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Title: Recreational Fishing Use-Values for Michigan's Great Lake Trout and Salmon Fisheries

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Abstract:

The study summarizes the results of a travel cost model developed for recreational angling in Michigan. The model and method are briefly described. The study focuses on how Great Lakes trout and salmon catch rates were related to angler behavior.

The model is used to value changes in trout and salmon catch rates at Great Lakes fishing sites in Michigan. Fish population levels can be linked to a host of Great Lakes environmental quality issues including fish stocking, fish habitat restoration/preservation, and control/prevention of non-indigenous species. Particular emphasis is placed on the environmental data needed in order to establish pathways for valuing environmental quality with the travel cost method.

The study finds a fitted relationship between catch rates and fishing trips are better suited to evaluating small and moderate changes in catch rates than large changes in catch rates. There is nothing that prevents a change in environmental quality from causing a complex array of changes in a angler. For example, sediment remediation might increase fish populations as well as the size of fish. Both of these might affect angler behavior. However, in Michigan, data on the size of fish does not exist for all the sites in the model.