



# RETAINING THE 2020 COVID-19 COHORT



How Washington retained over 28%  
of new fishing license holders by  
using three key strategies





# COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The unique circumstances of the 2020 COVID-19 global pandemic caused an increased number of new fishing participants in Washington and across the country.

However, Washington was one of the only states to close fishing (and hunting) activities at the outset. We reopened on May 5, 2020.







# NEW ANGLERS ON THE SCENE

In previous years, the number of new anglers in Washington hovered around 210,000 each year.

In 2020, there were over **254,000** new anglers who participated in a fishing opportunity.





# PURPOSE & GOALS

The sole purpose of the campaign is to retain this large cohort of new anglers in the coming years, utilizing them to drive further recruitment and reactivation.

We're starting the second year of this two-year retention plan. The current goals remain:

- Retain at least 29% of license year 2020 (LY20) new fishing customers by the end of LY21 ✓
- Retain at least 16% of LY20 new fishing customers by the end of LY22



# STRATEGIES

① SURVEY NEW ANGLERS

② USE CUSTOM AUDIENCE TARGETING   

③ PERSONALIZED EMAIL CAMPAIGN

# 1 SURVEY NEW ANGLERS

At the start of the new license year, WDFW surveyed new anglers via email to learn more about their fishing experiences.

## Key survey findings:

### 1. Top three reasons they decided to fish for the first time:

- To spend time with friends and family
- To reduce stress and relax
- To connect with nature

### 2. Top three species fished for:

- Trout
- Salmon
- Bass

Cont.

**WDFW wants to hear about your fishing experience in 2020**



**Dear Valued Customer,**

Washington and much of the country saw a high number of new hunters and anglers this year as other forms of recreation closed and social distancing measures went into effect due to the COVID-19 pandemic.





# 1 SURVEY NEW ANGLERS

## Key survey findings, cont.:

### 3. Top three things participants enjoyed the least about their fishing experience:

- Not catching any fish
- Lack of lake access/crowding
- Not knowing where to go

### 4. Top three things participants enjoyed the most about their fishing experience:

- Being in the outdoors/around water and nature
- Catching fish
- Relaxing

### 5. New anglers are most interested in the following information:

- Places to fish
- Season dates
- Fishing rules and regulations

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# ① SURVEY NEW ANGLERS

## Informing our content strategy

Based off our survey results, our new angler cohort is primarily in need of educational content and resources to get them to a place of continuation without support.

- Finding places to fish
- Figuring out what is open and when
- Understanding the rules and regulations

They also indicated that not catching a fish was the thing they liked the least about their fishing experience.





## 2 CUSTOM AUDIENCE TARGETING

Custom audience targeting is an advertising service that allows marketers to target existing audience lists on social media.

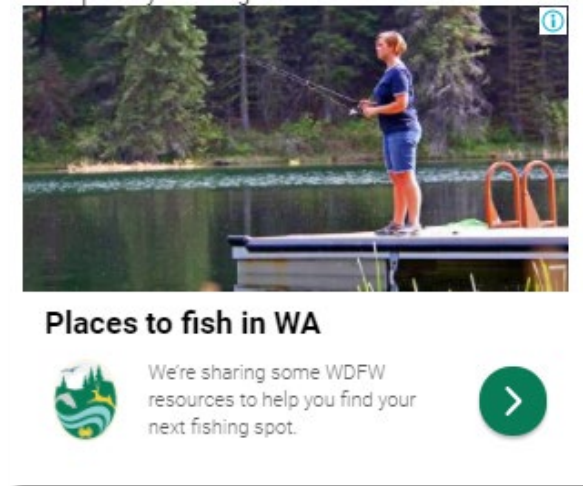
Google has a custom audience service that allows for marketers to target individuals based on their interests, behaviors, frequented websites, and most-used apps.



## 2 CUSTOM AUDIENCE TARGETING

Combining both efforts allows for targeted re-marketing and enhanced retention messaging effort.

These targeted Google and social media ads were launched once per month with relevant content to different audience segments.





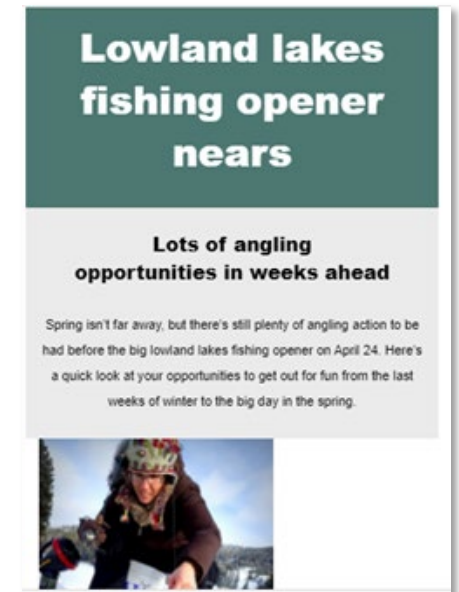
# 3 PERSONALIZED EMAIL CAMPAIGN

We used available customer data, survey results, and demographic trends to create targeted, personalized email messaging.

Each time an email goes out, target audiences are segmented out and contain specific, personalized messaging relevant to each audience.

Personalization may include targeted imagery, content tone and type (informed by survey results), and email frequency (behavior triggered).

Email timing and topic is aligned monthly across social, Google, and email, leading people forward each month.



# PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Ask...


- Who are you talking to?
- What are you talking about?
- What do you want them to do?
- So what?...what is the benefit of the benefits?

Leverage customized search criteria and algorithms for distribution and manually dial things in to get the most value - turn up the fidelity on your audiences!





# DIGITAL CONTINUITY – INSPIRE, EDUCATE, CONVERT



## BLACK FRIDAY FISHING

WDFW is stocking lakes statewide with over **140,000** rainbow trout!

**Skip the shopping and fish this Black Friday**

WDFW blog has the info on lakes stocked with thousands of trout

Choose tight lines over long lines or online on the day after Thanksgiving and create a new family fishing tradition. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is stocking 24 lakes statewide with over 140,000 rainbow trout!

The "holiday specials" being stocked just in time for Nov. 26 include thousands of large trout averaging 15 to 16 inches in length and weighing up to three pounds.

WDFW's latest blog on [myWDFW.com](#) has all the details about this great angling opportunity, including lake locations, links to stocking reports, how-to information, and more.

These lakes join dozens of others around the state already stocked in October with tens of thousands of trout. A number of other lakes stocked earlier this year are also open for fishing on Black Friday. Many other lakes still boast excellent trout fishing as a result of stocking earlier in the year.


**Don't miss out on this chance for fun, family friendly fishing on Black Friday and beyond!**


[Read the blog](#)

**Licensing**

When you're ready to give it a go, you can buy your fishing license today by visiting [fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov](#), calling 360-902-2464, or going to a license dealer near you. Go to [wdfw.wa.gov/licenses/dealers](#) to find your nearest license dealer.

Tight lines to you and yours on the holiday weekend!






[WDFW home](#)[Buy license](#)

[myWDFW Home](#)[Multi-season & special hunt](#)[First Turkey Program](#)[Hunting highlights](#)[Fishing highlights](#)[Life Outdoors](#)

## Fishing highlights – November 2021

[Home](#) / [Fishing highlights](#) – November 2021

Monthly recreation opportunities by region



### Skip the shopping and fish this Black Friday

WDFW stocking lakes with thousands of trout

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"Fall is a great time to get out and fish your local lakes, and a peaceful alternative to the chaos of Black Friday shopping," said Steve Caromile, WDFW inland fish program manager. "It's also a fun way to get outdoors with family and friends and create some holiday memories. We work hard to offer year-round opportunity at lakes across the state, and we hope everyone gets a chance to enjoy some of the great fall fishing on tap this year."

**How-to and stocking details**


[Read our blog on shore fishing for rainbow trout](#) for helpful tips on tactics and gear for this family friendly fishery.


For up-to-date stocking information, anglers should follow the department's weekly catchable [trout stocking report](#), where they can find reports on stocking that has taken place within the last 30 days and throughout the year.

**License and regulation**

Anglers 15 years and older must have a current Washington freshwater fishing license valid through March 31, 2022, to participate.

Fishing licenses can be purchased by telephone at 360-902-2464, online at [fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov](#), or at hundreds of license dealers across the state. Visit [wdfw.wa.gov/licenses/dealers](#) to find a license dealer near you.





[License Information](#)[Help & Support](#)

## Recreational login


Purchase hunting and fishing licenses, passes for wildlife viewing, and submit harvest activity

## Commercial login

Limited to commercial whale watching license application submittals and account management

Per emergency rule, a commercial whale watching license is not required for whale watching operations until 5/1/2021

[Shop for Products that Don't Require a Customer Account](#)



Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife

**WDFW - Licensing Division**  
PO BOX 43154  
Olympia, WA 98504  
360.902.2464  
[licensing@dfw.wa.gov](#)

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# DIGITAL CONTINUITY – INSPIRE, EDUCATE, CONVERT

Example of your image ad at 300x250



**Surfperch fishing how-to**

 Come for the razor clams, stay for the surfperch 

 **myWDFW**

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## Fishing highlights – August 2021

[Home / Fishing highlights – August 2021](#)

Monthly recreation opportunities by region



### Sand, summer, sunsets, and surfperch!

#### Get in on beach angling with this surfperch fishing primer


*By Tom Ryle/WDFW*

Looking for an easy, fun, family-friendly way to go fishing this summer? Want to maximize family fun on our coastal beaches? Do you love fresh fish and generous catch limits? Then look no further than Washington's coastal beaches, where surfperch fishing can be enjoyed year-round.

**Where to go**

Several [species of surfperch](#) inhabit the Pacific Ocean along most of the West Coast, making them an ideal target species for those venturing to the beaches for razor clams, kite flying, or even just watching sunset with friends and family. In fact, adding fishing to your plans can make for some memorable catch-and-cook experiences!

You can experience good surfperch fishing along all of Washington's coastal beaches with miles of coastline access available. Anglers target them close to shore

 Washington Department of  
**Fish & Wildlife**

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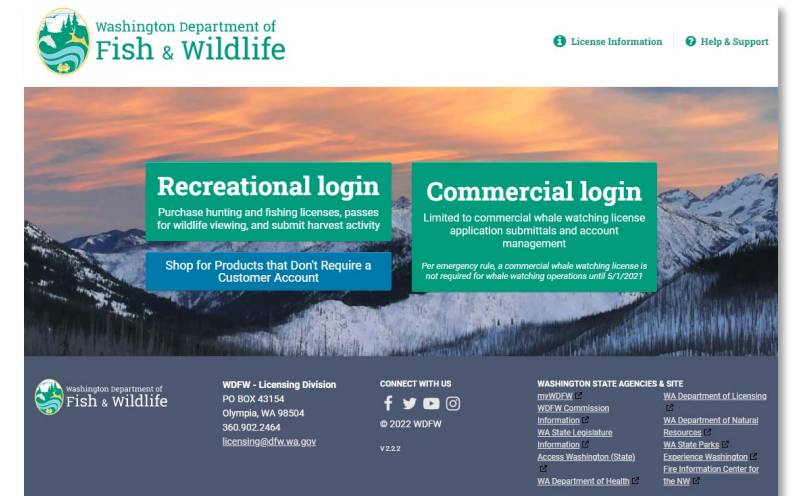
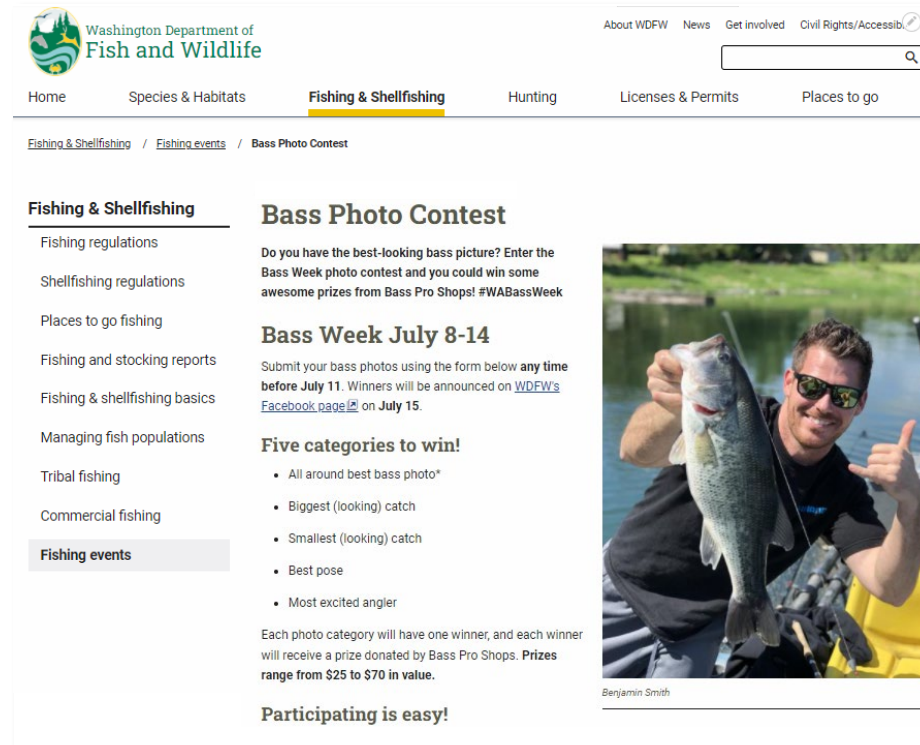
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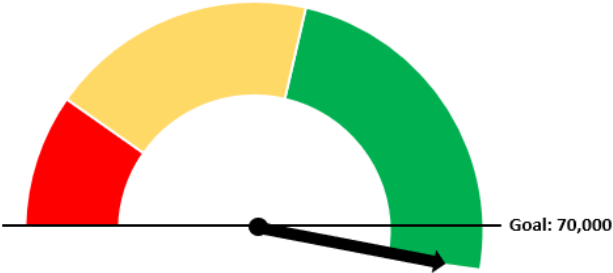




# DIGITAL CONTINUITY – INSPIRE, EDUCATE, CONVERT



# RESULTS



As of 11/30/21, we retained **72,498** new anglers

	New anglers LY2020	% of New anglers	Retained in LY2021	% of Retained anglers	% Difference
Female	89,082	35.00%	23,897	33.00%	-2.10%
Male	164,756	64.80%	48,519	66.90%	2.10%
Non-binary	362	0.10%	82	0.10%	0.00%
Total	254,201		72,498		

- ⌘ Kids ages 0-15 do not need to purchase a fishing license in Washington, however, some families purchase for their kids anyway
- ⌘ Anglers 70+ do need a license, however, they receive a substantial senior discount, except for razor clam





# KEY INSIGHTS & LESSONS LEARNED

- The 20 to 40 age bracket is the sweet spot for retention however we saw a slight bump of movement in the 60 to 70-year-old bracket as well
- Identify audience specific goals – lead them through seasonal species, related skills/gear/tactics that apply to their goals (basics > intermediate > advanced)
- Align audience motivation to success opportunities
- Plan for team capacity and resourcing realities
- Plan for the unexpected external factors impacting recreational opportunity, timing, etc.



# KEY INSIGHTS & LESSONS LEARNED

- Establishing expectations is key, especially when experimenting and pivoting plans
- Always consider the politics at play (species conflicts, governor's office, news stories, elections, etc.)
- Consider timing of emails/opportunity alignment (pandemics, weather, access, etc.)
- Facebook (now Meta) has proven to be difficult to work with for advertising R3/outdoor recreation, often censoring ads and causing delays, etc.

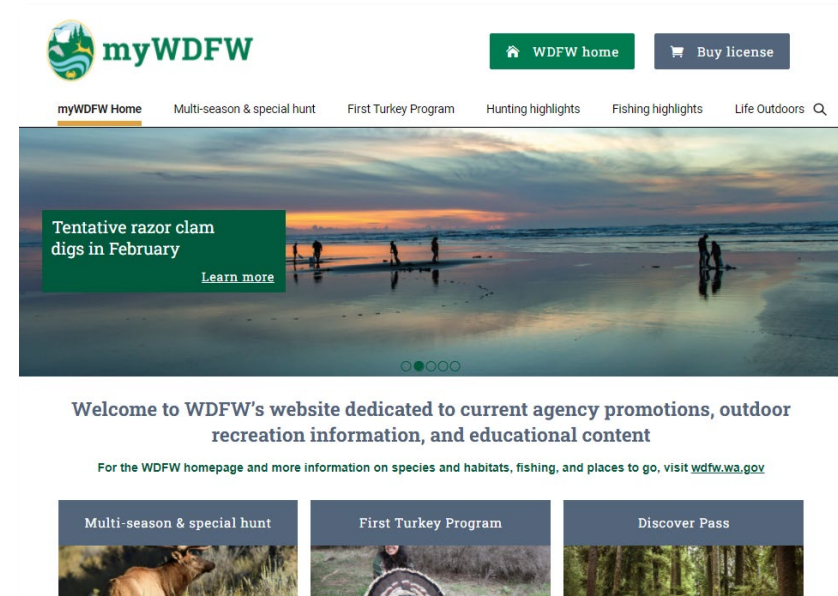




# NEXT STEPS

The current goal remains to retain at least 16% of LY20 new fishing customers by the end of LY22.

- Dive deeper into customer data, trend analysis, and leverage best practices and resources (dashboards, etc.)
- Continue surveying audiences to learn and inform our content marketing strategies
- Continue to build-out myWDFW.com and engage staff to contribute, build relevancy
- Collaborate with more industry partners and influencers to enhance messaging
- Deploy our Mobile First Catch Center!



# PARTING THOUGHTS

## **Consider the entire digital journey**

Continuity between your email or ad and the destination landing page is crucial.

## **Audience at the center of the story**

Make it about them, not you. Aspirational lifestyle imagery and copy draws people in and keeps their attention. Strive to capture the emotion.

## **Focus on user experience (UX)**

Now that you have their first click, keep them engaged. Hire a designer and/or leverage best practices to ensure users experience a seamless, successful conversion.

## **Experiment, measure, and learn**

People and audiences are fickle – experiment to learn and evolve your approaches.





A fishing rod and reel are positioned horizontally across the top right of the image. To the left, a clear plastic tackle box is open, revealing several white and silver fishing lures and spinnerbaits. A single lure lies on the wooden surface between the tackle box and the fishing reel. The entire scene is set against a background of weathered, greyish-brown wooden planks.

# THANK YOU

## QUESTIONS?



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