

Anglers Be Aware Of The Following Information:

1. A saltwater license is required. State regulations on size, seasons and limits are strictly enforced.
2. Fishing is not permitted on lifeguard protected beaches.
3. Open fires are permitted in Virginia at designated sites on the beach by permit ONLY. In Maryland, consult a ranger for the open fire regulations.
4. Deposit all trash in containers or carry it out with you.
5. Camping or overnight sleeping is permitted only in designated camping areas in Maryland. Overnight sleeping is not permitted in Virginia.
6. The Virginia entrance is open from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m., May through September; 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., April and October; and from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., November through March. After hours fishing permits may be obtained at the Toms Cove Visitor Center. After hours permits are not required in Maryland.
7. Over Sand Vehicles are allowed on designated areas along the seashore. In Maryland, annual permits may be purchased at the Campground Office. In Virginia, permits may be purchased at the Toms Cove Visitor Center and the Refuge administration office.
8. Be aware of signed and fenced areas protecting nesting birds on the island. Some of these species are protected by the Endangered Species Act. DO NOT ENTER THESE AREAS!

Please respect this precious natural resource!
Take only fish you plan to eat. Return all other fish gently to the water.

Safety Tips

- Use caution when casting-keep a safe distance from other anglers. Look around before each cast-swimmers frequently drift into fishing areas. Fish hooks can inflict painful wounds.
- Leave the beach during lightning storms! Do not seek shelter under a beach umbrella.
- Avoid prolonged sun exposure to prevent sunstroke or sunburn. Wear a shirt, hat and sunglasses. Sunscreen is recommended!
- First aid and emergency assistance are available at the Campground Office in Maryland, both Visitor Centers in Virginia and at lifeguard stands.

The National Park Service offers summer surf fishing demonstrations. These demonstrations provide advice for novice and experienced surf anglers alike. Check visitor centers for program schedules.

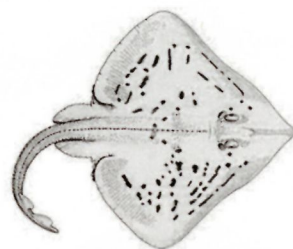
Equipment

The challenge of surf fishing has lured anglers to Assateague's beaches for generations. Whether just "wetting a line" while relaxing in the sun or serious fishing addiction draws you to the surf line, the hope of "catching" cannot be denied! The surf caster's choice of equipment is a matter of personal preference. The heavy duty 13-foot surf rod and bait casting or spinning reel provides maximum casting distance and is needed for landing larger surf species. However, a smaller surf rod (10-foot) with a surf spinning reel can be used successfully. In gentle surf even a 6 to 8-foot casting rod and spinning reel can provide excellent sport. Keep in mind, heavy action fresh water gear can be used under most conditions.

Surf conditions will often dictate the type of tackle necessary for successful fishing. The rod used must be able to cast a sinker of sufficient weight to hold bottom. When ocean currents are strong and wave action is heavy, a very heavy sinker is necessary. Pyramid sinkers or no-roll sinkers are best for holding bottom in the surf. Weights range from two to six ounces. Three or four ounce sinkers are suitable for most surf conditions. Line size depends on wind and surf conditions, type of bait and size of fish. (17-20 lb. test will be satisfactory in most cases.)

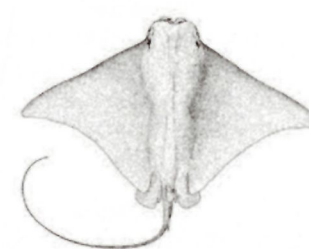
Salt water and sand are surf fishing equipment's worst enemy! A sand spike will keep a rod and reel out of the sand. All salt water gear should be rinsed with fresh water after use. After rinsing, an application of light-weight lubricant on the moving reel parts is recommended.

Clearnose Skates, Cownose Rays and certain shark species are frequently caught in the surf. These cartilaginous fishes represent a very ancient group of fishes. Please respect these amazing creatures and return to the sea uninjured.



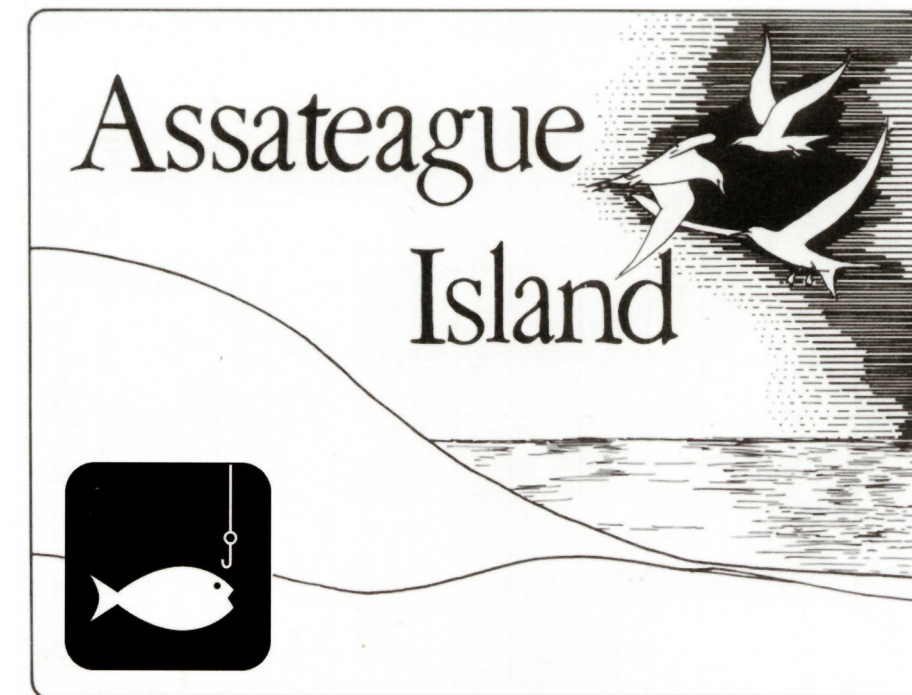
Clearnose Skate

Skates are harmless. They have thorny skin but no poisonous barb at the base of the tail. Skates lay egg cases.



Cownose Ray

Most rays have a barb near the base of the tail. Rays generally have smooth skin and a slender tail. Rays produce live young.



Surf Fishing

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Surf fishing is a popular recreational activity on Assateague Island. While late spring and fall draw most anglers to the beach, surf fishing offers a challenge no matter what the season. Here are a few basic tips on seasons, conditions, equipment, species and regulations to get you started. Have fun, relax and good fishing!

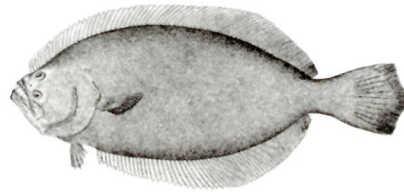
Species	Bait	Season	Comments
Summer Flounder	Bloodworms, lures, squid, minnows, peeler crabs	Late Spring / Summer / Fall	Light to medium surf gear is best.
Croaker	Bloodworms, clams, peeler crabs, squid	Summer	Light surf gear is best.
Spot	Bloodworms, peeler crabs, squid	Summer / Fall	Light tackle is best.
Kingfish	Bloodworms, cut bait, peeler crabs, squid	Spring / Summer / Fall	Light tackle is best.
Weakfish	Bloodworms, clams, lures, peeler crabs, squid	Spring / Summer / Fall	Light to medium surf gear is best.
Black Drum	Clams, lures, minnows, peeler crabs	Spring / Early Summer / Fall	Heavy surf gear is best.
Red Drum	Clams, lures, peeler crabs	Spring / Fall	Medium to heavy surf gear is best.
Striped Bass	Bloodworms, lures, peeler crabs	Spring / Summer / Fall	Medium to heavy surf gear is best.
Bluefish	Cut bait, lures, squid	Spring / Summer / Fall	Medium tackle or surf gear is best.
Northern Puffer	Clams, squid	Summer	Light tackle or surf gear is best.
Sharks	Cut bait, squid	Late Spring / Summer/ Early Fall	Medium to heavy surf gear is best.

A saltwater fishing license is required. Obtain current size, season and limit regulations at Visitor Centers or the Ranger Station!

A Guide to Identification of Surf Species

Summer Flounder

A flatfish with eyes and color pattern on the left side of the body. Flounder spend most of their time on or near the bottom although they can swim rapidly in pursuit of prey. 2-5 pounders common.



Atlantic Croaker

A silvery fish with slightly diagonal lines or spots along upper body. Tiny barbels form a row along the inner edge of the lower jaw. ½ - 1 lb. common.



Spot

Similar to croakers, but have a shorter, deeper silvery body with yellowish diagonal bars along the sides, a forked tail, no chin barbels and a spot near the pectoral fin. ¼ lb. common, 14" max.



Kingfish

Northern and southern kingfish may be taken in the surf. Both species are silvery gray with darker diagonal bars along the sides (bars are much darker on northern kingfish). The mouth is found below the cone shaped snout with a single barbel on the chin. 1st dorsal fin is triangular and much higher than 2nd dorsal fin. 1 lb. common, 15"-18" max.



Weakfish

The gray trout derives its nickname from its delicate mouth structure. The upper body varies from olive to bluish, covered with many small spots. 2-3 pounders common, 36" max.



Black Drum

A deep bodied silvery fish with an arched back and broad black vertical bars on the sides. There are many long barbels on the chin. 30-40 pounders were once caught along Assateague, catches today are usually much smaller.



Red Drum

The elongated body is copper-colored above with silvery sides and a black spot(s) at the base of the tail. No chin barbels are present. Max. 60", if caught, usually much smaller.



Striped Bass

The elongated body is dark olive green to dark blue above with silvery sides with a slightly protruding lower jaw. 6-9 stripes extend from behind the head to the tail. The 1st and 2nd dorsal fins are triangular in shape. 20"-30" common, 72" max.



Bluefish

An elongated fish with a forked tail. The upper body is greenish or bluish with silver sides and a white underside. Large mouth with a protruding jaw and many razor sharp teeth. 2-5 pounders common.



Northern Puffer

Puffers may inflate their bodies with water or air when alarmed. They have small mouths with 2 strong plate-like teeth in each jaw. Dorsal, pectoral and anal fins are small. No pelvic fins. 6"-9" common.



Smooth Dogfish Shark

Young smooth dogfish are common in the surf. These sharks have slender bodies with a prominent opening behind the eye and very small flat, blunt teeth. 12"-24" common.



Dusky Shark

Dusky have a streamline gray to bluish gray body. The relatively small 1st dorsal fin begins above the point behind the pectoral fins. The 2nd dorsal fin is much smaller. Most inshore specimens are around 3 feet in length

