

Hatchery Supported Waters Tips & Suggestions

When fishing in Hatchery Supported Waters we would like to make a few suggestions that will enhance your fishing experience to some degree. We would also like to suggest that you download our full list of Water Regulations and Signs (and their meanings) that are provided by the North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission also in the PDF downloads section of this site to familiarize yourself with what to expect at each individual body of water before you go fishing.

BAIT TIPS

As you probably already know, there are no bait/lure restrictions in Hatchery Supported waters. We would like to make a few suggestions on what to use. We recommend using natural bait when fishing in [Hatchery Supported Waters](#). Using natural bait helps promote healthier fish that you might “miss” or “let get away” while fishing. If the fish consumes our recommended bait but gets away, the chances of that same fish being caught either by you at a later date or by someone else is much higher than if you used a bait that a fish might have trouble digesting. Below is a short list of recommended “Natural Bait.”

“Red Worms”

Tip: Worms work with practically all types of fish, especially trout. Another plus is that you can find them at just about any place that sells bait or try digging your own in any shaded/wooded area in the forest nearby or along the creek/river bank

“Night-crawlers”

Tip: Worms work with practically all types of fish, especially trout. A tip for finding these large “Night-crawlers” is to wait for a Summer rain shower to pass in the evening. Late that evening/night go out to where you know of some bare dirt or even a yard with dirt spots. Be sure to take a flashlight with you. The rain from earlier brings these large worms to the surface giving you the perfect opportunity for FREE bait! Simply pick them up and put them in a container with some loose but moist dirt and be sure to punch holes in the lid. Some of these are big enough to break into pieces to allow you to use one worm for multiple casts/fish.

“Crickets”

Tip: Trout tend to like a variety of “natural” baits, so crickets offer a nice alternative to worms. You can either catch them on your own for free or a number of locations that sell bait will also have crickets available. To catch your own the best time is in the morning while the dew is still on the ground. Go out into your yard and see what you can find hopping around. A tip on how to use your cricket once you’re ready to go fishing is to make sure you place your hook just behind it’s head and under what is called it’s “collar.” From here run the hook down and under with the barb poking out ever so slightly of its back and between the wings. Make sure to run the hook in a shallow manner into the cricket making sure you don’t kill it before it goes into action.

An exception to “Natural” bait:

“Corn”

Tip: Corn is probably the most popular and cost effective bait to use. I have used it before when fishing in stocked trout ponds/lakes/ rivers and is very effective. Corn is not considered “Natural” to the fishing world because it doesn’t occur naturally around water unless introduced by humans. Trout from a hatchery are used to being fed in the form of pellets. The pellets may contain some form of corn in them and many believe that’s why whole kernel corn works so well. It could just be the bright yellow color though. All we know is that it works and works well. But please use in “Hatchery Supported” waters only. Do not use corn in waters designated “Wild Natural Bait” because it is not considered “Natural.”

General Tips for Hatchery Supported Trout:

- In streams and rivers, hatchery trucks generally stock around bridges. This is a plus due to the easy access bridges provide anglers. The majority of our recommended Fishing POI’s for “hatchery supported”, their coordinates and map icons will be located at or around the bridges of that particular creek/river.
- Two of the best and most popular rivers to catch trout in our area are the [Tuckasegee River](#) (NC 107 bridge at Love Field to Old Dillsboro Dam) & [Nantahala River](#) (White Oak Creek to the powerhouse), both designated “Delayed Harvest” waters. The hatchery pumps upwards of 49,000 trout into the “Tuck” and 18,000 into the Nantahala annually from March to November. Catch Rainbow, Brown and Brook trout here as is the case in all other Hatchery Supported waters. Please see our trout waters designation PDF download to review the regulations for “Delayed Harvest” waters. Also, be sure to check each of these two river’s POI pages for even more info, local scoops and directions.
- Creel limit of 7 fish
- No lure restrictions
- Make sure to pick your [N.C. Wildlife license](#) up at a number of certified locations within our area before you go out. Our waters are strictly patrolled by U.S. Forest Service Game Wardens.