

2018 NAWMP UPDATE: ASSESSMENT/IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

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TITLE OF ACTIVITY: NAWMP General Public Survey

Overview of purpose/issue: The general public survey focuses on attitudes and preferences concerning conservation and natural resource management that will be functional for NAWMP decision making. The survey explores participation in and attitudes toward waterfowl and wetlands-based activities, engagement in conservation behaviors, preferred communication channels and sources, knowledge and awareness of wetlands, and importance of wetlands ecological goods and services.

Summary of Key Results:

- Total of 1,030 completed surveys from 49 states were returned = 23% response rate
- Results represent a segment of the U.S. public that is more oriented toward and aware of wildlife and conservation issues than the general public as a whole
- Very high participation in outdoor recreation and high engagement in general/wildlife conservation behaviors, but not in waterfowl/wetlands-specific conservation behaviors
- Many respondents had negative attitudes toward hunting but not toward birdwatching
- Overall high concern about the reduction or loss of wetlands/waterfowl benefits, except for hunting opportunities
- Most preferred channels of nature/conservation information were personal experience, online content, and visual media; three most trusted sources of information were scientific organizations, universities/educational organizations, and friends/family
- Hunters and rural residents were most engaged in conservation; wildlife viewers, people who do not participate in wildlife-related recreation, and urban residents were the least engaged

Initial implications for the 2018 Update:

- Promoting wetlands-related activities which include non-motorized activities and general wildlife/habitat conservation projects may help to bring more people to these areas
- Messages which focus on the broad environmental benefits of wetlands and on many different species, not just waterfowl, may resonate best with the general public
- Online visual media produced in conjunction with scientific organizations and universities may be the most effective in communicating with the public
- Many people have negative attitudes toward hunting and/or are not interested in participating, so attempting to recruit them as hunters may not be effective. However, given how many people across all groups knew a hunter and the relatively high levels of trust people had in their friends/family, hunters may be effective ambassadors for promoting waterfowl and wetlands conservation.