



FACE to FACE



by Jeff Baile ~ Certified Forensic Interviewer

I talked about the effects of waving in the non-law enforcement context in part one. We found that waving is seen within every culture and used as a long distance way of showing friendliness. When I applied this information to my first twenty anglers in the enforcement context, I noticed there might be a connection between waving and breaking the law. But after documenting the waving habits of over four hundred anglers, I discovered a variety of reasons anglers chose to wave or not to wave. Although data was collected in thirteen categories, only six are discussed here:

- (1) Did the angler return my wave?
 - (2) Did the angler acknowledge me by either smiling, nodding or saying hello, instead of waving?
 - (3) Was there a violation detected if my wave was returned?
 - (4) Was there a violation detected if my wave was not returned?
 - (5) Did the angler have another reason for not returning my wave when no violation was detected?
 - (6) Ethnic group.
- Anglers engaged in ice fishing were also included.

Rapport is Just a Wave Away

Part Two of Two

Collection procedure

This project was completed while I was in full uniform from a marked police vehicle or on foot. There is a socially acceptable distance to wave at someone. To avoid distorting any information, I purposely did not wave from too close a distance or from too far away. Whether I waved from the vehicle or on foot, I made certain each angler was looking directly at me before waving. Sometimes, I had to create noise before I could wave so some would look my way. I also considered the sun's position with this same mindset. It was critical that the angler knew I was waving specifically to them to avoid misinterpreting their reaction. Only the angler's immediate response was recorded following my wave. Returned waves were defined

as any form of raising either arm along with palm display. Following the initial greeting and after mentally recording the angler's responses the angler was checked for compliance. A violation was defined as breaking any type of law including active arrest warrants on file. Following the check, I returned to the vehicle to document the appropriate information.

Other concern

Early in the project I began noticing a recurring fact I named the 'Other Concern' category. Due to the smaller sample size (28 non-waving anglers), I present what I found for argument only. We can only attribute anecdotal corroboration to these numbers. There is not enough statistical support to draw definitive conclusions.

In many cases, non-waving anglers were found with no violations, but revealed something else was bothering them. In these cases, without directly asking, I tried to establish why the person had not waved back. Those anglers who revealed any kind of disapproving mindset fell into the other concern category. This was satisfied when the angler failed to wave but verbally reported a negative attitude about anything. Some examples were a previous fight with a spouse, poor fishing conditions, being checked often or being previously arrested, and other similar complaints. Those anglers who thought they were doing something wrong, such as hiding otherwise legal fish as I approached, also fell into this field. In short, anglers were entered into this category if:

- a) They did not return my wave.
- b) No violations were detected.
- c) A negative attitude was indicated about something else.

Totals for the project

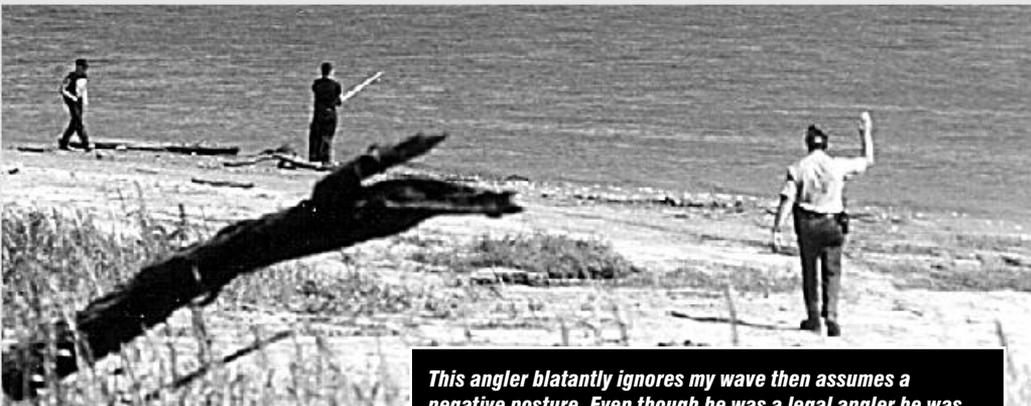
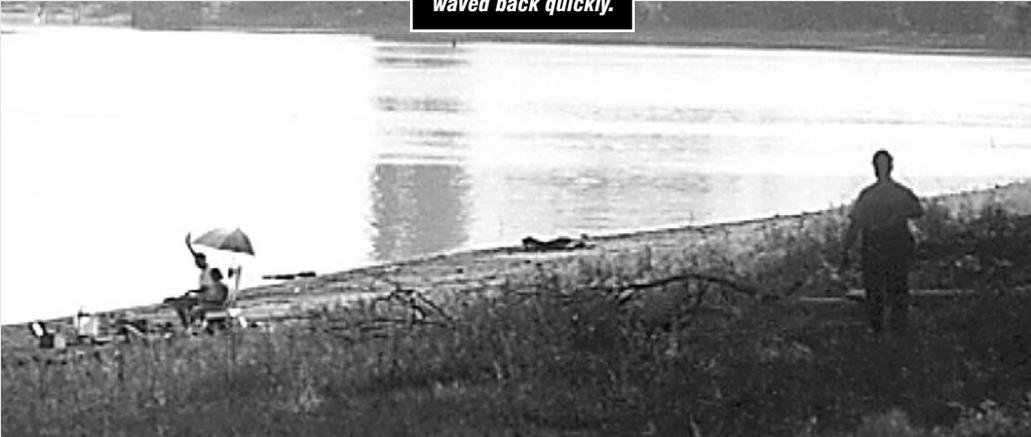
Data was recorded from 411 anglers involving 339 males (269 white - 70 black) and 72 females (48 white - 24 black). A total of 262 returned the wave, 100 failed to return the wave, and 49 chose instead to acknowledge my presence by

Waving Anglers	Non-Waving Anglers
No violation detected 231	No violation detected 52 *
Violation detected 31 *	Violation detected 48
* 15 of these anglers, however, believed they were legal - a positive state of mind	* 28 of these anglers, however, indicated a negative state of mind (i.e. other concern)
Nod/Smile/Hello	Other Concern
No violation detected 39	Negative state identified 28
Violation detected 10	Negative state not identified 2
Additional Data Collected (Ethnicity) *	
White wavers / no violation detected = 88%	
Black wavers / no violation detected = 88%	
White wavers / violation detected = 12%	
Black wavers / violation detected = 12%	
White non-wavers / no violation detected = 49%	
Black non-wavers / no violation detected = 61%	
White non-wavers / violation detected = 51%	
Black non-wavers / violation detected = 39%	

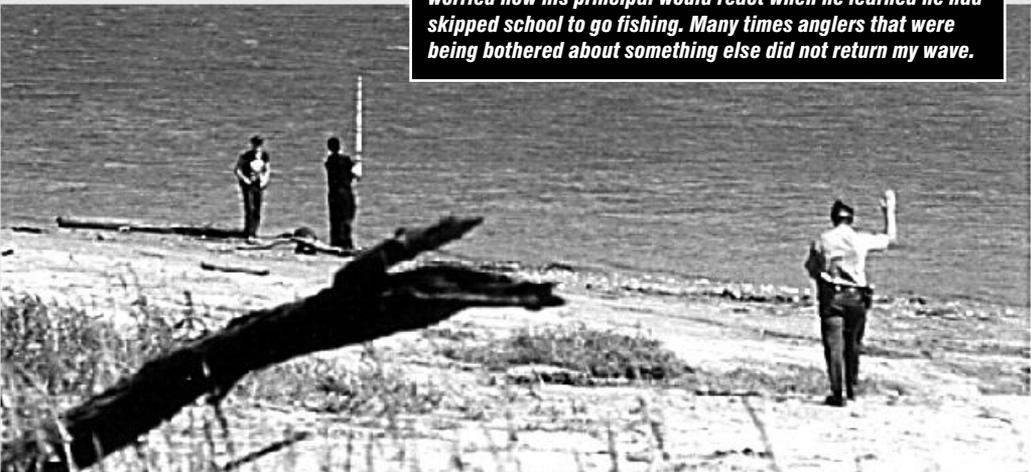
* Consider sample sizes



Many anglers who were not violating waved back quickly.



This angler blatantly ignores my wave then assumes a negative posture. Even though he was a legal angler he was worried how his principal would react when he learned he had skipped school to go fishing. Many times anglers that were being bothered about something else did not return my wave.



nodding, smiling or saying hello. Many who fell into this category were doing something with their hands such as reeling, baiting, or casting. The youngest angler recorded was 14 years old and the oldest 88. Mean age of the anglers was 38.

Putting it all together

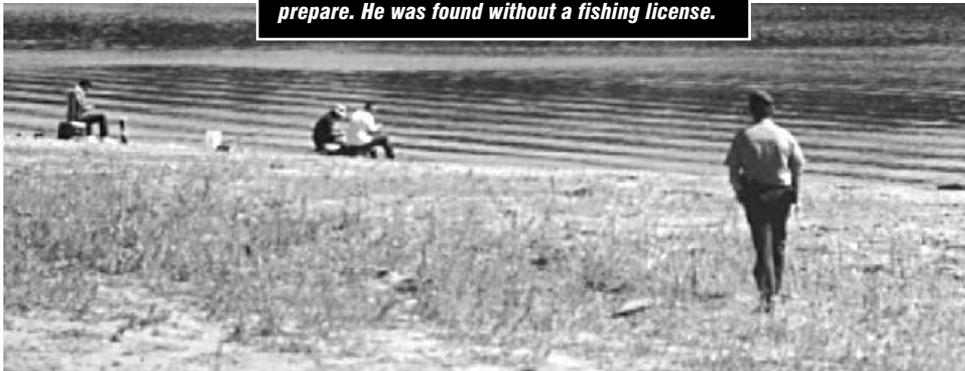
The results of this project offer a number of different perspectives why anglers chose to wave. It strongly suggests that anglers who return a wave are probably legal at least 88% of the time. Those anglers who are unable to wave back for whatever reason, yet find other ways to offer a friendly acknowledgement, may be legal at an 80% rate as well. Because waving in any context conveys friendliness, I suggest that the majority of anglers who return our waves or offer some other greeting are more apt to be in a better mood than non-wavers.

This project found that 48% of non-waving anglers were illegal in some fashion compared to 52% when no violation was detected. Even more interesting were the anglers who fell into the other concern category. Looking closely at the non-waving group we find something significant. Twenty-four definitive non-waving violators remain after extracting the twenty-eight 'other concerns' from the fifty-two non-waving, non-violators. The 2:1 ratio demonstrates that non-waving anglers are twice as likely to be violating than waving anglers which supports my original hypothesis.

Program Manager Jeff Kelley of Applied Measurement Professionals, Inc. in Lenexa, KS summed up the wave/violation data this way. "These results show that there were statistically significant differences in rate of violation across the wave, no wave, and other groups. There were also statistically significant pairwise differences for rate of violation between the other and no wave groups. In layman's terms, these results show that those who fail to wave are more likely to be engaged in a violation than those who do wave or offer some other acknowledgement."



From 50 feet, the center angler displays his displeasure by not waving. Negative feelings revealed from a distance allows us more time to prepare. He was found without a fishing license.



Practical use

The results of this project strongly suggest that wavers, in general, probably hold a more positive attitude than those who don't wave. But regardless of any insight that may be deduced from someone's wave, consciously waving to the public is a valuable rapport builder that we should do more of no matter what the circumstances. I think seeing a uniformed officer acting friendly can be just the thing needed to begin calming people down regardless of the enforcement situation. Waving builds instant rapport – it's easy to do – and it is disarming. Just like a smile.

I make one last observation from the results. Defensive tactics instructors refer to the six-foot "reactionary gap" as the minimum distance that we can effectively react to an assault. In this project, over 76% of the anglers recorded who did not wave back, were either violating or experiencing negative feelings. The non-wavers do not realize it, but they are sending us long distance (nonverbal) warnings that their moods just might not be the best. From an officer safety standpoint this is good news. I think you will agree that a pessimistic person is a far greater threat than someone in a cheerful state of mind.

When an angler, or anyone for that matter, does not return your wave, consider their inaction as being the nonverbal counterpart to a scowl on their face. Both tell us the person might be trouble but now we have a lot more time to prepare ourselves.☺

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Except where noted, all photos are by Jeremy Hicks

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