

# If you can't catch fish in Carolinas right now ...

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Freshwater fishing generally is racing full bore toward its spring peak in the Carolinas.

Action at all lakes rates good to excellent, with some sources rating the catch of crappie the best in years.

Perhaps producing best overall is Lake Norman, good news for entrants in the Bass Pro Shops Southern Open, scheduled today through Saturday out of Blythe Landing near Cornelius.

"If you can't catch bass on Norman right now, you need to find another sport," avid angler Boots Beasley said this week. "Buy a set of golf clubs or something."

**LAKE NORMAN:** Excellent for largemouth and spotted bass along the shoreline and around docks. They're hitting practically every lure cast to them. Many anglers taking part in local tournaments are boating up to 30 fish per trip, keeping only the best five to weigh in. Striped bass are hitting live baits worked 20 feet deep or free-lined. There's also fine striper action at night for anglers casting Redfin lures to points. Crappie around shoreline cover and docks on jigs, minnows. Catfish very shallow in coves in a pre-spawn pattern, biting almost anything presented to them.

**LAKE WYLIE:** Excellent for crappie around shoreline cover and docks on jigs, minnows. "Every bush seems to be holding a crappie," reports the S.C. Department of Natural Resources. Good for largemouth along the banks on soft plastic lures. Catfish in the creeks on cut baits.

**MOUNTAIN ISLAND LAKE:** Good catches of crappie around shallow cover both for anglers in boats and those fishing from the banks. Largemouth also are hitting along the shoreline.

**UNION COUNTY LAKES:** Good for catfish, crappie and largemouth at all lakes – Cane Creek Park, Lakes Lee, Monroe and Twitty.

**YADKIN/PEE DEE RIVER LAKES:** .Exceptional for crappie, being caught right against the banks at High Rock, Tuckertown, Badin, Tillery and Blewett Falls. Largemouth on Alabama Rigs with a variety of lures attached (soft plastics appear to be producing best). American shad to five pounds on green curly-tail grubs, shad darts and Sabiki rigs at the Blewett Falls Dam tailrace. Catfish in the Pee Dee River on cut baits.

**LAKES JAMES, HICKORY, RHODHISS:** Excellent for largemouth bass at Lake Hickory, where it took a two-day weight of 31.86 pounds for 10 fish to win a regional bass tournament last weekend. Good to excellent for crappie at all three reservoirs. Walleye up the Catawba and Linville River arms at James. Scattered smallmouth bass around the points at James on shiners.

**FONTANA LAKE:** Excellent for smallmouth, with spotted bass mixed in, along the shoreline. They are hitting tube jigs in avocado and watermelon color patterns best, while also taking jerk baits and shiners. Walleye in the creek runs and pockets on crawlers worked on small lead heads.

**LAKE WATEREE:** Excellent for largemouth along the shoreline on a wide variety of lures. Crappie in very shallow cover and around docks. Catfish 10-15 feet deep in the creeks on cut baits.

**LAKE MURRAY:** Stripers are feeding across the lake, with surface schooling activity and action on bucktails and topwater lures reported from the Little Saluda River to Bomb Island. Stripers also are hitting cut baits on the points.

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Largemouth along the shoreline on soft plastic lures. Shellcrackers in 2-8 feet of water, mainly on crickets. Crappie around shallow brush on jigs.

LAKE THURMOND: Good for stripers and hybrids on points from the dam to Shriver's Creek on live baits and lures. They also are hitting well in the tailrace at the dam. Largemouth on artificial lizards, jigs worked around points. Crappie around cover 6-8 feet deep.

SANTEE COOPER LAKES: Good for largemouth on soft plastics and spinnerbaits in Potato, Taw Caw and Wyboo Creeks. Excellent for bedding bream along the shoreline on crickets, earth worms. Catfish on cut baits in the shallows at night. Striped bass in the rivers, but few of keeper size are reported.

LAKE HARTWELL: Good for stripers and hybrids around the points on free-lined live herring. They're also starting to take cut baits on the points. Largemouth around docks on soft plastics. Catfish in the creeks on cut baits. Crappie around docks and shallow shoreline cover.

LAKE KEOWEE: Largemouth and spotted bass around docks on soft plastics.

LAKE JOCASSEE: Trout up to 5 pounds on live baits, mostly shiners, worked from the surface down to 50 feet. They also are striking trolled spoons. Largemouth and smallmouth in the coves and creeks on soft plastic lures.

OUTER BANKS: Nags Head area: Blowfish, gray trout and whiting in the surf and at piers; Oregon Inlet: Limits of yellowfin tuna offshore when sea conditions are favorable; Hatteras Island: Large wahoo off Hatteras Village when sea conditions permit. Blowfish, small blues and whiting in the surf; Ocracoke Island: Some large red drum, puppy drum, blues and whiting in the surf; Morehead City area: Blues to 3 pounds, red drum to 40 inches in the surf. Whiting in the surf and sounds. Speckled trout at the Haystacks and in the North and Whit Oak Rivers. Wahoo offshore when sea conditions are favorable. Black drum, blowfish, blues, flounder, gray trout and whiting at piers.

SOUTHEASTERN N.C. COAST: Whiting to a pound at night at piers. Increasing numbers of flounder, including fine keepers, in the backwaters, along with reds and trout.

S.C. COAST: Grand Strand area: Keeper flounder in the creeks and inlets, mainly on mud minnows. Reds in the backwaters on live mud minnows. Black drum and sheepshead around the jetties and near-shore artificial reefs. Blues and whiting at piers. Good to excellent offshore for blackfin tuna, dolphin and wahoo; Charleston area: Reds around docks, on the flats and in the marsh grass on Red Fish Magic Spinners and live baits. Also on cut baits. Sheepshead around the bridge pilings and jetties on fiddler crabs, but getting a bait to them is difficult because of the abundances of black seabass.



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