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Fishing License Sales in New York's Great Lakes Counties

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fishing, (3) combined small game hunting/fishing, and (4) combined small game/big game hunting/fishing (Sportsman's). The nonresident licenses sold relating to fishing include: (1) seasonal, (2) 3-day, and (3) 7-day fishing. Each license year begins on October 1 and ends on September 30. For example, the 1972 license data is for the license year October 1, 1971 through September 30, 1972.

Introduction

This publication is a summary of New York State fishing license sales data collected by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation during the years 1972-1986. The total number of licenses sold is a combination of both New York State resident and nonresident sales. Resident licenses related to fishing include: (1) seasonal, (2) 3-day

License Sales

Fishing license sales in New York State have fluctuated in the years between 1972 and 1986, but overall they have increased 31 percent. The fishing license sales in the Great Lakes counties increased 65 percent from 1972-1986. The most notable decreases in total statewide fishing license sales were for the periods between 1976-1979 and 1983. The same

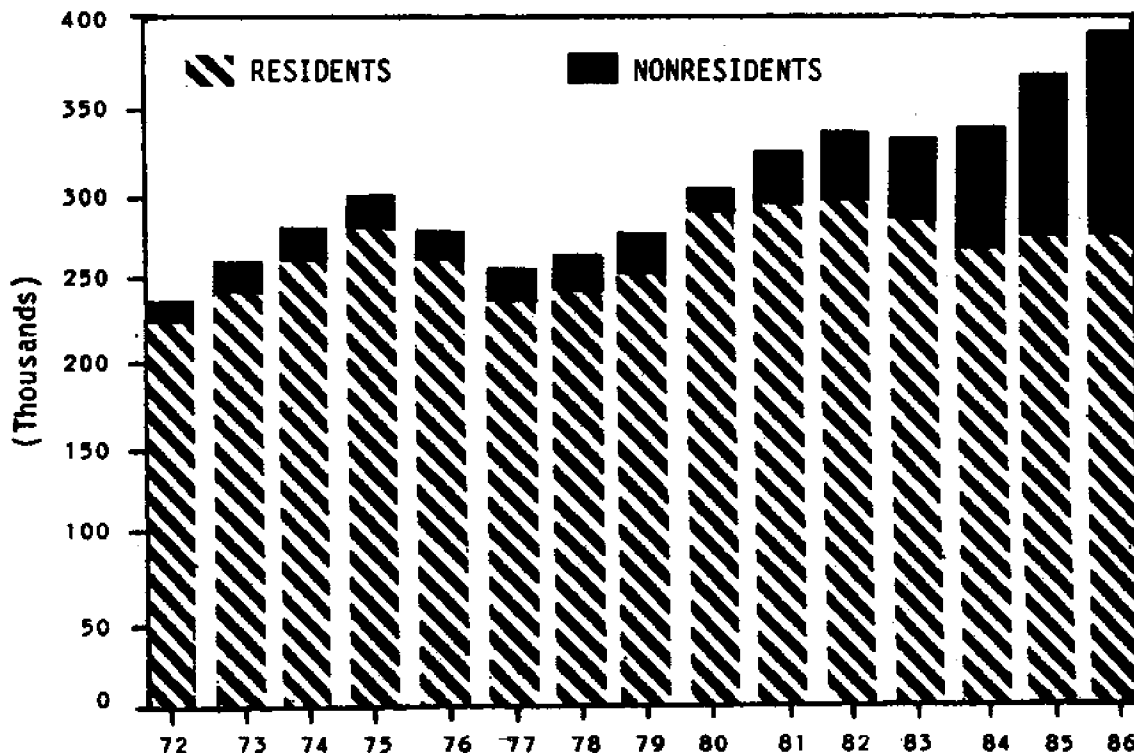


Figure 1: New York Resident and Nonresident Fishing License Sales in the Great Lakes Counties From 1972 - 1986.

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patterns are apparent on a smaller scale in the ten Great Lakes counties of Cayuga, Chautauqua, Erie, Jefferson, Monroe, Niagara, Orleans, Oswego, St. Lawrence, and Wayne. These counties contributed 31 percent to the total state license sales in 1972 and 39 percent in 1986 (Figure 1).

One explanation for the decrease in sales during the 1976-1979 period is the ban that was placed on the consumption and possession of Lake Ontario fish by the Commissioners of New York State Departments of Health and Environmental Conservation. The possession of eight different species of fish was banned because of possible health effects that were associated with fish contaminants such as mirex. Restrictions were relaxed for several of the species in the spring of 1977. Even though the ban was not statewide, the total number of fishing licenses sold in the state decreased dramatically due to decreases in the Great Lakes counties. The growing awareness of and concern for contaminated fish may have deterred additional anglers from participating in the sport.

The 1983 decrease in sales is likely a

result of the license fee increase for the 1982-1983 license year.

When decreases in total fishing license sales have occurred it has been due to fewer resident licenses sold. Non-resident sales increase every year except 1975 when they decreased 5 percent from the previous year. Nonresident sales increases, despite the ban on possession of fish, are due to their strong commitment to fishing. Resident anglers show a similar commitment but participation is more affected by external conditions such as the ban.

In 1986, four of the ten Great Lakes counties reported over 40 percent of their fishing license sales from non-residents (Table 1). The greatest county contributions to Great Lakes total fishing license sales were by anglers purchasing their license in Oswego, Erie, Monroe, and Jefferson counties.

Although the number of resident fishing licenses sold outnumbered the nonresident licenses sold by 16 times in 1972, in 1986 they only outnumbered nonresidents by 2 times, a substantial increase in nonresident sales.

Table 1. Fishing License Sales for New York State's Great Lakes Counties in 1986.

County	New York State			Nonresidents Percent Contribution to County Total	County Percent Contribution to Great Lakes Total
	Resident	Nonresident	Total		
Cayuga	9,037	1,387	10,424	13.3	2.6
Chautauqua	16,310	12,428	28,738	43.2	7.3
Erie	70,642	1,406	72,048	2.0	18.3
Jefferson	24,677	17,615	42,292	41.7	10.7
Monroe	61,501	4,020	65,521	6.1	16.6
Niagara	25,672	13,466	39,138	34.4	9.9
Orleans	5,576	7,776	13,352	58.2	3.4
Oswego	25,426	52,004	77,430	67.2	19.6
St. Lawrence	20,468	4,371	24,839	17.6	6.3
Wayne	14,974	5,408	20,382	26.5	5.2
Great Lakes Total	274,283	119,881	394,164	30.4	100.0

Overall, the 1986 Great Lakes county fishing license sales increased 1.7 times (or 65%) over the 1972 total (Table 2). In comparison, the statewide fishing license sales total increased 1.3 times (or 31%) during the same period. Non-resident Great Lakes county fishing license sales increased 8.4 times while

resident sales increased only 1.2 times during 1972-1986.

All of the Great Lakes counties showed an increase in the number of fishing licenses sold from 1972-1986 (Figure 2). However, the single most dramatic increase was in nonresident licenses sold in Oswego County.

Table 2. Percent Change in Fishing License Sales in the Great Lakes Counties from 1972-1986.

County	1972-86 Percent Increase		
	Resident	Nonresident	Total
Cayuga	7.5	670.6	21.4
Chautauque	0.9	98.8	28.2
Erie	15.3	266.1	16.9
Jefferson	18.6	319.8	69.2
Monroe	16.9	755.3	23.4
Niagara	42.9	11,028.9	116.4
Orleans	12.8	22,117.1	168.3
Oswego	71.8	11,482.2	407.9
St. Lawrence	27.9	123.0	38.3
Wayne	32.4	3,505.3	77.9
Great Lakes Total	22.3	744.4	65.3
State Total	13.2	283.7	31.4

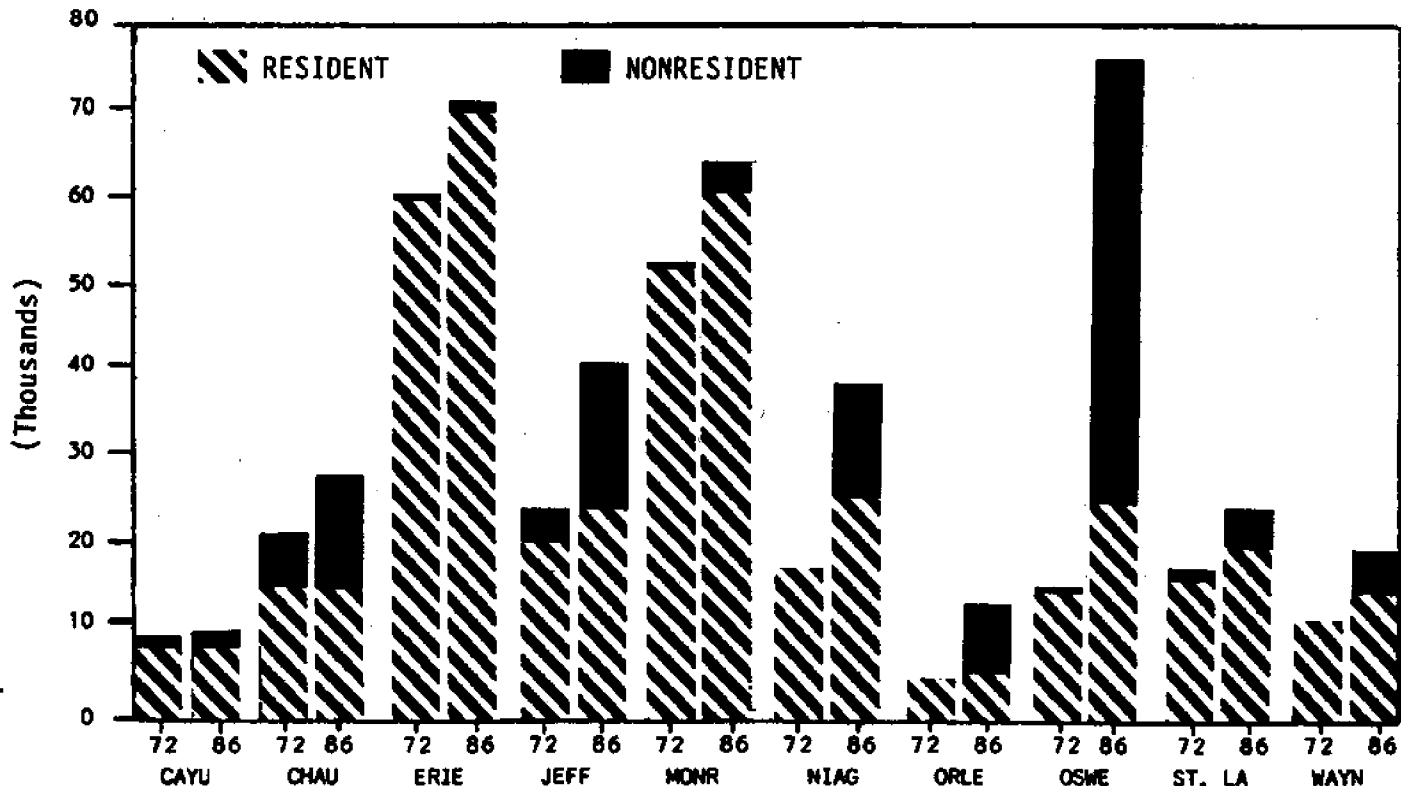


Figure 2: New York Resident and Nonresident Fishing License Sales by Great Lakes County For 1972 and 1986.

Discussion

Fishing license sales are only one indicator of angler activity in the Great Lakes counties since a resident or non-resident can purchase a fishing license from any county in New York. However, it is reasonable to assume that most anglers purchase their license in their primary destination county. Increasing license sales to nonresidents indicates the development of a tourism industry partially based on fishing in these Great Lakes counties.

In 1984, Great Lakes anglers (excluding those on the St. Lawrence River) contributed \$32 million in trip expenditures to nine Great Lakes counties. Nonresident anglers average daily expenditures were nearly twice as much as resident expenditures. Total resident angler expenditures within the coastal counties were three times as large as total nonresident expenditures. To emphasize the importance of fishing in these counties, during the 1976 ban, there was a loss of approximately \$300,000 in angler expenditures in the Salmon River area alone.

For many of these counties, the income generated from anglers is a substantial contribution to the coastal economy.

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