

Fishing report: Fall in the air, on the water

BY PHILLIP GENTRY
FOR THE JOURNAL

For those of you who are not going to be in the deer stand this weekend, here's another rendition of going 'Round The Horn to find out what's happening on the water in our local area.

Two major influences are controlling most of the area lakes at this time. The first is a continuing drought, which members of the SCDNR Drought Response Committee currently maintain at moderate drought status for the entire state. An upcoming conference call to be conducted by the Committee a week from next Tuesday is likely to upgrade that status to more severe.

Lake reporters for both Hartwell and Keowee are reporting signs of an annual lake turnover, which is completely natural for this time of year but certainly makes fishing difficult for most.

John at The Bait Shop off Highway 24 in Townville said his customers are reporting striped bass and hybrids moving down the lake at Hartwell ahead of the lake turnover, which is occurring more now in the tributary arms than the main lake.

Some schooling action has been seen early and late in the day. The water level is down 9 to 10 feet, which makes putting in at some local boat ramps difficult and increases the risk of grounding on shallow shoals.

He reports that there's a lot of bass fishing activity with many anglers catching both spotted bass and hybrid striped bass schooling in the same locations.

There was no local catfish report from The Bait Shop except that most of the catfishing regulars have been commuting to the Cooner River below



Lake Moultrie during the past week.

Gerald at The Fishing Hole on Shiloh Road in Clemson reports that his bass fishing customers have been having good success catching both largemouth and spotted bass in the shallows on crank baits and jig head worms.

He also reports a decent top-water bite early and late and made the prediction that this weekend's forecasted cooler weather would speed up the fall turnover.

The better news from The Fishing Hole was that the crappie bite had been on fire lately with anglers fishing either small minnows or crappie jigs around brush piles in 12 to 14 feet of water. The retreating water levels are exposing much of this brush, and catching crappie has just been a matter of hopping from stick up to stick up in the usual crappie venues like Seneca Creek, Keowee River and Coneross Creek.

Gerald reported a lingering catfish bite while the surface temps are still in the mid to upper 60's. Anglers reported mostly channel catfish coming from 10 to 12 feet of water using worms, cut bait and dip baits.

Up at Jocassee Outdoor Center on Jocassee Lake Road in Salem, Ray offered that bass fishing had been good of late with one customer reporting nine



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Despite fall turnover and dropping lake levels, Lake Hartwell anglers have been hauling in good catches of crappie over the past week.

nice fish caught fishing along the creek channels in the lake tributaries using nine-inch Senko's in earthworm and green pumpkin colors.

The trout at Jocassee are still relatively deep around the 70 to 90 foot mark, and most catches are coming during daylight hours trolling large live minnows or three-inch Apex spoons on downriggers. Rau stated the night trout bite has dropped off with few anglers continuing to night-fish as the weather gets cooler.

Some local canvassing by yours truly at the boat ramps on Lake Keowee this week revealed that some lake turnover is occurring in the tributaries pushing most bass anglers to the main lake points or the far back ends of the creeks.

Drop shottin' points adjacent to creek channels with green pumpkin worms has been mildly successful, as well as throwing natural shad pattern topwater lures near exposed structure near the backs of the creeks.

Despite Keowee being nearly three-and-a-half feet low, anglers expect fall schooling action to heat up over the week-end

with night time lows dipping into the lower 40's for the weekend.

IN OTHER NEWS

The Walmart Bass Fishing League is headed to Lake Hartwell Nov. 3-5 for one of six regional championships.

This three-day tournament features the top 40 boaters and 40 co-anglers from each of the Choo Choo, Gator, North Carolina and Shenandoah divisions. They will compete for a Ranger 198VX with a 200-horsepower Evinrude or Mercury outboard and a Chevy 1500 Silverado in the Boater Division and a new Ranger 198VX with a 200-horsepower Evinrude or Mercury outboard in the Co-angler Division.

Takeoffs will be at Clemson Beach and Recreation Area located at 275 YMCA Circle in Seneca at 7:45 a.m. daily. Weigh-ins on Nov. 3 and 4 will be at the marina beginning at 4 p.m. The final weigh-in is scheduled for 5 p.m. on Nov. 5 at Shaver Center in Seneca.

Takeoffs and weigh-ins are free and open to the public.

GOT OUTDOOR news, tournaments or photos to share? Contact Phillip Gentry at pgentry5@bellsouth.net.