

North Carolina Sport Fish Profiles



Striped bass

Scientific Name:

Morone saxatilis

Other Names:

striper, rockfish, rock

Identification:

Striped bass can be silver, copper or greenish, with six to nine dark, unbroken stripes running from head to tail along the sides. It has an elongated and slightly compressed body, with a moderately forked tail and separated dorsal fins. On the top of the tongue, it has two narrow tooth patches. This feature is important to note, as it separates striped bass from white bass (one tooth patch on the tongue) and white perch (no tooth patch). The hybrid striped bass is similar in appearance to the striped bass but can be identified by broken lines on the sides and a much thicker and deeper body. Female striped bass grow larger and typically live longer than males.

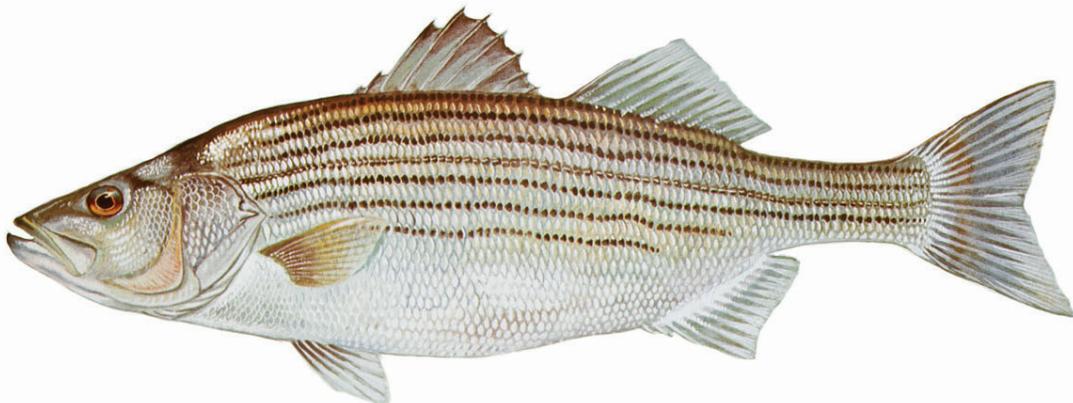


Illustration by Duane Raver

Habitats and Habits:

Striped bass are marine fish native to the Atlantic slope from Canada to Florida and west to eastern Texas. As adults, they migrate each spring from the ocean into four major North Carolina coastal rivers (the Roanoke, Tar, Neuse and Cape Fear) to spawn. In addition to these native migratory populations, the Commission stocks striped bass into many reservoirs in the state, where food and habitat are adequate. Striped bass stocked into these reservoirs are not able to reproduce naturally; populations are maintained through stockings. Young striped bass favor zooplankton and eat freshwater invertebrates and small fish as they grow. Their preferred foods as adults depend on their location but can include crayfish, shad, golden shiners, menhaden, herring and shrimp.

Fishing Techniques:

Live and cut baits, such as gizzard shad, threadfin shad and hickory shad, are popular in coastal rivers. Bucktail jigs in white and yellow, spoons and rattling crankbaits are also effective. Large flies are popular among anglers during the spring in the Roanoke River. Stripers move in schools, and all members tend to feed at the same time. Reservoir striped bass are more active feeders at night so anglers should fish for them in low-light conditions and/or at night.

Good Places to Fish:

The Roanoke River striped bass run occurs from March through May and is the most popular native striped bass fishery in the state. Anglers can also catch stripers in other coastal rivers during this time of year. Striped bass fisheries are actively managed in 13 reservoirs throughout the Piedmont and foothills of North Carolina. Lake Gaston, Lake Norman and Badin Lake are three of the most popular.

Other Information:

NCARP Minimum Requirements: 10 pounds or 27 inches

State Record: 54 lbs., 2 oz., from the Hiwassee Reservoir, June 7, 1991

World Record: 78 lbs., 8 oz., from Atlantic City, N.J., Sept. 21, 1982*

* 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
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