

41st Annual Cedar Key Seafood Festival

Attendee Survey Results

prepared by

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A total of 347 surveys were completed over the course of the two-day 41st Annual Cedar Key Seafood Festival held October 16-17, 2010. Attendees were randomly selected at various sites throughout the festival to complete the short in-person survey.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ATTENDEES

The surveys provide a general assessment of the demographics of individuals attending the festival. Attendees were almost all white, predominately married with children, and older than 30. 60% of the attendees surveyed were over the age of 50, while only 8.2% were under the age of 30. The sample was evenly split between men and women. Most attendees (78.1%) had greater than a high school education and a substantial number (45.1%) had completed a college degree. Attendees of the seafood festival were also financially well off, with almost a quarter of survey respondents (23.8%) earning more than \$80,000 a year. The most commonly answered income bracket was \$40,000 - \$60,000. As a reference, the media income in Levy County in 2000 was \$27,000. Only 19.5% of respondents viewed themselves as being political liberal, while 44.7% thought of themselves as generally conservative.

Table 1: Festival Attendees Characteristics

	N	Percent
Gender		
Female	178	51.3%
Male	169	48.7%
Age		
18-29	28	8.2%
30-49	73	21.5%
50-59	85	25%
60-69	100	29.4%
70+	54	15.9%
Race		
White/Caucasian	312	91%
Black/African American	14	4.1%
Other	17	5.0%
Marital Status		
Married	216	62.8%
Has Children		
Yes	261	75.7%
Education		
High School or less	76	21.9%
Some College	114	32.9%
College	108	31.2%
Advanced Degree	48	13.9%
Household Income		
\$0-40,000	51	28.4%
\$40,000-60,000	83	29.1%
\$60,000-80,000	53	18.6%
\$80,000+	68	23.8%
Political Ideology		
Liberal	64	19.5%
Moderate	118	35.9%
Conservative	147	44.7%

Respondents were asked a series of questions regarding their behavior relevant to the Seafood Festival (Table 2). When asked about their attendance at Cedar Key Seafood Festivals, 41.5% of respondents listed this year as their time at the festival. The average number of times respondents had been to previous festivals was roughly 6 years. When asked if they knew anyone who had chosen not to come to the 2010 Seafood Festival due to the oil spill, only 6 respondents (1.7%) answered yes. Additionally, very few respondents (7.9%) decreased their consumption of seafood following the oil spill.

However, almost all of the respondents (96.8%) believed there to be at least some oil remaining in the Gulf of Mexico. The average percentage of the oil spill estimated to be remaining somewhere was 43.1%. Many respondents added that they felt the oil was remaining on the ocean floor.

Table 2: Attendance and Seafood Consumption

Average Number of Times Attending Festival (sd)	5.85 (8.35)
Average Number of Nights Eat Seafood for Dinner per Month (sd)	4.73 (4.07)
Percentage Who Think Oil Remains in the Gulf (N)	96.8% (333)
Average Percentage Thought to Remains in the Gulf (sd)	43.1 % (24.2)
Percentage Who Decreased Consumption of Seafood After the Oil Spill (N)	7.9% (27)

PERCEPTION OF RISK FROM THE GULF OIL SPILL

Although most of the respondents in our sample thought that there was a substantial amount of oil remaining somewhere in the Gulf of Mexico, most did not directly perceive that oil as a threat. We asked a series of three questions asking respondents to estimate how much risk the oil spill posed to the health of people living along the Gulf of Mexico, to the overall health of the Gulf's natural ecosystems, and to the continued production of seafood taken from the Gulf. Figure 1 presents respondents' perception of risk directly to human health.

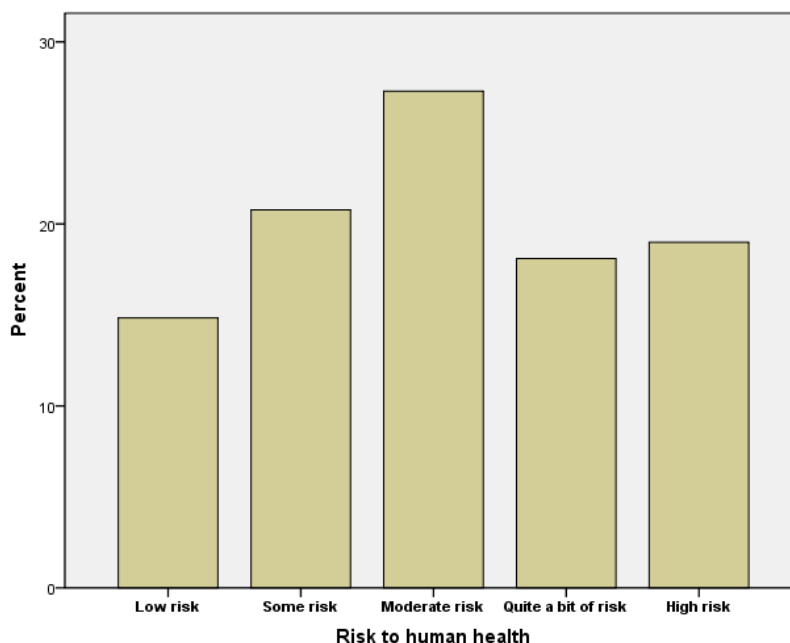


Figure 1: Perception of Risk to Human Health along the Gulf of Mexico

Respondents' perception of risk to human health along the Gulf of Mexico is fairly normally distributed on the modal category, a moderate amount. This pattern is a typical finding in survey research, with the middle category – in this case an answer of 3 on a scale of 1 to 5 – receiving the most responses. Of note in Figure 1 however, is the slightly higher frequency of responses in the 'High Risk' category than the 'Quite a Bit of Risk' category, though the difference is not statistically significant.

When asked about the risk posed to the Gulf of Mexico's natural ecosystems however, respondents perceived a much higher level of risk than to human health (see Figure 2). Responses to this question are much more skewed to the left, indicating a very high perception of risk to the general natural environments associated with the Gulf. More than half (53.6%) of respondents thought that the natural ecosystems in the Gulf of Mexico were at a high risk of being harmed by the oil spill.

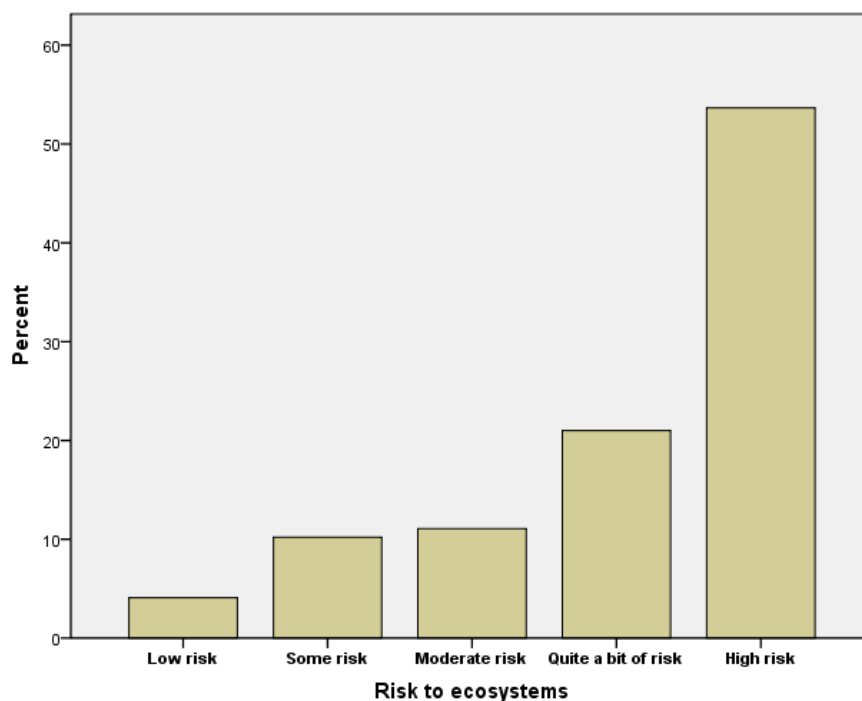


Figure 2: Perception of Risk to the Natural Environment in the Gulf of Mexico

When asked what level of risk the oil spill posed to the continued production of seafood from the Gulf of Mexico, the pattern of responses is less clear (see Figure 3). Again, we see something of a normal distribution around the middle response of a 3 on the scale of 1 to 5 in terms of risk. But in this case, the modal category is a 5 – a high level of risk.

Combined, these three measures of risk perception tell us that attendees of the Seafood Festival express very common estimations of risk. According to the literature on risk and safety, people are much more likely to downplay immediate risks to themselves, as perceiving immediate risks such as health hazards create cognitive dissonance. To avoid feeling unsafe in our everyday lives, most people tend to downplay personal risks while perceiving higher risks to other groups or areas away from themselves. In the case of the oil spill, we observe this trend in the lower perceptions of risk to personal health while at the same time perceiving very high levels of risk to the natural environment and to the production of seafood.

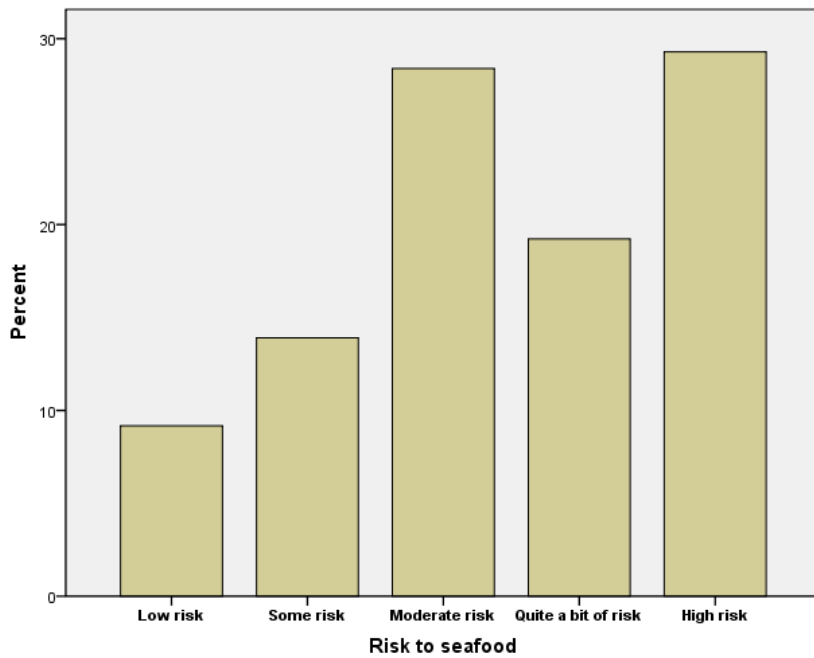


Figure 3: Perception of Risk to Seafood Production in the Gulf of Mexico

When asked how safe seafood taken from the Gulf of Mexico after the oil spill was for human consumption, we again observe a similar finding (see Figure 4). Most people think of seafood currently taken from the Gulf as being very safe or safe (57.6%). Only 14 respondents (4.1%) chose ‘Not Safe.’

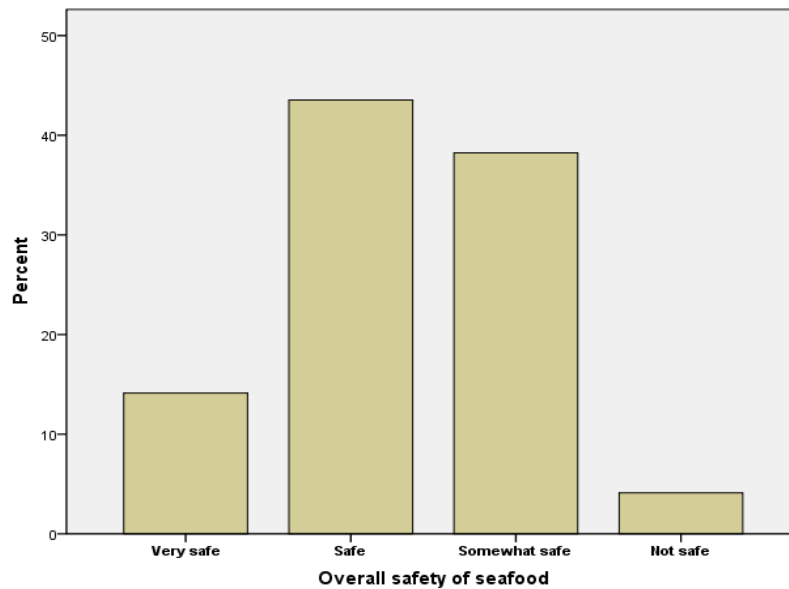


Figure 4: Overall Impression of Seafood Safety

When asked a question regarding seafood safety in a slightly different manner, respondent did think that seafood taken from the Gulf after the oil spill was less safe than before the spill (see Figure 5). 58% of respondents reported perceiving seafood as being less safe, while only 4.3% thought of it as more safe.

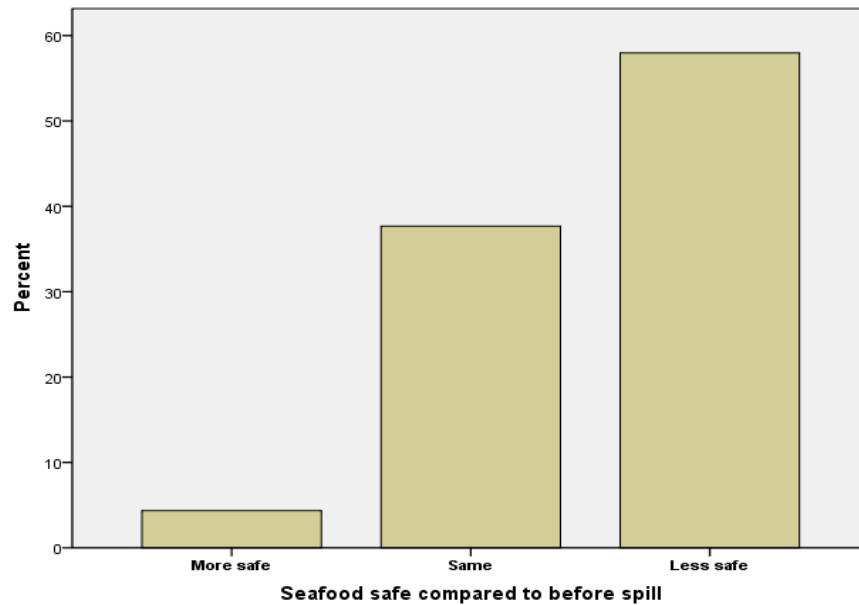


Figure 5: Shifts in Perception of Seafood Safety after the Oil Spill

Taken together, these measures of risk perception tell us that a fair amount of confusion concerning the long-term effects of the oil spill remains. While respondents tended to attribute only a moderate amount of risk directly to human health, their concern for the Gulf’s natural ecosystems and seafood taken from the Gulf suggests that people still believe that the oil spill will have some long-term effects. That human health should receive the lower levels of concern is not surprising.

Lingering concerns with seafood safety also remain. With 58% of respondents reporting a perception that the seafood from the Gulf is less safe today than it was before the oil spill, seafood producers and resource-dependent communities should be aware of the lingering concern. However, when asked directly whether seafood was safe, more than half of our sample believed the seafood to be safe or very safe. How should we reconcile with the fact that half the sample seeing the seafood as being less safe, while at the same time half perceive the seafood as being safe overall?

Table 3 compares respondents’ overall impression of the safety of seafood taken from the Gulf of Mexico today to their answer of whether the safety of seafood had changed following the oil spill. For those individuals who see the safety of seafood as being safe or very safe, the majority of them thought that there was no change in overall safety. For those individuals who saw seafood today as being somewhat safe or not safe, the vast majority also thought the seafood was less safe today compared to times before the oil spill.

Table 3: Comparing Overall Safety to Change in Safety

Overall Safety of Seafood	Safety of Seafood Compared to Times Before the Oil Spill		
	More Safe	The Same	Less Safe
Very Safe	10.4%	66.7%	22.9%
Safe	4.7%	52.7%	42.6%
Somewhat Safe	2.3%	13.8%	83.8%
Not Safe	0	14.3%	85.7%

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON THE GULF OIL SPILL

In order to understand how respondents were developing their understanding and concerns regarding the oil spill and seafood safety, we asked a series of questions about their sources of information and levels of trust in sources of information. Table 4 presents the results of our question asking respondents what was their *main* source of information on the topic of the oil spill. The most common source of information on the oil spill was television (58.7%), followed by the internet (17.6%), and newspapers (12.1%).

Table 4: Cedar Key Festival Attendees' Main Source of Information

Source of Information	N	Percent
Newspaper	42	12.1%
Television	203	58.7%
Internet	61	17.6%
Radio	11	3.2%
Friends or relatives	11	3.2%
Other	18	5.2%
Total	346	100%

When asked how much trust on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high) respondents placed in a variety of sources of information to be accurate, the most trusted source was from universities and researchers associated with universities (see Table 5). The least trusted source of information was from the media in general (e.g. television, internet, radio) followed very closely by the federal government.

Table 5: Trust in Source of Information

Source of Information	Average Response (Mean 1-5)	Most Common Answer (Mode)
Federal Government	2.28	Hardly Any Trust
Local Government	2.68	Some Trust
Private Businesses	2.57	Some Trust
Universities	3.92	Quite a Lot of Trust
Environmental Groups	3.05	Quite a Lot of Trust
Media in General	2.26	Hardly Any Trust

Since the most trusted sources of information (universities and environmental groups) are not as likely to be in direct contact with respondents, the media's role in translating and communicating information on the oil spill is of paramount importance. While respondents get most of the information directly from the general media, they are much more likely to trust in information presented as originating from universities or nonprofit organizations. Although we did not ask if the media presented information from universities or nonprofits equally in comparison to government agencies or private businesses like BP, our results suggest that relying simply on the media to convey information on seafood safety or on the oil spill in general is not likely to be trusted unless that information is presented as originating from a trusted source.