

International Angling Rules, Regulations and Equipment Criteria for

Muskellunge (*Esox masquinongy*)

and

Tiger “Hybrid” Muskellunge (*Esox masquinongy x Esox lucius*)

World Record Applications

The following rules, regulations and equipment criteria were developed by the International Modern Day Muskellunge World Records committee in order to establish uniform angling guidelines for muskellunge or hybrid muskellunge world records. Please read carefully. All rules, regulations and equipment criteria must be fully complied with for record consideration.

Only fish that are captured using legal angling methods established by the state or provincial jurisdiction where it was landed will be accepted.

“Angling” is defined as fishing using a rod and reel with line and hook or hooks, or a plug or artificial lure with hook or hooks as described in the criteria listed below. Only muskellunge or tiger “hybrid” muskellunge will be considered. All materials submitted, unless noted otherwise, become the property of the International Modern Day Muskellunge World Records committee.

Note: The minimum qualifying weight for a muskellunge record application is 60 58-pounds (26.308-kilograms), and the minimum qualifying weight for a hybrid muskellunge record application is 44-pounds (20.071-kilograms). A record weight must be bested by at least 4 ounces to establish a new record otherwise it will be considered a tie.

International Rules, Regulations & Equipment Criteria for Muskellunge & Hybrid Muskellunge World Record Application

All-Tackle Only - Equipment criteria:

1) Rod: Rod used to catch a potential record muskellunge must comply with accepted angling and sporting ethics and customs. Rod used must not give the angler an unfair advantage and precludes the use of an “unconventional” rod of inadequate length, including rods broken during the fight if there is less than adequate rod length left to allow a fair advantage to the fish. Final decision of

this matter will be at the sole discretion of the committee. Photograph of the rod used in capture must accompany the application. If the rod was broken during the fight, the length of the remaining part of the rod attached to the reel must be stated from the broken end of the rod to the centerline of the reel.

2) Reel: The reel used must comply with accepted angling and sporting ethics and customs and as such, no “power-driven” reels will be allowed, including motor, hydraulic or electrically driven reels. Photograph of the reel used in capture must accompany the application. Exception: Handicapped anglers may use power driven reels at the discretion of the committee.

3) Line: Any normal, conventional manufactured line may be used, whether it is monofilament, multifilament, lead core multifilament, or wire line (where legal). A five foot (152 centimeter) length of the line used must be submitted with the application.

4) Leader: Use of a leader is at the option of the angler. We highly recommend that a nylon coated wire leader, monofilament leader or fluorocarbon leader be used while trolling for the external protection of the fish, should they roll in the leader while being fought.

5) Hooks and Lures: Hooks attached to a plug or other artificial lure specifically designed for their use must be attached directly to the plug or artificial lure. Single, double or gang (treble) hooks may be used and must be free swinging, unless they were “imbedded” in the lure during manufacture. A photograph of the plug, or artificial lure, must be submitted with the application.

In the case of treble hooks used with live or dead bait, where legal, they may be attached to the bait by any of a variety of methods. Bait rigs used with live or dead bait must be legal where used and submitted with the application.

A maximum of four hooks, unless fewer are specified by law, either single, double or gang (treble) in any combination, may be used. There shall be no exceptions.

The “intent” of this rule is to prevent solidly affixed external hooks being used to “snag” the fish rather than hooking it in the fair and sporting angling manner of normal hook-setting.

IT IS “RECOMMENDED” THAT SINGLE HOOKS NOT BE USED WITH LIVE or DEAD BAIT TO PREVENT THE DEATH OF FISH THAT COULD BE GUT HOOKED AND RELEASED.

6) Landing Devices: Gaffs, where legal, may be used. Length must not exceed 7 feet (213 centimeters). Gaffs may have only one point. Nets may be used and they must comply with laws for size, if any, where used. If gaff or net was used, a photograph of same must accompany application.

Angling and Catch Rules and Regulations:

1) The angler must hook the fish, fight and bring it to boat or shore, without the aid of any other person from the time the fish strikes or takes bait or lure.

Landing assistance is allowed. It is permissible for a second person to touch the leader to assist in landing the fish by legal method. If a short leader or no leader is used, the line may not be touched by the assisting person until the distance from the rod tip to the snap or lure is 5 feet (152 centimeters) or less.

2) Should a rod holder be used and a fish strikes while the rod is in the rod holder, the angler must remove the rod from the rod holder as quickly as possible after the strike. There are no exceptions to this rule.

In the “spirit” of this rule, and to comply with some laws, forward propulsion of the boat, if used, whether by outboard or inboard motor, electric motor or oar or paddle, must be immediately discontinued at the strike or immediately after the angler has gained control of the rod from a rod holder if used, which must be accomplished as quickly as possible after the fish strikes.

It is the “intent” of this rule for the angler to fight the fish directly via rod and reel and not let the boat and rod holder become part of the equation to diminish the sporting aspect of the catch. A boat may be moved under power if necessary while the angler is playing the fish in situations of danger, or the boat may be “held” in place by motor, if necessary, while playing the fish.

Your Catch Will Be Disqualified IF:

1) You do not comply with each angling and catch rule and all equipment criteria, especially as pertains to photographs (see photograph requirements below, and within individual rules, regulations and equipment criteria).

2) You rest your rod on the gunwale of the boat or place it in a rod holder while playing the fish.

3) Anyone other than you the angler touches any part of the equipment or line from the time a fish strikes or takes the bait or lure, or while the you the angler is

fighting the fish until it is landed, except as allowed for landing assistance under “Angling and Catch Rules and Regulations.”

Should a line become obstructed with an item that will not pass through the rod guides, assistance may be rendered by holding only the obstacle and cutting or otherwise removing it without touching the line. This includes planner boards. Only the angler may touch the line during this process.

It is the “intent” of this rule to insure that no unfair advantage is gained by the angler during the duration of the time spent fighting the fish.

4) You use the boat or any other device to attempt to drive the fish into shallow water in an attempt to reduce the fish’s natural ability to swim. If shore fishing, you or a partner may, after your fish has been brought into shallow water at the end of the fight, enter the water, or if in the water, approach the fish in order to gain control of it in the absence of a net or gaff or to use a net or a gaff.

It is the “intent” of this rule for the boat or shore angler or another person or boat, not to “herd” the fish into shallow water before completion of the fight while fishing from boat, shore or while wading.

5) You employ a kind of live or dead bait that is illegal to use or possess or is of an illegal size, for the water being fished.

6) You intentionally or unintentionally snag or foul hook a fish.

7) A fish is captured in fish hatchery waters, fish sanctuary or private waters not available to the general public.

8) Your catch is not made during the legal “open season” or is not caught during legal fishing hours, if applicable, for the water where caught.

9) Your catch is not weighed in accordance with the rules and regulations set forth herein.

10) You land your fish with a gaff or net not in compliance with size or it is illegal where used.

11) You fail to cooperate with a record application claim reviewer or a designated record application claim review representative.

Record Catch Rules and Regulations; General Information:

Applications:

1) An “official” application as provided (see below), or an exact copy, **must** be used.

2) In certain circumstances, an International Committee member or appointed representative may be instructed to document information provided on a record application. This action should be regarded as “due diligence” on the part of the Committee and not doubt of anglers claim for record. **Cooperation with this process is mandatory.** Failure to comply will result in rejection of the application.

3) Any protested record claims or any dispute arising over an existing record will be examined by the International Committee for validity and reviewed as appropriate. Their decisions will be final. **The committee also reserves the right to refuse an application, or grant a claim for a record application previously accepted. Record holders or applicants that refuse to cooperate with the committee or the committee’s designated representative will be automatically disqualified.**

Application Time Limit:

1) Applications for record must be received within 60 days of catch. **Exceptions to this rule for “just cause” will be at the sole discretion of the committee.**

The “intent” of this rule is for the committee to be able to review the application, and interview catch witnesses and weight witnesses in a timely manner. The sooner after the capture of a potential record fish an application is received, the easier it is to validate the information submitted and to request additional information if deemed necessary.

2) Application for record may be made for catches made in prior years, **PROVIDED** that **ALL MODERN DAY RECORD RULES, REGULATIONS AND EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS ARE MET AND CAN BE DOCUMENTED** as set forth herein by the committee. Any exceptions shall be at the sole discretion of the committee, as shall the decision whether or not an application under this rule will be accepted. Their decision is final.

3) Applications submitted with incomplete information will not be acceptable unless a satisfactory written explanation of why is included with the application. Additional time may be allowed for the missing information to be provided, or at the discretion of the committee, may be waived for sufficient reason, where the missing information is not directly relevant to the decision making process.

Catch Witness(es):

It is highly desirable to have a witness or witnesses to the catch if any were present. Unwitnessed captures may be disallowed should questions arise with regards to their credibility or authenticity. Capture witnesses must be able to verify the anglers compliance with the Angling and Catch Rules and Regulations and Equipment Criteria. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Scale, Weighing and Witness Requirements:

1) The fish must be weighed on a digital or balance beam scale legal for trade and certified for accuracy within the previous twelve months. Spring type scales are not allowed. Scale certification details must be included on the application. The weighing should be done by the owner of the scale, who is familiar with its operation. If a scale has not been certified within the previous twelve months, it must immediately be re-certified. Any scale deviation found at that time must be applied to the “official” weight of the fish taken at the time of the original weighing. A full written, signed and notarized explanation of this process must be included with the application. Photographs of the entire process would be helpful. A photograph of the scale is required and must be submitted with the application.

It is strongly recommended that even if a scale has been certified in the previous twelve months, a re-certification be made after the official weighing by an appropriate agency. This can only help speed the application acceptance process, and if done, full documentation must be included with the application.

THE COMMITTEE RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REQUEST THAT ANY SCALE BE RE-CERTIFIED FOR ACCURACY AND, BASED ON THE RE-CERTIFICATION RESULTS, RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ADJUST WEIGHT ACCORDINGLY. FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THIS REQUEST SHALL BE GROUNDS FOR THE COMMITTEE TO REJECT THE APPLICATION.

IT IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT A FISH BE WEIGHED “ONLY ONCE” ON A CERTIFIED SCALE. ADDITIONAL WEIGHINGS ONLY TEND TO CONFUSE THE ISSUE, HOWEVER, IF MORE THAN ONE CERTIFIED SCALE IS USED, “ONLY” THE SCALE WEIGHING THE “LESSER AMOUNT,” IF ANY, WILL BE ACCEPTED AND CONSIDERED!

3) No weight “estimation” or scale “interpolation,” also known as “visual fractionalizing,” shall be permitted. If a scale is used that shows only pound or

half-pound (or kilogram) increments and the weight indicator falls between two of these graduations, **THE LOWER OF THE TWO GRADUATIONS SHALL BE THE ONE USED FOR OFFICIAL WEIGHT DETERMINATION.** **There shall be no exceptions to this rule. A photograph showing the fish on the scale and another photograph showing the actual scale reading is required and must be submitted for scales having less than one-ounce graduation with the application and is recommended with all scales.**

4) If a rope, sling or other contrivance is used to hold or attach the fish to the scale **the weight of said item must be accurately determined and deducted from the total weight. A photograph of same must be provided with the application with a full written, signed and notarized explanation of the item and the process used to determine its weight and the calculations used to make final weight determination of the fish. Scales with pre-attached hooks must be “ZEROED” with the hook attached prior to weighing of the fish.**

5) Fish weighed only on the water in a boat **SHALL NOT BE CONSIDERED.** There shall be no exception to this rule.

6) **There must be at least two witnesses to the weighing, and subsequent scale certification process if required.** These witnesses **MUST** be disinterested persons **not** associated with the angler. **Witnesses to the catch MAY NOT be weight witnesses.**

7) The fish must be re-weighed by a biologist or committee representative **BEFORE** the fish is skinned for mounting or cut open in any manner (see “Possession of Fish after Weighing” below).

Fish Measurement:

1) **Length:** The fish **must be measured “only” lying down upon a flat surface. Measurement shall be taken ALONG THE FLAT SURFACE, from the tip of the longest jaw to the farthest tip of either lobe of the tail, USING ONLY AN ACCURATE MEASURING DEVICE ACCEPTABLE FOR BUSINESS OR TRADE USE.** The tail may be pinched if desired. **A photograph of the fish lying down with the “measuring device” clearly shown in the photo is required.** Measurement of the fish hanging in a vertical position is not allowed or accepted. **Extreme care should be taken to assure accuracy.** Fish must be of legal length for water where caught.

The “intent” of this rule is to obtain an absolutely accurate length measurement which can aid in weight verification and may also be useful in scientific studies.

2) **Fork Length**: The same method employed in taking the length measurement as outlined above should be employed with the exception that **the rearward measurement on the fish shall be only to the “fork” or center of the “V” of the fish’s tail.**

3) **Girth Measurement**: Girth measurement is also a very important dimension and must be measured as accurately as possible. **“Girth” denotes the “largest circumference on the fish at any place along the body.”** It is strongly recommended that a flexible measuring tape be used if available. If none is available, a piece of string or other soft piece of material may be used, marked, and measured against an accurate measuring instrument. **If anything other than a marked flexible measuring tape is used, the entire process must be explained in writing, signed by the witnesses, notarized and included with the application.** When taking the girth measurement, do not pull so tight on the measuring tool as to indent the skin, while at the same time assuring that the tool is snug and accurate.

Photograph Requirements:

1) All photographs must be clear. All fish photographs must show the entire fish. Failure to comply with this request may result in rejection of application).

Any photographs submitted of a “digital” format may be rejected by the committee at their discretion, or they may require that the original digital image be submitted, whether still in the camera or on the original camera disc. Cameras will be returned if submitted.

A VIDEO OF THE ENTIRE PROCESS, IF AVAILABLE, THAT COVERS ALL RULES AND REQUIREMENTS WOULD BE VERY VALUABLE FOR RECORD CONSIDERATION, IN ADDITION TO THE REQUIRED PHOTOGRAPHS. Video will returned if requested and treated as copyright property. Submission of additional photographs not pertaining to rules is encouraged.

2) In addition to ALL photograph requirements in the rules for equipment, fish measurement, and scale, **there must be at least one clear “side view” photograph of the fish with the angler standing “BESIDE” the fish and NOT behind it. This photograph MUST show the complete length of the fish AND the full length of the angler, including the shoes, boots or bare feet and the top of the angler’s head, preferably with hat removed.**

The fish must be identifiable to the committee from this photograph. If there is any doubt that this positive identification can be obtained from the photograph, it is recommended that the fish be examined by a biologist or a designated representative of the committee prior to submitting the application. Their written statement of identification must be submitted with the application.

It is the “intent” of these photographic rules to be able to adequately identify the fish, the measurement of length, the equipment used and the size of the fish in comparison to the angler, and is “required” as denoted within all rules, regulations and equipment criteria sections. Photo requirements for rod, reel, lure and gaff or net if used, may be included in the photograph of the angler standing “beside” the fish. Submission of additional photographs not pertaining to rules is encouraged.

3) In addition to the photograph required of the angler standing “beside” the fish, for tiger “hybrid” muskellunge application, a biologist must make positive identification and multiple, close-up, full length, side view photographs from different angles of the fish lying flat is also desirable. A written statement of identification from the biologist must be signed and submitted with the application for it to be considered.

If a biologist is unavailable, the fish must be retained in a preserved condition until a qualified authority can make positive identification. There are no exceptions to this rule

The “intent” of this rule is to fully verify that the fish is indeed a muskellunge x northern pike cross. Multiple photographs of a close-up, full length, side view of the fish from different angles will also aid the committee in their final decision.

Possession of Fish after Weighing:

1) It is strongly recommended that the fish be kept frozen until released by the committee after the application is received. Should the angler turn the fish over to a taxidermist for skinning instead, it is MANDATORY that a biologist or committee representative be present prior to the fish being opened. Arrangements must be made by the angler for the biologist or committee representative to be able to re-weigh the fish prior to opening on a certified scale. This is to assure that the fish is still “within internal committee protocol for acceptable weight loss,” if any, as compared to the certified weight submitted on the application. After the fish is opened a biologist or committee representative must examine the stomach contents of the fish to determine what the stomach contents are if any. Failure to follow this procedure will result in the application

being rejected. A complete written report of this entire procedure, signed by the biologist or committee representative must be submitted.

The angler or the committee representative must also obtain a scale sample and the cleithral bone from the fish for submission to the committee. These items are for scientific information, verification and study.

2) If the fish is retained in a frozen state, arrangements will be made by the committee to have a biologist or committee representative present immediately after the fish is thawed and prior to the fish being opened. This is MANDATORY. Arrangements must be made by the angler for the biologist or committee representative to be able to re-weigh the fish prior to opening on a certified scale. This is to assure that the fish is still “within internal committee protocol for acceptable weight loss,” if any, as compared to the certified weight submitted on the application. After the fish is opened a biologist or committee representative must examine the stomach contents of the fish to determine what the stomach contents are if any. Failure to follow this procedure will result in the application being rejected. A complete written report of this entire procedure, signed by the biologist or committee representative must be submitted.

The angler or the committee representative must obtain a scale sample and the cleithral bone from the fish for submission to the committee. These items are for scientific information, verification, and study.

It is the “intent” of the above process in rules 1 & 2, to assure that the fish being submitted for record consideration was not “loaded” with foreign objects or water prior to certified weighing. Failure to follow these requirements will result in rejection of the application.