

Habitat Improvement Ups Your Chance of Landing the Big One

Catching a fish sometimes isn't as simple as dropping your line in the water. The aquatic habitat has to be suitable for popular game fish to find shelter, food and spawning grounds. "Fish Attractors" utilize recycled Christmas trees and other brush to create underwater diversity. Habitat enhancement in major South Carolina freshwater bodies has been an ongoing effort to provide improved fish habitat and fishing opportunities.

Habitat improvement takes place from the shoreline out to deeper waters marked by buoys. Long-term enhancement along the shoreline includes live plantings, which can help reduce erosion and create a natural habitat. More fish-friendly improvements include gravel and rocks to create spawning grounds.

Funding from a Natural Resource Damage Assessment is supporting a large scale habitat enhancement project at Lake Hartwell. Many of the techniques mentioned above were used at Lake Hartwell. The first site, a cove adjacent to the Cherry Farm at Clemson University, was completed in 2015. Twelve additional sites are currently being evaluated for the next phase of the project.

A recent joint project between the Santee Cooper Public Service Authority, Santee Cooper Promotions Board and the Department of Natural Resources brings new freshwater artificial reefs to Lake Moultrie and Lake Marion. Concrete structures were donated by Concrete Pipe & Precast of North Charleston and General Pre Cast manufacturing Company of Moncks Corner. The concrete fish attractors differ from the brush piles, which are typically used in the lakes, in that they will provide more diverse and long lasting habitat. Each site is marked with a buoy and will provide better fishing opportunities for anglers not familiar with the lakes.



Beginning of habitat enhancement at Lake Hartwell in 2008



Offshore enhancement creating diversity at greater depths at Lake Marion and Moultrie in 2014



Shoreline enhancement utilizing brush and rocks at Lake Hartwell in 2014



To find out more information and view maps of habitat restoration visit:
<http://www.dnr.sc.gov/fish/fishattract/fishattr.html>