

STUDY PERFORMANCE REPORT

State: Michigan

Project No.: F-81-R-7

Study No.: 230697

Title: Fisheries Stewardship and Heritage Outreach/Research (SHOR) Initiative: A Five Year Plan for Baseline and Longitudinal Research on Angling Involvement and Associated Fisheries and Aquatic Stewardship Activities in Michigan.

Period Covered: October 1, 2005 to September 30, 2006

Study Objectives: 1) Develop an annual, baseline reporting system to track demographic segments represented (and not represented) in the Michigan angling and fisheries stewardship populations, by using the computerized point-of-sale license database and other statewide databases. 2) Examine Michigan angler/stewardship population dynamics, including recruitment rates, retention rates, and other population parameters, using descriptive and analytical techniques commonly employed in basic fisheries population analysis and demography. 3) Design longitudinal research, using the computerized point-of-sale database, to examine the role of educational program interventions in early angling recruitment retention, and stewardship development, particularly among teenage, pre-license Michigan youth. 4) Evaluate effectiveness of other fisheries and aquatic stewardship communications/outreach tools and/or programs specifically designed for targeted audiences.

Summary: Throughout 2005-06, we continued our work with the angler license computerized point-of-sale license database to track trends in sales. We have completed analysis of data from the 1995-2004 license years. Through our analyses, we have examined participation, recruitment, and retention trends. Working with Roger Parsons, we acquired the annual data from the statewide angler license computerized-point-of-sale database and sorted, analyzed, and graphed trends in angler recruitment and retention. In particular, during 2005-06, we re-examined previous analyses conducted. Working with Roger Parsons, we identified additional duplicate records in the metadata, and established new analysis protocols that parallel how MDNR License Control has extracted records each license year for reporting to the US Fish and Wildlife Service. In summary, our findings indicate a 14.5% decline in unique angling customers in the 10 license years since initiation of the RSS computerized point-of-sale license system in 1995. During spring 2006, we had the unique opportunity to present this analysis to approximately 80 attendees at two meetings: the Lake Huron Fisheries Advisory Committee and the Lake Huron Fisheries Stakeholder Meeting held in Alpena, MI. We have completed a final baseline Research Report describing angler recruitment and retention, parallel to the report issued in 2001 by the MDNR Wildlife Division describing hunting trends. We have identified parameters, such as license types, age, and gender in the annual fishing license sales database that will be used in future annual tracking reports to monitor angler recruitment and retention. Finally, we are beginning to execute a longitudinal research strategy to examine dynamics of long-term recruitment/retention and the role of educational program interventions.

Findings: Jobs 13–17 were scheduled for 2005-06, and progress is reported below.

Job 13. Title: Continue longitudinal study (second year of data collection).—Since the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) discontinued its work with the widest possible set of partners from their Southeast Michigan Partnership for Fishing, Boating and Aquatic Stewardship, the proposal submitted to RBFF for expanded funding of continued

longitudinal work was not supported. We had chosen the seven-county metro-Detroit area as a targeted study site for the longitudinal work, under funding from RBFF. At present, we have developed an alternative project concept for longitudinal evaluation of aquatic education program impacts. This project will involve assessing long-term impacts through volunteer aquatic resource educators statewide. There will be a two-stage on-line and printed survey process: the first survey will reach volunteers trained through Project FISH since 1998, and the second survey will be conducted with youth and families reached by the program. Data from this longitudinal study will be analyzed during fall-winter, 2006-07. Subjects will be sought from these populations who agree to be contacted again in future years for additional long-term tracking of factors influencing angling recruitment and retention.

Job 14. Title: Analyze data; write final report.—Work is underway (see Job 13).

Job 15. Title: Prepare/update research proposals for continuation of longitudinal research.—Since the MDNR budget projections are dire, we did not submit a research proposal under the 2006 RFP process. At present, alternative sources of external funding are being explored, while we wait to ascertain the likelihood of a license fee increase and additional monies to support research on the issue of angler recruitment and retention.

Job 16. Title: Prepare annual performance reports.—Completed.

Job 17. Title: Prepare final report.—Our final report (in the form of a full Fisheries Division Research Report) will include data from 10 full license years (1995-2004), and the report will detail protocols used to ensure data are consistent with information reported by MDNR License Control to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service on annual bases. The final report will be prepared in a format that includes a manuscript for submission to Fisheries (of the American Fisheries Society).

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