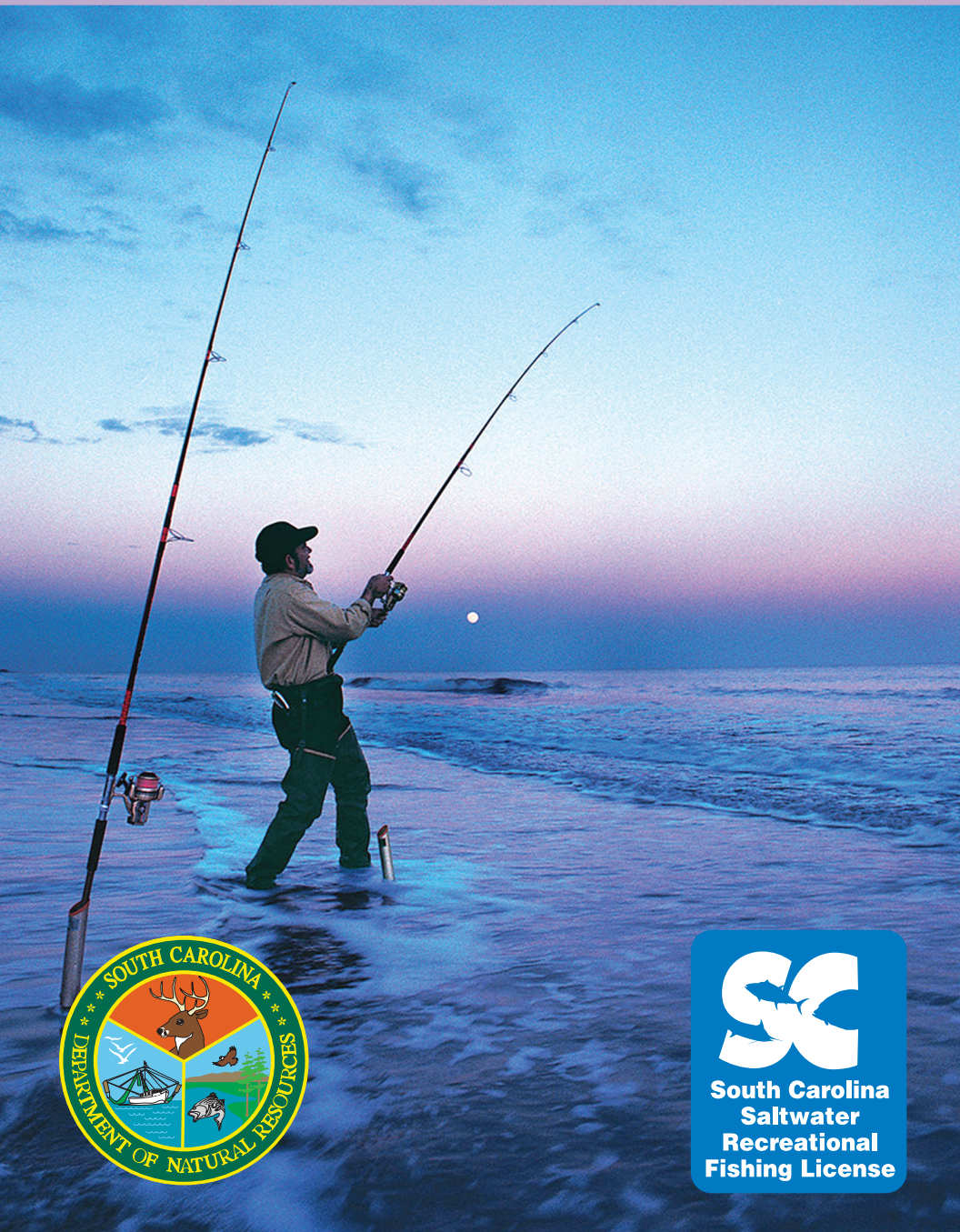


Beginner's Guide to Saltwater Fishing





Welcome to Saltwater Fishing

Learning to fish can be as simple as tying your shoe. You may find yourself sitting on the bank or on a pier using a cane pole, or using a fully-rigged boat with state-of-the-art equipment. Either way, with some basic knowledge and minimum skill, a beginning angler can embark on a lifetime of fun, relaxation and camaraderie with other anglers.

Discussed in the next few pages are several styles of saltwater fishing, types of rods, reels, knots, baits, lures, saltwater fish and marine habitats. You'll find tips to improve your skills and prepare you for a fun, exciting and successful fishing trip. You'll also learn ways to protect your marine resources.

And don't forget, fishing isn't just about catching fish! As experienced anglers will tell you, fishing is one of the best ways families and friends can relax together as they enjoy being outdoors and learning new skills.



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Angler Ethics

What are ethics?

- Rules and values that change your behavior, causing you to do the right thing.

To determine if something is ethical, ask yourself three questions:

- Is it legal?
- Would it still be ok if everyone was doing it?
- Would it make you or people who know you proud?

Ethical Anglers:

- Are considerate of one another, respecting other anglers' space and being quiet so as to not disturb others.
- Always leave their fishing area cleaner than when they arrived so as to protect the resource.
- Abide by all rules and regulations.
- Obey all fishing regulations and report violators by calling Operation Game Thief.



- Respect the resource. Keep only those fish that are injured or those you intend to eat.
- Respect the rights of landowners. Get permission to fish on their property first.
- Pass it on. Teach a child or a friend to fish.
- Support fisheries research and habitat protection through your South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR).

Safety

- Keep at least one rod's length between you and the next angler before, during and after you cast.
- Always look behind you and to the side before casting to prevent hooking power lines, trees or a person.
- Wear sunglasses, sunscreen, bug spray and other protection from the natural elements.
- Always be aware of your surroundings.
- Be very careful around water and make sure you have a fishing buddy with you. If fishing from a boat, always wear a life jacket or PFD (personal flotation device).
- Keep your fishing rig or artificial bait secured to your rod when you are carrying your equipment or not fishing.



Regulations FAQs

Why do we have Regulations? People! Along with natural pressures such as predators and competition for food and space, fish have to worry about pressures we put on them. Those pressures include pollution, in the forms of litter and runoff, which damages water quality; loss of adequate habitat due to changes in the landscape, such as urban development and farm practices; and overfishing, which comes from the unnecessary harvest of too many fish or from harvesting fish that are too small and haven't had the opportunity to reproduce. SCDNR's role is to protect and manage the resource through science and provide suggestions to the legislature on necessary laws. The South Carolina General Assembly then votes to make the bills law and SCDNR law enforcement officers enforce these laws. Some of the common management practices include daily bag or creel limits on the amount of fish an angler can catch and possess in a day, slot or size limits on fish to allow fish to reach sexual maturity and reproduce and restrictions on what type of gear can be used to harvest or catch certain fish—game versus non-game.

Frequently Asked Questions about Fishing Regulations

Where do I find fish and wildlife regulations for the state of South Carolina?

- Regulations are available at every license vendor in the state. They are also found on the website at www.dnr.sc.gov/regulations.

At what age do I need a fishing license?

- When you turn 16, you must have a fishing license in order to fish legally in public waters.

Do I need a fishing license to fish from my private property?

- Yes, you will need a license to fish in public waters (such as lakes or rivers) even if you're on private land. You don't need a license to fish on private property in a private pond unless you are fishing in a commercial pay pond when the pond is permitted by SCDNR.

Where do I go to buy a license?

- You can visit any of the 500 license agents throughout the state; at the nearest local bait and tackle store; the SCDNR office in Charleston, Clemson, West Columbia, and Florence between 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday; or call 1-866-714-3611 (7 days a week 24 hours a day), or visit the web at www.dnr.gov/purchase.

When I buy a license, how is that money used?

- Every fishing license purchase helps to support fisheries research, habitat enhancement and management projects.

For questions regarding your license purchase, please call 803-734-3833.

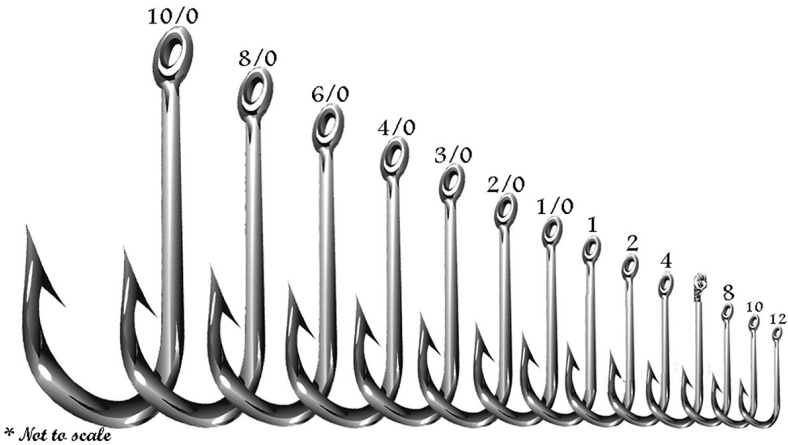


Equipment Overview

Basic Fishing Tackle or Terminal Tackle

Hooks

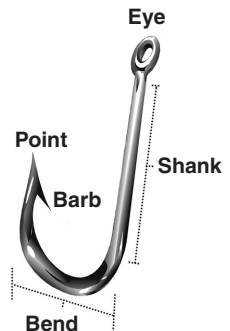
Hooks come in a variety of sizes and shapes. Size 1/0 (called one aught) is big to size 12, which is small. For hooks size 32 to size 1, the larger the number, the smaller the hook. For hook sizes from 1/0 to 19/0, the larger the number, the larger the hook size. Popular hook styles are: Treble, Kirby, Octopus, Wide Gap, O'Shaughnessy, Baitholder, Circle and Weedless.



To determine what hook size to use, consider the bait you are using and the type of fish you are trying to catch. When using live bait, use a hook size that allows the bait to move naturally.

Hook anatomy

- **Point:** The sharp end of the hook that punctures the fish's mouth; there are many different point types such as spear, hollow or rolled in.
- **Barb:** An extension of the point that projects backwards to keep the fish on your hook.
- **Eye:** Just like an eye of a needle, the eye of the hook is the loop at the top used to connect the hook to the line; there are many types of eyes, and they can be positioned in many ways on the shank (up-turned, down-turned, straight, ringed or lopped).
- **Bend & Shank:** The portion of the hook that connects the point to the eye; the hook shank can be straight or have curves, kinks, bends and offsets which allow for easier setting of the hook, or bait holding.



Monofilament Line

- Like the hooks, monofilament line comes in a variety of weights for different species.
- Monofilament line is measured in “pound test,” meaning the amount of weight required to break the line. 10 pound test line is stronger and thicker than 6 pound test line; so, the higher the pound test, the stronger the line.



- When choosing the right pound test, it is always best to match the line to the capabilities or size of your rod and reel and to take into account the lures/bait you’re using and the species you want to catch. Pound test capability for rods is usually printed on the rod near the handle.
- Always discard properly or recycle monofilament line as it can cause harm to wildlife.

Fluorocarbon Fishing Line

- Other alternatives to standard nylon monofilament lines are made of copolymers or fluorocarbon, or a combination of the two materials. Fluorocarbon fishing line is valued for its refractive index, which is similar to that of water, making it less visible to fish. Fluorocarbon is also a more dense material, and therefore, is not nearly as buoyant as monofilament. Fluorocarbon is often used as leader material.

Braided Fishing Lines

- There are also braided fishing lines, cofilament and thermally fused lines, also known as ‘superlines’ for their small diameter, lack of stretch, and great strength relative to standard nylon monofilament lines. These lines are extremely abrasion resistant and are an excellent choice when fishing around structure like rocks and pilings.

Sinkers

- Sinkers come in a variety of weights (measured in ounces) and shapes.
- They allow you to present your bait close to the bottom.
- Popular sinker types: bank, pyramid, split shot, egg, bell and bullet.



The shape of the sinker determines how much your rig moves along the bottom. For instance, pyramid and bank sinkers will keep your rig in one place on the bottom. Oval shaped sinkers will cause the rig to “roll” along the bottom. Experiment with different shapes to find out what works best for the conditions.

Floats, Popping Corks

- Floats keep your bait closer to the surface.
- Serve as a strike indicator, letting you know when you’re getting a bite by bobbing down in a quick, jerky motion.
- Floats come weighted, unweighted and in many different shapes and sizes.
- Popping corks “pop” when jerked and can attract fish.



Note: If you ever have questions about what terminal tackle you need for the fish you want to catch, make sure you stop by your local bait and tackle shops. These folks can provide you with what tackle to buy, what rigs and lures to use and let you know which fish species are biting.

Swivels

Swivels come in a number of different styles, each of which has a specific purpose. The three most common swivels are the snap, barrel, and three way. As the name suggests, this type of terminal tackle “swivels” around a fixed point. The main purpose of a swivel is to make a connection between your line, a rig, or a weight. Swivels also help prevent your main line or leader from twisting.

– Snap Swivel

Usually attached directly to the main line, the snap swivel allows you to change rigs or artificial baits quickly.



Eye



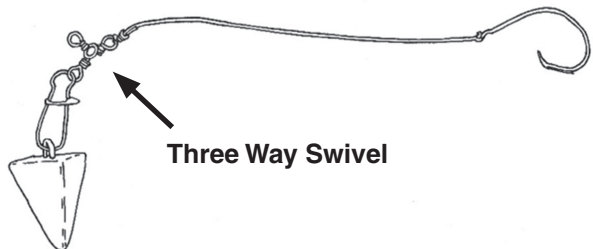
– Barrel Swivel

Used to connect the main line to a leader. Most commonly used with the “Carolina Rig.” Each eye of the swivel can turn 360 degrees preventing line twist.

– Three Way Swivel

Similar to a barrel swivel, except there are three eyes. One eye connects the leader to the hook, another is for the weight, and the third attaches to the main line.

The drawing below shows a snap used for attaching different size weights, but a short leader with a loop can work just as well.



Tip: Sometimes less terminal tackle is better. In clear water or if fish are skittish, tie the main line directly to your rig or artificial bait instead of using a snap swivel.

Rod Types

- **Cane Pole** is a pole with fishing line tied to it, mainly used for shoreline fishing.



- **Spincasting & Baitcasting** rods have small guides for line to move through on the top side of the rod, a handle with a finger grip and a reel that mounts on the top side of the rod.



- **Spinning** rods have large guides for line to move through that decrease in size as they get closer to the rod tip, no finger grip on the handle and reel mounts on the bottom.



- **Fly** rods are very flexible with guides and reel mount on the bottom.



What to look for in a rod?

The type of rod chosen depends on the fish you plan to catch and the type of bait or lure you'll be using.

Remember, when in doubt, ask a local bait and tackle shop or an avid angler.

- **Length:** a longer rod is better for distance casting and controlling the lure.
- **Action:** refers to the portion of the rod at which it bends; measured as slow, medium or fast:
 - Fast action: rod bends mainly near the tip; good for surface lures or detecting subtle strikes when jigging.
 - Medium action: rod bends over the front half or $\frac{3}{4}$ the way up the rod; good for live bait fishing.
 - Slow action: rod bends over the entire length or at the halfway point; good for absorbing pressure when fighting a big fish so as not to break the line.
- **Power:** similar to rod action; refers to the amount of force required to bend a rod; measured as light, medium, & heavy or on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is the lightest; light rods easily bend under the weight of a lure, so heavy action rods are needed for heavy lures.



The length, action, and power are usually printed on the rod just above the handle.

Reel Types

Spincast Reels



Photo By Dan DuPre

Spincast reels are also known as push button or close faced reels; easiest to use and great for beginners.

Rate the Reel

Overall Ease of Use: **Beginner**

Typically, great for children.

Cost: **Inexpensive**

\$10.00 - \$40.00

Maintenance: **Easy**

All moving parts are enclosed within the reel so disassembly is required for major cleaning and re-greasing of gears. This also makes the reel NOT good for saltwater fishing.

Casting: **Simple**

Spincast Reels have a one button line release. Casting only requires one hand.

Pros

Easy to use, inexpensive, no backlash, good for light-lures or baits.

Cons

Low gear ratio, simple drag system, not durable.

Spinning Reels



Spinning reels are also known as an open faced reel; line spools off quickly, casting farther than a spincast; suitable for light lures.

Rate the Reel

Overall Ease of Use: **Intermediate**

Great transition reel for kids that have mastered the spincast.

Cost: **Moderately Expensive**

\$20.00 - \$100.00 plus

Maintenance: **Easy**

Daily cleaning is easy since most of the moving parts can be rinsed with tap water. Major cleaning and re-greasing requires disassembly.

Casting: **Moderately Difficult**

Spinning Reels have a bail that has to be opened for casting. This requires two hands.

Pros

Simple and durable, no backlash, good for light lures and baits

Cons

Line will twist and tangle from time to time.

Baitcast Reels



Baitcast reels are difficult to master, mainly used to cast large lures and bait long distances; line is controlled during the cast by the angler's thumb.

Rate the Reel

Overall Ease of Use: **Expert**

Not recommended for children. It takes some time and practice to master.

Cost: **Moderately Expensive to Expensive**

\$30.00 - \$150.00 plus

Maintenance: **Difficult**

Baitcast reels can be difficult to maintain as there are complicated gearing mechanisms that wind and release the line.

Casting: **Difficult**

Without practice, you will backlash the line on reel causing a "birds nest" of line.

Pros

Handles heavy line well, high gear ratio, casting accuracy.

Cons

Backlash, expensive, not good for light lures and baits, learning curve to master the reel.

Fly Reels



Fly reels, used in fly fishing, hold the line, but the casting is done with the rod by projecting the line out instead of the weight of the lure casting the line.

Rate the Reel

Overall Ease of Use: **Intermediate**

In order to use a fly reel, you will need a lot of practice and instruction. You will have to learn a new angling method.

Cost: **Expensive**

\$50.00 - \$300.00 plus

Maintenance: **Easy**

Daily cleaning is easy since most of the moving parts can be rinsed with tap water. Major cleaning and re-greasing requires disassembly.

Casting: **Difficult**

There is no release mechanism for the fly reel. Also, retrieving your lure or fish is done by hand, not by reeling the reel.

Pros

Great for light lures and baits, very rewarding when you catch a fish.

Cons

Expensive, difficult to master

Casting Overview

In fishing, casting is the act of throwing a lure or bait via fishing line over the water with a flexible fishing rod. The usual technique is for the angler to quickly flick the rod from behind toward the water.

Casting Techniques

Casting techniques vary with the type of fishing involved. The technique using a spincast or baitcast outfit requires the angler to push a button to release the line when you are casting. When using a spinning outfit, you are required to “flip the bail” to cast your lure. Fly fishermen use artificial flies as a lure and use lighter rods and lines. They develop much finesse casting the flies, using motions of the hand and arm, so the flies land with great accuracy out on the water and mimic the behavior of real flies.

Saltwater anglers usually use heavier rods, lines, lures and bait. Specialized, two-handed casting techniques are used to cast the lure or bait the added distances required in many cases to reach fish feeding inshore. In these casts, the entire body rather than just the arms is utilized to deliver the cast, which may travel many hundreds of feet.



Spincasting

A spincasting reel has a button you push with your thumb to release the line. This button also acts as a brake if you push and hold the button.

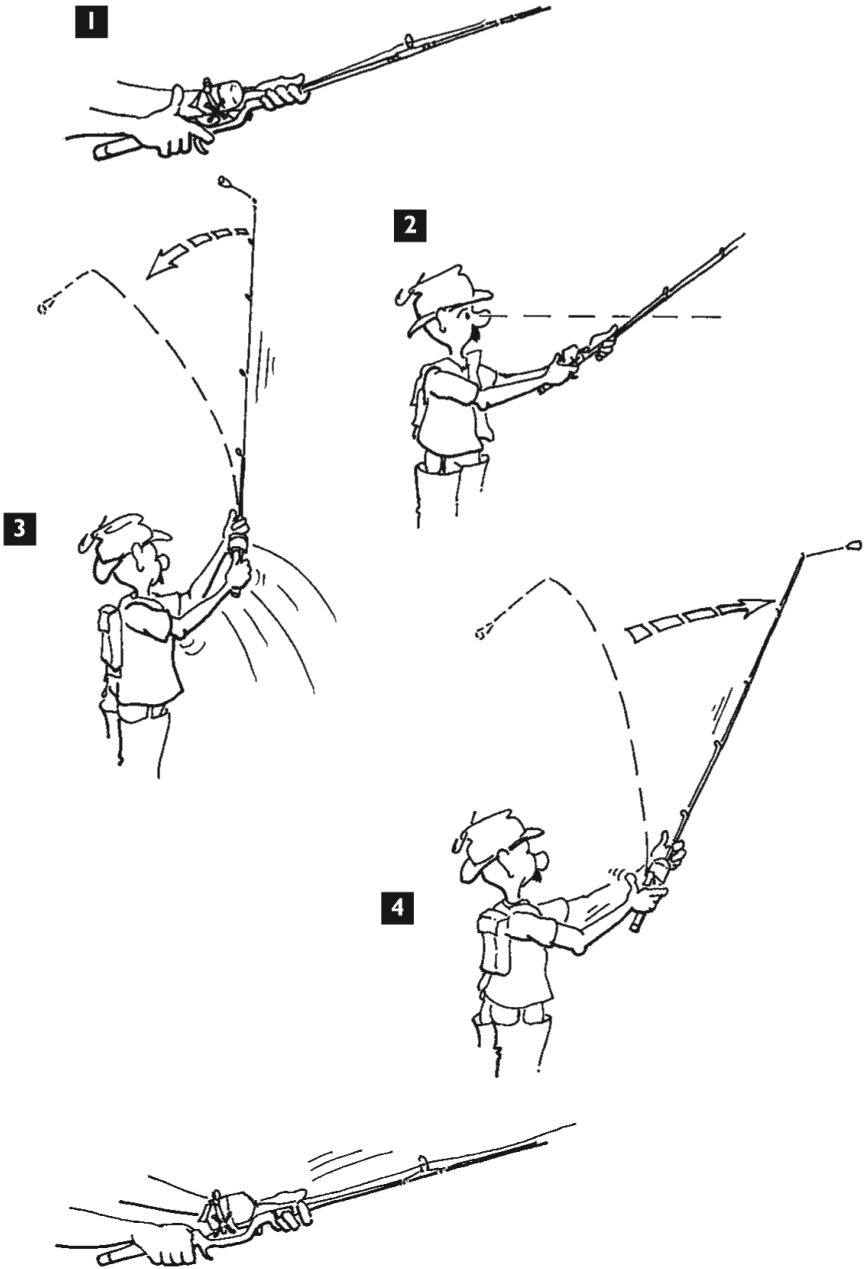
- 1.** Grasp the rod's handle or pistol grip with one hand. Push the reel's thumb button down and hold it in.
- 2.** Face the target area with your body turned to a slight angle, about a quarter turn. Aim the rod tip toward the target, about level with your eyes.
- 3.** Swiftly and smoothly bend your arm at the elbow, raising your hand with the rod until it almost reaches eye level. When the rod is almost straight up and down, it will be bent back by the weight of the lure. As the rod bends, move your forearm forward with a slight wrist movement.
- 4.** When the rod reaches eye level, release the thumb button.

If the lure landed close in front of you, you released the thumb button too late. If the lure went more or less straight up, you released the thumb button too soon.



Photo Courtesy of TakeMeFishing.org

Spincasting

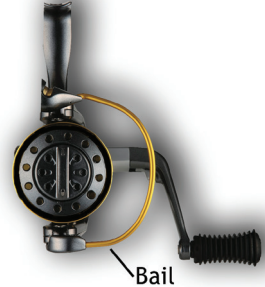


Spinning

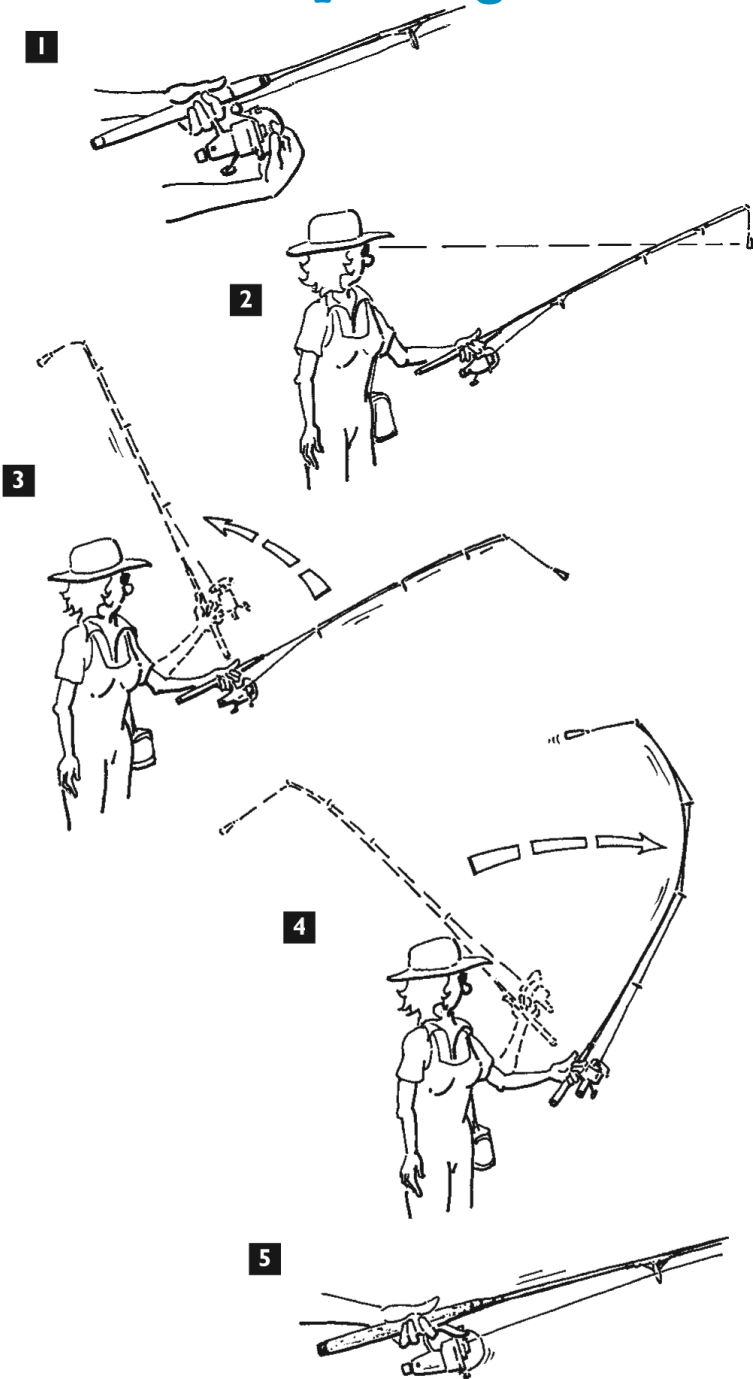
With a spinning reel, you use your finger to release the line.

1. Grasp the rod's handle, placing the reel "stem" that attaches the reel to the rod between your middle fingers. Extend your forefinger to touch the spool cover, holding the line against the stem with your forefinger. Open the reel's bail with your other hand.
2. Face the target area with your body turned at a slight angle, about a quarter turn. The arm holding the rod handle should be closest to the target. Aim the rod tip toward the target at about eye level.
3. Swiftly and smoothly, using just one motion, bend your casting arm at the elbow and raise your forearm so that your hand is almost at eye level.
4. When the rod is almost straight up and down, it will be bent by the weight of the lure. As the rod bends, move your forearm forward with a slight wrist movement.
5. When the rod reaches eye level, straighten your forefinger to release the line. If the lure landed close in front of you, you straightened out your index finger to release the line too late. If the lure went more or less straight up or behind you, you straightened your index finger too soon.

TIP: To change the handle on a spinning reel from one side to the other, remove the screw from the opposite side of the handle, and slide the handle out. Slide the handle back in on the opposite side and tighten the screw.



Spinning



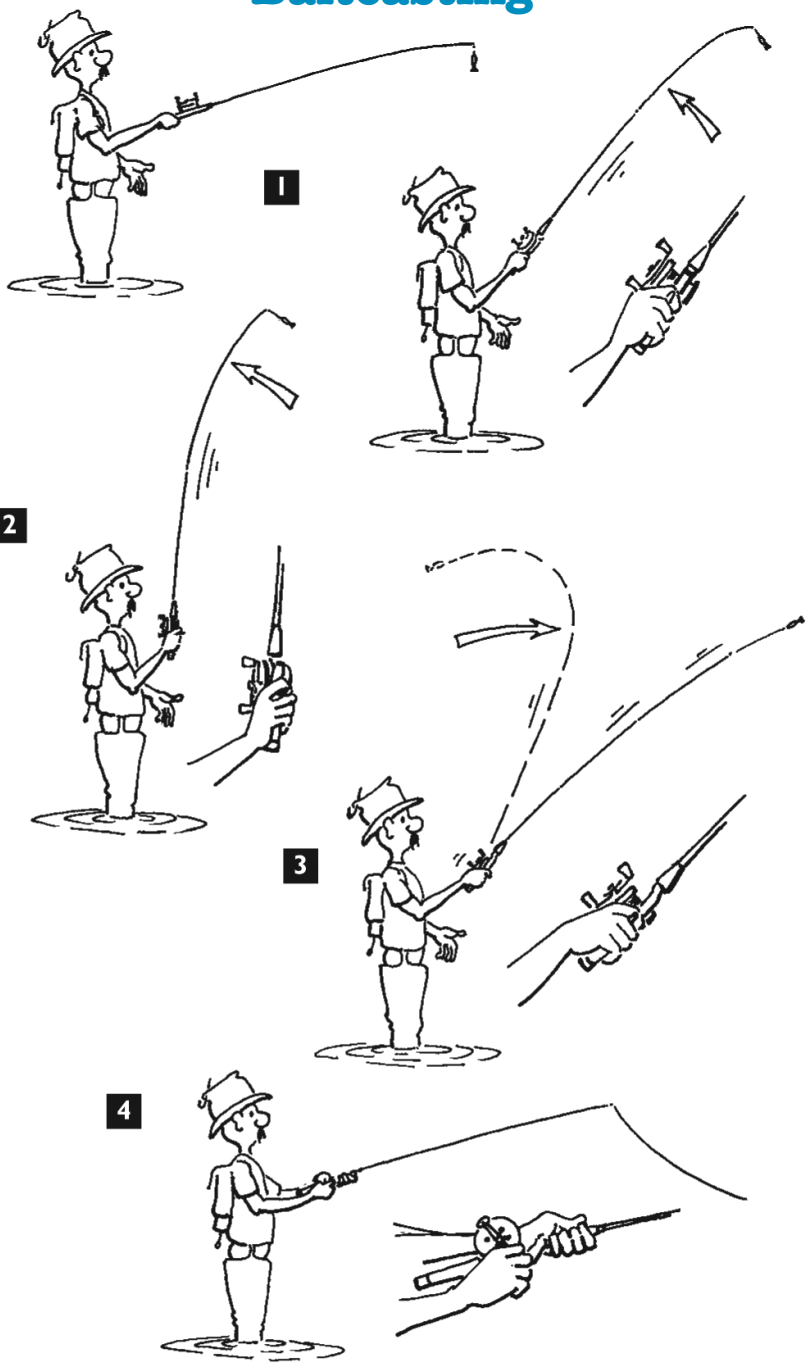
Baitcasting

The baitcasting reel has a button either on the top right-hand side of the reel or a “thumb” button behind and center of the spool that you push with your thumb to release the line.

- 1.** Grasp the rod’s pistol grip or handle with one hand. Push the reel’s thumb button down and move your thumb on the spool. Release the line so that the casting plug falls to the ground. Adjust the spool tension knob (located on the side of the reel) so that the spool stops when the plug hits the ground. It may take a couple of times to accomplish this and adjust it correctly. This will reduce the reel from backlashing when casting. Backlashing occurs when momentum from the cast allows the spool to keep rotating, causing line to ball up once the plug hits the water or ground.
- 2.** Face the target area with body turned at a slight angle, about a quarter turn. Aim the rod tip toward the target, about level with your eyes.
- 3.** Swiftly and smoothly bend your arm at the elbow, raising your hand with the rod until it almost reaches eye level. When the rod is almost straight up and down, it will be bent back by the weight of the practice plug. As the rod bends, move your forearm forward with a slight wrist movement.
- 4.** When the rod reaches eye level, release your thumb slightly off the spool. As the practice plug hits the ground, place your thumb back on the spool to reduce backlash.

If the plug landed close in front of you, you released your thumb too late. If the plug went more or less straight up, you released your thumb too soon.

Baitcasting



Fishing Knot Characteristics

Fishing knots are designed to be tied with monofilament line, which is relatively inexpensive. The emphasis of a good knot, therefore, is on compactness and reliability. Fishing knots often require multiple, tightly wound turns or loops. The structure of such knots changes under pressure or weight – outer wraps are pulled into the knot and the inner line becomes outer wraps.

Lubricating, Tightening, & Trimming

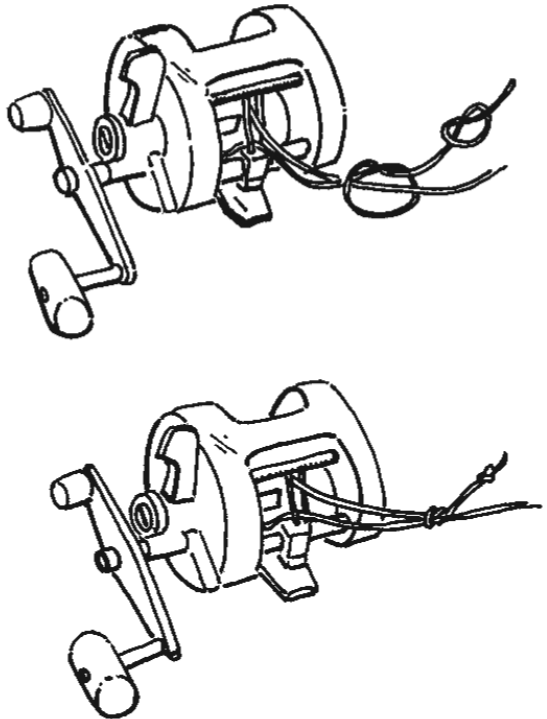
Fishing knots are intended to be pulled extremely tight or cinched down before use. To ensure the knot tightens smoothly, and to avoid generating friction, the knot should be moistened with water before cinching it down. The most conveniently available source of water is saliva!

The ends of most fishing knots can, and should, be trimmed closely against the knot. The best tool for the purpose is a nail clipper. You should trim all loose ends about ¼" or the width of your pinky fingernail across.

Arbor Knot

Quick, easy connection for attaching line to the reel spool.

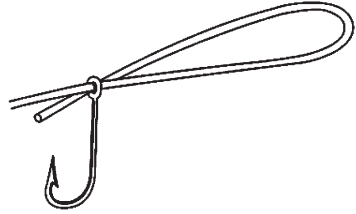
1. Pass the line around the reel arbor (spool).
2. Tie an overhand knot around the main line.
3. Tie a second overhand knot in the tag (loose) end.
4. Pull the knot in the tag end tight and clip off the excess line. Snug down the first overhand knot on the reel.



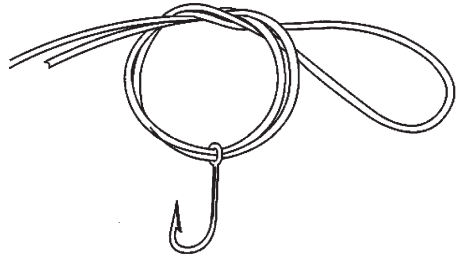
Palomar Knot

The easiest to tie and the strongest knot known to hold terminal tackle.

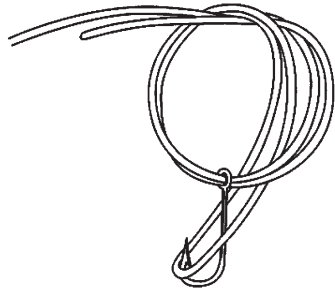
1. Double 4 inches of line to form a loop and pass the loop through the eye of the fishing hook. Let the hook hang loose.



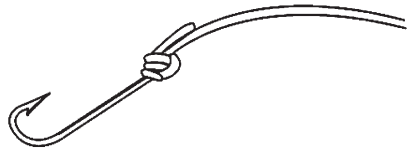
2. Tie an overhand knot in the doubled line. Don't twist or tighten line.



3. Pull the loop far enough to pass it completely over the hook.



4. Wet the line.
5. Hold the hook carefully, and pull the loose end with the standing line slowly to tighten the loose end.

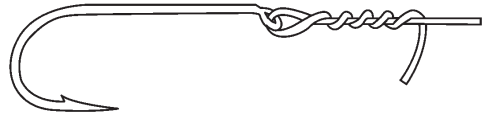
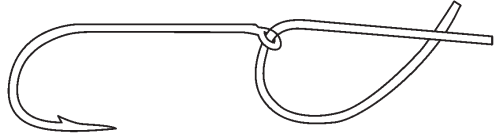


6. Clip extra line at $\frac{1}{4}$ ".

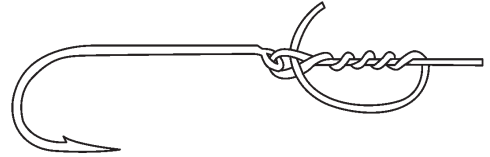
Improved Clinch Knot

An "old standby" known as the fisherman's knot.

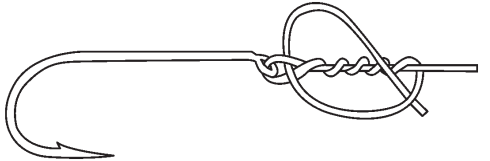
1. Pass the line through the hook eye and, with the tag end, make 5 or 6 turns around the standing line.



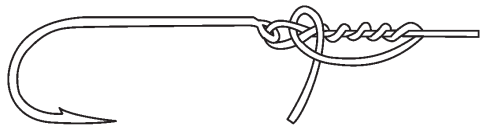
2. Insert the loose end of the line between the eye and the first loop formed.



3. Bring the end through the large second loop formed.



4. Wet the line and tighten the knot slowly while holding the loose end of the line end between thumb and index finger so the knot is partly closed before it's secured against the eye.



5. Clip extra line 1/4".



Equipment Checklist

- Pliers 
- Tackle bag or box 
- Nail clippers 
- Hooks (various sizes) 
- Floats 
- Weights (various sizes & types) 
- Snap swivels 
- Barrel swivels & beads 
- Artificial lures 
- Measuring tape 
- Regulations 
- Fish identification guide 
- First aid kit 
- Bug spray 
- Sunscreen 
- Fluorocarbon leader 
- Cooler, bucket or stringer for keeping fish you plan to eat. 
- Gloves 

Caring For Your Equipment

Rods and reels can last a lifetime if taken care of properly. These are some things to do that will help keep your equipment working:

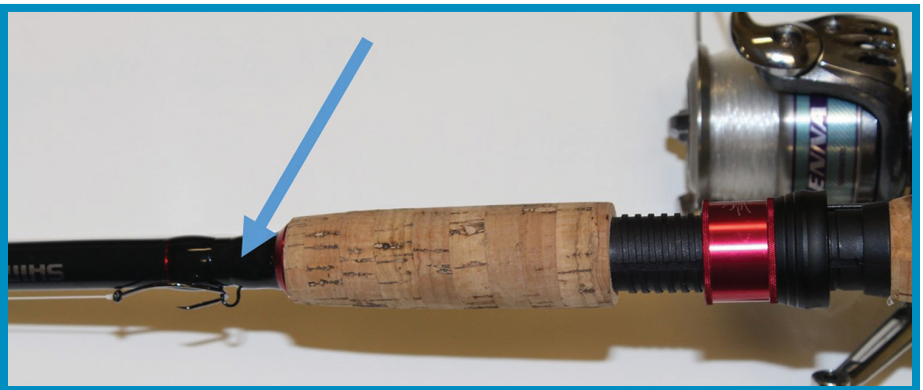
If you are using your rod and reel in saltwater, always hose it off with freshwater immediately after using.



Don't lay your rod and reel on the ground. Whenever possible lean it up against something. This keeps dirt out of the reel and prevents the rod from being stepped on and broken.

Today's rods and reels require little maintenance, but should occasionally be greased and oiled according to the owner's manual.

When securing your hook to the rod, use the hook holder (if the rod has one). Don't hook through the ring of the guide. This can damage the guide eye.



Rigging

Rigging refers to the way that you tie together your terminal tackle (hooks, swivels, sinkers, floats, etc.) and bait and/or lures with your line.

The most popular and most often used rig of all is the **float rig**. This involves placing a float on your line. The length of the leader between the float and the hook can differ depending on where and what fish species you are targeting.

A leader length of about two feet is a good place to start.

The float rig allows you to see when a fish strikes. When the float goes under, the fish most likely has the bait. Remember, if you are using a circle hook, to NOT jerk back on your rod to set the hook. Just get the line tight, and let the hook do the rest.

Float rigs are best used in water less than 10 feet deep, and are an excellent choice to use when fishing over oyster beds or other structure.

Tip: Some floats have brass beads and glass beads attached to the wire on either side of the float. The brass beads provide weight and the float should be turned so these beads are on the bottom.

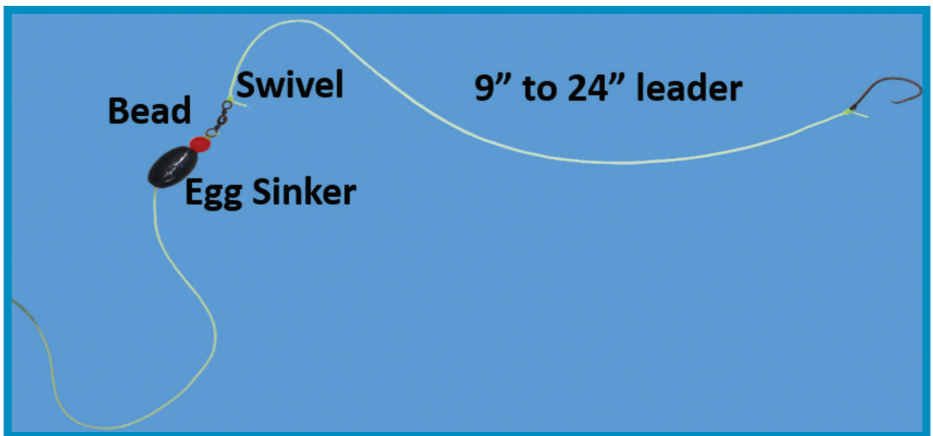


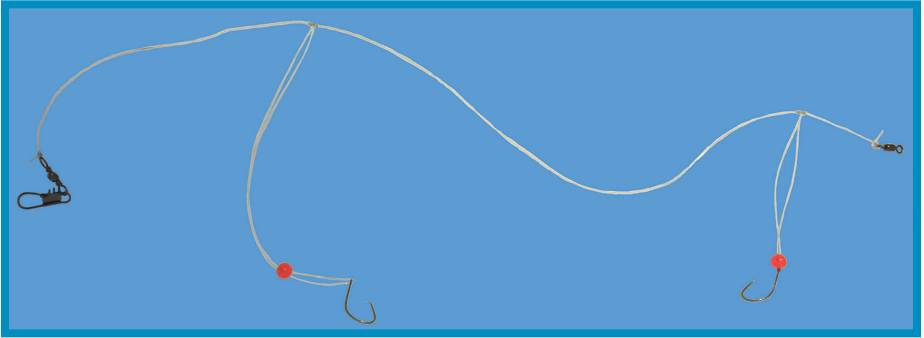
Another easy-to-use rig is the **Carolina rig**. Unlike the float rig, this rig is designed to sit on the bottom. This rig consists of an egg sinker, a bead, a barrel swivel, and a length of leader between the swivel and the hook.

Because the line slips through the egg sinker, when a fish takes the bait, it doesn't feel any resistance. The bead serves two purposes. It protects the knot from the sliding of the weight, and creates a "clicking" sound as it makes contact with the weight, which acts as an attractant.

The size of the weight and leader length depend on the depth you are fishing, species, and the amount of current. A ½ oz. egg sinker with a two foot leader is a good starting point for most conditions.

This rig is typically fished in deeper water than a float rig. Avoid casting directly into structure like oyster beds, as the rig will easily snag. Instead, fish the rig along the edges.





The **standard bottom rig** or **drop rig** can also be a good choice, especially if you are fishing straight down from a pier or boat.

This rig consists of a swivel, with a length of leader that has one or two loops placed several inches apart, and a snap swivel for attaching the weight at the bottom. A hook is then attached to each loop.

These rigs can be purchased pre-made.

Circle hooks versus “J” hooks



Standard hooks are shaped like a “J” and usually require the angler to set the hook when a bite occurs.

Circle hooks are shaped like a “C”, and because of their design do not require the angler to set the hook. They tend to hook fish in the corner of the mouth (rather than in the throat), and are the best choice when practicing catch and release.



Common Saltwater Natural/ Live Baits

In most cases live or fresh bait is better than frozen bait.

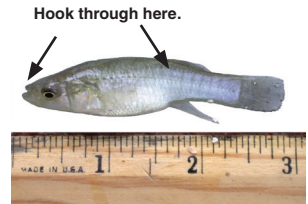
Shrimp is a great all around bait and is natural prey for many saltwater fish. They can be fished dead or alive.



Squid either fresh or frozen should be cut in triangular pieces about 1-3" long to mimic a small baitfish.



Mud Minnows work best fished alive, and should be hooked through the lips or under the dorsal fin.



Finger Mullet can be used either alive or dead. If using dead mullet, one option is to cut the bait into chunks.



Fiddler Crabs should be fished alive and hooked through the side of the shell.



Menhaden are a very oily fish and can be used either alive or dead.



Tip: Make sure to always present the bait on your hook as naturally as possible. Hook live bait in a way that keeps it alive as long as possible.

Catching Your Own Bait

Sometimes catching your own bait can be just as much fun as fishing.



Learning to throw a cast net can be a valuable skill for an angler to develop and is an excellent way to catch live shrimp, menhaden, and finger mullet. There are many different techniques people use to throw a cast net, and local tackle stores can provide hands-on instruction to find out what way works best for you.



Mud minnows and other baitfish can be caught using a minnow trap. Saltwater ponds or small tidal creeks that are fairly shallow at low tide are good places to set your trap. Bait the trap with a slice of bread.

A bait bucket with a battery operated aerator will help keep the bait alive.



Artificial Baits (Lures)



Using artificial baits is one of the most satisfying and exciting ways to catch fish. Imagine the feeling you get knowing you fooled a fish into eating something that wasn't natural!

Artificial baits can be used anytime of year, for any type of species, under a variety of conditions.

Fishing with artificials is typically a more "active" style of fishing that involves continuous casting and retrieving. The rod is used to create the action that makes a lure appear more lifelike.



Why use artificial bait?

- They are an excellent choice when practicing catch and release because they usually hook fish in the jaw (as opposed to the throat).
- Half the fun of using an artificial is the casting and retrieving.
- You don't have to constantly re-bait your hook if you start catching one fish after another.
- You don't have to worry about catching or purchasing live or natural bait.
- You can sometimes catch fish that are not hungry. A fish may strike a lure as an involuntary reaction.

Common Saltwater Artificial Baits (Lures)



Topwater "walking" baits

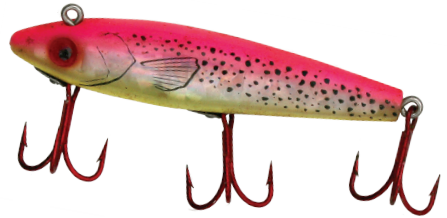
Use for: Spotted seatrout; red drum

These baits require the angler to create the right action. Pointing your rod tip at the water, and using a short jerking type motion will cause the bait to dart from side to side. Referred to as "walking the dog," the retrieve can be either fast or slow.

Suspending Plugs

Use for: Spotted seatrout; red drum; flounder

Suspending plugs can be made of various materials such as plastic, wood and sometimes cork. They are designed to sink slowly. After allowing the bait to sink several feet below the surface, retrieve it using a short, slow twitching motion.



Spoons

Use for: Spotted seatrout; red drum; flounder

Spoons are metal, spoon-shaped lures made to resemble a swimming or injured baitfish. You can jig them (jiggle them up and down), cast and reel them in, or troll them behind a boat (let it drag on a fishing line behind the boat). Many anglers attach a swivel with a leader to the spoon to prevent it from twisting their line during the retrieve.



Jigs

Use for: Spotted seatrout; red drum; flounder

Jigs have weighted lead heads with a body made of soft plastic. Different sizes, colors and patterns are used to catch a variety of saltwater fish. As a general rule, use natural colors in clear water and bright colors in murky water.

Soft Plastic Imitations

Use for: Spotted seatrout; red drum; flounder

These soft plastics usually resemble shrimp or crabs and can be used with a float or fished weightless. Like jigs, they come in a variety of colors.



Jerkbaits

Use for: Spotted seatrout; red drum; flounder



Jerkbaits are slender bodied hard plastic baits with a lip that causes the bait to dive several feet. The retrieve can be either continuous reeling or a “reel then pause,” which will cause the bait to suspend in the water. Vary your retrieve to find out what the fish prefer.

Scented Soft Baits

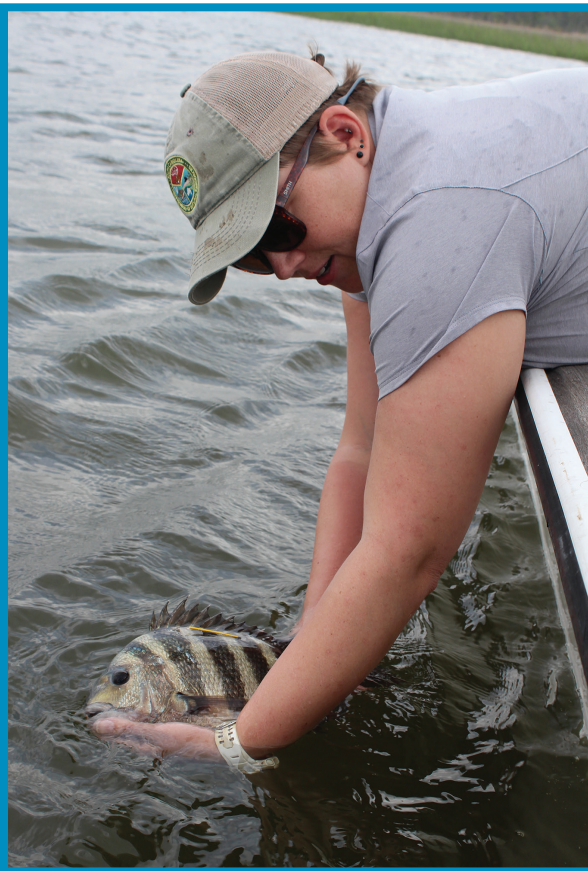
Use for: Spotted seatrout; red drum; flounder; black drum

These baits are made with a natural bait scent and are usually packaged in a sealed container. They can be fished on any type of natural bait rig or fished on a jig head.

Using scented soft baits is an excellent alternative when natural bait is unavailable.

Always put the baits back into a sealed package after using, as they will dry out if left outside.

For most beginning anglers, live/natural bait often achieves better results than artificial baits. Lures usually require a higher level of skill in order to create action that makes them appear lifelike.



Tips: *In murky water, many fish feed by smell rather than by sight. Using fresh cut live/natural bait or scented soft baits can be more effective.*

If you are interested in using artificial baits and you are unsure of which ones to use or when to use them, you can ask your local tackle shop for guidance.

How to Tell a Fish is Biting

Fishing with a Float:

Fishing with a float allows anglers to know when a fish bites. However, sometimes the movement in the float isn't so obvious. Sometimes a biting fish will cause the float to twitch only a bit or the float will start to move across the surface of the water.

Fishing without a Float:

If you are not using a float it is important to keep your line tight at all times. The best way to tell when a fish is biting is to feel for tugs, jerks or taps. If you are using a standard "J" style hook, you should set the hook or pull on the rod as soon as you feel that you are getting a bite. If using a circle hook, allow the rod to start to bend slightly before starting to reel.

Manipulating Drag

Drag is a mechanical means of applying variable pressure to the turning spool in order to act as a friction brake against it. Properly set drag will "slip" just before the breaking point of the line. Combined with the flex in the rod, drag will tire a fish by converting the energy from the fish into heat in the drag system. Drag systems not only differ by reel types, but within each reel group.

Drag is a helpful tool, but you need to make sure your drag isn't set too loose as you'll never land that fish. If the drag is set too tight, then you will definitely pop your line if you hook a large fish. To set your drag, start by turning the drag dial all the way towards the plus sign. At this point your drag is locked. Slowly turn the dial while pulling off line using your finger. Line should begin to come off the spool at the point when the line becomes tight around your finger, but not uncomfortable.

When fighting a fish that is pulling drag, let the fish run and don't reel against the drag. You may need to adjust your drag during the fight in order to keep a fish from breaking your line.

Setting the Hook and Fighting the Fish

When you see signs of a fish biting, move your rod tip from pointing towards the water to pointing slightly up while winding all slack in the line. Then, quickly pull the rod back to set the hook. Practice makes perfect when it comes to learning the timing of setting the hook. The feel of setting the hook will vary based on the fish species you're targeting, the lure or bait you're using and the size of your rod, reel and line.

After setting the hook, keep a bend in your rod and wait for the fish to make its move. If the fish is pulling against the fishing reel, let him simply pull. **DO NOT** wind in line if the fish is pulling line off your reel. After the fish quits pulling, begin reeling in, keeping a bend in your rod. Take this process slowly.

If you are using a circle hook, it's important to not set the hook. These hooks are designed to "roll" when a fish takes the bait, causing the fish to hook itself. If your rod is in a holder, let the rod bend over before picking it up.

When fighting large fish use a technique known as "pumping the rod." This involves keeping the rod in a vertical position as the fish makes a run. Once the fish stops, lower the rod while reeling in the slack line, then pull back on the rod until it is once again in a vertical position.



How to Handle Your Catch

Handling fish properly protects both you and the fish. Some fish have sharp fins or teeth that can cut you if you don't hold them correctly. Thus, different fish species need to be handled in different ways. Keep the following rules in mind when handling fish:

- Many saltwater fish have sharp spines on the first dorsal fin. Be careful of these when holding a fish by the body.
- Always wet your hands first before handling fish. Wet hands are less likely to damage the protective coating of mucus on the outside of the fish. This slimy layer helps protect the fish from disease.
- Avoid putting your hands in the fish's mouth. Unlike freshwater bass, which can be held by the jaw, saltwater fish generally have sharp teeth.
- Never hold a fish by the eyes or gills.
- Don't allow fish to flop around on the bank, the dock, or the floor of the boat.
- Don't hold a fish, especially large ones, in a vertical position. This can tear internal organs and dislocate the spine.
- After a long fight fish become exhausted. If they cannot swim off on their own, you may need to slowly swish the fish in the water to revive them. It usually only takes a few minutes.



Catch & Release Fishing

Currently, many species of popular game fish have legally mandated size and catch limits, requiring anglers to release undersized and over the limit fish. Many anglers voluntarily release their fish. If these fish are not released properly, their chance of survival is reduced.

The location of the hook wound is one of the most important factors that influences the survival of a released fish. Keep these tips in mind:

- If you are using natural bait, either alive or dead, always use circle hooks.
- If a fish has swallowed the hook, cut the line as close to the hook as possible. Do NOT pull the hook out!
- File or bend down the barbs. This makes for easier release and less damage to the mouth of the fish.



- Whenever possible always release fish gently back into the water. Never throw the fish.
- If taking a picture, support the fish's weight by holding it horizontally. Try not to keep the fish out of the water for more than 30 seconds.

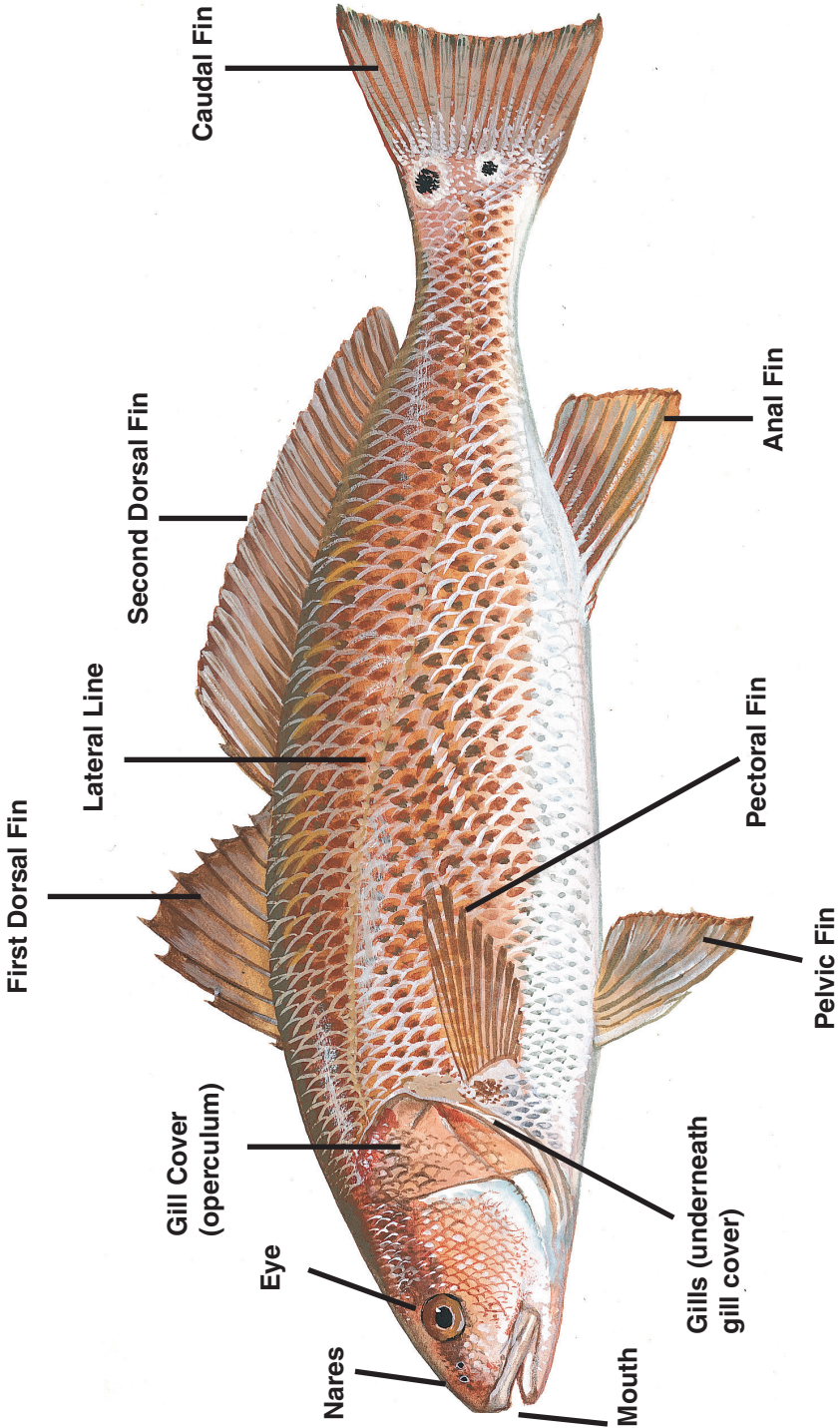


Fish External Anatomy & Senses Introduction

To understand fishing, you first have to understand fish anatomy and senses. Did you know you can look at a fish's mouth and tell how it feeds or that fish sense the smallest vibration using its lateral line?

Knowing more about their anatomy and senses will give you the edge when you are fishing.

- The lateral line is a special sensory organ that fish have in addition to the usual senses of seeing, hearing, tasting and smelling. The lateral line is a collection of nerve endings along a fish's side that feels vibrations in the water. It helps the fish determine the speed, direction of movement and even the size of the predator or prey, thus helping them find food and avoid being eaten. The lateral line is very important to fish that live in deep water or in murky water.
- Fish eyesight is similar to ours. They see brightness and color; however, some species have better color vision than others. Fish that live in deep water don't see the full spectrum of colors since water filters out color. Fish can see up to 100 feet in extremely clear water and in murky water about 10 to 20 feet out in front of them. A fish's field of vision is all directions except for straight down and straight back. Fish can also see above-water objects so anglers should keep a low profile when approaching fishing spots, especially in clear waters.
- Fish hear using an inner ear with tiny bones that pick up sound. They lack external ears like we have.
- The fish sense of smell is highly developed. They detect odors by a nasal sac in their mouth. Water comes in through the nares (similar to nostrils) and is passed through the nasal sac and out again. Smells allow fish to return to spawning grounds and alert them to the presence of predators or prey.
- Taste is a useless sense in most fish, except for sharks and catfish. Sharks have skin made up of dermal denticles instead of scales, that are sensitive to taste. These fish can use their sense of taste to help track down food sources.



Red Drum

Habitat

“Where Fish Live”



Healthy fish need water, food, cover and space. These four things are called “habitat.” It’s important that people take good care of our lakes, rivers, streams and coastal waterways so fish and other life in the water will have what they need to stay healthy.



South Carolina has about a half-million acres of salt marsh, more marsh than any other Atlantic coast state.

Marshes provide highly productive nursery grounds for numerous commercially and recreationally important species and serve as filters to remove sediments and toxins from the water. Marshes also buffer the mainland by slowing and absorbing storm surges, thereby reducing erosion of the coastline.



High



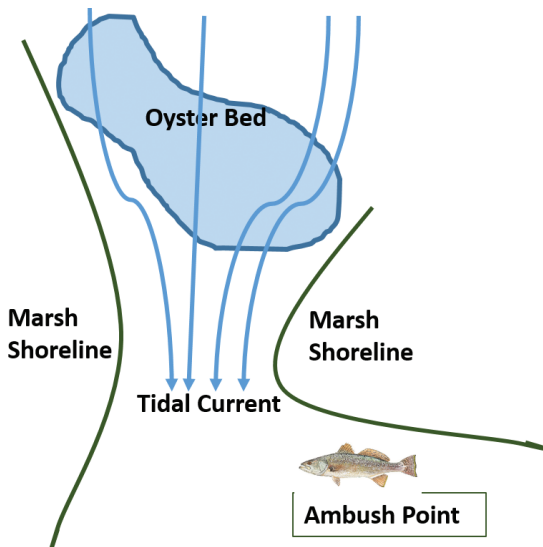
Low

Tides

Tides are an important thing to consider when saltwater fishing. There are two high tides and two low tides over a 24-hour period. During the high tide in the estuaries, water floods the oyster beds and salt marsh. As the tide goes out, small baitfish and invertebrates are flushed out of their sanctuaries that were provided by the high water. Larger fish will often wait in ambush for an easy meal.

Fishing Spots

Most fish love cover or structure. This is where fish hide from predators or wait for their next meal. Good saltwater fishing spots can be found near oyster beds, manmade pilings, or any area where there is tidal current.



Cast your bait into the current and allow it to drift past the ambush point.

Fishing From Shore

Fishing from shore can be just as productive as fishing from a boat. Game fish will use structure and current to their advantage when seeking out prey. Anglers should pay close attention to shoreline transitions. For example, where an oyster bed transitions to sand or where shallow water is adjacent to deep water.



Surf Fishing

Surf fishing provides an easily accessible way to enjoy fishing from shore. Fishing in the surf requires specialized equipment. A spinning reel on an 8-12 foot rod allows anglers to make long casts beyond the breakers. However, some of the best surf fishing can be found in sloughs (deeper water) right off the beach. In these instances lighter tackle can be used.

Pier Fishing

Piers are structures that extend from the shoreline out towards open water. They provide anglers with access to deeper water that they could otherwise not reach from shore. When fishing from a pier many anglers will cast as far as they can away from the pier. The pilings provide excellent structure for many fish, so fishing closer to the pilings can sometimes be more productive.



Common Saltwater Fish

In the following section you will learn more about different fish species and their habitat so you have a better chance of landing the big one.

Red Drum

South Carolina State Record:
75 pounds



Preferred Habitat:

Juveniles inhabit estuaries near shallow tidal creeks and salt marshes, commonly at marsh grass edges or in the vicinity of oyster reefs and reside in deeper river channels during winter. Sub-adults inhabit larger tidal creeks, rivers, and the front beaches of barrier islands. Adults utilize nearshore and inshore bottom habitats, such as tidal creeks, oyster reefs, and beaches, typically over sandy or sandy-mud bottoms. They may also congregate in nearshore groups.

Food Habits:

All sizes of red drum are predatory foragers on or near the bottom. Inshore foraging (juveniles) typically occurs at marsh grass edges. Larvae feed primarily on zooplankton and small invertebrates, and then as juveniles feed on opossum shrimp, grass shrimp, juvenile spot, and mud minnows, mud crabs, and fiddler crabs. Adults feed primarily on menhaden, spot, anchovies, blue crab, and speckled crab.

Spawning:

Adults mature by 3 – 5 years of age, when they have reached an approximate size of 28-33 inches. Spawning occurs during late summer and fall. Spawning aggregations occur near estuary inlets and passes along barrier island beaches. Males produce drumming sounds using muscular contractions to vibrate the swim bladder, to attract females. Larval red drum use vertical migrations to ride high salinity tidal currents into tidal creeks and shallow salt marsh nursery habitats.

Best Rigs:

Float Rig, Carolina Rig

Best Baits:

Shrimp, mud minnows, mullet, menhaden, squid

Best Artificial Baits:

Soft plastic lures, jigs, swimming plugs, spoons, topwater plugs

Spotted Seatrout

South Carolina State Record:
11 pounds, 13 ounces



Preferred Habitat:

All ages utilize inshore live bottom habitats, primarily estuaries and rivers, but also shallow coastal bays and sounds and possibly along front beaches of barrier islands. Adults are common near salt marsh edges and over grass beds, in the vicinity of tidal creek mouths and channels, and over oyster reefs. Juveniles utilize shallow tidal creeks and salt marsh as nursery habitats, often over submerged vegetation. Sub-adults inhabit larger tidal creeks and main portions of estuaries.

Food Habits:

Spotted seatrout prey on organisms located near shallow tidal creeks and marsh grass edges. Fishes constitute a greater portion of the diet as size increases. Large adults eat menhaden, spot, mullet, croaker, mud minnows, and occasionally grass and penaeid shrimp. Smaller adults consume larger amounts of crustaceans but also consume fishes. Juveniles feed on opossum shrimp, grass shrimp, mysid shrimps, copepods, amphipods, spot, and mud minnows. Larvae consume zooplankton (primarily copepods).

Spawning:

Adults mature at 1 year of age and an approximate size of 12 inches. Spawn April – September in moderate salinity in deeper portions of estuaries. Spawning aggregations occur at night, often in habitat associated with piers, pilings, bridges, points of land, and holes. To attract females to aggregation sites, males generate sounds by contracting muscles to vibrate the swim bladder. Larvae utilize shallow tidal creeks as nurseries from June – November. Older juveniles progress to larger creeks and deeper reaches of estuaries in fall, often forming schools of similar sized fish.

Best Rigs:

Float Rig, Carolina Rig, Popping Cork

Best Baits:

Mullet, menhaden, mud minnows, shrimp

Best Artificial Baits:

Soft plastic lures, jigs, topwater plugs, spoons, swimming plugs

Southern Flounder

South Carolina State Record:
17 pounds, 6 ounces



Preferred Habitat:

Adults inhabit estuaries, rivers, and shallow coastal water including front beaches. They are most abundant in shallow, muddy bottom tidal creeks and at tidal creek mouths and will also utilize flooded salt marshes at high tides and occasionally near estuarine inlets. Southern Flounder spend winters offshore. Juveniles reside in shallow, soft bottom tidal creeks at upper reaches of estuaries. They may occasionally reach freshwater and sometimes utilize submerged vegetation either as cover or for foraging purposes.

Food Habits:

Flounder are predatory fish, ambushing prey by using camouflage to blend into surrounding habitat. Foraging occurs in tidal creeks and flooded salt marsh or at marsh edges. Adults feed primarily on fishes (striped mullet, spot, mummichog, white mullet, anchovy), but also consume crustaceans, including grass shrimp, penaeid shrimp, and blue crabs. Juveniles prey on a variety of species depending on the size of the flounder. Smaller juveniles feed primarily on zooplankton, mysids, and grass shrimp, while larger juveniles (sub-adults) feed on small fish. Larvae consume zooplankton

Spawning:

Both sexes mature at 2 – 3 years of age. Males typically mature at 11– 13 inches, while females mature at 14 – 16 inches. Adults migrate to unknown locations offshore during late fall, and spawning occurs in these areas throughout the winter. The flounder return to inshore habitats during spring. Larvae undergo a 30 – 60-day pelagic phase then use ocean currents to enter estuaries during late winter and early spring. Metamorphosis is partially completed prior to settling inshore. Once inside the estuary larvae finish metamorphosis and settle to the bottom in the flat juvenile body form. Juveniles remain in estuaries through winter and first migrate offshore just prior to spawning.

Best Rigs:

Carolina Rig, Dropper Rig

Best Baits:

Mud minnows, mullet, menhaden, croakers, shrimp

Best Artificial Baits:

Soft plastics, jigs

Black Drum

South Carolina State Record:
89 pounds



Preferred Habitat:

Adults are common over sandy and soft live bottoms in salt and brackish water including estuaries, coastal rivers, shallow coastal bays, and along beaches. Black drum congregate around natural and artificial hard structures, including reefs, rock piles, jetties, docks, pier pilings, and bridges. Juveniles are common over muddy bottoms in shallow tidal creeks and salt marsh. Sub-adults progress to deeper creeks, river mouths, and bays and into nearshore coastal waters.

Food Habits:

Black drum are bottom feeders and use their sensitive chin barbels to aid in locating food. Heavy pharyngeal teeth are used to crush invertebrates. Adults feed primarily on mussels, oysters, crabs, shrimp and occasionally small fishes. Juveniles consume small crabs, amphipods, copepods, shrimp, marine worms, and small fishes. Diet of larger juveniles is similar to adults. Larvae consume primarily zooplankton.

Spawning:

Black drum Mature by 4 – 6 years of age and an approximate size of maturity 23-25 inches. Spawning occurs during spring and early summer in high salinity inlets, estuaries, bays, sounds, and coastal rivers. Adults may form schools for migration to spawning grounds. Larvae use tidal currents to enter estuaries where they settle in shallow tidal creeks. Older juveniles leave deeper inshore waters during fall, migrate offshore to overwinter, and return inshore in the spring.

Best Rigs:

Carolina Rig, Dropper Rig

Best Baits:

Shrimp, fiddler crabs, mussels, oysters, clams

Best Artificial Baits:

Black drum are occasionally taken on jigs and soft plastics that imitate crustaceans.

Sheepshead

South Carolina State Record:
16 pounds, 6 ounces



Preferred habitat:

Adults utilize nearshore coastal waters, bays, sounds, estuaries and may also enter brackish reaches of rivers. Typically sheepshead are associated with reefs, live bottom, wrecks, piers, pilings, rocks, and jetties. Juveniles inhabit grass beds, muddy bottoms, and oyster reefs within estuaries. Older juveniles tolerate higher salinity water near jetties, piers, and other hard structures in coastal waters.

Food habits:

Sheepshead are omnivorous grazers that use their unique teeth to grind and crush invertebrates associated with hard structures. Algae are also consumed, either deliberately or while foraging for associated invertebrate prey. Adults and juveniles share similar diets. Adults feed primarily on mussels, clams, small oysters, barnacles, crabs, shrimp, and small fish. They may also consume tunicates, polychaete worms and amphipods or copepods. Algae may become less important in the diet as sheepshead age and move to offshore reef habitats. Juveniles consume mainly bivalves and crabs. They also feed heavily on filamentous algae and encrusting colonial bryozoans on hard structures. Larvae feed primarily on zooplankton.

Spawning:

Adults mature between 2 – 5 years of age, when they have reached a size of 7-14 inches. Spawning occurs in nearshore and offshore waters, probably in the vicinity of wrecks, reefs, or live bottom from late winter through early spring. Eggs hatch offshore, with a month long pelagic (open water) larval stage. Larvae develop in nearshore and estuarine waters until reaching approximately 2 inches in length, then occupy hard structure habitats with adults in late summer.

Best Rigs:

Carolina Rig, Double Dropper Rig

Best Bait:

Fiddler crabs, mussels, clams, oysters, shrimp

Best Artificial Baits:

Sheepshead are not usually caught on artificial baits

Atlantic Croaker

South Carolina State Record:
4 pounds, 9 ounces



Preferred Habitat:

Adults are Common over mud and sandy bottom, as well as over oyster reefs and live bottoms. They can tolerate a range of salinities, but prefer moderate salinity. Juveniles utilize low salinity upper reaches of estuaries, primarily associated with muddy bottoms or detritus-laden habitats, and progress to higher salinity with age. They overwinter in deeper channels and tidal rivers within estuaries.

Food Habits:

The mouth faces downward and can be formed into a tube to suction prey from on or within bottom sediments. Adults feed primarily on marine worms, small shrimp and crabs, clams, and some fishes. Juveniles consume copepods, amphipods, mysid shrimp, worms, and detritus. Diet of larger juveniles and sub- adults is similar to adult fish. Larvae consume predominantly copepods.

Spawning:

Adults mature at 1 – 2 years of age, when males reach a size of 5 ½ inches, and females reach a size of 7 inches. Spawning occurs over continental shelf during fall and winter. Larvae use tidal currents to reach nursery grounds in low salinity tidal creeks at the upper reaches of estuaries. Inshore larval migration peaks between late fall and spring.

Best Rigs:

Dropper Rig, Carolina Rig

Best Baits:

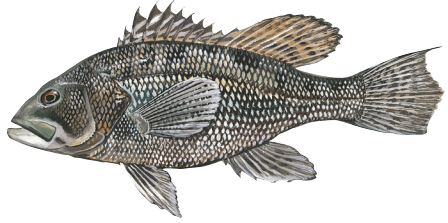
Shrimp, squid

Best Artificial Baits:

Croaker are not normally taken on artificial baits

Black Sea Bass

South Carolina State Record:
8 pounds 3 ounces



Preferred Habitat:

Adults are temperate reef fishes and inhabit open-shelf and shelf-edge waters 10 – 120 m deep. They are typically found around structured habitat, hard or rocky substrates, and live-bottom. Juveniles occupy nearshore coastal habitats and high salinity, lower estuarine waters; often near oyster reefs, pier pilings, and over live-bottom.

Food Habits:

Black sea bass are opportunistic bottom foragers during daylight. Adults and older juveniles consume bottom dwelling invertebrates, especially crabs, shrimp, clams, small fishes, and squid. They also graze on organisms attached to hard structure. Younger juveniles and larvae consume zooplankton, including amphipods and isopods, and small shrimp.

Spawning:

Black sea bass are protogynous hermaphrodites, so most fish begin as females and later become males. Most fish transition by 2 – 4 years of age. Males are most frequent in fish greater than 4 years old. Females mature at 1 – 3 years of age and a size of 7 inches. They transition sexes when they reach 8 – 13 inches. Spawning occurs in offshore waters March – May with minor spawning also occurring during September – November. Early larval development occurs offshore. Larvae quickly become bottom dwelling fish and move to nearshore waters and estuaries.

Best Rigs:

Carolina Rig, Dropper Rig

Best Baits:

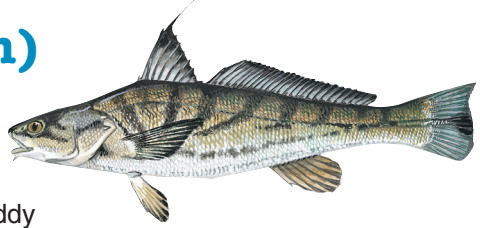
Shrimp, squid, mussels, clams, fiddler crabs, mud minnows, cut fish

Best Artificial Baits:

Metal jigs, soft plastic jigs, bucktails

Whiting (kingfish)

South Carolina State Record:
2 pounds, 10 ounces



Preferred Habitat:

Adults and juveniles occur over muddy or sand-mud bottoms in shallow coastal water and estuaries. Also common along beaches, near inlets and mouths of larger coastal sounds; juveniles sometimes in upper estuaries.

Food Habits:

Whiting use their chin barbel to locate bottom prey in estuaries and in the surf. They feed primarily on marine worms, crabs and shrimp. Larvae feed on zooplankton

Spawning:

Whiting mature by age 1, when they reach a size of 5-7.5 in. They move offshore to spawn April – September. Larger individuals may return to summer habitat after breeding. Larvae enter nearshore waters late spring and utilize estuaries and beaches as nursery grounds. Young fish move seaward as they grow.

Best Rigs:

Dropper Rig, Carolina Rig

Best Baits:

Shrimp, squid, clams, sand fleas, worms, cut fish

Best Artificial Baits:

Whiting are not normally taken on artificial baits

Spot

South Carolina State Record:
1 pound, 1 ounce



Preferred Habitat:

Adults inhabit estuaries, tidal creeks, and shallow coastal waters, generally over muddy or sand-mud bottoms, but also over oyster reefs and along beaches. Juveniles utilize lower salinity tidal creeks. Yearlings progress to deeper water of lower estuaries and inlets. They are most common over mud or detritus-laden bottoms and seagrass beds.

Food Habits:

Spot feed on locally available invertebrates including polychaete worms, amphipods, copepods, small mollusks and detritus. Adults gulp sediments and sort out invertebrate prey; juveniles graze on bottom-dwelling invertebrates. Larvae consume zooplankton.

Spawning:

Both sexes mature by 2 years of age, and approximately 7 – 8 inches in length. Spot spawn October – March over the outer continental shelf. Adults congregate near inlets and beaches during fall prior to offshore and southerly spawning migrations. Larvae develop offshore, utilizing currents to reach nearshore waters where they metamorphose into bottom dwellers near estuarine inlets and enter estuaries December – April.

Best Rigs:

Dropper Rig, Carolina Rig

Best Baits:

Shrimp, squid

Best Artificial Baits:

Spot are not normally taken on artificial baits

Keep a Fishing Journal

Keeping a record of your fishing trips is a great way to become a better angler. Every fishing trip, whether you catch fish or not, provides you with information that can help you on future trips. By maintaining a consistent fishing journal over a period of time, you will begin to see patterns emerge as you compare your trips. This allows you to identify conditions and coordinate your fishing efforts on the right location with the right tactics. The more information you record in your journal the more useful it will be.

There are many mobile apps available nowadays that make it easy to record your fishing trips on your smartphone.

A good fishing journal should include the following information:

- Date
- Body of Water
- Weather Conditions (sunny, overcast, rainy etc.)
- Wind Direction and Speed
- Temperature (air and water)
- Tide Stage (incoming/outgoing)
- Water Color (clear, murky, stained etc.)
- What fish were caught
- Times fish were caught
- Depth fish were caught
- Habitat you were fishing (Oysters, pilings, grass etc.)
- Lure or Bait (size and color)

Marine Education Programs

Carolina Coastal Discovery

The CCD Program utilizes a 45' catamaran, the Education Vessel (E/V) Discovery, and a variety of land based programs to reach thousands of students from a variety of backgrounds and locations.

SCDNR staff provide k-12 marine education programs that cover curriculum standards for each grade. Students conduct hands-on investigations into our coastal ecosystem by collecting data and using scientific sampling methods. These programs teach students about the inherent value of South Carolina's marine ecosystems and resources while developing critical inquiry skills.

Marine Game Fish Tagging Program

The Marine Division of SCDNR uses volunteer anglers to tag and release select species of saltwater gamefish. As a result, scientists are able to gather valuable data on movement and migration patterns, growth rates, habitat utilization, and general population dynamics.



Youth Saltwater Fishing Clinics

Administered by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources Marine Division, the primary intent of these clinics is to promote saltwater fishing to kids.

Fishing clinics introduce participants (youth) to all aspects of saltwater angling and increase the angling competence and confidence of participants.

Through saltwater fishing tournaments and clinics, young anglers have an opportunity to experience saltwater fishing in South Carolina.





References & Acknowledgments

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“A good game fish is too valuable to be caught only once.” ***Lee Wulff***

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