

Coastal Rivers Fisheries Reports – Roanoke River

BASIC INFO:

River sampled:

Roanoke River

Fisheries Biologists conducting sampling:

Katy Potoka, Chris Smith, Jen Atherton, Chad Thomas, Jeremy McCargo

Date of sample:

4/3/2017 – 4/7/2017

Area(s) of river sampled, and water temps:

Gaston

Boat ramp(s) used to access river:

Gaston BAA

Species (spp) information:

- Spp. captured:

American Shad broodfish were collected this week for use in the Commission's Roanoke River American Shad stocking program. Approximately 350 fish were sent to Watha State Fish Hatchery and Edenton National Fish Hatchery where they will be allowed to spawn in recirculating tanks over the next month. The eggs will be incubated and fry will be stocked into the river periodically this spring. Genetic material will be archived and used to match future returning adult shad back to their hatchery parents.

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS:

River level and other water quality observations (turbidity, etc.):

Discharge was around 5,000 cfs, and water was clear with temperatures around 60°C at the Gaston BAA.

Weather conditions on sampling date?

The weather this week varied from warm and sunny to cool and windy. We were able to sample every day despite the thunderstorm activity on Thursday morning.

Your observations of other people fishing on the river:

Several boats were observed at the Gaston BAA. There was a mixture of largemouth bass fishing and anglers targeting striped bass.

Comments to anglers about your sampling results, and fishing-related conclusions that can be drawn from your data:

American Shad have moved into the upper Roanoke River in fairly strong numbers. We did not sample at Weldon this week, but indications are that Hickory Shad remained on the spawning grounds throughout the week and small Striped Bass are moving onto the spawning grounds as well. Hickory Shad numbers should begin to decrease, but Striped Bass will be moving upriver as the month progresses. Anglers are reminded of the single barbless hook rule now in effect for the Roanoke River upstream of Hwy 258 near Scotland Neck. Flows from Kerr Lake and Roanoke Rapids Dam are scheduled to increase to 8,500 cfs on Saturday. Despite this increase in flow, boaters should continue to use caution while navigating the river near Roanoke Rapids and Weldon.

2017 Roanoke River Creel Survey Information:

Jeremy McCargo, Anadromous Research Coordinator of the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC), will share some creel survey information collected from different stretches along the Roanoke River during March, April, and May this season. The Roanoke River Creel Survey is designed and administered by the NCWRC through Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration funding to estimate angler effort, catch, and harvest of Striped Bass in the Roanoke River Management Area.

March 31 – April 6

Upper River: WRC Boating Access Areas (BAA) near Gaston, Weldon, Scotland Neck Boat fishing effort was higher this week at the Weldon BAA. Anglers are still reporting excellent catches of Hickory Shad at Weldon and navigation is a bit easier with the rise in water level seen on Wednesday. Bank anglers were also catching good numbers of Hickory Shad at Weldon. Only a few keeper Striped Bass were reported from the upper river this week, but anglers are beginning to catch decent numbers of small Striped Bass.

Lower River: WRC BAAs near Lewiston, Hamilton, Williamston, Jamesville, Plymouth Fishing effort has been steady in the lower river at Williamston and Jamesville. Saturday was a decent fishing day at Jamesville with anglers catching a few keeper Striped Bass but not high numbers. Anglers had little success, however, at Williamston on Sunday. We did not interview any Striped Bass anglers at the new boating access area on Weeping Mary Rd. near Lewiston-Woodville.

Shad and Striped Bass Regulations for Roanoke River

The daily bag limit is 10 shad per angler, of which only one may be an American (white) shad on the Roanoke River and its tributaries.

The daily creel limit for Striped Bass is two fish per angler, and the minimum size limit is 18 inches in total length. No fish between 22 inches and 27 inches in total length shall be retained in the daily creel limit. Only one fish larger than 27 inches in total length may be retained in the daily creel limit.

April 1–June 30 in Inland Waters of Roanoke River upstream of U.S. Highway 258 bridge to Roanoke Rapids Dam, only a single barbless hook or lure with a single barbless hook (or hook with barb bent down) may be used.