

Maryland Application, Rules and Procedures for State Record Sport Fish Catch Consideration

Maryland Department of Natural Resources maintains state records for sport fish and awards a plaque to anglers whose catch exceeds the current state record or establishes a new species category. Positive identification of the species of fish is mandatory for consideration of state record applications. The catch must be inspected in person by a fisheries biologist from the department. Immerse the fish in ice water until it can be weighed in order to preserve the weight. All possible state record fish will be reviewed under the Official FishMaryland Rules (dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/Pages/challenge/rules.aspx)

APPLICATION PROCESS: (must be completed within 2 weeks of catch date)

Call 443-569-1398 or 410-260-8300 to report a potential state record catch then mail the following required information to address above.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Species Caught: _____ Date of Catch: _____

Region Caught (Circle One): Atlantic Chesapeake Freshwater

Specific Location Caught (As Best Described, Along with Name of Body of Water): _____

Certified Weight: _____ Date Fish was Weighed: _____

Scale operator's name (Cannot be angler who caught fish): _____

Scale operator's signature: _____

Name of establishment where fish was weighed: _____

Angler signature: _____

Submit signed application with clear photograph of fish to DNR within two weeks of catch.

State record fish are determined by weight. Most fishing tackle shops do not have certified scales, so call ahead. Establishments that sell products by weight such as grocery stores, seafood retailers and mailing/shipping outlets should have a certified scale and may be willing to help.

Except for fish in the invasive species category, all fish must be legally caught with rod and reel during its open season. From the time that a fish strikes or takes a bait or lure, the angler must hook and fight the fish without the aid of any other person. The reel must be operated manually. Once the leader is brought to the rod tip, one or more people may help land the fish. Fish that have been snagged, shot, gaffed*, speared, scaled, or mutilated are not eligible. *Gaffing is illegal in the Chesapeake Bay, but is allowed for securing and boating fish in ocean waters, after they have been brought to the side of the boat with rod and reel.

Fish designated as eligible for the Invasive Species component of FishMaryland (currently Northern Snakehead, Blue Catfish and Flathead Catfish) may be caught and kept by all legal recreational fishing gear including rod and reel, bow and arrow, spear, trotline, jugline, etc.

Fish caught from privately-owned fee fishing waters are not eligible for record consideration.

The fish must be considered trophy sized for the department to consider opening a new species category for state record recognition. Thresholds for trophy size are established by the department using the best data available to create a benchmark weight. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources reserves the right to investigate the methods used in catching the fish and the accuracy of the measuring and weighing process. It also reserves the right to reject any application based on the results of an investigation.