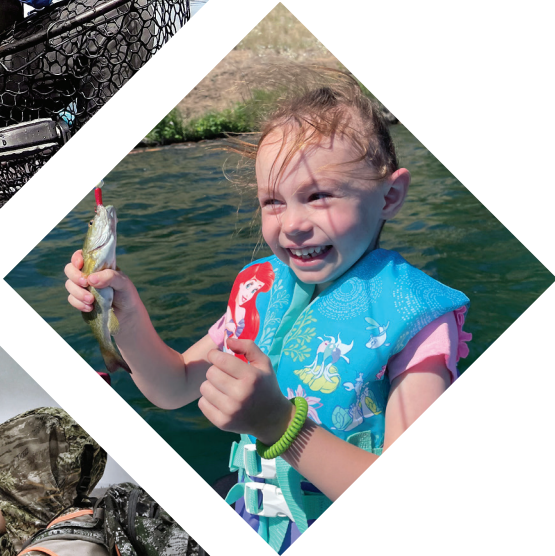


# Washington Hunting and Angling Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation (R3) Plan



Washington  
Department of  
**FISH &  
WILDLIFE**

JUNE 2022



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## Letter from the Director

For many, being a hunter or angler is part of one’s identity—it’s not just a hobby, but a way of life. For those that identify as such, myself included, our calendar revolves around preparing equipment, scouting, buying licenses, pursuing game, and ultimately, processing and consuming the harvest.

However, for most Washingtonians, hunting and fishing may be perceived as requiring specialized equipment or difficulty finding access. Some might be curious to participate in the activities because of source of organic protein or to learn a new skill, but don’t even know where to start. Many others enjoy the fish and wildlife conserved by hunting and fishing dollars, or hike on land or water ski by way of boat ramps funded by hunters and anglers, and are simply unaware of the financial contributions made by hunters and fishers to provide those other opportunities.

This plan is intended to promote and preserve the hunting and fishing heritage in Washington. By recruiting, retaining, and reactivating hunters and anglers, we hope to secure a prosperous future for the public engaged in these activities, and to ensure that these activities are open and accessible to all that might be interested.



I also know that WDFW can’t secure this important heritage alone. Public and private landowners provide habitat that supports fish and wildlife and access for hunting and fishing. We want to partner with you to improve both. There are numerous business and non-governmental organizations that support the hunting and fishing community—through sales of equipment or shared enthusiasm for conservation and sustainable opportunities—and we are eager to connect with you to implement this vision.

And to the WDFW staff implementing this plan, thank you. Our mission is rooted in the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. The scientific and democratic conservation and management of fish and wildlife supported through sportsperson funding is central to our mission—and supporting R3 initiatives is key to our future success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Kelly Susewind".

Kelly Susewind, Director



## Washington R3 vision

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's Hunting and Fishing Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation Plan (R3 Plan) aims to increase statewide hunting and fishing participation, support the hunting and fishing heritage in Washington, and increase broader public support for these activities and awareness of their economic contribution to fish and wildlife conservation.

## Introduction

Hunting and fishing are a way of life for many Washingtonians – a pastime passed down from generation to generation. For many, hunting and fishing are a way to connect with family, harvest organic protein, or even just get outdoors.

Hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, and other outdoor activities contribute much to Washingtonians' quality of life. Such activities enhance residents' health, wellbeing, and can even enhance senses of belonging and inclusion.

The Department's 25-year strategic plan identifies the development of a R3 plan for hunters, anglers, and nature appreciators as a near-term action under the strategy *Engage communities through recreation and stewardship*. While this document is focused on R3 efforts for hunters and anglers, the Department is also expanding efforts to improve public awareness of fish and wildlife conservation needs, expand volunteer and environmental education initiatives, and increase engagement with Washington's diverse communities in its decision making in separate parallel efforts. In addition, the Director's Office has recently established a new work unit that consolidates outreach staff in order to better communicate and engage Washingtonians and better utilize social science in its decisions.

The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation was founded by sportspeople who identified the need to conserve the nation's fish and wildlife resources, including buying licenses and establishing state-managed fish and wildlife agencies. Hunting and fishing participants contribute significantly to fish and wildlife conservation through buying licenses and buying equipment and supplies that are subject to federal excise taxes that are then distributed back to state fish and wildlife agencies. In addition, hunters help wildlife managers achieve population management objectives and address agricultural damage. Thus, it is critical for state fish and wildlife managers to continue to provide sustainable opportunities to hunters and anglers to perpetuate the conservation and management of its resources held in trust for the public.

The human population of Washington state continues to increase dramatically, with many of these new residents attracted to the region's





rich natural resources and outdoor opportunities. These population changes also reflect changes in outdoor activities, with noticeable declines in hunting and fishing. These declines challenge the relevancy of these traditions.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW or Department) intends to lead in the development of strategic actions and tactics to maintain or increase hunting and angling participation in Washington.

Recent, and perhaps temporary, COVID-related increases in hunter education graduates and license sales is a clear indication of strong public interest that WDFW needs to capitalize on to retain those participants.

This R3 plan considers existing R3 plans and efforts and contains strategies and tactics to address hunter and angler recruitment, retention, and reactivation for all demographics, as well as strategies specifically focused on underrepresented communities and diverse audiences.

For decades, WDFW has administered programs to provide access to fishing and hunting opportunities. Some examples include: National Hunting and Fishing Day; mentored pheasant hunts; youth fishing events; squid jigging events; partnering with Washington Outdoor Women for their annual summit; Annual Statewide Trout Derby; Fish Washington initiative; First Turkey Program, Turkey Slam; WDFW Hunt Planner; Hunting Prospects; Fishing Prospects; Hunter Education Program; Master Hunter Program; and Private Lands access programs.

While these events are a great opportunity to invite diverse audiences to the hunting and angling heritage, WDFW needs a strategic plan to reach more Washingtonians. It is WDFW's hope that this plan will be a hub of national R3 investment and will serve as a model for our diverse partners and stakeholders.

This plan identifies R3 efforts for Washington, and partnerships are key to its success. WDFW will lead many aspects of this plan, but there is a sincere desire and need for partners to take the lead with support from WDFW.

This plan includes background on the Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model (ORAM), national and statewide trends and draft goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics to enhance Washington's R3 efforts.





## Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model (ORAM)

Participation rates in many outdoor activities are changing. Demographic changes, competing hobbies and interests, and shifts in popular American culture have all contributed to the participation decline in several outdoor pastimes. The traditional pathway for people to learn to hunt and fish is changing, and there are new opportunities to connect with communities we serve. WDFW and its conservation and sportsgroup partners need to respond to existing and emerging changes in our societal makeup to ensure non-traditional pathways are available to potential new hunting and fishing recreationists.



True R3 efforts focus on the needs of individuals and the process required to ensure their adoption of, and continued participation, in a new outdoor activity. This outdoor-specific adoption process is referred to as the Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model (ORAM) and is based on more than fifty years of research documenting why and how certain activities or ideas are adopted by people and cultures. The model discusses the steps an individual moves through as they learn about, try, and then adopt a new activity or behavior, and we can use this to understand the difference between recruitment, retention and reactivation. By understanding the ORAM and the processes critical to an individual's adoption of an activity, R3 program managers and organizations can build strategies that effectively engage individuals in outdoor recreation and increase the reach and impact of their R3 efforts. (Council to Advance Hunting and Shooting Sports, [www.cahss.org](http://www.cahss.org))



As an example, we're seeing generational shifts of how people view and enjoy the outdoors. In some generations, satisfaction may come from being a die-hard enthusiast, spending multiple days in the woods by themselves. While in younger generations, participants may seek diverse experiences in their outings, where fishing is but one activity in their weekend outdoor excursion with friends.

Another social phenomena is the typical stages an individual make progress through as they develop as a hunter/angler. A hunter in their lifetime may progress through various stages including:

- **The shooting stage:** a hunter is new and is eager to harvest something for the first time.
- **The limiting-out stage:** a hunter finds satisfaction and places a priority on fulfilling their bag limit.
- **The trophy stage:** the hunter is selective and measures success by quality rather than quantity, and may pass up opportunities for younger animals to harvest a mature big game animal.
- **The method stage:** the hunter finds satisfaction in the process of hunting and elects to choose and develop expertise in the technique.

- **The sportsperson stage:** the hunter finds satisfaction in the entire experience, and appreciates being outdoors, the animal and process of the hunt, and the companionship and teaching the activity to others.

Similar parallels exist with anglers, with initial success viewed as catching a fish, then limiting out, then catching larger fish, using fly fishing gear, and then finding success in seeing others catch fish and spending time on the water.

Further, sportspeople might be in different stages for different hunting and fishing activities. They might be in the stage of limiting out when waterfowl hunting, but in the method stage, using archery for big game.

The key is for WDFW to provide or help provide multiple steps along the various stages and know and understand these stages as we consider R3 tactics—where recruitment might be focused on promoting opportunities for species that are easier to harvest while reactivation might be achieved by enticing recreationists to try a new method.





## R3 glossary and acronyms

**Churn:** expressed as lost customers; i.e., the percentage rate of those who participated one year, and not the following year (as an example: if 200 anglers bought licenses in Year 1, and 160 of those anglers bought licenses in Year 2, the churn rate is  $(200-160)/200 = 20\%$ ).

**DJ:** Dingell-Johnson Act. Passed in 1950, the Dingell-Johnson Act, also called the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act, authorizes the Secretary of Interior to provide state financial assistance for state fish restoration and management plans and projects. Federal funding for the program is derived from an excise tax on fishing equipment and certain boating equipment is provided to each state based on an apportionment that includes annual state fishing license data.

**Inconsistent:** in a licensing context, it represents individuals that participated in the current license year, but not consistently during the previous five consecutive years

**Lapsed:** in a licensing context, it represents individuals that have purchased licenses in the past, but not in the current year

**Loyal:** in a licensing context, this represents a regular license purchaser that buys license product(s) every year.

**New:** in a licensing context, this represents new/first-time license holder. While it may be a new license holder in Washington, this may include someone who is an established hunter/angler, but is new to hunting/fishing in Washington.

**ORAM:** Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model. The steps an individual moves through as they learn about, experience, and adopt an outdoor recreation activity/behavior.

**PR:** The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, popularly known as the Pittman Roberson (PR) Act was passed in 1937. It authorizes the Department of Interior to collect an excise tax on firearms, ammunition, and archery equipment and use it to fund state-managed habitat and wildlife conservation programs. The annual apportionment is based on the area of the state and the number of licensed hunters.

**R3:** Recruit, retain, reactivate.

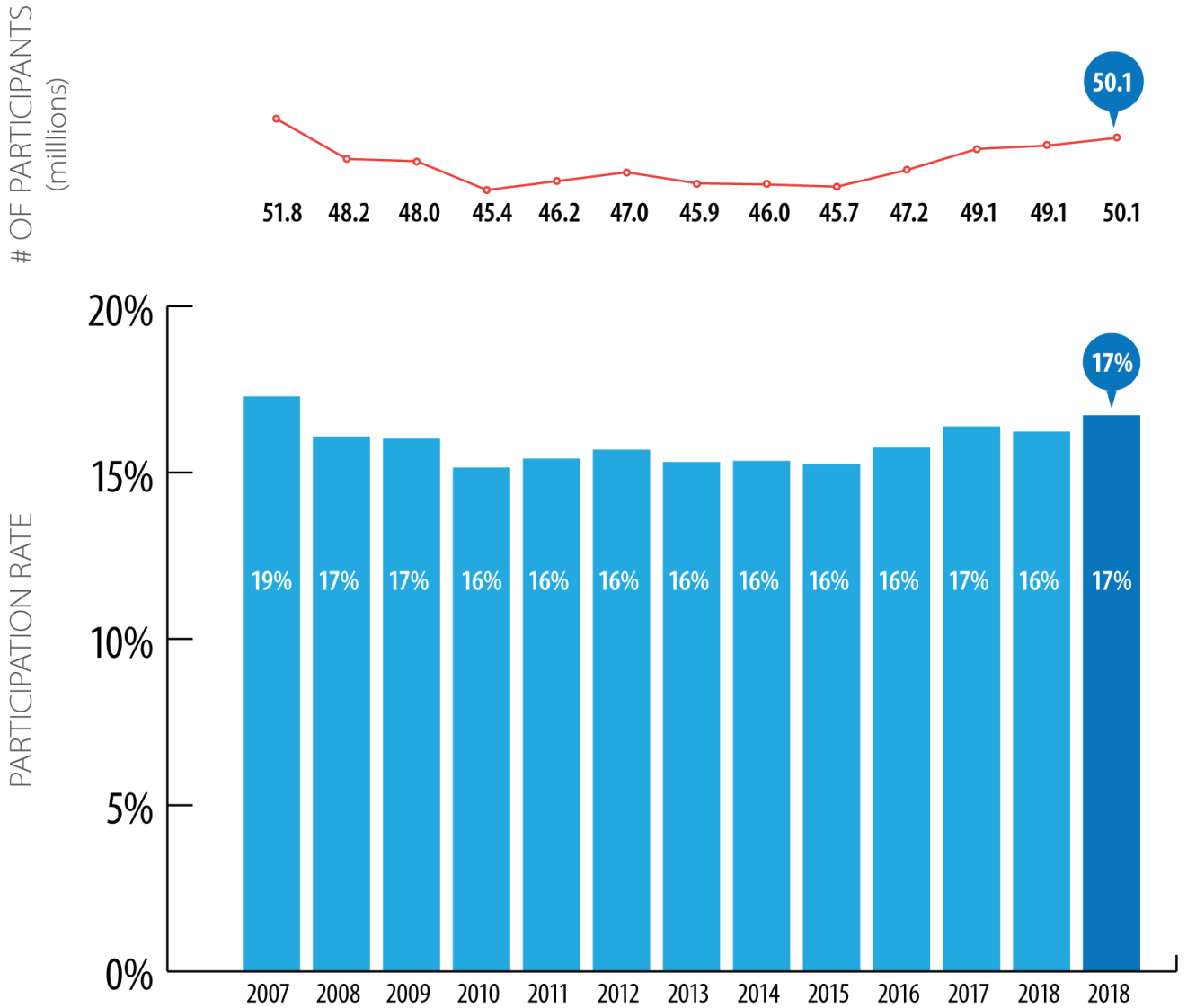
**WDFW:** Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

**WSFR:** Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. A branch of the US Fish and Wildlife Service that manages the PR and DJ programs.

## National trends

### Fishing participation

Nationally, fishing participation has remained mostly flat for the last decade. In 2019, 17% of the U.S. population aged 6 and up went fishing at least one time. This was a 1%-increase since the year before, and it represents a decade-long upward trend in fishing participation.



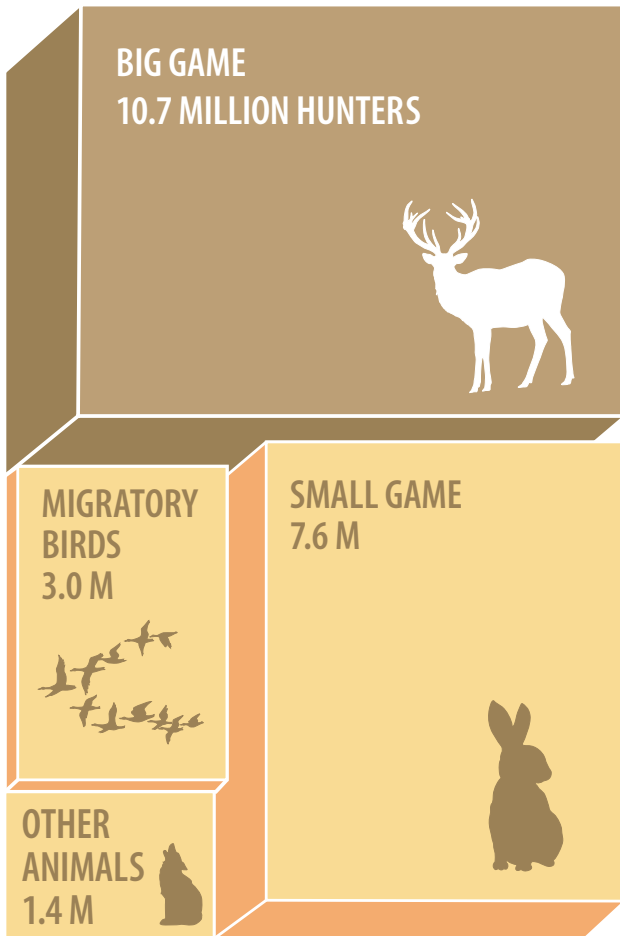
Source: Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation 2020 special report on fishing - <https://tinyurl.com/dzcrcs9mm>

### Hunting participation in the United States

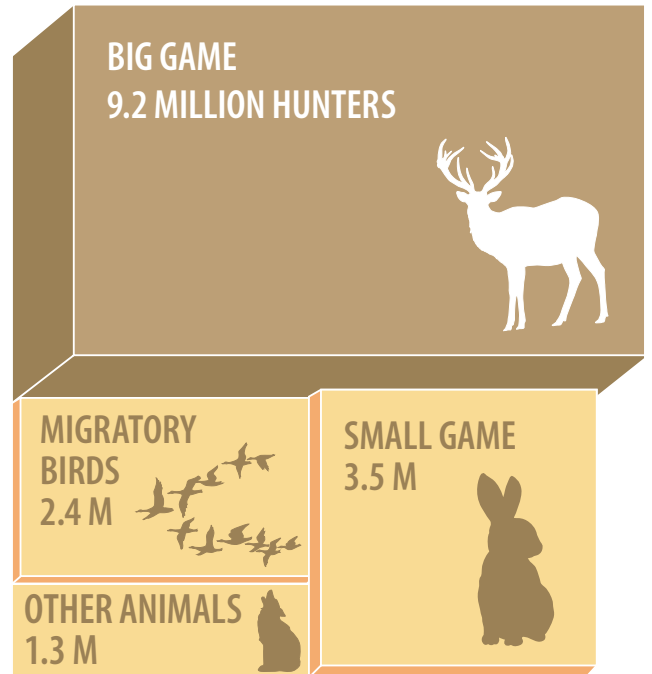
Hunting participation in the United States peaked in 1982, when nearly 17 million hunters bought 28.3 million licenses. Today, however, approximately 11.5 million people in the U.S. hunt, less than 4% of the national population.

The boxes below are proportional representations of hunters by species type. There were 14.1 million U.S. hunters in 1991; in 2016, that number fell to 11.5 million, according to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). You might notice that the sum of these breakdowns is greater than those respective totals; that is because some hunters bought more than one type of hunting license that year. The net change in number of hunters for each species type decreased between 1991 and 2016. For more on the decline of migratory bird hunters, see *The Goslings*.

**Number of Hunters in 1991**



**Number of Hunters in 2016**



Source: USFWS and Outdoor Life - <https://www.outdoorlife.com/why-we-are-losing-hunters-and-how-to-fix-it/>

## Washington trends

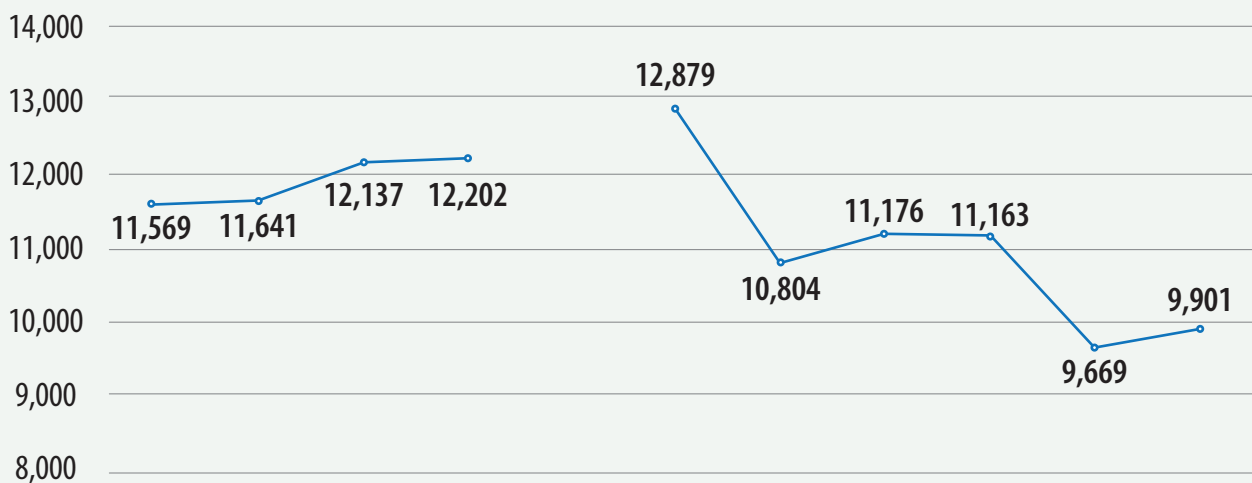
### Washington Hunter Education enrollment trend

Washington State law requires all new hunters born after Jan. 1, 1972 to successfully complete a hunter education class prior to buying their first hunting license. Therefore, the annual number of hunter education students certified represents potential hunter recruitment.

From 2009 to 2019 (the last full pre-COVID year), the number of hunter education certifications averaged 11,314 students. While 2013 data is lacking, the number increased slightly from 2009 to 2014, but has since declined.



Number of hunter education students certified



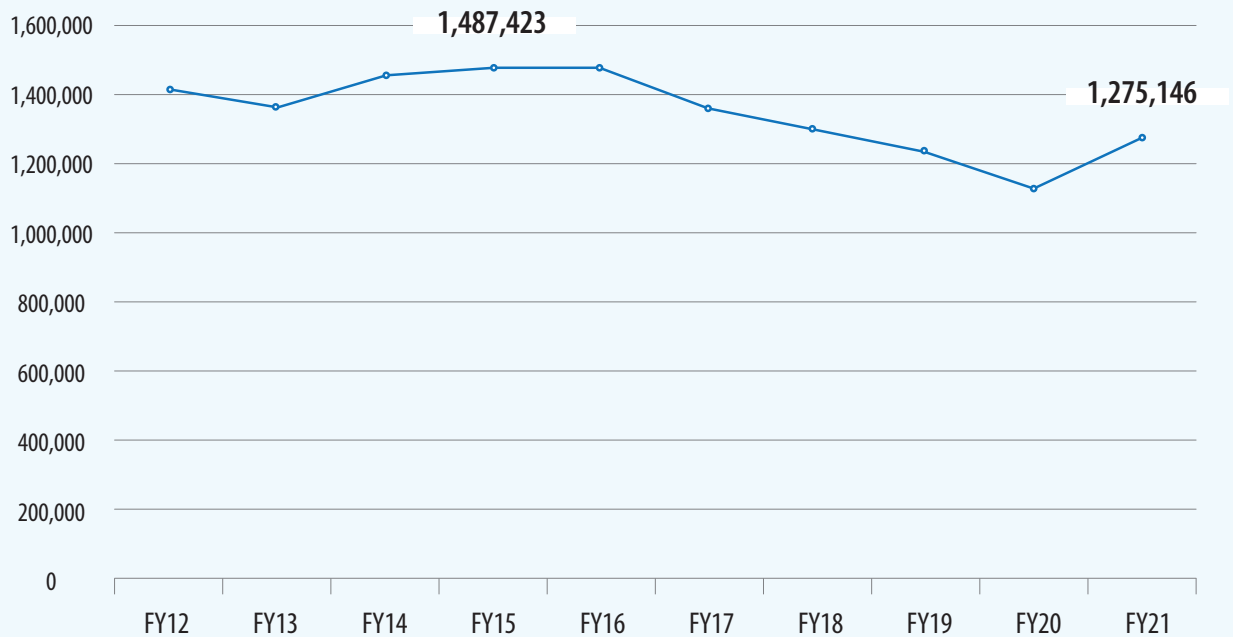
**Hunting and angling at a high level**

To fully comprehend the trends and nuances to hunting and angling participation in Washington, we need to dive deep into our licensing sales data. This work has started and will also be compared to the most current and available data from other organizations working on R3 at the national level.

The following figures plot the number of licenses sold and associated revenue over the last 10 years. We can use this data to understand the general trajectory of fishing and hunting participation in Washington. Note that fishing graphs include the Fish Washington license package but do not include charter/guide stamps or duplicates, nor does it include fishing licenses associated with the Get Outdoors license package.

The Department introduced the Get Outdoors license package in 2020, which includes both hunting and fishing license products, therefore its data is represented separately.

**Total number of fishing licenses sold - including Fish WA package**



**Figure 1** - Total number of fishing licenses sold including Fish WA package

**Total number of fishing licenses sales - including Fish WA package**  
 (Does not include Guide stamps/Charter stamp sales or duplicates)

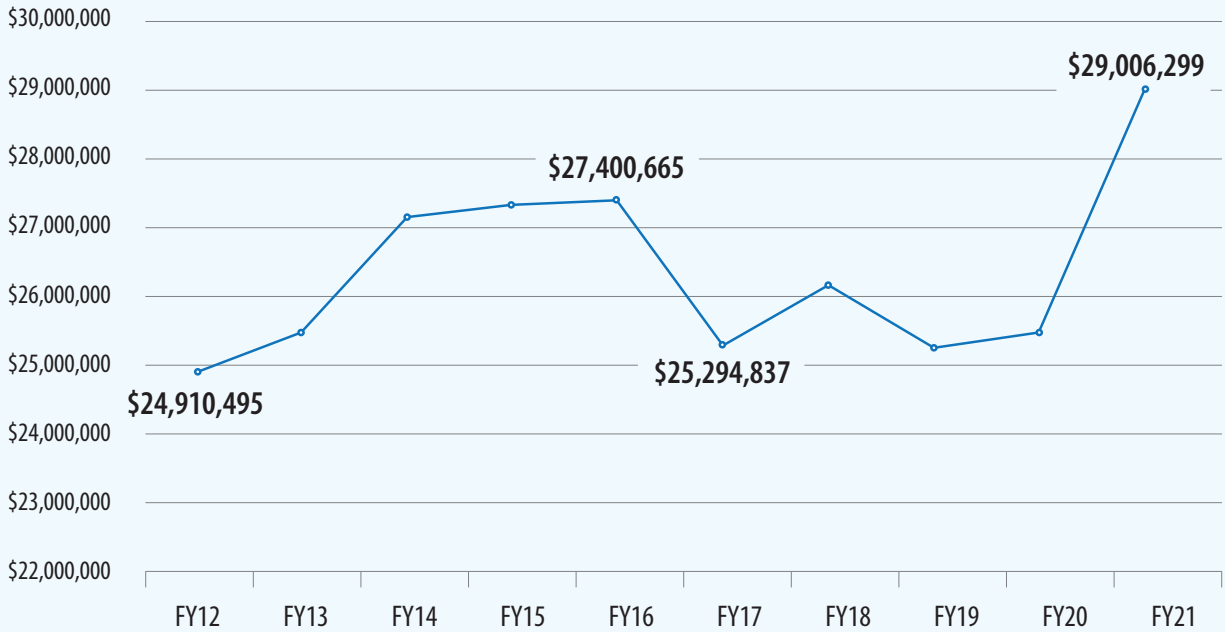


Figure 2 - Total fishing license sales including Fish WA package

**Total quantity of hunting licenses sold**

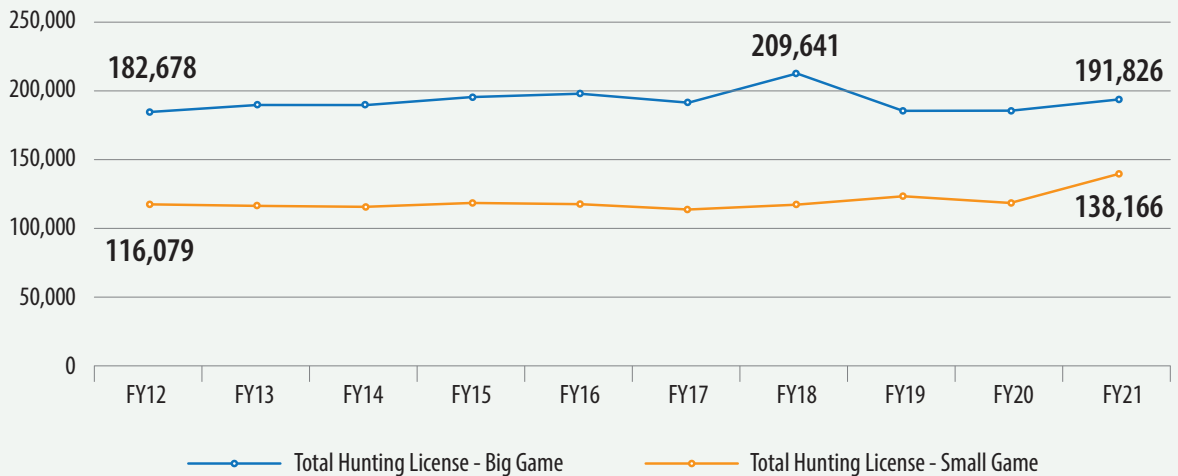
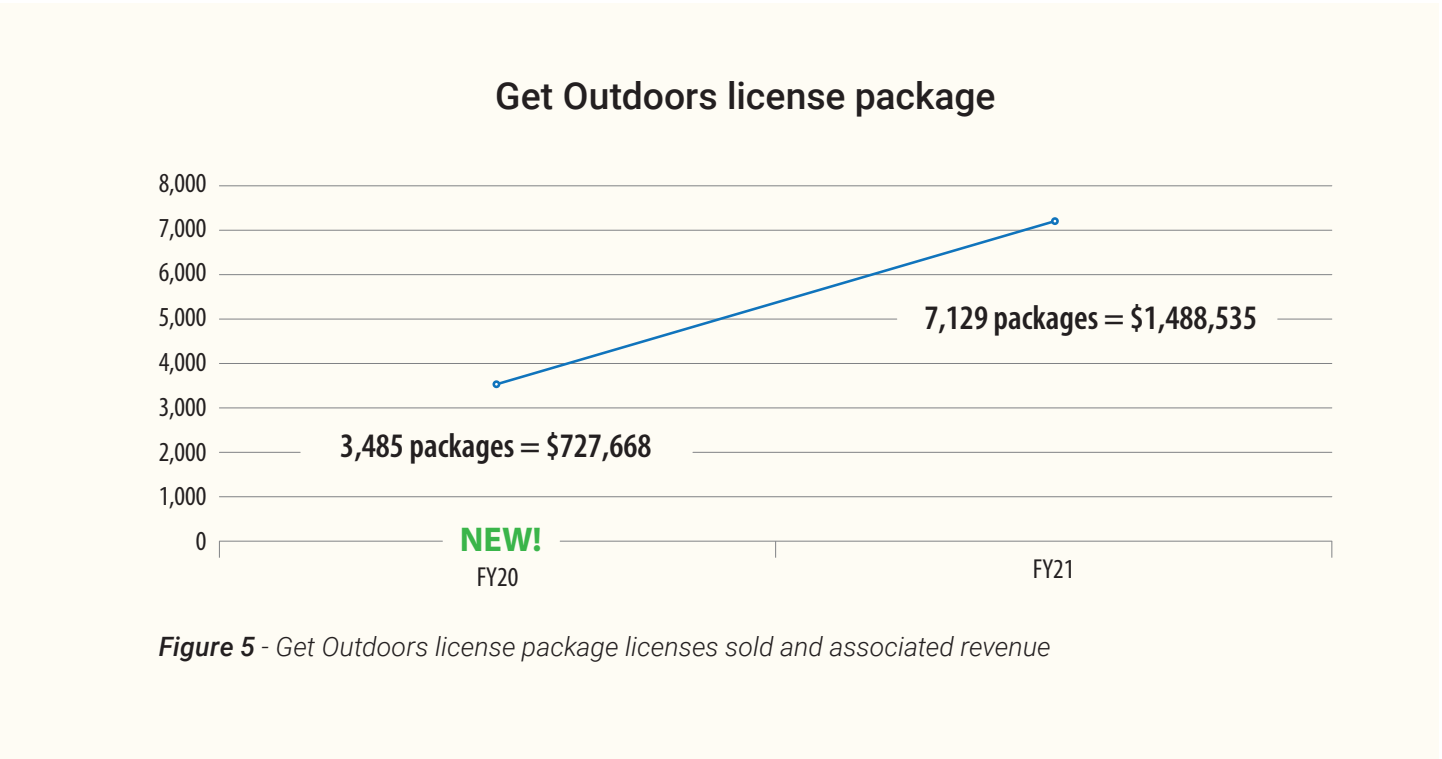
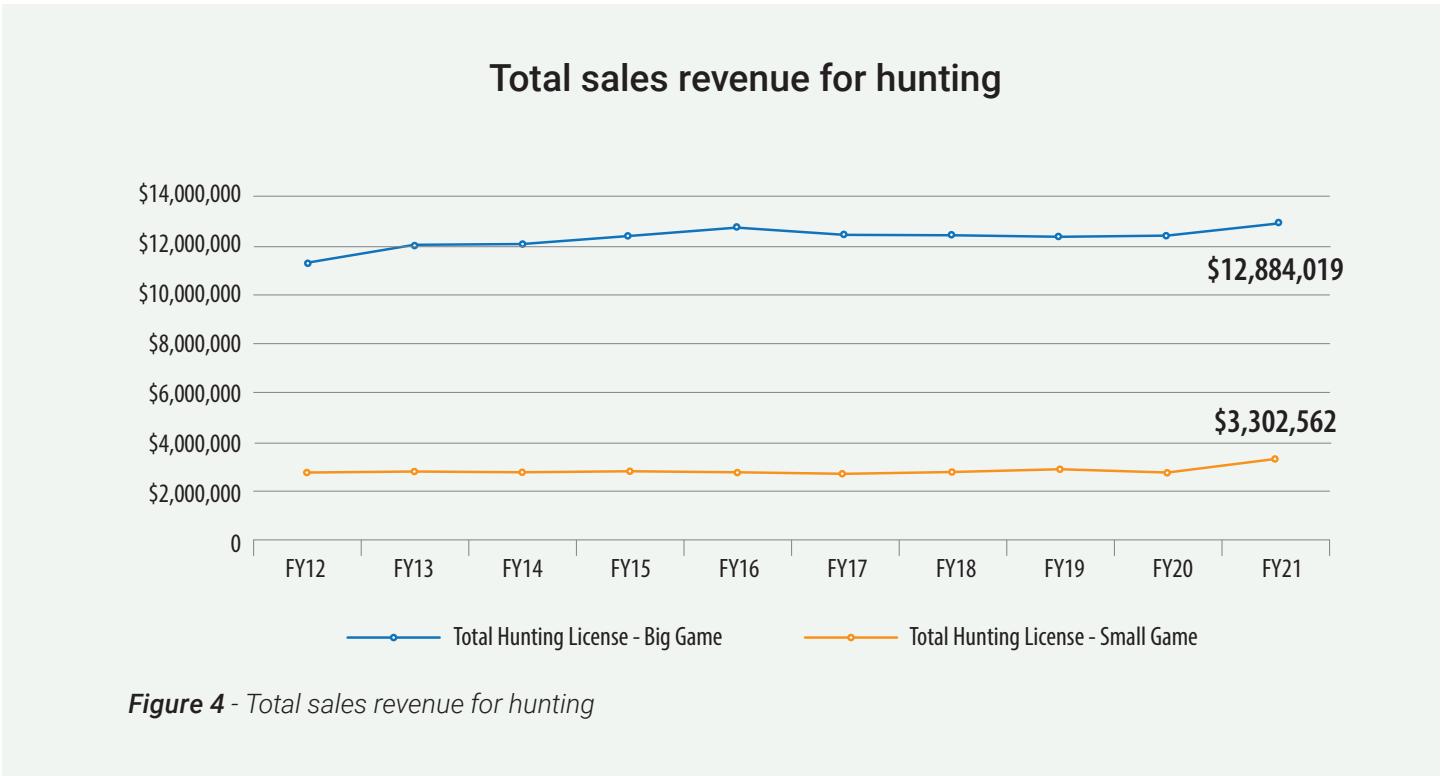


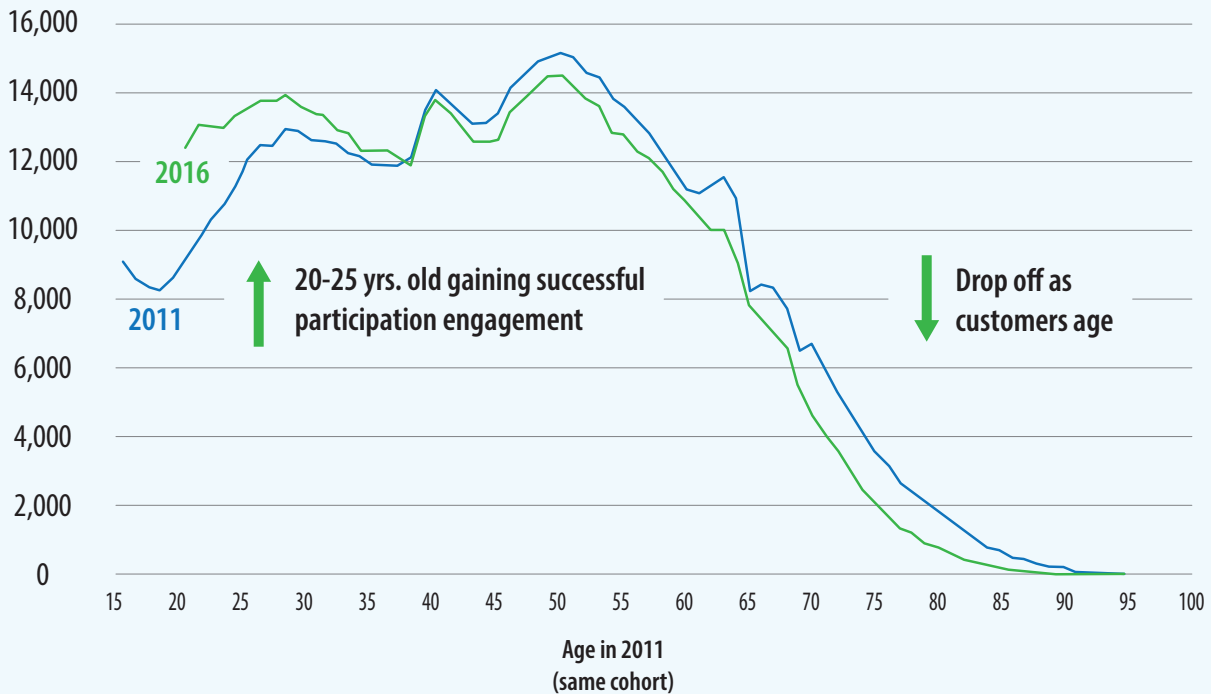
Figure 3 - Total quantity of hunting licenses sold





**Figure 6** below describes anglers aging out over time. We see a consistent participation trajectory that correlates with general life stages. Kids and teens ramp up in participation with some wavering during early career-building years. As noted, 20-to-25-year-olds are consistently participating and eager for information. As families are established, discretionary income increases, we see participation bump up again. Between ages 50-55, we have seen the start of a long, slow decline as people age.

**Anglers aging out over time**



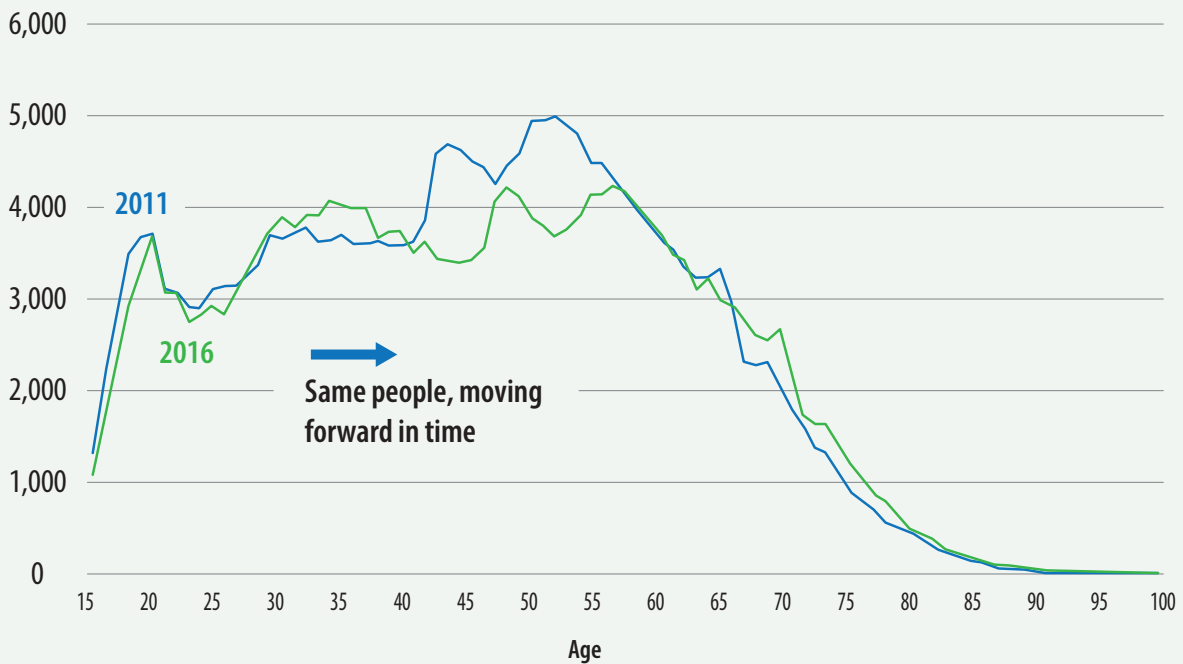
**Figure 6** – Anglers aging out over time



**Figure 7** below describes the hunters aging out over time. Here too we see a similar pattern of participation after age 50-55. Also note that hunting is more physically demanding and presents more barriers for aging hunters.



**Hunters aging out over time**



**Figure 7** - Hunters aging out over time

## Key insights for Recruitment (from 2021-23 Biennial Marketing Plan)

**What seems obvious, isn't.** WDFW needs to provide information on the most basic aspects of hunting or fishing for recruitment. Hunters and anglers may choose not to participate in these activities because of not catching a fish/harvesting an animal, confusion over rules, or even being unprepared for bad weather.

### **25-40-year-olds are emerging as the key demographic for recruitment.**

As some hunting and fishing participants age out, the 25-40-year-old group is increasing in new participation. This age group contains two large recruitment audiences: parents of young children looking for a way to recreate with their family and adventure-seekers wanting an active, outdoor lifestyle.

### **Using digital marketing and virtual resources is more crucial than ever.**

While digital marketing was already proving to be one of the most successful and cost effective R3 strategies, the COVID-19 pandemic further facilitated using digital properties as a primary focus for engagement and recruitment efforts. Additionally, as the public has been forced to learn and engage virtually for safety reasons, virtual resources are quickly becoming an expectation, and a lack of them becomes a barrier.

### **New hunters and anglers are motivated to participate in outdoor recreation for health and wellness reasons.**

Physical and emotional health has been reported as major contributing factor driving recruitment of large market segments for several years. In the wake of COVID-19, these values combined with the ability to safely social distance only bolster health and wellness as a recruitment motivator.





## Key insights for Retention and Reactivation (from 2021-23 Biennial Marketing Plan)

**The traditional hunting and fishing audience is still core.** While new hunting and fishing audiences and trends are emerging, the core hunting and fishing base is as essential and relevant as ever. Due to historical knowledge and experience this group participates consistently, becomes mentors, and can influence attitudes, perceptions, and expectations of the next generation. It is important to continue acknowledging the traditional base, so as not to increase hunter and angler churn.

**Overcommunicate.** Retention and reactivation market tests and campaign results show a consistent positive relationship between messaging frequency and continued participation. The Department must use diverse message distribution methods to maximize results.

**Retention and reactivation is easier and more cost effective than recruitment.** Existing customers are easier to market to and communicate with because there are fewer barriers to re-entry. They do not need as much education on how to participate, they often already have access to equipment and social support for the activity, and they have provided information via the licensing system that the Department can use to communicate with them about opportunities.

## The format of this report is as follows:

**Goal (Why: the overarching, aspirational goal)**

**Objective (What: the specific, desired outcome)**

**Strategy (How: the action to achieve the outcome)**

**Task (Who/When/Where: the specific tactic to address the strategy)**

Each tactic is also labeled by prioritization either by Fiscal Year 2023, 2023-2025 biennium, or long-term.



## Goal one: Increase participation in hunting by recruiting new participants, retaining existing hunters, and reactivating previous hunters.



### OBJECTIVE:

Increase total hunter education enrollment from 9,900 in 2019 to 14,000 by 2030 while increasing demographic diversity of students.

### STRATEGIES:

Promote an organic, sustainable source of protein to encourage locavore lifestyle.

- Create hub for recipes, how-to videos, workshops/camps, etc. to promote how to harvest and process game (2023-2025 biennium)

Encourage hunter education teams to connect with underserved, underrepresented communities.

- Pursue partnerships with community organizations to help promote and advertise hunter education classes and the need for hunter ed instructors. (Fiscal Year 2023)
- Translate hunter education materials into other languages. (2023-2025 biennium)
- Enlist foreign language speakers to volunteer as hunter education instructors. (2023-2025 biennium)

Use resources from WDFW's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion office, Sales and Marketing, and Hunter Education Division to focus outreach and recruitment efforts.

- Create adult-only hunter education classes. (Fiscal Year 2023)
- Provide a tutorial for how to understand the laws, how to apply for hunts, what tools to use, and training opportunities. (Fiscal Year 2023)
- Offer basic and advanced hunter education trainings. Advanced would include more how-tos, access, and mentorship experiences. (2023-2025 biennium)
- Create demographic-specific outreach & recruitment efforts. (2023-2025 biennium)
- Create student licenses for college students. (long-term)
- Implement hunter education in college clubs. (long-term)
- Focus on non-traditional audiences and facilitate participation through transportation to hunter education classes. (long-term)
- Create hunter education curricula in other languages and hold language-specific hunter education classes. (long-term)



Increase the number of certified hunter education instructors from diverse and underrepresented demographics.

- Create demographic-specific outreach & recruitment efforts. (2023-2025 biennium)
- Create more in-depth DEI training for hunter education instructors. (2023-2025 biennium)

Secure legislation to offer discounted hunting license to recent hunter education graduate.

- Develop agency-request legislation to offer the hunter education discount that can be applied to first-time license purchase. If passed, modify WILD system to send 'voucher' to graduates. (long-term)

Follow up with recent hunter education students to promote going afield.

- Identify more opportunities for mentored hunts with recent hunter education graduates. (Fiscal Year 2023)
- Send quarterly emails to hunter education graduates, alerting them to upcoming hunting seasons, the online WDFW publication of hunting prospects, encourage to send photos of them afield to WDFW, and continuing education opportunities and clinics. (Fiscal Year 2023)
- Cover Weekender, social media, e-news, Master Hunters, volunteer opportunities, annual hunting prospects, Habitat at Home, jobs link, and season setting processes in Hunter Education class content. (Fiscal Year 2023)



Expand our partnerships with groups, NGOs, etc. not currently on our radar (rafting groups, Audubon, etc.)

- Promote hunting with cross-over activities that pair well with hunting such as backpacking, hiking, kayaking, etc. (2023-2025 biennium)

Leverage existing partnership and reach out to new partners to encourage hunting and fishing activities.

- Host annual summit with R3 partners to provide forum for partnership creation and investment in R3 initiatives. (Fiscal Year 2023)



**OBJECTIVE:**

**Increase small game license holders from 100,000 in 2019 to 124,000 in 2030.**

**STRATEGIES:**

Develop a Learn-to-Hunt Program for college students.

- Work with REI or other outdoor outfitters to cross-promote or provide “how-to” clinics. (2023-2025 biennium)
- Implement a pilot program at 1-2 colleges & evaluate for possible scaling-up. (long-term)
- Create gear loaning program or work with NGOs to provide funding for loaned gear. (long-term)

Create a communications campaign about hunting skills.

- Create communications about hunting that aren’t necessarily related to firearms – perhaps backpacking, cooking, hiking, etc. (Fiscal Year 2023)
- Pair hunter education and culinary programs as a way to capitalize on the local food movement. (long-term)
- Create videos with processing partners like Butchering 101. (long-term)

Market small game hunting opportunities to hunter education graduates that have graduated within the past three years.

- Offer mentorship and/or guided first-hunt opportunities with species like pheasant, turkey, and other small game species. (Fiscal Year 2023)
- Quarterly email new hunter education graduates with information about small game hunting opportunities, GoHunt, WDFW access programs. Email link to hunting prospects. (Fiscal Year 2023)
- Offer a chef collaboration for wild game with live and recorded events. (Fiscal Year 2023)
- Develop a list of WDFW employees that are willing to serve as hunting mentors and connect them with mentees. (Fiscal Year 2023)
- Market to military bases and members about small game hunting opportunities. (Fiscal Year 2023)
- Create three-day waterfowl licenses to incentivize new hunters. (long-term)
- Create how-to videos for hunting small game, in particular forest grouse and other species where dog/boat/etc. may not be required. (long-term)

Follow up with recent hunter education students to promote going afield.

- Create a formal mentorship program for hunting. (Fiscal Year 2023)

Look for opportunity in underutilized species and market those opportunities. Quail and dove as example.

- Create marketing campaign with how-to blogs and social media posts about underutilized species. (Fiscal Year 2023)
- Create a #DecoyWeek and a #BackCountryHunterWeek. (2023-2025 biennium)

Increase awareness for license holders about small game opportunities they may not have participated in before.

- Highlight specific areas where certain small game species can be found and seasonal information. (Fiscal Year 2023)

**OBJECTIVE:**

**Increase participation in shooting sports as they relate to hunting.**

**STRATEGIES:**

Promote hunting and hunter education with schools, 4H, Boys/Girls Scouts and private ranges that support shooting

- Add additional liaisons for these groups to promote shooting-sport outreach. (Fiscal Year 2023)

Explore partnerships with shooting sports organizations, to promote hunting and hunter education.

- Provide a “How to run a clinic” document for partners/organizations to use. (2023-2025 biennium)
- Market pathways into hunting to target shooting range users and target shooting clubs (geofencing, signage, newsletter contributions) (long-term)

WDFW lands

- Ensure public and license holders have information on where to shoot safely on WDFW-managed lands. (Fiscal Year 2023)
- Create a Learn-to-Shoot program. (2023-2025 biennium)
- Develop new shooting ranges on WDFW lands and coordinate with local shooting club(s) to ‘adopt a range’ to help with maintenance of site. (long-term)
- Ensure wildlife area maintenance staff have resources to maintain shooting ranges and Enforcement officers patrol areas. (long-term)
- Enhance reservation system on WDFW lands to provide quality hunts. (long-term)

Public lands

- Coordinate more litter pick-ups on public lands with shooting areas. (Fiscal Year 2023)



- Ensure sister agencies and other public agencies have resources to maintain shooting ranges and information about the benefits of providing access. (long-term)
- Work with public landowners to enhance target shooting opportunities on their lands. (long-term)
- Partner with local, state and federal entities to create archery ranges. (long-term)

Private ranges

- Work with private ranges to provide more free sight-in days before the season begins. (Fiscal Year 2023)

**OBJECTIVE:**

**Reduce churn rate of hunters from 20% in 2019 to 15% in 2030, excluding hunters over 65.**

**STRATEGIES:**

Connect lapsed and new hunters to hunting cohorts by promoting chances to engage with partners.

- Promote Master Hunter enrollment with lapsed hunters--both for recruiting volunteers and to connect hunters seeking opportunities to assist in damage hunts. (2023-2025 biennium)
- Create a Hunt WA app. (long-term)

Establish ongoing relationship via regular email, targeted marketing, and social media with big game hunters.

- Promote and enhance Hunting Prospects. (2023-2025 biennium)
- Email Hunting Prospects for hunters based on the special permit that was drawn. (2023-2025 biennium)
- Provide clinics/virtual events on how to apply for special permits. (2023-2025 biennium)
- Provide clinics on how to hunt big game. (long-term)
- Provide clinics/virtual events on how to process big game. (long-term)

Examine special hunt framework to explore additional R3 opportunities.

- Work within the Game Management Plan and then work with Game Management Advisory Council and others to evaluate options to address overcrowding and quality hunts. (2023-2025 biennium)

**OBJECTIVE:**

**Maintain acreage accessible for hunters.**

**STRATEGIES:**

WDFW lands

- Ensure the public has information on where to hunt on WDFW wildlife areas. (Fiscal Year 2023)

Public lands

- Secure access easements to 'land-locked public lands.' (long-term)
- Partner with land management agencies on road management and trail development. (long-term)

Private lands

- Provide more law enforcement patrols on private land that allow hunting including industrial timber to reduce vandalism and promote cooperation. (2023-2025 biennium)
- When providing habitat technical assistance to private landowners, access about their interest in enrolling in WDFW lands access program(s). (long-term)
- Acquire public access--via agreements like feel free to hunt, hunt by reservation. (long-term)
- Meet with private industrial timberland owners to understand needs/ barriers for providing public access. (long-term)
- Create access opportunities with small private landowners via a reservation system. (long-term)
- Create public/private partnership to create more guide service opportunities. (long-term)

## Goal two: Increase participation in fishing by recruiting new participants, retaining existing participants, and reactivating previous anglers.



### OBJECTIVE:

Increase the number of licensed anglers from 837,000 in 2019 to 1,000,000 by 2030.

### STRATEGIES:

Promote/market underutilized species that can sustain growth of the fishery.

Provide the what, where, and how-tos to new anglers.

- Create a quarterly email for new anglers in WILD with information on where to fish in WA with links to relevant YouTube videos. (Fiscal Year 2023)
- Consider non-traditional media markets like being guests on YouTube pages (Fiscal Year 2023)
- Create Top 10 lists of best lakes for specific species. (Fiscal Year 2023)
- Create videos for gear selection, techniques for different species, how to get a license, what is legal and open. (2023-2025 biennium)
- Create videos or blogs that highlight unique opportunities that are underutilized by the angling public. (2023-2025 biennium)
- Create a video series for each region where we feature or show areas to go fishing. (2023-2025 biennium)
- Demonstrate how to catch, prepare, and cook these species. (2023-2025 biennium)
- Create culturally specific versions of these videos. (2023-2025 biennium)

Provide angling information to anglers' mobile devices.

- Upgrade Fish Washington app to offer language translations. (2023-2025 biennium)
- Create a digital catch record card. (2023-2025 biennium)
- Create GIS layer for bank access in Fish Washington app and on WDFW website. (long-term)
- Simplify the regulations or how the regulations are displayed/provided. (long-term)



Engage the public and recruit new anglers at special events near urban centers.

- Utilize RBFF trailer to provide fishing equipment to underserved communities. (Fiscal Year 2023)
- Partner with clubs to provide family experiences. (2023-2025 biennium)
- Promote the benefits of going out with someone to introduce you to the sport or a new fishing technique in a new area. (2023-2025 biennium)
- Create a family fishing center at larger sportshows. (long-term)

Increase awareness for license holders about fishing opportunities they may not have participated in before.

- Continue to promote the pikeminnow reward program. (Fiscal Year 2023)
- Create promotional Campaigns, like “BassWeek” and “WalleyeWeek,” could include “PerchWeek” or “CrappieWeek.” (2023-2025 biennium)
- Create opportunities for education in hatcheries. (2023-2025 biennium)



Ensure public is aware of charter and guide opportunities to get out on the water and be introduced to the sport.

- Create charter seasonality wheel, blogs about how-tos of fishing with guides/charters in appropriate seasons. (Fiscal Year 2023)

Expand our partnerships with groups, NGOs, etc. not currently on our radar (rafting groups, Audubon, etc.)

- Cross-over activities that pair well with fishing such as backpacking to an alpine lake, kayaking, or whitewater rafting. (Fiscal Year 2023)
- Promote live events for college credit on campuses or in the field. (long-term)



Leverage more innovative partnerships for those who may not identify as an angler.

- Host annual summit with R3 partners to provide forum for partnership creation and investment in R3 initiatives. (Fiscal Year 2023)

Follow up with participants from partner events about entry-level fishing opportunities.

- Create a formal mentorship program for fishing. (long-term)
- Host adult beginner fly fishing workshops. (long-term)

**OBJECTIVE:**

Increase participation in youth fishing by 2030.

**STRATEGIES:**

Create a mentorship program

- Reach early learners with Wild Washington to tie into P.E. classes, after school programs, etc. (long-term)
- Partner with colleges and create credit for an outdoor recreation class. (long-term)

**OBJECTIVE:**

Reduce churn rate of anglers from 42% in 2019 to 37% in 2030.

**STRATEGIES:**

Follow up with license holders that participate in low-barrier to entry fishing activities about additional opportunities they may be interested in.

- Establish a program for bank and jetty fishing. (long-term)

Establish Master Anglers program to establish an angling mentoring program.

- Content can include fisheries management 101, stewardship, and education. (Fiscal Year 2023)

**OBJECTIVE:**

Maintain current boat launches and shore access for anglers and increase access for places that allow fishing.

**STRATEGIES:**

WDFW lands and access sites

- Provide better information on how-to's and access, particularly bank access. Use existing on-site kiosks to promote these items. (2023-2025 biennium)
- Ensure access area maintenance staff have resources to maintain water access sites and Enforcement officers patrol areas. (long-term)

Public lands

- Work with partners on signage and information on WDFW website on where to go and access public land fishing areas. (2023-2025 biennium)

Private lands

- Use volunteers for habitat enhancement projects and litter pick up. Put existing free Discover Pass authority to work. (2023-2025 biennium)
- When providing habitat technical assistance to private landowners, access about their interest in enrolling in WDFW lands access program(s). (long-term)
- Acquire public access--via agreements like feel free to fish, new fish by reservation system. Post/sign access on easements over private land. (long-term)



## Goal three: Increase public support for hunting and fishing and increase awareness for how those activities contribute to funding and supporting conservation.



### OBJECTIVE:

Increase support for legal, regulated hunting.

### STRATEGIES:

Establish a baseline survey of WA residents to assess public support for legal, regulated hunting

Humanize and highlight dedication of hunters to conservation.

- Educate the public on how WDFW contributes to food shelters. (Fiscal Year 2023)
- Social media campaign to ask people what hunting means to them. (Fiscal Year 2023)
- Collaborate with nonprofit partners to help support positive framing of hunting/ fishing in their communications and messaging. (2023-2025 biennium)
- Create a compelling storytelling video featuring wildlife and habitat success stories, research funded by hunting dollars, and key figures in WA who have made significant impacts. (long-term)

Increase public awareness for how hunting revenue contributes to conservation and non-hunting recreation opportunities.

- Create a compelling storytelling video suitable for mainstream TV and other digital channels. (long-term)

Conduct preliminary research and message testing, and launch media campaign that highlights how conservation work and recreational opportunities are mutually beneficial to fish and wildlife

- Create communications around North American Model of Wildlife Conservation and conservation funding via licenses matched with PR. Conduct a news release each year about PR apportionment and how the Department intends to use it. (2023-2025 biennium)
- Create a compelling storytelling video featuring habitat success stories and key figures in Washington who have made significant impacts. (long-term)

Increase support from the general public for the use of hunting as a wildlife management tool

- Promote WDFW staff as scientific and professional experts in wildlife management. (Fiscal Year 2023)

- Create a video of wildlife damage and the Department’s role and hunters role in managing wildlife. Coordinate with conservation/ hunting partners to enhance message amplification. Use social media/ YouTube ad targeting to reach hunting/ conservation audiences. (long-term)

Incorporate information about wildlife management funding into relevant communications products (news releases, web content, blog post content, etc.).

- Share wildlife management funding information with partners who typically share information about wildlife conservation etc. with their audiences. Encourage info integration into partner web and e-newsletter content as applicable. (Fiscal Year 2023)
- Ensure blogs, news releases, and partner events contain a funding component to acknowledge the origin of the fund source. (Fiscal Year 2023)

**OBJECTIVE:**

**Increase support for legal, regulated recreational fishing.**

**STRATEGIES:**

Establish a baseline survey of WA residents to assess public support for legal, regulated recreational fishing.

- Work with partner such as WMI, Southwick, etc. to create survey. (Fiscal Year 2023)

Humanize and highlight dedication of fishers to conservation.

- Create a compelling storytelling video featuring fisheries success stories, research funded by fishing dollars, and key figures in WA who have made significant impacts. (long-term)

Increase public awareness for how fishing revenue contributes to conservation and non-fishing recreation opportunities.

- Create a compelling storytelling video suitable for mainstream TV and other digital channels. (long-term)

Launch media campaign that highlights how conservation work and recreational opportunity are mutually beneficial to wildlife and aquatic species

- Create rack card highlighting conservation/ outdoor rec benefits for wildlife and aquatic species for use at Department events, region offices, hatcheries, etc. (Fiscal Year 2023)
- Report to the media/public Dingell-Johnson annual apportionment, including the history behind the legislation. (2023-2025 biennium)
- Consider on-site signs that amplifies strategy messaging at conservation/ outdoor recreation related projects and water access sites. Announce signage implementation via social media. Seek signage partnerships as applicable. (long-term)



## **Conclusion**

WDFW staff will begin implementing Fiscal Year 2023 efforts from July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023. WDFW is seeking ongoing funding for agency R3 coordinators in the 2023-2025 biennium. WDFW will assess the plan annually and intends to host an external partner summit to assess whether tactics are successful.

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