

North Carolina Sport Fish Profiles



Brook trout

Scientific Name:

Salvelinus fontinalis

Other Common Names:

brookie, speckled trout

Identification:

The brook trout is greenish brown, often iridescent, with light red spots on its sides. It has dark, wavy, worm-like lines on the back and white edges on the fins, including the tail.



Illustration by Duane Raver

Habitats and Habits:

Brook trout are native to the eastern United States and Canada. Two strains of brook trout exist, and both are now found in North Carolina. The southern strain, although identical in appearance to the northern strain, is genetically unique and is native to North Carolina. Rainbow and brown trout, two non-native trout species, are thought to outcompete brook trout for habitat and food resources. As a result, wild brook trout are often restricted to small headwater streams. Spawning occurs in the fall.

Young brook trout feed on small aquatic and terrestrial insects. Adults eat a wide variety of aquatic and terrestrial insects, as well as crustaceans, fish and other small vertebrates.

Fishing Techniques:

Fishing dry flies, streamers and nymphs that imitate natural food items works well. This method is especially popular in North Carolina's many streams that support wild trout. Fishing baits, such as worms and corn, work well for hatchery-reared brook trout. Spin casting small spinners, spoons and crankbaits can be productive as well. Check the current trout fishing regulations on the type of lures allowed as well as the size limit and creel limit for a particular trout water before fishing.

Good Places to Fish:

Check out the North Carolina Trout Maps (http://www.ncwildlife.org/Fishing/Fish_Maps_Location.htm#trout) to find trout fishing opportunities listed by counties.

Other Information:

NCARP Minimum Requirements: 2 pounds or 16 inches

State Record: 7 lbs., 7 oz., Raven Fork River, May 15, 1980

World Record: 14 lbs., 8 oz., in Nipigon River in Ontario, Canada, July 1916*

* Anglers provide information on their potential world-record catches directly to the International Game Fish Association, which maintains the world records for sport fishing.