

For Starters – Try Fishing Beaufort Inlet

This is the second in a series of articles primarily oriented towards new-comers to our area. Here, we take a look at the Beaufort Inlet area. It's easily accessible, and offers a variety of fishing. Beaufort Inlet is one of only two deep water inlets along NC's coast, the other being the Cape Fear River. A lot of water goes through the Inlet, often carrying bait and with larger fish chasing that bait. Depending on the season (See the NC-DMF web site for what fish occur when), the Inlet and waters just outside it regularly offer up bluefish, flounder, sea mullet (whiting), gray trout, Spanish mackerel, king mackerel, false albacore, and the occasional legal sized black sea bass. This is a mix of surface, mid-depth and bottom fish so rig three rods accordingly (See Mike Marsh's book).

Tidal currents and wind determine fishing opportunities and your boating safety. Be aware that dangerous rollers develop at the Inlet when the tide and wind oppose each other – e.g., full ebb tide with a strong southwest wind. Always check NOAA's weather & wave forecast at <http://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/data/Forecasts/FZUS52.KMHX.html>. Then, weather permitting, past speakers who are knowledgeable of the area suggest that the first couple of hours of the falling tide and/or the rising tide are best times to try. Some options are given below.

Tide Stage	Where to try?	What for?	How?
Falling Tide	West side of inside channel from the "No Wake" sign to Coast Guard Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drift for flounder • Bottom fish for sea bass & sea mullet • Cast for blues • Troll for Spanish, blues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carolina rig w/squid • Spec rig tipped w/squid, shrimp • Gold 7/8th oz Got-Cha jig • Small Clark Spoons, 1-1/8th oz Stingsilvers, small lipped lures.
	Channel between Shackleford Bank and Bird Shoal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drift for flounder • Cast for blues • Troll for Spanish, blues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carolina rig w/squid • Gold 7/8th oz Got-Cha jig • Small Clark Spoons, 1-1/8th oz Stingsilvers, and lipped lures
	Outside along Beaufort channel edge near green buoys #9, 11 & 15.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gray trout, sea mullet, blues. If there, will show up near bottom on fishfinder along drop-off. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spec rig tipped w/squid, shrimp. Also try 1-1/8th oz silver stingsilver w/dropper fly (Deceiver or Clouser) above.
	Beaufort Channel between Sea Buoy and # 5 – look for dirty water/clean water edge line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Troll for King Mackerel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sardine minnows (can buy frozen) on ½ oz Hank Brown Hookup lure, w/ blue or pink "king skirt." Fish one on surface, one at ~15 ft using planer.
Rising Tide	Western tip of Shackleford Bank near bar at red buoy #16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cast or jig for blues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gold 7/8th oz Got-Cha jig or 1-1/8th oz silver stingsilver. Try adding dropper fly above stingsilver for increased action.
	Steep drop-off along eastern edges of channel from red buoy # 16 to Radio Island jetty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Troll for Spanish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Clark Spoons, 1 1/8th oz Stingsilvers, small lipped lures

Last, REALLY try to avoid crowds – especially with summer coming. Plan so you can pick a day when you can catch the tide stage above that occurs very early in the day, or fish weekdays. Good Luck!