

ANGLER R3 PLAN



Developed by the Angler R3 Committee (2020)
Revised 2021, 2023

Overview



Our mission is to conserve and promote fishing, hunting, and wildlife resources through management, education, and scientific research.



For generations, recreational fishing has been a cultural staple in the American way of life. Across our great nation, people of all ages have enjoyed engaging in the art and excitement of casting a lure, watching a bobber go down, and anxiously anticipating what they may find on the other end of their fishing line. The people that engage in this pastime are as diverse as the fish species they target, but all have a common interest in pursuing the benefits gained from fishing. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) is tasked with conserving and promoting fishing and our diverse fish resources. To succeed in this endeavor, it is critical that WRD continues to recruit, retain, and reactivate anglers in Georgia. This effort, known as R3 (recruit, retain, reactivate), involves numerous stakeholders with the common goal to increase interest and participation in fishing. To support this effort and in consideration of its mission statement, WRD has developed the following strategic plan.

Project Description

Angler R3 efforts play an important role in achieving this overall mission. This plan consists of three goals that WRD hopes to accomplish within the next three years in Georgia. Specific objectives and planned strategies to achieve these goals are defined. The metrics and target audiences referenced will guide future actions and tasks associated with angler R3 and determine success. Adaptive management will be incorporated as we implement strategies, learn from those efforts, and refine our approach.

The Angler R3 Coordinator will maintain the currency and relevancy of this plan and

oversee implementation. Engagement from the Fisheries Management Section and beyond will be fundamental components of the Angler R3 team. Marketing, education, customer service, and evaluation all play significant roles in achieving the goals defined. Marketing platforms utilized may vary and will depend upon target audience and metrics. In some cases, the use of multiple platforms may be used to maximize reach. Many objectives and strategies in the plan were developed based upon findings presented by Brandt Information Services in the document, "License Holder Insights August 2020."

Our Goals

Goal 1: Reduce angler churn

Goal 2: Increase interest and participation in fishing

Goal 3: Evaluate angler R3 efforts





Goal 1: Reduce Angler Churn in Georgia

- 1.1. **Objective:** Increase availability of educational and informational support to Georgia anglers.
Target Audience: Those who have been recently introduced or reintroduced to fishing within the past 5 years. Current or recently lapsed (within 1 year) Georgia Fishing license holders.
Metric: % of new anglers who renew fishing license. Email analytics indicating 2% open rate, number video views, number of clicks, unsubscribes, event registrations.
 - 1.1.1. **Strategy:** Conduct a one-year email campaign introducing new anglers to fishing events and opportunities close to home. New anglers are defined as current first-time license holders or those who've not possessed a license within 5 years.
 - 1.1.2. **Action:** Include resources and checklists to equip anglers with tools needed to increase the chance of success around their local area (where to go, what baits to use, species to target, equipment tutorials, etc.).
 - 1.1.2.1. **Action:** Initiate campaign by distributing information to current, first-time fishing license holders, license holders who've not possessed a license in the previous 5 years and lapsed anglers (within 1 year of expiration). Distribute reminders to those with their first-time licenses within 3 months of expiration. Auto-generate distribution to any new customers purchasing their fishing license for the first-time or first-time within the past 5 years.
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- 1.1.3. **Strategy:** Develop a system to auto-generate emails to former and lapsed fishing license customers on their 65th birthday to inform them of the affordable senior fishing license option. Explore the idea of fishing events for seniors in areas of the state where a high proportion of the population are senior citizens (Figure 1).

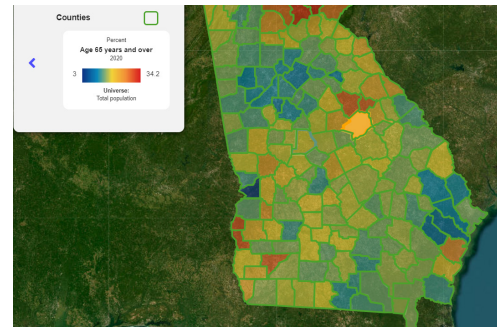
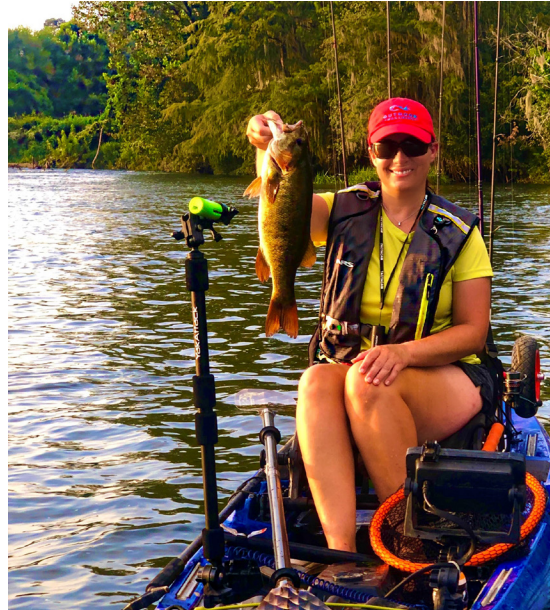


Figure 1. Percent Distribution of Individuals Ages 65 and Older in Georgia (Source: US Census, 2020)

- 1.1.4. **Strategy:** Alter the format and title of existing fishing events. Going forward, avoid using the term “Kids Fishing Event” for event titles and allow event participants to include kids and adults (i.e., families and communities.) Encourage fishing events and “event ponds” to be open to the public, if possible, and prioritize stocking efforts accordingly. Provide instruction to equip anglers with knowledge and skills needed to succeed by incorporating an educational component or demonstration into public fishing events. Promote and encourage participation in GADNR angler recognition programs at all events.
- 1.1.5. **Strategy:** Develop print and digital resources to offer on GADNR websites, to include State Parks, WRD Fishing, WRD Education.
- 1.1.5.1. **Action:** Enhance educational and instructional resources currently available. Develop content, such as infographics, checklists, and videos, to address gaps in information.
- 1.1.5.2. **Action:** Reprint and provide electronic versions of the following publications: *Georgia Angler Pocket Guides*, *Trout Streams of Georgia*, and *Georgia’s Black Bass*.
- 1.1.5.3. **Action:** Enhance the Georgia Outdoor Map and Go Outdoors GA App to incorporate links to educational resources and instructional content. Incorporate small impoundment fishing opportunities that are open to the public and notate any fee requirements. Create regional maps of these resources for local distribution.
- 1.1.5.4. **Action:** Develop one-page fishing basics resources and checklists based on specific species/locations/seasons.
- 1.1.5.5. **Action:** Distribute resources within GADNR and to event and industry partners to promote to consumers and participants. Partners may also include visitor information centers, private businesses (e.g., retailers, marinas, etc.), etc.



- 1.2. **Objective:** Increase awareness of fishing access and opportunities that may appeal to female anglers. According to analysis by Brandt Information Services (Brandt License Holder Insights in Georgia, August 2020), the COVID-19 pandemic brought a small surge of non-traditional audiences that trended more female. According to RBFF (2023), Female anglers comprise 37% of the national angling population which is the highest proportion to date. However, females stop fishing at a 10% higher rate than their male counterparts. Community has been pinpointed as being the key to female angler retention, as well as mitigation of common barriers they commonly face (RBFF, 2023).

Target Audience: Females who possess a current or recently lapsed fishing license.

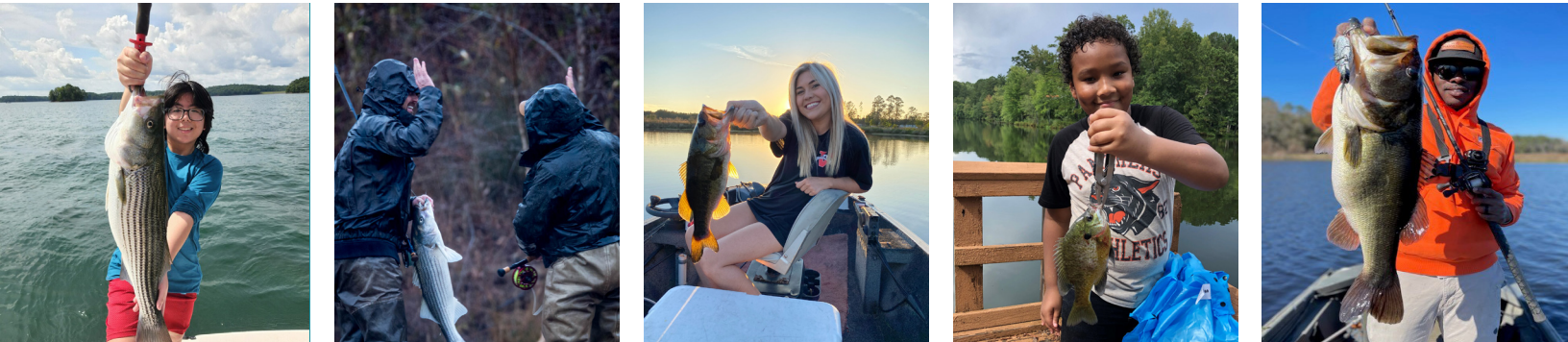
Metric: Increase in the proportion of fishing license sales among women by 1% each year for 3 years.

- 1.2.1. **Strategy:** Implement at least one fishing event annually that incorporates an educational component and is specifically designed for women anglers. Encourage the development and promote communities/groups comprised of females who share an interest in fishing.
- 1.2.2. **Strategy:** Develop targeted messaging to women to increase awareness of fishing opportunities that are safe, close to home, accessible from shore, and offer amenities such as restrooms, picnic facilities, etc.
- 1.2.3. **Strategy:** Host at least one Family Fishing Event per Fisheries Management region annually. Promotional messaging should represent women and multi-generational families. According to RBFF (2022), data continues to underscore the critical importance of introducing fishing at a young age, as 86% of current fishing participants first fished before the age of 12.

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- 1.3. **Objective:** Retain and reactivate anglers, identified by Brandt (2020) as high-value customer segments, that may be prone to allowing their license to lapse. Students comprise one customer segment in which retention efforts should be assigned. According to RBFF (2022), fishing participation rates among young anglers fell by nearly half between the ages of 12 and 24, which suggests retaining teenagers and young adults is significant to growing and maintaining future participation.
- Target Audience:** Anglers from the following customer segments: Hispanic; ages 25 and up; non-residents; and students.
- Metric:** Number of views, Reach, Engagement, Readership. License renewals and churn rates based upon angler demographics.
- 1.3.1. **Strategy:** Create series of brief videos to promote resources and places to fish in Georgia. Include information to equip anglers with tools to increase the likelihood of success (baits to use, stocking events, different ways/methods to fish, seasonal tips, etc.)
- 1.3.2. **Strategy:** Offer Spanish-language versions of our websites (including license/event management database), the WRD app, and various educational and information publications.
- 1.3.3. **Strategy:** Evaluate and improve opportunities to access fishable waters through kayak and canoe launches. The popularity of kayak fishing among young anglers is growing due to increased affordability and mobility, along with less maintenance compared to a typical fishing boat.
- 1.3.4. **Strategy:** Engage with these customers through creel and email surveys to develop an understanding of their fishing behavior and motivations. Determine what motivates these anglers to fish and what can be done to keep them fishing in Georgia (e.g., trophy bass, slams, angler recognition programs). Also determine their preferences for receiving fishing-related information.
- 1.3.5. **Strategy:** Determine impacts of the auto-renew option available for licenses. If successful, determine if opportunities exist to further promote this option through collaboration and incentives.



Goal 2: Increase Interest and Participation in Fishing



- 2.1. **Objective:** Expand customer base.
Target Audience: Fishing event and creel survey participants.
Metric: Increased number of fishing event participants, registered in the GO system, by 5% annually for 3 years; track direct license purchases from emails.
- 2.1.1. **Strategy:** Collect email addresses and/or mobile phone numbers of event participants (DNR and partner events). After each event, distribute educational and informational resources, promote local fishing event opportunities, and provide instructions to purchase or renew a Georgia fishing license to these participants. The inclusion of a survey may provide insight as to habits and motivations behind fishing.
- 2.1.2. **Strategy:** Promote and incentivize fishing event advance and on-site registration, using the Go Outdoors Georgia website, as well as creel survey participation.
- 2.2. **Objective:** Promote fishing with current outdoor recreationists and conservationists. Brandt (2020) recommends turning single-sport license holders into multi-sport license holders.
Target Audience: Current customers who possess a hunting license or lands pass but not a fishing license; Current customers who have registered vessels with DNR; Park visitors, campers, event participants. Potential customers with outdoor interests include Amazon customers shopping for outdoor equipment and people using Google to search outdoor-related items.
Metric: Number of hunting licenses and lands pass holder conversions to multi-sport or fishing licenses; number of new fishing licenses purchased by current boat registrants. Tie direct ROI to digital advertisements.

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- 2.2.1. **Strategy:** Initiate a marketing campaign to introduce customers without fishing licenses (e.g., hunting license, lands pass, etc.) etc. to angling opportunities near (within 50-miles) where they live or recreate regularly. This may include information related to other outdoor opportunities (hunting, hiking, camping, wildlife watching, etc.) to increase purchase of multi-sport licenses.
- 2.2.2. **Strategy:** Incorporate and promote fishing with participants in adjacent activities at parks and partner sites. Encourage outdoor adventure days (or other events that incorporate multiple interests) on DNR-sites. The 2022 Special Report of Fishing indicates the following as top cross-over outdoor activities, for kids (ages 6-17), Hispanics, and females: camping, hiking, bicycling, and walking for fitness.
- 2.2.3. **Strategy:** Promote fishing using digital advertisements with Amazon/Google.
- 2.3. **Objective:** Promote fishing license sales as a conservation tool with outdoor enthusiasts and conservationists. According to Brandt (2020), a unique segment of “ethical tourists” has emerged in Georgia. These outdoor adventurers possess a conservation mindset and propensity to donate. Messaging that connects to the bigger purpose of conservation should resonate and there is a wide opportunity to engage younger demographics with sustainability messaging. Communications that reveal the impact of their contribution will help keep them engaged Brandt, 2020). Outdoor recreationists attitudes toward natural resources are influenced by their perceptions of the benefits accrued from recreating in those natural areas (Morais, 2015).
- Target Audience:** GADNR license plate customers; wildlife watchers; lands pass holders; GADNR donors.
- Metric:** Partnership; signage; social media engagement; trout license plate revenue; non-consumptive or adjacent activity participation.
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- 2.3.1. **Strategy:** Continue to promote public messaging related to the importance of fishing licenses and the impact they have on our economy and natural resource conservation. Replace or add signage (as needed) at state parks, boat ramps, marinas, etc. to convey message that Georgia fishing licenses conserve our natural resources (e.g., signs showing a pier was made possible due to funds generated from the sale of fishing licenses).
- 2.3.2. **Strategy:** Promote the broad benefits fishing can provide for people, to include affordability, socialization, mental and physical well-being.
- 2.3.2.1. **Action:** Develop and distribute messaging and creative content via social media platforms to convey these benefits of fishing. For example, compare the average cost of a fishing trip to other solitary or social activities to demonstrate the relative affordability of fishing.
- 2.3.2.2. **Action:** Offer regional fishing packages or “recipes” that convey the number of local fishing options available, species available, and entry-level costs of participating in fishing (e.g., cost of a license, rod and tackle, and average travel costs). Seek partnerships with retailers to offer discounts on beginner fishing equipment.





- 2.4. **Objective:** Each Fisheries Management region (Figure 2), along with Go Fish Education Center, McDuffie Environmental Education Center, and each Public Fishing Area (PFA) will facilitate instructional/ educational fishing programs annually to reach potential anglers state-wide. Commitment from each Fisheries Management Region and Program is necessary to maximize the success of our educational efforts, and thus all are encouraged to participate in the development and implementation of such tools and events.
- Target Audience:** Communities that have not been impacted by angler R3 outreach opportunities in the recent past should take priority.
- Metric:** Two programs per region/center. At least one program should be a fishing class for beginners and one program for advanced anglers who possess basic skills but have limited experience.
- 2.4.1. **Strategy:** Instructional programs are encouraged to incorporate an actual fishing component (if feasible). However, they're distinctly different from the typical public fishing event format facilitated by Fisheries Management. Instructional programs should teach participants how to catch fish and provide them with fundamental skills and knowledge to be successful anglers. All events should incorporate the importance and benefits of fishing.
- 2.4.2. **Strategy:** A broad availability of classes is critical to the success of these education efforts. Utilizing in-person and virtual formats may have the potential to reach new audiences. Classes are encouraged to be offered at optimal times for target audience participation and fishing success.
- 2.4.3. **Strategy:** Events should be staffed and available volunteers within the Go Outdoors Georgia system should be utilized. Training and equipment will be provided to staff and volunteers. Mutually beneficial partnerships with outside entities can improve overall event and participation. Provide excellent customer service to ensure participants have an enjoyable experience and increase the chances of participants successfully catching fish.

- 2.4.4. **Strategy:** Angler R3 liaisons will utilize mobile fishing trailers to facilitate instructional fishing events within their regions. Location venues to consider include State Parks, Public Fishing Areas, Wildlife Management Areas, Regional Education Centers, and Hatcheries, etc.

<p>Region 1 Supervisor: Jim Hakala 706-295-6102 2650 Floyd Springs Road Armuchee, GA 30105</p> <p>Summerville Hatchery: 706-857-3394 Rocky Mountain PFA: 706-802-5087 West Point District Office: 706-845-4180</p>
<p>Region 2 Supervisor: Anthony Rabern 706-535-5498 2150 Dawsonville Highway Gainesville, GA 30501</p> <p>Burford Hatchery: 770-781-6888 Burton Hatchery: 706-947-3112 Wildlife Resources Conservation Center: 800-366-2661 Wildlife Resources Division Headquarters: 706-557-3305</p>
<p>Region 3 Supervisor: Steve Schleiger 478-825-6151 1014 MLK Boulevard Fort Valley, GA 31030</p> <p>Thomson District Office: 706-595-1619 Walton District Office & Hatchery: 770-918-6418 Go Fish Education Center & Hatchery: 478-988-6737 Flat Creek PFA: 478-825-6151 Marben PFA: 770-784-3063 McDuffie PFA & Hatchery: 706-595-1684</p>
<p>Region 4 Supervisor: Bert Deener 912-285-6094 108 Darling Avenue Waycross, GA 31502</p> <p>Bowen's Mill Hatchery: 229-426-5272 Dodge County PFA: 478-374-6765 Hugh M. Gillis PFA: 478-296-6192 Ocmulgee PFA: 706-595-1684 Paradise PFA: 229-533-4792</p>
<p>Region 5 Supervisor: Rob Weller 229-430-4256 2024 Newton Road Albany, GA 31701</p> <p>Cordele Fish Hatchery: 229-276-2362 Dawson District Office & Hatchery: 229-995-4486 Big Lazer PFA: 478-825-6151</p>
<p>Region 6 Supervisor: Tim Barrett 912-727-2112 130 Hatchery Drive Richmond Hill, GA 31324</p> <p>Richmond Hill Fish Hatchery: 912-727-2112 Evans County PFA: 912-727-2112</p>

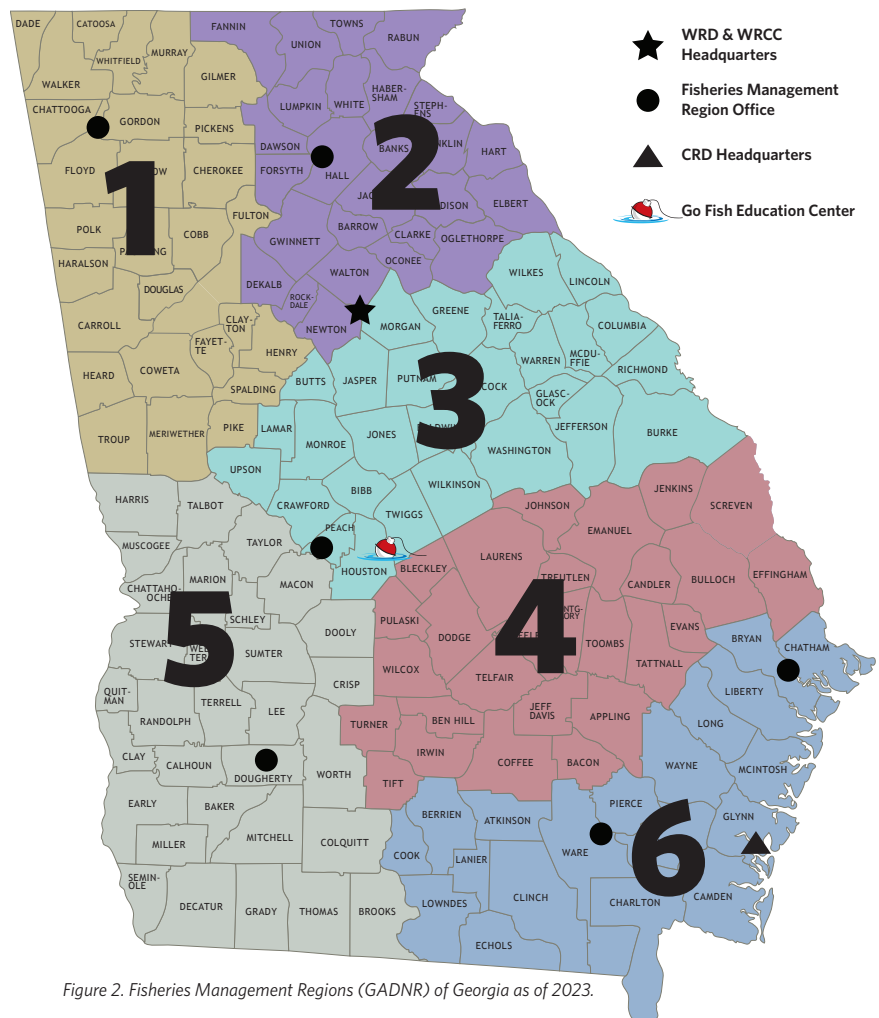


Figure 2. Fisheries Management Regions (GADNR) of Georgia as of 2023.

- 2.5. **Objective:** Increase fishing participation and access in urban areas and among ethnic minorities. Eighty percent of Americans live in or near cities (USFWS, 2022). The top trends in license sales across Georgia originated from women, younger people, and minorities (Brandt, 2020). Figures 3 through 5 indicate Georgia counties with the heaviest concentrations of Black, Hispanic, and Asian populations (U.S. Census, 2020). Fishing access to public water bodies in urban areas will heavily rely upon engagement and partnerships within local communities.

Target Audience: Residents of urban areas in Georgia, to include Atlanta, Savannah, Valdosta, Augusta, Macon, Columbus, and Albany; Underrepresented audiences include Hispanic, Black, and Asian ethnicities (RBFF, 2022).

Metric: Increase in the proportion of fishing license sales among these locations and ethnicities. Increase in the number of fishing events offered in or near urban areas. Increased access to fishing opportunities within or near a 10-mile radius of urban areas. Number of partners, volunteers, and certified fishing instructors.

- 2.5.1. **Strategy:** Investigate feasibility of hosting a “Vamos a Pescar” fishing event in or near Atlanta. Location, opportunities, partners, and volunteers should be taken into consideration. Event should facilitate the distribution of Spanish-language materials, related to fishing, that are relevant and representative.
- 2.5.2. **Strategy:** Provide access and opportunities for urban fishing events through the establishment of partnerships and cooperative management (e.g., city/county parks, schools, pond owners, clubs, etc.). Event goals should include: 1) recruit and retain anglers, 2) building competence and confidence in fishing among participants, and 3) instill the value of conservation and natural resource stewardship.

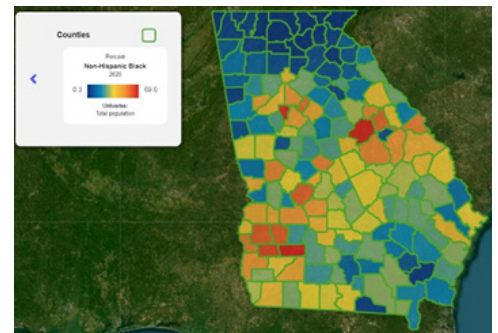


Figure 3. Percent Non-Hispanic Black Population.

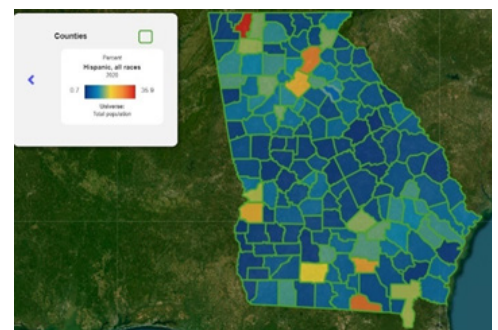


Figure 4. Percent Hispanic Population (all races).

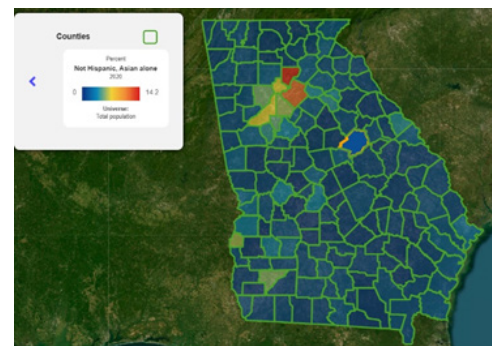


Figure 5. Percent Non-Hispanic Asian Population



- 2.5.2.1. **Action:** Region R3 liaisons will identify at least one partner within or near urban areas with accessible fishable waters and the ability to host at least one community fishing event (open to the public) each year. Each region will be responsible for developing one or more partnerships to result in at least 3 new community fishing event opportunities per year.
- 2.5.2.2. **Action:** Liaisons will implement intensive fisheries management plans and submit stocking requests, as needed. It is important to engage event partners in this process through technical assistance and management recommendations to ensure sustained fishery. R3 efforts of event partners should be considered if stocking efforts need to be prioritized.
- 2.5.2.3. **Action:** Region R3 liaisons will train partners and volunteers to successfully implement community fishing events. Angler R3 liaisons will be responsible for transportation and maintenance of trailers, conveying expectations of proper trailer use to partners, and collection of event/participant data. Locations and partners to consider include city/county water bodies, schools, fairgrounds, extension, federal partners, Chamber of Commerce, and local community organizations.
- 2.5.3. **Strategy:** Increase public awareness of fishing access in or near urban areas through event partners and local communities. Many urban residents may be unaware that fishing opportunities exist in or near these areas. Liaisons will be responsible for promoting community fishing events and registration using the Go Outdoors Georgia Event Management System.

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- 2.6. **Objective:** Increase use of Public Fishing Areas (PFA's) by 2%.
Target Audience: Outdoor enthusiasts and recreationists.
Metric: PFA traffic counter data, creel survey data, tackle loaner program data
- 2.6.1. **Strategy:** Increase and maintain fishing access (bank and boat) and improve facilities at PFA's.
- 2.6.2. **Strategy:** Promote fishing opportunities and non-consumptive uses of PFA's that are available to fishing license customers.
- 2.6.3. **Strategy:** Increase the quantity of fishing events and instructional programs offered at PFA's. Consider cooperation with WRD to incorporate adjacent activities (such as Outdoor Adventure Days) to broaden visitation and participation.
- 2.6.4. **Strategy:** Incorporate and promote a tackle loaner program at one PFA in Georgia. This will serve as a pilot program, lasting one year, to see if it is effective and will work at other PFA's.



A vertical photograph on the left side of the page shows a man with a grey beard and a light-colored hat, smiling and holding a large, silvery fish. He is wearing a light-colored polo shirt. The background is a clear blue sky.

Goal 3: Coordination and Evaluation of Angler R3 efforts

GADNR staff will evaluate the effectiveness of various measures taken to stabilize and increase fishing participation in Georgia. This includes evaluating the efficacy of many angler R3 strategies currently utilized by WRD (Appendix 1). It is imperative that we annually assess each of our R3 programs and initiatives and determine if they have proven to be successful or need review. As such, we propose such evaluation may include the following:

- 3.1. **Objective:** Build and grow an Angler R3 team that will work within and across regions toward the objectives listed below (a through h).
Target Audience: GADNR Staff
Metric: The Angler R3 Coordinator will guide and support the Angler R3 team which will consist of at least one angler R3 liaison from each Fisheries Management Region, along with representatives with Public Affairs, GIS, and Licensing and Boating Registration Unit.
- a. Provide training and resources to WRD staff regarding the current demographics and motivations of license buyers and potential license buyers.
 - b. Develop initiatives to encourage the sale of fishing licenses by GADNR and other license vendors (e.g., region packages/competitions).
 - c. Further develop the Angler R3 plan to include specific actions and tasks. Determine specific actions and tasks for plan, delegate, and prioritize during the implementation of plan.
 - d. Support current fishing event partners, including State Parks, in the successful implementation of fishing events and education. Seek new event partners that align with angler R3 goals.
 - e. Engage existing industry partners/sponsors to demonstrate results of their investments and recognize their contributions.
 - f. Work across GADNR divisions and with outside entities (NGO's, private businesses and stakeholders, universities, professional societies, municipalities) to identify potential partnerships that are mutually beneficial and support angler R3 goals and initiatives in Georgia. Seek support through funding, sponsorships, prizes, promotion, volunteers, etc.
 - g. Coordinate purchase of supplies and materials to support fishing events and fishing education, statewide.
 - h. Establish templates for facilitating fishing events and instructional fishing classes. Offer routine training to GADNR staff and event partners.

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- 3.2. **Objective:** Gather information about current license holders in Georgia and evaluate the efficacy of existing angler R3 efforts. This will aid in the development of adaptive management strategies to optimize reach and engagement. It will also support the prioritization of future angler R3 efforts and initiatives. Existing angler R3 efforts include strategies currently utilized and listed in Appendix 1. A better understanding of the demographics and motivations of Georgia anglers can guide us, along with the fishing industry, to better reach and foster their fishing enthusiasm to encourage retention (RBFF, 2022).
- Target Audience:** GADNR Staff, Brandt Information Services, event partners, angler recognition program participants, PFA creel survey participants.
- Metric:** Event/program participation data, event participant demographics
- 3.2.1. **Strategy:** Review and compare event participation data using the Go Outdoors System, ArcGIS dashboards, sign-in data, QR code scans, survey responses, etc. Investigate any relationships between past event participation and license purchases. Work with Brandt Information Services toward the development of a tiered account system within the Go Outdoors Georgia database. This should ease the registration process for fishing event participants by not requiring the creation of a customer account within the Go Outdoors Georgia system. It should also provide more in-depth opportunity to examine association between customer event participation and license purchase behavior.
- 3.2.2. **Strategy:** Evaluate catch rates, accessibility, and stocking efforts of resources managed by event/program partners. Provide guidance and technical assistance to ensure success. Examine partner event schedules, participation, audience, certified instructor engagement to ensure alignment with R3 goals. Explore opportunities to incentivize partners to collect and submit data.
- 3.2.3. **Strategy:** Analyze data and identify any trends (statewide or regional) related to our current base of Georgia license customers. Analyze fishing license sales and churn rates and associated demographic and geographic data. Review Brandt license sales reports for insight regarding customer segments to effectively guide efforts toward growth.
- 3.2.4. **Strategy:** Review data collected from PFA traffic counters, PFA creel surveys, and the tackle loaner program. Improve creel survey instrument to allow us to collect more information about barriers, behavior, and motivations as they relate to fishing and license purchases. Investigate possibility of collecting contact information from anglers participating in PFA creel surveys and tackle loaner programs.



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- 3.2.5. **Strategy:** Examine connections between angler recognition participants and license purchases. Develop a follow up survey for angler recognition program participants to collect information related to barriers, behavior, and motivations as they relate to fishing and license purchases.
- 3.3. **Objective:** Streamline reporting process of R3 data to ensure accuracy and timeliness. Since data should be at the core of any fishery management decision, it is critical that all collected data follow a standardized protocol. Data collected for evaluating R3 effectiveness may be collected at fishing events, education/outreach events, public fishing areas, participation and creel surveys, training exercises, and other avenues.
Target Audience: GADNR Staff
Metric: Go Outdoors Georgia Event Management System, ArcGIS Online Reporting Tool
- 3.3.1. **Strategy:** Seek a solution to capturing fishing event/program data not currently captured in the Go Outdoors Georgia database nor ArcGIS. Examples include fishing events at State Parks, Gateway to Fishing events, Fish and Learn Programs, etc.
- 3.3.2. **Strategy:** Update Events and Education section of the *Guidance, Events, and Outreach* survey utilized by WRD staff to enter fishing event participation data.
- 3.4. **Objective:** Evaluate effectiveness of marketing efforts related to angler R3.
Target Audience: WRD Public Affairs
Metric: Engagement, impressions, conversions, ROI, app open rate.
- 3.4.1. **Strategy:** Utilize results from PFA creel survey and angler recognition program analyses to develop and prioritize angler R3 promotional efforts.



Conclusion



Photo credit: David Cannon Photography

As outdoor recreation activities like hunting and fishing continue to face the challenges of competing with a plethora of leisure and recreation opportunities available, the need for an effective campaign to increase interest in the wise use of our natural resources has become critical. A national R3 program has been designed for just this purpose, and GADNR staff recognize the potential we have in tailoring this national effort to best meet the goals and objectives for Georgia. It is imperative to continue efforts that address barriers to angler R3, including: 1) lack of access, 2) lack of awareness, 3) lack of skills, 4) lack of motivation, and 5) lack of angler R3 capacity (AREA and RBFF, 2016). The time frame for the development and implementation of strategies will vary. Nonetheless, these and other ideas should be thoroughly discussed, developed, implemented, and evaluated quickly and efficiently. It is important to note that all these initiatives require employee/volunteer participation, and thus it will be critical to engage, train, encourage, and evaluate employees on how best they can be used individually in the implementation of these efforts. With strong leadership and employee support and participation, an effective R3 program is highly achievable and valuable.

Appendix 1. Current Angler R3 Strategies Utilized by WRD

All 3 Rs

- » **Fish stocking** — WRD stocks 8 to 10 million warmwater fish and around one million trout each year. We recently increased the average size of our stocked trout to ten inches, and it has been very popular.
- » **Fishery Sampling** — Fisheries Section personnel regularly survey recreational public fisheries to monitor the health of sportfish populations and to determine stocking and regulatory needs. This effort strives to produce quality fisheries that all Georgia anglers can access and enjoy. The University of Georgia is reviewing monitoring efforts to improve sampling design, efficiency of effort, and evaluation.
- » **Go Fish Education Center** — Approximately 20,000 visitors each year. Around 10K are part of organized school field trips and educational events. All educational programs include fishing education and instruction.
- » **News releases** — seasonal news releases about fishing opportunities and access.
- » **Opportunities/Access** — More than \$1 million per year is spent on boating access. WRD also maintains bank and boat access for anglers at 11 Public Fishing Areas (PFA) and many State Parks.
- » **Outreach Programs** — Fisheries specific programs are given to angler clubs, school groups, civic organizations, and other stakeholder associations to educate them on local fishing opportunities, current fishery status, and other valuable information provided by the Fisheries Section.
- » **Social media** — Extensive reach with public engagement providing current and relevant information about fishing opportunities around the state.

Recruitment

- » **Educational programs/school programs** — We have “Fish and Learn” programs, Fishing Day Camps, and offer a Fishing Basics class for beginners.
- » **First Fish Certificate**
- » **Fishing Events** — We host or provide fish for over 200 Fishing Events each year with more than 20,000 participants.
- » **Gateway to Fishing Program/Community Fishing Program**
- » **Outdoor Adventure Days** — We host several Outdoor Adventure Days around the state that attract over 1,000 participants at each event.
- » **State Parks** — We train State Park staff to host fishing events and provide guidance for successful fishing instruction. We manage their lakes and ponds to improve fishing and access and provide fishing equipment via the tackle loaner program. Parks host events and drive localized angler R3 efforts.

Retention

- » **Angler Recognition Programs** — Programs designed to reward anglers meeting certain catch qualifications with prizes, certificates, and recognition via social media. These include our Adult and Youth Angler Awards, Georgia Bass Slam, Georgia Trout Slam, and more.
- » **Auto-generated reminder emails before license expiration.**
- » **Auto-renewal option for licenses.**
- » **Discounted licenses for renewing your license before expiration.**
- » **Weekly Fishing Report** — Fisheries Section staff compile weekly fishing reports from sources around the state to relay timely and relevant fishing to anglers. Sources of information may include professional anglers, fishing guides, local experts, and Fisheries staff. Reports target relevant species and techniques that will result in greater fishing success.

Reactivation

- » **Free fishing days.**
- » **Lapsed angler emails.**
- » **System emails timed 30 days after and 1 year after expiration.**

Resources

- » [Aquatic Resources Education Association \(AREA\) and Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation \(RBFF\). 2016. *Recommendations and Strategic Tools for Effective Angler Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation \(R3\) Efforts.*](#)
- » Brandt Information Services. August 2020. *Brandt License Holder Insights in Georgia.*
- » [Morais, D. 2015. *Non-consumptive Utilitarian Use of Forest Resources and the Improved Sustainable Livelihoods of Vulnerable Communities.* North Carolina State University](#)
- » [Outdoor Foundation; Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation \(RBFF\). 2022. *2022 Special Report on Fishing*](#)
- » [Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation \(RBFF\); Colle McVoy. Jan. 2023. *RBFF + Ipsos Research.* Research fielded May 2022.](#)
- » [U.S. Census Data via Neighborhood Nexxus. 2020.](#)
- » U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2022. *Urban Fishing Outreach Program Presentation.*