

## **Omineca Angler and non-Angler Preference and Diversity Study**



A Technical Summary Report Prepared for

British Columbia Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship  
Fish and Wildlife Section, Omineca Region, Prince George, BC

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## **Executive Summary**

Omineca fisheries managers sought to a) understand current fishers' preferences and b) understand nonparticipation in fishing through conversations with non-fisher and marginalized fishing communities (e.g., women, 2SLGBTQIA+ persons, and racialized persons). The project team collected data from fisher, non-fisher and marginalized fishing communities regarding their perceptions and experiences of fishing with the goal of improving management of the Omineca Region's public fisheries and increasing overall participation rates. This was accomplished through an intersectional and social constructionist, mixed-method study to reach fishers and non-fishers from diverse backgrounds (focusing on race, gender, and sexuality) to understand the inclusionary and exclusionary practices occurring within the recreational fishery in the Omineca Region. Data were collected via six focus groups and four semi-structured interviews and distributed an online survey. The project team found various factors that contribute to non-participation of non-fishers from various backgrounds not limited to the commonly cited constraints to participation such as lack of time, limited resources, insufficient socialization into the activity, and lack of motivation to participate. To reduce these constraints and increase the number of new fishers, the project team recommends increasing access to required fishing resources, developing partnerships with affinity groups, and creating opportunities for social connection in recreational fishing.

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**Title image:** A father and daughter fishing from kayaks in the Omineca Region in 2022.

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## 1. Introduction:

In 2020, approximately 350,000 licenced anglers participated in recreational fishing across British Columbia, with just under 20,000 people participating in the Omineca Region (Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC, 2020). The population of BC was over 5.14 million people at this time ("2020 Sub-Provincial Population Estimates Highlights", 2021). However; analyses of regional flightline derived boat-count data indicates a steady decline in open water season angler effort in the Omineca Region of ~30% since 2005 (Spendlow, 2020). In addition to rigorous biological and ecological studies, angler/fisher preference surveys are often used to make informed decisions based on fisher feedback, which in turn builds trust with the public, reduces conflict between users, and improves public compliance of regulations (Stüssi & Maher, 2006). Elements related to fisher preferences and satisfaction are typically informed by feedback from licensed fishers (Johnston, 2021).

Our study investigated the underrepresentation of women, gender diverse communities, sexuality diverse communities, and other racialized communities participating within the Omineca fishery. Data on aspects of diversity and inclusion (e.g., ethnicity, sexuality/gender identity, economic status, etc.) are not systematically collected, and while examples from the urban context exists (van Poorten, 2009; Dabrowska et al., 2015) they are less understood for rural settings. Within our study area, the Omineca Region of BC, Johnston (2021) reported the dominant demographic of fishers were middle-aged men, also supported through recent angler surveys that reported gender diversity in the region at typically ~80% men and ~20% women in their demographics (Blackburn and Van Ruskenveld, 2021). Therefore, when fisheries managers are seeking public input, less-avid fishers and non-fishers are often excluded from the consultation process, unintentionally missing feedback from a commonly marginalized portion of the population.

The purpose of the current investigation was threefold: to assess anglers' satisfaction with their recreational fishing experiences; to understand anglers' and non-anglers' perceptions and experiences of drivers and constraints to recreational fishing participation; and to provide insight for fisheries management about creating inclusive, recreational spaces. These three objectives were examined by way of collecting non-angler responses and current angler preferences and satisfaction levels using a mixed-methods approach. As a result of this investigation, the project team has developed recommendations for the various fisheries management entities with respect to ideas for how to facilitate a more diverse fishery that is managed for a diverse population.

## **Project objective(s)**

Objective 1: Contextualize drivers of participation as well as inclusionary and exclusionary practices (i.e., language and discourse, social groups, gatekeeping, gear, and equipment) in the region's recreational fishery.

Objective 2: Characterize the current demographic and angler satisfaction in the region.

Objective 3: Identify inclusionary and exclusionary practices as well as constraints and opportunities to encourage current non-anglers (and/or non-avid anglers) participation in regional recreational fisheries.

## **2. Methods:**

To address the three objectives, the project team developed the following five research questions:

1. What leads to satisfying experiences for current fishers?
2. What factors enable and constrain fishers' and non-fishers' participation within the fishery?
3. How do current fishers, and non-fishers, perceive issues of diversity and inclusion within recreational fishing?
4. How do racialized people, women, and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community perceive and experience recreational fishing in terms of diversity and inclusion?
5. What specific opportunities and pathways exist to increase and support diversity and inclusion among recreational fishers in the region?

## ***Recruitment***

We used a combination of online and offline recruitment strategies, creating two posters, one targeting fishers and the other targeting non-fishers. The team emailed these posters to various local fishing and outdoor recreation organizations that provided letters of support, such as Spruce City Wildlife Association, Polar Coachman Flyfishers; City of Prince George; Tourism Prince George; and the Good Neighbours Committee. Other organizations included Recreation Sites and Trails BC, BC Wildlife Federation, local affinity groups such as Immigrant and Multicultural Services Society (IMSS), Northern Pride Centre, Northern Women's Centre at UNBC and various local fishing businesses, outdoor recreation Facebook pages. The team circulated the two posters online through social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram), hung posters up around Prince George and at UNBC, and attended a fishing derby to speak with anglers.

Participants self-identified as fishers or non-fishers depending on whether they had or had not purchased a license since 2020. Demographic information was collected via email communication following focus groups and interviews from January 2023 – August 2023 and as part of the survey in September to November 2023.

***Data collection: focus groups, interviews, and a two-stream survey***

Mixed-methods data analysis has been shown to increase depth and understanding of the research topics (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2011). Where managers traditionally used quantitative methods from telephone surveys to aerial surveillance (Pollock et al., 1994), we used qualitative and quantitative methods of completing focus groups, interviews, and a virtual survey. This mixed-methods approach differed from current fisher engagement techniques because we engaged both fishers and non-fishers in the Omineca Region. While focus group and interview participants' perceptions are subjective, they hold important perspectives to consider in addition to the quantitative results. Mullins (2015) explained that adding a qualitative approach to outdoor recreation experience research can be beneficial in representing diverse communities, as he stated that the "...experience of outdoor recreation [was] quite complex, diverse, and shifting with personal histories, race, gender, class, and culture [...]. The meanings, experiences, and outcomes of outdoor recreation settings and activities are not universal. Qualitative research can richly represent this diversity." (p. 73). Therefore, a mixed-method approach was appropriate to achieve the project goals as it allowed the team to explore participants' experiences in detail while also seeing patterns in the larger sample.

To complement the richness and depth we collected through these focus groups and interviews, we revised the questionnaire before it was launched publicly. Each focus group addressed different topics prevalent in the literature and relevant to our project objectives (FG topics were gender, race, and sexuality) and the survey expanded on these topics. We developed the questionnaire using other resources (Maher, 2008; previous 2014 BC creel survey, and existing literature). Like the focus groups, the point of the survey was to gather data from a broader sample and their understanding of perceived issues and aspects of equity, diversity, and inclusion. For the purposes of methodological triangulation (Noble & Heale, 2019), the research team conducted six focus groups (see Appendix A), four semi-structured interviews, and circulated a digital survey (see Appendix B) targeting both fishers and non-fishers from diverse backgrounds in 2023.

All focus groups were conducted over Zoom and were one and a half to two hours in length. Each focus group was transcribed using Otter.ai software and corrected with Microsoft Word. All participants received a MS Word copy of their transcript to review for additions, deletions, or revisions (e.g., member checking) by a certain date to increase data validity and reciprocal learning while decreasing the researcher/participant power hierarchy (Caretta, 2016). The team held a prize draw at the end of each session to thank participants for their time, expertise, and emotional labour in the study. These prizes included: three fishing rods with tackle boxes, six fishing nets, six Northern BC topographic map books, and three copies of 'Hatches of Northern BC Trout Stream' by Danie Erasmus. The research team recognizes that focus group and interview participants' perceptions are subjective but are important perspectives to consider.

The project's total sample size across all data collection methods was 251 participants. Eight non-fishers and thirteen fishers participated in the individual and focus group interviews (total of 21), and 149 fishers and 81 non-fishers participated in the online survey

(total of 230) were over the age of eighteen, and eleven identified as female and ten identified as male. No participants identified as gender diverse in the focus groups, but two focus groups participants identified as part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, the remainder identified as straight. Six of the focus group participants emigrated from other countries: China (four), Australia (one), and South Africa (one), the rest were from Canada (15). Note, participants' country of origin does not necessarily reflect their ethnicity or race.

The research team administered an online questionnaire via SurveyMonkey to fishers and non-fishers of the Omineca Region based on feedback received through the focus group interviews. The team received 230 survey responses (81 non-fishers; 149 fishers) between September 2023 and November 2023; of note, soliciting and recruiting non-participant responses is one of the most difficult challenges in recreation research and the research team was satisfied with the response rate. The questions included demographics, licensing, desired fishing experiences, trip planning, preferences, satisfaction, equipment, drivers, constraints, and aspects of equity, diversity, and inclusion. The survey used skip patterns to determine which stream (fisher or non-fisher) a participant would be sorted into, and each questionnaire consisted of rankings, multiple choice, open-ended responses, and 5-point Likert scale questions flipped to apply to either stream but remain comparable.

Survey participants were permitted to select multiple gender, racial, and sexuality categories thus totals can reflect greater than 100%. Fifty-five percent of total survey participants identified as a woman or a gender identity other than male, 19% of total survey participants self-identified with a racial identity other than white, and 18% of total survey participants self-identified with a sexuality other than straight. In the non-fisher stream, 78% self-identified as women and other genders, 23% self-identified as a racial identity other than white, and 16% self-identified with a sexuality other than straight. In the fishing stream, 40% self-identified as women and other genders, 30% self-identified as other than white, and 15% self-identified as other than straight.

### ***Data analysis***

As a mixed-method study, there were two distinct datasets of qualitative and quantitative data. Due to using non-probability methods of the focus groups, we were unable to generalize the results to the broader population because the methods used cannot be representative of the whole population (Andrade, 2021). We conducted constant comparison analysis, descriptive statistics, and independent samples t-tests to produce findings. The participants were divided into 4 groupings for ease of analysis: fishers (licensed or First Nation), non-fishers (non-licensed), dominant group (straight, white, male) non-dominant group (non-straight, non-white, non-male) (see Table 1).

**Table 1:** *Groupings for Analyses: Dominant/Non-Dominant and Fisher/Non-Fisher*

Grouping	Fisher	Non-Fisher
	Focus Groups & Interviews	
<b>Dominant</b>	6	1
<b>Non-Dominant</b>	7	7
<b>Total<sup>a</sup></b>	13	8
	Survey	
<b>Dominant</b>	63	12
<b>Non-Dominant</b>	86	69
<b>Total<sup>b</sup></b>	149	81

*Note.* <sup>a</sup> n = 21 focus group and interview participants, <sup>b</sup> n = 230 survey participants

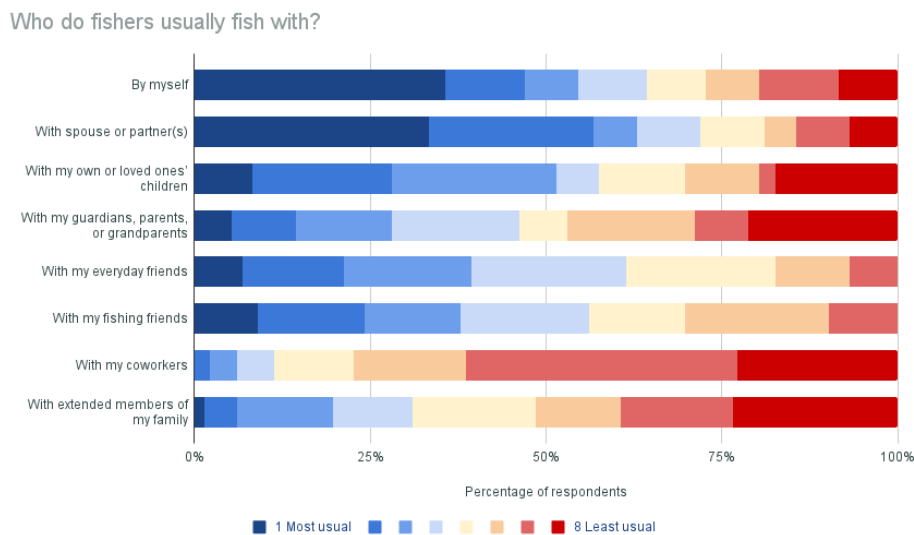
Qualitative data analysis was conducted using QSR NVIVO 12 software for Windows through the University of Northern British Columbia's (UNBC) subscription. An initial codebook was developed collaboratively with supervisory input to reflect anticipated themes, while also allowing for emergent themes based on participant responses. For the survey, the team used Posit Software RStudio 2022 to clean the data for analysis and IBM SPSS 28 to run the necessary statistical tests, including independent t-tests, population descriptions, and frequencies.

### 3. Results and discussion

#### *What leads to satisfying experiences for current fishers?*

Throughout this report, the research team uses pseudonyms to refer to the fishers and non-fishers from the interviews. This section includes responses from fishers from all demographic backgrounds.

Fishers were generally satisfied with their fishing experiences in the Omineca Region (M=3.79, SD=0.73). There was no significant difference (measured at  $p > 0.05$ ) on satisfaction between dominant fishers (M=3.6, SD=0.66) and non-dominant fishers (M=3.80, SD=0.78) (Table 1). For fishers, fishing alone was preferred overall (47 out of 132) and fishing with their spouse or partner was a close second (44 out of 132) (Figure 1).



**Figure 1:** Who do fishers typically fish with? Weighted average asking fishers to rank who they typically fish with on a scale from 1-9, 1 being most usual.

While fishers report enjoying both summer and winter fishing (42.1%), they illustrated a preference for summer activities (54.9%) over ice fishing (3.0%) (Figure 2). On average, fishers estimate they fish 34 days per year (M=34.1), although there's considerable variability (SD=41.2) (Table 2). Fishers were asked to select all the fish that they mostly fish for and the top three were rainbow trout (111 out of 134), kokanee (76 out of 134), and lake trout (67 out of 134).

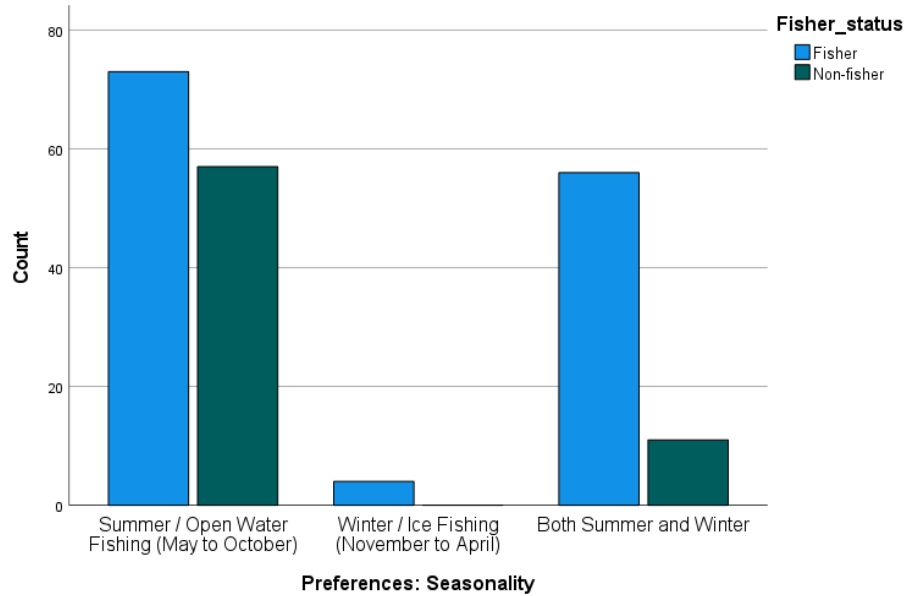


Figure 2: Fisher and non-fisher preferences on seasonality of fishing.

Table 2 compares t-test result of dominant fishers and non-dominant fishers mean satisfaction of their fishing experiences on a scale of one to five, with five being very satisfied. There was no significant difference between the two groups ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 2:** T-test comparing satisfaction with fishing in the Omineca Region on a scale from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied).

t-test for Equality of Means							
							Significance
Fisher type	N	M	SD	Lev. Sig. <sup>a</sup>	t <sup>b</sup>	df <sup>c</sup>	Two-Sided p
Dominant	56	3.76	.660	.234	-.291	131	.772
Non-dominant	77	3.80	.778				

\* $p < 0.05$ , two-sided p-test

<sup>a</sup>. Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances. If Sig > .05, equal variances assumed; if Sig. < .05, equal variances not assumed.

<sup>b</sup>. t-value – Ratio of the difference between the mean of the two-samples, it is used for testing the null hypothesis that two population means are equal. A positive t-value indicates a significant difference between the two groups, while a negative t-value indicates no significant difference.

<sup>c</sup>. Degree of freedom – Number used to calculate the statistic=  $n - 1$ , in this case there are 131 degrees of freedom (132 - 1).

Most fishers purchase the Annual Angling Licence (88.5%), and the majority use the online purchasing option (79.3%) (Figure 3). Overall, fishers thought a reasonable cost from the annual licence was between \$16 - \$30 (38.6%) and \$31 to \$45 (32.1%) (Figure 4). Fishers in the survey considered themselves moderately skilled; as for experience levels, 44.4% percent consider themselves intermediate, 27.8% advanced, 19.5% beginner and 8.3% expert. Additionally, fishers report that camping (69.6%), hiking (37.5), and hunting (35.7) were their top three other outdoor recreation activities. Fishers report that their preferred method of transportation to fishing spot is by way of driving a vehicle like a car, truck, or SUV (90 out of 133). Fishers’ reasons for not going fishing included bad weather (68.8%), working (65.2%) and travel costs (54.5%).

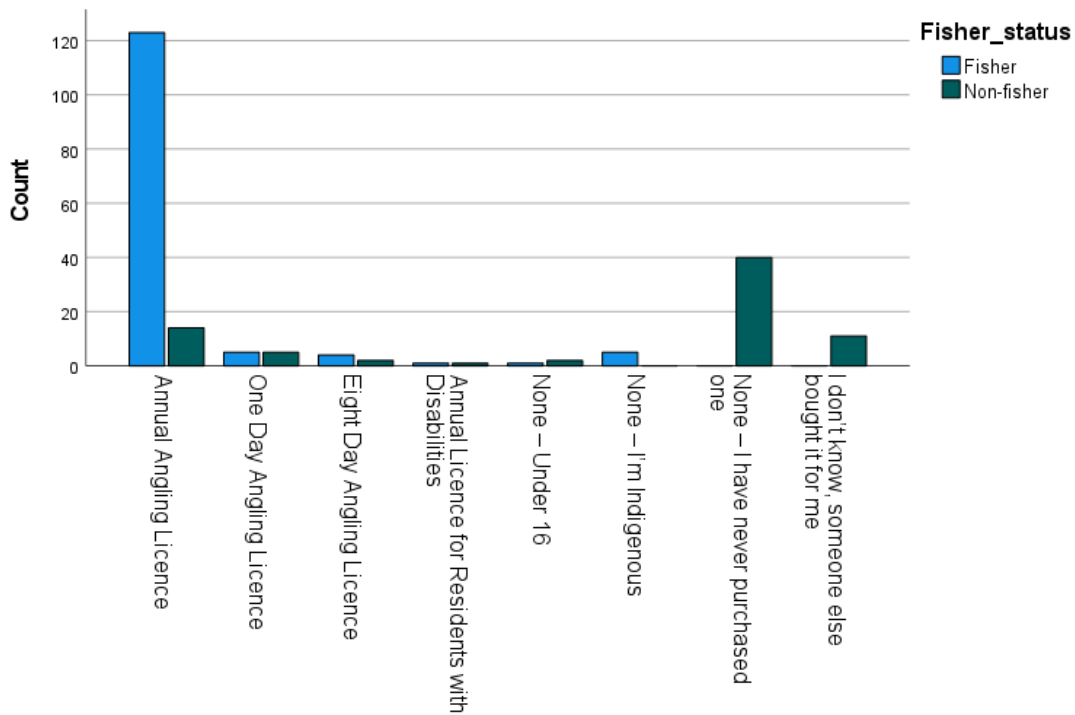


Figure 3: Which licence have fishers and non-fishers purchased in the past?

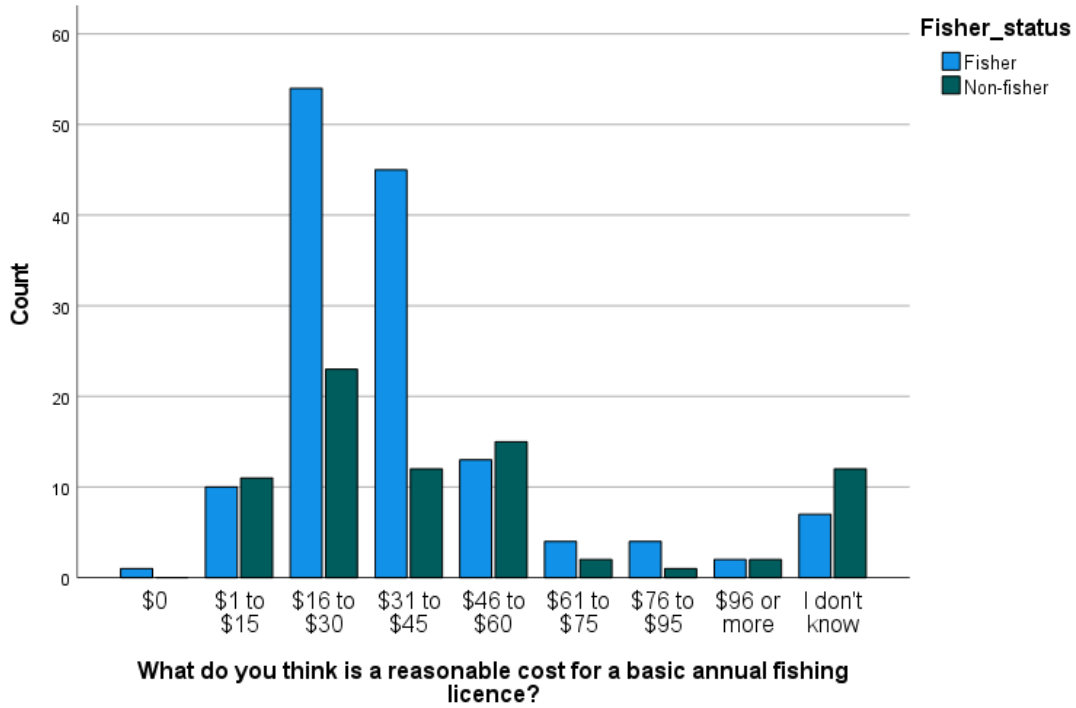


Figure 4: Fisher and non-fisher's reasonable licence cost for an annual licence.

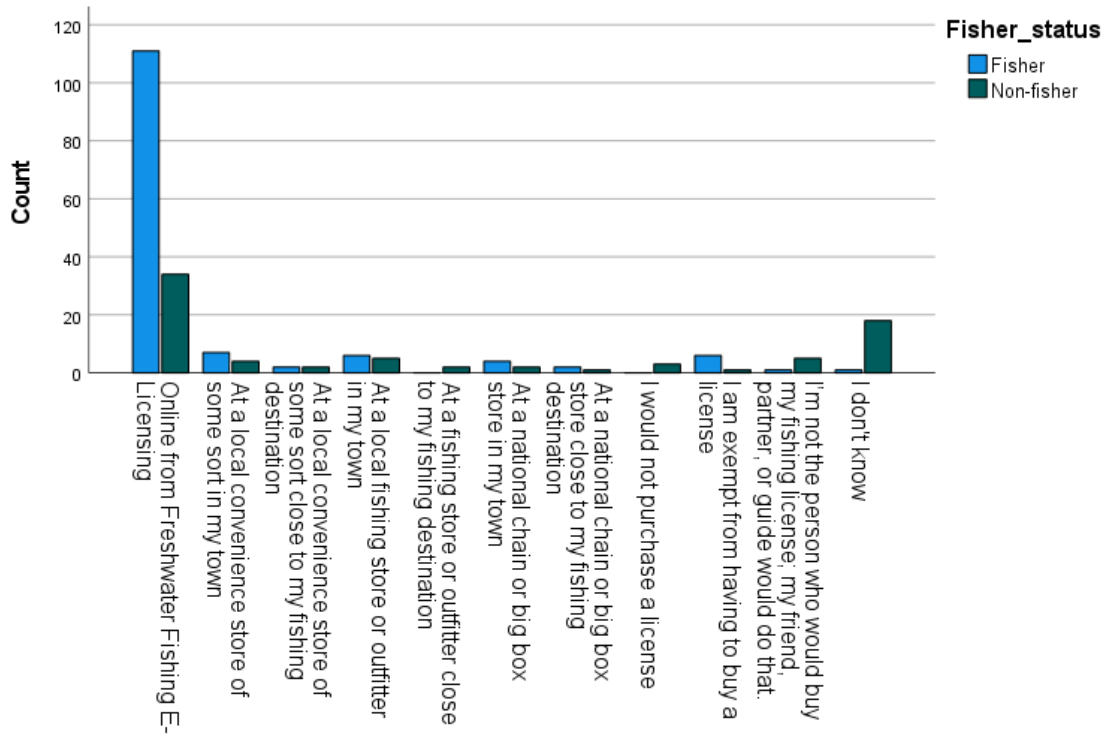


Figure 5: Where would fishers and non-fishers purchase a licence?

Catching large fish was a motivator for fishing among 26.6% of total respondents. For fishers, the most important aspects of a fishing experience were catching big fish (M=3.8 SD=1.01) followed by catching a lot of fish (M=3.4, SD=1.11). In contrast, non-fishers identified fishing to feed themselves as most important (M=3.3, SD=1.16) with fishing to feed their family (M=3.25, SD=1.21) and catching the allowed limit (M=3.25, SD=1.15) tied as the next most important considerations. However, catching fish to eat was ranked higher by both fishers (M=5.6) and non-fishers (M=5.7) compared catching large fish (M=7.0; M=8.8) or many fish (M=7.9; M=9.7), meaning the consumption of fish caught was highly important to current and potential fishers. See summary in Table 3 and 4.

**Table 2 – Fishers’ and Non-Fishers’ Desired Outcomes with Fishing Experiences**

I (would) fish...	Fisher			Non-fisher		
	Mean	SD	Variance	Mean	SD	Variance
To feed family	2.852	1.304	1.700	3.255*	1.211	1.467
To feed myself	3.119*	1.290	1.665	3.319*	1.169	1.366
To catch allowed limit of fish	3.028	1.398	1.953	3.255*	1.157	1.339
To catch a lot of fish	3.431*	1.112	1.236	2.787	1.147	1.316
To catch big fish	3.835*	1.018	1.037	3.170	1.208	1.460
For culture or tradition	2.284	1.227	1.506	2.064	.861	.741

*Note.* Population description showing mean, SD, and variance of responses to desired fishing experiences. The scale ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

**Table 3 – Fishers’ and Non-Fishers’ Ranking Reasons for Going Fishing**

I (would) fish...	Fisher			Non-fisher		
	Mean	SD	Variance	Mean	SD	Variance
To find companionship	8.380	2.837	8.05	6.255	3.199	10.233
To be challenged	5.556	2.58	6.654	6.319	2.730	7.451
To improve skills	6.120	2.414	5.828	5.489	2.633	6.931
To bring friends together	6.204	2.519	6.347	4.043*	2.405	5.785
To get away	3.796*	2.176	4.736	4.468*	2.162	4.675
To be close to nature	3.676*	2.505	6.275	3.383*	2.198	4.832
To catch fish for eating	5.676	3.548	12.589	5.723	3.292	10.838
To relax	4.370*	2.613	6.826	5.596	2.524	6.368
To catch large fish	7.019	2.564	6.574	8.872	1.579	2.494
To bring family closer together	7.241	3.226	10.405	6.106	3.144	9.882
To catch many fish	7.963	3.217	10.35	9.745	2.129	4.531

*Note.* Population description showing mean, SD, and variance of the ranking question asking either stream why they would consider going fishing. Asterix \* denotes top three responses per grouping.

A second strong theme that emerged from the open-ended survey question asking fishers to describe their ideal fishing experience was that fishers enjoy “being the only people on the lake.” In the focus group interviews, fishers also expressed that building social connections and sharing their expertise with others was a rewarding part of the sport. George (dominant fisher) exemplified this theme of building social connections and sharing expertise through fishing:

When you meet someone and they fish, you have like, an instant sort of connection, understanding of the world with that person. So, it's been great to a great way to meet people to, you know, share knowledge, share what you know about catching fish and eating fish, or catching fish and releasing fish. [...] I still love to catch lots of fish, or big fish, like I'm, I'm not out of that- I'm not one of those ‘I go down there for the river’ kind of thing, but like fish live in really nice places, especially in British Columbia, right, like there's no bad scenery when you're fishing in British Columbia. So, for me it's a way to like, be out in nature, connect with nature, but not, you know, and having something to do, right, like you're not, it's not just about that. But it's all of those things combined like having either being with friends, sharing skills, sharing stories, or being alone, and like being a hyper focused on something really stupid like ‘what are trout eating today?’ So yeah, it's a mix of like all of these different things that make fishing to be really, really worthwhile. Although I still like- there's nothing better than like the feeling of a huge fish in a shallow lie that you've like scoped out and seen and then you're like ‘I'm going to get this guy’ and you get him. It's- I mean, that feeling is still- I don't know how to describe it. But I- that feeling, I really, really love. That's why I like steelhead, I think.

Although fishers reported mixed feedback on the stocked versus wild lakes and catching individual allowed limits, they reported that the practical aspect of catching fish for consumption contributed to feeling a sense of accomplishment and a day well spent. This finding is expressed well by Turner (non-dominant fisher) as she described her ideal day of fishing in the Omineca Region:

So, I love the fact that our lakes are stocked. Like there's a lot of local lakes that I can just run into and catch fish and then come back out. Um, so that's the stocked fishery program is very ideal for me. [...] I get to the lake and it's an ideal day it's fine, it's sunny, it's maybe plus three or plus five. I get on the lake, drill my holes, I catch my five kokanee right off the bat because there's a good fish hatchery, like not hatchery, but they stock the lake really well. Right. Um, so I catch my five kokanee that I'm allowed. And then I go off onto the shoreline or the shorelines and I drill other holes, and I'm catching brookies and trout that are there. And they have them because they stocked rainbows in there too, you're- there's a really good chance you're going to get a trout, right. And you know, and maybe I'm not catching my limit there, but I'm still, I'm still walking away between five and 10 fish, for example. And I feel like that's been a very productive day, a really successful day. I'm happy to bring, like for all that gas money I went out there and the effort of walking in, I feel like I'm coming back out with a great haul of fish.

And so that's what like really my ideal day and I'm coming back with like, like, 'oh, you know, I caught my caught my limit.' And I like that I don't have to feel guilty for catching a limit. Like they, they stocked it. It's a sport fishery on purpose. Because I do fish at some naturally occurring lakes, but you're always aware that the more people fish there, the more that take out, you know, you can affect the numbers of the population in that area. So, you're definitely a bit more aware and keen on that. So, you're kind of fishing, um, you might not take all- maybe you're gonna catch three big ones and then just leave the rest, or you're going to throw every little one back for example. So, my ideal day is like that. I love fishing on stock lakes for that because- I don't know, I just really like really just like catching fish. I like the jerk on the line. That's always- that's always exciting to me. I'm bringing something home. It's bringing fish home.

### ***What's important to non-fishers?***

This section includes survey responses from non-fishers from all demographic backgrounds. Non-fishers were asked similar questions that were then flipped to apply to them. For example, the team asked fishers to rank why they bought a fishing licence, and they asked non-fishers to rank the same options *if they were to purchase* a license; non-fishers reported the top motivation to purchase as license to be fishing with friends and family (40 out of 77).

Non-fishers expressed slightly above neutral interest in potentially fishing in the Omineca Region ( $M=3.15$ ), but 53.3% had never purchased a fishing licence before (Figure 3). 44.2% of non-fishers were likely to purchase a licence online, where 23.4% responded they did not know. Non-fishers' perceptions on a reasonable cost varied widely, but \$16-\$30 was most agreed (29.5%) (Figure 4). In terms of seasonality, 83.8% of non-fishers reported that they would prefer to fish in the summer, compared to 16.2% in the summer and winter option. Notably no of non-fishers were interested in solely ice fishing or the "none of the above." Non-fishers anticipated they would fish fewer days per year than fishers, estimated just under 28 days per year but with high variation in responses ( $M=27.8$ ,  $SD=74.7$ ). Nearly 70% of non-fishers placed themselves as a beginner (69.6%), and 18.8% claiming they have never been fishing. The most different finding from fishers is that non-fishers wanted to see physical accessibility at sites (24.0%), outhouses (20%), and signage (16.3%) as their top 3 most important amenities. Non-fishers report that they would envision fishing with spouses, everyday friends, or parental figures. Non-fishers expect to access fishing by driving to a lake, hiking, or walking in, and using canoes or kayaks. Non-fishers primarily prioritized scenery, time off work, crowd avoidance, and accessibility when considering fishing. They also share the same concerns as fishers about bad weather (58.3%), working (54.2%), and travel costs (50.0%), with uncertainty about fishing skill (33.3%) emerging as a notable factor. Similar to fishers, non-fishers enjoyed camping (77.6%) and hiking (67.3%), but instead of hunting like the fisher's third choice, kayaking and swimming tied for third place (24.5%) among other preferred outdoor activities.

In the focus groups, non-fishers were asked to describe an ideal fishing experience. They prioritized catching fish to keep and eat; many assumed that better tasting fish would be

harder or more effort to catch and/or these fish might not be present in the Omineca Region. Non-fishers also emphasized the importance of fishing as a social activity between family and friends. They expressed a preference for fishing to be part of a broader outdoor experience rather than the primary focus of a trip. Non-fishers expressed that participating in activities such as kayaking, hiking, or camping combined with fishing would be more appealing than only going fishing.

***How do current fishers, and non-fishers, perceive issues of diversity and inclusion within recreational fishing?***

Fishers and non-fishers perceived issues of diversity and inclusion in fishing in various ways. From the interview transcripts with fishers and non-fishers from dominant and non-dominant groups, one theme that emerged was that there is a so-called unified, Northern BC fishing ethos that entails a particular fishing culture that was historically created and is still upheld by a dominant group of fishers.

Dominant and non-dominant fishers reported that being a fisher is an inherent part of living in British Columbia and part of being Canadian. For most avid fishers, they expressed that fishing was more than a sport or leisure activity and that it was a way of life. Kurt (dominant fisher) captured this sentiment well:

I fully believe it's for everyone, my girl's fish, my wife fishes, we salmon fish, we trout fish, camp and hunt. You know, it's integral to our way of life. And when you threaten a person's way of life, things get mean.

Fishers go to the water, often alone, with their years spent acquiring skills, knowledge, and gear, and come home with a sense of accomplishment. These fishers are guided by the unspoken rules, the unconscious expectations, and the familial generational knowledge passed on to them, most often from father to son. The patriarchal nature of fishing convinced Alice (non-dominant non-fisher), that she wanted her husband to take her hypothetical future sons fishing, but not her hypothetical daughters, due to her past experience with her own father:

Alice: I'm also married, my husband isn't big into like, outdoor activities. He enjoys more like online gaming, board games, things like that. So, I've actually been more of the one that wants to go up, wants to go do things. And so, I think in terms of fishing, if I, this is yeah, if I have a daughter one day I probably won't take her fishing. But if I have a son, I'm going to be like, Ah, I did this, you know, as a child with my dad, I hope that you take, you know, our son to go fishing just one day, it doesn't mean that they'll do it forever, because my husband will probably not. He'll probably take them and then it'll be done, you know? But yeah, so I think sometimes, like, maybe our past just influences the present influences the future, maybe it's not so much a gender specific thing, rather than, like, the cultural background or the familial background you're in. Just, just thinking about the leisure of fishing.

Jessica (Interviewer): Is there a reason you can think why you would want your husband to take your son and not your daughter?

Alice: Just because when I was younger, like my dad stopped taking me. So, I was older than my brother. And when my brother was old enough, my dad stopped taking me. So, I think it was just kind of, a like, oh, well that's just how it is.

Every focus group participant mentioned that they had gone fishing with their fathers or grandfathers, sometimes mentioning mothers and grandmothers. Data showed fishers and non-fishers perceive that the avid dominant group of fishers held values associated with following conservative politics and paternalistic values, such as men being providers. In the words of George (dominant fisher), fishers were associated with getting to "...be the manly men of the north." He does not just go fishing; he is a fisherman.

Conceptually, Braun (2003) reflects how outdoor recreation is often viewed as man conquering nature and challenging or putting yourself at risk to better oneself through a difficult activity. These beliefs about outdoor recreation are commonly projected by and for young, white, middle-class, able-bodied men (Kusz, 2001). Our focus group and interview participants were asked to describe a typical fisher, and all participants perceived a typical fisher as a heterosexual, cis-gender male aged late 20s to 80s. For both fishers and non-fishers in the study, participants said that these fishing men are seen or see themselves as providers, or the paternal figure who teaches the future generation about fishing. Willy (dominant fisher) best reflects upon this theme by his story of going fishing with his elderly neighbour, and how he realized that fishing is more than just fishing; to many, it is a way for an older generation to pass down their knowledge to the younger generation, calling them the knowledge keepers of the sport:

So, the family friend I fish with regularly. He's a neighbor of like my parents, and he's been quite close to their family, for like over 10 years. His sons have zero interest in fishing, like, with him, and when I told him I took a liking to it, and he was really excited because he found some similarities in and himself with me, and so I think that he was very excited, much like what George was mentioning with a lot of people passing down this information down to him. I think it's kind of like, I think it's like an important part of fishing is passing down those little like tricks about how to fish, just because it's all this important knowledge, and it's almost like- I don't know, it's just very special to them, and knowing that, like that knowledge gets to continue on is really important, because the neighbor he's like in his early eighties. He still is going out fishing regularly, and so, but he hasn't had anyone who's really taken interest in fishing, so like, I think that just the fact that he was able to kind of relate with me, see a bit of himself within me, and then, like he was very excited to pass on some of that information down to me. So I think that's part of it, cause like, to get into fishing you, you need to know a little bit what you're doing, because, like, it is, it can be one of the most fun sports ever, or it could be the most like draining, boring, and like really upsetting sport to

participate in if you don't have that background knowledge. So, like the older generations are like the knowledge keepers in my mind of the sport, and you know they kind of determine who gets to like, get that knowledge and continue on, you know? That's one reason why I think it is the way it is.

***What factors enable and constrain fishers' and non-fishers' participation within the fishery?***

***Drivers of participation & inclusionary practices***

Fishers were driven to fish for multiple reasons, including to catch fish to eat, connect with nature, spend time with other people and build personal and/or professional relationships, and to escape from some of their daily routines or make fishing a part of their lifestyle. To go fishing, a person needs access to knowledge and equipment, often initially available through someone else, either a family member or friend. Fishers, both dominant and non-dominant, found it much easier to get into fishing if someone had the knowledge and equipment already, and the respondent could simply tag along on a trip. Once a fisher has gained knowledge, skill, and equipment, they may begin to feel comfortable going alone or taking others and continuing the cycle of passing down knowledge from one generation to the next. More avid fishers reported being more comfortable going alone, and often preferred solitude. Casual fishers preferred fishing as a social event, and non-fisher agreed that fishing should be social. According to Larry (dominant fisher), there are several reasons for going fishing:

I have several friends who have a fishing problem like myself. And I mean, I've heard the saying from steelhead fishermen that 'the tug is the drug.' And like that kind of is a large part of the reason why I want to keep going back is, you know, to try to catch the fish and it's just something I think that some people really can get addicted to. But more recently, I think I go fishing for a couple of reasons. One is adventure. I like going where there are no other people, getting as far away from people as possible to have those experiences, you know, being one with nature, kind of a zen-like experience. And also, I use it as a tool to build relationships. So quite frequently, I'll take people fishing, you know, my colleagues from other countries who maybe have never had an opportunity to fish. It creates a nice bonding experience and can strengthen those relationships. I've used it, you know, as a tool to work with people like the head of research and development, you know, taking them out fishing, got them really excited, they wanted to do more. So, it helped me build that relationship and ultimately work with them getting research grants. And I use it as a sort of team building tool, I guess with my colleagues on campus and my students, so we usually go out once a year as a sort of team building exercise. I think most of the people that I go fishing with what they take away from it are just really good stories, you know, the kind of stories that you can tell around a campfire, you know, the time that the transmission fell out of your vehicle and you had to tie it up with rope to get it back out of the bush and things like this. So yeah, adventure, relationship building, zen, those would be sort of why I go now.

### *Constraints & exclusionary practices*

A common constraint across dominant and nondominant fishers and non-fishers is the idea that a person's access to leisure changes over a person's lifetime. Examples included moving away from their family that fished, moving away from their home communities, building a career, pursuing education, shifting financial situations, changes in physical ability, and/or starting a family. A lot of these constraints were temporary. For example, Bob (dominant fisher), used to fish much more often in his hometown with his dad, and moving to the Omineca Region reduced his access to fishing:

...since fishing was such a family related affair for me... I would probably go fishing here. You know, it's mostly just like the startup of it. Like, when I'm home like I have my rods there. If you know, I'm not great at a lot of the minutiae, like a lot of the detail stuff. So like, you know, my dad will like, tie me new flies if I need something right or, you know, so it's a lot of -it's like from him...like getting that started up here and actually doing it... I feel like it's not like a barrier because obviously anyone can do it. It's just one of those things where like, I think without having that as like a starter point, it's just something that's not in my current...with the stuff that I currently do right now, it's hard to find the time.

Another example is Mia (non-dominant fisher), who is Chinese and moved to the Omineca Region for her education and did not have any people to really participate in outdoor recreation like fishing with her:

When I come here the first year, I don't have car and I only know a few people and they don't want to go to just like fishing, hiking, camping. So, I just stay, stay indoors. Maybe sometimes go to the gym. That is, that is my first year come to the P.G., and second year I know more people and I buy a vehicle. So, I have more times, or I can go to someplace if I want so- and I was met some friends, they love to hiking, camping, and skiing. Yeah. So, I think it totally depends on if I have the chance, and there are someone can guide you, I can if I can see that, because I never know how to- um. I think the camping is a very difficult thing, before I go to camping, but when I go, I found it's very simple. And since you have the car and everything there, yes, there are a lot of things that you have to pay attention to. You have to, don't let the food out of the sight and you have to put everything in your car. But it's not so difficult as I imagined. And just like the hiking and before I go get out of my home I just think it's the most difficult thing. I walk out from my home but when I walk in the forest, I feel so relaxed.

Changes in physical ability also occur over the lifespan, often with long-term or permanent effect, which constrains fishing opportunities likely requiring adaptation. Fishers such as Justine (non-dominant fisher) felt that not having people to go with and her level of ability changing over the past few years made fishing less accessible to her:

A lot of my activities have kind of changed to town. And then I think a barrier is going- I won't go by myself because I don't feel safe in the outdoors by myself. And so, I think that that having someone to go with is a key piece to my access to

nature. And yeah, with changing health conditions, it's hard to carry the kayak or the canoe by myself. So even when I do feel stable enough to go by myself in terms of like, I feel safe today, I can go. It's just a little bit more difficult for me to maneuver the kayak off of the car and get it back up is really, really the problem without injuring myself. So, yeah, that's, I think how it's changed for me in a really distinct way.

All the non-fishers interviewed had been fishing at least once in their lifetimes. All non-fishers did not want to fish without a social connection with the person mentoring them. When asked about how fishing would compare to other recreational activities they participated in, non-fishers felt fishing would be boring (50%), or that fishing was not as accessible to them (50%). Even having that mentorship, some non-fishers mentioned negative experiences with their mentors that deterred them from continuing the sport, like Anna (non-dominant non-fisher):

When I worked as a care aid for a bit, and the person that I cared for his dad owned a wilderness resort. And so, I went out with him and his son to go to a fishing derby. And during that time, while we were fishing, he made a lot of assumptions and guesses that I wouldn't feel comfortable fishing or like, I wouldn't feel comfortable handling the fish, like when we caught them, or just like different things like that. And I don't know if that's because of gender, or just because of like, how I presented myself while I was working with them. – Anna

Non-fishers strongly suggested that catching fish to take home was an essential part of having an enjoyable fishing experience. Catch-and-release is not preferred as non-fishers wanted to keep the fish to eat, a few participants noting it seemed unethical to harm fish with hooks without the goal of consuming them, sometimes stemming from childhood like Cedar (non-dominant non-fisher):

Okay, so my history of fishing is that I once fished once when I was seven. And then I caught a fish, because I was really into the outdoors. And my dad was like, 'what do we do next? Let's take her fishing. And I caught one and then I had a mental breakdown, and I cried, and then he had to send us home early. So, we had like a four day weekend, and I went home on day one because I was like, 'How could you do this?' And he was like, 'we're gonna throw it back, it's fine.' And I was like, 'we ripped his face out, he's not fine' so, um, baby Cedar was not having a good time and I've just never had any want to fish after that. - Cedar

Participants in the focus groups suggested that understanding BC and Canadian fishing laws, regulations, and licensing requirements, as well as needing a driver's license, a boating license, and a fishing license (and paying for multiple licence add-ons depending on what fish they are catching) present challenges to fishing participation. Francis (dominant non-fisher) elaborated upon this in his interview:

Francis: Well, I basically grew up fishing in Australia. So, I've done a lot of like sea fishing and stuff, but since moving to Canada, I haven't done any. So, it's like six years. Yeah.

Jessica (Interviewer): Okay. So, it used to be part of your life, but not really anymore.

Francis: Yeah, not so much these days, I think. I think that might be just because I have a preference of saltwater fish over fresh. And I don't like to fish for sport. So, if I'm fishing to eat, you know, my choices are limited to freshwater fish and I'm not super, super into that.

Another concern expressed by both non-fishers and fishers alike was trouble understanding BC and Canadian fishing laws, regulations, and licensing requirements, as well as obtaining a driver's license, boating license, and fishing license, which can make going fishing more complicated. Momo (non-dominant non-fisher) and Simon (non-dominant non-fisher) explained this well:

Momo: Yeah. And also, the access to the lake. Like I mentioned, I probably mentioned once like, I think I need a vehicle to go there. Like, I cannot walk to a lake from the city, right? Yeah.

Simon: Also need to get a driving license, of course.

Momo: Yeah, that's true. Driving license and a vehicle. Yeah.

Simon: A vehicle, it's very easy. Driving license is difficult.

Momo: But I won't say a vehicle is very easy for Indigenous people.

Simon: Hm, yeah.

Momo: Yeah. For different groups, probably not that easy. Yeah. And also, you ask about people with colours? Driver license, it might be a barrier for us.

This concern was echoed by Francis (dominant fisher):

Yeah. I also find like- uh, I'm also like, this is probably just me because I grew up in Australia where you don't need a fishing license or anything so if you want to go fishing, you just grab your stuff and you go. But, yeah, the licensing thing, I guess there's a bit of a barrier to some people as well, not knowing where to go to get them, not knowing how much it costs, I guess ease of- ease of access to information, maybe?

And this concern with understanding fishing laws and licensing was further elaborated upon by Jen (non-dominant non-fisher):

I think often it's actually the fishing license that deters me. Like when I do go out with somebody that's fishing. I'm like, they're like, Oh, you want to cast a few casts? And like, oh, no, I just I don't have a fishing license, so I just won't do it at all. Whereas if I didn't need that, then I probably would, you know, like, not go for all day, but for half an hour, you know, yeah, we're on the road and see if I could catch something. But just knowing that I have to get a fishing license, and I'm like, 'Ah, nah, I just won't bother at all.' So, I think that, yeah, the licensing for sure. And I think it's fairly easy to get but it's still like, something that you need to do and sign up and have with you and go through the process. Can we see ID and you know, all that, that I'm like that, it's not worth it.

Several participants highlighted other fishing constraints, such as needing a boat, having children, and finding fishing to be boring:

In Vanderhoof, you can like, Vanderhoof- the Nechako was not a fishing river. And most of fishing in Vanderhoof, Omineca region is in lakes. And to be in these lakes that, like sure, you can catch fish off the shore, off the docks. But like everywhere you go in Vanderhoof, you need a boat. Like when we first started fishing, we had this little two like, four-person dinghy, and we would hand pull up and paddle out or like trolling paddle out to places like it makes such a huge thing like you need. You almost need a boat, or a kayak or something to get into the water to fish in the north or central BC. You can't just walk in. You can't just cast off the river. You can't just go to the ocean, you can't just do something, you almost need a boat. - Lee (non-dominant fisher)

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Yeah. [laughs] For, for our little son, for- for little kids. You need to do somehow to say that, to do some activity which are not very loadful, which are not very heavy for them, we go outside, maybe it just takes one hour, he will feel tired, yeah. But before [having our son], we can go outside for about five, six hours. It's okay for us. But for now, we just need to find a very easy, like, easy way to easy-uh, how to say that route or some pathway to hike, yeah...but I think the potential solution for me is ice fishing, maybe? We can build a small tent and use some heater there. It's much easier to get a fish I guess, but I'm not quite sure. [laughs.] Because we know the fish don't have many things to eat. So. So, they're starving, yeah. And it's easier to get them out. - Simon (non-dominant non-fisher)

I don't necessarily find fishing the most exciting. And when I have enjoyed it, it's mostly been because of the company that I'm with, not necessarily the activity itself. I would also say like comparing fishing to like the activities that I mentioned before, like hiking or camping or something like that. It doesn't always feel like as accessible I suppose. If I want to go out fishing, I have to drive normally a fair distance out to a lake, I either have to rent a boat, if that's an

option, or I have to know someone that a boat. So, money wise, it might not be like as accessible. Also, whereas like with hiking, I can just, you know, put on a backpack and like go up a mountain that's, you know, just a few kilometers away [...] And you can like rent [fishing gear] in some places I suppose. But then like in terms of like a boat if you can like go and like rent all the stuff that you need, but if you don't know how to drive the boat to get where you need to go... [trails off]  
 - Anna (non-dominant non-fisher)

***How do racialized people, women, and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community perceive and experience recreational fishing in terms of diversity and inclusion?***

***Racialized communities***

Overall, there was the notion from fishers that racialized communities were not fishing. Research participants from racialized communities, both women and men, expressed that they felt it was rare to see other members of racialized communities fishing. Many said that fishing as leisure was not high on the list of priorities for racialized and immigrant community members, who likely had more important concerns than going fishing for recreational purposes. Participants from racialized communities expressed that they are often, like Momo said, “struggling for their life,” and may not have time for things like fishing, or they may spend time doing something else perceived within their ethnic/cultural community as more productive. Momo (non-dominant non-fisher) best stated this theme:

Oh, I guess we had a question about like, the reasons we guess behind different racial groups, why they don't do fishing, right. So, uh, it just came to my mind like, I think I talked about our workload. And for Indigenous people and Black people we learned well, all my knowledge from like, the news, the like, public web- websites probably is like I have some bias- or probably it's just a stereotype. But as I know that many of them like people with colour, uh the whole group is like, don't really have the time to do a lot of leisure things. Yeah. It's part of our culture. Like for Chinese, we feel like hard working is the first, the number one thing you need to do in your life. And to let- to gather rice, to get some rest, to have some fun. No, that's kinda like, you, you probably don't have to do that until you get retired. Yeah, so we don't really value those time. We don't really think that's necessary. And also, like, all these groups, like people with colors, we're kind of struggling for our life. Like, if you have like actual time, maybe we'll do like another part time work. Or maybe we have a lot of housework to do. And we just don't think like, oh, we need to leave some time for recreation. [...] Yeah, so that's- It was a part of the reasons from our cultures and part of knowledge from the reality, I guess for like, we see a lot of Indigenous people stated that they're still struggling. They don't even have clean water to drink. I don't think in like, during that time, you will think about any recreation, stuff you want, like activity you really want to do right. Yeah. So, we have a saying in China. It's kinda like, once you get fulfilled, like, you eat enough, and you feel warm, and you feel safe, then you think about other things like having fun.

Racialized community members expressed that the lack of representation of diverse cultures and ethnicities in fishing and fishing media impacted their desire to participate in fishing. This suggested to racialized community members that the activity is not meant for them, as Mia (non-dominant fisher), a new fisher and Chinese woman, best stated with her reflection on what society and her family consider acceptable hobbies for racialized women:

It's really hard how to describe what I'm thinking. I think when someone wants to do something, or willing to do just like if I love to, I have the hobby the first time I have to know it, how we'll try it and to figure out, do I love it or not? Yeah. And sometimes when I try to do something and someone tells me you can't do that and that you're not suitable for it, maybe I won't do that. I think that is because we say a comment about activities who can do that and who can't- who is not suitable, who is suitable at this... The stereotype sometimes can influence the people... Sometimes it will influence yourself... I will think I'm a woman, and uh, I can't- maybe the fishing is not suitable for me, even [if] I never tried it, and some- so, so this is influenced myself... Maybe because I never see a woman try to go fishing. So, I was thinking, maybe this activity is not suitable for a woman, so I will never try it. So, it's very interesting. I never try it. And I will think I'm not suitable for it. Yeah, but I think that, it's different in Canada because I don't feel- I don't have this feeling in Canada because my friends will say, 'Come with me! You will love it and that you enjoy it.' But in China, they- no one say that to you, but no one tells you to try it. And then you just see it from your eyes... If I say I will go fishing to my mom, my mom will say 'Stop. Don't do that. Just stay at home.' Yeah.

Racialized communities, especially new immigrants, have less free time overall due to social inequities, and fishing is thus not a prioritized leisure activity. Lee (non-dominant fisher), a Chinese man, and Bob (dominant fisher), a white man, had a conversation about how immigrants are not prioritizing fishing because of the time, energy, and cost it requires:

Lee: It's recreational, right? And so like, it's not really a priority for immigrants to come over here and do that, like fishing is still- as much as we love fish. It's still for fun. It's still to be able to take the time away and go somewhere and like, it's just like a passion like a hobby enough where you take the time, energy and money to go and pursue it.

Bob: And if you live in a place where you have to drive for 40 minutes to get to the nearest place you can get to go to fish. Sometimes that's just too much.

In addition, participants were suggesting that the type of language used in fishing was not often said directly to racialized participant but could be heard along the rivers through racist jokes or comments made, as discussed by two white fishers, Bob (dominant fisher) and Carol (non-dominant fisher):

Bob: I think there's actually a kind of interesting thing to be said about being a, like a white person, and the assumptions that are made along with that. So, I think I mentioned earlier today, right, that, you know, you hear conversations in the river, sometimes between anglers, basically primarily white, but sometimes other races as well, about, you know, fishing laws, especially when it comes to Indigenous groups. And I mean, I've heard some pretty nasty stuff that I obviously very much disagree with, when it comes to what should be allowed and what shouldn't be allowed. But I think it's interesting, because since I'm white, people feel free to say stuff, that can be pretty shocking, because they assumed I would agree with them, because I'm there angling with them. Right. So, I think that's like, it's a one experience where I can really say, well, which kind of fouls my time there. Because it, like, you know, it should be an experience that is, you know, pretty good for everyone there. But I think that sometimes it's a sort of unique subculture, like angling, angling subculture, I guess it's such a unique subculture. I think often it does get preyed upon by certain powers that be to try to affect their opinions and ideas. And you hear that, like, you like, you would not hear that if you were like for say, if you're an Indigenous person, you're probably not going to hear it in person at the river. Because, you know, people usually don't like conflict that much. But as a white person, I've definitely heard those conversations before. And they are pretty, pretty damaging.

Carol: Same. I- like, outside of actually being out fishing, I've definitely had the same experience where like, other white people just think that they can say shitty things, because I'm white. And they assume that I agree with them. And yeah, like I do hear a lot of talk around. Like, from an angry perspective, I know one or two people that are coming to mind that, like, if you talk about angling with them, and it's anywhere around any traditional lands or nations territory, they're going to jump on, like the unfairness. Yeah. And like, like from a perspective of like, it's not fair that Indigenous people have different rights to the land or to the water at all. It's really sad.

Fishers assumed that racialized communities, especially racialized women, who fish have become desensitized to the type of languages and behaviours used in the dominant fishing as mentioned above by Carol and Bob in a focus group on race, as shown below by the conversation between Rhea (non-dominant fisher) and Frank (dominant fisher) in a separate interview:

Rhea: But we've also had different ethnicities- like we've had Asians like from Korea, and we've had Persian people or women come on our retreat...[female customer]'s East Indian and came on our women's retreat. Like, I don't think that there's a barrier to ethnicity because I feel like people who are Canadian are so comfortable with their ethnicity that I don't feel like it would necessarily make them uncomfortable because of that to attend the women's retreat. I don't- does that make sense?

Frank: I think so. I- we, what we're trying to say is we don't see a barrier based on-

Rhea: No.

Frank: -on race or sexuality from preventing them from entering the industry. I think some of the barriers might come-

Rhea: -but I have to add something. All of these women work in industry. So, I feel like they're also probably very comfortable and confident with themselves. Does that make sense?

Frank: In their sexualities?

Rhea: Well, sexuality and ethnicity, like when you work in industry, and like I feel like industry is very harsh, because it's a lot of like--

Frank: She means like machines, like forestry, mining.

Rhea: Right. Do you know what I'm saying? Yeah, I don't know. If you've ever worked in industry, there's like a lot of men who don't have filters and so you really have to kind of speak up for yourself.

### ***A Male-Dominated Social Environment***

The present study identifies/indicates that fishing in the Omineca Region is perceived as a male-dominated social environment, based on responses from female fishers and non-fishers from all genders; some of the more avid fishers of all genders recognized fishing as a male-dominated sport, where the dominant fishing culture could prevent participation from women and other genders. However, both the avid fishing men and women we spoke with, initially insisted that fishing was 'beyond gender' and was an activity that was available and accessible evenly to all genders. When asked about the role gender plays in fishing, Kurt's (dominant fisher) response best highlights this theme, as he initially stated that fishing was equally accessible for all people regardless of gender, then quickly hyperbolized that due to fishing being dominated by males with *older mentalities* that women were one hundred percent facing sexism while fishing:

No, gender has no, no. Fishing is one of the few, I don't know if it's the few- but when you have a common interest, really gender, gender plays no role in it. If you ask me. [...] Work life balance is a huge thing as far as getting out, because you need the time, right? I don't think gender plays an issue with time because if you want to go fishing male or female or or, or the other- I don't even know how to say the other group name. If you're gonna go, you're gonna go; if you want to go camping, you're gonna go camping. So, I don't really think it plays a big role in that way in fishing. [...] I've never experienced it, but from the lady anglers that I

fished with, it's- it's a 100%. Not so much gender bias, but it is a- there, there was, there has been. Yeah, definitely sexism. I mean, when, when you- when you have women coming into a very male dominated activity; you're gonna get it. And the demographic is from like two years old to 90 years old. So, you're still dealing with older mentalities over the younger mentalities, the older is still a little bit predominant. But that has, like in the last say, 10 years, that's been changing a little bit more. So yeah, I think it's changing but yeah, definitely there. There has been in the past for sure. I don't think it's going away anytime soon.

Most of the sexism discussed was indirect or underlying in men's actions. As every participant including non-fishers had fished at some point in their life, women fishers and non-fishers expressed that men often had been excited to have them along; however, there persisted an aura of paternal coaching that many women found it to be patronizing, especially if they felt they were already adept fishers. Jen, a non-dominant non-fisher who is surrounded by fishers but still chooses to not participate in fishing, simply stated, "if it was an equal opportunity sport, men wouldn't be so excited to have women there." There was the ubiquitous perception that female fishers needed to prove themselves as proficient enough to fit in with the dominant male fishing community. The women who proved they could do these so-called manly things, which should not be gendered tasks, like reeling in a fish, gutting a fish, were welcomed into the male-dominated fishing environment. The avid female fishers we spoke with were prided themselves on their skills; this is best portrayed in a quote from Turner (non-dominant fisher), a Metis woman who said the men in her life have a running joke between them that they want her along because she is highly skilled:

My dad, he took me fishing and hunting since I was little [...] just because I'm a girl did not let that stop him from taking me out. He wanted to teach me everything he knew- he knew I was very capable. And even with my husband, and when I met my husband, when I said that I fish and hunt, he was like, 'that's perfect, because I like fishing and hunting too.' So, we're very, very compatible in that way. And both men in my life and other men, like other friends in my life have really realized I'm a really good, proficient hunter and angler. And they normally- especially when it comes to, for example, hunting, they do want me along. I hear better than them, I see better than them. Like I tend to spot the animals faster than they can. So, they're like, 'oh, we need Turner along, because we won't see them, we won't see the animals without her.' It's kind of like a running- it's not a joke. But that's kind of like that attitude, they want me along with them. Because I'm very proficient in the outdoors that way.

Sexism and assumptions of women's lack of fishing capabilities was also a strong theme that emerged in the transcripts from both fishers and non-fisher women. Two examples provided from Ashley (non-dominant fisher) and Anna (non-dominant non-fisher) are cataloged below:

There is an expectation, when I'm out with my male friends, that I'm going to be offended or scared to touch a fish or get a fish out of the mouth, there's just an expectation, right? I'm a health care worker, we see things all the time and stuff like that. So like, I can certainly get a hook out. And I can certainly wack a fish over the head. But there's always this 'Oh, is she gonna 'princess out'. Oh, is she gonna – oh', you know what I mean. There's always this, um, expectation that I'm going to be like, you know, super feminine, around, you know, getting that fish in the boat, you know, and like hitting it over the head and stuff like that. Right. So that is a stereotype that exists, right? - Ashley

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I guess one thing I can think of, when I worked as a care aid for a bit, and the person that I cared for, his dad owned a wilderness resort. And so, I went out with him and his son to go to a fishing derby. And during that time, while we were fishing, he made a lot of assumptions and guesses that I wouldn't feel comfortable fishing or like, I wouldn't feel comfortable handling the fish, like when we caught them, or just like different things like that. And I don't know if that's because of gender, or just because of like, how I presented myself while I was working with them. But that's one thing I can maybe think of. - Anna

Men who are outside the dominant fishing community expressed not feeling welcomed and feeling pressured by male friends. For example, Marcus (non-dominant non-fisher), a Chinese man, spoke about how he went fishing with his friends and was still learning how to fish:

Sorry, so for me, it's like when they really get into the moment, like for example, like my friends, he, he says a couple of times, 'Marcus, you always you almost gathered the fish, but you let it go, so we almost get the fish.' So, I- it's make me feel a little bit upset as it feels like okay, it's kinda my fault. But I don't really consider it as harassment. But just, you know, when they this is kind of like sports where the treat it really serious, they just- you know what I mean? [...] Yeah, kind of like, they give me some like pressure, like, because I probably do something wrong or something like that.

Fisher and non-fisher women mentioned sexualization in fishing advertising; however, these women more strongly felt women were represented as beginners or as less competent than male counterparts. During the focus group on gender, the women noticed that the female representations they saw did not make them feel empowered to fish; rather, they felt like it was a marketing scheme, or something comical that made woman look less competent, or an obvious attempt to attract the existing dominant male demographic; the three women from the focus group on gender best discussed how they felt about women being represented in fishing media:

Alice: I think I've always seen it as a male on TV and in media and things- I don't think I've ever, Yeah, I can't think of a time where I've seen a woman in media

doing it unless they're doing something comical where a man has to teach her how to fish.

Jen: I mean, I think it's been- it mostly is, especially in TV it's mostly men, you know, the men will bond or fishing and that sort of thing. But I do follow a couple of different- mostly because I was trying to win contests for my husband, but I follow a few different social media pages that are like for ocean fishing things and it's actually surprising how many times they are featuring women in those now. And there's more like- it's all it's totally that targeting ads on social media but I'll get like, learn how to fish and you know, women retreats and things like that are popping up more and more. So, I think more, like the traditional media, it's more male, but then if you look at social media, I think they're trying to advertise more to females probably realizing it's like an untapped revenue source potentially. [...] I think like the targeted ads definitely I would say it's beginner fishers. So, I don't know if they can tell that or not, but I think that the social media ads on like some of the ocean fishing companies that I follow it does have some looking like fully geared up and that sort of thing. And again, like again, my husband's a big angler so he'll watch like the TV, sorry like the fishing channels or whatever, the outdoor channel, and mostly again it's men but every once in a while they do throw in women that look like they know what they're doing. I think they're trying to diversify. But it's always like young pretty girls, looking all, you know, maked-up, and that kinda thing. But I definitely think like traditional- still primarily is men.

Anna: Yeah, I definitely agree, like I think representation for like yeah, like maybe like posters or ads that I've seen like it's generally like men that are on the ads. I think yeah, it is interesting Jen that you bring it up, like when they do have women they look like very- like they have like they're done up, like they have their makeup done and different things like that. And I guess when I see that initially it feels great. But then it also makes me wonder like are they just there to show that they are representing women, or are there women behind it that are actually doing it? So that's just a question I guess I have when I see that.

There was a strong assumption from dominant fishers did not perceive gender diverse people to be among them. We did not speak with anyone who identified themselves as gender diverse, and ~4% of survey participants selected an option other than man or women (some of the fisher responses selected other to answer with harmful intent, no non-fishers said anything negative). While the irony is not lost on using a quote from white male fisher, George (dominant fisher) best explained how gender diversity and sexuality are possibly not as well understood by the people in the Omineca Region and the dominant fishing population, which is what he believes is a major deterrent against fishing for these communities:

But gender diversity is so not well understood in the in the main population, like, you know what I mean? I don't think there's any sport or endeavor that we do as human beings were gender diversity is really well understood. Like, it's, it's such

a, it's such a new- like using pronouns, the vast, the vastness of pronouns, like, blows my mind every, every month, there's new pronouns that have a new meaning and a new way to express yourself as an individual. And it's, you know, it's difficult to keep up with that. And, you know, the onus is sort of on the person to be like, 'Hey, here's, here's how I, you know, this is how I'd like to be- this is how I like you to refer to me in terms of pronouns.' But what does that do for a deeper understanding of what that gender identity means, right? So, if you can't even ask a man about his pronouns without them feeling like sexually threatened, how the hell are we going to understand people's you know, preferred identity, when it doesn't fit our sort of rigid, traditional gender? [...] How do you take a sport that you think is like stereotypically male dominated, and with a tinge of like toxic masculinity, how do you open that up for a space for gender diverse people to feel included? That's the- I don't have an answer for you, right, but that's the question I think if we could figure that piece out, then we can actually figure out how to get more, you know gender diversity around the boat, the lake, on the water.

### ***2SLBTQIA+***

Fishers suggested that members of the 2SLGBTQ+ do not participate within Omineca Region's fisheries. Respondents from the dominant fishing group suggested members of the 2SLBTQIA+ group may not feel comfortable living in a rural region where some people assume the complexities of identity are not well understood and how they would probably want to move to larger cities to find community elsewhere. Fishers either did not know people from this community or assumed they were not spending as much time outdoors. Here, among dominant fishers, we see intersections of stereotypes of rural, urban, and 2SLGBTQ+ life and lifestyles operating to normalize or rationalize invisibility of 2SLGBTQ+ members of society, particularly in rural regions and recreation. According to Kurt (dominant fisher):

I think fishing in our community is already inclusive, where if you are gay, or lesbian or bi, however you want to call it, I won't use binary, because I don't believe in the term. Um, people can go buy a fishing rod and go fishing, they can come to me, and they can ask, hey, where do I need to go, I don't care. I don't care who you are, if you want to go fishing, I'm gonna help you. And everybody I know. They don't care, they're gonna help you. You might be going by yourself. They might not be a person that you want to take out, we're gonna help you, we're not going to be rude or mean or anything. And fishing is a great thing where you can do it as a group, you can do it by yourself, and just do it in peace and quiet. Right? So, I think our region's good for that. [...] I don't think sexuality should be part of fishing, because you're now giving it a radical connotation that doesn't need to be in fishing, and we don't even talk about that. The biggest- I'll tell you the reason is, is they don't fish. It's like I said, Prince George, you're not sticking around with Prince George because [it's] hostile in a northern environment outside of the big cities. For me personally, I don't care if you're gay. But I really care when you make a point about being gay. Because it's just like, just like a man

and a wife walking around. You don't want to see us necking on the street, making out? You know what, keep that at home. And I expect that for all couples, right? And, and just the gay people I know who have traveled, even they just go to cities, and they might camp, but they- I've never seen the expression to go. That's kinda where it's at.

2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, particularly in a rural area such as the Omineca, often struggle to find community. A key finding was that the 2SLGBTQIA+ community was perceived to not live in this region, they were not well-represented, and those that did live here faced additional barriers that prevent their participation. Firstly, fishers' thought members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ did not typically participate within Omineca Region's fisheries assuming this community did not live here. Thus, the masculine nature of the fishing culture was dominated by traditional gender roles that assume heterosexuality and the performance of stereotypical masculinity is encouraged:

So like, I know, for me, I don't want to be on a boat with a bunch of rednecks. I don't want to go to [city] and fish with [male name] [laughs] [Francis: yeah.] who's like, against gay marriage, in [city], that takes my cousin's fishing. Fuck, [male name] sometimes. Fuck he's a shithead. Anyway, in that example like, I don't want to spend three hours on a boat with somebody who is going to, you know, cause harm to people that I care about. [...] It takes a long time to find your people and if it was not immediately apparent then, or if it's not available to you, that can be really scary, and people tend to isolate after that. And for sports, like fishing that require like, a pretty huge amount of knowledge. Like you need to know what boat to take. You needed to know where to go, you need to know how to navigate the websites like that would be tough. I think- I think for a lot of people who are like, it's not that their sexual, like their sexual orientation would impact the amount that they fish, but it's more so just like being able to be around people who are similar to you. - Cedar, (non-dominant, non-fisher)

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I think for me, when I go [fishing] with my [female] friends that like, we could definitely look like we're a couple of just because they fit that stereotypical, like, butch woman. We get stared at a lot. And I don't know if that's just me in my own head. Like, we're not holding hands or anything. We're not dating. We're just friends, right? But like, I've gotten those stares before. And I know it's just a- it's not an intimidating stare necessarily. It's just like, I don't know, people just aren't used to seeing that or something. I don't know. It's 2023. But that's okay. Yeah, I don't know. Just yeah, I think the stares when I'm showing up with like friends like that. And I just- and I don't want to stereotype either. It's just I know, like all the people that I do know that like to fish, when they get in a certain culture, like this bro culture, I think it's just normal to make homophobic and transphobic comments or jokes, like just from what I've experienced in wildfire, who are the only people that I have to compare to people that, like men, that fish. I haven't heard much of that from women. - Justine (non-dominant fisher)

In the survey responses where participants strongly disagreed (1) or strongly agreed (5) with statements about sexuality within fishing. The non-dominant community (M=3.0, SD=0.91) and non-fishers (M=2.4, SD=0.82) disagreed that all sexualities are well-represented in fishing media (Table 6)

**Table 6** – *Fishers’ and Non-Fishers’ Perceptions of Sexuality within Fishing*

	Fisher		Non-fisher		Dominant		Non-Dominant	
	M	St. Dev.	M	St. Dev.	M	St. Dev.	M	St. Dev.
All sexualities are well-represented	2.93	.935	2.46	.823	3.01	.911	2.65	.919
Inspired to fish (hear about 2SLGBTQ+)	2.51	.923	3.03	.830	2.53	.910	2.76	.933
Feel discriminated against (sexuality)	1.71	.821	2.05	.875	1.61	.783	1.93	.876
Feel comfortable sharing my sexuality	3.21	1.08	3.05	1.05	3.20	1.13	3.13	1.06
Witness homophobia	2.01	1.13	2.89	1.04	2.08	1.22	2.42	1.14
Experience hate	1.66	.791	2.10	.908	1.56	.789	1.99	.869
Hear derogatory language towards 2SLGBTQ+	2.09	1.16	3.01	1.04	2.13	1.24	2.54	1.17

*Note.* Population description showing mean and standard deviation, of the 5-point Likert scale question about fishing and sexuality for fishers/non-fishers. The scale ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Std. Deviation used N rather than N-1 in denominators.

Here, among dominant fishers, there are intersections of stereotypes of rural, urban, 2SLGBTQIA+ life and lifestyles operating to normalize or rationalize invisibility of members of society, particularly in rural regions and recreation.

***What specific opportunities and pathways exist to increase and support diversity and inclusion among recreational fishers in the region?***

A common theme across all sessions was participants not knowing what the Omineca Region was already doing, if anything, to create a more inclusive and diverse fishery. When we asked all participants what fisheries managers could do to make fisheries more welcoming and satisfying to diverse communities, one comment stood out. Lee, who had moved to Canada from China as a child, asked simply, “what do you mean by satisfying?” His question prompted us to wonder whether fisheries managers had asked themselves similar questions.

Previous research has compared what people of different racial backgrounds sought from fishing, which often framed the needs of racialized communities in terms of food security and subsistence, while suggesting that white fishers primarily engaged in the activity for leisure (Hunt & Ditton, 2011; Toth & Brown, 1997). This study differed as it examined white privilege, equitable access, and societal norms that shape the sport of fishing in rural northern British Columbia. While previous studies showed tangible differences in the average lived experiences of racialized communities, cis-women, gender diverse, and 2SLGBTQ+ people, compared to the white, straight, cis-gender male lived experiences, it is possible to reduce the inequalities faced. Inclusion means everyone regardless of background has full and equal access to the same opportunities if desired.

While recommending broad societal change may feel beyond the scope of fisheries management, there are actionable steps that fisheries managers can take. Fisheries managers have the power to shift who they represent as fishers, to create genuine partnerships and connections with other people regardless of their identity, and to show that the fishing community is open to all fishers.

During recruitment and some fisher interviews, fishers told us that fishing was already accessible to all people. However, the dominant group may be ignorant and/or unaware and/or dismissive of issues experienced and voiced by non-dominant group. This study showed that it was not always that simple. Gaining access to the mentoring, financial resources, and pre-requisite knowledge that enables fishers to ‘simply’ fish, would be a good pathway to get non-fishers that have an interest in fishing into the sport. These conversations provided the opportunity to begin the conversation about who has been historically welcomed within fishing spaces and more broadly in the outdoors, and what that representation and inclusion would look like moving forward.

Although fishers expressed that fishing is a close-knit activity, building relationships and teaching new fishers made fishing rewarding for many fishers. Some opportunities for introducing new fishers include continuing community Learn to Fish days but perhaps providing minimum to no licensing requirements for adults those learning as licencing was a barrier for many adults. In addition, creating partnerships with existing community groups representing diverse demographics, such as LGBTQ+ organizations or international societies, and work together on inclusive fishing events and initiatives is a good start. Local events hold potential to introduce a more diverse community members to the sport and not only help them overcome any constraints but also introduce new people to the existing fishing community. Cedar (non-dominant non-fisher), who says gender and sexuality can be fluid throughout life, best stated how genuine human connection is important for mentorship:

Like there's a difference between a checkbox and saying, we're doing the thing, because we want gay people to fish with us versus like, you're human. And I'd like you to learn to fish with me. Let me teach you how, here's where you go and do the stuff. So, I don't know. I think that's important. – Cedar (non-dominant non-fisher)

While it would be great to have separate events aimed towards 2SLGBTQ+ groups or other groups, having the dominant fishing community to connect with existing community groups to connect over a shared interest, not always just over a shared identity factor, was highly recommended by 2SLGBTQ+ participants. Justine (non-dominant fisher), who identifies as bisexual, best stated this.

[...] And also forming groups, provides community for people. So, I think that any type of community where people have similar interests, and they're not just lumped together, because they're gay, is really cool to have, like, a very specific, common interest that people share, other than just being gay.

However, this should be done with caution to not cause harm to the people that would attend, because without society being more generally accepting of all types of people and beliefs, there is a risk of ridicule—or worse, violence—being perpetrated by people who oppose this mindset.

### ***Conservation-related outcomes***

In terms of conservation, fishers were more often intrinsically motivated to go to stocked rather than wild lakes because they knew these stocked lakes are established for recreational purposes, like Turner (non-dominant fisher) who said,

I love the fact that our lakes are stocked. Like there's a lot of local lakes that I can just run into and catch fish and then come back out. So that stocked fishery program is very ideal for me [...] And I'm coming back with like, like, 'oh, you know, I caught my caught my limit.' And I liked that I don't have to feel guilty for catching a limit. Like, they stocked it. It's a sport fishery on purpose. Because I do fish at some naturally occurring lakes, but you're always aware that the more people fish there, the more that take out, you know, you can affect the numbers of the population in that area.

Other fishers preferred to go fishing at a wild/unstocked lakes for the serenity it provided. While stocked lakes are listed in the fishing regulations and available in the fishing regulation synopsis, this information may not be easy to find for a new fisher or a fisher who may speak English as a second language.

In a focus group with non-fishers, the topic of stocking lakes with sterile fish occurred through conversation and these participants were concerned and unsure about how stocking sterile fish would be a process that conserves fish, as they thought management was stocking reproductively viable fish. To best elaborate this management consideration, Cedar and Francis had the following conversation:

Francis: I was always under the impression that the stocking was there to help like, reinvigorate a population. Yeah. So that's very interesting that they, they're sterile and they don't actually like- I guess it seems a little backwards. Because I feel like if you're stocking a lake, I feel like you would want it to self-replenish to some degree instead of having to constantly go back and waste time resources and

constantly restocking the same area.

Cedar: Yeah, I'm curious what the arguments for making them sterile is.

Jessica: I think it's so they don't take over because there's so many. But I know there are also like hatchery programs that release like sturgeon in the Nechako and I don't think those are sterile, so I think it's like, yeah, depends on the purpose of- Yeah, I don't know. It's really complicated.

Cedar: Our roommate is working with that program. And it's because the sturgeon I think, are near extinct. They're an endangered species. And so yeah, they're not they're like "do not fish this fish" kind of fish. But I, yeah, tricky.

Jessica: Yeah, you can buy, you can pay more to fish sturgeon. There's like a conservation surcharge on license fees.

Francis: Wow.

Cedar: This feels very similar to the like hunting endangered animals in Africa, like the rhinos and stuff. And the weird argument that like it brings the dollar value into conservation efforts into it, right, because you're gonna bring more attention to it.

Francis: Hey, here! We have this endangered species that you shouldn't fish but if you give us a little money...

Cedar: Well, one of the things that I'm interested in if like if we're using the argument that more people being out to go fishing is good. Why are we controlling the lakes that they're going to and who gets to pick which lakes are seen and does that, like, does that like influence where the flow of fishers and anglers are on the landscape? Like where they're gonna go look? So- do big industry companies and resource extraction companies have control over which lakes are stocked and which lakes are not stocked. That'd be an interesting thing to see. If there's like some sort of political pull over like, whether or not we bring eyes towards different types of areas in the province. And if that is an attraction, like are these listed lakes or stock lakes listed somewhere?

Jessica: Yes, I think in the fishing regulations, you can see which are stocked in with what, I believe.

Cedar: So, if I'm a fisher person, and I want to take my six year old daughter who loves to be outside fishing [laughs], I'm probably going to look at that list. And I'm going to figure out where I can go. And it would direct the flow of like the specific tourism that already exists. That's interesting. [...] I wonder for small communities who are struggling. So, I'm thinking right now, like, I just spent some time in Granisle, which is a very small community near Burns Lake that Jess you would probably know very well. Yeah. And then they're like, their mine closed. Francis, I think I told you all about it. That was where we stayed on the lake, on Babine Lake so pretty, but their mine closed and there's like no people there. I wonder if you

could, as a small community, try and like, ask to have your like, lakes stocked with fish, if we're gonna do it, we might as well provide value to communities that are somewhat, you know, slipping, I guess.

Francis: That's actually a cool concept, I feel. I feel like, like back to like the, I think the question initially, it was like a pro or against stocking lakes from like, Cedar is a vegetarian, and she cares a lot about animals, [then stocking is] not good. But at the same time, there's like, the practical, pragmatic piece of it, where it's like, where's the benefit coming from? And if a benefit comes from that, we're able to somehow use this to, like, you know, bring more people in, give- care more about being outside, then I think that then, that's good. It's one of those like all things in life, there's nothing we can really do. It's either good or bad. It's just figuring out how to weigh out the pros and the cons, and like, which hills we die on I suppose. So, I don't know. It's hard to say without knowing what the greater environmental impact is, on it. Sounds like there's probably a lot of social impact.

The conversation ended on an interesting note suggesting how stocking lakes could potentially be beneficial to smaller communities in the region, but mostly the conversation ended with the participants, and myself, left pondering what and how managers are stocking lakes and raising fish.

### ***Angler and public responses to the project***

Public responses to the study were mixed. The posters were shared widely and publicly over social media which was met with a range of reactions. Many members of the dominant fishing community were excited to get more people into the sport and to see fisheries management engaging with issues of inclusion and social justice, they recognized value in making fishing more accessible and welcoming to underrepresented groups.

However, some public responses, particularly from individuals that appeared to belong to the dominant fisher demographic we identified, were critical or dismissive. Notably, no women publicly replied negatively to the posters. A few men responded defensively to the posters, suggesting that fishing was already inclusive and that this was a “non-issue” undeserving of attention, for perhaps they found it threatening. Some fishers were upset, claiming that our study was ruining fishing, and that anyone could go fishing if they would just do it, and identity politics of gender, race, and sexuality had no place in the sport, and more. This reflects a privileged position socially, but also relative to the activity, land, and resource as experienced, for them, as an open space for leisure available and accessed without unwanted risk or restriction that are actively experienced by the non-dominant group. The team interprets how this theme demonstrates the type of denial and subtle and not-so-subtle aggression faced by anglers and prospective anglers who do not identify with the majority of fishers. Nevertheless, the focus groups and interviews were mainly positive and uplifting, supportive of the research purpose; there were, however, comments made during interviews, focus groups, and in the survey open-ended responses that suggested misogyny, racism, and homophobia were still present, including a few cases of internalized misogyny among women.

***Challenges and other relevant information***

The study faced various challenges, however, was overall successful in achieving the objectives. Reaching non-fishers and non-dominant community members was a more complex undertaking, but our study shows it is possible to talk to people about non-participation about complex topics such as race, gender, and sexuality. Future studies should keep in mind that gender was the easiest topic to discuss, and people were more hesitant to discuss race and sexuality.

#### 4. Management Recommendations:

Further recommendations are likely to be developed and refined pending completion of further analyses as part of the thesis. Based on the conversations with diverse groupings of fishers and non-fishers and the public survey findings, we recommend the following efforts to fisheries managers.

1. We proposed that speaking with fishers and non-fishers from all backgrounds, in addition to specifically targeting women, gender-diverse people, racialized communities, and people identifying as 2SLGBTQ+, was an important first step towards creating not only a sustainable fishery, but an equitable, diverse, and inclusive fishery. Therefore, we recommend continuing efforts to diversify feedback mechanisms to ensure diverse perceptions are heard, as non-fisher and diverse community feedback has shown to be insightful and useful to management practices. Future fisher engagement studies could utilize internal engagement tools or through further academic partnerships. As was the first study that included non-anglers in preference research and questions about diversity in the fishing community in the Omineca Region, we recommend Regional Fisheries managers continue to strengthen human dimensions of fisheries work, in collaboration with subject matter experts and incorporate the results within the Omineca's Fisheries Management approach.
2. We found it was valuable to speak with current dominant fishers to understand the current social context of the region. We learned that there are some fishers who think there is nothing that needs fixing and there are others who are actively working to reduce inequality related to recreational fishing. We recommend continuing to speak with the current community about EDI issues to increase inclusive practices. Consider completing a regional and/or BC-wide follow up assessment of non-angler preferences and diversity and inclusions and compare findings to this study. The current study could inform research strategies to better access non-anglers.
3. We heard from non-fishers that licencing requirements often deterred them from participating in fishing, claiming they found it inconvenient, or they had immigrated to Canada from a country that had different fishing licencing requirements, if any at all. Therefore, we recommend clarifying the licencing process. Potential ideas include placing QR codes on signage at lakes, or in stores that sell fishing gear, to licence sale websites (or apps) to reduce the inconvenience. We also heard from fishers that they most often purchased their fishing licence online, and non-fishers would like to purchase online because they did not know where else to purchase a licence. We recommend promoting online purchasing options for licences and increasing education on where people could go in-person to purchase fishing licences. If possible, create a one-stop shop (or app) with information on where to fish, how to fish, and how to buy license as easily as we buy other things online.

4. We heard from non-fishers that they wanted to see more programs aimed at adults, with better access to rental rod programs. We recommend providing access to affordable or subsidized fishing equipment and resources at places people go to without fishing, such as stores, provincial camp sites, or day-use areas. In addition, we recommend establishing more free fishing days for both adults (over 16 per fishing regulations) and children, such as Mother's Day or Family Day, to reduce this specific barrier to entry. Since the province already waives licencing requirements on Father's Day, we recommend exploring waiving requirements and other opportunities to exempt fishers for a day. The Province of Ontario does this already. Another idea from our participants were hosting themed days with more diverse advertising that is intentional and not performative, perhaps a Pride fishing day or other events created through a partnership with community groups.
5. We heard that from non-fishers that they did not know what type of fish they wanted to catch, where to catch them, and how to catch them. We recommend increasing public education on which lakes are stocked with what species and providing more learning opportunities or increasing public knowledge about the programs that already exist. We recommend increasing the public education about how the stocking programs and hatching programs are managed, how these programs conserve fish, and explore how the public could volunteer or be more involved in these processes. In addition, on-site and online (digital app and maps) could include conservation and interpretive media to help the public better understand hatcheries and conservation practices, such as on the FFSBC website or advertising this website more. Additionally, hosting local events at well-known places, and not just at rivers and lakes but public places such as museums or public libraries. The events could be about sharing tips and tricks about fishing, sharing fishing locations, knot tying class, understanding fishing basics, or other things like meet-and-greets that are not just about fishing. Ensure the events are open and advertised to both fishers and non-fishers to begin to build personal connections and develop confidence in non-fishers' knowledge and skills.
6. Non-fishers from all demographics in our study agreed that catching fish to eat was a critical part of the fishing experience, and more avid fishers were happy to catch and release' after catching their allowed limit. Respondents in general were fishing to "fill their freezers" as Carol (non-dominant fisher) said. We recommend promoting retention fisheries to non-fishers / new fishers, as we heard their interest in fishing for consumption. Along with this, recognizing and developing language around the ethics and reciprocity of consumption and commitments to conservation. 'Put-and-take fisheries,' stocked for retention/consumption, can be very environmentally ethical as they reduce pressure on wild fish stocks. Indigenous partners may be able to provide advice and guidance in helping develop such an ethic. While a difficult undertaking, creating a fishery that can support increased intake for sustenance fishing, not only for First Nations families, but also for the average recreational fisher. There appears to be opportunity to examine and integrate food benefits and ecological relationships of consumption as part of

- fishing benefits, factors in ecological conservation, and fisher's support for river and lakes, conservation, and resource management.
7. We heard from racialized communities that fishing as leisure is not high on the list of priorities for racialized and immigrant communities because they perceive there are more important or pressing things than going fishing, like working or pursuing their educational and career goals. Racialized community participants expressed the feeling that they do not have time for activities that do not feel productive to them. Momo stated how she felt her Chinese cultural background was a huge influence on the way she saw leisure, as well as her assumptions for other cultures *"[...] We feel like hard working is the first, the number one thing you need to do in your life. And to let- to gather rice, to get some rest, to have some fun. No, that's kinda like... you probably don't have to do that until you get retired. Yeah, so we don't really value those time. We don't really think that's necessary. And also, like, all these groups, like people with colors, we're kind of struggling for our life. Like, if you have like actual time, maybe we'll do like another part time work. Or maybe we have a lot of housework to do. And we just don't think like, oh, we need to leave some time for recreation."* While it is difficult to make a recommendation here as this statement generalizes a group of people with vastly differing lived experiences from each other, the key commonality is creating space for fishing feel like a productive and worthwhile activity for a variety of people. Catching fish in general, regardless of size, is likely a good way to get beginners 'hooked' on fishing. Consider advertising family-friendly or beginner food-fishery lakes, perhaps stocked with smaller easier-to-catch fish. This aligns with the recommended goal above of creating more sustenance-focused fisheries while also diverting pressure from wild lakes to stocked fisheries.
  8. We heard from women and racialized communities that the lack of representation of women and people from other cultures in fishing and fishing media can simply be enough to convince someone the fishing is not meant for them to participate in. We recommend continuing to focus on genuine and respectful representation of the diversity of who is fishing that is mindful of not using sexualization or tokenism.
  9. We heard from women that fishing is seen as a male-dominated social environment that can feel exclusive. There are also many women fishers who participate and love fishing for many reasons. We recommend promoting avid female fishers and continuing to represent and uplift women actively finding a place for themselves in a male dominated activity. This could include promoting women's fishing groups or other water-related sports, like kayaking or canoeing, which could be a gateway to more women fishing. Managers could partner with fishing clubs or other organizations that uplift women to create events or advertisements.
  10. We heard strongly that mentorship was a critical part of learning how to fish and introducing new fishers to the sport. While the sport is often passed from father to son, we heard many stories of people fishing with friends, neighbours, family, kids, students, colleagues. We recommend developing mentorship programs for new

fishers to help them learn to participate on their own and form their own fishing social groups.

11. We heard from our participants that creating partnerships with local diversity groups, clubs, international societies, etc., would be the best way to create more diverse interest in fishing. Recreational Angler Advisory committees should continue to include non-fishers' voices to build fisheries that attract new fishers as a result of incorporating their feedback and interests. This will help identify blind spots and pinch points that constrain or add friction to the processes, progressions, and choices of people entering and staying with fishing. Therefore, we recommend connecting with affinity groups to create local community connection events.
12. We heard from many non-fisher and fisher participants that licensing is difficult, not only do you need a fishing license, but multiple other licences (i.e., drivers, boaters) to potential get more satisfying experience. We recommend developing and promoting urban fishing opportunities provide more easy-access (i.e., via public transportation, cycling, walking) urban fisheries in communities in the Omineca Region where those do not already exist, that are accessible without car and a drivers' licence.

Our recommendations in this summary report provide a handful of potential pathways to creating a sustainable, equitable, and inclusive fishery, and highlight the importance of continued collaboration with underrepresented voices.

While anyone, any organization, and/or group associated with recreational fisheries in BC (or elsewhere) may implement any of our recommendation as they deem appropriate, the project team developed a Recommendations Table (below) to identify which partners in the context of recreational freshwater fisheries in BC could work together to implement our recommendations. Note, these suggestions are not idented to assign formal responsibilities of the identified parties. Check marks '✓' in the table indicate suggested level of involvement in implementation, where '✓✓✓' identifies suggested leading or co-leading organization(s), '✓✓' identifies key partners that should contribute, '✓' indicates partners who may wish to contribute, and the '-' indicates no direct involvement is suggested, while such involvement maybe relevant and is encouraged.

Recommendations Table

#	Brief of recommendation	Ministry Fisheries programs	FFSBC	Ministry IDEA team	BC Parks	Fishing clubs/groups	Local govt./ Tourism/ Fishing Guides	Under-represented group/organizations	Social Science Researchers
1	Diversify feedback mechanisms to ensure diverse perceptions are heard (target under-represented groups).	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓
2	Continue to engage community on DEI and conduct follow up studies in region or BC-wide.	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
3	Improve and simplify fishing licencing system and information on regulations.	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	-	-	-	✓✓	-
4	Provide additional free fishing days and learning programs for adults.	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓	-	-	-	✓	-

#	Brief of recommendation	Ministry Fisheries programs	FFSBC	Ministry IDEA team	BC Parks	Fishing clubs/groups	Local govt./ Tourism/ Fishing Guides	Under-represented group/organizations	Social Science Researchers
5	Increase public awareness on fisheries and stocking programs.	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	-
6	Provide and/or promote (stocked) retention fisheries to conserve wild stocks.	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-
7	Provide and promote easy-access (urban), family-friendly or beginner food-fishery lakes.	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	-
8	Ensure genuine and respectful representation of the diversity of who is fishing.	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
9	Support female fishers to be more represented - female-focussed fishing clubs/events/activities.	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	-

#	Brief of recommendation	Ministry Fisheries programs	FFSBC	Ministry IDEA team	BC Parks	Fishing clubs/groups	Local govt./ Tourism/ Fishing Guides	Under-represented group/organizations	Social Science Researchers
10	Develop mentorship programs for new anglers (bring anglers and new anglers together).	✓	✓✓✓	-	✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓	-
11	Recreational Angler Advisory committees to include non-angler voices/feedback opportunities.	✓✓✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	-
12	Develop and promote urban fishing opportunities (accessible without car/drivers' licence).	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	-

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**7. Appendix A: Focus Groups & Interviews Questionnaire**

FG1 – Recreational Fishing and Experiences of Gender

1. Could you provide a brief history of your fishing experiences?
  - a. What made the experience (insert word they use)?
  - b. If no: What other outdoor recreation activities have been/are you involved in? How do you think fishing compares to these?
  - c. If you do fish, how did you get into it and what helped?
2. What is your impression of who typically fishes?
  - a. What do they look like?
  - b. How do they behave?
  - c. Who else is with them, if anyone?
  - d. How does that idea of an “ideal angler” connect with deciding on how, where, and when you to go fishing, or not?
3. I’d like to discuss with you how you see gender at work within fishing.
  - a. If at all, in what ways has your gender identity, or a friend or family member’s identity, impacted your fishing experiences?
    - i. Limitations?
    - ii. Experienced prejudice, harassment, transphobia, sexism?
    - iii. Family life? Children?
    - iv. Work/life/leisure balance?
  - b. What do you think of the current level of representation of genders (women, transgender, intersex, and more) in recreational fishing media?
    - i. What about on TV, YouTube, Magazines, Social Media?
    - ii. Do you have any examples of good or bad representation to share?
4. When the Omineca Fisheries conducted creel surveys in 2021, they changed from assuming someone’s gender to participant self-identification. Between 10-20% of the participants expressed disapproval at being asked this question. What do you think of this? How does this make you feel?
5. What are some steps fisheries management could take to make recreational fishing more welcoming and satisfying for women and gender diverse people?
  - a. What are you and others already doing to have better fishing experiences?
  - b. If you were to go fishing, what would an ideal experience be for you? Who would be there, what would you do, what would it feel like?
6. Is there anything we have not talked about today that you would like to share?

## FG2 – Recreational Fishing and Experiences of Race

1. Could you provide a brief history of your fishing experiences?
  - a. What made the experience (insert word they use)?
  - b. If no: What other outdoor recreation activities have been/are you involved in? How do you think fishing compares to these?
  - c. If you do fish, how did you get into it and what helped?
2. What is your impression of who typically fishes?
  - a. What do they look like?
  - b. How do they behave?
  - c. Who else is with them, if anyone?
  - d. How does that idea of an “ideal angler” connect with deciding on how, where, and when you to go fishing, or not?
3. I’d like to discuss with you how you see race within fishing.
  - a. If at all, in what ways has your or a friend’s/family member’s ethnic, racial, or cultural identity impacted a fishing experience?
    - i. Limitations?
    - ii. Experienced prejudice?
    - iii. Family life? Children?
    - iv. Work/life/leisure balance?
  - b. What do you think of the current level of representation of Black, Indigenous, or People of Colour, or other racialized peoples, in recreational fishing media?
    - i. What about on TV, YouTube, Magazines, Social Media?
    - ii. Do you have any examples of good or bad representation to share?
4. Black, Indigenous, and other racialized people are shown in previous research to participate less than white people in outdoor recreation for leisure purposes; but there is a growing number of organizations working towards a more diverse outdoors. What do you think of this? How does this make you feel?
5. What are some steps fisheries management could take to make recreational fishing more welcoming and satisfying for Black, Indigenous, or other racialized people?
  - a. What are you and others already doing to have better fishing experiences?
  - b. If you were to go fishing, what would an ideal experience be for you? Who would be there, what would you do, what would it feel like?
6. Is there anything we have not talked about today that you would like to share?

## FG3 – Recreational Fishing and Experiences of Sexualities

1. Could you provide a brief history of your fishing experiences?
  - a. What made the experience (insert word they use)?
  - b. If no: What other outdoor recreation activities have been/are you involved in? How do you think fishing compares to these?
  - c. If you do fish, how did you get into it and what helped?
2. What is your impression of who typically fishes?
  - a. What do they look like?
  - b. How do they behave?
  - c. Who else is with them, if anyone?
  - d. How does that idea of an “ideal angler” connect with deciding on how, where, and when you to go fishing, or not?
7. I’d like to discuss with you how you see sexuality within fishing.
  - a. If at all, in what ways has your or a friend’s sexuality impacted a fishing experience?
    - i. Limitations?
    - ii. Experienced prejudice, or homophobia?
    - iii. Family life? Children?
    - iv. Work/life/leisure balance?
  - b. What do you think of the current level of representation of Two Spirit, Lesbian Gay, Bisexual, Asexual, and more, in recreational fishing media?
    - i. What about on TV, YouTube, Magazines, Social Media?
    - ii. Do you have any examples of good or bad representation to share?
3. Recognizing that gender, sex, and sexuality are different, there is literature that suggests that the 2SLGBTQIA+ community is often not represented as participating as often in the outdoors, but there is a growing community on social media trying to increase the number of LGBTQ people participating in outdoor recreation. What do you think of this? How does this make you feel?
4. What are some steps fisheries management could take to make recreational fishing more welcoming and satisfying for people who are part of 2SLGBTQIA+?
  - a. What are you and others already doing to have better fishing experiences?
  - b. If you were to go fishing, what would an ideal experience be for you? Who would be there, what would you do, what would it feel like?
5. Is there anything we have not talked about today that you would like to share?

## 8. Appendix B: Survey Streams

Thank you for taking the time to participate in our survey.

Your responses will help us understand and manage opportunities for recreational fishing in the Omineca Region of British Columbia. We are particularly interested making participation welcoming and enjoyable for all British Columbians, including for people who already fish, or who might want to take up the activity.

The questions focus first on demographics, licensing, and fishing experience, then on the role of trip planning and equipment, as well as satisfaction, drivers, and constraints to participation. Then, we focus in on equity, diversity, and inclusion and how a person's identity may influence their experiences fishing, or desire to go fishing. Your perspective is very helpful even if you don't fish, or don't fish often.

There are 35 questions, and the survey should take approximately 25 minutes to complete. All responses will remain confidential and anonymous, and responses cannot be linked back to you personally.

If you have any questions or concerns about this survey, please contact [woskett@unbc.ca](mailto:woskett@unbc.ca) or supervisors Dr. Mullins or Dr. Wigglesworth at [philip.mullins@unbc.ca](mailto:philip.mullins@unbc.ca) or [jennifer.wigglesworth@unbc.ca](mailto:jennifer.wigglesworth@unbc.ca).

Select your approximate location on the map: (optional)

\* I consent to my responses being collected anonymously

- Yes I consent
- No I do not consent

### Demographics

This section has confidential questions about your age, employment, level of education, approximate income, and how you identify in terms of gender, race or ethnicity, sexuality, and disability. Collecting this information will help us understand and address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion within recreational fisheries.

1. What is your age?

- Under 18
- 18-24 years old
- 25-34 years old
- 35-44 years old
- 45-54 years old
- 55-64 years old
- 65-74 years old
- 75 years or older

Prefer not to answer

2. What is your current occupation?

3. What is the highest level of school you have completed?

- Less than high school graduation
- Graduated high school or equivalent
- Some college or university, no degree or diploma
- Trades/technical/vocational diploma or certification
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral Degree
- Other (please specify)

4. What is your approximate total annual household income in Canadian dollars?

- Under \$10,000
- \$10,000 to \$24,999
- \$25,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$74,999
- \$75,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to \$149,999
- \$150,000 and greater
- Prefer not to answer

5. What is your gender? (Select all that apply.)

- Boy / Man
- Girl / Woman
- Genderqueer
- Transgender
- Third gender
- Gender neutral
- Cisgender
- Two-Spirit
- Agender
- Bigender
- Non-binary
- Gender fluid
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please specify)

6. What is your sexual orientation? (Select all that apply.)

- Two-Spirit
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Lesbian
- Asexual
- Queer
- Straight
- Prefer not to answer
- Other (please specify)

7. With which race/ethnicity do you identify? (Select all that apply.)

- Métis
- First Nations
- Inuit
- Arab
- Black
- Chinese
- Filipino
- Japanese
- Korean
- Latin American
- South Asian (e.g., Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan etc.)
- Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Malaysian, Laotian etc.)
- West Asian (e.g. Iranian, Afghan etc.)
- White
- Prefer not to answer
- Other (please specify)

8. Are you a person with disabilities?

- No
- Prefer not to answer
- Yes (If yes, please tell us about your disability.)

### **Licensing**

For the purposes of our study, a fisher is someone who has purchased a recreational fishing licence in the last 3 years, or who is exempt (i.e., is not required by law to have a license) but regularly fishes. A non-fisher is someone who has not purchased a licence in the last 3 years, and who does not regularly fish. This categorization allows us to compare diversity among fishers and non-fishers, and to learn about their experiences, representation, and preferences.

9. Have you gone fishing in the Omineca Region before?

- Yes
- No

\*10. Have you purchased a BC recreational freshwater fishing licence in the past 3 years (2020-2023)?

- Yes
- No
- No – I'm First Nation (exempt, but I still fish recreationally in the Omineca Region)
- No – I am under 16 (I am exempt, but I still fish recreationally in the Omineca Region).

## Questionnaire for Fishers

For the purposes of this study, we are considering you a “fisher” since you have purchased a fishing licence within 3 years or are exempt but still fish recreationally.

11. Why did you buy a fishing licence? If exempt, why do you fish? (Drag the boxes below to rank them from 1 – 8, with 1 being the most important to you and 8 being the least important.)

- To go on a fishing trip
- To fish with friends or family
- To fish alone
- To catch fish for food
- To catch fish for fun
- To be outdoors
- To support conservation
- To have an adventure

12. Which BC recreational fishing licence did you purchase most recently?

- Annual Angling Licence
- One Day Angling Licence
- Eight Day Angling Licence
- Annual Licence for Residents with Disabilities
- None – Under 16
- None – I’m Indigenous
- None – I have never purchased one
- I don’t know, someone else bought it for me

13. Where do you purchase your fishing license?

- Online from Freshwater Fishing E-Licensing
- At a local convenience store of some sort in my town
- At a local convenience store of some sort close to my fishing destination
- At a local fishing store or outfitter in my town
- At a fishing store or outfitter close to my fishing destination
- At a national chain or big box store in my town
- At a national chain or big box store close to my fishing destination
- I would not purchase a license
- I am exempt from having to buy a license
- I’m not the person who would buy my fishing license; my friend, partner, or guide would do that.
- I don't know

14. When do you typically purchase a fishing licence?

- Summer/Open Water (May to October)
- Winter/Ice Fishing (November to April)
- I don't know
- No preference
- I'm exempt from having to buy a license

15. What do you think is a reasonable cost for a basic annual fishing licence?

- \$0
- \$1 to \$15
- \$16 to \$30
- \$31 to \$45
- \$46 to \$60
- \$61 to \$75
- \$76 to \$95
- \$96 or more
- I don't know

### **Fishing Experience**

This section asks about your fishing experiences to understand your involvement in the fishing community.

16. What is your skill level in fishing?

- Beginner
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Expert

17. On a scale of 1 to 5, how satisfied are you with your fishing experiences in the Omineca Region?

18. Name up to three lakes or rivers in the Omineca Region you like to visit, whether for fishing or not.

19. Estimate how many days per year you spend fishing. (Use the slider to select or type a number between 0-365 in the textbox.)

20. Which season do you prefer to fish in?

- Summer / Open Water Fishing (May to October)
- Winter / Ice Fishing (November to April)

- Both Summer and Winter

21. What species of fish are you fishing for? (Select all that apply.)

- Burbot (lingcod)
- Brook trout
- Arctic grayling
- Rainbow trout
- Bull trout (Dolly Varden)
- Lake trout
- Kokanee
- Whitefish
- I don't know
- Other (please specify)
- No specific species

22. Who do you usually fish with? (Drag the boxes below to rank them from 1 – 8, with 1 being the most usual and 8 being the least usual.)

- By myself
- With spouse or partner(s)
- With my own or loved ones' children
- With my guardians, parents, or grandparents
- With my everyday friends
- With my fishing friends
- With my coworkers
- With extended members of my family

23. How do you typically get to a fishing spot? You may use multiple vehicles to get to the lake or river. (Drag the boxes to rank from 1-9, with 1 being used most typically/often and 9 being least often or never used.)

- All-terrain vehicle ATV (Four Wheeler/Quad)
- Utility task vehicle UTV (SxS/Side-by-side)
- Driving a vehicle (car/truck/SUV)
- Flying in
- Hiking or walking in
- Kayaking or Canoeing
- Boat (motorized)
- Public transit
- Snowmobile

### **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

This section's questions are about the topics of equity, diversity, and inclusion in

recreational fishing, starting with general questions about inclusion followed by specific questions on race, gender, and sexuality.

24a. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Please select one option per row. The scale ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

I feel represented within the fishing community  
I believe fishing is accessible to all people  
I feel welcomed in the fishing community  
I feel safe in the fishing community  
I feel connected to the fishing community  
I feel the fishing community reflects the diversity of the population of the Omineca Region  
I feel it is possible for anyone to progress in fishing  
I feel fishing is a socially inclusive activity  
I find it difficult to find friends to go fishing with  
I find it difficult to find people like me that are fishing  
I feel social media (Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, etc) about fishing showcases diversity  
I feel current media (magazines, television, etc) about fishing showcases diversity  
I feel stores that sell fishing equipment showcases diversity  
I would be more satisfied while fishing if it was a more welcoming space  
I think the fishing community is socially diverse

24b. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about fishing and race? Please select one option per row. The scale ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

I find people of all racial backgrounds are well represented in the fishing community  
I feel inspired to fish when I learn about people from racialized backgrounds fishing  
While fishing, I have been discriminated against because of my racial background  
While fishing, I have witnessed racism  
While fishing, I have experienced racism  
While fishing, I have heard derogatory language towards racialized or minority communities

24c. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about fishing and sexuality? Please select one option per row. The scale ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

I find people of all sexualities are well-represented in the fishing community  
I am inspired to fish when I learn about people from the 2SLGBTQ+ community fishing  
While fishing, I have been discriminated against because of my sexuality  
While fishing, I feel comfortable sharing my sexuality  
While fishing, I have witnessed homophobia

While fishing, I have experienced hate related to my own sexuality  
While fishing, I have heard derogatory language towards people from the 2SLGBTQ+ community

24d. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about fishing and gender? Please select one option per row. The scale ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

I find people of all genders are well-represented in the fishing community  
I feel inspired to fish when I hear about women fishing  
I feel inspired to fish when I hear about men fishing  
I feel inspired to fish when I hear about gender diverse people fishing  
While fishing, I have felt discriminated against because of my gender identity  
While fishing, I have witnessed gendered discrimination  
While fishing, I have experienced gendered discrimination

### **Trip Planning**

Planning a fishing trip, whether for an afternoon, a whole day, or longer can be an important part of the fishing experience. These questions ask about your preferences and priorities when trip planning. Note: A "stocked" lake or river refers to the fisheries management practice of raising specific species of fish in hatcheries and releasing them into certain waterbodies for recreational fishing purposes. A "wild" or "not-stocked" lake or river does not have hatchery-raised fish released. The BC fishing regulations specify which waterbodies are stocked or not, and you can find more information on the Stocking Program from Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC at <https://www.gofishbc.com>

25a. How important are the following factors for you when planning to go fishing? Please select one option per row. The scale ranges from not at all important (1) to extremely important (5).

Outhouses  
Washroom with running water  
Barbeques  
Cell phone service  
Campsites  
Dock  
Fish cleaning station  
Physical accessibility of the site  
Signage at the site  
Lighting or a well-lit area

25b. How important are the following factors to you when planning to go fishing? Please select one option per row. The scale ranges from not at all important (1) to extremely important (5).

Beauty of scenery  
Getting time off from work  
Availability of friends  
Availability of family  
Avoiding crowds  
Seeing people like me out fishing  
Teaching others to fish  
Improving my fishing skill  
Distance from home to the lake/river  
Ease of access to the lake/river  
Going to a stocked lake  
Going to a wild (not stocked) lake  
The cost of gasoline/fuel  
Finding information about the fishing site  
Cost of a fishing guide

\* 26. What are three reasons you would NOT go on a fishing trip? (You may select up to three.)

- Working
- Travel costs
- Skill differences between me and others
- Feel unsafe in nature
- Feel unsafe from other people
- Feel unwelcome
- Bad weather
- Knowledge differences
- Unsure of fishing regulations
- Concerned about conservation
- None of the above
- Other (please specify)

\* 27. What other activities do you already do outdoors? (You may select up to three.)  
ATV/off road

- Boating (motorized)
- Camping
- Canoeing
- Cycling / Mountain biking
- Foraging/gathering
- Hiking
- Hunting
- Kayaking
- Swimming
- Wildlife viewing

- None of the above
- Other (please specify)

### **Equipment**

This section is about your knowledge and access to fishing equipment

28. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about equipment? Please select one option per row. The scale ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

- I have the fishing equipment needed to go fishing
- I have easy access to fishing equipment
- I know what equipment I need to go fishing
- I have someone in my life who could teach me about equipment
- I know how to use equipment effectively
- I am satisfied with the quality of my fishing equipment
- I wish I had better fishing gear/equipment
- I know where to buy equipment
- I can borrow fishing equipment
- I think the equipment required to go fishing is too expensive
- I can afford the equipment I need for a satisfying fishing experience

29. What type of equipment, gear, and/or vehicles do you need for a satisfying trip, and why these?

### **Preferences, Drivers, and Constraints**

These questions ask what would encourage or discourage you from fishing.

30a. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about fishing experiences? Please select one option per row. The scale ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

- I fish to feed my family
- I fish to feed myself
- I want to catch my allowed limit of fish per the regulations
- I want to catch a lot of fish
- I want to catch big fish
- I fish for cultural or traditional purposes

30b. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about fishing preferences? Please select one option per row. The scale ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

- I prefer to keep and eat fish
- I prefer to catch and release fish

- I prefer to fish with family and friends
- I prefer to fish alone
- I prefer to fish from the shoreline
- I prefer to fish from watercraft such as a boat, kayak, or canoe
- I prefer to fish at stocked lakes
- I prefer to fish for wild fish in lakes
- I prefer to fish for wild fish in rivers
- I go fishing to feel relaxed
- I go fishing to feel excited
- I prefer fish that are challenging to catch

30c. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about fishing constraints or limitations? Please select one option per row. The scale ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

- I have enough money to go fishing
- I feel confident in my fishing skills
- I have people to go fishing with
- I find it difficult to find the time to go fishing
- I would fish to feel some escape from my daily routine
- I feel like I belong in the outdoors
- My job prevents me from fishing
- My family duties prevent me from fishing
- I feel supported by the fishing community

30c. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about fisheries management? Please select one option per row. The scale ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

- I understand the BC fishing regulations
- I follow the BC fishing regulations
- I follow cultural or traditional methods of fishing
- The regulations prevent me from fishing
- I want to see the fishing regulations written in my first language
- I know how to buy a fishing licence
- I would feel safe if approached by a Conservation Officer while fishing
- I feel the regulations are enforced fairly
- I would review the specific regulations for my fishing spot before going fishing

31. Why do you fish? (Drag the boxes to rank from 1 – 11 with 1 being most preferred and 11 being least preferred.)

- To find companionship
- To be challenged

- To improve skills
- To brings friends together
- To get away
- To be close to nature
- To catch fish for eating
- To relax
- To catch large fish
- To bring family closer together
- To catch many fish

32. What motivates you to go fishing?

33. Describe your ideal fishing experience.

34. If you know any, please provide the names of some recreational community organizations, social media pages, or other programs that support diverse experiences.

35. What could Omineca recreational fisheries management do to make fishing more welcoming?

36. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about fisheries management?

## Questionnaire for Non-fishers

For the purposes of this study, we are considering you a “non-fisher” since you have NOT purchased a fishing licence within 3 years.

11. If you were to purchase a licence in the future, what would your main reasons be? (Drag the boxes to rank from 1 – 8, with 1 being the most important and 8 being the least important.)

- To go on a fishing trip
- To fish with friends or family
- To fish alone
- To catch fish for food
- To catch fish for fun
- To be outdoors
- To support conservation
- To have an adventure

12. If you have ever purchased a license in the past, which BC recreational fishing licence did you purchase?

- Annual Angling Licence
- One Day Angling Licence
- Eight Day Angling Licence
- Annual Licence for Residents with Disabilities
- None – Under 16
- None – I’m Indigenous
- None - I have never purchased one
- I don’t know, someone else bought it for me

13. Where would you likely purchase your fishing licence?

- Online from Freshwater Fishing E-Licensing
- At a local convenience store of some sort in my town
- At a local convenience store of some sort close to my fishing destination
- At a local fishing store or outfitter in my town
- At a fishing store or outfitter close to my fishing destination
- At a national chain or big box store in my town
- At a national chain or big box store close to my fishing destination
- I would not purchase a license
- I’m exempt from having to buy a license
- I’m not the person who would buy my fishing license, my friend, partner, or guide would do that.
- I don't know

14. What time of year would you most likely consider purchasing a fishing licence?

- Summer/Open Water (May to October)
- Winter/Ice Fishing (November to April)
- I don't know
- No preference

15. What do you think is a reasonable cost for a basic annual fishing licence?

- \$0
- \$1 to \$15
- \$16 to \$30
- \$31 to \$45
- \$46 to \$60
- \$61 to \$75
- \$76 to \$95
- \$96 or more
- I don't know

### **Fishing Experience**

This section concerns your past and possible future fishing experiences to understand your involvement in the fishing community.

16. What is your skill level in fishing?

- Never been fishing
- Beginner
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Expert

17. On a scale of 1 to 5, how interested would you be in fishing in the Omineca Region?

18. Name up to three lakes or rivers in the Omineca Region you like to visit.

19. If you were to purchase a licence, how many days would you expect to fish in a year? (Use the slider to select or type a number between 0-365 in the textbox.)

20. If you were to fish, which season would you prefer to fish in?

- Summer / Open Water Fishing (May to October)
- Winter / Ice Fishing (November to April)
- Both Summer and Winter
- None of the above

21. What species of fish would you fish for? (Select all that apply.)

- Burbot (lingcod)
- Brook trout
- Arctic grayling
- Rainbow trout
- Bull trout (Dolly Varden)
- Lake trout
- Kokanee
- Whitefish
- I don't know
- Other (please specify)
- No specific species

22. Who would you most likely go fishing with? (Drag the boxes to rank from 1 through 8, with 1 being the most likely and 8 being the least likely.)

- By myself
- With spouse or partner(s)
- With my own or loved ones' children
- With my guardians, parents, or grandparents
- With my everyday friends
- With my fishing friends
- With my coworkers
- With extended members of my family

23. How would you expect to get to a fishing spot? You may use multiple vehicles to get to the lake or river. (Drag the boxes to rank from 1-9, with 1 being used most likely and 9 being least likely.)

- All-terrain vehicle ATV (Four Wheeler/Quad)
- Utility task vehicle UTV (SxS/Side-by-side)
- Driving a vehicle (car/truck/SUV)
- Flying in
- Hiking or walking in
- Kayaking or Canoeing
- Boat (motorized)
- Public transit
- Snowmobile

### **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

This section focuses on your perception of equity, diversity, and inclusion in recreational fishing (even if you don't fish), starting generally and moving to more specific questions about race, gender, and sexuality.

24a. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Please select one option per row. The scale ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

- I want to feel represented within the fishing community
- I think fishing is accessible to all people
- I want to feel welcomed in the fishing community
- I want to feel safe in the fishing community
- If I went fishing, I would want to feel connected to the fishing community
- I feel the current fishing community reflects the diversity of the Omineca Region
- I think it is possible for anyone to progress in fishing
- I think that fishing is a socially inclusive activity
- I think it would be difficult to find friends to go fishing with
- I think it would be difficult to find people like me that are fishing
- I feel social media (Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, etc) about fishing showcases diversity
- I feel current media (magazines, television, etc) about fishing showcases diversity
- I feel stores that sell fishing equipment showcases diversity
- I would be more likely to go fishing if it were a more welcoming space
- I think the fishing community is socially diverse

24b. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about fishing and race? Please select one option per row. The scale ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

- I think people of all racial backgrounds are well-represented in the fishing community
- I would be inspired to fish if I heard about people from racialized backgrounds fishing
- If I went fishing, I think I would be discriminated against because of my racial background
- If I went fishing, I think I would witness racism
- If I went fishing, I think I would experience racism
- If I went fishing, I think I would hear derogatory language towards racialized or minority communities

24c. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about fishing and sexuality? Please select one option per row. The scale ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

- I think that people of all sexualities are well-represented in the fishing community
- I would be inspired to fish if I heard about people from the 2SLGBTQ+ community fishing
- If I went fishing, I think I would be discriminated against because of my sexuality
- If I went fishing, I think I would feel comfortable sharing my sexuality with others

If I went fishing, I think I would witness homophobia  
If I went fishing, I think I would experience hate related to my own sexuality  
If I went fishing, I think I would hear derogatory language towards people from the 2SLGBTQ+ community

24d. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about fishing and gender? Please select one option per row. The scale ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

I think that people of all genders are well-represented in the fishing community  
I would feel inspired to go fishing if I heard about women fishing  
I would feel inspired to go fishing if I heard about men fishing  
I would feel inspired to go fishing if I heard about gender diverse people fishing  
If I went fishing, I think I would feel discriminated against because of my gender identity  
If I went fishing, I think I would witness gendered discrimination  
If I went fishing, I think I would experience gendered discrimination

### **Trip Planning**

Planning a fishing trip, whether for an afternoon, a whole day, or longer can be an important part of the fishing experience. These questions ask about your preferences and priorities if you were to plan a fishing trip. Note: A "stocked" lake or river refers to the fisheries management practice of raising specific species of fish in hatcheries and releasing them into certain waterbodies for recreational fishing purposes. A "wild" or "not-stocked" lake or river does not have hatchery-raised fish released. The BC fishing regulations specify which waterbodies are stocked or not, and you can find more information on the Stocking Program from Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC at <https://www.gofishbc.com>

25a. If you were planning on where to go fishing, how important would the following factors be to you? Please select one option per row. The scale is from not at all important (1) to extremely important (5).

Boat launch  
Outhouses  
Washroom with running water  
Picnic tables  
Barbeques  
Cell phone service  
Campsites  
Dock  
Fish cleaning station  
Physical accessibility of sites  
Signage at the site  
Lighting or a well-lit area

25b. If you were planning on where to go fishing, how important would the following factors be to you? Please select one option per row. The scale is from not at all important (1) to extremely important (5).

Beauty of scenery  
Getting time off from work  
Availability of friends  
Availability of family  
Avoiding crowds  
Seeing people like me out fishing  
Teaching others to fish  
Improving my fishing skill  
Distance from home to the lake/river  
Ease of access to the lake/river  
Going to a stocked lake  
Going to a wild (not stocked) lake  
The cost of gasoline/fuel  
Finding information about the fishing site  
Cost of a fishing guide

\* 26. What are three reasons you would NOT go on a fishing trip? (You may select up to three.)

- Working
- Travel costs
- Skill differences between me and others
- Feel unsafe in nature
- Feel unsafe from other people
- Feel unwelcome
- Bad weather
- Knowledge differences
- Unsure of fishing regulations
- Concerned about conservation
- None of the above
- Other (please specify)

\* 27. What other activities do you already do outdoors? (You may select up to three.)

- ATV/off road
- Boating (motorized)
- Camping
- Canoeing
- Cycling / Mountain biking
- Foraging/gathering
- Hiking

- Hunting
- Kayaking
- Swimming
- Wildlife viewing
- None of the above
- Other (please specify)

### **Equipment**

This section is about your knowledge and access to fishing equipment.

28. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about fishing gear or equipment? Please select one option per row. The scale is from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

- I have the fishing equipment needed to go fishing
- I would have easy access to fishing equipment
- I know what equipment I need to go fishing
- I have someone in my life who could teach me about equipment
- I know how to use fishing equipment effectively
- I am satisfied with the quality of my fishing equipment
- I wish I had better fishing gear/equipment
- I know where to buy fishing equipment
- I could borrow fishing equipment
- I think the equipment required to go fishing is too expensive
- I could afford the equipment I need for a satisfying fishing experience

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### **Preferences, Drivers, and Constraints**

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- I would fish for cultural or traditional purposes

30b. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about fishing preferences? Please select one option per row. The scale ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

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- I would prefer to catch and release fish
- I would prefer to fish with family and friends
- I would prefer to fish alone
- I would prefer to fish from the shoreline
- I would prefer to fish from watercraft such as a boat, kayak, or canoe
- I would prefer to fish at stocked lakes
- I would prefer to fish for wild fish in lakes
- I would prefer to fish for wild fish in rivers
- I would go fishing to feel relaxed
- I would go fishing to feel excited
- I would prefer fish that are challenging to catch

30c. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about fishing constraints or limitations? Please select one option per row. The scale ranges from strongly disagree

(1) to strongly agree (5).

- I have enough money to go fishing
- I feel confident in my fishing skills
- I have people to go fishing with
- I find it difficult to find the time to go fishing
- I would fish as an escape from my daily routine
- I feel like I belong in the outdoors
- My job prevents me from fishing
- My family duties prevent me from fishing
- I would feel like I was supported by the fishing community

30d. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about fisheries management? Please select one option per row. The scale ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

- I understand the BC fishing regulations
- I would follow the BC fishing regulations
- I would follow my cultural or traditional methods of fishing
- The regulations prevent me from fishing
- I want to see the fishing regulations written in my first language
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31. Why would you want to fish? (Drag the boxes to rank from 1 – 11 with 1 being most preferred and 11 being least preferred.)

- To find companionship
- To be challenged
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- To brings friends together
- To get away
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36. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about fisheries management?