

Three great Upstate summer fishing trips

BY PHILLIP GENTRY
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The summer months of June and July usher in what some consider the "second season" of fishing across the Upstate of South Carolina. Gone are the prospects of pre-spawn or spawn fishing as well as most still, shallow water fishing patterns. What the second season brings to Upstate anglers is deep water and moving water fishing and for those who understand how summertime fish relate to these conditions, the fishing is good.

Here's three suggested summer fishing trips that should provide plenty of hot fishing action for Upstate anglers—enough to last them well into the fall.

JOCASSEE TROUT

Starting in the upper northwest corner of the state, deep, clear Lake Jocassee's trout fishing plummets to the deepest

depths of the year where hungry trout can be found holding along the thermocline when temperatures soar.

While some trout anglers find success using live or cut bait from an anchored boat while night fishing near the hydro station, most veteran trout anglers who fish during daylight hours prefer to troll artificial baits for Jocassee trout. Due to the trout's propensity for cold, dark water, trout are often caught as deep as 100 feet throughout the summer. This deep-water fishing necessitates the use of downriggers in order to present baits at the appropriate depths.

Trolling spoons and crankbaits behind downriggers from 70 feet down to the thermocline is the best tactic. Try the dam area early and late in the day and half way back into Three Rivers during the rest of the day. June 1 marks the start of the "3 and Done" rule on Lake

Jocassee. No size limits are imposed, but once each angler has three trout in possession, it is unlawful to take or attempt to take any additional trout. This runs until Sept. 30.

"If they're pumping water, the better bite usually lasts from about an hour before daylight till 10:30 a.m.," Sam Jones, a trout guide at Jocassee, said. "You can still catch fish even if they aren't running water but the fish are not as concentrated and you'll need to do a lot of searching and cover a lot more water. There's a lot of submerged timber out in the lake and the trout will hold in that if they aren't ganged up at the dam."

BROAD RIVER SMALLMOUTH

Heading west across the Upstate, the Broad River is home to some great moving water smallmouth bass fishing.

"This is a unique fishery" said Brandon Barber who spends a lot of time plying the Broad for bronzebacks when he's not working at his Riverblade Knife and Fly shop in Spartanburg. "Naturally, there are smallmouths up and down this river and they can be caught year round, but to me, the best time to catch them is in the dead of summer. July usually means the lowest river flows of the year and that concentrates fish."

Unlike their largemouth cousins, smallmouth bass prefer flowing water and hard bottom to the slower, deeper pools that are found along the Broad. The grass lined mud banks that drop off into chest deep water littered with stumps and old wood may look like a bass angler's dream but in truth hold very few smallmouths.

"The first thing I look for is rocks, the second is current" said Barber. "Pretend you're looking for good trout water rather than bass water and you're going in the right direction. The river has stretches of both and that's what makes this such a great place to float fish from a kayak. You can paddle through the deeper spots and then either fish the rocky areas from the boat or get out and wade fish."

CLARKS HILL CRAPPIE

The third in line of the Savannah chain lakes, Clarks Hill's sprawling creek arms are home to an abundant population of both black and white crappie. Summer finds crappie relating to deep-water structure.

Veteran angler Rod Wall prefers to tight line troll for crappie during the summer at Clarks Hill. He suggests starting at the mouth of any the major tributary creeks and go at least halfway to the back and start looking for bait-

fish on your graph. Target depths may be from 12-30 feet deep but look for crappie to relate to structure along the edge of the creek channel or suspend up in the water column at or just below the level of the bait.

Troll 1/16-ounce jigs tipped with curly tail grubs or live bait over the tops of submerged structure such as stumps or channel breaks to target white crappie, which pre-

fer to suspend over deeper water during the summer. Black crappie will be found holding tight to heavier cover such as brush piles or standing timber.

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