

# FISHERMAN'S HANDBOOK

A VIRGINIA FISHING EDUCATION AND PRESERVATION FIELD GUIDE

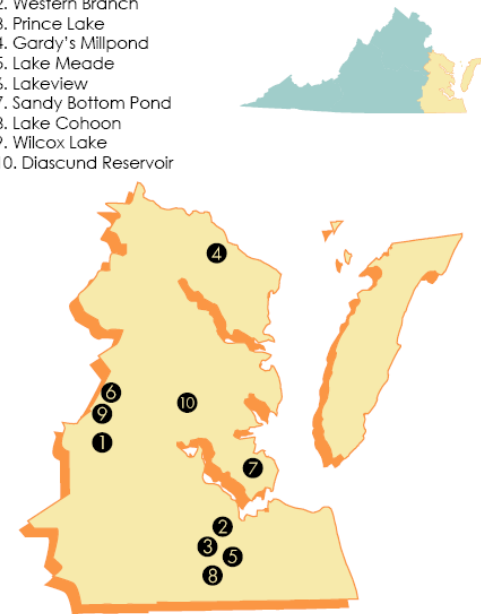


## SOUTHEAST-TIDEWATER REGION

Here is a list of the best lakes for fishing ranked by the Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries.

### Region 1

1. Lake Chesdin
2. Western Branch
3. Prince Lake
4. Gardy's Millpond
5. Lake Meade
6. Lakeview
7. Sandy Bottom Pond
8. Lake Cohoon
9. Wilcox Lake
10. Diascund Reservoir



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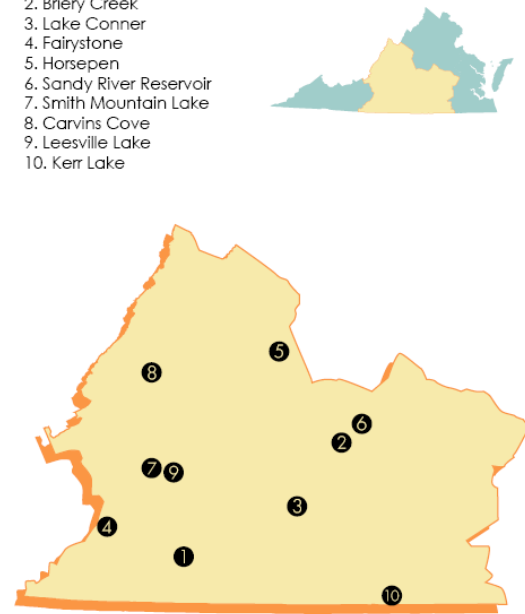
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## SOUTH-CENTRAL REGION

Here is a list of the best lakes for fishing in the South-Central region. This region is home of the largest lake in the state, Kerr Lake.

### Region 2

1. Burton Lake
2. Briery Creek
3. Lake Conner
4. Fairystone
5. Horsepen
6. Sandy River Reservoir
7. Smith Mountain Lake
8. Carvins Cove
9. Leesville Lake
10. Kerr Lake



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## LAKE ANNA

AREA: 20.31 mi<sup>2</sup>  
9,600 acres  
MAX DEPTH: 80 feet

Louisa County, VA  
Spotsylvania County, VA  
Orange County, VA

**MOST POPULAR FISH:**  
Striped bass, largemouth bass,  
walleye, bluegill, yellow perch,  
white perch, catfish, crappie

### ABOUT:

The Lake Anna Reservoir was formed by the creation of the North Anna Dam in 1972. The lake is used as a cooling source for the North Anna Nuclear Generating Stations. This creates a "cool" side and a "hot" side. The water near the reactors are noticeably warmer, which causes fish to feed more consistently. This also allows for recreation activities and better fishing all year round. The "hot" side is private, while the cool side is public.

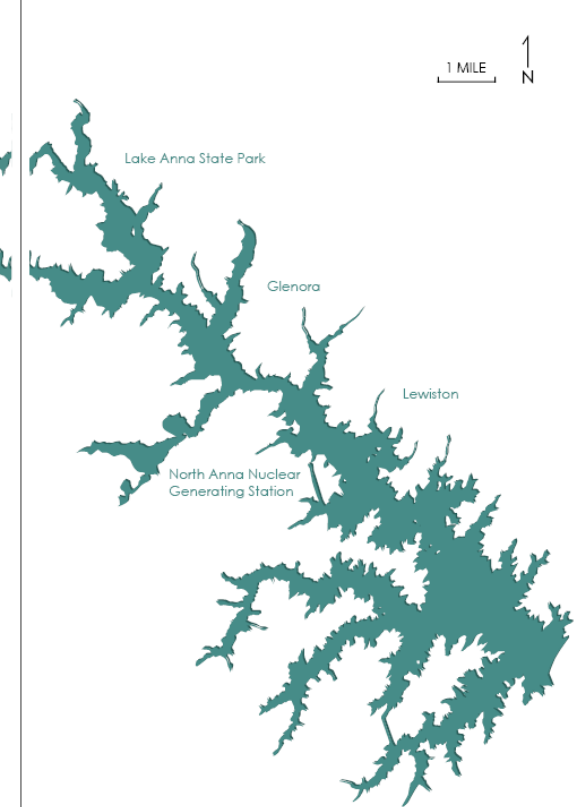
### TIPS:

Wood, brush piles, and other cover are a consistent way to find bass and other species. Jigs and swim-baits are often go-to artificial baits for bass and crappie.

For more information and boat landing locations, visit us online at [www.dgif.virginia.gov/waterbody/lake-anna](http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/waterbody/lake-anna).

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MAPS

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## QUICK CHECK-LIST

Here is a quick check-list of everything you might want to bring, either out of the boat or fishing from land.

- License and Permits
- Fishing Gear
- First Aid Kit
- Drinking Water
- Life Jacket\*
- Sound Producing Device\*
- Fire Extinguisher\*
- Visual Distress Signals\*
- Check Navigation Lights\*

Remember to be careful with things like cell phones and keys, as they do not float! Many people bring along **plastic, sealable bags** to keep their valuables in. Sunglasses may also be useful.

\*Boat Required Only

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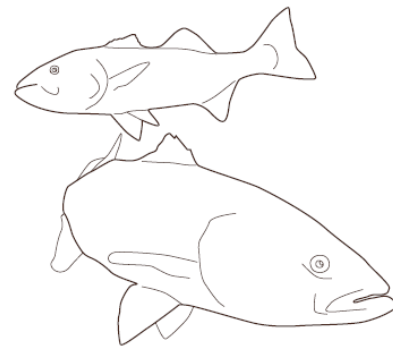
## CHAPTER THREE: WILDLIFE INTRODUCTION TO WILDLIFE

Virginia has a wide variety of animal and plant species that makes its fishing very unique. This chapter focuses on fish identification, plant identification, and other wildlife.

### FISH SPECIES

Virginia is home to over 50 unique species of fish. Some are bait fish that do not get larger than 5 inches long, while others, like the catfish, can get as large as 60 inches.

For a full, detailed list of all of the fish species in Virginia and where to find them, you can visit the VDGF at [www.dgif.virginia.gov/wildlife/fish](http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/wildlife/fish).



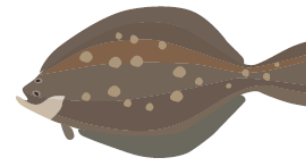
WILDLIFE

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## SALT WATER SPECIES

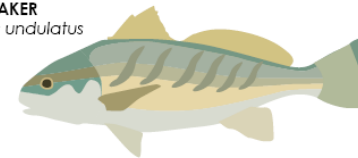
There are over 50 species found in the salt waters in Virginia. Many of them migrate through the Chesapeake Bay throughout the year, while others stay off of the coast year round. For many of these species, you will need a large boat and heavy-duty gear. Pictured here are some of the more common salt water species.

### FLOUNDER *Paralichthys dentatus*



Rounded, flat body is brown on one side, the left side, and white on the other side; both eyes appear on the brown (left) side of the fish; caudal fin is convex and the mouth features sharp, cone-like teeth; summer flounder feature five ocellated spots on their brown side, three tending to form a triangle just above the base of the tail.

### ATLANTIC CROAKER *Micropogonias undulatus*

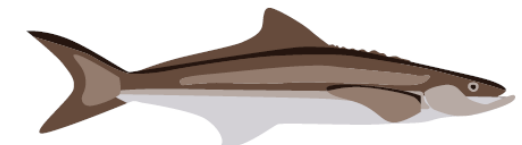


Silvery color overall with a white belly; often has a faint bronze or golden cast, with yellowish fins; back often has small brassy spots, that align into wavy lines down the fish's sides; underslung jaw features 3 to 5 pairs of barbels under the chin; caudal fin is convex in shape; gill cover is hard and sharp

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### COBIA *Rachycentron canadum*



Large, long fish which is dark, chocolate brown on the back and sides fading to a white belly; juveniles often display a brown back with a white horizontal stripe, a very dark stripe and a second white stripe down the sides; the tail is deeply forked and the first dorsal fin is absent (replaced by 7 to 9 short spines) but they feature a pronounced second dorsal fin; the lower jaw protrudes past the upper jaw.

### TAUTOG *Tautoga onitis*



A thick-bodied fish characterized by thick lips, blunt snout, and large, irregular teeth (incisors in front, molars in the rear); coloration is varied from a chocolate brown, to gray or a blackish olive on the back and sides with a white belly; some fish have irregular blotches on the side, but this mottling pattern, often associated with spawning activity, is not present in all individuals; males have a more blunt head, a more pronounced white chin, and a distinct white spot on their side.

WILDLIFE

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## FRESHWATER SPECIES

### LARGEMOUTH BASS *Micropterus salmoides*



Basically dark greenish above fading to a whitish belly, but vary depending on the water it lives in. Shows a series of dark blotches that form a dark horizontal band along its midline to its tail. Named because of its big mouth. Upper jaw extends well beyond the eye. Dorsal fin deeply notched. Average weight is 2 to 4 lbs., with up to 10 lbs. occurring in some waters.

### SMALLMOUTH BASS *Micropterus dolomieu*



Coppery-brown above, with greenish-brown sides with darker vertical bars. Three dark bars radiate from the eye on the cheek and gill cover. Dorsal fin is not as deeply notched as the largemouth. Upper jaw extends back only in line with the middle of the eye. A 4 or 5 lb. fish is considered a trophy.

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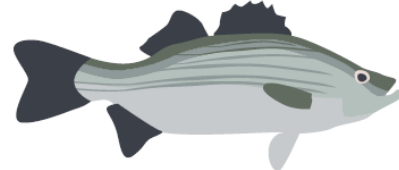
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### SPOTTED BASS *Micropterus punctulatus*



Much like the largemouth and the smallmouth, it is called the "in-between" species. It is distinguished from the smallmouth by the dark, blotchy lateral band from head to tail. The back of spotted bass' upper jaw lines up with the middle rear of the eye, while largemouth jaws extends past the eye. It derives its name from the black spots on its belly scales. Most are about a 1 lb. to 2lb.

### WHITE BASS *Morone chrysops*



Light greenish back, light yellowish-green to silver sides to a silvery-white below. 6 to 8 horizontal faint stripes; stripes below lateral line are broken; the first stripe below the lateral line is not complete to tail. Deep-bodied with distinctively arched back, considerably smaller than its striped bass cousin. Single spine on gill cover; variable patch of teeth on tongue. Commonly reaches 1/2 to 2 lbs.

WILDLIFE

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## OTHER WILDLIFE



Virginia is also home to many reptiles and other species. Painted turtles, the American water shrew, bobcats, carpenter frogs, and the common mink; these are just of few of the animals that are native to Virginia. The VDGF helps the preservation of these animals by tracking their numbers and keeping their habitats intact.

While fishing, you can help preserve Virginia's wildlife by picking up trash and litter and by not leaving fishing line or hooks in the water. Hooks in fresh water can take up to 50 years to rust and fall apart. Fish are naturally able to dislodge most hooks in their mouths and throats. Try not to leave hooks and baits in waterways, as they are often perceived as food and may harm other wildlife.

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## DANGERS: THINGS TO WATCH FOR

There are a few native animals and plants in Virginia that are poisonous. Be careful around the following:

### Snakes

Copperhead



Rough Earth Snake



### Spiders

Black Widow Spider



Brown Recluse



### Poisonous Plants

Poison Hemlock



Poison Ivy



Giant Hogweed

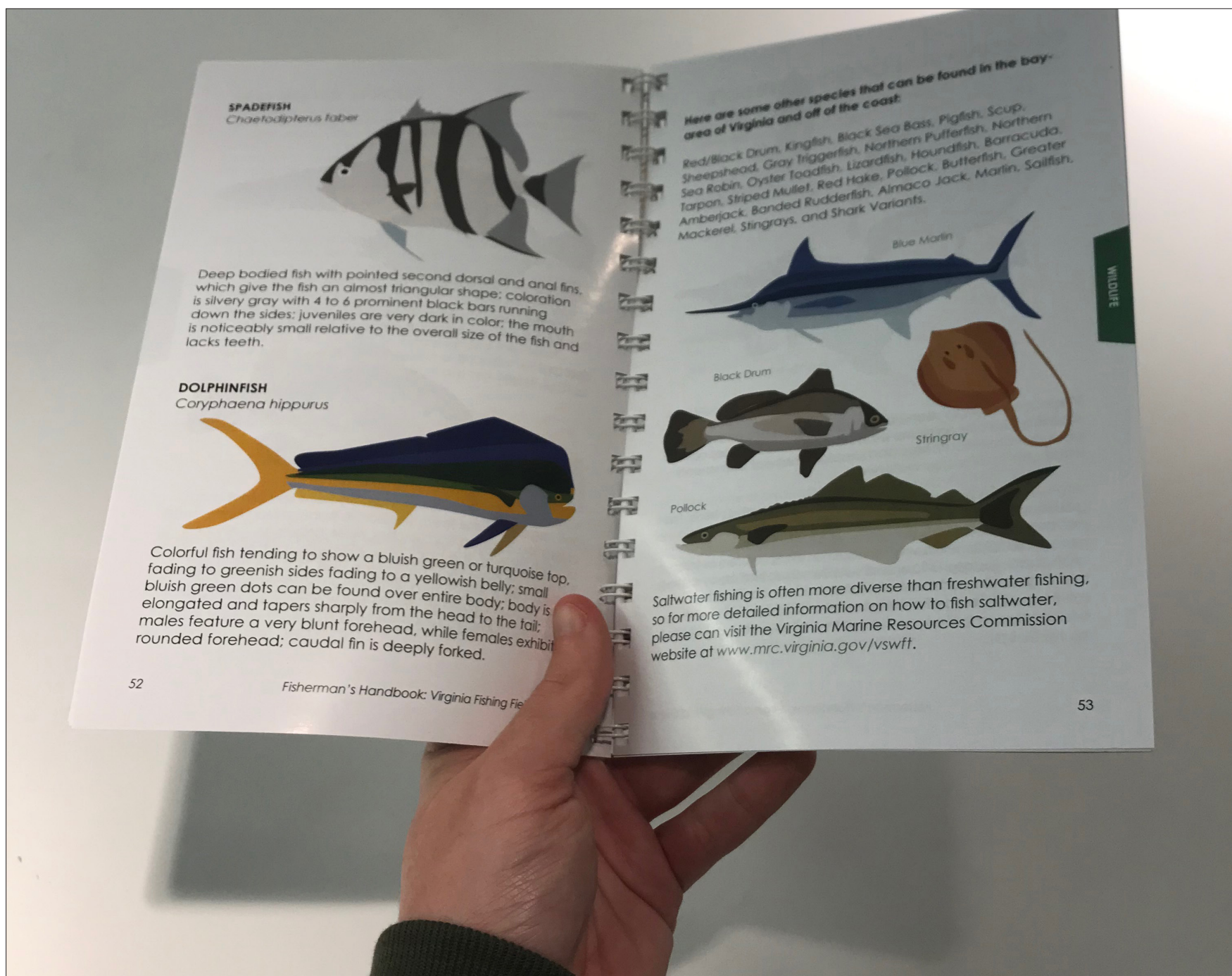
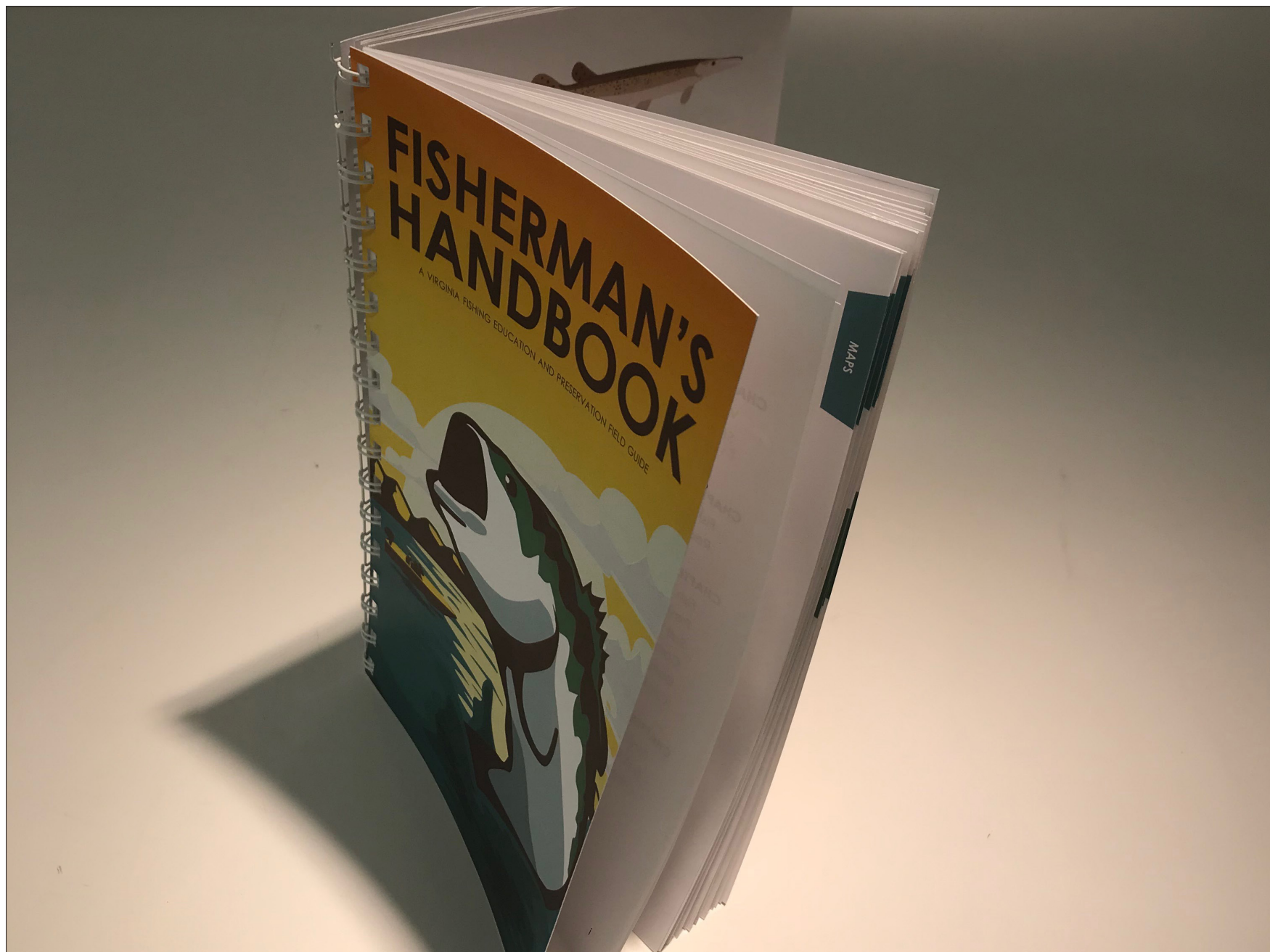


Contact with poisonous plants and animals can be dangerous. For appropriate medical advice call the National Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222.

WILDLIFE

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# CAPTURE

**LEFTOVER LURES AND LINE  
KILL THOUSANDS  
OF FISH AND BIRDS EACH YEAR...**

**HERE IS WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP:**

- If you have to break off line, follow it to the start of the snag before breaking the line.
- Use wire, barb-less hooks rather than stainless steel hooks.
- Change your fishing line regularly.
- If you find a lure or line, collect it so that it doesn't harm wildlife.
- Remember, waterways are a shared resource; keep them clean and pristine for everyone.

# CAUTION

**LINE IN PROPELERS  
CAN COST UP TO  
\$2500  
TO REPAIR...**

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- Check your prop regularly, and try to stay in deeper water.
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# CAPTURE

**PLASTIC AND TRASH  
KILL THOUSANDS  
OF FISH AND BIRDS EACH YEAR...**

**HERE IS WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP:**

- If you have to break off line, follow it to the start of the snag before breaking the line.
- Do not litter. If you see trash while fishing, be sure to clean it up.
- Recycle and compost.
- If you find a lure or line, collect it so that it doesn't harm wildlife.
- Remember, waterways are a shared resource; keep them clean and pristine for everyone.

# CAUTION

**HOOKS CAN TAKE  
UP TO 40 YEARS  
TO BREAK DOWN IN FRESH WATER...**

**HERE IS WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP:**

- Retrieve as many hooks/lures as possible while fishing.
- Avoid fishing in swimming or high-traffic areas.
- Use wire, barb-less hooks rather than stainless steel hooks.
- Change your fishing line regularly.
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# KIDS FISHING INSTRUCTIONAL COURSE

HOSTED BY FISHRIGHT



FREE • OPEN TO PUBLIC • APPROVED INSTRUCTORS

March 1, 2019 | 2PM  
Holly Grove Marina  
Lake Gaston, Bracey, VA

Bring your own fishing equipment, and join us for a day of learning about fishing and safety techniques. The course is a great way to learn how to catch fish and respect the environment. All students will receive free resources courtesy of FishRight. If you have any questions or are interested in membership, you can find us online at [va.fishright.edu](http://va.fishright.edu).



# KIDS FISHING INSTRUCTIONAL COURSE

HOSTED BY FISHRIGHT



FREE • OPEN TO PUBLIC • APPROVED INSTRUCTORS

March 1, 2019 | 3PM  
Holly Grove Marina  
Lake Gaston, Bracey, VA

Bring your own fishing equipment, and join us for a day of learning about fishing and safety techniques. The course is a great way to learn how to catch fish and respect the environment. All students will receive free resources courtesy of FishRight. If you have any questions or are interested in membership, you can find us online at [va.fishright.edu](http://va.fishright.edu).



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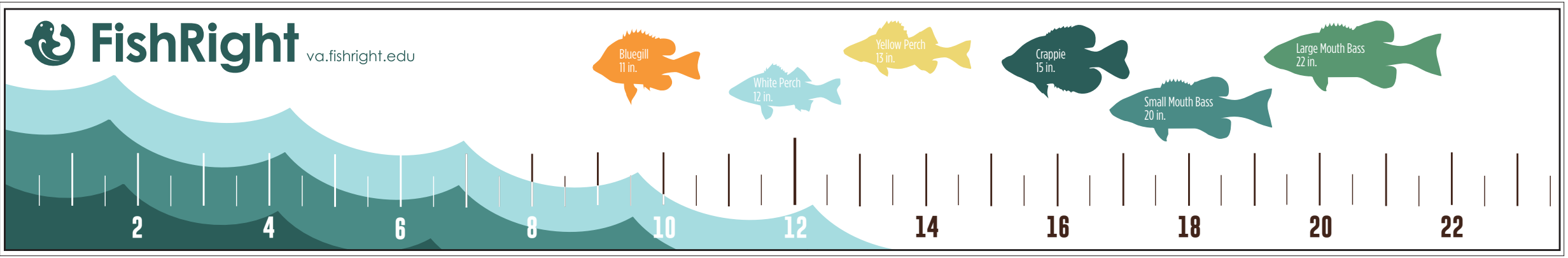
April 5, 2019 | 3PM  
Holly Grove Marina  
Lake Gaston, Bracey, VA

Bring your own fishing equipment, and join us for a day of learning about fishing and safety techniques. The course is a great way to learn how to catch fish and respect the environment. All students will receive free resources courtesy of FishRight. If you have any questions or are interested in membership, you can find us online at [va.fishright.edu](http://va.fishright.edu).









**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Start Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

This card demonstrates the completion of a FishRight introductory safety course or quiz. The young members of FishRight are the next generation of fishermen, so fish responsibly.



**CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION**

PRESENTED TO

\_\_\_\_\_

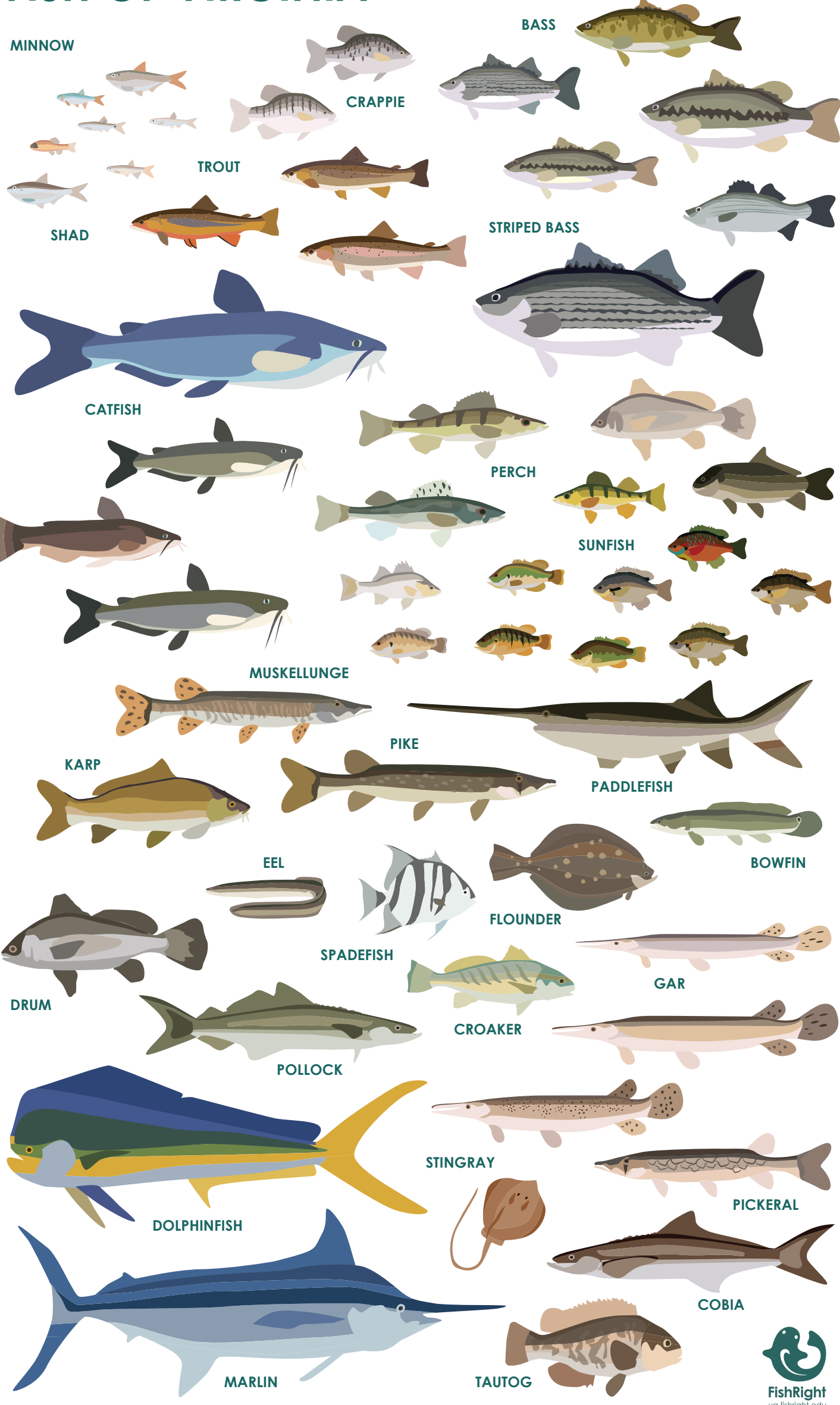
for finishing the FishRight introductory environmental safety and angling course taught by \_\_\_\_\_.

Instructor's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

va.fishright.edu



# FISH OF VIRGINIA







# LEARN HOW TO FISH

with FishRight, Youth Fishing Educational Campaign

- Fishing Seminars
- Print Resources
- Online Tutorials
- Free Membership items

FishRight  
va.fishright.edu

## OUR GOAL

FishRight is a fishing education campaign created to teach children how to fish in an environmentally-friendly and safe way. Our goal is to be a knowledge resource for the next generation of young fishermen! We hope to teach all people how to fish in a sustainable matter.

## LEARN TO FISH

In a fast-paced world, fishing can be a great way to disconnect and get outside. FishRight's educational material covers casting, knot tying, fishing rigs, how to fish cover, bait types, and so much more! Our goal is to give you all of the information you need to catch some huge fish.

## BECOME A MEMBER

If you are under the age of 16 and would like to become a member, you can find a form online and mail it or email it to:

360 Beechwood Dr. Bracey, Virginia 23919

Membership is free! For more information about volunteering, sponsoring, or our educational resources, you can visit us online.

va.fishright.edu