

Fishing is best in water that provides good fish habitat: food, oxygen, water, shelter, and space.

Food

Food sources vary for different species of fish. Food can include plants, plankton, insects and insect larvae, smaller fish, crayfish, worms, and freshwater shrimp. Learn more about the particular food favored by different fish species on pages 18-23 (baits or lures) or read about different fish species on the Texas Parks and Wildlife Web site, www.tpwd.state.tx.us.

Oxygen

Oxygen levels in the water vary with water temperature, water movement, and with the amount of algae present. In the summer when water temperatures are high and flow is low, algal blooms can cause oxygen levels to dip at night, causing a fish kill. Oxygen levels are increased when water moves over water falls or riffles.

Water

Water quality is also important and sometimes difficult to determine by just looking. If the water is very muddy, light can't penetrate, making it hard for many fish to find food. However, some catfish can thrive in water that is not clear because they can find their food mainly by smell. Also, particles in the water protect a catfish's skin from being sunburned.

"Clean" looking water, however, may have harmful chemicals, too much or too little salt, or may be too acidic or basic. A healthy ecosystem helps maintain a good balance of nutrients and chemical composition in water, making it ideal for fish.

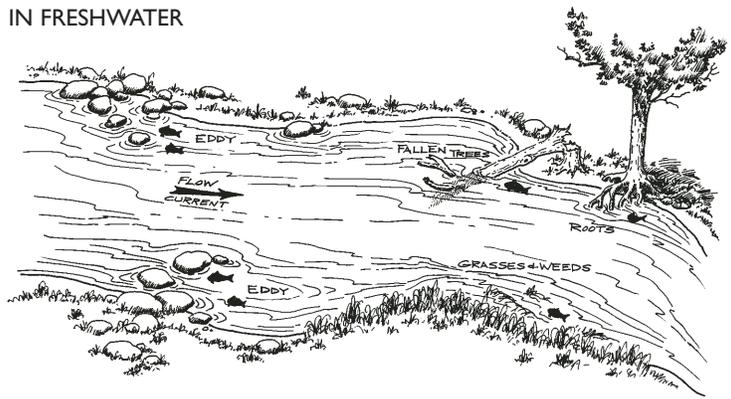
Shelter

All fish need "**structure**" such as rocks, stumps, aquatic plants, and piers to provide cover from predators or to hide out and wait for prey. If the water is flowing, try fishing downstream below one of these structures. In saltwater, fish deal with currents and tides. Near the shoreline, find a fishing spot down-current from structures such as jetties, piers, and rocks where fish are somewhat protected and can catch food floating by. In bays and other shallow areas, seagrass meadows provide good cover for small fish, crabs, and shrimp. These organisms attract larger predatory fish like spotted seatrout and red drum.

Space

Fish, like people, can't handle being too crowded. Good fish habitat has enough space to provide a good arrangement of structure for protection and rest, not only for them, but for their prey species as well.

IN FRESHWATER



IN SALTWATER

Try fishing down-current from "structures" such as rocks, trees and stumps, jetties and piers.

