

Fish to be considered for the 2014 Maryland Fishing Challenge awards and state records.

Atlantic Cod

The Atlantic Cod is a historically significant fish for the east coast of the United States whose population numbers have been greatly diminished due to overfishing. The ocean waters off the coast of Maryland represent the southern limit of their range and in recent years fishermen have seen been catching Cod now and then while fishing for Black Sea Bass and Tautog on the artificial reefs and wrecks off Ocean City. Establishing a state record for Atlantic Cod is an important benchmark for Maryland fishermen that this species may once more become a more common inhabitant off the coast of Maryland. A 24lb specimen was recognized as a Maryland state record for the Atlantic Division of the Maryland Fishing Challenge in May of 2013 at 24lbs. We would also propose for the Atlantic Cod to be part of the Maryland Fishing Challenge award program with a minimum size of 36" to qualify for an award certificate.

Addition of two new species to the Chesapeake Division

Kingfish and Tautog are proposed to be an eligible species for the Chesapeake Division of the Maryland Fishing Challenge. Kingfish have become increasingly more common in the Maryland portion of the Chesapeake Bay recently and several inquiries have been made regarding Kingfish caught in the Chesapeake Bay that meet the minimum size for an award certificate in the Atlantic Division. This species is already qualified for the Atlantic Division of the Maryland Fishing Challenge at 14"; we propose to use the same minimum size for the Chesapeake Division. Large Tautog are not commonly caught in the Maryland portion of the Chesapeake but there have been a few instances. We propose to use the same minimum size as the Atlantic Division of 24" for the Chesapeake Division.

Revision of minimum size for catch and release awards for Red Drum

Due to an unexpected abundance of small Red Drum in the Maryland portion of the Chesapeake Bay the minimum size for a catch and release certificate for Red Drum was changed from "any size" to 36" in the fall of 2013.