How To Certify a State Record Freshwater Fish

1. Angler must have a valid Florida fishing license or be exempt under provisions addressed in Florida Freshwater Sport Fishing Regulations.

2. The fish must have been caught legally using an active hook-and-line method (bush hooks, snatch hooks, set lines, trotlines, etc. are excluded) in fresh waters of Florida.

3. If possible, keep the fish alive. If it is not possible to keep the fish alive, place it in ice water. Avoid freezing the fish, because it will dehydrate causing it to lose weight.

4. Before contacting the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), weigh the fish to determine if a possible state record exists.

5. Make arrangements with the local FWC office during business hours to have the fish species certified by a biologist, and to have a FWC employee witness the official weighing, on a certified scale, and take measurements.

FWC Regional Offices:

Northwest Region  (850) 265-3676
Northeast Region   (352) 732-1225
North Central     (386) 758-0525
Southwest Region  (863) 648-3200
South Region      (561) 625-5122

6. Fill out a State Record Fish application and have the application signed by the biologist and notarized. Applications can be obtained from local offices of the FWC or on the Internet at www.MyFWC.com/fishing.

7. Mail the completed application to: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Record Fish Program, 620 South Meridian Street, Tallahassee, FL, 32399-1600

MEASUREMENT STANDARDS:

A) A flexible steel ruler should be used to measure the fish’s total length and girth to the nearest one-quarter inch. Total length is measured with the mouth closed and tail fin pinched together. Girth is the measurement around the widest part of the fish (see illustration).

B) Weight shall be determined on a scale certified by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services or International Game Fish Association, within one year of the scale’s certification. Weighing shall be done by a FWC employee and rounded according to the following: (i) nearest one-quarter ounce for fish up to five pounds, (ii) to the nearest one-half ounce for fish more than five pounds and up to 10 pounds, and (iii) to the nearest one ounce for fish more than 10 pounds.

C) A FWC biologist must see the actual fish and certify its species. The biologist shall also validate the measurements of the fish.

If your fish does not qualify as a state record, the “Big Catch” Angler Recognition Program, sponsored by eAngler.com, rewards anglers who catch a memorable-sized fish. Qualifying anglers receive a colorful citation showing the type fish they caught and a window sticker to proudly display their prowess. To qualify, the fish must be legally caught and exceed the specified minimum length or weight. The catch must be witnessed and a “Big Catch” form completed. Details can be found on applications available at many bait-and-tackle shops, FWC offices, in the Freshwater Regulations Summary, or on the Internet at http://www.state.fl.us/fwc/fishing/
OFFICIAL APPLICATION - FRESHWATER STATE RECORD FISH
FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

NAME: ________________________________
DATE OF BIRTH: ______________
ADDRESS: ________________________________
TELEPHONE: ________________________________
CITY, STATE AND ZIP CODE: ________________
COUNTY WHERE FISH WAS CAUGHT: ________________
SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER: ________________
LAKE OR RIVER CAUGHT FROM: ________________
DATE FISH WAS CAUGHT: ________________
TIME OF CATCH: __________ AM, __________ PM
FISHING LICENSE NUMBER: ________________________________
☐ YOUNGER THAN 16, ☐ OLDER THAN 65, ☐ PERMANENTLY DISABLED,
☐ USED CANE POLE IN COUNTY OF RESIDENCE,
☐ MILITARY HOME ON LEAVE,
☐ OTHER: ________________________________

FISHING METHOD USED TO CATCH FISH (Check one and complete blank)
☐ ROD AND REEL WITH ARTIFICIAL LURE
☐ ROD AND REEL WITH NATURAL BAIT
☐ CANE POLE WITH NATURAL BAIT
☐ FLY ROD AND REEL WITH ARTIFICIAL FLY
☐ OTHER FISHING METHOD
LURE USED: ________________________________
NATURAL BAIT USED: ________________________________
FISH USED: ________________________________
DESCRIBE: ________________________________

IDENTIFICATION AND WEIGHT/LENGTH OF FISH

* SEE BACK OF FORM FOR INSTRUCTIONS

SPECIES: ________________________________
LENGTH: _______ GIRTH: __________
WEIGHT: _____POUNDS _____OUNCES
WAS FISH RELEASED? ☐ YES, ☐ NO
OWNER OF CERTIFIED SCALE USED: ________________________________
DATE OF LAST INSPECTION: ________________
INSPECTION NO.: ________________________________

I, ________________________________, STATE THAT THE FISH DESCRIBED IN THIS APPLICATION WAS LEGALLY CAUGHT
IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA, BY MYSELF, AND THE ABOVE INFORMATION IS TRUE AND CORRECT. THE FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MAY USE THIS INFORMATION AND ANY
ATTACHED PHOTOS FOR RESEARCH, INFORMATIONAL AND OTHER PUBLIC PURPOSES.

APPLICANT’S SIGNATURE: ________________________________
BIOLOGIST’S SIGNATURE: ________________________________
WITNESS’ SIGNATURE: ________________________________
SUBSCRIBED BEFORE ME THIS _____ DAY OF __________, 20 ______
NOTARY PUBLIC’S SIGNATURE: ________________________________
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES: ________________________________

NOTICE: The FWC reserves the right to cancel this application and any official recognition resulting
from it, if at any time the application is shown to contain false statements. Recognition is not official until
approved by the FWC and a Record Fish Certificate is issued.