

# Night moves when it comes to area fishing

BY PHILLIP GENTRY  
FOR THE JOURNAL

**T**he prospect of night fishing is a love/hate relationship for many anglers.

Some recount fishing trips with family and friends either sitting on the shore or piled up in a boat using Coleman lanterns to illuminate the fishing area.

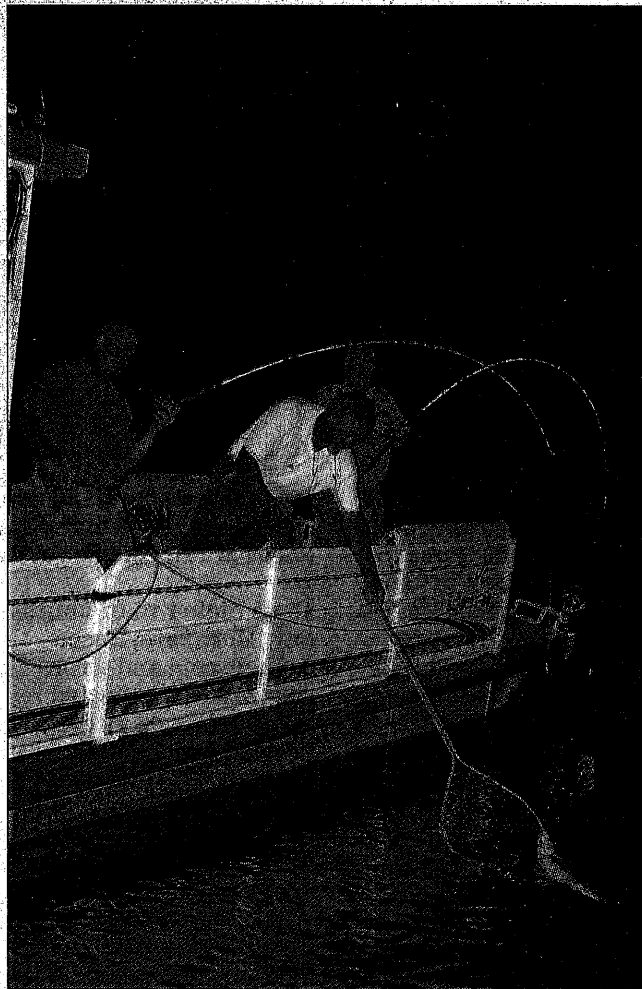
Others complain about loss of sleep and not being able to see, along with that one time a snake crawled up in the boat.

Love it or hate it, night fishing is a rite of passage on most Upstate lakes. Just like everything else, times and technology are having an effect on the old ways.

Using lights to draw in baitfish for night fishing isn't new. Fishermen have been doing it for years. The usual scenario is hanging lights over the side of the boat — the Coleman lantern is a time-tested light source. The surface light draws insects, which attract bait fish, followed by predators.

"The concept of the Hydro Glow is to get the entire light below the surface" said Hydro Glow creator Darrell Keith, who's the owner of the Dawsonville, Ga.-based company. "There's no reflection of light off the surface like you get with gas lanterns or generator-driven lights.

"There are two colors that have the best underwater light penetration — green and blue. Unfortunately, blue has no stimulating effect on plankton in freshwater. Green, on the other hand, stimulates plankton in freshwater, much like plants react to light for photosynthesis. Drawing plankton draws baitfish,



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**Night fishing is a rite of passage for many anglers on South Carolina's Upstate lakes.**

which brings in the predators. It starts the whole feeding chain."

One final benefit of Keith's Hydro Glow is it operates on 12-volt power, and not very much of that.

"The draw for the Hydro Glow is about 2.5 amps per hour" Keith said. "For an overnight fishing trip, that equates to about 20 amps. There's not even a need to bring a spare battery. Most deep cycle 12 volts easily have 20 amps to spare."

A grave mistake made by too many night anglers is to think that just putting out lights is a guarantee of drawing in fish.

May is a great time of

year for night fishing, because the weather is not too hot or cold and many fish are hungry after going through the spawn and will readily prowl around looking for food.

The key is first finding the bait with your graph, then anchoring on the bait, veteran night angler Mike Taylor of Fair Play said.

"The lights help keep the bait at your location, and the bait will draw the fish," he said. "A lot of anglers think they'll draw the bait and fish to them by putting out lights, and they've got it backward."

Taylor said live-bait fishing is his main tactic, and his bait changes

depending on which lake he's fishing and what species he's likely to catch. He favors whole nightcrawlers if he's fishing on Lake Jocassee for trout, medium minnows if he's tied up under a bridge on Lake Keowee for crappie, and either minnows or live herring depending on whether he's after crappie or stripers and hybrid striped bass on Lake Hartwell.

If he has a night with enough wind to hold the boat in position, Taylor only has to use a single anchor from the bow of his boat to stay in place. One anchor is preferred since his bait presentation is straight down using six to 10 rods at the same time. His tactic is down-rod fishing in its most classic sense, putting baits at 10-foot increments from 10 feet and down. He even has his boat rigged with rod holders to evenly space the rods.

"If there is no wind to hold the boat, I'll have to go to a double-anchored setup," Taylor said. "It takes a lot of anchor line to anchor in 100 feet of water (at Jocassee), and without that second anchor, the boat will drift back over the front anchor, then you have a mess with 12 rods, and it's a possibility you could drift off the fish."

Once he's anchored on bait with lights aglow and a dozen baits dangling in the depths, he's as prepared as he can get for an evening of controlled chaos.

**PHILLIP GENTRY** is a freelance outdoor writer and the host of PG & Boatgirl Outdoors. Download the podcast on Apple, Google Play, Spotify or at [pgandboatgirl.com](http://pgandboatgirl.com).