

# FISH Project Results Summary for Detailed Questions about Fish Consumption



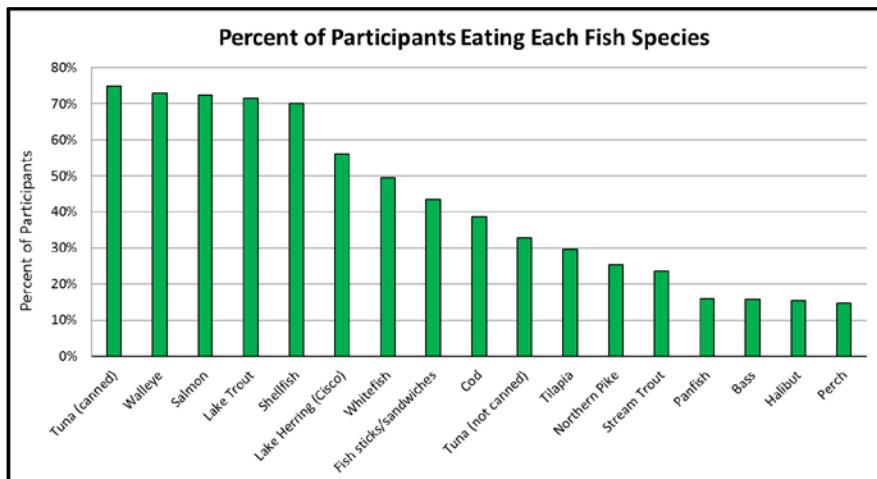
As part of the FISH Project, 499 women (age 16 to 50) were asked to complete a detailed questionnaire about the fish they had eaten in the past year. This is the summary of their responses.

**Out of 499 women, 96% reported eating fish in the last year.**

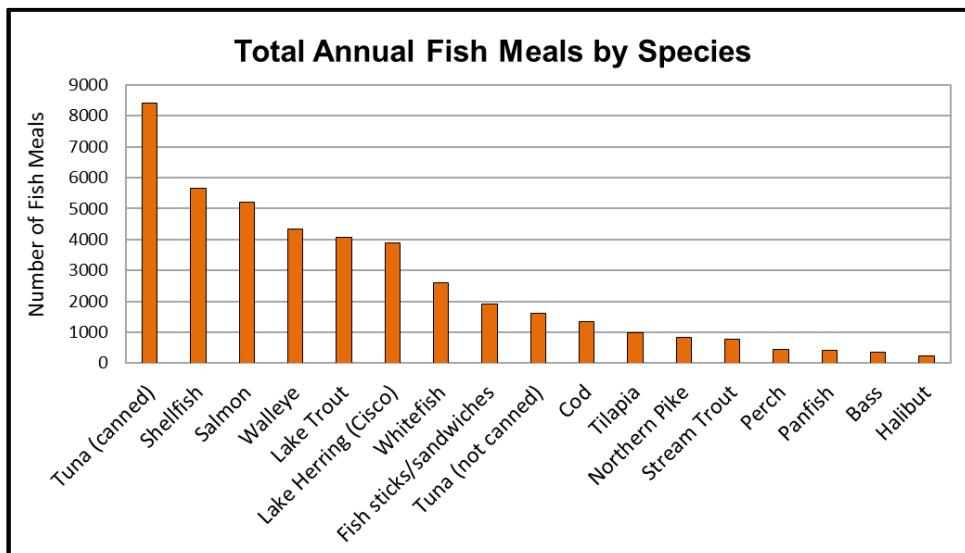
Participants reported eating over 40,000 meals of fish the year prior to their FISH visit. On average, participants ate 1.7 fish meals per week.

## Most Popular Fish and Seasonal Trends

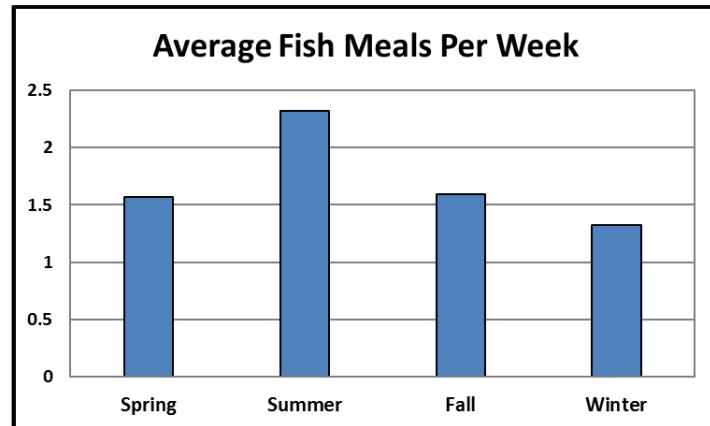
Canned Tuna was the most popular fish eaten –



**Canned tuna** was the top species reported both by the percent of participants that ate it (75%) and the total number of meals eaten in the last year (over 8400 meals).



Participants ate more fish during the **summer** (average of 2.3 fish meals per week) compared to other seasons.

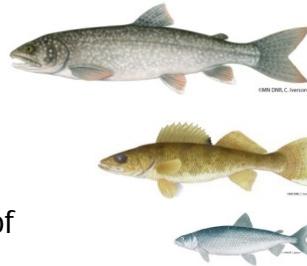


**Table 1: Weekly Average for Species Eaten in the Last Year**

Fish Species	Annual Average Meals per Week
Tuna (canned)	0.3
Shrimp and shellfish (clams, mussels, oysters, scallops, crab)	0.2
Salmon (canned or not canned)	0.2
Walleye	0.2
Lake Trout	0.2
Lake Herring (cisco)	0.2
Whitefish	0.1
Fish sticks/sandwiches	0.07
Tuna (not canned)	0.06
Cod	0.05
Tilapia	0.04
Northern Pike	0.03
Stream trout (brook, splake rainbow, brown)	0.03
Perch	0.02
Panfish (bluegill, sunfish, crappie, etc.)	0.02
Bass	0.01
Halibut	0.01

## Consumption of Caught Fish

Out of the over 40,000 fish meals participants reported eating, **35% of these meals were “caught” fish** (e.g. fish that were not purchased). Walleye, lake trout, and lake herring were the most popular caught fish eaten. Caught fish were also eaten most often in summer compared to other seasons. About 50% of participants knew the size of the caught fish they ate.



Two out of three participants (67%) reported eating 1 or 2 pieces of fish the size of the palm of their hand per meal. Six percent (6%) reported eating 4 or more pieces per meal.

## Participants' Fish Consumption & the MN Fish Eating Guidelines

The fish species participants reported eating are grouped into one of 3 tables (Tables 2, 3, and 4 on page 4) by how often the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) recommends they be eaten based on mercury and other contaminants (called the MN Fish Eating Guidelines). The tables list the **highest** number of times each species was eaten by a participant in one week or month.

The **MN Fish Eating Guidelines** say:

1) **Each Week** -

Women of childbearing age are encouraged to eat fish from one of these two categories: Eat 2 fish meals from fish listed in Table 2 OR Eat 1 fish meal from fish listed in Table 3.

2) **In addition, Each Month** -

Women of childbearing age are also encouraged to eat 1 fish meal per month from fish listed in Table 4.

**Table 2: MN Fish Eating Guidelines - Eat these fish 2 times per week**

Fish Species	Most times eaten in <u>one week</u> by a participant
Cod	4
Tilapia	3
Shrimp and shellfish (clams, mussels, oysters, scallops, crab)	7
Fish sticks/sandwiches	2
Stream trout* (brook, splake rainbow, brown)	2
Salmon* (canned or not canned)	5
Lake herring**	5

\*Fish Eating Guidelines vary from 2 times/week to 1 time/month, based on fish size, waterbody source, and species. The stream trout and salmon participants reported eating likely are within the 2 times/week category.

\*\*Fish Eating Guidelines vary from 2 times/week to 1 time/week, based on waterbody. The herring participants reported eating likely are within the 2 times/week category.

**Table 3: MN Fish Eating Guidelines - Eat these fish 1 time per week**

Fish Species	Most times eaten in <u>one week</u> by a participant
Perch	3
Panfish (bluegill, sunfish, crappie, etc.)	1
Lake whitefish	4
Tuna, canned light	3

**Table 4: MN Fish Eating Guidelines - Eat these fish 1 time per month**

Fish Species	Most times eaten in <u>one month</u> by a participant
Walleye	13
Northern pike	13
Bass (smallmouth, largemouth, rock)	4
Halibut	4
Tuna, canned white (albacore)	30
Tuna steak or sushi	22
Lake trout	13

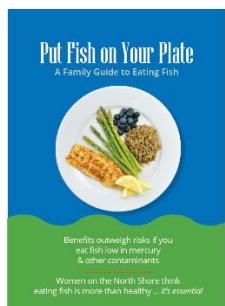
\*Fish Eating Guidelines vary from 1 time/week to 1 time/month, based on fish size and waterbody source. The lake trout participants reported eating likely are within the 1 time/month category.

**Table 5** shows the percent of participants who ate more fish than what the MN Fish Eating Guidelines recommend.

- Most women who ate fish within the 2 times per week (92%) or 1 time per week (90%) categories stayed within the guidelines.
- Over half (51%) of women reported eating fish more than 1 time per month from the 1 time per month category (Table 4).
- 3 of out 5 women (59%) ate more fish than the guidelines recommend (Tables 2, 3, and 4 combined).

**Table 5: Participants (%) who ate more than MN Fish Eating Guidelines**

<b>Guideline Category Description</b>	<b>Percent who ate more fish than recommended (based on MDH guidelines to keep exposure to contaminants low)</b>
Table 2: Eat these fish species up to 2 times per week	8% of women ate these species more than 2 times per week
Table 3: Eat these fish species up to 1 time per week	10% of women ate these species more than 1 time per week
Table 4: Eat these fish species up to 1 time per month	51% of women ate these species more than 1 time per month
MN Fish Eating Guidelines (defined on page 3)	59% of women ate more than the guidelines recommend (includes all fish meals from species in Table 2, 3, and 4)



For a brochure of the MN Fish Eating Guidelines, go to the FISH Project link on the Sawtooth Mountain Clinic website [www.sawtoothmountainclinic.org](http://www.sawtoothmountainclinic.org)