



Idaho Department of Environment Quality (DEQ) Fish Consumption Survey

What is the purpose of this research?

- Fish consumption is one factor used to set water quality standards. This research is meant to provide reliable measures of how much Idahoans fish and seafood consume and how much of that fish comes directly from Idaho's lakes and streams.

How many people are being surveyed for this project?

- Over the course of the next 12 months, more than 4,500 Idahoans will complete the survey. They are being contacted by telephone and asked to complete a relatively brief—10 to 15 minutes—but comprehensive series of questions. A subset of those who complete the first survey will be asked to complete a portion of the survey to assess variability in fish consumption.

Why is this research needed?

- The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) disapproved Idaho's current criteria set to protect human health because they could not determine that the fish consumption rate the criteria were based on represented all Idahoans and was thus protective. Idaho DEQ initiated a negotiated rulemaking process to revise the disapproved water quality criteria set to protect human health.

How will the results from this research be used?

- Results from the research will be used to determine if Idaho's current estimates of fish consumption adequately protect human health or, if the current estimates are not protective, what new estimates should be used. DEQ felt that a well-designed and implemented survey would provide the best estimates of fish consumption in Idaho. For more information on the rule-making process, visit DEQ's website: <http://www.deq.idaho.gov/58-0102-1201>.

Why such a large study?

- The research is designed to be as broad and inclusive as possible. It will provide estimates of consumption rates that should be useful for several years, accounts for the seasonality of fish consumption, and will characterize consumption for the general population as well as resident anglers who may be more vulnerable because of higher consumption of fish. DEQ feels that a comprehensive survey of this kind will become a best practices model for these kinds of estimates.

How are people being selected for the research?

- A random sample of telephone numbers--both landline and cell phones--was drawn to represent all residents of Idaho. Everyone in Idaho has a possibility of being selected. This ensures that the study is all inclusive and that the results can be reliably projected to the general population. If you are contacted about the study you will be asked several questions to ensure the final sample is representative of all Idahoans.



My time is valuable. Why should I participate in this research?

- It is important that all segments of the population are represented so that the results are indeed a reflection of the general population. High response rates ensure that the data is of the highest possible quality and that Idaho has a strong foundation for this critical policy decision. DEQ recognizes the value of your time and we have done everything to make this research as efficient as possible while gathering the data needed. Your individual participation does make a real difference.

Who is Northwest Research Group and how were they selected for this project?

- Northwest Research Group (www.nwresearchgroup.com) (NWRG) is an independent market research company that specializes in the design and implementation of market, opinion, and social research studies that are used for public policy decisions such as this. In the fall of 2013, DEQ issued a formal Request for Proposals to identify the most competitive firm to conduct this research and NWRG was selected based on this process.

I got called by Issues and Answers about this project. Who are they and what is their role?

- Northwest Research Group has subcontracted the telephone data collection part of this project to Issues and Answers, a company that specializes in this aspect of the work (www.issans.com). Issues and Answers works directly for NWRG, not DEQ.

What if I don't want to participate?

- Your participation in the survey is completely voluntary. You may choose to skip any question or stop participation at any time. We do, however, hope that you will choose to participate as your responses do count. Your individual responses are completely confidential and can never be linked back to you directly. Northwest Research group is a member of the Council of American Survey Research Organizations (www.casro.org) and strictly abides to their Code of Ethics and Business Standards.

Who may I contact if I want additional information?

- If you would like additional information about this research you may contact NWRG's Project Director, Nathan Wiggin, at 206.489.2363 or nwiggin@nwresearchgroup.com. If you wish to speak with someone at DEQ you may contact Don Essig at 208.373.0119 or don.essig@deq.idaho.gov.