

Roanoke River Fisheries Report – April 12, 2019

SAMPLING INFORMATION

Sample Date	Area Sampled	Water Temp (°F)	Boat Ramp Used
4/10/2019	Weldon	58	Weldon BAA
4/11/2019	Roanoke River near Hwy 48	58	Gaston BAA

SPECIES INFORMATION

Species	Striped Bass	American Shad	Hickory Shad
Number Collected	269	173	20
Min. Size (in)	12	15	15
Max. Size (in)	27	20	18
Max. Weight (lb)	10	3	1.5
Sex Ratio (M:F)	7:1	4.3:1	1.2:1

BIOLOGISTS' OBSERVATIONS & RIVER CONDITIONS

Fisheries Biologists conducting sampling:

Katy Potoka, Chris Smith, Jeremy McCargo, and Chad Thomas

Biologists' Observations:

Striped Bass are beginning to arrive on the spawning grounds near Weldon and should continue to increase as water temperatures rise. The majority of the Striped Bass collected this week were in the Weldon area; however, a good number of fish were also seen during the American Shad sample near the Hwy 48 bridge in Gaston. American Shad catches in our electrofishing sample continued to increase this week. They are still migrating to the spawning grounds of the Roanoke River, and numbers should continue to increase over the next month. We observed, but did not collect, numerous Hickory Shad in the Weldon area. Those Hickory Shad we did collect were netted during the American Shad sample in Gaston. A few of the Hickory Shad captured were spent or partially spent. Hickory Shad are likely at their peak and will soon be heading back downstream.

River level and other water quality observations:

Flow from Roanoke Rapids Dam was 13,500 cfs at the time of sampling. Water temperatures were in the upper 50s. The river continued to be turbid but wasn't as muddy as last week.

Weather conditions on sampling date:

During sampling, air temperatures were in the high 60s to mid-70s.

Observations of people fishing on the river:

Around a dozen fishing parties were observed in the Weldon vicinity on April 10th. Most were shad fishing near Big Rock. Four boats were observed catching both shad and stripers between the Gap and the Weldon boat ramp. Bank anglers were also catching shad near the Weldon boat ramp. About 8 fishing parties were observed near the Gaston BAA on April 11th. Most were drifting the center channel around the Hwy 48 bridge, but several were observed fishing downstream of the paper mill. The boat anglers were catching Striped Bass. Multiple bank anglers were also fishing around the boating access area.

2019 ROANOKE RIVER CREEL SURVEY INFORMATION

April 6–12

Upper River (Roanoke Rapids Dam to Scotland Neck)

Fishing effort increased in the upper Roanoke this week. Most of the anglers in the upper river targeted Hickory Shad, and they reported good catches in the Weldon area and at the Edwards Ferry boat ramp near Scotland Neck. Bank anglers were having good luck catching shad around the Weldon boat ramp as well. Some anglers targeted and caught a few Striped Bass at Weldon during the past week.

Lower Region (Scotland Neck to Plymouth)

Striped Bass fishing effort in the lower river was again concentrated around Williamston and Jamesville this week. Anglers caught and harvested Striped Bass in both areas. We also documented limited effort and harvest in Hamilton.

Shad and Striped Bass Regulations for the Roanoke River

The daily creel limit per angler is 10 Hickory Shad and American Shad in combination, only one of which can be an American Shad.

The daily creel limit for Striped Bass is two fish per angler, and the minimum size limit is 18 inches. No Striped Bass between 22 inches and 27 inches in total length may be possessed at any time, and only one fish greater than 27 inches may be included in the daily creel limit of two fish. Striped Bass may only be harvested March 1–April 30 unless the season is extended or closed early by proclamation.

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.