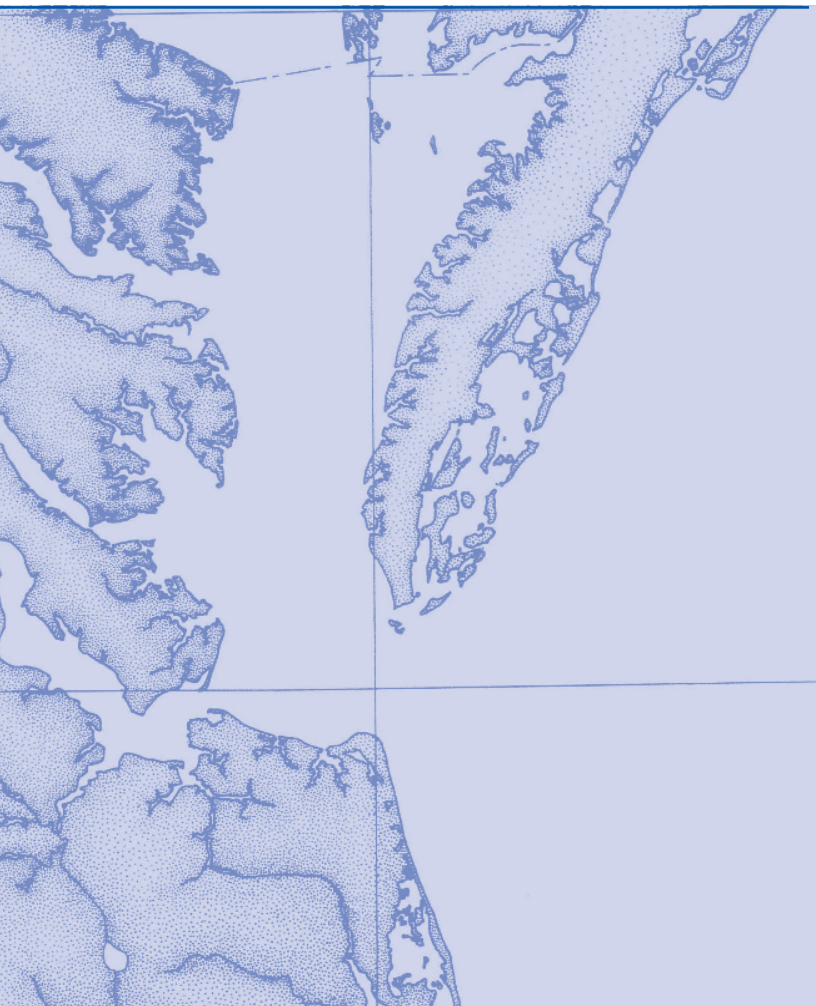


69th Annual *Virginia*

Saltwater Fishing Tournament **2026**



Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament

Marine Resources Commission

380 Fenwick Road

Fort Monroe, VA 23651

Tel. No. (757)491-5160

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ELIGIBLE SPECIES AND MINIMUM WEIGHTS FOR CITATIONS

Swordfish.....	100 lbs.
Tuna, Bluefin.....	100 lbs.
Black Drum.....	80 lbs.
Tuna, Yellowfin or Bigeye.....	70 lbs.
Cobia.....	55 lbs.
Tuna, True Albacore (Longfin Tuna).....	40 lbs.
Striped Bass	Temporarily Suspended
Wahoo.....	35 lbs.
Golden Tilefish.....	30 lbs.
Dolphin.....	25 lbs.
King Mackerel.....	20 lbs.
Bluefish.....	16 lbs.
Sheepshead.....	10 lbs.
Blueline Tilefish.....	10 lbs.
Gray Trout.....	5 lbs.
Spadefish.....	8 lbs.
Tautog.....	9 lbs.
Flounder.....	6 lbs.
Black Sea Bass.....	5 lbs.
Speckled Trout.....	5 lbs.
Spanish Mackerel.....	4 lbs.
Gray Triggerfish.....	4 lbs.
Croaker.....	3 lbs.
Kingfish (Roundhead).....	1 lb. 8 oz.
Pompano.....	1 lb. 8 oz.
Spot.....	1 lb.

Fish must be weighed and registered at official weigh stations.

ELIGIBLE SPECIES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR RELEASE CITATIONS

Billfish*.....	No Required Minimum Length (Marlin, Sailfish, Spearfish, Swordfish)
Sharks (any)*.....	72 inches
Tuna, Bluefin*.....	60 inches
Cobia.....	50 inches
Amberjack.....	50 inches
Drum, Black or Red.....	46 inches
Striped Bass.....	44 inches
Crevalle Jack.....	40 inches
Bluefish.....	36 inches
Tarpon*.....	36 inches
False Albacore.....	32 inches
Gray Trout.....	24 inches
Flounder.....	26 inches
Spanish Mackerel.....	26 inches
Speckled Trout.....	24 inches
Sheepshead.....	24 inches
Tautog.....	23 inches
Spadefish.....	22 inches
Gray Triggerfish.....	20 inches
Croaker.....	20 inches
Kingfish (Roundhead).....	16 inches
Pompano.....	16 inches
Spot.....	13 inches

Actual measured lengths required for all species except for those marked with asterisk (). Estimated length may be used for species marked with asterisk.*

Length measurements for live releases only.

TOURNAMENT RULES

1. Eligibility

- (a) The following persons are eligible to participate: all persons holding valid Virginia Saltwater Fishing Licenses; all persons fishing on private boats, charter or head boats, commercial fishing piers or rental boats that possess valid “blanket” Virginia Saltwater Fishing Licenses; all persons with valid out-of-state saltwater recreational fishing licenses that have been certified as reciprocal with Virginia’s license; all persons exempt from saltwater licensing requirements due to age (under 16 and 65 years and older) except as provided in section (b) following:
- (b) The following persons are *not eligible* to participate: captains and paid crew through the duration (from departure to return) of any for-hire trip aboard any charterboat, headboat or party boat or any professionally guided trip; all persons participating in commercial hook-and-line fishing trips.
- (c) All fish must be caught on a rod and reel in accordance with accepted recreational angling practices, in a sportsmanlike manner without aid, by the angler. Electra-mates and all other power-assisted reels or equipment may not be used. Qualifying catches must be made on recreational fishing trips; *any fishing trip producing any fish that are sold or bartered is deemed a commercial fishing trip, and all persons participating in such trips are not eligible for participation in any Tournament programs and all fish caught by all persons on such trips are not eligible for any awards.*
- (d) All catches must comply with all applicable regulations and laws, including recreational size limits, possession limits, open and closed seasons, closed waters and areas, and the waters must be open to public fishing.
- (e) To qualify for a “release” Citation, the angler or mate must control the fish and either touch the fish or the leader and the fish must be alive when it is unhooked and/or released. Gaffs may not be used, except to gaff the fish through the lip, if a minimum length is required to qualify, the fish must be *landed and measured*, and its *actual, measured length* must be recorded on the Citation entry form, except for bluefin tuna, sharks, and tarpon in which the length must be determined to meet the minimum requirement and the *estimated* length recorded on the entry form. The Tournament entry form is to be completed in the standard manner and a witness to the catch, measurement (if required), and release of the fish must complete the witness certification attesting to compliance with tournament rules.
- (f) An angler fishing alone may earn a “release” Citation by providing a clear, sideview photograph of the fish on a measuring device *clearly showing the length of the fish*, provided the entry form is completed and photograph is supplied to the weigh station within 7 days as required in rule 3(a) and a copy of the photograph is provided to the Tournament office.
- (g) Measurements for “release” Citations shall be total length measured on a flat measuring device; fish must be laid on top of a measuring stick or tape that has been completely stretched out and is resting on a flat surface and measured from the tip of its nose or lower jaw to the tip of its tail.

2. Boundaries

Catches are eligible from all saltwater areas within the Commonwealth of Virginia (Chesapeake Bay, tributary rivers, ocean surf). Catches also are eligible from the Potomac River, upper Chesapeake Bay, and Atlantic Ocean provided the angler fished on a boat that leaves from and returns to a Virginia port without docking or landing outside of Virginia.

3. Weighing and Registering Fish

- (a) All fish must be weighed and releases registered at an official weigh station as soon as practical, but no later than 7 days following the actual date of catch. Scales used must be inspected or certified and fractions of an ounce do not count.
- (b) Each entry must be recorded on an official entry form, signed by the angler, weighmaster, and a witness.
- (c) Weighmasters are eligible, but a witness to the weighing is required.
- (d) Weigh stations must forward the original (white) copy of the entry form to the Tournament office within 10 days of the date of registration. Original entry forms may not be given to any person, and original entry forms mailed to the Tournament office by any one other than the weigh station will not be accepted.
- (e) Mutilated, cut, scaled, harpooned, speared, shot or frozen fish are not eligible; however, tuna which have been cut and bled may be registered. Weighmasters may cut, open or mark any fish after it has been weighed.
- (f) Anglers will not be allowed to weigh fish at more than one weigh station, or “shop” their fish among weigh stations for heavier weights. Entries will be disqualified for anglers violating this rule.

4. Rules Violations

- (a) Any angler, weigh station, boat or pier operator, or other person who violates Tournament Rules may be excluded from Tournament participation and forfeit all rights to all Tournament awards.
- (b) Rules violations may be considered any time, however protests filed by other anglers must be submitted in the form of a written, notarized affidavit within 10 days of any alleged violation.
- (c) The Tournament Director may require additional information or affidavits at any time for any reason for any entry.
- (d) The Tournament Director and/or appointed Tournament Committee at their sole discretion may require any entrant to take a polygraph (lie detector) examination at any time for any reason regarding a Tournament entry; information gathered from the examination may be used to help evaluate the validity of the entry.
- (e) Decisions of the appointed Tournament Committee will be final.

5. Awards

- (a) No fish that falls below Tournament standards will be eligible for an award.
- (b) Anglers may earn only one Citation award for each species per year. Anglers with multiple entries in a single species will receive an award for the heaviest entry in the species.
- (c) An angler who enters fish for both release and weight Citation awards in the same species will receive, at the discretion of the Tournament, only one plaque listing the heaviest catch and number of releases.

STATE RECORD RULES

The Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament (VSWFT) maintains the official records for saltwater game fish in Virginia. Records are determined by weight in pounds and ounces. Ties will be recognized and accorded state record status. Special "State Record" Citation plaques are awarded for catches exceeding or tying existing state records, provided the catches comply with state record standards, proper registration procedures are followed, and the fish is certified by the VSWFT Director as a state record. *It is the sole responsibility of the angler to ensure all state record rules and procedures are followed.*

State records must conform to all the rules of the Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament. A listing of these rules can be found on page 2-4 of this brochure. In addition, the following conditions and rules must be complied with:

- 1) State record entries must be made on special two-page state record application forms and all information requested on the form must be supplied. In addition, the applicant and all persons involved in the trip producing a potential state record will be required to file affidavits prepared by the Tournament Director with the VSWFT.
- 2) The actual fish must be viewed by the VSWFT Director or an appointed member of the VSWFT Committee or the fish will not be eligible for state record recognition. The VSWFT office and Director should be contacted as soon as possible, or a member of the VSWFT Committee should be contacted, to arrange for the viewing and the fish must be preserved intact and not frozen for the viewing.
- 3) Side view photographs of the fish must be submitted with the state record application; photographs become the property of the VSWFT and may be used for publication and publicity.
- 4) The VSWFT Director and/or appointed Committee may require any state record entrant to undergo a polygraph (lie detector) examination at any time for any reason; the information gathered may be used to evaluate the validity of the state record entry and compliance with the program rules.
- 5) In addition to the boundary requirements listed in Rule 2 of this brochure, state record catches must be made in waters regularly and commonly fished by boats leaving from and returning to Virginia ports. Current boundary limits shall be deemed to be waters north of the line connecting Cape Point, Hatteras, NC with Diamond Shoals Light Tower and then to the east; and south of latitude line 38° 15', which is south of Ocean City, MD.

Initial state records will be recognized in the following species at the following minimum initial weights:

Atlantic Bonito.....	8 lbs.
Atlantic (Boston) Mackerel.....	3 lbs.

VIRGINIA MARINE G

SPECIES	WEIGHT
Amberjack.....	118 lbs.
Barracuda.....	45 lbs. 8 oz.
Bluefish.....	25 lbs. 4 oz.
Cobia.....	109 lbs.
Cod, Atlantic.....	35 lbs.
Crevalle Jack.....	48 lbs. 12 oz.
Croaker.....	8 lbs. 11 oz.
Dolphin.....	71 lbs. 8 oz.
Drum, Black.....	111 lbs.
*Drum, Red.....	85 lbs. 4 oz.
False Albacore.....	25 lbs. 4 oz.
Flounder.....	17 lbs. 8 oz.
Gray Triggerfish.....	6 lbs. 12 oz.
Kingfish (Roundhead).....	2 lbs. 13 oz.
Kingfish (Roundhead).....	2 lbs. 13 oz.
Mackerel, King.....	63 lbs. 1 oz.
Mackerel, Spanish.....	10 lbs. 7 oz.
Marlin, Blue.....	1,093 lbs. 12 oz.
Marlin, White.....	131 lbs. 10 oz.
Pollock.....	23 lbs. 8 oz.
Pompano.....	5 lbs. 14 oz.
Porgy.....	5 lbs. 5 oz.
Sailfish.....	68 lbs. 8 oz.
Sea Bass.....	10 lbs. 4 oz.
*Shark, Bigeye Thresher.....	149 lbs.
Shark, Blacktip.....	76 lbs. 10 oz.
Shark, Blue.....	266 lbs.
Shark, Bull.....	256 lbs.
*Shark, Dusky.....	673 lbs.
Shark, Hammerhead (Great).....	430 lbs.
Shark, Hammerhead (Scalloped).....	245 lbs.
Shark, Hammerhead (Smooth).....	272 lbs.
Shark, Lemon.....	312 lbs. 12 oz.
Shark, Mako.....	728 lbs.
*Shark, Sandbar (Brown).....	213 lbs.
*Shark, Sand Tiger.....	339 lbs.
*Shark, Silky.....	110 lbs.
Shark, Spinner.....	129 lbs. 8 oz.
Shark, Thresher.....	525 lbs.
Shark, Tiger.....	1,099 lbs. 12 oz.
*Shark, White.....	131 lbs.
Sheepshead.....	20 lbs. 12 oz.
Snowy Grouper.....	70 lbs. 7 oz.
Spadefish.....	14 lbs. 14 oz.
Spot.....	2 lbs. 6 oz.
Striped Bass.....	74 lbs.
Swordfish.....	597 lbs.
Tarpon.....	130 lbs.
Tautog.....	24 lbs. 3 oz.
Tilefish, Blueline.....	23 lbs. 5 oz.
Tilefish, Golden.....	58 lbs.
Tripletail.....	17 lbs. 6 oz.
Trout, Gray.....	19 lbs.
Trout, Speckled.....	16 lbs.
Tuna, Bigeye.....	311 lbs.
Tuna, Blackfin.....	33 lbs. 15 oz.
Tuna, Bluefin.....	832 lbs. 6 oz.
Tuna, Skipjack.....	22 lbs. 11 oz.
Tuna, True Albacore.....	73 lbs.
Tuna, Yellowfin.....	203 lbs. 12 oz.
Wahoo.....	122 lbs. 1 oz.

*Currently Illegal to Possess

AME FISH RECORDS

WHERE	WHEN	ANGLER
Ches. Light Tower.....	1986.....	Mark J. Roberts
CB Buoy Line.....	1996.....	Wayne Seymour
Bluefish Rock.....	1986.....	Gayle E. Cozzens
York Spit.....	2006.....	Joseph F. Berberich, II
Off Wachapreague.....	1969.....	Robert Crammer
Ches. Light Tower.....	1993.....	Charles McCaskill, III
New Point Light.....	2007.....	Norman T. Jenkins
Off Virginia Beach.....	1991.....	Don Dorey
Off Cape Charles.....	1973.....	Betty D. Hall
Wreck Island.....	1981.....	Herman Moore
Off Virginia Capes.....	1964.....	Jack Sparrow
Baltimore Channel.....	1971.....	Charles E. Cross
Off Virginia Beach.....	2017.....	Dave Walden
Off Sandbridge.....	2002.....	Chip Watters
Sandbridge Surf.....	2023.....	B. W. Wild III
Off Sandbridge.....	2007.....	Susan M. Smith
Off Smith Point.....	2022.....	Noah Mills
Norfolk Canyon.....	1978.....	Edward Alan Givens
Off Virginia Beach.....	1978.....	Rudolph D. van't Riet
Off Chincoteague.....	1998.....	Lee Michalski
Goose Island.....	2025.....	Scott Patey
Off Chincoteague.....	1978.....	Charles B. Haines, Sr.
Off Virginia Beach.....	1977.....	P. J. Murden
Off Virginia Beach.....	2000.....	Allan P. Paschall
The Cigar.....	1992.....	Wayne M. Gross
Off Virginia Beach.....	1988.....	John W. Thurston, Jr.
The Cigar.....	1987.....	Wayne C. DeFord
V-Buoy.....	1982.....	Craig R. Paige
S.E. Lumps.....	1982.....	Michael J. Halperin
S.E. Lumps.....	1984.....	Ronald E. Ault
The Cigar.....	1977.....	Don Lips
Off Virginia Beach.....	1988.....	Carolyn L. Mathews
Off Sandbridge.....	1976.....	Bill Walker
Ches. Light Tower.....	1983.....	Geoffrey H. Newbill
Triangle Wrecks.....	1986.....	Bill Moffett
Off Cape Charles.....	1983.....	Kelly D. Capps
Norfolk Canyon.....	1977.....	Gary W. Seay
Off Chincoteague.....	1991.....	John E. Patton, II
Triangle Wrecks.....	2004.....	Andrew P. Schuyler
S.E. Lumps.....	1981.....	John W. Thurston, Jr.
S.E. Lumps.....	1981.....	Fred Williams
CBBT, Seagull Fishing Pier.....	2005.....	Arun Nhek
Norfolk Canyon.....	2011.....	Roger C. Burnley
The Cell (Ches. Bay).....	2009.....	Roland E. Murphy
Off Poquoson.....	1980.....	Nathan Dryden
Off Virginia Beach.....	2012.....	Cary Wolfe
Norfolk Canyon.....	2020.....	Nicholas Kontodiakos
Off Oyster.....	1975.....	Barry Truitt
MorganWreck.....	2012.....	Ken Neill, III
Norfolk Canyon.....	2009.....	Michael Adkins
Norfolk Canyon.....	2017.....	Joshua Jung
CBBT, 3rd Island.....	2025.....	Jordan Duke
Ches. Bay Br. Tunnel.....	1983.....	Philip W. Halstead
Masons Beach.....	1977.....	Bill Katko
Norfolk Canyon.....	2013.....	Vic Gaspeny
Norfolk Canyon.....	2004.....	William W. Charlton, III
Off Eastern Shore.....	2026.....	Michael Rogerson
The Cigar.....	1995.....	Kitty Falk
Washington Canyon.....	2020.....	Kyle Shipp
Norfolk Canyon.....	1981.....	Bruce C. Gottwald, Jr.
Off Wachapreague.....	2012.....	Susan Nelson

WEIGH STATIONS

EASTERN SHORE

Cape Charles - Bailey's Tackle Shop
Sun Outdoors Bait & Tackle

Chincoteague - Capt. Steve's Bait & Tackle

Exmore - Eastern Shore Outfitters

Townsend - Oceans East Eastern Shore

TIDEWATER

Chesapeake - Gail's Bait & Tackle

Norfolk (Little Creek area) - Morningstar Marina

Portsmouth - Greg's Bait Shack; Culpepper Boats

Virginia Beach - Virginia Beach Fishing Pier; Oceans East II; Princess Anne Distributing Co.

Virginia Beach (Little Creek area) - Cove Marina, JEB Little Creek

(Lynnhaven Inlet area) - Bubba's Marina; Lynnhaven Marine Center; Long Bay Pointe Bait & Tackle

(Rudee Inlet area) - Fisherman's Wharf Marina; Rudee's Marina; Virginia Beach Fishing Center.

NORTHERN NECK

Callao - R.W.'s Sport Shop

Kilmarnock - Chesapeake Boat Basin

Lewisetta - Lewisetta Marina

Reedville - Buzzard Point Marina; Smith Point Marina

White Stone - Tackle Cove Outfitters

Wicomico Church - Ingram Bay Marina

THE PENINSULA (YORK - JAMES)

Ft. Monroe - Old Point Comfort Marina

Hampton - Salt Ponds Marina; John T. Wilson/Buckroe Pier;

Hampton Marina & Dry Storage; Wallace's Marina; Safe Harbor Bluewater

Newport News - Wilcox Bait & Tackle, Inc.

Seaford - Mills Marina

Yorktown - Legasea Marine ; Bishop's Fishing Supply

MIDDLE PENINSULA (RAPPAHANNOCK-YORK)

Ashland - Green Top Sporting Goods

Bowlers Wharf - Garrett's Marina, Inc.

Colonial Heights - Dance's Sporting Goods

Deltaville - Tackle Shop at J & W

Gloucester - GTown Bait & Tackle

Gloucester Point - York River Bait & Tackle

Gwynn's Island - Morningstar Marina

Hayes - Perrindise Marina & Club

Plainview - Tucker's Boat Rental & Storage

Saluda - B.E.S.T. Marine

Ware Neck - Nuttall Country Store

West Point - Surf & Turf Outdoor Sports

PRACTICE RESPONSIBLE ANGLING

- Abide by all fishery regulations and laws
- Report all violations
- Keep only those fish you plan to eat – release the rest
- Show courtesy and respect to others on the water



Learn about the Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament, including our rules, weigh stations, state record information, and a complete listing of last year's Citation winning fish, on the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's website. Visit us at www.mrc.virginia.gov; we are listed under the section entitled "Recreational Fishing Information".

OUTSTANDING ANGLER AWARDS PROGRAM

Virginia Expert Saltwater Angler – any angler registering six different species of fish for Citations in a single year earns this designation along with a pin and certificate suitable for framing.

Virginia Master Saltwater Angler – any angler earning 25 Citations awards in a minimum of 5 different species (a maximum of 1 Citation per species per year allowed) over an unlimited period of time starting with the year 1996 earns this designation. Additional levels of recognition accrue to anglers with 50 Citations in at least 10 different species and 75 Citations in 15 different species. Qualifying anglers must notify the Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament upon meeting the requirements and earn pins and certificates suitable for framing.

Virginia Junior Angler – any angler 15 years of age and younger can earn a special Virginia Junior Angler Award certificate by catching and releasing 6 different species of saltwater fish in Virginia during the year. The program is free, there are no minimum size limits for the fish, and all species of saltwater fish qualify. Complete information and special Junior Angler registration cards are available from the office of the Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament and forms are also available on the Virginia Marine Resources Commission website at: www.mrc.virginia.gov

Virginia Junior Expert Angler Awards Program – Any angler 15 years of age or younger can earn a special Junior Expert Award Citation by catching and releasing qualifying Saltwater species by rod and reel. Fish must be caught in Virginia marine waters, the Chesapeake Bay, or the Atlantic Ocean. Complete information on the program and the Junior Expert Citation form is available on Virginia Marine Resources Commission website at: www.mrc.virginia.gov

ANNUAL SPECIES AWARDS

Trophies will be awarded to the anglers catching the largest fish in each of the Tournament's 26 species eligible for weight Citations. In the case of a tie, the date of catch will be used to determine the winner. The angler with the earliest (first) fish caught will be declared the trophy winner. Fish must meet all entry criteria of the Tournament.



A program of Virginia Marine Resources Commission funded with Marine Recreational Fishing License monies.

2025 Annual Species Awards

COBIA

Dennis Mongold, Fulks Run 72 lbs. 8 ozs.

TUNA, BLUEFIN

William Brunjes, Vienna 240 lbs.

TUNA

Mike Harrison, Virginia Beach 105 lbs.

WAHOO

Seth Eyler, York, PA 78 lbs.

DOLPHIN

William T. Hastings, Machipongo 37 lbs. 1 oz.

GOLDEN TILEFISH

Mike Malbon, Virginia Beach 53 lbs.

KING MACKEREL

Robert L. Mayfield III, Newport News 53 lbs. 5 ozs.

TAUTOG

Sam Cook, Ivor 26 lbs.

SHEEPSHEAD

Tim Elliott, Hampton 18 lbs. 3 ozs.

BLUELINE TILEFISH

William Beaghan, Basye 22 lbs. 11 ozs.

FLOUNDER

James Carroll, Norfolk 10 lbs. 5 ozs.

SPECKLED TROUT

Ryan Conway, Lancaster 10 lbs. 10 ozs.

SPADEFISH

Kyle Spruill, Gloucester 13 lbs. 3 ozs.

SPANISH MACKEREL

Alexander Bendeliani, Virginia Beach 6 lbs. 8 ozs.

SEA BASS

Shawn A. Shapiro, Norfolk 10 lbs. 5 ozs.

GRAY TRIGGERFISH

Shawn A. Shapiro, Norfolk 6 lbs. 6 ozs.

GRAY TROUT

B. W. Wild III, Virginia Beach 9 lbs. 6 ozs.

POMPANO

Scott Patey, Delmar, DE 5 lbs. 14 ozs.

KINGFISH (Roundhead)

Chester E. Pawlowski, Virginia Beach 2 lbs. 7 ozs.



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