

# Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Report

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## A Public Benefit/Public Pay Model

More than a century ago hunters, anglers and trappers were among America's first conservationists who realized that our country's natural resources were in peril and could not sustain unregulated harvest and habitat destruction. Our forefathers took it upon themselves to create laws that stopped the over-harvest of fish and wildlife and established fish and game agencies to protect fish and wildlife and their habitats.

The Fish Commission was established as part of this national trend in 1866 and we were given our water pollution enforcement authority by our General Assembly in 1909. Sportsmen also supported the user pay/user benefit model that all states continue to use to fund programs to protect, conserve and enhance aquatic resources and provide fishing and boating recreation, which is still the Resource First mission of the PFBC.

However, our predecessors quickly learned that license fees alone were insufficient to restore our natural resources which had been damaged by the indiscriminate logging of our mountains and the mining of coal. They also fought the battle in Washington D.C. to create an excise tax on various hunting, fishing and boating equipment to raise additional funds to support the states with our important fish and wildlife programs.

The program is known as the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program that began 75 years ago when President Franklin Roosevelt signed the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act into law in 1937.

The Federal Aid in Sportfish Restoration Act followed 13 years later in 1950. The combined revenue from both of these programs has exceeded \$13 billion since 1939 which is the first year these funds were distributed to the states. This program has provided more funding for fish and wildlife conservation than any other single conservation effort in American history.

This funding continues to be allocated to the states by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proportional to how many fishing and hunting licenses we sell or how much gasoline our boaters use. These funds currently provide the PFBC with 25% of our annual budget and we continue to depend upon them to fulfill our mission.

We truly appreciate your support by continuing to pay this tax since our anglers and boaters spend over \$3.4 billion dollars a year fish-

ing and boating in our Commonwealth. We are also grateful for the continued support of our industry partners—the manufacturers of fishing tackle, electric trolling motors, marine electronics and motorboat fuel—who also support the tax. This is a re-investment in our sport that has resulted in the most successful model of fish and wildlife management in the world, restoring populations and improving habitats not just in Pennsylvania but all across our nation.

This North American Model of Fish and Wildlife was based upon a user pay/user benefit concept; however, I suggest that the direct benefits are much greater than those provided to just anglers and hunters. For example, the thousands of acres of wetlands we have created for waterfowl, bog turtles and other wetland-dependent birds, mammals and herptiles also serve much broader public benefits. They have flood control benefits by storing



*John and his grandson Xander stocking fish at Tionesta Creek in Forest County.*

water and gradually releasing it to minimize downstream flooding and they filter pollutants out of the water so that public water supply companies downstream pay less to treat the water that they deliver to their customers. The fish habitat devices our habitat mangers design and the sportsmen help install not only provide great structure for fish, they also protect stream banks for local landowners and minimize damage to downstream bridges and culverts.

I could fill a book with examples of other work we have done collectively that benefits fish and wildlife and also provides societal benefits. Unfortunately these public benefits are most often overlooked, under appreciated and taken for granted. I say it is about time to start thinking about a Public Benefit/Public Pay Model. What do you think?

Your Director,  
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## Many Anglers Spend Less Time Fishing than Desired



FERNANDINA BEACH, Fla. — When it comes to finding time to fish, many anglers dream big at the beginning of each year. However, making all of their plans happen is a bit more of a challenge. That was the case last year as reported by anglers in a survey conducted by AnglerSurvey.com.

When asked if they fished more, less or as much as expected, 45 percent of participating anglers said they made it out “less.”

Conversely, less than 27 percent of anglers made it out more than expected and only 28 percent made it out as much as expected.

“There are so many ways for people to spend their free time. Every year, we see people’s best intentions to fish waylaid by other activities,” says Rob Southwick,

president of Southwick Associates, which designs and conducts the surveys at AnglerSurvey.com.

Southwick Associates recently provided key research for “On the Fence About Fishing: A Study of Why Anglers Do and Don’t Fish and What Will Get Them on the Water,” a study that examined the reasons anglers fish less or quit fishing altogether, as well as what activities they participated in instead of fishing. The study was conducted on behalf of the American Sportfishing Association. The key factor cited in the report was “not enough time.” That report can be viewed at southwickassociates.com.



## Top Fishing Equipment Brands for 2011

FERNANDINA BEACH, Fla. - Southwick Associates’ AnglerSurvey.com announced the brands and products anglers purchased most frequently in 2011. This list has been compiled from the 29,495 internet-based surveys completed by anglers who volunteered to participate last year in AnglerSurvey.com polls.

### In 2011, the top brands include:

- Top rod brand: Shakespeare (9.6% of all purchases)
- Top reel brand: Shimano (21.4% of all purchases)
- Top fishing line producer: Berkley Trilene (13.1% of all purchases)
- Top hard bait brand: Rapala (21.8% of all purchases)
- Top soft bait brand: Zoom (15.2% of all purchases)
- Top spinner bait brand: Strike King (16.4% of all purchases)
- Top sinker brand: generic (28.8%), Bullet Weights (12.1%

- of all purchases)
- Top fly rod brand: Orvis (10.4% of all purchases)
- Top fly reels brand: Orvis (16.5% of all purchases)
- Top fly combo brand: Cabela’s (31.5% of all purchases)
- Top fly line brand: Scientific Angler (3M) (23.8% of all purchases)
- Top fly leader brand: Rio (28.9% of all purchases)
- Top tackle box brand: Plano (45.8% of all purchases)
- Top landing net brand: Frabill (24.5% of all purchases)
- Top fishing knife brand: Rapala (25.2% of all purchases)

\* Largemouth bass remain the number one targeted species of freshwater fish, with 52% of fishing activity targeting largemouth bass.

\* Saltwater anglers were more varied, with 31% of trips targeting redfish/red drum, followed by any saltwater fish that bites (25%), flounder

(24%), spotted seatrout or weakfish (23%) and striped bass (20%). Please note these refer to species targeted on trips and not the number of fish actually caught.

A comprehensive 2011 fishing tackle market review will be presented in the April issue of the Fishing Tackle Retailer.

The marketing data presented here is a summary of a 150-page market report just released by Southwick Associates that details consumer behavior including what products and brands are purchased, where they are bought, how much customers spend, and demographics of freshwater and saltwater anglers broken out by each product category. Current information about what gear and brands anglers prefer, how many days they spend on the water and what type of fishing they enjoy most is vital to businesses trying to build their customer base.