

RBFF-GA New Angler Retention Pilot Program

**Prepared for the Recreational Boating & Fishing
Foundation**

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FISH AND WILDLIFE ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS

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Introduction

In 2015, the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF) partnered with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Division to implement a pilot program to assess the effect of email communication on the retention of new anglers. New anglers, or first-time fishing license buyers, were defined as those who purchased a resident annual fishing license in 2015, but did not purchase any privilege in the four years prior (2011-2014).

All new anglers from January 1 to July 31, 2015 with valid email addresses were selected as the target audience for this retention effort. These were divided into five groups with 10% of the total set aside as a control group (group 1) and the remaining treatment group divided evenly across the remaining four groups (Table 1). All five groups received a 'thank you' email upon license purchase. All of the treatment groups received email reminders the following year to renew their license. Two of the groups received additional emails with four monthly newsletters containing fishing-specific content and a follow-up survey. Additionally, the renewal notices included a discount promotion for early renewal for two of the groups while it was not mentioned for the other two treatment groups. The \$2.75 transaction fee was waived if the license was renewed before it expired.

Table 1: Communications Received by Treatment and Control Groups.

Communication	Group				
	1	2	3	4	5
'Thank You' upon purchase	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Newsletters and follow-up survey	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES
Renewal reminders	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES
Discount (promoted in renewal notice)	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES

Four renewal reminder emails were sent based on the license expiration date of each angler as follows:

1. 30 days before license expired
2. 1 week before license expired
3. 1 day before license expired
4. 30 days after license expired

The following results section compares renewal rates and days lapsed before renewal of the treatment groups in comparison to the control group. It also provides the additional effects of the newsletter emails and the discount promotion in the renewal notices.

The final analysis was conducted using sales through September 8. Note that anglers whose licenses expired in June or July had less time to renew before the cutoff date for the analysis

than those in earlier months. Anglers whose licenses expired after July 25 had less than two weeks to renew after the last reminder before the analysis cutoff date.

Results

All four of the treatment groups have shown significant increases in renewal rates compared to the control group (Table 2 and Figure 1).

- Overall, the email reminders generated an increase of 4.7% in the renewal rate compared to the control group, which translates into an additional 1,448 renewals.
- The groups whose reminder included the discount promotion for early renewal had statistically significant greater renewal rates compared the groups that did not receive the promotion for the discount.
- Groups that received emails with newsletters had slightly lower renewal rates compared to the groups not receiving these emails. However, overall the difference in renewal rates was not statistically significant.
- Besides increased renewal rates, anglers who received the reminders had fewer days between expiration and renewal compared to anglers in the control group who renewed their license. Renewing anglers in the treatment groups lapsed for an average of only 18.8 days compared to 30.5 days before renewal for anglers in the control group.

Table 2: Treatment Groups vs. Control Group Renewal Rates.

Group	Description	#	Renewals	Renewal Rate	% Lift	Increased Renewals	Average days lapsed before renewal
1	Control (no contact)	3,430	658	19.2%			30.5
2	Reminders	7,737	1,852	23.9%	4.8%	368	20.1
3	Reminders w/discount	7,719	1,907	24.7%	5.5%	426	16.5
4	Newsletters + reminders	7,731	1,740	22.5%	3.3%	257	20.6
5	Newsletters + reminders w/discount	7,734	1,881	24.3%	5.1%	397	18.1
Total Treatment Group (2-5)		30,921	7,380	23.9%	4.7%	1,448	18.8

Figure 1: Renewal Rates of Treatment Groups vs. Control Group.

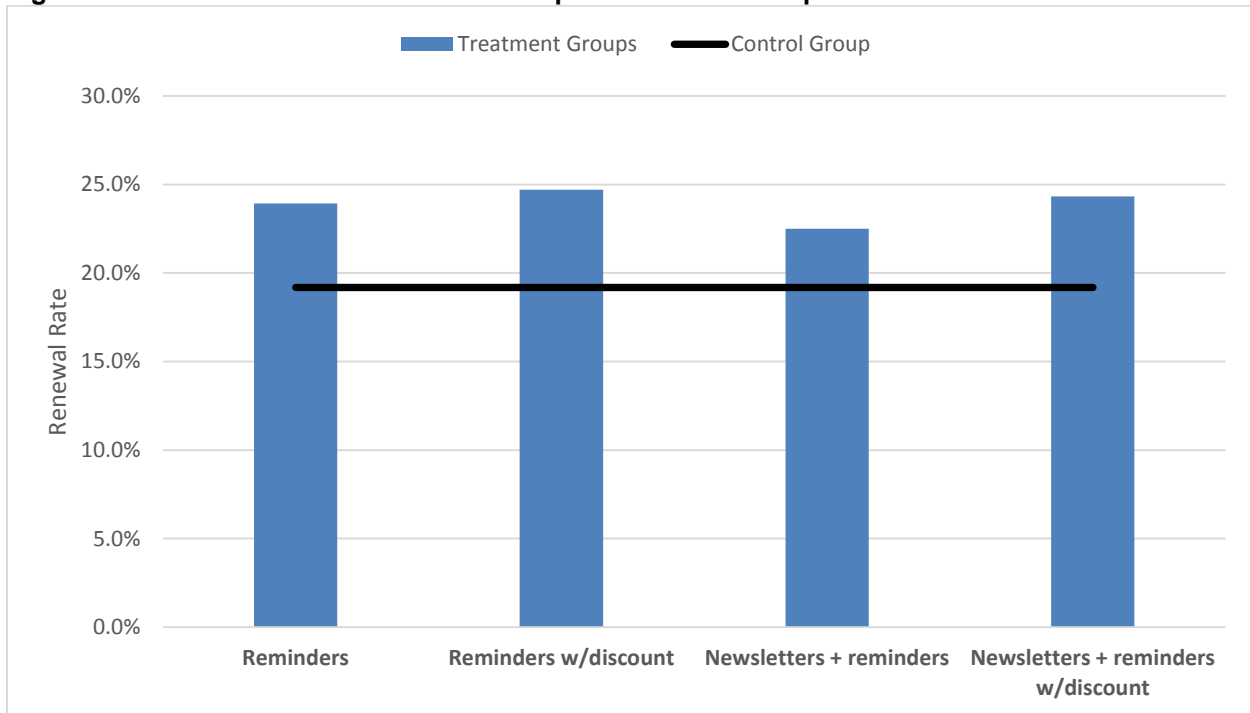


Table 3 shows the revenue effects of the retention program.

- On average, renewing anglers in the treatment group spent an average of \$12.49 on licenses. Applying this to the increase in renewals from Table 2, the email retention program generated an additional \$18,091 compared to what Georgia would have received without the reminders.
- The control group spent almost a \$1.50 more per angler than the treatment groups. Perhaps this is a sign that anglers in the control group who renewed tended to be more avid since they renewed without any reminders to do so.

Table 3: Revenue Effects of Retention Efforts.

Group	Description	Total License Revenue	Revenue Per Renewal	Lift in Revenue
1	Control (no contact)	\$9,182.50	\$13.96	
2	Reminders	\$24,371.00	\$13.16	\$4,839.45
3	Reminders w/discount	\$23,273.50	\$12.20	\$5,201.60
4	Newsletters + reminders	\$21,256.50	\$12.22	\$3,138.51
5	Newsletters + reminders w/discount	\$23,291.50	\$12.38	\$4,920.00
Total Treatment Group (2-5)		\$92,192.50	\$12.49	\$18,091.42

Renewals by Month of Expiration

Table 4 and Figure 2 compare renewal rates of the treatment groups to that of the control group by the month that an angler's license expired.

- The reminders produced statistically significant increases in renewal rates in every monthly cohort of anglers except for those whose license expired in March.
- Renewal reminders had the greatest impact on anglers whose licenses expired in January or February, however these months contained lower numbers of new anglers.
- Renewal rates were lower for later months, at least in part because these anglers had less time to renew before the cutoff date for the analysis. But, the reminders produced a strong increase in renewals in these later months, with almost two-thirds of the total increase in renewals (904) coming from anglers whose licenses expired in May through July.

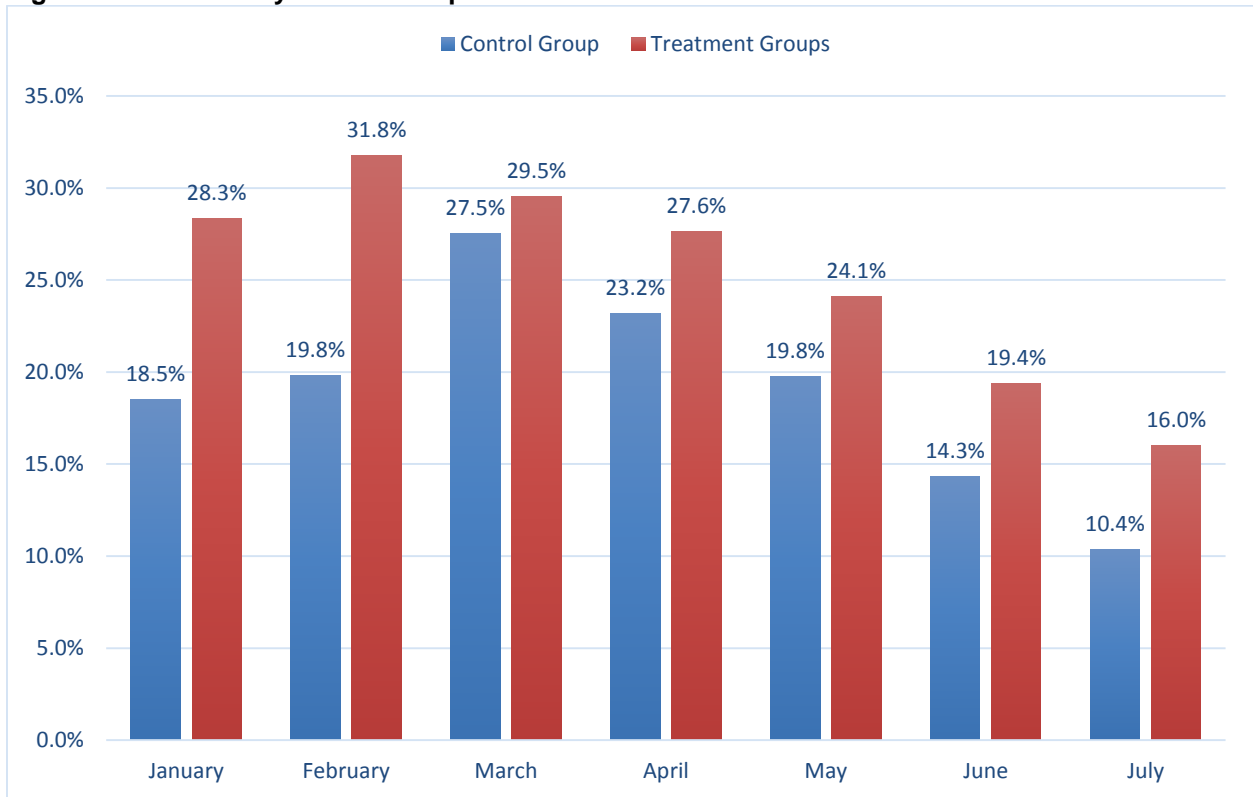
Table 4: Overall Results by Month.

Expiration Month	Control Group			Treatment Groups			% Difference	Additional Renewals
	#	Renewals	Renewal Rate	#	Renewals	Renewal Rate		
January	81	15	18.5%	759	215	28.3%	9.8%	74
February	101	20	19.8%	954	303	31.8%	12.0%	114
March*	472	130	27.5%	4,265	1,260	29.5%	2.0%	85
April	747	173	23.2%	6,443	1,780	27.6%	4.5%	288
May	901	178	19.8%	8,303	2,002	24.1%	4.4%	362
June	607	87	14.3%	5,521	1,070	19.4%	5.0%	279
July	520	54	10.4%	4,670	749	16.0%	5.7%	264
Total**	3,430	658	19.2%	30,921	7,380	23.9%	4.7%	1,448

* Increased renewal rate for March was not statistically significant.

** Total includes 6 anglers in the treatment groups and 1 in the control group whose licenses expired before January 2016

Figure 2: Renewals by Month of Expiration.



Discount

Table 5 and Figure 3 compare renewal rates of new anglers whose reminders included the discount vs. those who did not receive the discount promotion.

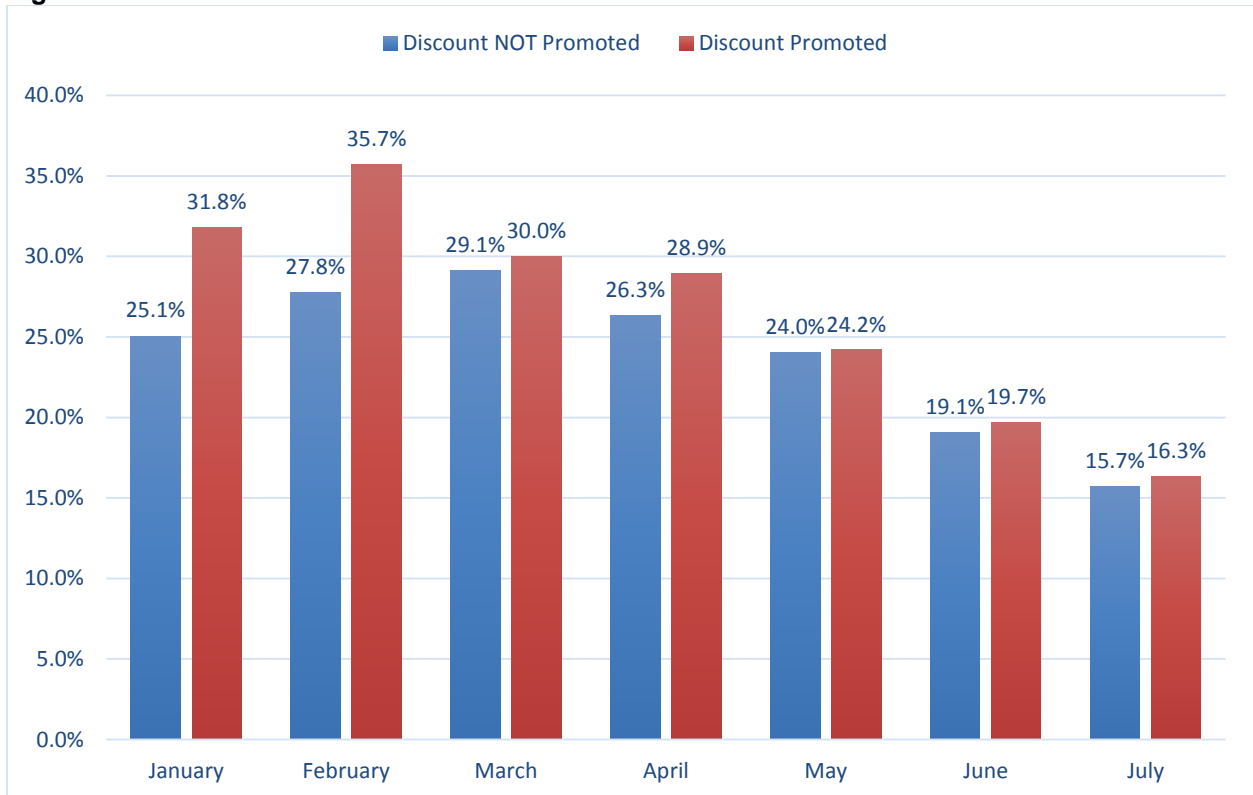
- Overall, reminders promoting the discount increased the renewal rate by 1.3% or by an additional 198 renewals compared to if the discount was not mentioned.
- The discount promotion had the most effect on those anglers whose licenses expired in January or February, producing 6.7% and 7.9% greater renewal rates in those months.
- Renewal rates were the lowest for anglers whose licenses expired in June and July, at least in part because they had less time to renew before the cutoff date of the analysis.

Table 5: Discount vs. No Discount Promotion.

Expiration Month	Discount NOT Promoted			Discount Promoted			% Difference	Additional Renewals
	#	Renewals	Renewal Rate	#	Renewals	Renewal Rate		
January	391	98	25.1%	368	117	31.8%	6.7%	25
February	475	132	27.8%	479	171	35.7%	7.9%	38
March	2,150	626	29.1%	2,115	634	30.0%	0.9%	18
April	3,211	845	26.3%	3,232	935	28.9%	2.6%	84
May	4,149	997	24.0%	4,154	1,005	24.2%	0.2%	7
June	2,765	528	19.1%	2,756	542	19.7%	0.6%	16
July	2,324	366	15.7%	2,346	383	16.3%	0.6%	14
Total	15,468	3,592	23.2%	15,453	3,788	24.5%	1.3%	199

* Totals include 6 anglers whose licenses expired before January 2016.

Figure 3: Renewal Rates of Discount vs. No Discount Promotion.



Newsletters

Table 6 and Figure 4 compare renewal rates of those anglers who additionally received newsletters with fishing-specific content during 2015 vs. those that only received the reminder emails around the time their license was expiring.

- Except for anglers whose license expired in January and July, anglers who received the newsletters had lower renewal rates compared to those who did not receive the newsletter emails.
- Overall, the groups receiving newsletters had a slightly lower (-0.9%) renewal rate compared to the groups not receiving the newsletters. However, this is not statistically significant. In other words, the newsletters did not appear to have a measurable effect on subsequent renewal rates.

Table 6: Newsletters with Reminders vs. Reminders Only.

Expiration Month	Did NOT Receive Newsletters			Received Newsletters			% Difference*	Additional Renewals
	#	Renewals	Renewal Rate	#	Renewals	Renewal Rate		
January	374	99	26.5%	385	116	30.1%	3.7%	14
February	469	153	32.6%	485	150	30.9%	-1.7%	-8
March	2,140	650	30.4%	2,125	610	28.7%	-1.7%	-35
April	3,197	906	28.3%	3,246	874	26.9%	-1.4%	-46
May	4,179	1,036	24.8%	4,124	966	23.4%	-1.4%	-56
June	2,762	543	19.7%	2,759	527	19.1%	-0.6%	-15
July	2,333	371	15.9%	2,337	378	16.2%	0.3%	6
Total**	15,456	3,759	24.3%	15,465	3,621	23.4%	-0.9%	-140

* Note that difference in renewal rates between anglers receiving newsletters and those not receiving newsletters is not statistically significant.

** Totals include 6 anglers whose licenses expired before January 2016.

Figure 4: Renewal Rates of Groups Receiving Newsletters vs. No Newsletters.

