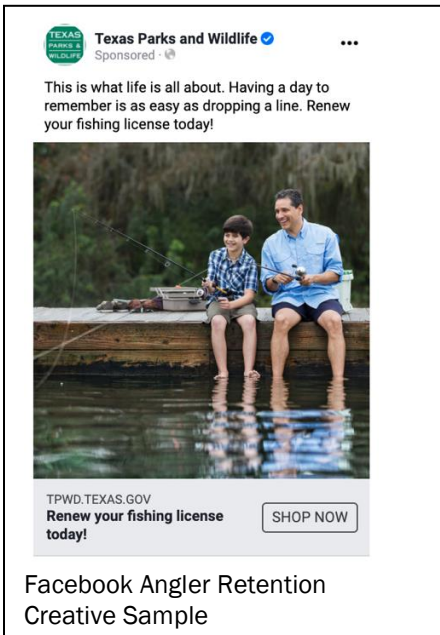


# “COVID-Era” Customers: New Angler Retention



## OVERVIEW

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) implemented a targeted effort to retain new anglers, with special focus on those who bought a fishing license (for the first time in five years or more) during the early stages of the coronavirus pandemic.

The campaign objective was to generate license renewals, thereby retaining so-called “COVID anglers” at higher rates than they would otherwise have been retained without these marketing efforts.

Using targeted email marketing, targeted online advertising on Facebook, and a combination of both, TPWD generated a positive return on investment.

By comparing results of our treatment groups against those of a control group, the agency was able to determine lift and revenue that can be directly attributed to this campaign.

## RESULTS

**Total Revenue, All Treatment Groups: \$383,810**

**Total Attributable Revenue\*, All Treatment Groups: \$74,827**

Two treatment groups (email + digital advertising, and email-only) outperformed the control group by significant margins.

As measured by lift\*\*, the email + digital advertising treatment group performed the best, with a 5.12% lift and \$41,081 in attributable revenue.

This group was followed closely by the email-only treatment group, which had a 5.07% lift and \$16,515 in attributable revenue

The digital-advertising-only treatment group also generated a positive lift, albeit at a smaller percentage (.54%), as well as \$17,230 in additional attributable revenue.

*\*Attributable revenue = (lift percentage / treatment group percentage) times total revenue.*

*\*\*Lift = percent license purchases in treatment minus percent license purchases in control.*

## PARTNERS

Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (State R3 Grant Award)

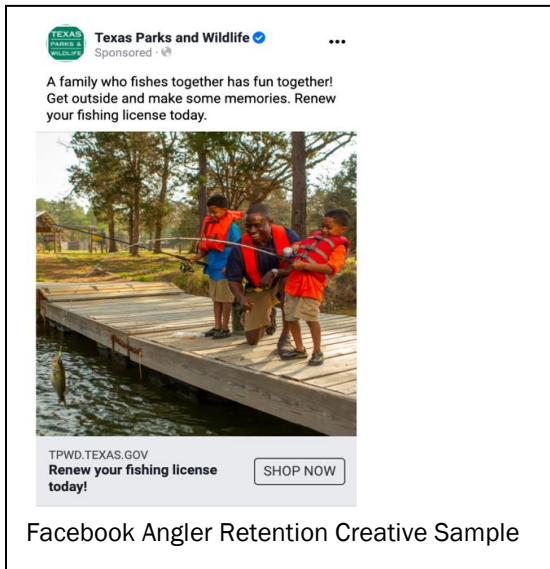
Sherry Matthews Group (Advertising Agency)

TPWD Inland Fisheries Division (Funding +Data Analysis)

## SUPPORT

“Texas recently launched its R3 strategic plan. A primary objective is to retain the surge of new anglers who tried fishing during the pandemic. RBFF’s state R3 grant helped us further quantify how various marketing efforts help make this objective a reality.”

- Craig Bonds  
Inland Fisheries Director



## BENEFITS

This targeted retention campaign helped measurably reduce churn among new anglers. It also ran during the license year following one in which many people tried fishing for the first time, due in part to COVID-19.

In other words, the campaign succeeded in its objective, to generate license renewals and retain so-called "COVID anglers" at higher rates than they would otherwise have been retained.

A final benefit, albeit one that cannot be directly attributed to the campaign, was a rise in total fishing license e-commerce revenue during this campaign period vs. 2020:

June 14 – July 31, 2021: \$2,040,000

June 14 – July 31, 2020: \$1,956,922

(Total Gain = 3%)

## METHODOLOGY

While most Texas fishing licenses are timed to coincide with our hunting license year, our "Year-from-Purchase" (YFP) fishing license is valid until the end of the month one year after the angler buys it. The campaign targeted first-time buyers of a YFP license using email marketing, Facebook advertising, and a combination of both. A control group was set aside, which received neither.

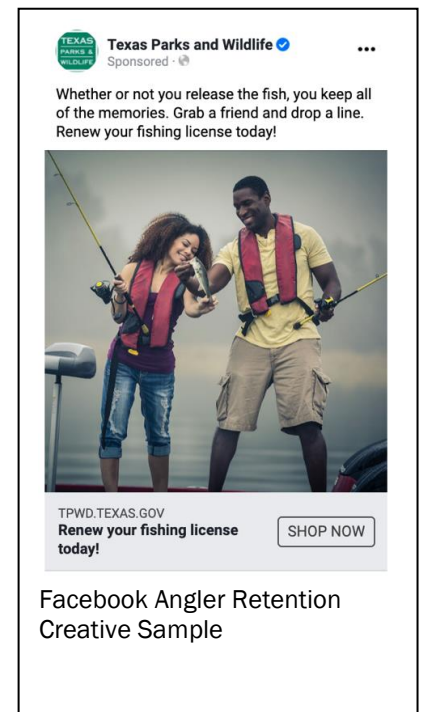
The media plan and creative were developed during April and May, and the digital advertising was launched in June. In July we sent retention emails (one before Independence Day, one after) and added new ads to rotation, based on performance and ad agency recommendations. Later that month we paused all creative, other than the three best-performing ads, and by the end of July the campaign was completed.

## LESSONS LEARNED & FUTURE PLANS

The Texas "Year-from-Purchase" fishing license type reaches its peak value during the earlier months of the calendar year. TPWD intended to launch this campaign earlier in April, but we were delayed due to issues with staffing and with "match rates" on Facebook. In the future, we plan to expand the audience to target more types of fishing license buyers; use "lookalikes" to refine the audience; and use creative focused primarily on family and making memories – all of which may generate an even higher return on investment. We will also test Google Responsive display ads due to new iOS tracking limitations on Facebook.

We learned that the YFP license type produced all of the measurable return from this campaign, versus the "One-Day, All-Water" license type which did not generate a return. This learning may help us target one-day buyers using *only* email due to its cost-effectiveness, and investing valuable advertising funds in license buyers who are more likely to buy a longer term/higher-priced license.

Last, TPWD's R3 Strategic Plan includes a variety of fishing license retention efforts for TPWD Marketing to test as they continue to seek greater investment in fishing license retention campaigns.



## CONTACT INFO

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