# Long Island Sound 2024 Public Perceptions Research Study Regionwide Survey & Focus Groups

# **Survey Questionnaire**









Note: Subheads, question numbers, input numbers, and italicized text did not appear to respondents. Answer scales throughout the questionnaire were randomly presented in reverse order about half the time to reduce the influence of order bias.

# Introduction and Screening

S1. In what state do you live?

Connecticut	52%
New York	100/2

S2. In what county do you live? (Sample was stratified to provide a significant number of interviews in five regions of the watershed; additional population weights will be applied to bring the Sound-wide results into proper balance.)

#### Connecticut

Fairfield	18%
Hartford	23%
Litchfield	7%
Middlesex	14%
New Haven	
New London	6%
Tolland	3%
Windham	3%
New York	400/
Bronx	
Columbia	*%
Nassau	
Queens	
Suffolk	
Westchester	
Sampling region of the respondent	

 Region 1 (Upland CT)
 19%

 Region 2 (Coastal CT)
 33%

 Region 3 (Westchester+, NY)
 8%

 Region 4 (Bronx + Queens, NY)
 28%

 Region 5 (Nassau + Suffolk, NY
 11%

- S3. What is your zip code at home? (See data file.)
- S4. What is your age? (Number box for exact age. Categories have been created.)

Less than 25	13%
25 to 34	17%
35 to 44	
45 to 54	17%
55 to 64	17%
65 or more	21%





#### Relationship with the Outdoors

1. How often do you do any of these things?

(Randomize list):

- A. Go fishing or shellfishing
- B. Canoe, kayak, or paddleboard
- C. Powerboat or sail
- D. Swim or wade in natural waters (not a pool)
- E. Hike or walk near the water
- F. Birdwatch or observe other wildlife

(New screen; show any activities from Q1A-F that were marked frequently or occasionally plus a text box for other):

1G.Do you do any of those activities on Long Island Sound or in the harbors, bays, rivers, streams, or coastlines near Long Island Sound?

(Phone: If yes): Which ones? (Pause. Do not read list unless needed.)

(Online): Mark which ones, if any.

	Α	В	С	D	Е	F
Frequently	10%	6%	6%	14%	28%	22%
Occasionally	19%	17%	12%	33%	38%	32%
Top 2 (Frequently + Occasionally)	29%	23%	17%	46%	66%	54%
On/Near Long Island Sound (Q1G)	22%	16%	13%	32%	46%	35%
Rarely	23%	23%	22%	27%	19%	21%
Never	46%	52%	59%	26%	14%	23%
Not Sure	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%

1H. Do you do any other activities on Long Island Sound or in the harbors, bays, rivers, streams, or coastlines near Long Island Sound? (Open-ended; categorized responses.)

Take walks/ Exercise	26%
Go to the beach/ different bodies of water	17%
Enjoy the water and nature/ Relax or meditate	13%
Picnic/ Barbecue/ Gather with friends or family	9%
Go to local restaurants and stores	9%
Boating	7%
Swim/ Go in the water	7%
Camping and hiking	6%
Fishing/Crabbing/Clamming	5%
Go to different attractions or events	4%
Photograph the fish and wildlife	2%
Mentions specific location	2%
Hunting	1%
Other	5%





2. Do you feel like you have convenient access to Long Island Sound or other waters near you?

Yes	68%
No	21%
Not sure	11%

3. When you think about all the other things you could be doing with your time, how important is it to you to have convenient access to the water for outdoor activities?

Very important	31%
Somewhat important	29%
Top 2 (Very + Somewhat important)	
Neutral	23%
Somewhat unimportant	9%
Very unimportant	
Bottom 2 (Very + Somewhat unimportant)	

4. If you are in parks or on trails near the water, do you feel welcome and a sense of belonging there?

Always	36%
Usually	41%
Top 2 (Always + usually)	77%
Only sometimes	
Never	
Bottom 2 (Sometimes + Never)	
Not sure	3%
Don't go to those places	5%

(If never or only sometimes):

4A. Please briefly describe why you said you {drop in Q4 response: never/only sometimes} feel welcome and a sense of belonging in parks or on trails near the water? (Open-ended. Categorized responses. See verbatim responses..)

I just do not like parks	15%
It is not accessible to me	14%
Depends on my mood/Personal issues with parks	12%
The parks feel like they are private or for residents only/I don't know anyone.	12%
They are not safe/clean	12%
The people there are not welcoming	11%
The parks are too crowded	8%
Because of the weather	7%
Racism/Prejudice	4%
Other	10%





(All):

5. Can you picture in your mind a stream, river, bay, or coastline close to where you live? (Online, continue with): If yes, what is its name? (Phone: Pause; if yes, continue with): What is its name?

Yes, I can picture it, and this is its name	46%
Yes, I can picture it; but I do not know its name	28%
Yes, I can picture it; but it is too small to have a name	6%
Total Yes	81%
No, I cannot picture it	14%
Not sure	6%

6. If you were to consider all the issues and challenges facing this area today, where would protecting the natural environment rank on that priority list for you?

At the top	27%
Above average	
Top 2 (At the top + Above average)	
In the middle of the pack	
Below average	
At the bottom	
Bottom 2 (Below average + At the bottom)	8%
Not sure	5%

# Relationship with the Sound

8. As far as you know, do you live in the Long Island Sound watershed?

Yes, definitely	14%
Yes, maybe	19%
No, maybe not	15%
No, definitely not	31%
Total No	
I have no idea	22%

9. What three adjectives first come to your mind when you think about Long Island Sound? (3 text boxes; see verbatim responses.)





- 10. Do you agree or disagree with these statements about Long Island Sound?
  - A. Long Island Sound has a positive economic impact on our region.
  - B. Long Island Sound provides recreational opportunities for people like me.
  - C. Long Island Sound is a national treasure.
  - E. Being near Long Island Sound makes me feel peaceful and happier.
  - F. I care about Long Island Sound.
  - G. I care about the river, stream, or coastline (including local beach, bay, harbor, or cove) closest to where I live.
  - H. I know what I can do to help improve the health of the Sound.

	Α	В	С	E	F	G	Н
Strongly agree	28%	31%	33%	33%	40%	47%	13%
Somewhat agree	29%	30%	27%	27%	27%	27%	23%
Total Agree	58%	61%	60%	60%	67%	74%	36%
Neutral or not sure	34%	25%	26%	27%	21%	14%	44%
Somewhat disagree	5%	8%	8%	7%	6%	6%	13%
Strongly disagree	4%	6%	7%	6%	6%	6%	7%
Total Disagree	9%	14%	14%	13%	12%	12%	20%

11. From a public health perspective, how safe do you think it is for adults and children to swim in Long Island Sound?

(LIS 2006 Public Perception Study Question 3)

Very safe	19%
Somewhat safe	42%
Total Safe	60%
Somewhat unsafe	19%
Very unsafe	7%
Total Unsafe	
Not sure	

12. How safe is it to eat fish and shellfish from Long Island Sound? (LIS 2006 Public Perception Study Question 4)

Very safe	18%
Somewhat safe	36%
Total Safe	54%
Somewhat unsafe	17%
Very unsafe	8%
Total Unsafe	
Not sure	21%





13. Do you think the quality of the water in Long Island Sound is...? (LIS 2006 Public Perception Study Question 5)

Excellent	
Good	
Top 2 (Excellent + Good)	45%
Fair	
Poor	
Bottom 2 (Fair + Poor)	

14. Compared to five years ago, do you think the quality of the water in Long Island Sound is...?

(LIS 2006 Public Perception Study Question 6)

Much better	9%
Somewhat better	20%
Total Better	
About the same	33%
Somewhat worse	17%
Much worse	5%
Total Worse	22%
Not sure	16%
Not suite	10 /0

# Barriers to Spending Time Outdoors/at the Sound

15. (Online): Here are some reasons why people might not visit Long Island Sound. Mark any that apply to you. (Randomize list.)

(Phone): What keeps you from visiting Long Island Sound, if anything? (Do not read list. Code any reasons mentioned.)

31%
28%
28%
24%
21%
20%
20%
18%
18%
17%
14%
5%
15%





#### **Knowledge & Attitudes**

/Δ c	k of	random	1/2 of	sample.	Group	Δ).
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16. Do you think there is anything that you do now as part of your daily life that might hurt the quality of water in Long Island Sound?
(LIS 2006 Public Perception Study Question 54)

Yes	
No	61%
Not sure	24%

#### (If yes):

16A. What is an example of something you do that might hurt the quality of water in Long Island Sound? (Open-ended. Categorized responses. See verbatim responses..)

Littering/Creating garbage	34%
Driving	12%
Polluting or wasting water	11%
Use fertilizers/pesticides/chemicals	
Using plastic	
Not recycling	
Boating pollution/Too much boating	
Other	

# (Ask of random ½ of sample, Group B):

17. Do you think there is any change you could make in your daily life that might help to improve the quality of water in Long Island Sound?

(LIS 2006 Public Perception Study Question 55)

Yes	26%
No	32%
Not sure	41%

# (If yes):

17A. What is an example of something you could change that might help improve the quality of water in Long Island Sound? (Open-ended. Categorized responses. See verbatim responses..)

Not litter/Stop polluting	28%
Pick up litter or garbage	
Recycle	
Want government/policy solutions	
Volunteer or support environmental organizations/Clean up the environment	
Use less plastic	
Filter or clean the water	
Conserve water or energy	3%
Reduce fertilizer/pesticide/chemical use	
Reduce water contamination/runoff	
Reduce emissions	2%
Other	10%





#### (All):

18. In your view, if most local residents changed their everyday behavior, how much would it improve the quality of water in the Long Island Sound? (LIS 2006 Public Perception Study Question 55)

A great deal	
Some	28%
Top 2 (A great deal + Some)	56%
Not much	12%
A little	
Not at all	4%
Bottom 3 (Not much + A little + Not at all)	30%
Not sure	

- 19. Do you agree or disagree with these statements?
  - A. The actions of people on the land have an impact on the health of Long Island Sound.
  - B. Rainwater that runs into the storm drain is treated before it is released into local rivers and streams.
  - C. Nitrogen from lawn fertilizer and septic tanks is a major source of water pollution in Long Island Sound.
  - D. Natural habitats like wetlands and marshlands protect humans as well as wildlife.
  - E. My community has been increasingly affected by flooding over the last few years.
  - F. Over time, cigarette butts will break down into the soil naturally with no negative effects.

	Α	В	C	D	Е	F
Strongly agree	40%	8%	22%	36%	12%	7%
Somewhat agree	33%	17%	31%	28%	23%	10%
Total Agree	73%	25%	53%	64%	35%	16%
Neutral or not sure	18%	51%	38%	26%	32%	32%
Somewhat disagree	4%	13%	6%	6%	19%	20%
Strongly disagree	4%	11%	3%	4%	15%	32%
Total Disagree	8%	24%	10%	10%	34%	52%





# **Behaviors**

(Screening for behavior section):

S5. Do you own or rent your home?	
Own Rent Other Not sure	45% 4%
S6. Do you have a yard or property that you are responsible f	for maintaining?
Yes No Not sure	40%
(If S6=yes): S7. Does your yard or property have a grass lawn?	
Yes No Not sure	9%
(If S6=yes): S8. Who typically cares for that grass lawn? You can choose	more than one. (Single choice.)
You or another household member	25% 7% 1%
(If S5=yes; own their home): S9. Does your home have a septic system to handle its waste sewer system?	e, or are you connected to a public
Septic Public sewer Not sure	52%
(All): S10. Do you own a car?	
Yes No Not sure	26%
S11. Do you have a dog?	
Yes	39%





S12. Do you smoke cigarettes or e-cigarette often, once in a while, or never?

Often	18%
Once in a while	12%
Total Yes	30%
Never	68%
Not sure	2%

Following are a few things that you may or may not have done. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Just answer each one based on your own experience.

# In the last two years, have you...?

B1. (All): Recycled cans and bottles

Very frequently	55%
Frequently	
Sometimes	
Top 3 (Sometimes + Frequently + Very frequently)	
Seldom	5%
Never	7%
Bottom 2 (Seldom + Never)	12%
Not sure	2%

B2. (If S6=1; Those with a yard or property): Used chemical pesticides in or around your home to control mosquitos and ticks.

Very frequently	4%
Frequently	8%
Sometimes	20%
Top 3 (Sometimes + Frequently + Very frequently)	33%
Seldom	18%
Never	48%
Bottom 2 (Seldom + Never)	65%
Not sure	2%

B3. (If S6=1; Those with a yard or property): Used herbicide to control weeds in your yard.

Very frequently	4%
Frequently	8%
Sometimes	22%
Top 3 (Sometimes + Frequently + Very frequently)	34%
Seldom	17%
Never	44%
Bottom 2 (Seldom + Never)	
Not sure	4%





#### In the last two years, have you...?

B4.	(All): Volunteered in your community to help clean up or beautify a neighborhood park,
	peach, or garden.

Yes	31%
No	65%
Not sure	4%

B5. (If S6=1; Those with a yard or property): Connected a rain barrel to your downspouts and used the water between rainstorms.

Yes	20%
No	77%
Not sure	3%

B6. (If S6=1; Those with a yard or property): Created a rain garden, which is an area that has been dug out and planted with water-loving native plants to capture and quickly absorb excess rainwater.

Yes	17%
No	79%
Not sure	4%

B7. (If S7=1; Those with a grass lawn): Reduced the size of your lawn and replaced the grass with native or pollinator plants.

Yes	26%
No	70%
Not sure	Λ%

B8. (If S9=1; Homeowners with septic): Upgraded your septic system with the latest advanced technology.

Yes	20%
No	74%
Not sure	6%

#### Do you typically...?

B9. *(All):* Toss food wrappers, cups, or cigarette butts on the ground when you are not near a trash can

Always	5%
Usually	4%
Sometimes	8%
Top 3 (Sometimes + Usually + Always)	
Seldom	8%
Never	73%
Bottom 2 (Seldom + Never)	81%
Not sure	2%





# B10. (All): Pick up litter when you see it

Always	22%
Usually	
Sometimes	
Top 3 (Sometimes + Usually + Always)	
Seldom	
Never	
Bottom 2 (Seldom + Never)	
Not sure	
B11. (All): Use a refillable water bottle instead of disposab	le plastic water bottles
Always	35%
Usually	
Sometimes	
Top 3 (Sometimes + Usually + Always)	
Seldom	
Never	
Bottom 2 (Seldom + Never)	
Not sure	
B12. (If S10=1; Those with a vehicle): Wash your car in a	•
Always	
Usually	
Sometimes	21%
Top 3 (Sometimes + Usually + Always)	45%
Seldom	
Never	
Bottom 2 (Seldom + Never)	
Not sure	1%
B13. (If S11=1; Those with a dog): Pick up your dog's was	ste and dispose of it in the trash
Always	67%
Usually	
Sometimes	
Top 3 (Sometimes + Usually + Always)	
Seldom	
Never	
Bottom 2 (Seldom + Never)	
Not sure	





B14. (If S7=1; Those with a grass lawn): How many times a year is your lawn fertilized? Just give it your best guess. If it is never fertilized, enter 0. If you are completely unsure, leave the box blank. (Number box)

0	44%
	20%
	8%
	6%
5 or more	7%

### (Random ½ of the full sample):

B15. Is there anything else you are doing to help improve the health of Long Island Sound or any nearby waters? (Open-ended. Categorized responses.)

Throw garbage away/Not litter	25%
Pick up others' trash/Clean the environment	
Recycle or compost	14%
Volunteer or support environmental organizations/Encourage government a	ction9%
Encourage people to take helpful environmental actions	7%
Use or buy environmentally friendly products	6%
Drive less/Reduce my carbon footprint	5%
Reduce or reuse plastic	4%
Conserve water	2%
Reduce lawn/Have natural lawn	1%
Reduce hazardous materials/chemicals/pesticides	1%
Other	13%

#### Willingness/Likelihood

Now we're going to look to the future. Looking ahead over the <u>next year or so</u>, is it very likely, somewhat likely, or not likely that you will do each of these things?

(Randomize L1-15; ask likelihood of performing each behavior in the future if currently not performing a positive behavior or performing a negative behavior, or if unsure):

L1. (If B1=1, 2 or 9): Recycle cans and bottles

Very likely	30%
Somewhat likely	
Top 2 (Very + Somewhat likely)	64%
Not likely	
Bottom 2 (Somewhat + Not likely)	
Not sure	15%





L2.	(If B2=3, 4, 5 or 9): Use chemical pesticides in or around your home to control mosquitos
	and ticks.

Very likely	33%
Somewhat likely	
Top 2 (Very + Somewhat likely)	75%
Not likely	16%
Bottom 2 (Somewhat + Not likely)	58%
Not sure	
.3. (If B3=3, 4, 5 or 9): Use herbicide to control weeds in you	ur yard.
Very likely	30%
Somewhat likely	44%
Top 2 (Very + Somewhat likely)	
Not likely	17%
Bottom 2 (Somewhat + Not likely)	61%
Not sure	9%

Top 2 (Very + Somewhat likely)	49%
Not likely	
Bottom 2 (Somewhat + Not likely)	
Not sure	

L5. (If B5=1 or 9): Connect a rain barrel to your downspouts and use the water between rainstorms.

Very likely	10%
Somewhat likely	
Top 2 (Very + Somewhat likely)	
Not likely	
Bottom 2 (Somewhat + Not likely)	81%
Not sure	

L6. (If B6=1 or 9): Create a rain garden, which is an area that has been dug out and planted with water-loving native plants to capture and quickly absorb excess rainwater.

Very likely	9%
Somewhat likely	
Top 2 (Very + Somewhat likely)	
Not likely	
Bottom 2 (Somewhat + Not likely)	83%
Not sure	





L7. (If B7=1 or 9): Reduce the size of your lawn and replace the plants.	grass with native or pollinato
Very likely	
Somewhat likely	
Top 2 (Very + Somewhat likely)	
Not likely	62%
Bottom 2 (Somewhat + Not likely)	83%
Not sure	9%
L8. (If B8=1 or 9): Upgrade your septic system with the latest ad	vanced technology.
Very likely	7%
Somewhat likely	
Top 2 (Very + Somewhat likely)	27%
Not likely	60%
Bottom 2 (Somewhat + Not likely)	
Not sure	13%
L9. (If B8=3, 4, 5 or 9): Toss food wrappers, cups, or cigarette b are not near a trash can.	utts on the ground when you
Very likely	
Somewhat likely	
Top 2 (Very + Somewhat likely)	
Not likely	
Bottom 2 (Somewhat + Not likely) Not sure	
Not sale	13 /0
L10. (If B10=1, 2 or 9): Pick up litter when you see it	
Very likely	14%
Somewhat likely	
Top 2 (Very + Somewhat likely)	
Not likely	35%
Bottom 2 (Somewhat + Not likely)	
Not sure	14%
L11. (If B11=1, 2 or 9): Use a refillable water bottle instead of disp	posable plastic water bottles
Very likely	21%
Somewhat likely	
Top 2 (Very + Somewhat likely)	
Not likely	
Bottom 2 (Somewhat + Not likely)	67%
Not sure	12%





L12. (If B12=3, 4, 5 or 9); Wash your car in a payed driveway or street

Very likely	55%
Somewhat likely	
Top 2 (Very + Somewhat likely)	88%
Not likely	8%
Bottom 2 (Somewhat + Not Likely)	40%
Not sure	
L13. (If B13=1, 2 or 9): Pick up your dog's waste and dispose of it in the tras	sh
Very likely	21%
Somewhat likely	
Top 2 (Very + Somewhat likely)	
Not likely	
Bottom 2 (Somewhat + Not Likely)	
Not sure	
L14. (If B14=2 or more): Fertilize your lawn less often.	
Very likely	22%
Somewhat likely	
Top 2 (Very + Somewhat likely)	
Not likely	
Bottom 2 (Somewhat + Not Likely)	
Not sure	

# **Sources of Information**

(All):

- 20. How much would you trust information about water pollution and the environment that comes from each of these sources?
  - A. Your faith community
  - B. Local environmental organizations
  - C. Your local government
  - D. Your doctor or a health organization
  - E. University scientists
  - F. State environmental agencies

	Α	В	С	D	E	F
A lot	17%	37%	21%	33%	42%	36%
Some	34%	35%	39%	37%	31%	35%
Top 2 (A lot + Some)	51%	72%	60%	71%	74%	71%
Only a little	17%	14%	19%	13%	11%	13%
Not at all	17%	7%	14%	8%	8%	8%
Bottom 2 (Only a little + Not at all)	35%	21%	33%	21%	18%	21%
Not sure	14%	7%	7%	8%	8%	7%





- 21. Here are several ways of getting local information. How often do you use each one? (Randomize list):
  - A. Social media like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc.
  - B. Local TV or newspapers, whether in print or online
  - C. Newsletters or emails from local organizations or government

	Α	В	C
Frequently	35%	34%	16%
Sometimes	28%	36%	38%
Top 2 (Frequently + Sometimes)	63%	70%	54%
Seldom	16%	16%	23%
Never	16%	9%	18%
Not sure	5%	4%	5%

#### **Focus Group Pre-Recruit**

F1. In the next few weeks we will hold a focus group to talk more about some of these topics. It will last two hours and pays \$100. It may be in-person or on Zoom. No one will try to sell you anything. How interested would you be in participating if it was held at a good time for you?

Definitely	31%
Probably	20%
About 50-50	
Not interested	25%

F2. Are you interested in participating in the drawing for the \$100 gift card?

Yes	62%
No	38%

(If F1=Definitely, Probably, or About 50/50, and/or if F2=Yes):

So that we can reach you, what is your...?

- F3. First name (Text box)
- F4. Last name (Text box)
- F5. Email address (Text box)
- F6. Best telephone number to reach you (*Text box*)
- F7. Is that a mobile phone?





### **Classification**

The final few questions are just to make sure we have a balanced sample. The answers will not be tied back to you personally.

C1. How many years have you lived in the area? (Number box)

Less than 5	17%
5 to 9	14%
10 to 19	16%
20 to 39	30%
40 or more	23%
C2.Do you live in a…?	
Single-family house	50%
Attached townhouse, rowhouse, or duplex	
Apartment or condo	
Mobile home	
Other	
Not sure or prefer not to say	
not sails of professional say	
C3. What is the last grade in school or level of education that you	completed?
Less than 12 <sup>th</sup> grade	5%
High school diploma or GED	
Attended some college, no degree	
Associate (2-year) degree	
Bachelor's (4-year) degree	
Post-graduate degree	
Not sure or prefer not to say	
Not sure or prefer not to say	
C4.Do you most closely identify your race or ethnicity as? Cho	pose any that apply to you.
African-American or Black	15%
Asian or Pacific Islander	
Hispanic or Latino	
Middle Eastern or North African	
Mixed race or Multi-racial (unspecified)	
Native American or Alaska Native	
White	
Something else	
Not sure or prefer not to say	3%
C5.What is your gender identity?	
Female	49%
Male	
Non-binary	
Another gender category	
Prefer not to say	20%





C6. About what was the total income for all members of your household last year before taxes? Just give it your best guess.

(Phone only): Stop me when I get to the right category. (Read categories until stopped.)

Less than \$25,000	18%
25 to less than \$50,000	21%
50 to less than \$75,000	16%
75 to less than \$100,000	12%
100 to less than \$150,000	12%
\$150,000 or more	13%
Not sure or prefer not to say	9%

That completes the survey. Thank you for your time. Your responses have been recorded.



