

# Yellow Perch

## Seasonable Stripes



Football, azure skies, and tailgate parties: It's perch season. Rain, cherry blossoms and April Fools Day: It's perch season. The year's warmwater fishing seasons are perfectly bracketed by optimal conditions to chase down schools of "stripes." And what's so ideal about this eager little pan fish? Admittedly, fly fishing for perch requires neither the wisdom of trouting, nor the insight of bassing. Our yellow friends are smaller than game fish, and bluegills fight better. Perch don't even jump.

Yet stripes have three major advantages over the other quarry. First and foremost is that they are most active when many

other fish are in low gear. Sure, trout season may open in April, but the reliable and thick bug activity usually isn't under full sail until May (or this year, June in many places). After a winter holed up in the cabin, you're ready for some fast action, and perch can scratch that itch. In the fall, the bass have gone deep, and in many waters the trout season closes and populations are thinned from summer heat.

The second advantage is that yellow perch are often found in large numbers, providing good fishing and better eating. While many of us are out of the habit of keeping fish, there's no guilt in bagging a bunch of plentiful perch for supper.

Third, they hit best during the middle and later parts of the day: No dawn patrols necessary. You can have that extra beer and spin a yarn the night before with impunity.

Practical fly fishing for perch is predicated on water temperatures below 65 degrees, and preferably into the 50s. It's at these temperatures that perch will school in water shallow enough to get a fly down to them without casting lead-core line. Schools can readily be found swimming inlets and bays in four to eight feet of water. Where to go for perch? Primarily a lake fish, they are found across all the Mid-Atlantic states, Canada and large parts of the

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