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SC WMA DEER HUNTING PREVIEW



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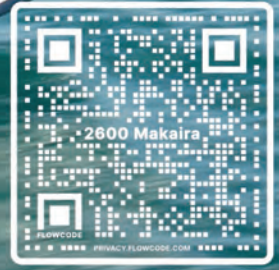
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OUTDOOR UPDATE

with **Brian Cope**



Brian Cope of Borden, S.C., is the editor of Carolina Sportsman Magazine. He is a retired Air Force combat communications technician and has a B.A. in English Literature from the University of South Carolina. He has been writing about the outdoors since 2006.

MERCENARIA BANKS \$3.4 MILLION

572.6-POUND BLUE MARLIN TAKES TOP HONORS AT BIG ROCK BLUE MARLIN TOURNAMENT

The 72-foot Viking MERCENARIA won the top prize in the 2022 Big Rock Blue Marlin Tournament. Captained by Neil Sykes with Mates Jake Keech and Kurt Ward, anglers Chad Ballard, Matthew

Stacy Allen's 556.4-pound blue marlin, earning them \$426,288. Third place went to HIGH YIELD with their 536.8-pound blue. They took home \$283,525.

DOLPHIN PAYOUT WAS \$527,000

It's not just billfish that pay the big bucks at the Big Rock Blue Marlin Tournament. CAROLINA TIME, a 56-foot Gwaltney out of Raleigh, N.C. and captained by Jay Blount pocketed \$527,000 for catching the largest dolphin of the tournament.

Angler Parker Jones was on the rod when the 54.1-pound mahi hit during Day 4 of the 2022 event. The catch unseated the 55-foot Wanchese, J&B, which held the lead up until then with a 29.5-pound dolphin they'd caught on Day 2. REEL TIME offered a slight scare with a 43 pounder they brought in on the final day. ■



Big Rock Blue Marlin Tournament

MERCENARIA's crew had the biggest payout for their big blue marlin. CAROLINA TIME pocketed big money of their own for their 54.1-pound dolphin fish.

Brown, Ben Fox, and Tim Rapine were the first team to bring a blue marlin to the scales of this year's event. Their marlin, which weighed 572.6 pounds, was the first one listed on the leaderboard and it held out as the heaviest one throughout the tournament, which was held June 10 - 19 in Morehead City, N.C. With a bonus of \$777,750 for being the first team of the tournament to weigh a blue marlin, their total prize money topped \$3.4 million. WALL HANGER took second place with Lady Angler

Bag-A-Buck Contest

begins Aug. 15



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

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

ANGLER CATCHES RECORD POMPANO DOLPHINFISH

While fishing with Salt Fever Guide Service out of Ocean Isle Beach, N.C., 18-year-old Charlie Noonan of Sumter, S.C. caught the North Carolina state record pompano dolphinfish. The fish is also a pending world record. The young angler caught the fish during the evening of June 8, 2022 while 42 miles offshore.

Noonan's fish weighed 11.34 pounds, which is about 3 pounds heavier than the current IGFA world record. Capt. Tyler Hailey was running the charter with First Mate Bailey Auten aboard the GLORY DAZE, a Freeman Boatworks Catamaran, when Noonan caught the record fish.

Pompano dolphinfish are frequently caught in other parts of the globe, but somewhat rarely off the North Carolina coast. The fish does resemble its cousin, the more popular mahi mahi, which is commonly called dolphin or dolphinfish. So it's possible for some lesser-experienced anglers to catch one and think it's just a small, odd-looking dolphin.

But Hailey thought the fish looked unusual enough that he made a mental note to check on it when he got the chance. He wasn't positive, but he thought it might be the lesser-known species.

"We've been seeing an abandoned refugee raft offshore for a few weeks now. Numerous species of fish are always hanging around any type of floating debris, and that raft has been very productive lately. We saw a cobia, a tagged bull dolphin, and this fish under the raft when Charlie pitched a ballyhoo to them," Hailey said.



Charlie Noonan caught the record fish 42 miles off the coast of Ocean Isle Beach.

Capt. Tyler Hailey

It was actually their second time of the day fishing around that raft. After fishing it without much luck that morning, they did some bottom fishing and caught plenty of snappers and triggerfish. After a full day of that, they began heading back in. But Hailey and Auten were pretty sure they could get a dolphin to bite for the young angler if they went back to the raft. The fishing trip was a graduation gift to Noonan from his family. And the Salt Fever crew wanted to make sure it was something to remember.

MISSING NC ANGLER'S BOAT WASHES ASHORE 2700 MILES AWAY

A boat that washed up 2700 miles away from the Carolina coastline has added to the mystery of Joseph Matthew Johnson's disappearance 7 months ago from Carolina Beach, N.C.

Johnson, 44-years-old of Carolina Beach, left in his boat from Federal Point Yacht Club on Nov. 22, 2021. He was reported missing on Nov. 27 when his friend showed up for a planned fishing trip.

In June, Johnson's boat, a 2006 Clearwater fishing boat, washed ashore on Sao Jorge Island, which is a part of the Azores, an archipelago about 800 miles west of Portugal and 2700 miles from Carolina Beach. But authorities found no sign of Johnson. The boat was reportedly heavily encrusted with barnacles.

In November, the U.S. Coast Guard launched a search that covered 7500 square miles, but found no trace of Johnson or his boat.

Officials from Portugal are working closely with the Carolina Beach Police Dept. to piece together what happened to Johnson. Anyone with information is urged to contact the Carolina Beach PD at 910-458-2540. ■

"We'd had a truly great day of fishing, with dozens of keepers of bottom fish. We knew if Charlie caught a dolphin, it would be like icing on the cake," Hailey said.

Once they found the raft again, the record fish was ready to feed.

"Charlie pitched the ballyhoo toward the raft. The fish bit and the fight was on," Hailey said.

Up until then, Hailey just figured it was a dolphin, but even during the fight, he noticed the dorsal fin didn't look quite like it should.

"At first I thought maybe it was just a dolphin with bad genes. But I made a mental note to take a closer look once back at the dock," Hailey said.

"Charlie landed the fish and was grinning ear to ear."

Once back at the marina, Hailey asked another Salt Fever charter captain to look the fish over. He agreed with Hailey's suspicions that it was a pompano dolphinfish. And he said it was a big one.

After talking with NCDMF, they weighed the fish at Intracoastal Angler and met with one of the state's marine biologists. He confirmed the species and helped put the paperwork in motion for the fish to be certified as the N.C. state record and the new world record.

"Charlie is a great young man and it was humbling and gratifying to be able to play a part in helping him catch his record fish," Hailey said. ■

BAG-A-BUCK IS BACK

With deer season opening in two of South Carolina's Game Zones on Aug. 15, and the rest of the Carolinas not far behind, there's no better way to show how well you're doing and track how other hunters are doing than to enter your kill in Carolina Sportsman's Bag-a-Buck Contest and become eligible to win great prizes.

The winner of each monthly contest (August-September/October/November/December) will receive a prize package that includes a one-year subscription to Carolina Sportsman magazine and a Sportsman prize package.

The grand-prize winner, drawn from all entries and announced in the March 2023 issue of Carolina Sportsman Magazine, will receive a Barnett Hyper XP 405 crossbow, a 2-day, deer-hog combo hunt for two people at Cherokee Run Hunting Lodge in Chesterfield S.C., a 3-year subscription to Carolina Sportsman Magazine and a Sportsman prize package.

The rules are simple:

- Take a photo of you with a deer you kill during the 2022-23 season.



**Post Photos!
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- Upload the photo to the Bag-a-Buck Contest.
 - Write a short account of your hunt when you post the photo. Please include the date of the hunt, the county in which you killed the buck, and your name and hometown.
 - Add as much detail as you'd like. Tell us your story!
- The contest runs from Aug. 15, 2022 through Jan. 1, 2023. Enter your buck at carolinaspportsman.com/bag-a-buck. ■

SC ANGLER LANDS STATE RECORD WALLEYE

Chris Edlund of Spartanburg, S.C. was fishing with his friend Dave Starzek of Greer when Edlund hooked a 10-pound, 1.44-ounce walleye in Lake Tugalo on May 29. Starzek netted the fish.

The walleye now shares the South Carolina state record, tied with a slightly lighter-weight, 10-pound walleye due to a technicality in the state's record keeping system. Any fish weighing less than 25 pounds must beat the previous record by at least 2 ounces, or it's counted as a tie.

The two anglers were on the water at 6:30 a.m. and trolled lures from their 13-foot Lowe aluminum boat for about 2 hours when the big fish hit.

"When it surfaced, we got excited. We knew if that wasn't a record, it was going to be close," said Edlund.

The 597-acre Lake Tugalo sits on the South Carolina/Georgia border. A small reproducing population of walleye make their home in the lake, which has also been stocked with walleye numerous times by the Georgia DNR. ■



SCDNR

Chris Edlund poses with his 10-pound, 1.44-ounce walleye from Lake Tugalo.



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SOUTH CAROLINA WMA DEER HUNTING PREVIEW

■ By Terry Madewell

PUBLIC LANDS OFFER PLENTY FOR SC DEER HUNTERS.

August is a pivotal month for deer season preparation in South Carolina for **WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA (WMA) HUNTING.**

The large acreage of land in the WMA program has tremendous habitat diversity and provides opportunities for South Carolina hunters to enjoy a successful season. We've narrowed the search to target the top WMAs in each of the four Game Zones in the state for 2022.

Hunting on the WMAs as a whole is good according to Charles Ruth, South Carolina Dept. of Natural Resources Big Game Program Coordinator.

Ruth said that during the 2020 season, the latest season with available harvest numbers, the WMA harvest estimate is that 4113 bucks, 3245 does, and 9 deer of unknown sex were harvested for a total deer harvest of 7367 deer. This figure represents a 5 percent increase from 2019, higher than the overall statewide average of a 2.4 percent harvest increase.

The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) has an extensive set of maps for WMAs available via their website at www.dnr.sc.gov.

Because many WMAs are managed individually with specific management practices unique for only that property, the rules and regulations governing use of these lands vary. Each hunter is responsible for ensuring they understand the rules and regulations for the specific WMA hunted.

GAME ZONE 1

UNNAMED, ISOLATED WMAS ARE PRIME TARGETS

Because of the topography and size of the area of Game Zone 1, Ruth said some of the best WMA deer hunting is found on several of the unnamed WMAs of the Sumter National Forest in that part of the state. The small areas are subject to management activities such as timber harvests that can alter habitat dramatically from one year to the next.

"Some of these changes are ideal for deer hunters such as timber harvests that leave areas of clear cuts for vegetative regrowth," Ruth said. "Beginning a couple of years after harvest, the regrowth process begins to create prime deer habitat that lasts for several years. Hunters doing their legwork in pre-season can find these areas and identify potential hotspots. But hunters need to physically check the areas to ensure good deer habitat exists."

Ruth said as new areas begin to produce quality hunting habitat, areas cut more than 10 years prior can begin to be less productive as habitat trends toward a more open forest environment.

"But recent timber harvests generate dramatic changes for the better in terms of deer habitat as dense, diverse growth creates areas of prime deer habitat," Ruth said.

GAME ZONE 1 NUGGET >

Early season recon efforts enable hunters to know exactly where to go when hunting WMAs later in the fall. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Several WMAs offer excellent opportunities for bowhunters prior to gun season hunts.



Terry Madewell

GAME ZONE 1 NUGGET

Ruth said the Jocassee Gorges WMA, consisting of 43,500 acres of land owned primarily by the SCDNR, is a good example of a large area to focus hunting efforts in Game Zone 1.

“Jocassee Gorges has a low population density of deer, but that makes it potentially productive for hunters seeking trophy animals,” Ruth said.

“The rugged terrain is physically demanding. But the payoff can be big deer,” Ruth said.

GAME ZONE 2

WORTH MOUNTAIN WMA

Worth Mountain WMA is a 1643-acre area in York County that offers excellent deer hunting opportunities. Ruth said antler restrictions apply and this tract was privately owned and managed for quality deer hunting prior to SCDNR acquiring the land.

“SCDNR continued the quality deer management practices in place and it seems to have worked well,” he said. “Hunters do have to check in and out when hunting at Worth Mountain.”

“Part of the property borders the Broad River, enhancing habitat diversity,” he said. “Good small game hunting also exists which is also indicative of habitat diversity that deer hunters

can use to their advantage if they scout during pre-season.”

Access to this property is via SC Highway 211 near Hickory Grove.

MCCALLA WMA

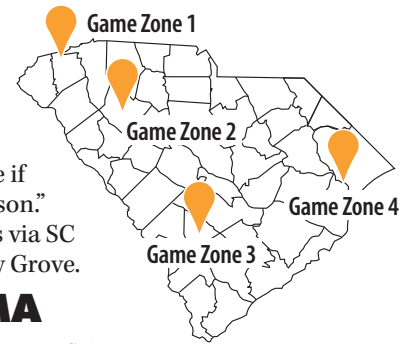
McCalla WMA is a 5660-acre US Army Corps of Engineers property located on Lake Richard B. Russell in Abbeville County. It's a named WMA via an agreement between the Corps and the SCDNR.

Ruth said this area provides quality hunting for deer. And it does have an antler restriction.

“McCalla WMA presents a good age structure for bucks. And that, coupled with the size of the area, enhances the potential for finding quality bucks,” he said. “The diversity of habitat from the lake area to higher elevation ridges offers a diversity of quality habitat for deer. Again, boots on the ground scouting by hunters is essential for hunters to keep pace with management efforts that create habitat changes to pinpoint the area with the best potential.”

GAME ZONE 2 NUGGET

Ruth said another option is similar to what he described in



Hunting small, isolated WMAs adjacent to private lands is a great way to find deer. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Good deer are taken on WMAs and usually by hunters who do their preseason scouting to find the best buck habitat.



Terry Madewell

Game Zone 1 of hunting unnamed WMA tracts in Newberry, Laurens, Fairfield and Chester counties within Game Zone 2, most of which is in Sumter National Forest.

“This portion of the state typically has excellent private land deer habitat. And the small, isolated WMA tracts interspersed with private lands provides a diversity of quality deer habitat,” Ruth said. “Land in the smaller WMAs is generally wooded. But it often adjoins private lands having open areas, creating a diversity of habitat. This provides hunters the opportunity to hunt areas with less restrictive antler regulations than the above-named WMAs. These unnamed areas generally follow the hunting regulations for Game Zone 2 once the WMA season opens.”

GAME ZONE 3

BOTANY BAY

The 3363-acre Botany Bay Plantation Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is located in the northeast corner of Edisto Island in lower Charleston County. It is in close proximity to the North Edisto River.

Botany Bay WMA lies within the boundary of the ACE Basin Focus Area, one of the largest remaining relatively undeveloped wetland ecosystems along the Atlantic Coast.

Ruth said Botany Bay WMA is isolated and protected as part of the ACE basin. And that’s part of what makes the deer hunting productive.

“Botany Bay WMA has an excellent deer population and a lot of deer are harvested,” he said. “The latest harvest rate is 19.2 deer per square mile and is the highest of named WMAs in the state,” he said. “Botany Bay has antler restrictions and offers reasonable gun hunting opportunities via the Lottery Hunts Program. However, bowhunting opportunities are outside of the Lottery Hunts Program. And they offer hunters an excellent opportunity to harvest deer prior to gun hunts.”

CRACKERNECK WMA >



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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CRACKERNECK WMA

Ruth said the 10,600-acre Crackerneck WMA is owned by the U. S Department of Energy and managed by the SCDNR. The area is open only during designated dates. Times and public access are tightly controlled.

“The Crackerneck area has antler restrictions and this management technique has helped form a good age structure of bucks,” Ruth said. “The limited access in terms of hunting only on designated days reduces pressure on deer, also improving hunting productivity.

Everyone utilizing Crackerneck WMA must sign in at the check station prior to entering the property and sign out before leaving. In addition to entering through the check station gate, individuals are also allowed to access Crackerneck from the Savannah River. But they must register prior to entering the river and return to sign out. SCDNR personnel will be present at all times to assist with registration, answer questions and provide maps.

GAME ZONE 3 NUGGET

Ruth said although gun hunts on Hamilton Ridge and Palachucola WMAs are via the Lottery Hunts Program, archery hunting is not. Archery hunters can take advantage of several weeks of hunting prior to gun hunts that are under the lottery system. Hunters must still check in and out at the kiosks.

GAME ZONE 4 **WOODBURY WMA**

Woodbury WMA is a 25,668 Acre WMA in Marion County.

WMA HUNTING LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

Anyone wishing to hunt on WMAs in South Carolina must have the proper licenses and follow some rules that may be more stringent than rules for hunting private land.

Aside from a valid South Carolina hunting license, those hunting on WMAs must also have a special WMA hunting permit. South Carolina residents may purchase a yearly WMA permit for \$30.50, or a three-year permit for \$91.50. Non-residents may purchase a yearly WMA permit for \$76.

South Carolina residents can also opt for purchasing the yearly



Terry Madewell

Its size and habitat diversity are key components to good deer hunting at this area.

Ruth said one caution he has with this WMA is it is prone to flooding. And it has been closed at times for extended periods.

“But the potential for excellent deer hunting is high. And that makes it worth checking out,” he said. “A wide diversity of habitat exists as documented by excellent small game opportunities. Woodbury is also a Class II Waterfowl Management Area.”

An extensive road network provides good access throughout the WMA and boat access to the area exists via numerous boat landings.

Ruth said on-site scouting is essential at Woodbury to identify potentially productive areas prior to the hunting season.

LITTLE PEE DEE HERITAGE WMA

Ruth said the Little Pee Dee Heritage WMA offers a diversity of hunting opportunities. And the 10,247-acres provides the size and habitat diversity to make it potentially highly productive for deer.

Sportsman License for \$50 (\$150 for 3 years). This license includes hunting, freshwater fishing, and WMA permits.

Hunting licenses and WMA permits may be purchased online at www.dnr.sc.gov/purchase, by calling 866-714-3611, or in person at SCDNR offices in Aynor, Charleston, Clemson, Florence, York and at the SC State Farmer’s Market, or at select retail stores.

The SCDNR reminds hunters that on WMA lands during any gun and muzzleloader hunting season for deer, bear and hogs, all hunters, including small game hunters, must wear either a hat, coat, or vest of solid visible international orange. Archery hunters are exempt from this only during archery-only deer seasons.

WMAs also have some weapons restrictions. WMA deer hunters are not allowed to use armor-piercing, tracer, incendiary, or full metal bullets or .22 or smaller rimfire. Shotguns with only buckshot or slugs are allowed, except buckshot is prohibited during still gun hunts for deer on WMA lands in Game Zones 3-4.

For a full look at WMA regulations, check out the WMA section of the SCDNR website at www.dnr.sc.gov. ■

Preseason scouting is crucial when hunting WMA or private lands. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Scouting public hunting lands enables hunters to locate potential hotspots for big bucks.

“The WMA lies along the Little Pee Dee River. It is a complex of multiple properties lying adjacent to the river,” he said. “Hunters must refer to maps to ensure they’re on public lands. And they can utilize boats to access remote areas.”

Ruth said excellent deer hunting opportunity exists and some of the prime habitat is remote and not easily accessed.

“For those willing to go to the effort, the potential for excellent public land deer hunting is available,” he said.

GAME ZONE 4 NUGGET

Ruth said the 2024-acre Oak Lea WMA in Clarendon County typically produces excellent deer hunting. The WMA lies in the upper Lake Marion area. Based on historical data, except when significant flooding occurs, Ruth said Oak Lea is typically quite productive for deer hunting.

“Lots of habitat diversity exists. And for a smaller area, hunters willing to put forth effort can get into isolated areas to hunt,” Ruth said. ■



Terry Madewell

SPORTSMAN SHOWCASE >

The advertisement features a large image of a green tractor with a black roller attachment on a dirt path. To the right, there is a dark green background with white and yellow text. Below the text are two smaller images of the G-3 models: a compact ATV unit and a tractor unit. At the bottom, there is a 'MADE IN USA' logo and contact information.

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The tower puts the Buck Hut 8 feet, 8 inches off the ground, and features adjustable legs to help level it out on uneven ground. The ladder has non-slip steps and two handrails.

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water-resistant soft shell material.

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The promise of the coming fall is heralded by slightly cooler evenings, the choral sounds of summer frogs giving way to crickets, the rise of a mountain trout to the season's final mayfly hatch, and those tell-tale markings and scraping of whitetail bucks setting the stage. Unfortunately, this same time period also means it's feasting time for some of the most demon-possessed creatures on the face of the earth. Be it stinging, biting, buzzing or otherwise intending to inflict pain, several species of insects are just waiting to ruin your day.

Fortunately, we have a mixture of modern chemistry, forgotten remedies and sage advice that may not completely exorcise these demons of the insect world, but will help keep them at bay or minimize the damage done.

TICKS >

DON'T WANT TO BUG YOU, BUT....

AVOIDING STINGING, BITING INSECTS IS ALL PART OF TAKING TO THE WOODS WHEN HUNTING SEASON ARRIVES. HERE ARE PROFILES OF THE 'DEMON-POSSESSED CREATURES' AWAITING YOUR ARRIVAL.

■ By Phillip Gentry

Phillip Gentry

TICKS

Ticks may not be a big issue on the water, but the woods are full of them in late summer and early fall. Ticks bite people and animals to feed and may stay attached for as long as 10 days if not removed, before falling off the host.

In many cases, tick bites are harmless and leave little sign other than slight redness on the skin. Other times, ticks can cause allergic reactions or transmit disease to the host ranging from Lyme disease to Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever.

The best tick prevention is to wear long shirt sleeves and pants in the woods and spray with an insect repellent containing at least 20% DEET. Showering after possible exposure and self-examination are also recommended, as ticks will often crawl over the host looking for a moist area before attaching themselves.

MOSQUITOS

Possibly the most widespread and hated pest in the outdoor world is the mosquito. Like ticks, mosquitos bite to draw blood to feed. Only female mosquitos bite, and the nutrients gained from blood help make eggs for reproduction.

Mosquito saliva contains an anticoagulant that keeps blood from clotting so the insect can feed. The anticoagulant is what causes the itching sensation and at times, small red wheals on the skin or other allergic reactions.

Taking antihistamines or applying heat, aloe, basil oil or honey topically to the bite can reduce inflammation and relieve symptoms.



⚡ Mosquitos are public enemy No. 1. Females need blood to assist with egg production. **BACKGROUND:** Ticks burrow into the skin of the host and may feed for up to 10 days before falling off.

Mosquito spray, typically composed of DEET, can ward off mosquitoes, and wearing long-sleeve clothing the insects can't penetrate is not a bad idea.

In recent years, newly developed devices that emit the oils or aromas of plants such as citronella and chrysanthemum, which naturally repel mosquitoes, can be worn on the body or placed in an area to ward off mosquitoes.

BLACK FLIES >

ALLERGIC REACTIONS TO INSECT BITES

Most insect bites pose little danger other than the initial bite and lingering itch. In some cases, allergic reactions, particularly to insect stings, can cause severe illness or even death.

After being bitten/stung by an insect, pay close attention for signs of an allergic reaction which may include swelling, redness or rash, itching and numbness or tingling.

Severe reactions, those requiring medical attention, may include fever, difficulty breathing, nausea or vomiting, rapid pulse, swelling of the lips or throat, or loss of consciousness. ■



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Don't want to bug you, but...

More than 250 species of black flies exist in North America, including this deer fly. **BELOW:** Most insect sprays contain an oily base with concentrations of DEET, an insect repellent developed at the end of World War II.



BLACK FLIES

North America is home to more than 250 species of flies, including sand gnats, also referred to as no-see-ums. Black flies wear you out slowly as they find seams in your clothing and bite, resulting in a lingering, relentless itch. Flies bite and feed for the same reasons as mosquitos, to produce eggs. Rather than suck blood, flies and gnats have a scissor-like mouth appendage that bites through skin and injects a coagulant.

Several species of biting flies swarm in areas of high moisture content, like marshes and swamps, and are most active early and late in the day.

In North America, black flies do not spread disease, but their bites can cause swelling, bleeding, pain and itching.

The best defense is light-colored clothing with tight fittings around the neck, wrists and ankles. Insect repellents have been proven effective, however, with varying results. Most sprays that leave

an oily residue seem to work better, presumably because the oil makes it difficult for the smaller flies to land and bite, which is why natural oils — even without harsh chemicals — are believed to be effective.

CHIGGERS

The larval stage of the otherwise inert insects known as harvest mites or red bugs may possibly be the greatest villain in the insect world, although, like ticks, chiggers are actually arachnids, closely related to spiders and not insects at all.

Contrary to popular belief, chiggers do not crawl into your skin, although it may feel like it. After hatching from eggs, chiggers group low to the ground waiting for passersby. At less than .33 of a millimeter in size, chiggers are hard to see with the naked eye.

After crawling to a suitable area, usually at a restriction such



as a sock line or belt line, chiggers attach to the skin, make an opening with tiny sharp claws and spit saliva into the holes. The saliva rots human flesh, and the ungodly creatures drink your liquified flesh, often for a couple of days, before they fall off. After feeding, chiggers move on to the next stage of life.

Prevention for chiggers is sometimes difficult, because they are nearly invisible. Tucking pant legs into calf-high boots is an old standby, as the creatures usually live within a foot of the ground.

Along with long pants and high boots, spraying your pant legs with high concentrations of DEET is effective. Another preventative measure is to dust your socks and pants legs with food-grade diatomaceous earth, a naturally occurring, soft, siliceous sedimentary rock that has been crumbled into a fine white to off-white powder. When chiggers, ticks, ants or any bug with an exoskeleton is exposed to diatomaceous earth, the fine powder gets under the skeleton, absorbs moisture, and mummifies the creature, providing a fitting end for them.

Treatment of chigger bites with clear nail polish is an old wives' tale. In some cases, the nitrocellulose used in nail polish may help dry the skin and offer some coincidental itch relief, but anti-itch creams, calamine lotion or hydrocortisone is the best solution applied topically. For serious reactions, antihistamine pills, steroid shots, or even antibiotics may be in order.

FIRE ANTS

The best prevention for fire ants is awareness. While the odd, roaming fire ant may be in a tree or high in vegetation, most fire ant bites and stings are caused by stepping into or on fire ant mounds.

Be aware of your surroundings before sitting down or placing any bare skin on the ground. Attacks often occur when cultivating the ground, when ants swarm the equipment, which is then handled by the victim.

Fire ants both bite and sting as a group response to protect their mounds. Worker ants will find an area to bite with their mandible jaws, then twist their abdomen up to sting the victim in a rotating circular



Phillip Gentry is a freelance outdoor writer and photographer who says that if it swims, walks, hops, flies or crawls he's usually not too far behind.

pattern, stinging very similarly to the way bees sting.

Treatment for fire ant bites and stings include cold compresses and applications of hydrocortisone or other anti-itch creams and/or taking antihistamines.

UNINTENTIONAL PESTS

Additional threats to outdoorsmen include wasps, bees, hornets, spiders and scorpions. Unintentional pests rarely go looking for victims but may bite or sting if encountered.

Like fire ants, the best prevention for being stung or bitten is awareness. Wasps, hornets and yellow jackets may nest in trees or vacant structures such as deer stands or duck blinds and attack if threatened.

Spiders and scorpions typically reside in arid, dark locations and may also bite if disturbed.

Treatments for severe stings/bites from unintentional pests may be more acute than typical bug bites. Along with topical treatments and internal medications such as antihistamines, special attention should be given to make sure a severe allergic reaction does not occur. ■

STICKS & STRINGS >

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The author poses with a mule deer he killed while on a bow hunt out west.



THE PROCESS BEGINS

CONSTANTLY LEARNING IS THE KEY TO GOOD BOW SHOOTING

Sammy Romano

As mentioned in last month's installment, my first Western bow hunt in the early 1990s caused me to focus on and become enamored with the process of bow hunting.

Up until then I had only hunted white-tailed deer east of the Mississippi River at close range from elevated stands. Honestly my game was sloppy when it came to proper preparation. This was sufficient when taking shots within 25 yards, but wouldn't suffice at the longer shot distances and more open terrain of Wyoming.

Mechanical broadheads were in their infancy. String materials were of much poorer quality. You had to really work to get fixed blade broadheads to shoot accurately at distances over 25 yards. This was also before the days of internet and ready access to "how to" information. So everything had to be learned firsthand (and often the hard way).

Bows available in the early 90s were extremely primitive compared to today's

modern compound bows. Bow risers were often not cut out for a true center-shot. And string materials were of much lower quality, constantly stretching and changing the tune of a bow.

Bows were much longer overall, making them unwieldy in many hunting situations. They were also generally much slower shooting, making distance judgement even more crucial in the absence of range-finding technology.

My Browning Maxim bow, for example, was 44 inches axle-to-axle length and shot my aluminum arrow at only 235fps. Arrow shafts were of good quality, but the tolerances of components such as nocks and especially inserts left a lot to be desired. More attention to detail was necessary to achieve a given degree of accuracy back then.

Still, I am glad I was able to experience these challenges. They have made me a better bow technician as well as hunter. And I have a greater appreciation for the ease with which newer technology

allows for bow setup.

Once I started to stretch out my shot distances, I quickly found that my broadheads were shooting inconsistently at longer distances. This led to me seeking answers as to why. First, I paper tuned my bow, ensuring my arrows were flying straight with my target tips. After some adjustments, I achieved perfect arrow flight. My broadheads were now hitting in the same area of the target as my target tips. But they weren't grouping nearly as well. I learned that this was due to poor tolerances in my arrows' inserts.

Because of a loose fit, my inserts were often crooked in the end of my arrows causing broadhead misalignment. This off-center alignment led to a rudder effect.



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.

Because no two were out of alignment exactly the same amount, my broadhead groups were poor, especially at longer distances.

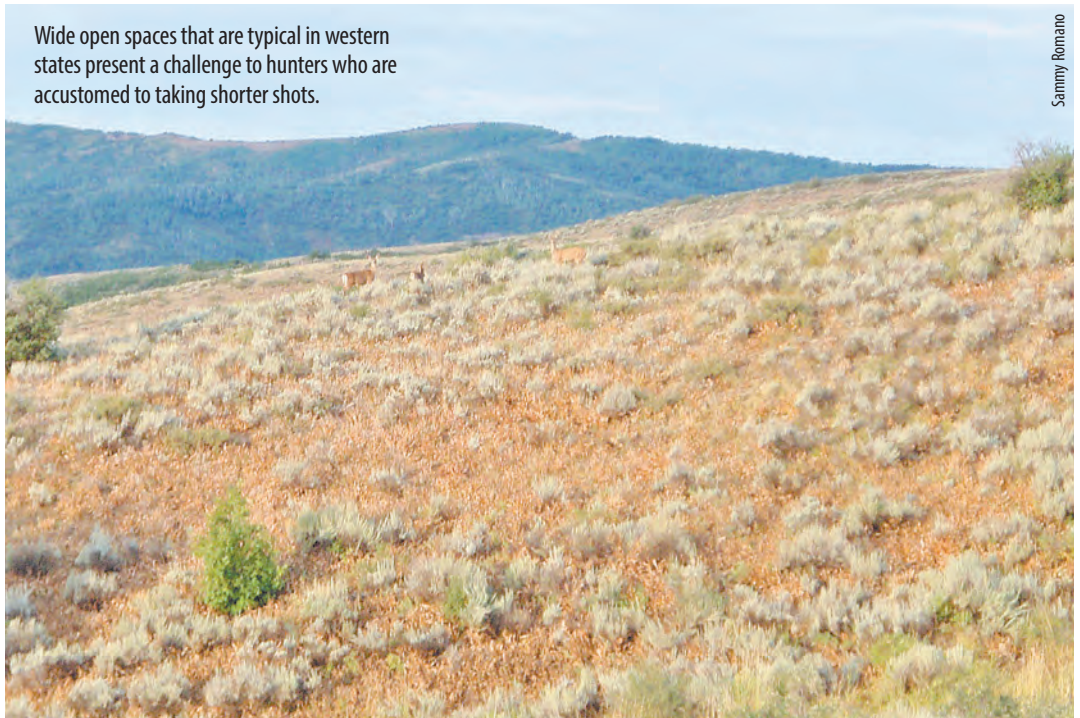
The solution was to carefully heat the end of the aluminum arrows then spin the insert (they were glued with hot melt cement back then), floating the glue evenly and thus balancing each broadhead. I even went so far as to spin them on a dial indicator. Once they were properly spin balanced, my groups immediately tightened up, even as far as 70 yards out.

All of this time spent tuning my bow and fine tuning my arrows made my bow deadly accurate with both target tips and broadheads, regardless of the distance. This would prove to be key to my success on my upcoming hunt. Although technology has vastly improved the tune-ability of modern compound bows and made broadhead alignment almost a sure thing, these same principles still apply and I use them often today. Archers who weren't around to experi-

ence these issues much of the time don't appreciate how good we have it today. And they are often at a loss for what to do if they have a problem. Next month I'll tell the story of that trip, and how well it all worked out. ■

GREENER PASTURES ➤

Wide open spaces that are typical in western states present a challenge to hunters who are accustomed to taking shorter shots.



Sammy Romano




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Todd Amenrud

CONTROL THE COMPETITION

HELP THE RIGHT PLANTS WIN IN YOUR FOOD PLOTS

It may be hot and sweltering outside, but the fall planting is just around the corner.

Landowners will always need to be ready to implement food plot preparation tactics throughout the year.

One of the most important aspects of developing a rockstar set of food plots is controlling competition. Through a series of mechanical and chemical methods, we can control competition. This should always be a part of the food plot program whether planting during warm or cool seasons.

Why is controlling competition so important? Well, it may seem counter intuitive to kill off existing green vegetation prior to planting something new. To some, adding new forage to an existing green field can be the perfect duty to enhance an existing green food source.

But all green plants aren't created equal to say the least. In fact, many grasses and weeds only provide marginal nutritional value if any at all. And this couldn't be

any truer for late summertime vegetation that has become well established in open fields and former food plots.

An established crop of grass and native or exotic weeds often provides little nutritional value for deer and other foraging wildlife. And when landowners are trying to cultivate a new forage crop for the fall hunting season, a clean site, clear of other established vegetation, is one step in the right direction.

IT'S ABOUT FOOD VALUE

Throughout the year different types of vegetation grow and will persist in certain areas. Typically, the available vegetation in August has been well established from summer heat and routine rainfall. And any food value is generally severely diminished in these areas usually covered in mostly undesirable species.

The undesirable vegetation that is already well established will compete heavily with newly planted seeds. So they

must be removed prior to planting. Not only will established vegetation compete for space and sunlight, the root systems will also suck up any available nutrients and available water preventing the new seeds from having a good start.

Basically, existing vegetation can be either mechanically or chemically destroyed. Most farmers will mechanically turn up the soil and the existing plants to kill them by using a disk harrow, chisel plow, or sometimes even a turn plow. The mechanical efforts dry out roots and can severely disturb growth and sustainability. Yet, sometimes poor plow performance and soil types that can retain moisture, will not kill all of the vegetation impacted by the



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.

physical destruction methods. Mechanical treatment alone isn't always the best way to kill off competing vegetation prior to planting a fall food plot.

Chemical control through herbicides is the best way to kill plants. Essentially, herbicides will inhibit photosynthesis, cell wall production, or some other biological process critical for plant growth and survival. Herbicide use is the best way to control competing vegetation on sites where an established, noxious plant community is present. Or herbicides prior to planting can be used to just restart the food plot killing off any preferred species as well to start off with a clean seed bed too. For the best results, a full spectrum herbicide should be used to attack both woody and herbaceous vegetation.

While a variety of full spectrum herbicides are available, glyphosate is the most readily available and most effective chemical killer of woody and herbaceous vegetation. Glyphosate was first registered in 1974. It is the most widely-used herbicide in the nation. This herbicide disrupts protein production that is required for plant growth. And while glyphosate can bind to soil for quite some time, it must enter the leaves or grass blades through the plant tissues in order to be taken up by the plant and to be effective. Glyphosate can be broadcasted, or boom sprayed over plants. Chemicals will take effect within a few hours.

A combination of both mechanical and herbaceous treatments can also be an effective way to control unwanted vegetation. An initial herbaceous treatment can be conducted followed by a mechanical treatment to turn the dead vegetation back into the soil. And if the initial herbicide treatment and mechanical treatment doesn't kill all of the weeds, a second herbaceous treatment can be applied to kill any new growth that precipitated from the mechanical treatment and germination of other weed seeds that were dormant in the soil.

Acting early is the key to controlling unwanted vegetation for a cool season planting. And August is the prime time to start controlling vegetation in food plots prior to a fall planting regime. Vegetation control is an integral part of any food plot program and controlling competition prior to planting season will give the food plot a head start to have rich foods available for the fall and winter season. ■

ALL DOGS GO TO HEAVEN >

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Mechanical methods help put a stop to already established vegetation, but it often needs help from chemical means.

Todd Amenrud

MECHANICAL MEANS:

Turning up the soil through the use of plows or disks is one way to help kill already established vegetation, but it isn't always the best way.

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ALL DOGS GO TO HEAVEN

Pat Robertson

Pete Proctor considers Sunshine Crybaby the pinnacle of success for his beagle breeding program.



Pat Robertson

TOP BEAGLER'S KEYS TO BREEDING SUCCESS

PETE PROCTOR SHARES HIS BREEDING SECRETS

The old saying that you can't argue with success certainly holds true for Pete Proctor and his Sunshine Kennels in Vale, N.C. A member of the National Brace Beagling Hall of Fame and the National Brace Beagling Breeders Hall of Fame, Proctor primarily competes in female classes in American Kennel Club licensed and sanctioned field trials. He has bred and earned championships on well over 100 female beagles and has produced more than two dozen male champions, most finished by other beaglers.

Because of his breeding success, he has been called on to write multiple articles on breeding, puppy raising and training for *Today's Breeder*, a magazine published by Purina for dog breeders and canine enthusiasts. In an article titled "Breeding for Champions" Proctor says the best chance for success in the field is to raise and train your own puppies.

"Your odds are even better if your bitches come from a long line of bitches that are good mothers and possess

the right running traits. If you do not already have this bitch line, you should concentrate on buying one or more from someone else's line. Most successful brace beaglers today already have an established bitchline and are working hard to keep it."

PAIR THEM UP RIGHT

Being a good mother and being able to whelp and raise healthy puppies is essential to a successful breeding program, Proctor said. They must also exhibit the desired running traits and should be bred to stud dogs that also exhibit those traits, he added. Most breeders looking to produce a high quality litter of puppies out of their female will choose a high profile stud dog to breed to. But that is not always the track that Proctor follows. Instead of choosing an individual stud dog, he often chooses a family or line of outstanding dogs.

"I do not necessarily breed to the best stud available. Instead, I pick a stud dog that can improve the traits I need for my

bitch," he said. "For instance, if my bitch needs a keener nose and does not excel at carrying the line, then I am likely to choose the best available stud whose family have keen noses and excel at carrying a smooth straight line. Notice that I pick families more than I pick individuals. And I try to pick the best available stud from the family."

Proctor did not develop his principles of breeding overnight. It was a long process, spanning many years. He grew up rabbit hunting with his Dad and was always looking to improve the performance of their pack of beagles.

"One Saturday afternoon a bunch of us were running our gun dog packs together and discussing what we liked and did not like in our dogs," he recalled. "One of the



Pat Robertson covered outdoors issues for more than 30 years for *The State* and *The Columbia Record* newspapers. Now retired, he is a full-time free-lancer living in Blythewood, S.C., where he and his wife, Jan, raise beagles and compete in field trials.

participants said it sounded like he might like field trials. And he gave Proctor the name of a prominent beagle field trialer named J.W. Kidd of Huntersville. Kidd took Proctor out to watch some of his dogs run and introduced him to beagle field trials.

SUNSHINE CRYBABY

“My Dad died shortly after that and my interest in rabbit hunting went away,” he said. He found a replacement in beagle field trials and his journey into prominence in the sport began. He did not enter many of his own dogs in field trials and did not do much breeding the first few years of his interest in the sport. He mostly ran dogs for Kidd and a couple of other prominent field trialers and used the experience to study the sport.

“It was a learning process. I did not stand in the gallery and chat with other beaglers. I watched the runs and compared how the dogs performed,” he said. He then applied those lessons to developing his own breeding program.

Today his program includes as many as 10 generations of producing females. The culmination of his program resides in one of his current field champions, Sunshine Crybaby.

“She has raised every pup she ever had without too much assistance. And she has produced nine field champions, with another that could have finished already, but the owner’s wife has been sick and he has not run her in trials. Looking at all aspects — performance, producing ability and being a good mother, she is the best,” he said.



Pete Proctor works Field Champion Sunshine Crybaby on the trail of a fleeing rabbit.

Pat Robertson

Using those same principles as guides, Proctor said he believes they apply across all phases of beagle field trial competitions — both gun dogs and braces.

Taking that a step further, using performance, productivity and breeding to enhance desired traits while improving areas that are lacking can provide a framework for a breeding program in any competitive field dog sport or hunting program, no matter the breed. ■

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SUMMER SHARKING OFF THE CAPE HATTERAS COAST

By Taylor Pardue

FORGET SWIMMING AND SUNTANNING; SHARK FISHING IS MUCH MORE EXCITING.

“IF PEOPLE KNEW WHAT WAS SWIMMING JUST OFFSHORE, THEY’D NEVER GO IN THE WATER AGAIN,”

the first mate of the *Seas The Day* said. I believed him. Looking down at the sandtiger shark that my friend Bobby Keller had just reeled up to the boat’s edge, I knew I would never go swimming in the ocean again.

We were fishing along Cape Point in the summer of 2020. Back on shore were the perils of COVID and quarantine, so Bobby, his dad, Terry Keller, and I had planned a bit of an escape on board Capt. Ethan Ingle’s charter out of Buxton, N.C. We had already seen an awesome sunrise over the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse and landed a few fish when Bobby hooked the shark that ultimately took him more than half an hour to bring to the boat. Bobby is an avid angler and, as such, no slouch when it comes to reeling in big fish. But even he had to put in some effort for this catch.

Many species of shark can be found cruising along the Outer Banks throughout any given year, including blacktips, spinners, and even great whites. Some of these sharks you can keep for great eating. And some of them you can’t. Great whites are obviously one of the latter species. Sandtigers are off the table (pun intended), too. So when Bobby got his shark to the boat, we cut it loose and went about the rest of our half-day trip.

THE RIGHT TACKLE IS KEY >

THE RIGHT TACKLE IS KEY

Fishing for sharks isn't that complicated as long as you have the right tackle. Ingle often uses a Penn 4500-size reel paired with 30- or 40-pound braided line on a lighter rod, giving his anglers plenty of line capacity if a shark makes a run or, as often happens, tries to wind itself around the prop or the anchor line.

"Having that lighter setup really pays off because you can maneuver around the boat, and you're less likely of a chance of them wrapping up on something and breaking you off," Ingle said. "I've had better success using light line. But I do use about 10 or 15 feet of 50-pound mono just to give the line some stretch so it's a little more forgiving.

"Also," Ingle added about the monofilament line, "if it wraps or rubs around the boat, it's a lot more forgiving than braided line. The braided line isn't nearly as abrasion-resistant as mono. I've definitely had days where you had the mono rub up against the boat hard. And you know if that was braid you would have lost it."

Ingle then adds a swivel, and 18 to 24 inches of 300-pound mono to the braid/mono combo.

"Some people use 7-strand wire," Ingle said. "I feel like I get more bites with mono. But that may not make a difference. You can't use single-strand, though, because it'll kink and you usually lose them."

Bluefish heads are an especially effective bait choice, as are small live bluefish. "But anything bloody and oily works," Ingle said. Circle hooks are required by law, with Ingle opting for size 10/0 to 12/0.

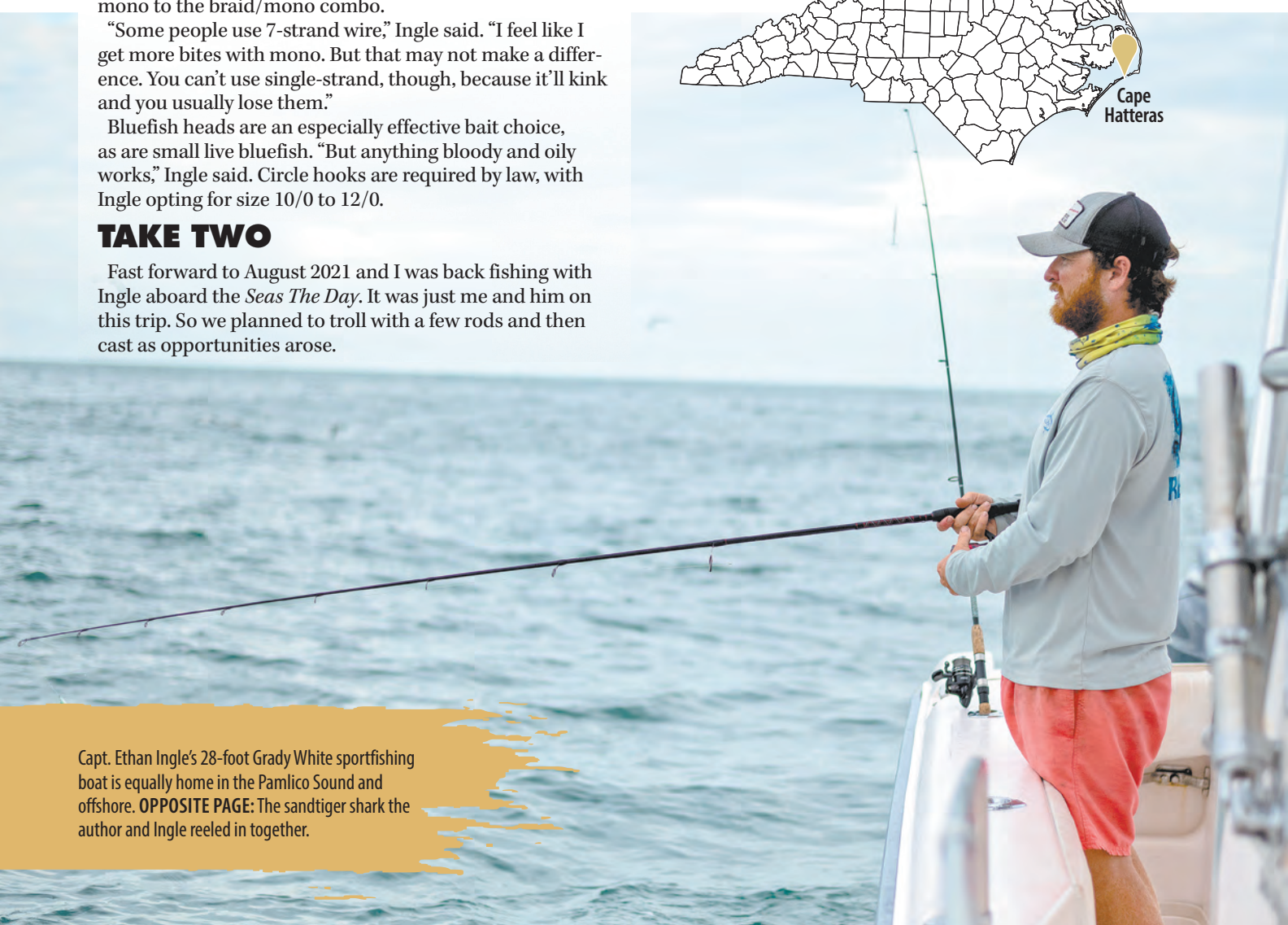
TAKE TWO

Fast forward to August 2021 and I was back fishing with Ingle aboard the *Seas The Day*. It was just me and him on this trip. So we planned to troll with a few rods and then cast as opportunities arose.

"Basically, we're fishing on top of a big shoal about 7 or 8 feet deep, on the down-current side," Ingle said. "The current typically flows from the southwest up to the northeast. We're right on a break; a dropoff that drops down to about 26 feet."

Ingle has most of his shark success as a charter captain in Hatteras Inlet when high tides push clean saltwater into it. However, a week or so of rain before our trip ruled out that strategy and led us to the shoal. It didn't take us long to get into fish. But the blacktips we were primarily searching for were strangely absent. The reason why became obvious soon enough, though.

Ingle and I were trolling with two rods behind the boat by this point in the trip. Both were free-spooled to let any wary shark get the bait firmly in its mouth before any pressure was applied to the line that might cause it to spook and spit the hook out. One rod eventually began losing line and I jumped into action, closing the spool and adding just enough drag to start getting the shark's attention. I had no more done so than line began peeling off the second reel. Two sharks at once?



Capt. Ethan Ingle's 28-foot Grady White sportfishing boat is equally home in the Pamlico Sound and offshore. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** The sandtiger shark the author and Ingle reeled in together.



Taylor Pardue

NOT QUITE

Ingle jumped to the second rod and began getting set for what we thought was going to be an epic fight against two blacktips. But it soon became apparent that we had hooked into something much harder to bring to the surface. We each struggled to gain back any of the line we had lost. Breaks in the action were few and far between. And all of this taking place for both of us at the same time without fail.

The shark had taken both baits before we could even react to the first bite.

Ingle and I worked to bring what proved to be another sandtiger shark (the same one Bobby hooked the year before?) to the boat without breaking it off. But we could only manage to get it to the surface and within about 20 or 30 yards of us before its teeth finally cut through the 300-pound mono.

It's a rare day when Ingle catches a sandtiger shark — this was his first of the whole 2021 summer — which goes to show that you never really know what a day of fishing might hold off Cape Point. Especially when you're actively trying for a shark.

For more information on chartering a trip aboard the *Seas The Day* with Capt. Ethan Ingle, visit fishingbooker.com/profile/view/15389. ■



Taylor Pardue is a freelance outdoor writer from Raleigh, N.C. He graduated from N.C. State with a degree in fisheries, wildlife and conservation biology, and is a former newspaper reporter. He is an avid duck hunter and runs a waterfowl-focused hunting blog titled "River Fowler."

MOONFISHIN' WHERE THE SHARKS SWIM ➤






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MOONFISHIN' WHERE THE SHARKS SWIM

While reeling in sharks is fun, it was the moonfish that really made my 2021 trip aboard the *Seas The Day* so memorable. We began casting for baitfish when we first got to Cape Point and quickly noticed a flock of seagulls whirling a few hundred yards away. So, we moved in for a closer look and to try hooking whatever had caught their attention.

Silver flashes all along the surface met our gaze. And we started reeling in round, slab-sided fish about a foot in length. These unexpected visitors to the Outer Banks turned out to be a school of moonfish, which, we learned when we reached shore and turned our haul over to the fish-cleaning station, only a few of the local anglers had ever seen. While there wasn't much meat on them relative to an adult blacktip, moonfish are tasty if you know how to properly prepare them.

Seeing acres of saltwater shining as the moonfish schooled all around us was an unforgettable sight — as was the pod of bottlenose dolphins that came hunting for them not long after we did. If we had only caught the moonfish, I still would have counted the day as a success. But we later found out that something much bigger was swimming nearby. ■



The moonfish made quite a splash back at the dock, with only a handful of locals having ever seen them before. **ACROSS SPREAD:** Acres of water flashed silver in the sunlight as moonfish schooled around the boat.

Taylor Pardue



Taylor Pardue

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Chris Burrows

MAKE YOUR FUEL EXPENSE COUNT

LIGHTEN YOUR LOAD, PLAN YOUR TRIPS ACCORDINGLY

In case you haven't been paying attention to anything lately, fuel prices are at an all-time high, even when adjusted for inflation.

Blame whatever you want, gasoline alone has approached \$5/gallon this summer and doesn't look to be retreating much anytime soon. Diesel fuel is even higher. Any marina manager will tell you that they are seeing fewer trips this season, with the stated reason as "the price of fuel."

We all still want to go fishing though, right? Here are a couple of concepts that will help you still be able to get on the water without taking out a second mortgage just to fill the tank.

LIGHTEN THE LOAD

This concept is simple. Every pound of weight that you don't have on the boat with you is another pound of weight that your motor(s) doesn't have to push away from the dock and back home again.

The most immediately effective way to do this is to remove unnecessary items from the boat. Take inventory of the lead you keep on the boat. If it hasn't seen the water in several seasons, it probably won't be needed on the next few trips, either.

Leave a couple of your "just in case" downrigger balls behind. If you're not going to the bluewater, take the outrigger poles down and put them in the garage.

It requires some trade-offs here and there. But if you can set your expectations for what you will be fishing for, you can narrow down what you need, potentially saving some critical weight. Instead of filling an in-deck fish box completely up with ice, a good investment is a fish bag, the style that kingfish anglers use in tournaments. You'll need less ice, as the insulation on those bags is extremely efficient. And these bags hold much more than you think.

Fluid weight is critical on any vessel. Saltwater weighs about 8.6 pounds a gal-

lon, while freshwater weighs about 8.3 pounds for the same amount. With fuel, diesel and gasoline weigh 7 and 6 pounds per gallon, respectively.

A lot of newer center consoles have three livewells. That's great for easy access and segregating different baits. The larger, 55-gallon and greater capacity livewells can add some serious weight to your vessel when full. If they're being used, then great.

But you can drop some mass instantly at the end of the day (before making the run back to the dock) if you cut them off, then close the seacock to the pump that fills them, leaving the one connected to the drain open. Your boat will immediately ride a little bit higher in the water.



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.

Does your 60-gallon freshwater tank have to be completely full, or could you get by with 15 gallons for a trip?

You don't want to risk running out of fuel, of course, but you don't need 150 gallons in the tank if you are running to the buoy to chase cobia. Leave yourself a reserve, and don't forget to add in what you will be burning while trolling or checking out a different spot. But a partially filled tank will lead to a lighter boat.

The more you know about your boat's fuel economy, the more accurately you can make the fuel calculation based on plans and load. You should know your boat's "sweet spot" with regards to fuel economy, too.

Just pushing the throttle to the dash with the trim tabs all the way down isn't the best way to save on gas. Try three-quarters throttle with just a bit of tab, if tab is even necessary. Play around with it. Modern gauges are getting very accurate with regards to fuel consumption now, especially when they are linked to GPS. Keep watching the gauges. You'll figure out quickly when you get it right.

PLAN YOUR TRIPS ACCORDINGLY

If your saltwater fishing platform is trailerable, chances are that your truck gets better fuel economy than your boat. A lot of times, a boat ramp may be closer to your spot than the one you have traditionally used. Do the math. If 20 minutes in your truck saves you having to run 6 miles each way on the water (12 total) and your boat at current load gets 2.4 miles per gallon, that's 5 gallons of gas you don't have to burn on the water. You have to know your truck's fuel economy when towing too. But automotive engines are usually a good bit more efficient than outboards.

Live bait is usually your best bet during the summer months.

Every nice morning, boats are generally just offshore of any beach in the Carolinas, running up and down looking to throw a cast net at menhaden.

Menhaden (pogies) are great bait. But chasing schools of them up and down the beach burns fuel. Instead of this method of "making" bait, plan a stop at a nearshore artificial reef that's on your way to the spot, and rig up a couple of rods with sabiki rigs. Load up on cigar minnows, which are generally kingfish candy in summer. Then use a larger sabiki with tiny pieces of cut squid to score some pinfish for grouper bait. It's a great diversion if you have kids or anyone new to saltwater fishing on board as well. If the baitfish are thick you can get the skunk off the boat really quickly this way.

It's also vital to know the weather report heading into your fishing day. Most importantly, what direction will the waves be coming from?

You will be most comfortable and efficient running down-sea coming home. But that usually means you must run into a head sea going out. Banging straight onto the waves headed offshore is no fun. It's also the least fuel efficient.

Running in the trough can be squirrely at times. But it's the best compromise for both legs of the trip. You can also work your way up or down the beach while fishing to get a slightly better angle for the trip home as well. The more the waves are behind you, the nicer (and cheaper) it will be. ■

FISHING FUEL:

Record fuel prices aren't a death sentence for fishing. But they do present a challenge. A few tweaks to your saltwater tendencies will allow you to stay on the water without breaking the bank.

COOKING ON THE WILD SIDE ➤

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COOKING ON THE WILD SIDE

Jerry Dilsaver

August days are hot. So a nice cool meal like this is a great way to end them. Tuna is a favorite fish in the Carolinas, and just about everyone enjoys pasta. The two together are enough to excite the taste buds of most folks. This mixture includes tomatoes, corn, peas, carrots, onions, cucumbers and more. It all blends well and I believe it exceeds expectations.

This month, sportsmen's minds begin to wander from their next fishing pursuit to their first hunt of the year. Hunters will have plenty to do to get ready for the coming seasons and this meal will fill them up lightly and not bog them down. There should be plenty of energy left to straighten decoys, shoot some arrows or skeet to sharpen the eyes or whatever else needs to be done in the cool of the early evening.

Maybe one of your late summer fishing adventures could be catching the tuna to make this dish. Blackfins, yellowfins and even a few bigeyes are working the Gulf Stream eddies and temperature breaks. If that doesn't fit your schedule, your favorite fishmonger should have a few loins and be ready to slice a steak or some tasty medallions for you. ■

RAINBOW TUNA PASTA SALAD

LIGHT RECIPE IS A REFRESHING SUMMER MEAL



It takes very little cooking to get the tuna just right, so be careful not to overcook it. **INSET:** Tuna, pasta and assorted vegetables go well together, and the rainbow-colored pasta adds a nice visual touch to this meal.

TIP!

Serve peppers and olives in bowls on the side and allow folks to add them based on their personal preferences.

RAINBOW TUNA PASTA SALAD

I like tuna! Maybe not quite enough to slice a piece off on the way to the fish box, but once it's been bled and chilled, I'm game. This is another tasty way to use tuna and I think you'll enjoy it too. For those that are squeamish, this recipe involves cooking the tuna – a little.

I also like pasta and decided cooked and chilled pasta would go well with tuna. The next decision was which pasta. And after several trials, I decided I preferred the multicolor rotini from Mueller. You may prefer another pasta, but I think this one, with spinach in the green spirals and carrots in the red spirals, adds more to the dish than regular or whole wheat pasta. The extra colors add to its appeal also and helped with the name. A tip on cooking the pasta is

PREPARATION:

1. Put the tuna in a Ziploc bag, add enough Zesty Italian dressing to cover it, squeeze all the air out, seal it and let it marinate in the refrigerator while preparing the rest of the meal.

2. If using frozen corn and peas, remove them from the freezer and allow them to thaw.

3. Cook the pasta according to the directions on the package.

4. Cool the pasta in the refrigerator.

5. Dice the banana peppers, onion, cucumber, tomatoes and jalapeno peppers (optional).

6. Slice the olives (optional).

7. Drain the green chilies – and tomatoes if you use canned tomatoes.

8. Mix the vegetables, except the olives and jalapenos, and 2 TBL of olive oil into the pasta, seasoning to taste with pepper and Cavender's.

9. Remove the tuna from the bag and season lightly with pepper and Cavender's.

10. Add a TBL of olive oil to a heavy (cast iron) frying pan and preheat to medium to medium-high.

11. Sear the tuna to where the white is rising about 1/8 to 1/4 inch up the side, turn over and repeat.

12. Remove the tuna to a cutting board and cut into approximately 1/2-inch pieces.

13. Add the drippings from the frying pan into the pasta bowl.

14. Mix the tuna and drippings into the pasta and vegetables.

15. Return the salad to the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes.

16. Serve chilled.

to add a splash of olive oil to help prevent it sticking together. This recipe only calls for three tablespoons of olive oil. One is to coat the bottom of the pan for searing the tuna and the other two are mixed into the salad. I also mix in any drippings left in the pan. This has the flavor of the cooking tuna, a touch of olive oil and the Zesty Italian dressing. This mixture isn't meant to be wet and this is plenty of liquid.

I realize this is an unusual way to prepare tuna and pasta, but we like it at our house. This makes more than you will need for a meal. But the leftovers will get eaten pretty quickly. It's a nice, easy preparation that I find light and tasty and I believe you'll like it too. Enjoy! ■

TIP!

Use a cup of mixed frozen green peas and carrots to save a little time on this recipe.

INGREDIENTS:

2 pound tuna fillets or medallions

1 Pkg (12 oz.) Mueller's Tri-color rotini

1 Cup diced tomatoes

1 Cup chopped cucumber

1 Can (small) green chilies

½ Cup diced sweet onion

½ Cup chopped banana peppers

½ Cup frozen yellow corn kernels

½ Cup frozen green peas

⅓ Cup sliced carrots

3 TBL olive oil

Coarse ground black pepper

Cavender's All Purpose Greek Seasoning

Zesty Italian Dressing

OPTIONS: Chopped jalapeno peppers, sliced olives.



This is a complete light meal that is ideally suited for a hot August evening. I like salads and often add a green salad or lettuce wedge. Some of my friends also like to have a bowl of multi-grain rolls on the table. Those who like to end their meals with something sweet can consider adding a slice of angel food cake topped with sliced fruit.

Those with outside kitchens can prepare and serve this meal on a covered patio or deck as the day cools. If you don't have an outside kitchen, it's still nice to eat outside after preparing it inside. ■

Peppers and olives are best served in separate bowls since they can change the recipe's taste quite a bit.

CAPE FEAR TRIPLETAIL ➤



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](mailto:captainjerry@captainjerry.com).

TRIPLETAIL HOTSPOTS



Tripletail are hard fighters and make great table fare. They head south once summer is over, so don't miss out.

TRIPLETAIL IN THE CAPE FEAR RIVER

Don't pass up the chance to catch these summer visitors

T By Jerry Dilsaver
ripletail began spreading up the Atlantic Seaboard over the past couple of decades. Their large dorsal and anal fins that flow just above and below their tail look similar – hence the name. Tripletail are adaptable to both ocean and inside waters.

These fish arrive in and around the Cape Fear River once the water warms in the summer and stay until it cools in the fall.

Thomas Cutler caught the N.C. state record tripletail from Ocean Crest Pier in Oak Island on Sept. 4, 2009. It weighed 27-pounds, 7-ounces. Most N.C. tripletail are smaller, generally ranging from 3 to 10 pounds. But N.C. anglers catch double-digit weight fish each year.

Capt. Jeff Wolfe of Seahawk Inshore Fishing Charters (910-619-9580) in

Wilmington, discovered tripletail in the lower Cape Fear River almost two decades ago. Now, Wolfe and his son Christian offer the opportunity to catch tripletail as a specialty of their guide service.

Wolfe said tripletail are attracted to shade and may be found around and under day markers, range markers, light towers and even the larger floats used by commercial fishermen. They may be under water or sometimes they float on the surface on their side and appear to be a large leaf or debris. When under water, they are generally close to the surface and even if they can't be seen clearly, cast a noticeable shadow.

"The work begins once you locate a tripletail," Wolfe said. "They are spooky and approaching too close, making noise on the boat or making a bad cast will usually

end the possibility of catching that one.

"The tide moves quickly in the main part of the river. So we look for tripletail in the bays and behind the spoil islands, where the tide moves slower," Wolfe said. "There is still enough current to move bait here and tripletail lay waiting in ambush for a tasty shrimp or minnow to drift by. We look for that floating fish or a shadow under something and set up to get a bait to it. We usually use a live shrimp or minnow suspended under a small cork."

Wolfe said tripletail fight hard and seem to have a knack for wrapping around something and breaking off. However, they're worth the effort as they taste great cooked in any way.

Tripletail have no size or number regulations in N.C.. Check the latest regulations at www.ncdmf.net. ■



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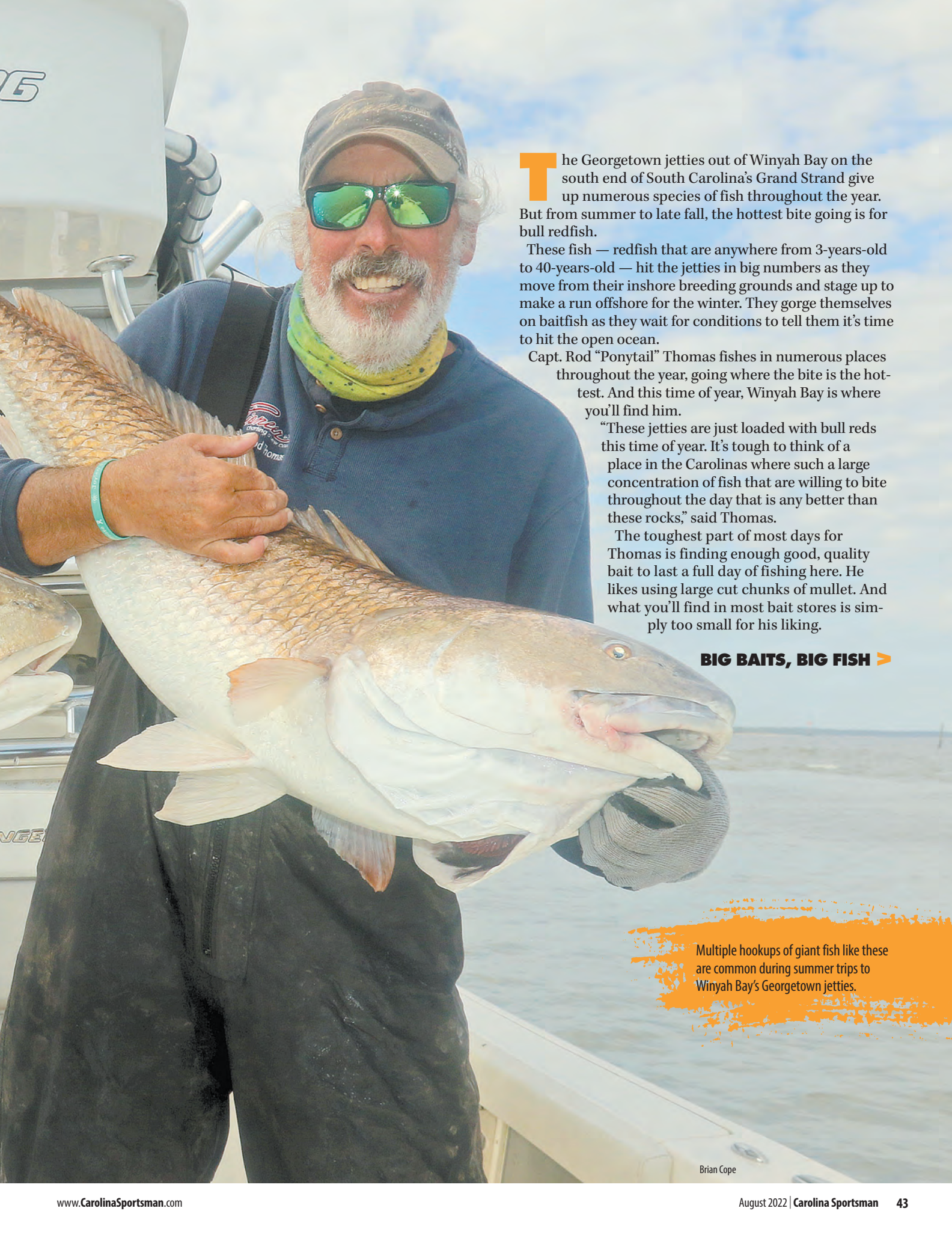


Winyah Bay

**HIT THE GEORGETOWN
JETTIES FOR BULL REDFISH
ACTION.** ■ By Brian Cope

RUNNING OF THE BULLS IN WINYAH BAY





The Georgetown jetties out of Winyah Bay on the south end of South Carolina's Grand Strand give up numerous species of fish throughout the year. But from summer to late fall, the hottest bite going is for bull redfish.

These fish — redfish that are anywhere from 3-years-old to 40-years-old — hit the jetties in big numbers as they move from their inshore breeding grounds and stage up to make a run offshore for the winter. They gorge themselves on baitfish as they wait for conditions to tell them it's time to hit the open ocean.

Capt. Rod "Ponytail" Thomas fishes in numerous places throughout the year, going where the bite is the hottest. And this time of year, Winyah Bay is where you'll find him.

"These jetties are just loaded with bull reds this time of year. It's tough to think of a place in the Carolinas where such a large concentration of fish that are willing to bite throughout the day that is any better than these rocks," said Thomas.

The toughest part of most days for Thomas is finding enough good, quality bait to last a full day of fishing here. He likes using large cut chunks of mullet. And what you'll find in most bait stores is simply too small for his liking.

BIG BAITS, BIG FISH ➤

Multiple hookups of giant fish like these are common during summer trips to Winyah Bay's Georgetown jetties.

Brian Cope

BIG BAITS, BIG FISH

“What I use for bait, the size eliminates catching the majority of undesirable species. We’ll catch an occasional shark and maybe even luck up into hooking a tarpon every now and then. But the majority of the bites we get on these large chunks of bait are bull redfish,” said Thomas.

He catches his own bait with a cast net in Winyah Bay’s inshore waters before heading out to the jetties. Then he points his Avenger bay boat toward the jetties and finds a good place to anchor down.

“On some days, the conditions might concentrate a great number of fish into a relatively small area out here. But on most days this time of year, as long as you’ve got fresh bait and enough weight to keep it on the bottom, you’re going to get bit regularly enough,” he said.

The Georgetown jetties are basically two walls of large piles of rocks that extend far into the ocean. On some days, the bite is better on one side of those walls than the other. On other days, it doesn’t seem to matter. Thomas lets the weather, wind and the tide determine where he tries first.

“Once you figure out how the current and wind is pushing the boat, you can toss out your anchor. I like to be a cast away from the jetty wall. These fish, on some days, will run tight to the jetties. But on other days, they’ll be a bit off of them. So anchoring a cast away, we can drop our baits right along the wall. And we can also cast out the other side of the boat, putting those baits away. Then we just see where the bites come from and concentrate on that direction,” he said.

On some trips, that means Thomas stays in the main channel between the North and South jetties. Other times, he anchors up outside the main channel.

STOUT GEAR IS REQUIRED

When it comes to gear, Thomas goes heavy. Spinning reels in the 6500 to 7500 range are good, and he spoos

them with 60-pound braided line. At the business end is a very short, 100-pound leader with an 8/0 circle hook. A 3-ounce weight keeps the bait down.

Boat rods with medium-heavy and heavy ratings are standard. Catching 30 to 40 pound redfish is not uncommon. And considerably heavier ones sometimes bite as well.

These fish don’t come in especially easy, however, using gear any lighter would mean a much longer fight, which would be much worse on the fish.

“The quicker you can land them, the more strength they have when you release them. Using light gear would really stress them out and make them easy targets for sharks when you release them,” Thomas said.

Occasionally, a bull redfish will have trouble swimming away. But Thomas has a solution for that.

“It’s somewhat rare, but every so often, one of these fish will just go belly up as soon as you release them. I pull them back on board, lay them on their side, and put the hose of my raw



Many anglers catch the biggest fish of their life at the Georgetown jetties. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Capt. Rod “Ponytail” Thomas fights a bull red with the jetties in the background.

Brian Cope



Brian Cope

water washdown in their mouth. Then I just run water until it starts foaming out of their gills and they start moving their gill plates. It really helps revive them and then you can slip them back in and they're good to go. It's the best way to release a worn-out fish. It works like a charm," he said.

Healthy releases are important, Thomas said, because these bulls are the breeders that keep the entire inshore stock of slot-sized redfish in good shape.

"Some of these fish are as much as 40-years-old. So they've made the trek from offshore to inshore and back dozens of times.

"These are true trophy fish, and the last thing we want to do is kill them. It's an honor for anglers to get the chance to catch them. Just to think about what these fish have seen in their lifetimes is amazing. Their population is healthy and we want to keep it that way," he said.

MULTIPLE RODS, MULTIPLE HOOKUPS

Once Thomas is anchored up, he baits up six rods, casts them out, then puts the rods in rod holders.

"The more bait you have in the water, the better your chances of hooking up," he said. "And when you've got multiple anglers on board, double- and triple-hookups are a lot of fun.

"On unusually slow days, having numerous rods out can mean the difference between a mediocre day and a good day. On other days it really doesn't matter, because with even one rod out, you're going to get bit."

Thomas starts off with four rods facing the jetty. Their baits are fairly close to the jetty wall. He puts another two on the other side of the boat.

"It doesn't take long for you to figure out where the hot bite is coming from that day. And on some days, they're biting in every direction. We will see boats 100, 200 yards away from us and they're into them just as thick as we are," he said.



Brian Cope is the editor of *Carolina Sportsman Magazine* and *CarolinaSportsman.com*. He's been writing about the outdoors since 2006. Reach him at brianc@sportsmannetwork.com

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DON'T OVERLOOK ARTIFICIALS

Cut bait is definitely the go-to choice here. But Thomas said when the bite is especially strong, artificial lures fished under popping corks can add a little extra to a trip.

"This is a really popular tactic in North Carolina's Pamlico Sound. But I don't see many anglers using it in Winyah Bay yet. It's a lot of fun catching them like this," said Thomas.

He ties an 18- to 24-inch leader under a popping cork and finishes it off with a heavy jighead and a long soft plastic grub.

"Catching a bull redfish on the bottom is a lot of fun. And catching one on a popping cork just below the surface kicks it up a notch. It's also good when you have anglers that prefer to be more active than just waiting on a bite," he said.

Thomas said anglers need to work this rig very aggressively, making lots of noise and imparting a good deal of action to the lure.

"You need to pop it real hard, very aggressively. Make lots of noise and get that lure really moving. When a bull red hits this, it's a bite you'll never forget, and the start of a fight you'll never forget," he said.

ALL SUMMER LONG

This bite starts off and ends at slightly different times each year, but Thomas said it's a sure-thing during the summer months.

"Some years, these fish gather here in late spring and leave in the early fall," he said. "Other years, they show up a little later, early in the summer and stay until Thanksgiving.

"It's generally very consistent throughout the summer and into at least the early fall." ■

Brian Cope



Running water from the raw-water wash down hose into a bull redfish's mouth and out its gills is a quick way to revive the fish when necessary. **ABOVE:** Bull redfish gather along the rock jetties during the summer and feed heavily.



Brian Cope

OWEN LUPTON RIG

Dawson Hinkamp shows off the right size bait for fishing the jetties. You can also see the Owen Lupton rig which virtually eliminates fish getting deep hooked.



Brian Cope

When fishing for bull redfish, Capt. Rod Thomas always uses an Owen Lupton rig, which is required during certain months in some parts of North Carolina. It is sometimes referred to as a Carolina Drum rig.

The rig consists of a swivel and a short (3 inches or less), heavy leader of mono or fluorocarbon finished with a circle hook. An egg weight is threaded onto that leader and either doesn't slide at all or slides very little due to the short length of the leader.

This rig is known to drastically reduce the frequency with which redfish are deep-hooked.

"With long leaders, the fish will often swallow the bait (and hook) completely. But with this short Owen Lupton rig, the fish feels the weight almost immediately after taking the bait into its mouth. So it stops when it feels the weight and begins to swim off. The weight helps the circle hook embed itself into the corner of the mouth," Thomas said.

While it's not required in South Carolina, and only under certain circumstances in North Carolina, Thomas said he uses it any time he fishes for bull redfish, no matter where he is fishing.

"It's a North Carolina thing. And it just isn't popular in South Carolina yet, but it should be. It's a great rig. It's got a high hookup ratio and a very low deep-hooking ratio," he said.

Anglers new to the rig often worry about losing fish that are scared off by the weight. But Thomas said if that happens at all, it's too infrequently to notice. He also said he'd rather lose an occasional trophy fish than to catch, but gut hook, a single one. ■

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Dale Collins of Swansboro guided this young angler and his dad to a 30-inch red drum



Dale Collins

"Live baits seem to work better when it gets hot after the sun gets up. Redfish like cooler water, which is deeper or shadier. In the middle of bays in August, the water temperature can get to 95 degrees."

During bright days, Collins noted red drum like the ends of shady docks in deeper water.

FISHING IS RED HOT

for redfish in Swansboro

D By Craig Holt
 ale Collins of FishOrDie Charters of Swansboro (252-422-4326), luckily hasn't been gob-smacked by fuel prices because he specializes in taking clients to nearby creeks and marsh bays with his center console 23-foot aluminum skiff.

"It's hot in August. But you can have a good drum topwater bite near Bogue and Bear Inlets early in the mornings and late in the evenings," he said.

Collins' favorite lures for redfish include ¼-ounce Gulp and Redfish Magic spinnerbaits during falling tides, or soft-plastic paddle-tail lures bumped along the bottom.

Good fishing hours include the first couple of hours of incoming tide and last two hours of falling tide.

When tides flood marsh grass, he'll push a 3/0 Owner circle hook into a soft-plastic grub to make it weedless and toss it in front of tailing redfish that scour bottoms for tiny crabs and other crustaceans.

"I like for clients to fish the edges of marsh islands near a little deeper water with a Carolina rig or pitch live baits at docks with shade," he said.

If redfish don't show interest in artificial lures, Collins ties on Carolina rigs to flip live finger mullets, pinfish, tiny croakers or menhaden near marsh islands.

Oyster beds also can be a redfish magnet, he said.

"Oyster beds attract mud minnows and hold all types of little crabs. Redfish eat mud crabs and small blue crabs."

His open-water tackle includes medium-light 40-pound class Star rods mated to 2500 series Penn Conflict reels spooled with 10-pound test Power Pro braided main line and pink 30-pound test Yo-Zuri monofilament leaders.

For fishing near oyster rocks or marsh edges, he'll use 6- to 14-pound rated Star Segis rods with 15- to 20-pound test Power Pro and 50-pound test fluorocarbon leaders.

A day's catch often includes five to 10 red drum and flounder that'll smack artificial grubs and live baits, the same things drum eat.

The redfish keeper limit in North Carolina is one fish per day inside an 18- to 27-inch slot limit. ■

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TAMING TARPON

Silver kings are biting in Georgetown

A By Jeff Burleson
 August is the prime month to target tarpon in the inshore waters along the South Carolina coast.

Guide Greg Holmes of Fish Skinny Charters out of Georgetown, South Carolina specifically fishes for everything from bull reds, speckled trout, and flounder to the ultimate of all, the silver king.

"Tarpon show up around here in mid-July and are available until the first week or two of October," Holmes said. (843-241-0594) "But, the second and third week of August is the peak for tarpon fishing in the Georgetown area, especially in the bay."

The inshore and nearshore waters are inundated with mullet, menhaden, and juvenile fishes this time of year. The tarpon will gorge on these schools of baitfish wherever they can find them. And the nearshore and inshore waters are typically teeming with forage in August.

"The jetties, river mouths, beachfronts, and bays are good places to find tarpon in the peak of the summer," he said.

Holmes patrols these areas and looks for fish feeding, rolling on the surface, or bait busting on the surface.

"I like to ride in the bay on the rising tide and look for nervous bait. Sometimes you can even see the flashes at a distance. It's not that hard to see. And it can be obvious when a big one explodes on the surface," he said.

Holmes floats either live or dead bait 3 feet below a cork. Floating the baits enables them to cover a large area. He will use either a live or dead 9- to 12-inch mullet or large menhaden on a 7/0 or 9/0 offset circle hook.

"It is always best to fish these areas when you see fish surfacing and feeding on live schools. Sometimes you don't see them at all though. But it doesn't mean the tarpon aren't there either. We will stake up and fish these areas for a while," he said.

Typically, tarpon will be traveling in groups that can be in small two- to three-fish schools to over a dozen fish in a school.

Tarpon are regularly caught across the east coast from North Carolina to Florida. They migrate up the coast from



Numerous tarpon spend the summer in Georgetown's waters, and these fish can put on a show when hooked.

Florida following the bait venturing up the Eastern Seaboard. And the rich and fertile waters around Georgetown are prime places to land a 100+ pound fish in the simmering August waters. ■

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GET DOWN ON THE WATER

TROLL THE DEPTHS FOR SUMMERTIME FISH.

■ By Phillip Gentry

On any given weekend night throughout the summer, you're very likely to hear *MUSIC ROLLING ACROSS THE WATER.*

The summer crowds love to come to the lake to party and get down to the beat.

On Lake Greenwood in South Carolina, Dale Brown from Waterloo is likely to be at the source of the music. As the owner of Brown Entertainment, he can jam with the best of them, providing music and karaoke to several lakeside venues.

During the day, Brown loves to get down on the water. By getting down, he means trolling baits behind his boat. He trolls for almost anything that will bite during the summer heat. He's not alone. Trolling is a great way to cover water, create a breeze to keep the heat under control, and catch fish. The remaining factor is targeting the right depths for the fish you're seeking.

A variable speed trolling motor has replaced using the boat's main motor or a smaller outboard for almost every trolling application. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Dale Brown said trolling is a great summertime tactic to catch scattered fish and beat the heat.

SURFACE TO 10 FEET

When he's on the water, Brown targets long stretches of water that have enough current to keep the water a bit cooler than the surrounding areas, and with relatively clean bottom so there's almost no chance of fouling his lines.

"The stretch of water I like is only 8 to 10 feet deep through the whole run," he said. "I catch everything from bass to crappie, perch and even stripers."

From the rear deck of his pontoon, Brown will cast out four to six lines. Most of these lines will have crappie jigs on them ranging from $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{32}$ ounces. Another favorite bait is a sinking blade bait called a Steel Shad.

"I cast the lines out and then check the depth," he said. "If I can lift the rod all the way up, then pull the line with my other hand and it comes to the top, that's about the right distance out."

Brown sets his speed on a variable speed trolling motor for just under 1 mile per hour. He then makes passes up and down the stretch of river.

"I see bait in here most of the time," he said. "I know my baits are covering different depths, some up close to the top and others near the bottom. So I don't depend much on electronics, I just troll until I catch fish."

10 FEET TO 20 FEET ➤



Phillip Gentry

10 FEET TO 20 FEET

Lake Gaston, N.C. fishing guide Zakk Royce fishes for a number of different species during the year. When white perch and striped bass, along with a few black bass and even a catfish or two favor open water in the mid-depth range, Royce uses a crankbait/jig combo that lets him keep his baits securely in the mid depths.

“I run a three-way swivel from the 8- to 10-pound main line that goes to my rod. I tie two, 2- to 3-foot leaders off of it using 20-pound mono,” he said. “I tie the crankbait on the shorter leader and the longer one gets a Beetle Spin or something with a small blade attached.”

Royce uses the crankbait as a depth planer. He said a Bandit 200 will run to about 10 feet and the 300 will run deeper. The lighter jig runs above the crank and tends to collect smaller fish like perch and crappie while usually only the bigger fish will hit the crankbait.

“That’s not a hard and fast rule,” he said. “I’ve caught



Phillip Gentry is a freelance outdoor writer and photographer who says that if it swims, walks, hops, flies or crawls he’s usually not too far behind.

two smaller perch on the same crank.”

Royce uses the 112-pound, 36-volt trolling motor on his guide boat to troll the rigs, one on either side of the boat. The optimal trolling speed is from 2.0 to 2.5 mph. He has tried to run more rods but said when he’s in a school of fish, it’s tough to handle more than two rods.

“I run the lines way back, like 100 feet behind the boat. So it takes a little bit of maneuvering to get turned around. But if the perch are in the area, along with catfish, bass, and crappie, I’m usually catching fish all through the run,” he said.

20 FEET TO 50 FEET >





Phillip Gentry

With any trolling tactic, sturdy rod holders are needed to fish with multiple rods at the same time. ABOVE: Leadcore line sinks much faster than standard line, allowing anglers to target deeper depths without the use of heavy weights or other attachments.



Phillip Gentry

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, mahogany, 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-bream), 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 SCDNR's Regulations Digest

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

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

20 FEET TO 50 FEET

Around the Albemarle, North Carolina area, Rodney Crisco of Joe's Bait, Tackle & Guns said August is the time to troll deep, especially if there is a thermocline. To get in the right zone, he prefers to fish with lead core line.

Lead core line is a continuous strip of lead that is sheathed in nylon braid. The appeal of lead core is that it sinks better than standard line — getting to the depths fish are holding.

Lead core line is multi-colored with colors changing every 10 feet. The color variation is used to discern the amount of line out by counting colors. Crisco uses the color coordination in a formula for depth control.

“Although all boats are a little different, at a trolling speed of 2 to 2.5 miles per hour, a bait on lead core will sink 3½ to 4 feet per color” said Crisco. “By watching your graph and marking fish, you can let out the numbers of colors to get down to the fish.”

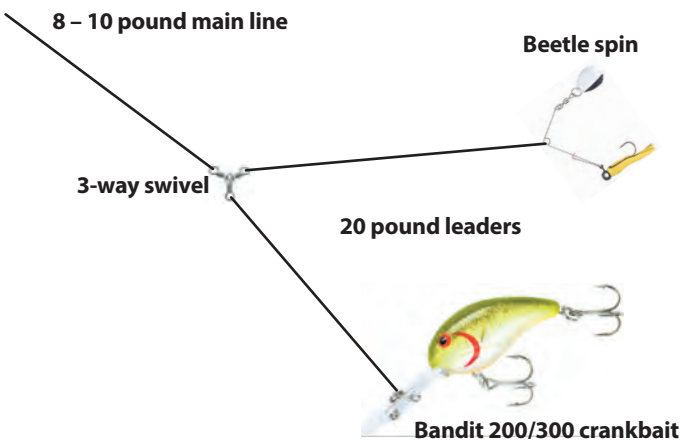
At the tag end of the line, Crisco attaches a 50-foot section of 20-pound mono or fluorocarbon leader via a double uni-knot. To the other end of the leader, Crisco ties a three-way swivel with either a double bucktail rig, a bucktail and spoon or he may use a combination that includes hard stick baits.

“Trolling with lead core lets you cover a lot of water, which is essential since fish may be in a number of different places. And it creates strikes,” said Crisco. “Most of these are reaction strikes rather than feeding bites. I believe a lot of stripers follow white perch schools around and let them do all the work of injuring baitfish because they don't want to expend the energy. Then, right out of the blue, here comes this rig with all this action, noise, and color barreling right down on them and they hit it on impulse.” ■

Guide Zakk Royce uses the prescribed trolling depth of a crankbait to get additional baits down to that level. **RIGHT:** Striped bass and white perch are commonly caught species while trolling almost everywhere in the Carolinas.

ZAKK ROYCE'S PERCH TROLLING RIG

Trolling speed: 2.0 – 2.5 MPH



50 FEET PLUS

Lake Jocassee in northern South Carolina is well known for its depths, down to 300 feet in some areas. To fish depths of this magnitude, downriggers are a necessity. Guide Sam Jones said with downriggers, he can put a bait right in the face of a fish at well over 100 feet deep.

Downriggers work by suspending a heavy weight hydrodynamic ball from the stern of the boat. A heavy boom allows the ball and cable to hang free while the length of cable and subsequently the depth of the ball are controlled by a metal spool. The spool is equipped with a depth counter to give the angler precise control over the depth of the ball. A sturdy line clip is just above the ball. The release has rubber pads that hold the fishing line tight enough to troll the bait. It releases when a fish takes the bait. This allows the angler direct access to the fish without having to hassle with the added weight of the ball.

"Trolling with downriggers is my specialty," said Jones. "I can cover a lot of water and target fish that I see on my depth finder that most people would never dream of trying to catch with regular fishing tackle."

Using downrigger balls staggered anywhere from 80 feet deep up to 115 feet, the guide uses his main outboard motor to troll along the edges of the river channel. He keeps the motor at idle speed which he measures at between 1.5 to 1.9 miles per hour on his GPS. His typical spread is a six-rod setup: two lines stacked on the outside balls and one line from each of the inside balls.

His arsenal of baits is a mixture of trolling spoons and shallow diving crankbaits. The most popular spoons for downrigger fishing are Sutton Spoons, Doctor Spoons and another locally-made flutter spoon. All of these lures are light, flutter-type spoons in the 2- to 3-inch range with an occasional 4 incher deployed in hopes of a trophy fish. ■

LUNKER LINES ➤

Downriggers allow anglers to deploy baits to depths of over 100 feet, then release the line on the strike and fight the fish to the surface.



Phillip Gentry

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, mahogany, 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. % 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.



Davy Hite begins fishing shallow this month because that's where bass find the most dissolved oxygen.

Dan Kibler

SHALLOW FOR AUGUST BASS?

YOU BET, THANKS TO WATER QUALITY

Obviously, August for most people isn't a time that they're thinking about fishing because of the heat.

But you can have some good days in the Carolinas, especially if you're fishing a lake that has blueback herring.

And strangely enough, one of the winning strategies in August is to look shallow. Well, maybe shallower – at least compared to June and July.

The reason? Water quality. As the water temperature peaks in the most-miserable of all months in the Carolinas, the places where freshwater gamefish – and baitfish – can survive and thrive start to shrink.

The water toward the surface of most lakes is as hot as fish can stand. But it has the amount of dissolved oxygen they need to thrive. Deeper, where the water is a little less hot – cooler than what you pour out of a coffee pot – the levels of dissolved oxygen aren't high enough.

So a good percentage of the baitfish and gamefish in a river or reservoir will make

a move toward the surface.

WATER QUALITY

When I won the Bassmaster Classic in August 1999 in the Louisiana Delta, it was hot enough to boil crawfish. And before the tournament, I actually stumbled onto quite a few dead fish. The water temperature at the beginning of the day would be around 90 degrees. But by afternoon, it would be around 93 or 94. But I still caught every fish I weighed in those three days in 4 feet of water or less. They chose the shallows because of the water quality.

That's one reason that fish are often deeper in June and July, after the spawn when they move offshore. They can live in deeper water because there's enough dissolved oxygen. That's why we're fishing deep-diving crankbaits like a DT-16, big worms and big Mop Jigs. But August is a different animal.

Think about it. At the opposite end of the spectrum, during the winter. That's

when you see shad and herring dying and floating to the surface, where the seagulls sweep them up. This is just in reverse; they're moving up because it's too hot.

A lot of fishermen overlook water quality, but it moves the fish around. Dissolved oxygen affects where the fish have to live. That's how fish get trapped sometimes as the areas with the right temperature and dissolved oxygen narrow – especially in some of our coastal rivers where storms may push saltwater upstream.

A lot of bluegill will be close to the bank in shallow water, and the bass can be there, feeding on them. That's one kind of shallow water to look for. Don't be afraid to go to the bank.



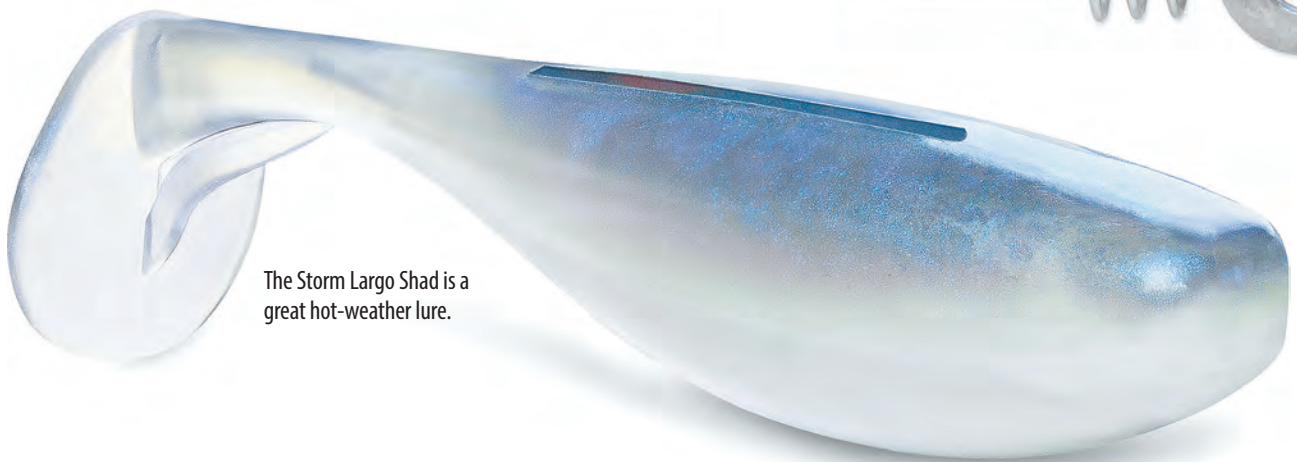
Davy Hite of Ninety Six, S.C. is a two-time BASS Angler of the Year who won the 1999 Bassmasters Classic and 1998 FLW Tour Championship. He is sponsored by Phoenix, Yamaha, Bass Pro Shops, Rapala, Buckeye, VMC, Humminbird, War Eagle and Yamamoto.

SHALLOW OVER DEEP

The other is, shallow water over deep water. Shad and blueback herring in August, September and October tend to be shallow over deep – suspended over cover like brush piles and cane piles. The water might be anywhere from 15 to 40 feet deep. But they can be anywhere from 10 feet to the surface. That's why I like to fish topwaters like Skitter Vs or Cover Pops, my favorite walking and popping baits. And I will fish baits that I can get down to suspended fish, say 5 or 10 feet deep over 20 or 30 feet of water.

Keep a sharp eye on your electronics. I'm constantly scanning my Humminbird Helix units for signs of baitfish and bass suspended up in the water column. And I'm looking for fish schooling at the surface, or a fish or two breaking the surface. Those are giveaways – like the seagulls in winter.

When I find fish suspended around bait or suspended over deeper cover, relating to it but nowhere near the bottom, I like to fish two baits that I can count down to the right depth: a Texas-rigged Senko or a big swimbait like a Storm Largo Shad fished on a VMC swimbait head. I'll rig that Senko with the point just barely under the skin of the bait and make long casts over deep water and count the bait down. Same with the swimbait. I'll count down about a second for each foot. That's a good general rule, but an 1/8-ounce weight sinks a lot slower than a 3/4-ounce weight. Take that into consideration. A good thing about fishing a big swimbait for suspended fish is that you can reduce the amount of weight you have to use. And you can hold your rod tip high on the retrieve, making it easier to feel the bait.



The Storm Largo Shad is a great hot-weather lure.



A Rapala Skitter V fished on top is a killer on bass suspended shallow over deep water.

COUNT IT DOWN

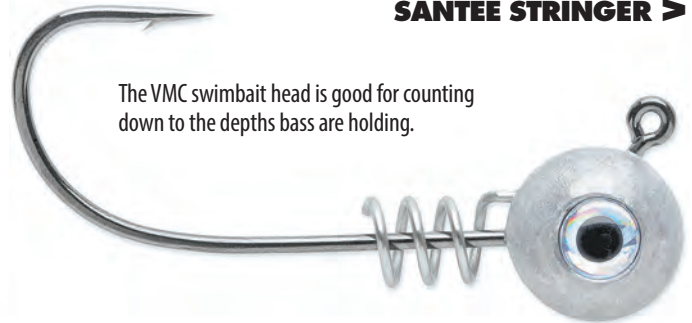
I remember a conversation with the great Bill Dance. We were in Tennessee, and he was telling fishing stories. He talked about the first fish he ever caught offshore, in the late 1960s or around 1970. He said he made a long cast and counted down, "One-thousand-one, one-thousand-two...all the way to one-thousand-seventeen. Then, he started working his bait a little, and he got a bite. He said, "I just caught a bass in 17 feet of water!"

If fish are relating to a brush pile or cover, you want to cast over that target and count down to the depth they're holding – not necessarily to the cover.

I don't fish a bait real slowly in August, but not real fast, either. I cover water, because I don't think fish are as territorial. You don't have to coax them out from the brush for a bite. And you'll need to move more to find them. They will roam a lot more in the middle of the summer than in spring or fall. So you do better if you're moving.

So, I know it's hot, but that's no reason to put your boat in the garage for the month. And it's no time to be tied to heavy, bottom-bumping rigs and baits. If you like to fish shallow the way I do, fish are still there to be caught in August. ■

SANTEE STRINGER ➤



The VMC swimbait head is good for counting down to the depths bass are holding.

Fishing just as the sun is setting, then through the night is a great way to beat the sweltering days of summer.



BEAT THE MID-SUMMER BLUES

Terry Madewell

KEEP COOL, GAZE AT THE STARS, CATCH CATFISH

It's August and it's hot everywhere in the Carolinas. High temperatures and humidity are bummers, but you can still beat the midsummer blues by heading for the water.

Specifically, you can go to the Santee Cooper lakes and catch big blue catfish at night.

Catfish guide Steve Howard said he fishes day or night trips during the summer, but the nocturnal hours certainly provide advantages.

WHY FISH AT NIGHT DURING AUGUST

Howard said fishing during the dark hours can be productive anytime of the year but the summer feeding patterns can be very consistent.

"Catfish, mostly blues but flatheads too, move shallow to feed at night and active, feeding catfish are my targets," he said.

Howard (336-421-5313) guides out of

Blacks Camp (843-753-2231) located on the Diversion Canal. He generally fishes Lake Moultrie but said both lakes are productive.

The lower air temperature is a plus in terms of comfort and enhances the enjoyment of the fishing trip, he said. Also, because of the proximity of the lakes to the coast and the sheer size of the Santee Cooper lakes, a reliable breeze often develops.

"A steady breeze pushes forage into downwind locations," Howard said. "Food motivates catfish and during the summer catfish feed heavily so I target food sources. The food may be species such as threadfin shad, gizzard shad and white perch. Another good bet for August is fishing mussel beds."

Downwind points, humps, coves, pockets, ledges and depressions leading to shallow water are all potentially prime nocturnal hotspots.

HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT STUFF

Howard gets on the water before dark, usually an hour or more before sunset.

"Fish patterns change as forage moves so this gives me time to determine the daily pattern," he said. "I'll graph places where I've had success recently, looking for forage and catfish signals on the graph. I prefer to see catfish off the bottom, not hugging it, because, hopefully that means they're active."

When he finds an area with promising signs, he'll often set up a course to drift-fish over skinny water areas that are pos-



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.

sible nocturnal targets. He likes to drift up a slope, over a hump and back down the other side. Often one side or the other will produce fish.

"I love to catch a couple of quality fish before dark because that means we should be in the right area," he said. "Also, that clues me in to where, and how, I need to fish after dark because drifting or fishing from an anchored setup can be effective."

TECHNIQUES FOR SUCCESS

Howard said he'll make a decision before dark whether to anchor or drift fish.

"Both techniques are productive during August and often the decision is based on my sense of what the fish are going to do, as well as the weather pattern for that specific evening," he said. "If fish are in the area and they're likely to move shallow, I'll get anchored and set up before dark."

Howard said defining shallow water for fishing is not about a specific number in terms of the depth to fish.

"If I'm going to fish shallow, I'll target the shallowest water in the area where fish are active," he said. "It may be 5-feet-deep or it may be 15-feet-deep. Doesn't matter to me as long as quality catfish show up."

When anchoring, he gets rigs baited and cast out before dark. He'll fan cast rigs around the boat to saturate the shallowest water and down a slope toward nearby deeper water that catfish use as travel routes.

"Often, we'll catch some good fish before dark. And right at sunset can be prime," he said. "But it can be a game of patience too, and they may not turn on until well after dark."

"If I'm on a good drift-fishing bite prior to dark, catching multiple fish each drift, I'm not going to leave biting fish to go anchor," he said. "Drifting is an awesome nighttime technique. I may have to adapt and drift shallower water as it gets darker. But if I'm on biting fish I stay on them. If action slows and I think they've scattered in the shallows, then I can anchor and fish that target after dark."

Bait is always a key for catfish and his summertime favorites are white perch and blueback herring.

"Bait size is important and I'll fish some big baits. But I typically use smaller baits this time of the year and they produce big fish," he said. "Mussel beds are excellent targets. And it's common to see mussel shells floating during August. When I see this, I know catfish are eating mussels. So I'll downsize my baits to match the small chunks of mussel meat that catfish consume."

Head to Santee Cooper and beat the heat while putting those midsummer blues in the cooler. ■

DRIFT OR ANCHOR?

Anchoring and drifting are both productive methods on Santee at night. Anglers can get a feel for what's best in the evening, then follow through with that plan throughout the night. If things slow down, they can always change it up as long as they have the proper equipment on the boat.

SMALL CRAFT ADVISORY ➤



Terry Madewell

Big blues can be taken by drifting at night as well as by fishing from an anchored position.

SMALL CRAFT ADVISORY

Phillip Gentry

Rivers and streams across the Carolinas offer great hot-weather fishing opportunities.



Brandon Barber

CHILLIN' OUT

BEAT THE SUMMTER HEAT IN THESE KAYAK FISHING LOCALES

August and February are probably the hardest on kayak anglers when it comes time to load up the kayak and go fishing. In February, water temperatures are usually the lowest of the year, you have to wrap up in a bunch of layers to stay warm, and fish tend to be dormant because of the temperature extremes.

The same could be said of the month of August when water temperatures reach the highest peaks and like February, fish tend to be sluggish because of the hot water.

The good news is you can forget all the heavy clothing in August. And it's very possible to find cooler water and willing fish if you know where to look. Here's some ideas.

RIVERS

Whether saltwater or fresh, moving water tends to be cooler than bodies of water that don't see much movement. If

you're looking at what section of river to launch on, the old adage that rivers get deeper further downstream is one to pay attention to.

Find a stretch of river that has deeper water than the surrounding area, which will attract fish to concentrate in those areas.

TAILRACES

Water exiting another body of water upstream often cools in one of two ways. If the exit is over the top of a dam, the fall aerates the water and will cool it significantly in the next few hundred yards. If the water exits from depth, as is the case from many hydro-electric dams, cooler water is being deposited into the tailrace and will be significantly cooler for up to a mile or more.

DEEP WATER

Deeper water is usually the ticket when surface temperatures are pushing

the upper 80- to 90-degree mark. That doesn't always mean you have to fish deep. But deeper water offers fish of all varieties a respite, making them more willing to move up in the water column when its time to feed or hold on the bottom if that's where the food is.

BRIDGE OVERPASSES

Again a feature common around saltwater inlets and freshwater impoundments, bridges often cross deep enough water to attract fish. As a bonus, if the overpass is high enough and wide enough to get the boat under, the angler can fish all day in relative comfort while the overpass takes the brunt of the sun.



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

DON'T FORGET SWAMPS

Believe it or not, a swampy area is a great place to fish during the heat of the summer provided there is overhead cover to keep the water cool. Swamps frequently have underwater springs and creek tributaries that keep enough water flowing to prevent stagnating the area.

One of the aspects of swamp fishing that few people consider is that swamp fish don't have a lot of options when it comes to migrating in or out of a swamp. These fish tend to seek the deepest, densest areas to hold in and will readily charge out to ambush prey if it is properly presented. ■

OFFSHORE

For the saltwater kayak angler, fishing beyond the beach offers better fishing for migratory species who prefer the warmer water. Getting a kayak through the surf zone is an advanced skillset and should never be attempted alone. It's better to find an inlet where the surf is easier to deal with although currents can be just as tricky to navigate. ■

BEST BETS

NORTH CAROLINA

WHAT — Sheepshead

WHERE — Swansboro area bridges

HOW — It's hard to beat live fiddler crabs for bait when fishing for sheepshead. Likewise, if the bait lands in front of a redfish, flounder, black drum or other opportunistic feeder, you can add that to the list. Use a Medium to light action spinning rod with 20-pound braid and a 24 foot section of 25-pound mono leader. A ½ oz egg sinker (or more if there's stronger current) on a Carolina rig will get the bait to the bottom.

LAUNCH — <https://www.ncwildlife.org/boating/where-to-boat>

INSIDER TIP — Use a #2 Aberdeen hook when fishing for sheepshead. Many times, the light wire hook will bite in the fish's lip lining but is also strong enough to penetrate the roof of the mouth inside the jaw. A bonus is if the hook gets snagged on the structure, you can bend the hook out without having to retie every time.

SOUTH CAROLINA

WHAT — Striped bass and black bass

WHERE — Tailraces on the Savannah River Chain

HOW — The fishing in the areas immediately beneath the dams is generally good at any time but definitely ramps up when water is being released. Kayak anglers should not venture too close to the dam facility as heavy water release can be a hazard. Casting live or artificial baitfish imitating lures around shoreline structure will catch both striped bass, hybrids, and black bass.

LAUNCH — Each tailrace area behind Lakes Hartwell, Russell, and Clarks Hill has access areas on either the South Carolina or Georgia side and the fishing licenses are reciprocal so it doesn't matter which side you launch from.

INSIDER TIP — Call the USACE Savannah District office at 1-800-944-7207 and press "1" for the water release schedules for all three lakes.

CATFISH HOTSPOTS ➤



Swamps are often-overlooked honey holes when the mercury rises.



Wolfe's Guide Service

CATFISH TWO WAYS at Lake Moultrie

Catching catfish isn't a problem on Santee's Lower Lake, no matter what month it is, according to Capt. Jason Wolfe of Wolfe's Guide Service (803-487-3690). The August heat brings challenges for anglers, but the fish usually cooperate well enough.

Wolfe has a two-step plan for catching fish during the dog days of summer.

"The Lower Lake can get pretty windy once the sun gets up. But early mornings are usually quite calm. So I like to get on the water before sunup, anchor down, and put out six lines," he said.

To avoid unwanted movement, Wolfe suggests anchoring both the front and back of the boat.

"If you've got one good anchor on your boat, you need one more. If you're fishing with just one, the least amount of current or boat traffic will have you swaying, either creating slack in your lines or pulling them too tight," he said.

He likes to start the morning in fairly shallow water, where he said catfish patrol during the early morning hours. He uses a basic Carolina rig here, with 60-pound Slime Line monofilament, 1-ounce sinkers and Triple Threat circle hooks from size 3/0 to 8/0.

"Fishing that shallow water first thing, sometimes you can score

a really big fish before the sun is even up," he said.

And once the sun does get up a ways, he pulls up anchor, gets into some open water, and drifts.

"We usually have enough wind by then to push the boat. I like to stay around .6 mph so I'll use drift socks if I need to slow the boat," he said.

To cut down on snags, he'll replace his sinkers with Drifting Stix, which are long, thin, flexible weights that aid in sliding through debris. He prefers drifting sideways, which allows him to space his Big Cat Fever rods out a little more for better coverage.

Once his rods are baited and his lines are cast, he places the rods in rod holders and watches the rod tips.

"One mistake a lot of people make is they try to set the hook too soon. And that's true whether you're anchored or drifting. It's best to just wait for the rod to double over. The fish will often hook itself as long as you don't jerk the bait away. Sometimes it's just not a very strong bite and you're not going to catch those anyway," he said.

Wolfe said the Lower Lake has too many good anchoring and drifting spots to count.

"I'll go back to areas that have produced in the past, but I'm always finding new spots too. The lake is so diverse that I don't think you can go wrong no matter where you fish," he said. ■

Anchor in the morning, then drift when the sun is up for lots of catfish action at Santee's Lower Lake.



CATCH THE BLUES

Gaston's blue cats are feeding heavily

C By Dusty Wilson
 atfish are synonymous with summertime fishing and there's no better month than August and no better place than Lake Gaston — where big blues have left the spawn in the dust and are ready to devour a properly-placed bait. Guide Zakk Royce of Gasburg, VA will be there with a spread of rigs to tempt fish from the shallows to deep water.

"In August, all of the blues will be off the spawn," said Royce (252-398-7192), who runs Blues Brothers Catfish Guide Service. "This makes it a good month for big fish because the biggest blues are later coming off the spawn. And they're going to be hungry. The fish will typically move up into shallower water to feed aggressively and back into deeper water during the heat of the day. But they can be caught in both places."

Royce will make his shallowest presentation during the early morning when the water is at its coolest. Around main lake points, flats and humps he pulls baits in depths as skinny as 5 to 10 feet. He gradually moves deeper to 15, 20, 25 feet around the same areas as the sun gets up and the water warms. The business end of Royce's lines are pulling Santee rigs so that he can

Big blue catfish are biting strong at Lake Gaston, and drifting is a great way to catch them.

troll snag free in any depth of water. And about half of these lines will have a slip float or a planer board. In 5 to 10 feet, all baits will drag bottom. But as he trolls into deeper water, these baits will suspend at different depths to appeal to fish throughout the water column. As he moves toward the ledges of the main river channel and much deeper water, he rigs all baits to suspend above the thermocline which generally establishes between 30 and 40 feet deep.

"I like to run a 50/50 mix with cut gizzard shad and white perch for bait," said Royce, "and I also mix up the sizes of the baits I'm using. Blues eat a lot of mussels on the points this time of year and they're more likely to notice a small bait if that's what they're keyed in on. A lot of days, I'll catch the biggest fish on the smallest bait."

"The fish are going to be spread out, but you can troll faster in the summer because their metabolism is going to be sped up," said Royce. "The 0.5 mph range is a good rule of thumb. But I've caught them trolling for stripers at 2.5 to 3 mph. So I know they'll chase a bait. When I'm searching for fish, I'll run from 1 to 1.5 mph and then slow down when I find them." ■

FRYING-SIZED CATS

on Lake Monticello

S By Pat Robertson
 ummertime. And the catfishing is easy on Lake Monticello. Once hot weather sets in, usually in mid to late June, Monticello is the go-to spot for filling a cooler with frying size catfish, according to Capt. William Attaway.

The fishing is easy because you just put your lines out with bait and drift, said Attaway who operates Slick Willie's Guide Service (www.slickwilliesguideservice.com/). He guides on lakes Monticello, Murray and at Santee Cooper for catfish, and on Murray for striped bass.

"The fish are hanging high in the water column this time of year, so I don't use any weight on the line," Attaway said. "I think they do that because when they pump the water back up into the lake through the turbines it stirs the baitfish up and they also bring bait up through the turbines. The fish are just sitting there waiting to eat."

TARGET SUSPENDING FISH

Attaway said the catfish suspend in the top 10 to 15 feet of the water column, even in areas where the water is 100 feet deep. If he finds some fish a little lower in the water he will crimp on a



William Attaway

Frying-sized catfish are plentiful at Lake Monticello, and they bite well during summer.

split shot to get the bait down a little bit, he said.

"I like to use several different baits – white perch, bluegill, gizzard shad and chicken cut into small pieces," Attaway said. "There are a lot of mussels in this lake and the catfish are feeding on them. That's one reason I like to use chicken. I cut it into pieces no bigger than my thumb and it looks like a mussel floating in the water."

Attaway said the catch this time of year consists mostly of small blue catfish and a few channel catfish from 1 to about 5 pounds. And anglers have the possibility of landing even bigger catfish up to 20 pounds.

"Monticello is the one place that I know you can catch fish in August," he said. "On a good day you can usually get from 25 to 50 fish."

Plenty for a summer fish fry. ■

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HEAT SPELLS GOOD NEWS AT TUCKERTOWN

T By Tony Garitta
he hotter the weather, the better the bass fishing at Tuckertown Lake. That's primarily because of the effect of the current that's generated when water is released from High Rock Lake Dam. Hot weather increases the likelihood of the lake being pulled.

The current stirs up the forage, which triggers a bass bite that can be phenomenal upon a strong pull.

The quality bass bite is verified by Bo Russell's summer wildcat tournaments at Tuckertown. The winning weights, ranging from 14 to 16 pounds, appear rather modest. But Russell has a three-fish tournament limit for summer events. In other words, the winners are bringing in three bass each weighing 4 pounds or more.

Anglers can assess the flow on their way to the Flat Creek Landing.

As they travel along Bringle Ferry Road, High Rock Dam will come into view. If water is gushing out of three or four gates, that's a sign to have a net handy. The strong current should result in excellent fishing.

Fishermen can also check the buoys near the tailrace. If they are leaning over, the lake is being pulled.



When the water is flowing at Tuckertown, bass fishing can be lights out on even the hottest days of the year.



BASS HOTSPOTS

TUCKERTOWN BASS continued >

The stretch from Cabin Creek to High Rock Lake Dam is influenced the most by current. This rugged area features stump-ridden ridges, rocks and eddies. And the fish come alive with moving water. Jigs, shaky heads, plastic worms and shallow-running crankbaits provoke the most bites.

Unfortunately, this shallow area is treacherous to navigate and a graveyard for props. Fishermen should motor about with care and note the channel buoys.

A strong pull can also improve the fishing throughout the lake. The mouth of Riles Creek to Badin Dam harbors deep structure including rocky points and ridges, an old railroad bed, stumps and tree laps. It's also much safer to fish.

Anglers use jigs, shaky heads and plastic creature baits to fish tree laps, algae pockets and stumps, frequently removing algae from their baits as they fish.

Some anglers, like Orlando Giles of Lexington, combat the algae by becoming frog tossers. Giles fishes the SPRO frog in shallow algae-infested pockets during the hottest of weather, contending that's the best time for catching big bass on a frog.

"It takes a big bass to blast through those algae mats to grab a frog," said Giles. "You won't get many bites. But the bites you get will be from big fish." ■

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Andrew Irvin

Andrew Irvin caught this hefty blue catfish from the Wateree River in June.



CJ Newcomb

CJ Newcomb caught and released this 47-pound black drum from Jeanette's Pier in Nags Head.



Emma LaRoche

Six-year-old Emma Laroche caught her personal best bass in Kingstree, S.C. on a pink plastic worm.



Dallas Brooks

Dallas Brooks caught this 25-inch red drum on a live finger mullet while fishing in Carolina Beach on June 8.



Brad Needham

Brad Needham hooked up and released this billfish on May 20 while fishing aboard HATTERAS FEVER II.



Jackson Roy

Jackson Roy caught this dolphinfish near the Navy Wreck while fishing out of Wilmington in May.



Carl Smith

Carl Smith was fishing in the surf at N. Topsail Beach when he landed this redfish.



Jacob Howard

Jacob Howard was fishing in Orangeburg, SC in May when he caught this chunky bass.



Jones Boyd

Jones Boyd and his dad Jeremy Boyd caught these nice flounder for dinner in Murrells Inlet, S.C.



Johnathan Gelok

Johnathan Gelok caught this 20 1/4-inch rainbow trout in Cherokee, NC's Soco Creek in May 2022.



JT Stanford

JT Stanford caught this blue catfish on the Broad River near Gaffney, S.C. during a night fishing excursion.



Caitlin Kovacs

Caitlin Kovacs of Charleston caught this redfish while fishing with Lowcountry Outdoor Adventures in April.



Eddie Rieman

Eddie Rieman was fishing out of Murrells Inlet on May 25 when he landed this huge dolphin.



Jess Inman

Jess Inman was fishing from the bank on the Lower Saluda River when she caught and released this 43-inch striper.



Taylor Thomas

Taylor Thomas caught this redfish in South Carolina's lowcountry.



**Lee Workman,
Stoney Kanupp**

Lee Workman and Stoney Kanupp caught this unique-colored coyote while running a trapline in Burke County, N.C.



Ashley Wallace

Ashley Wallace caught this 8-pound, 2-ounce citation sheepshead at Topsail Island on June 11.

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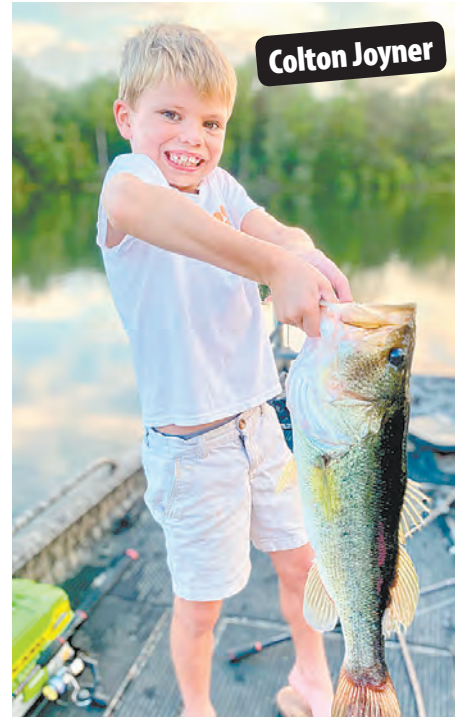
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Digital images must be at least 500KB and in jpeg format.



Cameron Brewer

Cameron Brewer's Wando River trout bit a live shrimp. The speck weighed 5 pounds and was almost 25 inches long.



Colton Joyner

Colton Joyner caught his personal best largemouth bass during a June fishing trip in Kershaw County, S.C.



Caleb Barnhardt

Caleb Barnhardt caught this 21-inch flounder while fishing from Apache Pier in Myrtle Beach in June.



Matthew Taylor

Matthew Taylor of Manning, SC caught these bass in mid-May while fishing on the Santee Cooper lakes.

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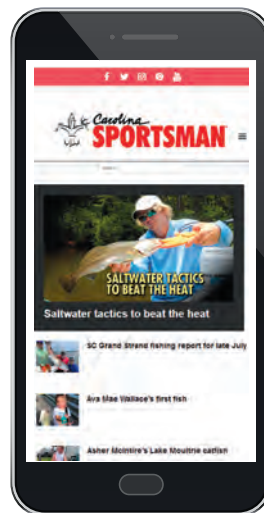


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Astro Tables is a quick-reference version of its parent publication, the **PrimeTimes Wall Calendar**, which is recommended for those wishing more complete data on the best days and times to go fishing and hunting for the entire year (see "Available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

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BEST DAYS				
2022	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	VALUE
AUG				
Mon 1	██	██	██	43
Tue 2	██	██	██	41
Wed 3	██	██	██	38
Thu 4	██	██	██	41
Fri 5	██	██	██	49
Sat 6	██	██	██	38

Sun 7	██	██	██	32
Mon 8	██	██	██	43
Tue 9	██	██	██	54
Wed 10	██	██	██	66
Thu 11	██	██	██	70
Fri 12	██	██	██	61
Sat 13	██	██	██	53

Sun 14	██	██	██	45
Mon 15	██	██	██	42
Tue 16	██	██	██	44
Wed 17	██	██	██	51
Thu 18	██	██	██	63
Fri 19	██	██	██	54
Sat 20	██	██	██	49

Sun 21	██	██	██	49
Mon 22	██	██	██	49
Tue 23	██	██	██	47
Wed 24	██	██	██	56
Thu 25	██	██	██	65
Fri 26	██	██	██	74
Sat 27	██	██	██	76

Sun 28	██	██	██	64
Mon 29	██	██	██	52
Tue 30	██	██	██	40
Wed 31	██	██	██	33

25 50 75
AVERAGE

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LUNAR PERIODS					
TIMES OCCURRING AT NIGHT ARE SHADED					
MOON RISE	PRIMARY MOON OVERHEAD	MOON SET	PRIMARY MOON UNDERFOOT		
9:54 am	3:09 pm - 5:39 pm	10:44 pm	2:41 am - 5:31 am	☾	
10:54 am	4:02 pm - 6:10 pm	11:10 pm	3:34 am - 6:04 am	☾	
11:55 am	4:56 pm - 6:44 pm	11:37 pm	4:27 am - 6:35 am	☾	
12:59 pm	5:52 pm - 7:20 pm		5:21 am - 7:09 am	☾	
2:05 pm	6:50 pm - 8:02 pm ☀	12:06 am	6:17 am - 7:45 am ☀	☾	Half
3:15 pm	7:53 pm - 8:49 pm ☀	12:41 am	7:15 am - 8:27 am ☀	☾	
4:27 pm	8:59 pm - 9:45 pm	1:22 am	8:18 am - 9:14 am	☾	
5:38 pm	10:05 pm - 10:47 pm	2:12 am	9:24 am - 10:10 am	☾	Low
6:42 pm	11:09 pm - 11:55 pm	3:14 am	10:30 am - 11:12 am	☾	
7:37 pm	no period	4:24 am	11:34 am - 12:20 pm ☀	☾	Perigee
8:23 pm	12:08 am - 1:04 am	5:40 am	12:33 pm - 1:29 pm ☀	☾	Full
9:01 pm	1:01 am - 2:09 am	6:55 am	1:26 pm - 2:34 pm ☀	☾	
9:33 pm	1:46 am - 3:14 am	8:08 am	2:11 pm - 3:39 pm	☾	
10:02 pm	2:27 am - 4:15 am	9:18 am	2:52 pm - 4:40 pm	☾	
10:30 pm	3:02 am - 5:14 am	10:24 am	3:27 pm - 5:39 pm	☾	
10:58 pm	3:38 am - 6:10 am	11:27 am	4:03 pm - 6:35 pm	☾	
11:27 pm	4:13 am - 7:05 am ☀	12:29 pm	4:38 pm - 7:30 pm	☾	
11:58 pm	4:49 am - 7:59 am ☀	1:31 pm	5:14 pm - 8:24 pm	☾	Half
	5:28 am - 8:54 am ☀	2:32 pm	5:53 pm - 9:19 pm ☀	☾	
12:34 am	6:11 am - 9:47 am ☀	3:31 pm	6:36 pm - 10:12 pm ☀	☾	
1:15 am	6:58 am - 10:40 am	4:27 pm	7:23 pm - 11:05 pm	☾	
2:01 am	7:47 am - 11:33 am	5:19 pm	8:12 pm - 11:58 pm	☾	High & Apogee
2:53 am	8:40 am - 12:22 pm	6:05 pm	9:05 pm - 12:47 am	☾	
3:49 am	9:32 am - 1:08 pm	6:46 pm	9:57 pm - 1:33 am	☾	
4:48 am	10:26 am - 1:52 pm ☀	7:22 pm	10:51 pm - 2:17 am	☾	
5:48 am	11:19 am - 2:31 pm ☀	7:53 pm	11:44 pm - Midnight	☾	
6:48 am	12:11 pm - 3:07 pm ☀	8:21 pm	Midnight - 2:56 am	☾	New
7:48 am	1:04 pm - 3:40 pm ☀	8:48 pm	12:36 am - 3:32 am	☾	
8:49 am	1:57 pm - 4:13 pm	9:14 pm	1:29 am - 4:05 am	☾	
9:50 am	2:51 pm - 4:47 pm	9:40 pm	2:22 am - 4:38 am	☾	
10:52 am	3:46 pm - 5:22 pm	10:09 pm	3:16 am - 5:12 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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