

2012 Massachusetts Saltwater Angler Permit Survey

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I participate in the study?

Surveys are being mailed to a small, randomly selected group of 2012 Massachusetts Saltwater Recreational Fishing Permit holders. If you don't receive a survey in the mail by June, you have not been selected to participate. The scientific design of the survey does not allow for the inclusion of responses from anyone who is not part of the randomly selected sample.

If I am selected for the study, do I have to participate?

No, your participation in this study is voluntary.

How long will it take to complete the questionnaire?

The questionnaire can be filled out in a few minutes.

If I haven't fished in Massachusetts marine waters yet this year, should I still participate?

Yes. If you haven't fished yet, or even if you're not sure you'll have a chance to fish at all in 2012, your responses are still important.

Why is this study being conducted?

There is a growing need for better information about the economic value of recreational saltwater fishing in Massachusetts. The contribution of recreational fishing to the State's economy is often measured by the number of jobs and the amount of sales and incomes that are supported by the expenditures of saltwater recreational fishermen. While this approach provides important information, it does not consider the value that anglers place on being able to go saltwater fishing. How valuable is saltwater fishing in Massachusetts to you? We believe that studies that attempt to estimate the value of saltwater recreational fishing should also include an estimate of what saltwater fishing is worth to the people that actually go fishing. The information collected from this study will allow us to estimate the value anglers like you place on being able to go recreational saltwater fishing.

I understand that some of the surveys include a cash offer to not go fishing in Massachusetts. Is the study trying to reduce effort or participation in Massachusetts' recreational fishery?

No. This study was not initiated to reduce the number of permits issued, take away fishing rights, or discourage recreational fishing in Massachusetts. The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries has no limit on the number of recreational saltwater fishing permits it issues. Only 500 of the 1,900 surveys being mailed will include a cash offer (ranging from \$15 to \$500) in exchange for the recipient's returning his or her permit and thus giving up access to fishing in Massachusetts' marine waters for the remainder of 2012. These offers will only be used to inform the researchers what value you place on access to recreational fishing in Massachusetts. Accepting the offer will not affect your ability to obtain a Massachusetts saltwater fishing permit in 2013. In place of the cash offer, the remaining surveys pose a hypothetical question about how much the recipient would be willing to sell his or her permit for or would have been willing to buy it for.

How will the results of the study be used by Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries?

The information on economic value gathered from the study will be used to better characterize Massachusetts' recreational fishery, such as for use in ocean planning and prioritizing competing uses, when evaluating future claims of lost access due to a natural or man-made disaster, and when determining the proper investment to support the recreational industry. The information will not be used to modify permit fees or to make management decisions that reduce recreational access to public resources. The Division of Marine Fisheries is committed to supporting and promoting the Commonwealth's recreational (and commercial) fishery.

Why am I being asked to provide information about my employment status, education level, and household income?

Your responses to these questions will help us better understand the relationship between demographic characteristics and the value that anglers place on being able to go recreational saltwater fishing. Although your answers to these questions provide important information, if you do not wish to answer a particular question you may leave it blank.

Will my answers remain anonymous?

Yes. All individual information will be treated as strictly confidential. Individual data will be combined with information from other respondents to present an overall view of anglers fishing in Massachusetts.

Who is conducting the study?

The study is being conducted by NOAA Fisheries Service, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, and Quantech, Inc., a statistical analysis and survey research firm. The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries is supporting the principal investigator, NOAA Fisheries Service, by supplying contact information (name and address) of 2012 Massachusetts Saltwater Recreational Fishing Permit holders for distribution of the surveys. NOAA Fisheries Service contracted Quantech, Inc. to distribute and compile responses to the surveys.

How is this study funded?

The study is federally funded. NOAA Fisheries Service allocated about \$145,000 to conduct the survey, with about \$75,000 allotted for cash offers. Fees collected from the sale of Massachusetts Saltwater Recreational Fishing permits are not funding the survey. As required by state law, all fees collected from the sale of Massachusetts recreational saltwater fishing permits go into a dedicated Marine Recreational Fisheries Development Fund and can only be used to improve recreational fishing or recreational fishery research, ensuring a "user-pays, user-benefits" program. A citizen board called the Marine Recreational Fisheries Development Panel assists the Division of Marine Fisheries in crafting annual spending plans for appropriations from the Fund, 1/3 of which must be used on recreational saltwater fishing infrastructure projects in Massachusetts, ensuring better access to coastal fishing.

Who should I contact if I have more questions about the survey?

General questions about *Marine Fisheries'* involvement can be directed to Nichola Meserve (nichola.meserve@state.ma.us). Technical questions regarding the study should be directed to Quantech, Inc., specifically Daemian Schreiber at 800-229-5220 ext 7831, or mavs@quantech.com.