

## TODAY'S FEATURE

### So You Wanna Be A Competitive Angler...

So, you want to be a competitive angler...

... but you're not quite certain how to start.

How about online?

Like online poker competitions, it looks like online fishing will be a new trend - at least if Canadian-based BountyFishing.com has anything to do with it.

BountyFishing is a website founded earlier this year to provide "the world's largest online fishing tournaments" giving anglers the opportunity to compete against other anglers from across the continent. BountyFishing may be web-based, but the fishing and cash rewards are real.

The BountyFishing concept is based on using the internet and digital photography -along with some extremely high-tech digital forensics, some assorted proprietary code and technology for measuring fish that ensures the legitimacy of the photos submitted by the contestants.

It sounds like "CSI:Fishing" but it's actually the first online application I've seen of existing computer-based forensic technologies. When a competitor enters a fishing photo into the database, it is imported into Bounty's forensics software. There, it is inspected to make certain it is, in fact, the original photo.

At that point, pretty complicated computer technology takes over, measuring the human eyes and "other reference points" in the photo of you holding your catch, verifying the accuracy of your ruler (a ruler has to be included in the photo).

Finally, the length of your catch is measured and validated from the image of the fish and the image of the ruler.

There are some stringent rules for entering, primarily focusing on the equipment you use to photograph your catch (4 Megapixel minimums, no camera phones, no video stills) and how you must photograph your catch (2 photos - one with the fish lying flat alongside a ruler clearly showing the length of the fish and a BountyFishing Code number assigned to each angler, the second shows the angler holding their catch horizontally, chest high, with the fish as close to the body as possible). Another sign that they're serious about the forensic measurements is the fact that photo number two must be with the angler facing forward and eyes clearly visible - that means no sunglasses and the typical hat brim pushed up and away from the eyes.



Images must also be uploaded before midnight on the day of the catch for Daily Code tournaments, images must be uploaded prior to the weekly tournament close on midnight-Saturday.

All fish must be caught according to all state/provincial laws and game regulations, and taken "alive and in a legal and sporting manner, by proper angling methods."

Like any competition, this one's not necessarily acceptable in all areas. As of today, Vermont, Maryland, North Dakota, Delaware, Colorado, South Dakota, Tennessee, Quebec and Mexico don't allow their anglers to compete in online events. The tournaments are also out of bounds for anyone under eighteen years of age.

If you're looking to become a tournament angler - without the possible humiliation associated with being a rookie in a complicated event, you might want to consider this as a way to, well, get your feet wet in tournament fishing.

Learn more at [www.bountyfishing.com](http://www.bountyfishing.com)

Get out there and wet a line this weekend- and take someone new along, too.

--Jim Shepherd