



Department of Health

Hudson River Fish Advisory Outreach Project

Project Update 2017

2016-2017 HRFA Accomplishments

This year, the Hudson River Fish Advisory Outreach Project forged ahead with activities and materials that let people know the Hudson River advice, and raise awareness about local waters that are healthier alternatives for families who want to eat the fish. We widened our alliances and created new resources to better reach the Hudson Valley’s diverse residents.

In the spring we offered a new Request for Applications for Hudson fish advisory outreach and added another mini-grant partner. We welcomed Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Albany County, who will table at community events, and work with a network of Women Infant and Children (WIC) clinics, food pantries and Head Start programs. We continued our support to Rensselaer Land Trust, Hudson Sloop Clearwater and CCE of Dutchess, Rockland and Saratoga counties. These Cornell Extension partners collaborate with CCE in Columbia, Greene, Orange, Ulster and Washington counties, promoting Hudson fish advisory outreach throughout most of the Hudson Valley.

We focused on initiatives to reach Hudson Valley newcomers who are less likely to know the advice and whose first language may not be English.

Bilingual Department of Health staff were interviewed about the fish advisory on two Spanish-language radio shows -- La Super Latina and La Voz. Our Cooperative Extension Rockland County partners and the Rockland Immigration Coalition linked us to community groups, enabling us to present the fish advisory to Spanish-speaking parents of children attending school in Haverstraw and to seniors at Centro de Amigos Day Center. We translated our Hudson River brochure into French and Haitian Creole, and participated in Affinity Health Plan’s fair at the French-Speaking Baptist Church in Spring Valley.



Mara Estes teaching an ENL (English as a New Language) class about Hudson fish and fishing locally.

An innovative strategy to share the Hudson fish advisory with people for whom English is not a first language was the development of a short curriculum for “English as a New Language” (ENL) classes. Staff with ENL experience developed a lesson about Hudson fish consumption and healthier nearby waters where families can eat fish. The project offered classes in Ulster and Orange Counties, and hope to work with more ENL providers in the Hudson Valley to reach more English-language learners and immigrant communities.



Our Cornell Cooperative Extension of Albany County partner’s display at a local community event.

Youth are a springboard into a community and this summer we piloted a project in NYC with the Chinese-American Planning Council Youth Services Division. Thirty interns in Manhattan's Summer Youth Employment program explored healthy local and market fish consumption. They visited Hudson River piers to do outreach and shared what they learned in presentations to 300 summer employment peers. A new collaboration with the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies and NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) adds a suite of lessons about PCBs in Hudson River Fish to Cary Institute's middle and high school lesson plans. Using data collected over the years by the NYSDEC, students explore how ecology, migration and fat content affect PCB levels in fish. Currently, these lessons are being piloted with area teachers, with a full release expected in the fall of 2018.

Hudson River HealthCare invited us to talk to their outreach staff, and we shared the advice with members of the Karen community from Burma at the Albany Karen Seventh-Day Adventist Mission. We appreciated the opportunity to be at the Food Bank for Westchester food distributions in Yonkers, and at one coordinated by Cornerstone Family HealthCare in Newburgh. We tabled at new venues - at the United Latin Festival of Haverstraw and at "Hooley on the Hudson" in Kingston. We continued our outreach at events popular with the fishing public, such as the World Fishing and Outdoor Exposition in Rockland County, the Dutchess and Saratoga County fairs, and the Hudson River Fisherman's Association "Hooked on the Hudson" children's fishing derby.

To make our communications more mobile-friendly, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) updated its fish advisory web page and is excited to add a valuable new resource: online maps. Although the goal of the program is to reinforce the advice that women under 50 (childbearing age) and children should not eat any fish from the Hudson River, we don't want to discourage healthy fish consumption. Fortunately, many waters in the Hudson Valley offer alternatives to the Hudson for less contaminated fish. This year saw the approval of color-coded maps as handy visual guides to the advice. The alternative fishing locations are outlined in blue on the maps and show state-managed public access waters where families can eat fish up to once a week. Seven Hudson River counties maps are now online with more planned.

An ongoing component of our program is to encourage property owners to post our fish advisory signs on the approximately 300 miles of shoreline from Troy to New York City, south of the DEC-regulated Catch-and-Release fishing section. Each year we

Rockland County Fishing Waters
NYS Department of Health Fish Advisories & Publicly Accessible Waters

All outlined waters are NYS DEC public access waters; there may be other fishing access sites in your county.
General Advisory Applies: Whole family - fish weekly/monthly
Specific Advisory Applies: Women under 50 & children under 15 should not eat fish from these waters.
Men over 15 & women over 50: health.ny.gov/fish/

www.health.ny.gov/fish/
fishadvisories.health.ny.gov
 Map issues © 2017 copyright

Example of Rockland County Fishing Waters map showing waters in blue where everyone in the family can eat the fish, as well as advisory waters in red.

See more maps at:
health.ny.gov/fish/maps.htm

focus on a specific stretch of the river and visit boat launches and fishing access sites to see if signs are present, damaged or overgrown. Property owners already in the database are then contacted if signs need to be replaced. For new sites, we research who owns the property and then contact them to see if they are willing to post signs. This season we visited 44 sites in four counties. We are delighted that in the last few years, a growing number of property owners at popular fishing sites are communicating our message to the fishing public, including Green Island in Albany County.

Moving into 2018, we will further expand our network and strategies to reach women who may be eating Hudson River fish, connect with immigrants and food bank customers, and share fishing maps that provide alternatives for healthier choices for families.



Coeymans has several DOH signs posted alerting the public about the fish advisory.

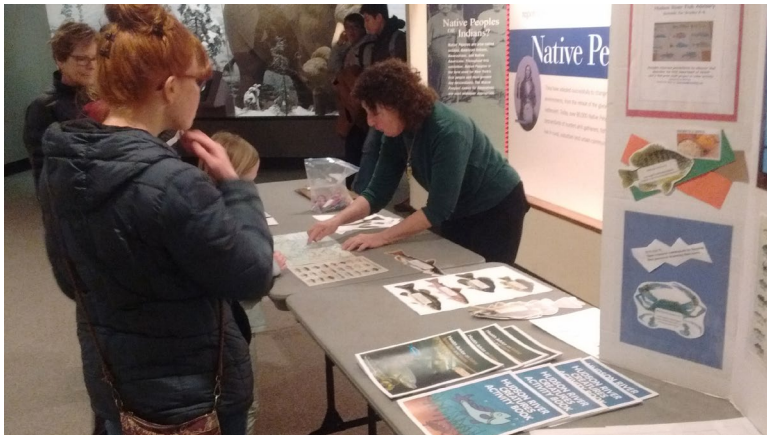
Partner Outreach



Dave Conover of Hudson Sloop Clearwater tabling at a community event.



Hudson Valley educators aboard the Sloop Clearwater learning about fish identification and the Hudson River fish advisory.



Fran Martino of River Haggie Outdoors/Rensselaer Land Trust teaching about the fish advisory at the NYS Museum.



Saratoga CCE's fish advisory displays at Saratoga Tackle & Archery in Schuylerville (left) and Bob's Bait Shop in Corinth (right). These displays help anglers have easy access to advisory information.



NYSDOH Outreach

Mara Estes and Regina Keenan tabling at the Haverstraw United Latino Fest, Haverstraw, NY.



Mara Estes facilitating an angler survey at the Dutchess County Fair, Rhinebeck, NY.



Audrey Van Genechten at a very rainy Hooley on the Hudson festival in Kingston, NY.



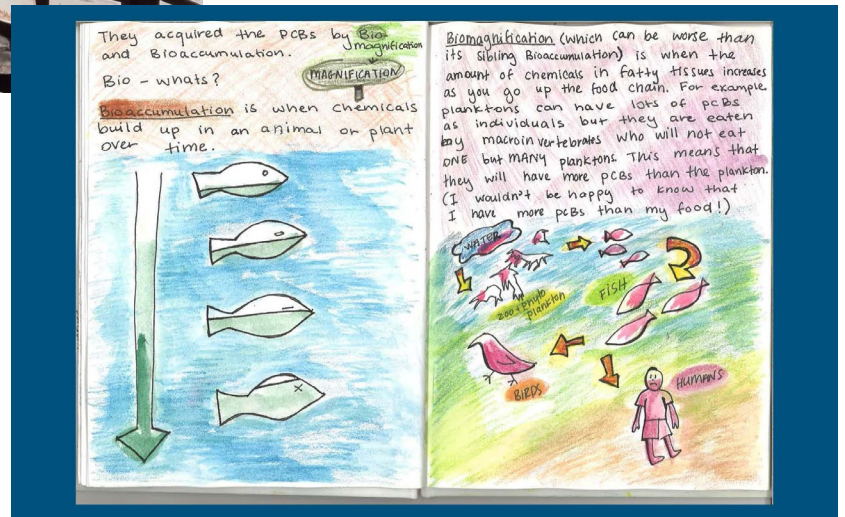
Raffle winners holding new fishing poles at the Karen Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Albany at a Hudson River fish advisory outreach event.

Special Projects

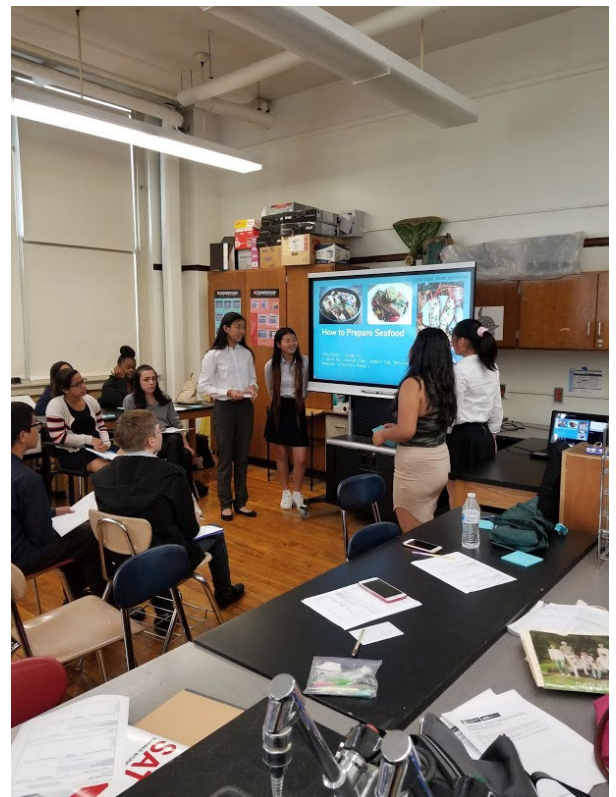


Ms. Nafisa Rashid with her mother Ms. Anifa Rashid and her winning entry from the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies' annual Data Jam, which makes Hudson River datasets "sing through creative expression".

Out of the many lessons and datasets available through the Cary Institute, Nafisa focused on a pilot of new lessons about PCB levels in Hudson River fish. These lessons will soon be available and were made possible through a collaboration with the Cary Institute, NYS DOH and NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.



Chinese-American Planning Council's Summer Youth program interviewed anglers riverside and developed presentations about healthy fish consumption.



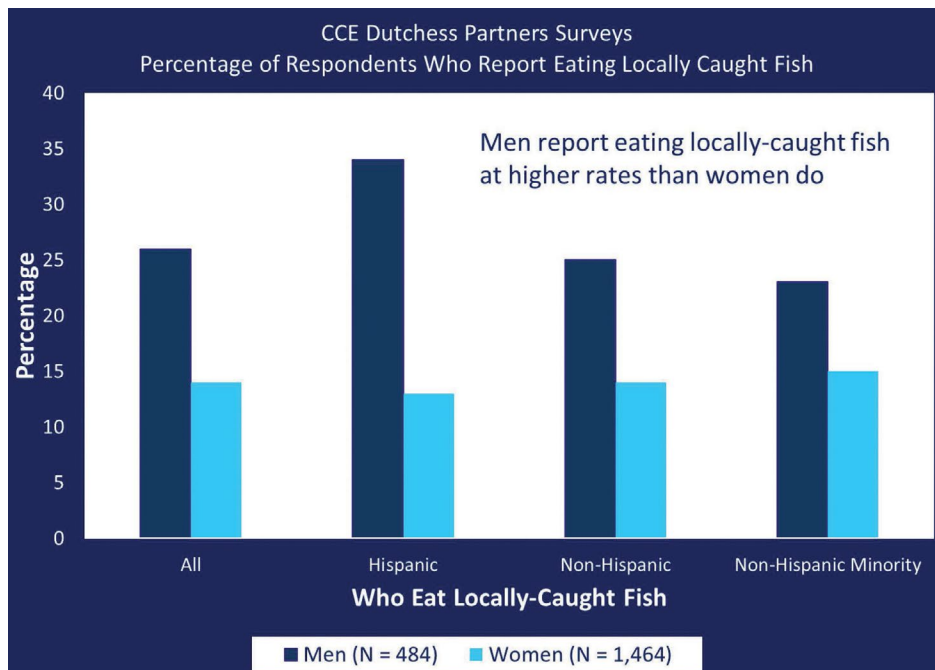
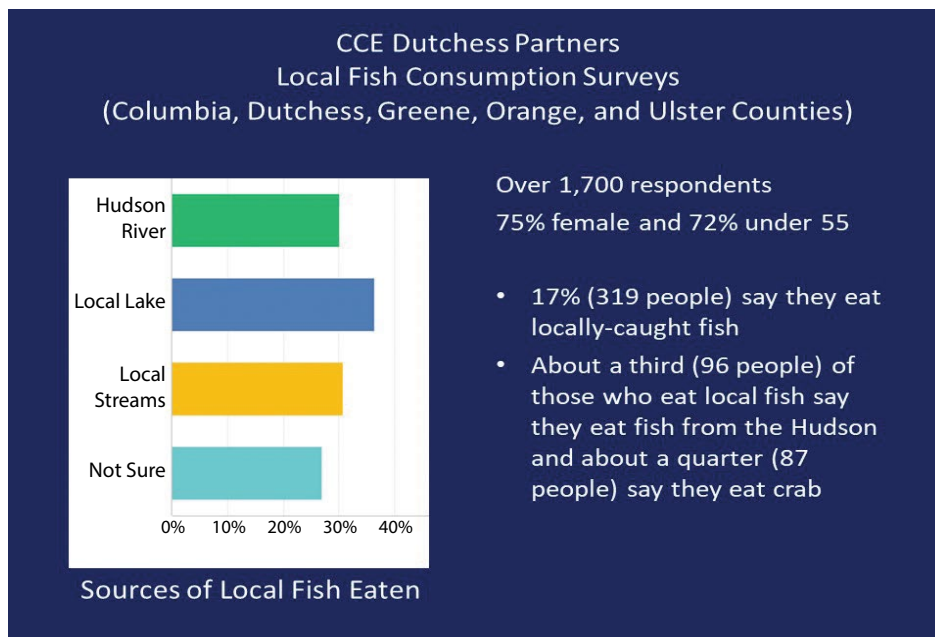
Survey Results Update

In 2017, NYSDOH staff and our Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) partners continued to collect hundreds of fish consumption surveys at tabling events and other outreach activities. The new surveys support the trends we detailed in our 2016 summary.

It is important to note that the surveys are convenience samples, and not a statistical representation of all Hudson River fish consumers, nor everyone in a specific community. We use the survey information to understand more about consumption choices, knowledge of fish advisories, and to target program resources. The data below are cumulative, with key points highlighted.

Cornell Cooperative Extension Partners

Our Cornell partners in Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange and Ulster counties asked the public in a variety of community settings about consumption of fish that they or someone they know catches. About 17% say they eat locally-caught fish, from the Hudson and other local waters. Men report eating locally-caught fish more often than women do.



During outreach at community events, NYSDOH and staff from Cornell Cooperative Extensions of Rockland and Saratoga Counties collect brief surveys from people who fish the Hudson River. Surveys from Saratoga County continue to show that anglers are very aware of NYSDEC regulations (Catch-and-Release only), and eat fish from other parts of the Hudson and other water bodies. CCE Saratoga's surveys are not included in the figure below as it illustrates results from the Hudson south of Troy, where keeping fish is legal.

Between Troy and New York City, NYSDOH has consumption advice and people can keep their fish. CCE Rockland and NYSDOH now have about 1,100 surveys. The consumption patterns that we shared in 2016 continue. About 39% of those surveyed say they practice catch and release fishing. Eighty-six percent of consumers are male. Over three quarter of consumers say they eat striped bass, and 73% eat Hudson fish a couple of times per year. Over a third of consumers share with family and friends, and 13% report sharing with children under 15.

Forty-seven percent of Hudson fish consumers say they knew the NYSDOH advice before our contact with them (see figure 1 below). While the number of respondents is small, only 31% of women who ate Hudson fish and 33% of those who share with children under age 15 say they knew the advice. This is a concern since women under 50 and children under 15 are advised not to eat any fish from the Hudson. We continue to work with organizations that can connect us with families, to make them more aware of the advice and of nearby waters where they can eat fish.

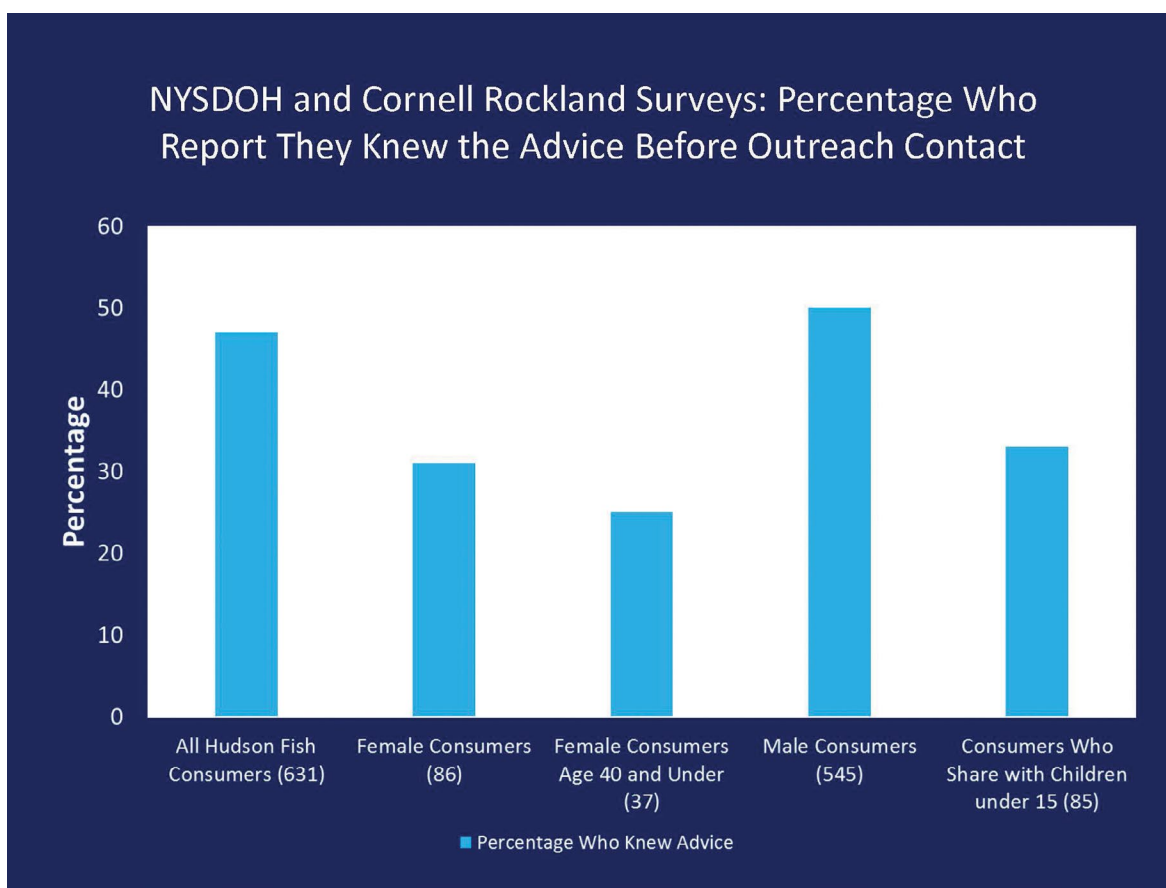


Figure 1. Percentage of people fishing below the Federal Dam in Troy who knew NYSDOH consumption advice before outreach contact. NYSDOH and CCE Rockland survey results combined.

Note: For a fuller discussion of Hudson River fish consumption survey results, please see the 2009-2016 Appendix on Survey Results at www.health.ny.gov/environmental/outdoors/fish/hudson_river/docs/hrfaappendix.pdf or visit www.health.ny.gov/environmental/outdoors/fish/hudson_river/docs/2016_hudson_report.pdf to view the report.