



FISHING IN THE TWIN CITIES METROPOLITAN AREA:
FOCUS GROUPS WITH HISPANIC/LATINO RESIDENTS

JUNE 2006

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Executive Summary

The Minnesota Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit contracted Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment through Research (HACER) to conduct focus groups in order to gauge interest and participation in fishing activities among Hispanics/Latinos in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. HACER carried out three focus groups with Hispanic/Latino residents of the metropolitan area for this project. This report summarizes the following: participants' impressions of and engagement with nature in the Twin Cities metropolitan area; their perceptions of and participation in fishing; and their views on channels and modes for communicating information about fishing. The report also includes recommendations for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and suggestions for future research.

Demographic Breakdown

HACER collaborated with existing alliances (e.g. organized parent groups, Hispanic/Latino-serving organizations, and churches) to recruit Hispanic/Latino residents of the Twin Cities metropolitan area for this study. The Twin Cities metropolitan area includes the following seven counties: Hennepin, Ramsey, Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Scott and Washington.

- The focus groups involved 35 participants of which 18 were women and 17 were men; 86 percent were between 21 and 40 years old; and 80 percent had children under the age of 18 living at home.
- Over two-thirds (72 percent) were born in Mexico, but overall participants had lived in the United States for an average of 11 years.
- Spanish was an important language for written and oral communication for the participants; of which 38 percent read only in Spanish.
- Eighty-five (85) percent earned less than \$40,000 a year in gross household income; 45 percent made under \$20,000.
- Although prior experience with fishing was not a requirement for participating in this project, 61 percent of participants had fishing experience.

Summary of Findings

Focus group participants noted there are many opportunities to engage in outdoor activities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. "Taking advantage" of the warmer months to spend time outside is important to them. Participants reported

enjoying a range of outdoor activities from sports to picnics at outdoor parks and lakes to going for walks. For them, spending time outdoors strengthens family ties and contributes to their mental and physical wellbeing. Pollution at area lakes and rivers was of concern to participants, and they stressed the importance of preserving the environment for future generations.

Benefits of Fishing

Generally, participants who had had experience fishing described fishing as “fun,” while those who had not fished in the past thought fishing was “boring” and were not interested in fishing. Those who enjoyed fishing described a number of benefits that motivated them to go fishing, such as:

- Spending time with family members and close friends;
- Stress relief and time to relax; and
- Eating fish.

Concerns about Fishing

Participants shared concerns about fishing, of which some were deemed a deterrent. These concerns included:

- Confrontations with enforcement authorities while fishing;
- Pollution in area lakes and rivers; and
- Personal safety along the banks of lakes and rivers.

Facilitators and Barriers

The abundance of lakes and rivers makes fishing in the Twin Cities metropolitan area easier, according to the focus group participants. Fishing does not require a great deal of training or experience, one can fish at any age, and one can fish alone or with other people. However, participants also spoke of obstacles to fishing. Key barriers identified were:

- *Getting a fishing license:* Participants explained that Hispanics/Latinos do not always have the necessary ID to get a fishing license. Furthermore, licenses (particularly non-resident licenses) were perceived as expensive.
- *Limited access to fishing equipment:* Fishing equipment is not always available (or is more expensive) at convenient locations, according to the focus group participants. “Quality” equipment is generally too costly.

- *Having to fish from the bank:* For the majority of focus group participants, fishing boats are too expensive, and catching fish from the bank is more difficult than fishing in a boat due to the line getting snagged on weeds, trees and rocks. Fishing from the bank also yields smaller fish, and keeping fish that are too small can lead to citations from enforcement authorities.
- *Information about licensing requirements, fishing rules and regulations, and where to fish legally and successfully is not available in Spanish:* Although participants identified a range of sources for information about fishing, the information typically available is only in English.
- *Long, cold Minnesota winters:* While participants described fishing as a year-round activity, none reported having any experience with ice-fishing.

Focus group participants identified additional barriers to fishing in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, such as: lack of information and/or signs about where to park legally; over-crowded lakes and parks; limited transportation to fishing areas outside of the metropolitan area; and lack of time.

Recommendations

Offer linguistically appropriate information and educational opportunities about fishing.

- *Provide information about fishing regulations, particularly licensing requirements and the purpose of particular regulations.*
- *Provide information about places to fish legally and successfully in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.* Information about where to catch more fish from the bank would be especially helpful.
- *Provide information about harmful contaminants/toxins and fish consumption.*
- *Provide information/training about fishing techniques, such as how to tie a hook, how to use different weights of fishing line, how to attract different kinds of fish, and how to go ice fishing.*

Improve dissemination of fishing information to Hispanics/Latinos.

- *Provide information about fishing in the Twin Cities metropolitan area in both English and Spanish.* This includes printed materials, electronic resources, signs and classes.

- *Take cultural and language considerations into account when crafting educational or promotional campaigns about fishing.* Promotional and educational materials should speak to cultural notions about fishing and “nature” in general by promoting fishing as a family activity, educating about the safe consumption of fish, and explaining why fishing regulations are in place.
- *Distribute a bilingual (English/Spanish) pamphlet with information about rules and regulations to individuals purchasing licenses.*
- *Certify that places where fishing is permitted and/or prohibited are clearly marked by signs in the appropriate languages.* Use pictures for individuals who cannot read or to cater to individuals in a more universal language.
- *Be strategic about reaching out to the Hispanic/Latino community.* Participants suggested disseminating information about fishing through community centers (like the YMCA), area schools, Hispanic/Latino businesses (clothing stores and supermarkets), Spanish-language radio and television (*La K Buena, Radio Rey, the Minnesota Univisión* channel), and promotional materials in the mail.

Improve access to fishing licenses and equipment for Hispanics/Latinos.

- *Relax proof of state residency requirements to allow individuals without a state ID or driver’s license to purchase a resident fishing license if they can prove residency by other means.* Undocumented residents and Hispanics/Latinos legally present in the US who do not have a Minnesota state ID or driver’s license face particular challenges in obtaining a resident fishing license.
- *Create more opportunities for Hispanics/Latinos to rent or borrow fishing equipment in the metropolitan area and/or advertise these opportunities appropriately.*

Complement data presented in this report with future research.

- *Investigate whether immigrant/refugee populations in Minnesota are disproportionately purchasing (or being required to purchase) non-resident fishing licenses.*
- *Track self-reported and observed race/ethnicity data for individuals cited for violating fishing regulations.*

Introduction

The Minnesota Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit contracted Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment through Research (HACER) to conduct focus groups in order to gauge interest and participation in fishing among Hispanic/Latino residents of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. HACER conducted three focus groups with Hispanic/Latino residents of the metropolitan area as part of this project. The main goals for this study were to:

- 1) Understand perceptions of and participation in fishing in the metropolitan area;
- 2) Determine motivations for fishing;
- 3) Determine perceived barriers to participation in fishing;
- 4) Identify practices to encourage/facilitate participation in fishing;
- 5) Identify best communication modes and channels for information about fishing and the Fishing in the Neighborhood (FiN) program; and
- 6) Identify environmental values and concerns for environmental stewardship.

This report first describes the research methodology used for this study and provides a demographic breakdown of study participants. Second, the report summarizes the following: participants' impressions of and engagement with "nature" in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, their perceptions of and participation in fishing, and their views on channels and modes for communicating information about fishing. It concludes with recommendations for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), as well as suggestions for future research.

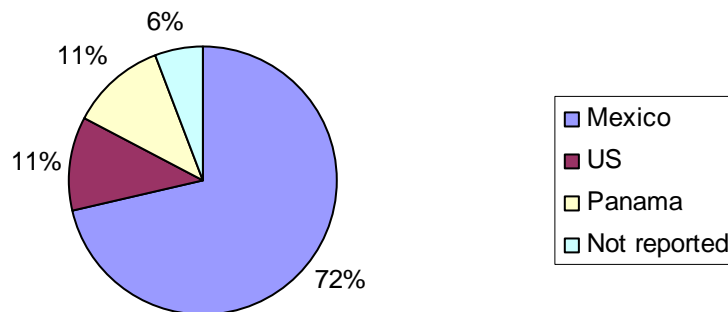
Methods and Procedures

In collaboration with existing alliances (e.g. organized parent groups, Hispanic/Latino-serving organizations, and churches), HACER recruited Hispanic/Latino residents of the Twin Cities metropolitan area to participate in 3 focus group sessions. Two sessions were carried out in February of 2006, while a third occurred in March of 2006. Focus groups were conducted in Spanish, with each participant receiving a \$40 reimbursement for his/her time. (See **Appendix A** for the focus group question guide, **Appendix B** for the participant consent form, and **Appendix C** for the demographic form.)

The focus groups involved 35 participants, of which 18 were women and 17 were men. Eighty-six (86) percent were between 21 and 40 years-old, and 80 percent had children under the age of 18 living at home. Eighty-five (85) percent reported less than \$40,000 a year in gross household income, with 45 percent making under \$20,000 a year. Sixty-eight (68) percent had never lived in a rural area; those who had lived in a rural area had done so for an average of 15 years.

As depicted in **Figure 1**, over two-thirds (72 percent) were born in Mexico, and 11 percent of the participants were from Panama.¹ Participants, however, had lived, on average, for 11 years in the United States and approximately 8 years in Minnesota.

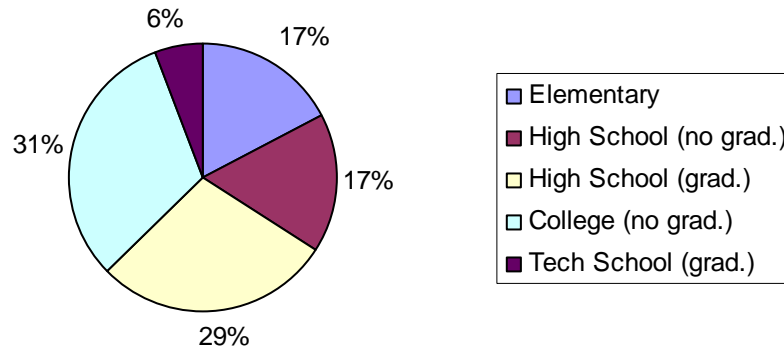
Figure 1: Breakdown of Participants by Country of Birth (N=35)



Nearly half (46 percent) of focus group participants had at least some high school education, while 31 percent had taken college classes. **Figure 2** breaks down participants' reported educational backgrounds (see next page).

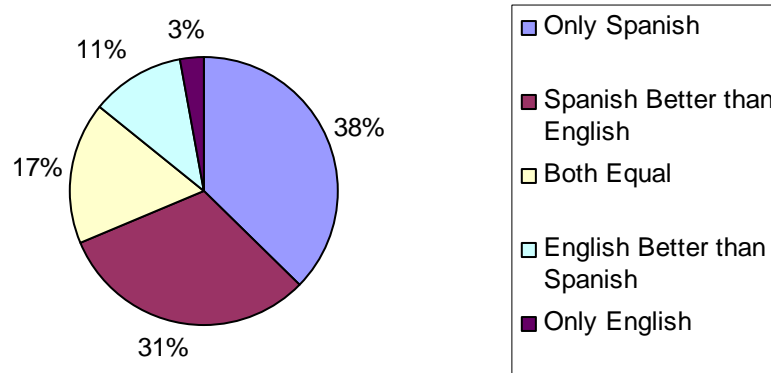
¹ The focus groups were not meant to be composed of representative samples of the population.

Figure 2: Highest Level of Education Completed by Participants (N=35)



Participants described Spanish as an important language for oral communication and reading. Twenty-nine (29) percent communicated with friends exclusively in Spanish, while 30 percent communicated better in Spanish than in English. As illustrated in **Figure 3**, 38 percent of participants read only in Spanish, while 31 percent read better in Spanish than in English.

Figure 3: Reading Language of Participants (N=35)



Findings

Focus group participants discussed their impressions of nature in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, the outdoor activities they enjoy in the metropolitan area, and their perceptions of and experiences with fishing. Additionally, participants made suggestions about channels for communicating information about fishing to the Hispanic/Latino community, and provided input on components of the Fishing in the Neighborhood (FiN) program. This section summarizes key focus group findings.

Nature and Outdoor Activities in the Metropolitan Area

What Comes to Mind When You Think of Nature in the Twin Cities metropolitan area?

Taking advantage of summer:

“[W]e need to enjoy what we have here [in Minnesota] because we have everything. Sometimes where we come from there are not so many parks and so many things to do. So we need to enjoy the summer season the best we can.”

Focus group participants noted many opportunities to engage in outdoor activities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. “Taking advantage” of the warmer months to spend time outdoors is important to them. They noted that they commonly engage in outdoor activities around holidays such as the 4th of July, Palm Sunday (the Sunday before Easter), Easter Sunday, the 5th of May (*Cinco de Mayo*), and the 16th of September (Mexican Independence Day). Some participants, however, recalled having had more contact with nature while living in Mexico, mentioning that they saw fewer plants, farm animals and even insects during their daily lives in the United States. One man, however, reported having more contact with nature in the US, explaining that there were fewer parks and opportunities to spend time outdoors in his country of origin. Having to pay to access nature was new to some participants. As one person from Mexico put it, “one has to pay to go see animals in Minnesota.”

Environmental conservation:

“[We need] to take care of the environment for the future, because it’s for the kids. We need to keep areas clean, to conserve plants and animals—it’s what we are going to leave our children.”

While they enjoy spending time outdoors, participants were concerned about the effects of pollution in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Participants in all three

focus groups underscored the importance of preserving the environment for future generations, particularly for their children. They reported feeling frustrated “when people don’t take care of the outdoors and they throw garbage outside,” and voiced concerns about litter, contamination, and global warming.

What Kinds of Outdoor Activities Do You Like to Do?

The focus group participants enjoyed a range of outdoor activities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, including: soccer, basketball, fishing, volleyball, baseball, American football, Frisbee golf, running, biking, walking, swimming, picnics and camping.

Family activities:

“The most important thing that you get from going out to parks is that it brings the family together.”

Participants across all focus groups valued outdoor activities that allowed them to spend time with their families, thus helping to “bring the family together.” Several parents told stories of playing sports with their children or taking them running, walking, swimming or biking in local parks. In addition to athletic activities participants reported having large picnics on weekends during which they would get together with family and friends to make grilled beef (*carne asada*) and relax. They noted that weekend gatherings are particularly important, because busy work schedules keep family members from seeing each other during the week.

Relaxing activities:

“I like it a lot when I have free time for myself only, to take a book and go to a park. I relax, take in fresh air, sunbathe, and arrive at home with lots of energy to start all over again.”

Participants saw outdoor activities as contributing to their physical and mental health, as well as that of their family members. One man reported being “happy” to watch his children “run, play and jump” outdoors because it reassured him that they would “grow up healthy.” While outdoor activities strengthen social ties they also offer much-needed personal time, and spending time in nature helped participants alleviate boredom and stress. One woman suggested that spending time outside was important “because you work every day and then you come home and keep working just the same, [and] it helps [...] to go outside.”

Fishing in the Metropolitan Area

Prior fishing experience was not a requirement for focus group participation, yet 61 percent of participants had some experience with fishing. Of those who did not have fishing experience (14 people), 5 reported being interested in fishing and 4 were unsure if they were interested in fishing. Through the course of the focus groups participants shared their perceptions of fishing, discussed their motivations for going fishing, mentioned concerns about fishing, and identified factors that made fishing in the Twin Cities metropolitan area easier or more difficult.

How Do You Feel When You Think About Fishing?

Some people like fishing, some people don't:

"What happens is that not everyone likes to fish. My husband, for instance, he thinks it's boring. He likes to eat them but to go fish them, he thinks it's boring. But for people who really enjoy it, the time goes by really fast."

Many participants described fishing as an outdoor activity they enjoyed. To them fishing is "fun" and makes people "happy." One participant characterized fishing as "a sport of patience," and several mentioned the anticipation of "catching the big one." As a male participant put it, "you always have that suspense and you are there the whole time excited." However, not all participants were enthusiastic about fishing. Those uninterested in fishing tended to view it as "boring," and did not understand why someone would do it. "It's boring to just sit there looking at that thing and not catch anything," a female participant explained. Another woman mentioned that her husband thought the worms were "gross," while a third person stated they did not like fishing because they did not like the idea of hurting an animal. Participants who did not enjoy fishing tended not to fish. As one woman explained, "If you don't want to go, you won't go."

People fish differently in different places:

"In Mexico, people do a lot of different stuff to fish."

Participants described a spectrum of fishing experiences as they discussed fishing in their country of origin as well as in the US. Fishing could be a "low-tech" activity requiring little equipment. Participants explained that in Mexico people commonly fished with cans (to wrap the fishing line around) and nets instead of fishing poles, and used bread, tortillas, and dough (*masa*) for bait. In contrast, participants tended to view fishing in Minnesota as a "high-tech" activity requiring skill, store-bought equipment and licenses. One participant proposed an economic explanation for differences between fishing in Mexico and in the US, stating that "In Mexico, people don't even have [money] to eat, let alone to be buying [fishing equipment]." While fishing in Mexico was seen as "different"

than fishing in the US, it still conjured up fond memories for participants. One woman spoke nostalgically of fishing in her home state of Puebla, remembering that fishing had given her an opportunity to “share” with her grandfather.

What Are the Benefits of Fishing?

Family time:

“Besides just thinking about whether or not you are going to catch something, you can have fun with the people you are with.”

The participants who enjoyed fishing discussed the benefits that they associated with fishing and that motivated them to go fishing. To them, fishing gives them an opportunity to spend quality time with family and friends, even when they do not fish themselves. One woman reported: “I like to go, but not to fish. I like to go with my husband and watch him fish to see if he catches anything!” Parents in each group mentioned that their children enjoy fishing as well. Another woman described that when she takes her children fishing “the kids start screaming ‘pull harder, pull harder’ and I think it is exciting that the kids like it so much!” Two participants in another group characterized fishing as a positive activity for kids. One person described fishing as “better than some of the other things kids could be doing,” such as delinquent behavior.

In addition to strengthening family bonds, fishing offers participants the chance to interact with people of different racial/ethnic backgrounds who live in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. One participant recalled meeting a group of Asian fishermen at a lake by Minnetonka “where many Asians go and they even build little huts and all that.” The participant ended up sharing a meal with the Asian fishermen, and reported being “excited” to “get involved with [people from] another community.”

Alone time:

“Many times that is why I go [fishing], because I like to have time to put my thoughts in order.”

Similar to other outdoor activities, participants described fishing as beneficial to their physical and mental wellbeing. They noted that fishing allows people to experience “contact with nature” and get some “fresh air.” While fishing can be a social activity it can also be a time to be alone, and fishing helps participants relieve stress and forget about their problems. As one man explained, “Even if I don’t catch anything, [I like] just sitting on the bank watching. And I like it when I get into the water to fish; I like the water, the calm.”

Eating fish:

“[I]t’s a cultural difference [...]. [F]or example we, as Mexicans, we fish in order to eat. And, excuse me, but the American does it for sport. [...] They have their culture and we have ours.”

The prospect of catching fish “to eat” is another key motivation for fishing. Participants reported that they generally enjoy eating fish, and eating the fish they catch allows them to save money. Participants stressed that they do not generally view fishing as a “sport” (in contrast with mainstream US culture), and were surprised to see other Minnesotans catching a fish just to take a picture and throw it back in the water. One woman recalled seeing fishermen at a lake near her home unhook fish only to return them to the water, even when the fish were dead. Yet, while most Hispanics/Latinos do not share the concept of fishing as “sport,” one man emphasized the importance of respecting the customs of people from different cultures. He pointed out that, unfortunately, some elements of Hispanic/Latino culture are often misinterpreted or frowned upon due to misunderstanding.

What Concerns Come to Mind When You Think About Fishing?

Documentation:

“This has happened to me personally the past two or three times [I’ve gone fishing], that our fun is [interrupted] because we have had to leave the water. We have our papers in order but as an example [...] we have seen that we Hispanics are asked for everything, everything.”

While they discussed factors that motivated them to go fishing, participants also shared their concerns about fishing. In some cases, these concerns deterred them from going fishing. Participants in each group recalled confrontations with enforcement authorities while fishing in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, and reported feeling scrutinized by enforcement authorities more than other fishermen. One person expressed frustration that “we Hispanics are asked for everything,” not just fishing licenses but also their identification documents. Another participant described seeing people of “other nationalities” engage in dangerous behavior while fishing, such as leaving their children unattended or without a life vest. This participant reported being “very mad, very upset” that such people “are not asked [to show their documents] but we [Hispanics] are.”

Pollution:

“I’ve never seen a sign that says you can’t fish [in the Mississippi River] because this water is polluted, and there are a lot of people who go fishing there, without knowing.”

The issue of pollution in area lakes and rivers troubled some participants. Two men mentioned that fish caught in the Twin Cities metropolitan area could be unsafe to eat because of mercury levels in the water, and another man was particularly concerned about Hispanics/Latinos fishing in the Mississippi river. However, not all participants were concerned about water pollution. A male participant stated: “I have never worried too much about the pollution because one goes to the lakes where they see other people fishing.” This man was not interested in more information about pollution and toxins as it would be “like bringing a negative thought into something I like to do.” He did not view eating fish from polluted waters as a significant health hazard, since, as he said, “Once it’s fried, what’s the difference?”

Safety:

“You need to be careful with the kids, because they like to go all the way to the water. My daughter slipped on a rock, it wasn’t deep, just on the bank. But the rocks are slippery [...] so you have to be careful with the kids.”

Another concern expressed during the focus groups was personal safety and the safety of family members while fishing. A male participant said he worried about crime while spending time outdoors in the metropolitan area. In general, however, participants did not express worries about crime when they went fishing and did not report confrontations with other fishermen. Rather, they stressed the importance of being cautious along the banks of area lakes and rivers, particularly when fishing with small children. One woman explained that she does not enjoy fishing because she is “afraid to get too close to the lake.”

What Makes It Easy or Hard to Fish?

Focus group participants identified factors that make fishing in the Twin Cities metropolitan area easier for them, such as the abundance of lakes in the area. Participants commented that fishing does not require a great deal of training or experience, one can fish at any age, and one can fish alone or with other people. Other factors, however, make going fishing in the Twin Cities metropolitan area more difficult for them.

Getting a license:

“For instance I have a friend that wants to go fishing but he does not have a license, he cannot fish. Well he can go fishing but he runs the risk of getting caught.”

To participants, the inability to get a fishing license is a significant barrier to fishing. Obtaining a license is not possible for individuals without the necessary identification. As one man explained, “Many times in the Hispanic community people do not have an ID. So many of them want to go fishing but they don’t have the ID. There are places that ask you for your identification and [Hispanics/Latinos] do not have identification.”

Cost further restricts access to fishing. Participants commented that fishing would be easier “if licenses were cheaper.” The higher cost of a non-resident fishing license may be an underlying reason that participants view the fishing license as expensive. In order to obtain a resident fishing license in Minnesota applicants must provide a Minnesota driver’s license or some other form of state-issued photo ID. Minnesota only issues driver’s licenses to people who are legally residing in the US, in contrast with other states such as Wisconsin that issue driver’s licenses to people who can establish residency regardless of their immigration status. Undocumented Hispanic/Latino residents of Minnesota sometimes go to Wisconsin in order to obtain a government-issued photo ID. As a result, some undocumented immigrants living in Minnesota may be using an out-of-state driver’s license to obtain their fishing license, and consequently pay more to fish in Minnesota. Additionally, Hispanic/Latino Minnesota residents legally residing in the US may not have a Minnesota ID for a number of reasons, and thus would be required to purchase a non-resident fishing license.

Purchasing bait and equipment:

“You end up having to go way to one side to get the worms or those other things and then the other to go fishing.”

Limited access to fishing equipment such as boats, poles, reels, tackle and bait was another significant barrier identified by participants. They explained that fishing equipment is not always available or is more expensive at the most convenient locations. Participants noted that one could only buy fishing bait at specialized stores, and a woman suggested that going fishing would be easier if more places sold bait in the Twin Cities. One man remarked that bait and tackle products sold at gas stations and bait shops near where he fishes are more expensive than those sold farther away. Participants also acknowledged different levels of quality among fishing equipment, and perceived high quality equipment as too expensive. While some had their own equipment they said that it is of lower quality. Some participants borrow fishing equipment from family members in order to fish.

Fishing from the bank:

“One of the issues is that in the cities there are always like police that are ready to come and see the size of the fish you catch, and you don’t catch an exaggerated amount of fish since you are not fishing from a boat and you are just fishing from the bank.”

Participants described fishing from the bank as a particular challenge. To them fishing boats are expensive, and fishing from the bank is more difficult than fishing in a boat. In one man’s words, “Sometimes you can fish from the bank and it’s fine but other times you can’t because the line gets tangled up or you get a snag and it breaks the line.” They further explained that fishing from the bank often yields smaller fish, and keeping fish that are too small can lead to citations from enforcement authorities.

“Family” licenses:

“It’s that [the license] can say family [but] it doesn’t specify if it means kids or just a couple. Because here, “family” for them, for the American, it’s just him, his wife and the dog, because they don’t have any [kids]. No really, the American has just one kid, but has three dogs and a cat!”

A lack of access to information about fishing is an additional barrier to fishing. Participants underscored a particular need for information about licensing requirements, such as who needs a fishing license, the length of the fishing season covered by a license, and whether boat fishing requires a special license. Participants raised further questions about who is covered under a family license, and one man shared a story of how his father had gotten in trouble for violating the terms of a family fishing license. The man’s father had assumed that all his children were covered by the family license, when in fact it only covered the husband, the wife and their children under the age of sixteen. This information surprised other people in the focus group, who had also assumed that all immediate family members are covered by a family license.

Fishing regulations:

“What I don’t understand is why people need to get permission to fish. For example in Mexico they do not need a license. Why do they do that?”

At least two participants saw fishing regulations themselves as barriers to fishing, as they did not understand why certain regulations were in place. One woman questioned the need for fishing licenses, and the reason behind regulations concerning how many fish and what size fish to keep was also unclear. A male participant explained, in reference to fishing regulations: “If I go fishing, as far as I am concerned if I catch something it’s going in the pail no matter what size it is.”

Knowing where to fish:

“Where I go to fish, I’ve never seen an American fishing. Never. And so they must go to the better lakes because they get better information. And it shouldn’t be like this because all of us are paying for the license in order to have a bit of fun.”

Participants identified knowing where to fish in the Twin Cities metropolitan area as another challenge. Areas where fishing is forbidden are not always clearly marked, and according to the focus group participants fishing in an inappropriate place could precipitate confrontations with property owners and enforcement authorities. Lack of information on safe fishing waters could also lead to unknowingly fishing in a polluted body of water. Participants’ frustrations with fishing from the bank suggests a need for better information on where to fish successfully from the bank, and one person specifically wanted information about places where he could catch more fish. This man commented that he has never seen “Americans” fishing at the places where he goes fishing, which he took to mean that they must have “better” information about places to fish.

Winter:

“If it was warmer here, it would be easier to fish!”

Participants characterized Minnesota’s long, cold winters as a barrier to fishing and outdoor activities in general. Although participants acknowledged that fishing could be a year-round activity, none reported having any experience with ice fishing. Two men described being “scared” of falling through the ice, though one woman mentioned that her husband would be open to ice fishing. “My husband does not go [ice fishing] because he does not have anybody to go with,” she explained, “but if there was someone who said, ‘Hey, let’s go ice fishing,’ he would love it.” While ice fishing could require additional equipment, one man pointed out that ice fishing may be “easier” for someone who does not have access to a boat. As he put it, “In the summer [if you don’t have a boat] you don’t have access to go out to the middle of the lake and in the winter if you have a machine to cut through the ice that is all you need!” Another man suggested that he would fish in the winter if his fishing license were valid for a longer period of time.

According to the participants, additional barriers to fishing in the Twin Cities metropolitan area include: lack of information and/or signs about where to park legally, over-crowded lakes and parks, limited transportation to fishing areas outside of the metropolitan area, and lack of time.

Channels and Modes for Communicating Information about Fishing

How Would You Expect to Get Information About Fishing?

A range of places provide fishing information:

“I think Minnesota is one of the states where they promote hunting and fishing the most.”

One person noted that fishing and hunting is “promoted” in Minnesota more than in other states. Participants cited a variety of places where they would expect to get information on fishing in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. They would expect to find information at retail stores that sell fishing equipment (such as Wal-Mart and K-Mart), at supermarkets (like Las Americas supermarket stores in Minneapolis), gas stations, and specialized sporting goods stores (such as Gander Mountain and Cabellas). Other participants cited the Parks and Recreation offices, area newspapers like the Pioneer Press, and TV programs about fishing and hunting on local stations as potential sources of information. One person mentioned fishing and boating expos, while two participants suggested the internet. Participants also noted that they obtain information about fishing through word-of-mouth, from family members, friends, and other fishermen. Interestingly, a participant in one group suggested that a good way to get information about fishing was to “ask an Asian,” implying that Asians would know more about fishing.

How Would You Like to Get Information About Fishing?

In Spanish:

“[The DNR] could make sure that they have information in Spanish. Sometimes people don’t even know how to read the signs and the sign might say it is prohibited to fish but yet they go there and fish because they cannot read.”

Although participants identified a number of sources for information about fishing in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, they do not always receive this important and reliable information. Above all, participants across the groups underscored the need for information in English and Spanish. Participants who purchased fishing licenses only received English-language information upon obtaining their licenses. In addition, they commented that the signs that they encounter at area lakes and rivers are largely in English. The lack of written information in Spanish is particularly significant given that over one-third of focus group participants (38 percent) read only in Spanish. Language barriers make finding where to fish more difficult for those participants who enjoy fishing, and limits their ability to fish safely and in compliance with regulations.

When a license is purchased:

“I think when they give you a license they also have an obligation to give you some information. Information about which lakes you can fish in, what fish are in particular lakes.”

Participants proposed that the DNR distribute bilingual (English/Spanish) pamphlets with fishing information at locations selling fishing licenses. Bilingual brochures could be an effective way to reach Hispanics/Latinos. Participants commented that bilingual information is part of the DNR’s responsibility, as well as the responsibility of other entities promoting fishing in Minnesota.

Participants identified stores selling fishing equipment and bait as good places to disseminate information about fishing. They also mentioned other channels through which the DNR could target Hispanics/Latinos in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, including community centers (specifically the YMCA), area schools, Latino stores (clothing stores and supermarkets), and Spanish-language media outlets (newspapers, *La K Buena* and *Radio Rey* radio stations, and the Minnesota *Univisión* channel). One participant suggested distributing bilingual information about fishing via mail.

Fishing in the Neighborhood: Favored Interventions

HACER asked participants to comment on seven DNR proposals to disseminate information about fishing to Hispanics/Latinos in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Participants identified the kinds of information they would be interest in most, and also provided feedback on specific interventions suggested by the DNR. Participants were agreeable to most if not all the interventions the DNR had proposed to promote fishing in the Hispanic/Latino community, which made narrowing down the options challenging. The seven DNR proposed interventions were:

- 1) Information about eating fish and concerns about contaminants/toxins.
- 2) Information about fishing regulations and licenses.
- 3) Classes about fishing where instruction and equipment is provided.
- 4) Information about where to fish.
- 5) Introduction of different fish species to local waters.
- 6) Exhibits about fishing at community events.
- 7) Fishing equipment available for use in parks or community centers.

Taking into account comments from all groups, participants emphasized the following: a need for information about rules, regulations and licenses; information about areas to go fishing; and information about fish consumption and contaminants/toxins.

Participants in one focus group were enthusiastic about all of the DNR's proposals, though making fishing equipment available for use in parks or community centers was not deemed especially important. Participants in another group expressed interest in more information about rules and licenses, as well as information about places to go fishing. In a third focus group participants were most interested in information about rules and regulations, information about areas to go fishing, and information about consuming fish and concerns about pollution as top priorities. No one in this final group felt that exhibits about fishing at community events are a priority.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Action

This section includes recommendations for how the DNR could better engage and serve Minnesota's Hispanic/Latino community. Suggestions are grouped according to three categories: informational/educational priorities, mechanisms for disseminating information, and strategies for improving access to fishing licenses and equipment.

Offer linguistically appropriate information and educational opportunities about fishing.

Hispanics/Latinos participating in these focus groups emphasized the need for more information about fishing in Minnesota. Below are recommendations for the types of information that the DNR should disseminate to the Hispanic/Latino community.

- *Provide information about fishing regulations, particularly licensing requirements and the purpose of specific regulations.* As is evident from these focus groups, the DNR is not effectively communicating licensing requirements (such as who needs a license to fish in Minnesota, who is covered by a family license, the different kinds of licenses available, and the fishing season covered by a license) to Hispanic/Latino individuals interested in fishing. More information about regulations could quell concerns over confrontations with enforcement authorities. Clearly and effectively communicating the reasons for particular fishing regulations (for instance, explaining the links between fishing regulations and both environmental conservation efforts and health concerns) could encourage compliance.
- *Provide information about places to fish legally and successfully in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.* Participants expressed wanting more information about where fishing is allowed in the metropolitan area, as well as where they could catch the most fish. Given that the cost of a fishing boat is prohibitive for many of them, information on where to fish successfully from the bank would be particularly helpful.
- *Provide information about harmful contaminants/toxins and fish consumption.* Participants suggested that Hispanics/Latinos generally go fishing because they like to eat fish, though many might not know how to fish safely in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The DNR has outlined

guidelines on how to fish safely in the metropolitan area. Effectively communicating these guidelines to Hispanics/Latinos is very important.

- *Provide information/training about fishing techniques, such as how to tie a hook, how to use different weights of fishing line, how to attract different kinds of fish, and how to go ice fishing.* While a great deal of training is not necessary to enjoy fishing, participants described successful fishing as involving a certain degree of skill. Based on participants' experiences in the focus groups, Hispanics/Latinos who enjoy fishing are likely to be open to improving their fishing techniques, particularly if training helps them to catch more fish.

Improve dissemination of fishing information to Hispanics/Latinos.

While participants cited a range of sources for information about fishing in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, they do not always receive important and reliable information. Below are recommendations for improving the dissemination of information about fishing to the Hispanic/Latino community.

- *Provide information about fishing in the Twin Cities metropolitan area in both English and Spanish.* This includes printed materials, electronic resources, signs and classes. Although Spanish represents an important language for written and oral communication among Hispanics/Latinos, some read and speak more comfortably in English. Thus, the DNR can most effectively reach the Hispanic/Latino community in Minnesota by providing information about fishing in both languages.
- *Take cultural and language considerations into account when crafting educational or promotional campaigns about fishing.* Findings from the three focus groups suggest that Hispanics/Latinos view fishing as a family activity and a form of sustenance rather than a sport. Regulation of fishing activities may be a foreign concept to recently arrived Hispanic/Latino immigrants. Promotional and educational materials, therefore, should speak to these cultural notions by promoting fishing as a family activity, educating about the safe consumption of fish, and explaining why fishing regulations are in place.
- *Distribute a bilingual (English/Spanish) pamphlet with information about rules and regulations to individuals purchasing licenses.* According to participants locations selling fishing licenses, bait, and equipment are some of the best channels for disseminating fishing information to the Hispanic/Latino community. Specifically, locations selling fishing licenses should make sure each person receives this information upon getting their license. As fishing licenses can be purchased online, the DNR should also consider including Spanish language resources on their website.

- *Certify that places where fishing is permitted and/or prohibited are clearly marked by signs in the appropriate languages.* Use pictures and diagrams for individuals who cannot read. Signs providing information about parking at area lakes and rivers should be similarly accessible.
- *Be strategic about reaching out to the Hispanic/Latino community.* Participants suggested disseminating information about fishing through community centers (like the YMCA), area schools, Latin businesses (clothing stores and supermarkets), Spanish-language media (La K Buena, Radio Rey, Univisión MN), and promotional materials in the mail. While the DNR should prioritize distributing fishing information at locations selling fishing licenses, bait and equipment, these channels represent alternative means for educating and engaging the Hispanic/Latino community in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Improve access to fishing licenses and equipment for Hispanics/Latinos.

Some participants reported having difficulty obtaining fishing licenses and equipment. Below are recommendations for increasing access to licenses and equipment.

- *Relax proof of state residency requirements to allow individuals without a state ID or driver's license to purchase a resident fishing license if they can prove residency by other means.* Undocumented residents and Hispanics/Latinos legally present in the US who do not have a Minnesota state ID or driver's license face particular challenges in obtaining a resident fishing license. Current regulations require a state ID or driver's license to purchase a resident fishing license. Those without an ID may resort to buying a non-resident license or forgo the license all together. The additional cost of non-resident fishing licenses represents a significant barrier to fishing for Hispanic/Latino residents. Allowing residents to present a rent stub or a utility bill along with another form of picture ID, such as the Mexican *Matrícula Consular*, when applying for a resident fishing license could facilitate fishing among Hispanics/Latinos who do not meet current documentation requirements for a resident license.
- *Create more opportunities for Hispanics/Latinos to rent or borrow fishing equipment in the metropolitan area and/or advertise these opportunities appropriately.* Participants across the groups stressed that fishing equipment (and especially fishing boats) can be expensive. Participants who have their own equipment, noted it to generally be of poor quality.

Future Research

This section outlines recommendations for subsequent research that might complement the data presented in this report.

- *Investigate whether immigrant/refugee populations in Minnesota are disproportionately purchasing (or being required to purchase) non-resident fishing licenses.* This report raises questions about who actually qualifies for resident fishing licenses and whether some Hispanics/Latinos in fact resort to purchasing non-resident licenses. Specifically, Hispanics/Latinos may lack the forms of identification necessary to obtain a resident fishing license. Comparative demographic information on purchasers of resident and non-resident licenses would help the DNR determine whether this scenario is in fact occurring. Such information could further assist the DNR in evaluating the efficacy and appropriateness of current licensing procedures.
- *Track self-reported and observed race/ethnicity data for individuals cited for violating fishing regulations.* Focus group participants felt that enforcement authorities had singled them out for being Hispanic/Latino while they were fishing in the metropolitan area. A demographic analysis revealing that more Hispanics/Latinos are being fined for fishing violations at higher rates than other groups relative to population could indicate that racial profiling and discrimination is occurring. Alternatively, such findings could underscore the need to provide better information about fishing regulations to the Hispanic/Latino community.

Appendices

Appendix A: Focus Group Discussion Guide

English

- I. **Opening Question: Participants get acquainted and feel connected**
 - a. Tell us your first name, what neighborhood you live in, and your favorite outdoor activity (if any).
- II. **Introductory Questions--Nature**
 - a. When you think of nature specifically in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, what comes to mind?
- III. **Introductory Questions--General outdoor activities**
 - a. What kinds of outdoor activities do you like to do?
 - i. Follow up: When? How often? With whom?
 - b. What benefits do you get from your participation in outdoor activities?
- IV. **Transition Question**
 - a. When you think of fishing, what comes to mind?
- V. **Key Questions: Fishing**
 - a. How do you feel when you think about fishing? (Probe: do you like it?)
 - b. What do you think are the benefits of fishing? (*Probes (if necessary): food, time with family, solitude, challenge, fun, relaxation...*)
 - c. What do you think are the things that make it easy to fish? (*Probes (if necessary): opportunities near my house, having my own equipment, having equipment available to use at a park...*)
 - d. What do you think are things that make it hard to fish (i.e. obstacles)? (*Probes (if necessary): expense, time, equipment, lack of interest, other interests, getting a license, transportation, lack of fish, lack of access, concerns about eating the fish...*)
 - e. Are there any other concerns or problems that come to mind when you think about fishing in the Twin Cities metropolitan area? (*Probes (if necessary): crime, lack of places to go, toxins in the fish, no fish in the lakes, pollution, racism...*)
- VI. **Ending Questions**
 - a. Where would you expect to get information about fishing?
 - b. What suggestions would you give to promote fishing to people from your community? (*Probes (if necessary): advertise in certain media outlets; provide information in specific places like schools, churches, community centers, parks; provide information in a specific way (i.e. classes, flyers, etc.)*)
 - c. Would you be interested in... (*Probe (if necessary): How about other people you know?*)
 - i. information about eating fish and concerns about contaminants/toxins (Probe: how best to communicate?)
 - ii. information about fishing regulations and licenses (how best to communicate?)
 - iii. classes about fishing where instruction and equipment is provided
 - iv. information about where to fish (how best to communicate?)
 - v. introduction of different fish species to local waters (what species?)
 - vi. exhibits about fishing at community events (names of important annual events?)
 - vii. fishing equipment available for use in parks or community centers

Spanish

- I. **Opening Question: Participants get acquainted and feel connected**
 - a. Díganos su nombre, el vecindario donde vive y su actividad favorita al aire libre.
- II. **Introductory Questions—Nature**
 - a. ¿Cuándo piensa usted en la naturaleza y estar al aire libre en el área metropolitana de las Ciudades Gemelas, que le viene a la mente?
- III. **Introductory Questions—General Outdoor Activities**
 - a. ¿Cuáles actividades al aire libre le gustan usted? ¿Cuándo? ¿Con cual frecuencia? ¿Con quién?
 - b. ¿Qué son los beneficios de participar en las actividades al aire libre?
- IV. **Transition Questions**
 - a. ¿Cuándo piensa en pescar? ¿Qué le viene a la mente?
- V. **Key Questions: Fishing**
 - a. ¿Qué siente cuando piensa en ir a pescar? Ausculte: ¿Le gusta ir a pescar?
 - b. ¿Qué cree usted que son los beneficios de ir a pescar? Ausculte: comida, tiempo con la familia, tiempo solitario, desafío, diversión, relajarse...
 - c. ¿Qué son las cosas que a usted le facilitarían ir a pescar? Ausculte (si es necesario): que sea cerca de donde vivo, que tenga mi propio equipo
 - d. ¿Qué son las cosas (los obstáculos) que a usted le dificultan ir a pescar? Ausculte (si es necesario): los gastos, tiempo, equipo, falta de interés, falta de acceso, inquietudes sobre consumir el pescado
 - e. ¿Hay algunas inquietudes o problemas que vienen a la mente cuando piensa en ir a pescar en el área metropolitana de las Ciudades Gemelas? Ausculte: crimen, falta de lugares que ir, contaminación del pescado, que no hay peces en los lagos, racismo...
- VI. **Ending Questions**
 - a. ¿Dónde esperaría conseguir información sobre ir a pescar?
 - b. ¿Cuáles sugerencias nos puede dar sobre la promoción de la pesca en su comunidad? Ausculte: periódicos, lugares estratégicos, maneras apropiadas de esparcir información
 - c. ¿Le interesaría a usted...?
 - i. Información sobre consumir pescado y las inquietudes o preocupaciones sobre la contaminación/las toxinas
 - ii. Información sobre las reglas y licencias
 - iii. Clases sobre la pesca con instrucción y equipo proveído
 - iv. Información sobre lugares donde se puede ir a pescar
 - v. Información sobre la introducción de diferentes especies de peces a los ríos y los lagos locales
 - vi. Exhibiciones de la pesca en eventos comunitarios (nombres de los eventos)
 - vii. Equipos para pescar disponibles en los centros comunitarios y parques locales

Appendix B: Consent Form

GRUPO DE ENFOQUE SOBRE EL RECREO AL AIRE LIBRE Y LA PESCA:

Formulario de consentimiento para los participantes.

INTRODUCCIÓN: La Universidad de Minnesota en colaboración con el Departamento de Recursos Naturales le ha invitado a una plática sobre su interés y deseo de participar en el recreo al aire libre, específicamente en la pesca. El investigador principal para este estudio se llama David Fulton del Departamento de Las Piscifactorías, La Fauna y La Biología de Conservación del Medioambiente ubicado en el recinto de la Universidad de Minnesota. Llevaremos a cabo pláticas semejantes con otros grupos a lo largo del área metropolitana. Por favor, lea este formulario completamente. Si por acaso le queda alguna pregunta o duda, por favor, aclare sus dudas antes de firmar el documento.

PROPÓSITO DEL PROYECTO: Específicamente queremos aprender sobre como se siente usted sobre el recreo al aire libre, su interés de participar en actividades al aire libre, además de los obstáculos que enfrenta, su conocimiento sobre y su participación en la pesca. No es necesario que tenga conocimiento ni experiencia anterior con el recreo al aire libre o de ir a pescar. Este estudio no está enfocado en el cumplimiento de requisitos para licencias ni del cumplimiento con las reglas de la pesca.

PROCEDIMIENTO: Si usted consiente a participar, quisiéramos que llene un formulario con su información demográfica y después que participe en un diálogo en forma de grupo. Es posible que el diálogo sea grabado para ayudarnos recordar sus comentarios. El dialogo durará aproximadamente 2 horas.

RIESGOS: Usted corre poco riesgo al participar en la plática. Usted hablará sobre sus experiencias personales delante de otras personas en el grupo. Le haremos preguntas acerca de sus experiencias personales, sus sentimientos y sus recomendaciones.

RECOMPENSA MONETARIA: Proveemos \$40 de recompensa monetaria después de la plática.

PRIVACIDAD: Su nombre y la información que usted provee se los guardará completamente confidenciales. Nadie afuera del grupo sabrá lo que usted dijo durante la conversación. Guardaremos las cintas y los archivos en una oficina segura. Solamente los investigadores involucrados directamente en este proyecto pueden tener acceso a los archivos.

PARTICIPACIÓN VOLUNTARIA: Su participación no es obligatoria. Si usted participa y si no quiere responder a alguna pregunta, no le obligaremos a responder. Usted puede salir de la conversación en cualquier momento. Su decisión de salir no afectará sus relaciones presentes ni futuras con nosotros.

CONTACTOS Y PREGUNTAS: La persona quien está dirigiendo esta investigación se llama David Fulton. Se puede comunicar con él al 612.625.5256. Jared y Maggie también pueden responder a sus preguntas en español. Si usted quisiera hablar con ellos, puede llamarlos al 612.624.3326. Si tiene preguntas o preocupaciones con respeto a esta investigación y quisiera hablar con alguien quien no esté directamente involucrado con la investigación, puede llamar a los Abogados de Participantes de Investigaciones al 612.625.1650 o escribirles a la siguiente dirección: Research Subjects Advocate, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware Street SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455. El número de referencia para esta investigación es 0507E71353.

Ud. recibirá una copia de este formulario para sus archivos personales.

DECLARACIÓN DE CONSENTIMIENTO:

He leído y entiendo la información en los párrafos anteriores. He aclarado mis dudas y he hecho las preguntas que tengo. He recibido respuestas a estas preguntas. Consiento a participar en la plática.

Firma del Participante _____ Fecha _____

Firma del Moderador(a) _____ Fecha _____

Appendix C: Demographic Form

Grupo de enfoque sobre el recreo al aire libre y la pesca.

Queremos la siguiente información demográfica sobre los participantes de los diálogos comunitarios para poder caracterizar con quien hemos hablado. Las respuestas son opcionales. Usted puede optar de no responder a cualquier pregunta.

Background Information

1. Sexo:

- Masculino
- Femenino

2. ¿Cuántos años tiene usted?

_____ Años

3. ¿Cuántos niños menores de 18 años viven en su casa?

4. ¿En qué país nació usted?

Si nació en otro país, ¿Hace cuántos años que vive usted en los Estados Unidos de América?

_____ Años

5. ¿Hace cuántos años que vive usted en Minnesota?

_____ Años

6. ¿Cuántos años tiene usted de haber vivido en un área rural? (Si califica.)

_____ Años

7. ¿Cual es su nivel de educación más alto? (Marque uno.)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Primaria/Centro básico | <input type="checkbox"/> Universitaria (no se graduó) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secundaria (no se graduó) | <input type="checkbox"/> Universitaria (se graduó) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secundaria (se graduó) | <input type="checkbox"/> Maestría o Doctorado (no se graduó) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Preparatoria o Bachillerato (no se graduó) | <input type="checkbox"/> Maestría o Doctorado |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Preparatoria o Bachillerato (se graduó) | |

8. En general, ¿En cual(es) idioma(s) lee usted?

- Solamente español
- Español mejor que el inglés
- Ambos igualmente
- Inglés mejor que el español
- Solamente inglés
- Otro

9. En general, ¿En cual(es) idioma(s) habla usted con sus amigos?

- Solamente español
- Español mejor que el inglés
- Ambos igualmente
- Inglés mejor que el español
- Solamente inglés
- Otro

10. ¿Cual de los siguientes representa el total de ingreso (bruto) de su casa?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Menos de \$10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000 - \$59,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 - \$19,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60,000 - \$69,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000 - \$29,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$70,000 - \$79,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000 - \$39,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$80,000 - \$89,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000 - \$49,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$90,000 o más |

11. ¿Cómo se identifica usted? Hablando en términos de raza, grupo étnico, tribu, herencia cultural y/o religión.

Historia de la pesca

12. ¿Jamás ha pescado usted?

- Sí
- No. ¿A usted le interesa ir a pescar? Sí No No sé

Si responde "no" a la pregunta número 12, por favor, pare aquí.



