



Coast

¿Que Clase de Pescado Prefieres?

What Fish Do You Prefer?

The New York metropolitan area is an ethnically and culturally diverse region. For New York's seafood industry, the challenge is to effectively market seafood to customers that may have a diversity of

attitudes and perceptions about the quality, safety and healthfulness of New York seafood. It would be ideal to have information about those perceptions and how they may vary. If there were any differences,

based on ethnicity, culture, economics or any other measure, seafood marketing could improve to appeal to a wider number of customers. Unfortunately, such information is rare. However, one New York Sea Grant researcher who has taken an interest in the Hispanic community did research that helps fill one of the gaps.

New York Sea Grant researcher **Carole A. Bisogni** and Sea Grant scholar **Stephanie Weinstein** at Cornell University conducted a mail survey of Hispanic households in Manhattan and Queens in New York City in the spring of 1994. The bilingual survey measured beliefs related to seafood and the sociodemographic characteristics of respondents. Historically, the Hispanic population has been one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in metropolitan New York. This group represents a potentially large and growing market for the seafood industry in New York State and the rest of the United States.

This study provides some of the first information about seafood preferences and eating practices of Hispanics in metropolitan New York. The researchers learned that the Hispanic population consumes a variety of seafood and most respondents to the survey had positive beliefs about the healthfulness of seafood. Also, the type of seafood consumed was influenced by country of origin, household size, and past seafood consumption. The federal Expanded Food and Nutrition Education



Grocer Raina Galarza explains that she stocks plenty of canned Pacific shellfish that Ecuadorans prefer to use in their traditional ceviche, a cold seafood dish made with lime juice.

Photos by Susan Hamill

Watch



At a supermarket seafood counter, Ki Ro helps Mrs. Penida choose croaker and mullet, fish similar to the kind she prepared in her native El Salvador.



Signs in Spanish help the Penida family choose fish for tonight's fish fry. Photos by Barbara Branca

Program (EFNEP) used results from this study to aid its food and nutrition education and counseling work with New York City Hispanic residents.

The study also found that shoppers were generally satisfied with the availability and quality of seafood products. However, marketing changes that would be positively received include providing recipes, samples, in-store demonstrations and species names

in Spanish. This is useful information for metropolitan New York City seafood businesses. Beyond New York City, researchers from Puerto Rico, New Jersey and Minnesota expressed interest in using the survey methods of this study to learn about their Hispanic communities. Research like this could also be used to learn about other ethnic groups. This provides information for the New York seafood industry to reach out to all people who come to New York and enjoy seafood as part of their diet.

As a result of this research project, **Stephanie Weinstein** received her Master of Science degree at Cornell. She went on to complete her doctorate with the Division of Nutritional Sciences at Cornell and recently joined the staff of the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion at the United States Department of Agriculture. The mission of that group is to improve the health of Americans by developing and promoting dietary guidance that links scientific research to the nutrition needs of consumers.

- Lane Smith



Seafood manager Jaime Turnil has a wide array of fresh seafood to serve a predominantly Hispanic population in a Long Island community. Fresh shrimp is his biggest seller.

The research also resulted in the following journal articles:

Weinstein, S.J., and C.A. Bisogni. 1995. Hispanics in Metropolitan New York: perceptions and practices related to the quality, safety and healthfulness of fish and seafood. Report to the New York Sea Grant Institute, Stony Brook, NY: 185 pp.

Weinstein, S.J., C.A. Bisogni, E.A. Frongillo, Jr., and B.A. Knuth. 1999. Factors explaining seafood consumption among Hispanics living in New York City. *Journal of Nutrition Education* 31(4): 212-223.

Weinstein, S.J., C.A. Bisogni, M.E. Villalobos, and D. Sanjur. 1999. Bilingual mail survey approach to examine seafood consumption practices among Hispanics living in metropolitan New York. *Journal of Nutrition Education* 31(4): 201-211.