

# North Carolina Sport Fish Profiles



## White perch

### Scientific Name:

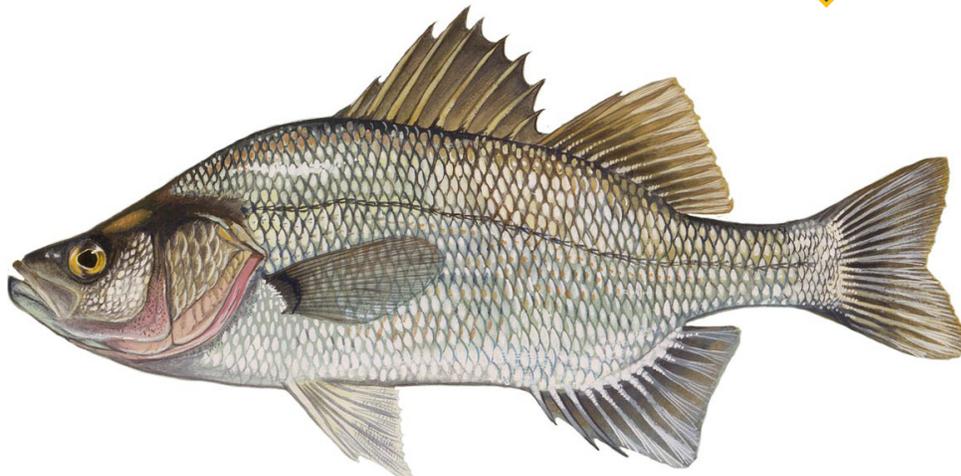
*Morone americana*

### Other Names:

silver perch, sea perch

### Identification:

The white perch is a thin, deep-bodied fish with sides that are predominantly silver, but sometimes golden or olive colored. Very similar to the white bass in appearance, the white perch does not have dark lines running the length of the body. The white perch also lacks a tooth patch in the center of the tongue, which distinguishes it from the white bass (one patch) and striped bass (two patches). Its two dorsal fins are separated by a tiny notch. The first dorsal fin has nine spines, and the second has one spine and 12 soft rays. The anal fin has three spines and eight or 10 soft rays.



*Illustration by Duane Raver*

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### Habitats and Habits:

White perch are native to the Atlantic Coast. They prefer low-salinity estuaries but frequently inhabit coastal rivers and lakes. White perch can be found in Piedmont reservoirs where they have been introduced. Adult white perch prefer silt, mud and sandy bottom habitats with little cover. White perch are semi-anadromous, migrating from brackish estuaries to freshwater rivers to spawn during spring. White perch have been known to eat the eggs of many fish species including walleye (*Stizostedion vitreum*), white bass (*Morone chrysops*) and other white perch. They also hybridize with white bass. White perch may overpopulate a small reservoir and prevent other species from thriving. White perch are carnivores that feed in active schools. Smaller white perch eat aquatic insects and zooplankton, and larger fish feed on worms, shrimps, crabs, small fishes, fish eggs and larval insects.

### Fishing Techniques:

Anglers often locate schools of white perch by trolling or drifting through prime habitat areas. Preferred baits include shrimp, worms, small minnows, lures or streamer-type flies. Once a school is located, white perch can be caught by casting lures or bottom fishing with bait.

### Good Places to Fish:

In North Carolina, most white perch fishing occurs in the Albemarle and Pamlico sounds and their tributaries. White perch can also be caught in Lake Mattamuskeet and Lake Waccamaw. Badin Lake, Lake Tillery and Lake Norman are good spots to catch white perch in the Piedmont.

### Other Information:

NCARP Minimum Requirements: 1 pound or 12 inches

State Record: 2 lbs., 15 oz., from Falls of the Neuse Reservoir, Dec. 16, 2001

World Record: 3 lbs.; 1 ounce, from Forest Hill Park, N.J., May 6, 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.

N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission  
[www.ncwildlife.org/fishing](http://www.ncwildlife.org/fishing)  
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