



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament

For Immediate Release

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State Record Gray Triggerfish Certified

A 6-pound 12-ounce gray triggerfish, caught on November 1, 2017 by Dave Walden of Yorktown, VA has been certified as the initial Virginia State Record for the species by the Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament. The record-setting gray triggerfish measured 18.5 inches (TL) and the fish sported a robust 17-inch girth.

Walden was bottom fishing off the Virginia Beach coast over the Chenango wreck site, which is located on the western edge of a seamount known as the Cigar, some 50 miles east of the coast. Walden was a member of a make-up charter trip for an “over-nighter” aboard the Underdog skippered by Captain Jake Hiles. The crew left the dock at the Virginia Beach Fishing Center at 2 AM and started trolling in vicinity of the Cigar around first light. After a few hours with no action the crew opted for bottom fishing for sea bass at the nearby Chenango site. Seabass provided steady action and a limit catch seemed in their future when Walden hooked a fish “that was clearly not a seabass” according to Captain Hiles. As the fish reached the surface mate Robert Mudgett grabbed the leader and unceremoniously slung the fish aboard. Walden was using a Shimano Tarmar rod mated with a Shimano Torium reel spooled with 30-pound Power Pro braided line. Attached to this rig was standard bottom rig, baited with strips of squid, with a 12-ounce lead sinker on the terminal end. The Chenango wreck site lies in surprisingly shallow water for such a distance from the coastline, at approximately 100 feet.

Gray triggerfish was added to the list of eligible species for state record consideration in 1996 with an initial qualifying weight of 6 pounds. In 1999, gray triggerfish was added to the Citation list of eligible species for both weight (4 pounds) and release (20 inches). Walden’s fish is the first gray triggerfish registered which met the 6-pound minimum established for initial state record recognition.

For more information, contact Lewis S. Gillingham, Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament, 2600 Washington Avenue, Newport News, VA 23607, (757) 491-5160, vswft@mrc.virginia.gov

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Figure 1. Angler with catch while aboard the Underdog.



Figure 2. Back at the Fishing Center and the angler with triggerfish and the entire trip's catch—after completing the overnighter.