

SEPTEMBER 2025

RESTORING THE RIVER

Official Newsletter of The St. Marys River Remedial Action Plan

Part 4: Restrictions on Fish Consumption BUI

Fishing History on The St. Marys River

Fishing along the Canadian shore of the St. Marys River is a way of life that has shaped both culture and community over many generations. For Indigenous peoples, the river has long been a source of nourishment and connection to the land. Whitefish, walleye, and pike are among the species traditionally harvested from these waters, especially in the fast-moving rapids. The place now known as Sault Ste. Marie is called “Baawitigong” in Anishinaabemowin, meaning “place of the rapids”. The St. Marys River holds profound cultural and spiritual meaning for members in and around our community.

Over time the landscape has changed, industrial development introduced new challenges, but the practice of fishing endured. At times, pollution forced health officials to issue consumption advisories, warning of elevated levels of mercury and PCBs in certain fish. These warnings influenced what people caught, how often they ate local fish, and which species they brought home. However, concerns aside, the connection people have to the river never faded.



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St. Marys River Fishing
History

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Preferred Fishing Locations
On and Off The River

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How Long Have Survey
Participants Been Fishing?

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Upcoming Projects

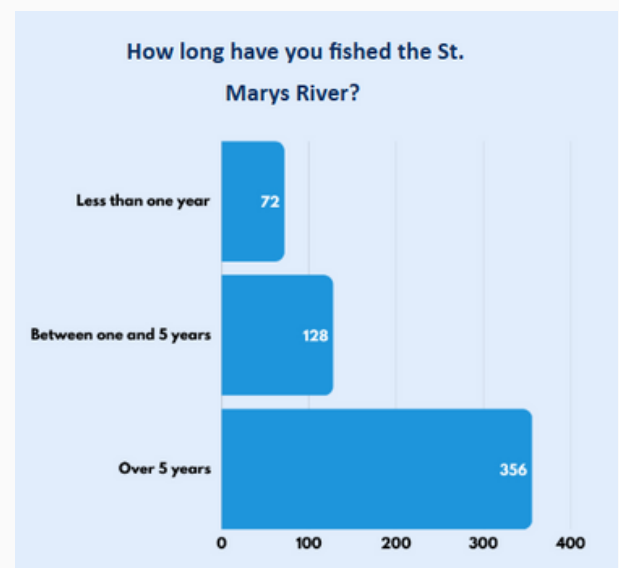
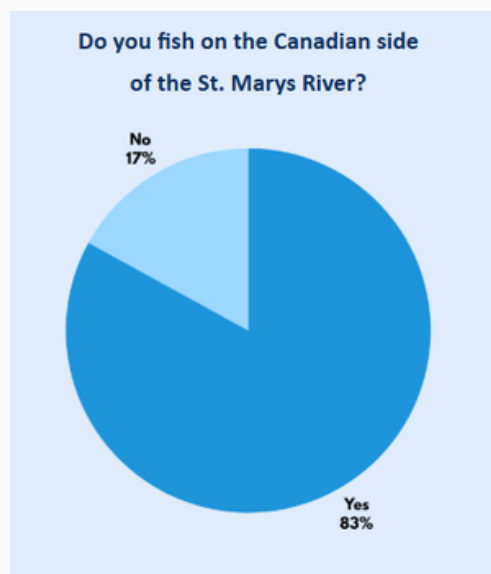
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To better understand how people interact with the river today, the St. Marys River Remedial Action Plan recently carried out a Community Fish Consumption Survey. The survey asked residents and anglers about what they fish for, how frequently they eat their catch, and whether they follow existing consumption guidelines. More than 600 people responded, offering a wide range of perspectives. These responses will help assess whether one of the river's remaining environmental concerns (Restrictions on Fish Consumption) can be moved to not-impaired.

Fish Consumption Survey Findings

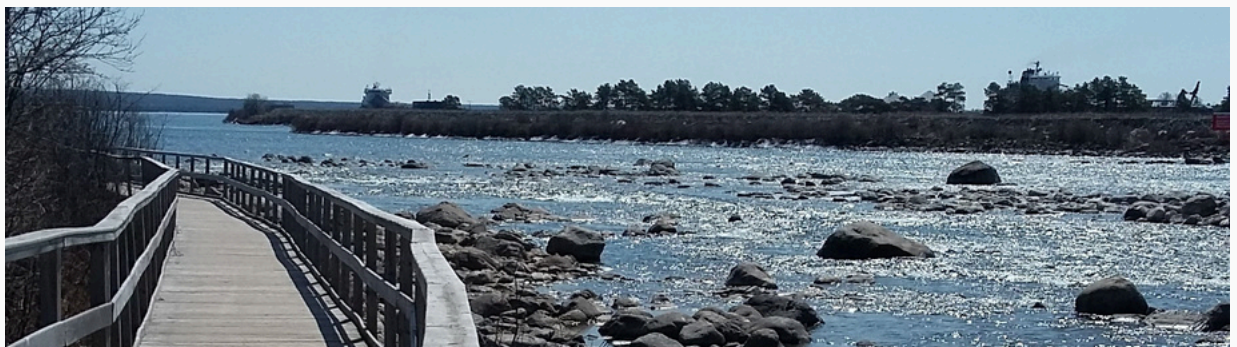
Who fishes on the Canadian side of the river?

Out of the 673 survey participants, 83% (N=556) go fishing on the Canadian side of the St. Marys River AOC. Survey results also showed that the majority of these survey participants have been fishing the river for over 5 years.



Where are the preferred fishing locations on and off The River?

- 22% prefer the St. Marys River Rapids
- 22% prefer the St. Joseph Channel
- 21% prefer Lake George
- 19% prefer Sault Ste. Marie (excluding rapids)
- 16% prefer Upper River (upstream of the rapids)





Coming Up Next

We have four more newsletters coming up, each of them taking a deeper look into the findings from the Fish Consumption BUI survey!

Get Involved!

There are multiple opportunities for you to get involved with the St. Marys Remedial Action Plan. Check out the upcoming possibilities below.

River Stories

This is a new series we are planning to integrate into our social media to engage with our incredible community. We want to hear your stories related to the river, tell us about how you grew up fishing on it, or how you spent time with your family along the shore. Share with us your cherished stories so that we can amplify your voice and the importance for the St. Marys River.

If you would like more information about outreach opportunities, please scan the QR code. It will take you to our linktree which has more information in the google forms. Alternatively, feel free to reach out to us through our channels below.

Additionally, if you have an upcoming event you'd like us to be at, please reach out and let us know!



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