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Fishing Forecast

Posted: Thursday, Dec. 24, 2009

Lakes Norman and Wateree appear the likeliest locations for good angling action during the holidays.

Striped bass in numbers are being caught at both reservoirs.

At Norman, the fish are along the main channel and near the backs of major creek arms. They're hitting live baits worked 30-70 feet deep.

Additionally, stripers occasionally are feeding in schools on the surface, striking bucktails, spoons and topwater lures cast to the "jumps." Best schooling this week is in the Stumpy Creek arm and near Marker 17B just below the N.C. 150 bridge.

The stripers at Wateree are hitting live herring and shiners fished 30-40 feet down. These fish also are occasionally chasing forage to the surface and hitting lures cast to the breaks, or jumps.

Lake Norman: Blue catfish to 50 pounds on cut baits. Scattered crappie on minnows worked around deep brush.

Lake Wylie: Blue catfish to 54 pounds on cut baits. Mixed concentrations of crappie and white perch on minnows 15-20 feet deep. Largemouth bass in the backs of coves fed by creeks on crankbaits.

Mountain Island Lake: Some white bass in the Riverbend power station's hot hole. Crappie around deep brush.

Lakes Badin, Tillery, Blewett Falls: Little activity.

High Rock Lake: Little activity.

Lakes Hickory, Rhodhiss: Little activity.

Lake James: Smallmouth bass off the points and along rocky bluffs on shiners.

Fontana Lake: Little activity.

Lake Wateree: Catfish to 30 pounds in the major creeks on drift-fished cut bait. Crappie on

jigs tipped with minnows slow-trolled 15-20 feet down.

Lake Murray: Stripers on free-lined live herring from mid-lake upstream to the Big and Little Saluda rivers.

Santee-Cooper Reservoir: Plentiful catfish on cut baits worked around schools of forage species in deep water. Good numbers of bream around brush piles 20-25 feet deep on crawlers, crickets, earthworms.

Lake Hartwell: Stripers, hybrids up the Seneca and Tugaloo River arms, and in 26-Mile Creek, on free-lined gizzard shad and herring. Largemouth in shoreline pockets of coves on crankbaits, spinnerbaits.

Lake Jocassee: Trout from the surface down to 50 feet on trolled spoons and drift-fished shiners.

Lake Keowee: Largemouth and spotted bass 25 feet deep at the lower end of the lake on artificial worms cast to points.

Outer Banks: Nags Head area: Little activity; **Oregon Inlet area**: Limits of yellowfin tuna offshore when sea conditions are favorable; **Hatteras Island**: Limits of big blackfin tuna off Hatteras Village. Sharks, some very large, at Cape Point near Buxton. Scattered puppy drum in the surf; **Ocracoke Island**: Puppy drum in the surf; **Morehead City area**: Bluefin tuna just offshore at areas known as Big 10 and Little 10, the 1700 Rock and Northwest Places.

Southeastern N.C. Coast: Bluefin tuna are starting to show off Southport and Ocean Isle.

S.C. Coast: Little River area: Reds, or spottails, on lures cast to fish tailing while feeding on the marsh flats. Trout in the Intracoastal Waterway on trolled grubs. Sheepshead at the jetties; **Grand Strand area**: Scattered spottails in the backwaters; **Charleston area**: Plentiful sheepshead around bridge and pier pilings on fiddler crabs. Reds in schools around creek mouths and rock piles on mud minnows, shrimp and Gulp! lures; **Beaufort area**: Spottails in the marshes at low tide on flies, spoons. Hilton Head waters are especially "hot" as the fish feed on the flats. Trout on DOA Shrimp, spoons.


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