

Coastal Rivers Fisheries Reports-Roanoke River

BASIC INFO:

River sampled:

Roanoke River

Fisheries Biologists conducting sampling:

Katy Potoka, Chris Smith, and Jen Atherton

Date of sample:

3/2/2017 & 3/9/2017

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

Gaston and Weldon

Boat ramp(s) used to access river:

Gaston BAA and Weldon BAA

Species (spp) information:

- Spp. captured:
American Shad
Hickory Shad
Striped Bass
- Numbers by spp:
American Shad- 12
Hickory Shad- 18
Striped Bass- 4
- Size range by spp:
American Shad 17-20 inches
Hickory Shad 13-18 inches
Striped Bass 13-20 inches
- Max size for spp:
American Shad 20 inches
Hickory Shad 18 inches
Striped Bass 20 inches
- Sex ratio by spp (Male:Female):
American Shad 2:1
Hickory Shad 17:1
Striped Bass 1:1
- Were the fish tagged?

No fish were tagged but fin clips were taken from American Shad to determine if there were of hatchery origin.

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS:

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

Discharge on both dates was around 2,200 cfs. These low flows limit our accessibility to certain sites, and sampling was somewhat limited. Water was clear, and temperatures are warming. Water temperatures are around 54°F around the Gaston BAA and 58 °F around Weldon BAA.

Weather conditions on sampling date?

The weather was sunny and warm (70 °F) with moderate winds, around 10 mph.

Your observations of other people fishing on the river:

At the Gaston BAA two boats were seen on the river, one above the 48 bridge and one downstream of the paper mill. At Weldon, there were about 10 boats on the water, most around the boat ramp and rapids, a couple anchored around the docks downstream, and two boats were below big rock. Boat anglers and bank anglers both reported good catch rates of Hickory Shad with a few small Striped Bass being caught.

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

Some anglers have contacted us with concerns about low water conditions in the Roanoke. Commission staff routinely coordinate with the US Army Corps of Engineers to recommend flows during the spring spawning season. Currently, flows are being kept low to increase water levels in Kerr Reservoir. The higher lake level is needed to meet target flows in the river during the striped bass spawning season in April, May, and June. Limited rainfall in February and early March has caused the lake to rise slowly and has also precluded the ability to provide additional flow in the Roanoke during March. While we anticipate flows to increase slightly the first week of April, weather patterns seem to be indicating that 2017 will be a low water year on the Roanoke and other coastal rivers in North Carolina. Low water conditions can make navigation difficult on the Roanoke River, especially near Weldon, but we can still expect a decent striped bass spawn during a low water year. Please note links to USGS streamflow gages and Dominion Power projected releases at the bottom of the webpage.

2017 Roanoke River Creel Survey Information: March 1 – March 9

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 (RRMA).

Upper River: WRC Boating Access Areas (BAA) near Gaston, Weldon, Scotland Neck
Our creel clerks began the Roanoke River Creel Survey on March 1st. Boat fishing effort has been relatively light in the upper river. Low streamflow is likely limiting boat fishing effort at Weldon. The few anglers venturing out have reported decent catches of Hickory Shad at Weldon, and the clerks observed good catches of Hickory Shad by bank anglers at Weldon.

Lower River: WRC BAAs near Lewiston, Hamilton, Williamston, Jamesville, Plymouth
Effort in the lower river has been steady but relatively light. Our creel clerks observed most angling effort and harvest of striped bass in the lower Roanoke River from our NCWRC Boating Access Areas at Jamesville-Astoria Landing. Anglers also caught a few striped bass in the Plymouth and Williamston areas.

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.