

Tropical Storm Alberto spurs fishing action at Carolinas coast

By Tom Higgins

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Tropical Storm Alberto appears to have stirred up fine fishing as it skirted the Carolinas coast, while proving to be a relative dud in regards to the forecasted possible damage.

Parties trolling offshore generally scored excellent catches of gaffer-sized dolphin the past three days, especially out of Oregon Inlet, Hatteras Village and Ocracoke. The catch also has included bigeye and yellowfin tuna.

Similarly, Outer Banks surf and pier fishing improved dramatically, with the catch including trophy-sized red drum near Ramp 55 on Hatteras Island.

LAKE NORMAN: The lake is at near full-pond stage following recent rains, with the water lapping at shoreline vegetation. Largemouth and spotted bass have moved in to feed, and are hitting crankbaits, soft plastic lures and topwater plugs, especially during early morning. Where the water is discolored, spinnerbaits are working best. Crappie are taking jigs and minnows around brush 20-30 feet deep. Catfish continue to provide good action on cut baits.

LAKE WYLIE: Largemouth, feeding on spawning shad near bridges, docks and rip-rap, are hitting a variety of lures. Catfish continue to hit well near the mouths of major creeks at the south end of the lake on cut baits drift-fished early in the morning, then deeper later. Good for bream and shellcrackers on earthworms, crickets. Crappie 15-30 feet down around boathouses, docks and sunken brush. Good catches of white perch reported.

MOUNTAIN ISLAND LAKE: Bream and catfish just off the shoreline. Largemouth around the points on topwater lures, artificial worms and other soft plastics

UNION COUNTY LAKES: Good to excellent for largemouth bass at Lake Twitty. Mainly bream and catfish at the others – Cane Creek Park, Lakes Lee and Monroe. Scattered crapping at Cane Creek Park..

YADKIN/PEE DEE RIVER LAKES: Crappie are being found relatively deep, around brush 15-30 feet down, at all impoundments – High Rock, Tuckertown, Badin, Tillery and Blewett Falls. Fair for largemouth all along the chain, mainly on crankbaits and soft plastic lures. Small striped bass in the 5-pound range in the tailrace at Blewett Falls. Several big catfish have been caught the past week in the Pee Dee River just below the Blewett Falls Dam.

LAKES JAMES, HICKORY, RHODHISS: Continuing fair for walleye on crawlers along clay shoreline at James, with scattered smallmouth bass also being caught on shiners, small lures. Scattered largemouth at Rhodhiss and Hickory. Crappie on trolled jigs and sliders at Rhodhiss. Bream along the shorelines of all three impoundments.

FONTANA LAKE: Smallmouth bass activity, which had been splendid for several weeks, appears to be slowing. But the catch of walleye under lights at night is on the upswing. Walleye, trout and scattered bass are being boated by anglers trolling 35-45 feet deep in the main channel from the dam uplake and then swinging back.

LAKE WATEREE: Good for largemouth relating to shoreline cover such as grass, rocks, boat docks on fast-moving lures. Catfish in the rivering stretch uplake on cut shad. Fair for crappie 15-25 feet down around boat docks and brush.

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LAKE MURRAY: Excellent for shellcrackers 2-6 feet deep along the banks on crickets, bits of crawlers, earthworms and small Beetlespin lures. Plentiful channel catfish on shrimp, cut herring and cut white perch. Continuing good catches of crappie 10-15 feet deep. Stripers in surfacing schools on bucktails, spoons, popping lures.

LAKE THURMOND: Stripers and hybrids in surface schools at extreme ends of the reservoir. When not slashing the surface to feed, they're hitting cut baits. Crappie suspended 8-10 feet deep over cover 15-20 feet down.

SANTEE COOPER LAKES: Good for largemouth in the upper lake, Marion, on Craw Worms, Senkos cast shoreline brush and cypress trees. Stripers on live baits worked 35-40 feet deep and on jigs, Rapalas and Stretch 25 lures trolled at the same depths. Crappie 10-15 feet deep around brush and sunken logs. Fair catfish, best at night, along the rip-rap near the dams

LAKE HARTWELL: Stripers and hybrids continue to be caught from the dam upstream to the creeks on both live baits and lures. There is sporadic surface schooling among these fish. Largemouth on soft plastic lures fished around the points. Channel and flathead catfish at night on the humps. Crappie 10-20 feet deep around the bridge pilings at night.

LAKE KEOWEE: Largemouth and spotted bass on a variety of lures cast to long, sloping points.

LAKE JOCASSEE: Trout on spoons trolled 35-45 feet during the day at about 2 mph. At night the trout are taking crawlers and shiners around the intakes. Largemouth and smallmouth on jigs, soft plastics cast to deep shoreline pockets.

OUTER BANKS: Nags Head area: Much improved at piers and in the surf for blues, croaker, pompano, spots, trout and scattered flounder. Fine catches of trout at the Little Bridge on the Nags Head-Manteo Causeway; Oregon Inlet: Great offshore for gaffer-sized dolphin, along with yellowfin tuna. Plentiful blues and Spanish mackerel inshore. Speckled trout and small flounder in the backwaters. Some large flounder around the Bonner Bridge spanning the inlet; Hatteras Island: Limits of very large dolphin, along with some wahoo, for the Hatteras Village sportfishing fleet. Some are rating in the best dolphin, or mahi mahi, action in years. Trophy-sized red drum and scattered cobia in Hatteras Inlet. Blues of all sizes from in the surf and at piers from the Rodanthe/Salvo area to Avon, Buxton and Frisco, along with black drum, croaker, flounder, gray trout, pompano, puppy drum and large whiting; Ocracoke Island: Big blues, gray trout, pompano and puppy drum in the surf; Morehead City area: Excellent offshore for gaffer dolphin, along with blue marlin and wahoo. Big cobia in the Barden Inlet near Harkers Island and in Beaufort Inlet. Spanish mackerel in schools near the gun mounts at Cape Lookout. Blues, sheepshead, Spanish mackerel, whiting and a few spots at piers.

SOUTHEASTERN N.C. COAST: Limits of dolphin offshore, along with blackfin tuna and a few blue marlin. Excellent for grouper while bottom fishing offshore. Speckled trout in the bays and creeks at Bald Head Island. Flounder and reds in the Cape Fear River near Southport and in the backwaters such as at Tubbs Inlet and the Intracoastal Waterway along the stretch near Sunset Beach. Blues, flounder, pompano, Spanish mackerel, trout and whiting at piers, along with a few cobia and king mackerel.

S.C. COAST: Little River area: Blues, cobia, reds, Spanish mackerel and whiting at the pier; Grand Strand area: Limits of flounder in Murrells Inlet on drift-fished mud minnows. Spottails, or reds, in the creeks and at the Georgetown and Murrells Inlet jetties on various live baits. Black drum and sheepshead also are being boated at the jetties. Excellent for dolphin offshore, with the Georgetown fleet scoring especially well. Blues, croaker, pompano, Spanish mackerel plus a few flounder, spots and trout at piers; Charleston area: Continuing good to excellent in the backwaters for reds and trout, the latter in limit numbers. Hottest new combo for trout is live shrimp under a Cajun Thunder float. The reds are in the marsh grass edges during high tide, around heavy structure at low tide. Blues and Spanish mackerel are showing in big numbers at the ends of jetties and also in waters near Castle Pickney. Flounder at the inlets; Beaufort area: Excellent for cobia on live baits, including eels, menhaden and whiting, plus squid. Very improved for reds and trout on mud minnows, sand eels, and Gulp! lures cast to the grass edges during high tide.



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