

Principal Investigator: Katrina Korfmacher, PhD
Interview Information Letter
June 2009

Thank you for participating in this interview. Your responses will help us develop our understanding of how many people catch and eat fish from waters around Rochester.

This interview is part of an ongoing study of local fishing, fish consumption and related outreach efforts. The study is being conducted this summer through the University of Rochester Environmental Health Sciences Center's Community Outreach and Education Core in partnership with Action for a Better Community.

There is some concern that certain groups in Rochester may be consuming more locally caught fish than is recommended by the health department. We are doing a study to find out who is catching and eating fish from around Rochester. If we find that many people eat more than the recommended amount of locally caught fish, we will use this information to recommend ways to improve public education about this issue.

Eating fish is very good for your health. Unfortunately, some locally caught fish can be contaminated with chemicals that are unsafe for people to eat (such as PCBs and methylmercury). Infants, children under the age of 15, and women of childbearing age are at greatest risk.

This interview is designed to help us gather information about local fishing and fish consumption. Your answers will help us understand fishing patterns in Rochester and knowledge of the consumption advisories. **Your participation in this interview is entirely optional. You may decline to participate without penalty.**

We will collect some personal information, such as your age and zip code of residence. We will not release this information to anyone else, and your responses will be confidential. We will summarize any information you give us (for example, "20% of anglers reported that...") or provide general descriptors to protect your identity (for example, "One 50 year old angler noted that he had been eating fish from Lake Ontario his entire life") in any publications or presentations based on this study.

If you would like more information about this project, or if you feel that your participation has resulted in any emotional or physical discomfort, please contact:

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Background: Fish Consumption Advisories

Eating fish is very good for your health. Fish is lean and high in protein, and has been shown to positively influence brain development. It is also good for your heart. Unfortunately, some fish can be contaminated with chemicals that are unsafe for people to eat (such as PCBs and mercury). This is especially true for infants, children under the age of 15, and pregnant or nursing women because these chemicals affect development.

Because of this concern, fish sold in stores must follow strict guidelines for contaminant concentrations. However, some locally caught fish (not sold in stores) may contain enough contaminants to make the fish less safe for people to eat. Because of this, recommendations are made for most water bodies to guide people on how much locally caught fish is safe for them to eat. There is a general consumption advisory for all of New York State, but the advisory changes for more polluted water bodies like Lake Ontario and Irondequoit Bay. It is recommended that women who may become pregnant and children under the age of 15 do not eat fish caught in these waters, and all waters that connect to them (e.g., Genesee River, Greece Ponds, etc.). For all others, the advisory is based on species and size of the fish.

Our intent is to promote safe consumption of fish, which is very healthy for the brain and heart. Our goal is simply to provide people with all of the information they need to decide whether or not to eat the fish they catch in local waters.

For more information about safely eating the fish you catch, please visit:

<http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/fish/>

For the New York State 2009 Fish Consumption Advisory, please visit:

<http://www.health.state.ny.us/environmental/outdoors/fish/fish.htm>

For more information on the health effects of exposure to chemical contaminants, please call:

1-800-458-1158, ext. 27815

ANGLER INTERVIEW 2009

We work at University of Rochester and are studying local fish consumption. Would you mind if we ask you a few questions while you fish? We would like to get as much information from you as possible, but if you are short on time or do not care to answer more than a few questions please let us know.

INTERVIEWER: BELOW ARE THE 5 KEY QUESTIONS. IF PARTICIPANT PREFERS NOT TO DO THE FULL INTERVIEW, ASK THESE. BE SURE TO INCLUDE DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION AS WELL (LAST PAGE).

- 1. How often do you (and your family) eat locally caught fish?**
- 2. What factors help you decide whether to eat locally caught fish?**
- 3. How do you cook/prepare fish you catch?**
- 4. Do you know about the advisories?**
- 5. What's your opinion of the advisories?**

CONSUMPTION AND ADVISORIES

Do you or other household members regularly eat fish caught from Lake Ontario, Irondequoit Bay, or their connecting streams? Yes No

IF NO: Continue to page 4

IF YES:

During which months do you fish locally?

Jan Feb Mar April May June July Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec

About how many times a week do you and your family eat locally caught fish during the fishing season?

Household Member	How often (per week)	Age	Gender
Angler			
Spouse			
Child			
Others			

What kind(s) of fish do you eat most often? (USE PICTURES)

- a. Blue Gill/Pumpkinseed/Sunfish/Sunshine Bass
- b. Brown Trout larger than 20 inches
- c. Brown Trout 20 inches or smaller
- d. Bullhead Catfish
- e. Carp
- f. Channel Catfish
- g. Chinook Salmon
- h. Coho Salmon larger than 20 inches
- i. Coho Salmon 20 inches or smaller
- j. Lake Trout larger than 25 inches
- k. Lake Trout 25 inches or smaller
- l. Rainbow Trout larger than 25 inches
- m. Rainbow Trout 25 inches or smaller
- n. White Perch larger than 25 inches
- o. White Perch 25 inches or smaller
- p. Yellow Perch
- q. Other (specify): _____

How do you prepare the locally caught fish you are going to eat? (circle all that apply)

- a) Gut
- b) Skin
- c) Filet
- d) Cut lateral lines (side fat)
- e) Cut belly fat
- f) Other (explain) _____

How do you cook the locally caught fish you are going to eat? (circle all that apply)

- a) Boil
- b) Stew
- c) Fry
- d) Broil
- e) Bake
- f) Grill
- g) Other (explain) _____

Do you eat ALL of the fish you catch?

IF NO:

What makes you decide which fish to keep?

- a) Quality of tastes
- b) Consumption advisories
- c) Where the fish is caught
- d) Advice from others in your community
- e) Health benefits
- f) Amount of fish consumed that month
- g) Other _____

What do you do with the fish you don't keep?

- a) Throw away
- b) Throw back
- c) Leave on the bank
- d) Give way to others
- e) Sell to others
- g) Other (explain) _____

Do you and your family members also eat STORE BOUGHT fish?

IF YES:

How often?

PARTICIPANTS WHO DO NOT EAT FISH CAUGHT AROUND ROCHESTER:

Why don't you eat the fish you catch?

ALL PARTICIPANTS:

Have you ever seen or heard advisories (warnings) about the safety of eating fish caught around Rochester (around Rochester means Lake Ontario, Irondequoit Bay and all connecting streams up to the first barrier)?

___yes ___no

IF NO:

How safe to eat is the fish you catch here compared to store-bought or restaurant fish?

- _____ Safer than store-bought / restaurant fish
- _____ Just as safe as store-bought / restaurant fish
- _____ Not as safe as store-bought / restaurant fish

Is eating locally-caught fish safe for everyone? Yes___ No___

IF NO: Please explain.

IF YES:

Where have you heard or read about the warnings?

Why are there warnings?

Who makes these warnings?

Based on the warnings you've seen, are the following statements true or false?

Eating fish is good for you

T / F / Don't Know

Children and women who may become pregnant should not eat fish caught in Lake Ontario

T / F / Don't Know

No one should eat fish caught in Lake Ontario

T / F / Don't Know

Some species of locally caught fish are safer to eat than others

T / F / Don't Know

I can always tell by looking at a fish whether it is safe to eat or not

T / F / Don't Know

Lake Ontario fish caught farther from Rochester are safer to eat

T / F / Don't Know

Do you agree with the warnings/advisories you've seen?

Do these warnings influence your decision of whether or not to eat fish?

IF YES: How?

DEMOGRAPHICS (as willing)

Gender: Male Female

Age:

Ethnicity:

- Hispanic / Latino
- Asian
- Black
- African American / non-Hispanic
- White / non-Hispanic
- Bi-racial / Multi-racial
- Other _____

Zip code:

What language are you most comfortable reading?

- English
- Spanish
- Other _____
- can't read (IF VOLUNTEERED)

What is your level of education?

- High school or less, no diploma
- Some college, no degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Other _____
- High school graduate
- Associate degree
- Graduate or professional degree

How many people are currently living in your household? _____ people

Of these, how many are under 18 years old? _____ people

How would you describe your annual household income?

- Less than \$10,000
- \$10,000-14,999
- \$15,000-19,999
- \$20,000-24,999
- \$25,000-29,999
- \$30,000-34,999
- \$40,000-74,999
- \$75,000 or more