

September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018

MEMO

TO: Tony Wilkinson, Director, Division of Fish and Wildlife  
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

CC: Michael Schiavone, Certified Wildlife Biologist

FROM: America's Wildlife Values Research Team  
Colorado State University

RE: Fish and Wildlife Agency Culture Survey Data for NYS Division of Fish and Wildlife

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As part of the America's Wildlife Values Project, NYS Division of Fish and Wildlife participated in a survey of agency culture that measured employees' perspectives on fish and wildlife management and the culture of your agency. In particular, the survey looked at:

- Characteristics of your fish and wildlife agency
- Management priorities of your agency
- Processes for public & stakeholder inclusion in decision-making
- Employee perspectives on management and culture
- Wildlife Value Orientations of employees

Data were gathered in New York State Division of Fish and Wildlife using an online survey in May and June of 2018. All permanent full-time employees were offered the opportunity to participate. In total, **271** usable responses were obtained, for a response rate of **65%**.

Attached are descriptive statistics outlining responses to each of the items on this survey and a list of complete comments provided by respondents in response to open-ended survey questions. In addition to this report, you will also receive a copy of the dataset used to run these analyses. You will notice that many demographic variables have been removed from this dataset to protect the anonymity of respondents, as promised in the original solicitation email and as required of us by law. Contact us if you have any questions.

A report on our findings comparing culture across state fish and wildlife agencies and linking to public data through the America's Wildlife Values study will be sent to you separately in the fall.

We thank you for your help in this important research. If you have any questions regarding this state report, please contact Leeann Sullivan, the project's research assistant, at [leeann.sullivan@colostate.edu](mailto:leeann.sullivan@colostate.edu).

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**Table 1: Employees' views on agency characteristics**

	<i>Very Uncharacteristic of my Agency</i>	<i>Somewhat Uncharacteristic of my Agency</i>	<i>Neither</i>	<i>Somewhat Characteristic of my Agency</i>	<i>Very Characteristic of my Agency</i>
Protectors of the state's natural resources	0.7%	3.0%	1.5%	31.4%	63.5%
Experts in natural resource management	0.4%	1.1%	5.2%	39.3%	54.1%
Enforcers of relevant natural resource law	1.5%	3.7%	3.0%	36.2%	55.7%
Innovative in its approach to management	7.4%	14.4%	23.0%	47.8%	7.4%
Adaptable in the face of change	8.5%	23.7%	19.6%	40.0%	8.1%
Focused on promoting stewardship	1.9%	9.0%	12.3%	50.0%	26.9%
Compassionate towards fish and wildlife	2.2%	3.0%	11.5%	40.5%	42.8%
Willing to take risks	22.4%	29.9%	23.1%	20.1%	4.5%
Forward-looking	11.5%	24.8%	15.6%	38.5%	9.6%
Accountable for its actions	6.0%	11.2%	17.5%	42.5%	22.8%
Transparent and open	7.0%	14.8%	17.0%	44.1%	17.0%
Tolerant of different view points	5.9%	13.7%	19.3%	45.6%	15.6%
Equitable in its approach to management	4.8%	11.2%	20.1%	49.8%	14.1%
Focused on fair process	4.9%	10.4%	17.2%	47.4%	20.1%
Stands for integrity	5.6%	7.4%	17.0%	45.9%	24.1%
Takes advantage of new opportunities	8.1%	21.5%	24.4%	35.2%	10.7%

Question Text: *Below is a list of phrases that may or may not describe your agency. We want to know how well you think each of these phrases characterizes your agency. Please indicate the extent to which you believe each phrase is uncharacteristic or characteristic of your agency by selecting one response for each.*

**Table 2: Employees’ views on management priorities of the agency**

*If forced to choose, my agency would place greater priority on...*

Protecting wildlife habitat	54.2%	Providing recreational opportunities	45.8%
Meeting the needs of the resources we manage	40.3%	Meeting the needs of the public	59.7%
Protecting endangered species	53.8%	Protecting game species	46.2%
Long-term planning	34.0%	Day-to-day management	66.0%
Efficiency	31.3%	Legitimacy	68.7%
Carnivores	14.4%	Ungulates	85.6%
Hunter recruitment and retention	50.4%	Reaching a diversity of interests	49.6%
Process	44.5%	Outcome	55.5%
Doing what is best	48.7%	Doing what is fair	51.3%
Tradition	75.7%	Innovation	24.3%
The present	68.7%	The future	31.3%
Science	27.9%	Politics	72.1%
Remaining true to our roots	48.7%	Adapting to changing social conditions	51.3%
Educating the public on what is right	45.8%	Listening to public concern	54.2%
Traditional stakeholders	48.9%	All members of the public	51.1%
Being proactive	26.8%	Being reactive	73.2%

Question Text: *Managers are often forced to choose between competing demands for fish and wildlife management. We are interested in knowing, in general, how you view the priorities of your agency. Assuming a hypothetical situation in which only one management option was possible, we want to know how you believe your agency would prioritize different goals and objectives. Please respond to the following series of questions by picking one of the two response options for each comparison.*

**Table 3: Employees’ perspectives on agency culture**

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Slightly Disagree</i>	<i>Neither</i>	<i>Slightly Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
I usually agree with how my agency prioritizes goals and objectives.	7.2%	20.5%	17.0%	45.1%	10.2%
With regard to the management of fish and wildlife, I believe my agency shares similar values to me.	5.3%	14.1%	13.0%	44.7%	22.9%
I believe my agency should focus more on adapting to change.	0.4%	5.7%	23.8%	40.2%	29.9%
In this agency, if someone acts in an inappropriate way, others will strongly disapprove.	8.0%	17.9%	20.5%	35.7%	17.9%
I believe my agency should focus more on being transparent and accountable to the general public.	2.3%	15.2%	32.3%	31.2%	19.0%
My employment at this agency is central to how I identify myself as a person.	6.1%	10.2%	22.0%	39.8%	22.0%
It is important to me that I fit in with the culture of my agency.	11.0%	20.5%	30.0%	31.9%	6.5%
I would like to be seen as a model agency employee.	3.8%	6.5%	20.9%	33.8%	35.0%
In this agency, there are clear expectations for how people should act in most situations.	5.7%	18.6%	17.9%	38.0%	19.8%
I feel a personal commitment to uphold the values of my agency.	2.7%	3.0%	13.6%	40.5%	40.2%
My agency provides adequate opportunities for employees to play a role in decision-making.	16.3%	26.2%	16.7%	33.8%	6.8%
People agree upon what behaviors are appropriate or inappropriate in most situations in this agency.	2.7%	17.6%	27.1%	42.4%	10.3%
The views of the public in my state are changing with regards to fish and wildlife management.	1.5%	7.6%	23.1%	45.8%	22.0%

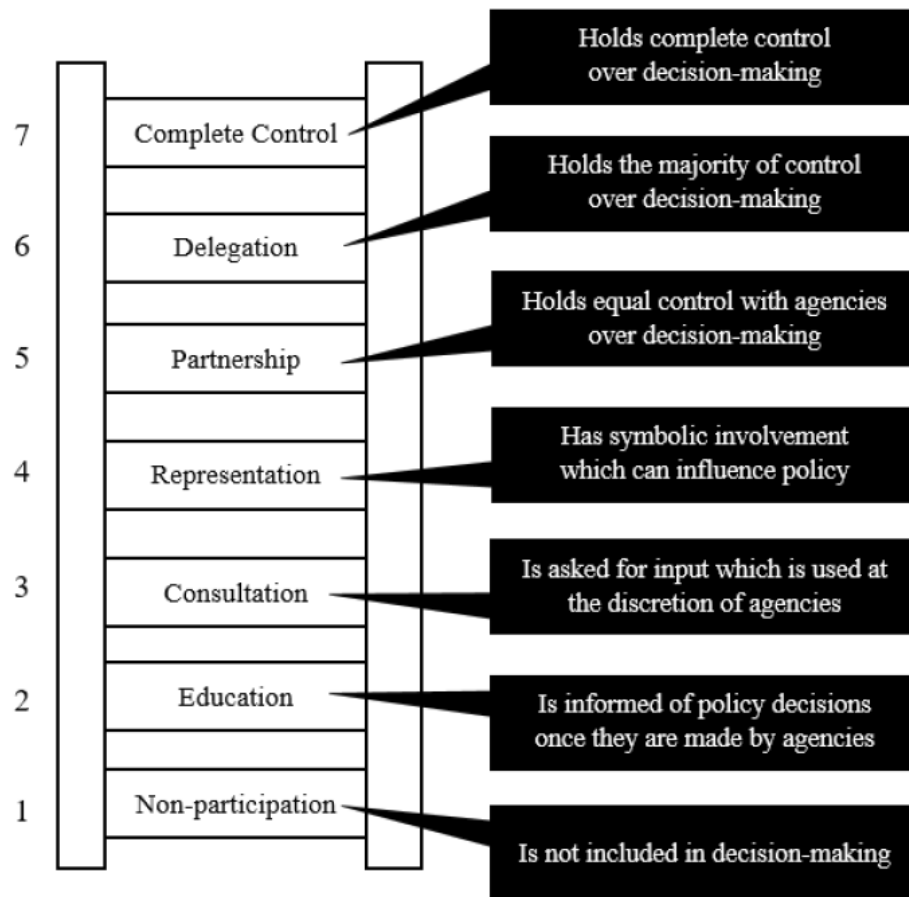
Question Text: *We want to know about the ways in which you personally identify with your agency. Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements by selecting one response for each.*

**Table 4: Employees' views on public and stakeholder participation**

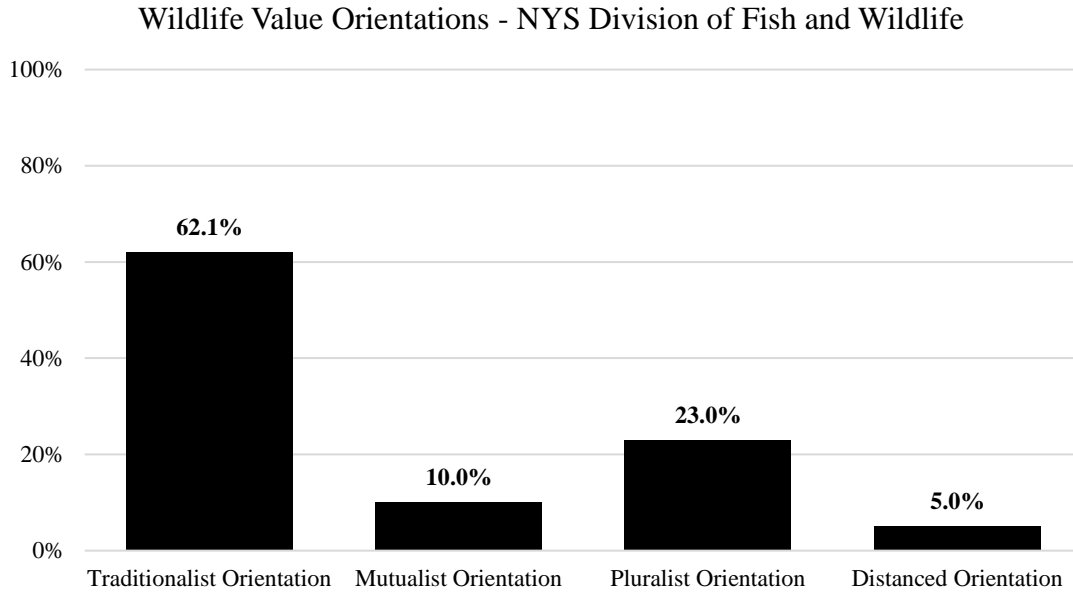
At what level do you believe your agency...	Non-participation	Education	Consultation	Representation	Partnership	Delegation	Complete Control
... <b>currently</b> includes the <b>general public</b> in decision-making?	0.4%	10.7%	41.4%	27.2%	11.5%	6.9%	1.9%
... <b>currently</b> includes <b>paying stakeholders</b> in decision-making?	4.0%	6.3%	21.0%	36.5%	20.6%	8.7%	2.8%
... <b>should</b> include the <b>general public</b> in decision-making?	0.8%	4.3%	35.3%	40.3%	13.6%	5.0%	0.8%
...should include <b>paying stakeholders</b> in decision-making?	5.7%	4.5%	32.0%	38.5%	15.8%	2.8%	0.8%

Question Text: Please indicate your answer to each of the following questions using the numbers listed next to each "rung" on the ladder (image below).

**Public participation in decision-making has been conceptualized by researchers as a "ladder" with the bottom rungs representing minimal public involvement and the upper rungs representing significant opportunities for the public to shape decision-making, as described below.**



**Table 5: Wildlife value orientation types among employees**



**Table 6: Employees’ views on the future of global biodiversity**

<i>Very Pessimistic</i>	<i>Moderately Pessimistic</i>	<i>Slightly Pessimistic</i>	<i>Neither</i>	<i>Slightly Optimistic</i>	<i>Moderately Optimistic</i>	<i>Very Optimistic</i>
13.2%	26.0%	22.1%	7.4%	18.2%	12.4%	0.8%

Question Text: *Research suggests that while some people in the conservation profession feel optimistic about the future of biodiversity, others may feel pessimistic. How would you describe your own views on the future of global biodiversity?*

**Table 7: Participation in non-work-related fish and wildlife activities.**

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Have you ever participated in recreational fishing?	96.9%	3.1%
Did you participate in recreational fishing in the past 12 months?	69.0%	31.0%
Have you ever participated in recreational hunting?	75.7%	24.3%
Did you participate in recreational hunting in the past 12 months?	59.3%	40.7%
Have you ever taken a recreational trip for which fish or wildlife viewing was the primary purpose of the trip?	83.1%	16.9%
Did you take any recreational trips in the past 12 months for which fish or wildlife viewing was the primary purpose of the trip?	60.0%	40.0%

Question Text: *We would like to learn about your non-work related fish and wildlife activities. Please select one option for each question below.*

**Table 8: Percent of respondents working in regional offices and central headquarters.**

	<i>Percent in Region</i>		<i>Percent in Region</i>
Regional Office	75.0%	Headquarters	25.0%

Question Text: *Do you work in a regional/field office or in your agency's headquarters? (Select one).*

**Table 9: Percent of respondents working in each division.**

	<i>Percent in Division</i>		<i>Percent in Division</i>
Fisheries	35.2%	Wildlife	48.0%
Parks/Lands/Habitat	8.6%	Other	8.2%

Question Text: *How would you identify the division in which you work? (Select one).*

**Table 10: Years employed in your agency**

	<i>Years in Agency</i>	<i>Years in Current Position</i>
0-1 years	7.4%	12.1%
2-5 years	24.2%	40.6%
6-10 years	11.7%	16.4%
11-20 years	30.9%	25.8%
21-30 years	18.0%	4.7%
30+ years	7.8%	0.4%

Question Text: *a) How many years have you worked for your agency in total?  
b) How many years have you worked in your current position?*

**Table 11: Age demographics in your agency**

<i>Age</i>	<i>Percent of Respondents</i>
20-30	19.8%
31-40	27.8%
41-50	21.4%
51-60	23.4%
61+	7.7%
Average Age	43 years

Question Text: *In what year were you born?*

**Table 12: Gender demographics in your agency**

	<i>Percent of Respondents</i>
Male	66.0%
Female	34.0%

Question Text: *Do you identify as...?*

**Table 13: Education demographics in your agency**

	<i>Percent of Respondents</i>
Less than high school	0.0%
High school diploma or equivalent (e.g., GED)	2.3%
2-year associate's degree or trade school	8.6%
4-year college degree	54.7%
Advanced degree beyond 4-year college degree	34.4%

Question Text: *What is the highest level of education you have completed?*

**Table 14: Racial demographics in your agency**

	<i>Percent of Respondents</i>
White	86.2%
Black or African American	0.4%
Hispanic or Latino	1.5%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.1%
Asian	1.5%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.0%
Other	0.4%

Question Text: *Are you...? (Select one or more categories). Note respondents could select no responses or more than one.*