

North Carolina Sport Fish Profiles



White bass

Scientific Name:
Morone chrysops

Other Common Names:
silver bass, stripes

Identification:

The top and the upper body of this fish are usually silvery-gray to blue with a white-to pale-green side. The white bass

usually has faint horizontal stripes or lines on its sides, which can often be difficult to see. The front dorsal fin is slightly separated from the rear dorsal fin. Smaller individuals are sometimes confused with white perch; however, white bass have one tooth patch on the back of the tongue, while white perch do not. The white bass has a deeper-bodied silhouette and is considerably smaller than its cousin, the striped bass.



Illustration by Duane Raver

Habitats and Habits:

In North Carolina, white bass are native to the rivers in the western part of the state that flow to the Mississippi. However, they have been widely introduced into rivers that flow to the Atlantic Ocean, such as the Catawba and Yadkin rivers. White bass often travel in schools, chasing baitfish in the open waters of lakes and large rivers. As a result, they are rarely associated with cover. Schools of white bass often chase baitfish to the surface. This splashy commotion, often called “jumps,” provides great fishing to anglers who locate them. Spawning occurs in the spring, with white bass leaving deep wintering areas and moving up river or to the upper portions of a lake. These fish often congregate in large numbers below dams and other obstructions such as riffles to spawn. White bass are active feeders during the spawn and can be caught in great numbers at this time. Adults feed on zooplankton, aquatic insects, small fish, crayfish and other aquatic animals.

Fishing Techniques:

Anglers often have success fishing with live minnows or shad and artificial lures, such as jigs, spinners, spoons and small crankbaits.

Good Places to Fish:

White bass can be found in practically all of North Carolina’s large reservoirs. Look for spawning white bass in the upper tailraces and major tributaries of these lakes during the spring. Look for schools of feeding white bass, or jumps, during the summer and fall on the main portion of these lakes.

Other Information:

NCARP Minimum Requirements: 2 pounds or 17 inches

State Record: 5 lbs., 14 oz., from Kerr Reservoir, March 15, 1986

World Record: 6 lbs., 13 oz., from Lake Orange, Orange, Va., July 31, 1989*

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