

North Carolina Sport Fish Profiles



Yellow perch

Scientific Name:

Perca flavescens

Other Names:

raccoon perch, redfin perch, ringed perch, lake perch

Identification:

The yellow perch is greenish yellow along the back, with darker-colored bands on its sides. It has two separate dorsal fins. The first dorsal fin is spiny, and there is a very sharp edge on the gill covering. The pelvic and anal fins are amber to bright orange. The yellow perch is a small fish, averaging around 7 to 9 inches, but its size varies with location.



Illustration by Duane Raver

Habitats and Habits:

Yellow perch are native to the northern United States east of the Rocky Mountains, and in Atlantic Coast watersheds south to South Carolina. They have been widely introduced throughout the country. Yellow perch live in a variety of aquatic habitats, including warm or cool lakes, ponds and sluggish streams. Yellow perch are often found in cool, clear lakes, with a sandy or gravelly bottom and rooted underwater vegetation. They also inhabit lakes with soft bottoms. In North Carolina, yellow perch are abundant in tannic, blackwater rivers and streams located in the Coastal Plain. Yellow perch are considered shallow-water dwellers and are not usually caught more than 30 feet deep.

Young yellow perch eat zooplankton and aquatic insects. As they get larger, yellow perch may eat worms, crustaceans, insects, mollusks and other fish. Yellow perch are sight feeders and usually feed during daylight hours. They actively feed throughout the year, even during winter.

Fishing Techniques:

Anglers can use many angling methods for yellow perch, including natural baits, such as worms, crickets or maggots. Keep your hook on or near the bottom, suspended under a float. Perch strike lightly so a float may help detect a bite. Small jigs and spinners are also effective.

Good Places to Fish:

Yellow perch are caught throughout North Carolina. In the eastern part of the state, good catches of yellow perch can occur in Lake Phelps and Lake Waccamaw as well as the Chowan, Neuse, North, Perquimans, Roanoke and Tar-Pamlico rivers and their tributaries. Yellow perch also can be found in many Piedmont reservoirs, especially those located in the Catawba and Yadkin River basins

Other Information:

NCARP Minimum Requirements: 1 pound or 14 inches

State Record: 2 lbs., 9 oz., from Indiantown Creek, Feb. 8, 1990

World Record: 4 lbs., 3 oz., from Bordentown, N.J., May 1865*

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