

Roanoke River Fisheries Report – May 10, 2019

SAMPLING INFORMATION

Sample Date	Area Sampled	Water Temp (°F)	Boat Ramp Used
5/6/2019	Weldon	70	Weldon BAA
5/9/2019	Roanoke River near Hwy 48	69	Gaston BAA

SPECIES INFORMATION

Species	Striped Bass	American Shad	Hickory Shad
Number Collected	77	40	
Min. Size (in)	10	14	
Max. Size (in)	26	20	
Max. Weight (lb)	18	2.6	
Sex Ratio (M:F)	1.2:1	4:1	

BIOLOGISTS' OBSERVATIONS & RIVER CONDITIONS

Fisheries Biologists conducting sampling:

Katy Potoka, Chris Smith, and Jeremy McCargo

Biologists' Observations:

The large schools of Striped Bass that were seen in previous weeks upstream of the Weldon boat ramp were not present on May 6th. With the reports of Striped Bass spawning and the reduction of flows, Striped Bass are likely moving downstream. A few larger females (10-20lbs) that had yet to spawn were collected this week, and spawning activity is likely to continue throughout the next week. Striped Bass were collected in fair numbers between the bridges at the Gaston BAA. American Shad catches in our electrofishing sample continue to decrease each week. Spawning is winding up as most of the fish captured on May 9th were spent and in poor, post-spawn condition.

River level and other water quality observations:

Flow from Roanoke Rapids Dam was 8,500 cfs at the time of sampling. Water temperatures were in the upper 60s to lower 70s. Water was clear.

Weather conditions on sampling date:

During sampling, air temperatures were in the upper 70s.

Observations of people fishing on the river:

A good number of anglers were fishing at Weldon on May 6th. Most anglers were down stream of Big Rock; however, a few anglers were in Little River and upstream of the boat ramp. Five to six anglers launched from the Gaston BAA on May 9th. Most were down stream of the paper mill, while a few were above the Hwy 48 bridge. Several bank anglers were present, most were targeting catfish.

2019 ROANOKE RIVER CREEL SURVEY INFORMATION

May 4–10

Upper River (Roanoke Rapids Dam to Scotland Neck)

The harvest season has ended, but we have continued our creel survey to estimate catch-and-release success during the month of May. Over the last week, effort remained high at Weldon but was lighter than during the harvest season. Anglers reported good catches on live bait this week. The fly and artificial bite was slower, but anglers caught fish with all types of bait. Anglers are reminded to use safe handling procedures when practicing catch and release. Single barbless hooks, keeping the fish in the water, and using a de-hooker tool, are all great ways to minimize catch and release mortality. Be sure to check out this video for information about safely releasing strippers. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=99MFTHkdTVw>

Lower Region (Scotland Neck to Plymouth)

No report.

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.

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

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.