FISHING REPORT

Lake Jocassee: Trout: Fair. Capt. Steve Pietrykowski reports the trout bite continues to improve and some nice fish were taken at the December Jocassee Outdoor Center tournament. Fish can be caught from the surface down to 50 feet by anglers fishing trolling spoons and shiners; trolling large shiners seems to be the best way to avoid small fish. The bite should continue to improve for the next few months. The third Jocassee Outdoor Center Trout Tournament of the 2009-10 season is Saturday. Black bass: Fair. Capt. Pat Bennett reports fishing is day to day but good fish can be found in pockets off the main lake, and trout are mixed in with bass. Fishing under schools of bait is also a good bet. Surface activity is being reported and bass will take a lure that thrown right on their head after they show themselves. Red Eye Shad, Float-n-fly rigs and jerkbaits will all catch fish.

Lake Keowee: Largemouth and spotted bass: Fair to good. Capt. Chris "Fishboy" Schuber reports he has been catching spotted bass on the lower end of the lake using shakey head worms in 25 feet of water. He has also caught some bass on Carolina rigged worms fished off main lake points in 25-30 feet of water. Watermelon seed color has been working. Also try Nemire lures Red Ripper Spoons as temperatures get cold.

Lake Hartwell: Striped and hybrid bass: Fair to good. Capt. Bill Plumley reports striper action has been hit or miss recently. There have been some very good days and on other days the fish are harder to catch. For best results free line gizzard shad or large herring up the Seneca, Tugaloo or 26 Mile Creek. Pietrykowski reports that if birds can be located striper will be found, too. Largemouth bass: Fair. Guide Brad Fowler advises that fish are spread out on Lake Hartwell but anglers should key on long deep coves and pockets. The major creeks are good places to fish as long as deep water can be found nearby. Jigs, shakey head worms and crankbaits are all working. Catfish: Fair. Plumley reports the catfish bite has been a little slow with all the recent rains. Fish cut bait in 15-30 feet of water up creeks that have some water flowing into them. Crappie: Slow. Plumley reports crappie fishing has really slowed down. Try fishing minnows or jigs around brush piles in 25 feet of water. The key at this time of year is working whatever bait or lure you are using very slowly.

Lake Russell: Largemouth and spotted bass: Very good. Guide Wendell Wilson reports he has been catching bass midlake in 25-35 feet of water just off the main channel. Whether he is fishing over trees, other cover or a clean bottom does not seem to matter – the key is fishing near the schools of bait. Jigging spoons are the artificial lures of choice and minnows will also catch fish. 80% of the bass caught have been spotted bass, but largemouths are also mixed in as well as other species. The best fishing seems to come in the middle of the day when the sun has been on the water for several hours. Perch and crappie: Very good. Wilson reports he is catching lots of white perch, yellow perch and crappie fishing around schools of bait in 30-35 feet of water. Fish medium minnows just off the bottom and expect a mixed bag with some bass and catfish thrown in, too. Fishing around brushpiles is slow. Catfish: Good. Wilson reports he is not spending much time targeting catfish but is picking them up on minnows while fishing for crappie and bass. Look in 20-25 feet of water around bait schools and fish cut bait on the bottom. Striped bass: Slow. Anglers can fish for striped bass by looking for seagulls, then casting half ounce bucktails towards the birds, or pulling free lined live herring through the same areas. Although striper don't seem to have showed up in decent numbers yet, they should arrive soon.

Lake Thurmond: Striped and hybrid bbass: Very good. The Clark's Hill Herring Hut reports striped and hybrid bass are feeding very well up the Little River arms around Big Heart Creek, Germany Creek and Holiday Park. Follow the birds to locate fish and down line live herring in 30 feet of water. Crappie: Very good. The Herring Hut reports crappie are feeding well 15 feet down around brushpiles in 28-35 feet of water. Minnow and jigs will both work. Bream and perch: Very good. Worms and minnows fished near the bottom will both catch fish. Black bass: Good. Buckeye Lures of Augusta, Ga., reports fish are feeding very shallow around broom sage and other brush in the creeks. They have followed the bait toward the banks and can be caught in 5 or less feet of water. Small crankbaits such as Shad Raps and Team Daiwa Minnows and spot removers will catch fish shallow. When the water temperature drops a few degrees and stays below 55, fish will pull out into warmer water in the deeper ditches where they can be caught on lead headed flukes. To catch pressured fish in the clear water, using Gamma fluorocarbon line is important during the cold months.

Lake Greenwood: Largemouth bass: Good.Sportsman's Friend reports that with up-and-down water levels fish seem to have bunched up. A good place to look is on the backside of points because so much water has been pulled on the lake. Fish crankbaits and worms in 8-15 feet of water. Some schooling action has also been reported which includes largemouth, striper and white perch mixed together. Striped bass: Fair to good. Sportsman's Friend reports that for the next couple of months the key to catching striped bass on Lake Greenwood is to look for the birds and fish around them. Jigging spoons and free lined live herring will both work – there is almost no down lining right now. The big in-flows of water that we are having lately can sometimes turn a massive feeding frenzy on for a day or so but can quickly turn bad after the first day or so of heavy feeding. Right now it's taking a lot of moving around to find good concentrations of fish. For the most part, drifting is the most productive method of finding fish. Whole small threadfin shad and small pieces of cut gizzard shad are working well, as that's what they are feeding on the most. Shrimp is still catching a few but it doesn't perform near as well in cold water as it does warm water. Catfish: Large inflows of water can create a feeding frenzy for a day or two, which is usually followed by a lull. Drifting whole small threadfin shad or pieces of cut gizzard shad is the most productive method. Crappie: Sportsman's Friend reports up-and-down water levels have hurt crappie fishing. Try minnows around deeper brushpiles.

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