



Nice Catch!

—New York's Angler Achievement Awards Program

New York offers some of the best freshwater fishing in the nation. Whether it's rod-bending salmon in the Great Lakes, or feisty panfish from a local pond, anglers can take their pick of fish species to pursue and what outdoor setting to enjoy it in. But of the hundreds of thousands of anglers who take to the water each year, only a select few are lucky enough to catch a trophy-sized fish.

To recognize the accomplishments of those anglers, DEC runs the Angler Achievement Awards Program. The program has three categories: state

record—which recognizes those anglers who break current New York State records; annual award—for anglers who catch the three heaviest fish of the year for each eligible species; and catch-and-release—to commend the actions of anglers who return their qualifying catch to the water. Currently there are 45 eligible freshwater fish species for both the annual and state record categories, and 21 major freshwater sportfish species for the catch-and-release category.

For a fish to qualify as a state record, it must exceed the current state record for

Bluegill—10"

Caught by: K. Schmid on June 15, 2012

Caught at: Rollins Pond, Franklin Co.

Lure/Bait used: Nightcrawler

Catch-and-Release Category

By Joelle Ernst

that species by at least an ounce. If you think you might have a new state record, photograph it, have it weighed on a certified scale, and take it to a DEC fisheries biologist so it can be examined and officially identified.

Here are a few of the proud anglers who entered their catches into DEC's Angler Achievement Awards program in recent years.

Joelle Ernst is a fisheries biologist in DEC's Albany office.



Brook Trout
5 lbs. 14 oz., 21"
Caught by: William Altman
on May 5, 2012
Caught at: West Canada Wilderness
Area, Hamilton Co.
Lure used: Lake Clear Wabblers
State Record Fish



Black Crappie
3 lbs. 8 oz.
Caught by: Jack Toone on March 23, 2011
Caught at: New Croton Reservoir,
Westchester Co.
2nd Place—Annual Award Category



Yellow Perch
2 lbs. 8 oz.
Caught by: Olivia Thorton on May 13, 2012
Caught at: Seneca Lake, Seneca Co.
Lure/Bait used: Reef Runner Cicada
1st Place—Annual Award Category





Lake Trout
31.25"
Caught by: John Greaves IV
on March 10, 2013
Caught at: Lake George, Warren Co.
Lure/Bait used: Live Minnow
Catch-and-Release Category

Largemouth Bass
21"
Caught by: Ryan Peck
on September 16, 2012
Caught at: Hudson River, Saratoga Co.
Lure/Bait used: Stik-O™
Catch-and-Release Category



For more information about the Angler Achievement Awards Program, including a full list of the current state records, visit www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7727.html.