Halifax County Tourism Articles

# Fishing and Hunting (300 words)

Plan your next hunting or fishing expedition in Halifax County to enjoy the great outdoors with some of the best hunting and fishing in the entire southeastern U.S.

On the hunting side of things, Halifax County consistently ranks #1 or 2 for both Wild-Tailed Deer and Wild Turkey hunting. Hunters will also find a wide variety of other game, including bear, racoon, possum, quail, fox, squirrel, rabbit, groundhog, nutria, bobcat, beaver, skunk, pheasant, grouse, and many more. There is ample open land for hunting provided by both the NC Wildlife Commission and for lease by private landowners.

Halifax County boasts world-class fishing nearly year-round. According to Capt. George Beckwith of [Down East Guide Service](http://downeastguideservice.com/), “Halifax County is the terminus of the spawning run of the striped bass, which have traveled over 100 miles up the Roanoke River from the Albemarle Sound. Not only striped bass, but also river herring, hickory shad, white shad and even giant sturgeon migrate up the river to reproduce. The aggregations of hundreds of thousands of fish in a small stretch of river allows recreational anglers a large number of interactions.

“Beginning in late February, light tackle and fly anglers can have catches of dozens of hickory shad, often fishing from the shoreline and without the need of a boat. In June, when the last of the striped bass make their way downstream, the river continues to offer excellent fishing for locals in the know.

“In addition to a half dozen panfish species, there are also largemouth bass and a world class blue catfish fishery that has gone almost unnoticed.

“River conditions vary wildly from day to day and from year to year but fishing is consistent, especially for those willing to spend the time to learn the river or hire a local guide.”

Visit [www.huntfishnc.com](http://www.huntfishnc.com) to learn more about hunting and fishing in Halifax County, including information on local guides, where to stay, and a great collection of fishing and hunting reports.

# Boating (170 words)

Whether you want to take wake boarding lessons, try your hand at wake surfing, paddle away the day on a kayak, or swim in a beautiful, clean, natural environment, Halifax County’s lakes have you covered.

[Lake Gaston Day Use Area](https://www.visitnc.com/listing/tkDX/lake-gaston) presents a great opportunity to get out on the water. Located at 2369 Jack Brown Road in Littleton, the public access beach is open sunrise to sunset and features designated swimming and fishing areas, grills and picnic tables, an ADA-accessible fishing pier, playground, public boat ramp, and horseshoe pits.

For another option, try Roanoke Rapids Lake, located at 100 Oakwood Avenue in Roanoke Rapids, NC. This 4,600-acre lake is perfect for an afternoon of kayaking, birdwatching, fishing, or just enjoying the great outdoors.

The Day Use Park features a 17-acre lakefront area for swimming, walking trails, a beautiful playground, a 9-hole disc golf course, sand volleyball courts, as well as a fishing pier, picnic shelters, grills, and restrooms. Early risers can catch a spectacular sunrise over the lake, and the sunsets are equally gorgeous.

# Medoc Mountain State Park (170 words)

Spanning nearly 3,900 acres, with almost 50 miles of hiking, biking, and horseback riding trails, [Medoc Mountain State Park](https://www.ncparks.gov/state-parks/medoc-mountain-state-park) is the perfect spot to enjoy the great outdoors in Halifax County. Don’t let the name fool you – the 350-million-year-old “mountain” is now a mere 325 feet, though there is still something vaguely mountainous about the terrain to my eyes.

The campgrounds are centrally located and well-kept, allowing for easy access to multiple hiking trails, a huge meadow perfect for stargazing or playing tag, a picnic shelter, and a great modern playground.

Stop by the visitor’s center to see taxidermies of local wildlife, pick up a souvenir, learn from the park rangers, and meet Charlie the friendly corn snake, the park’s unofficial park mascot. Charlie is 15 years old and has made his home at the visitor’s center for the last ten years. The author’s seven-year-old daughter even got to hold Charlie, and has been talking about it ever since!

According to Park Superintendent Allen Williford, “The 1.75-mile Bluff Loop Trail is probably the most beautiful hike in the park, featuring a small elevation gain to a scenic overlook, as well as some rapids. Children love our paved Habitat Adventure Trail, where they can learn about the natural ecology of the park through a variety of natural installations designed to both entertain and inform.”

We also recommend the Pyrite and Saponi Loops for mountain bikers, as well as several trails for horseback riding in the southern part of the park.

Fun fact: Medoc Mountain State Park has long been rumored to be home to Bigfoot! On the less mythical side of things, the park is home to the Neuse River Waterdog, a rare species of salamander found exclusively in North Carolina’s coastal plains.

# Sylvan Heights Bird Park (300 words)

[Sylvan Heights Bird Park](https://www.shwpark.com/) is a world-class waterfowl and exotic bird sanctuary right here in Halifax County. Founder Mike Lubbock, also known as the Waterfowl Man, is one of the world’s foremost experts on waterfowl aviculture and rare bird species.

Describing the park’s mission, Lubbock says, “The Park is designed to educate people about waterfowl and the importance of preserving them. Our goal is to tell visitors the story of every species–where it comes from, what habitat it prefers and why the species is important to our world. Visitors are also immersed into a wetland setting, so the feel and scope of a primary waterfowl habitat can be fully experienced.”

Opened in 2006, Sylvan Heights is home to the largest and most biologically significant waterfowl collection in the world. Featuring over 2000 exotic birds from around the world, this incredible 28-acre facility is nestled in the wetlands of Scotland Neck.

Education is a key component of Sylvan Heights’ mission. A great destination for a day trip with the family or school field trip, visitors learn and engage through the Sylvan Heights Scavenger Hunt, Wetland Safari Challenge, Endangered Species Passport, as well as regularly scheduled keeper talks on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. Pick up a bag of pellets or a seed stick and feed the birds yourself!

Plan your trip around one of the many events at Sylvan Heights. Ranging from educational classes to specialty food events and holiday celebrations, there’s always something special happening at Sylvan Heights Bird Park.

Sylvan Heights also features two beautiful event spaces perfect for your next get-together. Toad Hall seats over 200 guests in its 4,400 square foot open-air pavilion. Clear, weather-proof panels can be engaged to buffet against the cold or rain, and the adjacent treehouse overlooks a lush natural wetland teeming with wildlife.

The Golden LEAF Room is a beautiful space for events with less than 80 guests, with access to the facility’s caterer kitchen, front porch, and back deck overlooking the Multinational Aviary.

# Dine with the Locals (300 words)

You can find world-class dining options right here in Halifax County! Read on to learn more about

Take a trip back to a simpler time at [Oscar’s Restaurant](https://www.visithalifax.com/listing/r6FB/oscar-s-restaurant) on the west side of Roanoke Rapids. Established in 1953, Oscar’s authentic décor and classic American fare will make you feel right at home. Save room for desert – Oscar’s cakes are beautiful and delicious, made the good, old-fashioned way. Absolutely “Instagram-worthy,” if you can remember to snap a pic before digging in!

[Second Street Lunch](https://www.ourstate.com/second-street-lunch/) in Roanoke Rapids is a local favorite for the old-school diner experience. Opened in 1949 and run by the Haislip family, Second Street specializes in American breakfast and lunch staples – sandwiches, burgers, hotdogs, soups and salads. Try a burger made in the classic North Carolina style, topped with chili and coleslaw.

No trip to Halifax County would be complete without some authentic eastern North Carolina style barbecue! Chopped or pulled smoked pork garnished with a tangy vinegar-based sauce, served with hush puppies, mac and cheese, collard greens, and a side of Brunswick stew – every true North Carolinian’s favorite meal. My mouth is watering just thinking about it!

The top-rated barbecue spots in Halifax County include GrandPa’s Kitchen, Ralph’s Barbecue, A&M, and Abrams.

[GrandPa’s Kitchen](https://grandpaskitchen.org/) is Littleton’s top barbecue spot. This family business established in 1997 by Jeffery and Jonnell Mill has become a tourist destination, famous for their pork, chicken and turkey barbecue. “I flew all the way in from Oklahoma just for the BBQ and it was terrific!” says GrandPa’s customer B.J. Wilmet. According to Delmas Rose, “The chicken at GrandPa’s is so good it will make a glass eye cry.”

[Ralph’s Barbecue](https://www.ralphsbbq.com/) in Weldon has been “smoking the pig” the right way since 1941! If you are looking for some of the best authentic eastern NC-style barbecue, look no further. Founded by Ralph Woodruff, the restaurant is still in the family, currently run by Ralph’s granddaughter, Kim, and her son, Gavin.

# Shopping – Riverside Mill (300 words)

Antiquers and bargain hunters, rejoice! [Riverside Mill](https://www.riversidemill.net/) in Weldon is a one-stop-shop for everything to revitalize your home, wardrobe, and spirit.

Located in a converted cotton mill originally constructed in 1899, Riverside’s 20,000 square foot showroom is filled to the brim with collectibles, antique furniture, vintage clothing, artisan craftwork, and outlet-style name-brand designer décor and apparel. There’s even a home improvement outlet offering everything you need to keep your home stylish and spiffy – power tools, gardening equipment, hardware, window blinds and shutters, all at prices that can’t be beat.

Stock up your pantry on your next trip to Riverside Mill. They’ve partnered with Wolftrap Farms to offer North Carolina’s best local pantry items – sauces, pickles, jams and jellies, salsa. Wolftrap Farm’s chocolate-covered caramel peanut clusters are an eastern-NC specialty that is not to be missed.

Riverside Mill is also one of the premier distributors of local honey, through their partnership with Magnolia House Honey. In addition to being sweet and delicious, honey (and particularly honey from local bees) has tremendous health benefits and may even help fight the pollen allergies that are the bane of so many North Carolinians. Magnolia House Honey offers many varieties of local honey – pure raw Sage, Apple Orchard, Sourwood, Mountain, and Tupelo.

If you’re shopping for a unique and thoughtful gift or accent piece, the Riverside Mill Craft Gallery has you covered. Browse the curated selection of handcrafted jewelry, local pottery, whimsical metal sculpture, and other artisanal craftwork to find a piece with a story sure to spark conversation.

To make a full day experience out of your visit to Riverside Mill, borrow a bike from the Roanoke Canal Trail Bike Barn located on-site. This forward-looking program allows visitors to borrow a bike at no charge to explore the nearby trails and attractions. Just bring your own helmet, sign a waiver, and be sure to return your bike by the end of the day.

# Arts and Culture (300 words)

Pulling up to Littleton’s [Lakeland Cultural Arts Center](https://www.lakelandcac.org/), the first thing you’ll notice is that it doesn’t look like your typical performing arts center. Housed in the old Littleton High School building, the campus has a comfortable, homey vibe from the outside, and the inside is beautifully furnished, with high, cathedral-like ceilings and art adorning the walls.

Maybe you’re there to see the community Christmas pageant at the newly renovated indoor theater. Or during the warmer months, perhaps you’ll catch a jazz or folk music show at the beautiful outdoor Lakeland Amphitheater. Either way, you’re in for an unforgettable cultural experience along with hundreds of other happy guests!

Truly the jewel of Halifax County’s arts and culture scene, this beloved campus is supported by staff and volunteers from Littleton and the surrounding community. Established in 1978 by Mark E. Taylor and a group of investors, the Cultural Arts Center’s mission centers on building and sustaining the local arts community in all its forms – theater, comedy, the visual arts, and music.

The Cultural Arts Center has recently enjoyed remarkable revitalization efforts, spearheaded by Deb and Ed Fitts of the Ed Fitts Charitable Foundation, which reached an agreement to purchase the building and grounds with plans to renovate the entire property. Lakeland was also able to hire acclaimed Artistic Director John DuVall, an award-winning, nationally recognized actor, director, champion of the arts, and “a firm believer that art can change the world.”

The annual [Levitt AMP Littleton Music Series](https://levitt.org/amp-littleton-nc/), held at the freshly renewed outdoor Lakeland Amphitheater at the Lakeland Cultural Arts Center, is a key component of Littleton’s revitalization efforts to support local businesses and community engagement. The series features North Carolina-based and national touring acts – enjoy the best jazz, bluegrass, Latin, folk, country, and rock music North Carolina has to offer.

The [Halifax County Arts Council](https://www.halifaxarts.org/) serves as the anchor of the Halifax County arts and crafts community. Check out their [event calendar](https://www.halifaxarts.org/general-1) to find their next event featuring local works from local craftsmen and artists. The monthly “Sip and See” events are a fabulous opportunity to enjoy a glass of wine with a featured local artist and view a fine selection of their latest works.