

Local fishing report: They're bitin'

BY PHILLIP GENTRY
FOR THE JOURNAL

Nothing irks me more than making a trip to the lake based on a hot tip that fish are biting in this or that location, only to find out the information is a week or so old.

That situation prompts another of my great dislikes, which is to hear a guide or bait shop owner say, "You shoulda been here last week."

So, fresh as it gets, here's the roundup of bait shop and guide reports for our local mountain lakes, picked fresh Thursday morning.

LAKE KEOWEE

Rocky Wells of Gap Hill Landing in Six Mile said the spawn is on for both largemouth and spotted bass at Lake Keowee. The fish have moved up shallow, which at Keowee means anything from 15 feet deep to right up next to the bank.

Many of the local bass fishermen were starting to see fish on the beds and were casting Carolina-rigged plastic worms trying to work the fish on the beds.

Another good tactic for locating shallow water fish is by using a shallow running crank bait or a spinner baits to cover a lot of water and wear a good pair of polarized sunglasses that will let you see down into the shallow water.

As always, crappie on Lake Keowee are elusive. Keowee is not known for numbers of crappie, but the one's you do find should be good size.

Gerald Foster at the Fishing Hole in Clemson said now is the time to go find some stained water in the backs of creeks on Keowee and locate brush piles or other structures where the crappie will also be found mid-spawn.

Foster pointed out that the DNR has a habit of placing brush piles on



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Both bass and crappie on lakes Keowee and Hartwell can be found in shallow water involved in spawning activity this weekend. The rapidly warming water over the last two weeks has moved almost everything that swims up close to the banks.

the first couple of bridge pilings that cross Keowee, and these brush piles should be loaded with crappie as the water temperature is approaching 70 degrees from the hot sunny days last week.

Foster also suggested that anglers would do well to downsize their line choice when targeting Keowee crappie as the fish seem to be less spooky of 4- and 6-pound line over 8-10 pound that works on other lakes. Crappie jigs or minnows fished 6-10 feet deep over these brush piles is the ticket for getting them to bite.

LAKE JOCASSEE

Tanner Linder has

taken over the trout tournament responsibilities at Jocassee Outdoor Center in Salem. He said only three boats out of 20 in the last trout tournament they held were able to weigh fish, so maybe they're biting everywhere except Jocassee right now.

Linder did say the fish that were caught were good fish and that the warmer weather has got trout moving out of the upper river areas and headed back down the lake. He suggested fishing the Toxaway River and Fisher's Knob area, trolling for trout with spoons behind down rigger balls.

The largemouth and smallmouth bass bite at Jocassee still has a few weeks to go before the colder waters warm to spawning temperatures.

Linder said a good indication of when to start seeking out pre-spawn bass is when the dogwoods go into bloom.