

Summary of Recent US Polling Results on Aquatic Animal Welfare

A recent survey by Compassion in World Farming and Eurogroup for Animals reveals that 78% of Americans support better protection for farmed fish. The poll highlights that 64% believe fish can feel pain, and 60% back legislation requiring stunning before slaughter. Additionally, 70% of respondents prefer to buy fish raised in better welfare conditions, while 49% want clear welfare labeling on fish products. However, 58% of participants showed low awareness of current fish farming practices, underscoring the need for greater transparency and education.

Survey Overview:

- Conducted by Sapience for Compassion in World Farming and Eurogroup for Animals.
- Sample size: 1,053 adults (weighted to 1,025).
- Survey period: March 20 to April 5, 2024.

Key Findings:

1. High Support for Fish Welfare:

- a. 78% of Americans want better protection for farmed fish.
- b. 64% believe fish can feel pain, indicating a strong recognition of fish sentience.

2. Legislative Support:

- a. 60% support legislation requiring stunning before slaughter of aquatic animals, reflecting a demand for more humane practices in fish farming.

3. Consumer Preferences:

- a. 70% of respondents prefer to buy fish raised in better welfare conditions.
- b. 49% want clear welfare labeling on fish products, showing a desire for transparency in how fish are reared and killed.

4. Awareness of Fish Farming Practices:

- a. 58% of respondents showed low awareness of current fish farming practices.
- b. Only 19% knew that most farmed salmon are deaf due to intensive breeding practices.
- c. Other significant gaps in awareness include:
 - i. 72% were unaware that most farmed fish are not stunned before slaughter.
 - ii. 67% were unaware of the high mortality rates during rearing.
 - iii. 65% were unaware that fish spend 2-5 years growing on farms.
 - iv. 70% were unaware that wild-caught fish are common in farmed fish feeds.

5. Public Funding and Transparency:

- a. 85% believe there should be public records on how funds are used in aquaculture.
- b. 78% think funds should support farms ensuring high animal welfare.
- c. 73% think funds should support sustainable farms.

6. Consumer Impact on Purchasing Decisions:

- a. 54% say fish welfare impacts their choice of which fish to buy.
- b. 60% consider the environmental impact of the fishing or farming method.
- c. 58% consider whether the species is being overfished.
- d. 86% consider the freshness of the fish.
- e. 88% consider the quality of the fish.

Summary of Previous Poll Results Not Conducted by CIWF:

1. 2018 Study on Humane Harvesting:

- a. Consumers prefer humanely harvested fish, perceiving them as higher quality and better tasting.
- b. There is a gap between consumer perception and reality regarding humane practices in certification programs.

2. 2020 Global Seafood Consumer Survey:

- a. Consumers are increasingly concerned about climate change and pollution.
- b. 65% believe fish consumption should come from sustainable sources.
- c. 56% are willing to pay more for sustainably sourced seafood.

3. 2021 Survey on Seafood Purchasing Behavior Post-COVID:

- a. Seafood consumption remained largely the same post-COVID.
- b. 31% reduced intake due to cost, preparation difficulties, or personal preferences.
- c. 19% increased seafood consumption for health reasons.
- d. Shift towards eating more seafood at home.

4. 2024 Global Survey by Marine Stewardship Council:

- a. 91% of American seafood consumers express concern about environmental issues, up from 82% in 2022.
- b. 34% of respondents altered their diets due to environmental concerns.
- c. 19% are willing to consume more seafood if it does not harm the ocean.
- d. Climate change is the top environmental concern, followed by pollution and deforestation.