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Fishing Forecast

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Action is improving almost daily at Lake Norman, especially for catfish, crappie, striped bass and white perch.

The stripers generally continue smallish in size, but the catch of larger fish should pick up as the water temperature cools.

The catfish, perch and stripers are being taken from mixed schools, mainly on minnows fished 20-30 feet deep in the major creek arms.

N.C. coastal activity has been affected by foul weather, including heavy rains that have made access to some areas difficult.

Lake Norman: Crappie on minnows worked around brushy cover 10-15 feet deep. Largemouth, spotted bass on a variety of lures cast to the shoreline and to surface-feeding schools.

Lake Wylie: Good to excellent for catfish during early morning on cut baits worked 10-15 feet deep in the major creeks and near main channel structure. Schooling largemouth in the mid-lake area on topwater plugs. Crappie around brush and docks on minnows. Bream just off the shoreline on crickets.

Mountain Island Lake: Picking up for largemouth on crankbaits, skirted spinnerbaits cast to points. Bream, catfish along the shoreline.

Union County Lakes: Good for crappie on minnows at Cane Creek Park. Bream, catfish and largemouth at Lakes Lee, Twitty and Monroe.

High Rock, Tuckertown, Badin, Tillery, Blewett Falls: Very improved for crappie on minnows. White perch in surface schools on Ice Flies, jigs, small twister-tail grubs. Catfish in the Pee Dee River below Blewett Falls Dam on crawlers, cut baits.

Lakes Hickory, Rhodhiss: Crappie, moving into shallower cover, on jigs, minnows.

Lake James: Smallmouth bass on shiners, small lures worked around points.

Fontana Lake: Improving for smallmouth on crankbaits cast to rocky shoreline. They're hitting best in late afternoon.

Lake Wateree: Crappie just off the points and in channel swings in the creeks on trolled minnows. The fish also are congregating around docks and hitting jigs. Catfish in the river channel and at the mouths of creeks on crawlers, cut baits.

Lake Murray: Stripers in good numbers between Shull and Spence Islands, with a variety of baits and tactics working. Excellent for bream and shellcrackers 4-10 feet deep on crawlers, crickets. Crappie, moving into shallow brush and gathering at bridge pilings on jigs tipped with minnows.

Lake Thurmond: Stripers, hybrids in surface-feeding schools during late afternoon downlake at the mouths of Keg Creek, Little River and Savannah River. They're hitting topwater lures. Good for crappie on minnows fished 20-30 feet deep around brush.

Lake Hartwell: Stripers, hybrids in the main river channel on live herring worked 50-80 feet deep in 90-110 feet of water. Smallish stripers and hybrids are schooling in late afternoon near bridges in the Seneca River and 26-Mile Creek.

Lake Keowee: Largemouth and spotted bass on topwater lures and soft plastics cast to deep points.

Outer Banks: Nags Head area: Scattered blues, puppy drum and whiting in the surf and at piers. Stripers to 10 pounds at Little Bridge near Manteo; Oregon Inlet: Dolphin, a few white marlin and yellowfin tuna offshore when sea conditions are favorable. Small stripers and trout at the Bonner Bridge; Hatteras Island: Red drum in the Cape Point surf near Buxton. Scattered flounder to 5 pounds at Hatteras Inlet; Ocracoke Island: Trophy-sized red drum from boats in Ocracoke Inlet. Scattered blues, pompano, spots and whiting in the surf; Morehead City area: Blackfin tuna, sailfish, wahoo offshore when sea conditions are favorable. Blues, Spanish mackerel from the Cape Lookout Shoals to Beaufort Inlet. Plentiful spots at the Beaufort Bridge, Duke Marine Lab and in the Turning Basin. Red drum in the marshes. Pompano, puppy drum, sheepshead, spots, trout and whiting at piers.

Southeastern N.C. Coast: Large red drum at the Little River Jetties. Flounder, reds, trout at the near-shore artificial reefs and in the lower Cape Fear River near Bald Head Island and Southport. Scattered blues, flounder, pompano and puppy drum in the surf and at piers. Blues in the inlets. King mackerel are gradually showing up offshore.

S.C. Coast: Little River area: Black drum, croaker and whiting in the surf. Big reds at the jetties; Grand Strand area: Black and red drum in the creeks on both cut and live baits. Big reds at the Murrells Inlet jetties during the changing tides on cut baits. Sheepshead at the Winyah Bay (Georgetown) jetties on fiddler crabs. Spots in the creeks at Murrells Inlet. Spanish mackerel at the piers and trout around the sea walls; Charleston area: Spottails (reds) around docks, rock piles and at creek mouths on live baits. Smallish trout around shell rakes on surface lures and live baits. Flounder at the creek mouths on finger mullet. Sailfish, wahoo offshore in 130-400 feet of water; Beaufort area: Good to excellent for spottails in the marshes on flies, crankbaits, spoons and live shrimp. Trout on shrimp worked around flats near creek mouths and at current rips created by oyster beds.

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