

Citizen Survey

WHAT WERE THE RESULTS

Idaho Residents' and Sportsmen's Opinions on Wildlife Management and the Idaho Department of Fish And Game

Conducted for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game by Responsive Management

2012

Executive Summary

Introduction and Methodology

This study was conducted for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) to determine residents' and sportsmen's (i.e., hunters' and anglers') opinions on wildlife management and wildlife-related recreation opportunities in the state, and to assess attitudes toward the IDFG. The study entailed a scientific telephone survey of Idaho residents ages 18 years old and older to reflect the Idaho adult general population. Additionally, the data collection included interviews with licensed hunters and anglers as well as an oversample of 18- to 35-year-olds so that separate comparisons could be made between subgroups to the overall sample.

For the survey, telephones were selected as the preferred sampling medium because of the almost universal ownership of telephones

among Idaho residents (both landlines and cell phones were called). The telephone survey questionnaire was developed cooperatively by Responsive Management and the IDFG, based in part on a previous questionnaire implemented in the state. The software used for data collection was Questionnaire Programming Language (QPL). The analysis of data was performed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences as well as proprietary software developed by Responsive Management.

Responsive Management obtained a total of 1,665 completed interviews: this total included 1,059 interviews with the general population of Idaho residents, as well as an oversample of 200 18-35-year-olds and a supplemental sample of 203 licensed hunters and 203 licensed anglers. Throughout this report, findings of

the telephone survey are reported at a 95% confidence interval (or higher). For the general population sample of Idaho residents 18 years old and older, the sampling error is at most plus or minus 3.01 percentage points; additionally, individual sampling errors were calculated for various cross tabulated subgroups within the overall sample, based on the respective sample and population sizes. The survey was conducted in June and July 2012.

Fish and Wildlife Values

The overwhelming majority of Idaho residents (90%) are personally interested in fish and wildlife in the state, with most (61%) being very interested.

Respondents were read a list of values associated with fish and wildlife and asked whether they considered each

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FISH AND WILDLIFE VALUES

one to be important or unimportant. In general, values pertaining to the existence and management of fish and wildlife rate quite highly, while values focusing on the potential for fish and wildlife to act as interferences to other activities (gardening, landscaping, housing developments, etc.) are considered much less important. In the ranking by the percentage of respondents describing each value as very important, the top values include that fish and wildlife exist in Idaho (90% rate this as very important), that fish and wildlife populations are properly managed in Idaho (83%), that people have the opportunity to fish in Idaho (83%), that people have the opportunity to view fish and wildlife in Idaho (77%), and that people have the opportunity to hunt in Idaho (74%).

Meanwhile, the three values that focus on fish and wildlife as potential interferences are described as very important by less than half of the survey respondents: that fish and wildlife don't interfere with agricultural activities in Idaho, such

as farming or vegetable gardening (43% rate this as very important), that fish and wildlife don't interfere with outdoor hobbies and activities in Idaho, such as flower gardening or landscaping (33%), and that fish and wildlife don't interfere with development activities in Idaho, such as housing or energy development (29%).

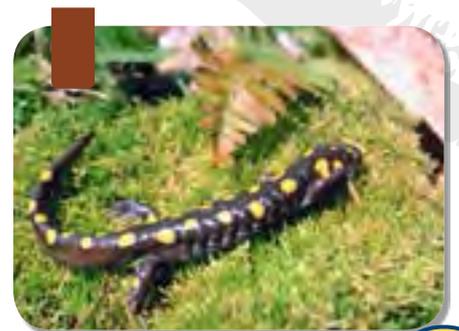
The overwhelming majority of Idaho residents (91%) consider the state's abundant wildlife as an important reason to live in Idaho when compared to other reasons; more than two-thirds (68%) consider this to be very important.

Respondents were read a list of eight statements regarding wildlife and land management priorities and asked whether they agreed or disagreed with each. In looking at the ranking by the percentage of respondents who strongly agree with each statement, there are four statements with which a majority of Idaho residents strongly agree: protecting fish and wildlife habitat also helps protect water quality (65% strongly agree with this); protecting fish and wildlife habitat also helps

protect places for people to recreate (62%); hunting and fishing are part of the scientific management of wildlife (60%); and you, personally, can make a difference in conserving fish and wildlife (56%).

The remaining four statements had well under half of the respondents strongly agreeing with them: the development of land should be restricted to protect fish and wildlife (39% strongly agree); the use of land should be restricted to protect wildlife (32%); efforts to conserve wildlife habitat in Idaho are adequate (28%); and landowners should be allowed to develop their land regardless of its impact on fish and wildlife (17%). Interestingly, when considering the percentages of respondents who strongly or moderately agree with each statement, all statements but one have a majority of Idaho residents agreeing with them: just 38% strongly or moderately agree that landowners should be allowed to develop their land regardless of its impact on fish and wildlife.

Faced with a choice between conserving fish and wildlife habitat



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MANAGEMENT PARTICIPATION

and providing land for new homes in Idaho, nearly three-quarters of residents (72%) answer that conserving fish and wildlife habitat is more important. Meanwhile, just 10% say that providing land for new homes is more important, and 18% are unsure.

Respondents were asked to rate the

importance of four items: open space (i.e., undeveloped land), clean water, places to hunt and fish, and places to participate in outdoor activities in general, including walking, running, and enjoying nature. At the top of the ranking by the percentage considering each item to be very important is clean water (96% of respondents consider this to be very important), followed by places to participate in outdoor activities in general (78%), places to hunt and fish (71%), and open space (69%).

Participation in Fish and Wildlife Management

A majority of Idaho residents (58%) agree that public opinion is seriously considered

in decision-making about fish and wildlife in Idaho, with 25% saying they strongly agree; at the same time, 32% disagree (18% strongly). The overwhelming majority of those surveyed (84%) have not participated in any kind of fish and wildlife management decision-making in Idaho in the past 2 years.

providing excellent customer service (78%).

A middle tier consists of issues with at least 60% of respondents rating them as very important: informing and educating the public about fish and wildlife (74%), involving Idaho citizens in decision-making about fish and wildlife management

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Opinions on Department Priorities

Respondents were read a list of 17 issues that the IDFG will face over the next 10 years and asked how important they considered each issue to be. In looking at the ranking by the percentage of Idaho residents who consider each issue to be very important, a top tier of issues, with at least three-quarters of respondents describing them as very important, includes dealing with diseases that affect fish and wildlife (86% of residents consider this to be very important), protecting fish and wildlife habitat (83%), maintaining populations of fish and wildlife at desirable levels (82%), enforcing fish and wildlife laws (82%), and

(71%), maintaining public support for wildlife-based recreation (71%), ensuring access to land and water for wildlife-based recreation (70%), conserving threatened, endangered, and other at-risk species (63%), and providing opportunities to observe and photograph wildlife (63%).

A lower tier of importance includes issues rated as very important by about half of those surveyed: providing opportunities for new participants



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DEPARTMENT PRIORITIES

in wildlife-based recreation (56%), maintaining populations of animals that are not hunted or fished (53%), improving funding to meet legal mandates and public expectations (52%), providing diverse fishing experiences (51%), and providing diverse hunting experiences (49%). Finally, just one issue on the list is markedly lower in importance compared to the other issues: less than a quarter of Idaho residents (22%) think that providing diverse trapping experiences is a very important issue on which the IDFG should focus.

Participation in, Interest in, and Opinions on Fish and Wildlife Related Recreation

Respondents were asked about their participation in four outdoor activities over the past two years in Idaho: more than three-quarters of Idaho residents (78%) have viewed or photographed wildlife around their homes during that time period, while 63% have taken a trip more than a mile from home to view or photograph fish or wildlife. Smaller percentages have gone fishing (53%) or gone hunting (35%). Note that these hunting and fishing participation rates closely correspond to rates determined in previous studies conducted in Idaho.

The median number of days engaging in trips taken more than a mile from home to view or photograph fish and

wildlife in Idaho among those who have done so is 14 days.

Respondents were asked about their interest in participating in each of the aforementioned outdoor activities in Idaho in the next 2 years: just over half of the residents surveyed (52%) are interested in going hunting, with 42% saying they are very interested; meanwhile, 46% are uninterested (36% very uninterested).

An overwhelming majority of Idaho residents (77%) are interested in going fishing in the next 2 years in Idaho, with 58% being very interested; about a fifth (21%) are uninterested, with 14% being very uninterested.

The vast majority of Idaho residents (86%) are interested in viewing or photographing wildlife around their homes, with 63% being very interested in doing this in Idaho in the next 2 years; just 12% are uninterested, with 7% being very uninterested.

A large majority of respondents (80%) are interested in taking a trip of more than a mile from home for the primary purpose of viewing

or photographing fish or wildlife, with 58% being very interested; meanwhile, 18% are uninterested (11% being very uninterested).

Residents who had hunted or fished in Idaho in the 2 years prior to the survey were asked how concerned they were that the fish and wildlife populations in the areas where they typically hunted or fished would decrease significantly in the next 10 years (note that the survey substituted the appropriate language into the question based on whether the respondent had hunted, fished, or hunted and fished). A large majority of Idaho residents (85%) are concerned about decreasing fish and wildlife populations in the areas where they engage in hunting and fishing, with over half (53%) being very concerned.

Those who had hunted or held a hunting license in the 2 years prior to the survey were asked whether they thought the quality of hunting has improved, stayed the same, or gotten worse in Idaho in the past 5 years, and two-thirds of respondents (66%) say it has gotten worse. Meanwhile,

“Virtually all respondents (97%) approve of legal, recreational fishing, with 81% voicing strong approval.”

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PARTICIPATION

about a fifth (22%) say it has stayed the same, and just 5% believe it has improved.

Those who had fished or held a fishing license in the 2 years prior to the survey were asked whether they thought the quality of fishing has improved, stayed the same, or gotten worse in Idaho in the past 5 years, and just over half of this group (55%) say it has stayed the same. Otherwise, 13% feel that fishing in Idaho has gotten better, and 21% say it has gotten worse.



Approval of Hunting, Fishing and Trapping

The overwhelming majority of Idaho residents (90%) approve of legal hunting, with almost three-quarters (73%) strongly approving of it.

Virtually all respondents (97%) approve of legal, recreational fishing, with 81% voicing strong approval.

A majority of Idaho residents approve of legal trapping (61%), with 36% strongly approving of it. Meanwhile, over a quarter (27%) oppose it, with 18% in strong opposition.



Participation in and Opinions on Department Funding

Respondents were read a list of three ways to contribute money to the IDFG's Nongame Program (also known as the Wildlife Diversity Program) and asked whether they had contributed in any of the listed ways in 2011. While more than three-quarters of respondents (78%) have not contributed in any way, notable percentages have purchased a bluebird, elk, or trout vehicle license plate (11%), donated through the Nongame Wildlife Check-off on a state income tax form (10%), or made a direct donation to the Nongame Trust Fund (4%).



In a question regarding whether respondents thought the state of Idaho should invest more, about the same, or less resources in protecting fish and wildlife habitat, land, and water over the next 2 years, opinion is divided between thinking that the state should invest more (43%) or thinking that the state should invest about the

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HUNTING, FISHING & TRAPPING

same amount (43%). Just 3% of respondents think that the state should invest less, while 11% are unsure.

The survey informed respondents that the IDFG does not receive any money from state taxes and that the majority of its budget comes from hunting and fishing license sales and federal excise taxes on ammunition and hunting and fishing equipment, but that most of Idaho's wildlife are not hunted, fished, or trapped. After being informed of this, respondents were asked whether they supported or opposed the IDFG spending money from the sales of hunting and fishing licenses, tags, and permits to fund conservation or management of species that are not hunted, fished, or trapped. A large majority of Idaho residents support this (72%), with 39% strongly supporting it. However, 17% are in opposition, with 8% strongly opposing it.

Sources of Information on Fish and Wildlife Management

The top ways Idaho residents say they want to be provided information on fish and wildlife management are direct mail (23% prefer this method), newspapers (20%), television (19%), the Internet (14%), and e-mail (13%).



While about a third of the sample (34%) say they use social media like Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube frequently, a slightly larger percentage (36%) never use social media. Smaller percentages say they use social media sometimes (16%) or rarely (12%).

Among the 34% of Idaho residents who use social media sites, Facebook is overwhelmingly the most popular, with 84% saying they use it. A further 25% of social media users use YouTube, while smaller percentages use Twitter (5%), Google+ (4%), LinkedIn (2%), and Pinterest (1%).

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