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Fishing Forecast

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With powerful Hurricane Earl threatening the Outer Banks, the concern of many anglers isn't whether the fish are biting.

Instead, it's about the welfare of the islands' residents and their homes and businesses - the latter including bait and tackle shops, marinas and sportfishing boats.

Hope the best for them.

Lake Norman: Plentiful white perch all across the reservoir on live baits fished 15-30 feet deep. Catfish, suspended 35-40 feet down over 100 feet of water, on drifted cut baits. Largemouth and spotted bass are starting to strike as the water cools slightly, hitting topwater lures along rocky shoreline during very early morning and then shakey-head artificial worms cast to docks later in the day.

Lake Wylie: Continuing good catches of bream on crickets, earthworms. Improving slightly for crappie on minnows. Catfish in the major creek arms on cut baits drift-fished 20 feet deep over humps. Largemouth in early morning in surface-feeding schools on small artificial lures.

Mountain Island Lake: Bream along the shoreline on crickets. Catfish on the ledges on cut bait, crawlers.

Union County lakes: Fair largemouth at Cane Creek Park, Lee, Monroe and Twitty on soft plastic lures.

High Rock, Tuckertown, Badin and Tillery: White perch in surface schools on Ice Flies.

Lakes Hickory, Rhodhiss: White perch at Hickory on earthworms, minnows and small spoons. Scattered crappie around deep cover at Hickory and Rhodhiss on minnows.

Lake James: Improving for crappie on minnows.

Fontana Lake: Smallmouth and white bass on spoons trolled 45 feet deep on down-rigger devices. Smallmouth uplake near the mouth of Chambers Creek on topwater lures cast to the jumps of fish feeding on the surface.

Lake Wateree: Catfish during late afternoon on drift-fished cut baits. Bream, white perch along the shoreline. Crappie in deep brush between Beaver and Wateree Creeks on green jigs.

Lake Murray: Stripers near the dam and at the towers on live herring worked 35-50 feet deep in 85 feet of water. Stripers are also hitting trolled lures such as Road Runners. Plenty of bream around docks and sunken trees on crickets. Shellcrackers in the backs of coves on crickets, earthworms. Catfish at night on traditional baits.

Santee Cooper Lakes: Crappie around cover 12-20 feet deep on jigs, minnows. Bream near shoreline vegetation on crickets, earthworms. Catfish in the lower lake, Moultrie, on cut herring, perch and shad. Largemouth during early morning on soft plastics cast to lily pads, stumps and sunken logs.

Lake Hartwell: Hybrids, stripers at the lower end of the impoundment on bucktails, swimbaits trolled deep with lead core line. The fish also are hitting live baits. Catfish off deep points.

Lake Jocassee: Trout 70-80 feet down on live baits, trolled spoons.

Lake Keowee: Largemouth and spotted bass at dawn and for a couple hours afterward in schools surfacing off long, shallow points. They're hitting topwater lures and crankbaits.

Outer Banks: Nags Head area: Blues, Spanish mackerel, spot and whiting in the surf and at piers; Oregon Inlet: Billfish, dolphin offshore. Blues, Spanish mackerel closer in. Hatteras Island: Billfish, dolphin, wahoo off Hatteras Village. Scattered blues, pompano, puppy drum in the surf. Flounder, gray trout in the sound near the village.

Ocracoke Island: Blues, puppy drum, whiting in the surf. Morehead City area: Excellent for wahoo offshore, along with some gaffer-sized dolphin, blackfin tuna and sailfish. Lots of Spanish mackerel near the shoals at Cape Lookout. Large red drum in Pamlico Sound near Oriental, where tarpon up to 150 pounds also have been boated. Smaller reds in the marshes. Scattered blues, flounder, Spanish mackerel, spot and whiting at piers.

Southeastern N.C. Coast: Billfish, wahoo offshore. Good numbers of Spanish mackerel along the shoreline, with the Ocean Isle area producing especially well. Flounder to 8 pounds at Carolina Beach Inlet and in the lower Cape Fear River. Flounder, reds at the near-shore artificial reefs.

Speckled trout in the backwaters at Bald Head Island and Oak Island on live shrimp. Tarpon on the Bald Head Island shoals. Black drum, sheepshead at the Little River and Masonboro jetties. Scattered blues, flounder, pompano, puppy drum and whiting at piers.

S.C. Coast: Cherry Grove area: Black drum during low tides and reds, trout during high tides on mud minnows, shrimp and soft plastic lures fished at the edge of spartina grass and at creek mouths. Grand Strand area: King mackerel at the Myrtle Beach Rocks, the Belkie Bear area and 3-Mile Artificial Reef. Spanish mackerel also are hitting at the reef. A few croaker, spots and whiting at piers.

Charleston area: Excellent for small speckled trout on live shrimp worked 3-5 feet deep around shell rakes. Larger trout are being taken on surface lures at dawn. Flounder at the creek mouths on mud minnows. Big red drum in the surf on cut bait. Tarpon at the Charleston jetties, Bulls Bay and North Edisto Inlet. Beaufort area: Tailing reds on the marshy flats on flies and spoons. Trout during moving tides on live shrimp.

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