

MA Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

AFWA Multi-State Conservation Grant



MASSWILDLIFE

Overview

Using Google search, Facebook, and Instagram ads, MA Division of Fisheries & Wildlife (MassWildlife) recruited, retained, and reactivated anglers with a digital marketing campaign that ran from April to August 2020.

Awareness ads were designed to recruit those who may have never fished before. These ads were used to primarily increase awareness and drive traffic to the website so interested people could learn more about fishing. Themes of these ads included Free Fishing Weekend, getting outdoors safely, reconnecting with nature, escaping screen time, planning a fishing staycation, tips for fishing with kids, and the benefits of getting a fishing license.

Google and social media were also used to target returning customers with “renew your license” ads.

Due to COVID, MassWildlife had to revise messaging and images they originally planned to use to better promote social distancing. They leveraged the “responsible recreation” theme that emerged nationally and developed ads that promoted fishing as a safe outdoor activity and an escape from screen time.

Results

In total, MassWildlife’s 2020 digital marketing campaign generated **\$1,222,533** in direct license sales:

- Google ads- \$1,210,394 in sales; ad spend of \$29,322
- Social media ads- \$12,139 in sales; ad spend of \$29,983

This revenue reflects purchases made immediately after a customer clicked on an ad and continued on to purchase in one session. Google search results include sales from both branded and non-branded keywords.

MassWildlife also looked at customers who purchased a license within a 28-day window after engaging with the ads. This technique allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of the ads. Within this window, an estimated \$1,345,108 in license sales can be attributed to the Google ads, and an estimated \$383,466 in license sales can be attributed to the social media ads.

Therefore, the overall campaign generated between **\$1,345,108–\$1,728,574** in license sales factoring in all purchases recorded during the 28-day window. This range accounts for the possibility of double-counting sales from Facebook and Google, if a customer interacted with ads on both platforms during the 28-day period.

Partners

- Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation
- Association for Fish & Wildlife Agencies
- Shields Design Studio

Support

"In 2020, many of us experienced firsthand just how important the outdoors are to our health and wellbeing. Our digital marketing campaign was critical for bolstering the public's renewed interest in outdoor recreation by encouraging residents to safely get outside, relax, and enjoy fishing. Our ongoing investment in marketing continues to pay off by strategically engaging with new, current, and lapsed anglers." – Mark Tisa, MassWildlife Director

Staycation
Outdoor Gen

Run Dates: July 9 - 16 (8 days)

 Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife
Sponsored

For summer fun close to home, give fishing a try! You don't need to travel far to find rivers, ponds, and lakes to explore. Experience the thrill of reeling in a keeper or just relax by the water.



THE WATER IS
OPEN

MA.WILDLIFELICENSE.COM
2020 Fishing Licenses
Find fishing spots near you. Get your license today

Learn More

Social Media Ad

Benefits

In addition to driving sales, the MassWildlife ads increased awareness and interest in fishing. Social media ads were viewed 6.73M times, reached 1.09M people, and generated 58K clicks to the website. Google ads were viewed 397K times and initiated 131K visits to their website.

Additionally, a greater percentage of customers who purchased from ads were new customers this year:

- Google ads- 54% of customers were new compared to 29% in 2019
- Facebook ads- 42% were new compared to 24% in 2019

MassWildlife was happy to continue to reach a greater number of people, sell more licenses, and lower ad costs. For example, the average cost-per-click dropped from \$0.31 to \$0.22 on Google, allowing them to stretch their budget further and extend the duration of the campaign.

Methodology

MassWildlife provided learnings from past campaigns to their new marketing agency to help inform their new campaign. They selected the best performing ads and audience segments from previous campaigns to use as a foundation for developing this year's campaign. However, due to COVID-19, they did make adjustments to their initial plans.

MassWildlife launched its campaign in April, 2020 with Google and social media ads. They used the Facebook algorithm to serve ads to an audience of "lookalike" customers who have similar interests and traits to customers already in their database, are similar to those users who visit fishing content on their website, or are similar to users who clicked on their fishing ads.

Messaging about "buy a license" was targeted to returning customers and drove traffic to their licensing portal. As the campaign progressed, they updated customer data to better target lapsed anglers who had yet to renew. New this year, they were also able to apply an exclusion audience segment to ensure ads were not served to those anglers who already renewed.

MassWildlife updated the messaging it had originally planned to incorporate information about safe social distance and avoiding crowding issues.

Campaign performance was checked daily and weekly meetings were held to discuss key metrics, review new ads, and discuss adjustments to budget, audience, and ads.

Summer Kickoff Ph 2 Single Image
Outdoor Gen

Run Dates: June 26 - July 8 (13 days)



Social Media Ad

Future Plans/Lessons Learned

Looking forward to 2021 and beyond, MassWildlife is committed to the recruitment, retention, and reactivation of anglers. The growth in fishing participation they experienced in 2020 provides a tremendous opportunity and challenge to retain these new and returning anglers in the future.

They plan to continue to use digital marketing tactics on Google search, Facebook, and Instagram to increase participation in fishing. In particular, their 2020 campaign drove sales from a higher percentage of new customers than in previous years. In addition to continuing with ongoing retention efforts for all anglers, future campaigns will target this group of first-time license buyers who are most vulnerable to lapsing to ensure their continued participation by providing them with tips, resources, and reminders to renew their license.

Nicole McSweeney | 508-389-6327 | nicole.mcsweeney@mass.gov

This grant program was conducted in 2020 and partially funded by the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF) through a USFWS financial assistance award (#F18AC00145). Additional funds were from the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies' Multi-State Conservation Grant Program through the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs of the USFWS (#F20AP00170) and a match from the state agency.

