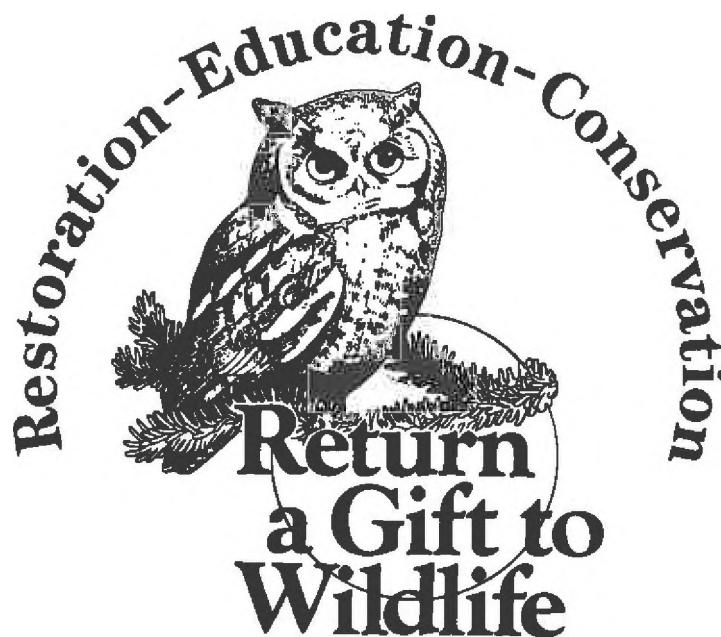


**EVALUATION OF  
"RETURN A GIFT TO WILDLIFE"  
PROGRAM MARKETING EFFORTS**

**By**

**Nancy A. Connelly and Tommy L. Brown**



**HDRU Series 90-6**

**June 1990**



**Human Dimensions Research Unit  
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Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y.**





## HUMAN DIMENSIONS RESEARCH UNIT PUBLICATIONS SERIES

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In light of the recent Legislative Commission on Expenditure Review report (1989) which found a contribution level for New York's "Return A Gift To Wildlife" (RAGTW) tax check off program that was stable but not keeping up with inflation, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) decided to reevaluate its program marketing efforts and contracted with the Human Dimensions Research Unit (HDRU) at Cornell University to conduct a study of New York tax filing households. The purpose of the study was to provide information on contributors, noncontributors, and potential markets to ensure an understanding of the wildlife interests of the public and development of the most effective marketing strategies and promotional activities.

A mail questionnaire was developed to assess tax filers' knowledge of and interest in the RAGTW program. The NYS Department of Taxation and Finance (DTF) systematically selected a sample of 4,000 names from 1988 tax records in 4 strata such that 1,000 each were upstate 1988 contributors and noncontributors, and 1,000 each were downstate contributors and noncontributors. Questionnaires were mailed on October 20, 1989; up to 3 follow-up mailings were sent to nonrespondents. The response rate, which was 39% overall, varied considerably by stratum; it was highest for upstate contributors (61%), and lowest for downstate noncontributors (22%).

Since 1984 when the RAGTW program was first evaluated, considerable promotion efforts have been undertaken. These have resulted in an increased awareness of the program throughout the state. Over half of tax-filing households are now aware of the program. The vast majority of people who were aware of the program had a favorable opinion of it. There is some evidence of "bad press" occurring in upstate areas of the state, and this study showed initial indications of awareness of this by taxpayers. Also some evidence is presented to suggest that the very limited dissatisfaction with how the funds are currently being spent may be associated with negative press on this topic.

Although awareness of the program has increased, few tax filers (approximately 3% in any given year) actually contribute to the program. Most contributors fill out their own tax form. Noncontributors were much more likely to have someone else (usually a tax accountant) fill out their form. This was especially true for downstate noncontributors.

Respondents, whether contributors or not, would like more information on how their contributions are being spent. Their highest priority for use of the funds was for protecting threatened or endangered species, followed by providing clean habitats for all fish and wildlife.



**General Recommendations:**

1. Since contributors generally fill out their own tax forms and noncontributors are less likely to do so, marketing staff should continue efforts to cultivate tax accountants as supporters of RAGTW.
2. DEC should provide more information to the public on how the RAGTW funds are being spent. Successes of previous programs should be pointed out in this information.
3. Although very few taxpayers have a negative image of the program, we would suggest that DEC adopt a medium-range strategy (2 to 5 years) for addressing this topic in a positive way. Such a strategy would include (1) continuing to fund new efforts, many of which are of interest to taxpayers, and (2) making results of past programs more visible to the public.

**Market Segmentation of Potential Contributors**

This report also presents what we believe is a more realistic estimate of the size of various market segments with potential to contribute to RAGTW than was possible in the 1984 evaluation. Three segments totaling approximately 2.1 million tax filers were identified as having some potential to contribute to RAGTW.

**Continuous Contributors: 1.8% of tax filers; 136,000 people**

This group was named "Continuous Contributors", because they contributed in 1988, said they thought they contributed in 1987 and prior to 1987, and said they will contribute in the future. Thus they are steady contributors that quite likely can be counted on in the future. Overall, contributors represent 3% of tax filers and continuous contributors represent two-thirds of all contributors.

Over 90% of continuous contributors were aware of the program. Three-quarters of this segment prepared their own tax form. This group was more likely to be interested in nonconsumptive wildlife activities than other groups. For example, over 60% observed wildlife in 1988 and 53% fed birds or other wildlife. They were somewhat less likely to be involved in hunting than other groups (14% versus 18% to 25%). As could be expected from their involvement in wildlife-related activities, continuous contributors were most likely to belong to conservation or environmental organizations.

**Recommendations for marketing to continuous contributors:**

1. Focusing message content on more in-depth information about specific projects being funded by RAGTW, since most members of this group are already aware of the program. Projects with appeal to people interested in nonconsumptive activities should be highlighted.
2. Sources of information most likely to reach this audience are conservation organizations and newspapers.





**Sporadic Contributors: 13.0% of tax filers; 965,000 people**

This market segment has contributed at some time in the past and say they are likely to contribute in the future. It comprises the other one-third of contributors in any given year.

Like continuous contributors, most sporadic contributors were aware of the RAGTW program and remembered seeing information about it in the tax booklet. What distinguishes this group most is the large minority who had their tax form prepared by a tax accountant. Sporadic contributors were less likely than continuous contributors to be involved in nonconsumptive activities such as observing or feeding wildlife, but were more likely to be involved in hunting. However, substantial numbers participated in each type of fish and wildlife activity.

**Recommendations for marketing to sporadic contributors:**

1. Because this group is already aware of the program, provide more detailed information about ongoing and successfully completed projects.
2. Sources of information with the highest potential to reach this audience would be tax accountants, newspapers and TV.

**Potential New Contributors: 14.3% of tax filers; 1,055,000 people**

This market segment did not contribute in 1988, were unsure if they contributed prior to 1988, but said they will contribute in the future. Awareness of the program is probably the biggest barrier to contribution for this group. Less than half (43%) of potential new contributors were aware of the RAGTW program before receiving the questionnaire. However, those that were aware had a generally favorable opinion of the program. The most likely reason for lack of awareness is that over half of this group (57%) did not fill out their own tax form. Potential new contributors participated in feeding birds and other wildlife at a much higher rate than any other market segment (69% versus 44% to 53% in 1988).

**Recommendations for marketing to potential new contributors:**

1. Because less than half of this group are currently aware of the program, message content should focus on creating awareness.
2. Since over half of this group did not fill out their own tax form, sources other than the tax booklet must be used to reach this group. Reaching tax accountants is important to reaching 28.8% of this group. Because a high percentage of this group feeds birds, many could be reached by placing information on packages of bird seed sold in New York or by posters placed near large retail outlets for bird seed. Other sources frequently accessed by this group include newspapers and TV. Few read DEC publications or belong to conservation organizations.



## Future Program Considerations and Recommendations

This analysis suggests that for the immediate future, RAGTW should focus on the 29% of tax filers that fall into one of 3 market segments: continuous, sporadic, and potential contributors. Thus, to guide overall program direction, it may be useful to look at these 3 market segments combined as an umbrella target audience.

Of the 2,156,000 tax filers that comprise the umbrella target market for RAGTW (the continuous, sporadic, and potential new contributors), 64% reside downstate. About 66% are aware of the program. About 55% prepare their own taxes, 29% use a tax accountant, and 16% have someone else prepare their tax form. About 72% rely on newspapers as a source of fish and wildlife information.

Given the above information, we make the following recommendations. These recommendations would probably need to be implemented over several years.

**Recommendation 1:** At least 65% of the RAGTW promotions budget should go downstate.

**Rationale:** Nearly two-thirds of the target contributing audience is downstate. DEC is less well known downstate than upstate. Many of the current promotional mechanisms that have little associated direct costs (e.g., notices in the tax guide, notices in *The Conservationist*, PSAs) can continue to be used for upstate audiences.

**Recommendation 2:** RAGTW needs to develop the image of a successful citizen-based program that is making a difference with regard to environmental protection and management in New York.

**Rationale:** About two-thirds of the target audience is aware of RAGTW. Many of these people are now seeking more information about the program, such as what the funds are being used for. Press releases that begin to provide additional information about successfully completed projects can also help build awareness for the one-third of the target audience that are not aware of the program.

**Recommendation 2A:** DEC should facilitate an expanded press release and general communications program that puts far more fish and wildlife news (especially other than sportfishing and game news) before the public.

**Rationale:** Although we have not done a systematic evaluation of this topic, we believe that the current system of outdoor columns aimed primarily toward sportsmen does a reasonably good job of reaching that audience (it would be revealing to do a content analysis of those columns to see how frequently RAGTW news appears there, however). Of primary concern is that no means analogous to the outdoors column exists to reach the majority of the RAGTW target audience that neither hunts nor fishes. Given that 72% of the target audience now relies upon newspapers as a source for fish and wildlife information, this may be the single greatest barrier to substantially increasing RAGTW contributions. Indeed, it would seem to be an excellent investment of some RAGTW funds to develop a pilot program that would result in periodic (e.g., weekly) general interest



fish and wildlife "news" features that would be informational and educational in format.

**Recommendation 3:** DEC should continue to identify tax accountants as a specific audience of promotional activities and continue specific efforts to reach this audience.

**Rationale:** Tax accountants are the "gatekeepers" to 629,000 tax filers who fall within the primary target audience for RAGTW promotions. Innovative marketing mechanisms should be investigated to reach this audience, persuade them to cooperate, and if possible, to recognize their cooperation.

Continued periodic evaluation of overall program promotion efforts and specific strategies is important to the long-term success of the program. We suggest continued overall evaluations on approximately a five-year basis.



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## **INTRODUCTION**

In 1982 the New York State Legislature authorized the Department of Taxation and Finance (DTF) to include space on the state's personal income tax forms whereby taxpayers could contribute to the Conservation Fund in support of fish and wildlife programs. Thus began New York's "Return a Gift to Wildlife" (RAGTW) program, administered by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). In 1983, the Human Dimensions Research Unit (HDRU) at Cornell University (then the Outdoor Recreation Research Unit) conducted a study to evaluate the first-year efforts of promoting the program, and to gain insight into developing and promoting the program in future years (Connelly et al. 1984). The newness and lack of publicity of the program were seen as its primary limitations at that time. Specific recommendations were made to help direct marketing efforts toward high potential contributors.

In light of the recent Legislative Commission on Expenditure Review report (1989) which found a stable contribution level but one which was not keeping up with inflation, DEC decided to reevaluate its program marketing efforts and again contracted with the HDRU to conduct a market research study of New York tax filing households. The purpose of the study was to provide information on contributors, noncontributors, and potential contributing groups to ensure development of the most effective marketing strategies and promotional activities. Additionally, information was sought on the public's desires for future program direction. Specific objectives of the study were:

1. To ascertain the effectiveness of DEC efforts to create an awareness of the RAGTW program and to influence taxpayers to contribute to the program.
2. To ascertain characteristics and interests of contributors beyond information included on the tax form and available from the DTF.
3. To determine contributors' attitudes toward the program and how these attitudes affect their decision to contribute.
4. To gain an understanding of the reasons for or against contributing and the public's desires for future program direction.
5. To estimate the size and characteristics of one or more market segments which have the highest potential to contribute to the program.



## METHODS

A mail questionnaire was developed to assess tax filers' knowledge of and interest in the RAGTW program. Questions dealt specifically with: awareness of the program and sources of information, perception of the program, information on tax filing behavior, past contribution history and reasons for contribution decision, prioritization of how funds should be spent, probability of contributing in the future, participation in wildlife-related recreation activities, sources of wildlife information, and socio-demographic characteristics. For the exact wording of each question, see Appendix A.

The previous survey of New York households found that a higher percentage of respondents reported contributing to RAGTW than actually did contribute (Connelly et al. 1984). This phenomena, found by other researchers as well, is often referred to as the social desirability or prestige bias. Eliminating this bias required a sample of known contributors and noncontributors. The DTF in New York is the only source for such a sample. They agreed to draw the sample and conduct the survey via subcontract, thus providing anonymity of tax filers as provided by New York State law.

The DTF systematically selected a sample of 4,000 names from 1988 tax records in 4 strata such that 1,000 each were upstate 1988 contributors and noncontributors, and 1,000 each were downstate contributors and noncontributors. Questionnaires were color coded as to contributors versus noncontributors; no other identifying information was provided to HDRU. For this study, downstate was defined as New York City, Long Island, Westchester, and Rockland Counties.

Questionnaires were sent to the 4,000 tax filers on October 20, 1989 by the DTF. Up to 3 follow-up mailings were sent to nonrespondents during the end of October and November. Responses were sent to an Albany Post Office box, and then forwarded to HDRU staff who coded and analyzed the data using the SPSS-X computer package (SPSS Inc. 1986). Responses were weighted based on the number of 1988 tax filers upstate and downstate, and by contributors and noncontributors. This allowed total population estimates of interest.





## RESULTS

The results of the survey will be presented in 4 main sections: (1) survey response and socio-demographic biases, (2) program visibility and image, (3) comparison of 1988 contributors with noncontributors, and (4) market segmentation of potential contributors.

### Survey Response and Socio-demographic Biases

Of the 4,000 questionnaires mailed, 67 were returned undeliverable and 1,548 were returned with codeable information, resulting in a 39% response rate (adjusted for undeliverables). The response rate, which varied considerably by stratum, was highest for upstate contributors (61%), and lowest for downstate noncontributors (22%); 42% of downstate contributors and 33% of upstate noncontributors responded.

A comparison of respondents' socio-demographic characteristics with 1980 census data and DTF data can be found in Appendix B. Briefly, a racial difference was found between respondents and the 1980 census (higher percentage white among respondents). Contributing respondents had higher household incomes than the adjusted gross incomes of all contributing taxpayers. Furthermore, contributions of respondents were larger than those of nonrespondents. The lack of comparability for race and income measures prevented weighting the data to account for biases. With respect to race, respondents were compared with the 1980 population, all of whom did not have to file tax forms. We would expect that a disproportionate number of minority members did not file a state tax form. With respect to income, adjusted gross income would not correspond to household income for people living together but filing separate tax returns. Although the amount of contribution differed somewhat between responding and nonresponding contributors, weighting for this bias did not change the results of further socio-demographic analysis. Therefore, we did not weight contributors for this bias.

From these socio-demographic comparisons, we concluded that some bias exists in the data towards white, higher income respondents, but the exact amount of bias can not be



determined, which prevents any weighting of the data. This bias should be kept in mind however, while reviewing the other results of the study.

### Program Visibility and Image

Over half of the respondents had heard of the RAGTW program. This is up from 1983 when approximately one-third had heard of the program. Interestingly, 16% of the contributors said they had not heard of the program prior to receiving the questionnaire (Table 1). This occurred more frequently downstate, where 21% of contributors said they had not heard of the program. Two possible explanations exist. First, respondents may not remember the program because most information about it appeared at tax time, approximately six months prior to their receiving the survey. Second, someone other than the respondent (e.g. tax accountant, spouse, friend) may have filled out the tax form and thereby contributed. The majority (59%) of those who contributed and don't recall hearing about RAGTW had someone else prepare their tax form.

Table 1. Knowledge of the "Return a Gift to Wildlife" Program by Whether or Not Respondents Contributed and Their Residence Area.

Heard of the "Return a Gift to Wildlife" Program	Contributors			Noncontributors		
	State- wide	Upstate	Downstate	State- wide	Upstate	Downstate
	Percent					
Yes	83.7	91.9	78.7	52.2	65.1	44.1
No	16.3	8.1	21.3	47.8	34.9	55.9



For a large majority of respondents who knew about the program, the tax instruction booklet was the most clearly remembered source of information (Table 2). Most recalled the instructions for contributing in the tax booklet, while few, especially downstate, recalled the ad that was placed in the tax booklet. Two other sources of information were recalled by over 10% of respondents -- TV and DEC publications (most likely *The Conservationist*). On average, upstate respondents recalled more sources of information than downstate respondents (1.8 versus 1.4).

Respondents who were aware of the program were asked if they recalled specific information about RAGTW. Only about one-fifth could recall specific information at the time they received the survey (Table 3). Of those, most recalled favorable information, but 13% of upstate respondents compared with less than 1% of downstate respondents could recall specific, unfavorable information about RAGTW. This suggests some recognition upstate of the messages of those who oppose the RAGTW program.

Even though there was some recognition upstate of unfavorable information about RAGTW, relatively few contributors or noncontributors had an unfavorable perception of the program (Table 4). However, over one-third of noncontributors had no opinion about the program.

#### Comparison of 1988 Contributors with Noncontributors

Of the more than 7 million resident income tax filers in New York State, 3% contributed an average of \$8 to the RAGTW program in 1988. A majority contributed \$5 or less. There was essentially no difference between upstate and downstate tax filers in the percent contributing or the average amount of contribution. However, since more tax filers reside downstate, most of the contributions (62%) come from downstate filers. Interestingly, respondents' belief about whether they had contributed was not always accurate (Table 5). Overall, 83% of contributors reported having contributed, while only 64% of noncontributors reported not contributing. We would expect some people to say they had contributed when in fact they had not (14%), but we did not expect those who had



Table 2. Sources of "Return a Gift to Wildlife" Information Remembered and Most Clearly Remembered by Respondents, Overall and by Residence Area.

Sources of "Return a Gift to Wildlife" Information	Statewide		Upstate		Downstate	
	% remembered*	% most remembered	% remembered*	% most remembered	% remembered*	% most remembered
Tax instruction booklet	87.4	79.6	86.2	77.7	88.6	81.2
Instructions	57.1		55.3		58.9	
Ad	14.2		20.1		8.9	
DEC Publications	13.9	5.5	18.7	6.0	9.6	5.0
TV	13.9	3.1	15.3	3.8	12.7	2.5
Tax Accountant	7.9	4.8	6.2	4.6	9.4	5.0
Exhibits	6.9	1.5	10.9	1.9	3.3	1.2
Newspaper	5.0	<1	10.2	<1	<1	<1
DEC Office	5.6	1.3	8.2	1.3	3.3	1.3
Magazines	4.7	2.0	5.3	1.3	4.2	2.5
Place of Employment	4.5	1.3	4.8	1.3	4.2	1.2
Radio	1.7	<1	2.4	<1	1.0	<1
Other	4.3	<1	6.6	2.0	2.2	<1
Mean Number of sources	1.5		1.8		1.4	

\*Percentages in this category add to more than 100% because respondents could recall more than 1 source of information.





Table 3. Recollection of Specific Information, Favorable or Unfavorable about "Return a Gift to Wildlife", Overall and by Residence Area.

	<u>Statewide</u>	<u>Upstate</u> <u>Percent</u>	<u>Downstate</u>
Recall specific information about "Return a Gift to Wildlife"	21.1	26.8	15.9
<u>For those who recalled specific information:</u>			
Recall favorable information	90.4*	84.1	99.9
Recall unfavorable information	7.8	12.7	<1

\*Respondents could recall both favorable and unfavorable information.

Table 4. Overall Perception of the Program by Whether or Not Respondents Contributed and Their Residence Area.

	<u>Contributors</u>			<u>Noncontributors</u>		
	<u>State-</u> <u>wide</u>	<u>Upstate</u>	<u>Down-</u> <u>state</u>	<u>State-</u> <u>wide</u>	<u>Upstate</u>	<u>Down-</u> <u>state</u>
	<u>Percent</u>					
<u>Overall Perception of Program</u>						
Highly favorable	50.3	51.1	49.6	25.4	25.9	25.0
Somewhat favorable	26.1	28.6	24.3	22.3	15.7	28.4
About equally favorable and unfavorable	3.2	3.6	2.9	10.1	13.7	6.8
Somewhat or highly unfavorable	0.8	1.4	0.4	2.9	3.5	2.3
No opinion	19.6	15.3	22.8	39.2	41.2	37.5



Table 5. Respondents' Recollection About Whether They Contributed in 1988 by Their Actual Contribution Status and by Residence Area.

Respondents' Recollection About Contribution in 1988	Contributors			Noncontributors		
	State- wide	Upstate	Down- state	State- wide	Upstate	Down- state
	Percent					
Contributed	83.0	86.2	81.0	13.6	11.1	15.2
Did not contribute	7.8	7.5	8.0	64.0	67.8	61.6
Unsure	9.2	6.3	11.0	22.4	21.1	23.2

contributed to say they had not (8%). Memory recall problems, social desirability bias, and someone other than the respondent filling out the tax form all likely contribute to these discrepancies. For the remainder of this section we will compare *known* contributors with noncontributors, regardless of their belief about their action.

A likely reason for noncontributors' confusion about whether or not they contributed was that 51% had someone else fill out their form (versus 26% of contributors) (Table 6). The other person filling out the form was usually a tax accountant. Downstate, 41% of noncontributors had their tax form filled out by a tax accountant.

Table 6. Who Prepared the 1988 Tax Form by Whether or Not Respondents Contributed and Their Residence Area.

1988 Tax Form Preparer	Contributors			Noncontributors		
	State- wide	Upstate	Down- state	State- wide	Upstate	Down- state
	Percent					
Self	73.9*	76.3	72.2	49.1	55.3	45.1
Tax Accountant	16.3	14.7	17.4	35.6	26.8	41.1
Spouse	4.9	5.8	4.4	4.5	6.0	3.6
Other	4.9	3.2	6.0	10.8	11.9	10.2

\*Statistically significant difference between contributors and noncontributors statewide.



Since the RAGTW program involves contributing via filing the tax form, we hypothesized that people receiving tax refunds would be more likely to contribute than people who owed tax, since the former would have a reduced refund and the latter would owe even more if they contributed. Table 7 shows that a higher percentage of respondents owing tax (10%) contributed than those receiving a refund (2%). This is probably because those who owed taxes had larger incomes and could more easily afford to contribute. However, because most taxpayers receive refunds, 81% of total contributions came from people receiving refunds, while 19% came from people owing tax.

Table 7. Whether or Not Respondents Contributed to "Return a Gift to Wildlife" in 1988 by 1988 Tax Status.

<u>Contributed to RAGTW in 1988</u>	<u>Owed Tax</u>	<u>Received a Refund</u>
		<u>Percent</u>
Yes	9.9	2.4
No	90.1	97.6

Respondents who believed they contributed were then asked to check off reasons for contributing. With one exception, about two-thirds checked each of the 3 options: "want to support DEC's fish and wildlife programs," "the tax check off is a convenient way to contribute," and "like fish and wildlife" (Table 8). Downstate respondents were significantly less likely to choose the option "like fish and wildlife." This may indicate that fewer downstate residents have an orientation toward fish and wildlife, which has implications for both DEC programs and marketing of RAGTW.

The reason most often checked for not contributing, especially among downstate respondents, was that they were unaware of RAGTW (Table 9). Few checked the option that it was hard to contribute when they already owed tax, confirming our earlier finding that owing tax was not a major deterrent to contribution. Interestingly, more upstate than downstate respondents (10% vs. 2%) did not approve of how the funds were being spent. Although the sample size was small, those who did not approve of how the funds were



Table 8. Reasons for Contributing to "Return a Gift to Wildlife" for Respondents Who Thought They Contributed, by Residence Area.

<u>Reasons for Contributing</u>	<u>Upstate</u>	<u>Downstate</u>
	<u>Percent Listing as a Reason*</u>	
Want to support DEC's fish and wildlife programs	68.3	63.1
Tax checkoff is a convenient way to contribute	66.4	65.9
Like fish and wildlife	67.3	57.7**
Other reasons	6.3	5.4

\*Percents add to more than 100% because respondents could give more than 1 reason.

\*\*Statistically significant difference between upstate and downstate respondents.





Table 9. Reasons for Not Contributing to "Return a Gift to Wildlife" for Respondents Who Thought They Did Not Contribute, by Residence Area.

<u>Reasons for Not Contributing</u>	<u>Upstate</u>	<u>Downstate</u>
	<u>Percent Listing as a Reason*</u>	
Unaware of program	34.8	62.1
Overlooked the option	16.6	13.0
Not convinced that additional funds are needed	14.2	8.3
Already give enough money to wildlife conservation programs	12.6	7.1
Not interested in wildlife	6.7	7.1
Do not approve of how the funds are being spent	9.9	2.4
When I owe taxes it is hard to pay more to contribute	4.7	3.0
Other reasons (written in by respondents)	22.9	15.4
Cannot afford to contribute	8.7	2.4
Don't know how funds are spent	4.3	4.7
Other	9.9	8.3

\*Percents add to more than 100% because respondents could give more than 1 reason.

being spent were much more likely than those who did to have also heard unfavorable information about RAGTW.

Even though a list of 7 reasons for not contributing was presented, almost one-fifth of respondents wrote in another reason in the space provided. The most common type of additional reason was lack of money, but a reason written in by 4 to 5% of respondents was that they did not know how the money was being spent.

All respondents, regardless of whether they had contributed or not, were then asked how they felt the money should be spent, i.e. what type of programs should be given the



highest priority for funding. Because no differences were found in priorities for programs between contributors and noncontributors or upstate and downstate respondents, all respondents were grouped together; an overall mean priority rating is presented in Table 10. The highest priority program was preservation of threatened or endangered species. (This was especially true of downstate noncontributors where 52% rated it the highest priority.) Next and almost equally highly rated was providing clean habitats for all fish and wildlife. The 2 remaining options of wildlife recovery/rehabilitation and public communication and education were rated somewhat lower. Respondents could also write in programs not listed which they felt should be funded by RAGTW. Programs most often mentioned were providing more habitat for wildlife, keeping the current amount of habitat (i.e. not losing habitat to development), and increasing law enforcement.

Table 10. Mean Priority Rating for Funding Various Types of Fish and Wildlife Programs with "Return a Gift to Wildlife" Funds.

<u>Types of Programs</u>	<u>Mean Priority Rating for Funding Programs*</u>
Threatened or endangered species preservation	1.8
Providing clean habitats for all fish and wildlife	2.1
Wildlife recovery/rehabilitation	2.8
Public communication and education	3.3

\*Priority was rated by respondents where 1 = Highest Priority to 4 = Lowest Priority.

From a comparison of recreation activity patterns, it was noted that more contributors than noncontributors were involved in nonconsumptive activities such as observing, feeding, and photographing wildlife (Table 11). Consumptive activities such as fishing and hunting were more common among upstate respondents, regardless of whether they contributed to RAGTW. Contributors were more likely to belong to a conservation or environmental organization (34% upstate, 22% downstate) than noncontributors (13%). The



Table 11. Participation in Wildlife-related Activities, by Whether or Not Respondents Contributed and Their Residence Area.

	Contributors					Noncontributors						
	Upstate		Downstate			Upstate		Downstate				
Wildlife-related Activities	Ever participated in 1988	Avg. Number Days in 1988	Ever participated in 1988	Participate in 1988	Avg. Number Days in 1988	Ever participated in 1988	Participate in 1988	Ever participated in 1988	Participate in 1988	Avg. Number Days in 1988		
Observe wildlife	86.0	66.2	141	78.6	56.2	128	62.7	47.1	152	69.4	49.1	132
Feed birds and other wildlife	71.7	55.6	145	69.6	51.5	126	57.6	40.9	135	79.2	54.3	108
Fishing	58.2	42.1	25	44.6	27.4	22	59.1	42.4	30	45.7	31.2	23
Boating/canoeing	59.5	43.4	19	43.2	30.6	13	47.1	33.0	14	44.5	30.6	16
Hiking/backpacking	57.5	42.1	17	44.3	30.4	13	34.4	25.4	14	33.5	22.0	12
Tent camping	49.6	32.2	12	31.5	18.1	12	41.7	27.9	11	32.4	17.9	9
Photographing wildlife	43.0	31.0	19	39.0	27.1	17	30.8	21.4	15	36.4	23.7	9
Hunting	28.8	22.1	21	9.8	7.4	15	41.3	33.0	25	13.3	8.1	16



5 most popular organizations, to which at least 10% of responding organization members belonged, were Greenpeace, Nature Conservancy, National Wildlife Federation, Local Rod & Gun Clubs, and Sierra Club.

Socio-demographic comparisons indicated that contributors had higher average household incomes than noncontributors (upstate: \$36,000 versus \$27,000; downstate: \$41,000 versus \$38,000). Contributors were also somewhat better educated than noncontributors (average of 15 versus 13 years of education).

### Market Segmentation of Potential Contributors

Various ways exist to divide respondents into market segments, but the one deemed most relevant in this case was to use past contribution history and future potential to contribute as stated by the respondent. Respondents were divided into the 4 groups shown in Table 12 and the size of each market segment was estimated. Each group and its relevant characteristics will be discussed separately below. The data to support this section are presented in Tables 12-21 and can be found at the end of the section.

#### **CONTINUOUS CONTRIBUTORS: 1.8% OF TAX FILERS; 136,000 PEOPLE**

This group was named "Continuous Contributors", because they contributed in 1988, said they thought they contributed in 1987 and prior to 1987, and said they will contribute in the future. Thus they are steady contributors that quite likely can be counted on in the future. Overall, contributors represent 3% of all tax filers and continuous contributors represent two-thirds of all contributors.

Over 90% of continuous contributors were aware of the program. The tax instruction booklet was remembered by almost everyone (Table 13). It was also the most clearly remembered source for approximately 80% of respondents. DEC publications (like *The Conservationist*), TV, and newspapers were the next most frequently remembered sources for continuous contributors. Newspapers were listed by 13% of continuous contributors, but less than 6% of other groups mentioned newspapers.





Three-quarters of this segment prepared their own tax form (Table 15). A higher percentage of continuous contributors owed tax in 1988 than other groups (16% versus 1 to 6%). This implies that owing tax does not detract from the likelihood of contributing.

Socio-demographic characteristics were very similar across all market segments. About 40% of continuous contributors came from upstate New York (Table 12). Continuous contributors had the highest average age (44), education (15 years), and income (\$40,000). They had been residents of New York for an average of 36 years.

The wildlife-activity patterns of the continuous market segment are noteworthy. This group was more likely to be interested in nonconsumptive wildlife activities than other groups (Table 18). For example, over 60% observed wildlife in 1988 and 53% fed birds or other wildlife. They were somewhat less likely to be involved in hunting than other groups (14% versus 18% to 25%).

As could be expected from their involvement in wildlife-related activities, continuous contributors were most likely to belong to conservation or environmental organizations (Table 19). Over one-quarter of continuous contributors belonged to an average of 2 organizations.

Seventy percent of continuous contributors listed newspapers as current sources of information regarding New York fish and wildlife. Over one-third of continuous contributors versus less than one-quarter of other market segments received information from conservation organization publications. Therefore, conservation organizations and newspapers may be good vehicles for disseminating more in-depth information to this already aware group of contributors.

#### **SPORADIC CONTRIBUTORS: 13.0% OF TAX FILERS; 965,000 PEOPLE**

The second market segment is named "Sporadic Contributors" because these respondents have contributed at some time in the past and say they are likely to contribute in the future. They comprise the other one-third of contributors in any given year.

Like continuous contributors, most sporadic contributors were aware of the RAGTW program and remembered seeing information about it in the tax booklet (Table 13). What



distinguishes this group most is the large minority (32%) who had their tax form prepared by a tax accountant (Table 15). About 20% of this group mentioned the tax accountant as a source of information, 4 times the frequency of other market segments (Table 13). For 13% of sporadic contributors, the tax accountant was the most clearly remembered source of information. Other current sources of wildlife information reported by a majority of respondents include newspapers and TV (Table 20).

In terms of socio-demographic characteristics, sporadic contributors were very similar to continuous contributors. About 40% of sporadic contributors came from upstate New York (Table 12). They had an average age of 40, education of 14 years, household income of \$36,000, and New York residency of 36 years (Table 17).

The other major difference between sporadic and continuous contributors was in terms of wildlife-related activity patterns. Sporadic contributors were less likely to be involved in nonconsumptive activities such as observing or feeding wildlife, and were more likely to be involved in hunting (Table 18). However, substantial proportions of sporadic contributors participated in hunting, fishing, and nonconsumptive activities.

#### **POTENTIAL NEW CONTRIBUTORS: 14.3% OF TAX FILERS; 1,055,000 PEOPLE**

The third market segment is termed "Potential New Contributors" because they did not contribute in 1988, were unsure if they contributed prior to 1988, but said they will contribute in the future.

Awareness of the program is probably the biggest barrier to contribution for this group. Less than half (43%) of potential new contributors were aware of the RAGTW program before receiving the questionnaire. However, those that were aware had a generally favorable opinion of the program (Table 14). The most likely reason for lack of awareness is that over half of this group (57%) did not fill out their own tax form. The number using a tax accountant versus another preparer such as a spouse or friend was about equal. Increasing the awareness of RAGTW to this group will require additional sources of information beyond the tax booklet.



Potential new contributors were somewhat more likely than other market segments to come from downstate (68% versus 60% to 61%). This segment was on average slightly younger, had fewer years of education, and had lower average income than the other 2 contributor groups (Table 17). Virtually all potential new contributors received a refund on their 1988 tax return (Table 16).

Once again, differences in wildlife-related activity patterns were noteworthy for this group. Potential new contributors participated in feeding birds and other wildlife at a much higher rate than any other market segment (69% versus 44% to 53%). They also spent more days per year than other groups participating in various consumptive and nonconsumptive activities.

Sources of information about New York wildlife for the potential new contributor segment were similar to the other 2 contributor groups, with newspapers and TV being mentioned by a majority of respondents. Only about 20% belonged to a conservation organization and very few (14%) read DEC publications. Thus, other mass media sources will have to be used to reach this group.

#### **NONCONTRIBUTORS: 70.9% OF TAX FILERS; 5,244,000 PEOPLE**

The fourth segment consists of "Noncontributors," who are not likely to contribute in the future. Virtually none of them have contributed in the past and all say they will probably not contribute in the future.

Within this group is a very small segment (less than 1%) who had contributed in the past but said they will not contribute in the future. We investigated the feasibility of analyzing this segment as a separate set of "discontented contributors" to try to determine why they had contributed, but would not contribute in the future. Upon close examination of their data, however, we noted that over half of them were probably not aware that they had contributed in 1988 because someone else filled out their form. The remaining members of this subsegment gave various reasons for not contributing in the future (i.e. moving out-of-state, don't have any money, not interested in wildlife), but did not seem discontented with the operation of the RAGTW program. Therefore, we concluded that



few known contributors were "turned off" from contributing to the program. This segment of less than 1% was therefore grouped with the noncontributors because they generally lack potential to contribute in the future.

Overall, only about half of noncontributors were aware of the program. Those who were aware were the most likely of any market segment to have an unfavorable impression of the program, yet only 4% had an unfavorable impression (Table 14). Like potential new contributors, less than half of this noncontributor segment filled out their own tax form. Those who used other preparers were more likely to use a tax accountant.

Socio-demographically, noncontributors were similar to potential new contributors except that more (about half) had one or more children living at home, compared to 40% for potential new contributors. Noncontributors were the least likely to be involved in wildlife-related activities (Table 18) or to belong to a conservation organization (Table 19).

Table 12. Estimated Number of Tax Filers and Their Region of Residence for Each Market Segment.

<u>Market Segments</u>	<u>Estimated Number</u>	<u>Percent of all tax filers</u>	<u>Upstate</u>	<u>Downstate</u>
Continuous Contributors	136,000	1.8	39.9	60.1
Sporadic Contributors	965,000	13.0	38.5	61.5
Potential New Contributors	1,055,000	14.3	32.4	67.6
Noncontributors	5,244,000	70.9	39.0	61.0





Table 13. Awareness of the "Return a Gift to Wildlife" Program and Sources of Information by Market Segment.

	<u>Continuous Contributors</u>	<u>Sporadic Contributors</u>	<u>Potential New Contributors Percent</u>	<u>Non- contributors</u>
Heard of the "Return a Gift to Wildlife program	91.0	87.6	43.2	46.6
If Respondent was Aware: <u>Sources of Information</u>				
Tax Instruction Booklet	96.4	87.7	91.9	88.0
Instructions	75.8	68.5	66.6	64.9
Ad	21.9	21.8	9.7	15.9
DEC Publications	16.3	21.9	11.1	11.7
TV	13.8	12.6	6.1	15.0
Tax Accountant	5.1	19.6	4.1	6.0
Exhibits	6.5	8.5	4.1	6.6
Newspapers	12.7	5.8	4.1	4.5
DEC Offices	7.2	8.0	6.1	5.1
Magazines	4.7	7.3	5.0	4.5
Place of Employment	3.6	2.3	<1	6.8
Radio	2.2	<1	2.0	1.1
Other	2.9	4.2	2.0	4.3
Mean number of sources	1.7	1.8	1.4	1.5



Table 14. Overall Perception of the Program for Those Who Had Heard of the Program by Market Segment.

<u>Overall Perception of Program</u>	<u>Continuous Contributors</u>	<u>Sporadic Contributors</u>	<u>Potential New Contributors</u> Percent	<u>Non- contributors</u>
Highly favorable	53.3	41.8	46.8	15.3
Somewhat favorable	25.9	18.3	29.8	22.8
About equally favorable and unfavorable	2.5	4.7	0.0	13.5
Somewhat or highly unfavorable	0.6	1.2	0.0	3.8
No opinion	17.7	34.0	23.4	44.6

Table 15. Who Prepared the 1988 Tax Form by Market Segment.

<u>1988 Tax Form Preparer</u>	<u>Continuous Contributors</u>	<u>Sporadic Contributors</u>	<u>Potential New Contributors</u> Percent	<u>Non- contributors</u>
Self	78.5	64.5	42.8	47.7
Tax Accountant	13.8	31.8	28.8	37.8
Other	7.7	3.7	28.4	14.5



Table 16. 1988 Tax Status by Market Segment.

<u>1988 Tax Status</u>	<u>Continuous Contributors</u>	<u>Sporadic Contributors</u>	<u>Potential New Contributors</u> <u>Percent</u>	<u>Non-contributors</u>
Owed tax	15.7	5.6	0.9	3.9
Received a refund	84.3	94.4	99.1	96.1

Table 17. Socio-demographic Characteristics by Market Segment.

<u>Socio-demographic Characteristics</u>	<u>Continuous Contributors</u>	<u>Sporadic Contributors</u>	<u>Potential New Contributors</u> <u>Percent</u>	<u>Non-contributors</u>
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	62.0	62.7	52.2	49.5
Female	38.0	37.3	47.8	50.5
<b>Number of children living at home</b>				
None	59.6	61.1	59.8	50.6
One or more	40.4	38.9	40.2	49.4
Mean number	1.9	2.4	2.1	1.9
	<u>Mean</u>			
Age	43.7	40.4	36.3	37.6
Years as a New York resident	36.5	36.1	33.7	33.8
Number of years in school	15.2	14.1	13.3	13.5
Income	39.9	35.8	32.3	33.6



Table 18. Participation in Wildlife-related Activities by Market Segment.

Wildlife-related Activities	Continuous Contributors			Sporadic Contributors			Potential New Contributors			Noncontributors		
	Ever Parti- cipated in 1988	Parti- cipated in 1988	Avg. Number Days in 1988	Ever Parti- cipated in 1988	Parti- cipated in 1988	Avg. Number Days in 1988	Ever Parti- cipated in 1988	Parti- cipated in 1988	Avg. Number Days in 1988	Ever Parti- cipated in 1988	Parti- cipated in 1988	Avg. Number Days in 1988
Observe wildlife	83.1	60.8	139	65.5	46.7	147	71.9	59.4	201	63.4	42.5	120
Feed birds and other wildlife	70.6	52.9	137	61.8	44.2	118	83.8	68.6	115	68.8	44.1	116
Fishing	51.3	33.8	22	58.4	34.6	24	48.7	39.5	57	51.5	36.0	21
Boating/canoeing	52.8	37.7	16	53.1	34.7	10	46.5	35.1	22	43.4	28.9	15
Hiking/backpacking	51.5	36.2	14	39.7	28.5	11	40.5	31.9	21	31.3	20.0	11
Tent camping	39.7	23.8	11	53.7	37.3	9	33.0	23.3	12	33.7	18.9	10
Photographing wildlife	42.1	29.8	19	42.7	20.8	11	30.8	22.2	22	32.6	22.3	9
Hunting	18.2	14.0	18	33.8	25.2	19	24.4	19.5	36	24.4	17.7	22





Table 19. Membership in Conservation or Environmental Organizations by Market Segment.

	<u>Continuous Contributors</u>	<u>Sporadic Contributors</u>	<u>Potential New Contributors</u> Percent	<u>Non- contributors</u>
Belong to a conservation or environmental organization	27.4	14.3	18.8	12.4
<u>If respondent belonged:</u>				
Avg. Number of Organizations	1.9	1.2	1.6	1.4

Table 20. Current Sources of New York Fish and Wildlife Information by Market Segment.

<u>Current sources of New York Fish and Wildlife Information</u>	<u>Continuous Contributors</u>	<u>Sporadic Contributors</u>	<u>Potential New Contributors</u> Percent*	<u>Non- contributors</u>
Newspaper	70.0	64.0	78.7	61.5
TV	55.6	56.7	63.5	59.0
Friends, family	28.7	29.4	29.5	30.0
Radio	21.8	30.1	24.9	21.4
Conservation organization publications	35.5	22.7	22.9	17.3
Exhibits	21.1	12.3	24.4	12.9
DEC publications	23.9	20.6	14.2	8.4
DEC personnel	6.6	13.7	3.1	3.6
Other	9.7	6.3	15.2	10.8

\*Percents add to more than 100% because respondents could check more than 1 source of information.



### Magazine Readership

Magazines were seen by DEC as a potential avenue for RAGTW information, so respondents were asked to list the magazines they read regularly. Most respondents listed at least one magazine that they read frequently. The most frequently mentioned magazines are listed in Table 21. Little difference was found between market segments in terms of magazine readership.

Table 21. The Top Magazines Read Regularly by Market Segment.

<u>Top Magazines Read Regularly</u>	<u>Continuous Contributors</u>	<u>Sporadic Contributors</u>	<u>Potential New Contributors</u> <u>Percent</u>	<u>Non- contributors</u>
Readers Digest	17.0	21.5	12.7	20.0
Better Homes & Gardens	8.9	8.4	10.9	8.7
National Geographic	13.3	13.5	8.3	6.9
Field & Stream	6.6	12.3	9.6	4.2
Time	9.7	9.6	5.2	3.9
The Conservationist	8.7	8.9	4.8	3.0
Outdoor Life	4.3	6.3	4.4	2.4



## **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Summary and Recommendations by Market Segment**

Since 1984 when the RAGTW program was first evaluated, considerable promotion efforts have been undertaken. These have resulted in an increased awareness of the program throughout the state. Now, over half of tax-filing households are aware of the program. The vast majority of people who were aware of the program had a favorable opinion of it. There is some evidence of "bad press" occurring in upstate areas of the state, and this study showed initial indications of awareness of this by taxpayers. Also, some evidence was presented to suggest that this may be correlated to dissatisfaction about how the funds are currently being spent.

Although awareness of the program has increased, few tax filers (approximately 3% in any given year) actually contribute to the program. Most who contribute fill out their own tax form. Noncontributors were much more likely to have someone else (usually a tax accountant) fill out their form. This was especially true for downstate noncontributors.

Respondents, whether contributors or not, would like more information on how their contributions are being spent. There was general agreement among respondents about how they thought the money should be spent. They felt the highest priority should be given to protecting threatened or endangered species, followed by providing clean habitats for all fish and wildlife.

From this information we would make the following 3 general recommendations:

1. Because contributors generally fill out their own tax forms and noncontributors are less likely to, marketing staff should continue to devote time toward informing tax accountants about RAGTW and encouraging them to discuss it with their clients.
2. DEC should provide more information to the public on how the RAGTW funds are being spent.
3. Although very few taxpayers have a negative image of the program, we would suggest that DEC adopt a medium-range strategy (3 to 5 years) for addressing this topic in a positive way. Such a strategy would include (1) continuing to fund new efforts, many of which are of interest to taxpayers, and (2) making results of past programs more visible to the public.



This report also presents what we believe is a more realistic estimate of the size of various market segments with potential to contribute to RAGTW than was possible in the 1984 evaluation. Three segments totaling approximately 2.1 million tax filers were identified as having some potential to contribute to RAGTW. However, few of these exhibited continuous contribution behavior in the past. The challenge will be for DEC marketing specialists to most effectively focus their efforts to reach these 3 segments. The following specific recommendations developed from the data in this report are made for each group:

**Continuous Contributors: 136,000 Tax Filers**

1. Because this group is already aware of the program, message content should focus on more in-depth information about specific projects being funded by RAGTW. Projects with appeal to people interested in nonconsumptive activities should be highlighted.
2. Sources of information most likely to reach this audience are conservation organizations and newspapers.

**Sporadic Contributors: 965,000 Tax Filers**

1. This group is already aware of the program, so message content should focus on in-depth information about projects. Substantial portions of this group are interested in hunting, fishing, and nonconsumptive activities.
2. Sources of information with the highest potential to reach this audience would be the tax accountant, newspapers and TV.

**Potential New Contributors: 1,055,000 Tax Filers**

1. Less than half of this group are currently aware of the program, so message content should focus on awareness.
2. However, over half of this group did not fill out their own tax form, so sources other than the tax booklet must be used to reach this group. One suggestion would be advertising on birdseed packages or at outlets that sell birdseed because a high percentage of this group feed birds. Other sources frequently accessed by this group include newspapers and TV. Few read DEC publications or belong to conservation organizations.





### **Future Program Considerations and Recommendations**

This analysis suggests that for the immediate future, RAGTW should focus on the 29% of tax filers that fall into one of 3 market segments: continuous, sporadic, and potential contributors. These 3 market segments differ from each other in ways that have been pointed out above. At the same time, these 3 segments are tremendously diffuse. They live all over the state. Many participate in some type of wildlife activity, but some do not. Their media habits are also rather diverse. Thus, to guide overall program direction, it may be useful to look at these 3 market segments combined as an umbrella target audience.

Of the 2,156,000 tax filers that comprise the umbrella target market for RAGTW (the continuous, sporadic, and potential new contributors), 64% reside downstate. About 66% are aware of the program. About 55% prepare their own taxes, 29% use a tax accountant, and 16% have someone else prepare their tax form. About 72% rely on newspapers as a source of fish and wildlife information.

Given the above information, we make the following recommendations. These recommendations would probably need to be implemented over several years.

**Recommendation 1:** At least 65% of the RAGTW promotions budget should go downstate.

**Rationale:** Nearly two-thirds of the target contributing audience is downstate. DEC is less well known downstate than upstate. Many of the current promotional mechanisms that have little associated direct costs (e.g., notices in the tax guide, notices in *The Conservationist*, PSAs) can continue to be used for upstate audiences.

**Recommendation 2:** RAGTW needs to develop the image of a successful citizen-based program that is making a difference with regard to environmental protection and management in New York.

**Rationale:** About two-thirds of the target audience is aware of RAGTW. Many of these people are now seeking more information about the program,



such as what the funds are being used for. Press releases that begin to provide additional information about successfully completed projects can also help build awareness for the one-third of the target audience that are not aware of the program.

**Recommendation 2A:** DEC should facilitate an expanded press release and general communications program that gets far more fish and wildlife news (especially other than sportfishing and game news) to the public.

**Rationale:** Although we have not done a systematic evaluation of this topic, we believe that the current system of outdoor columns aimed primarily toward sportsmen does a reasonably good job of reaching that audience (it would be revealing to do a content analysis of those columns to see how frequently RAGTW news appears there, however). Of primary concern is that no means analogous to the outdoors column exists to reach the majority target audience that neither hunts nor fishes. Given that 72% of the target audience now relies upon newspapers as a source for fish and wildlife information, this may be the single greatest barrier to substantially increasing RAGTW contributions. Indeed, it would seem to be an excellent investment of some RAGTW funds to develop a pilot program that would result in periodic (e.g., weekly) general interest fish and wildlife "news" features that would be informational and educational in format.

**Recommendation 3:** DEC should continue to identify tax accountants as a specific audience of promotional activities and continue specific efforts to reach this audience.

**Rationale:** Tax accountants are the "gatekeepers" to 629,000 tax filers who fall within the primary target audience for RAGTW promotions. Innovative marketing mechanisms should be investigated to reach this audience, persuade them to cooperate, and if possible, to recognize their cooperation.



Continued periodic evaluation of overall program promotion efforts and specific strategies is important to the long-term success of the program. We suggest continued overall evaluations on approximately a five-year basis.



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**APPENDIX A**

**Mail Questionnaire**



**NEW YORK'S  
"RETURN A GIFT  
TO WILDLIFE"  
PROGRAM EVALUATION**





## **New York's "Return A Gift to Wildlife" Program Evaluation**

**Research conducted by the  
Human Dimensions Research Unit  
in the Department of Natural Resources  
New York State College of  
Agriculture and Life Sciences  
Cornell University**

**New York residents have the option of contributing to a program called "Return a Gift to Wildlife" on their state income tax return. The money is used to support fish and wildlife conservation programs of the Department of Environmental Conservation. The Department has asked Cornell University to solicit input from the public on the "Return a Gift to Wildlife" program. We are asking your help in filling out this questionnaire so that we can best describe the interests and opinions of those people who do and do not contribute to the "Return a Gift to Wildlife" program.**

**Please complete this questionnaire at your earliest convenience, seal it, and simply drop it in any mailbox; return postage has been provided. Your responses will remain confidential and will never be associated with your name.**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE**



1. Prior to receiving this survey, had you ever heard of the "Return a Gift to Wildlife" program?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_\_ No (SKIP TO QUESTION 6)

2. From which of the following sources do you remember seeing or hearing about the "Return a Gift to Wildlife" program?  
(Please check [✓] all that apply.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Newspapers

\_\_\_\_\_ Radio

\_\_\_\_\_ TV

\_\_\_\_\_ Tax instruction booklet → Do you recall seeing the ad or the instructions?

\_\_\_\_\_ ad

\_\_\_\_\_ instructions

\_\_\_\_\_ can't recall which one I saw

\_\_\_\_\_ Place of employment

\_\_\_\_\_ Exhibits

\_\_\_\_\_ Tax accountant

\_\_\_\_\_ Department of Environmental Conservation offices

\_\_\_\_\_ Department of Environmental Conservation publications (such as *The Conservationist*)

\_\_\_\_\_ Magazines (which ones? \_\_\_\_\_)

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

3. Now, please circle the source above from which you most clearly remember information related to "Return a Gift to Wildlife."





4. Can you recall any specific information about "Return a Gift to Wildlife" that you read or heard from the media (newspapers, radio, TV)?

\_\_\_\_\_ No

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes → If "Yes", do you recall information that was:

- a) favorable toward "Return a Gift to Wildlife"?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

- b) unfavorable toward "Return a Gift to Wildlife"?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

5. Based on whatever you have heard or know of "Return a Gift to Wildlife," what is your overall perception of the program?

\_\_\_\_\_ Highly favorable

\_\_\_\_\_ Somewhat favorable

\_\_\_\_\_ About equally favorable and unfavorable

\_\_\_\_\_ Somewhat unfavorable

\_\_\_\_\_ Highly unfavorable

\_\_\_\_\_ No opinion formed yet



6. Did you (or someone on your behalf) file a 1988 New York State personal income tax form?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes (CONTINUE WITH QUESTION 7)

\_\_\_\_\_ No (SKIP TO QUESTION 12)

7. Who prepared your 1988 income tax form?

\_\_\_\_\_ I prepared my own tax form

\_\_\_\_\_ Income Tax Accountant or other Income Tax Specialist (e.g., H & R Block)

\_\_\_\_\_ Spouse

\_\_\_\_\_ Friend

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

8. Did you owe tax in 1988 or receive a refund?

\_\_\_\_\_ Owed tax

\_\_\_\_\_ Received a refund

9. Please check below whether you contributed to the "Return a Gift to Wildlife" program in any of the following years:

Tax Year

1988      \_\_\_\_\_ Yes      \_\_\_\_\_ No      \_\_\_\_\_ Not sure

1987      \_\_\_\_\_ Yes      \_\_\_\_\_ No      \_\_\_\_\_ Not sure

Prior to

1987      \_\_\_\_\_ Yes      \_\_\_\_\_ No      \_\_\_\_\_ Not sure



If You CONTRIBUTED to "Return a Gift to Wildlife" on Your 1988 Tax Form Please Answer Question 10.

If You DID NOT CONTRIBUTE Please Answer Question 11.

If You are UNSURE Whether You Contributed Skip to Question 12.

10. What were the primary reasons why you contributed in 1988?  
(Please check [✓] all that apply.)

- ☐ I like fish and wildlife
- ☐ I want to support the Department of Environmental Conservation's fish and wildlife programs
- ☐ The tax check off is a convenient way to contribute to fish and wildlife conservation
- ☐ Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

NOW GO TO QUESTION 12.

11. What were the primary reasons why you did not contribute in 1988? (Please check [✓] all that apply.)

- ☐ I was unaware of the program
- ☐ I am not particularly interested in wildlife
- ☐ I am not convinced that additional funds are needed for wildlife conservation
- ☐ I do not approve of how the funds are being spent
- ☐ I give enough money to wildlife conservation programs already
- ☐ I overlooked the option to contribute (or forgot to tell tax preparer to make contribution)
- ☐ When you owe taxes (as opposed to when you get a refund) it is hard to pay even more money in order to contribute.
- ☐ Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)



12. Listed below are 4 broad categories of fish and wildlife programs currently funded by "Return a Gift to Wildlife." Please prioritize (1=Highest Priority) the list according to how you think future funds should be spent. Feel free to add your own category.

\_\_\_ Threatened or endangered species preservation

\_\_\_ Wildlife recovery/rehabilitation

\_\_\_ Providing clean habitats for all fish and wildlife

\_\_\_ Public communication and education

\_\_\_ Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

\_\_\_\_\_)

13. At this time, do you think you will contribute to the "Return a Gift to Wildlife" program next year when you file your state income tax return?

\_\_\_ Definitely will not

\_\_\_ Probably will not

\_\_\_ Not sure if I will

\_\_\_ Probably will

\_\_\_ Definitely will





The following set of questions is designed to help identify your interests in wildlife.

14. Please check [✓] below all of the wildlife-related recreational activities that you have ever participated in. For those that you participated in during 1988, please indicate the approximate number of days that you participated.

<u>Ever Participated</u>	<u>Approximate Number of Days Participated in 1988</u>
___ Feeding wild birds and other wildlife	___ days
___ Observing wildlife	___ days
___ Photographing wildlife	___ days
___ Fishing	___ days
___ Hunting	___ days
___ Tent camping	___ days
___ Boating/canoeing	___ days
___ Hiking/backpacking	___ days

15. Do you belong to any conservation, environmental, outdoor, or fish and wildlife associated organizations?

\_\_\_ No

\_\_\_ Yes → If yes, which ones:

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16. Where do you currently obtain most of your information regarding fish and wildlife in New York? (Please check [✓] all that apply.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Newspapers

\_\_\_\_\_ Radio

\_\_\_\_\_ TV

\_\_\_\_\_ Publications of conservation organizations

\_\_\_\_\_ Exhibits

\_\_\_\_\_ Friends, family

\_\_\_\_\_ Department of Environmental Conservation personnel

\_\_\_\_\_ Department of Environmental Conservation publications  
(such as *The Conservationist*)

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

17. What magazines do you read regularly (e.g., Better Homes and Gardens, Reader's Digest, Field & Stream)?

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The following information is needed to help classify groups of individuals who share common concerns or interests about fish and wildlife. All information is kept strictly confidential and is never associated with your name.

18. How many years have you been a resident of New York State?

\_\_\_\_ Years

19. Which of the following best describes the type of area: (1) where you lived most of the time between the ages of 6 and 16 and (2) where you currently live?

	Residence between ages of 6-16	Current residence
Rural farm	_____	_____
Rural nonfarm	_____	_____
Village under 5,000	_____	_____
Village or small city 5,000 to 24,999	_____	_____
City 25,000 to 100,000	_____	_____
City over 100,000	_____	_____

20. In what year were you born? 19\_\_\_\_

21. What is your sex? \_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_ Female

22. What is your race?

\_\_\_\_ White, of Hispanic origin  
 \_\_\_\_ White, not of Hispanic origin  
 \_\_\_\_ Black  
 \_\_\_\_ Asian or Pacific Islander  
 \_\_\_\_ Other



23. How many children do you have living with you right now?

\_\_\_ None

\_\_\_ Number of children under 6 years of age

\_\_\_ Number of children age 6 or older

24. How many years of school did you complete, counting 12 years for high school graduation, and 1 year for each additional year of college, technical, or vocational training?

\_\_\_ years

25. Please circle your approximate TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME before taxes, in thousands of dollars:

5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19

20 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40 45 50

55 60 65 70 75 80 More than 80

Please use the space below for any additional comments you wish to make.

**Thank You For Your Time and Effort!**

To return this questionnaire, simply seal it (postage has been provided) and drop it in the nearest mailbox.







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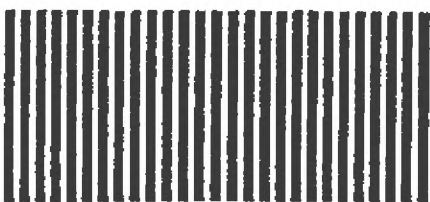
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## **APPENDIX B**

### **Socio-demographic Comparisons**



Table B-1. Race of Respondents Compared with 1980 Census Data, by Residence Area.

<u>Race</u>	<u>Upstate</u>		<u>Downstate</u>	
	<u>1980</u>	<u>RAGTW</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>RAGTW</u>
	<u>Population</u>	<u>Respondents</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Respondents</u>
		Percent		
White	93.5	97.9	70.8	94.6
Black	4.9	1.5	19.2	3.9
Other	1.6	0.6	10.0	1.5



Table B-2. Comparison of Income of Tax Filers with Income of Respondents.

<u>Income Categories</u>	<u>Contributors</u>	
	<u>Gross Income</u>	<u>Household Income</u>
	<u>of Tax Filers</u>	<u>of Respondents</u>
	<u>Percent</u>	
\$0-20,000	46.2	21.4
20,001-30,000	19.8	23.3
30,001-50,000	19.0	30.0
50,001+	15.0	25.3





Table B-3. Contribution Amounts for Respondents and Nonrespondents, by Residence Area.

<u>Contribution Amount</u>	<u>Upstate</u>		<u>Downstate</u>	
	<u>Respondents</u>	<u>Nonrespondents</u>	<u>Respondents</u>	<u>Nonrespondents</u>
	<u>Percent</u>			
\$1-5	59.0	66.2	56.9	71.8
6-10	29.8	25.6	29.9	19.9
11-20	9.0	7.0	8.3	6.6
21+	2.2	1.2	4.9	1.7

