



# 2026 TEXAS 4-H VIRTUAL SPORTFISHING PROGRAM

## Educational Opportunities

SPRING & SUMMER 2026

### TEXAS 4-H VIRTUAL SPORTFISHING PROGRAM

#### Program Highlights

**Zoom Educational Programs - No charge**  
 March 17, 24, & 31 and May 19, 26 & June 9 @ 5:30 pm  
 Registration required via Google <https://forms.gle/Rsvw78zdzdf4bMfV77>

**Freshwater & Saltwater Division Tournaments - \$50**  
 Fish in YOUR location across the state!  
 Spring: April 4-May 30      Summer: June 13-August 8  
 Register via 4HOnline at <https://texas.4honline.com>

**Texas 4-H Sportfishing Skill-a-thon Contest - \$5**  
 Spring: May 15 - 30      Summer: July 17-August 8

**Texas 4-H Sportfishing Angler Certification - No charge**  
 Participate in 3 educational programs, one tournament and one skill-a-thon

**NEW!** *New for 2026*

- Complimentary tail-pinching tool & Check-it-stik
- Saltwater Fishing 101 & Managing Fish Resources programs
- First Fish Species Caught - Angler News Spotlight
- Black Drum and Rio Grande Cichlids permitted

Questions? Contact  
 Dr. Jheri-Lynn McSwain at  
[jlmcswain@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:jlmcswain@ag.tamu.edu)

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.

**All information for the 2026 Texas 4-H Virtual Sportfishing program can be found at either site:**



### 2026 Texas 4-H Virtual Sportfishing

This Facebook page is a private group that you will need to receive permission to join. Already following? No need to rejoin!  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1202432833284039>



### Texas 4-H Sportfishing website

Information on Texas 4-H sportfishing programs can be found on this website. Check back on this site for official placings at the end of each tournament and skill-a-thon.  
<https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/projects/sportfishing/>

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# TEXAS 4-H VIRTUAL SPORTFISHING PROGRAM

Participate in some or all components of the program! See each section of this document to review the registration deadlines and rules of play for participation.

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians, youth participants and county agents to read and follow these guidelines as provided. The 2026 Texas 4-H Virtual Sportfishing Program provides the following educational opportunities for 4-H anglers and Clover Kids:

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# HOW TO PARTICIPATE

## Sportfishing Zoom Video Workshop Sessions

Short, informative programs with a Question-and-Answer session for youth and adults pertaining to the 2026 Texas 4-H Virtual Sportfishing Program will be provided. There is no cost to participate; however, you must register using this Google link

<https://forms.gle/Rsvw78zzdf4bMfV77>

### **March 17 and May 19 @ 5:30 pm – Program Orientation**

- Reviewing the program Rules of Play
- How to Use FishDonkey tournament app
- How to participate in the Skill-a-thon
- How to become certified as a Texas 4-H Sportfishing Angler or a Texas Parks & Wildlife Angler Instructor
- Q&A

**New!**

### **March 24 and May 26 @ 5:30 pm – Measuring & Handling Fish**

- Tips on Fish Identification
- Using a Check-it-Stik and Tail Pincher
- Measuring Freshwater and Saltwater Fish
- Responsible Handling of Fish
- Q&A

**New!**

### **March 31 and June 9 @ 5:30 pm – Fishing 101: Basic Skills to Get You Out in Freshwater and Saltwater Habitats**

- Equipment for Catching Freshwater and Saltwater Fish
- Knot Tying
- Lures and Bait for Freshwater and Saltwater Fish
- Q&A

**New!**

**Bonus video!** All registered participants will receive our new video: *How to Manage Your Fishing Resources*. Check out these tips on managing habitat and learn how to determine the number of fish in a pond (created just for 4-H youth).

Click the link below to register to participate in any or all of these live Zoom sessions or copy and paste this link in your browser:

<https://forms.gle/Rsvw78zzdf4bMfV77>

All programs will be recorded and emailed to registered participants.

# HOW TO PARTICIPATE

## Sportfishing Spring and Summer Tournaments

### Step 1: Enroll in Texas 4-H for 2025-2026

- Be enrolled in 4-H as a youth member (3<sup>rd</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grades) or Clover Kid (K – 2<sup>nd</sup> grades).
- If you are not in 4-H, join by setting up your family profile on 4HOnline at <https://texas.4honline.com> or contact your local county Extension agent for assistance with enrollment in your county 4-H program.
- Not sure who your county agent is? Click link to enter your county name and find contact information: <https://agriflifeextension.tamu.edu/counties/>

### Step 2: Register for the Spring and/or Summer Tournament

at <https://texas.4honline.com>

- In your 4-H profile, select **2026 Texas 4-H Virtual Sportfishing Tournament** from the event list.
- **4-H youth anglers (grades 3<sup>rd</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>):** Register for either the freshwater or saltwater division or both. The registration fee is per 4-H angler per **division** for each tournament. *Note: We are unable to issue any refunds once your payment has been submitted.*
  - Freshwater Division: \$50 Regular Registration      \$100 Late Registration
  - Saltwater Division: \$50 Regular Registration      \$100 Late Registration
- First-time registered 4-H anglers will receive a FREE official Check-it-Stik® and Perfect Pincher (tail pincher) by registering during the REGULAR registration period and if you have not previously received one in a past 4-H sportfishing tournament.
- Perfect Pinchers will be mailed to past 4-H sportfishing tournament participants (one per family).

**New!**

**Clover Kids (grades K-2<sup>nd</sup>)** participate for bragging rights and a certificate.

**New!**

- **First Fish Clover Kid Spotlight:** Photos of Clover Kids with their “big fish” can be posted to the **2026 Texas 4-H Virtual Sportfishing** Facebook page by completing this Google form: <https://forms.gle/aGgr8BzC8jHDZ8yH8>
  - Clover Kids are not eligible to compete and DO NOT set up a profile on the FishDonkey tournament app.
  - There is no fee for their participation, however, they must be registered on 4-H Online.
  - Clover Kids will receive a 4-H fishing lure at the conclusion of the tournament.



## 2026 Spring Tournament Dates

December 8 – March 19	Regular Registration open on 4-H Online <a href="https://texas.4honline.com">https://texas.4honline.com</a>
March 20 - April 30	Late Registration period
April 4	Spring tournament opens at 12:00 am
May 30	Spring tournament closes at 11:59 pm
June 18	Official placings posted on FB and website
June 25	Prizes emailed and/or mailed

## 2026 Summer Tournament Dates

March 1 – May 15	Regular Registration open on 4-H Online <a href="https://texas.4honline.com">https://texas.4honline.com</a>
May 16 – June 30	Late Registration period
June 13	Summer tournament opens at 12:00 am
August 8	Summer tournament closes at 11:59 pm
August 21	Official placings posted on FB and website
August 28	Prizes emailed and/or mailed

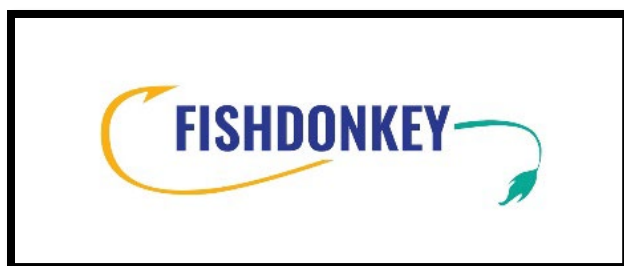
If you are a Clover Kid, SKIP TO STEP 4.

## Step 3: Download Tournament Judging App (4-H Anglers, only)

- 4-H Anglers: After your payment has been accepted in 4HOnline, go to [FishDonkey](#) to download the app to your mobile device and/or computer.
- There is no fee for participants to use this app.
- Set up ONE profile for each 4-H angler in FishDonkey using the **name of your child** as listed in 4HOnline (if more than one profile is uploaded for a 4-H angler it will be deleted. In addition, if a profile for a Clover Kid is set up, it will be deleted).
- Select the Division in which you registered in 4HOnline (Freshwater and/or Saltwater). If you registered for BOTH divisions, make sure you set up a profile in both.
  - 2026 **Spring** Texas 4-H Virtual Sportfishing Tournament – Freshwater
  - 2026 **Spring** Texas 4-H Virtual Sportfishing Tournament – Saltwater
  - 2026 **Summer** Texas 4-H Virtual Sportfishing Tournament – Freshwater
  - 2026 **Summer** Texas 4-H Virtual Sportfishing Tournament – Saltwater
- On the app, use the tutorial to practice how to measure and upload pics.
- Questions on setting up FishDonkey? See the sheet on the last page for additional information.

Set-up profile  
beginning December 8

Set-up profile  
beginning April 1



[www.fishdonkey.com](http://www.fishdonkey.com)



## Step 4: Fish the Tournament

To be successful in this 4-H tournament follow all posted Judging Rules on pages 7-11 of these guidelines.

### Spring Tournament

- On April 4, 2026, at 12:00 am the app will open for you to begin uploading your pictures of your fish to be posted to the leaderboard.
- The spring tournament closes on May 30, 2026 at 11:59 pm.

### Summer Tournament

- On June 13, 2026, at 12:00 am the app will open for you to begin uploading your pictures of your fish to be posted to the leaderboard.
- The summer tournament closes on August 8, 2026 at 11:59 pm.

## Tournament Supplies

- Rod and reel
- Bait and/or lure
- Phone or tablet to take your fish pics in FishDonkey.
- Check-it-Stik® measuring board
- Perfect Pincher tool (recommended)
- Fish net (recommended)

Already have a Check-it-Stik brand measuring board? You can use! Registered late? Purchase at fishing retail stores.

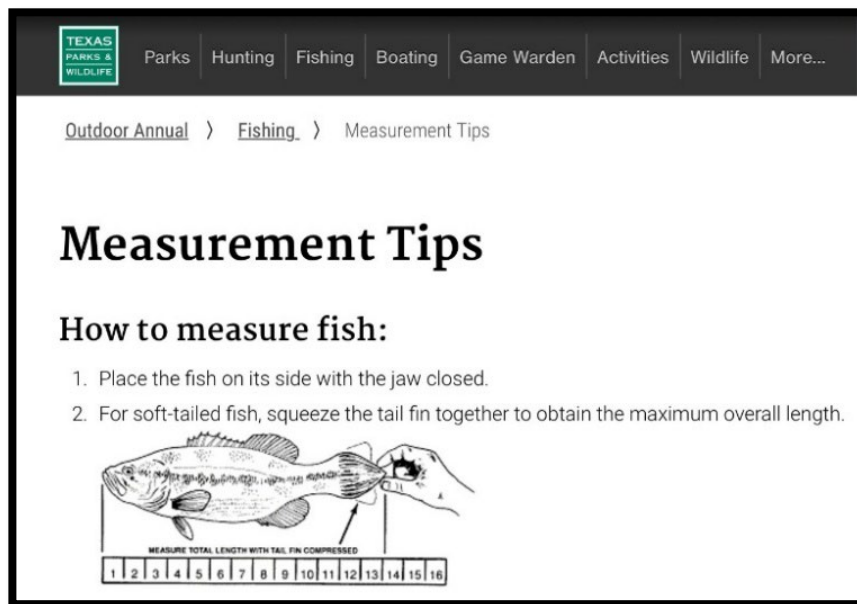


**4-H Anglers: Sign-up during REGULAR registration to get FREE!**

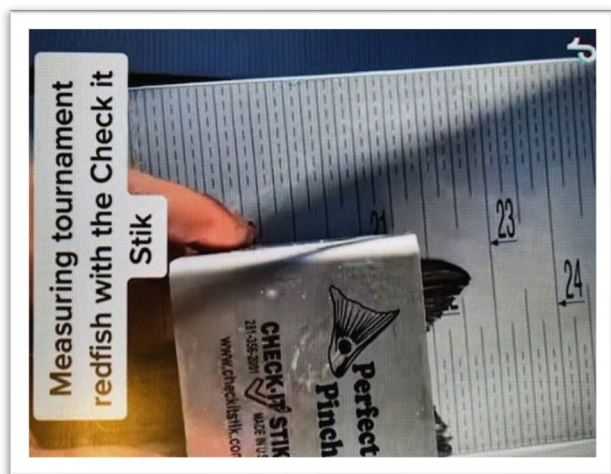


## How to Measure and Photograph Tournament Fish

As part of the learning experience and to comply with Texas Parks & Wildlife sportfishing regulations, 4-H youth should be familiar with the 2025-2026 Texas Outdoor Annual. We follow this regulatory agency's guidelines regarding **how to measure fish**.



<https://tpwd.texas.gov/regulations/outdoor-annual/fishing/>



Mouth closed & tailed manually pinched

**New!** Using Perfect Pincher to compress tail

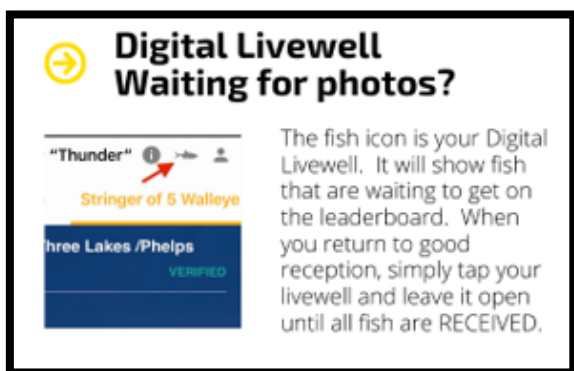
## Follow these steps to enter all fish (except catfish) for judging:

*Youth can utilize the help of other people to assist them in measuring and photographing*

1. Open the FishDonkey app.
2. Place fish on the Check-It-Stik® brand measuring board.
  - Lay all fish on their side to be photographed (except for catfish).
  - You may hold your fish on the Check-it-Stik, just be sure NOT to cover the mouth and tail with anything that blocks these views.
  - Ensure the snout is touching the front of the measuring board (where the 4-H clover is located).
  - Mouth of fish must be **closed** (you can hold it closed).
3. Use your Perfect Pincher tool to compress the tail or manually pinch the tail to a point to get maximum length.
4. Read the length of the fish in whole numbers and 2-digit decimal place.
5. Capture the picture of the whole fish on the Check-it-Stik, with mouth closed and tail compressed.
  - Photograph must be clear and measurement on board must be legible (watch out for glare from the sun).
  - Photos must be taken with the FishDonkey app open as this will timestamp the photo when taken.
6. Enter species and length of fish in FishDonkey
7. In FishDonkey, capture a hero pic of yourself and your fish.
  - Each photo submitted must also include a separate “hero” pic that documents the face of the youth participant with the fish caught (examples: posing, on measuring board, holding).
8. Pictures CANNOT be uploaded from your camera file. They MUST be taken with the FishDonkey app open. We WILL NOT accept photos emailed.



Example Hero Pic



Pics captured with the FishDonkey app open can be “pushed” through to load on the leaderboard by opening your digital live well in the app on a later date (they will be timestamped on the date taken).

Don't have internet to upload at your fishing spot? No problem, remember they are timestamped when you take them in the app so you can upload from the app when you have internet or even from a computer. Just make sure they are all pushed through FishDonkey before close of the tournament.



## Catfish qualification

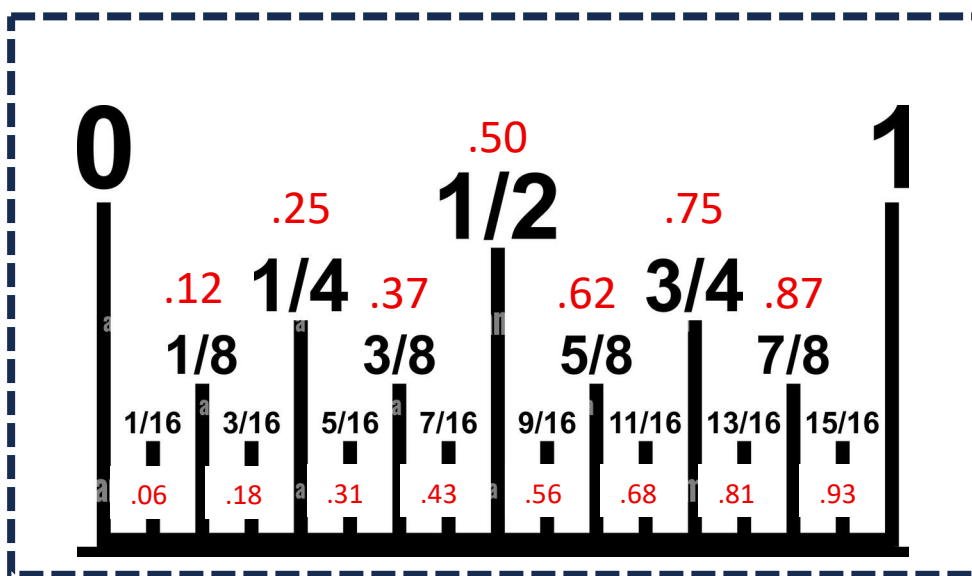
- Lay the catfish on its belly, on the Check-it-Stik, and use the Perfect Pincher tool or manually pinch the tail to a point to get maximum length.
- Catfish longer than the length of a Check-it-Stik should be measured on the measurement board in conjunction with a tape measure from the start of the board to the end of the fish. See example below.
  - i. Do not run the tape measure under the fish – the whole tape from beginning to end of tail must be visible.
  - ii. You must use the **video feature** in FishDonkey to document the measurement of your fish from the snout to tail – move slowly to ensure all is captured in the recording.



How to use Check-it-Stik with tape measure for fish longer than Check-it-Stik

## How to Read an Inch in Decimals

- Enter the length of your fish in whole number and 2-digit decimal place, i.e. 10.25
- Do not round up the numbers.
- The last black line that the end of the pinched tail touches is the measurement to be recorded.
- When fish are judged, the length you enter will be verified and confirmed. If length entered is more than documented, tournament judges will modify.



Tip: Cut out, put in plastic bag and take fishing for easy reference!

## Responsible Handling of Tournament Fish

Not every fish is a "keeper." You may catch a fish that's under legal size or too big to fit in your cooler. You may land a magnificent trophy and decide to return it to the water so that you — or some other lucky angler — will have a chance to catch that fish again. Whatever your reasons for choosing live release, you want to give your fish the best possible chance of survival.

### How to Begin

- Set the hook quickly to reduce likelihood that fish will swallow the bait.
- Play and land fish as quickly as possible. Playing fish to exhaustion can harm the fish.
- When fishing in deep water, bring fish in slowly to help it adjust to changing pressure.
- Consider using barbless hooks.
- Keep your release tools close by.

### Handling Your Catch

Proper handling protects both you and the fish. Some fish have sharp fins or teeth that can cut you. See Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) [Angler Education pages](#) for tips on how to handle different species.

- Minimize the time the fish is out of the water (no longer than you can hold your breath.)
- Leave fish in the water if you can and use a tool to remove the hook.
- If possible, keep the fish from thrashing without using a net. If a net is required, use a rubber-mesh landing net instead of abrasive nylon.
- Avoid removing the slime/mucus layer, which protects fish from parasites and infections.
  - Try to keep fish off the ground or floor of a boat.
  - Use a wet rag or glove, or wet hands before handling fish.
  - Turn fish on its back and cover its eyes to calm it.
  - Don't put your fingers in the eyes or gills.
- Smaller fish (< 5 pounds) can be vertically held by the lower jaw, either by hand or with grippers. Hold larger fish horizontally and support with two hands.

### Removing the Hook

- Use needle-nose pliers, hemostats, or a hook remover to remove the hook and protect your hands.
- Back the hook out the opposite way it went in.
- [Watch this video](#) to learn how to remove a hook embedded deep within the fish.
- For a larger fish in the water, slip a gaff around the leader and slide it to the hook. Lift the gaff upward while pulling downward on the leader.
- Do not jerk or pop a leader to break it. This can injure vital organs in the fish.

### Letting it Go


- Place fish in the water, gently supporting the mid-section and tail until it swims away.
- Resuscitate an exhausted fish by moving it or facing it into the current, gently forcing water into the mouth and over the gills.
- Watch the fish when released. If it doesn't swim away, recover it and try again.

## Tournament Judging Criteria

Judges will review the fish posted to the FishDonkey leaderboards to ensure the correct species is posted, length of fish is accurate, and that all rules have been followed. If these criteria are met, the fish will be “unofficially verified.” After this process, the tournament director will review the decisions made by the judges to make the official placings. **Note:** *leaderboard postings are not FINAL until official placings are released after each tournament.*

### Reasons for Disqualification

**Numbers below (1-8) will be listed on the leaderboard comment section in FishDonkey for feedback by judges as to why a fish was NOT qualified.**


1. Evidence of fish caught by means other than rod and reel.
2. Incorrect fish species entered in a category.
3. Fish not measured on a Check-it-Stik brand measuring board.
4. Mouth open (small gap between lips is permitted).
5. Mouth/snout of fish not touching the front of Check-it-Stik.
-  6. Tail fin not manually pinched to a point according to TPWD guidelines or not compressed using the Perfect Pincher tool.
7. Blurry picture or cannot see measuring numbers in photo or entire body of fish is not in the photograph.
8. No hero picture submitted.

Tip: Cut out, put in plastic bag and take fishing for easy reference!

### Other

Fish lengths posted **less** than their actual length will be verified as that entry length.

### Clarification of Rules and Judging Protests

 Need clarification of a judging rule or verification made? No problem...submit your request via Goggle. The tournament director will respond, via email address provided, within 3 days of submission.

Don't agree with a judging verification? Each family may submit up to THREE protests per 4-H year via Goggle. The judge, tournament director, and State 4-H Natural Resources Specialist will review and respond, via email address provided, within 30 days of submission. All decisions made by the Texas 4-H Virtual Sportfishing committee are final.

For rule clarification or to submit a protest, use this Google link: <https://forms.gle/NEcjt6vcVi1Gbans7>

## State Fishing Regulations and Angler Safety

- There are bag limits and length requirements on keeping fish caught in Texas. It is the responsibility of the angler to read and abide by these regulations. Be sure to follow all Texas regulations regarding fishing licenses, bag limits, length requirements and other rules  
<https://tpwd.texas.gov/regulations/outdoor-annual/fishing/>
- If you catch a fish that is shorter than the legal limits to keep, you MAY photograph and use in the tournament. However, as soon as possible after taking the photo, release the fish back into the water so that you are abiding by state fishing regulations.
- Each 4-H family entered is responsible for the safety of youth anglers and Clover Kids during the tournaments.

## Tournament Placings and Awards

### Placings and Contests

- Unofficial individual placings will be posted on the contest leaderboards as fish are caught, posted, and verified that the picture was received for judging.
- You will be able to see your posting in real time. Official placings will be posted to the Texas 4-H Sportfishing webpage and the 2026 Texas 4-H Virtual Sportfishing Facebook page after close of each tournament.
- Each Division (Freshwater and Saltwater) has individual contests based upon species and judging criteria.
- In order to encourage a greater number of placings by individual youth, a three-placing limit will be used on all top awards for each contest and division.
- A Texas 4-H Virtual Sportfishing Grand Champion for both Freshwater and Saltwater divisions will be announced at the end of the spring and summer tournaments. The winner in each division will be determined on a grand total of inches of longest one fish of each species caught in the Slam contest in both divisions.
  - **Saltwater Slam Grand Champion:** longest seatrout + longest black drum + longest redfish caught in the spring and/or summer tournaments. Prize: 4-H Fishing belt buckle
  - **Freshwater Slam Grand Champion:** longest bass + longest catfish + longest one panfish caught in the spring and/or summer tournaments. Prize: 4-H Fishing belt buckle







### 2025 Slam Grand Champions

## Awards and Prizes

- Awards and prizes will be mailed or emailed to the address listed in 4HOnline, during event registration, after completion of the spring program and the summer program.
- All awards and prizes to be determined by the 4-H Virtual Sportfishing committee. Awards are determined by the number of individuals registered for this tournament.
- Prizes can be gift cards from Bass Pro, Academy, other fishing-based stores. Additional prizes such as fishing equipment, lures, bait, shirts, caps, and cash will be awarded from sponsors for specific contests.
- Clover Kids participate for bragging rights and a certificate.
- Entry via 4-H Online gives permission to use the participant's name and photograph as needed for marketing and promotion purposes.

**New!**

## How to Place in the Tournament

- Use a rod and reel to catch your fish.
- Check that you have caught an allowable fish for this tournament (fish ID).
- Use a Check-it-Stik measuring board to capture the length of the fish.
- Completely close the mouth of the fish with your hand.
- Ensure the snout of the fish is touching the front of Check-it-Stik (portion that is at a 90-degree angle).
- Completely pinch the tail fin of the fish with your hand or the Perfect Pincher tool.
- Ensure the sun is not creating a glare or your camera is still while taking the fish pic on Check-it-Stik.
- Take that awesome picture of yourself to upload with your fish pic into FishDonkey (hero pic)!

## Questions

- For 4HOnline and registration questions, contact Carolyn Walton at the District 5 office via email at [carolyn.walton@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:carolyn.walton@ag.tamu.edu) or by phone at 903-834-6191.
- For program or FishDonkey questions, contact Dr. Jheri-Lynn McSwain, Extension Program Specialist – District 5 via email at [jlmcswain@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:jlmcswain@ag.tamu.edu) or by phone at 903-847-0598. Please leave a detailed message.
- For rules of play clarification or to submit a tournament judging protest, use this Google link: <https://forms.gle/NEcjt6vcVilGbans7>

**New!**



## Freshwater Division Tournament

### Species

- You may enter fish from the specific 3 groups and species listed below for the Freshwater Division.
  - Bass: Largemouth, smallmouth, spotted, Guadalupe (hybrid striped bass are not permitted).
  - New!** ➤ Panfish group: black or white crappie, Rio Grande cichlid, sunfish (warmouth, bantam, green dollar, red spotted, redbreast, longear, redear, orangespotted, bluegill, and sunfish hybrids)
  - Catfish: channel, blue, flathead
- Other fish species entered, other than those listed above, will be disqualified.
- You may enter all of one variety or a combination of varieties for judging.
- All fish must be caught by rod and reel** (no trotlines, noodles, etc.).
- See link below to learn how to identify specific fish species in Texas.  
<https://tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/water/aquaticspecies/inland.phtml>

### Location

- New!** Fish anywhere permitted by law (freshwater, ponds, stock tanks, rivers, lakes, etc.). All fish submitted for judging must have been caught in Texas waters. For boundary lakes/rivers, fish must be landed on Texas side.
- Fishing from a pier, edge of pond/lake/river, or boat is allowed for this event As long as the location is permitted by law. If private land, ensure you have landowner permission to fish.

### Length Limits by Species

<https://tpwd.texas.gov/regulations/outdoor-annual/fishing/freshwater-fishing/>

### Freshwater Judging Contests – More Ways to Win!

- Each of the pictures entered have multiple ways to qualify to win prizes.
- Each of the four contests have a separate leaderboard on FishDonkey. When you take a picture in the FishDonkey app, it will automatically be entered into the contest in which it is eligible based upon species you select.
- The best part of FishDonkey is the app's ability to AUTO CULL your catches. Enter all your pictures and the system only adds your longest catch to the individual contest leaderboard.
- No need to upload your pictures for each individual contest.

#### Bass Family Identification



Smallmouth Bass



Largemouth Bass



Guadalupe Bass



Spotted Bass

#### Catfish Family Identification



Flathead Catfish



Blue Catfish



Channel Catfish

## Panfish Group Identification

**New!**

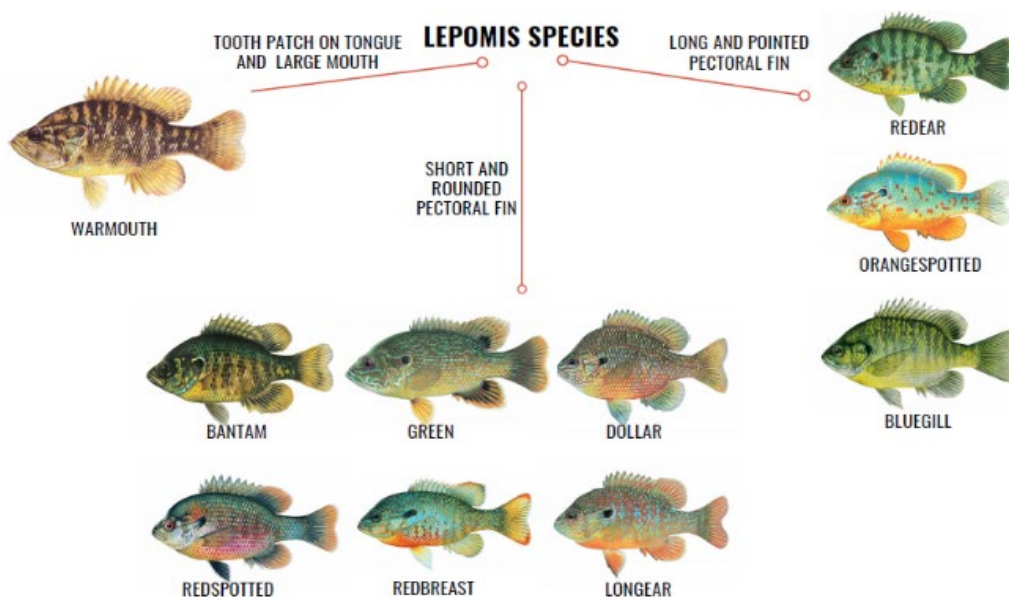
Rio Grande Cichlid



Black Crappie



White Crappie



## Leaderboard Contests

1. Longest Bass – prize for one Longest Bass, both tournaments – taxidermy replica mount – sponsored by Pond Boss
2. Longest Catfish
3. Stringer of 5 Panfish
4. Freshwater Slam (catching one of all three species) – prize one Slam Grand Champion Belt Buckle, both tournaments – sponsored by Pond Boss
5. Weekly Wild Card (random weekly drawing from all fish entered) – partially sponsored by Bass Pro Shops

**New!****New!**

## 2026 Freshwater Division Sponsors



## Saltwater Division Tournament

### Species

- You may enter fish from any of the 3 species listed below for the Saltwater Division. **All fish must be caught with a rod and reel.**
  - Spotted seatrout (*Cynoscion nebulosus*)
  - Redfish (Red drum) (*Sciaenops ocellatus*)
  - Black drum (*Pogonias cromis*)
- You may enter all of one variety or a combination of varieties for judging.
- See link below to learn how to identify specific fish species in Texas.

<https://www.takemefishing.org/fish-species/>



Black Drum



Spotted Seatrout



Redfish (Red Drum)

### Location

- All waters within 9 nautical miles of the Texas Coastline as permitted by Texas law
- All fish submitted for judging must have been caught in Texas waters. For boundary lakes/rivers, fish must be landed on Texas side.

### Length Limits by Species

<https://tpwd.texas.gov/regulations/outdoor-annual/fishing/saltwater-fishing/>

### Saltwater Judging Contests – More Ways to Win!

- Each of the pictures entered have multiple ways to qualify to win prizes. Each of the four contests below have a separate leaderboard on FishDonkey. When you post the picture of your fish it will automatically be entered into the leaderboard contest in which it is eligible based upon species.
- The best part of FishDonkey is the app's ability to AUTO CULL your catches. Enter all your pictures and the system only adds your longest catch to the individual contest leaderboard.
- No need to upload your pictures for each individual contest.

### Leaderboard Contests

Longest Redfish (Red Drum)	Saltwater Slam (catch one of all 3 species)
Longest Black Drum	Weekly Wild Card (random weekly drawing of all fish entered)
Longest Spotted Seatrout	

### 2026 Saltwater Division Sponsors



# FishDonkey Tournament App Tip Sheet

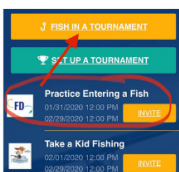


## How to Join: Spring Texas 4-H

1. Download the FishDonkey App (or scan QR)
2. Tap FISH IN A TOURNAMENT
3. Tap the magnify glass and type in: **Spring Texas 4-H**
4. When it populates, follow prompts to JOIN NOW.



## Practice First



Join the tournament called: PRACTICE. It may already appear on your home screen. Get familiar with the app's camera and video. This will also ensure you've given the app proper permissions.

## What do I do when the event starts?

Open the FishDonkey App.  
That's the home screen.  
Tap on the event name.  
Tap on Leaderboard.



## Stringer / Grand Slam

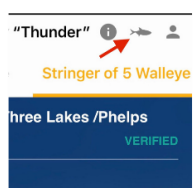
Enter each fish one at a time as you catch them. The app will auto-cull (toss out smaller fish when you enter a bigger one). You can upgrade the entire time. The Grand Slam will show your total for the biggest of each of your 3 species.

## Required Photos

1. Photo of the fish on the measuring board
2. Photo of you holding the fish



## Digital Livewell Waiting for photos?



The fish icon is your Digital Livewell. It will show fish that are waiting to get on the leaderboard. When you return to good reception, simply tap your livewell and leave it open until all fish are RECEIVED.

## FISHDONKEY TIP SHEET



## HOW TO ENTER A FISH

1. Tap ENTER A FISH / LEADERBOARD
2. That will open your camera. Take your required pics by tapping on the camera icon.
3. When you are finished taking all the pics and video, tap the checkmark.
4. Enter the species and the length of your fish.
5. Tap SUBMIT.

Don't panic if you cannot see your name or photos on the leaderboard. Those fish entries are simply waiting patiently to swim upstream to an internet connection. Tap on your Digital Livewell (fish icon) and you will be able to see that your fish are waiting.

## No Internet?

Open the app before you head out of range. Tap on the name of your tournament on the app home screen. That's all it takes to load your event for the day. Enter fish through the button ENTER A FISH. Your entries will be held in the fish icon. Open your Digital Livewell when you return to reception (fish icon)

## FISHDONKEY TECH SUPPORT

Support@FishDonkey.com  
Profile icon--> Contact Us  
(218) 249-0847



# HOW TO PARTICIPATE

## Sportfishing Skill-a-thon Contest

The Texas 4-H Virtual Sportfishing Program Skill-a-thon is a six-part contest that is designed to individually test the knowledge and skills of each youth who participates. Each 4-H age division (Junior, Intermediate, Senior) has a specific set of knowledge and demo skills required to be completed.

The Skill-a-thon is set up for each individual registrant to receive the proper set by age division to complete in a home environment while being proctored by an adult family member or otherwise. The knowledge portions have no time limit but must be completed in one sitting. However, the skills portions do have specific time limits and number of attempt limits per skill which are provided on each skill description.

The proctoring adult will complete and sign the score sheet per individual and email it to 4-H to be tabulated into the statewide scoring program. Links for the study resources for the Skill-a-thon are posted below and on the 4-H Sportfishing project webpage under the titles: 'Events and Activities' and 'Virtual Sportfishing Program'.

### Step 1: 4-H Enrollment

- Be enrolled in 4-H as a youth member (3<sup>rd</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grades) for the 2025-2026 year.
- If you are not in 4-H, join by setting up your family profile on 4HOnline at <https://texas.4honline.com> or contact your local county Extension agent for assistance with enrollment in your county 4-H program.
- Not sure who your county agent is? Click this link to enter your county name and find contact information: <https://agriflifeextension.tamu.edu/counties/>

### Step 2: Skill-a-thon Contest Registration

- Register to participate at <https://texas.4honline.com>
- In your 4-H profile, select **2026 Texas 4-H Virtual Sportfishing Skill-a-thon – Spring (Summer)** from the event list.
- Registration fee is per 4-H angler for each Skill-a-thon. Clover Kids are not eligible to compete in this event. ***Note:** We are unable to issue any refunds once your payment has been submitted.*
  - Spring Skill-a-thon    \$5                      Register December 8 – April 30, 2026
  - Summer Skill-a-thon    \$5                      Register March 1 – June 30, 2026
- No Late Registration Dates
- **Skill-a-thon Contest Dates**
  - Spring: May 15-30, 2026
  - Summer: July 24-August 8, 2026



### Step 3: Skill-a-thon Contest

- The fishing skills and knowledge-based quiz will be emailed to those registered in the Skill-a-thon on May 15 (spring contest) and July 24 (summer contest).
  - Email certified skill-a-thon scorecards to [jlmcswain@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:jlmcswain@ag.tamu.edu) by the following dates:
    - Spring Skill-a-thon scorecards must be received by May 30, 2026 at 11:59 p.m.
    - Summer Skill-a-thon scorecards must be received by August 8, 2026 at 11:59 p.m.
- Results of the contest will be released and published via Facebook and 4-H website by June 23, 2026 for spring and by August 24, 2026 for summer.

### Hosting a County-Level Sportfishing Skill-a-thon



A Skill-a-thon may also be set up by a club or county as a group 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.

## Study Resources

**New!** Use the following links to study for the sportfishing skill-a-thon. Knowledge quiz questions will be generated from these resources:

- [TPWD Fish Species Fact Sheets](#)
- [TPWD Learn to Fish: Basic Guide for the Beginning Angler](#)
- [TPWD Outdoor Annual App](#)
- [TPWD Outdoor Annual Fishing Regulations](#)

## Texas Angler Education Program

**New!** 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.

This one-day training will cover how to begin a 4-H Sportfishing project in a local county or club. Participants will receive two different curricula and numerous other resources as well as become certified as instructors in the Texas Angler Education Program through Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The training is for anyone, regardless of current fishing knowledge and experience, who would like to learn more about fishing and how to use the activity as a youth project.

Contact your local county Extension agent for more information and upcoming training dates offered in your area.

Training dates and locations are posted quarterly on the State 4-H website at:

<https://texas4h.tamu.edu/projects/sportfishing/>



**TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION**

**TX 4-H NATURAL RESOURCES PROGRAM**

**4-H Sportfishing Project Leader Training**

**November 8, 2025**  
**College Station, Brazos County**

This training is for anyone who would like to lead this project in their local club or county regardless of knowledge and experience.

**PARTICIPANTS WILL ALSO RECEIVE TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT ANGLER EDUCATION INSTRUCTOR CERTIFICATION**

Come join us for a hands-on, activity-based training to learn how to start this project. Registration is open on 4-H Online September 28 - October 26.

Registration fee - \$30; includes lunch, certification, and curriculum.

Training - Saturday 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

Registration open to adult 4-H volunteers, Senior division 4-H members, and County Extension Agents/Program Assistants.

All registrations will remain in pending status until registration period closes.

All registrants will receive more details in an email.

Contact Larry Hysmith with questions - [lhysmith@tamu.edu](mailto:lhysmith@tamu.edu)

The members of Texas A&M AgLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunities throughout Texas A&M AgLife. <http://aglifetexas.tamu.edu/life/identity/equal-opportunity-and-access-to-programs/>

# HOW TO PARTICIPATE

## Sportfishing Certification Program

### 2026 Texas 4-H Sportfishing Angler Certification

4-H youth desiring to become a 4-H Certified Sportfishing Angler will complete all three of the following components:

- Fish in either the spring and/or summer tournament and upload at least ONE qualifying fish and hero pic through FishDonkey.
- Participate in all THREE Zoom video workshops (live or watching the recording) and completing the Qualtrics knowledge survey for each program.
- Compete in the annual spring or summer virtual Sportfishing Skill-a-thon and remit your completed scorecard.



All information for the 2026 Texas 4-H Virtual Sportfishing program can be found here:



### 2026 Texas 4-H Virtual Sportfishing

This Facebook page is a private group that you will need to receive permission to join. Already following? No need to rejoin!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1202432833284039>



### Texas 4-H Sportfishing website

All information on Texas 4-H sportfishing programs can be found here. Check back on this webpage for official placings at the end of each tournament and skill-a-thon.

<https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/projects/sportfishing/>

- For 4HOnline and registration questions, contact Carolyn Walton at the District 5 office via email at [carolyn.walton@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:carolyn.walton@ag.tamu.edu) or by phone at 903-834-6191.
- For program or FishDonkey questions, contact Dr. Jheri-Lynn McSwain, Extension Program Specialist – District 5 via email at [jlmcswain@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:jlmcswain@ag.tamu.edu) or by phone at 903-847-0598. Please leave a detailed message.
- For rules of play clarification or to submit a tournament judging protest, use this Google link: <https://forms.gle/NEcjt6vcVi1Gbars7>