

Sea Trail Fishing Club

Annual Fishing Tournament Rules

Tournament Year 2026

Revision:

1. **Eligibility:** Open to all Sea Trail Fishing Club members. Members who are not in good standing and/or who have not signed a liability waiver shall not be eligible for any prizes.
2. **Time Period and Deadlines:** The Annual Fishing Tournament shall run from January 1 to December 31 of the tournament year. Only fish caught within this time period can be submitted and considered for prizes. All fish declarations must be submitted and received by the Tournament Committee no later than seven (7) days after the end of the tournament.
3. **Tournament entry:** a member interested in entering shall sign and turn in the attached entry form, along with payment, to the Tournament Committee Chairman or to anyone on the Board of Directors. Once a member completes the paperwork to enter the tournament, monies are committed and may not be returned/refunded unless there is an extraordinary and compelling circumstance. These situations require a vote by the Board of Directors and Tournament Committee Chairman, as applicable.
4. **Waiting Period:** After entering a category, a waiting period of 48 hours will be in effect. Any fish caught within this waiting period is ineligible and cannot be submitted.
5. **Fishable Waters:** Categories shown in section 13 (with the exception of the wild card category) must be caught in waters governed by North Carolina or South Carolina or, if caught in federal waters, the member must have left from and returned to a location within North Carolina or South Carolina. Wild card fish can be caught anywhere without restriction.
6. **Fishing Method:** Fish can ONLY be caught using a traditional hook-and-line method. Fish caught by any other method (gill net, seine net, longline, spear gun, gig, cast net, etc.) are not eligible for submission. The winning fish must be caught by one angler with no assistance from another party (example, no rod handoff). Exception: assistance with netting a hooked fish is permitted.
7. **Winning criteria:** Submitted fish length or handicapped length. Fish shall be measured as follows: for fish with a forked tail (example, Spanish mackerel), the fish shall be measured from the snout to the fork in the tail. For fish with a rounded tail (example, largemouth bass), the fish shall be measured to the furthest extension of the tail along the midline. In all cases, the measurement shall be taken with the fish physically located on top of a measuring device. To the extent possible the fish's mouth should be closed.
8. **Handicapped Length:** For the four (4) core categories of Flounder, Red Drum, Speckled Trout and Black Drum, hereinafter referred to as "Categories 13a-13d" as shown subsequently in Section 13 of these rules, the submitted length will be adjusted (handicapped) based on how the fish was caught, as follows:
 - a. Fish caught on a private boat or jet ski – no change to the submitted length
 - b. Fish caught on a charter / guide boat - subtract 1 inch from the submitted length
 - c. Fish caught on a pier/dock, in the surf, from a bank or on a kayak - add 1 inch to the submitted length
9. **Multiple Winners:** A member may win prizes in as many categories as they have entered. However, a member cannot win more than once in the same category.

10. Prize Fund: All money paid into a category, at \$10 per entry, will constitute the prize fund for that category unless:

- There are no fish reported for a category so the prize fund for that category will be added on a pro-rata basis to the prize funds for the other categories; and/or
- The Board of Directors determines that monies from the prize fund are needed for some other purpose for the tournament and those monies would be taken from the prize funds of all categories on a pro-rata basis.

11. Payouts: A maximum of three (3) places for each category will win prizes. Prizes may be in the form of cash, gift cards or certificates, merchandise, or some combination thereof. The minimum prize will be \$15 or the equivalent. The following table will be used to determine the number of places to be paid in a category and the percentages used to calculate each payout. In the event of a tie (more than one fish in a category have the exact same measurement), the appropriate percentages in the table will be added together and then split evenly between the tied entries.

# of Entries	# of places to be paid	Payout %		
		1st	2nd	3rd
1-12	1	100.0%		
13	2	70.0%	30.0%	
21 +	3	60.0%	25.0%	15.0%

12. Slot Limits and Fish Caught Out of Season: For purposes of the Annual Fishing Tournament only, slot limits and fish caught out of season do not apply. Once measured, fish shall immediately be returned to the water if not in season or if above/below any slot limit in accordance with applicable local, State, or Federal requirements.

13. Categories included in the tournament are as follows:

- Flounder
- Red Drum
- Speckled Trout
- Black Drum
- King Mackerel
- Spanish Mackerel
- Sheepshead
- Bluefish
- Largemouth Bass
- Wild Card

14. General Procedures:

- The member interested in participating shall fill out the attached entry form and return it to the Tournament Committee Chairman or to anyone on the Board of Directors. Cost of entry is \$10 for each category and is due at the time the entry form is turned in. Check or cash is acceptable. A member may enter-as many, or as few, categories as they wish and can enter at any time during the tournament. Fish can be caught and submitted after the aforementioned waiting period.

- b. A picture and/or a video showing the entire fish, in a single picture/video, on a measuring device, is required for any submission and the length on the device must be legible. The fish shall be measured to the nearest $\frac{1}{4}$ ". The measuring device used (bump board, tape measure, ruler, or an alternative measurement per rule 14.c) must be shown underneath the fish. A fish cannot be submitted and will not be accepted without the aforementioned picture and/or video. For a wildcard fish that cannot be measured due to its size or due to the fish being released without being landed onboard, an estimated length provided by the boat captain along with a submission form signed by a witness will be sufficient to satisfy this rule 14.b.
- c. If the fish exceeds the length of a measuring device on hand at the time the fish is caught, then an alternative measurement may be used. Examples of an alternative measurement is laying the fish on a piece of fishing line cut to the length of the fish or laying the fish on a paddle and marking the paddle to show the length of the fish, and then submitting a picture and/or video of this alternative measurement. Later, when the fishing line or marks on the paddle can be appropriately measured, a picture and/or video of a measuring device clearly showing the length of the fishing line or the length between the marks on the paddle must be submitted. An alternative measurement should only be used when no other options are available. The methodology used for an alternative measurement, if used, must be clearly explained in the submission email or on the Declaration Form.
- d. If there is a person who witnessed the fish being caught and measured, this person can sign the Declaration Form to attest to this catch and to the length of the fish. The signature of the witness can only be used in cases where the Tournament Committee rejects a submission because the submitted picture/video is not entirely acceptable and there is no violation of the Rules 14.b and 14.c above. The decision of the Tournament Committee may be appealed to the Board of Directors. The appeal must be submitted in writing within seven (7) calendar days of the Tournament Committee's ruling.
- e. At a minimum, the following information is required when submitting a fish:
 - i. The member's name
 - ii. The date the fish was caught
 - iii. How the fish was caught (private boat/jet ski, charter/guide boat, or pier/dock/surf/bank/kayak)
 - iv. The length of the fish
 - v. The fish species
 - vi. A picture and/or video of the fish on a measuring device
 - vii. If the fish is to be counted as a Wild Card fish, that information shall also be submitted.
 - viii. Optionally, a brief description of where the fish was caught and the method used to catch it
- f. An email or text message containing the required information is an acceptable submission method. If the member chooses to fill out the Declaration Form, then the form shall be mailed, emailed as an attachment, or handed to a member of the Tournament Committee.
- g. The Tournament Committee Chairman or designee shall maintain records of fish caught and entry forms turned in. The Tournament Committee Chairman, after consulting with

the Tournament Committee and with concurrence from the Board of Directors, shall determine the winner(s) in each category.

- h. Questions may be directed to a member of the Tournament Committee or to a member of the Board of Directors.
 - i. A running list of current leaders in each category will be updated at least bi-weekly on the STFC website. Members will be updated during the monthly business meetings.

15. Procedures For The Wild Card Category

- a. Entry is optional and the cost to enter is \$10.
- b. Any fish of any species can be declared as a wild card except for species such as shark, skate, stingray, lizard fish, ladyfish, and similar species of little to no game and/or table fare value. Also, fish species specifically listed in Section 13 of these Rules are excluded. The Tournament Committee, along with the Board of Directors, shall have the final decision on what is or is not allowable in this category.
- c. Multiple species of fish can be submitted as the wild card and there is no limitation on the number of fish that can be submitted as the wild card. The longest of all fish submitted will be used as the participant's submission for the wild card competition.
- d. All other tournament rules apply.

16. Aggregate Length Contest

- a. Entry into the aggregate length contest is automatic, at no additional cost, for any member who has entered any of the Categories 13a-13d listed in Section 13 of these Rules.
- b. The handicapped length of the longest fish submitted, in each of Categories 13a-13d that a member has entered, will be added together to arrive at the aggregate length for that member. Only one fish for each category will be used in the calculation. For example, if a member catches and submits a red drum, a speckled trout, and a black drum, then the handicapped lengths of these fish will be used to calculate the aggregate length for the member. If, at a later date, the member catches and submits another red drum / speckled trout / black drum that is longer, then this longer fish will be used to calculate the aggregate length for this member.
- c. Members are encouraged to submit a fish even though that fish may not win a prize in its category since even a short fish will increase the member's aggregate length.
- d. The Tournament Committee Chairman or designee shall maintain a spreadsheet, log, or some other method to document the leaders in the aggregate length contest.
- e. The member with the longest aggregate length will be declared the "Annual Tournament Champion" and his/her name will be added to a trophy/plaque. In the case of a tie, the member with the longest fish submitted in any of Categories 13a-13d will be deemed the Annual Tournament Champion.

Sea Trail Fishing Club

2026 Annual Fishing Tournament Entry Form

Entry: I wish to enter the Tournament in the categories indicated below. I understand that each entry costs \$10.

(Check all that apply)

King Mackerel

Spanish Mackerel

Flounder**

Red Drum**

Speckled Trout**

Sheepshead

Black Drum**

Bluefish

Largemouth Bass

Wild Card

** Denotes Categories that use handicapped lengths and are also used in the Aggregate Length Competition (aka Tournament Champion)

Total categories entered: _____ Total Amount Due: \$_____

Club Member's Name: _____ Date: _____

Entry Form received by: _____ Date: _____ Total Amount Received: \$_____

Fishing Contest Year: _____

Send the completed entry form to:

Brian Brumbaugh

1339 Minion Court SW

Ocean Isle Beach, NC 28469

Email: Tourney.STFC@gmail.com

Sea Trail Fishing Club
2026 Annual Fishing Tournament Declaration Form

I, _____, certify that I caught the fish described below on this date: _____.

(write name legibly)

Signed: _____

(person that caught the fish)

Witness: _____ Signed: _____ Date: _____

(write name legibly)

Fish species:

Length:

How was the fish caught (check one):

Private Boat/Jet Ski

Charter/Guide Boat

Pier/Dock/Surf/Bank/Kayak

(Optional) Describe in a few words where the fish was caught and the method used to catch it:

Is this fish your wild card fish (see the Wild Card section in the Rules) _____ Yes _____ No

Paperwork and photo/video received: _____ Date: _____

(Write name)

Send the completed Declaration Form to:

Brian Brumbaugh

1339 Minion Court SW

Ocean Isle Beach, NC 28469

Email: Tourney.STFC@gmail.com