

WILDLIFE VIEWING AND NATURE TOURISM WORKING GROUP

Chair: Shelly Plante (TX)

Wednesday, March 9, 2022

Attendees: 31

Agenda/notes

Call to order, introductions, and review of agenda, Shelly Plante (TX)

4th Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy: Tucson, Arizona

- Overview of conference- held Feb 21-25, 2022 om Tucson, AZ
 - People from 24 states participated (state agencies, federal agencies, city leaders, private businesses, non-profit organizations represented)
 - Did a full day deep dive in the wildlife viewing survey; had a sneak peak of what the survey revealed
- www.wvntacademy.com
- Will be uploading all presentation from the academy to the Academy website
- Next Academy: Feb 19-23, 2024 in Wrightsville Beach, NC
 - Surveying attendees to improve for next academy
- Will be creating webinar schedule for 2022-2023, based on input and feedback from the Academy (session feedback cards submitted by attendees)
- Looking for session proposals for the 2024 academy; official call for proposals will come out in 2023 (by the North American 2023)
- Focused on having insightful conversations during the academy; tap into the brainpower of a lot of different people with diverse experiences

Multi-State Conservation Grant: Wildlife Viewer Survey Update, invited: Shelly Plante (TX)

- Enhancing the relevancy (especially for state fish and wildlife agencies) and engaging support from a broader constituency
- Working with the Virginia Tech team
- Why did we want to study wildlife viewers?
 - Look at national trends in wildlife viewing; more than 1/3 of the adult population view wildlife; USFWS reported 14.3 million additional viewing between 2011 and 2016, increasing the national participation rate to 34%; increase primarily comes from a rise in around-the-home wildlife viewing
 - Saw viewers were growing in numbers and gaining influence; important for state fish and wildlife agencies to connect with these people
 - Help us fill in gaps and create programming that resonates with our target audiences and develop ways for wildlife viewers to support fish and game agencies more meaningfully
 - What agency decisions can this project inform?
 - Justify allocation of staff or resources; inform communication, conservation and land management strategies; inform funding model, and more
 - Virginia Tech did a literature review then created a survey: <https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/handle/10919/105661> (available for download)

- Survey instrument included large scale panel survey of US wildlife viewers, screening questions- participated in wildlife viewing in the last 5yrs; length of survey < 15 minutes
- Looked at wildlife viewers demographics, duration/location/frequency of participation, other outdoor recreation, level of specialization, related expenditures, likelihood of participating in conservation behaviors.
- Looked at their trust of state fish and wildlife agencies; level of support, etc
- Asked what kind of support they want to see from state fish and wildlife agencies
- Sampling period: August-Sept 2021
- Quota: 59%male/ 41% female; age 18-34: 22%, 35-54: 33%, 55+: 45%; education: HS diploma or less: 39%, some college 23%, Bachelors or graduate: 38% (based on demographics of the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation results)
- Sampling in all 4 regions (WAFWA, SEAFWA, MAFWA, NEAFWA)
 - Had over 1000 participants in each region
 - Allowed states to pay for oversampling for their state to get more data; 15 states participated in oversampling
- Data analysis: weighed responses to reflect geographical distribution of wildlife viewers → that way no-one region outweighs/overshadows another
- Literature review available:
 - <https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/handle/10919/105661>
 - great resource, and well written - not just a list of citations
- How do we recruit, reactivate or retain those participating in wildlife viewing— deep dive on this during the WVNT Academy; look at wildlife viewing in the R3 model
- Next Steps:
 - April: steering committee meeting and review national report draft for distribution
 - May: webinar with results for national report
 - June: webinar for Phase 1 results

Waterfowl Working Group – Birding Coordination Update, Anne Glick (FL)

- Potential new research:
 - Research Question: can recreation and conservation experiences in wetlands enhance our efforts to encourage birdwatchers and wildlife viewers to engage in wetland conservation behavior and increase relevancy of state and federal wildlife agencies and other conservation organizations?
 - Targeting 4 states for this project: AZ, FL, VA, MO
 - 3-year project
 - If anyone else is interested in getting involved in this project, please contact Anne Glick at anne.glick@myfwc.com
 - Cost would be ~75K over 3 years
 - Hoping to start this project Summer 2023
- Duck Stamp Sub-Group
 - Developed 5 recommendations
 - Encourage the National Refuge System to work with the NAWMP community to enhance communication with hunters, bird watchers and other outdoor

recreation enthusiasts to better inform them about Refuge areas acquired using Federal Duck Stamp funding and encourage stamp purchasers to access Refuges for waterfowl hunting and wildlife viewing

- Full report with all recommendations will be discussed at tomorrow's working group meeting (2-5pm Eastern)

Ongoing communication tools: Webinars, Facebook Group, Monthly Calls

- WVNT Webinars- you can view all the recorded webinars on AFWA's YouTube channel here: <http://bit.ly/3Ks38zs>
- There is an email list. If you want to join, email Shelly Plante at shelly.plante@tpwd.texas.gov or go to https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/TXPWD/subscriber/new?topic_id=TXPWD_1190 ;
 - Email list will notify you of upcoming webinar and join monthly calls
- You can join the Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Facebook group (private): <https://www.facebook.com/groups/wildlifeviewing>
- Anyone is invited to join our monthly calls
 - There are conversations that lead to action

Anything Else?

Jerry Leonard (USFWS) – is involved in the national survey process; please reach out to him if you have any questions about the applicability of the national survey, or anything else with the national survey. Available as a resource.

Q: Is this working group only for those involved with birding. A: no, anyone involved with any part of wildlife viewing should be part and is invited to this group