## ABRIDGED REPORT

Conducted for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources BY RESPONSIVE MANAGEMENT

### **IOWA ANGLER SURVEY**

#### **Responsive Management National Office**

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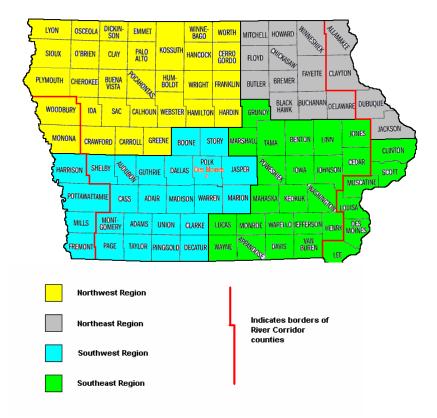
#### INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to learn about anglers' fishing preferences and behaviors, as well as their opinions on and attitudes toward the IDNR and its programs. The study entailed a survey of licensed Iowa anglers. Note that this text is an abridged version of the full report, *Iowa Angler Survey*.

For the survey, telephones were selected as the preferred sampling medium because of the universality of telephone ownership. The telephone survey questionnaire was developed cooperatively by Responsive Management and the IDNR. Responsive Management conducted a pre-test of the questionnaire and made revisions to the questionnaire based on the pre-test. Interviews were conducted Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Saturday noon to 5:00 p.m., and Sunday from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., local time. The survey was conducted in November and December 2007. Responsive Management obtained a total of 1,649 completed interviews. The software used for data collection was Questionnaire Programming Language.

The analysis of data was performed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software as well as proprietary software developed by Responsive Management. The results were weighted so that the proportions of the sample among the State's regions matched the distribution of the angler population statewide. The regional breakdown is shown in the map on the following page, and the weighting factors are shown in the tabulation that follows the map.

The analysis included a crosstabulation of data by type of angler: avid angler (purchased a license all 3 of the past 3 years) and casual angler (purchased a license for only 1 or 2 of the past 3 years).



#### **Weighting Factors**

Region	Sample Size	Sample Proportion	Weight	Weighted Proportion of Sample	Weighted Proportion of Population
NW Missouri River (Avid)	61	3.70%	0.230	0.85%	0.85%
NW Non-Missouri River (Avid)	128	7.76%	0.726	5.64%	5.64%
SW Missouri River (Avid)	76	4.61%	0.252	1.16%	1.16%
SW Non-Missouri River (Avid)	156	9.46%	0.742	7.02%	7.02%
NE Mississippi River (Avid)	45	2.73%	0.751	2.05%	2.05%
NE Non-Mississippi River (Avid)	86	5.22%	0.767	4.00%	4.00%
SE Mississippi River (Avid)	134	8.13%	0.412	3.35%	3.35%
SE Non-Mississippi River (Avid)	156	9.46%	0.753	7.13%	7.13%
Avid Anglers Total	842	51.07%		31.20%	
NW Missouri River (Casual)	72	4.37%	0.530	2.32%	2.32%
NW Non-Missouri River (Casual)	121	7.34%	1.584	11.62%	11.62%
SW Missouri River (Casual)	93	5.64%	0.552	3.11%	3.11%
SW Non-Missouri River (Casual)	181	10.98%	1.626	17.84%	17.84%
NE Mississippi River (Casual)	37	2.24%	1.651	3.70%	3.70%
NE Non-Mississippi River (Casual)	71	4.31%	1.678	7.23%	7.23%
SE Mississippi River (Casual)	75	4.55%	1.634	7.43%	7.43%
SE Non-Mississippi River (Casual)	157	9.52%	1.633	15.55%	15.55%
Casual Anglers Total	807	48.95%		68.80%	
TOTAL	1,649	100%	NA	100%	NA

#### **HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SURVEY RESULTS**

- Some of the highlights of the survey results include those listed below.
  - Among anglers who had fished in the past year, the mean number of days (a proxy measure of the number of fishing trips taken) that they had fished was 20.45 days (the median was 10 days). In total, Iowa anglers spent an estimated 8.3 million days fishing in Iowa in the past year (see calculation in text box that follows).
  - Nearly all anglers started fishing when they were children, and the mean age at which people first went fishing was 7.25 years old.
  - The most sought species of fish—all with roughly half the anglers having sought them in the previous year or the last year they fished—were catfish/bullhead, bass, bluegill, and crappie.
  - In the previous year or the last year they fished, the large majority of Iowa anglers (83%) fished from the shore at least some of the time, while 62% fished from a boat, 46% fished from a pier or dock, and 11% waded while fishing.
  - The most commonly fished type of water body was constructed lake (35% named a constructed lake as one of the two most fished bodies of water), followed by farm pond/gravel pit (27%), inland river (21%), border river (17%), natural lake (15%), reservoir (9%), trout stream (2%), and oxbow lake (2%).
  - The mean number of miles that Iowa anglers typically travel (one-way) to fish in Iowa is 31.3 miles; the median is 17 miles. Also, while the large majority of Iowa anglers (60%) typically travel no more than 20 miles to fish in Iowa, 16% typically travel more than 50 miles.
  - The most important motivation for fishing (out of seven that were read to respondents) was "for relaxation" (34%), followed by "to be with family" (26%), and "for the sport" (16%).
  - The survey asked anglers whether fourteen specific things would increase their motivation to go fishing. Two motivations stand out: being asked by a child to go fishing (93% said this would increase their motivation to go fishing), and being invited by a friend (92%).
  - The survey asked anglers about 26 potential constraints on fishing participation, asking if each was a major factor, a minor factor, or not a factor causing the respondent not to fish

as much as he/she wanted or took away from enjoyment of fishing. The top constraint,

by far, was lack of time because of work obligations (64% said this was a factor),

followed by lack of time because of family obligations (45%). Below these were poor water quality (35%) and lack of fish to catch (34%).

• Of those who fished for trout in Iowa, about half (48%) purchased a trout stamp specifically for an urban trout fishery.

## Calculation of Estimated Total Number of Days Iowa Anglers Fished in Iowa in 2007

Total number in sample:	506,920
Percent fished in past 12 months (approximates those who fished in 2007):	80.106%
Total number who fished in past 12 months:	406,075
Mean number of days fishing in past 12 months (of those who fished):	20.450
Total number of angler days:	8,304,330

### **KEY COMPARISONS WITH PREVIOUS SURVEYS**

The tabulation below shows some key comparisons of data from surveys in 1981, 1986, and 1994, as well as the current survey.

	1981	1986	1994	2007
Total number of days fished	12,742,921	11,878,647	8,726,770	8,304,330
Mean number of days fished per angler	30	31	24	20
Most preferred fish to catch	Catfish	Catfish	Catfish	Any type of bass
Second most preferred fish to	Largemouth	Largemouth	Largemouth	Catfish/
catch	bass	bass	bass	bullhead
Preferred type of water body to fish	Constructed lakes	Natural lakes	Constructed and natural lakes	Constructed lakes and farm ponds/ gravel pits

#### FISHING PARTICIPATION AND AVIDITY

- The overwhelming majority of anglers in the sample (80%) had fished within the previous 12 months. Additionally, the mean number of years that anglers had fished out of the past 3 years is 2.42 years.
  - A comparison of avid versus casual angler shows that avid anglers have greater measures of avidity: 95% of avid anglers (compared to 74% of casual anglers) had fished in the last 12 months.
- Of those who had fished in the past year, the mean number of days they fished was 20.45 days, and the median number of days was 10 days. Also, 56% had fished no more than 10 days, although a substantial percentage (24%) had fished for more than 20 days.
  - Those who had not fished in the past year were asked about their number of days fishing *in the last year that they fished*, with lower numbers than those who fished in the previous year: their mean number of days fishing was 9.75 days, and their median was 5 days in the last year they fished.
  - A comparison of avid versus casual angler shows that avid anglers are more active, as measured in days fished in the last year they went fishing. The mean (and median in parentheses) numbers among avid anglers are 27.17 mean days (15 median days) in the past year or 12.26 days (5 median days) the last year they went fishing, while the mean (and median) numbers among casual anglers are 16.48 mean days (6 median days) in the past year or 9.51 mean days (4 median days) in the last year they went fishing.
- The mean number of years that Iowa licensed anglers had fished in Iowa is 30.5 years, and the median is 30 years.
  - Avid anglers (34.42 mean years; 35 median years) tend to have fished for more years than have casual anglers (28.74 mean years; 30 median years).
- Nearly all anglers started fishing when they were children, typically prior to the age of 10. Indeed, nearly half of anglers (48%) started when they were from 4 to 6 years old. The mean age at which people first went fishing was 7.25 years old.
  - A comparison of avid versus casual angler shows that avid anglers typically started fishing at a slightly younger age relative to casual anglers.
  - Other analyses found higher measures of avidity among anglers who started fishing at an earlier age, relative to those who started later: younger initiates were more likely to have gone fishing in the past 12 months, to have fished all 3 of the last 3 years, and to rate

themselves as expert. Furthermore, younger initiates fished for more days in the last year they fished, relative to older initiates.

- Among anglers who had fished for at least 10 years (anglers who had not fished that long were not asked), a greater percentage of them currently fish less (44%) than fish more (34%) when compared to 10 years ago.
  - A comparison shows that avid anglers have a greater likelihood than do casual anglers to say that they now fish *more* than they did 10 years ago (40% of avid anglers versus 30% of casual anglers). In fact, a greater percentage of avid anglers say that they fish more than say that they fish less (40% of avid anglers say that they fish more, while 33% say that they fish less).
- Respondents are evenly divided between those who live in a household where only 1 person bought an Iowa fishing license in the past 12 months (44%) and those who live in a household in which 2 or more people purchased a fishing license (also 44%). Respondents were asked how many people in their household went fishing in the past 12 months (the above question asked only about *purchasing a license*): 32% said 1 person in their household went fishing in the past 12 months.
  - Among married anglers, 58% say that their spouse fishes.
  - In the comparison of avid versus casual angler, the results show that avid anglers are more likely than are casual anglers to live in a household where somebody bought a fishing license and/or went fishing. Interestingly, however, avid anglers and casual anglers are about the same regarding whether their spouse fishes.
- A question that tangentially relates to avidity is skill level. The large majority of Iowa anglers (71%) rate their skill level as medium. Otherwise, a slightly higher percentage rate themselves as beginner (16%) than rate themselves as expert (11%).
  - Not surprisingly, avid anglers are more likely to rate themselves as expert at fishing than are casual anglers.

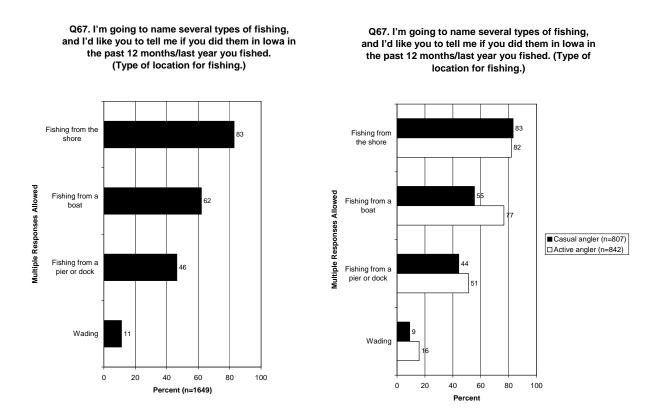
### SPECIES FISHED AND PREFERRED

The most sought species of fish are catfish/bullhead (51% of anglers fished for these in the previous 12 months or the last year they fished), bass (49%), bluegill (48%), and crappie

(47%)—the species that are most popular by far. Next in the ranking is walleye (33%), but with a much lower percentage having fished for that species than the top few species.

#### **METHODS OF FISHING**

- The large majority of Iowa anglers (83%) fished from the shore at least some of the time, while 62% fished from a boat, 46% fished from a pier or dock, and 11% waded while fishing in Iowa in the past 12 months (or in the last year they fished).
  - Avid anglers are more likely than casual anglers to have fished from a boat, fished from a pier or dock, or gone wading while fishing.

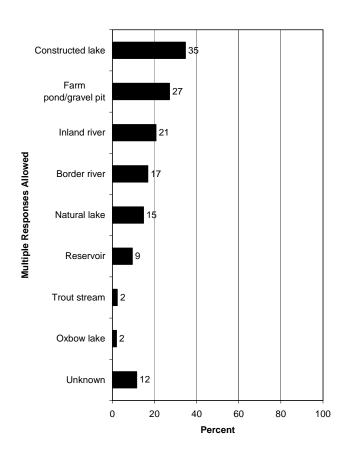


Relatively small percentages of Iowa anglers went ice fishing (15%), fly fishing (7%), or fishing in a tournament (3%) in Iowa in the past 12 months or last year they fished.

- A large majority of Iowa anglers (72%) had practiced catch-and-release at least once in the last year they fished.
  - Those who fished for trout and who indicated having done catch-and-release were asked about the amount of *trout* they release: 66% release about half or more, while 30% release few to none.
  - Regarding non-trout species: 77% of those who fished for trout and other species say that they release half or more of the non-trout fish that they catch, and 84% of those who did not fish for trout release half or more of the non-trout fish that they catch.
  - Casual anglers are more likely to release fish than are avid anglers.

#### FISHING LOCATIONS AND PREFERRED LOCATIONS

- The most commonly fished body of water was not a specific water body but a type of water body: the unnamed farm pond (or gravel pit, although nearly all responses within this category were "farm pond"), in which 27.1% of respondents fished. Otherwise, the Mississippi River (15.6%), the Cedar River (4.4%), Okoboji Lake (4.1%), Lake Red Rock (3.9%), Clear Lake (3.7%), the Wapsipinicon River (3.6%), Rathbun Lake (3.5%), Spirit Lake and/or Little Spirit Lake (3.4%), the Des Moines River (3.4%), and Big Creek (3.1%) were the most commonly fished bodies of water.
  - The most commonly fished type of water body was constructed lake (35% named a constructed lake as one of the two most fished bodies of water), followed by farm pond/gravel pit (27%), inland river (21%), border river (17%), natural lake (15%), reservoir (9%), trout stream (2%), and oxbow lake (2%).
- The survey asked Iowa anglers to name their preferred body of water and county in which to fish. Again, the top is a type of water body, not a specific one: 18.0% prefer an unnamed pond or gravel pit. Otherwise, the Mississippi River (10.1%), the Cedar River (2.5%), Spirit Lake or Little Spirit Lake (2.2%), Rathbun Lake (2.1%), and Clear Lake in Cerro Gordo County (2.1%) are the most preferred bodies of water.
  - The most preferred types of water body are farm pond/gravel pit (20% prefer this type) and constructed lake (also 20%), followed by border river (12%), inland river (11%), natural lake (10%), reservoir (6%), trout stream (1%), and oxbow lake (1%).
- The mean number of miles that Iowa anglers typically travel (one-way) to fish in Iowa is 31.3 miles; the median is 17 miles. Also, while the large majority of Iowa anglers (60%) typically travel no more than 20 miles to fish, 16% typically travel more than 50 miles.

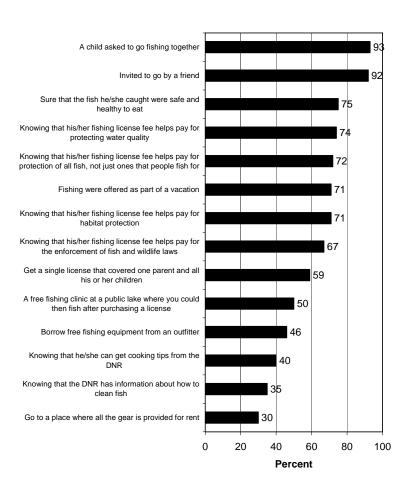


#### Type of water body fished on most. (Respondent gave top two places fished the most.)

#### **MOTIVATIONS FOR FISHING**

- The most important reason (out of seven reasons read to respondents) for fishing was "for relaxation" (34%), followed by "to be with family" (26%), and "for the sport" (16%).
  - Avid anglers are more likely to fish "for the sport" than are casual anglers; casual anglers are more likely to fish "to be with family" than are avid anglers.
- The survey asked anglers whether fourteen specific things would increase their motivation to go fishing, as shown on the graph that follows. Two motivations stand out: being asked by a child to go fishing (93% said this would increase their motivation to go fishing), and being invited by a friend (92%). Below these is a grouping of items, many of which relate to the health of the fishery and good water quality (all within the range of 67% to 75% saying the item would increase their motivation to go fishing). Within this range also is having fishing

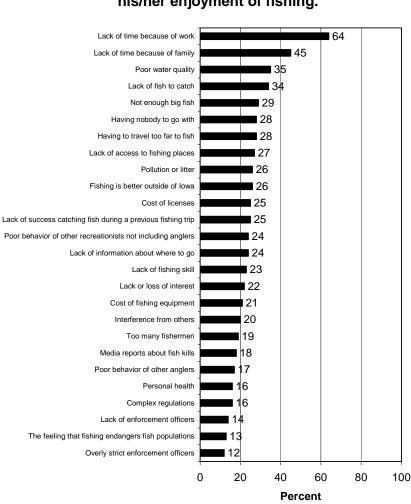
offered as part of a vacation. Low down on the ranking is having equipment made available, whether for rent or for free.



## Q122-135. Percent indicating that the following things would increase his/her motivation to go fishing.

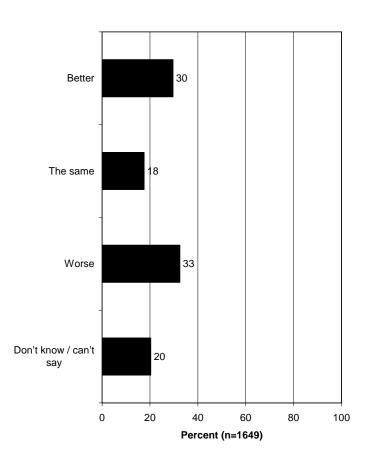
#### **CONSTRAINTS TO FISHING PARTICIPATION**

The survey asked anglers about 26 potential constraints to fishing participation, asking if each was a major factor, a minor factor, or not a factor causing the respondent not to fish as much as he/she wanted or took away from enjoyment of fishing. As shown in the graph that follows, the top constraint, by far, was lack of time because of work obligations (64% said this was a factor), followed by lack of time because of family obligations (45%). Below these were poor water quality (35%) and lack of fish to catch (34%).



#### Q93-119. Percent indicating that the following things were a factor that caused him/her not to fish as much as he/she wanted or took away from his/her enjoyment of fishing.

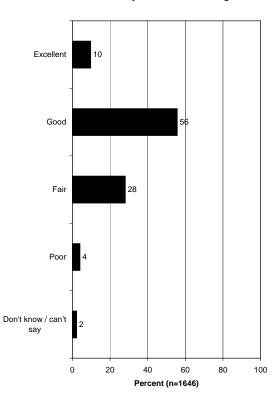
- The survey asked if the price of gas had negatively affected anglers' fishing, and 29% indicated that it had affected their fishing "a little" or "a great deal."
  - Avid anglers were more likely to be affected by the price of gas.
  - Those who typically travel farther were more likely to be affected by the price of gas.
- As shown in the graph that follows, in a direct question regarding trends in water quality over the past 10 years, a third of anglers (33%) say that water quality is worse now compared to 10 years ago. For these people, water quality may be a constraint.



### Q150. Do you think the water quality in lowa waters is better or worse now compared to 10 years ago?

## RATINGS OF FISHING AND FISHERIES MANAGEMENT IN IOWA

The majority of Iowa anglers (66%) rate fishing in Iowa as excellent or good (most of those saying good), while 32% rate it as fair or poor (most of those saying fair), as shown in the graph that follows.



Q142. How would you rate the fishing in Iowa?

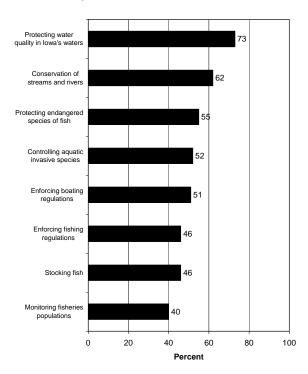
- The majority of Iowa anglers (63%) rate public access to Iowa's rivers and streams for fishing as excellent or good (mostly good), while 26% rate such access as fair or poor (mostly fair). Regarding access to lakes, the majority of Iowa anglers (76%) rate public access to Iowa's lakes for fishing as excellent or good (mostly good), while 15% rate access to lakes as fair or poor (mostly fair).
- The majority of Iowa anglers (72%) rate the IDNR as excellent or good in managing fishing and fisheries in Iowa (most of those saying good), while 16% rate the IDNR as fair or poor (most of those saying fair). Also, the large majority of Iowa anglers (77%) rate Iowa's enforcement of fishing regulations and laws as excellent or good (most of those saying good), while only 14% rate Iowa's enforcement as fair or poor (most of those saying fair).
- Among anglers who had fished in Iowa for at least 10 years and could, therefore, make the comparison, a majority (66%) think that fishing is currently the same or better than it was 10 years ago, while 23% think it is currently worse compared to 10 years ago.

- There is no consensus on the direction of water quality change over the past 10 years. Anglers are about evenly divided: 30% think water quality is better now than it was 10 years ago, while 33% think it is worse now.
- The overwhelming majority of Iowa anglers (78%) agree, after being informed that one of the uses of funds from license fees is to improve Iowa's fishing, that anglers are currently getting their money's worth for those fees; only 11% disagree.

## RATINGS OF IMPORTANCE OF IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES PROGRAMS AND EFFORTS

The survey asked anglers to rate the importance of eight IDNR efforts related to fishing, on a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 being the most important, as shown on the graph that follows. In looking at the percentage giving a rating of 9 or 10, protecting water quality (73% of anglers rated it at a 9 or 10) and conserving streams and rivers (62%) are at the top, followed by protecting endangered fish species (55%) and controlling invasive species (52%). Enforcing boating regulations also has a majority rating it a 9 or 10 (51%).

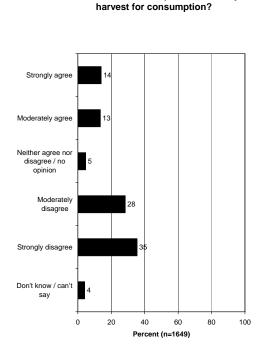
Q155-162. On a scale of 0 - 10 where 0 is "not at all important" and 10 is "extremely important", those who rated the importance for the following for the lowa Department of Natural Resources as a 9 or 10.



#### **OPINIONS ON PANFISH REGULATIONS IN IOWA**

- A large majority of Iowa anglers (65%) support having the IDNR set a daily creel limit on the number of panfish that anglers can take (see graph that follows).
  - In a follow-up question, anglers were asked to name the appropriate limit for panfish if the IDNR were to set a limit: the mean was 17.7 panfish.

Q181. Do you agree or disagree that anglers should be allowed to take all the panfish that they can



# CONTACT WITH DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES' LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL

The majority of Iowa anglers (57%) have had contact with an IDNR enforcement officer while fishing. Just more than half (51%) have been checked for a fishing license by an IDNR officer.

### **CONSUMPTION OF FISH CAUGHT IN IOWA**

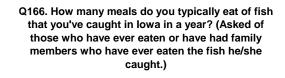
- The large majority of Iowa anglers (80%) eat (or their family members eat) the fish they catch at least some of the time. In the 1994 survey, only 54% of Iowa anglers consumed some of the fish they caught.
  - Most commonly, those who consume fish they have caught have about 3 to 5 meals per year of fish they have caught, as shown in the graph that follows. The mean is 13.78

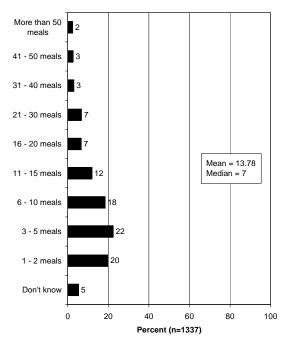
meals, and the median is 7 meals. Using these data, the researchers estimate that 5.6 million meals that included Iowa-caught fish were consumed by Iowa anglers and their families in 2007. The calculation is shown in the text box that follows.

• Avid anglers more often than casual anglers eat (or their family members more often eat) the fish they catch, and they typically eat more meals in a year of fish they have caught.

#### Calculation of Estimated Number of Meals of Iowa-Caught Fish Consumed in 2007

Total number of Iowa anglers:	506,920
Percent fished in past 12 months (approximates those who fished in 2007):	80.106%
Total number who fished in past 12 months:	406,075
Percent of anglers who fished last year who consume Iowa fish:	81.591%
Total number of Iowa anglers who consume fish:	331,320
Mean number of meals typically eaten annually by these anglers:	13.779
Total number of estimated meals of Iowa fish in 2007:	4,565,258

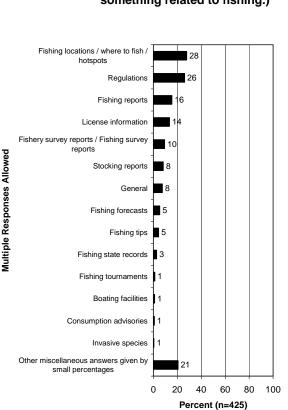




The overwhelming majority of those who consume fish that they have caught (88%) consider Iowa's fish to be safe for eating.

#### SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT FISHING IN IOWA

- When asked directly about whether they had ever visited the IDNR's website, 41% of Iowa anglers indicated that they had visited the site. Just more than half of those respondents visited the site for a fishing-related reason.
  - Commonly sought information, as shown in the graph that follows, includes fishing locations and regulations (the two answers markedly higher than the others), as well as the site's fishing reports, license information, fishing survey reports, and stocking reports.
  - Other common sources of information among all anglers include word-of-mouth (34%), IDNR publications (21%), the IDNR website (15%), other publications (12%), magazines not otherwise listed (12%), *Iowa Game & Fish* magazine (10%), newspapers (10%), and *Iowa Outdoors* magazine (8%).



Q195. What information were you trying to get? (Asked of those who have ever visited the lowa Department of Natural Resources' website for something related to fishing.)

#### **URBAN TROUT FISHERIES**

Of those who fished for trout, about half (48%) purchased a trout stamp specifically for an urban trout fishery.

# AWARENESS OF LAKE PROTECTION OR IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS IN IOWA

Just more than a third of Iowa anglers (37%) are aware of at least one lake protection or improvement effort undertaken in Iowa by the IDNR.

### **AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES IN IOWA**

- While most Iowa anglers (60%) are *un*aware of any invasive species, a substantial percentage are aware of something: 22% mentioned zebra mussels, 9% mentioned carp or Asian carp, and 8% mentioned milfoil.
  - The majority of those who have fished from a boat and are aware of invasive species take steps to prevent the spread of invasive species.
  - A comparison of anglers who fish from a boat versus anglers who do not fish from a boat found that those who fish from a boat are slightly more likely to be aware of at least one invasive species: while approximately 44% of anglers who fished from a boat were aware of an invasive species, only approximately 35% of anglers who did *not* fish from a boat were aware of any invasive species.

#### **ABOUT RESPONSIVE MANAGEMENT**

Responsive Management is a nationally recognized public opinion and attitude survey research firm specializing in natural resource and outdoor recreation issues. Its mission is to help natural resource and outdoor recreation agencies and organizations better understand and work with their constituents, customers, and the public.

Utilizing its in-house, full-service, computer-assisted telephone and mail survey center with 45 professional interviewers, Responsive Management has conducted more than 1,000 telephone surveys, mail surveys, personal interviews, and focus groups, as well as numerous marketing and communications plans, need assessments, and program evaluations on natural resource and outdoor recreation issues.

Clients include most of the federal and state natural resource, outdoor recreation, and environmental agencies, and most of the top conservation organizations. Responsive Management also collects attitude and opinion data for many of the nation's top universities, including the University of Southern California, Virginia Tech, Colorado State University, Auburn, Texas Tech, the University of California—Davis, Michigan State University, the University of Florida, North Carolina State University, Penn State, West Virginia University, and others.

Among the wide range of work Responsive Management has completed during the past 20 years are studies on how the general population values natural resources and outdoor recreation, and their opinions on and attitudes toward an array of natural resource-related issues. Responsive Management has conducted dozens of studies of selected groups of outdoor recreationists, including anglers, boaters, hunters, wildlife watchers, birdwatchers, park visitors, historic site visitors, hikers, and campers, as well as selected groups within the general population, such as landowners, farmers, urban and rural residents, women, senior citizens, children, Hispanics, Asians, and African-Americans. Responsive Management has conducted studies on environmental education, endangered species, waterfowl, wetlands, water quality, and the reintroduction of numerous species such as wolves, grizzly bears, the California condor, and the Florida panther.

Responsive Management has conducted research on numerous natural resource ballot initiatives and referenda and helped agencies and organizations find alternative funding and increase their memberships and donations. Responsive Management has conducted major agency and organizational program needs assessments and helped develop more effective programs based upon a solid foundation of fact. Responsive Management has developed Web sites for natural resource organizations, conducted training workshops on the human dimensions of natural resources, and presented numerous studies each year in presentations and as keynote speakers at major natural resource, outdoor recreation, conservation, and environmental conferences and meetings.

Responsive Management has conducted research on public attitudes toward natural resources and outdoor recreation in almost every state in the United States, as well as in Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Japan. Responsive Management routinely conducts surveys in Spanish and has also conducted surveys and focus groups in Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese.

Responsive Management's research has been featured in most of the nation's major media, including CNN, ESPN, *The Washington Times*, *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and on the front pages of *The Washington Post* and *USA Today*.

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