



South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

Keep our native fish population robust and healthy



Redeye Bass by Emily Judson

In South Carolina, it is unlawful to intentionally release fish and other aquatic organisms into bodies of water where they were not captured.

Moving fish and other aquatic organisms between water bodies is a substantial threat to our native animals and our sport fisheries. With the intention of creating new sport fisheries or changing existing fisheries by introducing non-native species, anglers can cause long-term harm to native fish communities and the sport fisheries they intend to change.

Non-native fishes can out-compete native fishes for prey and habitat. Non-native fishes can also hybridize with closely related species when the eggs of one black bass become fertilized by a different member of another black bass species.

The illegal introduction of Alabama Bass (Spotted Bass), which is not native to any drainage in South Carolina, has had a devastating impact on our native Redeye Bass populations. The Redeye Bass in South Carolina is a unique species that only exists in the Savannah River drainage of South Carolina and Georgia.

The Redeye Bass is severely threatened due to hybridization with the introduced Alabama Bass. Without significant conservation measures, the once abundant Redeye Bass could be lost forever. Even with significant conservation efforts, the continued existence of Redeye Bass is fragile. The small but feisty Redeye Bass provides excellent fishing opportunities. Please show your appreciation of South Carolina's native fishes and do not take stocking into your own hands.

The introduction of Alabama Bass to the upper Savannah River system and its reservoirs appears to have caused a drastic negative effect on those sportfish communities.

For instance, Lake Keowee's creel data indicates major declines in both the Black Crappie and Largemouth Bass fisheries as Alabama Bass numbers increased in that reservoir. Following the introduction of non-native Alabama Bass into the upper reaches of the Santee River System at Lake Norman in North Carolina, the catches of Largemouth Bass drastically decreased over the last 10 years.

Not only is releasing fish and other aquatic organisms into different water bodies unlawful, but it's also much more likely that those releases will damage existing fisheries rather than enhance them. To put it simply, anglers moving non-native fish, like the Spotted Bass, from one water body to another may jeopardize fishing across the state.



Alabama Bass (Spotted Bass)



Hybrid Bass