

Freshwater Fishing Regulations Guide Survey

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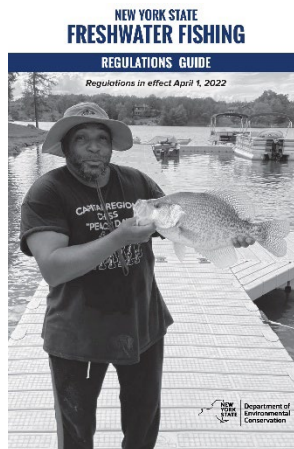
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Given the intermittent changes in the size, style, and content of the NYS Freshwater Fishing Regulations Guide over the past 10 years it’s uncertain which version anglers prefer to receive (Figure 1). To gain a better understanding of what angler preferences are for the guide a web-based survey using Alchemer® was sent to almost 175,000 subscribers to “The Fishing Line” e-newsletter and over 415,000 licensed anglers through GovDelivery.

Figure 1. Guide Cover Examples



Pocket-size (4.25” x 7”)



Current size (5.5” x 8.5”)



Magazine-style (8 x 10.5”)

Almost 14,000 completed surveys were received during the two-week period (February 24 – March 10, 2023) the survey was open. The summary below highlights the results.

- When asked what their primary source is to find information on fishing regulations, almost half of the respondents indicated they use the electronic version of the guide on the DEC website. Almost 39% use the hard copy of the guide. Other options that weren’t used nearly as frequently were local newspaper, HuntFishNY app and family/friends (Figure 2).
- When asked how often the sources were used, 50% of those that indicated they use the hard copy of the guide said consult the guide *a few times during the*

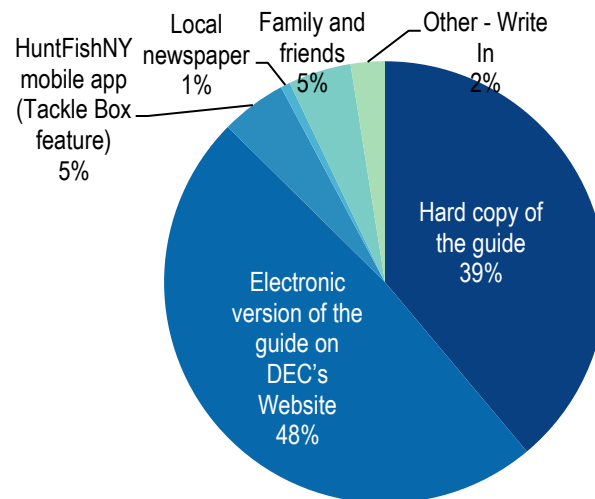


Figure 2. Guide Source Preferences

season. For the website users, 53% also consult the guide *a few times during the season*. For the hard copy and website, those that indicated they consult the guide *regularly* was about the same (17% and 15.8%, respectively).

- In addition to the regulatory content, survey participants were asked to rank specific additional content in order of preference. If they did not want to see any of those items in the guide, they were directed not to include them in the ranking. The large majority of respondents selected “articles on NY fisheries management & research” (75%) and “fishing tips and techniques” (72%) as items they’d like to see in addition to the regulations. The third option “angler-submitted photos” received the lowest ranking.
- Respondents were asked to select their preference from three different-sized guides (based on previous versions), as well as “no preference.” Almost 33% prefer the pocket-size (4.25” x 7”), followed by 28% for the current size (5.5” x 8.5”), 21% for the magazine-style (8 x 10.5”) and 18% that did not have a preference (Figure 3).
- Respondents were then asked what their preference for color scheme/style was. The majority selected either “no preference” (39%) or “full-color cover, text and images” (39%). Versions that had one color text and/or cover were not as favorable.
- The last question was a write-in format and allowed survey participants to add comments about the content and format of the guide.

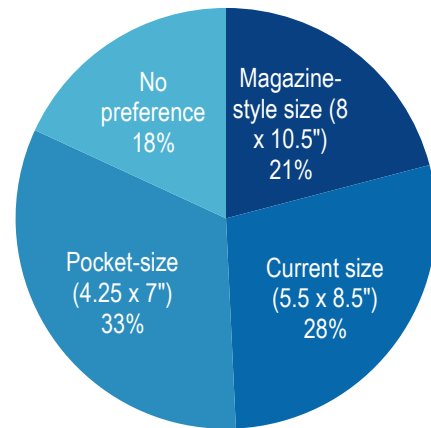


Figure 3. Guide Size Preference

Over 3,000 comments were received, and common suggestions/feedback for the regulations guide are noted below.

- *Highlight/bold/separate regulation changes*
- *Information on fishing access, including family-friendly fishing locations*
- *Waterproof/laminated guide*
- *Full-color fish images*
- *Pocket-size fits great in boat compartments, tackle boxes, etc.*
- *Lifetime License Holders do not receive a mailed copy.*

Overall, survey results suggest that a smaller-size guide with a full-color cover and content would be most favorable. The electronic version of the guide is also an important resource for anglers. Most anglers prefer to see additional content especially information on DEC’s fisheries management programs and fishing techniques. Additionally, helpful information gathered from the write-in portion of the survey combined with other survey results will provide valuable direction for future issues of the NYS Freshwater Fishing Regulations Guide.