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# Fishing Forecast

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When sea and weather conditions are favorable there is sensational action for speckled trout along the Carolinas coast.

Some anglers have caught up to 50 per day during the past week at the Cape Lookout jetties. A trout weighing 9pounds was boated in a tournament at Ocean Isle. And catches in the Charleston area are the best in years.

In freshwater, Lake Norman is yielding limits of striped bass and Fontana Lake's smallmouth bass are on a striking spree.

**Lake Norman:** Stripers in the 5-pound range from Marker 14 and the mouth of Mountain Creek uplake to well north of the N.C. 150 Bridge. The fish are suspended 30 feet deep in 50 feet of water and are hitting live herring. Scads of white perch are being caught on live baits in the creek arms. Largemouth and spotted bass around docks and rocks on jigs and soft plastic lures.

**Lake Wylie:** Largemouth in the backs of creeks, feeding on schools of shad and hitting bladed lures and grubs cast to the jumps. Catfish 15-25 feet deep in the creek arms on drift-fished cut baits. Crappie around cover 20 feet deep on minnows.

**Cane Creek Park Lake:** Good for crappie on minnows.

**High Rock, Tuckertown, Badin, Tillery, Blewett Falls:** Crappie on jigs, minnows around brush 15-20 feet deep. Blue and flathead catfish in the Pee Dee River below Blewett Falls Dam on crawlers, cut baits.

**Lakes Hickory, Rhodhiss:** Crappie on minnows at Hickory. Trolled jigs and drift-fished minnow are producing crappie at Rhodhiss.

**Lake James:** Largemouth and smallmouth bass on shiners. Crappie on minnows.

**Fontana Lake:** Limits and more of smallmouth on Andrew Minnow lures cast to points and rocky shoreline. The past week has produced several smallmouth in the 3-pound range.

**Lake Wateree:** Largemouth around rocky shoreline and the flats on Rattle Trap lures. Channel catfish in the reservoir's lower section on cut bait drifted 15-20 feet deep. Crappie 15-25 feet down along the old river channel ledges on minnows, with the state park area producing best.

**Lake Monticello:** Catfish on cut gizzard shad worked 10 feet under schools of forage species.

**Lake Murray:** Stripers on live herring fished 35 feet deep at the mouths of major creeks. Plentiful bream and shellcracker on crawlers, earthworms worked down to 10 feet around rocky points. Catfish on cut baits fished 25-45 feet down while drifting.

**Santee Cooper Lakes:** Good largemouth bass action on crankbaits, soft plastic lures cast to shallow cover. Good to excellent for crappie, concentrated 15-35 feet deep around brushy cover and logs. Lots of bream also are being caught in the same waters.

**Lake Thurmond:** Stripers, hybrids in the 8-12 pound range on free-lined live herring in the backs of creeks. Crappie in Soap Creek and Little River on minnows and trolled jigs.

**Lake Hartwell:** Stripers, hybrids in surface-feeding schools all across the impoundment on bucktails and topwater lures. They're also hitting live herring. Largemouth along rocky shoreline on crankbaits.

**Lake Keowee:** Largemouth and spotted bass on artificial worms, crankbaits and spinnerbaits cast to rocky points.

**Outer Banks:** Oregon Inlet area: Blackfin and yellowfin tuna offshore, along with a few dolphin. Striped bass to 35 pounds inshore; Hatteras Island: Blackfin, yellowfin and numerous sailfish off Hatteras Village. Puppy drum and speckled trout in the sound and surf near Hatteras Inlet on soft plastic lures, but only about one in 10 is of keeper size. Whiting in the hook at Cape Point; Ocracoke Island: Scattered black drum, puppy drum and whiting in the surf; Morehead City area: Excellent for speckled trout, red drum at the Cape Lookout jetties on Gulp! lures, green grubs and MirrOlures. False albacore at the cape. The first bluefin tuna of the season were boated Tuesday offshore, where blackfin tuna, yellowfins, wahoo and a few dolphin also have been caught.

**Southeastern N.C. Coast:** Speckled trout in the creeks and inlets on live shrimp and soft plastic lures. Reds and trout in the bays at Bald Head Island. Wahoo to 90 pounds offshore, along with several sailfish. King mackerel closer in, with catches reported over 100 feet of water. Flounder, gray trout at the near-shore artificial reefs. Trout, whiting in the surf and at piers where fishing is permitted during the off-season.

**S.C. Coast:** Little River area: Flounder, spots, whiting at Cherry Grove Pier; Grand Strand area: Spots in Murrells Inlet on bloodworms. Reds, or spottails, in the creeks and at the Murrells Inlet and Georgetown jetties on cut baits. Flounder in the creeks and at piers on mud minnows. Limits of trout in Murrells Inlet, at Pawley's Island and around Debordieu on shrimp. Sheepshead at the Georgetown jetties on fiddler crabs; Charleston area: Excellent for trout in the backwaters near shell rakes and at creek mouths on live shrimp, grubs and DOA shrimp lures. Spottails in the estuaries on mud minnows, shrimp and a variety of lures. Sheepshead around bridge pilings and other hard structure on fiddler crabs; Beaufort area: Spottails in the marshes on live baits, and Dupre spoons sight-cast to tailing fish feeding in the shallows. Trout around shell rakes when the tide is moving.

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