

MICHIGAN WILDLIFE COUNCIL
SEMIANNUAL REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE
Public Act 451 of 1994, Section 43532b(18)(b)

Approved by the chair of the Michigan Wildlife Council (MWC) on April 10, 2025.

The following is the semiannual report to be submitted to the Legislature documenting activities of the MWC for the first half of fiscal year 2025.

As mandated by 2013 PA 246, the mission of the MWC is to develop and implement, in conjunction with a third-party marketing or advertising agency, a comprehensive media-based public information program to promote the essential role sportsmen and sportswomen play in furthering conservation through wildlife management and to educate the public about hunting, fishing and the taking of game. This includes educating the public that hunting and fishing are:

- Necessary for conservation and management of Michigan's natural resources.
- A valued and integral part of the cultural heritage of this state.
- An important part of the state's economy.

The work of the MWC is funded by a \$1 surcharge on all Michigan base hunting and fishing licenses.

The MWC has contracted with Gd Marketing of Lansing to develop and implement the organization's marketing campaign. An annual baseline survey of Michigan's residents conducted in 2015 was used to set the foundation for the marketing campaign in terms of identifying the appropriate audience, determining the language that would connect most effectively with that audience and determining the tactics that would prove to be the most effective to reach that audience. Each year since that initial survey, a subsequent survey has been used to measure changes in attitudes, opinions and understanding of the value hunters and anglers bring to conservation efforts in Michigan. Those findings help the council refine messaging and tactics for the following year.

The annual study was conducted in December of 2024 by Responsive Management, an independent research firm specializing in natural resource and outdoor recreation issues in 50 states and 15 countries around the world. The study was tuned to determine Michigan residents' participation in and attitudes toward hunting, fishing and the taking of game, as well as their understanding of and support for the state's management of wildlife and natural resources. Survey questions were developed cooperatively by the MWC, Gd Marketing and Responsive Management.

Results of this work and other independent research conducted by Gd Marketing shows three quarters of Michigan residents (77%) approve of legal, regulated hunting, and 83% approve of legal, regulated fishing. Approval for the taking of game is much lower, with 46% approving of legal, regulated trapping. These results show approval of

hunting and fishing remaining largely unchanged year over year, unlike national surveys that indicate a slide in approval for hunting and fishing. Michigan is standing out as the only state in the nation where attitudes and perceptions around hunting and fishing are remaining stable.

The first six months of the new fiscal year also included reporting out on the 2024 campaign cycle that wrapped up in mid-October. Strategies were aligned to raise awareness about the positive impact of wildlife management and conservation work, educate more deeply on ecological, economic and population management benefits of hunting and fishing, and bridge the perceived differences between people who hunt and fish and those who don't. An adjustment in audience was made to focus more resources on sportspeople and advocates to empower hunters and anglers to educate others about the benefits of hunting and fishing.

The report shows the 2024 campaign drove significant awareness, reaching 61.8 million impressions and engaging 2.5 million people in southern Michigan across multiple channels. The MWC noted 130,000 new website users. The campaign exceeded industry benchmarks with a 98.5% video completion rate on streaming platforms and a 95.18% listen-through rate on digital audio. Several innovative tactics like a Harvest to Table event that generated 2.6 million impressions and walkway stickers along the Detroit Riverwalk highlighted a rich mix of tools and techniques used to connect to our principal audience.

The first six months of FY24 also marked a period of transition, as the contract for marketing services went to bid for the period beginning Dec. 12, 2024. The bid process was completed by January 2025, with the firm Fusion92 being awarded the contract with a service start date of June 8, 2025. Working toward the anticipated summer 2025 campaign season, Fusion92 was asked to provide the MWC with three creative concepts and move them through focus groups and additional research processes and present recommendations to the council on April 10, 2025. From these recommendations, Fusion92 has begun working on a new campaign scheduled to begin in July 2025.

Because of this transition with the MWC contract, the council asked GÜD to prepare a limited spring campaign using existing creative content for the purpose of remaining relevant and active for those following or linked to our work. The approved plan includes continuous organic social media campaigning, quarterly newsletters and paid media through Mike Avery Outdoors from October through the end of the contract on June 7. Additionally, GÜD will use repurposed creative content to manage a \$215,000 investment in streaming television placements (37%), streaming audio (28%), broadcast television/cable placements (17%), paid social media (14%) and Mike Avery (4%).

Additional information on the MWC can be found by visiting the [MWC website](#).

Current council members include:

Nick Buggia (chair), Mayville

Brent Pike, Grand Haven

Beth Gruden, Perrinton

Franklin Hayes, Detroit

Dawn Levey, Elsie

Daniel Ulfing, Redford

Daniel Cooke, Milford

Jon Spieles (treasurer, Department of Natural Resources director's designee)

The MWC appreciates the Legislature's continued support and the opportunity to report on the first half of fiscal year 2025 activities.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Buggia", written in black ink.

Nicholas Buggia, Chair

In compliance with Section 43532b(18)(b) of PA 451 of 1994, the MWC provides the following summary of Fiscal Year 2025 expenditures for the Michigan Wildlife Management Public Education Subaccount that was created within the Game and Fish Protection Account.

Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Expenditures for the Michigan Wildlife Council
(October 1, 2024 through March 31, 2025)

Expenditure Description	Amount
Research/Marketing/Creative/Media	\$272,100
Administrative	\$900
Total Expenditures	\$273,000