



When and where to catch

The Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife tells us the ideal time to fish for surfperch “is in the spring and early summer, when they school up along sandy shorelines for spawning.”

The best time of day to fish for surfperch is usually with the incoming tide, maybe an hour or two before high tide. Locations include steeply-sloped beaches, near rocky spots in the sand or sandy areas near jetties. Schools often congregate within 30 feet of the shoreline.

“If you go out in low water, look around for those big depressions where there are channels that go near the surf when the tide comes in,” Akerill said. “Perch move into those areas to feed. They’re definitely a schooling fish so don’t be afraid to move up and down the beach.”

Akerill said he’s seen the biggest surfperch off the jetty.

“Go out to the south jetty, just past the surf and cast a long ways down the surf line,” he said. “It’s an excellent spot.”

When surfperch fishing, Akerill said to “try and find a spot in the waves where there’s a deep channel between yourself and the actual breakers.”

“It’s a stick-and-move thing,” he said. “We live in a land of shifting sands. It moves back and forth. The channel is there for a while, and next year it’ll be gone.”

During big clam digs, there are miles of people digging holes in the sand, churning up worms, clams and sand bugs, Akerill said.

“When the tide comes in it starts washing all that stuff out of those holes into the surf, so there’s a big long chum line, and it brings all that in for bait,” he said.

The biggest thing, he added, “is to warn people that if the surf is much over four or five feet, it’s probably not worth getting yourself hurt in a wave up to your neck. Be careful.” 🌊

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