



News Release

Cape May County, New Jersey

www.thejerseycap.com

Contact: Diane Wieland, Director, (609) 463-6415
dwieland@co.cape-may.nj.us

Let's go fishin' on the Jersey Cape

Fishing for fun in Cape May County can also pay off in recognition for your best catch of the day simply by entering the longest, continuously-running fishing contest in the nation.

The Cape May County Fishing Tournament is a year-long contest held annually that is open to anyone catching a fish in Cape May County waters which include the Atlantic Ocean and Delaware Bay off Cape May County, inland waterways and the bays around the county.

Now in its 72nd year, the entries in the contest are received all year long, according to Diane Wieland, director of tourism for Cape May County.

Entering the contest is as easy as catching a fish and having it weighed at one of 50 weighmasters at marinas and tackle shops around the county. There is no fee and no pre-registration. Entry forms are available at each weighmaster location and once the postcard form has been filled out, signed by the fisherman and the weighmaster and mailed within seven days of the catch, the fish is officially entered in the contest. Whenever possible, fishermen are also asked to send along a photo of their catch.

In return, the fisherman will get a free, official tournament badge, and fish over the minimum weights are eligible for a bronze recognition pin and a recognition awards

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citation. Fish can be caught from the beach, a boat, pier or aboard party fishing boats and fisherman are encouraged to enter their catch regardless of size.

The top three heaviest fish in as many as 40 categories of fish common to Cape May County waters are named the winners at the end of each year's competition.

Wieland who oversees the contest, noted that the tournament has been so popular over the years that the grandsons - and perhaps even granddaughters - of fishermen who participated years ago are now making it a third and fourth generation family tradition. In 1998, a youth category was added to the tournament to accommodate the growing interest.

The pins have become collector's items with great sentimental value, according to Wieland. More than once she has gotten a call or note from a fisherman whose hat filled with pins has blown off or been lost asking about the chance of replacing some or all of the prized pins. Whenever possible, Wieland tries to provide some replacement pins.

For additional information or a brochure about the fishing tournament including tide tables, last year's winners and weights and other helpful information, call the Cape May County Department of Tourism at 609-463-6415 or 1-800-227-2297.