

# Skillful Angler Program

2022



Justin Lerner

Justin Lerner holding a beautiful Northern Pike caught while bank fishing the Passaic River.

The Skillful Angler Program is designed both to supplement the New Jersey Record Fish Program and to acknowledge that many anglers catch freshwater and marine fish that are not record size but are still worthy of recognition because the size and weight of the fish sufficiently tested the angler's skill. Open to resident and non-resident anglers. All fish must be caught in New Jersey waters using a hook and line during legally open seasons.

Saltwater species taken from a boat must have been caught from a boat that left from, and returned to, a New Jersey port during the same trip.

Anglers can now submit their application and photo(s) electronically! Program rules and steps to enter are found here [NJFishandWildlife.com/skflang.htm](http://NJFishandWildlife.com/skflang.htm). Anglers qualifying for a Skillful Angler award receive a certificate **along with a Skillful Angler patch** as a testament to their achievement.

The Program has three main divisions: **Adult** (for anglers age 16 and older), **Junior** (under age 16) and **Catch and Release** (based on length). A clear, side-view photo that allows accurate species identification must be included with each application. Additional good quality (and high resolution) photos with the angler are welcome and appreciated.


The Skillful Angler Program recognizes different levels of fishing expertise. An angler who submits five applications of qualifying size for the same species will receive a Specialist Certificate. An angler who submits five applications of qualifying fish of different species will receive a Master Certificate. Catch 10 or more qualifying fish within the year, and the angler will earn an Elite Angler Certificate.

For new anglers, the Program also recognizes your first fish caught *no matter the age of the angler*. Qualified anglers will receive a First Fish certificate. Three additional categories may bring out your competitive nature. Personalized certificates are also awarded for the Slam Series which includes:

- **Trout Slam**—catch one each qualifying rainbow, brook and brown trout
- **Bass Slam**—catch one each qualifying small and largemouth bass
- **Panfish Slam**—catch one each qualifying sunfish, crappie and yellow perch.

Each month, the leaders of each category and species will be posted on our Skillful Angler Leader Board webpage. At the end of the year, special recognition is given to anglers who catch the largest fish in each species category. The winner of each category is sent a special certificate recognizing his/her accomplishment along with a **winner's patch** as the best of New Jersey's Skillful Anglers.

Fish must be measured from the tip of the nose (with mouth closed) to the tip of the tail. For catch and release categories, the fish must be measured and photographed alongside a ruler. For Adult/Junior Division, fish must be weighed and measured by a fishing license agent, tackle shop or authorized Fish and Wildlife fisheries biologist.

**Anglers must submit a photograph of the fish caught, alongside a ruler for clear identification and measurement verification. Be sure the ruler markings are legible.** Please also include an attractive, well-composed, high-resolution (large file size) photo to be considered for printing in this *Digest*. **Smile!** All photos become the property of the NJDFW and may be used for promotional purposes. 

To apply, go to: [NJFishandWildlife.com/pdf/fwfisheries/skflangapp-fresh.pdf](http://NJFishandWildlife.com/pdf/fwfisheries/skflangapp-fresh.pdf).

## MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR EACH FRESHWATER SPECIES

Species	Adult Weight (lbs., oz.)	Junior Weight (lbs., oz.)	Catch & Release (inches)
Largemouth Bass	6	4	21
Smallmouth Bass	4	3	19
Striped Bass Hybrid	8	6	24
Striped Bass	30	25	40
Bowfin	6	4	25
Bullhead	2	1 lb., 8 oz.	14
Carp	25	20	35
Channel Catfish	10	8	29
Crappie	2	1 lb., 8 oz.	14
Muskellunge	20	15	45
Tiger Muskie	15	10	42
Yellow Perch	1 lb., 8 oz.	1	13
White Perch	1.8	1.4	14
Chain Pickerel	4	3	24
Northern Pike	10	8	34
American Shad	7	5	24
Brook Trout	3	2	19
Brown Trout	8	5	25
Lake Trout	12	8	31
Rainbow Trout	5	3 lbs., 8 oz.	23
Salmon, Atlantic Landlocked	4	3	20
Sunfish	1	12 oz.	9
Walleye	6	4 lbs., 8 oz.	24

The New Jersey State Record Fish Program requires a separate application from this Skillful Angler Program and is based on weight alone. Scale certification documentation and a weighmaster's signature are necessary. Other rules apply. Visit Fish and Wildlife's website at [NJFishandWildlife.com](http://NJFishandWildlife.com) for a complete list of current state records.

**New!**

**Email your Skillful Angler entry and photo from any device!**

The New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife's Record Fish Program honors anglers who catch the largest of select species of freshwater and saltwater fish. Record size is based on weight alone; there are no line classes. Currently there are 31 freshwater species eligible for entry into the program.

Anglers are reminded that the objective of the Record Fish Program is to increase the awareness of fishing opportunities for species that are regularly sought and routinely found in the freshwaters or off the coast of New Jersey.

Anglers should also be aware that several procedural changes are now in effect for the Record Fish Program. First, there are different applications for freshwater and saltwater species. Second,

for freshwater species, it is now mandatory that a freshwater biologist confirm the identification and weight of any potential record fish within three days of it being caught. Anglers must call Fish and Wildlife's Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries (north/central) 908-236-2118; (south) 609-259-6964, or the Hackettstown Hatchery at 908-852-3676 (Warren County) to make arrangements. Hours are Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. These offices have a certified scale on site, so an entry can be weighed and identified. Depending on the time and location of your catch, you may elect to have the fish weighed on a local certified scale, but you must still have a freshwater biologist personally confirm the identification and weight at one

of the above offices. Please note that all scale certification requirements still apply, including a valid Certificate of Inspection/Test Report and current Registration Certificate issued by the county Office of Weights and Measures.

Please also include an attractive, well-composed, high-resolution (large file size) photo to be considered for printing in this *Digest*. **Smile!**

**Entry deadline:** Applications must now be submitted no later than one month after the date of catch. All other program rules still apply.

For a complete list of state record fish or to print an application with complete program rules, visit the Division of Fish and Wildlife's website at [NJFishandWildlife.com/recfish.htm](http://NJFishandWildlife.com/recfish.htm). 🐟

## New Jersey State Record Freshwater Sport Fish

Species	lbs.	oz.	Year	Angler	Where Caught
Bass, Largemouth	10	14	1980	Robert Eisele	Menantico Sand Wash Pond
Bass, Rock	1	5	1982	Eric Avogardo	Saddle River
Bass, Smallmouth	7	2	1990	Carol Marciniak	Round Valley Reservoir
Bluegill	3	0	1990	Dom Santarelli	Farm Pond in Pennington
Bowfin	11	8.5	2017	Pierce Dopkin	Mantua Creek
Bullhead, Brown	4	8	1997	Gary Schmidt	Lake of Woods, Ft. Dix
Carp	47	0	1995	Billy Friedman	South Branch of Raritan River
Carp (Archery)	45	6	2014	Adam Faatz	Greenwood Lake
Carp, Grass	55	8	2011	Jack Demsey, Jr.	Curlis Lake
Carp, Grass (Archery)	76	11	2020	Daniel E. Sandorff	Delaware River
Catfish, Channel	33	3	1978	Howard Hudson	Lake Hopatcong
Catfish, White	14	4	2004	Timothy Jasko	Dallenbach Pond
Crappie, Black	4	8	1996	Andy Tintle	Pompton Lake
Crappie, White	3	11	2009	William Lewis	Mercer Lake
Eel, American	6	13	2005	David J. Payne	Round Valley Reservoir
Muskellunge	42	13	1997	Bob Neals	Monksville Reservoir
Muskie, Tiger	29	0	1990	Larry Migliarese	Delaware River
Perch, White**	3	1	1989	Edward Tango	Forest Hill Lake
Perch, Yellow	2	6	1989	Gene Engels	Holiday Lake
Perch, Yellow*	4	4	1865	Charles Abbott	Crosswicks Creek
Pickereel, Chain	9	3	1957	Frank McGovern	Lower Aetna Lake
Pickereel, Redfin	1	13	1982	Gerald Humphrey	Lake Assunpink
Pike, Northern	30	8.5	2009	John Viglione	Pompton Lake
<b>Salmon (Landlocked)</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Joe Satkowski</b>	<b>Merrill Creek Reservoir</b>
Shad, American	11	1	1984	Charles Mower	Delaware River
Striped Bass	51	0	2002	John Christian	Great Egg Harbor River
Striped Bass, Hybrid	16	4	1999	Bill Schmidt	Culvers Lake
Sunfish, Pumpkinseed	1	8	1987	Daryl Donalson	Farm Pond in Burlington County
Trout, Brook	7	3	1995	Andrew DuJack	Rockaway River
Trout, Brown	21	6	1995	Lenny Saccente	Round Valley Reservoir
Trout, Lake	32	8	2002	Greg Young	Round Valley Reservoir
Trout, Rainbow	13	0	1988	Gene Rutkoski	Lake Hopatcong
Trout, Sea Run Brown	— Vacant — (Minimum Weight 5 lbs.)				
Walleye	13	9	1993	George Fundell	Delaware River

\* Denotes historical record

\*\* Denotes fish has been certified by the IGFA as a world record



Ron DeGraff

On September 30, 2021, Joe Satkowski of Hampton broke the existing record for Landlocked Salmon while fishing Merrill Creek Reservoir using a homemade jig. This new state record Landlocked Salmon weighed 8 lbs., 10 oz., eclipsing by 5 ounces the previous 2018 record from Lake Aeroflex. Satkowski's fish measured 26 inches long with a 16.25 inch girth.

### Volunteers Needed To Get Kids Hooked On Fishing!

#### New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife needs volunteers at the Pequest Trout Hatchery and Natural Resource Education Center to teach youths about fishing.

Teaching experience is helpful—but not required—to become a fishing education instructor. However, enthusiasm, energy and the desire to teach children proper fishing techniques and ethics is a must!

Fishing classes run from April through October. Interested applicants must become a Wildlife Conservation Corps (WCC) volunteer. Download a WCC application from our website at: [NJFishandWildlife.com/wcchome.htm](http://NJFishandWildlife.com/wcchome.htm).

Share the pleasures of fishing and pass on a conservation ethic to the next generation. Become a fishing education instructor today!

For more information on Fish and Wildlife's fishing education programs, call Jessica Griglak at 908-637-4125 ext. 115, or e-mail [Jessica.Griglak@dep.nj.gov](mailto:Jessica.Griglak@dep.nj.gov).



A frozen Morris County pond gave up this bluegill sunfish to smiling 9-year-old Sierra.

### Beat The Fall Rush! Take Your Hunter Education Class This Spring!

#### Hunter Education has GONE ONLINE!

You're just 5 steps away from hunting in NJ

1. Complete the online course at [HunterCourse.com](http://HunterCourse.com).
2. Pass the test and print your voucher
3. Register for a live fire session
4. Attend a live fire session.
5. BUY YOUR LICENSE!

**NOTE:** The New Jersey Study Guide/Workbook will NOT be accepted.

For more information, visit [NJFishandWildlife.com/hunted.htm](http://NJFishandWildlife.com/hunted.htm).

Questions, email [NJHunterEd@dep.nj.gov](mailto:NJHunterEd@dep.nj.gov) or call the Hunter Education office at 856-629-0552.

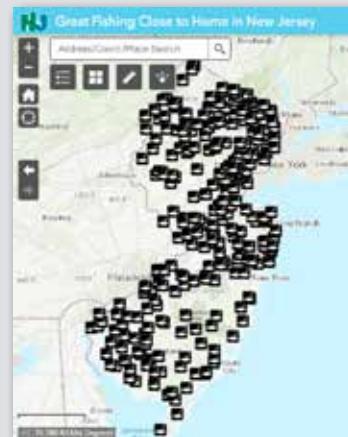


### Great Fishing Close to Home App

#### Looking for a place to fish in the Garden State?

The *Great Fishing Close to Home* app will help you select from more than 290 lakes, ponds and reservoirs.

Looking to target a particular species? Use the app's search feature to identify opportunities for various species. For each waterbody, information includes location, size, primary game fish species present, ownership, any special permit requirements, if outboard motors are permitted along with other amenities such as a boat ramp, swimming area, picnic area and camping. You are only a few clicks away from *Great Fishing Close to Home*. Visit [NJFishandWildlife.com](http://NJFishandWildlife.com).



## “Hook a Winner” Program

The Division of Fish and Wildlife will be jaw-tagging more than 1,000 rainbow trout for release into New Jersey waters. These tagged trout will be stocked pre-season to be available for opening day fishing. If you are a lucky angler who lands one of these fish, send your name, address, fish tag number (do **not** send the actual tag) and location of catch to:

Pequest Trout Hatchery  
605 Pequest Road, Oxford, NJ 07863  
Attn: Hook a Winner Program

In recognition of your catch, a certificate and award patch will be mailed.



For the **third time**, 10-year-old Johnny Gramaglia caught a tagged, Hook-A-Winner rainbow trout, earning him a classy certificate and patch to proudly add to his collection!

## Sedge Island Programs – Summer 2022

Sedge Island Natural Resource Education Center is offering a variety of programs in the summer of 2022 for students, adults and families. Come connect with the beauty of Barnegat Bay while learning about salt marsh ecology through fishing, clamming, and discovering what's edible in the bay!

Visit [NJFishandWildlife.com/sedge\\_summer.htm](https://www.nj.gov/dep/fishwildlife/sedge_summer.htm) for details, date and cost or contact Karen Byrne at [Karen.Byrne@dep.nj.gov](mailto:Karen.Byrne@dep.nj.gov).



# New Anglers ✓ Checklist

## Welcome to Fishing! To Get Started...

A fishing license is required for residents ages 16 through 69 years and for non-residents 16 years and older. Fishing for trout also requires a Trout Stamp. Purchase your license and stamp online at <https://nj.aspirafocus.com/internetsales> or at tackle shops and sporting goods stores statewide. If you never purchased a fishing license, or have not since 2011, you are eligible to save almost 50% of the fee when you and another qualified individual purchase a “Buddy License” at the same time. Both anglers receive the discount! See page 10 for details.

## New Anglers' Fishing Gear Checklist

Gather this essential gear, then consider adding the recommended accessories to complete your new angler package. Everything can be found at a local tackle shop or sporting goods store.

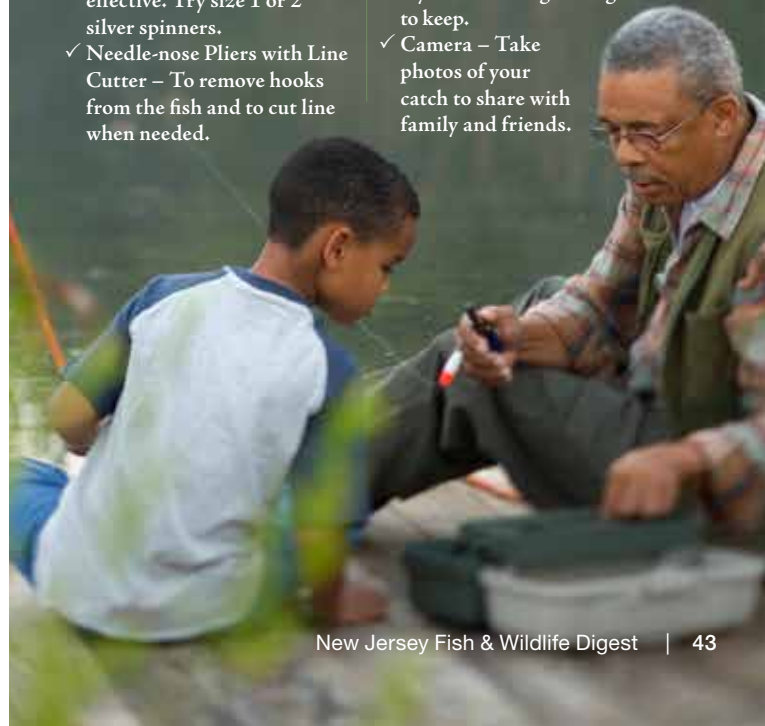
### Essential Gear

- ✓ NJ Fishing License
- ✓ Rod and Reel – A 6 to 7 foot-long spinning rod and reel with 8 lb. test line (monofilament).
- ✓ Hooks, Bobbers and Split Shot – Size 6 bait holder hooks (1 pkg.), 3 or 4 bobbers and a package of split shots.
- ✓ Bait – Nightcrawlers or earthworms (great choice, readily available, catch nearly everything) or try live minnows or shiners.
- ✓ Lures – Artificial lures can replace bait and be just as effective. Try size 1 or 2 silver spinners.
- ✓ Needle-nose Pliers with Line Cutter – To remove hooks from the fish and to cut line when needed.

- ✓ NJ Fish & Wildlife Digest – Contains images for commonly caught fish plus fishing regulations.

### Recommended Accessories

- ✓ Polarized Sunglasses – Protect your eyes and reduce glare off the water.
- ✓ Hat and Sunscreen
- ✓ Net – Don't let the big one get away. Use a net to help land your catch and to protect fish that will be released.
- ✓ Tape Measure – To determine if your fish is large enough to keep.
- ✓ Camera – Take photos of your catch to share with family and friends.



# HOW WILDLIFE IS THRIVING BECAUSE OF GUNS & HUNTING

Since the late 1930s, hunters, target shooters and the firearms industry have been the nation's **LARGEST** contributors to **conservation**, paying for programs that benefit America's wildlife and all who love the outdoors.

## HOW IT WORKS

- Hunters and target shooters purchase guns and ammunition.
- Manufacturers pay federal excise taxes on guns and ammunition.
- Revenue from these excise taxes is distributed to state wildlife agencies.
- State wildlife agencies use these funds to purchase land for wildlife habitat and to manage wildlife populations.
- In turn, millions of acres of important habitat have been set aside to help ensure future wildlife abundance.

This System Has Provided

**MORE THAN \$12.5 Billion**

For Conservation So Far

### Where the Money Goes

Buy, develop, maintain and operate wildlife management areas

Research projects focused on wildlife conservation

Hunter safety and education programs

Construction and maintenance of public target shooting ranges

### Quick History

**Early 1900s**  
As many wildlife species are dwindling in numbers or disappearing, firearms industry steps forward and asks Congress to redirect excise tax on sale of guns and ammo to help fund wildlife conservation.

**1937**  
Congress passes and President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act into law.

**1938 to today:**  
Revenue from this act has purchased millions of acres of prime habitat that is maintained by state wildlife agencies. These lands, where game and non-game species flourish, are purchased with sportsmen's dollars but used by all Americans.

## THEN & NOW



## OTHER WAYS SPORTSMEN CONTRIBUTE

**Excise taxes** combined with revenue from hunting and fishing **license sales** fund the majority of state wildlife agency budgets.

**\$81 Million** CONTRIBUTED ANNUALLY

Duck stamp proceeds are used by the government to buy or lease wetland habitat for ducks, geese and hundreds of non-game birds and animals.

### SOME HEROES OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL CONSERVATION MODEL IN THE WORLD ARE:



# New Jersey Freshwater Fishing Digest

2022 TELEPHONE DIRECTORY

Internet Address .....	NJFishandWildlife.com
<b>General Information .....</b>	<b>609-292-2965</b>
<b>DEP ACTION LINE—24 HOURS .....</b>	<b>877-927-6337 — 877-WARN-DEP</b>
<b>Automated Harvest Report System .....</b>	<b>855-448-6865 — 855-1-HUNT-NJ</b>
Commercial Preserves and Semi-Wild Preserves .....	609-984-6213
Endangered and Nongame Species.....	908-638-4127
Exotic & Nongame Captivity Permits.....	609-984-6213
Falconry Permits .....	908-735-8793
Field Trial Permits .....	609-259-2132
<b>Freshwater Fisheries</b>	
Lebanon Field Office (North)	
P.O. Box 394, 1255 County Rt. 629, Lebanon, NJ 08833 .....	908-236-2118
Central Regional Office	
1 Eldridge Rd., Robbinsville, NJ 08691 .....	609-223-6076
Southern Region Office	
220 Blue Anchor Rd., Sicklerville .....	856-629-4950
Horseback Riding Group Permits .....	609-259-2132
Hunter Education .....	877-248-6865 — 877-2-HUNT-NJ
Hunting, Fishing and Duplicate Licenses .....	609-292-2965
Hunting and Trapping Permit Hotline.....	609-292-9192
License Sales.....	888-773-8450
Operation Game Thief.....	855-OGT-TIPS
Outstanding Deer Program.....	908-637-4125
Pheasant and Quail Stocking.....	609-984-0547
Trout Stocking Hotline.....	609-633-6765
Wildlife Conservation Corps.....	908-735-7040
Wildlife Control.....	908-735-8793
Wildlife Education .....	908-637-4125
Wildlife Management Areas.....	609-984-0547
<b>Trenton Office</b>	
Mail Code 501-03, P.O. Box 420, Trenton, NJ 08625-0420	
Land Management.....	609-984-0547
Marine Fisheries.....	609-748-2020
Shellfisheries.....	609-748-2040
Wildlife Management.....	609-292-6685
<b>Northern Region Office</b>	
26 Route 173 W., Hampton, NJ 08827	
Wildlife Management.....	908-735-7040
Endangered and Nongame Species .....	908-638-4127
Hunter Education .....	908-637-4125 x 123
Wildlife Control.....	908-735-8793
Land Management .....	973-383-0918
Law Enforcement ( <i>Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union, and Warren counties</i> ).....	908-735-8240
<b>Central Region Office</b>	
1 Eldridge Rd., Robbinsville, NJ 08691	
Freshwater Fisheries.....	609-223-6076
Land Management.....	609-259-6969
Wildlife Control.....	908-735-8793
Law Enforcement ( <i>Burlington, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, and Ocean counties</i> ) .....	609-259-2120
<b>Southern Region Office</b>	
220 Blue Anchor Rd., Sicklerville, NJ 08081	
Freshwater Fisheries.....	856-629-4950
Hunter Education .....	856-629-0552
Land Management.....	856-629-5006
Law Enforcement ( <i>Atlantic, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Salem counties</i> ).....	856-629-0555
Wildlife Control.....	908-735-8793
<b>Pequest Natural Resource Education Centery .....</b>	<b>908-637-4125</b>
605 Pequest Rd., Oxford, NJ 07863	
For questions concerning state stocking programs or comments call 908-236-2118	
<b>Nacote Creek Research Station</b>	
P.O. Box 418, 360 Rt. 9 N. (Milepost 51) Port Republic, NJ 08241	
Marine Fisheries.....	609-748-2020
Marine Fisheries "Listen Only" regulation information line .....	609-292-2083
Shellfisheries.....	609-748-2040
Marine Education .....	609-748-4347
Marine Law Enforcement.....	609-748-2050
<b>Delaware Bay Office</b>	
1672 E. Buckshtutem Rd. Millville, NJ 08332 .....	856-785-0730

New Jersey is Hooked on Fishing, Not on Drugs

The Hooked on Fishing – Not on Drugs program will:

- Teach kids fishing and create opportunities to expose them to aquatic ecology, freshwater and marine careers
- Build self-esteem and confidence
- Develop problem-solving skills about their local environment
- Nurture outdoor recreation skills to avoid the pitfalls of drug and alcohol use



[njfishandwildlife.com](http://njfishandwildlife.com)

For information e-mail  
hofnod@dep.nj.gov.

Visit us on the web at  
[NJFishandWildlife.com/hofnodnj.htm](http://NJFishandWildlife.com/hofnodnj.htm).

Shhhhh. No wake zone.



Protect your baby (and their toys) with coverage for fishing gear and personal property too.

1-800-PROGRESSIVE / PROGRESSIVE.COM

**PROGRESSIVE**

Progressive Casualty Insurance Co. & affiliates. Additional charge may apply. Prices vary based on how you buy.