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Fishing Forecast

Posted: Thursday, May. 20, 2010

Splendid angling action continues along the Carolina coast, especially offshore.

The catch includes bluefin and yellowfin tuna off Oregon Inlet, dolphin off Morehead City, Spanish mackerel off Southport and blackfin tuna out of Georgetown, S.C.

There's exceptional largemouth bass angling at South Carolina's Lake Thurmond, formerly known as Clarks Hill Reservoir.

Lake Norman: Stripers and a mix of largemouth and spotted bass on live baits fished 28-40 feet deep around underwater humps in the river channel. Catfish about halfway back in coves fed by creeks on cut baits. Small white perch in the creeks on earthworms, small jigging spoons and tiny pieces of cut bait.

Lake Wylie: Mainly bream and catfish in shallow water on traditional baits. Largemouth, coming off the spawning beds, on a variety of lures. Tapering off for crappie.

Mountain Island Lake: Lots of bream on crickets, earthworms along the shoreline. Largemouth off the points on artificial worms, crankbaits.

Union County Lakes: Bream and largemouth at lakes Lee and Twitty, catfish at Monroe, fair crappie at Cane Creek Park.

High Rock, Tuckertown, Badin, Tillery and Blewett Falls: Bream, catfish and crappie at all reservoirs. Striped bass to 15 pounds in the tailrace at Tillery on bucktails. Also, American shad in the tailrace on shad darts, jigs.

Lakes Hickory, Rhodhiss: Catfish, crappie and bream in fairly good numbers.

Lake James: Smallmouth off the points on shiners and small lures. Very good for walleye along clay shoreline on crawlers.

Fontana Lake: Smallmouth 10 feet deep off points on shiners and tube jigs. Walleye on clay points and in discolored pockets of water along the main channel on crawlers.

Lake Wateree: Largemouth along the banks on floating artificial worms and soft plastic lures. Crappie 12-20 feet down around brush piles.

Lake Murray: All types of tactics are yielding striped bass. They're hitting topwater lures during early morning, free-lined live herring near the dam, trolled Roadrunner lures, and cut baits. Crappie around cover 10-15 feet deep on jigs, minnows.

Santee Cooper Lakes: Channel catfish on both Marion and Moultrie on dip baits, stinkbaits. The Diversion Canal is producing well.

Lake Thurmond: Limits of largemouth in the 3-pound range on topwater plugs worked in shaded areas back in coves. Stripers, hybrids 15-20 feet deep in the mid-lake area on live baits. Crappie around cover 20 feet down.

Lake Hartwell: Flathead catfish off points during early morning on cut baits. Stripers, hybrids all across the lake 25-35 feet deep off points on cut and live baits.

Lake Keowee: Largemouth and spotted bass on surface lures and artificial worms cast to the shoreline.

Outer Banks: Nags Head area: Blues, Spanish mackerel at piers; Oregon Inlet: Bluefin and yellowfin tuna, mako sharks offshore. Good for flounder inshore; Hatteras Island: Blues, croaker, flounder, Spanish mackerel and whiting in the surf and at piers. Lots of Spanish at Hatteras Inlet; Ocracoke Island: Limits of blues and Spanish mackerel. Schools of cobia and trophy-sized red drum on the shoals at the inlet. Dolphin offshore; Morehead City area: Gaffer dolphin to 40 pounds offshore from the Swansboro Hole to Big Rock. Blue marlin offshore. Cobia to 60 pounds. Plentiful Spanish mackerel from Cape Lookout to Beaufort Inlet.

Southeastern N.C. Coast: Good catches of cobia, king mackerel 9 miles off Ocean Isle. Dolphin, wahoo and scattered billfish offshore. Fine catches of offshore bottom species, including African pompano. King mackerel and Spanish closer in. Black seabass and flounder around wrecks and artificial reefs. Flounder to 8 pounds in the lower Cape Fear River and in the backwaters on live menhaden. Puppy drum and trout in the Bald Head Island creeks. Blues, pompano, Spanish mackerel and whiting in the surf and at piers.

S.C. Coast: Little River area: Reds and trout at the jetties. White and small flounder at Cherry Grove Pier; Grand Strand area: Terrific for blackfin tuna and dolphin offshore, with wahoo mixed in. Blues and Spanish mackerel along the beach and at piers. Flounder within Murrells Inlet and big red drum at the nearby jetty on cut mullet and blue crabs; Charleston area: Continuing fine catches of sheepshead around inshore structure on clam strips, fiddler crabs and oysters. Spottails around backwater docks and rock piles. Trout near shell banks; Beaufort area: Good action for anglers sight-casting in the marshes to tailing spottails.

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