



# Fishing in Wake County

February 2019



Wake County offers many diverse fishing opportunities, some of which may even be as close as your own backyard! In the same day, you could go from nationally renowned Largemouth Bass fishing at Shearon-Harris Reservoir to catching sea-run American Shad in the Falls Lake tailrace. Over a million people call Wake County home, making it the second-most populous county in North Carolina. Luckily, Wake County is home to two state parks, ten county parks, and over two hundred municipal parks, many of which have opportunities for public fishing. On top of that, the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission (Commission) maintains Public Fishing Access areas (PFAs), Boating Access Areas (BAAs), and partners with municipalities to facilitate public fishing access and opportunities. It's easier to fish now than ever, if you know where to look.

## Why go fishing?

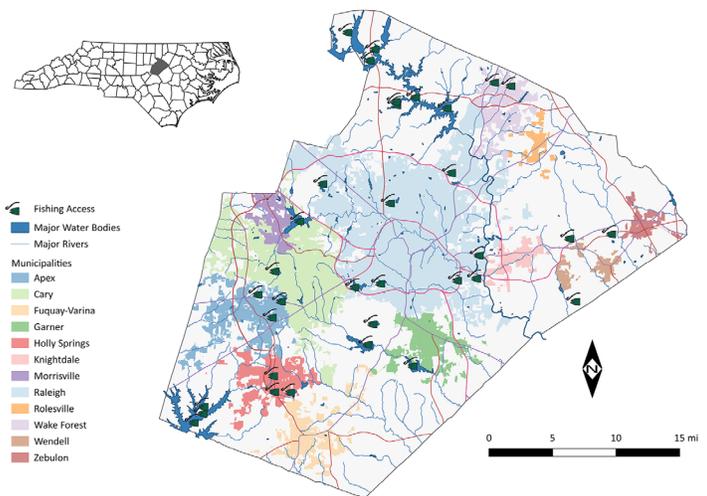
Fishing is an activity that means many different things to many different people. But from the most decorated tournament angler to a child catching brim on a cane pole, they all share common threads: sport, leisure and community. Fishing for sport challenges one to fish more effectively, to catch larger or more fish, or to catch a wide variety of fish species. Alternatively, fishing for leisure can be an excellent manner by which to relax and connect with the outdoors all through a simple fishing rod. Your fishing community can be as close-knit as your preferred fishing partner, or as broad as the people next to you on a crowded pier, all gathered in one place to achieve a common goal.

Fishing for recreation, for leisure, and for community are all good reasons to get out on the water. And it doesn't have to be for a single reason! Don't overlook your catch come dinnertime either, few pastimes are as satisfying as providing a good meal from lake to plate.

## What to catch?

North Carolina, and Wake County specifically, offer many opportunities to catch many different fish species. Area lakes and ponds offer great chances at catching Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, crappie and Channel Catfish. Fishing in streams and rivers offers many of the same species, as well as bullhead catfish, Redbreast Sunfish (or Robins), Chain Pickerel (or Jack), and various other species. During the spring spawning season in the Neuse River, one could even catch American Shad, Hickory Shad, and Striped Bass, which swim up into freshwater rivers from the ocean to spawn.

Officially, there are two state records (White Crappie, 3 lbs 15 oz., and White Perch, 2 lbs 15 oz.) for fish caught in Wake County.



*The Commission has identified over thirty public fishing areas in Wake County, allowing you to fish on lakes, streams, ponds, rivers, and swamps, often free of charge.*

But, trophies are often in the eye of the beholder. For some, it might be the biggest fish they've caught yet. For others, it might be a new species they haven't encountered before. And maybe among us, the true trophy is a fish fry at the end of a successful outing.

If you've caught a fish you're proud of, check out the Wildlife Commission's NC Angler Recognition Program (NCARP), which recognizes anglers who may fall short of a state record, but have caught a trophy-sized fish nonetheless. Anglers who qualify receive a recognition certificate featuring a color reproduction of the fish species by renowned wildlife artist Duane Raver. Learn more about NCARP here: [www.ncwildlife.org/ncarp](http://www.ncwildlife.org/ncarp).



### Where to go?

There are over 20 square miles of lakes and reservoirs and more than 600 linear miles of fishable rivers in Wake County. The Commission, NC State Parks, and local municipalities maintain over 30 PFAs and BAAs for public use, often free of charge or for a small fee. For an interactive map of public fishing access sites, visit: [www.ncwildlife.org/Fishing/Where-to-Fish](http://www.ncwildlife.org/Fishing/Where-to-Fish)

If you know someone with private access to a fishing hole, remember to always get the landowner's permission to access his or her property when considering private access.

### No pole? No problem!

The Commission partners with local municipalities to provide fishing poles and tackle free of charge for use through the Tackle Loaner Program. All you need to do is bring the bait! Visit [www.ncwildlife.org/TLP](http://www.ncwildlife.org/TLP) for a list of participating locations, six of which are in Wake County.

### Always turning up empty handed?

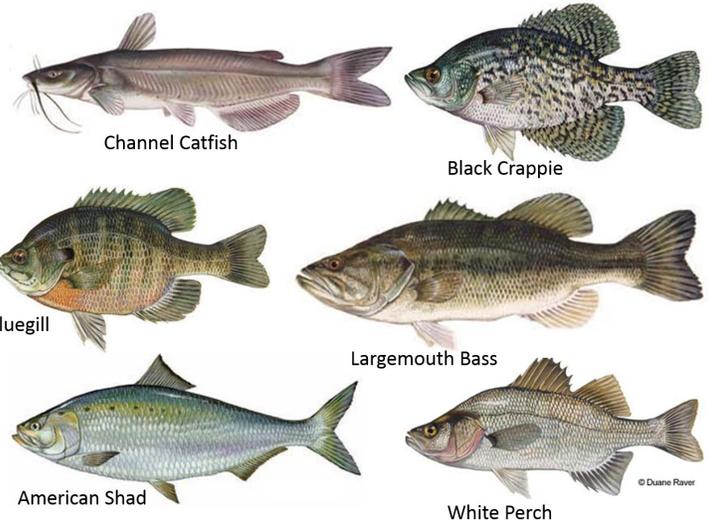
The Commission also conducts monthly stockings of catfish and sunfish during warmer months and trout during cooler months to increase your odds of catching fish at some lakes through the Community Fishing Program (CFP). Fish feeders and fish attractors are also deployed to concentrate fish where they can be better caught by anglers. Community Fishing Program locations:

[www.ncwildlife.org/CFP](http://www.ncwildlife.org/CFP) Fish attractor locations:

[www.ncpaws.org/wrcmaps/WRCFishAttractors.htm](http://www.ncpaws.org/wrcmaps/WRCFishAttractors.htm)

### For more information, contact:

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*A few fish species you might catch on a typical day at a public fishing area.*

### Laws and Regulation:

Please help keep our lands, waterways, and aquatic ecosystems healthy by following all posted laws and regulations. Check where you are fishing for local regulations as well, especially when using municipal resources. A copy of our regulations digest can be found online at: [eregulations.com/northcarolina/hunting-fishing/](http://eregulations.com/northcarolina/hunting-fishing/) or get a physical copy at a license vendor near you.

Report suspicious activity to local law enforcement. Poaching tips and violations can be submitted to the Commission by phone at 1-855-WILDTIP or online at [www.ncwildlife.org/wildtip](http://www.ncwildlife.org/wildtip).



*District 3 Assistant Fisheries Biologist Clint Morgeson measures a Black Crappie sampled in Shearon-Harris Reservoir in November 2018*