

# Responsive Management Report



Spring 2002

*“Excellent companies are better listeners.” —Tom Peters*

## Americans Say Environment Is Important but Are Unsure How to Help:

### *New Study Examines Americans’ Attitudes and Knowledge of the Environment*

Memphis, TN: The majority of Americans are outdoors enthusiasts and participate in activities like bird watching, camping, and hiking; however, the vast majority of Americans say they are not members of nor contribute to organizations that protect and conserve our natural resources. And a large percentage of Americans say they don’t know enough to rate the health of natural resources like forests, wetlands, and grasslands.

These are some of the results of a major study of environmental attitudes and awareness commissioned by Ducks Unlimited, the world’s leader in wetland conservation, supported by sportsmen and other outdoor enthusiasts. The study was conducted by Responsive Management. The study’s results indicate strong interest in wildlife and the outdoors, with 76% of Americans reporting a medium to high interest in wildlife. More than half of the individuals polled said they had participated in wildlife watching in the past year, and 51% said they had



*Art Courtesy of Todd Telander*

visited a state or national park. About one-third of respondents said they went hiking, camping, biking, boating or fishing.

Many Americans consider it important to conserve natural resources like wetlands. For example, 64% of respondents said it was very important to protect and conserve wetlands, while 27% said it was somewhat important. And 46% said they believed there were

too few wetlands in North America. On the other hand, 63% of the respondents could not name a single non-governmental organization that helps conserve wildlife and natural resources.

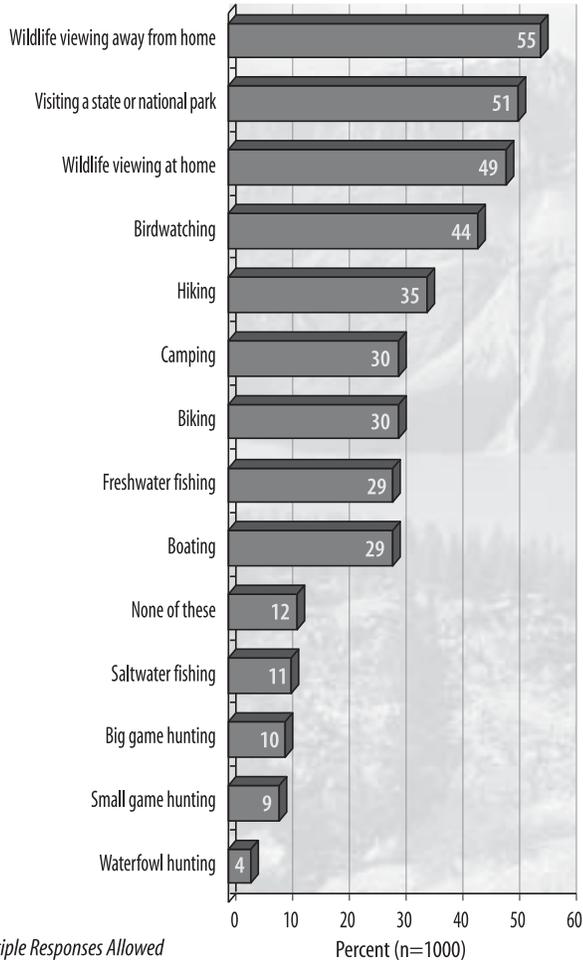
Americans are especially concerned about endangered species and say that this concern would increase their motivation to protect natural resources if they saw a connection between the vanishing resource and threats to wildlife. For example, 80% of those polled said they would be more likely to support waterfowl and wetlands conservation efforts if they knew that some endangered species are dependent on wetlands.

Similarly, interest in wetland protection grew when respondents saw a connection between wetlands and their ability to reduce water pollution, with 81% saying they would be more likely to support waterfowl and wetland conservation efforts if they knew wetlands help reduce pollution by purifying water.

*Survey highlights are on page 2.*

# Ducks Unlimited/Responsive Management Opinion Poll

## Americans' Participation in Outdoor Activities



## Methodology

The survey was conducted by Responsive Management of Harrisonburg, VA. Results are based on a random sample of 1,000 adult Americans (18 years and older) with a sampling error of +/- 3%.

## Awareness of and Membership in Conservation Groups

✓82% said that within the last 2 years, they were not members, nor had donated to, any organizations dedicated to the protection or conservation of wildlife

✓63% said they could not identify a non-governmental organization that helps conserve wildlife and natural resources

✓57% said they could not identify a non-governmental group that protects the environment

## Priorities

✓46% said there are too few wetlands in North America, while 26% said there is the right amount

✓64% said it is very important to protect and conserve wetlands while 27% said it was somewhat important

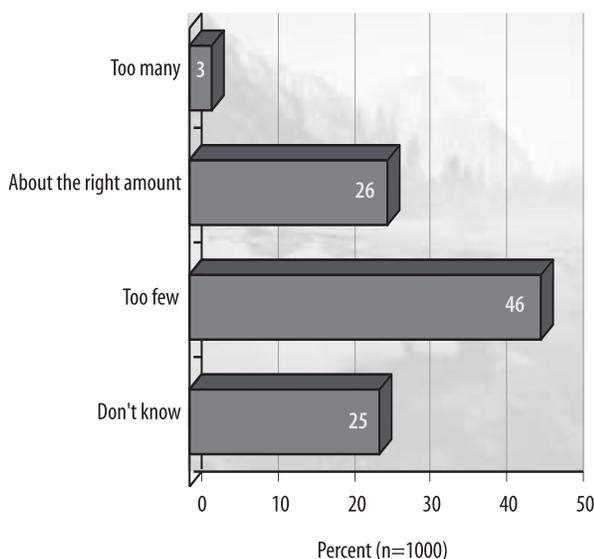
✓80% said they would be more likely to support waterfowl and wetland conservation if they knew that some endangered species were dependent on wetlands

✓81% said they would be more likely to support waterfowl and wetland conservation efforts if they knew wetlands help reduce pollution by purifying water

✓27% said they don't know enough to rate the health of North America's wetlands

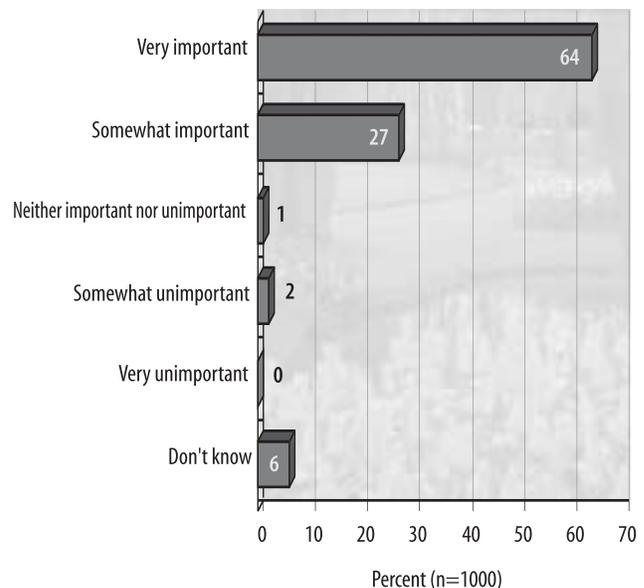
## Number of Wetlands

In your opinion, how would you rate the number of North America's wetlands? Would you say there are too many, about the right amount or too few wetlands in North America? (nationwide)



## Protection Importance

Do you think it is important or unimportant to protect and conserve wetlands? (nationwide)



# About Responsive Management

**R**esponsive Management is a nationally recognized public opinion and attitude survey research firm specializing in natural resource and outdoor recreation issues. Our mission is to assist natural resource and outdoor recreation agencies and organizations better understand and work with their constituents and the public.

Utilizing our in-house full-service computer-assisted telephone and mail survey center with 40 professional interviewers, we have conducted more than 500 telephone surveys, mail surveys and focus groups, as well as numerous marketing and communications plans and needs assessments.

Clients include most of the federal natural resource and state fish and wildlife agencies, many state departments of natural resources, environmental protection agencies, state park, tourism and conservation departments, and most of the major conservation and sportsmen's organizations.

Responsive Management also collects attitude and opinion data through telephone and mail surveys as well as personal interviews for many of the nation's top universities, including the University of Southern California, Virginia Tech, Penn State, Colorado State University, Auburn University, Texas Tech University, Michigan State University, the University of Florida, West Virginia University, and others.

Among the wide range of work we have completed during the past 12 years are studies on how the gen-

eral population values natural resources and outdoor recreation, and their opinions on and attitudes toward an array of natural resource-related issues. We have conducted dozens of studies of hunters, anglers, wildlife viewers, boaters, landowners, park visitors, historic site visitors, hikers, birdwatchers, campers and rock climbers.

We have conducted studies on animal rights and animal welfare, endangered species, waterfowl and wetlands, and the reintroduction of large predators such as wolves, grizzly bears, and the Florida panther.

We have assisted in numerous natural resource ballot initiatives and referenda and helped agencies and organizations find alternative funding and increase their memberships and donations. We have conducted major agency and programmatic needs assessments and helped natural resource agencies and organizations develop more effective programs based upon a solid foundation of fact.

We have developed Web sites for natural resource organizations. We have conducted training workshops on the human dimension of natural resources and presented numerous studies each year, including numerous keynote speeches at major natural resource and outdoor recreation conferences and meetings.

Responsive Management has conducted research on public attitudes toward natural resources and outdoor recreation in almost every state in the United States. We have also conducted natural resource and outdoor recreation studies in

Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Japan. We routinely conduct surveys in Spanish and have also conducted surveys and focus groups in Chinese, Korean, Japanese and Vietnamese. We have also conducted numerous natural resource and outdoor recreation studies with specific target audiences, including Hispanics, African-Americans, Asians, women, children, senior citizens, urban, suburban and rural residents, large landowners and farmers.

Responsive Management's research has been featured in most of the nation's major media including CNN's *Crossfire*, *The Washington Post*, *The Washington Times*, *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and on the front page of *USA Today*.

## **RM Conducts:**

- Telephone surveys
- Mail surveys
- Personal interviews
- Park/Outdoor recreation intercepts
- Web-based surveys
- Focus groups
- Needs assessments
- Literature reviews
- Data collection for researchers and universities

## **RM Develops:**

- Marketing plans
- Communication plans
- Outreach plans
- Business plans
- Program evaluations
- Policy analyses
- Public relation plans

# Responsive Management

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## RESPONSIVE MANAGEMENT'S RECENT RESEARCH REPORTS AVAILABLE

The following Responsive Management reports are currently available electronically in Adobe portable document file (.pdf) format and will be e-mailed free of charge. Contact Mark Damian Duda or Alison Lanier at mdduda@rica.net for a copy of the report(s).

•**Texas Parks and Wildlife for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.** Responsive Management recently completed the largest and most comprehensive human dimensions of wildlife, parks and fisheries project ever undertaken in Texas. The project consisted of 13 focus groups and a series of separate telephone surveys of 1) the general population, 2) day park users, 3) overnight park users, 4) outdoor recreation enthusiasts, 5) large landowners (owners of 640 or more acres), 6) boaters, 7) hunters, 8) freshwater anglers, and 9) saltwater anglers. These studies were conducted on behalf of Texas Tech University as

part of a major planning effort for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

•**Public Attitudes Toward Grizzly Bear Management in Wyoming.** Telephone survey of Wyoming residents concerning their attitudes toward grizzly bears.

•**Evaluation of "Georgia Outdoors" Public Television Program.** Telephone survey on awareness and viewership of the Georgia Outdoors program.

•**Boating Trends in the United States.** Boating trends projections (each state and nationwide) through 2015, including numbered boats, motor boating participants, boater trips and boater days.

•**Youth Attitudes Toward Aquatic Resources and Fishing Participation in South Carolina.** An in-depth study of South Carolina youths' (ages 8 – 18) participation in fishing and other outdoor-related

activities. Youth knowledge levels and attitudes toward aquatic and natural resources are also assessed.

•**Hunters' and Anglers' Attitudes Toward Boating Safety, the Use of Personal Flotation Devices, and Various Messages that Communicate the Benefits of Wearing Personal Flotation Devices.** Each year more than 800 boaters die in boating-related accidents. A large percentage (almost 30%) of these fatalities are sportsmen – anglers and hunters. This study takes an in-depth look at sportsmen's attitudes toward boating safety and the messages that best communicate boating-related safety, especially the use of personal flotation devices.

•**Attitudes Toward and Awareness of Trapping Issues in Connecticut, Indiana and Wisconsin.** Focus groups and telephone surveys of adult residents on trapping and wildlife management.