

# Fishing...

Continued from page 10

wading, there are drop-offs that can quickly put the tallest angler in over his or her head. A personal floating device is advised.

Probably the most basic and natural form of angling is bank fishing. There are various locations where casts can be made from the bank, but caution is advised. The banks of the New can be quite slick and steep.

## The Gear

The spinning rod and reel are the most popular rig for fishing the New. Coupled with live bait — worms or minnows — soft plastic bait or spinning rods are perfect for the beginner or experienced angler. Small crankbaits can get the lure down into the deep spots where the big fish lie and, in the right conditions, top water plugs can furnish a steady stream of excitement. Check in with S&L Outdoor Sports Supply (38 South Main, lower level, Sparta) for advice on what lure is currently most effective.

Another tactic to employ is fly fishing, generally more readily identified with trout fishing, larger wet flies that mimic crayfish and hellgrammites or large poppers can give a fly angler an exciting experience on big water.

## Getting There

There are numerous locations that give the wading angler access to the river. Kings Creek Access and Garvey Bridge Road in Piney Creek, N.C., allow access to the South Fork. Farmers Fish Camp Road, just outside of Sparta, is one of the most popular and productive locations. The Nile Road off U.S. 21-221 North is an access spot used by locals to reach an otherwise inaccessible portion of the river.

## Special Considerations

Many access points are on privately owned land. Be respectful of landowners' wishes, especially when parking. Don't block gates or drives.

Avoid moving or relocating rocks. Species such as the hellbender, a large salamander, are found in the New River. Moving rocks impacts the hellbenders' fragile habitat.

Littering is the most certain way to inhibit future access from landowners. Monofilament line, bait containers and other trash are unsightly and create hazards for wildlife. Littering is also illegal and carries a hefty fine.

Fishing licenses are required for all anglers over 16 years of age. Both North Carolina and Virginia licenses are valid from the confluence of the North and South Fork downstream to where the Little River joins the New River.

Nathan Cox, the county's master officer for the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, said wildlife officers and NCWRC staff have assessed streams in the region and he reported this spring that all were safely accessible. Even so, he advised anglers to proceed with caution because "the weather constantly changes, and trees can fall across stream banks."

## Trout Season Update

One thing for anglers to take into consideration this year — and for the next couple of years — is that the state is stocking fewer trout in streams due to the closure of the

Setzer State Fish Hatchery, which is undergoing a major renovation. This will result in a reduction in stocking this year and next — and potentially through 2028.

The wildlife commission typically stocks streams from April through June, but this year they likely won't be restocked past May due to the shortage. All Hatchery Supported Trout Waters in Alleghany County were stocked before opening day in April, but with fewer fish than usual.

However, this reduction in quantity won't affect the quality, according to Cox. He said anglers can expect trout to be of a similar size as in years past. The majority (96 percent) of trout in North Carolina average 10 inches in length, with the rest exceeding 14 inches.

There are no additional restrictions in Hatchery Supported Trout Waters this season due to the lower number of trout, nor are there bait restrictions or minimum length limits.

To learn more about fishing, visit the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission website ([ncwildlife.gov](http://ncwildlife.gov)) and follow the links under the "fishing" tab.

# STOP DREAMING. START LIVING.

## LOANS FOR:

- Farmland
- Agriculture
- Equipment
- Timberland
- Large & Small Acreage
- Home & Construction

## OTHER SERVICES:

- Leasing

 **AgSouth**  
Farm Credit

*Loans for land, farms and homes*

545 East Main St. | Jefferson, NC 28640  
828.406.0216 | [AgSouthFC.com](http://AgSouthFC.com)

Member FDIC     

 **BOOKS 'N Friends**  
Used Books & Treasures

35 N. Main St., Sparta, NC • 336-372-5155

**"Children  
are made  
readers  
on the  
laps of  
their  
parents."**

— Emilie Buchwald



**Paperback Sale, 1/2 Price**  
**First Saturday of Each Month, —Books 'N Friends**