

URBAN FISHING LAW ENFORCEMENT STUDY

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Prepared for

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INTRODUCTION

This study was commissioned by the Arizona Game & Fish Department (AGFD). The primary purpose of this effort was to determine what steps, if any, AGFD can take to curb urban fishing law violations. More specifically, this study addressed the following issues: (1) reasons fishing violators do not comply with the law, (2) effectiveness of citations in deterring fishing violations, and (3) violators' evaluation of the citing process.

The information contained in this report is based on 30 telephone interviews conducted with persons who received a citation from AGFD at a Phoenix or Tucson urban lake within the past year. The original intent of this study was to complete 100 interviews with violators, but as the following table reveals, this was not possible due to the extremely high number of violators unreachable by telephone.

Total persons on AGFD violator data base	904
No phone, disconnect, business number - person no longer on job, non-listed phone	807
Refused to be interviewed	6
Persons phoned but not reachable after 10 attempts	31
No answer, busy, answering machine after 10 attempts	24
Person's phone but not available for study - in jail, language barrier other than Spanish	6
Completed interviews	30

All of the interviewing on this project was conducted during November and December, 1994 by professional interviewers of the Behavior Research Center.

The Behavior Research Center has presented all of the data germane to the basic research objectives of this project. However, if AGFD management requires additional data retrieval or analysis, we stand ready to provide such input.

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OVERVIEW

- The typical urban fishing law violator is male (97%), 37 years old, has an annual income of \$31,000, and is a long-term resident. Additionally, violators are far more likely than the general metro population to be non-white -- 50 percent violator vs. 25 percent general public.
- Nearly two-thirds of all citations were issued due to fishing at an urban lake without a license. The use of two or more poles was the second most significant reason accounting for 23 percent of all citations issued.
- Ninety-five percent of those who received a citation for having no urban fishing license have since acquired one. This is a very encouraging reading.
- The principal reasons violators give for not getting a license are: (a) belief that they would not get caught (47%), (b) that they fish only a couple of times per year (42%), and (c) belief that their regular fishing license applied to urban fishing (42%).
- The main reasons given for violating the law by those violators who were cited for reasons other than no license are no knowledge that what they did was illegal (82%), and a feeling that an urban license is unreasonable since few fish are stocked in lakes (64%).
- Slightly more than nine out of ten violators indicate the issuance of a citation is an effective method in terms of curbing future violations of urban fishing laws.
- AGFD officers received high ratings from violators with either "excellent" or "good" ratings from about seven out of ten violators on each of six rating factors.
- Based on the information generated in this study, it is obvious that issuing tickets to urban fishing violators is an effective method of curbing future violations. This holds particularly true for those who received a ticket for fishing without a license since 95 percent have acquired one since receiving the citation.

One additional recommendation that may prove useful in curbing future violations is to post information signs more clearly in areas where an urban fishing license is required. The data supports this recommendation as a high percentage of respondents have indicated that they either did not know it was illegal to fish in urban lakes without a license or that they did not know their regular fishing license did not apply.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

PROFILE OF URBAN FISHING LAW VIOLATORS

Urban lake fishing law violators have the following demographic characteristics:

- Are males (97%);
- Are 37 years old — slightly younger than the typical metro area resident 18 or over (39.7);
- Have annual incomes of \$31,000 — below the metro area average of about \$36,000;
- Are long time area residents — 63 percent;
- Are far more likely than the general metro population to be non-white — 50 percent versus 25 percent; and,
- Are less educated than the general metro area population — 43 percent some college or more versus 56 percent.

**TABLE 1: PROFILE OF URBAN LAKE
FISHING LAW VIOLATORS**

	Violators	¹ Approximate Overall Metro Phoenix/Tucson
<u>GENDER</u>		
Male	97%	49%
Female	<u>3</u>	<u>51</u>
	100%	100%
<u>AGE</u>		
Under 35	43%	40%
35 to 54	37	33
55 or over	<u>20</u>	<u>27</u>
	100%	100%
Median (years)	37.2	39.7
<u>ANNUAL INCOME</u>		
Under \$15,000	19%	10%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	19	15
\$25,000 to \$34,999	19	23
\$35,000 to \$49,999	31	25
\$50,000 or over	<u>12</u>	<u>27</u>
	100%	100%
Median (dollars)	\$31.0	\$35.7
<u>YEARS LIVED IN ARIZONA</u>		
Under 10 years	17%	42%
10 to 19 years	20	58 (10+ yrs)
20 or over	<u>63</u>	<u>100</u>
	100%	100%
Median (years)	25.7	14.5
<u>ETHNICITY</u>		
White	50%	75%
Non-white	<u>50</u>	<u>25</u>
	100%	100%
<u>EDUCATION</u>		
Some high school	7%	9%
High school graduate	50	35
Some college	23	28
College graduate	<u>20</u>	<u>28</u>
	100%	100%

¹Sources: U. S. Census; Behavior Research Center, Inc.

TYPE OF CITATION RECEIVED

Violators were asked to indicate the type of citation they received at an urban lake. As Table 2 reveals, two thirds of all violators (64%) were cited for not having an urban fishing license. The remaining one-third of violators were cited for using two or more fishing poles (23%); not carrying an urban fishing license at the time the citation was issued (7%); fishing over the limit (3%); or the use of netting and snagging to catch fish (3%).

TABLE 2: REASONS FOR RECEIVING A CITATION

"What did you receive your citation for?"	
	<u>Total</u>
Not having a license	64%
Use of 2 or more poles	23
Did not carry license at time citation was issued	7
Fished over limit	3
Netting/snagging fish	<u>3</u>
	100%

ATTITUDES AMONG VIOLATORS CITED FOR NOT HAVING AN URBAN FISHING LICENSE

Individuals who were cited for not having an urban fishing license were asked a series of questions to determine why they had not obtained a license and whether or not they felt the issuing of a citation was an effective deterrent.

Looking first at why a license was not obtained, violators were given 12 possible reasons and asked if each applied to them. As Table 4 reveals, the three main reasons for not getting an urban fishing license are: belief that they would not get caught (47%); that they only fish a couple of times per year (42%); and that they did not realize their regular fishing license was not valid for urban fishing (42%). Other reasons mentioned by approximately one out of three violators were the lack of knowledge that a special urban license was necessary (32%) and a belief they could get away with it (32%). Also note that no violators indicate licenses are too difficult to obtain and only five percent believe it takes too long to get an urban fishing license.

**TABLE 3: REASONS FOR NOT ACQUIRING FISHING
LICENSE SINCE RECEIVING CITATION**

"Now I'd like to read to you several reasons other anglers have given us for not obtaining an urban fishing license. As I do, please just tell me if any of them apply to you."

	Yes	No	Don't Know
I didn't think I'd get caught.	47%	53%	0%
I only fish a couple times a year.	42	58	0
I didn't know that my regular Arizona fishing license was not valid for urban fishing.	42	58	0
I didn't even know I needed a special license to fish on urban lakes before I got my ticket.	32	63	5
A lot of other people don't have licenses and they get away with it.	32	68	0
The Game and Fish Department doesn't really enforce its rules that much.	26	74	0
I didn't plan to keep any of the fish.	21	79	0
I didn't think it was a big deal, it's only a misdemeanor.	16	74	10
The urban fishing license is too expensive.	16	84	0
The urban fishing license is unreasonable because the Game and Fish Department doesn't supply enough fish in the lakes for the number of anglers.	11	84	5
It takes too long to get an urban fishing license.	5	95	0
Licenses are too difficult to obtain.	0	100	0

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Violators were also asked if there were other reasons that prevented them from obtaining an urban fishing license. Although slightly more than one half indicate there were no other reasons, two reasons did surface with notable levels: I left my license at home/lost it, (21%) and forgot to renew my license (11%).

**TABLE 4: OTHER REASONS FOR NOT GETTING A LICENSE**

"What other reasons, if any, did you have for not getting an urban fishing license?"

|                                                                | <u>Total</u> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| I left my license at home/lost it.                             | 21%          |
| I forgot to renew my license.                                  | 11           |
| License application was filled out incorrectly by store clerk. | 5            |
| Laziness.                                                      | 5            |
| I thought I was fishing on private property.                   | 5            |
| None                                                           | <u>53</u>    |
|                                                                | 100%         |

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Violators were next asked how effective they felt the issuing of a citation is in curbing people from fishing without a license. As Table 6 reveals, 95 percent feel it is either a very (42%) or at least a moderately (53%) effective method with no violators indicating it is ineffective.

TABLE 5: EFFECTIVENESS OF ISSUING A CITATION

"Would you rate the issuing of a citation as a very effective, a moderately effective, or an ineffective method of stopping people from fishing without a license?"

Very effective	42%
Moderately effective	53
Ineffective	0
Don't know	<u>5</u>
	100%

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Further evidence that issuing citations is effective is demonstrated in the fact that 95 percent of violators who were cited for not having an urban fishing license have obtained one since receiving their ticket.

TABLE 6: ACQUIRED AN URBAN FISHING LICENSE  
SINCE RECEIVING CITATION

"Have you obtained an urban fishing license since you received the citation?"

|     | <u>Total</u> |
|-----|--------------|
| Yes | 95%          |
| No  | <u>5</u>     |
|     | 100%         |

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Finally in this section, violators who were cited for fishing without a license were asked to indicate if they felt there were other steps which could be taken to curb such violations. As Table 7 reveals, the only frequently mentioned suggestion is to increase enforcement (53%).

TABLE 7: ALTERNATIVES TO ISSUING CITATIONS

"What other methods or changes in existing enforcement efforts do you think would help stop others from fishing without a license?"

	<u>Total</u>
Increase patrolling/enforcement levels	53%
Make license easier to get/offer by mail	5
Don't know	<u>42</u>
	100%

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## ATTITUDES AMONG VIOLATORS CITED FOR OTHER REASONS

Violators who were cited for reasons other than no license were also given a list of different reasons for not complying with urban fishing laws and asked if any apply to them. As may be seen in Table 8, three reasons received the most frequent mention -- I didn't know that what I was cited for was illegal (82%); an urban license is unreasonable because AGFD does not supply enough fish in lakes for the number of anglers (64%); and, a lot of other people do it and get away with it (46%).

**TABLE 8: REASONS FOR VIOLATING ARIZONA  
URBAN FISHING LAWS**

"Now I'd like to read to you several reasons other anglers have given us for violating fishing laws. As I do, please just tell me if any of them apply to you."

|                                                                                                                                                   | Yes | No  | Don't Know |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|------------|
| I didn't know that what I was cited for was illegal.                                                                                              | 82% | 18% | 0%         |
| The urban fishing license is unreasonable because the Game and Fish Department doesn't supply enough fish in the lakes for the number of anglers. | 64  | 27  | 9          |
| A lot of other people do it and get away with it.                                                                                                 | 46  | 54  | 0          |
| The Game and Fish Department doesn't really enforce its rules that much.                                                                          | 36  | 64  | 0          |
| I didn't think it was any big deal, it's only a misdemeanor.                                                                                      | 27  | 64  | 9          |
| I didn't think I'd get caught.                                                                                                                    | 18  | 73  | 9          |
| The additional list for the two-pole license is too expensive.                                                                                    | 9   | 82  | 9          |

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This group of urban fishing law violators was next asked if there were any other reasons not previously mentioned that kept them from complying. Overall, responses across the board were too few to make any meaningful analysis, however, two violators did mention that they had left their license at home or had otherwise lost it.

TABLE 9: OTHER REASONS FOR FISHING WITHOUT A LICENSE

"What other reason, if any, were there for your violating fishing laws?"

	<u>Total*</u>
I left my license at home/lost it	18%
It is unreasonable for a resident to pay for an urban fishing license	9
Fish dying	9
None	<u>64</u>
	100%

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When asked how effective they felt the issuance of a citation is in curbing the violation of urban fishing laws, 91 percent indicate that this is either a very (73%) or at least a moderately (18%) effective method. Only nine percent of violators indicate it is ineffective.

**TABLE 10: EFFECTIVENESS OF ISSUING CITATIONS AS A DETERRENT TO FURTHER FISHING VIOLATIONS**

"Would you rate the issuing of a citation as a very effective, a moderately effective, or an ineffective method of deterring fishing violations?"

|                      |          |
|----------------------|----------|
| Very effective       | 73%      |
| Moderately effective | 18       |
| Ineffective          | <u>9</u> |
|                      | 100%     |

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Finally, this group of violators was asked to indicate other methods of deterring fishing violations. As may be seen, only one response received mention by more than one violator -- increase patrolling levels at urban lake sites (27%). All other responses were mentioned by only one violator each.

TABLE 11: OTHER REASONS FOR VIOLATING URBAN FISHING LAWS

"What other methods or changes in existing enforcement efforts do you think would best deter others from similar fishing violations?"

Increase patrolling/enforcement levels	27%
Post warning signs at urban fishing sites	9
Offer open house sessions/information clinics to keep the public aware of new and existing urban fishing regulations	9
Increase the cost of the fines	9
Provide more information to sporting goods stores on changes in fishing laws	9
Confiscate violators fishing equipment	9
Offer all purpose license	9
Don't know	<u>19</u>
	100%

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### **VIOLATORS' EVALUATION OF AGFD OFFICER ISSUING CITATION**

The final study question asked all violators to evaluate the enforcement officer who issued their citation. Here we find that AGFD officers receive positive ratings (excellent/good) from about seven of ten violators in each of the six areas studied. The two areas where officers receive the highest scores are giving clear instructions on how to satisfy the citation (80%) and, handling the situation in a courteous manner (76%). The only attribute dipping slightly under seven of ten was in giving clear instructions on how to avoid future violations (67%). Regardless, these ratings are quite positive overall.

**TABLE 12: EVALUATION OF OFFICER ISSUING CITATION**

"Next, would you evaluate the enforcement officer who issued you a citation as excellent, good, only fair or poor in each of the following areas?"

|                                                                                 | Excel-<br>lent | Good | Only<br>Fair | Poor | Not<br>Sure | Net<br>Excellent/<br>Good<br>Ratings |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------|--------------|------|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| Giving clear instructions on how to contact the court and satisfy the citation. | 60%            | 20%  | 17%          | 3%   | 0%          | 80                                   |
| Handling the situation in a courteous manner.                                   | 43             | 33   | 17           | 7    | 0           | 76                                   |
| Allowing you the opportunity to present your view of what happened.             | 40             | 33   | 10           | 17   | 0           | 73                                   |
| Giving clear information about what law was violated.                           | 50             | 23   | 20           | 7    | 0           | 73                                   |
| Handling the situation in a professional manner.                                | 53             | 17   | 20           | 10   | 0           | 70                                   |
| Giving clear instructions on how to avoid future violations.                    | 40             | 27   | 10           | 20   | 3           | 67                                   |

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire

Time Start: _____

Hello, may I speak to (LISTED NAME) please? (IF DESIGNATED RESPONDENT NOT HOME, ARRANGE CALLBACK)

CALLBACK INFO: _____

Hello, (LISTED NAME) my name is _____ and I'm with the Behavior Research Center, of Arizona. We are conducting a brief survey on fishing law enforcement for the Arizona's Game and Fish Department and I'd like to speak with you for a few minutes. The purpose of this study is to better understand steps the Department can take to reduce the number of fishing law violations in Arizona. All of your answers are strictly confidential and will be used only for research purposes.

According to my records, in the past two years, you received a citation from the Arizona Game and Fish Department at an urban lake. Is that correct?

IF YES -- CONTINUE

IF NO - THANK AND TERMINATE

1. To begin, what did you receive a citation for? _____ (GO TO Q1a) No license...1 (9)
 _____ Over limit...2
 (GO TO Q4) Use of 2 or more poles...3
 _____ Netting/snagging fish...4
 _____ Other (SPECIFY)

- 1a. Have you obtained an urban-fishing license since you received the citation? Yes...1 (10)
 No...2

2. Now I'd like to read to you several reasons other anglers have given us for not obtaining an urban fishing license. As I do, please just tell me if any of them apply to you. (READ EACH; BEGIN WITH CIRCLED LETTER)
- | | Yes | No | Don't Know | |
|---|-----|----|------------|------|
| A. Licenses are too difficult to obtain | 1 | 2 | 3 | (11) |
| B. It takes too long to get an urban fishing license | 1 | 2 | 3 | (12) |
| C. The Game and Fish Department doesn't really enforce its rules that much | 1 | 2 | 3 | (13) |
| D. I didn't even know I needed a special license to fish on urban lakes before I got my ticket | 1 | 2 | 3 | (14) |
| E. I didn't know that my regular Arizona fishing license was not valid for urban fishing | 1 | 2 | 3 | (15) |
| F. The urban fishing license is unreasonable because the Game and Fish Department doesn't supply enough fish in the lakes for the number of anglers | 1 | 2 | 3 | (16) |
| G. The urban fishing license is too expensive | 1 | 2 | 3 | (17) |
| H. I only fish a couple times a year | 1 | 2 | 3 | (18) |
| I. I didn't plan to keep any of the fish | 1 | 2 | 3 | (19) |
| J. A lot of other people don't have licenses and they get away with it | 1 | 2 | 3 | (20) |
| K. I didn't think it was any big deal, its only a misdemeanor | 1 | 2 | 3 | (21) |
| L. I didn't think I'd get caught | 1 | 2 | 3 | (22) |

2a. What other reasons, if any, did you have for not getting an urban fishing license?
 _____ (23-24)

_____ (25-26)

3. Would you rate the issuing of a citation as a very effective, a moderately effective, or an ineffective method of stopping people from fishing without a license? Very effective...1 (27)
Moderately effective...2
Ineffective...3
Don't know...4

3a. What other methods or changes in existing enforcement efforts do you think would help stop others from fishing without a license?

_____ (28-29)

_____ (30-31)

(SKIP TO Q6)

4. Now I'd like to read to you several reasons other anglers have given us for violating fishing laws. As I do, please just tell me if any of them apply to you. (READ EACH; BEGIN WITH CIRCLED LETTER)

	Yes	No	Don't Know	
A. The Game and Fish Department doesn't really enforce its rules that much	1	2	3	(32)
B. The urban fishing license is unreasonable because the Game and Fish Department doesn't supply enough fish in the lakes for the number of anglers	1	2	3	(33)
C. The additional cost for the two-pole license is too expensive	1	2	3	(34)
D. I didn't know that what I was cited for was illegal	1	2	3	(35)
E. A lot of other people do it and get away with it	1	2	3	(36)
F. I didn't think it was any big deal, it's only a misdemeanor	1	2	3	(37)
G. I didn't think I'd get caught	1	2	3	(38)

4a. What other reasons, if any, were there for you violating fishing laws?

_____ (39-40)

_____ (41-42)

5. Would you rate the issuing of a citation as a very effective, a moderately effective, or an ineffective method of deterring fishing violations? Very effective...1 (43)
Moderately effective...2
Ineffective...3
Don't know...4

5a. What other methods or changes in existing enforcement efforts do you think would best deter others from similar fishing violations?

_____ (44-45)

_____ (46-47)

6. Next, would you evaluate the enforcement officer who issued you a citation as excellent, good, only fair or poor in each of the following areas? (READ EACH, BEGIN WITH CIRCLED LETTER)

	Excel- lent	Good	Only fair	Poor	Not Sure	
A. Handling the situation in a professional manner	1	2	3	4	5	(48)
B. Giving clear instructions on how to contact the court and satisfy the citation	1	2	3	4	5	(49)
C. Handling the situation in a courteous manner	1	2	3	4	5	(50)
D. Giving clear information about what law was violated	1	2	3	4	5	(51)
E. Giving clear instructions on how to avoid future violations	1	2	3	4	5	(52)
F. Allowing you the opportunity to present your view of what happened	1	2	3	4	5	(53)

7. Now before we finish, I'd like to ask you a few clarification questions. First, how many years have you lived in Arizona? (CODE 00 IF LESS THAN 1 YEAR) Years / / / (54-55)
8. Do you have a regular Arizona fishing license? Yes...1 (56)
No...2
9. What is the highest level of regular education you've had the opportunity to complete? Some high school or less...1 (57)
High school graduate...2
Some college...3
College graduate...4
10. Which one of the following categories best describes your ethnic origin? (READ EACH) Asian...1 (58)
White...2
Black...3
Hispanic...4
American Indian...5
(DONT READ) Refused...6
11. And finally, was your total family income for last year, I mean before taxes and including everyone in your household, under or over \$35,000? UNDER \$35,000 (59)
Was it under \$15,000...1
\$15,000 to \$24,999...2
or \$25,000 or over...3
Refused...4
- OVER \$35,000
Was it under \$49,999...5
\$50,000 to \$64,999...6
\$65,000 or over...7
Refused...8
Refused overall...9

(OBSERVED DATA FROM SAMPLE SHEET):

- Gender: Male...1 (60)
Female...2
- Date of birth (2 digit) / / / (61-62)
- Zip Code (3 Digit) / / / (63-65)

Thank you very much, that completes this interview. My supervisor may want to call you to verify that I conducted this interview so may I have your first name so that they may do so?
(VERIFY PHONE NUMBER)

- NAME: _____ PHONE #: _____ (66-72)
- TIME END: _____ TOTAL TIME: _____ (73-74)
- ADMINISTRATIVE DATA:**
- INTERVIEWER NAME: _____ #: _____ (75-77)
- VALIDATED BY: _____ #: _____ (78-80)
- CODED BY: _____ #: _____ (81-83)