

# 2025 SPECIAL REPORT ON FISHING



a partnership project of:

**OUTDOOR  
FOUNDATION**



RECREATIONAL  
BOATING & FISHING  
FOUNDATION



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2024 brought encouraging developments (easing inflation, strong employment data, market highs) amid a troubling backdrop (deepening partisanship, continued global strife, AI worries). Through it all, fishing remains a gateway to health, wellbeing, and togetherness. More than a hobby, fishing represents a way of life, a connection to wildlife, and a sustainable way to support your family, community and local business. Whether on lakes, rivers, streams or seas; from shorelines, boats or embankments; millions of Americans were united in 2024 by the love of fishing.

For the 15th consecutive year, the Outdoor Foundation (OF) and the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF) have partnered to produce the Special Report on Fishing. The report provides a comprehensive review of fishing participation trends going back to 2007, including detailed information on specific fishing categories. Findings also include motivations, barriers, demographics and preferences of all anglers, including key segments such as youth, Hispanic Americans, Black Americans, and females. Marketing insights indicate that there is significant participation growth opportunity among these groups. Learning more about their fishing participation habits can help the whole industry better understand how to recruit, retain and reactivate anglers.

## Overall Fishing Participation Trends

In 2024, 57.9 million Americans ages 6 and over took to the nation's waterways to enjoy recreational fishing, up from 57.7 million in 2023. The number of anglers topped the record set last year. Fishing's participation rate remained at 19 percent, an all-time high.

68 percent of participants fished 1 to 11 times in 2024—less than one outing per month. Participation among more frequent anglers has gradually declined since participation tracking began in 2007. Just 32 percent fished once a month or more in 2024, down from 37 percent a decade ago. *See page 3 to learn more.*

The “leaky bucket” analysis measures the annual churn of fishing participants—those joining or rejoining the activity compared to those quitting. Following a sizable

net increase of 3.2 million fishing participants in 2023, 2024 saw a modest gain of nearly 300,000 anglers. 16.9 million new or returning anglers fished, while 16.6 million left the sport. *See page 6 for more on the leaky bucket.*

## Fishing by Category

More than 43 million Americans ages 6 and over went **freshwater fishing** in 2024. Freshwater's national participation rate held steady at 14 percent for the third consecutive year. Average annual outings of 15 and total outings of 639 million were comparable to the year prior. *See page 12 for more on freshwater fishing.*

After hitting 15 million anglers for the first time in 2023, **saltwater fishing** participation grew slightly to 15.1 million in 2024. This was the highest number on record, over 500,000 anglers more than in 2020, and over 3 million participants higher than a decade earlier. Average annual outings per participant and total saltwater outings were unchanged year-over-year. *See page 16 for more on saltwater fishing.*

For the second year in a row, **fly fishing** topped 8 million participants. The national participation rate remained at 3 percent. Average outings per participant fell from 11 last year to 10 in 2024, while total outings declined slightly to 78 million. *See page 20 for more on fly fishing.*

## Youth Participation

Fishing's national participation rate among children ages 6 to 17 declined slightly in 2024 but remained higher than five years ago. The number of participants ages 6 to 12 rose slightly to 7.5 million in 2024. Among ages 13 to 17, it fell from 5.6 million last year to 5.2 million. *See page 24 for more on youth participation.*

## Black Participation

More than 5.5 million Black Americans ages 6 and over fished in 2024, the highest number since activity tracking began in 2007. The participation rate—a record 14 percent—has increased an average of 17 percent over each



of the last 3 years. All styles of fishing saw year-over-year increases in participant numbers and the participation rate. *See page 31 for more on Black participation.*

## Hispanic Participation

Hispanic fishing participation increased by over 3 million in a decade, increasing from 3.3 million in 2014 to 6.6 million in 2024. Over the same period, the national participation rate rose from 10 percent to 16 percent. As with most fishing populations, the total number of outings and average annual times fished have slowly declined over time. *See page 37 for more on Hispanic participation.*

## Female Participation

In 2024, both the number of female participants and the female participation rate maintained all-time highs reached in 2023. Participant numbers held steady at 21.3 million, while the national participation rate was unchanged at 14 percent. Females represented 37 percent of total anglers, 39 percent of first-time participants, and 43 percent of those considering fishing in 2023. *See page 43 for more on female participation.*

## Profile of a Fishing Trip

Only 1 in 5 anglers typically fished alone, reiterating that fishing remained a shared activity in 2024. Nearly 8 in 10 participants reported that they usually fished in groups of 2 to 5 anglers. 87 percent of participants caught at least one fish on their most recent trip. 38 percent opted to release their catch to swim another day, 35 percent kept it,

and 27 percent reported doing both. Over 4 in 10 fishing trips were either spontaneous or planned one week prior. *See page 50 for insight into a typical fishing trip.*


## Perceptions of Fishing

Spending time with family and friends was a key driver for first-time fishing participants in 2024. Many also reported that the great outdoors and relaxation inspired their first fishing trip. The most cited factors that prevented the enjoyment of fishing were crowded fishing spots and the discomfort of being outdoors. Other frustrations included not catching any fish, unclear waters, and the expense associated with gearing up for fishing. *See page 54 to learn about perceptions of fishing.*

## Future of Fishing

**Data continues to underscore the critical importance of introducing fishing at a young age, as 85 percent of current fishing participants fished before the age of 12. Participation rates fell sharply after a child turned 18, making families with young children one key to growing future participation.**

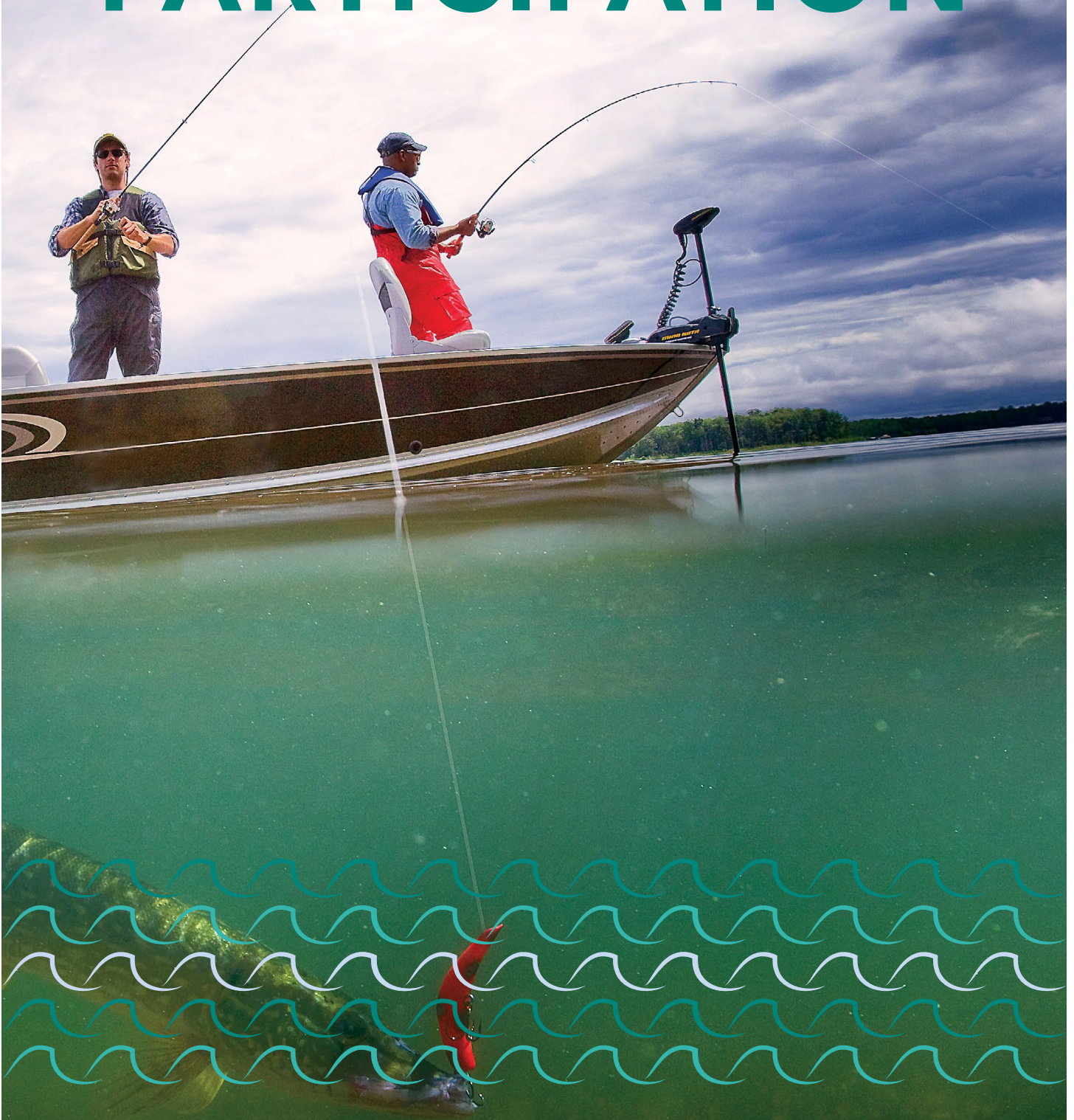
By understanding the demographics, motivations and barriers of participants, the fishing industry can better reach young Americans, nurture a new generation of fishing enthusiasts, and retain those new to the sport. Connecting youth to fishing will ensure that our nation's waterways are protected, our communities are healthy, and our industry is thriving. *See page 59 to learn about the future of fishing.*

A photograph of a person fishing in a river. The person is standing in the water, holding a fishing rod. The background features a dense forest of green trees and a range of mountains under a clear sky. The text is overlaid on the image in a large, white, sans-serif font.

**Retaining newcomers remains an integral part of fishing's continued success. New anglers are younger, from all walks of life, and digitally connected. The industry must remind newcomers about great fishing experiences, highlight convenient water access, provide beginner educational resources, emphasize the social aspects of fishing and boating, and recommend cost-effective equipment.**



# FISHING PARTICIPATION

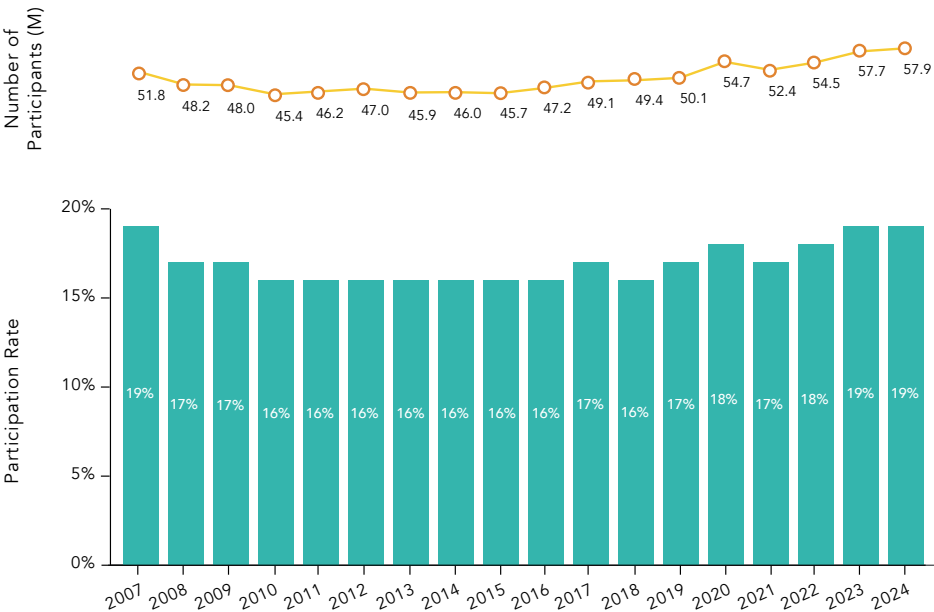




# FISHING PARTICIPATION

## PARTICIPATION OVER TIME

In 2024, 19 percent of Americans ages 6 and up went fishing at least once. This national participation rate matched the record level set in 2023. The number of participants was also the highest on record, slightly topping the previous high in 2023. 57.9 million Americans fished in 2024, up 200,000 from 2023.



57.9M

TOTAL #  
OF PARTICIPANTS

Up from 46 million a  
decade ago

19%

NATIONAL  
PARTICIPATION RATE

Up from 16% a decade ago



895M

TOTAL #  
OF OUTINGS

6M more than 2023



15

AVERAGE ANNUAL  
OUTINGS

up from 14 in 2023



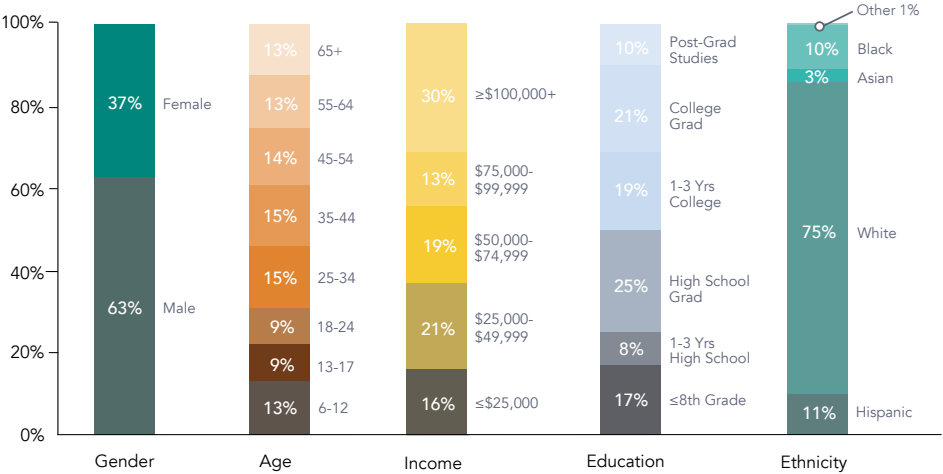
7.8M

MORE PARTICIPANTS  
IN 2024

vs. 2019



# WHO PARTICIPATED?



## PARTICIPATION RATES BY DEMOGRAPHIC

21.3 million women fished in 2024, the highest since participation tracking began in 2007 and the same number as in 2023. Females made up 37 percent of fishing participants for the third time in the prior four years, the others being in 2021 and 2023.

4 in 10 participants were 45 or older in 2024, and half reported attending at least some college. 30 percent of angler households earned over \$100,000 in 2024, up from 25 percent a decade ago. By comparison, the share earning less than \$25,000 per year held steady at about 16 percent over the same period.

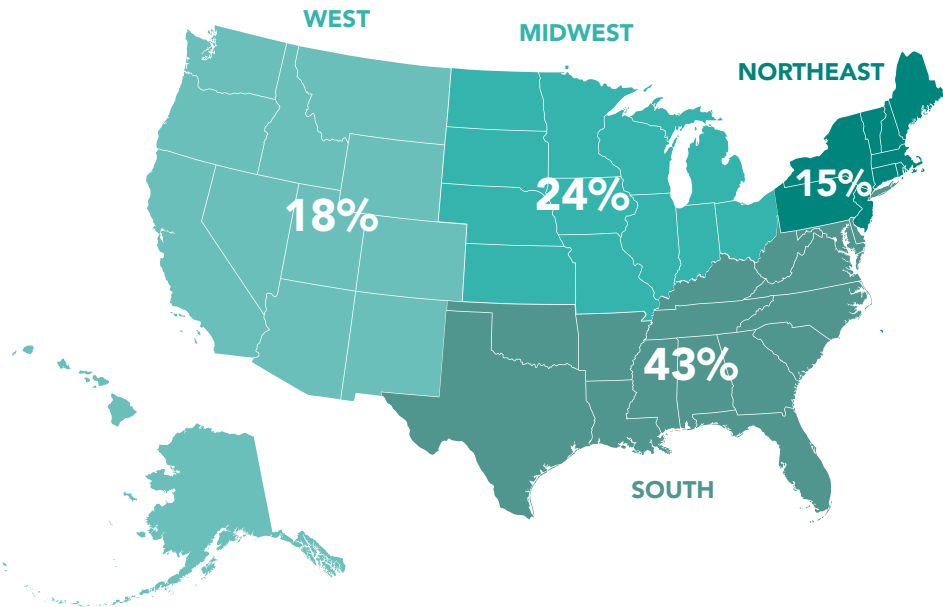
Although fishing participants in 2024 were less reflective of the U.S. population, they have become more representative over time. 75 percent of participants in 2024 were White (down from 86 percent in 2007) versus 58 percent nationally. Large gaps remained for Hispanics (11 percent of fishing participants versus 20 percent of the U.S. population), Black anglers (10 percent versus 13 percent) and Asian participants (3 percent versus 6 percent).



**63%**  
MALE  
PARTICIPANTS



**65+**  
FASTEST GROWING  
AGE COHORT



## PARTICIPATION BY REGION

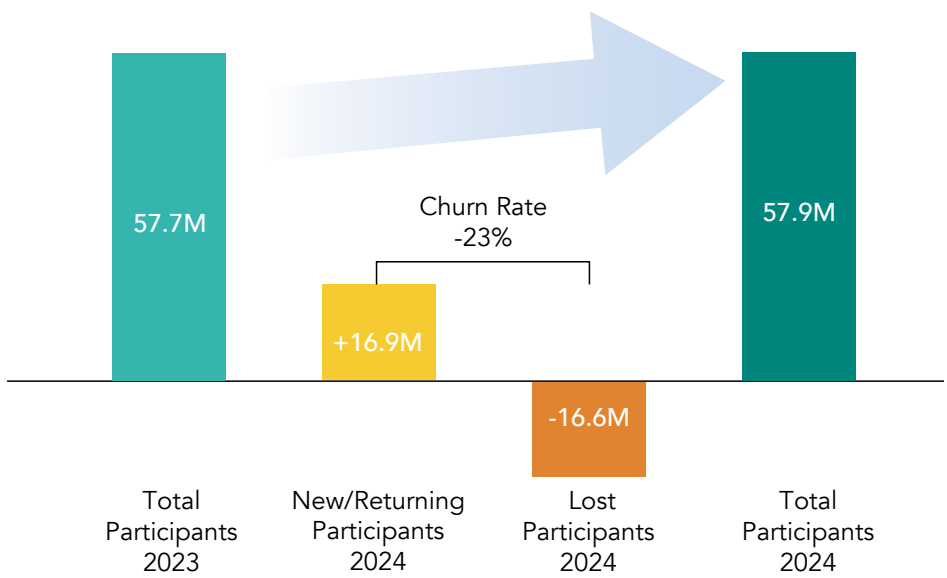
The South region (comprised of 16 Southern states with ample coastline and abundant interior lakes and waterways) was home to 43 percent of anglers in 2024, over 25 million participants in total. Compare this to the vast American West (the Pacific and Mountain states) and its 10 million participants. The Midwest and Northeast regions had 14 million and 9 million participants, respectively.



# PARTICIPATION IN-DEPTH

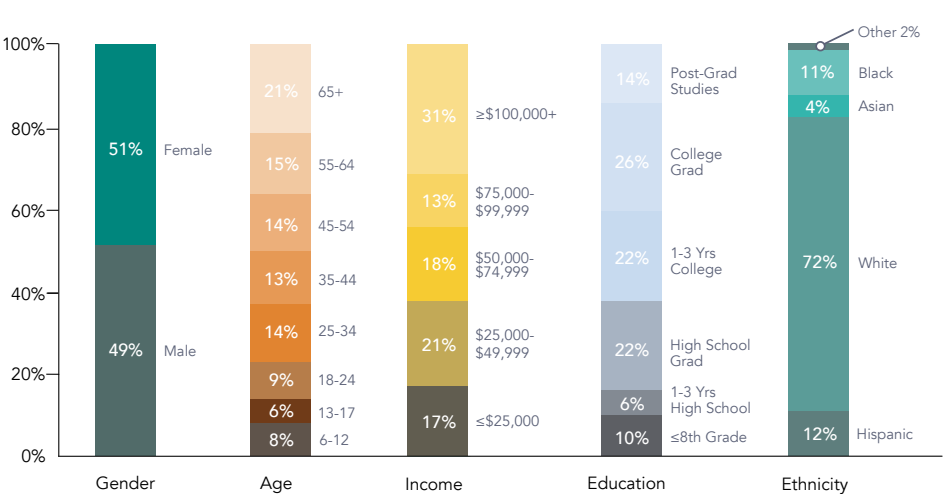
## LEAKY BUCKET ANALYSIS

Between 2023 and 2024 there was a net gain of nearly 300,000 fishing participants, versus a 3.2 million gain in 2023. The annual churn rate (which compares how many joined or continued fishing to those quitting the sport) was -23 percent, versus -20 percent in 2023.



## LOST PARTICIPANTS

51 percent of lost participants were female, a troubling trend considering that 37 percent of 2024 anglers were female. More than half of lost participants were over 45. About 4 in 10 reported an annual household income over \$75,000, and almost two-thirds had at least some college education.



**5.1M**  
FIRST-TIME  
PARTICIPANTS  
*vs. 4.2M in 2023*



**41M**  
CONTINUING  
PARTICIPANTS  
*and 11.8M returning*

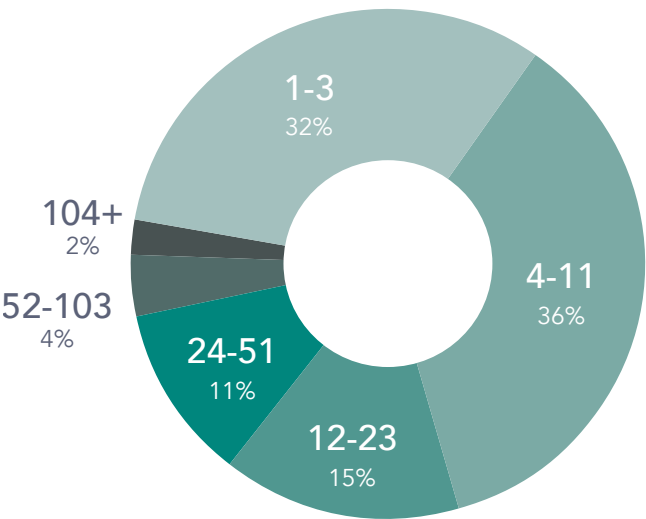


**16.6M**  
LOST  
PARTICIPANTS  
*vs. 12.3M in 2023*

# LEVELS OF COMMITMENT

## ANNUAL OUTINGS

Nearly 7 in 10 anglers in 2024 went fishing 1 to 11 times—less than once a month. Fewer participants in recent years indicated that they fished more than once a week. A decade ago, about 8 percent reported weekly outings, but in 2024 that share fell to under 6 percent. The least active group was also the fastest growing. Anglers reporting just 1 to 3 annual outings have grown from 22 percent of total participants in 2007 to 32 percent in 2024.



## PERCEIVED LEVEL OF FISHING

When asked, 36 percent of anglers in 2024 described themselves as “avid” fishing participants. If the term “avid” described someone who fishes once per month or more (i.e. 32 percent of participants in 2024) it would roughly match the perception that anglers held of themselves. Just under half wished they could fish more.

PERCEIVED LEVEL OF FISHING PARTICIPATION	PERCENTAGE
Occasional participant, fish as often as I want	30%
Occasional participant, would like to fish more often	29%
Avid fishing participant, would like to fish more often	19%
Avid fishing participant, fish as often as I want	17%
Don't fish currently, but would like to fish	3%
Don't fish currently, not interested in fishing	2%



6%  
MOST AVID  
PARTICIPANTS

vs. 6% a decade ago



1-11  
TRIPS

ANNUALLY FOR 68%  
OF PARTICIPANTS

vs. 63% a decade ago



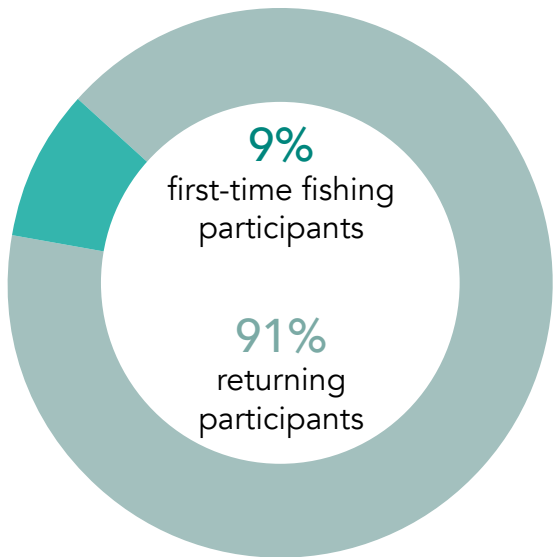
36%  
SELF-DESCRIBED  
AS AVID  
PARTICIPANTS



# INTRO TO FISHING

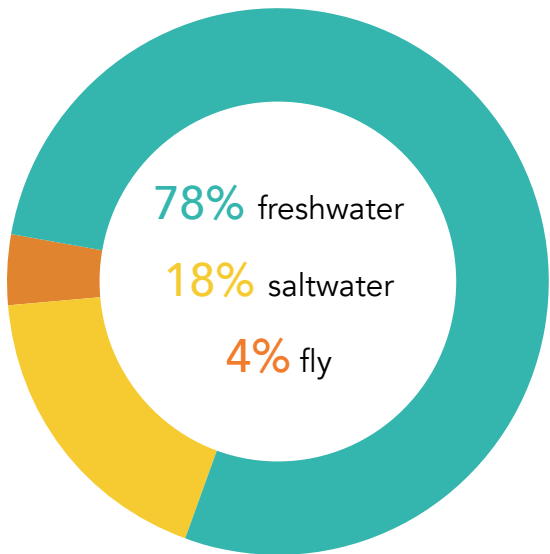
## NEW TO FISHING

Among 2024's 57.9 million fishing participants, 5.1 million were new to the sport. These newcomers represented 9 percent of total participants, up from 7 percent in 2023.



## FIRST TYPE OF FISHING EXPERIENCE

Almost 4 in 5 anglers said the first type of fishing they experienced was freshwater fishing. This has changed little over the prior decade, with gradual increases for fly fishing since 2014. Total outings by first-timers hit 31 million in 2024, the highest number on record. Average annual first-timer days reached 6, down from 7 in the year prior.



**31M**  
TOTAL ANNUAL  
OUTINGS  
*among first-timers*



**6 / YEAR**  
AVERAGE # OF  
OUTINGS  
*among first-timers*



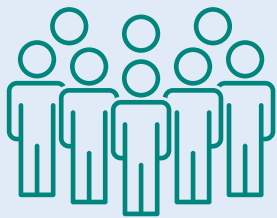
**39%**  
OF FIRST-TIME  
PARTICIPANTS  
WERE FEMALE  
*vs. 37% of total  
participants*

# TYPES OF FISHING & OTHER ACTIVITIES

## LITTLE OVERLAP IN FISHING

In 2024, Americans remained dedicated to their preferred form of fishing. Just 18 percent participated in more than one type, a ratio consistent for over a decade. To help sustain and expand the sport, anglers should introduce current participants (48 percent of whom indicated they'd like to fish more often) to a new type of fishing. 49 percent of both freshwater and saltwater anglers indicated they'd like to fish more, versus 40 percent fly participants.

TYPES OF FISHING	PERCENTAGE
Freshwater only	60%
Saltwater only	14%
Freshwater and Saltwater	11%
Fly Fishing only	8%
Freshwater and Fly Fishing	4%
Fly Fishing and Freshwater and Saltwater	2%
Saltwater and Fly Fishing	1%



82%  
participated in one  
type of fishing



18%  
participated in multiple  
types of fishing











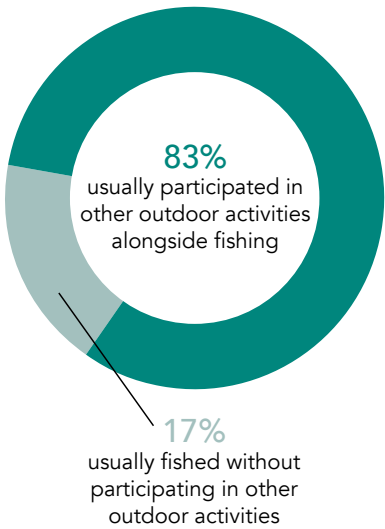
# ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF FISHING

## TOP CROSSOVER ACTIVITIES

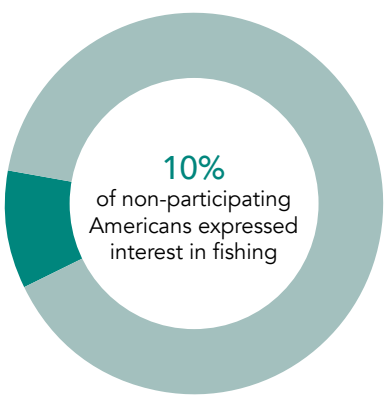
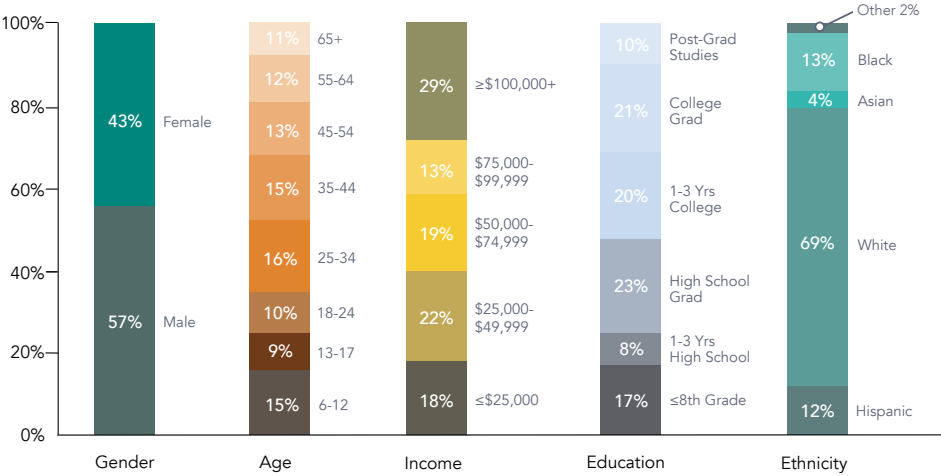
Fishing participants enjoyed a wide range of outdoor activities, including camping, hiking, bicycling and running.

### Which activities did you participate in outside of fishing?

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES		PERCENTAGE
	Camping	44%
	Walking	39%
	Hiking	32%
	Bicycling	32%
	Running	22%
	Birdwatching/Wildlife Viewing	22%
	Hunting	18%
	Kayaking	16%

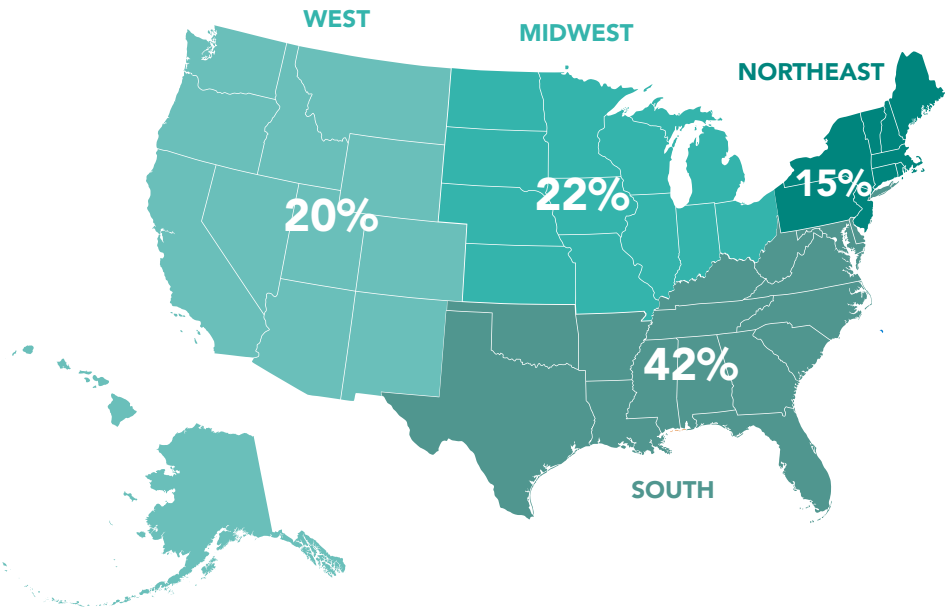


# AMERICANS CONSIDERING FISHING



## DEMOGRAPHICS OF THOSE CONSIDERING

Millions of Americans who did not fish in 2024 expressed interest in the sport. Among the nearly 26 million Americans—10 percent of the US population—who considered fishing in 2024, 11.3 million were female, 4.1 million were Black, and 3.4 million were Hispanic. 42 percent of those considering reported annual household incomes over \$75,000, while 51 percent had college experience.



## YOUTHS CONSIDERING FISHING

Over 15 percent of youths considered fishing in 2024, representing an enormous opportunity to grow fishing’s future. These 5.1 million interested youths bring a broader range of perspectives than current fishing participants, underscoring the need to engage communities that have not traditionally been part of the sport.

## THOSE CONSIDERING FISHING BY REGION

The map of those considering fishing largely mirrors the map of current participation, with higher concentrations of interest in the South region, with its abundant coastal and inland waterways. The West, Northeast, and Midwest regions had lower numbers of those considering fishing.



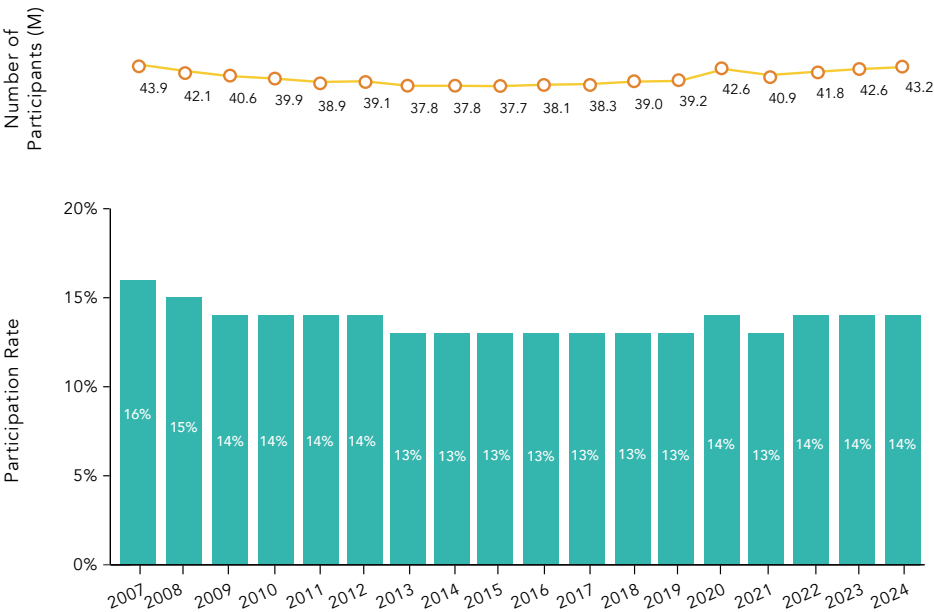
# FRESHWATER FISHING



# FRESHWATER FISHING PARTICIPATION

## PARTICIPATION OVER TIME

Freshwater remained fishing’s most popular format in 2024. 71 percent of fishing outings were freshwater trips. 60 percent of participants reported they only freshwater fished, 3 percent more than the year prior. Over 5 million more Americans participated in freshwater fishing in 2024 than a decade earlier, though the national participation rate has hovered at 13 to 14 percent since the Great Recession.



**43.2M**  
FRESHWATER  
PARTICIPANTS

**14%**  
NATIONAL  
PARTICIPATION RATE



**639M**  
TOTAL  
OUTINGS

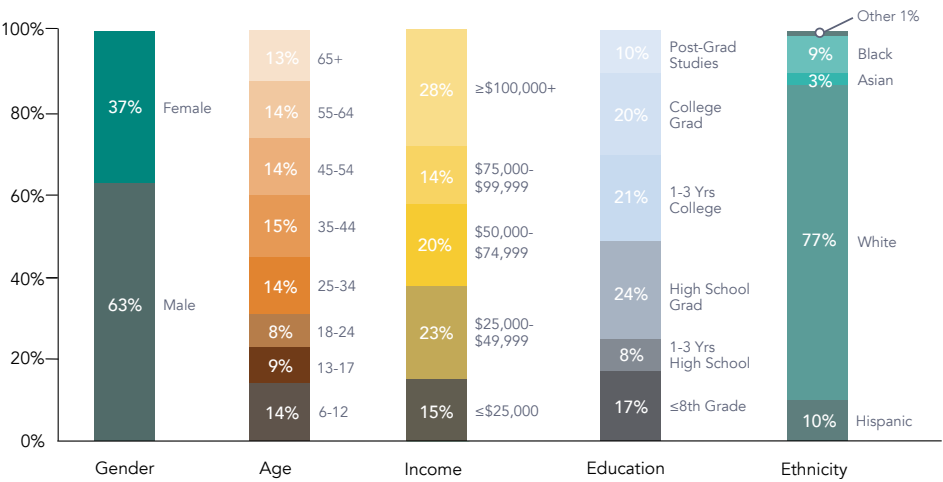


**15**  
AVERAGE ANNUAL  
OUTINGS



**+5.4M**  
PARTICIPANTS  
*vs. 2014*

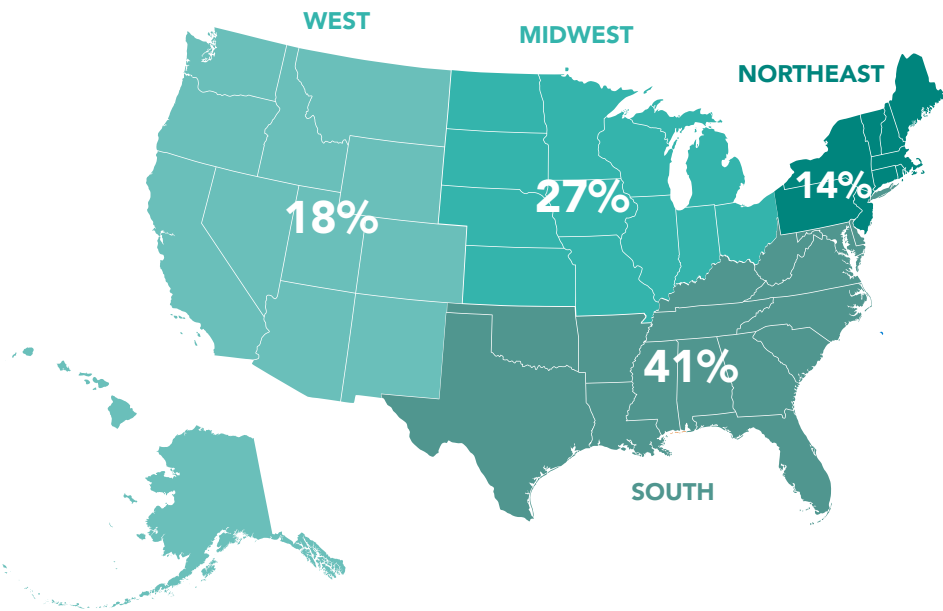
# WHO PARTICIPATED?



**44%**  
OF FRESHWATER  
ANGLERS WERE  
UNDER 35

## PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

The number of Black participants among total freshwater anglers grew from 3.1 million in 2021 to 3.9 million in 2024, an average annual increase of 8 percent. Similarly, the number of Hispanic participants among total freshwater anglers grew from 3.2 million in 2021 to 4.1 million in 2024, an average annual increase of 9 percent. Freshwater anglers 65 and older grew their share of total freshwater participants to 13 percent, the highest level since data collection began in 2007.



## REGIONAL PARTICIPATION

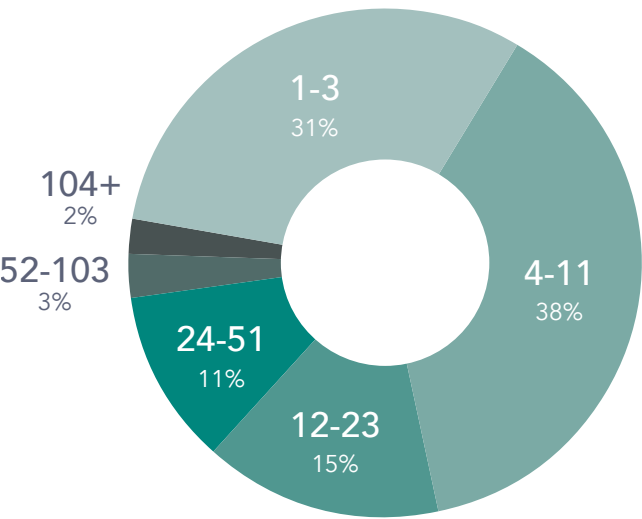
The Midwest was home to 27 percent of freshwater anglers on just 21 percent of the US population. This concentration is comparable to saltwater fishing in the South and fly fishing the West. The other regions (Northeast, South, and West) all reported freshwater fishing participation at levels lower than their population share. The West, for example, had 24 percent of the US population but only 18 percent of freshwater anglers in 2024.



# LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

## ANNUAL OUTINGS

Among the freshwater frequency levels measured, one segment has grown steadily since participation tracking began in 2007. Unfortunately, that was the least frequent participation level of just 1-3 annual outings. Nearly 7 in 10 freshwater anglers fished less than once per month.



## PERCEIVED LEVELS OF FISHING PARTICIPATION

61 percent of freshwater participants described their fishing activity as occasional in 2024. The percentage who wanted to fish more slightly exceeded that of those who fished as often as they liked, at 49 percent versus 47.

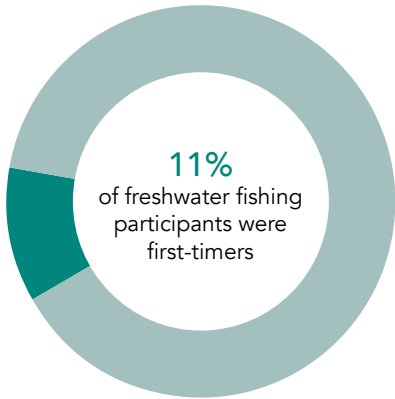
PERCEIVED LEVEL OF FISHING PARTICIPATION	PERCENTAGE
Occasional participant, would like to fish more often	31%
Occasional participant, fish as often as I want	30%
Avid fishing participant, would like to fish more often	18%
Avid fishing participant, fish as often as I want	17%
Don't fish currently, but would like to fish	3%
Don't fish currently, not interested in fishing	1%

4.6M  
FIRST-TIME  
FRESHWATER  
PARTICIPANTS  
IN 2024

vs. 2M a decade ago

2.6M  
FIRST-TIME  
FRESHWATER  
FEMALE  
PARTICIPANTS

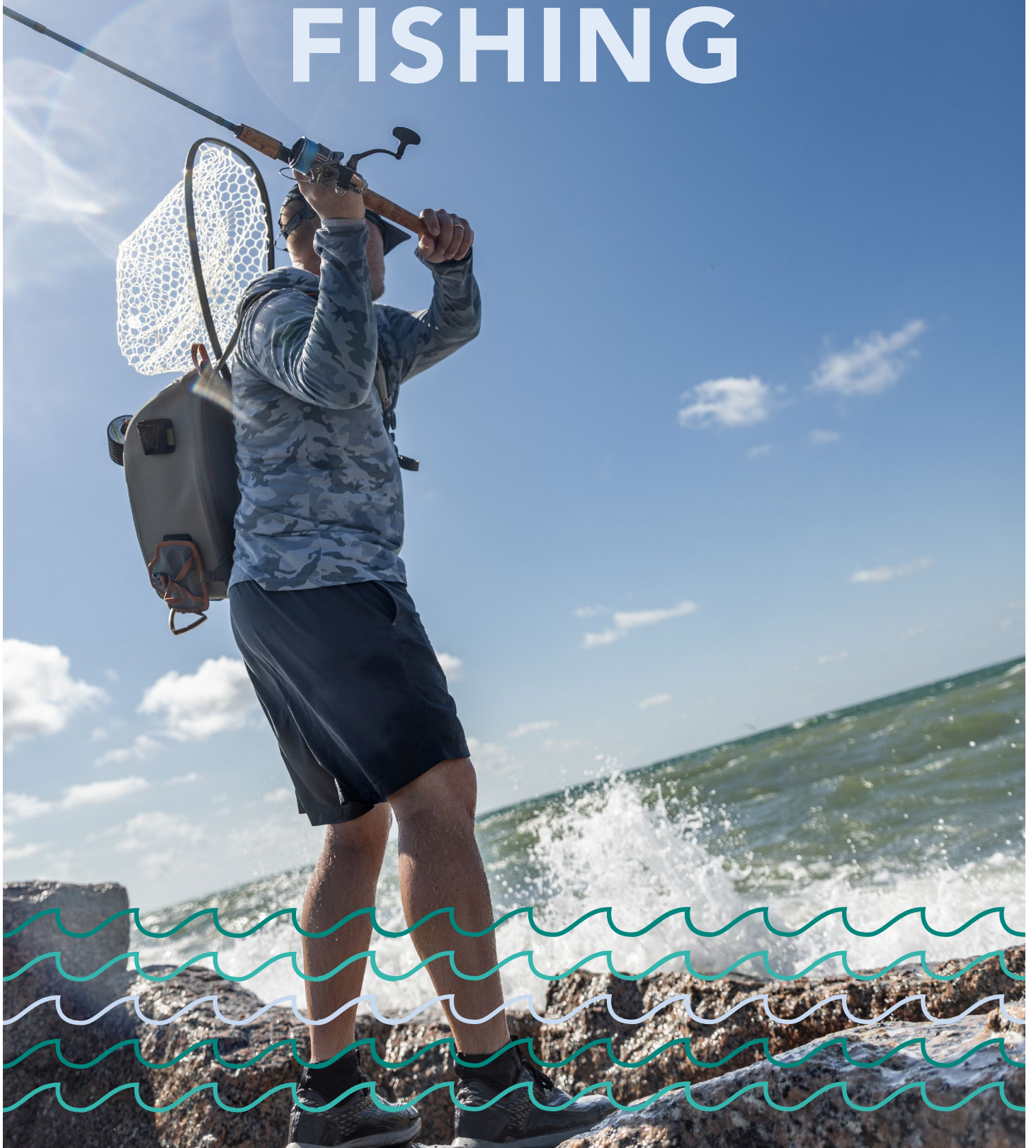
vs. 2M males



## FIRST-TIME PARTICIPANTS

First-time freshwater participants hit a record 4.6 million, representing nearly 11 percent of all freshwater participants. For the first time, female first-time freshwater anglers exceeded male first-timers, at 2.6 million versus 2 million.

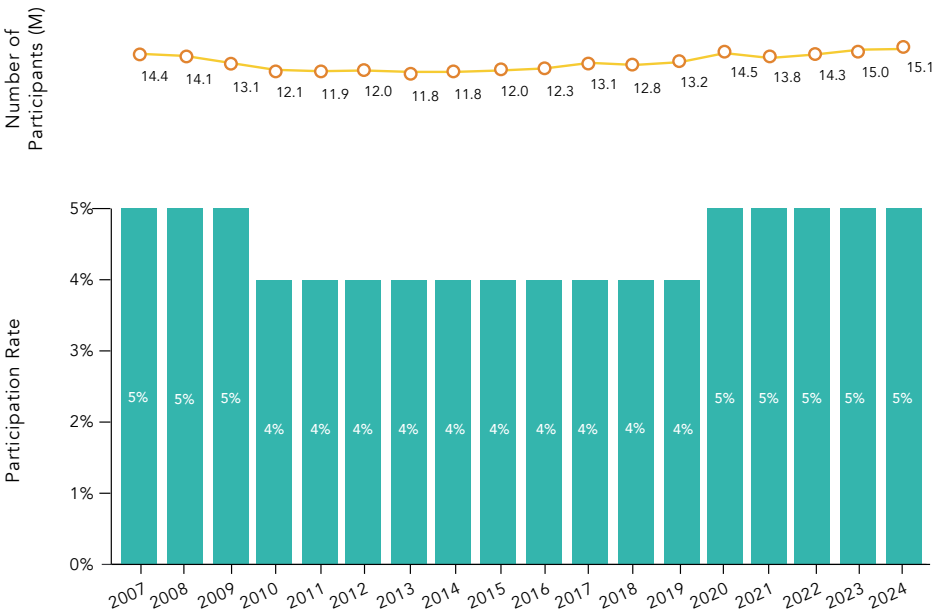
# SALTWATER FISHING



# SALTWATER FISHING PARTICIPATION

## PARTICIPATION OVER TIME

Following more than a decade of solid growth, saltwater participation increased slightly in 2024 to 15.1 million participants. This was the highest number on record, slightly exceeding 2023's total. Average annual outings per participant and total saltwater outings mirrored 2023 results.



15.1M

# OF SALTWATER PARTICIPANTS

vs. 11.8 million a decade ago

5%

NATIONAL PARTICIPATION RATE

vs. 4% a decade ago



179M

# OF OUTINGS



12

AVERAGE ANNUAL OUTINGS

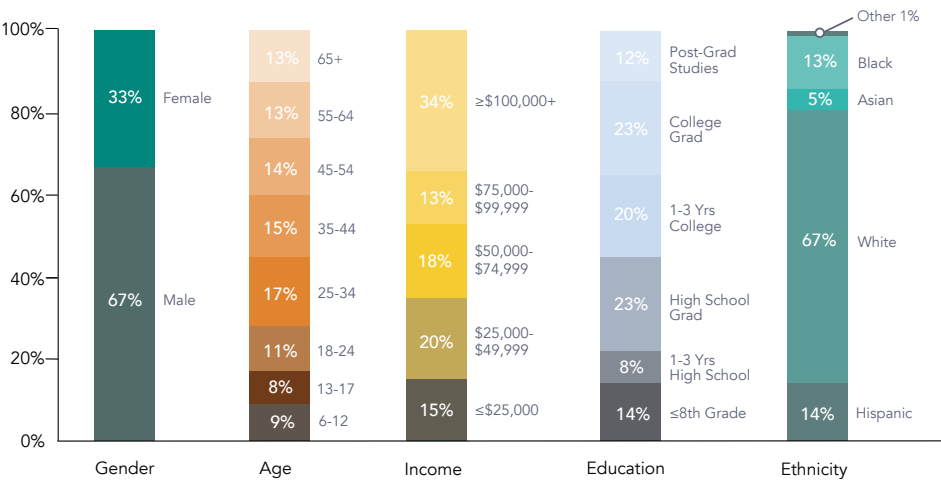


+2M

PARTICIPANTS  
vs. 2017



# WHO PARTICIPATED?

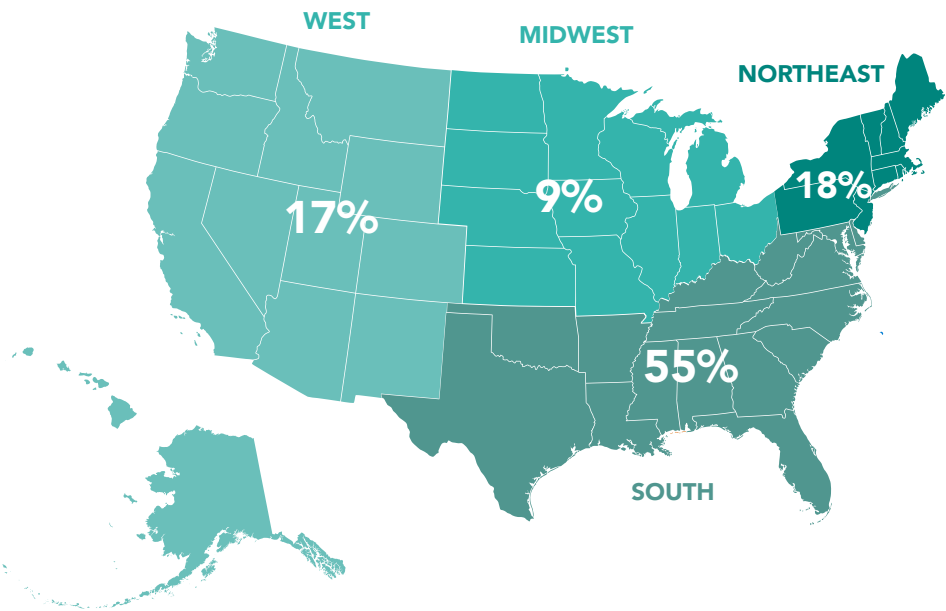


## MOST DIVERSE TYPE OF FISHING

*nearly one-third non-white participants*

### PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Saltwater fishing had a broad range of participants in 2024, with Hispanic, Black and Asian Americans together representing almost one-third of total participants, versus 24 percent of all 2024 anglers. Saltwater had 67 percent White participants, versus 78 percent in freshwater and 69 percent in fly. 47 percent of saltwater anglers reported annual household income of over \$75,000, versus 35 percent earning under \$50,000 per year.



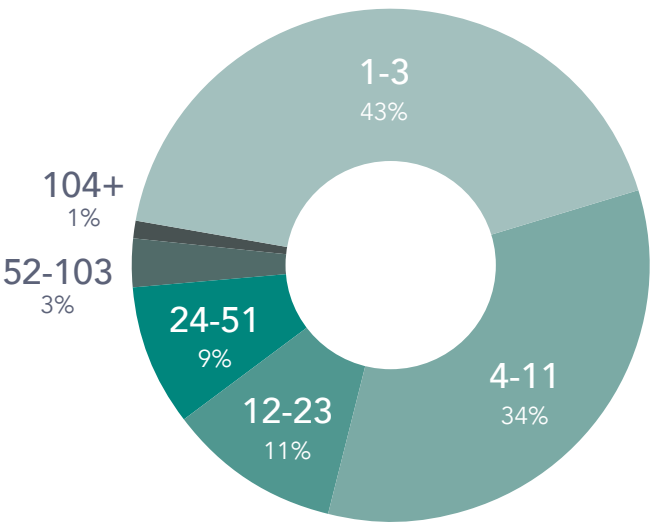
### REGIONAL PARTICIPATION

Unsurprisingly, saltwater fishing participants were concentrated in warmer coastal areas. The South region, home to 39 percent of the national population in 2024, held 55 percent of saltwater anglers. The South’s saltwater share has never fallen below 50 percent even as its overall population increased. For comparison, the Midwest has 21 percent of the US population and just 9 percent of saltwater participants.

# LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

## ANNUAL OUTINGS

Total saltwater outings peaked at 195 million in 2020, but at 179 million in 2024 came in just slightly above 2023 levels. 43 percent reported just 1 to 3 saltwater outings, better than fly fishing at 46 percent but not freshwater at 31 percent. About one in four participants said they saltwater fished more than once a month in 2024.



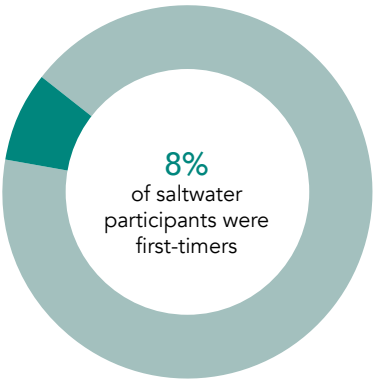
## PERCEIVED LEVEL OF FISHING PARTICIPATION

54 percent of saltwater anglers described themselves as occasional participants, versus 42 percent who said they were avid anglers. Participants were closely divided between those who fish as often as they want (47 percent) and those who wanted to fish more often (49 percent).

PERCEIVED LEVEL OF FISHING PARTICIPATION	PERCENTAGE
Occasional participant, fish as often as I want	28%
Occasional participant, would like to fish more often	26%
Avid fishing participant, would like to fish more often	23%
Avid fishing participant, fish as often as I want	19%
Don't fish currently, but would like to fish	3%
Don't fish currently, not interested in fishing	1%

**179M**  
TOTAL OUTINGS  
*7M higher than 2019  
(pre-COVID)*

**12**  
AVERAGE OUTINGS  
PER PARTICIPANT



**FIRST-TIME PARTICIPANTS**  
8 percent of saltwater anglers in 2024 were first-timers, up from 7 percent the year prior. Among these 1.2 million first-timers, approximately 700,000 were male and 500,000 were female.



# FLY FISHING

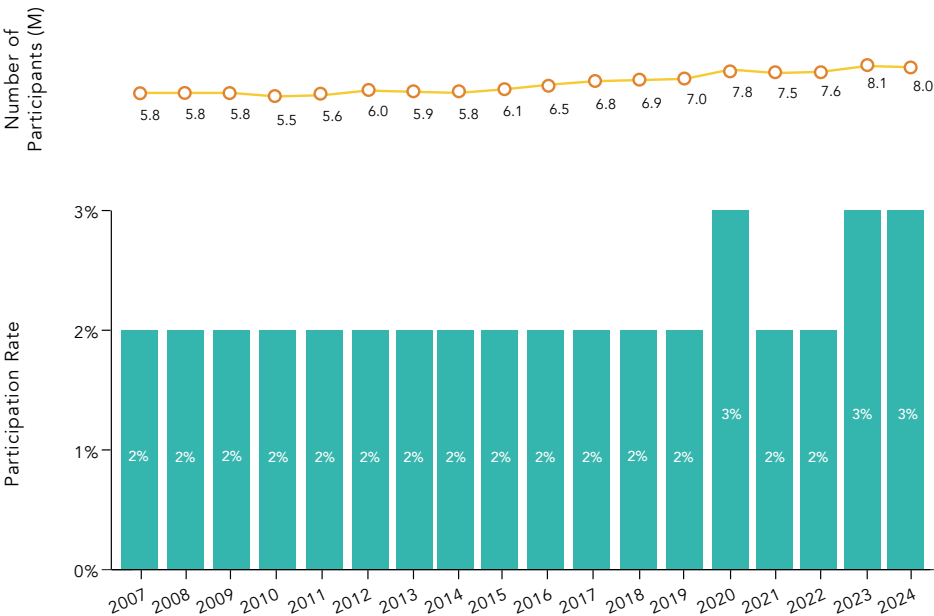




# FLY FISHING PARTICIPATION

## PARTICIPATION OVER TIME

With 8 million participants in 2024, fly fishing held onto last year's gains when participant numbers hit a record 8.1 million. Over 2 million more Americans went fly fishing in 2024 than did a decade earlier. The national participation rate remained at 3 percent. Average annual outings were unchanged at 10, while total outings declined from 80 million in 2023 to 78 million in 2024.



8M

# OF FLY FISHING PARTICIPANTS  
*vs. 5.8M a decade ago*

3%

NATIONAL PARTICIPATION RATE



78M  
TOTAL  
OUTINGS

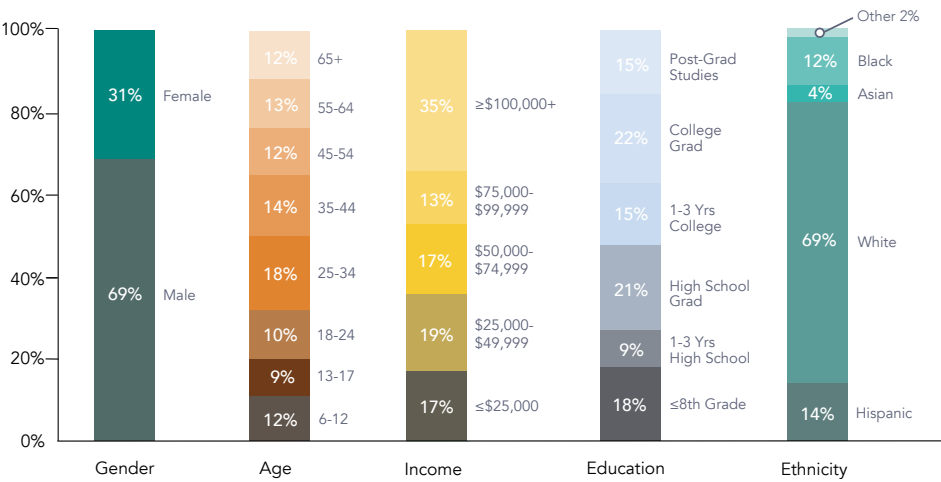


10  
AVERAGE ANNUAL  
OUTINGS



+2.2M  
MORE PARTICIPANTS  
IN 2024  
*vs. 2014*

# WHO PARTICIPATED?

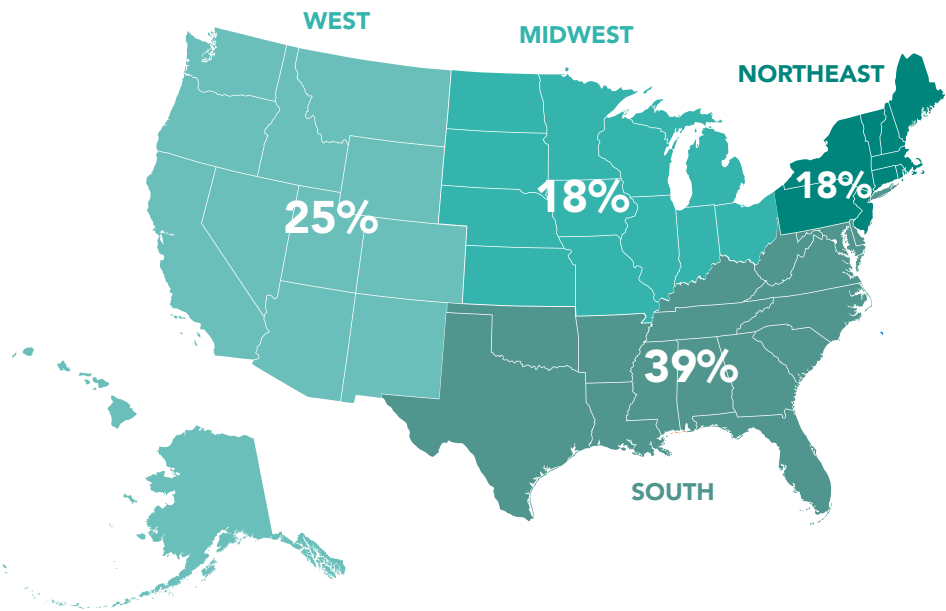


## PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Fly fishing remained the most male-dominated fishing category in 2024 with 69 percent male participants. This 70/30 male to female ratio has changed little in the last decade. The share of non-White participants has also changed little for over a decade. 48 percent of participants reported annual household income over \$75,000, versus 50 percent a year ago.



## HIGHEST INCOME AND EDUCATION LEVELS IN FISHING



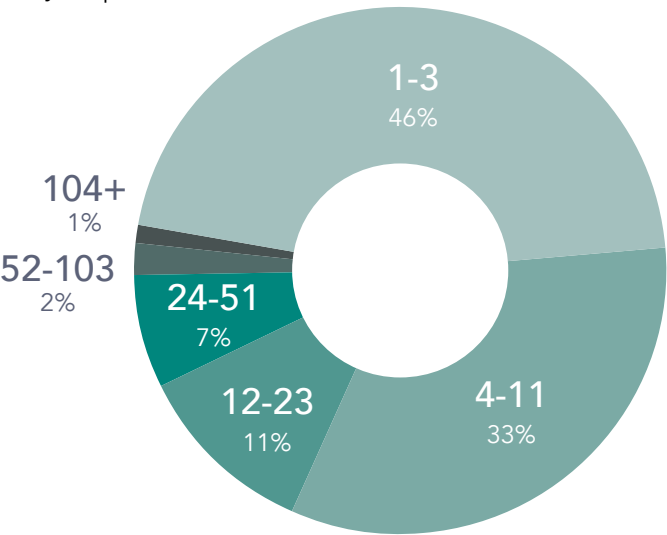
## REGIONAL PARTICIPATION

Fly fishing is the only style of fishing where participation share in the West (the Mountain and Pacific regions) is higher than population share. In 2024, 25 percent of fly participants lived in the West, home to 24 percent of the US population. For comparison, 17 percent of freshwater anglers and 18 percent of saltwater participants were from the West, far lower than the region’s population share.

# LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

## ANNUAL OUTINGS

Fly fishing maintained the lowest proportion of very active anglers. Just under 3 percent participated more than once per week in 2024, down steadily from 6 percent a decade earlier. 46 percent participated only 1 to 3 times, versus 31 percent for freshwater and 43 percent for saltwater. Like other types of fishing, participant numbers increased while frequency of participation declined. Fly fishing participants in 2024 reported 10 average annual outings, down from 11 the year prior.



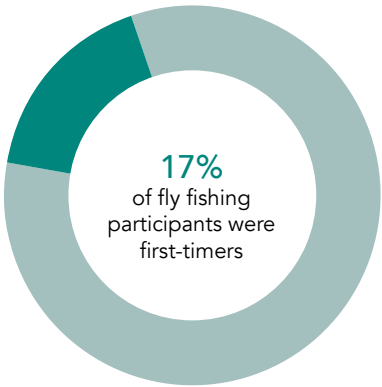
## PERCEIVED LEVELS OF FISHING PARTICIPATION

53 percent fly fished as often they wanted in 2024, versus 40 percent who wanted to fly fish more often. Just over half of participants described themselves as avid participants, much higher than the 35 percent of freshwater and 42 percent of saltwater anglers did. 42 percent considered themselves occasional participants.

PERCEIVED LEVELS OF FISHING PARTICIPATION	PERCENTAGE
Avid fishing participant, fish as often as I want	29%
Occasional participant, fish as often as I want	24%
Avid fishing participant, would like to fish more often	22%
Occasional participant, would like to fish more often	18%
Don't fish currently, but would like to fish	4%
Don't fish currently, not interested in fishing	3%

19%  
OF FEMALE FLY  
FISHING PARTICIPANTS  
WERE FIRST-TIMERS

16%  
OF MALE FLY FISHING  
PARTICIPANTS WERE  
FIRST-TIMERS

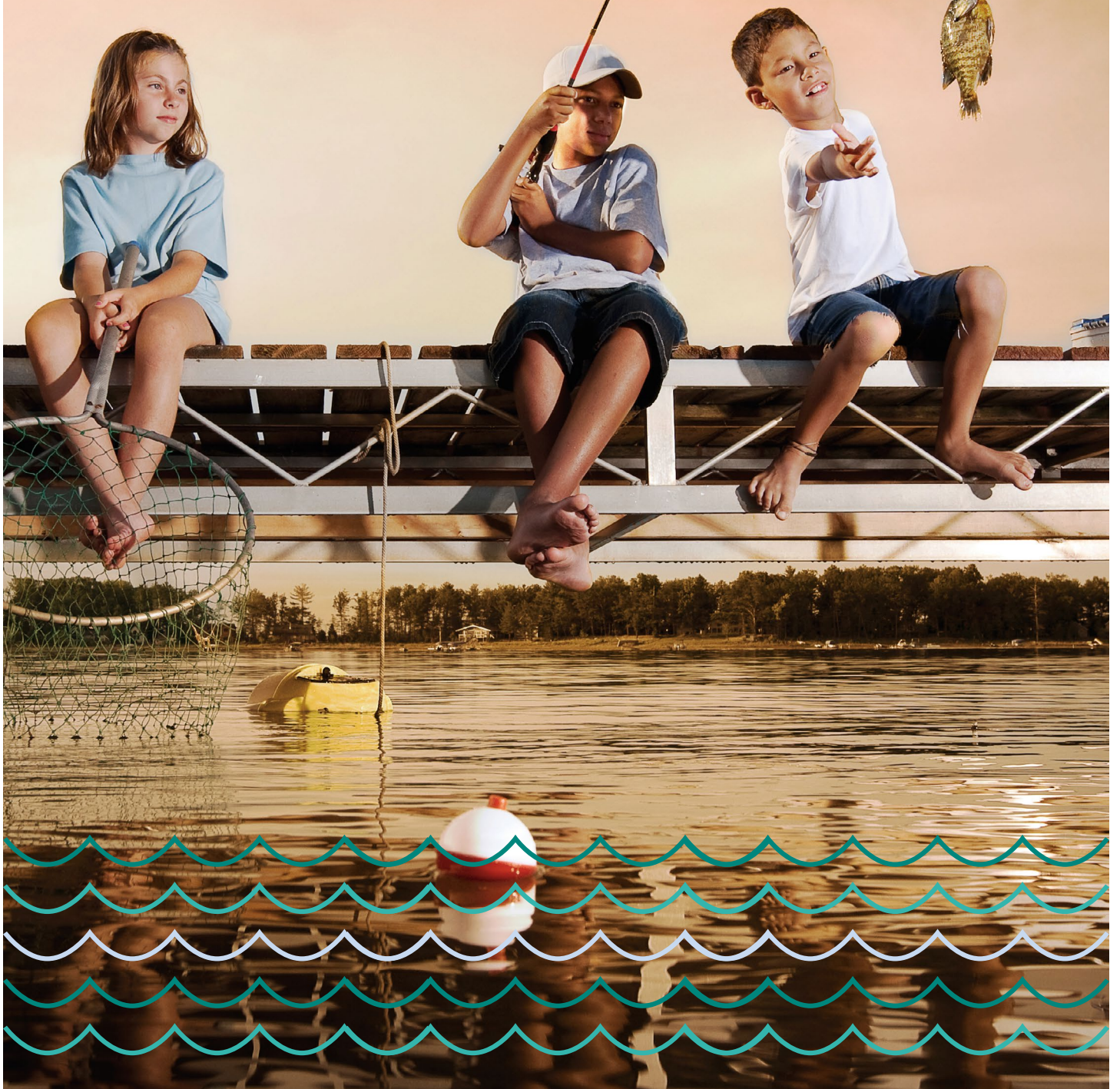


## FIRST-TIME PARTICIPANTS

Encouragingly, in 2024 fly fishing had a high level of first-time participants. 17 percent of fly fishing participants were first-timers, versus 8 percent in saltwater and 11 percent in freshwater. This consistent trend underscores the need for continued engagement of new fly participants to increase retention.



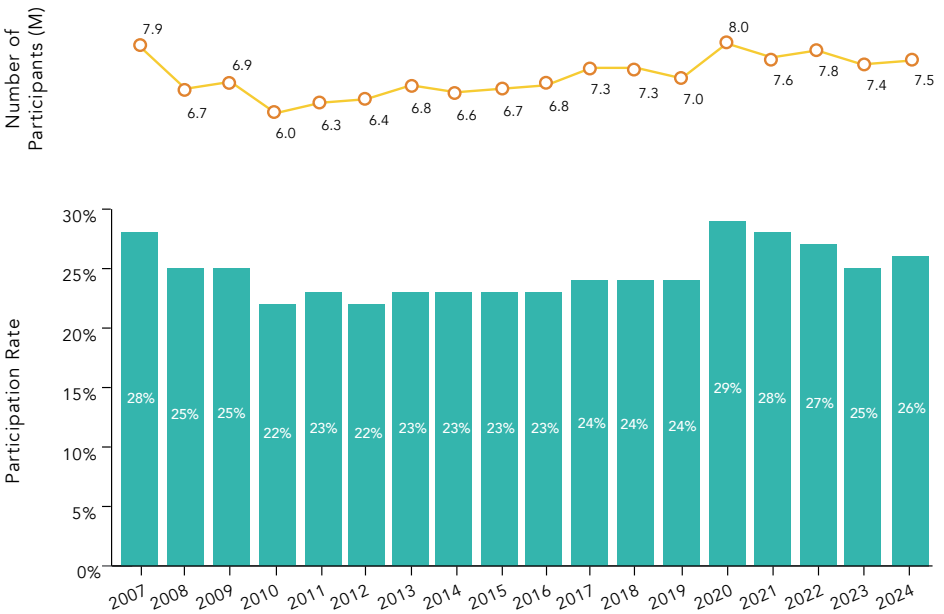
# YOUTH PARTICIPATION



# YOUTH PARTICIPATION

## PARTICIPATION OVER TIME CHILDREN AGES 6-12

Despite results lower than record-high 2020 levels, participation among children remained higher than a decade ago. This may signal a return toward levels seen in the 5 years that preceded COVID, when participation averaged 7 million. In 2024, 7.5 million children ages 6 to 12 went fishing—nearly 1 million more than in 2014—while fishing’s national participation rate rose 1 percentage point.



**7.5M**  
# OF CHILD FISHING  
PARTICIPANTS  
ages 6 to 12

**26%**  
NATIONAL  
PARTICIPATION RATE  
ages 6 to 12



**103M**  
# OF  
OUTINGS



**14**  
AVERAGE ANNUAL  
OUTINGS



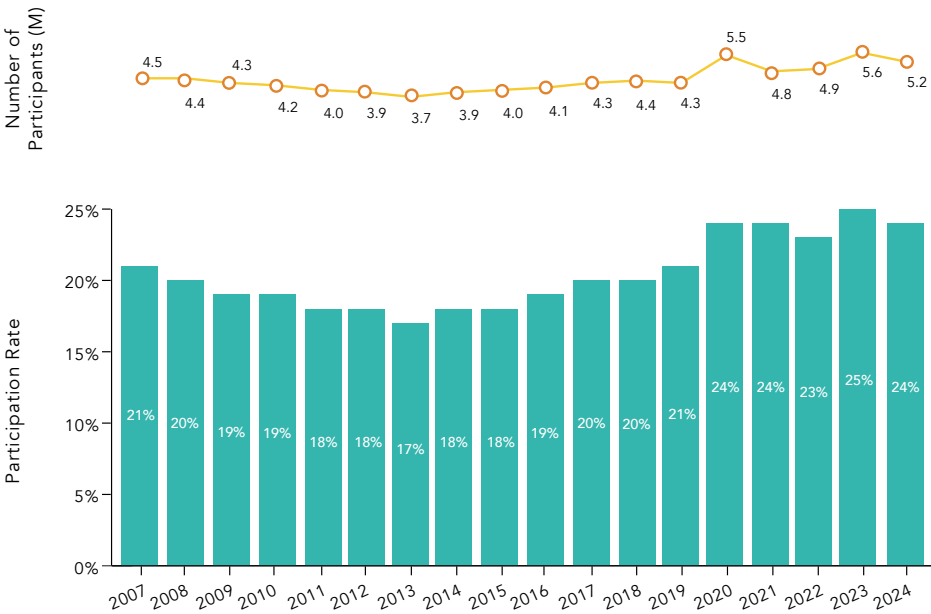
**-500K**  
CHILD PARTICIPANTS  
vs. 2020

# YOUTH PARTICIPATION

## PARTICIPATION OVER TIME

### ADOLESCENTS AGES 13-17

In 2024, the trajectory of participation among the nation’s 13 to 17 year olds paralleled that of younger children. The number of anglers ages 13 to 17 declined from 5.6 million in 2023 to 5.2 million, and the participation rate fell from 25 percent to 24 percent. Nonetheless, COVID-era gains appear to have held, as participation remained well above levels reported a decade ago.



**5.2M**  
# OF ADOLESCENT  
FISHING  
PARTICIPANTS  
*ages 13 to 17*

**24%**  
NATIONAL  
PARTICIPATION RATE  
*ages 13 to 17*



**83M**  
# OF  
OUTINGS



**16**  
AVERAGE ANNUAL  
OUTINGS



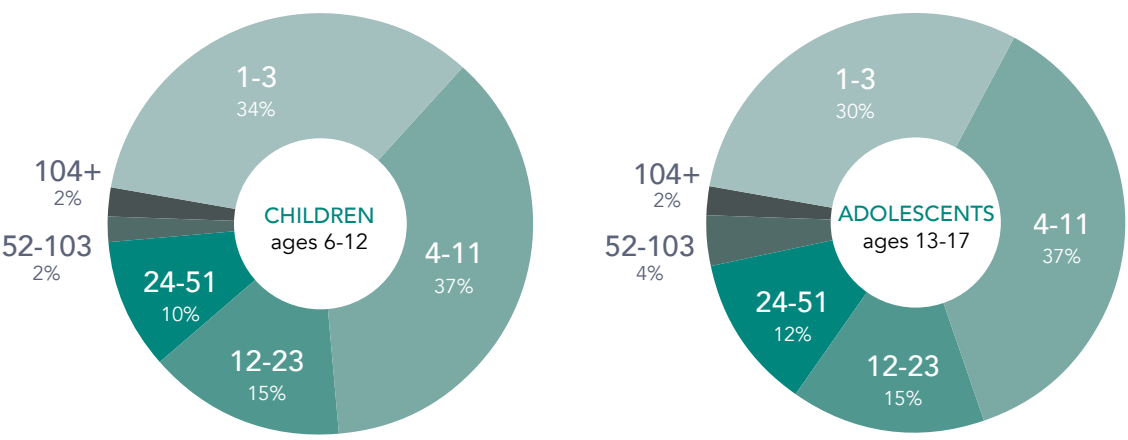
**+1.3M**  
ADOLESCENT  
PARTICIPANTS  
*vs. 2014*



# LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

## ANNUAL OUTINGS

Total annual outings among children 6 to 12 fell from 108 million in 2023 to 103 million in 2024. Outings among adolescents increased slightly, rising by 1 million to 83 million in 2024. One-third of adolescents fished more than one time per month, versus 29 percent of younger children, roughly the same as five years ago.



## PERCEIVED LEVELS OF FISHING PARTICIPATION

60 percent of children ages 6 to 12 and 59 percent of adolescents ages 13 to 17 called themselves occasional participants. 35 percent of children and 37 percent of adolescents considered themselves avid anglers. Children were more likely than adolescents to say they wanted they fish more.

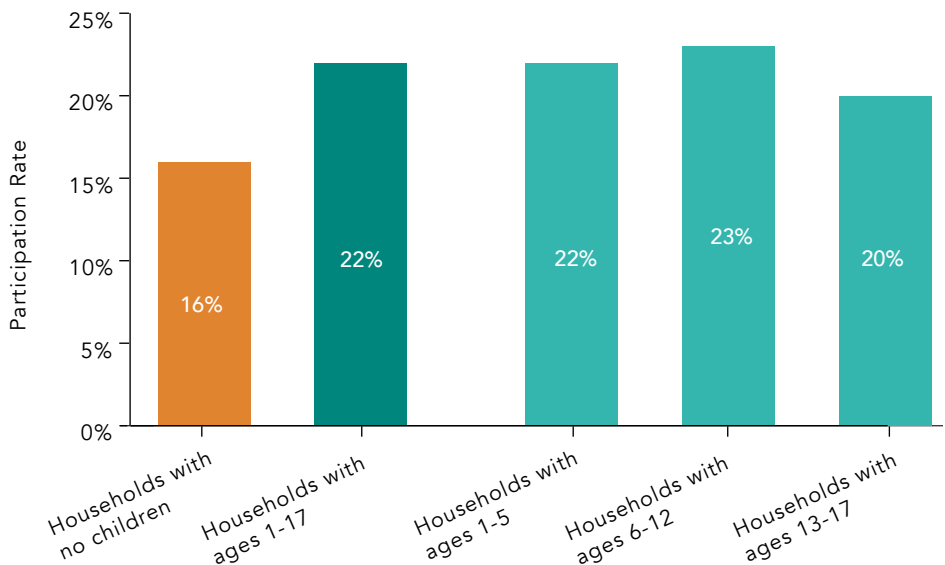
PERCEIVED LEVELS OF FISHING PARTICIPATION	CHILDREN	ADOLESCENTS
Occasional participant, fish as often as I want	32%	35%
Occasional participant, would like to fish more often	28%	24%
Avid fishing participant, would like to fish more often	19%	17%
Avid fishing participant, fish as often as I want	16%	20%
Don't fish currently, but would like to fish	3%	2%
Don't fish currently, not interested in fishing	1%	2%

# PARTICIPATION IN-DEPTH

## PARTICIPATION AMONG ADULTS WITH KIDS

Adults with children in their households, particularly younger children, participated in fishing at much higher levels than adults without children. In 2024, 22 percent of U.S. households with children fished, while just 16 percent of households without children fished. This distinction has held true since participation data collection began in 2007.

Having children in a household does not necessarily result in higher participation growth. Over the past three years, participation in households with no children grew 8 percent per year on average. During the same period, the participation rate in households with adolescents ages 13 to 17 reported annual participation growth averaging just 2 percent.



## FIRST-TIME PARTICIPANTS

3 percent of children and adolescents, 1.3 million in total, tried fishing for the first time in 2024. First-timer numbers have returned to pre-COVID levels, where between 2014 and 2019 an average of 1.3 million kids fished for the first time.

## FEMALE

participation rate among:

CHILDREN: 21%

ADOLESCENTS: 19%

## MALE

participation rate among:

CHILDREN: 30%

ADOLESCENTS: 29%

## 1.3M

KIDS AGES 6 TO 17  
WERE FIRST-TIME  
PARTICIPANTS







in 2024

# ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF FISHING

## TOP CROSSOVER ACTIVITIES

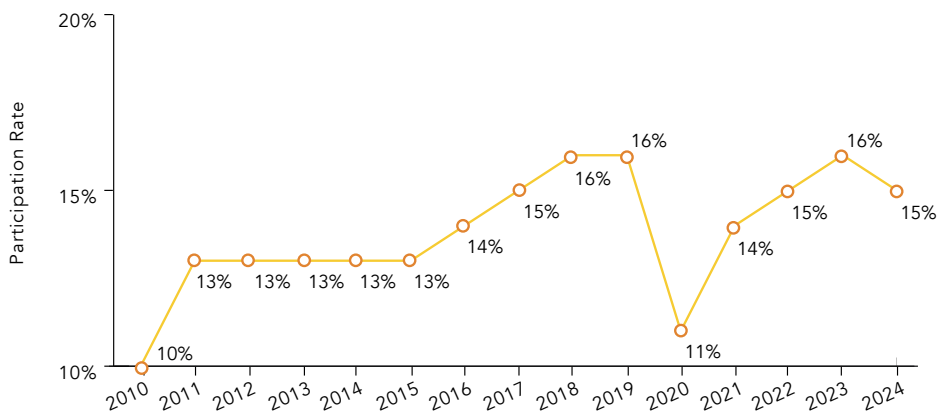
Outside of their fishing pursuits, participants ages 6 to 17 enjoyed a wide variety of other outdoor activities.

Which activities did you participate in outside of fishing?

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES		PERCENTAGE
	Camping	51%
	Bicycling	43%
	Hiking	30%
	Running	26%
	Kayaking	17%
	Hunting	16%

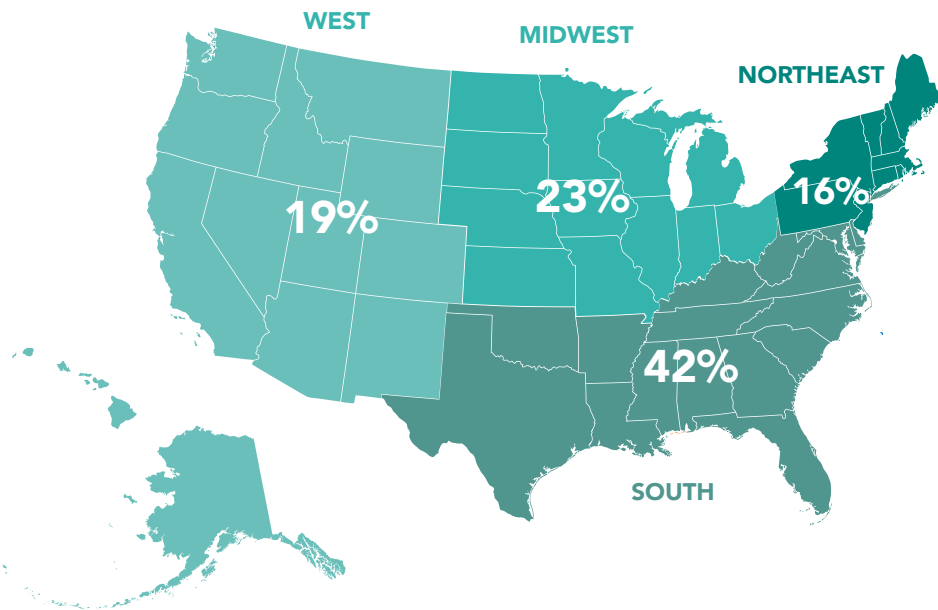


# WHO CONSIDERED FISHING?



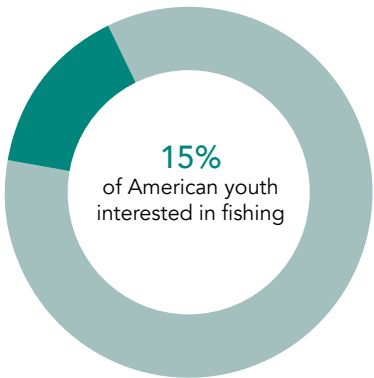
## CONSIDERING FISHING OVER TIME

15 percent of non-participating American youths ages 6 to 17 expressed interest in fishing in 2024, down from 16 percent in 2023.



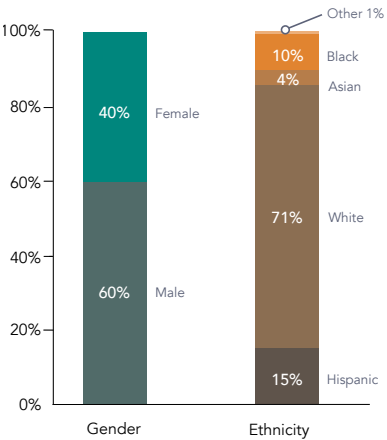
## CONSIDERING PARTICIPANTS BY REGION

Like the broader population contemplating but not participating in fishing, the young and interested tended to live in the South region (which includes the Atlantic coast and Gulf of Mexico) and the Midwest (home to the Great Lakes).



## YOUTH CONSIDERING PARTICIPATION

In 2024, 24 percent of those considering but not yet participating in fishing were under the age of 18, totaling 5.1 million young Americans.



## CONSIDERING DEMOGRAPHICS

Among young Americans who are interested in fishing, the share who are Black and Hispanic has slowly declined for over a decade. This underscores the need for expanded outreach to engage underrepresented populations.

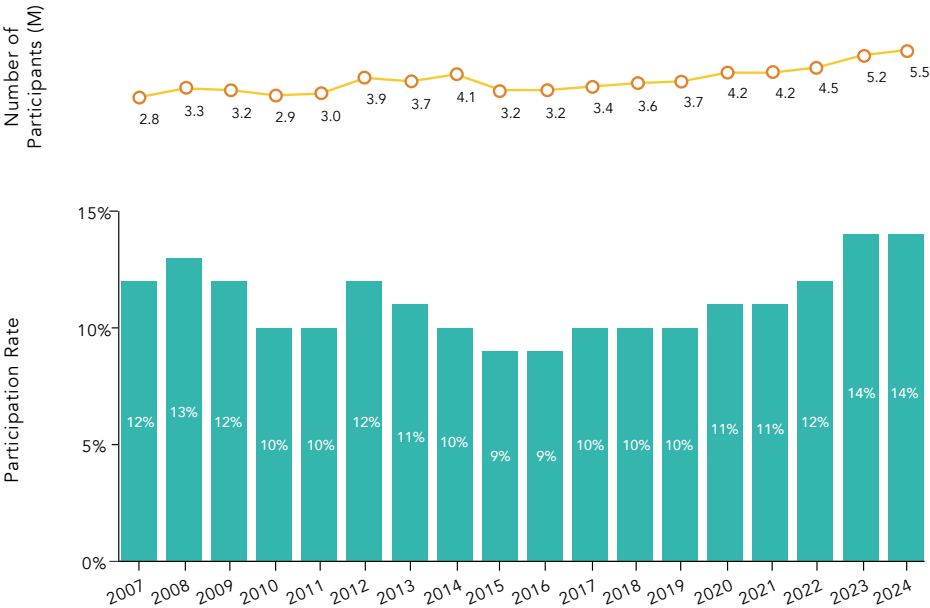
# BLACK PARTICIPATION



# BLACK FISHING PARTICIPATION

## PARTICIPATION OVER TIME

Over 5.5 million Black Americans ages 6 and over fished in 2024, the highest number since tracking began in 2007 and a 300,000 increase from the year prior. The participation rate, which held steady at 14 percent in 2024, has increased an average of 18 percent over each of the last 3 years. All styles of fishing saw strong year-over-year increases in participant numbers and the participation rate.



TYPE OF FISHING	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS (M)	PARTICIPATION RATE
All fishing*	5.5	14%
Freshwater	3.9	10%
Saltwater	2.0	5%
Fly	0.9	2%

\*Participants may have reported participating in more than one type of fishing.

5.5M

TOTAL #  
OF BLACK  
PARTICIPANTS

14%

NATIONAL  
PARTICIPATION RATE

## PARTICIPATION BY FISHING CATEGORY

Black anglers have emerged as a powerful growth driver of fishing participation. The number of Black fishing participants grew 18 percent on average annually for the last 3 years. 1.4 million more Black anglers went fishing in 2024 than did a decade earlier. Between 2019 and 2024, freshwater fishing gained 1.1 million Black participants, while saltwater and fly fishing increased by 700,000 and 300,000, respectively.



72M  
TOTAL #  
OF OUTINGS



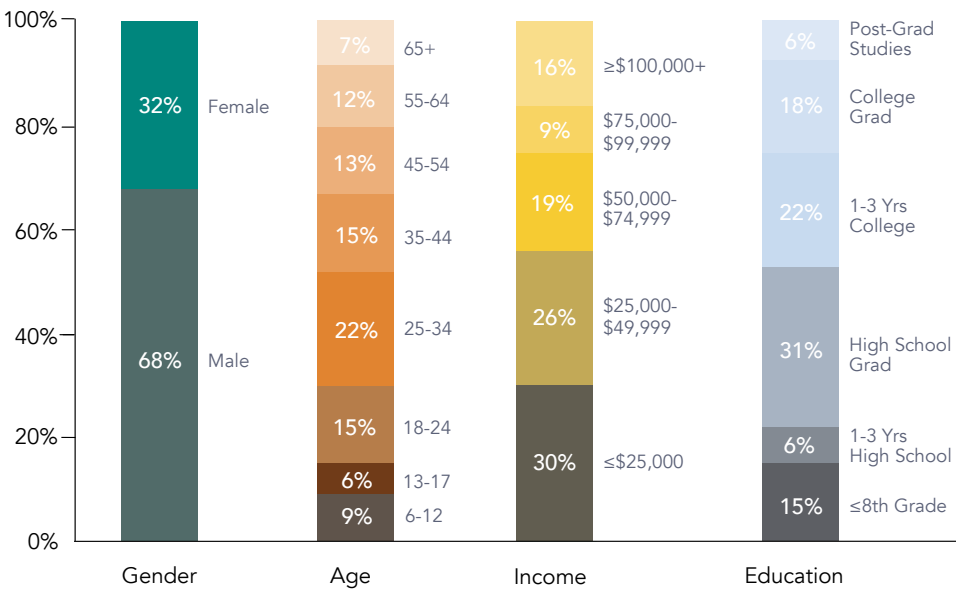
13  
AVERAGE ANNUAL  
OUTINGS



300K  
MORE BLACK  
PARTICIPANTS  
in 2024 vs. 2023



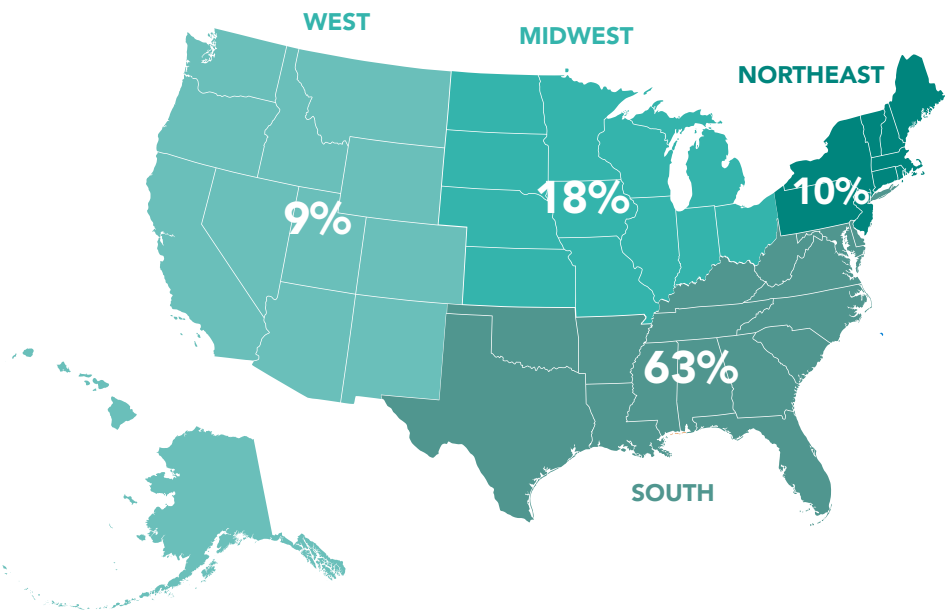
# WHO PARTICIPATED?



**AGES  
24-34**  
AGE GROUP  
WITH MOST SHARE  
GROWTH

## PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

52 percent of Black participants in 2024 were under the age of 35, with strong share growth recorded among those ages 18 to 34. Generally, as America’s population ages older anglers take share from the young, but among Black anglers the opposite occurred in 2024. As a share of total Black participants in 2024 versus the year prior, the 25 to 34 age cohort grew its share 14 percent while the 65+ cohort declined 17 percent. 1 in 4 Black anglers had household income over \$75,000 and nearly half completed at least some college.



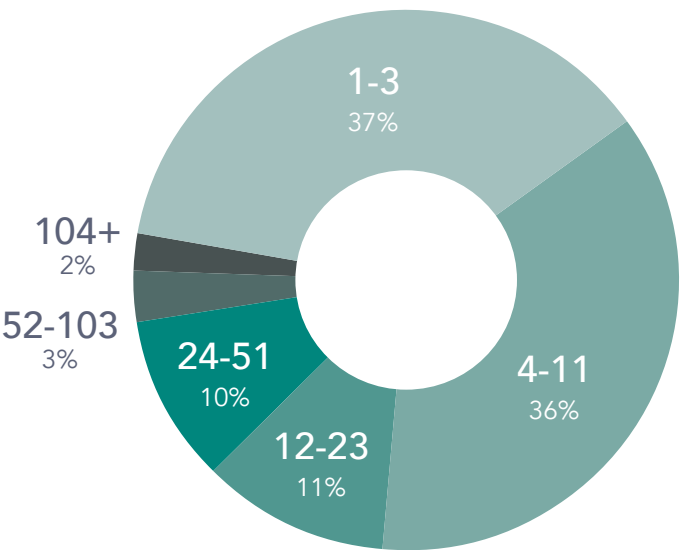
## REGIONAL PARTICIPATION

The South region was home to 63 percent of Black fishing participants in 2024. The Midwest was a distant second with just 18 percent. The Northeast and West had participation levels well below their population share of Black Americans.

# LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

## ANNUAL OUTINGS

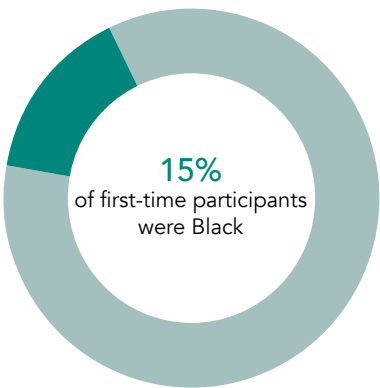
The only growing activity segments of Black fishing participants are the least active ones. Those fishing just 1 to 3 times a year increased to 37 percent of total anglers, up from 29 percent a decade prior. The most dedicated anglers, those fishing once per week or more, fell from 14 percent of Black participants in 2008 to just 5 percent in 2024.



## PERCEIVED LEVELS OF FISHING PARTICIPATION

48 percent of Black anglers considered themselves to be avid participants, up from 46 percent in 2023 and higher than the 45 percent who self-described as occasional participants. 45 percent wished they could fish more often.

PERCEIVED LEVELS OF FISHING PARTICIPATION	PERCENTAGE
Avid fishing participant, would like to fish more often	25%
Occasional participant, fish as often as I want	25%
Avid fishing participant, fish as often as I want	23%
Occasional participant, would like to fish more often	20%
Don't fish currently, not interested in fishing	4%
Don't fish currently, but would like to fish	3%



## FIRST-TIME PARTICIPANTS

6 percent of Black Americans ages 6 and over tried fishing for the first time in 2024. These 2.3 million new anglers made up 15 percent of all new participants.

# ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF FISHING

## TOP CROSSOVER ACTIVITIES

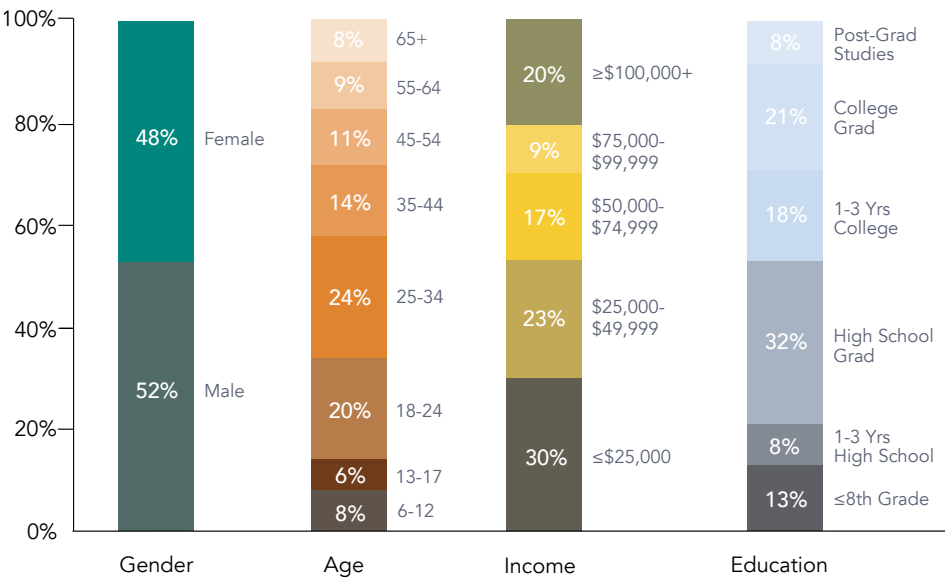
In addition to fishing, Black participants enjoyed a huge variety of other activities. Among the most popular were camping, bicycling, and running.

Which activities did you participate in outside of fishing?

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES		PERCENTAGE
	Camping	25%
	Bicycling	21%
	Running	19%
	Hiking	16%
	Swimming	15%
	Hunting	9%

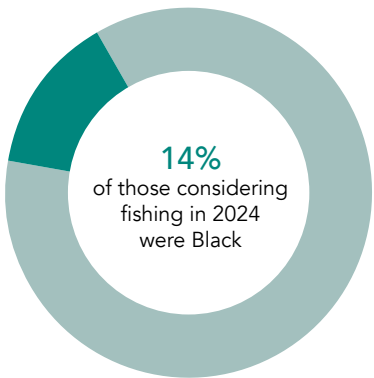


# WHO CONSIDERED FISHING?



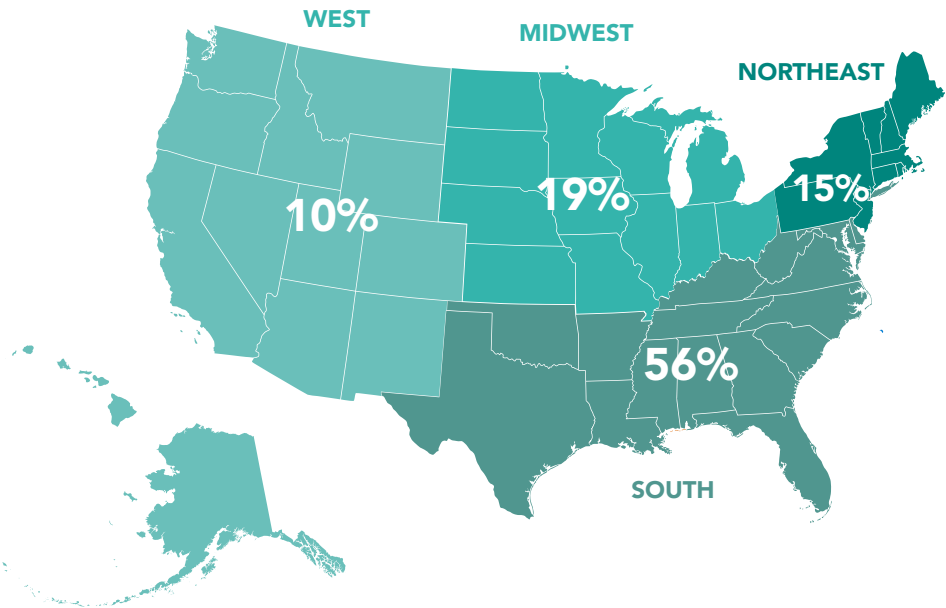
## DEMOGRAPHICS OF PEOPLE CONSIDERING FISHING

Among Black Americans considering fishing, just 14 percent were under age 18, versus 24 percent for the total considering population. 48 percent were female, versus a 32 percent share of female Black anglers in 2023.



## PEOPLE CONSIDERING FISHING

12 percent of Black Americans considered fishing in 2024. This represented 4.1 million potential participants, the highest level since 2019 and above the 10-year average of 3.6 million considering.



## THOSE CONSIDERING FISHING BY REGION

56 percent of those considering fishing in 2024 resided in the South region. Far fewer lived in the Midwest, West, and Northeast areas.

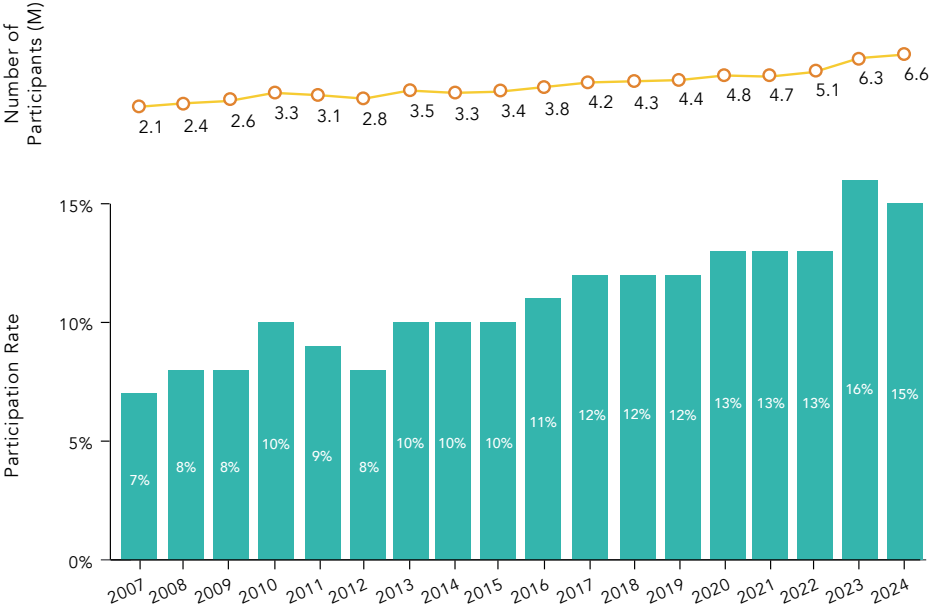
# HISPANIC PARTICIPATION



# HISPANIC FISHING PARTICIPATION

## PARTICIPATION OVER TIME

Fishing participation nearly doubled in a decade among Hispanic Americans ages 6 and over, increasing from 3.3 million in 2014 to 6.6 million in 2024. Participant numbers grew an average of 22 percent annually since 2021. Due in part to population growth, the participation rate fell from 16 percent in 2023 to 15 percent in 2024.



TYPE OF FISHING	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS (M)	PARTICIPATION RATE
All fishing*	6.6	15%
Freshwater	4.1	10%
Saltwater	2.2	5%
Fly	1.1	3%

\*Participants may have reported participating in more than one type of fishing.

6.6M

TOTAL #  
OF HISPANIC  
PARTICIPANTS

15%

NATIONAL  
PARTICIPATION RATE

## PARTICIPATION BY FISHING CATEGORY

2024 results reiterated that Hispanic anglers remain a critical and increasingly influential constituency in the recreational fishing industry. Compared to 2023, the number of Hispanic anglers increased strongly in freshwater fishing, and rose modestly in saltwater and fly fishing.



83M  
TOTAL #  
OF OUTINGS

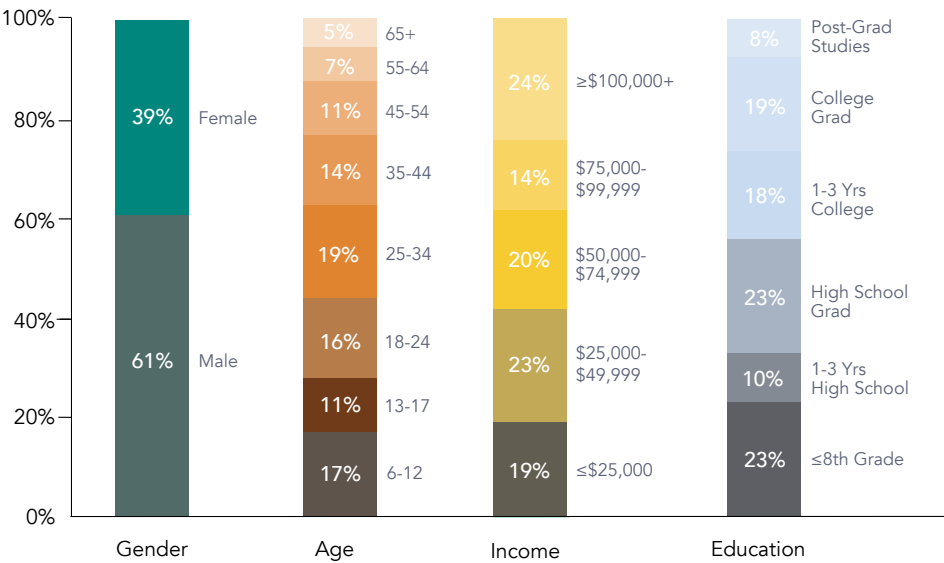


13  
AVERAGE ANNUAL  
OUTINGS



3.3M  
MORE HISPANIC  
PARTICIPANTS  
in 2024 than a decade ago

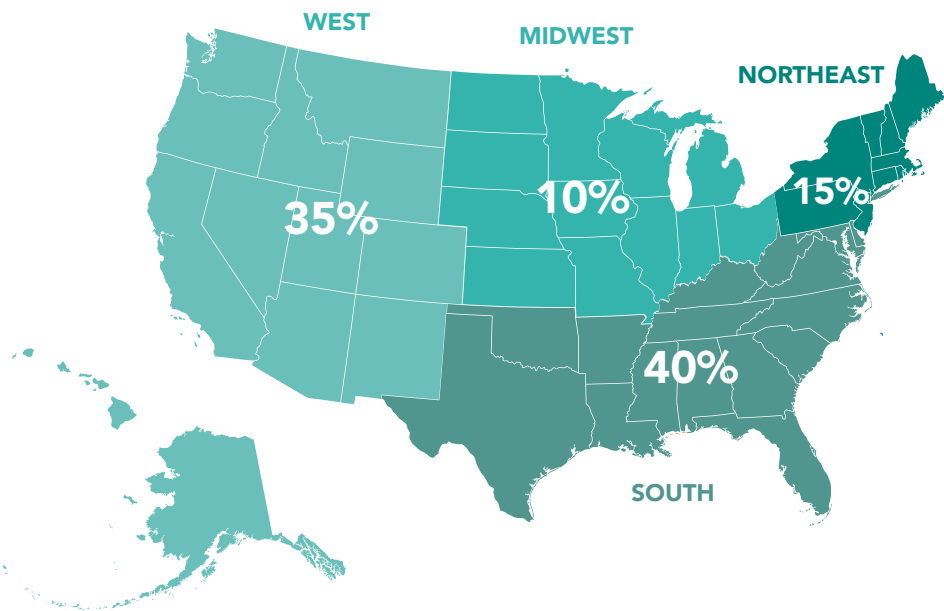
# WHO PARTICIPATED?



**AGES  
18-24**  
AGE GROUP  
WITH MOST SHARE  
GROWTH

## PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2024, Hispanic anglers were younger than the general participant population. 28 percent of Hispanic anglers were under the age of 18, versus 21 percent among total participants. Similarly, 35 percent of Hispanic participants were ages 18 to 35, compared to 24 percent of total anglers. This relatively young participant base, when coupled with the steady share growth of Hispanic anglers, highlights the importance of outreach to those considering the sport.



## REGIONAL PARTICIPATION

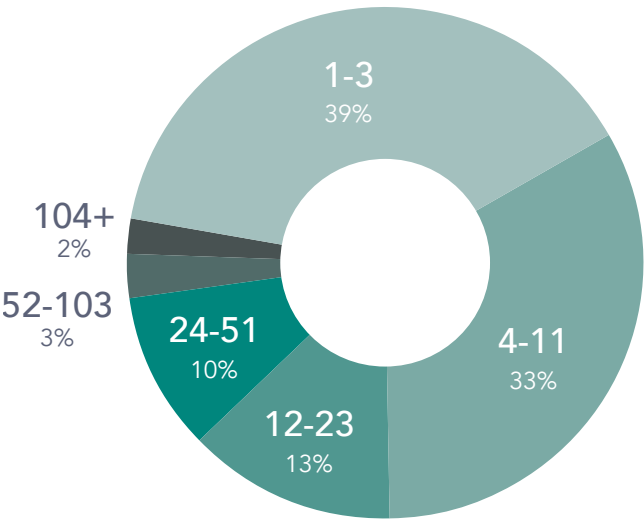
The vast American West, comprised of the Pacific and Mountain areas, held 35 percent of Hispanic participants. The Pacific coast states alone were home to nearly 1 in 4 Hispanic anglers, and the South had the highest participant share at 40 percent.



# LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

## ANNUAL OUTINGS

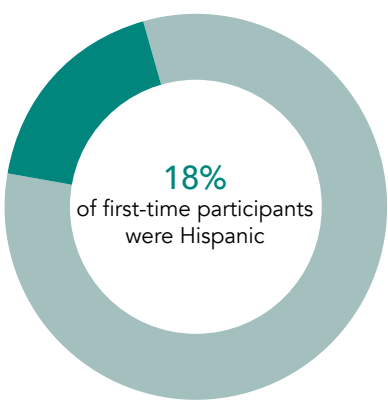
The fastest growing segment of Hispanic participants in 2024 was those who fished just 1 to 3 times. 39 percent fished 1 to 3 times, versus 27 percent a decade earlier. 33 percent fished 4 to 11 times. In 2007, 10 percent of Hispanic anglers reported fishing more than once a week, but by 2024 that fell to just 5 percent.



## PERCEIVED LEVELS OF FISHING PARTICIPATION

A majority of Hispanic fishing participants, 57 percent, considered themselves occasional participants, and 47 percent would like to fish more often. Their growing share of the U.S. population and strong interest in fishing more frequently confirms that Hispanics will continue to be a key demographic going forward.

PERCEIVED LEVELS OF FISHING PARTICIPATION	PERCENTAGE
Occasional participant, fish as often as I want	30%
Occasional participant, would like to fish more often	27%
Avid fishing participant, would like to fish more often	20%
Avid fishing participant, fish as often as I want	15%
Don't fish currently, but would like to fish	6%
Don't fish currently, not interested in fishing	3%



## FIRST-TIME PARTICIPANTS







2 percent of Hispanic Americans ages 6 and over tried fishing for the first time, representing over 900,000 new anglers in 2024. Hispanics represented 18 percent of the overall 5.1 million new participants.

# ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF FISHING

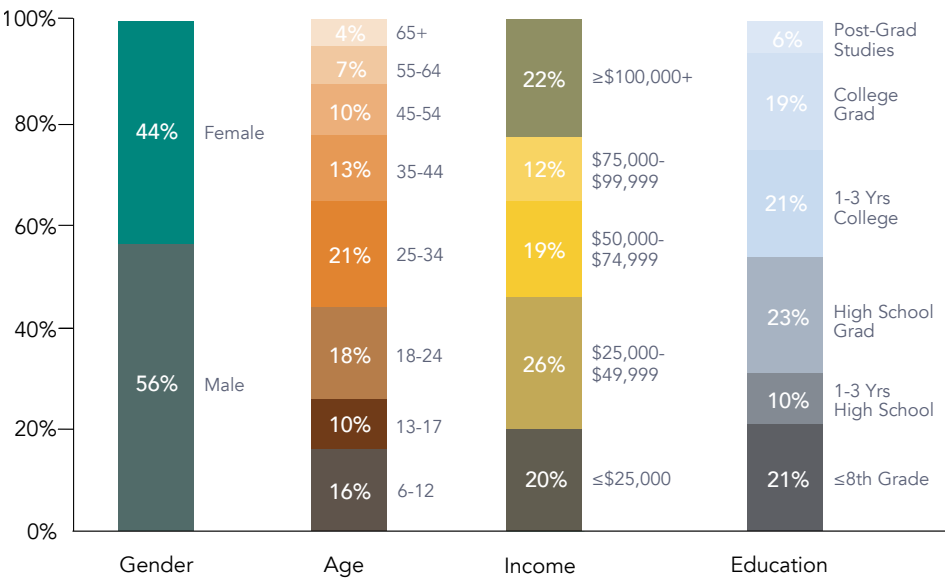
## TOP CROSSOVER ACTIVITIES

In addition to fishing, Hispanic participants enjoyed a huge variety of other activities. The most popular outdoor activities were camping, bicycling, and hiking.

### Which activities did you participate in outside of fishing?

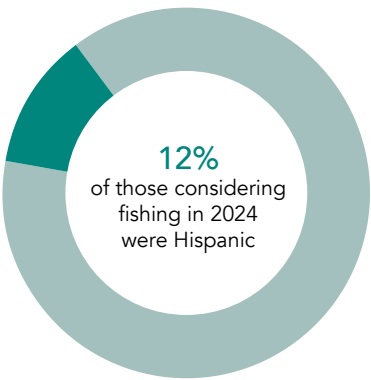
OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES		PERCENTAGE
	Camping	45%
	Bicycling	36%
	Hiking	31%
	Running	29%
	Hunting	17%
	Kayaking	15%

# WHO CONSIDERED FISHING?



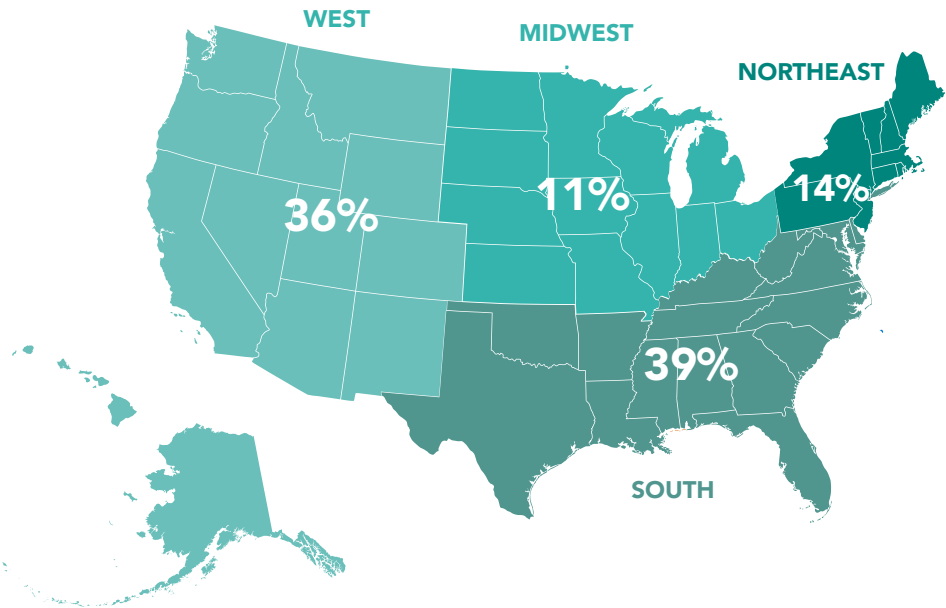
## DEMOGRAPHICS OF PEOPLE CONSIDERING FISHING

44 percent of Hispanics interested in fishing were under the age of 25, and another 34 percent were younger than 45. This underscores the need for experienced participants to introduce the sport to younger generations. 44 percent of Hispanics considering fishing were female, the same as the year prior.



## PEOPLE CONSIDERING FISHING

1 in 10 Hispanics in the U.S. considered fishing in 2024, representing 3.4 million potential participants. Activating even a small fraction of these potential customers would yield significant benefits for the industry.



## THOSE CONSIDERING FISHING BY REGION

Hispanics who considered participating were spread primarily across the American South and West, as 75 percent lived within those regions. Far fewer resided in the Midwest and Northeast regions.

# FEMALE PARTICIPATION

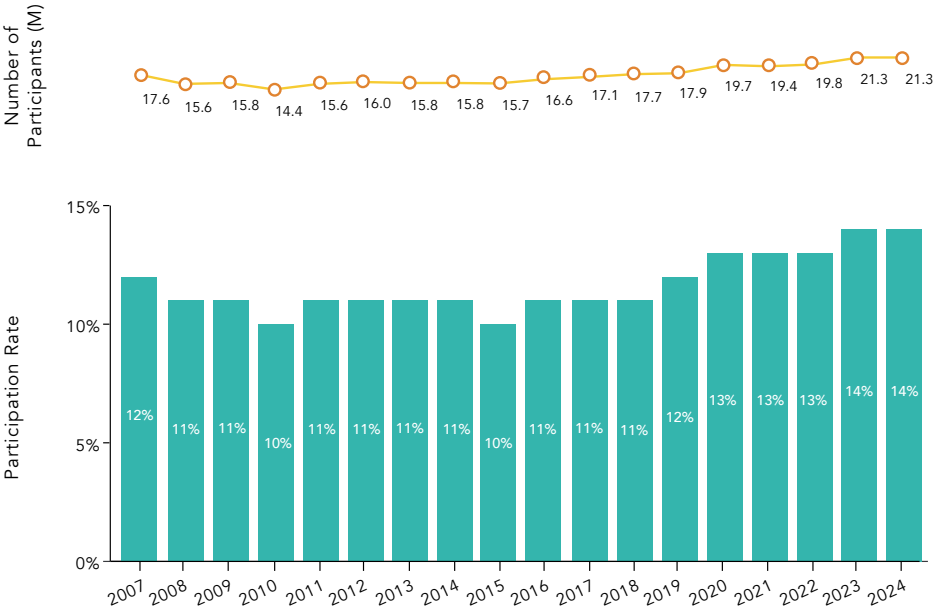




# FEMALE FISHING PARTICIPATION

## PARTICIPATION OVER TIME

Both the number of female participants and the female fishing participation rate held steady in 2024, tying all-time highs reached in 2023. Participant numbers grew by 5.5 million in a decade, from 15.8 million in 2014 to 21.3 million in 2024. Females represented 37 percent of total anglers, 39 percent of first-time participants, and 43 percent of those considering fishing in 2024.



21.3M

TOTAL #  
OF FEMALE  
PARTICIPANTS

vs. 15.8M a decade ago

14%

NATIONAL  
PARTICIPATION RATE



311M

TOTAL #  
OF OUTINGS



15

AVERAGE ANNUAL  
OUTINGS

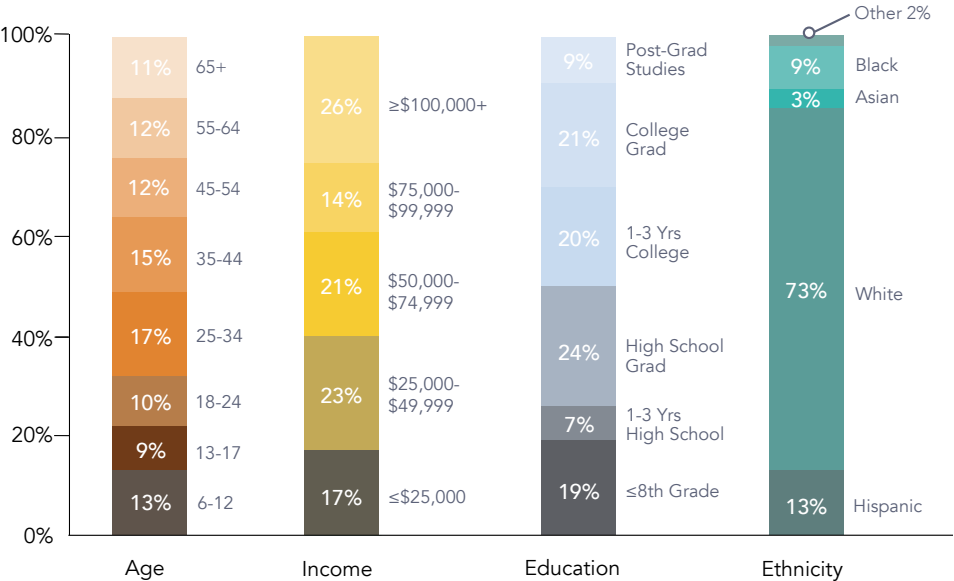


+5.5M

MORE FEMALE  
PARTICIPANTS

vs. a decade ago

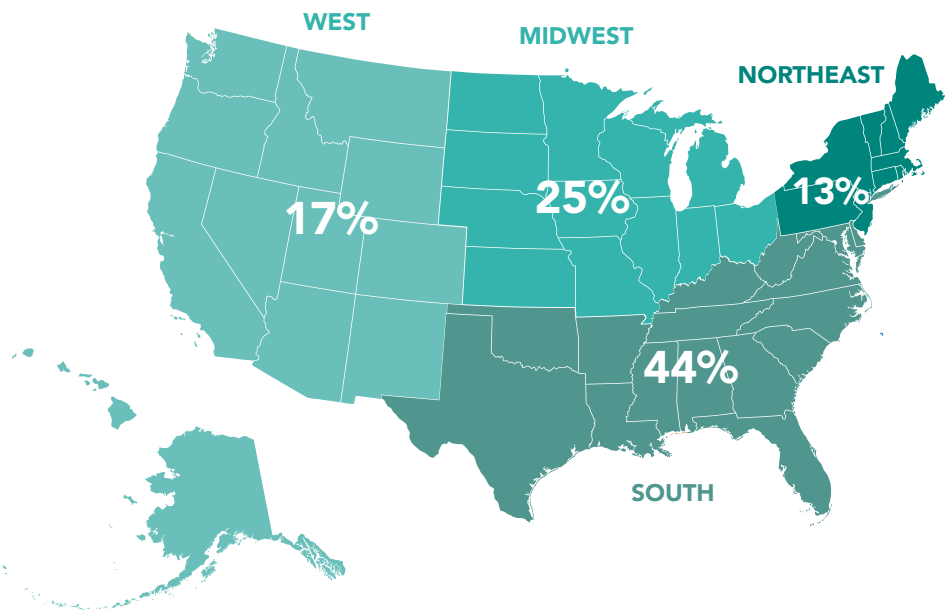
# WHO PARTICIPATED?



**26%**  
ANNUAL  
HOUSEHOLD  
INCOME \$100,000+

## PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Females comprised 37 percent of participants in 2024, unchanged from the year prior. Half of female anglers reported completing at least some college. 73 percent were White, versus 75 percent of the overall fishing population, while 13 percent were Hispanic, compared to 11 percent of total anglers. Over a quarter of female anglers reported household income over \$100,000.



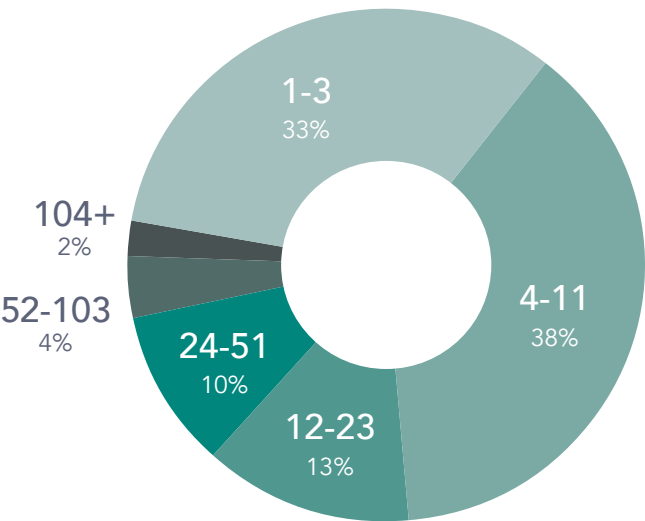
## REGIONAL PARTICIPATION

The South region was home to the highest percentage of female fishing participants, 44 percent. Fewer female anglers came from the Northeast, Midwest and West regions.

# LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

## ANNUAL OUTINGS

Average annual outings by female participants rose to 15 in 2024, up from 14 the year prior. As with other fishing populations, the subset of the least frequent participants slowly grew. 1 in 3 anglers fished just 1 to 3 times, and over 7 in 10 fished less than once per month. Female anglers took 311 million of the total 895 million outings reported in 2024.



## PERCEIVED LEVELS OF FISHING PARTICIPATION

65 percent of female participants described themselves as occasional anglers, while 48 percent reported they would like to fish more often. These perceived participation levels were roughly comparable to those reported by other groups.

PERCEIVED LEVELS OF FISHING PARTICIPATION	PERCENTAGE
Occasional participant, would like to fish more often	33%
Occasional participant, fish as often as I want	32%
Avid fishing participant, would like to fish more often	15%
Avid fishing participant, fish as often as I want	14%
Don't fish currently, but would like to fish	4%
Don't fish currently, not interested in fishing	2%

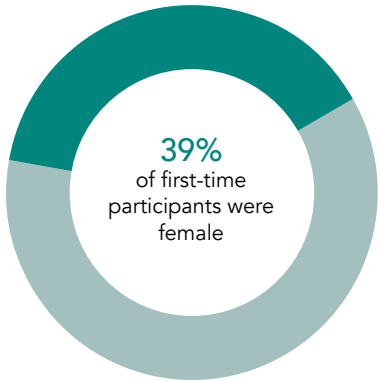
311M

OUTINGS IN 2024

vs. 266M a decade ago

48%

OF FEMALE ANGLERS  
WOULD LIKE TO FISH  
MORE OFTEN



## FIRST-TIME PARTICIPANTS

The number of first-time female participants rose from 1.7 million in 2023 to 2 million in 2024. This exceeded the previous high of 1.8 million recorded in 2020.

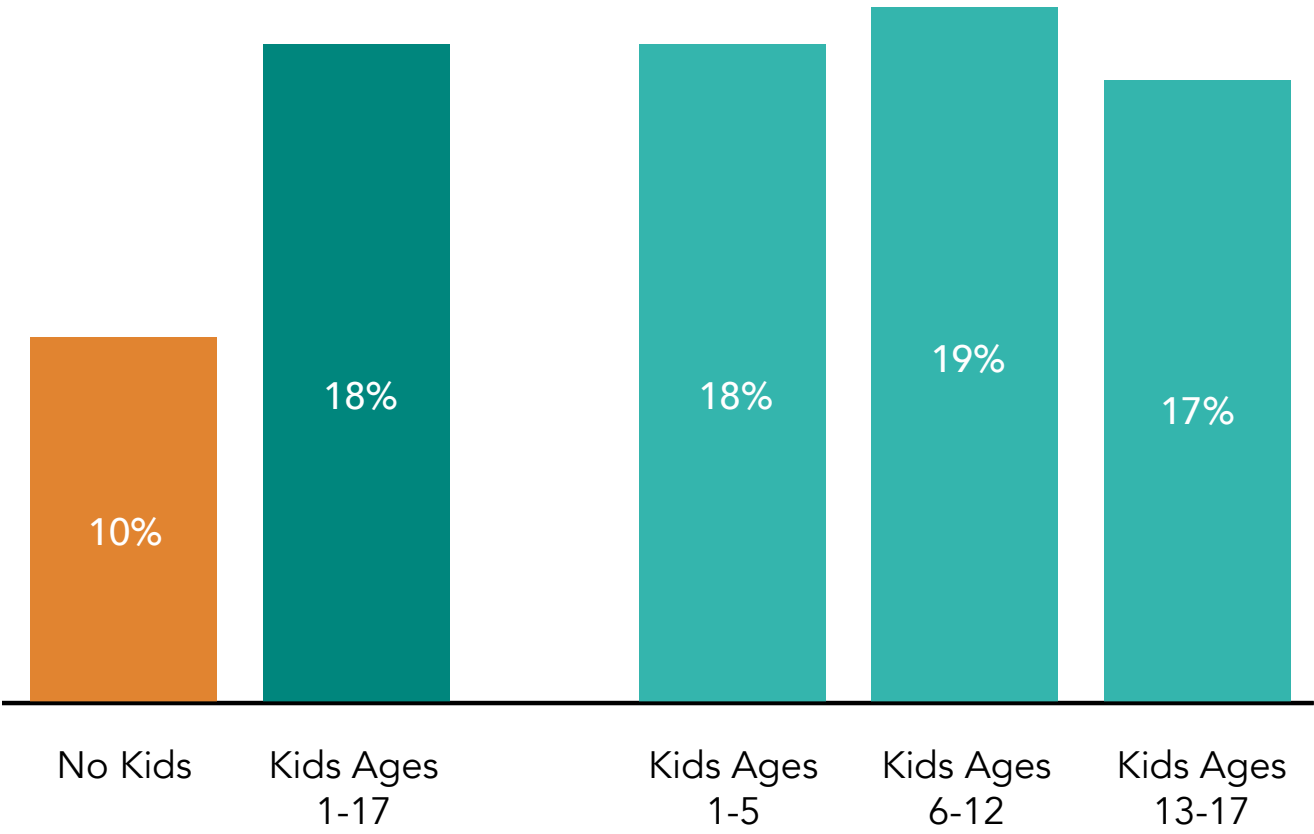
# THE INFLUENCE OF KIDS

## PARTICIPATION AMONG FEMALES WITH KIDS

Females were more likely to fish if they had children in their households, particularly kids ages 6 to 12. 18 percent of women with children ages 1 to 17 in their household went fishing in 2024, versus 10 percent of women without children in their household.

Having children in a household encourages—but is not necessarily required for—participation growth. Over the past three years, the female participation rate in households with children ages 1 to 17 logged average annual growth of 4 percent. During the same period, female participation in households with no children grew 6 percent on average each year.

Female participation rate among households with:











# ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF FISHING

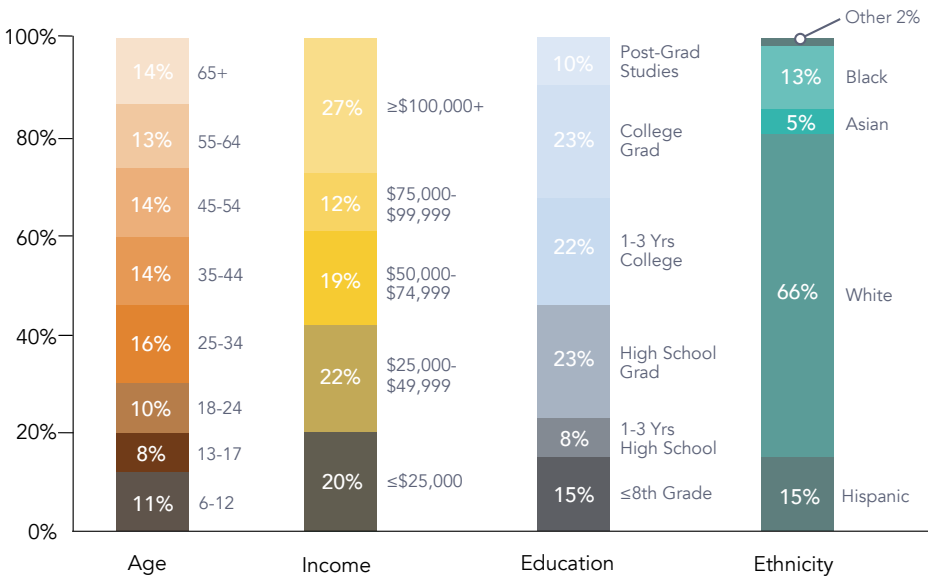
## TOP CROSSOVER ACTIVITIES

In addition to fishing, female anglers ranked camping, hiking, and bicycling among their preferred outdoor activities.

### Which activities did you participate in outside of fishing?

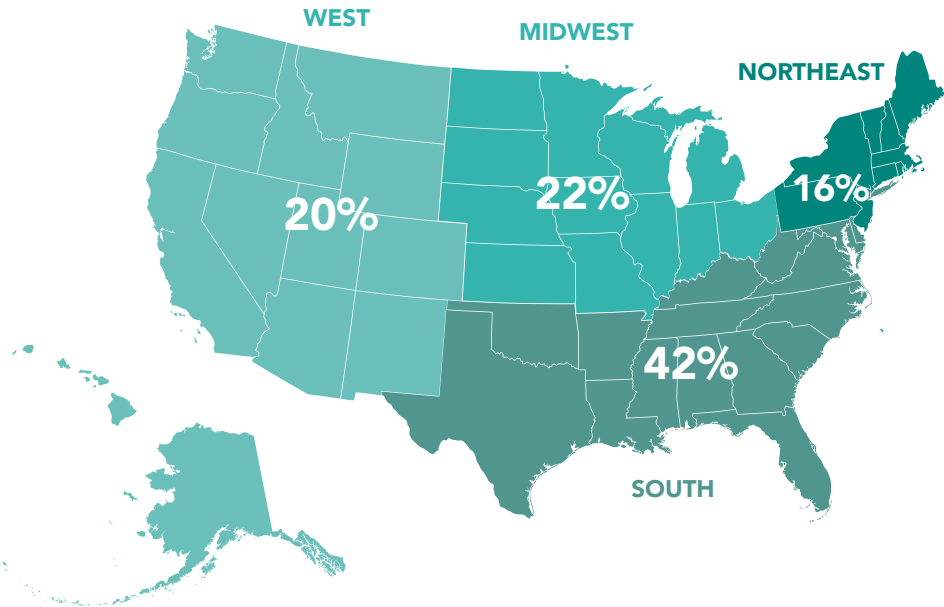
OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES		PERCENTAGE
	Camping	45%
	Hiking	32%
	Bicycling	29%
	Running	22%
	Kayaking	16%
	Hunting	12%

# WHO CONSIDERED FISHING?



## CONSIDERING PARTICIPATION DEMOGRAPHICS

Over 4 in 10 females considering fishing lived in the South, while roughly 2 in 10 resided in the both the Midwest and the West. Just like female fishing participants and the total pool of fishing participants, the highest percentage of females who were interested in fishing lived in the South region.



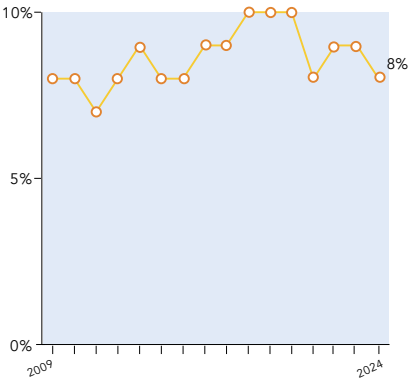
## CONSIDERING PARTICIPANTS BY REGION

Among those females considering fishing, 13 percent were Black and 15 percent were Hispanic. Females considering tended to have higher household income and higher educational levels than the overall female participant population in 2024.

**11.3M**  
NON-PARTICIPATING  
FEMALES  
CONSIDERED  
FISHING

## CONSIDERING FISHING PARTICIPATION

8 percent of females ages 6 and over expressed interest in fishing in 2024. These 11.3 million considering females represent an enormous opportunity. If just 10 percent became active participants, the number of first-time female anglers would jump by over half (in 2024 there were 2 million first-time female participants).



## CONSIDERING FISHING OVER TIME

Since 2009, between 7 and 10 percent of females ages 6 and over considered but did not participate in fishing each year.

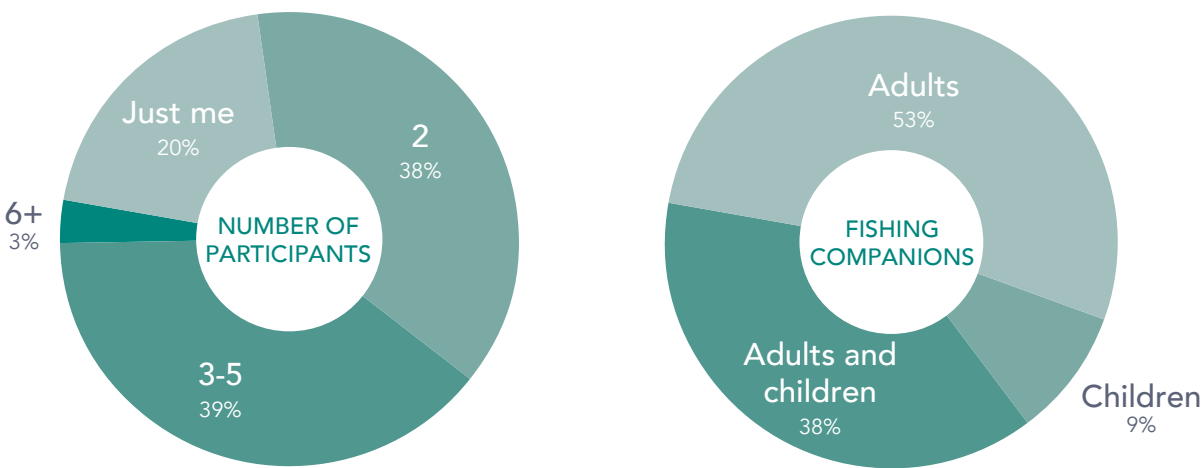
# PROFILE OF A FISHING TRIP



# A TYPICAL FISHING TRIP

## FISHING COMPANIONS

Just 1 in 5 anglers typically fished alone, underscoring that fishing remained a shared activity in 2024. Nearly 8 in 10 participants usually fished in groups of 2 to 5 anglers. Males were more likely than females to fish alone, at 23 percent versus 14 percent. Females were more likely to fish in groups of 3 or more, at 52 percent versus 36 percent of males. 66 percent of participants ages 65 and older reported that they typically fished alone or with one companion.



## FISHING LOCATION TYPES

Participants fished from a variety of locations, with riverbanks, shorelines, and boats topping the list in 2024. Kayak fishing nearly doubled its share of anglers in the last decade, steadily growing from 4 percent of trips in 2014 to 7 percent in 2024.

FISHING LOCATION TYPES*	PERCENTAGE
Riverbank	49%
Shoreline	48%
Boat	45%
Pier / jetty	24%
Kayak	7%
Other	5%

\*Participants may have reported fishing in more than one location type.



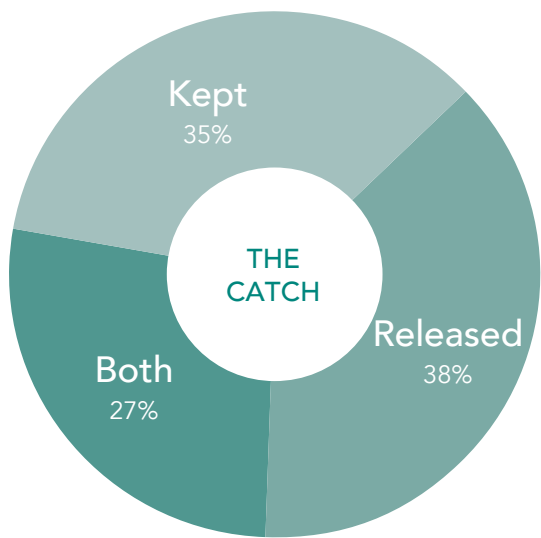
**80%**  
OF ADULT  
PARTICIPANTS  
BOUGHT FISHING  
GEAR/EQUIPMENT  
*in the last 12 months*



# A TYPICAL FISHING TRIP

## THE CATCH

87 percent of participants caught at least one fish on their most recent trip. 38 percent opted to release their catch to swim another day. 35 percent kept it, and about 3 in 10 reported doing both.

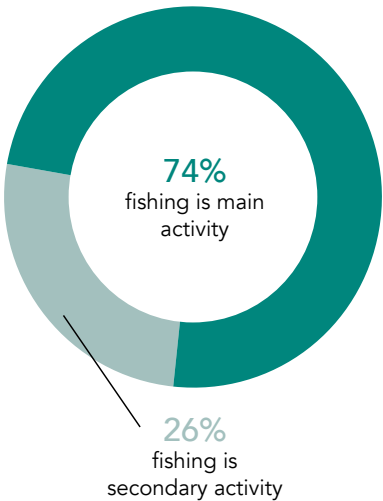


**87%**  
OF PARTICIPANTS  
CAUGHT FISH

## THE OUTING

74 percent of anglers typically considered fishing their “primary activity” rather than a side event. When a complementary activity was undertaken, camping, boating and picnicking were among the most popular activities.

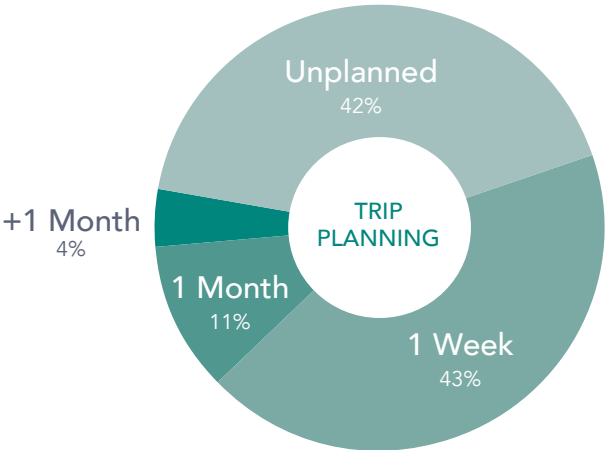
ACTIVITIES DURING A FISHING TRIP	PERCENTAGE
Camping	82%
Boating	48%
Day at the park	45%
Picnicking	44%
Hiking	40%
Beach trip	28%
Kayaking/canoeing	20%



# HOW DID PARTICIPANTS PREPARE FOR THEIR TRIPS?

## TRIP PLANNING

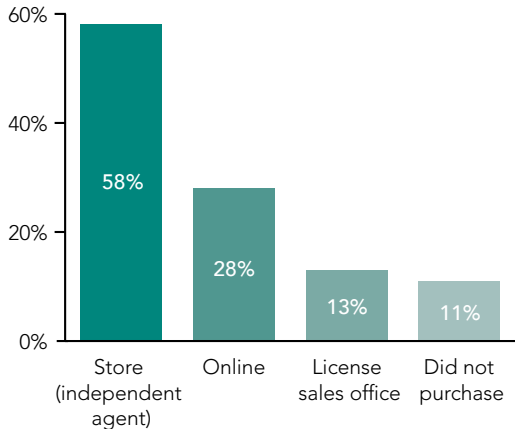
Over 8 in 10 fishing trips were spontaneous or planned one week prior. Anglers ages 65 and over were the age group most likely to undertake unplanned or spontaneous outings. Female anglers were more likely than males to report their most recent fishing trip was unplanned, at 52 percent to 36 percent.



FISHING INFORMATION SOURCES	PERCENTAGE
Friends	56%
Family	51%
Fishing specific website	31%
Wildlife fishing guide	25%
General outdoor websites	24%
Retail stores	21%
Fishing specific magazine	15%
Online retailers	14%
Outdoor magazines	14%

## FISHING LICENSE

Almost 6 in 10 fishing licenses were purchased at a store. Online sales represented another 3 in 10. 11 percent of participants did not purchase a fishing license at all, the same as the year prior. Among those not purchasing a license, many said they fished in private waters. Others cited age and not knowing a license was needed.



REASON FOR NO FISHING LICENSE	PERCENTAGE
Fished in private waters	48%
Did not because of my age	17%
Did not know I needed one	15%
I never purchase a fishing license	15%
I own a lifetime license	7%
Too expensive	6%
Fished on a charter boat	4%

LOCATION OF LICENSE PURCHASE\*

\*Participants may have reported more than one location.

# PERCEPTIONS OF FISHING



# ATTITUDES OF FIRST-TIME PARTICIPANTS

## EXPECTATIONS FOR A FIRST FISHING TRIP

Spending time with family and friends was a key driver for first-time fishing participants in 2024. Many reported that the great outdoors and relaxation also inspired their first fishing trip.

DRIVERS FOR A FIRST FISHING TRIP	PERCENTAGE
Spend time with family and friends	47%
Experience the great outdoors	41%
Relax and unwind	38%
Try something new, maybe catch a few fish	35%
Exciting time catching a lot of fish	35%
No expectations, thought I'd give it a try	29%
Teach my children about fishing and nature	18%
Compete to see who could catch the biggest/most fish	18%

96%  
SAID FISHING IS  
"FOR SOMEONE  
LIKE ME"

## PERCEPTIONS OF FISHING BEFORE PARTICIPATING

Fishing was generally seen as a stress-free, easy, and exciting way to spend times outdoors. Among first-time anglers, negative expectations of fishing—that it's time consuming, expensive, and requires too much equipment—were reported less often than positive perceptions.

PERCEPTIONS OF FISHING BEFORE PARTICIPATING	PERCENTAGE
Stress free activity	53%
Exciting way to spend time outdoors	50%
Time consuming	44%
Intriguing	41%
Easy to learn	38%
Requires too much equipment	27%
Too much of a financial investment	18%
Only for serious outdoors people	12%

53%  
OF FIRST-TIMERS  
SAW FISHING AS  
A STRESS FREE  
ACTIVITY



# FISHING STEREOTYPES

## STEREOTYPES OF FISHING PARTICIPANTS

When asked which characteristics best described the type of person fishing was for, most participants held no stereotypes and indicated that anyone could be an angler. Males were more likely to describe a fishing participant as a sportsman or an active person. Females were more likely to describe an angler as a quiet type of person, or that anyone could fish.

FISHING STEREOTYPES	ALL	MALE	FEMALE
Could be anyone/no stereotype	61%	55%	71%
Outdoor type of person	26%	28%	22%
Active person	19%	22%	13%
Sportsman	19%	23%	12%
A quiet type of a person	15%	14%	16%
Families with children	15%	15%	14%
Older person than me	7%	8%	5%
Educated person	6%	7%	4%
Younger person than me	6%	6%	4%
A lazy person	2%	2%	2%



**OUTDOORSY**  
MOST COMMON  
FISHING STEREOTYPE

# FEELINGS ABOUT FISHING

## TOP 10 BENEFITS OF FISHING

Americans fished to catch fish, of course. They also fished to enjoy nature, to escape the stresses of everyday life, and to spend time with family and friends.

BEST THINGS ABOUT FISHING	
Catching fish	54%
Being close to nature	52%
Getting away from the usual demands of life	52%
Enjoying the sounds and smells of nature	51%
Spending time with family or friends	43%
Observing the scenic beauty	37%
The "chase" (strategy, site selection, tackle selection etc.)	35%
Experiencing excitement/adventure	30%
Catching my own food	24%
Reliving childhood memories of going fishing	24%



**74%**  
CITED IMMERSION  
IN NATURE AS A  
BENEFIT OF  
FISHING

## POSITIVE FISHING MEMORIES OR ASSOCIATIONS

In terms of positive memories of fishing, 3 in 4 participants cited spending quality time with family and friends. This was consistent regardless of gender, age or ethnicity. Males were more likely to cite learning a new skill, while females more often cited connecting with a simpler way of life.

POSITIVE FISHING MEMORIES OR ASSOCIATIONS	ALL	MALE	FEMALE
Spending quality time with family or friends	75%	73%	79%
Spending time outdoors immersed in nature	74%	74%	74%
Reminds me of my childhood	60%	58%	62%
Connecting with a simpler way of life	47%	46%	49%
Enjoying the water	45%	46%	43%
Learning a new skill	45%	46%	41%



**75%**  
EQUATED FISHING  
WITH QUALITY TIME  
WITH FAMILY AND  
FRIENDS

# FISHING BARRIERS

## OBSTACLES TO ENJOYMENT

The most cited factors that prevented the enjoyment of fishing were crowded fishing spots and the discomfort of being outdoors. Other frustrations included not catching any fish, unclean waters and the expense associated with gearing up for fishing.

RANK	OBSTACLES TO ENJOYMENT
1	The fishing spots were crowded
2	Being outdoors - bugs, heat, cold, weather, etc.
3	Not catching any fish
4	The lakes and rivers weren't very clean
5	The expense - equipment, bait, supplies, etc.
6	Baiting the hooks or taking the fish off the hook
7	Not having the right equipment
8	The hassle
9	Lack of knowledge
10	Don't like to touch fish/worms

## REMOVING BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

When asked to rank resources that could help increase their enjoyment of fishing, participants first suggested information on local, close to home fishing destinations. They also indicated that more accessible and affordable fishing equipment and boats and fishing equipment could boost their participation. These rankings were unchanged from the prior year.

RANK	OBSTACLES TO ENJOYMENT
1	Local information on nearby bodies of water
2	Easier/more affordable access to fishing equipment
3	Easier/more affordable access to boats
4	Comprehensive mobile guides that you can access on the water
5	How-to's and tutorial videos
6	Short lessons/information session(s) from a state agency or local guide
7	Resources and information on voice activated devices

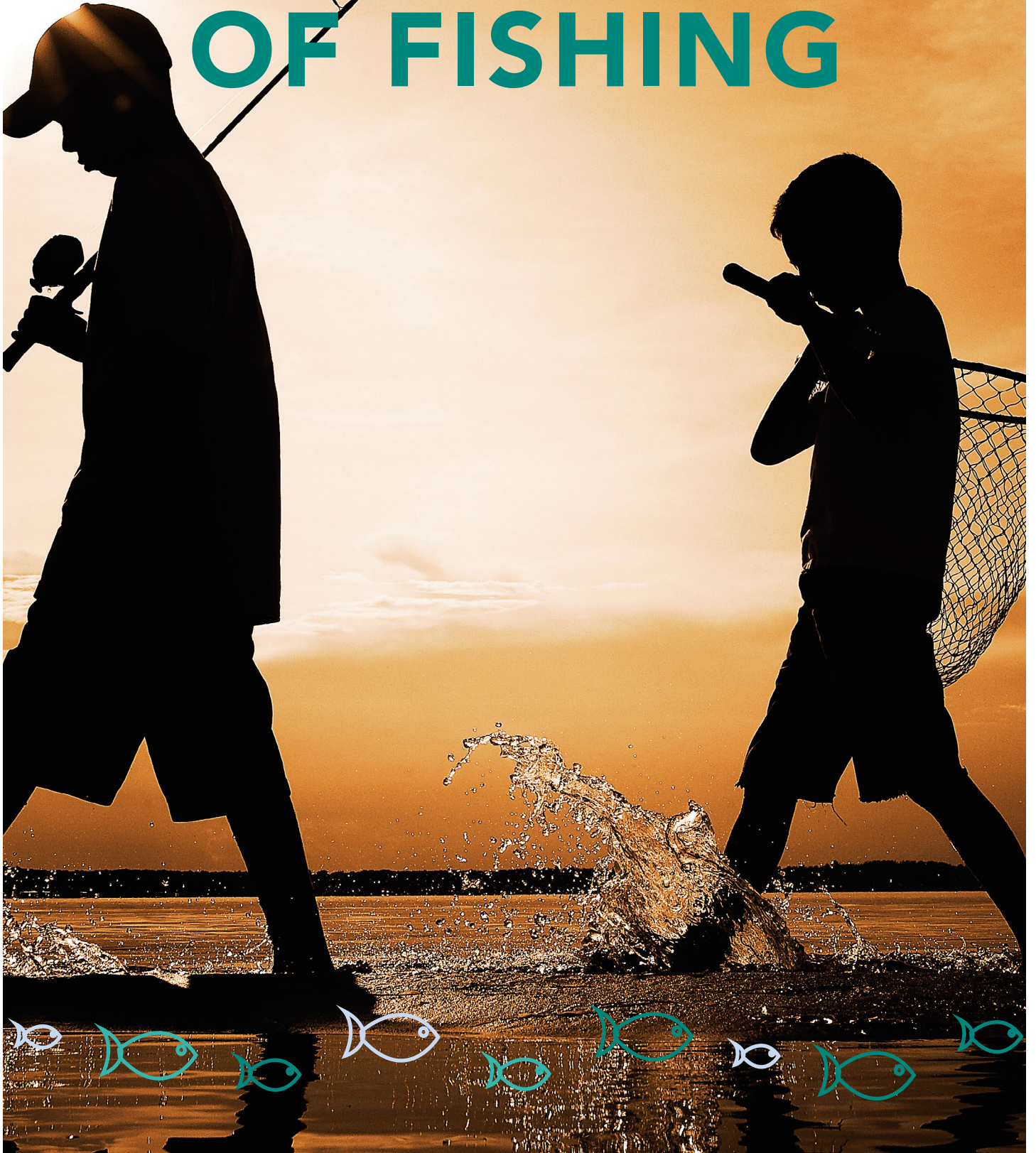


**CROWDS**  
MOST REPORTED  
BARRIER TO FISHING



**LOCAL INFO**  
MOST HELPFUL  
BOOST TO FISHING  
PARTICIPATION

# FUTURE OF FISHING





# FISHING MOTIVATIONS

## REASONS FOR STARTING TO FISH

In 2024, 49 percent of first-time anglers said they started fishing to spend time with family, while roughly one-third fished to experience excitement and adventure or because they wanted to try out a new hobby.

RANK	MOTIVATIONS TO START FISHING
1	Spend time with family
2	Experience excitement/adventure
3	Wanted to try out a new hobby
4	A friend or relative took me
5	Wanted to try catching my own food
6	To disconnect from electronics
7	Fished as a child and wanted to try again
8	Learned about fishing on the internet and wanted to try
9	Ease of access to fishing
10	Wanted to take my children fishing

## REASONS FOR STOPPING FISHING

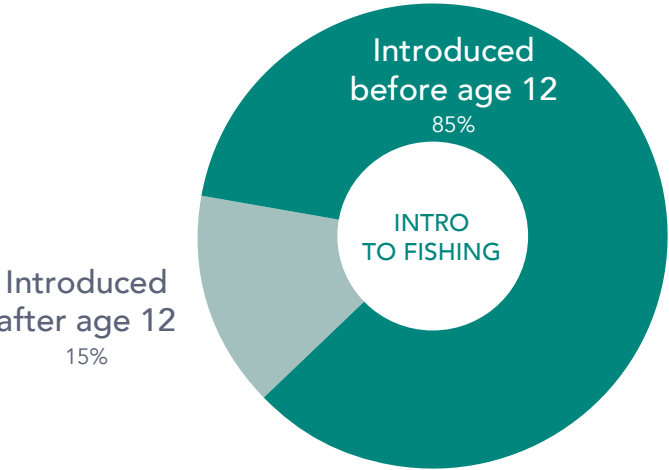
Fishing doesn't connect with everyone. The leading reasons for stopping fishing in 2024 included boredom, not catching anything, and the cost associated with fishing.

RANK	REASONS FOR STOPPING
1	Boring
2	Didn't catch anything
3	Too expensive
4	Limited access to waterways
5	Only fish during certain vacations
6	Didn't enjoy it
7	Lost interest
8	Prefer other outdoor activities

# FUTURE OF FISHING

## DID YOU FISH AS A CHILD?

RBFF research demonstrates the critical importance of introducing fishing at a young age, as 85 percent of current fishing participants fished as a child. 21 percent of anglers who fished as a child cited sharing the fishing experience with a child as motivation to participate.



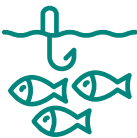
## NUMBER OF TIMES PARTICIPANTS EXPECT TO FISH

The future of fishing remains bright thanks to dedicated returning participants. Among anglers in 2024:

- 99% expect to fish during 2025
- 36% expect 20+ outings in 2025
- 42% expect 8 to 20 outings in 2025
- 21% expect fewer than 8 outings in 2025



**36%**  
ANTICIPATE 20+  
OUTINGS NEXT  
YEAR



**99%**  
OF PARTICIPANTS  
EXPECT TO FISH  
THE NEXT YEAR

# METHODOLOGY

## 2024 Participation Data

All participation statistics are from a nationwide study conducted during the 2024 calendar year by Sports Marketing Surveys USA (SMS). Under the guidance of the Physical Activity Council (PAC), a collaboration with the Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) and seven other sports industry associations, SMS partnered with Digital Research (DRI) to design and launch the participation study. All other data is attributable to the OIA/SMS research partnership.

## Sample Specification

During 2024, a total of 18,000 online interviews were carried out with a nationwide sample of individuals from U.S. proprietary online panels representative of the U.S. population for people ages six and older. Strict quotas associated with gender, age, income, region, and ethnicity were followed to ensure a balanced sample.

The 2024 participation survey sample size of 18,000 completed interviews provides a high degree of statistical accuracy. All surveys are subject to some level of standard error—that is, the degree to which the results might differ from those obtained by a complete census of every person in the U.S. A sport with a participation rate of five percent has a confidence interval of plus or minus 0.32 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

A weighting technique was used to balance the data to reflect the total U.S. population ages six and above. The following variables were used: gender, age, income, ethnicity, household size, region, and population density. The total population figure used was 308,888,845 people aged 6 and older.

The activity reported is based on a rolling 12-month participation rate. All charts represent data from U.S. populations ages 6 and over, unless otherwise specified. If you have specific questions regarding the methodology, please contact Sports Marketing Surveys at [info@sportsmarketingsurveysusa.com](mailto:info@sportsmarketingsurveysusa.com).

## Youth Interviews

All interviews of children under 13 were carried out following the guidelines set out in the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA). No children were contacted directly. The panel is a balanced sample of households with children in each age group, but contact is always made through designated adult panelists. The adult panelist receives the survey invitation on behalf of a specified child, aged six to 12, and they are asked to complete the survey together. Respondents aged 13 to 17 are contacted in a manner similar to respondents ages 6 to 12, but they are asked to complete the survey themselves.

## About the Physical Activity Council (PAC)

The survey that forms the basis of the 2025 Special Report on Fishing is produced by the Physical Activity Council (PAC), which is a partnership of leading organizations in the U.S. sports, fitness and leisure industries. While the overall aim of the survey is to establish levels of activity and identify key trends in sports, fitness and recreation participation, each partner produces detailed reports on specific areas of interest. Partners include Outdoor Industry Association (OIA); National Golf Foundation (NGF); Snowsports Industries America (SIA); Tennis Industry Association (TIA); USA Football; United States Tennis Association (USTA), Health and Fitness Association (HFA); and Sport and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA).

## Notes

Unless otherwise noted, the data in this report was collected during the 2024 participation survey, which focused on American participation in the 2024 calendar year. Please note that some information includes data that was collected during previous surveys, as some questions are not asked every year.

# 2025 SPECIAL REPORT ON FISHING

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**OUTDOOR  
FOUNDATION**



RECREATIONAL  
BOATING & FISHING  
FOUNDATION



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