system plays a large role in the Santee Cooper



Terry Madewell

THE BEST BAIT:

Guide Leroy Suggs is never caught without plenty of live herring in his bait tank when he’s on the water, chasing stripers on the Santee Cooper lakes. He locates fish on his depth finder and drops baits to the proper depth.

striper fishery,” he said. “We typically request about 2.5 million striper fry to be stocked each year in Marion and Moultrie. There were concerns about meeting this request with all the COVID-related shutdowns in the middle of the hatchery season, but our hatchery folks were able to produce and stock 2.4 million fry between the two lakes. This 100K difference between the request and final number isn’t anything more

than the normal year-to-year variability with stocking. We didn’t miss a beat, despite the logistical constraints COVID has imposed.”

Kaczka said with the current regs being in effect for just two full seasons, SCDNR will continue monitoring for any trends, but so far, those regulations seem to be having a positive effect on both the fish and the fishing. ■

BACK CREEK

GUIDE SERVICE

Inshore / Nearshore



Pamlico Sound
Neuse River
Oriental & Beaufort


- Giant Red Drum
- Puppy Drum
- Trout
- Flounder
- Tarpon

Follow Us On



Capt. Glenn Grigg
(252) 515-2971




SC'S FINEST FISHING & RECREATION IS ON LAKES MARION & MOULTRIE



SANTEE COOPER COUNTRY

170,000 Acres of Waterways
Called Santee Cooper...
Perfect for practicing social distancing!
#MaskUpSC

If you have any questions,
please call us at (803) 854-2131

Across Berkeley, Clarendon, Calhoun, Orangeburg, & Sumter counties

fishsanteecoopercountry.com

HEAD FOR THE MOUNTAINS

Robert Satterwhite

OLDIES BUT GOODIES

TRADITIONAL TROUT FLIES IN THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIANS STILL CATCH PLENTY OF TROUT, DECADES AFTER THEIR BIRTHS

Long before the first European settlers arrived, and long before “gentlemen” fly fishers discovered the fine trout waters of the Southern Appalachians, the Cherokee used hand-made flies to catch trout, not for sport, however, but for food.

According to Jan Davidson, director of the John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, N.C., and an authority on trout fishing in the mountains, the Cherokee were the mountains’ first master fly anglers. They fashioned hooks from chipped stone and the leg bones of deer. They wrapped the shanks of the hooks with deer hair and fished them wet, catching the abundant brook trout that, until the late 1800s, were the only salmonids populating mountain streams.

Early settlers continued the fly-fishing tradition, adapting and modifying the Cherokee deer-hair flies and creating their own. One version of that early fly evolved into a popular fly called the Irresistible, which is still used today.

THE YELLOWHAMMER

Other traditional mountain patterns evolved much later, some out of need, some out of opportunity. Probably one of the most famous is the Yellowhammer, or “Yallerhammer,” as it was more commonly called. This fly, according to Roger Lowe, a master fly-tier from Waynesville, N.C., is “a very effective fly, one of the first flies to come to mind when you think about fishing western North Carolina streams,” primarily because many mountain anglers believed a fly with a little “yaller” in it would attract more trout.

No one is certain who originated the Yellowhammer, although Davidson speculates that the Cherokee may have tied

the first one, wrapping the bright quills of the yellow-shafted flicker around a hook in reverse-palmer style. After the flicker became an endangered bird, fly tiers switched to other materials, dyeing grizzly hackle and peacock or dove feathers to resemble the bright yellow plumage of the flicker.

One of the people most often associated with the Yellowhammer was the late Fred Hall of Bryson City, N.C. Hall and his wife, Alleen, turned out thousands of Yellowhammers, along with a variety of other patterns, for local and visiting fly fishers. Some people give Hall credit for originating the Tellico nymph and the Adams variant.

The Yellowhammer was tied as both a wet and dry fly. It also was tied on a straight-eyed hook and fished as a nymph. Another early practice was to attach a willow-leaf spinner to the Yellowhammer and use it as a spinner, a practice favored by old-timers and used long before Rooster Tail and Mepps spinners became available.

SMOKIES’ FAVORITE

Another Fred Hall original was the Thunderhead, a fly especially designed for the rough-water streams in the Smokies. The fly floats well and is a good attractor pattern. Some fly fishers use this fly year-round, varying the size to fit fishing conditions. The fly is easy to see in the water because of its hair wings.

One fly that traditional fly fishers always kept in their fly boxes is the Gray Hackle, a yellow-bodied fly with grizzly hackle and tail but no wings. Fly fishers often would add a red feather for the tail, and a few enterprising fishers with more ingenuity than money used the red

Some of the oldest trout flies tied in this part of the country are still some of the best on trout waters in the high country of the Carolinas.

cellophane strip from a cigarette pack for a tail.

The Gray Hackle and the Tellico nymph were two patterns that fit the widest variety of fishing conditions, and if you didn’t have those two flies, you didn’t catch fish.

A STARTING POINT

Some patterns evolved from patterns created by other fly-tiers. The Tennessee Wulff, for example, is a variation of Lee Wulff’s famous Royal Wulff. The Appalachian version has a green center instead of a red center.

Other traditional favorites are the pale Yellow Palmer, a fly favored for the streams in the Little Cataloochee area; the Jim-Charley, a local pattern used on the Big East Fork of the Pigeon River and on the Davidson River; the Smoky Mountain Forked-Tail, which has mallard wings, blue dun hackle, orange body, and a forked tail of mallard feathers; the Coffey Stone Nymph, originated by Frank Coffey of Maggie Valley, N.C., utilizing scrap material from the Waynesville Dayco plant; the Secret Weapon, which was used by mountain fly fishers long before the popular Prince fly came into use; and the Horse Hair Nymph, which simulates a hellgrammite.

New patterns come and go, but the traditional patterns are the flies that consistently catch the most trout. ■



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 Tuckasee River, Caney Fork, Moses Creek, and several other prime trout streams.



Hunting/Fishing SCRAPBOOK



Vashti Beagle Boys

Brought in by the owner of a nursery who complained that rabbits were chewing on his plants and blackberry bushes, the Vashti Beagle Boys, led by Jackson Walker, took 35 rabbits on a Feb. 15, 2020, hunt, in Stony Point, N.C.



Lake Kellermyer

Lake Kellermyer of Taylors, S.C., killed his first deer, this nice buck, two days before his 14th birthday in October 2019.



Hunter White

Hunter White of Black Mountain, N.C., killed this 147-inch, 10-point buck on Christmas morning 2019, with a crossbow.



Kable Clark

Kable Clark, 6, killed his first deer on Nov. 18, 2018, with a .270 in Stanly County, N.C.



Makayla, Emilee Hester

Makayla Hester, 12, and sister Emilee, 13, killed their first fox squirrels on Jan. 20, hunting with their father, Donnie Hester.



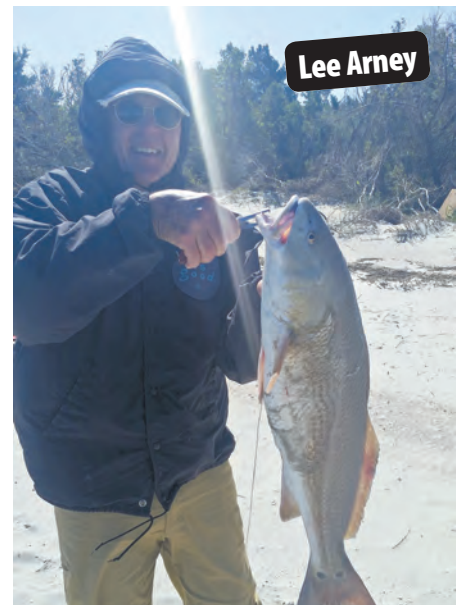
A.J. Thomas

A.J. Thomas, 13, caught this 74-pound blue catfish on a trip to Lake Marion with his father, Tony, and grandfather, Charlie.



Clayton Maynor

Clayton Maynor of Zebulon, N.C., killed his first redheads in December 2019, hunting out of Harker's Island.



Lee Arney

Lee Arney of Icard, N.C., caught this nice, 29-inch redfish on the last cast of the day last fall.



Sportsman
**FISHING
HOTSPOTS**

WACCAMAW RIVER BASS BITE IS GREAT

Pro bass angler Dana Rabon is psyched about the great fall bass bite on her home waters, the Waccamaw River.

Largemouths move back into myriad of creeks off blackwater river in both states

As October arrives, outdoor junkies spend more time away from home than at home, with hunting seasons wide open and the saltwater fishery sizzling along the coastal front.

But many anglers forget the freshwater bite that also picks up during fall, and the Waccamaw River, which twists and turns through both Carolinas just inshore of the coast, is ground zero for one of the best largemouth bass bites of the year.

The Waccamaw is one of the prettiest rivers around, beginning at the spillway below Lake Waccamaw in North Carolina and dumping into Winyah Bay near Georgetown, S.C. And while thousands of people drive over these tar-colored waters daily, few anglers venture into these bald cypress-lined channels to catch a bass.

Pro angler Dana Rabon of Conway, S.C., calls the Waccamaw home, and she said fall fishing there is never to be missed.

"The fall fishing can be fantastic on the Waccamaw," said Rabon, who fishes the BAA Woman's Pro Bass Tour. "As the water cools down, the bass go into the creeks to feed and fatten up for the winter."

Downstream from the state line, the

centuries of channel movements and the fact the river follows a major swamp corridor creates small creeks and channels all over. The Waccamaw River snakes from one side of the watershed to the other, with plenty of places to fish.

Bass make a living there throughout the year; the habitat ranges from super-shallow areas to very deep holes in channel bends and old oxbow lakes. As cooler weather begins to drive the water temperature down, the fishery responds, beginning with the baitfish and followed by the apex predators.

"The baitfish will run into the back of the creeks in the fall, and the bass will be right behind them," Rabon said. "It's fairly predictable this time of year, and you can have bumper days in these creeks."

Rabon's favorite creeks are ones with treetops, logs or brush piles off the bank, but near the shallower sections.

"I like finding a treetop or some structure in 3- to 4-foot water in the creeks. Bass will be hanging in these structures looking to ambush passing baitfish," she said.

According to Rabon, the bass are less selective in these creeks off the river in fall, and a reaction bait can allow anglers to

cover water and get some quick action.

"I like reaction baits or anything that rattles, vibrates or flashes and gets their attention," she said. "Bass aren't afraid to chase a lure this time of year. I love using a buzzbait or any type of topwater bait early and then switch to a spinnerbait or some type of soft plastic."

Rabon won't deny that topwater lures are some of her favorites to start the day, but she can't ignore her success rate with a worm, either.

"I love using junebug-colored worms from Prosser Bait Company, either wacky rigged or Texas-rigged. They can produce lots of fish this time of year," she said. "A big worm will usually produce bigger fish in this river when it's cool in fall."

The bass can be aggressive in fall conditions and a large collection of lures can put these fish in the boat this time of year.

Even though the deer rut is approaching and the spots are beginning to bite at the beach this month, a trip to the Waccamaw River is surely not to be missed if big bass are on the hit list. ■

— Jeff Burleson



FLOUNDER PILE UP

around Edisto Nearshore Reef in October

The Edisto Nearshore Reef loads up with flounder in October. They're always hungry and usually big.

When it comes to fall fishing, Buddy Bizzell of Edisto (S.C.) Palmetto Charters said you can't beat the flounder bite at the Edisto Nearshore Reef. The biggest challenge, he said, is to keep the black sea bass from stealing your bait before it gets down to the flounder.

"You'll catch a lot of black sea bass right here, so many that you'll come to see them as a nuisance," he said. "There's plenty of good, keeper-sized flounder here, but you've got to weed through those black sea bass to get to them."

Bizzell has a trick that helps a lot. He uses more weight than he needs to, and he uses a short leader.

"The flounder are stacked up along the bottom, and they like to stay put," he said. "So you've got to put the bait on them and keep it from straying. I've used egg sinkers as big as 4 ounces — more than the current calls for. But it gets bait down through the black sea bass quickly."

A short leader keeps his live mud minnow from swimming up too high off the bottom.

"On some days, the flounder may be aggressive enough to chase a bait down, but if you're keeping it right on top of them, it's a sure thing. I'll use leaders as short as 6 inches," he said.

This reef, which sits about 2 miles from the beach, doesn't get much fanfare from flounder anglers, according to Bizzell (803-603-2781), who believes it's because the flounder move from one side of the reef to the other throughout the day. It's tough to pinpoint them if you don't really study them.

"Here's what I've found though. When the tide is coming in, the flounder will lay on the beach side of the reef. When the tide is going out, they switch to the ocean side. So it's important to read your electronics and make sure you're on the correct side of the reef, according to the tide. If you're on the wrong side, the flounder aren't even seeing your bait," he said.

Bizzell also said anglers can forget the "count to 10 rule" that some folks swear by when feeling a flounder bite.

"You're going to feel one thump, and that's it from these flounder. They aren't going to swim away with your bait. They aren't going to move at all. They'll suck your bait in and sit right where they are waiting on another meal. Set the hook before they realize something's wrong and spit it out." ■

— Brian Cope



Brian Cope

Guide Dale Collins shows off a red drum he caught on a topwater bait.



Craig Holt

SWANSBORO REDS

will kill topwater lures on high end of tide

In spring and fall, the red drum patrolling North Carolina's inshore waters red drum will attack topwater lures, but October may be the best season to enjoy arm-jarring, adrenalin-pumping surface explosions.

"Waters start cooling in October and baitfish start moving from shallow to deeper water," said Dale Collins of Swansboro's Fish or Die Charters. "Redfish, trout and other fish follow them. The bite gets active. When I'm fishing, the first thing I look for is baitfish."

During October, Collins (252-422-4326) hunts reds both under and inside the 18- to 27-inch slot.

"I don't think there'll be as many 25- to 27-inch fish as last fall," he said. "We've been catching mostly catch lower- and under-slot reds. I've heard this referred to as a 'hatchery year.' That means (2021) should be a good year because they're always eating and growing. But we'll land some nice reds this year."

Collins rarely uses live or cut baits, preferring artificial lures.

"I like to fish a Skitter Walk 11 in golden mullet or sometimes silver mullet color," he said. "Early in the day, I'll throw smaller (lures) to match baitfish sizes."

If he's fishing in grass, Collins switches out the Skitter Walk's factory trebles for a single, 1/0 in-line hook to cut down hang-ups.

Collins doesn't have to travel far from his Cedar Point base, fishing

behind Emerald Isle, Bear and Browns islands and the White Oak River, "anywhere in the marshes with oysters," he said, "but I prefer high tide. At low tide, it's tough to get in some places."

Hot spots include marsh points and creek mouths with oyster beds in 18 to 24 inches of water.

"Oyster mounds during high tides are good places to find reds," Collins said, because at low tide, the water is too far from marsh edges to get lures near grass. "The best times are two hours before

high tide through two hours after the tide starts to fall."

If topwater lures aren't effective, Collins changes to 1/6-ounce Bluewater Candy jigheads — 1/8-ounce on windy days — carrying 4-inch white or chartreuse Gulp shrimp. His equipment includes 7-foot Star Segis 4- to 10-pound-class rods, 2500 Series Penn Conflict 2 spinning reels and 10-pound, moss-green Power Pro braid with 18 inches of a 30-pound, Yo-Zuri fluorocarbon leader.

When topwater lures and jigs don't produce action, he'll try a spinnerbait.

"If I'm not seeing any finger mullets, minnows or crabs, I'll throw a 1/4-ounce Falling Tides or a Strike King spinnerbait with a white-and-chartreuse skirt," Collins said. "Sometimes, I'll use a root-beer skirt if other colors aren't getting hit."

His basic technique is to slow-roll spinnerbaits off the bottom. ■

— Craig Holt

BQ GRILLS

Custom Built Quality
Outdoor BBQ Products Since 1989

Pig Cookers, Patio Grills, Smokers Customized BBQ Trailers



For More Info 1-252-236-4464
www.BQGRILLS.com
6043 Hwy 301N, Elm City, NC



The author shows off a nice fall largemouth taken at Shearon Harris Lake.

BASS TURN TABLES

when Shearon Harris water turns over

Bass fishing at Shearon Harris Lake south of Raleigh, N.C., will catch its second wind when October brings real, noticeable change to conditions.

While fish can be caught before and during the fall turnover, the real fun begins when the debris settles and water temperatures hold in the low 70s. That's when big bass get down to the business of fattening up on shad for the winter.

"We'll start to get a turnover in early October if we've had a couple of cold spells," said Jaime Fajardo, a veteran angler from Fuquay-Varina, N.C. "At this time, the fish will be suspended in the water column and hard to catch. You can throw a fish-head spin or a swimbait; topwater baits will also be good for the fish that stay on the main lake.

A Rat-L-Trap, shaky head or Texas-rigged worm will work for the fish that move to the backs of the creeks. But once the turnover has settled down — it's usually over in three to five days unless it warms up and starts over again — those fish will sit back down on the bottom of the long main lake points in 13 to 18 feet of water. Pretty much all of the best points will be at the mouths of creeks. They'll start to group up tighter and really key in on shad.

According to Fajardo, shad-mimicking baits, like deep-diving crankbaits, Alabama rigs and swimbaits will out-produce worms. The crankbait an angler uses will need to bump bottom in 13 to 18 feet of water; a Strike King 5XD will cover the shallow end of this range, while the 6XD will cover the deeper end. Blue/chartruse is Fajardo's go-to fall color.

Alabama rigs and swimbaits are best in pearl or albino. Fajardo will cast these soft plastics and allow them to hit bottom before beginning a slow retrieve, often eliciting a strike on the initial fall. Later in the month, he'll switch over to a spoon.

"The fish will start getting focused on smaller baits, and you won't be able to catch them with a crank," Fajardo said. "I'll start using a 7/8-ounce War Eagle jiggging spoon in gold. Once I see the fish on my depth finder, I'll back off and cast to them. I work it back close to the bottom and pop it like a worm."

Fajardo said anglers should check out the list of fish attractors placed on Shearon Harris by the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission. Their waypoints can be found on the Commission's website at www.ncpaws.org/ncwrcmaps/fishattractors. Many of them are in key areas for October. They are mostly inhabited by crappie, but bass will lie on the outside perimeter in ambush.

— Dusty Willson



Dusty Wilson

SAILFISH
SMALLER BOATS. Bigger BOATERS.

YAMAHA

MARINE WAREHOUSE CENTER 

TWO LOCATIONS TO SERVE YOU!
6921 MARKET ST WILMINGTON, NC 910.799.1277
3881 SAVANNAH HWY JOHNS ISLAND, SC 843.974.5353
MARINEWAREHOUSECENTER.COM

LAKE JAMES SMALLIES aren't very particular as October arrives

North Carolina fishermen don't have to fantasize about leaping smallmouth bass from northern waters or distant Canadian lakes.

They can catch quality smallmouth up to 5 pounds at 6,800-acre Lake James in the Foothills west of Morganton.

Better yet, locating smallmouth haunts at James is less daunting than searching for smallmouth hangouts in massive waters like 107-mile-long Lake Champlain or 241-mile-long Lake Erie.

Guide Colt Bass of Colt Bass Fishing said another boon is that in October, one of the best months for smallies, there's really not much you can't do to catch fish; they'll strike a variety of baits and lures fished in a variety of ways.

"It will vary each day, from throwing crankbaits, casting spoons, jigging spoons and Flukes to fishing with live bait," said Bass (www.coltbassfishing.com), who selects artificial baits in more natural colors because of James' clear water but occasionally opts for lures in crazy, bright colors to trigger bites.

Bass said his October strategy involves employing his electronics to look for ledges and humps in water as deep as 60 to 70 feet — but with shallow water close by. These deep, mid-lake humps and ledges are readily exposed to fishermen with side-scan units.

"I'll sit in the deep water and fan-cast a variety of baits into water as shallow as 2 to 3 feet," he said. "There's a lot of new shad in the water this month, and the smallmouth love to push them out of deeper water up into the shallow water to eat them."

Bass uses a 7-foot, medium-action rod and a reel spooled with 12- to 14-pound clear monofilament. If fan-casting doesn't produce, Bass searches for smallies suspended in 20 to 49 feet of water and tries for them with a small jigging spoon.

If all else fails, he switches to live bait.

"I may drop a 3- to 4-inch live bait on a Carolina rig with a 1/0 circle hook a few feet above the school I'm marking," said Bass, whose

Smallmouth bass will bite a variety of lures presented in a variety of ways at Lake James this month.



An advertisement for Big Lake Outdoor Products. The background is a sunset over a lake with ducks flying. The text reads: "BIG LAKE OUTDOOR PRODUCTS", "Wildly Raspierr... BREAKS DUCKS FASTER!", "NEW Pintail Passion", "Make this season one for the ages with the finest waterfowling calls and accessories available, period! Proudly made in Ellore, SC.", and "See the entire collection today and order online at www.biglakeoutdoorproducts.com". There are several colorful waterfowling calls and accessories displayed in the foreground.

typical October trips will produce five to 10 smallmouths.

Smallmouth fishing has remained stable at James with no observable changes in the past 5 years, he said. Years ago, the Catawba River arm of the lake harbored more large-mouth bass and the Linville River arm, more smallmouth bass. Now both species have become distributed throughout James. ■

— Tony Garitta



Brian Cope

LAKE WATEREE SLABS are stacked up on cover this month

The fall crappie bite turns on strong at Lake Wateree this month, and catching them consistently takes good electronics and simple fishing gear. Slabs are stacked up around brush piles, sunken logs and stumps, especially in mid-depth ranges. They'll disperse and spread out around the middle of November, so October is a great time to stock the freezer without having to move around too much.

T.C. Lloyd of Southern Angling Guide Service said the key to staying on the crappie this month is trusting your electronics.

"If you know how to read your electronics, you can't go wrong this month on Wateree," said Lloyd, from Hartsville, S.C. "You'll find the crappie around stump fields, sunken logs, and brush piles in 12 to 20 feet of water. The older the structure is, the better the fish like it this time of year.

Lloyd (843-307-6678) said for an angler without electronics, it's a complete guessing game.

"In the spring, anybody can catch these fish in shallow water, even without electronics," he said. "But this time of year, you have to be able to find that sunken debris to get on the crappie. These days, anglers have some of the most-advanced electronics ever, and even some of the less-expensive ones have features that will take the guessing out of it. They can't make the fish bite, but with today's electronics, you'll have no trouble finding them."

Guide T.C. Lloyd said he finds cover that's holding Lake Wateree crappie by using his electronics.

Lloyd catches plenty of October crappie fishing between the Clearwater Cove Landing and Wateree Dam on the lower end, but he said mid-lake and the upper end can be just as good.

"Really, almost all the lakes in the Carolinas fish the same way this month," he said. "October is a unique month for crappie here. It's the last full month that these fish will be stacked up in such big numbers until the spring. You can certainly catch them throughout the winter, but this month, you'll find the biggest concentrations of fish. They will start spreading out by early or mid-November."

Many anglers opt for a No. 1 crappie hook, but this time of year, Lloyd swears by a No. 6 gold Aberdeen hook.

"It's the same hook that most anglers catch bream on. I think the small size results in more bites, and I don't notice a negative difference in the hook up ratio. A No. 6 will hook them just fine," said Lloyd, who doesn't use a cork; he simply finds what depth the fish are holding with his electronics, then drops his bait — a medium-sized live minnow — to that depth or slightly above it. He uses a No. 5 split-hot about a foot above the hook.

"That allows the minnow to swim around some, and that draws strikes better than a minnow that can't move because it's got the weight right on top of it," he said. ■

— Brian Cope

GUIDES & CHARTERS

Display Ads

1/16 Page BW\$70/mn*

1/8 Page BW..... \$120/mn*

*Based on Pre-Paid 12 Month Contract

To place an ad in Guides & Charters
Mitch (NC) - 919.602.3862
 or mitchbeync@gmail.com

Bret (SC) - 843.442.7250
 or breth@carolinasportsman.com

ADVERTISE Your Charter Boat or Guide Service here!

Reach 1000's of potential
 customers each month
 starting at **\$70**

Call for details at
252.299.2138

FRESHWATER

BLACK'S CAMP

**Deer Water Access
 to Diversion Canal
 and Both Lakes...
 Boat Launch is
 Protected From
 Wind and Current**

FOOD TO GO, ORDER ONLINE



Please Call Us
 For Campground,
 Lodging
 & Guide Service
 Availability

Cross, South Carolina 29436
(843) 753-2231
 www.blackscamp.com

HUNTING

CHEROKEE RUN Hunting Lodge

Hunt deer, wild boar & turkey in the wilds of South Carolina



Trophy Managed
 Whitetail on the
 Great Pee Dee River



NIGHT HOG: JAN 1 - AUG 31
SC RIFLE DEER: SEP 1 - JAN 1
SC WILD BOAR: YEAR-ROUND SEASON
SC TURKEY: MAR 22 - APR 30
 DEER/BOAR OR TURKEY/BOAR COMBOS

Located on the border in beautiful Chesterfield County SC, one hour
 from Charlotte, NC. Comfortable lodging including satellite TV,
 pool table, bass ponds, rifle & 3-D archery range.

704-301-7950 • eatsleephunt.com

Top It Off!



SPORTSMANGear.com



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 2020 PrimeTimes Wall Calendar, \$13.95 (plus \$4 s&h). Know the best days, best times, and their relative strengths for all of 2020 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 2020, the year's best periods, a look ahead at 2021, and more. Comes with FREE 2020 Astro Tables pocket calendar, which sells separately for \$8.95, 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.

2020 Ultimate PrimeTimes software for PCs, \$29.95 (plus \$3 s&h, or no s&h if downloaded from web). The world's best forecaster allows you to fine-tune the peak times to your exact location, quarry, and even weather. Too many features to list here, including making your own App. For more details, please call us or visit our web site (see below).

SPECIAL PACKAGE OFFERS:
 #1: **Wall Calendar, Astro Tables and "How to Know..." book... \$19.95** (plus \$5 s&h).
 #2: **Same as #1, plus Software... \$47.95** (plus \$6 s&h).
 #3: **Same as #2, minus book... \$38.95** (plus \$5 s&h).

Send to: PrimeTimes 2020 - Dept. LS - 2487 NW 75th Ave., Ste. 100 - Ankeny, IA 50023

For credit/debit card orders, call **515-964-5516**, or go online to **primetimes2.com** and click **Catalog**.

For more information and samples of PrimeTimes products, visit our web site: **www.primetimes2.com**

2020 BEST DAYS		LUNAR PERIODS							
POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCEL	VALUE	TIMES OCCURRING AT NIGHT ARE SHADED				
MOON RISE	PRIMARY MOON OVERHEAD	MOON SET	PRIMARY MOON UNDERFOOT						
Thu 1	60	7:15 pm	Midnight - 1:43 am	6:46 am	12:10 pm - 2:08 pm				FULL
Fri 2	53	7:41 pm	12:16 am - 2:32 am	7:41 am	12:41 pm - 2:57 pm				Apogee
Sat 3	45	8:08 pm	12:49 am - 3:21 am	8:36 am	1:14 pm - 3:46 pm				
Sun 4	39	8:37 pm	1:21 am - 4:11 am	9:32 am	1:46 pm - 4:36 pm				
Mon 5	38	9:08 pm	1:56 am - 5:02 am	10:28 am	2:21 pm - 5:27 pm				
Tue 6	40	9:44 pm	2:35 am - 5:51 am	11:25 am	3:00 pm - 6:16 pm				
Wed 7	43	10:26 pm	3:18 am - 6:44 am	12:23 pm	3:43 pm - 7:09 pm				
Thu 8	49	11:13 pm	4:05 am - 7:37 am	1:19 pm	4:30 pm - 8:02 pm				
Fri 9	60		4:55 am - 8:31 am	2:14 pm	5:20 pm - 8:56 pm				HALF
Sat 10	51	12:08 am	5:49 am - 9:25 am	3:04 pm	6:14 pm - 9:50 pm				HIGH
Sun 11	46	1:09 am	6:49 am - 10:15 am	3:50 pm	7:14 pm - 10:40 pm				
Mon 12	45	2:14 am	7:49 am - 11:05 am	4:32 pm	8:14 pm - 11:30 pm				
Tue 13	53	3:23 am	8:51 am - 11:51 am	5:10 pm	9:16 pm - 12:16 am				
Wed 14	61	4:33 am	9:54 am - 12:34 pm	5:45 pm	10:19 pm - 12:59 am				
Thu 15	68	5:45 am	10:58 am - 1:16 pm	6:20 pm	11:23 pm - Midnight				
Fri 16	71	6:57 am	12:02 pm - 1:58 pm	6:54 pm	Midnight - 1:41 am				NEW & PERIGEE
Sat 17	57	8:11 am	1:07 pm - 2:43 pm	7:31 pm	12:27 am - 2:23 am				
Sun 18	43	9:25 am	2:14 pm - 3:30 pm	8:12 pm	1:32 am - 3:08 am				
Mon 19	30	10:39 am	3:19 pm - 4:21 pm	8:57 pm	2:39 am - 3:55 am				
Tue 20	22	11:49 am	4:24 pm - 5:16 pm	9:49 pm	3:44 am - 4:46 am				
Wed 21	21	12:53 pm	5:25 pm - 6:13 pm	10:45 pm	4:49 am - 5:41 am				LOW
Thu 22	24	1:50 pm	6:21 pm - 7:13 pm	11:45 pm	5:50 am - 6:38 am				
Fri 23	34	2:39 pm	7:12 pm - 8:10 pm		6:46 am - 7:38 am				HALF
Sat 24	25	3:20 pm	7:57 pm - 9:05 pm	12:46 am	7:37 am - 8:35 am				
Sun 25	21	3:55 pm	8:37 pm - 9:59 pm	1:47 am	8:22 am - 9:30 am				
Mon 26	22	4:25 pm	9:13 pm - 10:49 pm	2:46 am	9:02 am - 10:24 am				
Tue 27	23	4:53 pm	9:47 pm - 11:39 pm	3:44 am	9:38 am - 11:14 am				
Wed 28	35	5:19 pm	10:18 pm - 12:30 am	4:40 am	10:12 am - 12:04 pm				
Thu 29	45	5:45 pm	10:49 pm - 1:19 am	5:35 am	10:43 am - 12:55 pm				
Fri 30	56	6:11 pm	11:22 pm - Midnight	6:30 am	11:14 am - 1:44 pm				Apogee
Sat 31	63	6:39 pm	Midnight - 2:08 am	7:26 am	11:47 am - 2:33 pm				FULL

25 50 75 AVERAGE

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

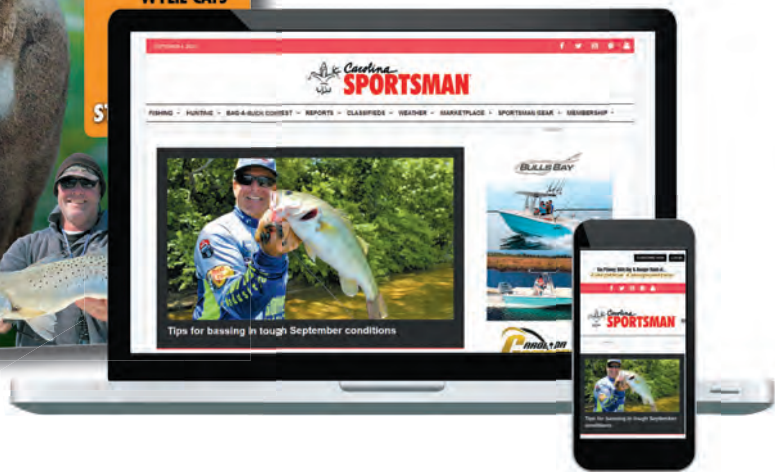
WHILE THE LESSER MOONRISE AND -SET OVERLAPS (ABOUT 30 MIN. BEFORE AND AFTER THE LISTED TIME) ARE DESIGNATED BY BOLD BLACK TYPE.

For more, visit
 primetimes2.com

SUBSCRIBE TO *Carolina* **SPORTSMAN**[®]



ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION OFFER



Subscribe to get our monthly print magazine and full web access on all your smart devices.

Subscribe today for the best:

- FISHING HOTSPOTS • HUNTING TACTICS
- LATEST MUST-HAVE GEAR • EXPERT ADVICE

To Subscriber call toll-free **1-855-224-1667**
or for faster service visit
CarolinaSportsman.com/subscribe



Please allow 4-6 weeks
for delivery of first issue

ADVERTISERS INDEX

BACK CREEK GUIDE SERVICE..... 57	COLLINS INC. 72	REALTREE OUTDOOR PRODUCTS 71
BIG LAKE OUTDOOR PRODUCTS..... 64	CROSS CREEK OUTDOOR SUPPLIES, LLC 23	ROCK OUTDOORS 69
BILL CARONE CHEVROLET BUICK GMC 25	CWP PROSERIES..... 38	SANTEE COOPER COUNTRY 57
BLACK'S CAMP 38, 66	CZ-USA 19	SEA ARK BOATS 39
BLUE WAVE BOATS 5	L & S BAIT COMPANY..... 7	SOUTHERN LAND SOLUTIONS, LLC 7
BOST ARGO..... 21	MARINE WAREHOUSE 63	SUZUKI MOTOR OF AMERICA, INC..... 40, 41
BQ GRILLS 62	NICHOLS STORE, INC. 13	TOON TIME, LLC..... 38
CAPPS TRAILERS 10	O'BRIAN TARPING SYSTEMS 47	WHITETAIL PROPERTIES 15
CAPTAIN FROGGY'S CHARTERS..... 53	PALMETTO STATE TRAINING..... 10	XPRESS BY ALUMA-WELD, INC. 2
CAROLINA COMPOSITES, LLC 3	PG & BOATGIRL SHOW 32	
CHATLEE BOAT AND MARINE 4, 68	PRECISION MARINE, INC. 31, 51	
CHEROKEE RUN HUNTING LODGE..... 23, 66	PROTHRO CHEVY- BUICK-GMC..... 34	

Get decked out in the latest from the **SPORTSMAN** Store 45, 70

Subscribe Today and SAVE 33, 67

NEED CASH FAST?

CHATLEE BOAT & MARINE

Prefer 15' – 24' and 2005 Year Model or Newer
**SKIFF • PONTOON • BAY BOAT
 DECK BOAT • RUNABOUT
 FISH & SKI • CENTER CONSOLE
 ALUMINUM BASS BOAT**

Call for an Immediate Quote!

We Will Buy Your Boat!

CALL ROBBIE!
919-775-7259
www.chatleeboats.com

Powered by

SUZUKI MARINE

ROCK *Outdoors*

Shop retail at www.shoprockoutdoors.com

TACKLE • CLOTHING • GEAR • KAYAKS

YOUR CONNECTION TO EVERYTHING OUTDOORS!



WINTERIZATION & STORAGE AVAILABLE
CALL TO SET UP YOUR APPOINTMENT OR
STOP BY 7 DAYS A WEEK.
TECHNICIANS ON STAFF MON-SAT.

STOP IN FOR *Hobie*  Huk

hey *dude* SHIMANO  *Berkley*

OR SHOP ONLINE! WE HAVE A LARGE
SELECTION TO CHOOSE FROM.



RawCut

AVENGER

BULLET



CRESTLINER

Tioneer

BENNINGTON

 Barletta
BOATS

VEXUS

CAYMAS
BOATS

ADVANCED MARINE PERFORMANCE

 SWEETWATER

Hurricane



7440 NC Hwy 8, Lexington, NC
(336) 793-4690 | rockoutdoors.com



Hours
Monday - Saturday: 8:30am - 6:00pm
Sunday: 10:00am - 5:00pm

hydrotechs

Hoodies



Long Sleeve
Shirts



Neckgaiter

Carolina Sportsman | October 2020

sportsman
gear

Fishing & Hunting Apparel

www.SPORTSMANGear.com



©2010 RealTree Outdoor Enterprise, Ltd. 100-100



A PICTURE SAYS A THOUSAND WORDS BUT

OUR NAME SAYS IT ALL.

IT DOESN'T GET ANY REALER THAN THIS.
AT A LOCAL SPORTING GOODS DEALER NEAR YOU





**New 267 OE
In Stock!!**



Masters Bay Boats
*Shallow water
performance
with family smarts
and comfort.*



SPORTSMAN



Hwy. 70, Exit 337 • Smithfield, NC
919-934-3143

COLLINSBOATING.COM