

NEW YORK SURF FISHING RULES AND REGULATIONS

Updated February 2025

1. Contest Rules and Procedures:

The contest will begin April 15 and end on November 30th. Only bona-fide fishing clubs with an active interest in surf fishing and located in areas adjacent to waters of the New York Marine District are eligible to compete. As of January 2009, Bona-fide Fishing Club shall be classified as one that meets the following criteria:

- A. Submit a formal roster
- B. Collect dues annually
- C. Hold at least four meetings per year
- D. Develop, print and use a constitution and by-laws that defines the club in all facets of activities
- E. The club shall be involved in a full and normal array of surf fishing activities including protection and be involved with organizations like NYCRF, LIBBA, MSA, etc.
- F. The club should have at least the following slate: Pres., V.P., Sec., Treas.
- G. The club should also select a Board of Directors to oversee and manage the club according to its by-laws and constitution.
- H. All clubs must submit to the Contest Officer a list of all members who have had their scales certified by the club.
- I. All clubs shall certify their member's scales once per year before the contest begins on April 15, or before they enter fish. An updated list shall be forwarded as needed to John Citarella. The certification process is as follows: A weight of one-half the scales capacity shall be used to determine accuracy, with weights of 10 and 25 lb used as benchmarks. If the scale cannot be zeroed out within 5 percent of said weight, the scale is deemed NOT-USABLE. A copy of the certification shall be sent to:

John Citarella
130 Bennet Rd
Greenport, NY 11944
or via email JCLTR3@aol.com (phone: 516-343-6497).

- J. One member must be in attendance at the annual meeting for a club to eligible to enter the contest. The only exception would be if on the day before the contest meeting, or the day of the contest meeting the contest chairman is called and informed of an illness or other item preventing a member from attending.
- K. If a member leaves a club in mid-season, his points shall stay with the original club. The angler at this point may "NOT" put points in for the new club until the following year.

2. Eligible Species:

Species	Minimum Qualifying Weights
Striped Bass	10 pounds
Bluefish	5 pounds
Weakfish	5 pounds
Fluke	3 pounds*

All Striped Bass, Bluefish, and Weakfish must be released to be eligible for the competition.

***All Fluke entries must occur during the open season and must meet minimum fluke size regulations in effect during the season.**

Each club may enter only the ten (10) best fish caught in each species category for each monthly period of the contest.

FISH THAT ARE SOLD OR BARTERED ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR ENTRY!

- A. Only fish caught from the surf in the waters of the New York Marine District may be entered in the competition. The exception to this relates to entries under the separate category of “Most Striped Bass Points Out-Of-State” - see Item #7, Awards.
- B. A surf caught fish is one that is taken from the beach, bank, pier, bridge or jetty. An angler may use a boat, ferry or swim to obtain access to a location, but all fish must be hooked, battled and landed by an angler standing on land or adjacent to the water, actually standing in the surf, or from a pier or jetty. All bridge caught fish must be noted on the weigh slip.
- C. The angler must be unassisted by any mechanical means in the natural casting motion from the surf to increase their natural casting ability. This includes, but is not limited to, drones and kayaks.

3. Allocation of Points:

One point per pound will be awarded for each fish caught and submitted in accordance with the rules and regulations of this contest. Points will be awarded on the basis of the lower nearest pound.

- A. All persons who have intentions of weighing fish, must own and carry a scale with them, that is certified by his club. This is to prevent anglers keeping fish out of the water waiting for someone else to weigh his fish.

4. Weigh-In Procedures:

Fish eligible for competition may be weighed by one of the following methods.

A. Eligibility for Heaviest of Species Awards: To be eligible for heaviest of species awards a fish can be weighed-in at an official tackle store. The scale must have been certified according to the tackle shop owner.

- Fish that are killed must be weighed at an official tackle store to be eligible!
OR, the fish may be eligible via a beach weigh-in, if the following conditions are met:
- The fish must be released! Damaged fish that are not likely to survive must be weighed at a tackle shop on a certified scale as per rules for heaviest of species.
- The entry blank that is submitted for the fish must bear the name of a witness, the club the witness belongs to (witness must be a member in good standing of a club participating in the New York Surf Fishing Contest), and the phone number of said witness. A “witness” is one who is present when the fish is caught and weighed, to personally verify weight and catch.
- The only scales that can be used are ones that have been certified by a members’ club. The brand and type of scales are at participating clubs’ discretion.
- The weight of a fish cannot exceed the poundage of the scale used, e.g., a 50-pound scale can weigh only up to 50 pounds.

B. Entries in other than heaviest of species:

- May be weighed by methods outlined under Item 4A.
- Or on a bona fide club scale (a commercial scale) that has been certified by the contest-reporting officer at the start of each season by the county. The contest officer retains the right to recall any club scale for testing at any time.
- On a hand scale as described in Item 4A. The club officer retains the same right to recall any scale for testing at any time.

** Anglers are requested to have entry blanks witnessed whenever possible; it being noted that this is mandatory of heaviest of species awards!

** Entries are to be weighed once.

5. Reporting Procedures:

The club’s fish contest chairman or duly appointed contest reporting officer responsible for monthly data collection and tabulation will supply to the CONTEST OFFICER a monthly tally sheet (supplied at the start of each contest year), once each month.

The responsibilities of the club reporting officer are:

- A. Sign all eligible blanks to be submitted with the reporting tally sheet.
- B. Sign the monthly reporting tally sheet.
- C. Complete all items on reporting tally sheet.
- D. Forward to the CONTEST OFFICER (report tally sheet and blanks) **by the 15th day of the month** following the month in which the fish were caught (postmarked or received on or before). If a delay is necessary, the club reporting officer must call the CONTEST OFFICER prior to the deadline in order to maintain the possibility of eligibility for that month. Failure to comply with the above requirements will nullify the club's entries for that month.
- E. For those clubs that do not produce fish slips for their internal purposes, the attached Consolidated Tally Sheet maybe submitted in lieu of steps A to C. The club will retain documentation of its submission until the final NYSFC Report is issued by CONTEST OFFICER, and such documentation will be open to inspection on request.
- F. Club contest chairmen must report fish each month to the Contest Officer to the lowest quarter pound. EXAMPLE: A fish weighing between 15 pounds 4 ounces and 15 pounds 8 ounces must be reported as 15 pounds 4 ounces. All qualifying fish must:
 - be reported in pounds and ounces.
 - be reported to the lowest quarter pound (0, 4, 8, 12 ounces)
 - be reported in the above format in order to be considered in the NYSFC. Failure to do so will result in the entry being disqualified.

NOTE:

- i. Boga Grip Scales: Weights must be reported to the lowest pound as these scales do not easily show quarter pound increments
- ii. Digital Scales: Readings must be converted from decimals or tenths of a pound to ounces. The conversion chart is provided for your convenience.

Digital Scale Read-Out	Ounce Conversion
.01 - .24	0 ounces
.25 - .49	4 ounces
.50 - .74	8 ounces
.75 - .99	12 ounces

** It is noted that clubs should take all possible action to avoid late reporting, and this option should **only be considered for use under emergency conditions**. It will be each club's responsibility, through its duly appointed officers, to maintain the efficiency and credibility of all tally sheets and entry blanks submitted. Irregularities of a fish entry blank may be grounds for nullifying that entry. Irregularities in the tally sheet may be grounds for nullifying a club's entry for

the monthly reporting period of the contest.

If the CONTEST OFFICER has a question regarding any entry blank, tally sheet, or other fishing contest irregularity, he or she may convene a meeting. All club-reporting officers will be notified of such a meeting in order that each participating club can be appropriately represented.

Each club will get only one vote per item. This group will investigate the question, concern, or irregularity and render a decision on the eligibility of the entry or entries in question. Or, this group may deliberate any matter relevant to the contest and render a decision should the Contest Officer convene this group. Any decision of this group is final and irreversible. A majority vote of those present will decide the issues.

6. Responsibility of the Contest Officer:

- A. Collect the monthly report tally sheets and entry blanks from participating clubs each month. These reports to be postmarked or received no later than the 15th day of the month following the month in which the fish were caught.
- B. Total all points for all categories for all clubs.
- C. Prepare a summary report of club standings for all categories.
- D. Forward a copy of the monthly summary report to each club’s reporting officer **on or before the 25th day** of the month following the month. It is imperative that all participating clubs receive the summary report at the same time. Thus, the contents of the summary report will be kept private to the CONTEST OFFICER and all summary reports will be mailed or e-mailed on the same day.
- E. The CONTEST OFFICER’s files will be open for review by participants.

7. Awards:

The following are the categories for which awards will be made to active members in good standing of participating clubs and/or to those clubs. Only fish caught by active members in good standing are eligible for competition.

Category	Place	Award to Individual
Heaviest Striped Bass	1 s t	Plaque
	2nd	
	3rd	
Heaviest Striped Bass, Fly	1st	Plaque
Heaviest Bluefish	1 s t	Plaque
	2nd	
	3rd	

Heaviest Weakfish	1st 2nd 3rd	Plaque
Heaviest Fluke	1st 2nd 3rd	Plaque
Most Overall Points	1st 2nd 3rd	Plaque
Achievement Award	100 points 200 points 400 points	Bronze P i n Silver P i n Gold Pin

Merit Award: 1 per club (*see below)

Club Category	Place	Award to Club
Most Points Overall	1st 2nd 3rd	Certificate
Most Striped Bass Points	1st 2nd 3rd	Certificate
Most Bluefish Points	1st 2nd 3rd	Certificate
Most Weakfish Points	1st 2nd 3rd	Certificate
Most Fluke Points	1st 2nd 3rd	Certificate
Most Released Fish Points	1st 2nd 3rd	Certificate

Most Out-Of-State Bass Points	1 st 2nd 3rd	Certificate
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For heaviest of species and most points awards (trophies to individuals), a given angler is eligible for only one award per species, per category. An eligible catch may count for only one club. In case of ties, the entry with the earliest date noted will win the award.

*Merit Award: Under this category, each club will be entitled to one certificate, which will be awarded to a member of the respective clubs at each club's discretion. It being understood that this award was created to give recognition to anglers who have not shared in other awards of the contest but who have contributed to the success of the contest or his/her club's participation in the contest in other ways. Value to the NYSFC should be a prime criterion.

Most Striped Bass - Out Of State: This category is separate from all others. That is, Out of State striped bass entries are not eligible for Heaviest of Species awards, and points compiled under this category will not be credited to any other category.

Released Fish Points: An eligible catch may be released in good condition by a participating member. Released fish will receive one point per pound as credit toward winning the Most Released Points award for his club.

The points accumulated in this category will not be added to any other category but are for use in this category only! There are no restrictions for the number of fish that may be entered in this category (released fish) each month. Thus, if the members of a given club catch more than ten (10) eligible fish per species for a given month, the excess may also be submitted for release points although no points for other categories will be credited. These fish must be weighed according to weigh-in procedures outlined in Rule 4.

Although entry blanks appropriately filled out, signed and indicating that the fish was released must be submitted to the club reporting officer for other categories, those qualifying for released points only need not be forwarded to the contest officer. The club reporting officer should total his club's complete release points for the month and enter this total in the release points space provided on the monthly reporting tally sheet (page 2).

Entry blanks for released points are kept on file by the club reporting officer until December 31st of the contest year. To clarify, only those entry blanks pertaining to a club's top ten (10) per species monthly entries, Out of State, and Women's and Children's Divisions must be forwarded to the Contest Officer.

Special Citations:

Women's Division:	1 st Place Striped Bass 2 nd Place Striped Bass 3 rd Place Striped Bass	Plaque
	1 st Place Bluefish 2 nd Place Bluefish 3 rd Place Bluefish	Plaque

	1 st Place Weakfish 2 nd Place Weakfish 3 rd Place Weakfish	Plaque
	1 st Place Fluke 2 nd Place Fluke 3 rd Place Fluke	Plaque

All woman over the age of 18, who are affiliated with the club by marriage, domestic partnership or a daughter of a paying member, whose club has a family membership, will be eligible for the Woman's Division. Woman who are club dues paying members are also eligible for this category. Dues paying women can also enter their fish for points in the overall standings to help their club's total.

Children's Division:	1 st Place Striped Bass 2 nd Place Striped Bass 3 rd Place Striped Bass	Plaque
	1 st Place Bluefish 2 nd Place Bluefish 3 rd Place Bluefish	Plaque
	1 st Place Weakfish 2 nd Place Weakfish 3 rd Place Weakfish	Plaque
	1 st Place Fluke 2 nd Place Fluke 3 rd Place Fluke	Plaque
Junior's Division:	1 st Place Striped Bass 2 nd Place Striped Bass	Plaque
	1 st Place Bluefish 2 nd Place Bluefish	Plaque

An award will be given to the son or daughter catching the largest (heaviest) specimen of each

species for the year. Only children, who are not active members of the participating club, who are under 16 years of age, and are sons and daughters of active club members in good standing are eligible for these awards.

An award will be given to the Junior son or daughter catching the largest (heaviest) specimen of each species for the year. Only children, who are not active members of the participating club, who are between 16 and 17 years of age, and are sons and daughters of active club members in good standing are eligible for these awards.

****In order to be eligible, the individual wife or child must cast, hook, battle, and land their catch without assistance. Another angler may help drag or gaff a fish for the wife or child at the surf zone only!**

Prizes:

The New York Coalition for Recreational Fishing will select and award prizes as prescribed by the rules of this contest.

8. Rule Changes:

All potential rule changes for the following year must be received during the month of November only! Do not send in earlier, as they will not be recognized. Upon receiving all possible changes, a letter with said changes will go to all clubs for review, and then voted on at the annual meeting.

Any rule change put forth on the table, which is voted down by a 75-percent margin, will not be permitted to be re-introduced for a period of three years. Send changes in November of the given year to nysfc@nycrf.org.

9. Proposed Rules:

November 2023:

- 1) The angler must be unassisted by any mechanical means in the natural casting motion from the surf to increase their natural casting ability. This means drones. – Motion passes 7-0
- 2) Have the surf contest begin April 1st instead of the April 15th start date. – Motion fails 4-3

November 2024:

All Island Surfcasters proposes the addition of 3 species to the contest in hopes of taking pressure off of striped bass and adding more opportunities to enter fish during the summer doldrums.

1. Fluke- Minimum weight 3-lbs. **Motion passes 6-4**
2. Bonito-minimum weight 5-lbs. **Motion fails 2-8**
3. False Albacore-minimum weight 5-lbs **Motion fails 3-7**

Please vote yes or no for each species. NOTE: This proposed rule change would result in additional costs for plaques (1st, 2nd and 3rd) for each species. This could impact the annual dues for participating in the Contest.

The Traditional Surfcasters propose the following rules change:

Given that stocks of striped bass, bluefish, and weakfish have declined significantly, we propose that all entries into the NYSFC be released in order to qualify. Anglers will still have the opportunity to harvest a legal fish however harvested fish will not eligible for submission into the NYSFC.

Motion passes 8-2