

## Week brings almost 4 inches of rain to Anderson

By Liz Carey, Jennifer Crossley Howard

Thursday, September 22, 2011

ANDERSON — Almost 4 inches of rain fell in Anderson on Wednesday and Thursday, but time will tell whether it was enough to pull the county out of a second-level drought. Showers amounted to 3.56 inches, already past the 3.43 inches that is normal for September, according to the National Weather Service.

Dry Septembers are not uncommon, said John Tomko, meteorologist at the National Weather Service. Today is the first day of fall and it will likely be a rainy introduction. The forecast calls for a 50 percent chance of thunderstorms. Saturday and Sunday will be mostly sunny with highs in the 80s.

For Kent "Catfish" Byrum, 76, this week's rain brought more than it took.

While the rising waters overflowed the ditch in the back of his Homeland Park home and took with it some of the topsoil in his garden, the small river the rain left in his backyard brought something else.

"I looked down there and seen something wriggling around in the water," Byrum said Thursday. "I reached down there and tried to grab it, but I couldn't get hold of it. The ants down there were just eating me alive. So I went and grabbed my net. Pulled out a 3-pound catfish."

Byrum said he thought the flathead catfish must have come from the drainage pond behind the nearby Bi-Lo grocery store.

"At first, I thought it was a squirrel caught up in the water," he said. "But when I looked, it was trying to swim up the ditch back to the pond. It must have come through that hole up there and went the water started to fall, tried to swim back up."

Byrum, who fishes at Stoneybrook Fishing Lake in Pelzer and sells his catch to neighbors, said he didn't need the fish. He is used to catching 45-pounders, hence his nickname. His freezer has enough catfish, he said.

Instead, he gave it to a neighbor for dinner.

Some areas of lakes around the state barely have enough water to hold fish.

Lakes Marion and Moultrie have lost more than a foot of water in the last two weeks, and parts of the lake bottoms are exposed. Anderson and Charleston areas are almost 10 inches below normal rainfall for this year.

The rain did little to help Anderson-area lakes.

Hartwell Lake dropped 1 foot since Sunday. Lake Keowee is at 95 feet, the same as Sunday, and Lake Jocassee is at 80 feet.

The state Drought Response Committee will hold a teleconference meeting Thursday to revisit counties' drought status. Much of the decision will depend on the condition of rivers and streams.

"We've had some rain this week," said state climatologist Hope Mizzell. "We'll at least see if it's temporarily stabilizing."

September seems the best chance for any drought recovery as October is usually dry.

But a rainy October is possible.

"Typically when that occurs it's when you have influence from tropical systems," Mizzell said. "Without that it's our driest month even with average rainfall."

The Associated Press contributed to this story.



© 2011 Scripps Newspaper Group — Online