

# Seabrook Island Fishing Guidelines and Etiquette

## 1. Introduction

Seabrook Island is a private coastal community offering a variety of fishing opportunities. This overview provides guidelines for surf, river, stream, pond, and marsh fishing, and fishing from bridges within Seabrook Island. Adherence to these guidelines ensures a safe and enjoyable experience for all residents and visitors.

## 2. Fish Species

- **Surf Fishing:** Common species include red drum, black drum, flounder, croaker, whiting (southern kingfish), sheepshead, bluefish, lady fish, stingrays, spotted sea trout, tarpon, sharks (sharpnose, bonnethead, black tip, etc.) and blue crab.
- **River and Marsh Fishing:** Species include red drum, flounder, spotted seatrout, sheepshead, and blue crab.
- **Lake Fishing:** Species include large-mouth bass, bluegill, and catfish.

## 3. License Requirements

- All individuals fishing in Seabrook Island's marshes, creeks, inlets and tidal ponds must have a **valid SC fishing license** (<https://saltwaterfishing.sc.gov/license.html>) and comply with **SC Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) regulations** (<https://www.eregulations.com/southcarolina>). A fishing license is not required for freshwater fishing in non-tidal freshwater ponds and lakes on Seabrook Island.
- Resident and non-resident licenses can be obtained online at SCDNR (<https://gooutdoorsouthcarolina.com>) or call 843-762-5000. To qualify for a resident fishing license, the applicant must have been a resident for the last 365 days. Short term licenses are available to non-residents at a reduced cost.

## 4. Fishing Locations

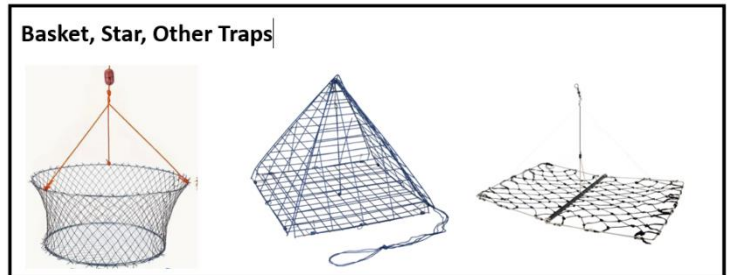
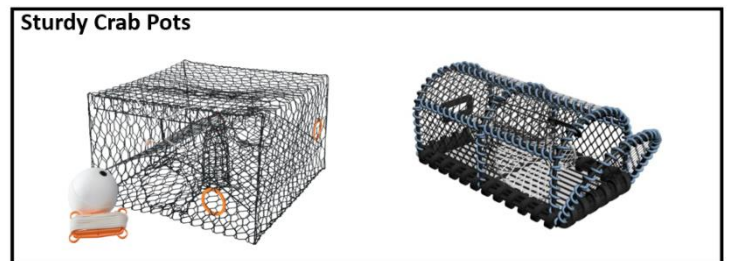
- **Surf Fishing:** "North to South Beach" (Northern stretch of Seabrook Island from Captain Sam's Inlet to the Beach Club and accessible through Boardwalks 1 through 7), to Edisto Beach and Privateer Creek.
- **Various Lakes, Ponds, Streams**
- **Kayak Launch and Crab Dock**
- **Bridges:** There are various bridges within Seabrook Island. Please do not park on the street, exercise caution, and adhere to posted signs.
- **Fishing Charters:** There are several charter captains at Bohicket Marina as well as at the various Charleston Marinas.
- *Fishermen, crabbers, shell fisherman and boaters should be considerate of each other and treat each other with mutual respect so all can enjoy the beach, lakes, streams, and docks and cohabitate peacefully together.*

## 5. Fish, Fishing Regulations

The SCDNR ([www.dnr.sc.gov](http://www.dnr.sc.gov)) has specific seasonal size and limit regulations that change from time to time. (<https://www.dnr.sc.gov/regulations.html>).

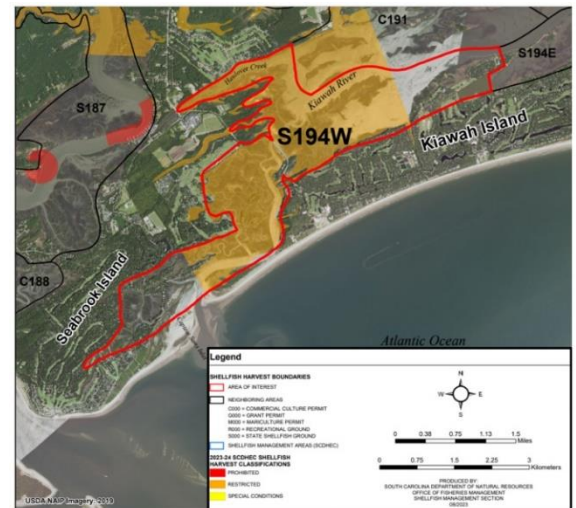
## 6. Crabbing Regulations

- **Licenses: Recreational crab fishermen need a saltwater fishing license with a maximum of two crab pots** (<https://saltwaterfishing.sc.gov/license.html>).
- Pots and traps must be marked with floats with the owner's name, address, and phone number and enough line to keep the float from going underwater at high tide.
- Traps should not be left where they could be exposed at low tide and should be checked daily. Unattended crab traps are death traps for crabs and other species and have negative impacts on our habitat.
- Proper crabbing practice depends on the type of trap used. Crab pots (sturdy structure with bait trap) should be removed within two days or less. Star, basket, net, and other traps are to be monitored and removed at the end of a fishing outing. Derelict (unattended) traps are subject to removal and disposal.
- Blue Crabs must be larger than five inches measured from the tip of one lateral spine across the back of the shell to the tip of the opposite lateral spine.
- Stone Crab claws must have a minimum forearm of  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches, and only crabs with two claws can have one removed. The larger of the two claws can be kept, but no claw can be removed from a female with eggs. Stone crab bodies cannot be possessed, live or dead.
- Crabbers should be cognizant and considerate of other users and keep equipment from cluttering the area. Do not leave equipment or tackle in the area, and clean up and remove all bait, lines, and other trash at the end of your crabbing outing.



## 7. Shell Fishing

- Shell fishing is only permitted within State and Recreational Shellfish Grounds.  
(<https://www.dnr.sc.gov/marine/shellfish/shellfishmaps>)
- Recreational Shell Fishing requires an **SCDNR Saltwater Fishing License** (<https://saltwaterfishing.sc.gov/license.html>)
- Limits: two bushels of oysters and/or one-half bushel of clams (>1 inch).
- The SCDNR publishes various approved areas, restricted areas, restricted equipment, and closure/open dates.
- Currently, there are no “special conditions” for Seabrook Island (see SCDNR map).
- Any discarded or open shells should be disposed of properly; do not leave shells in public areas.



## 8. Golf Course Ponds/Lakes

For safety reasons, the Seabrook Island Club does not permit non-golfers to be on the course. Do not fish the ponds/lakes on the golf courses or practice areas.

## 9. Equipment Regulations

### Permitted Equipment and Activities:

- Rods and Reels
- A fisherman may only use four rods and reels (SCDNR)
- A fisherman from a boat may use an unlimited number of rods (SCDNR)
- Hand Lines
- Kayak fishing
- Giggling
- Spear Fishing
- Cast Nets to collect bait fish
- Crab Traps (limit two per person)

### Prohibited Equipment and Activities:

- **No chumming** within 600 feet of the beach.
- *Definition: Chumming means the depositing into water chopped or ground bait consisting of raw meat or fish parts including blood and oil thereof (excluding chicken) in an attempt to catch fish.*
- This does NOT affect or prohibit the baiting of **crab traps** or the placement of natural bait upon a **hook and line**.
- Trot or long lines (~50 hooks) are prohibited.

## 10. Surf Fishing Guidelines

Seabrook Island was voted one of the top 10 quietest beaches on the East Coast. There are four miles of beachfront and plenty of room for both fisherman and swimmers to enjoy the beauty of Seabrook Island.

- Fishermen should maintain a safe distance from swimmers

- Avoid casting near swimmers and be mindful of where your lines are in the water.
- Swimmers should be aware of fishermen and avoid swimming in fishing locations to prevent accidents.
- If persons are swimming, fisherman should fish elsewhere (at a safe distance).
- If fishermen are present, swimmers should give them space (swim elsewhere at a safe distance).
- **Fishermen and swimmers should be cognizant and considerate of each other, use common sense, and treat each other with mutual respect so all can enjoy the beach and cohabitate the shore peacefully together.**

## 11. Bridge Fishing Guidelines/Safety Issues

- **Be mindful of traffic when fishing from bridges.**
- Do not obstruct the roadway or walkways.
- Follow all posted signs and guidelines.
- Be cautious of casting lines near pedestrians or vehicles; **safety is a priority.**

## 12. Post-Fishing Etiquette

- **Clean Up:** Ensure all trash, bait, and equipment are cleaned up and disposed of properly.
- **Bait:** Do not leave bait on the beach or near fishing areas.
- **Equipment:** Store all equipment safely after use.
- **Hooks:** Properly dispose of hooks and other sharp objects to prevent injuries.
- **Shellfish:** Any discarded or open shells should be disposed of properly; do not leave shells in public areas.
- **Fishermen and non-fisherman should be considerate of each other and treat each other with mutual respect so all can enjoy the beach and cohabitate the shore peacefully together.**

## 13. Other Safety Guidelines

- **Alligator Safety:** Alligators are present in ponds and marsh areas and can occasionally be seen in the ocean. Maintain a safe distance and do not feed, harass, or attempt to hook an alligator. Be cautious of alligators if boating or kayaking in ponds or rivers. Do not dispose of or leave bait or fish near alligators. Report any aggressive alligator behavior to the Seabrook Island Gatehouse at 843.768.6641 (<https://sipoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Alligator-Safety-Brochure-2024-2.pdf>).
- **Dolphin Safety:** Federal Law and the Town of Seabrook Island Ordinances prohibit harassment of dolphins ([https://library.municode.com/sc/seabrook\\_island/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=TOCO\\_CH32\\_WABE\\_ARTIIBEMA\\_DIV2RE\\_S32-43WIMALIPR](https://library.municode.com/sc/seabrook_island/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TOCO_CH32_WABE_ARTIIBEMA_DIV2RE_S32-43WIMALIPR)):
  - Keep your distance from dolphins, **staying 15 yards away on land** (50 yards by boat/kayak).
  - **Do not try to feed dolphins.** Keep quiet while dolphins are hunting or feeding.
  - No swimming in Captain Sams Inlet two hours before or after low tide or any time when dolphins are present.

- No swimming if dolphins are strand feeding; avoid chasing, following, petting, circling dolphins or separating a mother and calf. If dolphins are beached, don't try to wade in, touch, grab, or mount them.

#### **14. Beach Patrol Authorities**

The Seabrook Island Beach Patrol and SIPOA Patrol Officers have the authority to issue warnings and to ask fisherman (or swimmers) to move if in their judgement they perceive there is a safety issue. They are responsible for ensuring the safety of all beachgoers and responding to any incidents.

#### **15. Conclusion**

By following these guidelines, you contribute to the preservation of Seabrook Island's natural beauty, the freedoms for all to enjoy our special island, the rights of fishermen and swimmers, and the safety of all its residents and visitors.

**Thank you for your cooperation and happy fishing!**