

RBFF STATE INNOVATIVE R3 PROGRAM GRANTS:
MASSACHUSETTS DIVISION OF FISHERIES & WILDLIFE
DIRECT MAIL & EMAIL CAMPAIGN TO RETAIN & REACTIVATE ANGLERS

PARTNERS

- Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation

COMMUNICATIONS

MASSACHUSETTS DIVISION OF
FISHERIES & WILDLIFE
1 Rabbit Hill Road
Westborough, MA 01581

FISHING
LICENSE
REMINDER

IT'S TIME TO RENEW
YOUR FISHING LICENSE

Consider this your invitation out of the daily grind and into the fresh air.

Miles and miles of Massachusetts' finest lakes, rivers, and streams are out there just waiting to be experienced again. Chock-full of open space and peaceful sounds, our many waterways are the perfect backdrop for pondering life's biggest questions, or ignoring them completely, all while reeling in a few keepers.

Renew your license:

- Online at Mass.gov/MassFishHunt
- Or in person at a license vendor. Find one near you at Mass.gov/dfg/LicenseVendor



Questions? Call (508) 389-6300

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Who we are

The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife (MassWildlife) is responsible for the conservation, management, and restoration of fish and wildlife in the Commonwealth for the benefit and enjoyment of the public.

IT'S TIME TO RENEW
YOUR FISHING LICENSE!

Invest in a favorite pastime while helping to conserve Massachusetts' waterways.

Thank you for your past support of our natural resources. Your license renewal does more than grant you the freedom to fish the many beautiful lakes, rivers, and streams in Massachusetts. The revenue generated from your fishing license goes toward conserving healthy fish populations and ensuring public access to fishing opportunities.

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Connect with us

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Visit us at Mass.gov/MassWildlife
Find a [MassWildlife office](#) near you



OVERVIEW

The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife (MassWildlife) partnered with the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF) in Spring 2017 to implement a direct mail and email program to increase license sales for lapsed anglers. MassWildlife used RBFF's Direct Mail & Email Marketing Toolkit to Reactivate Anglers and the First-time Buyer Retention Toolkits to:

- 1.) increase license sales by encouraging anglers to renew their fishing license and,
- 2.) test if different communications to anglers with different experience levels affects their decision to purchase a fishing license.

METHODOLOGY

The target audience was lapsed Massachusetts anglers ages 24–58, who:

- Had purchased a fishing or sporting license in 2016 but had not renewed their 2017 license as of April 2017 (Retention audience)
- Had purchased a fishing or sporting license in 2015 but had not renewed their license in 2016 or 2017 as of April 2017 (Reactivation audience)

The target audience was then categorized into avidity tiers based on past license purchase history: avid, casual, and new. Control and treatment groups were randomly selected to receive different types of reminders to renew their license. Since Massachusetts does not require an email address, those who provided an email address and those who did not were separated into different groupings for communications. Anglers received:

- No communication (control),
- Postcard only,
- Email only, or
- Postcard with follow-up email.

MassWildlife evaluated over a 6-week period if anglers renewed their license.

BENEFITS

Massachusetts' annual churn rate is approximately 36% for anglers, higher than the Northeast regional average of 33%, making retention and reactivation a critical priority in Massachusetts' 2017 Outreach and Communications Plan for Fishing. Retention and reactivation efforts are typically lower cost than recruitment efforts. By increasing focus on retention and reactivation, Massachusetts can reduce its churn rate while increasing annual fishing participation in a cost-effective manner. This study provided valuable insight into which types of communications are most effective with lapsed anglers and serves as a great starting point for future retention and reactivation efforts.

SUPPORT

“Annually, over one-third of Massachusetts anglers do not renew their license. Lapsed anglers are a strategic target audience for marketing, as they’ve already demonstrated an interest in fishing. By prioritizing efforts to engage with this community, Massachusetts seeks to reduce its churn rate and increase fishing participation.”

-Jack Buckley, MassWildlife Director

RESULTS

Retention Audience

- For avid anglers who provided an email address, receiving a postcard with follow-up email significantly increased license sales.
- For casual anglers who provided an email address, receiving a postcard only or a postcard with follow-up email significantly increased license sales.
- For new anglers who provided an email address, receiving a postcard with follow-up email significantly increased license sales.
- For new anglers without an email address, receiving a postcard only significantly increased license sales.

Reactivation Audience

- Receiving a postcard and/or follow-up email significantly increased license sales for lapsed new anglers that provided an email address.
- The average renewal rate for the retention audience was about **8%**, while the average renewal rate for the reactivation audience was only about **3%**.

AVIDITY DEFINITIONS

Retention Audience

Avidity Tier	Purchase in 2012–2015	Purchase in 2016
New	0 years	X
Casual	1 or 2 years	X
Avid	3 or 4 years	X

Reactivation Audience

Avidity Tier	Purchase in 2012–2014	Purchase in 2015
New lapsed	0 years	X
Casual lapsed	1 year	X
Avid lapsed	2 or 3 years	X

*Reactivation audience did not purchase in 2016.

LESSONS LEARNED/FUTURE PLANS

Lessons Learned: Retention Strategies

While email marketing is relatively low-cost, one email alone was not enough to for a purchasing behavioral change in the retention audience. Across all avidity tiers of this audience, using a combination of a postcard with a follow-up email significantly increased license sales. This indicates having multiple touchpoints with anglers is important to their continued participation. Future studies could explore if multiple email reminders would have a similar effect.

Lessons Learned: Reactivation Strategies

Once casual and avid anglers lapse for a full year none of the above communications methods positively affect purchase behavior. However, when newly lapsed anglers receive a postcard and/or follow-up email, sales increase. This indicates MassWildlife has an opportunity to reactivate new anglers with any sort of reminder. A comparison of renewal rates between the retention (8%) and reactivation (3%) audiences shows that renewal rates drop substantially after anglers lapse for a full calendar year. This emphasizes the importance of intervention and outreach before an angler lapses for a full year.

Future Plans

This study utilized the recommended messaging in RBFF’s Lapsed Angler Toolkit. While a simple reminder seems to work well for newer lapsed anglers, casual and avid anglers may be more likely to renew if they are provided more advanced information, such as trout stocked waters, fishing reports, or advanced classes. On the other hand, new anglers might benefit more from basic information, like introductory classes or simple techniques. Future studies could test if alternate messages or a combination of simple reminders with more detailed follow-ups yield better results. Next year, MassWildlife also plans to test messages tailored by geographic location for angling opportunities within an angler’s vicinity.

CONTACT INFO

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