

# 2024 Great Lakes Angler Diary Steelhead Survey

*Daniel M. O'Keefe, Ph.D., Michigan Sea Grant, Michigan State University Extension*

**October 23, 2024**

On May 30, 2024 this electronic survey was sent to e-mail addresses associated with 766 volunteer numbers assigned to anglers registered for the Great Lakes Angler Diary online reporting system. Three reminders were also sent with the last one being delivered on June 8. Personal identifying information was redacted from results to ensure confidentiality and derogatory terms were also redacted.

## **Consent Letter:**

Thank you for using the Great Lakes Angler Diary to record information about your fishing trips. Michigan State University and Michigan Sea Grant would like to access the information you recorded. This will allow us to analyze trends in catches from around the Great Lakes and share the information you collected with state and federal agencies.

If you do wish to share data from your fishing trips, I will download and save your trip and catch information from the Great Lakes Angler Diary. Note that your name and e-mail address will NOT be saved in the same file as your catch data. In this way, we strive to maintain the confidentiality of your data.

If you wish to proceed, please review your Great Lakes Angler Diary data entries to make certain they are complete and accurate before taking the electronic survey. The survey should take approximately 15 minutes.

Your survey answers and downloaded data will be stored in files that are stored separately on a password-protected Michigan State University computer to ensure confidentiality. Catch data files will include your Volunteer Number and no other identifying information.

Your results will be analyzed along with results from other volunteers. These aggregated results will be shared with management agencies including Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. The aggregated results will not be linked to your personal identifying information.

The primary purpose of this program is to allow anglers to record and share their catch data with other anglers, biologists and managers in a way that is useful for answering questions related to the Great Lakes and stream fisheries. The benefits of this include better understanding of how stocked and wild-spawned fish contribute to fisheries over the course of the season, which may influence management decisions and contribute to the well-being of fisheries. However, there is no guarantee that your data will influence stocking decisions as biologists and managers rely on a variety of data sets when assessing fisheries.

Possible risks to you as a participant include any that might result from sharing your catch data. Reasonable precautions are being taken to prevent linking your catch data with your identity, but if your catch data includes evidence of any illegal activity or if you feel they could damage your reputation in any way you should consider these risks before proceeding.

If you have any questions regarding survey items, why this survey is being conducted, or how to complete the survey and submit data sheets do not hesitate to call me at (616) 994-4572. Questions regarding your rights as a participant in this survey can be directed to the Human Research Protection Program at (517) 355-2180.

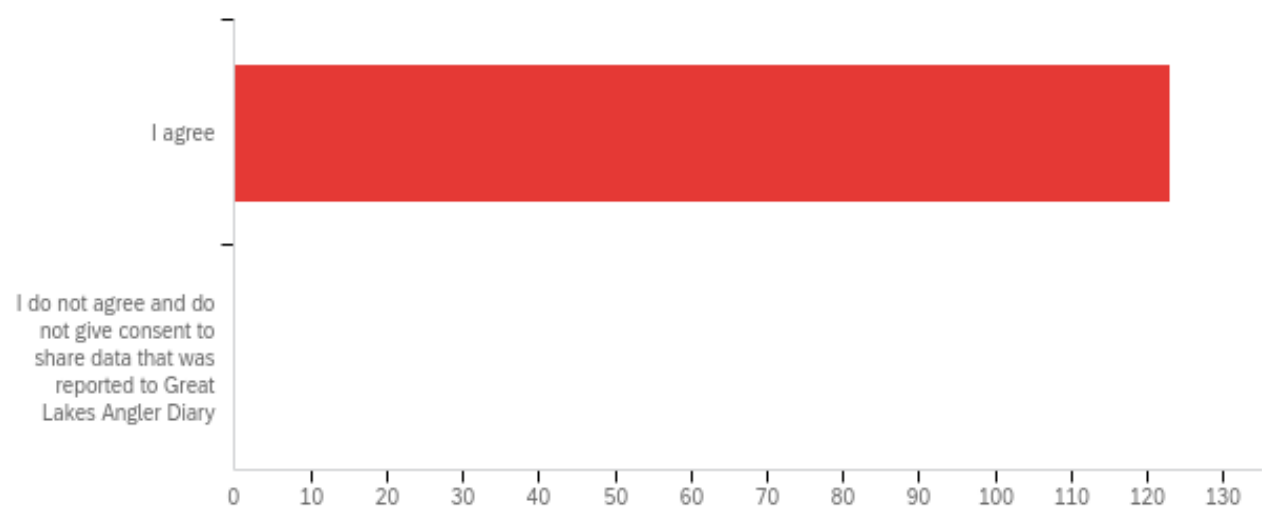
Your participation in this survey is strictly voluntary, and you must be at least 18 years old to participate. You can refuse to complete any or all of the questions in this survey; you have the right to withdraw at any time. By continuing with this survey you acknowledge your informed consent to share information as described above.

If you are 18 or older and live in the state of Michigan you will be entered into the drawing when your survey is submitted.

There will be two drawings on June 5 at 2:00 pm EST, and two drawings on June 12 at 2:00 pm EST. Participants who reply to the survey before noon EST on June 5 will be included in the first drawing. They will be divided into two groups with each entrant receiving one chance at winning a \$50 gift card. Participants who reply to the survey between noon EST June 5 and noon EST on June 12 will be included in the second drawings and will also be divided into two groups with each entrant receiving one chance at winning a \$50 gift card. Two gift cards will be awarded on June 5, and two gift cards will be awarded on June 12.

Dan O'Keefe  
Michigan Sea Grant  
Michigan State University Extension

Q1 - Do you agree to the terms above?

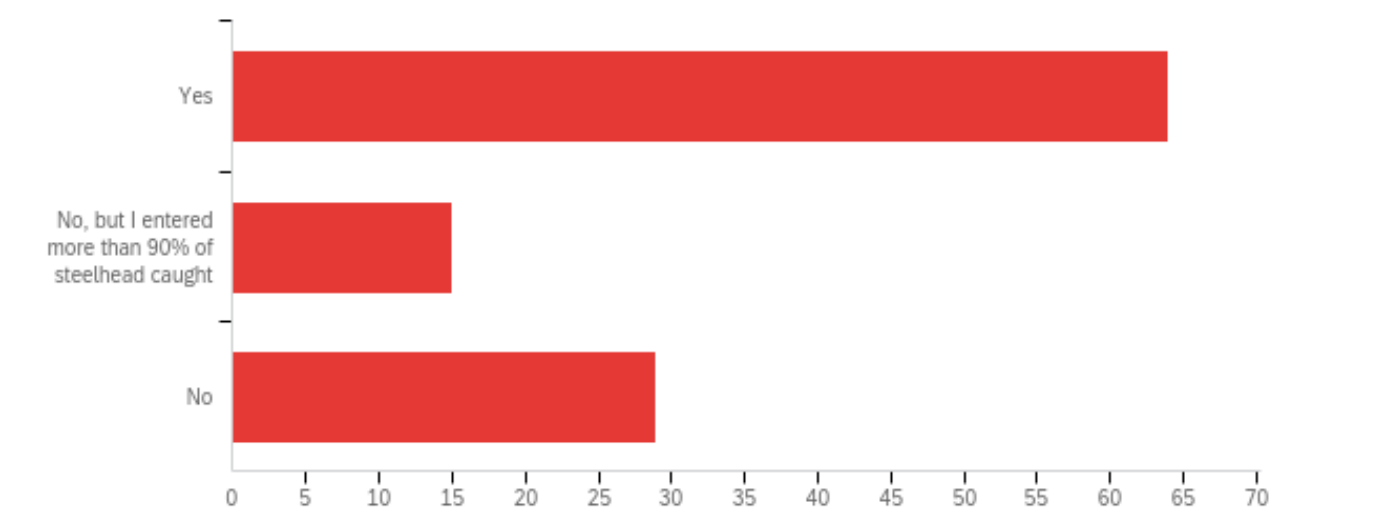


#	Answer	%	Count
1	I agree	100.00%	123
2	I do not agree and do not give consent to share data that was reported to Great Lakes Angler Diary	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	123

**Q3 - What is the name of the river (or port) you fished most often during the 2023-2024 steelhead fishing season (June 1, 2023 through May 31, 2024)? This is your "home water" that will be referenced in later questions.**

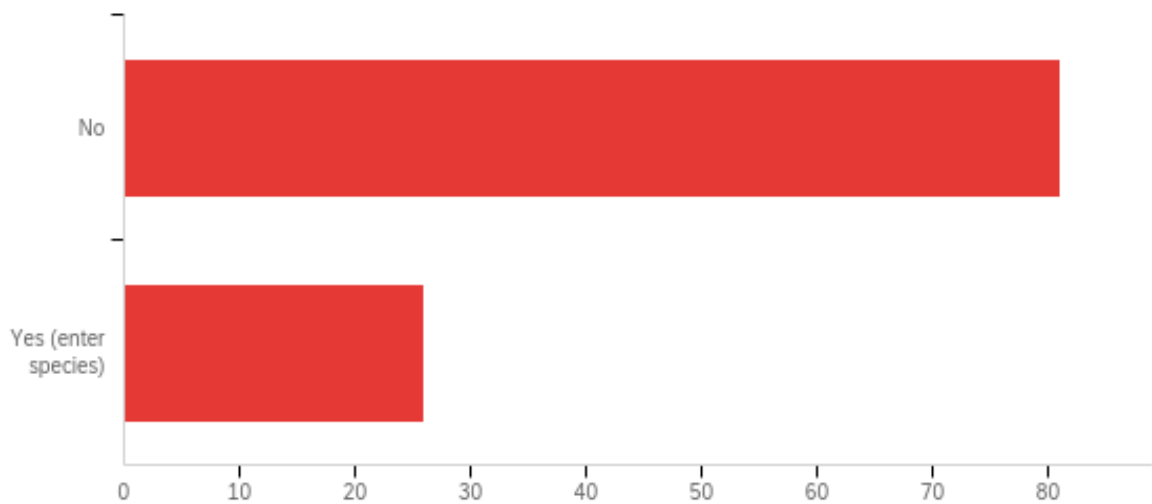
Home Water	Number of Respondents
<b>Lk. Erie/St. Clair Tributaries</b>	<b>13</b>
Clinton	8
Huron	5
<b>Lk. Huron Tributaries</b>	<b>7</b>
AuGres	1
AuSable	4
Thunder Bay	2
<b>Lk. Michigan Tributaries</b>	<b>91</b>
Betsie	4
Boyne	1
Grand	17
Kalamazoo	9
Manistee	23
Muskegon	9
Pentwater	1
Pere Marquette	11
St. Joseph	6
White	9
Other	1
<b>Superior</b>	<b>3</b>
Rocky	2
Sucker	1
<b>Great Lakes Open Water</b>	<b>3</b>
Big Lake - Lk. MI	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>117</b>

**Q4 - Did you enter each and every Steelhead caught from June 1, 2023 through May 31, 2024 (or since the time you registered if you signed up after June 1)?** NOTE: This applies only to steelhead that spent at least one summer in the big lake. You are not expected to enter data on each and every steelhead smolt, parr, or stream resident rainbow trout.



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	59.26%	64
3	No, but I entered more than 90% of steelhead caught	13.89%	15
4	No	26.85%	29
	Total	100%	108

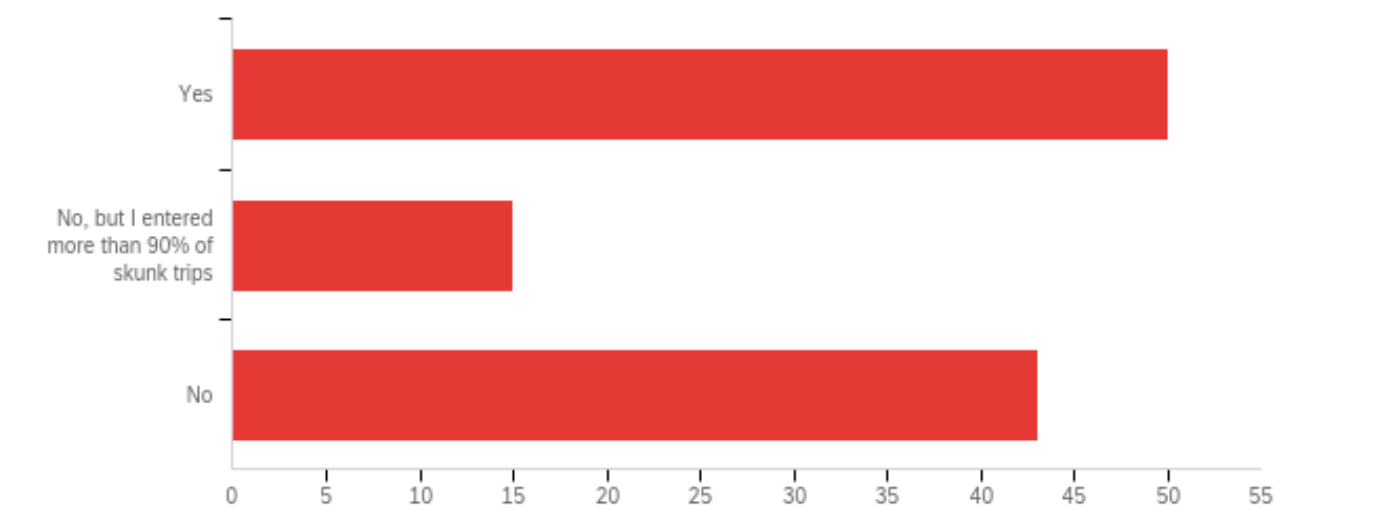
Q5 - Did you enter complete data on any other species during the 2023-2024 season (or since the time you registered if you signed up after June 1)?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	No	75.70%	81
4	Yes (enter species)	24.30%	26
	Total	100%	107

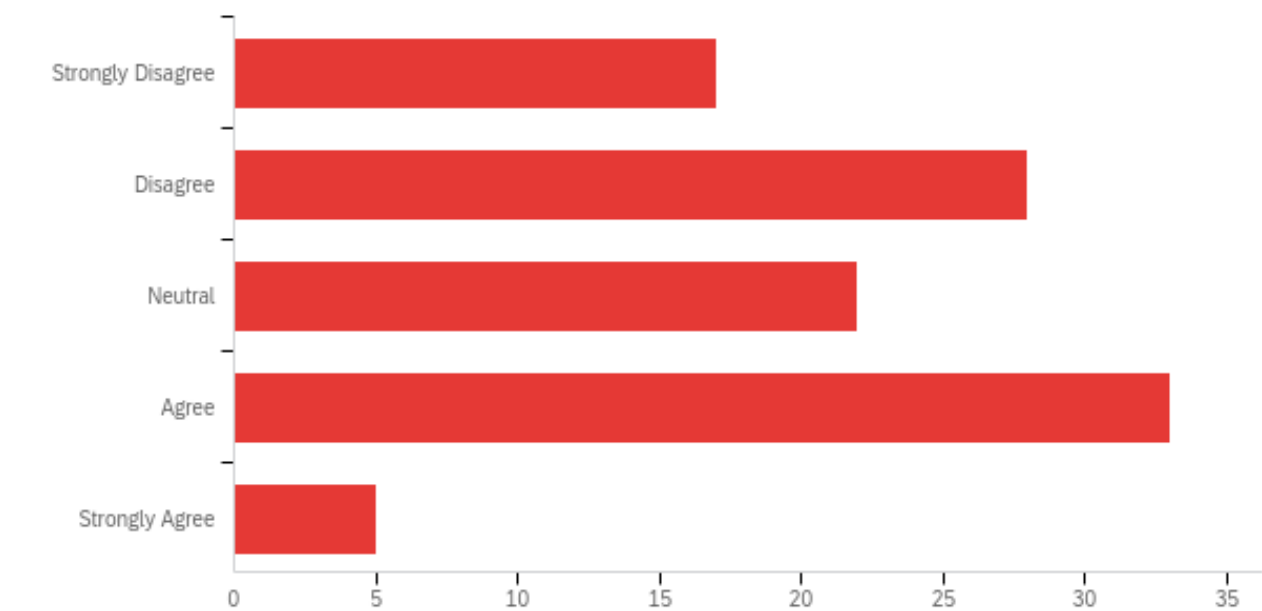
Q6 - Did you enter effort data for every skunk trip that targeted steelhead during 2023-2024 season (or since the time you registered if you signed up after June 1)?

NOTE: Entering effort data (number of hours fished and number of anglers fishing) for skunk trips is very important since it ensures that our catch rate calculations are correct. If you did not enter complete effort data for skunk trips, we can still use your steelhead measurements and fin clip data but we cannot use your catch rate data. You should consider any trip that had a reasonable expectation of catching a steelhead as a trip that "targeted steelhead."



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	46.30%	50
2	No, but I entered more than 90% of skunk trips	13.89%	15
3	No	39.81%	43
	Total	100%	108

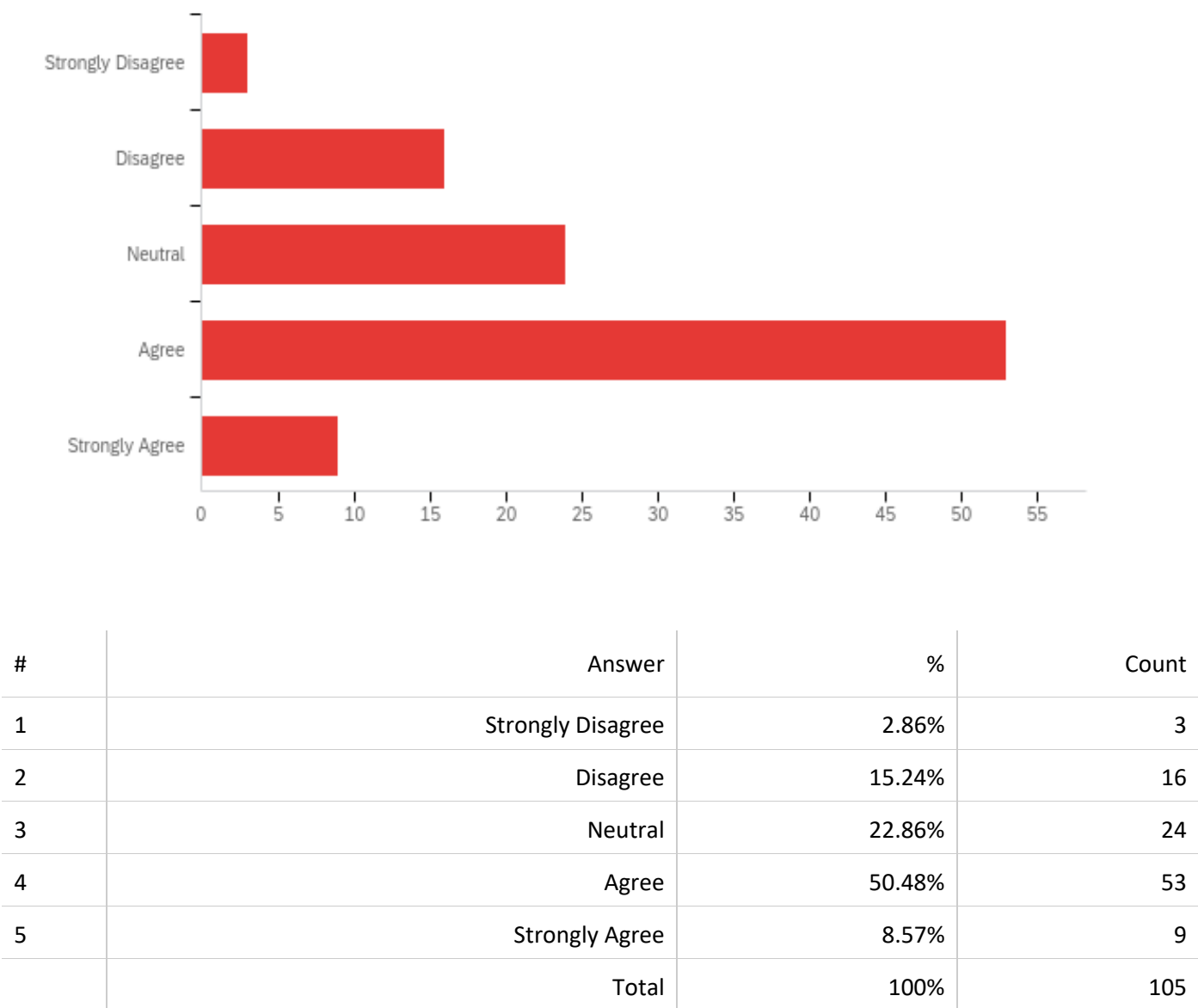
Q7 - I was satisfied with my steelhead catch rate on my home water during the past season.



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Strongly Disagree	16.19%	17
2	Disagree	26.67%	28
3	Neutral	20.95%	22
4	Agree	31.43%	33
5	Strongly Agree	4.76%	5
	Total	100%	105

Average: 2.82

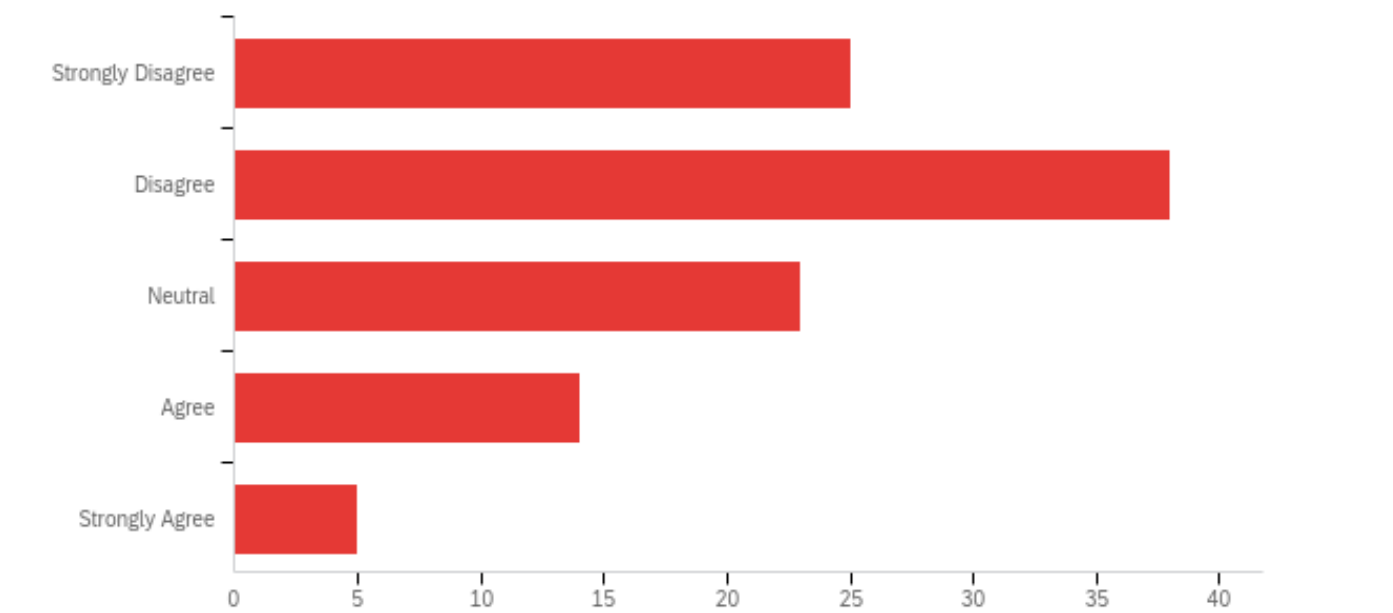
Q8 - I was satisfied with my fishing experiences overall.



Average: 3.47



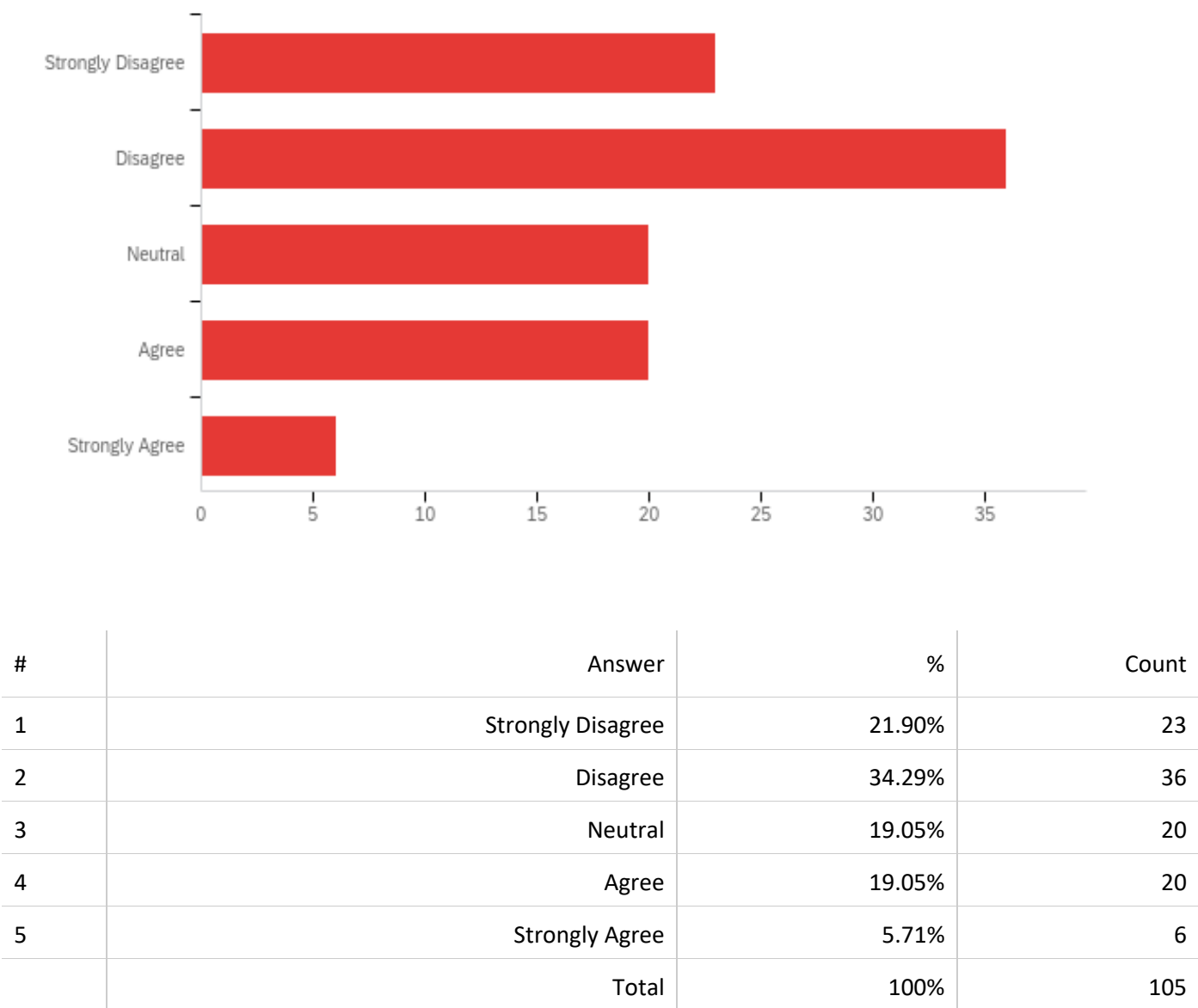
Q9 - Steelhead fishing was good this year relative to the past five years on my home water.



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Strongly Disagree	23.81%	25
2	Disagree	36.19%	38
3	Neutral	21.90%	23
4	Agree	13.33%	14
5	Strongly Agree	4.76%	5
	Total	100%	105

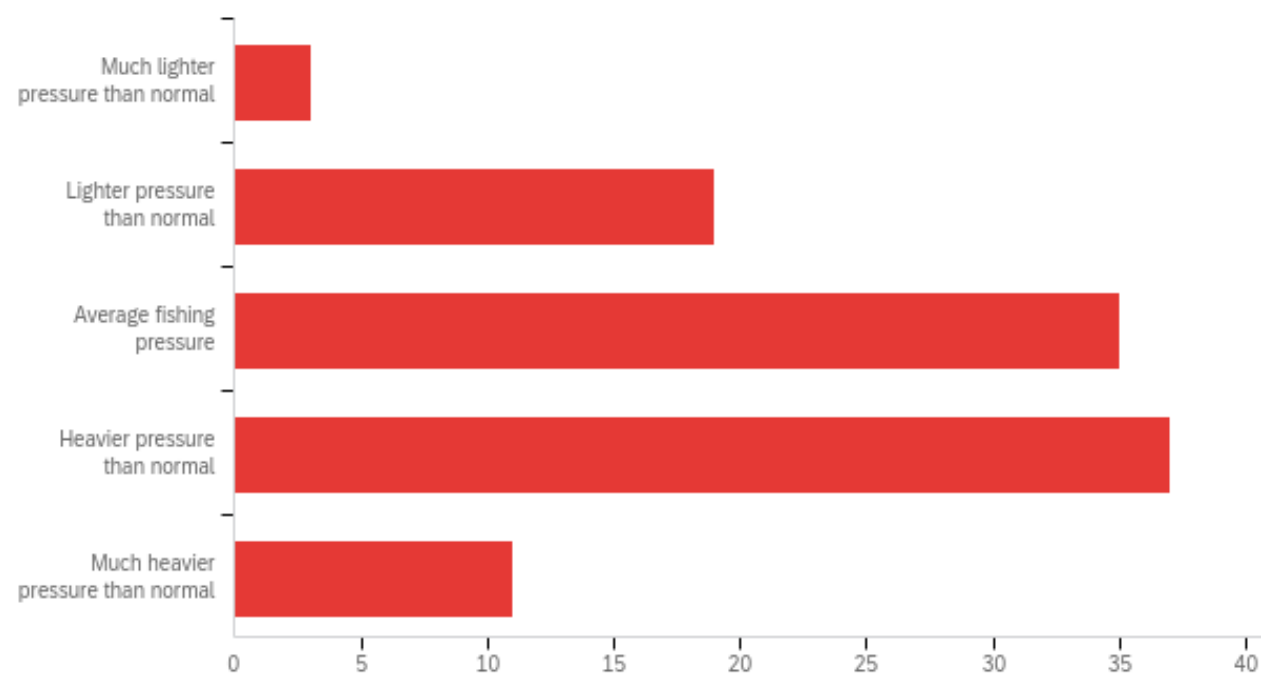
Average: 2.39

Q10 - Steelhead fishing was good this year relative to last year on my home water.



Average: 2.52

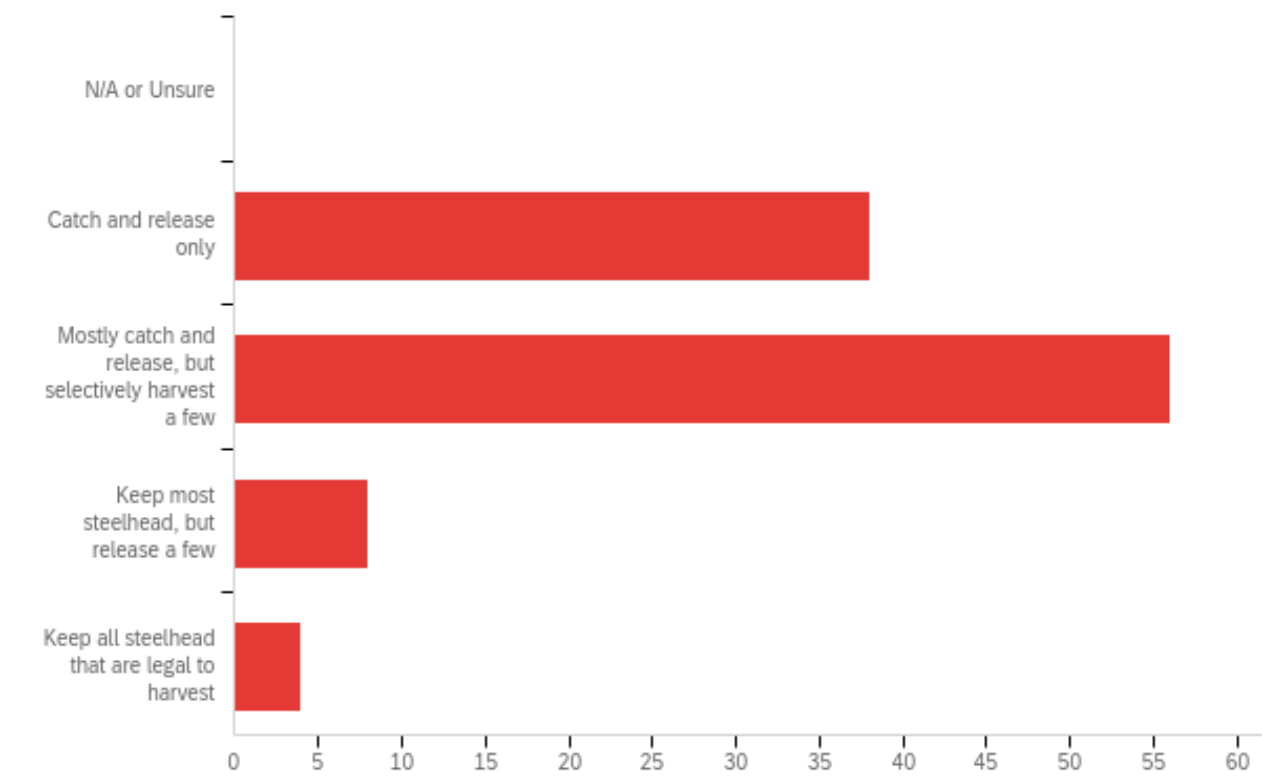
Q11 - How would you describe steelhead fishing pressure on your home water over the past season (June 2023 - May 2024)?



#	Answer	%	Count
5	Much lighter pressure than normal	2.86%	3
4	Lighter pressure than normal	18.10%	19
3	Average fishing pressure	33.33%	35
2	Heavier pressure than normal	35.24%	37
1	Much heavier pressure than normal	10.48%	11
	Total	100%	105

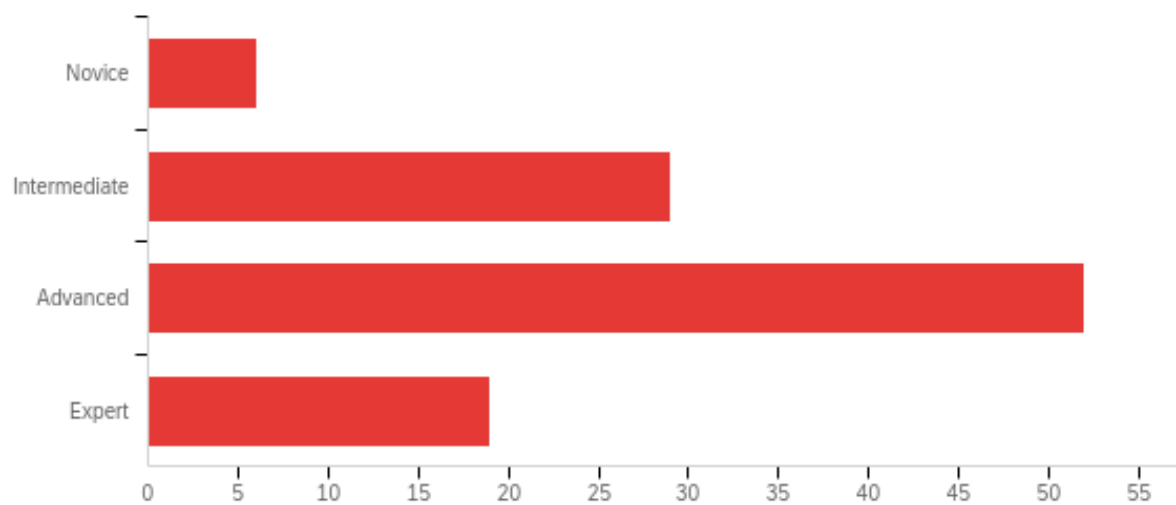
Average: 2.68

Q12 - Which best describes your personal approach to steelhead harvest?



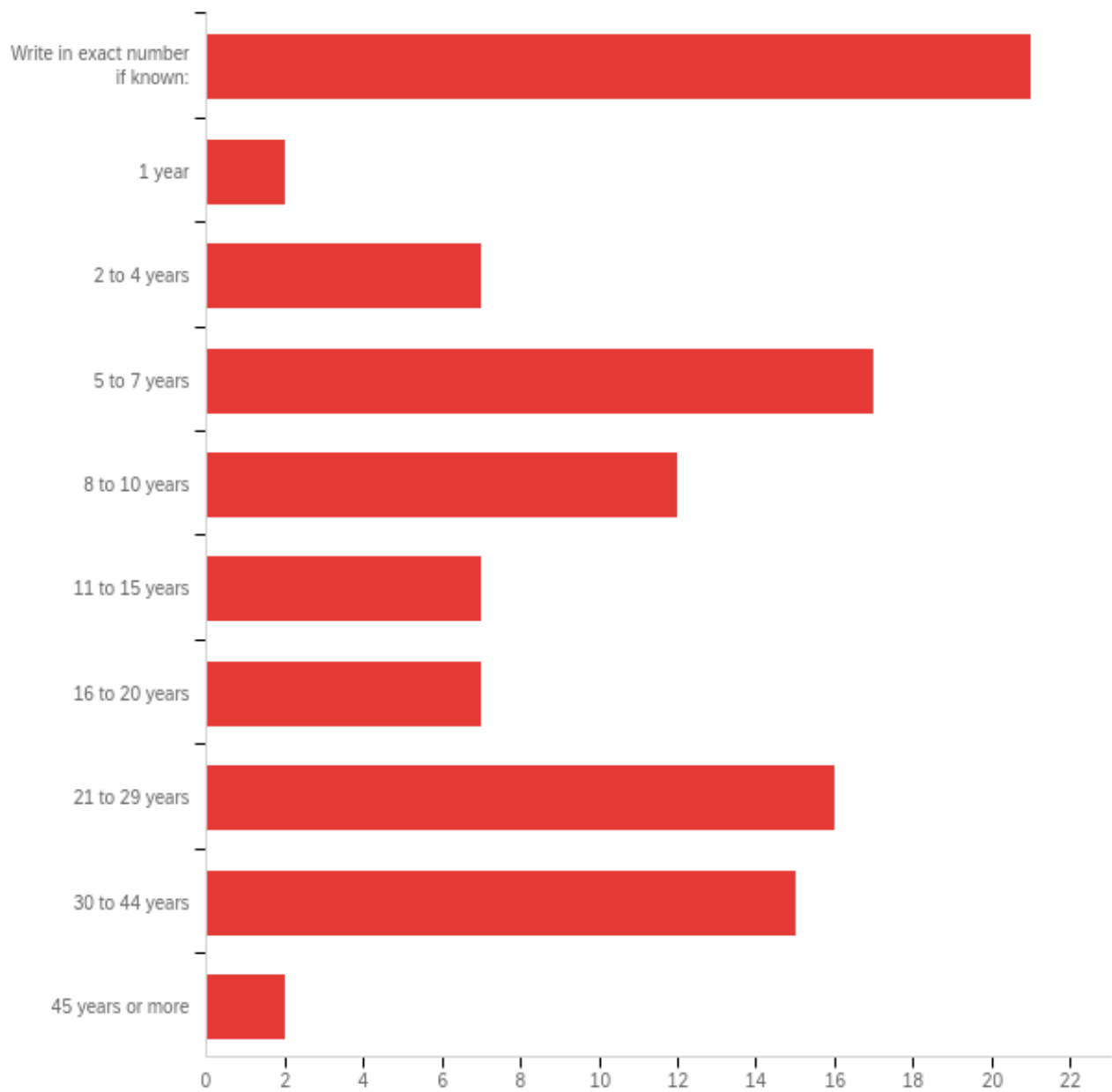
#	Answer	%	Count
0	N/A or Unsure	0.00%	0
1	Catch and release only	35.85%	38
2	Mostly catch and release, but selectively harvest a few	52.83%	56
3	Keep most steelhead, but release a few	7.55%	8
4	Keep all steelhead that are legal to harvest	3.77%	4
	Total	100%	106

Q13 - How would you classify yourself in terms of river steelhead fishing skill level?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Novice	5.66%	6
2	Intermediate	27.36%	29
3	Advanced	49.06%	52
4	Expert	17.92%	19
	Total	100%	106

Q14 - How many years of river steelhead fishing experience do you have?

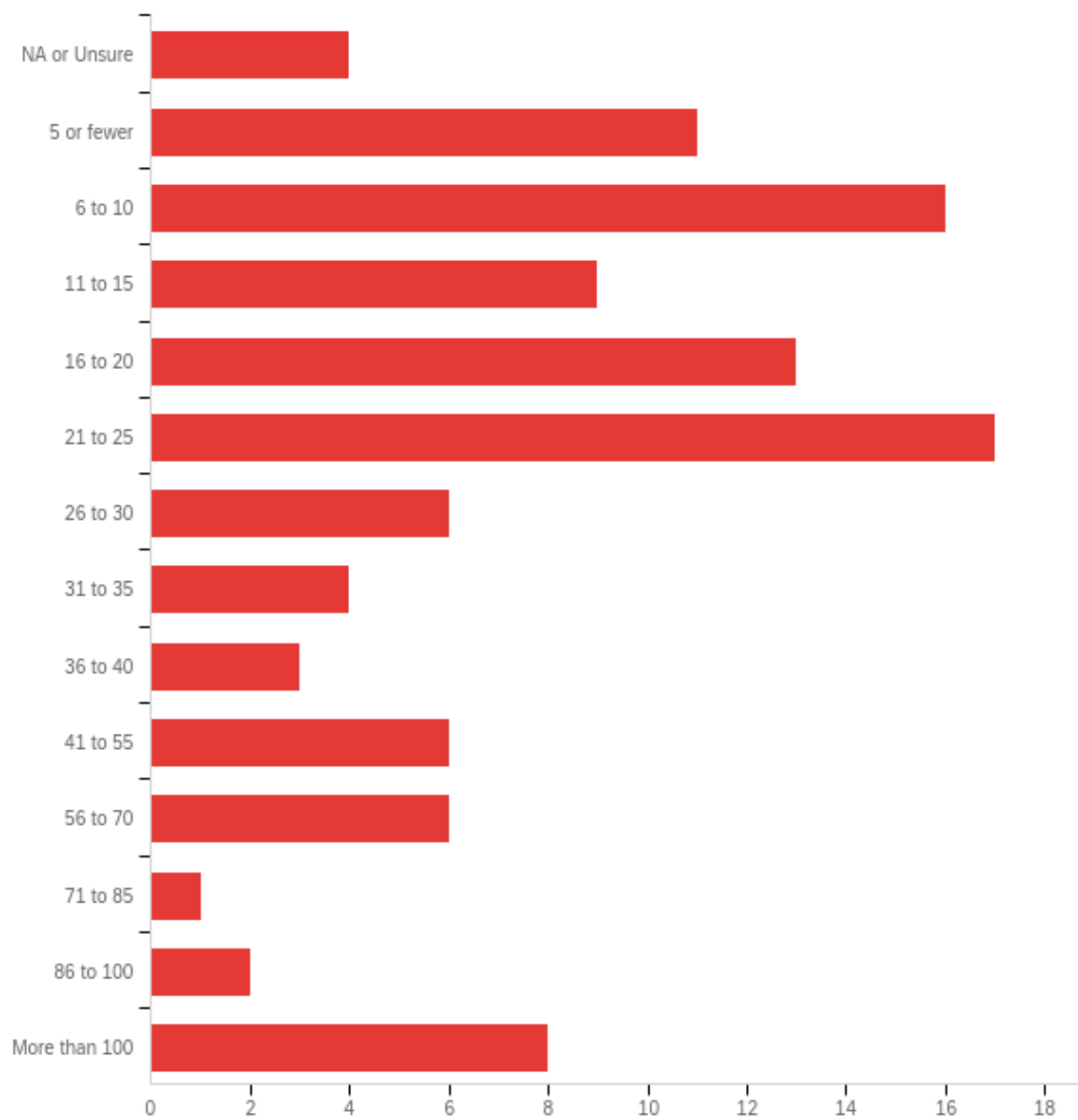


#	Answer	%	Count
0	Write in exact number if known:	19.81%	21
1	1 year	1.89%	2
3	2 to 4 years	6.60%	7
6	5 to 7 years	16.04%	17
9	8 to 10 years	11.32%	12
13	11 to 15 years	6.60%	7
18	16 to 20 years	6.60%	7
25	21 to 29 years	15.09%	16
37	30 to 44 years	14.15%	15
50	45 years or more	1.89%	2
	Total	100%	106

Q14\_6\_TEXT - Write in exact number if known:

9	47
37	11
28	38
4	5
16	53
4	58 years
38	4
54	52
6	20
Started catching Stlhd in Michigan in 1994.	
0	
4-5 seasons	

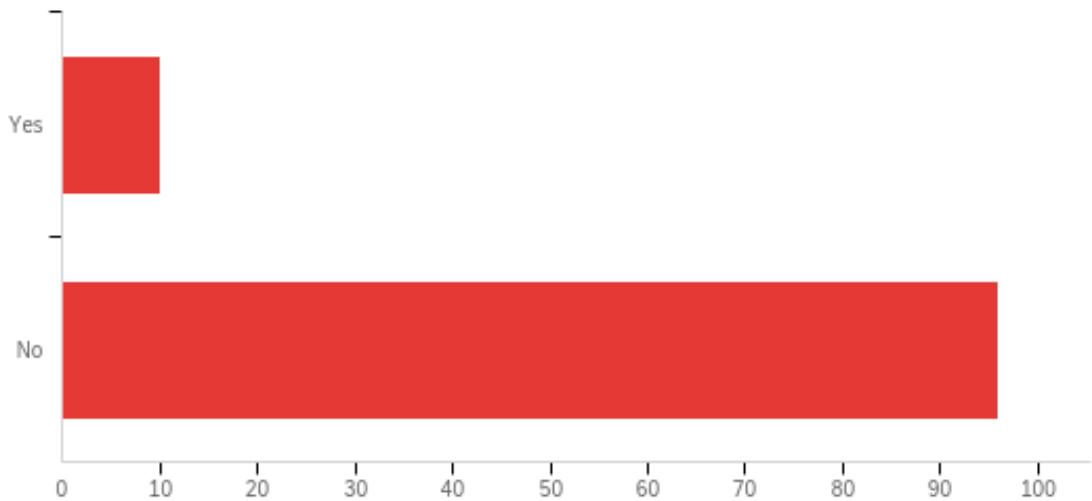
Q15 - In an average year, how many river steelhead fishing trips do you take?





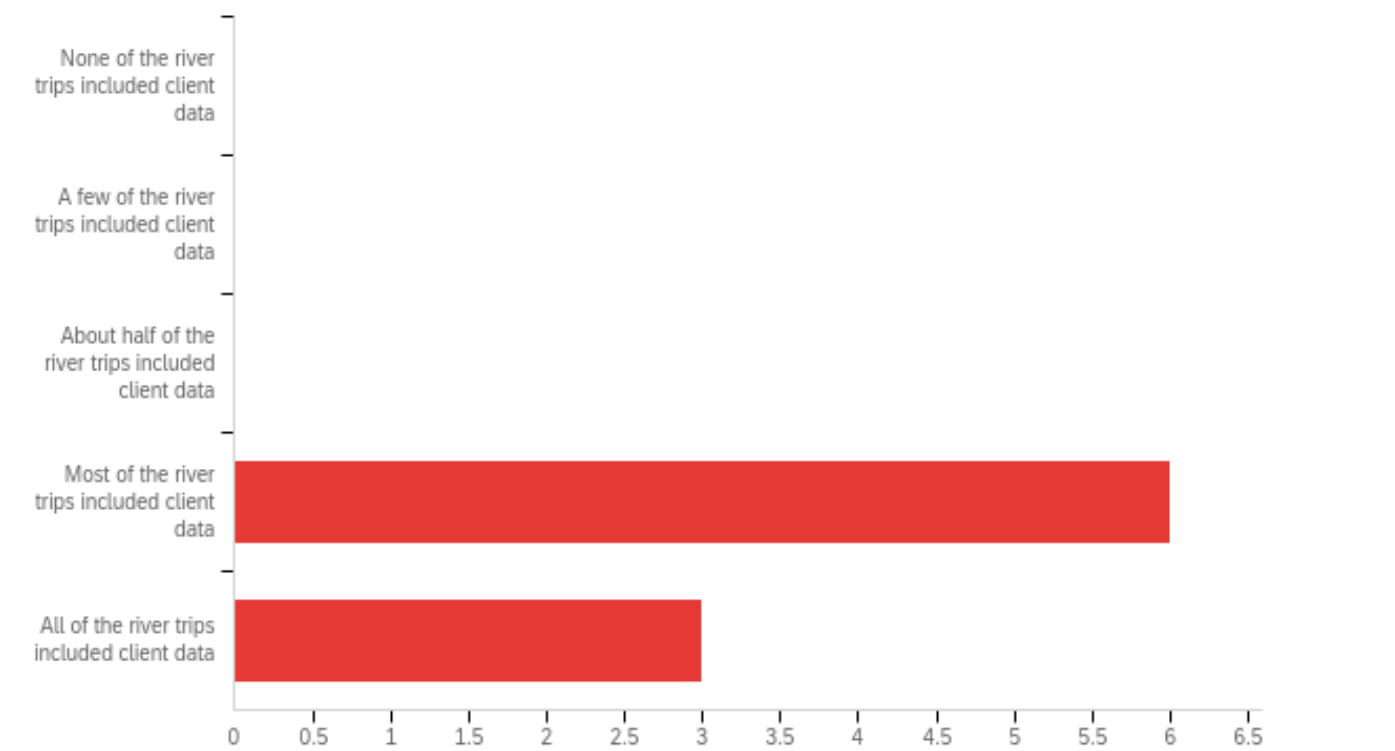
#	Answer	%	Count
0	NA or Unsure	3.77%	4
3	5 or fewer	10.38%	11
8	6 to 10	15.09%	16
13	11 to 15	8.49%	9
18	16 to 20	12.26%	13
23	21 to 25	16.04%	17
28	26 to 30	5.66%	6
33	31 to 35	3.77%	4
38	36 to 40	2.83%	3
48	41 to 55	5.66%	6
63	56 to 70	5.66%	6
78	71 to 85	0.94%	1
93	86 to 100	1.89%	2
110	More than 100	7.55%	8
	Total	100%	106

Q16 - Are you a professional steelhead fishing guide or charter captain? Answer yes if you took paying clients fishing at least once during the 2022-2023 season.



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	9.43%	10
2	No	90.57%	96
	Total	100%	106

**G1 - How many of the river steelhead trips you recorded in Great Lakes Angler Diary included steelhead catch and/or fishing effort data from clients?**



#	Answer	%	Count
1	None of the river trips included client data	0.00%	0
2	A few of the river trips included client data	0.00%	0
3	About half of the river trips included client data	0.00%	0
4	Most of the river trips included client data	66.67%	6
5	All of the river trips included client data	33.33%	3
	Total	100%	9

Q17 - Are the new harvest limits easy to understand?

Raw results are shown in the table below.

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Very easy to understand	24.76%	26
2	Easy to understand	41.90%	44
3	Neutral	18.10%	19
4	Hard to understand	15.24%	16
5	Very hard to understand	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	105

The figure below shows responses by Q17 by harvest preference, with response from agency employees omitted. The number of respondents is shown in white.

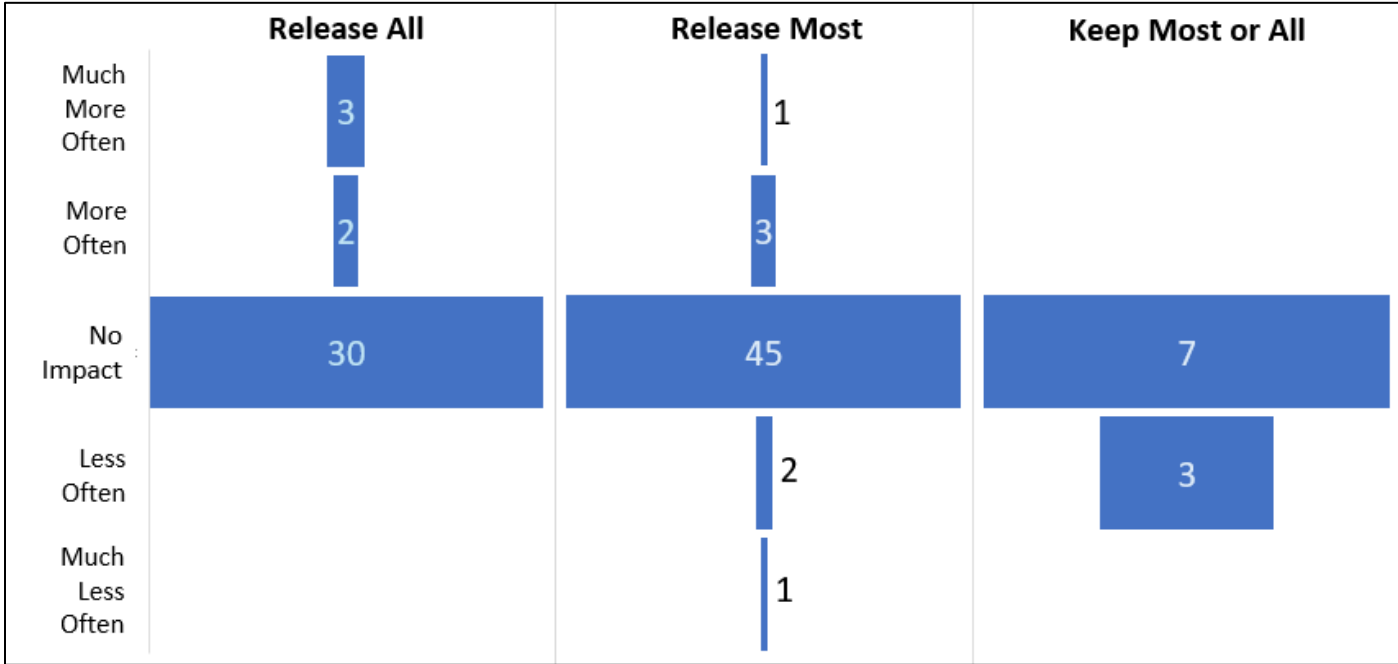


Q18 - Do you expect to fish more often or less often on rivers affected by the new one-fish limits?

Raw results are shown in the table below.

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Much more often on rivers with one-fish limit	3.81%	4
2	More often on rivers with one-fish limit	4.76%	5
3	No impact on how often I fish	83.81%	88
4	Less often on rivers with one-fish limit	6.67%	7
5	Much less often on rivers with one-fish limit	0.95%	1
	Total	100%	105

The figure below shows responses by Q18 by harvest preference, with response from agency employees omitted. 14% of anglers who practice strict catch-and-release (3 of 35) replied that they expect to fish more often or much more often on waters with a one-fish limit while 30% of anglers who keep some or most of their catch (3 of 10) expected to fish less often on waters with a one-fish limit.

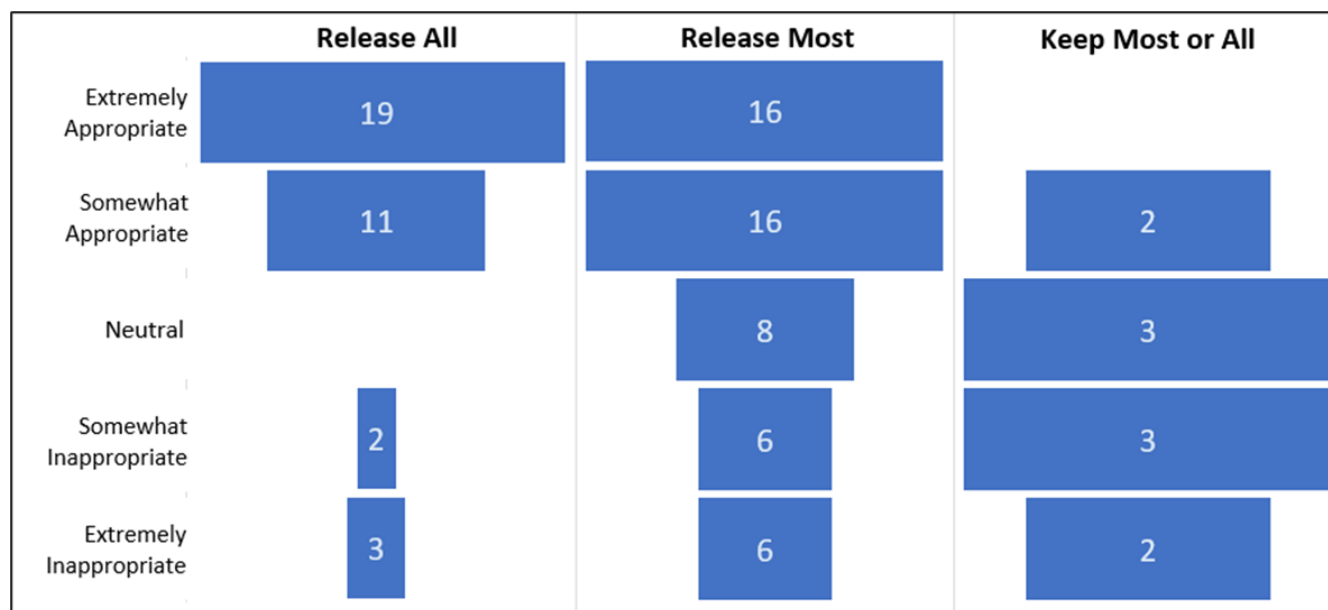


## Q19 - Are the new steelhead harvest limit regulations appropriate?

Raw results are shown in the table below.

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Extremely inappropriate	13.59%	14
2	Somewhat inappropriate	11.65%	12
3	Neither appropriate nor inappropriate	11.65%	12
4	Somewhat appropriate	29.13%	30
5	Extremely appropriate	33.98%	35
	Total	100%	103

The figure below shows responses by Q19 by harvest preference, with response from agency employees omitted. 14% of anglers who practice strict catch-and-release (3 of 35) replied that the one-fish limit was somewhat or extremely appropriate while 50% of anglers who keep some or most of their catch (5 of 10) thought that the one-fish limit was somewhat or extremely inappropriate.



**Q20 - Use the space below to let us know what you think about the new one-fish limits, which took effect on April 1, 2024.**

This rule should be implemented in every watershed that supports natural reproduction, which is pretty much all of them. And in some there should be catch and release zones where wild fish are being produced or reared. Watching ropes full of wild steelhead pitched into the bed of rusty pickup like firewood almost daily is sickening. The quality fishing experience those fish could have provided for countless others - not to mention revenue to the state and local economy alone should justify a more conservative approach to daily bag limits, regardless of what the fisheries classes at MSU taught students about "social" issues related to fishing. It's simple math: Better fishing that sustains itself longer will provide more recreation and thus more money to the economy. We aren't even close to carrying capacity on the most of these watersheds. The lake, maybe. But that's another issue entirely with ridiculous numbers of mouths to feed. Anyway...

I like the one fish limits and I think all much waters should have a one fish limit however the rule shouldn't apply from June to September as skams die easily

I utilize the GLAD for my river steelhead catches only. I do not enter my silver fish catch on the Great Lakes throughout the summer. I fish the rivers targeting steelhead between mid October and mid April.

I dont fish any of the rivers that the new regulations are on

Should be everywhere

I'm all in favor of the the 1 fish limit

I am from Southern Indiana. I would only take a fish or two a day anyways. The limit does not bother me. I would rather catch more fish!

I trust the recommendations of those who know best and have the best data available to make a wise decision for all of us who fish.

should have been enacted sooner, however, to be fair we should allow harvest of one to two hatchery fish and no kill on all unmarked steelhead. the marking program of smolts needs to be continued into the future to better understand the population dynamics in our river systems.

I think this is a great first step to help improve overall steelhead numbers. I really think that a one or two fish limit should be extended to the Great Lakes as well. I don't know how much of an impact a one fish limit is going to have on the affected rivers, but I think the paradigm shift is what's important. It seems as if the conditions in the Great Lakes are the determining factor in steelhead numbers, but that's a much larger scale problem. If we can preach more limits on steelhead streams, it brings awareness to the bigger picture issues, and may actually help with some of the survival.

I don't agree with the harvest of the less than 20" for the amount of skippers the big man produces. With the lack of clipped (hatchery) fish coming back our only life line is the wild strain.

One steelhead is plenty for one person

I strongly argue for a total catch and release of all wild steelhead. I also suggest that you should not take wild steelhead out of the net for photos. I have fished Idaho and Washington rivers that have the rule and it works. We Michiganders do not respect this valuable resource. I also suggest that certain sections of the spawning redds should be off limits during spring spawning runs.

I think it is a good idea since steelhead o Population is lowest

Limits on Lake Charters too! River anglers should not have to bear all the burden. Share the responsibility for the resource.

Everything is perfectly appropriate for normal fall winter and spring BUT besides summer run Skams. Now you got guys out for summer run steel and they have a one fish limit and they go out instead of catch and release the fish dies 90 percent of the time of exhausted and higher water temps now what there's fishermen letting them float down river because the limit is one something needs to be done ONLY SPECIFIC TO SUMMER RUN SKAMS DUE TO THUS ISSUE ASAP.

New limits are an important step to improving our fisheries. I'm not a fan of people stripping our rivers.

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I don't have a strong opinion one way or the other on the topic. It won't have any effect on me.

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Harvest is not the issue.

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I personally believe this should be effective for all rivers in Michigan especially the Huron and superior tribs due to how little stock we get and due to how many people abuse the resource.

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I think the one limit is excellent to help and try to keep the fishery's alive another thing this year as I seen last year is poor handling of fish that get released

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I don't know many people who can eat more than one good sized steelhead per day, even feeding a normal family of 4. Good to see stricter limits.

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I believe it is appropriate, with the added amount of pressure all of our river and tributaries get, I believe we could apply this new limit to more body of waters

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I wish they'd do it on every river

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It's a good idea so people stop over harvesting nobody needs 3-5 steelhead a day

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I am ok with the regulations

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It's great i was unsure this came into affect

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North branch of White River has a lot of natural reproduction and cutting back limit will improve wild brood stock. Which in turn will improve South Branch's steelhead run and improve fishing.

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I absolutely agree with the new one-fish limits, especially on rivers that rely heavily on natural reproduction.

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Strongly agree with the new limits. Anglers can help with sustainable fish populations as a result. You can't catch a dead fish. Also, the new limits anecdotally kept some anglers off the river which helped reduce angling pressure - this associated affect is something the DNR and anglers have been looking for - less pressure.

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No issue

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I don't mind a one fish limit in our river systems if the science suggests that this is necessary to help protect our fisheries. However, if that is the case, then why is that some limit not applied to fishing the Great Lakes? Selectively applying the new limits where there isn't sound reasoning for it doesn't sit well with me.

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I think it's great. Whatever we can do to avoid a collapse in this fishery like they have seen on the west coast is a plus. I think to make people happy they could have a season where people can harvest 3. Say October through February but as soon as the fish hit the gravel in March cut it to 1. I think it encourages people to rake fish off the beds when they know they can harvest 3.

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Unsure on how it will affect the fishery, but I release all steelhead I catch in the river, so the new regulations don't bother me.

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I think it is a good compromise to catch and release

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For fishermen that travel 2 or more hours to get to their favorite river & only get time during the peak runs to fish for a day or two, it's a dis advantage. I know people from southern Michigan who now don't believe it's worth the time & cost to go all that way for 1 fish a day. They love to fish but also enjoy eating these fine fish.

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I'm and advocate of a 0 fish limit, though I understand not everyone agrees, a 1 fish limit is a fine compromise.

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Fine by me

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I like it, Steelhead are a trophy fish to me!

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I think it could be applied to even more rivers.

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should be expanded to all rivers statewide



Personally, since I exclusively catch and release and fish “No Kill” stretches to avoid crowds the new regulations with thin the crowds on those rivers. I anticipate the meat fisherman will vacate those streams and I will start fishing those new regulation areas. Opening up new opportunities for me.

Appropriate and will allow measured data so we can move from there and see if it works

Valuable way to attempt to manage the resource. Would love to see keep of clipped fish only.

I'm all for it

Excellent idea.

Fine by me. Good decision overall for a fishery that relies somewhat on natural reproduction occurring in rivers where it's easy for people to harvest fish.

There's no biological data that supports the one-fish harvest limit. Therefore, it makes no sense to limit the harvest to one-fish. If this is going to continue to be a regulation, it needs to be enforced on all rivers and not just rivers that are heavily guided.

I think there should be adjustments made to accommodate skamania fishing because of the high mortality rate

I think the idea is correct but I think it has little impact on the steelhead population because most anglers release fish. I believe all wild, naturally produced fish should be released and the same regulations should apply to surf and boat anglers on the Great Lakes.

Fully supportive of the 1 fish harvest limit

I don't believe that the new regulation is going to change much when it comes to the population of steelhead. When the current issue at hand is trying to find a way to more proactively control the mussel population and what is affecting the ecosystem in the great lakes.

I don't think it is the end all be all answer to declining steelhead runs but it certainly won't negatively impact our steelhead populations so it's most likely a good bandaid solution for the time being.

It's great. Helps protect population. More fish for me to catch.

I think that they are appropriate!

I have no problem with the 1 fish limit just wish it would expand to more body's of water I see more pressure on my home water and have heard guys say they will fish here because they can keep more fish. So it's going to put more pressure on the higher limit waters

I think the entire state needs to have a one-fish limit, including a change in Lake Michigan, too. The last couple of years have been some of the worst steelhead fishing of my lifetime. Our steelhead fishery is in trouble!

Honestly, I am happy with the one fish limit that took effect. I do wish the one fish harvest was placed on all Michigan rivers to reduce fish kills on non regulated rivers. I am curious if the one fish limit with effect the states efforts when it comes to stocking, now that there's "forced" limited take. It's an interesting topic. I want to avoid the harsh regulations that our western states like Oregon and Washington have in place.

One planted Steelhead per day, maximum of 5 per year. I would support catch and release only.

I myself as an angler who appreciates steelhead like the new limit it will help us get the population back up and possibly catch some of those people who like to fish illegally,

Good

I understand the concept. Reduce the number of fish kept from streams that promote the most natural reproduction, but I think that the majority of serious steelhead fishermen who fish the affected streams rarely keep more than one if any per trip so it really seems to be an unnecessary regulation.

Very supportive of the one-fish limit for mostly psychological reasons. Helps anglers recognize that steelhead numbers in Lakes Michigan and Huron are down. Catch and release will make the most of the reduced runs.

For me, I don't have a problem as I don't keep too many fish, I think I only kept 2 this season. But I know a lot of people keep a lot, and I think that if there is no scientific reasoning for reducing the limit then it should have been kept as is to avoid confusion and to allow a higher level of use of the resource.

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I'm in favor of protecting wild fish stocks, my only objection is that the Kalamazoo is a major producer and did not get protection. On the other hand, when I learned that Silver Creek is the major producer for the Kalamazoo drainage and it is essentially unknown to the general public I understood that not advertising the run there may be the best protection it can receive.

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I haven't been impacted by them but growing popularity of steelhead fishing seems to be in conflict with a declining ecosystem. Having fished over 25+ years, there is a noticeable shift of smaller and more sporadic runs along with a huge increase in anglers chasing steelhead armed with the immediate knowledge of YouTube and such. The learning curve has shortened so relative to the past, we have trained assassins on the river and not as many fish around.

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The limit should be statewide in all waters.

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Maybe only keep a male and release all females.

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If numbers are down it is a good idea. How about planting more fish

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In total support. I think however given the decline in returns that either fishing should be suspended for a season or at the very least we should adopt catch and release altogether. We should be learning lessons from the mismanagement in the Pacific Northwest.

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The reduced limits are a handout from the NRC to purist catch-and-release fly anglers and guides who would like nothing more than to make keeping all steelhead illegal. It's a regulation not based on the science. In fact, it went against the recommendation of the state's fisheries managers. It also unfairly manages steelhead in the river, where they are accessible to more anglers, especially compared to the Great Lakes, which do not fall under the more restrictive rules. Moreover, a one-fish limit also essentially puts the Manistee's all-hatchery skamania fishery off limits because of catch and release mortality in warm summer waters. At the worst, I fear this reg overall is socially aimed at removing unsavory "regular" anglers from the river so they can be playgrounds for fly guides and their acolytes.

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I think its a good move. These are sport fish, and catching them can be a blast.

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I'm torn because I understand the DNR did not support it and it reduces opportunities when it is not necessary. At the same time I can't help thinking that there will be more fish in the river if less are removed throughout the season. I do think these decisions should be made by Fisheries people instead of the NRC ,who seem willing to make decisions based on political pressure. This concerns me because policies can be made that are based on who is appointed (Anti-fishing folks?) rather than what is best for the resource and sportsmen and women.

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It's understandable, but quoting how the NRC/DNR was "following the science" in this decision is incorrect. The moment someone crosses the pier heads, this rule is thrown out. But steelhead/rainbows turn into a pretentious fish with a price tag on their head due to river guides. This rule does not change how I fish much or what river to go to, but the guy who is just trying to catch a couple of fish for a meal might consider carrying some nippers. This year's joke with our fishing group was, "Next year the bottom will be covered with clipped adipose fins."

---

Considering most of the resident population of Michigan lives in Southeast Michigan this will discourage travel and commerce in our state and affect businesses up north.

---

Would be more appropriate if the big lake anglers were held to the same limits.

---

Apply to all rivers state wide

---

It was a socially driven mess driven primarily by fishing guides, and/or NRC members. The NRC members (majority?) show bias in my view as members of TU, where the TU mission statement is "To bring together diverse interests to care for and recover rivers and streams so our children can experience the joy of wild and native trout and salmon.". Of course with this mission, they would push for release of all unclipped steelhead (which are neither wild/native, and are simply "naturalized"). This bias was too "in your face/obvious" with the initial draft presented by Nyberg, and conveniently revised after such direct criticism, specifically on the PM (with no stocking

in the main branch), it would have been essentially a “zero harvest” river (from the river I feel has fished the best for hourly catch rate for several years). Unwarranted. I feel some should have abstained due to personal conflict, especially the leader of the push, who’s brother in law operates a guide outfit in the UP, where low angler hour effort has existed for years. I’d even venture to bet the majority of our stakeholders never even heard of steelhead running in the two UP rivers which were conveniently included. Regardless. Our true biologists yelled from the rooftops “we don’t need to do this”, but it fell on deaf ears with the unanimous NRC vote to side with Social/opinion, which trumped biological science/studies, and this is majorly flawed in our current legislation/management. Fiduciary responsibility was not upheld by the NRC in my opinion related to ALL stakeholders including not only those who may seek to harvest, but the local small towns and businesses supported by the fishery. Especially “average Joe from Ohio” who has the mission of a “meat haul”..... This all comes from a guy who personally releases most steelhead and selfishly I would benefit from “recycled fish” available for me to catch, but I see the bigger picture. Look at the boards equivalent to the NRC in other states such as WA and CO, with biased PETA-minded commissioners put into place. The precedent being set by the NRC regarding this, the chumming ban, and recently coyote regulations, (to name a few) is a very worrisome and slippery slope of social management trumping biological management in all cases.

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For those who pay and only fish a couple times it probably stinks but for me it don't matter I will only keep one fish maybe. Only take what I will eat and one is plenty.

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One fish over 20 inches should include all rivers, and Great lakes,

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I'm all about conservation but can't understand why big lake limit isn't 1 fish. Maybe would be better if spawning areas of rivers closed if conservation is priority.

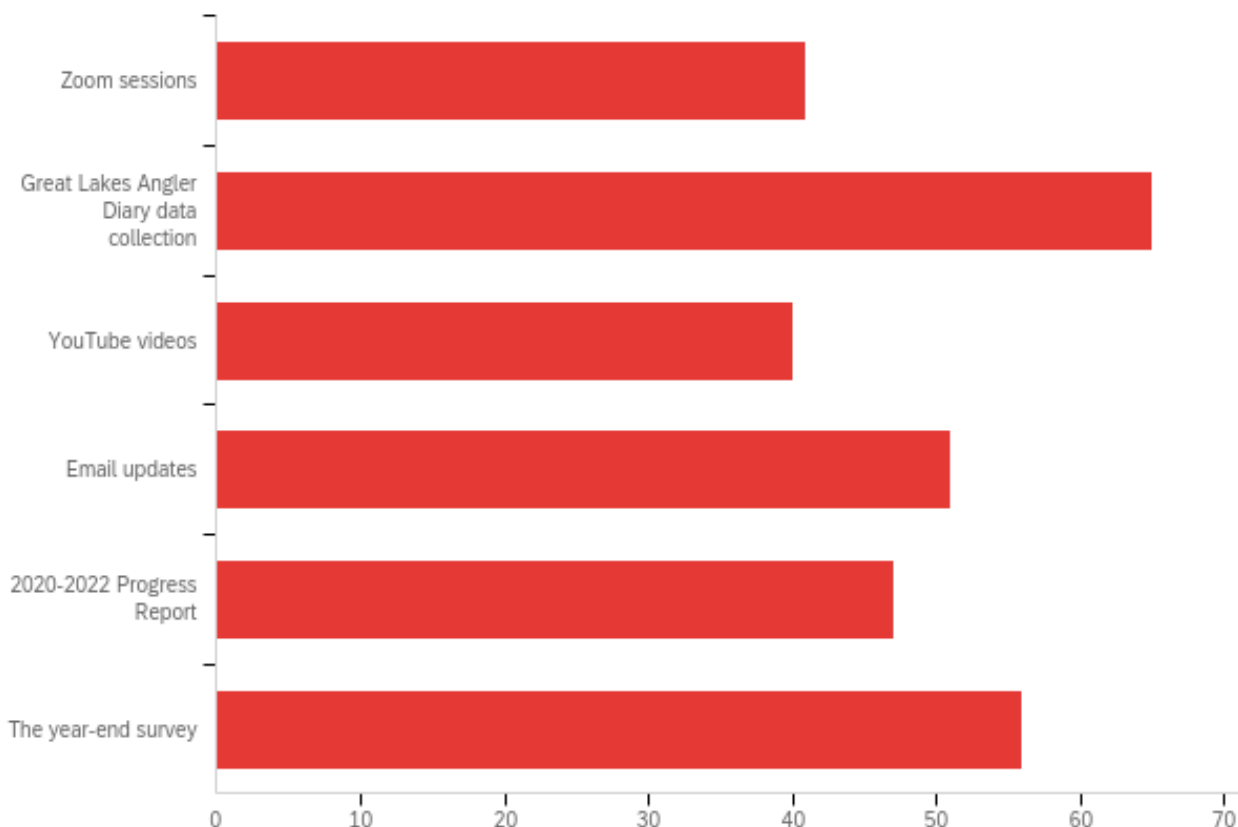
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Not scientific based so probably politically based.

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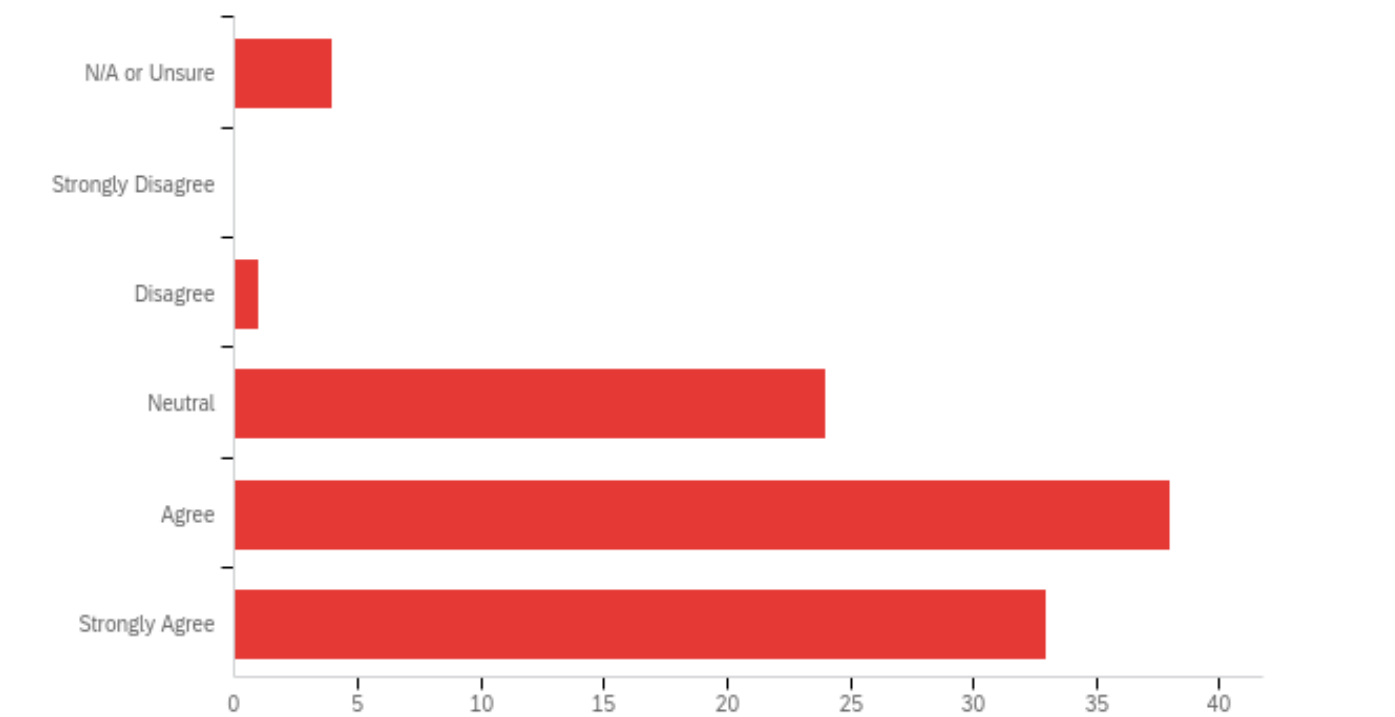
On the systems the new limits were implemented I %100 believe they will/are a overall benefit in preserving steelhead populations.

**Q21 - You were invited to take this survey because you registered to collect steelhead data using Great Lakes Angler Diary as part of the Michigan River Steelhead Program. The program also includes a web page with educational resources, Zoom sessions to share results and fishing reports, YouTube videos with results, and a progress report that details findings from the first two years of the program. Which elements of the Michigan River Steelhead Program did you find informative? Check all that apply.**



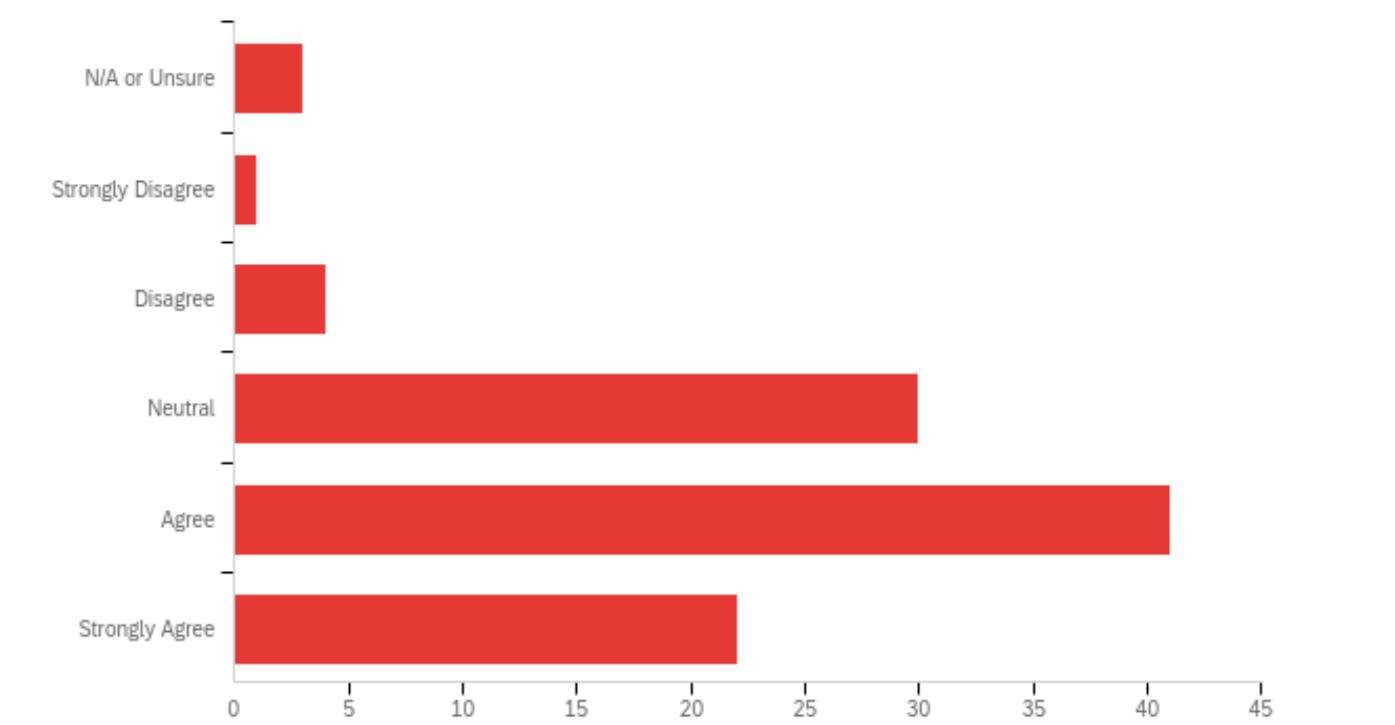
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Zoom sessions	13.67%	41
2	Great Lakes Angler Diary data collection	21.67%	65
3	YouTube videos	13.33%	40
4	Email updates	17.00%	51
5	2020-2022 Progress Report	15.67%	47
6	The year-end survey	18.67%	56
	Total	100%	300

Q22 - I have a better understanding of how stocked and wild steelhead contribute to fisheries as a result of participating in the Michigan River Steelhead Program.



#	Answer	%	Count
0	N/A or Unsure	4.00%	4
1	Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
2	Disagree	1.00%	1
3	Neutral	24.00%	24
4	Agree	38.00%	38
5	Strongly Agree	33.00%	33
	Total	100%	100

**Q23 - Through participating in this program, I gained a better understanding of fisheries management policies (for example, harvest limits, habitat restoration, or stocking programs).**



#	Answer	%	Count
0	N/A or Unsure	2.97%	3
1	Strongly Disagree	0.99%	1
2	Disagree	3.96%	4
3	Neutral	29.70%	30
4	Agree	40.59%	41
5	Strongly Agree	21.78%	22
	Total	100%	101

**Q24 - Let us know if you have any additional thoughts on steelhead fisheries, the Michigan River Steelhead Program, or the Great Lakes Angler Diary apps using the space below:**

Sorry I'm late on this and haven't participated like I should. It's been a WILD year and I have lots of irons in the fire. I will do my best to generate more timely data on my end, but also check with others who clearly are not participating.

Let's keep making the fishing better by being stewards of the land and water! Thanks for all you do!

keep this program moving forward

I think the GL Diary is a great start for data collection, but I think it needs to be streamlined and simplified if you want to get better participation. I know the goal is to get as much information as possible, but I think people get burned out because the process is rather cumbersome. I'm sure that there are statistical models that back the data collection method, but I think you're missing out on a bunch of quality information that you could get from other anglers if the process was simplified.

Limit the number of professional guides on the Muskegon River. Limit the engine size on the jet boats. I strongly suggest that there should be greater advocacy at the State level for river steelhead management and steelhead fishermen. The Michigan River Steelhead Program is a good start. The Great Lakes Angler Diary apps are a good start.

ABSOLUTELY MUST REVISE AND SPECIFY A DIFFERENT SYSTEM FOR SUMMER RUN SKAMMANIA DUE TO THE HIGH PERCENTAGE OF FISH THAT FIGHT TO THEIR OWN DEATH. AND HIGHER WATER TEMPS NEEDS REVISED ASAP FISH ARE BEING LET GO FLOATING BC LIMITS ARE MET.

I don't have much to add at this time. I wasn't able to get out much within the last year. I did like the app until it stopped working on my phone. I originally found the app from watching YouTube, and [REDACTED]. I like to see Michigan fisheries without naming them, or spot burning.

N/A

If I could hook into as many steelhead a day in northern MI as I have fishing steelhead alley in Ohio I would be very happy! I think the difference may be that Ohio just plants more fish than MI does relative to total fishable river miles so the fish are more concentrated.

Please tell me what the "mich river steelhead program" is. Is this something other than the Great Lakes Angler Diary? If it refers to the DNR's steelhead planting program and regulations I am very pleased with the way it is managed.

I LOVE this kind of thing - and did not even know that I could enter in other species of fish. I will be logging my catches more this year as I go out.

Just want to say thank you for anyone and everyone that's involved in this study and putting in the effort/work to give us a better understanding of our steelhead fisheries.

I appreciate the efforts of the program and the program administrator, the ease of participating. Moreover, the details asked for gives me hope that hard data can be used to steer the DNR into sound decisions going forward. The limited data required for the DNR catch reporting is close to useless in my opinion.

I spoke with [REDACTED] about some new construction along the Red Cedar that has caused Salmon to flood out of the river and into a new drainage pond. I know that this isn't great for a fishery that already sees so little return.

No comment at this point

I know a number of die hard steelhead fishermen that don't know about your program & how the fishery can benefit from the data collection. I tell them about it but there must be a way to get the word out about how useful this diary can be. Maybe a sign at some of the popular launches would help. Thanks for what you do to support and sustain our wonderful fishery.

This is a great program. I really appreciate the effort you all put into this.

I like your service but have had limited time to participate like I would have liked to. Now that I'm retired I expect to become a better source of information for you in the future.

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Appreciate the app and the community

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I believe a release of all wild (non-clipped) fish would be extremely beneficial.

---

I'd be for a 1 fish limit on lake run browns and steelhead state wide

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Fishing time was way down this year due to personal stuff. Looking forward to contributing more this year. Thanks!

---

Overall, the season was not great, but that was to be expected with losing plants during covid, as the river I primarily fish, The Boyne River, is heavily reliant on stocked fish. I was disappointed to hear that they were not stocking it this year. The river needs all the plants it can get due to blatant mismanagement of the dam by Boyne Mountain. They constantly flood the river with sediment and it continues to this day. It's very frustrating that they are allowed to poorly manage the dam. With the most recent rain, there was a ton of sediment in the river. With that said, I am hopeful that our fishery is on the upswing and I appreciate all the efforts by the DNR.

---

I enjoy helping with the data collection. I am looking forward to next years return fish and curious to see how my fishery is because it relies so heavily on stocked fish.

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I believe we need to get an understanding of smolt mortality in streams, river mouths and the Great Lakes. The DNR has shown that the steelhead population is about one half of what it used to be in Lake Michigan in the 1990s . We need to understand why and take corrective action.

---

The app needs to be reworked for next year. Many bugs. Had to talk to tech support several times.

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None at this time!

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Being able to enter multiple locations on a trip because I don't always spend the whole day fishing a stretch of river will move around if heavy pressure of people or the bite is slow

---

The Great Lakes angler diary app has been awesome. No complaints other than the fishing was just down this year. My home water has changed from the kazoo to the white this year which also could contribute to my catch rate this year. The lower numbers definitely had me staying home on the tougher weather days, so I found myself fishing less this year. I greatly appreciated everything this survey and program does for our fishery and community. So thank you.

---

I didn't enter any catch results bc I assumed my guide entered my catch results. If he did not my results were as follows: April 23 - 5 hooked, zero landed - Steelhead; Landed 3 Rainbow trout and released all. April 24 - 25 hooked, 5 landed/netted and released. April 25 - 9 hooked, zero landed.

---

I also think we should start a brute stock program here in Michigan it could benefit our fisheries for the better take some of the bigger fish a male and a female and breed them then release those fish into the wild to spread those genes in the river when they go and spawn.

---

None

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Maybe this is a simple feature that I missed but I can't seem to figure out how to edit a fish I entered on the app. Let's say I entered the wrong length or put no clips when there was a fin clip. How can I go back and edit that fish or delete it completely?

---

Wild steelhead seem to be much more "fit" to survive the current Lake conditions where the invasive mussels have greatly reduced the productivity of Lakes Michigan & Huron. We are lucky that our hatchery steelhead have wild parents so that even though a year in the hatchery reduces greatly their fitness, interbreeding with wild fish will not affect the fitness of the offspring.

---

I really appreciate the app and its dashboard. This year seemed like a bit of a struggle both in numbers and size, likely because of the missed Covid year, but when I saw my group's totals and compared them to my friends in Oregon I realized how spoiled we are in Michigan. I'd love the app to continue and will also be using the new walleye app.

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Great program. Thank you for all you do.



Love the app and this program. Hatchery fish need to all be fin clipped for the next 10 years in order to track populations.

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We need more fish planted in the white river. I've fished this river heavily for decades and have seen the slow decline and the past few years, steelhead are almost non existent. It seems like the "winter fish" are the only ones that come anymore and they are dwindling fast. These "winter" fish are typically mostly wild fish, we should be protecting these wild fish with a 1 fish limit all winter long. I believe you have the 1 fish limit backwards on the rivers that apply. Protect the wild natural fish that tend to spawn earlier and live in the river throughout winter months & maybe let people keep more of the later run fish that seem to be more planted fish. With the current state of the fishery, I would recommend a 1 fish limit for Steelhead across the board in all waters year round, at least for a few years to take advantage of the wild fish's ability to successfully reproduce. Aside from the White river I also fish the Muskegon, Manistee, Pere Marquette & little Manistee rivers and results seem to be consistent everywhere lately. "Bring back this fishery while we still have some wild fish to utilize in the effort!"

---

I swing flies when steelheading, I understand my catch rates will be low because of that. I think you should include a distinction of fishing method used in your survey.

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Add the Boardman River!

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I enjoy using the App and listening to all the specialist talk about the Michigan River Steelhead program. I learn a lot and enjoy hearing from others about their river experiences.

---

I enjoyed participating this year. I had tried previous years but struggled even to get good measurements on the fish because they won't stay still and I'm concerned about a quick release. One question I have on the reporting is that I wonder why we record only the fish we individually catch but are still asked how many were in the fishing party. I don't get how that is helpful and would like to know what is gained from that. In response to the next question: I work for the DNR seasonally for the last 3 years since my retirement from Ferris State

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It would be nice if the DNR publicized this app more or even enforced guides, per se, to record catches.

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We've had lower return rates since the winter of 2013 if you go back and look at the Great Lakes water levels and actual rainfall each year and when the rain came affected the return rates. We were in a 10 year weather cycle pattern that has now ended in my opinion and we should get back to a more normal Weather cycle, thus affecting a better return. The higher lake levels affected the lower sections of river and actually created more of a lake. Habitat for other predator fish that actually moved in and took up Residence. I believe a lot of these fish ate a lot of smokes too, and that contributed to the problem. But at the end of the day, I feel it was all related to water and temperature, and everyone has overreacted. Cutting stocking of hatchery fish and lowering the limits will have a huge economic impact trust me.

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The GLAD is still buggy for me on the Android platform.

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Try and promote the program more. Maybe target fly shops including surrounding states to help sign up anglers.

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Too many fishing guides. One distinction I see, there are "full time guides", and then there are "part time guides". The part timers may work in construction, then guide during peak steelhead/salmon season only. They are also the "bad apples" from my encounters. I'd love to see regulations put in place that "you may only operate as a guide, if you can show through financial records that guiding/chartering is your primary source of income. We understand as you start your venture into guiding, you may have to supplement your income with other means as you build your business/clientele. You have a 4 year grace period as you start your endeavor until this requirement goes into effect. If after 4 years passes, guiding/chartering does not become your primary source of income, your guide license is revoked."

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Ban gill nets period for any race no matter how they feel there ancestors were treated. We are all one people now, please respect what we have otherwise the gill nets will end steelhead fishing as we know it.

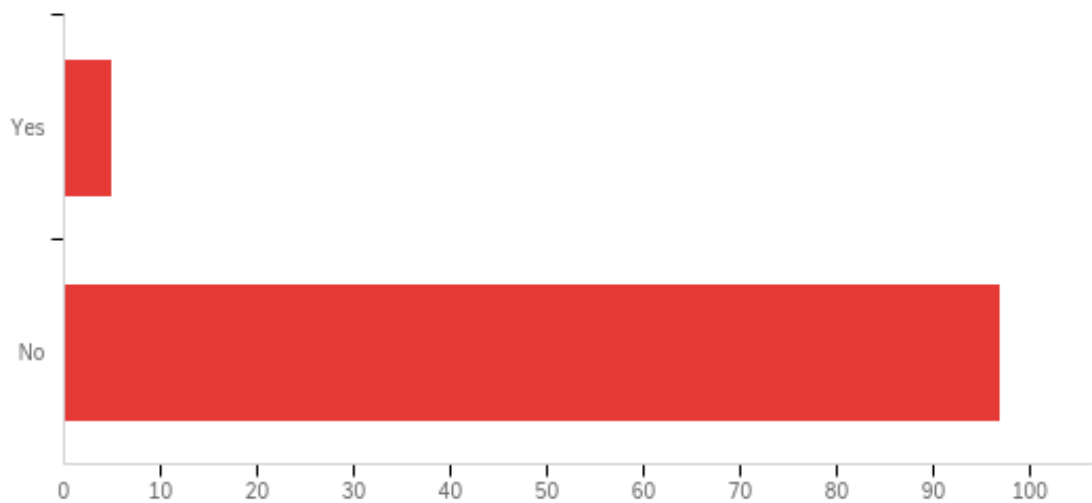
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Wish the app was android friendly

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The river guides and Great Lakes charters are harvesting an inappropriate percent of fish from a fishery that was originally developed for the general public. When the fishery becomes money driven, politics becomes the deciding factor in how it is managed.

Q25 - Do you work for a natural resource agency (e.g., DNR, Sea Grant, etc.)?



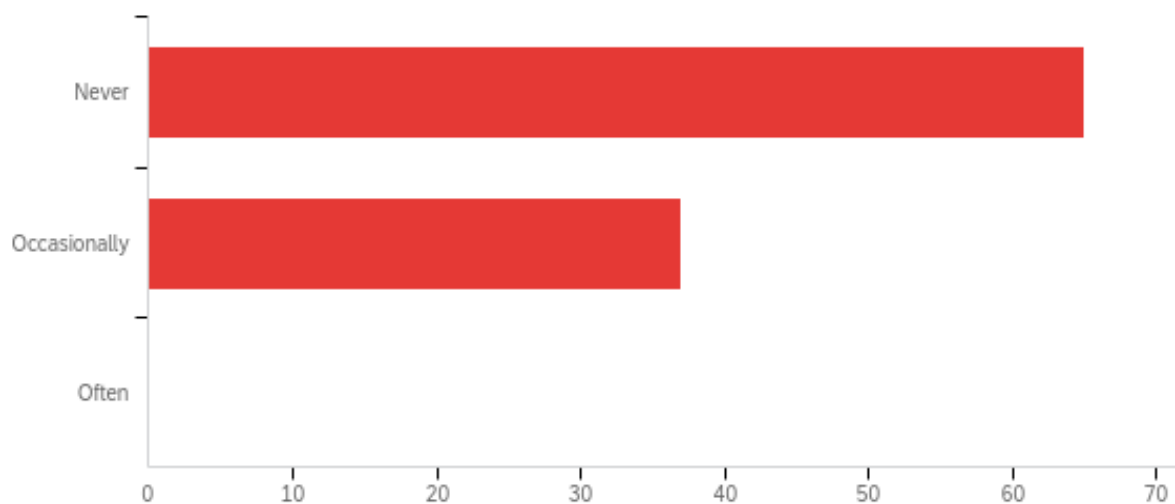
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	4.90%	5
2	No	95.10%	97
	Total	100%	102

Q26 - What year were you born?

The average birth year for respondents (N = 100) was 1977. Birth year was used to determine the demographic breakdown of participants by generation:

Generation	N
Silent	4
Baby Boomer	22
Gen X	29
Millennial	29
Gen Z	16

Q27 - While steelhead fishing, have you experienced harassment, obstruction, or other deliberate interference with your lawful pursuit of fish?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Never	63.73%	65
2	Occasionally	36.27%	37
3	Often	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	102

Q28 - If so, provide details on locations and the nature of harassment, obstruction, or other interference below:

I've been fishing Michigan streams for over 40 years and guiding for nearly 30 so as you can imagine I've seen and experienced a lot of things including fights, arguments, screaming matches, "low-holing" by other boats, lines intentionally casted over, super aggressive snagging, etc. Usually this is around common public areas but also in remote areas where poachers hide from the public. It'd take a day to type up every scenario. But, I have experienced these things from the Lake Superior shore to the Indiana state line and everywhere in between.

Bear Creek, Manistee county. Lack of public access has created an almost private stretch of water, we used to take out at the bridges, but that was shutdown I guess.... Never got a clear answer from the Dnr but I just quit fishing from the raft. landowners were less than pleasant

Small things. Recently I have notice people catching a fish, leaving, and then returning shortly after.

River guides think they own the river

Little Manistee, Bear Creek, Prairie Creek, EB Au Gres

The guides and especially the new generation of guides are much more aggressive in their fishing methods, and boat handling. It is low holeing, high speed operations, (boat waking) back bouncing. I suggest that you get Professional Guides like [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to teach river fishing ethics to these young guides. Now it is all about the dollar and getting a fish in the boat for their clients. The Muskegon from Pine street launch to the Henning Park lunch has become a retail corridor.

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Other anglers using passive aggressive behavior to push me out of the hole. I am a 5'2" female and can be an easy target. Way much more of my experiences have been highly positive.

---

Rivers charters will sometimes interfere with my fishing by anchoring in the run I am fishing close enough to prevent my casting. I hope the new reporting requirements and stricter regulations for inland guides will help weed out the cowboys.

---

I think the only thing I can but my finger on was, barbed wire across beaver creek north 9 Mile in Kaleva.

---

While wading Muskegon river I've had one landowner get in a boat and run circles around me, one fly guide drop anchor in the run I was fishing and then spook fish by revving motor when I called him on it, and another jet boat anchor directly where I was casting although there was plenty of room to spread out and limited places a wading angler could access the river. Get the impression that some people deliberately harass others to try and make sure they don't come back

---

Many different incidents of snagging, on all of the rivers I fish around the north eastern Michigan side especially alpena during salmon season and prime spawn of steelhead during April early may

---

Just people that don't agree with killing or catching the fish nothing to serious

---

River guides coming through with float boats and chainsaws to clear a path for their boats right where we were fishing.

---

There's always land owners that all in the sudden change their mind mid season about people fishing the water or walking through land and you are most of the time unaware of this untill you go and they call the fish commission on you

---

Land owners not understanding the legality of fishermen wading in a navigable river.

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Just other boats being inconsiderate and blowing through holes. Mainly duck hunters.

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Intoxicated bank anglers

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Too many fishermen in a small area and some tend to be inconsiderate of others. Their actions interfere with fishing.

---

Never while Steelheading. I have while fishing the fall Salmon run. Most situations were mild and easy to just ignore and move on. Worst situation, believe it or not, was from a guide who moved into a run I was already fishing.

---

Snagging and targeting spawning steelhead. In the past, I have also had landowners threaten to call the DNR even though I was not on their property.

---

Harassment mostly comes from other anglers with no respect for proper fishing and river etiquette

---

The Rockford dam, and above and below Childsdale and Jericho Ave in Rockford MI. The dam is in regards to obstruction of people having proper etiquette of seeing the lanes that others are fishing but I know that isn't going to change. As for Childsdale and Jericho bridge, it is the owners of the homes above and below the bridges that think that they own the walkways along the river and its their property when it is actually government property.

---

In previous years I have had land owners on the White River near Hesperia claim I couldn't be fishing in front of their house or try to disrupt fishing by tossing rocks in the water but haven't had that issue this steelhead season.

---

Being harassed by people that own property on the river that I can legally wade and fish and they don't understand the rules

---

Boaters no slowing down when passing fishermen. They just go full blast - full speed when they pass us. We have to fight the huge waves and they effect of that issue on fishing success. Jerks!

Even though I checked never I've rarely experienced some harassment when fishing/wading Prairie Creek through private property.

I know that people can fish wherever they please, but I had another angler be too close to our space, crossing our lines, and kicking fish on a stringer.

St Joe and Grand River conflicts over spots when trolling/backtrolling and approaching or being approached by other boats. General lack of courtesy and guides intentionally driving over the hole because they are mad you have the spot.

#### Bear Creek

It's typically guides that think they own the river because they have paying clients. Leaving an anchor in the river with a jug attached to it "does not save one's spot"! Jumping out of a boat and chasing a fish down with a 8' long handle net is also unacceptable! (What happened to the 14" handle rule on nets when you're wading?) Guides trimming trees/brush to access bedding fish more easily for clients.....this is very unacceptable, this brush/shade on the river is critical to the fish in many ways. One last idea: With the need for funding to plant more steelhead, let's implement a "pay to keep" on Steelhead. You can keep more fish than a 1 fish limit, but they must be immediately registered on line and will cost \$10 per fish kept.

It's been a long time but years ago landowners in the Flys Only section of the PM harassed a friend and I. They inferred that we trespassed and questioned how we got there and how we planned on getting out. They then sat on the bank and waited for us to touch dry land, which we never did. Definitely trying to bully us so we wouldn't fish there

I have had guides park right in a hole we were fishing multiple times. Harassment from homeowners on public land. Basically what is expected when fishing popular public waters.

Bear creek property owner up in arms, while standing ankle deep in water I legally accessed. Interference would be a day a guide was making "passes" down and motoring back up the Manistee (drifting/casting like the Detroit river). Through a 3/4 mile or so area I could see, they fished everything, we were the only anglers on shore, fishing one run. The guide was fishing so close, that I could hear as he instructed the clients to cast into the run we were fishing, essentially 20' in front of me. Of course, the client did hook a fish during this mess. I found out later in the day through another guide who knows that guide, it was their only fish of the day. We were skunked that day.

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