

Planning a kayak-float fishing trip

BY PHILLIP GENTRY
FOR THE JOURNAL

Kayaking and kayak fishing finds its appeal, in large part, in allowing the angler to “get away from it all.” In many cases, that means getting access to fish that don’t see a bait so often, as well as putting yourself in surroundings well off the beaten path.

Float tripping accomplishes both of these things, often in spades, and South Carolina’s Upstate river systems offer some great float-trip opportunities.

Theoretically, float tripping could take place on any body of water — an inland lake, a stretch of coastline or simply putting in at one end of a pond and paddling to the other. In most common thought, float tripping involves moving water — like a large creek or river — where it’s easier to go with the flow than float down and paddle back.

Whichever venue you choose, there are a few common factors to keep in mind to make your trip more enjoyable, more productive and safer.

FLOAT TRIP WITH A FRIEND OR TWO

The logistics of putting in at one location and taking out at another almost always involves two vehicles. Drop one vehicle at the take-out point, and traverse backward to the starting point in the second vehicle.

Because the distance in between is no-man’s land as far as an exit, it’s better to have a buddy in case something goes wrong, be it small or large calamity.



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Enjoying a day of fishing on an Upstate riverway is simple and easy — all it takes is a bit of planning.

It’s hard to cover both sides of a river when you’re constantly moving in one direction. Like any fishing grounds, there will be some areas that are more productive than others, and having a companion will help you cover more water and show the fish more presentations. If one of you lands on a hot spot, bait or presentation, you can share information.

HAVE A WAY TO ANCHOR

You may float an entire section of water and never encounter the need to fish one spot, but it’s better to have it and not need it than need it and not have it.

The most effective anchoring system will depend on the topography you are floating. If it’s generally shallow, open water with lots of sand bottom — as commonly

found in the coastal regions — then a stake-out pole and anchor trolley may fit the bill. If you’re fishing woody areas with lots of overhang and/or downed trees along the way, you may anchor with nothing more than a length of rope tied off to a stick or tree branch.

Deep water with current may require more line and a decent-sized anchor to hold the boat in place.

BE WELL SUPPLIED

Continuing with the thought of no turning back, be sure to supply yourself with enough bait, tackle, food and water to make the trip, plus some in the event the trip goes longer than expected. Make sure those supplies include additional clothing and safety gear in a dry-storage container.

Spend a little time planning on how to store

the additional provisions, as your load may be more than what you are normally accustomed to carrying on a non-float trip.

FILE A FLOAT PLAN

This may sound repetitious and cliché, but let someone other than the party members you’re making the trip with know where you’re putting in and where you’re taking out and the expected time period between. Your non-kayaking friends or relatives may not be familiar with the terrain you’ll be traversing, so a map of your float could save hours of time and effort if someone needs to come look for you.

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.