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**Fishing through the pandemic in Nebraska**

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Abstract:

The COVID-19 pandemic had profound effects on recreational activities throughout the world, affecting who participated, how they participated, and where they participated. Wildlife-based recreatoin throughout the United States, like hunting and fishing, appeared to experience a resurgence during the height of the pandemic in many states. We combined information gained from license sales and surveys to explore recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3) of anglers prior, during, and after the height of the pandemic in Nebraska. We observed an increase in more than 30,000 anglers in 2020; partially driven by an increase in reactivated resident anglers (those that had participated in the past, but not in 2019).The proportion of recruited anglers (new anglers to appear in the database since 2010) remained consistent the pre-pandemic period. Surveys were discover reasons why individuals chose to begin fishing during the pandemic. The most frequently indicated motivations to begin fishing during the pandemic matched traditional reasons for participating in fishing (e.g., spend time with family, connect with the outdoors). Many respondents reported that fishing was a safe activity to do during the pandemic with many other competing activities cancelled. Our results are promising for fish and wildlife management agencies in that it is possible to increase numbers of participating in hunting and fishing by appealing to the well-established reasons why individuals participate in wildlife-based activities.