

THE USE OF EMAIL TO ENGAGE AND RETAIN ANGLERS

(OR) How to shorten renewal gaps, reduce churn and
find out what 1-day license buyers are all about

February 2023

By Janis Johnson, Joshua Lee, Nick Guild and FishChat internal group



PURPOSE



Share results of email retention efforts that targeted 3 types of license holders

GOALS

Short term goal:

**Generate
license
renewals**



Long term goal:

**Create
lifelong
licensed anglers**

T H F W H O

T

THE *the* WHAT

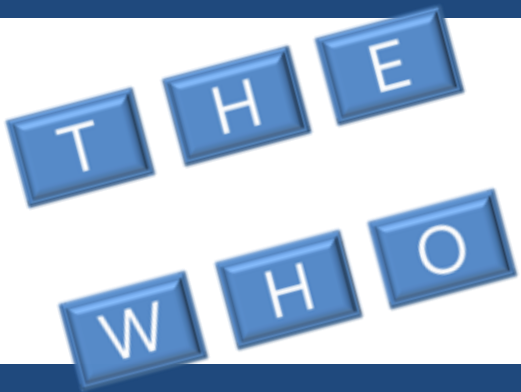
HOW





WHO DID WE TARGET?

1. 1-Day license buyers
2. First-time license buyers
3. Expired Year-From-Purchase license buyers



WHO ARE 1-DAY LICENSE BUYERS?

- Buy 1-Day licenses – some multiple x/year
- 35% are 18-40 years, 36% are 41-55
- Male (74%), female (24%)
- 22% of fishing license buyers in LY22 are 1-Day
- Account for 11% of LY22 revenue (~\$4.7M)



WHY TARGET 1-DAY LICENSE BUYERS?

- Learn more about them and their buying behavior
- Increase frequency of fishing
 - RBFF says “more likely to renew if they fish more frequently”
- Some might be better served on a different license type

THE WHAT?

WHAT WE DID WITH 1-DAY LICENSE BUYERS

1. Email with link to survey
2. Creative tests on email, then rollout winner
3. Auto reminder email to those who didn't click on survey link
4. Dashboard - compiled results for easy access/data sorting

Respondents: 5376 displayed, 5376 total **Status:** Closed

Launched Date: 10/05/2022 **Closed Date:** 11/15/2022

1. Please select the reason(s) you purchased a 1-day fishing license.

	Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
The 1-day license is a good value	405	15%	n/a	n/a
I don't fish very often	785	29%	n/a	n/a
I've never fished before and wanted to try it	61	2%	n/a	n/a
I was vacationing somewhere I wanted to fish	1061	40%	n/a	n/a
Other, please specify. view	622	23%	n/a	n/a

Total Respondents 2672

(skipped this question) 2704

2. What type of group did you fish with the last time you purchased a 1-day fishing license?

	Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
By yourself	236	9%	n/a	n/a
Family	1158	44%	n/a	n/a
Friends	532	20%	n/a	n/a
Family and friends together	711	27%	n/a	n/a

Total Respondents 2637 100%

(skipped this question) 2739

3. What type of waterbody did you fish the last time you purchased a 1-day license?

	Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
Saltwater: Offshore/Deep sea fishing	259	10%	n/a	n/a
Saltwater: Inshore/Bay/Surf	1224	46%	n/a	n/a
Freshwater: Ponds/Lakes	946	36%	n/a	n/a
Freshwater: Streams or Rivers	206	8%	n/a	n/a

Total Respondents 2635 100%

(skipped this question) 2741

EMAIL SURVEY TO 1-DAY LICENSE BUYERS

- 17 questions
- Sent to 330K anglers;
149K unique email opens,
47% open rate
- *Select Survey* software
(in-house)
- Survey open for 6 weeks

THE WHAT?

WHAT WE LEARNED: 1-DAY LICENSE BUYERS

- What was in line with other research/learnings?
 - who fish with, where, bait, other activities enjoyed, gender
- What were the surprises?
 - How they like to learn and primary motivations for fishing (by ethnic groups)

Recap of survey answers:

69% bought b/c don't fish often or were vacationing ☐ 56% saltwater, 44% freshwater ☐ fished with family/friends
☐ 63% summer season ☐ 57% shore/pier, 39% boats ☐ live bait ☐ 38% fish for social time w/family & friends,
20% to relieve stress & relax, 7% for sport/thrill ☐ 46% agree w/"the more I catch the happier I am" AND 42% are
"just as happy if I release catch" ☐ 33% usually eat catch ☐ constraints...32% not enough time, 22% expense..
☐ 62% camp, 42% hunt, 42% hike/run/jog, 27% boat ☐ license frequency: 1 time/year 58%, 2-3x/year- 20%, not
sure 20% ☐ Age: 37% Gen X, 27% Millennial, 27% Boomer, 8% Gen Z ☐ Race: 56% white, 32% Hispanic, 7% Black,
☐ Income 23% - \$30K to \$60K; 20% - \$60K to \$99K

THE WHAT?

WHAT WE LEARNED: 1-DAY LICENSE BUYERS (CONT'D)

Fishing education/resources:

- **Online videos:** Younger generations, Gen Z and Millennials, are much more likely to prefer **online videos** for than the older generations- Gen X and Boomers (38/34% v. 32/27% respectively).
- **Articles:** whites prefer info/articles on the TPWD website at a much higher rate than Latinos (36/35% v. 27/20%).

Reason to Fish:

- Latinos are more likely to list ***to relax or relieve stress*** as their primary motivator compared to Whites (30/30% vs 22/21%).
- Whites are more likely to list ***social time with friends/family*** as their primary reason compared to Latinos (50/54% vs. 38/44%).
- White Millennials are less likely to list ***social time with friends/family*** as the primary motivation compared to White Boomers (40/50% vs. 60/48%).

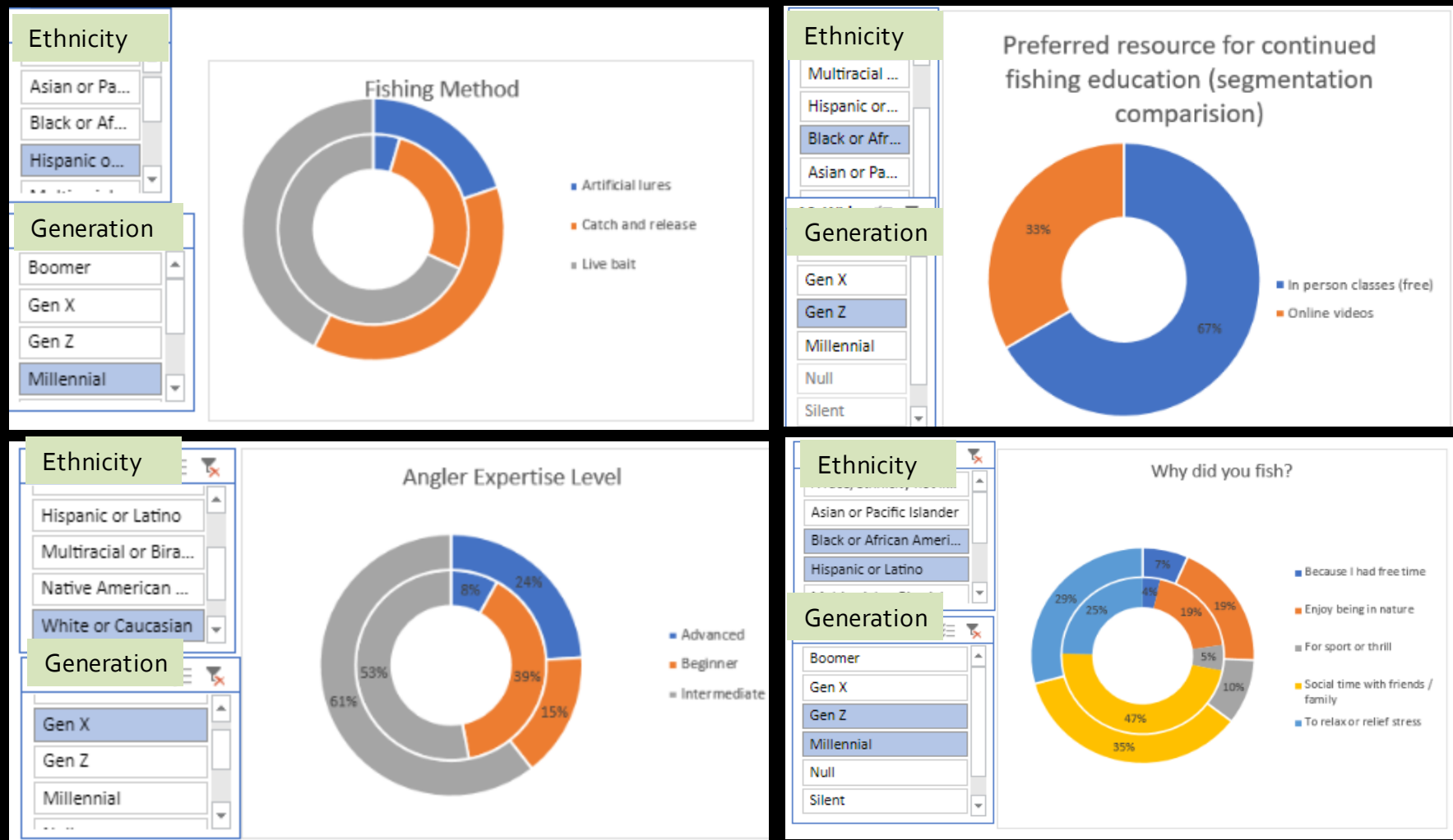
*X/Y% – first number is male, second is female

THE WHAT?

RESULTS DASHBOARD

- Built in-house with Excel utilizing license data imported from SAS database
- Easy access to results
- Compare and filter by: gender, generation, ethnic group

TPWD FISHING: 1-Day License Buyer Survey Results



HOW'S IT WORKING?

Completed Surveys

- 7,100 clicks on survey link
- 5,375 completed surveys
- Ran for 6 weeks (10/6 to 11/15)

Email Open Rates

1. Subject line/creative test to 30K on 10/6/22...48%
2. Auto-reminder to unopened 10K on 10/14/22..47%
3. Rollout winning version to 290K on 10/18/22..47%
4. Final reminder to 285K on 10/27/22.....46%

Click-To-Open Rates

- 3% beats the industry average of 2%
- Unique CTO rates average 18%

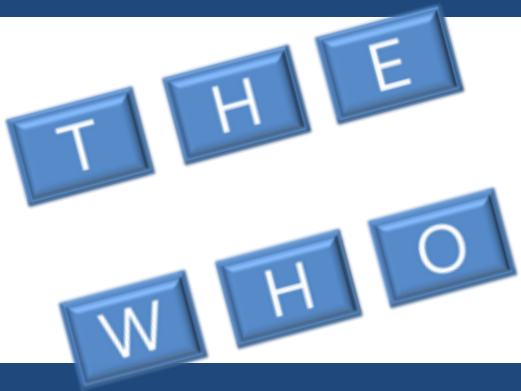
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 1-DAY LICENSES

Conversion Test

- Target 4x to 6x/year buyers for conversion to annual license (use small sample, 10K)
- Consider revenue write-down or longer retention rates

Retention Email Targets

- **<4 x/year:** offer free Outdoor Annual app with location based “where to fish” near you
- **Women:** send best performing links/info in first timer series, i.e., where to fish, how to cast
- **50+:** tell Boomers/grandparents about benefits for family and grandkids



WHO ARE OUR **FIRST-TIME** LICENSE BUYERS?

- No fishing license purchase in past 5 years
- 20-40 years old (60%), urban (80%), male (77%)
(based on current angler database)
- Only 10% of license database are first-time purchasers
in last 5 years. Need more recruitment efforts.

THE WHY

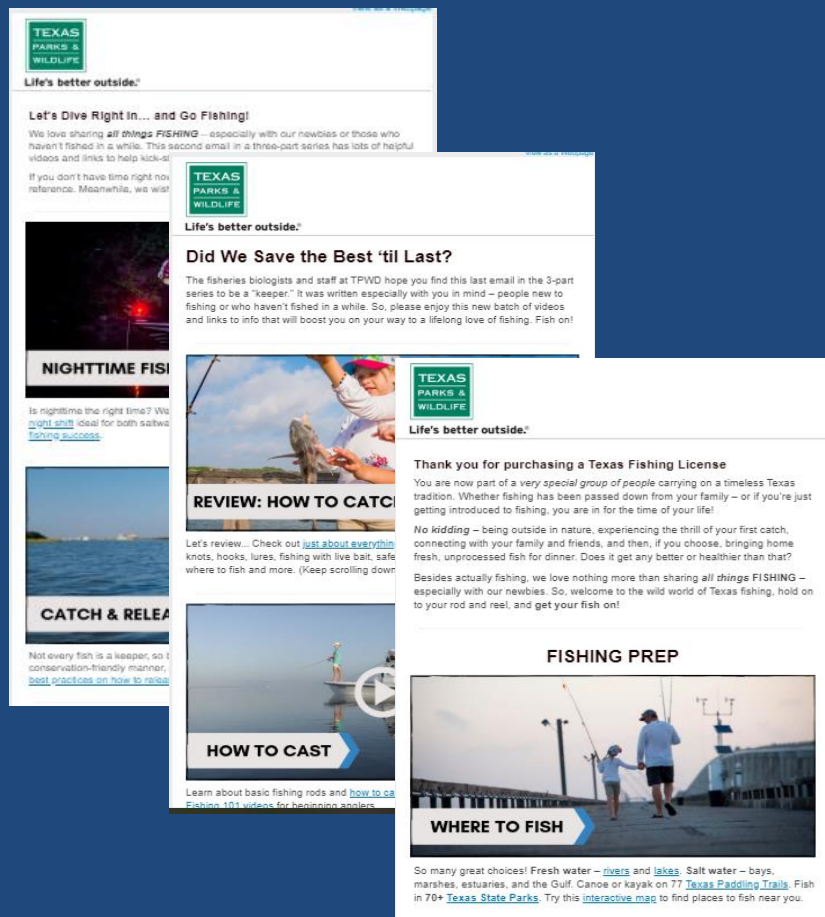
WHY TARGET FIRST-TIME LICENSE BUYERS?

- Help first-timers thrive
- RBFF research shows that first-timers:
 - are 2x more likely to lapse than repeat anglers
 - are more likely to renew if they fish frequently
- High churn rates (Ouch)
- They are our future

THE WHAT?

WHAT WE DO WITH FIRST-TIME BUYERS

- Series of three emails
- Empower with info, tips and opportunities
- Evergreen content; mobile-friendly
- Tone: friendly, light, fun – not governmental



THE WHAT?

EMAIL #1



Stocked year-round (except in August) with catfish or trout big enough to eat. Enjoy safe, well-lit areas with restrooms, parking and picnic tables at a [Neighborhood Fishin'](#) lake near you.

Email #1 in Series



Life's better outside.®

Thank you for purchasing a Texas Fishing License

You are now part of a *very special group of people* carrying on a timeless Texas tradition. Whether fishing has been passed down from your family – or if you're just getting introduced to fishing, you are in for the time of your life!

No kidding – being outside in nature, experiencing the thrill of your first catch, connecting with your family and friends, and then, if you choose, bringing home fresh, unprocessed fish for dinner. Does it get any better or healthier than that?

Besides actually fishing, we love nothing more than sharing *all things FISHING* – especially with our newbies. So, welcome to the wild world of Texas fishing, hold on to your rod and reel, and get your fish on!

FISHING PREP



WHERE TO FISH

So many great choices! Fresh water – [rivers](#) and [lakes](#). Salt water – bays, marshes, estuaries, and the Gulf. Canoe or kayak on 77 [Texas Paddling Trails](#). Fish in 70+ [Texas State Parks](#). Try this [interactive map](#) to find places to fish near you.



WATCH & LEARN

Feel excited but a little overwhelmed? Then sit back with a bowl of popcorn and enjoy these [how-to fish videos](#) on rods, reels, hooks, knots, bait, cleaning your fish, safety and more. Sorry Netflix.



RULES & REGULATIONS

Don't end up on [Lone Star Law](#)! Download the free Outdoor Annual [app](#) or visit [OutdoorAnnual.com](#) for all the fishing regulations you need to know – and then some.

FISH ON!



Everyone likes tips for success! Check out this blog for [5 simple fishing tips](#) in as many minutes. If you're all about that bass, watch this [bass fishing tips video](#) and read more about [how to catch bass](#) on TakeMeFishing.org.



TACKLE BOX TIPS

Watch these [tackle box tips](#) on the basic gear and supplies you'll need for your fishing trip. And take a look at our other [Fishing 101 videos](#) with more hot tips for beginning anglers.



THE WHAT?

EMAIL #2



FIND YOUR INNER CHEF

Cleaning and [filleting a fish](#) really is easier than you think. But don't stop there! Step your cooking up to chef-level. Chef Jesse Griffiths offers inspiration for how to fry [redfish 3 different ways](#), and Chef Tim Spice shows you how to "spice" up [crappie cooking](#).



Life's better outside.®

Let's Dive Right In... and Go Fishing!

We love sharing **all things FISHING** — especially with our newbies or those who haven't fished in a while. This second email in a three-part series has lots of helpful videos and links to help kick-start your fishing fun.

If you don't have time right now to view this info, just **save this email** for your future reference. Meanwhile, we wish you "tight lines."



NIGHTTIME FISHING

Is nighttime the right time? Well-lit piers and cooler temps can make [fishing the night shift](#) ideal for both saltwater or freshwater fishing. Here are a few [tips for night fishing success](#).



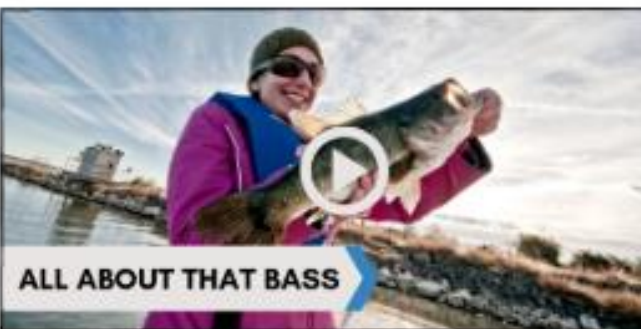
CATCH & RELEASE

Not every fish is a keeper, so be sure you know how to handle and release fish in a conservation-friendly manner, so they can live to fight another day. Here are easy [best practices on how to release fish](#).



HOW TO I.D. FISH

Use the [Texas Fishing Guide](#), free in [Texas Parks & Wildlife](#) magazine's [mobile app](#), for photos, descriptions and best places to catch them. Or, get to know [Freshwater](#) and [Saltwater](#) fish on our website.



ALL ABOUT THAT BASS

Bass is the most popular freshwater game fish in the U.S. Learn where they like to chill out, what lures and bait work best and other [bass fishing tips](#) to increase your catch rate.



SALTWATER FISHING

The mystery (and excitement) of saltwater fishing is that you never know what you're going to get! Check out these videos on [wade fishing](#) and [pier fishing](#) along the Texas coast.

Email #2 in Series



FIND YOUR INNER CHEF

Cleaning and [filleting a fish](#) really is easier than you think. But don't stop there! Stop your cooking up to chef-level! Chef Jesse Griffiths offers inspiration for how to [fry redfish 3 different ways](#), and Chef Tim Spice shows you how to "spice" up [craggole cooking](#).

LET'S STAY CONNECTED!

See what other Texans are catching, find out about fishing events and get advice from the experts at TPWD. Follow one or more of our [fishing-focused Facebook Pages](#) or [Instagram Accounts](#)! Or follow us on Twitter at [@TPWDFish](#).



Thank you to the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation ([TakeMeFishing.com](#)) for the use of some of their videos and information.

THE WHAT?

EMAIL # 3



Find out what's biting, where, and on what type of bait – in the [weekly fishing reports](#). Search by region or waterbody (lakes, rivers or bays). You can also [sign up](#) to get an email or text as soon as the reports are released each week.



Life's better outside.®

Did We Save the Best 'til Last?

The fisheries biologists and staff at TPWD hope you find this last email in the 3-part series to be a "keeper." It was written especially with you in mind – people new to fishing or who haven't fished in a while. So, please enjoy this new batch of videos and links to info that will boost you on your way to a lifelong love of fishing. Fish on!



REVIEW: HOW TO CATCH FISH

Let's review... Check out [just about everything](#) you need to know to start fishing – knots, hooks, lures, fishing with live bait, safety, essential gear, kayak fishing tips, where to fish and more. (Keep scrolling down, it practically goes on forever!)



HOW TO CAST

Learn about basic fishing rods and [how to cast](#) safely in this video, part of our [Fishing 101 videos](#) for beginning anglers.

Email #3 in Series



FREE ARTICLES & GUIDE

Free [articles](#) from the expert outdoor writers of Texas Parks & Wildlife magazine. And check out the Texas Fishing Guide, free in the magazine's [mobile app](#). It's the go-to source for species info and tips.



NON-GULF SHRIMP BAIT IS ILLEGAL

[It's the law](#). While safe for human consumption, when imported shrimp is used for bait, it can carry the white-spot syndrome that can wipe out native shrimp, crab and crayfish in Texas. Only use shrimp native to the Gulf of Mexico as bait.



WIN PRIZES WITH A BIG BASS

It could happen – you've heard of beginner's luck, right? Catch a largemouth bass that's 8+ lbs. or 24+ inches and be eligible to win prizes and recognition in the [Toyota ShareLunker Program](#). Entry is free.



IT'S NOT CHEATING...

Find out what's biting, where, and on what type of bait – in the [weekly fishing reports](#). Search by region or waterbody (lakes, rivers or bays). You can also [sign up](#) to get an email or text as soon as the reports are released each week.

Your License Fees Support Texas Fishing

100% of your license fees go to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, which helps to ensure fishing opportunities for you and for generations to come. Even if you don't plan to fish this year, buying a license is an investment in the Texas outdoors you love.

Thanks for helping us keep Texas fishing great!

HOW'S IT WORKING?

Open Rates for series



- Our **48%** average exceeds industry average of 28%

Open Rates each email

- Email #1: **55%**
- Email #2: **44%**
- Email #3: **44%**

Click to Open Rates

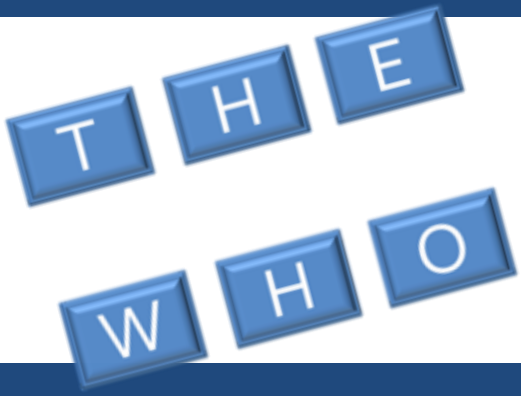
- **7.37%** beats the industry average of 3.99%

First Time Fishing License Buyers					
License Year (LY)	Licenses Sold (qty)	License Revenue (\$)	Licenses Retained from Prior LY (qty)	Revenue Retained from Prior LY (\$)	Revenue Retained from Prior LY (%)
2019	487,599	\$13,239,979	109,399	\$2,996,999	22.6%
2020	643,253	\$18,607,322	110,268	\$2,992,316	16.1%
2021	602,452	\$17,436,344	127,552	\$3,590,846	20.6% 
2022	510,401	\$14,757,317	112,461	\$3,305,969	22.4% 



MOST CLICKED ON LINKS

Email #1	Email #2	Email #3
<u>Where to Fish</u>	<u>Bass Fishing at Night</u>	<u>Fishing Reports</u>
<u>Find Places to Fish/Boat (map)</u>	<u>TPW Magazine App</u>	<u>How to Cast (video)</u>
<u>Fishing for Beginners (web)</u>	<u>How to Catch and Release (video)</u>	<u>How to Catch Fish (video)</u>



WHO ARE YEAR-FROM-PURCHASE LICENSE BUYERS?

- Millennials are largest segment
- 45% of *fishing* license buyers in LY22 are YFP buyers
- Account for ~ 46% of the LY22 *fishing* license revenue.

THE WHY

WHY TARGET YEAR-FROM-PURCHASE LICENSE BUYERS?

- Highest grossing revenue type (\$47/year, all water)
- Delayed renewals
 - Lag times up to 5 months after expiration date
 - Purchase based on convenience or upcoming events
- See how/if we can speed-up renewal times

THE WHAT?

WHAT WE DID WITH YEAR-FROM-PURCHASE BUYERS

- Historically sent 1 expiration notice email/year
- Tested subject line and body copy for follow-up email
- Messaging prompted earlier renewal versus waiting up to 5 months

THE WHAT?

FIRST RENEWAL REMINDER EMAIL

- Tested *soft-sell* vs *hard-sell* subject lines and body copy
- Rolled out hard-sell version
- Developed second renewal reminder email for 60 days later

From: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department <tpwd@service.govdelivery.com>

Subject: Fishing License Expiration Notice

[View as a Webpage](#)



EXPIRATION NOTICE

EXPIRATION DATE: October, 2022

LICENSE TYPE: Year-from-Purchase All Water Fishing Package

DESCRIPTION: (Texas residents only) includes a resident fishing license, a freshwater endorsement and a saltwater endorsement with a red drum tag, all valid from the date of purchase through the end of the purchase month of the next license year.

LICENSE FEE: \$47

RENEW YOUR LICENSE

Administrative fee: A \$5 fee is added to phone (800-895-4248) and [online](#) transactions. Licenses can also be purchased at [license retailers](#).

If you have already purchased a new fishing license, please disregard this notice.

THE WHAT?

SECOND RENEWAL REMINDER EMAIL

Expired License Reminder

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department sent this bulletin at 02/02/2023 03:00 PM CST

[View as a Webpage](#)



Your Fishing License has Expired

Don't miss out on all the perks that your resident Year-from-Purchase All-Water Fishing Package has to offer! Renew it now [online](#) or at a [local retailer](#).

- [Free Fishing Events](#) – hosted throughout the year at numerous locations.
- [Free Fishing Reports](#) – find out what's biting, which bait is working, and more, in the freshwater and saltwater waterbodies of your choice.
- [Free Leased River Access](#) – Anglers may use these leased (by TPWD) areas on privately-owned land for fishing and launching kayaks, canoes or other non-motorized boats.
- Your resident Year-from-Purchase All-Water Fishing License includes a freshwater and a saltwater endorsement with a red drum tag – all valid from the date of purchase through the end of the purchase month of the next license year.

RENEW YOUR LICENSE

Fishing in cold weather is awesome – here's why!

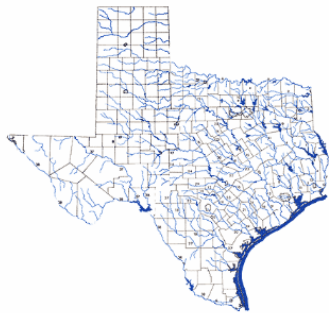


- **Bigger Fish** – Some of the biggest spotted seatrout, bass and red drum are caught when the weather is the coldest.
- **Fish gather together** – Fish tend to be much more concentrated, and when you find them, fishing can be over-the-top good.
- **Fewer people** – You may have the water more or less to yourself. If you're fishing on a lake, it's likely there will be fewer boaters which means less wake and less noise.
- **Great weather** – The burning hot sun, mosquitoes and bugs are not an issue.

RENEW YOUR LICENSE

Find Places to Fish

Find Places to Fish



Water, water, everywhere! Texas is known for having some of the best fishing in the country – rivers, lakes, bays, marshes, the Gulf – and that makes it easy to find great [places to fish](#) close to your home! Try this [interactive map](#) or download the free [Outdoor Annual App](#) to find places to fish nearby.

WHERE TO FISH

Administrative fee: A \$5 fee is added to phone (800-895-4248) and [online](#) transactions. Licenses can also be purchased at [license retailers](#).

If you have already purchased a new fishing license, thank you! Please disregard this notice.

the HOW

Anyway, from my notes, the lift from Nov send and Jan reminder was \$5989 and 69%. For Dec/Feb it was \$2625 and 46%.

HOW'S IT WORKING?

Open Rates for series

- Our average 53.15% exceeds industry average* of 28%

Open Rates each email

- Email #1: Expiration notice 53.12%
- Email #2: Reminder at 60 days 53.17%

Conversion Rates

- Ecommerce Conversion Rate 35.36%
- Revenue \$279,350 for FY22
- 60-day reminder revenue \$8,877 for Jan/Feb 2023

*2022 Email Marketing Statistics and Benchmarks by Industry – [MailChimp](#)

the HOW

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Conversion Rates

- Ecommerce Conversion Rate 35.36%
- Revenue \$279,350 for FY22

Lift Rates

- 46% increase in revenue (\$2,625) from Dec. send and Feb. 60 day email reminder
- 69% increase in revenue (\$5,989) from Nov. send and Jan. 60 day email reminder

*2022 Email Marketing Statistics and Benchmarks by Industry – [MailChimp](#)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YEAR-FROM-PURCHASE

Messaging Testing

- Test email focusing on more reasons/times to fish sooner – holidays, birthdays, dates, family reunions, new waterbodies or species

Emails/ Texting

- Test adding a 3rd follow-up email at 90 days
- Test follow-up with “texting” vs. email
- Target women YFP buyers with positive benefits of fishing (stress relief, self-confidence, escape) per recent RBFF research



RETENTION ON A SHOESTRING

- If You Don't Ask, You Don't Get
 - Aggressively collect new emails, money in the bank
 - We use large pop-up at bottom of web pages; events; social media; e-banners
- Use photos/videos/text from RBFF, or other agencies
- Email throughout the year to keep fishing top-of-mind

"Email campaigns and renewal notices via email are important and will continue to be effective ways to retain and reactivate anglers." -- RBFF

THE QUESTIONS?

Janis Johnson, Marketing Manager

janis.johnson@tpwd.texas.gov phone: 512.389.8670

Thank you to the **FishChat team of biologists, educators and anglers** and the **Marketing team**: Cory Chandler, Deputy Director Communications; Joshua Lee, Email Specialist; Nick Guild, Communications Data Analyst; Karen Marks, Angler Education; Zack Thomas, Coastal Fisheries biologist, John Taylor, Inland Fisheries biologist; and Jill Kreindler, Marketing Specialist.

THE WHAT?

"FISHCHAT"

- "FishChat" is an internal group of SME's (biologists, angler educators, anglers) who help communications people ideate topics and review content
- Helpful for non-fishing copywriters
- Early and more engagement with SME's made possible:
 - more interesting and effective email series
 - enhanced cross-division relationships