



Fishing Report

April 27 – May 4, 2009

Water Temp: 62 degrees

Water Clarity: Good

The long awaited warm weather and clear skies late last week brought the water temperature up as well and a number of boats out onto the lake over the weekend. I slipped out Sunday to watch a couple of the Bassmaster Elite tournament finalists compete in the Blue Ridge Brawl and found people out early on everything from jetskis and kayaks to large cabin cruisers. Daytime temperatures over the weekend exceeded 90 degrees and only slipped down into the 60's at night. Warm temperatures will continue through Tuesday. On Wednesday temperatures will drop to near normal levels where they will remain all week with highs around 80 degrees and low temperatures in the 50's. There are scattered showers and thunderstorms in the forecast most days this week. There will be increasing moonlight at night with a first quarter moon on May 1st and a full moon on May 9th. The lake is at full pond and all ramps are open.

Striped bass fishing this past week was mixed. Anglers fishing during the day continue to catch stripers on live bait pulled slowly behind planer boards and floats (Redi-rigs) near the shoreline and across main channel points. Striped bass are also being caught as they move shallow and close to the bank in anticipation of the upcoming Alewife spawn. Good lures imitate baitfish and include bucktails and flukes rigged on superline hooks, belly weighted hooks and quality jigheads. Anglers that want to increase their lures profile, add a little bulk or distinctive action to it are adding fluke and curl tail grub bodies to their bucktails and spinner bait skirts to their fluke and jighead rigs.

Floating jerkbaits are also working well for stripers, especially at night. As more alewives move up on the bank to spawn at night this pattern will improve. Good "striper night fishing" jerkbaits include the Storm Thunderstick (jointed), Size 10 and 12 Rapala X-Rap, Original Rapala F-18, Lucky Craft Pointer, Cotton Cordell Redfin, Smithwick Rattlin' Rogue and Long A. Most of these lures have treble hooks that easily tangle in conventional landing nets. If you are going to fish with multi-hooked jerkbaits at night, I strongly suggest you consider trying a boga type lip grip. There are several inexpensive models that work well, allowing you to control your fish and avoid treble hooks while removing your lure from the striper. You might also consider using one of the hook resistant rubber landing nets. While they are heavier and a little more cumbersome than conventional landing nets, they work well and do reduce the time spent getting tangled hooks out of your landing net.

Crappies have moved up into shallow water and continue to hit small, live minnows. Good areas include the backs of most creeks and cuts with laydowns and under docks with submerged structure under them. A gold, thin wire hook

tied onto light (4 to 6 pound) monofilament or fluorocarbon line with small splitshot and a bobber is still the best rig. You can also present live minnows on small jigheads. Small tubes and curly tailed jigs are also working for those shooting docks and the bank, but through late last week live “crappie minnows” were producing better results than artificial lures.

There are bass cruising the shoreline and shallow flats as they continue to spawn. While some bass came to the bank to spawn earlier in the month, many moved up just in time for the Elite anglers and others to find and catch them last week. Spawning activity will continue around the lake this week, so if you like to fish for bedding bass, now is a great time to head out on the lake. When looking for spawning bass, a pair of good quality polarized sunglasses with amber or vermilion colored lens, like those by Costa Del Mar, is essential. Once you locate a bass that is locked on the nest you can use a number of different lures to irritate and catch them. For more information about sight fishing techniques and lures, stop by your favorite local tackle shop. Bass are also being caught around docks on “shakey head jigs” and Senko worms and in deeper water on crankbaits, finesse baits and plastics.

It’s time to get your ticket for the 41st Annual Cave Spring Optimist Fishing Tournament this weekend. It starts at 7:30 a.m. May 1 and concludes at noon May 3. It will be hosted at Foxport Marina again this year. Tickets only cost \$40 and there is \$15,000 in prize money available. The fifth annual Bill Cochran Youth Tournament will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, May 2nd. Youngsters 12 and under do not have to pay to participate as long as they are accompanied by a paying adult. Tickets and additional information about this tournament are available at the Virginia Outdoorsman as well as Foxport Marina, Crazy Horse Marina, Captain’s Quarters, Franklin Outdoors and the Minnow Pond.

The “2009 Virginia Outdoorsman Fishing Workshop” series will start on Wednesday, May 20th with a “Fishing Basics” session. This hands-on session will cover the fish found in Smith Mountain Lake as well as the rods, reels, terminal tackle, rigs and lures used to catch them. Participants will learn how to fish with a number of artificial lures and live bait rigs that can be used from docks and boats. For more information or to reserve a seat, just contact us at the shop. We are open Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m.

Good luck this week at the Optimist Tournament, on the water and in the woods.

MIKE SNEAD

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