



NEWS

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Hugh Vickery 202-208-5634

SERVICE RELEASES PRELIMINARY STATE-BY-STATE REPORT ON WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATION

Michigan had the largest number of hunters in the country, Florida led the country in anglers, and California had the largest number of wildlife watchers, according to the preliminary state overview from the 1996 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation.

Meanwhile, the survey revealed that residents of the West North Central region--which includes Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, and the Dakotas--had the highest participation rates of any region for hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching.

The survey, which has been conducted every 5 years since 1955, was done for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by the Census Bureau. As part of the survey, the Census Bureau initially screened 80,000 households. From this, the bureau chose 28,000 sportsmen and -women and 14,400 wildlife-watching participants 16 years of age and older for detailed surveys throughout the year.

The preliminary national results released earlier this summer showed that more than 39 million Americans 16 and older either hunted or fished in 1996 while 62-million enjoyed watching wildlife. In all, 40 percent of the adult population enjoyed some form of wildlife-related recreation.

"America's love affair with wildlife continues to be strong," said Service Director Jamie Rappaport Clark. "Whether they're anglers, hunters, or wildlife watchers, Americans enjoy wildlife and, equally importantly, commit their time and resources to its conservation. Our economy also benefits from the \$100 billion spent on wildlife-related recreation."

In the state-by-state breakout, Michigan had 934,000 hunters 16 years and older, edging out Texas and Pennsylvania, which had 913,000 and 879,000 respectively. Wisconsin was fourth with 665,000 hunters trailed by New York with 642,000.

Florida led the way with 2.9 million anglers 16 and older, followed closely by California with 2.7 million. Texas had 2.6 million, Michigan 1.8 million and New York 1.7 million.

The survey revealed that 5.7 million Californians 16 and older enjoyed observing, photographing, or feeding wildlife around their homes while 2.4 million took trips away from home to enjoy these activities. Texas, Pennsylvania, New York, and Illinois also were home to millions of adults who enjoy watching wildlife.

Office of Public Affairs
1349 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240
Room 3447

(202) 208-5634
FAX (202) 219-2428

From a regional standpoint, 25 percent of the adults in the West North Central region fished, 14 percent hunted, and 37 percent participated in wildlife watching. That represented the highest participation in each category for any region in the country.

The final national report will be issued in November. The 50 state reports will be issued as they become available starting in November. Copies of the preliminary report can be obtained by calling the Service's publications unit at 304-876-7660.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages 511 national wildlife refuges covering 92 million acres, as well as 68 national fish hatcheries.

The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, manages migratory bird populations, stocks recreational fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, administers the Endangered Species Act, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that funnels Federal excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state wildlife agencies. This program is a cornerstone of the Nation's wildlife management efforts, funding fish and wildlife restoration, boating access, hunter education, shooting ranges, and related projects across America.