

Results from the 2008 Colorado Angler Survey



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Executive Summary

In order to provide the best possible customer service and establish program priorities that have the support of anglers, the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) routinely conduct scientific surveys of the angling public. This report details the results of a survey of Colorado anglers following the 2007 fishing season. Over three thousand individuals returned a self-administered questionnaire in the winter of 2008. Anglers were sampled randomly in four strata based on the type of fishing license purchased: annual, combination (combo), senior and non-resident. The results were weighted according to group size. The survey garnered a 58% response rate.

Overall, the data indicate strong satisfaction levels among all fisherman for both their angling experiences and the job being done by the CDOW to manage the fisheries of the state. Non-resident anglers were especially happy with the fishing opportunities in the state of Colorado.

Colorado is a destination fishery for trout fishing enthusiasts. Both resident and non-resident anglers continue to list Rainbow trout as their most preferred species. Those targeting cold water species outnumber fishermen chasing warm water species by a 6 to 1 margin.

Anglers reported an average of about 23 days spent fishing and took on average 13 trips in 2007. About 5 trips were greater than 50 miles of travel one way. Once methodological changes from the last survey of Colorado anglers (2004) are taken into account, fishing effort appears to be fairly stable. Resident and non-resident anglers differ somewhat in their favorite places to fish. The Elevenmile Reservoir, the Arkansas River, and South Platte River were the top three preferred destinations of Colorado citizens; while the Conejos, Rio Grande, and Gunnison Rivers were the favorites for non-residents. Fishing activity peaks in July and August with participation rates reaching 70% among all license groups.

The angling experiences being sought by anglers are as diverse as the opportunities that await them. Most of the respondents cited "relaxation", "being out in nature", "being with family and friends", and "the excitement of the catch" as their top motivations for fishing. The importance of keeping fish to eat is higher among beginning anglers and senior citizens. The importance of catch and release fishing was higher among non-residents and those respondents who rated angling as their most important recreation. All anglers practiced some degree of catch and release fishing for legal sized fish that they caught.

Colorado already limits the exploitation rates of some cold water fish species by designating certain waters as artificial lure or fly-only fishing areas. These areas are ones that tend to be more productive and offer greater growth potential for trout. While some have advocated either increasing the number of artificial-only waters and/or placing additional restrictions on angling gear, such as barbless hooks or single shank hooks, the data show little to no support for such regulatory changes. A strong majority of survey respondents thought that fishing with

barbless hooks or single shank hooks should be voluntary not mandatory. Most anglers reported using barbed hooks at least some of time in 2007.

Among the potential options for increasing the levels of fishing participation, improving access to public and private waters was the top rated management strategy. Seventy-nine percent of respondents stated that improving access to public waters was very likely or somewhat likely to increase their future level of fishing participation. This attitude is somewhat tied to perceptions of crowding from other anglers. In other words, the issue is not having enough places to fish, it is not having enough places to fish without interference (competition) from other anglers.

Other management strategies appear to offer somewhat less potential for increasing levels of angler participation. Of particular note was the relatively low influence of facility or infrastructure improvements at existing sites. Therefore, the CDOW should consider such projects as a lower priority when compared to improving access or providing information.

Angler usage of CDOW fishing information resources varies but is generally low for most communication products. Less than one in ten anglers made regular use of most information resources. The publication 101 Places to Take a Kid fishing is very under underutilized with over 80% indicating that were not aware of its existence. This provides one example of where additional or different marketing may help to promote angling opportunities—and in this case recruitment in Colorado.

Introduction

The Colorado Division of Wildlife has periodically surveyed fisherman using state waters to better understand their angling patterns, preferences, and opinions regarding current management issues. Gathering this information is important for developing management programs and promoting angling opportunities that enhance the satisfaction of anglers and establish program priorities for the Division. This report shares results of the most recent effort to understand the anglers in Colorado. Six thousand mail-back questionnaires were sent to randomly selected license buyers from 2007 during the winter of the following year. Anglers were sampled in four strata (Table 1). Overall survey response rate was 58%.

Table 1. Sample sizes and responses rate for angler survey.

Strata	Population Size	Sample Size	Non-deliverables	Respondents	Adjusted response rate	% of total respondents
Non-residents	25946	1000	183 (18.3%)	541	66.3	17.8
Senior	54791	1000	63 (6.3%)	710	75.9	23.4
Annual	3111174	3000	465 (15.5%)	1194	47.2	39.9
Combo	75278	1000	39 (3.9%)	591	61.6	19.5
Total	467189	6000	750 (12.5%)	3036	57.9	100

Presentation of analysis

Many of the findings contained in this report use the sampling strata to compare anglers by license type purchased on the variables of interest. Whenever aggregate findings are described, the text will refer to total anglers or all anglers. In these cases, the frequencies reported have been weighted to reflect the actual population sizes of the license holders. For example, annual (resident) license holders contribute the most variance to those aggregate findings by virtue of their large population size (Table 1). However, for results on certain questions, it became more meaningful to simply draw distinctions between in-state and out-of-state anglers. In doing so, the term “resident” refers to the combined results of in-state license buyers (combo, annual, senior) and “non-resident” refers to the results of the remaining license type of (out-of-state) anglers.

While license type provides a useful way to compare anglers based on the product they purchased, in some cases other variables provide a better way to discriminate angling segments on their characteristics or preferences. For example, anglers in the survey were asked to rate their own level of expertise (beginner, intermediate, or advanced) as well as how important

angling was in comparison to other recreations. These measures provide important insights into how anglers view themselves and how these measures are reflected in their attitudes and behaviors.

Ultimately the choice of segmentation approach used in data analysis and presentation of results are those that provide the most substantively meaningful comparison among groups. Cross tabulations were performed when comparing groups on variables of interest. Given the relatively large sample sizes involved, even very small differences (2-3%) were often found to be statistical significant. In order to enhance the readability of this report, specific Chi-square values or associated probabilities are not reported in text or in the tables. Instead, these findings include only those group comparisons where substantively important differences occur between groups. In other words, you can assume that all tables presented represent statistically significant group differences.

Tracking trends

CDOW also conducted angler surveys in 2004 and 1998. Whenever possible, this report highlights trends from variables that were found to be consistent in the previous reports. In the 2007 survey there were a number of changes to the way questions were worded and/or to the categorical response options provided. These changes were made to improve the measurement quality of those variables, but that decision also made direct comparison with past survey results more tenuous.

General Angler Profile

Demographics

Consistent with past profiles of outdoor users and previous research of Colorado anglers, most participants in this study were male (70%) and white (86%). Hispanics comprised about 10% of the survey respondents. Besides whites and Hispanics, no other ethnic group comprised more than 2 percent of the anglers who bought licenses in Colorado. Fifty-seven percent of anglers had household incomes of \$75,000 or less. Annual incomes were lower for senior license holders and higher among non-resident anglers. Forty-three percent of non-residents made more than \$100,000, nearly twice the frequency of all 3 resident angler segments. The average age of anglers was 44 years old. Half of the angling population is older than 49.

National research indicates that most people initiate into outdoor activities at a young age and those fishing Colorado waters fit this model. Among all survey respondents, 7.6 years old was the average age they started fishing. The average number of years fishing in Colorado ranged from 38 for seniors to 18 for non-residents. The average tenure for combo and annuals was 30 and 24 years respectively.

Fishing Participation

Ninety-two percent of the respondents to the 2007 Colorado Anglers Survey reported fishing that year, including 96% of the resident anglers and 98% of the non-resident anglers. Participation rates were lower among combo license holders (86%) and seniors (80%). The vast majority of people fishing in Colorado (85%) reported fishing with others indicating the social nature of the activity. Seniors and combos were slightly more likely to fish alone, 18% and 17% respectively, than were annuals and non-resident anglers.

Survey respondents who bought a license but did not fish in 2007 (8%) were asked to indicate the reason(s) for not participating. The most frequently checked reason was “other” at 22%. Among the categories provided on the questionnaire, the four most frequently selected reasons for not fishing were work obligations (17%), health reasons (17%), family obligations (16%), and fishing has not been too good (15%).

- License purchasing: 86% of all anglers purchased from a sporting goods or license agent. Only 6% purchased online—78% of those who bought online were very or somewhat satisfied with the service. Six percent purchased their fishing license from a service center.

Youth recruitment

Approximately 56% of respondents said they took a kid fishing in 2007. The combo angler segment had the highest frequency of respondents who took kids at 62%. Among those who took kids fishing, the average number of kids reported was three, one of whom was not a family member. Seniors and non-residents show slightly lower patterns of bringing youth fishing in Colorado (Table 2).

Table 2. Youth recruitment by license segment in 2007.

Angler Segment	% taking kids fishing	Average number taken	Average not related to respondent
Combo	62	3.3	1.7
Annual	58	3.0	1.0
Senior	46	2.7	.78
Non-resident	39	2.6	.78
Overall	56	3.0	1.0

Only one in five respondents that took a kid fishing used the *CDOW 101 Places to Take A Kid Fishing* publication. Seventy-eight percent of those who took kids fishing in 2007 said they were not familiar with this resource. A high percentage of in-state anglers have seen advertisements to take a kid fishing. Six in ten combo anglers have seen the ad campaign; 50% of annual and senior have seen it. Those who took kids fishing were more likely to have seen the ad than anglers who did not take kids fishing by a margin of 57% to 43%.

The lower rates of bringing kids among non-residents and senior anglers suggest opportunities to increase youth angler recruitment by marketing mentoring opportunities available for these segments. There is a continuing need to remind all sportsmen of the need to pass along our outdoor heritage, especially in an era where young people have more entertainment options available to fill their time.

Angling effort

Survey respondents fished an average of 23 days in 2007 (Table 3). This number is slightly less than the average number of days reported during the 2004 survey. This difference likely reflects a methodological change rather than an angling decline. For this analysis, I removed outliers that were more than 3 standard deviations from the mean (those in 99% of the distribution). For example, 2 people out of 3,000+ responses reported fishing 350 days in 2007. These rare exceptions artificially inflate the true average of the population. Fifteen of these outliers were moved to create the data shown in Table 3. The mean values with those 15 left in mirror the 2004 findings perfectly, yet assuming outliers were left in 2004, I would argue those findings overestimate angling effort.

The mode response for number of angling days was 10. Fifty percent of all anglers fished 14 days or less. Seventy five percent fished 29 days or less. When asked how much they intend to fish in 2008, 43% planned to fish more days. This was the same percentage who said they would fish about the same number of days.

Of any license type combo license holders fished the most days on average (25 days). Non-resident anglers averaged about a week less at 18 days. It is worth noting that anglers spend about 77% for their angling time targeting their favorite fish, and this figure rises to 86% for non-residents. Resident anglers spend about half their time (52%) fishing their most preferred fishing location; while non-residents spend 60% of their time fishing their top spot.

Table 3. Angling effort and trips taken by license segments in 2007.

Segment	Avg. Days fished			Avg. Number of trips taken		
	Total	For preferred species	On Favorite water	Total	For preferred species	Trips over 50 miles (one-way)
Combo	25.3	17.8	13.0	15.0	12.0	5.2
Non-Resident	18.3	15.8	11.1	9.2	8.3	3.0
Annual	23.5	18.5	12.4	13.3	12.2	6.0
Senior	20.3	16.2	9.6	11.2	10.0	5.1
Total	23.2	18.0	12.1	13.2	11.8	5.6

Trips from home

Anglers took an average of just over 13 trips to fish in 2007 (Table 3). Nearly nine in ten angling trips targeted the anglers' preferred species in the annual, senior and non-resident types. Four out of five combo anglers took trips targeting their preferred fish. Combo fisherman again led the way with 15 trips on average per year. Non-residents took the fewest targeting their favorite species at 9.2 on average. The average number of total fishing trips for all types declined from 16.0 in 2004 to 13.2 in 2007. Again, this decline likely reflects the removal of extreme outliers rather than a true decline. Anglers averaged 5.6 trips of more than 50 miles one-way to get to their preferred fishing grounds. Naturally, non-residents fished fewer days and took fewer trips than in-state residents. However, 75% of non-resident anglers fished as many days as residents; they only fall off in participation rates when compared with residents that fish more than 30 days per year. Among Coloradans, seniors fished about four days less than the state average and annual and combo license holders both fished one day more than the average.

Fishing Patterns

Angling by month

Fishing activity peaks for all groups in July and August. Seventy percent of all anglers fished in July and 71% fished in August. Combo license holders show a slight tendency to fish earlier and later in the calendar year than other groups (Figure 1). In addition combo license holders exhibit much higher participation rates in ice fishing (Table 4). The percentage of non-resident anglers that fish in any given month lags behind other groups throughout year except for the summer months (July -September) where they slightly surpass senior participation rates.

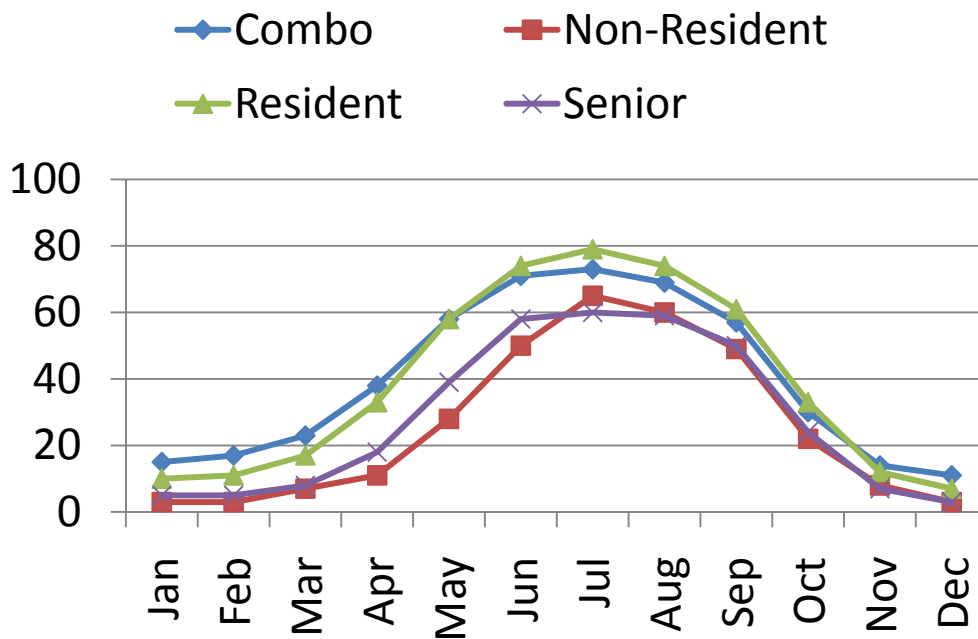


Figure 1. Frequency of license segments that fished during each month of the year.

Table 4. Ice fishing participation rates by license segments

Angler segment	% that went ice fishing in 2007
Combo	22
Annual	11
Senior	8
Non-Resident	3

Most popular waters

Almost all anglers (96%) in the survey said they fished publicly accessible waters in 2007. Thirteen percent fished private waters and 5 % fished in commercially owned waters. A majority (76%) of the anglers fished from the bank or shore for their preferred species. Mountain lakes and streams draw the largest percentage of anglers at 44%, followed by low elevation rivers and streams (36%) and low elevation impoundments (20%) (Figure 2).

Anglers were asked to list their three favorite locations to fish in Colorado. There were nearly 700 different waters provided as responses. The vast majority of locations received only one or two mentions indicating that Colorado offers a plethora of good angling opportunities. The top 50 waters are listed in Table 5. Points for ranking were assigned on the basis of 3 points for a first place vote, 2 points for a second place vote, and 1 point for a third place vote. To place the rankings in perspective, the top rank water— the Arkansas River— was mentioned by 7% of the survey respondents as either a first, second, or third favorite angling location. Others in the top five included the South Platte River, Colorado River, Blue Mesa Reservoir, and Elevenmile Reservoir.

Type of water fished

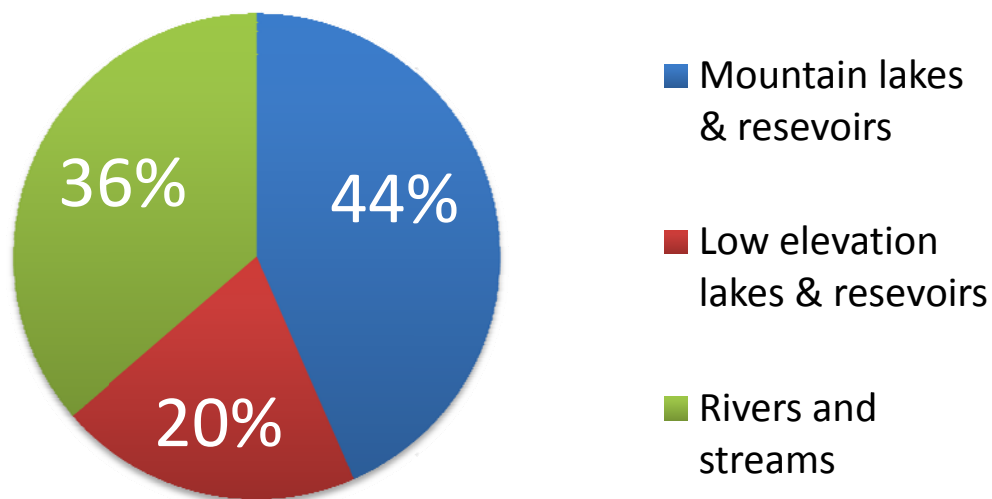


Figure 2. The frequency of favorite water type selected to pursue preferred species of fish.

Table 5: Top 50 favorite waters among all survey respondents.

Ranking	Water	Points
1	Arkansas River	428
2	South Platte River	359
3	Colorado River	326
4	Blue Mesa Reservoir	325
5	Elevenmile Reservoir	265
6	Gunnison River	218
7	Poudre River	201
8	Chatfield Reservoir	192
9	Big Thompson River	147
9	Rio Grande	147
11	Elevenmile Canyon	129
11	Conejos River	129
13	Roaring Fork	126
14	Steamboat Lake	110
15	Yampa River	109
16	Blue River	106
17	Spinney Mountain Reservoir	103
17	Eagle Lake	103
19	Antero Reservoir	101
19	Animas River	101
21	Vega Reservoir	100
22	Grand Mesa lakes/ Resv	99
23	Fryingpan River	94
23	Horsetooth Reservoir	94
25	Aurora Reservoir	93
26	Taylor River	89
26	Ridgway Reservoir	89

28	Dillon Reservoir	87
29	Vallecito Reservoir	86
31	Twin Lakes Reservoir	85
33	Cherry Creek Reservoir	83
34	Monument Lake	82
35	Red Feathers Lake	80
36	Dolores River	79
37	Carter Lake	76
38	McPhee Reservoir	74
39	Clear Creek	72
39	Granby Reservoir	72
39	Jefferson Lake	72
39	Stagecoach Reservoir	72
43	Dowdy Lake	71
43	Rampart Reservoir	71
45	Tarryall Reservoir	68
45	De Weese Reservoir	68
47	Green Mountain Reservoir	61
48	John Martin Reservoir	58
49	Williams Fork	57
50	Quincy Reservoir	55

Non-residents differed somewhat from residents in their selections for their favorite place(s) to pursue their preferred fish species (Table 6). The Conejos and Rio Grande Rivers tied for the top spot among non-residents; however, neither of these waters scored in the top ten among resident anglers. Meanwhile, resident anglers chose the Elevenmile Reservoir as their number one favorite angling destination. The South Platte, Colorado, Poudre and Gunnison rivers were common among the favorite destinations of non-resident and in-state anglers.

Table 6. A comparison of resident and non-resident anglers in their top 10 favorite waters.

Rank	In-state Anglers	Rank	Non-Resident
1	Elevenmile Reservoir	1 (tie)	Conejos River
2	Arkansas River	1 (tie)	Rio Grande
3	South Platte River	3	Gunnison River
4	Blue Mesa	4	Colorado River
5	Colorado River	5	Animas River
6	Poudre River	5	Dolores River
7	Chatfield Reservoir	7	Roaring Fork
8	Pueblo Reservoir	7	South Platte River
9	Gunnison River	9	Poudre River
10 (tie)	Vega Reservoir	9	Vallecito Reservoir
10 (tie)	Steam Lake		

Means of access

Fishing by means of wading (44%) to target preferred fish species or by motorboat (26%) were the most commonly reported means of accessing the water (Figure 3). Only one in ten anglers used a float tube or dock to fish for their preferred species.

- Roughly one in three combo, annual and non-resident anglers said they hiked, backpacked, or used a horse to access high elevation lakes and streams in 2007; Only 12% of seniors used any one or all three of these methods to access to remote areas.
- Nine percent of all respondents said they combined fishing with a hunting trip.
- Not surprisingly, combo license holders were four to five times as likely as the other segments to undertake a dual fishing/hunting trip. Very few (4%) non-residents anglers combined fishing with hunting when visiting Colorado.

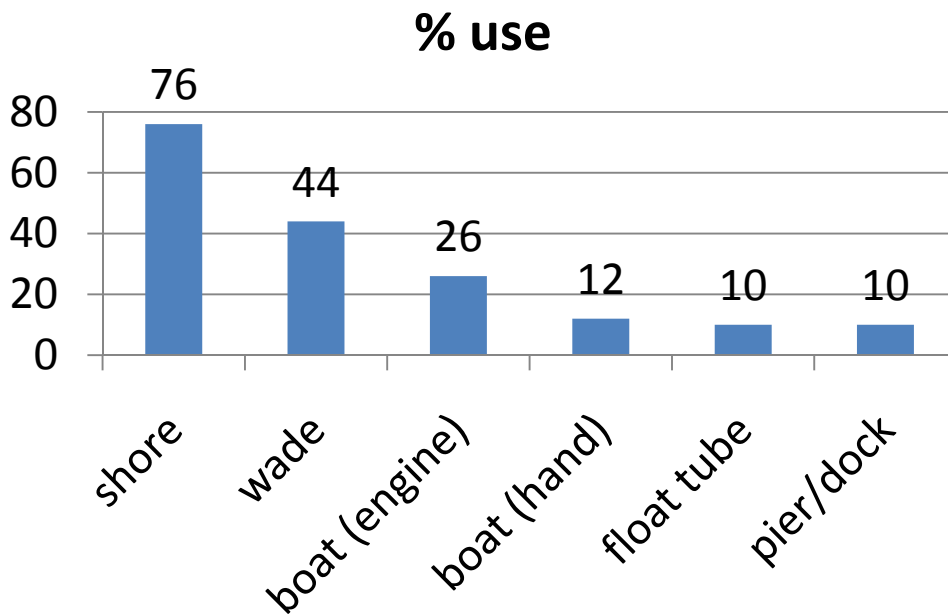


Figure 3. Frequency of responses to the question of how anglers accessed their favorite fishing spot in 2007.

Use of gear type

Most anglers utilized multiple gear/techniques over the course of a year. About half of all respondents said they used bait with barbed hooks, thus making this method the most frequently employed angling method (Figure 4). Most anglers (71%) employed barbed hooks at least some of the time; 29% used exclusively barbless hook methods.

Non-resident anglers reported the highest frequency of using barbless hooks—38% said that they used barbless flies (Table 7). Senior anglers reported the lowest frequency of barbless fishing among the license segments. The most popular method among seniors was fishing with bait on barbed hooks. Combo anglers fished with lures containing barbs (53%) and bait with barbed hooks (48%) most often. Combo anglers fished with barbed flies more frequently than any other angler segment.

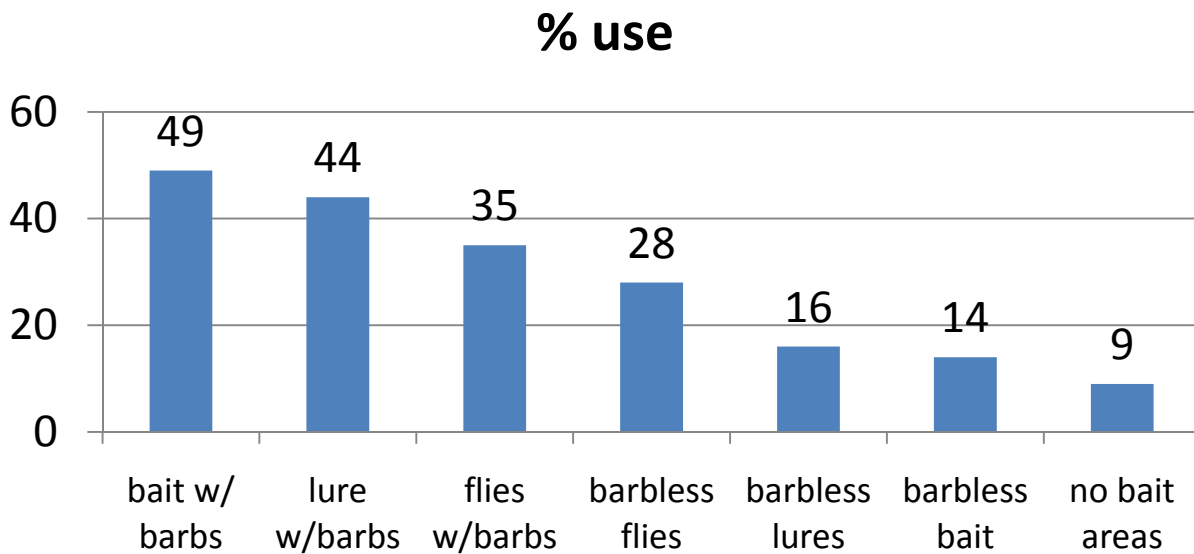


Figure 4. Frequency of responses by all survey participants to the angling methods they used in 2007.

Table 7. Frequency of fishing method according to license segment.

Fishing method	% within license segment			
	Combo	Annual	Senior	Nonresident
Flies w/ barbs	41	32	32	38
Lures w/barbs	53	46	45	29
Bait w/barbs	48	52	60	35
Barbless flies	28	27	18	38
Barbless lures	16	18	12	12
Barbless bait	15	17	11	8
Do not fish areas where bait is legal	7	8	8	15

Catch and release rates

Approximately one out of four (27%) anglers claimed to practice 100% catch and release when fishing for their preferred species in 2007 (Table 8). Harvest rates were highest among seniors with about half (48%) keeping up to half of the legal fish they caught. Non-residents had the largest segment of anglers who practiced strict catch and release with 38%. Direct comparison of catch and release trends with past Colorado angler surveys was not possible due to changes in the response scales used in 2007.

Table 8. Catch and release rates among Colorado anglers.

Segment	For your preferred species, what percentage of fish that are legal to keep do you release?				
	None (0%)	1-49%	50-90%	91-99%	100%
Combo	14	19	24	22	22
Annual	14	22	19	16	29
Senior	20	28	24	12	16
Non-Resident	12	20	15	15	38
Total	15	22	20	16	27

Favorite fish

Given Colorado's available fisheries along with the reputations they carry, it is not surprising that cold water species, especially trout, were pursued at much higher frequencies by all angler segments than were warm water fish. These findings are consistent with past angler surveys in the state. Six in ten anglers preferred a cold water species as their favorite; one in ten selected a warm species; and three in ten expressed no preference.

Trout remain the most popular fish species among all segments by a large margin (Table 9). Rainbow trout were the most sought of all fish species in 2007 with over half of all anglers targeting them specifically (Table 10). Three out of four non-residents targeted rainbows. Brown trout and brook trout were the second and third most popular species in 2007 for both resident and non-resident anglers. It is clear that Colorado's reputation as a trout fishing destination attracts many avid, out of state anglers.

One notable change, however, is the slight increase in bass fishing in Colorado compared with the 4 years ago. About one in five anglers reported targeting bass in 2007, including 24% of combo license holders (Table 11). This increase in bass fishing interest does not carryover among non-residents. In fact, four of the five non-resident anglers said they don't fish warm water species.

The CDOW should consider whether there may be opportunity or desirability of marketing bass fishing to non-residents. Several fish species attract little attention from any angling segments. Less than one in ten anglers targeted northern pike, muskies, catfish, crappie, white bass, wipers, or panfish in 2007.

Table 9. Frequency of favorite fish among survey respondents who preferred a cold water species.

Preferred cold water species	Overall	License segment			
		Combo	Non-Resident	Annual	Senior
Rainbow trout	52	48	52	52	62
Brown trout	16	18	26	15	8
Brook trout	9	11	13	7	11
Lake trout	7	8	3	15	8
Walleye/saugeye	5	5	1	5	2
I don't fish cold water species	6	2	2	7	7

Northern Pike/muskie and salmon < 3%

Table 10. Frequency of anglers who targeted various fish species at some point during the angling year.

Targeted Species	Overall	License segment			
		Combo	Non-Resident	Annual	Senior
Rainbow trout	59	61	75	60	47
Brown trout	41	40	58	43	27
Brook trout	32	33	45	32	22
Nothing in particular	29	21	18	32	29
Lake Trout	25	20	17	29	13
Bass	14	16	4	16	5
Walleye/Saugeye	12	14	2	13	7
Kokanee salmon	10	12	8	11	6
Northern Pike/ tiger muskie	9	11	5	9	4
Catfish	8	9	2	8	5
Crappie	6	9	1	6	5
Panfish	6	8	3	7	4
Wiper/White bass/ Striper	6	9	1	6	3

Table 11. Table 9. Frequency of favorite fish among survey respondents who preferred a warm water species.

Preferred warm water species	Overall	License segment			
		Combo	Non-Resident	Annual	Senior
I don't fish warm water species	54	40	81	54	63
Bass	19	24	10	20	11
Walleye	10	15	2	10	9
Catfish	8	8	3	8	8
Panfish, Crappie, Wiper group < 3%					

In 2004, 22% of anglers said they mostly kept what they caught; 40% said they mostly catch and release; and 35% said they sometimes keep, and sometimes release what they catch.

Psychological Profiles

Angler avidity and experience

For a majority (71%) of respondents fishing was rated as either their most important or one of their most important recreational activities (Figure 5). These response scale options differed from the version of the question asked in 2004, where (53%) said fishing was “extremely” or “very important” relative to other recreational activities. Slightly more than half (53%) view themselves as “intermediate” in their angler expertise, while about one in ten think of themselves as “advanced” (Figure 6). These numbers are nearly identical to the survey findings of 2004.

Non-resident anglers were slightly more likely to rate themselves as advanced than other license segments (Table 12). They were also slightly more likely to view angling as their most important recreation than other segments (Table 13). Relatively few (6%) of combo license holders said fishing was their most important recreation; 62% in this group said it was one of their most important recreational activities.

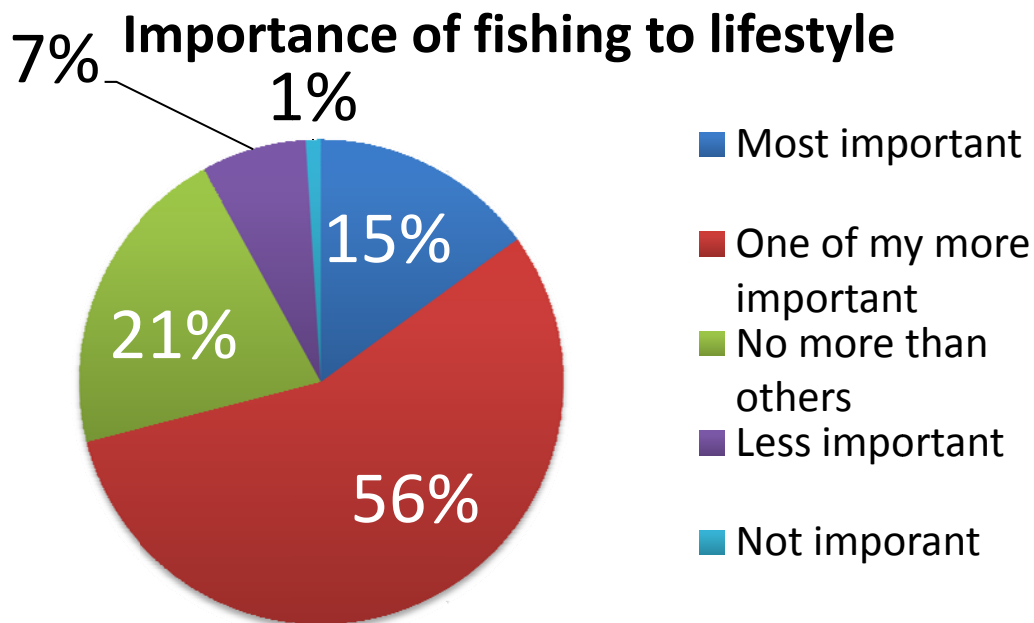


Figure 5. The frequency of anglers who self categorized the relative importance of fishing compared to other types of recreation.

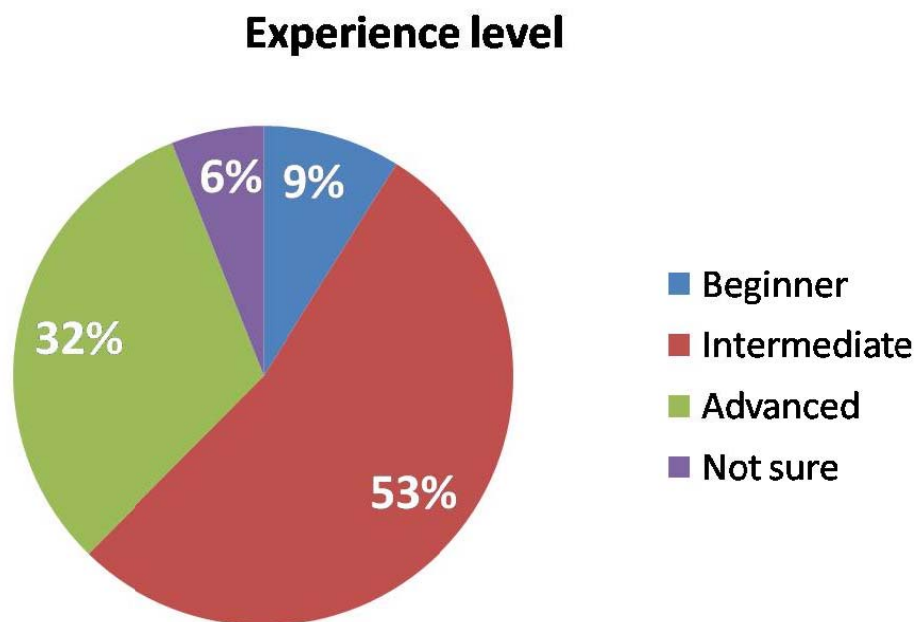


Figure 6. The frequency of anglers segmented by their self-reported experience levels.

Table 12. The frequency of angling experience levels cross tabulated by license segments.

License segment	Perceived angling skill experience level			
	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Not sure
Combo	6	49	39	6
Annual	10	55	30	5
Senior	9	56	24	10
Non-Resident	4	51	42	3

Table 13. The frequency of angling importance levels cross tabulated by license segments.

License segment	How important is fishing compared with other recreations?			
	Most important	One of my most important	No more important than others	Less important/not important
Combo	6	61	22	11
Annual	17	55	20	3
Senior	15	52	22	11
Non-Resident	20	62	14	4

Angler motivations

Fishing provides a chance to escape with others. That idea is reflected in the most frequently reported motivations for fishing (Table 14). Seventy-seven percent of respondents indicated that the chance “to relax” was important when fishing in Colorado. Other motivations that netted the highest frequencies were “to be close to nature” (68%), “to be with family and friends” (58%), and “to get away from others” (54%). Non-resident anglers placed higher levels of importance on the excitement of the catch, catch and release fishing, the challenge of fishing, and being close to nature than did all resident anglers.

Catch related motives for all anglers were cited far less frequently as “very important” motivations compared with non-catch benefits (Table 14). However, catching fish is still important to anglers in absolute sense. It is the thrill of hooking and fighting fish that is more important than their size, the opportunity to get a limit, catching trophies or eating fish (Table 15). The excitement of the act of catching is very or somewhat important to 90% of all anglers. Slightly more than half (55%) said catching and eating fish was very or somewhat important to their experience. These results underscore the fundamental truth that while aesthetic and social benefits of fishing rank highest as motivations, people go fishing to catch fish.

Table 14. Top rated angler motivations by license segment

Motivation	Total	Combo	Annual	Senior	Non Resident
To relax	77	74	79	72	80
To be close to nature	68	63	69	63	79
To be with family	58	57	60	53	53
To get away from others	54	74	79	72	80
Excitement of the catch	50	47	51	41	59
To be with friends	49	53	49	44	47
The challenge	33	29	34	32	42
To catch and release fish	32	27	32	27	45
To catch and eat fish	25	27	24	31	22
Natural or wild fish, not stocked	16	20	16	12	20
“Trophy” fish	12	13	12	6	13
To catch a limit of fish	12	11	12	15	11
To use my boat	10	13	9	13	5

Thirty-eight percent of all anglers have used outfitters and guides on their angling outings; 6% make regular use of these services.

Table 15. Relative importance catch-related motivations across all anglers.

Catch related motivation	% of relative importance			
	Very	Somewhat	Not very	Not at all
The excitement of the catch	50	41	7	2
To catch and release fish	32	34	20	13
To catch and eat fish	25	30	19	26
Trophy fish	12	21	33	38
To catch a limit of fish	12	18	34	35

Male-female differences in angling motivations.

Females were statistically more likely than males to rate catching fish to eat and spending time with family as “very important” motivations. The percentage of females (32%) who said catching fish for eating was very important was 10% higher than among males (22%). Three-quarters of women anglers said spending time with family was very important.

Females tended to place less emphasis on motivations related to catching wild fish and catching trophy fish than did male anglers. Nearly half of females surveyed (46%) said fishing for trophies was not important at all. Fifty-four percent of women rated catching wild fish as not very or not at all important.

Evaluation of Angling Experiences

Angler satisfaction ratings

Overall, all angler segments provided strong satisfaction ratings of their 2007 angling experiences while targeting their preferred species. Nearly three of four (72%) anglers said they were either “very satisfied” or “somewhat” satisfied with their fishing experiences (Figure 6). A strong majority of anglers were also satisfied with the size of available fish (Figure 7), the number of fish (Figure 8), and the places to fish (Figure 9). Slightly fewer than half (47%) were satisfied with the special regulations in place for their preferred fish species (Figure 10). This result can be attributed the rather large percentage (38%) who were neutral regarding their satisfaction levels with special regulations.

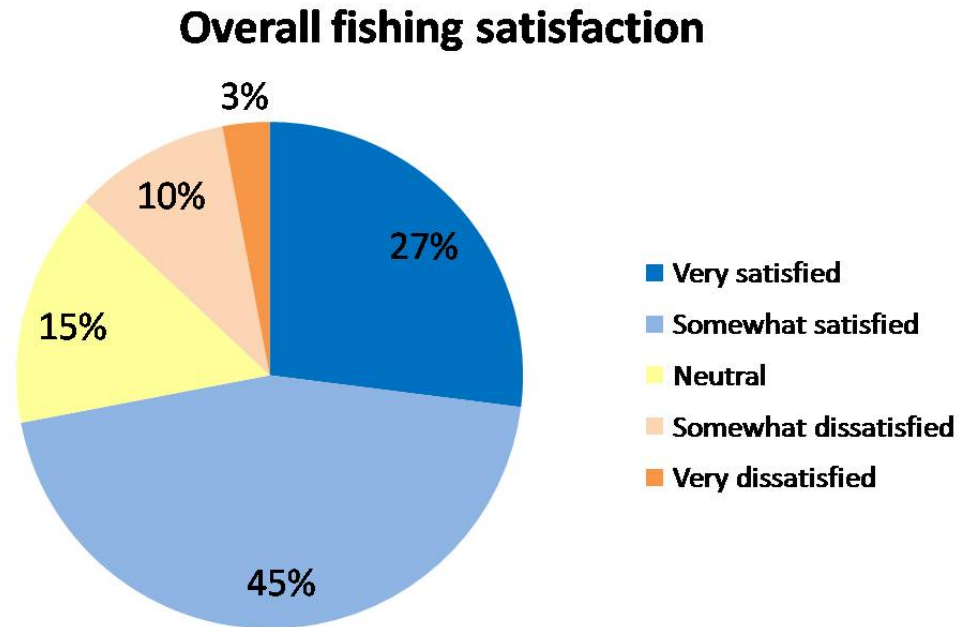


Figure 6. Frequency of overall satisfaction levels with 2007 angling experiences.

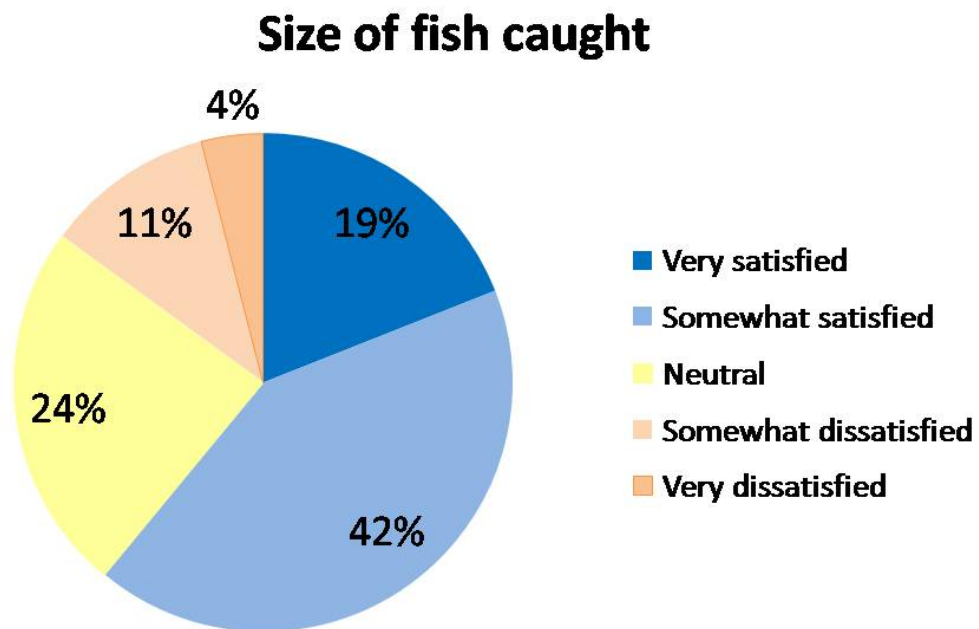


Figure 7. Frequency of satisfaction levels with size of the fish caught.

Number of fish caught

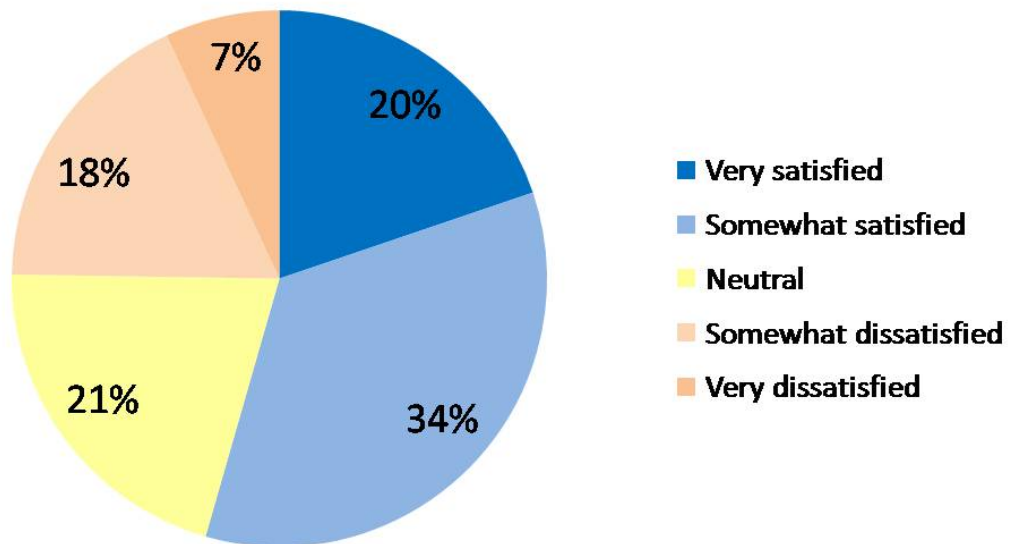


Figure 8. Frequency of satisfaction levels with number of fish caught.

Available places for preferred fish

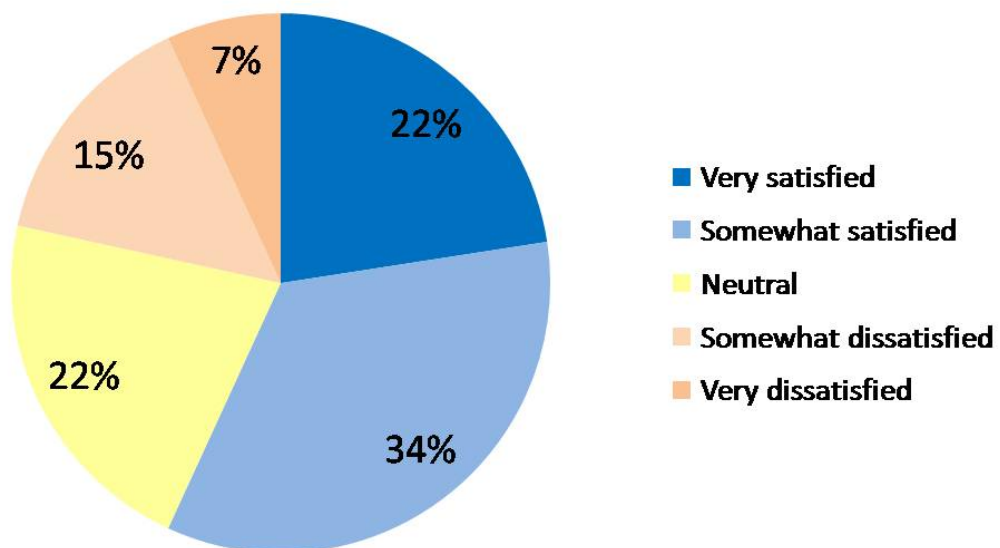


Figure 9. Frequency of satisfaction levels with number of available places to go for anglers' preferred fish.

Special regulations for preferred fish

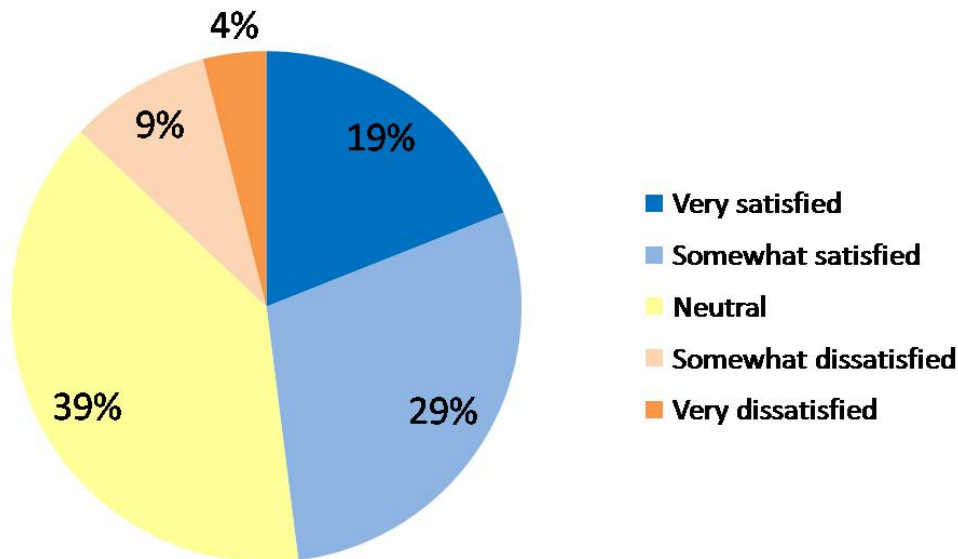


Figure 10. Frequency of satisfaction levels with the number of special regulations in place for anglers' preferred fish species.

Resident vs. non-resident differences

Non-resident anglers were even more satisfied with their angling experiences than in-state anglers (Table 16 and 17). Seventy-one percent of non-resident anglers were very satisfied with the available size for their preferred fish species compared to the 60% of in-state anglers who were very satisfied. Non-residents also rated the number of preferred fish available as satisfactory more frequently than did in-state anglers, 66% to 54%. A majority of on-residents (54%) were also satisfied with the special regulations for their preferred species, whereas 47% of in-state anglers were satisfied with special regulations. It should be noted that a high percentage (about one in three) of all anglers were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the special regulations, suggesting a fair degree of ambivalence on this issue.

Table 16. A comparison of the satisfaction levels of In-state and non-resident anglers.

Segment	% Satisfaction level with angling experience				
	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied, nor dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Non-resident	29	42	18	8	2
In-state	18	42	24	12	4

Table 17. A comparison of the frequency of satisfied In-state and non-resident anglers on several experience attributes.

Fishing attribute	% who were either very or somewhat satisfied among...	
	Non-resident anglers	In-state anglers
Size of fish caught	71	60
Number of fish caught	65	54
Special regulations in place	58	47

The gap in satisfaction ratings between resident and non-resident anglers relative to the size of fish, number of fish and special regulations is largely function of differences in fishing motivations. In general, resident anglers were more likely than non-resident anglers to rate catching fish to eat and catching a limit of fish as “very” important. Among anglers dissatisfied with the number of fish available, 62% said catching fish to eat was “very” or “somewhat” important. By contrast only 49% of satisfied anglers said getting fish to eat was “very” or “somewhat” important. Similarly, among those dissatisfied with the size of fish they encountered, 44% said that getting a limit was a “very” or “somewhat” important motivation; only 34% of anglers satisfied with fish size were “very” or “somewhat” motivated to get a limit. Seven in ten of anglers dissatisfied with special regulations were very or somewhat motivated by fish consumption; whereas only 50% of anglers satisfied with special regulations were motivated to get fish to eat. Conversely, non-resident anglers were more likely than residents to say that the *being close to nature* and the *challenge* of catching fish were “very” important motivations. The agency should consider ways to market their “put and take” fisheries more to the segment of resident anglers whose primary motivations are utilitarian in order to improve upon satisfaction ratings.

I also compared resident anglers who were satisfied with their overall fishing experience to residents who were dissatisfied according to the species of fish targeted. Significant differences emerged based on five species’ groups (Table 18). Dissatisfied residents were slightly more likely to fish for walleye/saugeye and tiger/ northern pike than were satisfied residents. Dissatisfied anglers also fished for trout species at lower rates than did satisfied anglers. This pattern suggests an opportunity to serve anglers preferring cool water species more than currently available. There were no differences in rates of fishing for warm water species between satisfied and dissatisfied residents.

Table 18. A comparison of species targeted by satisfied and dissatisfied, resident anglers.

Species	% of residents who fished for species who were...	
	Dissatisfied with their overall angling experience	Satisfied with their overall angling experience
Muskie/Northern pike	16	10
Walleye/saugeye	23	14
Brown trout	43	55
Brook trout	32	44
Rainbow trout	67	76

The only satisfaction measure of an experience attribute to produce substantively important difference among all four license segments was related to the number of available places to target their preferred fish species. In this case, a higher percentage of both non-resident (36%) and senior (28%) anglers were very satisfied than were combo (17%) or annual (23%) anglers. Still a majority of all four segments were satisfied with the number of places to fish for their preferred fish species (Table 19).

Table 19. A comparison of differences in levels of satisfaction with the number of available places to target their preferred species among the license segments.

License type	% response				
	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Combo	17	36	24	18	5
Annual	23	36	22	15	5
Senior	28	28	24	15	5
Non-resident	36	35	16	11	3

Perceived Crowding

Respondents were asked to what degree they experienced interference from other recreationists during their angling experiences. About 44% of all anglers reported a lot or some crowding from other anglers (Table 20). Combo license anglers had the highest frequency of

crowding from other anglers with 49% indicating “a lot” or “some” interference. Seniors were most tolerant of other anglers with 65% indicating that interference was slight or none.

Table 20. Interference from other anglers

Segment	% response			
	A lot	Some	Slight	None
Combo	9	40	33	15
Annual	9	37	36	16
Senior	5	27	40	25
Non-resident	4	31	42	22
Total	8	36	36	17

The frequency of interference by non-angling boaters and other recreationists was generally lower than it was for competing anglers. A majority of respondents among all license segments indicated that interference was slight or none by non-angling boaters and non-angling, non-boating recreationists (Table 21 & 22).

Table 21. Interference from non-angling boaters

Segment	% response			
	A lot	Some	Slight	None
Combo	15	24	23	36
Annual	12	22	25	37
Senior	9	20	23	43
Non-resident	2	14	23	60
Total	12	22	25	39

There was a significant relationship between perceived crowding from other anglers and dissatisfaction over the number of available places to pursue their favorite fish. One in three anglers who said they experienced a lot of interference from other anglers was also very dissatisfied with the number of places available to pursue their favorite fish. Only one in twenty anglers who encountered a lot of interference was very satisfied with the number of available places to fish.

Table 22. Interference from non-angling, non-boating recreationists

Segment	% response			
	A lot	Some	Slight	None
Combo	9	20	30	36
Annual	9	18	31	37
Senior	6	16	22	50
Non-resident	2	13	29	55
Total	8	18	30	39

Though it was not a huge difference, those who hiked, backpacked, or rode horse into remote areas were slightly more likely than others to experience a lot (12%) of interference from other anglers than those who did not (7%). This suggests that those who take measures to seek out areas that are more remote likely have less acceptance for competition from other anglers than those who fish more readily accessible locations.

Evaluation of CDOW performance

Two out of three anglers agreed that *“the CDOW does a good job managing fishery resources to provide angling opportunities”*. Only 9% disagreed with this statement. There were no substantively important differences on this matter among all license types. Intermediate anglers gave the highest marks among experience segments with 70% agreement that the Division is managing angling opportunity well (Table 23). Advanced anglers were also complimentary, although that segment posted the largest percentage (16%) who thought that the CDOW was not doing a good job. The highest amount of disagreement on this question (26%) came from anglers who prefer warm waters species.

Table 23. Frequency of response to statement *“the CDOW does a good job managing fishery resources to provide angling opportunities”*.

Experience level	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Beginner	25	31	29	3	0
Intermediate	24	46	17	5	2
Advanced	21	46	14	11	5

Attitudes about fisheries management

Attitude toward potential regulation changes

Barbless hooks

There is very low support among anglers for regulations that would require the use of barbless hooks in fly and lure only waters. Angler opinion on this question was compared among angler segments based on six different variables, each that produced slight variations, but none that rose to a level of majority support (Table 24). Instead, a majority of anglers across almost all segments preferred that barbless hook fishing remain voluntary on fly and lure-only waters of the state. Combo license holders registered the highest percentage of those who supported a voluntary approach at 73%. Slightly less than one in two beginning anglers favored a voluntary approach, while many (44%) were not sure. Support for installation of mandatory barbless hook fishing was highest among anglers who were very motivated by catch and release fishing (34%), those who fished in waters that do not allow bait (34%), and those who practiced 100% catch and release for legal fish they caught in 2007 (33%).

Single shank hooks

Requiring the use of single shank instead of treble hooks on fly and lure waters garnered a bit more support from respondents than mandatory barbless hook fishing. However, single shank fell short of garnering support from a majority of any group of anglers (Table 25). Non-residents were twice (41%) as likely to favor the single shank regulation as all resident anglers. Again, those motivated by catch and release, those practicing catch and release, and those fishing no-bait areas were the most supportive of making single shank hooks mandatory.

Support for mandatory restrictions on hook designs (both barbless and single shank) increased as recreational importance of angling increased among anglers. This finding is consistent with the development of recreational specialization among anglers. The most avid segments of anglers—those most invested from an identity perspective—tend to embrace norms that emphasize the challenge and perceived “higher ethics” of advanced fishing techniques over harvest related aspects. It is this dedicated, but comparatively small segment of anglers for whom greater regulations on the resource are desirable. Most anglers from casual to intermediate tend to be less focused in their pursuit of fish and are less supportive of additional regulations.

The upshot of this set of findings pertaining to increased regulations is that there appears to be insufficient support for adopting any new regulations that would mandate using barbless and/or single shank hooks. The current use of existing catch and release regulations combined with terminal tackle restrictions appear to satisfy the majority of Colorado’s anglers. Anglers strongly prefer a voluntary approach to gear restrictions.

Table 24. Attitude toward whether *Barbless hooks* should be mandatory or voluntary on fly and lure only waters.

Variable	Category	% response		
		Mandatory	Voluntary	Not Sure
Centrality	Most important	26	63	11
	One of my most important	19	67	15
	No more than others	14	62	24
	Less important	13	56	31
	Not important at all	3	55	42
Expertise	Beginner	8	48	44
	Intermediate	16	65	18
	Advanced	26	67	7
	Not Sure	8	55	36
License	Combo	16	73	11
	Annual	16	64	21
	Senior	18	61	21
	Nonresident	28	60	13
Fishing type	Use barbed hooks	13	66	20
	Does not use barbed hooks	31	59	11
	Fish no-bait areas (9)	34	52	14
	Practice 100% C & R	33	58	10
Motivation	Catch & Release	34	56	10
	Catching wild fish	25	64	11
	Challenge	25	64	11
	Trophy	22	68	11
	Harvest	11	68	21
Species targeted	Brown trout	25	68	9
	Brook trout	22	68	10
	Rainbow trout	21	67	11
	Lake Trout	15	69	16
	Warm water	18	73	10
	None	12	60	28

Table 25. Attitude toward whether *single shank hooks* should be mandatory or voluntary on fly and lure only waters.

Variable	Category	% response		
		Mandatory	Voluntary	Not Sure
Centrality of lifestyle	Most important	35	54	11
	One of my most important	25	60	15
	No more than others	16	58	26
	Less important	18	50	32
	Not important at all	6	48	45
Expertise	Beginner	13	39	47
	Intermediate	20	62	18
	Advanced	36	56	8
	Not Sure	11	49	39
License	Combo	19	68	13
	Annual	21	58	22
	Senior	21	58	21
	Nonresident	41	45	14
Fishing type	Barbless (29)	36	51	14
	Barbed (71)	19	61	20
	Fish no-bait areas (9)	49	35	16
	Practice 100% C & R	44	44	12
Motivation	Catch & Release	43	45	13
	Catching wild fish	35	54	12
	Challenge	33	54	14
	Trophy	29	60	12
	Harvest	16	63	21
Species targeted	Brown trout	34	55	11
	Brook trout	31	58	12
	Rainbow trout	28	59	13
	Lake Trout	18	65	17
	Warm water	18	72	10
	None	17	56	28

More artificial only waters

Anglers are very much divided on whether the state should have more waters designated as fly and lure-only fishing areas. Overall, 28% agreed, 30% were neutral, and 32% disagreed. Half of the anglers who opposed more fly and lure waters disagreed strongly. Advanced anglers favored the idea at a higher rate (41%) than either intermediates (25%) or beginners (16%). Similarly, a higher percentage of non-residents anglers (42%) wanted more lure and fly waters than did all residents (27%). Support was lower among warm water species anglers as well (17%). Therefore there is not a consensus in place to increase the number of artificial lure only waters in the state.

Ways to increase angling participation

There were statistically significant differences among license segments on the likelihood that management strategies would increase their fishing participation. However, these differences were not large enough in most cases to be substantively meaningful. Consequently, the pooled responses of all survey participants are shown in Table 26. Increasing access to private and public waters generated the largest impact on the anglers' likelihood to fish more in the future. Seventy-nine percent of respondents said that increasing access to public waters would make it very or somewhat likely to increase their fishing participation; 77% indicated the same was true for increasing private water access. The next most effective strategies for increasing fishing participation were stocking more fish (75%) and providing more information on where to fish (70%). Building or improving facilities at access points or providing information on how to fish appear to be far less effective management strategies for increasing levels of fishing participation in Colorado.

Regarding improved access to fishing waters, there were some notable differences among anglers based on experience levels. Advanced anglers were much more likely to indicate that improved access would be very likely to increase their level of fishing participation than were intermediate or beginning anglers (Table 27). These findings are somewhat counterintuitive because one would imagine that advanced anglers are also the most knowledgeable about places to fish. Half of advanced anglers said that increasing access to public waters would increase their fishing. Six in ten said increasing access to private waters would increase their fishing. This suggests there is a perception among about 10% of advanced anglers that private waters offer some more desirable fishing. The results also suggest that as anglers gain experience, there is a concomitant rise in expectations for access to quality waters.

Table 26. The potential effect of various management strategies on increasing angling participation in Colorado.

Intervention strategy	% of impact on increasing fishing participation		
	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not very/not likely
Increase access to private waters	47	30	19
Increase access to public waters	44	35	18
Stock more fish of catchable size	39	36	23
Provide information on where to fish	36	34	27
Improve existing facilities at access points	23	31	43
Build more facilities at access points	22	26	48
Provide information on how to fish	16	25	55

Table 27. A comparison of the influence of increased access according to level of angling experience.

Management option	% who said it would "very likely" increase their fishing		
	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginner
Increase access to public waters	51	40	28
Increased access to private waters	60	41	22

Those who have perceived crowding from other anglers also indicated that improved access to locations for their preferred species would increase their angling participation (Table 28). Sixty-nine percent of anglers who experienced "a lot" of crowding said they would "very likely" fish more if access was increased.

Table 28. The degree of interference by others anglers and the likelihood that improved access would increase fishing participation.

Degree to which respondent said they experienced interference from other anglers...	% response			
	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not very likely	Not at all likely
A lot	69	15	10	3
Some	54	30	11	4
Slight	41	37	14	6
None	23	37	24	4

Providing more information about *where to fish* and *how to fish* also produced meaningful differences among angler segments based on experience. As one would expect, beginning anglers were more likely than intermediate or advanced anglers to say that more information would increase their levels of fishing participation (Table 29). Even so, more information from CDOW has modest effects on intention to fish among these anglers.

Table 29. The role of information on increasing fishing participation among anglers of different experience levels.

Management option	% who said it would "very likely" increase their fishing		
	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
Provide information on where to fish	38	35	31
Provide information on how to fish	28	15	10

Information Resource Use by Anglers

The CDOW offers a number of information resources to assist its customers in finding places to fish and offering tips on how to improve their angling skills. The results of the survey indicate that relatively few people take regular advantage of these resources (Table 30). About four in ten respondents said that they regularly or sometimes used the CDOW Summer fishing report,

thus making it the most popular form of information resources that was investigated. The Colorado Fishing Map and the Stocking Report were the next most utilized information resources.

A number of information resources are never used by most anglers (Table 30). Less than half of all anglers used the Internet to find fishing information about Colorado, despite the fact that 85% of respondents had Internet access. Fewer yet used print publications like the *Colorado Fishing and Property Directory*, *Colorado Outdoors Magazine*, CDOW's *Fishing Close to Home*, *Fishing the Grand Mesa*, and *101 Places to Take a Kid Fishing*. There may be additional opportunity to market the agency's online fishing resources, especially to younger audiences, and beginners wanting to learn more about where to fish in Colorado. As stated earlier, resident angler with more traditional, consumption orientations have a desire to learn where to access stocked fisheries and those with fewer gear restrictions in order to harvest more fish. There may be opportunities to capitalize on the rapid growth of social networking sites to market Colorado's angling opportunities.

Table 30. Frequency of degree of usage of various CDOW angling information resources.

Information resource type	% level of usage			
	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Regularly
CDOW: Summer Fishing Report	41	19	28	12
The Colorado Fishing Map	43	21	28	8
CDOW: Stocking Report	49	22	21	8
Internet	55	20	17	8
Colorado Fishing & Property Directory	58	22	16	4
Fishing link on CDOW Webpage	59	19	16	5
Colorado Outdoors Magazine	61	20	14	5
CDOW: Fishing Close to Home	68	17	10	4
Fish Factors CD: Guide to Colorado	78	15	6	1
Angling				
CDOW: 101 Places to take a Kid Fishing	80	13	6	2
CDOW: Fishing the Grand Mesa	82	12	4	2

Evaluation of information sources by product

Survey respondents were asked to rate the quality of information resources provided by the CDOW. For the following analysis, only those who reported using a particular resource at least “sometimes” were considered in assessing the quality ratings. Generally speaking, anglers who used CDOW information resources are pleased with their quality (Table 31). The nineteen percent of anglers who read the Colorado Outdoors Magazine regularly or sometimes rated it as Excellent or Good at a frequency rate of 76%. Almost no one rated CDOW’s angling information resources as poor.

Table 31. Evaluation ratings of information products by anglers who reported using them regularly or sometimes.

Information resource type	% rating				
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not familiar *
Colorado Outdoors Magazine	28	48	16	0	8
The Colorado Fishing Map	14	55	17	2	11
Fishing link on CDOW Webpage	12	55	20	1	13
CDOW: Stocking Report	14	48	23	1	14
Colorado Fishing & Property Directory	11	47	20	2	21
CDOW: Summer Fishing Report	11	40	23	2	24

* Theoretically, the percentage of those selecting “not familiar” with a resource they indicated they used should have been close to zero. The fact percentages were substantially higher indicates a degree of measurement error on the questionnaire regarding this question.

Understanding of regulations

Most anglers (38%) were neutral about whether fishing regulations were too complex. More anglers (34%) agreed that regulations were too complex than those who disagreed (21%) (Figure 11). Almost half (47%) agreed that the Colorado Fishing Regulations and Property Brochure was easy to understand. Three in ten were neutral and one in six disagreed that the brochure was easy to understand. Advanced (52%) and intermediate (46%) experienced anglers were more likely to think the Brochure was easy to understand than were beginners (35%).

Definition of bait

Seventy percent of anglers were either very or somewhat confident with their understanding of what was defined as bait in Colorado. Sixteen percent were not very confident and 6% said they did not know what was considered bait. Differences on this question emerged based on self-perceived angling experience (Table 32). Beginners were much more likely to indicate and express their reservations about what was considered bait than were intermediate or advanced anglers.

Fishing regulations are too complex

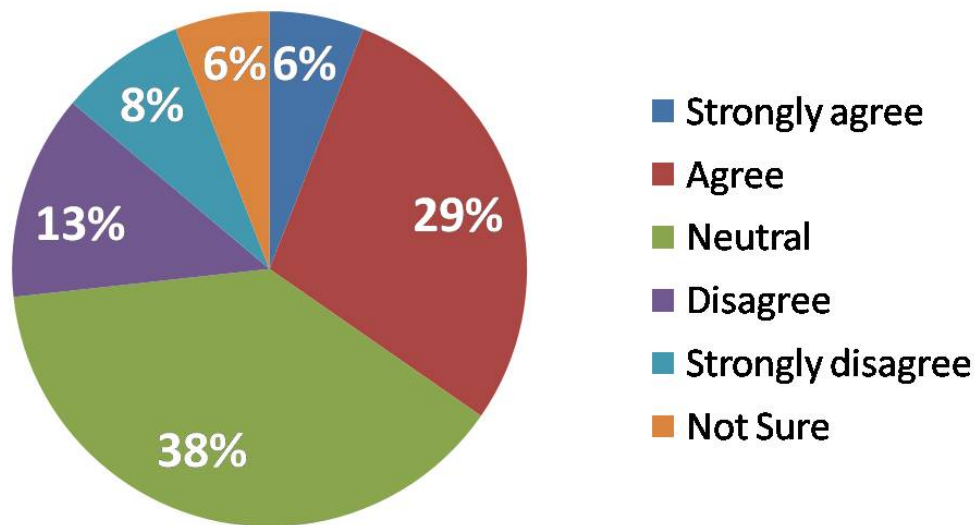


Figure 11. Frequency of responses to that statement: *Fishing regulations are too complex*.

Table 32. Frequency of confidence in knowing what is bait based on experience levels.

Segment	% response			
	Very confident	Somewhat confident	Not very confident	I don't know what is considered bait
Beginners	14	37	31	18
Intermediate	29	49	17	5
Advanced	53	34	8	5

Slightly more than half (53%) of the survey respondents said they had been checked by the District Wildlife Manager sometime in the last 5 years.

Perceptions of Stocking

The CDOW maintains over a dozen hatcheries dedicated to enhancing angler catch through stocking. Respondent knowledge and to a lesser extent use of these stocked waters was assessed on the questionnaire. Relatively few anglers (38%) said the water they fished was stocked with catchable sized fish; 43% were not sure. Seniors believed the waters they fished were stocked with catchable sized fish at higher rates than other license segments. This belief may indicate a greater knowledge of where fish are stocked, higher selection of these waters, or both by seniors (Table 33). Given that seniors were more motivated to catch fish to eat than other license segments, it gives some support to the selection idea.

Table 33. Angler beliefs about whether fish are stocked at their preferred fishing spot.

Angler segment	% who said ...		
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Not sure</i>
Seniors	46	13	41
Annual	39	18	43
Combo	34	25	41
Non-Resident	31	21	47

There was a slight tendency for respondents who placed a higher importance on eating fish to indicate that their favorite water body was stocked. For example, 47% of those who said catching and keeping fish was “very” important, thought their spot was stocked compared to 34% who said keeping fish was not at all important. Those who made regular use of the CDOW stocking reports also indicated that their favorite spot was stocked compared to other segments that were more likely to say “No” or “Not sure” (Table 34). These results suggest that a small segment of Colorado anglers seeks out stocked waters and use stocking reports to aid in their selection of angler destinations. Others may have their angling experiences enhanced by gaining knowledge of where “eaters” are stocked by the agency.

Table 34. The relationship between use of stocking reports and responses to whether anglers fished stocked waters for their favorite species.

How often do you use the CDOW stocking report	% of said...		
	Yes	No	Not Sure
Regularly	62	14	24
Sometimes	49	13	38
Seldom	34	20	46
Never	31	12	46

Acknowledgments

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