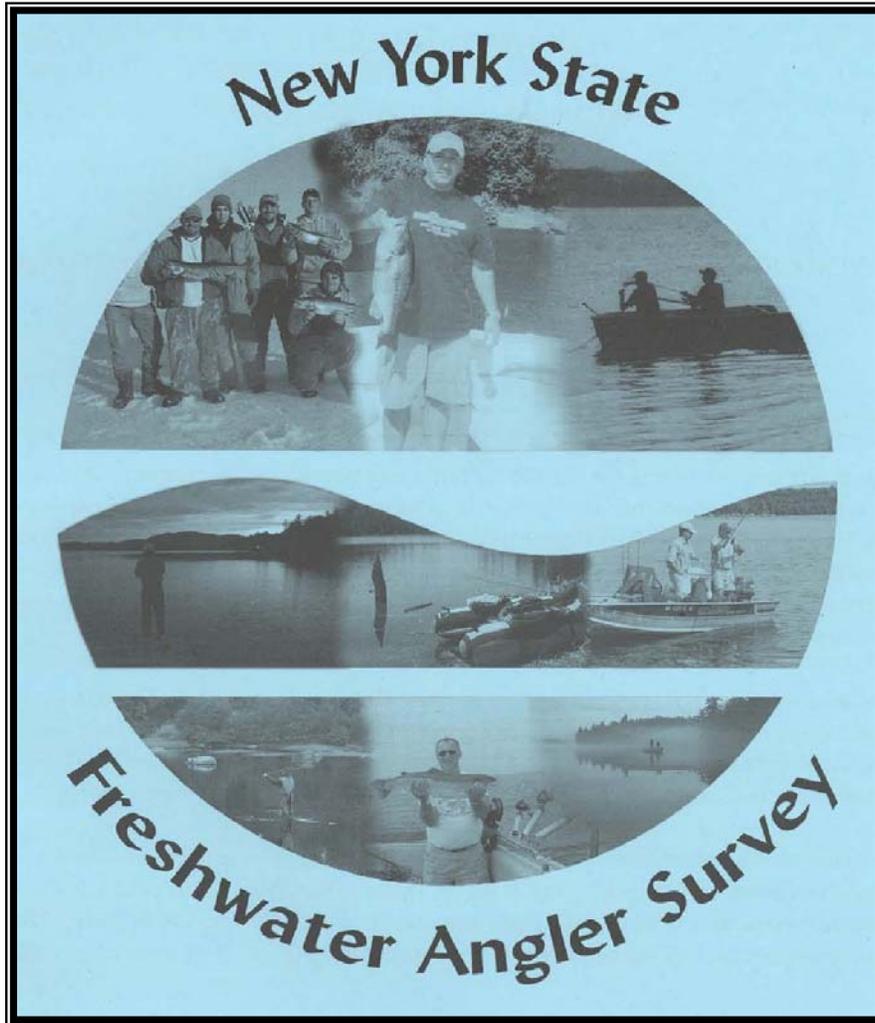


NEW YORK STATEWIDE ANGLER SURVEY 2007



SUMMARY

July 2009 (Revised)



New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Bureau of Fisheries
625 Broadway
Albany, New York 12233



INTRODUCTION

With more than 7,500 lakes and ponds and 50,000 miles of rivers and streams New York State has some of the finest freshwater fishing in the country. There is world class fishing for a wide variety of coldwater and warmwater fish species. Whether smallmouth bass fishing on Lake Erie, brook trout fishing on a crystal clear Adirondack lake, Pacific salmon fishing on Lake Ontario, or fishing for stripers on the Hudson River, there's something special here for everyone.

BACKGROUND

Research for the 2007 New York State Freshwater Angler Survey was conducted by the Cornell University Department of Natural Resources, in cooperation with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Bureau of Fisheries. The survey was implemented to learn more about fishing experiences in New York State, angler interests in different types of fishing opportunities, and angler opinions on fisheries management issues. The DEC will use the information obtained from the survey to carry out its mission in a manner that is responsive to the needs and desires of anglers.

To obtain this information, the statewide angler survey was conducted by mail in three phases over the course of 2007-08, focusing on fishing experiences in New York during calendar year 2007. For each survey phase, a random sample of 17,000 anglers age 16 and older was drawn from all license holders eligible to fish during the phase. Of the 17,000 questionnaires mailed out during each phase, between 700 and 1,100 were undeliverable and between 6,000 and 8,000 completed questionnaires were returned. This resulted in adjusted response rates ranging from 38% for phase 2 to 49% for phase 3. Collectively, over 20,000 anglers participated in the survey.

Results of the survey are documented in four reports. Each of the four reports are available on the DEC website as PDF documents and can be assessed at www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/56020.html. Report 1 contains statewide estimates of angler effort and expenditures, as well as breakouts by region, and major water body. It also provides estimates of specific use of New York's fisheries broken out by species fished for, region fished, and water body. Report 2 assesses angler characteristics, preferences, satisfaction, and opinions on management topics. Report 3 provides estimates of angler effort and expenditures in New York State Counties. Report 4 compares two different survey methodologies used in this study and provides an analysis of trends in fishing effort.

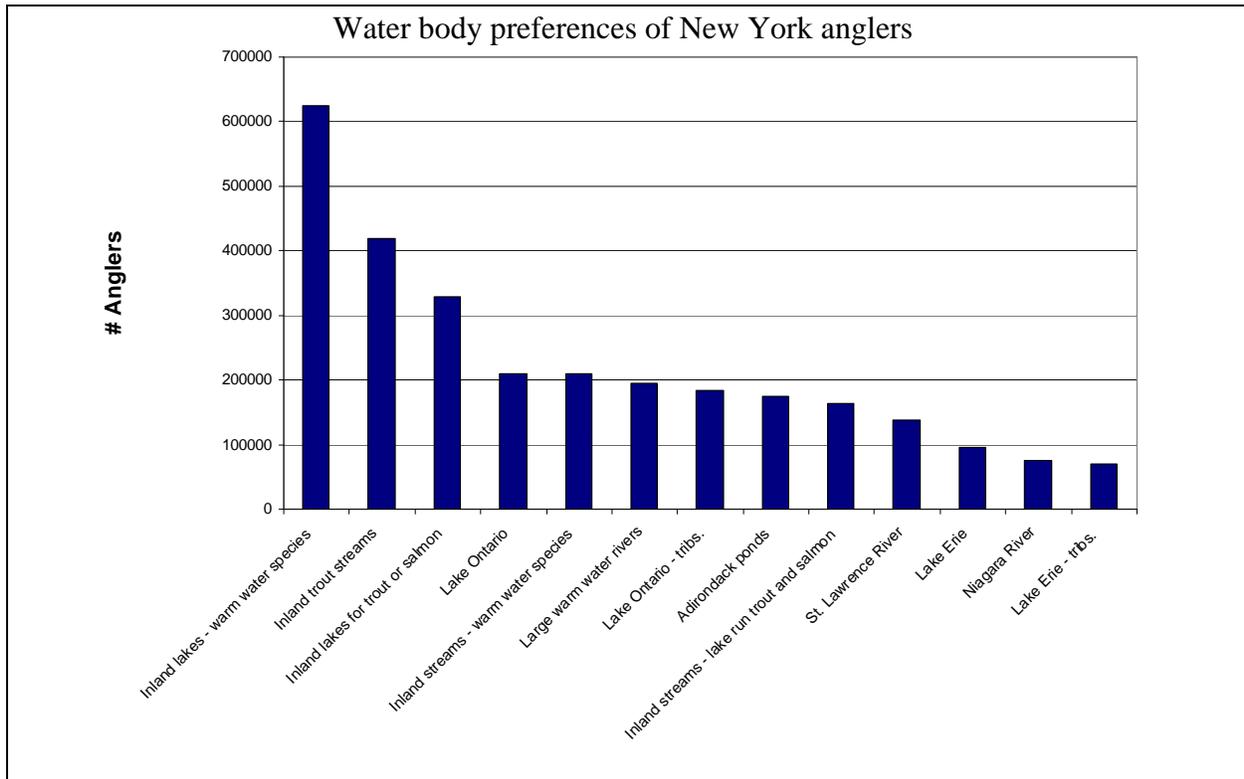
ANGLER PREFERENCES

Species Preferences

Black bass were the favorite species of 1/3rd of responding anglers and 3/4's ranked them among their top 5 favorite species to fish for. Trout, walleye, and yellow perch were each among the top five favorite species for about half of the anglers.

Water body Preferences

Most anglers (about 625,000 in total) indicated that they prefer to fish inland lakes for warmwater species. The next most preferred water body type was inland trout streams, preferred by half of the anglers.



Types of Fishing Opportunities

In the survey anglers were asked how important 18 different items were to their decision about where to fish. Of importance to almost all anglers (91%) was being able to fish in a water that contained a species they were interested in. Of lesser importance was the number or size of the fish present. Most anglers (79%) also wanted to fish a water that does not have a contaminant advisory. Many anglers (39%) expressed the desire to have new experiences – go to new places to fish.

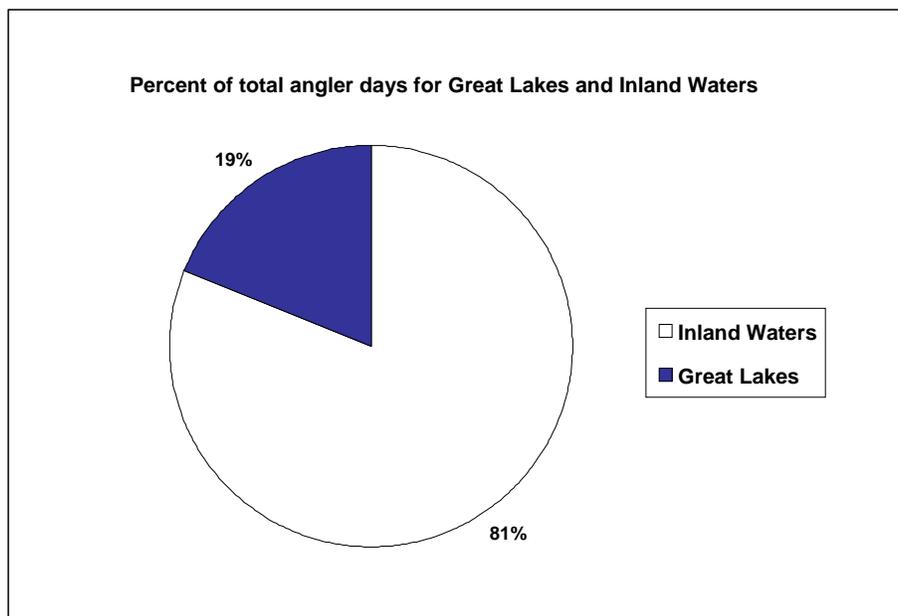
Management Opinions

- From the list of possible actions that DEC might do to increase angler's enjoyment of their fish trips, most anglers desired an increase in the number of fishing access sites, improved facilities at existing sites, expanded opportunities to catch larger fish and increased opportunities to catch wild fish.

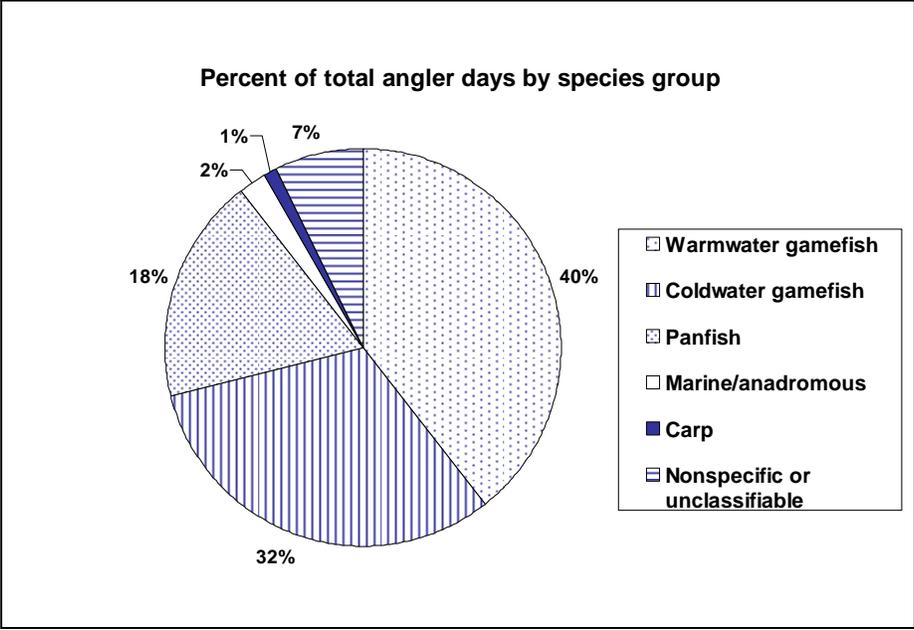
- Survey results suggest that only 1% of licensed anglers sold panfish in 2007. Fifty-two percent of survey respondents expressed an opinion about allowing the continuation of the sale of angler caught panfish. Of these, 77% felt that the practice should be prohibited. Support for a ban was lowest in Northern NY, but respondents residing in Regions 5 & 6 still favor banning the sale of angler caught panfish by a margin of nearly two to one.
- The majority of anglers are satisfied with DEC's stocking practices and want to see the current mix of stocked one and two year old brown trout maintained.
- Approximately 2/3rds of those surveyed expressed a desire for making New York's fishing regulations easier to understand.

FISHING EFFORT

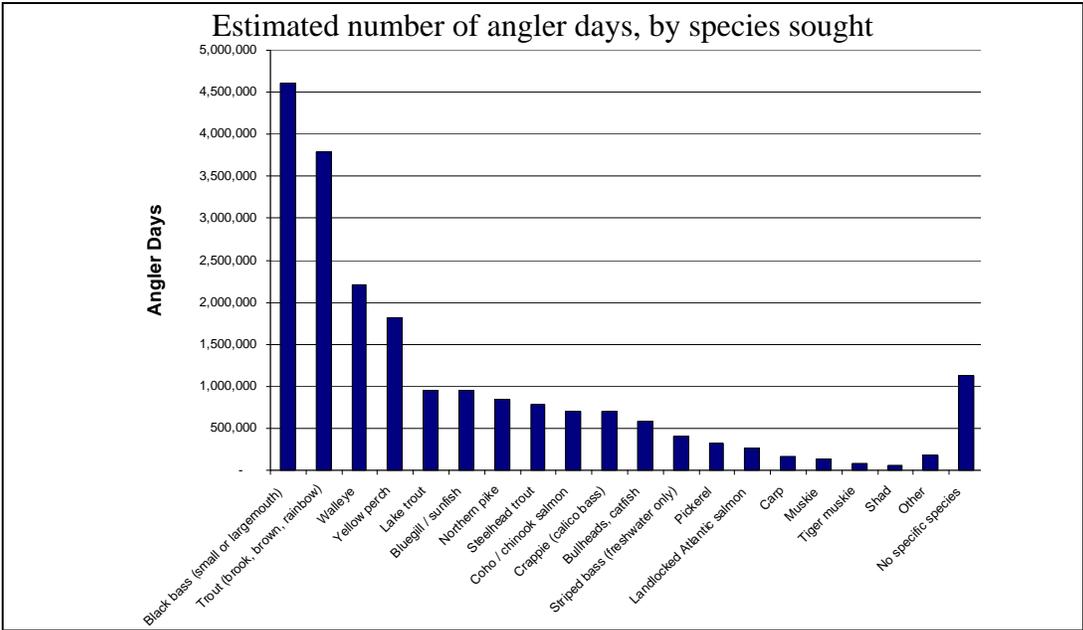
- Anglers spent an estimated 18.7 million angler days fishing New York's freshwaters in 2007. An *angler day* is defined as any part of a day that a person spent fishing. Effort divided between inland waters and Great Lakes waters was 81% and 19% respectively.



- Over 7 million days were spent fishing for warmwater gamefish. Almost 6 million days were spent in pursuit of coldwater gamefish. Fishing for panfish accounted for over 3 million days of effort, while fishing for marine/anadromous species in freshwater and carp accounted for less than half a million days each in 2007. Some anglers indicated that they fished for no species in particular or for other unclassifiable species, but this represented only 7 percent of the angler effort in 2007.

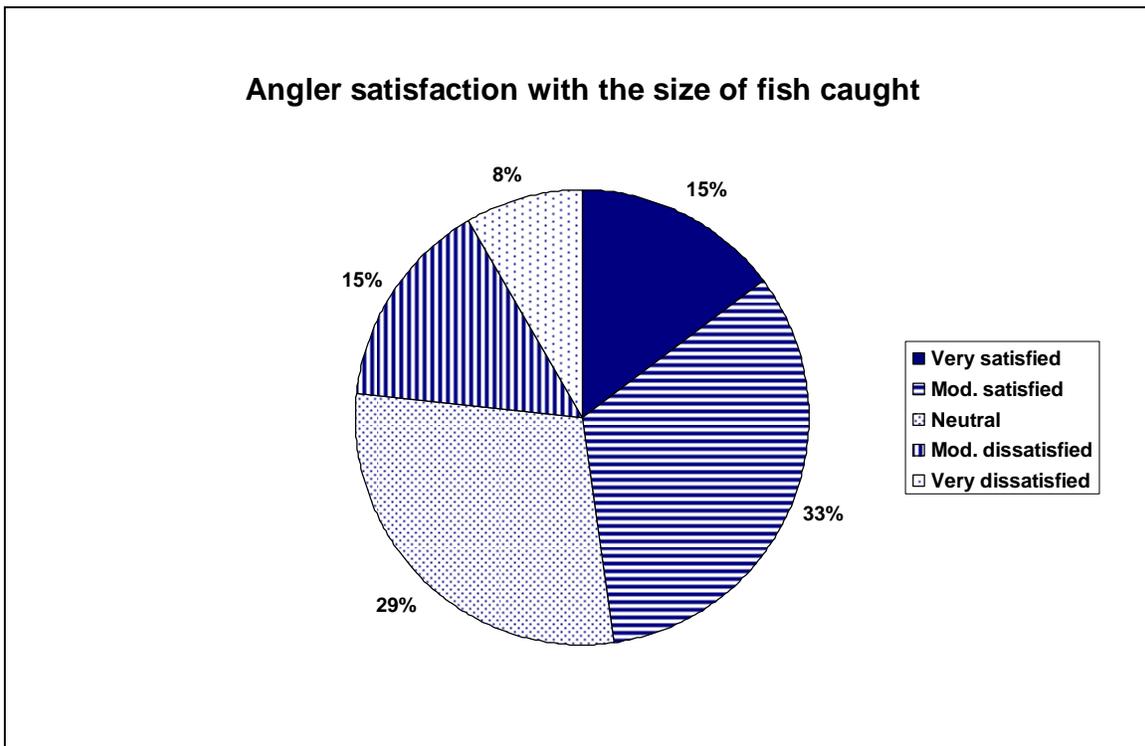
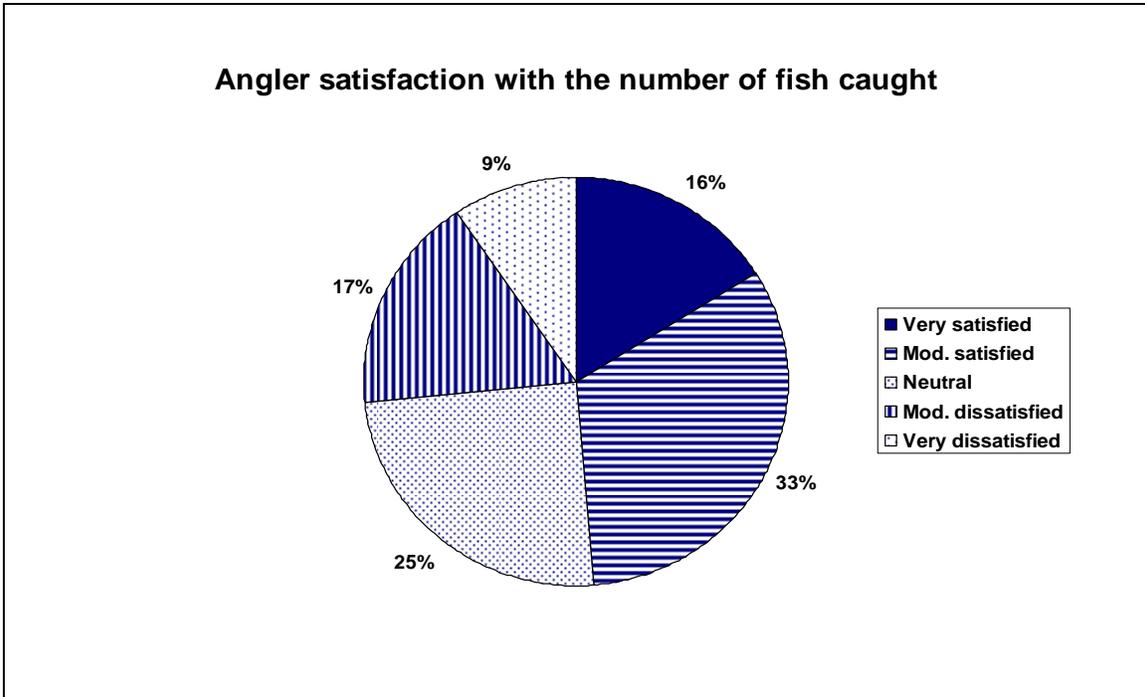


- The top species fished for in New York State was black bass (small or largemouth), which accounted for 4.6 million angler days. The three next most frequently fished for species or species groups were trout (brook, brown, or rainbow), walleye, and yellow perch accounting for over one million days of angler effort each.

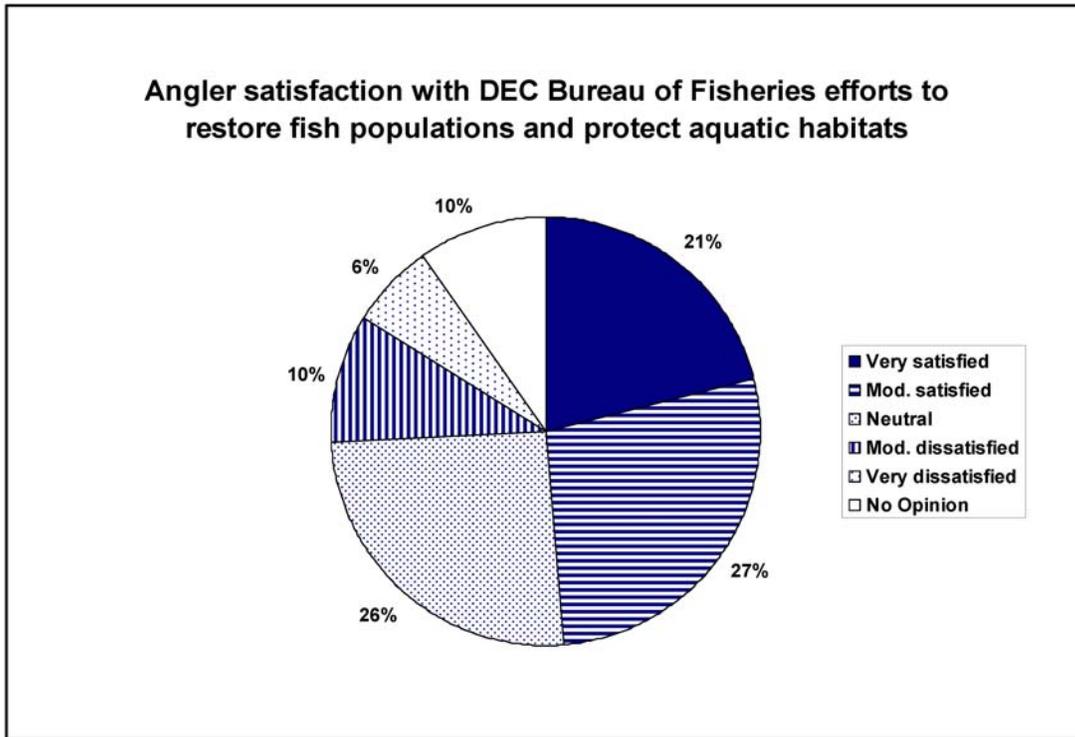


SATISFACTION

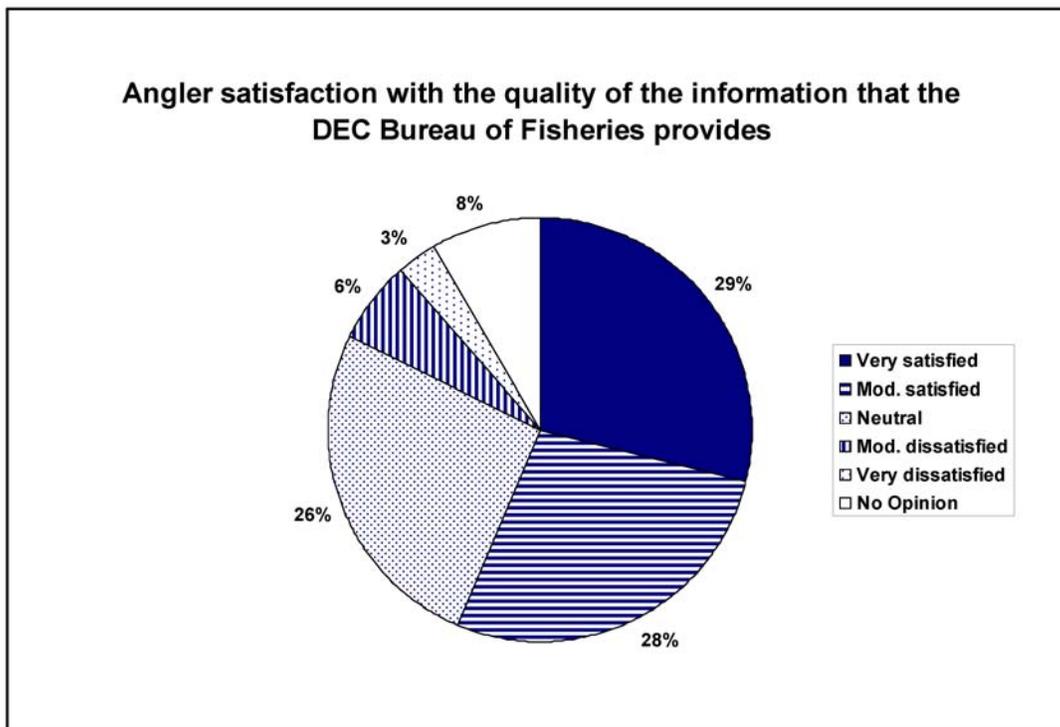
Approximately half of the anglers were satisfied with the number and size of fish they caught on their fishing trips.



Almost half of the anglers were satisfied with the DEC Bureau of Fisheries efforts to restore fish populations and protect aquatic habitats.



Over half were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of information that the Bureau provides, with only 9 percent indicating they were dissatisfied.



MOST FREQUENTLY FISHED WATERS

The top 10 most frequently fished water bodies in the state were:

1. Lake Ontario (1.3 million days)
2. Oneida Lake (786,000 days)
3. Lake Erie (658,000 days)
4. St. Lawrence River (651,000 days)
5. Hudson River (471,000 days)
6. Chautauqua Lake (414,000 days)
7. Niagara River (367,000 days)
8. Seneca Lake (340,000 days)
9. Salmon River (333,000 days)
10. Cayuga Lake (296,000 days)

EXPENDITURES

- New York's resident and nonresident anglers collectively spent an estimated \$331 million at the fishing site and \$202 million en route to the fishing site. Almost one-third (30%) of the total at-location expenditures were made by out-of-state anglers. Average daily trip-related expenses (\$17.62 at-site plus \$10.76 en route) for all anglers was \$28.38 -- \$22.36 for residents and \$90.10 for nonresidents.
- The Great Lakes fishery generated an estimated \$98 million in at-location expenditures, compared with \$231 million for inland waters.

The five counties with the highest angler expenditures in 2007, at the location fished were:

- Oswego \$ 42,623,006
- Jefferson \$ 35,314,663
- St. Lawrence \$ 17,861,105
- Chautauqua \$ 15,353,656
- Warren \$ 13,804,053

TRENDS

- The estimated 18.7 million days spent fishing New York's freshwaters in 2007 was quite similar to the 1996 estimate of 18.6 million days. These estimates are both lower than the peak of 20.8 million days estimated in the 1988 survey. All of these estimates are higher than the 16 million days estimated in the 1970s.
- Effort associated with most of the major species increased between 1996 and 2007. Walleye and yellow perch effort increased substantially. There was also a sizeable increase in angler days for bluegill/sunfish over that same time period.

Estimated number of angler days fished by species sought, 1996 and 2007.				
Species Sought	Angler Days			
	1996		2007	
	Number	Confidence Limits, \pm	Number	Confidence Limits, \pm
Black Bass (small or largemouth)	4,627,280	215,840	4,613,610	265,493
Trout (brook, brown, rainbow, steelhead)*	4,044,620	309,340	4,572,639	316,038
Walleye	1,667,020	121,890	2,212,317	199,508
Yellow Perch	1,162,410	112,850	1,816,026	176,354
Lake Trout	762,050	92,070	954,511	100,865
Bluegill/Sunfish	647,600	71,970	944,978	117,242
Northern Pike	784,680	72,320	847,385	85,879
Coho/Chinook Salmon	604,190	64,560	700,250	74,832
Crappie (calico bass)	540,750	68,140	698,243	170,134
Bullheads, Catfish	511,540	65,560	578,396	83,513
Landlocked Atlantic Salmon	291,230	46,890	262,773	41,514

*Several categories had to be combined from the original data to create a comparable trout category.

- Trends in angler effort by major water bodies can be traced back as far as the first statewide angler survey in 1973. While effort on some water bodies has remained relatively constant between 1996 and 2007 (e.g., Lake Erie, Salmon River), none of the major water bodies appears to have had level effort over the entire period (1973 to 2007). For example, Lake Ontario effort (and bays) increased rapidly into the 1980's and has gradually declined between 1996 and 2007.

Estimated number of angler days for major New York waters 1973, 1976-77, 1988, 1996, and 2007.					
Waterway	Angler Days				
	1973	1976-77	1988	1996	2007
Lake Ontario (and Bays)	664,000	1,027,000	2,568,610	1,730,350	1,553,223
St. Lawrence River	596,000	702,800	716,440	921,790	651,455
Lake Erie	697,000	663,000	945,500	609,340	657,821
Salmon River	126,000	178,100	329,090	344,230	332,827
Oneida Lake	693,000	703,400	782,400	573,060	786,401
Chautauqua Lake	283,000	417,700	438,980	460,090	413,961
Lake George	152,000	192,800	298,600	337,020	289,011
Niagara River	534,000	515,700	525,490	477,690	369,449
Hudson River	144,000	116,600	232,110	276,520	470,731
Delaware River (main stem)	*	*	163,219	146,160	128,344
Seneca Lake	274,000	399,800	350,130	455,500	340,290
Cayuga Lake	214,000	274,200	365,210	291,900	295,920
Lake Champlain	309,000	335,000	482,170	273,310	277,759

(Sources: Brown 1975, Kretser and Klatt 1981, Connelly et al. 1990, 1997.)

*Comparable data not available

- Recent significant increases in the estimated number of angler days include the Hudson River which totaled 470,731 in 2007, as compared with 276,520 in 1996, with notable increases in angler days expended for striped bass. Oneida Lake showed an estimated increase of over 200,000 angler days as compared to 1996, returning it to the level estimated in 1988.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The survey was conducted by Tom Brown and Nancy Connelly of the Human Dimensions Research Unit at the Cornell Department of Natural Resources. Mr. Brown and Ms. Connelly designed and oversaw implementation of the survey, conducted the analysis of the data, and summarized the findings in four reports. The Bureau of Fisheries Angler Survey Team provided much input during the process, including in questionnaire design and analysis planning. Shaun Keeler and Steve Hurst of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), Bureau of Fisheries, were the primary contacts throughout the study and headed up the Bureau Angler Survey Team. Other members of the team that provided invaluable help and support for the project were Melissa Cohen, Steve LaPan, Bill Culligan, Dan Bishop, Phil Hulbert, and Bill Schoch. NYSDEC consultant, Scott Houde, deserves recognition for the many hours he spent on sample selection. NYSDEC Bureau of Fisheries staff member, Casey Festa, is recognized for the many hours spent coding water bodies and checking data for the report.

Several additional members of the Cornell University Human Dimensions Research Unit deserve recognition. Staff member Karlene Smith, assisted with sample selection, mailings, and construction of tables for this report. Margie Peech provided assistance with typing the tables and formatting this report. The Survey Research Institute at Cornell University implemented the surveys, conducted the nonrespondent telephone follow-ups, and scanned the completed questionnaires. This study was funded by the NYSDEC, Bureau of Fisheries using Federal Aid in Sportfish Restoration funds.

EDITOR'S NOTE

(Revisions / Corrections)

The Summary was modified in July 2009. Changes were made to the “*Estimated number of angler days for major waters 1973, 1976-77, 1988, 1996, and 2007*” table to clarify the estimated angler days for the Delaware River (main stem). Some of the earlier yearly totals reported included estimated angler days for the West Branch Delaware River and East Branch Delaware River (*note that these are listed separately in Report 1 for year 2007*).