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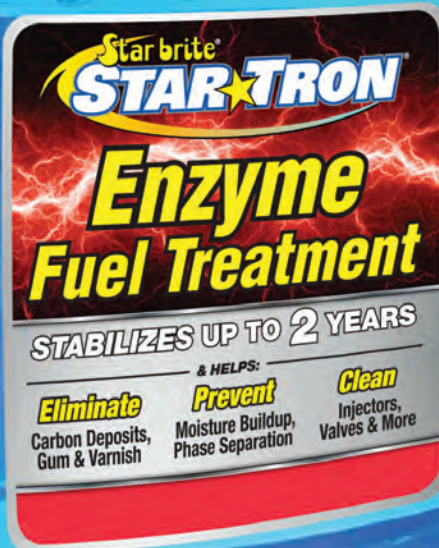
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LAKE HARTWELL'S
DOG DAYS STRIPERS



10
MADE IN
THE SHADE

Carolina CONTENTS

Volume 29 | Number 7 | July 2022

FEATURES:

10 MADE IN THE SHADE

Expert tips to catching sheepshead under bridges.

COVER STORY

> By Mike Marsh

22 LAKE HARTWELL'S DOG DAYS STRIPERS

It's time to target upstate stripers with BIG lures.

> By Glenn "Teach" Corley

32 CATS IN THE DARK

These lakes offer hot catfish action all night long.

> By Terry Madewell

42 PANFISH IN THE SURF

Pompano and whiting are fun to catch and fun to eat.

> By Jerry Dilsaver

54 WRANGLING FOR WHITE PERCH

The Catawba and Yadkin chains are home to huge schools of white perch.

> By Mike Marsh

FISHING HOTSPOTS:

- 18 Summer sheepshead tactics
- 19 Dolphin and sailfish alley
- 30 Prime time for Jocassee trout
- 52 Flounder in the inlet
- 53 Hilton Head's lagoon redfish
- 60 Perch picking time on Lake Norman
- 61 Cranking for slabs

OUTDOOR UPDATE:

6 NC ANNOUNCES FLOUNDER SEASON

COLUMNS:

16 **SOUND & SEA** By Chris Burrows

28 **LUNKER LINES** By David Fritts

40 **SANTEE STRINGER**
By Terry Madewell

48 **SMALL CRAFT ADVISORY**
By Phillip Gentry

50 **COOKING ON THE
WILD SIDE** By Capt. Jerry Dilsaver

62 **GREENER PASTURES**
By Jeff Burleson

66 **STICKS & STRINGS**
By Sammy Romano

DEPARTMENTS:

- 65 Sportsman Showcase
- 68 NC, SC Fishing Regulations
- 70 Hunting/Fishing Scrapbook
- 74 Advertiser Index



ON THE COVER:

Anglers can beat the summer heat by fishing in the shade of bridges for sheepshead like this one caught by Hannah Kibler. Photo by Brian Carroll.

PUBLISHER
Jonathan Menard

MANAGING EDITOR
Brian Cope, brian@sportsmannetwork.com

ASSISTANT PRODUCTION MANAGER
Desiree P. Lewis

ART DIRECTOR
Kevin Orgeron

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS
Jeff Cashio, Alissa Zeringue

CONTROLLER
Juanita Guidry

NC ADVERTISING SALES REP
Bradley Hulin
336-688-0273, bradleyh@carolinasportsman.com

SC ADVERTISING SALES REP

Stephen Loper
919-522-8667, stevel@carolinasportsman.com

ADVERTISING SALES

Asa Faulkner, Burton Angelle,
and Mark Hilzlim (National Sales)

CIRCULATION DIRECTOR

Mitch Eby 919.602.3862, mitchebync@gmail.com

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Allen J. Lottinger

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Lisa Lottinger Cuccia

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ADVERTISING INQUIRIES:

advertising@CarolinaSportsman.com
985.758.7217

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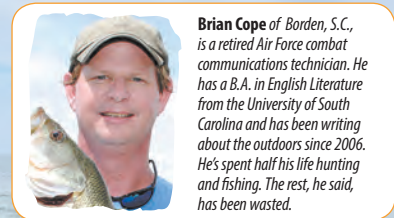
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OUTDOOR UPDATE

with **Brian Cope**



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.



NC ANNOUNCES FLOUNDER SEASON

MONTH-LONG SEASON BEGINS SEPT. 1

The N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries has announced that North Carolina's 2022 recreational flounder season will open at 12:01 a.m. Sept. 1 and close at 11:59 p.m. Sept. 30.

The season will open with the following provisions for both the recreational hook-and-line and gig fisheries: A one-fish per person per day creel limit.

A 15-inch total length minimum size limit (from the tip of the snout to the tip of the compressed tail).

Harvest of flounder with a Recreational Commercial Gear License will be prohibited.

The season and possession limits are meant

to keep the fishery within the recreational quota approved in the N.C. Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan Amendment 3. Harvest restrictions are required because the 2019 South Atlantic Southern Flounder Stock Assessment found that southern flounder is overfished and overfishing is occurring throughout the region (North Carolina through the eastern coast of Florida). Overfished means the population is too small. Overfishing means the removal rate is too high.

Amendment 3 also includes an adaptive management framework with accountability measures to implement paybacks if the allowable catch is exceeded. Overages from the 2022 recreational season could impact the 2023 recreational season.

Discard mortality will be accounted for in the estimates of Total Allowable Catch. For this reason, the Division discourages anglers from targeting flounder for catch-and-release after they have caught their one-fish limit or when the season is closed. ■

North Carolina anglers finally know the dates of the 2022 recreational flounder season. Anglers will have a 1-fish per day limit with a 15-inch minimum size limit.



RED SNAPPER SEASON IS JULY 8-9

NOAA has determined anglers in the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida will get a 2-day red snapper season for 2022 in the South Atlantic's federal waters. The season will run from 12:01 a.m. on July 8 until just after midnight July 10, giving anglers the entirety of the 8 and 9 to pursue red snappers.

All vessels fishing for snapper and grouper are required to have a descending device on board. The device must have a minimum of 16 ounces of weight attached with at least 60 feet of line.

The red snapper season has a one fish/per person limit and no minimum or maximum size limits.

Earlier this year, South Carolina declared open season year-round on red snapper in state waters. Anglers don't often catch these fish in state waters, but the new law allows for the harvest of the species on such occasions. Red snapper caught in these waters (within 3 miles of the coast) must be at least 20 inches total length to be harvested. Anglers are allowed to keep two per day that meet the minimum size requirement. ■

Red snapper anglers are hoping for good weather July 8-9.

CCA-SC STAR FEATURES TWO DIVISIONS

The Coastal Conservation Association of South Carolina started its 2022 STAR Tournament on May 28. And this year, anglers have two ways to win some great prizes.

In the redfish division, CCA staff and volunteers released 60 tagged redfish up and down the South Carolina coastline. The first two STAR-registered anglers to catch a 2022 tagged redfish will win a fully rigged Polaris Ranger Crew SP 570 Premium. This is the sixth year CCA-SC has had a redfish tournament in this format.

And new for 2022, in its first year, the Heaviest Dolphin Division will award the STAR-registered angler who catches the heaviest dolphin during the tournament with \$5000 worth of tackle, courtesy of Shimano and Haddrell's Point Tackle and Supply. No need to check for a tag here — just catch the biggest dolphin you can!

Anglers participating in this STAR event must be current members of CCA and be registered for the tournament, which runs through Sept. 5. Anglers can sign up any time before the end date. For more information, visit www.cca-southcarolina.com. ■



Team Collins took home \$12,380 for their Redfish Classic win on June 4.



TEAM COLLINS WINS JUNE 4 REDFISH MADNESS EVENT

John and Michael Collins — Team Collins — took the top spot in the Tideline Marine of Jacksonville Redfish Classic held on June 4. With a two-fish total weighing 14.14 pounds and the Big Fish at 7.39 pounds, they won \$12,380.

Team Taylormade, made up of Mike and Christian Taylor, took second place with a total of 13.73 pounds. Tiffany Banks took the Top Lady Angler award.

This was Event 1 of the Redfish Madness Series, the premier redfish tournament trail on the East coast.

Of the 48 teams that entered the tournament, 33 teams weighed in. Teams were allowed to weigh in a maximum of two redfish measuring between 18 and 27 inches, the slot size for redfish in North Carolina.

Event 2 of the series will be held on July 9. To sign up or for more information, visit www.redfishmadness.com. ■

Taylor Thomas killed this gobbler in Brunson, SC during the 2022 season.

SC HUNTERS HARVESTED 8832 TURKEYS

Preliminary reports from SCDNR show turkey hunters in South Carolina killed a total of 8832 birds during the 2022 season.

Of all the turkeys killed, 89 percent were mature toms and 11 percent were jakes. Most successful hunters (76 percent) killed their turkeys in the morning, with 24 percent bagging their birds in the afternoon/evening hours.

The most successful day of the year was April 1, when a total of 700 turkeys were killed in the state.

Successful hunters came from a total of 39 different states, with the majority coming from South Carolina, North Carolina, Florida, Georgia and Virginia. The five most successful counties were Bamberg, Union, Spartanburg, Williamsburg and Orangeburg. As for land type, 91 percent were killed on private lands, with 9 percent on public lands.

Turkey hunters are required to report their kills to the SCDNR by one of three methods. For 2022, 69 percent reported through the mobile app, 16 percent used their phones to text their report and 15 percent reported through SCDNR's website. ■



NC HUNTERS KILLED 20,576 TURKEYS

Turkey hunters in North Carolina killed a total of 20,576 turkeys during the 2022 spring season.

The vast majority of harvested birds (17,217) were mature gobblers. Jakes accounted for 3359 of all harvested turkeys. An overwhelming majority were also killed on private land, with public game lands only accounting for 921 birds.

Duplin County led the way with a total of 748 turkeys killed. Six hundred-and-fifty-six of those were adult gobblers followed by 92 jakes. All but one of those birds were killed on private land. Bladen County hunters killed 569 birds (507 longboards, 62 jakes). Twenty-eight of those were killed on game lands with the remaining 541 killed on private lands. Pender County was a close third with 565 birds killed (489 mature gobblers and 76 jakes). Fifty-three of those came on public game lands and 512 were harvested on private land.

The majority of adult gobblers (17,005) fell to shotguns. Another 121 were killed by bows and 91 were shot with crossbows.

Most of the harvested jakes (3312) were also killed with shotguns. Bow hunters killed 28, followed by crossbow hunters with 19. ■

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EXPERT TIPS
TO CATCHING
SHEEPSHEAD
UNDER BRIDGES.

■ By Mike Marsh

MADE IN THE SHADE

THE 22-FOOT RANGER BAY BOAT SLUNK FROM GLARING SUNLIGHT INTO CHARCOAL SHADE.

A bridge's shadow sliced the boat in two, creeping along its shiny hull until it swallowed it completely. The contrast between light and dark was so stark that Capt. Jot Owens removed his ever-present sunglasses so his pupils could adjust to the dimmer illumination.

"There's nothing like fishing a bridge when it's hot and sunny," Owens said. "Sheepshead fishing is a great way to beat the heat. The shade is such a welcome relief."

Owens operates Jot It Down Fishing Charters (910-233-4139). Based in Wrightsville Beach, he takes clients fishing for many species. But he cut his teeth on sheepshead.

"When I was a kid with no boat, I fished for sheepshead by walking the docks," he said. "I could look down into the water

and watch them eat my bait. When I got a boat, it broadened the area where I can catch them. They love structure because it attracts the things they eat. Bridges have more structure than anything else around and that's why sheepshead love them."

The bridge was one of many spanning saltwater channels along the southern coast of North Carolina within Owens' fishing territory. Some cross the ICW, others hopscotch vehicles between islands. They are just like all the others in North Carolina and South Carolina in that they all have one thing in common. No matter where they are, they hold sheepshead. Anyone who wants to catch these convict-striped fish should try these tips and tactics.

ANCHORING >

A typical Carolina rig was used to hook this sheepshead, and the net helped land the fish before it could wrap the line around the bridge pilings. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Capt. Jot Owens shows off a hefty sheepshead he landed under a bridge.



Mike Marsh

ANCHORING

Securing the boat is the most important aspect of sheepshead fishing. While many anglers tie the boat to pilings fore-and-aft, the two lines create an impossibly tiny rectangle for fighting a fish. Using anchors invites problems as well, including snagging the anchor on a concrete piling base.

Owens drops his fluked anchor upstream of the bridge and allows the tide to move the boat beneath it. Turning the wheel allows water flow to move the boat closer or farther from pilings. Hauling in or letting out line moves the boat from piling to piling. A second, less snag-prone anchor, such as a mushroom anchor, can be dropped straight down off the stern or the stern can be tied off to a piling, leaving only one line to fish around. If the boat has a power anchor, setting it is another way to prevent boat sway.

No matter how well the boat is anchored, it may still hit a piling if another boat disregards the bridge's no-wake signs. A floatation cushion should be handy to place between the piling and the gunwale as a bumper.

CLUES

Anglers should look for other boats and cut lines dangling from the beams and pilings. Another clue is freshly scraped patches in encrustations.

CHUMMING

Scraping the pilings attracts sheepshead at all depths. They see fluttering shell fragments and exposed sea creatures, which ultimately collect on the bottom. The scent also drifts downstream on the current.

Owens scrapes pilings on the downstream side of the bridge and fishes them because it attracts fish from open water. Other anglers scrape the upstream pilings, hoping to attract fish from within the structure maze. Another method is crushing or dicing crabs, oysters or thawed seafood and tossing it into the water.

BAITS

Most anglers use fiddler crabs because they are abundant and relatively easy to catch or to buy at bait shops. However,

Fishing guide Jot Owens uses a flat garden rake to scrape barnacles off bridge pilings to chum the water for sheepshead. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** A good collection of fiddler crabs stored in a bucket is a good way to start a sheepshead trip.



gathering enough can take the entire day before a trip. Buying them can be expensive because it takes a quart per angler for a day of fishing.

Fiddlers can be caught in cast nets in open sandy areas or captured by hand. They can pinch painfully, seldom drawing blood. But soft hands should be gloved.

Sheepshead also bite mud crabs, which can be withdrawn with pliers from between oysters on dock pilings. Mud crabs also hide beneath rocks and rubble. Gloves should be worn when collecting them.

Other good baits include mole crabs, shrimp, snipped sections of blue crab legs, barnacles, oysters and clams. While some of these baits can be impaled or draped on the hook, squishier baits can be bound in "barnacle bags." Commonly used by pier anglers, most bridge anglers are unfamiliar with them. Barnacles or other baits are collected in a pouch made of Nylon hose and tied together. An elastic hair band also holds the bag on the hook. Bait stealers

cannot eat the bait as easily as a naked bait, and sheepshead bite and hold it, making the hookset easier.



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

RIGS >



Mike Marsh

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RIGS

Sheepshead are notoriously soft biters, and making rigs aimed at sensitivity are unique to each angler. Treble hooks, long-shank and short-shank hooks, wire hooks and stout stainless-steel hooks have their fans. Owens uses a Carolina rig with an egg sinker just heavy enough to keep the line taut sliding on the line above a swivel, 12 inches of 40-pound mono leader and a No. 2 live bait hook. He spools his reels with 20- to 30-pound braid. The rod is short because the distance between the tip and overhead bridge structure diminishes as the tide rises. Keeping watch on overhead clearance can prevent a broken rod tip.

SEARCHING

Sheepshead move around, grazing pilings. The best depth is usually 4 to 10 feet and, if the water is clear, anglers can see them. A good tactic is to start fishing at low tide, scraping barnacles from pilings. As the water rises, the exposed area may attract fish.

The fish prefer a certain depth, so the angler may have to move closer to the bank into shallower water or farther from the bank into deeper water to stay in the strike zone. This usually involves moving from one row of pilings to another.

LANDING

Sheepshead are strong fighters that can wrap line around a piling and cut free. Fishing close enough to poke the rod between the pilings to follow a fish around them is a good tactic. Keeping a tight drag is a must. Having a landing net ready to corral a big fish quickly is another. ■



One of several species anglers often catch when fishing for sheephead, the blowfish has some tasty food value for those who give them a try. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** The author was fishing under a bridge when he caught this keeper-sized sheephead.

NUMEROUS OTHER FISH FIDDLE AROUND WITH CRAB BAIT

Anyone who fishes for sheephead should be prepared to catch other species. Some of them are so bizarre, it's almost like fishing from an offshore head boat.

Small gag grouper and gray triggerfish are common catches. A tautog may even tug on the line. Although they are nearly always too small to keep, it is interesting to see them.

The most common gamefish sheephead anglers catch are red drum and black drum. Both of these species are totally all right with sucking in a sand fiddler, or any other crustacean or mollusk an angler uses for bait that gets in the way of their noses.

Various rays, including southern stingrays that can be downright dangerous to handle, also strike sheephead baits. The safest way to release them is to cut the line. But experienced anglers have other ways of releasing them.

Another annoying fish that is common to catch is the oyster toadfish. It is one ugly monkey, but is edible if the angler dares to



Mike Marsh

tempt its crushing jaws and clean it.

One of the tastiest, underappreciated and often released catches is the puffer, also known as the blow toad or blowfish. These fish are quite tasty and, when stripped of their skin, gutted and fried, look so much like chicken legs that some anglers call them "sea squab." A similar fish, the porcupinefish, has a spiny skin. It is a highly regarded aquarium fish and quite an unusual sight when it puffs itself full of water or air. ■

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Changes are coming for dolphin regulations, but the right changes aren't always the most obvious to everyone.



MAHI MAYHEM

Chris Burrows

CHANGES ARE COMING TO DOLPHIN REGULATIONS

One way or another, whether we like it or not, changes are coming to the dolphin fishery that we experience off the Carolina coast. Since 2012, I have served as a member of the Dolphin/Wahoo Advisory Panel for the South Atlantic Marine Fishery Council.

I originally got involved in serving in this capacity when a proposal surfaced in 2010/2011 to reduce the limit on wahoo from two fish per person, per day, to two fish per vessel, per day. Many others were outraged by this idea, which I believe would have had a devastating effect on the livelihoods of charter boat captains in both North and South Carolina, not to mention how it would affect recreational anglers who liked to fish offshore.

At the time, ample public input on the matter was enough to stave off any needless changes to the limits. In this case, the system worked to benefit the best interest of the public, or at the very

least, the public who loved to fish.

Following that debate, I decided that I could be more involved in fisheries management, as a stakeholder who wasn't afraid to speak my mind and look at the data and issues presented. Ten years later, I am currently the chair of the Dolphin/Wahoo Advisory Panel. That means I presented the results of the last Advisory Panel meeting to the actual Council in June.

At the end of April, I had the privilege of attending that Advisory Panel meeting in Charleston. Of all the meetings I have attended, this was easily the stickiest. When major changes are on the table, emotions can often run high. To sum it up, two proposed major concepts could potentially impact dolphin fishing in the Carolinas.

20-INCH MINIMUM

The first is an extension of the 20-inch minimum size on dolphinfish from

where it currently ends, at the border of North and South Carolina, potentially to every state on the East Coast, the most important being North Carolina. I'll explain why this is of such importance shortly. Second, the Council is looking at a few different ways to potentially reduce the bag limits on dolphin, either for the individual or the vessel.

North Carolina is a vital data point for the dolphin fishery. Almost 80% of dolphin harvested on the U.S. East Coast are landed in either Florida (approximately 65%) or North Carolina (approximately 23%). Lately, dolphin are being caught as far north as Maine. So a mere two states out of fourteen essentially control the



Chris Burrows began his charter fishing career out of Charleston and Georgetown, SC, but moved to Brunswick County, NC in 2005. He currently runs Wing & Fish Company in Shallotte and is involved with fisheries management at the federal level, but still fishes recreationally whenever he gets a free second.

landings data for dolphin.

Florida, which has had a 20-inch minimum size on dolphin caught in federal waters since 2004, reports nearly three times what is caught in North Carolina. But bear in mind, quite a few more boats are registered in Florida than North Carolina. Plus, South Florida's proximity to the Gulf Stream means more access to these fish for Floridians than for anglers in the Tarheel State.

Expanding the size limit north may be well-intentioned. But I think it would do far more harm to charter boat anglers and the recreational experience in general than it would result in a benefit to the dolphin population.

North Carolina charter boats and a good many recreational anglers target smaller dolphinfish later in summer when they are prolific. And the biggest numbers of large gaffers are well to the north of us. This is the bread and butter of the charter fleet at the Outer Banks in July and August.

Many anglers who book charter trips come from out of state and with the expressed desire to bring home some meat. This is their access to fresh seafood and the fishery. More restrictive measures on what they can bring home will almost certainly mean reduced bookings. This in turn hurts hotels, restaurants, and other businesses in a tourism-based economy.

CULLING NOT THE ANSWER

Secondly, restrictions on the size will mean released fish to find larger fish to put in the box. And not a lot is known about the mortality rate of released dolphin.

In general, dolphin have a mortality rate of more than 99% in their first year of life. They grow fast on average. And certain studies have shown that they can spawn when they reach 18 inches. The practice of "culling" through dolphin to get to the right-sized ones, by this author's reasoning, could potentially kill more fish in the population than it preserves.

Better to keep the first ones you catch than to hook, land, and release greater numbers of them, potentially returning them to the ocean damaged and tired, now easy targets for any predator, including larger dolphin.

Regarding the concept of bag limits, the waters get even murkier. It's important to note that the first group to impose any kind of bag limit at all on dolphin in the United States was not any kind of government entity, but the charter boat fleet at Hatteras Island.

Before the dolphin stock came under any kind of federal management program, captains on the Outer Banks self-imposed a limit of 10 fish/per person/per day that served two ends. Not only did it help conserve the stock, but it kept boats from showing off with unnecessary catches that were often wasted. This is where the limit on dolphin caught in federal waters can be traced. And now that same lineage of fisherman is in danger of facing tighter regulations, when it is them that will be hurt the most.

LONGLINE GEAR

I think a greater problem faces the dolphin stock and the recreational fishery for dolphin in the present. In the past dozen years or so, commercial fishermen who specialized in catching bottomfish have been either forced out of their fishery or limited to an extent that their efforts are no longer profitable.

Boats that longline for swordfish, tuna, and sharks are required to have Highly Migratory Species (HMS) permits, which require a tremendous investment. But access is wide open to the commercial fishery for dolphin.

With basic longline gear, a basic commercial license, and a \$50 operator's card (which will soon not even be needed) anyone can longline dolphin. The appeal of this practice is such that it is hard to find a weedline in May that doesn't have longline gear set next to it. Consistent good gaffer fishing has suffered. And this has hurt the charter industry the hardest, all while removing the best spawning fish from the ocean indiscriminately.

Recreational anglers in center consoles are seeing fewer productive days as well. In 2015, for the first time in history, the commercial Annual Catch Limit for dolphin was met in June, which ended that fishery for the year. Subsequent years have come close to the same levels. As stated before, times are changing.

In my eyes, the solution is simple. Restrict longlining for dolphin to those boats who possess HMS permits. Those who aren't HMS permitted and wish to fish for them commercially can still do so, but must use rod and reel tackle, just like recreational/charter boat anglers.

A limited and regulated longline fishery won't hurt the stocks of these fish or the recreational fishery. But having it accessible to too many boats certainly can. I am hopeful that this solution, or something close to it, will be adopted, rather than imposing more restrictions on a historic fishery in North Carolina. ■

SHEEPSHEAD, OFFSHORE HOTSPOTS ➤



About 23% of the East coast's harvested dolphin come from North Carolina waters each year.

Fishing guide Jeff Wolfe caught this sheepshead, a typical-sized one for the summer.



Craig Holt

SUMMER SHEEPSHEAD TACTICS

Hook “convict” fish with these tips

C By Craig Holt
 hasing “convict” fish — sheepshead — provides action and challenges for adults and children. If you find a hot spot beneath a bridge, you also can fish in shady comfort. And sheepshead make great table fare.

Any inside waters with relatively shallow depths (4 to 12 feet) and barnacles — piers, boat docks, edges of oyster beds, concrete rubble, pilings — may offer a mother lode of these striped battlers that may weigh from 2 to 14 pounds.

All it takes to catch them is a good supply of fiddler crabs, a 7-foot rod (even a cane pole), 20-pound-test braid for main line and a Carolina rig (1-ounce barrel weight, black swivel, 2 feet of 40-pound-test fluorocarbon leader tied to a swivel

above a 2/0 Owner octopus hook).

Fiddler crabs are great baits and are sold in many coastal bait-and-tackle shops. You can also catch them yourself in many marshes at low tide.

But be aware — fiddlers can pinch fingers with their largest claw. Hold the big pincher against its body when picking up or hooking.

A favorite July or August boating approach is to anchor beneath a highway bridge piling for shade. Anglers lower fiddlers (or mole crabs or pieces of barnacle) down a piling’s side where sheepshead work with their sharp teeth.

Sheepsheads inhale crabs then crush them with two rows of upper and lower molars. They nip at barnacles with sheep-like upper and lower teeth.

The best advice to catch light-biting sheepshead is keep the line tight, lower baits to the bottom, then reel in a foot or so beside a piling or structure. If line moves away or you feel a tug, snap your wrist to set the hook and keep the fish’s head turned up.

Good inside-waters areas to find sheepshead include any bridges, piers, jetties, rock walls or other places with concrete or wooden structures in the water.

The N.C. record sheepshead was caught by Christopher Robbins in 1999 and weighed 19 pounds, 4 ounces. The S.C. record weighed 16 pounds, 6 ounces and was caught by Jimmy Widener in 2008. ■

DOLPHIN AND SAILFISH ALLEY

Pelagic fish move in close during summer

By Jerry Dilsvor

Two favorite species of gamefish break free from the Gulf Stream and move much closer to shore as the water warms each summer. Pods of dolphin are the first to do this each year. Anglers have been reporting sporadic encounters with them since mid-May. And an unexpected encounter with a sailfish can quickly become the cherry on top of any fishing trip.

These open water pelagics usually prowl the rips, eddies, color changes, temperature breaks and grass lines at the inshore edge of the Gulf Stream. However, once the surrounding water temps rise into the upper 70s and higher, they often move well inshore when foraging on schools of baitfish.

Capt. Rod Bierstedt of On My Way Charters (www.onmywaycharters.com, 910-352-2719) in Wilmington zeros in on this to give his clients a day of reeling hard and filling the fish box with great tasting fillets. They keep dolphins and release all sailfish.

Bierstedt catches enough nearshore mahi and sailfish each summer to know it isn't a coincidence. He said dolphin are almost always ready to feed and will usually bite when found. Sailfish aren't as plentiful and are often finicky about grabbing a bait.

"When targeting dolphin and sailfish, we use a spread of small ballyhoo, with some naked and some rigged behind small lures like the Moldcraft chuggers and Blue Water Candy king skirts," Bierstedt said. "We also use teasers and spreader bars to get their attention. They aren't always on the surface, so we troll at least one deep line that might be a Rapala swim lure or another rigged ballyhoo. We troll this spread at 5½ to 6 knots to cover more water and locate that day's hotspot."

Bierstedt said the prime zone for dolphin and sails runs from roughly Frying Pan Tower to 23 Mile Rock and inshore. Numerous rocks, shipwrecks and artificial reefs in this area attract and hold baitfish. Bierstedt checks anything found floating as dolphin are attracted to the shade they make.

NOTE: Approximately 20 years ago, several Wrightsville Beach fishermen began the Capt. Eddy Haneman Sailfish Tournament, held in late July each year. The tournament, which is the only sailfish tournament in N.C., honors Haneman for calling attention to the number of dolphin and sailfish caught in this area each summer. Fittingly, dolphin is the secondary category in the tournament. The boundaries in the Capt. Eddy Haneman Sailfish Tournament enclose the area Bierstedt noted. This is Cape Fear's dolphin and sailfish alley. ■



Dolphin and sailfish move in very close to North Carolina's shore during the heat of summer.

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IT'S TIME TO TARGET
UPSTATE STRIPERS
WITH BIG LURES.

LAKE HARTWELL'S DOG DAYS STRIPERS

■ By Glenn "Teach" Corley



DURING THE DOG DAYS OF SUMMER, FISHING IS ALWAYS TOUGH.



This big striper was caught on a Palmetto Flutter Spoon. **RIGHT:** Palmetto Flutter Spoons are quite large, measuring 8 inches in length and weighing 3.5 ounces.

Striper fisherman on Lake Hartwell know that the stripers are down by the dam. But the trick is trying to get them to bite when the weather is hot.

Rick Cain of Lady Blue Adventures knows how to catch these hot weather fish by dropping a Palmetto Flutter Spoon to the bottom. Then he power cranks the spoon back up really hard. Cain is looking for the reaction strike with the big spoon.

Stripers congregate near the dam during hot weather because of the deeper water, cooler water temperatures, and the presence of the bait, blueback herring. Cain said that stripers are constantly moving up and down the dam looking for suspended bait.

Using his depthfinder, Cain looks for “noodles” or “spaghetti” on the screen which is the stripers going up and down in the water column and feeding.

Cain cautiously said “Just because the stripers can be seen, it does not necessarily mean that they are going to bite.”

STAY ABOVE THE FISH ➤



Glenn “Teach” Corley

STAY ABOVE THE FISH

Cain uses a trolling motor with Spot-Lock to stay on top of the fish. The Spot-Lock feature uses GPS to lock the boat into position and keeps the boat on the fishing spot. Cain said power cranking requires that you stay on top of the fish, dropping the spoon right in front of them.

He likes fishing three general areas near the dam including coves, the dam itself, and points within site of the dam.

First, Cain will start out fishing in the mouth of big coves with underwater trees near the dam. Fishing in water 40 to 50 feet deep, the bait is usually suspended between 20 and 30 feet deep holding over the tops of the trees. The stripers will hold in the structure and then come out to hit the lure as it drops or comes screaming back up.

As the lure drops down, the big spoon will flutter back and forth as it falls. A light touch on the line is needed to feel the bump as the fish hits. When that happens, Cain puts his thumb on the reel and locks it in place by engaging the crank and turning the handle. Then he gives a sharp jerk to hook the fish or does the same when cranking back up.

The second place that Cain likes to fish is right out in front of the dam. Because of the deeper and cooler water, plus bait, the stripers can be found anywhere within a hundred yards of the dam. Cain uses his depth sounder and trolling motor to find the fish.

CRANK IT UP

After locating the stripers, Cain drops the spoon to the bottom and if the lure reaches the bottom without a hit, he will crank up the spoon with a hard and steady retrieve. He repeats this process over and over as long as fish are present.

The third place that Cain likes to fish is off points right before dark. These points are also not far from the dam, but they have deep holes off to the side where the fish like to hang out. Sometimes they will hold in shallower water or in the brush piles or trees off to the side of the point.

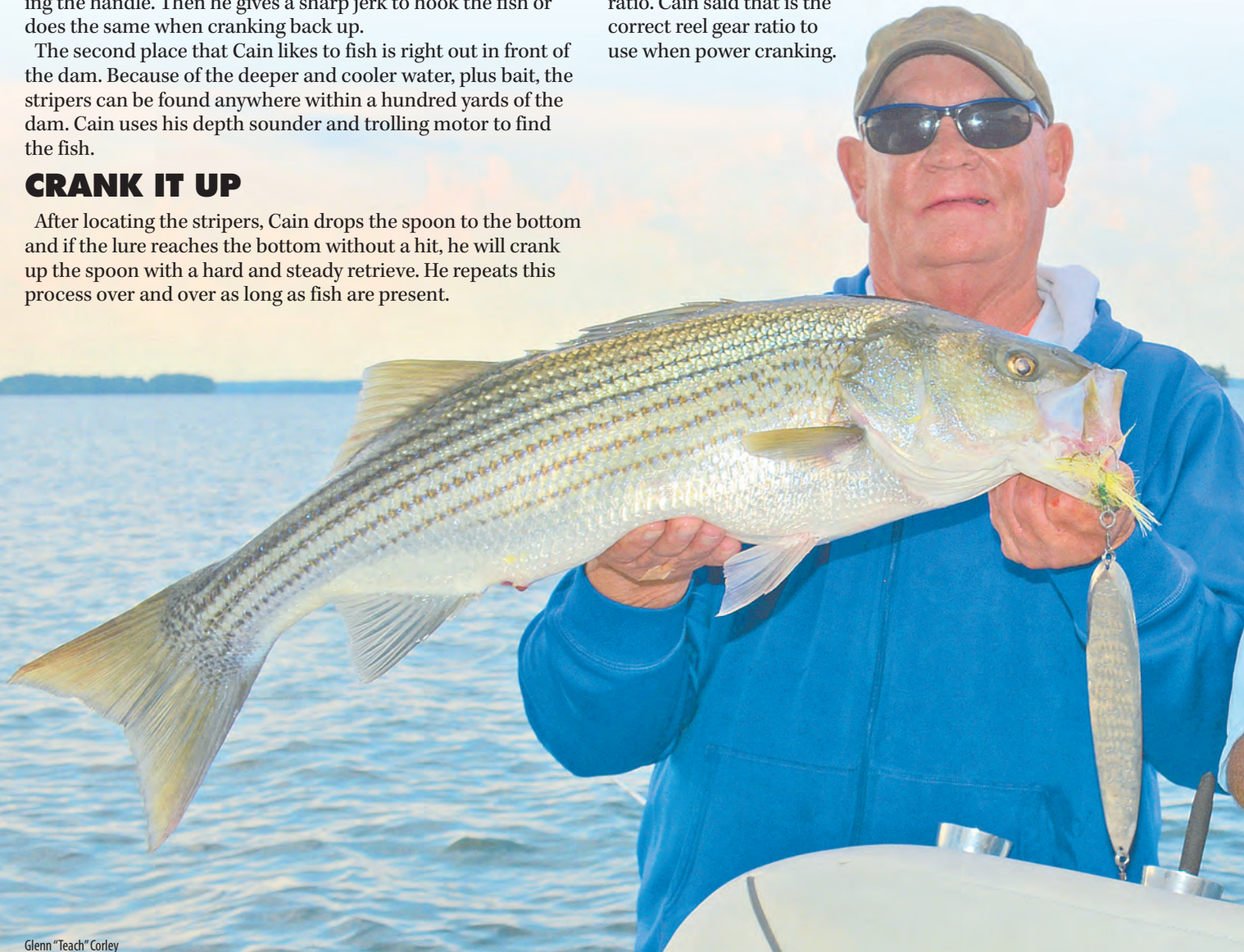
Cain's main lure is an 8-inch, 3.5-ounce Palmetto Flutter Spoon with a 2/0 treble hook. He ties these on to 20-pound monofilament line. These lures can be bought at local fishing stores around Lake Hartwell for \$18 apiece.

Using the bigger spoon will most often keep the smaller fish from biting. While fishing an area, Cain usually gives it about 20 to 30 minutes. If he has no luck, he will move around to another spot.

The rods are medium heavy 7-foot Ugly Stik Striper rods. The reels are high speed Ambassador C4 or 6500 with a 6.3:1 gear ratio. Cain said that is the correct reel gear ratio to use when power cranking.



Glenn "Teach" Corley grew up in Seneca and returned to Oconee County to teach high school; he also began freelancing writing. Retired from the classroom, he has had more than 200 articles and/or photos published in newspapers and magazines.



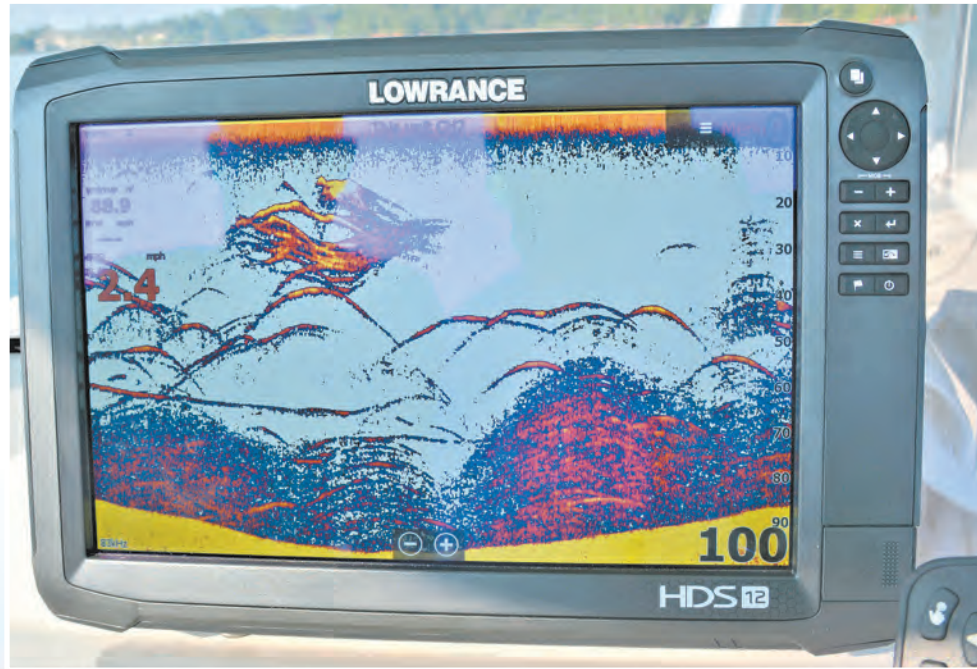
Glenn "Teach" Corley

Lake Hartwell



Power cranking for stripers is hard fishing. Sometimes you are dropping to 100 feet deep and the cranking can get tiresome. That's especially true when the weather is hot. Cain said the stripers will stay near the dam throughout the summer and into the late fall until the weather cools and they start moving back upriver. Give Rick Cain a call at (864) 569-9974 if you are interested in catching some dog days of summer stripers. ■

FACTS ABOUT LAKE HARTWELL >



Glenn "Teach" Corley



Multiple hookups can cause some of the most fun commotion an angler will ever experience. **ABOVE:** Depthfinders play a critical role when power-cranking big spoons for hot-weather stripers.

FACTS ABOUT LAKE HARTWELL

Lake Hartwell is one of the biggest and most popular lakes in the southeast. It sits on the South Carolina-Georgia state line and was created by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It is the upper-most lake on the Savannah River Chain, which also includes Lakes Russell and Clarks Hill.

Lake Hartwell was named after Nancy Hart, a frontierswoman who played a role in defeating British troops during several skirmishes in the area during the American Revolutionary War.

The lake has 962 miles of shoreline and 56,000 acres of surface water. It is located within Anderson, Oconee and Pickens counties on the South Carolina side.

Lake Hartwell is known as a deep lake. The average depth is 45 feet, and the maximum depth is about 190 feet.

Forty-five boat ramps are located on Lake Hartwell and 11 fish attractors are located in the lake's waters.

Stripers are one of the lake's most popular species. The deep, cool water and abundance of baitfish helps these fish grow. Numerous charter services make a living guiding anglers on Lake Hartwell for stripers and other fish, including largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, spotted bass, crappie and bream. ■

Big stripers can hit at any time when an angler is cranking up a big spoon, so it's best to keep the net handy.



STATE PARKS ON LAKE HARTWELL

South Carolina's State Parks Service has two state parks on Lake Hartwell. Lake Hartwell State Park, at 680 acres, is the largest and features two boat landings and a 140-foot long fishing pier. The park features 115 paved campsites that can be used for RVs or tents, two camper cabins for those wishing to camp in comfort without their own tent, and an additional 13 walk-in tent sites.

Aside from the boat launches and fishing pier, anglers can cast a line from numerous places along the lake's shores -- including directly from your own camping spot.

Lake Hartwell State Park has more than 14 miles of shoreline along the lake.

The lake's other state park is Sadler's Creek. This park sits on 395 acres that extends onto a peninsula on Lake Hartwell. It features a 100-foot fishing pier and two boat landings.



This big striper was caught within sight of the dam, a common area for Rick Cain to fish with his big spoons.

Glenn "Teach" Corley

Sadler's Creek offers 51 camping spots that are suitable for RVs or tents, and another 14 tent-only campsites.

Aside from these two state parks, numerous other campgrounds — some privately owned and some owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers — are located on the lake or within very close proximity. For a complete list, visit www.lakehartwell-guide.com. ■

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Finding contour breaks with cover on them is a surefire way to score a big bag of bass in July.



Dan Kibler

CRANKING THE CONTOURS

CONTOURS WITH COVER ARE JULY BASS HAVENS

July brings plenty of changes to bass anglers, as fish begin to move toward the places where they'll spend the summer. But they'll still bite. A good topwater bite happens first thing in the morning early in the month. You might even find some fish grouped up – but not quite as good as they were in June.

When July really arrives, you're going to be fishing in one of these three places in whatever lake you call home:

- Close to the mouth of creeks;
- On the main lake;
- Up in the river.

And when August arrives, you can add the backs of creeks, because some fish will be back there.

At lakes where fish get a lot of pressure, like High Rock, Norman and Wylie, there can be some big stringers caught by going up the river. You will find fish there that haven't been pressured quite as much. They haven't been caught 50 times before.

Most of the time, I'm going to start about halfway back in creeks and move to the mouth and the main lake. I'll make a little milk run of spots to see where I find the most fish, then concentrate

there. When I was fishing High Rock a lot, I could find an area where they were concentrated and fish it all day, sooner or later knowing where they'd be feeding and at what time.

CONTOUR BREAKS

But general areas aside, I'm going to be looking for one particular thing in July: a contour break. Fish will get on them in July. You might catch one, two or three on a spot. But you have to do a lot of idling and looking at your electronics to find spots where they'll be hanging out.

A contour break is different from a channel break. A channel break is where a flat drops quickly into an old creek channel. In the areas we're going to find the most fish, these kinds of places will be too deep to fish. In a lot of lakes, the creek channel breaks near the mouth of creeks and on the main lake will be too deep to hold fish.

Contour breaks are places where the bottom drops 2 to 5 feet very quickly. These kinds of places don't always show up good on some of our maps. If they do, you'll be able to see those contour lines close together where the bottom drops off. But a channel won't be right

there – but there might be one close by. Somewhere along those contour lines will be a contour break.

You find a lot of contour breaks around points that don't get close to a channel. On one side, there might be a straight-off drop, a 2- to 5-foot break. On High Rock, I'd be looking for breaks from 12 to 15 feet. And at Buggs Island, maybe 15 to 18 feet, dropping into 20 to 22 feet. You fish a lot of contour breaks on a big, deep lake like Buggs Island because the channel breaks are so deep. Wylie and Norman are the same way.

To find contour breaks, you just roll down a flat, going back and forth, until you find a spot where the bottom falls away quickly. Somewhere along a section of about 100 yards on almost every flat will be a place that has a good drop, where the bottom drops straight off. Find it and you have a big advantage. That's because bass will stay on places like this



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, Lewis, Lowrance, Power Pole and Berkley.

all the way into the fall. That's why I've had so much success fishing tournaments in the fall. You find six or eight places like that – maybe more if you can – and you'll have places where you can catch fish.

FIND COVER

The good thing about these little drops is, they've usually got some good cover on them, especially shells or rocks. Put those two things together and you've got a big-fish combo in July.

A little contour drop will normally not have a smooth bottom. This is the place where, a long time ago, when you had a lot of current running past this place, it didn't wash away the rocks and shells. It left you with a little high spot and a good drop.

In the old days, you'd look at a spot and try to get a decent line-up on it, lining up spots on the bank, maybe two trees or a corner of a dock and a tree up on the bank – anything that will help you get

back to that spot. Now, guys just hit a waypoint on their GPS. You come back, find it on your side-vision or down-vision and set up in your boat where you need to be to hit it with your bait. I almost always set up deep and cast deep to shallow, then work my bait down the drop. I rarely fish parallel to a contour drop.

START CRANKING

July is really crankbait time, deep-diving baits. I will be tying on a Berkley Dredger 20.5 or 25.5. I like the 25.5. It's not a giant bait, but you can get it to run down to 21 or 22 feet consistently. With most of your fish in July on drops in 15 or 18 to 22 feet of water, you'll need that depth.

I'll have most of these baits tied on my 7-foot-11, Lew's David Fritts cranking rod. A 7-foot-11 rod is only 5 inches longer than a 7-foot-6. But that makes a big difference. It can get you 5, 6 or 7 more yards on a cast, and you need all the casting distance you can get when you're fishing 20 feet deep.

If I think bass are on a spot – sometimes you can't see them on your electronics because they're right on the bottom – I'll start with a crankbait. But before I leave a spot without any fish, I'll switch over to a Texas-rigged, 10-inch Power Worm. Those are basically the two baits you'll need to fish these contour lines.

Idling and looking might not sound exciting. But if you fish one lake more than any others, spending that kind of time finding a bunch of spots like these will be well worth the effort. You will be able to fish them for a good 4 months, starting in July. And you'll catch fish on them all the way to the time when they start moving back in the creeks. At that point, you'll be fishing contour breaks and channel breaks – and you'll find a lot of both back in a creek. ■

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TROUT HOTSPOTS

PRIME TIME FOR JOCASSEE TROUT

Slow-trolling for browns, rainbows

What better way to escape the summer heat than to relax and enjoy beautiful mountain scenery on Lake Jocassee while catching some big brown and rainbow trout? The hot summer months are prime time for catching those big lake trout in Lake Jocassee's clear waters, according to veteran guide Sam Jones.

Surface water temperatures can rise to sultry temperatures under the hot July and August sun. So the trout survive by going deep in the thermocline where the temperature is a more tolerable and comfortable 55 to 65 degrees.

"The best way to get them is trolling flutter spoons and stick-baits 1.2 to 1.8 mph, 80 to 120 feet deep using downriggers," said Jones who operates Jocassee Charters (www.jocasseecharters.com) year-round on Lake Jocassee. "Drifting or trolling large shiners works well also."

Jones said the most productive areas are the dam and the deep river channels of the Toxaway and Whitewater rivers.

"The time of day is not as important as other types of fishing. We have caught some of the biggest fish midday in the summer. The biggest one caught on my boat was an 11-pound brown trout. We caught it around noon in the middle of July, trolling 85 feet deep."

These young ladies were on a combination fishing/tour trip with Sam Jones when they caught these nice trout.



Sam Jones

In addition to half-day and longer fishing trips, Jocassee Charters offers 3-hour lake tours and combination fishing/tour packages. Check out the Jocassee Charters Facebook page for deals and fishing reports. ■

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CATS IN THE DARK

THESE LAKES OFFER
HOT CATFISH ACTION
ALL NIGHT LONG.

■ By Terry Madewell



MID-SUMMER HAS LONG BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH CATFISHING.

With water temperatures increasing the metabolism of these cold-blooded creatures, they simply must eat. This makes them highly susceptible to anglers fishing the right lakes with the appropriate baits, tackle and fishing strategy.

The keys to success are simple. Find the right lakes and employ the strategies of highly successful catfishermen to make excellent catches.

LAKE MOULTRIE

The Santee Cooper lakes offer excellent nocturnal catfish action in July. Professional Guide Spencer Hodges said nighttime catfishing at Lake Moultrie can be sensational.

Hodges hails from Winterville, NC and has fished the Santee Cooper lakes since he was 1-year-old. He's been guiding professionally for catfish for the past few years.

"I have two solid patterns for July and August," he said. "Lake Moultrie's proximity to the coast typically ensures a reliable wind pattern on most afternoons. So I'll fish downwind mussel beds in shallow water where waves are rolling over the area."

Hodges (336-469-0177, Purrfect Kitty Guide Service) said mussels rank high on the preferred catfish chow in hot weather. And the wind-driven waves create an ideal situation for big cats to feed in skinny water after dark.

"I'll get set up about 90-minutes prior to dark and we'll occasionally enjoy a flurry of action around sunset," he said. "Prime time is typically right at dark. And for the next hour or two, the action is often sensational.

"Actively feeding fish are on the move. So an anchored setup with multiple rigs is ideal," he said.

Hodges anchors about 6 feet deep and fan casts baits around the boat. He'll position baits in various depths, but skinny water is prime for big cats.

ANCHOR FIRST, THEN DRAG

"I'll stay anchored in this type area as long as the fish keep biting. But usually by 10:30 pm the bite slows on this pattern," he said. "I'll pull my rigs and make a move to deeper water and drag baits the rest of the night."

Hodges added that if the preferred wind pattern doesn't occur, the dragging method is his singular go-to tactic.

"I love fishing the shallow stuff. But if the wind is calm, it's much less productive. And the dragging bait tactic works great all night" he said.

Hodges said favored targets for dragging baits include ledges and underwater rolling hills where the depth changes routinely.

"I have a pattern to fishing deeper water," he said. "I'll begin in 20 feet but will gradually migrate to 25 to 30 feet, as well as pulling baits in shallower water into the 15 to 20-foot range. Different depth patterns can produce. So don't get locked into a specific depth unless you're catching fish."

Bait is a crucial component and Hodges has favorites for hot weather.

"My A-number one bait at this time of the year is white perch, followed by bream," he said. "Big cats are feeding heavily on these species making it an easy choice."

Hodges said a key for trophy catfish this month is bait size. "Big bait for big fish is a common practice and I'll fish some big baits in the summer," he said. "But small baits are lethal in July and August. The head of a 5- to 6-inch white perch is in the half-dollar size range. But this small-bait pattern is strong this month and produces trophy catfish."

Hodges said having a fishing game plan before going, and knowing where and how to safely navigate at night, are two keys to nocturnal catfishing success.

CLARKS HILL LAKE >



Terry Madewell

Guide Rodger Taylor said don't hesitate to fish skinny water at night on Lake Wateree. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Guide Spencer Hodges said anglers can catch huge catfish on small baits at night on Lake Moultrie.

CLARKS HILL LAKE

Clarks Hill Lake offers outstanding fishing for blue, flathead and channel catfish. And during mid-summer, the nocturnal hours are prime time.

Catfish guide Chris Simpson from McCormick, S.C. fishes Clarks Hill Lake year-round. And he loves this time of year after the sun goes down.

“Big cats move into shallower water after dark and are more accessible at reasonable depths,” Simpson said. “On Clarks Hill shallow is a relative term because of water clarity. And I consider anything 20 feet deep or less to be shallow. At night the blues, flatheads and channel catfish all move shallower.”

Simpson (864-992-2352, Fightin’ Da Blues Guide Service) said the key is fishing areas with lots of rock outcroppings.

“I usually orient to main lake and secondary points, humps and ledges in the major arms of the lake,” he said. “But anywhere large rock outcroppings exist near deeper water can be a prime target.”

Simpson anchors in about 15 feet of water and fan casts baits all around the boat in various depths, from close to the shoreline all the way down to 30 feet deep.

“Big flatheads tend to move quite shallow at night and I’ll often catch them near the shoreline as shallow as 4-foot-deep,”

he said. “Blue catfish tend to cruise multiple depths. And they’re often deeper. But they’ll also cruise the shallows.”

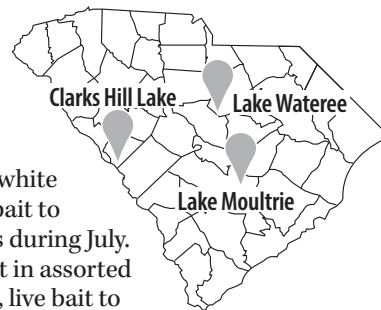
Simpson prefers bream, white perch or gizzard shad as bait to target blues and flatheads during July. He’ll use chunks of cutbait in assorted sizes for blues, and whole, live bait to target flatheads.

“Flatheads love a live bait. But they’ll eat fresh cutbait too,” he said. “And a big blue catfish won’t hesitate to eat a live bait. I fish both baits and let the catfish decide.”

Simpson said the entire lake is productive, although he typically fishes the mid- to upper-portion of the lake.

“In the lower end of the lake, with much deeper water, catfish may not move quite as shallow,” he said. “But it’s still a significant change from fishing during the daylight hours.”

“If clients want to fill a cooler with channel catfish in the 1- to 10-pound range, I’ll use small pieces of cut herring, stink bait and shrimp,” he said. “The lake is teeming with channel catfish and they’re found in the same type rocky areas as the big blues and flatheads.”



LAKE WYLIE ➤



Jeff Manning said for nocturnal fishing, focus on areas where the deep water is close to shallow flats.



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LAKE WYLIE

This border lake encompasses large chunks of both North and South Carolina and offers tremendous diversity for nocturnal catfish anglers.

Jeff Manning and Michael Paciocco often team up as highly successful catfish tournament partners. Both live in Gastonia, N.C., making Lake Wylie their home lake.

“Lake Wylie has a diversity of species and produces quality fishing for blues, flatheads and channel catfish,” Manning said. “Fishing at night, we’ll avoid the recreational traffic. And the weather is much more tolerable. Most importantly the big blues and flatheads migrate to shallow water to feed.”

Manning said he fishes the South Carolina lower portion of the lake a lot. But the entire lake can be productive. Since no reciprocal license agreement exists, he and Paciocco have licenses for both states.



Paciocco said targeting big blues and flatheads at night is an excellent plan because they can often be found on the same type of bottom topography and the same baits work for both species. Cut perch, bream and shad, and whole live baits are top bait choices.

“Live baits are touted as a prime offering for flatheads. But these big-headed brutes are caught on fresh cut bait,” Paciocco said.

Manning said his fishing strategy is similar to daytime fishing. He simply moves to shallower water.

“I key on changes in water depth such as river or creek channel ledges, as well as humps, underwater islands and long points,” Manning said. “During the day I may fish 20 feet deep





Terry Madewell

Michael Paciocco said big catfish move shallower after dark to feed during the summer months. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** The type and size of bait choices are crucial to success. Best choices can vary from one lake to another.

or deeper. But at night I'm targeting areas in less than 10 feet of water and casting baits even shallower. I fish from an anchored setup because I catch more big fish that way."

Manning said a good example of a prime target would be a shallow sandbar along the main river channel, perhaps 5 to 10 feet deep, with a small creek or cove entering downstream of where he would anchor.

"I'll cast baits to the drop where the creek or ditch is located, shallower on the sandbar and deeper along the river channel ledge," he said.

Manning said fishing humps along the river — some that may be within 5 feet of the surface — is another prime target.

Paciocco said they'll give a spot an hour or more to produce. But they won't stay in one spot longer than 90 minutes without action.

"The key is to find identifiable targets with changing bottom contours, fish a lot of rigs in various depths then adjust according to where the bites originate," Paciocco said. "By downsizing baits and rigs, anglers can load a cooler with great-eating channel catfish in these same locations." ■

SLEEPER HOTSPOT ➤



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.

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SLEEPER HOTSPOT — LAKE WATEREE

Catfish guide Rodger Taylor from Rock Hill, SC, who guides on lakes Wylie and Wateree, said Lake Wateree offers outstanding fishing for blue and channel catfish. Plus, flatheads are beginning to get a foothold in the lake and overall catfish action is excellent at night.

Taylor (803-517-7828; Catfish ON! Guide Service) said he'll work the main lake points, ledges and humps with cut bait including bream, white perch, gizzard and threadfin shad.

"The entire lake can be productive in July. But a key is having some patience and fishing some baits in ultra-shallow water," he said. "Downsize rigs and bait size for excellent action on smaller channel and blue catfish." ■

Jeff Manning said blue and flathead catfish are often caught in the same locations after dark.

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SANTEE STRINGER

Terry Madewell

Bream expert Dean Ilderton said artificial lures produce stringers of bream during hot weather.



HOT WEATHER, HOT FISHING

Terry Madewell

EMBRACE SANTEE COOPER'S SUMMER HEAT

Hot air and rising water temperatures typical of July have most anglers working the early morning, late-afternoon and graveyard shifts when pursuing various fish species at Santee Cooper.

And that's an excellent fishing game plan. The scorching heat makes it difficult for anglers to stay comfortable and enjoy mid-day fishing. Fortunately, good fishing patterns exist for these low-light hours.

MONSTER BREAM ON TINY LURES

Live bait is the 'go-to' tactic for many bream anglers throughout the summer. But artificial lures are also effective for limits of big, bull bream.

Dean Ilderton, a bream guru from St. George, S.C. said not all artificial lures are created equal for summertime fishing. He works patterns using the right lure in the proper situation for big bream.

"I can fish multiple types of bream habi-

tat effectively and faster with artificial lures than I can using live bait," he said. "This enables me to find feeding fish quicker. Plus artificial lures are particularly effective during the summer when bream are actively feeding early and late in the day."

Ilderton said he'll occasionally find an ongoing mayfly hatch. Anytime this occurs on Santee Cooper, the hunt for big bream is over. And bream catching begins.

"A good mayfly hatch provides extraordinary fishing for big bream whether using artificial or live bait," he said. "Hatches occur throughout the summer. And sometimes I'm actively searching for them. But occasionally I'm simply working good bream habitat and literally fish my way right into the midst of a bream fishing mecca."

Ilderton said a wide variety of artificial lures are lethal on bream including safety-pin type spinners, such as the Beetle Spin. Inline spinners, small jigs, tiny crankbaits

and flyrods loaded with popping bugs or sinking flies are also great.

Ilderton said he uses a small version of the Beetle Spin, such as the 1/32 or 1/16 ounce size, because this lure is less prone to snag in the cover-rich bream habitat in Santee Cooper.

"I'll use either 4- or 6-pound test line on spinning or spin-cast rigs. This light-weight rig enables me to cast long and accurately around heavy cover," he said. "Accurate casting is a huge benefit everywhere I fish in the lakes. And especially in the confined spaces of fishing around cypress trees, weedbeds and anywhere in the Lake Marion swamps."



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.

A SUMMERTIME DIVERSION

Excellent catfishing opportunities abound during the summer on Santee Cooper. But one of the most productive places to be right now is the Diversion Canal. This 7-mile long canal linking the lakes provides sensational summertime catfishing.

Kevin Davis fishes out of Blacks Camp and is a veteran angler familiar with catfishing on both lakes Marion and Moultrie.

“With normal rainfall, the current flow is good at this time of the year. And that’s a key to the outstanding catfishing,” he said. “Catfish like current. And current attracts multiple species of catfish forage producing tremendous forage diversity.”

Davis said two primary fishing patterns exist – drifting and fishing from an anchored position.

“Drifting is an excellent tactic for daytime fishing,” he said. “I’ll drift with the current and hold my bait just off the bottom.”

Davis typically uses a 2-ounce weight to keep the line vertical. But during high current flow he may need more weight.

“I keep the line vertical and hover the bait about a foot off the bottom,” he said. “I’ll occasionally lower the rodtip, allowing the sinker to ‘tick’ the bottom to ensure I’m in the strike zone. The bottom of the canal is extremely snaggy. So dragging baits right on the bottom results in continuous snags.”

Davis said anchor fishing is excellent by day or night. Top locations include the deep holes along the canal bottom and where water flows into the canal from the shallow flats creating eddies.

“At night I’ll anchor where I can fish the shallow rims around the deep holes. But during the day I’ll set up so I can present my baits in the holes,” he said.

Davis said bait is crucial and it’s often based on the specific technique and time he’s fishing.

“Prime baits include gizzard shad, herring, bream, white perch and mullet,” he said. “I’ll experiment with various sizes of baits. But at night live bream and white perch are effective because big flat-heads love live baits. And big blues will eat them too.”

One exception to this bait presentation is when mussels

THE CANAL:

When you hear anglers who regularly fish the Santee Cooper lakes talk about the canal, it’s the Diversion Canal that connects the upper and lower lakes they’re speaking of. This canal is a hot spot for catfish during the heat of summer, especially when the current is flowing. Anglers can often catch all they want in the canal without ever wetting a line in either lake.

begin to die during hot weather and they float down the Canal.

“When this occurs, I’ll downsize bait size,” he said. “The meat from the mussels is small, about nickel size. And catfish feast on that food source. I literally match that bait size using nickel-sized chunks of blueback herring. It’s effective for all size classes of catfish.” ■

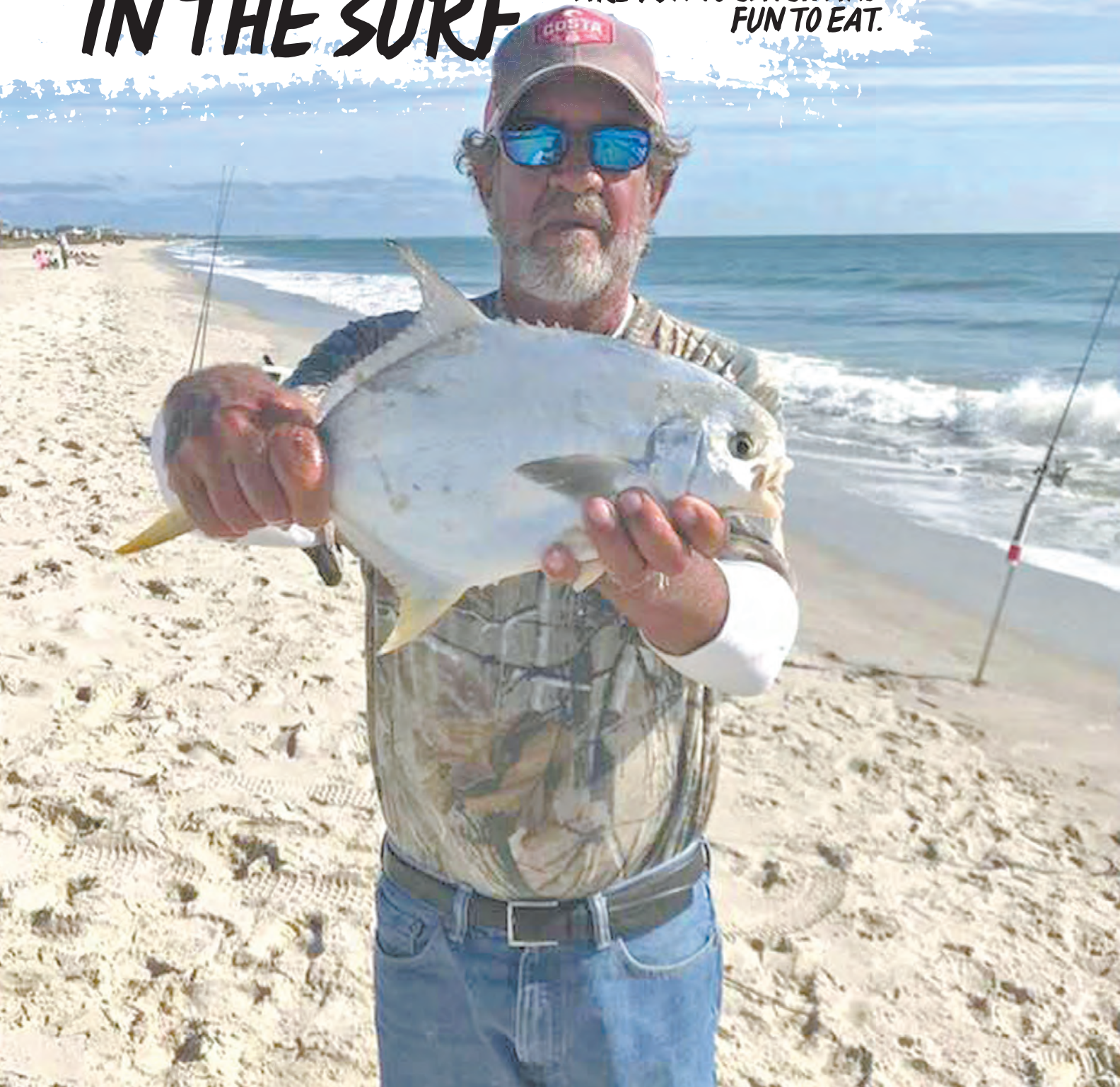
The Diversion Canal is a summer hotspot for catfish that range from small eaters to trophy-sized fish.



PANFISH IN THE SURF

■ By Jerry Dilsaver

**POMPANO AND WHITING
ARE FUN TO CATCH AND
FUN TO EAT.**



ONE OF THE FAVORITE SPECIES

pursued by Carolina surf fishermen is Florida pompano, usually simply called pompano. The bright silver fish arrive when the water in the surf zone begins to warm in the spring. And they stay until the water cools in the fall. They are willing biters, usually feeding and typically within easy casting distance for even the most inexperienced casters.

Another plus for surfcasters targeting pompano is they are usually accompanied by whiting. Whiting, which are also called sea mullet and Virginia mullet, roam surf lines from the Gulf of Mexico to the mid-Atlantic with pompano. These fish occupy a lot of fishermen with good action and plenty of prime fillets for dinner.

Catching pompano and whiting doesn't carry the thrill of landing a stubborn cobia or large red drum at Cape Hatteras. But they please many fishermen along the Carolina Coast and many are carried home to become the guest of honor at fresh fish dinners.

Oak Island, N.C. isn't a well-known surf fishing destination. But a dedicated group of fishermen here catch lots of pompano and whiting. And their techniques will produce anywhere that holds the two fish. They typically do well at area surf fishing tournaments and don't miss meals when relying on their catch when fishing other areas. They offered some tips that should help other surfcasters improve their catches of pompano and whiting.

Bobby Summey enjoys surf fishing and enjoys eating his catch. He said that pompano, along with whiting, are two of the tastiest panfish available for surf fishermen. Once the weather warms in the spring, Summey and a loose group of friends that alternates with Jimmy Adkins, Keith Whitworth, Jerry Moss and Breck Honeycutt, plus other occasional participants, gather on the beach several times a week to ply their luck for a fresh pompano and/or whiting dinner, talk and other things friends enjoy.

POMPANO CAN BE PICKY ➤

Anglers don't need to wade out very deep to catch pompano and whiting. **OPPOSITE:** Nice pompano like this are not uncommon in the June surf.



POMPANO CAN BE PICKY

Summey said finding the bait they prefer is sometimes the most difficult part of this. Pompano like live shrimp and live sand fleas (mole crabs), especially sand fleas laden with eggs. Sometimes they like both at the same time. And sometimes it's one or the other.

When these live baits aren't available, they use pieces of the freshest shrimp possible. Some fishermen revert to frozen sand fleas when live ones aren't available. But this crew feels they get more bites using pieces of shrimp.

Summey said they take turns catching bait. Sometimes live shrimp can be purchased from area tackle shops, but they all throw cast nets and go to favorite spots to catch bait. Even though they have been friends and fished together for a long time, most have different favorite bait-catching spots. Obviously, more than one or two spots are available to catch bait in the area.

They generally catch shrimp around low tide and keep them in aerated baitwells until it's time to use them.

Sand fleas live in the sand at the edge of the surf and can also be caught in advance and kept. Summey and friends keep them in small buckets, with holes in the bottom to drain. The buckets are placed on cooling packs and kept in a cooler to keep them out of the sun, fresh and ready to go. Some fishermen use their hands and small shovels to dig up sand and sift it for sand fleas. And many tackle shops sell sand flea rakes.

LOOK AT LOW TIDE

Summey said sand fleas have a much easier time digging in areas of the beach with softer sand. And fishermen can look

for these spots to catch them easier. He pointed out that beach renourishment projects have become regular at many beaches and they tend to pack sand in some areas and may loosen it in others. He suggested paying attention to the hardness of the beach. Finding the softer areas definitely makes locating and gathering sand fleas easier.

"Not all parts of the beach have equal fishing either," Summey said. "You would think the fish would be close to the soft areas that usually hold more bait. This helps often, but it's not a rock-solid thing. Sometimes the fish are attracted to something and hold over areas of harder packed bottom."

Fishermen should note that sloughs, drains and sandbars along the beach are important features that help attract fish. Many of these same things that create rip currents also create bottom features that attract fish. It is wise to check out the beach at low tide and find areas with sloughs, drains or sand bars within casting distance of the beach. These areas will hold bait and attract fish when they're covered with water. Return while the tide is rising and fish this area as the rising tide covers it.

FIND THE STRIKE ZONE

"We use rigs that Jimmy (Adkins) makes," Summey said. "He likes making them and they catch fish well. So we gladly use them. Jimmy's rigs are double-drop setups, with the sinker at the bottom. They use loop-to-loop connections to allow easily replacing hooks. We like small circle and needle point



Sand fleas a/k/a mole crabs are readily available on Carolina beaches. **RIGHT:** Whiting are also common catches in the same areas as pompano.



Bobby Summey shows off a pompano double.



hooks like the Mustad Ultrapoint and Eagle Claw Needlepoint Octopus hooks in size 2. These hooks hold the baits well and hook most of the fish on their own if we're not paying attention. And we sometimes get involved in talking or something and don't notice a bite until a hooked fish is bouncing the rod."

The strike zone is the slough, when one is present, or where the farthest offshore wave is breaking on the bottom or sand bar. This is one good thing about south-facing beaches, like Oak Island; they rarely have big nasty surf. Sometimes reaching the outer breaker requires a hefty cast. But many times it is closer in and easy to reach.

Summey and friends mainly use 10-foot conventional rod and reel setups. They are easier to cast once your thumb is educated to prevent backlashes. Fishermen who haven't mastered casting with a conventional reel can use a spinning outfit.

"We start by fishing a live shrimp on one hook and a sand flea on the other," Summey said. "When we see they have a preference on that particular day — and their preference changes — we switch to that bait. When live bait isn't available, pieces of the freshest shrimp possible become the preferred bait."

Note: A local story tells of one fisherman who uses Pro-Cure Scent Gel in shrimp flavor to mask the smell of shrimp he is concerned aren't fresh enough. This sounds a bit extreme, but this fisherman catches a lot of fish.

Oak Island isn't known as a surf fishing destination. But Summey and friends eat a lot of pompano and whiting, plus speckled trout, gray trout, red drum, black drum, flounder and more they catch there. It's more of a panfish place, with the possibility of hooking a trophy red drum, tarpon and more.

These tips work well here for pompano, whiting and the other panfish in the Oak Island surf and should help increase your catch anywhere you fish. ■

MORE ABOUT POMPANO & WHITING >



Jerry Dilsaver of Oak Island, a full-time freelance writer, is a columnist for North Carolina Sportsman. He is a former SKA National Champion and USAA Angler of the Year.

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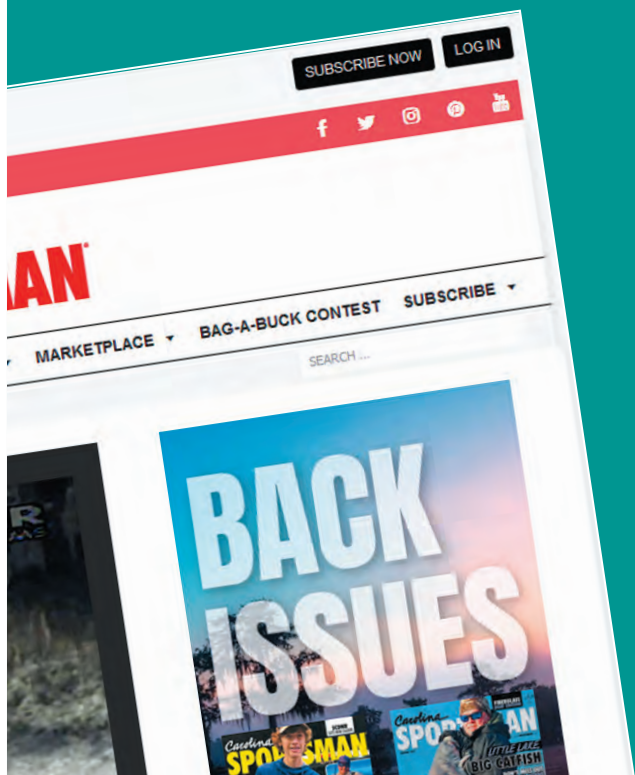


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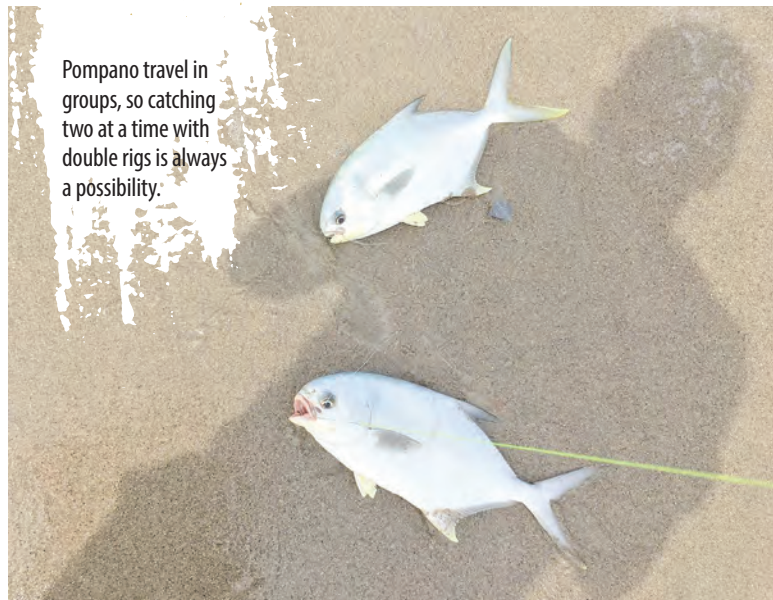
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PANFISH IN THE SURF

MORE DETAILS ABOUT POMPANO AND WHITING

Pompano travel in groups, so catching two at a time with double rigs is always a possibility.



Pompano and whiting are popular fish with surf casters along the US Gulf and Atlantic Coasts. They are panfish, which feed along the bottom in the nearshore ocean. And this brings them within easy casting range of surf fishermen. They feed on small crabs, shrimp, minnows and other things they root out of the bottom, generally right at the edge of the surf line.

Florida pompano is the species found most often in the N.C. and S.C. surf. Pompano grow quickly and can reach 12 inches (approximately 1 pound) in a year. It is rare for Florida pompano to live longer than 3 or 4 years and weigh more than 4 pounds.

Whiting, which are also called sea mullet and Virginia mullet, are actually kingfish and are cousins in the croaker/drum family. There are three species of kingfish; northern kingfish, southern kingfish and Gulf kingfish. Northern kingfish have dark striping and a long spine extending from their first dorsal fin, while southern kingfish have dusky brown striping. Gulf kingfish have dull silver sides. All are caught in the Carolinas.

Whiting are not large fish, with most weighing less than a pound. Any whiting heavier than 1.5 pounds is considered large. The Gulf kingfish is the largest and may reach 4 pounds.

All whiting are fun to catch, willing biters and excellent table fare. They range from a few miles inshore in rivers and sounds to a mile or so offshore in the ocean. As with pompano, live shrimp, live sand fleas and freshly caught shrimp are the best baits for whiting.

Whiting have excellent noses and can be particular about eating older baits. One successful charter captain suggested going to the seafood market and buying shrimp intended for the dinner table for the best results. ■

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Summer vacation season is officially in and many anglers will be heading on vacation for some fun in the sun. That doesn't mean you have to take a break from fishing. Just be sure you pack some plastic.

One of the benefits of owning and/or fishing from a kayak on vacation, or anytime for that matter, is the number of locations where they can be used.

Unlike a motor boat, a public boat ramp isn't necessary to put a kayak or canoe in the water. Kayaks can be launched from roadside throw-in points, bridge overpasses, inlets, private docks, or even off the beach.

Choosing a kayak to use for fishing is a little different than choosing one for recreational paddling. Generally speaking, anglers aren't keen on traveling great distances from where they put in to where they are going to fish. So wider is better than longer. Anglers are more interested

in stability. A wide bottom means a more stable platform. It may even allow the anglers to stand in the bottom of the boat when fishing.

Sit-on tops often have sealed hatches to store gear, or at least have molded features that allow for the carrying of gear. Another feature is that most of the popular sit-on tops have rod holders attached. A rod holder in and of itself does not make any kayak a fishing kayak. But it is a step in the right direction.

Once you've been bitten by the kayak fishing bug, one of the most important features at the next level is some type of rudder or tracking system so that the boat tracks in a straight line when being paddled. A rudder system that is operated with foot pedals is an advanced feature, but well worth it when trying to maneuver hands-free.

Get in a situation where you can paddle to a spot, then let the tide, current or wind slowly push you through the area.

This lets you fish without occupying your hands for paddling or maneuvering. Pedal kayaks already have the hands-free thing covered and make for great hands-free propulsion with only a little steering required.

A final word about preparation for kayak fishing is to decide if you are going to fish with live bait or artificial baits on your outing. Outside of a small cooler or one of those buckets that you troll alongside the boat, space is limited for carrying any type of live bait. Likewise, a small compartmentalized tackle box for artificial baits will fit nicely under your feet or in a storage well. ■



Phillip Gentry of Waterloo, S.C., is host of "PG & Boat Girl Outdoors" podcast and a veteran outdoor writer.



A variety of species are available to kayak anglers no matter where they're vacationing.

KAYAK COOLERS

Through the years, many pieces of kayaking gear have vied for the tank well space. The milk crate remained supreme, until recently. The milk crate has been unseated by today's modern wave of fishing coolers.

Bridgett Valet started out as a kayak fishing pro-staffer for Sparta, Tennessee-based Jackson Kayaks and has made the jump to full time marketing rep for the company shortly after Jackson began producing its line of tough, heavy insulated coolers under the Orion brand name.

"We had all the equipment necessary to make roto-molded plastic gear and were contracting coolers for other brands," said Valet. "Then we decided to put what we know about the outdoor industry and kayaking into our own coolers."

Kayak fishing applications were at the top of the list for Jackson, whose line of fishing kayaks has exceeded both their recreational paddling and whitewater kayaking lines. The Orion line even resembles Jackson's fishing kayaks with one piece roto molded shell construction in swirled coloration, integrated gear tracks, and Marine Mat deck covers.

The company also decided to go all out with features specifically targeted to anglers, who found it easy to strap on a cooler for use as locking dry space for the yak or traditional cooler storage on any boat.

Accessories for the GearTrack are limited only to the imagination of the user. Jackson/Orion sized their gear track to easily integrate with both Yak Attack and RAM Mount accessories. ■

BEST BETS

NORTH CAROLINA

WHAT — Black bass

WHERE — Lake Rhodhiss

HOW — Look for topwater schooling action early and late in the day. Then look for bass to hold in and around rocks anywhere current is present. The upper sections of Gunpowder, Warrior or Lower Creeks are good spots. The John's River on the National Forest side of the lake is also promising.

LAUNCH — <http://lakerhodhiss.org>

INSIDER TIP — Target smallies as you would cold-water trout, keying on moving water with current breaks inside the flow. Largemouth are not opposed to current but prefer the slower moving water.

SOUTH CAROLINA

WHAT — Flounder, redfish, trout

WHERE — Murrells Inlet

HOW — Murrells Inlet is the flounder fishing capital of South Carolina. Expect to find a lot of power boats trolling the inlet pulling mud minnows. This is possible in a kayak, but you'll get as many bites targeting ledges along the inlet where one creek or ditch meets another or the main inlet. Work a standup jighead baited with a live mud minnow along the bottom.

LAUNCH — Oyster Landing is the most kayak-friendly launch.

INSIDER TIP — Flounder see a lot of moving baits in Murrells Inlet. Target different areas than where trollers fish and vary your retrieve to give the fish something they don't see 50 times a day.

COOKING ON THE WILD SIDE ➤

COOKING ON THE WILD SIDE

Jerry Dilsaver

I was thinking of red snapper with this recipe, but didn't have any in my freezer. I visited my favorite local fishmonger, Haag and Sons, in Oak Island, N.C. to see if they might have some and was steered to another excellent cousin in the snapper family. The owner, Jon Haag, pointed out they had one mangrove snapper that had been brought in by a local spearfisherman and suggested it as a great alternative. He said it had a little more fat than the red snapper I was after and would cook well on the grill. He then added that if it hadn't sold by closing time, he was taking it home for supper.

With that recommendation, I prepared this meal using mangrove snapper. But it also prepares well with my intended red snapper, beeliners (vermilion snapper) and others in the snapper family. The key is mild white meat — and the bonus is they're pretty easy and a lot of fun to catch yourself. ■



AVOCADO PINEAPPLE GRILLED SNAPPER

A TASTY, REFRESHING DISH FOR SUMMER EVENINGS

Summer evenings are nice for grilling, which is one step in preparing this recipe. **INSET:** Set the grill to medium, then keep a close watch to make sure you don't overcook the fish.

TIP!

Red snapper season is July 8 and 9, 2022 with a limit of one fish per angler and no minimum or maximum size.

AVOCADO PINEAPPLE GRILLED SNAPPER

This is a fun recipe that complements the mild flavor of fresh snapper. I'm presenting it in July, thinking that many readers may have some fresh red snapper to use as the main ingredient. If not, prepare it with one of the other snapper cousins. They taste good too.

Snapper is mild fish and I'm not trying to mask or draw out anything by marinating it in 7-Up. I think it gives it a little bit of citrus flavor in the background, without being too much. After all, this is a tropical recipe.

I don't know why, but regular 7-Up gives a better flavor than the diet versions. You'll need less than one can as you only use enough to cover the fillets with the air squeezed out of the Ziploc bag. The hot sauce helps too and isn't enough to make it spicy. Use your favorite — I

PREPARATION:

1. Mix the hot sauce into a can of 7-up.
2. Place the fillets in a Ziploc bag, cover with the 7-Up/hot sauce mixture, roll all the air out and let marinate in refrigerator for 30 minutes to 2 hours, turning it over occasionally.
3. Pit and dice the avocados.
4. Peel and chop the cucumbers, chop the onions and peppers and drain the pineapple. (Some chunk pineapple is too large for this and should be cut again.)
5. About 15 minutes before cooking fish, mix the avocados, cucumbers, pineapple, onions and lime juice in a bowl and put in refrigerator to chill.
6. Remove the snapper fillets from the marinade and allow to drain a few minutes.
7. Season the fillets to individual taste with Cavender's, salt and pepper.
8. Preheat grill to medium heat.
9. Spray a vegetable tray or fish basket with butter-flavored non-stick spray.
10. Grill the snapper fillets approximately 4-6 minutes on each side. (This varies with the thickness of the fillets and the heat of individual grills.)
11. Remove the fillets to individual plates and spoon the avocado/cucumber/pineapple and onion mixture around and/or over each fillet.
12. Sprinkle jalapeno pepper over each

like Texas Pete Cha Sauce for its smoky sweet flavor.

The amount of Cavender's, salt and pepper for the fillets is a personal choice. I like a reasonable amount of pepper and Cavender's and do not use any salt.

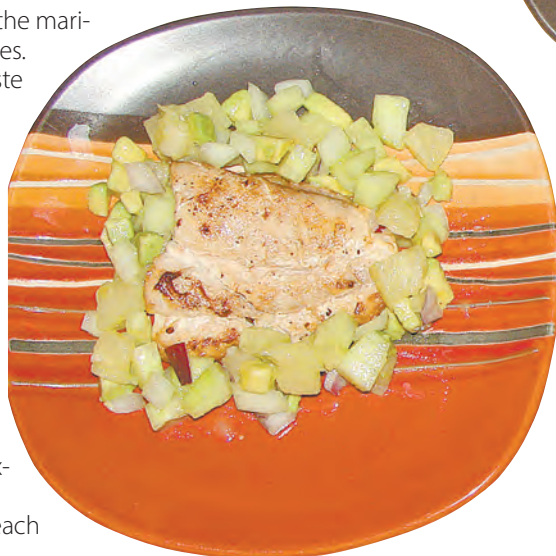
This is mild, light fish and the pieces may break up while cooking. I cook it on a grill vegetable tray that has been sprayed with butter flavored non-stick cooking spray. A fish basket will work also.

Different grills have different heat at similar settings. So keep an eye on the snapper and be careful not to overcook it.

This is a fine meal to celebrate a successful fishing trip or just to enjoy being outdoors on a summer evening. ■

fillet to individual tastes.

Even though this has its own fruit and vegetable topping, I like to begin with a garden salad or lettuce wedge. A hearty roll or sliced bread should be added too. Those who enjoy dessert can easily add a slice of key lime or coconut pie to finish the meal. But fried plantains really hit the spot with my family and friends. ■



Whether you call the topping salsa or a veggie salad, the light ingredients in this dish make it as refreshing as it is tasty.

FLOUNDER, REDFISH HOTSPOTS >



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.

TIP!

Sprinkle the jalapeños on like garnish at the end rather than mixing it with the rest of the ingredients.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1½ - 2 pound snapper fillets
- 2 avocados
- 1 large cucumber
- 1 20-oz can pineapple chunks or tidbits
- ½ cup red onion
- 2 jalapeno peppers
- 1 7-Up
- 1 Tbsp Hot sauce
- Cavender's All Purpose Greek Seasoning
- Salt and pepper to taste.

Capt. Dan Connelly said Murrells Inlet provides some of the best flounder fishing in the Carolinas this month.

FLOUNDER IN THE INLET

Murrells Inlet flounder are feeding heavily

By Jeff Burleson

For flounder fishermen, summer is the prime time to bring home dinner from Murrells Inlet's famed waterways.

Capt. Dan Connelly of Captain Dan's Fishing Company is one of the staple fishing guides in the Murrells Inlet area.

"Murrells Inlet is well-known for its stellar inshore flounder fishing from spring through fall," said Connelly (843-241-7022). "During the summer months, the plethora of natural live baits show up. And they keep all the large, keeper-sized and doormat flounder feeding on a regular basis."

Flounder are ambush feeders and will set up in about any place where they can ambush bait. Connelly fishes around the jetties and along creek mouths, creek edges, and adjacent to structure to find flounder.

"My main focus is usually around structure or areas with strong current and eddies where the fish can lay on the bottom and ambush anything that comes within reach," he said.

Connelly rarely stays in one place too long while fishing for flounder in the summertime.

"Don't spend more than 10 to 15 minutes in an area without a bite. If they are feeding in an area, they will not allow a bait or lure to enter their strike zone without taking a bite. And flounder are also traveling in groups. If you find them feeding in an area, chances are, they aren't traveling alone," he said.

Flounder will engulf about any live bait, dead bait, or artificial



Dan Connelly

lure imaginable. They are almost like the vacuum cleaner of the inshore grounds. Connelly will typically use live finger mullet, peanut menhaden, or mud minnows in the summer on a Carolina rig or jigheads.

"Traditional Carolina rigs and colored jigheads are my rigs of choice for targeting flounder. I like to fan cast an area while slowly dragging bait along the bottom to give the flounder more than enough time to attack," he said.

"Many folks believe that smaller baits like mud minnows are needed to catch flounder but this isn't necessarily true. Even an undersized fish can gorge on a 6- to 8-inch meal. And typically larger fish are caught with larger baits," he said.

"It is not unheard of to have a banner day catching 30 to 40 fish and having 5 to 10 keeper-sized fish ranging from 2 to 8 pounds," he said. ■



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Brian Cope

HILTON HEAD'S LAGOON REDFISH

Calm waters offer trophy fishing

By Brian Cope

One of the most unique inshore fishing spots in the Carolinas is the Palmetto Dunes Lagoon on Hilton Head Island. The 11-mile system winds through neighborhoods and past golf courses. And it's chock full of redfish, speckled trout, flounder and even tarpon.

As with many places that we'd all love to fish, the biggest obstacle is access. You can only fish here if you own property or are renting a place that is on the lagoon. But an easy solution lies in Palmetto Lagoon Charters (843-301-4634) with Capt. Trent Malphrus and Capt. Stacy Garbett.

Their charter is located on the lagoon, and they're happy to take anglers all summer long. Only electric-powered boats are allowed in the lagoon, and Palmetto Lagoon Charters has you covered. And with them located on the lagoon, you're fishing right away.

Malphrus and Garbett like pursuing redfish this time of year, and doing so is quite a bit different than it is for anglers fishing the inshore waters around Hilton Head.

"In the lagoon, redfish will hold tight to cover, which in many cases is partially submerged pine trees and large limbs," said Malphrus.

It's common to fish with fairly loose drags for inshore redfish, but Garbett said that won't do here.

Palmetto Lagoon Charters puts their clients on lots of redfish like this one all summer long.

STOUT TACKLE IS REQUIRED

"We fish with strong braided line and as tight a drag as we can get. Unlike fishing inshore where you'll allow a redfish to pull against the drag to tire itself out, in the lagoon, you've got to turn that fish away from structure right away or it will wrap you up and pop you off," he said.

Live bait is a great choice here, and Garbett said putting that bait under a popping cork is a good choice.

"You cast it up against a submerged tree or structure and get ready," he said. "Their first instinct is to grab the bait and swim into the structure. And that first second after the fish bites, it's going to have its way. So if you don't get that fish turned right after that first second, you'll be hard pressed to land it."

Malphrus suggests stout tackle for this type of battle. Spinning reels in 4500 to 6500 sizes are standard, along with 60-pound braided line and 3/0, 3X circle hooks.

In the summer, the earlier you can get on the water, the better chances you'll have to hook up multiple redfish, which range anywhere from 18 to 45 inches here. Most of the ones these guys land are on the larger size. ■



■ By Mike Marsh

**THE CATAWBA AND
YADKIN CHAINS ARE
HOME TO HUGE SCHOOLS
OF WHITE PERCH.**

WRANGLING FOR WHITE PERCH

Mike Marsh

When it comes to filling an ice chest, nothing beats rounding up a **HERD OF WHITE PERCH.**

For wrangling up a mess of these tasty fish, no better lakes exist than the reservoirs of the Catawba and Yadkin river chains. So, saddle up your watercraft, slather on some sun-screen, cinch up your rigging and give a wave of your broad-brimmed hat to these fishing guides.

LAKE NORMAN

Capt. Gus Gustafson (Fishing With Gus, 704-617-6812) said he must have made a million dollars taking clients out for white perch. No matter what anyone else thinks of these smallish silver fish with lines on their sides (some anglers consider them fit only for catfish bait) this perch fanatic is their biggest fan.

“In the worst summer heat, white perch school in big congregations. But they may be as deep as 30 to 50 feet,” Gustafson said. “Also, the biggest fish, which everyone is itching to catch, are in the deepest water. They may start shallow in the morning, but then move to deeper, sloping ledges later in the day. A good rule of thumb is the higher the sun gets, the deeper the white perch go. If I lose them, I just keep looking in deeper and deeper water until I find them again.”

When the fish move around, Gustafson uses his secret weapon - a Bobo's Thumper. It is a mechanical device that anglers can see in action and order through social media sites.

It beats rhythmically against the boat, taking the place of the old angler's trick of banging a paddle handle, shovel handle or rubber mallet against the boat to attract schooling fish.

“I have had anglers leave the area in disgust after they notice all the fish have moved to my boat,” he said. “They would be happier if they would get a Thumper, too.”

LAKE WYLIE

Chris Nichols (thecarolinaangler.com, 704-860-7951) said white perch are abundant if you know where to look.

“In the summer, white perch will be schooling at the ends of the deepest primary and secondary points or on edges of the main lake channels,” he said. “You don't need anything special to catch them once you find them. But you have to use a good depthfinder to keep looking in those areas until you spot them before you start fishing.”

Nichols fishes for them with a double-dropper rig with two hooks and a sinker tied to the end of the line. He uses small strips of perch, night crawlers and other baits. But his favorite bait is a live minnow.

“If you get a minnow into a school of perch, you are going to catch a fish,” he said. “It's the one thing that they can't turn down.”

HIGH ROCK, TUCKERTOWN AND BADIN LAKES >

This 1.1-pound white perch is heavy enough to be eligible for a NCARP certificate from the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** White perch schools can be massive and the fish are so aggressive it is commonplace to catch two fish on one lure at the same time.



Mike Marsh

HIGH ROCK, TUCKERTOWN AND BADIN LAKES

Maynard Edwards said that while white perch can be as thick as thieves, you must look high and low to find their hideouts.

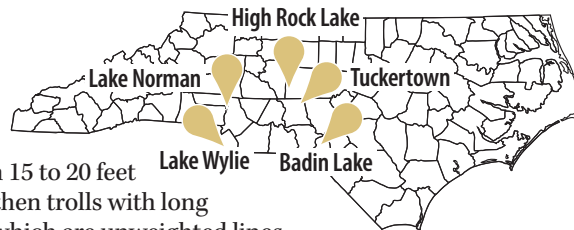
“They are about as plentiful in each of the three lakes I mainly fish, High Rock, Tuckertown and Badin,” he said. “But perch can be as picky about where they will be as they are persnickety about what they will bite at times. You have to look high and low for them and catching them consistently can take different approaches.”

HIGH ROCK LAKE

At High Rock, the fish head “high,” meaning upstream, when the water is flowing through the dam. The fish head there when the dam is generating hydropower because the water is cooler and has more oxygen than water farther downstream. Edwards searches for them in the main river channel where it narrows as well as upstream creeks including Swearing Creek.

“I troll with my smallest E-Rigs (Extreme Fishing Concepts’ version of the Alabama Rig),” he said. “I rig Sassy Shad trailers on the hooks, with pearl and shad the best colors.”

The fish also move to the mouths of downstream creeks when the water is not flowing. They mix with crappie that feed on the same small forage fish. He uses electronics to find the baitfish



schools in 15 to 20 feet of water, then trolls with long line rigs, which are unweighted lines with curly-tailed grubs impaled on jigs.

If the fish are “low,” meaning too deep to reach with a long line rig, he trolls with down line rigs. Each down line rig has two dropper loops, each with a single, long shank hook that holds a curly tailed grub. Below the two droppers he ties a 3-ounce bank sinker to keep the line taut. Down line rigs will snag in cover. So he avoids using them where woody cover is present.

TUCKERTOWN LAKE

At Tuckertown, Edwards applies similar tactics. When the water is moving through the dam, he heads upstream.

“The water flow may be subtle, but if it is moving perch are in it,” he said. “I troll an E-Rig and it will catch white bass, stripers, white perch and largemouth bass. You never know what’s going to strike next. If you are into a school of perch, you often get a double hookup in one E-Rig haul.”

Another good bet is Ellis Creek, also called the Newsome area. It is a big, deep area with lots of structure, including a railroad trestle. Crappie and white perch mix together and will show up as the same school on a depthfinder. They can be suspended as deep as 40 feet.



A depth finder is the best tool for locating schools of white perch. They may be as deep as 50 feet in the summer heat. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** During the summer heat, some of the hottest fishing action is catching a cooler full of white perch.

Mike Marsh



Mike Marsh

BADIN

Badin's bandit perch are lowest of the low-down. Edwards said he really can't search too deep for them.

"I have found white perch mixed with crappie suspended at 40 feet, 50 feet or more in extremely deep creeks," he said. "I assume that is where water is coolest or has the highest oxygen content. But for whatever reason, they are hiding there."

White perch that deep are concentrated compactly, making anglers spend more time searching more water for fewer schools. However, once an angler finds the school, he can stay in the fish as long as he wants.

"I actually catch them until I almost get tired of catching them. And then I head for another creek to find another school just for fun," he said.

"In those tight creek turns, a minnow will wiggle when a curly tail grub goes slack. So I put a minnow on one hook and a grub on the other."

LAKE TILLERY >

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LAKE TILLERY

Rodney Crisco (Joe's Bait & Tackle, 704-982-8716) said white perch are so special, Joe's has a special rig for them.

"I tie so many Joe's Waccamaw Rigs my trigger finger bleeds," Crisco said. "We call them 'Waccamaw' rigs because anglers here call white perch 'Waccamaw Perch' or just 'Waccamaws' after the big white perch at Lake Waccamaw in the coastal plain."

Joe's Waccamaw Rig is similar to a Sabiki rig, but with larger hooks and heavier line. The multiple hooks make multiple catches possible. And they will also hold very large fish of any species. The angler adds a sinker, bucktail jig or spoon to the end of the rig for weight. And fish may also strike the spoon. The most common spoon used is a gold Nungesser and the rig can be jigged, drifted or slow trolled.

"If white perch are deep in the creek mouths, a good depthfinder helps anglers locate them," he said. "The perch will also hit minnows and cut perch drifted on single-hook rigs. If you don't have a depthfinder or need to cover some water to find the perch, trolling any small crankbait, spoon or diving lure will work. They aren't picky eaters." ■



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



White perch are not picky about what they will strike, so small crank baits are great lures for trolling while an angler keeps an eye on the depthfinder to search for a school.

Mike Marsh

FACTS ABOUT WHITE PERCH

White perch are thought of as nuisance fish by some anglers. But others see them as another fish that's fun to catch and good to eat. Still others load up on them to use as catfish bait. They are often caught by anglers targeting crappie.

These fish are known to eat the eggs of many other species of fish and can do damage to the populations of other species. Many anglers believe the white perch is the biggest reason for the decline in white bass populations throughout the Carolinas. They reproduce abundantly and can overpopulate small reservoirs quickly.

Anglers in the Carolinas are not bound by any size or creel limits on white perch.

North Carolina's state record white perch weighed 2 pounds, 15 ounces and was caught by Bob G. Williams Jr. on a Strata Spoon at Falls of the Neuse Reservoir in December 2001.



Mike Marsh

Anglers can quickly have enough for a meal when fishing for white perch.

South Carolina has a tie for the state record -- Rodger Taylor's Lake Wylie white perch and Frank Drose's Santee fish each weighed 1 pound, 15 ounces.

White perch have several nicknames throughout the Carolinas. These include Waccamaws, Eisenhowers, black-backs and mother-in-law fish.

Anglers sometimes misidentify white perch as white bass, small striped bass and small hybrid bass. ■

PERCH, CRAPPIE HOTSPOTS >

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PERCH PICKING TIME ON LAKE NORMAN

L By Tony Garitta
 Lake Norman is the perfect summer piscatorial playground, offering exciting fishing action thanks to an overabundant population of white perch that's largely ignored and held in disdain by many anglers. Wildlife biologists encourage fishermen to keep white perch in an effort to thin out their numbers.

Large schools of white perch will keep young and old busy grabbing rods and reeling frantically to capture their prize.

One overseer of these frenetic happenings at Norman is Capt. Justin Goodson of Fishers of Men Guide Service. He specializes in family fishing trips.

Goodson knows that youngsters and novice anglers care more for action than they do for size when it comes to fishing. White perch fishing at Norman meets their desires. And perch are feisty battlers on light tackle.

Goodson (828-461-2007) said it's essential to get off to an early start.

"Summertime can be hard for fishermen to locate fish," said Goodson, who knows his clients are more interested in hooking than in looking for fish. "I find it best to start most days right at daylight."

He said white perch suspend in 30 to 40 feet of water in the main river channel and in large creeks. On a sonar unit, schooling fish resemble spaghetti. And anglers can spot them as they follow the channel.

His clients might also catch spotted bass.

"White perch and spotted bass are likely to be schooling together this time of year. So the chances of catching both species is likely," said Goodson.

They might also catch something much bigger.

Huge catfish often linger below feeding schools of perch to dine upon the scraps of forage the perch leave behind.

To pinpoint schools of white perch, Goodson trolls live minnows about 2 mph until he gets bites. Then he straight-lines.

He has multiple rod holders set up around his boat that hold 6- to 7-foot medium spinning rods paired with spinning reels filled with 6- to 8-pound monofilament line. A large split shot is crimped about 18 inches above a 1/0 J hook baited with a small minnow hooked through the lips. The rig is lowered about 25 feet. Other depths are sampled with the remaining rigs.

Experienced clients might opt to fish with jiggging spoons or Sabiki Rigs.

Feeding white perch will start rods bouncing everywhere with everyone in pursuit. ■



White perch are plentiful and eager to bite, the perfect combination to keep kids involved.

“ White perch and spotted bass are likely to be schooling together this time of year. So the chances of catching both species is likely. **”**



Eddie Moody

CRANKING FOR SLABS

Small crankbaits are key to summertime crappie

Trolling small crankbaits is the key for Eddie Moody when searching for crappie on Kerr Lake this month.

In By Dusty Wilson
July, crappie at Kerr Lake will be taking a deep dive and there's no better way to catch them and put a breeze in your face than by trolling a spread of crappie-sized crankbaits. Guide Eddie Moody of Roxboro, NC is a long-time jig troller. But he switches to cranks in the summer to up his trolling speed and capitalize on this bait's ability to draw strikes.

"The crappie are going to be deeper and scattered this time of year," said Moody (984-363-5256), who runs Slab's Guide Service. "And one of the biggest advantages of trolling crankbaits versus jigs is that the faster you go, the deeper they dive. I can troll crankbaits at 1½ to 2 mph, versus pulling jigs at 0.6 to 0.8 mph. The fish won't have a lot of time to make a decision when the bait comes by. And a lot of times that means an aggressive reaction strike."

PLANER BOARDS HELP

Moody primarily trolls 3 different baits — a Bandit 100, 200, and 300 in chartreuse, red, and pink. Over his many years of experience, Moody has determined that at a speed of 1½ mph with

100 feet of line out, the 100 will dive to a depth of 8-9 feet, the 200 will dive to a depth of 12-14 feet, and the 300 will dive to a depth of 16-18 feet.

On either side of the boat, he runs a 14-foot rod with a planer board clipped on to take the shallow 100 as far away from the boat as possible. The next baits in line will be a pair of 200's on 14-foot rods set off the gunwales at an angle. Then, the 300's will run directly behind the boat on either side of the motor. Moody prefers Slime Line Hi-Vis monofilament in alternating colors of orange and chartreuse to keep up with which bait is where. He uses Catch the Fever Precision Trolling Rods.

"I'm trying to find the contour line when I'm trolling," said Moody. "I'll start out in the mouth of a creek and head toward the main lake. In the summertime, I like the midlake area to the lower end. The water is generally deeper and the contour lines are closer together. My first pull will be in the 16 to 20 foot depth range, going around the point at the mouth of the creek and making a big circle. If I'm not getting any strikes, my next pull will be over 20 to 25 feet of water. I'll just keep going around the rim of the bowl over deeper water until I find where the fish are." ■

Salt and other minerals are highly attractive to deer during the heat of summer.



SUMMER PREPARATION PRIORITIES

DEER SEASON ISN'T THAT FAR AWAY

Jeff Burleson

It's the middle of the summertime and it will not be long until the opening day of deer season.

Every year, many hunters regret not being a little more prepared for hunting season. Preparations can take many forms, from tree stand site activities and food plots to mineral supplementation for the deer themselves.

Surely it is hot in July and August. But pre-season preparations have many benefits to both the deer and deer hunters.

Summer preparations can take on a wide range of intensities from simple activities to investing massive amounts of time and energy into large, complex pre-season projects. Hunters looking to get the most out of their time investments should prepare a priority list for the most important items to take care of right now.

Deer benefit greatly from mineral supplements and especially during the summertime when a deer's diet consists

of foods with high water content. When animals consume large quantities of vegetation with a high-water content, they can develop a temporary salt deficiency.

Deer will also intake more water when it's hot as well. Mineral supplements contain high levels of sodium that can be very attractive to passing wildlife.

GIVE 'EM MINERALS

Additionally, antler growth is high in summer and bucks are craving sites enriched with calcium, phosphorus, and other minerals to replenish their skeletal systems from the antler growth process.

Mineral sites can be low cost and easy to establish. And existing mineral sites can be refreshed in summertime as well. Both does and bucks will be attracted to mineral sites. So it can be a low-cost and easy way to retain deer on the property as they consume items their bodies crave.

One of the largest pre-season activities relates to housekeeping around

stand sites. Tree stand sites will often get overgrown quickly from aggressive vegetation. And while some additional summer growth can occur throughout the rest of the growing season, heavy-duty cuttings now can reduce the majority of the competing vegetation to open up shooting lanes and remove woody obstructions.

Heavy cuttings in the summertime can be made with tractor-led bush hogs and even large forestry tractors with mulching heads attached. Or heavy chainsaw work can quickly get the job done for large limbs and whole trees that are just



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.

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GREENER PASTURES

continued

in the way. But these types of heavy disturbances are better suited to take place in the summer long before the season arrives to allow time for the landscape to heal and return to normal operating procedures. During deer season, it is preferred to reduce human intervention as much as possible. So summertime maintenance can make a huge difference.

FUNNEL THE DEER

In addition to trimming lanes and brush around existing tree stands, bush hogging and clearing access lanes to food plots and other major food sources can be excellent ways to funnel deer to a specific location or by a specific location.

Surely deer will travel to and from food sources and bedding areas using their own-created pathways. But they will also take advantage of clear paths whether natural or man-made. Deer will often follow deer hunter access paths to food plots. And the smart hunter will create these paths to funnel deer right by tree stands or blinds. Summertime is the best time to get these paths established long before deer season arrives when pressure makes deer weary.

Finally, the summertime may not be the ideal time to plant food plots. But plots can be worked in July in preparation for



Jeff Burleson

PATHWAYS OF LEAST RESISTANCE:

While deer will create their own pathways when necessary, they'll gladly use naturally-created or man made paths when it takes them where they want to go. Funnel them to your desired areas by establishing these pathways right now before hunting season starts.

the fall planting season. Early tilling and pH balancing with lime supplementation can be ideal pre-planting techniques months before burying the first seed.

Summertime isn't a time to ignore opportunities to improve the land. And when deer season arrives, hunters will not be sorry for all the hard work invested during the middle of these hot months. ■

Spend a little time preparing your hunting land now and it will pay big dividends this fall.

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Available in a wide range of colors, 911 Custom Lures out of Lexington, N.C. will customize the lure for you in whatever color combination you desire.

With its BOSS Outdoors black nickel lightwire frame, this compact-sized spinnerbait offers great vibration. The high end swivels, blades and hand tied skirts set this lure apart from the mass-produced spinnerbaits on the market.

For more info, visit: 911customlures.com



THE OUTLAW NET

The extra-long rods used when crappie fishing create one problem — how to net that slab before the hook tears out of its paper mouth. That's where The Outlaw Net from Crappie Monster comes in. Adjusting from 6 to 12 feet in length and with a lightweight but rigid handle, anglers can scoop those fish without fear.

This net works extremely well when using the Livescope or when spider rigging. The removable head measures 20 inches by 16 inches so it handles even the largest of slabs. The silicone netting stays hook-free, meaning you can slip

that fish into the livewell and back to fishing in a snap.

Feel the need for a shorter version? Opt for The Outlaw Scoper, a 48-inch version of this net with all the same great features, just in a more compact footprint.

For more info, visit: crappiemonster.com

BARNETT HYPERTAC 420 CROSSBOW

Compactness and high maneuverability aren't words normally associated with crossbows. But the Barnett HyperTac 420 is all that and more, and is a welcome addition to the company's list of hunting weapons.

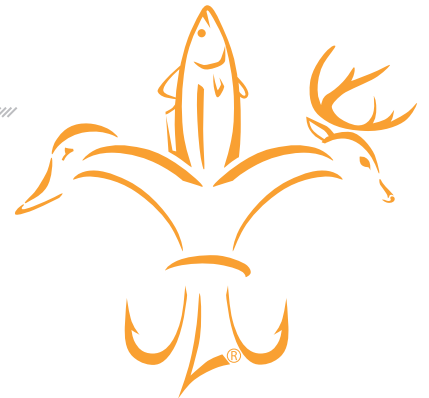
Weighing in at 7.9 pounds, it measures just a tad over 9 inches wide when cocked. One of the most portable hunting crossbows on the market, it allows freedom of movement in tight ground blinds and tree stands.

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loaded with features, including an anti-dry fire system, a 3-pound pull trigger for smooth, consistent shots, a side-mount quiver and illuminated scope.

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BOW HUNTING IS A JOURNEY

THE END GOAL ISN'T THE SOLE PURPOSE OF BOW HUNTING

As we begin another year of this column, I've been reflecting quite a bit about my personal journey of hunting with archery gear. Things have certainly changed in our sport since I first picked up a bow. Some of those changes are for the better and some not so much. One thing is certain though — as with everything else, change is inevitable if not always welcome.

After more than three decades of shooting a stick and string and working in the archery industry, the basic tenets of archery remain the same. But the equipment, the business, and many of the new participants are drastically different.

Bow hunting means many different things to many people. For some it is simply a means to begin their hunting season early, providing an opportunity to get away from home and scout for the upcoming gun seasons. Some of these casual bow hunters only shoot their bow a few times before halfheartedly occupying a stand for a few hours a weekend hoping to stumble upon an animal.

THE JOURNEY AND PROCESS

I've been in camp with people who have zero confidence in their ability to see game or capitalize on the opportunity if they do. For them it feels like a chore to maintain, tune, and become proficient with their gear. And this often shows in their lack of success in the field. Others are solely focused on the trophy animals and the gratification of posing with their kill on social media platforms or adding

Tight groups like this are no accident. They are achieved through a process.



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.

Sammy Romano

to their game room wall.

Each person has their own personal reasons for hunting with a bow. But for many of us who are committed to the sport, the journey and the process are as important if not even more so than the destination or the result. Note that I said journey and process. Because in its purest form that's what bow hunting is really all about.

DON'T MISS THE POINT

Many people in today's fast paced world of instant gratification have become so focused on the destination or result that they miss the entire point. Throughout this year's column I will focus on these two elements in hopes of helping others to take the time to enjoy them both and the satisfaction that this brings. Where relevant, I will also reflect on my own personal journey.

Each step along the way I've learned many lessons from both the equipment and the animals I've pursued (many of them the hard way).

Most of us don't bow hunt because it is easy. And that's a good thing because usually it isn't. We as bow hunters must first place ourselves in extremely close proximity to an animal who has senses far more acute than our own. When we occupy the same close quarters as them, we are somewhere we are not meant to be. And the shot clock is often counting down fast. Once in range we have to draw and launch an arrow at the animal, striking it in a vital area, then trail it for a successful recovery.

WHAT DRIVES YOU TO BOW HUNT?

Bow hunting is a conscious choice to use a weapon that requires us to shrink the distance much closer and use additional skills to reach a successful conclusion. All of this doesn't happen consistently by accident, but rather through a process that begins long before the hunter takes to the field on the first day of a hunt. Today's equipment is certainly more efficient than when I started in the late 80s. But the basic tenets of proper form and much of the overall process are not.

Although this process is different for every hunter, many of us share certain common denominators. By sharing my process in upcoming installments, I hope to help you with yours. My journey really began when I first realized how important this process was in preparation for a big hunt in Wyoming back in the early 90s.

Steve Borsa who worked as a manufacturer's rep for Browning Archery had invited me to his lease in Kaycee, WY. I would be hunting with Bill Norton, who was the President of Browning (no pressure there!).



Sammy Romano

As a kid who had only hunted the thick woods of Louisiana and Mississippi, heading out West with a bow, hunting for new species in more open terrain presented a huge challenge. Bear in mind this was before modern rangefinders. So practicing distance judgement was huge, especially for someone with little to no depth perception.

After months of preparation, I successfully filled both my mule deer and doe antelope tags. And I fell in love with the process of archery itself. I will elaborate on this hunt in next month's column. But suffice to say, it helped me to grow as a bow hunter in many ways. ■

Each person has their own personal reasons for hunting with a bow. But for many of us who are committed to the sport, the journey and the process are as important if not even more so than the destination or the result.

2022 NORTH CAROLINA FISHING REGULATIONS

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

2022 SOUTH CAROLINA FISHING REGULATIONS

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

SALTWATER

STATE COASTAL WATERS REGULATIONS (0 - 3 miles)

FISH SPECIES	Minimum Lengths	Creel Limit (per person)
Greater amberjack	28" FL	1/day
Blue marlin	99" LJFL	1/vessel/trip
White marlin	66" LJFL	1/vessel/trip
Sailfish	63" LJFL	1/day
Sharks	%	%
Cobia	36"	1 per day*
Bluefish	none	& 3/day 5/day
Red drum (channel bass, puppy drum)	18" min., 27" max.	1/day
Black drum	14" min., 25" max.	10/day
Flounder	Closed	Closed
Dolphin (mahi-mahi)	none	10/day
Groupers (black and gag)	24" TL	1/day
Red, scamp, yellowfin, yellowmouth	20" TL	3/day
Speckled hind/Warsaw Grouper	closed	closed
Wahoo	none	2/day
Red porgy (aka silver snapper, pinky)	14" TL	3/day
King mackerel	24" FL	3/day
Spanish mackerel	12" FL	15/day
Sea bass (north of Hatteras)	12.5" TL	15/day
Sea bass (south of Hatteras)	13" TL	7/day
Yellowfin/Bigeye tuna	27" CFL	3/day
Bluefin tuna	Contact NMFS (http://www.nmfspermits.com)	
Spotted sea trout (speckled)	14"	4/day
Weakfish (gray trout)	12" TL	1/day
Snappers:	12" TL	10/day in federal waters
Gray (mangrove), yellowtail, queen, cubera, dog, mahogony, schoolmaster		
Sheepshead	10"	10/day
Red snapper	closed	closed
Mutton snapper	16" TL (federal waters)	10/day
Vermillion snapper	12" TL	5/day
Striped bass ^	28"-35" TL max (ocean)	1/day
Hickory shad	None	10/day
American shad	closed	closed

^ see NCWRC/NCDMF regs for inshore Management Area limits. % Contact NMFS Highly Migratory Species, 888-872-8862, visit hmspermits.noaa.gov. % 5 bluefish per day for recreational anglers on for-hire or charter vessels; 3 bluefish per day otherwise. * 1 cobia per day, two per vessel for private vessels. 1 per day, up to 4 per vessel for-hire.

FRESHWATER

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

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

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

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

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

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

SALTWATER

STATE COASTAL WATERS REGULATIONS (0 - 3 miles)

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

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

FRESHWATER

FISH Species (Inland waters)	Minimum Size Limit	Creel Limit (per day)
Crappie/Panfish +	None	30 bream (15 red-breast), 20 crappie
Largemouth, smallmouth, spotted, redeye, bass%	none largemouth 12" smallmouth	5 lg/sm/r, 15 spots
Channel catfish	No restrictions	None
Blue catfish	Only 2 fish longer than 32 inches per day	25 fish per day
Flathead catfish	No restrictions	None
Striped bass or hybrid bass	Varies by location&%	Varies by location&%
Mountain Trout	+	5
White bass	None	10 (except Sav. River)
Walleye and sauger+	None	8

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

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

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

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

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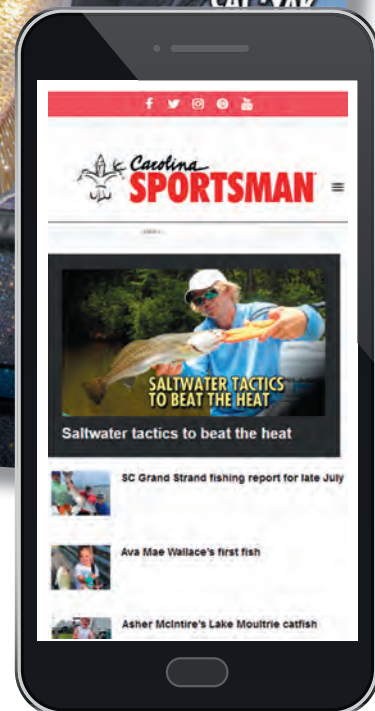
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Jeffrey Stewart

Jeffrey Stewart killed this 18-pound longbeard during a South Carolina hunt this past spring.



Amber Butner

Amber Butner caught this nice brown trout in Alleghany County on April 16, 2022.



Tyler Barnes

Tyler Barnes killed this gobbler on April 16, 2022 with a Marlin Model 50. It was Barnes' first hunt in 15 years.



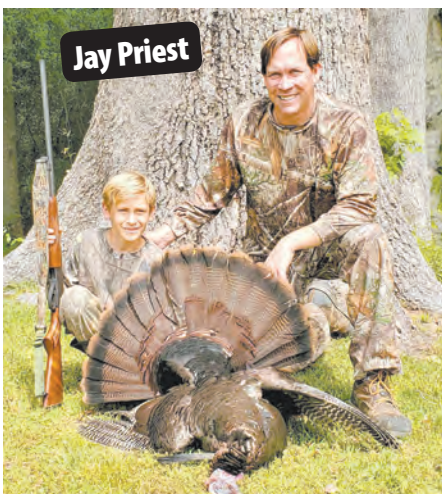
James Hayes

The Dan River gave up this 36-pound catfish to James Hayes on April 27, 2022. Hayes released the fish.



Ross Howard

On Lake Keowee, Ross Howard caught this bass during a spring fishing trip.



Jay Priest

Jay Priest killed this gobbler two weeks after his 10th birthday during the spring of 2022.



Robbie Jones

Robbie Jones and his fishing buddy caught this rockfish on the Roanoke River near Williamston on May 5, 2022.



Lisa Adams

Lisa Adams of Washington, N.C. caught this multi-spotted redfish in the Pamlico River in May.



Lyndley Whitfield

Lyndley Whitfield of Hurdle Mills, N.C. killed this gobbler on April 16 in Person County on her dad's birthday.



Shaun Smith

Shaun Smith caught this chunky largemouth from a farm pond in Sophia, N.C. in April.



Sevin Carter

This is what it's all about! Sevin Carter shares a special fishing moment with his daughter Savannah in May 2022.



Ron Funderburk

Ron Funderburk of Harrisburg, N.C. caught this catfish on Badin Lake.



Debbie Williams Croom

Debbie Williams Croom caught this 7-pound bass on Clarks Hill Lake in April.



Kermit Black

Kermit Black killed this 22-pound gobbler on April 10 after about an hour of playing cat-and-mouse with the bird.



Abigail Johnson

Using a .410 shotgun, 13-year-old Abigail Johnson killed this Chatham County gobbler on April 3.



Bradley Hulin

Bradley Hulin of Thomasville, N.C. killed this 20.7-pound gobbler in Davidson County on April 30, 2022.



Genelle Douglas

Genelle Douglas killed her first turkey on April 16, 2022 in Lee County, N.C.



Kyle Berry

This old drum was one of four citation fish caught by Kyle Berry of TW's Bait and Tackle on May 4 at Hatteras.



Jeff Crawford

Jeff Crawford of Wilmington, N.C. caught this wahoo while trolling in the Gulf Stream.



Bryson Watt

Bryson Watt of Sumter, S.C. caught this chunky bass in a Clarendon County farm pond.



Wells Dodd

Wells Dodd caught his biggest bass, this 4.5-pounder, on Lake Norman.

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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.

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2022 JUL		BEST DAYS				
		POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCEL	VALUE
Fri 1						58
Sat 2						51
Sun 3						50
Mon 4						48
Tue 5						51
Wed 6						59
Thu 7						47
Fri 8						40
Sat 9						38
Sun 10						46
Mon 11						56
Tue 12						67
Wed 13						73
Thu 14						63
Fri 15						54
Sat 16						45
Sun 17						42
Mon 18						43
Tue 19						51
Wed 20						63
Thu 21						54
Fri 22						51
Sat 23						52
Sun 24						53
Mon 25						62
Tue 26						70
Wed 27						80
Thu 28						84
Fri 29						73
Sat 30						62
Sun 31						50

25 50 75
AVERAGE

LUNAR PERIODS					
TIMES OCCURRING AT NIGHT ARE SHADED					
MOON RISE	PRIMARY MOON OVERHEAD	MOON SET	PRIMARY MOON UNDERFOOT		
8:03 am	1:43 pm - 5:13 pm	10:45 pm	1:14 am - 4:54 am		
9:02 am	2:36 pm - 5:52 pm	11:18 pm	2:08 am - 5:38 am		
10:01 am	3:28 pm - 6:30 pm	11:47 pm	3:01 am - 6:17 am		
11:01 am	4:21 pm - 7:03 pm		3:53 am - 6:55 am		
12:00 pm	5:12 pm - 7:38 pm	12:14 am	4:46 am - 7:28 am		
1:01 pm	6:05 pm - 8:11 pm	12:40 am	5:37 am - 8:03 am		Half
2:04 pm	7:02 pm - 8:44 pm	1:07 am	6:30 am - 8:36 am		
3:10 pm	8:01 pm - 9:23 pm	1:35 am	7:27 am - 9:09 am		
4:20 pm	9:03 pm - 10:09 pm	2:07 am	8:26 am - 9:48 am		
5:34 pm	10:09 pm - 11:01 pm	2:45 am	9:28 am - 10:34 am		
6:48 pm	11:18 pm - 11:59 pm	3:32 am	10:34 am - 11:26 am		
7:58 pm	no period	4:29 am	12:51 pm - 12:25 pm		Low
8:59 pm	12:20 am - 1:08 am	5:36 am	12:51 pm - 1:33 pm		FULL & PERIGEE
9:50 pm	1:29 am - 2:17 am	6:51 am	1:54 pm - 2:42 pm		
10:31 pm	2:24 am - 3:26 am	8:07 am	2:49 pm - 3:51 pm		
11:06 pm	3:13 am - 4:31 am	9:21 am	3:38 pm - 4:56 pm		
11:36 pm	3:55 am - 5:33 am	10:30 am	4:20 pm - 5:58 pm		
	4:33 am - 6:31 am	11:36 am	4:58 pm - 6:56 pm		
12:04 am	5:06 am - 7:28 am	12:39 pm	5:31 pm - 7:53 pm		
12:31 am	5:40 am - 8:22 am	1:40 pm	6:05 pm - 8:47 pm		Half
12:58 am	6:15 am - 9:15 am	2:40 pm	6:40 pm - 9:40 pm		
1:27 am	6:52 am - 10:08 am	3:40 pm	7:17 pm - 10:33 pm		
1:59 am	7:31 am - 11:01 am	4:40 pm	7:56 pm - 11:26 pm		
2:36 am	8:14 am - 11:54 am	5:38 pm	8:39 pm - 12:19 am		
3:18 am	9:03 am - 12:45 pm	6:32 pm	9:28 pm - 1:10 am		
4:06 am	9:54 am - 1:36 pm	7:23 pm	10:19 pm - 2:01 am		HIGH & APOGEE
5:00 am	10:45 am - 2:25 pm	8:07 pm	11:10 pm - Midnight		
5:57 am	11:39 am - 3:11 pm	8:46 pm	Midnight - 2:50 am		New
6:56 am	12:31 pm - 3:53 pm	9:20 pm	12:04 am - 3:36 am		
7:56 am	1:24 pm - 4:30 pm	9:50 pm	12:56 am - 4:18 am		
8:55 am	2:16 pm - 5:06 pm	10:18 pm	1:49 am - 4:55 am		

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

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

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ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE..... 57	HELLUVA VIEW 73	THE REEL OUTDOORS..... 37
BLUE WAVE BOATS 31	M2S BIKES..... 47	TIDELINE MARINE 13
BOST ARGO..... 59	MARINE WAREHOUSE 75	TOON TIME, LLC..... 37
BQ GRILLS 45	MAROLINA MARKETING, INC..... 5	UNASHAMED ADVENTURES..... 73
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CAROLINA COMPOSITES, LLC 76	PG & BOATGIRL SHOW 29	XPRESS BY ALUMA-WELD, INC..... 2
CENTRAL CAROLINA HABITAT SOLUTIONS 64	SARAH JUDY'S INSURANCE AGENCY 19	
CLARENDON COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 38	SOUTHEAST PRODUCTIONS 39	
CLIMAX GENERAL STORE / BUFFALO RIDGE JERKY..... 9	SOUTHERN LAND CO., INC..... 73	

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