



N.C. SALTWATER FISHING TOURNAMENT STATE RECORD REQUIREMENTS

The North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) reserves the right to deny any application to the Saltwater Fishing Tournament & State Record Programs and can change these rules at any time without notice.

All-Tackle Categories

- DMF recognizes two all-tackle categories, All-Tackle Weight and All-Tackle Length (catch and release).
- Angler and fish are eligible for only one category per application.
- Angler must obey all state and federal laws and regulations.
- It is the responsibility of the angler to understand the rules of each category and submit all requirements.
- Everyone is eligible except for actively working charter captains or crew of a for-hire boat and commercial fishermen.
- Fish must be caught in N.C. sounds, rivers, or ocean.
- All fish must be hooked, fought, and landed on traditional hook and line. No electric hydraulic reels regardless of operational status.
- Recognition will be given to only one individual.
- Only all-tackle records are maintained. Tackle size is not a consideration for state records.
- Ties will not be certified or recognized.
- The application for a state record fish must be filled out in its entirety and mailed to the address at the bottom of this document. Additionally, anglers may email applications. Applications can be found at deq.nc.gov/citation-program under 'Saltwater State Records'
- **Prohibited species:** any sturgeon, Goliath Grouper, Nassau Grouper, Warsaw Grouper, all species under moratorium (state or federal), certain sharks (exceptions under catch-and-release), and all species not actively in an open take season (exceptions under catch-and-release).

All-Tackle Weight

Rules

- Species listed in the All-Tackle Length category or prohibited species are not eligible for All-Tackle Weight certification.
- Fish must remain intact as a biologist from the DMF may request to confirm ID, examine, or collect biological samples. Store on ice, but not frozen. Failure to provide access to the complete fish may result in denial of the application.
- Fish must be weighed at an official N.C. Weigh Station on scales that have been certified for accuracy by accredited organizations within the past 12 months.
- Weighmaster reserves the right to cut, open, or mark fish.

- Snagged, mutilated, scaled, speared, gilled, frozen, or shot fish are not eligible.
- No fish offered for sale is eligible.
- Highly migratory species applications will also need to submit proof of a completed catch card.

Setting & Besting Records

- To replace a record for a fish weighing less than 25 pounds, the replacement must weigh at least 2 ounces more than the existing record.
- To replace a record for a fish weighing 25-99 pounds, the replacement must weigh at least one half of one percent (0.5%) more than the existing record.
- To replace a record weighing 100 pounds or more, the replacement must weigh 8 or more ounces than the existing record.
- To establish a new state record for a species not currently recognized, the fish must meet one of the following two requirements (whichever is less).
 - ✓ The fish must be considered a trophy; weight must fall within the top 10% of the reported weight range of the species.
 - ✓ The fish must be the same weight or better compared to a neighboring state's existing public state record or the IGFA world record.

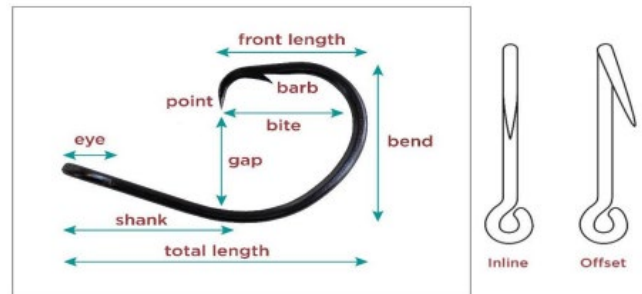
Application Requirements

- Fish must be weighed at an official N.C. weigh station on certified scales. Angler is responsible for gaining evidence that the scale was certified within the last 12 months from the weigh station (picture of certification sticker or receipt is sufficient).
 - ✓ A list of weigh stations can be found at deq.nc.gov/citation-program, note that not all scales are certified.
 - ✓ Weigh stations are responsible for having their scales calibrated. If a weigh station cannot provide their calibration certification, then the fish must be weighed at another location.
- Photographs must accompany all state record applications. Applications without photographs will not be accepted. Submitted photographs may be used in DMF materials and should show anglers using proper fish handling techniques. To qualify for a record, photographs must be submitted clearly showing the following:
 - ✓ Fish being weighed with legible weight displayed on the scale.
 - ✓ Full-length view of the entire fish being weighed on the scale.
 - ✓ Angler with their catch.
 - ✓ Scale certification sticker or receipt.
 - ✓ Fish in various views for identification purposes.
 - ✓ Fishing equipment and gear used.
 - ✓ Any other photos needed to accurately identify the species of the fish.

All-Tackle Length (Catch and Release)

Rules

- **Eligible species: Red Drum, Black Drum, Striped Bass, Tarpon, Shark (Atlantic sharpnose, blacktip, blacknose, blue, bonnethead, bull, common thresher, finetooth, lemon, nurse, smoothhound dogfish, spinner, spiny dogfish, tiger)**
- Sharks must be caught using non-offset, and non-stainless steel circle hooks.
- The healthy release of the fish takes precedence.
 - Fish must be released alive.
 - ✓ Fish that die during the documentation process or do not swim away unassisted will not be recognized.
- Fish must be handled in ways to prevent injury or death (see Best Handling & Fishing Practices).
 - ✓ Mishandled fish will be rejected (e.g., hands through the gills or holding the fish vertically).
- All fish must be measured using imperial units with permanent and legible marks down to the quarter inch.
 - ✓ Anglers must mail in the measuring device with their application (will be returned) or they may bring them to the *Sportfishing Specialist* at the Morehead City Marine Fisheries Headquarters for verification.
- Netted, trapped, dead, or injured fish are not eligible.



Setting & Besting Records

- Fish will be measured to the nearest one quarter inch. Fish measuring between increments shall be recorded at the lower of the two increments.
- To replace a record the fish must measure one or more inches longer than the existing record.
- To establish a new state record for a species not currently recognized, the fish must meet one of the following two requirements (whichever is less).
 - ✓ The fish must be considered a trophy; length must fall within the top 10% of the reported length range of the species.
 - ✓ The fish must be the same length or better compared to a neighboring state's existing public state record or an IGFA world record.

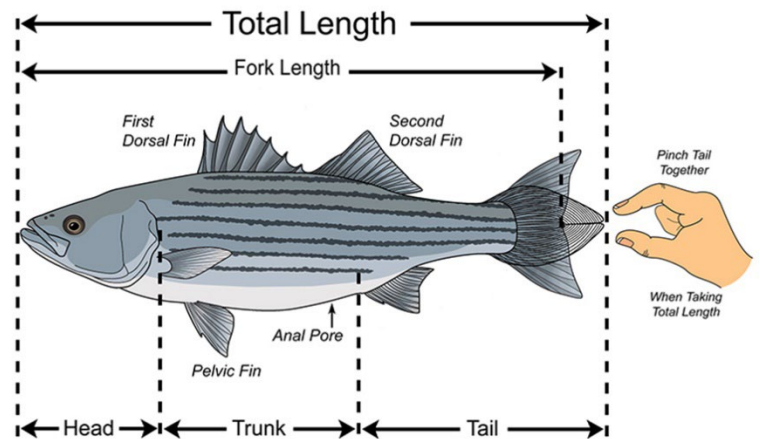
Application Requirements

- Anglers must mail the measuring device with their application (will be returned) or they may bring them to the *Sportfishing Specialist* at the Morehead City Marine Fisheries Headquarters for verification.
- Photographs must accompany all state record applications. Applications without photographs will not be accepted. Submitted photographs may be used in DMF materials

and should show anglers using proper fish handling techniques. To qualify for a catch-and-release record, photographs must be submitted clearly showing the following:



- ✓ The full length of the fish on the measuring device clearly showing the position of the mouth and tail. The fish may be held in position but must be done in a manner that does not obscure the view of the fish on the tape.
- ✓ Close up of the fish's nose/mouth touching a fixed nose stop (cooler/boat gunnel).
- ✓ Close up of fork length, and total length taken straight down on measuring device.
- ✓ Photo of fishing equipment and gear used, including hook.
- ✓ Angler with their catch.
- ✓ Photo or video of fish being released (in the water, swimming away, not being held or assisted).
- ✓ Fish in various views for identification purposes.
- ✓ Any other photos needed to accurately identify the species of the fish.
- ✓ For all shark species: side profile of the head, side profile of the body with dorsal and pectoral fins, top-down view of the entire dorsal side, picture of anal fin. **If a positive species ID cannot be made from the submitted photos the application will be rejected.**
- ✓ If a species cannot be brought onboard, then submit photos of the measuring process using a soft tape. Tape must be secured at the tip of the nose, and include the measurements for fork length, and total length. Photos must show the tape stretched across the body of the fish at the time of measurement.



Best Handling & Fishing Practices

- Use non-offset, non-stainless steel circle hooks with compressed barbs.
- Remove, or cut hooks when possible. Otherwise cut leader as close to the hook as possible.
- Limit the time the fish spends out of the water.
- Keep fish in the water or return the fish to the water to moisten skin and gills as necessary.
- When removing fish from the water, anglers should use two hands or a knotless, rubberized landing net to minimize slime and scale loss.

- Lip gripping devices may be used to help subdue fish; however, large fish should not be hoisted vertically out of the water, as this can cause damage to jaw muscle and bone as well as to internal organs.
- Support the fish under the stomach area and at the base of the tail, never by the mouth, gills, or operculum.
- Hold the fish horizontally and properly supported, never vertically.
- Fish should be placed in the water and held by the base of the tail.
- If the fish does not swim away, gently move it forward in circles to get water flowing over the gills. For best results, move the fish in the forward direction only.



Please direct questions to Amanda Macek, Sportfishing Specialist at

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