

## Swimming

---

### Abstract

Swimming is one of the uses of freshwater. The map shows the amount of participation as mapped by major watershed. Not surprisingly, the highest absolute numbers occur in southern Canada.

---

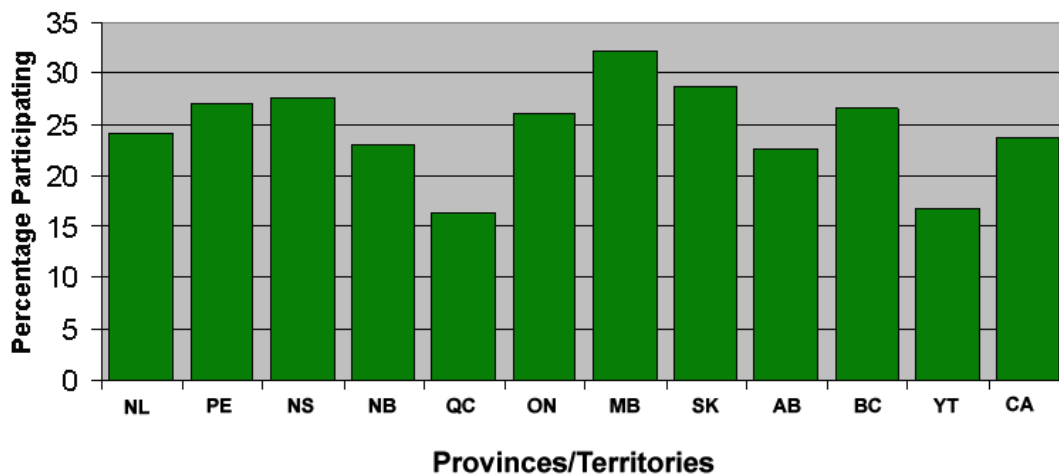
With Canada's abundance of surface freshwater it is not surprising that outdoor swimming is a popular summer activity. Millions of Canadians enjoy swimming in freshwater rivers, ponds and lakes. Many municipalities operate beaches for local residents. Many other people swim in some of the clear lakes of the Canadian Shield. Beaches and swimming are also commonly found in Canada's parks. There is also a great deal of indoor swimming throughout Canada, although this was not measured for this survey, nor is it mapped here.

On a per capita basis, however, there is a remarkable similarity in participation rates across Canada as measured by visits per person. Other than very low values for the Arctic and Mississippi drainage areas (2.9 and 4.5 visits per person, respectively), all values range from 12.6 to 17.9, with the highest value being for the area representing northern Quebec.

The source of the data is the survey carried out in 1996. In that year, Statistics Canada conducted a survey on behalf of a nationwide partnership of 16 federal, provincial and territorial agencies interested in nature-related activities. The Survey on the Importance of Nature to Canadians asked 87 000 Canadians 15 years and over about relevant activities in 1996.

In addition to having detailed information on participation in swimming, the survey also asked about concerns and found that Canadians worry about pollution of outdoor swimming areas.

Figure 1 shows a summary of data for outdoor swimming by province or territory from the survey.



**Figure 1.** Participation in Swimming by Canadians, 1996

**Source:** Canada. Environment Canada. Survey on the Importance of Nature to Canadians: A Federal-Provincial-Territorial Initiative. Ottawa, 1998.

## Map Sources

### Frequency of Participation for Swimming (days/sqkm of watershed)

The units are defined as the ratio of total number of days visiting the watershed for swimming by the area of the watershed. Statistics Canada. 1996. Survey on the Importance of Nature to Canadians.

## References

Canada. Environment Canada. 2000. A Primer on Fresh Water: Questions and Answers. Fifth Edition. Ottawa (<http://www.ec.gc.ca/eau-water/>).

Canada. Environment Canada. 2001. Tracking Key Environmental Issues. 2001. Ottawa ([http://www.ec.gc.ca/TKEI/toc/toc\\_e.cfm](http://www.ec.gc.ca/TKEI/toc/toc_e.cfm)).

Canada. Environment Canada. 2001. Recreation: Importance of water for Tourism and Recreation in Canada. Ottawa (<http://www.ec.gc.ca/eau-water/>).

Federal-Provincial Task Force on the Importance of Nature to Canadians. 1999. The Importance of Nature to Canadians: Survey Highlights. Ottawa: Environment Canada (<http://www.ec.gc.ca/nature/highlights/highlite.html>).

Marsh, James H. (ed. in chief). 1985. The Canadian Encyclopedia. Edmonton: Hurtig.

Stanké, Alain (ed.). 2000. L'Encyclopédie Canada 2000. Montréal, Québec: Éditions internationales Alain Stanké.

## **Related Web sites (1999 – 2009)**

### **Federal Government**

Environment Canada. Freshwater Web Site

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/eau-water/>

This web site gives access to the nature of water, water policy and legislation, the management of water, water and culture, and informational resources and services

Environment Canada. Quebec Region. The St. Lawrence Centre

<http://www.universadecouvrir.gc.ca/page/index.php?l=e&p=86>

The St. Lawrence Centre studies the ecosystems of the St. Lawrence River and conduct research programs with the aim of better understanding how these ecosystems function, and maintaining knowledge of the St. Lawrence River up to date.

Environment Canada. Survey on the Importance of Nature to Canadians

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/nature/>

The Survey on the Importance of Nature to Canadians, which assesses the social and economic value of nature-related activities to Canadians, drew on a nationwide partnership of 16 federal, provincial, and territorial agencies.

Environment Canada. The National Water Research Institute

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/inre-nwri/>

The National Water Research Institute (NWRI) is Canada's largest freshwater research establishment. NWRI conducts a comprehensive program of research and development in the aquatic sciences, in partnership with the Canadian and international science communities.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Canadian Hydrographic Service (CHS)

<http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/regions/central/science/chs-shc/index-eng.htm>

The CHS is responsible for charting Canada's 243,792 kilometres of coastline (the longest of any country in the world) and 6.55 million square kilometres of continental shelf and territorial waters (the second largest in the world) and an extensive system of inland waterways.

### **Other**

University of Guelph. Canada's Aquatic Environments

<http://www.aquatic.uoguelph.ca/index.htm>

This site, at the University of Guelph, gives information on lakes, rivers, wetland regions and aquatic animals and plants.

### **Inter-agency**

International Joint Commission

<http://www.ijc.org/>

The International Joint Commission is an independent binational organization established by the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909. Its purpose is to help prevent and resolve disputes relating to the use and quality of boundary waters and to advise Canada and the United States on related questions.

