

New to Area? Start Simple. Keep it Simple at First.

When you think about it, even though there are basically three kinds of fishing techniques (casting, dropping, and trolling), when you add in choice of “lure” (live bait, dead/cut bait, or artificial) you end up with endless options. So where do you start? This month we’ll cover a few basic suggestions to get you on the water and, hopefully, get fish into the boat. This is just one (and not the only one) approach for fishing in/near Beaufort Inlet that has proved productive. Maybe members can chime in on other approaches.

Check your rods and reels. They’re probably too heavy if you fished previously in salt water, and too light if you’re a bass fisherman. While any outfit will catch some fish sometime, you really want to be able to find fish that may be on the surface, at mid-depth, or on/near the bottom to increase your chances. Carry at least three rods, rigged and ready to do so. The suggested rigs below gives you a sense of the rough capacities/ratings that map into reel/rod sizes and ratings to give you a start. End the end, you’ll need to decide what’s comfortable for you. Talk to our Club Sponsors.

Application	Reel	Rod	Line
Light Lure Casting / Trolling	4000 spinning series, having 160 yd of 12# capacity	Medium, Fast Action rated for 8-15# line and 5/8 ounce lure	PowerPro 20# Braid
Light Jigging and Light Bottom Fishing	Spinning having 240 yd of 12# line capacity	Med to Med Heavy, Fast Action rated for 8-15# line and 5/8 oz lure.	PowerPro 30# Braid
Medium Trolling and Heavy Bottom Fishing	Shimano TLD-15 Lever Drag Conventional (Not Level-Wind!) reel	Medium Heavy, Fast Action rated for 15-30# line and 1/2 to 3 oz lures.	PowerPro 40 – 50# Braid

Fish the lure, not the line. Use braided line. Braid’s thinner diameter to equivalent weight mono, no-stretch and abrasion resistance characteristics will produce more hook-ups with head-to-head mono-rigged outfits, allow you to use lighter lures/rigs yet sink faster, and will provide (in my opinion) a better fishing experience with braid’s “instant feedback.” Know what knots work with braid. Follow the package brochure of get a knot book. All lines are tipped with an appropriate monofilament leader from 20# for light action to 40 – 50# for the medium and heavy applications above.

Tides, Weather and Water Clarity Matter. Know what the tide stage and weather will be before you leave the dock. A lot of bait move in and out the inlet with the tide. The fish we’re after set up to ambush bait as the tide. The inlet and its surroundings are fished differently depending on the tide, and wind. If you can pick a time to fish, the most productive times are often 1 to 2 hours either side of high and low tide. Beaufort Inlet is the only deep-water outlet along our coast. After major rains or storms, don’t expect much action in the inshore / alongshore areas until the turbidity drops off.

Where You Might Try. Once our water temperatures reach 60 degrees, the spring fishing should really turn on. Croaker, gray trout, speckled trout, sea mullet, bluefish, summer flounder, and sheepshead are among the targets. SO wher can you go and what might you use?