



# How I catch Sheepshead (On a fly)

Archosargus probatocephalus

Pronounce it

# Texas Sheephead Bag Limits, and definitions

Daily Bag: 5  
Min Length: 15 inches  
Max Length: No limit

## **Daily bag limit (anglers)**

Quantity of a species of a wildlife resource, such as fish, that may be taken in one day.

## **Possession limit (anglers)**

The maximum number of fish a person may possess before returning to their residence. Possession limit is twice the daily bag on game and nongame fish, except as provided in this guide, and does not apply to fish in the possession of or stored by a person at their residence.



# TPWD description of Sheephead

Vivid black and white bars make the sheephead or "convict fish" distinctive among fishes of the Texas coast. Large sharp spines and a razor-edge gill cover make handling and cleaning difficult. Another key feature is the jutting teeth, slightly like a humans.

AKA:

Prison Permit

Texas Permit

Convict fish



# Gear and preparation (What I use) 1 OF 3

- a. 8 weight fly rod with floating weighted forward line, with right-handed retrieve
- b. Line and leader setup discussed on next slide
- c. Weighted flies, favorites discussed soon



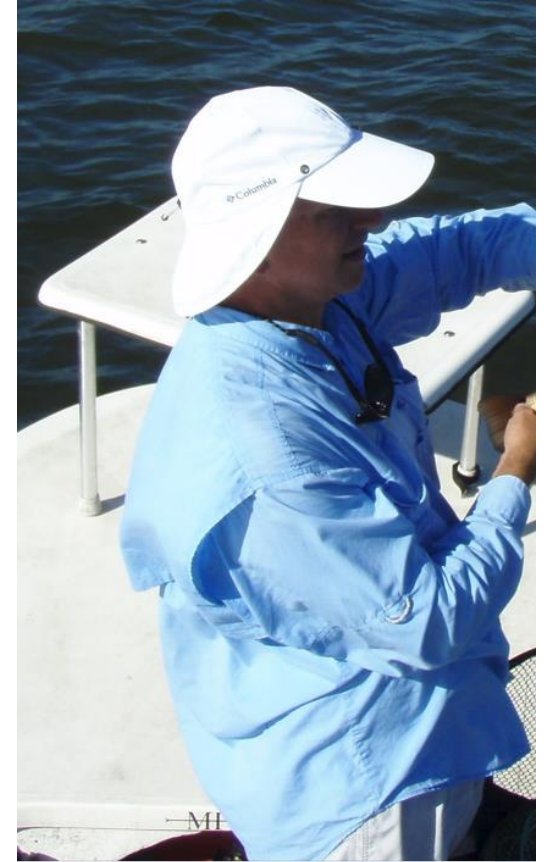
# Gear and preparation (What I use) 2 OF 3

- d. Landing net or lip gripper
- e. Good polarized prescription sunglasses with brown tint.
- f. Full brimmed hat with dark underside



# Gear and preparation (What I use) 3 OF 3

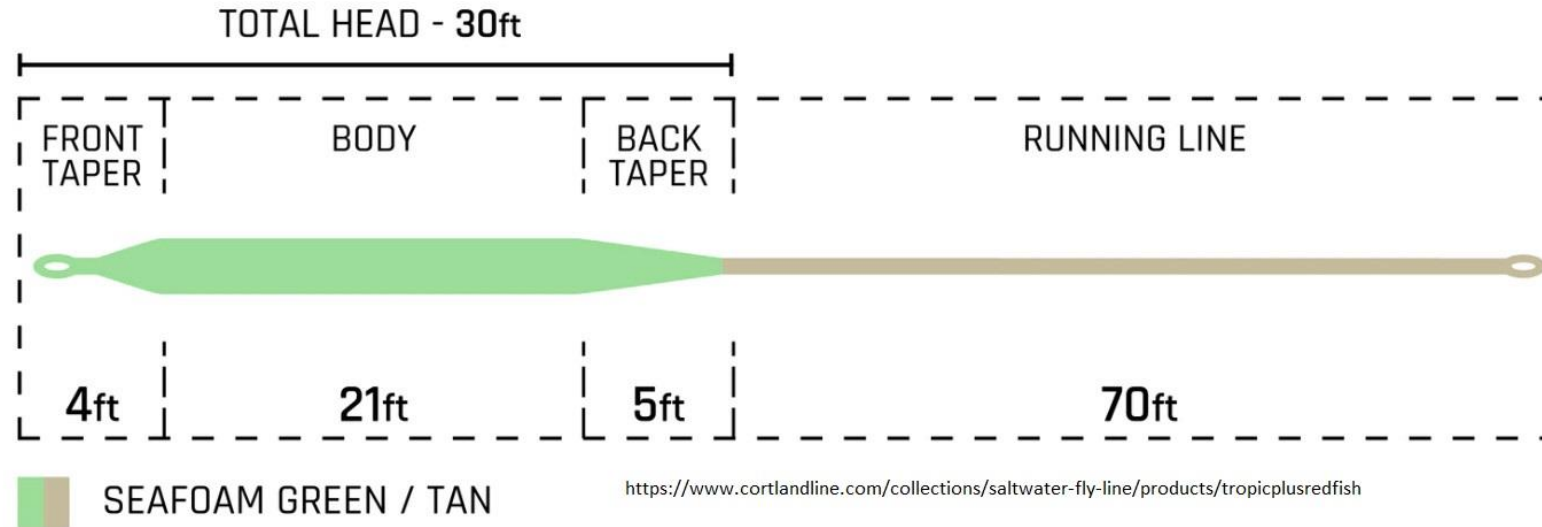
- h. Light blue shirt, or sometimes tan
- i. Long quick dry pants, bloused at the ankles
- j. Sun gloves with stripping guards
- k. Single finger stripping guard in addition to my gloves



# My fly line etc. setup

Backing, 30-pound test Dacron is what I use, enough to fill the gap, tied to the spool with an arbor knot.

Fly line, WF-8-F



A tapered 7-1/2ft leader, 0X (12#) attached to the fly line with a double nail knot.

A 40# test tippet ring



2 feet of 6-10# fluorocarbon

# When and where to find them, 1 OF 2

All year they can be found, but I've had my best days in February. And I have a theory, unproven, as to why.

For fly fishing, I like knee deep or shallower. Deeper than that, seeing the fish is difficult.

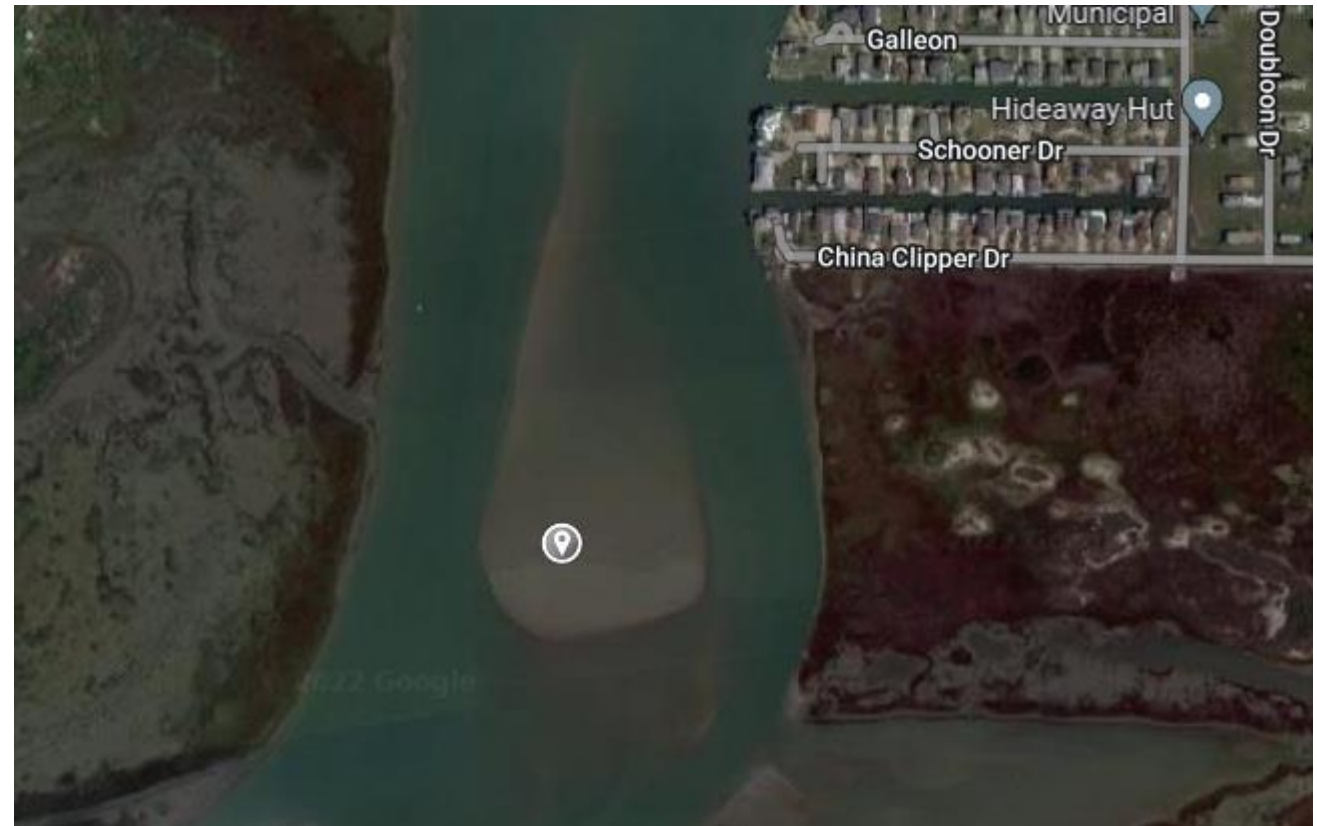


# When and where to find them, 2 OF 2

Oysters, and other shell, are attractors for these fish. I've stood in one spot, in ankle deep water, for hours, watching dozens of them cruise within a rod's length away.

Sand flats are a great place to learn how to spot fish. The sand flats at SLP is where I learned, under the tutelage of a seasoned angler. (GPS 29.074528095118293, -95.13669918577912)

Image is from Google Maps®



# Watercraft

Kayak is what I own and use.

Crab walk when I can

Stand, carefully, when I must

But if I can get a ride on a friend's boat.....

Poling skiff, sometimes you can fly fish from this, and sometimes...

Bay runner, just get out and wade

Aluminum anything, wade.. Far away



# Wading

Wading boots. Don't "cheap out" here. Oysters don't care. They will destroy your footwear

Waders in the cold months

Rain jacket on hand, always



# Seeing fish

You would think that this strikingly marked fish will be easy to see, and track, but they seem to be able to disappear in a blink of an eye.

The Sheepshead are notoriously skittish, so stealth is required to get close enough to make a good cast.

The trick to catching Sheepshead is to see them before they see you. This is where the good sunglasses, full brimmed hat, and light-colored clothes come into play.

If you see Sheepshead in the area by spooking them, slow down, and watch the water closely. Where there is one, there are usually more.

Instead of casting as soon as you see a fish, wait, watch, and see what it is doing. Cruising, napping, eating, tailing, etc.



# My 2 favorite flies for sheephead

#1 the RGW (Reverse Green Weenie)

[Tying the RGW, video](#)

Pattern:

Gamakatsu B10S, Size 2-8 saltwater hook  
Black size "A" rod wrapping thread (280 denier)  
Lead dumbbell eyes, sized to match hook, black  
Died olive barred hackle  
Black Mohair yarn  
Cyanoacrylate glue



# My 2 favorite flies for sheephead

#2 the Skinny Crack, a redfish crack variation.

[Tying the Skinny Crack, video](#)

Skinny crack recipe:

Gamakatsu B10S, size 6

Size "A" rod wrapping thread, color to match EP brush

Lead dumbbell eyes, 1/80th oz

Black fingernail polish

Craft fur, tan, cream, or sand

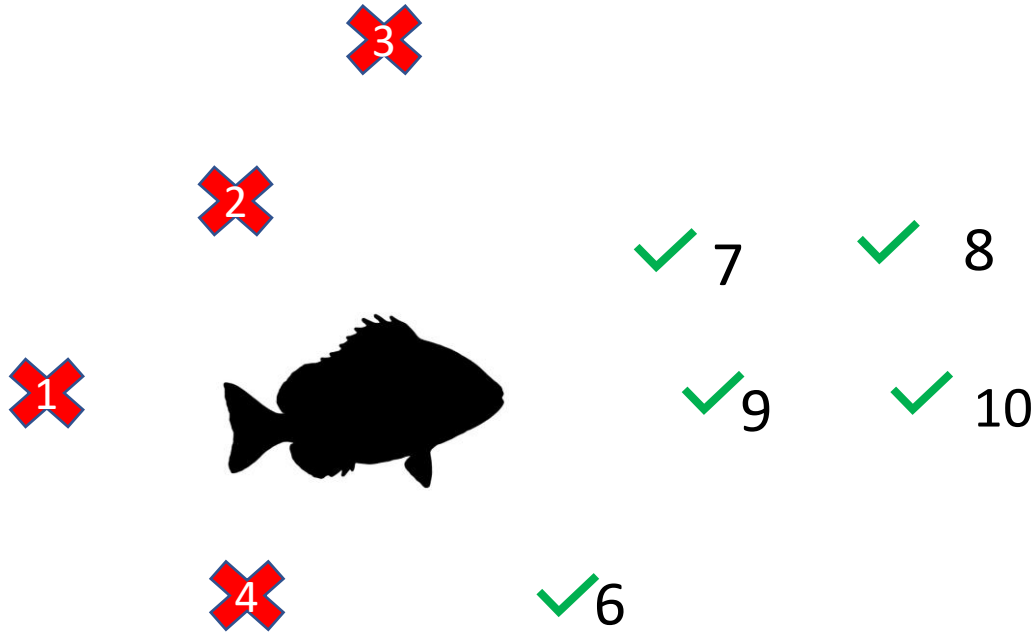
Estaz, orange or florescent orange

EP Streamer brush, short fibers, green or brown 1"

Head cement of your choice.



# Presenting the fly



Angler

# Action given to the fly

Here you must figure out what the sheephead want as far as action:

1. None, drop the fly into position, and don't move it
2. Slow crawl, about 6 inches in ten seconds
3. Slow strip, strip it, one time, for a couple of inches, then pause.
4. Fast escape, draw your arm all the way back in a steady pull, moving the fly about 2+ feet, count of three for full arm extension.
5. Disappearing act (credit to Scott Null), if the fish is interested, but won't bite, yank the fly away completely, and then drop it down a little further away.

Key point. Keep the rod tip pointed at the fish and in the water.



# Setting the hook

With the rod tip pointed at the fish and in the water, strip set the hook. These fish have tough mouths and a lot of teeth. Don't be bashful.

“Raising the rod—trout set—pulls the fly away from the fish. But, if you strip-strike and miss, the fly only moves a foot or so and will still be in the zone so you can get another chance at that fish.”

Watch some videos. Get with some friends. Learn how to set the hook with authority, and then practice.

Practice this hook set long before you get on the water. Tie some 6 lb test to a tree, fence post, etc. and then try to break it. Most of us are surprised at just how much force is needed to break a measly 6 lb test.



[Video--- Fly Fishing: How NOT to Strip Set](#) Gunnar Brammer

# The fight

Once you have the fish on, what now?

1. Line control. Nothing is worse than standing on your line with a nice fish hooked up.
2. Fish control. He goes left, lean your rod right. He goes right, lean your rod left.
3. Keep the rod low, parallel to the water. No “high sticking.”
4. Have a fishing partner net, or lip (use a lipper), the fish. Keep fingers out of the way and use a tool.
5. If alone, carefully, without killing your fly rod, get the fish close enough to net or lip.
6. Another technique is to grab the fish across its back and lift it upside down as you unhook it.



# CPR

CPR = Catch, photograph, and release

Support the fish

Keep it wet

Release quickly

Some folks advocate barbless hooks, but for me, and this fish,,, no

What do you see “wrong” in this picture?



# Taking Nubees

1. Safety first
2. Stink baits
3. Lots of pictures
4. Extra flies
5. Patience



# Getting the word out

Share your pictures with others, let them fish vicariously through you.

