

Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament
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For Immediate Release
February 20, 2008

Forty-six Anglers Receive Expert Status; Ten Anglers Join Master Angler Ranks in 2007

As part of Virginia's Outstanding Angler Awards Program, a total of 46 anglers, who registered six or more species of fish for Citations in 2007, 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 2007, ten new anglers achieved Master Angler status while nine 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 287 young anglers qualified in 2007. 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. In conjunction with the Bass Pro Shops Spring Fishing Classic and the Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament, an Award Ceremony for the 2007 class of Expert Anglers will be held on Friday, February 29, 2008, beginning at 7 PM, at Bass Pro Shops, located just off Interstate 64, at 1974 Power Plant Parkway, Hampton, Virginia. The event is free and open to the public.

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.

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