Will Millennials Sustain Fishing?

Report five of six in a series[1]

Executive Summary

April 2016

While the proportion of people between the ages of 18 and 34 in the overall U.S. population—about 80 million people—has remained roughly the same over the last few decades, the proportion who fishes has declined by 16 percent, from 29 to 13 percent of the fishing population, from 1980-2011.

This and other insights into today's 18- to 34-year-old anglers, known as the millennial generation, are explained in this fifth and final report in a series that sheds new light on anglers' fishing habits and loyalty to the sport.

This report examines and compares characteristics of the millennial generation of anglers with all other licensed anglers from older age groups. Specifically, it compares data related to anglers' gender, license type preferences, community type, and Tapestry™ segmentation. The latter is a classification system developed by a Virginia company called ESRI which defines 68 neighborhood types based on common lifestyle choices of residents all across the United States.

With all of the above demographic and geographic characteristics in mind, the report compares the churn rate among both age groups. It also explores crossover among anglers and hunters and how that might influence fishing license renewal rates. Finally, the report forecasts the future composition of the angler population based on three scenarios of projected change to the U.S. population.

The main findings about millennial anglers are gender and churn-related (the latter refers to the percentage of anglers who leave the sport from one year to the next). While there is a higher proportion of female millennial anglers compared to older age groups, they also have a considerably higher churn rate compared to older age groups—as do male millennials. Highlights include:

- The proportion of millennials within the angler population decreased from 29 percent to 13 percent from 1980-2011.

- The number of female anglers is 5 percent higher among millennials than older age groups.

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[1] Report #6 is a powerpoint summary of the major findings from the first five reports in this series.

- Millennial anglers have an average churn rate of 50 percent—notably higher than the average churn rate of 39 percent for older age groups. Female millennials' churn rate is 15 percent higher than male millennials' (61 percent vs. 46 percent).

- Millennials are far more likely to buy a fishing license alone than individual fishing and hunting licenses or fishing/hunting combination licenses. Two-thirds of millennial anglers purchased only a fishing license. This is similar to older age groups.

- Churn rates among those who only fish, regardless of age, are higher than those who fish and hunt. For millennials who only fish, the churn rate is 60 percent, while it's considerably less—49 percent—for older anglers who only fish. For millennials, close to a third of those who bought both individual fishing and hunting licenses or combination licenses will not renew. For older anglers, it's about a quarter.

- The urban/suburban/rural makeup of millennial anglers is similar to older age groups, with millennials only slightly more likely to reside in urban communities.

- The proportion of millennials within the top 20 Tapestry™ lifestyle segments are also very similar to older age groups.

These findings are based on a comprehensive examination of state fishing license data covering a 10-year period, from 2004-2013, and a five-year period, from 2009- 2013, for 12 states (CO, FL, GA, ME, MI, MN, MS, MT, NH, NY, UT, and WI) to provide a regionally and nationally representative portrait of anglers. Some additional data comes from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's *National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation* from 2001-2011. More information on ESRI's Tapestry™ segmentation, also used in compiling this report, is provided in this report and available at http://doc.arcgis.com/en/esri-demographics/data/tapestry-segmentation.htm.