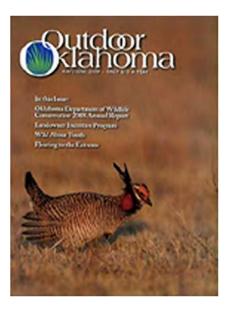
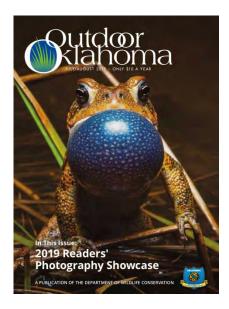
# OUTDOOR OKLAHOMA READERSHIP SURVEY





### 9/10/2019

# Assessing opinions of current magazine subscribers

This document reports on the findings of a mixed-mode internet and mail survey conducted by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) during July-September 2019. This survey was initiated to better understand the impact of one of ODWC's main external communication channels. Subscriber preferences for future content, and satisfaction with current content and format were also assessed.

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## Outdoor Oklahoma Readership Survey

#### ASSESSING OPINIONS OF CURRENT MAGAZINE SUBSCRIBERS

#### INTRODUCTION

During the spring of 2019, the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) initiated a five year strategic plan. The goal of this strategic plan was to provide a roadmap for the future in terms of focus and improvement for the benefit of ODWC. One identified strategy is to improve the quality and effectiveness of external communication. One external communication medium at ODWC is our bi-monthly magazine Outdoor Oklahoma. The implementation team for assessing external communication approached a social sciences researcher at the Department to conduct a survey of current subscribers to assess magazine satisfaction of content, format, and delivery method/timing, as well as several demographic variables to describe our current subscriber population. The last time a survey was conducted of Outdoor Oklahoma readers was in 1997- 22 years ago. A sample of the current subscriber population was randomly selected to receive this survey and give their input.

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to determine magazine subscriber satisfaction and opinions of various facets of the magazine. We also looked at outdoor activities that subscribers participate in and what types of content they may be interested to read in the future.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

- 1. Determine satisfaction of magazine in its current form (format, content, delivery, etc.)
- 2. Determine preferences for future magazine content
- 3. Identify demographics of current subscribers
- 4. Describe how subscribers prefer to receive information from ODWC
- 5. Identify ways to improve the reach and effectiveness of Outdoor Oklahoma Magazine

#### **METHODS**

Surveys are a quantitative research method used frequently by ODWC to obtain user input on current management issues at the department. Outdoor Oklahoma Magazine (hereafter referred to as Outdoor Oklahoma) is a public relations tool to update the general public on the Wildlife Department activities, and the strategic planning team wanted to assess the effectiveness of the magazine. The current number of paying subscribers as of June 2019 was 6,623. A sample of 2,967 subscribers was randomly selected to receive the

Outdoor Oklahoma Readership Survey. We removed any subscriptions that were associated with groups or organizations (i.e. schools, offices, libraries, etc.).

A mixed-mode internet and mail design was employed for this survey to increase response rates. Dillman et al. (2014) suggests when using internet collection and mail collection to use a "push-to-web" methodology. This method offers only internet response first and then after pushing the majority of respondents to answer the survey online, you follow up with a mail survey to obtain more responses. This lowers costs by allowing you to cut down on the amount of full surveys that you print and mail to respondents.

An initial postcard (Appendix A) was sent the first week of July, 2019 with a URL provided for respondents to type into their web browser taking them directly to the first page of the survey. They were asked to enter their survey ID number so that subsequent mailings could remove those who had already responded. After several weeks, a reminder postcard was sent detailing the same instructions to fill out the survey online by entering the web URL. Finally, after these two postcards, a full two page survey was mailed out with an included postage paid envelope. This allowed those who were not able to access the online survey another avenue to send in their responses.

One issue that became apparent was that some respondents were not able to correctly enter the URL into their browser. The phone number for the principal researcher was provided so respondents could call with questions and numerous calls were fielded to help with this issue. The URL was emailed directly to several participants that called-in so that they could fill out the survey. The URL was easily accessed by others. According to survey demographics, *Outdoor Oklahoma* subscribers are on average older than the general population of Oklahoma. Being older, they may be less familiar with entering web addresses. With the inclusion of the option to respond by mail, this issue did not hurt our overall response rates.

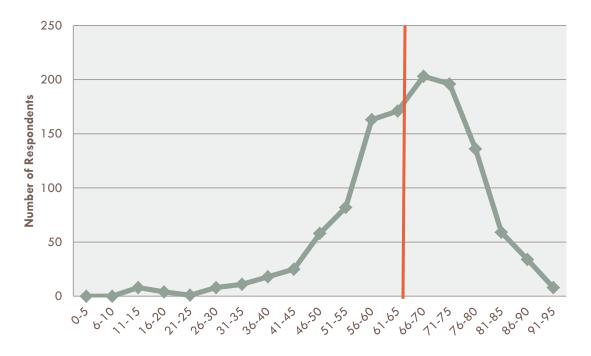
All data were compiled in Survey Monkey. Respondents were taken to a Survey Monkey URL and interns entered mailed survey responses directly into Survey Monkey. The survey was closed to responses on September 30, 2019. Descriptive statistics were employed to describe the overall respondent population, and chi-squared, t-tests and ANOVA were employed to determine significant statistical differences between groups (significance was allotted at the 0.05 level). Demographics were compared to determine the resemblance of this respondent group to the general population of Oklahoma. Comparisons to summary data from the 1997 survey are also reported when applicable.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Respondent Demographics**

The Outdoor Oklahoma magazine survey totaled 1,237 responses. Initially, 2,968 subscribers were invited to complete the survey. The initial mailing achieved 269 online responses. The second postcard received 218 online responses. We sent a final full mailer to 2,481 members of the sample. Seven hundred and fifty responded to the hard copy mailer. Our adjusted sampled population, after removing those we could not possibly have gotten in touch with (deceased, wrong address, etc.) was 2,947. It follows that our adjusted response rate was 42%.

We asked a series of five questions to better describe the population of Outdoor Oklahoma subscribers. The average age of respondents was 65.28 with the minimum age being 12 and the maximum being 95. The median age was 67 (Fig. 1). Comparing to the general population of Oklahoma, only 15.7% are over the age of 65 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). In 1997, the most selected age class was 45-54 putting the most common age about 20 years younger than the current subscriber population.





The overwhelming majority of respondents were male (90.7%; Fig. 2). The current gender breakdown in Oklahoma cites 50.5% female (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). Many subscriptions are sent to both the male and female of a household, so it is possible that the gender breakdown is less stark, but males were the ones self-selected to fill out the survey of the male-female couple. In 1997, 93% of respondents were male. The majority of respondents have

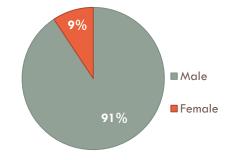
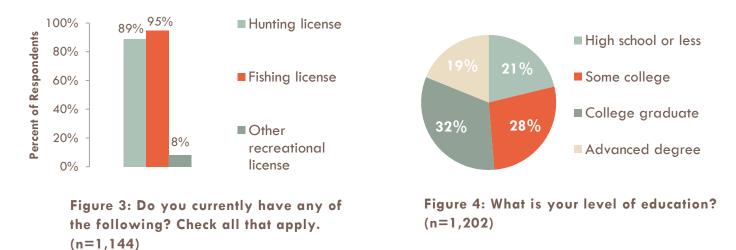


Figure 2: Please select your gender. (n=1,159)

either a hunting (89%) or fishing (95%) license (Fig. 3). Ninety-three people (8%) did not denote an answer for this question. Out of the 93, we do not know if they decided to opt-out of this question or if they do not have any of the licenses (in the future, a 'none of the above' option should be included). For those 25 years of age and over, the census reports Oklahoma state population has 24.8% with a bachelor's degree or higher. Magazine subscribers 25 and over report 51.4% have a bachelor's degree or higher (Fig. 4).



We also compared how respondents describe themselves with the overall population of Oklahoma. Magazine subscribers identify as white much more often than the Oklahoma census estimates (Fig. 5).

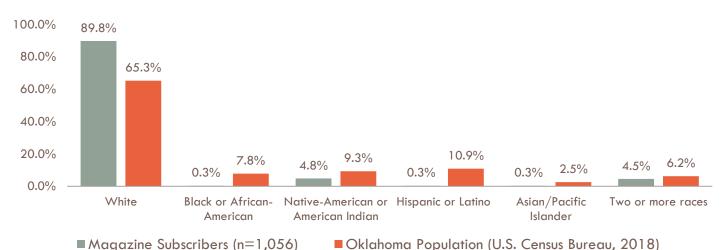


Figure 5: How would you describe yourself? Check all that apply. (Comparison shown between Outdoor Oklahoma subscribers <u>resident to Oklahoma</u> and the general Oklahoma state population.)

Finally, we asked subscribers about the activities that they participated in within the last year. The highest percentages participated in fishing (Fig. 6). Those that selected "other" wrote in shooting, trapping, biking, etc. Similarly in 1997, 82% of magazine subscribers participated in fishing.

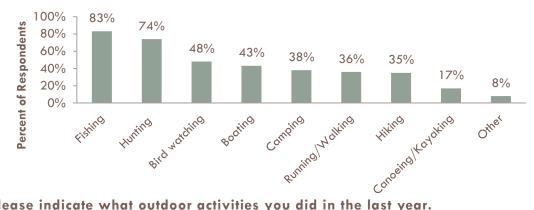


Figure 6: Please indicate what outdoor activities you did in the last year. Check all that apply. (n=1,209)

The spread of Outdoor Oklahoma subscribers also extends beyond the borders of Oklahoma (Map 1).



Map 1: Geographic reach of Outdoor Oklahoma

#### **Subscription Patterns**

Outdoor Oklahoma can either be directly subscribed to or given as a gift subscription. Out of the subscribers that we surveyed, the majority pay for their subscription (Fig. 7). The plurality have been subscribing for over 10 years (Fig. 8).

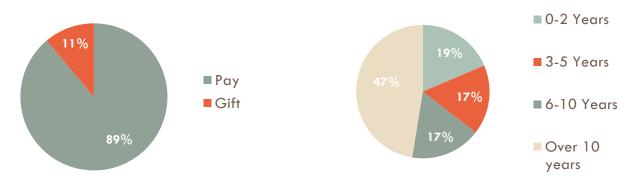


Figure 7: Did you pay for your subscription to Outdoor Oklahoma or is it a gift? (n=1,226) Figure 8: How many years have you been an Outdoor Oklahoma subscriber? (n=1,227) The plurality of respondents selected that 2-3 people look at their magazine (Fig. 9). If we multiply our subscriber numbers by 2.5, this significantly increases the amount of people that interact with the Wildlife Department through our bi-monthly magazine. The average amount of children under the age of 16 that are reading our magazine via the monthly subscriber is 1.804. If we were to reach a younger audience with this magazine, we may increase the number of youths that we reach. Out of the 987 people that share the magazine, 486 (49%) do not share it with youths. There was no significant difference between new subscribers (subscribing 0-10 years) and long-term subscribers (subscribing over 10 years) in the number of people whom they share their magazine with (p=0.19). This number has declined since 1997 with 5.2 being the average amount of people that the main subscriber shared their magazine 22 years ago.

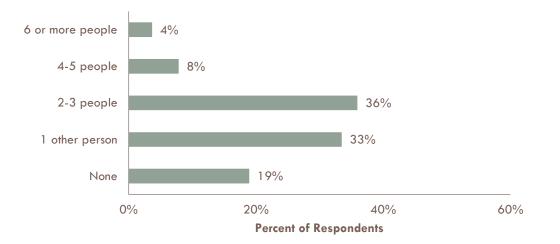
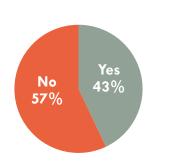


Figure 9: How many people (other than the main subscriber) commonly look at your copy of Outdoor Oklahoma)? (n=1,218)

Forty-three percent of subscribers subscribe to another magazine besides Outdoor Oklahoma (Fig. 10). Of those that receive another magazine, the plurality expressed it ranks about the same (Fig. 11). We asked people to explain their response to how Outdoor Oklahoma compares and many respondents expressed that it is better due to the localized topics and the photography. The most common other magazines that people subscribe to are Field and Stream, American Hunter and Oklahoma Game and Fish.



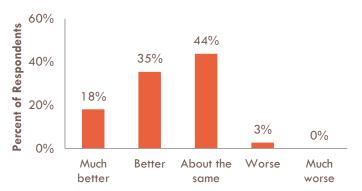
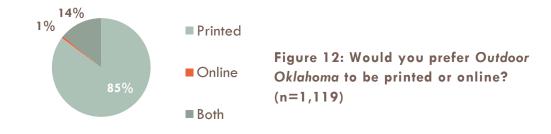


Figure 10: Do you currently subscribe to any other outdoor magazines? (n=1,201)

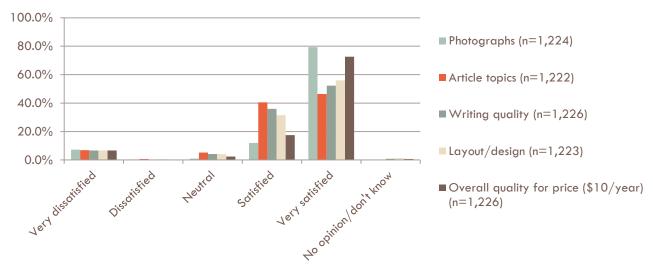


The majority of respondents (81%) are okay or satisfied with the amount of issues in a yearly subscription (6); those who felt it was too few would prefer a monthly magazine. The vast majority said that they would prefer it to be printed over online (Fig. 12). There was a significant difference in age between those that want the magazine printed ( $\overline{X} = 65.8$ ) and those that would be satisfied with an online option ( $\overline{X} = 60.1$ ; p<0.001). We asked the reason for wanting a printed or online option and a common answer was respondents do not like reading things on a computer. Some reasons for not wanting online could be alleviated by explaining the ability to take the magazine with you on a smartphone as well as being able to share articles via the internet. Between new subscribers and long-term subscribers, there was no significant difference between wanting printed, online or both. (p=0.05)



#### **Magazine Content**

In terms of content, we asked how satisfied subscribers are with five aspects of the magazine. Overall, they are very satisfied with all aspects, particularly the photographs and the overall quality for price (Fig. 13). During data entry, it was noticed that although other comments and answers throughout the survey suggested the respondent was satisfied, they selected "very dissatisfied" across all magazine aspects. This was possibly a measurement error with respondents meaning to select "very satisfied" rather than "very dissatisfied" (about 80 respondents selecting "very dissatisfied" in this manner). Data are denoted in the below figure as it was selected by the respondent.





When looking at what areas of the magazine respondents read most often, Watchable Wildlife appears to be the most popular section, while the Panoramas column, Game Bag/letters to ODWC and Off the Beaten Path briefs appear to be slightly less popular (Fig. 14).

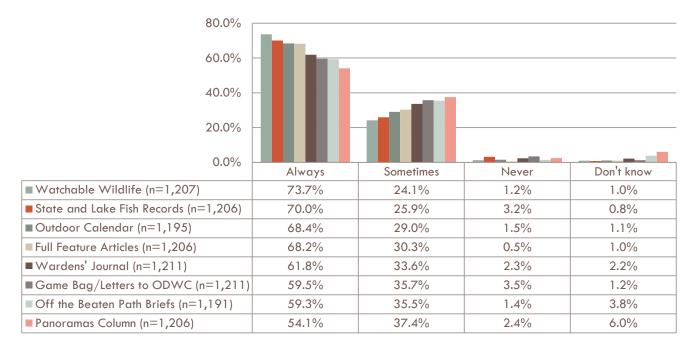


Figure 14: How often do you read the following regular sections of Outdoor Oklahoma?



Figure 15: Which of the following article topics would interest you? Check all that apply. (n=1,229)

Looking at the reading patterns of new subscribers (subscribing 0-10 years) compared to long-term subscribers (over 10 years), there were significant differences in the frequency of reading certain sections of the magazine in all but one section- Outdoor Calendar. In all other sections, long-term subscribers were more likely to select they always read the section compared to newer subscribers. The average age of new subscribers is 61.7 years while long-term subscribers average 69.1 years. Magazine subscribers as a whole would be most interested in articles about fishing (86%), wildlife (84%), hunting (83%), public land (65%), and regulations (62%; Fig. 15).

#### **Outdoor Oklahoma Readership Survey**

Different topics of interest for article topics emerge when we subset the population by different demographics. If we look at newer subscribers (who are younger on average) they differ from long-term subscribers in their interest in boating, hiking, and camping (Fig. 17). Camping and hiking in particular would be non-traditional topics for the magazine by focusing on "non-consumptive" recreational activities. Men and women also have a few varied preferences in content (Fig. 18). Of note is the large difference in women's preference for content on bird watching. Women are also more interested in fishing, wildlife, and hiking. They are much less interested in hunting and regulations.

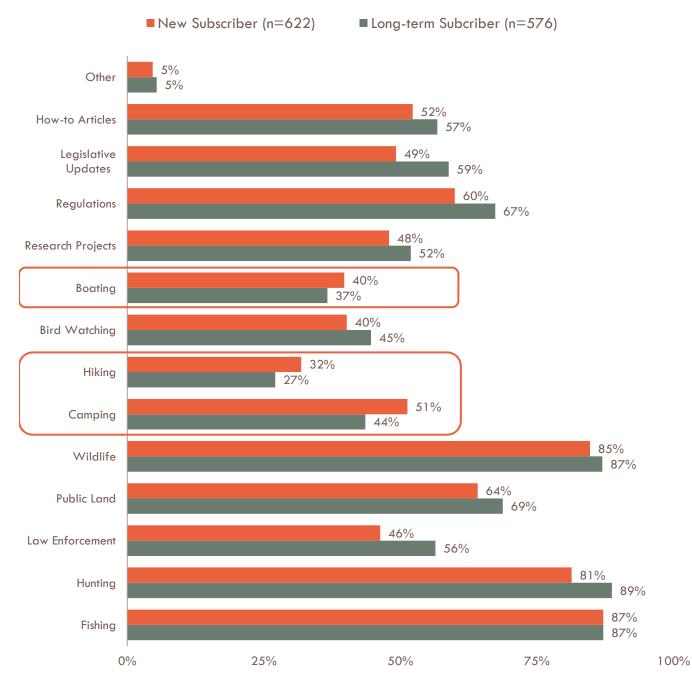


Figure 17: Which of the following article topics would interest you? Check all that apply. (Responses separated by respondent years subscribing to the magazine- New subscriber is 0-10 years, long-term subscriber is over 10 years.) Orange ovals denote differences based on subscription years that gear towards the minority of subscribers.

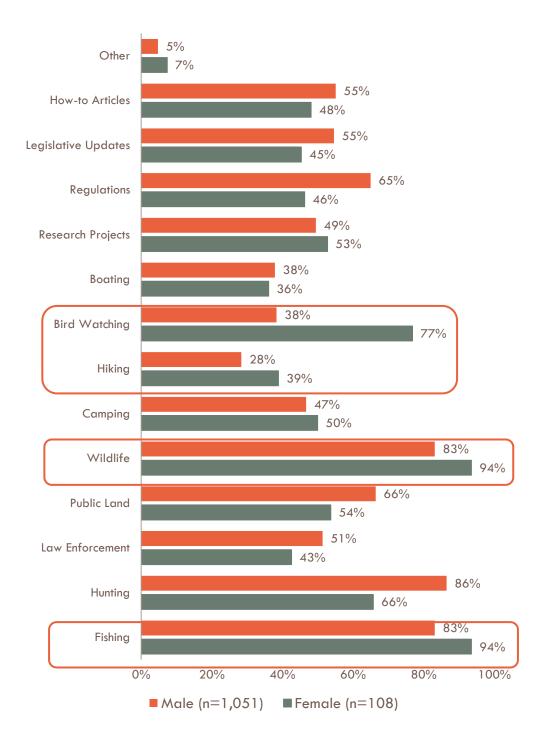


Figure 18: Which of the following article topics would interest you? Check all that apply. Responses separated by respondent gender. Orange ovals denote differences based on gender that gear toward female subscribers.

#### Wildlife Department Communication

Almost 35% of subscribers do not receive information in any other way from ODWC. Those who do not receive information in another way are significantly older (p<0.001) than those that receive information in other ways. The average age of magazine-communication-only respondents was 69 years of age. The average age of those who do receive information in other ways was 63 years. Of those that said they receive information from other avenues, the Outdoor Oklahoma TV show was the most popular answer (Fig. 19). Data cleaning was employed to categorize "other" options into the categories we provided if applicable. Outside of the options we provided, the most common "other" answer was the ODWC regulations guide.

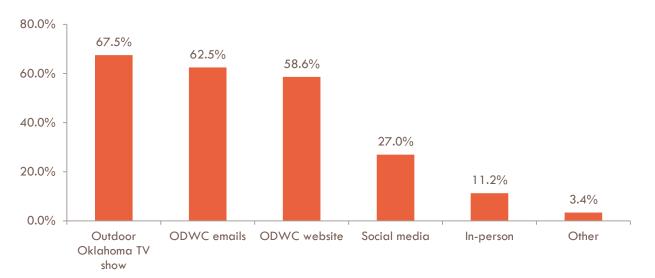


Figure 19: What other ways do you receive information from ODWC? Check all that apply. (n=775)

We also asked those that **do** communicate with the department in different ways what they feel is the **best way** to interact with the department. *Outdoor Oklahoma* magazine was selected as being the best way to communicate (Fig. 20).

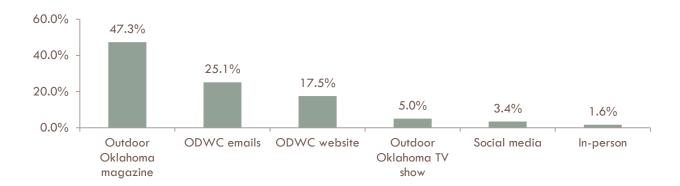


Figure 20: If you could only choose one, what is the BEST way to receive information from ODWC? (n=733)

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Determine target audience and alter magazine content to increase/appease that audience.
  - a. If the magazine is a public relations tool, the target audience should be the general population of Oklahoma so that they recognize the name and responsibilities of their state wildlife agency.
  - b. Of particular note is the age, gender and racial disparities between subscribers and the general population of Oklahoma. Focus should be placed on increasing content to better engage with more diverse and representative audiences.
- 2. Keep a printed version of the magazine, but include an online option. A younger audience may respond well to an online option without alienating the current older audience who prefer print.
- 3. Alter content to include other recreational opportunities on public lands in Oklahoma. Hunting, fishing, and wildlife are the most desired article topics, but if we look at other populations (new, younger subscribers and women) there are varied desired outside of the "hook and bullet" content. Public land, birding, camping, hiking, and boating are popular with a more diverse audience. With current subscribers overall, legislative updates and how-to articles would be popular.
- 4. Focus on the R3 (recruitment, reactivation, and retention) capabilities of the magazine. The current subscriber population could be targeted for reactivation/retention efforts or recruitment. They may be aging out, but the opportunity for grandparents to take their grandchildren to would recruit youths as well as reactivate those who gave up the sport due to age. By targeting different populations, recruitment of new recreationists could increase the amount of conservation dollars coming to the Wildlife Department.
  - a. Based on the age demographics of the 1997 survey and the age demographics of this 2019 survey, it could be hypothesized that a similar subscriber list has been subscribing over the 22 years. Recruiting new readers to the magazine should be a focus.
- 5. Dedicate a certain percentage of magazine content to varied article topics and featuring varied demographics while keeping content that aligns with our current subscription audience. This way we can recruit new readers while not alienating our loyal subscribers.

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#### APPENDIX A- INVITATION POSTCARDS AND FULL PAPER SURVEY MAILINGS

#### Dear Outdoor Oklahoma Reader,

We want to learn about our readers and their opinions to help us deliver the best magazine possible. Our survey is online and only takes a few minutes to complete. After completing the survey, enter your email address for a chance to win an *Outdoor Oklahoma* hat, *WMA Atlas, Lakes of Oklahoma Atlas* and a one-year subscription to *Outdoor Oklahoma*.

Find your ID number on the front of this card above your name and address. Visit the weblink below and enter your ID number to begin the survey. The deadline is July 15, 2019. Thank you!

www.surveymonkey.com/r/OutdoorOklahoma



Betsey York, Human Dimensions Specialist betsey.york@odwc.ok.gov (405) 401-7532

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Dear Outdoor Oklahoma Reader,

A few weeks ago, we sent a postcard inviting you to complete a survey for *Outdoor Oklahoma* magazine. We are counting on your opinions to help improve the magazine.



After completing the survey, enter your email address for a chance to win an Outdoor Oklahoma hat, WMA Atlas, Lakes of Oklahoma Atlas and a oneyear subscription to Outdoor Oklahoma.

Find your ID number on the front of this card above your name and address. Visit the weblink below and enter your ID number to begin the survey. The deadline has been extended to August 15, 2019. Thank you!

www.surveymonkey.com/r/OutdoorOklahoma

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Betsey York, Human Dimensions Specialist betsey.york@odwc.ok.gov (405) 401-7532

		Questions? Contact Betsey York, Human Dimension Specialist at 405-401-7532 or email Betsey.york@odwc.ok.gov						
Thank you	homa Readership Su very much for taking the ti k in using the prepaid enve	ime to complet	e this surv	ey. Once	you have co	ompleted t	-	
Subscriber Inform	mation							
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Outdoor Oklahoma subscriber?		Bird v	Bird watching		□Boating		Other:	
0-2 years	6-10 years							
3-5 years	Over 10 years	-	<ol> <li>Do you currently subscribe to any other outdoor magazines?</li> <li>No (please continue to question 6)</li> </ol>					
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interest you? Chec			an annual subscription of Outdoo				
🗆 Fishing	Hiking		Just right				
Hunting	🗆 Bird Wab	shing	Too few why?				
Law Enforcement	Boating		Too manywhy?				
Public Land	Research	Projects	10. Would you prefer Outdoor Oklahoma to be printed of				
Wildlife	🗆 Regulatio	ns	online?				
Camping	🗆 Legisiativ	e Updates	Printed Online Both				
Other:	🗌 🗆 How-to A	rticles	10a. Please explain:				
Communication							
11. Do you receive inf in any other way?	ormation from (	ODWC					
No (please contin	ue to question	13)	12. If you could only choos	se one what is the			
🗌 Yes 11a. What	other ways do	you receive	BEST way to receive inform	mation from ODWC?			
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			rrently have any of the following? C				
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College graduate		Black or A	frican-American 🛛 Asi	lan/Pacific islander			
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15. Please select your gender.							
18. Please share any	other thoughts	you have about	how we can Improve Outdoor Okk	ahoma:			
If you would like to be	entered into a	drawing for an (	Outdoor Oklahoma prize bag, provi	de vour email address:			
			@				