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## White Perch

*Morone americana*

The white perch has a silvery body that varies in color from greenish-gray to black on its elevated back, with a whitish belly. Adults have:

- A slightly projecting lower jaw.
- Faint lines on the sides.
- A mildly forked tail.
- Usually grow to about 7 to 10 inches and rarely weigh more than a pound.



### Where do white perch live?

White perch spend their entire lives in the Bay and its tidal tributaries. They tend to inhabit open waters close to shore, but also frequent quiet streams well up into the tributaries. They overwinter in deeper channel areas.

### What do white perch eat?

Adults are ravenous predators on all forage species, such as:

- Crabs
- Shrimps
- Small fishes

### How do white perch reproduce?

White perch are considered "halfway" anadromous, since they do not travel from the ocean to their spawning grounds in the Bay's tidal tributaries. They begin their spawning runs when water temperatures increase in late March.

- Adults move upstream to fresh or slightly brackish waters. Males usually reach the spawning grounds before females.
- After spawning, adults move downstream, primarily to brackish areas in the middle and lower portions of tributaries.
- The eggs hatch in about 1-6 days. Juveniles stay in the shallows of their natal rivers through summer and fall, feeding on small insects and crustaceans and mingling with juvenile striped bass.

### Other facts about white perch:

- A close relative of the famous striped bass.
- Can live as long as 17 years.
- It is believed that each of the Bay's river systems has its own population of white perch, since this fish is unlikely to venture far from its natal stream.

- The Maryland Chesapeake record white perch, caught in 1979 in Dundee Creek, weighed 2 pounds, 10 ounces.

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