



America's Wildlife Values and Related Conservation Information

The [America's Wildlife Values study](#) draws on new and existing polling and analysis to describe our country's attitudes and perspectives toward wildlife.

Highlights

- ❖ More Americans generally support wildlife management that emphasizes wildlife protection over more traditional consumptive uses.
- ❖ Value differences cause conflict in fish and wildlife management and will likely affect how states fund and manage fish and wildlife resources.
- ❖ These changes track new information on scientific, social, economic, and cultural trends, perspectives and choices related to wildlife and natural resources.

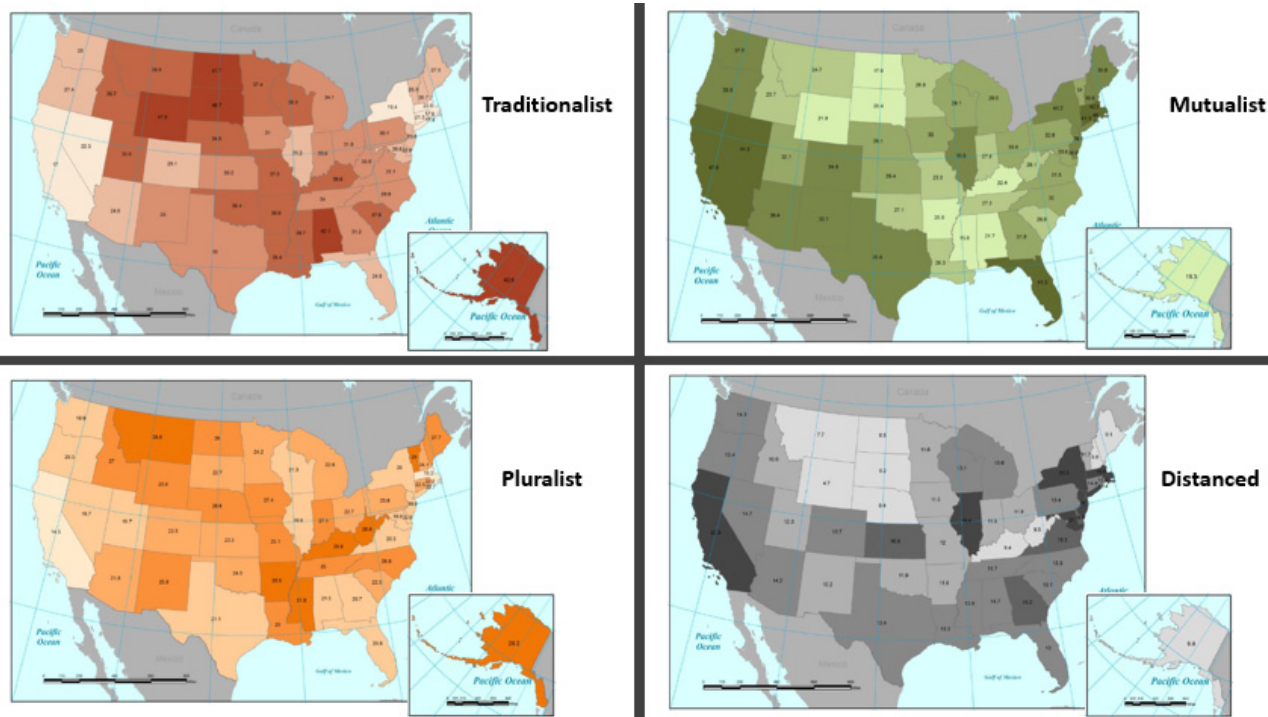
American values toward wildlife provide social context for fish and wildlife management

"Wildlife values have been shown to effectively predict a person's positions across a wide range of issues, and value differences among people are the foundation for conflict over these issues in fish and wildlife management."

- **Mutualists: 35 percent** of Americans view wildlife as family or companions deserving of care and even rights, similar to people.
- **Traditionalists: 28 percent** of Americans view wildlife as a resource that should be managed and used for the benefit of people.
- **Pluralists: 21 percent** of Americans emphasize a Traditionalist or Mutualist orientation depending on the situation or context.
- **Distanced: 15 percent** of Americans exhibit relatively little interest in wildlife.

American wildlife value orientations vary by state

"Results showed that modernization variables, specifically education, income, and urbanization, were strongly associated with the compositions of wildlife value orientations in a state."



Agencies will be challenged to adapt fish and wildlife management as American values and demographics change

“As values shift and the population of America changes, ...agencies will be challenged to adapt... This will be important for wildlife managers as... minority groups hold differing values toward wildlife.”

- White and indigenous people have higher percentages who hunted and fished in the past and were interested in doing so in the future.
- White and indigenous people and Latinos also participate more in wildlife viewing and had more interest in doing so in the future than African American and Asian populations.
- Interest in future hunting (16%) and fishing (32%) among respondents was lower than rates of past participation, while wildlife viewing had higher future interest (52%) compared to past participation.

Value differences may affect state fish and wildlife management

“Value shift ... causes an increase in conflict over wildlife management issues.”

- As the proportion of Mutualists in a state increases, belief in climate change increases, and there is greater support for environmental protection over economic growth, and less support for lethally removing wildlife involved in conflicts with humans.
- As the proportion of Traditionalists in a state increases, there is a stronger belief that private property rights are a greater priority than protecting declining or endangered species.

Value differences may affect how states fund fish and wildlife management

“With declining revenue associated with a reduction in hunting and fishing license sales, fish and wildlife agencies are faced with the challenge of how to fund the future of wildlife management.”

- A majority (54%) preferred funding state fish and wildlife management equally from hunting/angling license fees and support from general taxes.
- States with a higher percentage of Mutualists favored this combination of funding sources slightly more than states with a higher percentage of other orientation types.
- In fact, the percentage of people who supported general funding over license fees increased as the percentage of Mutualists in the state increased.

Differing wildlife values track new information on scientific, social, economic, and cultural trends, perspectives and choices related to wildlife and natural resources

- Up to one million species face extinction now or in the coming decades ([IPBES 2019](#)).
- States have identified more than 13,000 Species of Greatest Conservation Need in State Wildlife Action Plans ([USGS](#)).
- 1,662 species in the U.S. are listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).
- Four out of five Americans support the ESA, and support for the law has remained stable for decades ([OSU 2018](#)).
- At least 66 percent of voters reject the contention that the ESA harms our economy and rather believe that we can protect wildlife and grow the economy at the same time ([Tulchin 2015](#)).
- 74 percent of political conservatives, 77 percent of moderates, and 90 percent of liberals support the ESA ([OSU 2018](#)).
- The percentage of Americans aged 16 and over who hunt dropped from 7.3 percent in 1991 to 4.4 percent in 2016 ([NPR 2018](#), [Nat'l Survey](#)).
- There are 36 million hunters and 12 million anglers, and 86 million wildlife watchers in the U.S. ([Nat'l Survey 2016](#)).
- People spend \$156 billion annually participating in wildlife-associated recreation ([Nat'l Survey 2016](#)).
- The larger outdoor recreation economy accounts for 2.2 percent—\$412 billion—of the Gross Domestic Product in the U.S. ([BEA 2016](#)) and employs 7.6 million people ([OIA 2017](#)).
- 70 percent of adults believe global warming is happening, and 70 percent believe global warming will harm plants and animals ([Yale 2018](#)).
- What are now minority populations will, in aggregate, outnumber white, non-Hispanic populations in the U.S. by 2045 ([U.S. Census 2017](#)).