

2026 SPECIAL REPORT ON FISHING



a partnership project of:



AMERICAN
SPORTFISHING
ASSOCIATION

**OUTDOOR
FOUNDATION[®]**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2025, fishing remained a gateway to health, wellbeing, and togetherness throughout America. More than a shared hobby, it represented a way of life—a connection to nature, a means of sustaining families, and a cornerstone of local communities and economies. Whether on lakes, rivers, streams, or open seas; from shorelines, boats, or embankments; millions of Americans were united by a love of fishing.

The American Sportfishing Association (ASA) and The Outdoor Foundation (OF) have partnered to produce this Special Report on Fishing, a comprehensive review of 19 years of participation trend data spanning 2007 to 2025. The report examines specific fishing categories in depth, offering insights into the motivations, barriers, demographics, and preferences of key groups, including youth, Hispanic Americans, Black Americans, and female anglers.

Overall Fishing Participation Trends

In 2025, 57 million Americans ages 6 and older took to the nation's waterways for recreational fishing, down slightly from 57.9 million in 2024, but well above the 50.1 million anglers recorded in 2019. The overall participation rate among Americans ages 6 and over dipped to 18 percent, versus 19 percent the year prior.

Total fishing outings grew by 3 percent to 918 million. Nearly 1 in 3 anglers reported fishing once a month or more, though participation among the most frequent anglers has slowly declined since tracking began in 2007. 68 percent of participants fished between 1 and 11 times in 2025, fewer than one outing per month on average. *See page 3 to learn more about 2025 participation trends.*

The “leaky bucket” analysis measures the annual churn of fishing participants—those joining or rejoining the activity compared to those quitting. Following a modest gain of 300,000 anglers in 2024, nearly a million anglers left the sport in 2025. *See page 6 for more on the leaky bucket.*

Fishing by Category

Nearly 43 million Americans ages 6 and over went **freshwater fishing** in 2025. Freshwater's national participation rate held steady at 14 percent for the fourth consecutive year. Average annual outings of 15 were unchanged, while total freshwater outings of 652 million days were 2 percent higher than in 2024. *See page 12 for more on freshwater fishing.*

After a strong 2024, **saltwater fishing** participation grew 3 percent to 15.5 million in 2025. This was the highest number on record, 1 million anglers more than in 2020, and a whopping 3.5 million participants higher than a decade earlier! Average annual outings per participant were unchanged year-over-year at 12, while total saltwater outings increased 2 percent to 183 million. *See page 16 for more on saltwater fishing.*

Fly fishing participant numbers dipped slightly to 7.9 million participants, versus 8 million in 2024. The national participation rate held steady at 3 percent. On a positive note, average outings per participant rose to 11, up from 10 in 2024, while total outings grew to 83 million from 78 million. *See page 20 for more on fly fishing.*

Youth Participation

Despite slipping from 2024 and sitting below the 2020 record, 7.4 million children ages 6 to 12 went fishing—nearly 1 million more than a decade earlier and in line with the pre-COVID average of 7 million. Anglers ages 13 to 17 rose from 5.2 million to 5.4 million, and their participation rate ticked up from 24 percent to 25 percent. *See page 24 for more on youth participation.*

Black Participation

Nearly 6 million Black Americans ages 6 and older fished in 2025, the highest number since tracking began in 2007 and an increase of 400,000 from the prior year. The participation rate rose to 15 percent, up from 14 percent. Every style of fishing saw gains in both participant numbers and participation rate year-over-year. *See page 30 for more on Black participation.*

Hispanic Participation

Fishing participation among Hispanic Americans ages 6 and over doubled in the last decade, climbing from 3.4 million in 2015 to an all-time high of 6.9 million in 2025. Growth has accelerated in recent years, with participant numbers rising an average of 11 percent annually since 2022. The participation rate held steady at 16 percent. See page 36 for more on Hispanic participation.

Female Participation

Female participation dipped slightly, falling from 21.3 million in 2024 to 21.1 million in 2025, with the participation rate slipping from 14 percent to 13 percent. Despite this modest decline, the long-term trajectory remains strong, as female anglers grew by 5.4 million over the past decade, from 15.7 million in 2015 to 21.1 million in 2025, a 34 percent increase. See page 42 for more on female participation.

Profile of a Fishing Trip

Fewer than 1 in 5 anglers typically fished alone in 2025, underscoring that fishing remained a shared activity, with 3 in 4 participants usually heading out in groups of 2 to 5. Men were nearly twice as likely as women to fish alone, at 22 percent compared to 12 percent, while women were more likely to fish in groups of 3 or more, at 50 percent versus 43 percent for men. More than 8 in 10 fishing trips were spontaneous or planned less than a week out. 85 percent considered fishing their main activity rather than a complement to something else. 41 percent released their catch, 32 percent kept it, and almost 3 in 10 did both. See page 50 for insight into a typical fishing trip.

Perceptions of Fishing

3 in 4 participants cited quality time with loved ones as a positive fishing memory, a sentiment that held steady across gender, age, and ethnicity. When asked what kind of person fishing is for, most participants rejected the notion of a typical angler, agreeing that anyone could take up the sport. The most cited barriers to enjoyment were crowded fishing spots and the discomfort of being outdoors, followed by not catching fish, unclear waters, and the cost of gear. See page 54 to learn about perceptions of fishing.

Future of Fishing

Data continues to underscore the critical importance of introducing fishing at a young age, as 86 percent of current fishing participants fished before the age of 12. Participation rates fell sharply after a child turned 18, making families with young children one key to growing future participation.

By understanding the demographics, motivations and barriers of participants, the fishing industry can better reach America's youngest citizens, nurture a new generation of fishing enthusiasts, and retain those new to the sport. Connecting youth to fishing will ensure that our nation's waterways are protected, our communities are healthy, and our industry is thriving. See page 59 to learn about the future of fishing.



Retaining newcomers remains an integral part of fishing's continued success. New anglers are younger, more diverse, and digitally connected. The industry must remind newcomers about great fishing experiences, highlight convenient water access, provide beginner educational resources, and emphasize the community and familial benefits of fishing and boating.

FISHING PARTICIPATION



FISHING PARTICIPATION

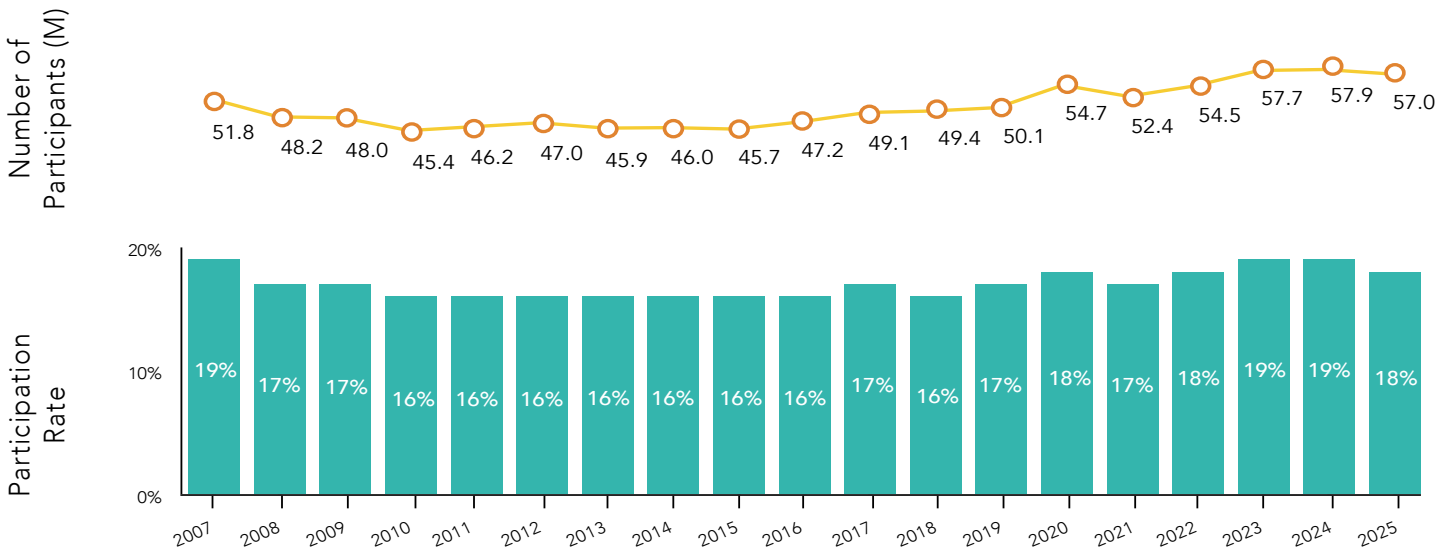
57M
TOTAL #
OF PARTICIPANTS
*Up from 45.7 million
a decade ago*

18%
NATIONAL FISHING
PARTICIPATION RATE
Up from 16% a decade ago

+25%
PARTICIPANT
GROWTH
Since 2015

PARTICIPATION OVER TIME

In 2025, 18 percent of Americans ages 6 and over went fishing at least once, down slightly from the 2024 record of 19 percent. The number of participants dipped to 57 million, compared to 57.9 million the year prior. Although both the participation rate and total participants declined by roughly 2 percent, each remains well above pre-COVID levels.



918M
TOTAL #
OF OUTINGS
23M more than 2024

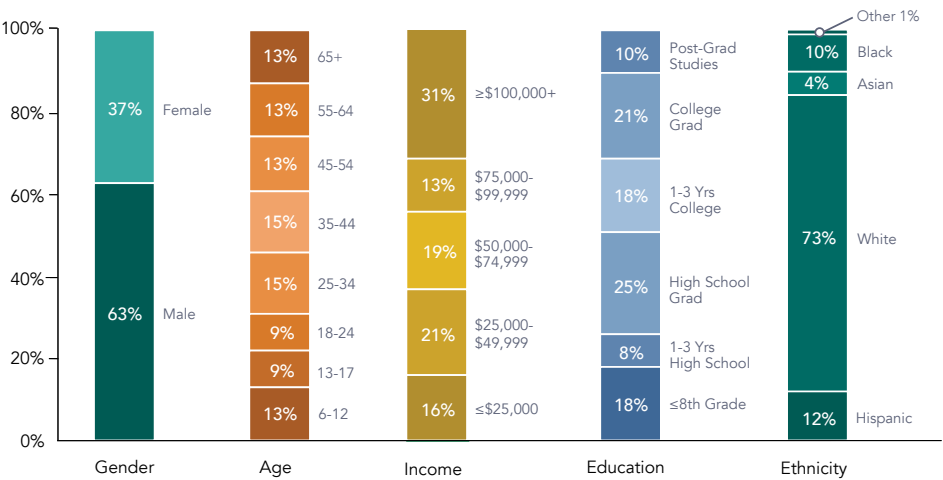


16
AVERAGE ANNUAL
OUTINGS
up from 15 in 2024



11.3M
MORE PARTICIPANTS
IN 2025
vs. 2015

WHO PARTICIPATED?



63%
MALE
PARTICIPANTS

PARTICIPATION RATES BY DEMOGRAPHIC

21.1 million women fished in 2025. Females made up 37 percent of fishing participants for the fourth time in the last five years.

Nearly 4 in 10 participants were 45 or older in 2025, and nearly half reported attending at least some college. 31 percent of angler households earned over \$100,000 in 2025, up from 26 percent a decade ago. 37 percent earned less than \$50,000, down from 39 percent a decade ago.

Fishing participants were less diverse than the U.S. population. White participants made up 73 percent of anglers in 2025, exceeding their 57 percent share of the U.S. population, though the gap has narrowed considerably since 2007, when that figure stood at 86 percent. Large gaps remained for Hispanics (12 percent of fishing participants versus 20 percent of the U.S. population), Black anglers (10 percent versus 14 percent) and Asian participants (4 percent versus 7 percent).



65+
FASTEST GROWING
AGE COHORT

WEST

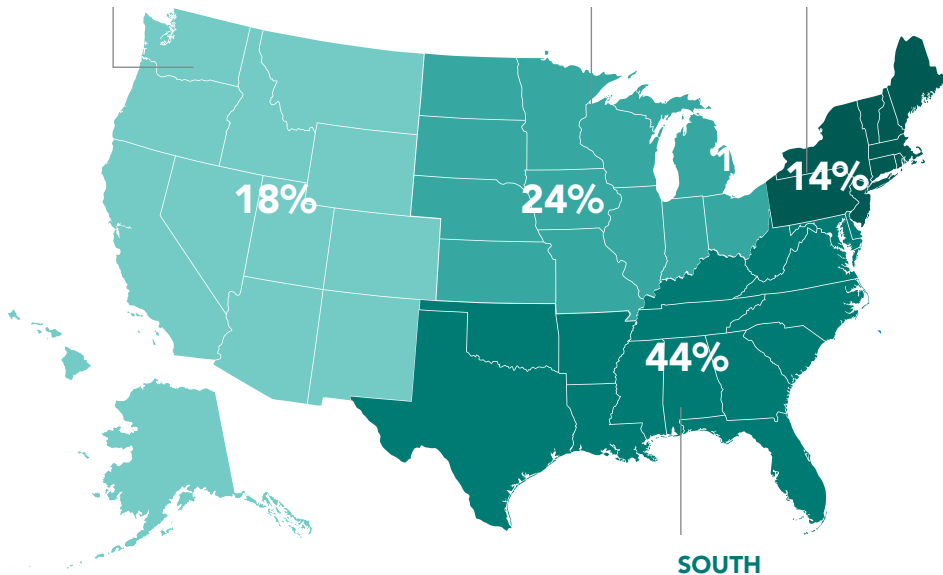
Population by region: 23%

MIDWEST

Population by region: 21%

NORTHEAST

Population by region: 17%



SOUTH

Population by region: 39%

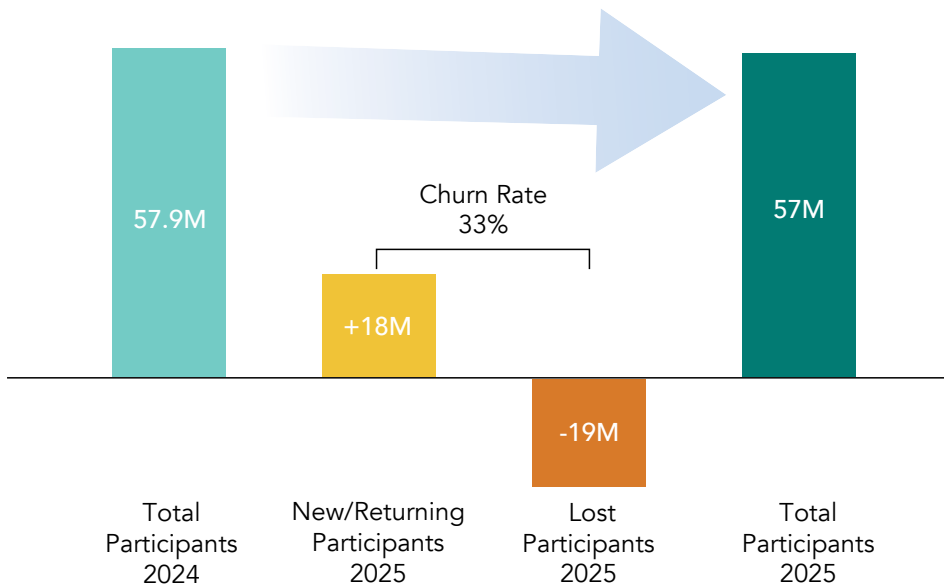
PARTICIPATION BY REGION

The South census region (comprised of 16 southern states with ample coastline and abundant interior lakes and waterways) was home to 44 percent of anglers in 2025, over 25 million participants in total. Compare this to the vast American West (the Pacific and Mountain states) and its 10 million participants. The Midwest and Northeast regions had 13 million and 8 million participants, respectively.

PARTICIPATION IN-DEPTH

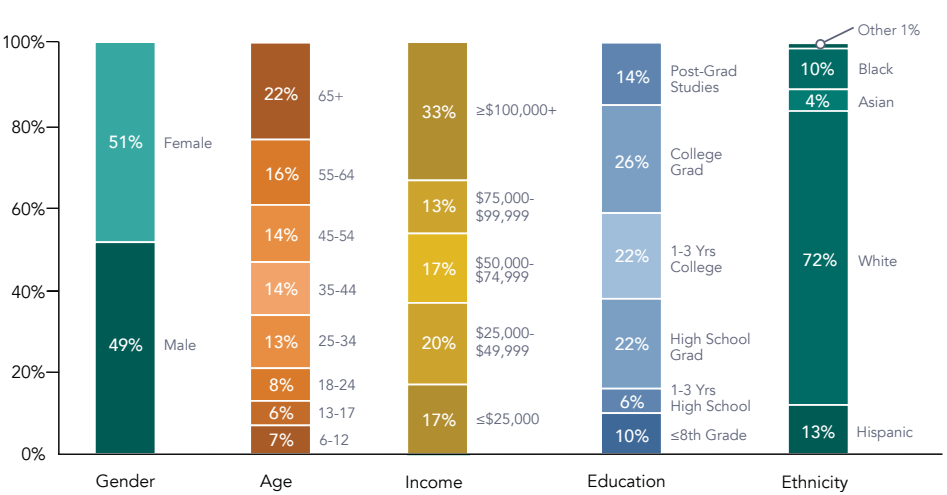
LEAKY BUCKET ANALYSIS

Between 2024 and 2025 there was a net loss of nearly 1 million fishing participants, down from a 300,000 gain in 2024. The annual churn rate (which compares how many joined or continued fishing to those quitting the sport) was 33 percent.



LOST PARTICIPANTS

Lost participants in 2025 tended to be female (51 percent were female versus 37 percent of total anglers), and more than half were over the age of 45. Nearly half reported an annual household income over \$75,000, and almost two-thirds had at least some college education.



6.3M
FIRST-TIME
PARTICIPANTS



39M
CONTINUING
PARTICIPANTS
and 11.7M returning

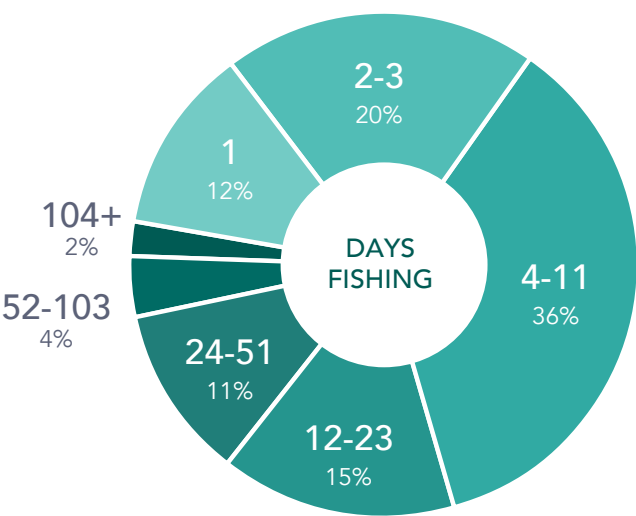


19M
LOST
PARTICIPANTS

LEVELS OF COMMITMENT

ANNUAL OUTINGS

Nearly 7 in 10 anglers in 2025 went fishing 1 to 11 times. A decade ago, about 8 percent reported weekly outings, but in 2025 that share fell to under 6 percent. Anglers reporting just 1 to 3 annual outings have grown from 22 percent of total participants in 2007 to 32 percent in 2025.



PERCEIVED LEVEL OF FISHING

When asked, 39 percent of anglers in 2025 described themselves as “avid” fishing participants. If the term “avid” described someone who fishes once per month or more (i.e. 32 percent of participants in 2025) it would roughly match the perception that anglers held of themselves. 51 percent wished they could fish more.

PERCEIVED LEVEL OF FISHING PARTICIPATION	PERCENTAGE
Occasional participant, fish as often as I want	32%
Occasional participant, would like to fish more often	30%
Avid fishing participant, would like to fish more often	21%
Avid fishing participant, fish as often as I want	18%



32%
MOST AVID
PARTICIPANTS

*those fishing more than
once a month or more*



**1-11
TRIPS**

ANNUALLY FOR 68%
OF PARTICIPANTS

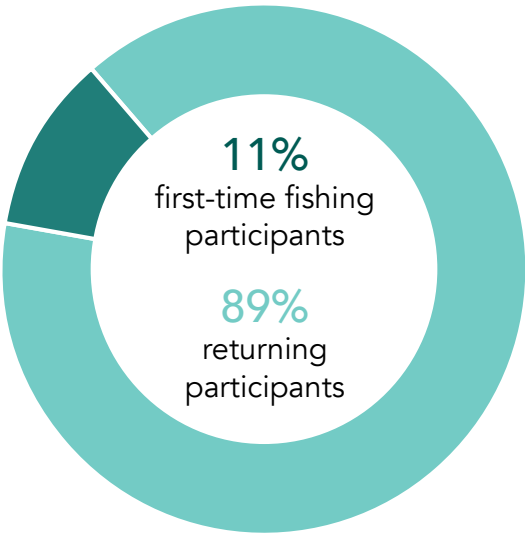


39%
SELF-DESCRIBED
AS AVID
PARTICIPANTS

INTRO TO FISHING

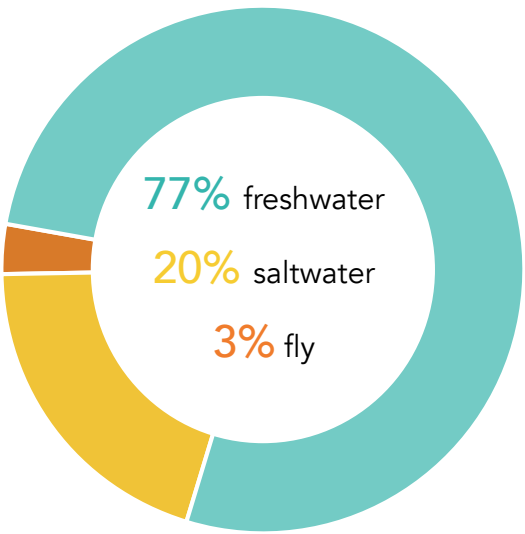
NEW TO FISHING

Among 2025's 57 million fishing participants, 6.3 million were new to the sport. These newcomers represent 11 percent of total participants, versus 9 percent in 2024.

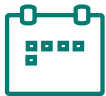


FIRST TYPE OF FISHING EXPERIENCE

Nearly 4 in 5 anglers got their start in freshwater fishing, a pattern that has held steady over the past decade even as saltwater fishing has gradually gained ground. First-timers logged a record 41 million outings in 2025, averaging 6 days on the water, consistent with the prior year.



41M
TOTAL ANNUAL
OUTINGS
among first-timers



6 / YEAR
AVERAGE # OF
OUTINGS
among first-timers



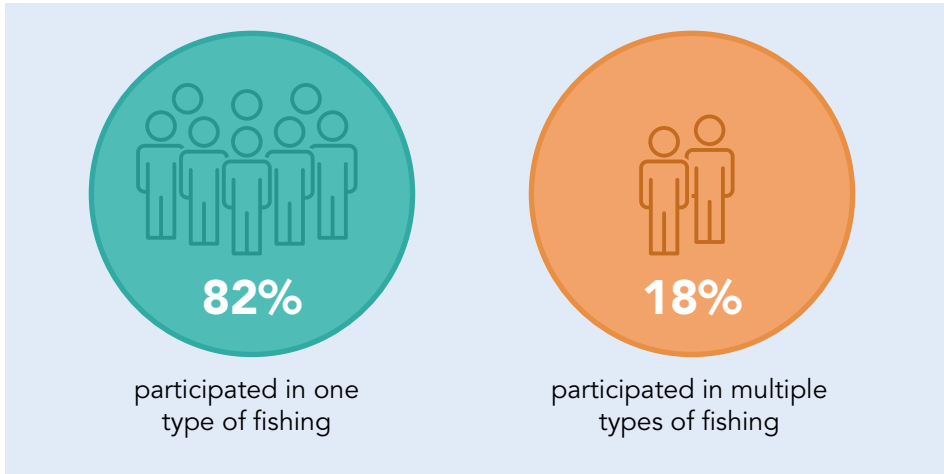
41%
OF FIRST-TIME
PARTICIPANTS
WERE FEMALE
*vs. 37% of total
participants*

TYPES OF FISHING & OTHER ACTIVITIES

LITTLE OVERLAP IN FISHING

In 2025, Americans remained dedicated to their preferred form of fishing. Just 18 percent participated in more than one type, a ratio consistent for over a decade. 51 percent of both freshwater and saltwater anglers indicated they’d like to fish more, versus 46 percent fly participants.

TYPES OF FISHING	PERCENTAGE
Freshwater only	59%
Saltwater only	15%
Freshwater and saltwater	11%
Fly fishing only	8%
Freshwater and fly fishing	4%
Fly fishing and freshwater and saltwater	2%
Saltwater and fly fishing	1%



WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO FISHING MORE OFTEN?	PERCENTAGE
All participants	51%
Freshwater	51%
Saltwater	51%
Fly	46%

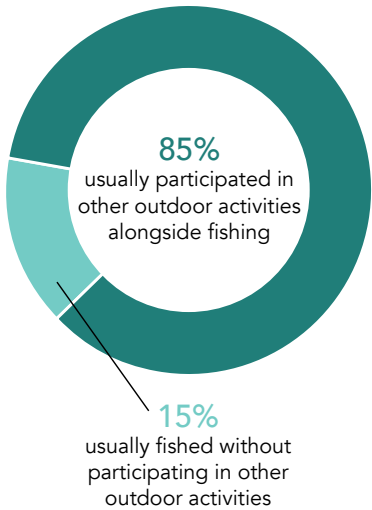
ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF FISHING

TOP CROSSOVER ACTIVITIES

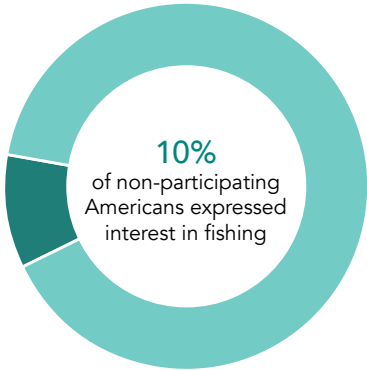
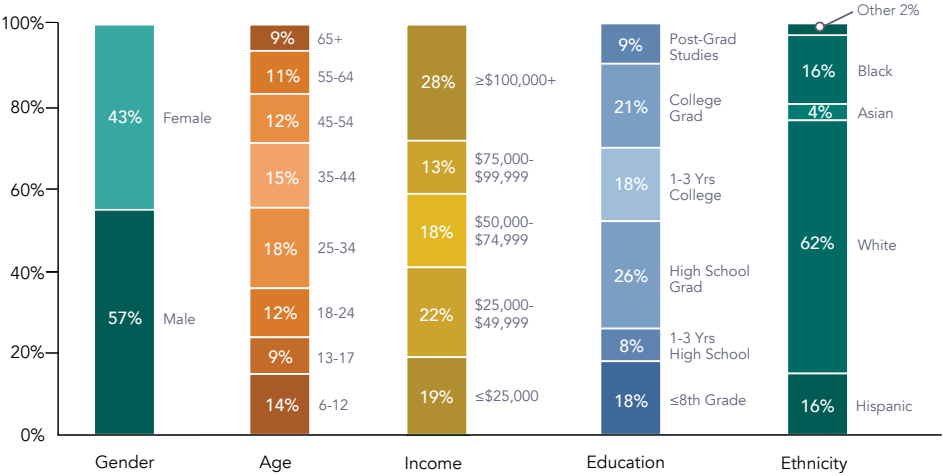
Fishing participants enjoyed a wide range of outdoor activities, including camping, hiking, bicycling and running.

Which activities did you participate in outside of fishing?

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES		2015 PERCENTAGE	2025 PERCENTAGE
	Camping	38%	45%
	Walking	45%	39%
	Hiking	24%	32%
	Bicycling	29%	32%
	Running	26%	22%
	Birdwatching/ wildlife viewing	22%	22%
	Hunting	22%	18%
	Kayaking	11%	16%

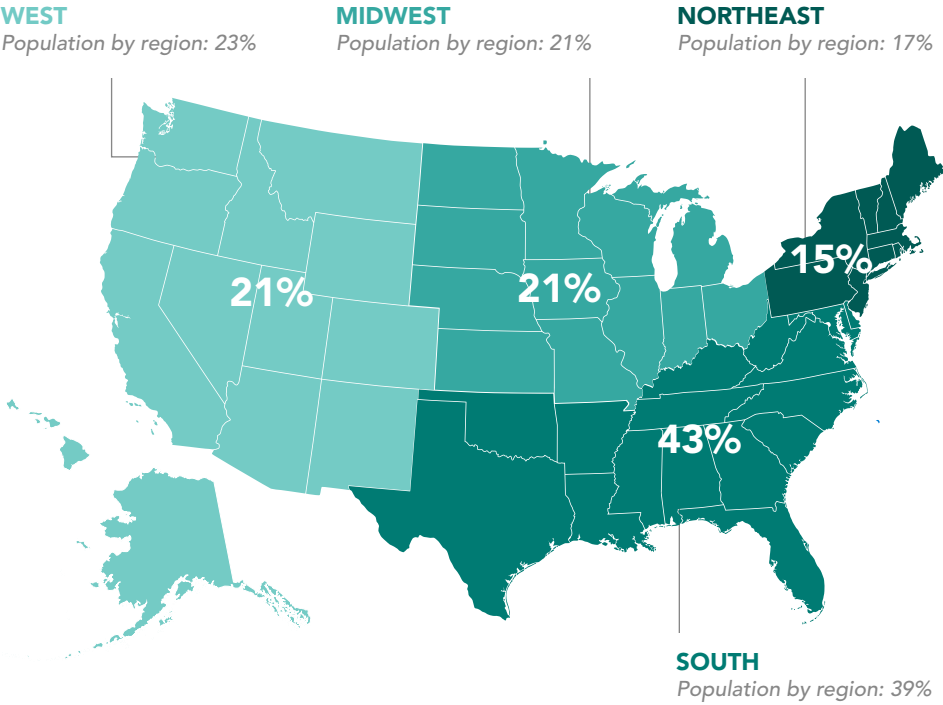


AMERICANS CONSIDERING FISHING



DEMOGRAPHICS OF THOSE CONSIDERING

Millions of Americans who did not fish in 2025 expressed interest in the sport. Among the nearly 34 million Americans—10 percent of the U.S. population—who considered fishing in 2025, 11 million were female, 4.4 million were Black, and 4 million were Hispanic. 41 percent of those considering reported annual household incomes over \$75,000, while 48 percent had college experience.



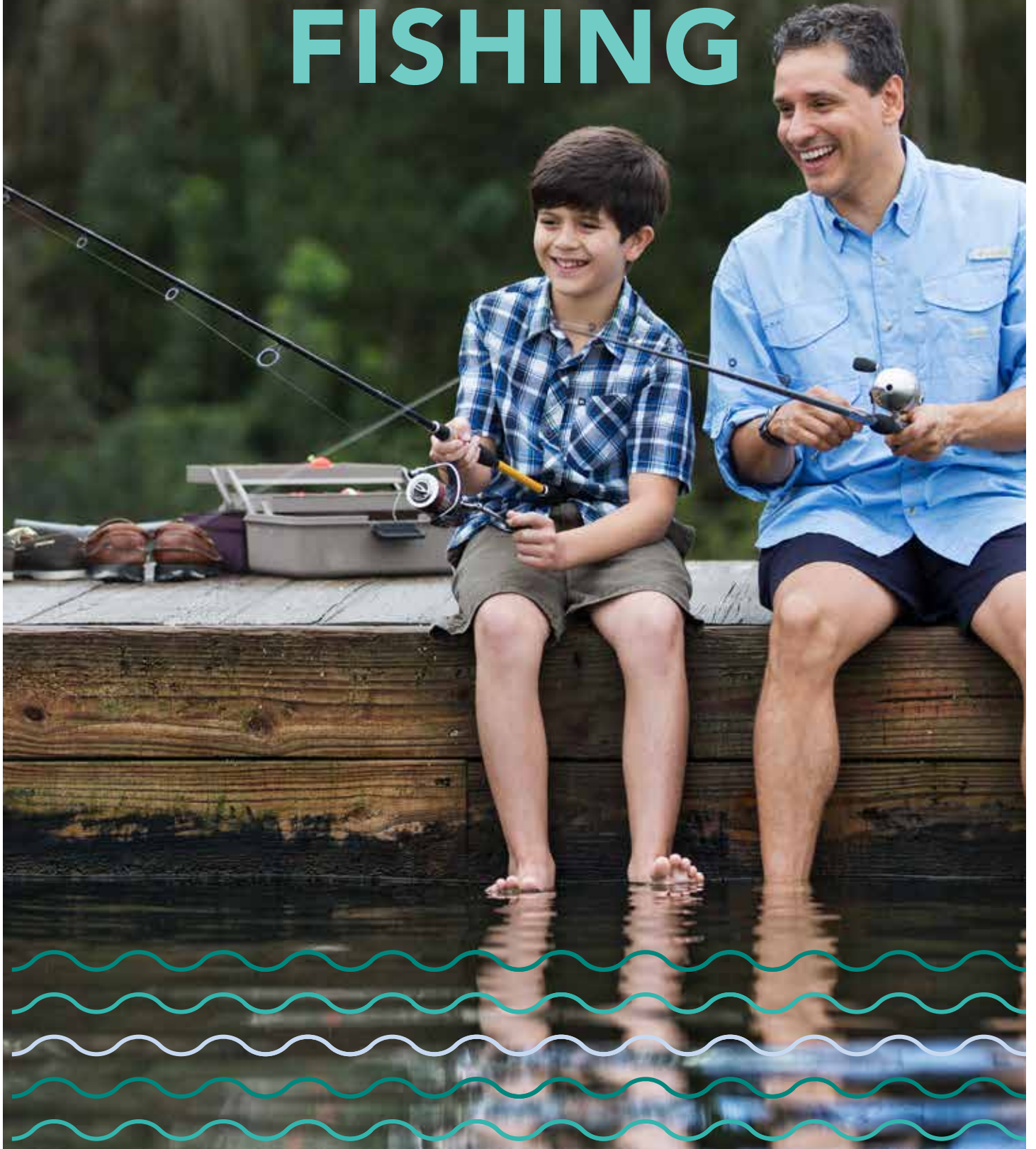
YOUTHS CONSIDERING FISHING

Over 15 percent of youths considered fishing in 2025, representing an enormous opportunity to grow fishing’s future. The 5.7 million young people interested in fishing were somewhat less diverse than interested adults. 70 percent were White compared to 62 percent of interested adults, while Black youth made up 10 percent of interested youths versus 16 percent of interested adults.

THOSE CONSIDERING FISHING BY REGION

The map of those considering fishing largely mirrors the map of current participation, with higher concentrations of interest in the South region, with its abundant coastal and inland waterways. Interest in fishing was relatively low in the West and Northeast, with both regions slightly underrepresented, each falling 2 percentage points below their share of the U.S. population.

FRESHWATER FISHING



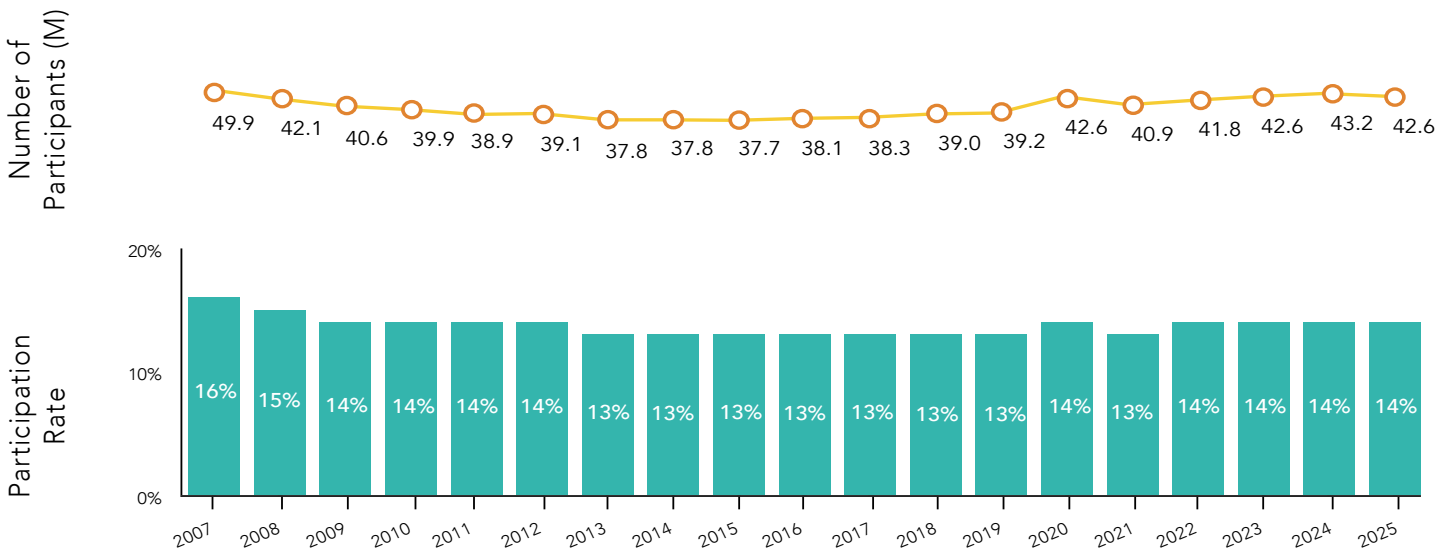
FRESHWATER FISHING

42.6M
TOTAL #
OF PARTICIPANTS

14%
NATIONAL FRESHWATER
PARTICIPATION RATE

PARTICIPATION OVER TIME

Freshwater remained fishing’s most popular format in 2025, accounting for 71 percent of all outings. While nearly 5 million more Americans picked up a rod in 2025 than in 2015, the national freshwater participation rate has held steady at 13 to 14 percent since 2009. This suggests growth has kept pace with the broader population rather than outpacing it. Anglers are also diversifying where they fish, as 59 percent reported fishing exclusively in freshwater, down from 63 percent a decade earlier.



652M
TOTAL
OUTINGS

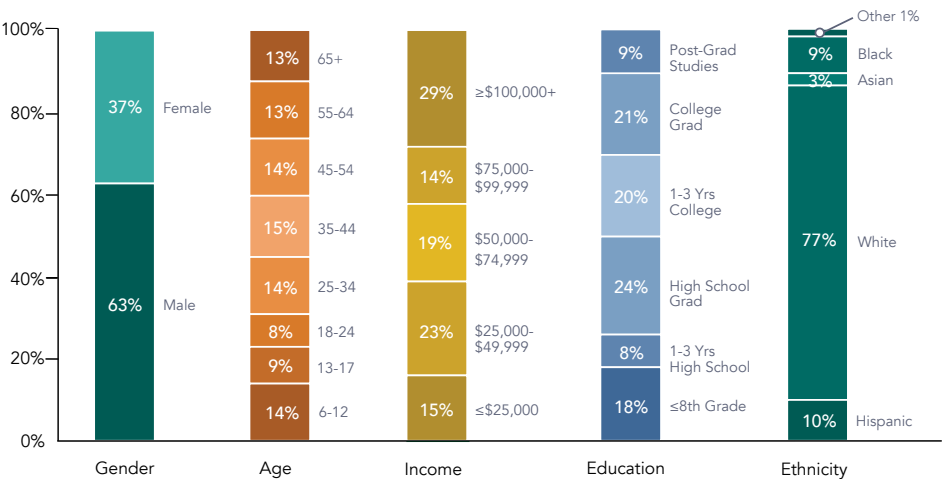


15
AVERAGE ANNUAL
OUTINGS



+4.9M
PARTICIPANTS
vs. 2015

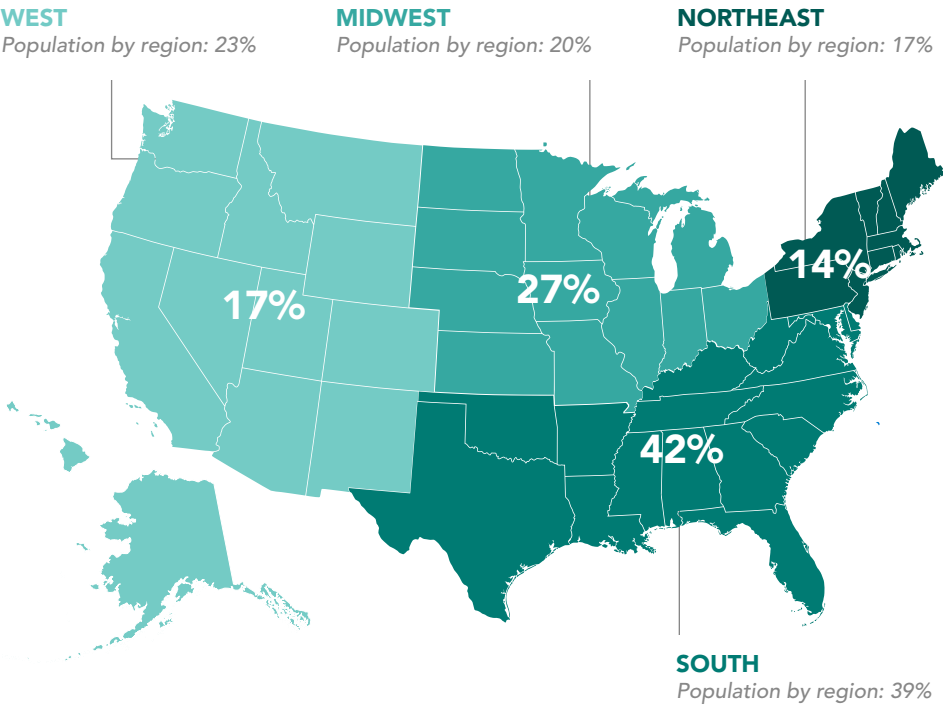
WHO PARTICIPATED?



31%
OF FRESHWATER
ANGLERS WERE
UNDER 25

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Freshwater fishing is drawing a broader audience. Black anglers grew from 3.3 million to 3.9 million between 2022 and 2025, an average annual increase of 12 percent, while Hispanic anglers rose from 3.7 million to 4.3 million between 2022 and 2024, an average annual gain of 8 percent. Older anglers are also showing up in record numbers: those 65 and older now account for just over 13 percent of all freshwater participants, the highest share since data collection began in 2007.



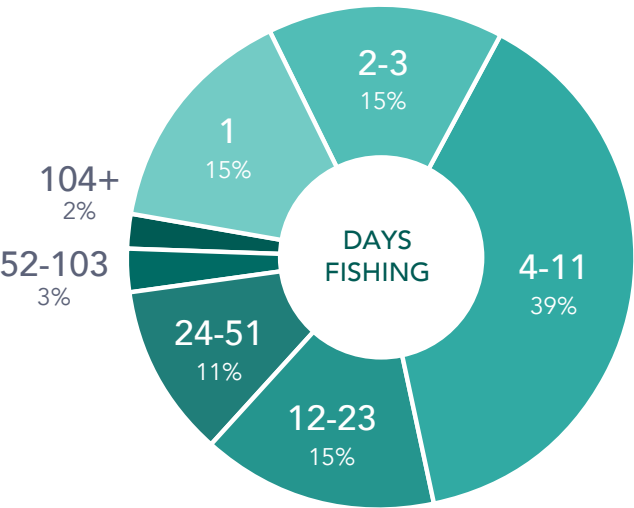
REGIONAL PARTICIPATION

Freshwater fishing skews Midwestern. The region was home to 27 percent of freshwater anglers despite holding just 20 percent of the U.S. population, a concentration rivaling the South’s dominance in saltwater fishing and the West’s in fly fishing. Every other region punched below its weight: the Northeast, South, and West all claimed smaller shares of freshwater anglers than their populations would suggest. The gap was widest in the West, where 23 percent of Americans produced only 17 percent of freshwater participants.

LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

ANNUAL OUTINGS

Freshwater fishing has steadily welcomed more casual participants. Those fishing just 1 to 3 times per year have grown from 62 percent in 2007 to 69 percent in 2025. With this group now representing nearly 7 in 10, there is a tremendous opportunity to deepen their connection to the sport and inspire more time on the water.



PERCEIVED LEVELS OF FISHING PARTICIPATION

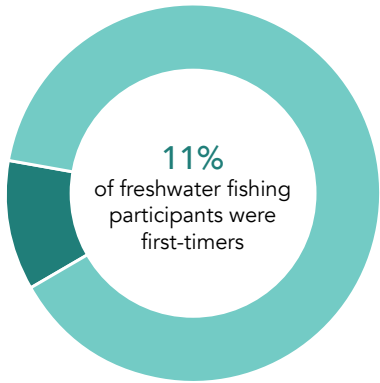
Most freshwater anglers, 63 percent, described their fishing as occasional in 2025. The appetite for more time on the water was widespread: 51 percent said they wanted to fish more, versus 49 percent who felt they fished as often as they liked.

PERCEIVED LEVEL OF FISHING PARTICIPATION	PERCENTAGE
Occasional participant, fish as often as I want	32%
Occasional participant, would like to fish more often	31%
Avid fishing participant, would like to fish more often	20%
Avid fishing participant, fish as often as I want	17%

4.8M
FIRST-TIME
FRESHWATER
PARTICIPANTS
IN 2025

highest on record

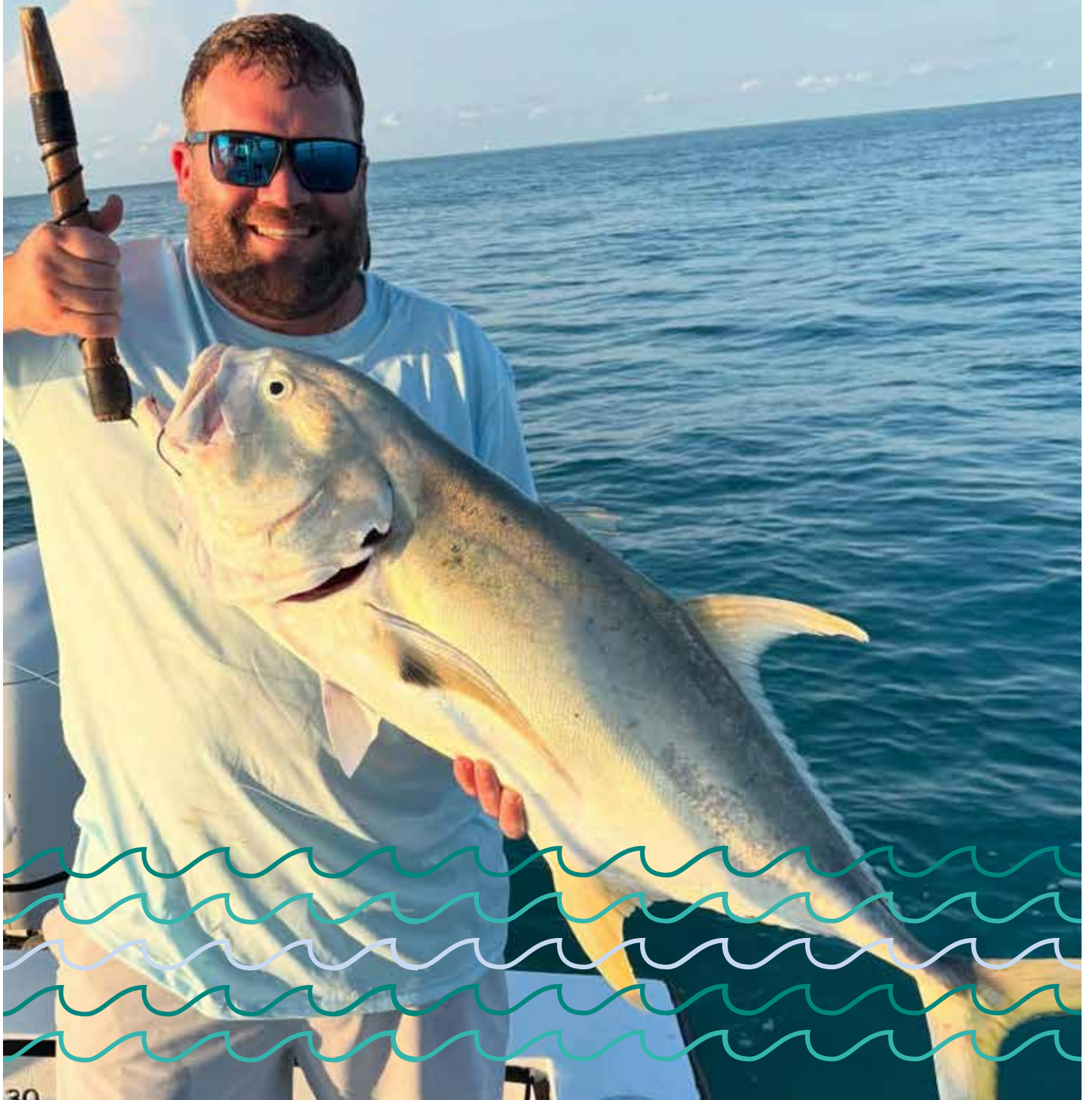
2.7M
FIRST-TIME
FRESHWATER
FEMALE
PARTICIPANTS
vs. 2.1M males



FIRST-TIME PARTICIPANTS

Freshwater fishing drew a record 4.8 million first-time participants—nearly 11 percent of all freshwater anglers. Women led the way among newcomers, outnumbering men 2.7 million to 2.1 million.

SALTWATER FISHING



SALTWATER FISHING

15.5M

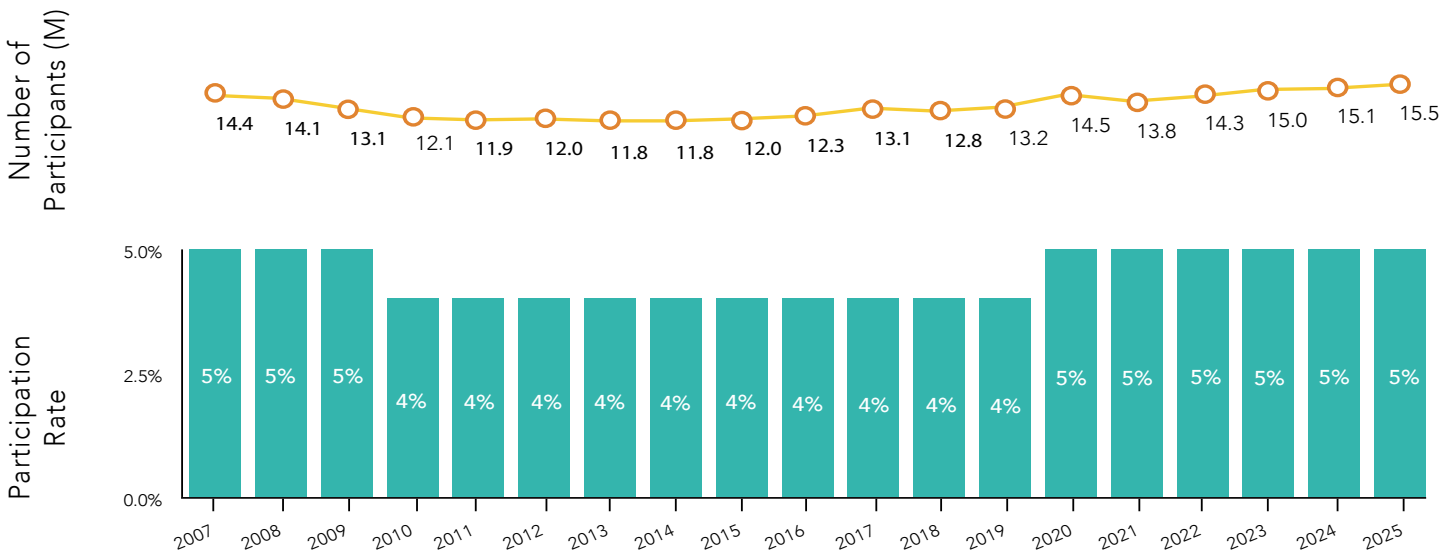
TOTAL #
OF PARTICIPANTS

5%

NATIONAL SALTWATER
PARTICIPATION RATE

PARTICIPATION OVER TIME

Saltwater fishing’s steady growth continued in 2025, with participation reaching a record 15.5 million, up 400,000 from the year prior and the third consecutive record high. The saltwater participation rate held at 5 percent, while average outings per angler remained at 12, pushing total saltwater outings up 2 percent to 183 million.



183M

OF
OUTINGS



12

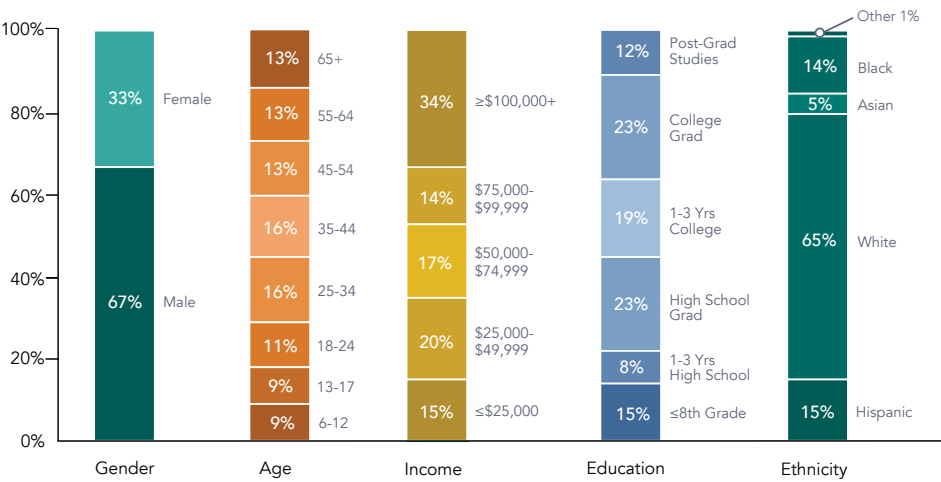
AVERAGE ANNUAL
OUTINGS



+3.5M

PARTICIPANTS
vs. a decade prior

WHO PARTICIPATED?



MOST DIVERSE TYPE OF FISHING

over one-third non-white participants

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Saltwater fishing maintained the most diverse participant base in 2025. Hispanic, Black, and Asian Americans together represented more than a third of saltwater anglers, well above their 27 percent share of all anglers. White participants accounted for 65 percent, compared to 77 percent in freshwater and 68 percent in fly fishing. Income distribution was balanced: 34 percent of saltwater anglers reported household incomes above \$100,000, with 35 percent earning under \$50,000.

WEST

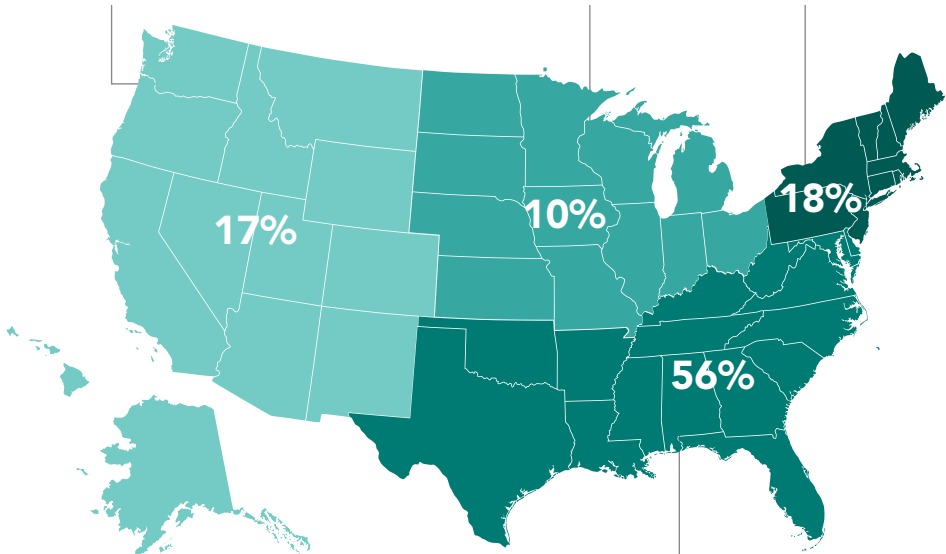
Population by region: 23%

MIDWEST

Population by region: 21%

NORTHEAST

Population by region: 17%



SOUTH

Population by region: 39%

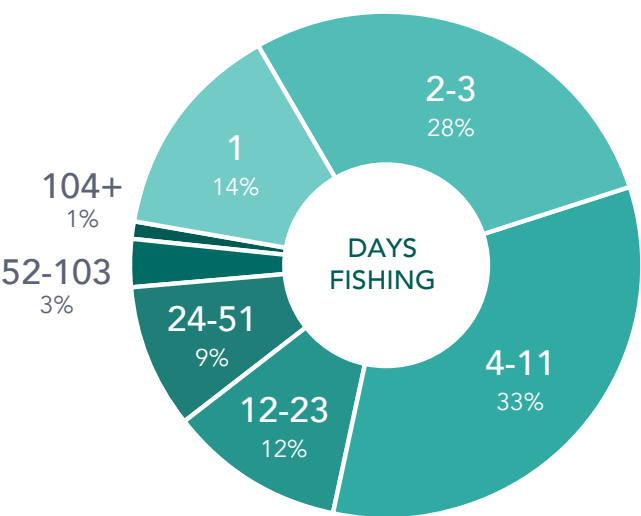
REGIONAL PARTICIPATION

Saltwater participants were concentrated in warmer coastal areas, as expected. The South, home to 39 percent of the U.S. population, claimed 56 percent of all saltwater anglers, a share that has never dipped below 50 percent even as the region's population has grown. The Midwest, by contrast, holds 21 percent of the national population but just 10 percent of saltwater participants.

LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

ANNUAL OUTINGS

Total saltwater outings peaked at 195 million in 2020; 2025 ranks second all-time at 183 million. Participation skewed active, as one in four participants saltwater fished more than once a month. 42 percent reported just one to three outings, a higher rate of infrequent participation than freshwater (30 percent) but lower than fly fishing (45 percent).



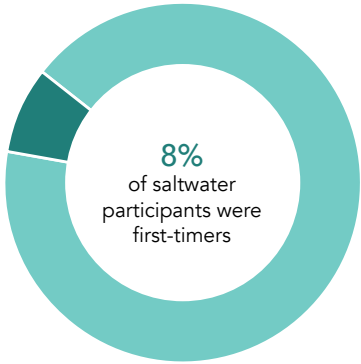
PERCEIVED LEVEL OF FISHING PARTICIPATION

57 percent of saltwater anglers described themselves as occasional participants, versus 43 percent who said they were avid anglers. Participants were closely divided between those who fish as often as they want (51 percent) and those who wanted to fish more often (49 percent).

PERCEIVED LEVEL OF FISHING PARTICIPATION	PERCENTAGE
Occasional participant, fish as often as I want	30%
Occasional participant, would like to fish more often	27%
Avid fishing participant, would like to fish more often	24%
Avid fishing participant, fish as often as I want	19%

24%
FISH MORE THAN
ONCE A MONTH

20%
OF FIRST-TIME
FISHING PARTICIPANTS
WERE SALTWATER
ANGLERS
vs. 14% in 2015



FIRST-TIME PARTICIPANTS

First-timers accounted for 8 percent of saltwater anglers in 2025, unchanged from the prior year, totaling 1.2 million newcomers. Men outnumbered women among them, 700,000 to 500,000, a reversal of the pattern seen in freshwater.

FLY FISHING



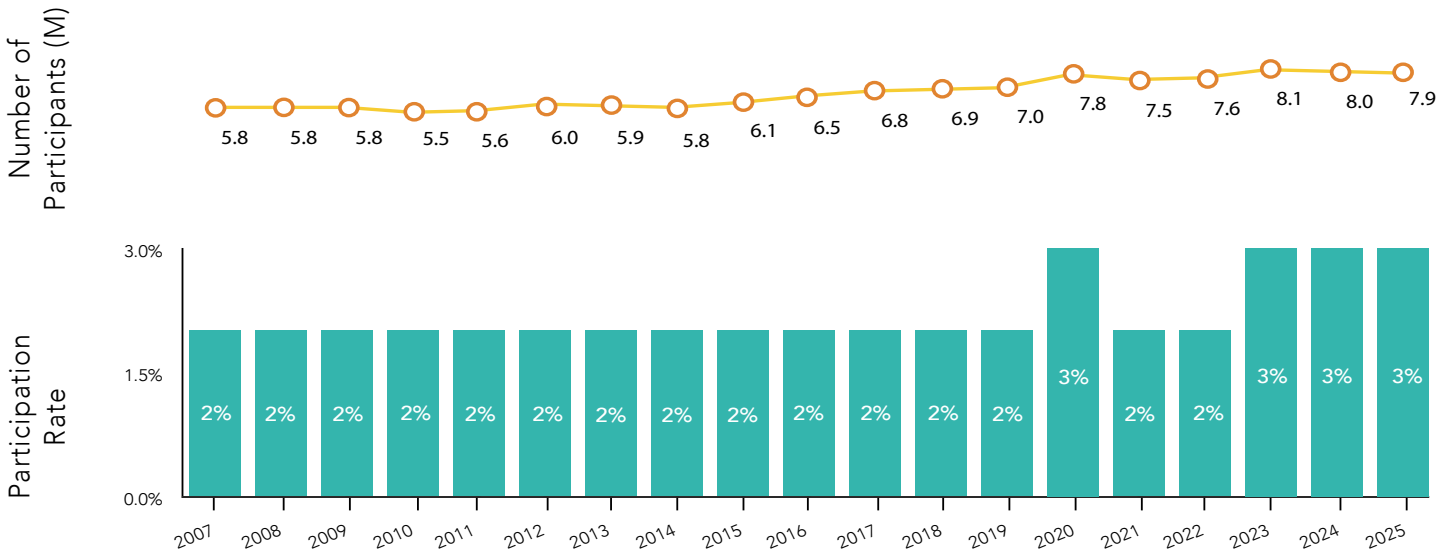
FLY FISHING

7.9M
TOTAL #
OF PARTICIPANTS

3%
NATIONAL FLY FISHING
PARTICIPATION RATE

PARTICIPATION OVER TIME

Fly fishing pulled back slightly in 2025, with participation dipping to 7.9 million, though that figure still represents nearly 2 million more anglers than a decade earlier. The national fly fishing participation rate held at 3 percent. Average outings per angler rose to 11, lifting total outings from 78 million to 83 million.



83M
TOTAL
OUTINGS

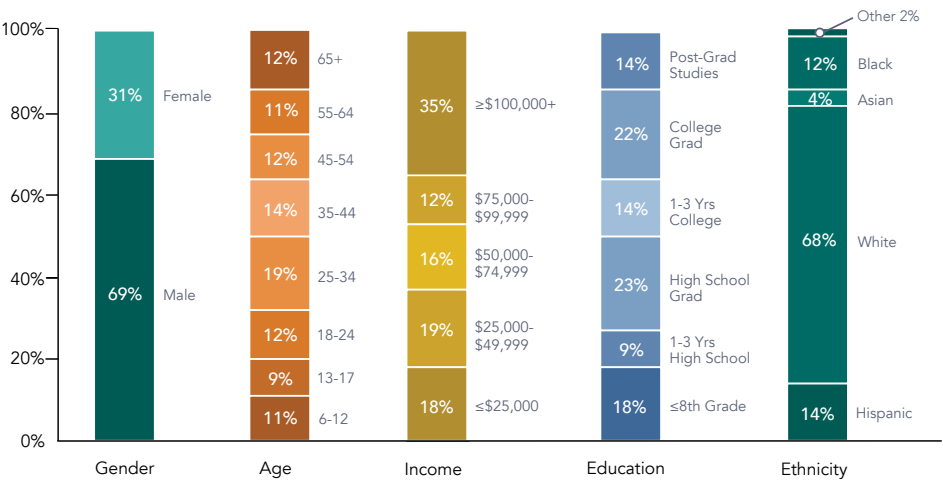


11
AVERAGE ANNUAL
OUTINGS



+1.8M
MORE PARTICIPANTS
IN 2025
vs. 2015

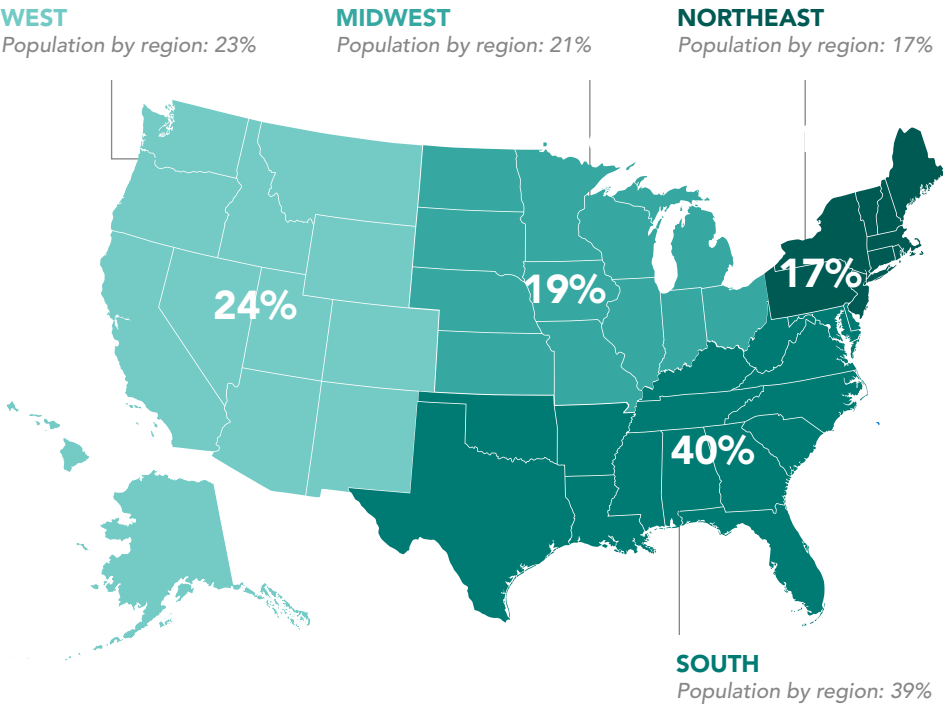
WHO PARTICIPATED?



HIGHEST INCOME AND EDUCATION LEVELS IN FISHING

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Fly fishing remained the most male-dominated discipline in 2025, with men accounting for 69 percent of participants. This ratio that has held nearly constant for a decade. Racial composition has been similarly stable, with non-White participants representing a largely unchanged share over the same period. Income was broadly distributed: 37 percent of fly anglers reported household incomes under \$50,000, while 35 percent reported over \$100,000.



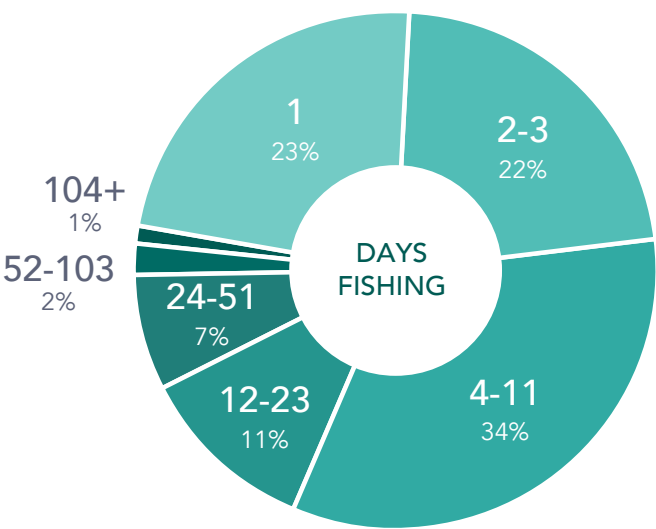
REGIONAL PARTICIPATION

Fly fishing is the only discipline where the West punches above its weight. The region, which spans the Mountain and Pacific states with abundant inland and coastal waterways, was home to 24 percent of fly participants while holding 23 percent of the American population. Freshwater and saltwater tell the opposite story: both drew just 17 percent of their participants from the West, well below the region's 23 percent population share.

LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

ANNUAL OUTINGS

Fly fishing continued to have the lowest share of highly active anglers. Just over 3 percent fished more than once a week in 2025, down steadily from 6 percent a decade earlier. Infrequent participation was also the norm: 45 percent of fly anglers reported just one to three outings, higher than saltwater (43 percent) and well above freshwater (30 percent). Average annual outings nonetheless ticked up to 11, from 10 the year prior.



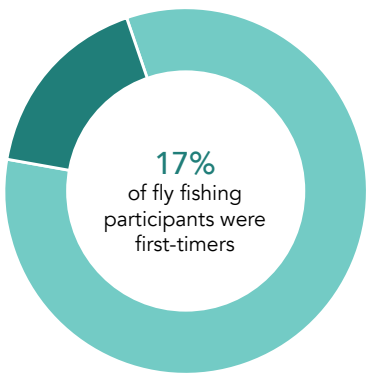
PERCEIVED LEVELS OF FISHING PARTICIPATION

Fly anglers were the most self-described avid of any discipline, as 56 identified that way, compared to 44 percent in saltwater and 37 percent in freshwater. Their satisfaction showed: 55 percent said they fished as often as they wanted, while 45 percent wished for more time on the water.

PERCEIVED LEVELS OF FISHING PARTICIPATION	PERCENTAGE
Avid fishing participant, fish as often as I want.	30%
Avid fishing participant, would like to fish more often	26%
Occasional participant, fish as often as I want	25%
Occasional participant, would like to fish more often	19%

21%
OF FEMALE FLY FISHING PARTICIPANTS WERE FIRST-TIMERS

16%
OF MALE FLY FISHING PARTICIPANTS WERE FIRST-TIMERS



FIRST-TIME PARTICIPANTS

Fly fishing continued to attract newcomers at an impressive rate in 2025, with first-timers accounting for 17 percent of all participants—more than double the saltwater share (8 percent) and well above freshwater (11 percent). The consistency of this trend points to an ongoing challenge: bringing new anglers in is working; keeping them is the harder task.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION



YOUTH ages 6-12

7.4M

TOTAL #
OF PARTICIPANTS

ages 6 to 12

26%

NATIONAL YOUTH 6-12
PARTICIPATION RATE

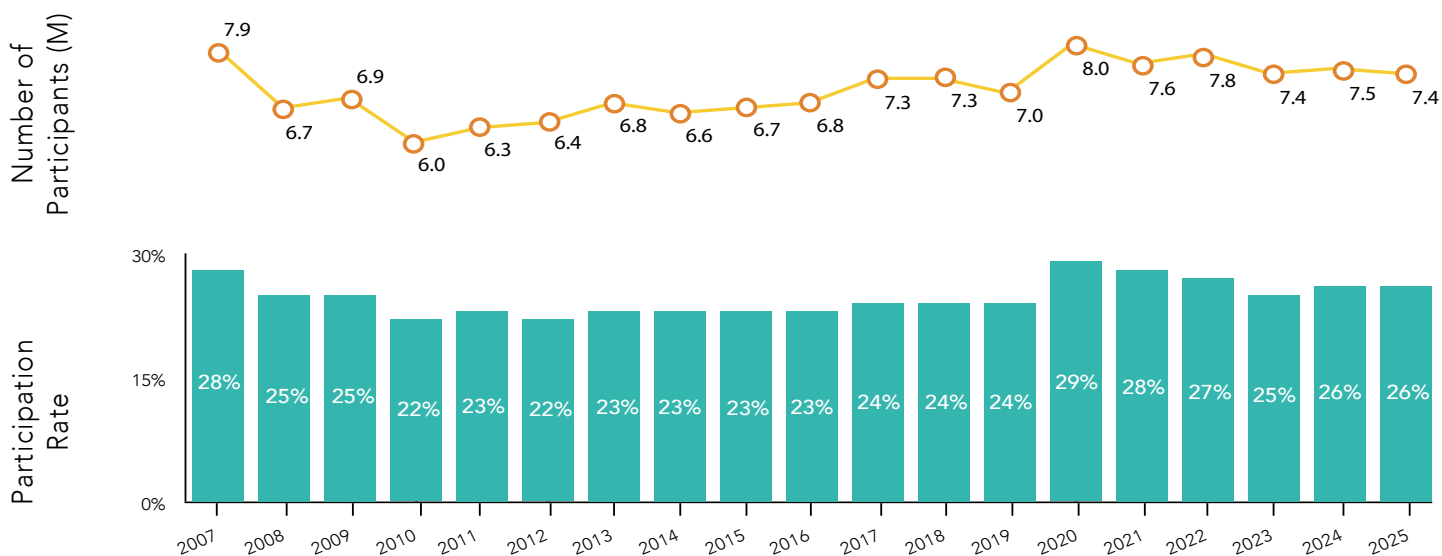
-600K

CHILD PARTICIPANTS
vs. 2020

PARTICIPATION OVER TIME

CHILDREN AGES 6-12

Youth fishing is losing ground. Participation in 2025 fell to 7.4 million, down 600,000 anglers from the 2020 peak. The national participation rate has flatlined at 26 percent, down from 29 percent in 2020.



105M

OF
OUTINGS



14

AVERAGE ANNUAL
OUTINGS



2

FEWER AVERAGE
ANNUAL OUTINGS
than ages 13 to 17

YOUTH ages 13-17

5.4M
TOTAL #
OF PARTICIPANTS
ages 13 to 17

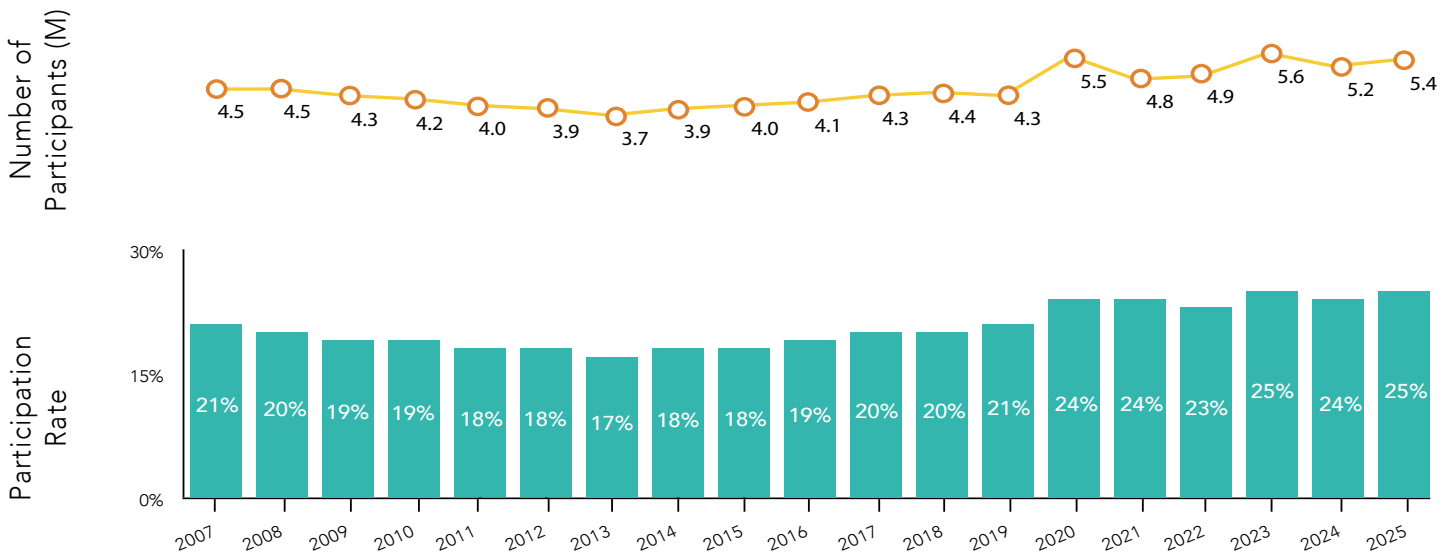
25%
NATIONAL YOUTH 13-17
PARTICIPATION RATE

+200K
ANGLERS AGES 13
TO 17
vs. 2024

PARTICIPATION OVER TIME

ADOLESCENTS AGES 13-17

Participation among 13 to 17 year olds was a bright spot in 2025. Anglers in that age group rose from 5.2 million to 5.4 million, and the participation rate ticked up from 24 percent to 25 percent. Notably, COVID-era gains appear to have held, as participation remained well above levels reported a decade ago.



86M
OF
OUTINGS



16
AVERAGE ANNUAL
OUTINGS

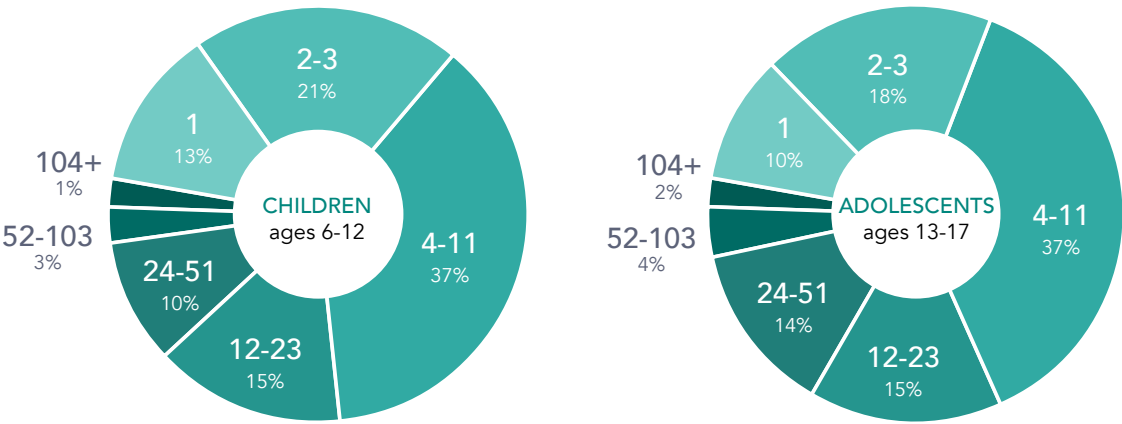


+1.4M
ADOLESCENT
PARTICIPANTS
vs. 2015

LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

ANNUAL OUTINGS

Total outings among children ages 6 to 12 rose to 105 million in 2025, up from 103 million the year prior, while adolescent outings climbed from 83 million to 86 million. Adolescent anglers fished more frequently: 35 percent went more than once a month, compared to 29 percent of younger children. This gap that has held roughly constant for five years.



PERCEIVED LEVELS OF FISHING PARTICIPATION

Occasional participation was equally common across both age groups, with 65 percent of children ages 6 to 12 and adolescents ages 13 to 17 describing themselves that way, while avid anglers made up the remaining 35 percent in each group. Notably, younger children were more likely than adolescents to express a desire to fish more often, pointing to stronger unmet demand and greater potential for deeper engagement among families with younger anglers.

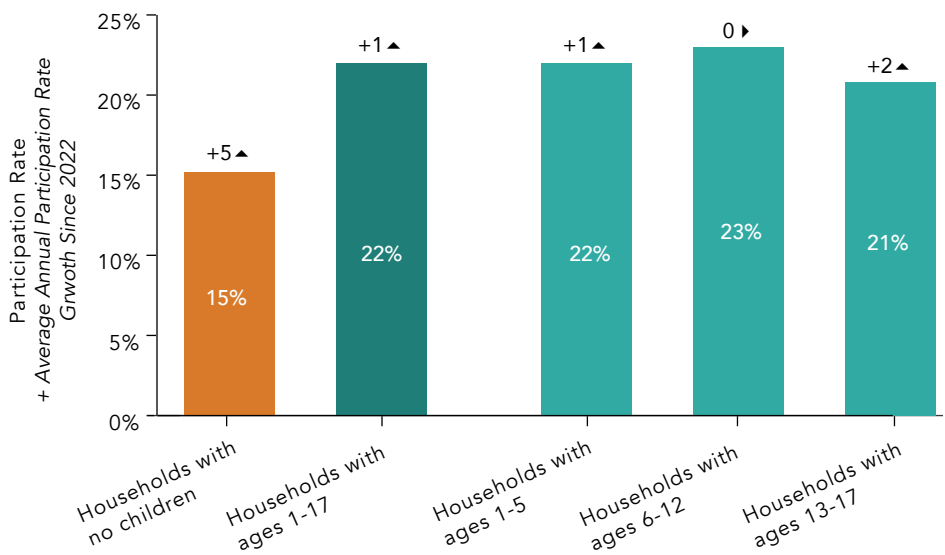
PERCEIVED LEVELS OF FISHING PARTICIPATION	CHILDREN	ADOLESCENTS
Occasional participant, fish as often as I want	33%	36%
Occasional participant, would like to fish more often	32%	29%
Avid fishing participant, would like to fish more often	19%	17%
Avid fishing participant, fish as often as I want.	16%	18%

PARTICIPATION IN-DEPTH

PARTICIPATION AMONG ADULTS WITH KIDS

Adults with children at home, particularly those with younger kids, participated in fishing at significantly higher rates than adults without. In 2025, 22 percent of households with children fished, compared to 15 percent of those without, a gap that has held consistently since data collection began in 2007.

Having children at home does not automatically translate to faster participation growth. Over the past three years, households without children grew at an average of 5 percent annually—outpacing households with children which averaged just 1 percent growth over the same period. The likeliest explanation is the rising participation of anglers 65 and older, who skew toward child-free households.



FIRST-TIME PARTICIPANTS

3 percent of children and adolescents, 1.7 million in total, tried fishing for the first time in 2025. First-timer numbers exceed pre-COVID levels, as between 2014 and 2019 an average of 1.3 million kids fished for the first time.

FEMALE

participation rate among:

CHILDREN: 20%

ADOLESCENTS: 19%

MALE

participation rate among:

CHILDREN: 31%

ADOLESCENTS: 30%

1.7M

KIDS AGES 6 TO 17
WERE FIRST-TIME
PARTICIPANTS

in 2025

ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF FISHING

TOP CROSSOVER ACTIVITIES

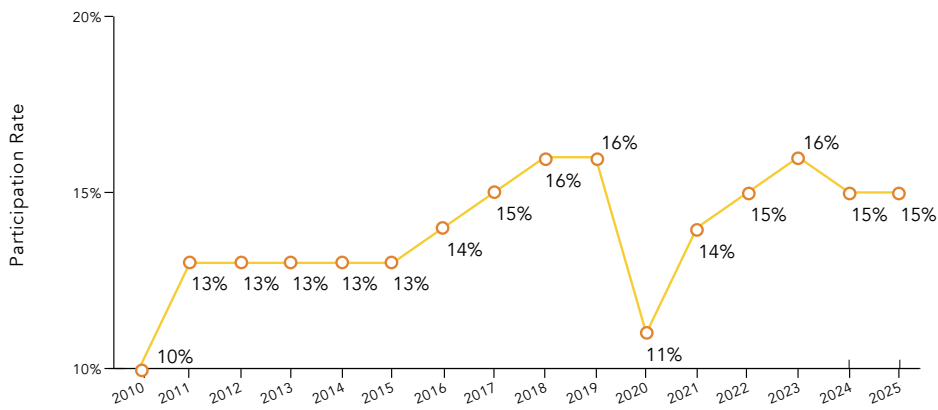
Beyond fishing, participants ages 6 to 17 pursued a wide range of outdoor activities, with camping, bicycling, and hiking leading the way.

Which activities did you participate in outside of fishing?

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES		2015 PERCENTAGE	2025 PERCENTAGE
	Camping	45%	51%
	Bicycling	45%	43%
	Hiking	24%	30%
	Running	29%	26%
	Kayaking	10%	17%
	Hunting	18%	16%

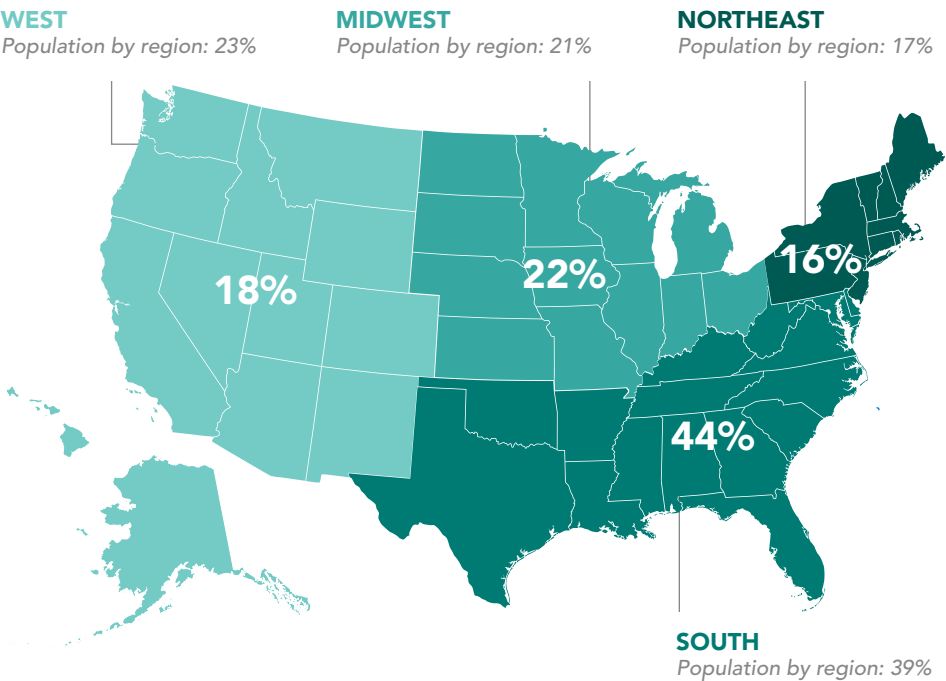
WHO CONSIDERED FISHING?

Expressed interest in fishing, but did not participate



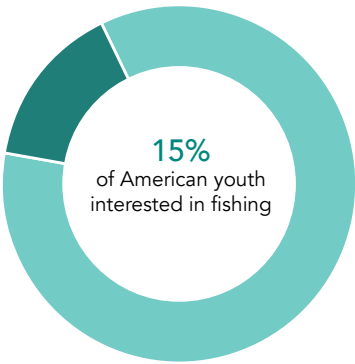
CONSIDERING FISHING OVER TIME

Interest in fishing among non-participating youth remained strong in 2025, with 15 percent of Americans ages 6 to 17 expressing interest in trying the sport, up from 13 percent in 2015. These 5.7 million young people represent a prime opportunity to expand participation.



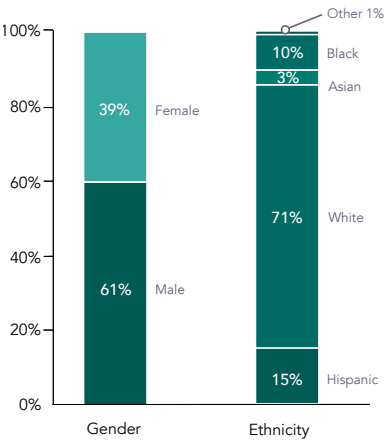
CONSIDERING PARTICIPANTS BY REGION

Young would-be anglers were concentrated in the South and Midwest, mirroring the broader non-participant population. The South represented 44 percent of interested youth with just 39 percent of the national population. The Midwest showed a similar pattern, with 22 percent of interested youth on 21 percent of the population.



YOUTH CONSIDERING PARTICIPATION

In 2025, 24 percent of those considering but not yet participating in fishing were under the age of 18, totaling 5.7 million young Americans.



CONSIDERING DEMOGRAPHICS

Among young Americans who are interested in fishing, the share who are Black and Hispanic has slowly declined for over a decade. This underscores the need for expanded outreach to engage underrepresented populations.

BLACK PARTICIPATION



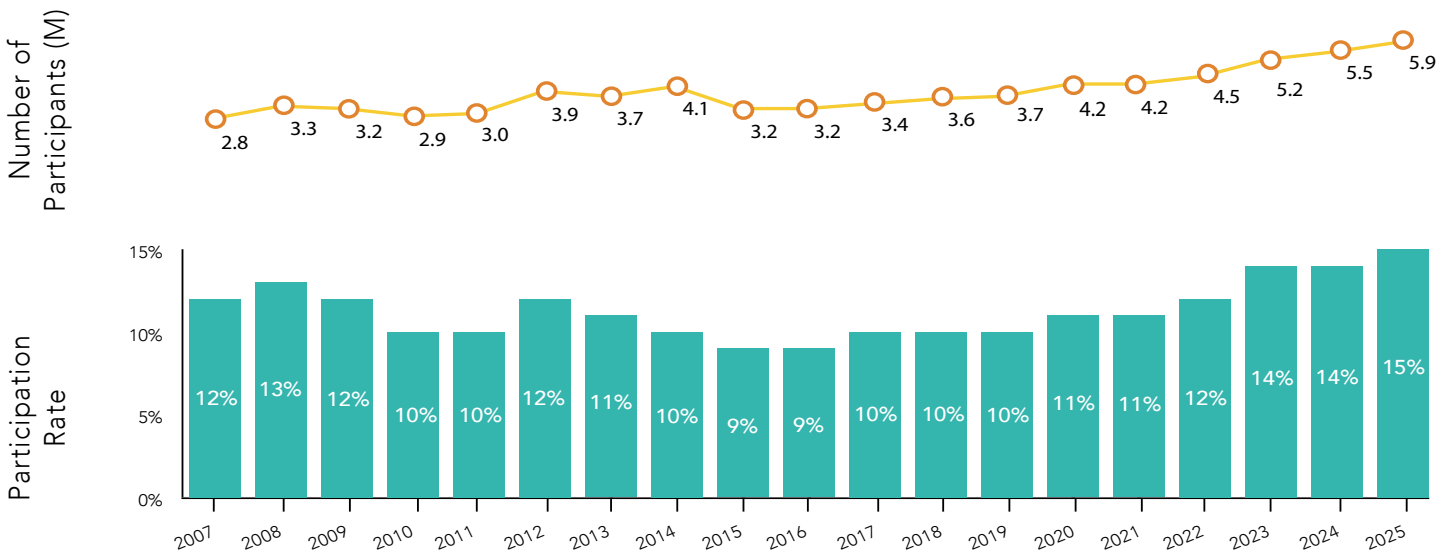
BLACK PARTICIPANTS

5.9M
TOTAL #
OF PARTICIPANTS

15%
NATIONAL BLACK
PARTICIPATION RATE

PARTICIPATION OVER TIME

Nearly 6 million Black Americans ages 6 and older fished in 2025, the highest number since tracking began in 2007 and an increase of 400,000 from the prior year. The Black participation rate rose to 15 percent, up from 14 percent. Every style of fishing saw gains in both participant numbers and participation rate year-over-year.



82M
TOTAL #
OF OUTINGS

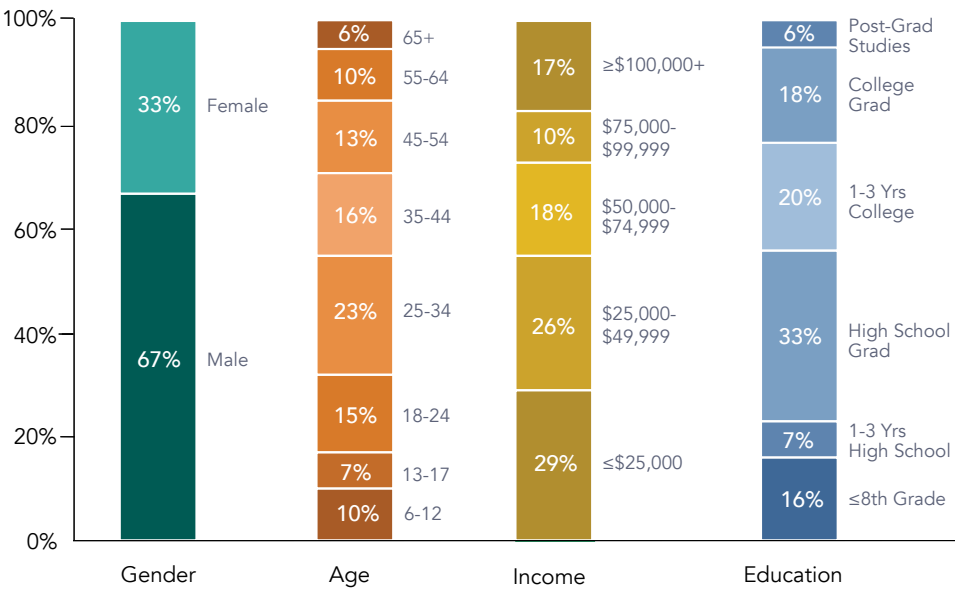


14
AVERAGE ANNUAL
OUTINGS



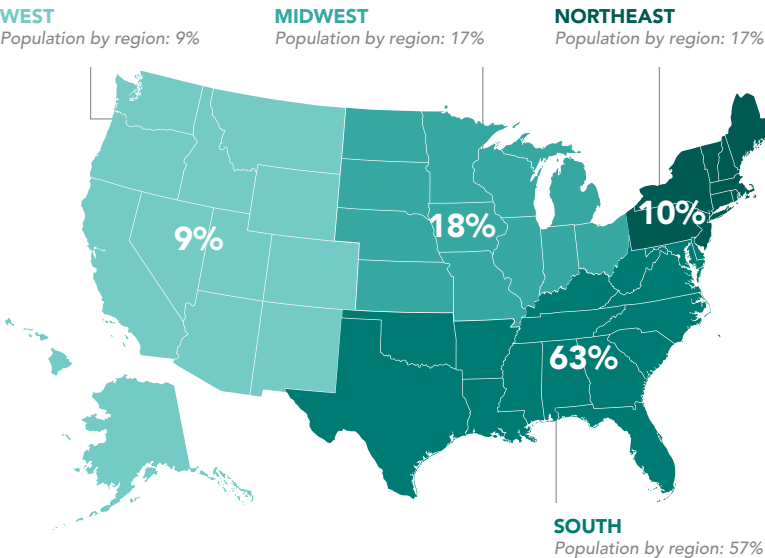
400K
MORE BLACK
PARTICIPANTS
in 2025 vs. 2024

WHO PARTICIPATED?



PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Black anglers skewed notably young in 2025: 55 percent were under 35, with the 25 to 34 age group leading the way. This bucked a broader national trend in which older anglers have steadily gained share at the expense of younger ones. Instead, the 25 to 34 cohort grew its share of Black participants by 4 percent from the prior year, while the 65-and-older cohort fell 6 percent. Black anglers were also relatively affluent and educated: more than 1 in 4 had household incomes above \$75,000, and nearly half had completed at least some college.



REGIONAL PARTICIPATION

The South dominated Black fishing participation in 2025, accounting for 63 percent of Black anglers while home to 57 percent of the nation's Black population. In the Northeast, Black Americans were underrepresented among fishing participants, comprising 10 percent of anglers despite accounting for 17 percent of the regional population.

PARTICIPATION BY FISHING CATEGORY

Black anglers have emerged as a powerful growth driver of fishing participation. The number of Black fishing participants grew 17 percent on average annually for the last 3 years. 2.7 million more Black anglers went fishing in 2025 than did a decade earlier. Between 2015 and 2025, freshwater fishing gained 1.1 million Black participants, while saltwater and fly fishing increased by 1 million and 400,000, respectively.

TYPE OF FISHING	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS (M)
All fishing*	5.9
Freshwater	3.9
Saltwater	2.2
Fly	1.0

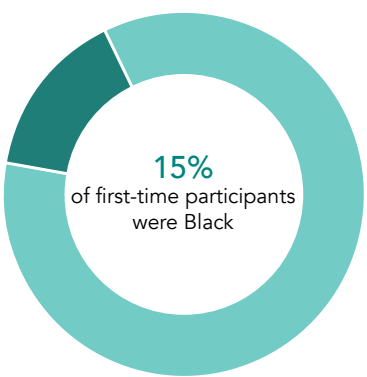
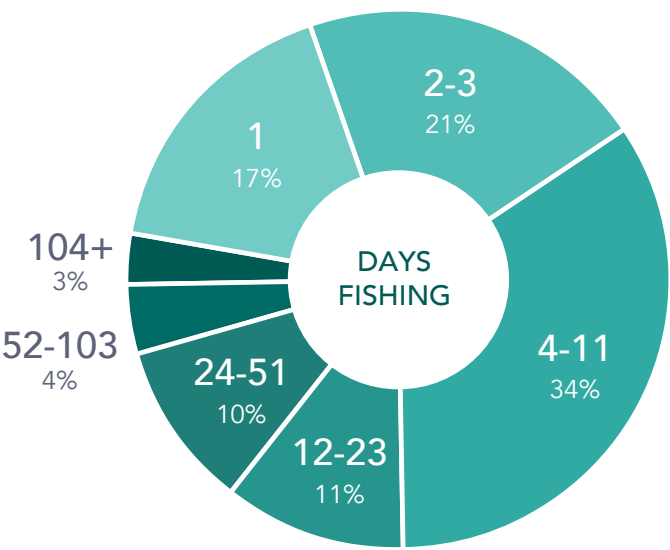
TYPE OF FISHING	PARTICIPATION RATE
All fishing*	15%
Freshwater	10%
Saltwater	5%
Fly	2%

*Participants may have reported participating in more than one type of fishing.

LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

ANNUAL OUTINGS

The least-engaged segment of Black anglers, those with just one to three outings per year, now make up 38 percent total anglers, a worrisome sign for participation growth. At the other end of the spectrum, the most dedicated anglers, those fishing at least once a week, gained ground, rising from 5 percent of Black participants in 2024 to 7 percent in 2025.



FIRST-TIME PARTICIPANTS

6 percent of Black Americans ages 6 and over tried fishing for the first time in 2025. These 2.2 million new anglers made up 15 percent of the all new participants.

PERCEIVED LEVELS OF FISHING PARTICIPATION

Black anglers were nearly evenly split in how they see themselves: 51 percent considered themselves occasional participants, while 49 percent identified as avid anglers. Notably, 49 percent wished they could fish more often.

PERCEIVED LEVELS OF FISHING PARTICIPATION	PERCENTAGE
Occasional participant, fish as often as I want	28%
Avid fishing participant, would like to fish more often	26%
Occasional participant, would like to fish more often	23%
Avid fishing participant, fish as often as I want.	23%

ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF FISHING

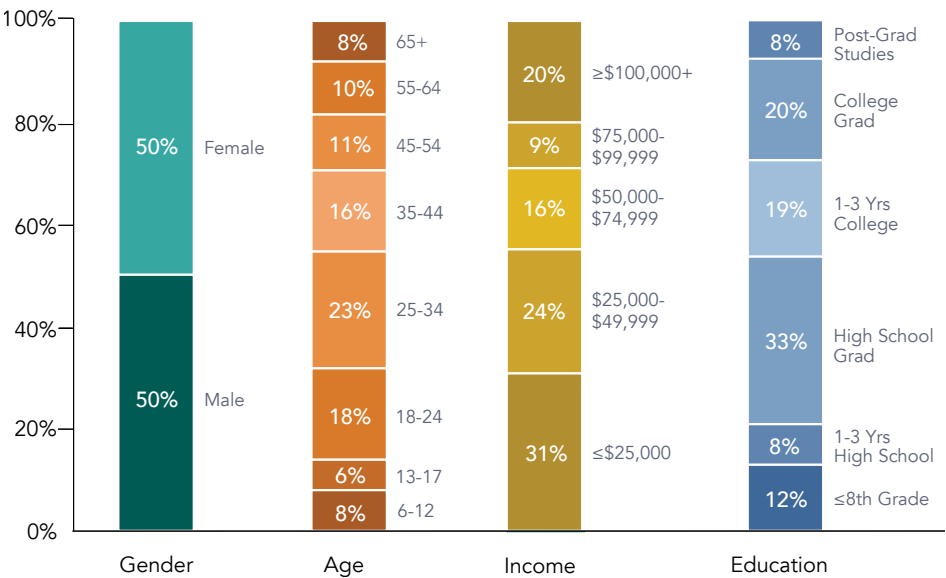
TOP CROSSOVER ACTIVITIES

In addition to fishing, Black participants enjoyed a huge variety of other activities. Among the most popular were camping, bicycling, and running.

Which activities did you participate in outside of fishing?

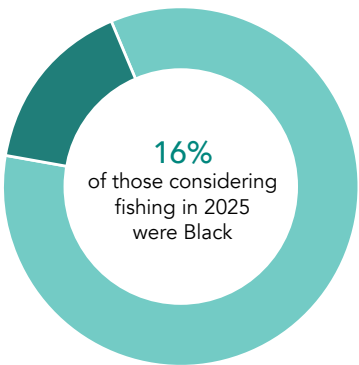
OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES		2015 PERCENTAGE	2025 PERCENTAGE
	Camping	12%	26%
	Bicycling	23%	21%
	Running	23%	19%
	Hiking	12%	16%
	Swimming	15%	15%
	Hunting	11%	8%

WHO CONSIDERED FISHING?



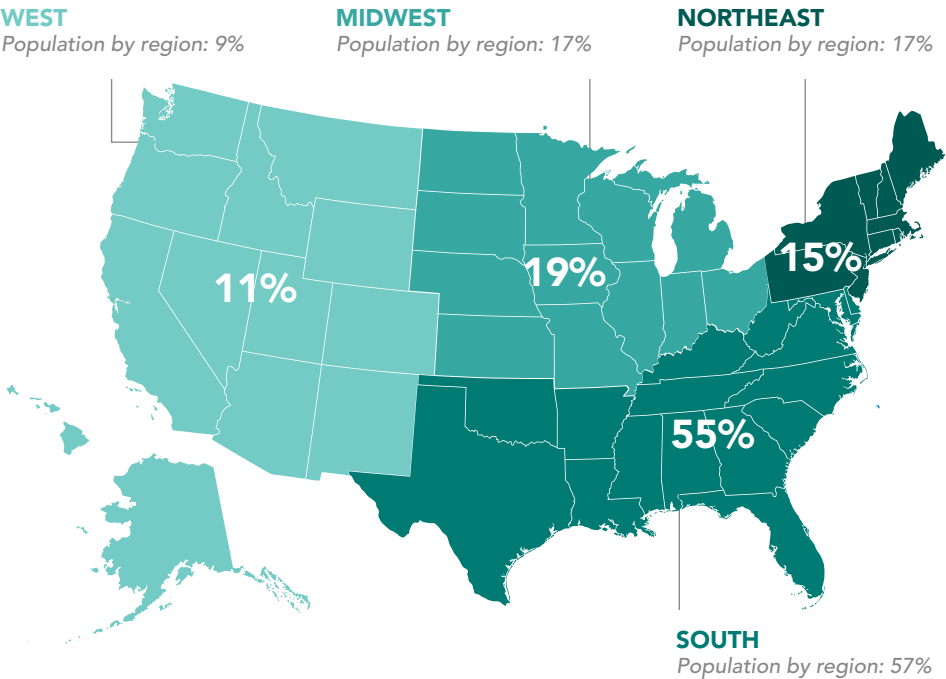
DEMOGRAPHICS OF PEOPLE CONSIDERING FISHING

Among Black Americans considering fishing, just 14 percent were under age 18, versus 17 percent for the total considering Black population. 50 percent of those considering were female, versus 17 percent for the total considering Black population.



PEOPLE CONSIDERING FISHING

Some 13 percent of Black Americans considered taking up fishing in 2025, representing 4.4 million potential participants, the highest number on record.



THOSE CONSIDERING FISHING BY REGION

55 percent of Black Americans who considered fishing in 2025 lived in the South, where 57 percent of Black Americans reside. The Midwest, West, and Northeast each accounted for a much smaller share that was in line with their population share.

HISPANIC PARTICIPATION



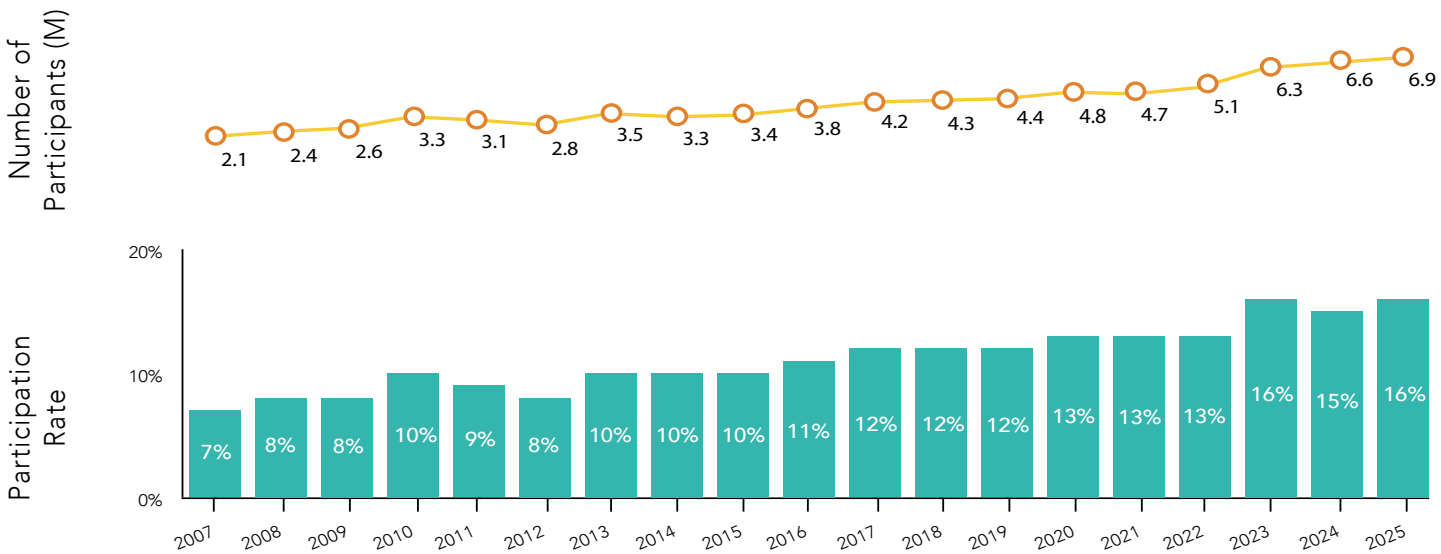
HISPANIC PARTICIPANTS

6.9M
TOTAL #
OF PARTICIPANTS

16%
NATIONAL HISPANIC
PARTICIPATION RATE

PARTICIPATION OVER TIME

Fishing participation among Hispanic Americans ages 6 and over doubled over the past decade, climbing from 3.4 million in 2015 to an all-time high of 6.9 million in 2025. Growth has accelerated in recent years, with participant numbers rising an average of 11 percent annually since 2022. The Hispanic participation rate held steady at 16 percent.



90M
TOTAL #
OF OUTINGS

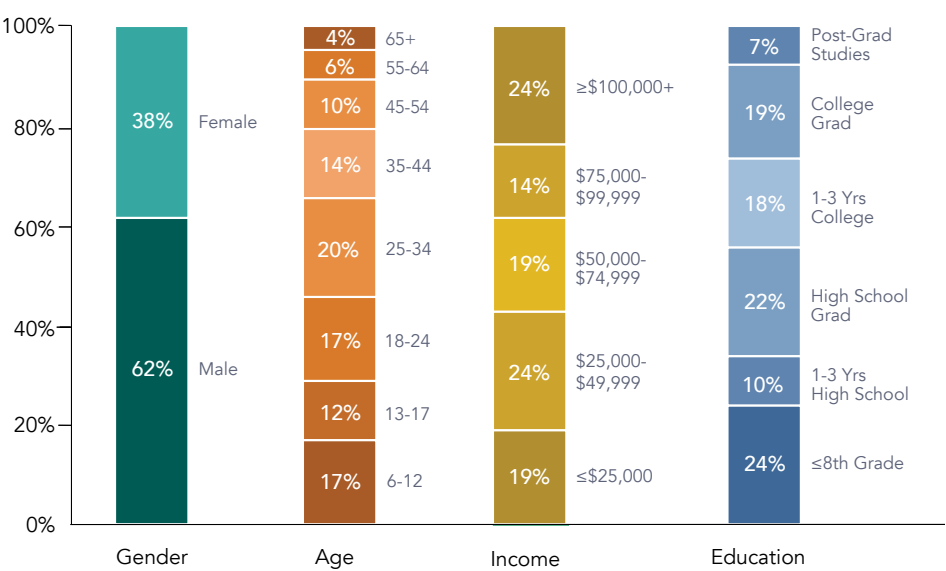


13
AVERAGE ANNUAL
OUTINGS



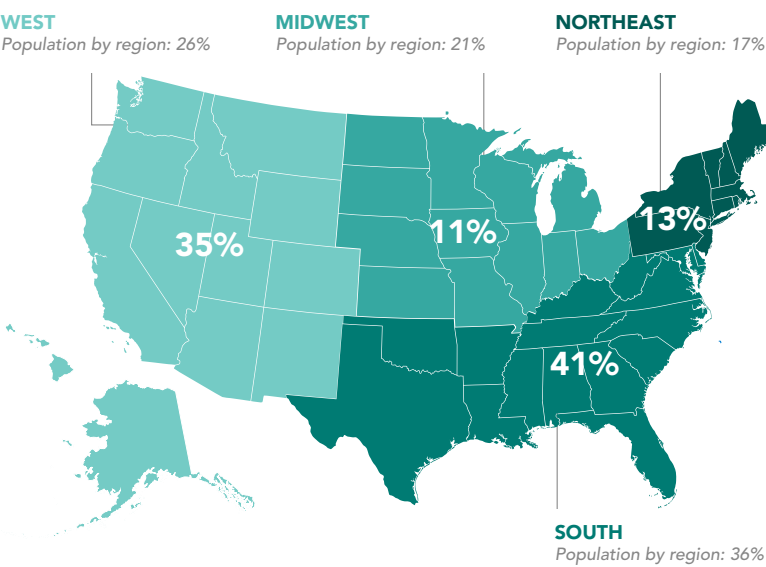
+3.5M
MORE HISPANIC
PARTICIPANTS
in 2025 than a decade ago

WHO PARTICIPATED?



PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2025, Hispanic anglers skewed younger than the broader angling population. 29 percent were under 18, compared to 22 percent of all anglers, and 37 percent were ages 18 to 35, compared to 24 percent. This relatively young base, combined with steady share growth among Hispanic anglers, underscores the importance of outreach to those considering the sport.



REGIONAL PARTICIPATION

The American West (the Pacific and Mountain regions) was home to 35 percent of Hispanic anglers in 2025, with Pacific coast states alone accounting for nearly 1 in 4. The South held another 41 percent.

PARTICIPATION BY FISHING CATEGORY

2025 results reiterated that Hispanic anglers remain a critical and increasingly influential constituency in the recreational fishing industry. Compared to 2024, the number of Hispanic anglers increased strongly in freshwater and saltwater fishing, and rose modestly in fly fishing.

TYPE OF FISHING	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS (M)
All fishing*	6.9
Freshwater	4.3
Saltwater	2.3
Fly	1.1

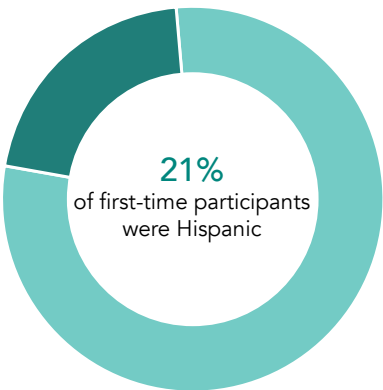
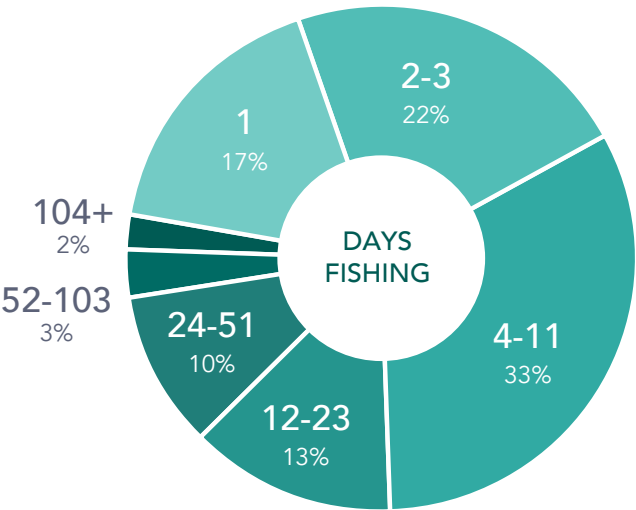
TYPE OF FISHING	PARTICIPATION RATE
All fishing*	16%
Freshwater	10%
Saltwater	5%
Fly	2%

*Participants may have reported participating in more than one type of fishing.

LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

ANNUAL OUTINGS

Among Hispanic anglers, the balance is shifting in the wrong direction. Casual participants fishing just 1 to 3 times a year grew from 27 percent to 39 percent of the total over the past decade, while the most committed anglers—those fishing more than once a week—saw their share cut in half, falling from 10 percent in 2007 to just 5 percent in 2025.



FIRST-TIME PARTICIPANTS

In 2025, 3 percent of Hispanic Americans ages 6 and over fished for the first time, adding more than 1.3 million new anglers to the sport. Hispanic first-timers represented 21 percent of the 6.3 million new participants overall.

PERCEIVED LEVELS OF FISHING PARTICIPATION

A majority of Hispanic fishing participants, 62 percent, considered themselves occasional participants, and 52 percent would like to fish more often. Their growing share of the U.S. population and strong interest in fishing more frequently confirms that Hispanics will continue to be a key demographic going forward.

PERCEIVED LEVELS OF FISHING PARTICIPATION	PERCENTAGE
Occasional participant, fish as often as I want	32%
Occasional participant, would like to fish more often	30%
Avid fishing participant, would like to fish more often	22%
Avid fishing participant, fish as often as I want.	16%

ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF FISHING

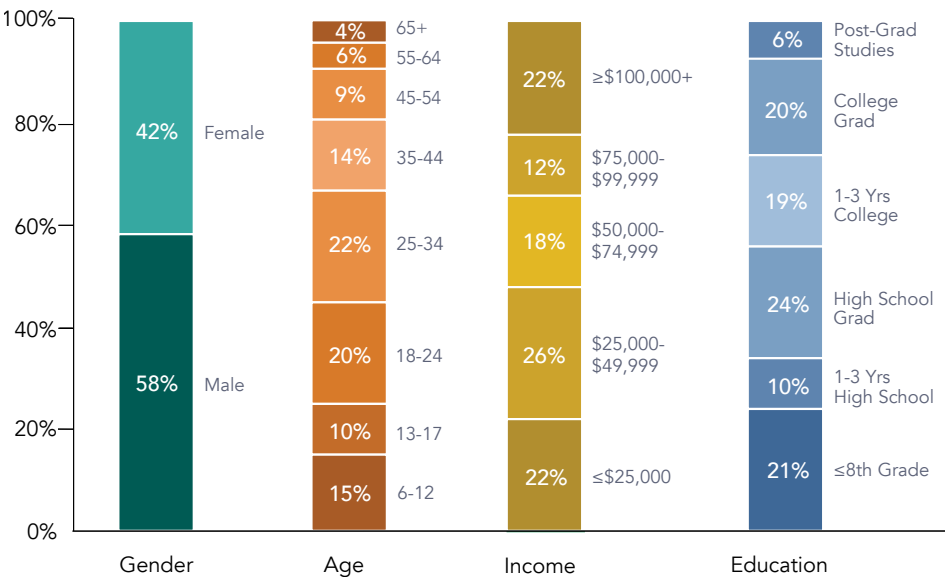
TOP CROSSOVER ACTIVITIES

In addition to fishing, Hispanic participants enjoyed a huge variety of other activities in 2025. The most popular outdoor activities were camping, bicycling, and hiking.

Which activities did you participate in outside of fishing?

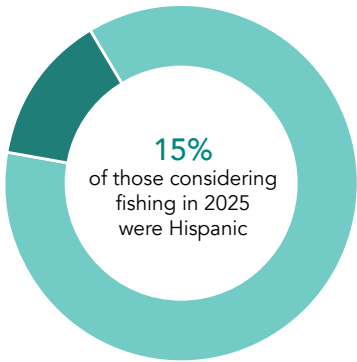
OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES		2015 PERCENTAGE	2025 PERCENTAGE
	Camping	42%	46%
	Bicycling	32%	36%
	Hiking	21%	31%
	Running	34%	29%
	Hunting	23%	17%
	Kayaking	16%	16%

WHO CONSIDERED FISHING?



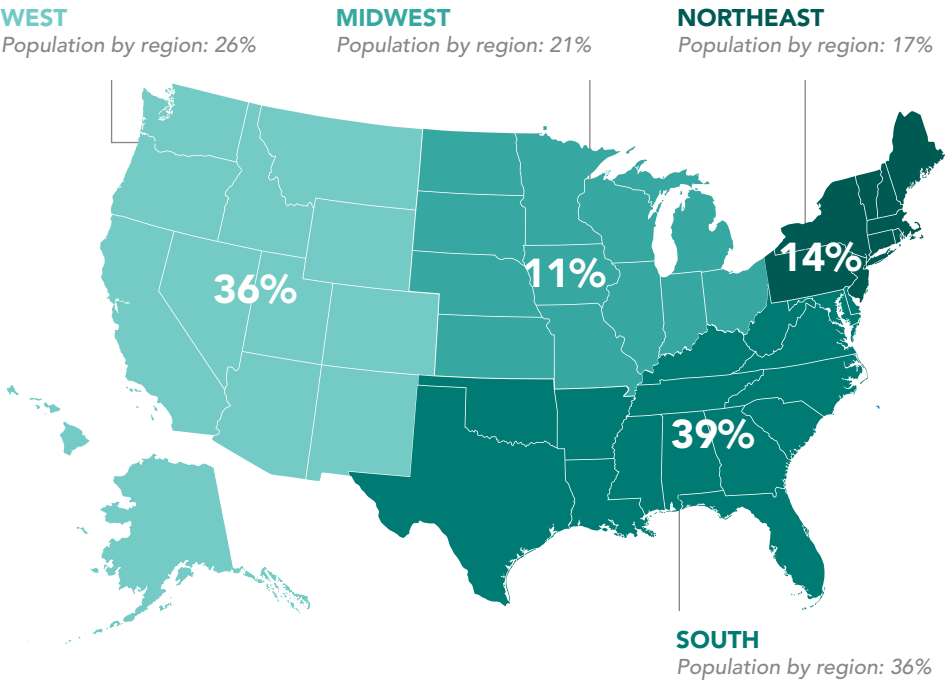
DEMOGRAPHICS OF PEOPLE CONSIDERING FISHING

Among Hispanics interested in fishing, 45 percent were under 25 and another 36 percent fell between the ages of 25 and 44, a generational skew that highlights the importance of experienced anglers mentoring newcomers to the sport. Meanwhile, 42 percent of those considering fishing were female, a slight dip from 44 percent the year prior.



PEOPLE CONSIDERING FISHING

11 percent of Hispanics in the U.S. considered fishing in 2025, representing 4 million potential participants, a 15 percent increase over 2024. Activating even a small fraction of these potential customers would yield significant benefits for the industry.



THOSE CONSIDERING FISHING BY REGION

Hispanics interested in participating were concentrated primarily in the American South and West, with 75 percent living within those regions. Far fewer resided in the Midwest and Northeast.

FEMALE PARTICIPATION



FEMALE PARTICIPANTS

21.1M

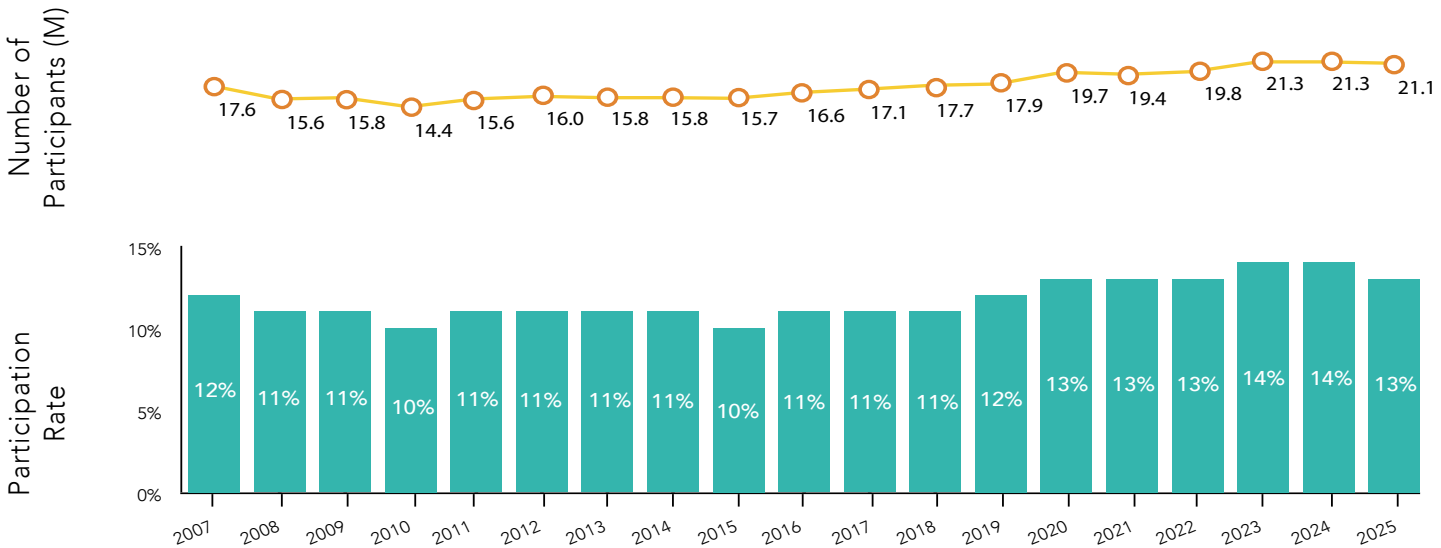
TOTAL #
OF PARTICIPANTS

13%

NATIONAL FEMALE
PARTICIPATION RATE

PARTICIPATION OVER TIME

Female participation dipped slightly, falling from 21.3 million in 2024 to 21.1 million in 2025, with the female participation rate slipping from 14 percent to 13 percent. Despite this modest decline, the long-term trajectory remains strong, as female anglers grew by 5.4 million over the past decade, from 15.7 million in 2015 to 21.1 million in 2025, a 34 percent increase. In 2025, females represented 37 percent of total anglers, 41 percent of first-time participants, and 43 percent of those considering fishing.



299M

TOTAL #
OF OUTINGS



14

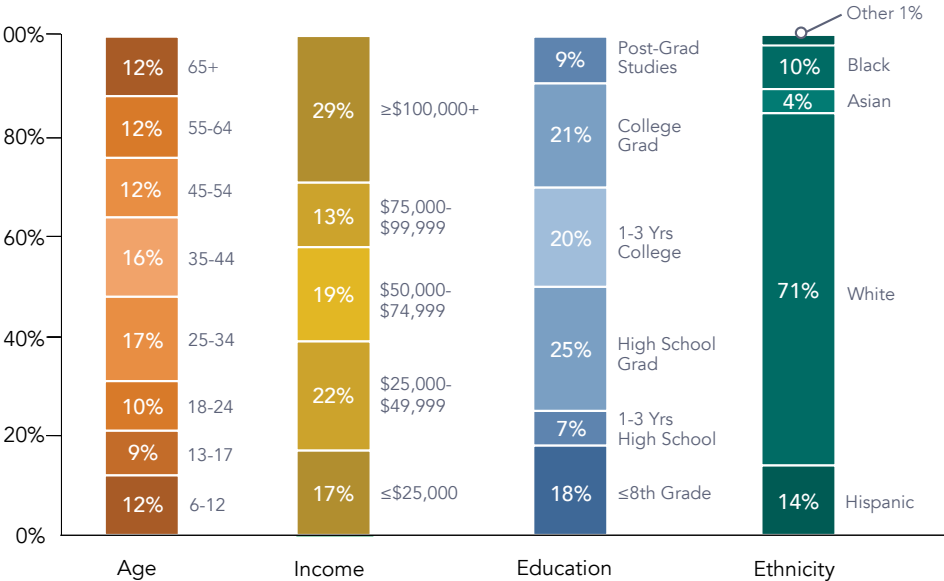
AVERAGE ANNUAL
OUTINGS



+5.4M

MORE FEMALE
PARTICIPANTS
vs. a decade ago

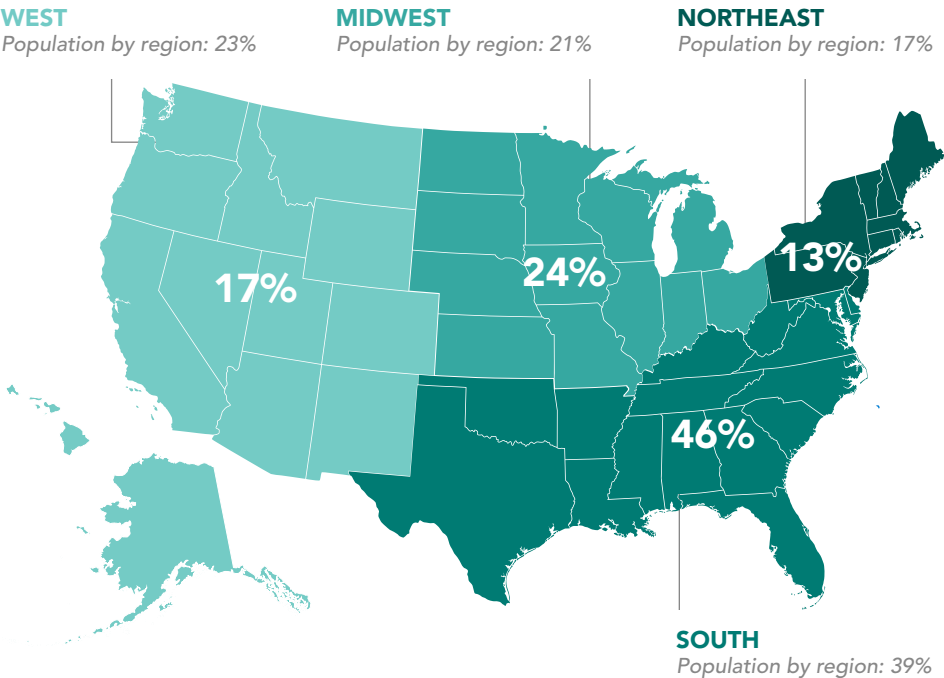
WHO PARTICIPATED?



30%
ANNUAL
HOUSEHOLD
INCOME \$100,000+

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Females comprised 37 percent of participants in 2025, unchanged from the year prior. Half reported completing at least some college, and nearly 3 in 10 had a household income exceeding \$100,000. 71 percent were White, versus 73 percent of the overall fishing population, while 14 percent were Hispanic, compared to 12 percent of total anglers.



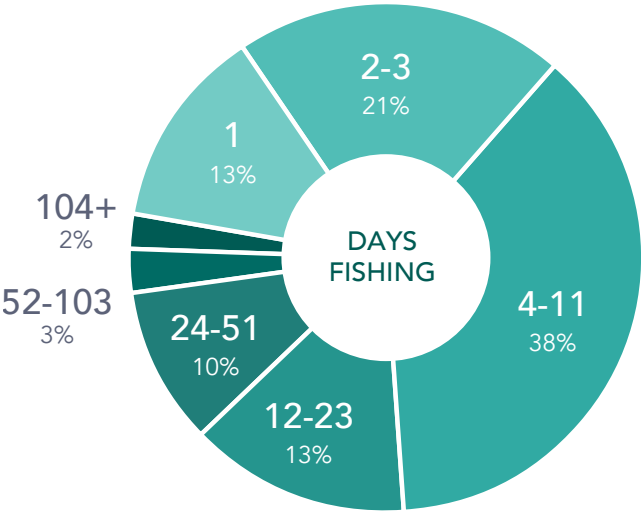
REGIONAL PARTICIPATION

The South was home to the largest share of female anglers, accounting for 46 percent of female participants, with the Northeast, Midwest, and West each representing much smaller portions.

LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

ANNUAL OUTINGS

Average annual outings among female participants dropped to 14 in 2025, down from 15 the year prior. As with other fishing populations, the least frequent participants made up a slowly growing share—1 in 3 fished just 1 to 3 times annually, and over 7 in 10 fished less than once per month. In total, female anglers accounted for 299 million of the 918 million outings reported in 2025, down from 311 million in 2024.



PERCEIVED LEVELS OF FISHING PARTICIPATION

71 percent of female participants described themselves as occasional anglers, while 53 percent reported they would like to fish more often. These perceived participation levels were roughly comparable to those reported by other groups.

PERCEIVED LEVELS OF FISHING PARTICIPATION	PERCENTAGE
Occasional participant, would like to fish more often	37%
Occasional participant, fish as often as I want	34%
Avid fishing participant, would like to fish more often	16%
Avid fishing participant, fish as often as I want	14%

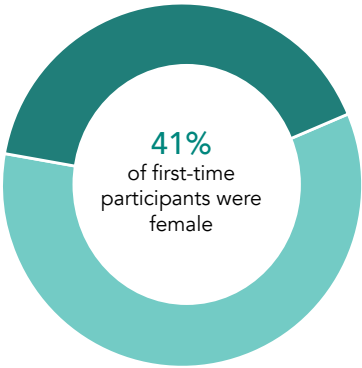
299M

OUTINGS IN 2025

vs. 261M a decade ago

53%

OF FEMALE ANGLERS
WOULD LIKE TO FISH
MORE OFTEN



FIRST-TIME PARTICIPANTS

The number of first-time female participants jumped to 2.6 million in 2025, up from 2 million in 2024, an encouraging 30 percent increase. Adding to that optimism, 2 percent of American women fished for the first time, both signs of healthy growth for the sport.

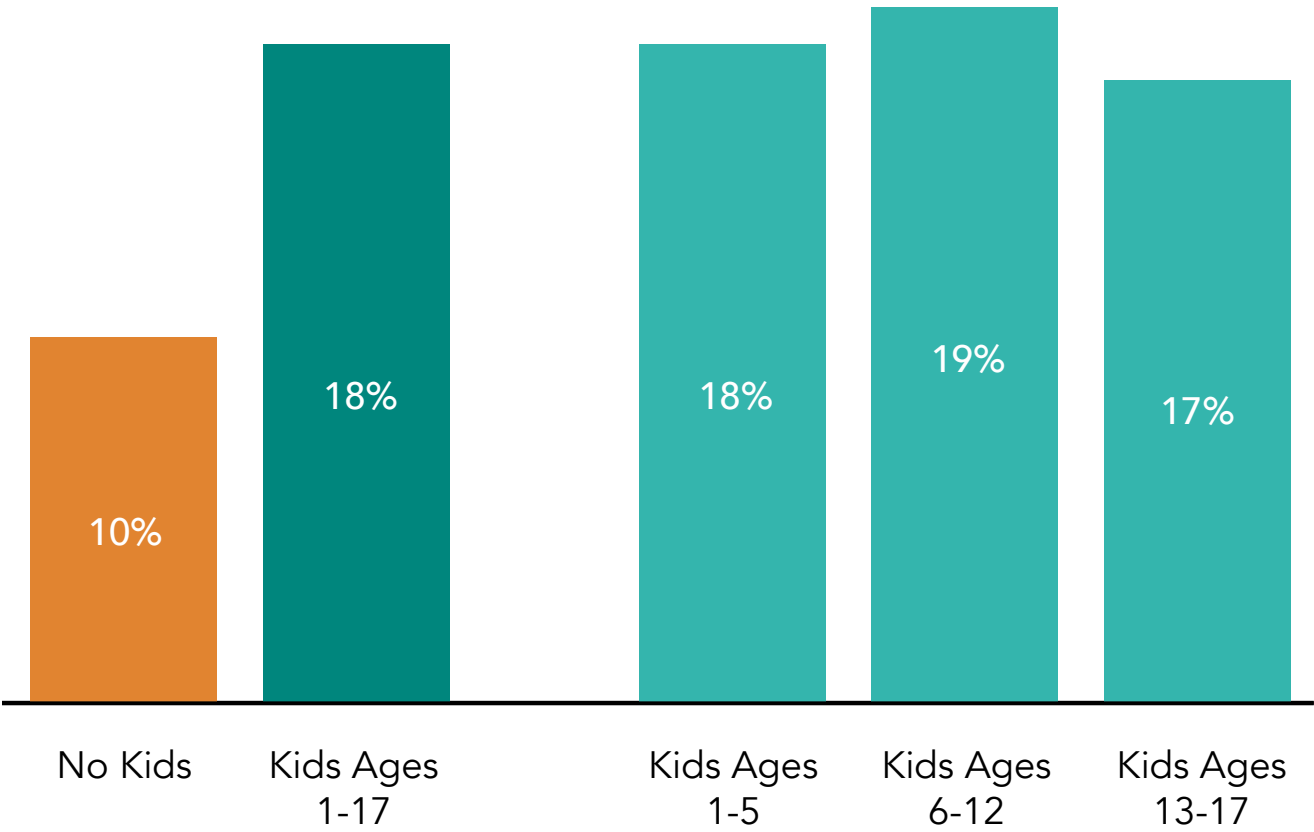
THE INFLUENCE OF KIDS

PARTICIPATION AMONG FEMALES WITH KIDS

Women with children in their households were more likely to fish, particularly when kids ages 6 to 12 were present. 18 percent of women with children ages 1 to 17 went fishing in 2024, compared to 10 percent of those without children at home.

That said, children are an encouragement rather than a requirement for participation growth. Over the past three years, the female participation rate in households with children ages 1 to 17 grew an average of 2 percent annually, while households without children saw a stronger average annual growth rate of 5 percent.

Female participation rate among households with:



ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF FISHING

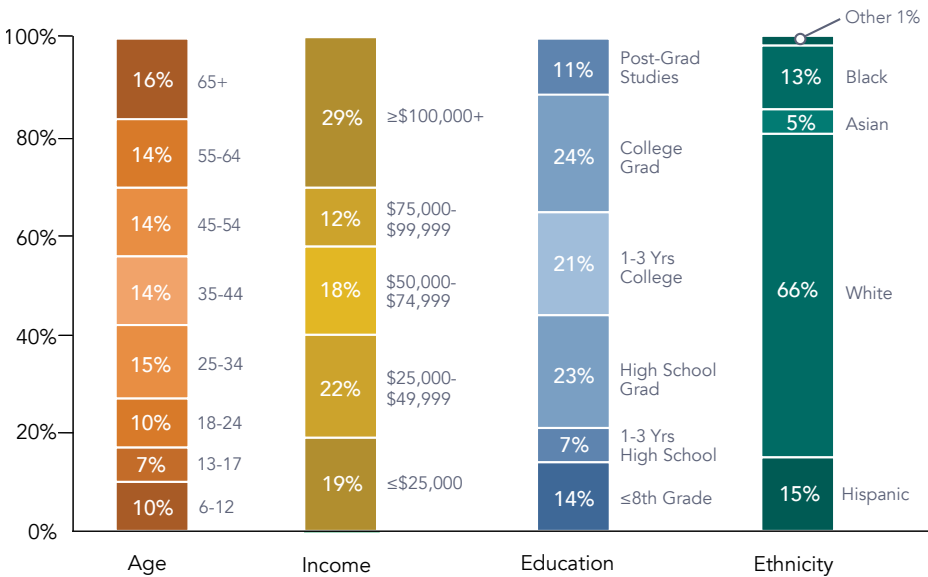
TOP CROSSOVER ACTIVITIES

In addition to fishing, female anglers ranked camping, hiking, and bicycling among their preferred outdoor activities.

Which activities did you participate in outside of fishing?

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES		2015 PERCENTAGE	2025 PERCENTAGE
	Camping	38%	46%
	Hiking	24%	33%
	Bicycling	28%	29%
	Running	27%	22%
	Kayaking	11%	17%
	Hunting	14%	12%

WHO CONSIDERED FISHING?



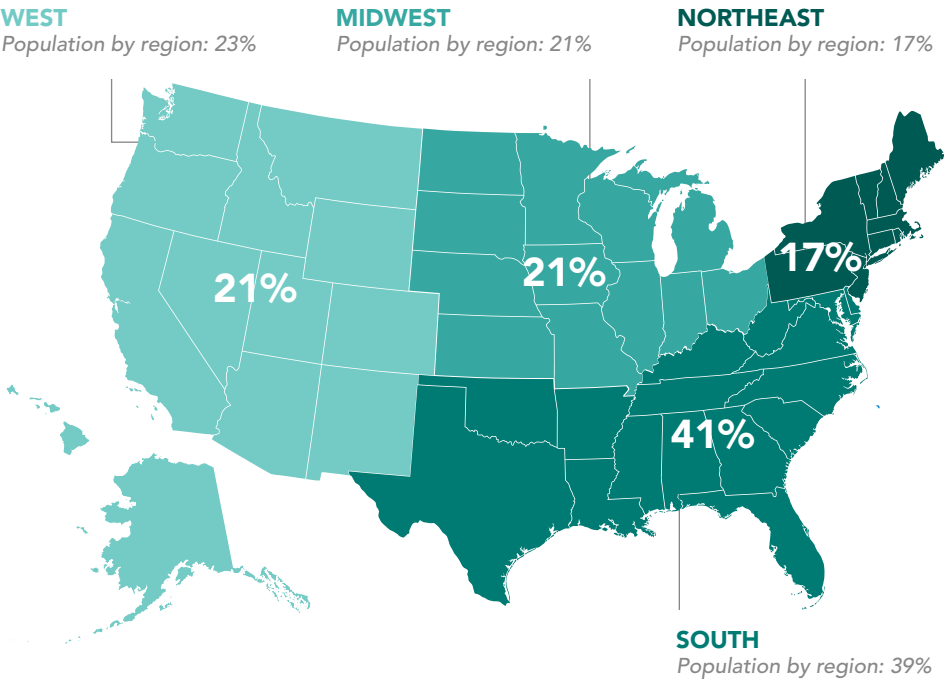
CONSIDERING PARTICIPATION DEMOGRAPHICS

Among women considering fishing, 13 percent were Black and 15 percent were Hispanic. Those interested in fishing also tended to have higher household incomes and educational attainment than the broader female participant population in 2025.

11M
NON-PARTICIPATING
FEMALES
CONSIDERED
FISHING

CONSIDERING FISHING PARTICIPATION

In 2025, 8 percent of females aged 6 and older—roughly 11 million people—expressed interest in fishing. Given that 2.6 million women fished for the first time in 2025, this points to a significant opportunity to expand fishing’s reach.



CONSIDERING PARTICIPANTS BY REGION

The regional map of females who expressed interest in fishing in 2025 closely tracks overall population distribution, with modest deviations in the South and West.

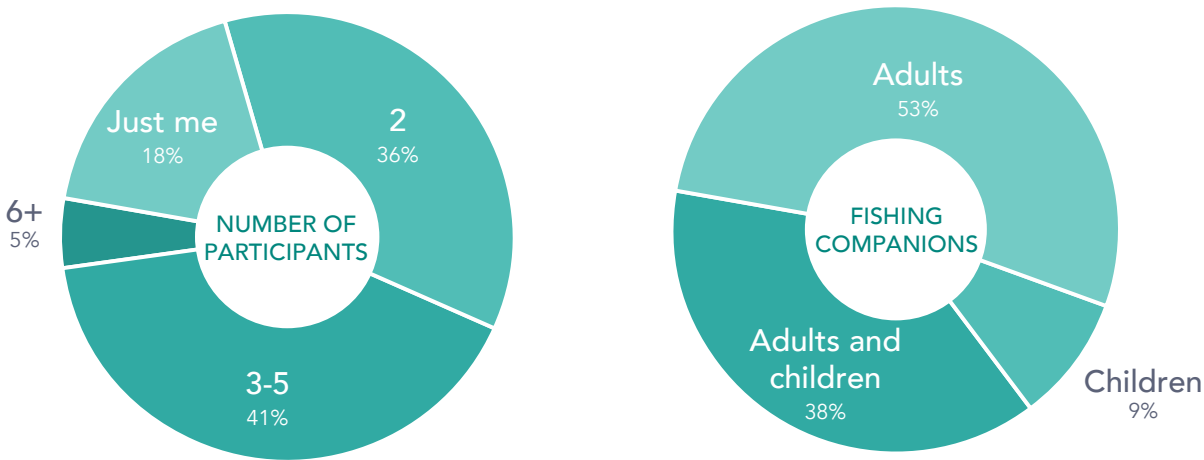
PROFILE OF A FISHING TRIP



A TYPICAL FISHING TRIP

FISHING COMPANIONS

Only 1 in 5 anglers typically fished alone in 2025, underscoring that fishing remained a shared activity, with 3 in 4 participants usually heading out in groups of 2 to 5. Men were nearly twice as likely as women to fish alone, at 22 percent compared to 12 percent, while women were more likely to fish in groups of 3 or more, at 50 percent versus 43 percent. Older anglers showed a stronger preference for solitude or small company, with 63 percent of those ages 50 and up typically fishing alone or with just one companion, compared to 40 percent of those under 30.



FISHING LOCATION TYPES

Anglers fished from a range of locations in 2025, with shorelines, riverbanks, and boats the most popular. Kayak fishing has seen steady growth, rising from 5 percent of trips in 2015 to 7 percent in 2025, and more than doubling its share since data collection began in 2007.

FISHING LOCATION TYPES*	2015 PERCENTAGE	2025 PERCENTAGE
Shoreline	51%	49%
Riverbank	43%	47%
Boat	48%	44%
Pier / jetty	27%	24%
Kayak	5%	7%
Other	6%	5%

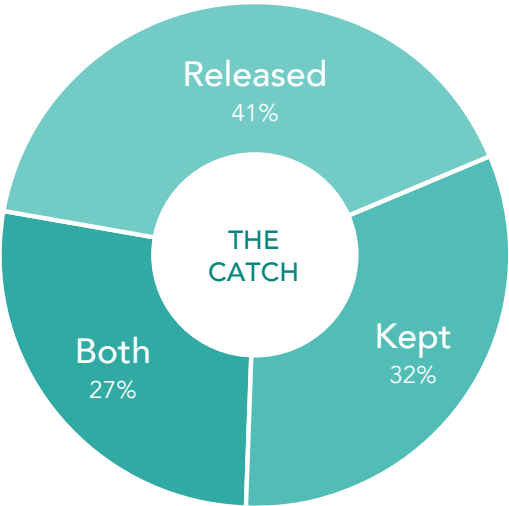

79%
OF ADULT
PARTICIPANTS
BOUGHT FISHING
GEAR/EQUIPMENT
in the last 12 months

*Participants may have reported fishing in more than one location type.

A TYPICAL FISHING TRIP

THE CATCH

In 2025, 92 percent of anglers caught at least one fish on their most recent outing. Of those, 41 percent released their catch, 32 percent kept it, and almost 3 in 10 did both.

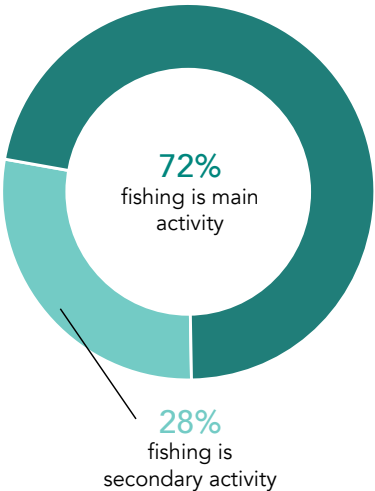


92%
OF PARTICIPANTS
CAUGHT FISH

THE OUTING

When asked about their most recent outing, 85 percent of anglers reported pairing fishing with another outdoor activity. Camping, boating, and picnicking ranked as the most popular choices.

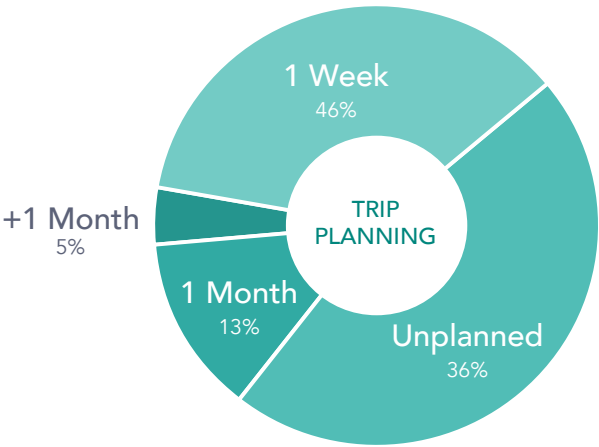
ACTIVITIES DURING A FISHING TRIP	PERCENTAGE
Camping	78%
Boating	49%
Picnicking	45%
Hiking	40%
Day at the park	40%
Kayaking/canoeing	31%
Beach trip	27%



HOW DID PARTICIPANTS PREPARE FOR THEIR TRIPS?

TRIP PLANNING

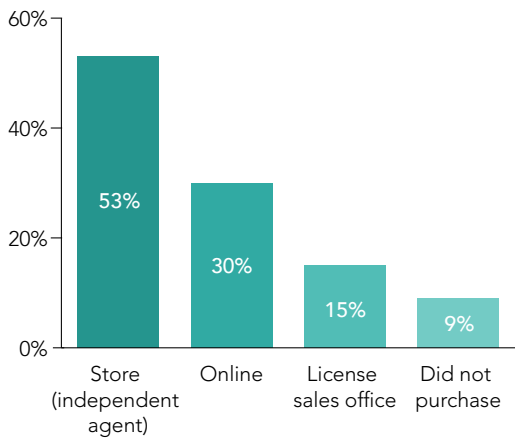
In 2025, more than 8 in 10 fishing trips were spontaneous or planned less than a week out. Friends and family were the most common sources of fishing information. Nearly 1 in 4 anglers turned to fishing guides, and close to 1 in 5 consulted social media influencers.



FISHING INFORMATION SOURCES	PERCENTAGE
Friends	58%
Family	49%
Fishing-specific websites	29%
General outdoor websites	26%
Fishing guides	24%
Retail stores	22%
Social media influencers	18%
Online retail stores	15%
Outdoor magazine	14%
Fishing-specific magazine	14%

FISHING LICENSE

More than half of fishing licenses were purchased in a store. Online sales accounted for another 3 in 10. 9 percent of participants fished without a license, down from 11 percent the year prior. Among those, nearly half said they fished in private waters, while others cited age-based exemptions, unawareness of licensing requirements, or a general unwillingness to purchase one.



LOCATION OF LICENSE PURCHASE*

*Participants may have reported more than one location.

WHY DIDN'T YOU BUY A FISHING LICENSE?	PERCENTAGE
I fished in private waters	43%
I didn't know I needed one	31%
I never purchase a fishing license	28%
I didn't need to because of my age	10%
I didn't purchase one because of the cost	8%
I fished on a charter boat	7%
I fished out of state and did not want to purchase one	7%

PERCEPTIONS OF FISHING



ATTITUDES OF FIRST-TIME PARTICIPANTS

EXPECTATIONS FOR A FIRST FISHING TRIP

The desire to relax and unwind was a top motivator for first-time anglers in 2025, alongside the appeal of trying something new, getting outdoors, and spending time with family and friends.

DRIVERS FOR A FIRST FISHING TRIP	PERCENTAGE
Relax and unwind	58%
Try something new, maybe catch a few fish	54%
Experience the great outdoors	54%
Spend some time with family and friends	50%
Exciting time catching a lot of fish	46%
No expectations, thought I'd give it a try	21%
Teach my children about fishing and nature	17%

PERCEPTIONS OF FISHING BEFORE PARTICIPATING

First-timers held some reservations: some felt the sport demands too much equipment or too much financial investment, or that it is the domain of serious, dedicated outdoors enthusiasts. Still, fishing was widely seen as an exciting and accessible way to enjoy the outdoors.

PERCEPTIONS OF FISHING BEFORE PARTICIPATING	PERCENTAGE
Afordable, not too much of a financial investment	79%
For anyone, not only serious outdoors people	71%
Does not require too much equipment	67%
Exciting way to spend time outdoors	54%
Easy to learn	42%
Stress free activity	33%
Intriguing	25%

95%
SAID FISHING IS
"FOR SOMEONE
LIKE ME"

61%
SAID THAT
"ANYONE COULD
BE AN ANGLER"

79%
OF FIRST-TIMERS
SAW FISHING AS
AN AFFORDABLE
ACTIVITY

FEELINGS ABOUT FISHING

TOP 10 BENEFITS OF FISHING

Catching fish was only part of the appeal. Americans also fished to enjoy nature, escape everyday stress, and spend time with family and friends.

BEST THINGS ABOUT FISHING	
Being close to nature	54%
Catching fish	52%
Getting away from the usual demands of life	50%
Spending time with family or friends	44%
Observing the scenic beauty	40%
Experiencing excitement/adventure	34%
The "chase" (strategy, site selection, tackle selection etc.)	32%
Experiencing solitude	28%
Reliving my childhood memories of going fishing	26%
Being with people who enjoy the same things	26%

POSITIVE FISHING MEMORIES OR ASSOCIATIONS

3 in 4 participants cited quality time with loved ones as a positive fishing memory, a sentiment that held steady across gender, age, and ethnicity. Men were more likely to associate fishing with learning a new skill or connecting with a simpler way of life, while women more often pointed to time spent outdoors or fond childhood memories.

POSITIVE FISHING MEMORIES OR ASSOCIATIONS	ALL	MALE	FEMALE
Spending quality time with family or friends	75%	74%	76%
Spending time outdoors immersed in nature	72%	71%	73%
Reminds me of my childhood	61%	60%	64%
Enjoying the water in a way I don't typically do in my daily life	51%	53%	50%
Helping me connect with a simpler way of life	51%	55%	45%
Learning a new skill	43%	45%	40%



54%
CITED IMMERSION
IN NATURE AS A
BENEFIT OF
FISHING



74%
EQUATED FISHING
WITH QUALITY TIME
WITH FAMILY AND
FRIENDS

FISHING BARRIERS

OBSTACLES TO ENJOYMENT

The most commonly cited barriers to enjoyment were crowded fishing spots and the discomfort of being outdoors, followed by not catching fish, unclear waters, and the cost of gear. Both the barriers and the wish list were largely unchanged from 2024.

RANK	OBSTACLES TO ENJOYMENT
1	The fishing spots were crowded
2	Being outdoors – bugs, heat, cold, weather, etc.
3	Not catching any fish
4	The lakes and rivers weren’t very clean
5	The expense – equipment, bait, supplies, etc.
6	Baiting the hooks or taking the fish off the hook
7	The hassle
8	Not having the right equipment
9	Lack of knowledge
10	Don’t like to touch fish/worms

REMOVING BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

When asked what resources would most improve their experience, anglers pointed first to better information on nearby fishing destinations, followed by more accessible and affordable boats and equipment. Both the wish list and the obstacles listed above were largely unchanged from 2024.

RANK	OBSTACLES TO ENJOYMENT
1	Local information on nearby bodies of water
2	Easier/more affordable access to boats
3	Easier/more affordable access to fishing equipment
4	Comprehensive mobile guides that you can access on the water
5	How-to’s and tutorial videos
6	Short lessons/information session from a state agency or local guide
7	Resources and information on voice activated devices

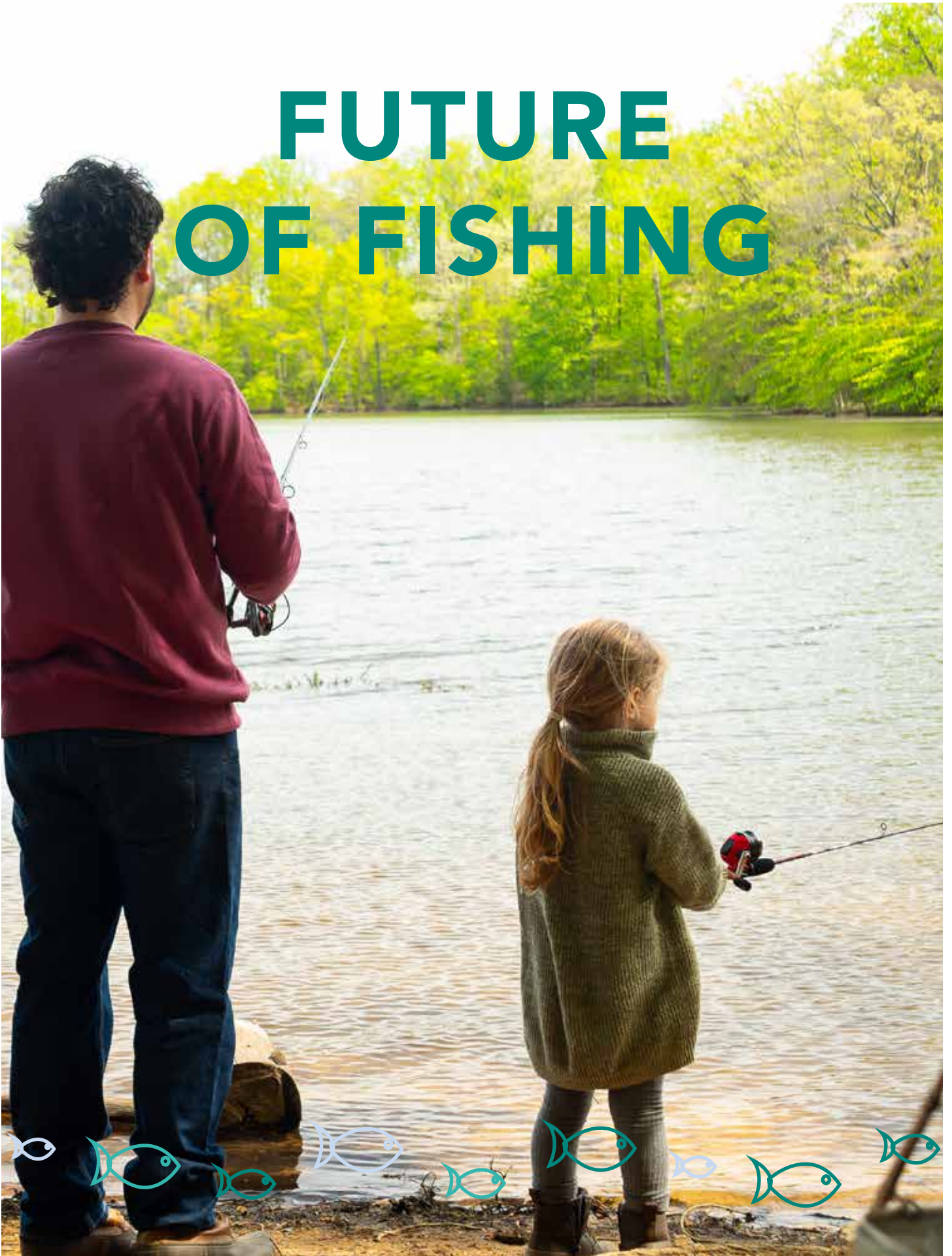


CROWDS
MOST REPORTED
BARRIER TO FISHING



LOCAL INFO
MOST HELPFUL
BOOST TO FISHING
PARTICIPATION

FUTURE OF FISHING



FISHING MOTIVATIONS

REASONS FOR STARTING TO FISH

In 2025, 58 percent of first-time anglers took up fishing to spend time with family. Roughly one-third were drawn in by the promise of excitement and adventure, or by the chance to try it during a vacation or group outing.

RANK	MOTIVATIONS TO START FISHING
1	Spend time with family
2	Experience excitement/adventure
3	Fishing trip as part of a vacation or group outing
4	A friend or relative took me
5	I wanted to try out a new hobby
6	I wanted to try catching my own food
7	Learned about fishing on the internet and wanted to try it
8	Fished as a kid but not as an adult and wanted to try again
9	Solitude
10	Disconnect from electronics

REASONS FOR STOPPING FISHING

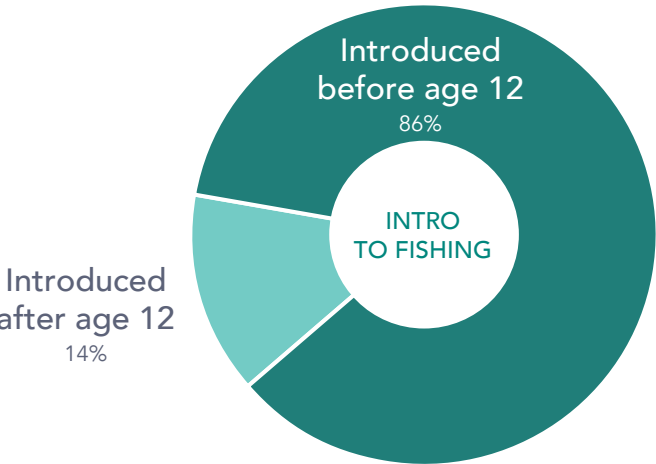
Not everyone stays hooked, however. The leading reasons for giving up the sport included not catching fish, not enjoying the experience, and the cost of gear and licensing.

RANK	REASONS FOR STOPPING
1	Boring
2	Didn't catch anything
3	Too expensive
4	Limited access to waterways
5	Only fish during certain vacations
6	Didn't enjoy it
7	Lost interest
8	Prefer other outdoor activities

FUTURE OF FISHING

DID YOU FISH AS A CHILD?

Research underscores the importance of introducing fishing early, as 86 percent of current anglers fished as children. That early exposure also shapes who passes on the tradition, as 1 in 5 anglers who fished as a child cited sharing the experience with a younger generation as a motivation to keep participating.



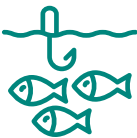
NUMBER OF TIMES PARTICIPANTS EXPECT TO FISH

The future of fishing remains bright thanks to returning participants. Among anglers in 2025:

- **99%** expect to fish during 2026
- **30%** expect 20+ outings in 2026
- **40%** expect 8 to 20 outings in 2026
- **29%** expect fewer than 8 outings in 2026



30%
ANTICIPATE 20+
OUTINGS NEXT
YEAR



99%
OF PARTICIPANTS
EXPECT TO FISH
THE NEXT YEAR

METHODOLOGY

2025 Participation Data

All participation statistics were derived from an annual online participation-tracking study conducted during the 2025 calendar year by Sports Marketing Surveys USA (SMS), a Buffalo Groupe Company. SMS designed the participation questionnaire in collaboration with the Physical Activity Council (PAC).

Sample Specification

During 2025, a total of 18,000 online interviews were carried out with a nationwide sample of individuals from U.S. proprietary online panels representative of the U.S. population of people ages six and older. Strict quotas associated with gender, age, income, region, and ethnicity were followed to ensure a balanced sample.

The 2025 participation survey sample size of 18,000 completed interviews provides a high degree of statistical accuracy. All surveys are subject to some level of standard error—that is, the degree to which the results might differ from those obtained by a complete census of every person in the U.S. A sport with a participation rate of five percent has a confidence interval of plus or minus 0.32 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

A weighting technique was used to balance the data to reflect the total U.S. population ages six and above. The following variables were used: gender, age, income, ethnicity, household size, region, and population density. The total population figure used was 310,635,717 people aged 6 and older.

Activity reporting is based on a rolling 12-month participation rate. All charts represent data from U.S. populations ages 6 and over, unless otherwise specified. If you have specific questions regarding the methodology, please contact Sports Marketing Surveys at info@sportsmarketingsurveysusa.com.

Youth Interviews

All interviews with children under 13 were carried out following the guidelines set out in the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA). No children were contacted directly. The panel is a balanced sample of households with children in each age group, but contact is always made through designated adult panelists. The adult panelist receives the survey invitation on behalf of a specified

child, age six to 12, and they are asked to complete the survey together. Respondents aged 13 to 17 are contacted in a manner similar to respondents ages 6 to 12, but they are asked to complete the survey themselves.

About the Physical Activity Council (PAC)

The 2025 Participation Survey is managed by Sports Marketing Surveys, USA, a Buffalo Groupe Company and hosted by the partnership of the Physical Activity Council (PAC). This partnership of made up of the leading organizations in the U.S. sports, fitness, and leisure industries. While the overall aim of the survey is to establish levels of activity and identify key trends in sports, fitness, and recreation participation, each partner produces detailed reports on specific areas of interest. Partners include International Health and Fitness Association (HFA); Outdoor Foundation (OF); People for Bikes; National Golf Foundation (NGF); the Sport and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA); Snowsports Industries America (SIA); USA Football; and United States Tennis Association (USTA).

Notes

Unless otherwise noted, the data in this report was collected during the 2025 participation survey, which focused on American participation in the 2025 calendar year. Please note that some information includes data that was collected during previous surveys, as some questions are not asked every year.

2026 Fishing Supplemental Data

The Outdoor Foundation partnered with Sports Marketing Surveys to design and execute a comprehensive quantitative study to evaluate the behaviors, demographics, and psychological profiles of adult anglers. The primary objective of this study was to capture insights building upon prior data, specifically targeting active fishing participants aged 18 and older.

A sample size of 650 participants completed the survey during the start of 2026. These respondents were identified and recontacted through a nationally representative online research panel. Participants reported fishing at least once in 2025. The strict demographic quotas were implemented at the launch of the survey. These quotas were benchmarked directly against the baseline data established by the 2025 PAC Fishing Profile including gender, age, household income, region, and ethnicity.

2026 SPECIAL REPORT ON FISHING

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