Outdoor Stewards of Conservation Foundation

Research

***FULL REPORT**

Americans' Attitudes Towards Legal, Regulated Fishing, Target/Sport Shooting, Hunting and Trapping




Study conducted for
Outdoor Stewards of Conservation Foundation by:

OUTDOOR STEWARDS OF CONSERVATION FOUNDATION™
OutdoorStewards.org

RESPONSIVE MANAGEMENT

Americans' Attitudes Towards Legal, Regulated Fishing, Target/Sport Shooting, Hunting, and Trapping

June 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study was conducted by Responsive Management and the Outdoor Stewards of Conservation Foundation, Inc., to measure Americans' attitudes toward legal, regulated fishing, sport shooting, hunting, and trapping. The study also examines how approval of legal, regulated fishing, hunting, and trapping varies by motivation, species, and method. Identifying the trends in these attitudes is important for developing, managing, and assessing recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3) programs for these activities in the continually changing social and political climates of the U.S. The purpose of this study is to proactively track these trends and to accurately update our understanding of Americans' current attitudes and how they impact R3 efforts. This study entailed a scientific, probability-based multi-modal survey of U.S. residents aged 18 and older. Data from the survey were weighted to ensure that the results were representative of adult Americans as a whole.

Responsive Management and the Outdoor Stewards of Conservation Foundation developed the telephone and online survey questionnaires cooperatively, based in part on the previous surveys as well as the research team's familiarity with outdoor recreation. In the study, each state was sampled proportionately to preserve proper distribution within each region and in the U.S. as a whole. The states were grouped into regions to aid in comparison and analysis; the five main USFWS regions were used.

For the telephone portion of the survey, the sample used a probability-based selection process that ensured that all U.S. residents with a telephone had an approximately equal chance of being selected for the survey within each region.

For analysis of the combined telephone and online survey results, weighting was applied to ensure that the regions exactly matched U.S. Census data for U.S. residents 18 years old and older, and then the regions were weighted so that they would be in proper proportions for the nationwide results. The final sample was representative of all U.S. residents 18 years old and older.

The survey was conducted by telephone and online. Surveys conducted by telephone are administered by a live interviewer. Telephone interviews were conducted Monday through Friday from noon to 9:00 p.m. and Saturday from noon to 7:00 p.m., local time, using interviewers with experience conducting computer-assisted surveys about conservation and outdoor recreation. The online survey was administered to both the online sample and to cell phone respondents who did not respond via phone call and were sent a text. Note that the online survey was closed, meaning it was available only to respondents who were specifically selected for the survey.

For both the online and telephone versions of the survey, the survey questionnaire contained error checkers and computation statements to ensure quality and consistent data. After the surveys were obtained, the Survey Center managers and statisticians checked each completed survey to ensure clarity and completeness and to filter out any invalid respondents.

The analysis of data was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics as well as proprietary software developed by Responsive Management.

APPROVAL OF LEGAL, REGULATED FISHING, SPORT SHOOTING, HUNTING, AND TRAPPING

Approval is highest for legal recreational fishing (90% of Americans approve) (Figure ES1). Just a little lower are both approval of legal recreational shooting (78%, summed on unrounded numbers—note that graphs show numbers rounded to the integer, but the data are stored in decimal format) and legal hunting (77%). At the bottom is regulated trapping, of which 54% approve. Table ES1 summarizes the results.

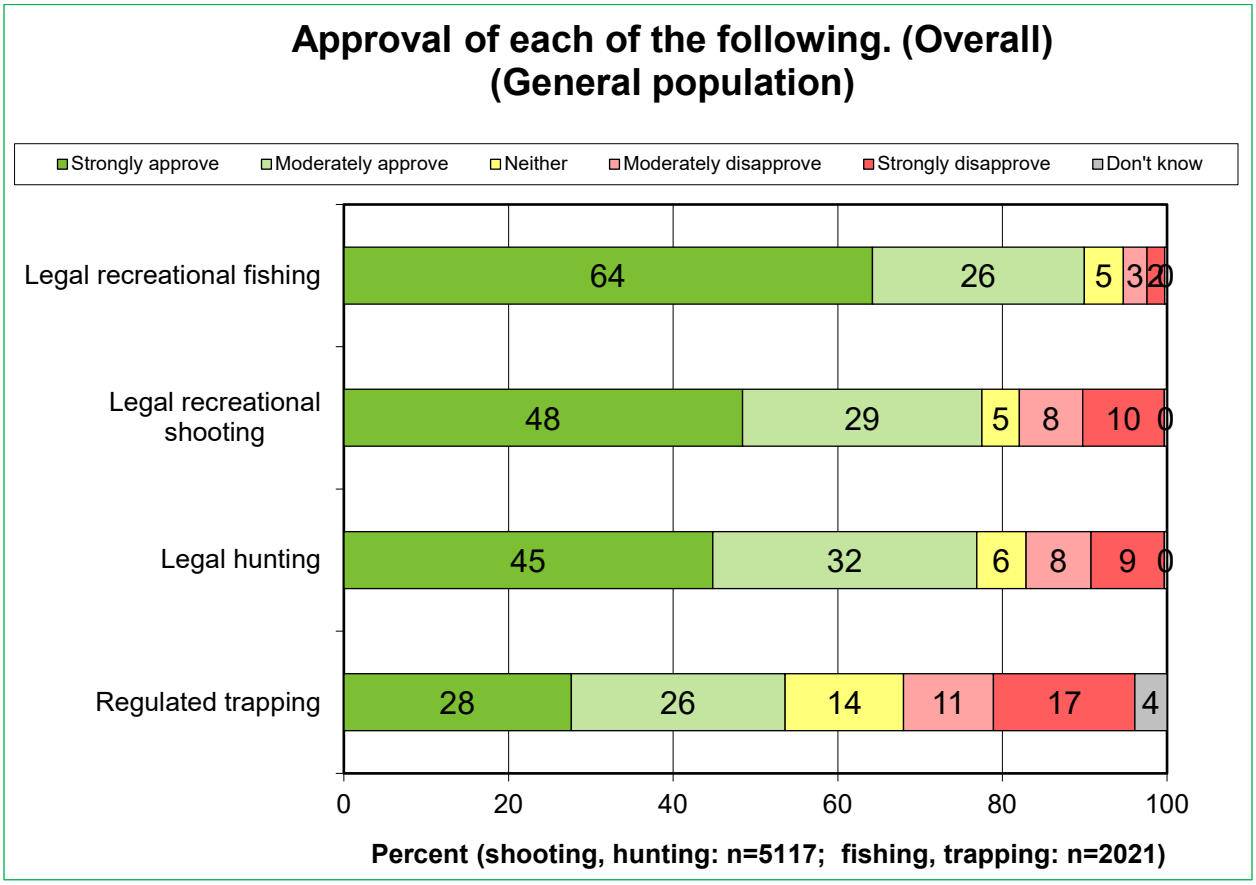

Figure ES1. Approval and Disapproval of Fishing, Sport Shooting, Hunting, and Trapping

Table ES1. Approval and Disapproval of Fishing, Sport Shooting, Hunting, and Trapping				
U.S. residents overall (percentage who approve / disapprove)	Legal recreational fishing	Legal recreational shooting	Legal hunting	Regulated trapping
Total approve	90	78	77	54
Total disapprove	5	18	17	28

Trends graphs are presented in Figures ES2 through ES5 of approval of fishing, shooting, hunting, and trapping. The graphs show, compared to recent years, a decline in approval of fishing, shooting, and hunting (as well as an increase in disapproval). Regarding trapping, overall approval is about the same in the three surveys shown in the graph. Disapproval has declined slightly, but respondents moved to neither, for the most part, rather than approval.

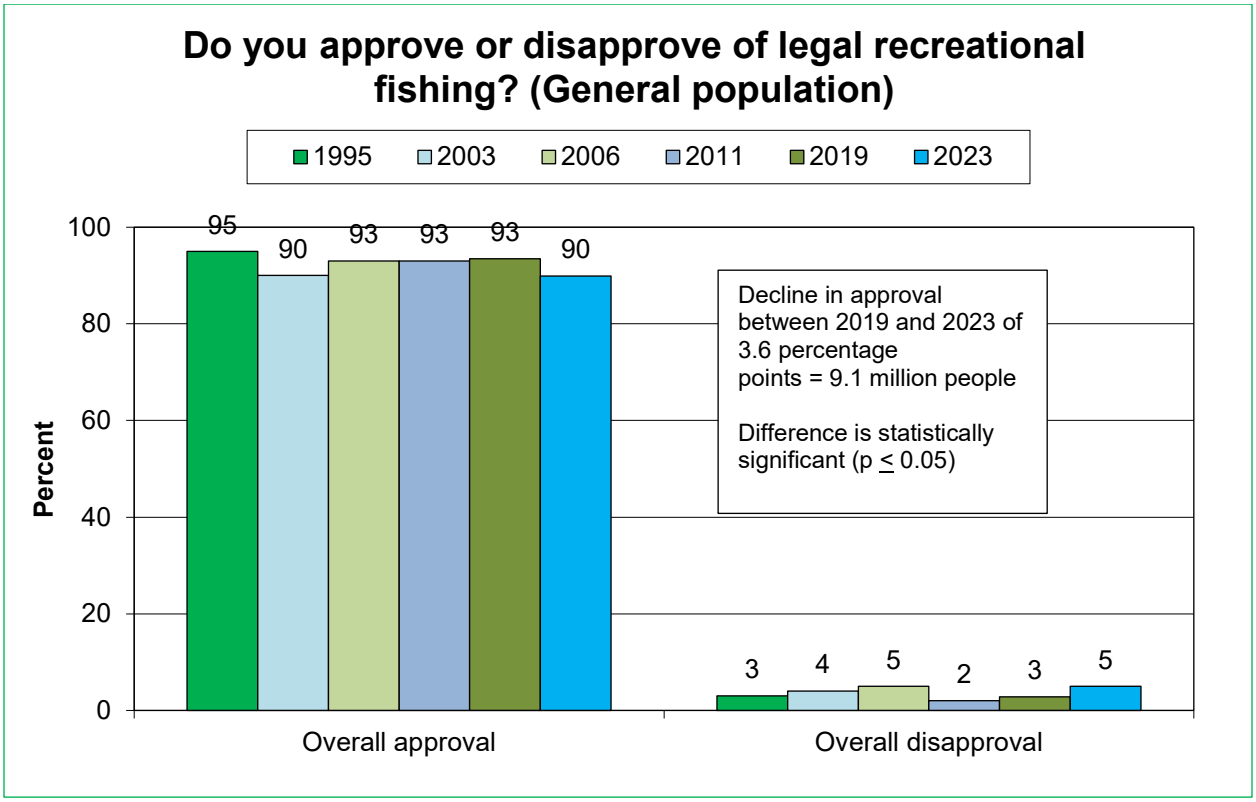

Figure ES2. Approval and Disapproval of Recreational Fishing (Trends)

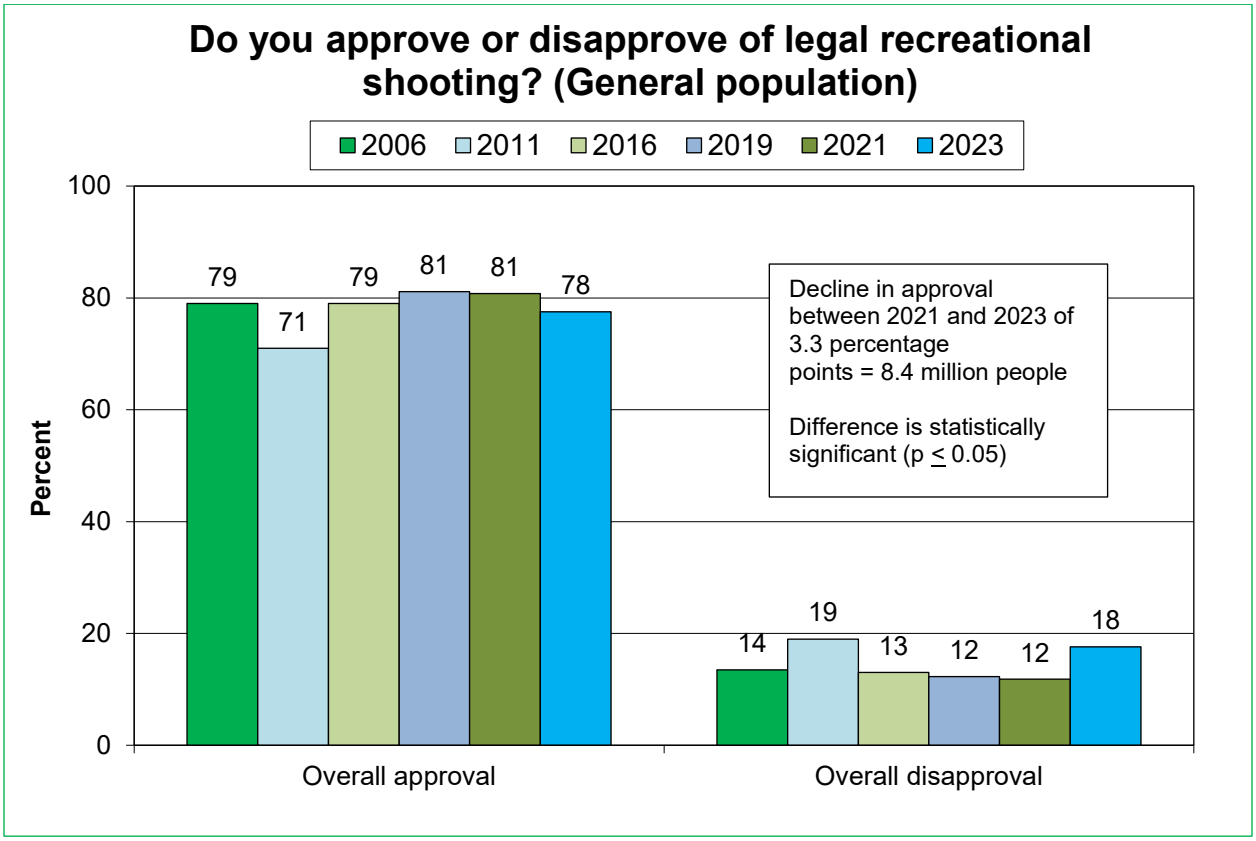

Figure ES3. Approval and Disapproval of Recreational Shooting (Trends)

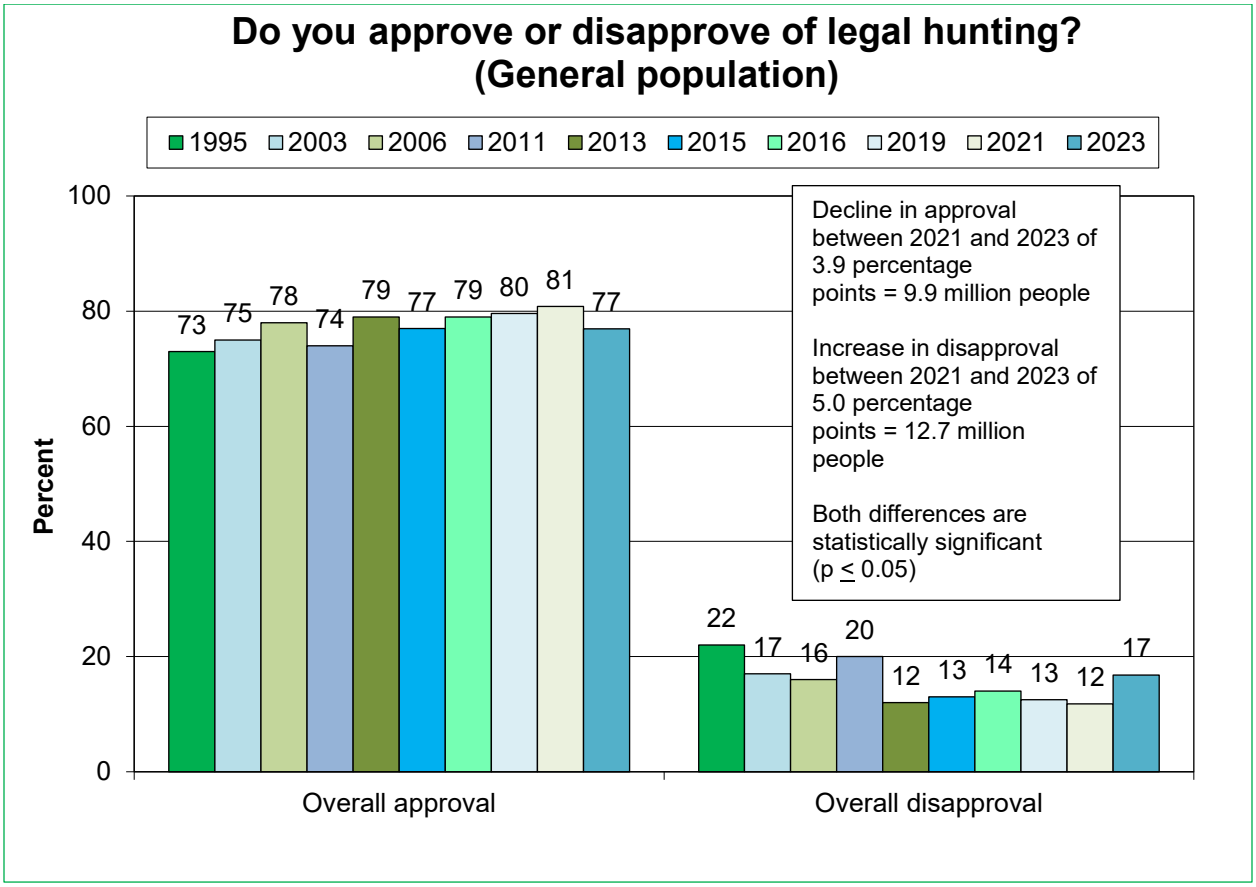

Figure ES4. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting (Trends)

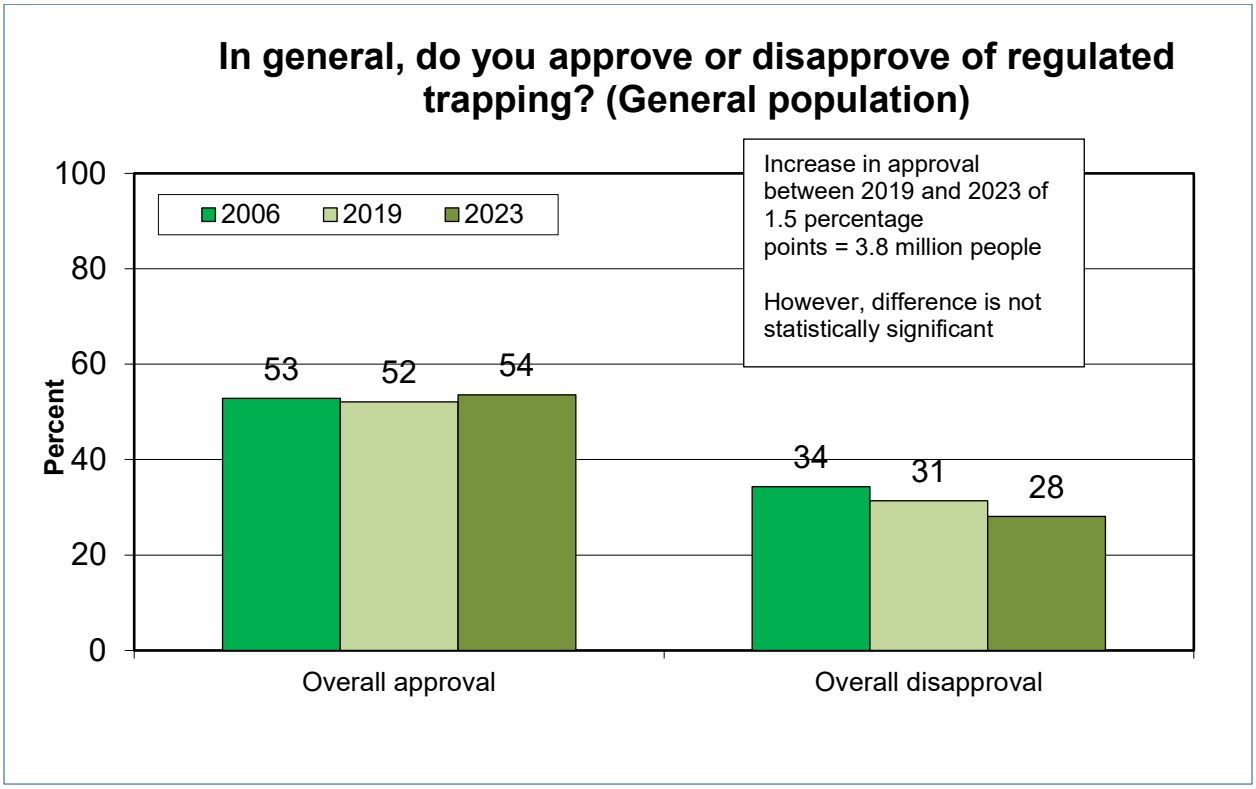

Figure ES5. Approval and Disapproval of Trapping (Trends)

The large majority of U.S. residents (86%) agreed that, regardless of their opinion on hunting, it is okay for others to hunt, if it is done in accordance with laws and regulations (this percentage agreeing is substantially higher than approval of hunting itself). Only 9% disagreed.

The large majority of Americans (60%) say that shooting sports are acceptable. On the other hand, 36% have doubts about the appropriateness of recreational shooting sports. The acceptability of recreational shooting sports declined in 2023 compared to the previous two surveys.

APPROVAL OF LEGAL HUNTING FOR VARIOUS REASONS, FOR VARIOUS SPECIES, AND USING VARIOUS METHODS

Four reasons are deemed the most acceptable for hunting, with two being human-centered and two being ecological (Figure ES6 and Table ES2). Regarding the first, to protect humans and for the meat are the top human-centered reasons, and for conservation and for wildlife management are the top ecological reasons.

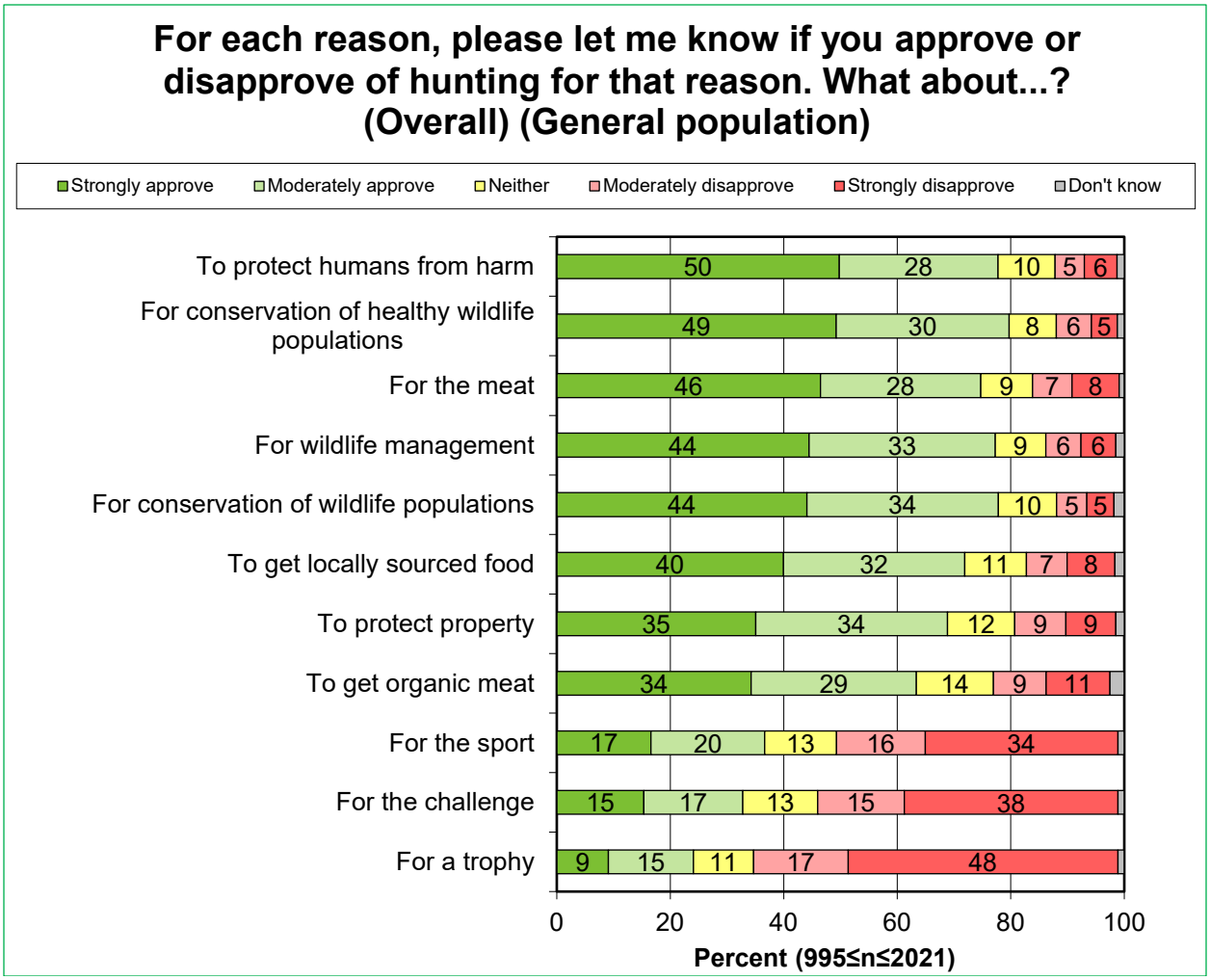

Figure ES6. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting for Various Reasons

Table ES2. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting for Various Reasons											
U.S. residents overall (percentage who approve / disapprove)	To protect humans from harm	For conservation of healthy wildlife populations	For the meat	For wildlife management	For conservation of wildlife populations	To get locally sourced food	To protect property	To get organic meat	For the sport	For the challenge	For a trophy
Total approve	78	80	75	77	78	72	69	63	37	33	24
Total disapprove	11	11	15	12	10	16	18	21	50	53	64

Trends analysis in Figure ES7 revealed that reasons for legal, regulated hunting have lost support across the board, including traditionally strong approval reasons such as hunting for the meat (down 9.5% or 24.1 million people [statistically significant, $p \leq 0.05$]), hunting to protect people from harm (down 6.9% or 17.5 million people [statistically significant, $p \leq 0.05$]), and hunting for to get locally sourced food (down 10.9% or 27.6 million people [statistically significant, $p \leq 0.05$]). For most of the motivations, 2023 showed the lowest approval of all the survey years presented in the graph.

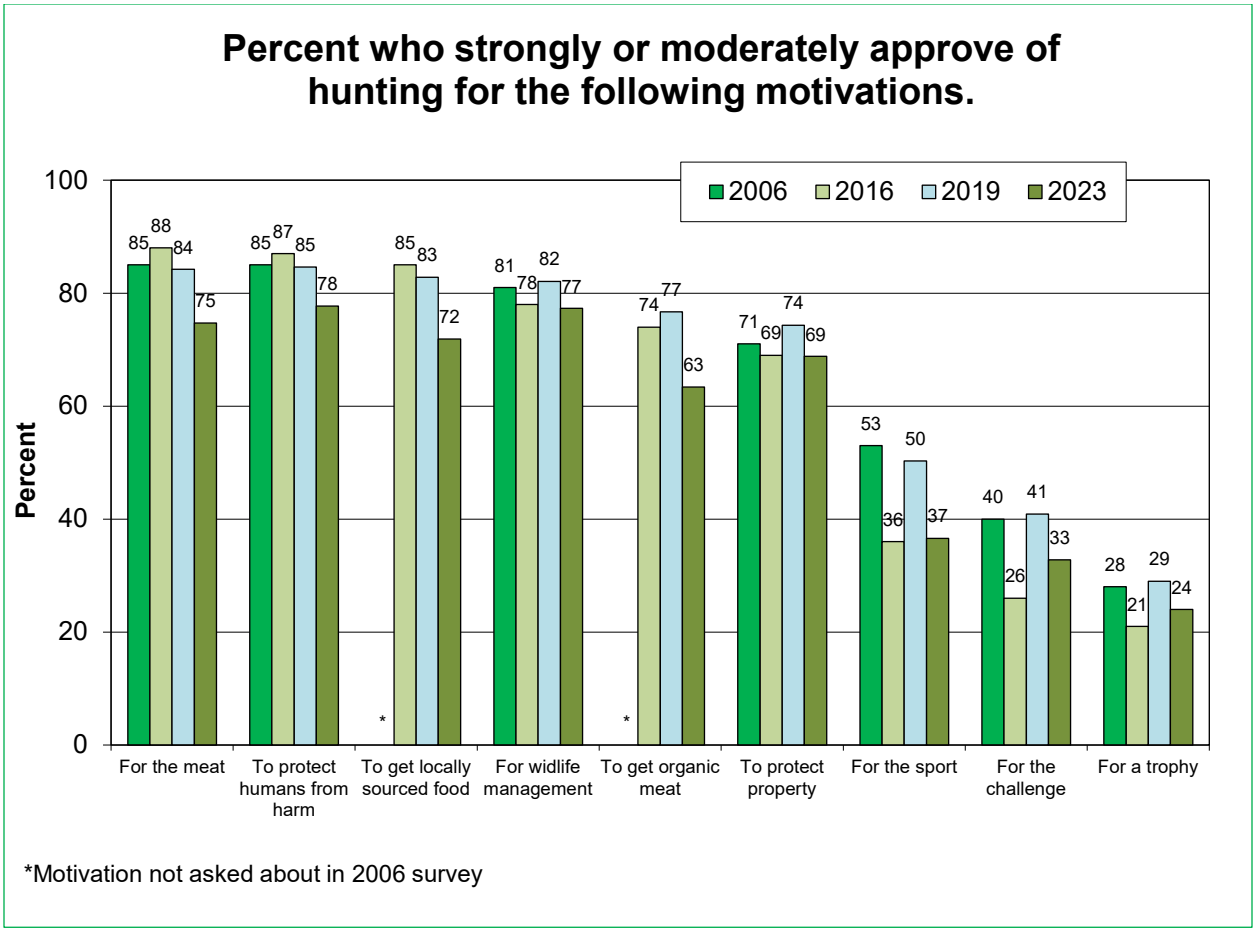

Figure ES7. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting for Various Reasons (Trends)

Concerning hunting various species, the highest approval rate is for the hunting of deer and wild turkey: 69% of U.S. residents approve of hunting these species (Figure ES8 and Table ES3). In a second tier are five commonly hunted species, all with approval rates of 55% up to 63%. For the rest of the species, disapproval exceeds approval.

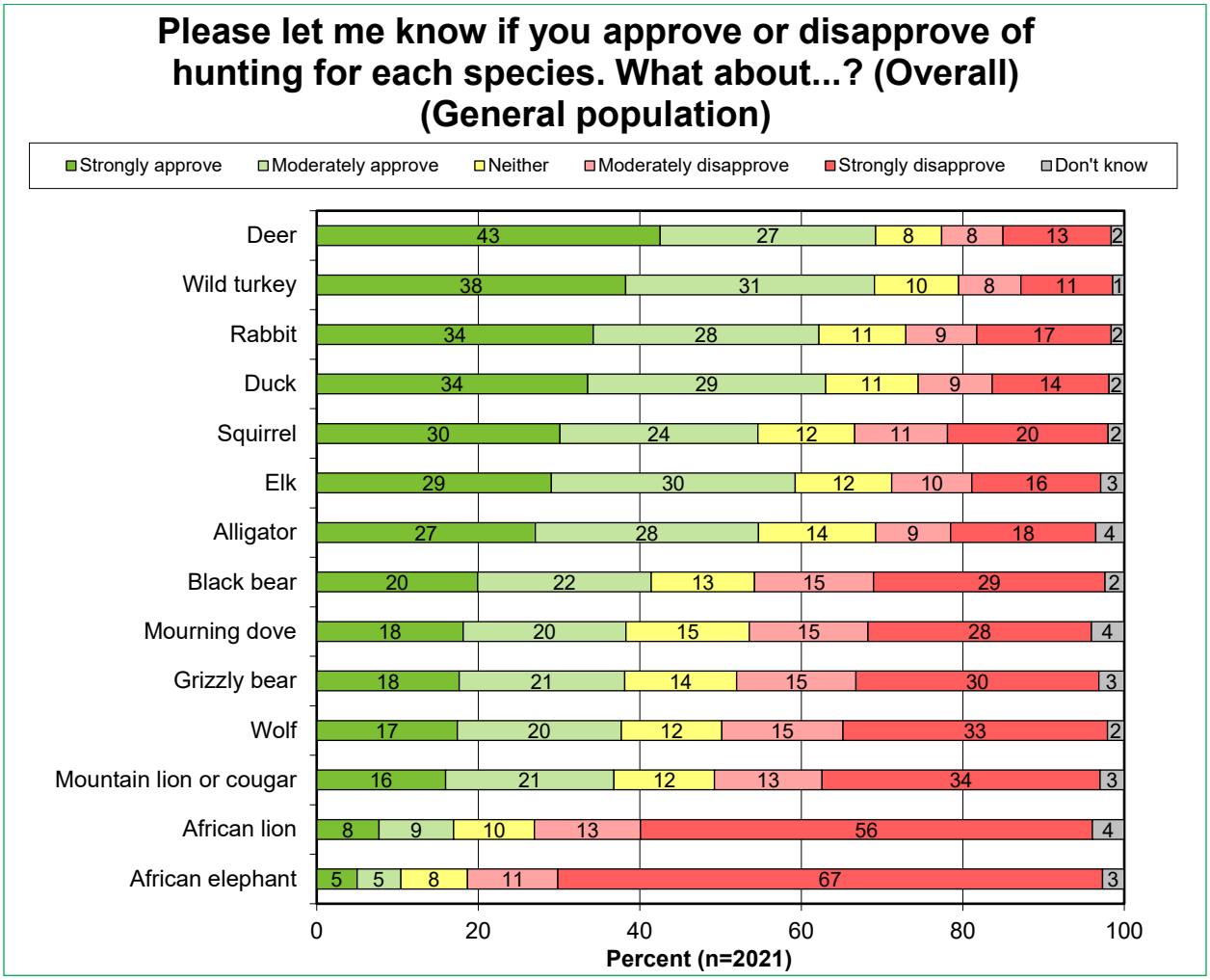

Figure ES8. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting Various Species

Table ES3. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting Various Species

U.S. residents overall (percentage who approve / disapprove)	Deer	Wild turkey	Rabbit	Duck	Squirrel	Elk	Alligator	Black bear	Mourning dove	Grizzly bear	Wolf	Mountain lion	African lion	African elephant
Total approve	69	69	62	63	55	59	55	41	38	38	38	37	17	10
Total disapprove	21	19	25	24	31	26	27	43	42	45	48	48	69	79

Approval of legal hunting most species has gone down in 2023 compared to previous years (Figure ES9 and ES10). For example, hunting deer lost 8.5% support between 2023 and 2019, which represents 21.5 million people (statistically significant, $p \leq 0.05$).

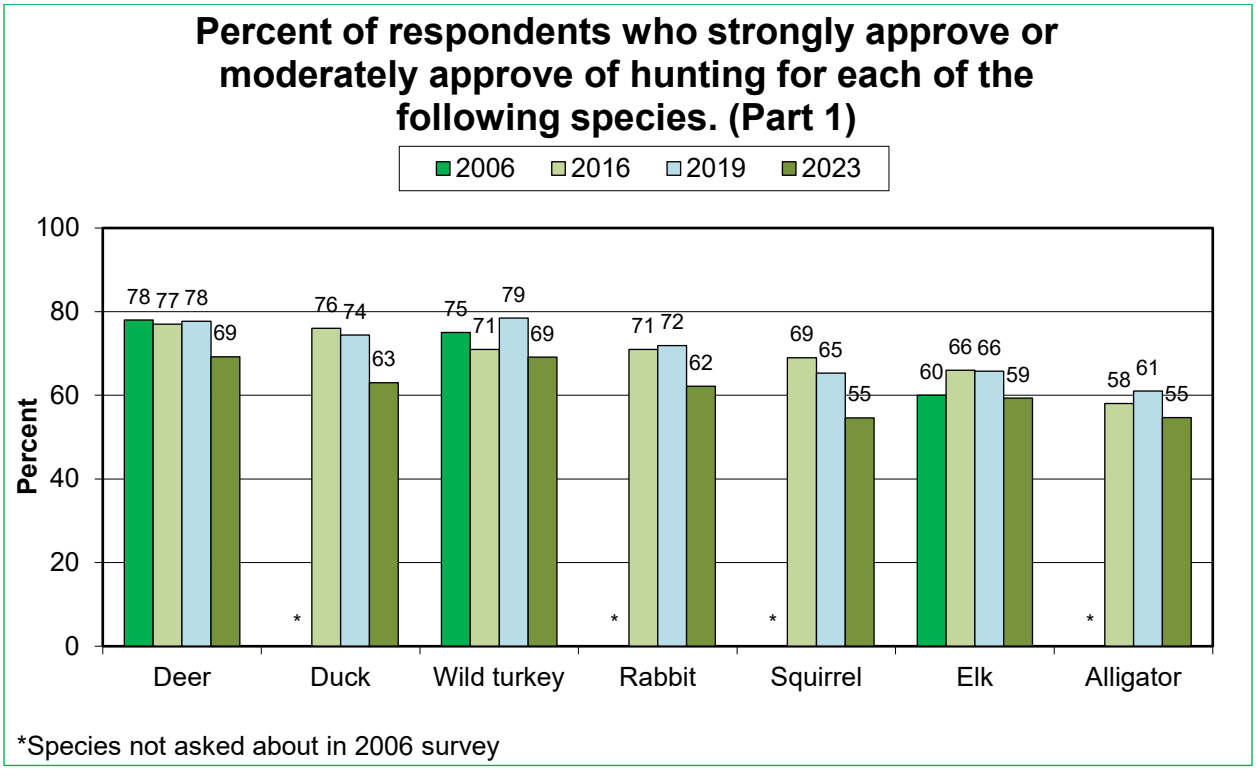

Figure ES9. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting Various Species (Trends) (Part 1)

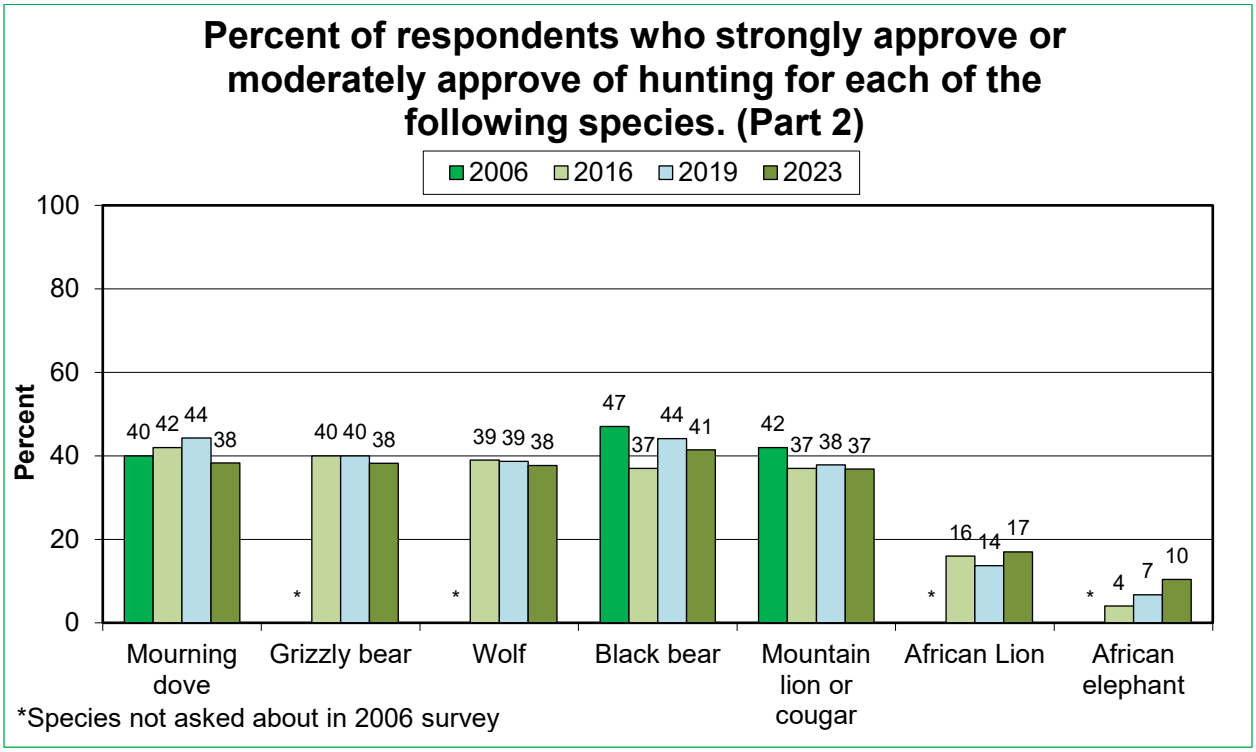

Figure ES10. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting Various Species (Trends) (Part 2)

Regarding methods of legal hunting, the highest approval is hunting with a bow and arrow and hunting with a firearm: both have approximately two thirds of Americans approving (Figure ES11 and Table ES4). Next in approval is hunting with dogs, with a majority in approval. Below that, less than a majority approve of the rest, with the three lowest having higher disapproval than approval. All of the methods at the bottom affect fair chase, seemingly giving humans too much of an advantage.

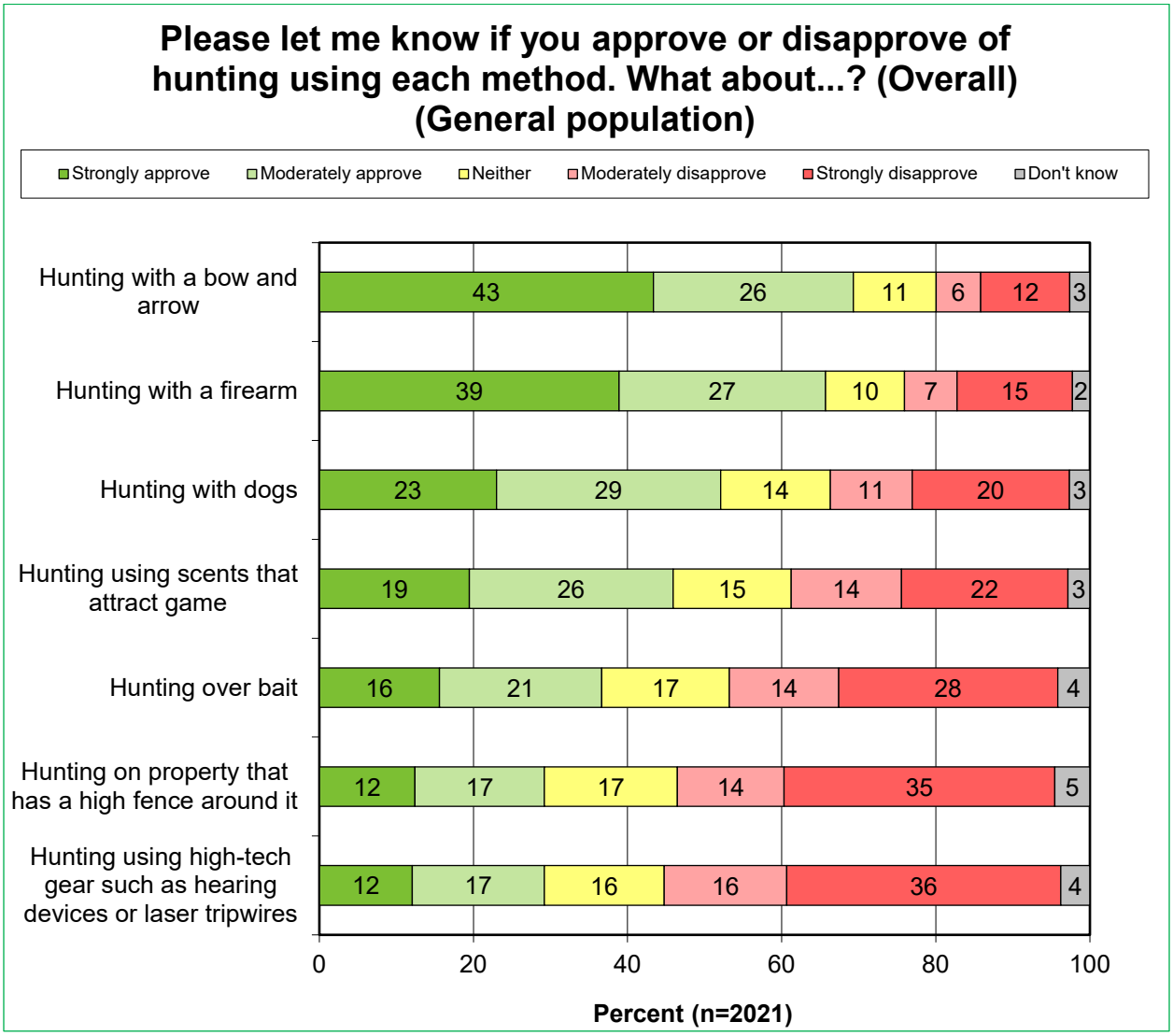

Figure ES11. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting Using Various Methods

Table ES4. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting Using Various Methods

U.S. residents overall (percentage who approve / disapprove)	Hunting with a bow and arrow	Hunting with a firearm	Hunting with dogs	Hunting using scents that attract game	Hunting over bait	Hunting on property that has a high-fence around it	Hunting using high-tech gear
Total approve	69	66	52	46	37	29	29
Total disapprove	17	22	31	36	43	49	51

The trends show lower approval in 2023 for hunting with a bow and arrow and hunting with dogs (Figure ES12). There is higher approval for the rest of the methods. Note that hunting with firearms was not previously asked. The wording on the high-fence hunting was as follows in 2006: Hunting in a high-fence preserve. In surveys from 2016 on, the wording was as follows: Hunting on property that has a high fence around it.

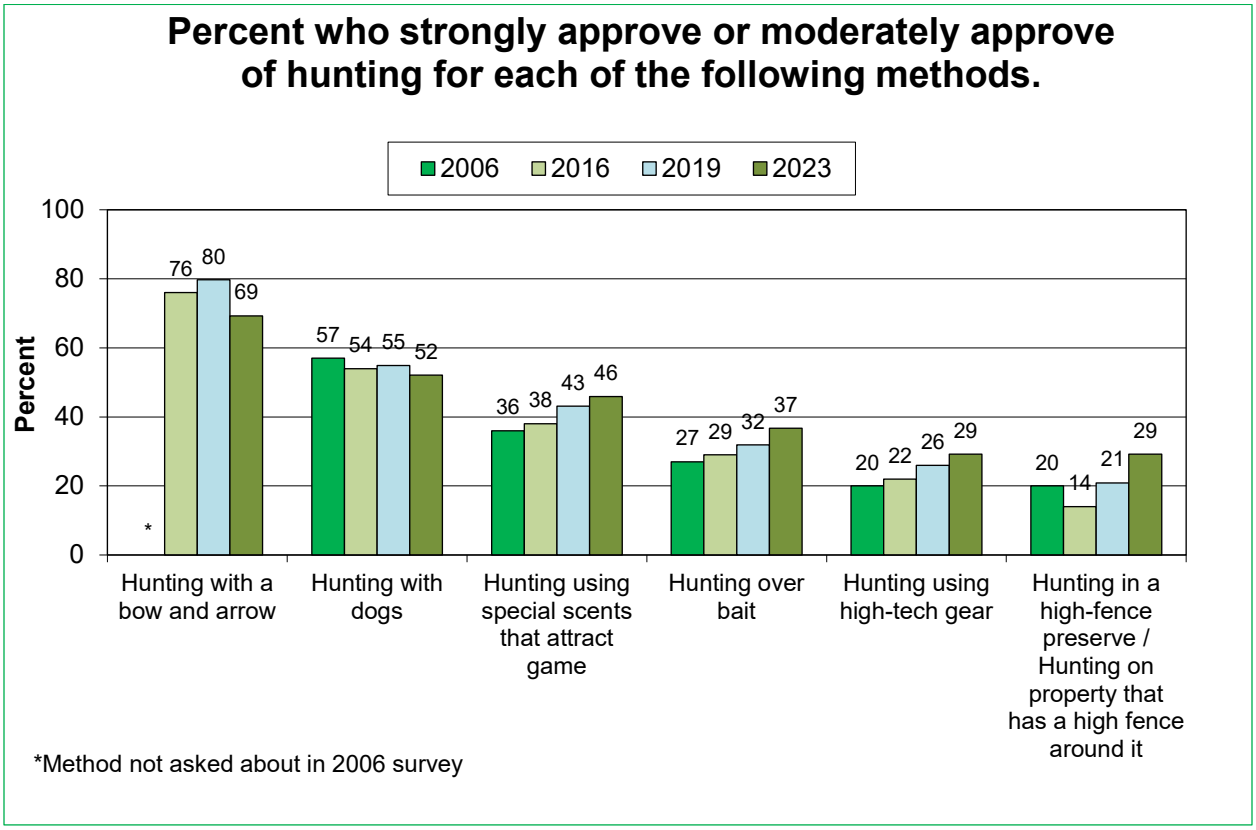

Figure ES12. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting Using Various Methods (Trends)

APPROVAL OF LEGAL RECREATIONAL TARGET/SPORT SHOOTING FOR VARIOUS REASONS

The most acceptable reason for target/sport shooting among Americans is to sport shoot to learn self-defense skills, with half of residents strongly approving and almost three quarters (74%) approving overall of that as a reason to sport shoot (Figure ES13 and Table ES5). The next two are in the middle tier: 68% and 62% approving of sport shooting to practice for hunting and for recreation, respectively. The lowest approval is sport shooting for the challenge, although there are still a majority who approve (56%).

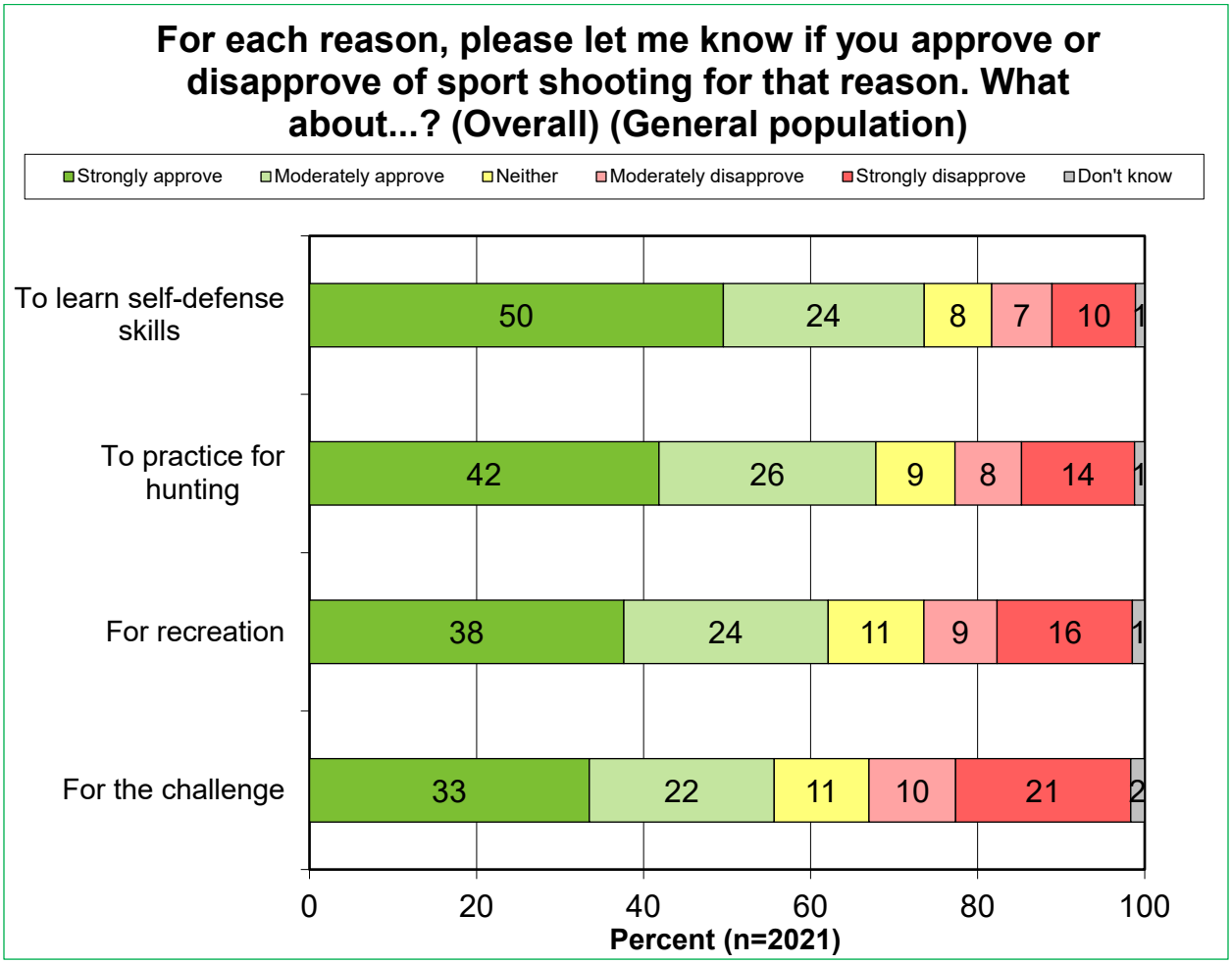

Figure ES13. Approval and Disapproval of Sport Shooting for Various Reasons

Table ES5. Approval and Disapproval of Sport Shooting for Various Reasons				
U.S. residents overall (percentage who approve / disapprove)	To learn self-defense skills	To practice for hunting	For recreation	For the challenge
Total approve	74	68	62	56
Total disapprove	17	21	25	31

The large majority of U.S. residents (68%) think that most sport shooters know how to handle firearms and are careful. Nonetheless, 16% think that most sport shooters do not know how to properly handle firearms.

APPROVAL OF REGULATED TRAPPING FOR VARIOUS REASONS

Although approval of trapping among U.S. residents is at 54%, with disapproval at 28%, the approval of trapping goes up when residents consider some of the reasons for trapping. In fact, every reason for trapping has higher approval than that except for doing so to make money, for fur clothing, or for recreation (Figure ES14 and Table ES6). The top two reasons are as part of a restoration program, in which the animal lives, and for food, in which the animal is harvested.

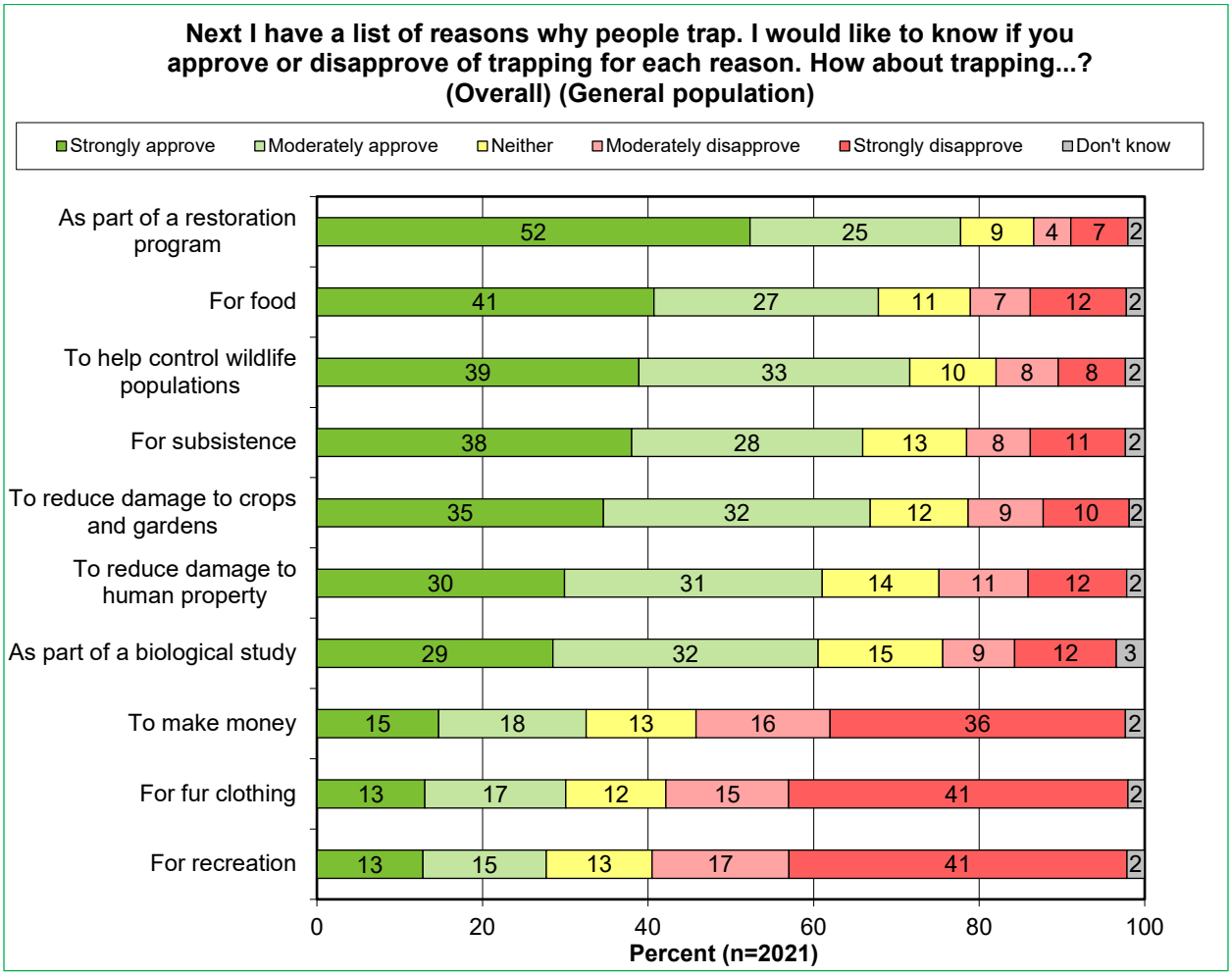

Figure ES14. Approval and Disapproval of Trapping for Various Reasons

Table ES6. Approval and Disapproval of Trapping for Various Reasons

U.S. residents overall (percentage who approve / disapprove)	As part of a restoration program	For food	To help control wildlife populations	For subsistence	To reduce damage to crops and gardens	To reduce damage to human property	As part of a biological study	To make money	For fur clothing	For recreation
Total approve	78	68	72	66	67	61	61	33	30	28
Total disapprove	11	19	16	19	19	23	21	52	56	57

As shown in Figure ES15, there is one other survey to compare with the current results in the trends. Approval for almost every reason drops in 2023 compared to 2019.

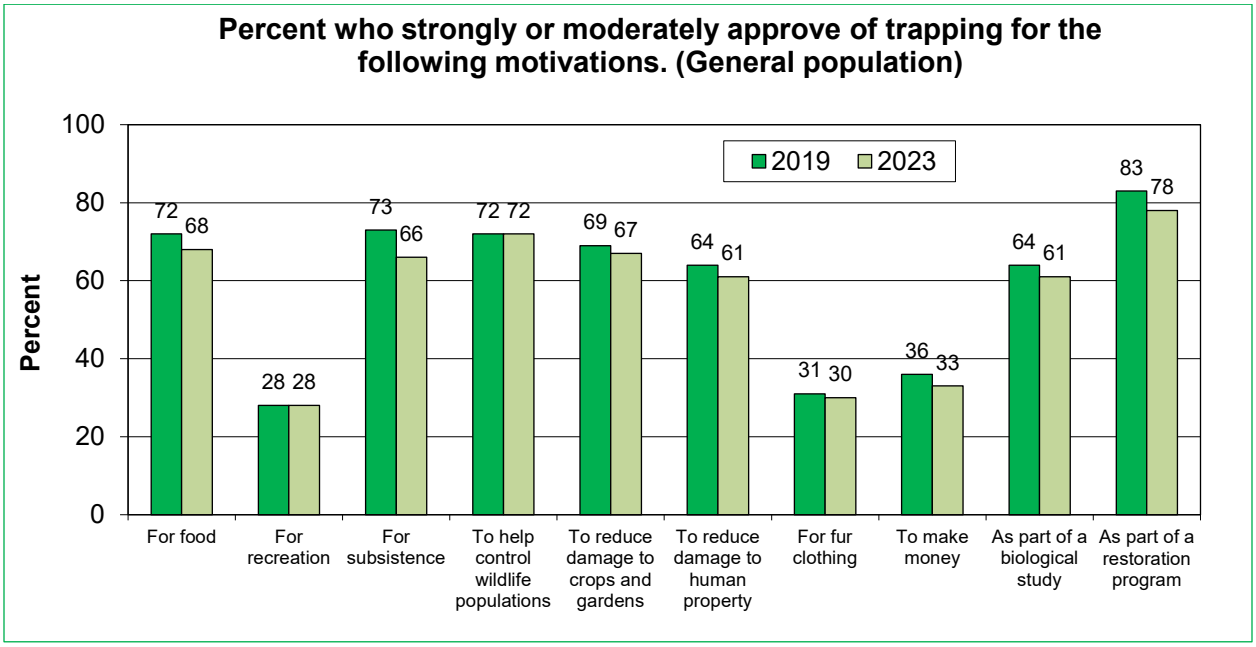

Figure ES15. Approval and Disapproval of Trapping for Various Reasons (Trends)

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INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted by Responsive Management and the Outdoor Stewards of Conservation Foundation, Inc., to measure Americans' attitudes toward legal, regulated fishing, sport shooting, hunting, and trapping. Responsive Management has tracked public attitudes on the four activities in various forms since 1995, and the study makes use of this trend data by examining how Americans' attitudes have changed over the years.[1] The study also examines how approval of fishing, hunting, and trapping varies by motivation, species, and method. Identifying the trends in these attitudes is important for developing, managing, and assessing recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3) programs for these activities in the continually changing social and political climates of the U.S. The purpose of this study is to proactively track these trends and to accurately update our understanding of Americans' current attitudes and how they impact R3 efforts.

This study entailed a scientific, probability-based multi-modal survey of U.S. residents aged 18 and older. Data from the survey were weighted to ensure that the results were representative of adult Americans as a whole. **Many graphs within this report reference percentage increases or decreases. It is important to know that each 1.0% of change represents 2,532,726 adult Americans (aged 18 and older).**

In the survey, the four activities are referred to as follows: "legal hunting," "legal recreational fishing," "legal recreational shooting," and "regulated trapping." The qualifying terms before each activity serve to exclude any illegal or improper variations of the activity, as might be the case if a respondent were to interpret the single term "hunting" as being inclusive of poaching.

The project was funded by a Multistate Conservation Grant, a program funded from the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program, and jointly managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA). Previous similar trend surveys have been funded by a variety of partners and grants, including through the National Shooting Sports Foundation, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Multistate Conservation Grant Program, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Hunters' Leadership Forum, the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the Southeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

Other sources for the data used in the fishing, hunting, and trapping trend analysis include survey research for the Professional Outdoor Media Association and surveys conducted by Responsive Management for the Archery Trade Association; additionally, the trend analysis on shooting uses data from a survey by Roper Starch Worldwide. Sample sizes for these surveys range from 800 to 5,103, with sampling errors ranging from plus or minus 1.4 to 3.5 percentage points. All telephone surveys administered since 2006 entailed landlines and cell phones called in their proper state and regional proportions.

A discussion of the specific aspects of the research methodology follows.

[1] For the trend results in this report, comparisons of the new data are made only to previous survey questions that used consistent wording.

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

Responsive Management and the Outdoor Stewards of Conservation Foundation developed the telephone and online survey questionnaires cooperatively, based in part on the previous surveys as well as the research team's familiarity with outdoor recreation. The questionnaires, in part, included questions from previous surveys to allow for a trend analysis. There are slight differences between the telephone and online versions of the survey to accommodate each survey mode, but otherwise the surveys are identical. Responsive Management conducted pre-tests of the questionnaires to ensure proper wording, flow, and logic in the survey.

SURVEY SAMPLES

The samples of U.S. residents (telephone and online) were obtained from and maintained by Marketing Systems Group, a firm that specializes in providing scientifically valid samples for survey research. For the telephone survey, both landlines and cell phones were sampled in their existing proportions in the population.

In the study, each state was sampled proportionately to preserve proper distribution within each region and in the U.S. as a whole. The states were grouped into regions to aid in comparison and analysis; the five main USFWS regions were used, as shown in Figure 1.

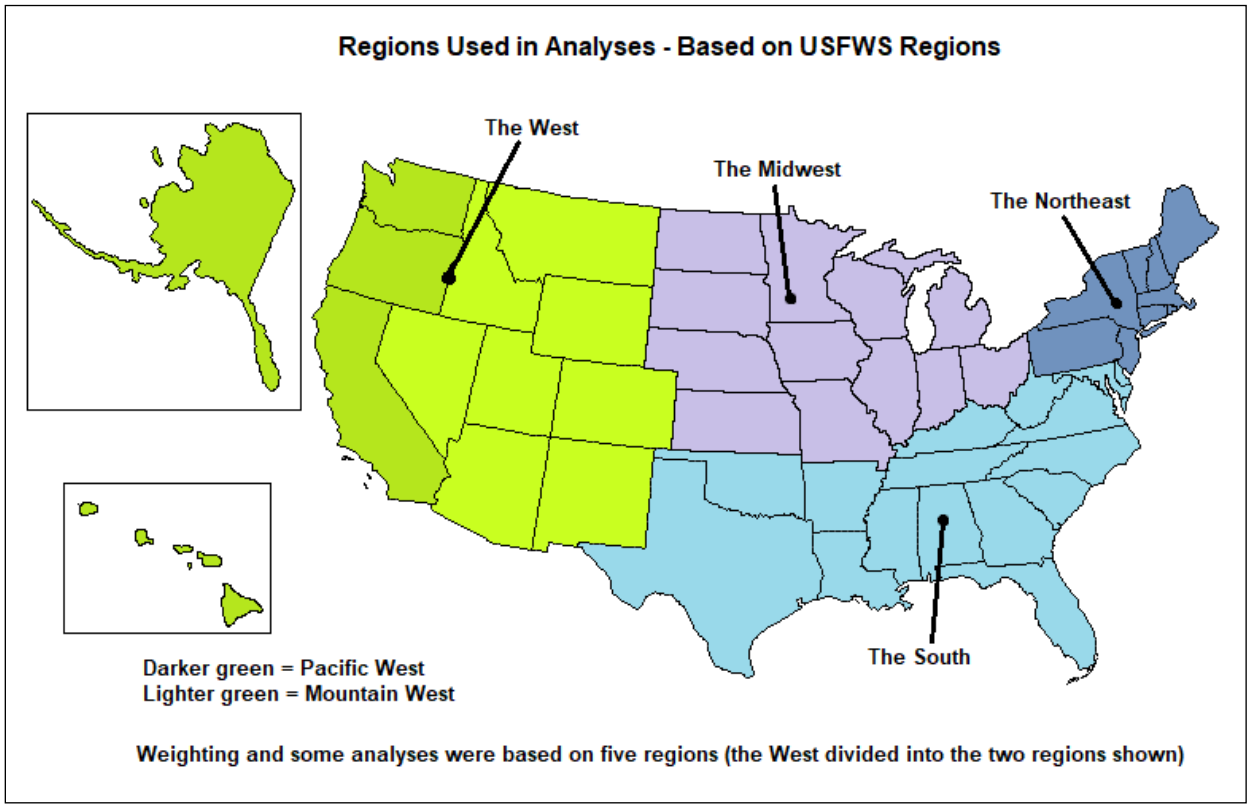


Figure 1. Map of Regions

Note that some analyses for this study had to be performed on only the four U.S. Census Bureau regions to be consistently compared to trend data. When four regions were used, the USFWS Mountain West and Pacific West regions (shown in darker and lighter green, respectively, on the map above) were combined into a single West region matching the U.S. Census Bureau's West region.

For the telephone portion of the survey, the sample used a probability-based selection process that ensured that all U.S. residents with a telephone had an approximately equal chance of being selected for the survey within each region.

For analysis of the combined telephone and online survey results, weighting was applied to ensure that the regions exactly matched U.S. Census data for U.S. residents 18 years old and older, and then the regions were weighted so that they would be in proper proportions for the nationwide results. The final sample was representative of all U.S. residents 18 years old and older. Note that in the report, this sample is referred to interchangeably as U.S. residents or Americans.

MULTI-MODAL SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

The survey was conducted by telephone and online. The version of the survey conducted by telephone was coded for integration with Responsive Management's computer-assisted telephone interviewing process. The online version of the survey was coded in an online platform by Responsive Management and was administered to the online sample, as well as to cell phone respondents who did not respond via phone call and were sent a text. An important aspect of both the online and telephone versions of the survey is that the computer controls which questions are asked and allows for immediate data entry.

Surveys conducted by telephone are administered by a live interviewer. Telephone interviews were conducted Monday through Friday from noon to 9:00 p.m. and Saturday from noon to 7:00 p.m., local time, using interviewers with experience conducting computer-assisted surveys about conservation and outdoor recreation. A five-callback design was used to avoid bias toward people easy to reach by telephone and to provide an equal opportunity for all to participate. When a respondent could not be reached on the first call, subsequent calls were placed on different days of the week and at different times of the day. The survey was conducted at the time of initial contact, or a callback time was set that was more convenient for the respondent.

The online survey was administered to both the online sample and to cell phone respondents who did not respond via phone call and were sent a text. Note that the online survey was closed, meaning it was available only to respondents who were specifically selected for the survey. Respondents could complete the survey only once, and the survey could not be accessed through a general internet search. Nonetheless, the online component of the survey provides a greater opportunity to reach more residents, particularly younger residents, who may be more likely to complete the survey online.

Residents with a cell phone number who could not be reached after five call attempts were sent a text message inviting them to complete the survey online. Respondents received the text message from a phone number with an area code matching that of their state fish and wildlife agency. Limited characters were used for the text message to ensure that it could be delivered to all recipients, regardless of cell phone type or plan. An example of the initial short text message is shown on the following page, which provided a link to the online introduction with more information for the survey.

Text Invitation to Take the Survey

Hello [state] resident! This is [project manager name] with Responsive Management.
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would like your feedback on outdoor recreation activities in your state! Please consider participating in this short survey [survey link].

Online Information Provided by Text Survey Link

This survey is being conducted on behalf of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, under a grant with Responsive Management. The purpose of this survey is to find out more about Americans' attitudes about outdoor recreation activities.

Please be assured that the information you provide in the survey is completely confidential and will never be associated with any personal information. Thank you in advance for your time and participation in this important research.

Please click "Next" below to start the survey.

The survey was conducted in the Spring of 2023. Responsive Management obtained 2,021 completed questionnaires. In addition, for two questions in the survey, a sample of 5,117 was included of the U.S. general population who had responded to the questions.

SURVEY QUALITY CONTROL

For both the online and telephone versions of the survey, the questionnaire was programmed to branch and substitute phrases in the survey based on previous responses to ensure the integrity and consistency of the data collection. The survey questionnaire also contained error checkers and computation statements to ensure quality and consistent data.

For quality control of the telephone surveys, Survey Center managers monitored some of the interviews in real time and provided feedback to the interviewers. To ensure that the data collected by telephone are of the highest quality, the interviewers are trained through lectures, role-playing, and video training, according to the standards established by the American Association for Public Opinion Research. Methods of instruction included lecture and role-playing. The Survey Center managers and other professional staff conducted briefings with the interviewers prior to the administration of this survey. Interviewers were instructed on type of study, study goals and objectives, handling of survey questions, interview length, termination points and qualifiers for participation, interviewer instructions within the survey questionnaire, reading of the survey questions, skip patterns, and probing and clarifying techniques necessary for specific questions on the survey questionnaires.

For quality control of the online surveys, an additional question developed by Responsive Management was used to identify and filter out bots that may be automatically generating illegitimate results. In this "error check" question, respondents were instructed in the question to provide a specific answer. Therefore, any human respondent could provide the correct answer, while any incorrect responses signifying that a bot is most likely responding were removed from the survey.

Finally, after the surveys were obtained, the Survey Center managers and statisticians checked each completed survey to ensure clarity and completeness and to filter out any invalid respondents. Analysts reviewed all individual survey responses to identify other potential red flags. This entailed a review of survey responses to identify potentially invalid submittals, such as surveys that were completed in an unrealistically brief timeframe, which suggest that respondents were clicking through responses without reading and evaluating the questions, or "straight-lining" of responses, which is when respondents select (for example) the first or same response options throughout the survey. Also, open-ended responses to the final question asking for additional comments were used to identify and remove invalid respondents. All completed surveys of questionable quality were removed prior to data analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of data was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics as well as proprietary software developed by Responsive Management. There were set goals for the numbers of interviews in each state. The results were weighted by age, gender, and race/ethnicity to be exactly proportional to the total population of each region (see the map of regions shown on page 2) and of the United States as a whole.

Many graphs within this report reference percentage increases or decreases. It is important to know that each 1.0% of change represents 2,532,726 adult Americans (aged 18 and older).

SAMPLING ERROR

Throughout this report, findings of the telephone survey are reported at a 95% confidence interval. For the entire sample, the sampling error is at most plus or minus 2.18 percentage points. This means that if the survey were conducted 100 times on different samples that were selected in the same way, the findings of 95 out of the 100 surveys would fall within plus or minus 2.18 percentage points of each other. Sampling error was calculated using the formula described in Figure 2, with a sample size of 2,021 and a population size of 253,272,570 United States residents 18 years old and older (population data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau).

$$B = \left(\sqrt{\frac{\frac{N_p(.25)}{N_s} - .25}{N_p - 1}} \right) (1.96)$$

Where: B = maximum sampling error (as decimal)
N_P = population size (i.e., total number who could be surveyed)
N_S = sample size (i.e., total number of respondents surveyed)

Derived from formula: p. 206 in Dillman, D. A. 2000. *Mail and Internet Surveys*. John Wiley & Sons, NY.

Note: This is a simplified version of the formula that calculates the maximum sampling error using a 50:50 split (the most conservative calculation because a 50:50 split would give maximum variation).

Figure 2. Sampling Error Equation

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

In examining the results, it is important to be aware that the questionnaire included several types of questions:

- Single response questions: Some questions allow only a single response.
- Multiple response questions: Other questions allow respondents to give more than one response or choose all that apply. Those that allow more than a single response are indicated on the graphs with the label, "Multiple Responses Allowed."
- Closed-ended questions have an answer set from which to choose.
- Open-ended questions are those in which no answer set is presented to the respondents; rather, they can respond with anything that comes to mind from the question.
- Scaled questions: Many closed-ended questions (but not all) are in a scale, such as one that ranges from very important to not at all important.
- Series questions: Many questions are part of a series, and the results are primarily intended to be examined relative to the other questions in that series (although results of the questions individually can also be valuable). Typically, results of all questions in a series are shown together.

Results are shown for nationwide results, followed by regional crosstabulations. In addition, trends graphs are included to show 2023 results alongside results from 1995, 2003, 2006, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2019, and 2021 for comparison. Note that not all survey questions have trend data available from each year listed. For example, the graphs for approval of legal hunting and legal recreational shooting include results for 2021, but there are not 2021 data available for other questions.

The report also includes special graphs that show how various demographic groups respond to certain questions, hereinafter simply referred to as demographic-participatory analyses graphs. Only select questions that were determined to be of the most interest or utility were analyzed in this way. The example Figure 3 is being provided to explain how to interpret these graphs.

The example graph shows the percentages of the various demographic groups in the general population who approve of legal hunting. Overall, 77% of general population U.S. residents aged 18 and older strongly or moderately approve of legal hunting, as shown by the patterned bar. Specific demographic groups shown above the overall bar have a higher percentage who approve of legal hunting. For instance, 83% of males approve of legal hunting, higher than among the general population overall. Meanwhile, those groups below the overall bar have lower percentages who approve; in this example, only 65% of Black or African American residents approve of legal hunting.

When one group is above the overall bar (for instance, in this example, males), its counterpart or one of its counterparts (in this instance, females) will typically be below the overall bar. The distance from the overall bar matters, as well. If a group is close to the overall bar (for instance, residents of the South Region in this example), then the group should not be considered markedly different from respondents overall. A rule of thumb is that the difference should be 5 percentage points or more for the difference to be noteworthy.

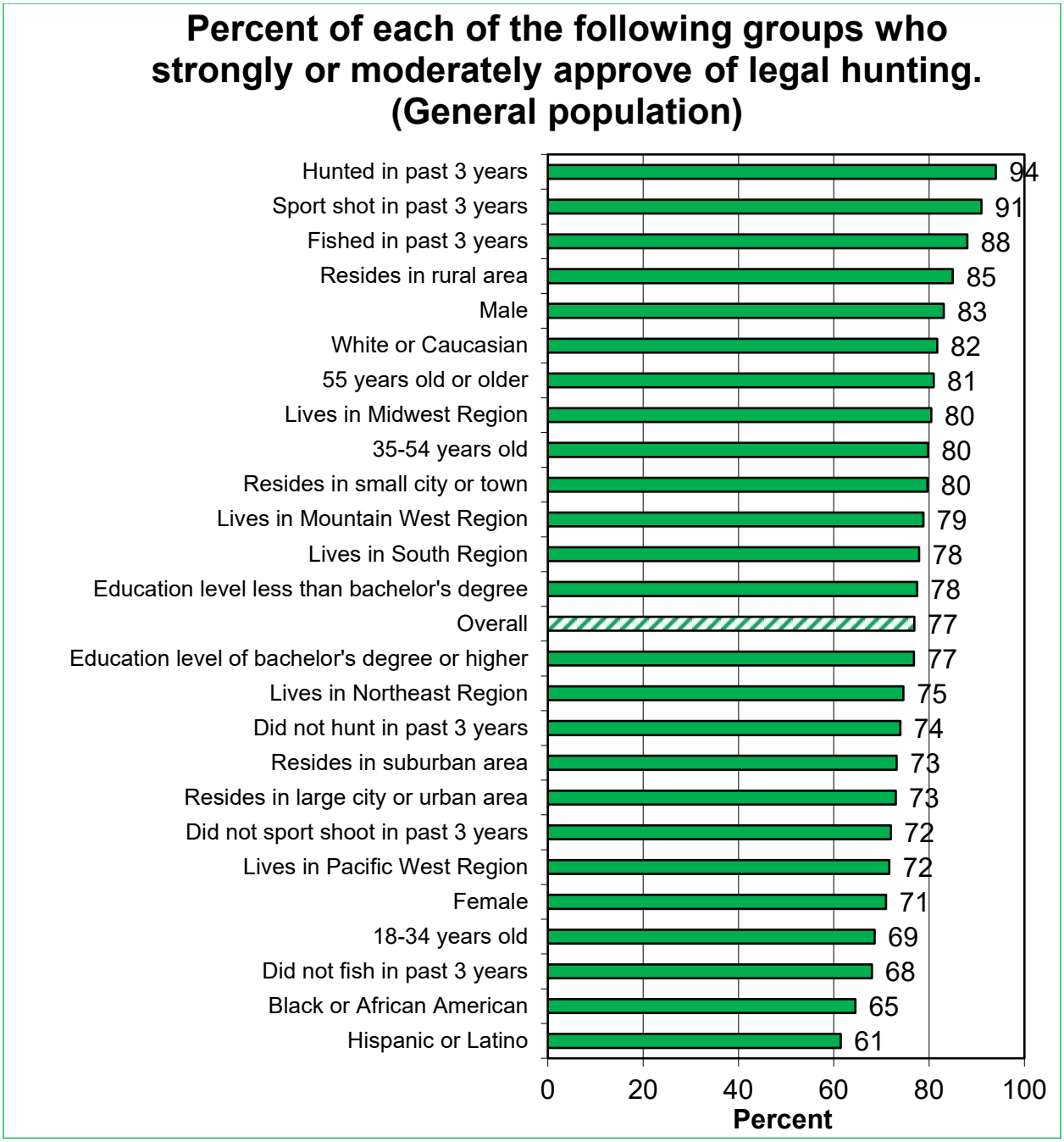


Figure 3. Example of a Demographic-Participatory Analyses Graph

For all the questions in the results that follow, the graphs among U.S. residents overall are shown first, followed by regional crosstabulation graphs. Trends graphs are next, shown for each question for which trends were run. After those are any other graphs of any special analyses that were run, including demographic-participatory analyses.

Finally, some sums presented in the report appear to be off by 1 percentage point. This apparent discrepancy is caused by rounding on the graphs. All sums are calculated on unrounded numbers. For instance, the next page shows that 78% of the general population approves of legal recreational shooting, the sum of the rounded values 48% and 29%. The unrounded values are 48.446% and 29.054%, which is 77.500%, which rounds to 78%.

APPROVAL OF LEGAL FISHING, SHOOTING, HUNTING, AND TRAPPING

Of the four activities, approval is highest for legal recreational fishing (90% of Americans approve) (Figure 4 and Table 1). Just a little lower are both approval of legal recreational shooting (78%) and legal hunting (77%). At the bottom is regulated trapping, of which 54% approve.

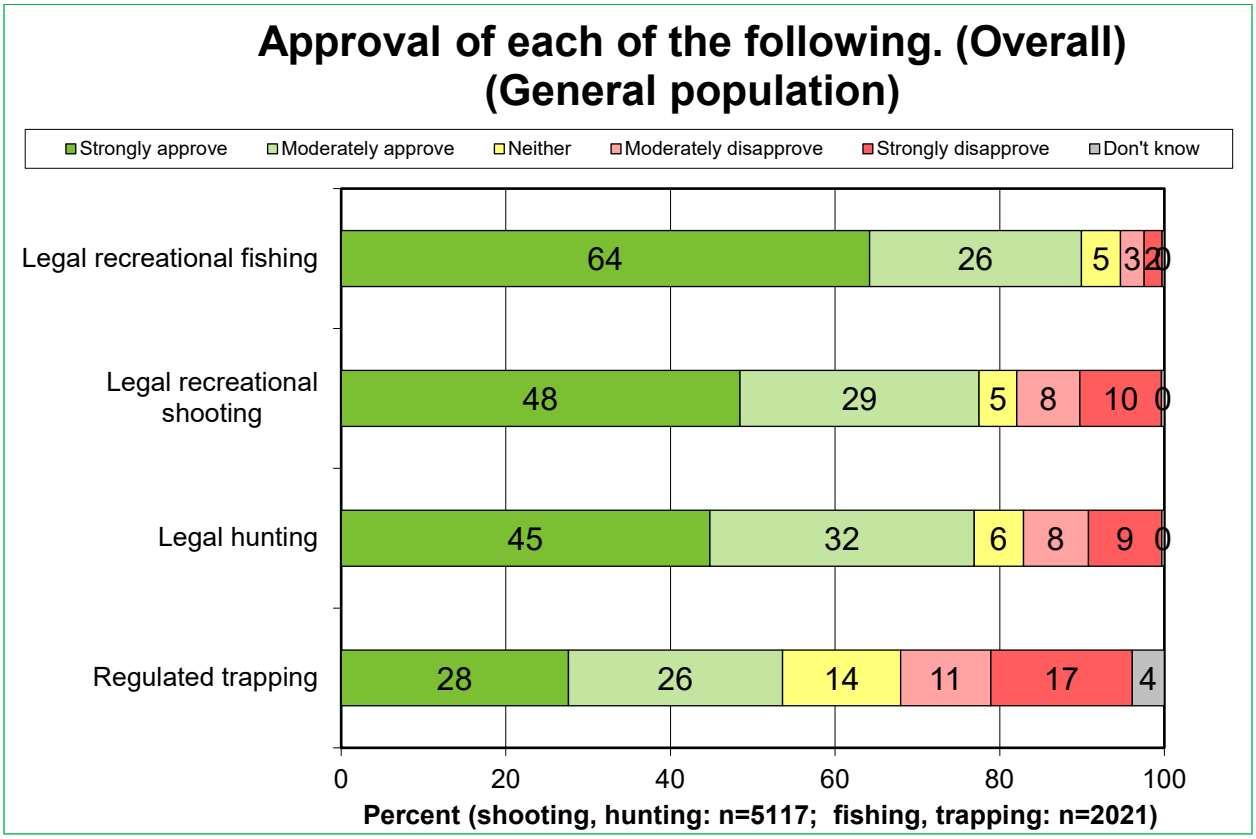


Figure 4. Approval and Disapproval of Fishing, Sport Shooting, Hunting, and Trapping

Table 1. Approval and Disapproval of Fishing, Sport Shooting, Hunting, and Trapping

U.S. residents overall (percentage who approve / disapprove)	Legal recreational fishing	Legal recreational shooting	Legal hunting	Regulated trapping
Total approve	90	78	77	54
Total disapprove	5	18	17	28

In the regional analyses, shown in Figures 5 through 8, residents of the Midwest have the highest approval rates:

- 93% for fishing compared to 87% to 90% in the rest of the regions.
- 82% for shooting compared to 73% to 77% in the rest of the regions.
- 80% for hunting compared to 74% to 78% in the rest of the regions.
- 57% for trapping compared to 50% to 54% in the rest of the regions.

In the regional results in Table 2, light green shading shows the highest approval among the four regions, and light red shows the highest disapproval.

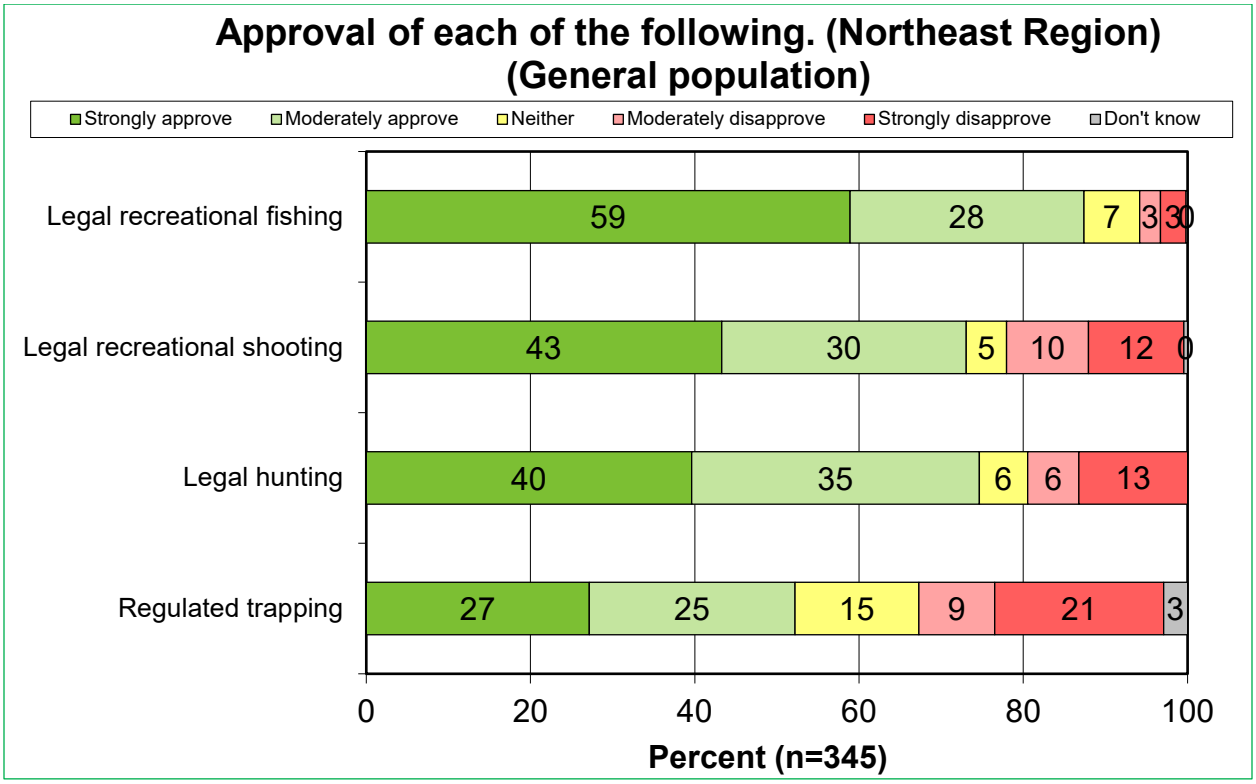


Figure 5. Approval and Disapproval of Fishing, Sport Shooting, Hunting, and Trapping (Northeast)

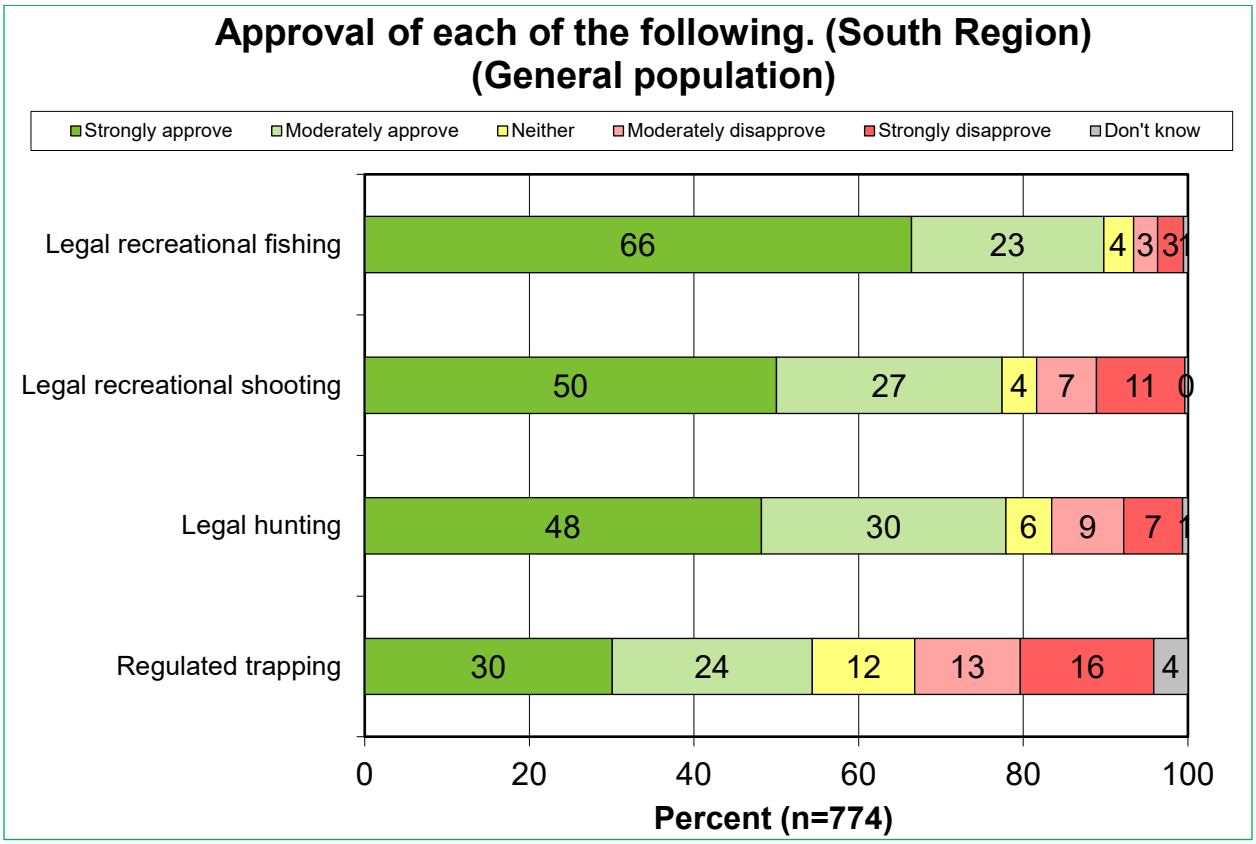


Figure 6. Approval and Disapproval of Fishing, Sport Shooting, Hunting, and Trapping (South)

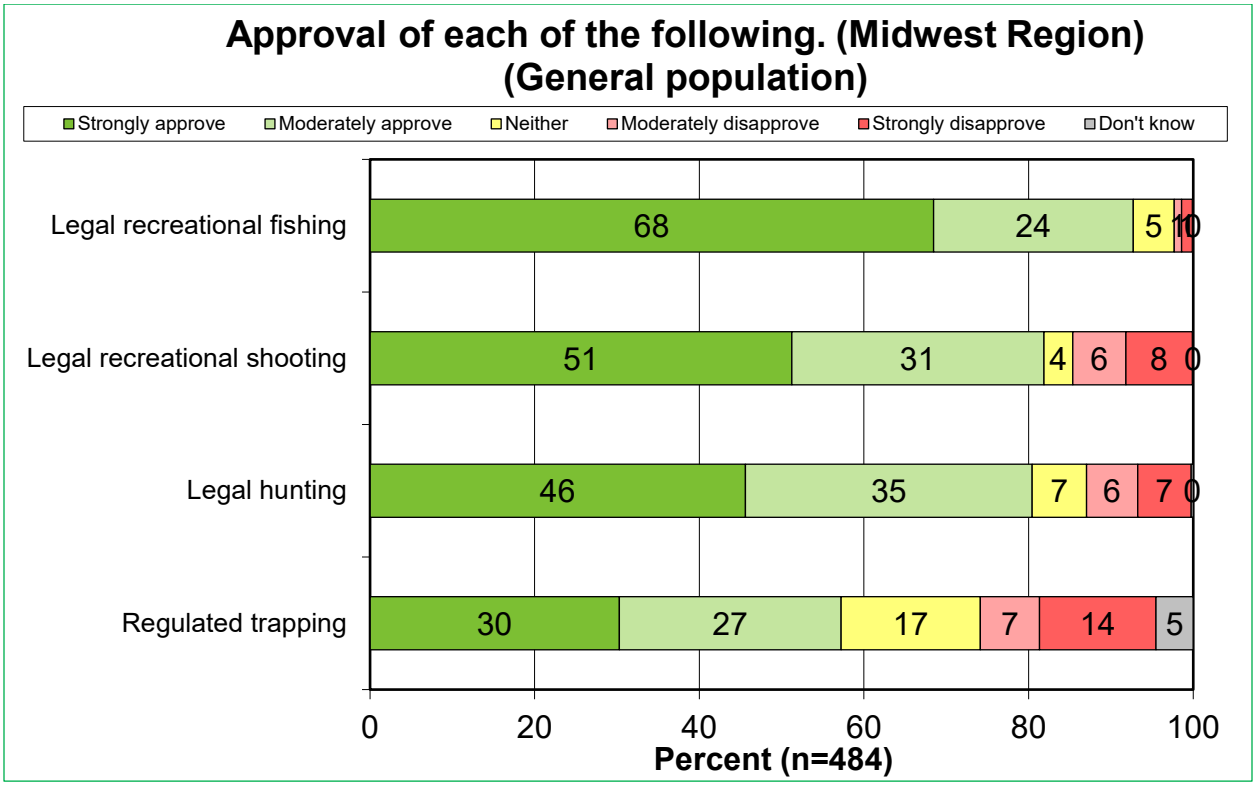


Figure 7. Approval and Disapproval of Fishing, Sport Shooting, Hunting, and Trapping (Midwest)

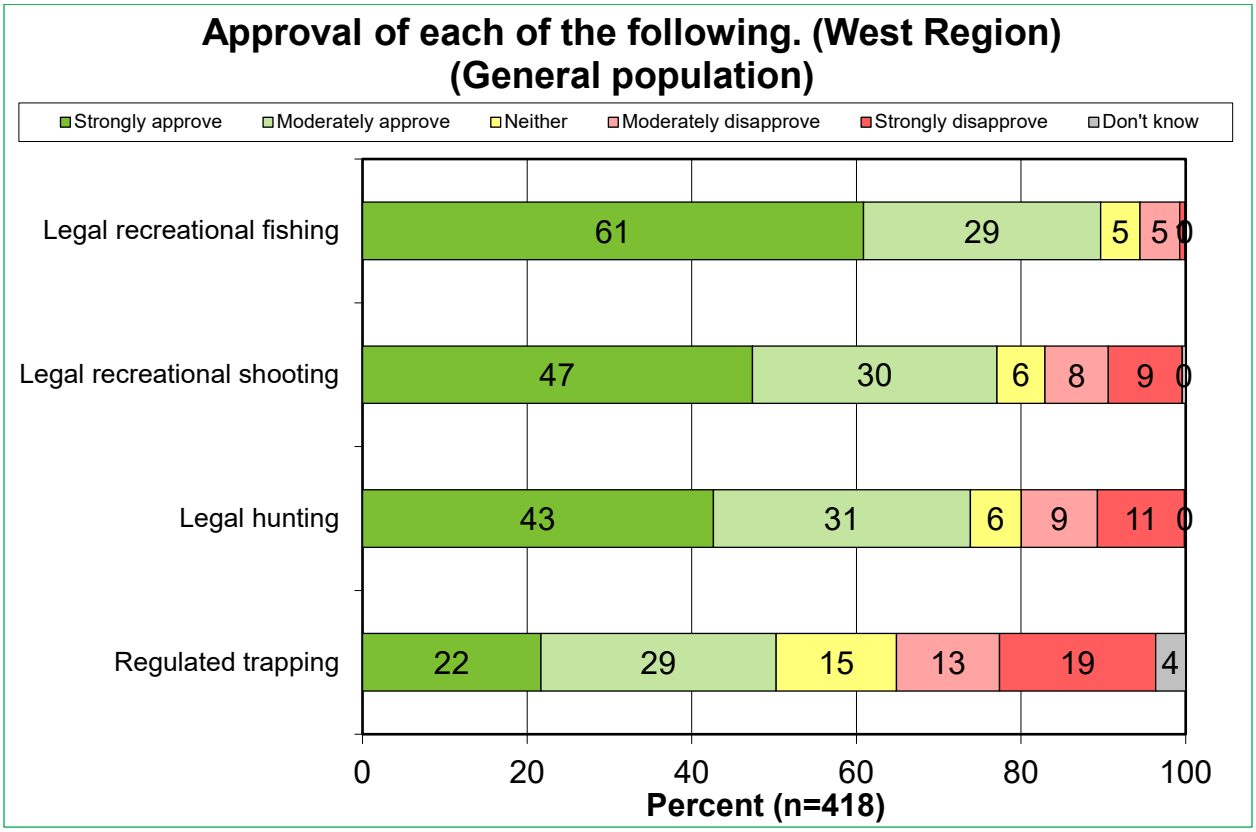


Figure 8. Approval and Disapproval of Fishing, Sport Shooting, Hunting, and Trapping (West)

Table 2. Approval and Disapproval of Fishing, Sport Shooting, Hunting, and Trapping (Regions)					
Percentage who approve / disapprove		Legal recreational fishing	Legal recreational shooting	Legal hunting	Regulated trapping
Northeast Region	Total approve	87	73	75	52
	Total disapprove	6	22	19	30
South Region	Total approve	90	77	78	54
	Total disapprove	6	18	16	29
Midwest Region	Total approve	93	82	80	57
	Total disapprove	2	15	13	21
West Region	Total approve	90	77	74	50
	Total disapprove	5	17	20	31

Trends graphs are presented in Figures 9 through 12 of approval of fishing, shooting, hunting, and trapping. The graphs show, compared to recent years, a decline in approval of fishing, shooting, and hunting (as well as an increase in disapproval). Regarding trapping, overall approval is about the same in the three surveys shown in the graph. Disapproval has declined slightly, but respondents moved to neither, for the most part, rather than approval.

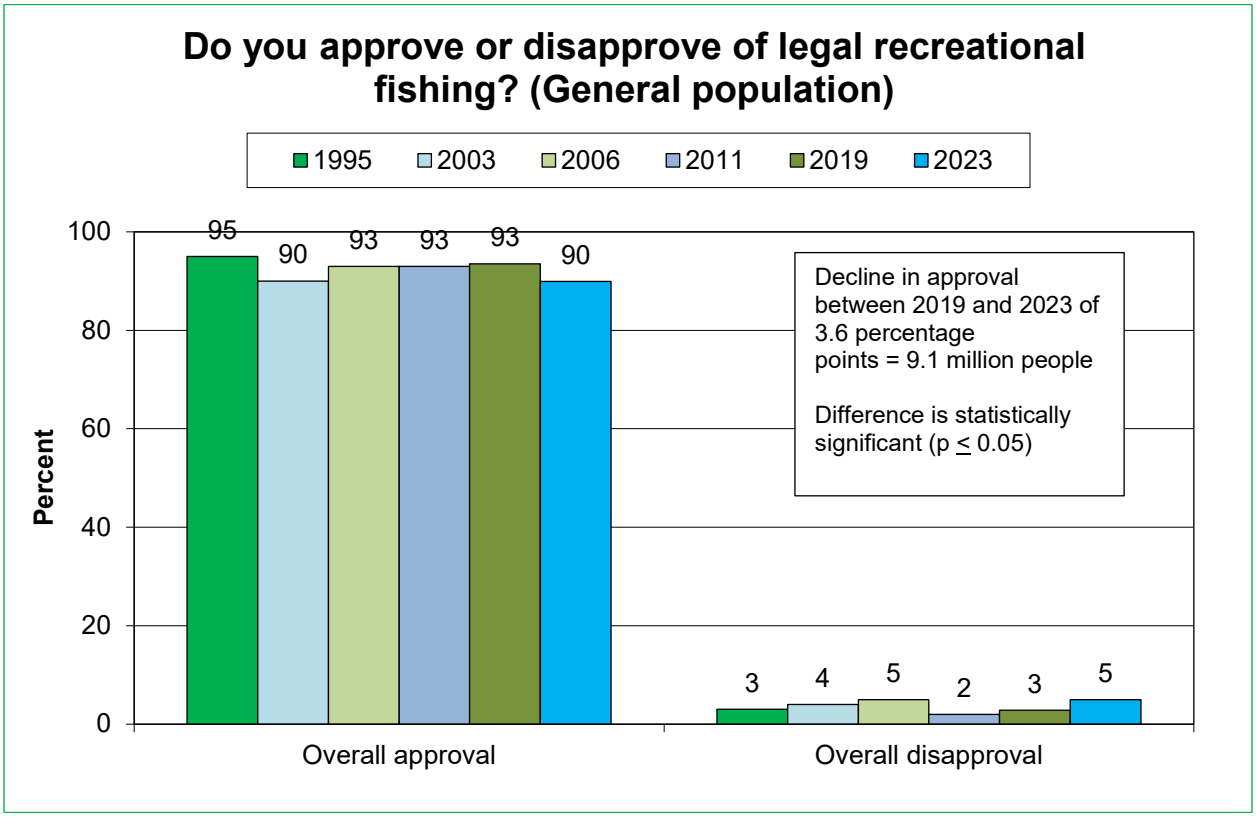


Figure 9. Approval and Disapproval of Recreational Fishing (Trends)

* Over 18 population of the U.S. is 253,272,570, which was used in all these calculations.

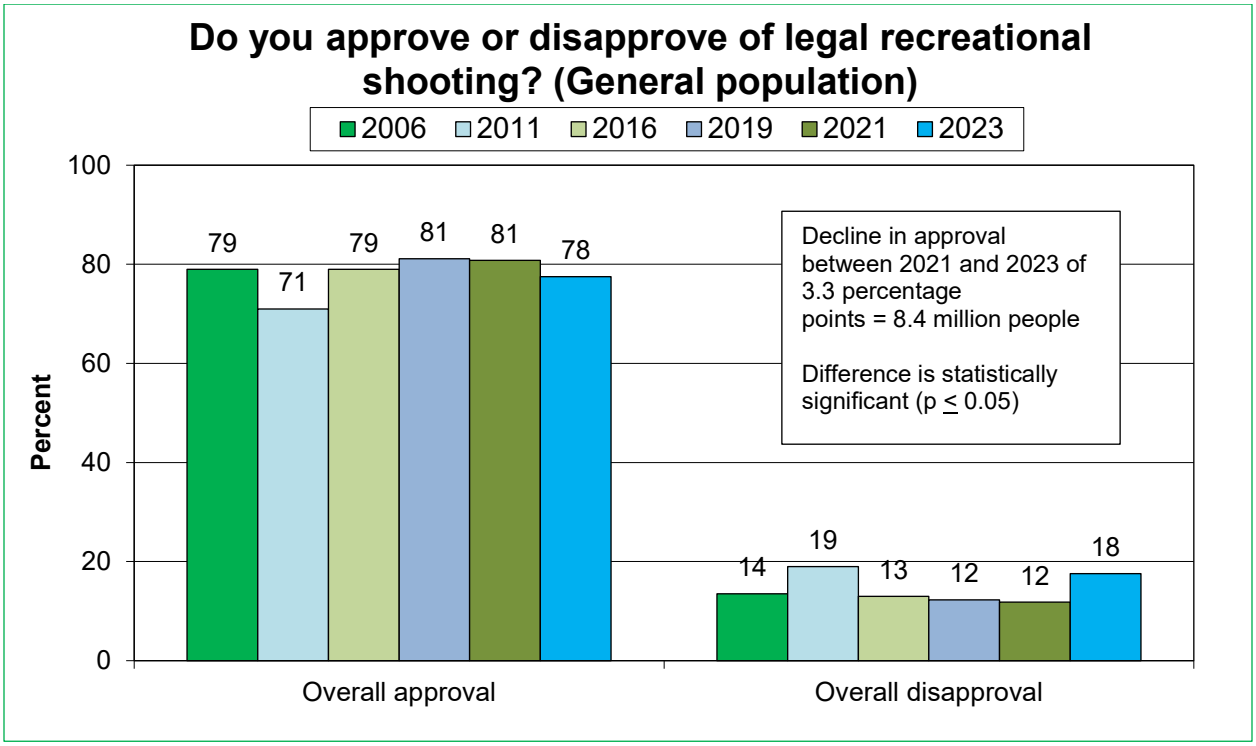


Figure 10. Approval and Disapproval of Recreational Shooting (Trends)

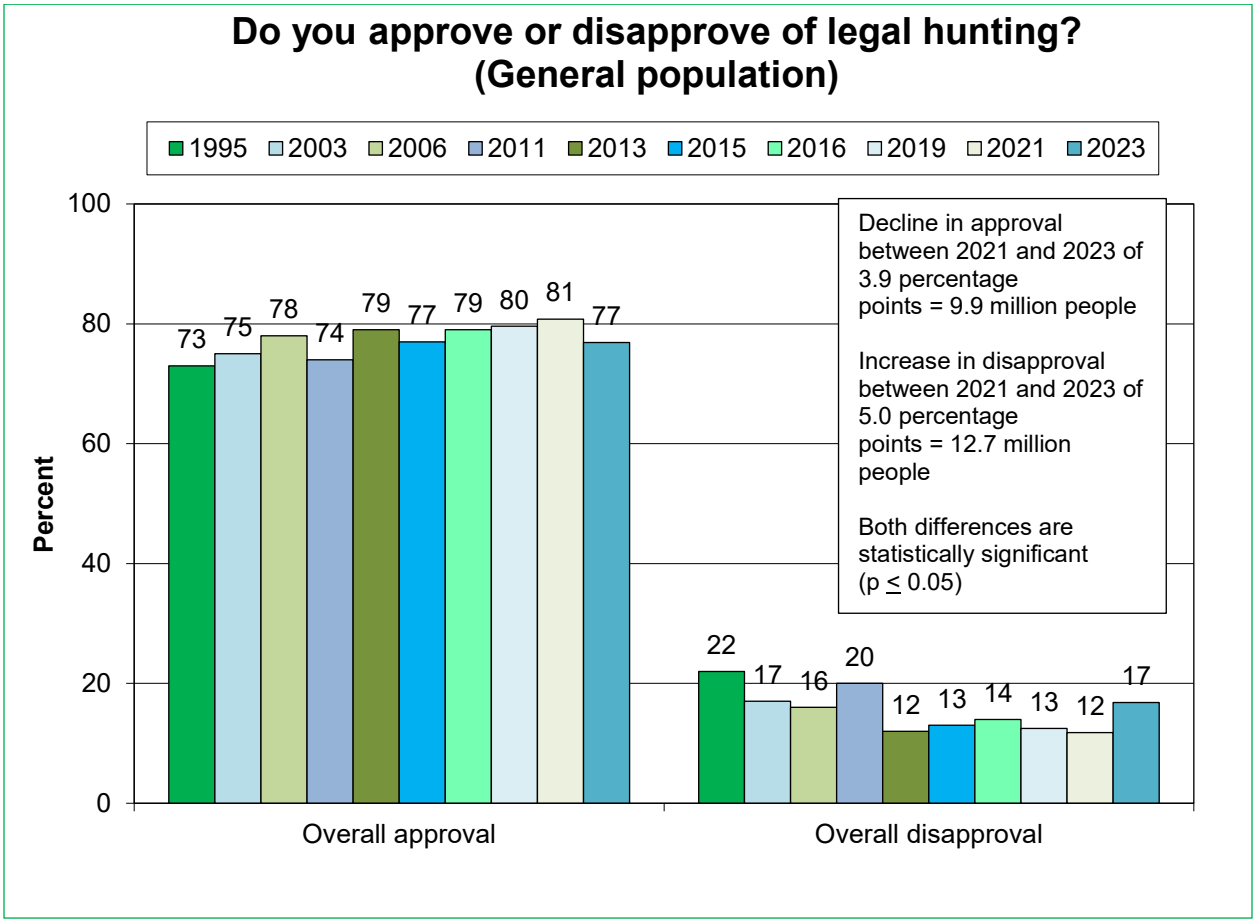


Figure 11. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting (Trends)

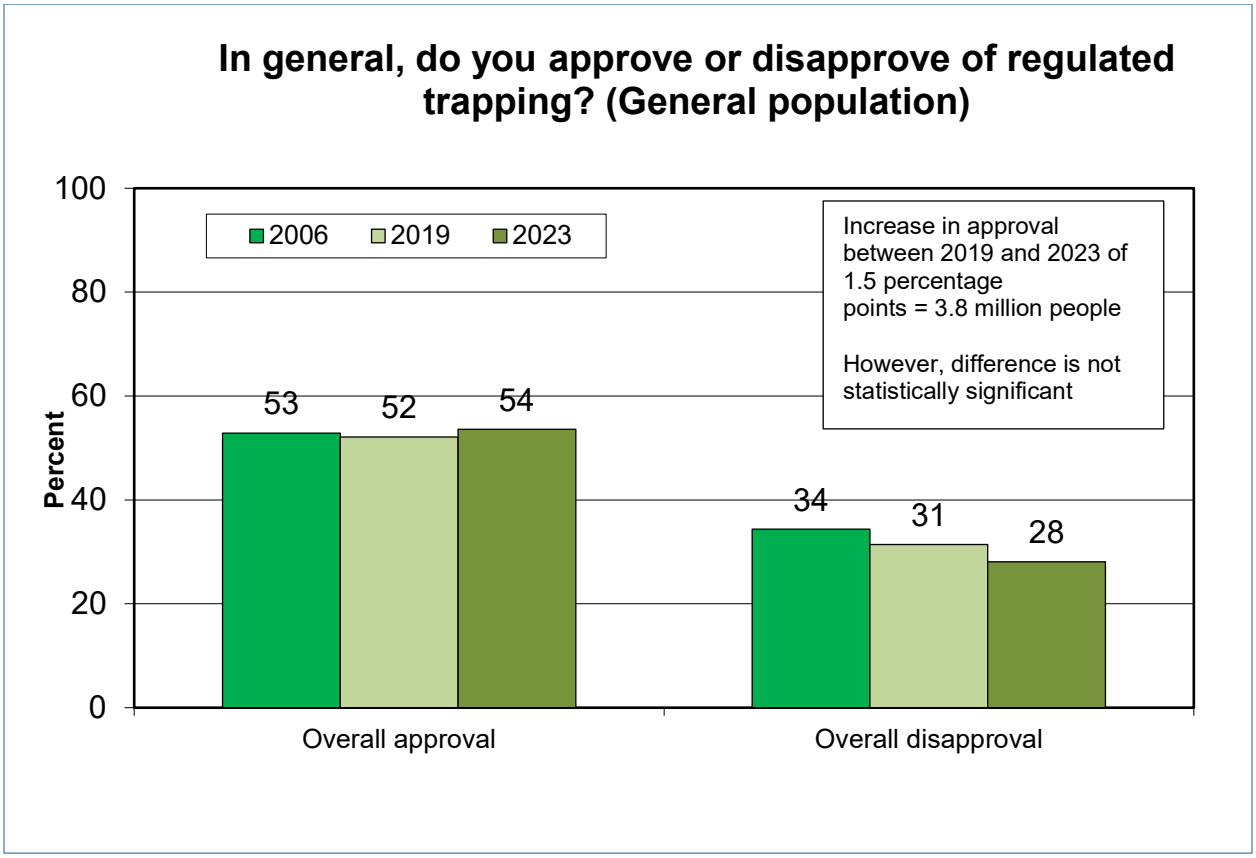


Figure 12. Approval and Disapproval of Trapping (Trends)

Approval of fishing, sport shooting, hunting, and trapping is associated with participation in any one of these activities, as participants in those activities were at the top in approval of all four activities (Figures 13 through 23). The demographic-participatory analyses graphs also show that rural residents and males have high percentages approving of the activities. Additionally, for approval of fishing, residents of the Mountain West Region are also high in the ranking. On the other hand, there are high levels of disapproval among Blacks, Hispanics, and non-anglers. (Included in the demographic-participatory analyses graphs are trends for some of them.)

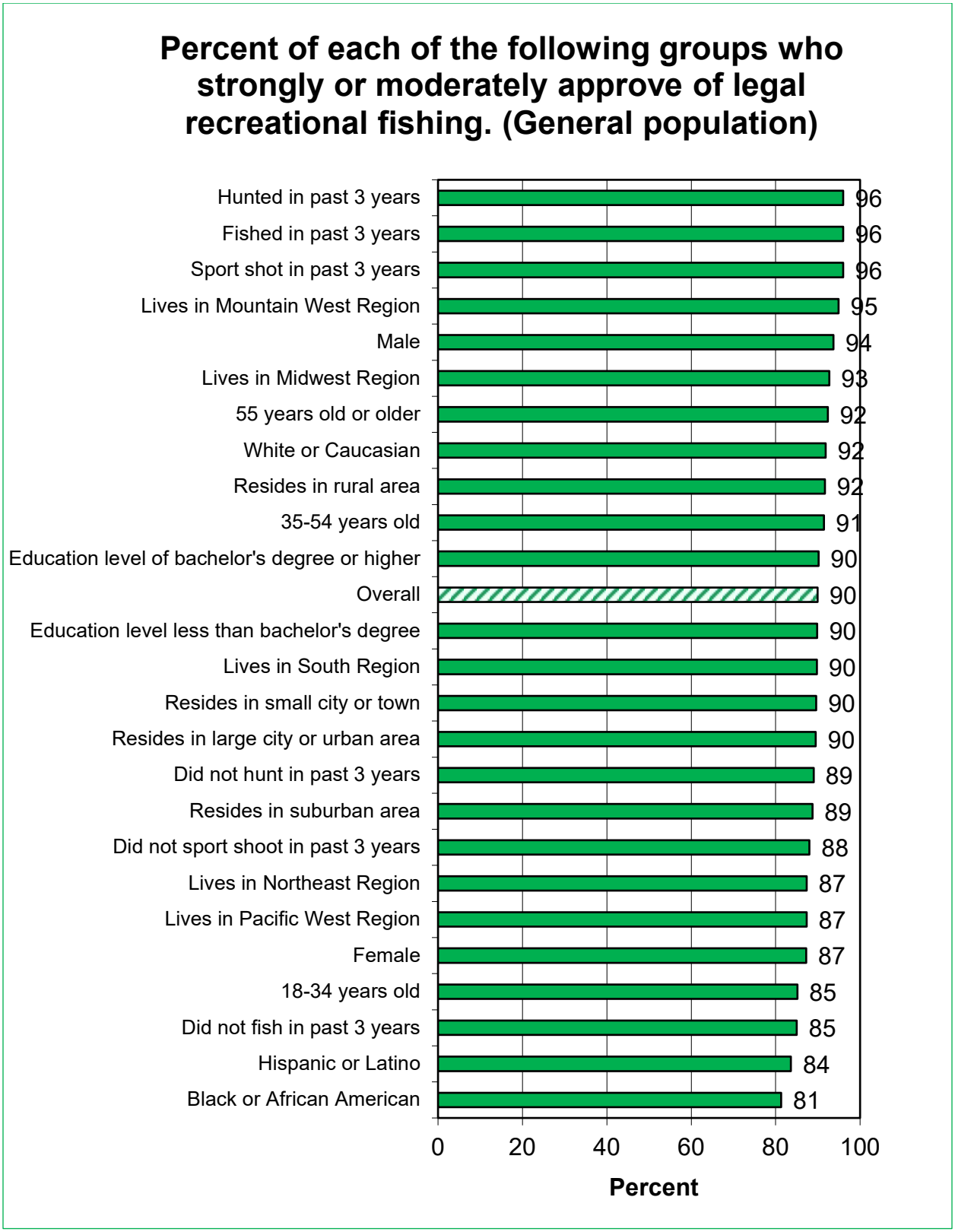


Figure 13. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Approval of Recreational Fishing

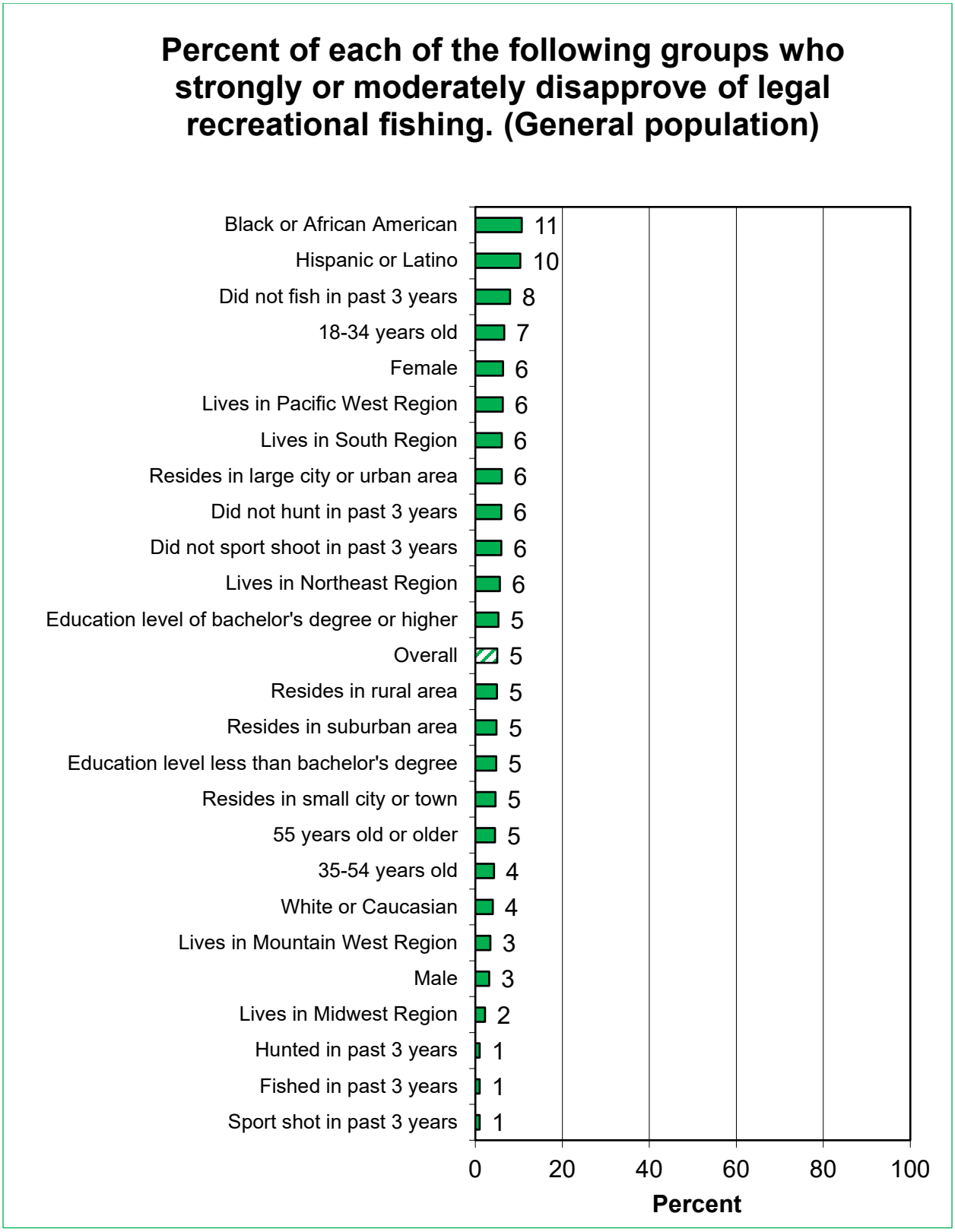


Figure 14. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Disapproval of Recreational Fishing

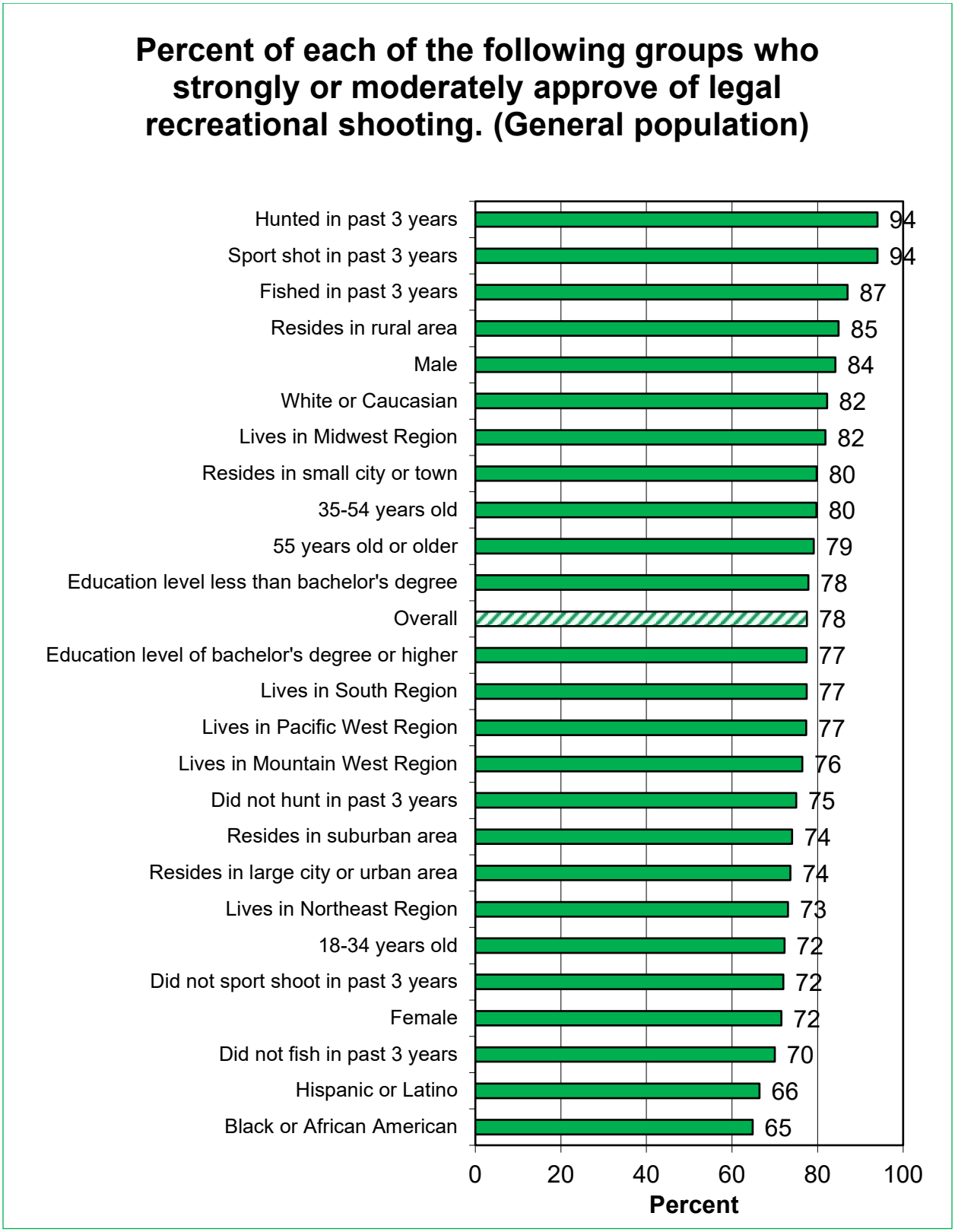


Figure 15. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Approval of Recreational Shooting

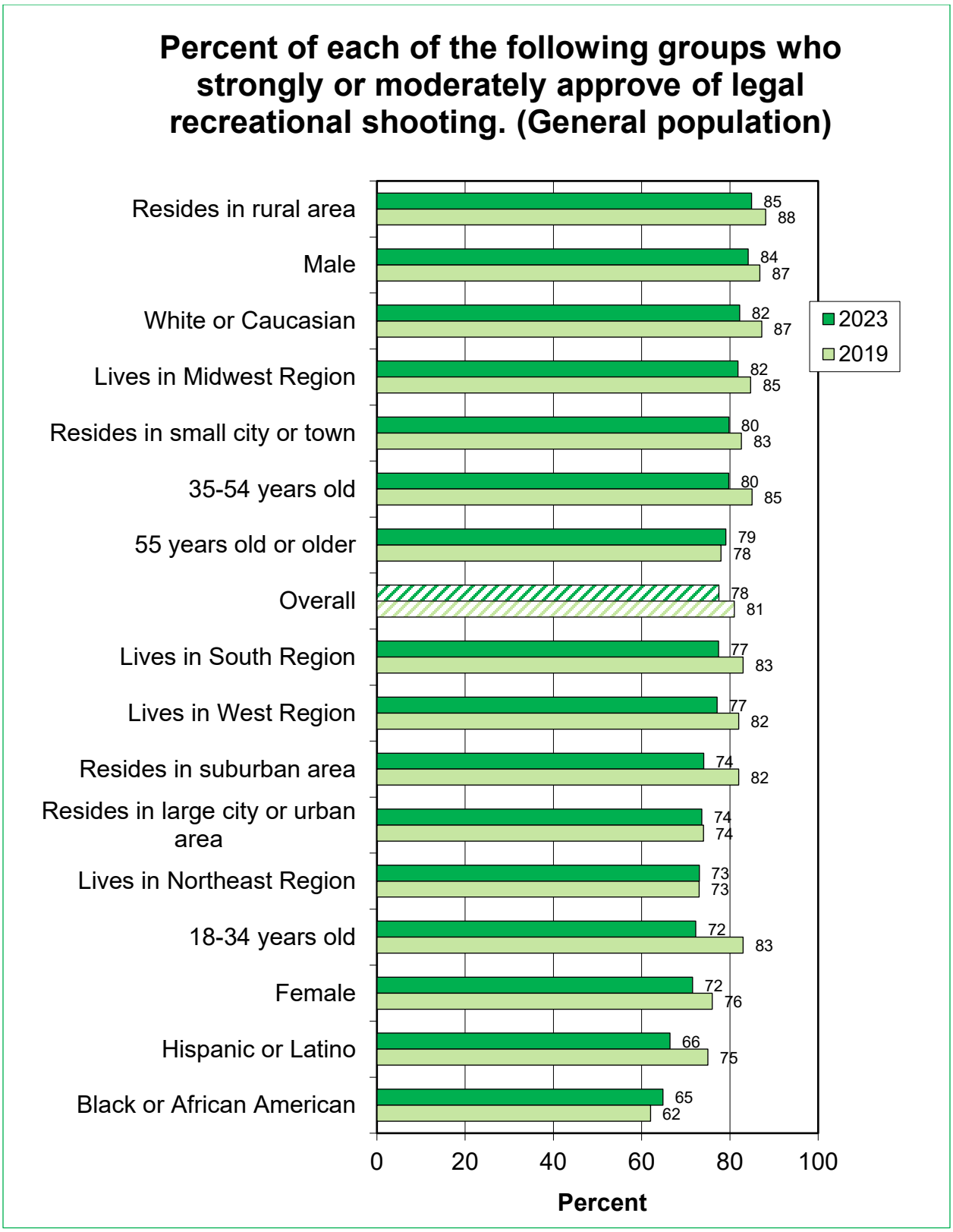


Figure 16. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Approval of Recreational Shooting (Trends)

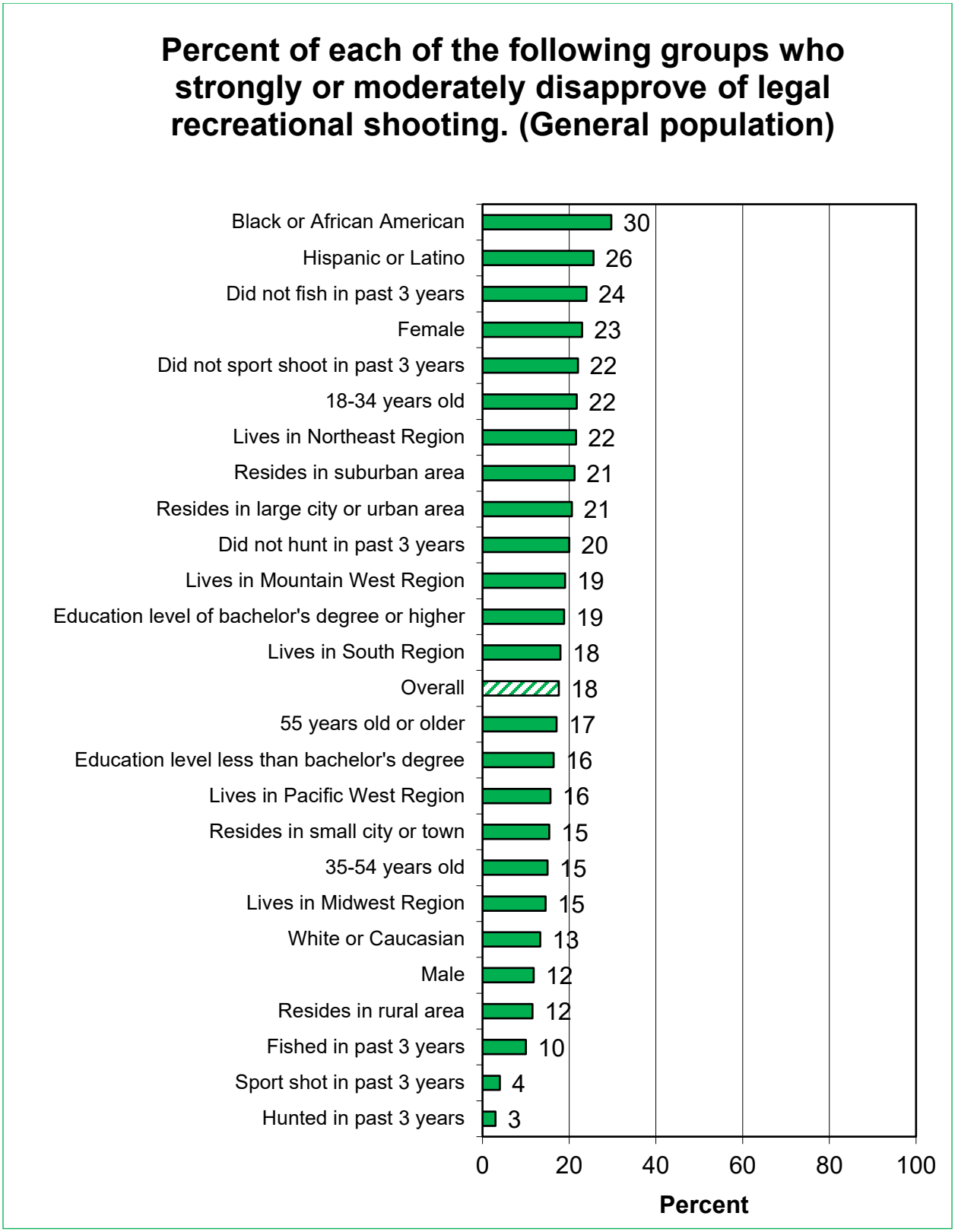


Figure 17. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Disapproval of Recreational Shooting

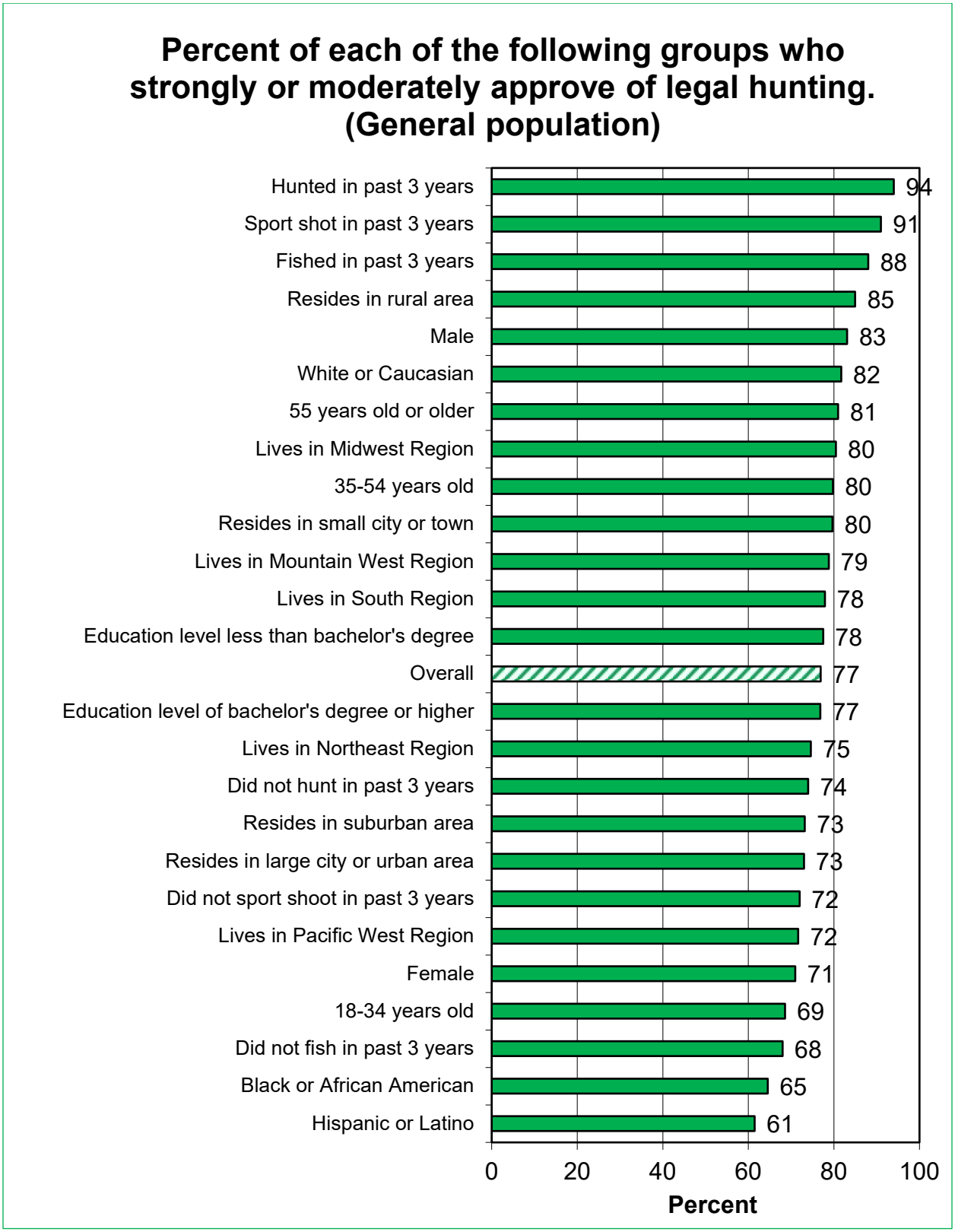


Figure 18. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Approval of Hunting

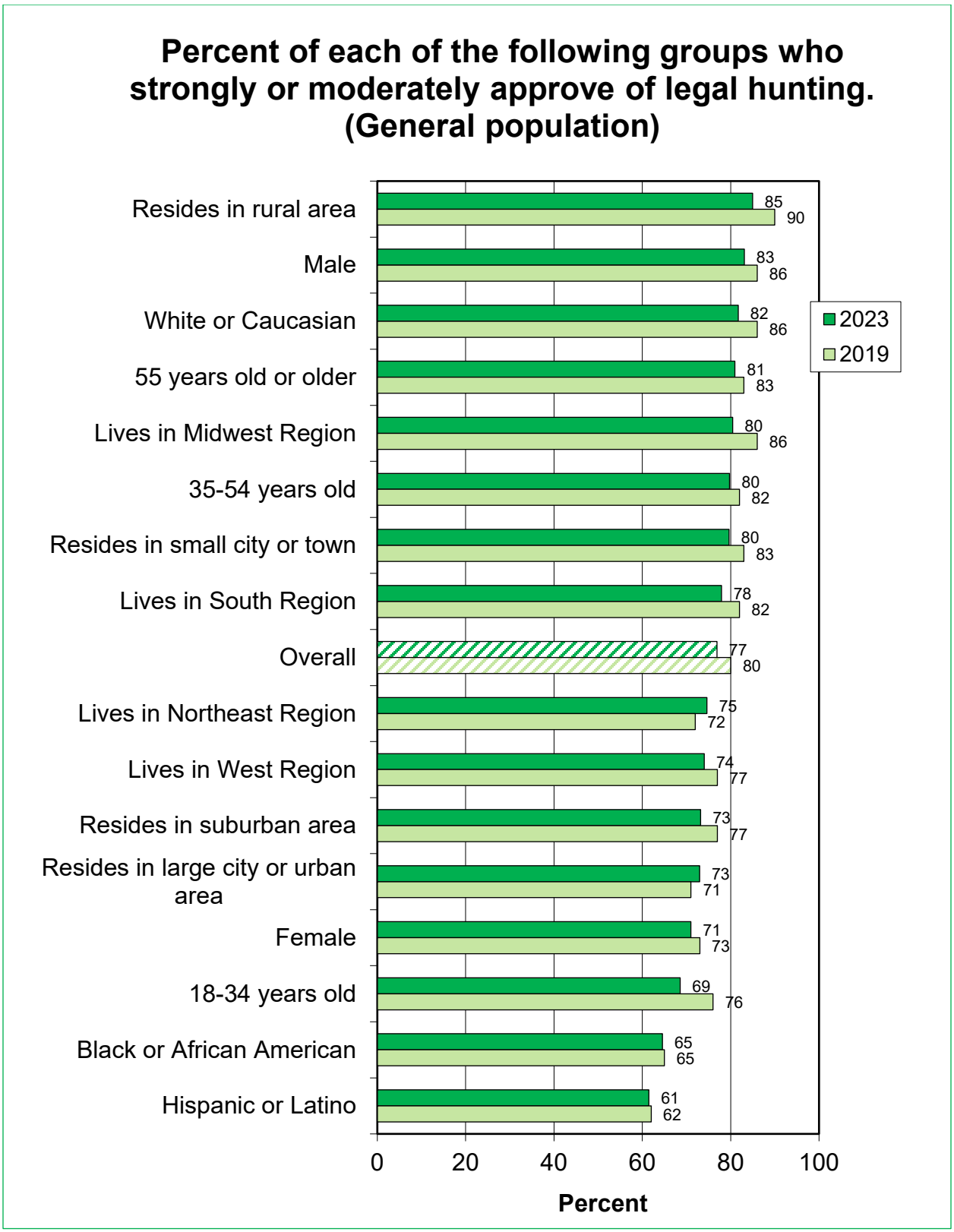


Figure 19. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Approval of Hunting (Trends)

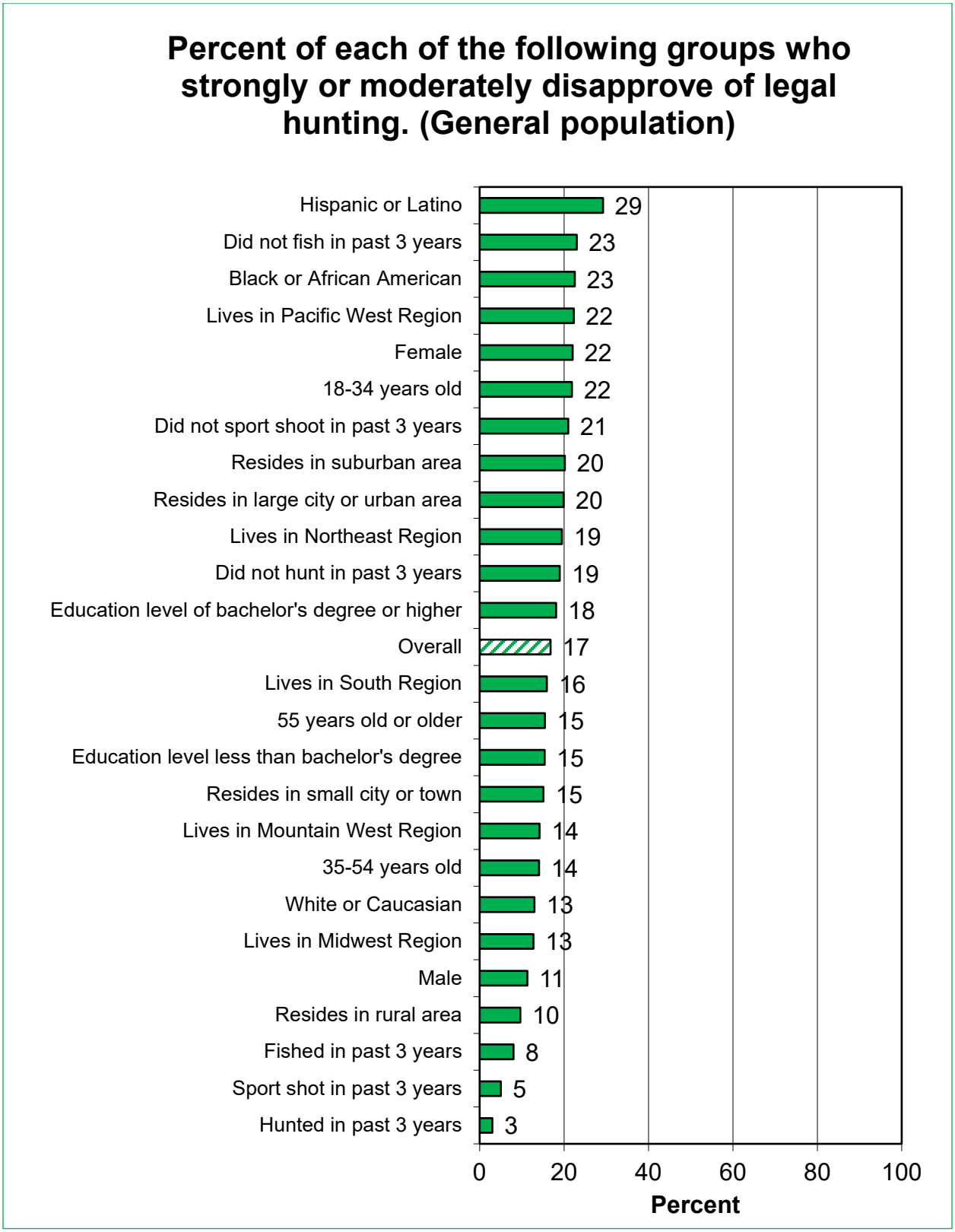


Figure 20. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Disapproval of Hunting

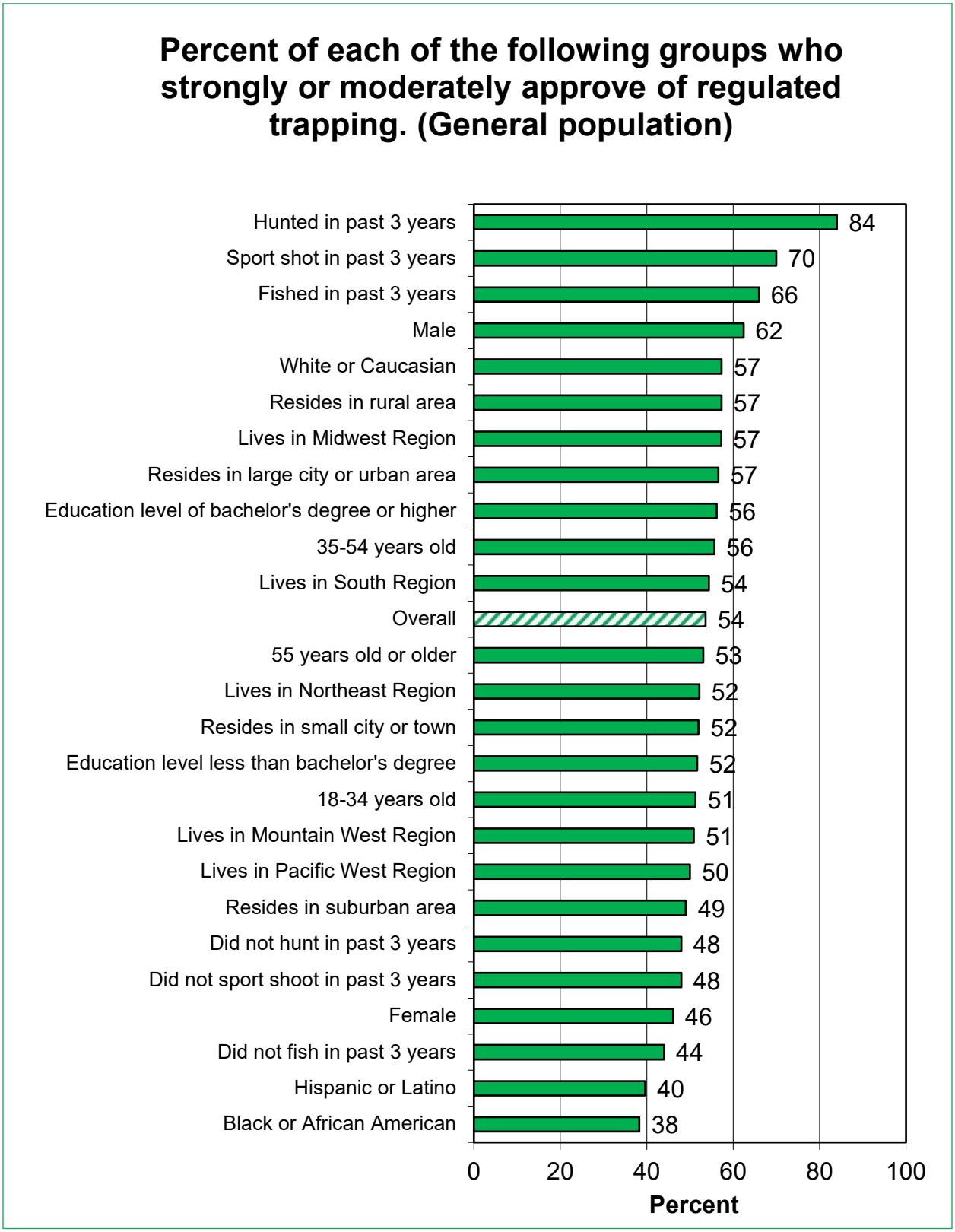


Figure 21. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Approval of Trapping

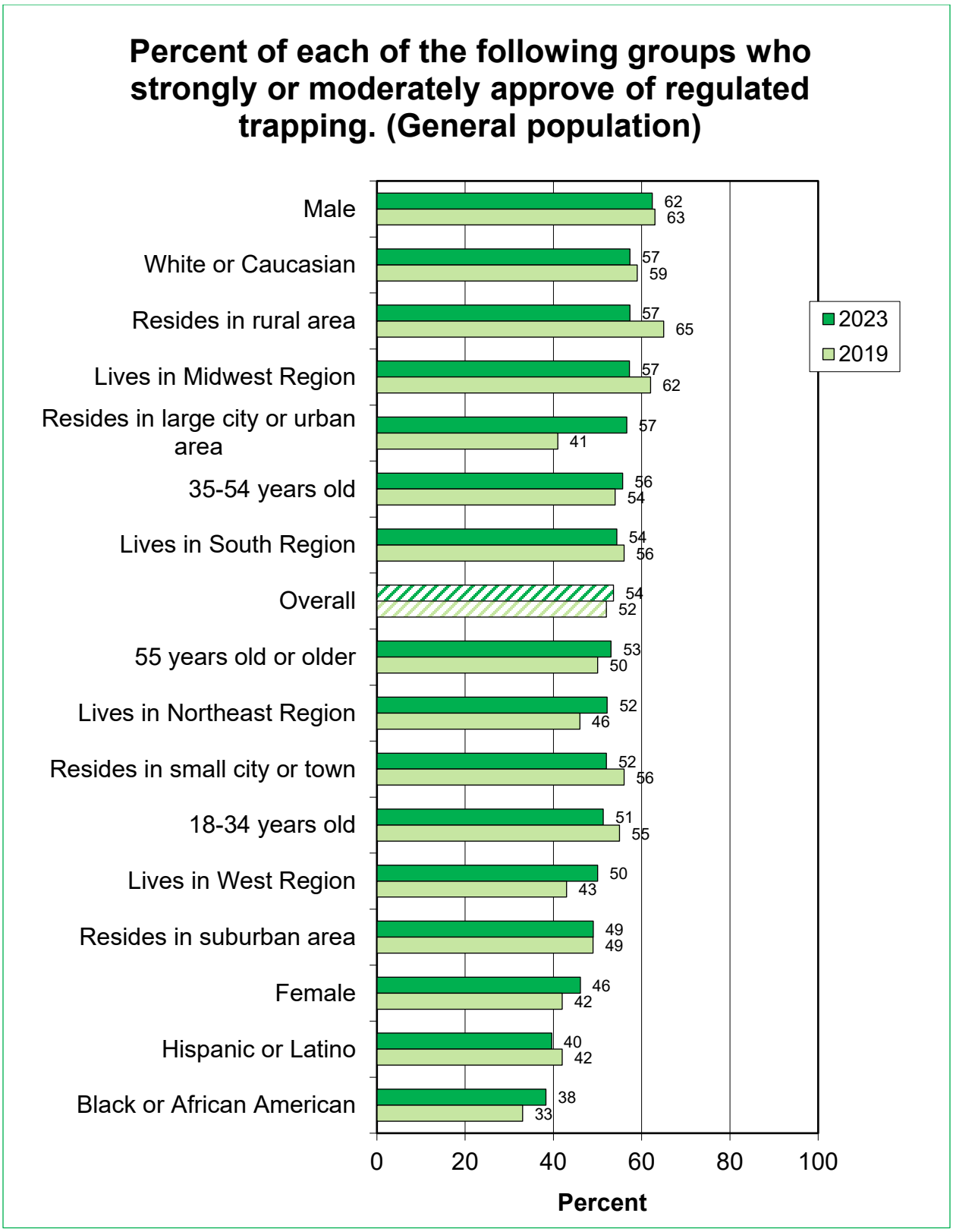


Figure 22. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Approval of Trapping (Trends)

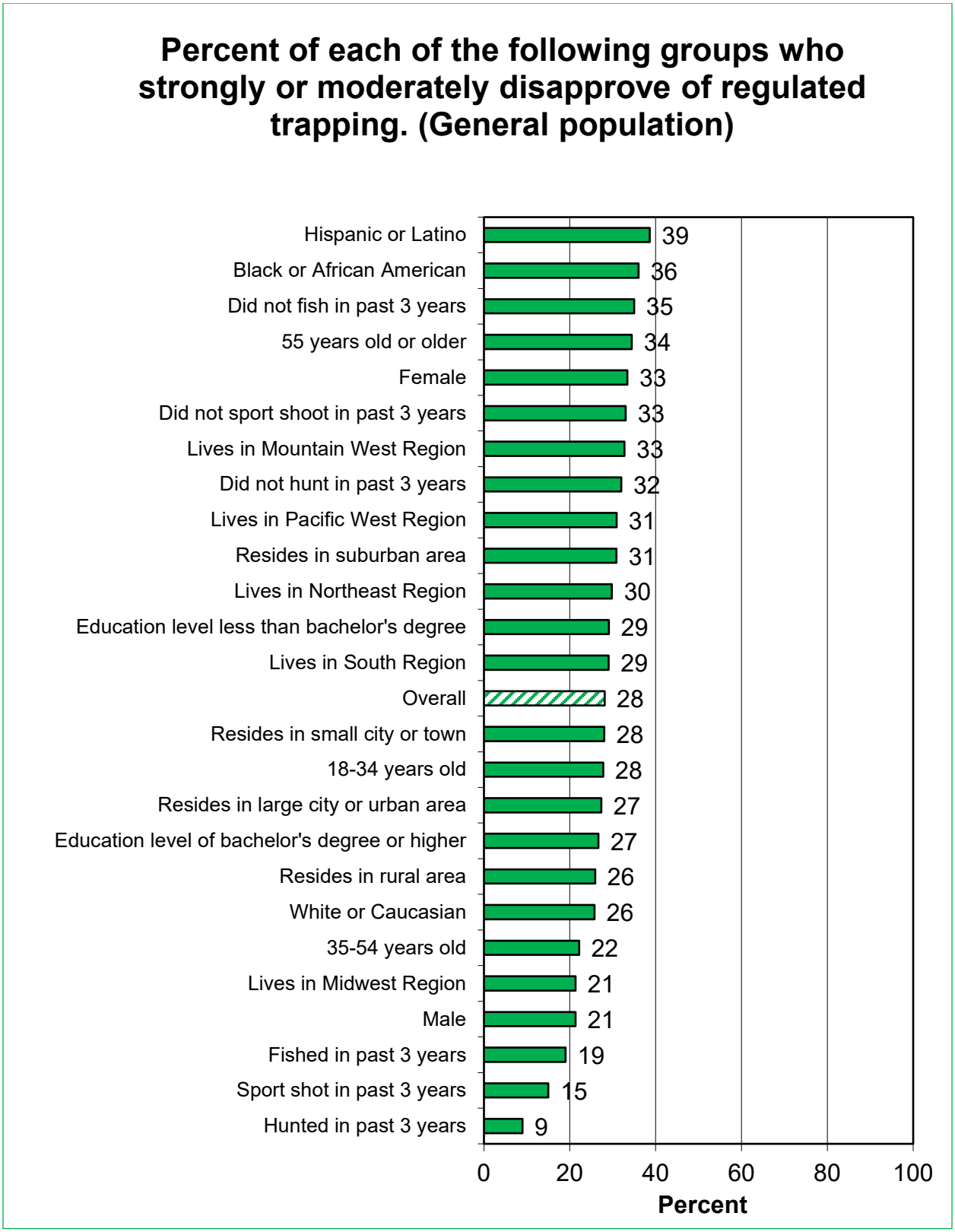


Figure 23. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Disapproval of Trapping

U.S. residents were then asked, regardless of their opinion on hunting, whether they agreed or disagreed that it is okay for other people to hunt. The large majority (86%) agreed that others can hunt in accordance with laws and regulations (Figure 24). Only 9% disagreed. (Recall that 77% of U.S. residents approve of legal hunting, so this percentage agreeing is substantially higher than approval of hunting itself.) Agreement is highest in the Midwest Region (90%) and the South Region (88%), and it is lowest in the West Region (83%) and Northeast Region (82%) (Figure 25).

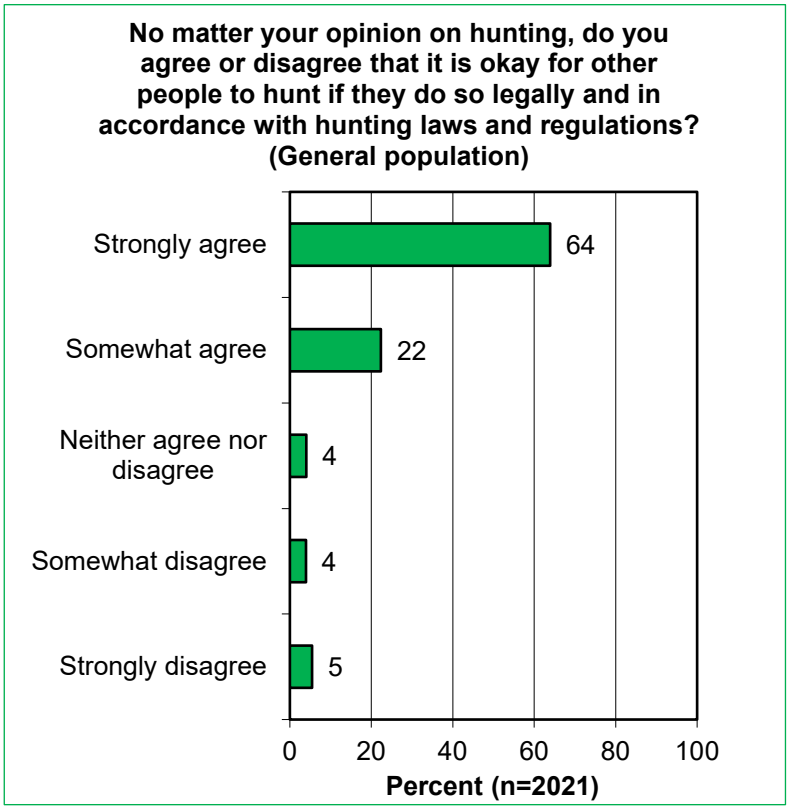


Figure 24. Opinion on Other People Hunting

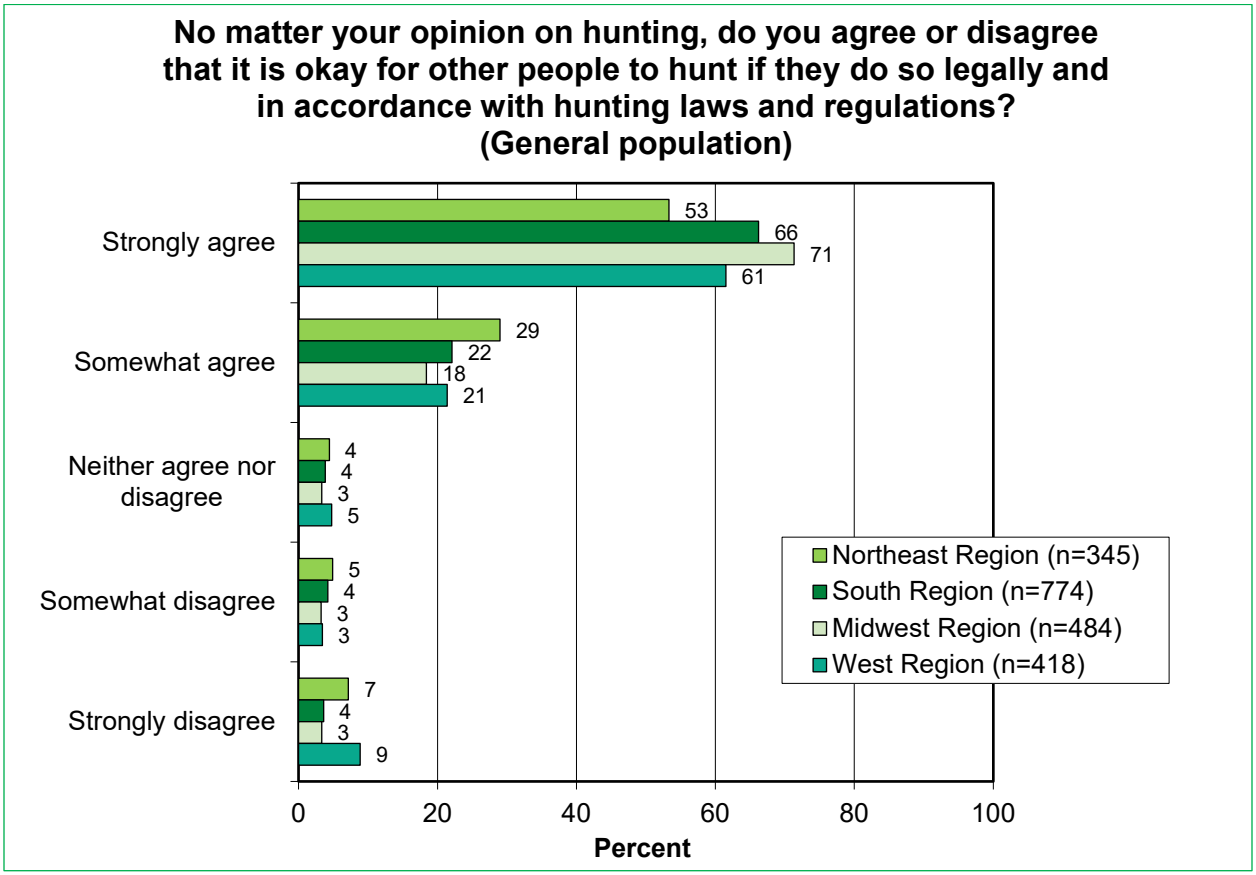


Figure 25. Opinion on Other People Hunting (Regions)

Figure 26 shows that agreement on this question has declined slightly since 2011.

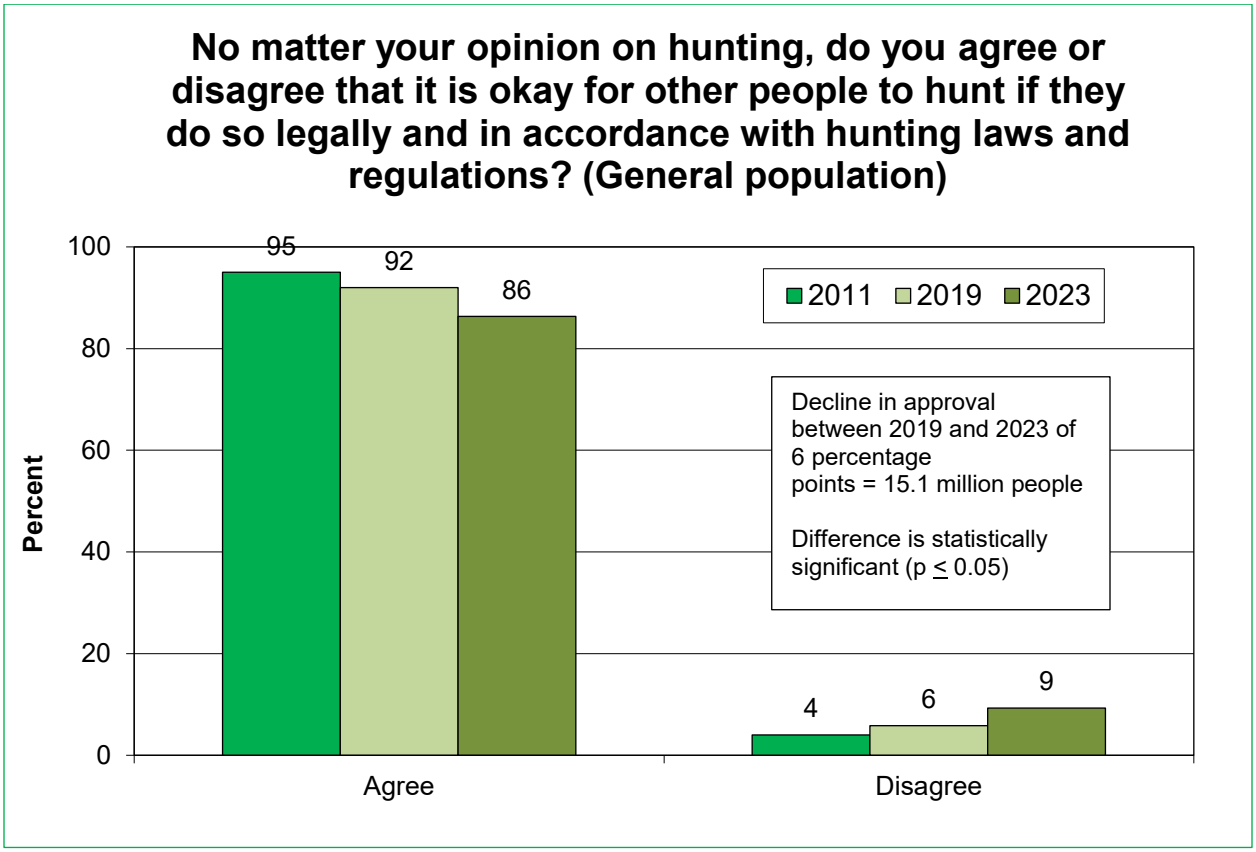


Figure 26. Opinion on Other People Hunting (Trends)

Demographic-participatory analyses in Figures 27 though 29 show the results regarding the opinion that it is okay for others to hunt. At the top are participants in shooting, hunting, and fishing, as well as rural residents and males. These graphs include a trends demographic-participatory analyses graph (Figure 28).

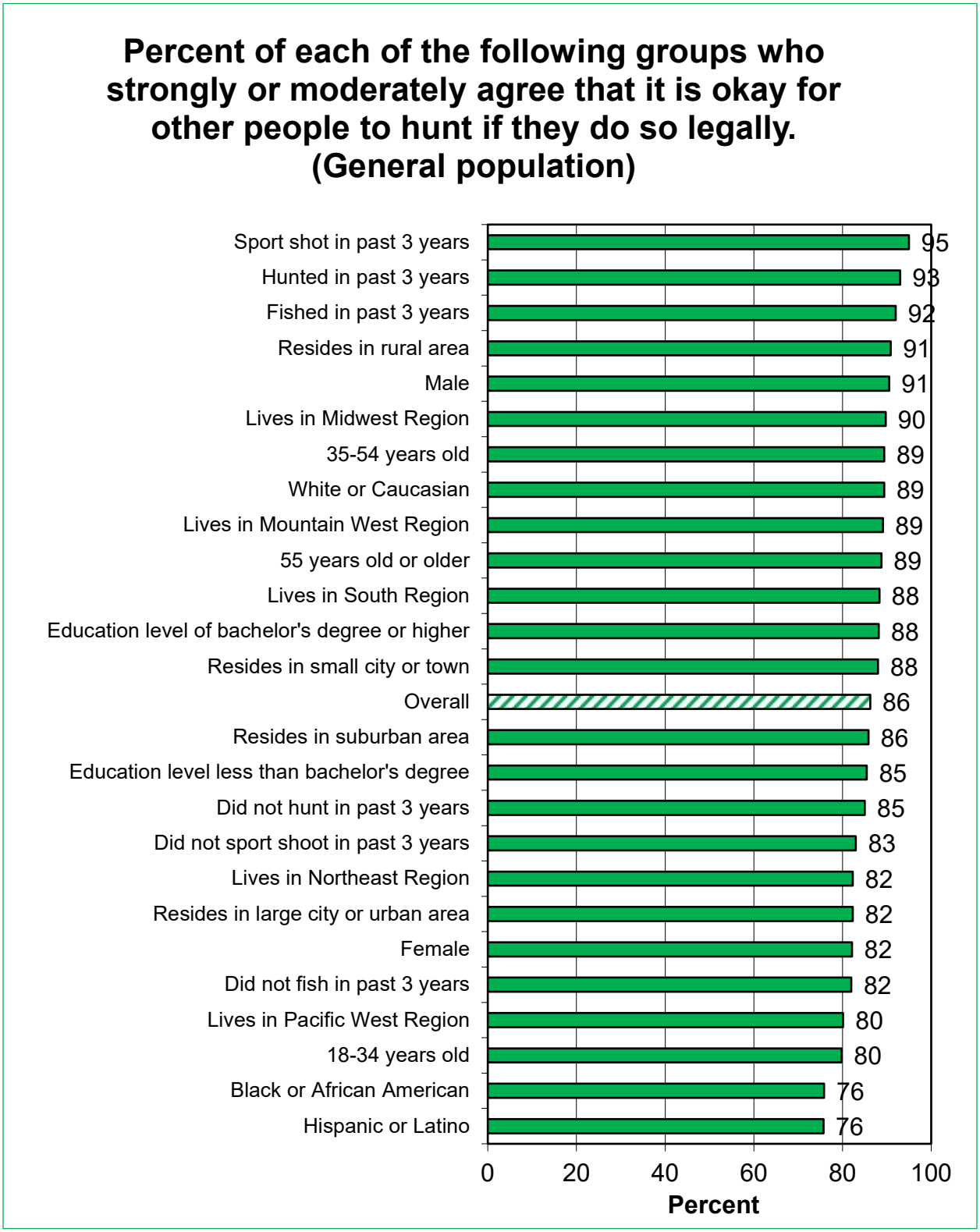


Figure 27. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Agree That Other People Can Hunt

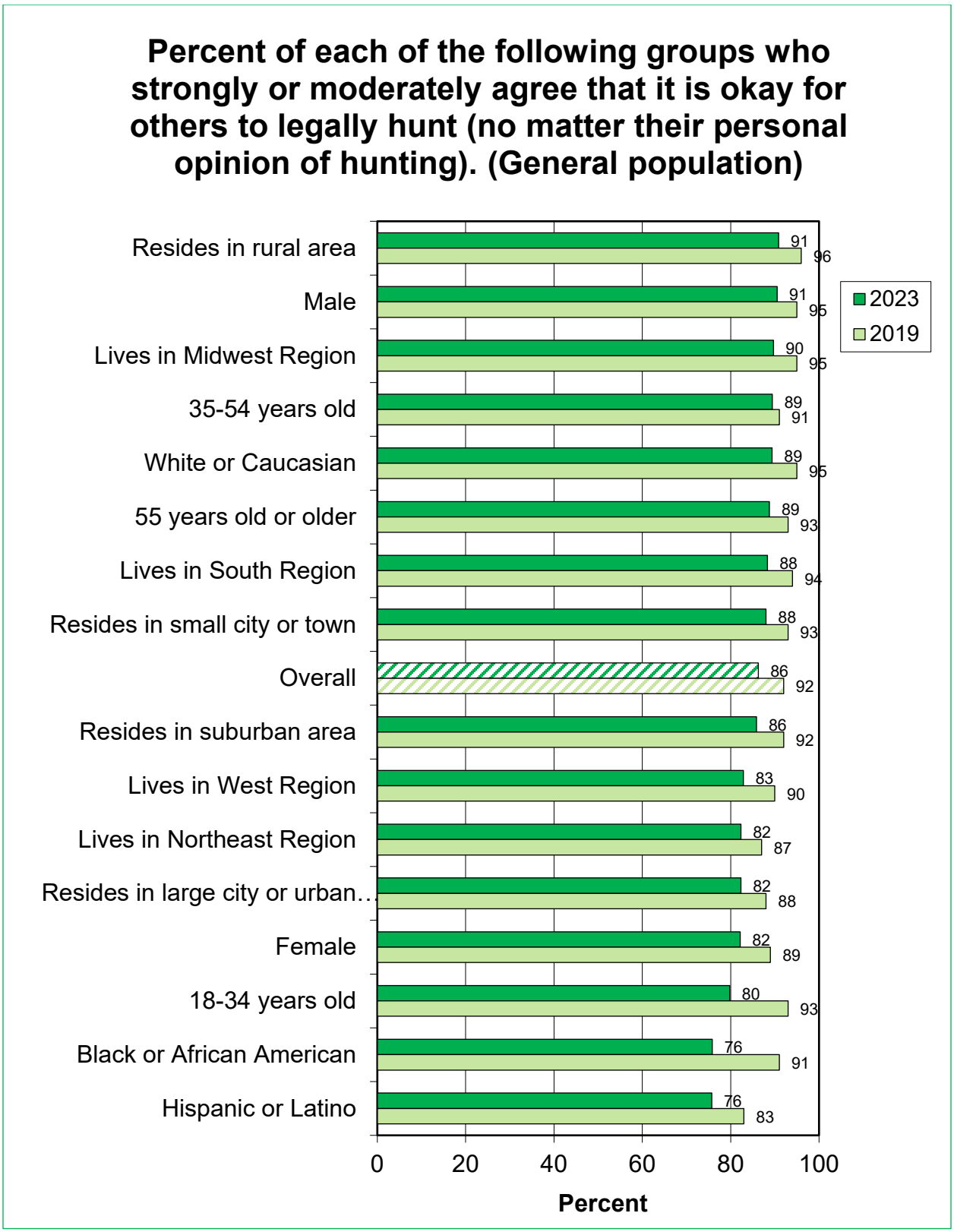


Figure 28. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Agree That Other People Can Hunt (Trends)

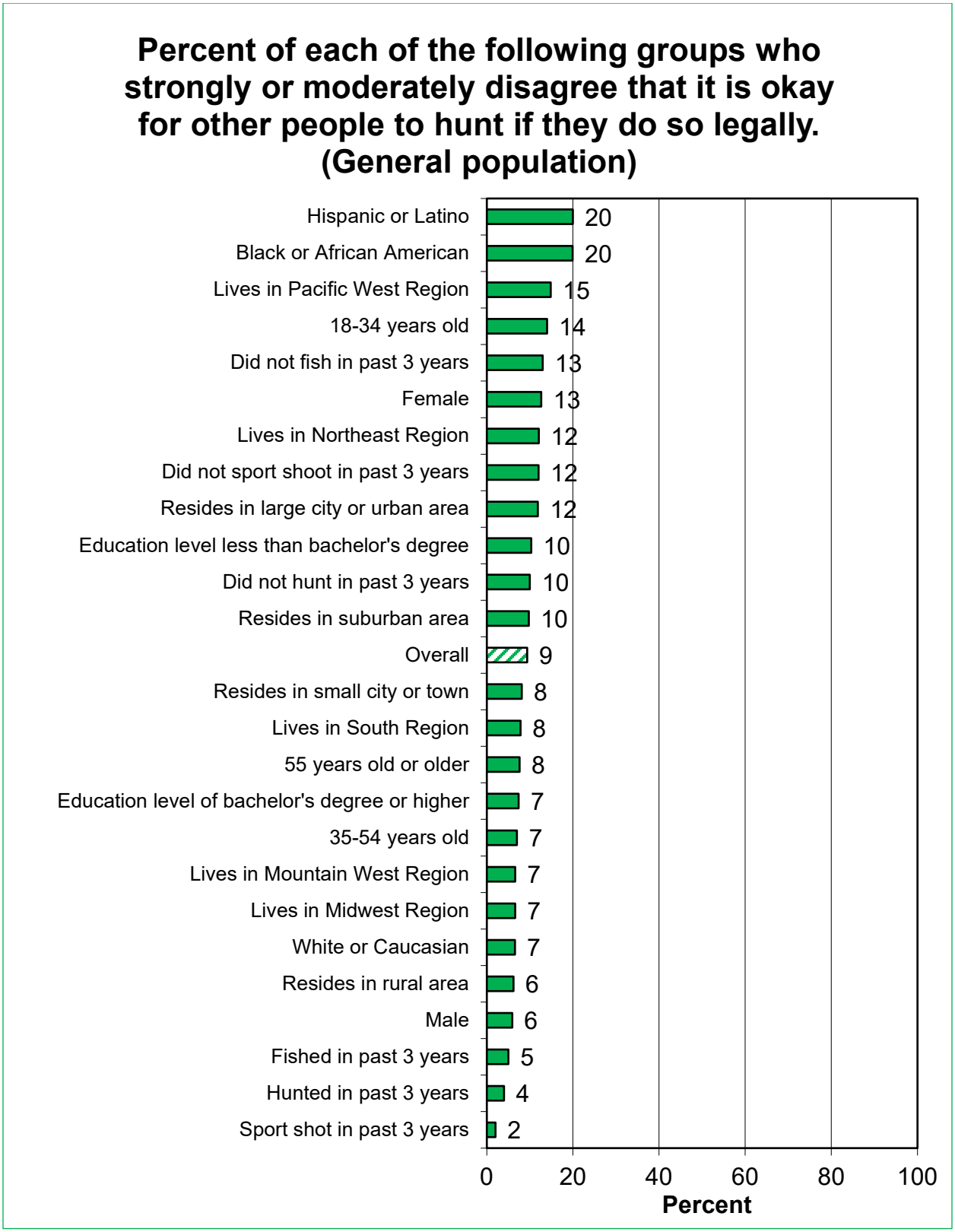


Figure 29. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Disagree That Other People Can Hunt

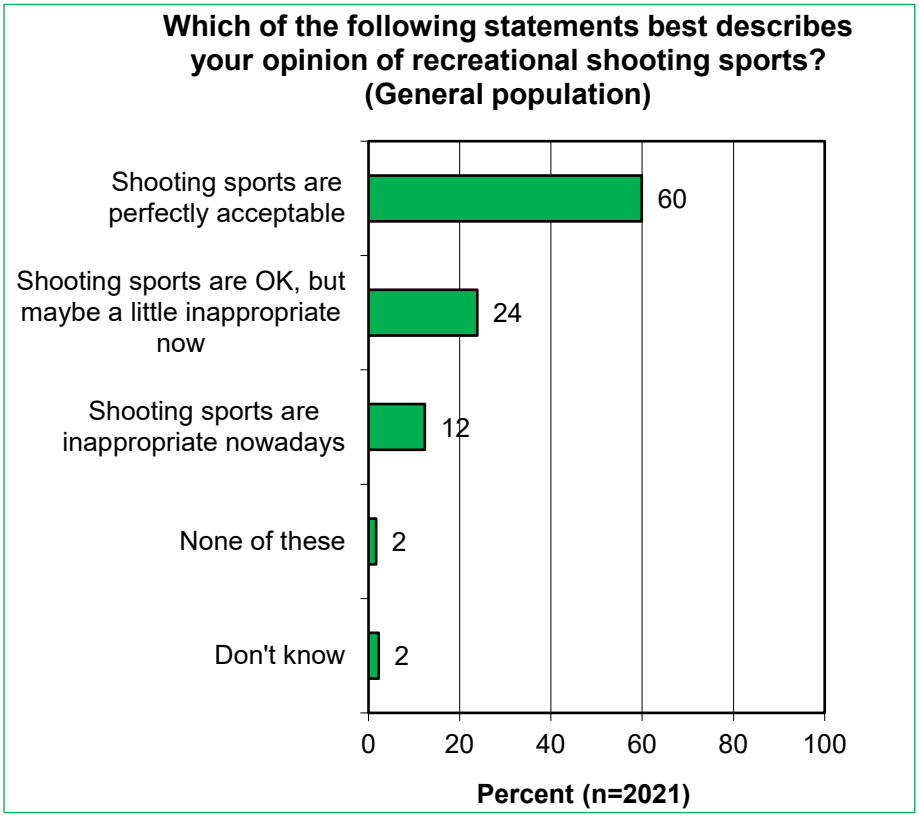


Figure 30. Opinion on Recreational Shooting Sports

The large majority of Americans (60%) say that shooting sports are acceptable (Figure 30). On the other hand, 36% have doubts about the appropriateness of recreational shooting sports. Regionally, the highest acceptance is in the Midwest (64% find it acceptable, while 32% have doubts), while the lowest acceptance is in the Northeast (55% find it acceptable, with 41% having doubts) (Figure 31).

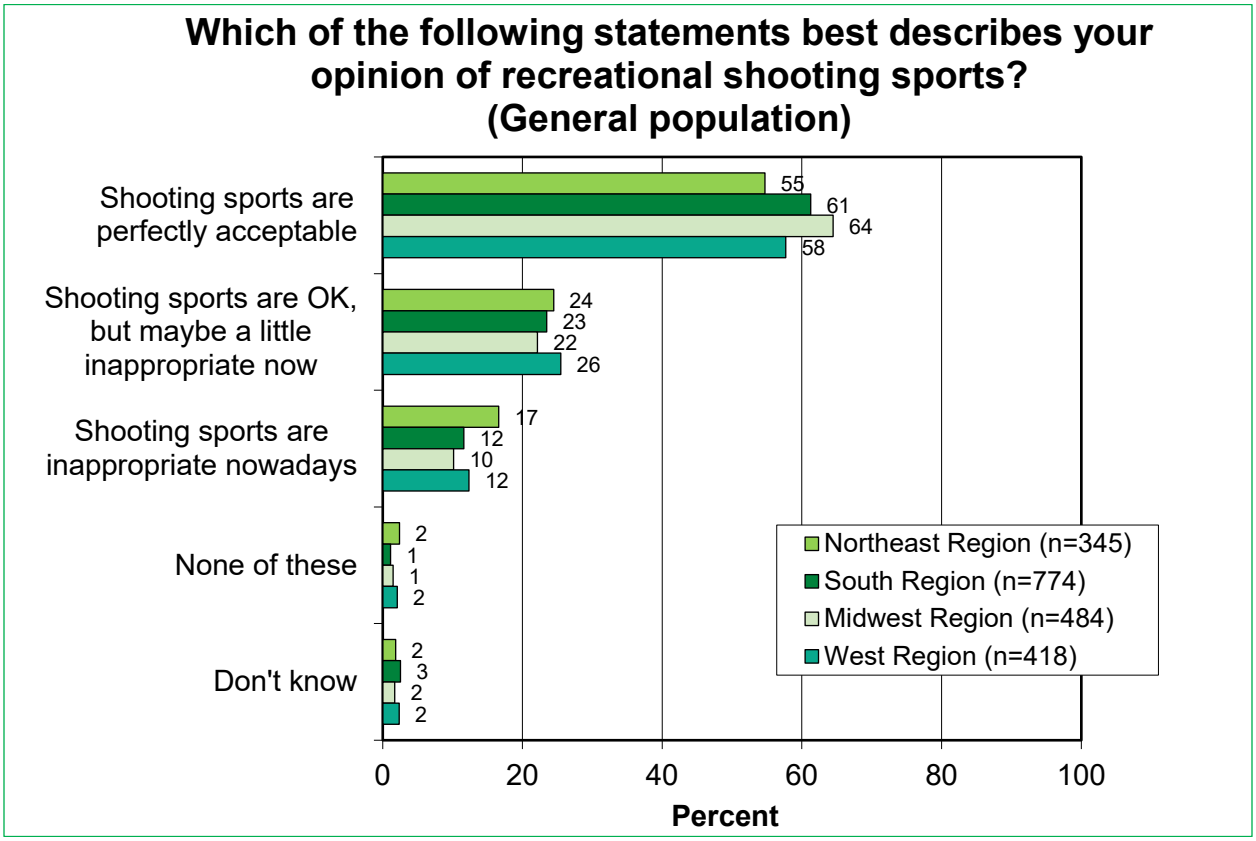


Figure 31. Opinion on Recreational Shooting Sports (Regions)

The acceptability of recreational shooting sports declined in 2023 compared to the previous two surveys in 2011 and 2019 but is about the same as the first survey in 2001 (Figure 32).

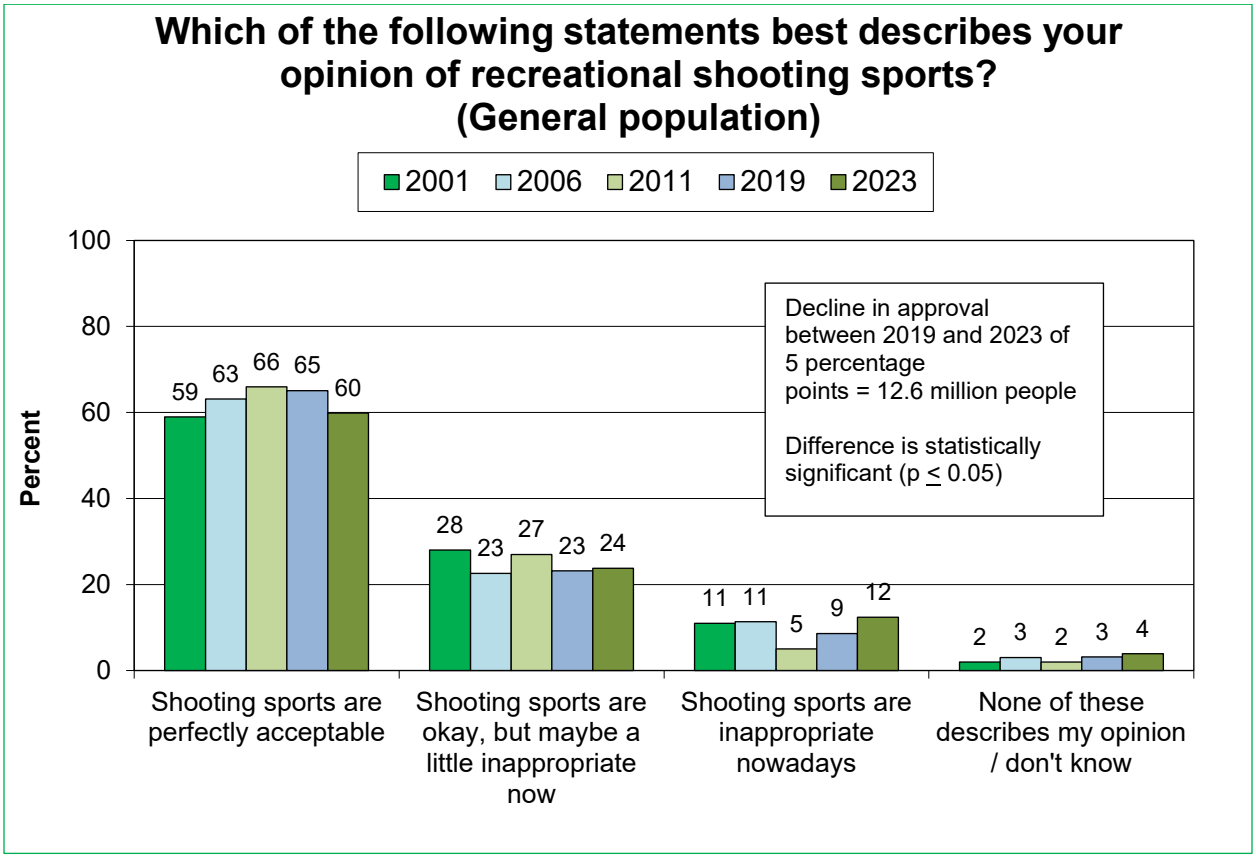


Figure 32. Opinion on Recreational Shooting Sports (Trends)

The demographic-participatory analyses in Figures 33 through 35 show that participants in shooting, hunting, and fishing are all more likely to believe that shooting sports are acceptable. Also, rural residents, males, and Whites are more likely than residents overall to believe this. Meanwhile, young people, Blacks, Hispanics, and urban residents are more likely than residents overall to question the acceptability of the shooting sports. These graphs start on the following page.

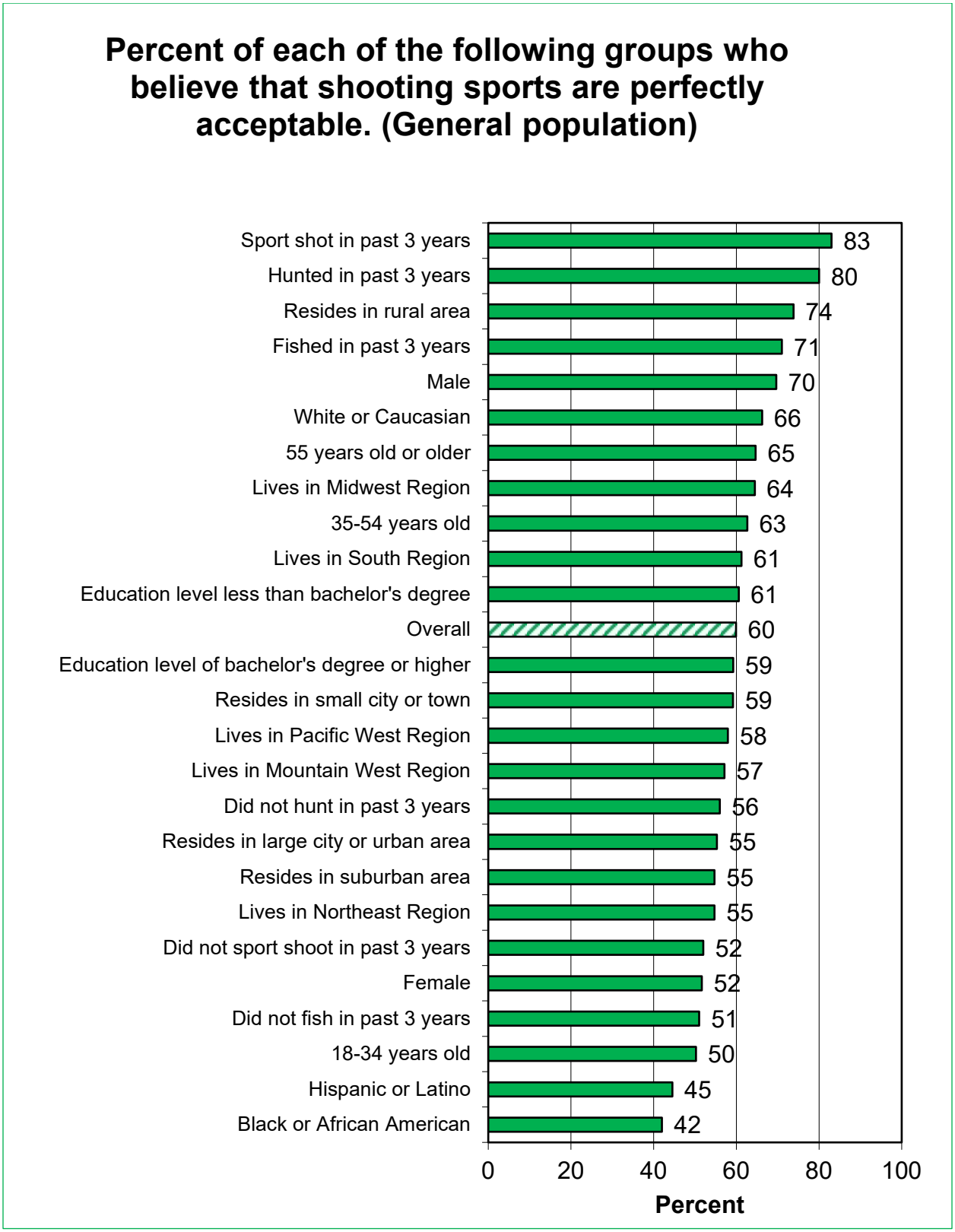


Figure 33. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Shooting Sports Are Acceptable

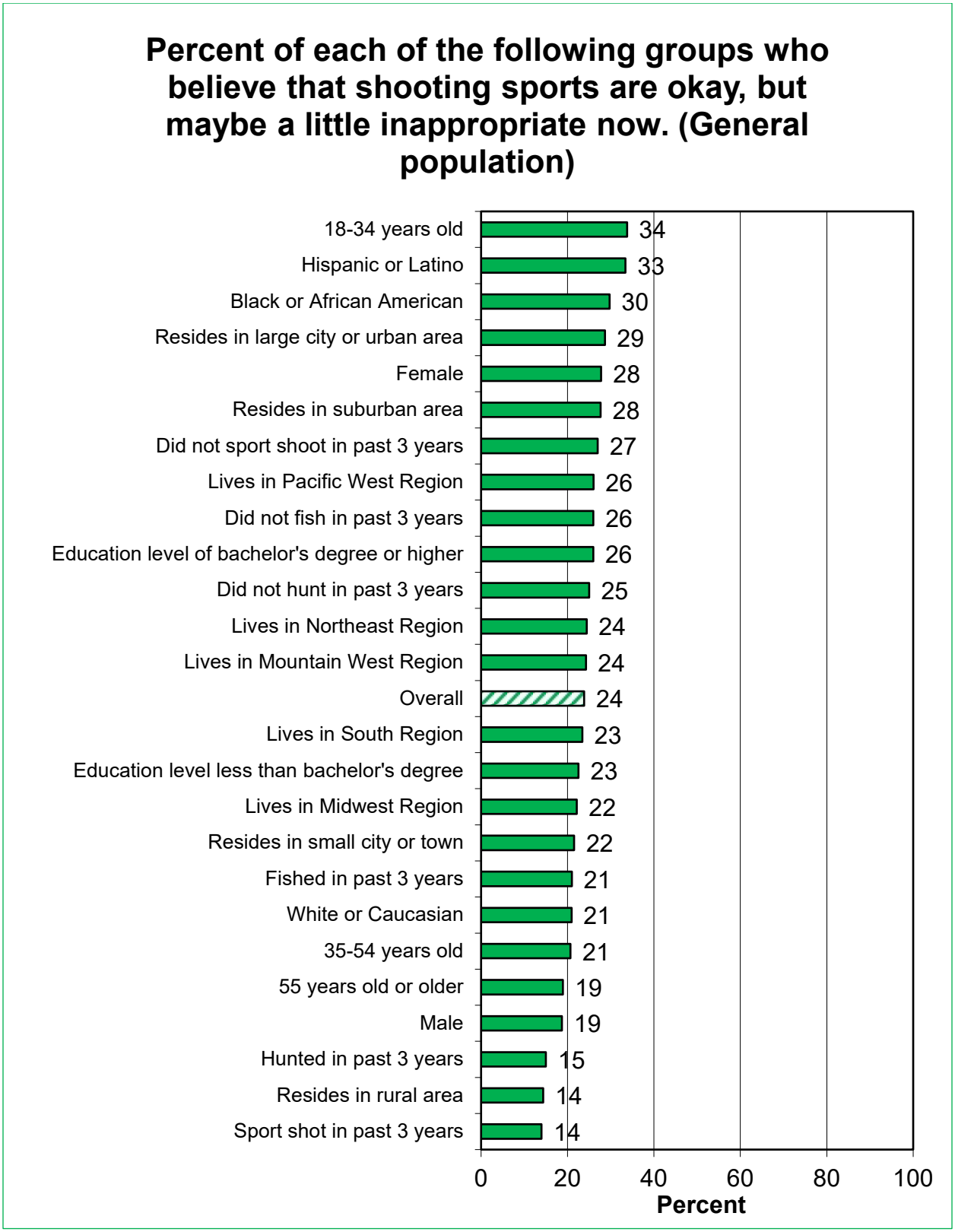


Figure 34. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Shooting Sports Are a Little Inappropriate

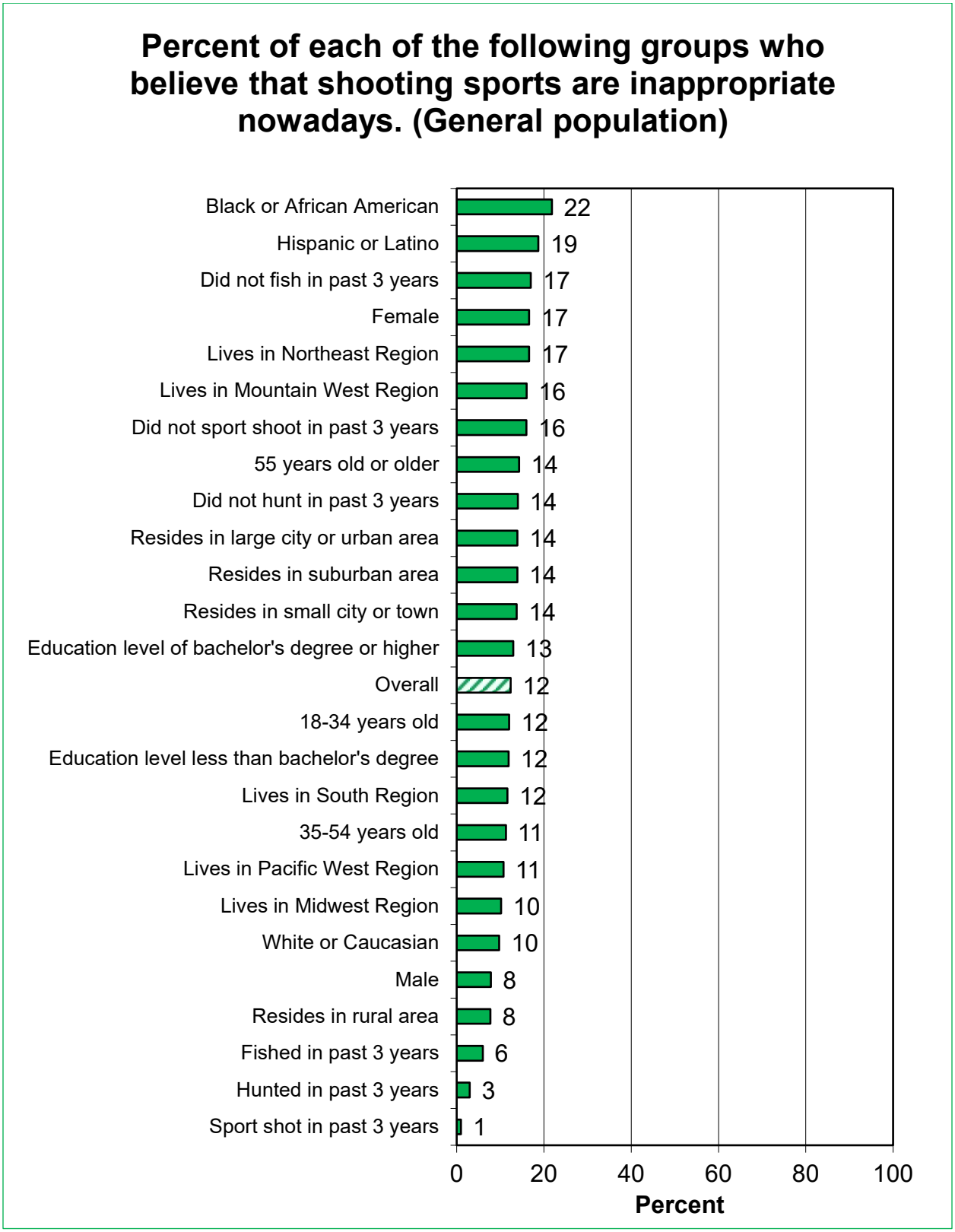


Figure 35. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Shooting Sports Are Inappropriate

APPROVAL OF LEGAL HUNTING FOR VARIOUS REASONS, FOR VARIOUS SPECIES, AND USING VARIOUS METHODS

Four reasons are deemed the most acceptable for legal hunting, with two being human-centered and two being ecological (Figure 36 and Table 3). Regarding the first, to protect humans and for the meat are the top human-centered reasons, and for conservation and for wildlife management are the top ecological reasons. (Note that the survey asked about conservation in two ways: *for conservation of healthy wildlife populations* and *for conservation of wildlife populations*. Although not greatly different, a slightly higher percentage strongly approve with the *healthy* wording.)

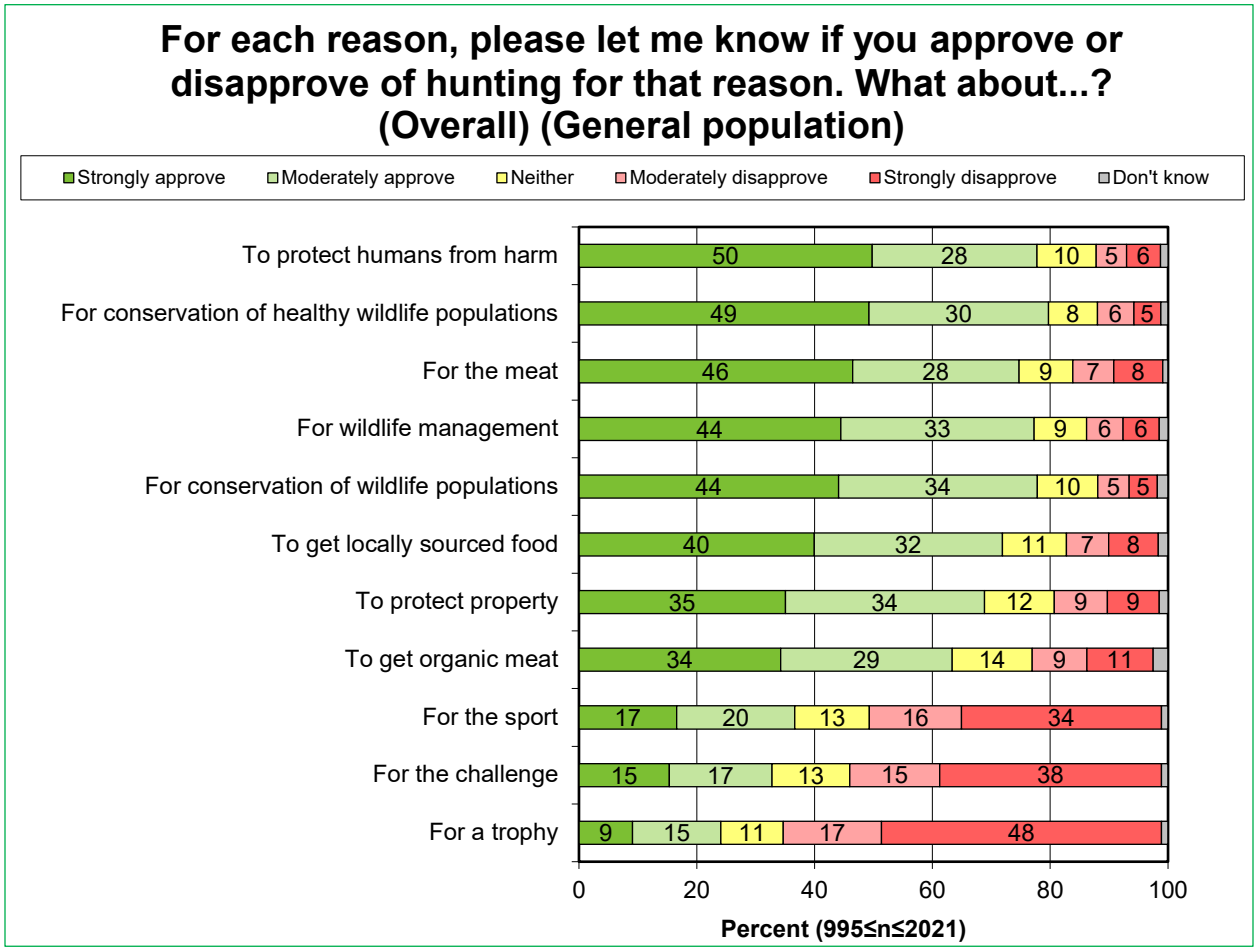


Figure 36. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting for Various Reasons

Table 3. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting for Various Reasons

U.S. residents overall (percentage who approve / disapprove)	To protect humans from harm	For conservation of healthy wildlife populations	For the meat	For wildlife management	For conservation of wildlife populations	To get locally sourced food	To protect property	To get organic meat	For the sport	For the challenge	For a trophy
Total approve	78	80	75	77	78	72	69	63	37	33	24
Total disapprove	11	11	15	12	10	16	18	21	50	53	64

The regional graphs are presented in Figures 37 through 40, after which Table 4 is presented of total approval/disapproval, along with a discussion of the regional results.

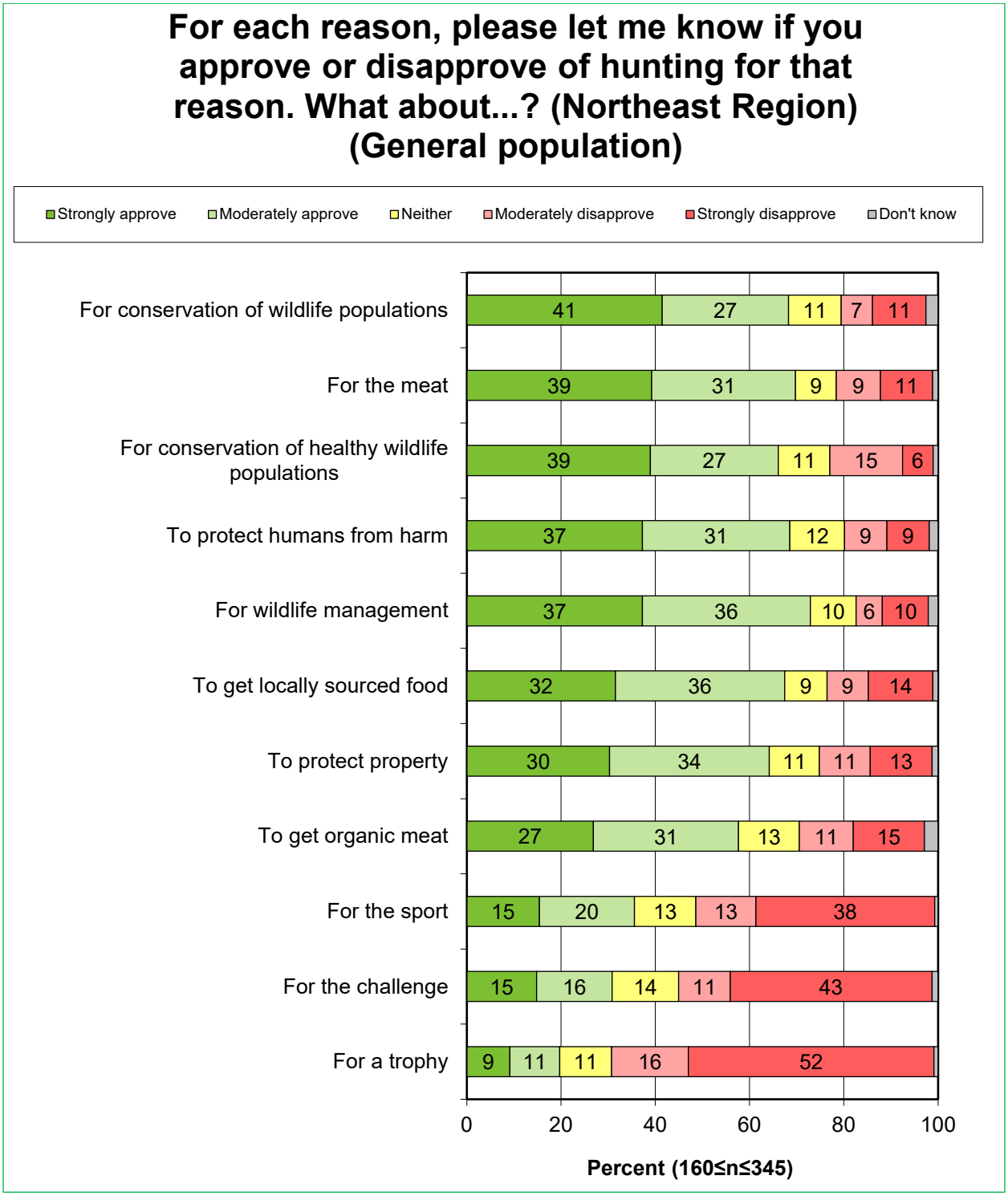


Figure 37. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting for Various Reasons (Northeast)

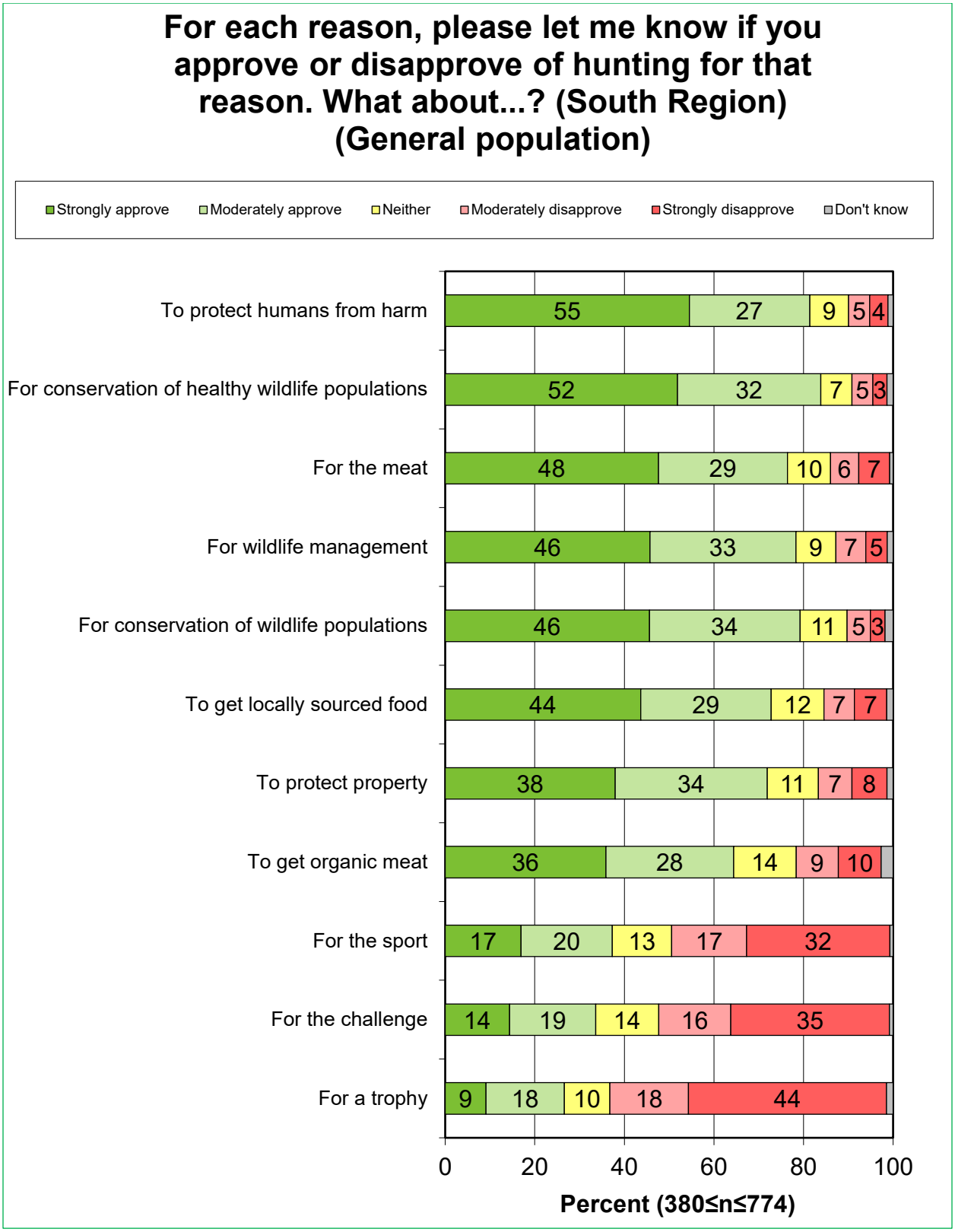


Figure 38. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting for Various Reasons (South)

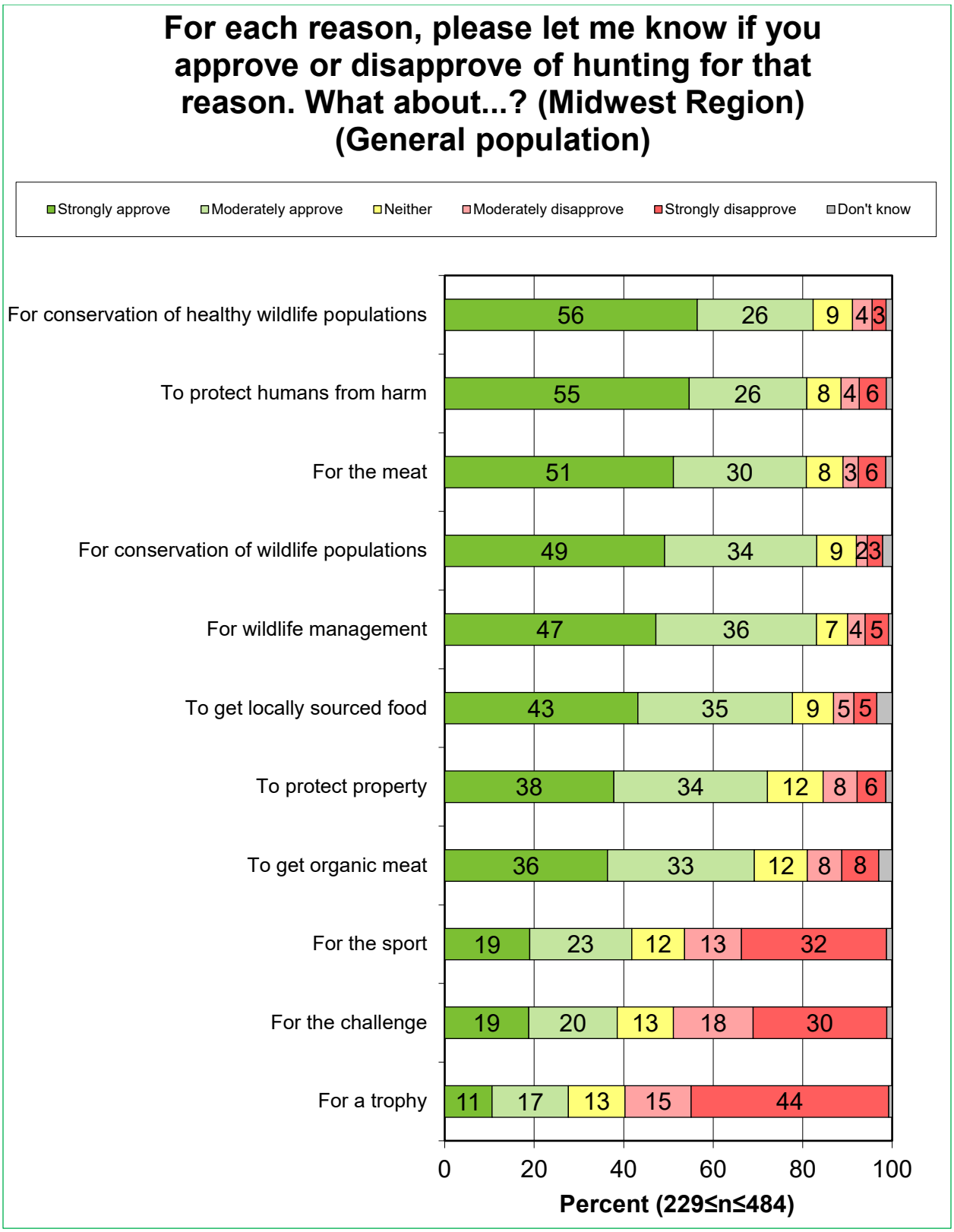


Figure 39. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting for Various Reasons (Midwest)

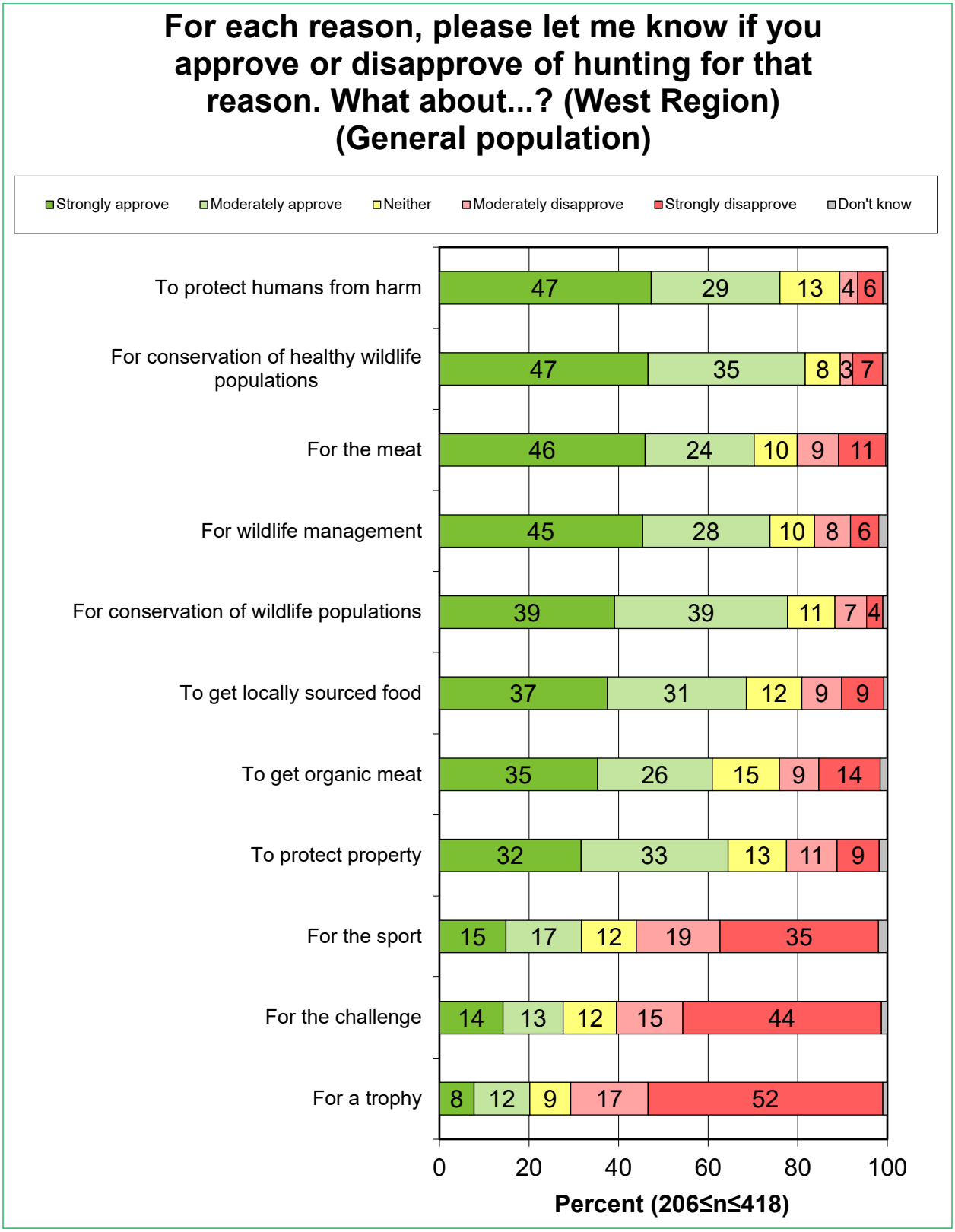


Figure 40. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting for Various Reasons (West)

Table 4. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting for Various Reasons (Regions)											
Percentage who approve / disapprove	To protect humans from harm	For conservation of healthy wildlife populations	For the meat	For wildlife management	For conservation of wildlife populations	To get locally sourced food	To protect property	To get organic meat	For the sport	For the challenge	For a trophy
Northeast Region											
Total approve	69	66	70	73	68	67	64	58	36	31	20
Total disapprove	18	22	20	15	18	22	24	27	51	54	68
South Region											
Total approve	81	84	76	78	79	73	72	64	37	34	27
Total disapprove	9	8	13	11	8	14	15	19	49	52	62
Midwest Region											
Total approve	81	82	81	83	83	78	72	69	42	39	28
Total disapprove	10	8	10	9	6	10	14	16	45	48	59
West Region											
Total approve	76	82	70	74	78	68	64	61	32	28	20
Total disapprove	10	9	20	14	11	18	21	23	54	59	70

As the tabulation shows, the highest approval for most reasons is among Midwest Region residents, with the South Region residents next in approval in general. Meanwhile, the highest amount of disapproval is among Northeast Region residents for most reasons and among West Region residents for a few of the reasons. Light green shading shows the highest approval among the four regions, and light red shows the highest disapproval.

Trends analysis in Figure 41 revealed that reasons for hunting have lost support across the board, including traditionally strong approval reasons such as hunting for the meat (down 9.5% or 24.1 million people [statistically significant, $p < 0.05$]), hunting to protect people from harm (down 6.9% or 17.5 million people [statistically significant, $p \leq 0.05$]), and hunting for to get locally sourced food (down 10.9% or 27.6 million people [statistically significant, $p \leq 0.05$]). For most of the motivations, 2023 showed the lowest approval of all the survey years presented in the graph.

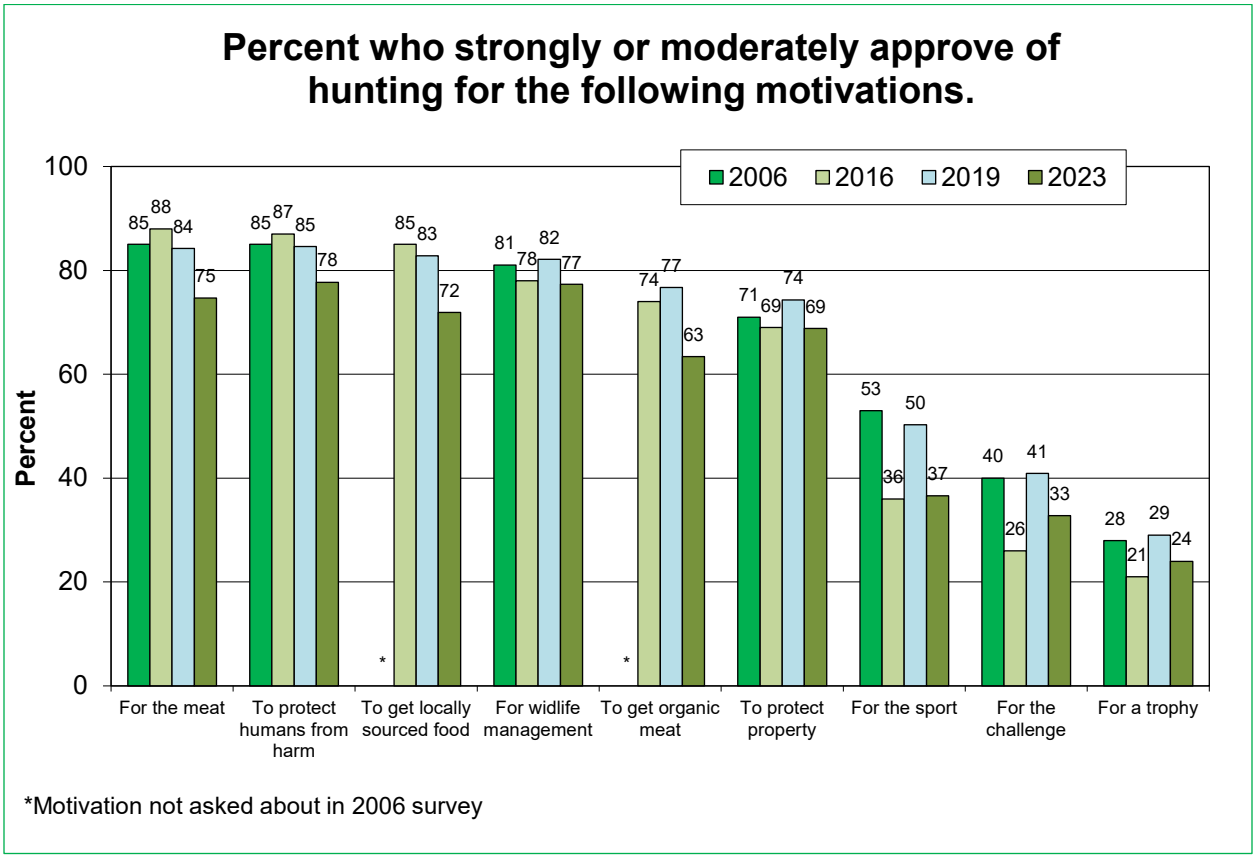


Figure 41. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting for Various Reasons (Trends)

One demographic-participatory analyses trends graph is included as Figure 42 regarding hunting to get organic meat.

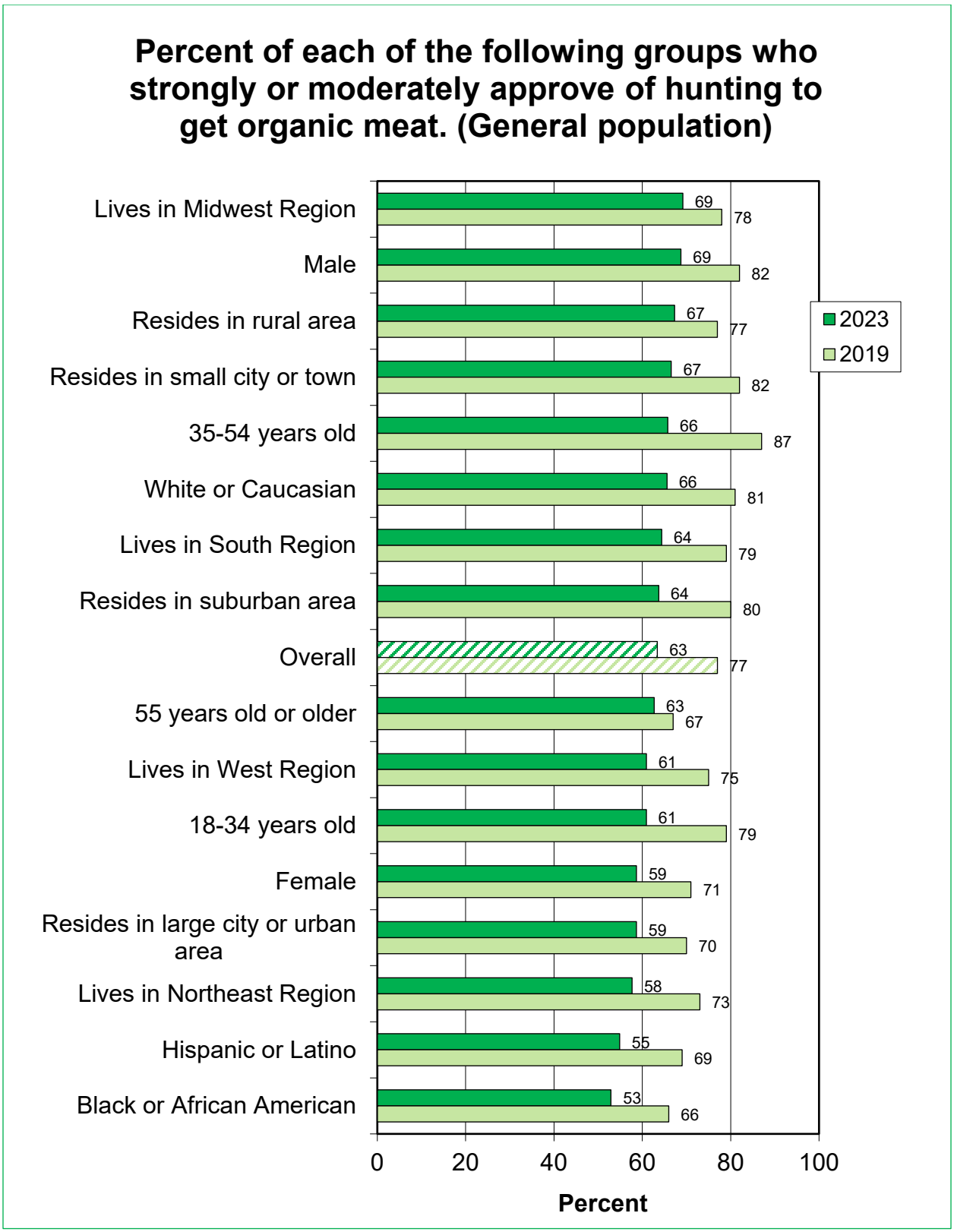


Figure 42. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Approve of Hunting for Meat

The survey looked at hunting various species, as shown in Figure 43. The highest approval rate is for the hunting of deer and wild turkey: 69% of U.S. residents approve of hunting these species (summed on unrounded numbers). In a second tier are five commonly hunted species, all with approval rates of 55% up to 63%. For the rest of the species, disapproval exceeds approval. Table 5 shows the overall approval and disapproval.

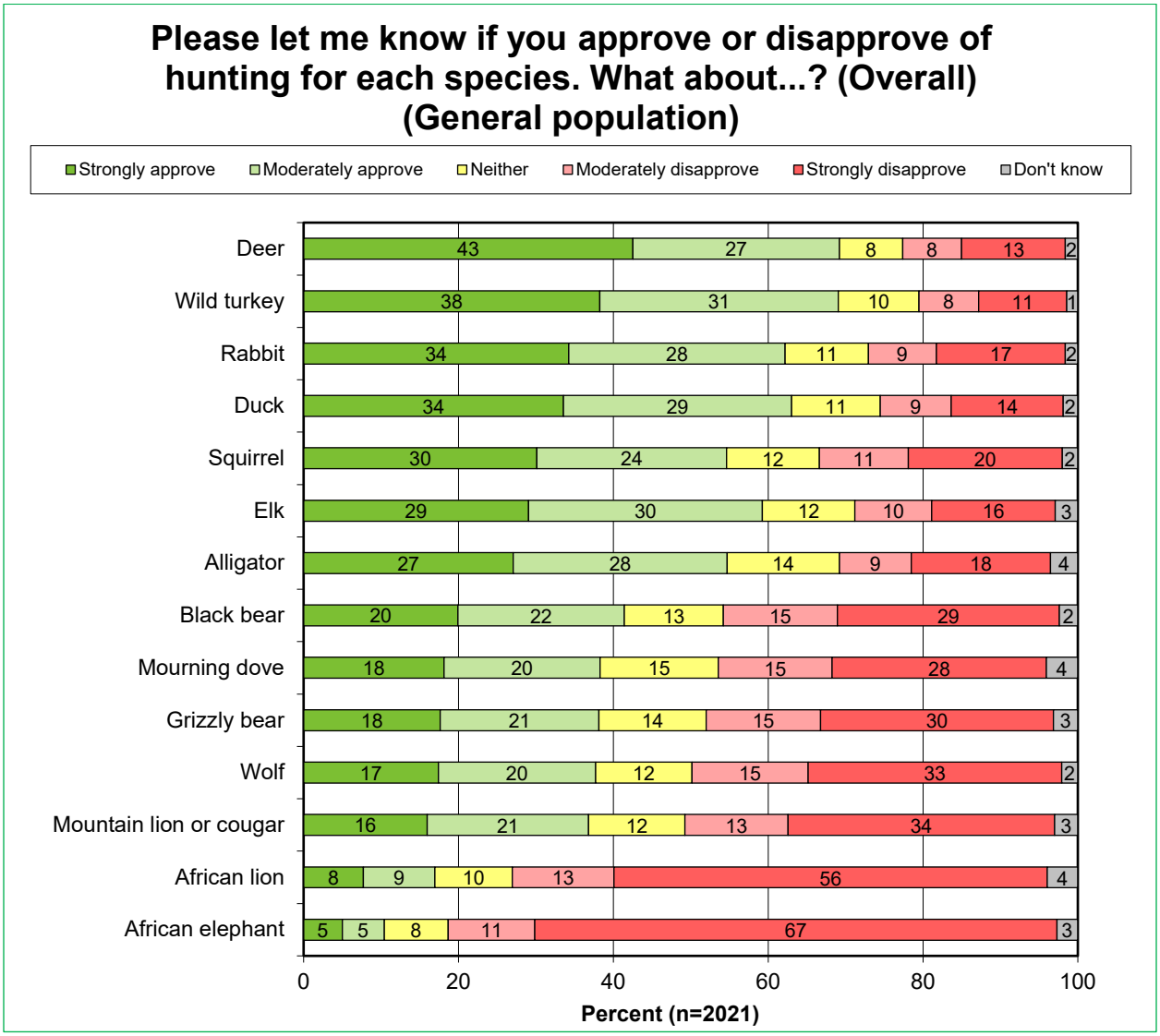


Figure 43. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting Various Species

Table 5. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting Various Species

U.S. residents overall (percentage who approve / disapprove)	Deer	Wild turkey	Rabbit	Duck	Squirrel	Elk	Alligator	Black bear	Mourning dove	Grizzly bear	Wolf	Mountain lion	African lion	African elephant
Total approve	69	69	62	63	55	59	55	41	38	38	38	37	17	10
Total disapprove	21	19	25	24	31	26	27	43	42	45	48	48	69	79

The regional graphs are in Figures 44 through 47. Table 6 shows total approval/disapproval along with a discussion of the regional results.

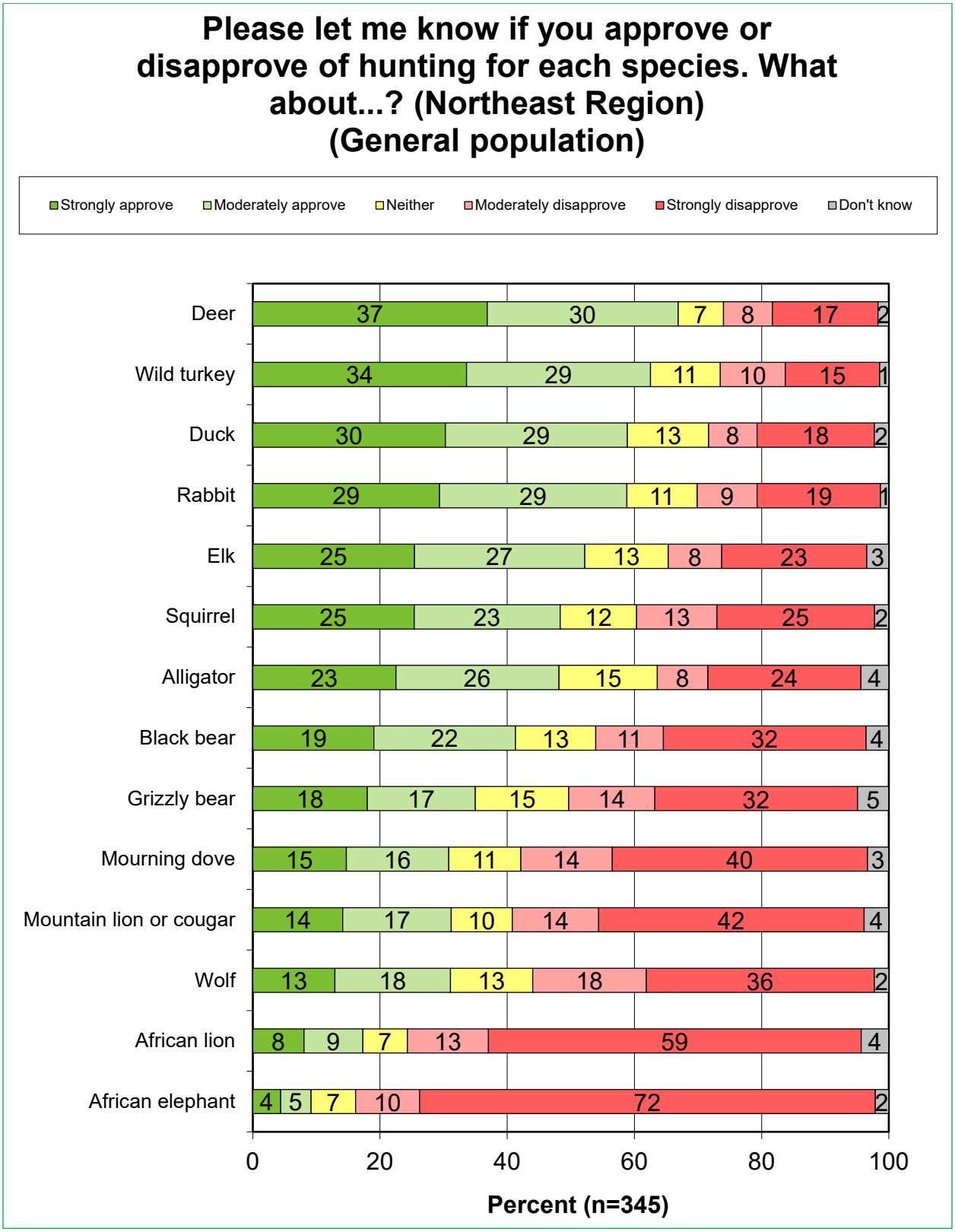


Figure 44. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting Various Species (Northeast)

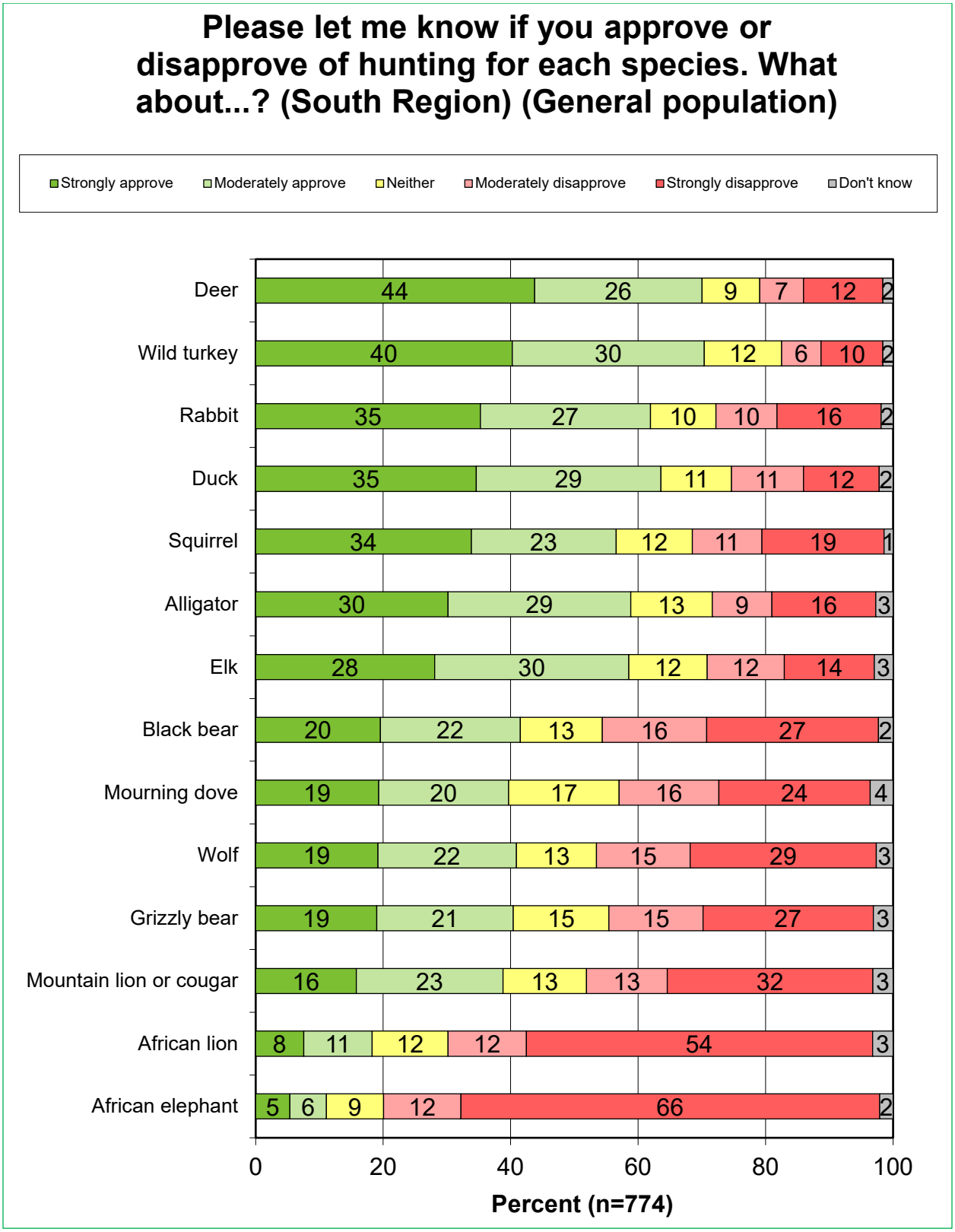


Figure 45. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting Various Species (South)

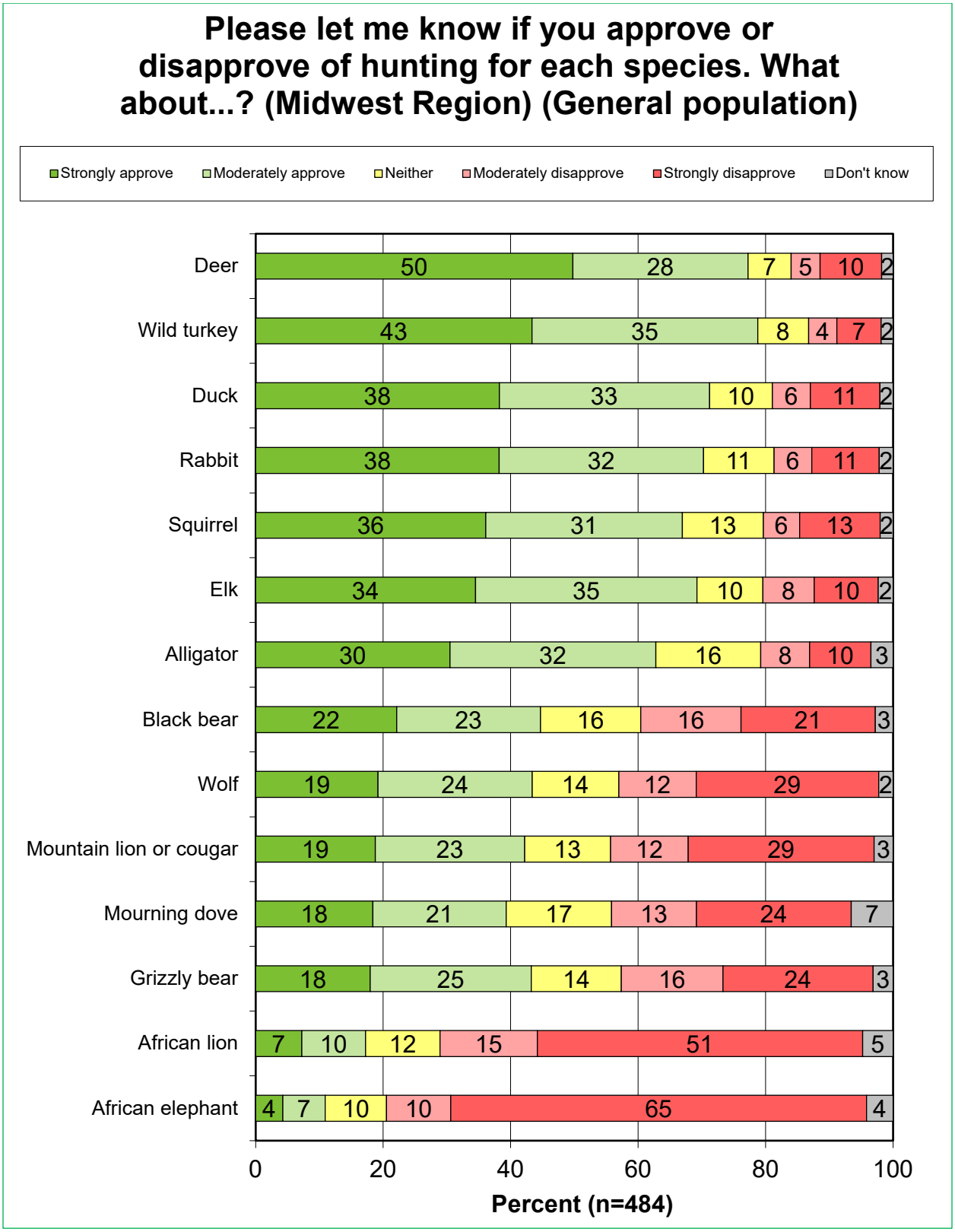


Figure 46. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting Various Species (Midwest)

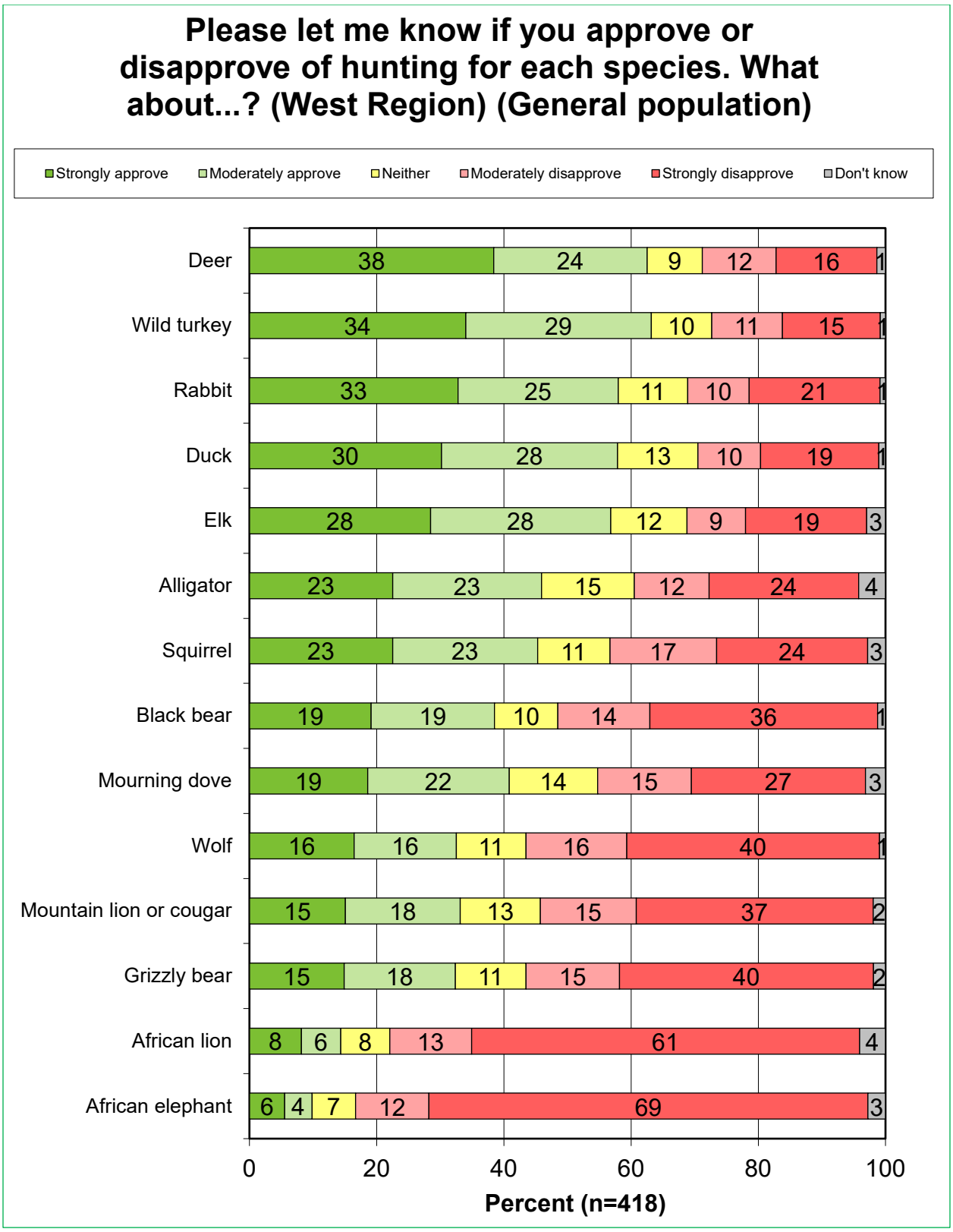


Figure 47. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting Various Species (West)

Table 6. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting Various Species (Regions)														
Percentage who approve / disapprove	Deer	Wild turkey	Rabbit	Duck	Squirrel	Elk	Alligator	Black bear	Mourning dove	Grizzly bear	Wolf	Mountain lion	African lion	African elephant
Northeast Region														
Total approve	67	63	59	59	52	48	48	41	35	31	31	31	17	9
Total disapprove	24	25	26	29	31	37	32	42	45	55	55	54	71	82
South Region														
Total approve	70	70	64	62	59	57	59	41	40	40	39	41	18	11
Total disapprove	19	16	23	26	26	30	26	43	41	39	45	44	67	78
Midwest Region														
Total approve	77	79	71	70	69	67	63	45	43	39	42	43	17	11
Total disapprove	14	11	17	16	18	18	17	37	39	38	41	41	66	75
West Region														
Total approve	63	63	58	58	57	45	46	39	32	41	33	33	14	10
Total disapprove	27	27	28	30	28	41	35	50	55	42	52	56	74	81

Residents of the Midwest Region have the highest approval of hunting almost every species. Disapproval is highest among West Region residents for most species, although the Northeast Region has higher disapproval for a handful of species. Light green shading shows the highest approval among the four regions, and light red shows the highest disapproval.

Approval of legal hunting most species has gone down in 2023 compared to previous years (Figures 48 and 49). For example, hunting deer lost 8.5% support, which represents 21.5 million people (statistically significant, $p \leq 0.05$).

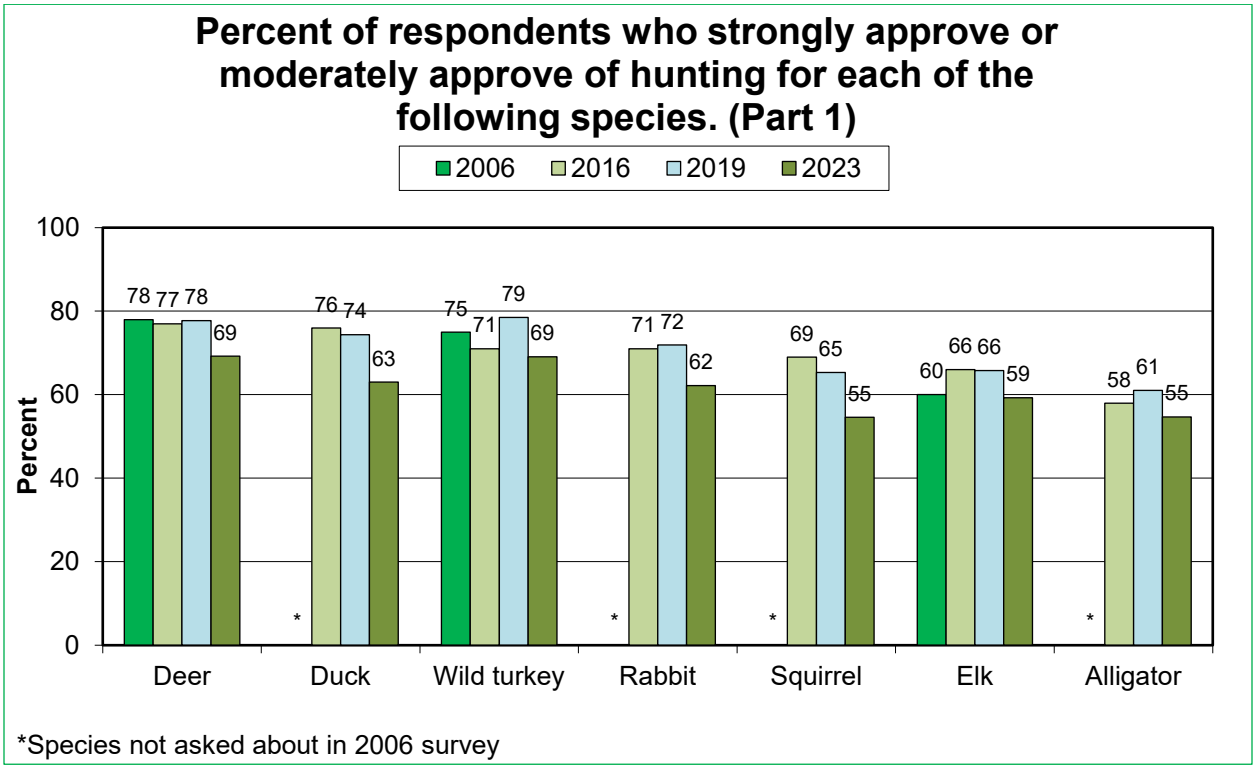


Figure 48. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting Various Species (Trends) (Part 1)

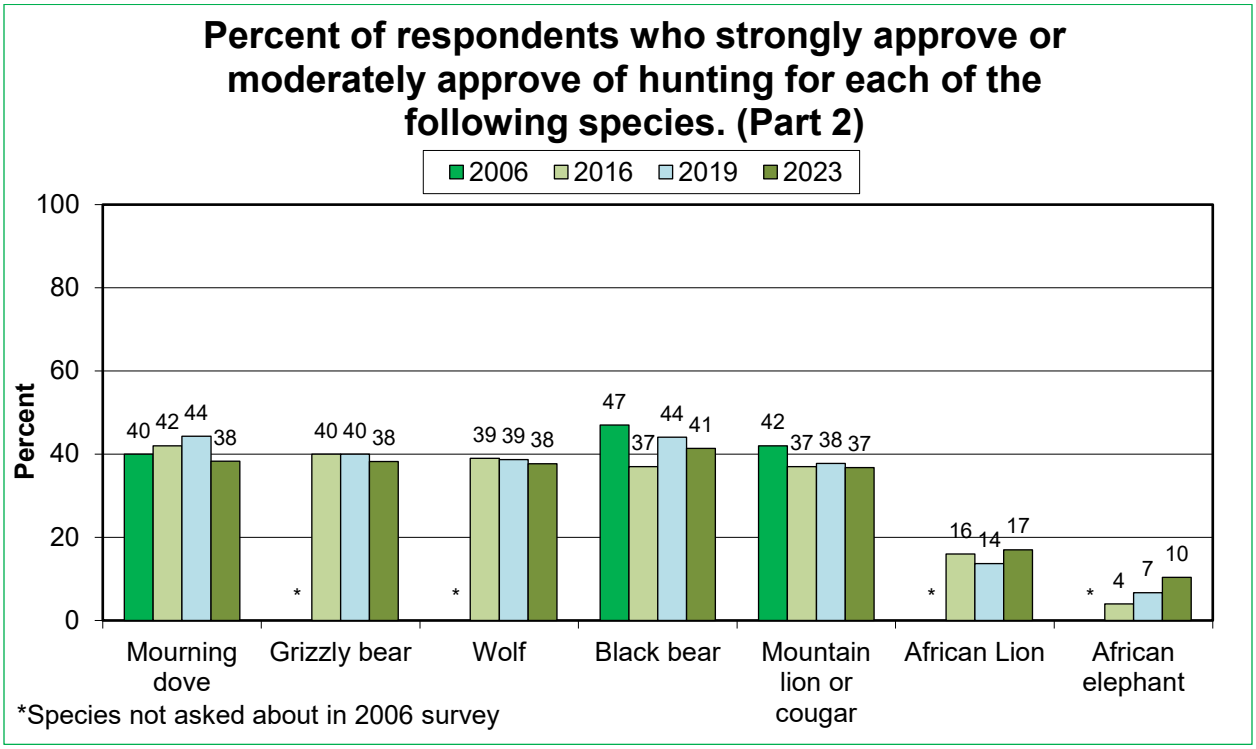


Figure 49. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting Various Species (Trends) (Part 2)

Demographic-participatory analyses graphs are included showing the percentages in 2019 and 2023 who approve of hunting deer, wild turkey, and duck (Figures 50 through 52).

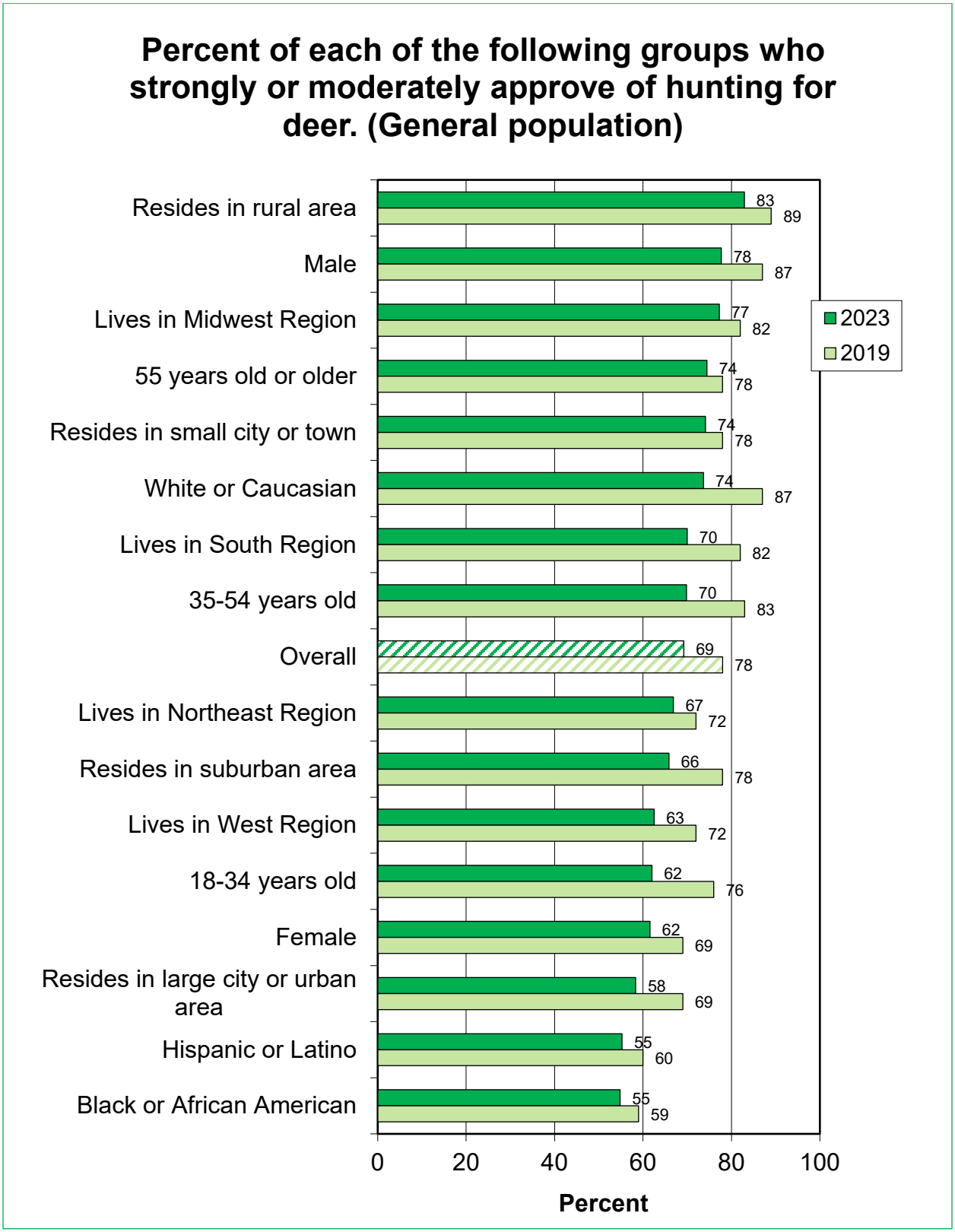


Figure 50. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Approve of Hunting Deer (Trends)

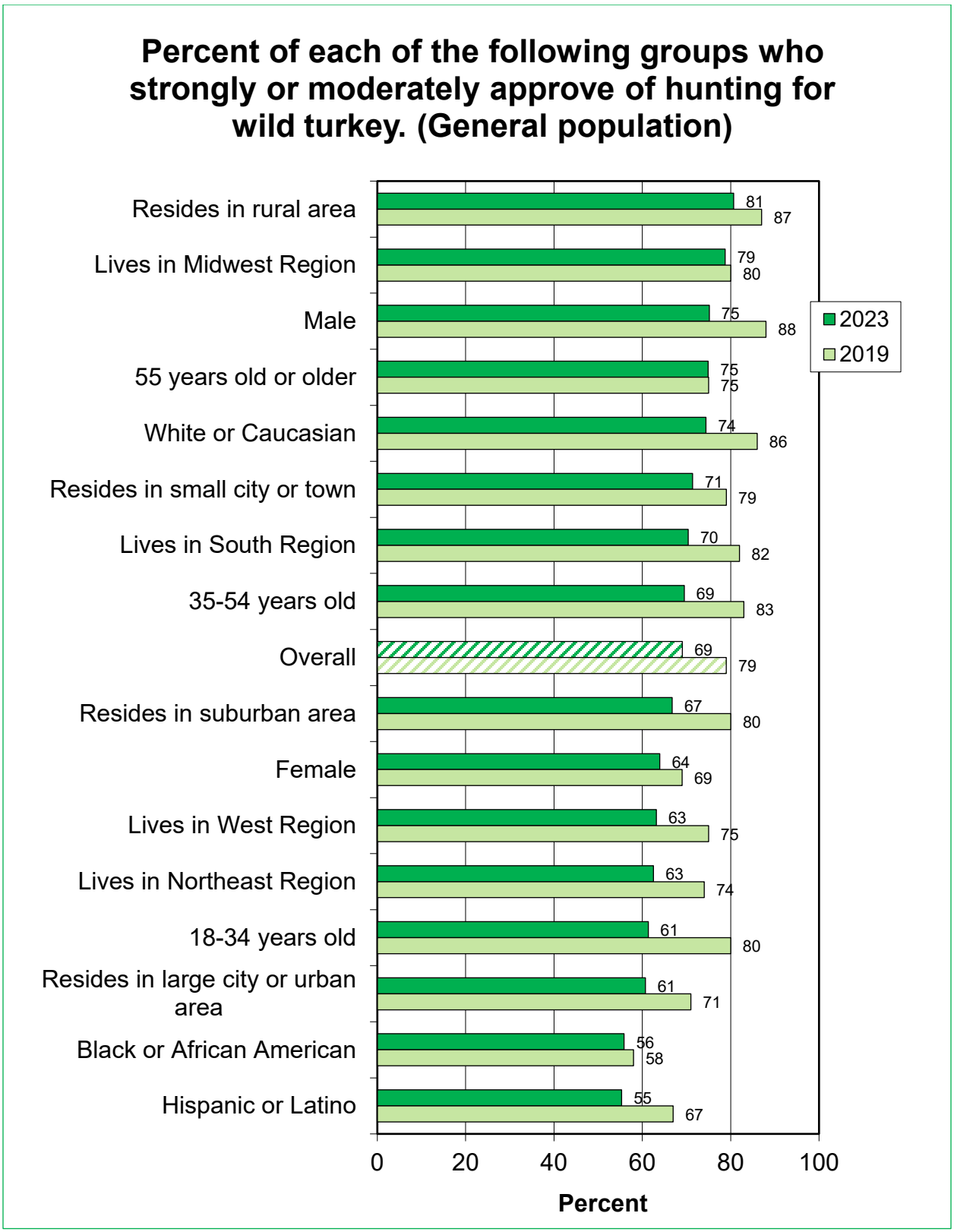


Figure 51. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Approve of Hunting Wild Turkey (Trends)

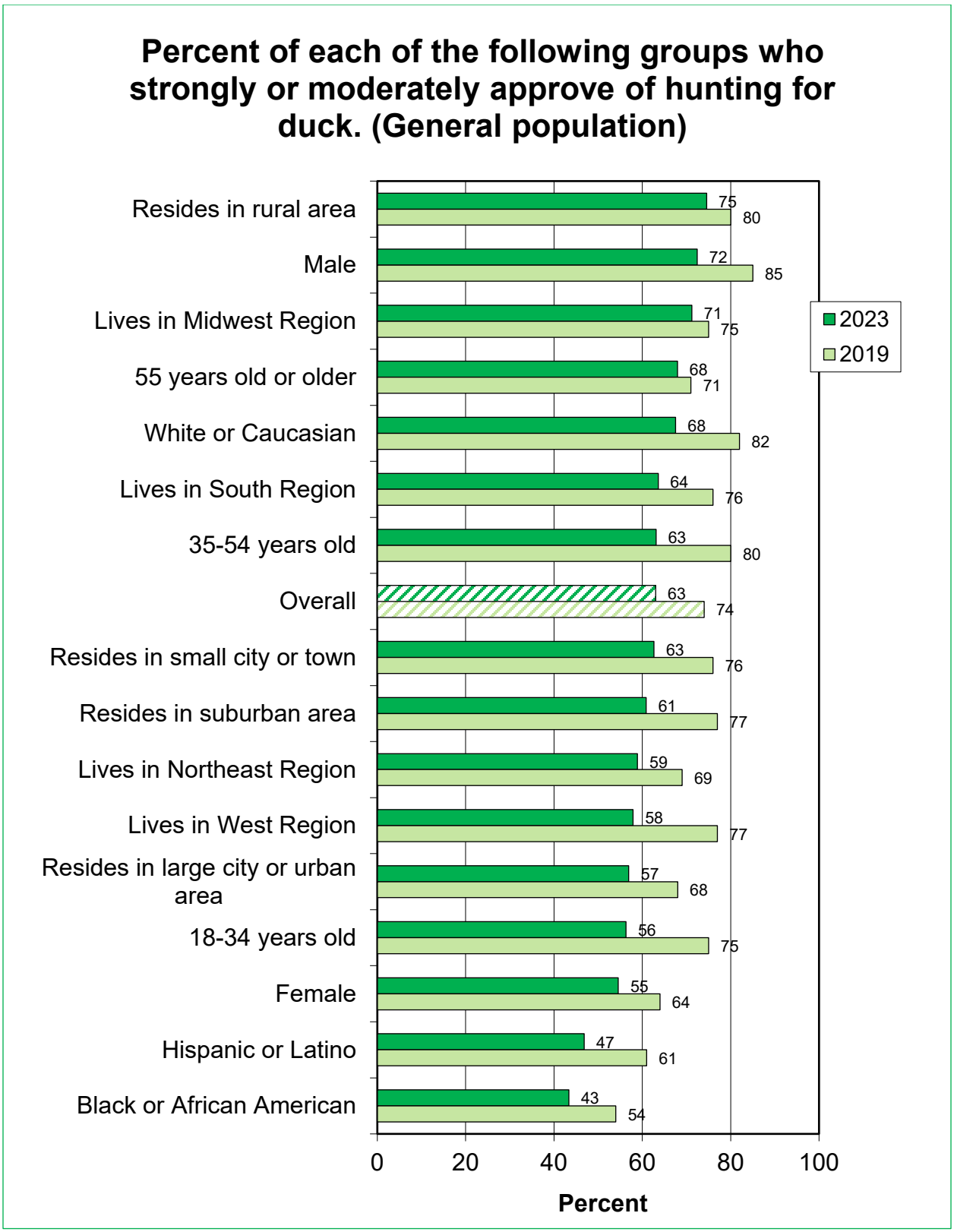


Figure 52. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Approve of Hunting Duck (Trends)

Regarding methods of hunting, the highest approval is hunting with a bow and arrow and hunting with a firearm: both have approximately two thirds of Americans approving (Figure 53 and Table 7). Next in approval is hunting with dogs, with a majority in approval. Below that, less than a majority approve of the rest, with the three lowest having higher disapproval than approval. All of the methods at the bottom affect fair chase, seemingly giving humans too much of an advantage.

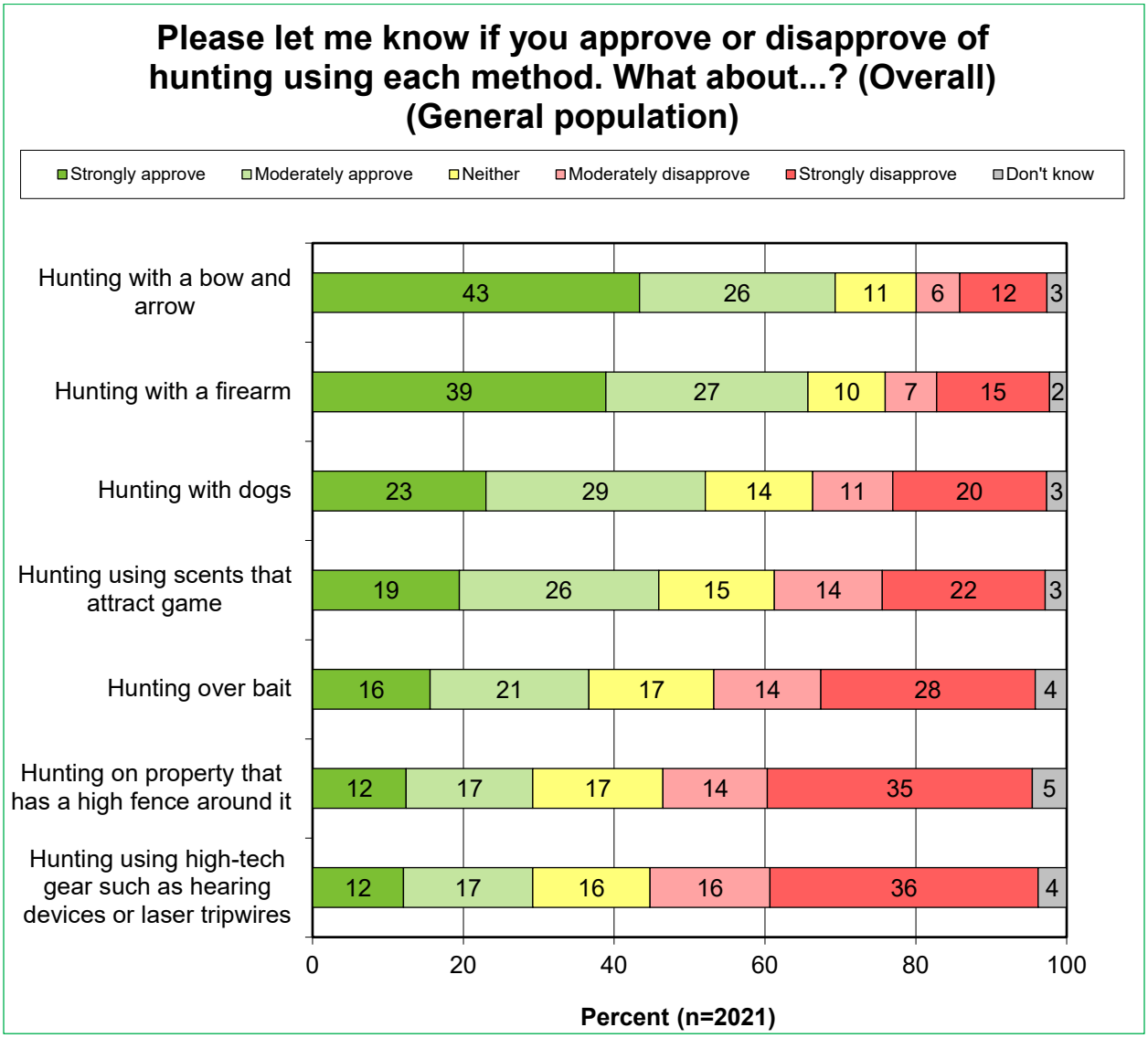


Figure 53. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting Using Various Methods

Table 7. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting Using Various Methods

U.S. residents overall (percentage who approve / disapprove)	Hunting with a bow and arrow	Hunting with a firearm	Hunting with dogs	Hunting using scents that attract game	Hunting over bait	Hunting on property that has a high-fence around it	Hunting using high-tech gear
Total approve	69	66	52	46	37	29	29
Total disapprove	17	22	31	36	43	49	51

Regional graphs follow in Figures 54 through 57. A discussion of regional results is included after Table 8.

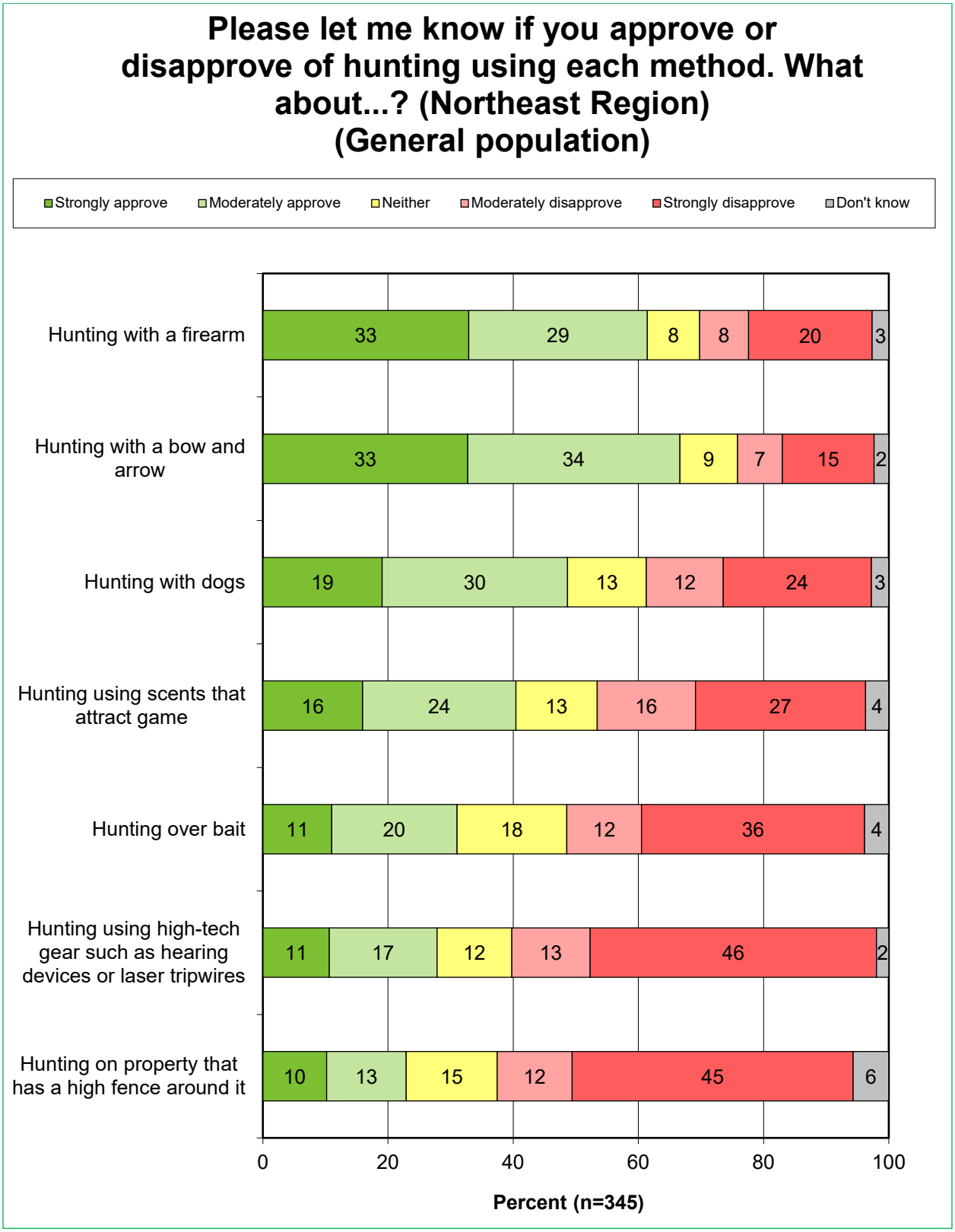


Figure 54. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting Using Various Methods (Northeast)

Figure 55. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting Using Various Methods (South)

Figure 56. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting Using Various Methods (Midwest)

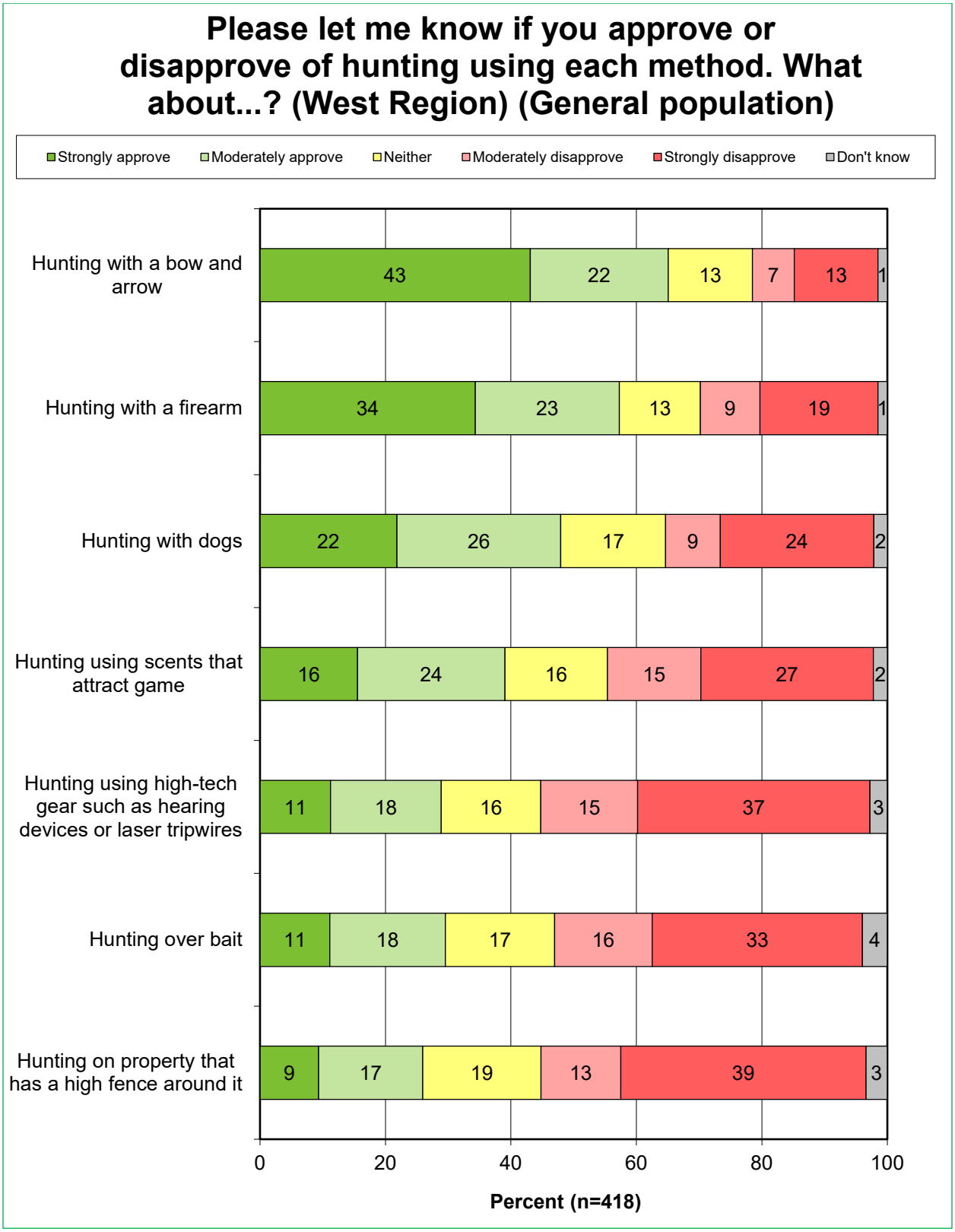


Figure 57. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting Using Various Methods (West)

Table 8. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting Using Various Methods (Regions)							
Percentage who approve / disapprove	Hunting with a bow and arrow	Hunting with a firearm	Hunting with dogs	Hunting using scents that attract game	Hunting over bait	Hunting on property that has a high fence around it	Hunting using high-tech gear
Northeast Region							
Total approve	67	61	49	40	31	23	28
Total disapprove	22	28	36	43	48	57	58
South Region							
Total approve	69	68	54	49	43	34	29
Total disapprove	17	19	29	33	37	44	49
Midwest Region							
Total approve	77	74	57	53	38	29	32
Total disapprove	11	15	27	29	42	48	48
West Region							
Total approve	65	57	48	39	30	26	29
Total disapprove	20	28	33	42	49	52	52

The highest approval of most of the methods is among Midwest Region residents, with the South Region having the highest approval for two of the six methods. The highest disapproval occurs in the Northeast Region, for the most part. Light green shading shows the highest approval among the four regions, and light red shows the highest disapproval.

The trends in Figure 58 show lower approval in 2023 for hunting with a bow and arrow and hunting with dogs. There is higher approval for the rest of the methods. Note that hunting with firearms was not previously asked. The wording on the high-fence hunting was as follows in 2006: Hunting in a high-fence preserve. In surveys from 2016 on, the wording was as follows: Hunting on property that has a high fence around it.

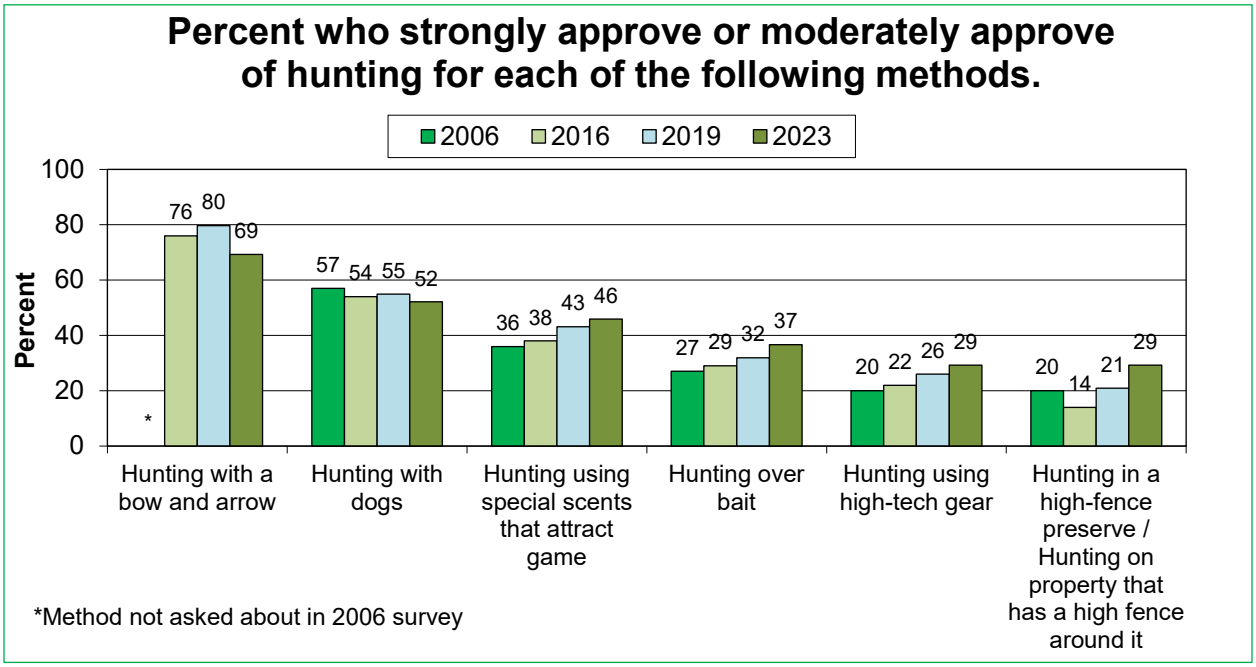


Figure 58. Approval and Disapproval of Hunting Using Various Methods (Trends)

Demographic-participatory analyses in Figures 59 and 60 show the percentages of various groups in 2019 and in 2023 who approve of bowhunting and who approve of high-fenced hunting.

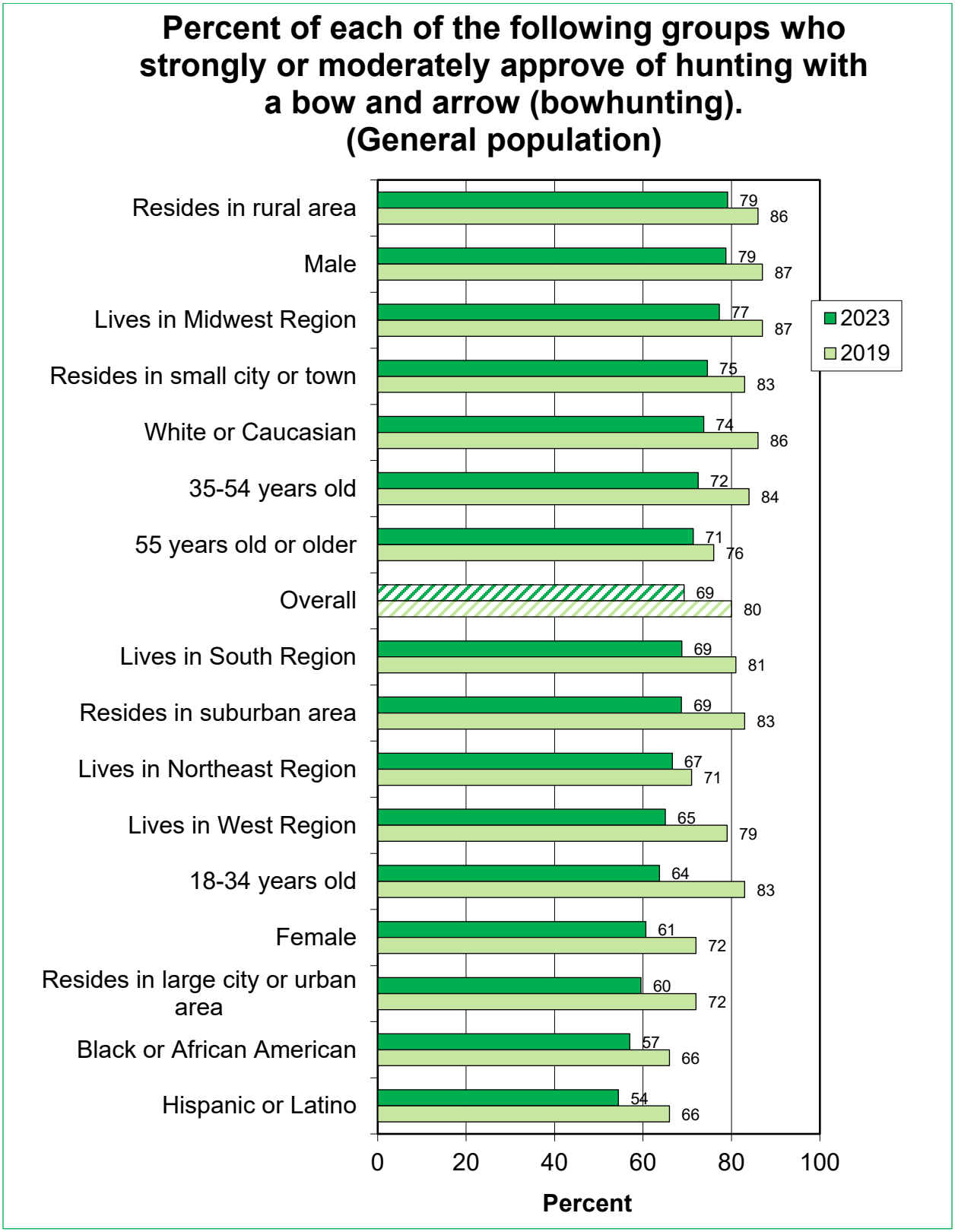


Figure 59. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Approve of Bowhunting (Trends)

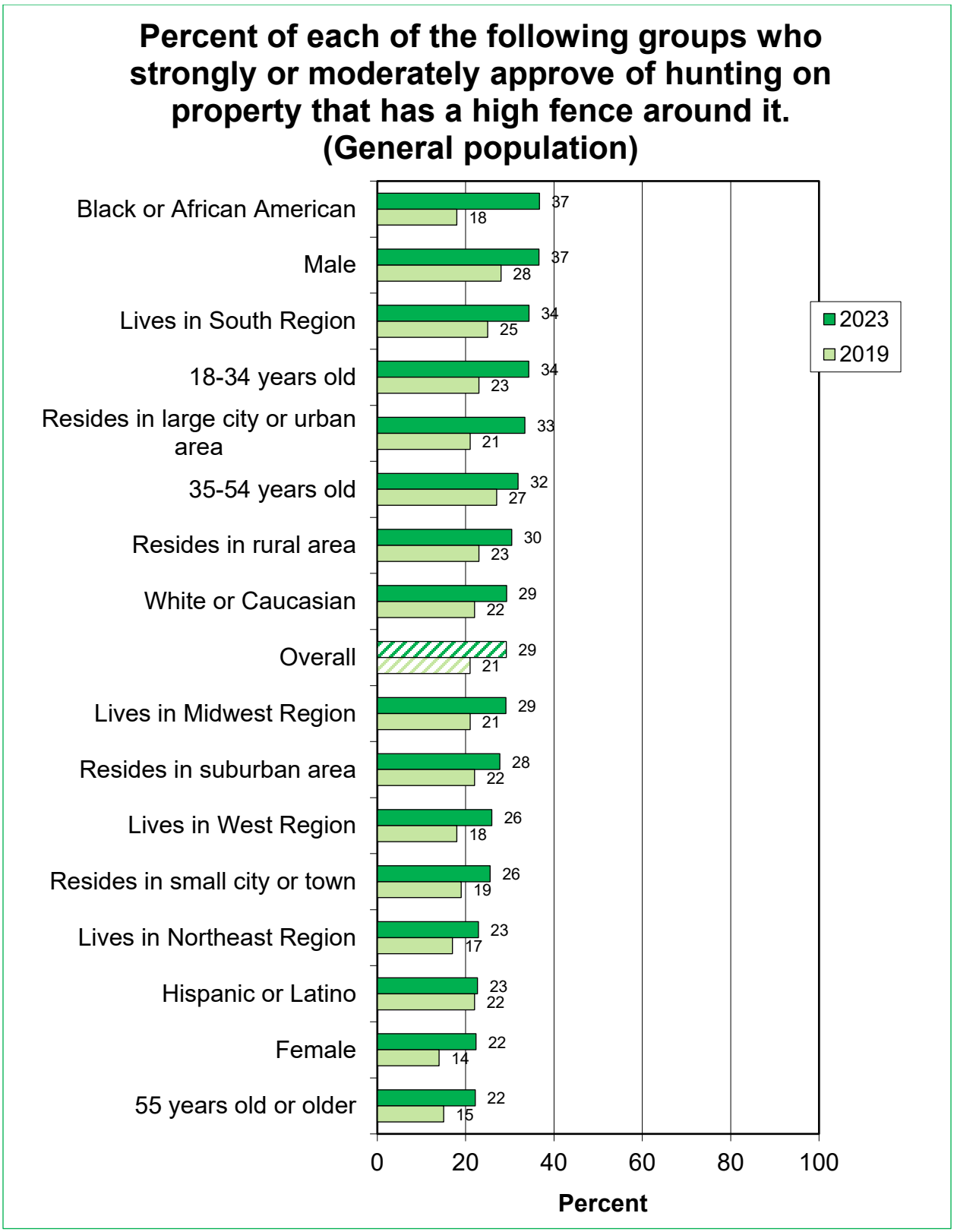


Figure 60. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Approve of High-Fence Hunting (Trends)

APPROVAL OF LEGAL TARGET/SPORT SHOOTING: VARIOUS REASONS

The survey explored motivations for legal recreational sport shooting in Figure 61. By far, the most acceptable to Americans is to sport shoot to learn self-defense skills, with half of residents *strongly* approving and almost three quarters (74%) approving overall. The next two are in the middle tier: 68% and 62% approving of sport shooting to practice for hunting and for recreation, respectively. The lowest approval is sport shooting for the challenge, although there are still a majority who approve (56%). Table 9 summarizes the results.

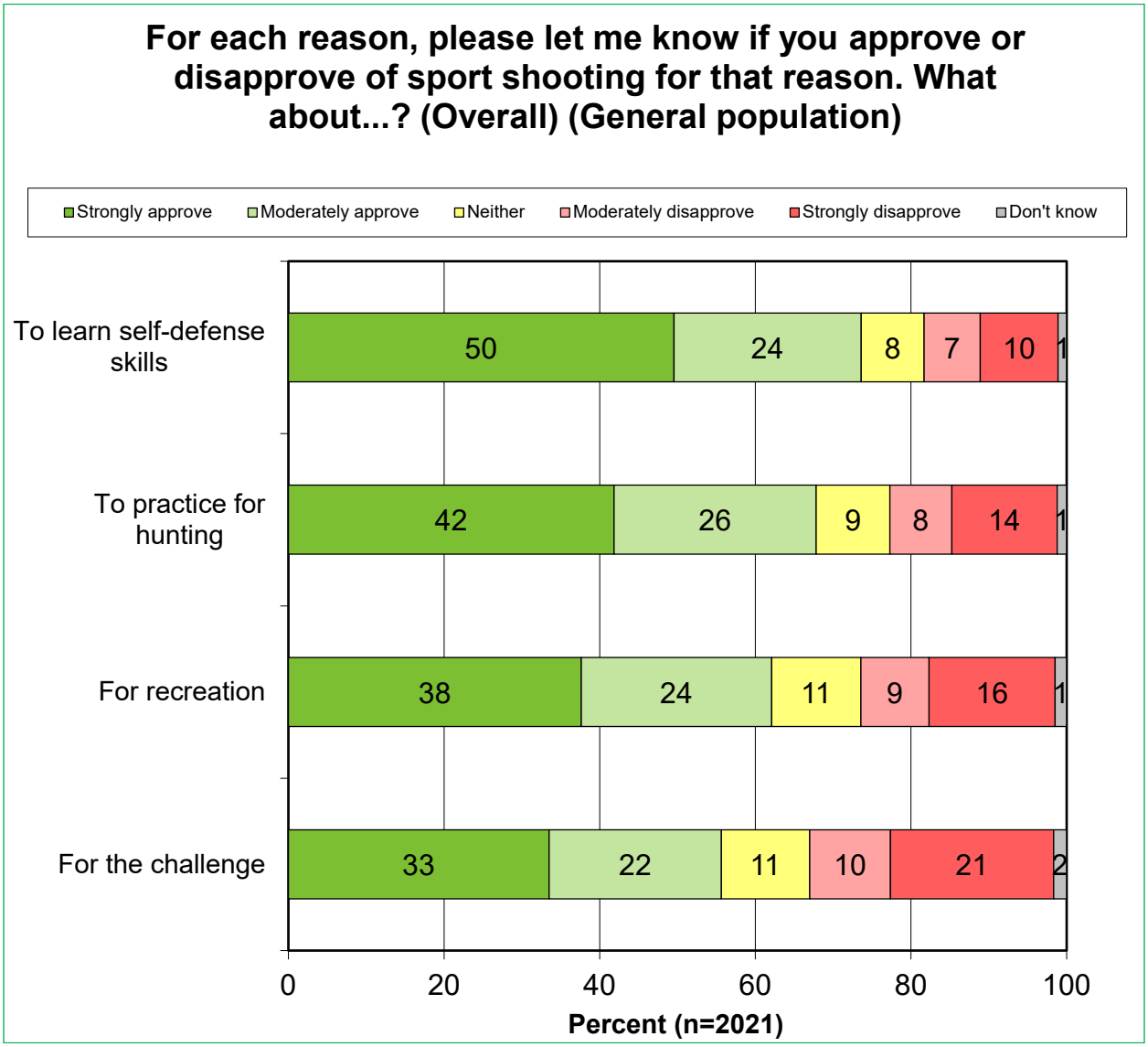


Figure 61. Approval and Disapproval of Sport Shooting for Various Reasons

Table 9. Approval and Disapproval of Sport Shooting for Various Reasons				
U.S. residents overall (percentage who approve / disapprove)	To learn self-defense skills	To practice for hunting	For recreation	For the challenge
Total approve	74	68	62	56
Total disapprove	17	21	25	31

The discussion of the regions is included after the graphs and tabulation of the regional results in Figures 62 through 65 and Table 10.

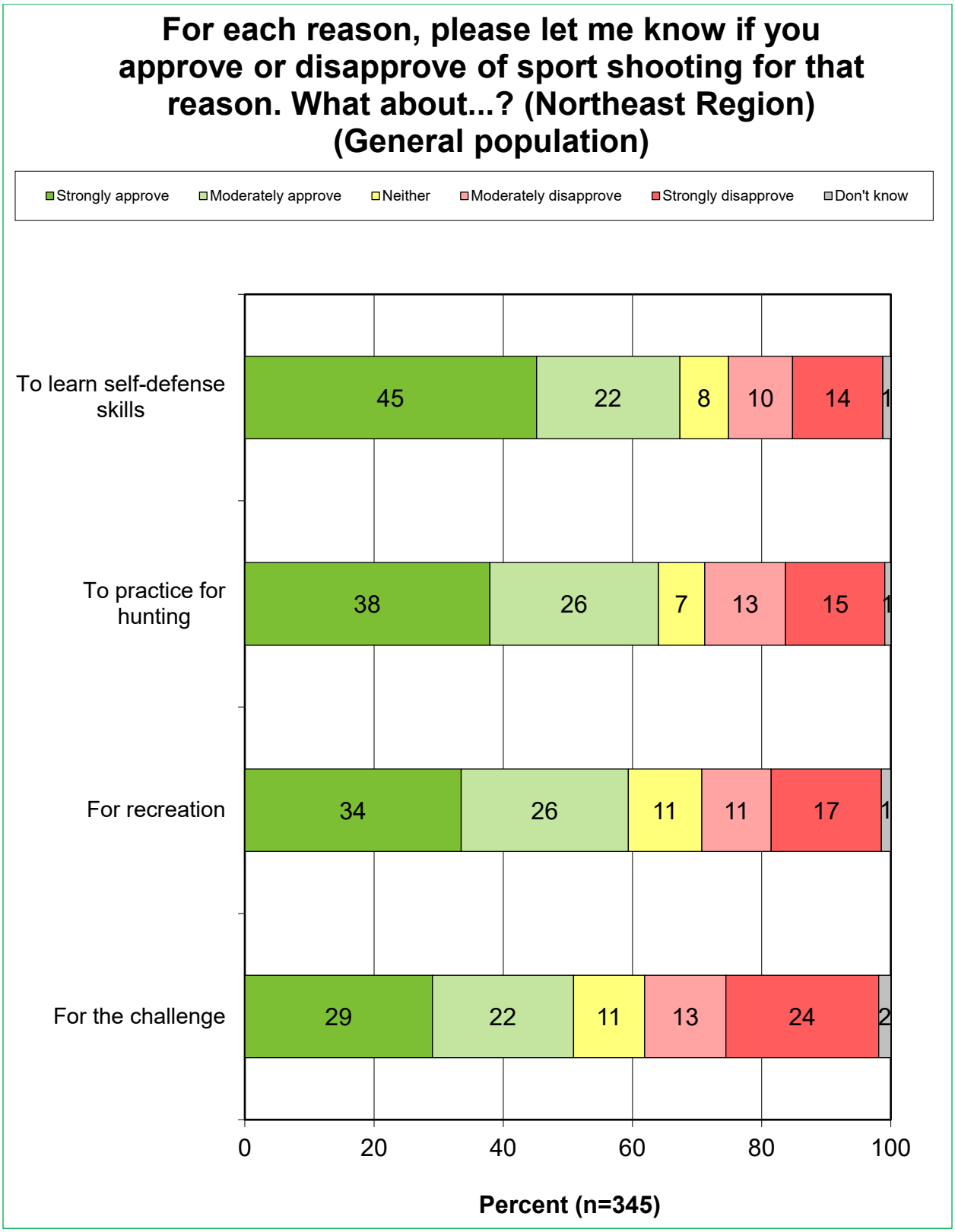


Figure 62. Approval and Disapproval of Sport Shooting for Various Reasons (Northeast)

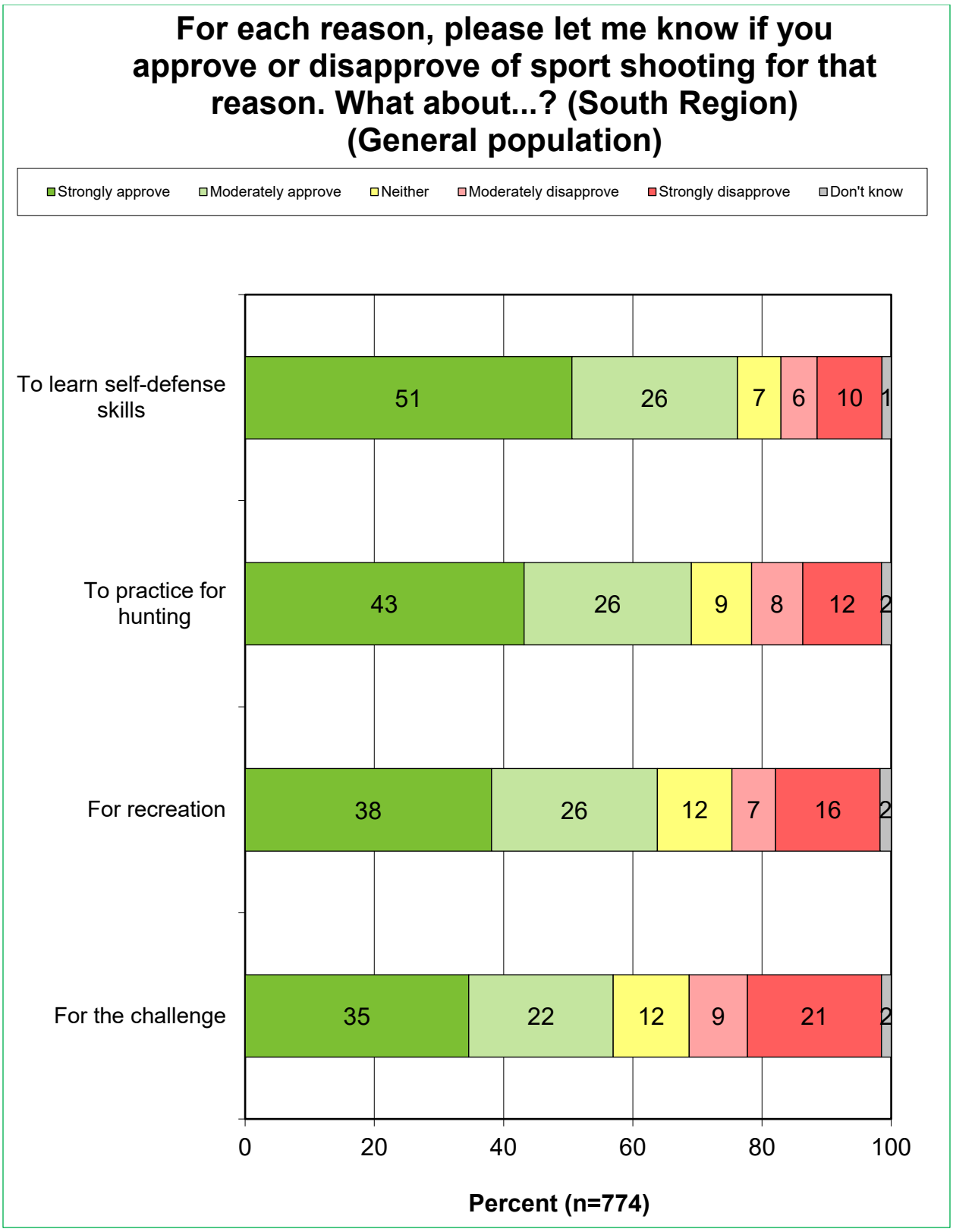


Figure 63. Approval and Disapproval of Sport Shooting for Various Reasons (South)

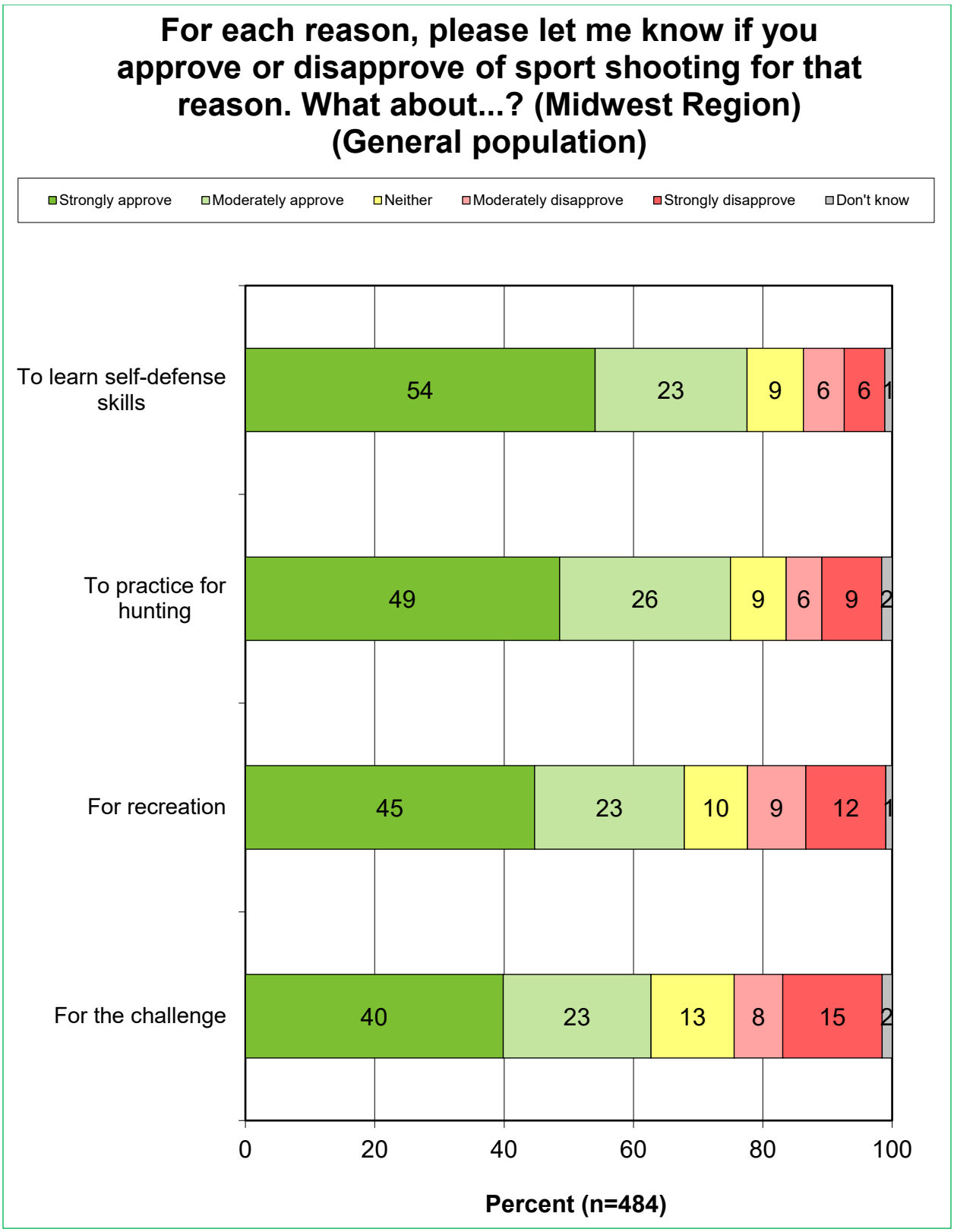


Figure 64. Approval and Disapproval of Sport Shooting for Various Reasons (Midwest)

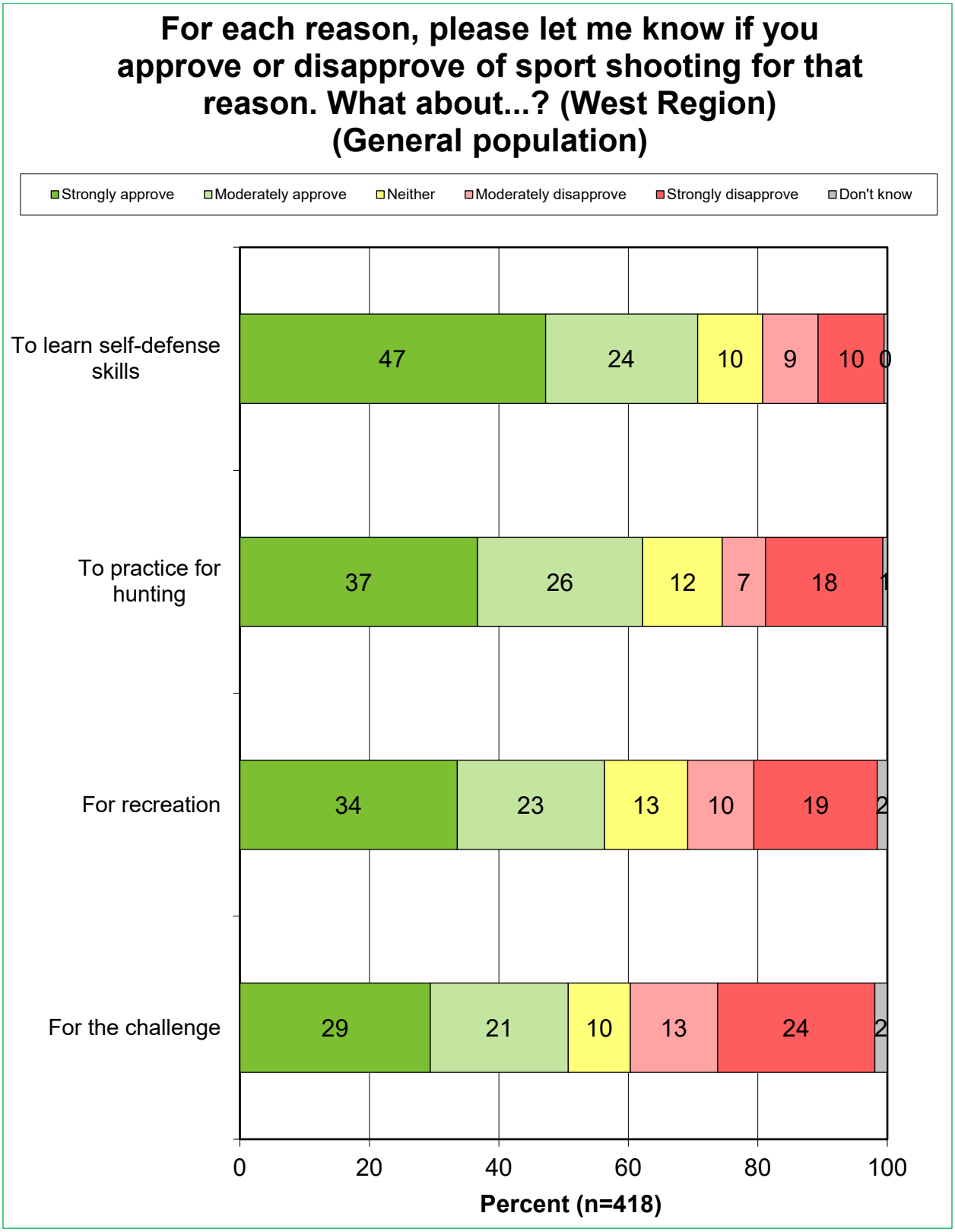


Figure 65. Approval and Disapproval of Sport Shooting for Various Reasons (West)

Table 10. Approval and Disapproval of Sport Shooting for Various Reasons (Regions)					
Percentage who approve / disapprove		To learn self-defense skills	To practice for hunting	For recreation	For the challenge
Northeast Region	Total approve	67	64	59	51
	Total disapprove	24	28	28	36
South Region	Total approve	76	69	64	57
	Total disapprove	16	20	23	30
Midwest Region	Total approve	78	75	68	63
	Total disapprove	13	15	21	23
West Region	Total approve	71	62	56	51
	Total disapprove	19	25	29	38

Across all four motivations, the highest approval for sport shooting is among residents of the Midwest Region. The most disapproval is split between the Northeast Region and the West Region. Light green shading shows the highest approval among the four regions, and light red shows the highest disapproval.

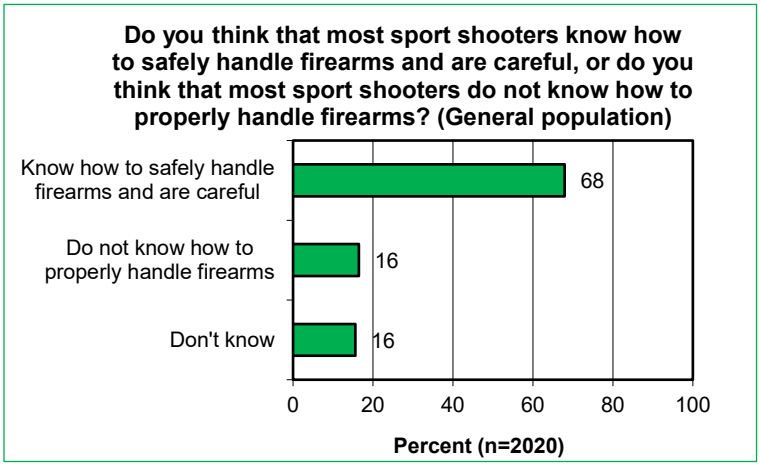


Figure 66. Opinion on Shooters Safely Handling Firearms

Although the large majority of U.S. residents (68%) think that most sport shooters know how to handle firearms and are careful, 16% think that most sport shooters do not know how to properly handle firearms (Figure 66). This latter thinking—that sport shooters do not know—is highest among residents of the West and Northeast Regions (Figure 67).

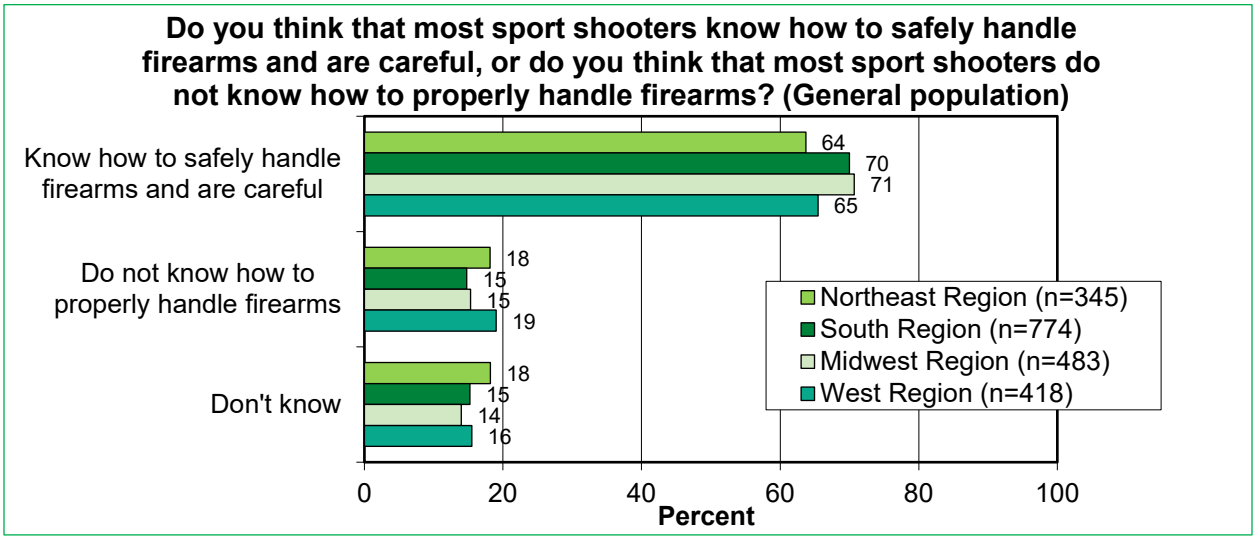


Figure 67. Opinion on Shooters Safely Handling Firearms (Regions)

APPROVAL OF REGULATED TRAPPING FOR VARIOUS REASONS

Although approval of regulated trapping among U.S. residents is at 54%, with disapproval at 28%, the approval of trapping goes up when residents consider some of the reasons for trapping (Figure 68). In fact, every reason for trapping has higher approval than that except for doing so to make money, for fur clothing, or for recreation. The top two reasons are as part of a restoration program, in which the animal lives, and for food, in which the animal is harvested. Therefore, it does not appear that the death of the animal is the issue with approval or disapproval as much as the motivation. Table 11 summarizes the results.

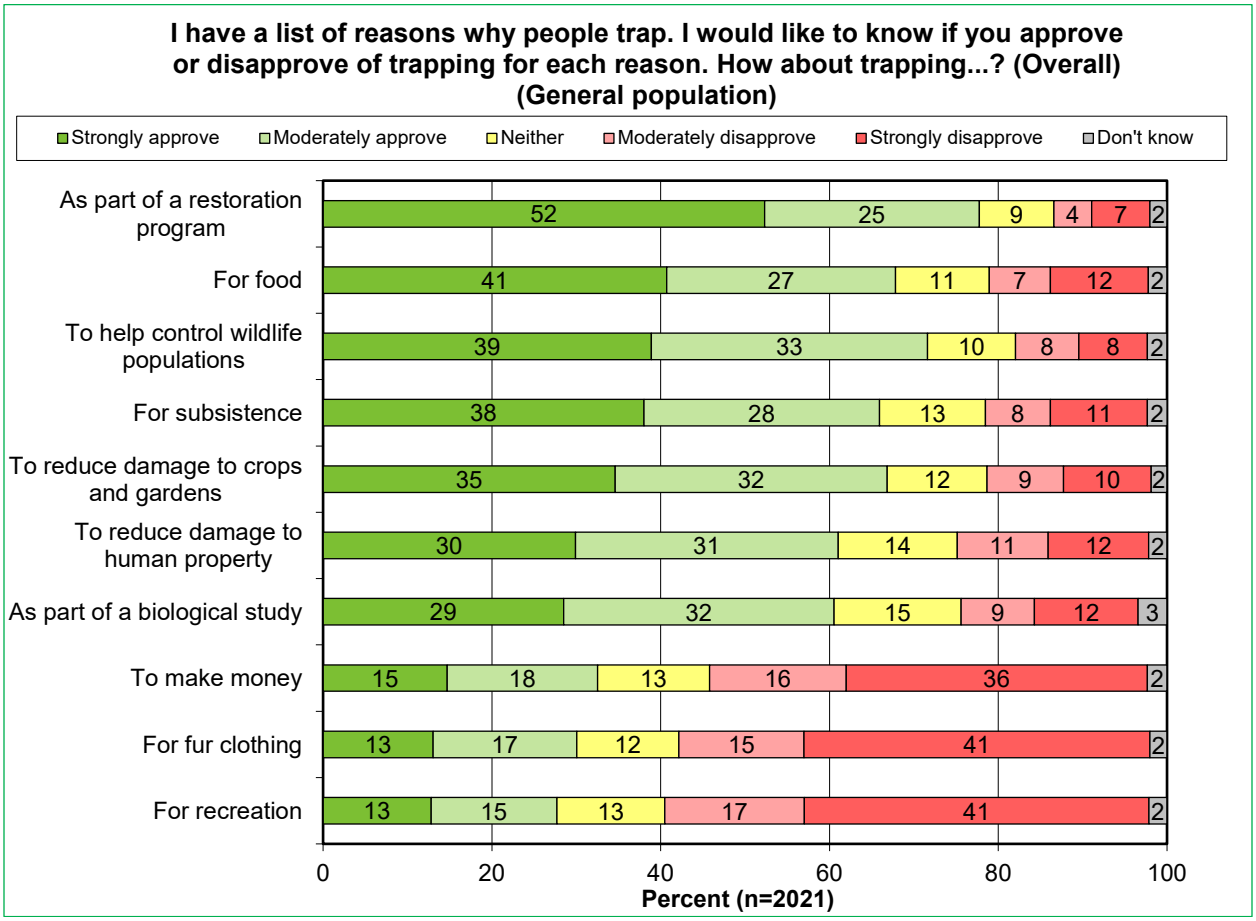


Figure 68. Approval and Disapproval of Trapping for Various Reasons

Table 11. Approval and Disapproval of Trapping for Various Reasons

U.S. residents overall (percentage who approve / disapprove)	As part of a restoration program	For food	To help control wildlife populations	For subsistence	To reduce damage to crops and gardens	To reduce damage to human property	As part of a biological study	To make money	For fur clothing	For recreation
Total approve	78	68	72	66	67	61	61	33	30	28
Total disapprove	11	19	16	19	19	23	21	52	56	57

Following the regional graphs (Figures 69 through 72) is Table 12 along with a discussion of the differences among the regions.

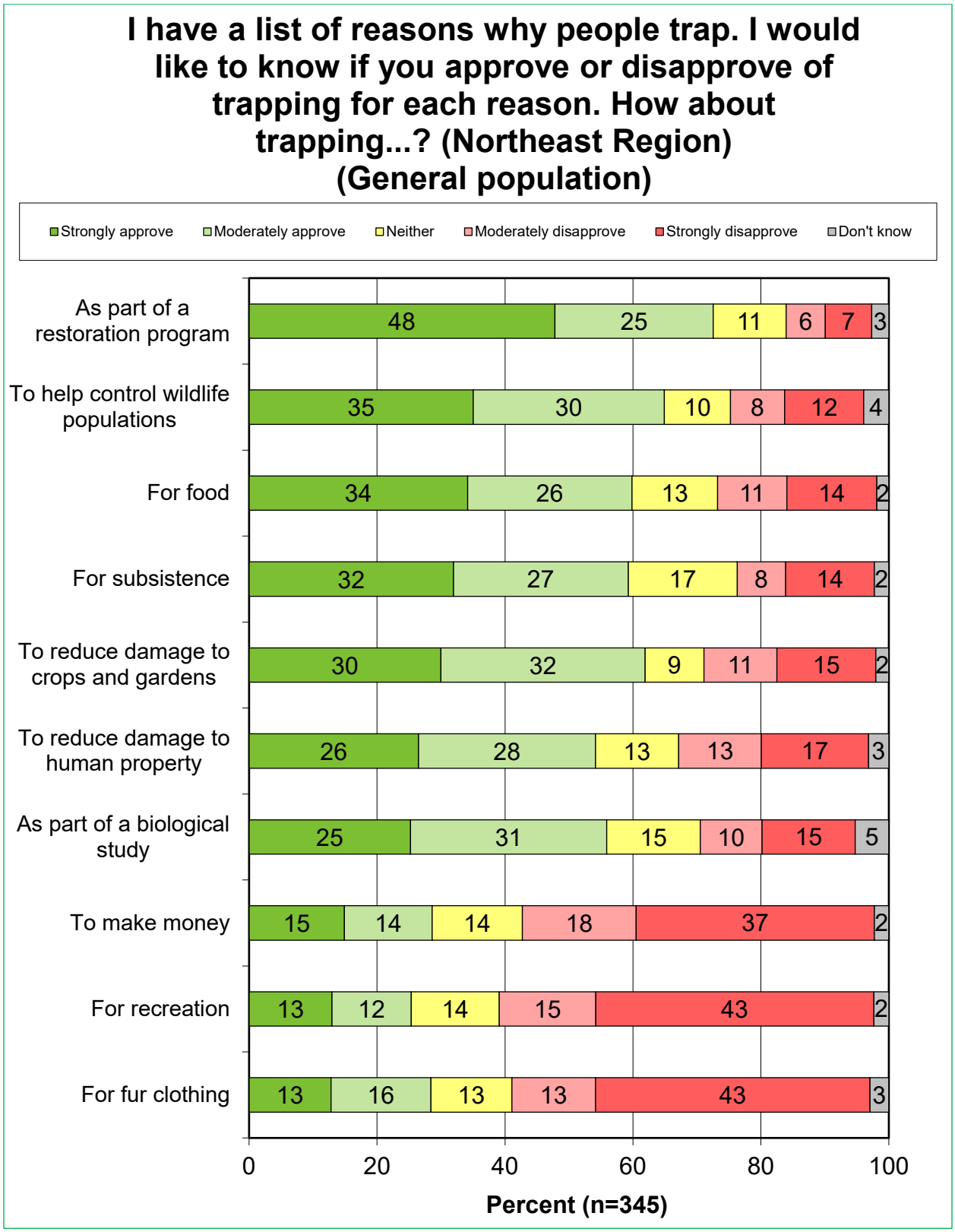


Figure 69. Approval and Disapproval of Trapping for Various Reasons (Northeast)

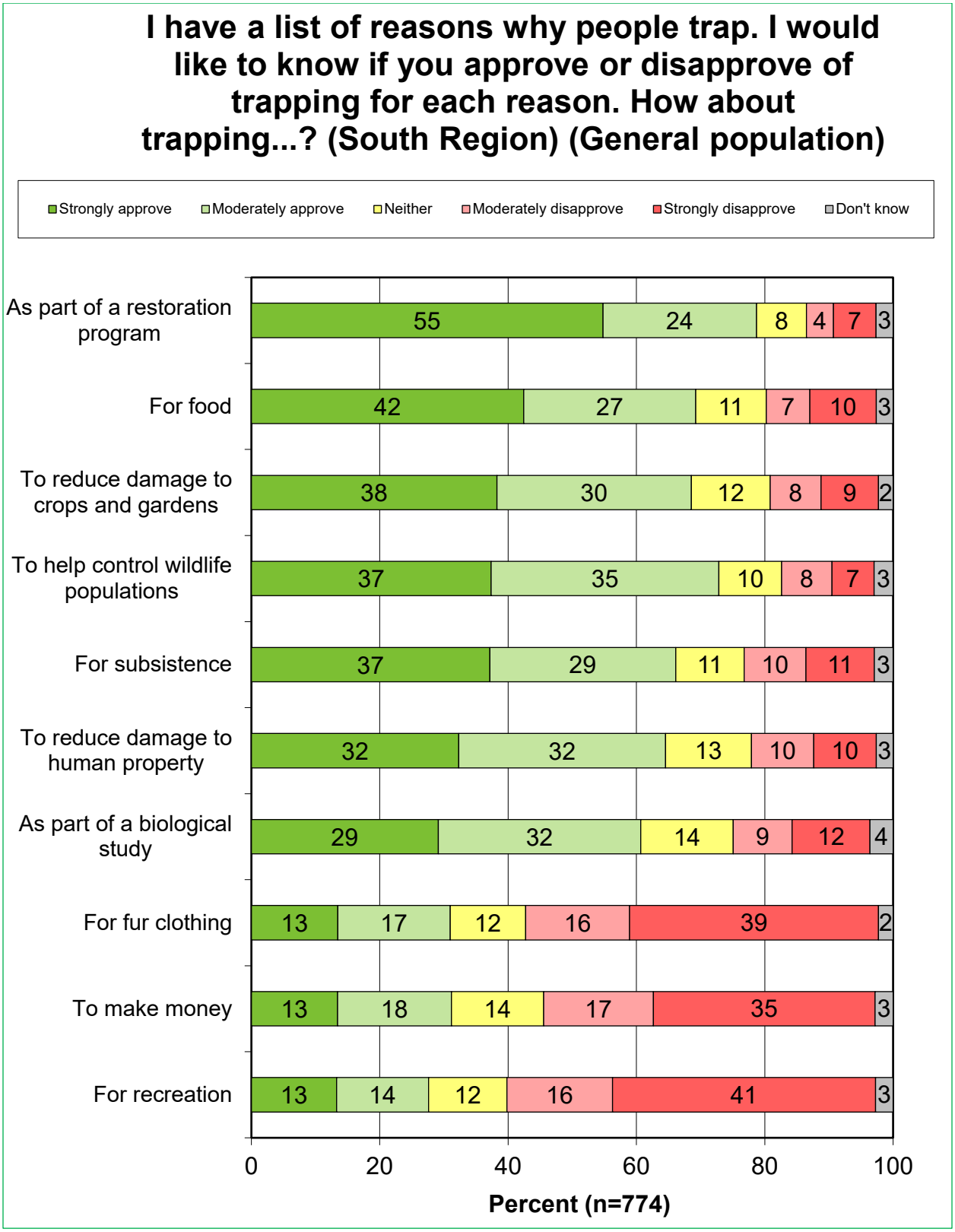


Figure 70. Approval and Disapproval of Trapping for Various Reasons (South)

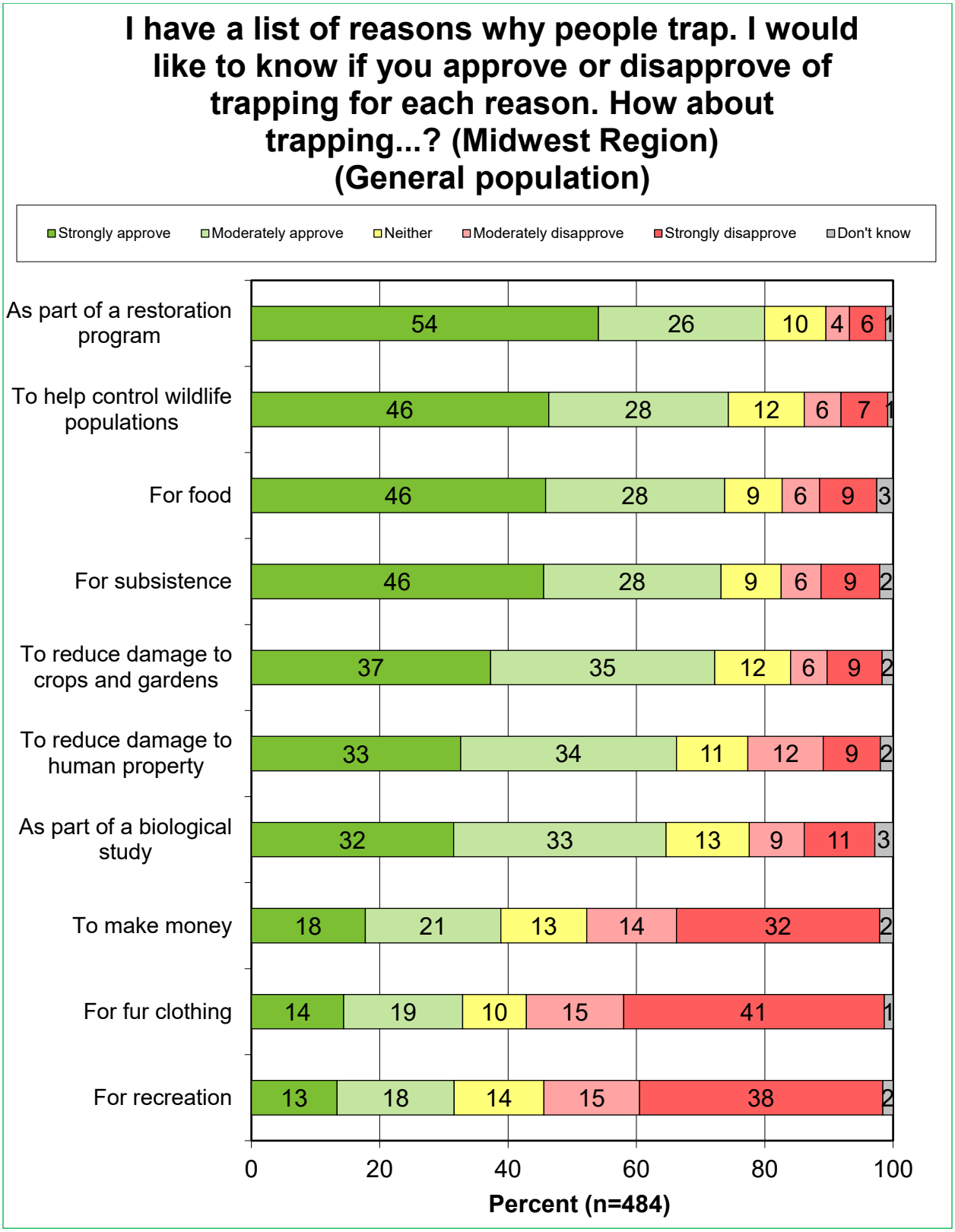


Figure 71. Approval and Disapproval of Trapping for Various Reasons (Midwest)

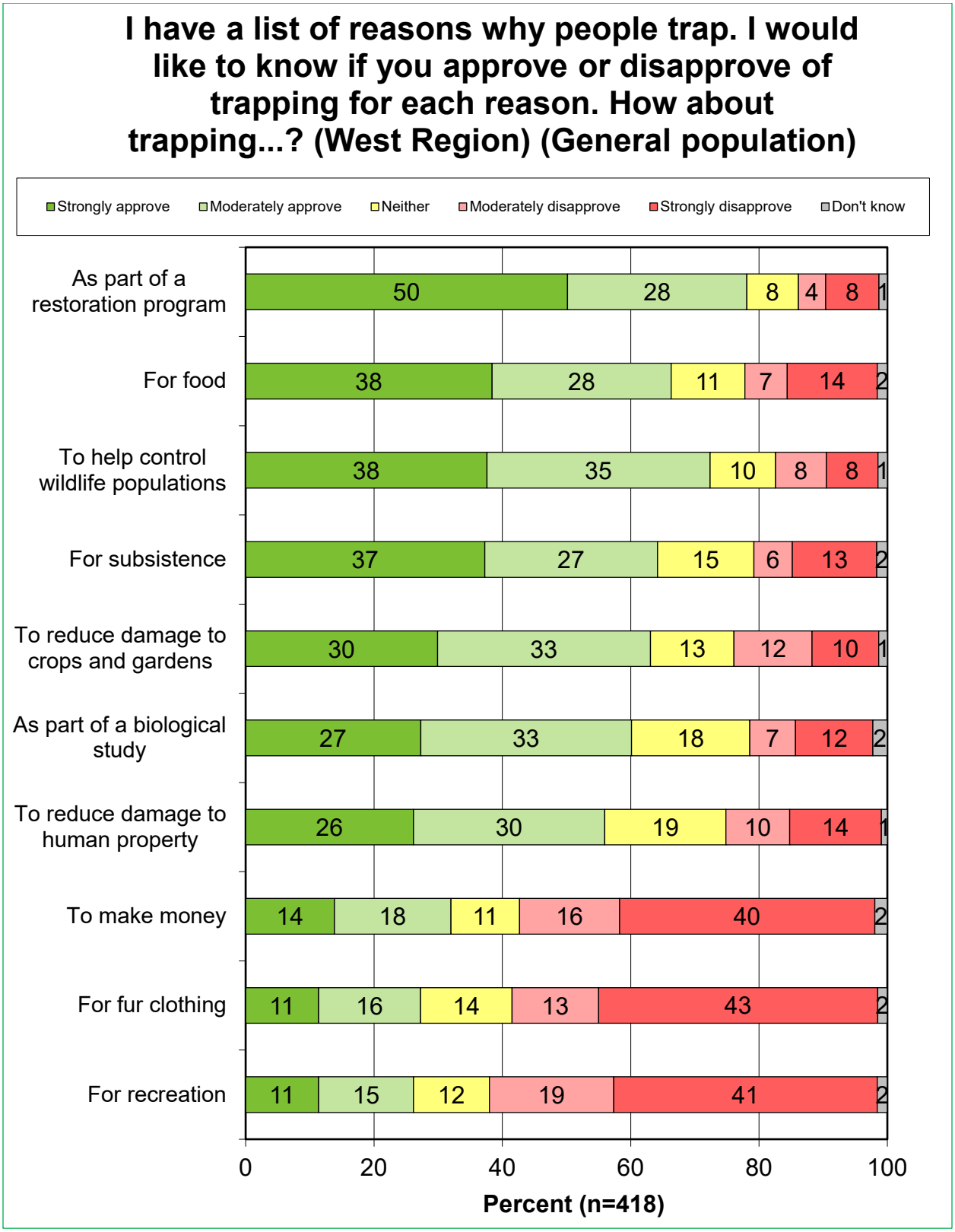


Figure 72. Approval and Disapproval of Trapping for Various Reasons (West)

Table 12. Approval and Disapproval of Trapping for Various Reasons (Regions)										
U.S. residents overall (percentage who approve / disapprove)	As part of a restoration program	For food	To help control wildlife populations	For subsistence	To reduce damage to crops and gardens	To reduce damage to human property	As part of a biological study	To make money	For fur clothing	For recreation
Northeast Region										
Total approve	73	60	65	59	62	54	56	29	28	25
Total disapprove	13	25	21	21	27	30	24	55	56	59
South Region										
Total approve	79	69	73	66	69	65	61	31	31	28
Total disapprove	11	17	14	20	17	19	21	52	55	57
Midwest Region										
Total approve	80	74	74	73	72	66	65	39	33	32
Total disapprove	9	15	13	15	14	21	20	46	56	53
West Region										
Total approve	78	66	72	64	63	56	60	32	27	26
Total disapprove	13	21	16	19	23	24	19	55	57	60

For every reason to go trapping, the highest approval is among Midwest Region residents. The most disapproval is, for the most part, among Northeast Region residents. Light green shading shows the highest approval among the four regions, and light red shows the highest disapproval. There is one other survey to compare with the current results in the trends (Figure 73). Approval for almost every reason drops in 2023 compared to 2019. For example, the 4% decline in 'Trapping for Food' equates to a loss of support from 10.1 million adult Americans.

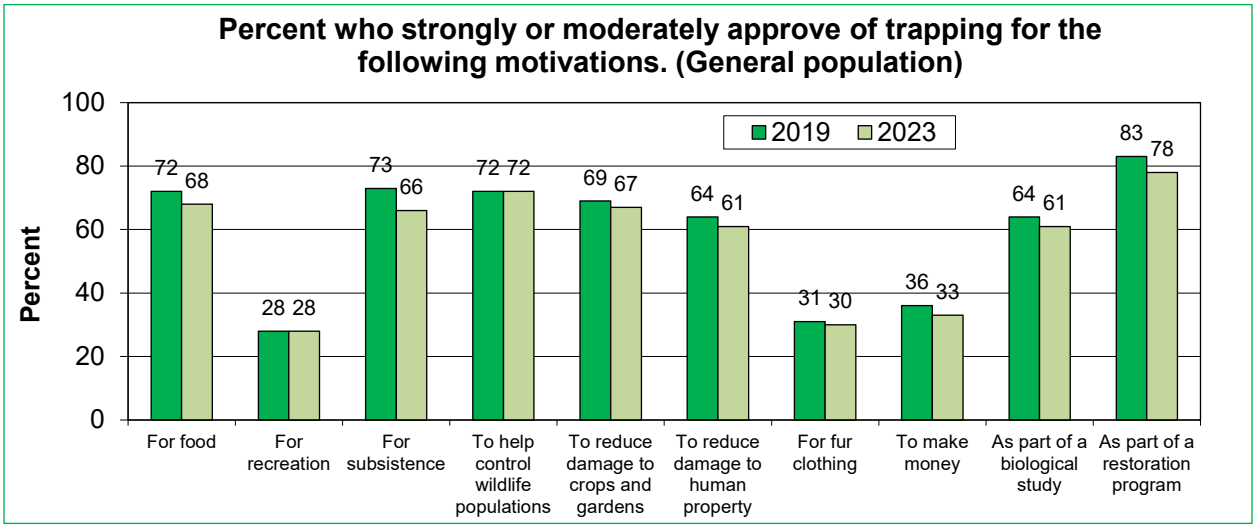


Figure 73. Approval and Disapproval of Trapping for Various Reasons (Trends)

PARTICIPATION IN AND SUPPORT OF CONSERVATION ACTIONS

Almost two thirds of U.S. residents consider themselves to be conservationists (Figure 74). The lowest percentage is among Midwest Region residents (Figure 75).

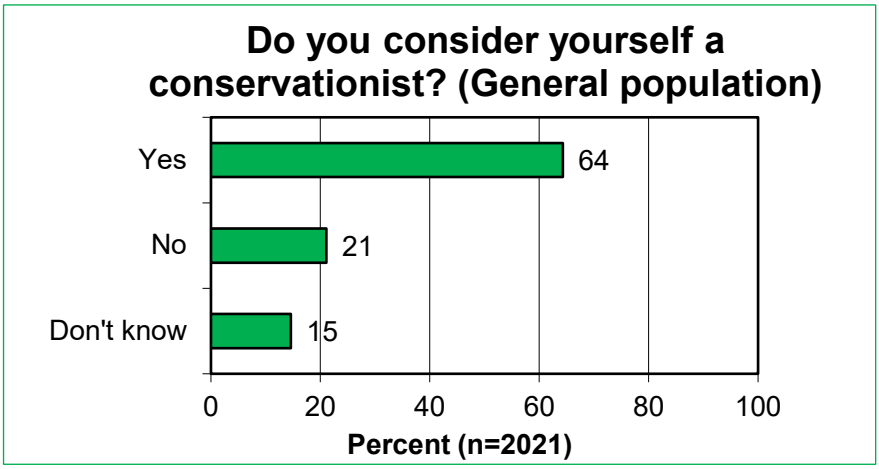


Figure 74. Considers Oneself a Conservationist

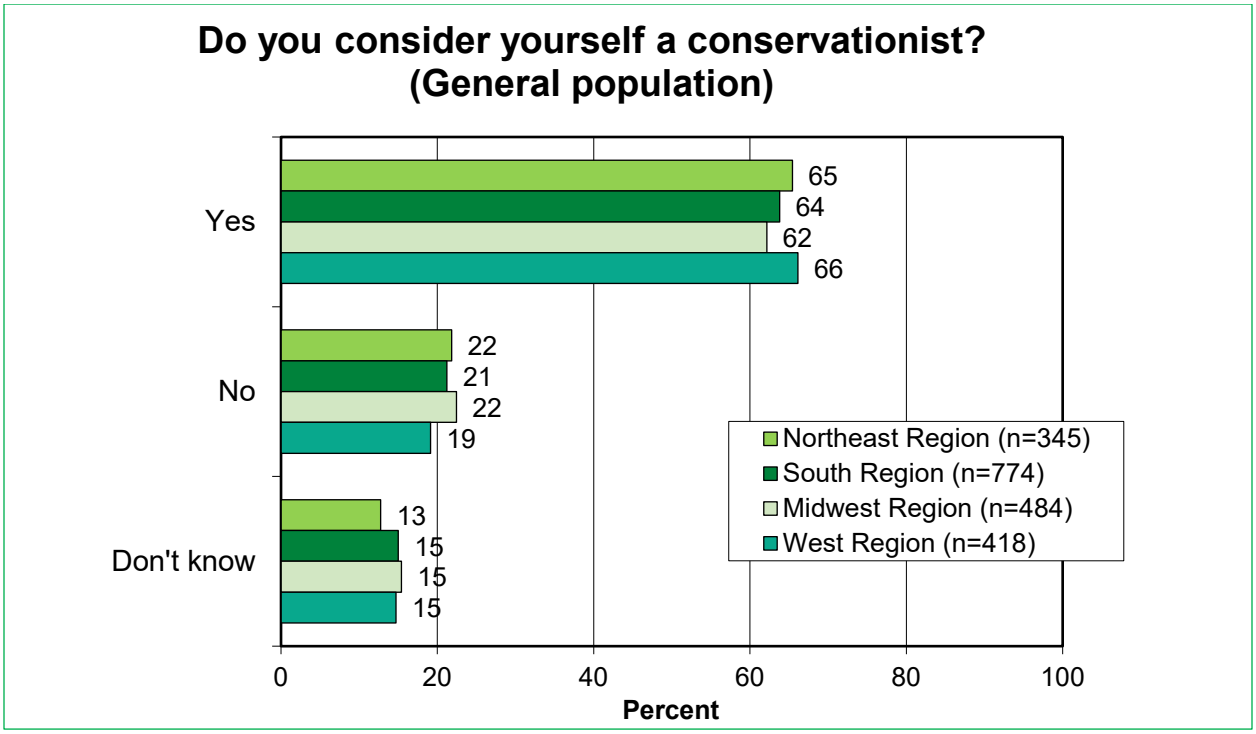


Figure 75. Considers Oneself a Conservationist (Regions)

Those who participated in legal, regulated fishing, sport shooting, hunting, or trapping (referred to as sporting participants) were asked if they had removed trash that was not theirs out of the woods or waters while they were participating in those activities and then asked if they did so when participating in other nature-based activities. Likewise, those who had not participated in those four activities were asked if they had removed trash from the woods or waters while they participated in nature-based activities.

Among sporting participants, 73% removed trash while doing those activities and 80% removed trash while doing other nature-based activities (Figures 76 through 79). Meanwhile, of those who did not do any of those four activities, 55% removed trash from the woods or waters (Figures 80

and 81). There is not much difference among sporting participants when they are doing any of those four activities, but when doing other nature-based activities, sporting participants in the Northeast and West Regions are the most likely to remove trash. Among those who did not participate in those four activities, those from the West Region are the most likely to remove trash from the woods and waters.

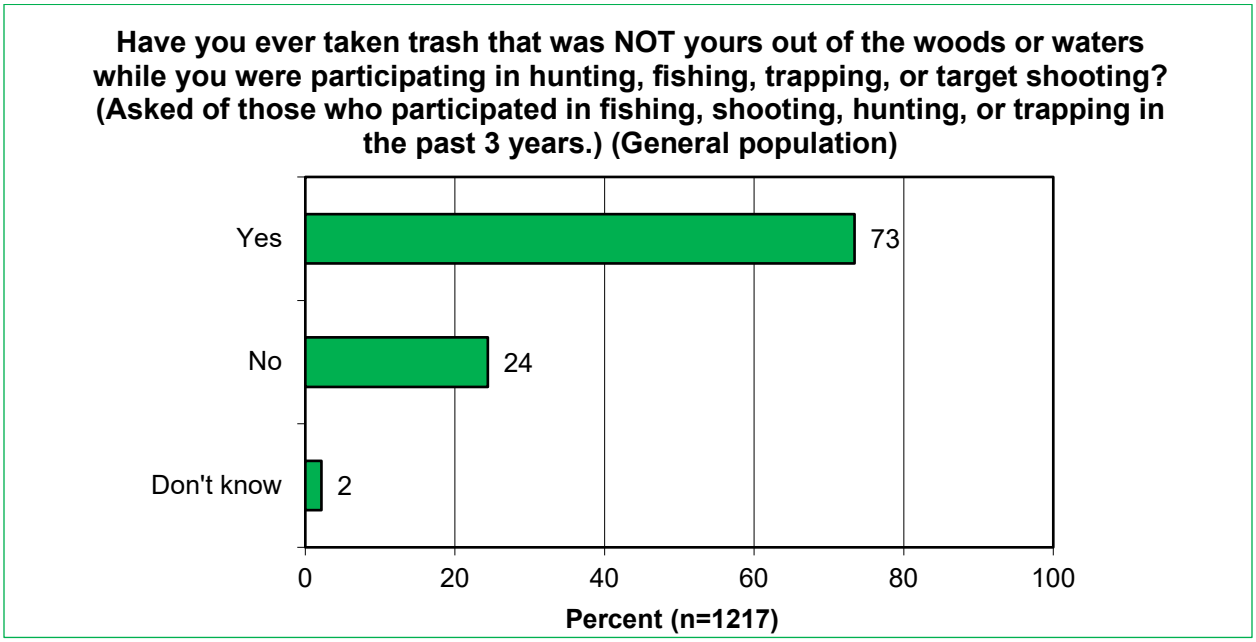


Figure 76. Taken Trash Out of Woods or Waters Among Hunters/Anglers/Trappers/Shooters

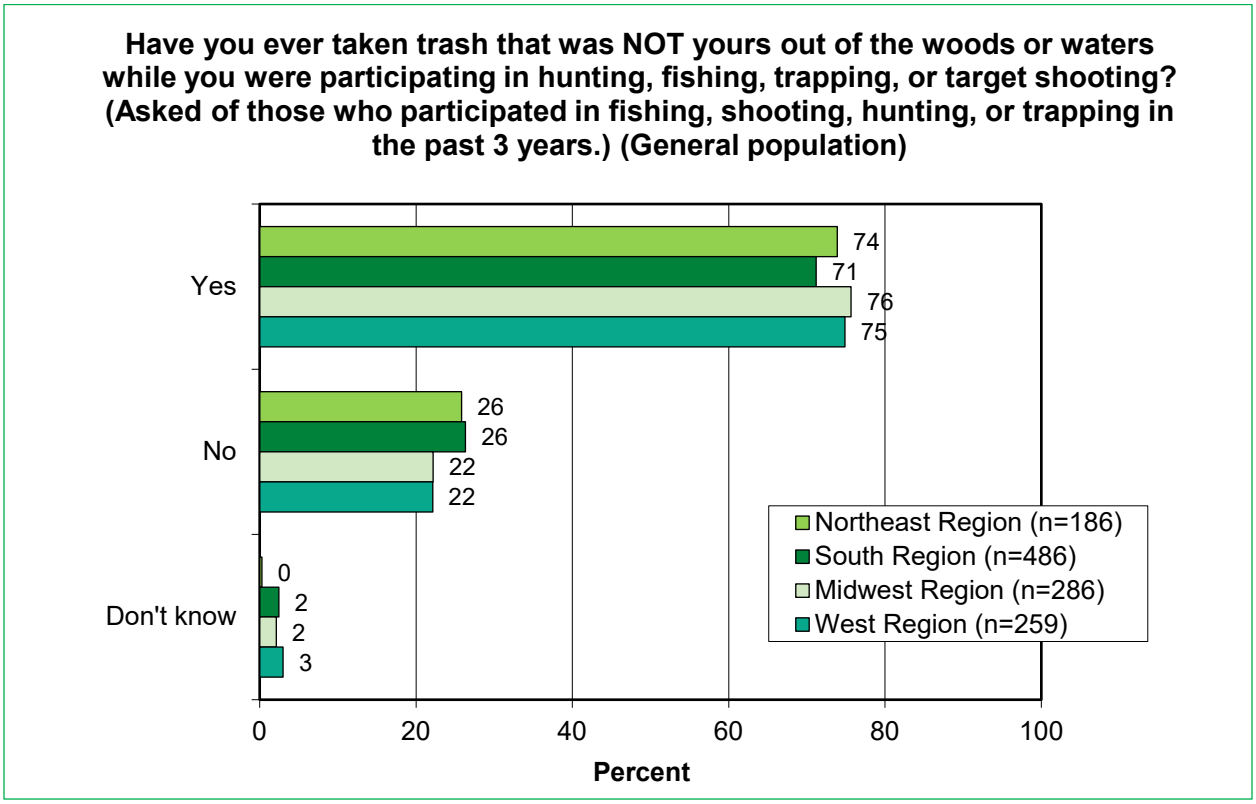


Figure 77. Taken Trash Out of Woods or Waters Among Hunters/Anglers/Trappers/Shooters (Regions)

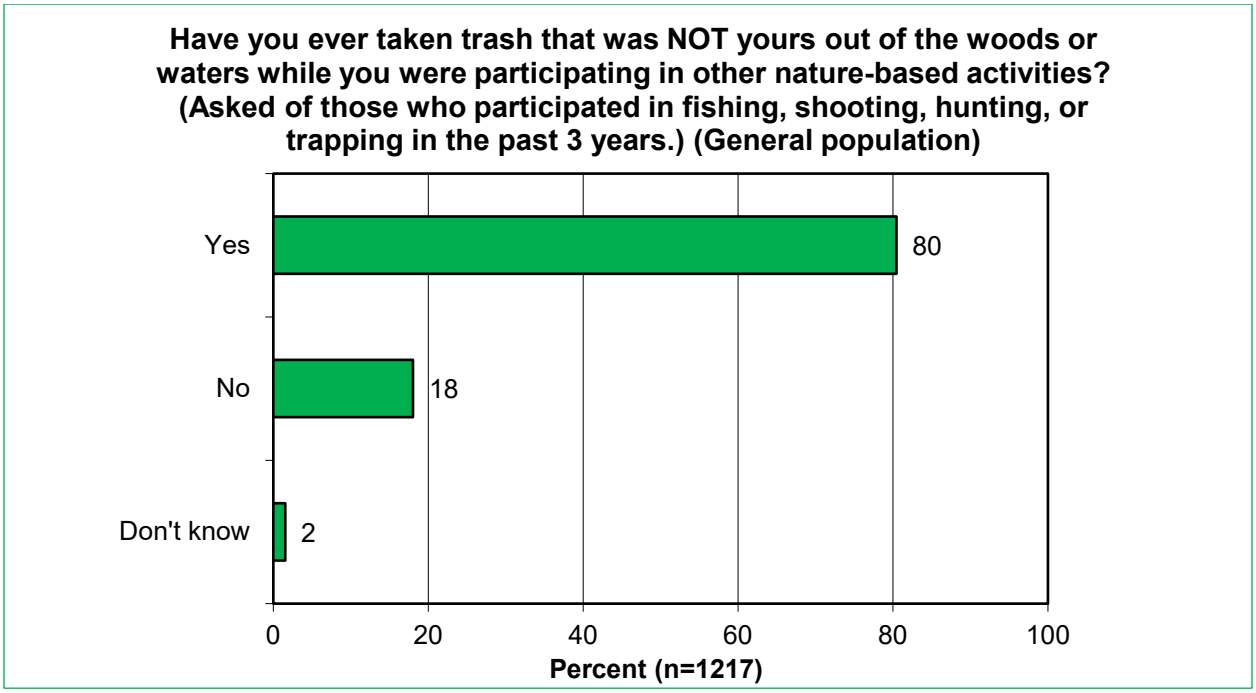


Figure 78. Taken Trash Out of Woods or Waters Among Other Nature-Based Participants

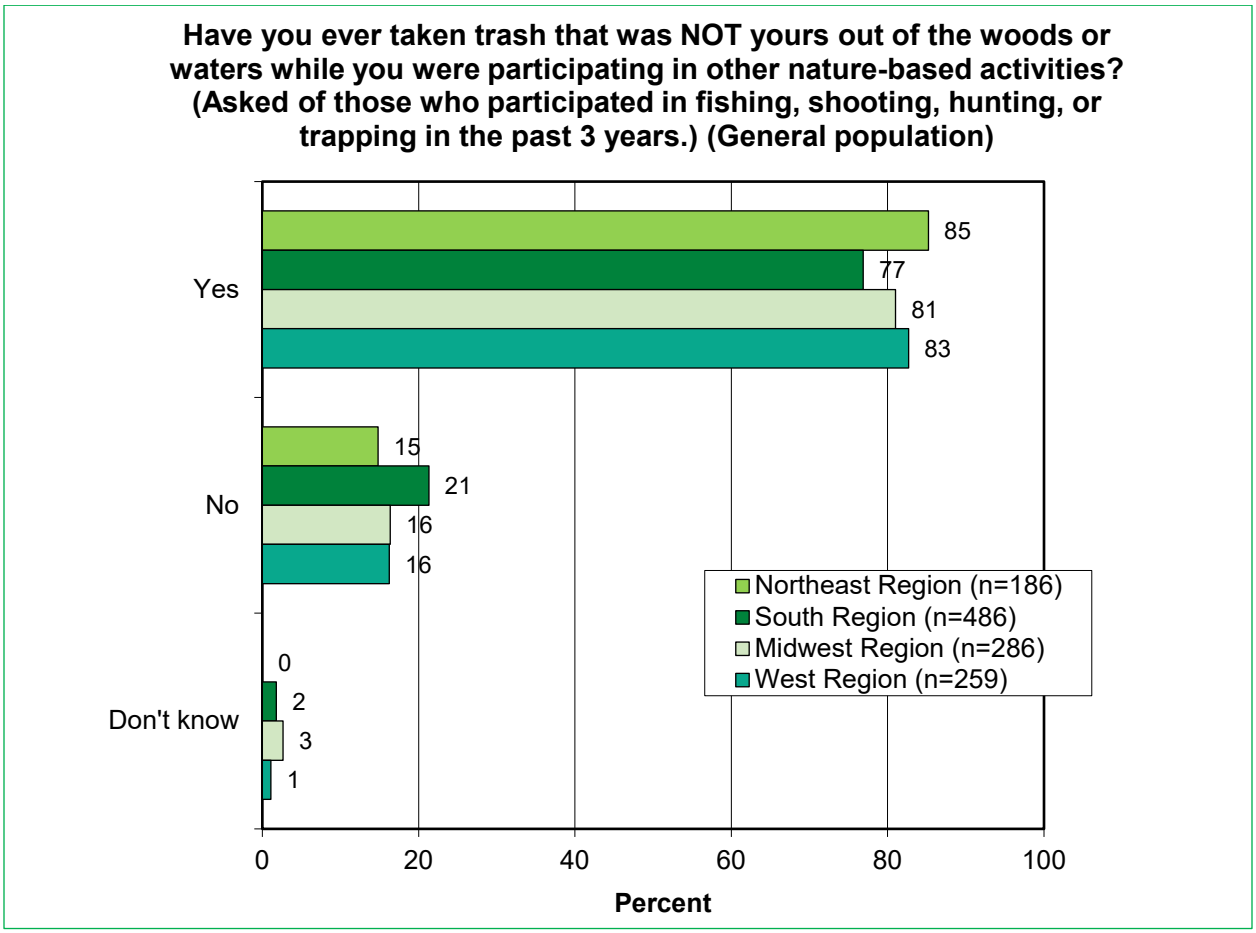


Figure 79. Taken Trash Out of Woods or Waters Among Other Nature-Based Participants (Regions)

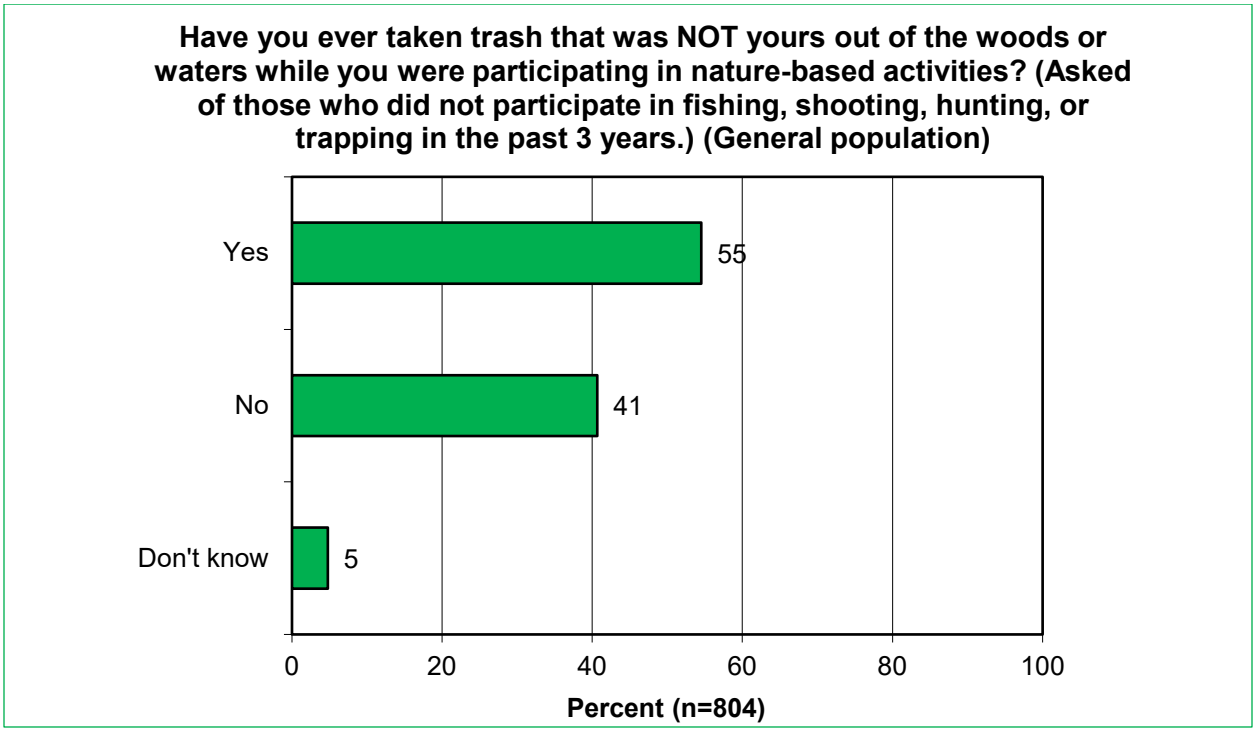


Figure 80. Taken Trash Out of Woods or Waters Among Those Not Fishing, Shooting, Hunting, or Trapping

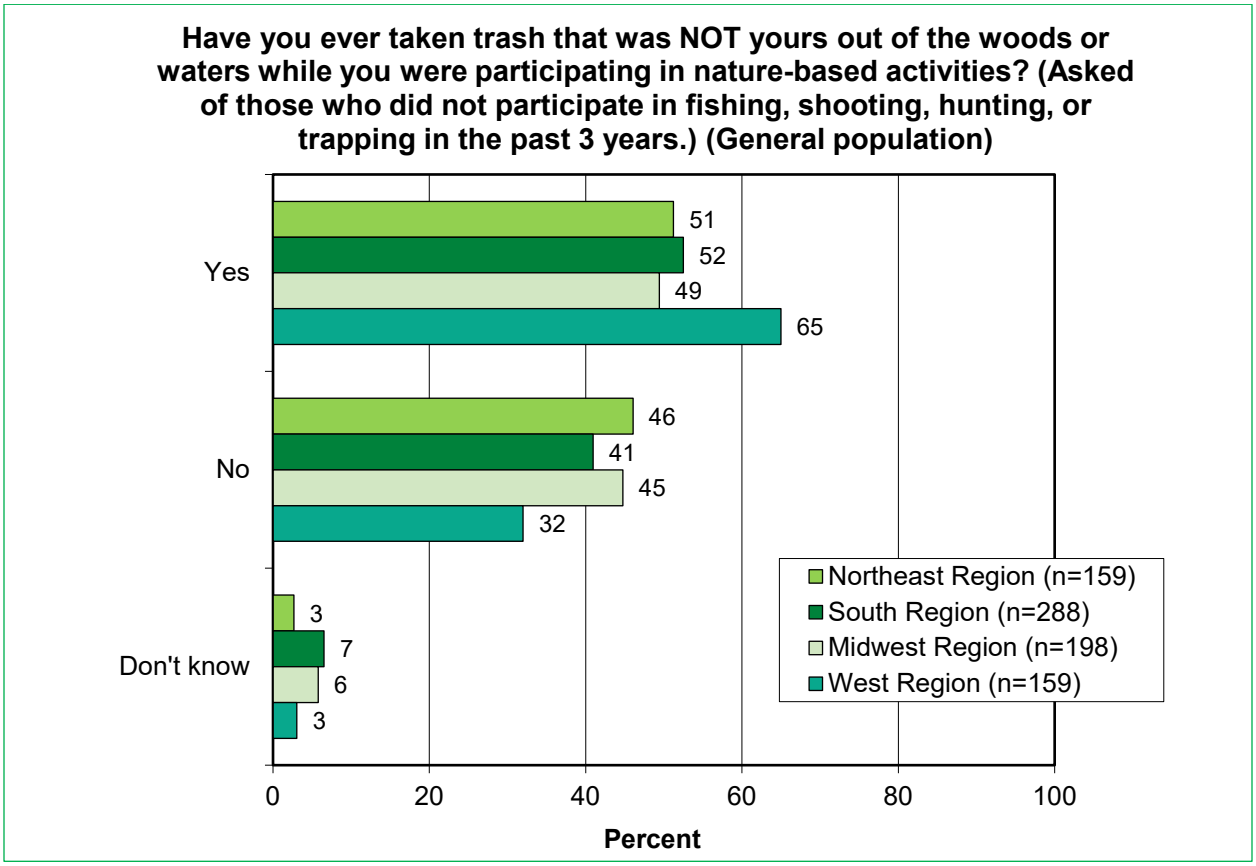


Figure 81. Taken Trash Out of Woods or Waters Among Those Not Fishing, Shooting, Hunting, or Trapping (Regions)

One analysis looked at two of the questions in this section by cross tabulating the results among those who fished, went sport shooting, hunted, or trapped. Table 13 shows the percentages who consider themselves to be a conservationist. Those who fish, shoot, hunt, or trap have a higher rate considering themselves to be a conservationist than do U.S. residents overall. Hunters and trappers consider themselves to be a conservationist at a higher rate than do anglers and shooters. Note that some people will be represented in more than one row in the table, as respondents could have done multiple activities.

Table 13. Crosstabulations by Participation in Outdoor Recreation: Considers Oneself a Conservationist

Do you consider yourself a conservationist?	Percent Who Said Yes
Hunting with a bow and arrow (or bowhunting)	84
Hunting with firearms	82
Trapping	81
Recreational saltwater fishing	74
Recreational freshwater fishing	73
Target shooting or sport shooting	68
General population overall	64

Table 14 shows the question about taking trash out of the woods or waters among participants in the activities. Hunters are the most likely to take trash out of the woods or waters. Again, note that some people will be represented in more than one row in the table, as respondents could have done multiple activities.

Table 14. Crosstabulations by Participation in Outdoor Recreation: Taking Trash Out of Woods or Waters

Have you ever taken trash that was NOT yours out of the woods or waters while you were participating in hunting, fishing, trapping, or target shooting? (Asked of those who participated in hunting, fishing, or shooting in the past 3 years.)	Percent Who Said Yes
Hunting with a bow and arrow (or bowhunting)	86
Hunting with firearms	85
Recreational saltwater fishing	80
Recreational freshwater fishing	78
Target shooting or sport shooting	76
Trapping	75

PARTICIPATION IN OUTDOOR RECREATION

The survey asked about six outdoor recreational activities (to include indoor shooting as well as outdoor shooting), and freshwater fishing was the most popular: 40% went in the past 3 years (Figure 82). In the middle tier of activities are sport shooting and saltwater fishing, with hunting and trapping rounding out the list. South Region residents were the most active, with only 42% doing none of the listed activities (Figure 83). Another obvious difference is that the Midwest, without any saltwater coastlines, is the highest in freshwater fishing and lowest in saltwater fishing, as Midwest anglers must travel far to participate.

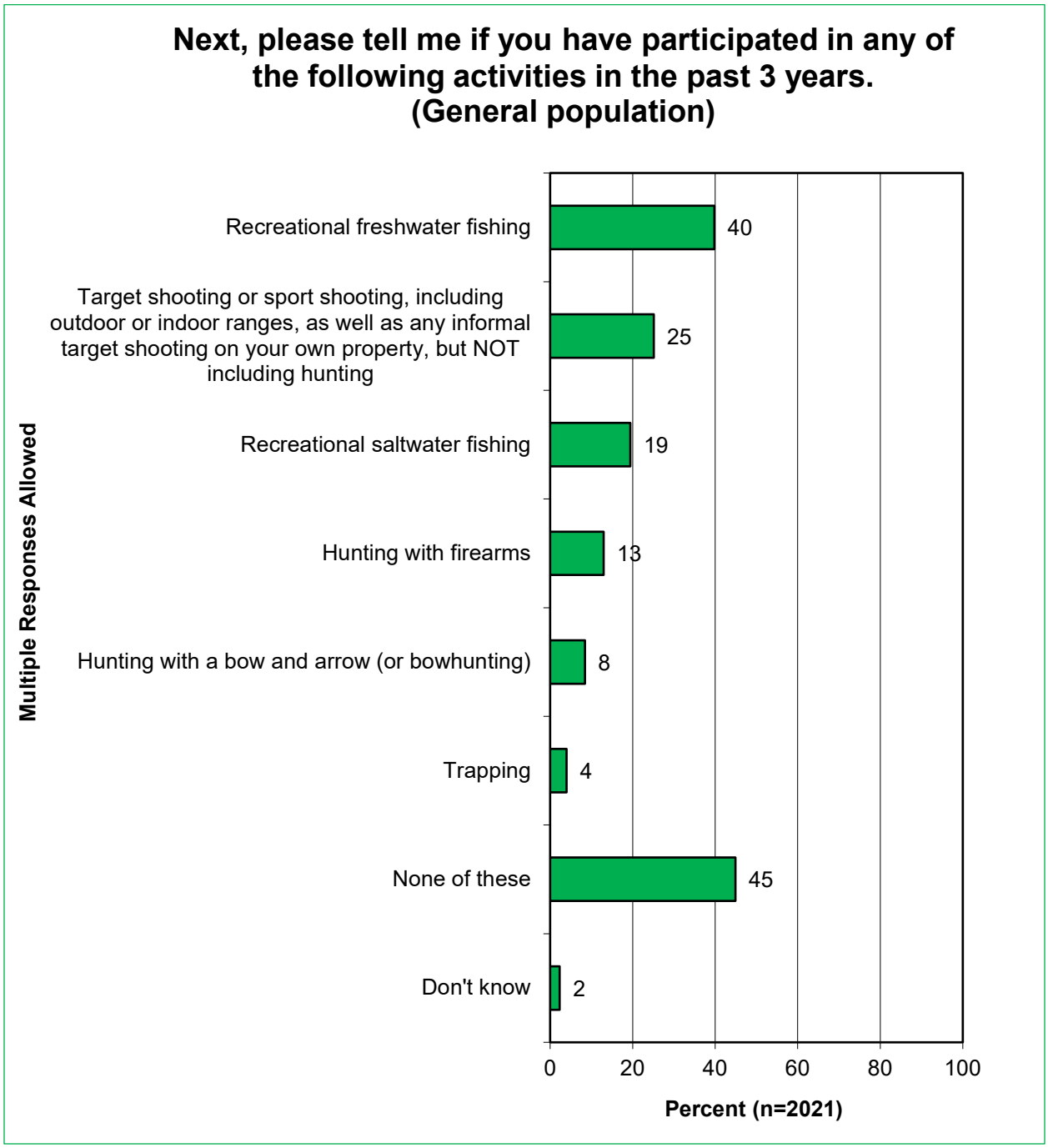


Figure 82. Participation in Outdoor Activities

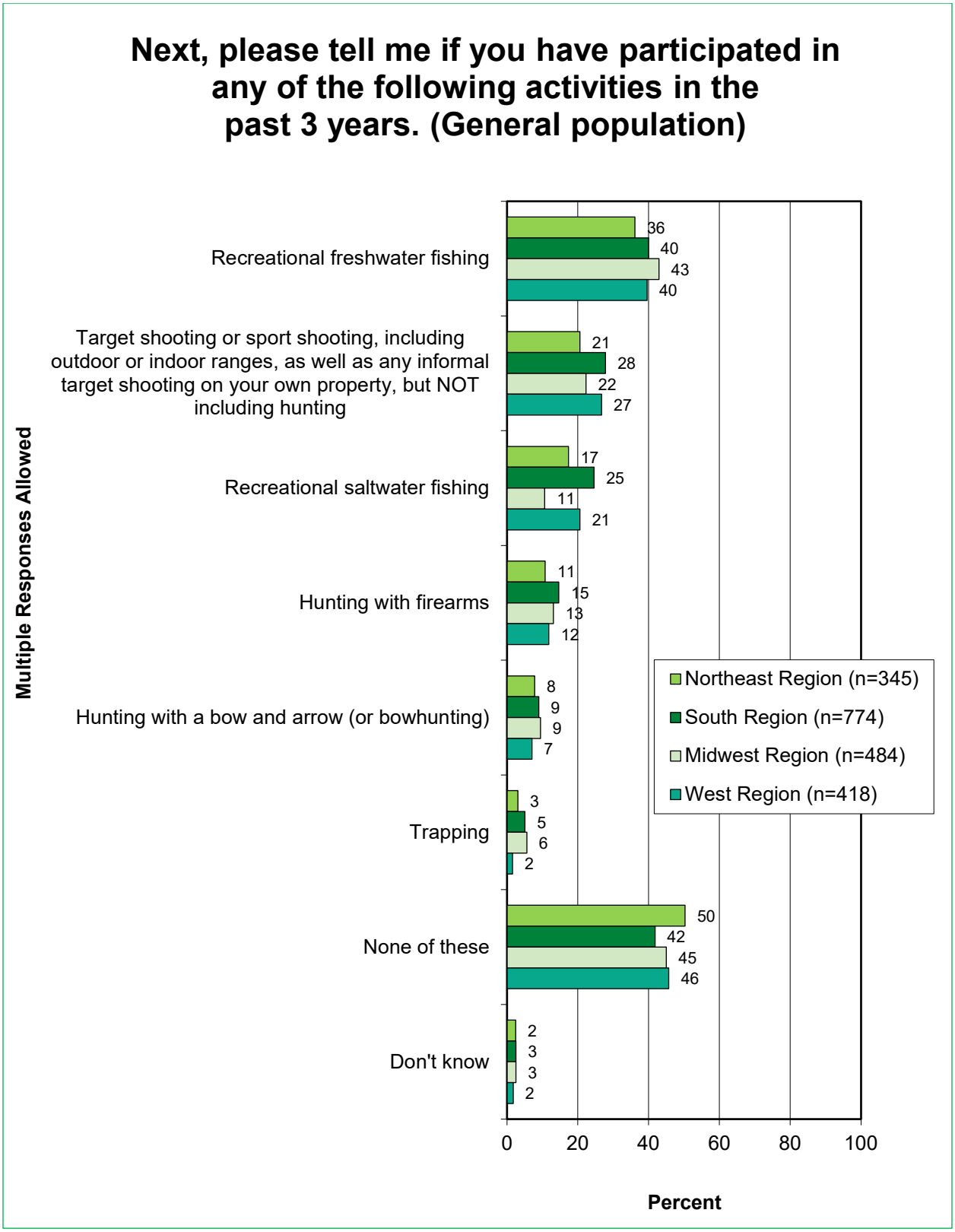


Figure 83. Participation in Outdoor Activities (Regions)

Six demographic-participatory analyses graphs are presented in Figures 84 through 89 showing the results of participation questions. For all activities, the groups most likely to participate are those who participated in any of the other major three activities (fishing, sport shooting, and hunting), as well as males, young people, and rural residents.

Figure 84. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Went Recreational Freshwater Fishing

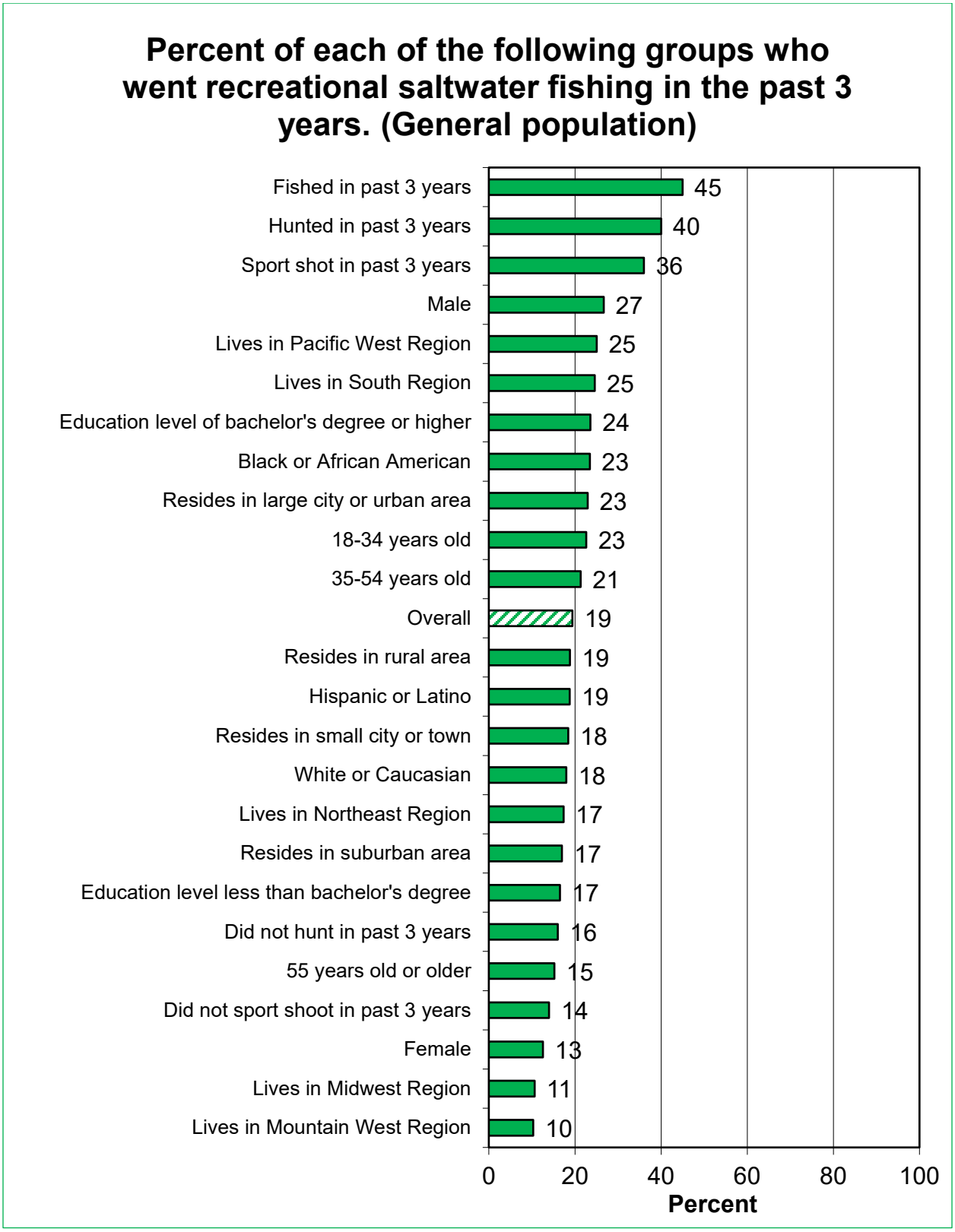


Figure 85. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Went Recreational Saltwater Fishing

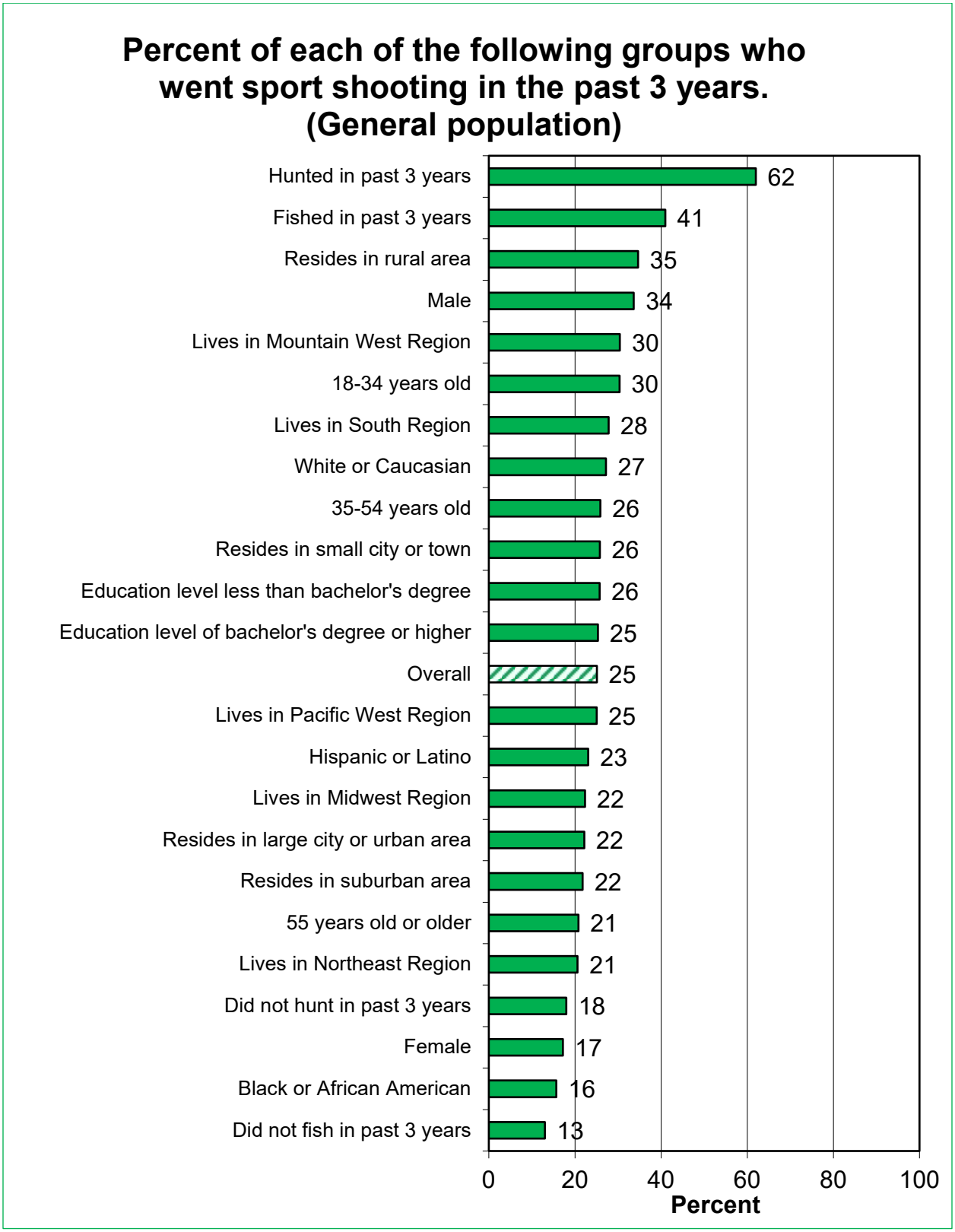


Figure 86. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Went Sport Shooting

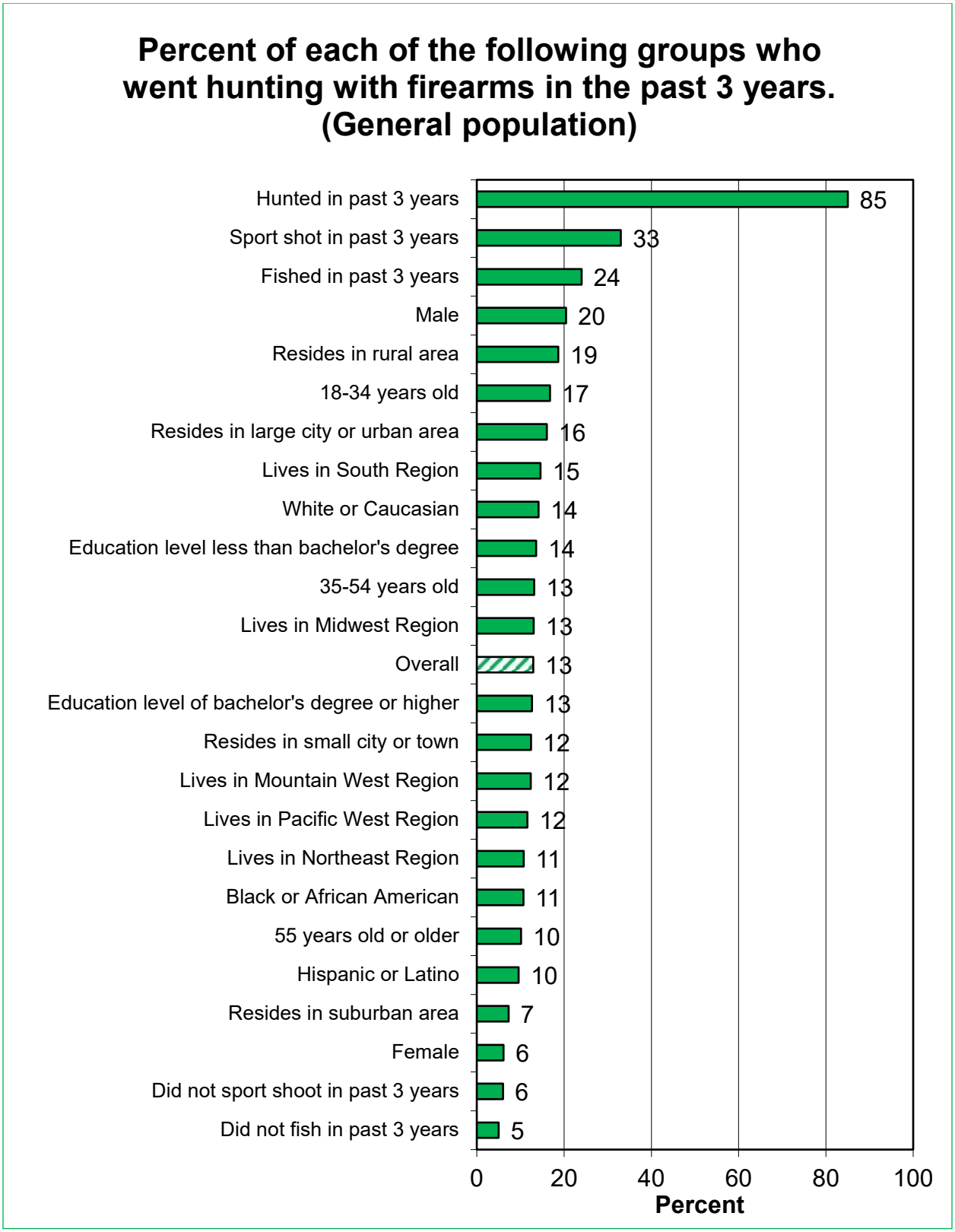


Figure 87. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Went Hunting With Firearms

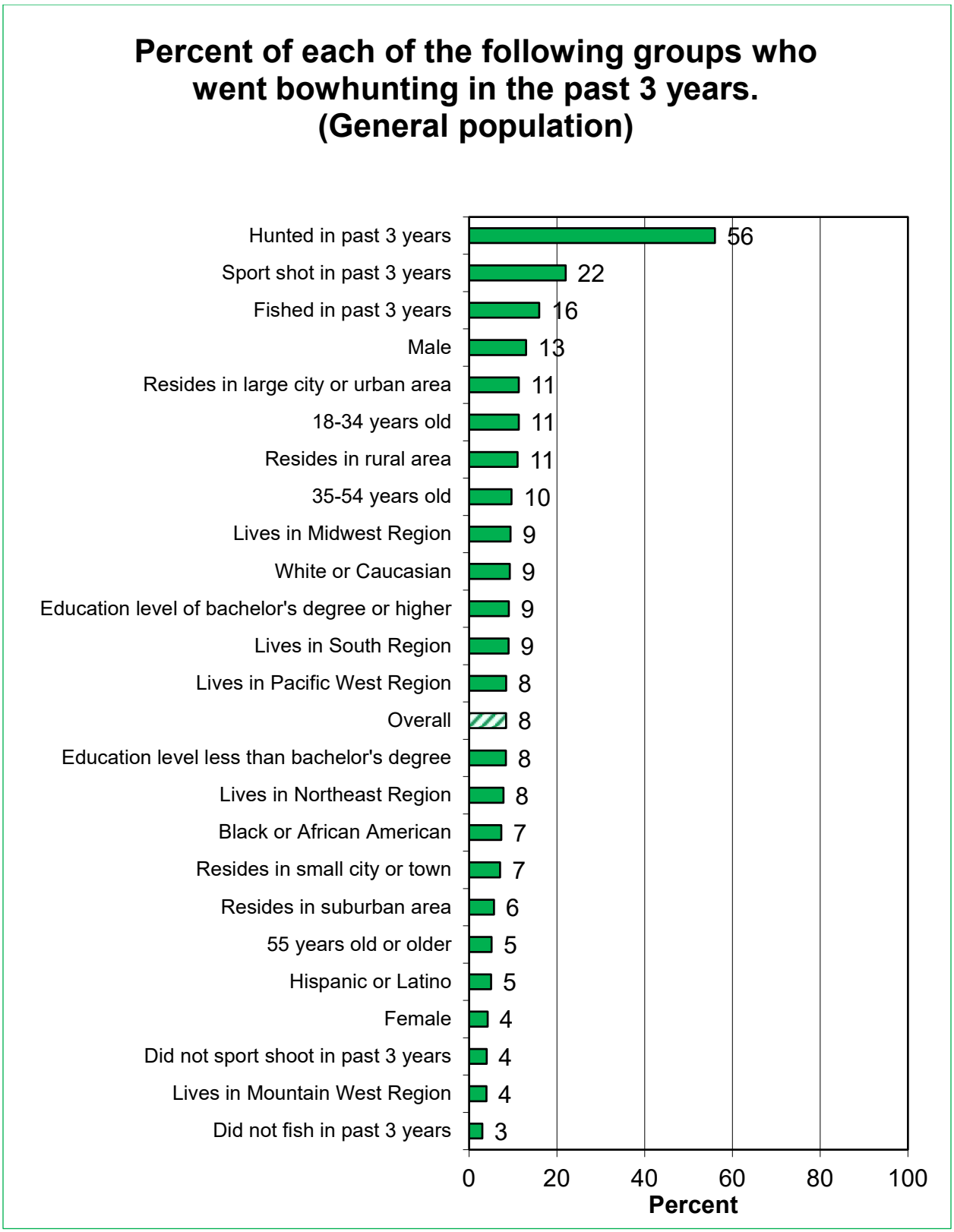


Figure 88. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Went Bowhunting

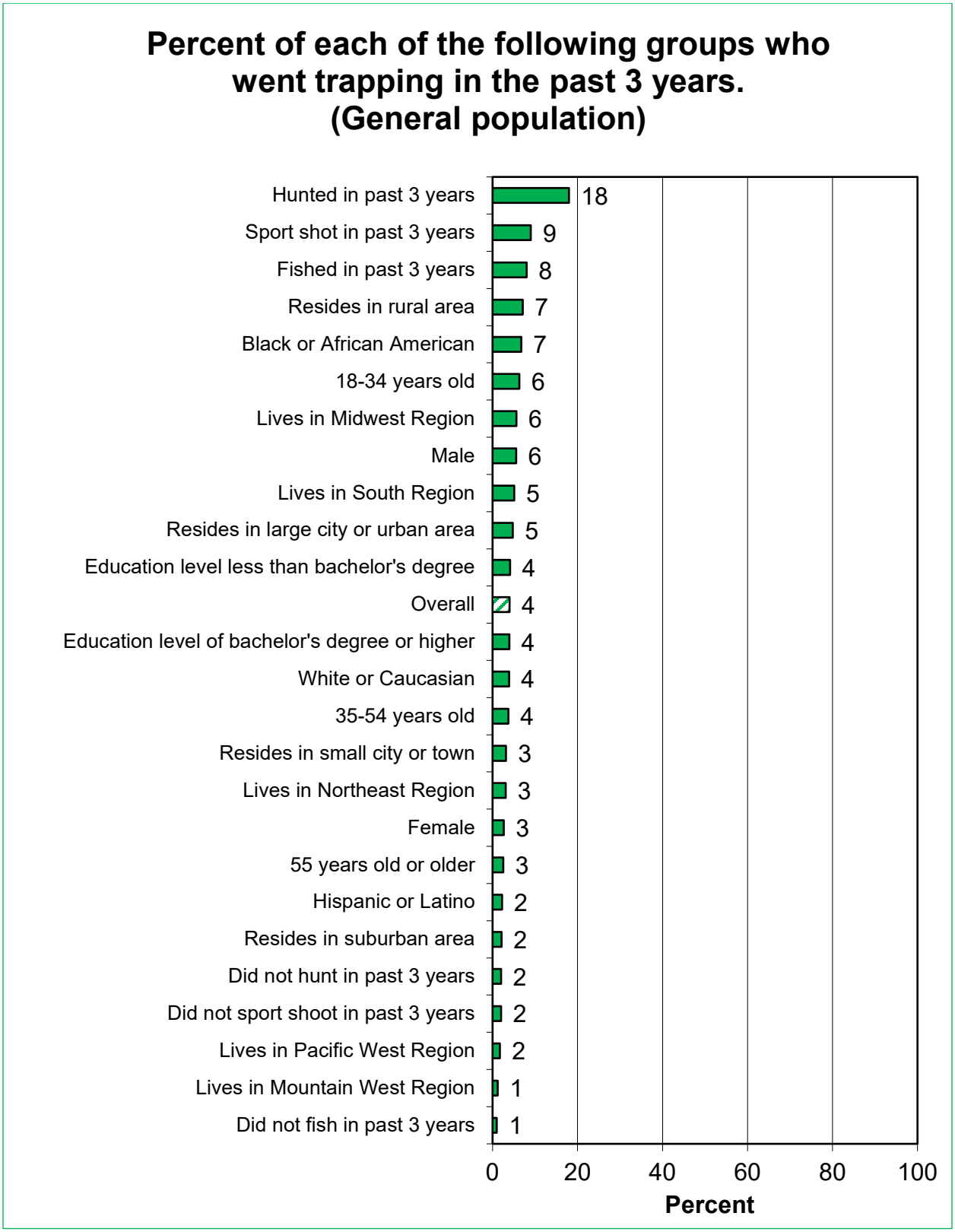


Figure 89. Demographic-Participatory Analyses: Went Trapping

HARVEST AND CONSUMPTION OF GAME MEAT

As shown in Figures 90 through 95, about 2 in every 5 Americans indicate that they ate wild-caught game meat, with the highest percentage being among South Region residents. About a third of those who ate game meat had harvested it themselves (which is 12% of all U.S. residents). Again, the South Region has the highest percentage who ate game they personally harvested. (Note that the question specifically excluded meat from farm-raised sources, ordered at restaurants, or bought at stores.)

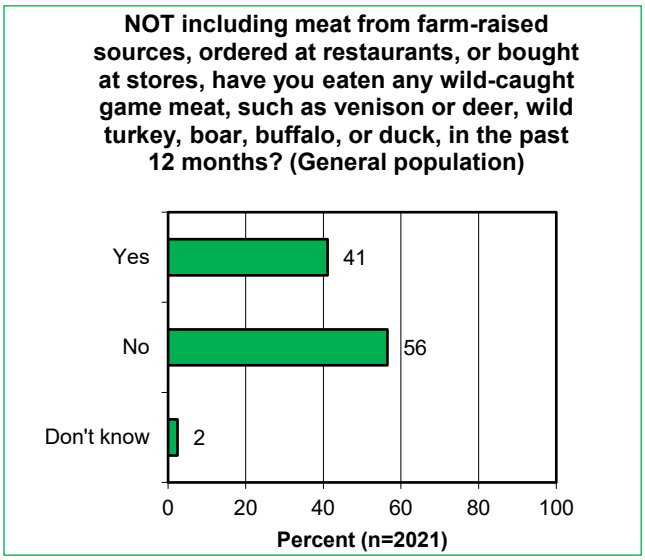
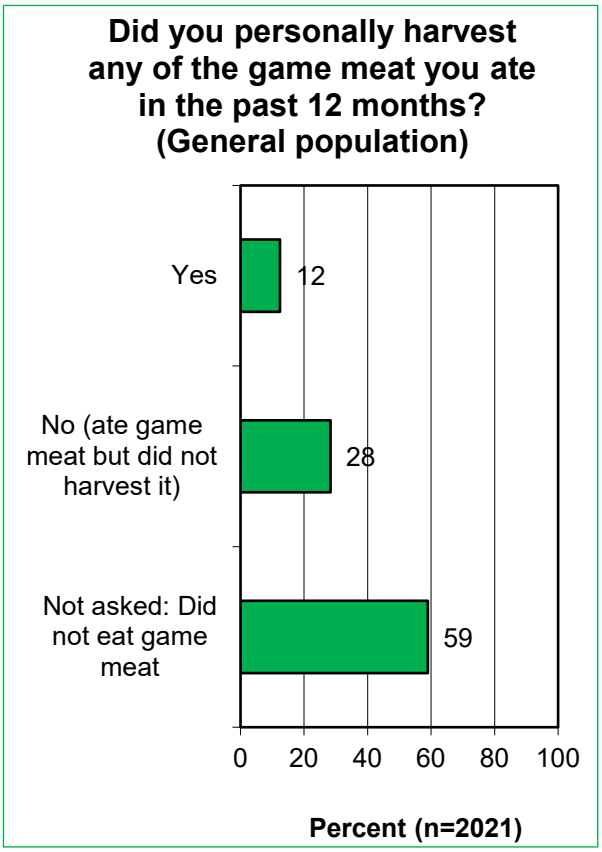


Figure 90. Eating Game Meat



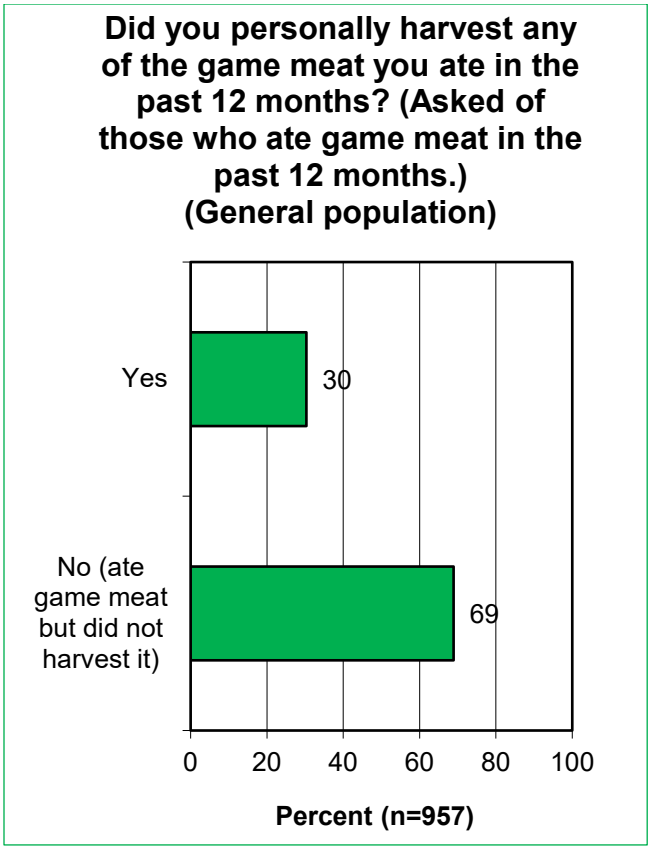


Figure 91. Harvest Game Meat Eaten

Figure 92. Harvest of Game Meat, All Residents

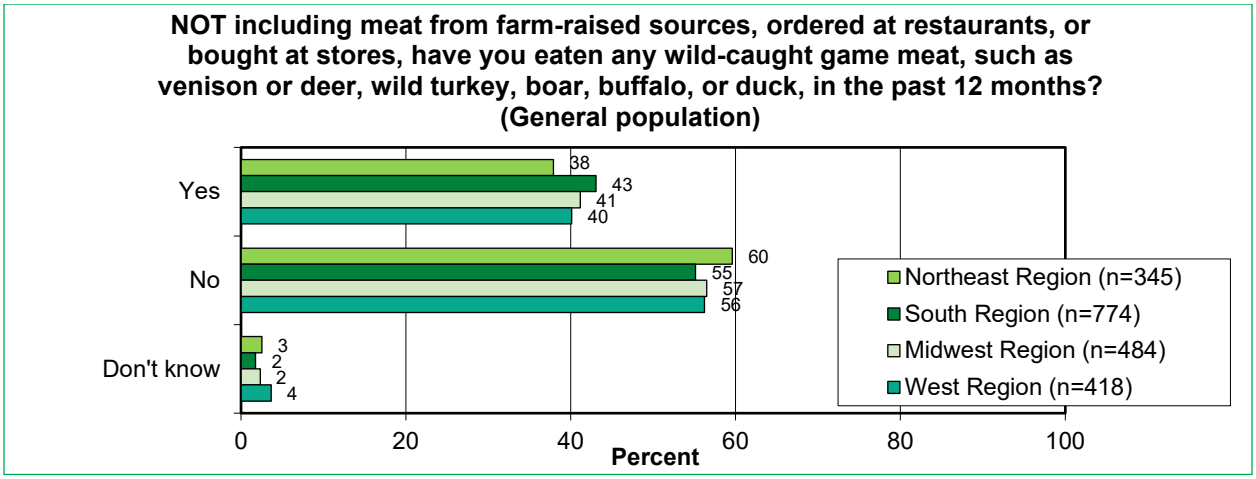


Figure 93. Eating Game Meat (Regions)

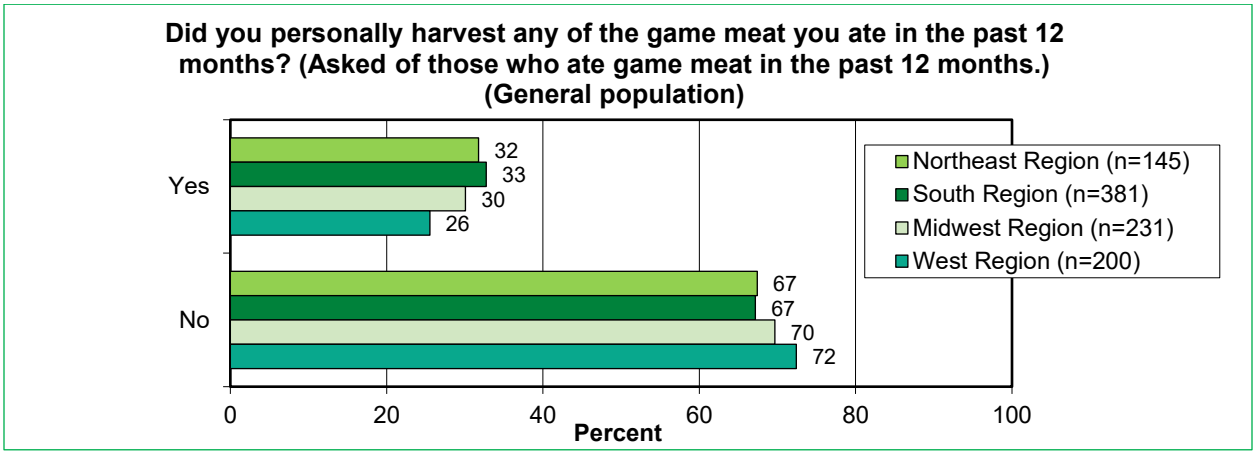


Figure 94. Harvest Game Meat Eaten (Regions)

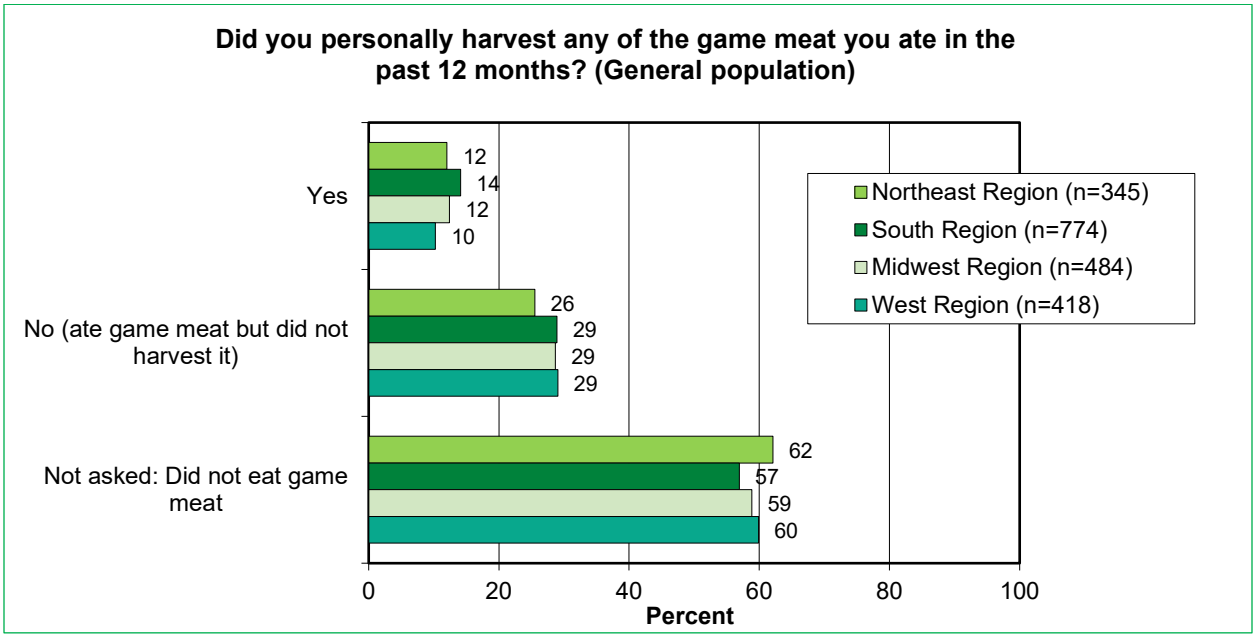


Figure 95. Harvest Game Meat Eaten, All Residents (Regions)

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The demographic information listed below was gathered primarily for crosstabulations and further analyses (Figures 96 through 107). The data obtained were:

- Gender.
- Age.
- Ethnicity.
- Education.
- Residential area (urban-rural continuum) lives in now and grew up in.

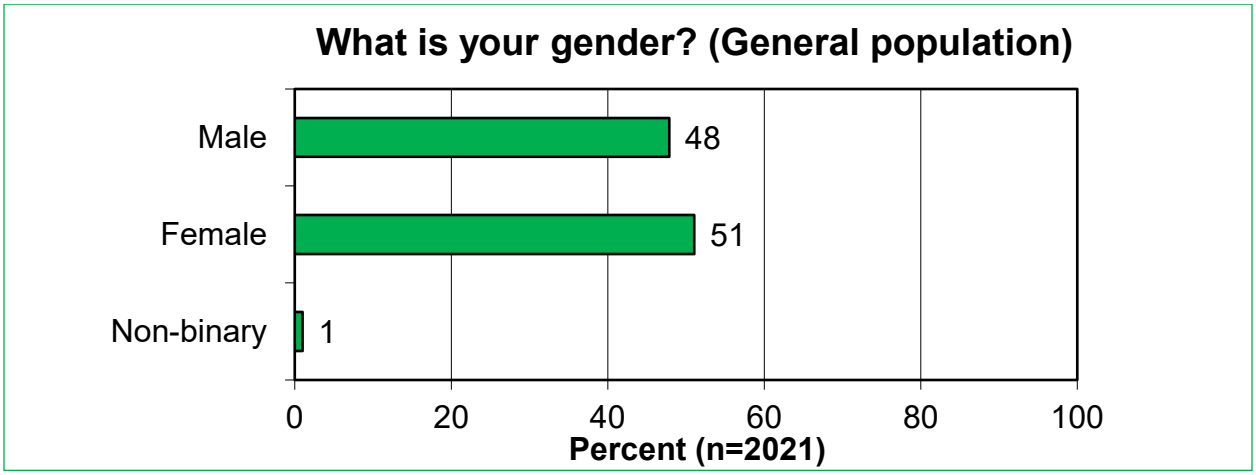


Figure 96. Gender

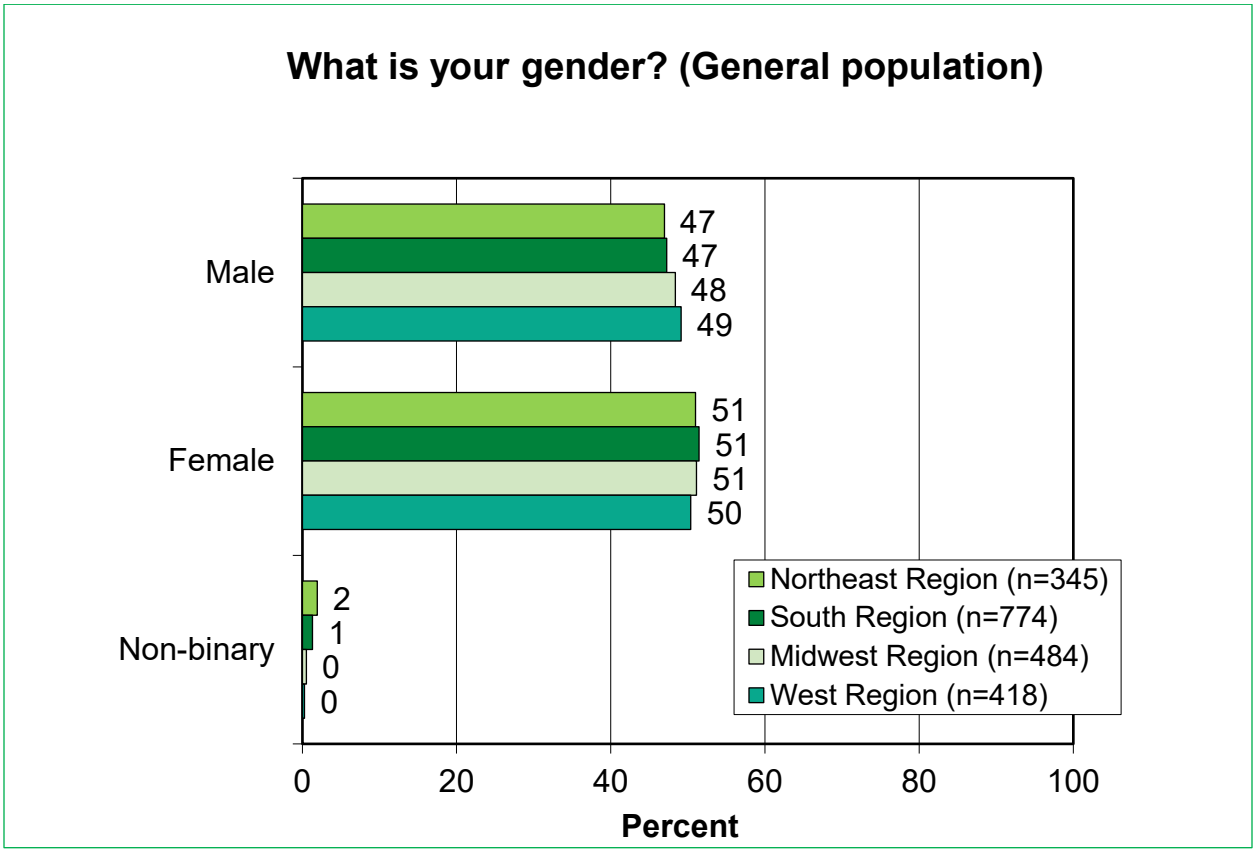


Figure 97. Gender (Regions)

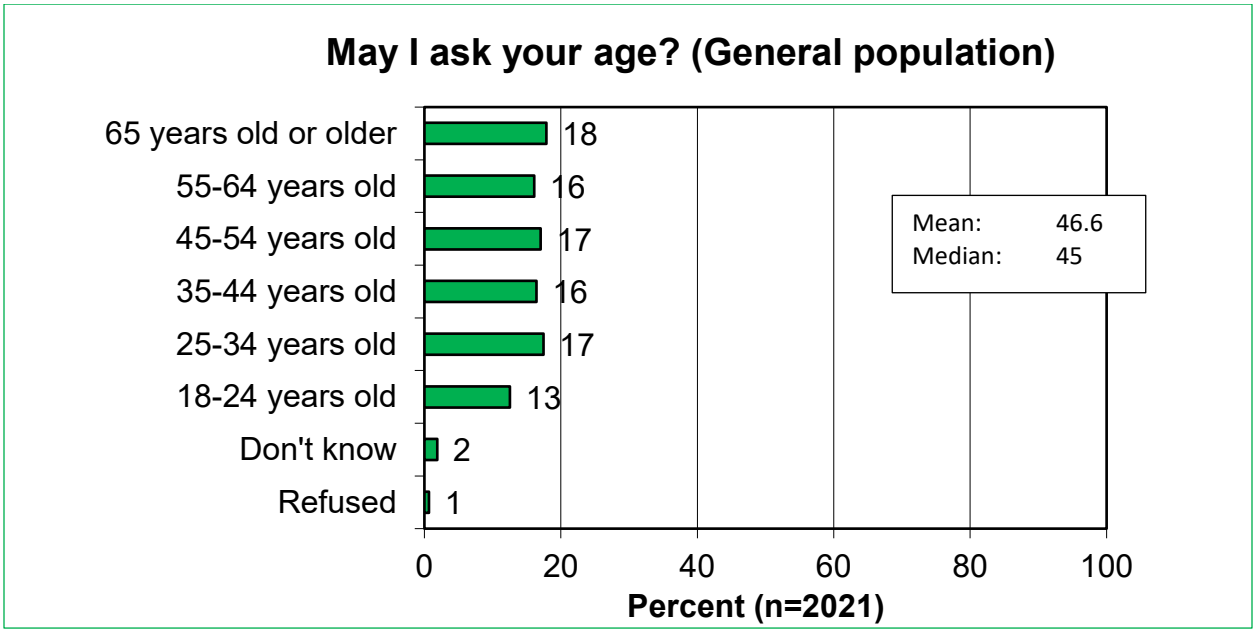


Figure 98. Age

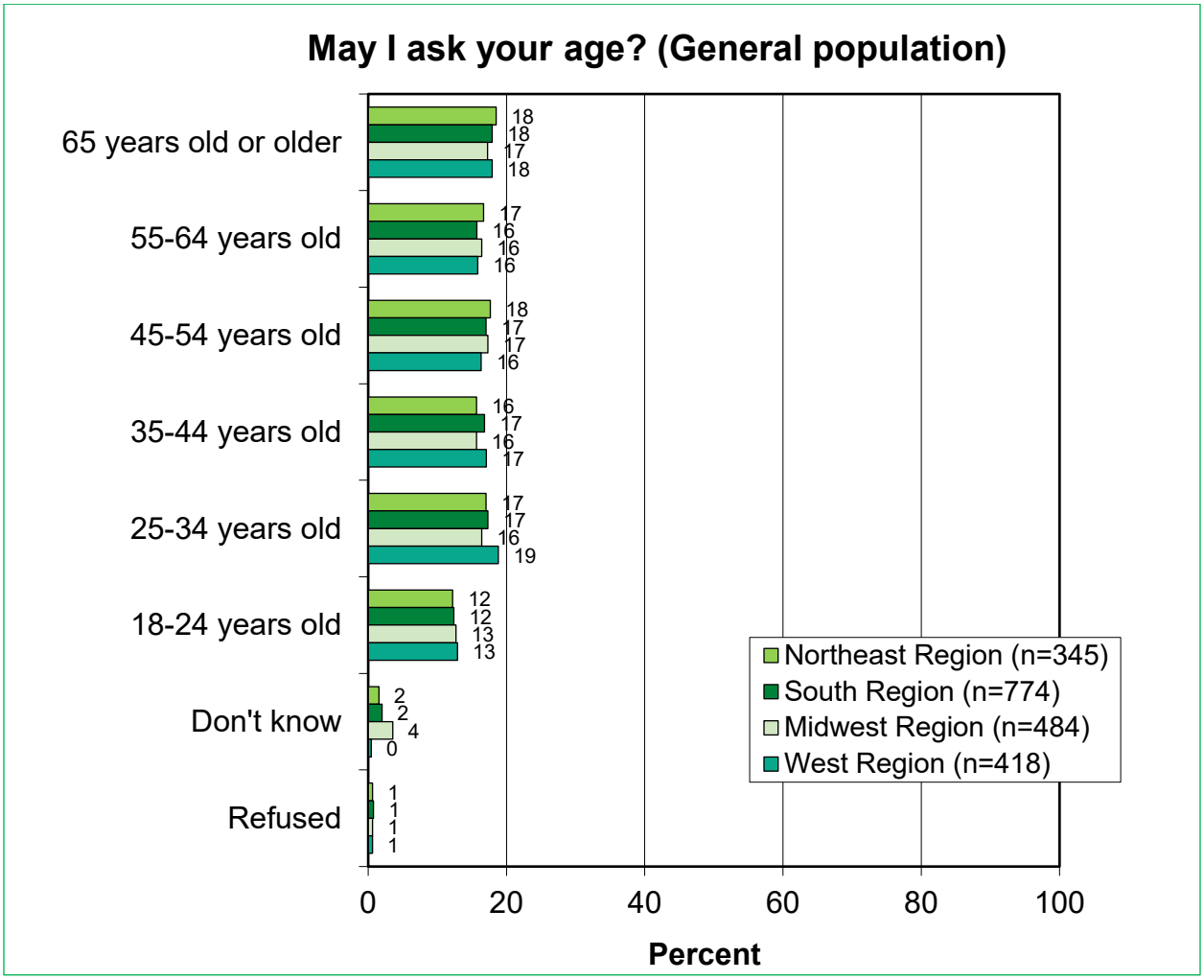


Figure 99. Age (Regions)

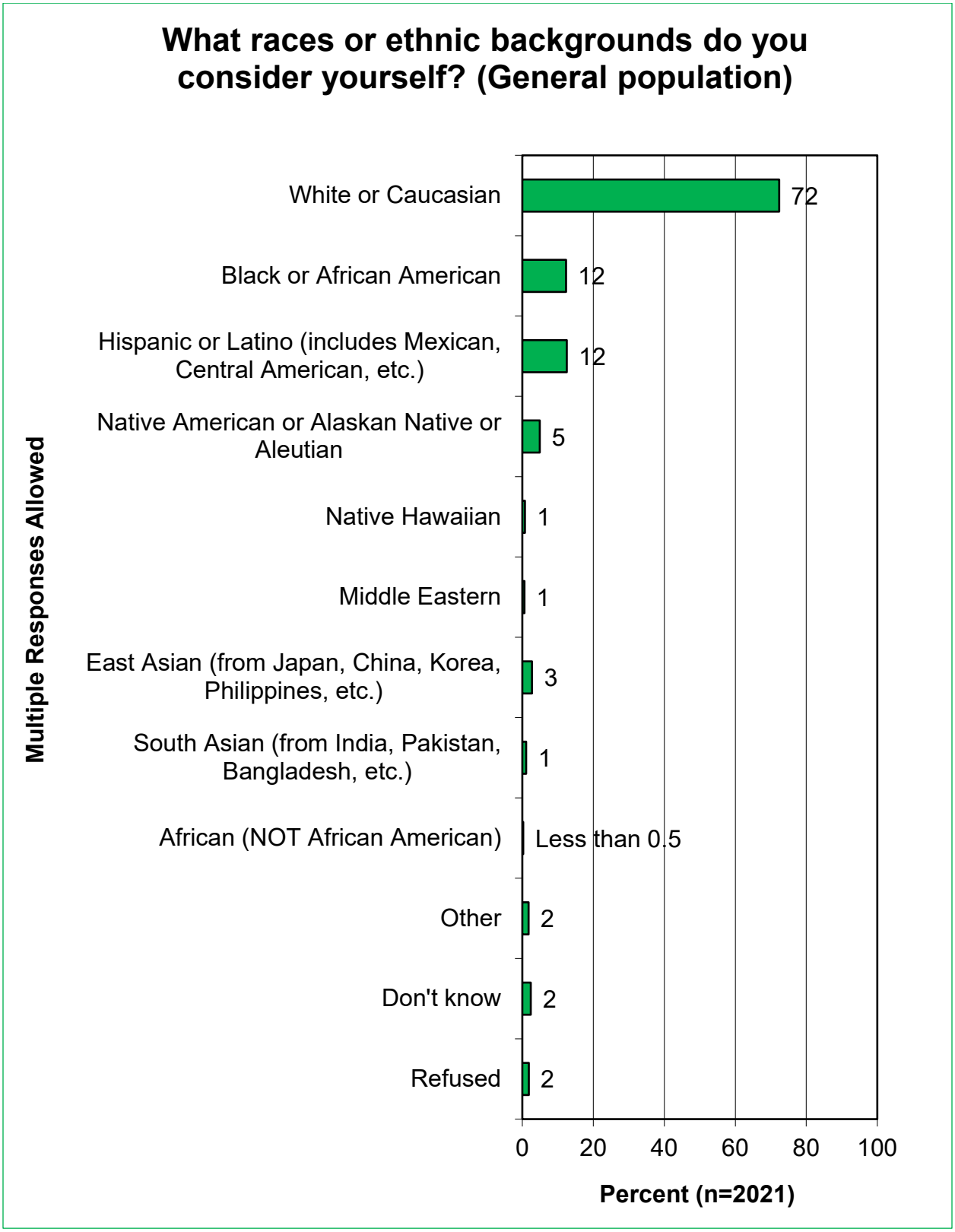


Figure 100. Ethnicity

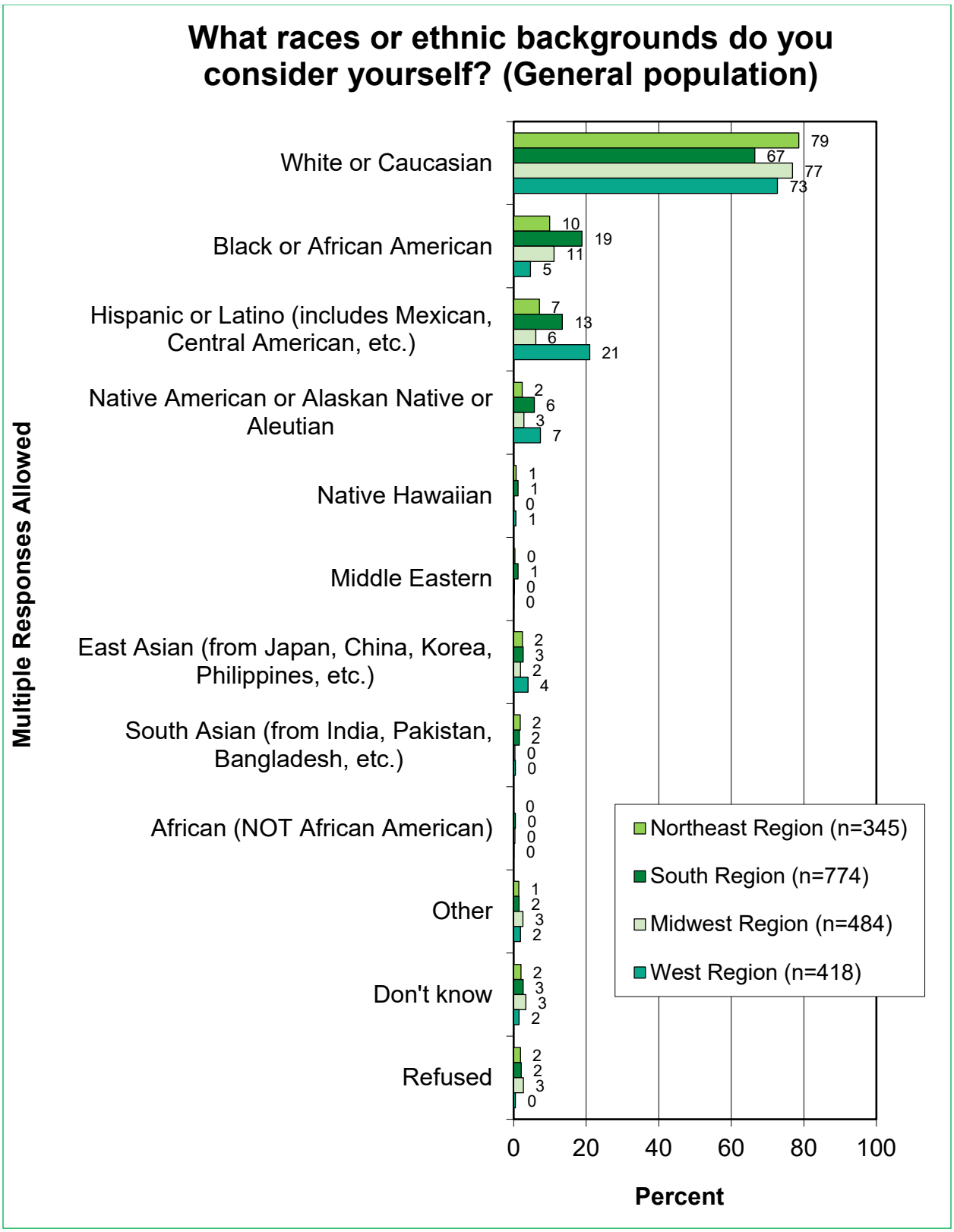


Figure 101. Ethnicity (Regions)

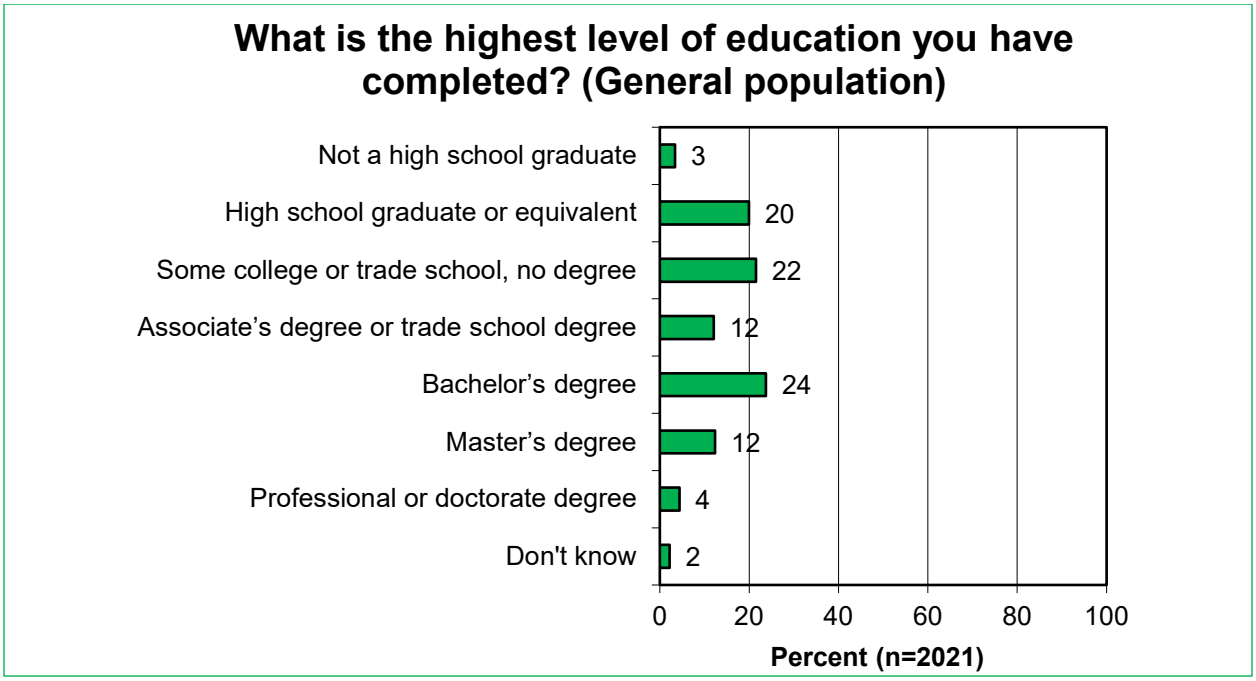


Figure 102. Education

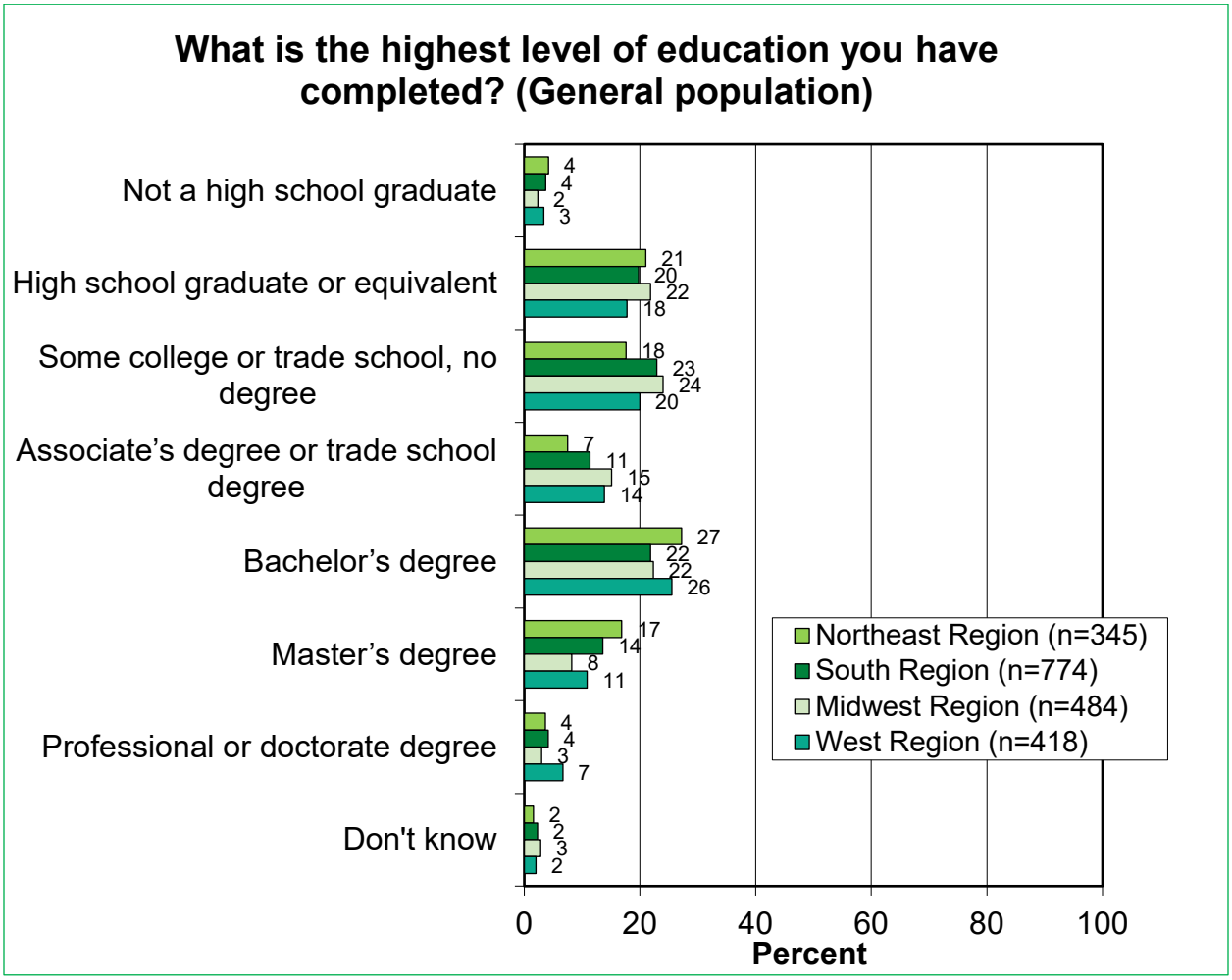


Figure 103. Education (Regions)

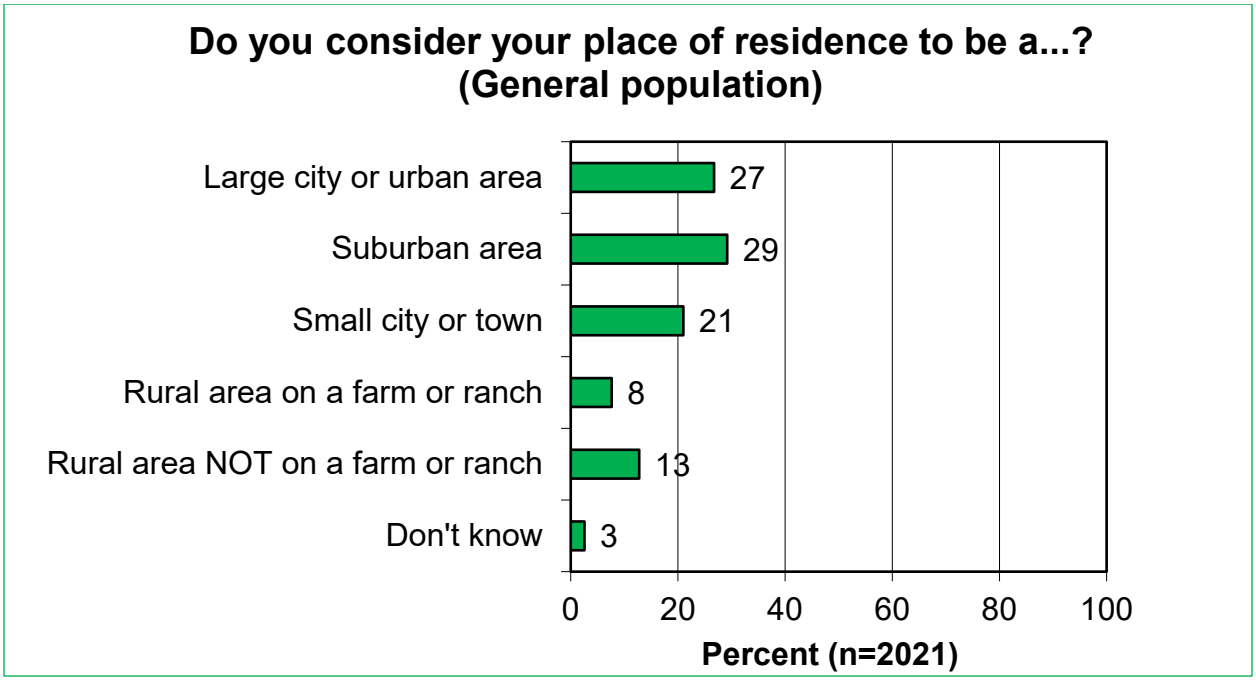


Figure 104. Place of Residence

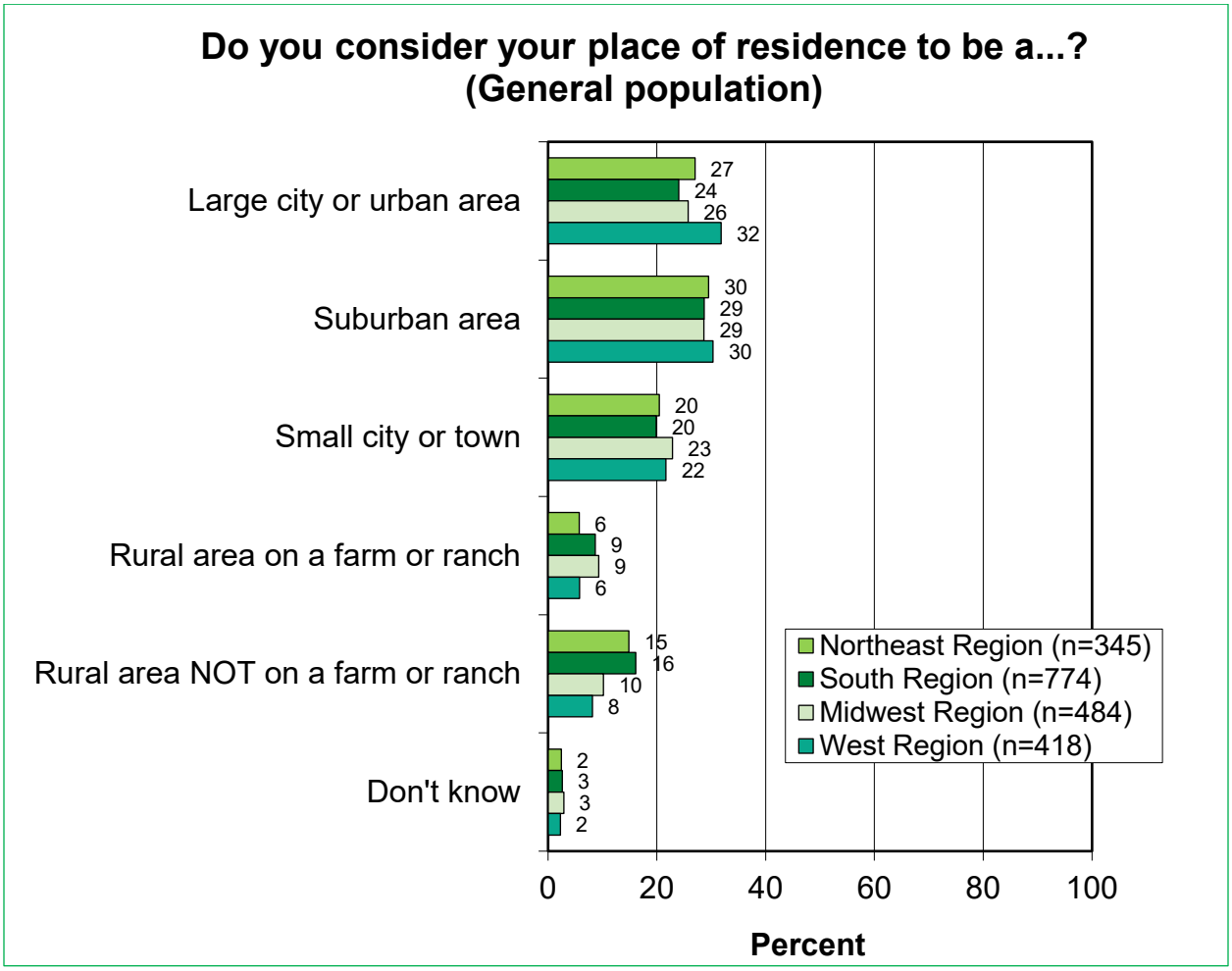


Figure 105. Place of Residence (Regions)

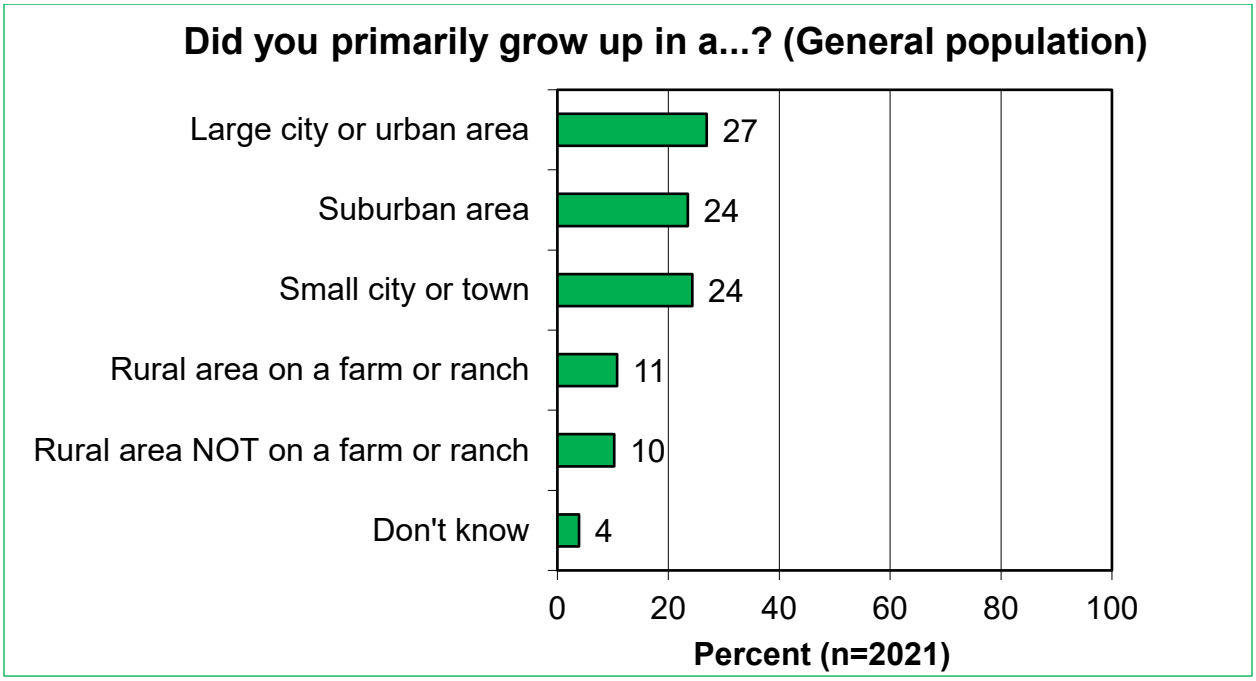


Figure 106. Residential Area Grew Up In

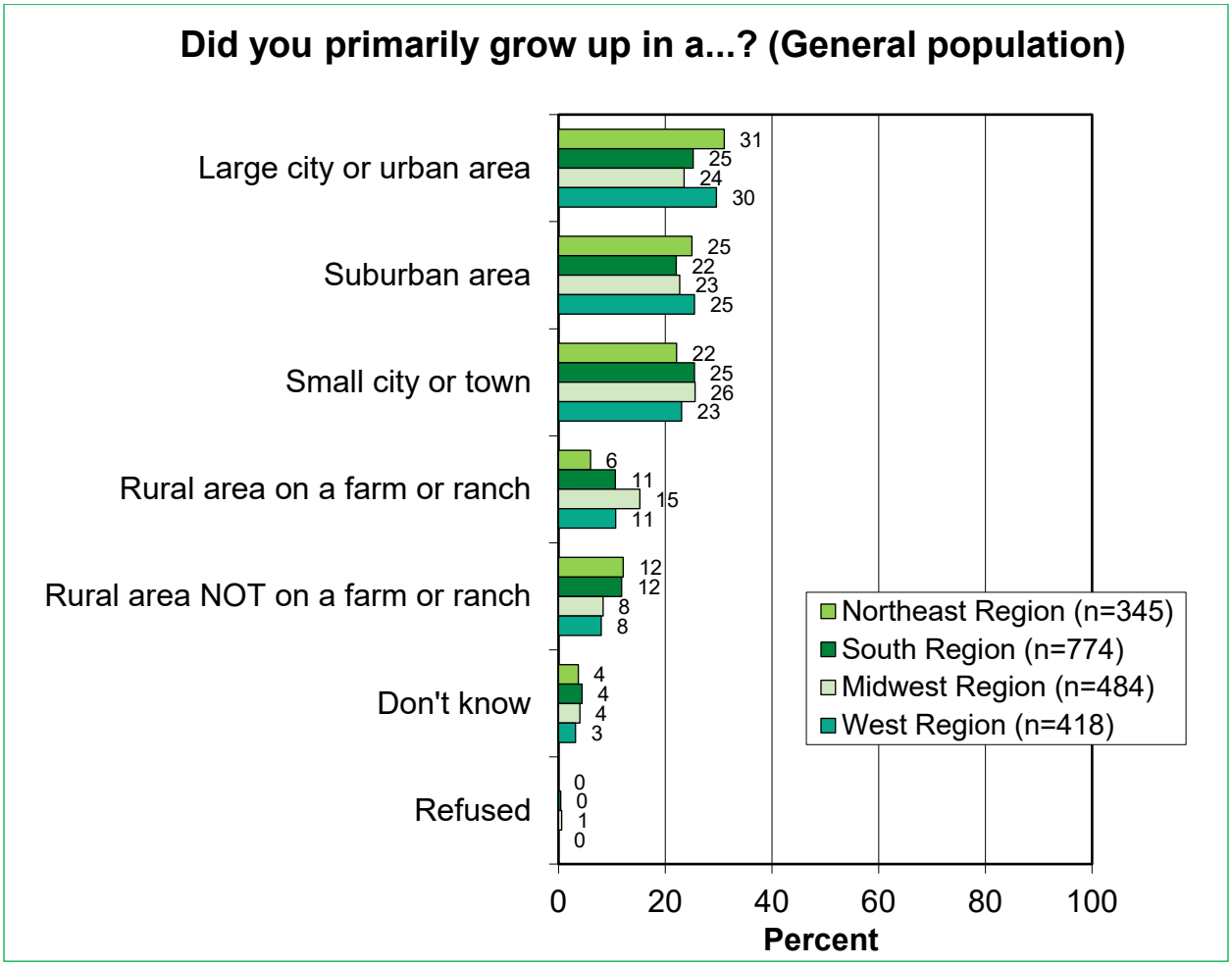


Figure 107. Residential Area Grew Up In (Regions)

ABOUT:

OUTDOOR STEWARDS OF CONSERVATION FOUNDATION (OSCF):

Outdoor Stewards of Conservation Foundation, Inc. is an IRS registered 501c3 nonprofit organization with a mission to use research-based communications and engagement programs to help recruit the next generation of HATS™ (**H**unters, **A**nglers, **T**rappers, and **S**hooters) and promote the fact that HATS™ are the primary funders and stewards of land, fish and wildlife conservation in America.

To support their mission, OSCF developed and manages programs such as:

COME WITH!™
This R3 (Recruit, Retain, Reactivate) communication program works with industry companies such as; manufacturers, retailers, ranges, NGO's, media and state fish and wildlife agencies to activate America's 60+ million avid HATS™ to invite someone new to COME WITH! them to the range, water or field in an effort to increase participation.

CONNECTING WITH CONSERVATION™
OSCF uses this informative communication program to work with industry and agency partners to communicate how conservation is funded in America. The three main parts to the conservation funding cycle include; 1) excise tax paying manufacturers, 2) state fish and wildlife agencies, and 3) HATS™. 'Connecting with Conservation' includes a series of videos and social media postings that showcase leaders from industry and wildlife agencies explaining the funding cycle and thanking HATS™ for their contributions to conservation.

FILL A BAG WHILE FILLING YOUR TAG™
The first ever, year-round, national conservation engagement program that works with industry and agency partners to distribute reusable, biodegradable bags to HATS™ all across America. HATS™ take the bags with them while out hunting, fishing, trapping or target shooting and use the bags to take out any trash them may find while outdoors. Bags are preprinted with messages that ask HATS™ to post photos or short videos of themselves with their bag and trash to their social media accounts to show others who the true stewards of conservation are. Posts include #TrophyTrash in order to be tracked on social media sites such as Instagram.

To learn more about OSCF or our programs contact:

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Post Office Box 1043
Middlebury, CT 06762
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Instagram: @OutdoorStewards

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(203) 450-7202

ABOUT RESPONSIVE MANAGEMENT:

Responsive Management is an internationally recognized survey research firm specializing in natural resource and outdoor recreation issues. Our mission is to help natural resource and outdoor recreation agencies, businesses, and organizations better understand and work with their constituents, customers, and the public.

Focusing only on natural resource and outdoor recreation issues, Responsive Management has conducted telephone, mail, and online surveys, as well as multi-modal surveys, on-site intercepts, focus groups, public meetings, personal interviews, needs assessments, program evaluations, marketing and communication plans, and other forms of human dimensions research measuring how people relate to the natural world for more than 30 years. Utilizing our in-house, full-service survey facilities with 75 professional interviewers, we have conducted studies in all 50 states and 15 countries worldwide, totaling more than 1,000 human dimensions projects *only* on natural resource and outdoor recreation issues.

Responsive Management has conducted research for every state fish and wildlife agency and every federal natural resource agency, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Coast Guard, and the National Marine Fisheries Service. Additionally, we have also provided research for all the major conservation NGOs including the Archery Trade Association, the American Sportfishing Association, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Dallas Safari Club, Ducks Unlimited, Environmental Defense Fund, the Izaak Walton League of America, the National Rifle Association, the National Shooting Sports Foundation, the National Wildlife Federation, the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Safari Club International, the Sierra Club, Trout Unlimited, and the Wildlife Management Institute.

Other nonprofit and NGO clients include the American Museum of Natural History, the BoatUS Foundation, the National Association of Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs, the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, and the Ocean Conservancy. As well, Responsive Management conducts market research and product testing for numerous outdoor recreation manufacturers and industry leaders, such as Winchester Ammunition, Vista Outdoor (whose brands include Federal Premium, CamelBak, Bushnell, Primos, and more), Trijicon, Yamaha, and others.

Responsive Management also provides data collection for the nation's top universities, including Auburn University, Clemson University, Colorado State University, Duke University, George Mason University, Michigan State University, Mississippi State University, North Carolina State University, Oregon State University, Penn State University, Rutgers University, Stanford University, Texas Tech, University of California-Davis, University of Florida, University of Montana, University of New Hampshire, University of Southern California, Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia Tech, West Virginia University, Yale University, and many more.

Our research has been upheld in U.S. Courts, used in peer-reviewed journals, and presented at major wildlife and natural resource conferences around the world. Responsive Management's research has also been featured in many of the nation's top media, including *Newsweek*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, CNN, National Public Radio, and on the front pages of *The Washington Post* and *USA Today*.

responsivemanagement.com

For additional research and information about Outdoor Stewards of Conservation Foundation, visit www.OutdoorStewards.org