



Casting to the Future:

Connecticut's plan to increase the number of people fishing.



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Summary

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's (DEEP) [Fisheries Division](#) has focused effort toward increasing the number of people fishing since 2011¹ through **Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation (R3)** initiatives. Ultimately, the number of people who obtained a fishing license increased by 8.7% (15,363 people) between 2011 and 2016 (Figure 1).

This plan outlines action items and recommendations to further increase the number of people fishing in Connecticut over five years (2017-2021) while concurrently supporting the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation's (RBFF) "[60 in 60 campaign](#)" (Figure 2).

To increase the number of people fishing, emphasis will focus on:

1. Improving communication,
2. Expanding angler education programming and angler recognition,
3. Reinvigorate traditional Fisheries Management Programs and Jobs with R3 goals as a priority,
4. Increasing the convenience of fishing, including the process for obtaining a fishing license,
5. Increasing the Fisheries Division's capacity to undertake R3 events and implementation tools.



The [Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation](#) has embarked on a grand effort to grow participation from the current 46 million anglers to [60 million anglers in 60 months](#) (2021). Each state has been allocated license sales goals. **Specifically for Connecticut, which has 0.55% of the total license sales nationally, the goal is to sell 7,455 additional licenses each year each for the next five years (2017 -2021).**



¹ Increasing Angler Participation in Connecticut. A Summary and Status Update. CT DEEP Fisheries Division. 2017.

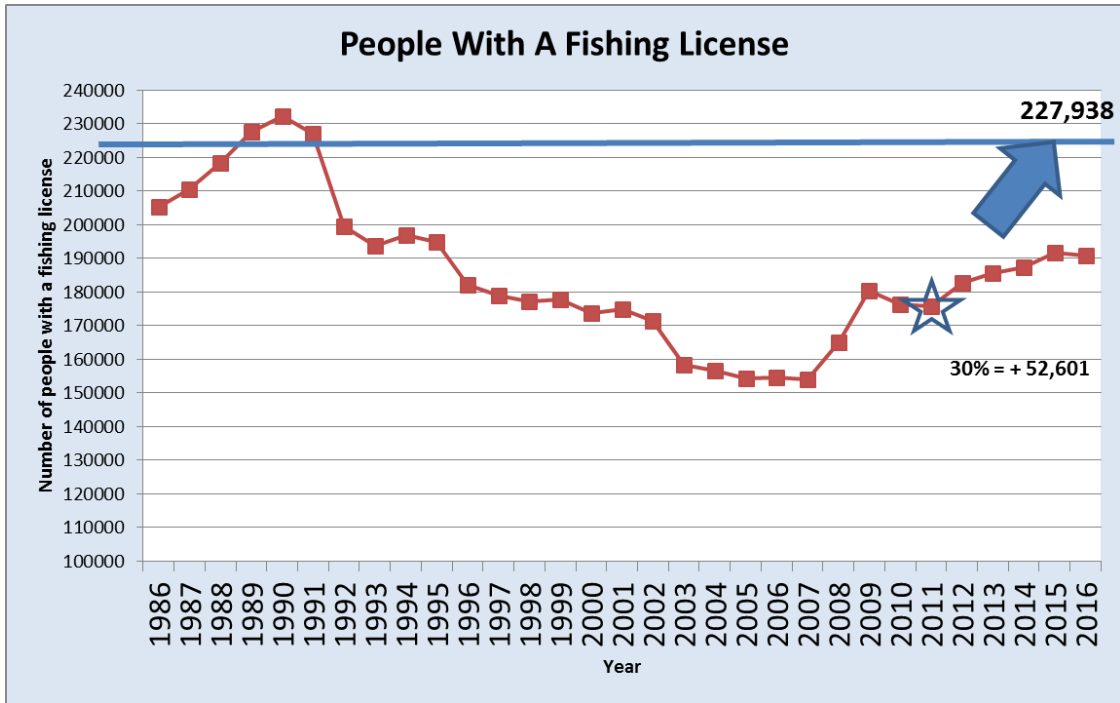


Figure 1. The number of people who obtained a fishing license in Connecticut since 1986. Starting in 2011, a five-year goal was to increase the number of people fishing by 30%. Over the five-year period, participation increased 8.7% (15,363 people).

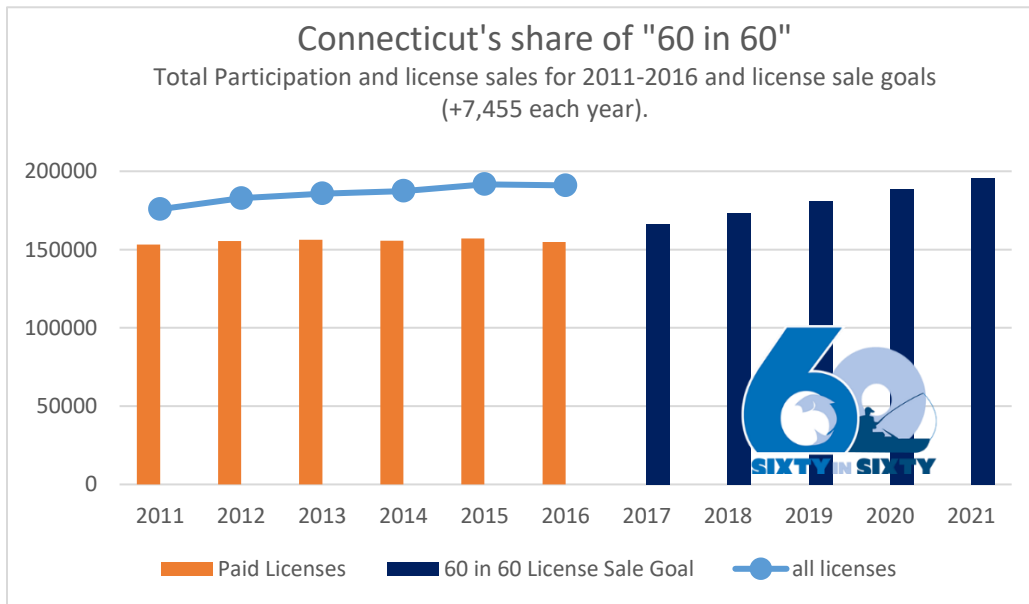


Figure 2. The total number of people who obtained a fishing license (blue line) between 2011 and 2016 and those who paid for a license (orange bars). The dark blue bars (right) show Connecticut's allocation for growth of paid licenses as part of the "60 in 60" campaign for 2017-2021.

Introduction

Engaging in recreational angling is important as the funds generated from the sale of licenses and fishing equipment provide direct benefit to Connecticut's anglers through providing quality fish and fisheries. This angler generated funding also supports many in the general population who value Connecticut's fish and wildlife, via restoration and conservation programs.

Nationally, over the past decade, fishing participation trends indicate a decrease, as younger, more diverse audiences are reluctant to take up fishing, all while older white males (the traditional core demographic) are aging out of the sport. Several common barriers to fishing participation include:²

- Lack of **access** to fishing opportunities
- Lack of **awareness** of fishing opportunities
- Lack of **skills/confidence/knowledge** to go fishing
- Lack of **motivation** to go fishing
- Lack of **time** to go fishing
- Lack of **relevancy**
- Difficulty obtaining a **fishing license** and/or understanding **rules and regulations**.

As part of the previous five-year strategic plan (2011-2016), the Fisheries Division implemented a variety of efforts to [increase participation in fishing by 30%](#) (Appendix A).

To increase the number of people fishing, emphasis will focus on:

1. Improving communication,
2. Expanding angler education programing and angler recognition,
3. Reinvigorate traditional Fisheries Management Programs and Jobs with R3 goals as a priority,
4. Increasing the convenience of fishing, including the process for obtaining a fishing license,
5. Increasing the Fisheries Division's capacity to undertake R3 events and implementation tools.

Who are the people of R3 efforts?

- ✓ People who have never fished (**Recruitment**)
- ✓ Former anglers (**Reactivation**)
- ✓ Current anglers (**Retention**)

The fourth "R": Relevancy.

Relevancy is an important component in the development and implementation of R3 efforts and implementation tools. Participation is likely to increase when the target audience feels the program is applicable, important, or imparts a sense of purpose. A key question (asked by the angler) to keep at the forefront in R3 coordination is, "*What's in it for me?*"

² Tools to Evaluate, Improve, and Develop Angler Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation Efforts. Aquatic Resource Education Association. 2016

ACTION ITEMS AND TIME FRAME

The following are action items and a time frame for the five specific action items previously mentioned (Table 2). Suggested details for implementation are included in the next section.

1. IMPROVING COMMUNICATION

- **Improve data within DEEP's Sportsmen Licensing System**
 - Implement duplicate email capture **within 2 years**
 - Implement duplicate phone number data capture **within 2 years**
- **Improve/Expand electronic contact with anglers**
 - Expand to at least 2 additional major social media platforms **within 1 year**
 - Host **10 or more** relevant Facebook live sessions **each year for the next 4 years**
 - Grow contact list for e-newsletters/reports **25% annually**
 - Implement pop-up windows on the DEEP web page(s) to encourage visitors to "opt-in" to various DEEP electronic correspondence **within 1 year**
 - Create capacity for customizable messages sent from DEEP's Sportsmen Licensing System **within 4 years**
 - "Thank you" messaging based on the license(s) acquired
 - Increase messaging that 100% of funds invested in a fishing license goes to fish and wildlife
 - Reminder emails to renew your license as the end of year approaches (1 month, 2 weeks, 1 week, 1 day)
 - Reminder emails to renew your license throughout the year (April, May, June, July)
 - Increase awareness of giving a license as a gift
 - Improve data extraction from DEEP's Sportsmen Licensing System for analysis of customer license acquisition history.
 - Create a web page to recognize those who have purchased a license in consecutive years (5, 10, 15) **within 0.5 years**
 - Expand and/or build upon cross promotion opportunities via communicating with Hunter Education and Boater Certification students

2. EXPANDING ANGLER EDUCATION PROGRAMMING AND ANGLER RECOGNITION

- Facilitate "women only" classes **each year for the next 4 years**
 - Have total attendance of **75 or more annually**

- Offer continuation with support opportunities through weekly “Fish with [CARE](#) (Connecticut Aquatic Resources Education)” events each June with attendance of at least **150 people each year for the next 4 years**. The target audience includes those who have recently participated in a [CARE](#) fishing class (CARE fishing course graduates, Forster Pond Program students (Hamden and East Lyme Schools), and Summer Fishing Class students).
- **Complete at least 90%** of scheduled [CARE](#) family fishing classes (i.e., less than 10% cancelled) annually.
- Develop collaborative partnerships with stakeholders
 - Implement at least 1 new advanced fishing topic course **each year for the next 4 years**
 - Identify fish “sharpies” willing to collaborate on short educational videos and/or Facebook Live sessions focused on pointers, tips, and places to fish. Conduct/create at least **six per year starting in 2018**.
- Develop pathway to take full advantage of Public Act 14-201 **within 3 years**
 - Identify a method and implement ability to offer a reduced fee for the remainder of the calendar year for all graduates of a [CARE](#) fishing class.
 - Increase use of the secondary high school fishing license waiver by identifying ways to encourage or assist high schools with implementing basics of fishing into their curriculum. Collaborate with the recent establishment of the [National Archery In Schools program](#) in Connecticut.
 - Increase awareness of 50% license fee discount for those age 16-17 to **exceed 6,000 anglers annually within 2 years**
- Increase the number of [Youth Fishing Passports](#) by **30% each year for the next 4 years**
- Increase the number of individuals entering Youth Fishing Passport activities **50% each year for the next 4 years**
- Expand Fishing Recognition Program (currently called the [Trophy Fish Award Program](#))
 - Increase the number of submissions by **100% by 2021**
 - Create a self-service online portal for angler’s to submit new applications and a dashboard for the public to view existing acknowledgements **within 2 years**
- **Angler Recognition (supporter of fisheries)**
 - Develop structure and implement a process to publically acknowledge people with fishing licenses held consecutively for; 5 years, 10 years, 20 years
 - Develop and implement a “thank you” web page that has the name and town of each angler who has obtained a fishing license for a set number of consecutive years.
 - Copper: 5 consecutive years
 - Bronze: 10 consecutive years

- Silver: 15 consecutive years
- Gold: 20 consecutive years
- Platinum: 25 consecutive years
- Super supporters: 25 or more consecutive years (list the number of years)
- “Fish of the month” contest where active license holders are eligible to submit entry for the largest fish contest.
- Create “get more out of your license” program, which would engage the fishing industry to provide rewards and incentives to license holders

3. REINVIGORATING TRADITIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS AND JOBS WITH R3 GOALS AS A PRIORITY

- Engage constituents by soliciting at least **20-50 volunteers each year** to assist in stocking fish, sampling fish populations, and caring for fish at a hatchery
- Update and republish Statewide [Trout Management Plan](#), to be a salmonid management plan **within 3 years**
- Update and republish Statewide [Bass Management Plan](#) **within 4 years**
- Revise trout stocking policy to maximize return on investment **within 1.5 years**
- Create new fishing opportunities
 - Create six new Class 1 Wild Trout management areas on state land **within 2 years**
 - Create and Market “Get Away Waters”, which are long stretches of river that provides the feeling of being distant from development (for those who want to be away from crowds and be able to wade or float a long stretch of river) **within 2 years.**
 - Identify at least additional six rivers/streams within urban/suburban landuse, that are not currently stocked and that have the potential to be a put-grow-take trout fishery. Implement trout fry stocking **within 3 years.**
 - Increase awareness of Common Carp fishing, including newly established Trophy Carp Water in 2018.

4. INCREASING THE CONVENIENCE OF FISHING, INCLUDING THE PROCESS OF OBTAINING A FISHING LICENSE

- Augment existing or develop at least 1 new interactive map **each year for the next 4 years**
- Coordinate and facilitate the second [Community Fishing Waters](#) Summit in 2018 and then hold an annual summit **each year after**
- Increase the number of waters stocked in urban areas by **50% over the next 4 years**
- Continue to streamline the license purchasing process. Keep the look and feel of the user interface “current”

- Reduce steps (clicks involved)
- Reduce data entry demands in required fields
- Update user interface to take advantage of current interface design technology

5. INCREASING THE FISHERIES DIVISION'S CAPACITY FOR R3 EFFORT AND IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

- Assemble R3 coordinating committee **within 1.5 years**
 - Hold biennial (March and September) meetings beginning in 2019
- Hire a multi-lingual person with expertise in fishing, human dimensions, communication, and/or marketing **within 4 years**



Table 2. Action items and implementation time frame/goal to increase angler participation during 2018 to 2021.

Action item	Time frame in years to complete	2018	2019	2020	2021
Create a web page to recognize those who have purchased a license consecutive years	0.5				
Implement web-based methods for email capture “opt-in”	1				
Assemble R3 coordinating committee	1.5				
Revise trout stocking policy to provide increased return on investment	1.5				
Implement duplicate email capture in sportsmen licensing system	2				
Implement text-based data capture in sportsmen licensing system	2				
Expand to at least 2 additional major social media platforms	2				
Create Class 1 Wild Trout management areas where appropriate on state land	2				
Create and Market “Get Away Waters”	2				
Create a self-service online portal for angler’s to submit new applications and a dashboard for the public to view existing acknowledgements	2				
Update and republish Statewide Trout Management Plan	3				
Identify at least 6 urban rivers/streams that have the potential to be a put-grow-take trout fishery and implement fry stocking	3				
Implement custom messaging based on license product in sportsmen licensing system	4				
Update and republish Statewide Bass Management Plan	4				
Increase the number of waters stocked in urban areas	4				50%
Increase angler recognition	4				100%
Annual Tasks and goals					
Grow contact list for e-newsletters	annually	25%	25%	25%	25%
Host 10 or more Facebook live sessions	annually	10	10	10	10
Facilitate multiple fishing classes specifically for women (2 per year)	annually	2	2	2	2
Offer Weekly “fish with CARE” opportunities in June (150+ attendees)	annually	150	150	150	150
Implement at least 1 new advanced fishing topic course each year	annually	1	1	1	1
Develop collaborative partnerships with stakeholders to facilitate at least 1 advanced topic class	annually	1	1	1	1
Identify fish “sharpies” and collaborate on short educational videos (Facebook Live) to offer pointers, tips, and places to fish. (6 videos)	annually	6	6	6	6
Increase the number of youth fishing passports	annually	30%	30%	30%	30%
Increase the number of individuals entering YFP activities	annually	50%	50%	50%	50%
Engage constituents by soliciting at least 20-50 volunteers total each year	annually	20 to 50	20 to 50	20 to 50	20 to 50
Augment existing and develop at least 1 new interactive maps	annually	1	1	1	1
Coordinate and facilitate Community Fishing Waters Summit	annually	1	1	1	1

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

1. IMPROVING COMMUNICATION

- **Develop capability to text message customers (for example, the EverBridge system used by DEEP dispatch)**
- **Social Media**
 - **Increase use of Facebook LIVE**
 - Highlight Fish Management and Restoration
 - Trap netting pike
 - Trap netting kokanee
 - Spawning trout at hatchery
 - Counting/Sorting eggs at hatchery
 - Dam removal
 - Diversity of Diadromous fisheries topics
 - Electrofishing
 - CARE and No Child Left Inside Events
 - Bass Tournament Weigh-In
 - Fishing pointers (seek out expert or avid angler who can demonstrate technique) for species or a technique
 - Walleye
 - Pike
 - Catfish
 - Common Carp
 - Sunfish
 - Bass
 - Striped bass
 - Snapper Blues/Bluefish
 - Crabbing
 - Porgy
 - Black Sea Bass
 - Fly fishing
 - Ice fishing
 - Surf fishing
 - Hickory Shad
 - Trout
 - Daily Stocking Posts
 - Encourage engagement via questions/surveys/quizzes/games/contests
- **Lapsed Angler Correspondence**
 - Improve on 2017 campaign
 - Develop ability to measure “lift”
 - Evaluate responses from 2017 campaign

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop a schedule for a campaign for 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sporting Expos (Hunting and Fishing Expo/ DEEP Hunting and Fishing Day) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improve “opt-in” data collection by soliciting email addresses ○ Develop and implement statistically valid survey to collect “customer feedback” on fishing participation, motivation(s), barrier(s), and relevancy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Non Sporting Expos (Fairs, Women’s Expo, Farmers Markets, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Participate in expos that are catering to non-traditional audiences (people who have never fished but are aware of and could be interested in fishing) in order to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communicate benefits of fishing ▪ Improve “opt-in” data collection by soliciting email addresses ▪ Develop and implement statistically valid survey to collect “customer feedback” on their motivations, barriers, and relevancy. ▪ Develop and distribute relevant information for people who have never fished but are aware of and could be interested in fishing.

2. EXPANDING ANGLER EDUCATION PROGRAMMING AND ANGLER RECOGNITION

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Family Fishing Classes With Trial (Includes market segmentation like “Women Only Class”) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improve awareness of class opportunity, especially locally <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seek local posting in e-newspapers/town web pages ○ Continue to focus on retention through “Continuation with Support” especially for people who previously have fished or have recently tried fishing by offering follow-up fishing events ○ Develop awareness with people who could be interested but do not think about fishing as an activity that is applicable to them <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partner with No Child Left Inside ▪ “Locavore” appeal / Farmers Markets ▪ Community-Based Fishing Programs (i.e., Cops and Bobbers) ○ Increase brand awareness (FREE basic fishing classes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Renaming/rebranding “CARE” to emphasize “fishing” ○ Develop and distribute relevant outreach materials ○ Develop an inventory of sporting groups and sporting clubs and make available to CARE students via CARE web page. ○ Weekly Social Media posts on tips and pointers (advertise for upcoming classes).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Forster Pond School Classes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to focus on retention by offering follow-up fishing events for the student and their family ○ Nurture awareness with people who could be interested but do not think about fishing as an activity that is applicable to them ○ Continue to develop and distribute relevant outreach materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Summer Fishing Classes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to focus on retention by offering a follow-up fishing events for the student and their family ○ Nurture awareness with people who could be interested but do not think about fishing as an activity that is applicable to them Partner with No Child Left Inside <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Locavore” appeal / Farmers Markets ○ Continue to develop and distribute relevant outreach materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Family Fishing Days <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase awareness with people who could be interested but do not think about fishing as an activity that is applicable to them <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partner with No Child Left Inside ○ Continue to develop and distribute relevant outreach materials, including Social Media ○ Add evaluation component
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advanced Topic Classes (ice fishing, bass fishing, saltwater fishing, fly-fishing, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Initiate and/or expand collaborative partnerships with industry and sporting groups who can facilitate advanced topic classes ○ Utilize Social Media
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Follow Up Family Fishing Nights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Add evaluation ○ Improve attendance by making the night more relevant and convenient ○ Partner with No Child Left Inside ○ Utilize Social Media
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CARE Certified Fishing Instructors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to recruit new CARE instructors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus recruitment of urban and suburban residents ○ Increase diversity (gender and ethnic association) within active CARE instructors ○ Increase retention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Angler’s Guide Photo Contest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase the number of photos submitted ○ Maximize publicity about the guide and the contest winner
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Angler Recognition for catches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop a centralized web-based application system (see example from Vermont) ○ Increase participation in the program ○ Improve attendance and awareness of the annual award ceremony ○ Implement annual survey on relevancy and motivation of the program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Angler Recognition (supporter of fisheries) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop structure and implement a process to publically acknowledge people with fishing licenses held consecutively for; 5 years, 10 years, 20 years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and implement a “thank you” web page that has the name and town of each angler who have obtained a fishing license for a set number of consecutive years. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Copper: 5 consecutive years ● Bronze: 10 consecutive years ● Silver: 15 consecutive years ● Gold: 20 consecutive years ● Platinum: 25 consecutive years ● Super supporters: 25 or more consecutive years (list the number of years)

- Promote on Social Media

3. VIEWING TRADITIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS AND JOBS WITH R3 GOALS AS A PRIORITY

<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Public presentations and talks<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Maximize use of Facebook Live to reach a large number of people simultaneously○ Proactively offer to speak at various sporting group meetings and conferences
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Community Fishing Waters Program<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Install more relevant signage at locations to increase awareness about fishing opportunity○ Improve community awareness through collaboration with local civic groups and the municipality○ Create additional “Community Fishing Waters” (primarily stocked rivers and streams)<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Still River (Danbury)▪ Willimantic River (Windham)▪ Naugatuck River (Torrington, Waterbury)▪ Harbor Brook (Meriden)▪ Connecticut River (Hartford, Middletown)○ Invite the public and elected officials to assist in stocking, especially by soliciting school groups to assist in stocking fish (school would “adopt” a water of and would assist the Fisheries Division in stocking each year).○ Seek ability to publicize stocking schedule in advance of stocking○ Increase awareness of year-round fishing opportunity at many of these locations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Enhanced Shoreline Opportunity Site<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Improve awareness○ Evaluate angler survey information
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Bonus Striped Bass Tags<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Continue to offer program○ Implement annual survey on relevancy and motivation○ Develop and implement program using some number of tags at an event(s) targeting the people who have not tried fishing yet or those people who could be interested but do not think about fishing as an activity that is applicable to them
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Stocking Fish<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Restructure trout stocking schedule and locations to maximize utilization of the fish○ Identify ways to use trout stocking to<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ attract people who do not currently fish (recruit) or reactivate (someone who has not had a license for some time)▪ retain those who currently have a fishing license or reactivate those who have lapsed○ Invite public and elected officials to participate and assist more frequently than prior to or on Opening Day○ Continue to utilize Facebook LIVE and social media to increase awareness and convenience○ Solicit school groups to assist in stocking fish (school would “adopt” a water and would assist the Fisheries Division in stocking each year).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Trout Parks

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Invite the public and elected officials to assist in stocking, especially by soliciting school groups to assist in stocking fish (school would “adopt” a water and would assist the Fisheries Division in stocking each year). ○ Seek ability to publicize stocking schedule in advance of stocking ○ Create additional trout parks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Trout Management Areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Invite the public and elected officials to assist in stocking, especially by soliciting school groups to assist in stocking fish (school would “adopt” a water and would assist the Fisheries Division in stocking each year). ○ Increase awareness of year-round fishing ○ Update Trout Management Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to include trout and salmon ▪ Improve and support R3 ▪ Remain relevant to current angler attitudes and preferences ● Wild Trout Management Areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create new Class 1 waters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appeal to Catch and Release crowd ▪ Millennial ’s value sustainability and the catch-and-release of self-sustaining populations appeals to this market ○ Improve awareness of locations and the unique nature of the fishery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Get Away Waters” are a long stretch of river access (for those who want to be away from crowds and be able to wade or float long stretches of river). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Salmon River (below Route 16) ▪ Housatonic River and Tenmile River(Kent area) ▪ Yantic River ▪ Pease Brook ▪ Merrick Brook ▪ Macedonia Brook ▪ Quinebaug River ▪ Shetucket River
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bass <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Update Bass Management Plan, policies, and regulations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve and support R3 ▪ Remain relevant to current angler attitudes and preferences ○ Increase numbers of large fish <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Modify regulations in some waters to have a maximum size/reduced creel limits ○ Improve collaboration with constituents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop an advisory team ▪ Solicit volunteers for Lake and Pond data collection ▪ Increase the percentage of tournament directors utilizing the feature to self-report tournament catch data into the EZ-File system ▪ Improve engagement with tournament anglers to assist with marketing bass fishing opportunities in CT (work towards more regional and national level tournaments). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facebook LIVE during tournament and weigh- in
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Walleye Lakes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop plan to increase awareness of fishery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Utilize Facebook LIVE ○ Improve collaboration with constituents through the development of an advisory team. ○ Invite the public and elected officials to assist in stocking, especially by soliciting school groups to assist in stocking fish (school would “adopt” a water of and would assist the Fisheries Division in stocking each year).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Northern Pike Waters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop plan to increase awareness of fishery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Utilize Facebook LIVE ○ Improve collaboration with constituents through the development of an advisory team. ○ Invite the public and elected officials to assist in stocking, especially by soliciting school groups to assist in stocking fish (school would “adopt” a water of and would assist the Fisheries Division in stocking each year).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Channel Catfish Lakes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop plan to increase awareness of fishery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Utilize Facebook LIVE ○ Improve collaboration with constituents through the development of an advisory team. ○ Invite the public and elected officials to assist in stocking, especially by soliciting school groups to assist in stocking fish (school would “adopt” a water of and would assist the Fisheries Division in stocking each year). ○ Modify stocking densities and sizes ○ Create a “trophy” fishery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Trophy Carp Waters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop plan to increase awareness of fishery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Utilize Facebook LIVE ○ Improve collaboration with constituents through the development of an advisory team. ○ Evaluate to determine participation rate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Youth Fishing Passport Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create new events to stimulate more interest in the Youth Fishing Passport Program ○ Increase the participation in the “Fishing Challenge” and “Geo-Catching” ○ Evaluate recruitment to age 16 annually ○ Evaluate retention annually
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Free Fishing Day/Free Fishing License Days <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to survey anglers and evaluate responses in order to remain relevant ○ Improve promotion through traditional and social media. ○ Improve messaging about “re-connecting with friends and family using fishing as the medium”. ○ Improve awareness, especially to people who could be interested but do not think about fishing as an activity that is applicable to them, or those who are aware of fishing but have never fished.

4. INCREASING THE CONVENIENCE OF FISHING, INCLUDING THE PROCESS OF OBTAINING A FISHING LICENSE

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Free Fishing Day/Free Fishing License Days <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to survey anglers and evaluate responses in order to remain relevant ○ Improve awareness, especially to people who have never fished, or to those who have fished a long time ago
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Weekly Fishing Report and CT Fishin Tips <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to build distribution list through “opt-in” pop-up windows on web page ○ Implement annual survey on the relevancy of the content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Web Content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Migrate information to more modern and appealing platform ○ Re-structure layout and content to better achieve R3 goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Basics of fishing to people who could be interested but do not think about fishing as an activity that is applicable to them, or to people who once fished a very long time ago and currently do not. ○ For beginners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Basics of fishing info (how to get started) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Where to fish ● What you need to get started ● What to do with a fish after you catch it ● Understanding regulations ● Getting a License
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Publications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improve the content and availability of Fisheries publications on the web page ○ Improve awareness of materials ○ For beginners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Basics of fishing info (how to get started) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Where to fish ● What you need to get started ● What to do with a fish after you catch it ● Understanding regulations ● Licenses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interactive Maps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to improve and increase awareness of content ○ Create additional maps ○ Track and evaluate utilization via Google Analytics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Incentive to purchase a fishing license <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop pathway to take full advantage of Public Act 14-201 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify a method and implement ability to offer a reduced fee for the remainder of the calendar year for all graduates of a CARE fishing class. ▪ Increase use of the secondary high school fishing license waiver by identifying ways to encourage or assist high schools with implementing basics of fishing into their curriculum. ▪ Increase awareness of discount for age 16-17 year olds. ○ Reward program/Merchandise Discounts/Coupons

- Develop “Get more with your fishing license” reward program with donations from industry
- “Fish of the month” contest where active license holders are eligible to submit entry for the largest fish contest.
 - Monthly drawing of Conservation ID to receive a prize
 - Offer discount on particular day(s) to active fishing license holders

5. INCREASING THE FISHERIES DIVISION’S CAPACITY FOR R3 EFFORT AND IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

- Assemble an R3 coordinating committee composed of a broad cross section of DEEP staff and external partners who can advise/address issues related to R3 program development and implementation (potential candidates could be gleaned from; Information Management, Licensing, Law Enforcement, Communications, Fish and Wildlife, Boating, Parks, and external partners like the Fisheries Advisory Council, Sportsmen Groups, Retail Store Owners, New or Non-Traditional Partners)
- Acquire multi-lingual staff with experience in fishing, human dimensions, marketing, and social media.

Challenges to R3 programs/initiatives

False perceptions

- License fees are misappropriated to General Fund
- Trout Stamp is another money grab
- Trout production is woeful
- Fish are contaminated and not safe to eat
- Regulations are too complicated
- Fishing is too expensive (license fees)
- Fishing is boring

- **Competing interests with other activities and jobs**

- **Fear of outdoors**
 - Diseases from ticks and mosquitos
 - Poor air and/or water quality
 - Some wildlife can be harmful

- **Apathy**

- **Fisheries Staff Expertise/Knowledge/Opinions**
 - Lack of fluency or awareness of human dimension work
 - Limited multi-lingual capability

- Pre-conceived notion that R3 is not a function of a fisheries biologist
- Antiquated policies/ideas regarding or related to
 - customer engagement/service
 - customer demographics
 - motivations to fish
 - relevancy of fishing to new generations
- **Fisheries Staff Time/Resources**
 - Staffing levels lost to attrition and inability to rehire
 - Competition for resources from other CORE functions
- **External to Fisheries**
 - CT Office of Policy and Management
 - CT Legislature
 - DEEP Licensing Unit
 - Fishing Industry
 - Sporting Groups

Opportunities for R3 programs/initiatives

- Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation grants to R3 programs/initiatives
- Industry Collaboration
- Sporting Group Collaboration
- Internal DEEP Collaboration
 - Parks Division
 - Boating Division
 - Wildlife Division
 - Conservation Law Enforcement Division
- Promote eating fish as part of a healthy diet ([Locavore](#) movement)
- Promote “fishing is a good activity for me and my family”
- Expand outreach programs to Hispanic and Asian Communities
- Expand outreach programs to women



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Appendix A

DEEP Fisheries programs and strategies and the corresponding R3 target audiences. Most of these programs and implementation tools were utilized or developed in order to achieve the 30% increase in participation goal as stated in the 2011-2016 Strategic Plan.

Recruitment: People who have never fished and

1. are aware of fishing but have not tried fishing (trial)
2. could be interested, but not think about fishing as an activity

Reactivation: Former anglers

3. who once fished as a child and are now over age 16 and have not purchased a license
4. who once held a fishing license and have not for 5 years or more
5. who once held a fishing license and have not for less than 5 years

Retention: Current anglers, who are either

6. Long-term – 4 or more consecutive years
7. Beginners - 2-3 consecutive years
8. Newcomers – first purchase of a license in the current year

	R3 Target Audience							
	Recruitment		Reactivation			Retention		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Program								
Awareness/Education								
Family fishing classes	x		x					
Forster Pond School Classes	x	x						
Summer Fishing Classes	x	x						
Family Fishing Days	x	x	x	x			x	
Advanced topic classes (Ice Fishing, Bass fishing)				x	x		x	x
Follow Up Family Fishing Nights							x	x
Sporting Expos					x	X	x	
Non Sporting Expos	x	x	x	x				
Access to Fish and Fishing								
Community Fishing Waters Program	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Enhanced Shoreline Opportunity Site	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Trout Parks	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Trout Management Areas			x	x	x	x	x	
Wild Trout Management Areas			x	x	x	x	x	
Gear Restriction Areas (Fly, C&R, Barbless)						x	x	
Bass Management Areas			x	x		x	x	x
Walleye Lakes			x	x		x	x	
Northern Pike Waters			x	x		x	x	

Channel Catfish Lakes			X	X		X	X	
Miscellaneous								
Lapsed Angler Correspondence			X	X	X			
Youth Fishing Passport Program	X					X	X	
Free Fishing Day/Free Fishing License Days	X		X	X	X			
R3 Implementation Tools								
Stocking Fish	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Trophy Fish Awards			X	X	X	X	X	X
Weekly Fishing Report			X	X	X	X	X	X
Daily Stocking Posts on Social Media	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Publications			X	X	X	X	X	
Web Content	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bonus Striped Bass Tags						X	X	
Interactive Maps	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
License Incentives	X		X	X	X			
Reward/Discounts/Coupons					X	X	X	X
Anglers Guide Photo Contest						X	X	

