

Don't give up quite yet on outdoor summer activities

BY PHILLIP GENTRY
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If you think about it, August is like February in reverse for outdoors fans. All summer long, you've been there and done that, and now it's getting to the point that it's just too dang hot to do more. Don't fret, because a lot of people suffer from the summer doldrums while waiting for cooler weather and the outdoor action to heat back up.

In the meantime, don't let August go by while you watch it from indoors with the air conditioner on. Below are a few suggestions of some activities you can do now, and some stuff you'll wish you'd done later.

GET YOUR BOW TO THE SHOP

August is borderline on waiting until the last minute if there's something that needs to be done to your archery tackle before the opening day of bow season, which rolls around on Oct. 1 in Game Zone 1 (primitive weapons) and Sept. 15 in Game Zone 2 (archery only).

Even if there's nothing that requires the work of a bow technician, late August afternoons are a great time to have some friendly 3-D target-shooting outings in the backyard or out in the field.

SCOUT SOME GEESE

More and more hunters are embracing the fun of early season resident Canada goose hunting. The early season provides a liberal segment of 30 days — Sept. 1-30 — and an even more liberal bag limit of 15 geese per hunter per day. Some hunters find success during late summer hunting geese around water, but most of these big fowl can be found eating in fresh cut grass, hay or grain fields, particularly during the off days on love fields.

PRACTICE WING SHOOTING

You've hopefully got a spot reserved on a good dove field during the month of September, as the first and second seasons run consecutively this year. From Sept. 1-3, the season doesn't open

until noon of each day. But from Sept. 4 through Oct. 13, the season is open from half an hour before sunrise until sunset. A few days at the skeet range can help you shake the rust off and get back in the groove for trying to bring down some gray speedsters.

ENJOY SOME TOP-WATER ACTION

As hot as it may seem, August afternoons are historically a great time to get in on some good top-water action in the late evenings for striped bass and black bass where those species are found. The feeding frenzy is sparked by migrations of young threadfin shad moving away from their rearing areas and into open water. Surface activity can frequently be seen from long distances — just make sure you have something noisy tied on to your line and maintain a good distance from the school to keep from spooking the fish.

TAKE A HIKE

Frequent rain showers this summer have kept the Upstate's water stocks high, meaning August is a great time to head for the mountains and hike to one of the state's noted waterfalls. For a complete listing of some of the best waterfall hikes in the Upstate, visit scmountainlakes.com and view the waterfall hike listing.

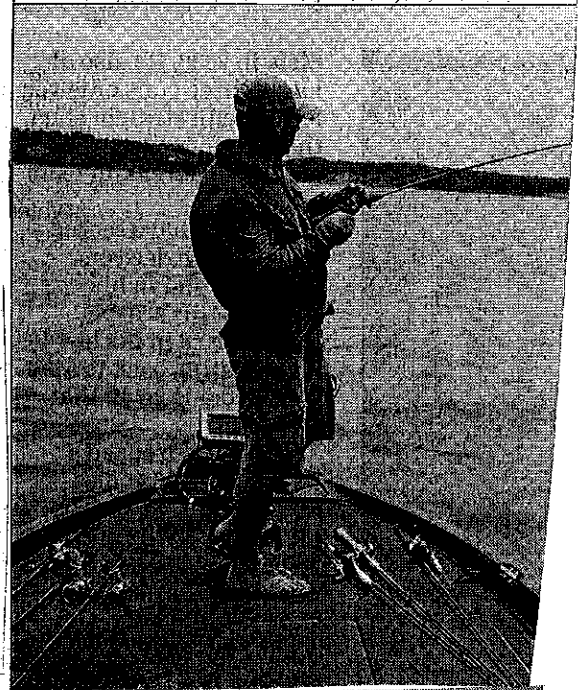
GRAB A PADDLE

If you're more into using a paddle over a pair of hiking boots to get back to nature, the same water levels that are supplying waterfalls are also making whitewater rafting and paddling a blast this summer. There may be no better way to beat the summer heat than spending a day in a cold mountain river. Some of the favored local rivers in South Carolina, North Carolina and Tennessee include the Chattooga River, the Nantahala River and the Pigeon River.

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August might be considered the "summer doldrums" by some, but there's still plenty of great outdoor recreation to be found this month.