



# **2020 Anglers in 2021: A Repeat Performance or the Sophomore Slump?**

**Jane Gustafson, Marketing and Advertising Manager**

**Nebraska Game and Parks**



# 2020: A Big Year for Fishing

Nebraska picked up 126,049 new and reactivated anglers in 2020

- Our previous 10-year fishing permit sales average is 195,044

We picked up 67,978 new anglers

- First license purchase of any type (1-day, 3-day, annual, 3-or 5-year)
- Included residents and non-residents
- Resident = Over age 16; Non-resident = May include those under 16

We reactivated 58,071 anglers

- Reactivated = did not purchase a permit in 2019
- Included residents and non-residents
- Resident = Over age 16; Non-resident = May include those under 16



# The 2021 Challenge: Keeping them Engaged

## Typical Churn Rates (Pre 2020)

- Around 38% for anglers with 1-day, 3-day and annual permits
- Trends higher for new anglers
- Trends higher for those who purchased 1-day and 3-day permits
- How can we create life-long anglers?





# The 2021 Challenge: Keeping them Engaged

We don't know what we don't know.....

We did an online survey

- What changes led to them go fishing in 2020?
  - Work? More time with family? Less organized sports?
- For reactivated anglers: What reason did they have for not fishing as much prior to 2020?
- How likely were they to go fishing in 2021?
- What resources or information would help them fish more often / have a better experience in 2021?
- How do they like to receive information?



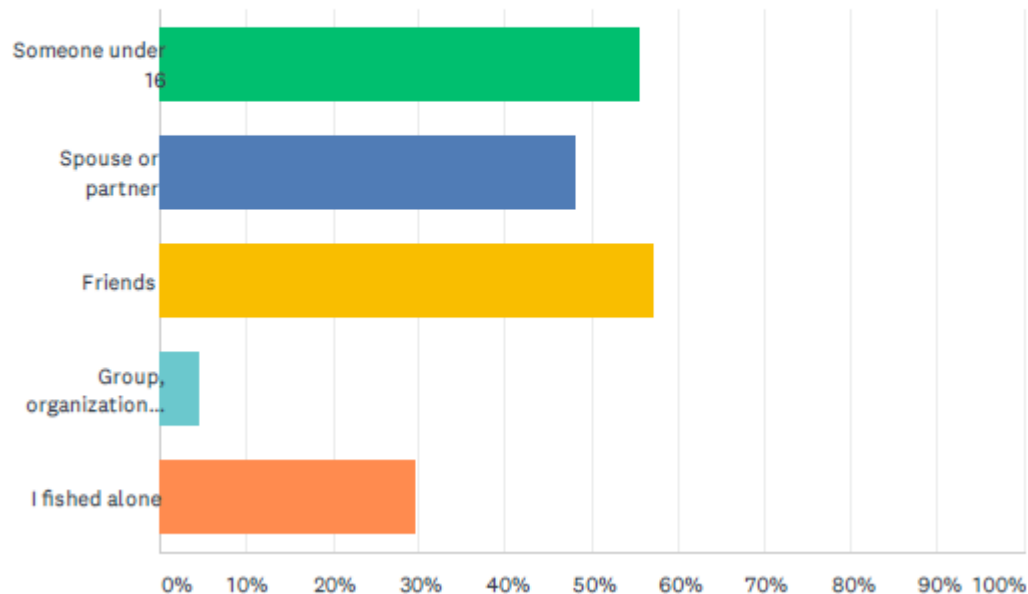
# Survey Says.....

- These groups have much in common

New Anglers

Q2 This year, did you fish with:(select all that apply)

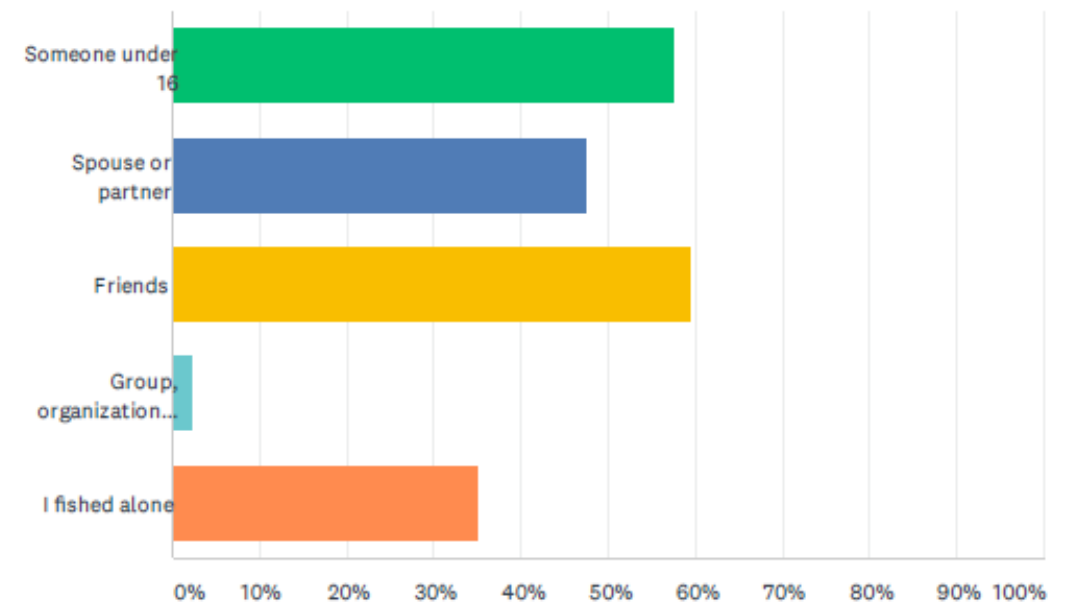
Answered: 370 Skipped: 4



Reactivated Anglers

Q3 This year, did you fish with:(select all that apply)

Answered: 200 Skipped: 3





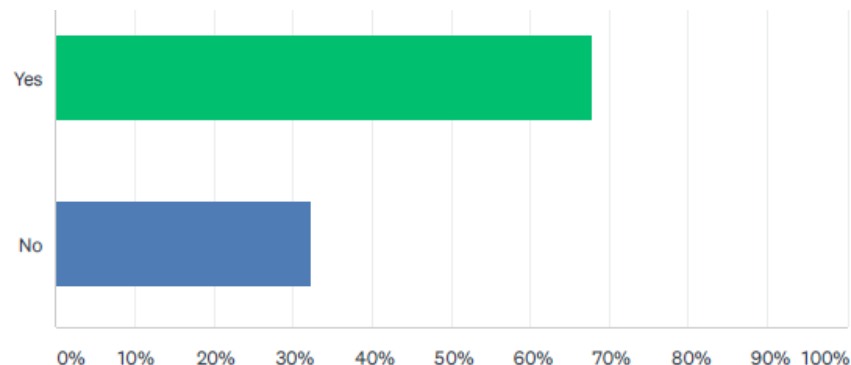


# Survey Says

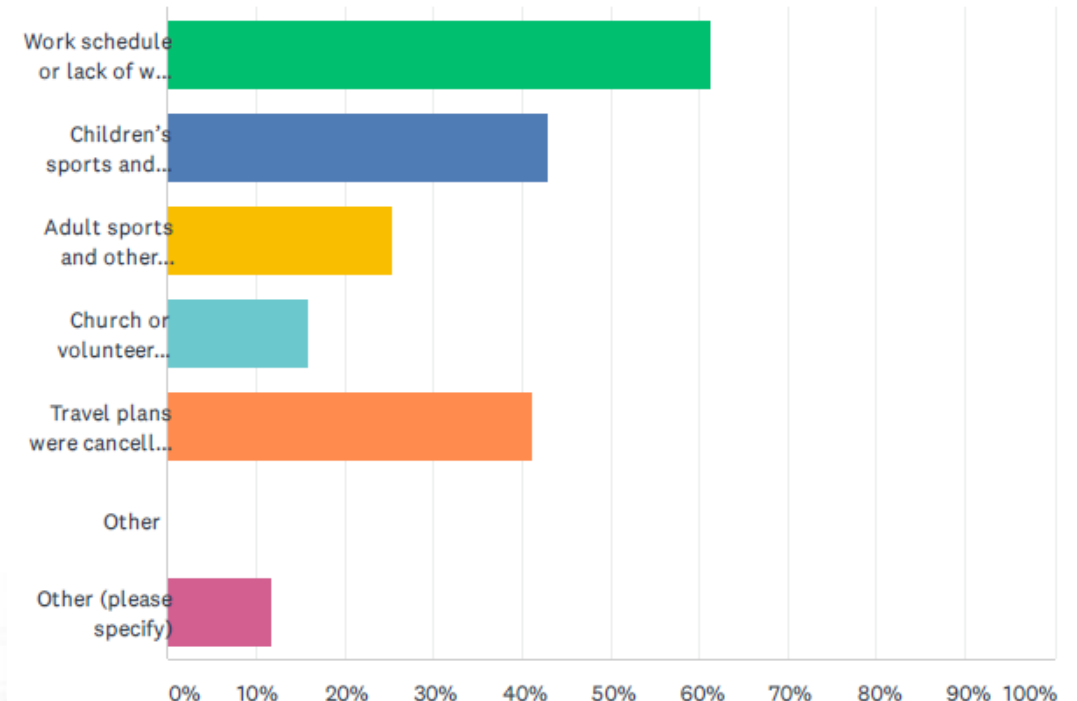
What perceive changes led to more fishing?

- Results were similar for both new and reactivated anglers
- Changes in work schedule or lack of work
- Children's sports or other organized activities were cancelled
- Travel plans cancelled

Q8 Did you have more free time to fish this year?



Q10 If yes, please select all that apply





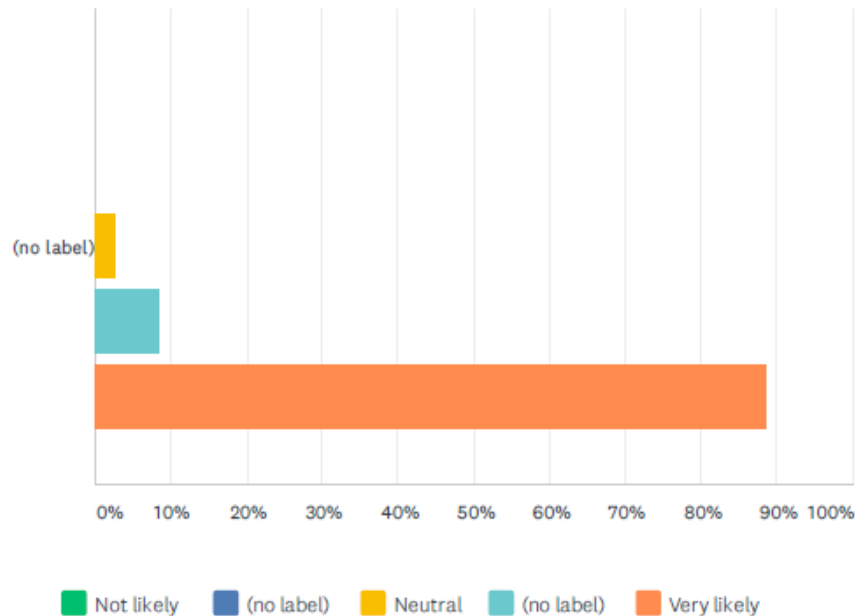
# Survey Says

## How likely are they to fish in 2021?

- 90% of the newly recruited “strongly agreed” that they intended to fish in 2021

Q11 What is the likelihood you will continue to fish in 2021?

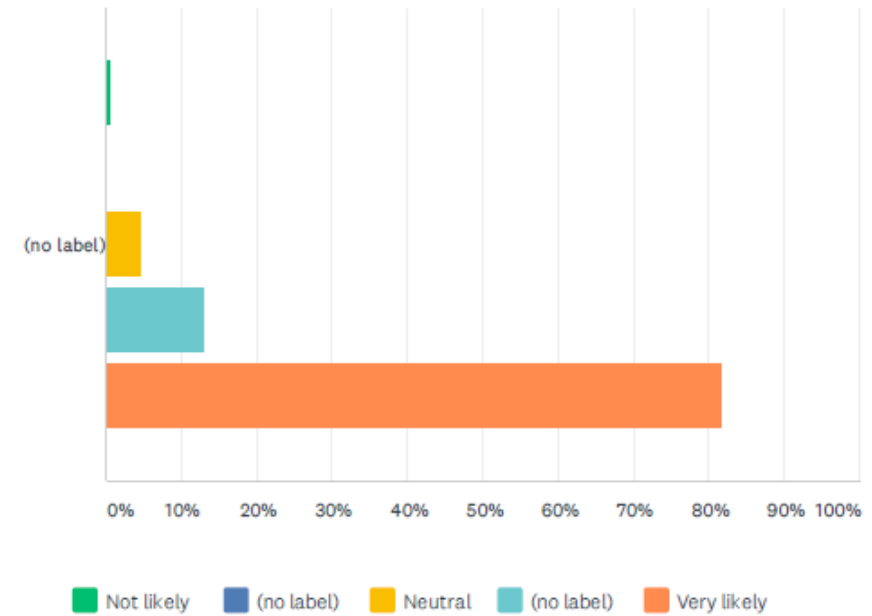
Answered: 363 Skipped: 11



- 82% of the reactivated “strongly agreed” that they intended to fish in 2021

Q12 What is the likelihood you will continue to fish in 2021?

Answered: 192 Skipped: 11





# Survey Says.....

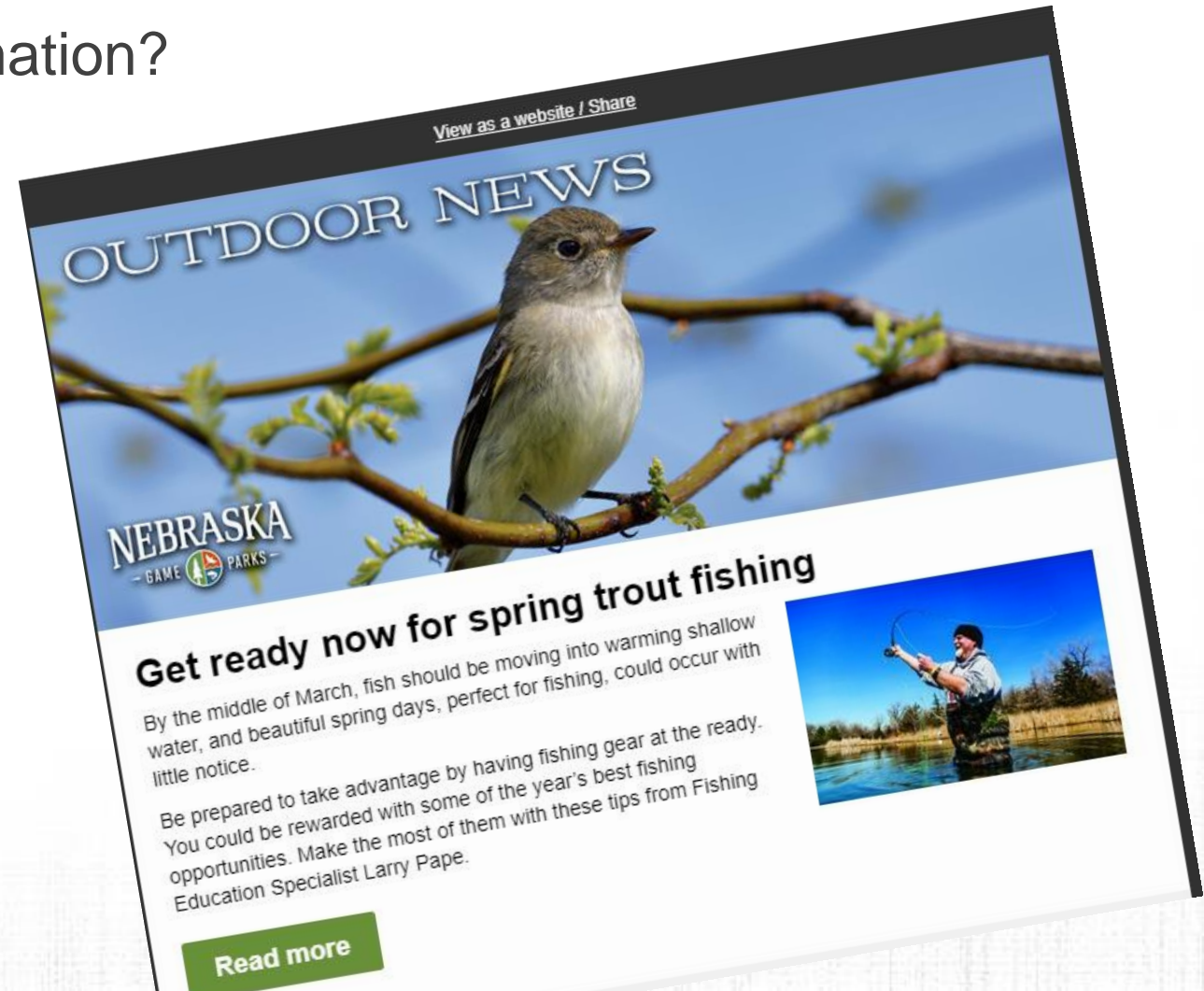
- What resources would help you fish more often?
  - Knowledge of convenient places to fish
  - Opportunities closer to me
  - More fishing piers/access areas on nearby waterbodies
  - Better knowledge of fishing techniques
- What types of information would help you fish more often?
  - Up-to-date fishing reports/information
  - Where to go fishing information
  - Information to improve my chances of catching specific species of fish
  - Skill development





# Survey Says.....

- Where would you like to get your information?
  - Emails (overwhelmingly)
  - Social Media
  - NGPC Website



# Survey Results



Our survey insights were similar to what RBFF learned about new 2020 anglers:

- 90% of new anglers plan to keep fishing in the future
- They are looking for convenient, local places to go
- They are eager to build their skills
- They want you to provide ideas for outings and "quick trips," as there will be more competition for time
- Most people prefer to be reached through email and social media
- Lots of opportunity for households with kids





# Our Project Goals

## What we wanted to do

- Keep fishing top-of-mind as a leisure activity
- Remind new anglers about fishing as an activity and be aware of local places to fish and seasonal opportunities, along with building skills and confidence
- Help reactivated anglers learn about places to fish statewide, seasonal opportunities and build their knowledge and skills

Overall goal: Retain 68% of these anglers

**2021 ANNUAL HUNT FISH COMBO**

NEBRASKA RESIDENT  
**JOHN DOEBUCK**  
NAME

Permit No: 4247288

**2200 N 33RD ST**  
STREET

**LINCOLN**  
CITY

**08/10/1985**  
DATE OF BIRTH

**Male**  
SEX

**NE**  
STATE

**5'9"**  
HT.

**190**  
WT.

**Brown**  
HAIR

**Blue**  
EYES

**01/01/2021**  
DATE/FROM

**12/31/2021**  
THRU

Hunter ID  
**Lincoln Permits Section**  
PERMIT AGENT

**STATE OF NEBRASKA**  
GAME AND PARKS COMMISSION

**VOID UNLESS SIGNED**

I accept this permit with the understanding that it is issued to residents only, that I am a resident of Nebraska, that I have resided in Nebraska continuously for a period of 30 days prior to making application for this permit, that this permit is not transferable under penalty and that same is void unless signed by me.

Sign Here  
is permitted to Hunt or Fish in the State of Nebraska during the period stated on the face of this permit under restrictions of the Game Laws and the rules of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

Director - Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

**AQUATIC HABITAT STAMP**  
2021  
\$15.00  
NEBRASKA GAME AND PARKS COMMISSION

**HABITAT STAMP**  
2021  
\$25.00  
NEBRASKA GAME AND PARKS COMMISSION

**WATERFOWL**  
2021  
\$10  
NEBRASKA GAME AND PARKS COMMISSION

Take a Kid Hunting

Barcode





# Create Content

- Fisheries + Communications = Lots of topics and ideas
  - Created a weekly calendar of topics to be written about
  - A mix of information for beginners and those looking to build skills, try new things
  - A webpage resource for these topics
  - Shared assignments and team approach to content and distribution
- Focused on survey results:
  - Knowledge of convenient places to fish / Opportunities near me / Where to go fishing information
  - Better knowledge of fishing techniques
  - Up-to-date fishing reports/information
  - Information to improve my chances of catching specific species of fish



# Serve Content

- Created a list of places to use this content
  - Internally: Website, blogs, agency magazine
  - Externally: News releases, columns in local papers
  - Content Marketing: social channels, paid social, emails, PIOs push in local markets
- Think outside the tackle box
  - Up-to-date fishing reports/information
  - Repackage and repurpose into new products
  - “Quick trip” tools
  - Partnerships



# What We Did

## Created a Website “Base Page”

- Where to go fishing/opportunities near me
- Information to improve skills/build knowledge
- Up-To-Date reports/information
- Community Fishing Nights information

### FISHING ARTICLES

Looking for fishing advice from the experts? Check out our series of fishing articles and blogs for fishing tips, techniques and much more.

#### Open Water Fishing



#### Ice Fishing



#### Barbs & Backlashes



### FISHING VIDEOS







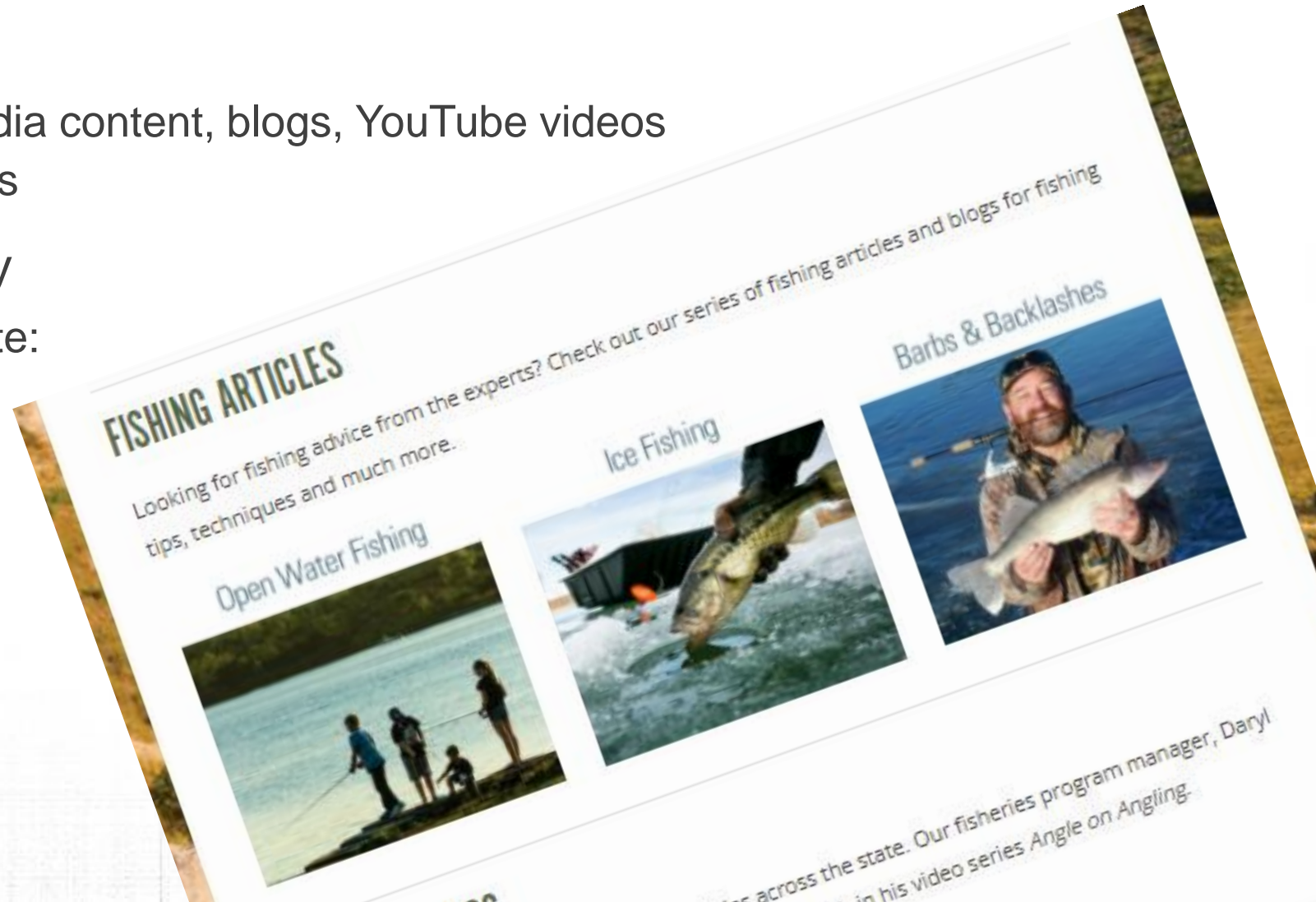
# What We Did

## Created content

- Feature articles, social media content, blogs, YouTube videos
- Trip planners for local areas

## Marketed content aggressively

- Email, social media, website: the top three preferred places from our survey



# What We Did

## Targeted New and Reactivated Anglers



- Emails for customers with email addresses
- Weekly March 3 – July 7; then Bi-weekly
- For those without email addresses:
  - Reverse search and targeting on social media (Facebook and Instagram)
  - Programmatic reverse IP targeting and reverse targeting through adaptive digital ads and paid Google search.
  - April 15 – May 31; June 1 – June 30






# What We Did



**Nebraska Game and Parks Commission**  
Sponsored · 




The best kind of on-line learning involves a fishing pole and hook.




## THE BEST KIND OF ON-LINE LEARNING

OUTDOORNEBRASKA.GOV/HOW...  
**Fish Nebraska**  
Find the perfect spot.


[LEARN MORE](#)

 Like  Comment  Share





Instagram

 negameandparks  
Sponsored

## PIKE AND SUBSCRIBE




[Learn More](#)

negameandparks When it comes to our fishing fans, we only have this simple request: pike and subscribe.

[View as a webpage](#) / [Share](#)

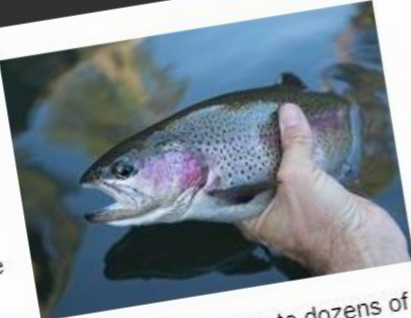


## NEBRASKA

— GAME PARKS —

### Grab your fishing pole; the trout are coming!

It's that time: spring trout stockings have begun. Take advantage of the nice weather, and head to a city pond or lake to enjoy some good fishing.



This week, trout stockings are coming to western Nebraska, and then to dozens of other sites statewide this month. There are a ton of communities on the list; visit our website to find one near you!

Rainbow trout fishing is especially great for kids or beginners as only simple and inexpensive equipment is needed. They will bite on about anything, including corn, wadded up pieces of bread, or worms. They're also easy and safe to handle. Bring a towel for handling these slippery fish, and a cooler to keep some for dinner!

[See Schedule](#)



# Keep Sharing Content



## SOFT PLASTIC BAITS

Plastics include a wide variety of different lures, and can be used to target many sport fish. Plastics are popular with anglers because they feel more natural in a fish's mouth than a hard plastic lure like a crankbait. Hard plastics require that the fish is hooked quickly before it drops the lure, but soft plastics can allow for more time to set the hook. The classic soft plastic bait is the worm. These baits are created by pouring liquid plastic into a mold and adding dyes, metallic flakes, or even scent. They can resemble worms, crayfish, lizards or frogs. The legs, tails, etc. undulate as they move through the water. The soft plastic bodies of these lures encourage fish to hold on to them a little longer before they spit them out, giving the angler a better chance to set the hook.



**How to fish with plastics:** For the worm, a popular technique is the Texas Rig. Use a bullet weight above the hook, and insert the hook through the top of the worm's head, then bury the point into the body of the worm to make it "weedless" (so it will not get hung up on underwater vegetation.) Cast and let it fall to the bottom. Twist the rod tip a few times and retrieve in short twitchy hops. A fish bite is detected when a fish picks up the bait and swims away and is noticeable through line movement or a gentle pull. Allow the fish a few seconds before firmly setting the hook.

## PREPARED BAITS

Doughbaits are often used to attract catfish. Many catfish anglers have closely guarded secret recipes for doughbaits that combine a variety of tastes and scents. Livers, hot dogs, frozen shrimp, cut pieces of fish, and other food items that will disperse a scent in the water are all good catfish attractants. Canned corn can be a very effective bluegill bait. Treble hooks are often used to hold prepared baits.



## THE TACKLE BOX

Hard-sided tackle boxes are not as common as they once were. Most tackle "box" choices are now more like bags that hold a variety of boxes designed to carry all types of lures and equipment. These small component boxes are a great choice for new anglers to start and build a collection. As you develop more specific fishing interests, you can expand to larger, more complex containers and bigger tackle bags. Your boxes should have enough trays to organize your lures so they can be stored separately and won't tangle together. Plan to buy a tackle bag that is slightly larger than what you need right now. A little extra space allows you to carry non-tackle items like your cell phone and sunscreen and gives you room to expand your collection.



## FILLING YOUR TACKLE BOX

In addition to a variety of hooks, weights, bobbers and baits, consider the following for your tackle box.

**Fishing Guide:** Your current Nebraska Fishing Guide will help you decide where to fish in public waters of Nebraska, list the species

available to catch, and what the regulations are for keeping fish. Length limits, bag limits and possession limits are imposed to help manage the fisheries in Nebraska's waters.

**Common Fishes of Nebraska book:** Be able to identify the fish you catch so you won't accidentally break a law by putting a "catch and release" species on your stringer.



**Fishing permit:** At 16 years old, you are required to purchase a fishing permit if you are going to fish in Nebraska. Revenue from fishing permit sales allows the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission to maintain quality fisheries for Nebraska's residents and visitors to enjoy. If you are required to carry a permit, it must be on your person when you fish. It's handy to keep your permit in your tackle box, safe inside a waterproof sleeve.

**Knot tying card:** Until you've tied on many hooks, it may be difficult to remember the steps to a good fishing knot. A reminder card will help you tie a secure knot so you don't lose your fish.

**Swivels:** Some lures, like spoons and spinners, can cause the line to twist when they are retrieved. Attaching a swivel to the line and the lure to the swivel will prevent line twisting. Swivels can also be used as a stop for slip sinkers or bobbers. Some swivels are equipped with snaps to make it easy to change lures.



**Needle-nose pliers:** This is a useful tool in attaching and removing split shot and also in removing a hook from a fish's mouth.

**Nail clippers:** These are handy for cutting excess fishing line after tying a knot.

**First aid:** Disinfectant, a few Band-Aids and antibiotic ointment in a zip-lock bag are good to have on hand when dealing with sharp objects (hooks and fish's spines).

**Tape measure:** Keep a tape measure so you can measure your catch. Not only can you be able to brag about the size of your catch, it is also important to determine whether a fish you intend to keep meets length-specific regulations.

**Whistle:** A whistle can be heard from greater distances than a person's cry for help. A repetition of three short blasts followed by a pause is the international signal for distress.

**Sunscreen and insect repellent:** Pick up travel sized bottles to stash in the bottom of your tackle box.

**Stringer:** A stringer is useful if you want to keep the fish you've caught while you continue fishing. The stringer can be threaded through the fish's mouth and secured on the shore, allowing the fish to stay alive in the water until you are done fishing.



**Landing net:** Although a landing net probably won't fit in your tackle box, it is a useful item to add to your gear collection. Choose a net with a long handle for shore fishing. A net with a collapsible handle will store easily. Rubber mesh nets are durable and hooks or spines will not get tangled in rubber mesh like they will in nylon mesh.





View as a webpage / Share

### Do you have what you need for a day of good fishing?

Let's say you're preparing for a day of fishing. You've got the absolute essentials — license, rod and reel, and some tackle — but is there anything else you really need for a good day on the water?

We would say there is! Let's start with one of the most helpful items on the list: a Fishing Guide. Not only will this help you with current regulations and things like size and bag limits, it will give ideas of places to fish in each region of the state.

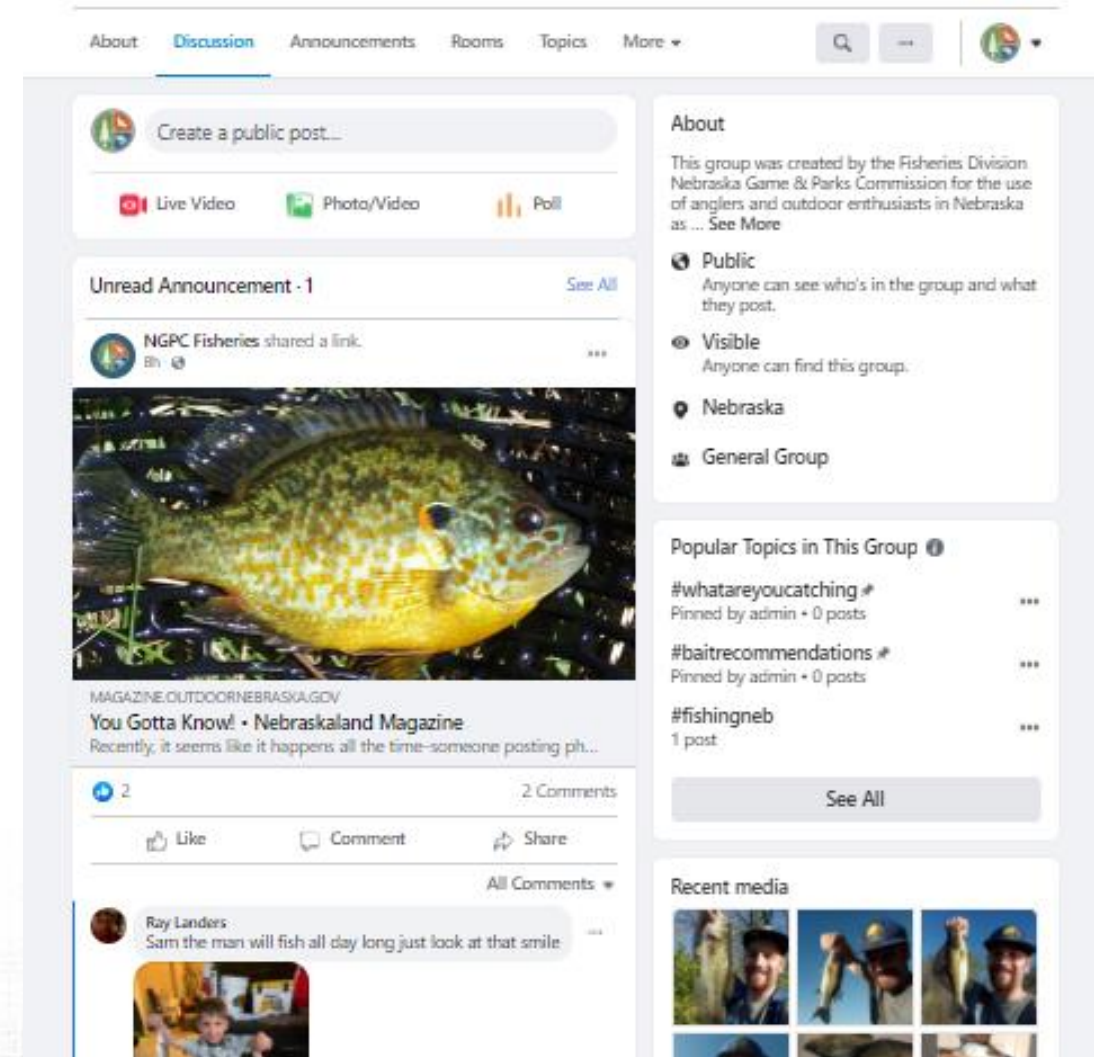
Related to that is our next needed item: a measuring device. A small tape measure or ruler will work here — as long as you can measure any catch you intend to keep if fishing in a body of water with a length limit.

Which brings us to the another useful category of devices: hook removal tools and line clippers, not to mention things that just make fishing more comfortable, like polarized sunglasses and appropriate clothing.



# Think Outside the Tackle Box

- Up-to-date fishing reports/information

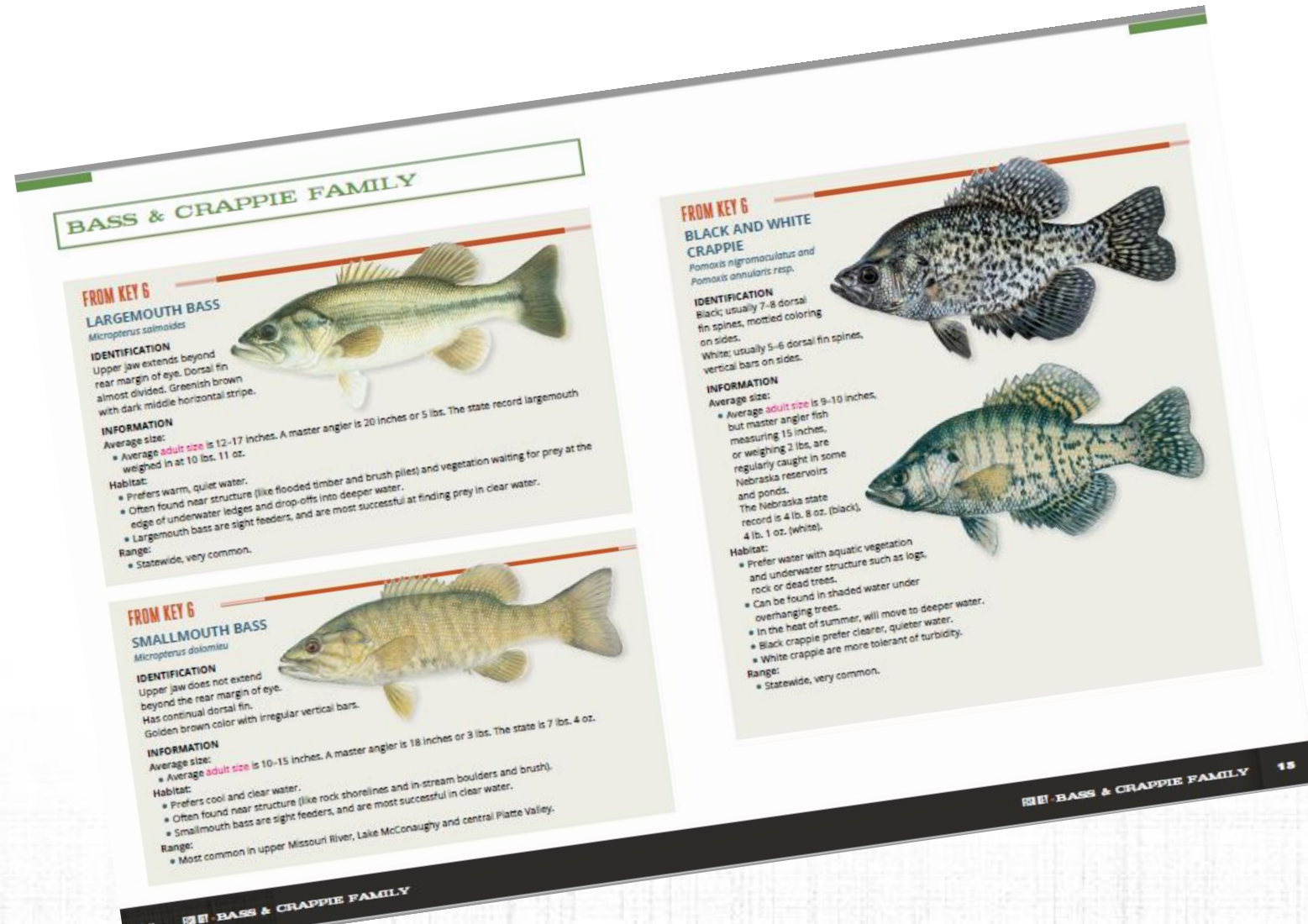
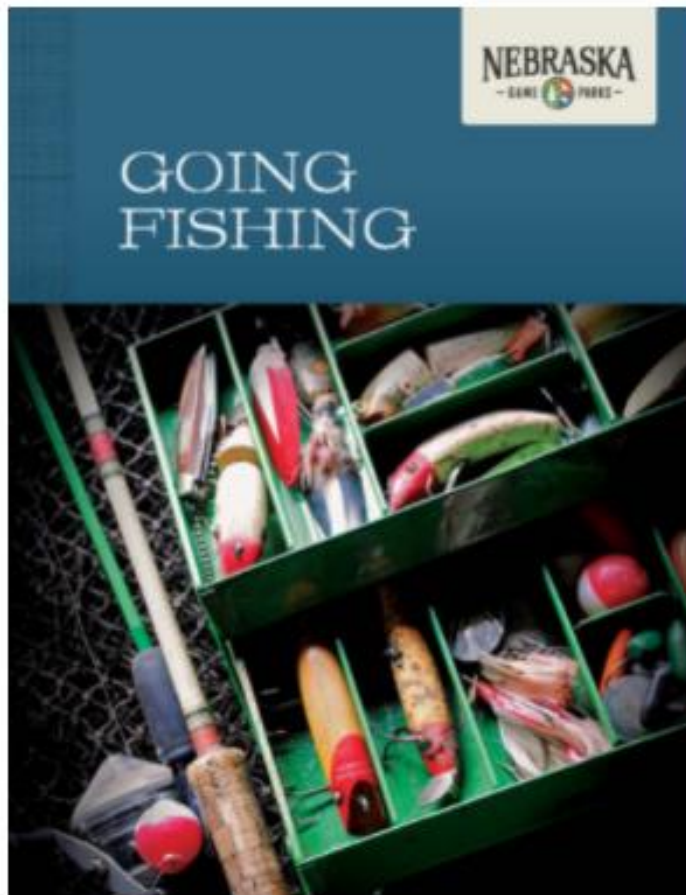






# Think Outside the Tackle Box

- Repackage and Repurpose





# Think Outside the Tackle Box



Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

## OMAHA NEIGHBORHOOD FISHING TRIP PLANNER

Featuring Fontenelle Park Pond, Lake Halleck, Zorinski Lake and Kramer Park

**NEBRASKA**  
- GAME & PARKS -

Fishing is a great family get-away activity and Omaha ponds and lakes offer comfortable and fantastic fishing opportunity in your community.

- Many types of fish for all types of anglers.
- Fishing locations that offer beginner friendly amenities.
- Affordable fishing licenses with annual, 3-day and 1-day options.
- Fish and enjoy other fun family activities.

### Getting Started!

Fishing can be easy and inexpensive. Start out simple with those new to fishing to use the Going Fishing publication as a resource to answer your questions. Additional suggested publications include the Common Fishes of Nebraska identification pamphlet and the annual Fishing Guide for current regulations and fishing locations. All found at [OutdoorNebraska.org/FishingGuidesandReports](http://OutdoorNebraska.org/FishingGuidesandReports)

### Fishing Resources

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### How to Buy a Fishing License:

Fishing licenses are available at Game and Parks Commission offices and permit vendors statewide or at [OutdoorNebraska.org](http://OutdoorNebraska.org)

**Fishing Licenses:**  
Resident Annual: \$38, 3-Day: \$31 and 1-Day: \$10  
Non-resident Annual: \$76, 3-Day: \$37 and 1-Day: \$13

[OutdoorNebraska.org](http://OutdoorNebraska.org)

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

## ESCAPE OMAHA FISHING TRIP PLANNER

Featuring Eugene T. Mahoney State Park, Platte River State Park, Louisville State Recreation Area and Two Rivers State Recreation Area

**NEBRASKA**  
- GAME & PARKS -

Fishing is a great family get-away activity and several metro state parks offer comfortable and fantastic fishing opportunities 30 minutes from Omaha.

- High success rate of catching fish for the entire family.
- Fishing locations that offer beginner friendly amenities.
- Affordable fishing licenses with annual, 3-day, and 1-day fishing license options.
- Fish and enjoy other fun family activities.

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**Park Entry Permits:**

### Beginner Friendly Fishing near Omaha

The Omaha Metro Area is rich with over two-dozen fishing opportunities. This planner features a few of each, but encourages you to explore and discover them all.

All of the suggested locations below include picnic shelters, hiking trails, barrier free access, nearby playground and highly maintained fish populations making them perfect for family and beginner fishing outings. The bass, bluegill and channel catfish, will keep you busy catching fish.

### Fontenelle Park Pond in North-Central Omaha was restored in 2019 and now includes a walking trail with unlimited fishing access from every shore, and fishing benches and platforms. Rainbow trout are stocked in October and hybrid bluegill/green sunfish in June.

### Lake Halleck in Papillion's Halleck Park is the perfect location to take beginners fishing. The entire shoreline, offers beginners to snag free fishing. A paved trail circles the lake and connects to the Omaha trail system. Rainbow trout are stocked annually in October and March and hybrid bluegill/green sunfish in June.

### Zorinski Lake in west Omaha offers a larger more natural lake experience, but still includes all the amenities that make it comfortable. The main access off of 156th and F streets includes a boat ramp, fishing pier and mowed shorelines. Trails from this location can lead you to more remote and natural shoreline fishing. This lake additionally includes crappie, musky and walleye.

### Kramer Park Pond in Bellevue is scenically located along the bank of the Missouri. A paved trail around the lake allows for easy access to mowed shorelines and snag-free fishing. A large fishing pier near the parking area offers wheelchair barrier free access. The fish in this lake can include anything found in the Missouri River, but features hybrid bluegill/green sunfish stocked in June.

### A Guide to Omaha's Lakes and Waterways.

For a complete listing of local fishing opportunities see the NebraskaLand Special Publication, Fishing the Metro - A Guide to Omaha's Lakes and Waterways.

Scan the QR code with your smartphone's camera and it will take you directly to the Fishing the Metro publication.

**Contact Us:**  
Larry Page - 402-471-5447  
[Larry.Page@Nebraska.gov](mailto:Larry.Page@Nebraska.gov)

Nebraska Game and Parks  
2200 North 33rd Street  
Lincoln, NE 68503

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# Think Outside the Tackle Box

- Community Fishing Nights
  - Two-fer learning experiences: basic + advanced
  - Discover Fly Fishing, Discover Bowfishing, Discover Catfish Fishing



JUL 27 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm   
**Community Fishing Event – Bellevue,  
Kramer Lake**



JUL 27 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm  
**Discover Bow Fishing – Bellevue,  
Kramer Lake**



# Results

## Email

- Engaged 29,572 new and reactivated anglers with 19 emails
  - Weekly Emails March 3 – July 7; then Bi-weekly for next 2 months
  - Open rates starting at 24%

## Reverse Targeting

- Engaged new and reactivated anglers via programmatic reverse IP targeting (for those whom we did not have email addresses)
  - Via social media (Facebook and Instagram)
  - Via adaptive digital ads
  - Via Google search targeting and retargeting
  - April 15 – May 31; June 1 – June 30
- 2.3 million ad impressions
  - 4/15 to 5/31 and 6/1 to 6/30 (multiple sets of creative)



# Results

## New Anglers (67,978 in 2020)

- We retained 22,710 (33.4%) / We lost 45,268 (66.6%)
- 64.69% of those lost were female
- 35.31% of those lost were male

A breakdown for the 2020 first permit purchasers who lapsed or purchased a permit in 2021:

2020 New Anglers in 2021		
Age	Those who lapsed in 2021	Those who purchased in 2021
16-24	13,191	7,145
25-34	10,397	4,871
35-44	8,854	4,257
45-54	5,605	3,170
55-64	4,136	1,848
Over 65	3,085	1,419
totals:	45,268	22,710



# Results

## Reactivated Anglers (58,071 in 2020)

- We retained 38,443 (66.2%) / We lost 19,628 (33.8%)
  - 73.24% of those lost were female
  - 26.76% of those lost were male

A breakdown for the 2020 reactivated anglers who lapsed or purchased a permit in 2021:

2020 Reactivated Anglers in 2021		
Age	Those who lapsed in 2021	Those who purchased in 2021
16-24	1,351	3,397
25-34	4,731	7,498
35-44	5,349	7,560
45-54	3,375	6,116
55-64	2,377	5,838
Over 65	2,445	8,034
	19,628	38,443



# Variations from Plan

Changed to bi-weekly emails a little earlier than planned

- Due to open rates dropping

Delay in starting reverse targeting efforts

- Started April 15 instead of March 15
  - Nebraska had a late spring, so we don't think this affected us

Data analysis was not as smooth as anticipated

- Planned data analyst was out with covid
- Replacement data analyst used a slightly different data set
- We worked with both resources to reconcile our numbers





# Lessons Learned

## We need more email addresses

- Nebraska does not require them
- 126,049 anglers targeted in this effort; we only had 29,572 emails
- We need to collect more email!!
  - Carrot approach (as opposed to stick)?

## Demographics

- Female anglers tended to have a higher lapse rate
- Among new anglers, younger anglers (16-44) were more likely to lapse
  - Due to the resumption of other activities?



# Lessons Learned

It's easier to keep reactivated anglers than new anglers

- Churn is a fact of life; keep the funnel full
- We are still working to determine variations between the email and reverse IP groups
- (Retention, retention, retention!)

**GOOD THINGS COME  
TO THOSE WHO BAIT**



**NEBRASKA**  
- GAME  PARKS -

**FISH NEBRASKA >>>**

# Lessons Learned



Emails are good – in moderation

- Open rates and click rates both dropped as time went on
  - Open rates from 24% to 11%
  - Click rates dropped as well
- Switch to Bi-weekly or monthly emails earlier
- Survey your customers to learn about their preferences





# Lessons Learned

## Google search marketing + retargeting works well

- Top performer of our reverse IP strategy; drove the most clicks to our landing page (our “Base Page”)
- Paid search aimed at new anglers drove the most clicks to our site
  - CTR of 2.41%
- Paid search aimed at reactivated anglers was the next best
  - CTR of 2.13%

[Cast a Line in Nebraska | Buy Your Permit | Find Access Points](#)

[outdoornebraska.gov/fishing/permits](https://outdoornebraska.gov/fishing/permits)

Fish the State's Best Waters. Let the Game and Parks Commission Help Get You Started. Find Public Fishing Areas Near You. Get Your Permit Online and Start Fishing Today.





## Lessons Learned

Check 'Under the Hood' before your campaign starts

- Make sure that your site's analytics are working (We had a glitch)
- Make sure your vendor double checks everything on their end; our results might have been better
- Nebraska continues to be challenged by not being able to track actual purchase/dollars from marketing efforts
  - We are going through the process of getting a new permit system; make sure that you are involved in this process and have a seat at the table





# Lessons Learned

## Have a plan for analyzing results

- Make sure everyone is on the same page
  - How will you handle multiple 1-day permit purchases?
  - What permits will you include?
    - 1-day, 3-day, annual, multi-year, lifetime permits
  - Be sure to compare apples to apples
  - Don't forget about senior permits, special permits, veteran's or deployed military permits

## Other paths to success

- Communicate with 1-day permit buyers to upsell them into an annual permit
- Take advantage of a CRM or automatically triggered messages
- Find strategic partners: would your state park system sell fishing permits?





# Future Direction

Where did we land in relation to our retention goal of 68%?

- There was definitely a sophomore slump among new anglers
- We did come close to our objective by retaining 66.2% of reactivated anglers

What could we do differently?

- Additional research on purchase patterns
  - Retention of those with email address vs. Reverse IP people
  - Resident vs. non-resident
  - Additional survey efforts





## Questions?

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