

Trout Angler Survey Results

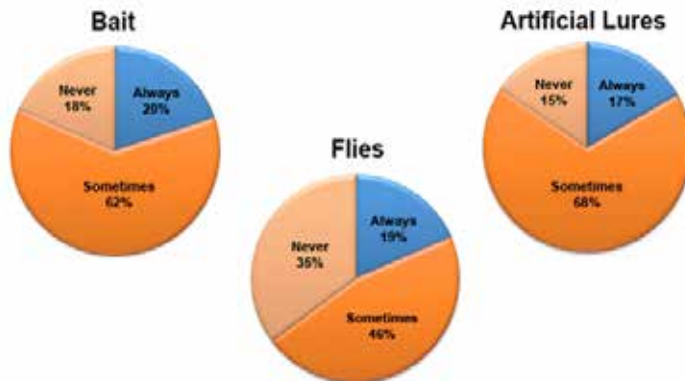
By Ross Shramko, Senior Fisheries Biologist

39% of anglers named rainbow trout as the *easiest* species to catch in the fall

During the fall of 2012, the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife set out to better understand the opinions and attitudes of its trout anglers by administering both a telephone and an online trout angler survey. Surveys like this help fisheries managers determine what anglers think regarding certain topics pertaining to fishing and fisheries management. The opinion and insight gained from these surveys is critically important information that will be used to help Fish and Wildlife managers make informed decisions and guide the future of our trout fishing program. What follows are survey highlights.

- Bait such as worms, minnows and PowerBait are the most commonly used of the three lure choices by a very narrow margin over artificial lures and flies.

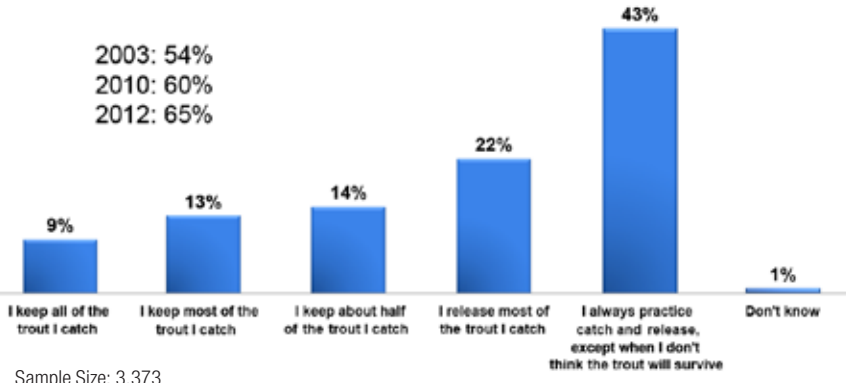
Lure Selection



Sample Size: Bait 3,225; Flies 3,196; Artificial Lures 3,208

- The overwhelming majority of New Jersey trout anglers (95 percent) fish throughout the spring trout season, while about 4 percent of respondents fish *only* on the opening day weekend.
- Anglers spend an average of 16 days fishing for trout during the spring trout season (March through May).
- The increasing trend towards catch and release continues with 64 percent of trout anglers surveyed indicating they release most or all trout caught.

Catch & Release



- Forty percent of anglers surveyed indicated that they fish in a *year round* or *seasonal trout conservation area* (TCA). The Ken Lockwood Gorge on the South Branch of the Raritan River was slightly more popular (25 percent) than the Point Mountain TCA located on the Musconetcong River (18 percent). Also, 22 percent of anglers surveyed indicated that they have fished the special regulation sections of the Big Flat Brook.

Big Flat Brook

At the time of the survey, Fish and Wildlife was developing regulations for a 4.2-mile section of the Big Flat/Flat Brook from Rt. 206 downstream to Roy Bridge. Therefore, the survey included several questions pertaining to angler practices targeting this popular trout stream. Anglers were asked if they fished the stretch of the Big Flat Brook where fly fishing regulations are in effect for all or most of the year. Twenty-two percent of all survey respondents indicated they had fished this section of the Big Flat Brook at some point during the year. This subset of anglers then answered a series of questions related to this special regulation area. Their answers are reflected here:

- Angler satisfaction with the existing special regulations was high, with 31 percent very satisfied and 40 percent somewhat satisfied; 17 percent were somewhat or very dissatisfied.
- When asked to name one regulation they would change if they could, 40 percent would change nothing while 33 percent would change the methods/type of bait or lures allowed; 6 percent would change the timing/dates when various regulations apply.
- When asked if they would support reducing the daily creel as a way to limit the number of trout harvested from this stretch of stream, many said they would strongly support (56 percent) or moderately support (16 percent) a creel limit change. Less than 25 percent were opposed (10 percent strongly and 7 percent moderately opposed) to a daily creel reduction.

In-season Closures

In 2012, 16 trout stocked rivers and streams were closed to fishing from 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the day they are stocked during the seven-week period after opening day. These waters are mostly larger rivers and streams that are heavily stocked with trout, with many trout stocking and fishing access locations near a majority of New Jersey's resident anglers. The in-season closures create a sense of fairness by allowing anglers who work during conventional work week hours the same "first crack" at freshly stocked trout as someone who may not have the same timing constraints. The closures also create a sense of sporting fairness by allowing the freshly stocked trout a period of time to acclimate to their new stream surroundings and spread out throughout a stream segment. Sixty-eight percent of anglers responding indicated that they fish in a river or stream that has an in-season stocking closure.

The majority of anglers surveyed (71 percent) were in support of these closures with the top reason given that it allows fish the opportunity to spread out throughout an area, while those who oppose the closures (10 percent) stated that the closures limit an anglers time and opportunity to fish.

Fall Trout Program

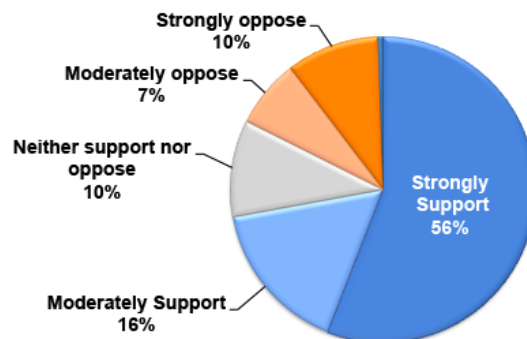
In 2006, Fish and Wildlife made significant changes to its fall trout program. These changes included the stocking of larger two-year-old trout which resulted in fewer, but larger, trout being stocked.

- Sixty percent of survey respondents fish for trout stocked in the fall; 40 percent stated that they do not fish for fall trout.
- The top reasons given for not fishing in the fall include not enough time (30 percent), poor weather (28 percent), busy hunting (10 percent) and fishing for other species (six percent).
- Rainbow trout were the overwhelming top choice (39 percent) for *easiest* species to catch in the fall.
- As for *preferred* species to catch, brown trout (25 percent) and rainbow trout (23 percent) were favored over brook trout (12 percent), though the majority of anglers answered that they have no preference (40 percent) as to which species they catch in the fall.

Information derived from this survey is crucial to assist Fish and Wildlife in managing recreational fishing and the state's freshwater fish resources. We appreciate the time devoted to answering the survey and remind anglers that participation in future surveys will remain vital for making accurate and informed decisions on the future management of your freshwater fisheries resources.

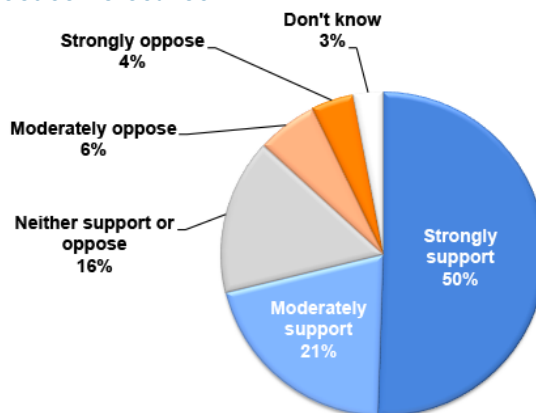
Creel Limit — Big Flat Brook Fly Stretch

Would you support or oppose reducing the daily creel limit, in this stream section, as a way of limiting the number of trout that are harvested from the fly fishing areas?



Sample Size: 635

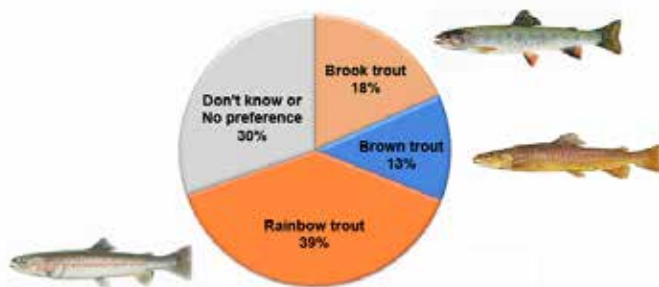
In Season Closures



Sample Size: 3,307

Fall Species Analysis

In your opinion, which stocked species is **easiest** to catch in the fall?



Sample Size: 1,787

Volunteers Needed To Get Kids Hooked On Fishing!

Jamie Darrow/NJ Div. Fish and Wildlife



New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife needs volunteers at the Pequest Trout Hatchery and Natural Resource Education Center to teach youths about fishing.

Teaching experience is helpful—but not required—to become a fishing education instructor. However, enthusiasm, energy and the desire to teach children proper fishing techniques and ethics is a must!

Classes run Monday through Friday from April through October. Interested applicants must become a Wildlife Conservation Corps (WCC) volunteer. Download a WCC application from our website at: NJFishandWildlife.com/wcchome.htm.

Share the pleasures of fishing and pass on a conservation ethic to the next generation. Become a fishing education instructor today!

For more information on Fish and Wildlife's fishing education programs, call Jessica Griglak at (908) 637-4125, or e-mail Jessica.Griglak@dep.state.nj.us.

Beat The Fall Rush! Take Your Hunter Education Class This Spring!

The best time to take your Hunter Education class is spring!

Last year over 6,000 students completed the course but more than 4,000 waited until the fall.

Register for a class this April or May and enjoy the following:

- Smaller class size
- Greater student to teacher ratio
- Shorter lines
- Greater selection of classes
- Good weather

With classes in the fall averaging over 100 students, you may not find a class if you wait. Classes in April and May seldom exceed 50 students.

So Beat The Fall Rush—Register Now!

For class information and to register, go to:
NJFishandWildlife.com





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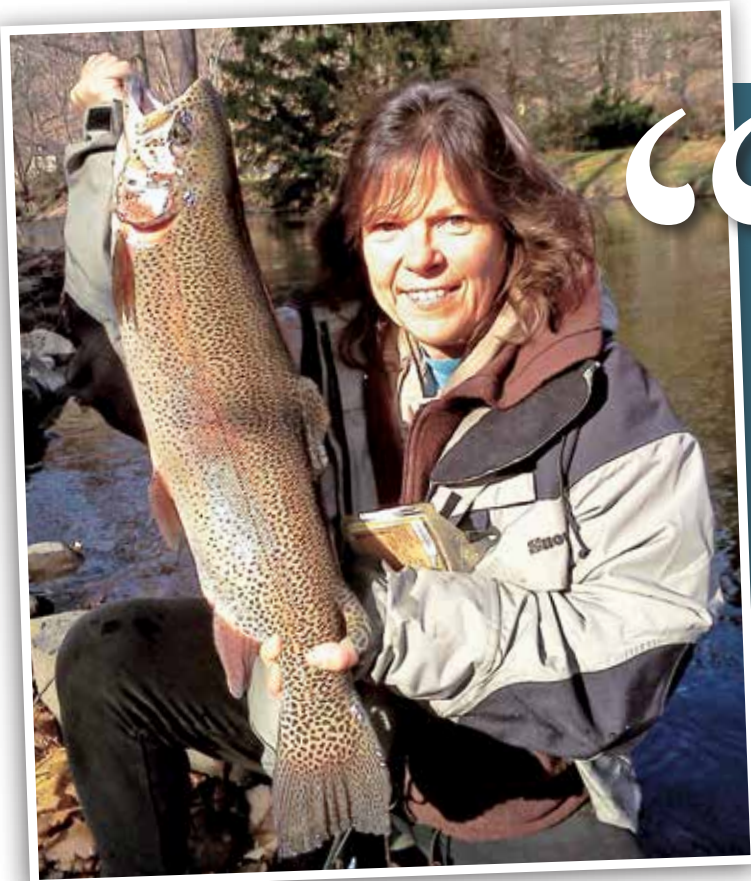
GRAND SLAM DESTINATION

Item	Cost	Website	Source
Accessible Fishing Sites For People With Disabilities	Free	Yes	1
Commercial (fee-based) Fishing Preserves in NJ	Free	Yes	1
Delaware River Boat Access	Free	Yes	1
Disabled Veterans—Free Fishing License application	Free	Yes	1
Field Guide to Dragonflies and Damselflies of NJ—Book	\$39	No	4
Field Guide to Reptiles & Amphibians of NJ—Book	\$18	No	4
Field Guide to Reptiles & Amphibians of NJ—CD	\$12	No	4
Field Guide to Reptiles & Amphibians of NJ—Book/CD Set	\$25	No	4
Lake Survey Maps (specify waterbody)	Free	Yes	1
List of Fishing Guides	Free	Yes	1
Manasquan River Fishing Access Areas	Free	Yes	1
State Parks & Forests Maps	Free	No	3
USGS Topographic Maps	\$10	No	2
Visually Impaired—Free Fishing License application	Free	No	4
Visually Impaired—Large Format Freshwater Fishing Digest (Enlarged photocopy of this Digest)	Free	No	4
Wildlife Management Area Maps (specify name of WMA)	Free	Yes	1

Sources:

Be sure to write the name of the item being requested on the outside of the envelope.

1. NJ Div. of Fish and Wildlife, 605 Pequest Road, Oxford, NJ 07863, (908) 637-4125
2. NJ Geological Survey, Maps & Publications, Sales Office, MC401-07A, P.O. Box 402, Trenton, NJ 08625-0402, (609) 777-1038
3. DEP, Div. Parks & Forestry, MC501-04, P.O. Box 420, Trenton, NJ 08625-0420, (800) 843-6420 (Specify name of park.)
4. NJ Div. Fish and Wildlife, MC501-03, P.O. Box 420, Trenton, NJ 08625-0420. Make check payable to Conserve Wildlife Foundation for items with a fee.



I have been fishing the Pequest River for about 15 years and always make the time to get up there during the spring and fall stockings. This is my favorite guaranteed trout fishing hole and it never disappoints. The river changed a lot after Sandy. This rainbow was caught on the first cast under a downed tree using a baby nightcrawler on 6-pound test. She is by far the most beautiful fish I have ever seen and one Black Friday I will never forget. Thank you for a fish of a lifetime!

—Ele Ikenson