

Title: **Fishing for the Truth: An Examination of the Effects of Task Complexity on Choice Experiment Responses for Recreational Fishing Management**

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Abstract: Environmental resource values are often obtainable only through stated preference or hypothetical surveys because other nonmarket valuation methods only account for part of the resource value or are unsuitable. Despite the recent popularity and many advances in discrete choice techniques for nonmarket valuation, the implications of questionnaire structure, namely framing and task complexity, are rarely considered. Participant preferences may not be accurately reflected in stated preference willingness to pay estimates if the results are affected by cognitive or response issues. This paper compares the effects of task complexity on modeling outcomes and WTP estimates for nonmarket goods. Specifically, I examine the consequences of questionnaire length, number of attributes, and number of alternatives on choice experiment responses to a mail questionnaire regarding recreational fishing management of Northwest Atlantic groundfish. By comparing response rates, response types, model parameter estimates, and willingness-to-pay between a controlled base survey and different variations on task complexity, this study will discern whether different choice experiment structures induce respondent behaviors that alter response outcomes, and the type and magnitude of such effects.