

2024 GREAT LAKES REGIONAL POLL

Online Poll Report

A report submitted to the
International Joint Commission by the
Great Lakes Water Quality Board
Engagement Work Group

October 2024



oraclepoll.com

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List of Acronyms

- IJC International Joint Commission
WQB Great Lakes Water Quality Board

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1.0 Methodology and Logistics

1.1 Background and overview

In 2015, Oraclepoll conducted the first baseline Great Lakes basin random telephone poll for the International Joint Commission (IJC) Great Lakes Water Quality Board (WQB) among residents of the Great Lakes basin catchment area. There were 2018, 2021 and 2024 follow-ups to the telephone poll. The 2024 phone poll¹ was completed between February 1 and March 9, 2024, and surveyed 4,550 residents of the Great Lakes basin.

In 2021, the board also conducted an online version of the phone poll, which was repeated in 2024. This report contains findings of the open, online self selection poll conducted between February 15 to March 15, 2024. In total, 2,453 respondents completed surveys.

This online poll of 2,453 respondents provides additional information to consider in conjunction with the 2024 randomized telephone poll. Online results are compared with the 2024 telephone poll results when and where possible. This is not a random sample poll based on a scientific representative sample of the general public. Rather this is considered unscientific in that it was open for anyone to participate. For example, only 16 percent of respondents to this online survey defined themselves as politically conservative, compared to 30 percent in the random 2024 telephone poll. Online respondents also tended to be older, as 55 percent were in cohorts over the age of 55 and only 8 percent under age 35.

1.2 Design

Oraclepoll designed the online poll instrument in consultation with the board's Engagement Work Group. Unlike the 2021 poll, in which the online poll had a mix of questions that were the same and different from the 2021 phone poll, the 2024 online poll questions were identical to the 2024 phone poll questions. Accordingly, question numbers in the online poll correspond exactly to the question numbers in the phone poll.

1.3 Polling method

All respondents completed the online poll using computer-assisted web interviewing. This was an open, online self-selection poll where participants could connect with the poll link to complete their interview.

Oraclepoll conducted the poll by developing a web-based questionnaire that was embedded into a board webpage. In addition, a link to the poll website could be emailed or texted to a potential respondent. IJC staff and board work group members promoted the poll through their own

¹ The 2024 phone poll results report is available on the Great Lakes Water Quality Board website at: ijc.org/wqb/2024-great-lakes-poll.

resources and networks. This differs from 2021 when the survey, in addition to being promoted by IJC staff, was boosted by Oraclepoll using social media, including ads and other media channels. Given this difference in the sampling, a comparison of the 2021 non-probability online poll results (on similar questions) to this 2024 survey are not made.

1.4 Logistics

Respondents could complete the online poll between February 15 and March 15, 2024.

1.5 Study sample and error rates

This online poll is considered anecdotal because it was a non-probability sample of the general public and was open to any participant.

In total, 2,453 respondents completed the online poll. However, the online survey allowed respondents to skip and refuse certain questions, and as a result not all respondents answered all questions. There were no respondent quotas for state and provincial jurisdictions or other demographic cohorts. It was possible for individuals living outside of the Great Lakes basin to complete the poll.

It is not acceptable to assign online self-selection non-probability samples a margin of error. However, a probability sample of 2,453 can be considered accurate ± 2 percent, 19 out of 20 times.

1.6 Reporting notes

This report contains the findings of the online poll in the order that questions were asked. Oraclepoll also provided the board with complete results and crosstabulations.

Some numbers displayed in charts and graphs may not add up to 100 percent as a result of rounding.

2.0 Opening Questions

The first set of introductory questions began by asking all respondents how long they have lived in the Great Lakes basin (**Figure 1**).

Q1. "How long have you lived in the Great Lakes basin?"

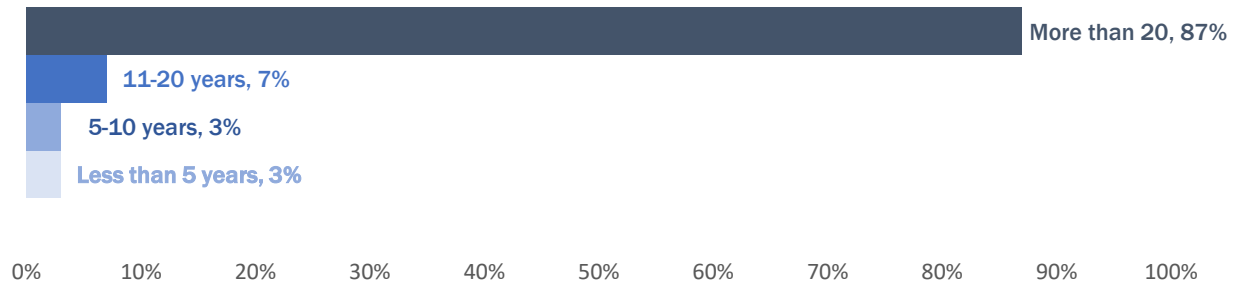


Figure 1. Length of time respondents lived in the Great Lakes basin.

Next, all respondents were asked what Great Lake (or body of water) they live closest to (**Figure 2**).

Q2. "Which Great Lake or water body do you live closest to?"

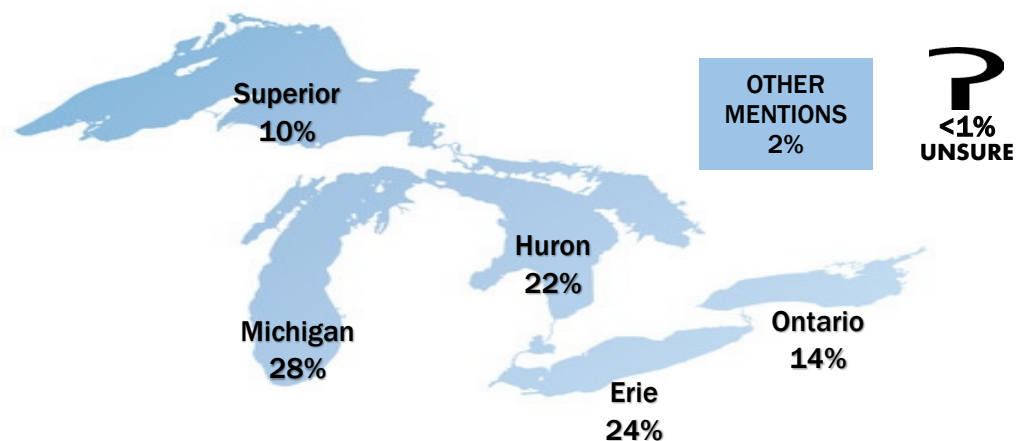


Figure 2. The Great Lake (or body of water) respondents live closest to.

3.0 Water Quality Concerns and Issues

3.1 Status and direction of water quality

Respondents were asked to rate the water quality of the Great Lake they said they live closest to as referenced in Question 2. Nearly six in ten or 58 percent answered good or very good and only 19 percent poor or very poor, while 21 percent were neutral (neither poor nor good) and four in ten did not know (Figure 3).

Q3. "How would you rate the water quality of the Great Lake you live closest to?"

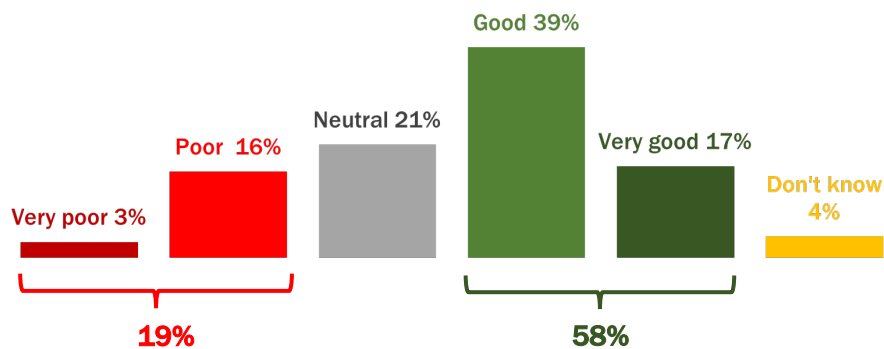


Figure 3. Rating of the water quality of the Great Lake respondents live closest to.

Those closest to Lake Erie and Ontario rated them poorest, while Superior and Huron scored the best. In the 2024 telephone poll, 37 percent answered good or very good and 33 percent poor or very poor, while 20 percent were neutral (neither poor nor good) and 11 percent did not know.

All respondents were asked about the trend of the water quality of the lake they said they live closest to in Question 2 (**Figure 4**).

Q4. “In your opinion, is the trend of the water quality of this Lake improving, deteriorating or not changing?”

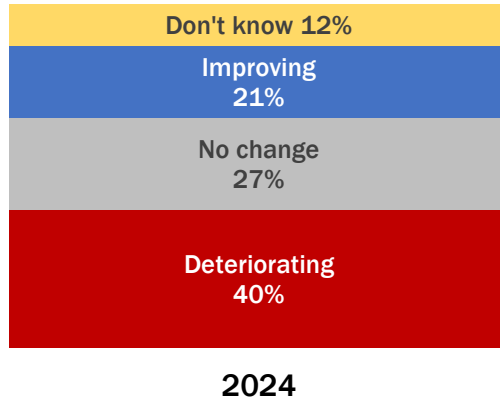


Figure 4. Rating the trend of the water quality of the Great Lakes.

Results from the telephone poll were 34 deteriorating, 32 percent no change, 20 percent improving and 14 percent do not know.

Respondents were next asked in an open or unaided question to identify what they believed was the most significant problem facing the lake lived closest to in Question 2 (**Table 1**).

Table 1. Most significant problem or challenge facing the lake respondents live closest to.

Q5. "When thinking about the water quality of this lake, what in your opinion is its most significant problem or challenge?"

Algae/green algae/blooms (causes of)	11%
Drainage/municipal runoff/sewage/ <i>E. coli</i>	11%
Pollution (in general)/chemicals	11%
Don't know	11%
Invasive species (plants, fish, mussels)	11%
Agricultural pollution/fertilizers, nutrients/animal waste/runoff	9%
Climate change/extreme weather	6%
Industrial pollution	6%
Development (housing, sprawl, industry)	4%
Plastics	4%
Waste being dumped into the lakes	3%
Water levels/fluctuations	3%
Water quality/clarity	2%
Shipping/boats (traffic/spills/bilge)	2%
Lack of regulations/policy/education	1%
Oil industry/spills/oil pipelines	1%
Erosion/damage to wetlands, shores	1%
Water diversion/extraction	1%
Dams/hydroelectric/nuclear plants/turbines	1%
Government policy/inaction	<1%
Endangered species/fishing depleted in the lakes	<1%
Aquaculture	<1%
Mercury levels	<1%
Acid rain/air pollutants from industry/emissions	<1%

The top mentions in the telephone poll related to invasive species (20 percent), industrial pollution (10 percent), pollution in general (10 percent), runoff (9 percent) and algae (9 percent).

Below (**Table 2**) are the top results by the lake named in Question 2 or the one that is closest to where respondents live.

Table 2. Crosstabulation of top mentioned most significant problem or challenge, by the lake respondents live closest to.

	Drainage/ municipal runoff/sewage / <i>E. coli</i>	Pollution/ chemicals	Invasive species	Agricultural pollution/ fertilizers/ nutrients/runoff	Algae/green algae/ blooms	Industrial pollution	Climate change/ extreme weather
Ontario	17%	11%	8%	8%	6%	5%	4%
Michigan	13%	14%	19%	6%	4%	7%	5%
Erie	9%	11%	3%	20%	31%	5%	2%
Huron	8%	7%	12%	8%	6%	3%	7%
Superior	9%	7%	6%	2%	3%	14%	24%

3.2 Safety of the water

Online respondents rated how safe it is to swim, drink water and eat fish from the Great Lake that is closest to them (Figure 5).

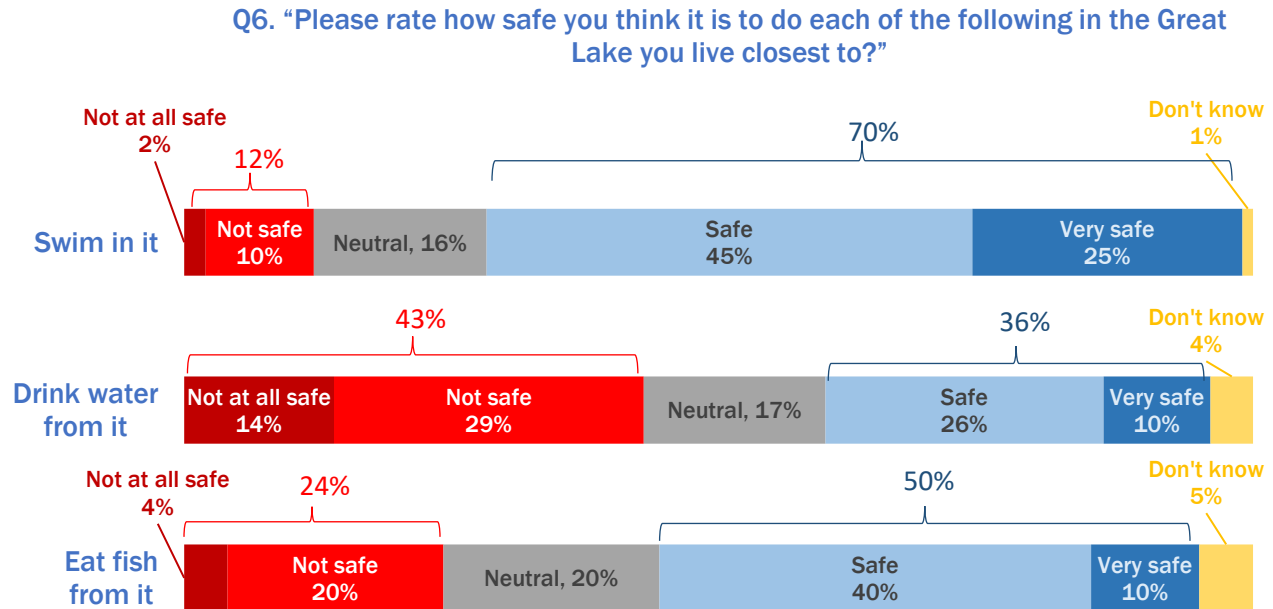


Figure 5. Safety ratings for the lake respondents live closest to on the perceived safety to swim in the lake, drink water from it and eat fish from it.

When comparing results from the scientific telephone poll, concerns over safety, as evidenced by responses of not safe and not at all safe, were highest for drinking water from the Great Lake closest to them at 37 percent (32 percent answered safe or very safe).

With respect to eating fish from the lake, 34 percent in the telephone poll felt this is unsafe and 33 percent safe or very safe.

In the telephone poll safe and very safe numbers were best for swimming at 47 percent, while not safe and not at all safe findings for swimming were lowest at 29 percent.

3.3 Health and water quality of the Great Lakes basin overall

Next, respondents were asked to rate the importance of protecting the health and water quality of the Great Lakes basin (**Figure 6**).

Q7. “How important is it that the health and water quality of the Great Lakes basin be protected?”



Figure 6. Importance that the health and water quality of the Great Lakes be protected.

Nearly all online participants feel it is important (4.6 percent) or very important (94.7 percent) that the health and water quality of the Great Lakes basin be protected. This compares to 93 percent that said important or very important in the telephone poll, 2 percent that were neutral, 4 percent that answered unimportant and 1 percent unsure.

Respondents then rated the impact that each of 11 issues may have on the environmental health and water quality of the Great Lakes (**Table 3**). The Likert scale was re-worded from the 2021 poll, from a five point to a three-point scale of no negative impact, neutral and negative impact.

Table 3. The impact that each of 11 issues may have on the environmental health and water quality of the Great Lakes.

Q8. “How much of an impact do you feel that each of the following have on the environmental health and water quality of the Great Lakes?”

	No negative impact	Neutral	Negative impact	Do not know
A. Climate change/global warming	7%	14%	75%	4%
B. Flooding	6%	27%	59%	9%
C. Nuclear waste	14%	18%	46%	22%
D. Loss of wetlands	2%	7%	87%	3%
E. Farm runoff including, manure, animal waste and fertilizers	1%	5%	92%	2%
F. Municipal wastewater sewage, or stormwater runoff	1%	7%	89%	2%
G. Algae blooms	1%	7%	88%	4%
H. Invasive species such as zebra and quagga mussels, Asian carp	1%	5%	92%	2%
I. The petroleum industry, such as pipelines, drilling, fracking	7%	17%	64%	13%
J. Plastics/microplastics	1%	6%	90%	3%
K. Offshore wind turbines	27%	34%	19%	20%

Telephone poll negative impact comparative results were highest (in order of highest to lowest) for plastics/micro plastics at 88 percent, algae blooms at 88 percent, municipal wastewater sewage, or stormwater runoff at 86 percent, invasive species at 86 percent and farm runoff including, manure, animal waste and fertilizers at 81 percent. Next highest negative impact findings were for climate change/global warming at 77 percent, flooding at 73 percent, loss of wetlands at 74 percent, the petroleum industry at 64 percent, nuclear waste at 60 percent and offshore wind turbines at 53 percent.

All respondents were asked to rate the overall health of the Great Lakes using a scale of poor, fair or good (Figure 7).

Q9. “Using scale of poor, fair or good how would you rate the overall health of the Great Lakes?”

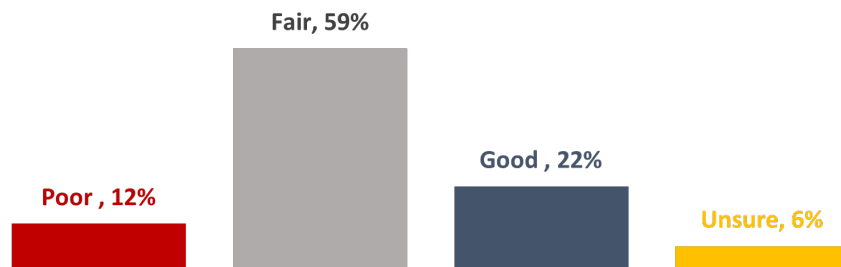


Figure 7. Rating the overall health of the Great Lakes.

Telephone poll results differed in that there was a three-way split of opinion with three in ten saying poor, one-third good and 34 percent fair, while 2 percent were unsure.

3.4 Understanding of issues facing the Great Lakes

In a question new to the 2024 poll, respondents were asked to rate their understanding of nine areas related to the state of the Great Lakes, using a three-point scale of poor, fair or good (Table 4).

Table 4. Rating the understanding of nine areas related to the state of the Great Lakes.

Q10. “Please rate your understanding of each of the following areas related to the state of the Great Lakes using the scale of poor, fair or good.”

	Poor	Fair	Good	Do not know
A. Drinking water	14%	41%	38%	7%
B. Water quality at beaches	12%	51%	34%	4%
C. Fish consumption	17%	44%	30%	9%
D. Toxic chemicals	33%	35%	14%	18%
E. Habitat and species	17%	48%	29%	6%
F. Nutrients and algae	38%	37%	16%	9%
G. Invasive species	49%	28%	17%	6%
H. Groundwater	16%	43%	22%	19%
I. Watershed impacts of climate	29%	35%	18%	18%

Telephone poll of good comparative results were highest for drinking water at 41 percent, beach water at beaches at 36 percent, habitat and species at 34 percent and fish consumption at 32 percent. Good results were lower for groundwater at 24 percent, invasive species at 20 percent, watershed impacts of climate at 20 percent, nutrients/algae at 19 percent and toxic chemicals at 16 percent.

3.5 Impact of climate change

In a three-part question new to the 2024 poll, respondents were asked to rate their level of concern that climate change will have on the three areas below (Table 5). A five-point scale from one not at all concerned to five very concerned was used and the table below highlights the combined unconcerned (1-not at all concerned and 2-not concerned) as well as the total concerned (4-concerned and 5-very concerned) results.

Table 5. Concern that climate change will impact water quality, water quantity and community well-being.

Q11. “In your opinion, how concerned are you that climate change will impact the following? Please use a scale from one not at all concerned to five very concerned.”

	Total Unconcerned (1 and 2)	3 Neither concerned nor unconcerned	Total Concerned (4 and 5)	Do not know
Water quantity	12%	11%	75%	2%
Water quality	10%	8%	81%	1%
Community well-being	10%	10%	79%	1%

When comparing telephone poll results, 83 percent were concerned with quality, 81 percent with community well-being and 77 percent water quantity.

Another question new to the 2024 poll asked respondents if climate change will put more pressure on the Great Lakes (**Figure 8**).

Q12. “As the global climate changes do you think the Great Lakes will have more pressure put on them?”

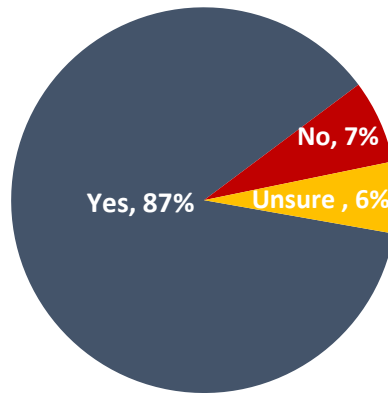


Figure 8. Climate change and pressure on the Great Lakes

In comparison to the 2024 telephone poll results, nine in ten respondents answered yes.

4.0 Drinking Water Topics

In a series of questions, respondents were asked about their drinking water, starting with an unaided probe about the source of their drinking water (**Table 6**).

Table 6. Source of drinking water.

Q13. “Where does your drinking water come from?”

Great Lakes	47%
Groundwater (well/spring/private well)	33%
Local lake or river	10%
Bottled water/water company	4%
Don't know	3%
Municipal water supply/ ap	2%

Results from the telephone poll were Great Lakes (34 percent), groundwater (25 percent), local lakes/ivers (21 percent), bottled water (9 percent) and municipal supply (2 percent), while 8 percent did not know.

Respondents were then asked to rate their level of agreement with four statements related to the quality and access to their drinking water and treatment of wastewater (**Table 7**). A five-point rating scale was used, and the table below combines the total disagree (1-strongly disagree and 2-disagree) as well as the total agree (4-agree and 5-strongly agree) responses.

Table 7. Agreement statements related to community drinking water.

Q14. “Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements related to drinking water in your community using a scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.”

	Total Disagree (1 and 2)	3-Neither agree nor disagree	Total Agree (4 and 5)	Do not know
A. I have access to clean, safe drinking water in my community	9%	9%	81%	1%
B. I trust my water / the source of my water	12%	13%	74%	1%
C. All members of my community have affordable, equitable access to drinking water	21%	14%	58%	7%
D. My community effectively manages, and treats used wastewater or sewage	18%	20%	51%	11%

Sixty two percent of telephone poll respondents agreed they have access to clean, safe drinking water, 59 percent trust the source of their water, 52 percent agreed all community members have

affordable, equitable access to drinking water and 50 percent agreed their community effectively manages and treats used wastewater or sewage.

The following five-part question asked respondents to rate their level of concern with water removal from the Great Lakes by five methods (**Table 8**). They rated each area using a five-point Likert scale from 1-not at all concerned to 5-very concerned. The chart below combines the one and two responses (not at all concerned and not concerned) and the four and five scores (concerned and very concerned). Question 15E is new to the 2024 poll.

Table 8. Concern over water removal.

Q15. “How concerned are you with the removal of water by each of the following and the impact these water removals have on the quality of water in the Great Lakes.”

	Total Unconcerned (1 and 2)	3-Neutral	Total Concerned (4 and 5)	Do not know
A. Private wells	45%	26%	22%	7%
B. Agriculture	14%	19%	64%	3%
C. Industry	5%	10%	82%	3%
D. Commercial bottled water extraction	7%	12%	77%	4%
E. Golf courses	12%	21%	62%	5%

Comparative telephone poll results were industry at 85 percent, followed by agriculture at 81 percent, commercial bottled water extraction at 77 percent, private wells at 57 percent and golf courses at 54 percent.

In the following question, respondents were asked how much they pay for their monthly water bill (**Table 9**). The results below are presented and were converted to US dollars.

Table 9. Monthly water bill payment amounts (online poll results on the left, telephone poll results on the right).

Q16. “On average, how much do you pay for your household’s monthly water bill? If you are unsure, please provide your best estimate.”

ONLINE POLL RESULTS		TELEPHONE POLL RESULTS	
Nothing	15%	Nothing	23%
Under \$20	3%	Under \$20	10%
\$20-\$39	10%	\$20-\$39	16%
\$40-\$59	12%	\$40-\$59	14%
\$60-\$79	9%	\$60-\$79	6%
\$80-\$99	5%	\$80-\$99	16%
\$100+	17%	\$100+	10%
Unsure	29%	Unsure	7%

In another set of questions, respondents were asked how much more they would be willing to pay on their monthly water bill to help improve water quality to a safe level across three areas (Table 10). Results from the 2024 telephone poll are presented in Table 11.

Table 10. How much extra willing to pay to improve water quality for fishing, swimming and drinking (2024 online poll results).

Q17. “In order to improve water quality to a level that is ‘very safe’ for the following three categories, would you be willing to pay an additional amount on top of your household’s current monthly water bill?”

ONLINE POLL RESULTS (2024)	No extra	\$10	\$15	\$20	More than \$20	Don't know	N/A
A. Fishing	36%	25%	4%	5%	6%	8%	16%
B. Swimming	35%	25%	5%	6%	6%	7%	15%
C. Drinking	23%	26%	9%	12%	11%	5%	14%

Table 11. 2024 telephone poll results on how much extra willing to pay to improve water quality for fishing, swimming and drinking.

Q17. “In order to improve water quality to a level that is ‘very safe’ for the following three categories, would you be willing to pay an additional amount on top of your household’s current monthly water bill?”

TELEPHONE POLL RESULTS (2024)	No extra	\$10	\$15	\$20	More than \$20	Don't know	N/A
A. Fishing	34%	24%	5%	5%	5%	7%	20%
B. Swimming	31%	23%	8%	6%	5%	7%	21%
C. Drinking	21%	24%	9%	11%	12%	5%	18%

5.0 Recreational Activities

The next section and series of questions dealt with usage of the Great Lakes for recreational purposes including their importance for these activities. Respondents were first asked about how they engage with the Great Lakes (**Table 12**). Multiple responses were accepted, and the results below display the percentage of cases or the number of times (expressed in percentage terms) each area was mentioned.

Table 12. Ways the Great Lakes are engaged in recreationally, culturally or otherwise (comparing 2024 online poll results to 2024 phone poll results).

Q18. “In what ways do you engage recreationally, culturally, or otherwise with the Great Lakes?”

	% of Cases Online	% of Cases Telephone
Walking/hiking	82%	69%
Swimming	71%	64%
With friends/family/pets	66%	49%
Boating	51%	36%
Birdwatching	49%	33%
Kayaking	47%	47%
Fishing	45%	41%
Canoeing	38%	36%
Tent camping/RV camping	34%	11%
Motorboating	29%	7%
Paddleboarding	20%	20%
Political action	20%	4%
Cultural activities	19%	15%
Sailing/windsurfing	17%	5%
Hunting	12%	12%
Foraging	12%	10%
Scuba diving/snorkeling	11%	1%
Wild rice harvesting	3%	<1%
Don't know	2%	3%

A new question in the 2024 poll asked about how often respondents look for information about the water quality of the beach they intend to visit before swimming (Question 19, **Table 13**) and then about the sources of their information (Question 20, **Table 14**).

Table 13. How often information is sought about the water quality of the beaches visited (comparing 2024 online poll results to 2024 phone poll results).

Q19. “Before swimming at a Great Lakes beach, how often do you look for information about the water quality at the beach you intend to visit?”

	Online	Telephone
Never/do not	16%	26%
Rarely	17%	21%
Sometimes	19%	15%
Most of the time	20%	16%
Always	24%	19%
Don't know	4%	4%

For Question 20 below (**Table 14**), multiple responses were accepted, and the results below display the percentage of cases or the number of times (expressed in percentage terms) each area was mentioned.

Table 14. Resources used to look up the water quality of Great Lakes beaches (comparing 2024 online poll results to 2024 phone poll results).

Q20. What resources do you usually use to look up the water quality at Great Lakes beaches?

	% of Cases Online	% of Cases Telephone
Signage at the beach	58%	48%
Government website	55%	46%
Newspapers, radio, or TV	21%	17%
Google search or reviews	19%	17%
Word of mouth	15%	12%
Social media	13%	11%
None of the above/do not	11%	26%
The Swim Guide website or app	6%	5%
Unsure/don't recall	1%	1%

In this question respondents were asked to rate the importance of having the Great Lakes available for leisure or recreational purposes (**Figure 9**). A five-point importance rating scale was used, with the graph below combining the total unimportant (1-not at all important and 2-not important) as well as the total important (4-important and 5-very important) responses.

Q21. “How important is it to you that the Great Lakes are available for leisure or recreational purposes? Please respond using a scale from one not at all important to five very important.”



Figure 9. Importance of having the Great Lakes available for leisure and recreational purposes.

In the final set of probes for this section, a new question for the 2024 poll asked all respondents if their interaction with nature and water in the Great Lakes provides them with benefits in the following four areas (**Table 15**).

Table 15. Interaction with nature and water in the Great Lakes and benefits provided.

Q22. “In your opinion, does interaction with nature and water in the Great Lakes provide benefits in each of the following areas?”

	Yes	No	Do not know
Happiness	98%	<1%	2%
Life satisfaction	97%	1%	2%
Mental health	96%	1%	3%
Overall well-being	98%	1%	1%

Results from the telephone poll were 95 percent for happiness, 94 percent for life satisfaction, 93 percent for mental health and 95 percent for well-being.

6.0 Information Sources

The following question is about the sources residents use to get information about the Great Lakes with a list of options being provided (**Table 16**). Multiple responses were accepted. Results below display the total percentage of results (%) as well as the percentage of cases or the number of times (expressed in percentage terms) each area was mentioned.

Table 16. Sources of information about the Great Lakes (comparing 2024 online poll results to 2024 phone poll results).

Q23. “What are the sources of information you use for information about the Great Lakes?”

	% of Cases Online	% of Cases Telephone
Internet (in general)	84%	37%
Newspaper (online or print)	57%	33%
Government websites	57%	18%
NGOs/Environmental groups	48%	1%
Television	42%	14%
Word of mouth	37%	4%
Radio	35%	9%
Social media	34%	33%
IJC website	17%	–
Don't know	1%	5%
Magazines	–	<1%

7.0 Responsibility, Governance and Action

7.1 Responsibility for protecting the Great Lakes

Respondents were asked the following semi-open question and were provided a list of potential options about who they felt is responsible for protecting the health and water quality of the Great Lakes (Table 17). Multiple responses were accepted. Results below display the total percentage of results (%) as well as the percentage of cases or the number of times (expressed in percentage terms) each area was mentioned.

Table 17. Who should be responsible for protecting the health and water quality of the Great Lakes basin (comparing 2024 online poll results to 2024 phone poll results).

Q24. "Who in your opinion should be responsible for protecting the health and water quality of the Great Lakes basin? Accept multiple responses / check all that apply."

	% of Cases Online	% of Cases Telephone
State/Provincial governments	78%	75%
Federal government(s)	77%	73%
Everyone/all	77%	24%
City/local governments	67%	62%
Industry	57%	7%
Residents/individuals	58%	6%
Indigenous governments	53%	9%
Nongovernment organizations	42%	3%
Don't know	<1%	<1%

2024 telephone poll results were 75 percent for state / provincial governments, 73 percent for federal government's, 62 percent for city / local governments, 24 percent for everyone/all, 9 percent for Indigenous governments, 7 percent for industry, 6 percent for residents/individuals and 3 percent for non-government organizations.

7.2 Role of the individual

The next question specifically asked about the role of the individual or household in protecting the health and water quality of the Great Lakes (Figure 10). It began with a scaled question (1-5) in the perceived importance or role of the individual in this process. The chart below combines the results of very important (5) and important (4) as well as not at all important (1) and not important (2).

Q25. “How important is the role of the individual or individual household in protecting the health and water quality of the Great Lakes basin? Please respond using a scale from one to five with one being not at all important and five being very important.”



Figure 10: Importance of the role of the individual or household in protecting the health and water quality of the Great Lakes basin.

A strong majority of telephone respondents, or 93 percent, feel the role of the individual is important or very important in protecting the health and water quality of the Great Lakes basin.

Respondents were shown a list of ten actions and were asked if they would take part in each of them to help protect Great Lakes (**Table 18**).

Table 18. Actions likely to take part in to protect the water quality of the Great Lakes (comparing 2024 online poll results to 2024 phone poll results).

Q26. “Which of the following actions would you be likely to take part in to help protect the water quality of the Great Lakes?”

ACTIONS LIKELY TO TAKE PART IN	Online YES	Phone YES
A. Attend a public meeting organized by government or nongovernment organizations	58%	21%
B. Engage in an online forum or group	42%	44%
C. Contact a local elected representative or government official	54%	39%
D. Conserve water at home by using less or installing water efficient fixtures	70%	80%
E. Be aware of or be more careful about what you are disposing down household drains	86%	81%
F. Reduce use/disposal of plastics and waste	87%	78%
G. Purchase products that reduce my household water use	59%	63%
H. Join a local watershed group, volunteer your time, or donate money	47%	25%
I. Engage in local water quality sampling	43%	47%
J. Sign a petition	59%	45%

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with four statements related to their local municipality and water protection (**Table 19**). A five-point rating scale was used, and the table below combines the total disagree (1-strongly disagree and 2- disagree) as well as the total agree (4-agree and 5-strongly agree) responses.

Table 19. Agreement statements related to local municipalities and water protection.

Q27. “Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements.”

	Total Disagree (1 and 2)	3-Neither agree nor disagree	Total Agree (4 and 5)	Don't know
A. My municipality takes its responsibility to protect the Great Lakes seriously	17%	25%	45%	12%
B. Sustainability related to water and the Great Lakes is included in planning and environmental protection efforts in my municipality	19%	22%	41%	19%
C. My municipality has an active agenda related to the health of the Great Lakes	23%	23%	31%	23%
D. My municipality is taking action to protect water quality	18%	22%	44%	16%

When comparing telephone poll results, agreement levels were highest for their municipality taking its responsibility to protect seriously (42 percent) and taking action to protect water quality (42 percent), followed by having sustainability included in planning (37 percent). It was lowest for municipalities having active agendas related to the health of the Great Lakes (28 percent agreement).

7.3 Government responsibilities

Respondents were asked their opinion on having greater protection and its perceived impact on jobs and the economy (Table 20).

Table 20: Impact of having greater protection of the Great Lakes through regulations and enforcement (comparing 2024 online poll results to 2024 phone poll results).

Q28. “In your opinion, would having greater protection of the Great Lakes through regulations and their enforcement have a positive impact, negative impact, or no impact on jobs and the economy?”

	Online	Phone
Positive	71%	29%
Negative	6%	26%
No impact	10%	30%
Don't know	13%	16%

A new question about the importance of governments investing to protect the Great Lakes was next asked (Table 21).

Table 21. Importance of governments investing to protect the Great Lakes (comparing 2024 online poll results to 2024 phone poll results).

Q29. “How important do you think it is for governments to invest in protecting the Great Lakes?”

	Online	Phone
Not at all important	<1%	1%
Not important	<1%	1%
Neither important nor unimportant	1%	2%
Important	13%	19%
Very important	84%	76%
Don't know	<1%	1%

10.0 International Joint Commission

Questioning moved on to the topic of awareness of the International Joint Commission (IJC) (Figure 11).

Q30. "Have you heard of, or are you aware of, the International Joint Commission or IJC?"

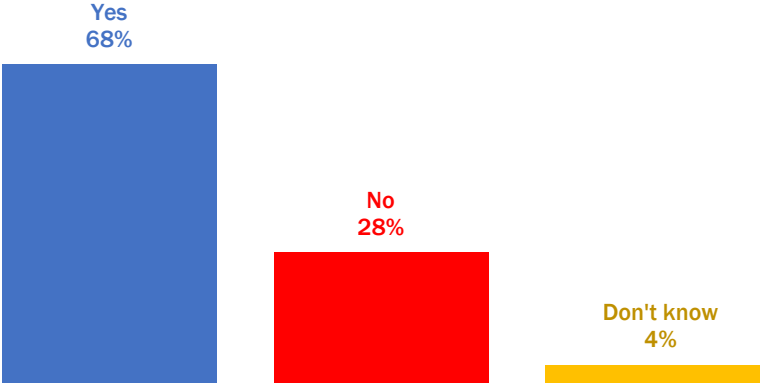


Figure 11. Awareness of the International Joint Commission (IJC).

A total of 68 percent of online respondents have heard of or were aware of the International Joint Commission compared to only 26 percent in the random telephone survey.

9.0 Value Statements

All online respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement on a scale from one strongly disagree to five strongly agree with eight value statements related to the Great Lakes (**Table 22**). Results in this table combine the total agree results of strongly agree (5) and agree (4).

Table 22. Agreement value statements (comparing 2024 online poll results to 2024 phone poll results).

Q31. “Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.”

	Online %	Phone %
A. Actions should be taken now to ensure the health and water quality of the Great Lakes for future generations	95%	80%
B. The Great Lakes water quality should be protected for the benefit of people living in the Great Lakes Basin	96%	78%
C. The Great Lakes water quality should be protected for the benefit of fish and wildlife	97%	85%
D. The economy of the region will suffer if the Great Lakes are not healthy	94%	80%
E. I feel hopeful about the future of water quality in the Great Lakes	49%	59%

10.0 First Nations, Métis and Tribal Nation Member Responses

First Nations, Métis and Tribal Nation member respondent breakdown by Canadian and US respondents are highlighted in **Table 23** below.

Table 23. Identification as Indigenous, (First Nations-Canada, Native American/Tribal Nation-United States) or Métis (Canada).

Q32. “Do you identify as Indigenous, (First Nations-Canada) (Native American/Tribal Nation-United States) or Métis (Canada)?”

	N	%	
Native American/Tribal Nation-US	N=26	1%	ASKED Q33
First Nations Canada	N=42	2%	ASKED Q33
Métis	N=28	1%	PROCEEDED TO Q35
No / none	N=2239	96%	PROCEEDED TO Q39

There were 68 individuals (3 percent) that self-identified as First Nations (Canada) or Native American/Tribal Nations (United States); these individuals were also asked to name the First Nation, Tribe or community they are members of or identify with (Question 33, **Table 24**) and then if they live on or off reserve (Question 34, **Table 25**).

Table 24. The name of respondents’ Tribe/Nation/Indigenous community.

Q33. “What is the name of your Tribe / Nation/Indigenous Community?”

Refused	N=20	Akwesasne	N=1
Ojibwe/Welsh	N=6	Cherokee Nation Of Oklahoma	N=1
Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians	N=4	Cree	N=1
Bad River	N=3	Fond du Lac	N=1
Oneida of the Thames	N=3	Hiawatha	N=1
Aamjiwnaang	N=2	Leech Lake Band of Ojibway	N=1
Red Rock	N=2	Mississaugas of the Credit	N=1
Michipicoten	N=2	Oglala Lakota Sioux/ Anishinaabek	N=1
Boise Forte	N=2	Red Cliff	N=1
Atikameksheng Anishnawbek	N=2	Rocky Bay	N=1
Beausoleil First Nation	N=2		

Table 25. Respondents living on or off Reserve.

Q34. “Do you live on or off Reserve?”

	Percent
On reserve	26%
Off reserve	74%

Next, all 96 respondents (4%) that identified as First Nations, Tribal Nations members, and including Métis, were asked if any of the ways they engage with the lakes are threatened Question 35, **Figure 12**.

Q35. "Are any of the ways that you engage with the Great Lakes threatened or are you no longer able to participate in them because of the poor health and water quality of the lakes?"

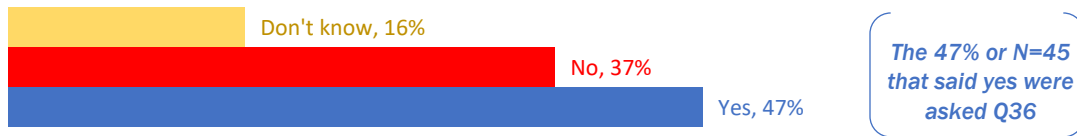


Figure 12. Is poor health and water quality of the lakes affecting the ways that the lakes are engaged with or participated in.

The 47 percent or 45 respondents who said yes in Question 35 were asked in an open-ended probe allowing for one response to comment about the threat (**Table 26**).

Table 26. Comments about the threats affecting health and water quality.

Q36. "Please provide comments about these threats."

Fish contamination	N=13
Swimming	N=6
Industry/mining sectors	N=5
Do not know	N=5
Wild rice harvesting	N=3
Invasive species (plants, fish, mussels)	N=2
Poor water quality	N=2
Drinking/ingesting	N=2
PFAS/Microplastics	N=2
Recreational activities	N=1
Decreasing/low water levels	N=1
Pollution/chemicals	N=1
Contaminated water	N=1
Ceremonial activities	N=1

The final question in this section asked about concerns over fish, plant, or wildlife species of cultural importance (**Figure 13**).

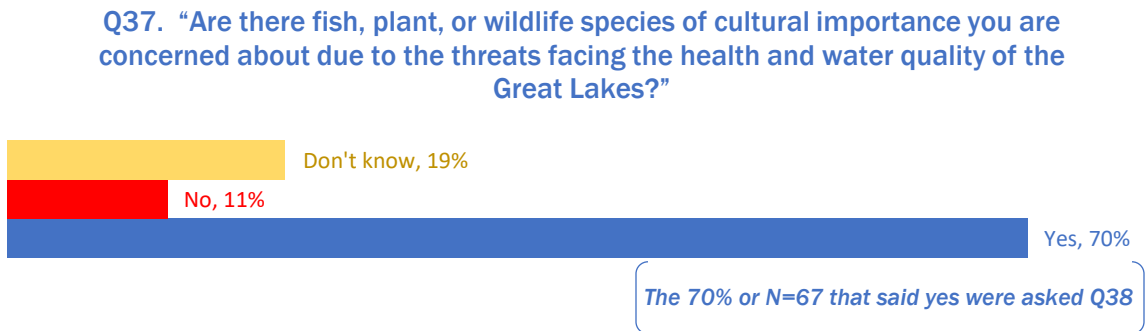


Figure 13. Is the health and water quality of the lakes causing concern over fish and wildlife species of cultural importance.

The 70 percent or 67 respondents that said yes in Question 37 were asked in an open-ended probe allowing for one response to comment about the threat (**Table 27**).

Table 27. Comments about concern over fish and wildlife species of cultural importance.

Q38. “Please provide comments about these threats.”

Fish habitat	N=13
Do not know	N=10
Invasive species (plants, fish, mussels)	N=6
Wildlife	N=5
Pollution/contaminants	N=4
Flora	N=4
Industry practices/accountability	N=4
All species	N=3
Protection of the lakes	N=3
Wild rice harvesting	N=3
Extirpation / extinction/endangered species	N=2
Indigenous culture	N=2
PFAS/Microplastics/toxins	N=2
More research needed	N=1
Loss of endangered species	N=1
Financial impact	N=1
No comment	N=1
Lack of enforcement from regulatory bodies	N=1
System failure	N=1

11.0 Evaluating Statements About the Future of the Great Lakes

In a seven-part question new to the 2024 poll, all online respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement on a scale from one strongly disagree to five strongly agree with seven statements related to the future of the Great Lakes. Results in this table combine the total agree results of strongly agree (5) and agree (4).

Table 28. Future of the Great Lakes agreement statements (comparing 2024 online poll results to 2024 phone poll results).

Q39. “Finally, I would like you to think ahead to 2040 and the Great Lakes basin. Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements. using a scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. In 2040, the Great Lakes region...”

	% Total Agree Online	% Total Agree Phone
A. In 2040, the Great Lakes region is a sustainable region	40%	36%
B. In 2040, the Great Lakes region has an increasing population and water uses/demands	84%	83%
C. In 2040, the Great Lakes region is a center of economic investment and prosperity	50%	44%
D. In 2040, the Great Lakes region is a global example of how to protect and restore shared waters	36%	31%
E. In 2040, the Great Lakes region is a region with conflict over water	69%	70%
F. In 2040, the Great Lakes region is becoming more polluted and degraded	63%	65%
G. In 2040, the Great Lakes region is being protected by our governments	37%	32%

12.0 Demographics

D1. "Which of the following age groups may I place you in?"

15-18	1%
19-34	8%
35-44	9%
45-54	13%
55-64	25%
65-74	29%
75 or older	12%
Refused	2%

D2. "What is the highest level of education that you have completed?"

Some high school or less	1%
Graduated high school	4%
Some post-secondary (college, university)	15%
Graduated college/university	37%
Graduate/professional degree level education	41%
Refused	2%

D3. "Do you consider yourself to be politically conservative, liberal, moderate, or are you apolitical/non-political?"

Conservative	16%
Liberal/progressive	40%
Moderate	25%
Apolitical/nonpolitical	6%
Refused	13%

D4. "People come from many different ethnic, cultural, and racial backgrounds in the Great Lakes region. What is your self-identified race or ethnicity?"

White/Caucasian/European origin	66%
Black/African American or Canadian/African	<1%
Hispanic/Latinx	<1%
South/SE Asian (India, Pakistan)	<1%
East Asian (China, Japan, Vietnam)	<1%
Indigenous/Métis	4%
Mixed	1%
Refused	27%

D5. "What gender do you currently identify as?"

Female	44%
Male	49%
Transgender	<1%
Two-spirited	1%
Non-binary	<1%
Gender fluid	<1%
Gender neutral	<1%
Refused	6%

D7. "What is your combined family income?"

Less than \$25,000	3%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	10%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	14%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	13%
\$100,000 or more	41%
Refused	19%