



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament
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Thirty-nine Anglers Receive Expert Status; 17 Anglers Join Master Angler Ranks in 2008

As part of Virginia's Outstanding Angler Awards Program, a total of 39 anglers, who registered six or more species of fish for Citations in 2008, have qualified as Virginia Expert Saltwater Anglers. Each Angler will receive a pin and a certificate suitable for framing.

The most demanding of Virginia's special awards program is that of Master Angler Status. To qualify, an angler must have earned 25 Citation awards in a minimum of 5 different species (a maximum of one Citation per species per year allowed) over an unlimited period of time starting in 1996. Additional levels of recognition accrue to anglers in increments of 25 Citations. In 2008, 17 new anglers achieved Master Angler status while 7 anglers, already qualified as Master Angler, advanced to the next level.

The most popular component of Virginia's special Angler Awards Program continues to be its Junior edition, as 304 young anglers qualified in 2008. For recognition as a Virginia Junior Angler, any angler 15 years of age or younger is eligible and will qualify simply by catching and releasing 6 different species of saltwater fish in Virginia during the year. This program is free, there are no minimum size limits for the fish, and all species of saltwater fish qualify. Information and Junior Angler registration cards are available from licensing agents, Citation Weigh Stations and the office of the Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament.

Junior Angler Awards and Master Angler Awards are processed as they are received throughout the year. Expert Angler Certificates reflect the total number of species of fish qualifying for Citation awards registered by an angler for the year and are processed following the end of the Tournament on December 31.

An Agency of the Natural Resources Secretariat

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The Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament is operated by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission with funding provided by the Virginia Saltwater Recreational Fishing License. Citation awards are made to anglers catching fish meeting established weight criteria in 25 species, while an additional 10 species meeting established length criteria are available for release awards only, for a total of 35 species eligible for Citation recognition.

Citation awards are full color certificates delivered at the recipient's choice as a plaque or in a plastic album page. Special awards are presented to anglers meeting the eligibility requirements of the Master Angler and Expert Angler programs. The Program also administers the very popular Virginia Junior Angler award program.

For more information, contact Lewis S. Gillingham, Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament, 968 S. Oriole Drive, Virginia Beach, VA 23451, (757) 491-5160, vswft@mrc.virginia.gov

