

Gulf oil spill: Poll finds anglers concerned about the long-term health of fish populations

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A recent poll conducted about the Gulf of Mexico oil spill showed that the majority of anglers put conservation concerns first. More than 67% of anglers who participated in the poll said the long-term health of fish populations as a result of the oil spill in the gulf was a major concern. The poll was commissioned by [Pure Fishing](#) and conducted May 14-28.

Those responding to the [AnglerSurvey.com](#) poll also revealed the gulf crisis will change their fishing behavior in many ways. Slightly more than 40% of anglers who said they planned to fish the gulf, Florida Keys or east coast of Florida in the next 12 months anticipate their fishing activity in those areas will decrease as a result of the oil spill.

When asked if the number of trips they take to fish for certain species will change, a third to nearly half of anglers predicted a decrease in the number of fishing trips for saltwater species because of the spill. However, anglers indicated freshwater fishing may be a viable alternative -- approximately 26% of respondents anticipated an increase in the number of trips to fish for largemouth bass, and 27% expected to take more fishing trips for other freshwater species.

A concern about government restrictions that would ban area fishing also was high on anglers' minds, with 62% rating this as a major concern.

Of those who usually keep and eat the fish they catch from the gulf, 34% said they expect the amount of fish they keep will decrease as a result of the spill, while 22% said the amount of fish they expect to eat will stay the same.

Launched in 2006, AnglerSurvey.com and HunterSurvey.com help the outdoor equipment industry, government fisheries and wildlife officials, and conservation organizations track consumer activities and expenditure trends. The results are scientifically analyzed to reflect all U.S. anglers and hunters.

Those who hunt, fish and target shoot are invited to participate in either or both survey sites. Respondents are entered in a monthly drawing for one of five \$100 gift certificates to the sporting goods retailer of their choice.

-- Kelly Burgess