



Evaluation of North Carolina Trout Anglers' Opinions, Participation and Socioeconomic Impact

The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission surveyed a random sample of resident and non-resident trout anglers in 2023 to assess public perceptions on management of trout and expenditures on trout fishing. Results from this study, like previous trout angler research, provide the Commission with the information and understanding needed to successfully implement the Public Mountain Trout Waters program.



METHODS:

- An emailed survey was sent to a random sample of 22,650 resident and 2,500 non-resident license holders that held fishing privileges at any point during 2022

RESULTS:

- Approximately 369,968 anglers fished for trout in North Carolina in 2022 (32% of North Carolina freshwater fishing license holders)
- These anglers spent a collective 4.6 million days fishing for trout
- On average, North Carolina trout anglers spent \$240 per trout fishing trip, which totaled \$587,553,393 million on trip-related expenditures in North Carolina
- When combining trip and equipment related expenditures, the overall economic impact of trout fishing in North Carolina was \$1.38 billion
- Most survey respondents reported that their participation in trout fishing has not changed over time
- The primary motivations of trout anglers were for sport and relaxation
- In addition to places where fish would be caught, respondents indicated that locations on public land and secluded locations were important when deciding where to go fish
- Anglers reported fishing the most in Ashe, Watauga, Avery, Jackson and Haywood counties
- Hatchery Supported Trout Waters (58%) and Delayed Harvest Trout Waters (26%) were the waters fished most
- As found in previous surveys, trout anglers were satisfied with Public Mountain Trout Waters, with 76% of respondents being somewhat or extremely satisfied with their trout fishing experience
- Lack of trout and overcrowding were the most common reasons for angler dissatisfaction
- Results from this project continue to highlight the challenges associated with the loss of angling access and the importance of retaining and increasing access into the future

