

Fishing Tips



Largemouth bass can be caught all year in a variety of habitats. Anglers focus on the tidal section and warmer backwaters in winter, then shift focus upriver as the weather warms in spring to oxbow lakes and shallow areas off the main river. Overhanging willows, fallen trees, and rocks are locations frequented by largemouth bass. Live shiners, jigs, soft plastics, spinner baits, and minnow imitations are popular and effective methods of catching bass on the Altamaha. Along the river channel, lures should be presented as close to cover as possible or just upstream and allowed to drift back to the target before retrieving.



Redbreast sunfish are popular targets in the late spring and summer on the Altamaha. Fishing peaks from April to June and depends on water level. Redbreast prefer deep holes, but can be found anywhere there is moving water and cover. Anglers use live crickets and worms fished under a bobber as well as artificial lures. Small beetle spins, in-line spinners, and popping bugs presented by fly rod all entice strikes from feisty redbreast. These methods also work for longear sunfish, a non-native inhabitant of the Altamaha River which resemble redbreast but are distinguished by a white margin around the earflap.



Bluegill and redear sunfish (shellcracker) fishing usually picks up in April and continues throughout the summer. Most anglers fishing for these tasty panfish focus on oxbow lakes, but both species also occur in backwaters and eddies along the main river. Fishing for bluegill and redear requires similar presentations to redbreast, but they are usually found in slower waters.



Mullet fishing can be fantastic in summer on the Altamaha. These fish swim up from the coastal waters to feed along the sandbars that line the river. Anglers often wade in the water along a sandbar, and use a cane pole to dangle a red wiggler from a tiny hook placed next to a chum bag to catch mullet from the schools as they swim by.



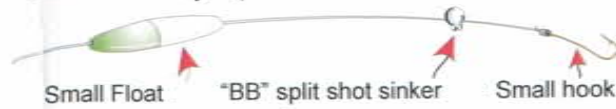
The non-native **flathead catfish** is a very popular target for anglers on the Altamaha due to its large size and high quality taste. When fishing for flatheads, live bait is a must, with Louisiana pink worms, shiners and bream as some of the most popular baits. Sport tackle with a minimum 30 pound test line can be fished in deep holes during the day for flatheads, but limb-lines and trotlines fished at night are the most popular due to the nocturnal behaviour of these fish.

Fishing Rigs

Bottom Rig for catfish - Use a natural bait and fish deep eddies on outsides of bends and on edges of sandbars.



Floating Rig - Flip a cricket or red wiggler underneath limbs in slow water along channel and in oxbow lakes to catch a variety of panfish.



The **Altamaha River** flows from the merging of the Ocmulgee and Oconee rivers, forming the largest free-flowing stream in Georgia. Once a major thoroughfare for steam-boat traffic, the Altamaha now hosts a variety of sporting activities, ranging from canoeing to boat and bank fishing, to pleasure boating and tournament fishing. Its many public access points provide boaters and fishermen an easy avenue to almost the entire river. Fishermen can find an abundance of freshwater fish species including largemouth bass, redbreast sunfish, bluegill, redear sunfish, crappie, channel catfish, white catfish and flathead catfish (see fishing tips, inside). The diversity of recreational opportunities along with the natural beauty of this wide, meandering river makes it a primary resource for freshwater recreational activity in southeast Georgia.

BE AN ETHICAL ANGLER

Ethical anglers fish responsibly and consider the rights of others. They portray a positive image and help protect and conserve our natural resources. Be an ethical angler. The future of fishing depends upon it.

- Show courtesy to others, lend a helping hand whenever possible, and always ask permission before fishing on private property.



- Know and obey fishing regulations.
- Report violations and pollution.

T.I.P.
(Turn in Poachers)
1-800-241-4113

- Keep only the fish you can use and release all others properly so they will survive. Some fish species are endangered or threatened.



- Appreciate the environment by not littering, dispose of fishing line properly, and leave a place cleaner than when you found it.



- Pass on the tradition! Takemefishing.org

- Don't transfer fish or plant species between bodies of water. Non-native species can adversely affect existing populations.



Some images courtesy of
The Native Fish Conservancy
www.nativefish.org



Printed August, 2008

Guide To Fishing The Altamaha River



DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
WILDLIFE RESOURCES DIVISION
FISHERIES MANAGEMENT SECTION
2070 U.S. HIGHWAY 278 S.E.
SOCIAL CIRCLE, GA 30025-4711



<http://www.gofishgeorgia.com/>

