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These Outer Banks surf fishing tips about tackle, baits to use, times to fish, and scouting locations will help you zero in on drum, striped bass, and bluefish headline a long list of possible catches. Any compilation of Outer Banks fishing tips must be prefaced with a reminder to make sure youre up-to-date on fishing license. That said, here are eight top Outer Banks fishing tips to help focus your efforts. If youre new to OBX, as this area is known, and/or an inexperienced beach angler, hiring a local surf fishing guide will get you off to a great start for where to go and how to go about it. At the very least, visit a local tackle shop not only for supplies and bait, but also for information about whats happening currently. Remember that storms change beach conditions, and this summer, Hurricane Dorian had a big effect on the North Carolina coast. Get as much local information as you can. Perhaps the most important of all Outer Banks surf fishing tips is this: When possible, try to do your fishing when the right tide and current coincide with low light conditions, meaning at dawn and dusk. This is prime fishing time. The fall staple of Outer Banks surf fishing species is red drum. These fish, which run large, are overwhelmingly caught on bait rather than lures. Crabs, mullet, and spot are the favorites. There is no substitute for the freshest possible bait. Buy your bait locally, as it will probably be what fish along the Outer Banks are feeding on, and acquired recently and locally. Take care to keep it in top condition. Use only single-hook surf rigs for bigger fish, like blues, stripers, and red drum. A two-hook rig can be used if your target is smaller species. Make sure you dont use too small a hook with your bait. Smallish hooks are often made of thin wire and can straighten under severe pressure, plus their barbs may not completely penetrate a fishs mouth, meaning they wont hold. A lot of pressure is exerted in the surf while landing big fish, and the hook is vitally important. Visit beaches you plan to fish at low tide to observe sloughs, holes, bars, and other features. This is especially helpful after a storm, as beach and surf conditions change frequently. How to | Tips and Tricks | Saltwater | Surf When it comes to surf fishing, its hard to beat the coastline of North Carolina. Well known for hundreds of miles of beaches where record-breaking catches are landed on a regular basis, the North Carolina shoreline is arguably one of the top destinations for surf fishermen in the U.S. So if you are new to the N.C. coastline, or just want to brush up on your surf fishing insight, take a closer look at everything you need to know about casting from the coast, and get ready for plenty of opportunities to reel in the catch of a lifetime. Permits state has specific rules and regulations in place to help manage natural resources, and North Carolina is no different. One of the ways these conservation efforts are funded is through saltwater fishing licenses, which help to support fisheries management programs, like hatcheries, habitat research, and fish stocking. As such, all anglers who fish along the North Carolina beaches, sounds, and any body of saltwater on the coast or barely inland will need to have a Coastal Recreational Fishing license, (also known as a saltwater fishing license in North Carolina: Licenses are sold via the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, and can be purchased online at . In addition, licenses can be purchased at the majority of local bait and tackle stores throughout the N.C. coastline, as well as at major sporting goods stores. A license is required for fishing pier The coastal recreational fishing license allows anglers to fish in all coastal waters, but not in inland, fresh waters. A separate license the Unified Fishing License will allow anglers to fish in all waters across the state. A fishing license is not required for clamming or harvesting oysters, as the license is not required for finfish species. There are multiple types of coastal recreational fishing licenses available, which vary in price by timeframe, as well as the license holders state of origin. (I.e., North Carolina residents pay less for a saltwater fishing license in hand, its time to start thinking about gear. Anglers will find tons of options when it comes to equipment for casting into the surf, from custom designed rods and reels at local tackle shops, to name brand varieties that are designed for multiple areas along the coastline. We were not provided with free or discounted products to review. These recommendations were not influenced by manufacturers. We like these products, but we took care to make sure other customers agree. Some of the product links include affiliate codes. If a purchase is made, OuterBanks.com is paid a commission for the referral. See our full surf fishing gear guide including rods, reels, line, rigs, carts, waders and more. Surf Fishing Rod and Reel Combos Rods can be purchased separately, or as a rod and reel combo. Though the length can vary by beach and surf conditions, local anglers traditionally recommend using an 8 to 16 light to medium surf type rod, which can adapt to most conditions and most species. Keep in mind that the rod you choose has a lot to do with your physical size some rods are heavy, and can tire out an angler quickly after multiple casts. \*Prices are updated several times a day, but subject to change at any moment Surf Fishing Line Your line will literally make or break your ability to reel in a catch. Look for 20-25 test line for the best results in all conditions, and go for Nylon Monofilament, Fluorocarbon, or Braided Line varieties in terms of materials. Monofilament nylon is a great choice for new anglers, as it is fairly cheap, knots well, and has an inherent stretch, which is a great attribute for surf fishing Like all gear designed for surf fishing, when it comes to rigs and rig setups, there are a lot of options, which generally depend on the fish you are targeting, the season, and other conditions and factors that change depending on where along the North Carolina coastline you land. In fact, there is likely a unique and distinct type of rig available for every species of fish, and every type of body of saltwater. Rod holders Sand spike and other varieties of rod holders will hold your rod in place when you need a break, or just want to enjoy a little downtime relaxing on the beach. This piece of equipment comes in a variety of different materials such as PVC or ABS plastic are traditionally the least expensive, but if youre in rough ocean conditions and do a lot of surf fishing, upgrading to a more durable metal rod holder may be your best rouet. Pyramid weight is often the preferred weight for surf fishermen, as it can stand up to currents and hold at the bottom. A roughly 2 oz. to 4 oz. pyramid weight should hold strong in most ocean conditions, when used in conjunction with a surf rod. If its a rough day, or you are fishing on a beach with large breakers close to the shore, up the weight a bit to hold strong in the surf. Cart A cart will make a surf fishermans life infinitely easier when heading to and from the beach. Built to be pulled across the sand with ease, and large enough to hold all the essential equipment and then some, a beach cart is a great way to pack and tote along all the equipment youll need for a full day on the sand. Look for carts that have larger than normal, sturdy wheels. Larger wheels will essentially transform a standard cart into a 4WD mode of transportation that can easily haul your supplies across soft sand. Waders are effectively worn like overalls, protecting the lower 3/4th of your body from water inundation when you wade out to the surf to cast. Dont skimp on quality when it comes to waders! Inexpensive varieties can leak, which can turn a great fishing day into a bad one fairly quickly. Bait and Lures One of the hardest decisions for surf fishermen is what type of bait, or artificial lure, to use for the best results. Many local tackle shops can direct new anglers in the right direction when it comes to whats biting, and what bait or lures to use, but heres a closer look at some of the most popular varieties for fishing along coastal North Carolina. Bait Shrimp Virtually all saltwater species are attracted to shrimp, which is why its found in just about every bait and tackle store up and down the North Carolina coastline. Fresh shrimp is generally preferred over frozen if you can find it, and its recommended that you remove the head, cut the shrimp into 3-4 bite-sized pieces if desired, and hook the shrimp through the dorsal back so that it stays securely on the hook. Sand fleas are a great (and effective) on-the-spot option when surf fishermen are out of bait, or out of money. In the summer months, sand fleas can often be obtained by digging through the sand close to the ocean wash. Able to attract a wide array of species, sand fleas can often be obtained by digging through the sand close to the ocean wash. can attract a wide array of species. Discard the tail, and cut into small chunks for the best results. Small bait mullet can also be caught for free in area sounds, saltwater canals, marshes, and other calm salty waters with a bucket or a cast net. Menhaden Menhaden is a cut-bait fish that is popular with bluefish, sea trout, and striped bass some of the most prevalent species along the North Carolina coastline. Most bait shops will have menhaden available, which can be easily cut and hooked. Squid Squid is a frequent option at North Carolina bait shops, as it works well with saltwater species of all varieties, and of all sizes. Use whole smaller squids for targeting the big fish, or cut up squid into smaller piece. Clams and Oysters Though tricky to hook, clams and oysters can attract a wide array of species. Just be sure and stock up its easy for this bait to slide off a hook in rougher ocean conditions. Bloodworms or ragworms Bloodworms or ragworms are also available in most all North Carolina bait and tackle stores, as they work well in all conditions, for all types of fish. (Theyre also nicely inexpensive!) Best of all, bloodworms can be used for surf fishing, as well as targeting inland streams, canals, and what an angler uses is all dependent on where they are headed, and what they are targeting. Bait and tackle store will provide the best recommendations for lures to use for specific species, weather conditions, and seasons, but there are a few popular types of lures for saltwater fishing. Other Gear Youll Need for Surf Fishing In addition to all of the above essentials, there are some other tools youll need to bring along to ensure you have everything you need for a full day (or night) of surf fishing along the North Carolina coastline. Available at bait and tackle stores, sporting goods stores, and even traditional beach shops or grocery stores, look for these items that will make it easier to spend long hours on the beach. \*Prices are updated several times a day, but subject to change at any moment Natural Conditions Surf fishing in North Carolina is naturally affected by the weather, the tides, and the inherent shape of the shoreline itself. If you want to know what to target, and how successful youll be when you start casting, then you need to know the fundamentals of a North Carolina beach when it comes to surf fishing. Heres a little insight on the basic elements that impact surf fishing from Duck to Oak Island and Holden Beach, and how you can use these varying factors to your best advantage. Seasons A number of saltwater species that frequent the North Carolina coastline are seasonal, which means that they are always on the move as they migrate up and down the coastline are seasonal, which means that they are always on the move as they migrate up and down the coastline are seasonal appearances, as they can be found in droves when the conditions are just right, and they en route along the East Coast. A good rule of thumb when it comes to seasonal and migrating species is that they tend to head south for the winter. This is why the late spring, early summer, and fall are arguably the best times for surf fishing in North Carolina. During these times of year, anglers have the best chances of reeling in migratory catches, as well as local species that are at their most abundant close to shore when the water temperatures are warm. Weather Ideal weather conditions for surf fishing can be tricky to pinpoint because there are all sorts of different factors to consider. An onshore breeze can provide an increase in larger fish swimming closer to shore, but conditions that are too windy can affect the clarity of the water, and can make a day of surf fishing a soggy experience. On the whole, aim for sunny days with a light onshore breeze. A low pressure is considered preferable to a high pressure during a spring tide, and if the weather conditions have been poor for more than a day, its best to wait a day or two before heading out to the beach again. It typically takes at least a day for fish to acclimate after a bout of severe weather, and to return to the waters close to shore after the bad weather has subsided. Tides and Time of Day Tides have a major influence on surf fishing all along the North Carolina coastline, and a general rule of thumb is that high tide is better than low tide, simply because its easier to reach deeper waters with every cast. Try to aim for high tide, or up to two hours before or after a high tide is generally not as productive for surf fishing. As for time of day, early morning and dusk are typically when a number of varying species feed. So head out to the beach before 9 a.m. or about an hour or so before sunset. Not only will you miss the sunbathers and other beach crowds, but youll also have the best chance of taking advantage of the nocturnal feeding habits of a wide array of saltwater fish. Reading the ocean waters Experienced surf fishermen can generally tell if a beach is good for fishing with just a few casts, or even a quick look. Considering that the North Carolina shoreline varies greatly with every mile, there are a few things to look for when it comes to determining if your stretch of sand will be a solid fishing spot. Slough can be a haven for all varieties of saltwater fish, so casting into this trough can yield great results. Look for waves that are breaking offshore, and then dissipating before they get closer to the beach. (i.e., an outlying sandbar that grows deeper close to the shoreline.) This will be a sign that theres a slough present, and its a good beach for fishing. Sand and depths As a rule of thumb, the deeper the water is close to shore, the better your luck will be at surf fishing. Look for beaches with steep and deep slopes and soft, course sand, which indicate that the adjacent ocean shoreline has a steep and deep slope as well. Also, look for waves that are breaking close to shore or hardly any waves at all to determine if the ocean waters are nice and deep next to the shoreline. Wild waters If you spot a collection of birds or other wildlife congregating in one location on the open waters, chances are that theyre feeding on a passing school of fish. As such, this is always a good indicator that the fishing conditions are currently exceptional. Jetties, piers, and bridges At multiple points along the coastline, jetties, bridge and piers can be popular fishing spots, simply because the presence of underwater structures attract so many different varieties of fish. In addition, a bridge - (like the Little Bridge in Manteo or the Bonner Bridge just south or Oregon Inlet) - can allow anglers to cast into deeper waters, well away from the shoreline. Inlets Inlets Inlets are notoriously productive fishing grounds as the deep and steady currents allow multiple species of fish ample opportunities to access varying fishing grounds in the ocean or sound. Head to the edge of a sound or oceanfront beach on the edge of an inlet for surf fishing at its arguable best. Avoiding dangers When the weather conditions arent right, surf fishing can actually be a potentially dangerous sport. To mitigate the odds of injury, stick to the following tips that will ensure you remain safe on every trip to a North Carolina beach. Never fish alone, and if thats not possible, always let someone know where youre going. Use mile markers and landmarks to indicate where youll land along the beach, and you need to call for help. If you're taking a 4WD vehicle to go surf fishing, be sure and air down your tires to 20 psi at most, and never park below the high tide line. If you get stuck, and youre below the tide line, you may damage or even lose your vehicle to approaching ocean waves and saltwater. Watch out for swimmers, surfers, and other beach-goers who may be sharing the shoreline. Use caution in inlets, and at beaches known for their currents and constantly changing the shoreline. Use caution in inlets, and at beaches known for their currents and constantly changing the shoreline. on inlet sandbars when there is an incoming tide, as they tend to disappear guickly as the waters rise. Bring sunscreen! The intensity of the sun increases along the beach, as the year long, despite the outdoor temperatures. There are several techniques when it comes to casting, hooking, and reeling in fish, which depend on where you land along the North Carolina coastline. How you fish from a pier will likely be different from how you fish from along the shore, and there are a myriad of considerations to keep in mind for both types of saltwater fishing. Pier fishing is popular in coastal North Carolina simply because it is so plentiful, and can have so many big rewards. There are multiple fishing piers located in every developed corner of the North Carolina coastline, which includes the Outer Banks, Hatteras Island, (with the exception of isolated barrier islands like the Cape Lookout National Seashore), chances are that youll be close to a local fishing pier. A saltwater fishing license is also not required to fish from a North Carolina pier, and many piers offer on-site bait and tackle stores, convenience stores, or even full-service restaurants and bars. But the primary benefit to fishing off an oceanfront pier as opposed to a local beach is all about the location. The fishing piers on the North Carolina coastline can extend anywhere from 600 feet to 1000 feet or more into the Atlantic Ocean, which means that youre that much close to the big catches that are found slightly offshore. In fact, in the summer months, its not that uncommon to hear reports of dolphin or even wahoo catches, which are offshore species that tend to trickle in closer to the beach when water temperatures are high enough. Techniques, tips and tricks for pier fishing Keep the following in mind on your next pier fishing trip to maximize your chances of reeling in plenty of catches. Dont cast too far One of the best things about pier fishing is that it doesnt require much effort when it comes to casting, as fish are naturally attracted to the underwater pilings and structures that are directly under the birds and see what areas of the surrounding waters they tend waters, but theyll help you spot fish that are well beneath the surface in deeper waters off the pier. Look into pass options It costs money to go pier fishing, but if you regularly fish from your local fishing pier, it may be worth it to look into seasonal or annual passes. Long-term passes for a week, month, or even a year can save you big in the long run If you dont know whats biting, ask! The folks who man the North Carolina fishing piers know their stuff. Ask for recommendations on bait, rigs, and whats biting along the North Carolina coastline, simply because it can be solid rig Many experts attest that the best surf fishing rig set-up is the Fish Finder Rig, which is easily one of the most popular rigs for surf fishing along the North Carolina coast. Do some recon first Head to your local beaches around low tide and look for sloughs, deep waters, dips, sandbars, and structures, which will all indicate great fishing vehicle to explore the area beaches. This is especially true for hard-to-reach but popular surf fishing beaches like Cape Point on Hatteras Island or Ocracoke Island and Cape Lookout National Seashore. Best of all, its easier to haul all your gear to the shoreline. Buy a rod holder Makeshift rod holders that are made out of buckets, coolers, or holes dug in the sand itself may be cost effective, but they wont hold your rod very well if you get a big bite. Invest in rod holders, or at the very least, get some cut PVC pipe if you want a do-it-yourself variety. Dont overdo the cast The fish may be closer than you think, and this is especially true in areas that have sloughs close to shore. Aim for deep waters, and not just waters that are far away from the shoreline, for the best chance of catching fish that feed during these times of day, while avoiding swimmers, surfers, and other folks enjoying the shoreline. Look for fishing crowds The locals know where to go, so if you see a dozen of more fishermen congregated in one spot, then chances are youve stumbled upon a good fishing nothing ruffles a local fishermans feathers more than getting their lines twisted with a new arrival. Practice close to inlets The good thing about fishing near an inlet is that you don't have to cast very far to reach potentially deep and fruitful waters. So if youre new to surf fishing and havent perfected your cast just yet, try heading to the beach close to a local North Carolina inlet for the best results. Just don't water can be deceptively swift and are ever-changing. What youll catch when youd catch along the Currituck County beaches during identical times of year. With that being said, there are a variety of popular saltwater species that can veritably pop up anywhere along the coastline, from the northern Virginia border, to the southern South Carolina state line. So when you go surf fishing, be on the lookout for these types of fish that frequent the ocean waters off the North Carolina coast, and which are popular and sometimes coveted catches for local and visiting fishermen alike. Types of fish and seasons Known Aliases: Hardhead fish, pinfish, kingfish Season: Generally spring through fall, but can linger into the winter and summer months Catch Limits: None Where youll bag limit of 10 per day Where youll find them: All along the beaches when the drum run is on. How youll catch them: A bottom rig with a sinker, and plenty of live bait no artificial lures for this species. Known Aliases: Channel Bass, Redfish, Puppy Drum Season: Spring months of March through June, fall months of September through December Catch Limits: 18-27 long, and a bag limit of 1 per day Where youll find them: By surf fishing anywhere along the coastline. Spot fishing works too when the drum arrive in droves. How youll catch them: By surf fishing anywhere along the coastline. Spot fishing works too when the drum arrive in droves. How youll catch them: By surf fishing anywhere along the coastline. Spot fishing works too when the drum arrive in droves. 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How you have a surface and the droves are along the droves. How you have a surface and the droves are along the d be caught in the winter months on occasion Catch Limits: bag limit of 15 per day, and only 5 per day for bluefish that are greater than 24 long Where youll find them: Off the pier and along the beach, and all along the North Carolina coast How youll catch them: Bottom fishing on cut bait or artificial lures. Watch out for their teeth, which are razor sharp. Known Aliases: Lemonfish Season: April through August when the waters are warm Catch Limits: Regulations change based on season and number of fish caught. See for more information. Where youll find them: Off the local piers and near the inlets How youll catch them: Live bait especially mullet works well. Chumming is a good option too. Known Aliases: Florida Pompano Season: Late summer when water temps are at their highest Catch Limits: None Where youll find them: Pompano frequent the beach close to shore, just past the breaking waves. Especially common in clear and warm ocean waters. How youll catch them: Bottom rigs with natural bait, like sand fleas, cut mullet, or shrimp. Known Aliases: Flounder Season: Late May or early June until December Limits: 15 long minimum, bag limit of 4 per day Where youll find them: On the bottom of the ocean floor. Use a bottom rig, or try flounder Season: Late May or early June until December Catch Limits: 15 long minimum, and a bag limit of 6 per day Where youll find them: On the bottom of the ocean floor. Use a bottom rig, or try flounder gigging. How youll catch them: Cut bait, minnows, Bucktail lures, and jigs Known Aliases: King, Kingfish, Snakes, Smokers Season: April through June, and September through December Catch Limits: 24 long minimum, and a bag limit of 3 per day Where youll find them: Head to the end of the pier! How youll catch them: Use a slow reeling technique with live minnows, menhaden, or even mullet, or try spoons and jigs as artificial lures Known Aliases: Whiting, Virginia Mullet, Roundhead Season: April through November Catch Limits: Bag limit of 200 per day Where youll find them: Piers are great for sea mullet, but you can also find them all along the beach. How youll catch them: Use a bottom rig with two hooks and live bait, such as shrimp, sand fleas, squid, or blood worms. Known Aliases: None Season: Can potentially be found year-round Catch Limits: 10 long minimum, and a bag limit of 10 per day Where youll find them: All kinds of live bait works, including crabs, sand fleas, clams, and shrimp Known Aliases: Yellow Belly Season: Can potentially be found year-round Catch Limits: None Where youl kind of rig will work, but try casting or jigging with artificial lures such as spoons. Known Aliases: Weakfish, Trout Season: Late April or May through December Catch Limits: 12 long minimum, and a bag limit of 1 per day Where youll find them: Along the beach and piers How youll catch them: All rigs work well, but be careful reeling them in, as the aptly named weakfish has a weak mouth that can tear the hook through the lip. Surf fishing in North Carolinas hundreds of miles of stunning shorelines. From the isolated barrier islands of Hatteras Island and the Cape Lookout National Seashore, to the bustling beach towns of Carolina Beach, Oak Island, and Nags Head, any stretch of sand can yield some spectacular results. So be sure and bring along your gear, your fishing license, and your luck you never know what youll land when you try surf fishing in North Carolina. The Outer Banks (OBX) is a prime destination for surf fishing, offering abundant opportunities for anglers of all skill levels. This guide provides essential Tips for OBX Surf FishingGear and EquipmentProper gear is crucial for a successful surf fishing experience. Use a sturdy surf rod, typically 8 to 12 feet long, paired with a high-capacity spinning reel. Braided line with a test strength of 20 to 30 pounds is ideal for handling larger fish and rough surf conditions. Dont forget essential accessories like sand spikes, tackle boxes, and a variety of baits and lures. For bait, use live or cut bait such as mullet, menhaden, and shrimp, which are effective in attracting a variety of fish species like bluefish or Spanish mackerel. Understanding Tides and Currents significantly impact surfice species like bluefish or Spanish mackerel. Understanding Tides and Currents Significantly impact surfice species like bluefish or Spanish mackerel. fishing success. Fish are generally more active during incoming and outgoing tides, as these movements stir up the sand and bring in food. Plan your fishing trips around these tidal changes to increase your chances of catching fish. Additionally, pay attention to rip currents and sandbars, as these areas often attract fish looking for food. Using a tide chart can help you determine the best times to fish. The hours surrounding high tide are often the most productive, providing optimal conditions for surf Fishing Spots in the Outer BanksCape Hatteras National SeashoreCape Hatteras National Seashore is a renowned spot for surf fishing, offering miles of pristine beaches and diverse fishing opportunities. Anglers can catch a variety of species, including red drum, flounder, and bluefish. The seashores diverse habitats, from sandy shores to rocky outcroppings, provide excellent conditions for both novice and experienced anglers. The point at Cape Hatteras is particularly famous for its surf fishing, known for its high concentration of fish. This area is especially productive during the fall and spring migrations when large schools of fish pass through the region. Be prepared for changing weather conditions and strong currents, and always follow local fishing regulations.Oregon InletOregon InletOregon Inlet is another top destination for surf fishing in the OBX. This area is known for its rich waters and variety of fish species, including striped bass, speckled trout, and Spanish mackerel. The inlets proximity to deeper waters makes it an ideal location for targeting both inshore and offshore species from the shore. Fishing near the Bonner Bridge can be particularly productive, as the structure provides habitat for baitfish and attracts larger predators. Early morning and late afternoon are prime times to fish, as the cooler temperatures and lower light levels encourage fish to feed closer to shore. Nags Head Nags Head offers accessible and productive surf fishing spots, with several piers and beach access points. Anglers can expect to catch species such as croaker, spot, and sea mullet. The towns well-maintained beaches and amenities make it a convenient and enjoyable location for surf fishing, lennettes Pier in Nags Head provides an excellent vantage point for surf fishing, extending 1,000 feet into the Atlantic Ocean. Fishing from the pier allows anglers to reach deeper waters without needing a boat, increasing the chances of landing larger fish. The nearby beach areas also offer good fishing opportunities, especially during the summer months. Seasonal Considerations for OBX Surf FishingSpring and Summer are prime seasons for surf fishing in the OBX, with warmer waters bringing a variety of fish species closer to shore. During these months, anglers can target species like pompano, bluefish, and Spanish mackerel. Early mornings and late evenings are the best times to fish, as fish are more active during cooler parts of the day. Fall and WinterFall and winter offer surf fishing in the OBX, with warmer waters bringing a variety of fish species closer to shore. During these months, anglers can target species like pompano, bluefish, and Spanish mackerel. Early mornings and late evenings are the best times to fish species closer to shore. excellent surf fishing opportunities in the OBX, with cooler temperatures attracting larger game fish like striped bass and red drum. The fall migration is a particularly productive time, as many species move southward along the coast. Anglers should dress in layers and be prepared for changing weather conditions during these seasons. Conclusion OBX surf fishing provides a rewarding experience for anglers, with abundant opportunities to catch a variety of fish species. By understanding the best gear, optimal conditions, and top fishing spots, you can enhance your surf fishing adventures in the Outer Banks. Plan your trip today and enjoy the rich fishing heritage and natural beauty of the OBX. Photo credit: Smoovey via FlickrLooking for Outer Banks, or OBX, is a two-hundred-mile-long string of islands on the US east coast, spitting off the North Carolina coast and southeastern Virginia. They cover most of the coastline of North Carolina, separating Pamlico Sound, Albemarle Sound, and Currituck Sound from the Atlantic Ocean. The Outer Banks is known worldwide for its expanded, open beachfront and its warm and inviting climate. If youre a surf fishing enthusiast, youre certain to fall in love with this gem of a destination. Read on to discover our insider guide for having a successful and enjoyable Outer Banks surf fishing trip. Our in a big catch. Though we love a good fishing pier, every fisherman loves the feel of a rod and reel in hand as they head out to the shore. These are the best times of year to try your luck: Anglers have success during the early spring as the water warms up, as well as during the summertime in the surf. Better times of day to target surf fish include morning daybreak to mid-morning as well as evenings as the sun goes down (targeting sharks or dogfish). Sea trout can also be found off the Outer Banks remarkable beaches throughout the entire length of summer particularly along inlets and points in the late evening and early morning. You may want to rent or bring a big fishing rod throughout the duration of the trip to these parts. The reason for a big rod is that some species of fish, particularly the coveted cobias and red drums, can weigh between 20 and 50 pounds. Around these parts and particularly on Hatteras Island, the fall is when surf fishing season really heats up. This is something all anglers in the area attest to, particularly on Hatteras Island, the fall is when surf fishing season really heats up. This is something all anglers in the area attest to, particularly in the October peak weeks when finger mullet runs along the coastline, and the return of the fattened red drum never fails. You will even see an occasional sheepshead along with schools of black drum, croakers, spots, redfish, sea mullets, puppy drum, striped bass, and flounder. Throughout the season, these are some of the fish found along the surf. Larger king mackerel can be found during fall, but you may also be lucky enough to catch one during winter, too. Other popular fish to catch Banks while you are in the area or visit the website of the Division of Marine Fisheries and buy a license online. If you only plan to be in the State once each year, it may be better to buy a Coastal Recreational Fishing 10-Day License. You can buy everything from blood worms to squid and pre-cut bait from any tackle shop. You can also DIY and catch small mullets and fishing bait on your own. There are small live baitfish in the saltwater canals that you can use for live bait for small beige crabs found by the ocean in the wet sand. These are not edible but do make great bait for fish. It is nothing short of exceptional to fish on the shore on the beaches, starting from Kitty Hawk all the way to Hatteras Island. Cape Hatteras alone is a seventy-mile shoreline with migrating species from all over the world that brush along the coast. Once you do land extra-large catch, stop by a weight station in a tackle shop and see if your catch is eligible for a North Carolina Fisheries. Shore fishermen who release or land certain species of saltwater fish in a minimum size on the coastal waters of North Carolina Fisheries. Carolina are eligible for a certificate of citation commending their extraordinary catch. Once youve got your bait, make sure you also have the correct kit. Jigs hooks attached to artificial lures are also popular among surf fishers in OBX. If youre unsure, any tackle shop will be able to help you out. Those who have never gone surf fishing in the Outer Banks might want to take advantage of the many options for instructions and classes. Check out classes at Jennettes Pier in Nags Head to learn more about this fun and exciting sport! For a more casual approach to fishing lessons, there are a fishing in the Outer Banks might want to take advantage of the many options for instructions and classes. several local tackle shops that can supply you with any of your fishing needs, as well as give you tips on their favorite fishing charter with Oregon Inlet Fishing Center. Whether youre a skilled angler or its your first time fishing on the open water, the team will supply you with all the kit and know-how needed to get a big catch. So now that you have all the information you need to make the most of your Outer Banks Surf Fishing trip, here are our final tips for catching big fish in OBX:Use a longer rod (10 feet to 12 feet) to cast longer into the surfThe fresher the bait, the better the success rateIt takes time to see results but dont be afraid to moveVary your fishing as you listen to the endless lull of ocean waves than the beautiful Outer Banks. From desolate shorelines with no one around to the most popular spots dotted with lifeguard stations, it isnt hard to find the perfect beach for a fishing trip. In fact, many of our guests from Hatteras Island, Nags Head, or Kill Devil Hills enjoy pier fishing and surf fishing just a short walk from the door of their oceanfront condo rental! So what are you waiting for, make your booking with First Flight Rentals and get ready to discover this surf fishing tips about tackle, baits to use, times to fish, and scouting locations will help you zero in on drum, stripers, blues, and more An abundance of surf fishing opportunities makes the Outer Banks of North Carolina a top East Coast angling attraction. This is especially so in the fall, when large red drum, striped bass, and bluefish headline a long list of possible catches. Any compilations of Outer Banks fishing tips must be prefaced with a reminder to make sure youre up-to-date on fishing regulations. for different species, as things can change during the season, plus access permits and your fishing license. That said, here are eight top Outer Banks fishing tips to help focus your efforts. If youre new to OBX, as this area is known, and/or an inexperienced beach angler, hiring a local surf fishing guide will get you off to a great start for where to go important of all Outer Banks surf fishing tips is this: When possible, try to do your fishing when the right tide and current coincide with low light conditions, meaning at dawn and dusk. This is prime fishing time. The fall staple of Outer Banks surf fishing species is red drum. These fish, which run large, are overwhelmingly caught on bait rather than lures. Crabs, mullet, and spot are the favorites. There is no substitute for the freshest possible bait. Buy your bait locally, as it will probably be what fish along the Outer Banks are feeding on, and acquired recently and locally, as it will probably be what fish along the Outer Banks are feeding on, and acquired recently and locally. Take care to keep it in top condition. Use only single-hook surf rigs for bigger fish, like blues, stripers, and red drum. A twohook rig can be used if your target is smaller species. Make sure you dont use too small a hook with your bait. Smallish hooks are often made of thin wire and can straighten under severe pressure, plus their barbs may not completely penetrate a fishs mouth, meaning they wont hold. A lot of pressure is exerted in the surf while landing big fish, and the hook is vitally important. Visit beaches you plan to fish at low tide to observe sloughs, holes, bars, and other features. This is especially helpful after a storm, as beach and surf conditions change frequently. How to | Tips and Tricks | Saltwater | Surf The Outer Banks of coastal North Carolina present wonderful opportunities for anglers to fish the various species of the Atlantic. Surf fishing is super common in this area, where you can walk right up to the tide and cast a line out. When it comes to Outer Banks surf fishing, there are specific times of the year that youll find migrating fish spring-fall and times of the day that work best (high tide). You can also find better luck with the right lures, a fun activity to enjoy at the Outer Banks of North Carolina. But in order to have a successful fishing locationsThe best fishing locationsThe best fishing data from the right fishing locations of North Carolina. But in order to have a successful fishing locations of North Carolina. But in order to have a successful fishing locations of North Carolina. But in order to have a successful fishing locations of North Carolina. But in order to have a successful fishing locations of North Carolina. But in order to have a successful fishing locations of North Carolina. But in order to have a successful fishing locations of North Carolina. But in order to have a successful fishing locations of North Carolina. 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But in order to have a successful fishing location of North Carolina in order to have a successful fishing location of North Carolina in order to have a successful fishing location of North Carolina in order to have a successful fishing location of North Carolina in order to have a successful fishing location of North Carolina in order to have a successful fishing location of North Carolina in order to have a successful fishing location of North Carolina in order to have a successful fishing location of North Carolina in order to have a successful fishing location of North Carolina in order to have a successful fishing location of North Carolina in order to have a successful fishing location of North Carolina in order to have a successful fishing location of North Carolina in order to have a successful fishing location of North Carolina in order to have a successful fishing location of North Carolina in order to have a successful fishing location of North Carolina in order to have a successful fishing location of North Carolina in order to have a successful fishing location of North Carolina in order to have And aside from the time of day, you also want to know which months of the year produce the best fishing, which can help you find certain fish, as they dont all swim in the same locations or patterns. First and foremost, lets discuss the kinds of gear youll need for surf fishing. Since you arent going to be casting off from a vessel or a pier, you need the right rod, reel, line, and lures/bait to assist you. In terms of a good surf fishing rod, there are a couple of things you want to consider before renting or purchasing. First of all, you cant rely on a rod that is too big for your body size/height. It simply wont end well and will leave you exhausted. Second of all, you want to consider the relative size of the fish species you aim to catch. If theyre larger, heavier, or stronger then yould need a larger and stronger rod to accommodate them. In general, though, most surf fishing rods should measure between 8-16 feet long and be designed for surf fishing specifically. Youll also want to make sure that you have the following gear, keeping in mind that different baits work better for certain fish: A good saltwater reelBraided or monofilament nylon fishing line (20-25 test)An appropriate rig for your fishing technique (fish finder, high-low, etc.)CartWeightsRod holderWadersLive and cut bait, such as shrimp, sand fleas, clams, eels, bloodworms, squid, and insectsDead or frozen baitSpoonsJigsArtificial lure The Kitty Hawk Pier at sunrise Furthermore, its important to go to the right spot to find certain fish. For example, if you want to fish for bluefish, then you should stay near the surf zone where the water is shallow. However, this fish can and will bite anglers, so you dont want to wade into the water to fish for them. On the other hand, a fish like the striped bass is more commonly found in waters that are a bit deeper, such as near the end of the pier. And if youre seeking out red drum, then youre fine to stand nearly anywhere on the fishing coastline and spot fish. In terms of specific beaches in the Outer Banks that are great for surf fishing, check out the following locales: Hatteras InletCape PointOcracoke IslandKill Devil HillsOregon Inlet High tide tends to be better than low tide when it comes to fishing along the Outer Banks coastlines. Therefore, a good way to gauge the best time for surf fishing along the Outer Banks coastlines. in OBX would be to study the tide schedule for the day you plan to fish. Find out which hours the time of year in order to optimize your chances of catching migratory fish when theyre passing through. For example, the Outer Banks are known to produce the best surf fishing conditions in the months of fall, early summer, and later in the springtime. Furthermore, you can gauge the best times to fish based on weather patterns since many local NC coastal fish will flock towards the shore in warm weather. This makes warmer summer, fall, and winter days arguably the best for surf fishing. When you go surf fishing in the Outer Banks, youll primarily be using the surf casting method. When you fish from the shore and dont actually venture into the water, its necessary to be able to cast out long distances so that your bait or lure can reach the fish and avoid getting stuck on the bottom. For this reason, surfcasting requires a faster casting rod so that you can extend your hook out into the open ocean while you remain on the shore. When surf fishing at the Outer Banks, youll encounter a variety of saltwater fish species, depending on the season and the types of bait/lure you use. Consider the table below to learn more about the fish you can find on the North Carolina coast, as well as info regarding fishing limits, size, weight, and more. Average SizeAverage WeightEdible? Time of YearBag LimitBaits/LuresTechniquesRed Drum28-33 inches long7 poundsYes (better when smaller) Late spring (March-June), fall and early winter (September-December) per dayLive baits and cut baitsSpot fishing, surf fishingGulf Flounder11-15 inches long2 pounds (up to 6 maximum) YesLate spring (late May or early June) through December4 per dayLive bait, dead fish, and artificial/frozen shrimp and clamsJigging and spearfishingKing Mackerel20-35 inches long11-30 pounds (up to 6 maximum) YesLate spring (late May or early June) through December4 per dayLive bait, dead fish, and artificial/frozen shrimp and clamsJigging and spearfishingKing Mackerel20-35 inches long11-30 pounds (up to 6 maximum) YesLate spring (late May or early June) and fall (September-December)200 per dayLive bait (insects and/or crustaceans), jigs, and spoonsBottom rigging, trolling, 2-hook fishingStriped Bass20-35 inches long5-20 pounds (20-40 pounds mature)YesFall-spring (October-April)1 per person per day (varies)Topwater lures, live/dead bait (worms, clams, eels)Surfcasting, trollingBluefish8-24 inches long7-20 poundsYes (but more fishy and doesnt stay fresh as long)Spring-fall (March-November), sometimes winter5-15 per day depending on sizeArtificial lures, cut baitBottom fishing Have you been considering surf fishing on the Outer Banks of North Carolina? If so, hopefully our guide has given you some useful insight into the right seasons, locations, and times of day to partake. Spring through fall is a great time of year to visit the coast and fish for favorites such as mackerel, flounder, red drum, and more. obxouter bankssurf fishing Home Stripers Online Forums Main Forum Waves NC, Surf Fishing Home Stripers Online Forums Main Forum Waves NC, Surf Fishing Home Stripers Online Forums Main Forum Waves NC, Surf Fishing Home Stripers Online Forums Main Forum Waves NC, Surf Fishing Home Stripers Online Forum Waves NC, Surf Fishing Home Str