

Hosting an In Person 4-H Sportfishing Skill-a-thon

A 4-H Skill-a-thon may also be set up by a club or county as a group in person event while still maintaining the individual testing of each participant. The set up for multiple participants at a time can be in 6 separate stations around a large room or outdoor space.

The six stations would represent the six parts of the contest: Knot Tying, Tackle Assembly, Casting, Fish Identification, Fish Habitat & Conservation, and Fishing Ethics & Regulations. This set up would require at least one proctoring adult at each station to provide oversight and organization. More than one would be better depending on the size of your Skill-a-thon participant group. Individuals in a community who may be willing to help and have fishing/fish experience and credentials include the local game warden, a local fisheries biologist, a local fishing guide, anyone certified as a Texas Angler Education Instructor (many County Extension Agents and 4-H leaders have this training and certification), and anyone with fishing experience willing to help.

All adults who would like to help will need to read through the Skill-a-thon questions and answers and the Skill-a-thon Study Resources before the event since there are many ways to fish and ways to perform certain skills and answer certain questions. All answers to the Skill-a-thon must come from the posted Study Resources so that competition is the same across the state. The answer key will be provided to the adult proctor who organizes the event. This set up will require that the space between stations is enough and arrangement of the questions or skills is placed so not to give away answers from one participant to the next.

To make the event a better learning opportunity, plan to go through the stations with the total group of participants and provide the correct answers after all score sheets have been turned in and the contest is over.

Each Skill-a-thon participant must register themselves for the event on 4HOnline prior to the event. All Skill-a-thons must take place within specific dates (approximately 15 days) stated in the written information posted and sent to each registrant.

Resources to Assist in Locating Personnel Assistance for a Skill-a-thon:

- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Fisheries Biologists and Fisheries Facilities- <https://tpwd.texas.gov/fishboat/fish/management/biologist/>; Both freshwater and saltwater resources are included.
- Texas State Game Wardens by County - <https://tpwd.texas.gov/warden/game-warden-list.phtml>
- Texas State Parks - <https://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/parks-map>; These may be a good resource for qualified adult proctors or for a location to hold a Skill-a-thon.

Texas Angler Education Program

The 4-H Virtual Sportfishing Program Skill-a-thon is set up so that participants learn basic fishing knowledge and skills and align with the requirements of the Basic Certification of the Texas Angler Education Program. This certification could be worked into the offerings to each participant of a group Skill-a-thon event provided a Texas Angler Education Instructor is part of the team. Review the information regarding the Texas Angler Education Program and Instructor certification requirements at <https://tpwd.texas.gov/education/angler-education/teach-fishing> or attend a 4-H Sportfishing Project Leader Training where all adult participants receive A.E. Instructor certification.