

By Rob Southwick

Why Do People Fish?



One of the more important initiatives in the sportfishing world in recent years is the 60-in-60 initiative, seeking to grow U.S. angler numbers to 60 million in 60 months. Under the leadership of the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, with active involvement by the American Sportfishing Association, state fisheries agencies and industry are working together to increase the number of anglers and keep our current customers fishing each year. This will require inspiring people to fish and motivating them to action.

Certainly, no one ever went fishing because he was a 50-year-old guy. Likewise, no female angler has ever bought a fishing license because she was a woman. However, many of us have been guilty of marketing towards anglers based on what they look like. Hispanics, African-Americans, Millennials, women, Boomers—we too often talk to people based on what they look like. If we're going to effectively connect with current or would-be anglers, we need to speak to their personal needs. We need to help them see how many needs and wants can be satisfied by fishing.

Let's take an example: women. It's been a hot topic about how to encourage more women to fish, and the number of female anglers has been growing. Women fish for many reasons: to spend time with good friends, to introduce kids to the outdoors, for a challenge, to socialize with peers, to escape from daily stresses and more. There isn't one reason common to all women for fishing. Speaking to them as one group will have minimal marketing success.

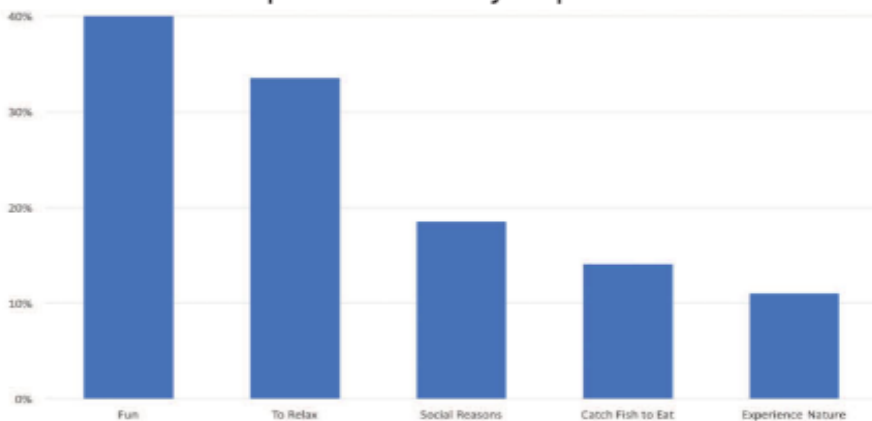
Instead of talking to them as women, we must talk to them as people who want to spend more time with their friends and family, or who want to try a new outdoor experience, or other reasons that touch on deep-down personal interests. Just don't ever give the impression you are saying that fishing is for women. Please.

The chart presented here shows the top five reasons why people fish. Only one of these is unique to fishing: catching something to eat. The other four reasons reveal fishing's competition, which is any activity that is fun, outdoors, and social in nature. Whether camping, a day hike, or a church picnic, there are many activities that basically provide the same core benefits as fishing. When other activities are perceived as more convenient or less of a hassle and perceived as providing the same benefits of fishing, we've lost another angler.

It's our duty to make sure current and future anglers understand how fishing can provide the basics we want from our free time—and make sure fishing is easy, accessible, convenient, and fun. There are many details about why people fish available from the American Sportfishing Association. Visit the Fishing Participation pages in the Facts and Figures section at www.asafishing.org. With a sound understanding of why people fish, we can effectively increase angler numbers and sales in the U.S.

To learn more about the 60-in-60 initiative, and to access their free marketing toolkit, visit the RBFF (www.takemefishing.org/60in60/).

Top Five Reasons Why People Fish



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