

Determining Standards of Quality for Pay Fishing Establishments in West Virginia

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Introduction

Pay fishing involves paying a fee for the privilege of fishing a body of water where fish populations are enhanced by stocking fish. There are over 30 pay fishing establishments in West Virginia; they are growing in number and popularity. Fish are often supplied to these establishments by state and regional farms that are structured to cater to the food industry, rather than the recreational pay fishing market. Thus, the size of the fish stocked, and potentially the stocking density, reflect the demand of consumers in an entirely different market.

The purpose of this study was to determine the standards of quality for the pay fishing experience in West Virginia as they relate to type of fish caught, fee structure, and the motives of the angler.

Method

Study sites—three business that utilize various fee structures and offer different fishing opportunities were used as study sites.

- Family Fishing and Camp (e.g., catfish tournaments)
- Whispering Pines (e.g., catfish tournaments)
- Mill Run Farm (e.g., catch-and-keep trout)

Study instruments—mail-back questionnaires and on-site interviews

Sampling—randomly selected customers
•N=220 anglers (65% response rate)



Fig. 1. Family Fishing and Camp



Fig. 3. Mill Run Farm



Fig. 2. Whispering Pines

Results—Rainbow Trout catch-and-keep

Table 1. The four most desired fishing experiences (among 26 items examined) reported by rainbow trout catch-and-keep anglers.

Recreation Experiences	n	Mean*
Take a child fishing	29	6.48**
Spend time with family	29	6.28
Catch fish to eat	28	6.25**
Experience fishing excitement	29	6.17

*Means reflect responses based on a scale from 1 (very undesirable) to 7 (very desirable).

**These rainbow trout catch-and-keep mean scores are significantly greater than channel catfish tournament mean scores. (t-test, 2-tail, p<.05)

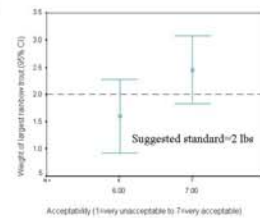


Fig. 4. Weight (lbs.) of largest rainbow trout by acceptability rating.

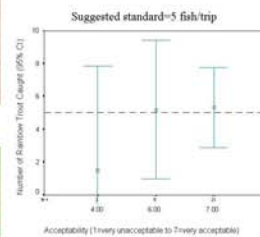


Fig. 5. Number of rainbow trout caught per trip by acceptability rating.

Results—Channel Catfish tournament

Table 2. The six most desired fishing experiences (among 26 items examined) reported by channel catfish tournament anglers.

Recreation Experiences	n	Mean*
Escape from pressures	80	6.44**
Recover from everyday stress	81	6.32**
Enjoy natural scenery	82	6.28
Be with people who share similar values	81	6.23**
Catch large fish	81	6.19**
Tell others about visit	80	6.16**

*Means reflect responses based on a scale from 1 (very undesirable) to 7 (very desirable).

**These channel catfish tournament mean scores are significantly greater than rainbow trout catch-and-keep mean scores (t-test, 2-tail, p<.05).

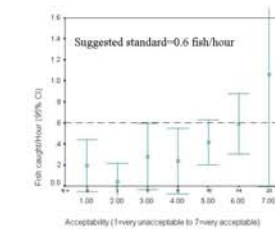


Fig. 6. Weight (lbs.) of largest rainbow trout by acceptability rating.



Fig. 7. Average pounds per channel catfish by acceptability rating.

Discussion

Rainbow trout catch-and-keep anglers seek opportunities to take children fishing, spend time with family, catch fish for eating, and experience excitement.

Operational recommendations for this type of business include:

- stocking largest rainbow trout at a weight of 2 pounds and
- maintaining a population of rainbow trout at a density conducive to catching 5 fish per visit.



Tournament channel catfish anglers seek opportunities to catch large fish, tell others about their visit, be with people who share similar values, and escape from pressures and everyday stress.

Operational recommendations for this type of business include:

- stocking average channel catfish at a weight of 6 pounds;
- maintaining a population of channel catfish at a density conducive to catching 0.6 fish per hour (about 1 fish per 2 hours fishing); and
- maintaining a natural looking environment.

