

Skillful Angler Program

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Skillful Angler Program: What Is It?

- Angler recognition program started in 1983 to identify and recognize NJ anglers who catch fish of “not quite record” size, but large enough to have tested the angler's skills
- Recognize 43 different species in both Freshwater (23) and Saltwater (20)
- Since 1983, the program has awarded 4,150 certificates



Nick Massa holding a 28" Walleye

Skillful Angler Program: How Does it Work?



Frank Ruczynski with a 26.75" Chain Pickerel

- 4 Divisions:
 - Adult (16 and older) - based on weight
 - Junior (under 16) - based on weight
 - Catch and Release - based on length
 - First Fish
- 4 Categories:
 - Specialist – 5 qualifying fish of same species
 - Master – 5 qualifying fish of different species
 - Elite – 10 qualifying fish of any species
 - Single Species
- 3 Slams
 - Bass Slam – catch one Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass
 - Trout Slam – catch one Rainbow, Brown, and Brook Trout
 - Panfish Slam – catch one Crappie, Sunfish, and Yellow Perch
- Winners for each species in each division are announced at end of year

Skillful Angler Program: How Does it Work?

Species	Adult Weight (lbs/oz)	Junior Weight (lbs/oz)	Catch and 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"
White Perch	1 lb 8 oz	1 lb 4oz	14"
Yellow Perch	1 lb 8 oz	1	13"
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"

<https://nj.gov/dep/fgw/skflang.htm>

Skillful Angler Program: Application Process

- Fill out application found on our website
- Must include a picture of fish on a measuring device (measuring tape/bump board)
- Adult/Junior must have fish weighed on a certified scale (Tackle Shop/Butcher)
- Photos of angler with fish is encouraged!
- Email (NJSkillfulAngler@dep.nj.gov) or mail application

New Jersey Skillful Angler Application - Freshwater

Applicant Information

Full Name: _____ Age: _____
Last First M.I.

Address: _____
Street Address Apartment/Unit #

City State ZIP Code

Phone: _____ E-mail _____

Entry Division (please check one)

- Adult (16 years and above, officially weighed)
- Junior (under 16)
- Catch and Release (based on length)

Fish Species (Angler must complete)

Subject to verification by a state biologist.

Species _____ Weight (lb.oz) _____ Length _____
 Girth _____ Date Caught _____ Time _____
 Waterbody _____

Caught From: Boat Shore Other (specify) _____

Line Test Used _____ Reel Type _____ Rod Type _____
 Bait/Lure _____

Enter a Category

- First Fish (celebrate your first fish ever!)
- Single Species
- Specialist Angler (5 qualifying fish of the same species)
 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th
- Master Angler (5 qualifying fish of different species)
 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th
- Elite Angler (10 or more qualifying fish within 1 year)
 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th

Enter a Slam Category

- Trout Slam (1 each of a qualifying Rainbow Trout, Brook Trout or Brown Trout)**
- Rainbow Trout
- Brook Trout
- Brown Trout

- Bass Slam (1 each of a qualifying Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass)**
- Largemouth Bass
- Smallmouth Bass

- Panfish Slam (1 each of a qualifying sunfish spp., Crappie spp. and Yellow Perch)**
- Sunfish spp.
- Crappie spp.
- Yellow Perch

Certification for Adult and Junior Divisions

Fish measured and weighed by: (establishment's name and address)

Full Name: _____
 Address: _____ Phone: _____
 City/State/Zip _____
 *Weighmaster's Name _____
 Weighmaster's Signature _____

I hereby certify that this fish was caught in New Jersey waters in accordance with state laws and regulations and in the case of Adult/Junior Divisions, that the entry was weighed on a certified scale.

Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____

*Application/photo must be submitted within 30 days of catching the fish. Additional High-Resolution photos with the angler are always welcome and appreciated! All photos become the property of NJDFW and may be used for promotional purposes.

Email completed form and photo(s) to:
NJSkillfulAngler@dep.nj.gov
 OR mail to:
 NJ Skillful Angler Program
~~One Edridge Road~~
~~Robbinsville, NJ 08691~~

1255 County Rt. 629
 P.O. Box 394
 Lebanon, NJ 08833

Print

Incorrect Measuring



Incorrect Measuring



Incorrect Measuring



Correct Measuring



Correct Measuring



Correct Measuring (Mostly)

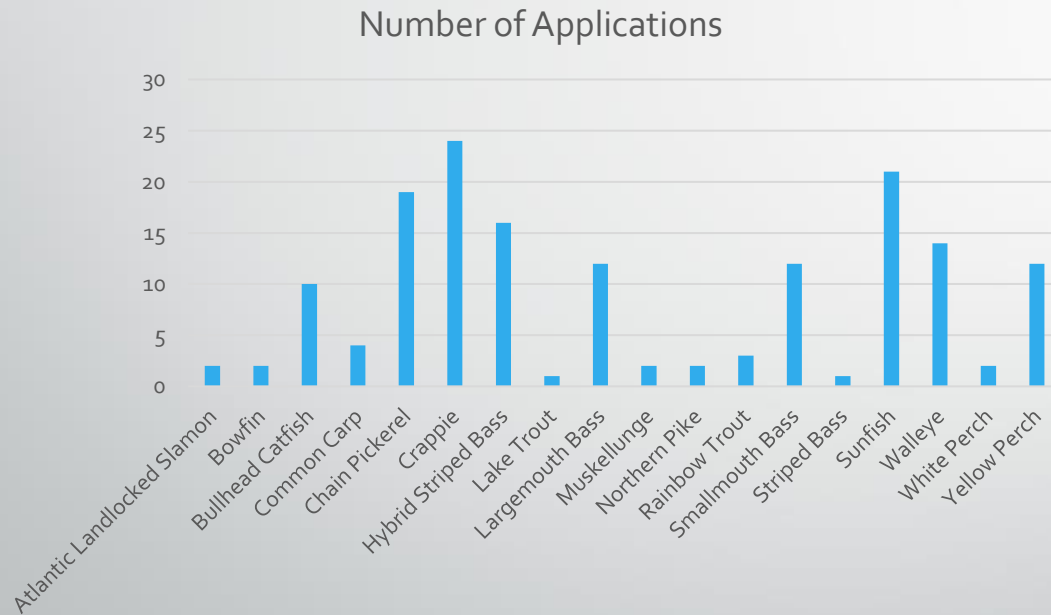


Skillful Angler Program: What You Get

- Receive a personalized certificate
- Receive a qualifier patch
- Winners at the end of the year also receive a Winner certificate and patch



Skillful Angler Program: 2021 Freshwater Statistics



- 169 applications compared to 104 in 2020
- 18 different species submitted by 68 anglers
- Crappie had the most submissions with 24 followed by Sunfish with 21
- Catch and Release category had the most with 155 followed by First Fish with 10

Skillful Angler Program: 2021 Freshwater Statistics

- Specialist
 - 12 Anglers entered 30 species (7 completed)
- Master
 - 7 Anglers entered (3 Completed)
 - Christopher Pereira, Duane Chapman, Frank Ruczynski
- Elite
 - 8 Anglers entered (3 completed)
 - Christopher Pereira, Duane Chapman, Frank Ruczynski
- Slams
 - 2 Trout entries
 - 9 Bass entries (5 completed)
 - 11 Panfish entries (2 completed)



Duane Chapman holding his 31.5" Lake Trout

Updates for 2022



Luke LeDrappier holding a 21.5" Smallmouth Bass

- In the process of designing new patches
- Possible new category being discussed



Nicholas Zemplachenko with a 26" Bowfin



Emmer Chase holding his 21.5" 6lbs 9oz. Largemouth Bass



Jake and Logan Boyer with a 25.50" Hybrid Striped Bass



Justin Lerner holding a 26" Brown Trout

Questions?



Christopher Pereira holding a 50" Muskie