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Carolinas fishing action should warm with weather

By Tom Higgins
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With a warm spell forecast through the weekend across the Carolinas, fishing conditions should prove very pleasant.

The most promising freshwater locations appear to be Fontana Lake and Lake Keowee. Tops for saltwater angling are the backwaters around Charleston.

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Smallmouth and spotted bass are feeding on the surface in the mid-section of Fontana, the picturesque reservoir in the Great Smoky Mountains, striking crankbaits and topwater lures. Largemouth and spotted bass also are schooling on top at South Carolina's Lake Keowee, where anglers are boating up to 20 per trip.

Sight-casting action for spottails, or reds, is "on fire" at Charleston, according to the S.C. Department of Natural Resources. The fish are feeding in the shallows – "tailing," it's called – and hitting soft plastic lures. Flycasters are catching them on EP Everglades Specials and black Clousers.

LAKE NORMAN: Largemouth and spotted bass along the banks on No. 5 Shad Rap lures. These species also are being found 40-45 feet deep around pods of small forage fish and are hitting jigging spoons. Crappie around deep brush on minnows. Catfish 10-30 feet deep in the coves and off the shoreline on cut baits. Some hybrids, the striper/white bass cross, in the 3-pound range are being boated.

LAKE WYLIE: Continuing fair to good for catfish along the main channel on drift-fished cut gizzard shad and white perch. Fair for crappie from around deep cover and near the power plant hot water discharges on minnows. Fair for largemouth just off the shoreline on Alabama Rigs and Rattletrap lures.

MOUNTAIN ISLAND LAKE: Continuing fair for crappie at the Riverbend Power Station "hot hole" on minnows. Largemouth around the points on deep-running crankbaits.

CANE CREEK PARK: Fair for crappie, mainly on minnows.

YADKIN/PEE DEE RIVER LAKES: Continuing scattered catches of crappie on minnows at all reservoirs – High Rock, Tuckertown, Badin, Tillery and Blewett Falls.

SMITH LAKE, ROCKINGHAM: Good to very good for crappie on both jigs and minnows.

LAKES JAMES, RHODHISS, HICKORY: Fair to good for smallmouth bass at James on shiners. Scattered crappie at Rhodhiss and Hickory on minnows.

LAKE WATEREE: Good to very good for crappie at the upper end of the reservoir. They are biting best just off the bottom in 18-24 feet of water, taking both jigs and minnows. Fair for largemouth on crankbaits and jigs with trailers cast to rocky banks.

LAKE MURRAY: Stripers from The Gap to the reservoir's upper end on live herring free-lined in 40 feet of water and also on trolled planer boards. Shellcrackers 10 feet deep off the shoreline on earthworms. Fair for catfish, moving in the creeks and along the shoreline, on cut herring and gizzard shad.

LAKE THURMOND: Good for crappie suspended 15 feet deep around standing trees and at creek mouths. Stripers 20 feet deep in the middle of channels on gizzard shad and herring trolled under planer boards. Largemouth on jigs worked around hydrilla edges.

SANTEE COOPER LAKES: Very good for catfish in Lake Moultrie on cut gizzard shad fished deep. Slightly improved for stripers in both Moultrie and Lake Marion.

LAKE HARTWELL: Continuing catches of largemouth 20-40 feet deep on Blade Runner lures and drop-shot rigs. Striped bass up the major creek arms on free-lined gizzard shad. Crappie 15 feet deep around brush.

LAKE JOCASSEE: Little activity.

OUTER BANKS: Nags Head area: Little activity; Oregon Inlet area: No report; Hatteras Island: King mackerel offshore of Hatteras Village; Ocracoke Island: No report; Morehead City area: Blackfin tuna, wahoo offshore when conditions are favorable.

SOUTHEASTERN N.C. COAST: Speckled trout to 4 pounds at the Little River Jetties on the N.C.-S.C. border. Big wahoo in the 40-pound range off Ocean Isle.

S.C. COAST: Little River/Cherry Grove area: Trout at the jetty; Grand Strand area: No report; Charleston area: Plentiful reds in the backwaters; Beaufort area: No report.

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