

Assessing the Quality and Availability of Hunting and Shooting Access in the United States



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INTRODUCTION

Research has consistently shown that difficulty gaining access to lands for hunting and sport shooting has become a constraint to recruiting, retaining, and reactivating hunters and shooters. Adequate access to land and shooting ranges is one of the fundamental issues that affect the future of hunting and sport shooting, but it is also an issue over which agencies and organizations have some influence. This report is presented as part of an overarching assessment of the quality and availability of hunting and sport shooting access in the United States. An extensive study to obtain baseline data on hunting access was conducted over a decade ago and was documented in the report titled, *Issues Related to Hunting Access in the United States: Final Report* (Responsive Management and the National Shooting Sports Foundation, 2010).

Since that time, no comprehensive nationwide follow-up assessment has been implemented to identify where access has improved or worsened (and no similar nationwide baseline data exist at all on the sport shooting side). To address this issue, the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) and Responsive Management were awarded this project, funded by Modern Multistate Conservation Grant Program Number F21AP00285-00.

This nationwide access assessment entailed three major research efforts:

1. A search of available data sources to determine the current availability of public and private areas for hunting and sport shooting in the United States.

This was documented in a separate report, titled *Assessing the Quality and Availability of Hunting and Shooting Access in the United States: Hunting and Shooting Access Inventory* (Responsive Management and the National Shooting Sports Foundation, 2021). That report is supplemented by an Excel database that includes greater detail on the research efforts, such as listings of Wildlife Management Areas or state-managed public shooting ranges, where available, as well as a source for each reported value.

2. A nationwide survey to determine how hunters and sport shooters rate access to their activities and to identify the range of issues currently affecting access.

Results of the nationwide survey are presented in this report.

3. A trends analysis to examine how perceptions of access have changed over the past decade.

The trend analysis is presented in this report.

MAJOR FINDINGS FROM THE HUNTER ACCESS SURVEY

CHARACTERISTICS OF HUNTING PARTICIPATION

Deer is the most hunted species among hunters in the survey, with wild turkey in a distant second place but ahead of the rest of the species named.

Nearly 4 out of 5 hunters sought white-tailed deer (79%), while 8% hunted mule deer. This is distantly followed by wild turkey (40%). All other species are at 28% or less.

The groups most likely to travel longer distances to hunt are urban and suburban hunters, West Region hunters, and those seeking elk, upland game birds, waterfowl, or wild turkey.

Those who primarily hunt white-tailed deer are *less* likely than hunters overall (or their counterparts who primarily hunt other species) to travel a long distance to hunt.

The overwhelming majority of hunters use a car or truck to access their hunting spot. A little under half walk to get to their hunting location, and a quarter of hunters in the survey use an ATV. (Note that more than one mode could be selected in the survey.)

Among hunters in the survey, 79% use a car or truck, 40% walk, and 25% use an ATV as modes that are used to get to their hunting location. They were asked to select all that applied.

LOCATIONS OF HUNTING ACTIVITIES

Among hunters in the survey, 56% hunt mostly on private land, while 25% hunt mostly on public land. In the middle, 19% hunt on both about equally.

In looking at sums, 75% hunt on private land mostly or at least half the time, and 44% hunt on public land mostly or about half the time.

Over a third of hunters in the survey use private lands enrolled in walk-in access programs or state-run access programs: 8% do so *often*, 10% do so *sometimes*, and 17% do so *rarely*.

On the other hand, 59% never use them.

Among those who use private land, they most commonly use land owned by someone else (59% do so mostly). However, 22% mostly use their own land, while the rest use their own land and others' land about equally.

Most commonly, those using other people's land are connected as a family member or a friend to the owner. A little over a third of those using private land owned by another person or entity describe the owner as an acquaintance, a corporate owner, or a person unknown to the hunter prior to the hunt.

FACTORS CONSIDERED IN CHOOSING LANDS ON WHICH TO HUNT

One factor stands above all others as an important consideration when hunters are choosing where to hunt: that the land is not crowded with other sportsmen.

This emerges as an issue in this series that had hunters rate the importance of various factors in their decisions regarding where to go hunting: 71% rated it as very important, and another 21% rated it as somewhat important—a sum of 92%.

Additionally, this is reinforced in a later section of the report about ratings of access, as the top reason by far for not giving a higher rating to access on public lands is that they are too crowded with other hunters. The second most common reason is that the land is too crowded with other recreationists.

Also important as factors (but distantly below that top factor discussed above) are that the land is easy to access by foot, that the land is familiar and close to home, and that it can be accessed by car or truck.

Of less importance are that the land is public, that ATVs can be used, that dogs can be used, and that the land has well-maintained roads. (Note that people could both want to be able to access the land by car or truck but not care if the road is particularly well-maintained.) One important regional difference is that hunters in the West Region rate having public land available higher than do those in the other regions.

FACTORS AFFECTING HUNTER ENJOYMENT

Access is one of the top issues affecting hunter enjoyment, and it is the very top issue over which agencies have much sway.

No time/family or work obligations collectively was named as the top issue taking away from enjoyment (24% name this as an issue), but this was closely followed by access issues (21%).

The top access issues are a lack of land on which to hunt, crowding, land being leased to others, land being posted by landowners, the cost of access, and travel distance.

Those with access issues in the question above were then asked to elaborate on the access issues that they had, with those named issues being the top problems.

HUNTING ACCESS CONSTRAINTS

In a direct question about access, nearly half of hunters agree that lack of access to hunting lands in their state has caused them to not hunt as much as they would have liked. Agreement is particularly high among those hunting public and private land about equally, those hunting upland game birds or waterfowl, and hunters who live in an urban/suburban area.

In this question, 45% agreed compared to 34% who disagreed (the rest answering neutrally).

The items that hunters rated as the most problematic when they go hunting relate to changes in the land ownership or land use, including developments on the land.

Hunters rated each of 25 potential problems as being a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all. The top, when ranked by major or moderate problem combined, are less land on which to hunt due to private land ownership changes, less land on which to hunt due to development, less land on which to hunt because the land use has changed, housing or other developments making land not huntable, finding previously open private land sold and posted or closed by the new landowner, and finding previously open private land posted or closed by the landowner—all with 30% or more saying they were major or moderate problems.

The above were problems that hunters may encounter when hunting. The survey also asked hunters to rate potential problems for the state as a whole relating to lands available (or not available) for hunting and land uses. Again, the top issues are development and land ownership changes, along with landowners' concerns about liability prompting them to post their lands.

This list contained 10 potential statewide problems, with hunters using the same scale as above from major problem to not a problem at all. Three of the problems were in the top tier as being problematic: housing and commercial development, private land posted or closed because the landowner is concerned about liability, and tracts being broken up when sold or leased.

RATINGS OF ACCESS TO HUNTING LANDS

Hunters are just about evenly divided in their ratings of hunting access in their state, with about half rating hunting access excellent or good and the other half rating it fair or poor. Additionally, ratings are generally not at the very top or bottom but are in the middle: good more than excellent at the top half of the scale, and fair more than poor in the lower half of the scale.

Among hunters in the 19 states surveyed, 47% rate access *excellent* (12%) or *good* (35%), while 49% rate it *fair* (37%) or *poor* (12%).

The strong majority of hunters rate their state agency's management of access as excellent or good, not quite double the percentage rating the management of access fair or poor. Ratings of hunters' state agency at managing access are better than the ratings of access itself, suggesting that some hunters do not blame the agency itself for access problems.

The majority (58%) give a rating of *excellent* or *good*, compared to 34% giving a rating of *fair* or *poor*. Again, most ratings are in the middle (*good* and *fair*) rather than in the extremes (*excellent* or *poor*).

Public land access gets better ratings than private land access: 60% rate public access excellent or good, while only 43% rate private land access excellent or good.

Both public and private land access were rated. For public land: 60% rated it *excellent* or *good*, and 40% rated it *fair* or *poor*. For private land: 43% rated it *excellent* or *good*, and 48% rated it *fair* or *poor*.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION USED IN DECIDING WHERE TO HUNT

Friends, family, and word-of-mouth in general together make up the top source of information on places to hunt. Otherwise, people turn to the internet. Nonetheless, information provided with license applications (including the regulations booklet) and through the state agency itself are among the top sources of information.

In this open-ended question, the large majority named friends/family/word-of-mouth (68%). This was distantly followed by the internet in general (24%), information provided with the license application/hunting regulations (20%), specific sites on the internet (18%), and the state agency other than its website (13%).

When asked directly, about a third of hunters had visited their state's wildlife agency website, and about a quarter had visited the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's website.

The list was presented to hunters: 36% had visited their state agency's website, 23% had visited the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's website, 14% had visited the U.S. Forest Service's website, and 11% had visited the Bureau of Land Management's website. However, 46% had visited none of those websites.

AWARENESS AND USE OF HUNTING ACCESS PROGRAMS OR RESOURCES

Hunters were asked about their awareness of various access programs or resources. Regarding national level programs or resources, they were most aware of Waterfowl Production Areas, onX Maps, and the Conservation Reserve Program.

Hunters were asked about five national programs or resources and then whatever programs were available in their state, choosing from a scale of *very aware*, *somewhat aware*, or *not at all aware*. Regarding the national programs or resources, they were most aware of Waterfowl Production Areas (56% total awareness, 18% very aware), onX Maps (51% total awareness, 29% very aware), and the Conservation Reserve Program (51% total awareness, 20% very aware).

In addition to awareness, hunters were asked about their participation in or use of the national programs and resources. The most usage was for the onX Maps app, distantly followed by the Conservation Reserve Program and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Waterfowl Production Areas.

Just under a third of hunters (29%) had used the onX Maps app. Also with substantial use were lands in the Conservation Reserve Program (11% used them) and Waterfowl Production Areas (10%).

Finally in the hunter survey, hunters rated the programs or resources (of which they were aware) for making access for hunting easier. Of the national programs or resources, the highest rating (considering excellent and good combined) was for onX Maps (65%). The other four programs all have combined excellent/good ratings of 43% to 48%.

Note that the *do not know* responses were relatively high (from 23% to 40%), as being aware of the programs does not always allow one to rate them. *Fair* and *poor* ratings ranged from 21% down to 12%, so always well below *excellent* and *good* ratings.

The same questions (awareness, participation, and ratings if aware) were asked of hunters for the programs and resources within their state of residence.

- Regarding awareness, the Kansas Walk-In Hunting Access (WIHA) Program, Maine Youth Hunting Days, and Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) in Massachusetts rank at the top among the 19 participating states, each with 71% of its state's hunters being *very aware* of the program.
- WMAs in Massachusetts and the Kansas WIHA Program also rank at the top in participation rates (64% and 61%, respectively, of hunters in the given state participate in these programs), along with New Jersey WMAs (64%).
- The top ratings from those aware of the state programs and resources, looking at *excellent* or *good* ratings combined, are for Indiana Youth Hunting Days (73%), WMAs in Massachusetts (73%), Missouri Conservation Areas (72%), and New Jersey WMAs (72%).

HUNTER TRENDS

Hunter behaviors and preferences regarding the species or species groups hunted; if their hunting participation has increased, stayed about the same, or decreased over the past 5 years; and the type of land hunted (public, private, or both) have remained consistent since the 2010 survey.

In a series of questions measuring how important 11 factors are when deciding where to hunt, the percentages giving *very important* responses decreased for each factor. The largest decrease was for being familiar with the land, going from 58% in 2010 to 38% in 2021 (in other words, being familiar with the land is much less important today).

Other substantial decreases are observed for the land being owned by someone they know, the land being close to home, the land being private, and the land not being crowded with other hunters or recreationists.

In assessing 10 potential problems within their state, the percentages giving *major, moderate, or minor problem* responses increased for each issue. The largest increases were for management issues, with management of land for purposes other than hunting (such as timber) increasing from 31% in 2010 to 49% in 2021.

Other notable increases are for poor management of public land use, closures of public land by government agencies, and lack of or unclear signs marking public hunting lands.

In assessing whether 25 potential issues have been a *major, moderate, or minor problem* when hunting in the past 5 years, the percentages giving one of those responses increased for nearly every issue.

There are marked increases in those responses for less land due to development, difficulty in finding landowners to ask permission, lack of or inaccurate information on where to hunt, poor maintenance of roads or trails, difficulty in locating a road, difficulty in locating land from maps on the ground, road closures, boat launch and ATV access, cost of access, and travel distance.

Ratings of access to land for hunting decreased somewhat, with *excellent or good* responses decreasing from 56% in 2010 to 47% in 2021.

Participation in walk-in access programs increased from 29% in 2010 to 35% in 2021.

MAJOR FINDINGS FROM THE SHOOTER ACCESS SURVEY

CHARACTERISTICS OF SHOOTING PARTICIPATION

Handguns, non-AR rifles, and shotguns are used by the majority of sport shooters.

Multiple responses were allowed. Sport shooters named all the types of firearms they used in the past 5 years: 68% shot handguns, 58% shot non-AR rifles, and 56% shot shotguns. About a third each shot AR platform rifles or used archery equipment.

The groups most likely to travel longer distances to shoot are urban and suburban shooters, West Region shooters, and those who primarily shoot with AR platform rifles or shotguns.

This is based on the question about the typical travel distance for shooting.

The overwhelming majority of shooters use a car or truck to access their shooting spot, far exceeding any other mode.

The overwhelming majority of shooters (86%) use a car or truck to get to their shooting location.

LOCATIONS OF SHOOTING ACTIVITIES

In the survey, 57% of shooters go sport shooting mostly on private land, compared to 21% shooting mostly on public land. Meanwhile, 18% shoot on both about equally.

The calculated sums show that 75% shoot on private land mostly or at least half the time, and 39% shoot on public land mostly or about half the time.

Almost half of shooters in the survey use private lands enrolled in walk-in access programs or state-run access programs.

Specifically, 9% use them often, 19% use them sometimes, and 21% use them rarely, for a sum of 48% (on unrounded numbers); however, 45% never use them.

Private land users most commonly use land owned by someone else (65% do so mostly), while 21% mostly use their own land. The rest use their own land and others' land about equally.

In general, shooters using other people's land are connected as a family member or a friend to the owner rather than by another person or entity described as an acquaintance, corporate owner, or a person unknown to the shooter prior to the activity.

FACTORS CONSIDERED IN CHOOSING LANDS ON WHICH TO SHOOT

Two factors make a top tier of factors considered important when shooters are deciding where to go shooting: that the land is not crowded with other sportsmen and that the land is easy to access by car or truck.

Shooters rated the importance of various factors in their decisions about where to go shooting: 63% rated not being crowded as very important, and another 24% rated it as somewhat important. Car/truck access had 49% rate it very important and 36% rate it somewhat important.

A second tier of factors considered important are that the land is easy to access by foot, the land has well-maintained roads, and the land is familiar and close to home.

Of less importance are that the land is public and that ATVs can be used.

FACTORS AFFECTING SHOOTER ENJOYMENT

Cost is the top issue affecting sport shooters' enjoyment. However, access is also among the top issues.

No time/family or work obligations collectively was also named as a top issue taking away from enjoyment.

The top access issues are a lack of land on which to shoot, land being too far away, and a lack of information about lands on which to shoot.

These are far above the other issues when those with access issues in the question above were then asked to elaborate.

SHOOTING ACCESS CONSTRAINTS

More shooters, in a direct question about access, agreed than disagreed that lack of access to shooting lands in their state has caused them to not shoot as much as they would have liked. Agreement is particularly high among urban shooters who are young and who primarily shoot modern rifles.

In this question, 43% agreed and 32% disagreed (the rest answered neutrally).

The items that shooters rated as the most problematic when they go shooting relate to development, lack of information, changes in the land use, and travel distances (including the cost of gas).

Shooters rated each of 22 potential problems as being a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all.

The above were problems that shooters may encounter when shooting. The survey also asked shooters to rate potential problems for the state as a whole relating to lands available (or not available) for shooting and land uses. The top issues are development, lack of signage, and land being posted because of the landowner's liability concerns.

This list contained 10 potential statewide problems.

RATINGS OF ACCESS TO SHOOTING LANDS

Shooters are essentially evenly divided in their ratings of shooting access in their state: 45% rate it *excellent* or *good*, and 47% rate it *fair* or *poor*, with ratings being in the middle rather than the extremes.

Among shooters in the survey, 45% rate access *excellent* (9%) or *good* (36%), while 47% rate it *fair* (33%) or *poor* (14%).

Half of shooters rate their state agency's management of access as *excellent* or *good*, but a third rate the management of access *fair* or *poor* (the rest being neutral). This is slightly better than ratings of access overall.

Half (50%) give a rating of *excellent* or *good*, compared to 34% giving a rating of *fair* or *poor*.

Public land access gets far better ratings than private land access: 57% rate public access *excellent* or *good*, while 40% rate private land access *excellent* or *good*.

Ratings were given for both public and private land access, and the ratings were as follows: public land had 57% rating it *excellent* or *good* and 38% rating it *fair* or *poor*, while private land had 40% rating it *excellent* or *good* and 45% rating it *fair* or *poor*.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION USED IN DECIDING WHERE TO SHOOT

Friends, family, and word-of-mouth in general together is the top source of information on places to shoot, double the use of general internet searches. A substantial percentage use specific websites that they already know.

In this open-ended question, the large majority named friends/family/word-of-mouth (62%), followed by the internet in general (31%) and specific websites (17%).

When asked directly, about a quarter of shooters had visited their state wildlife agency's website or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's website.

The list was presented to shooters: 27% had visited their state agency's website, 22% had visited the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's website, 15% had visited the U.S. Forest Service's website, and 12% had visited the Bureau of Land Management's website. Meanwhile, 46% had visited none of those websites.

AWARENESS AND USE OF SHOOTING ACCESS PROGRAMS OR RESOURCES

Shooters were asked about their awareness of various national and state programs or resources for access. Of the two national level resources, they were more aware of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's interactive map of shooting ranges than the letsgoshooting.org website.

Shooters were asked about two national resources and whatever programs were available in their state, choosing from a scale of *very aware*, *somewhat aware*, or *not at all aware*. Looking at the national resources, 40% were aware of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's interactive map of ranges (12% were *very aware*); note that the mapped ranges specifically are those supported by funding from Wildlife Restoration funds. Also, 23% were aware of the letsgoshooting.org website (5% were *very aware*).

Sport shooters were also asked about their participation in the listed programs and resources. Regarding the national resources, 10% of shooters used the interactive range map and 6% used letsgoshooting.org.

Sport shooters then rated the programs and resources (of which they were aware) for making access for shooting easier. For the national resources, the interactive range map was rated *excellent* or *good* by 58% of respondents, while letsgoshooting.org had 54% giving an *excellent* or *good* rating.

The same questions (awareness, participation, and ratings if aware) were asked of sport shooters for the programs and resources within their state of residence.

- Among the 19 participating states' programs, awareness was highest for the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) Public Shooting Ranges (42% of the state's shooters are *very aware*) and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (NJDEP's) 12 state-operated public shooting ranges (38%).
- Regarding participation rates, the NJDEP's public ranges (at 50%) and the MDC Public Shooting Ranges (43%) rank at the top again, along with Alabama Public Shooting Ranges (44%).
- The top ratings from those aware of the programs/resources are for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission-Managed Public Shooting Ranges (86% *excellent* or *good* ratings) and the Alabama Public Archery Parks (72%).

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INTRODUCTION

Adequate access is one of the fundamental issues affecting the future of hunting and sport shooting—notably, it is also an issue over which agencies and organizations have some influence. To gain a better understanding of the specific problems that affect public and private hunting and sport shooting access, the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) and Responsive Management have undertaken this comprehensive nationwide scientific survey and trend assessment.

While extensive baseline data on hunting access were collected more than a decade ago, no comprehensive nationwide follow-up assessment had been implemented to identify where access had improved or worsened, until this study. Furthermore, no baseline data are available for sport shooting access—again until this study.

This project fulfills the need for updated data on hunting and shooting access. The assessment used a nationwide probability-based survey of hunters and sport shooters in representative states across all regions to evaluate the quality and availability of current access for the two activities. The trend data made available through the comparison of these new results with the findings from the NSSF/Responsive Management 2010 access study¹ determined the extent to which efforts made in the past decade have worked to increase access for hunters and sport shooters.

COMPONENTS OF ACCESS

The factors that affect participation in hunting and sport shooting include physical factors and social/psychological factors. In other words, access involves the physical opportunities and locations to do these activities as well as participants' (or potential participants') awareness, perceptions, and attitudes regarding access. The practical reality of whether fewer opportunities exist for these activities and the perception that access is becoming a greater problem represent two separate, albeit related, issues. The reality of less access is a physical constraint to participation, whereas the perception that access is becoming more difficult is a psychological constraint (whether there actually is less access or not).

Another important factor is the ownership of the lands for hunting and shooting, in particular whether the land in question is public land or private land. This dichotomy will be explored as it affects access and, ultimately, participation in hunting and sport shooting. The land ownership affects both physical access and psychological access, as well as each of the typologies described below.

It is also helpful when examining access to consider a typology of factors. The previous study by the NSSF and Responsive Management² considered five components of access: availability,

¹ Responsive Management/National Shooting Sports Foundation. 2010. *Issues Related to Hunting Access in the United States: Final Report*. Produced under a Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Administered by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Grant CT M-8-R.

² Ibid.

accessibility, accommodation, awareness, and assumptions. The interplay between these various factors makes addressing access issues complex and challenging. The first three (availability, accessibility, and accommodation) are physical components of access. The latter two (awareness and assumptions) are social/ psychological components of access. These components are defined and categorized as shown in the box below. It is helpful to further discuss each of these typologies of factors that affect access in detail. To this list, another component has been added: crowding.

Physical Aspects of Access

- **Availability** pertains to the actual land available for hunting and shooting.
- **Accessibility** pertains to the ability to get to the land. For example, problems of accessibility may include public lands and waters blocked by intervening private lands, public lands that are distant from roads and difficult to access, or roads and trails that are gated or restricted.
- **Accommodation** pertains to the ease of mobility and the experience once recreationists are on the land. For example, crowding may be a concern for hunters who are seeking isolated areas for hunting and prefer not to encounter others. As another example, hunters may be able to access the land, but the conditions of roads and trails may make maneuverability difficult, or prohibitions on ATVs may make access to public lands inconvenient and may make removing harvested game challenging.

Social/Psychological Aspects of Access

- **Awareness** pertains to information and knowledge—to hunters' and shooters' awareness of the access options open to them. Lack of *knowledge* of a place to hunt or sport shoot can be just as effective a constraint as an actual lack of places to do those activities. Awareness also pertains to knowing where information can be found and how to use the information sources.
- **Assumptions** pertain to hunters' and shooters' perceptions about opportunities. These include prevalent ideas that opportunities are being threatened or other perceived barriers, regardless of whether they actually exist.

Availability

Availability is perhaps the most basic—none of the rest of the factors, such as knowing about that land, getting to that land, or moving about on that land, matters if there is no land in the first place. Unfortunately, availability of land is constricted by urbanization of formerly rural lands, as well as the closing of some lands, particularly private lands, to recreationists. For instance, past research indicated that between 1982 and 1997, there was a 34% increase in the amount of land devoted to urban uses in the United States, primarily due to the conversion (i.e., development) of croplands and forests into urban/suburban and industrial land uses.³ This same study indicated that developed areas in the United States would go from 5.2% of the land base of the country to 9.2% of it by about 2030.

³ Alig, R.; J. Kline; and M. Lichtenstein. 2004. "Urbanization on the U.S. Landscape: Looking Ahead in the 21st Century." *Landscape and Urban Planning* 69(2–3), 219–234.

Accessibility

It may be that accessibility is becoming a greater problem than it once was as development often blocks access to public lands. Some research, in fact, suggests that it may be more of a problem than an actual lack of land. For instance, in one study, hunters who had experienced access problems were asked whether the access problem was a lack of land (i.e., availability) on which to hunt or a situation where land existed that the hunter could not get to (i.e., accessibility). The majority of those hunters with access problems (60%) indicated that land existed but they could not get to it, while 29% indicated that there was a lack of land. In fact, among active hunters, 68% reported that land existed but they were unable to get to it.⁴

This problem is epitomized by a statement (from the same study cited above) made in a hunter focus group about access issues: “I’ve talked to Bureau of Land Management people, and we know there’s a section of land there open to the public—but how do you get into it? There’s houses on it by the road, so the only way to get through to that public land is to go through somebody’s yard. And we’re talking about a pretty good section of land. But there’s no road.”

Another example is provided in a study of Colorado hunters: those hunters who hunted on private lands and rated private land access as fair or poor said that their low rating was because of limited access rather than because too few hunting lands exist.⁵ In other words, these Colorado hunters felt that private land existed for hunting but that they were blocked from using the land and/or it was becoming increasingly more difficult to obtain permission to hunt on these private lands. In this case, then, the land existed but was difficult to access. This same research found that hunters encountered instances where private landowners had *illegally* blocked access to public lands by posting no trespassing signs on public lands.

Another cause of a lack of accessibility occurs when private lands are leased to hunting or sport shooting clubs, which limits public access to that land. Clubs that arrange for their members to hunt or shoot on private lands take those private lands out of the “public” realm. Furthermore, those clubs can drive up leasing costs of other lands, the result of which is increases in club fees and fees for land leases. This presents a problematic financial aspect of access.

To summarize, accessibility issues include real and/or perceived “landlocked” hunting and shooting areas (e.g., public lands surrounded by private lands or public lands only accessible by remote access points), posted lands, closed lands, gated entries, illegally blocked access to public lands, and road closures. Accessibility issues differ on public versus private lands, as well. Fish and wildlife agencies often have more options available for managing public land under their jurisdiction, meaning that they can work to improve roads and reduce road closures into and on public lands. Conversely, working with private landowners to ensure hunting and shooting access is more complicated.

⁴ Responsive Management/National Shooting Sports Foundation. 2008. *The Future of Hunting and the Shooting Sports: Research-Based Recruitment and Retention Strategies*. Produced for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under Grant Agreement CT-M-6-0. Harrisonburg, VA.

⁵ Responsive Management/Ecosystem Management Research Institute. 2003. *Access to Federal Hunting Lands in Colorado*. Produced for The Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation. Harrisonburg, VA.

Accommodation

Access also pertains to the ease of mobility and the hunting and sport shooting experience once recreationists are on the land. Issues related to accommodation include, but are not limited to, road and trail conditions, prohibitions on vehicles, distance traveled afoot for hunting or shooting, and crowding. All of these factors limit opportunities in these activities in some way. In some instances, the distance—though open to foot access—is too far for feasible access. Further, restrictions on ATVs and other vehicles can result in difficulties when hunters try to remove game; areas that fail to provide hunters with an opportunity to feasibly remove game are commonly viewed as lacking access.

Crowding is also a concern for providing positive hunting and sport shooting experiences and is related to access. Although access, in this case, is not actually blocked, it is, nonetheless, limited by crowding. As urbanization continues to limit land access, crowding issues may become more prominent in the future (crowding is discussed further in this report).

Awareness

To further complicate access issues, there is sometimes a disconnect between the amount of land actually available and a hunter's awareness of this land (which would presumably apply to shooters looking for places to shoot, as well). In 2003, for example, Responsive Management initiated a detailed evaluation of hunting access in Colorado for the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation.⁶ Colorado was identified as a state that had a high but declining level of hunting participation and possessed a diversity of (and large amounts of) federal public lands. In this study, the Geographic Information System (GIS) component showed that most public lands in Colorado were generally accessible to the public, as no more than 12% of federal lands in Colorado were landlocked by private land. Further, the study found that most public lands in Colorado were within one mile of a road. However, because large portions of public land were surrounded by private lands and were often accessible only by a secondary road, hunters reported frustration regarding "landlocked" public lands. In truth, few public lands in Colorado were landlocked by private lands.

The results in Colorado illustrate the complexity of psychological constraints to hunting access. Although there was clearly land available for hunting in Colorado, hunters' lack of awareness of remote access points and alternative routes to hunting lands as well as their perception that public lands were landlocked resulted in situations where hunters cited access issues. The Colorado study shows that despite the increased reporting of hunting access as a problem, the physical on-the-ground reality does not always correspond with these problems. In short, access issues are not always simply a lack of access points, roads, or trails, but a lack of good information as well.

⁶ Responsive Management/Ecosystem Management Research Institute. 2003. *Access to Federal Hunting Lands in Colorado*. Produced for The Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation. Harrisonburg, VA.

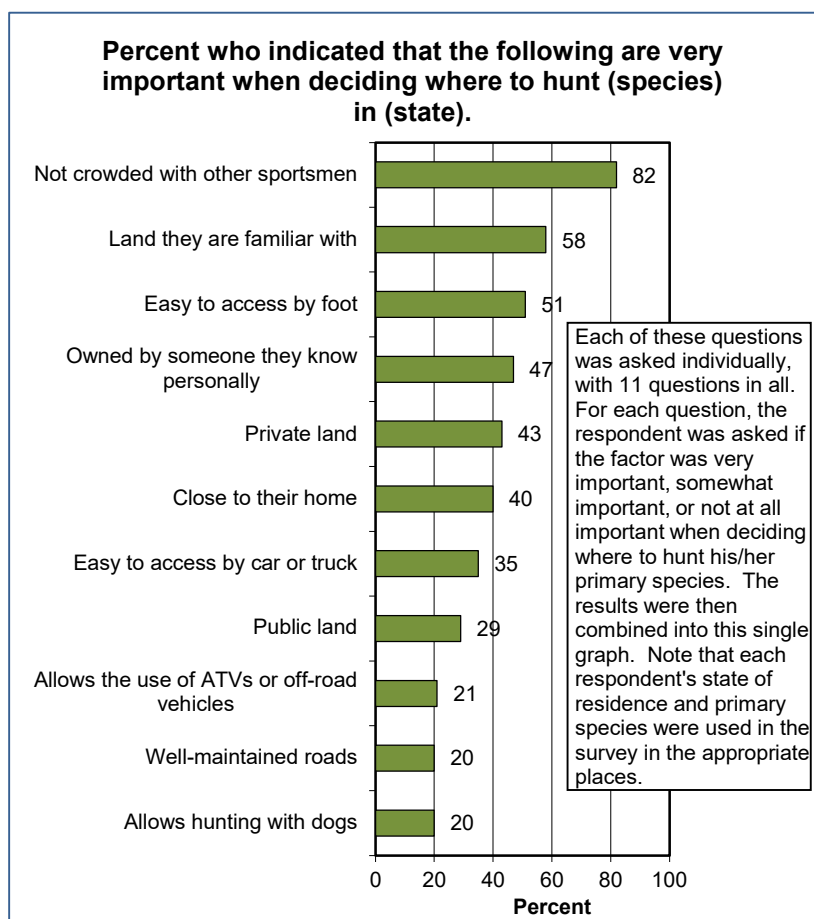
Assumptions

Access pertains to hunters' and shooters' assumptions and perceptions about opportunities for these activities. These include prevalent ideas that opportunities are being threatened or the perception of other barriers, regardless of whether they actually exist. Changes in land use from agriculturally zoned to residentially zoned and development of land have made more prevalent the idea that hunting opportunities are being threatened and have increased hunters' perception that access is becoming worse. As hunters and shooters increasingly see the encroachment of development in their communities, they may assume that access is being threatened, even if they themselves have not experienced access problems. If a hunter or shooter passes land that has been developed on the way to his or her favorite hunting or shooting spot, even though he or she may not have an access problem to the location of choice, he or she may worry about the future encroachment or development of those lands. Other perceptions or fears may also contribute to access issues. For example, if a hunter or shooter is hesitant to obtain permission from a landowner, access can be, for all practical purposes, blocked by this hesitancy.

Crowding

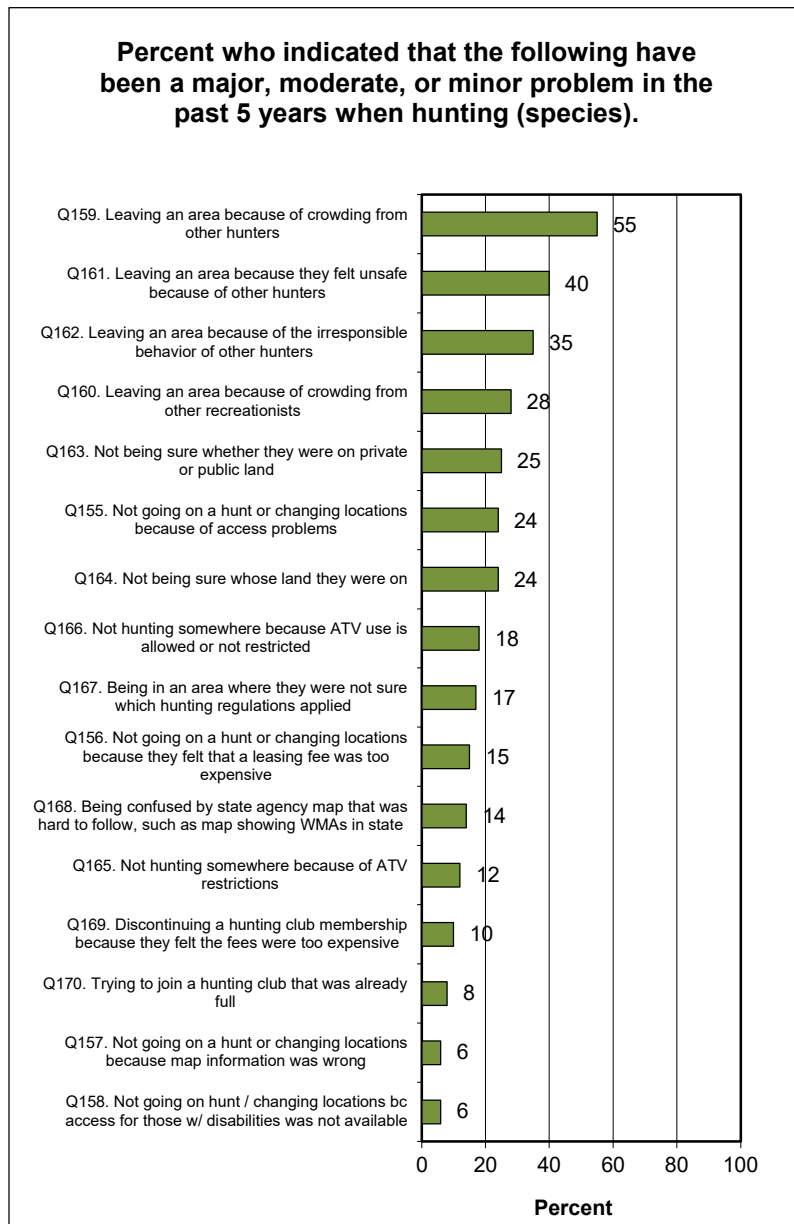
Crowding crosses several of the previously described typologies of access. Crowding can affect availability (by essentially taking land away), accessibility (by making access points crowded and uncomfortable), accommodation (by making travel in the hunting and shooting location difficult), and assumptions (by affecting perceptions of the area in question).

A nuance of crowding is whether the land is isolated or relatively well travelled. Although not a physical obstacle to access, crowding can affect access in that it can make an area undesirable or unsuitable for an activity, particularly hunting in which the participant may not want the wildlife to be spooked. Crowding may not cause desertion from hunting—one study⁷ found



⁷ Responsive Management/National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF). 2008. *The Future of Hunting and the Shooting Sports: Research-Based Recruitment and Retention Strategies*. Produced for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under Grant Agreement CT-M-6-0. Harrisonburg, VA.

that only 1% of active hunters said that crowding had caused a decline in their participation or prevented them from participating, and the same study found that only 1% of inactive hunters named crowding as a reason for not hunting in recent years—but crowding can have a large effect on *where* hunters choose to hunt. In a 2010 survey,⁸ when hunters were asked about the importance of 11 factors in their decisions regarding where to hunt their primary species, a single factor stood out markedly more important than the rest in the ranking by the percentage saying the factor is very important: that the land is not crowded with other sportsmen (82% said this was very important) (see graph above).



Not only has crowding been identified as an important consideration in choosing a place to hunt, but it is also an important determinant in a hunter's decision to leave certain hunting locations. When presented a list of potential problems with associated consequences of the problem, 55% of hunters cite leaving an area because of crowding from other hunters (the top problem identified as being major, moderate, or minor). In a finding tangentially related to crowding, hunters also identified two other social issues in this line of questioning as top-named problems: leaving an area because they felt unsafe because of other hunters (40%) and leaving an area because of the irresponsible behavior of other hunters (35%) (see graph on left). Therefore, the top three problems pertain to other hunters' presence in an area in which the respondent wanted to hunt, and the fourth ranked problem is leaving an area because of crowding from other (i.e., non-hunting) recreationists.

⁸ Responsive Management/National Shooting Sports Foundation. 2010. *Issues Related to Hunting Access in the United States: Final Report*. Produced under a Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Administered by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Grant CT M-8-R.

URBANIZATION AND ACCESS

Because urbanization presents its own set of problems for access, it is further discussed in detail here. Urbanization particularly affects availability, accessibility, and assumptions, and remains a critical obstacle for access to outdoor recreation as a whole. While the demand for outdoor recreation opportunities increases with population growth, the ability to meet this demand is becoming more challenging because the supply of open land is diminishing. This trend is even more evident in wildlife-dependent recreation, such as hunting, where increasing urbanization results in a loss of wildlife habitat appropriate for providing hunting opportunities.⁹ Other research examining state-by-state data throughout the United States has shown that the percent change in total hunters in a state is statistically correlated with housing units per square mile in the state: the denser the development, the fewer the number of hunters.¹⁰ Urbanization reduces land available for hunting and also reduces ingress to available lands. Finally, in addition to the actual land being developed, there is also a buffer zone around developed areas in which hunting and firearm shooting are often prohibited.

In addition to limiting the physical availability and accessibility of hunting and shooting lands, urbanization and land development have profound effects on the hunting and sport shooting *culture* as well. Urbanization and lack of access change the social environment in which these activities flourish. Given the important relationship between rural residency and participation in hunting and shooting, demographic trends toward urbanization are an emerging challenge.

With less rural land and fewer places to hunt and sport shoot, there are fewer people growing up in a hunter- and sport shooter-friendly environment, or for that matter an environment in which they even know anybody who engages in hunting or shooting. Further, as a smaller proportion of youth grow up in rural areas where participation in hunting and sport shooting is a more typical occurrence, efforts to maintain the participation rates in these activities will become more difficult. There are also fewer people growing up in an environment that fosters being comfortable around firearms, a prerequisite to participation in hunting and sport shooting. Finally, urbanization and the concomitant mobility of society contribute to a deterioration of a social groups for hunting and sport shooting as people move from place to place.¹¹

ACCESS AS A PRIORITY

Access has been recognized as a top priority of the Department of the Interior—over the past few years, the agency has made concerted efforts to increase recreational opportunities on public lands. Therefore, this study comes at a particularly opportune time given recent federal legislative developments: the House of Representatives passed the Great American Outdoors Act in a voice vote in April 2020, and the Senate passed the bill in a bipartisan 73-25 vote in

⁹ Jensen, C.; and S. Guthrie. 2006. *Outdoor Recreation in America* (6th ed.). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

¹⁰ Responsive Management/National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF). 2008. *The Future of Hunting and the Shooting Sports: Research-Based Recruitment and Retention Strategies*. Produced for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under Grant Agreement CT-M-6-0. Harrisonburg, VA.

¹¹ Ibid.

June 2020. The Great American Outdoors Act was signed into law in August 2020.¹² One of the Act's provisions is providing \$9.5 billion over 5 years to address infrastructure on and near America's public lands.

SUMMARY OF METHODOLOGY

The full methodology is contained in the final section of this report, but a quick summary of the methodology is helpful in interpreting the data that are presented. Briefly, this report is based on a probability-based scientific multi-modal survey conducted with hunters and a similar multi-modal survey conducted with sport shooters. The two groups were never combined, so results are presented for hunters and sport shooters in separate chapters, followed by a chapter that compares results between the groups.

The survey instrument (one instrument was used with different paths for hunters and sport shooters) was developed by the NSSF and Responsive Management, based in part on previous surveys pertaining to access (including for the 2010 report previously referenced), with analogous questions added regarding access to sport shooting locations. Please refer to the Methodology section at the end of this report for a full description of the surveying procedures and quality control.

PRESENTATION OF DATA IN THIS REPORT

To fully understand the results, it is essential to know the types of questions in the survey instrument.

- 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.
- Closed-ended questions have an answer set from which to choose.
- Single or multiple response questions: Some questions allow only a single response, while 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."
- Scaled questions: Many closed-ended questions (but not all) are in a scale, such as excellent-good-fair-poor.
- 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.

¹² This information was obtained from the website of the U.S Congress, www.congress.gov.

HOW TO INTERPRET DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSES GRAPHS

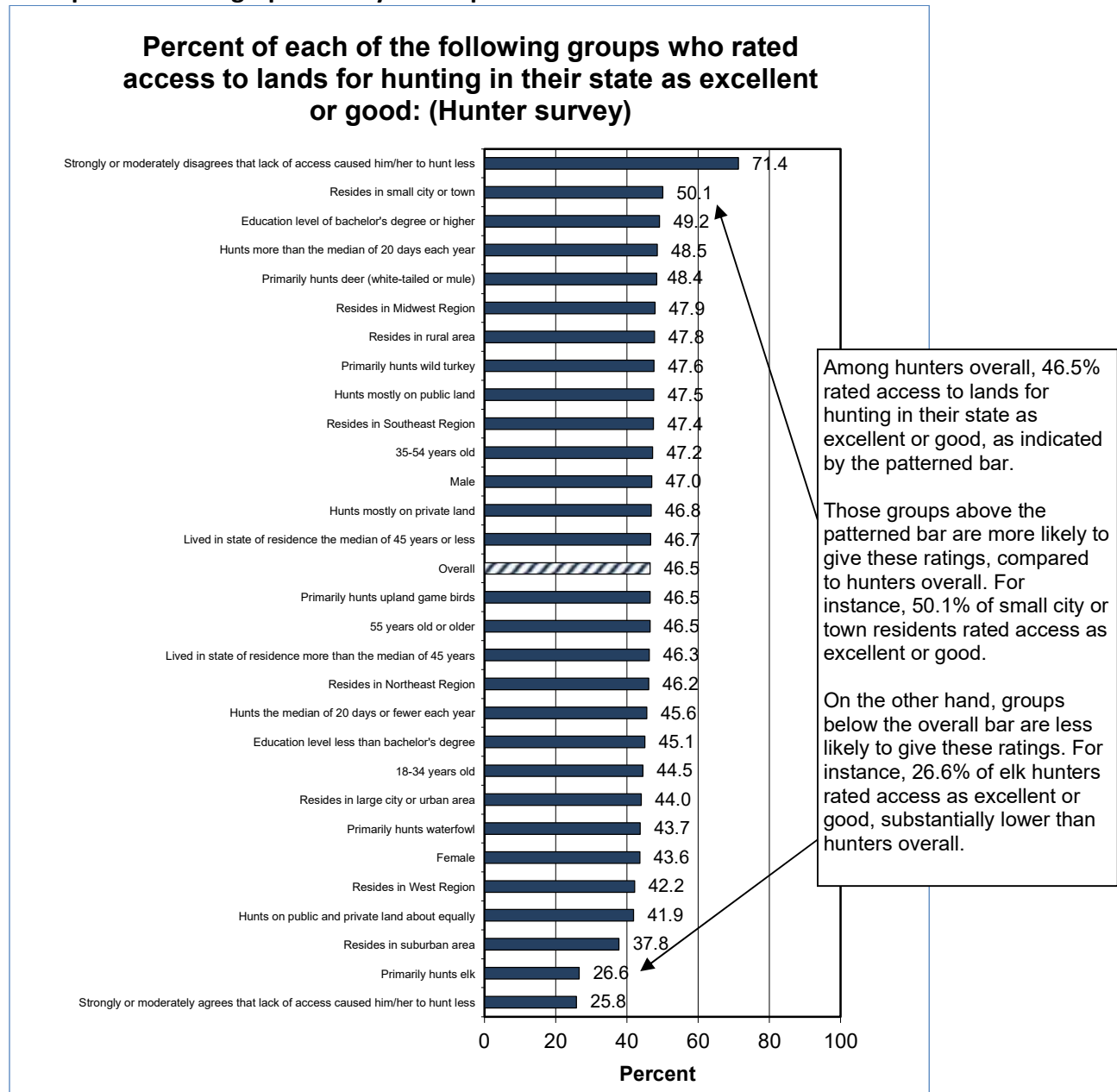
In addition to tables and graphs depicting the results of the individual survey questions, the report includes special graphs that show how various demographic and participatory groups respond to certain questions, hereinafter simply referred to as demographic analyses graphs. Not all the questions were analyzed in this way; questions chosen for these analyses are those deemed to be of the most utility.

The example on the following page shows how to interpret these graphs. This shows the percentage of various hunter groups who rated access to lands for hunting in their state as excellent or good. Among hunters overall, 46.5% rated hunting access as excellent or good (shown in the patterned “Overall” bar). Those groups shown above the overall bar have a higher percentage who gave these ratings, compared to hunters as a whole. Meanwhile, those groups below the overall bar have a lower percentage who rated access as excellent or good.

Those groups far from the overall bar have a marked difference from hunters overall (in this example, those who strongly or moderately disagree with the statement that lack of access caused them to hunt less are the furthest above the overall bar, while those who strongly or moderately agree with the statement are the furthest below the overall bar). Those groups near the overall bar do not have a marked difference. A rule of thumb is to consider any group at more than 5.0% difference as having a difference that is worth noting.

Also, to further understand how these graphs are interpreted, note that having 46.5% who rated access to hunting lands in their state as excellent or good means that 53.5% (i.e., 100.0% - 46.5%) do not.

Example of a Demographic Analyses Graph



HUNTER ACCESS SURVEY RESULTS

CHARACTERISTICS OF HUNTING PARTICIPATION

MAJOR FINDINGS

Deer is the most hunted species among hunters in the survey, with wild turkey in a distant second place but ahead of the rest of the species named.

Nearly 4 out of 5 hunters sought white-tailed deer (79%), while 8% hunted mule deer. This is distantly followed by wild turkey (40%). All other species are at 28% or less.

The groups most likely to travel longer distances to hunt are urban and suburban hunters, West Region hunters, and those seeking elk, upland game birds, waterfowl, or wild turkey.

Those who primarily hunt white-tailed deer are *less* likely than hunters overall (or their counterparts who primarily hunt other species) to travel a long distance to hunt.

The overwhelming majority of hunters use a car or truck to access their hunting spot. A little under half walk to get to their hunting location, and a quarter of hunters in the survey use an ATV. (Note that more than one mode could be selected in the survey.)

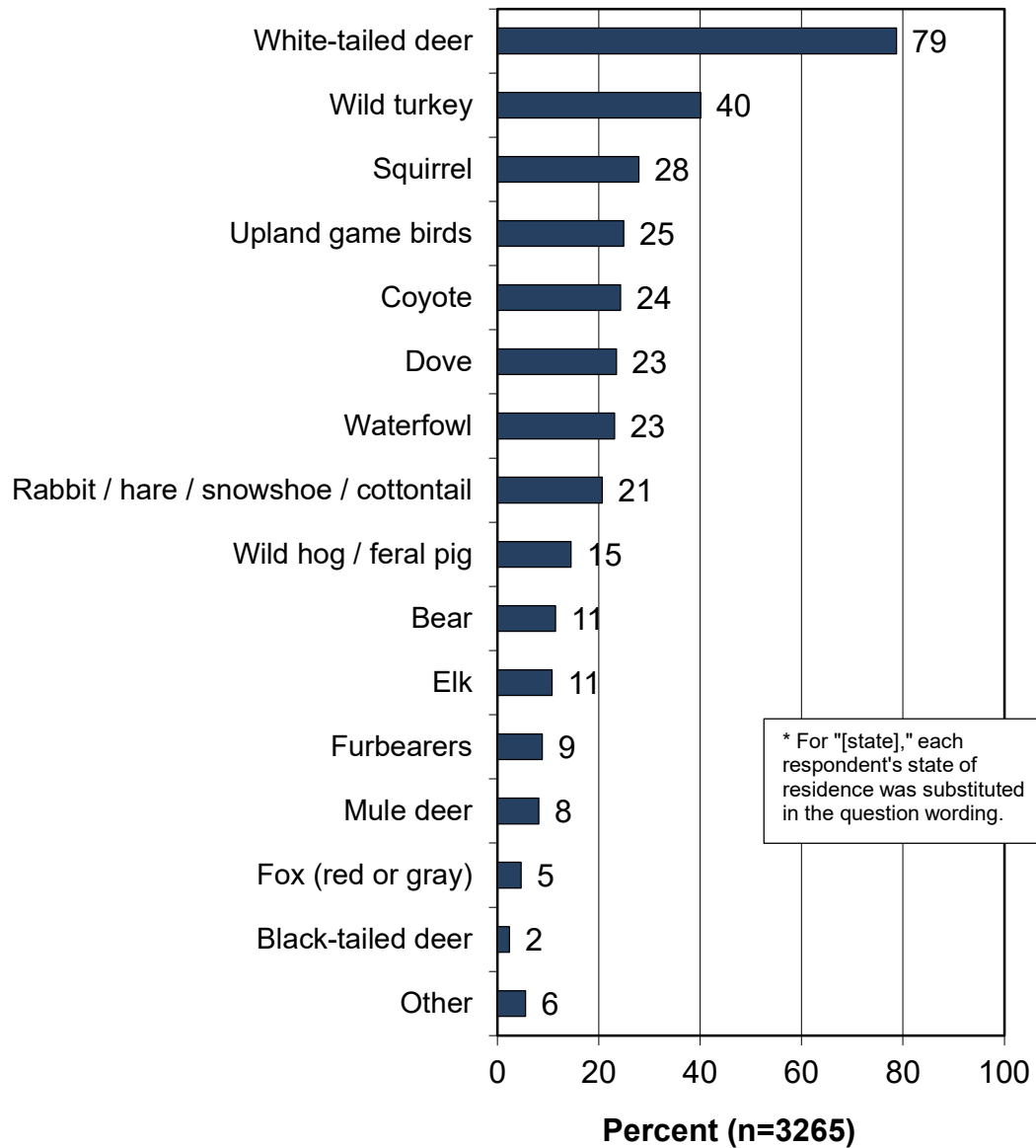
Among hunters in the survey, 79% use a car or truck, 40% walk, and 25% use an ATV as modes that are used to get to their hunting location. They were asked to select all that applied.

The characteristics of participation, such as species hunted and days of hunting, were examined in the survey. The main use of this information is for crosstabulations and further analyses; nonetheless, the data are of interest on their own and are presented in this section.

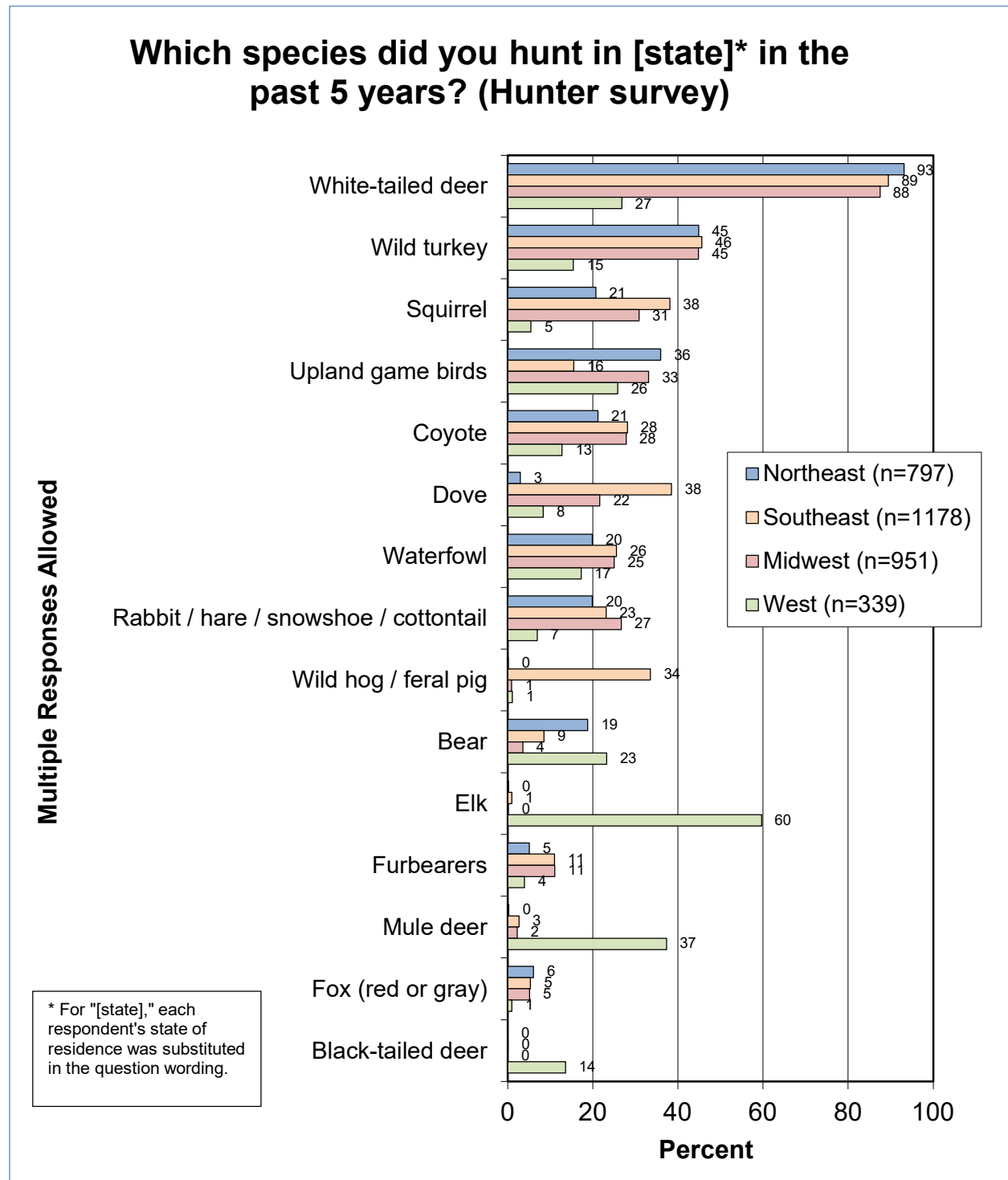
By far, white-tailed deer are pursued the most by hunters, with 79% of hunters hunting that species in the past 5 years. This is distantly followed by wild turkey (40%), while about a quarter of hunters hunt squirrel, upland game birds, coyote, dove, and waterfowl.

Which species did you hunt in [state]* in the past 5 years? (Hunter survey)

Multiple Responses Allowed

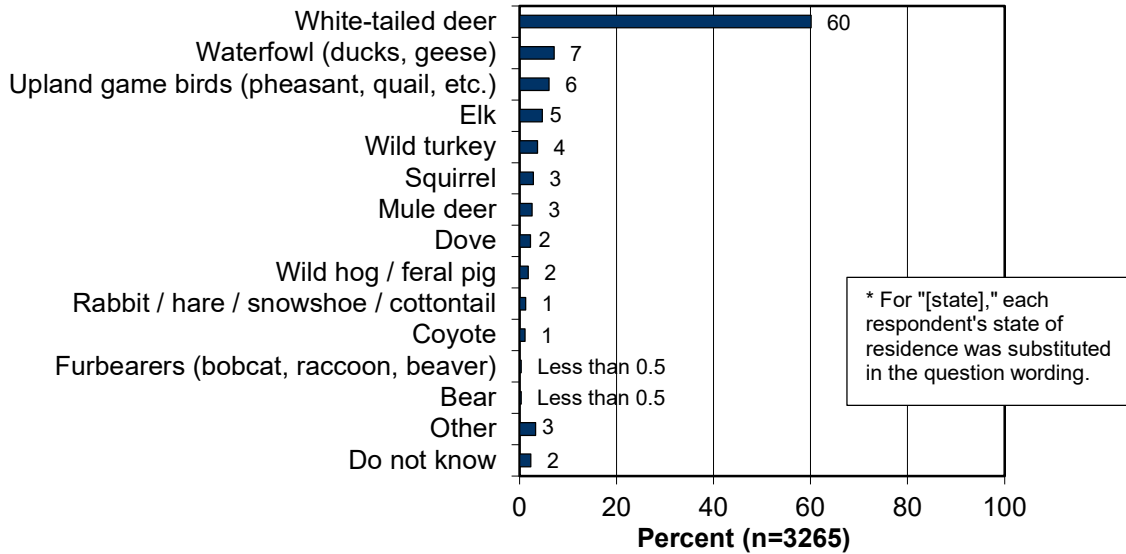


Regional variances are shown. The graph mainly reflects the availability of different species in different areas of the country: elk and mule deer are most commonly found in the West, while dove and feral hog are most commonly found in the Southeast.

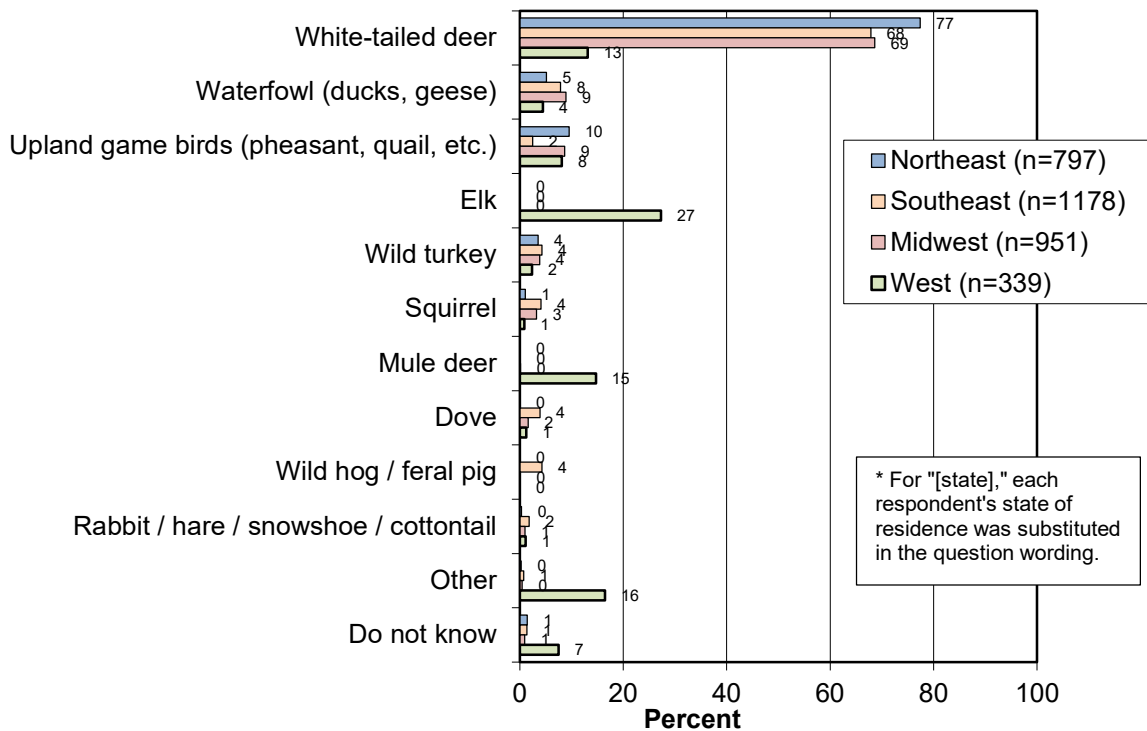


White-tailed deer is the most hunted species for a majority of hunters, by far (60% stated this), although elk is the top species in the West.

Which one species do you hunt most often in [state]*?
(Hunter survey)

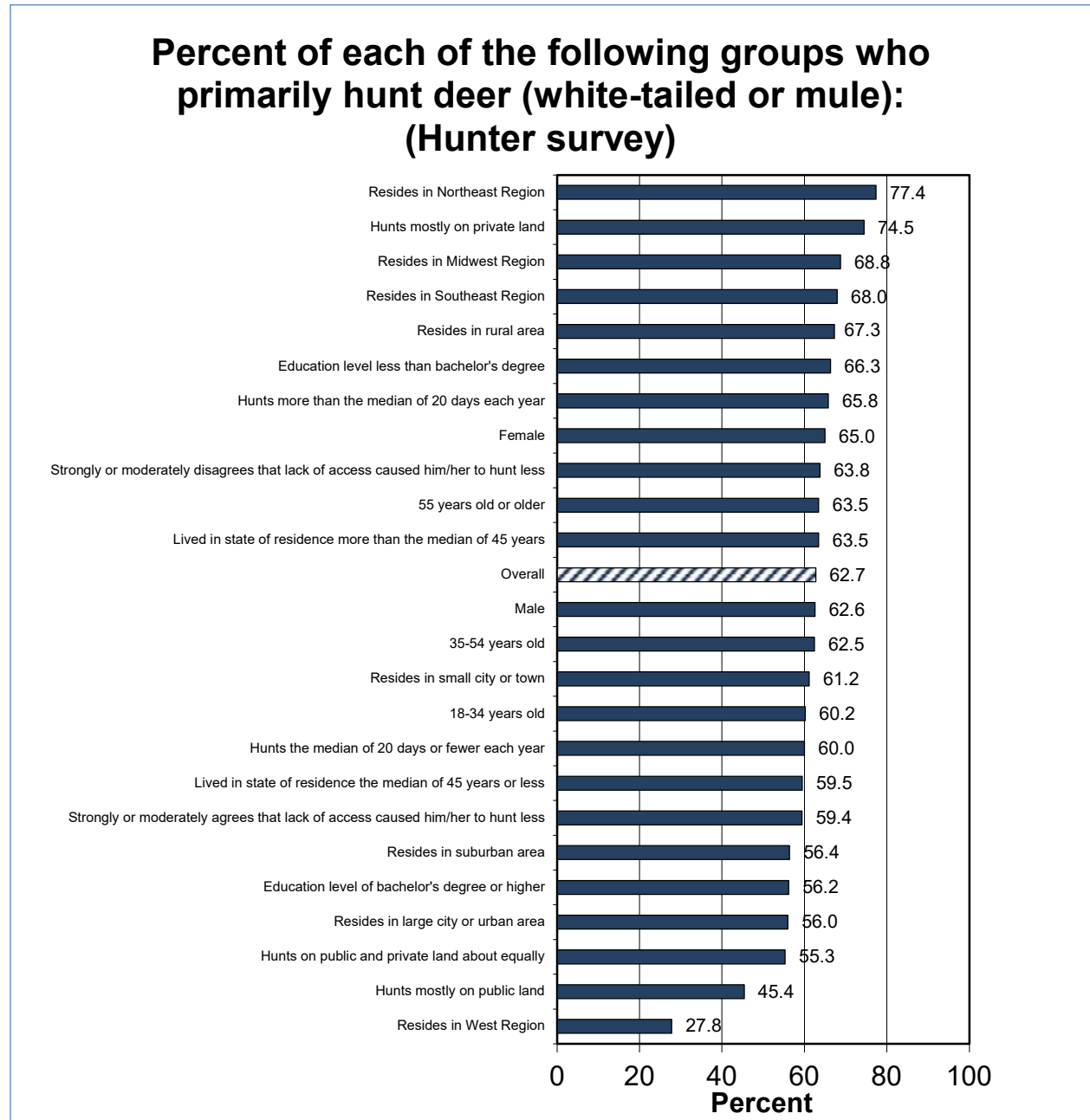


Which one species do you hunt most often in [state]*?
(Top species shown) (Hunter survey)



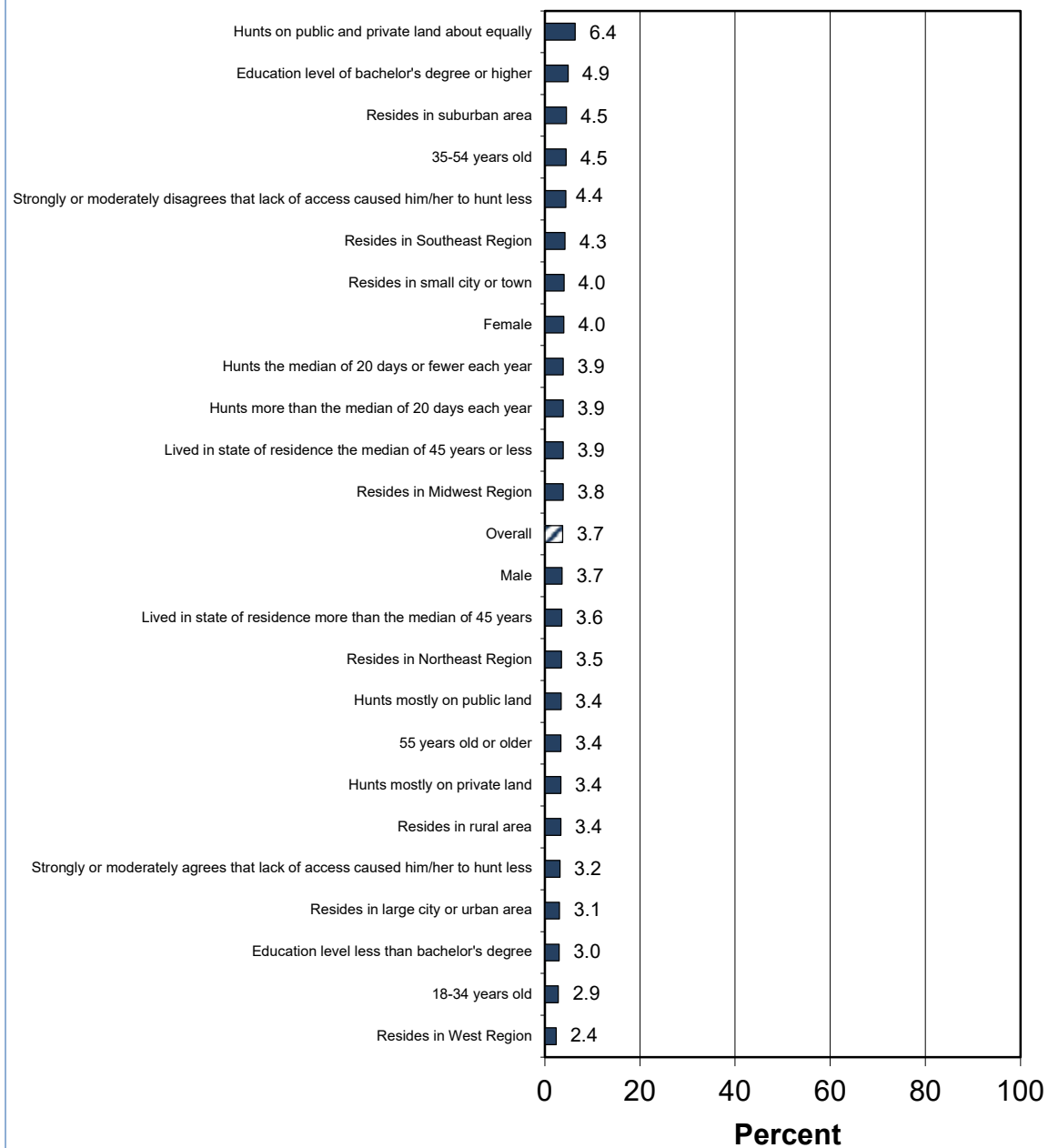
Demographic analyses graphs are included to show characteristics of hunters who primarily hunt deer (white-tailed or mule), wild turkey, waterfowl, upland game birds, and elk.

Groups most likely to hunt deer are Northeast Region residents and those who mostly hunt on private land. This analysis combines white-tailed deer and mule deer; because white-tailed deer is the most-sought species, but not in the West, there is a substantially lower percentage of West Region hunters in this graph. The graph below is followed by demographic analyses graphs for wild turkey, waterfowl, upland game birds, and elk.



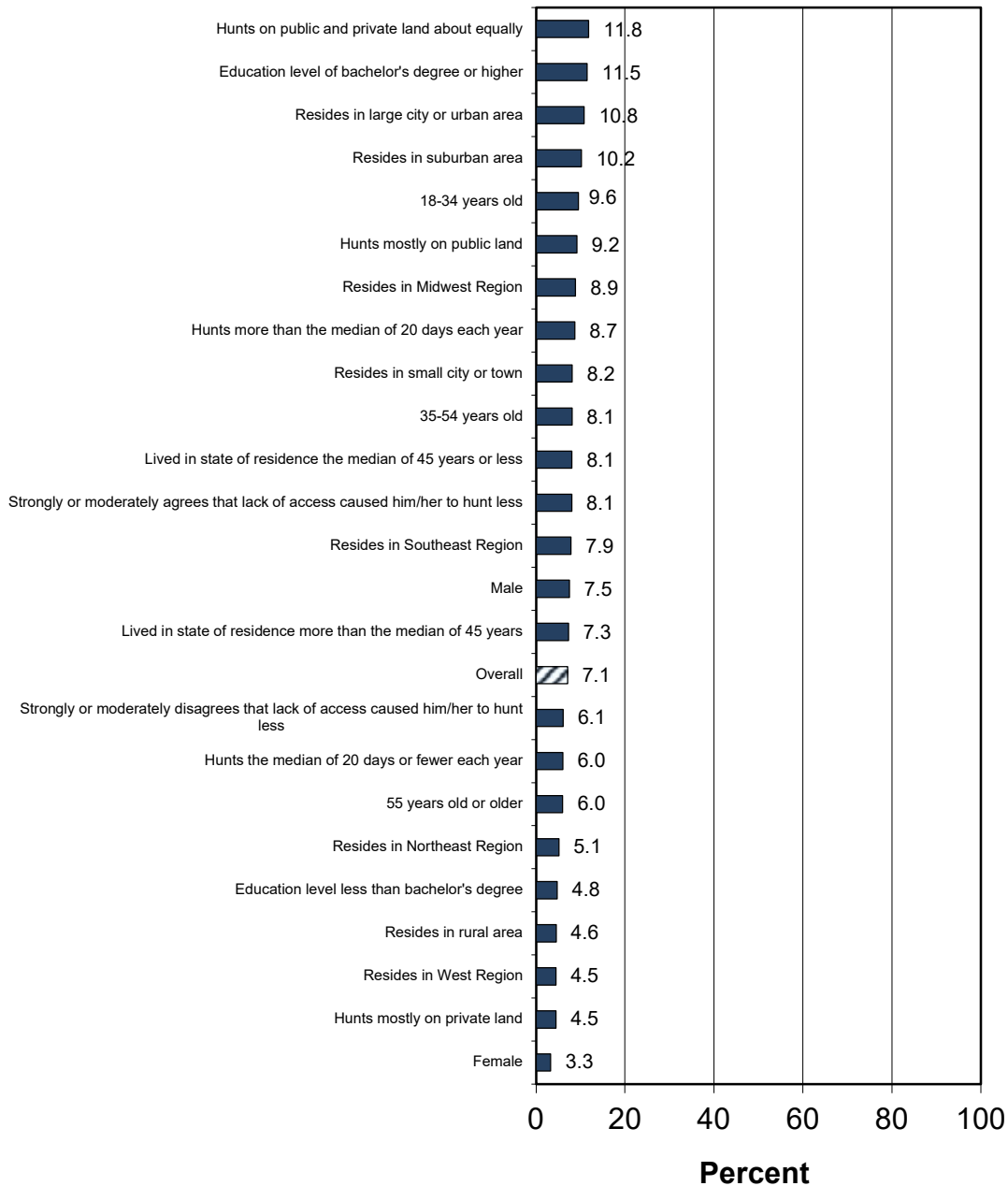
Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

Percent of each of the following groups who primarily hunt wild turkey: (Hunter survey)



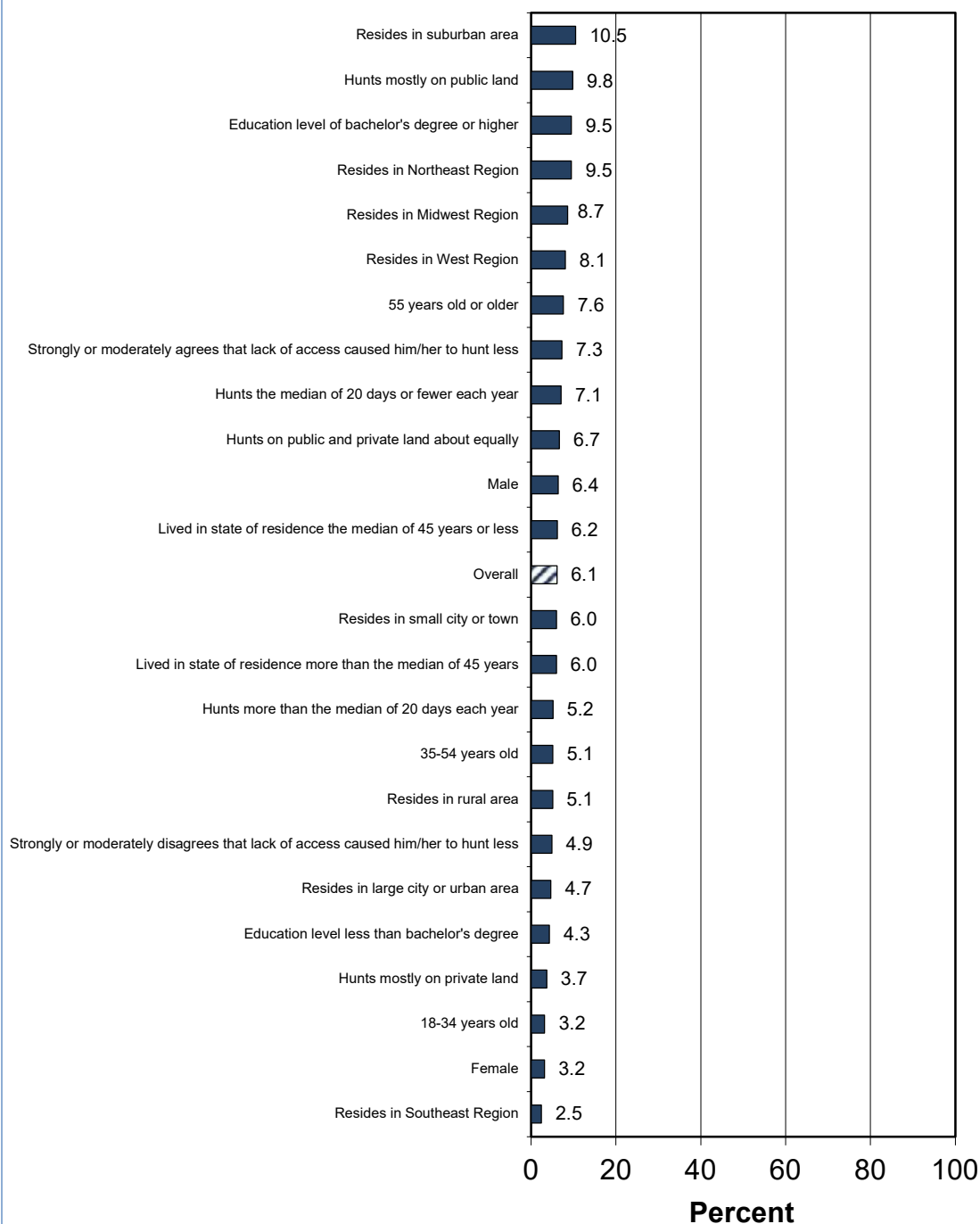
Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

Percent of each of the following groups who primarily hunt waterfowl: (Hunter survey)



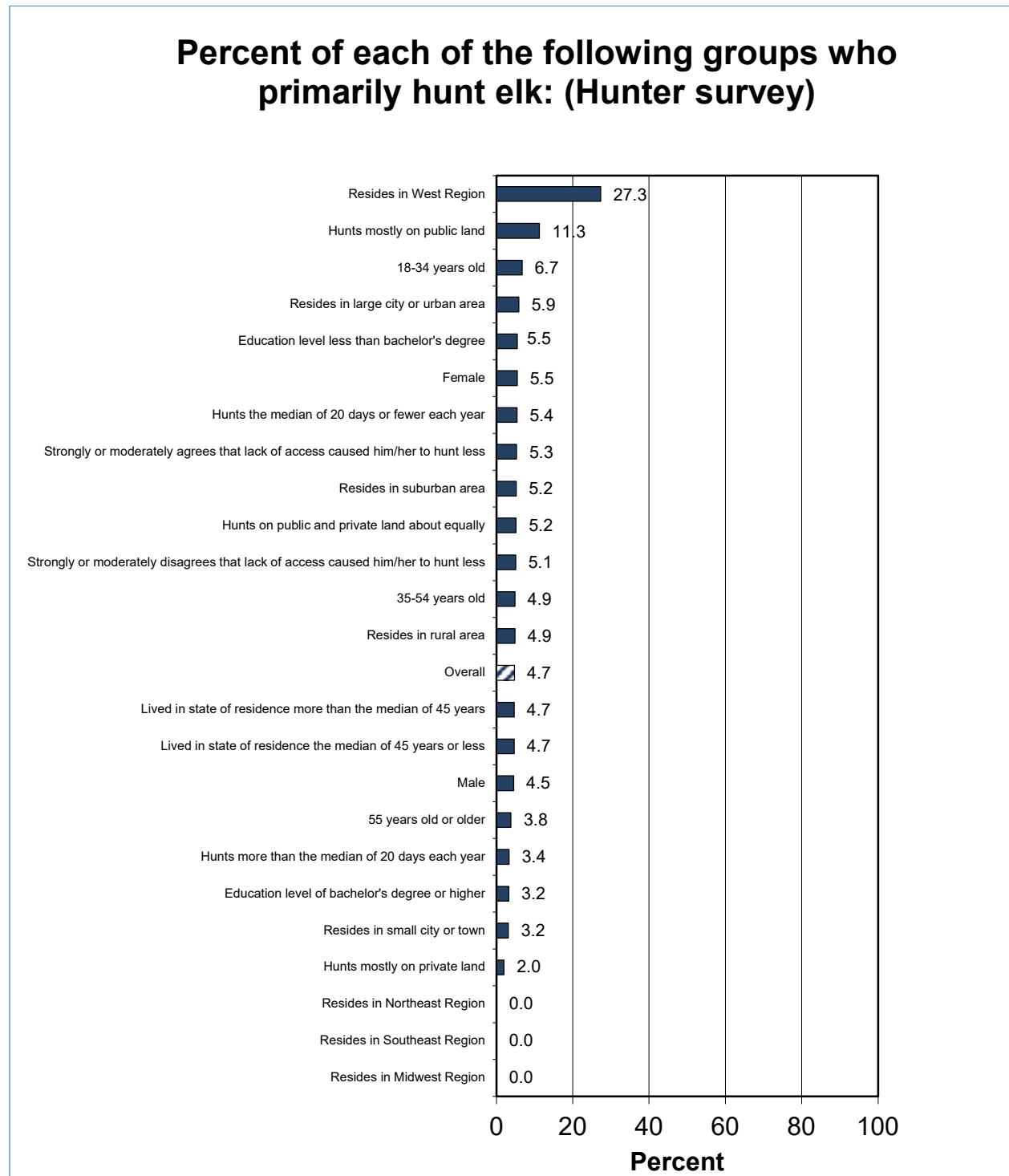
Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

Percent of each of the following groups who primarily hunt upland game birds: (Hunter survey)



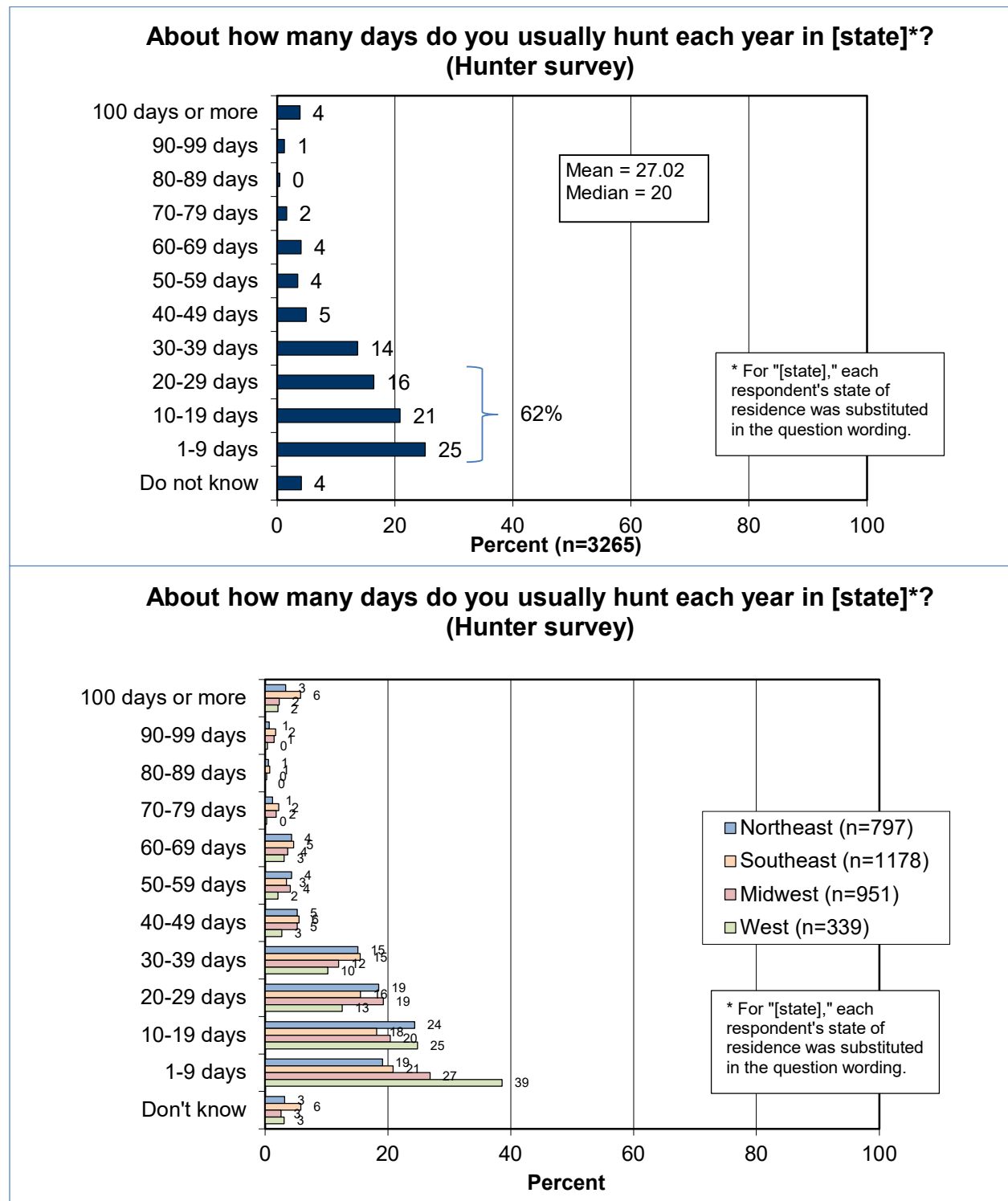
Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

Unsurprisingly, due to species location, only residents of the West Region primarily hunt elk.



Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

Hunters usually hunt a mean of 27.0 days each year in their state; a majority (62%) hunt fewer than 30 days.



The groups most likely to be avid hunters (i.e., hunt more than the median of 20 days each year) are waterfowl hunters, those who hunt public and private lands about equally, Southeast Region residents, rural residents, and younger hunters.

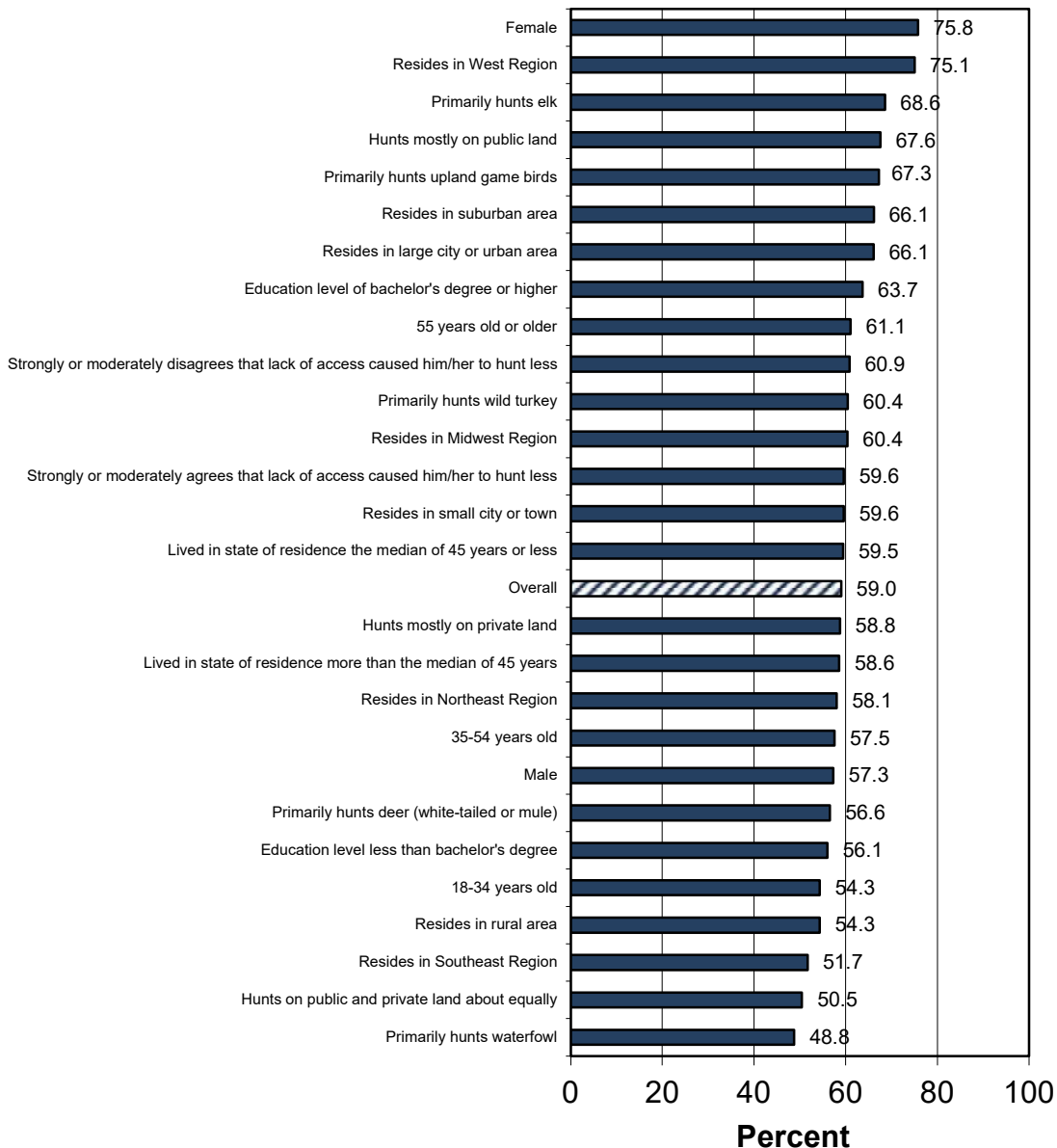
Percent of each of the following groups who hunt more than the median of 20 days each year: (Hunter survey)



Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

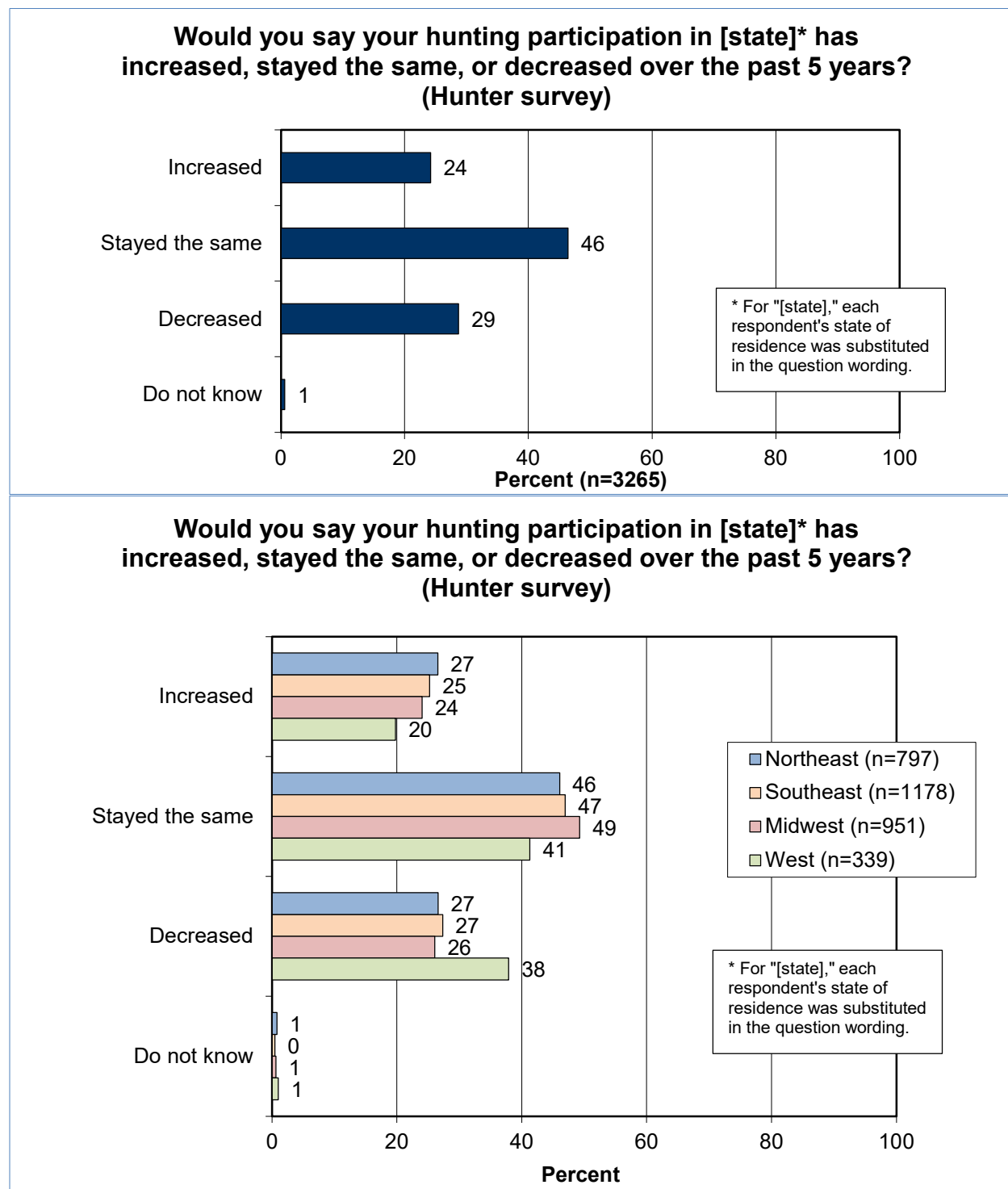
In contrast, groups least likely to be avid hunters are female hunters, West Region residents, elk hunters, those who mostly hunt public land, and upland game bird hunters.

Percent of each of the following groups who hunt the median of 20 days or fewer each year: (Hunter survey)

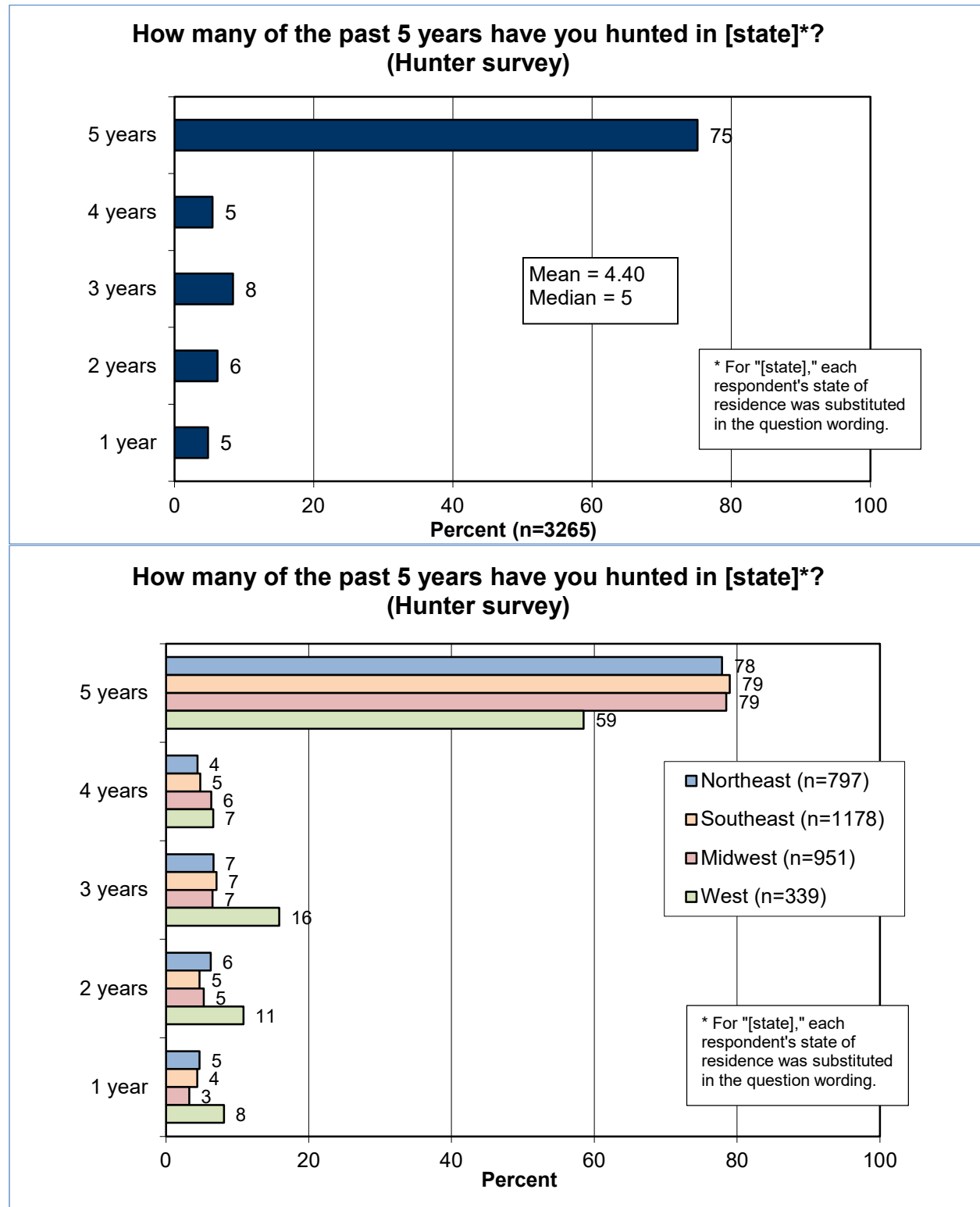


Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

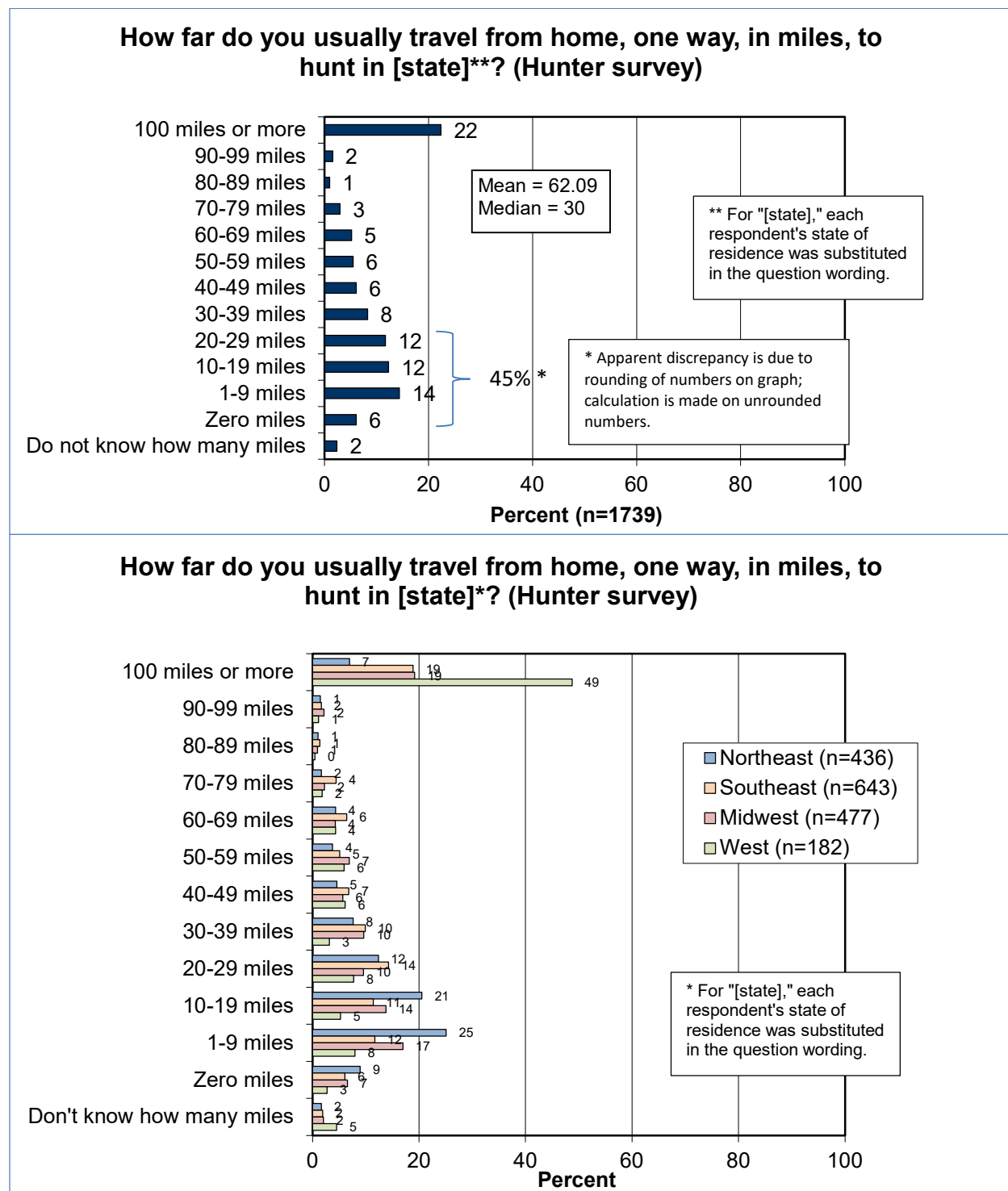
In a self-evaluation of hunting activity, nearly half of hunters (46%) said that their hunting participation stayed about the same over the past 5 years. Otherwise, there were slightly more who said it decreased (29%) than increased (24%). West Region hunters were the most likely to say their hunting participation decreased (38%).



Three quarters of hunters (75%) hunted each of the past 5 years. West Region hunters are less avid than those from other regions.

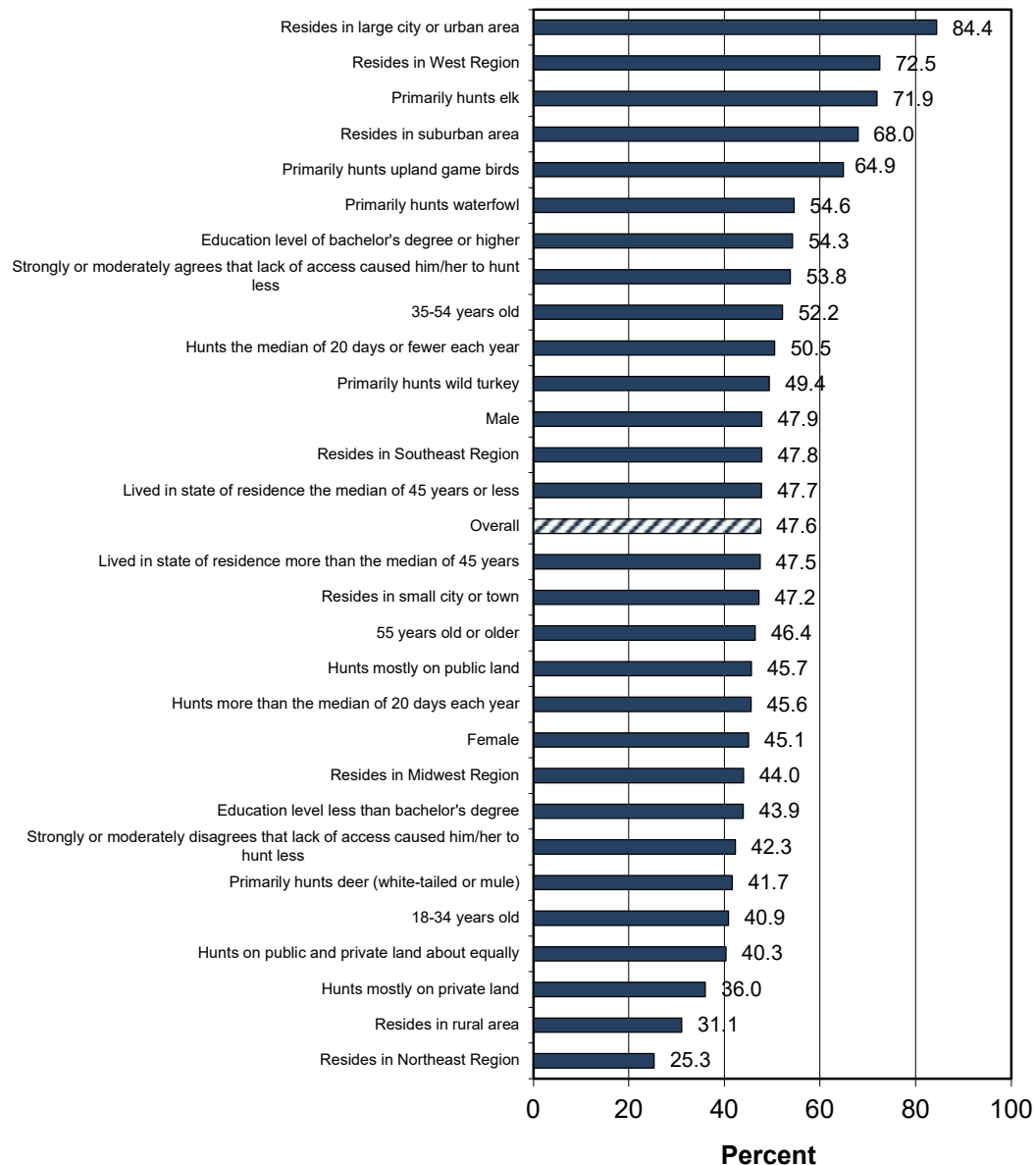


Hunters usually travel a mean of 62.1 miles, one way, to hunt in their state; 45% travel less than 30 miles.



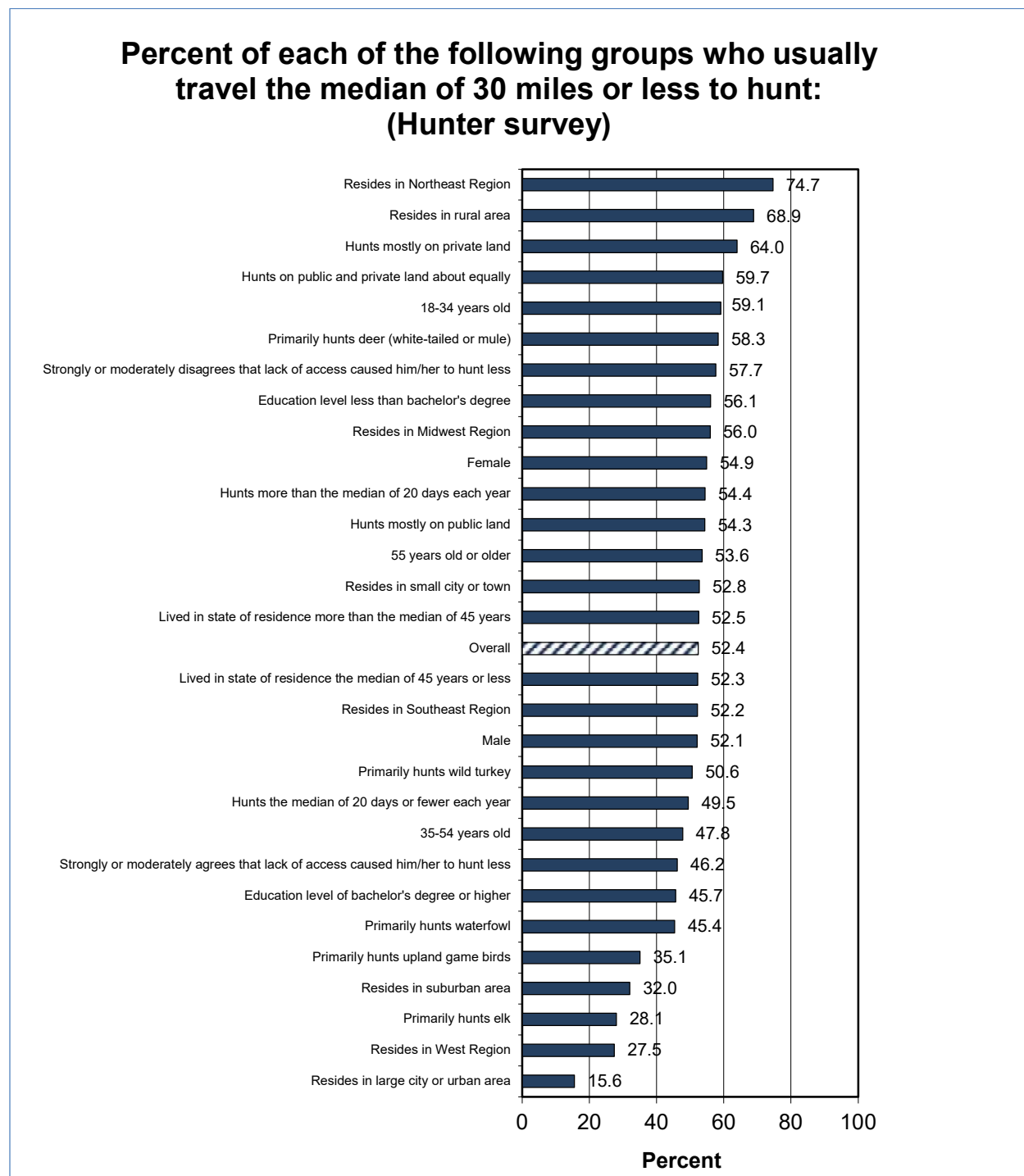
Groups most likely to travel more than the median of 30 miles to hunt include urban residents, West Region hunters, elk hunters, suburban residents, and upland game bird hunters.

Percent of each of the following groups who usually travel more than the median of 30 miles to hunt: (Hunter survey)



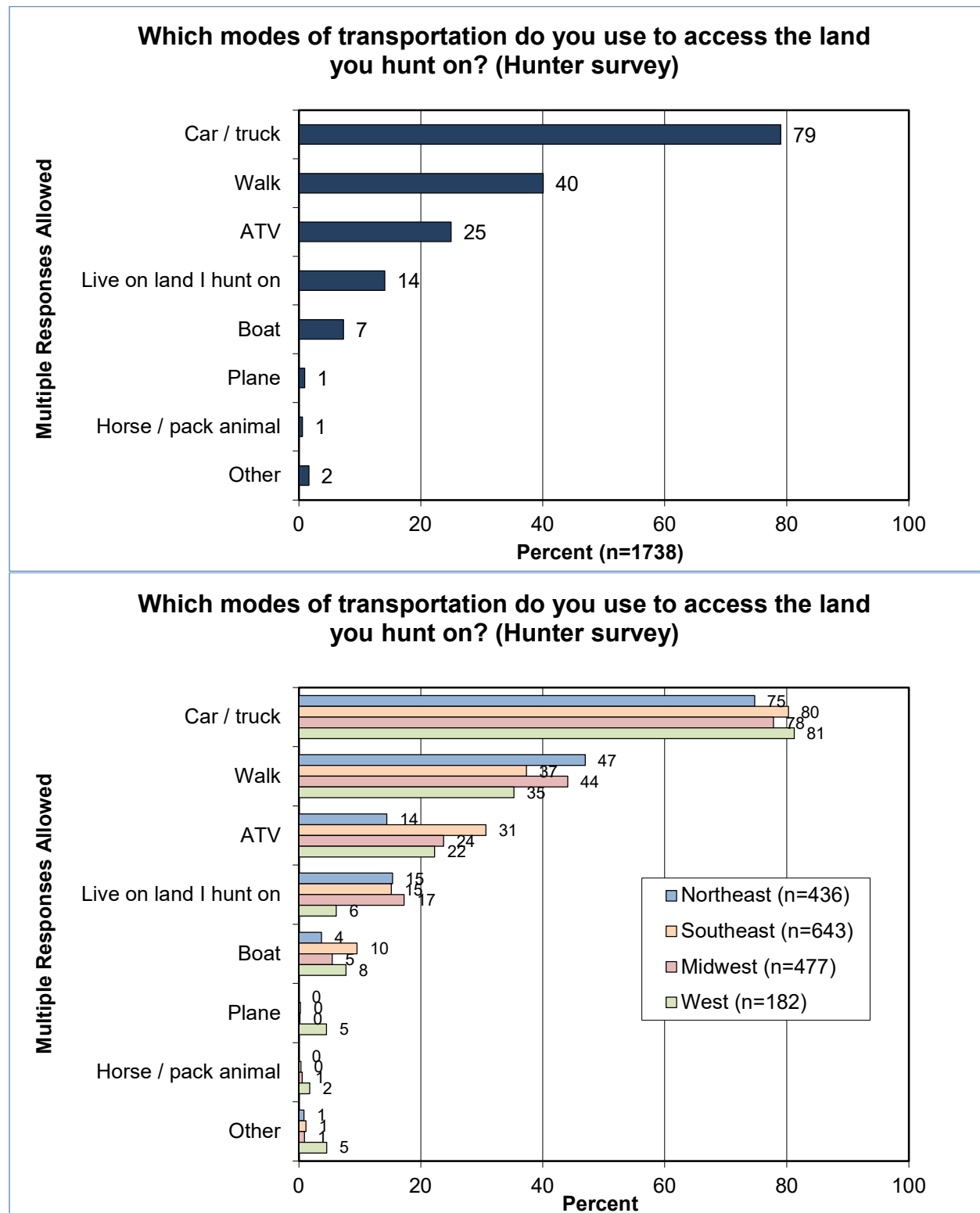
Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

Groups most likely to travel less than the median distance to hunt include Northeast Region residents, rural residents, and those who mostly hunt private land.



Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

The majority of hunters (79%) use a car or truck to access their hunting land, while substantial percentages walk (40%), use an ATV (25%), or live on the land they hunt (14%).



LOCATIONS OF HUNTING ACTIVITIES

MAJOR FINDINGS

Among hunters in the survey, 56% hunt mostly on private land, while 25% hunt mostly on public land. In the middle, 19% hunt on both about equally.

In looking at sums, 75% hunt on private land mostly or at least half the time, and 44% hunt on public land mostly or about half the time.

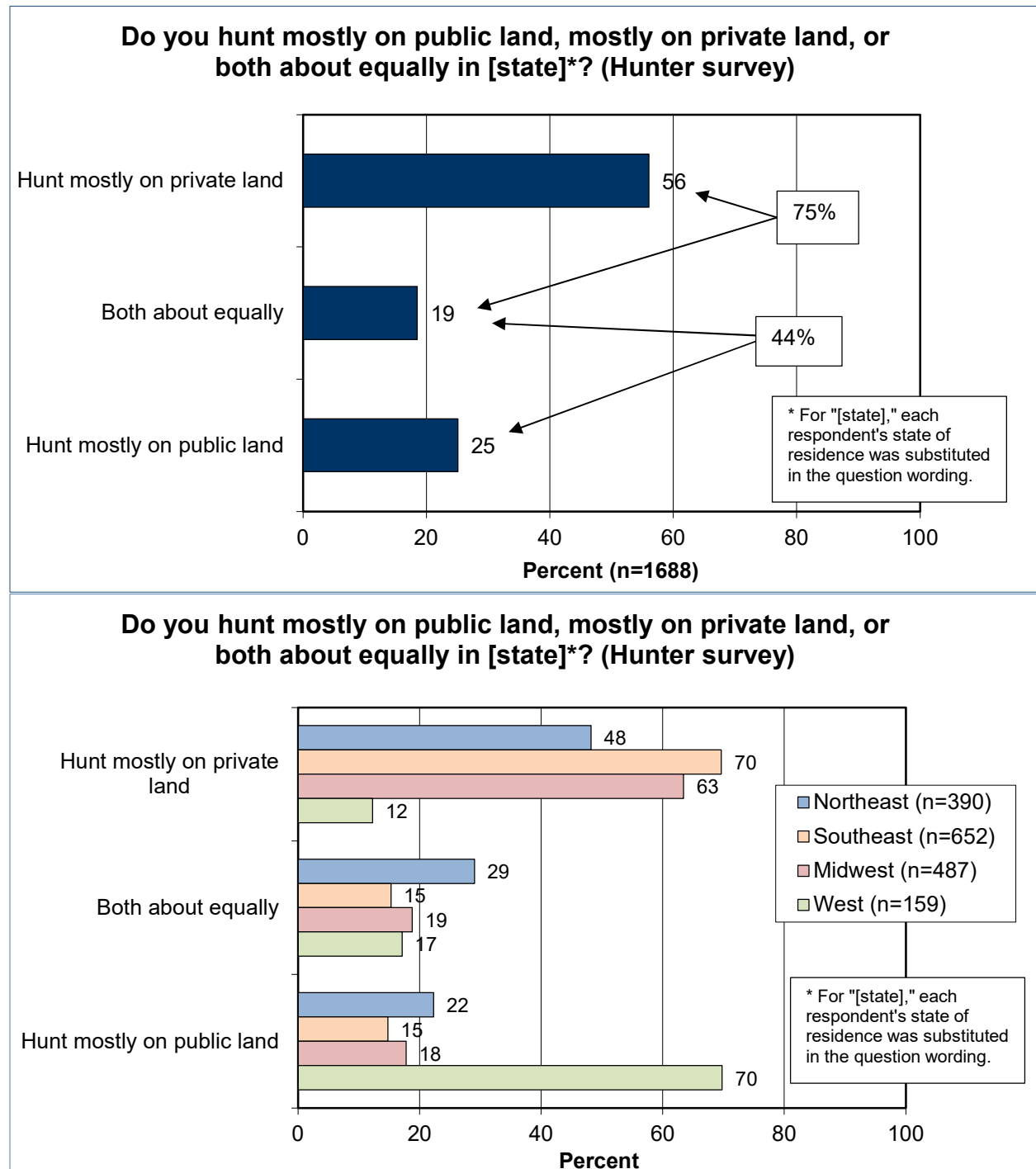
Over a third of hunters in the survey use private lands enrolled in walk-in access programs or state-run access programs: 8% do so *often*, 10% do so *sometimes*, and 17% do so *rarely*.

On the other hand, 59% never use them.

Among those who use private land, they most commonly use land owned by someone else (59% do so mostly). However, 22% mostly use their own land, with the rest use their own land and others' land about equally.

Most commonly, those using other people's land are connected as a family member or a friend to the owner. A little over a third of those using private land owned by another person or entity describe the owner as an acquaintance, a corporate owner, or a person unknown to the hunter prior to the hunt.

Three quarters of hunters (75%) hunt on private land, and a majority (56%) do so most of the time. Meanwhile, 44% hunt on public land; public land is dominant among West Region hunters, however.



West Region hunters and those who primarily hunt elk are far more likely than their counterparts to hunt public lands.

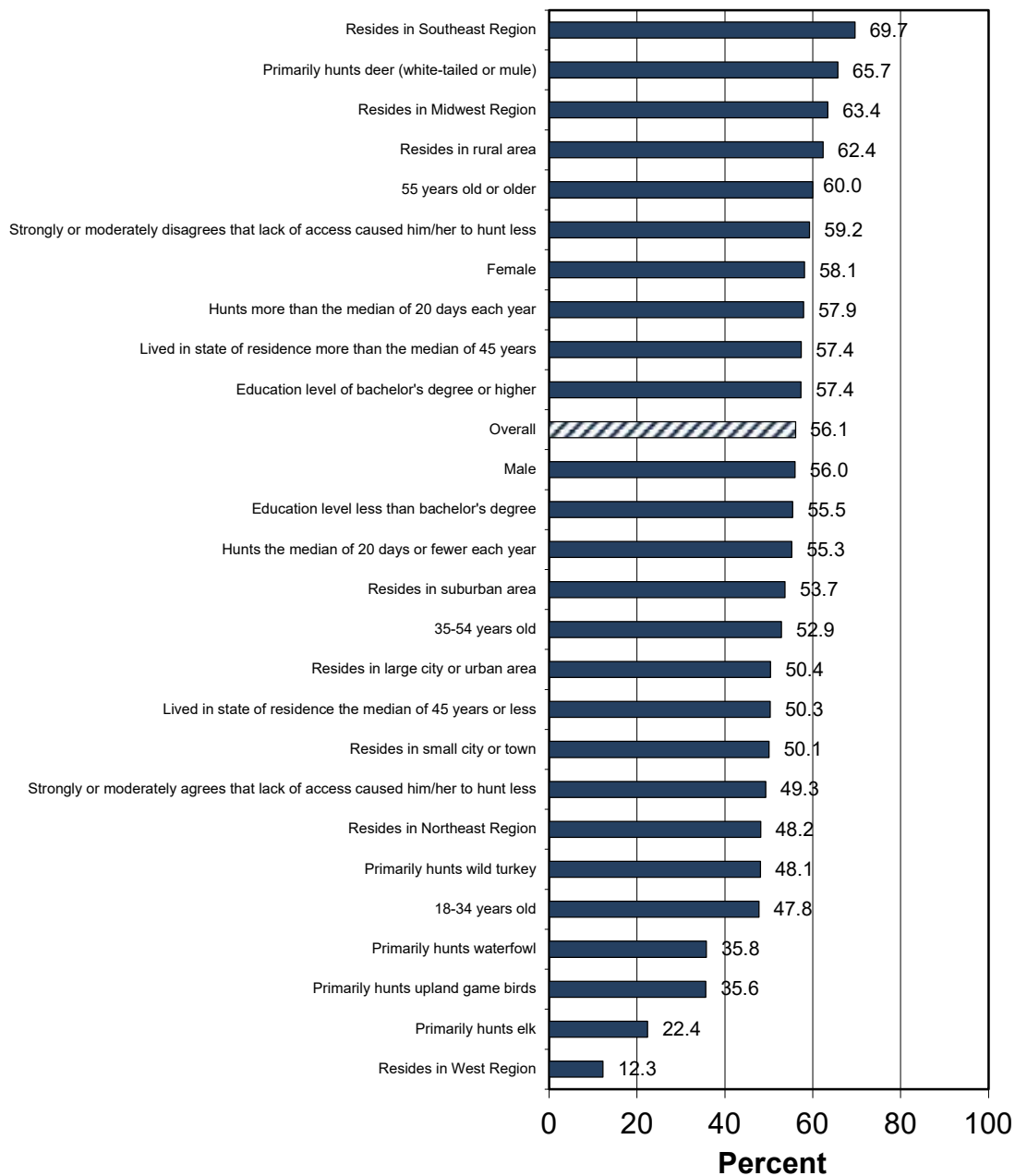
Percent of each of the following groups who hunt mostly on public land: (Hunter survey)



Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

Southeast and Midwest Region residents, deer hunters, and rural residents are the groups most likely to hunt private lands.

Percent of each of the following groups who hunt mostly on private land: (Hunter survey)



Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

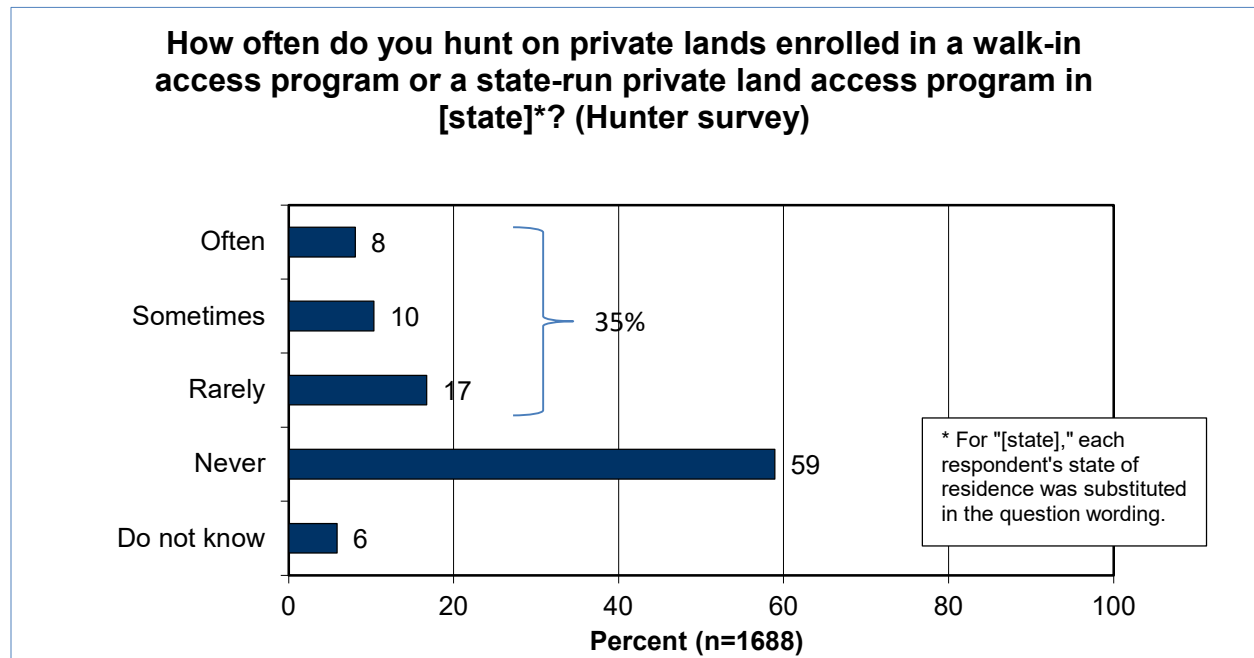
Waterfowl hunters, wild turkey hunters, and Northeast Region residents are the groups most likely to hunt on public and private land about equally.

Percent of each of the following groups who hunt on public and private land about equally: (Hunter survey)

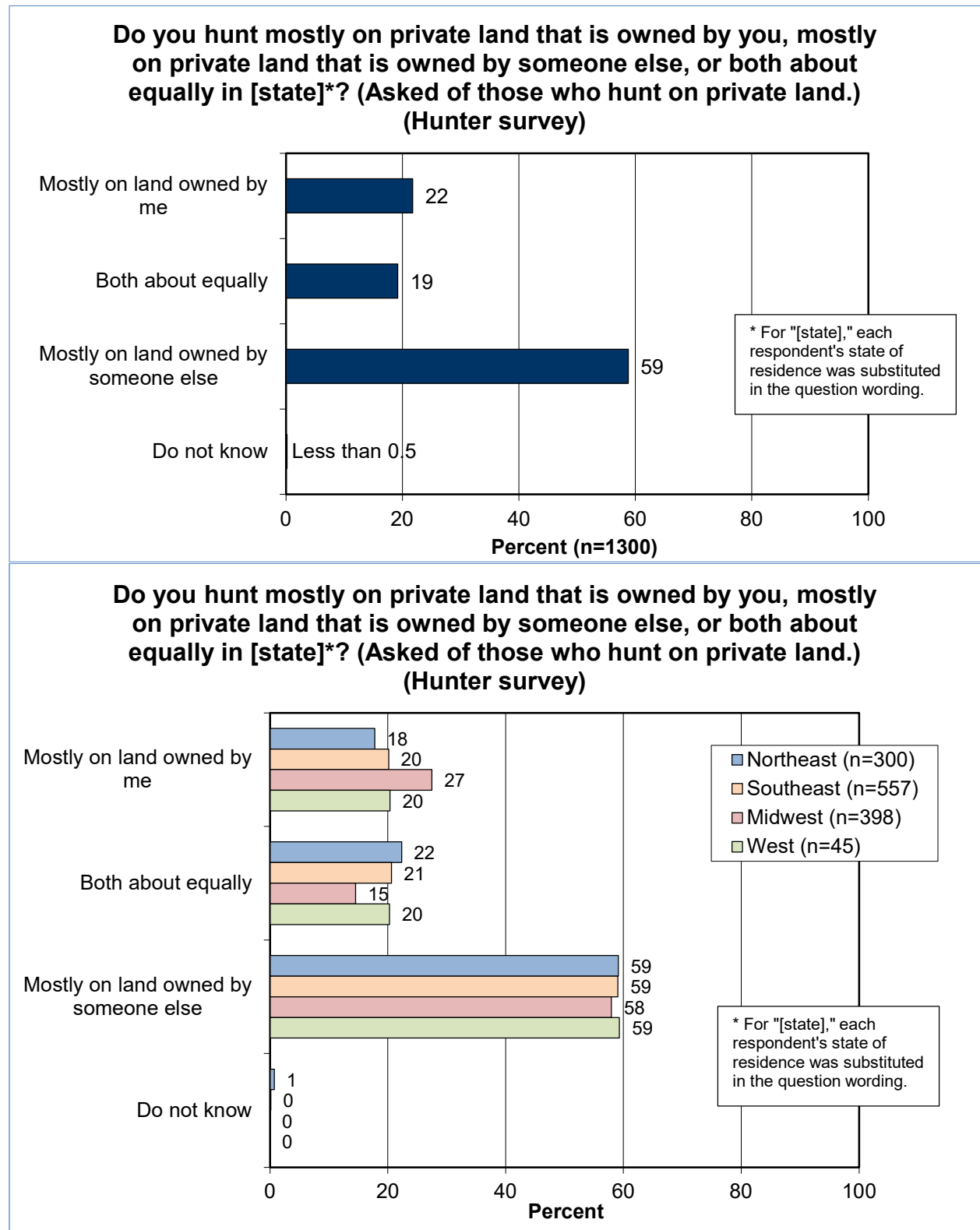


Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

Over a third of hunters (35%) hunt on private lands enrolled in an access program.

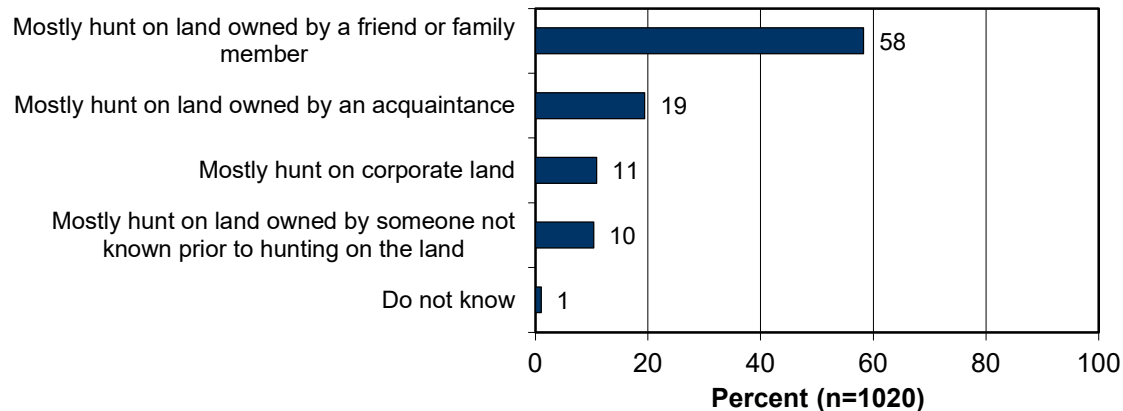


A majority of private land hunters (59%) hunt mostly on private land owned by someone else.

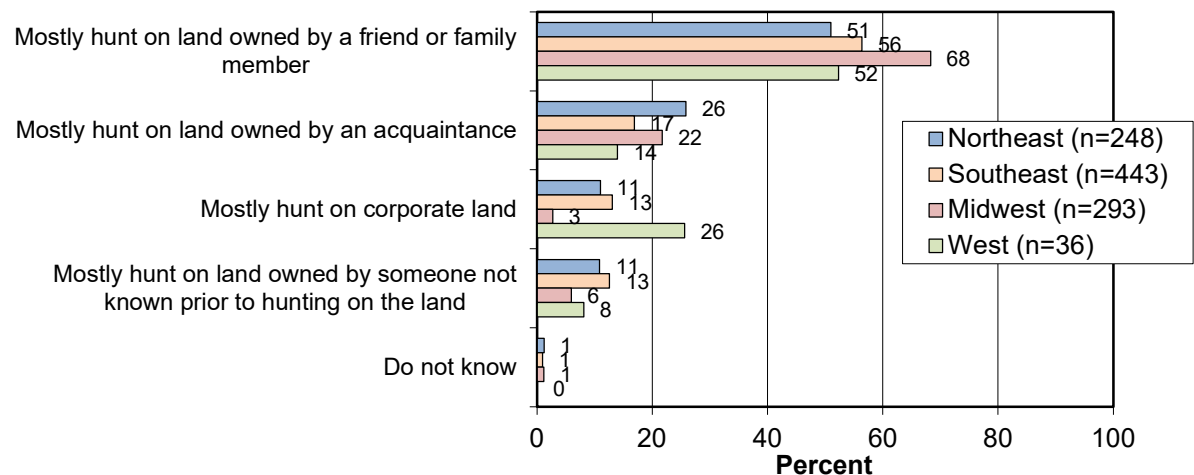


Among those who hunt on private land that is owned by someone else, a majority (58%) do so on land owned by a friend or family member, while 19% hunt on land owned by an acquaintance and 11% hunt on corporate land. Only 10% hunt on land owned by someone not known prior to hunting. (Note that the qualifier “mostly” was included in all response options.)

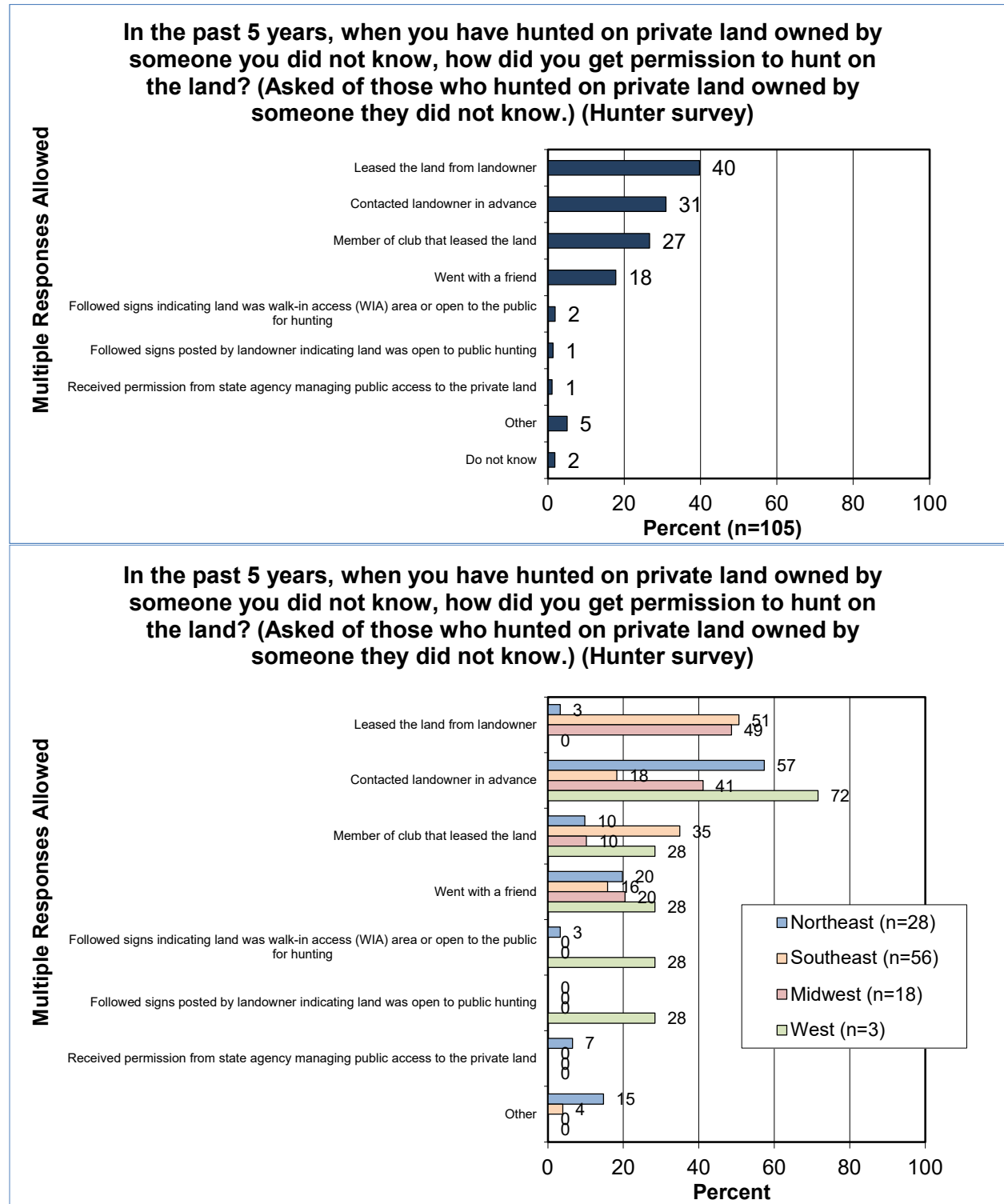
Of the private land you hunt on that is owned by someone else, which of the following best describes the ownership of that land? (Asked of those who hunt on private land that is owned by someone else.) (Hunter survey)



Of the private land you hunt on that is owned by someone else, which of the following best describes the ownership of that land? (Asked of those who hunt on private land that is owned by someone else.) (Hunter survey)



Among those who hunted on private land owned by someone they did not know over the past 5 years, the most common ways to get permission were to lease the land, to contact the landowner in advance, to belong to a club that leased the land, and to go with a friend.



FACTORS CONSIDERED IN CHOOSING LANDS ON WHICH TO HUNT

MAJOR FINDINGS

One factor stands above all others as an important consideration when hunters are choosing where to hunt: that the land is not crowded with other sportsmen.

This emerges as an issue in this series that had hunters rate the importance of various factors in their decisions regarding where to go hunting: 71% rated it as very important, and another 21% rated it as somewhat important—a sum of 92%. Additionally, this is reinforced in a later section of the report about ratings of access, as the top reason by far for not giving a higher rating to access on public lands is that they are too crowded with other hunters. The second most common reason is that the land is too crowded with other recreationists.

Also important as factors (but distantly below that top factor discussed above) are that the land is easy to access by foot, that the land is familiar and close to home, and that it can be accessed by car or truck.

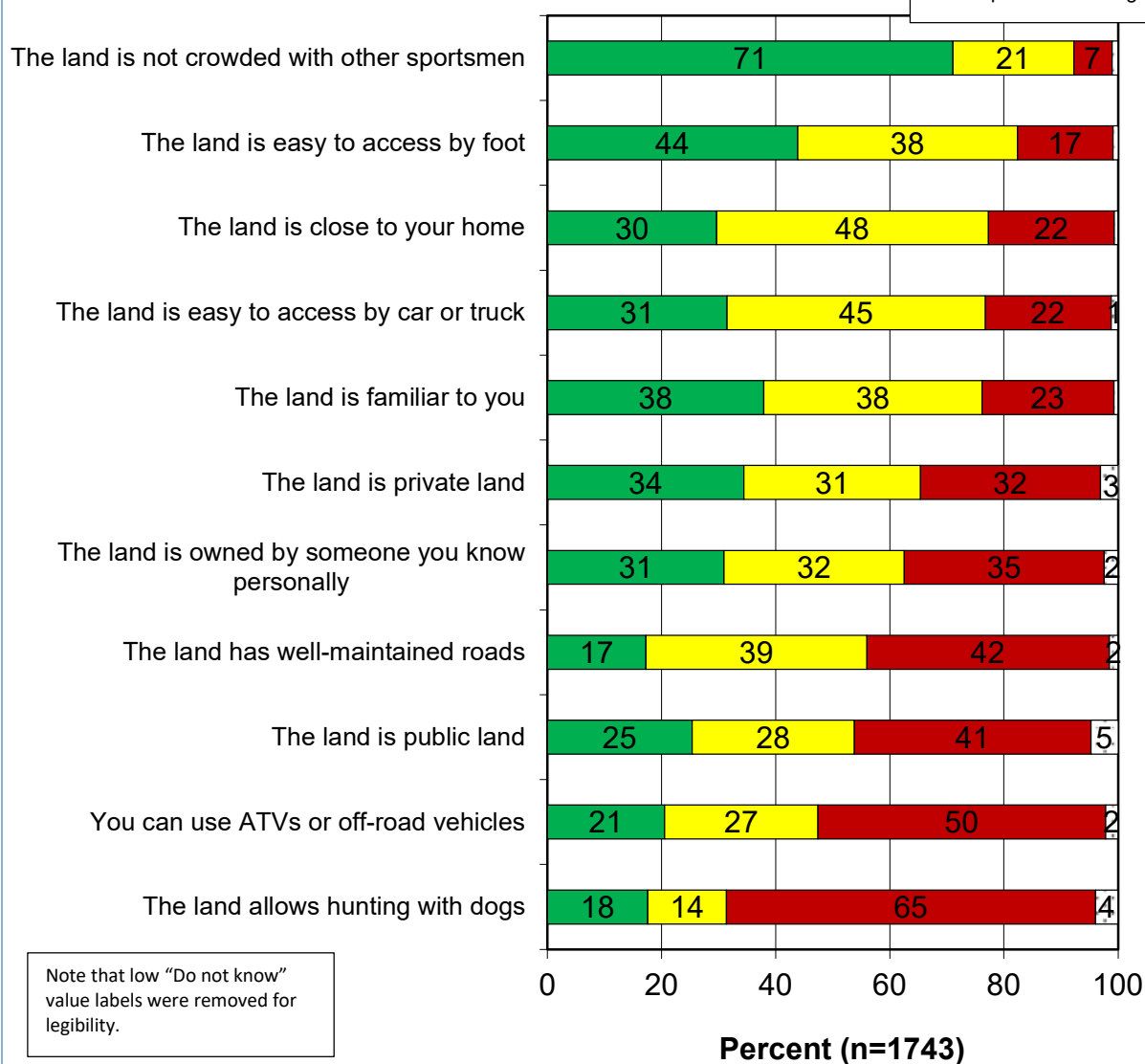
Of less importance are that the land is public, that ATVs can be used, that dogs can be used, and that the land has well-maintained roads. (Note that people could both want to be able to access the land by car or truck but not care if the road is particularly well-maintained.) One important regional difference is that hunters in the West Region rate having public land available higher than do those in the other regions.

Hunters were presented with a series of factors and asked to indicate how important each is when deciding where to hunt. Lack of crowding by other sportsmen was considered to be the most important factor, while others considered important include easy access by foot, being close to home, easy access by car or truck, and being familiar with the land. The series graph on the following page shows overall results in descending order of *very* and *somewhat important* combined; this is followed by series graphs for each region.

Please indicate if each of the following are [level of importance] to you when deciding where to hunt in [state]*: (Hunter survey) (Overall)

Very important Somewhat important Not at all important Do not know

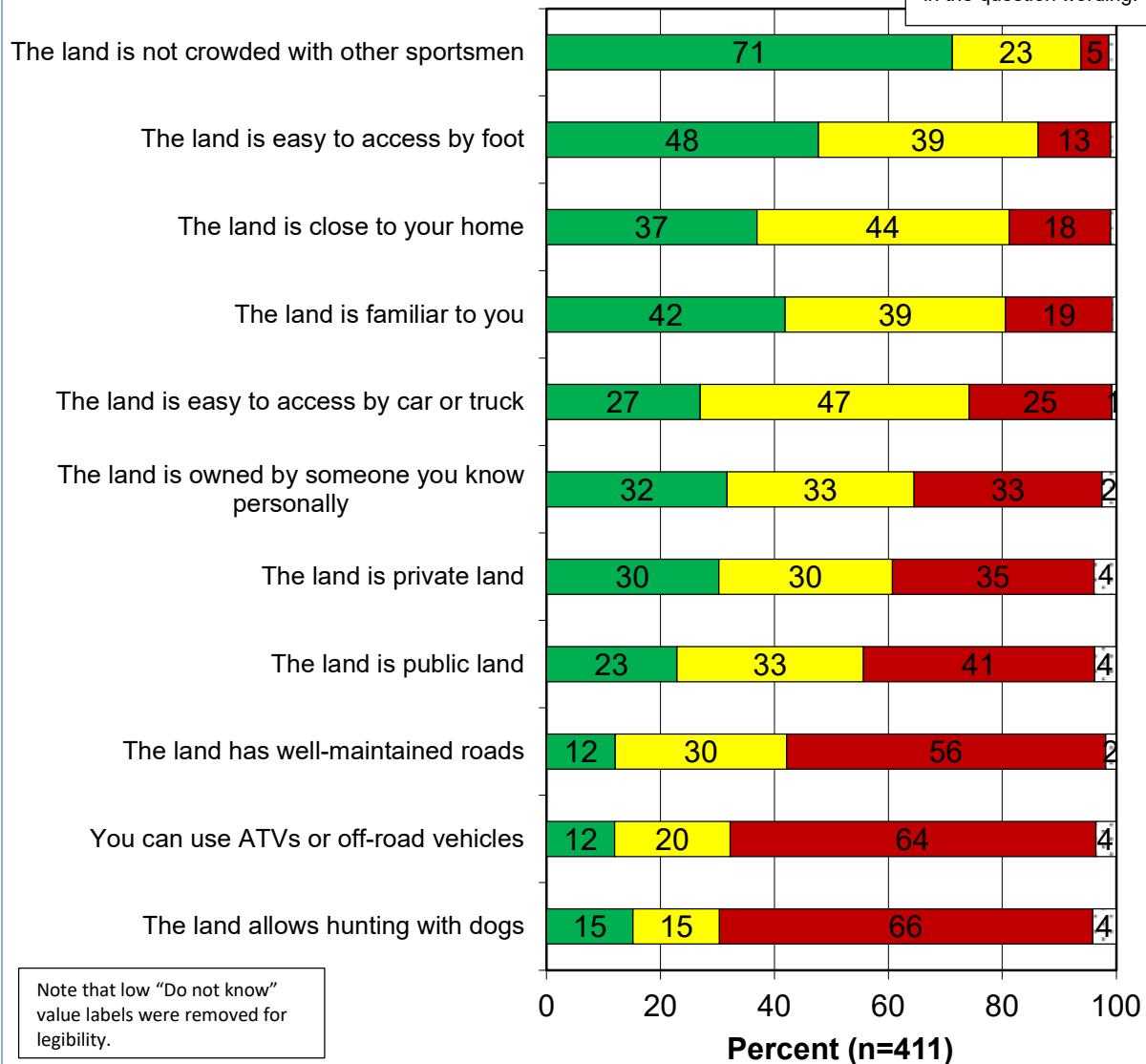
* For "[state]," each respondent's state of residence was substituted in the question wording.



Please indicate if each of the following are [level of importance] to you when deciding where to hunt in [state]*: (Hunter survey) (Northeast)

■ Very important ■ Somewhat important ■ Not at all important □ Do not know

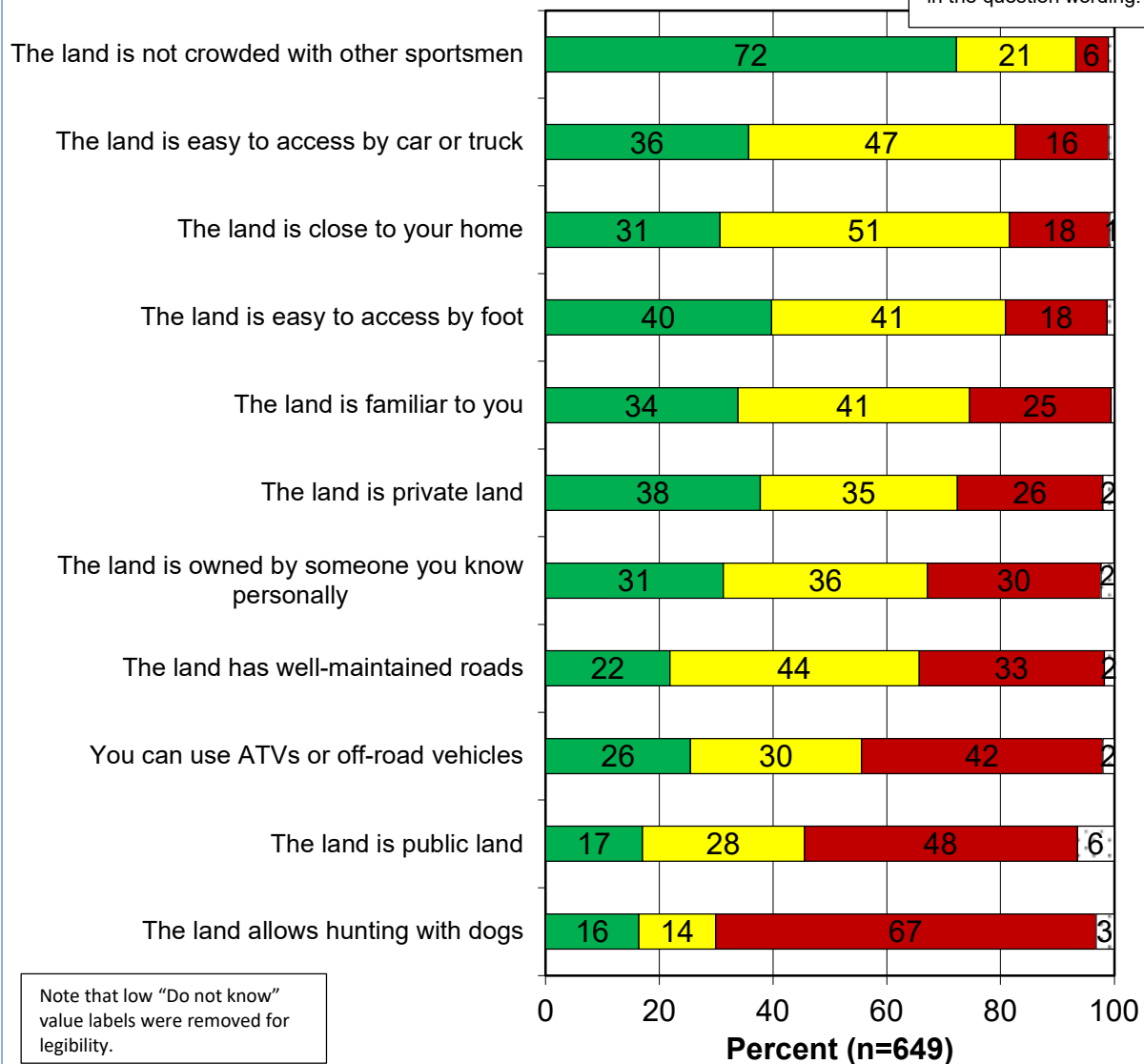
* For "[state]," each respondent's state of residence was substituted in the question wording.



Please indicate if each of the following are [level of importance] to you when deciding where to hunt in [state]*: (Hunter survey) (Southeast)

Very important Somewhat important Not at all important Do not know

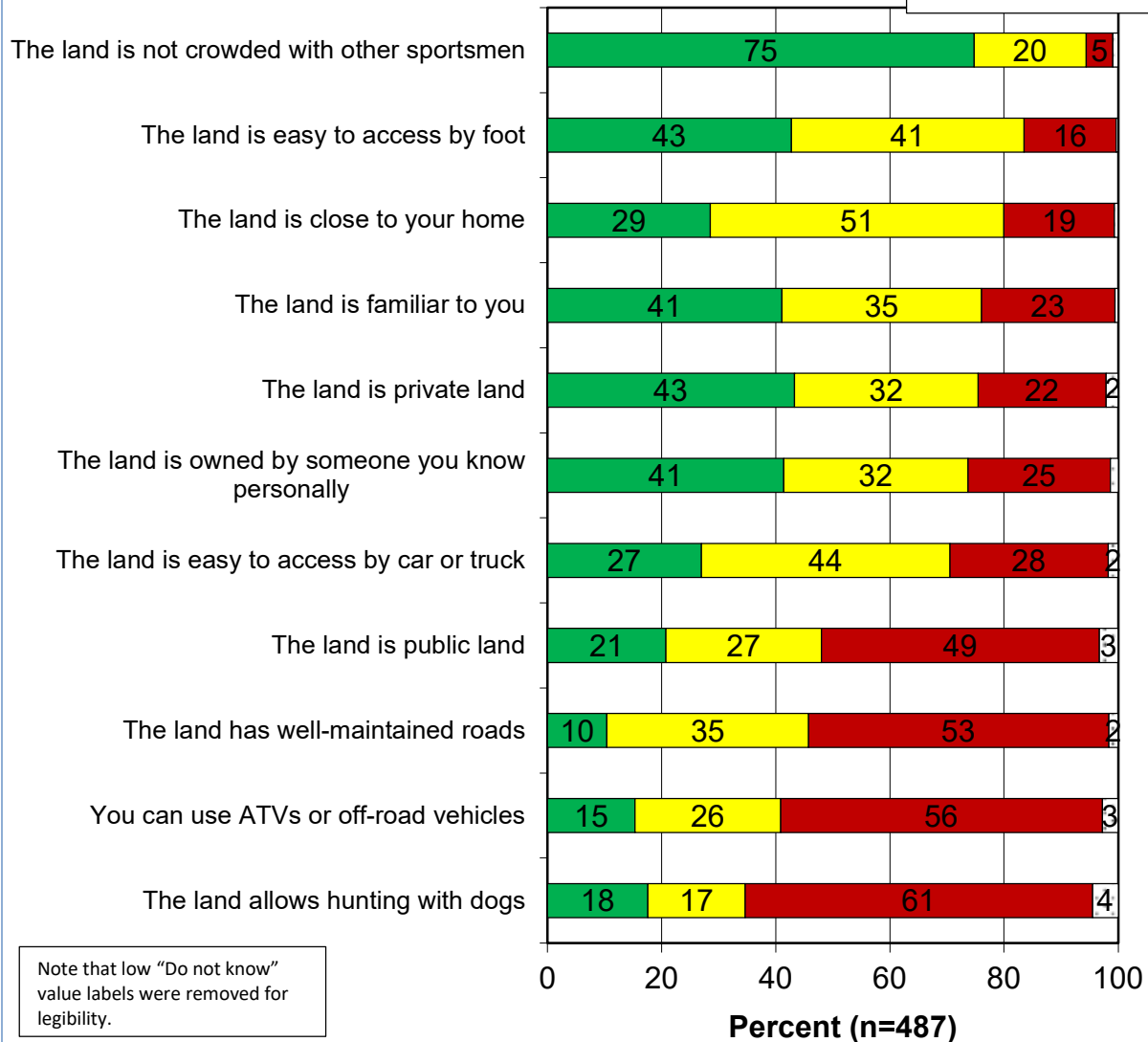
* For "[state]," each respondent's state of residence was substituted in the question wording.



Please indicate if each of the following are [level of importance] to you when deciding where to hunt in [state]: (Hunter survey) (Midwest)

Very important Somewhat important Not at all important Do not know

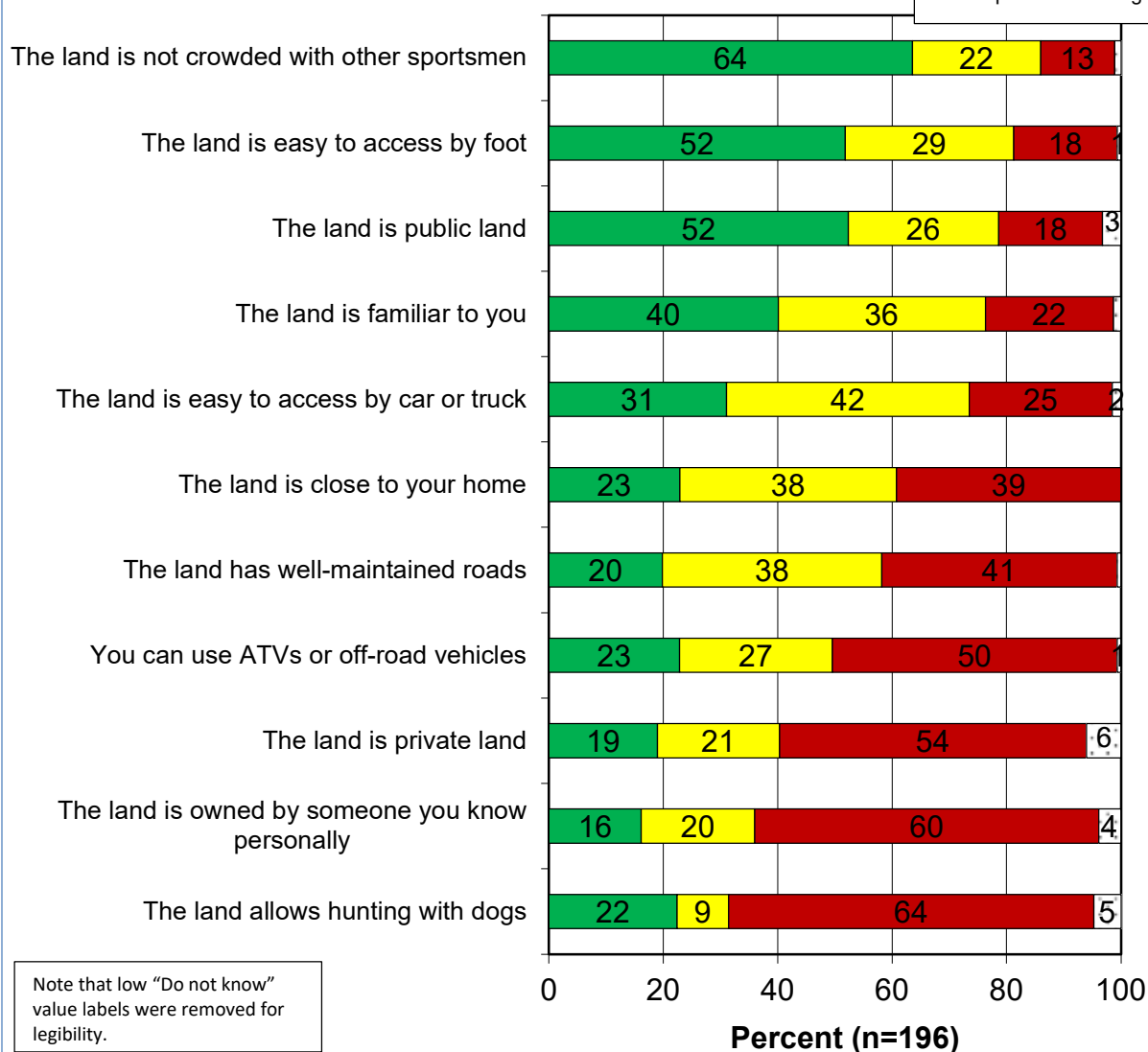
* For "[state]," each respondent's state of residence was substituted in the question wording.



Please indicate if each of the following are [level of importance] to you when deciding where to hunt in [state]: (Hunter survey) (West)

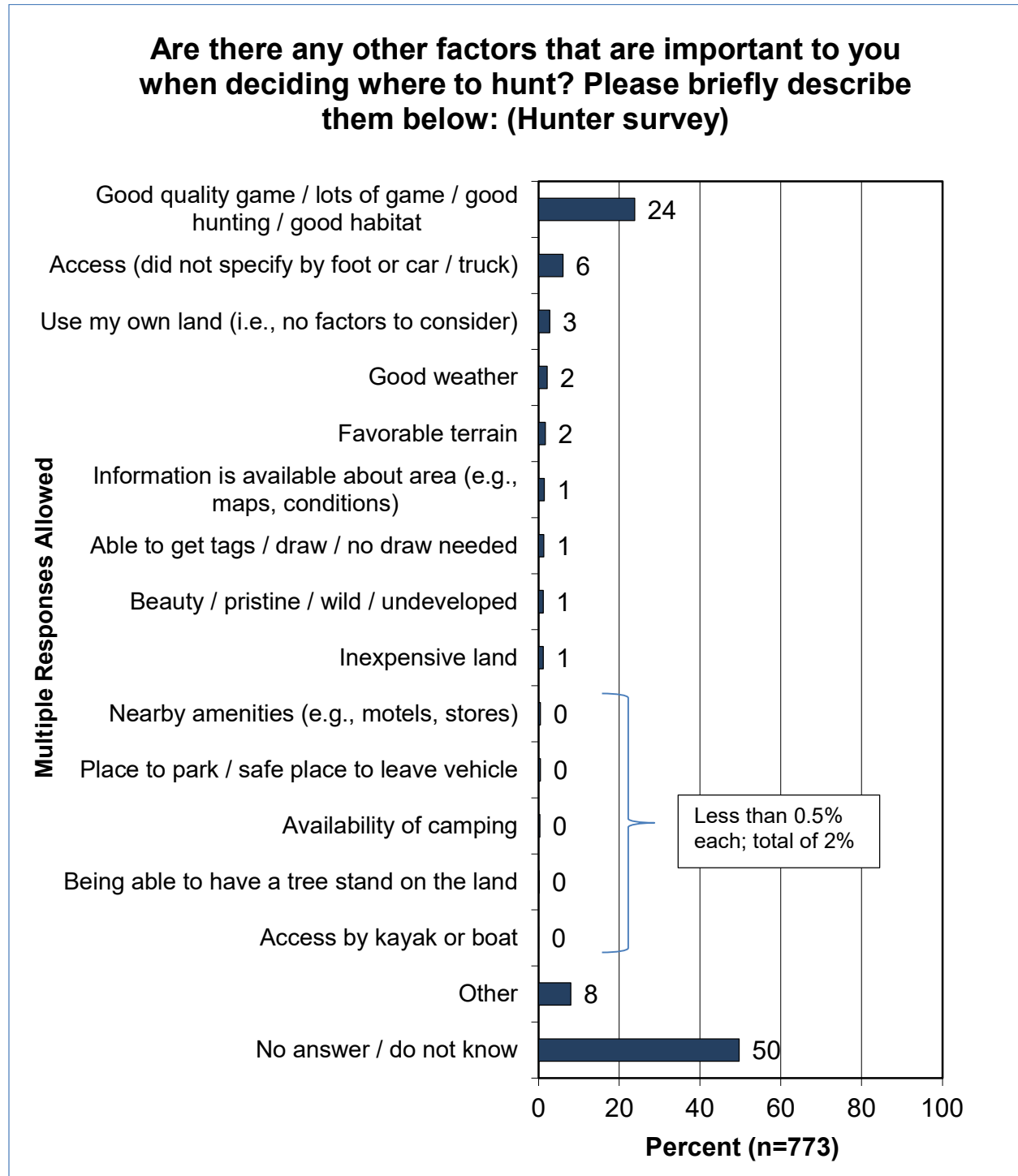
Very important Somewhat important Not at all important Do not know

* For "[state]," each respondent's state of residence was substituted in the question wording.

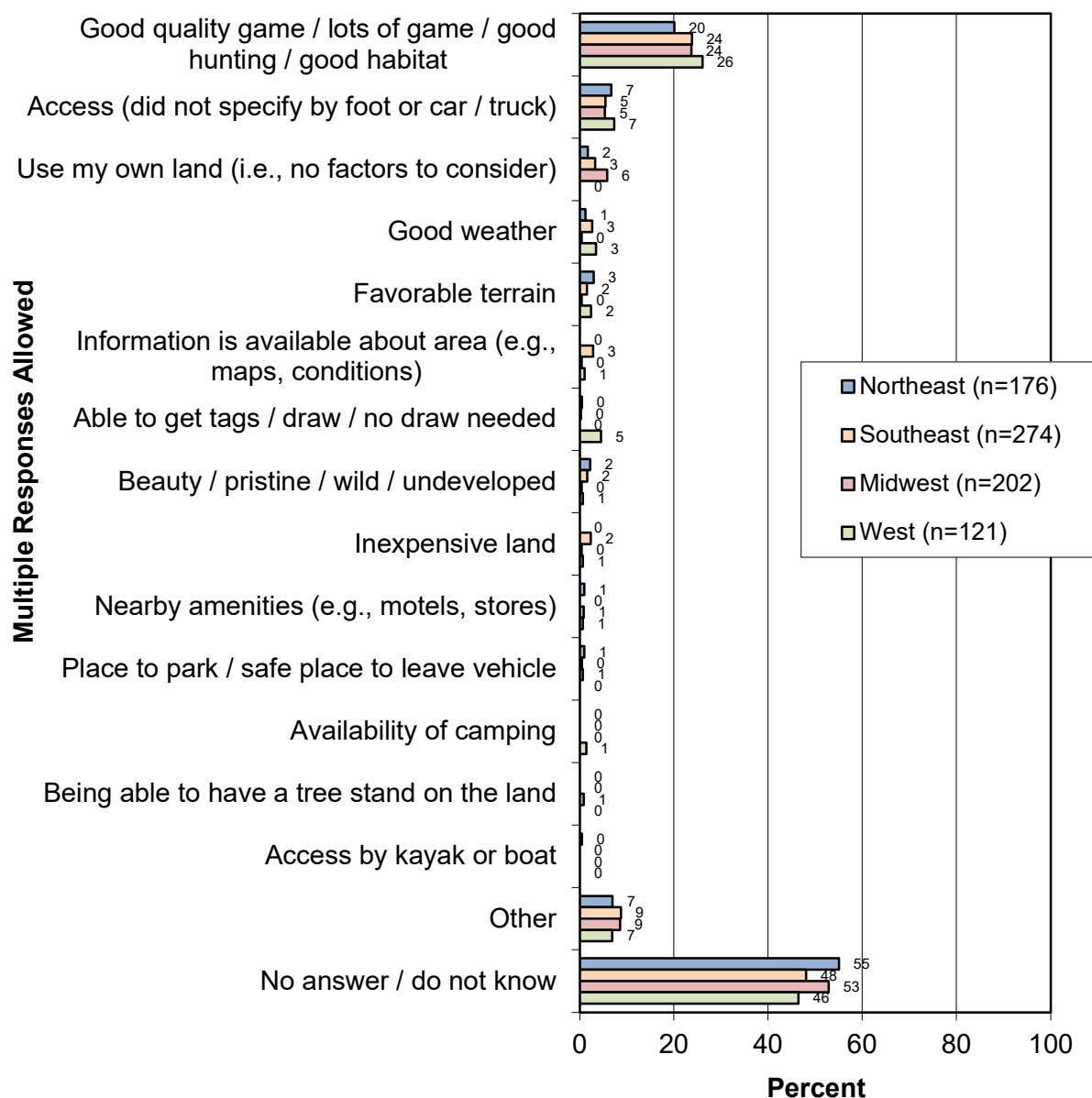


Note that low "Do not know" value labels were removed for legibility.

Following the series of questions about the importance of different factors when deciding where to hunt, hunters were asked if there are any other important factors, in an open-ended question. By far the top response was the amount or quality of game, hunting, or habitat (24% stated this). Note that half of the hunters did not provide a response.



Are there any other factors that are important to you when deciding where to hunt? Please briefly describe them below: (Hunter survey)



FACTORS AFFECTING HUNTER ENJOYMENT

MAJOR FINDINGS

Access is one of the top issues affecting hunter enjoyment, and it is the very top issue over which agencies have much sway.

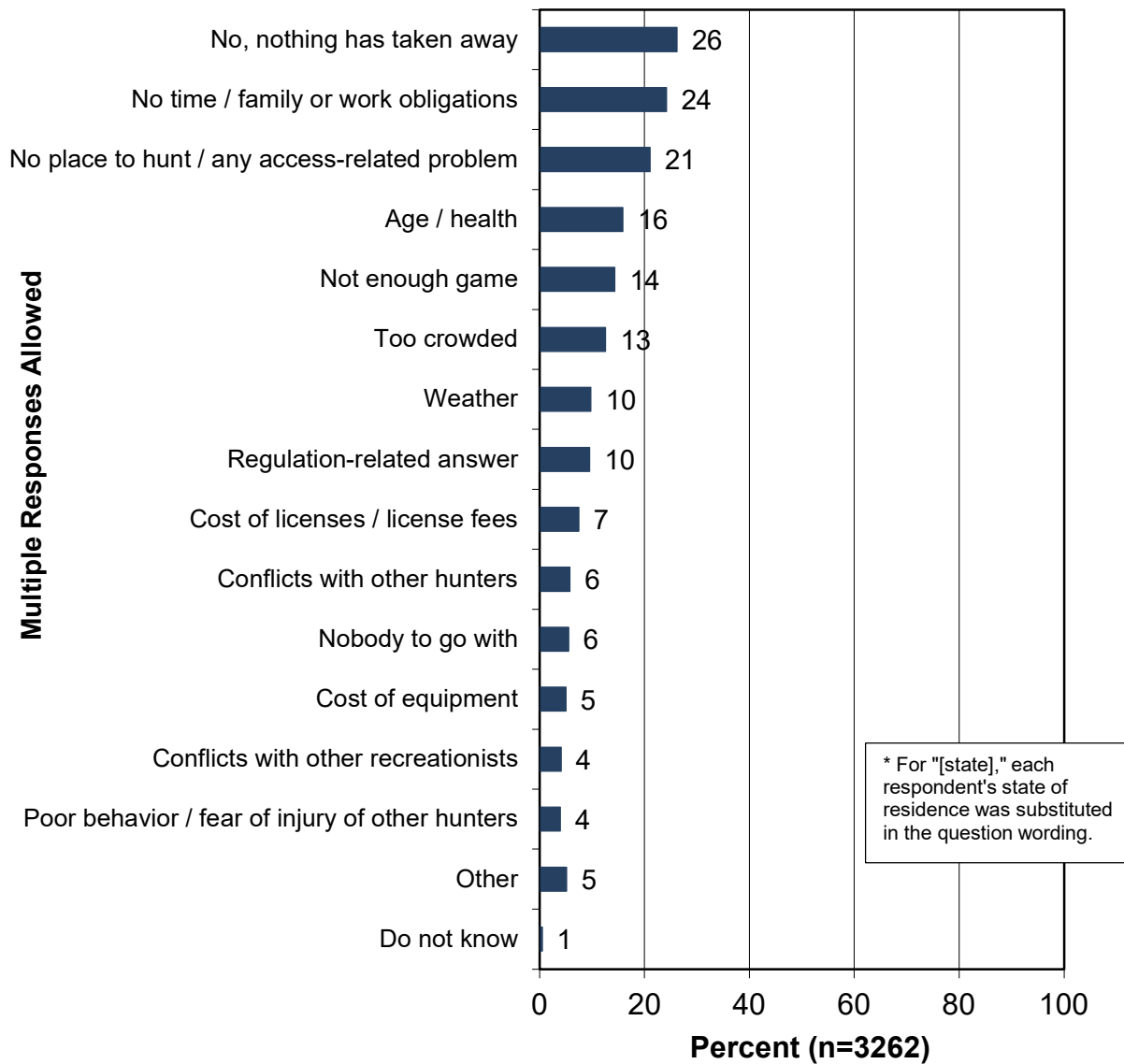
No time/family or work obligations collectively was named as the top issue taking away from enjoyment (24% name this as an issue), but this was closely followed by access issues (21%).

The top access issues are a lack of land on which to hunt, crowding, land being leased to others, land being posted by landowners, the cost of access, and travel distance.

Those with access issues in the question above were then asked to elaborate on the access issues that they had, with those named issues being the top problems.

Lack of time and lack of access/no place to hunt were named as the top issues taking away from hunters' enjoyment of hunting, even if they did not prevent the hunters from participating. The next tier of detriments to hunting enjoyment include age or health, lack of game, and crowding. However, note that the top response to the question was that nothing has taken away from their enjoyment (26% stated this). Results to this question are shown on the following page.

**Are there any things that have taken away from your enjoyment of hunting in [state]*, even if they didn't prevent you from actually going?
(Hunter survey)**

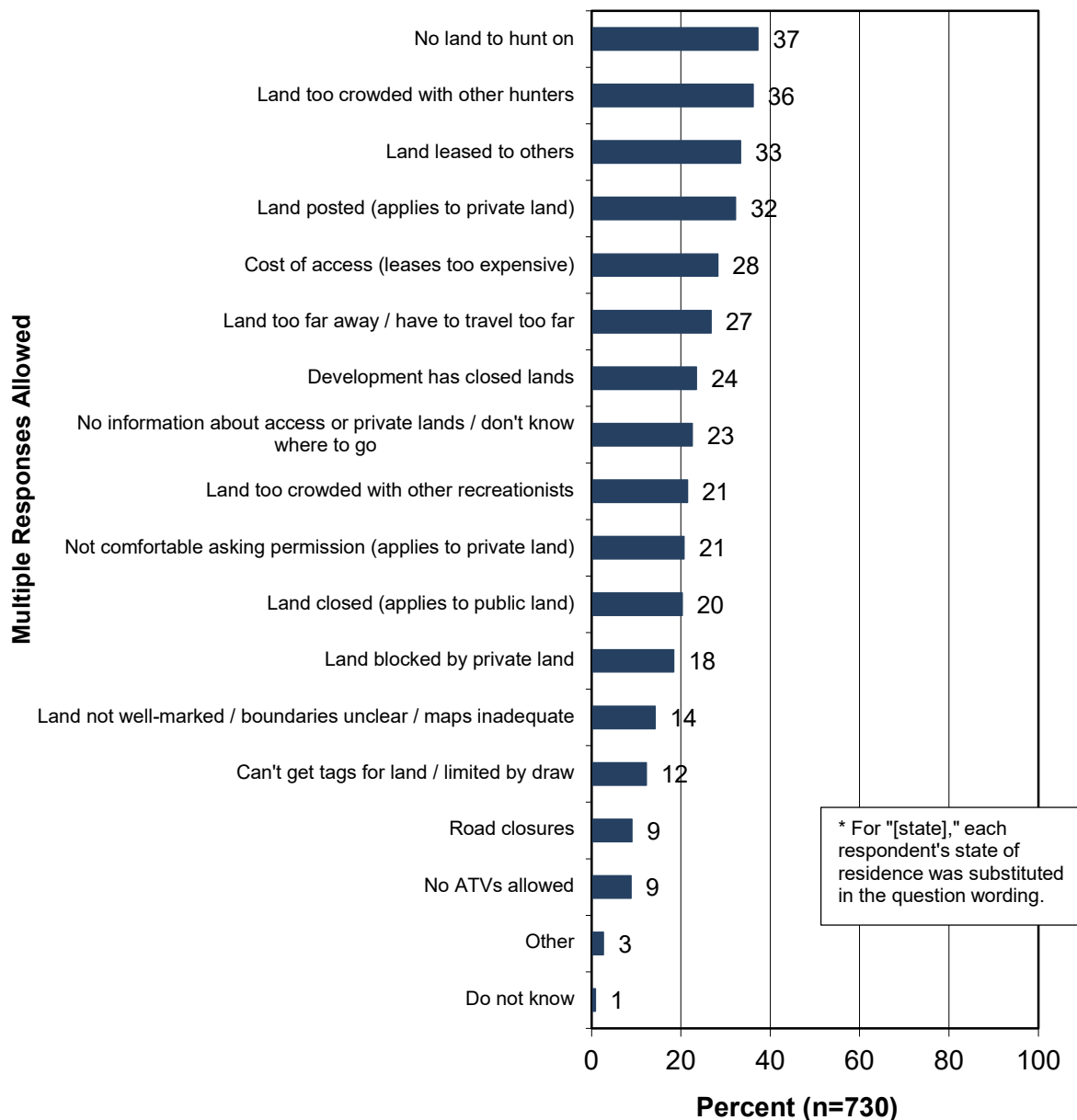


**Are there any things that have taken away from your enjoyment of hunting in [state]*, even if they didn't prevent you from actually going?
(Hunter survey)**



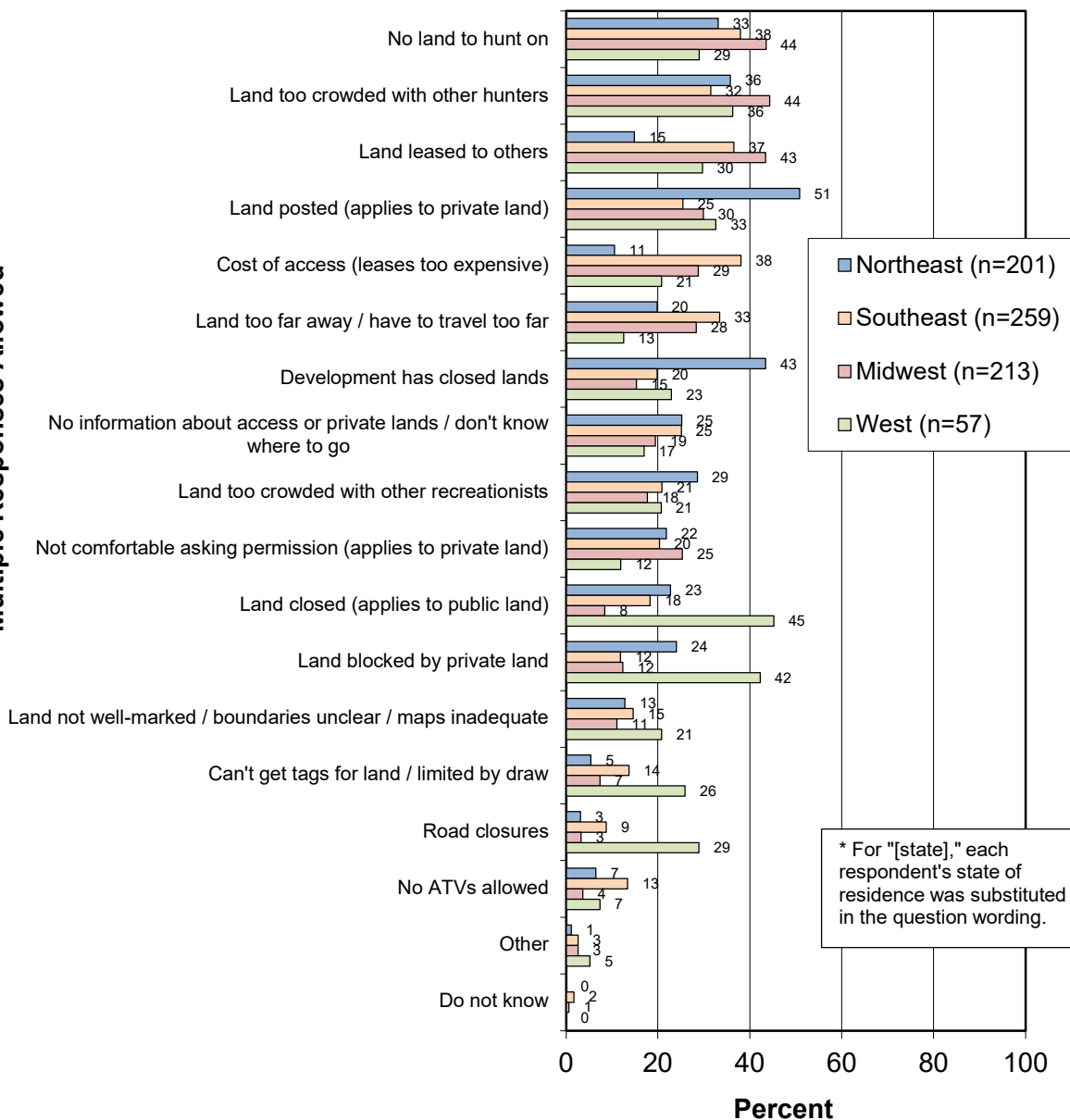
Those who indicated that access problems have detracted from their hunting enjoyment were asked to name the specific problems related to access. The top problems named are no land to hunt on, crowding, land being leased to others, and posted land.

What are the specific access problems that have taken away from your hunting enjoyment in [state]*? (Asked of those who indicated that access problems have taken away from hunting enjoyment.) (Hunter survey)



What are the specific access problems that have taken away from your hunting enjoyment in [state]*? (Asked of those who indicated that access problems have taken away from hunting enjoyment.) (Hunter survey)

Multiple Responses Allowed



HUNTING ACCESS CONSTRAINTS

MAJOR FINDINGS

In a direct question about access, nearly half of hunters agree that lack of access to hunting lands in their state has caused them to not hunt as much as they would have liked. Agreement is particularly high among those hunting public and private land about equally, those hunting upland game birds or waterfowl, and hunters who live in an urban/suburban area.

In this question, 45% agreed compared to 34% who disagreed (the rest answering neutrally).

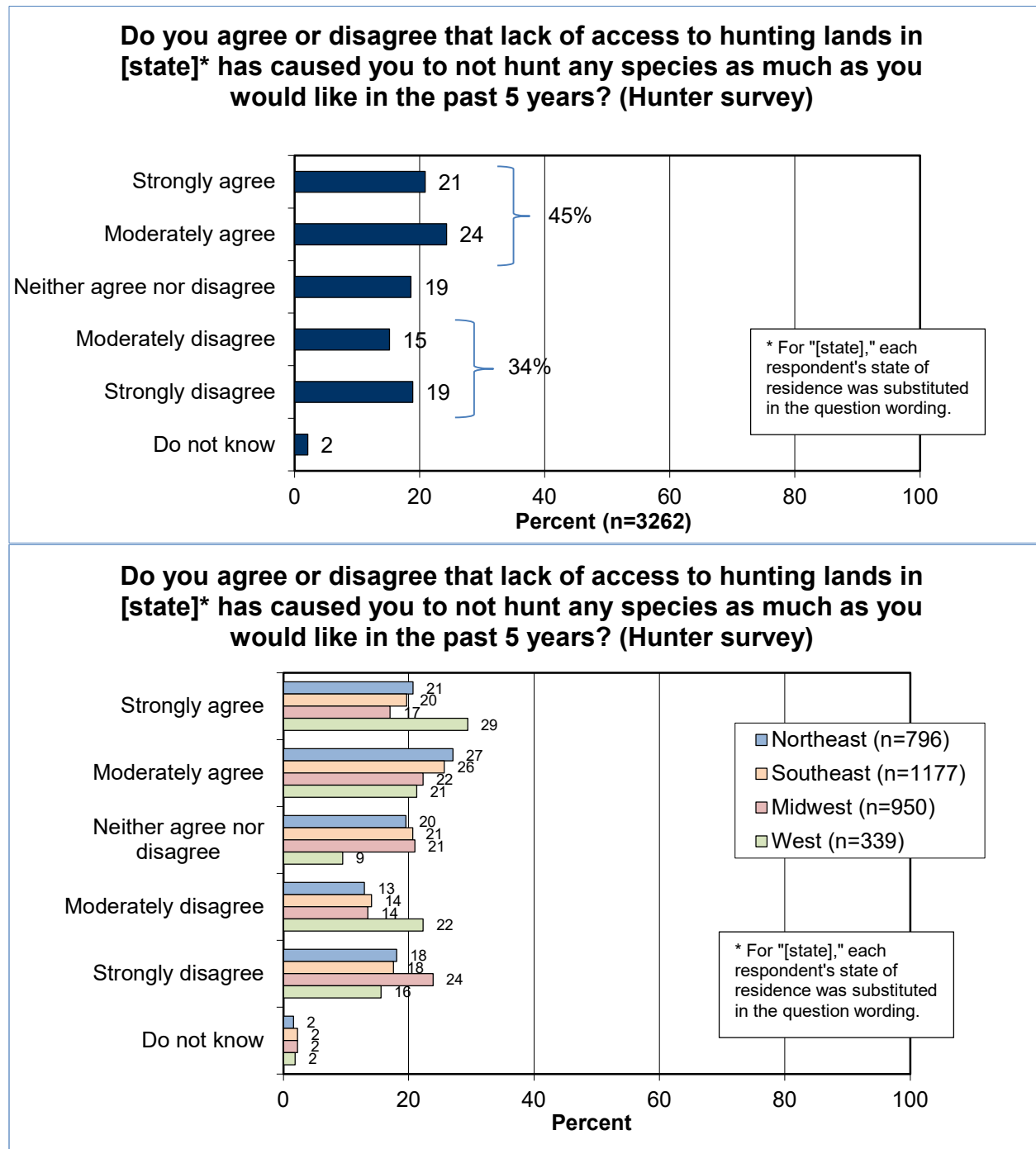
The items that hunters rated as the most problematic when they go hunting relate to changes in the land ownership or land use, including developments on the land.

Hunters rated each of 25 potential problems as being a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all. The top, when ranked by major or moderate problem combined, are less land on which to hunt due to private land ownership changes, less land on which to hunt due to development, less land on which to hunt because the land use has changed, housing or other developments making land not huntable, finding previously open private land sold and posted or closed by the new landowner, and finding previously open private land posted or closed by the landowner—all with 30% or more saying they were major or moderate problems.

The above were problems that hunters may encounter when hunting. The survey also asked hunters to rate potential problems for the state as a whole relating to lands available (or not available) for hunting and land uses. Again, the top issues are development and land ownership changes, along with landowners' concerns about liability prompting them to post their lands.

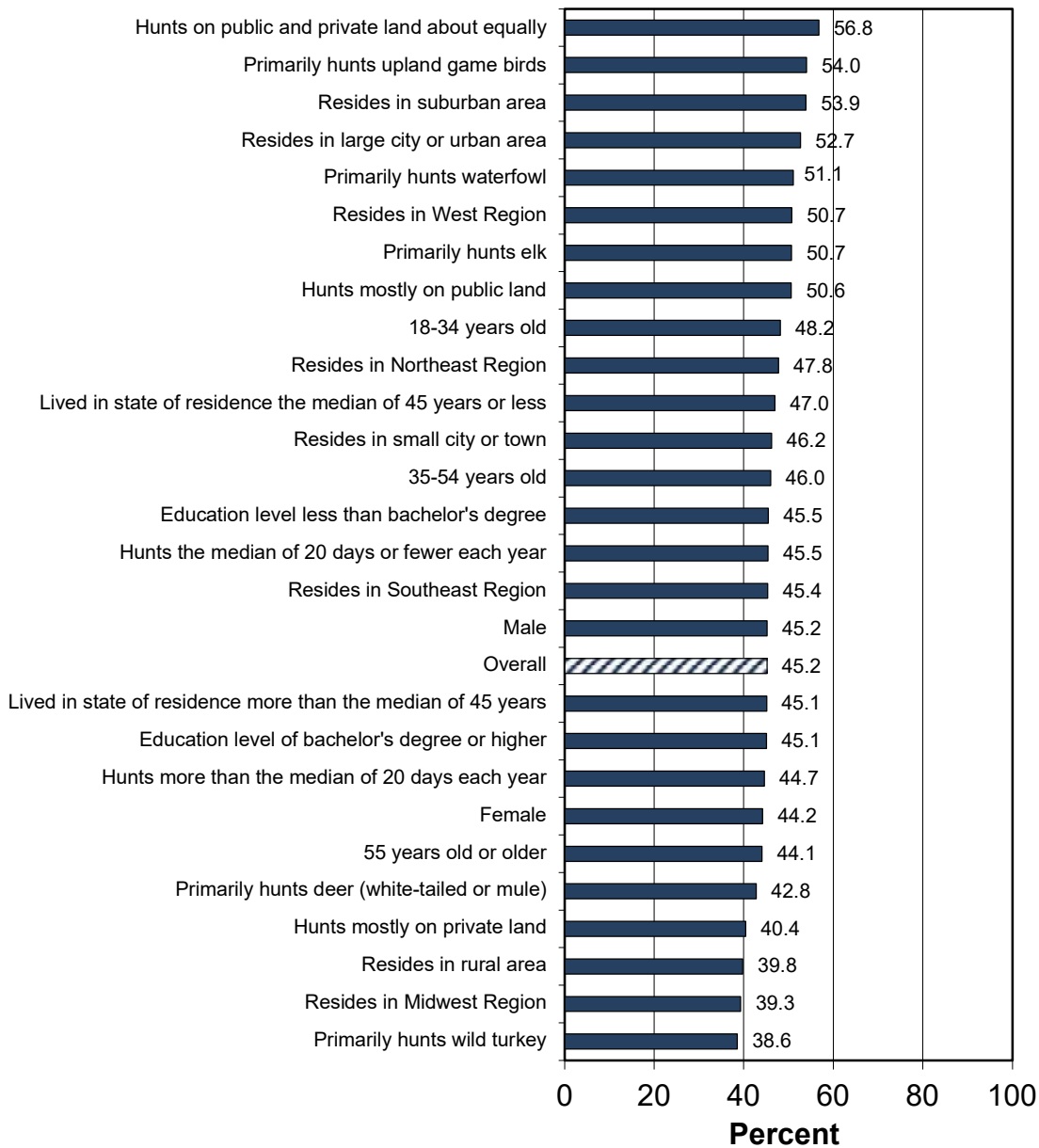
This list contained 10 potential statewide problems, with hunters using the same scale as above from major problem to not a problem at all. Three of the problems were in the top tier as being problematic: housing and commercial development, private land posted or closed because the landowner is concerned about liability, and tracts being broken up when sold or leased.

Nearly half of hunters (45%) agree that lack of access to hunting lands in their state has caused them to not hunt as much as they would have liked in the past 5 years; this compares to 34% who disagree.



Groups most likely to agree that lack of access caused them to hunt less include those who hunt public and private land about equally, upland game bird hunters, suburban residents, and large city or urban area residents.

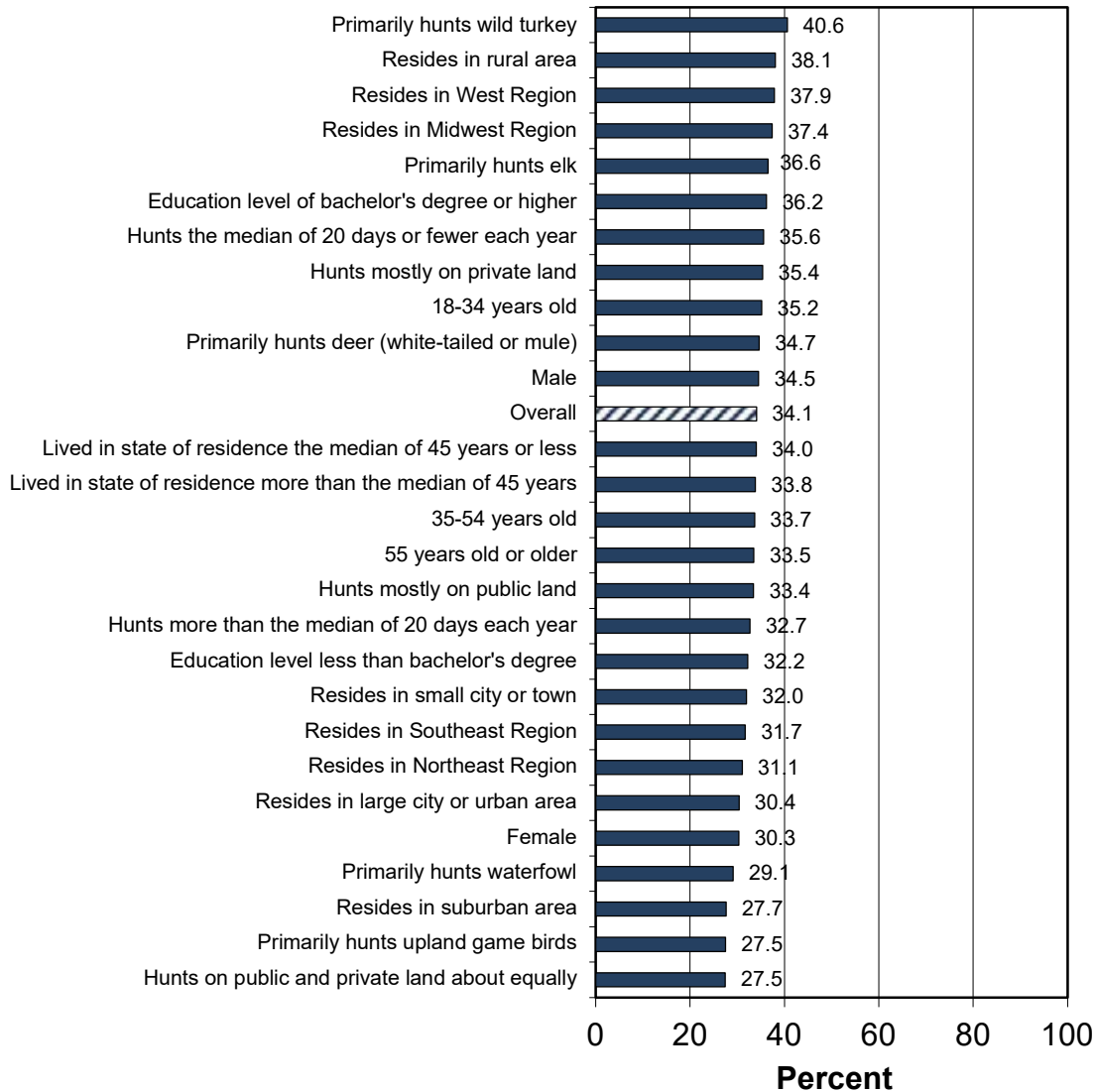
Percent of each of the following groups who strongly or moderately agree that lack of access caused them to hunt less: (Hunter survey)



Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

Groups most likely to disagree that lack of access caused them to hunt less include wild turkey hunters, rural residents, and West and Midwest Region residents.

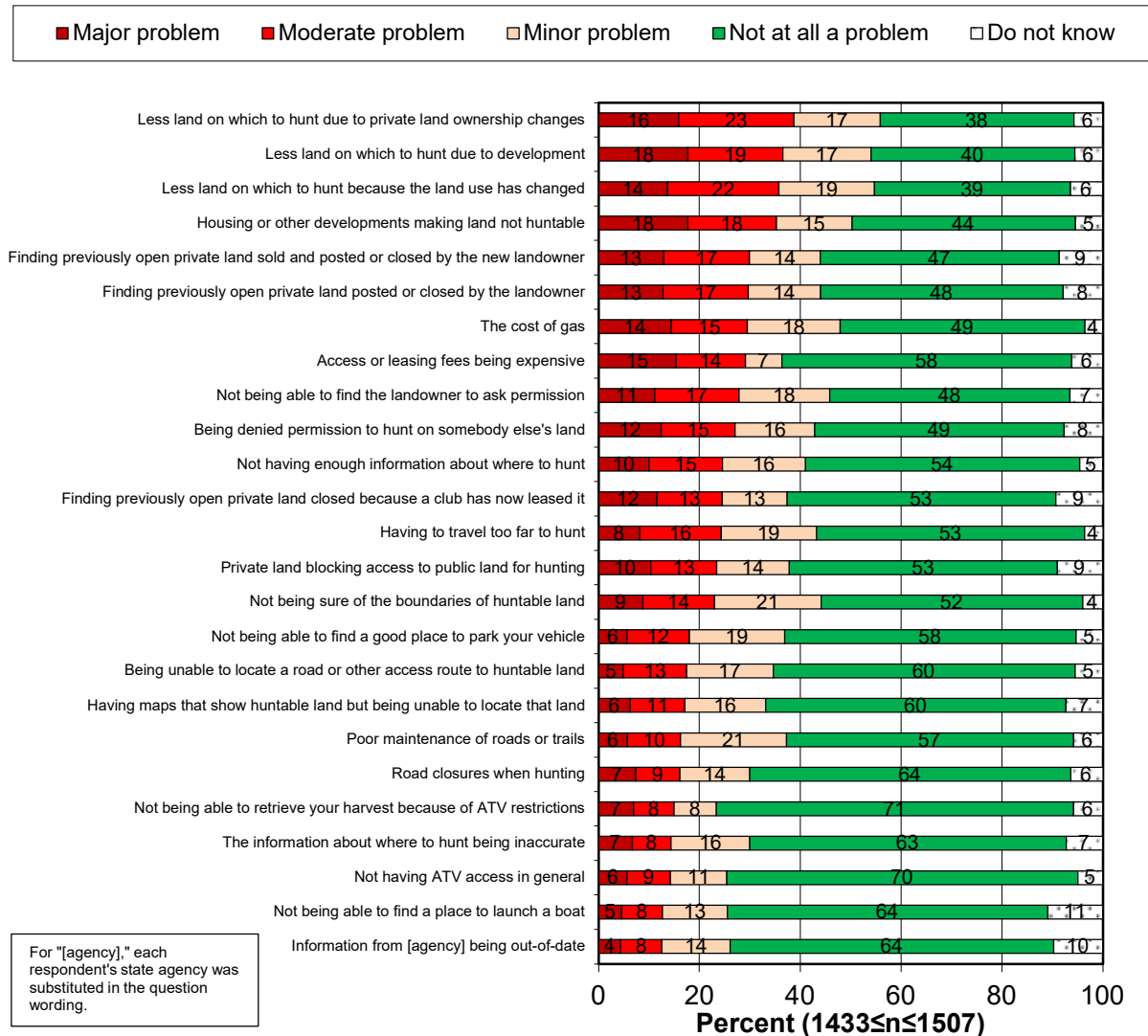
**Percent of each of the following groups who strongly or moderately disagree that lack of access caused them to hunt less:
(Hunter survey)**



Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

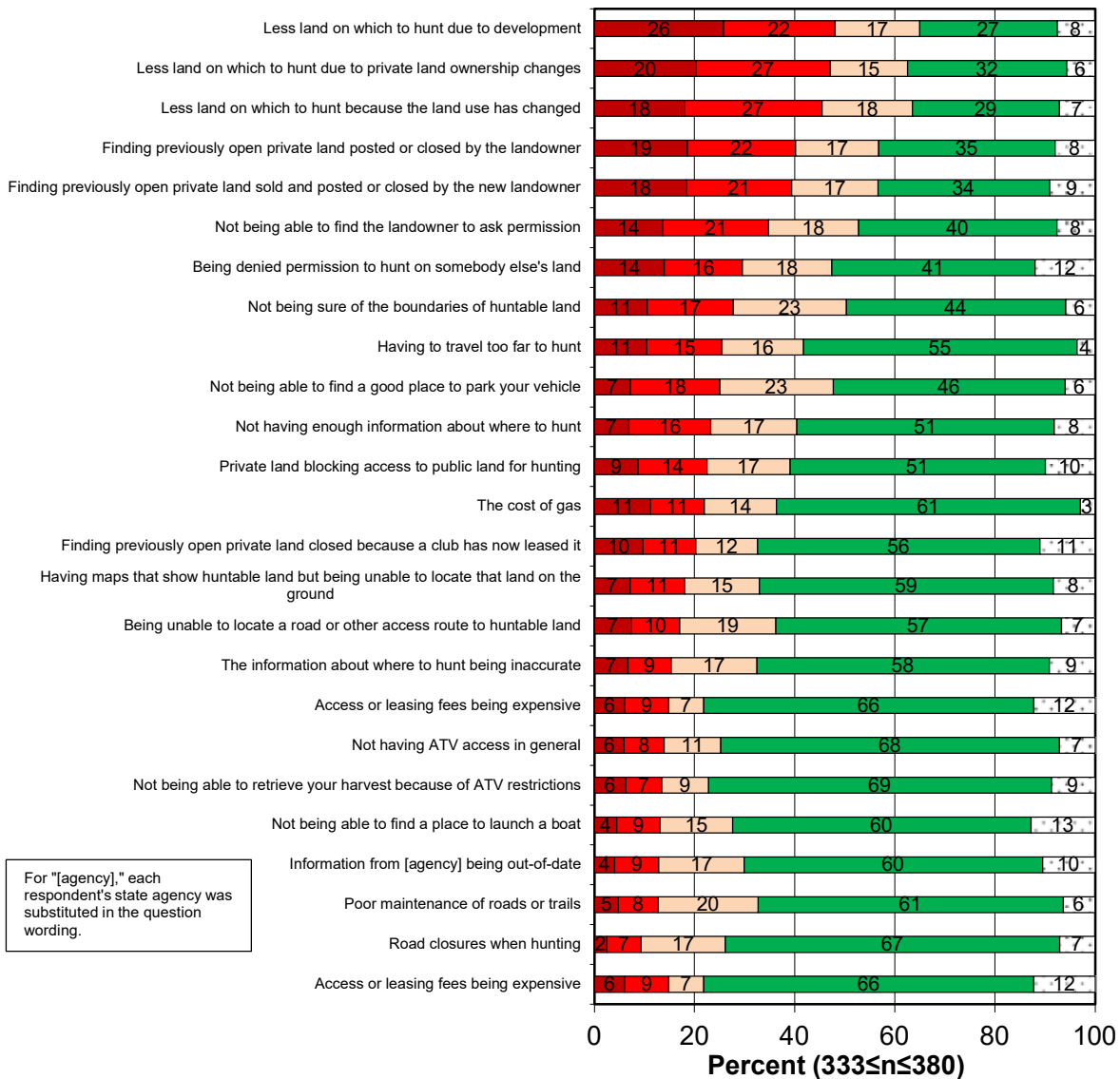
Hunters were presented with a list of 25 items and asked to rate how much of a problem each has been when hunting in the past 5 years. The items rated as the most problematic, when ranked by *major* or *moderate problem* combined, are less land on which to hunt due to private land ownership changes, less land on which to hunt due to development, less land on which to hunt because the land use has changed, housing or other developments making land not huntable, finding previously open private land sold and posted or closed by the new landowner, and finding previously open private land posted or closed by the landowner—all with 30% or more saying they were *major* or *moderate problems*. The full list is shown below, in descending order of *major* or *moderate problem* responses. Graphs for each region follow.

**Please indicate if each issue has been a [degree of problem] when hunting in the past 5 years.
(Hunter survey) (Overall)**



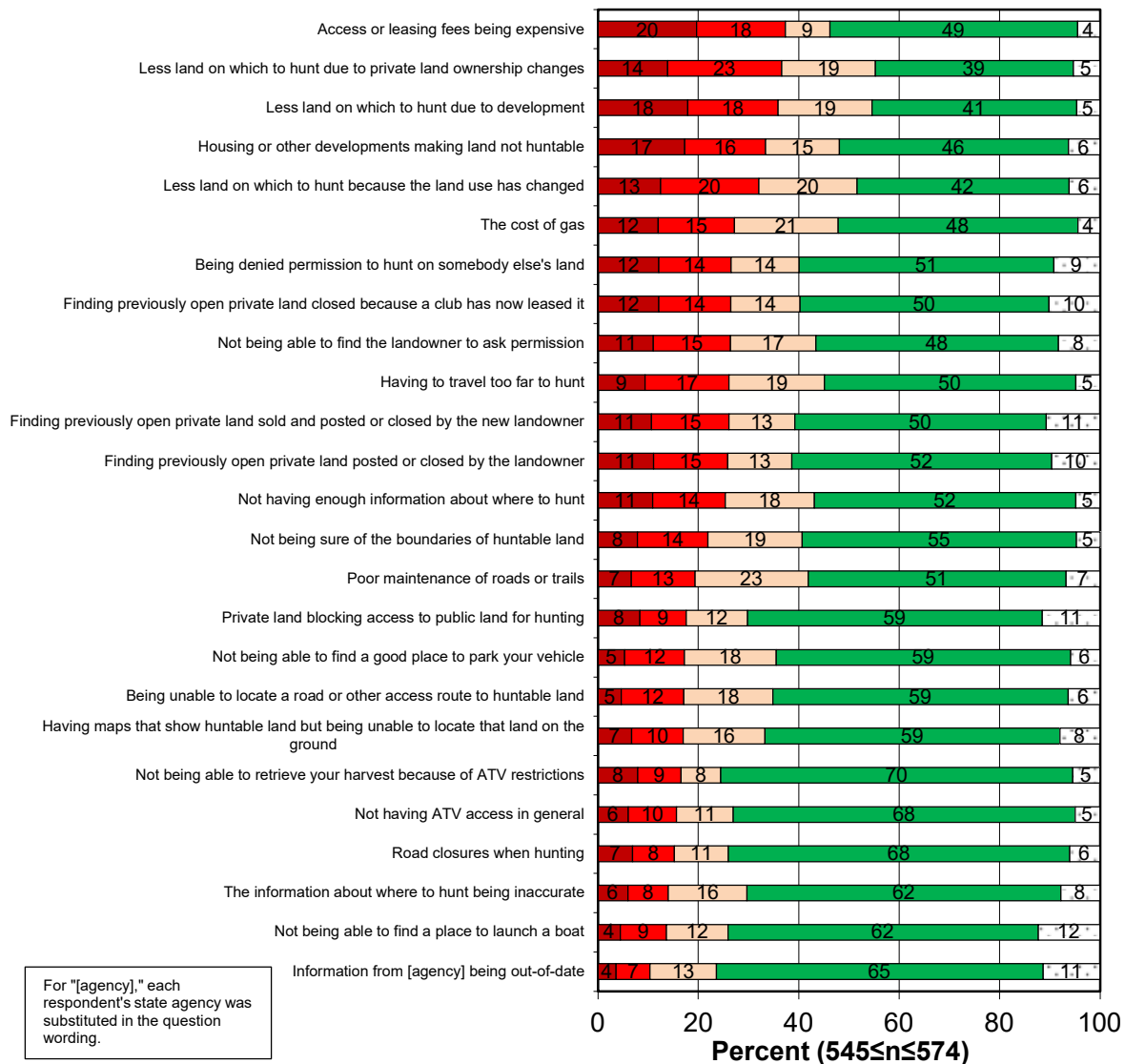
**Please indicate if each issue has been a [degree of problem] when hunting in the past 5 years.
(Hunter survey) (Northeast)**

■ Major problem ■ Moderate problem ■ Minor problem ■ Not at all a problem □ Do not know



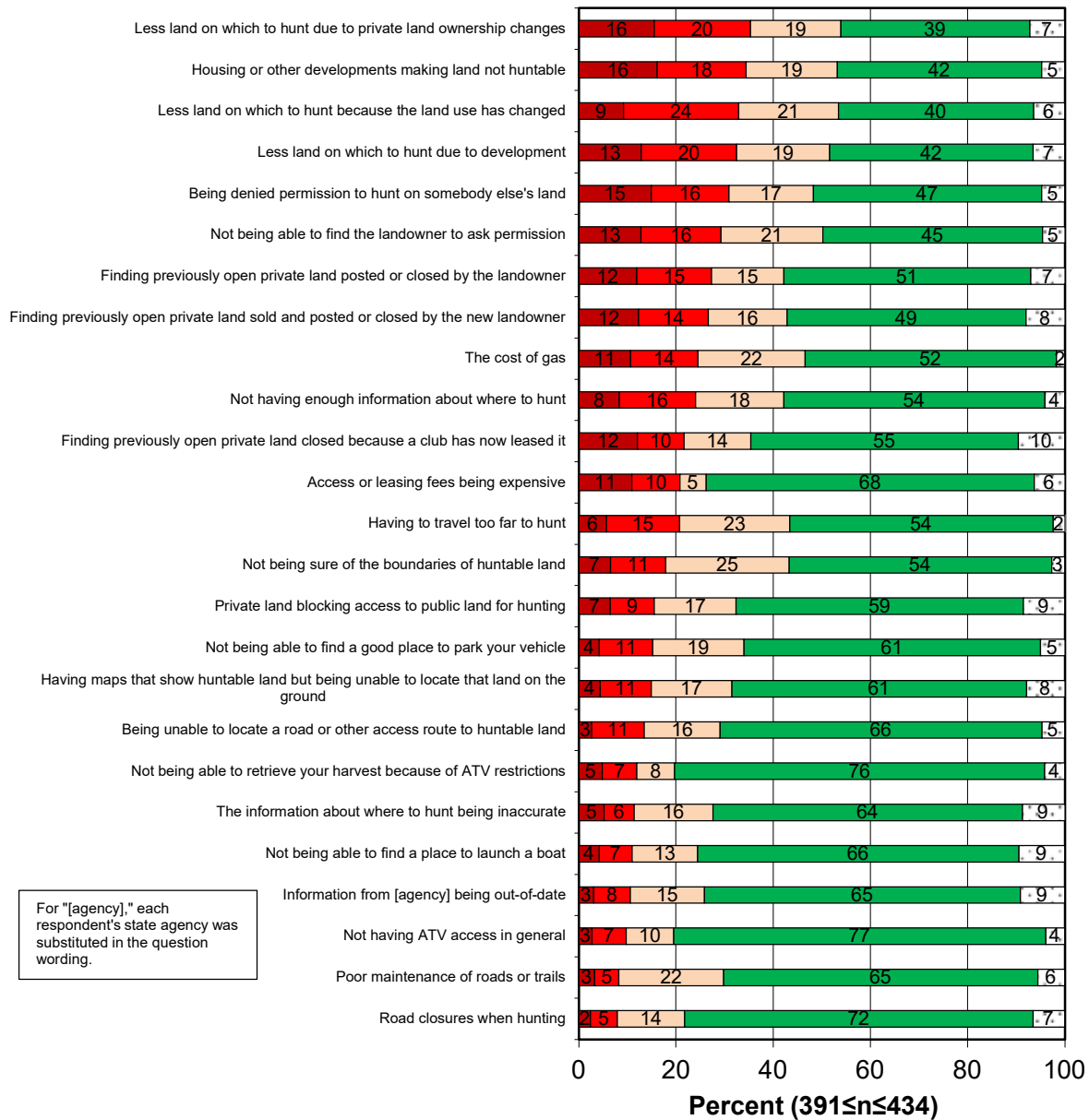
Please indicate if each issue has been a [degree of problem] when hunting in the past 5 years. (Hunter survey) (Southeast)

■ Major problem ■ Moderate problem ■ Minor problem ■ Not at all a problem ■ Do not know



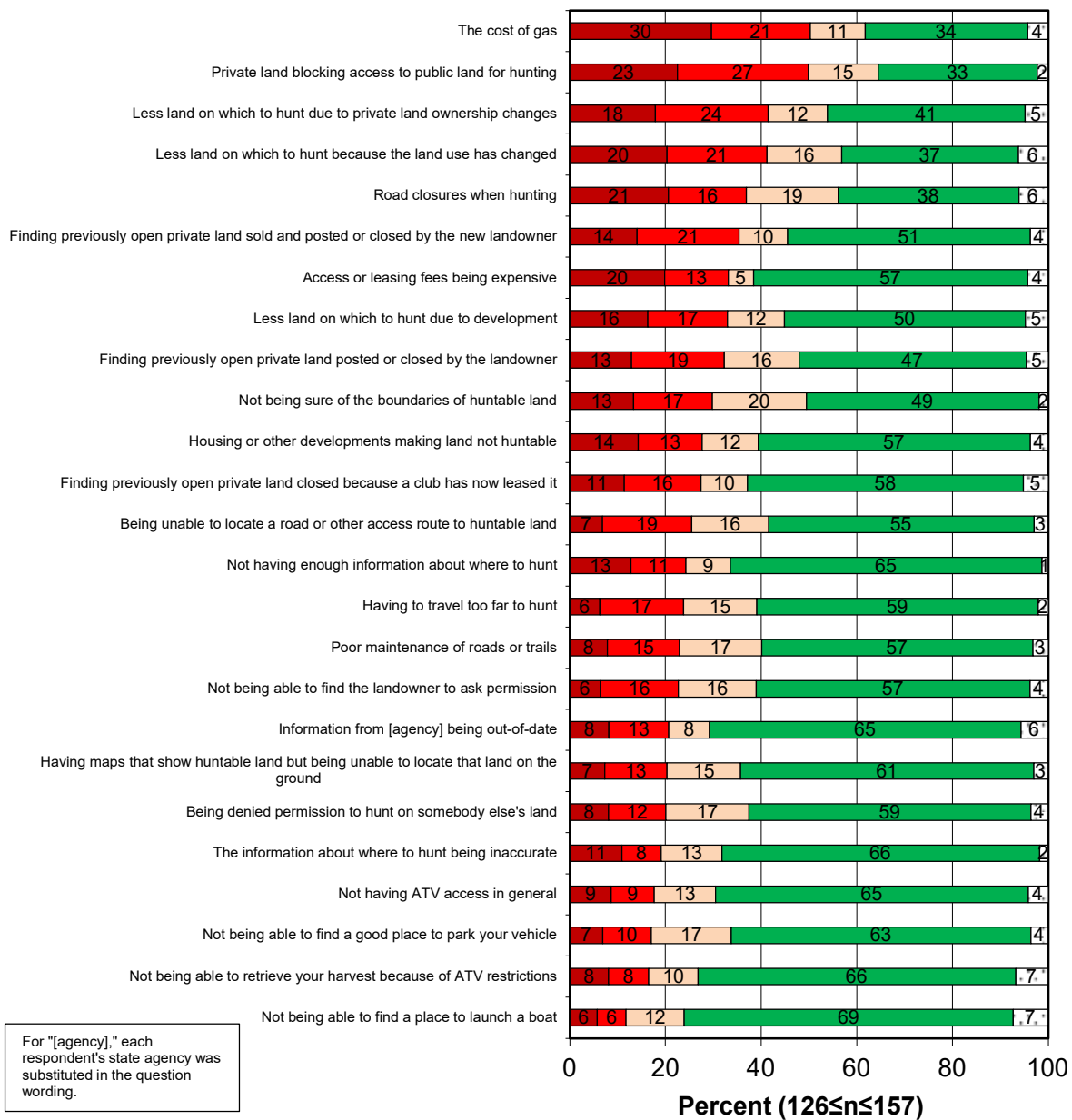
**Please indicate if each issue has been a [degree of problem] when hunting in the past 5 years.
(Hunter survey) (Midwest)**

■ Major problem ■ Moderate problem ■ Minor problem ■ Not at all a problem ■ Do not know

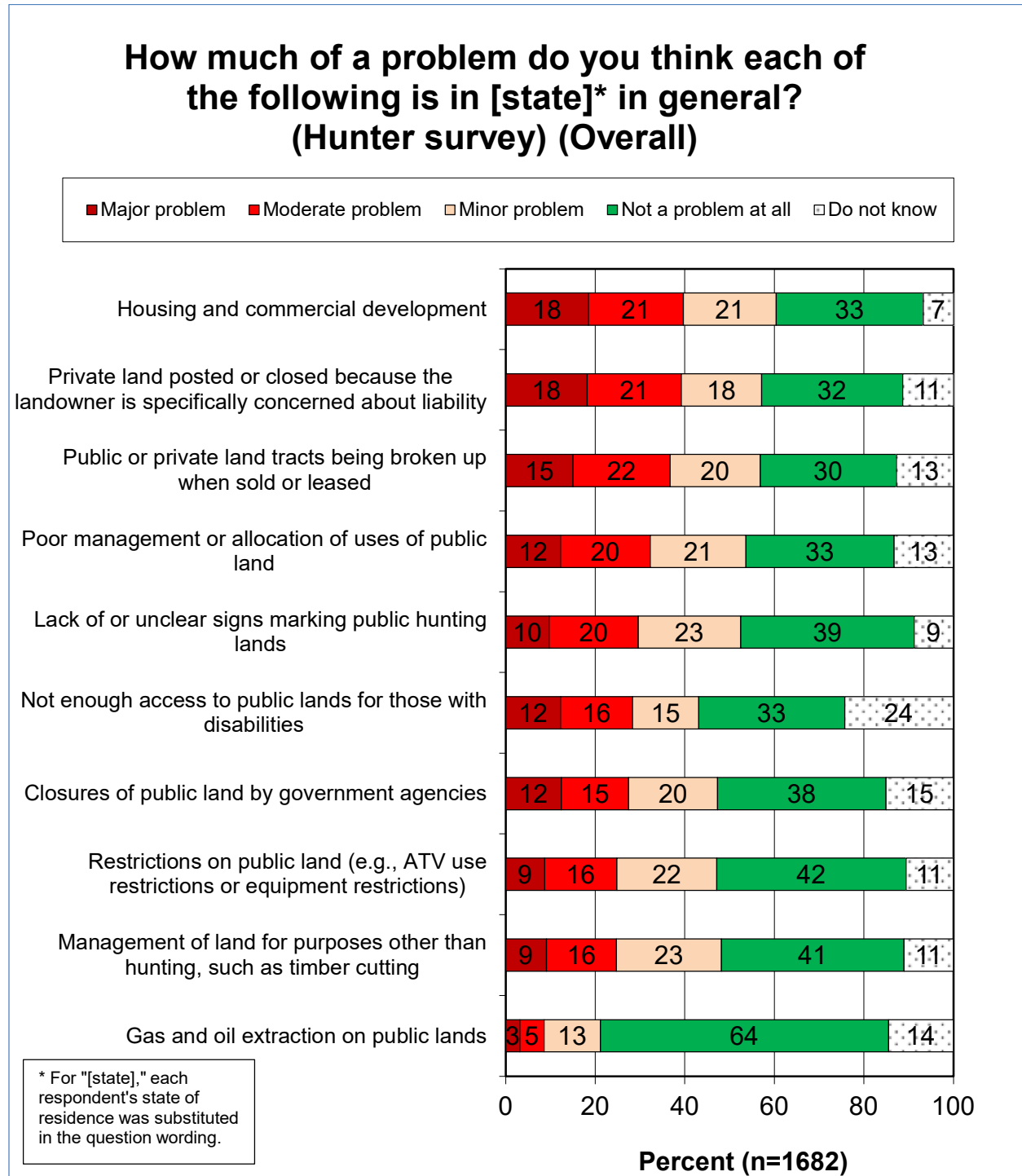


Please indicate if each issue has been a [degree of problem] when hunting in the past 5 years. (Hunter survey) (West)

■ Major problem ■ Moderate problem ■ Minor problem ■ Not at all a problem ■ Do not know

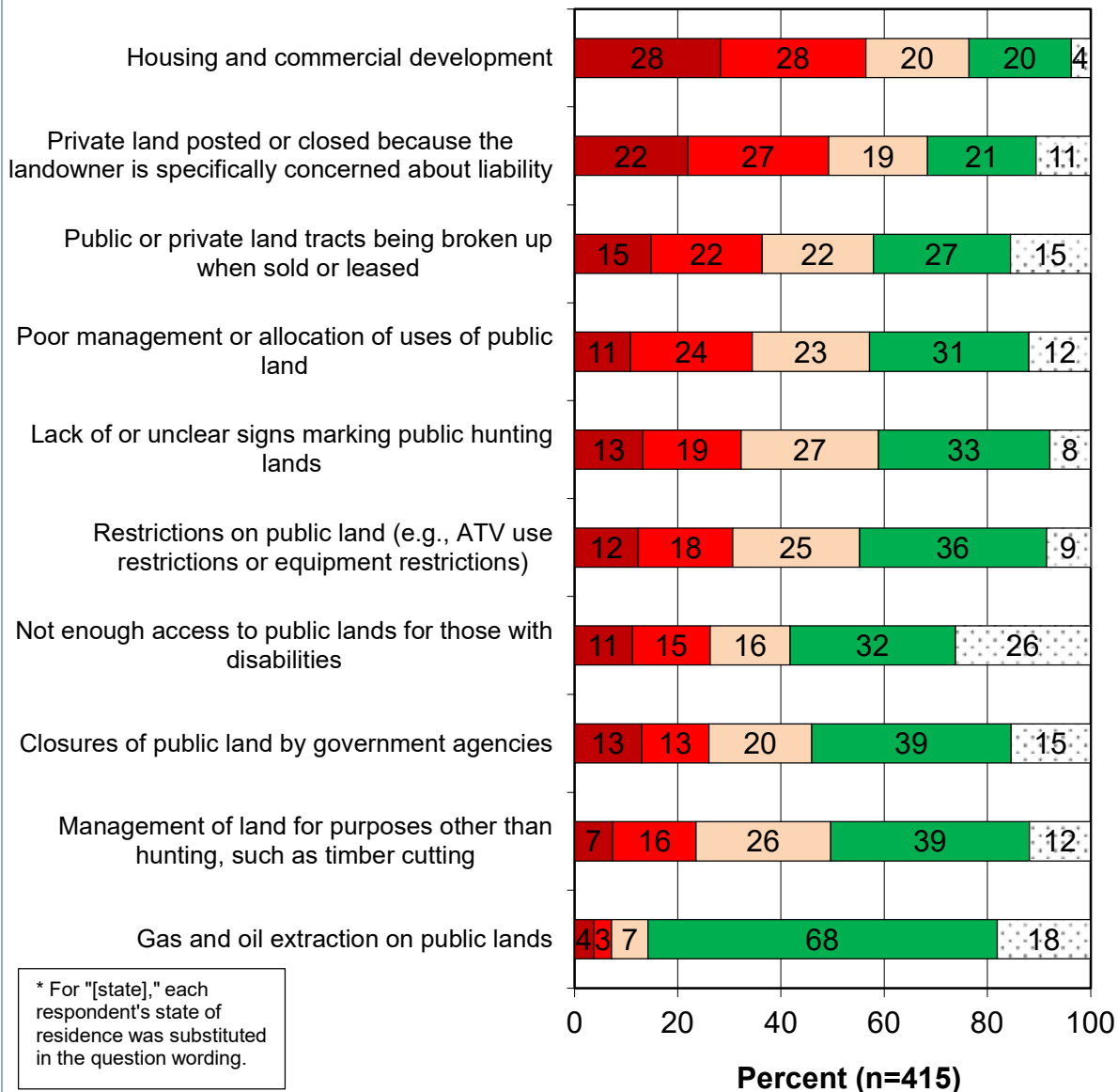


In another series, hunters were asked to rate how much of a problem 10 items are in their state. The items rated as the largest problems were housing and commercial development, private land closed due to owners' liability concerns, tracts being broken up when sold or leased, poor management of public lands, and unclear marking of public lands.



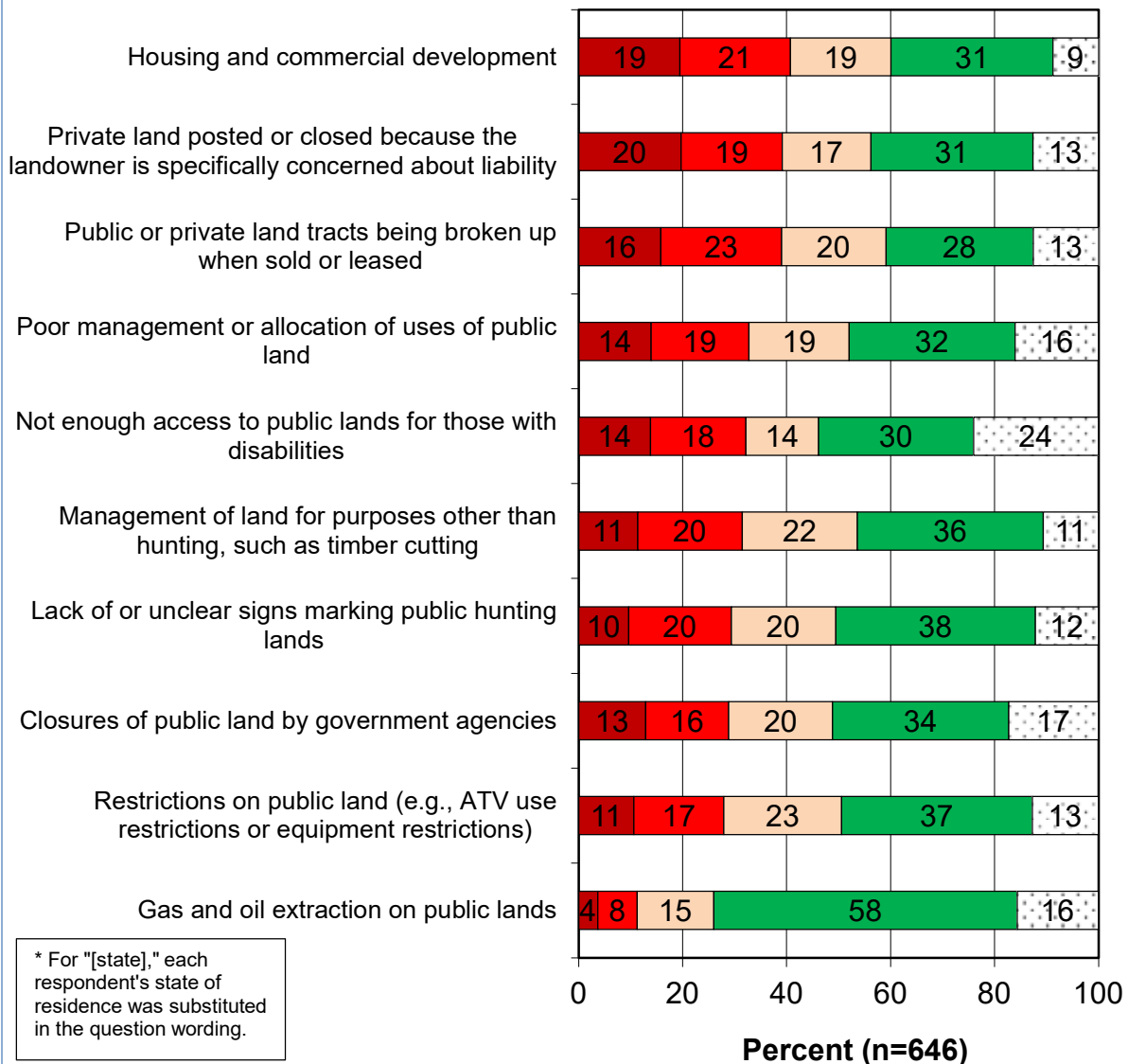
How much of a problem do you think each of the following is in [state]* in general? (Hunter survey) (Northeast)

■ Major problem ■ Moderate problem ■ Minor problem ■ Not a problem at all □ Do not know



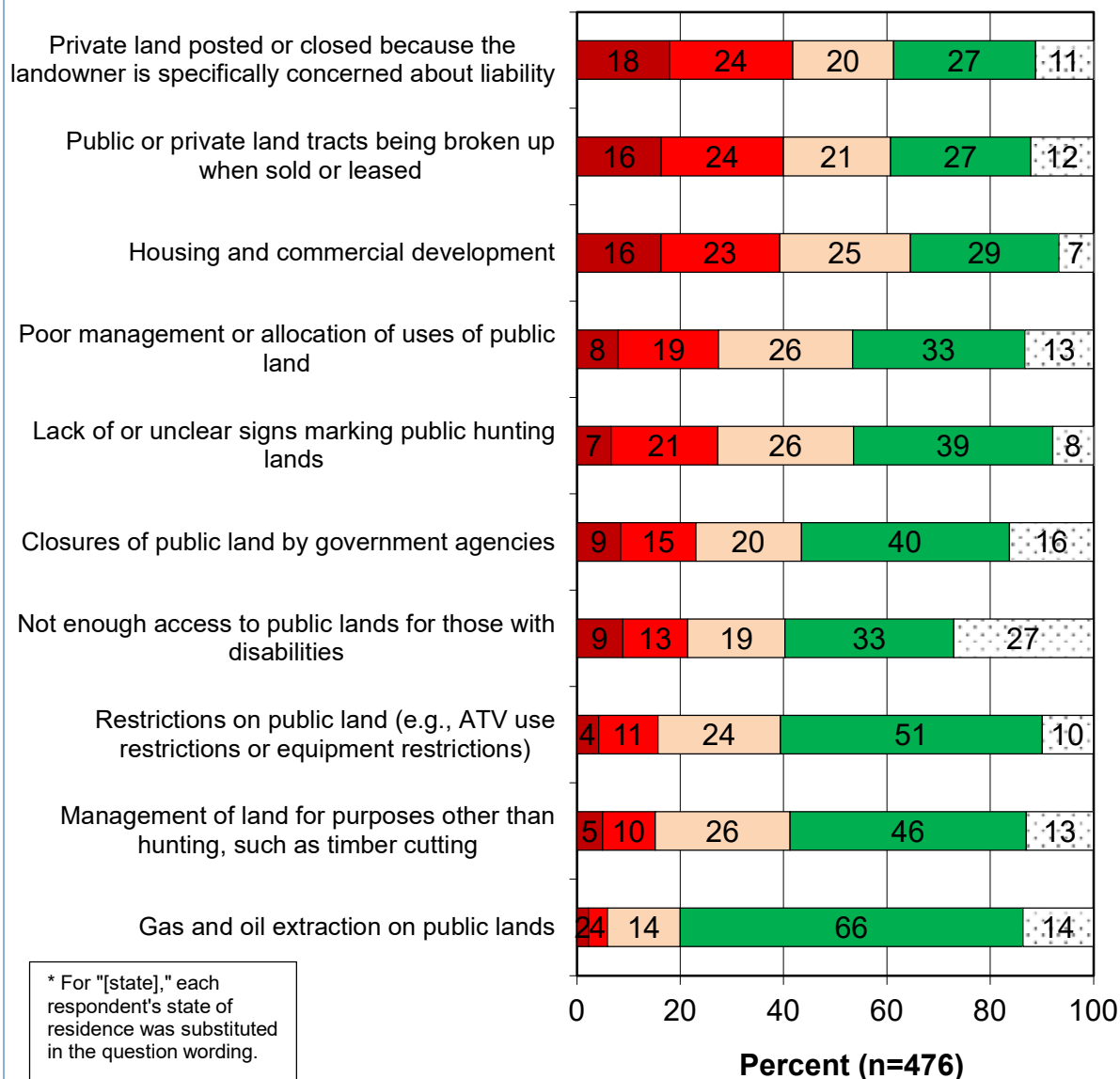
How much of a problem do you think each of the following is in [state]* in general? (Hunter survey) (Southeast)

■ Major problem ■ Moderate problem ■ Minor problem ■ Not a problem at all ■ Do not know



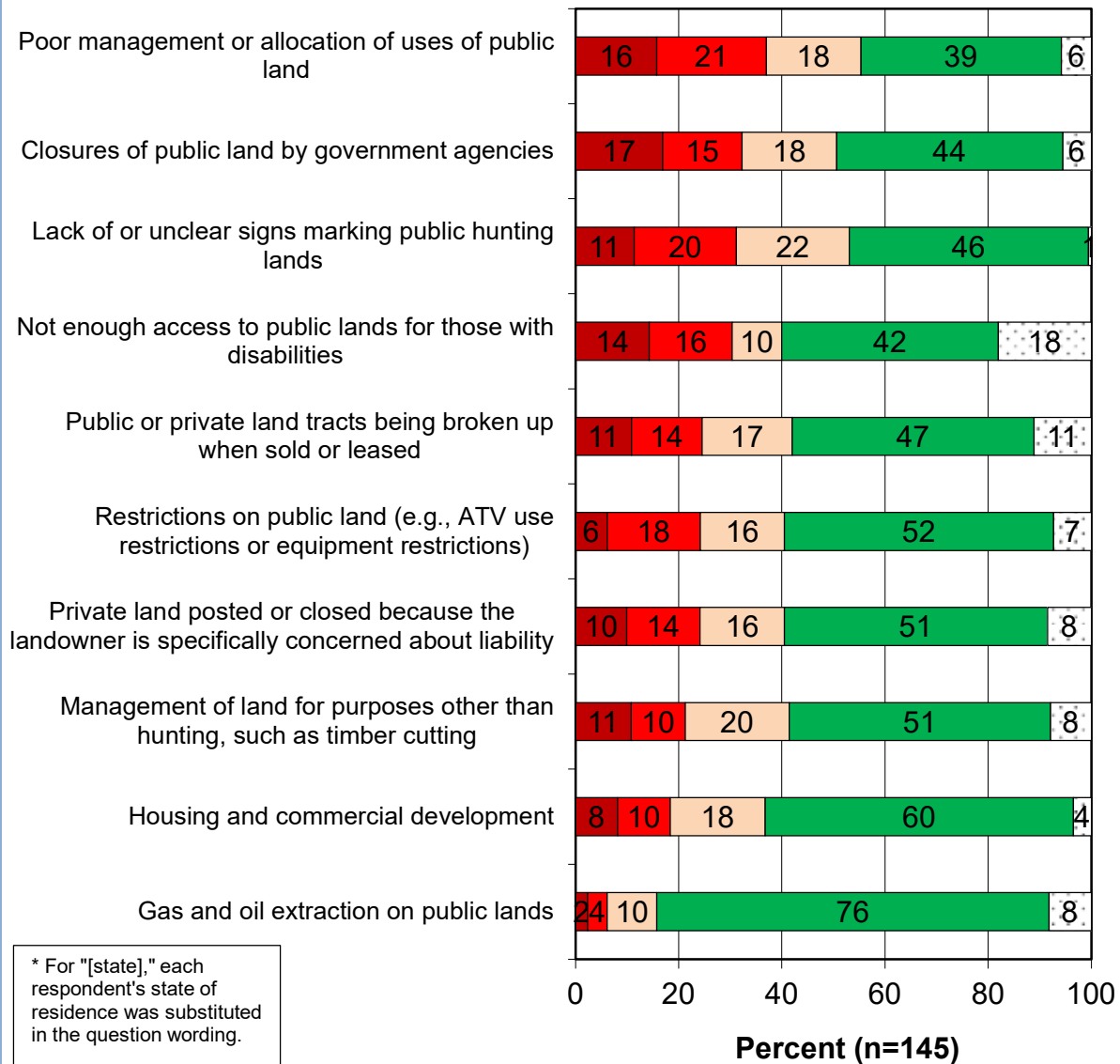
How much of a problem do you think each of the following is in [state]* in general? (Hunter survey) (Midwest)

■ Major problem ■ Moderate problem ■ Minor problem ■ Not a problem at all ■ Do not know

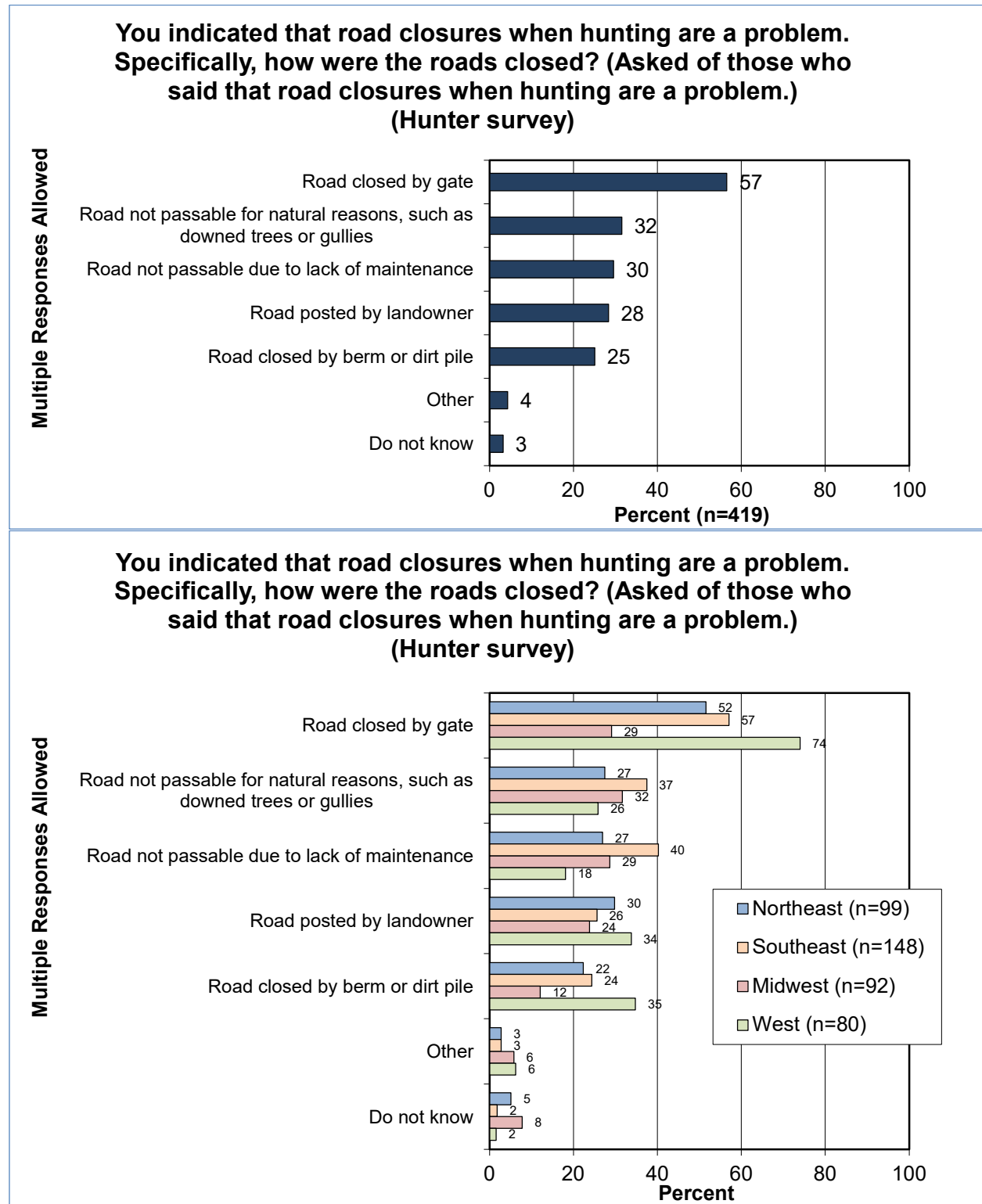


How much of a problem do you think each of the following is in [state]* in general? (Hunter survey) (West)

■ Major problem ■ Moderate problem ■ Minor problem ■ Not a problem at all □ Do not know

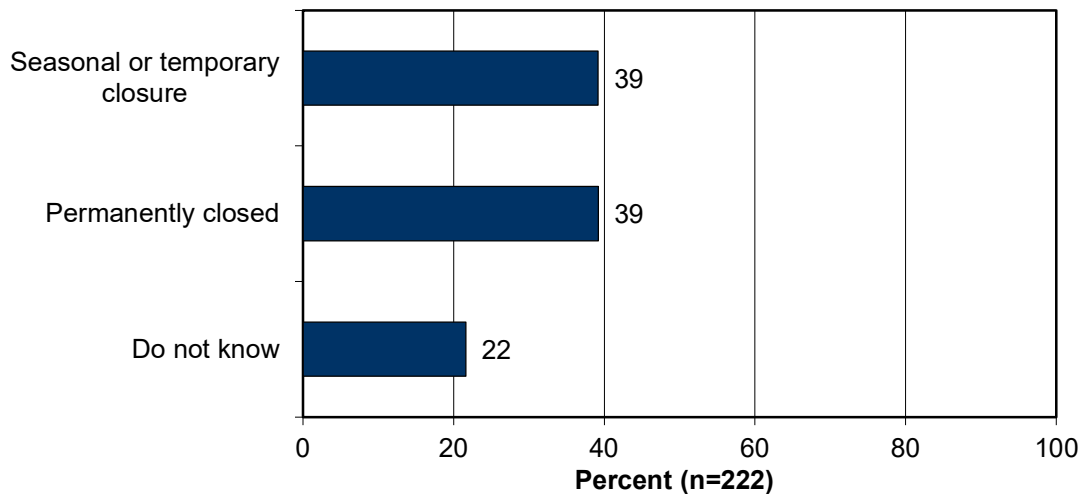


Among those who said that road closures when hunting are a problem, over half (57%) said the roads were closed by a gate.

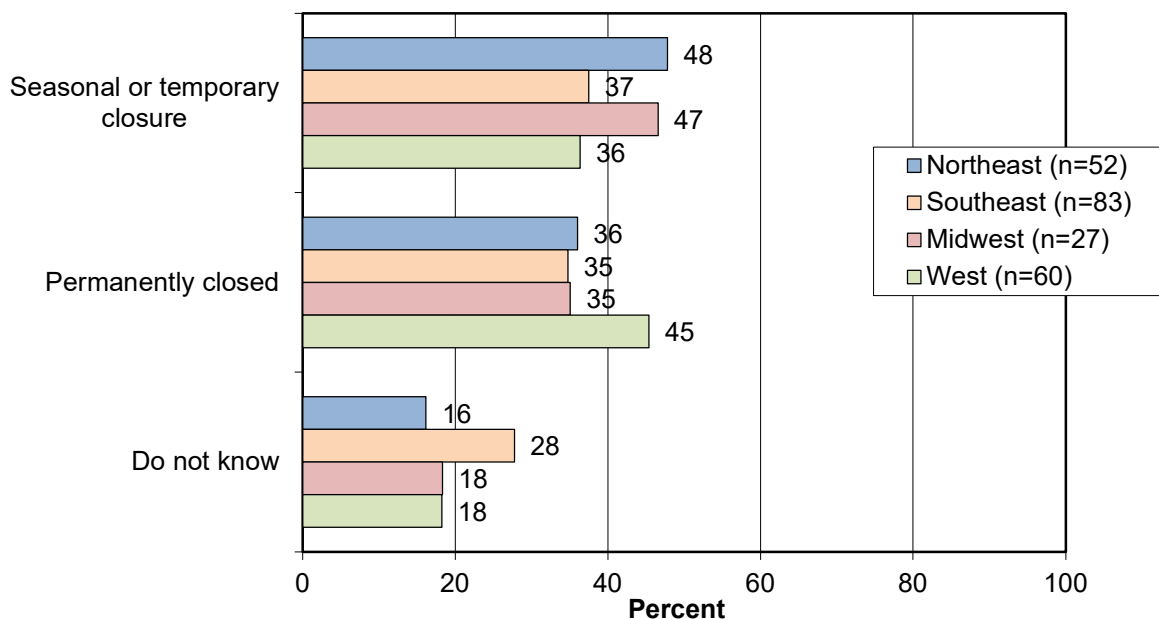


Among those who said a road was closed by a gate, 39% said the closure was permanent and 39% said it was seasonal or temporary; the remainder did not know.

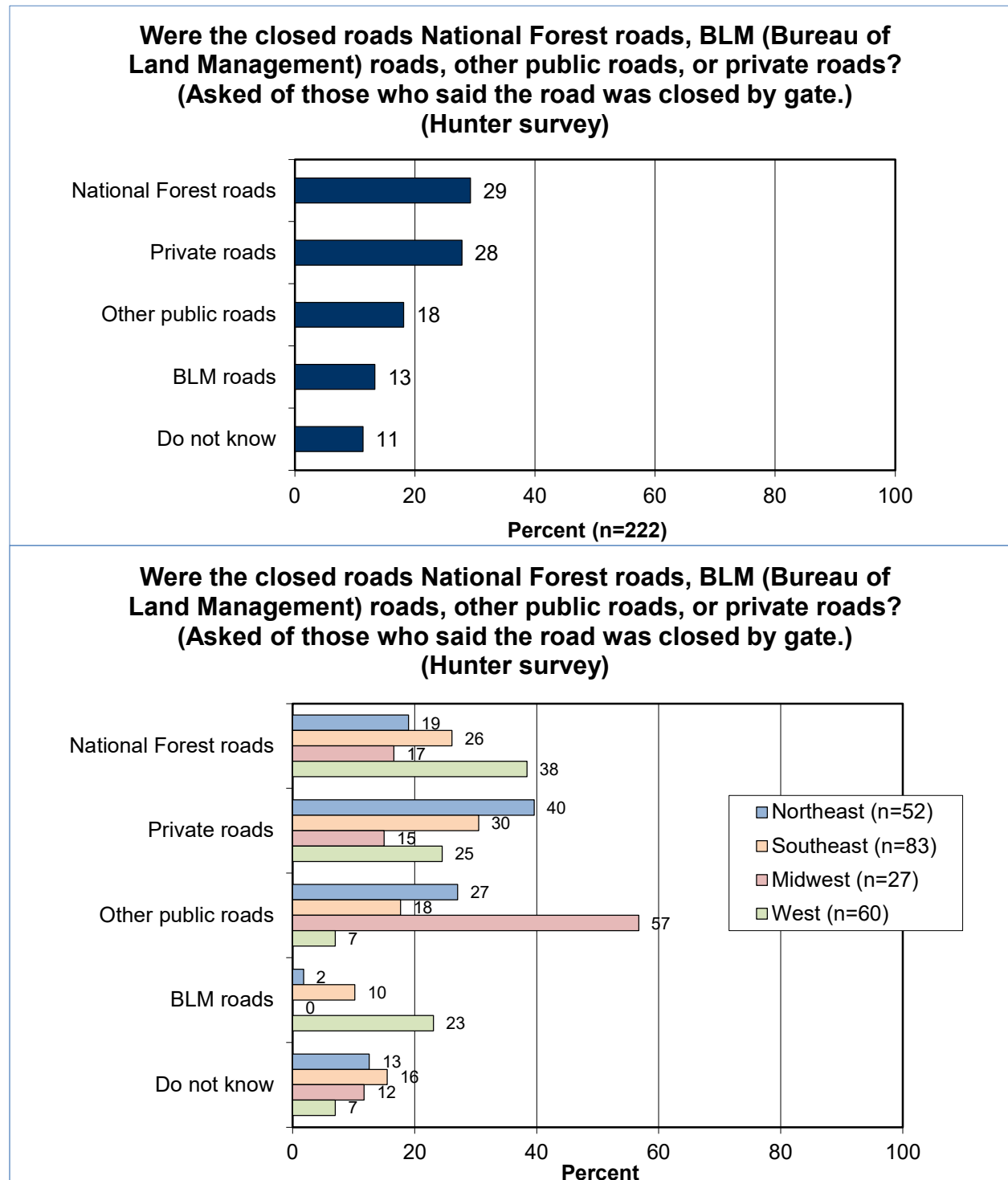
**Was this a seasonal or temporary closure, or was it permanently closed? (Asked of those who said the road was closed by gate.)
(Hunter survey)**



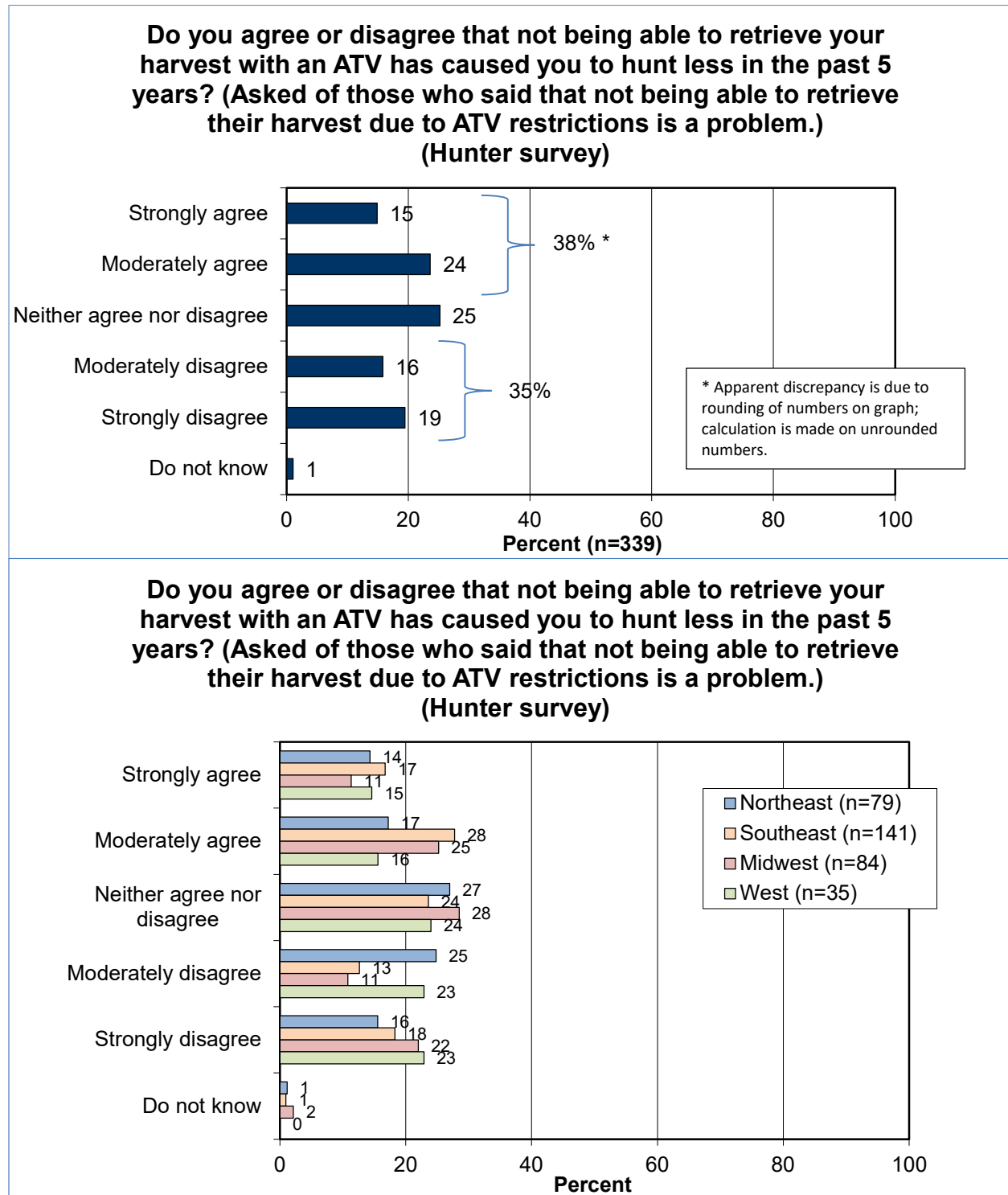
**Was this a seasonal or temporary closure, or was it permanently closed? (Asked of those who said the road was closed by gate.)
(Hunter survey)**



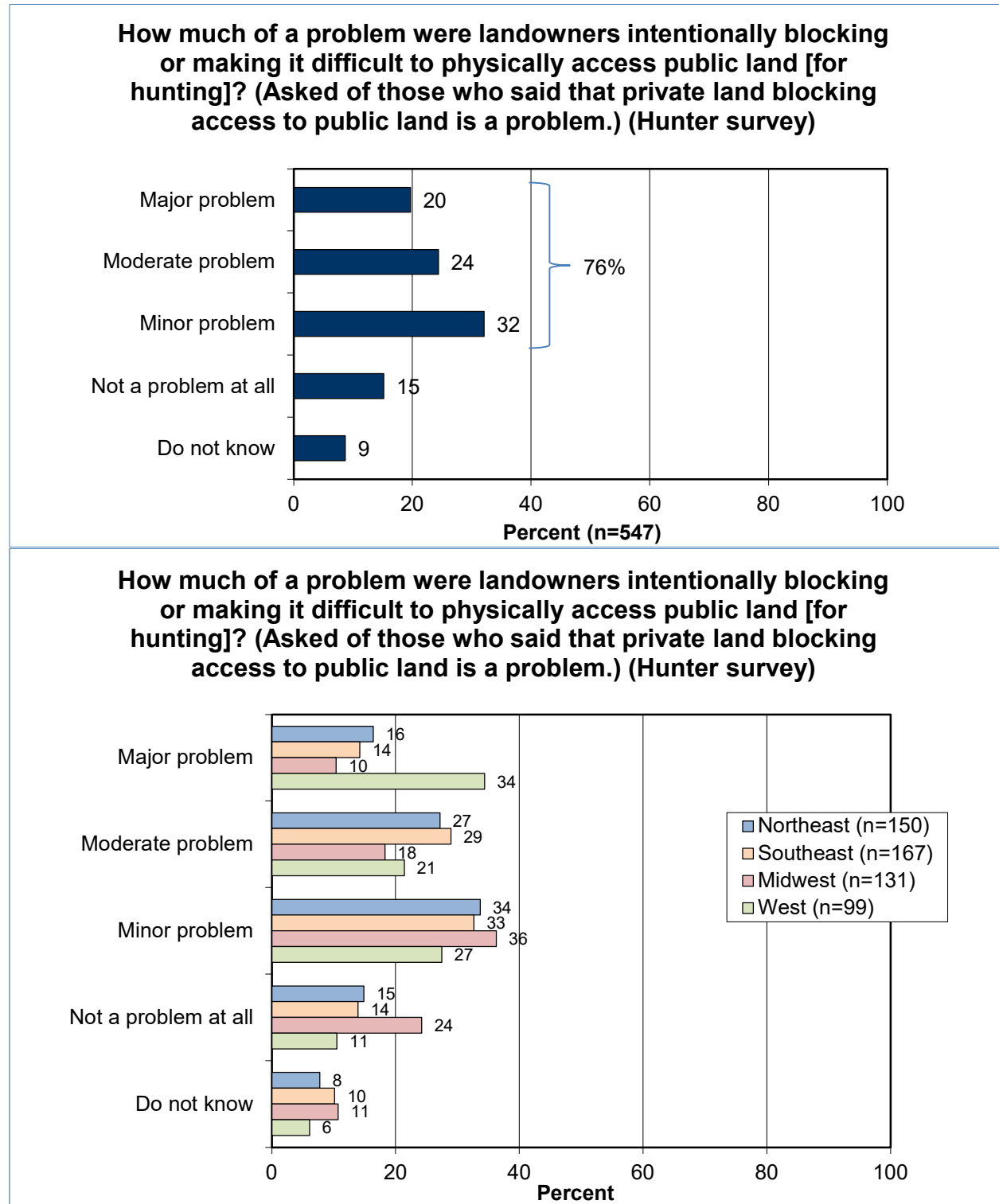
Again among the hunters who said a road was closed by a gate, 29% said the road was a National Forest road, 28% said it was private, 18% said it was another type of public road, and 13% said it was a Bureau of Land Management road.



Among hunters who said that not being able to retrieve their harvest due to ATV restrictions is a problem, 38% agree and 35% disagree it has caused them to hunt less in the past 5 years.



Finally in this section, among hunters who said that private land blocking access to public hunting land is a problem, a strong majority (76%) said the problem to some degree was landowners *intentionally* blocking access.



RATINGS OF ACCESS TO HUNTING LANDS

MAJOR FINDINGS

Hunters are just about evenly divided in their ratings of hunting access in their state, with about half rating hunting access excellent or good and the other half rating it fair or poor. Additionally, ratings are generally not at the very top or bottom but are in the middle: good more than excellent at the top half of the scale, and fair more than poor in the lower half of the scale.

Among hunters in the 19 states surveyed, 47% rate access *excellent* (12%) or *good* (35%), while 49% rate it *fair* (37%) or *poor* (12%).

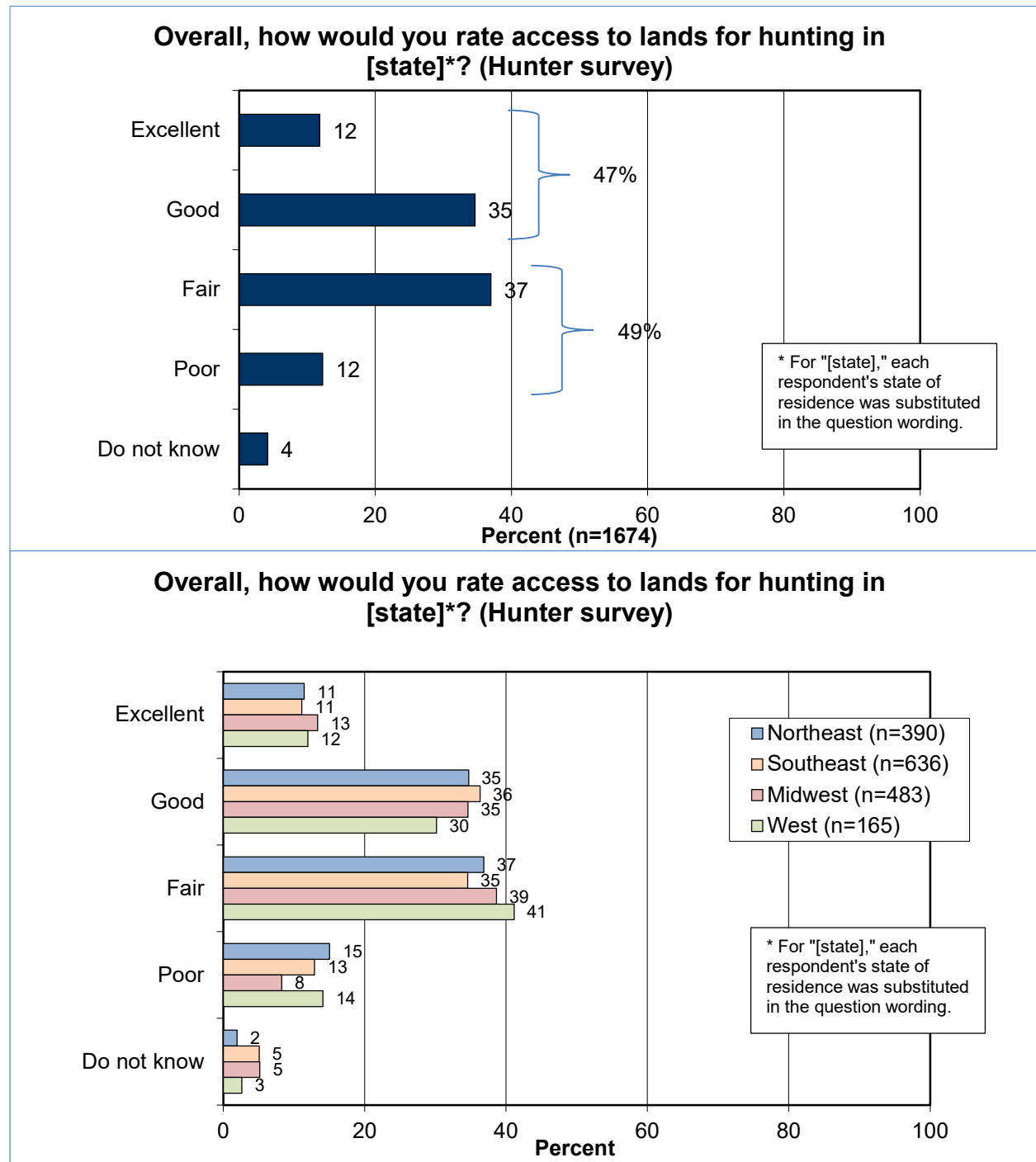
The strong majority of hunters rate their state agency's management of access as excellent or good, not quite double the percentage rating the management of access fair or poor. Ratings of hunters' state agency at managing access are better than the ratings of access itself, suggesting that some hunters do not blame the agency itself for access problems.

The majority (58%) give a rating of *excellent* or *good*, compared to 34% giving a rating of *fair* or *poor*. Again, most ratings are in the middle (*good* and *fair*) rather than in the extremes (*excellent* or *poor*).

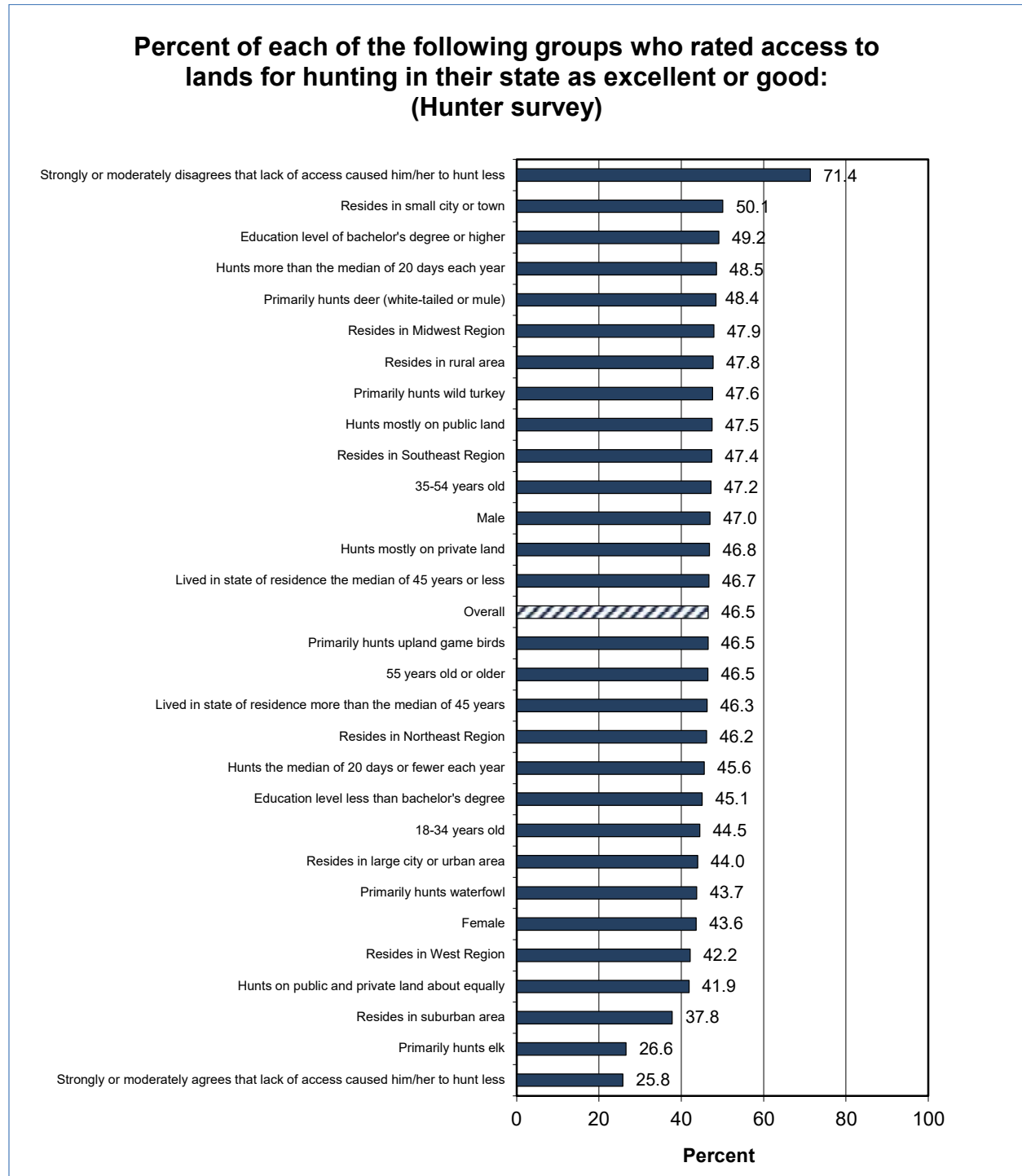
Public land access gets better ratings than private land access: 60% rate public access excellent or good, while only 43% rate private land access excellent or good.

Both public and private land access were rated. For public land: 60% rated it *excellent* or *good*, and 40% rated it *fair* or *poor*. For private land: 43% rated it *excellent* or *good*, and 48% rated it *fair* or *poor*.

Hunters are divided when rating access to hunting lands in their state, with nearly half (49%) rating access *fair* or *poor*, the bottom half of the scale, compared to 47% rating in the top half of the scale. Looking at this another way, nearly three quarters of hunters (72%) give moderate ratings (*good* or *fair*), compared to nearly a quarter (24%) giving an extreme rating (*excellent* or *poor*).

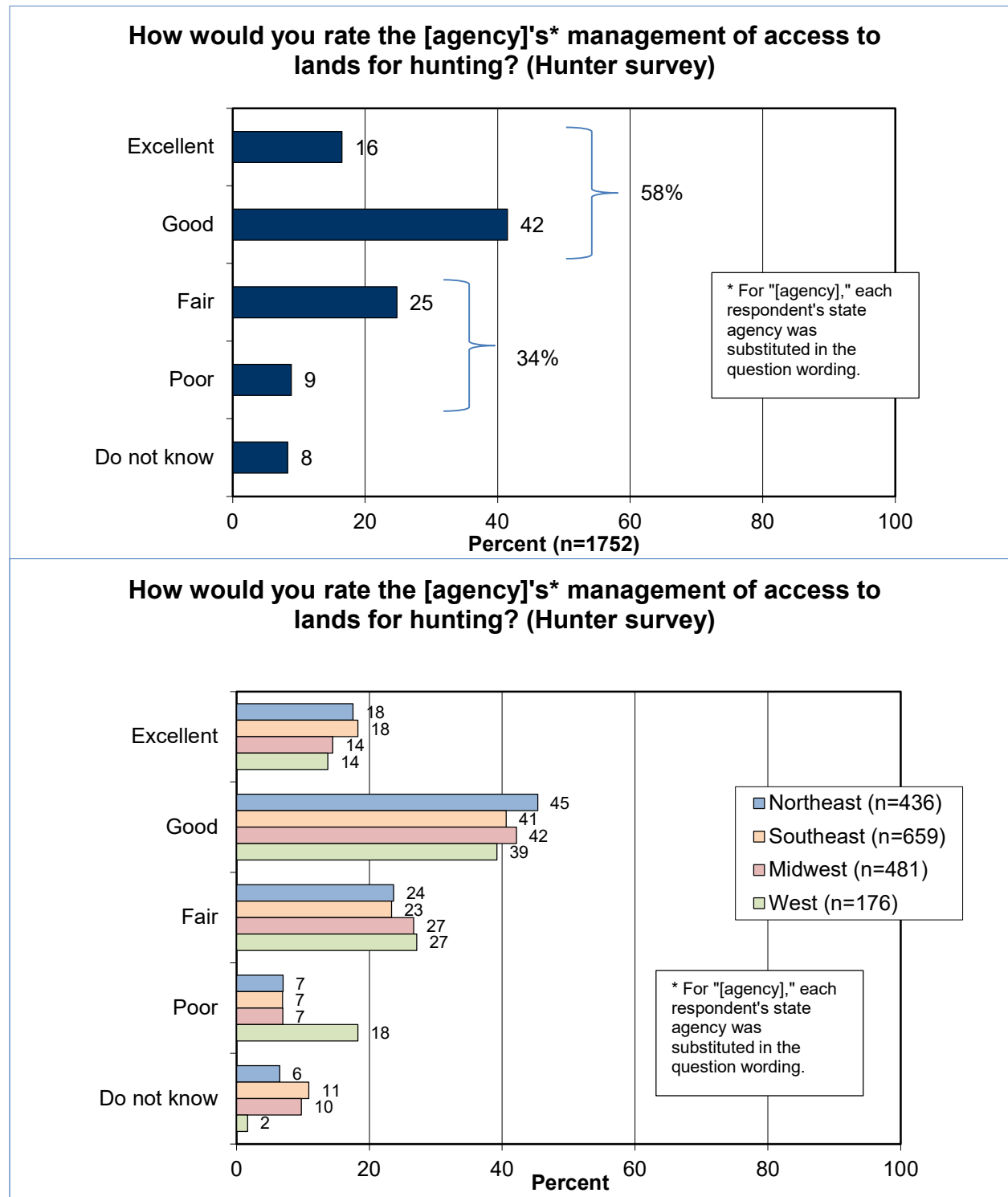


Along with those who disagree that lack of access caused them to hunt less, the groups most likely to rate access to hunting lands in their state as *excellent* or *good* include small city/town residents, those with an education level of a bachelor's degree or higher, those who hunt more than the median of 20 days each year, and deer hunters.



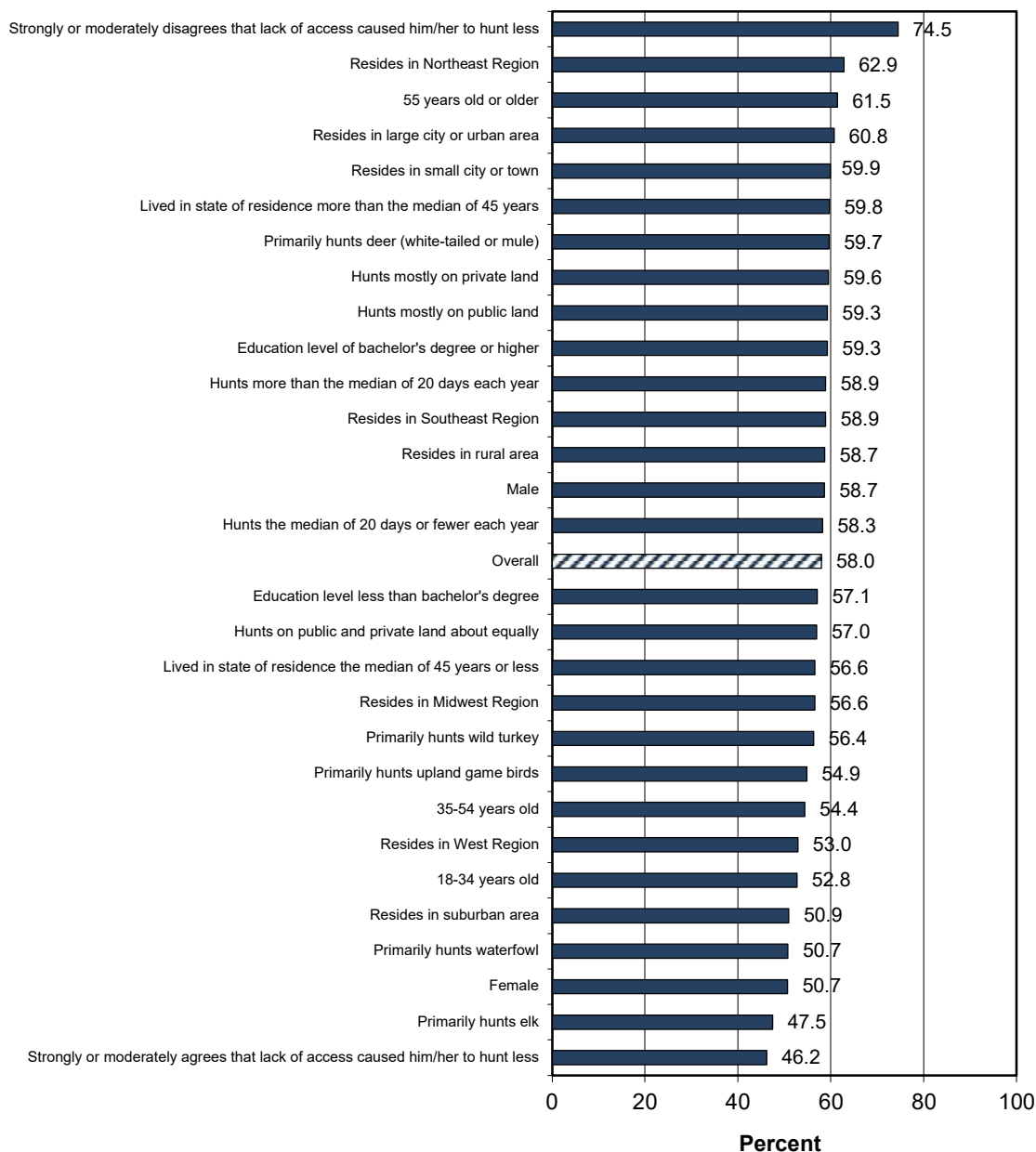
Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

Hunters give markedly higher ratings to their state agency's management of hunting access than they do to the access in general: 58% rate the management *excellent* or *good*, whereas 34% rate it *fair* or *poor*.



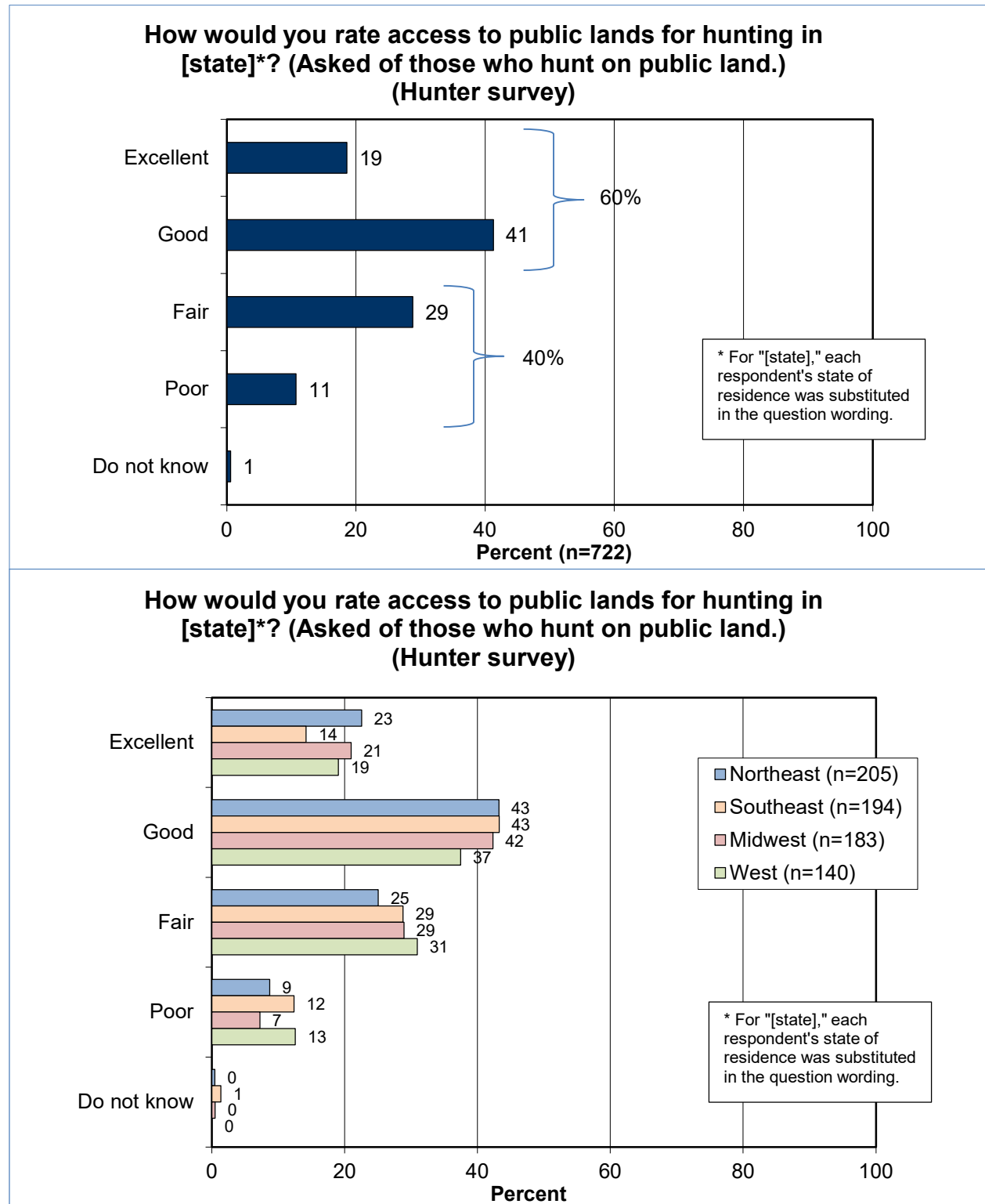
Along with those who disagree that lack of access caused them to hunt less, the groups most likely to rate their state agency's management of hunting access as *excellent* or *good* include Northeast Region residents, those in the older age bracket, and large city/urban residents.

Percent of each of the following groups who rated their state agency's management of access to lands for hunting as excellent or good: (Hunter survey)



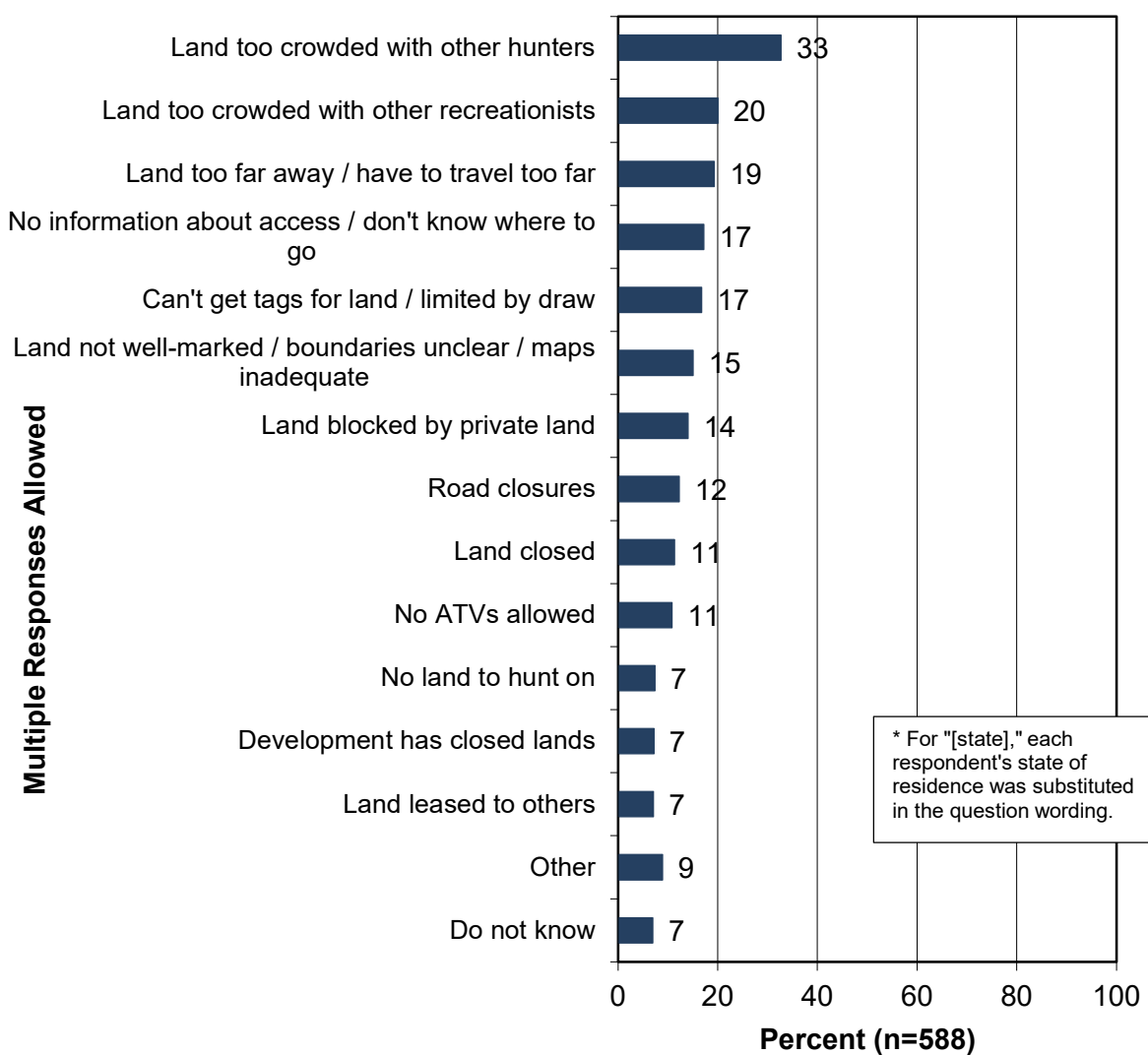
Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

A majority of public land hunters (60%) rate access to public hunting lands as *excellent* or *good*, while 40% rate it *fair* or *poor*.

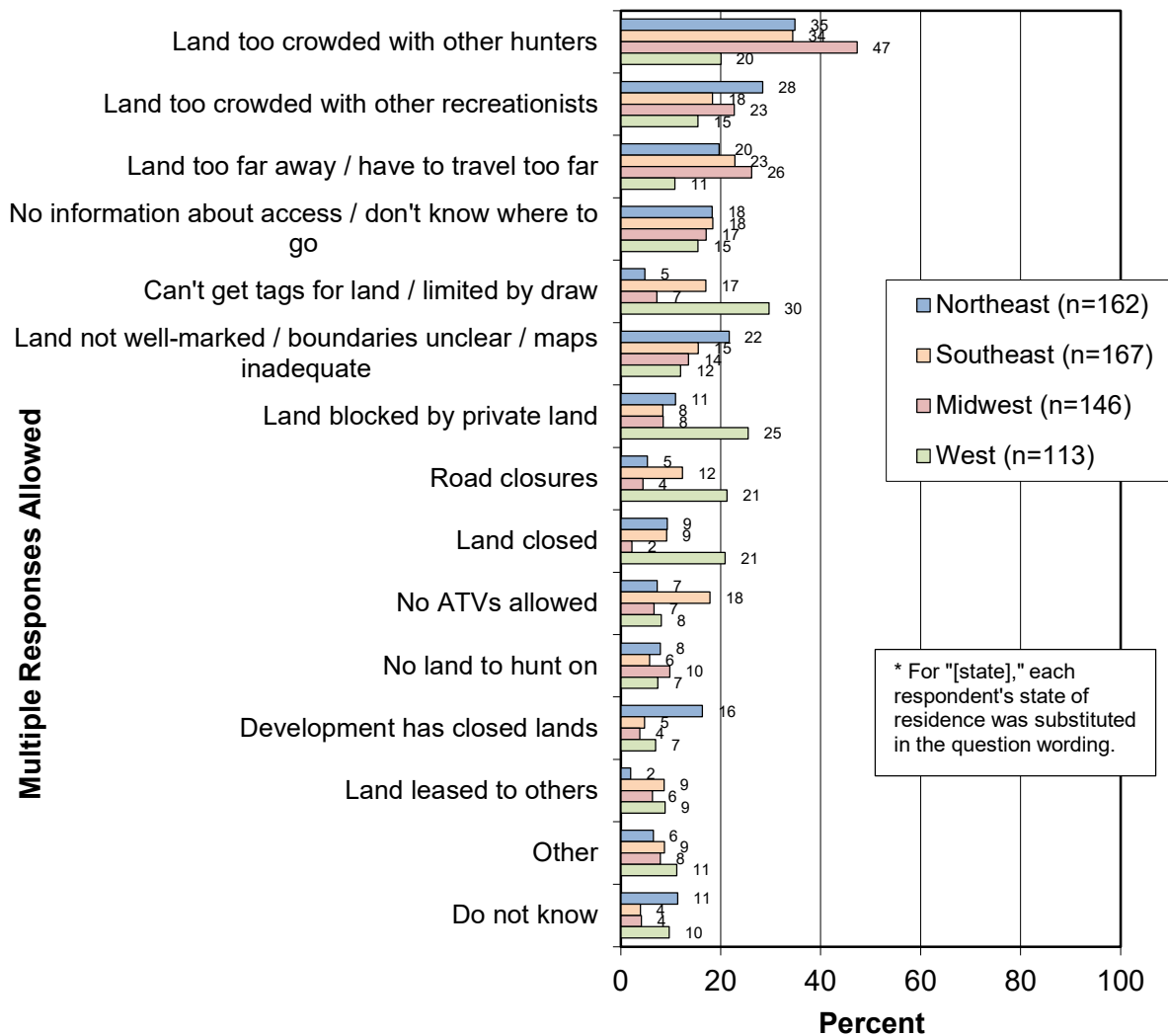


Among hunters who did not rate public hunting access as *excellent*, the top reasons given are crowding (hunters or other recreationists), travel distance, lack of access information, and difficulty in drawing tags.

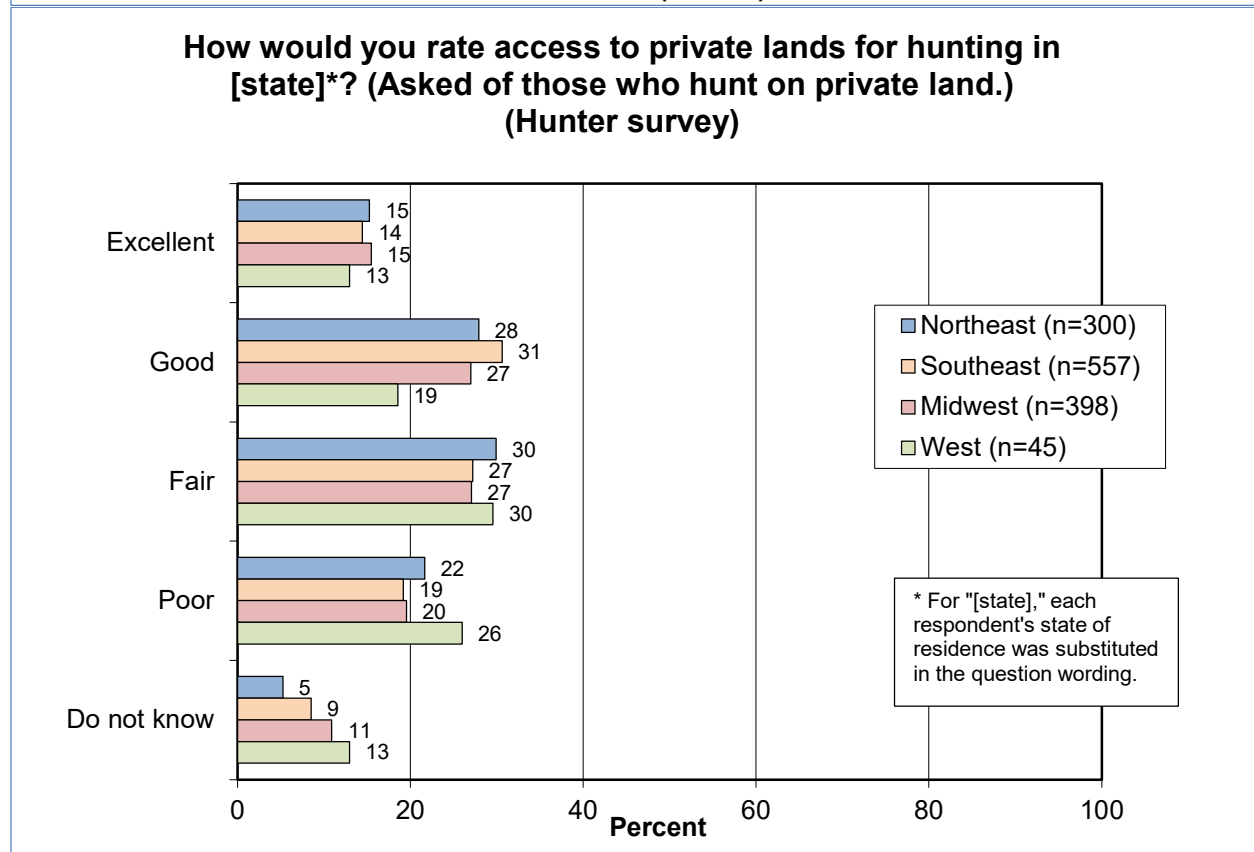
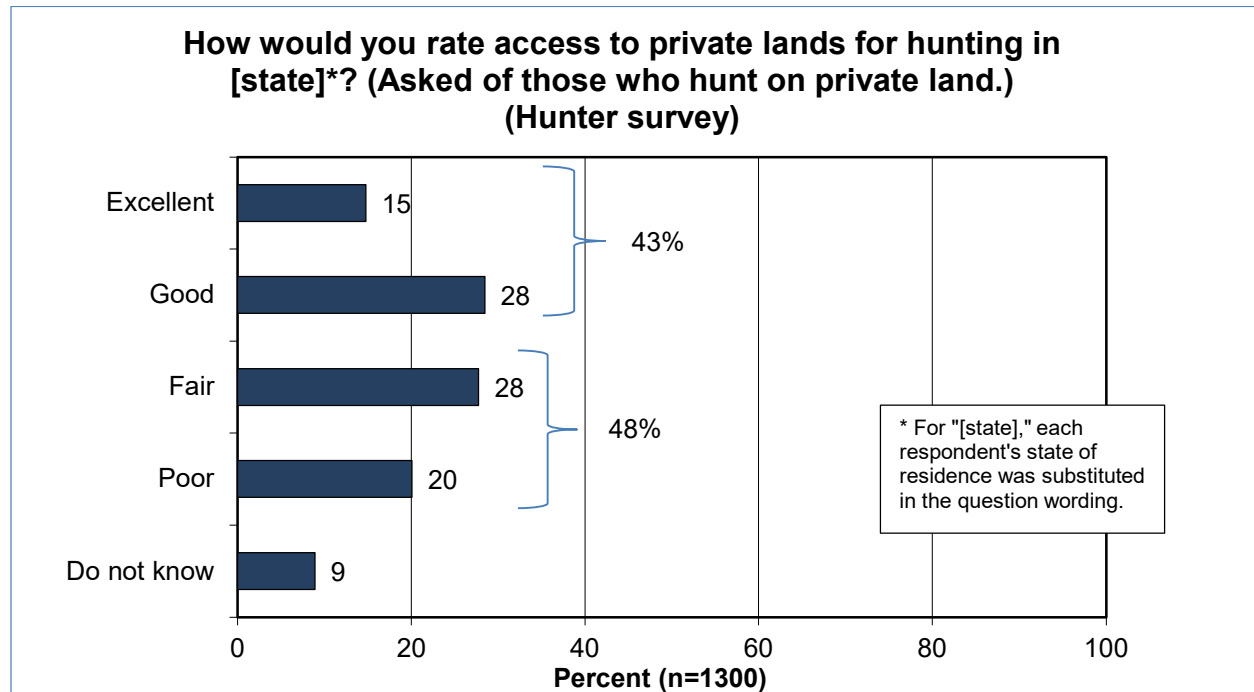
What are the specific reasons you did not rate access to hunt on public land in [state]* higher? (Asked of those who did not rate hunting access on public land as excellent.) (Hunter survey)



What are the specific reasons you did not rate access to hunt on public land in [state]* higher? (Asked of those who did not rate hunting access on public land as excellent.) (Hunter survey)

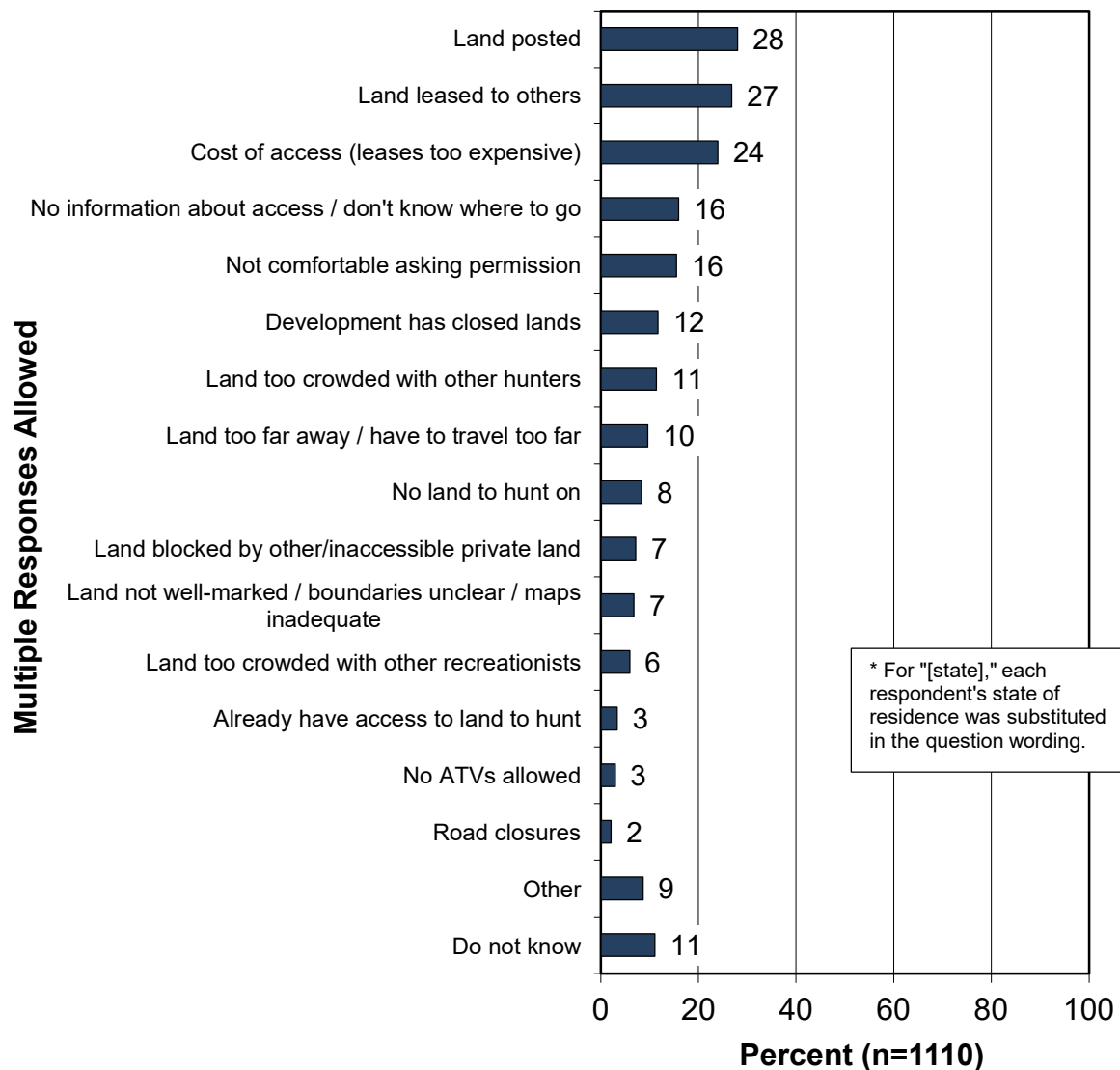


Ratings of private land access are lower than ratings of public land access: 43% of private land hunters rate private access as *excellent* or *good*, while 48% rate it *fair* or *poor*.

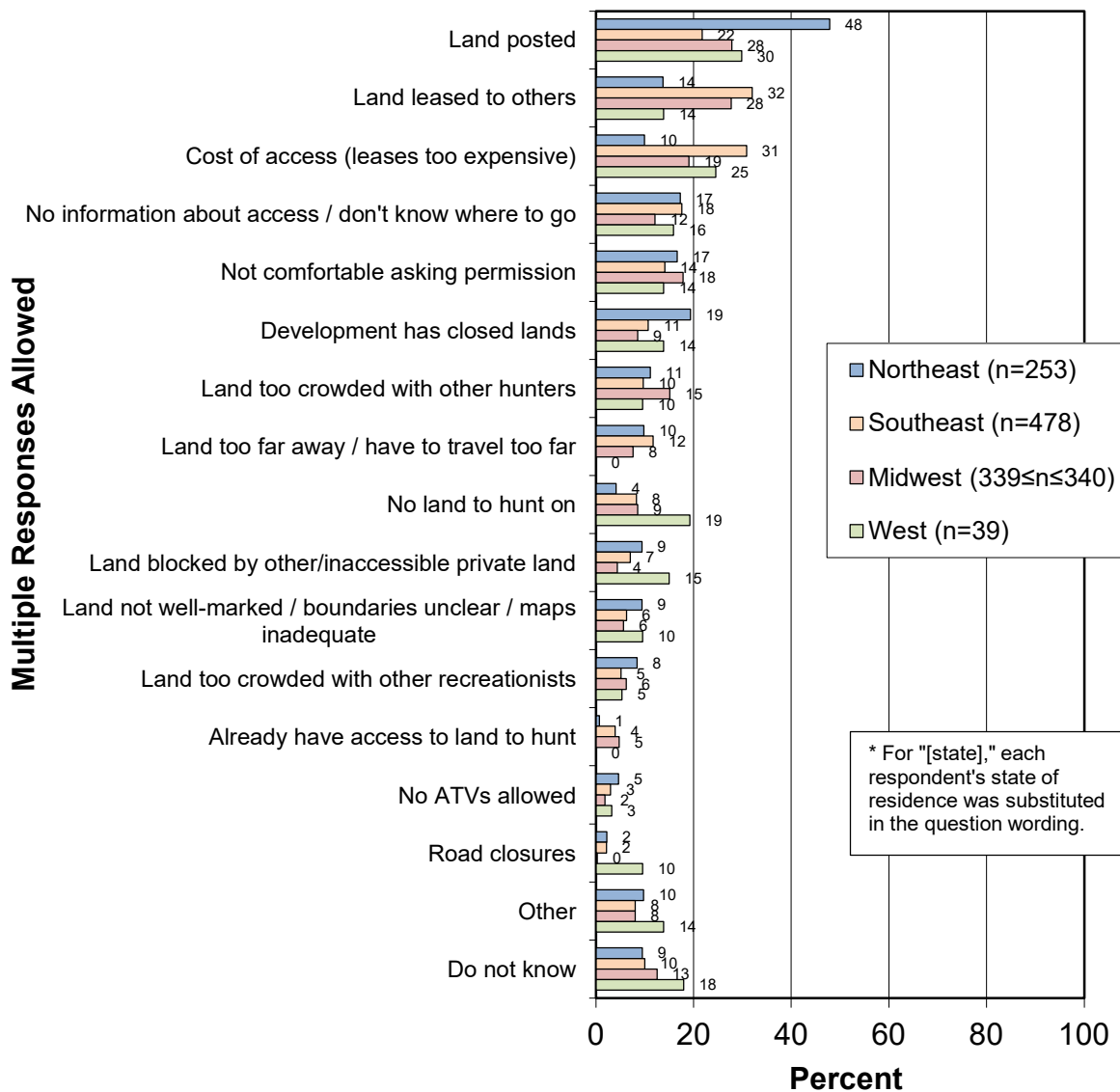


Among those who did not rate private land access as *excellent*, the top reasons given were that the land is posted, the land is leased to others, and the cost of access.

What are the specific reasons you did not rate access to hunt on private land in [state]* higher? (Asked of those who did not rate hunting access on private land as excellent.) (Hunter survey)



What are the specific reasons you did not rate access to hunt on private land in [state]* higher? (Asked of those who did not rate hunting access on private land as excellent.) (Hunter survey)



SOURCES OF INFORMATION USED IN DECIDING WHERE TO HUNT

MAJOR FINDINGS

Friends, family, and word-of-mouth in general together make up the top source of information on places to hunt. Otherwise, people turn to the internet. Nonetheless, information provided with license applications (including the regulations booklet) and through the state agency itself are among the top sources of information.

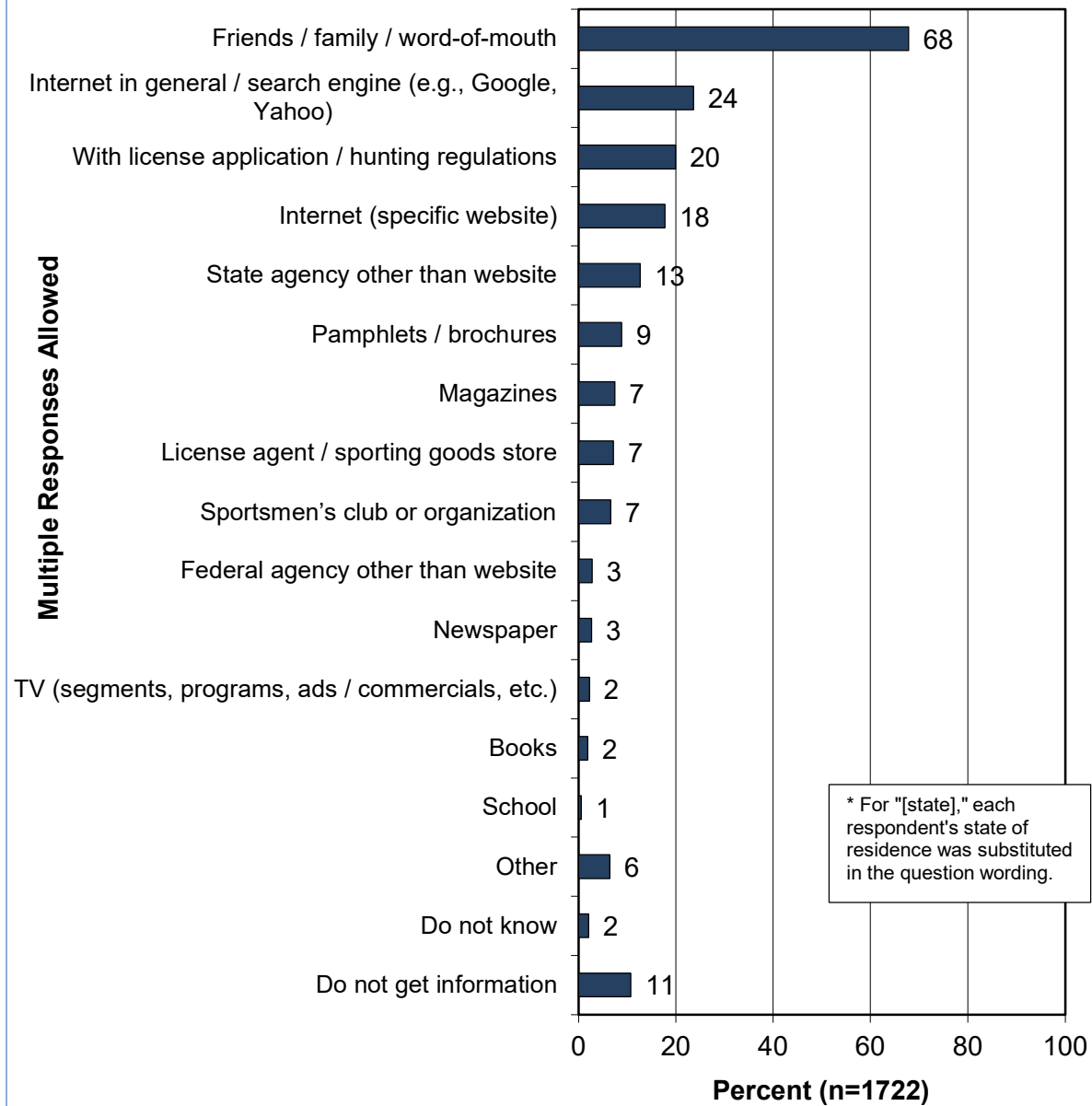
In this open-ended question, the large majority named friends/family/word-of-mouth (68%). This was distantly followed by the internet in general (24%), information provided with the license application/hunting regulations (20%), specific sites on the internet (18%), and the state agency other than its website (13%).

When asked directly, about a third of hunters had visited their state's wildlife agency website, and about a quarter had visited the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's website.

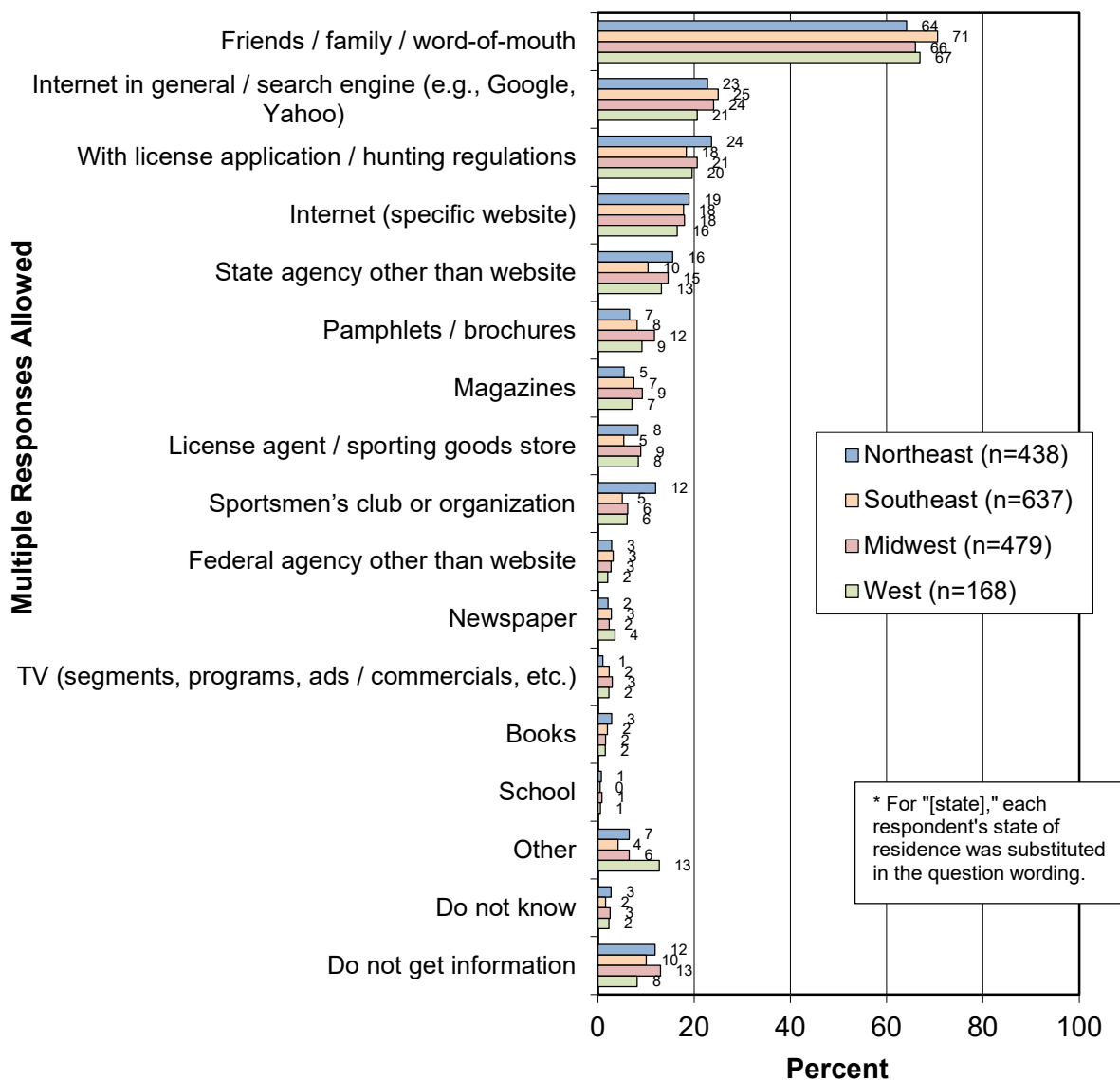
The list was presented to hunters: 36% had visited their state agency's website, 23% had visited the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's website, 14% had visited the U.S. Forest Service's website, and 11% had visited the Bureau of Land Management's website. However, 46% had visited none of those websites.

Two thirds of hunters (68%) get their information on places to hunt through word-of-mouth. Other sources of information include general internet searches (24%), license applications or hunting regulations (20%), specific websites (18%), and their state agency apart from the website (13%).

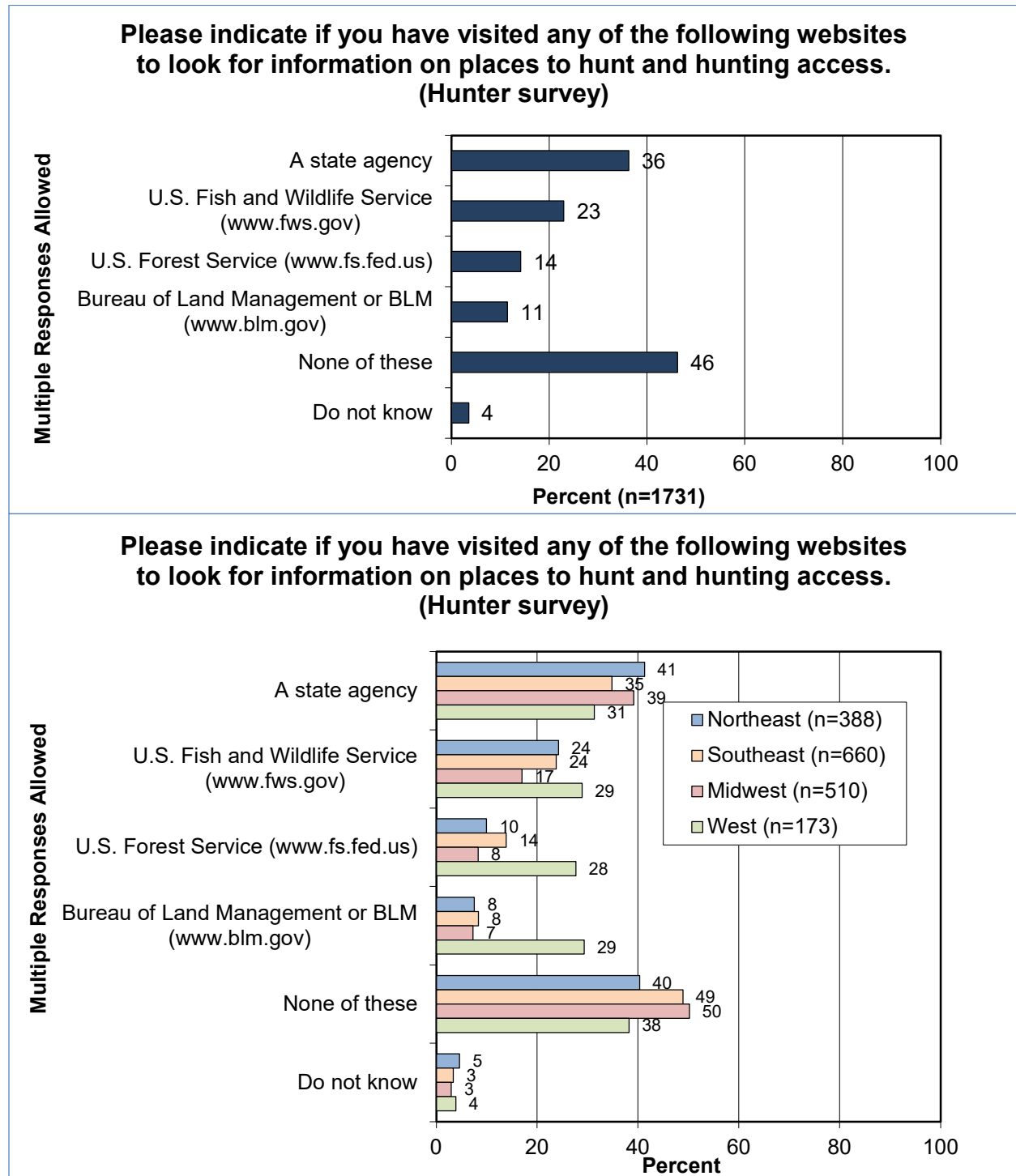
Where do you get information on places to hunt in [state]*? (Hunter survey)



Where do you get information on places to hunt in [state]*? (Hunter survey)



About half of hunters have used official government websites to find information on places to hunt, most commonly a state agency's site.



AWARENESS AND USE OF HUNTING ACCESS PROGRAMS OR RESOURCES

MAJOR FINDINGS

Hunters were asked about their awareness of various access programs or resources. Regarding national level programs or resources, they were most aware of Waterfowl Production Areas, onX Maps, and the Conservation Reserve Program.

Hunters were asked about five national programs or resources and then whatever programs were available in their state, choosing from a scale of *very aware*, *somewhat aware*, or *not at all aware*. Regarding the national programs or resources, they were most aware of Waterfowl Production Areas (56% total awareness, 18% very aware), onX Maps (51% total awareness, 29% very aware), and the Conservation Reserve Program (51% total awareness, 20% very aware).

In addition to awareness, hunters were asked about their participation in or use of the national programs and resources. The most usage was for the onX Maps app, distantly followed by the Conservation Reserve Program and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Waterfowl Production Areas.

Just under a third of hunters (29%) had used the onX Maps app. Also with substantial use were lands in the Conservation Reserve Program (11% used them) and Waterfowl Production Areas (10%).

Finally in the hunter survey, hunters rated the programs or resources (of which they were aware) for making access for hunting easier. Of the national programs or resources, the highest rating (considering excellent and good combined) was for onX Maps (65%). The other four programs all have combined excellent/good ratings of 43% to 48%.

Note that the *do not know* responses were relatively high (from 23% to 40%), as being aware of the programs does not always allow one to rate them. *Fair* and *poor* ratings ranged from 21% down to 12%, so always well below *excellent* and *good* ratings.

The same questions (awareness, participation, and ratings if aware) were asked of hunters for the programs and resources within their state of residence.

- Regarding awareness, the Kansas Walk-In Hunting Access (WIHA) Program, Maine Youth Hunting Days, and Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) in Massachusetts rank at the top among the 19 participating states, each with 71% of its state's hunters being *very aware* of the program.
- WMAs in Massachusetts and the Kansas WIHA Program also rank at the top in participation rates (64% and 61%, respectively, of hunters in the given state participate in these programs), along with New Jersey WMAs (64%).
- The top ratings from those aware of the state programs, looking at *excellent* or *good* ratings combined, are for Indiana Youth Hunting Days (73%), WMAs in Massachusetts (73%), Missouri Conservation Areas (72%), and New Jersey WMAs (72%).

The survey asked about five national programs or resources that pertain to hunting access, and all respondents were asked about those resources. In addition, respondents were asked about programs/resources in their state of residence. Hunters were first asked about their awareness of the programs or resources from a *very aware* to *not at all aware* continuum. Of those national hunting programs or resources, hunters were most aware of Waterfowl Production Areas (56% total awareness, 18% *very aware*), onX Maps (51% total awareness—summed on unrounded numbers, 29% *very aware*), and the Conservation Reserve Program (51% total awareness, 20% *very aware*). In addition, awareness percentages of all state programs or resources are shown in the tables.

The first set of tables shows hunters' awareness of national and state programs or resources, ranked in descending order of *very aware* percentages. The first table shows the five national programs/resources, the second shows the top-ranked programs/resources among all the 19 participating states, and the third shows all the programs/resources within the 19 states.

Hunters' Awareness of National Programs or Resources (Asked of All Hunters)

	Very aware	Somewhat aware	Not at all aware	Do not know
NATIONAL (Hunting Programs or Resources)				
onX Maps - GPS Hunting Map App (onxmaps.com)	29	23	44	5
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)	20	31	45	5
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Waterfowl Production Areas	18	38	39	5
letsghunting.org (website) (also accessed through wheretohunt.org)	6	16	72	6
Open Fields Program	4	15	74	6

Hunters' Awareness of State Programs or Resources (Asked of Hunters Within Their State of Residence) (Top-Ranked Programs/Resources)

	Very aware	Somewhat aware	Not at all aware	Do not know
State Hunting Programs or Resources				
Kansas Walk-In Hunting Access (WIHA) Program	71	21	7	1
Maine Youth Hunting Days	71	16	10	3
Wildlife Management Areas in Massachusetts	71	21	7	2
Florida Wildlife Management Areas	64	19	17	0
Arkansas Youth Hunts	61	27	8	3
Missouri Conservation Areas	58	31	9	3
Indiana Youth Hunting Days	57	32	7	4
New Jersey Wildlife Management Areas	56	36	6	2
Youth Deer Hunt Day (Massachusetts)	55	32	10	3
Florida Quota Hunt Program	51	23	26	0

Hunters' Awareness of State Programs or Resources (Asked of Hunters Within Their State of Residence)

	Very aware	Somewhat aware	Not at all aware	Do not know
ALABAMA (Hunting Programs or Resources)				
Alabama Youth Dove Hunts	35	37	24	4
Outdoor Alabama Interactive Map (found on the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources website, OutdoorAlabama.com)	34	27	35	4
Alabama Forever Wild Land Trust Program	33	36	28	3
Hunt Outdoor Alabama Program	23	37	34	6
Alabama Adult Mentored Hunting Program	21	34	42	3
Alabama Physically Disabled Hunting Locations	14	43	38	5
ALASKA (Hunting Programs or Resources) (No State-Level Programs)				
ARKANSAS (Hunting Programs or Resources)				
Arkansas Youth Hunts	61	27	8	3
Arkansas Game and Fish Commission online maps (www.agfc.com/en/resources/maps/)	37	31	29	4
Arkansas Leased Land WMA Program	22	28	46	4
Arkansas Urban Archery Hunt Program	17	37	41	6
Arkansas Special Active Duty Military and Veteran Hunts	14	30	50	7
Becoming an Outdoors-Woman Arkansas	9	15	68	8
Arkansas Waterfowl Rice Incentive Conservation Enhancement Program	8	29	58	5
Arkansas Hunt Natural Mentor Program	8	27	60	5
Arkansas Outdoor Skills Program	6	22	67	5
FLORIDA (Hunting Programs or Resources)				
Florida Wildlife Management Areas	64	19	17	0
Florida Quota Hunt Program	51	23	26	0
Florida WMA Brochures	44	22	34	0
Florida Deer Management Units	36	22	42	0
Florida Special Opportunity Permit Program	33	19	48	0
Youth Hunting Program of Florida	29	38	31	2
Florida WMA Finder	25	19	56	0
Florida Recreational Use Permit Program	20	24	55	0
Florida Private Lands Deer Management Program	18	25	57	0
Florida Operation Outdoor Freedom	14	13	71	2
INDIANA (Hunting Programs or Resources)				
Indiana Youth Hunting Days	57	32	7	4
Indiana Apprentice License	44	27	25	4
Indiana Where to Hunt Map	14	35	46	5
Indiana Private Lands Access Program	6	25	64	5
Indiana Our Community Hunter Access Program	2	12	80	6
KANSAS (Hunting Programs or Resources)				
Kansas Walk-In Hunting Access (WIHA) Program	71	21	7	1
Kansas Wildlife Areas Wildlife	37	40	21	1
Kansas Special Hunts on Public Lands	23	43	31	3
Kansas iWIHA Limited Access Hunts	22	36	39	2
MAINE (Hunting Programs or Resources)				
Maine Youth Hunting Days	71	16	10	3
Maine Wildlife Management Areas	42	34	20	4
Maine Adult Mentor Hunts for New Hunters	21	28	47	4
Maine Outdoor Partners / Landowner Relations Program	16	40	41	3
Maine Next Step Hunting Programs	7	20	69	4
Maine GIS map of ranges available for hunting	6	14	73	7

Hunters' Awareness of State Programs or Resources (Asked of Hunters Within Their State of Residence) (Continued)

	Very aware	Somewhat aware	Not at all aware	Do not know
MASSACHUSETTS (Hunting Programs or Resources)				
Wildlife Management Areas in Massachusetts	71	21	7	2
Youth Deer Hunt Day	55	32	10	3
Youth Turkey Hunt Program	48	32	16	4
Direct Emails from MassWildlife	43	25	24	7
MassWildlife Where to Hunt Webpage https	26	23	47	4
MassWildlife Lands Viewer	25	18	45	11
MassWildlife Outdoor Recreation Map	24	27	41	8
MassWildlife Learn To Hunt Programs	22	39	30	8
MassWildlife Facebook Page	20	19	51	10
Wildlife Conservation Easements	20	28	41	11
MISSOURI (Hunting Programs or Resources)				
Missouri Conservation Areas	58	31	9	3
Missouri Managed Hunts	40	45	12	3
Missouri Outdoor Recreational Access Program	13	33	50	4
Missouri Where to Hunt & Shoot	8	31	56	4
NEW JERSEY (Hunting Programs or Resources)				
New Jersey Wildlife Management Areas	56	36	6	2
Take a Kid Hunting Program	49	40	8	3
New Jersey Public Deer Hunting Land	37	45	15	2
New Jersey Public Turkey Hunting Land	30	42	24	5
New Jersey State Park and Forest Hunting Land Maps	25	49	24	2
New Jersey Natural Lands and Trust Preserve	22	33	40	5
Veterans and Active Duty Military Waterfowl Hunting Days	20	33	41	6
New Jersey Hunting and Trapping Explorer	10	24	60	5
Wading River WMA Blinds for Youth Waterfowl Hunters	8	20	63	9
NJ-Geo Web	7	15	70	8
NEW YORK (Hunting Programs or Resources)				
New York Department of Environmental Conservation Junior Hunter and Trapper opportunities	35	35	23	6
New York Department of Environmental Conservation Pheasant Hunt Program	24	33	37	6
New York Department of Environmental Conservation hunting permits for those with disabilities	16	38	38	8
New York Department of Environmental Conservation state-owned land that provides access to hunters and trappers with disabilities	16	35	42	7
New York Fish and Wildlife Management Act Cooperative Areas	14	32	49	6
New York Motorized Access Program for People with Disabilities	7	27	57	9
NORTH CAROLINA (Hunting Programs or Resources)				
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission online game land maps	38	31	26	4
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Permit Hunting Program	31	30	35	4
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Disabled Sportsman Permit Hunt Program	20	32	42	6
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Disabled Access Permit	20	25	49	6
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Huntmaster Lift Program	9	9	75	6
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Track Chair Program	7	14	72	6

Hunters' Awareness of State Programs or Resources (Asked of Hunters Within Their State of Residence) (Continued)

	Very aware	Somewhat aware	Not at all aware	Do not know
OKLAHOMA (Hunting Programs or Resources)				
Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation Wildlife Management Areas	45	39	14	3
Oklahoma Controlled Hunts	40	40	16	4
Oklahoma Land Access Program	17	39	39	5
OREGON (Hunting Programs or Resources)				
Oregon Habitat and Access Program	12	27	55	6
Oregon Upland Cooperative Access Program	7	13	74	6
Oregon Open Fields Program	5	13	77	5
TEXAS (Hunting Programs or Resources)				
Texas Drawn Hunts	46	35	15	4
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Public Hunting Program	37	41	19	4
Texas Annual Public Hunting Permit (Walk-In)	28	41	26	4
Texas Interactive Map of Public Hunting Areas (found on the Texas Parks and Wildlife website)	22	32	42	4
Texas Mentored Hunting Workshops	13	28	54	5
VERMONT (Hunting Programs or Resources) (No State-Level Programs)				
VIRGINIA (Hunting Programs or Resources)				
Virginia special youth hunts, such as the youth waterfowl and youth goose hunts	32	36	27	5
Virginia Quota and Managed Hunts	26	37	32	5
Virginia Notes from the Field newsletter	18	26	50	6
Virginia Find Game / Find Wildlife GIS Mapping System	10	22	63	5
Virginia Public Opportunities for Wildlife-Related Recreation	7	27	59	6
WEST VIRGINIA (Hunting Programs or Resources)				
West Virginia Special Hunting Seasons	42	40	16	2
West Virginia Public Hunting Lands	29	47	22	2
West Virginia State Park Deer Hunting	27	42	28	3
West Virginia online interactive hunting and fishing map	18	28	52	2
West Virginia Private Lands Public Access Program	6	15	75	3
West Virginia Physically Challenged Hunter Access Trails	4	26	66	4
WISCONSIN (Hunting Programs or Resources)				
Wisconsin Managed Forest Law Program	27	29	40	4
Wisconsin Agricultural Damage Program	19	41	36	4
Wisconsin Voluntary Public Access Program	7	26	63	4
Wisconsin Turkey Hunter Access Program	6	18	70	7

The survey also asked about participation in or use of the various programs or resources among hunters. The most participation at the national level was in use of the onX Maps app (29% of hunters used it). Also with relatively robust use was the Conservation Reserve Program (11%) and the Waterfowl Production Areas (10%). Tables of participation rates are shown for the national programs/resources, the top-ranked programs/resources among the 19 states, and all programs/resources within those states.

Hunters' Participation in National Programs or Resources (Shown Out of All Hunters)

	Participation Rate
NATIONAL (Hunting Programs or Resources)	
onX Maps - GPS Hunting Map App (onxmaps.com)	29
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)	11
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Waterfowl Production Areas	10
letsghunting.org (website) (also accessed through wheretohunt.org)	5
Open Fields Program	3

Hunters' Participation in State Programs or Resources (Shown Out of All Hunters Within Their State of Residence) (Top-Ranked Programs/Resources)

	Participation Rate
State Hunting Programs or Resources	
Wildlife Management Areas in Massachusetts	64
New Jersey Wildlife Management Areas	64
Kansas Walk-In Hunting Access (WIHA) Program	61
Florida Wildlife Management Areas	55
Direct Emails from MassWildlife	47
New Jersey Public Deer Hunting Land	47
Florida Quota Hunt Program	45
Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation Wildlife Management Areas	45
Florida WMA Brochures	43
Missouri Conservation Areas	43

Hunters' Participation in State Programs or Resources (Shown Out of All Hunters Within Their State of Residence)

ALABAMA (Hunting Programs or Resources)	
Outdoor Alabama Interactive Map (found on the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources website, OutdoorAlabama.com)	30
Alabama Forever Wild Land Trust Program	16
Alabama Youth Dove Hunts	14
Hunt Outdoor Alabama Program	8
Alabama Adult Mentored Hunting Program	6
Alabama Physically Disabled Hunting Locations	5
ALASKA (Hunting Programs or Resources) (No State-Level Programs)	

Hunters' Participation in State Programs or Resources (Shown Out of All Hunters Within Their State of Residence) (Continued)

	Participation Rate
ARKANSAS (Hunting Programs or Resources)	
Arkansas Game and Fish Commission online maps (www.agfc.com/en/resources/maps/)	32
Arkansas Youth Hunts	32
Arkansas Leased Land WMA Program	14
Arkansas Special Active Duty Military and Veteran Hunts	4
Arkansas Hunt Natural Mentor Program	3
Arkansas Waterfowl Rice Incentive Conservation Enhancement Program	2
Arkansas Urban Archery Hunt Program	2
Becoming an Outdoors-Woman Arkansas	2
Arkansas Outdoor Skills Program	1
FLORIDA (Hunting Programs or Resources)	
Florida Wildlife Management Areas	55
Florida Quota Hunt Program	45
Florida WMA Brochures	43
Florida Deer Management Units	37
Florida Recreational Use Permit Program	25
Florida WMA Finder	25
Youth Hunting Program of Florida	24
Florida Special Opportunity Permit Program	21
Florida Private Lands Deer Management Program	17
Florida Operation Outdoor Freedom	10
INDIANA (Hunting Programs or Resources)	
Indiana Youth Hunting Days	34
Indiana Apprentice License	27
Indiana Where to Hunt Map	19
Indiana Private Lands Access Program	6
Indiana Our Community Hunter Access Program	3
KANSAS (Hunting Programs or Resources)	
Kansas Walk-In Hunting Access (WIHA) Program	61
Kansas Wildlife Areas Wildlife	29
Kansas Special Hunts on Public Lands	12
Kansas iWIHA Limited Access Hunts	11
MAINE (Hunting Programs or Resources)	
Maine Wildlife Management Areas	37
Maine Youth Hunting Days	30
Maine Outdoor Partners / Landowner Relations Program	14
Maine Adult Mentor Hunts for New Hunters	6
Maine GIS map of ranges available for hunting	5
Maine Next Step Hunting Programs	3

Hunters' Participation in State Programs or Resources (Shown Out of All Hunters Within Their State of Residence) (Continued)

	Participation Rate
MASSACHUSETTS (Hunting Programs or Resources)	
Wildlife Management Areas in Massachusetts	64
Direct Emails from MassWildlife	47
MassWildlife Lands Viewer	26
MassWildlife Where to Hunt Webpage https	24
MassWildlife Outdoor Recreation Map	23
Wildlife Conservation Easements	20
MassWildlife Facebook Page	14
Youth Deer Hunt Day	14
MassWildlife Learn To Hunt Programs	11
Youth Turkey Hunt Program	11
MISSOURI (Hunting Programs or Resources)	
Missouri Conservation Areas	43
Missouri Managed Hunts	13
Missouri Where to Hunt & Shoot	7
Missouri Outdoor Recreational Access Program	4
NEW JERSEY (Hunting Programs or Resources)	
New Jersey Wildlife Management Areas	64
New Jersey Public Deer Hunting Land	47
New Jersey State Park and Forest Hunting Land Maps	31
New Jersey Public Turkey Hunting Land	29
New Jersey Natural Lands and Trust Preserve	16
Take a Kid Hunting Program	16
New Jersey Hunting and Trapping Explorer	10
NJ-Geo Web	4
Veterans and Active Duty Military Waterfowl Hunting Days	3
Wading River WMA Blinds for Youth Waterfowl Hunters	1
NEW YORK (Hunting Programs or Resources)	
New York Department of Environmental Conservation Junior Hunter and Trapper opportunities	18
New York Department of Environmental Conservation Pheasant Hunt Program	14
New York Fish and Wildlife Management Act Cooperative Areas	11
New York Department of Environmental Conservation state-owned land that provides access to hunters and trappers with disabilities	7
New York Motorized Access Program for People with Disabilities	2
New York Department of Environmental Conservation hunting permits for those with disabilities	2
NORTH CAROLINA (Hunting Programs or Resources)	
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission online game land maps	34
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Permit Hunting Program	25
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Disabled Sportsman Permit Hunt Program	5
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Disabled Access Permit	3
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Track Chair Program	0
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Huntmaster Lift Program	1
OKLAHOMA (Hunting Programs or Resources)	
Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation Wildlife Management Areas	45
Oklahoma Controlled Hunts	26
Oklahoma Land Access Program	12

Hunters' Participation in State Programs or Resources (Shown Out of All Hunters Within Their State of Residence) (Continued)

	Participation Rate
OREGON (Hunting Programs or Resources)	
Oregon Habitat and Access Program	6
Oregon Open Fields Program	3
Oregon Upland Cooperative Access Program	3
TEXAS (Hunting Programs or Resources)	
Texas Drawn Hunts	26
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Public Hunting Program	19
Texas Annual Public Hunting Permit (Walk-In)	17
Texas Interactive Map of Public Hunting Areas (found on the Texas Parks and Wildlife website)	14
Texas Mentored Hunting Workshops	2
VERMONT (Hunting Programs or Resources) (No State-Level Programs)	
VIRGINIA (Hunting Programs or Resources)	
Virginia Notes from the Field newsletter	18
Virginia Quota and Managed Hunts	15
Virginia special youth hunts, such as the youth waterfowl and youth goose hunts	15
Virginia Find Game / Find Wildlife GIS Mapping System	10
Virginia Public Opportunities for Wildlife-Related Recreation	5
WEST VIRGINIA (Hunting Programs or Resources)	
West Virginia Public Hunting Lands	33
West Virginia Special Hunting Seasons	31
West Virginia online interactive hunting and fishing map	21
West Virginia State Park Deer Hunting	10
West Virginia Private Lands Public Access Program	6
West Virginia Physically Challenged Hunter Access Trails	5
WISCONSIN (Hunting Programs or Resources)	
Wisconsin Managed Forest Law Program	22
Wisconsin Voluntary Public Access Program	8
Wisconsin Agricultural Damage Program	5
Wisconsin Turkey Hunter Access Program	4

Hunters rated the programs and resources of which they were aware for making access for hunting easier, using an excellent-good-fair-poor scale. Of the national programs and resources, the highest rating (considering *excellent* and *good* combined) was for onX Maps (65%). The other four programs/resources all have excellent/good ratings of 43% to 48%. Tables are also shown for statewide programs/resources (top-ranked and overall). All tables are ranked by *excellent* and *good* combined percentages.

Hunters' Ratings of National Hunting Access Programs or Resources (Asked of Those Aware of the Programs/Resources)

Programs or Resources Rated (Rating for making access to land for hunting easier.)	Excellent	Good	Excellent or good combined*	Fair	Poor	Fair or poor combined*	Do not know / Does not apply
NATIONAL (Hunting Programs or Resources)							
onX Maps - GPS Hunting Map App (onxmaps.com)	35	30	65	10	2	12	23
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)	17	30	48	16	5	21	31
letsghunting.org (website) (also accessed through wheretohunt.org)	9	36	45	16	3	19	35
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Waterfowl Production Areas	14	31	44	13	3	16	40
Open Fields Program	9	34	43	14	3	18	39

*Summed on unrounded numbers (table values are shown as integers).

Hunters' Ratings of State Hunting Access Programs or Resources (Asked of Those Aware of the Programs/Resources in Their State of Residence) (Top-Ranked Programs/Resources)

Programs or Resources Rated (Rating for making access to land for hunting easier.)	Excellent	Good	Excellent or good combined*	Fair	Poor	Fair or poor combined*	Do not know / Does not apply
State Hunting Programs or Resources							
Indiana Youth Hunting Days	42	31	73	7	2	9	18
Wildlife Management Areas in Massachusetts	35	38	73	15	3	18	9
Missouri Conservation Areas	35	37	72	12	2	14	14
New Jersey Wildlife Management Areas	24	48	72	14	3	17	11
Indiana Apprentice License	39	30	70	8	2	11	20
Maine Youth Hunting Days	40	30	70	7	1	8	22
Direct Emails from MassWildlife	24	46	70	15	3	18	12
Kansas Walk-In Hunting Access (WIHA) Program	40	29	69	14	5	19	12
MassWildlife Lands Viewer	26	43	69	13	6	18	13
Florida WMA Brochures	20	47	68	16	5	22	11

*Summed on unrounded numbers (table values are shown as integers).

Hunters' Ratings of State Hunting Access Programs or Resources (Asked of Those Aware of the Programs/Resources in Their State of Residence)

Programs or Resources Rated (Rating for making access to land for hunting easier.)	Excellent	Good	Excellent or good combined*	Fair	Poor	Fair or poor combined*	Do not know / Does not apply
ALABAMA (Hunting Programs or Resources)							
Outdoor Alabama Interactive Map (found on the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources website, OutdoorAlabama.com)	21	45	66	12	0	12	22
Alabama Forever Wild Land Trust Program	23	38	61	8	5	13	26
Alabama Youth Dove Hunts	23	33	56	6	2	8	36
Alabama Adult Mentored Hunting Program	20	35	55	3	0	3	43
Alabama Physically Disabled Hunting Locations	23	28	51	7	3	10	39
Hunt Outdoor Alabama Program	19	31	50	9	1	11	39
ALASKA (Hunting Programs or Resources) (No State-Level Programs)							

*Summed on unrounded numbers (table values are shown as integers).

Hunters' Ratings of State Hunting Access Programs or Resources (Asked of Those Aware of the Programs/Resources in Their State of Residence) (Continued)

Programs or Resources Rated (Rating for making access to land for hunting easier.)	Excellent	Good	Excellent or good combined*	Fair	Poor	Fair or poor combined*	Do not know / Does not apply
ARKANSAS (Hunting Programs or Resources)							
Arkansas Game and Fish Commission online maps (www.agfc.com/en/resources/maps/)	20	44	64	17	1	18	18
Arkansas Youth Hunts	29	34	63	8	2	10	27
Arkansas Leased Land WMA Program	21	38	59	15	2	17	24
Arkansas Urban Archery Hunt Program	18	34	53	13	0	13	35
Arkansas Waterfowl Rice Incentive Conservation Enhancement Program	10	41	51	13	3	16	33
Arkansas Outdoor Skills Program	15	35	50	11	2	12	38
Arkansas Hunt Natural Mentor Program	16	33	49	11	3	14	38
Arkansas Special Active Duty Military and Veteran Hunts	17	29	47	8	3	12	41
Becoming an Outdoors-Woman Arkansas	18	28	46	8	2	10	44
FLORIDA (Hunting Programs or Resources)							
Florida WMA Brochures	20	47	68	16	5	22	11
Florida Wildlife Management Areas	23	40	62	22	2	24	14
Florida Special Opportunity Permit Program	14	48	62	17	7	24	14
Florida WMA Finder	4	57	61	16	6	23	16
Florida Deer Management Units	9	45	54	31	0	31	15
Florida Quota Hunt Program	16	34	49	24	10	34	17
Florida Recreational Use Permit Program	0	48	48	36	10	46	6
Youth Hunting Program of Florida	15	33	48	15	3	17	35
Florida Private Lands Deer Management Program	4	29	33	23	19	42	25
Florida Operation Outdoor Freedom	0	26	26	37	0	37	37
INDIANA (Hunting Programs or Resources)							
Indiana Youth Hunting Days	42	31	73	7	2	9	18
Indiana Apprentice License	39	30	70	8	2	11	20
Indiana Where to Hunt Map	16	35	51	18	4	22	27
Indiana Our Community Hunter Access Program	19	29	48	14	10	24	28
Indiana Private Lands Access Program	16	25	41	24	10	33	26
KANSAS (Hunting Programs or Resources)							
Kansas Walk-In Hunting Access (WIHA) Program	40	29	69	14	5	19	12
Kansas Wildlife Areas Wildlife	19	34	53	15	2	16	31
Kansas Special Hunts on Public Lands	17	27	44	11	6	17	39
Kansas iWIHA Limited Access Hunts	11	26	38	15	6	22	41

*Summed on unrounded numbers (table values are shown as integers).

Hunters' Ratings of State Hunting Access Programs or Resources (Asked of Those Aware of the Programs/Resources in Their State of Residence) (Continued)

Programs or Resources Rated (Rating for making access to land for hunting easier.)	Excellent	Good	Excellent or good combined*	Fair	Poor	Fair or poor combined*	Do not know / Does not apply
MAINE (Hunting Programs or Resources)							
Maine Youth Hunting Days	40	30	70	7	1	8	22
Maine GIS map of ranges available for hunting	26	35	60	14	3	17	23
Maine Wildlife Management Areas	30	29	59	14	3	17	24
Maine Adult Mentor Hunts for New Hunters	22	29	51	13	0	13	35
Maine Outdoor Partners / Landowner Relations Program	18	26	44	20	5	25	31
Maine Next Step Hunting Programs	12	22	34	17	4	22	45
MASSACHUSETTS (Hunting Programs or Resources)							
Wildlife Management Areas in Massachusetts	35	38	73	15	3	18	9
Direct Emails from MassWildlife	24	46	70	15	3	18	12
MassWildlife Lands Viewer	26	43	69	13	6	18	13
MassWildlife Where to Hunt Webpage https	20	45	64	16	0	16	20
MassWildlife Outdoor Recreation Map	15	49	64	16	2	18	19
MassWildlife Facebook Page	15	36	51	17	4	21	28
Youth Turkey Hunt Program	23	20	43	11	3	14	44
Wildlife Conservation Easements	16	27	43	19	6	25	32
MassWildlife Learn To Hunt Programs	17	19	36	9	2	11	54
Youth Deer Hunt Day	18	16	33	13	1	14	52
MISSOURI (Hunting Programs or Resources)							
Missouri Conservation Areas	35	37	72	12	2	14	14
Missouri Managed Hunts	22	29	52	13	2	15	33
Missouri Where to Hunt & Shoot	19	30	49	13	0	13	37
Missouri Outdoor Recreational Access Program	15	32	46	14	4	18	36
NEW JERSEY (Hunting Programs or Resources)							
New Jersey Wildlife Management Areas	24	48	72	14	3	17	11
New Jersey Public Deer Hunting Land	21	44	65	18	3	21	15
New Jersey Public Turkey Hunting Land	17	38	54	18	2	20	26
Take a Kid Hunting Program	22	29	51	6	2	7	42
New Jersey State Park and Forest Hunting Land Maps	15	33	49	21	5	25	26
New Jersey Hunting and Trapping Explorer	20	25	46	11	0	11	43
New Jersey Natural Lands and Trust Preserve	16	28	44	18	3	21	35
Veterans and Active Duty Military Waterfowl Hunting Days	21	23	44	6	1	7	49
Wading River WMA Blinds for Youth Waterfowl Hunters	13	24	37	4	8	12	52
NJ-Geo Web	16	13	29	15	3	18	53

*Summed on unrounded numbers (table values are shown as integers).

Hunters' Ratings of State Hunting Access Programs or Resources (Asked of Those Aware of the Programs/Resources in Their State of Residence) (Continued)

Programs or Resources Rated (Rating for making access to land for hunting easier.)	Excellent	Good	Excellent or good combined*	Fair	Poor	Fair or poor combined*	Do not know / Does not apply
NEW YORK (Hunting Programs or Resources)							
New York Department of Environmental Conservation Junior Hunter and Trapper opportunities	23	34	57	8	1	10	34
New York Fish and Wildlife Management Act Cooperative Areas	15	34	49	15	3	18	34
New York Department of Environmental Conservation Pheasant Hunt Program	21	26	47	9	8	16	37
New York Department of Environmental Conservation state-owned land that provides access to hunters and trappers with disabilities	14	29	42	12	8	20	38
New York Department of Environmental Conservation hunting permits for those with disabilities	15	23	38	11	7	17	45
New York Motorized Access Program for People with Disabilities	14	16	30	12	2	14	56
NORTH CAROLINA (Hunting Programs or Resources)							
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission online game land maps	28	36	64	10	4	14	22
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Permit Hunting Program	17	37	54	19	5	24	22
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Disabled Sportsman Permit Hunt Program	16	26	42	12	4	16	42
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Huntmaster Lift Program	23	17	41	20	0	20	39
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Disabled Access Permit	15	25	40	16	0	16	43
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Track Chair Program	17	17	35	19	3	21	44
OKLAHOMA (Hunting Programs or Resources)							
Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation Wildlife Management Areas	28	38	65	13	4	17	18
Oklahoma Controlled Hunts	20	34	54	21	3	24	22
Oklahoma Land Access Program	19	34	53	19	2	21	26
OREGON (Hunting Programs or Resources)							
Oregon Open Fields Program	9	40	48	11	2	13	39
Oregon Upland Cooperative Access Program	8	29	37	18	2	20	44
Oregon Habitat and Access Program	7	24	31	13	6	19	50

*Summed on unrounded numbers (table values are shown as integers).

Hunters' Ratings of State Hunting Access Programs or Resources (Asked of Those Aware of the Programs/Resources in Their State of Residence) (Continued)

Programs or Resources Rated (Rating for making access to land for hunting easier.)	Excellent	Good	Excellent or good combined*	Fair	Poor	Fair or poor combined*	Do not know / Does not apply
TEXAS (Hunting Programs or Resources)							
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Public Hunting Program	19	24	43	18	7	25	32
Texas Annual Public Hunting Permit (Walk-In)	14	28	41	15	8	24	35
Texas Drawn Hunts	21	19	40	19	7	26	34
Texas Interactive Map of Public Hunting Areas (found on the Texas Parks and Wildlife website)	12	27	39	16	5	21	40
Texas Mentored Hunting Workshops	14	18	31	13	4	17	52
VERMONT (Hunting Programs or Resources) (No State-Level Programs)							
VIRGINIA (Hunting Programs or Resources)							
Virginia special youth hunts, such as the youth waterfowl and youth goose hunts	26	25	51	8	1	9	41
Virginia Notes from the Field newsletter	18	30	48	20	4	24	28
Virginia Quota and Managed Hunts	13	29	43	16	10	25	32
Virginia Find Game / Find Wildlife GIS Mapping System	9	34	43	15	4	19	38
Virginia Public Opportunities for Wildlife- Related Recreation	10	30	41	17	4	21	39
WEST VIRGINIA (Hunting Programs or Resources)							
West Virginia Special Hunting Seasons	32	36	68	12	3	15	17
West Virginia Public Hunting Lands	25	40	64	18	4	22	14
West Virginia online interactive hunting and fishing map	24	36	60	6	0	6	34
West Virginia State Park Deer Hunting	21	34	56	14	4	18	26
West Virginia Private Lands Public Access Program	22	24	47	18	0	18	35
West Virginia Physically Challenged Hunter Access Trails	18	20	38	14	3	17	45
WISCONSIN (Hunting Programs or Resources)							
Wisconsin Managed Forest Law Program	19	31	50	23	5	28	23
Wisconsin Turkey Hunter Access Program	19	31	49	22	6	28	22
Wisconsin Voluntary Public Access Program	14	27	41	20	4	24	35
Wisconsin Agricultural Damage Program	11	28	38	19	8	27	34

*Summed on unrounded numbers (table values are shown as integers).

HUNTER TRENDS

MAJOR FINDINGS

Hunter behaviors and preferences regarding the species or species groups hunted; if their hunting participation has increased, stayed about the same, or decreased over the past 5 years; and the type of land hunted (public, private, or both) have remained consistent since the 2010 survey.

In a series of questions measuring how important 11 factors are when deciding where to hunt, the percentages giving *very important* responses decreased for each factor. The largest decrease was for being familiar with the land, going from 58% in 2010 to 38% in 2021.

Other substantial decreases are observed for the land being owned by someone they know, the land being close to home, the land being private, and the land not being crowded with other hunters or recreationists.

In assessing 10 potential problems within their state, the percentages giving *major, moderate, or minor problem* responses increased for each issue. The largest increases were for management issues, with management of land for purposes other than hunting (such as timber) increasing from 31% in 2010 to 49% in 2021.

Other notable increases are for poor management of public land use, closures of public land by government agencies, and lack of or unclear signs marking public hunting lands.

In assessing whether 25 potential issues have been a *major, moderate, or minor problem* when hunting in the past 5 years, the percentages giving one of those responses increased for nearly every issue.

There are marked increases in those responses for less land due to development, difficulty in finding landowners to ask permission, lack of or inaccurate information on where to hunt, poor maintenance of roads or trails, difficulty in locating a road, difficulty in locating land from maps on the ground, road closures, boat launch and ATV access, cost of access, and travel distance.

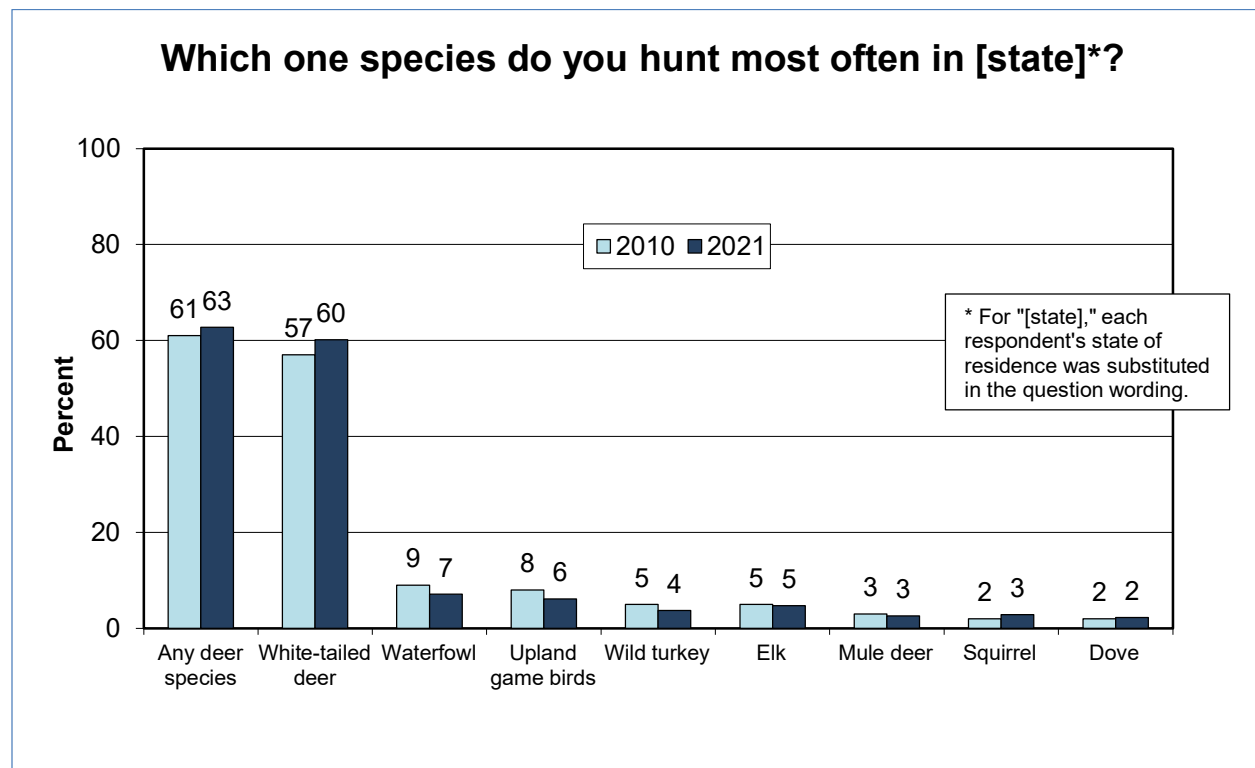
Ratings of access to land decreased somewhat, with *excellent or good* responses decreasing from 56% in 2010 to 47% in 2021.

Participation in walk-in access programs increased from 29% in 2010 to 35% in 2021.

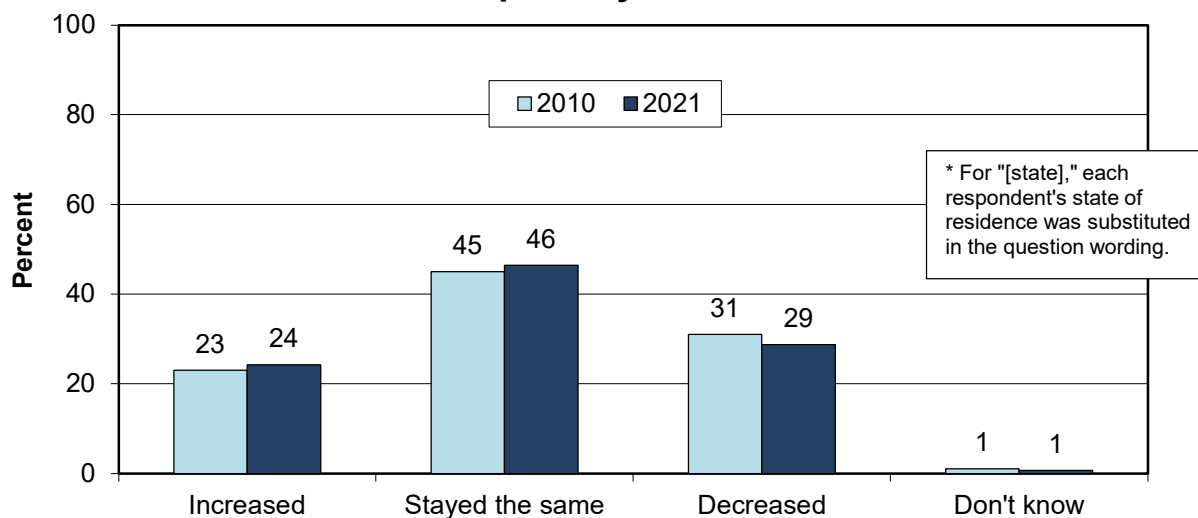
In the aforementioned 2010 access report by NSSF and Responsive Management, in many instances the survey asked questions about access for hunting specific species. For example, deer hunters were asked questions about access for *deer* hunting rather than for hunting in general. In the current survey conducted for this study, the questions about access were not tied to a specific species. Therefore, trends cannot be compared for the samples overall on several questions. Instead, the access questions for the current study were crosstabulated by the most-hunted species question, and the current data are then broken down by species (or species group). Comparisons are then made between the current survey results and the 2010 report data by species or species group.

Also note that 19 states were participants in the 2021 national survey, while 17 states were oversampled in the 2010 national survey. Although weighting was applied in both cases to ensure that hunters were representative of the country as a whole, these different survey procedures should be kept in mind when comparing results.

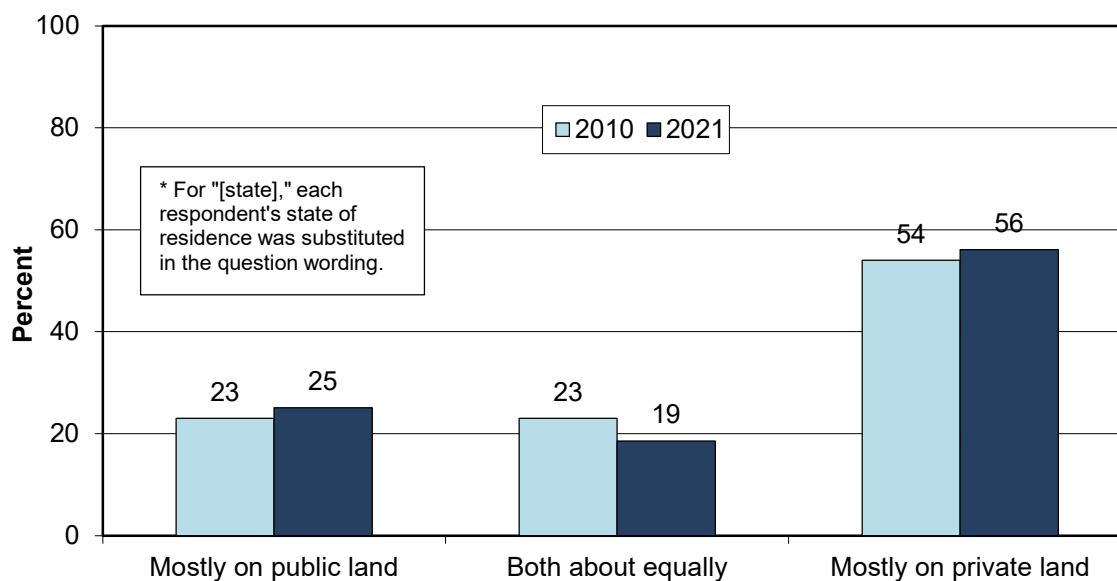
This comparison can only be done on those species with enough hunters hunting them for valid statistical analysis. In the current survey, six species or species groups had sufficient numbers of hunters for trends to be compared with the 2010 report data. These species are any deer species, white-tailed deer, waterfowl, upland game birds, wild turkey, and elk. As shown below, the top species for hunters are fairly consistent with 2010 results (mule deer, squirrel, and dove are also shown but are not used in other crosstabulations).



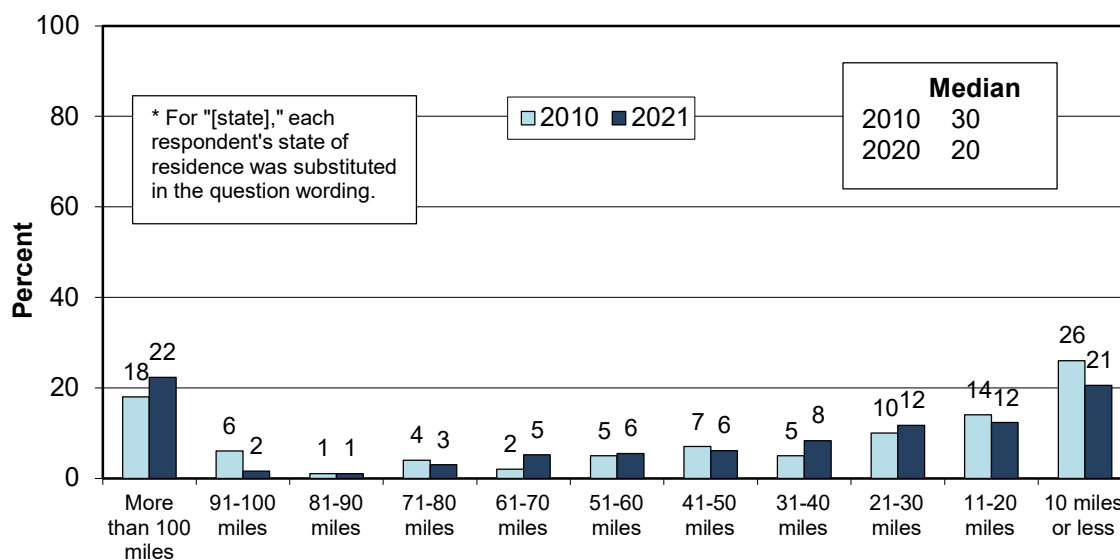
**Would you say your hunting participation in [state]*
has increased, stayed the same, or decreased over the
past 5 years?**



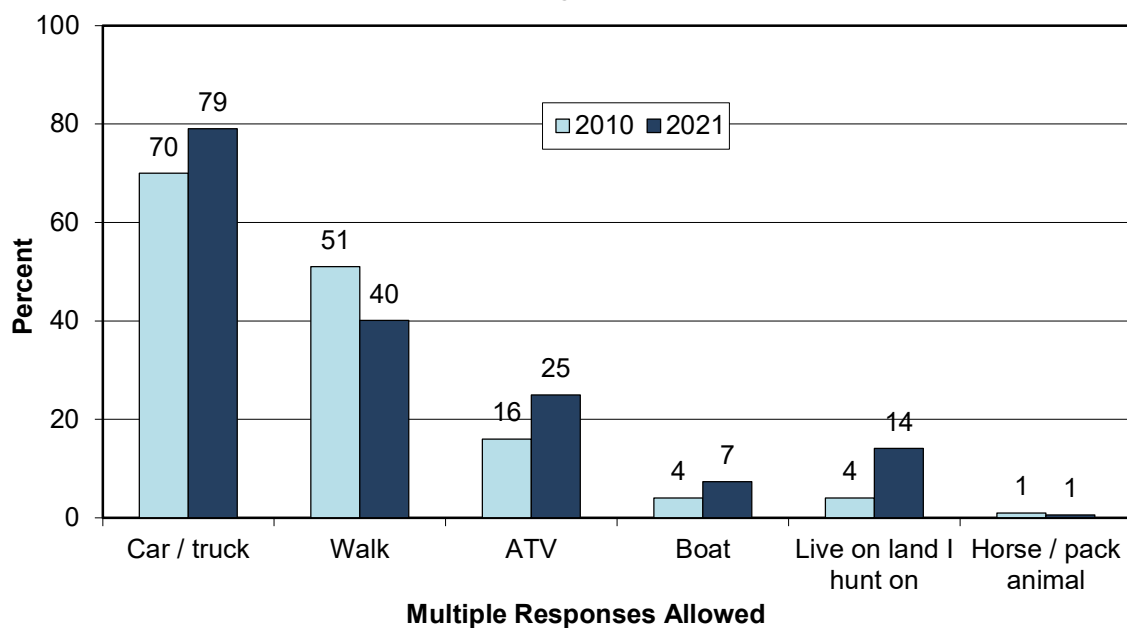
**Do you hunt mostly on public land, mostly on private
land, or both about equally in [state]*?**



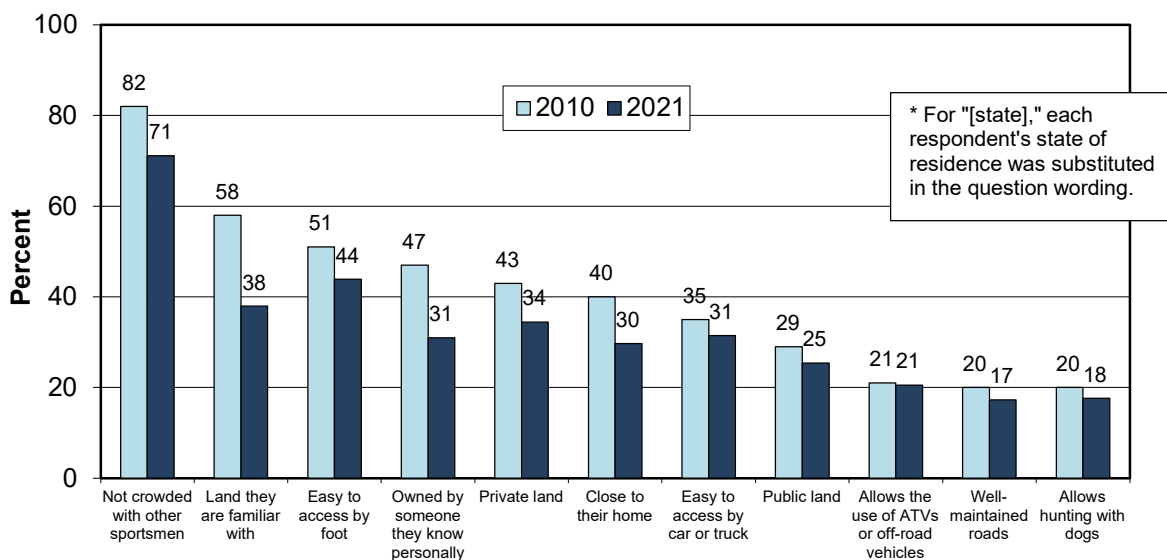
How far do you usually travel from home, one way, in miles, to hunt in [state]*?



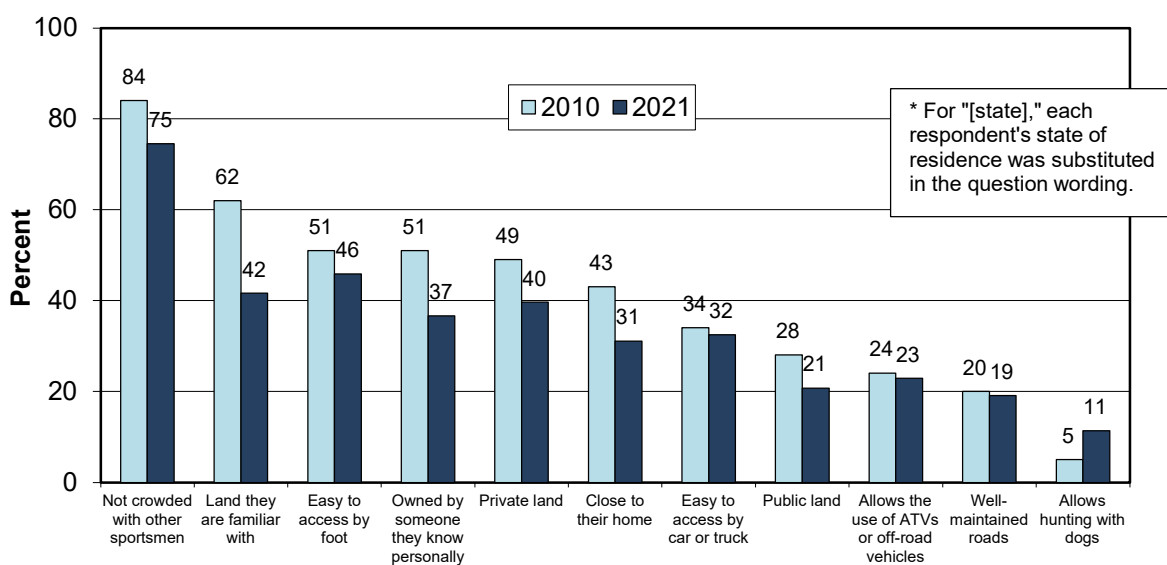
Which modes of transportation do you use to access the land you hunt on?



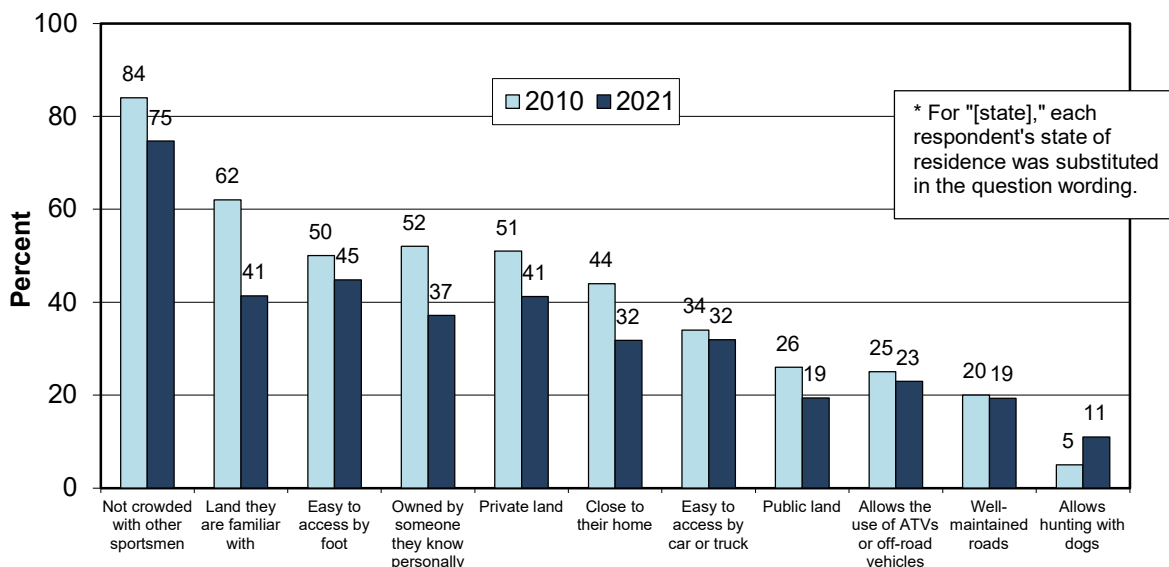
Please indicate how important each of the following are to you when deciding where to hunt your primary species in [state]*?
(Very important responses) (Overall)



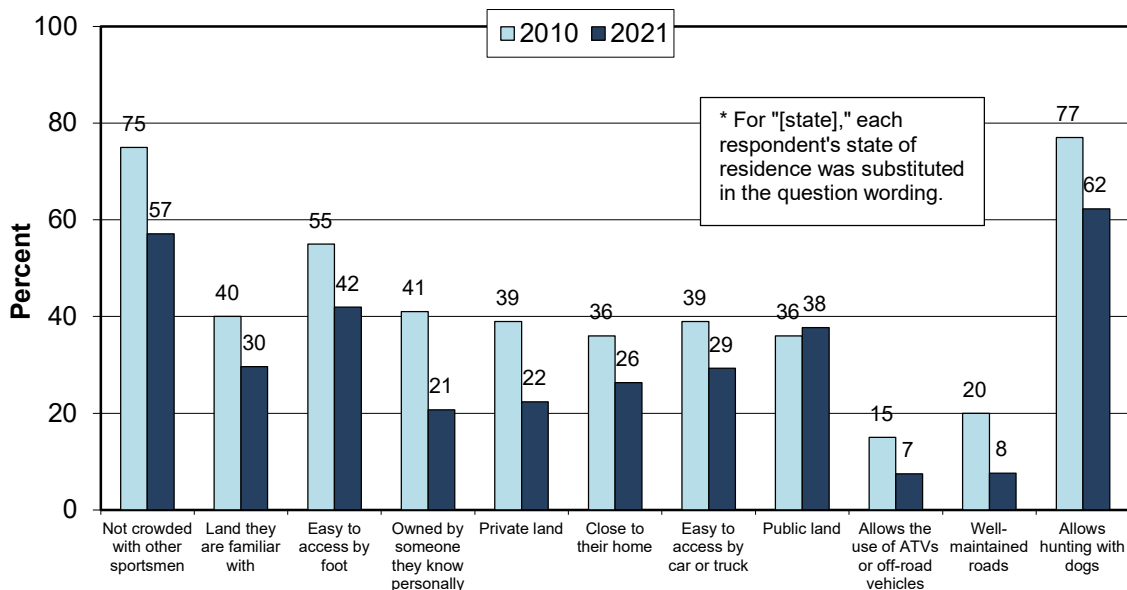
Please indicate how important each of the following are to you when deciding where to hunt your primary species in [state]*?
(Very important responses) (Primarily hunts any deer)



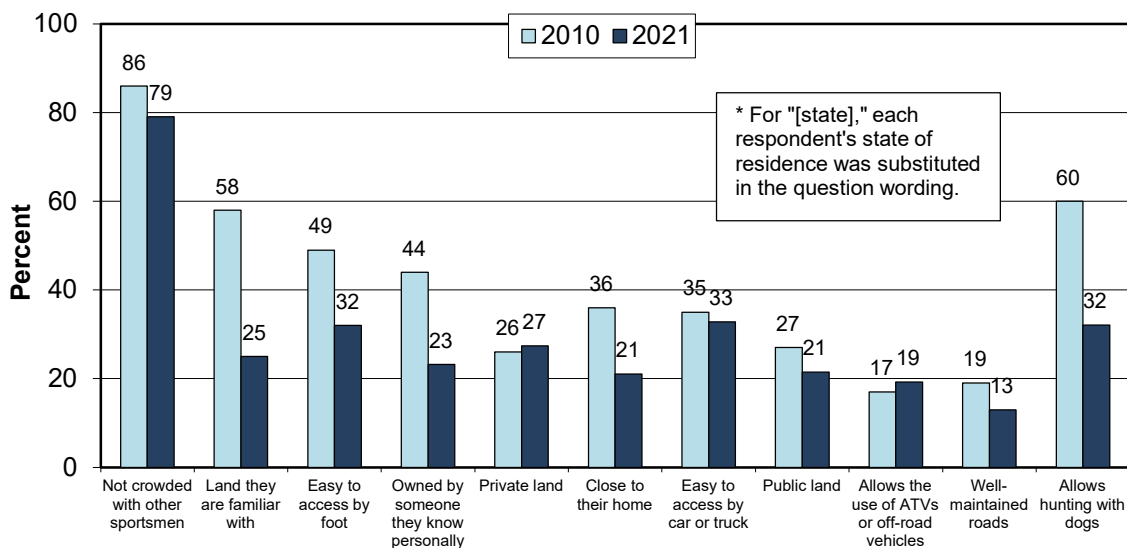
Please indicate how important each of the following are to you when deciding where to hunt your primary species in [state]*? (Very important responses) (Primarily hunts white-tailed deer)



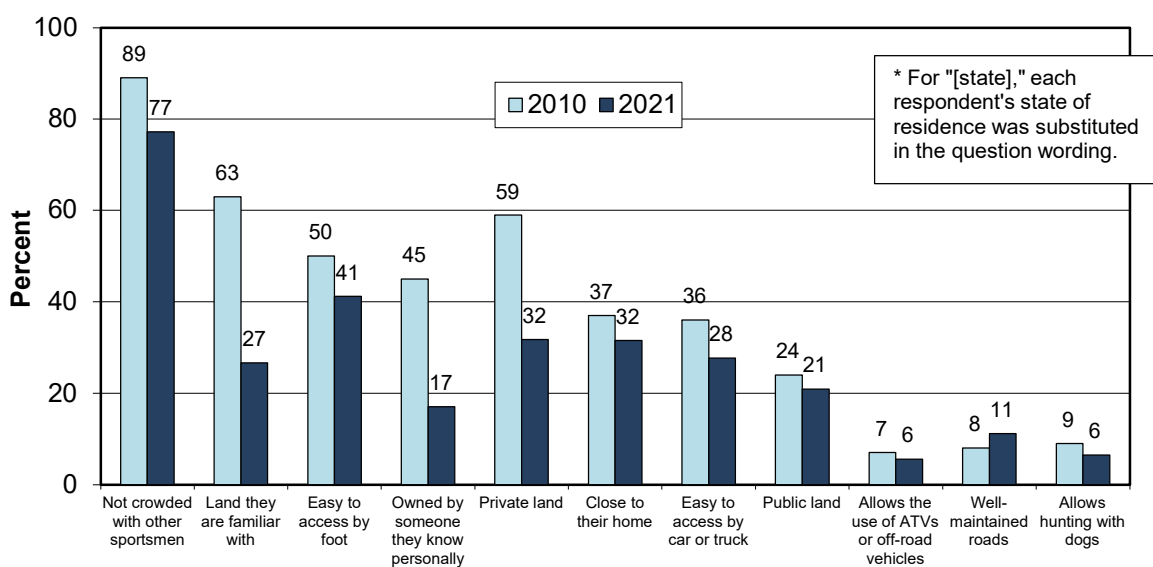
Please indicate how important each of the following are to you when deciding where to hunt your primary species in [state]*? (Very important responses) (Primarily hunts upland game birds)



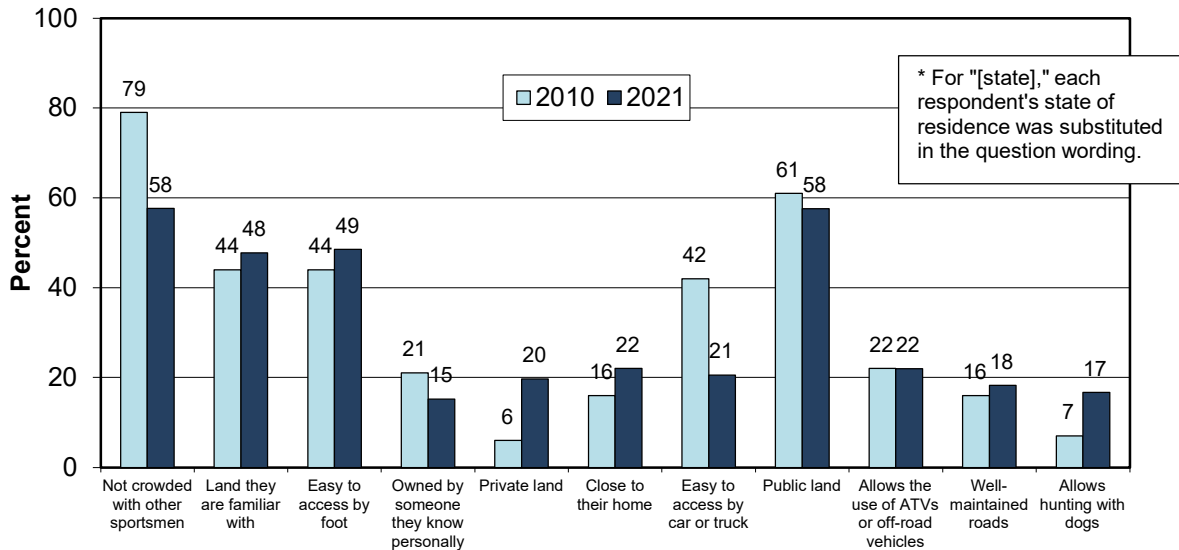
Please indicate how important each of the following are to you when deciding where to hunt your primary species in [state]*? (Very important responses) (Primarily hunts waterfowl)



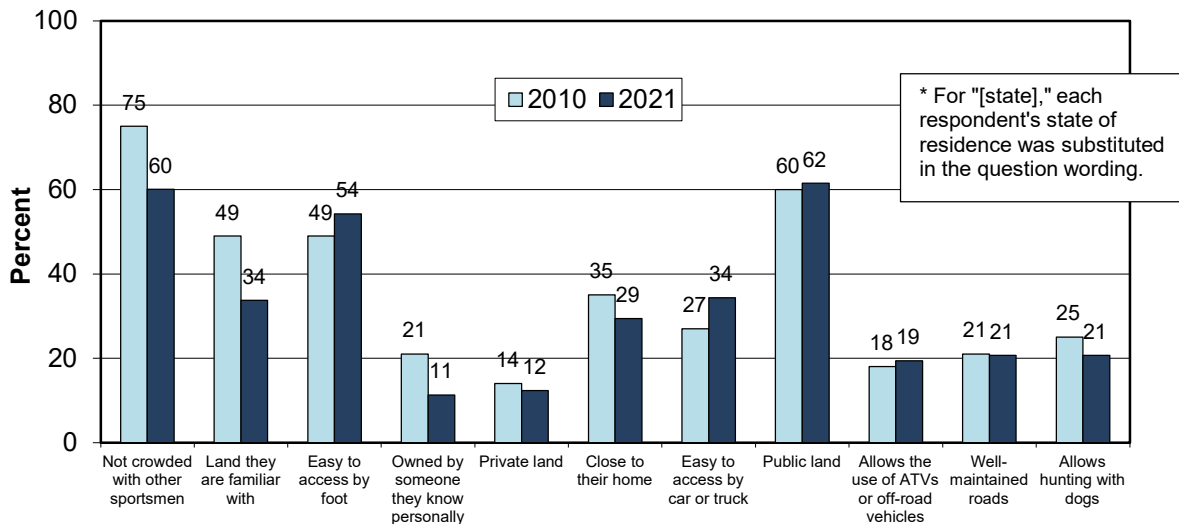
Please indicate how important each of the following are to you when deciding where to hunt your primary species in [state]*? (Very important responses) (Primarily hunts wild turkey)



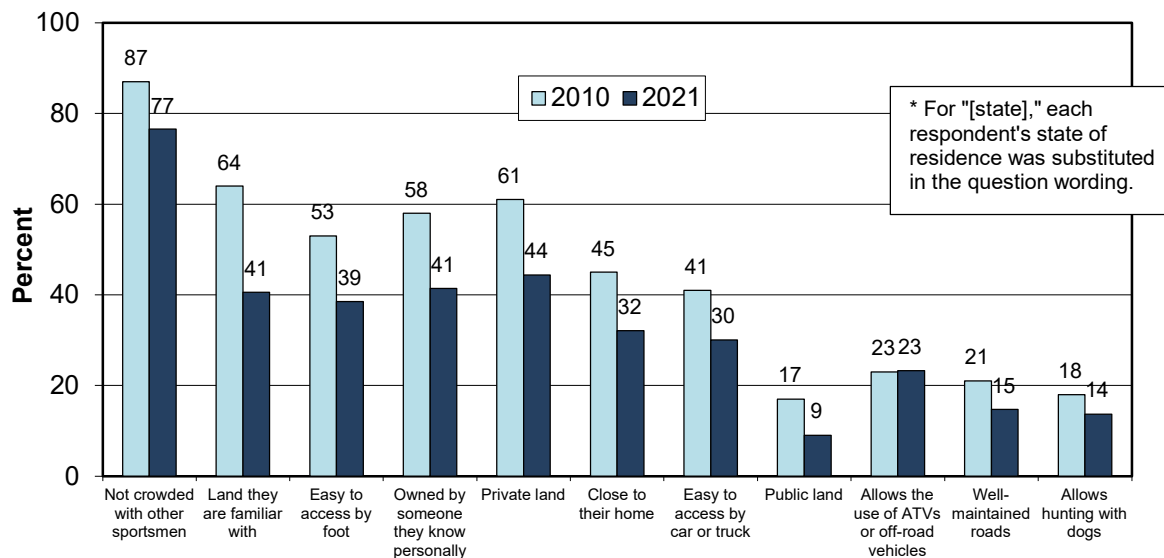
Please indicate how important each of the following are to you when deciding where to hunt your primary species in [state]*? (Very important responses) (Primarily hunts elk)



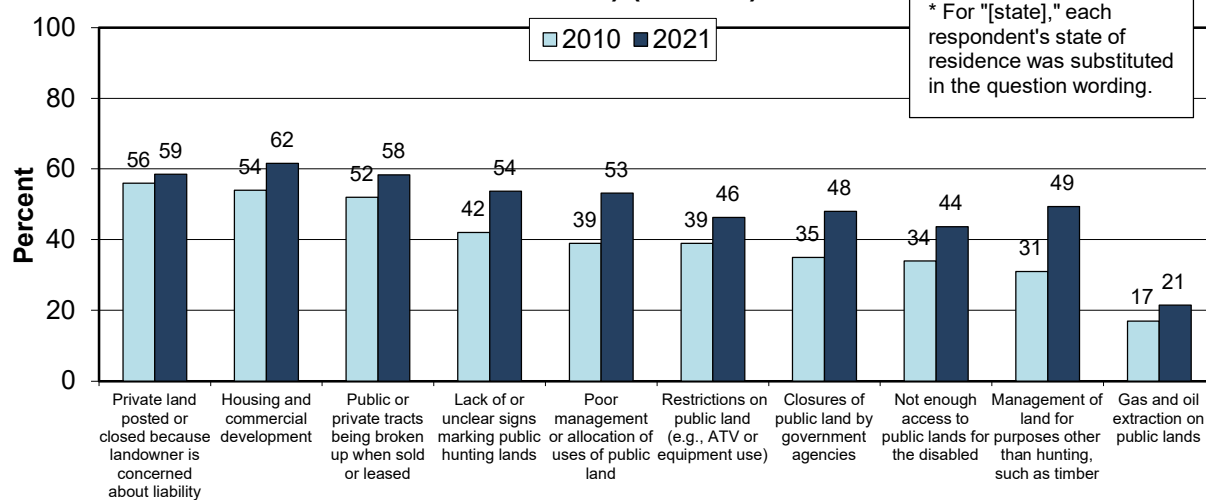
Please indicate how important each of the following are to you when deciding where to hunt your primary species in [state]*? (Very important responses) (Mostly hunts public land)

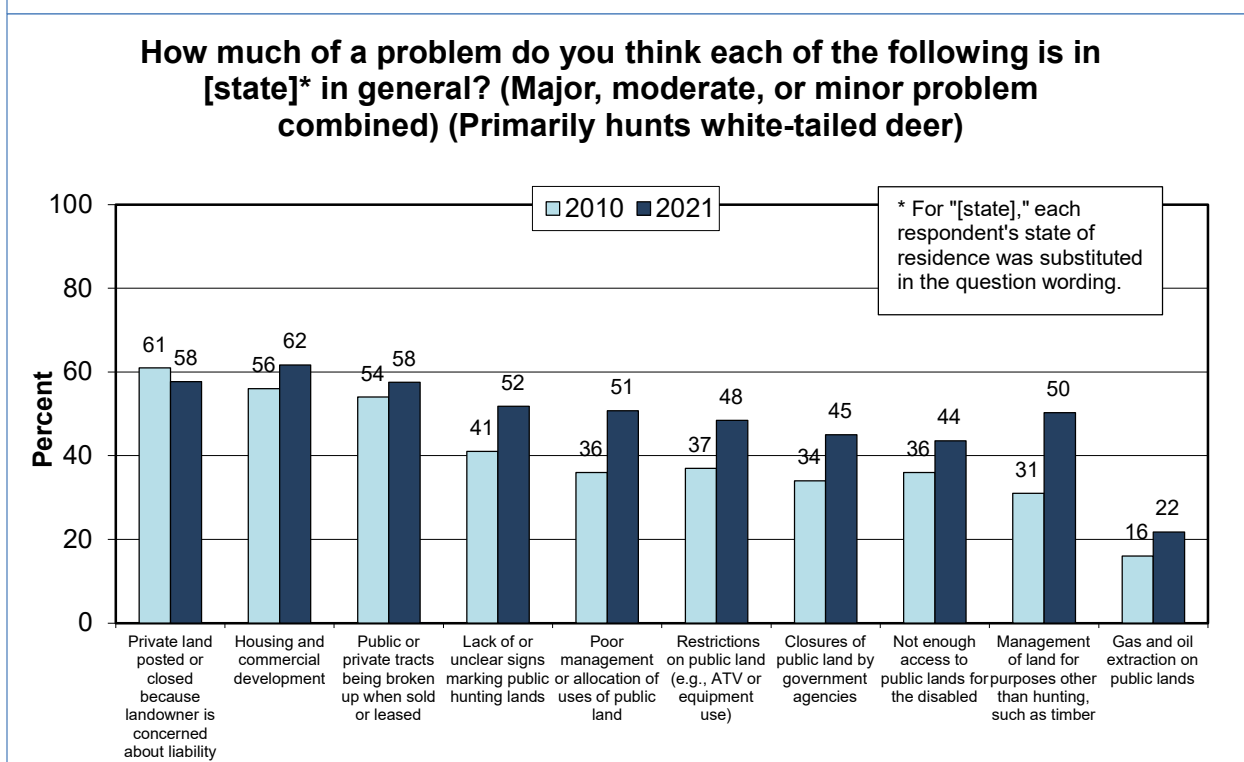
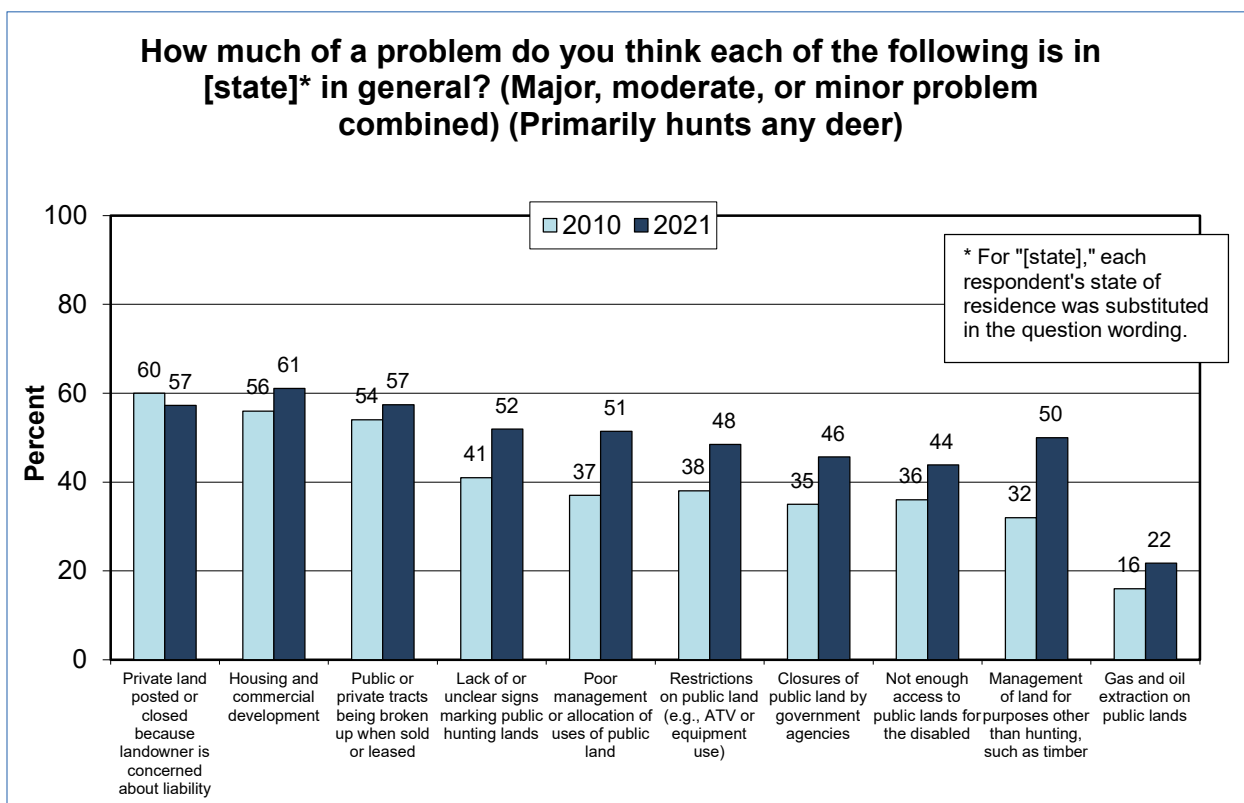


Please indicate how important each of the following are to you when deciding where to hunt your primary species in [state]*? (Very important responses) (Mostly hunts private land)

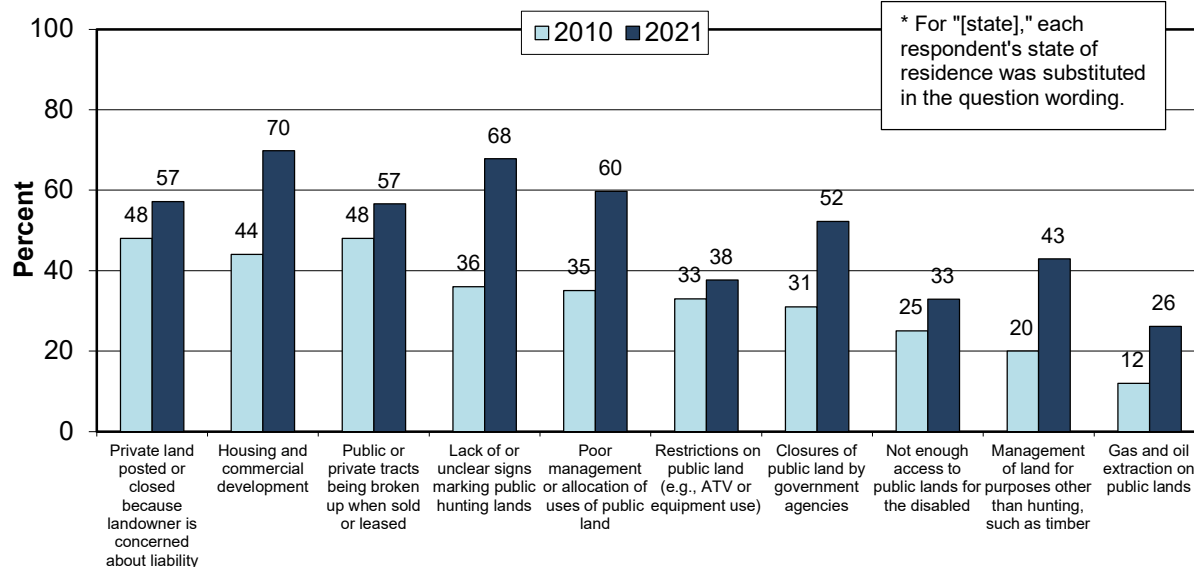


How much of a problem do you think each of the following is in [state]* in general? (Major, moderate, or minor problem combined) (Overall)

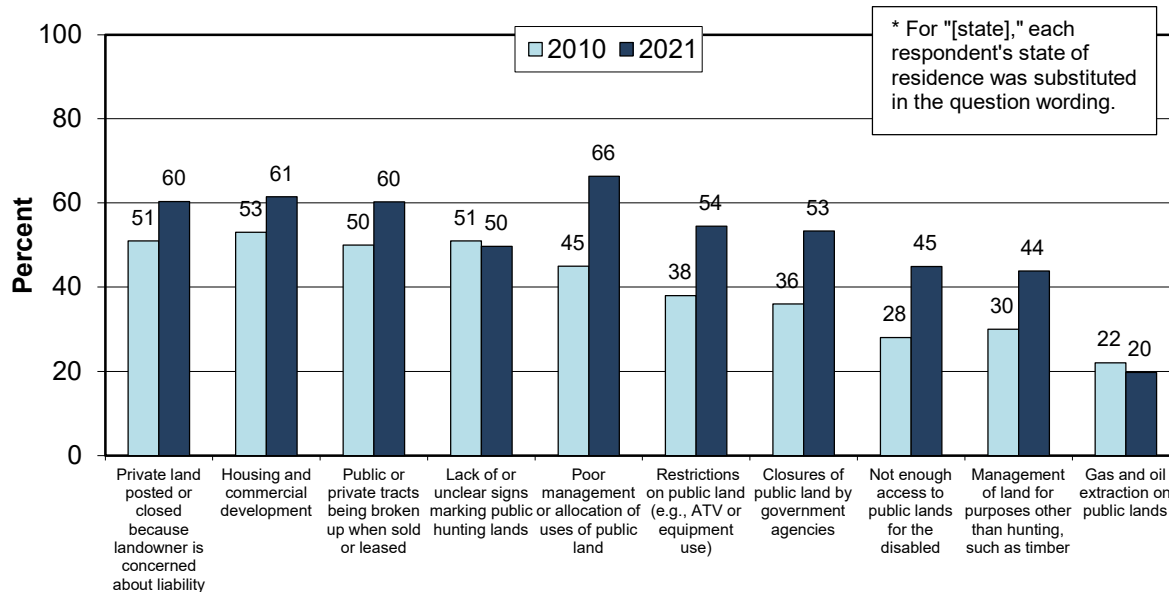


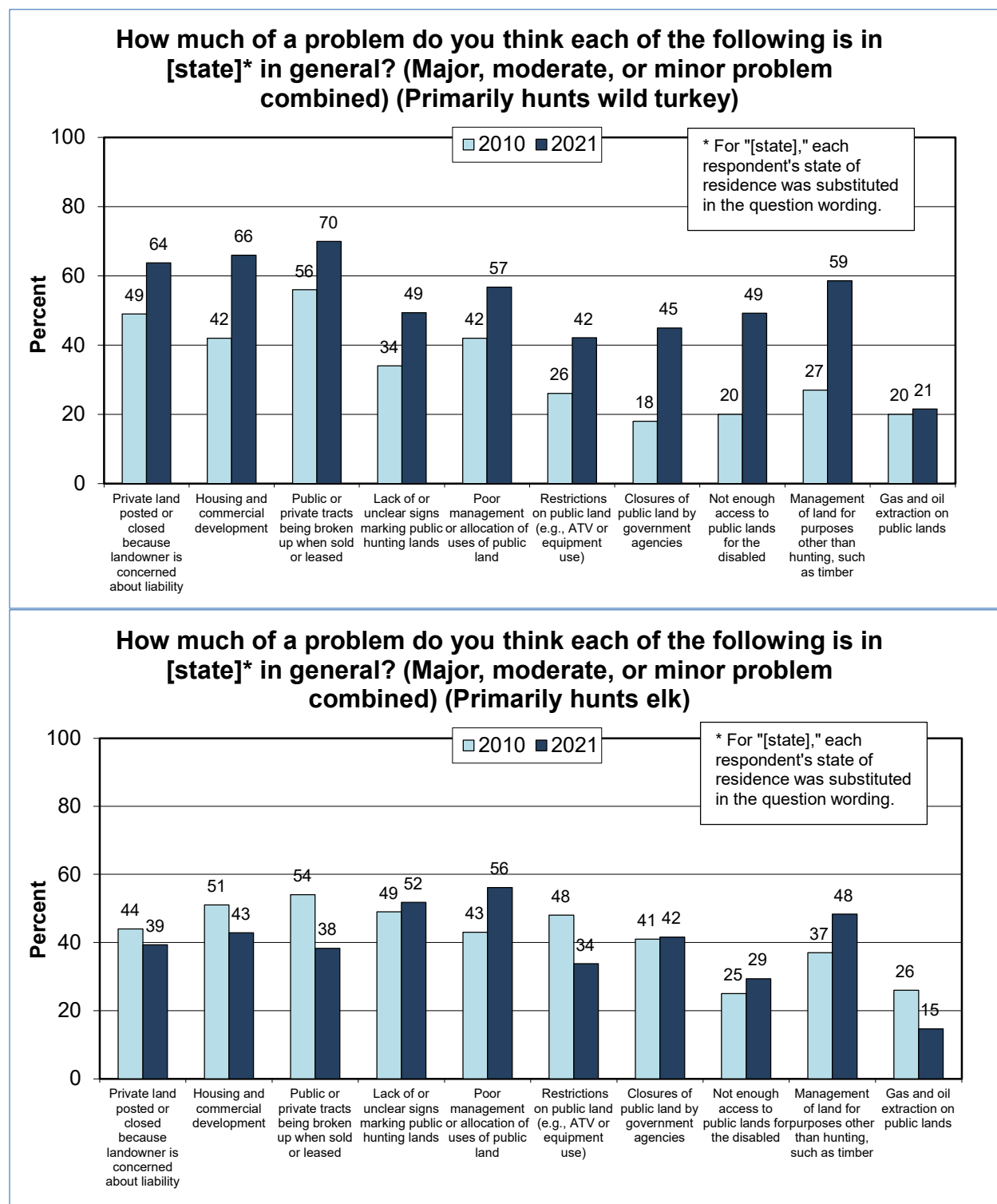


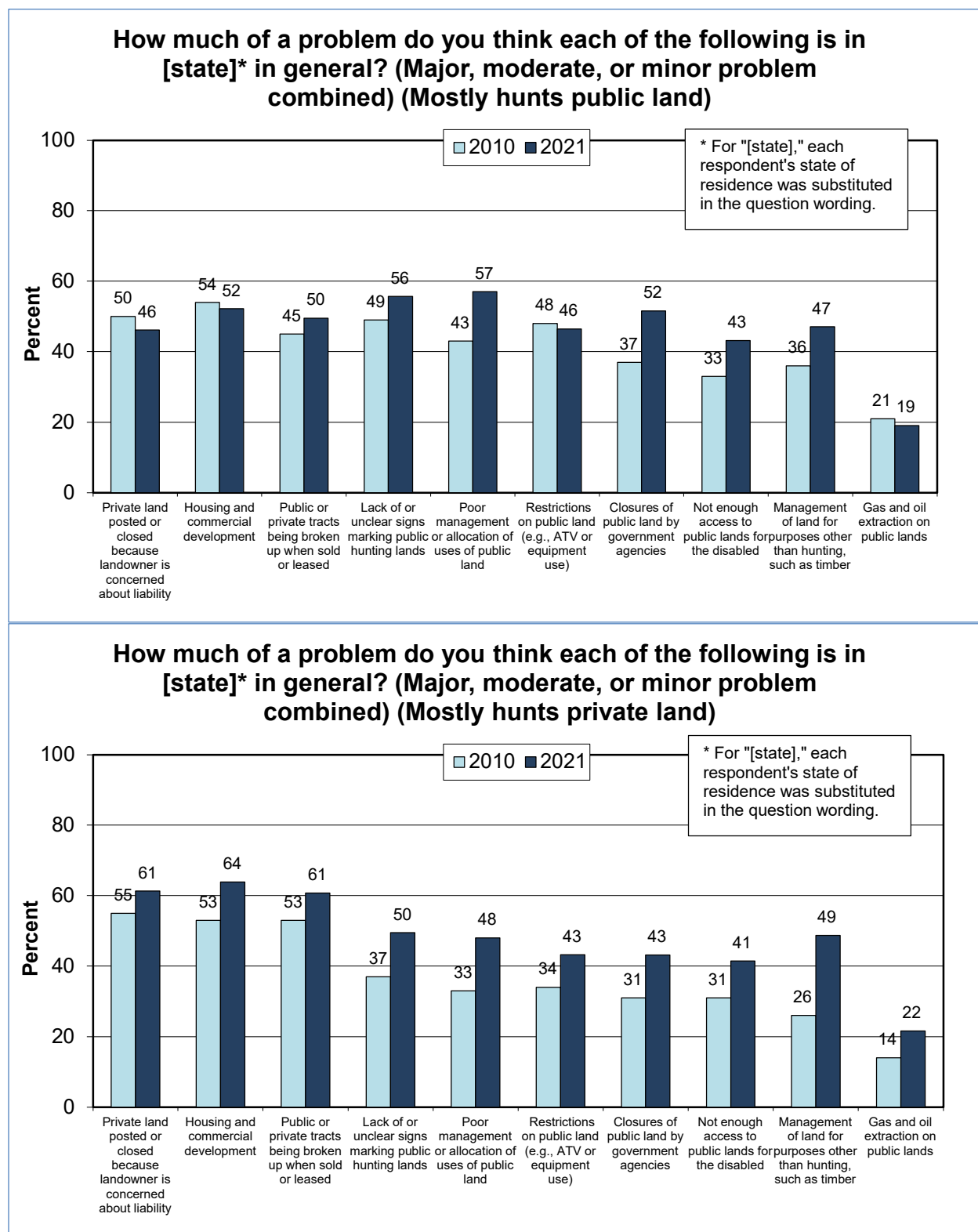
How much of a problem do you think each of the following is in [state]* in general? (Major, moderate, or minor problem combined) (Primarily hunts upland game birds)

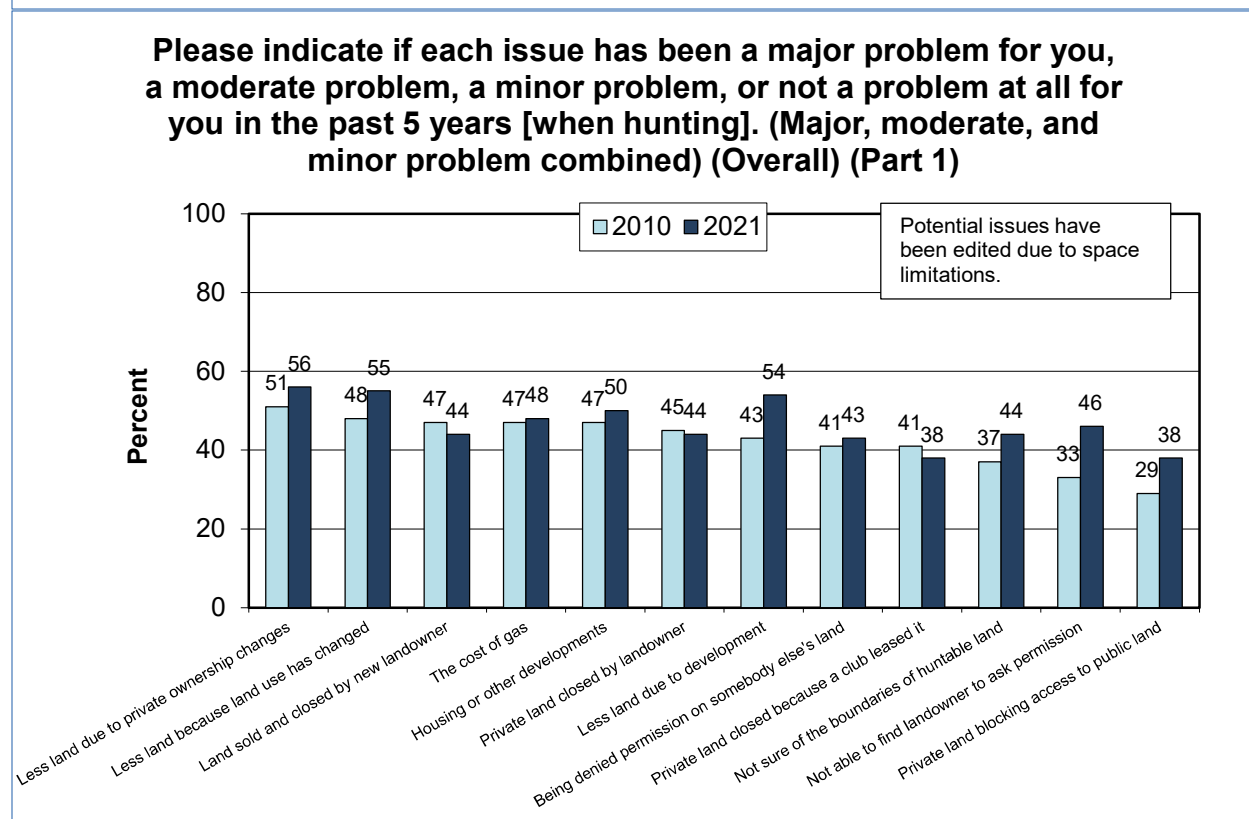
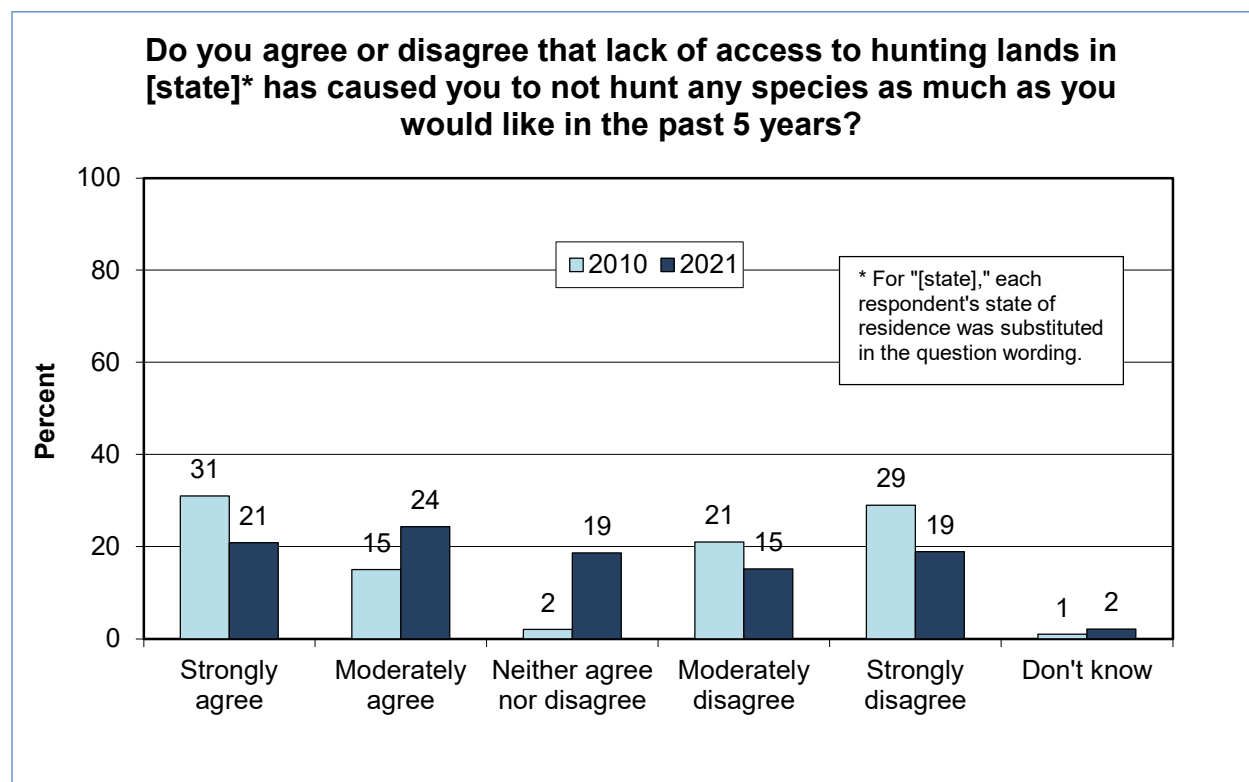


How much of a problem do you think each of the following is in [state]* in general? (Major, moderate, or minor problem combined) (Primarily hunts waterfowl)

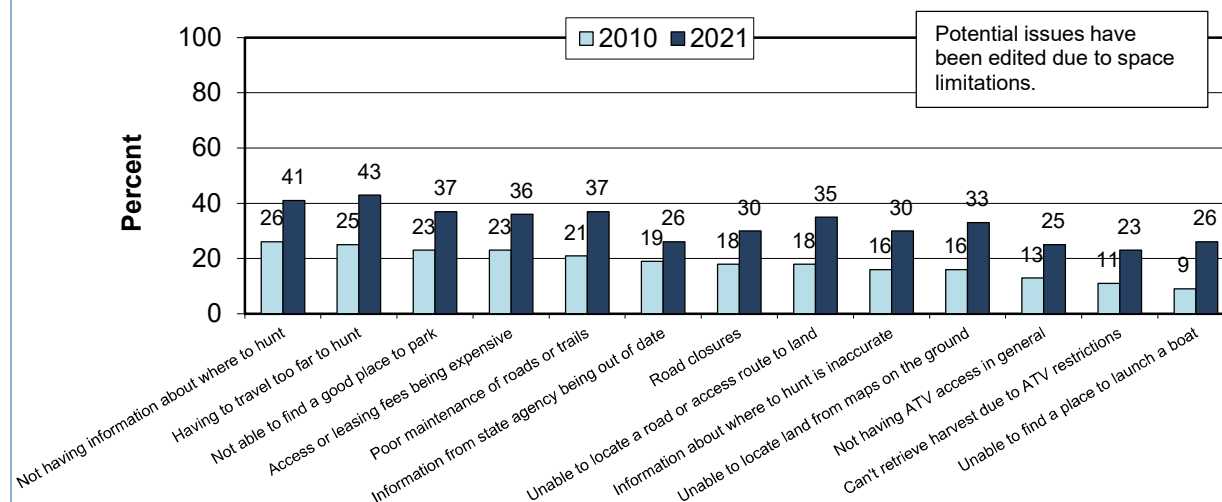




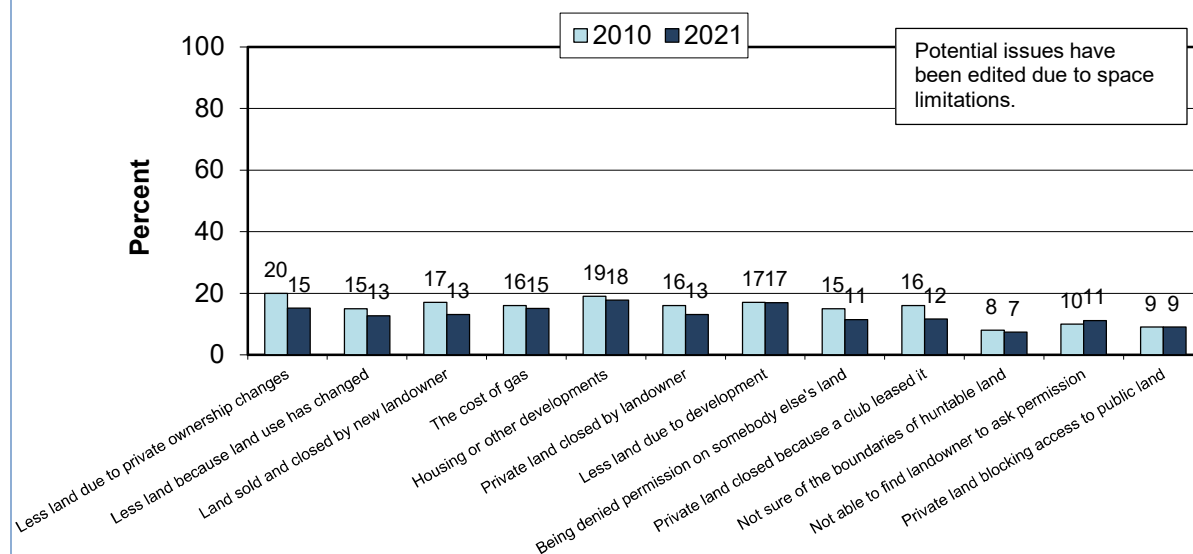




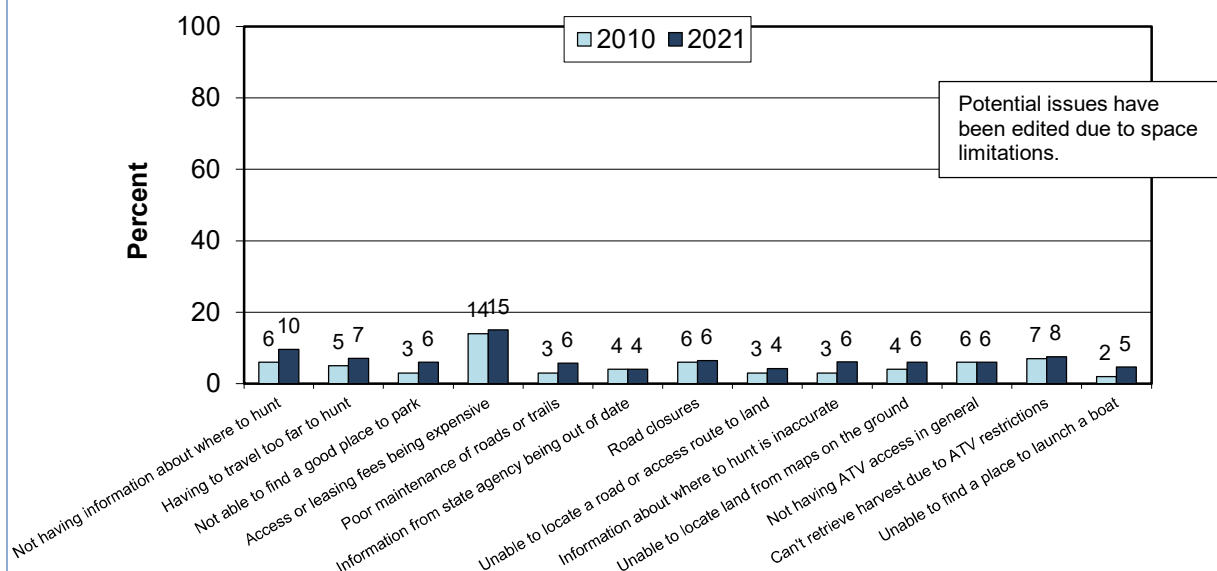
Please indicate if each issue has been a major problem for you, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years [when hunting]. (Major, moderate, and minor problem combined) (Overall) (Part 2)



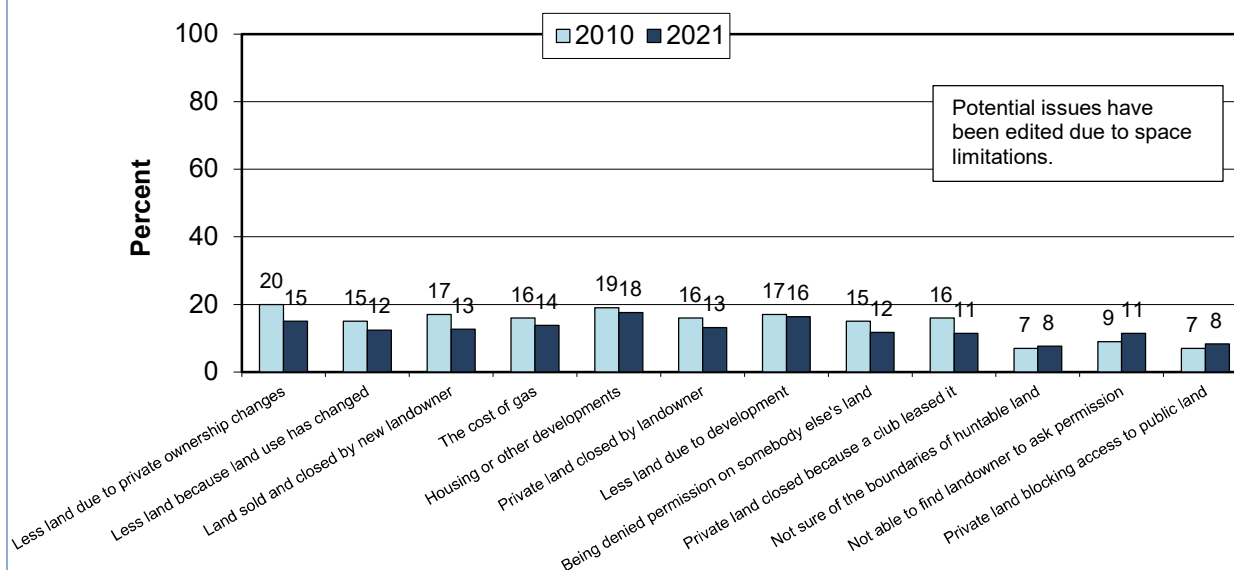
Please indicate if each issue has been a major problem for you, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years [when hunting]. (Major problem responses) (Primarily hunts any deer) (Part 1)



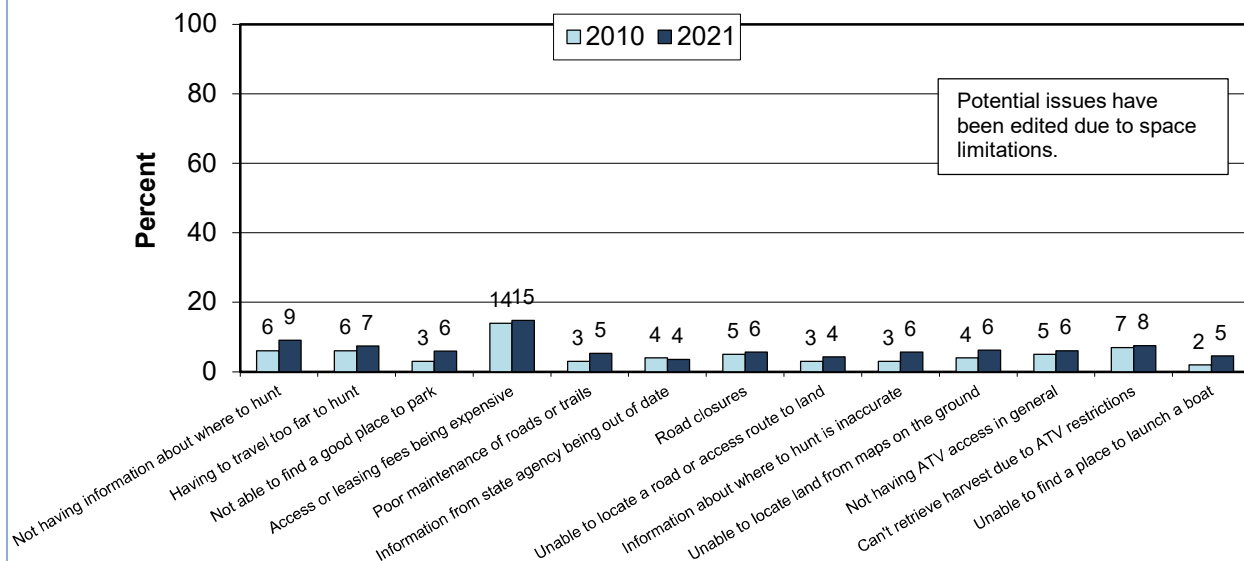
Please indicate if each issue has been a major problem for you, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years [when hunting]. (Major problem responses) (Primarily hunts any deer) (Part 2)



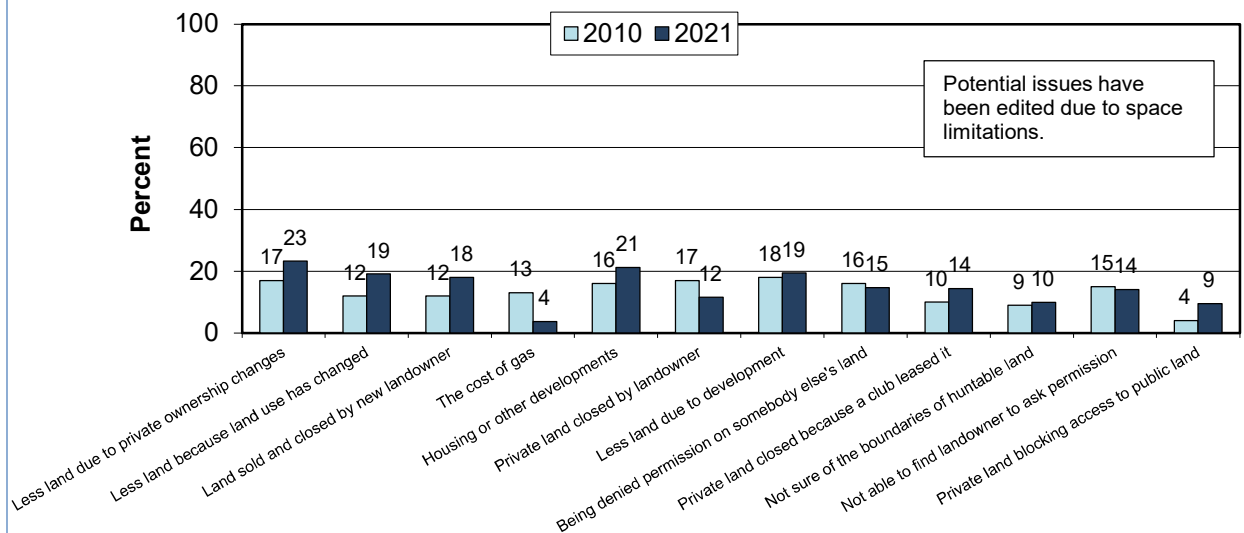
Please indicate if each issue has been a major problem for you, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years [when hunting]. (Major problem responses) (Primarily hunts white-tailed deer) (Part 1)



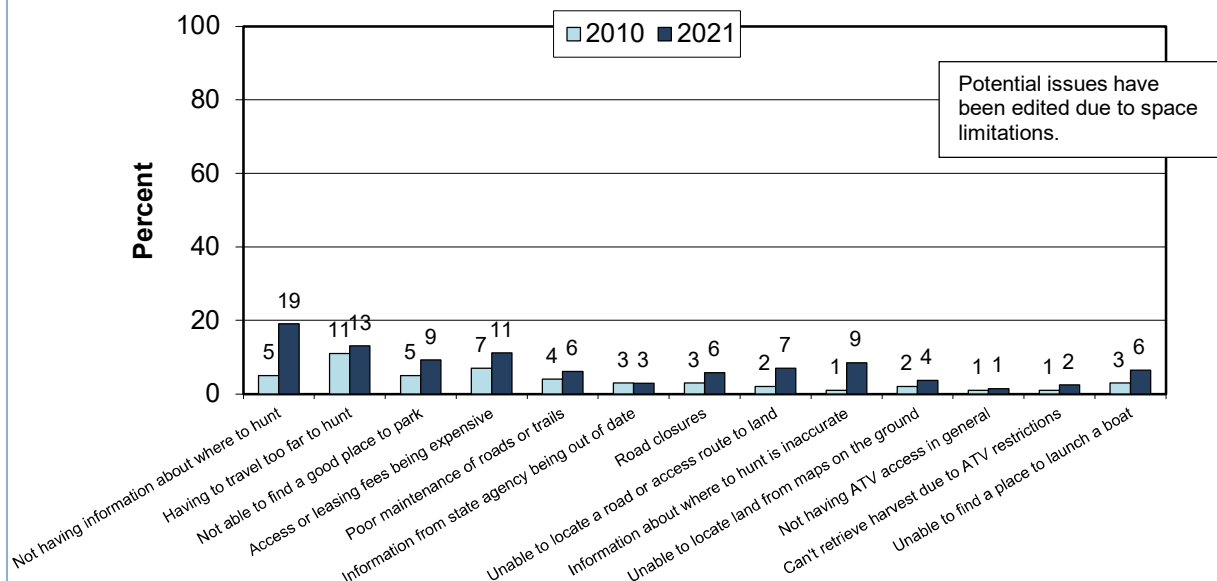
Please indicate if each issue has been a major problem for you, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years [when hunting]. (Major problem responses) (Primarily hunts white-tailed deer) (Part 2)



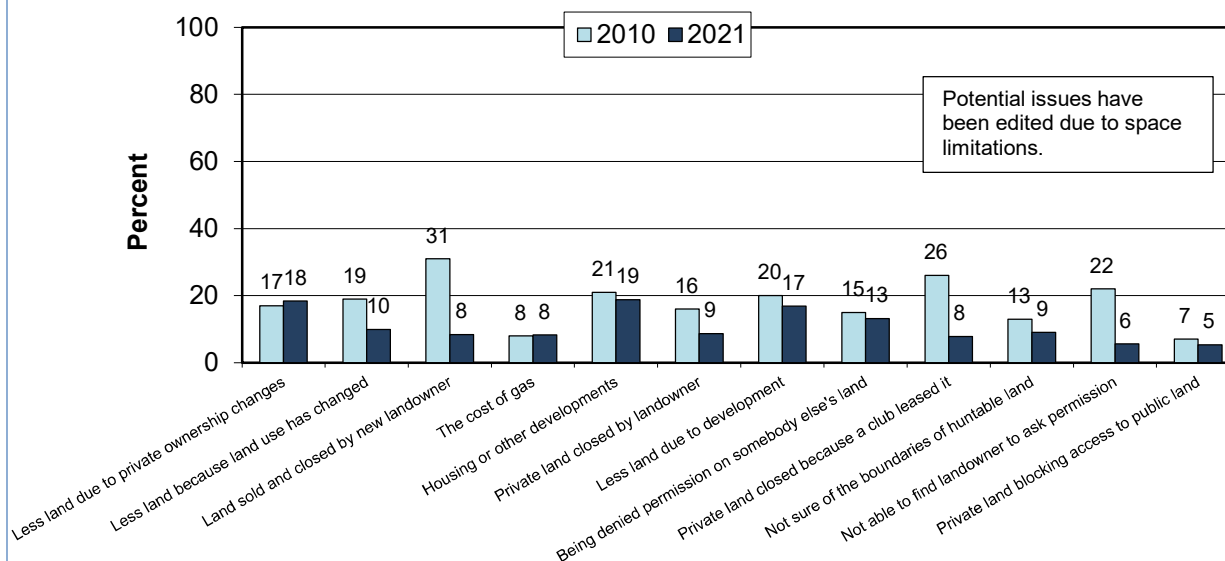
Please indicate if each issue has been a major problem for you, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years [when hunting]. (Major problem responses) (Primarily hunts upland game birds) (Part 1)



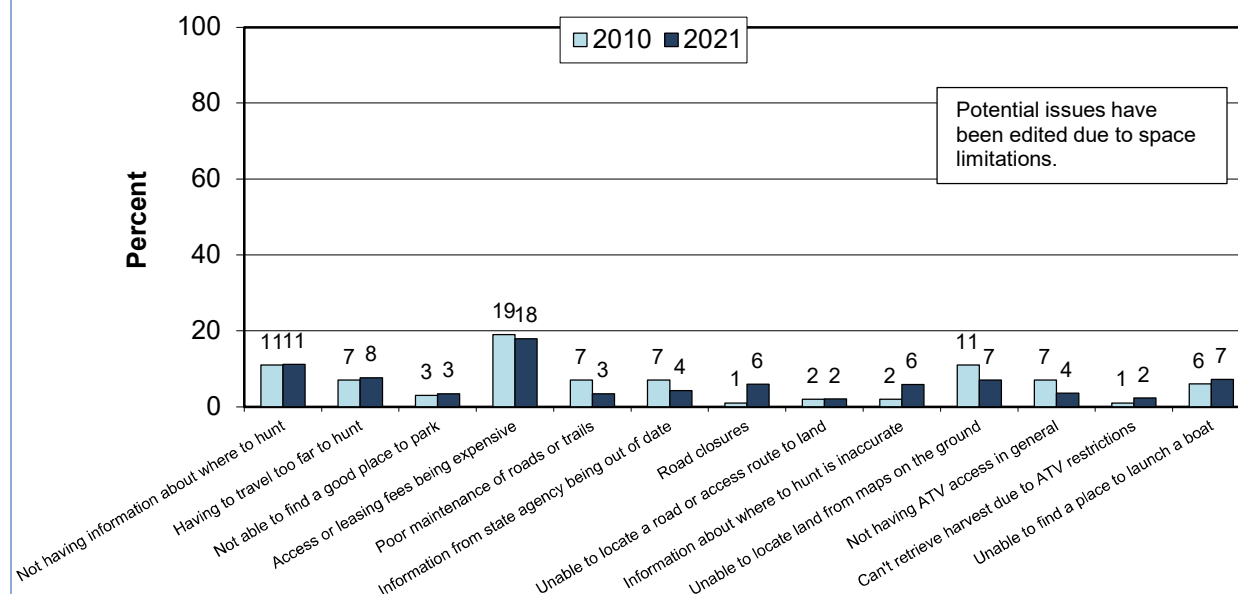
Please indicate if each issue has been a major problem for you, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years [when hunting]. (Major problem responses) (Primarily hunts upland game birds) (Part 2)



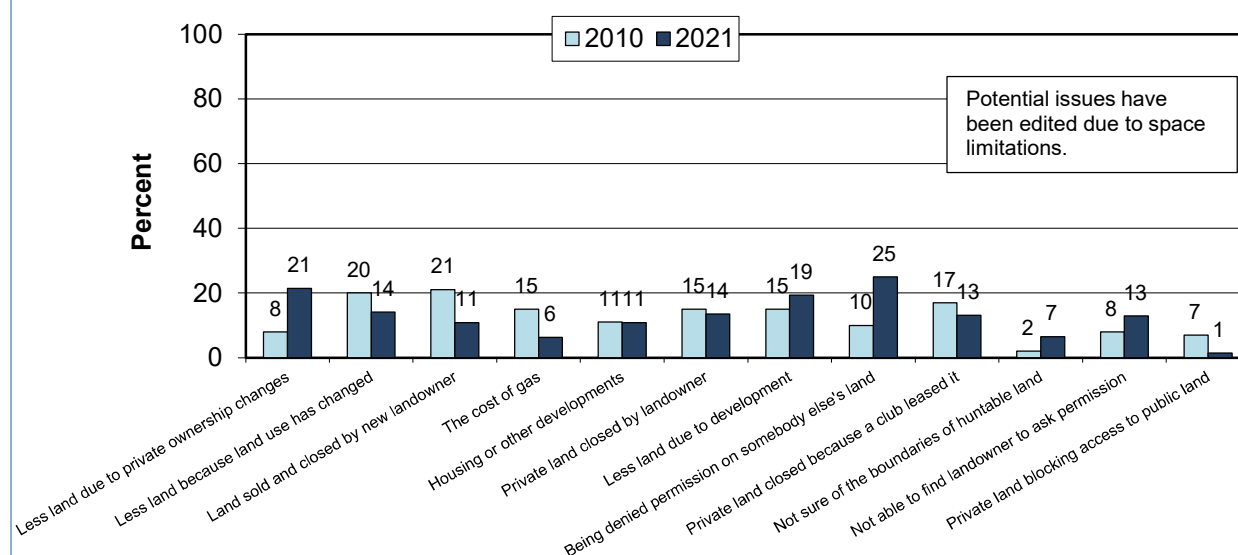
Please indicate if each issue has been a major problem for you, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years [when hunting]. (Major problem responses) (Primarily hunts waterfowl) (Part 1)



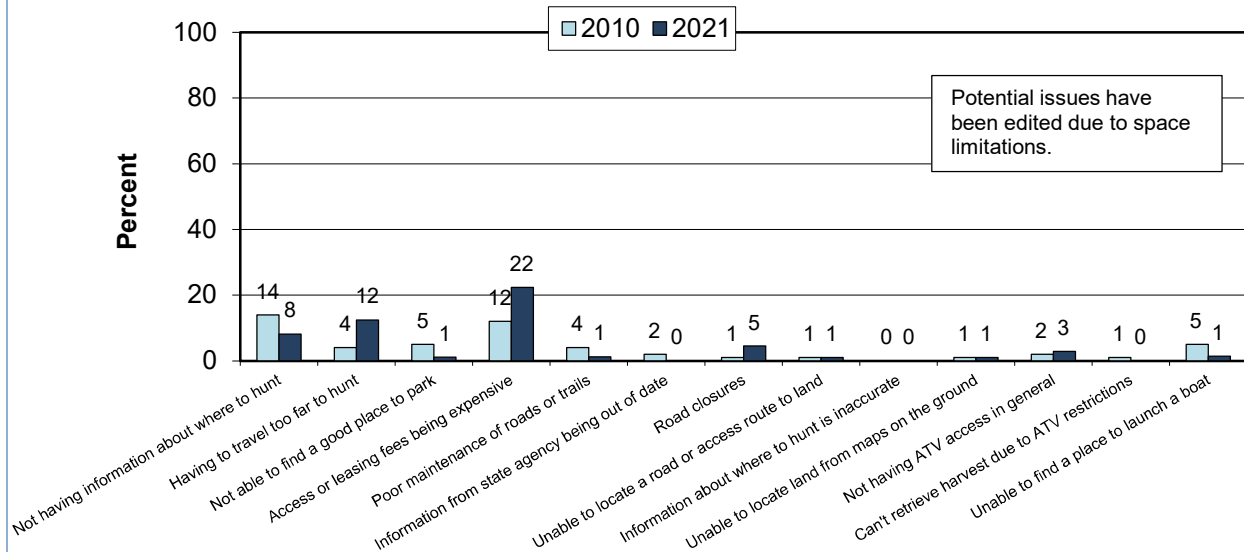
Please indicate if each issue has been a major problem for you, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years [when hunting]. (Major problem responses) (Primarily hunts waterfowl) (Part 2)



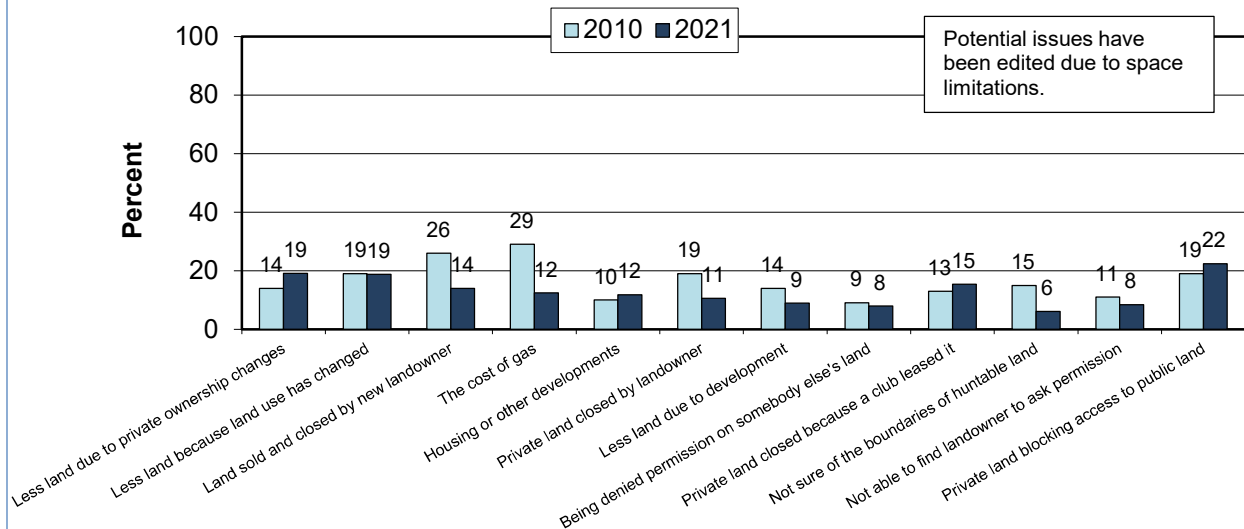
Please indicate if each issue has been a major problem for you, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years [when hunting]. (Major problem responses) (Primarily hunts wild turkey) (Part 1)



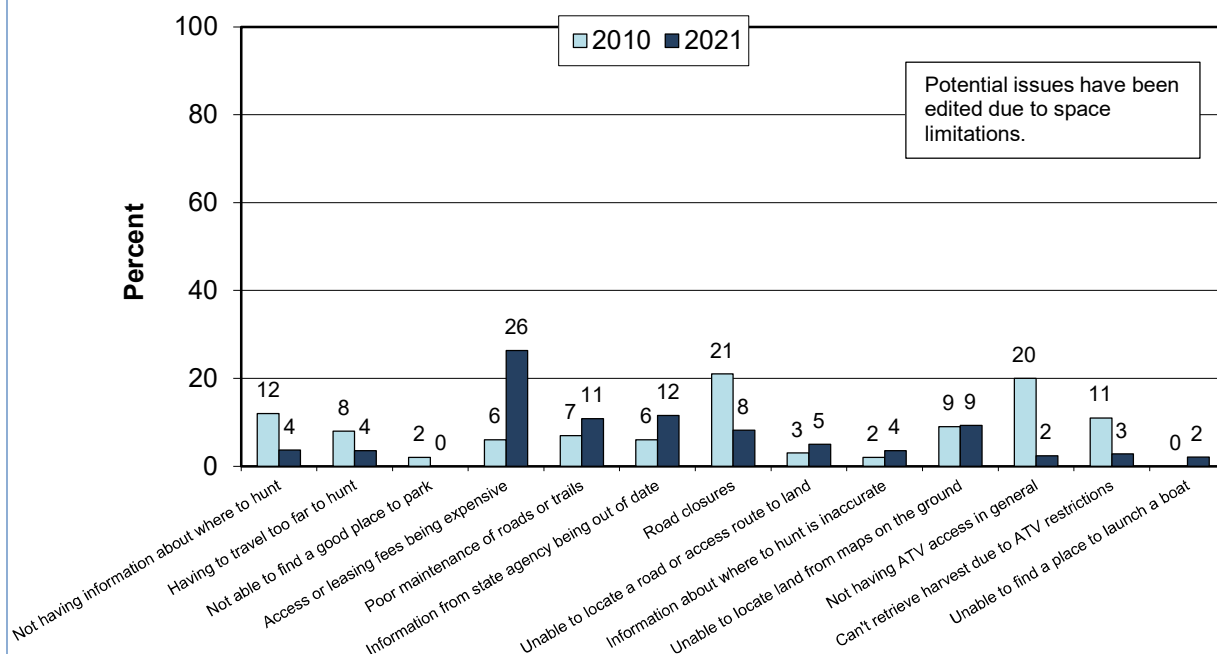
Please indicate if each issue has been a major problem for you, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years [when hunting]. (Major problem responses) (Primarily hunts wild turkey) (Part 2)



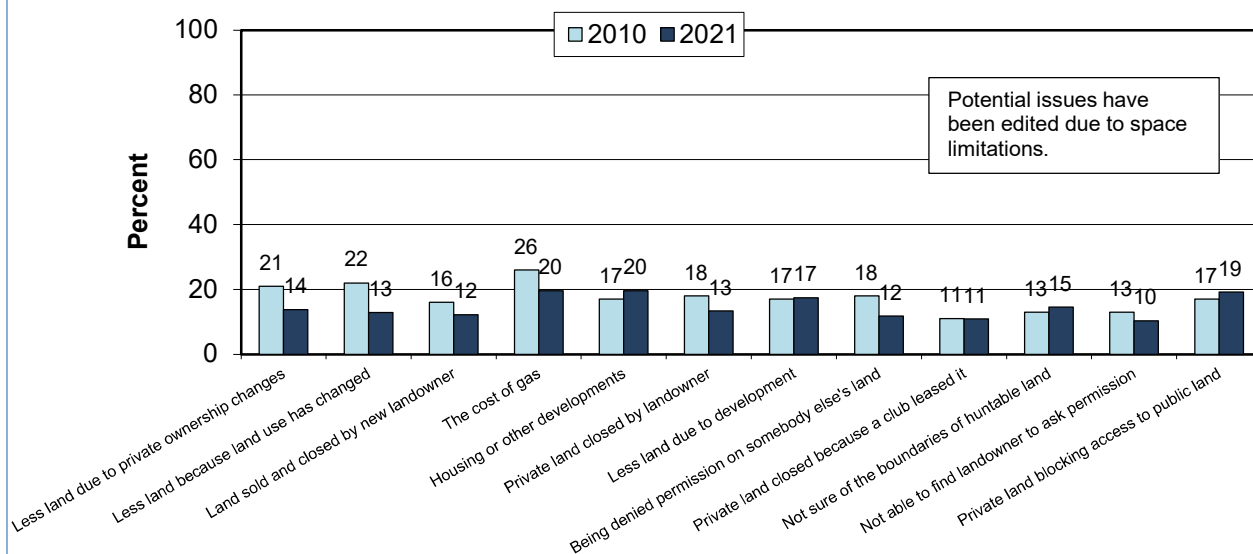
Please indicate if each issue has been a major problem for you, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years [when hunting]. (Major problem responses) (Primarily hunts elk) (Part 1)



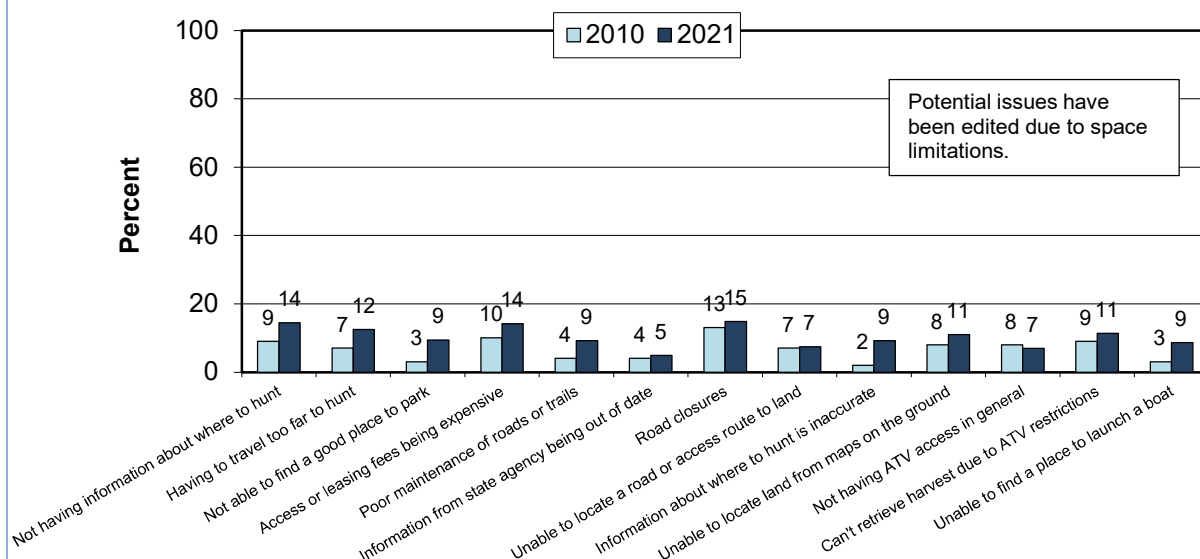
Please indicate if each issue has been a major problem for you, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years [when hunting]. (Major problem responses) (Primarily hunts elk) (Part 2)



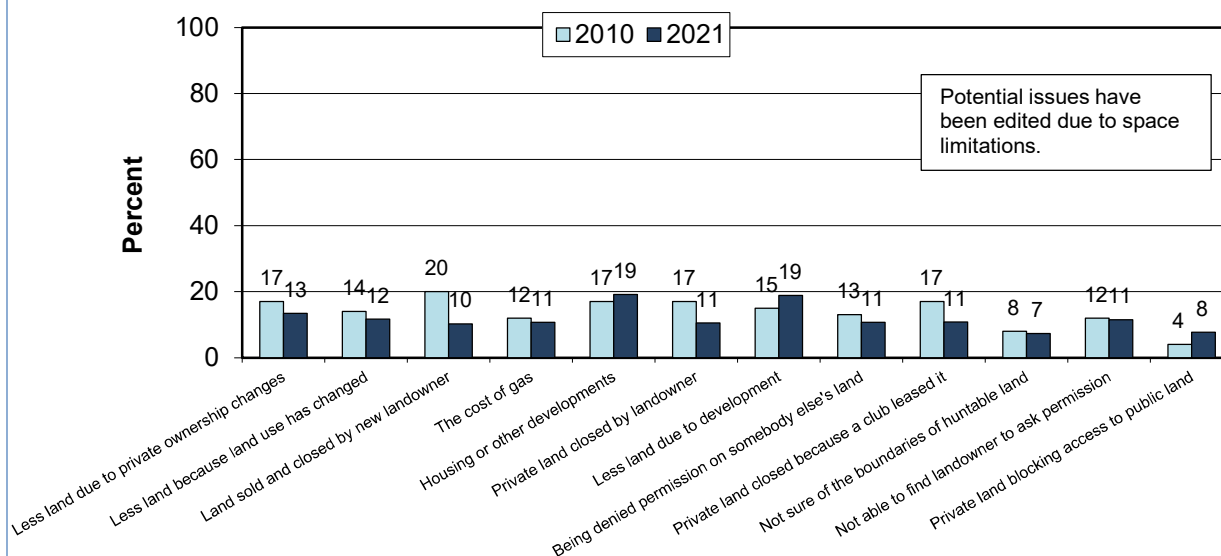
Please indicate if each issue has been a major problem for you, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years [when hunting]. (Major problem responses) (Mostly hunts public land) (Part 1)



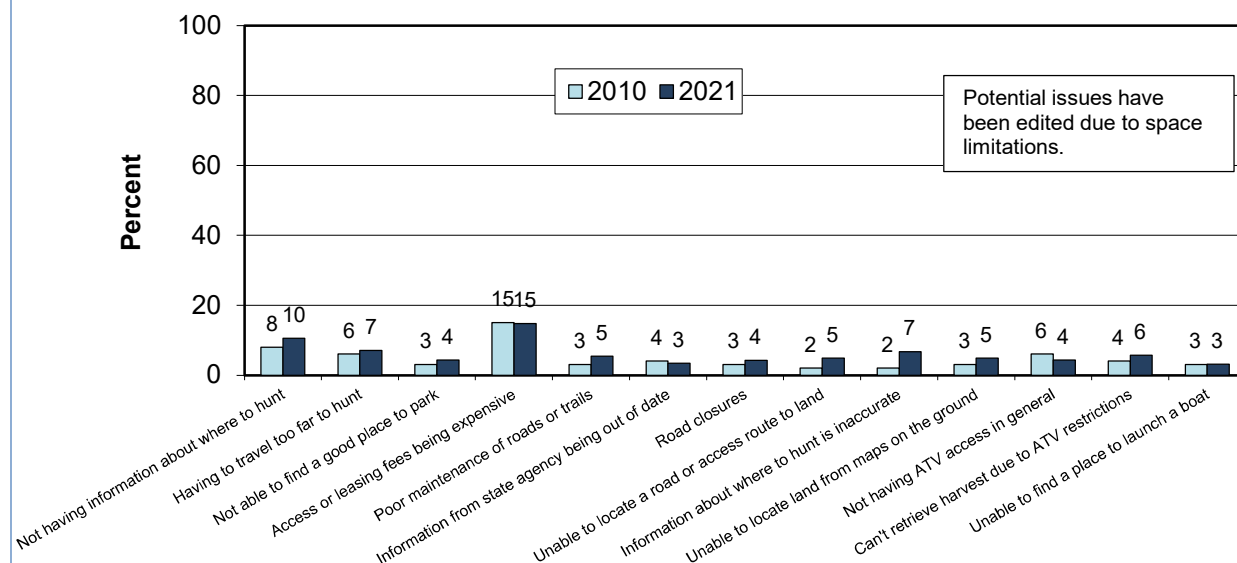
Please indicate if each issue has been a major problem for you, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years [when hunting]. (Major problem responses) (Mostly hunts public land) (Part 2)



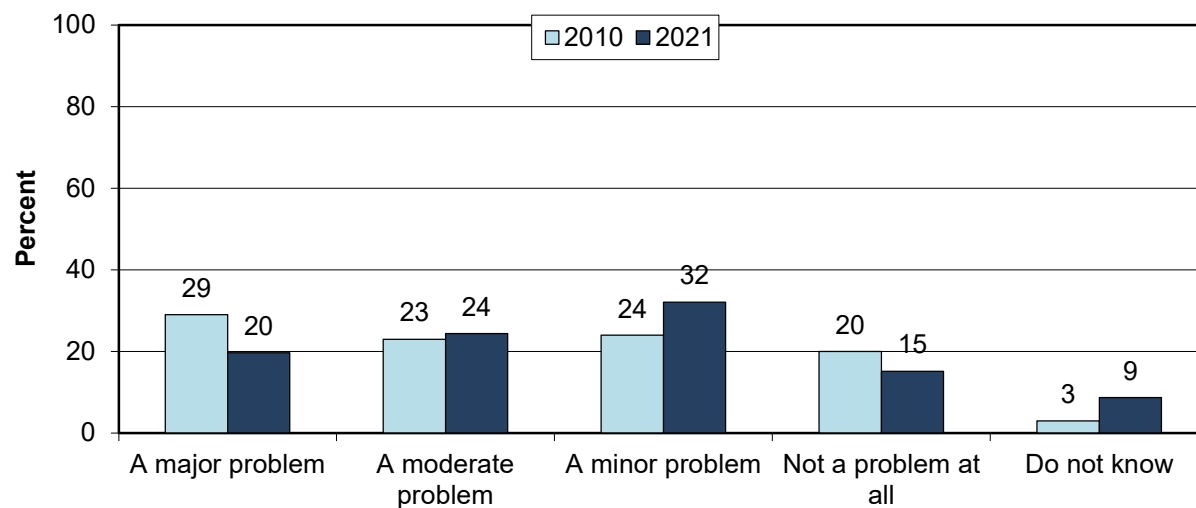
Please indicate if each issue has been a major problem for you, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years [when hunting]. (Major problem responses) (Mostly hunts private land) (Part 1)



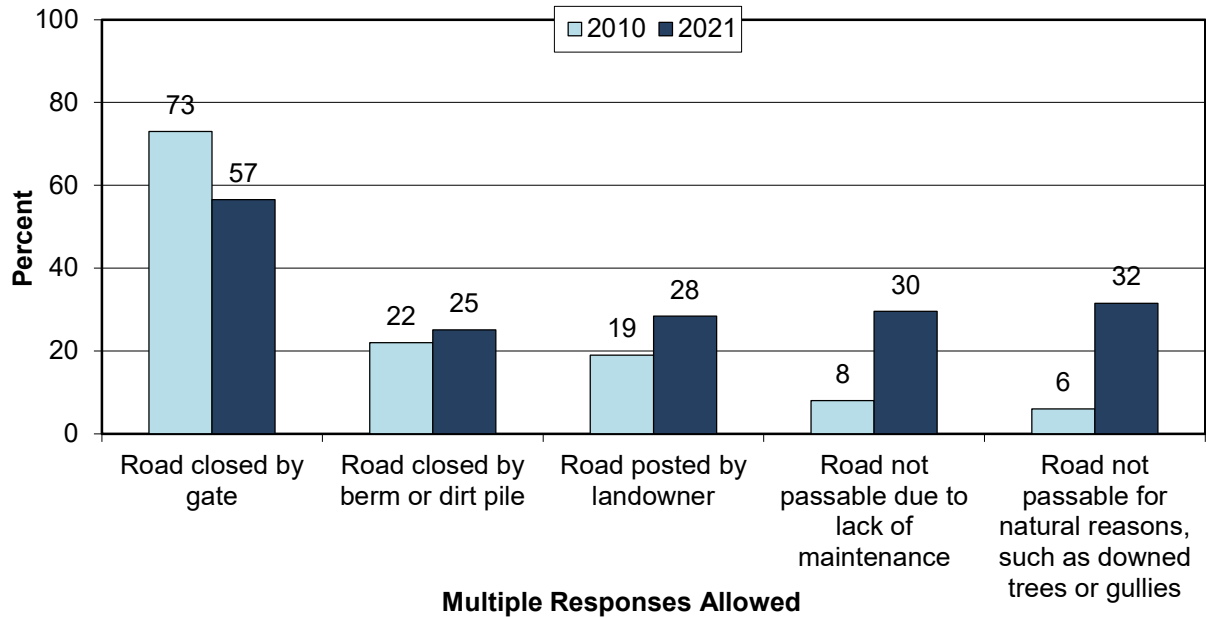
Please indicate if each issue has been a major problem for you, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years [when hunting]. (Major problem responses) (Mostly hunts private land) (Part 2)



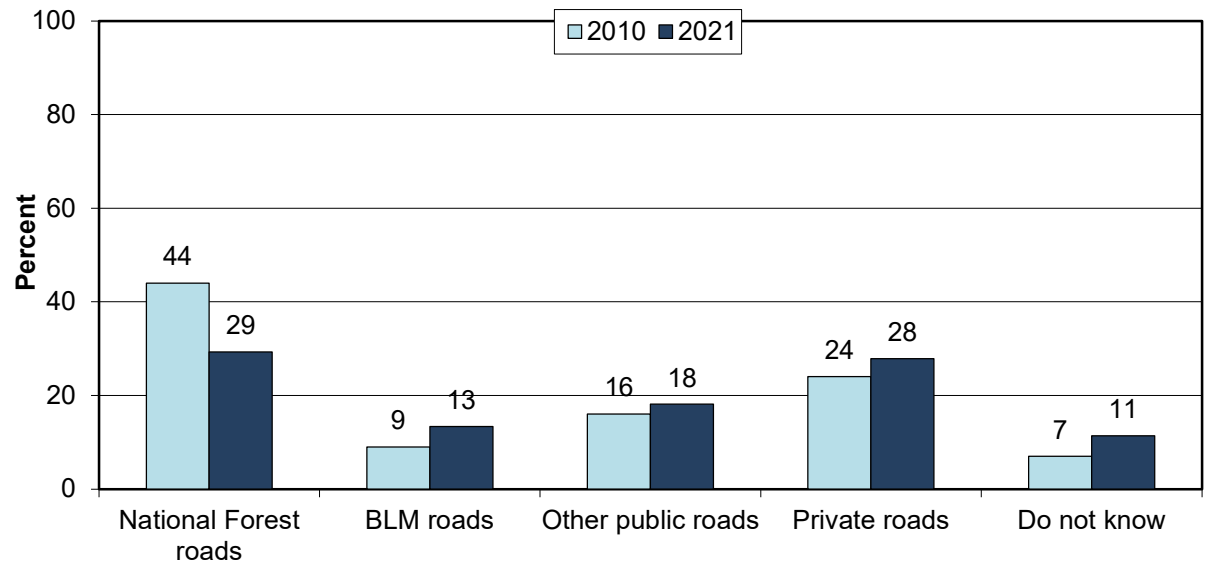
How much of a problem were landowners intentionally blocking or making it difficult to physically access public land? (Asked of those who said that private land blocking public land for hunting is a problem.)



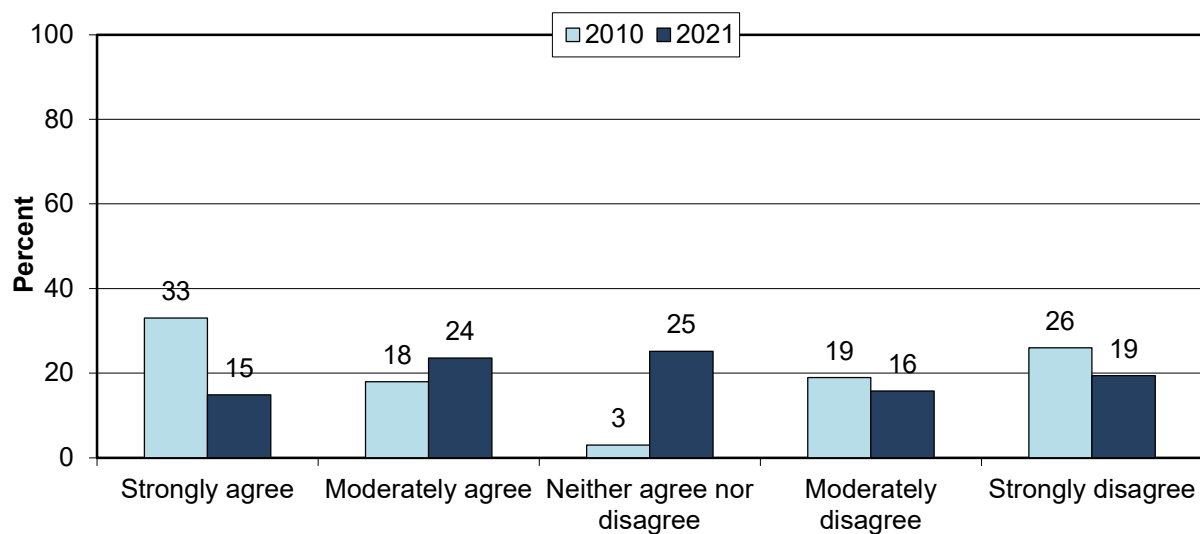
How were the roads closed? (Asked of those who said road closures were a problem.)



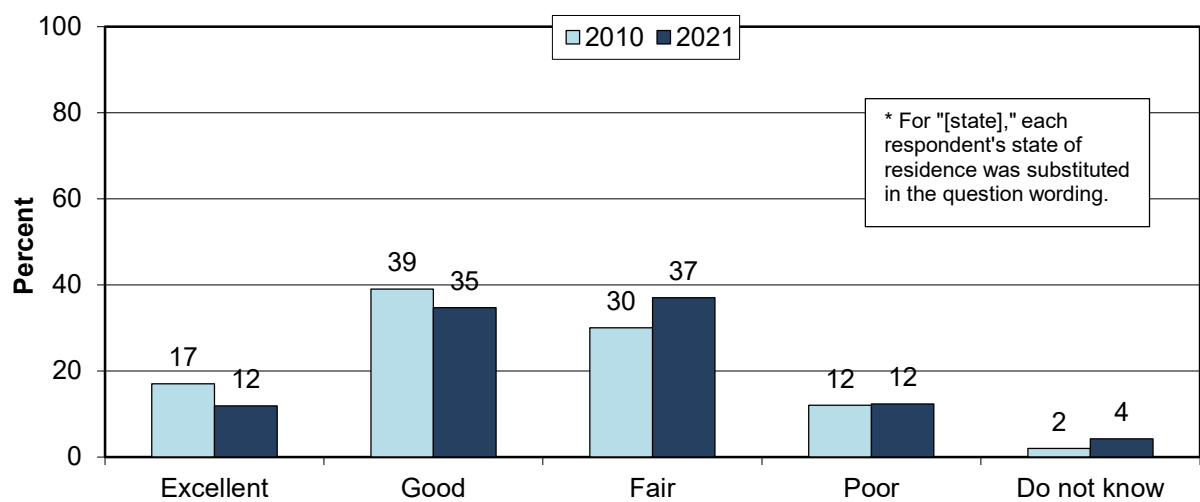
Were the closed roads National Forest roads, BLM (Bureau of Land Management) roads, other public roads, or private roads? (Asked of those who said the roads were closed by gate.)



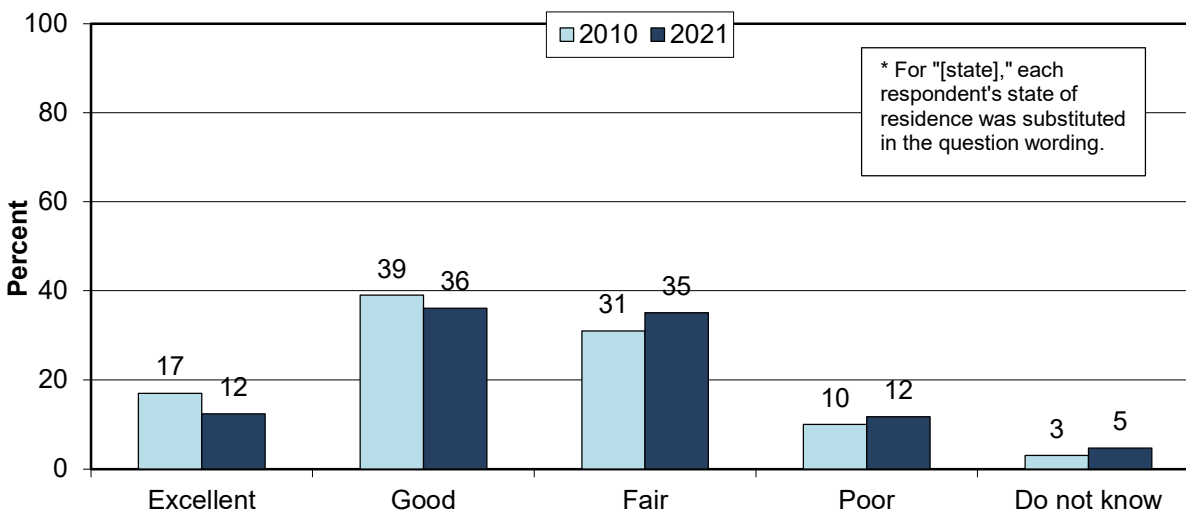
Do you agree or disagree that not being able to retrieve your harvest with an ATV has caused you to hunt less in the past 5 years? (Asked of those who said this is a problem.)



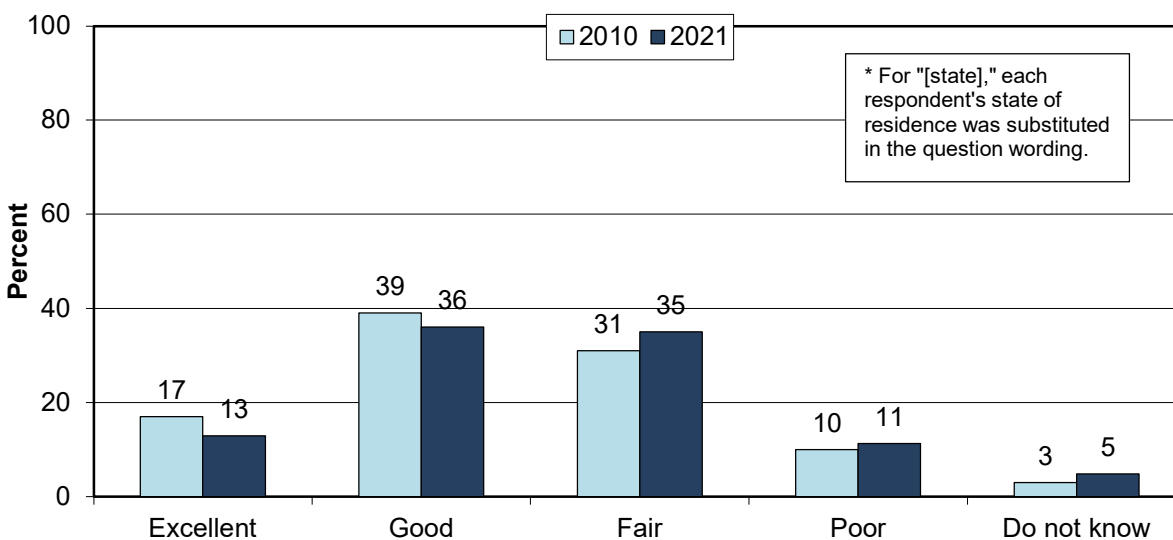
Overall, how would you rate access to lands for hunting in [state]*? (Overall)



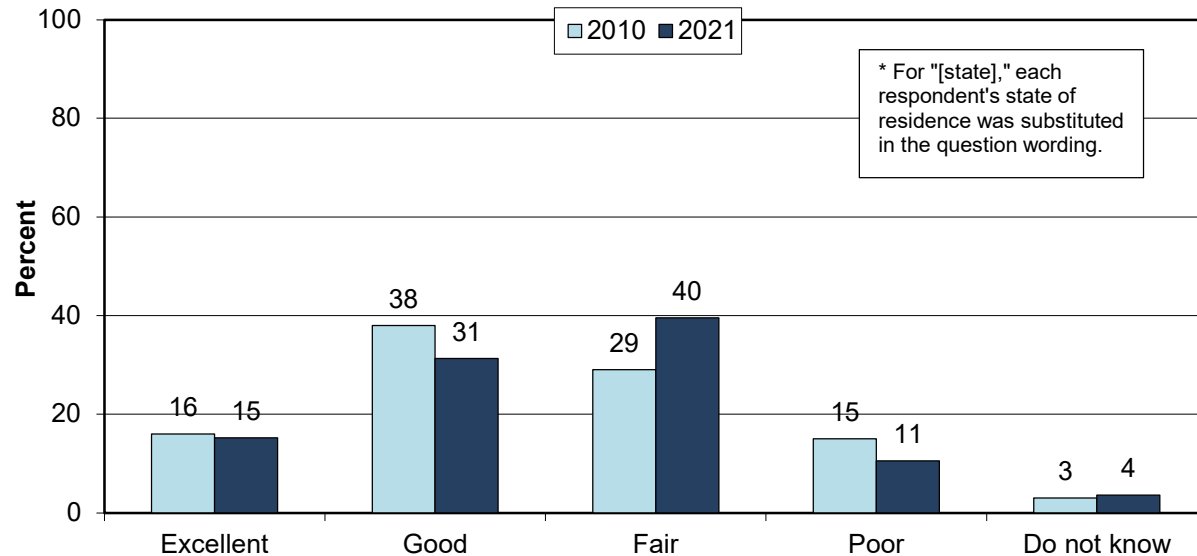
Overall, how would you rate access to lands for hunting in [state]*? (Primarily hunts any deer)



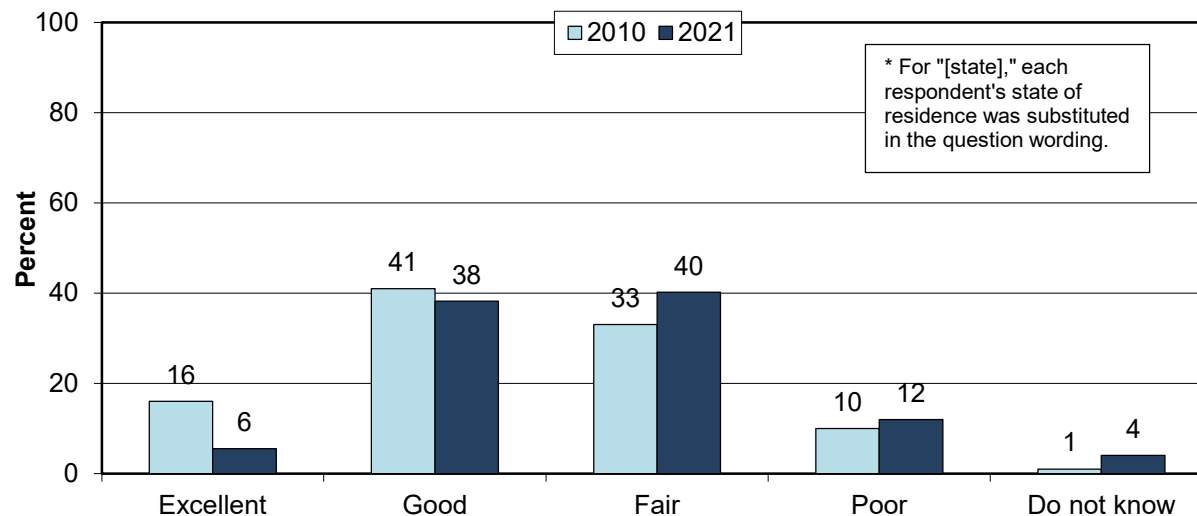
Overall, how would you rate access to lands for hunting in [state]*? (Primarily hunts white-tailed deer)



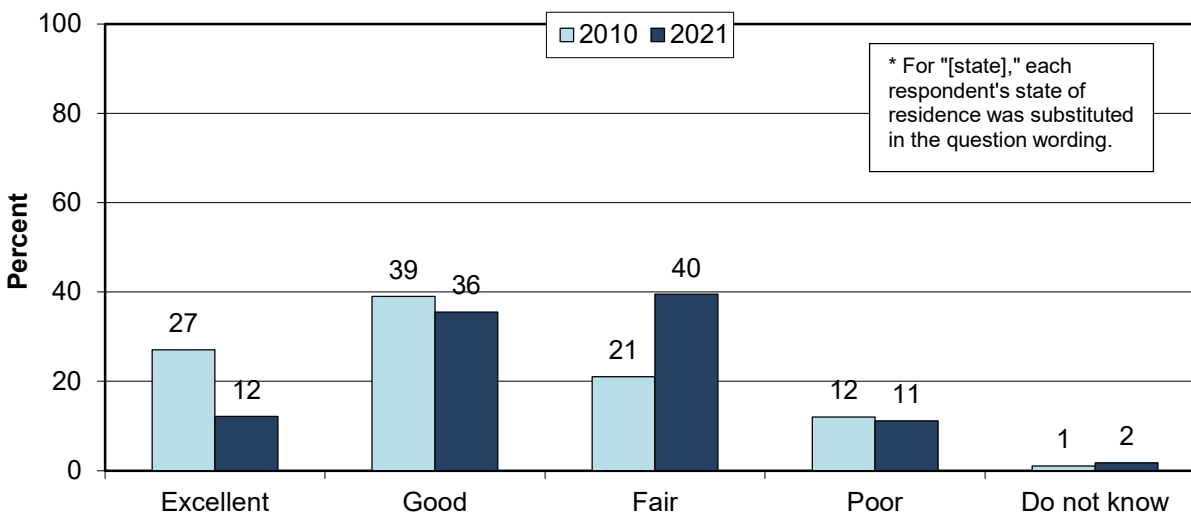
Overall, how would you rate access to lands for hunting in [state]*? (Primarily hunts upland game birds)



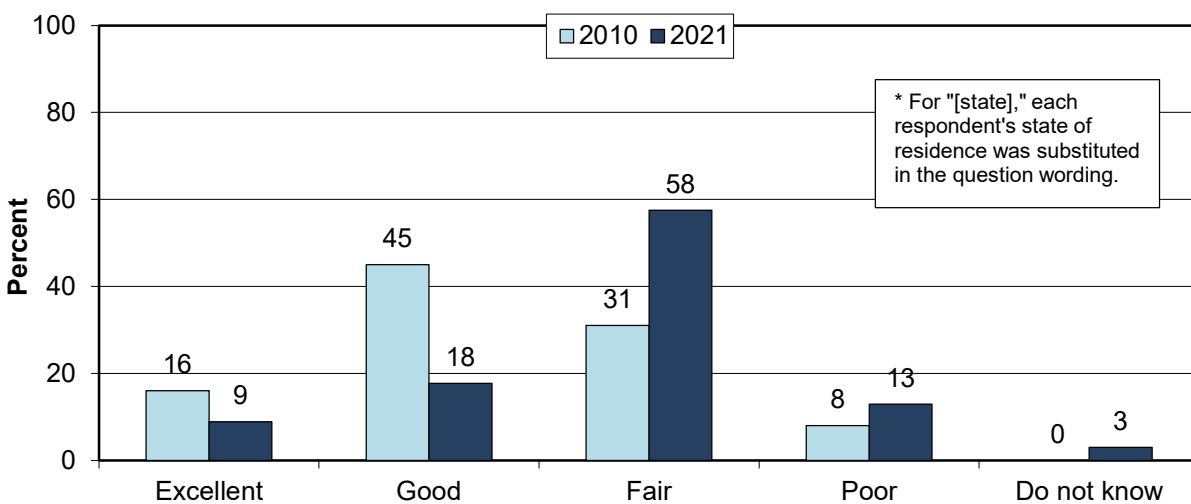
Overall, how would you rate access to lands for hunting in [state]*? (Primarily hunts waterfowl)



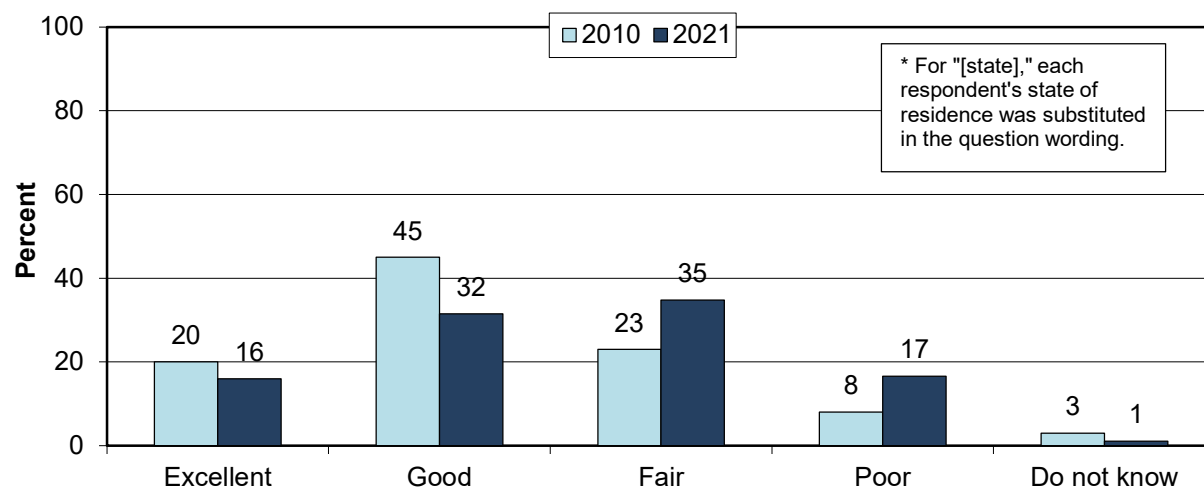
Overall, how would you rate access to lands for hunting in [state]*? (Primarily hunts wild turkey)



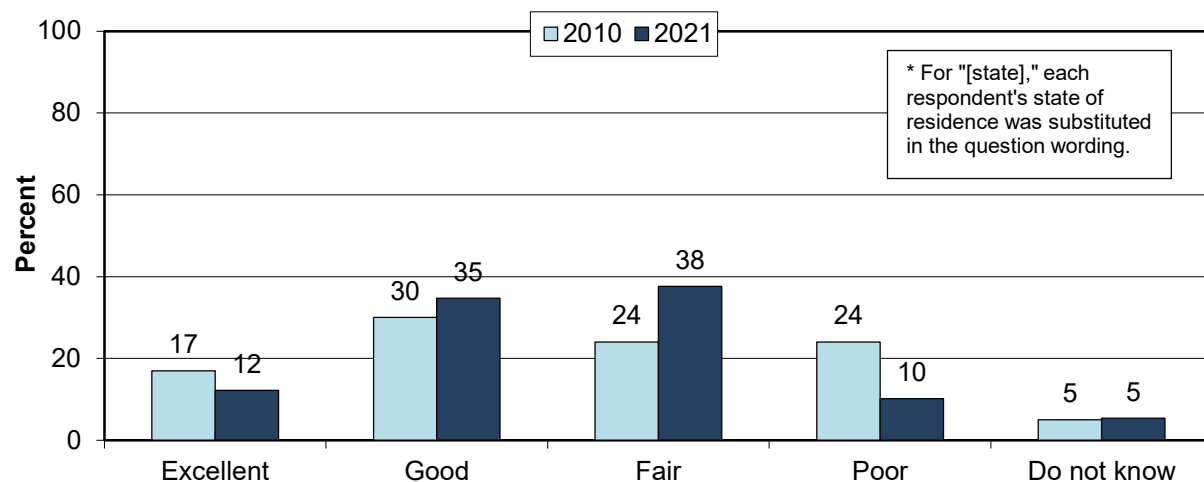
Overall, how would you rate access to lands for hunting in [state]*? (Primarily hunts elk)



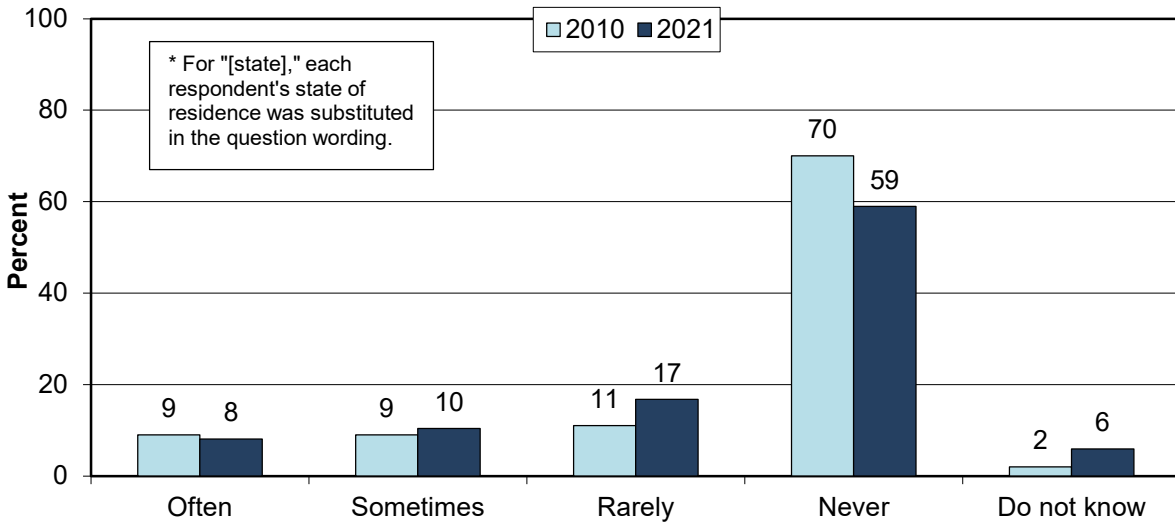
**Overall, how would you rate access to lands for
hunting in [state]*?
(Hunts public lands at least half the time)**



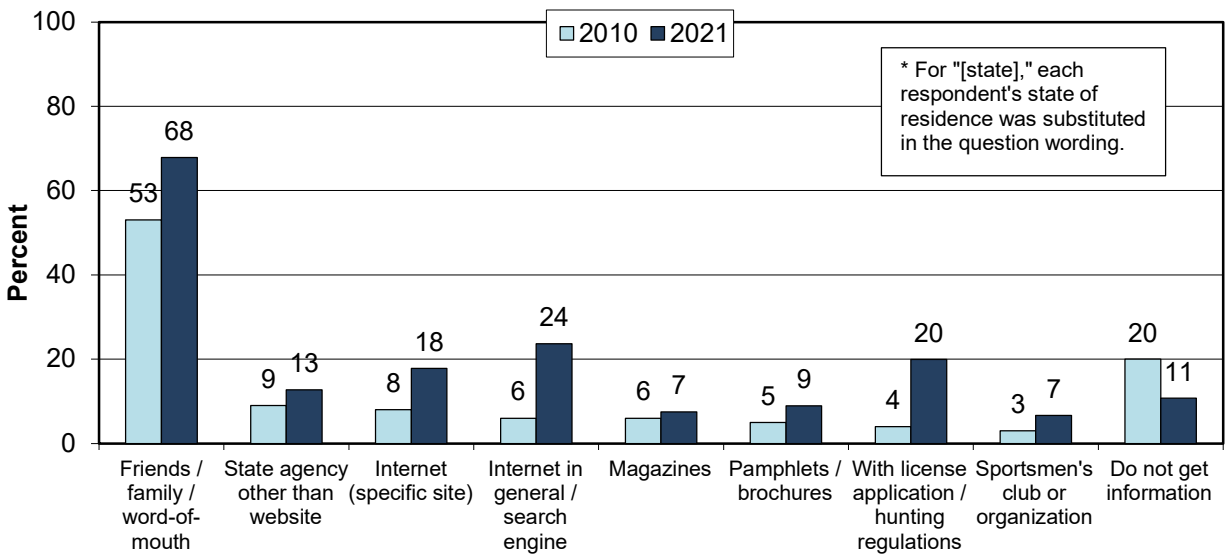
**Overall, how would you rate access to lands for
hunting in [state]*?
(Hunts private lands at least half the time)**



How often do you hunt on private lands enrolled in a walk-in access program or a state-run private land access program in [state]*?

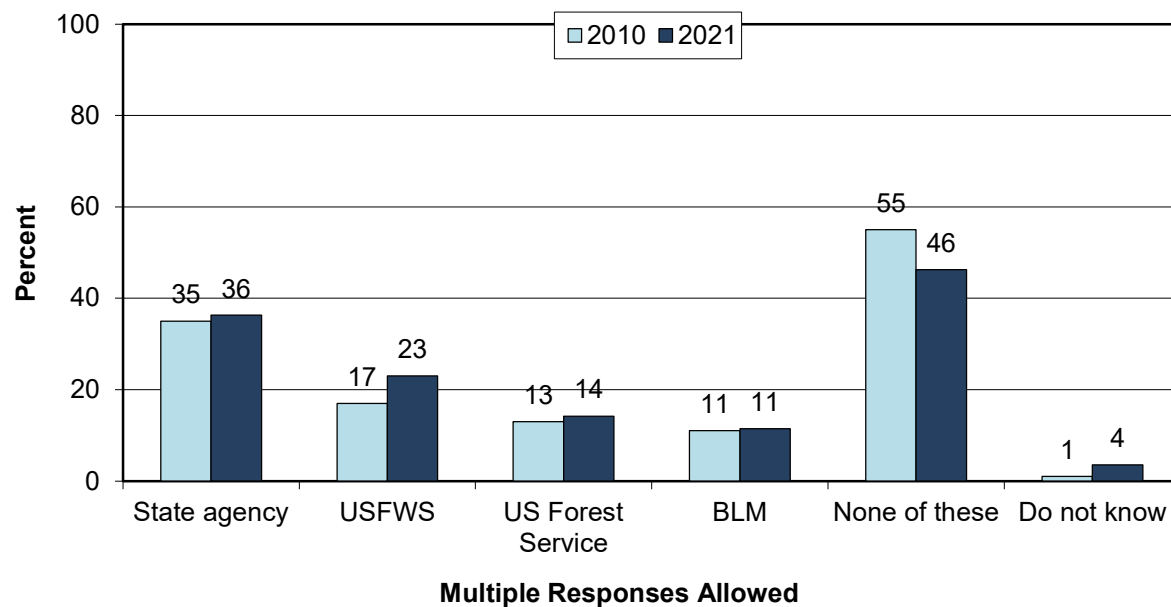


Where do you get information on places to hunt in [state]*?

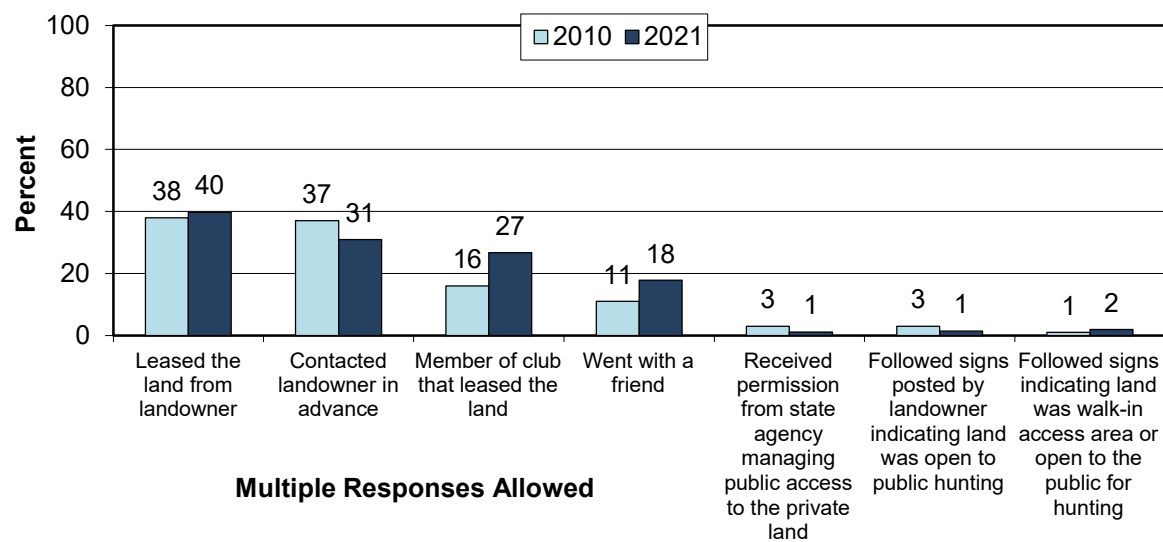


Multiple Responses Allowed

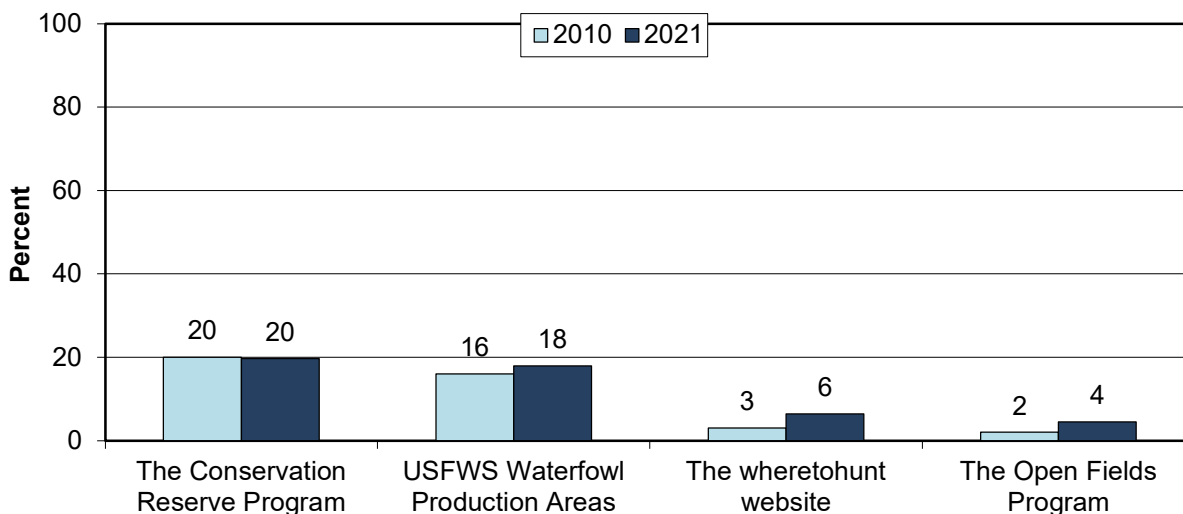
Have you visited any of the following websites to look for information on places to hunt and hunting access?



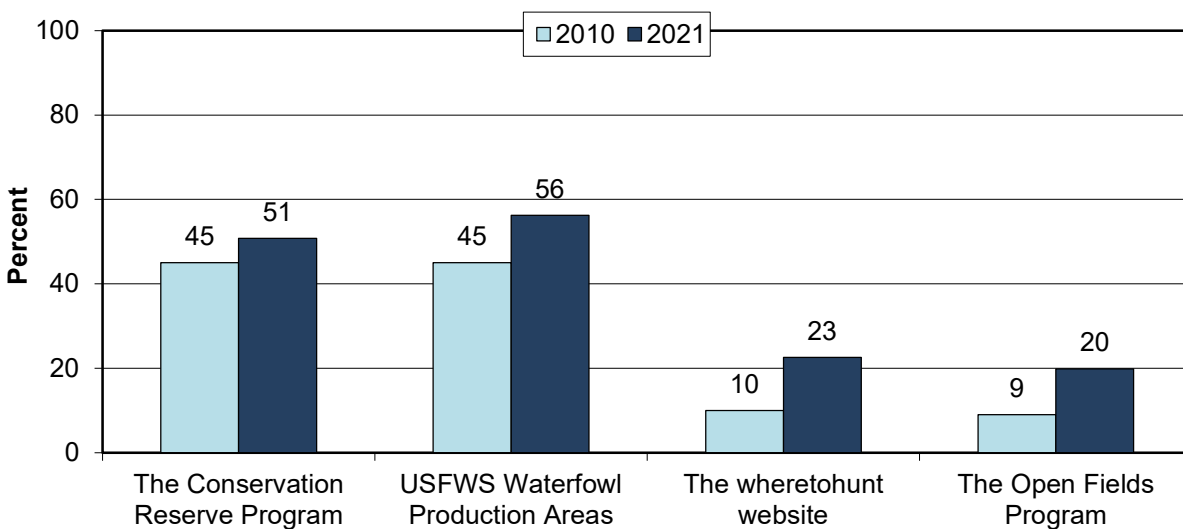
In the past 5 years, when you have hunted on private land owned by someone you did not know, in which of the following ways did you get permission to hunt on the land? (Asked of those who hunted on private land owned by someone they did not know.)



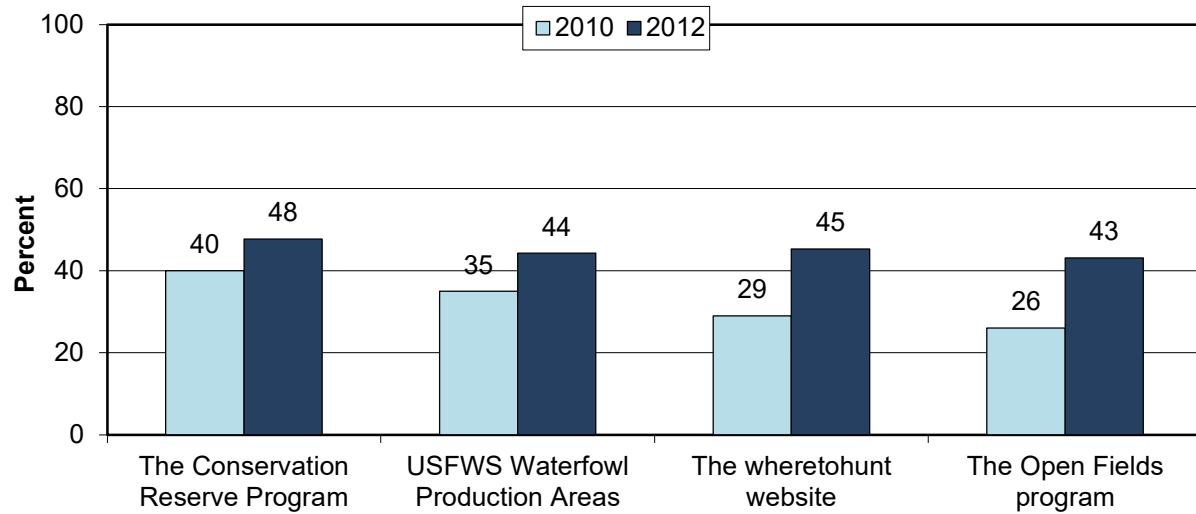
**For each one listed below, please indicate if, prior to this survey, you were very aware, somewhat aware, or not at all aware of it.
(Very aware responses)**



**For each one listed below, please indicate if, prior to this survey, you were very aware, somewhat aware, or not at all aware of it.
(Very or somewhat aware responses)**



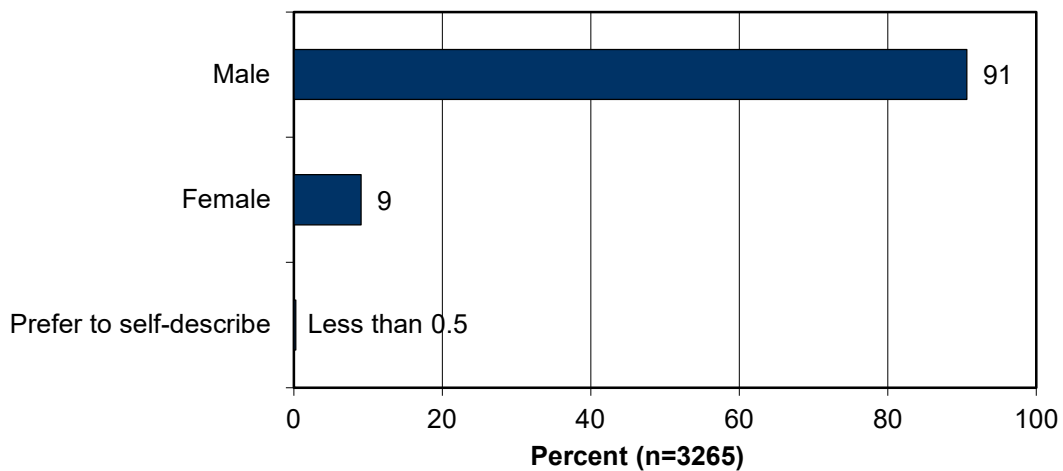
Please indicate below how you would rate the program or resource for making access to land for hunting easier. (Asked of those aware of the program.) (Excellent and good responses)



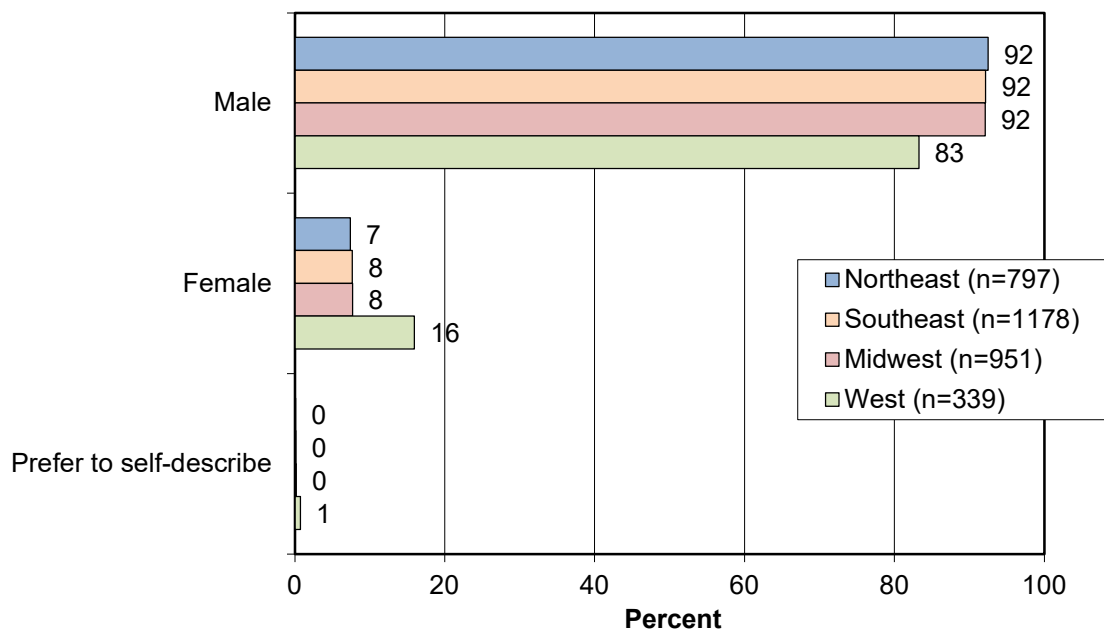
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF HUNTERS

Demographic information is obtained primarily for crosstabulations and further analyses. They are also gathered to ensure that the samples of hunters are representative of hunters in the real world. The survey collected data on gender, age, education, residential area (i.e., on the urban-rural continuum), the state of residency (not shown here but used to establish the regions), and the years of residency in that state.

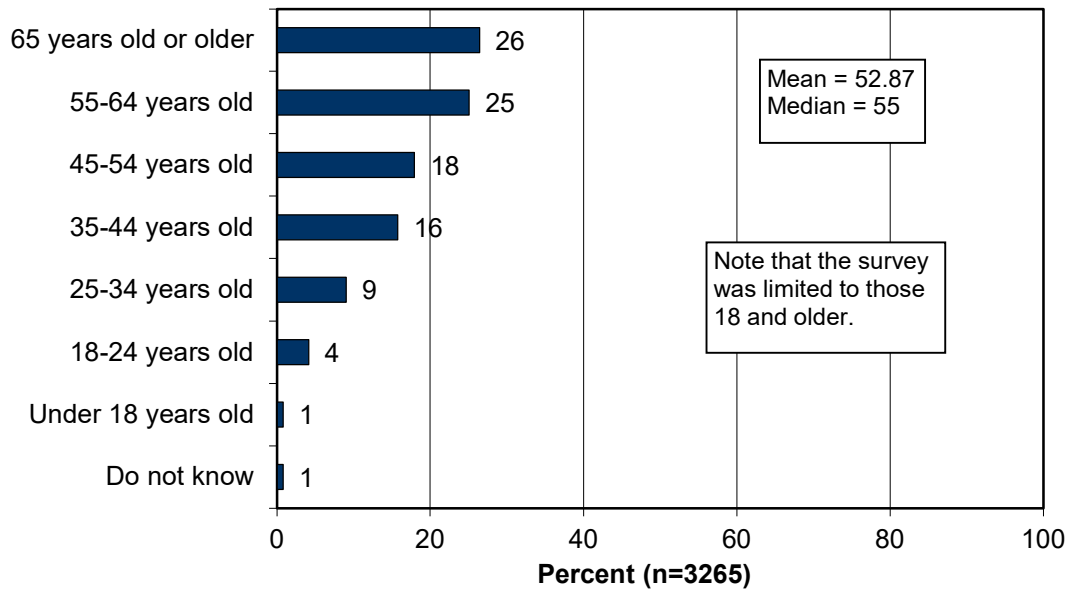
Are you...? (Gender question is in the online survey; observed but not asked in the telephone survey.) (Hunter survey)



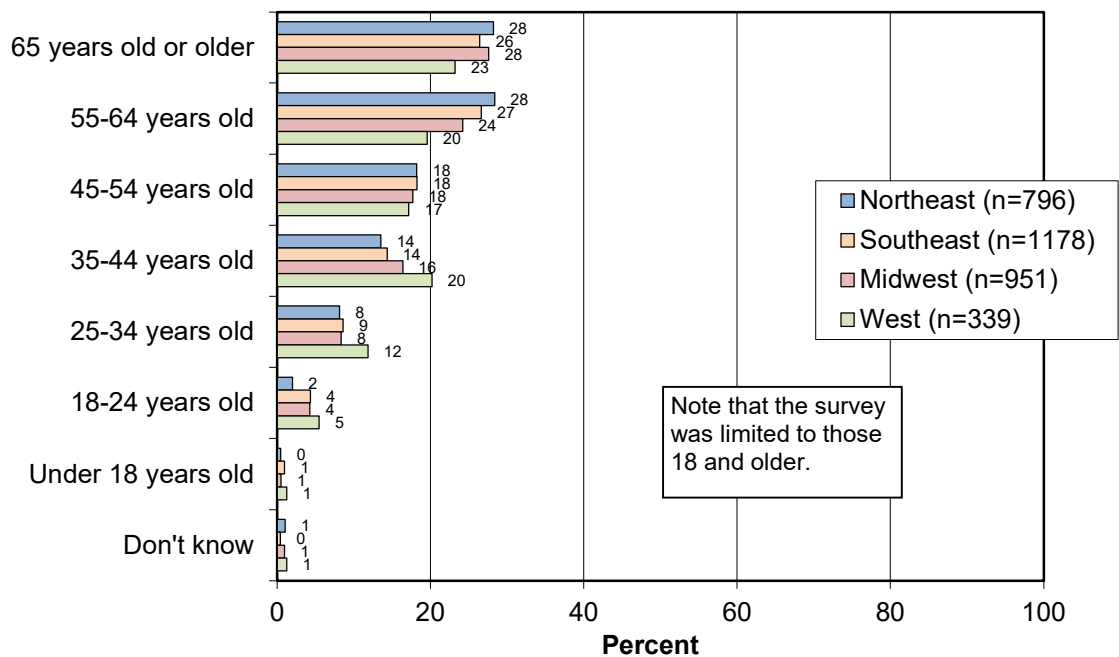
Are you...? (Gender question is in the online survey; observed but not asked in the telephone survey.) (Hunter survey)



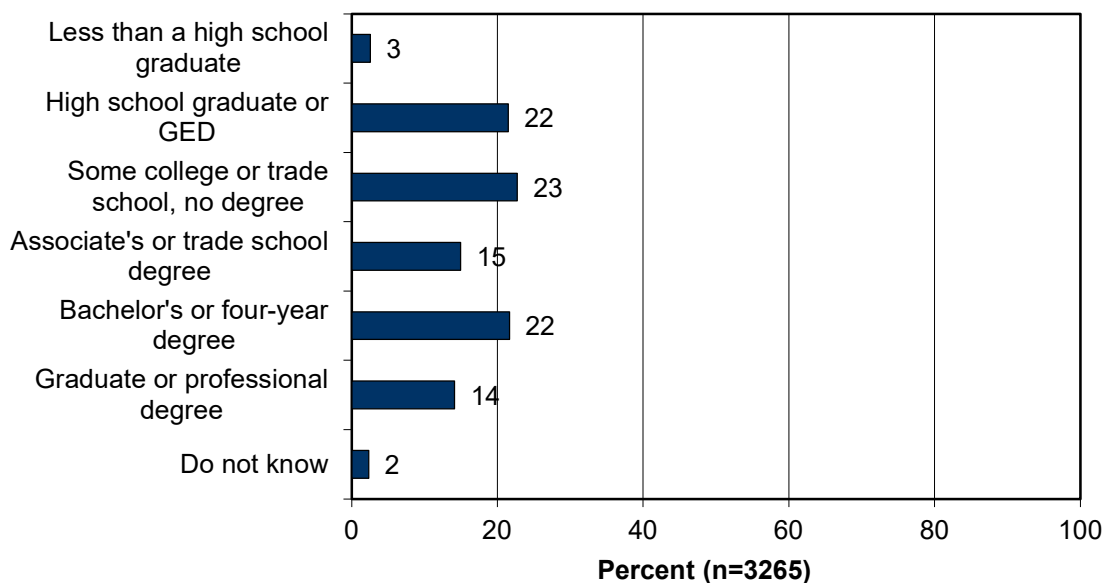
May I ask your age? (Hunter survey)



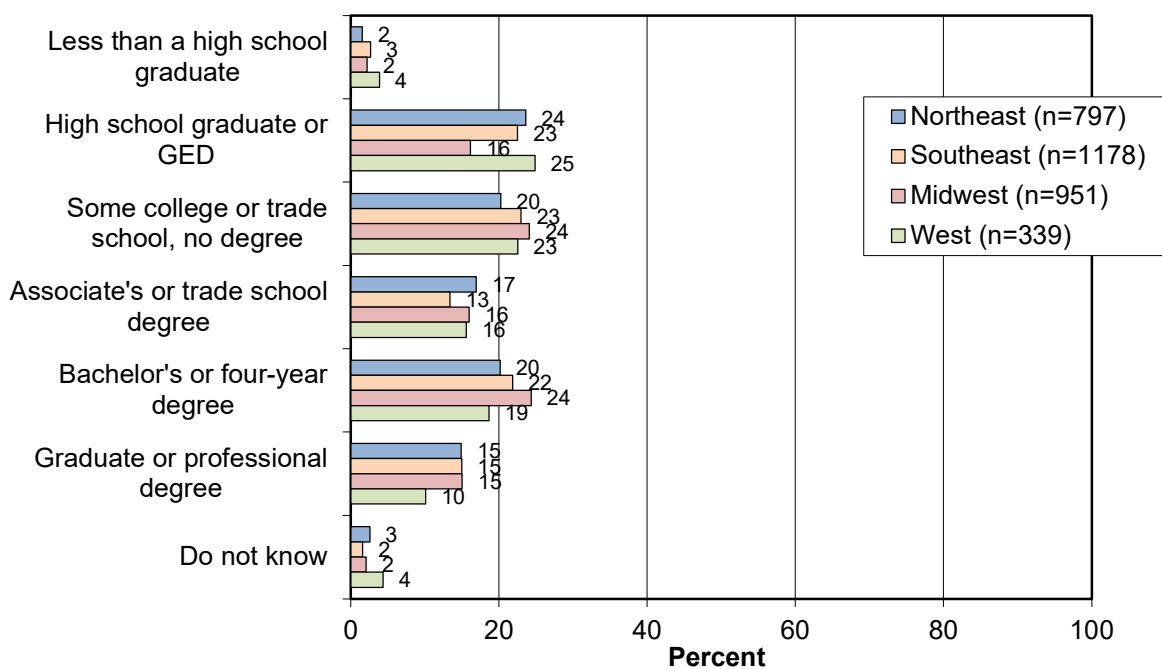
May I ask your age? (Hunter survey)



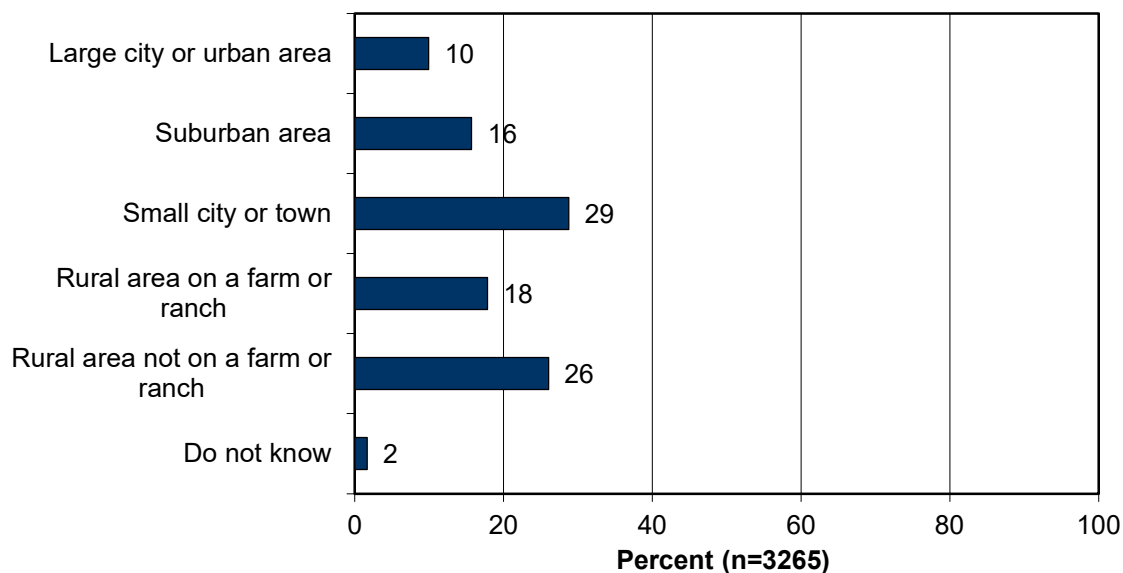
Which of the following statements best describes the highest level of formal education you have completed? (Hunter survey)



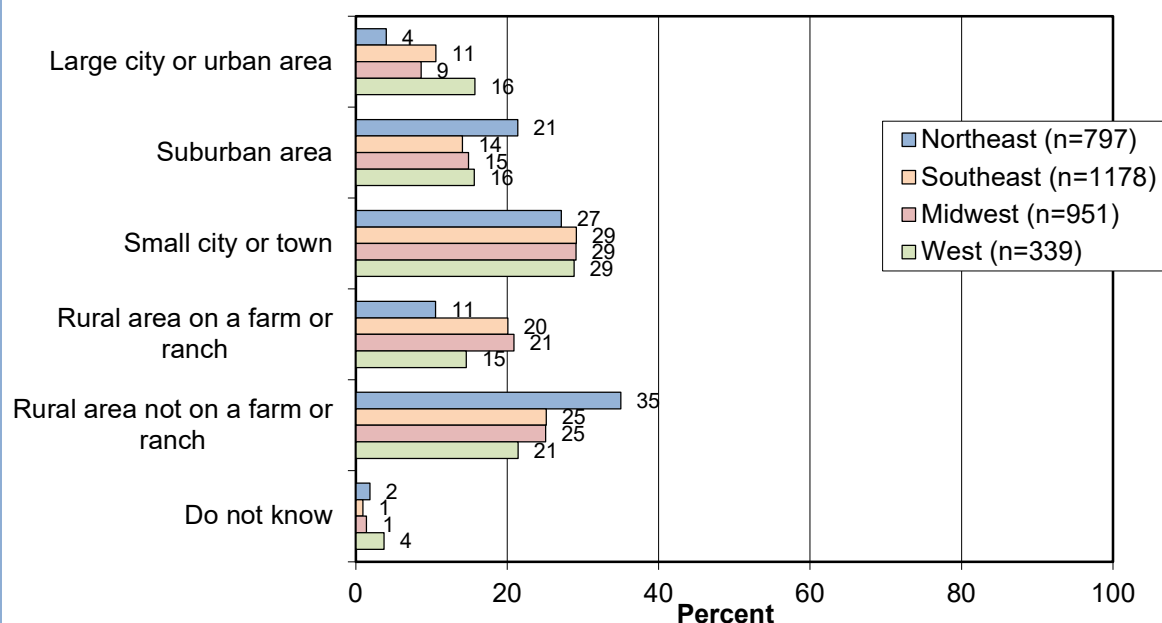
Which of the following statements best describes the highest level of formal education you have completed? (Hunter survey)



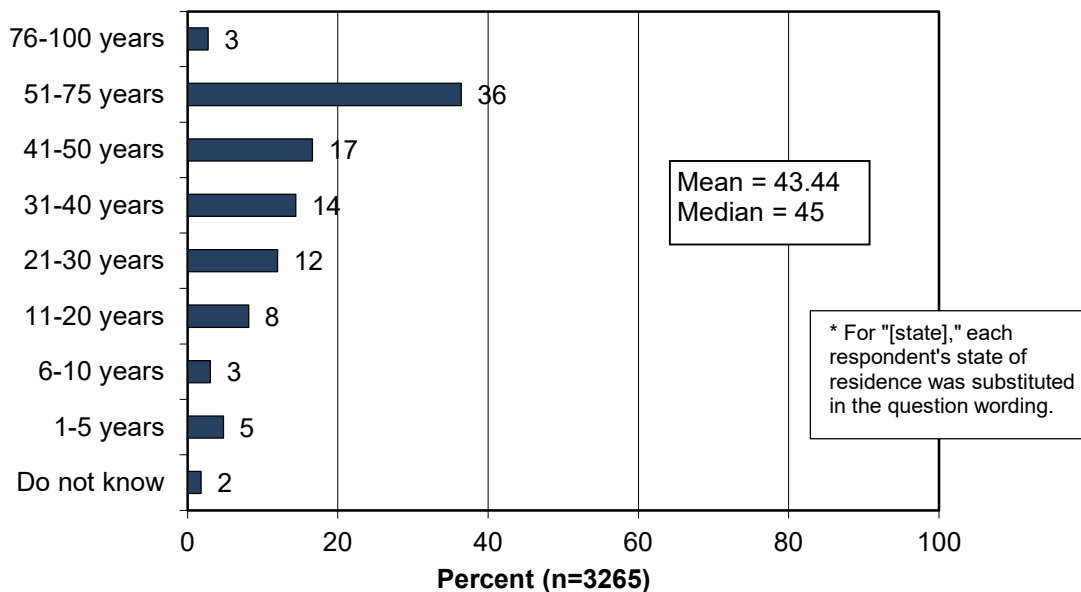
**Which of the following best describes where you currently live?
(Hunter survey)**



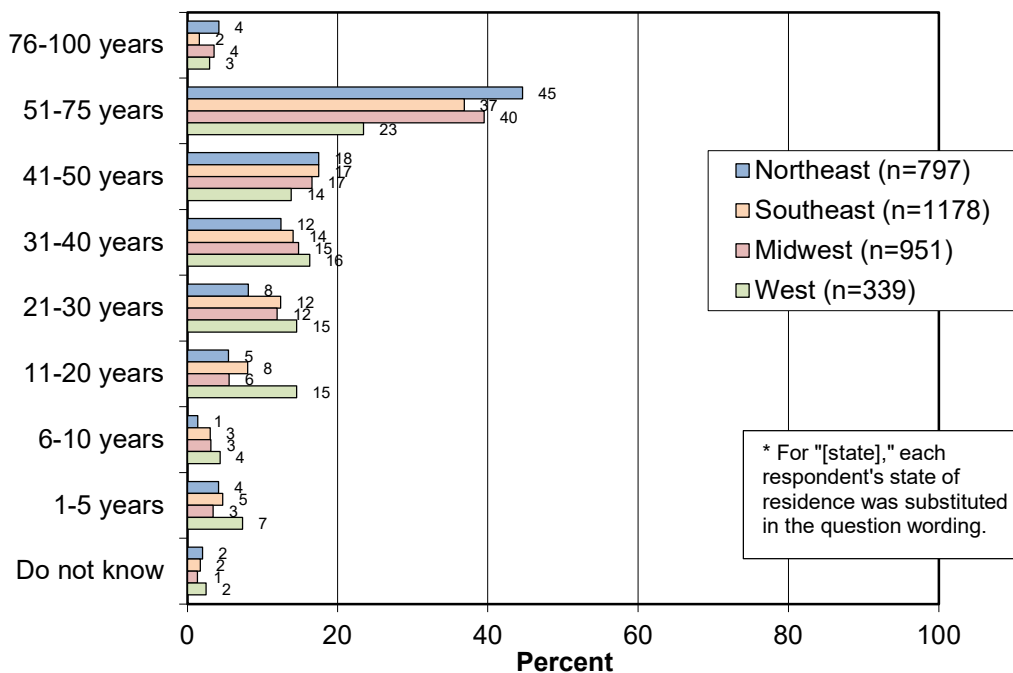
**Which of the following best describes where you currently live?
(Hunter survey)**



How many years have you been a resident of [state]*? (Hunter survey)



How many years have you been a resident of [state]*? (Hunter survey)



SPORT SHOOTER ACCESS SURVEY RESULTS

CHARACTERISTICS OF SHOOTING PARTICIPATION

MAJOR FINDINGS

Handguns, non-AR rifles, and shotguns are used by the majority of sport shooters.

Multiple responses were allowed. Sport shooters named all the types of firearms they used in the past 5 years: 68% shot handguns, 58% shot non-AR rifles, and 56% shot shotguns. About a third each shot AR platform rifles or used archery equipment.

The groups most likely to travel longer distances to shoot are urban and suburban shooters, West Region shooters, and those who primarily shoot with AR platform rifles or shotguns.

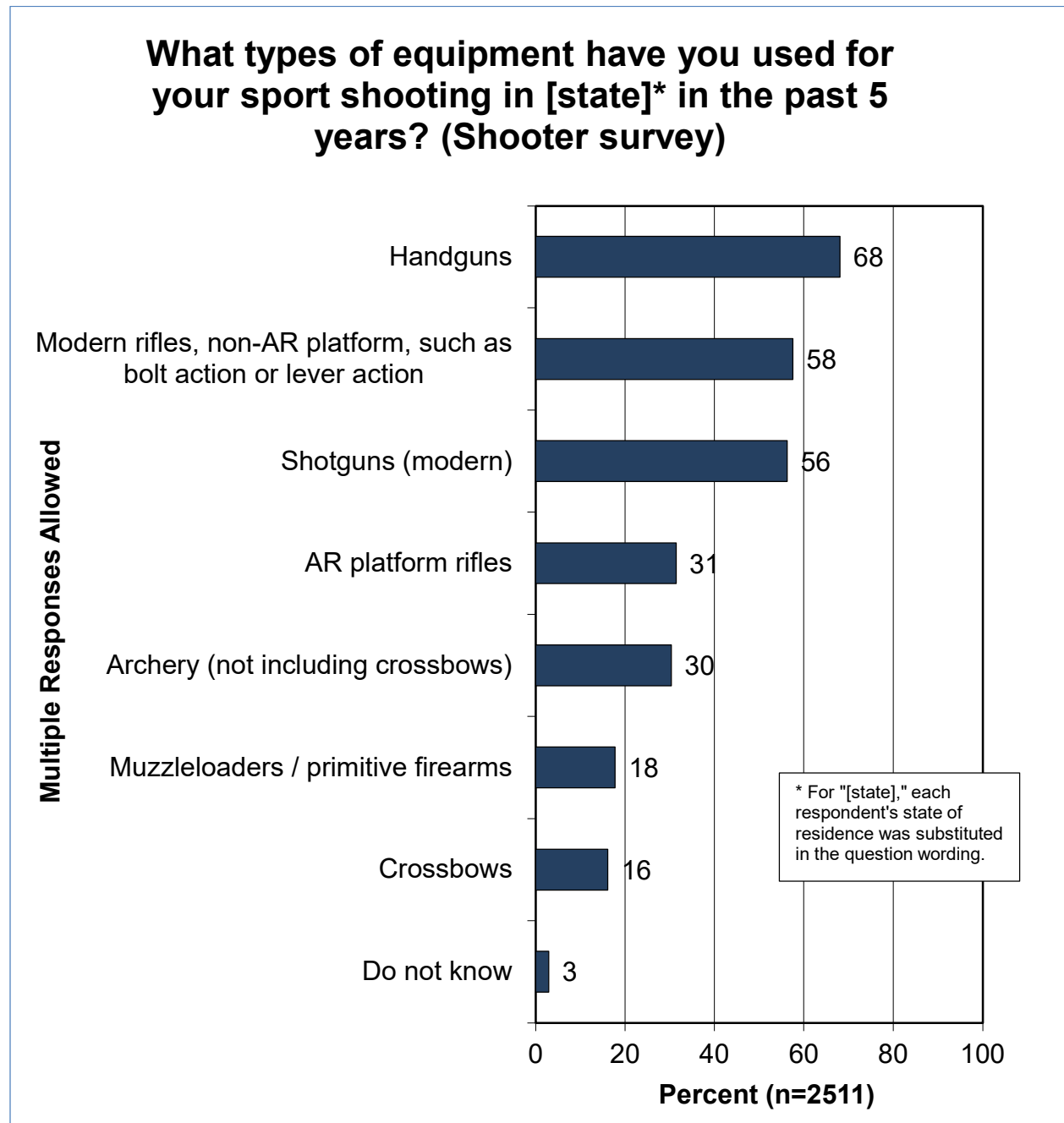
This is based on the question about the typical travel distance for shooting.

The overwhelming majority of shooters use a car or truck to access their shooting spot, far exceeding any other mode.

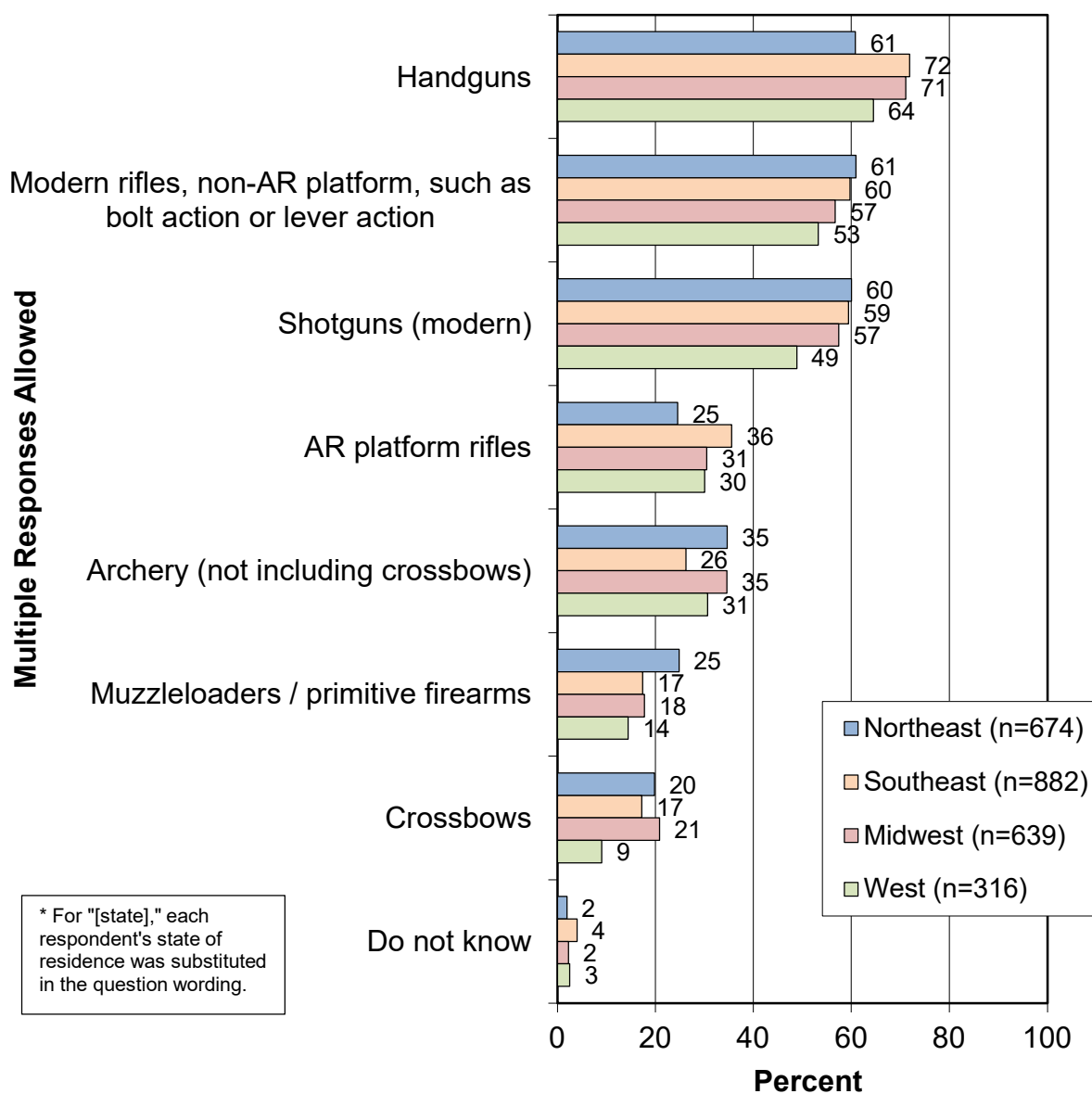
The overwhelming majority of shooters (86%) use a car or truck to get to their shooting location.

The characteristics of participation, such as equipment used and days of participation, were examined in the survey. The main use of this information is for crosstabulations and further analyses. Nonetheless, the data are of interest on their own and are presented in this section.

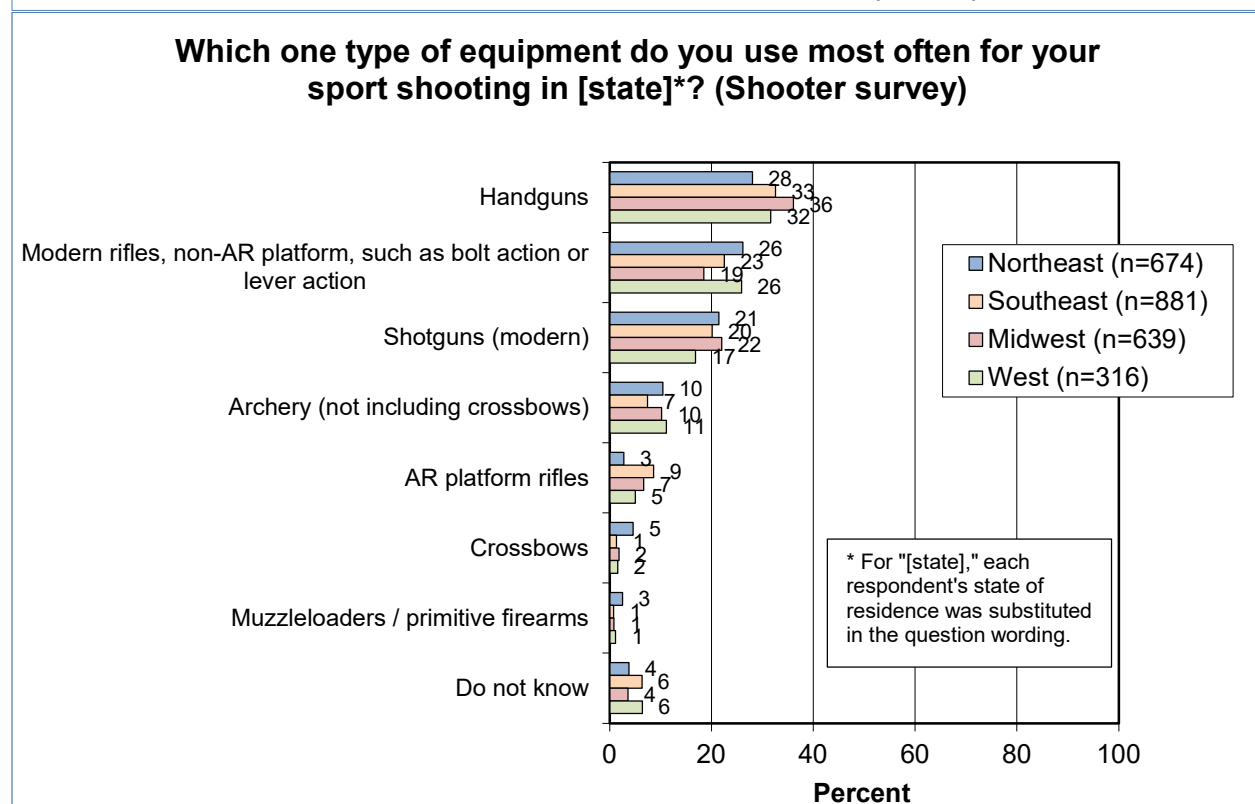
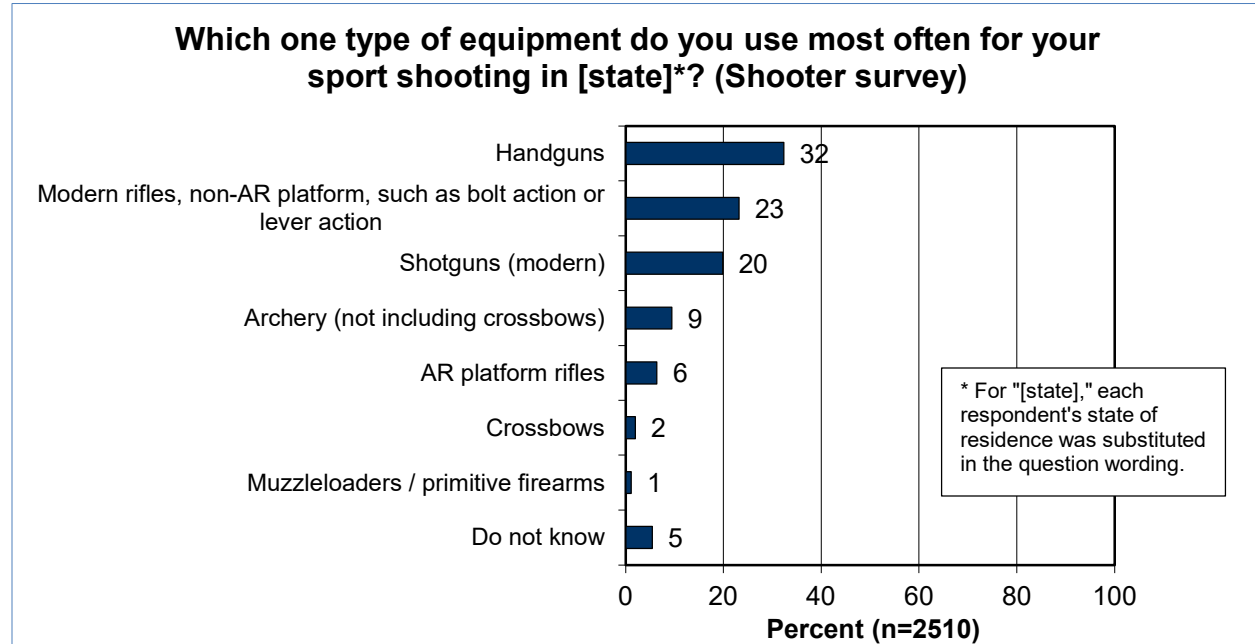
Sport shooters most commonly used handguns in their state in the past 5 years (68% did so), closely followed by modern non-AR platform rifles (58%) and shotguns (56%). Shooters were asked to name all the equipment types that they had used.



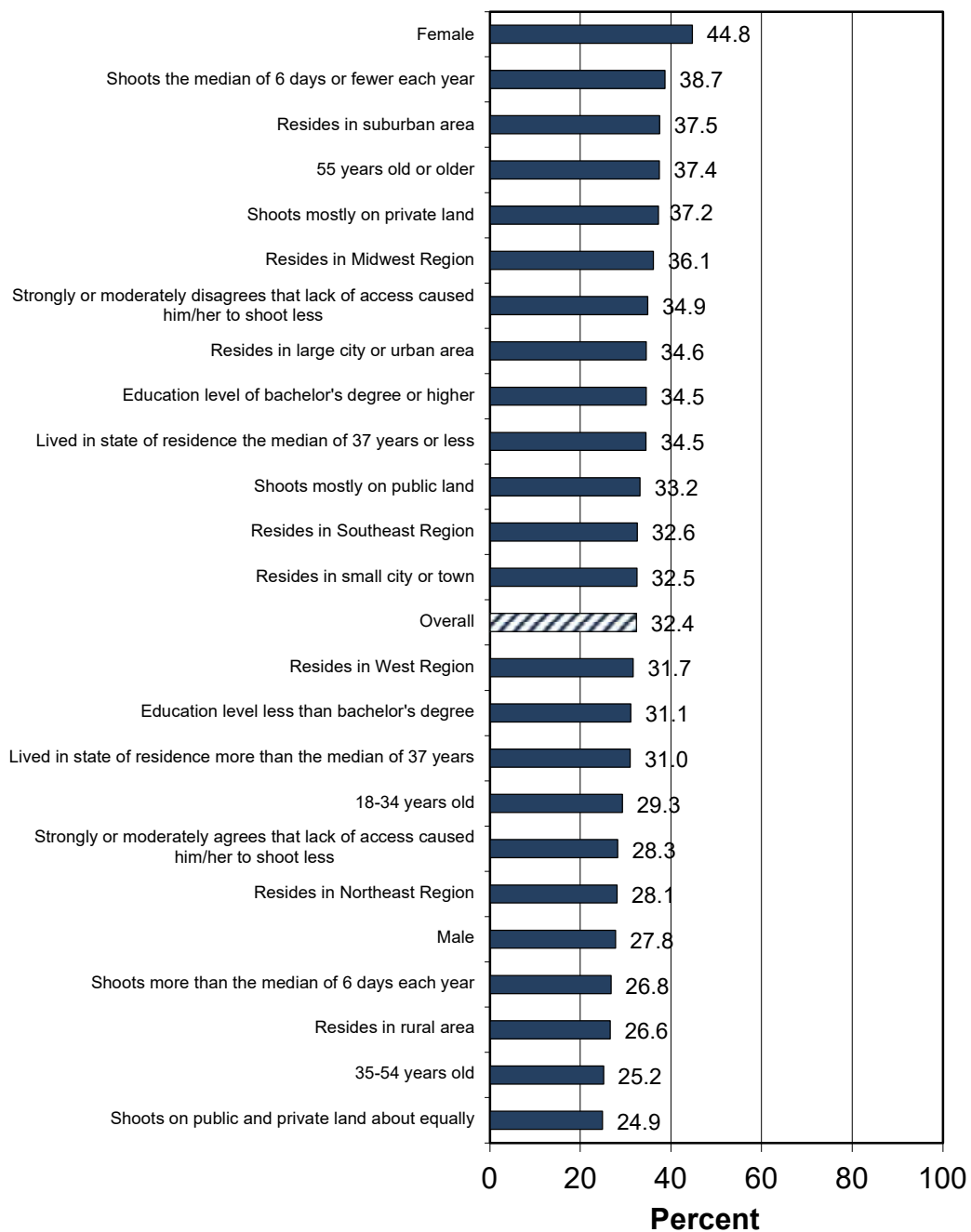
What types of equipment have you used for your sport shooting in [state]* in the past 5 years? (Shooter survey)



When sport shooters were asked to name the one type of equipment they use most often, again the top responses were handguns (32%), modern non-AR platform rifles (23%), and shotguns (20%). The percentages in the previous question demonstrate that many shooters use more than one type of equipment.

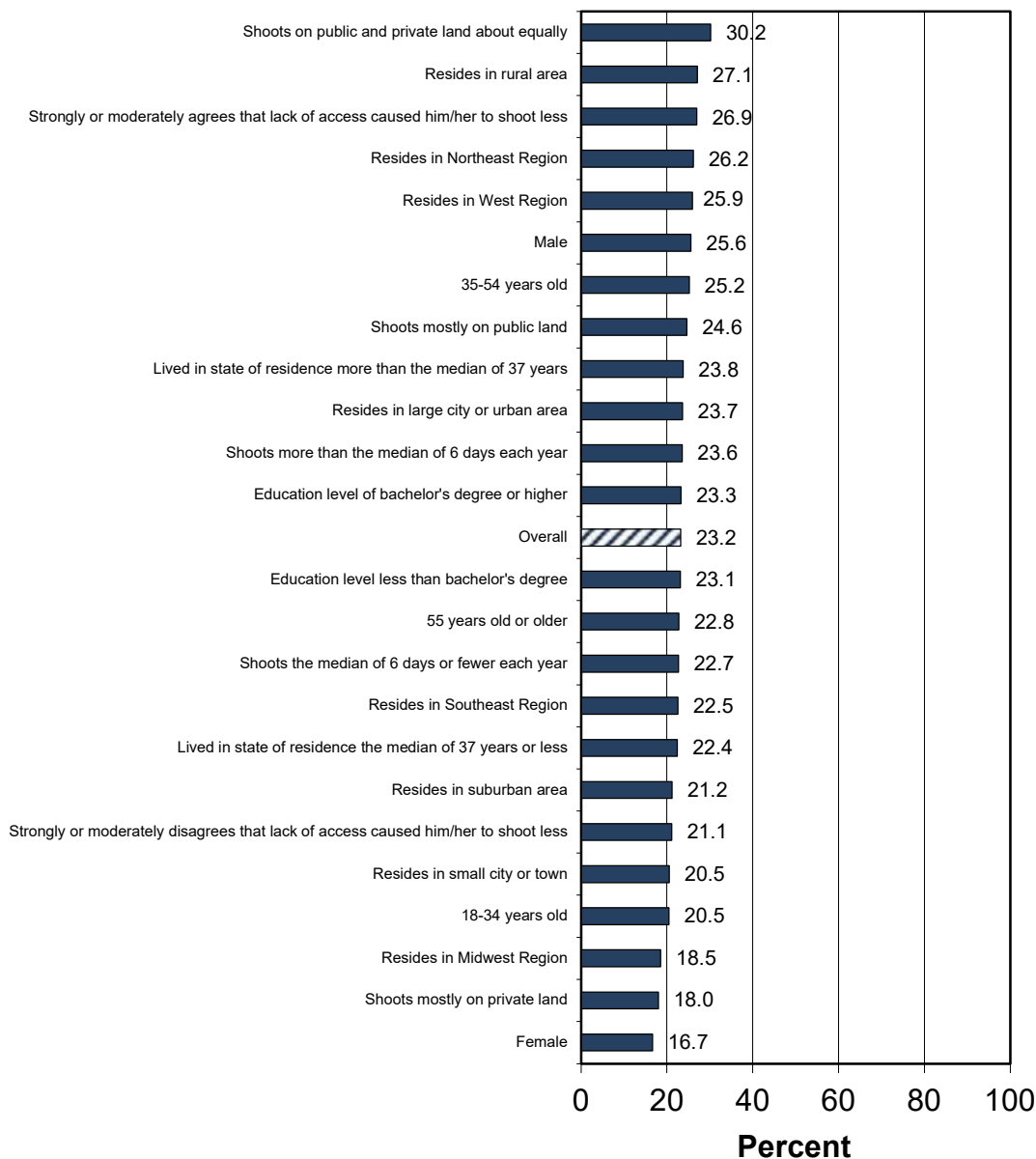


Percent of each of the following groups who primarily shoot with handguns: (Shooter survey)



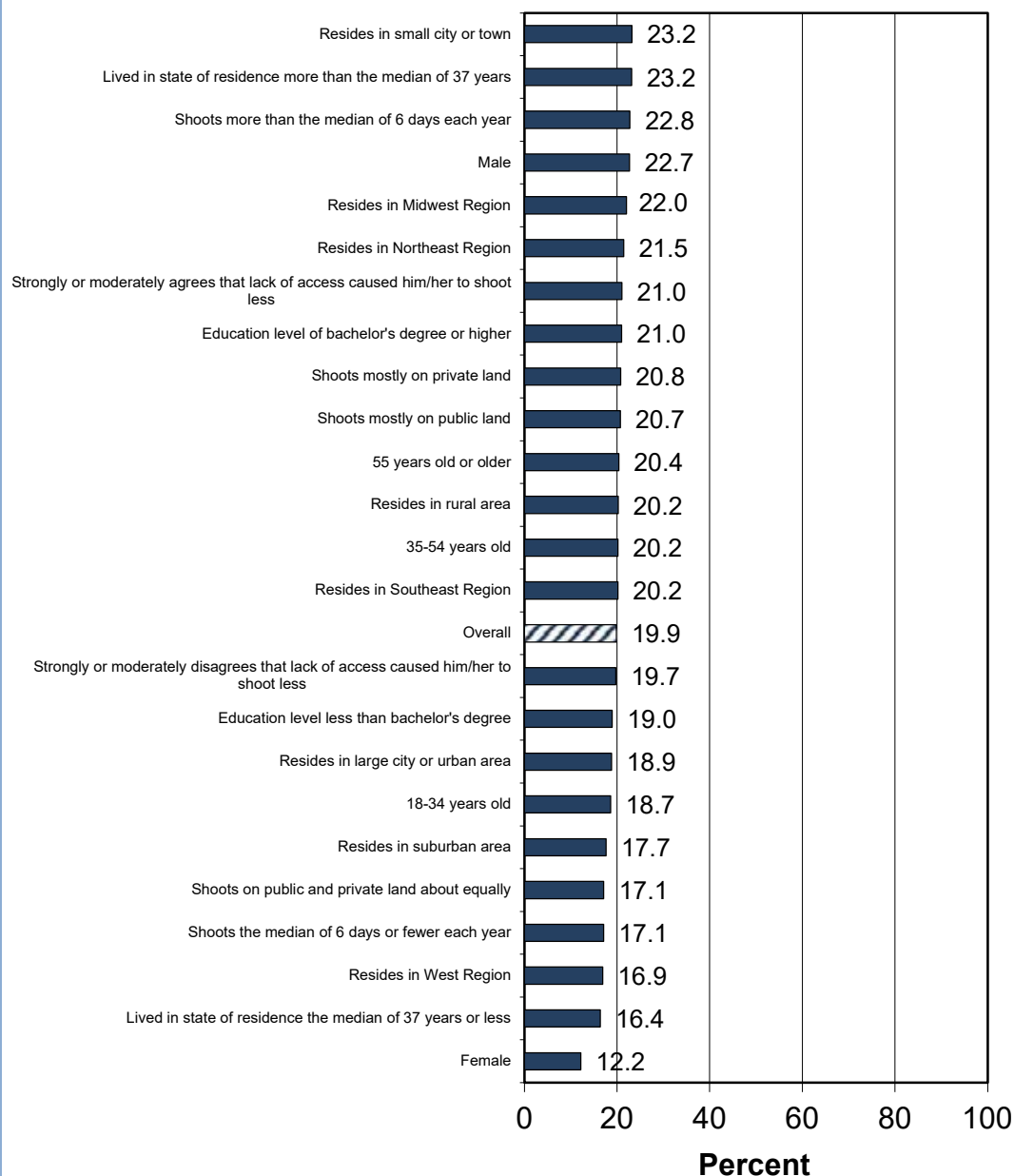
Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

Percent of each of the following groups who primarily shoot with modern rifles (non-AR platform): (Shooter survey)



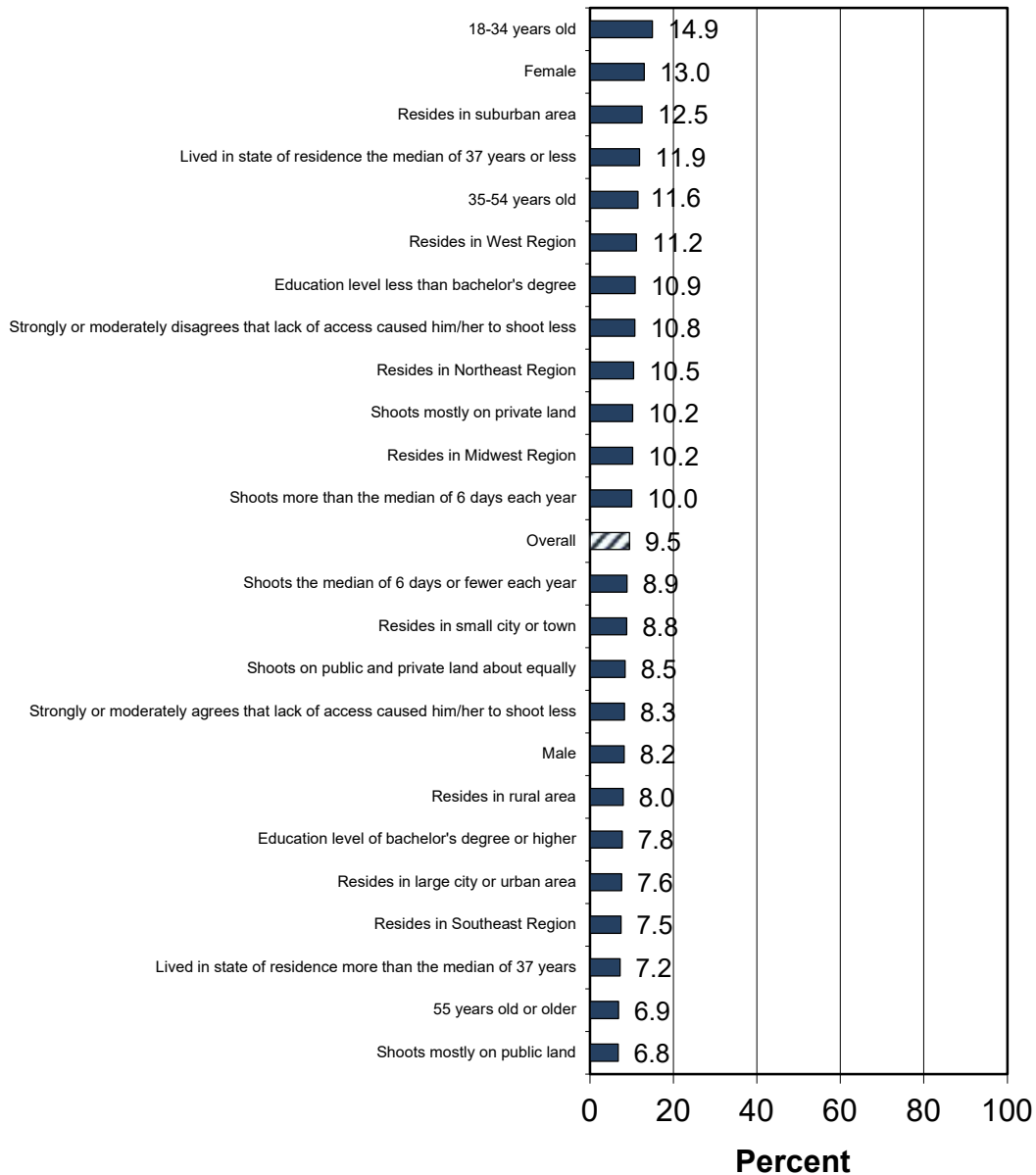
Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

Percent of each of the following groups who primarily shoot with shotguns: (Shooter survey)



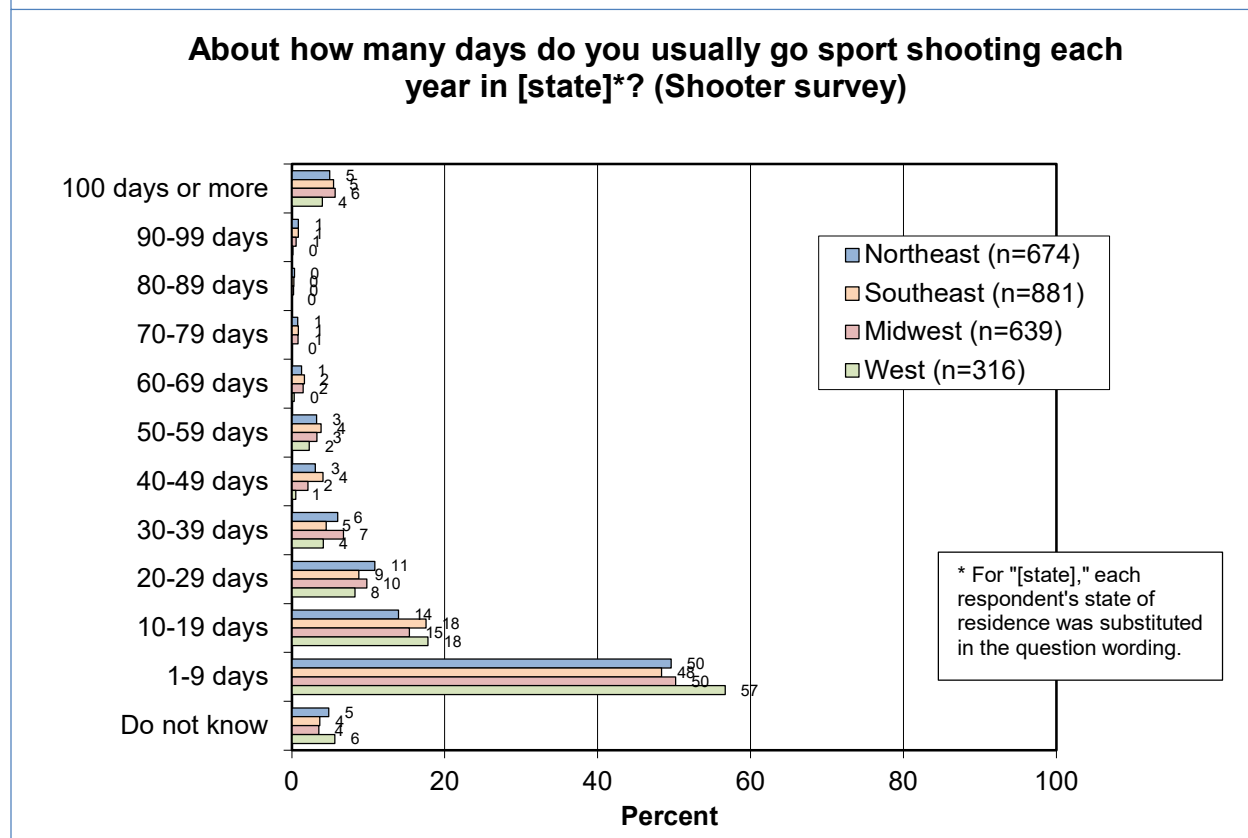
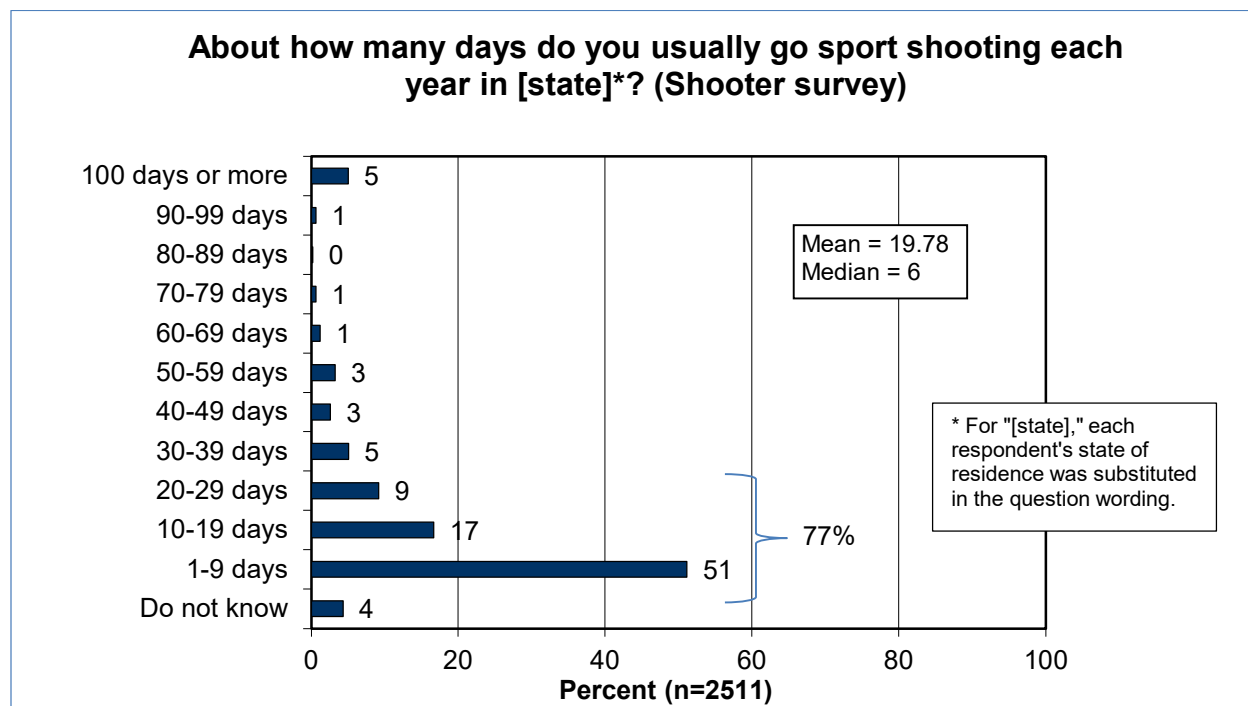
Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

Percent of each of the following groups who primarily shoot with archery equipment (not crossbows): (Shooter survey)

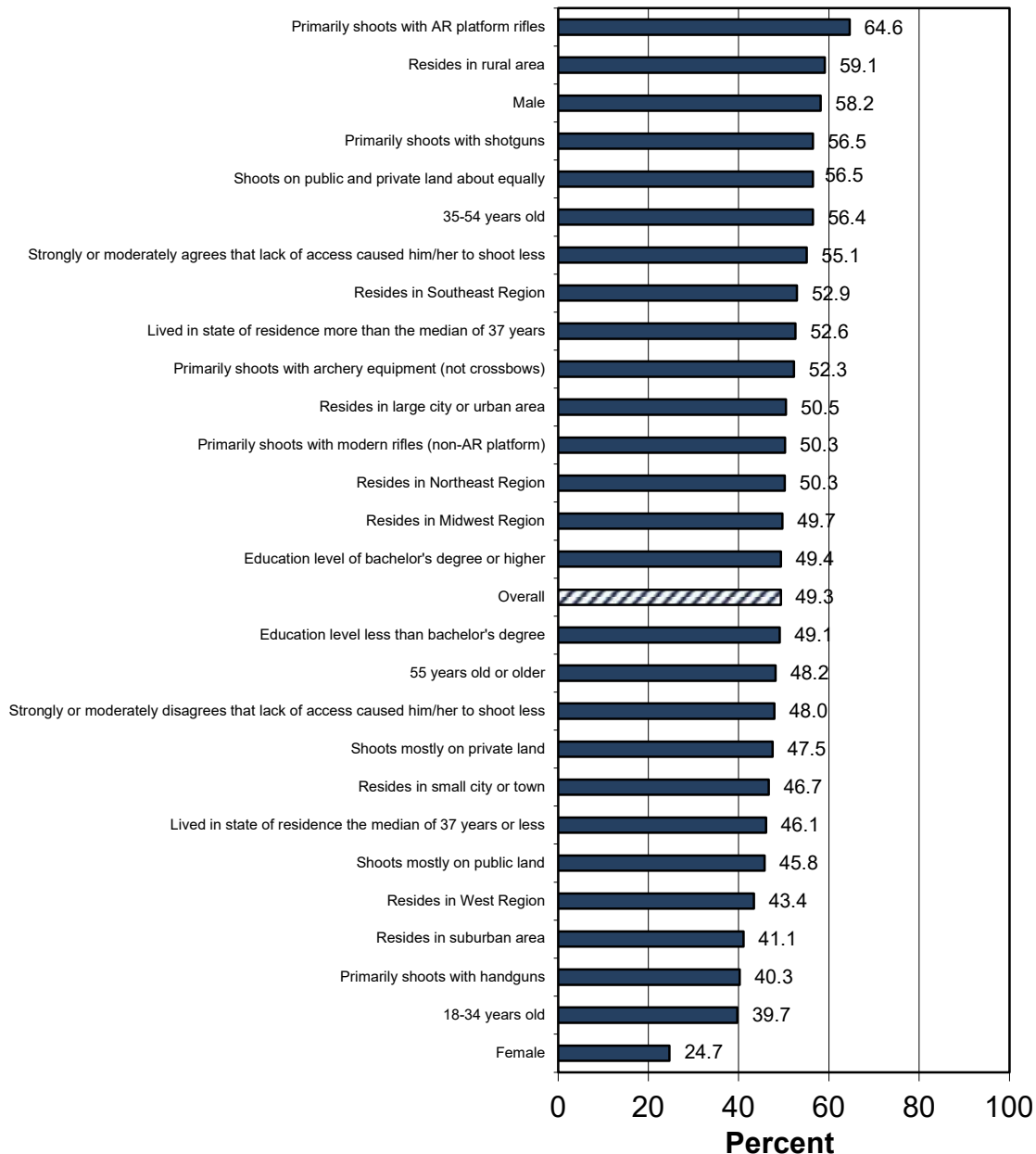


Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

Sport shooters shoot a mean of 19.8 days each year in their state; a majority (77%) shoot fewer than 30 days.

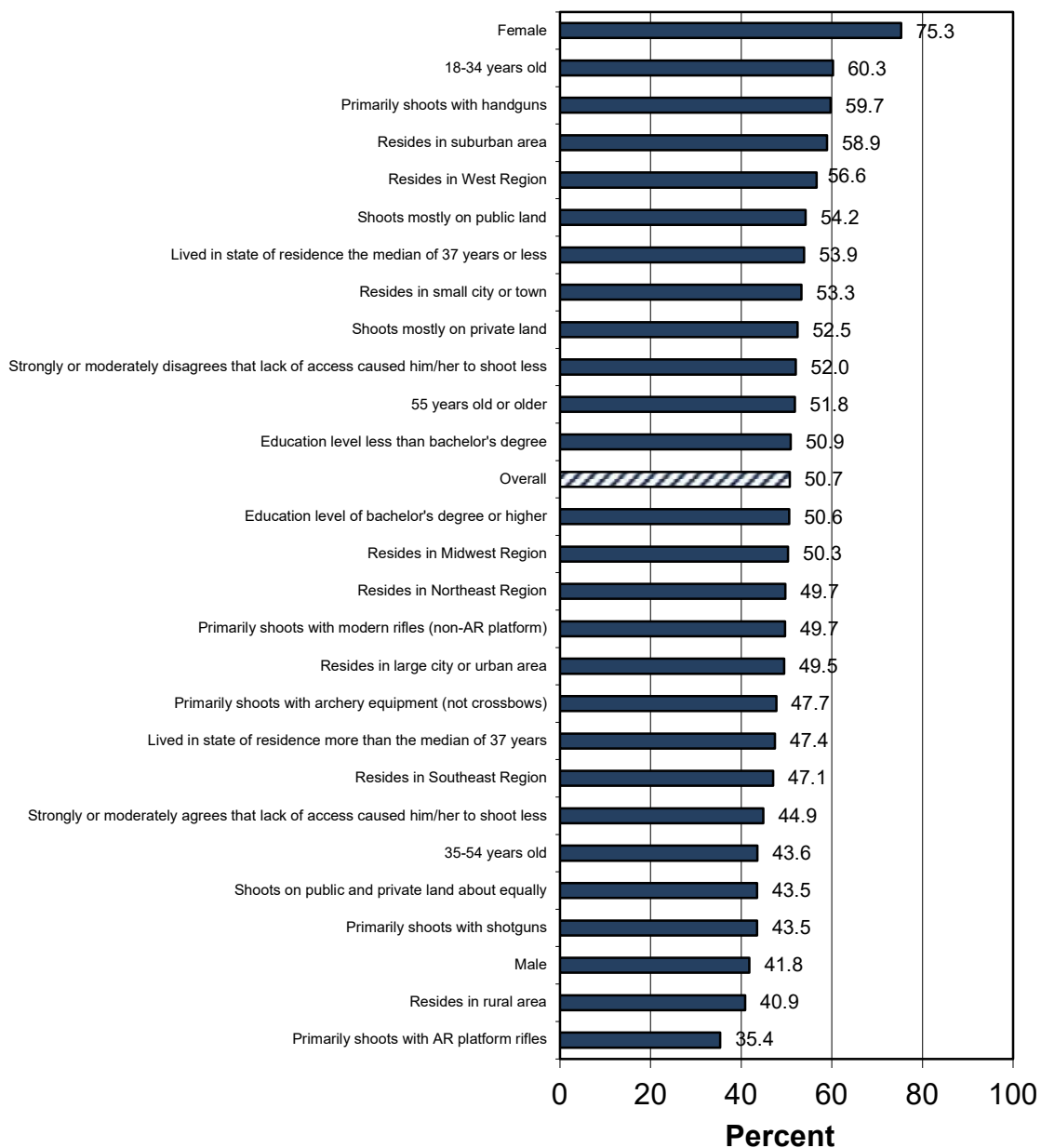


Percent of each of the following groups who shoot more than the median of 6 days each year: (Shooter survey)



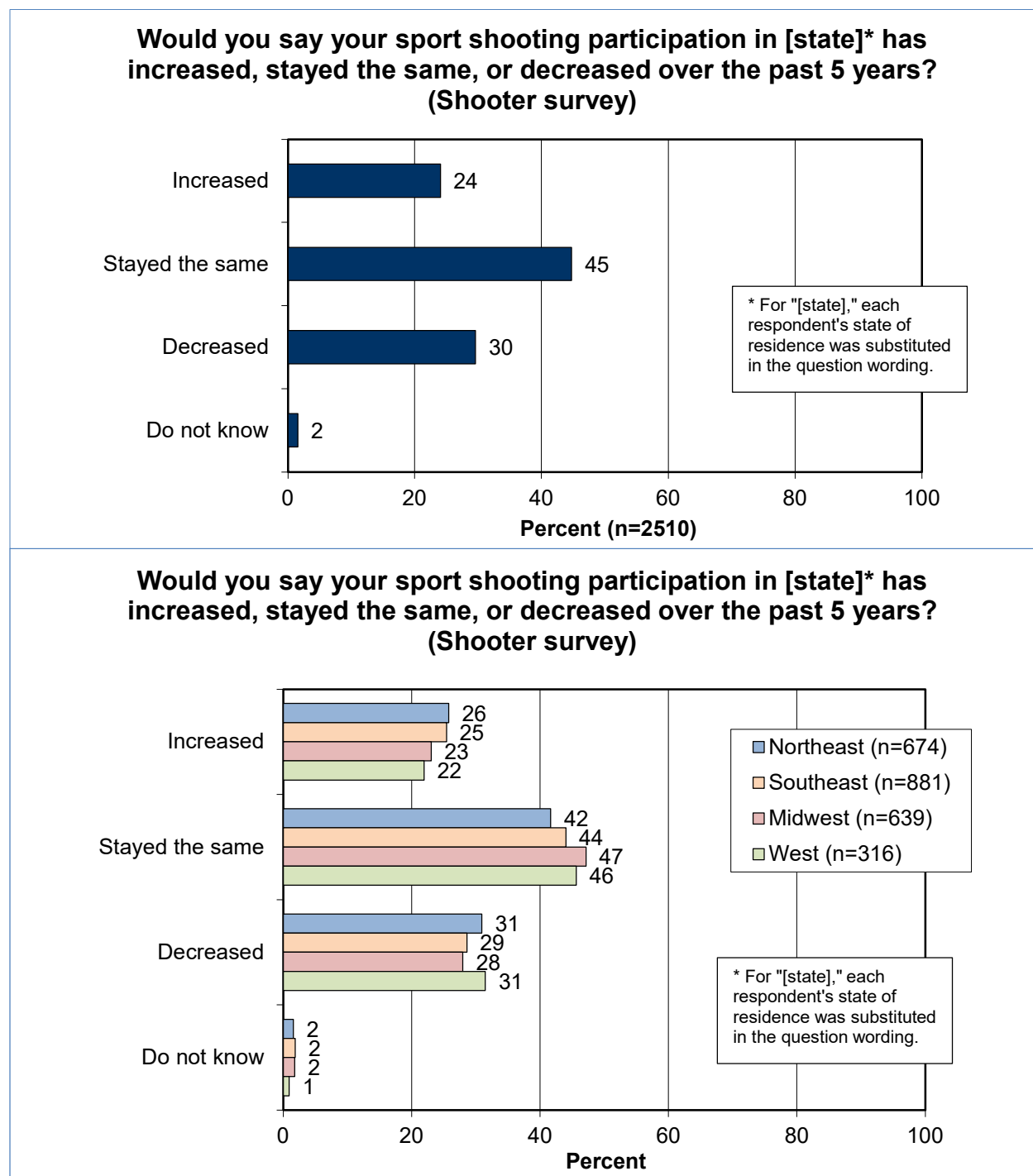
Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

Percent of each of the following groups who shoot the median of 6 days or fewer each year: (Shooter survey)

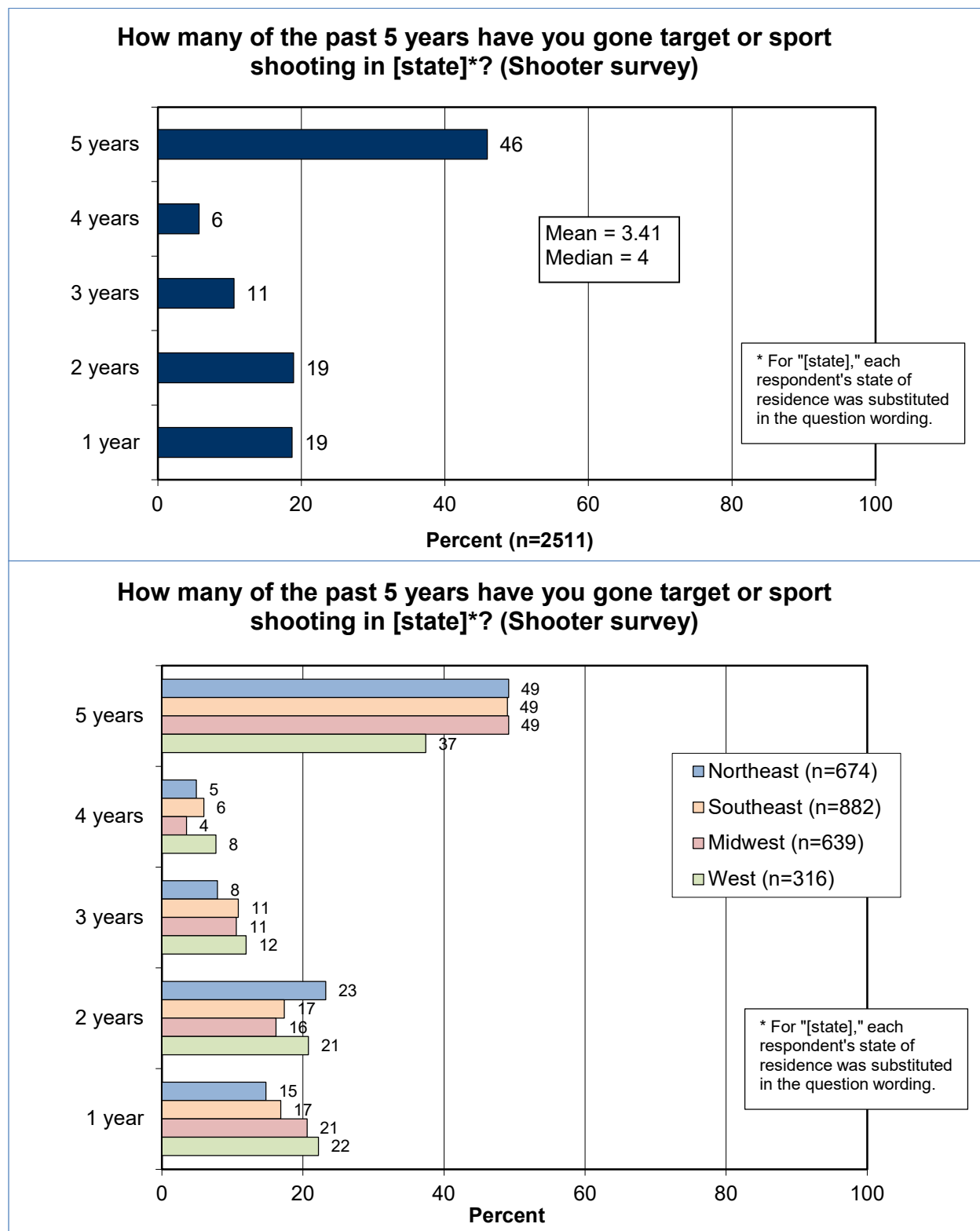


Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

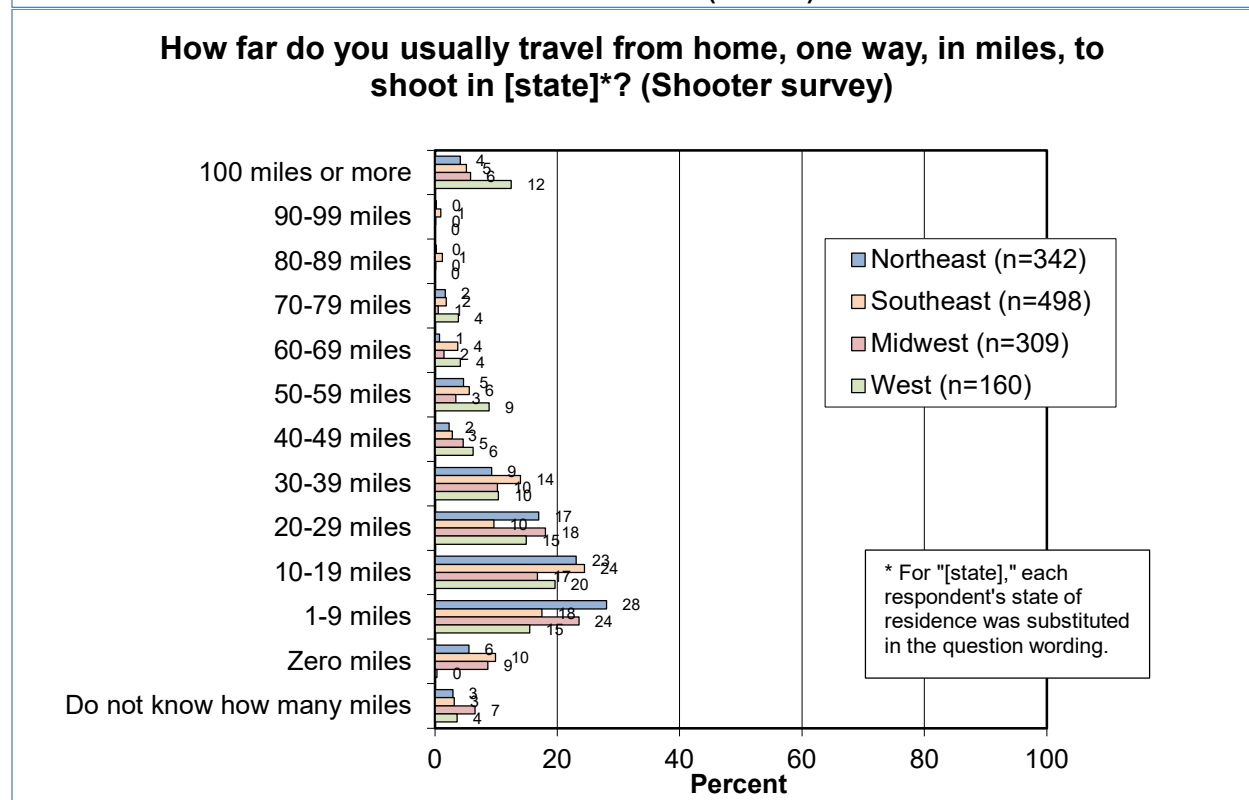
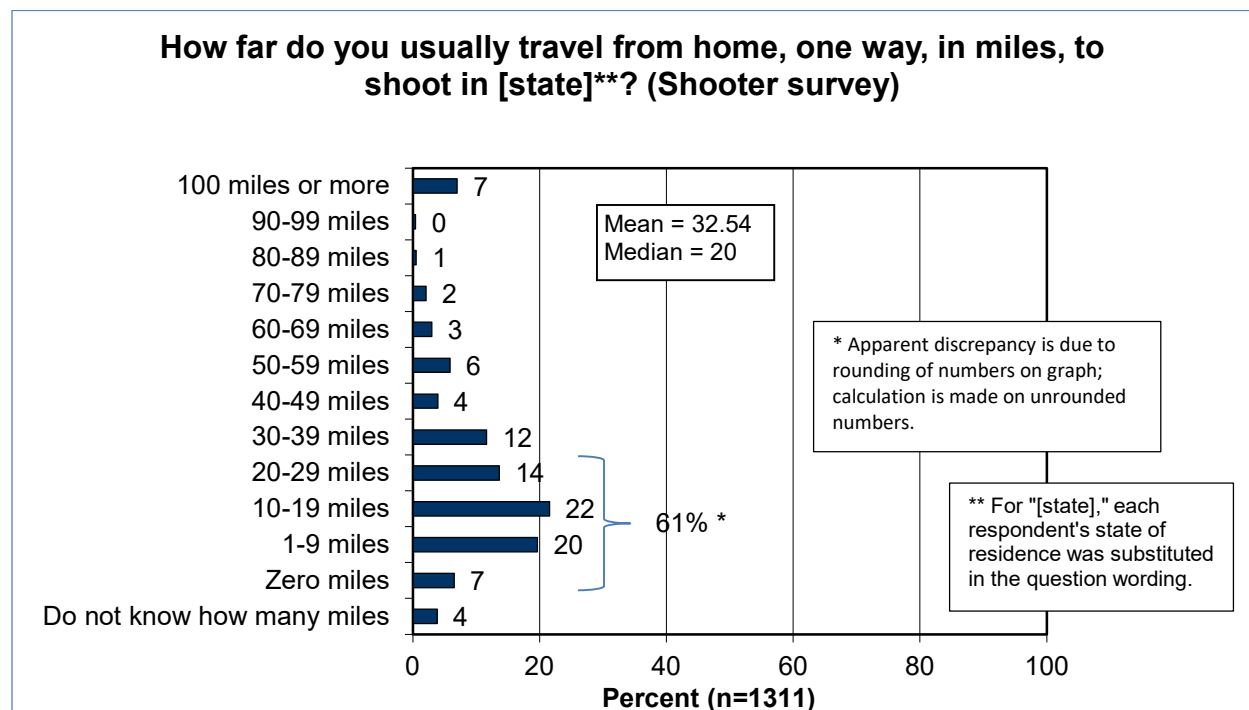
Sport shooters most often said that their shooting participation in their state remained the same over the past 5 years (45% said this), while slightly more said it decreased (30%) than increased (24%).



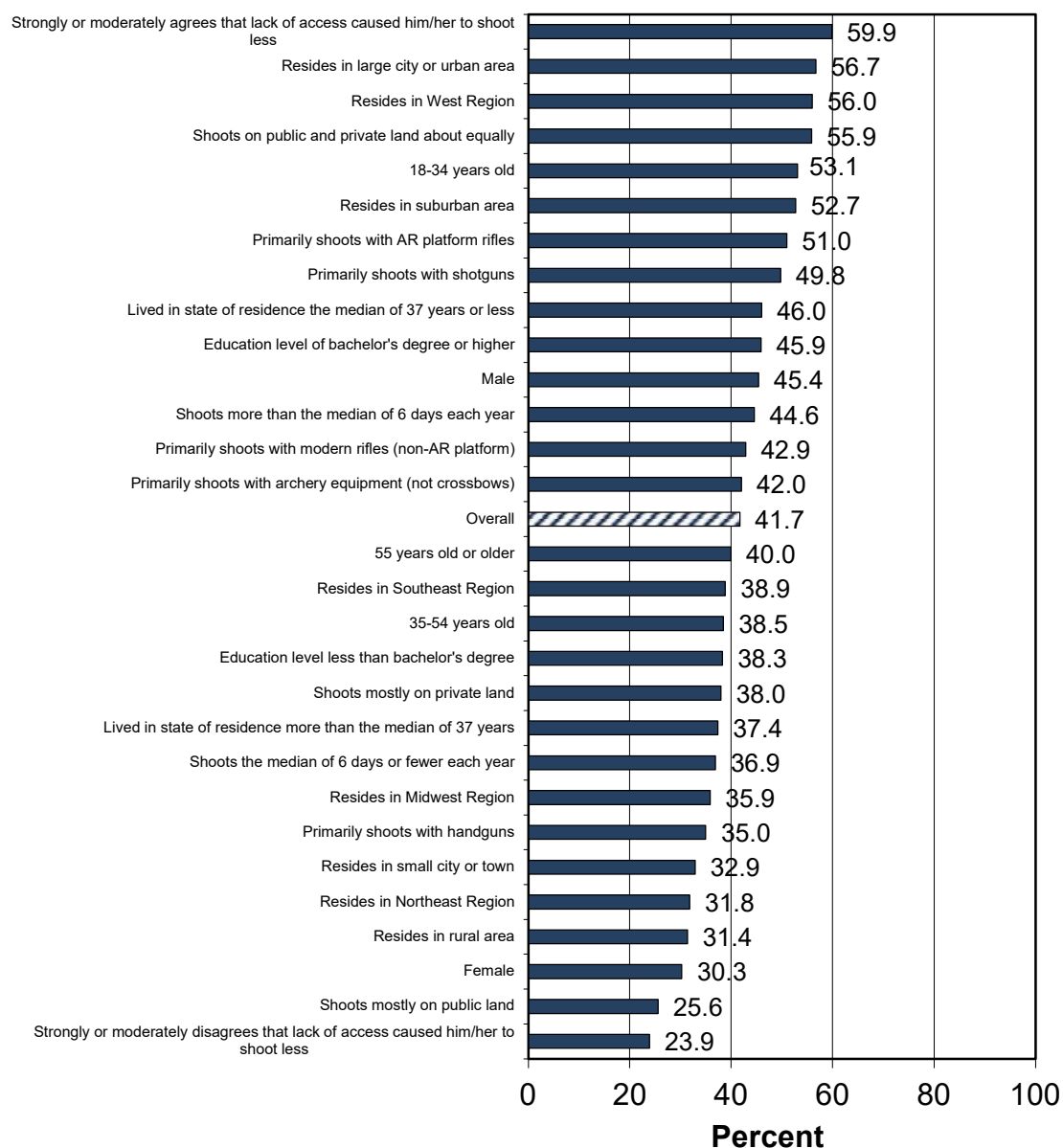
Nearly half of sport shooters (46%) went shooting each of the past 5 years. Shooters in the West Region are less avid than those in other regions.



Shooters travel a mean of 32.5 miles, one way, to shoot in their state; a majority (61%) travel less than 30 miles.

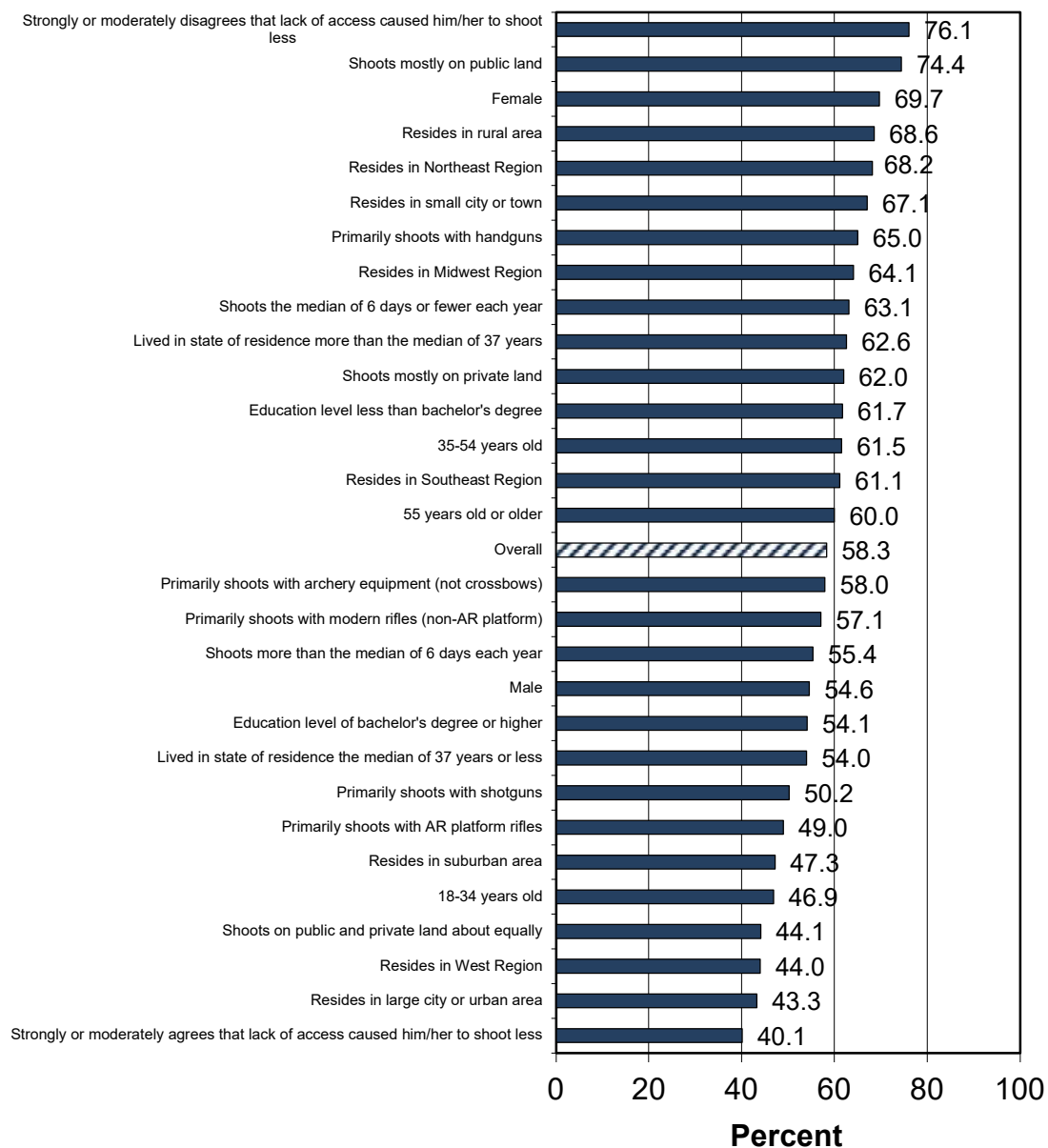


Percent of each of the following groups who usually travel more than the median of 20 miles to shoot: (Shooter survey)



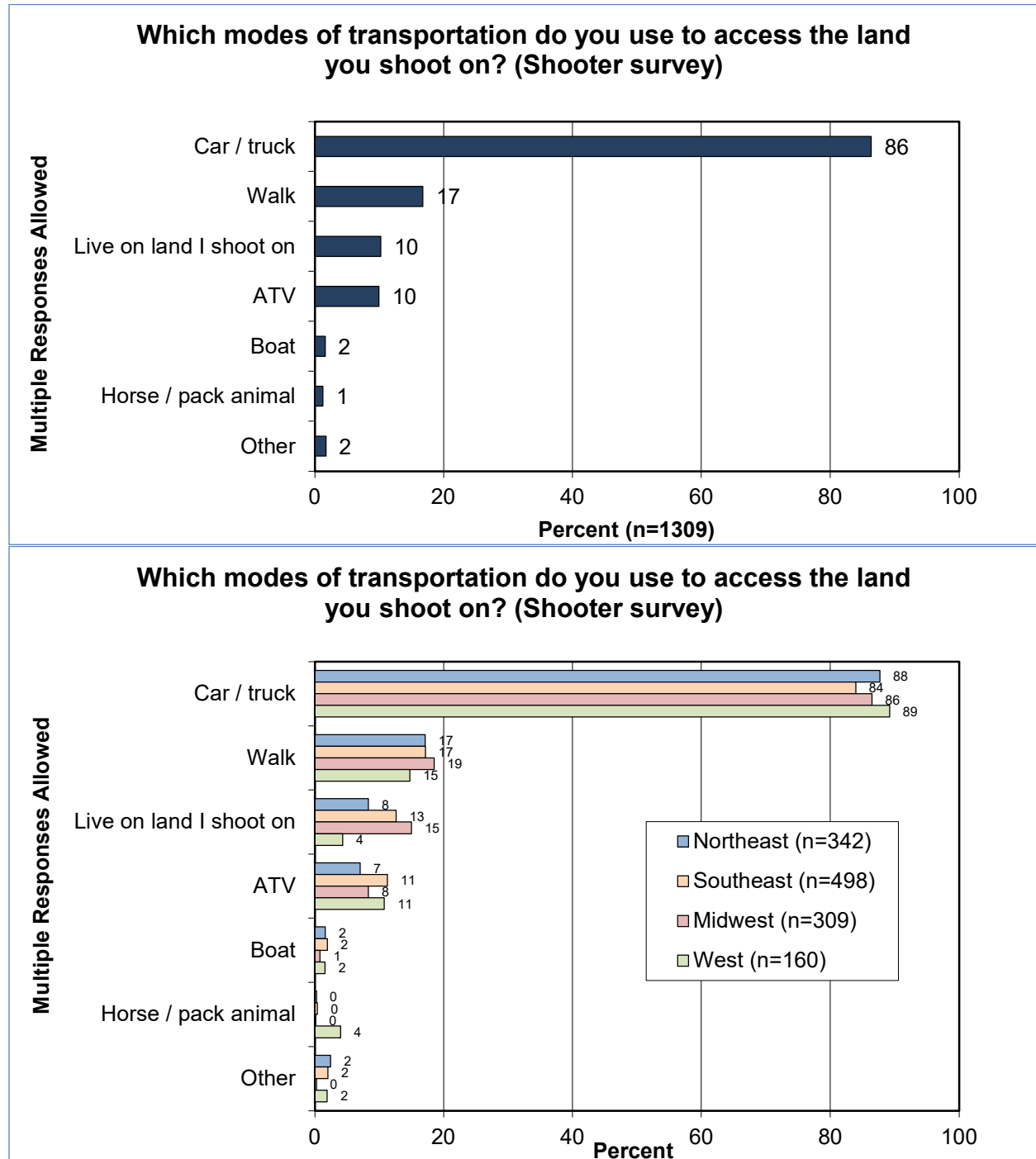
Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

Percent of each of the following groups who usually travel the median of 20 miles or less to shoot: (Shooter survey)



Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

By far, shooters most frequently use a car or truck to access their shooting location (86% stated this). Otherwise, substantial percentages walk (17%), live on the land where they shoot (10%), or use an ATV (10%).



LOCATIONS OF SHOOTING ACTIVITIES

MAJOR FINDINGS

In the survey, 57% of shooters go sport shooting mostly on private land, compared to 21% shooting mostly on public land. Meanwhile, 18% shoot on both about equally.

The calculated sums show that 75% shoot on private land mostly or at least half the time, and 39% shoot on public land mostly or about half the time.

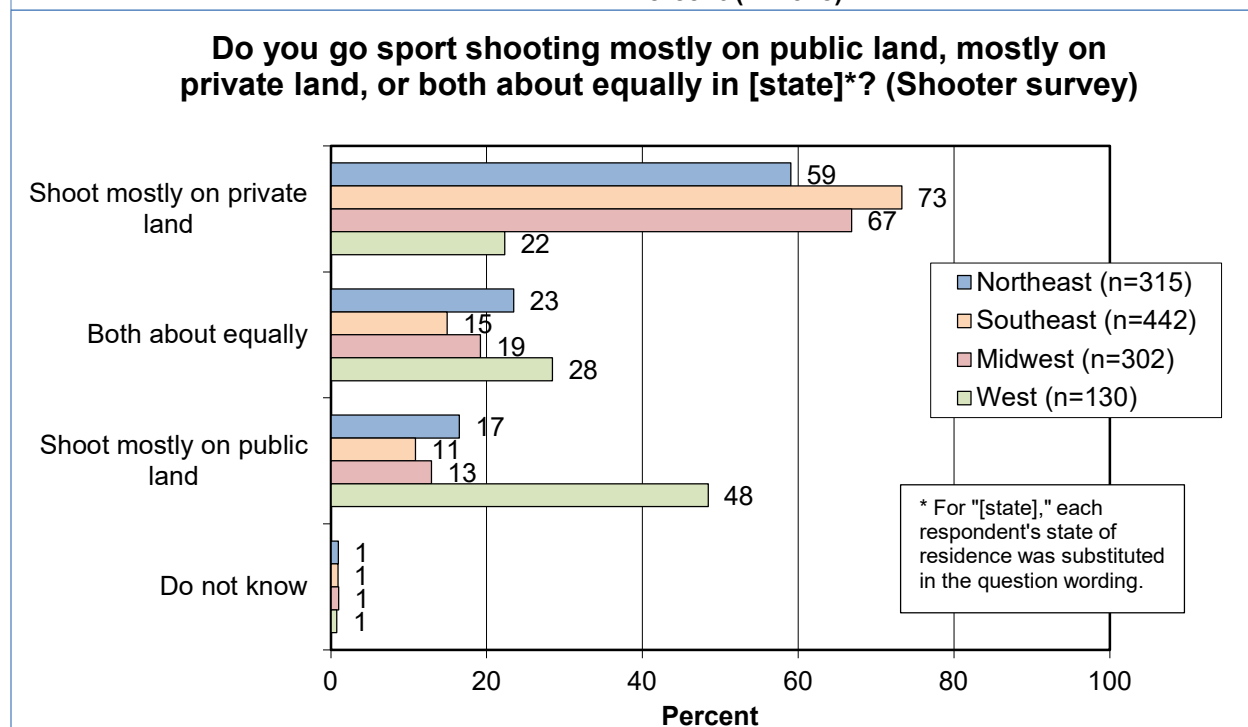
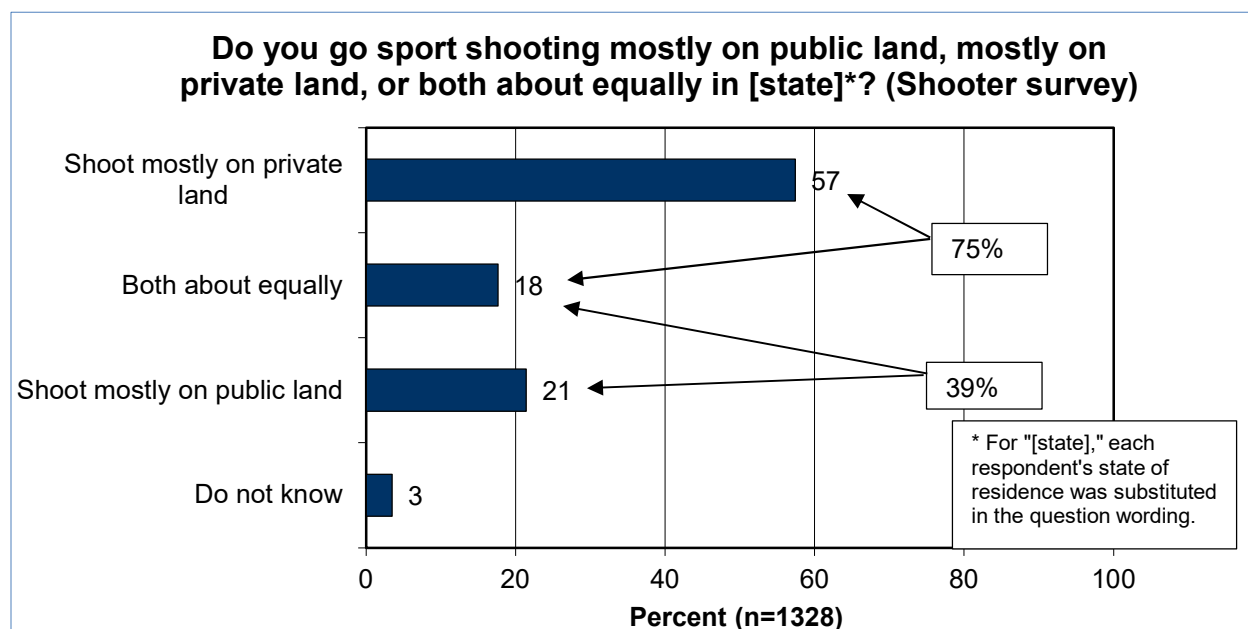
Almost half of shooters in the survey use private lands enrolled in walk-in access programs or state-run access programs.

Specifically, 9% use them often, 19% use them sometimes, and 21% use them rarely, for a sum of 48% (on unrounded numbers); however, 45% never use them.

Private land users most commonly use land owned by someone else (65% do so mostly), while 21% mostly use their own land. The rest use their own land and others' land about equally.

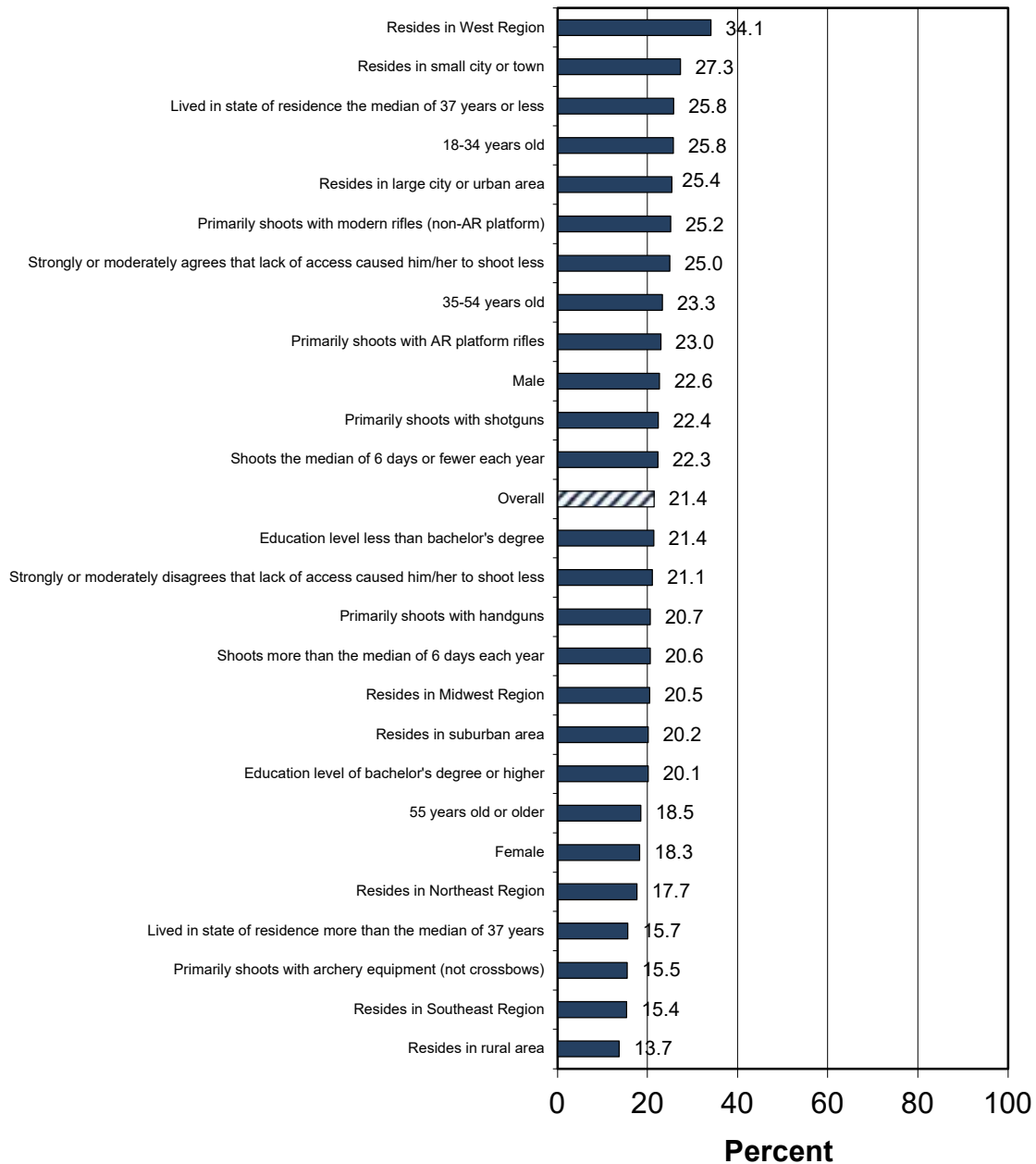
In general, shooters using other people's land are connected as a family member or a friend to the owner rather than by another person or entity described as an acquaintance, corporate owner, or a person unknown to the shooter prior to the activity.

The vast majority of shooters (75%) shoot on private land, and a majority (57%) do so most of the time. Meanwhile, 39% shoot on public land. Note that public land is dominant among West Region shooters, however.



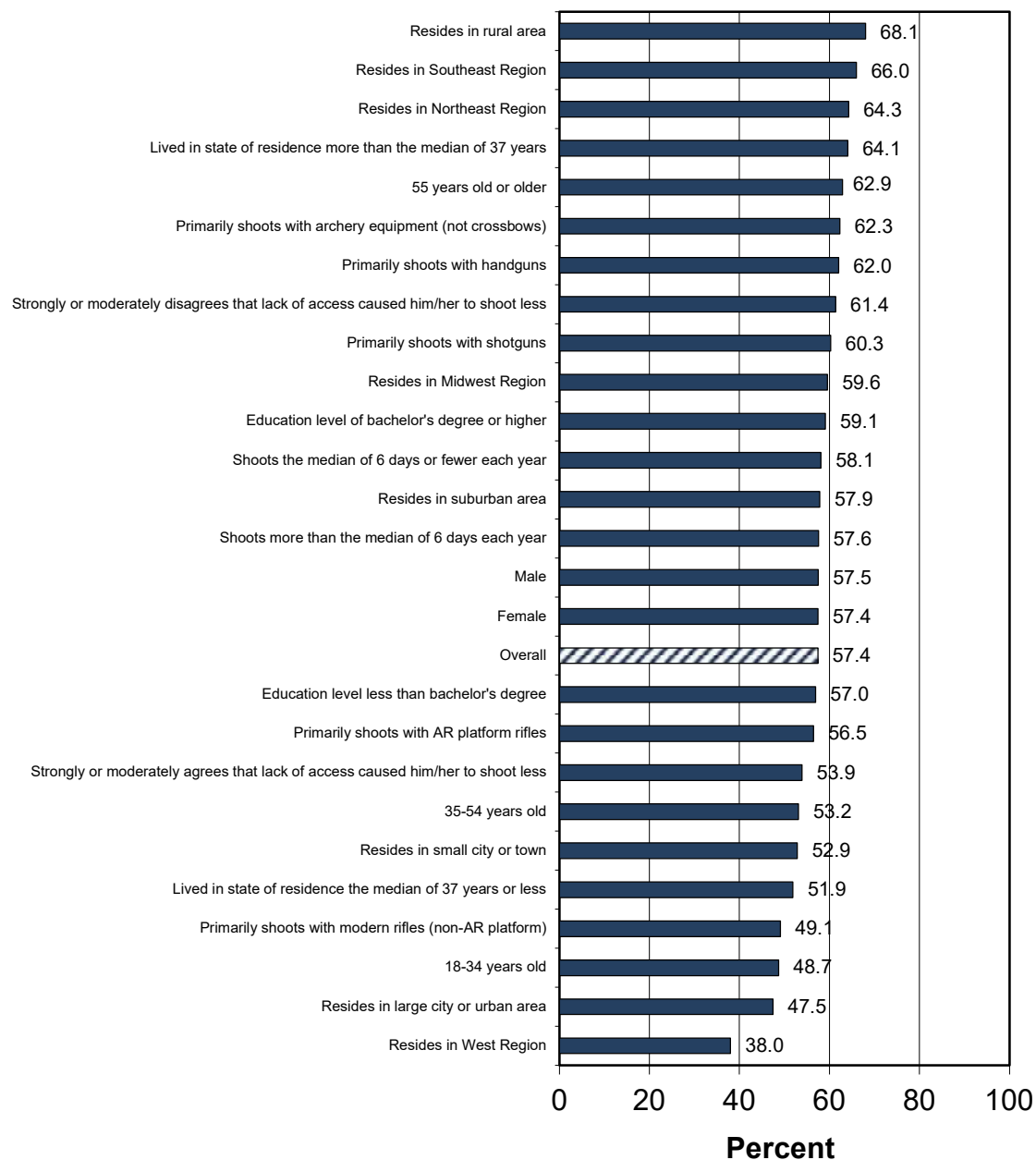
West Region shooters are the most likely to shoot on public land.

Percent of each of the following groups who shoot mostly on public land: (Shooter survey)



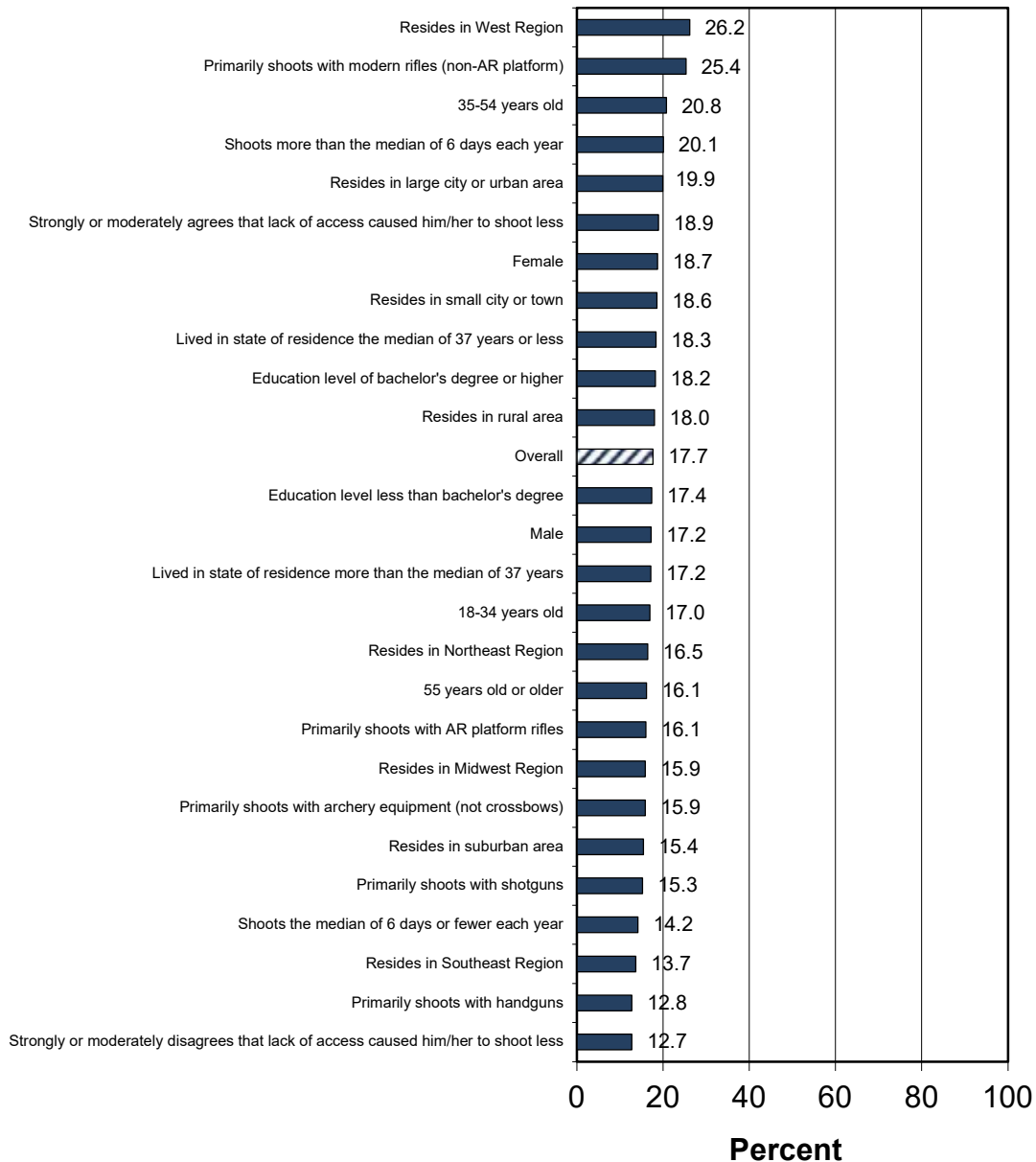
The groups most likely to shoot primarily on private land are rural residents, those from the Southeast and Northeast Regions, and those who lived in their state more than the median of 37 years.

Percent of each of the following groups who shoot mostly on private land: (Shooter survey)

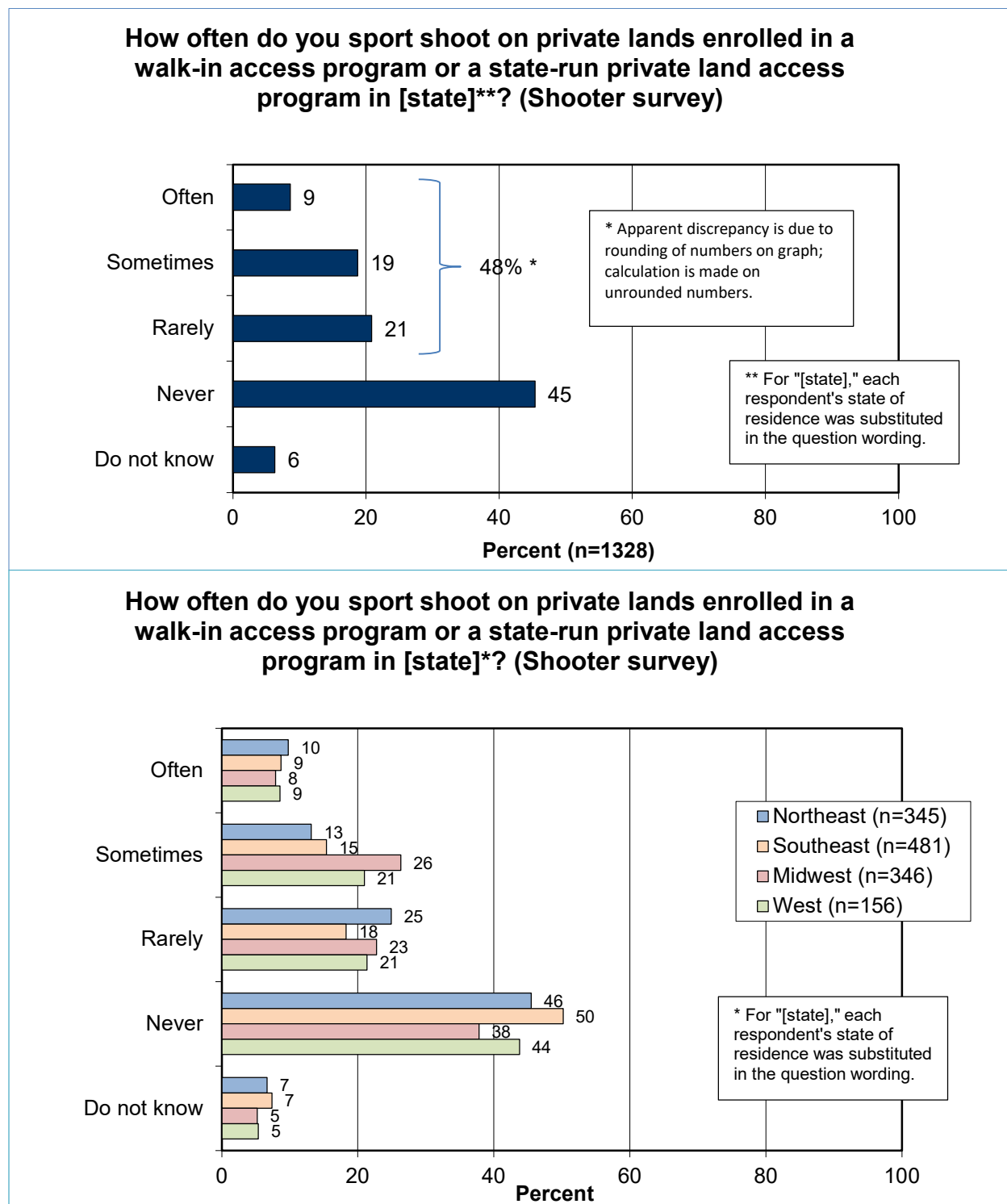


West Region shooters and those who primarily shoot with modern rifles (non-AR platform) are the groups most likely to shoot on public and private land about equally.

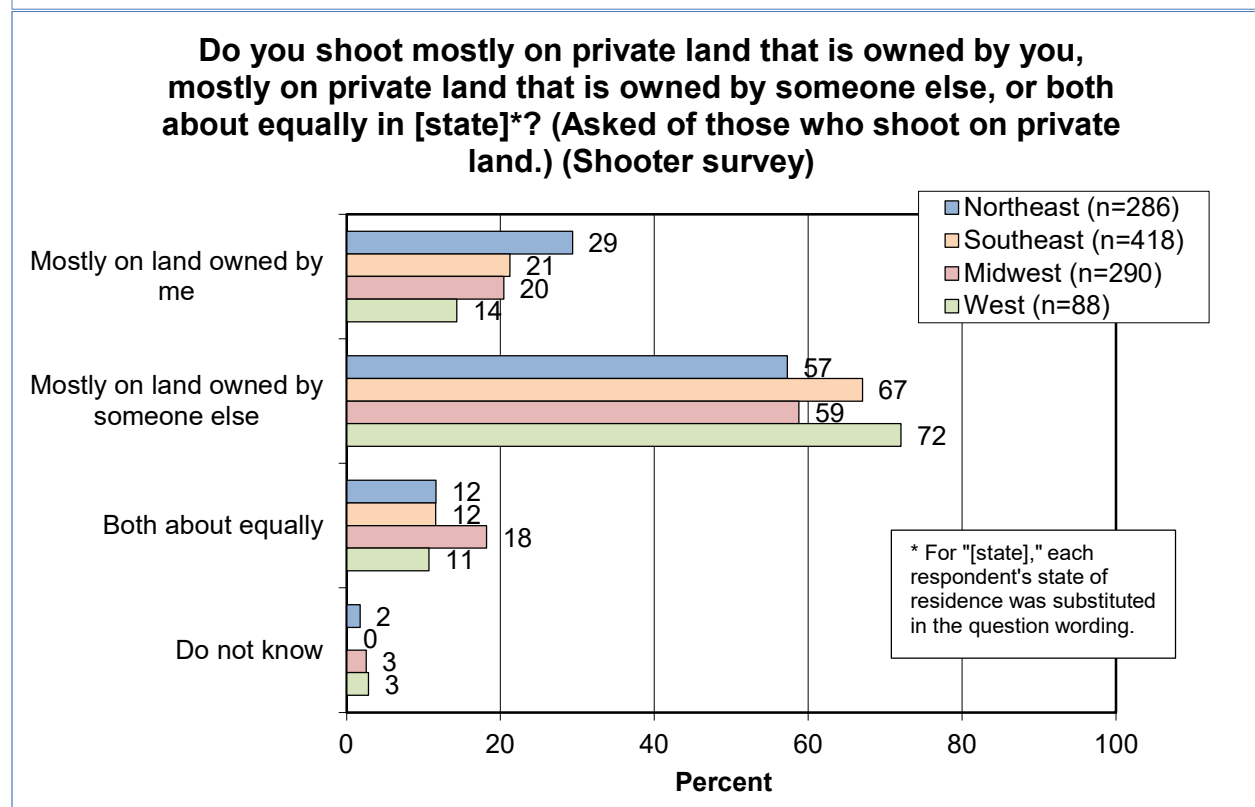
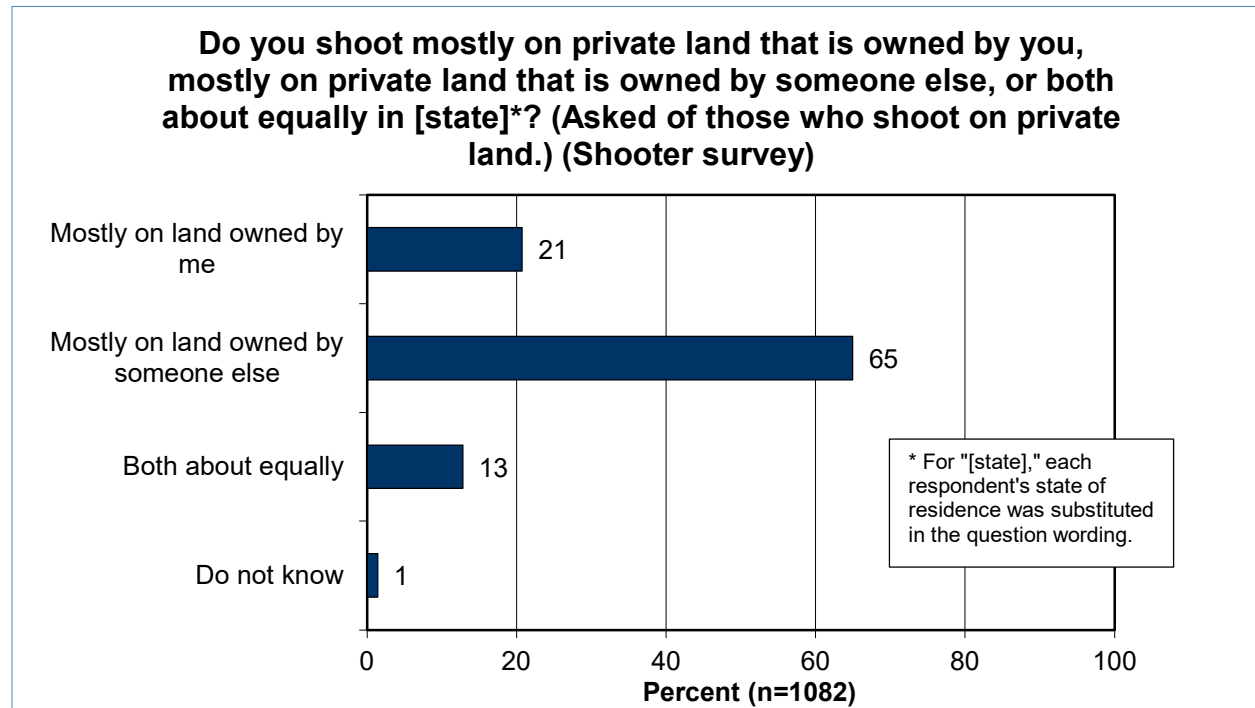
Percent of each of the following groups who shoot on public and private land about equally: (Shooter survey)



Nearly half of sport shooters (48%) shoot on private lands enrolled in an access program; over a quarter do so with some regularity.

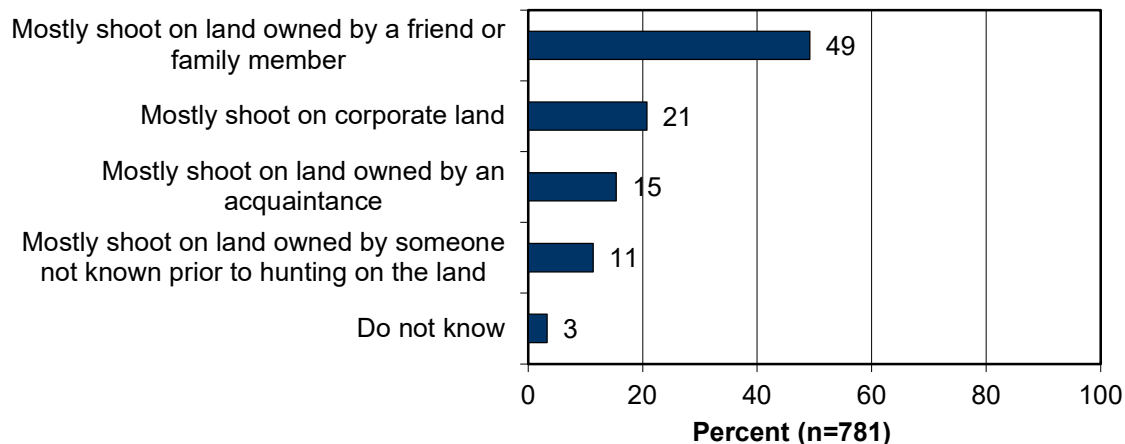


About two thirds of private land sport shooters (65%) shoot mostly on private land that is owned by someone else.

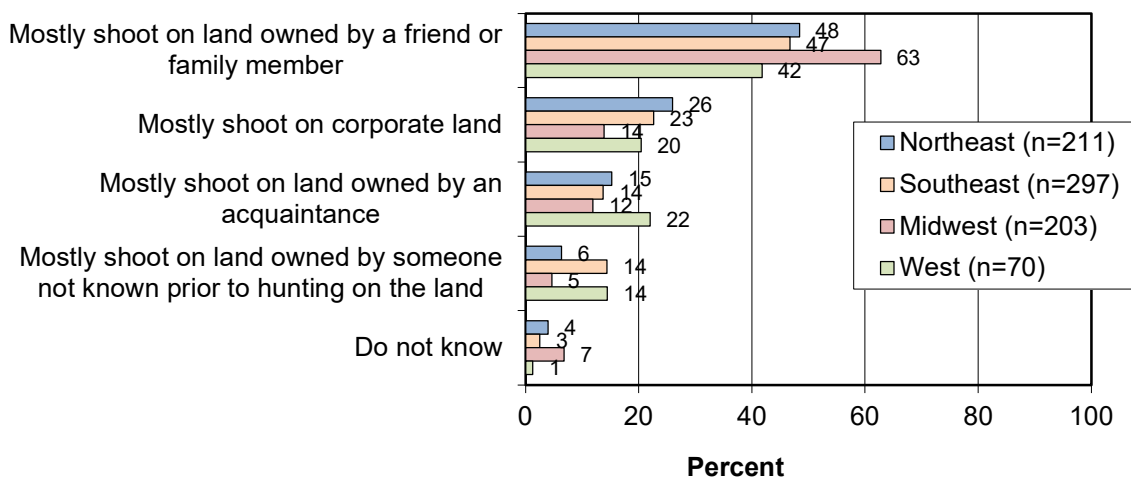


Among those who shoot on private land that is owned by someone else, about half (49%) mostly do so on land owned by a friend or family member, while 21% mostly shoot on corporate land and 15% mostly shoot on land owned by an acquaintance. Only 11% mostly shoot on land owned by someone not known prior to getting permission.

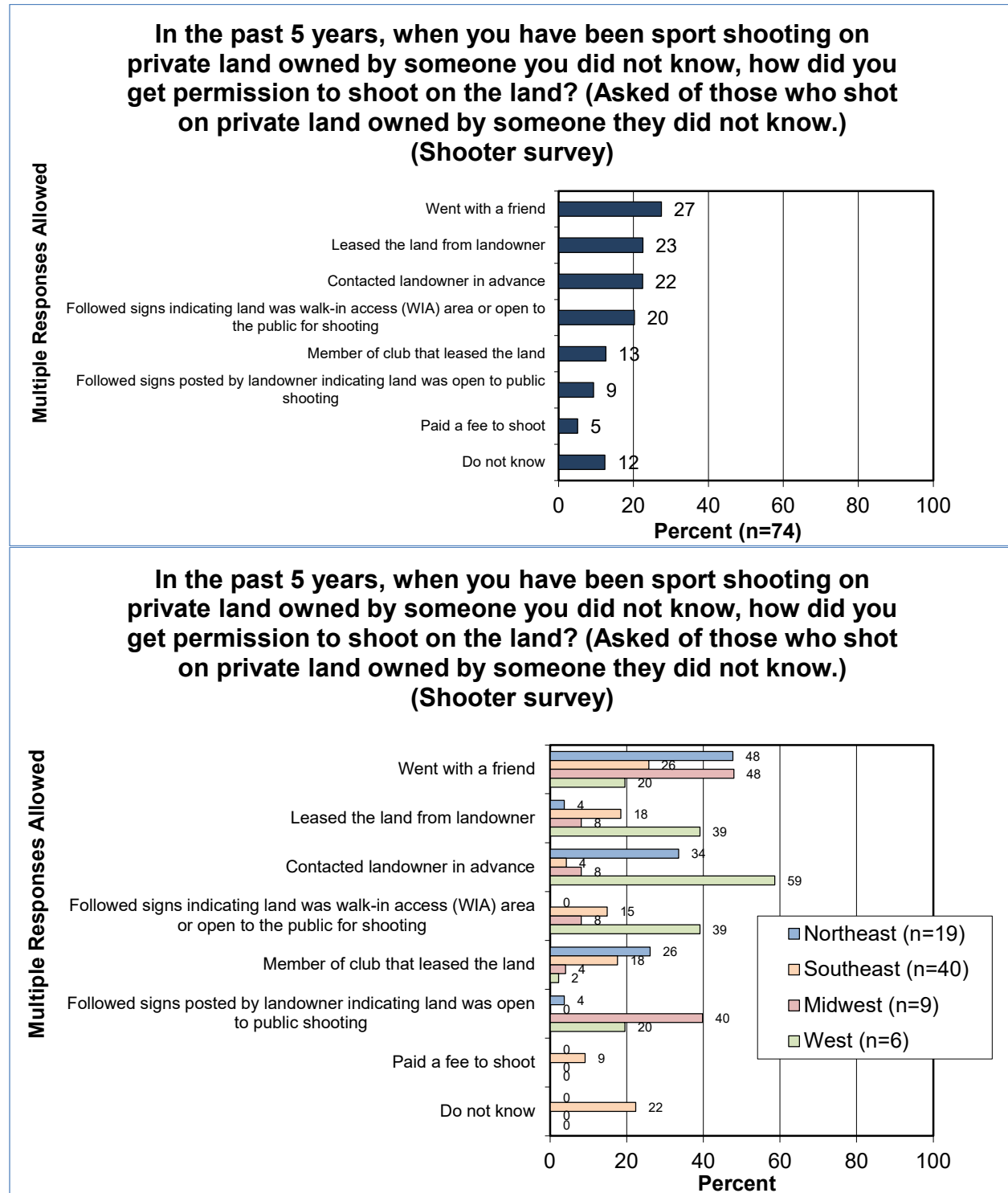
Of the private land you shoot on that is owned by someone else, which of the following best describes the ownership of that land? (Asked of those who shoot on private land that is owned by someone else.) (Shooter survey)



Of the private land you shoot on that is owned by someone else, which of the following best describes the ownership of that land? (Asked of those who shoot on private land that is owned by someone else.) (Shooter survey)



Among those who went sport shooting on private land owned by someone they did not know over the past 5 years, the most common ways to get permission were to go with a friend, to lease the land, to contact the landowner in advance, and to follow signs indicating that the land was open to the public for shooting.



FACTORS CONSIDERED IN CHOOSING LANDS ON WHICH TO SHOOT

MAJOR FINDINGS

Two factors make a top tier of factors considered important when shooters are deciding where to go shooting: that the land is not crowded with other sportsmen and that the land is easy to access by car or truck.

Shooters rated the importance of various factors in their decisions about where to go shooting: 63% rated not being crowded as very important, and another 24% rated it as somewhat important. Car/truck access had 49% rate it very important and 36% rate it somewhat important.

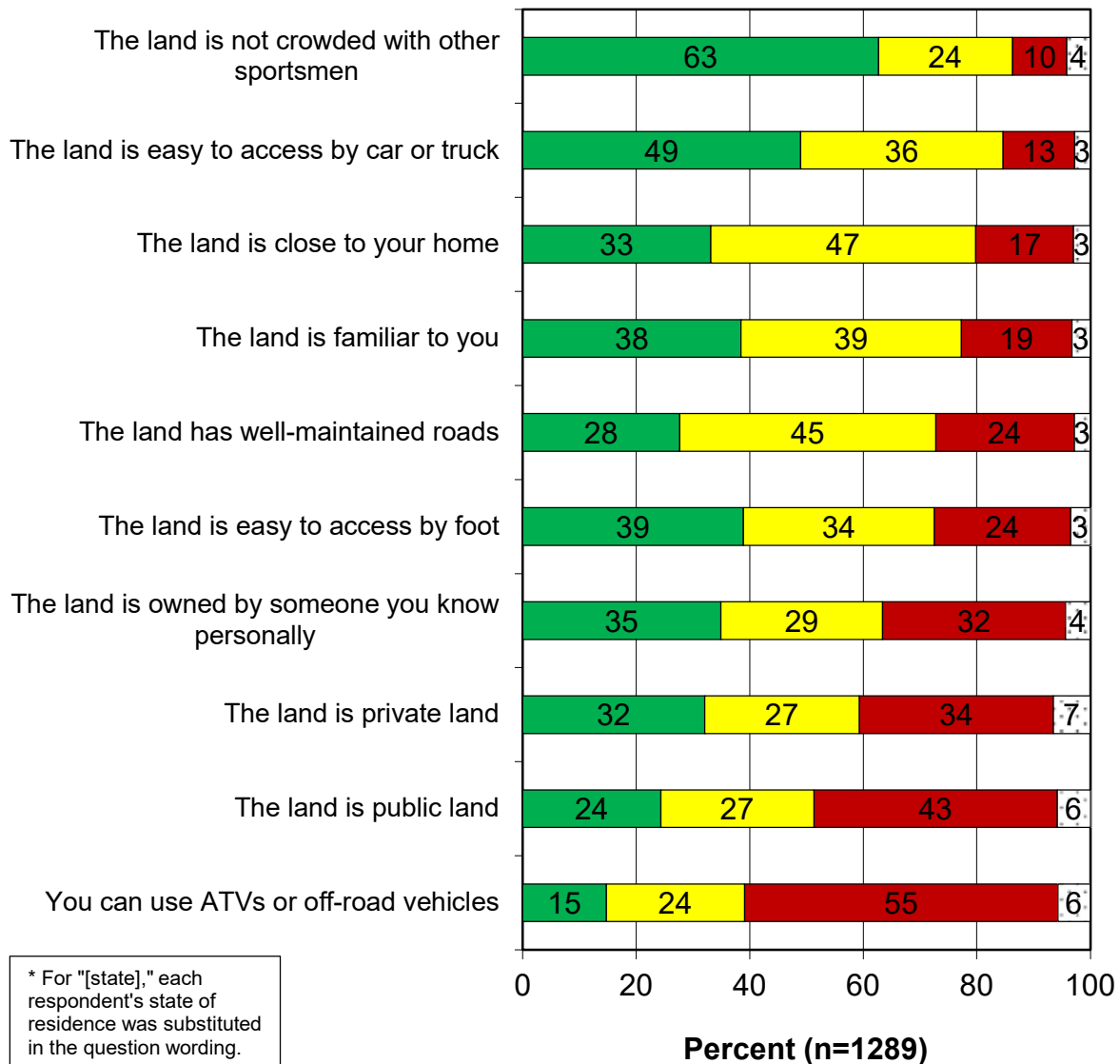
A second tier of factors considered important are that the land is easy to access by foot, the land has well-maintained roads, and the land is familiar and close to home.

Of less importance are that the land is public and that ATVs can be used.

Shooters were presented with a series of factors and asked to indicate how important each is when deciding where to shoot. Lack of crowding by other sportsmen was considered to be the most important factor, while others that are considered important include easy access by car or truck, being close to home, and being familiar with the land. The series graph on the following page shows overall results in descending order of *very* and *somewhat important* combined; this is followed by series graphs for each region.

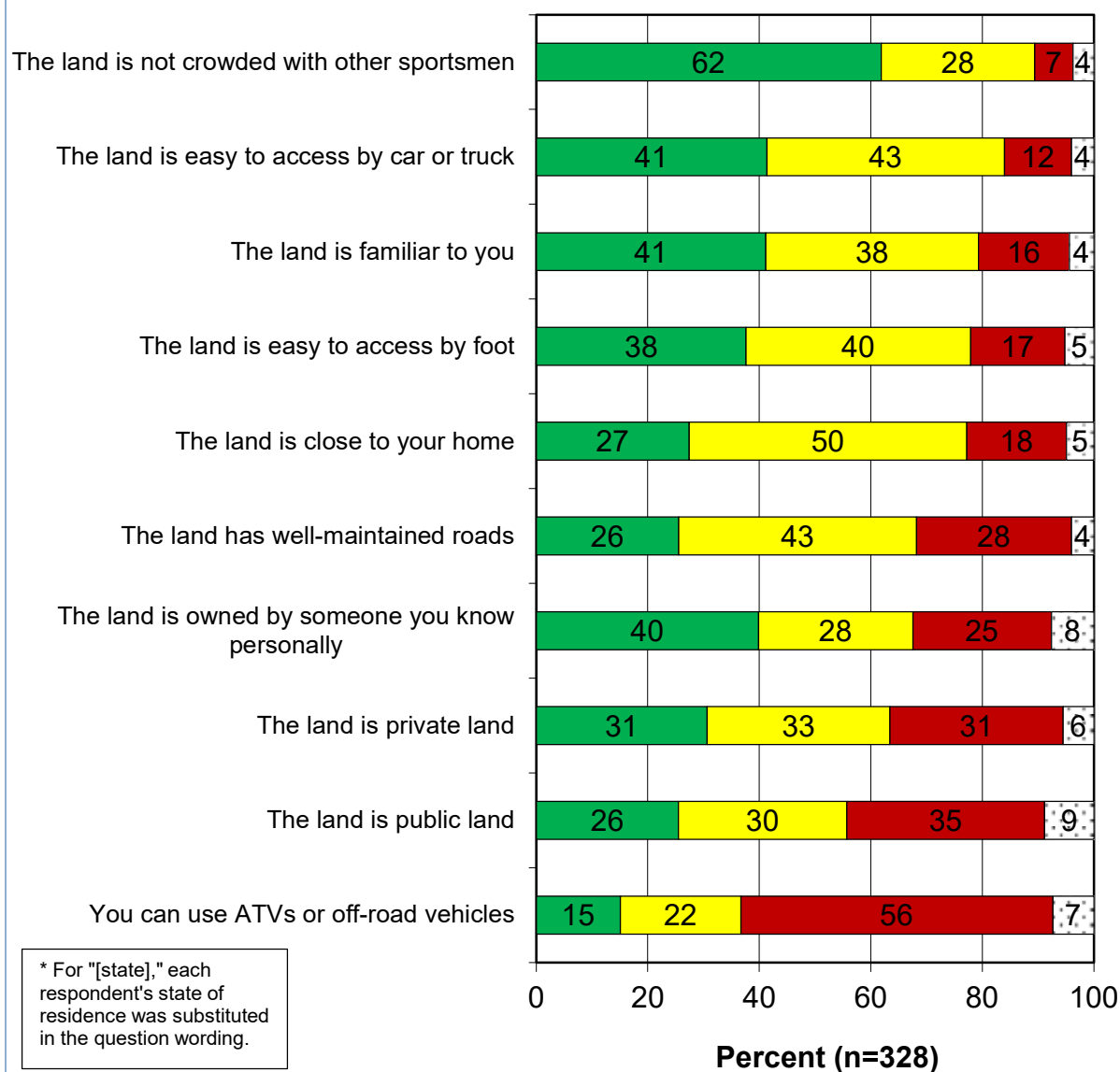
Please indicate if each of the following are [level of importance] to you when deciding where to shoot in [state]*: (Shooter survey) (Overall)

■ Very important ■ Somewhat important ■ Not at all important □ Do not know



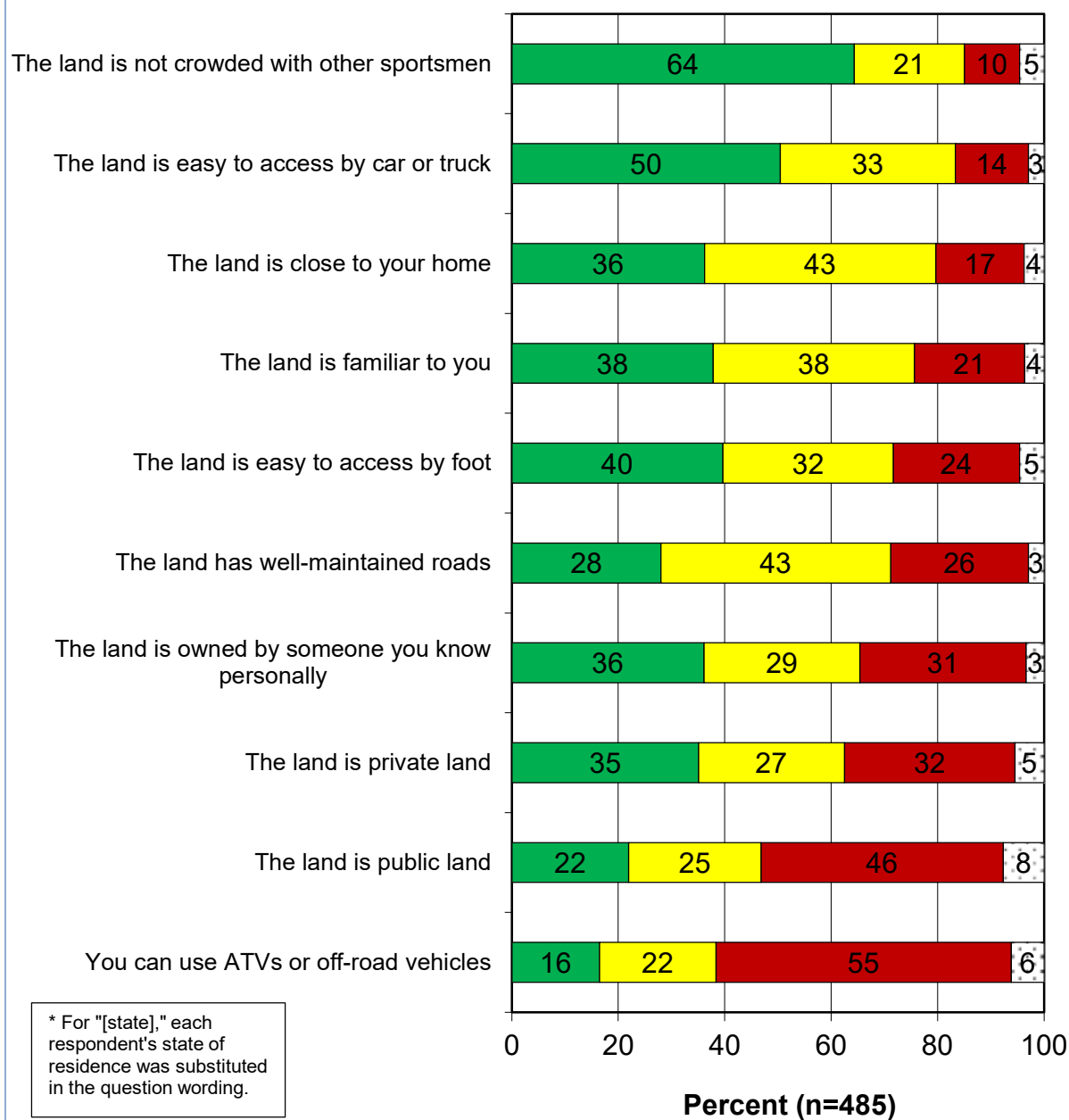
Please indicate if each of the following are [level of importance] to you when deciding where to shoot in [state]*: (Shooter survey) (Northeast)

Very important Somewhat important Not at all important Do not know



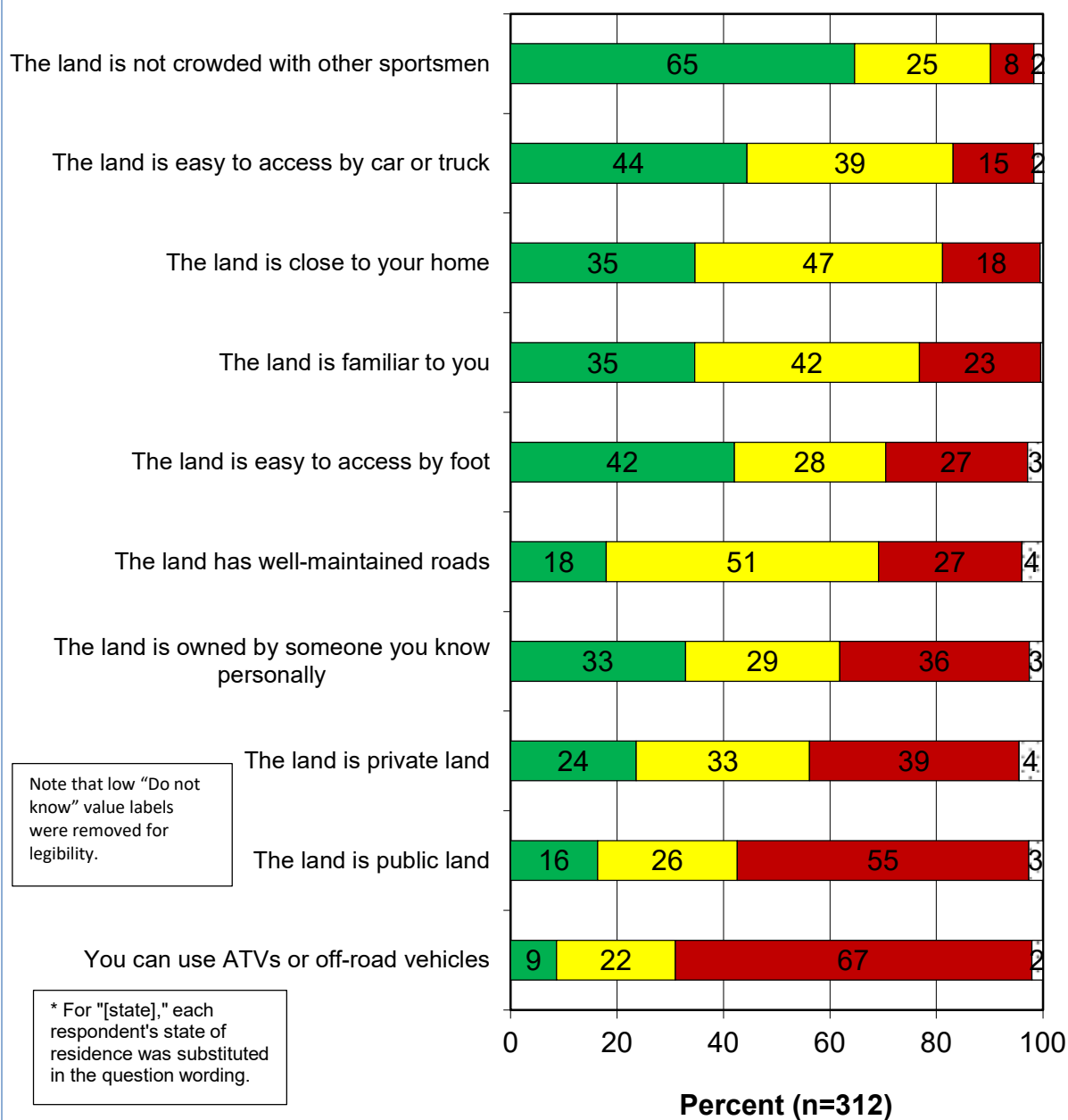
Please indicate if each of the following are [level of importance] to you when deciding where to shoot in [state]*: (Shooter survey) (Southeast)

Very important Somewhat important Not at all important Do not know



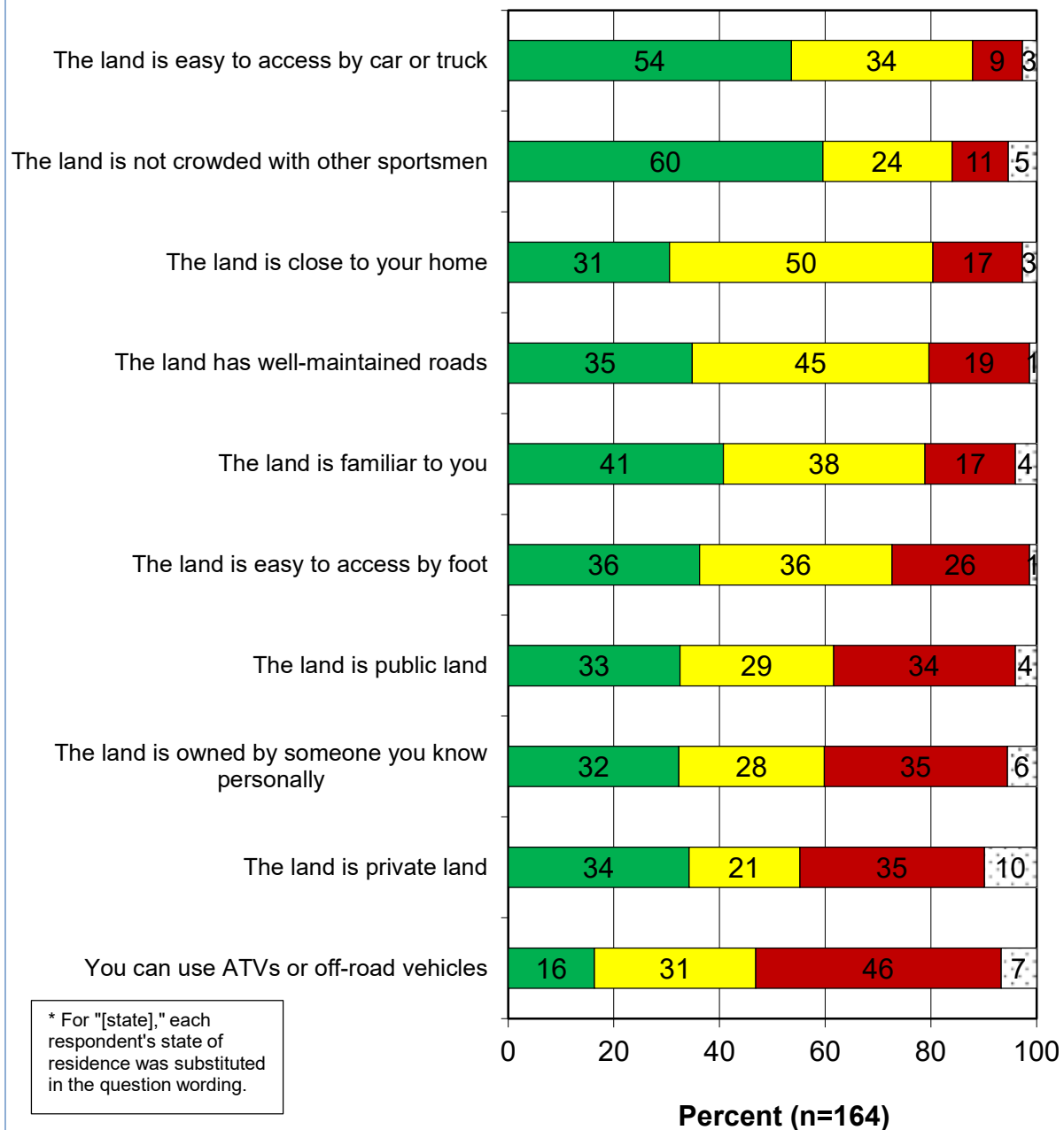
Please indicate if each of the following are [level of importance] to you when deciding where to shoot in [state]*: (Shooter survey) (Midwest)

■ Very important ■ Somewhat important ■ Not at all important □ Do not know

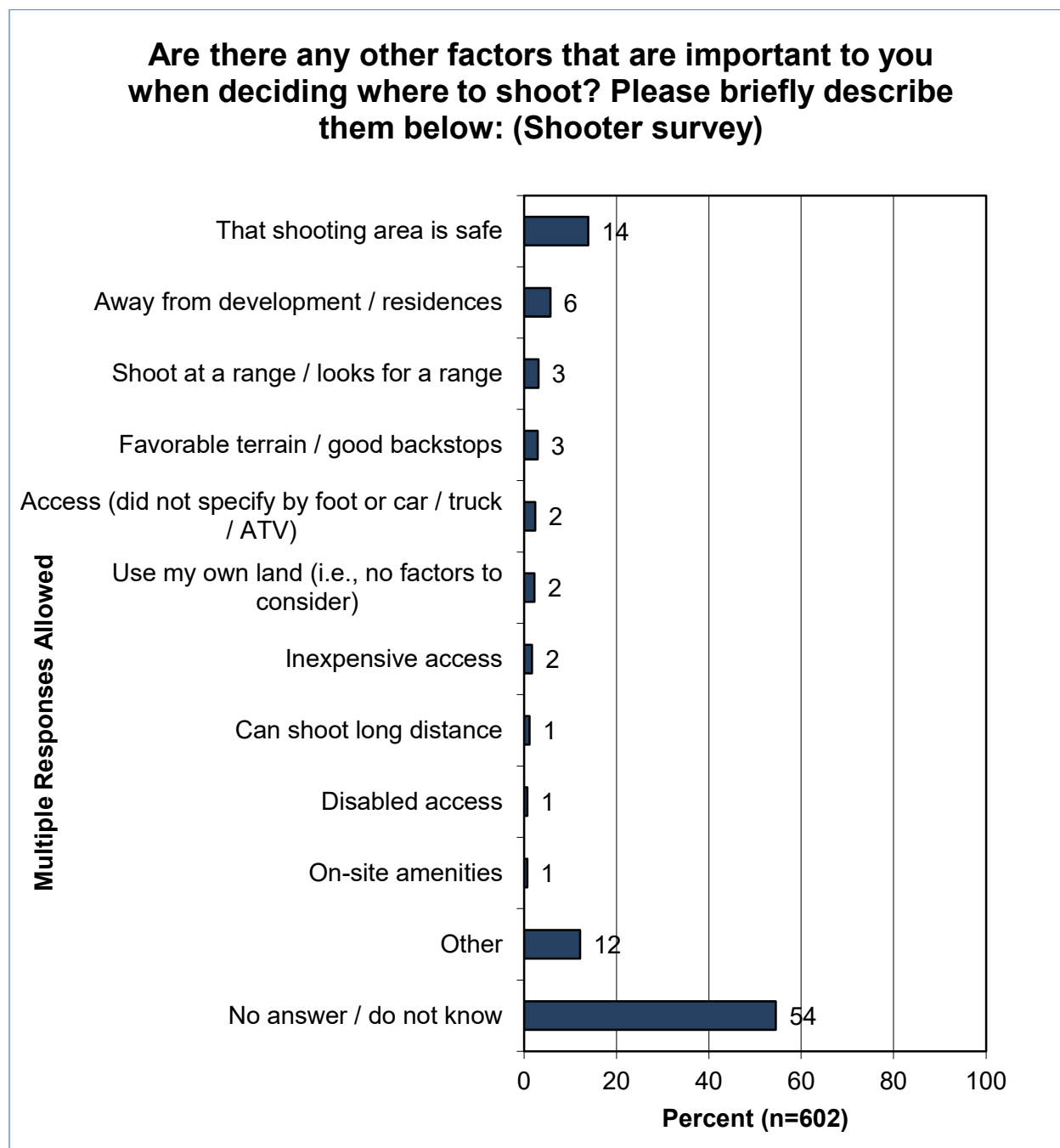


Please indicate if each of the following are [level of importance] to you when deciding where to shoot in [state]*: (Shooter survey) (West)

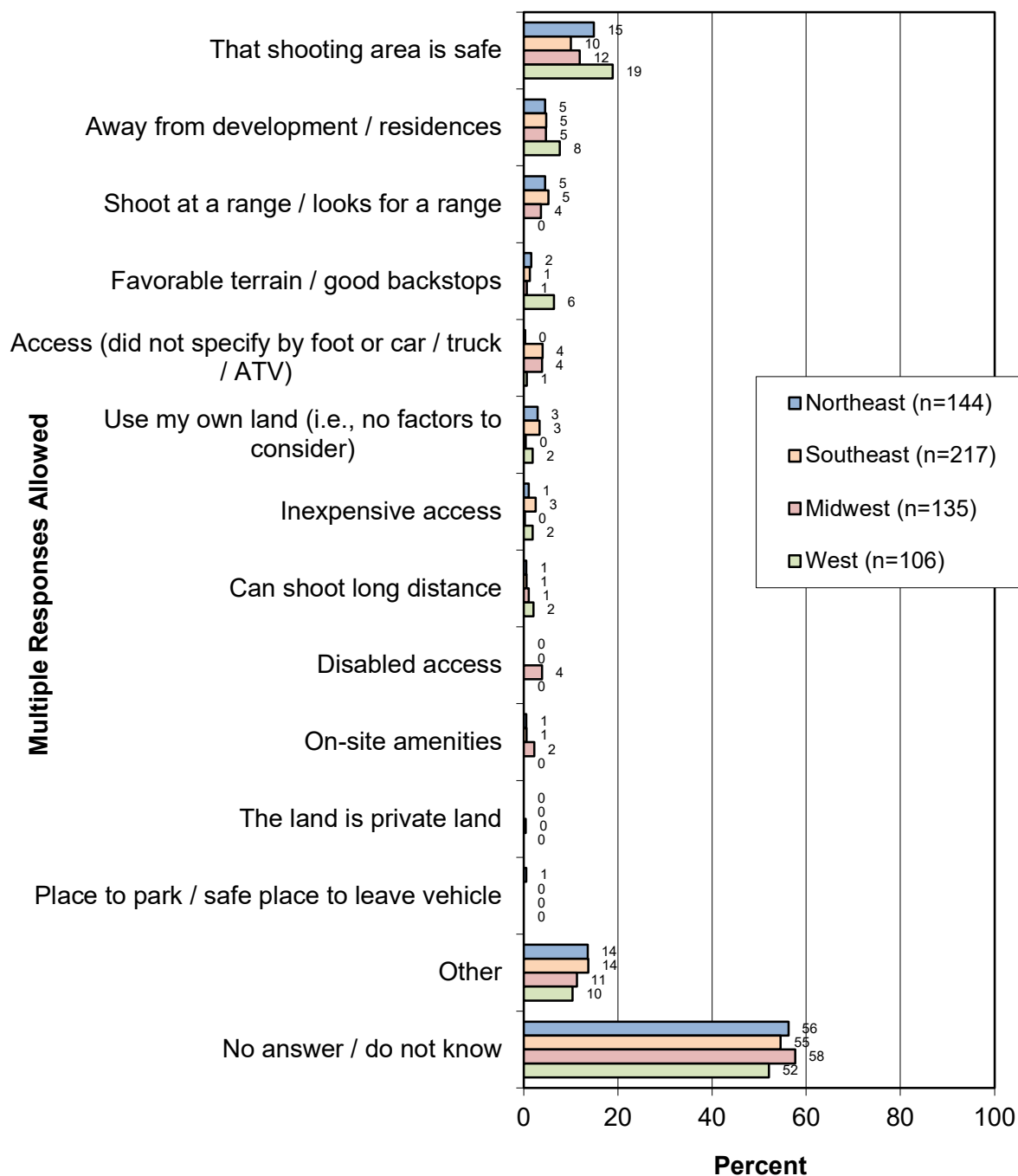
Very important Somewhat important Not at all important Do not know



Following the series of questions about the importance of different factors when deciding where to sport shoot, shooters were asked if there are any other important factors, in an open-ended question. The top responses were that the shooting area is safe (14% stated this) and that the location is away from development or residences (6%). A majority of the shooters (54%) did not provide a response.



Are there any other factors that are important to you when deciding where to shoot? Please briefly describe them below: (Shooter survey)



FACTORS AFFECTING SHOOTER ENJOYMENT

MAJOR FINDINGS

Cost is the top issue affecting sport shooters' enjoyment. However, access is also among the top issues.

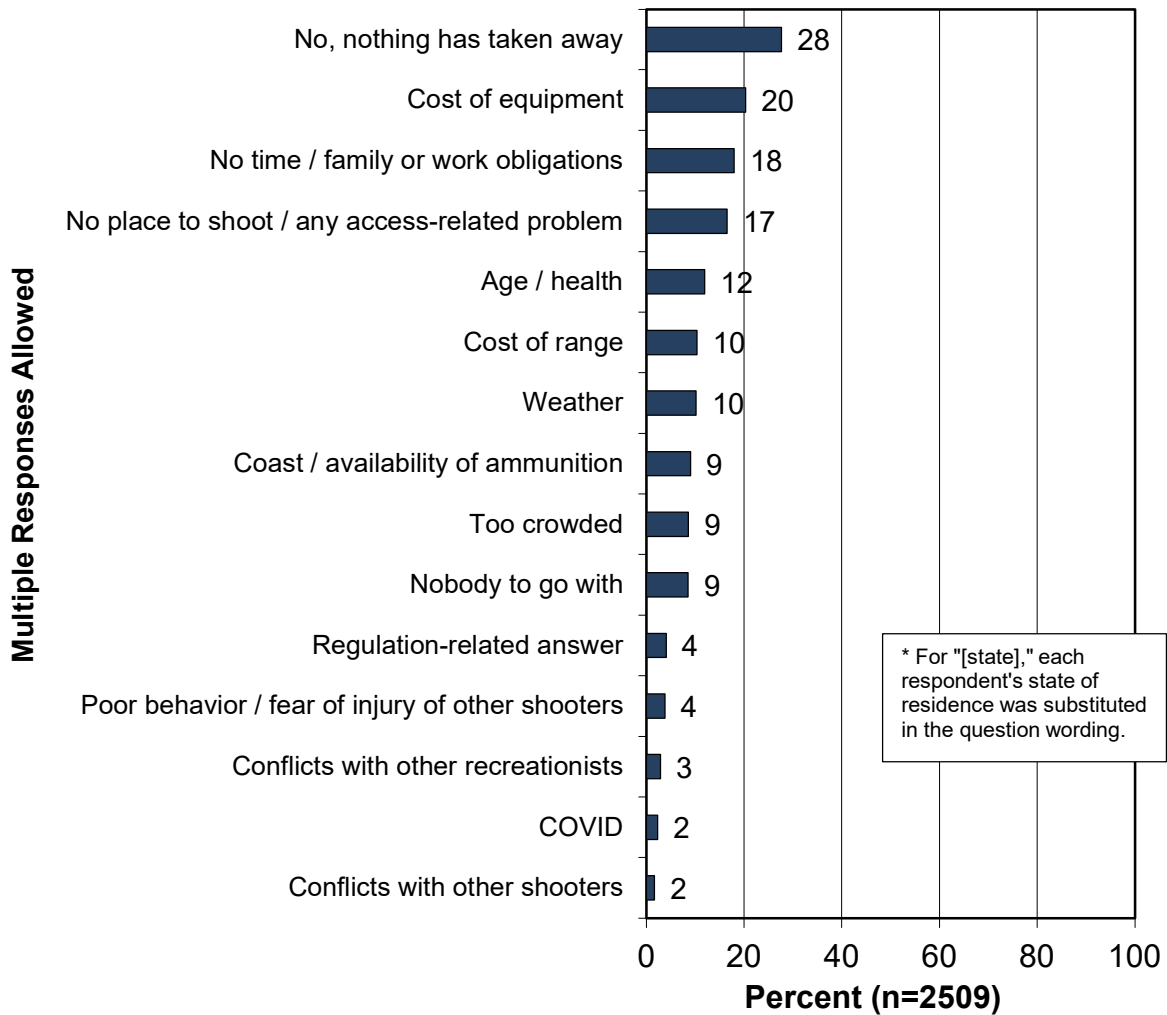
No time/family or work obligations collectively was also named as a top issue taking away from enjoyment.

The top access issues are a lack of land on which to shoot, land being too far away, and a lack of information about lands on which to shoot.

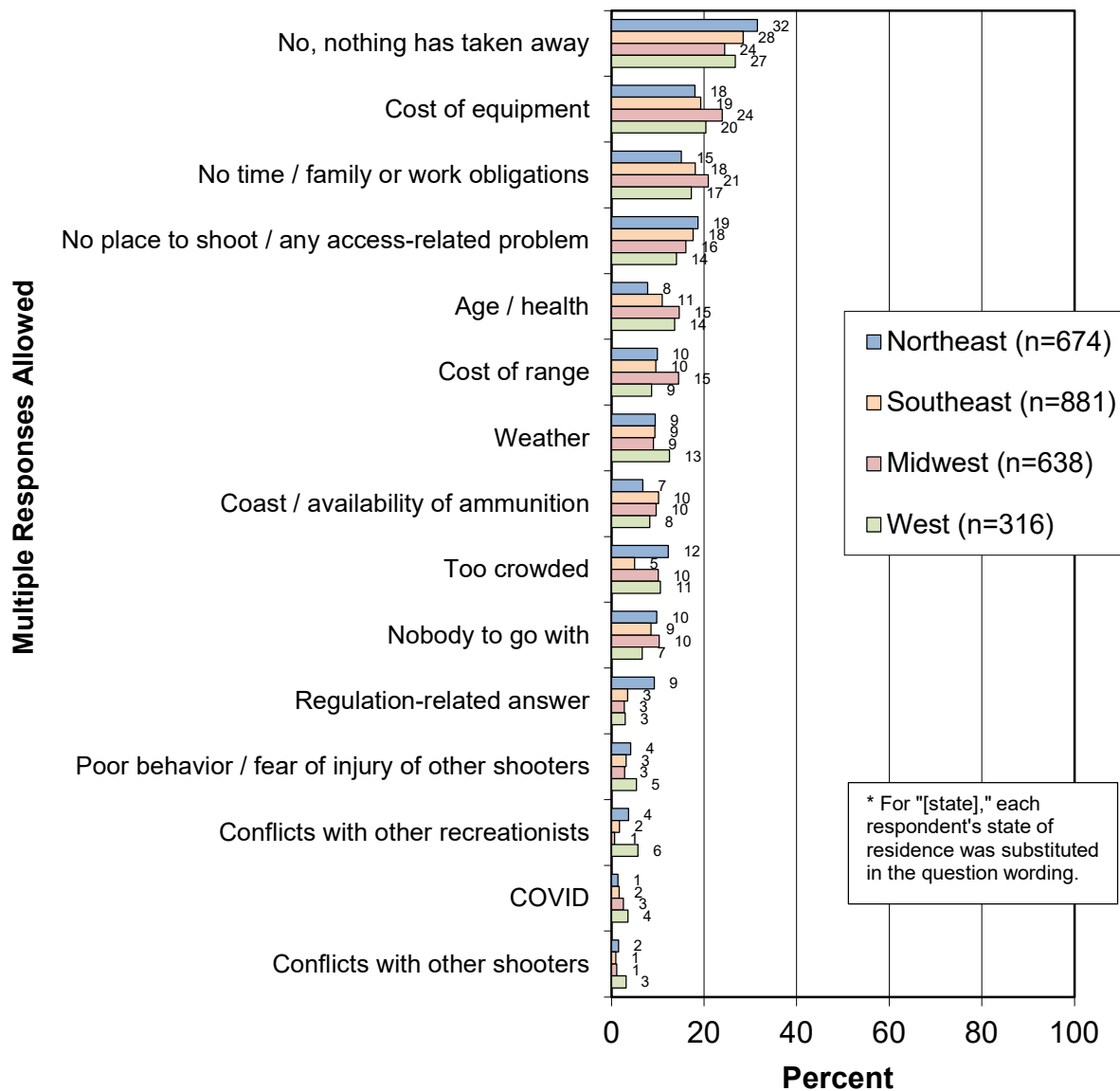
These are far above the other issues when those with access issues in the question above were then asked to elaborate.

The cost of equipment, lack of time, and lack of access/no place to shoot were named as the top issues taking away from shooters' enjoyment of shooting, even if it did not prevent them from participating. The next tier of detriments to shooting enjoyment includes age or health, the cost of the range, and weather. However, note that the top response to the question was that nothing has taken away from their enjoyment (28% stated this).

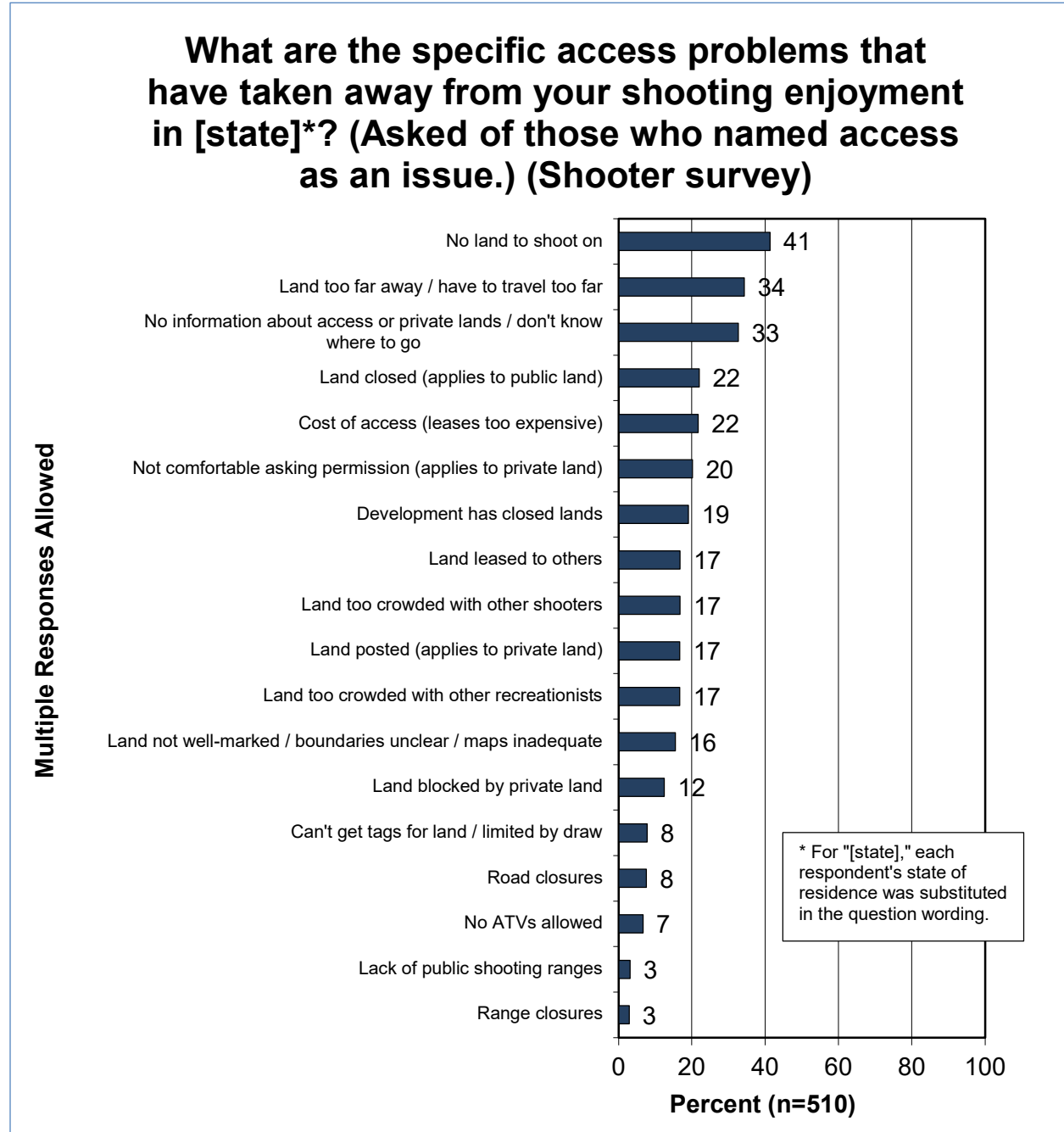
**Are there any things that have taken away from your enjoyment of shooting in [state]*, even if they didn't prevent you from actually going?
(Shooter survey)**



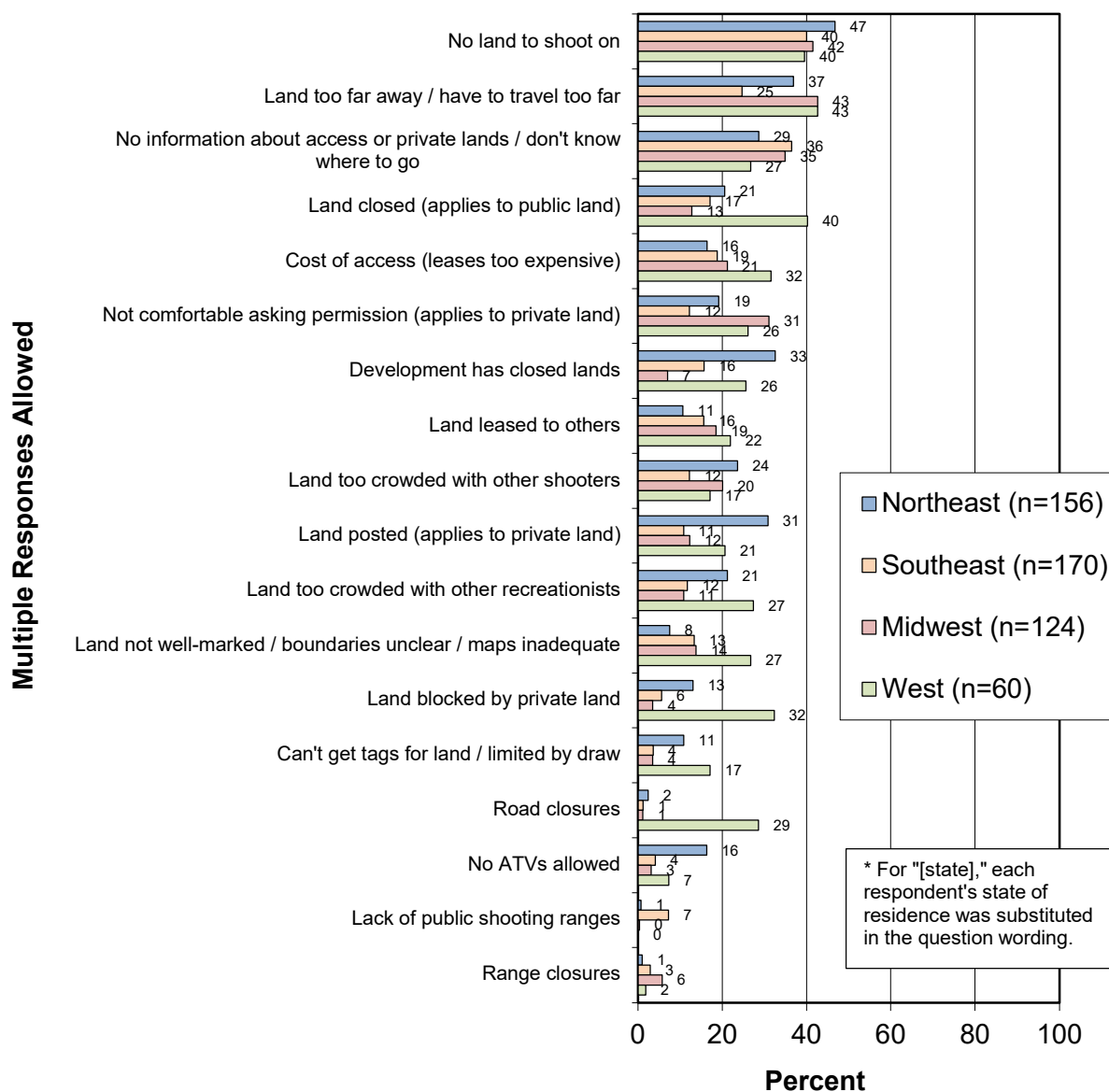
**Are there any things that have taken away from your enjoyment of shooting in [state]*, even if they didn't prevent you from actually going?
(Shooter survey)**



Those who indicated that access problems have detracted from their shooting enjoyment were asked to name the specific problems related to access. The top problems named are no land to shoot on, the land is too far away, lack of information on where to go, public land is closed, and the cost of access.



What are the specific access problems that have taken away from your shooting enjoyment in [state]*? (Asked of those who named access as an issue.) (Shooter survey)



SHOOTING ACCESS CONSTRAINTS

MAJOR FINDINGS

More shooters, in a direct question about access, agreed than disagreed that lack of access to shooting lands in their state has caused them to not shoot as much as they would have liked. Agreement is particularly high among urban shooters who are young and who primarily shoot modern rifles.

In this question, 43% agreed and 32% disagreed (the rest answered neutrally).

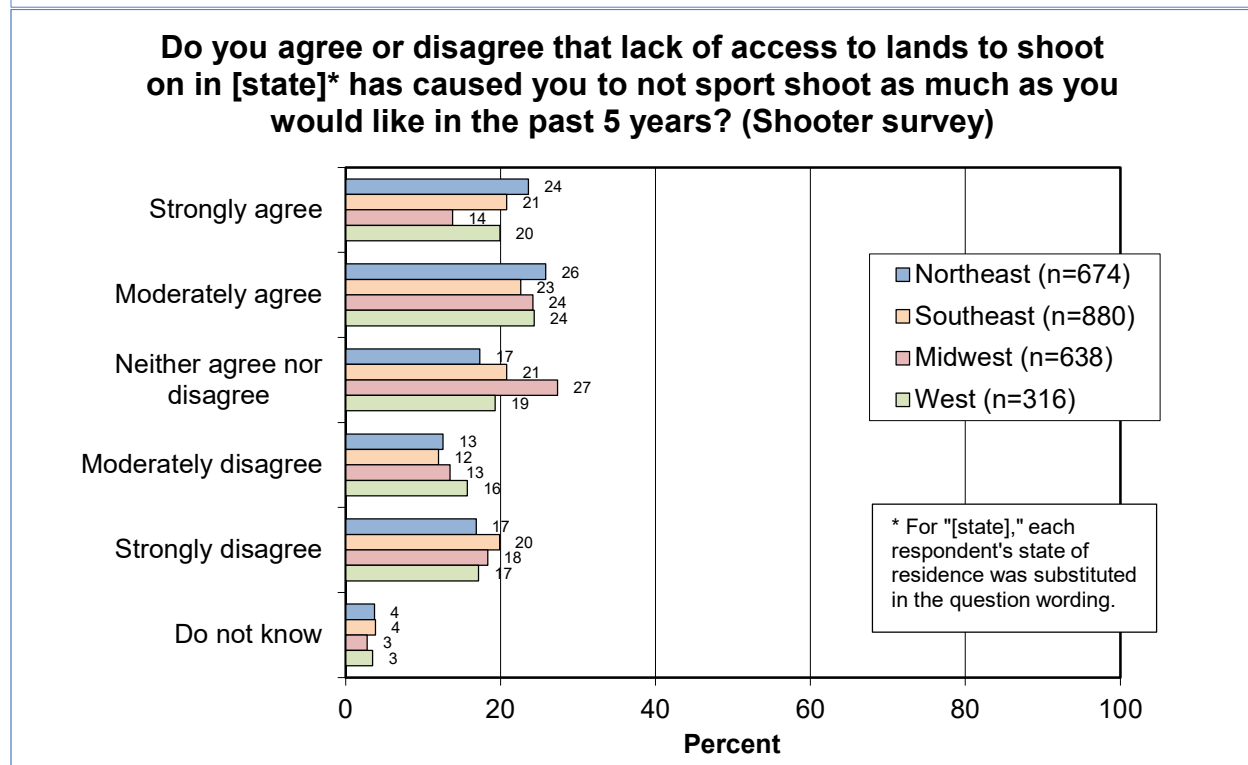
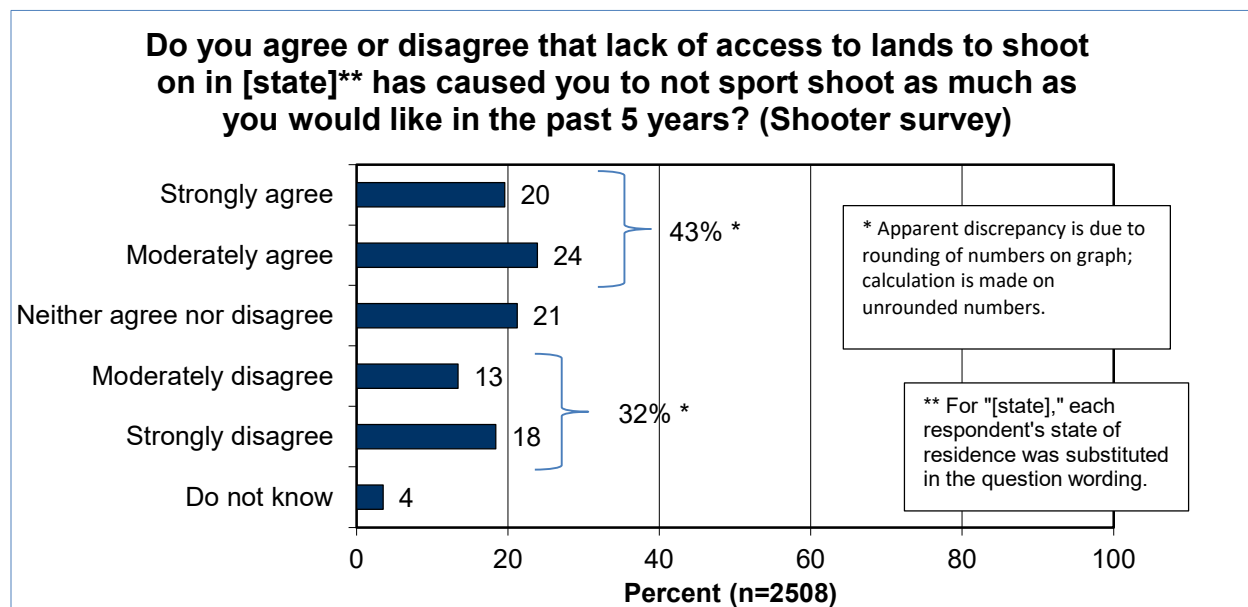
The items that shooters rated as the most problematic when they go shooting relate to development, lack of information, changes in the land use, and travel distances (including the cost of gas).

Shooters rated each of 22 potential problems as being a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all.

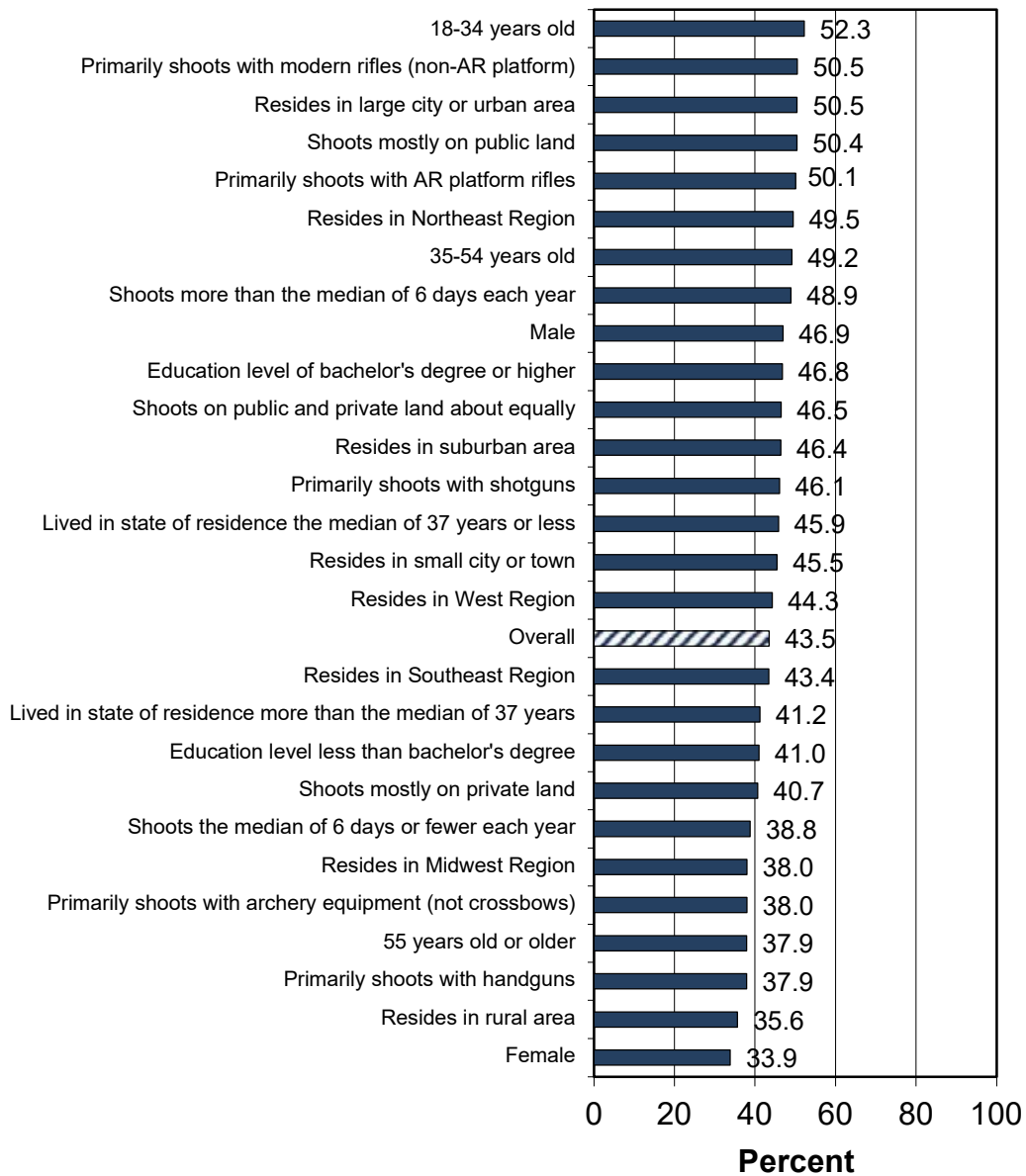
The above were problems that shooters may encounter when shooting. The survey also asked shooters to rate potential problems for the state as a whole relating to lands available (or not available) for shooting and land uses. The top issues are development, lack of signage, and land being posted because of the landowner's liability concerns.

This list contained 10 potential statewide problems.

Nearly half of hunters (43%) agree that lack of access to shooting lands in their state has caused them to not shoot as much as they would like in the past 5 years; meanwhile, 32% disagree.

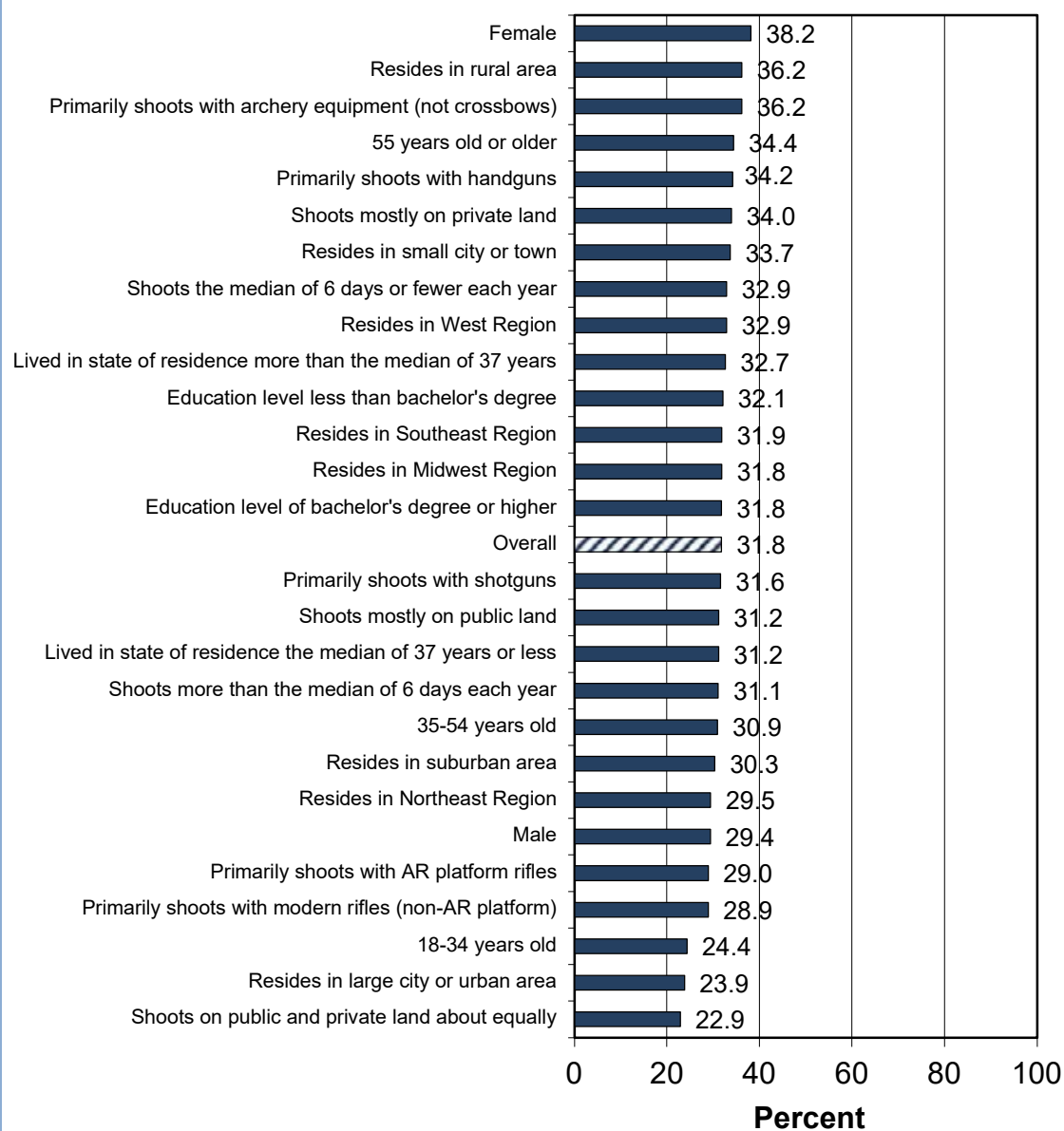


Percent of each of the following groups who strongly or moderately agree that lack of access caused them to shoot less: (Shooter survey)



Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

**Percent of each of the following groups who strongly or moderately disagree that lack of access caused them to shoot less:
(Shooter survey)**

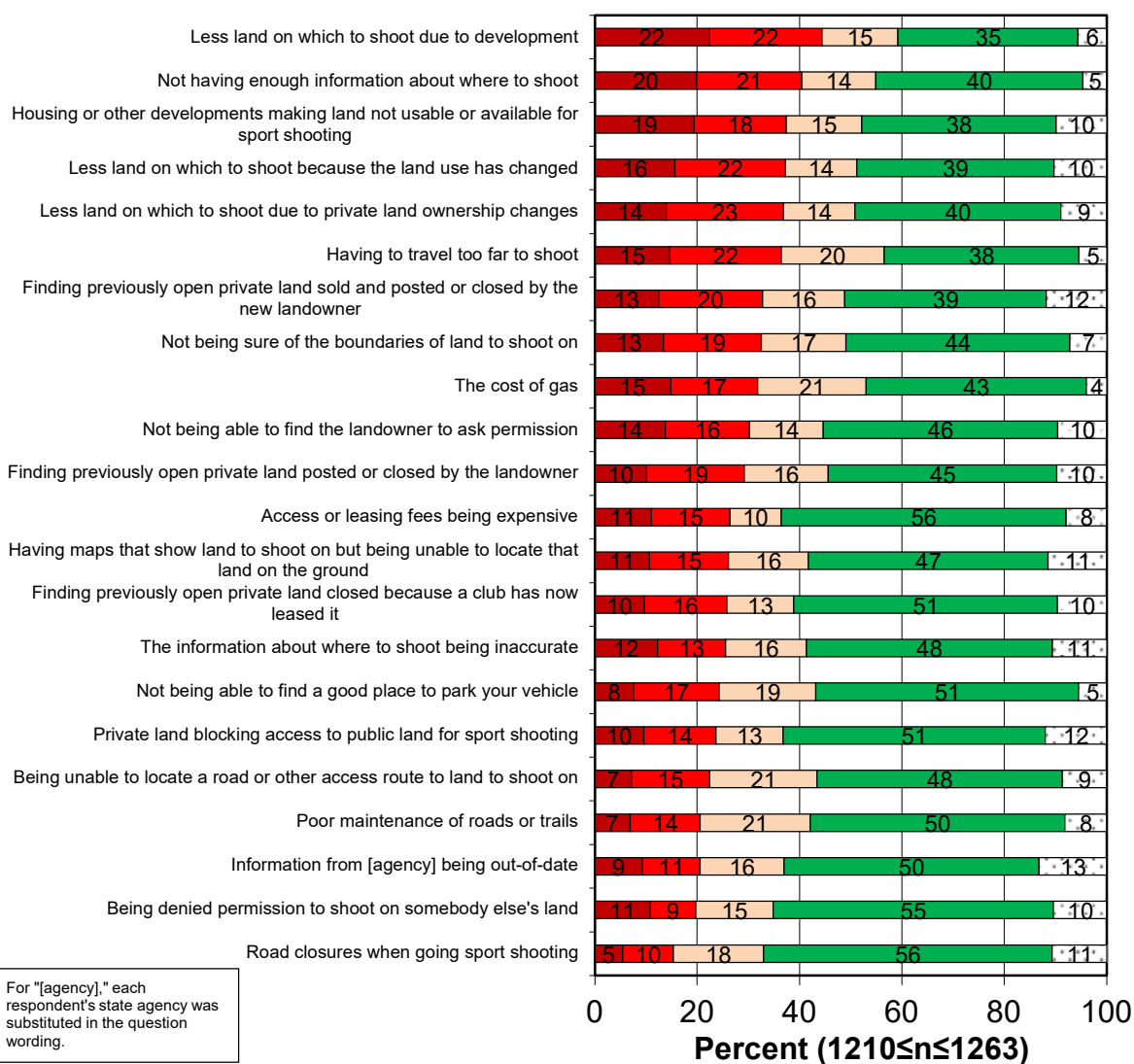


Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

Shooters were presented with a list of 22 items and were asked to rate how much of a problem each has been when shooting in the past 5 years. The items rated as the most problematic are land not being available due to development, lack of access information, housing or other developments, land use changes, private land ownership changes, and travel distances. The full list is shown below, in descending order of *major* and *moderate problem* responses combined. Graphs for each region follow.

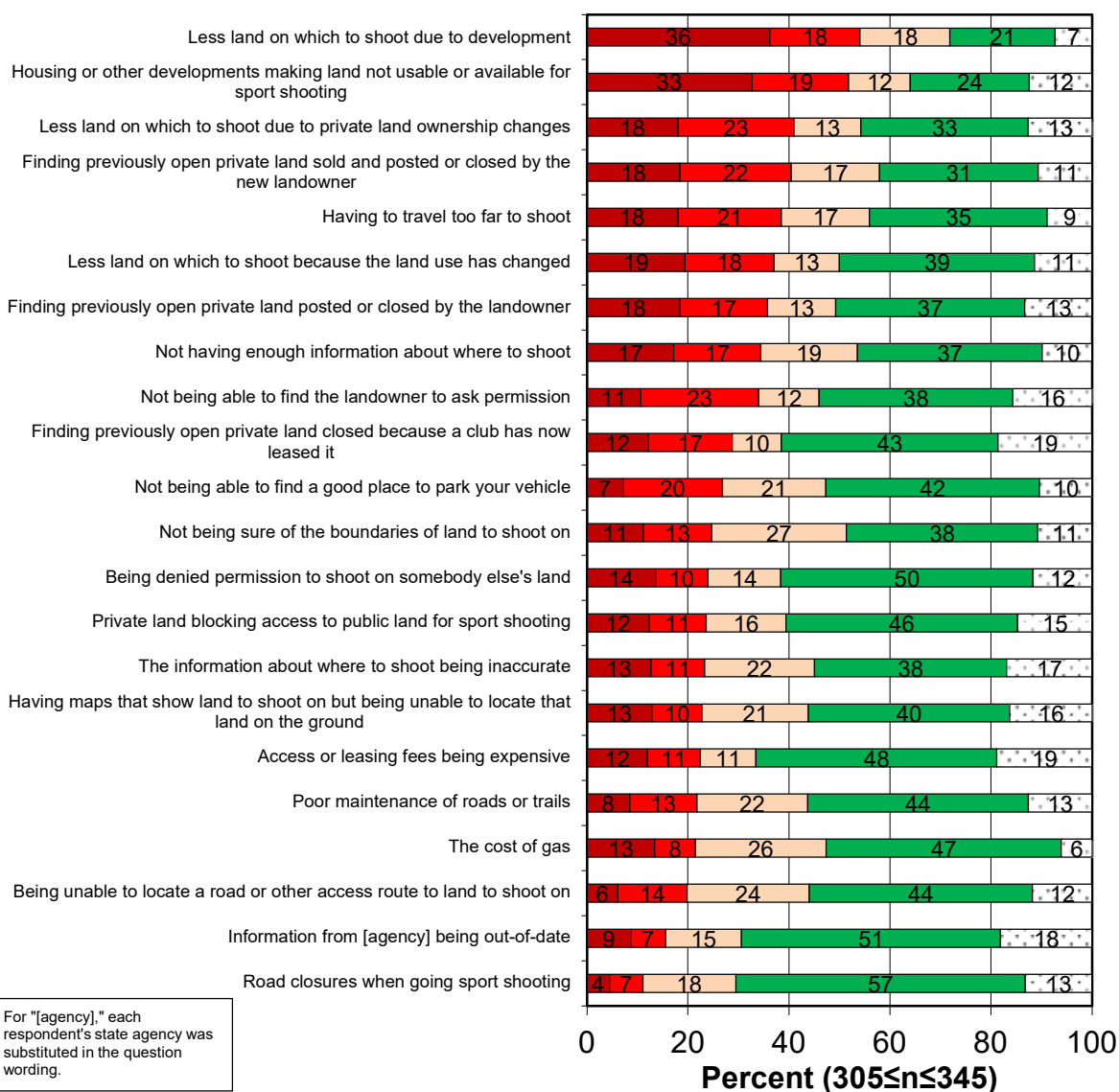
**Please indicate if each issue has been a [degree of problem] when shooting in the past 5 years.
(Shooter survey) (Overall)**

■ Major problem ■ Moderate problem ■ Minor problem ■ Not at all a problem ■ Do not know



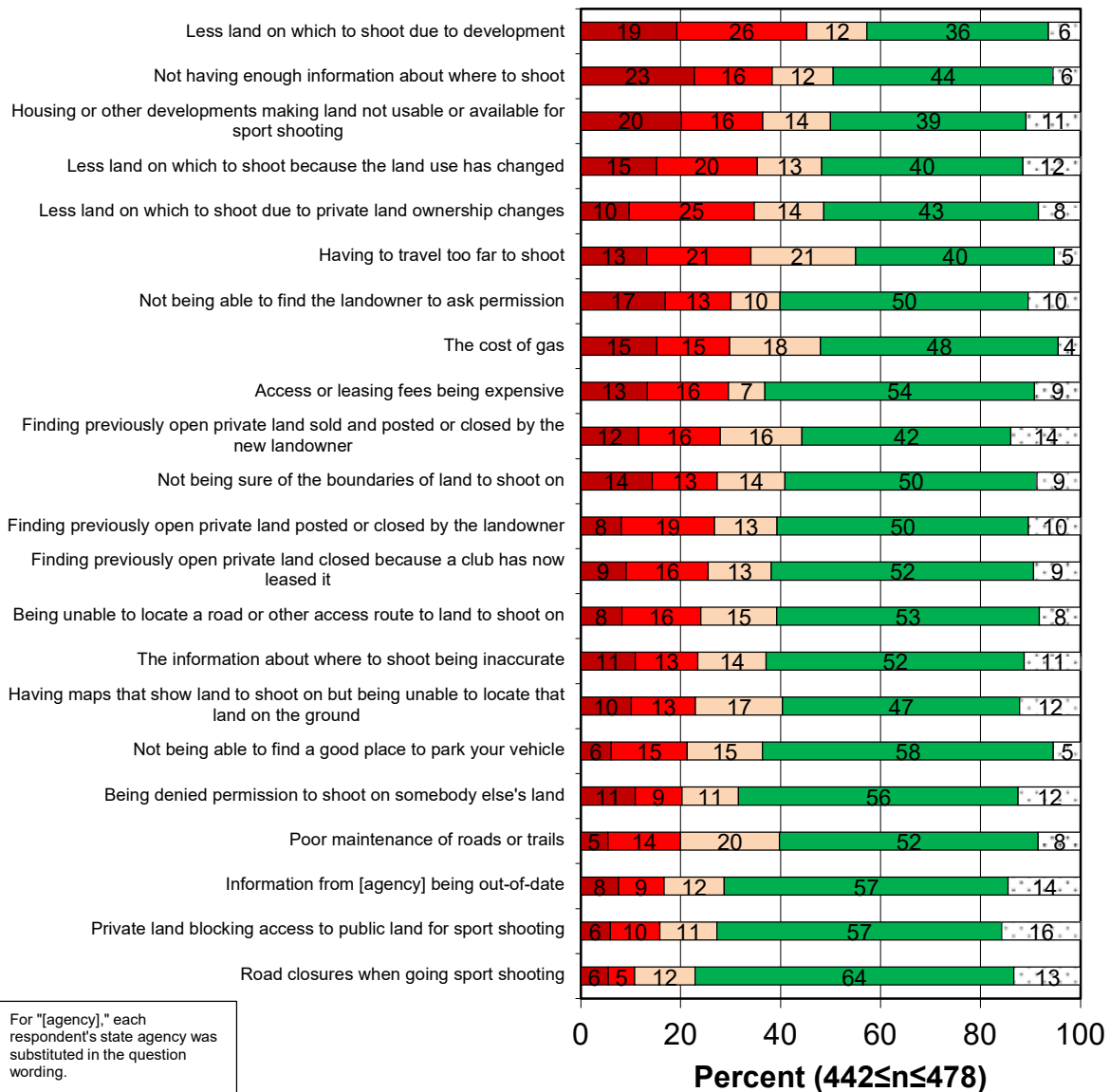
**Please indicate if each issue has been a [degree of problem] when shooting in the past 5 years.
(Shooter survey) (Northeast)**

■ Major problem ■ Moderate problem ■ Minor problem ■ Not at all a problem □ Do not know



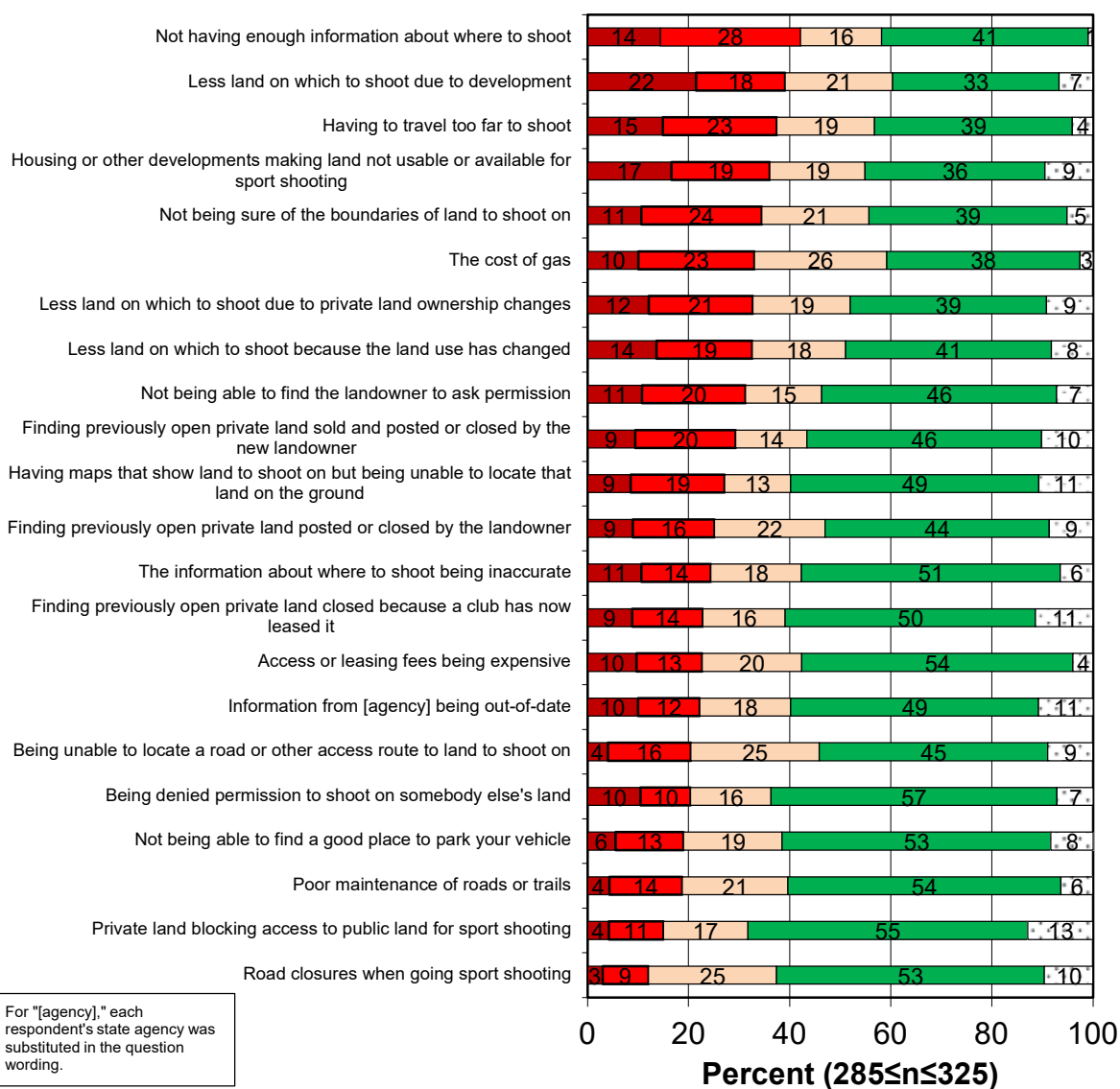
**Please indicate if each issue has been a [degree of problem] when shooting in the past 5 years.
(Shooter survey) (Southeast)**

■ Major problem ■ Moderate problem ■ Minor problem ■ Not at all a problem ■ Do not know



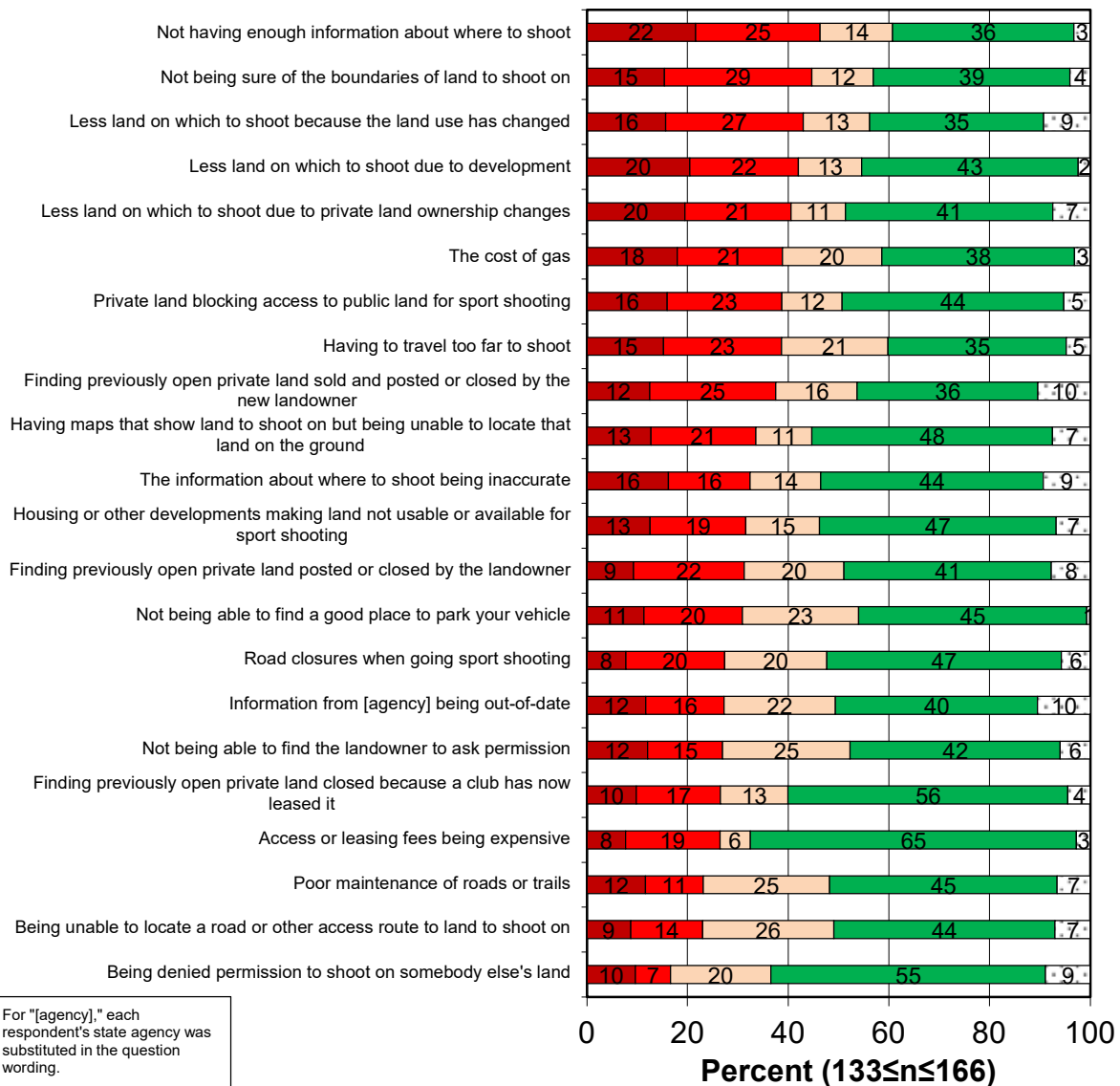
**Please indicate if each issue has been a [degree of problem] when shooting in the past 5 years.
(Shooter survey) (Midwest)**

■ Major problem ■ Moderate problem ■ Minor problem ■ Not at all a problem □ Do not know



**Please indicate if each issue has been a [degree of problem] when shooting in the past 5 years.
(Shooter survey) (West)**

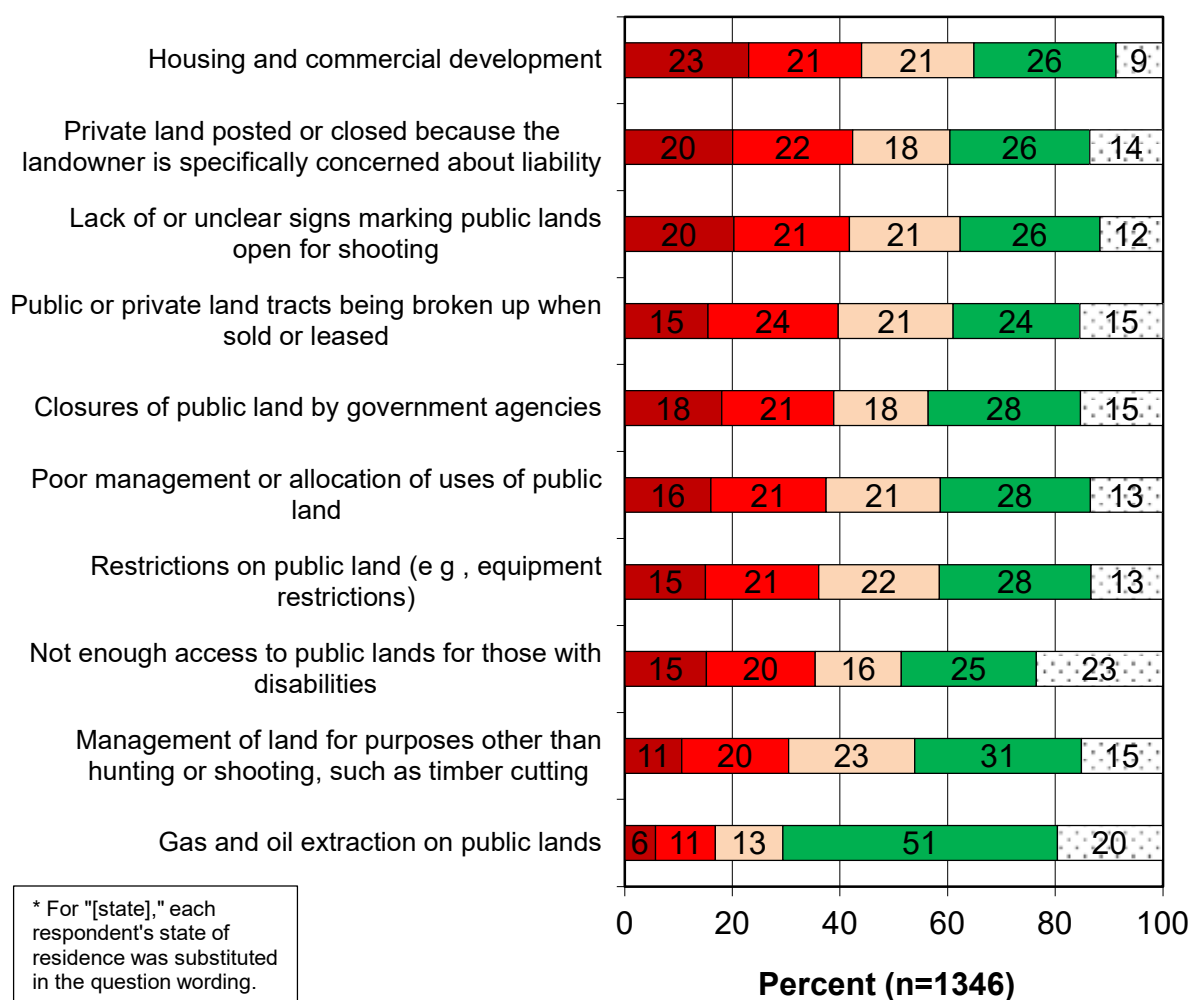
■ Major problem ■ Moderate problem ■ Minor problem ■ Not at all a problem ■ Do not know



In another series, shooters were asked to rate how much of a problem 10 items are in their state. The items rated as the largest problems were housing and commercial development, private land closed due to owners' liability concerns, and unclear marking of public lands open for shooting.

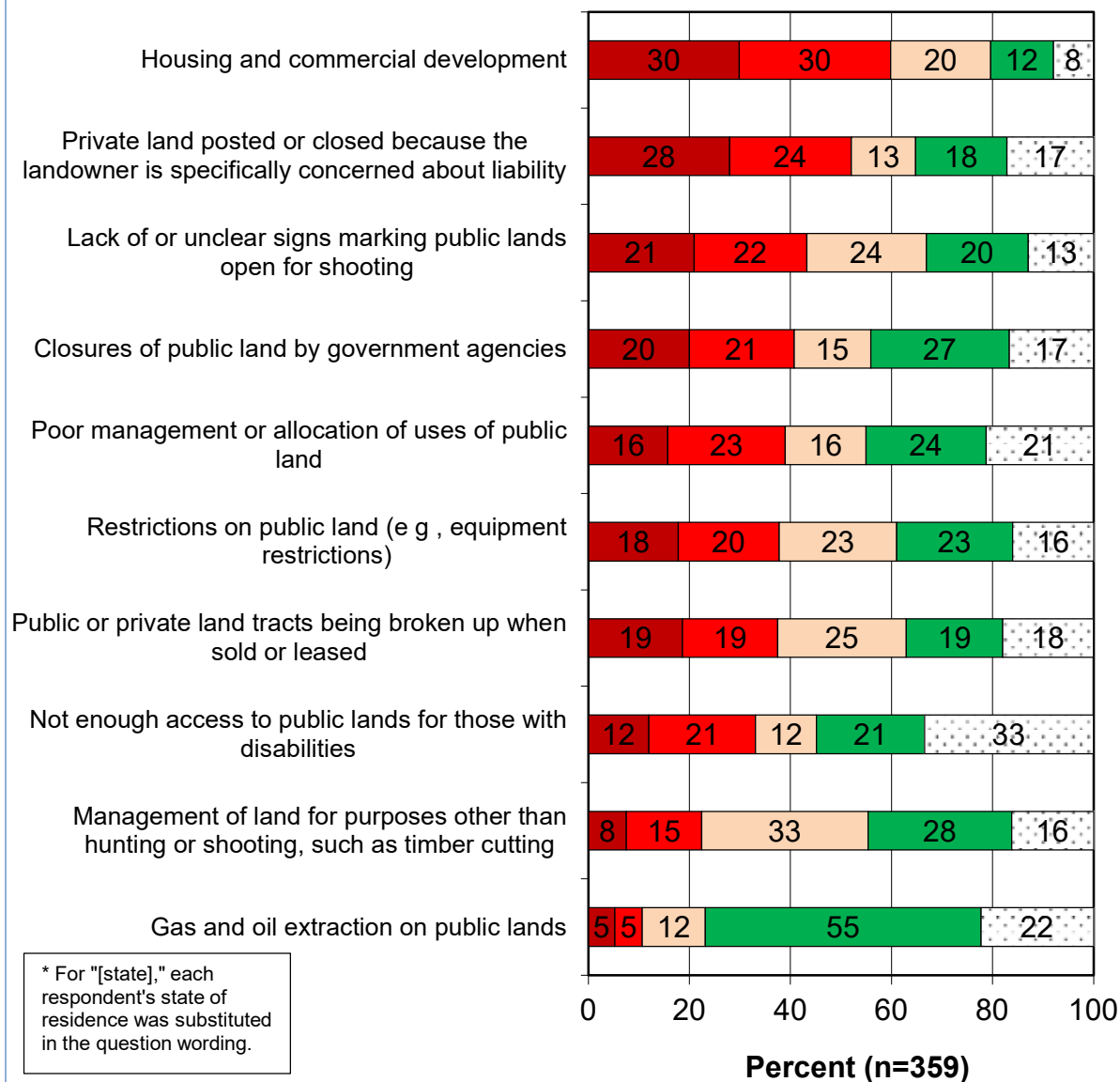
How much of a problem do you think each of the following is in [state]* in general? (Shooter survey) (Overall)

■ Major problem ■ Moderate problem ■ Minor problem ■ Not a problem at all □ Do not know



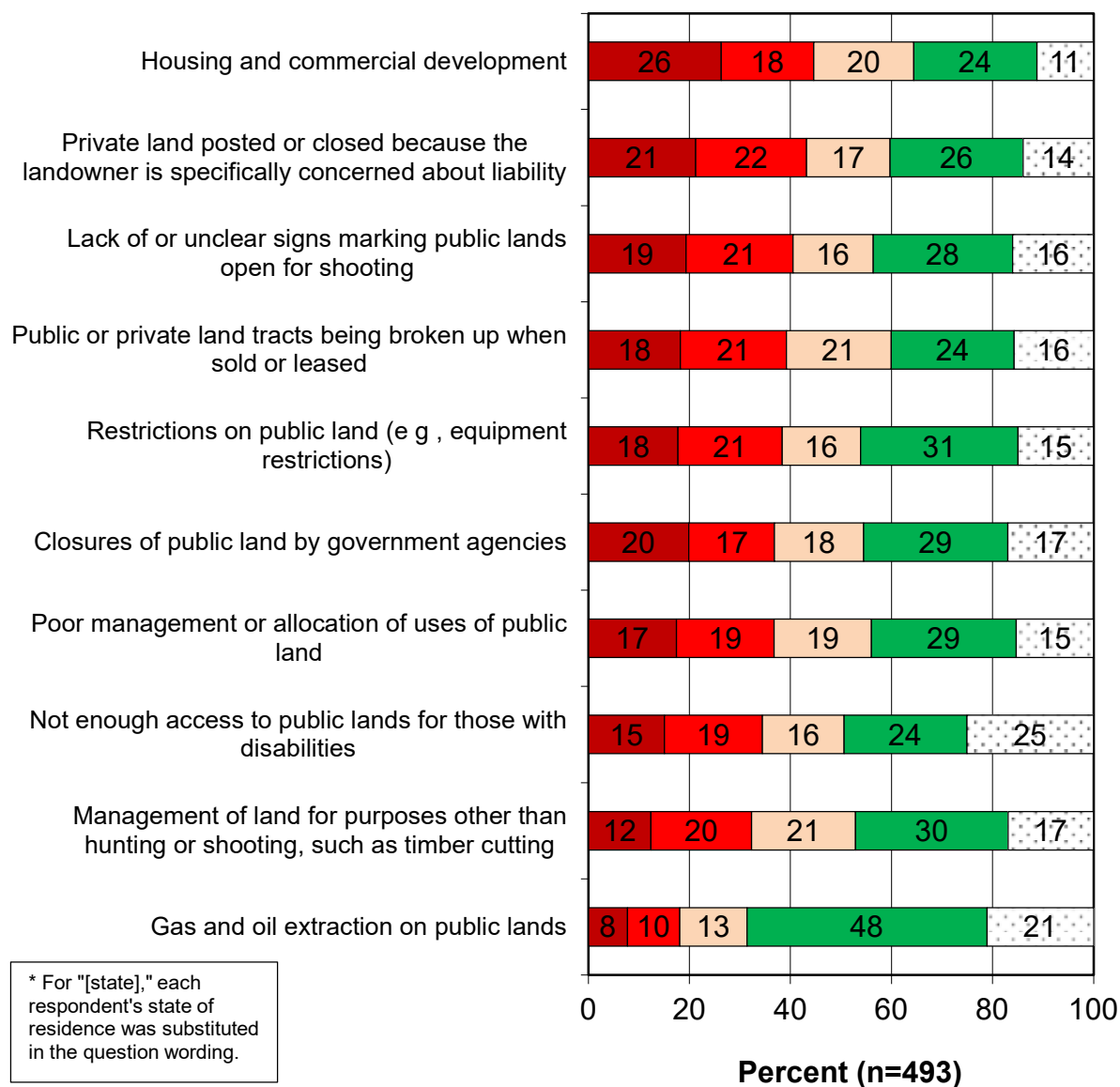
How much of a problem do you think each of the following is in [state]* in general? (Shooter survey) (Northeast)

■ Major problem ■ Moderate problem ■ Minor problem ■ Not a problem at all ■ Do not know



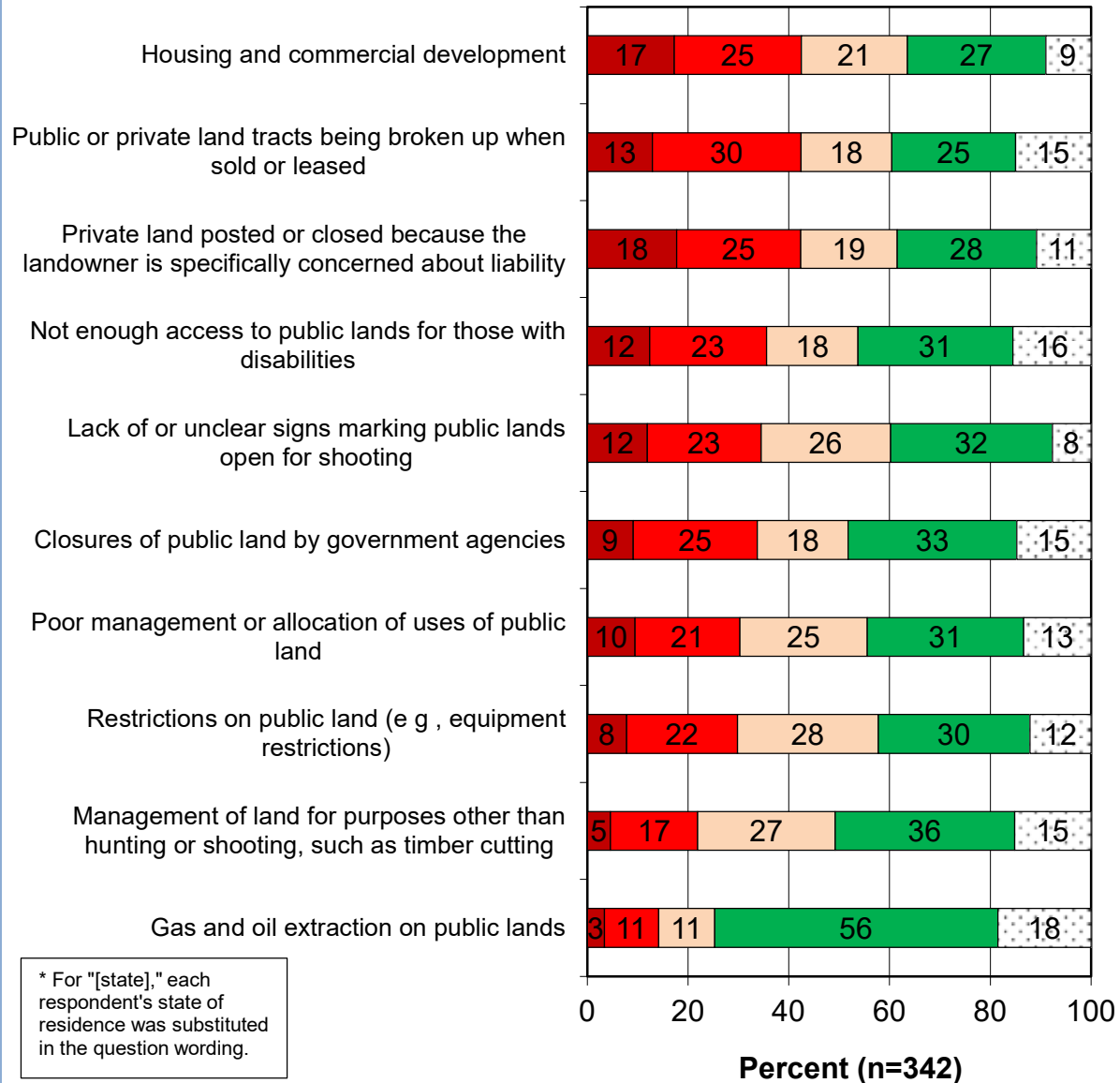
How much of a problem do you think each of the following is in [state]* in general? (Shooter survey) (Southeast)

■ Major problem ■ Moderate problem ■ Minor problem ■ Not a problem at all ■ Do not know



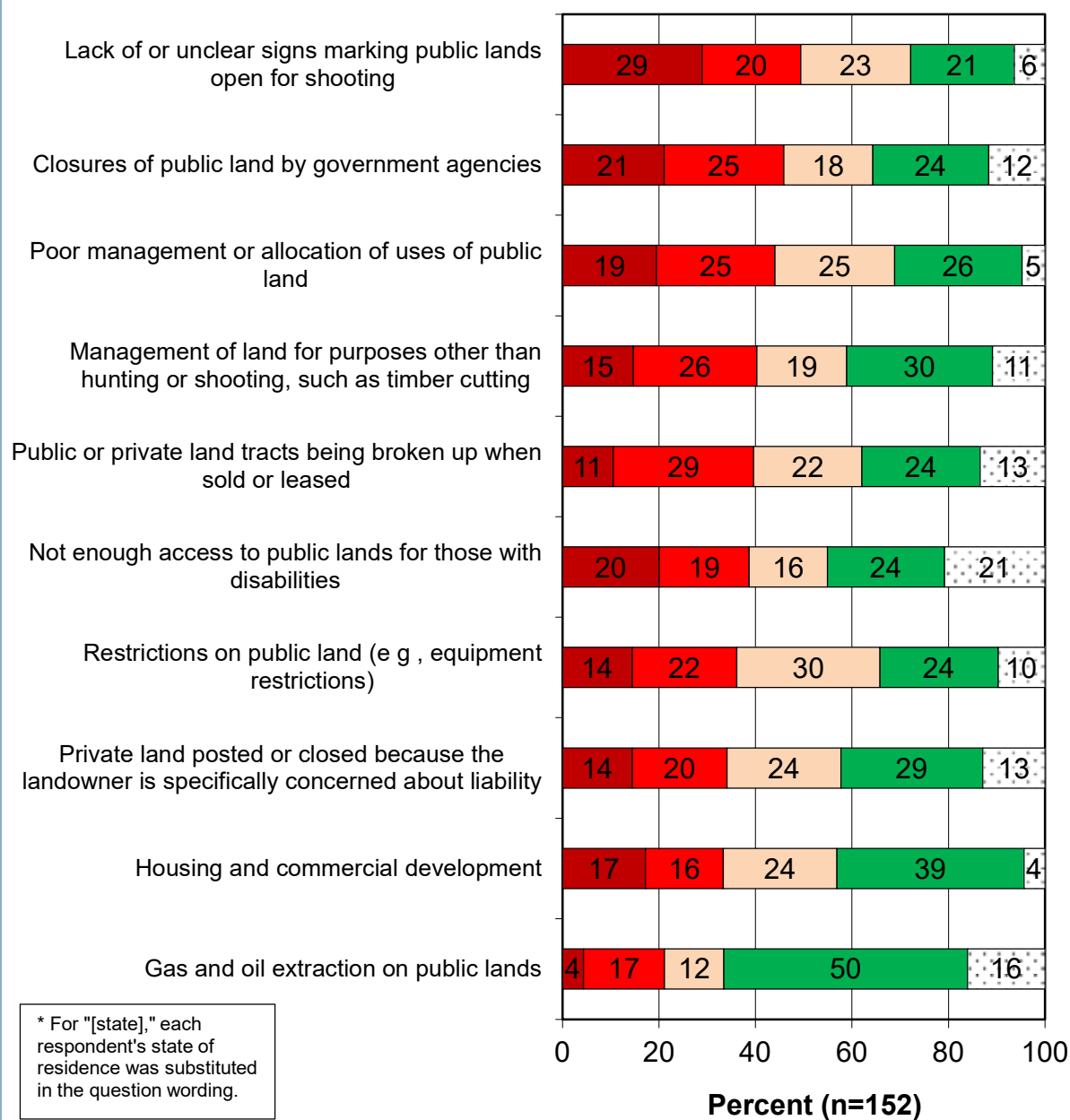
How much of a problem do you think each of the following is in [state]* in general? (Shooter survey) (Midwest)

■ Major problem ■ Moderate problem ■ Minor problem ■ Not a problem at all □ Do not know

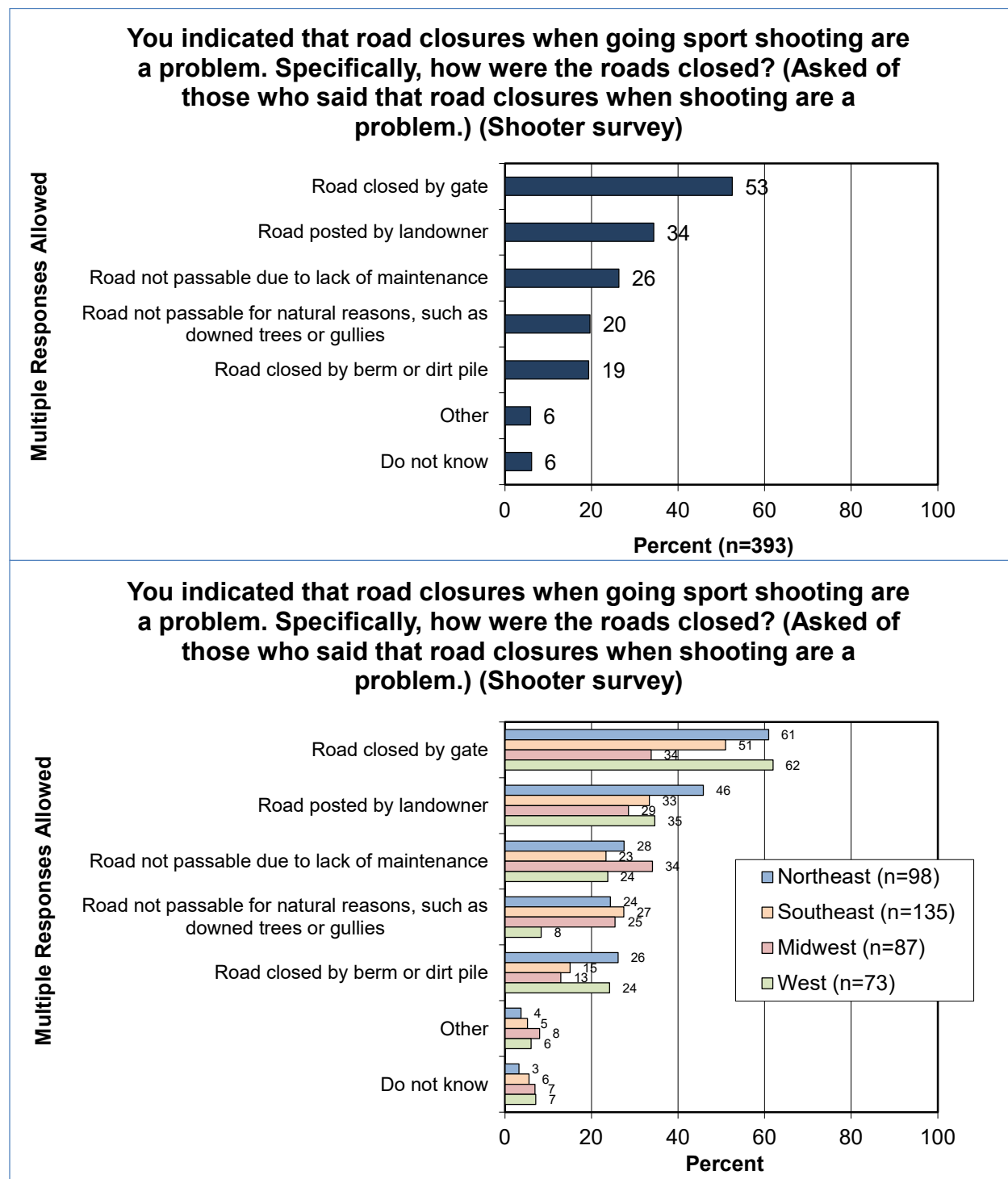


How much of a problem do you think each of the following is in [state]* in general? (Shooter survey) (West)

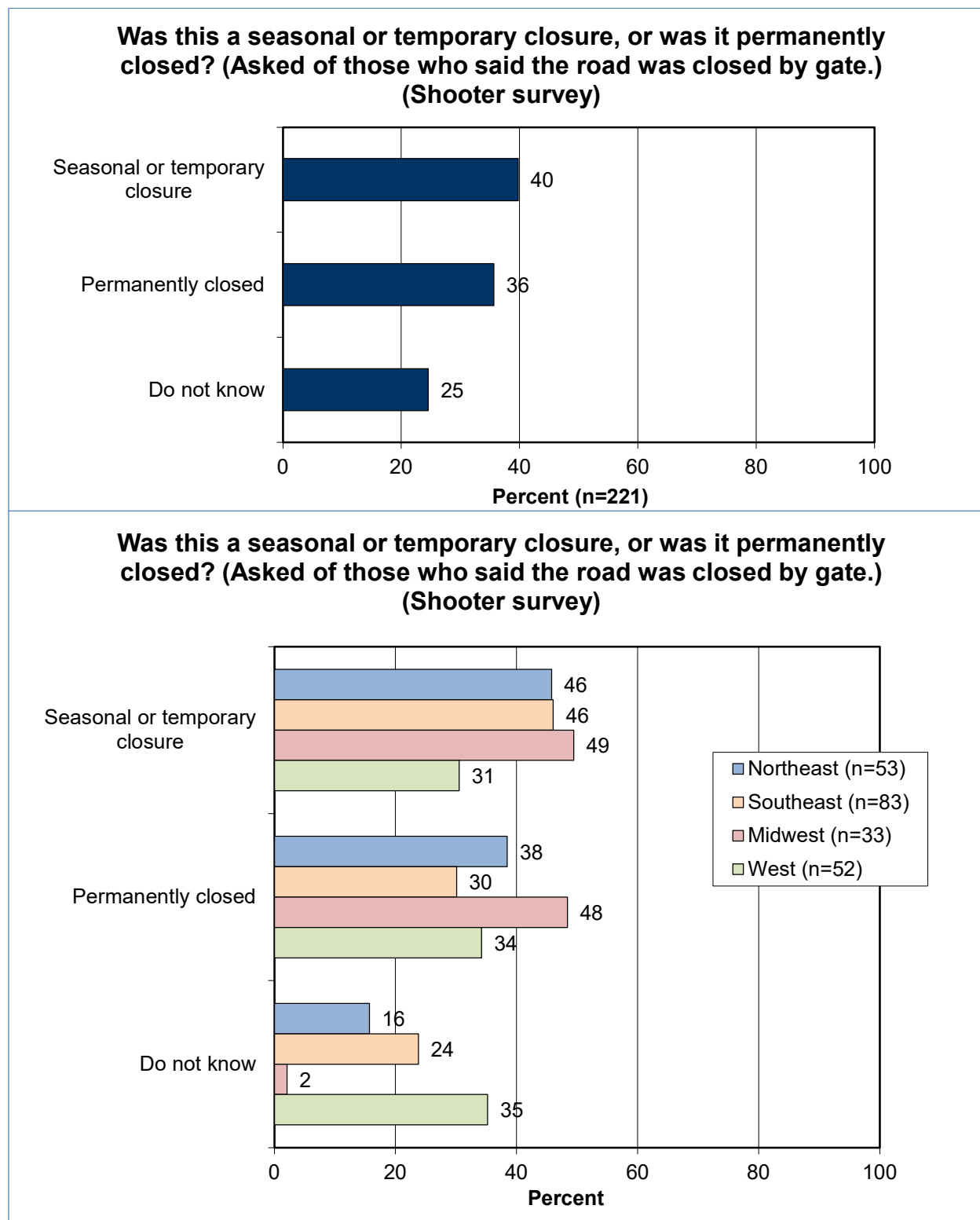
■ Major problem ■ Moderate problem ■ Minor problem ■ Not a problem at all ■ Do not know



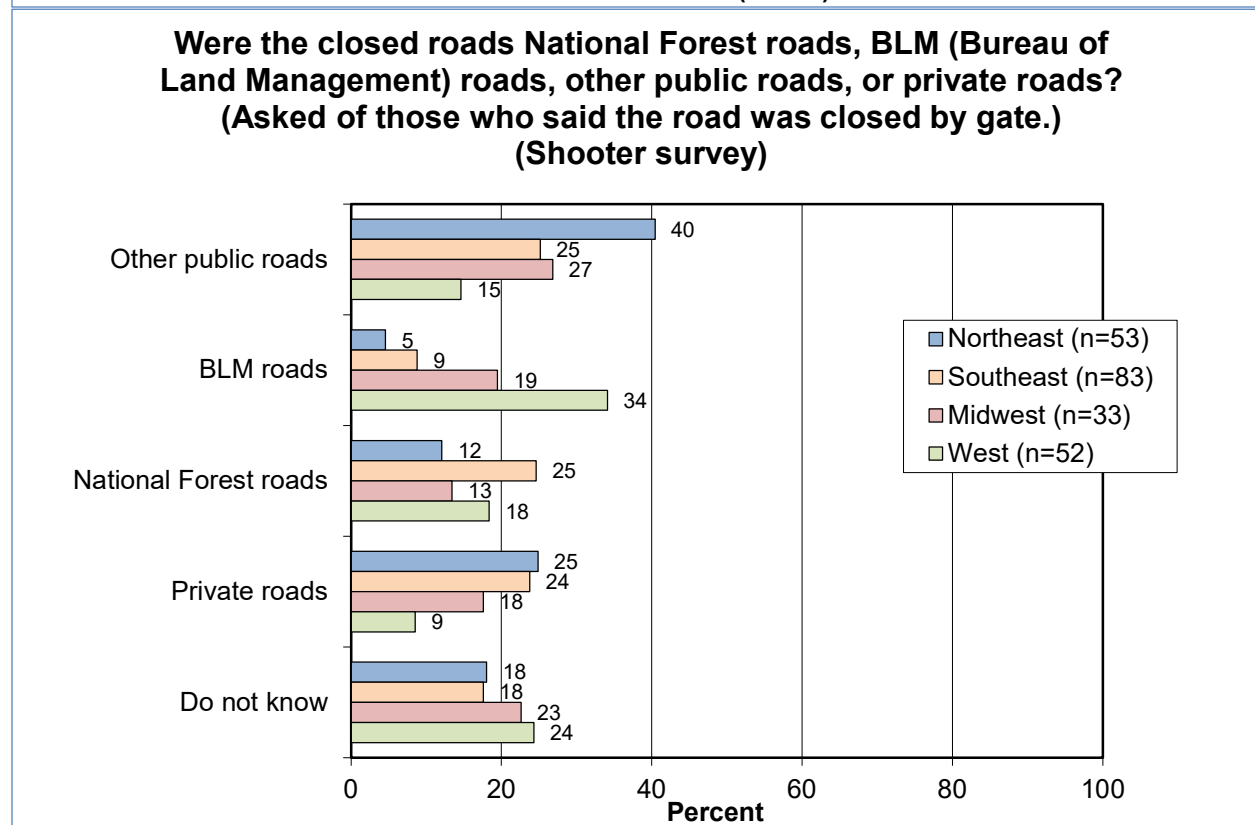
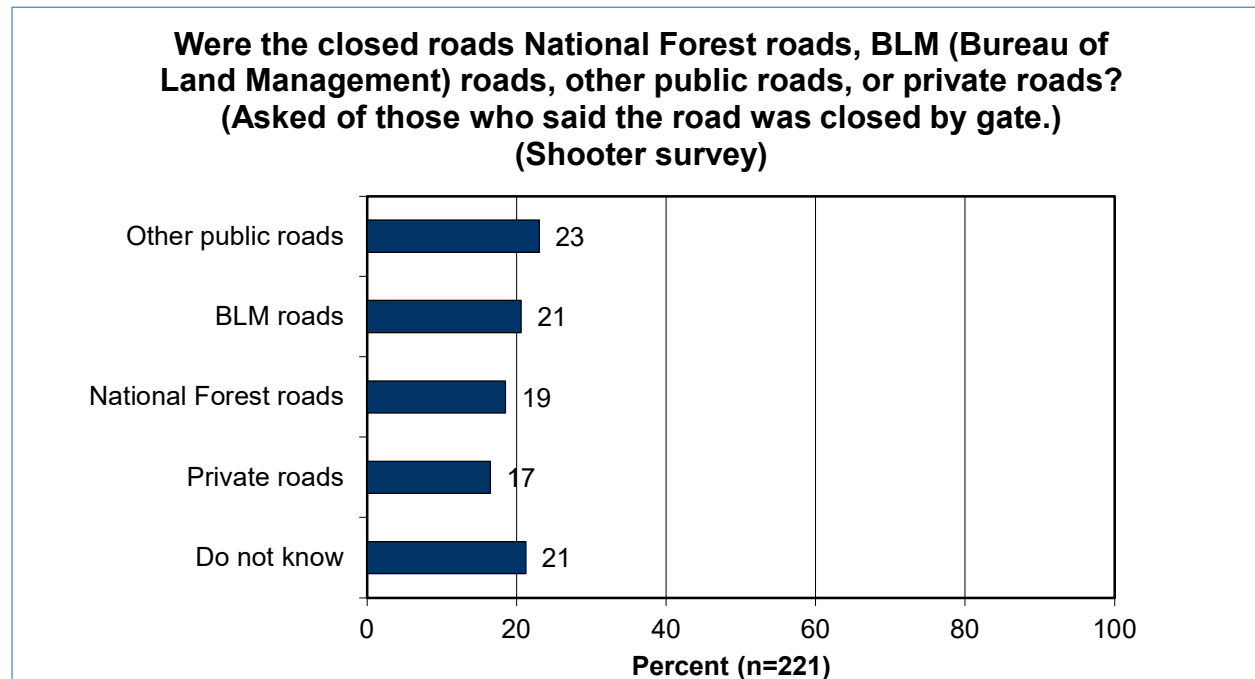
Among those who said that road closures when shooting are a problem, a majority (53%) said the roads were closed by a gate. Other frequent responses were that the roads were closed by the landowner (34%), they were not passable due to lack of maintenance (26%), they were not passable for natural reasons (20%), and they were closed by berm or dirt pile (19%).



Among shooters who said a road was closed by a gate, 40% said the closure was seasonal or temporary and 36% said the closure was permanent; the remainder did not know.

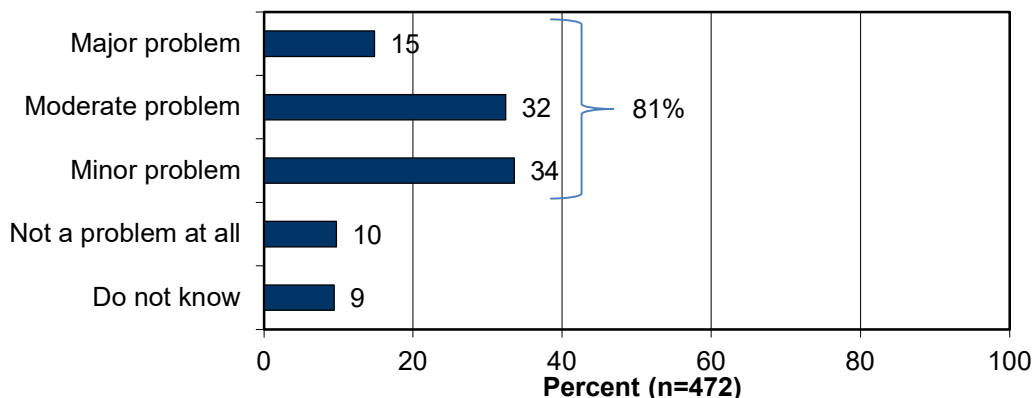


Among shooters who said a road was closed by a gate, 23% said the road was another type of public road, 21% said it was a Bureau of Land Management road, 19% said it was a National Forest road, and 17% said it was a private road.

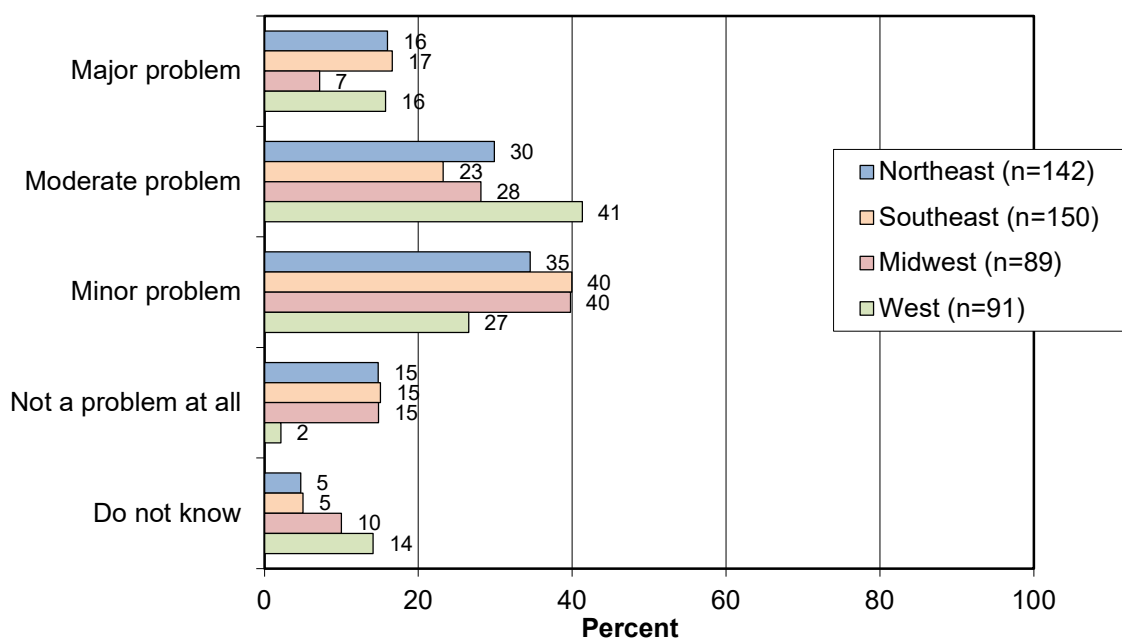


Finally in this section, among shooters who said that private land blocking access to public land for shooting is a problem, a strong majority (81%) said the problem to some degree was landowners *intentionally* blocking access.

How much of a problem were landowners intentionally blocking or making it difficult to physically access public land [for shooting]? (Asked of those who said that private land blocking access to public land for shooting is a problem.)
(Shooter survey)



How much of a problem were landowners intentionally blocking or making it difficult to physically access public land [for shooting]? (Asked of those who said that private land blocking access to public land for shooting is a problem.)
(Shooter survey)



RATINGS OF ACCESS TO SHOOTING LANDS

MAJOR FINDINGS

Shooters are essentially evenly divided in their ratings of shooting access in their state: 45% rate it *excellent* or *good*, and 47% rate it *fair* or *poor*, with ratings being in the middle rather than the extremes.

Among shooters in the survey, 45% rate access *excellent* (9%) or *good* (36%), while 47% rate it *fair* (33%) or *poor* (14%).

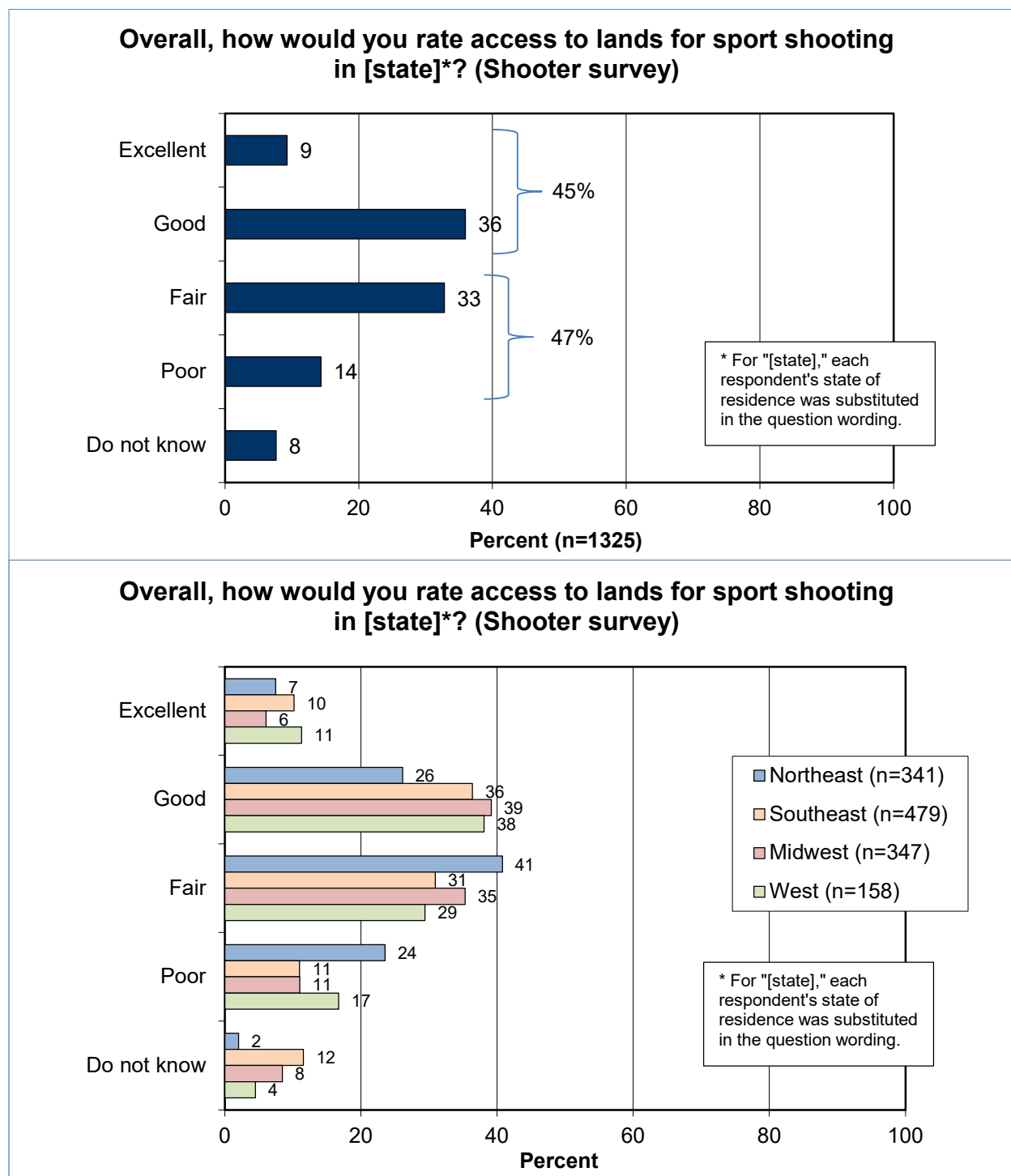
Half of shooters rate their state agency's management of access as *excellent* or *good*, but a third rate the management of access *fair* or *poor* (the rest being neutral). This is slightly better than ratings of access overall.

Half (50%) give a rating of *excellent* or *good*, compared to 34% giving a rating of *fair* or *poor*.

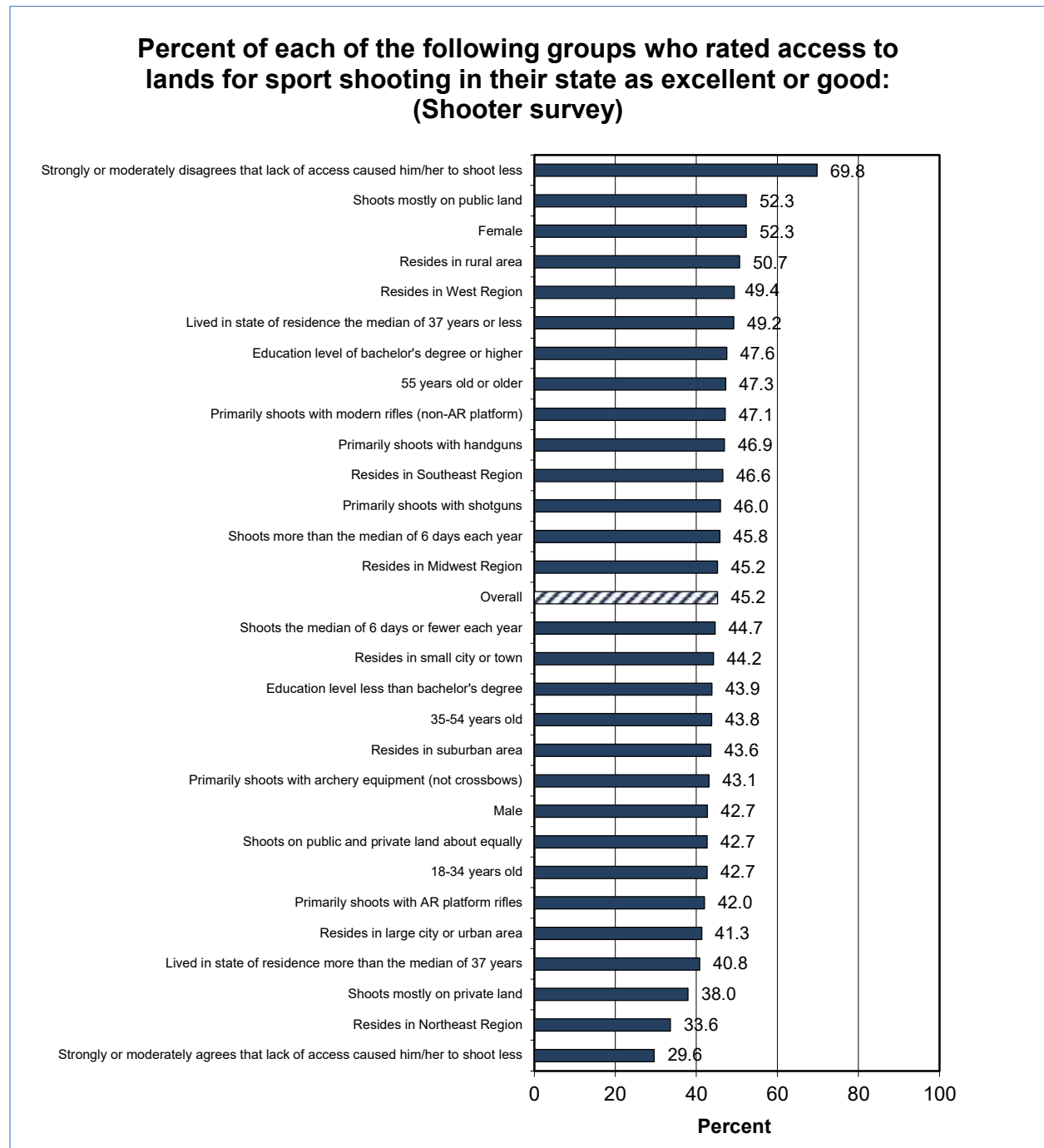
Public land access gets far better ratings than private land access: 57% rate public access *excellent* or *good*, while 40% rate private land access *excellent* or *good*.

Ratings were given for both public and private land access, and the ratings were as follows: public land had 57% rating it *excellent* or *good* and 38% rating it *fair* or *poor*, while private land had 40% rating it *excellent* or *good* and 45% rating it *fair* or *poor*.

Shooters are divided when rating access to lands for sport shooting in their state, with 47% rating access *fair* or *poor*, the bottom half of the scale, compared to 45% rating access in the top half of the scale (*excellent* or *good*); the top response was *good* (36%).

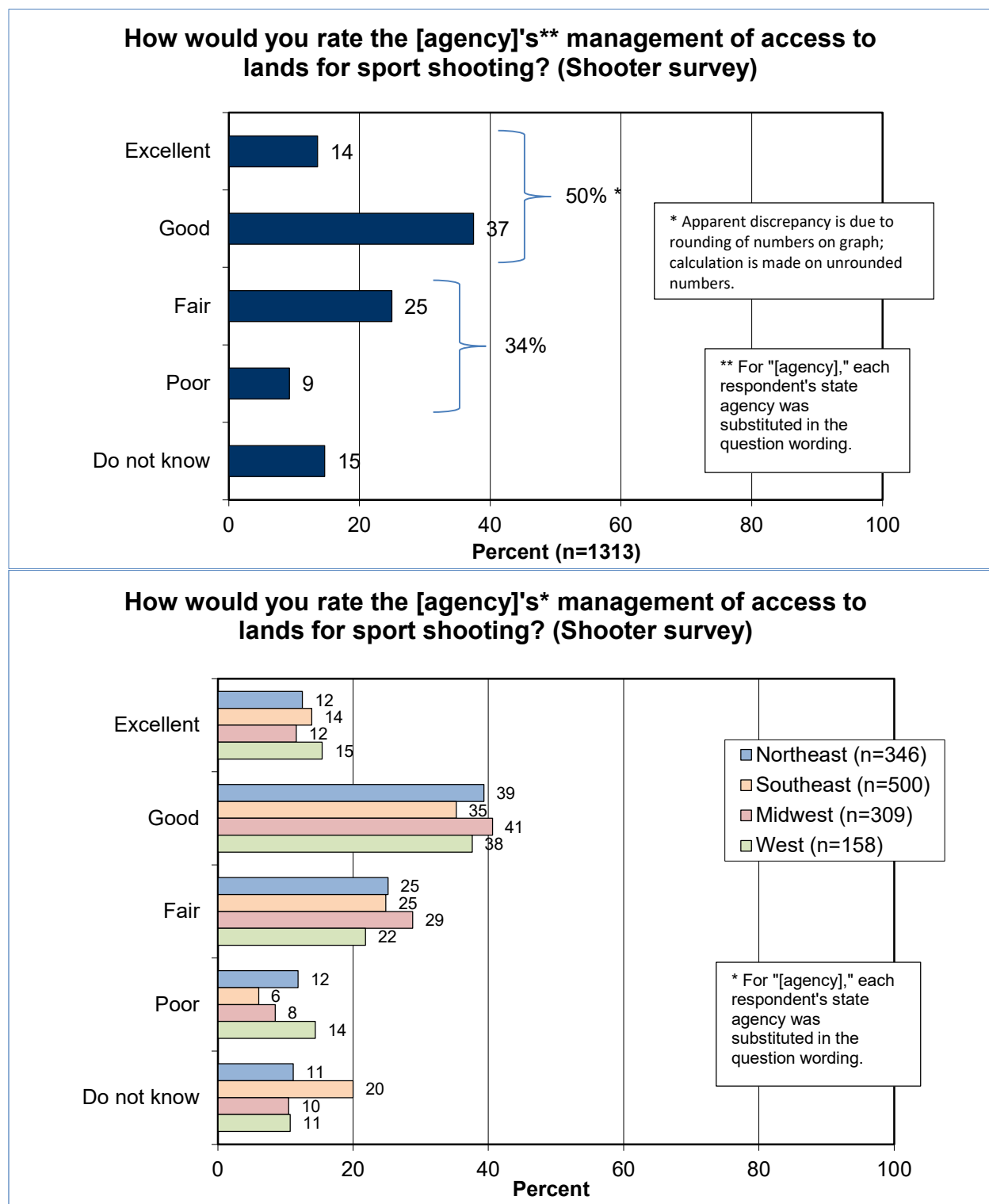


Along with those who disagree that lack of access caused them to shoot less, the groups most likely to rate access to lands for sport shooting as *excellent* or *good* include those who shoot mostly on public land, female shooters, and rural residents.



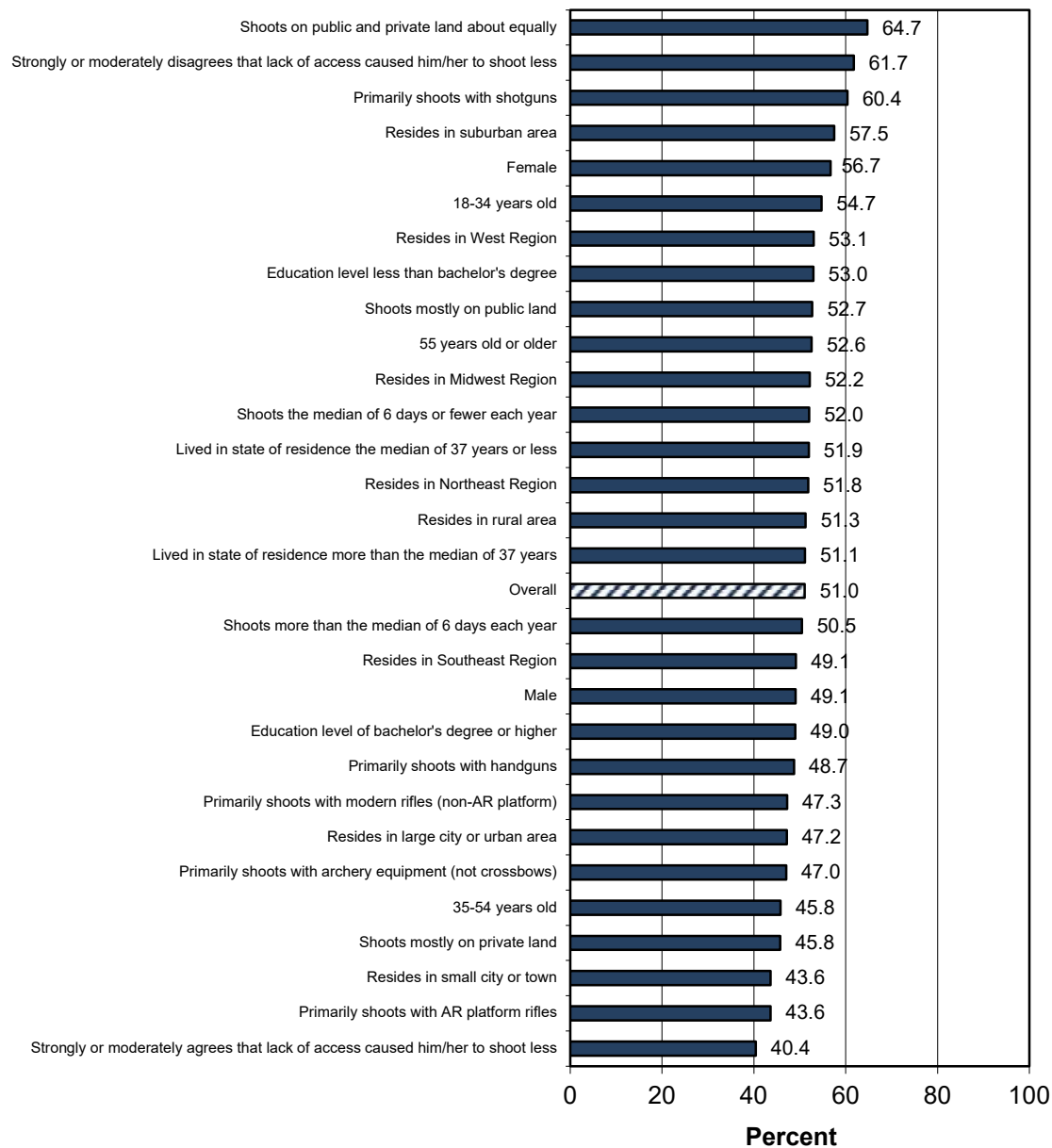
Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

Shooters give somewhat higher ratings to their state agency's management of shooting access than they do to the access in general: 50% rate the management *excellent* or *good*, compared to 34% who rate it *fair* or *poor*.



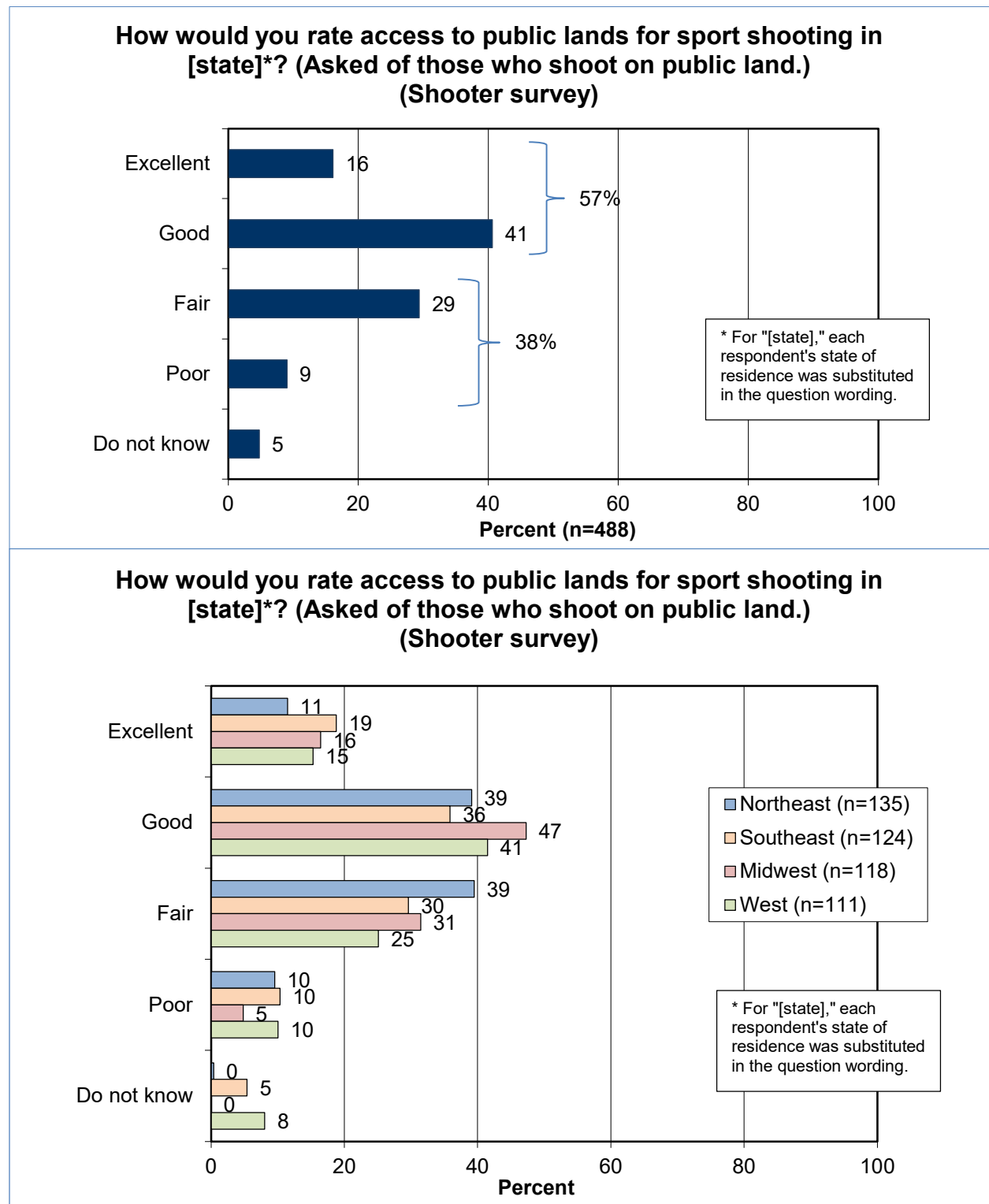
The groups most likely to rate their state agency's management of access to shooting lands as *excellent* or *good* include those who shoot on private and public land about equally, those who disagree that lack of access caused them to shoot less, those who primarily shoot with shotguns, suburban residents, and female shooters.

Percent of each of the following groups who rated their state agency's management of access to lands for sport shooting as excellent or good: (Shooter survey)

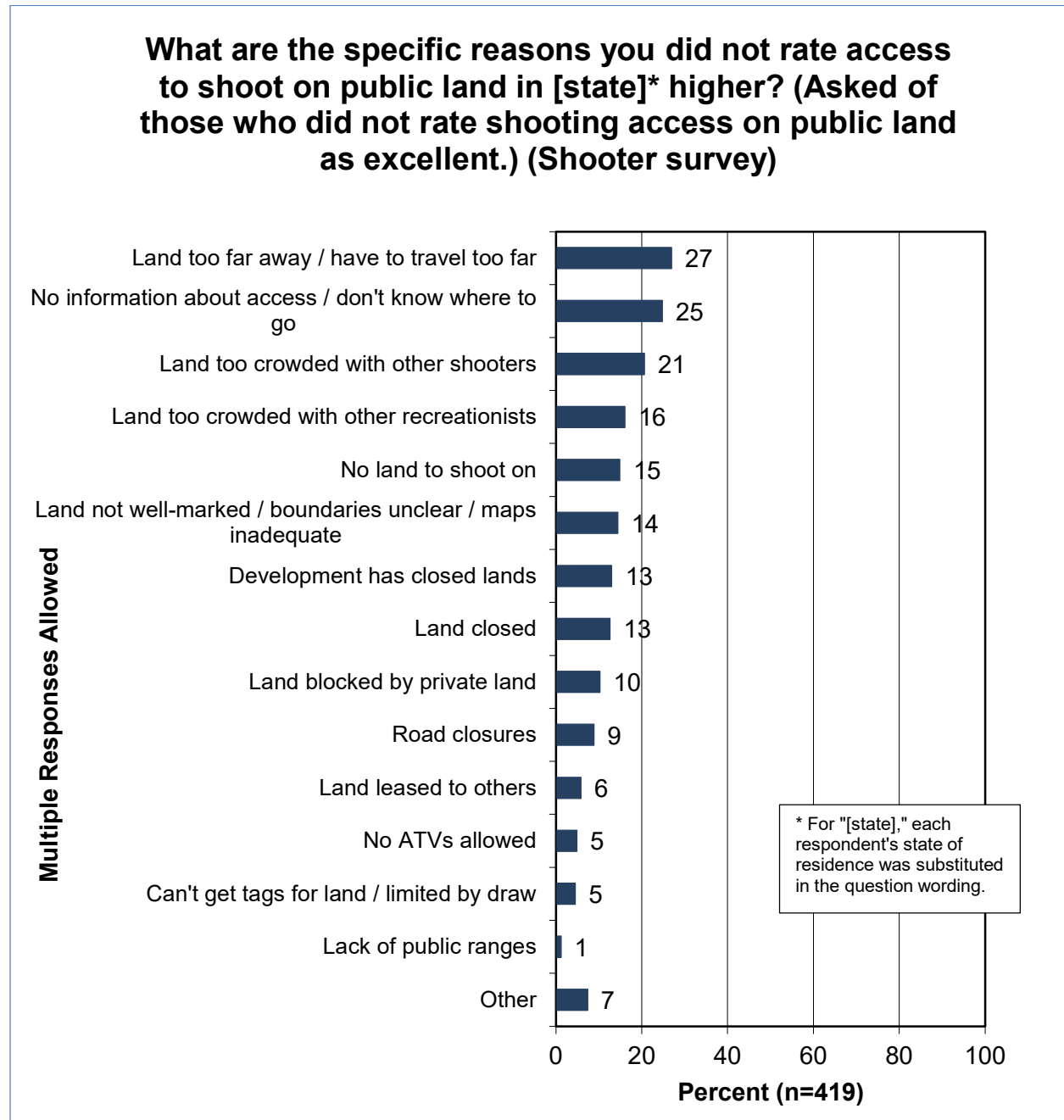


Refer to pages 9 and 10 for an explanation on interpreting demographic analyses graphs.

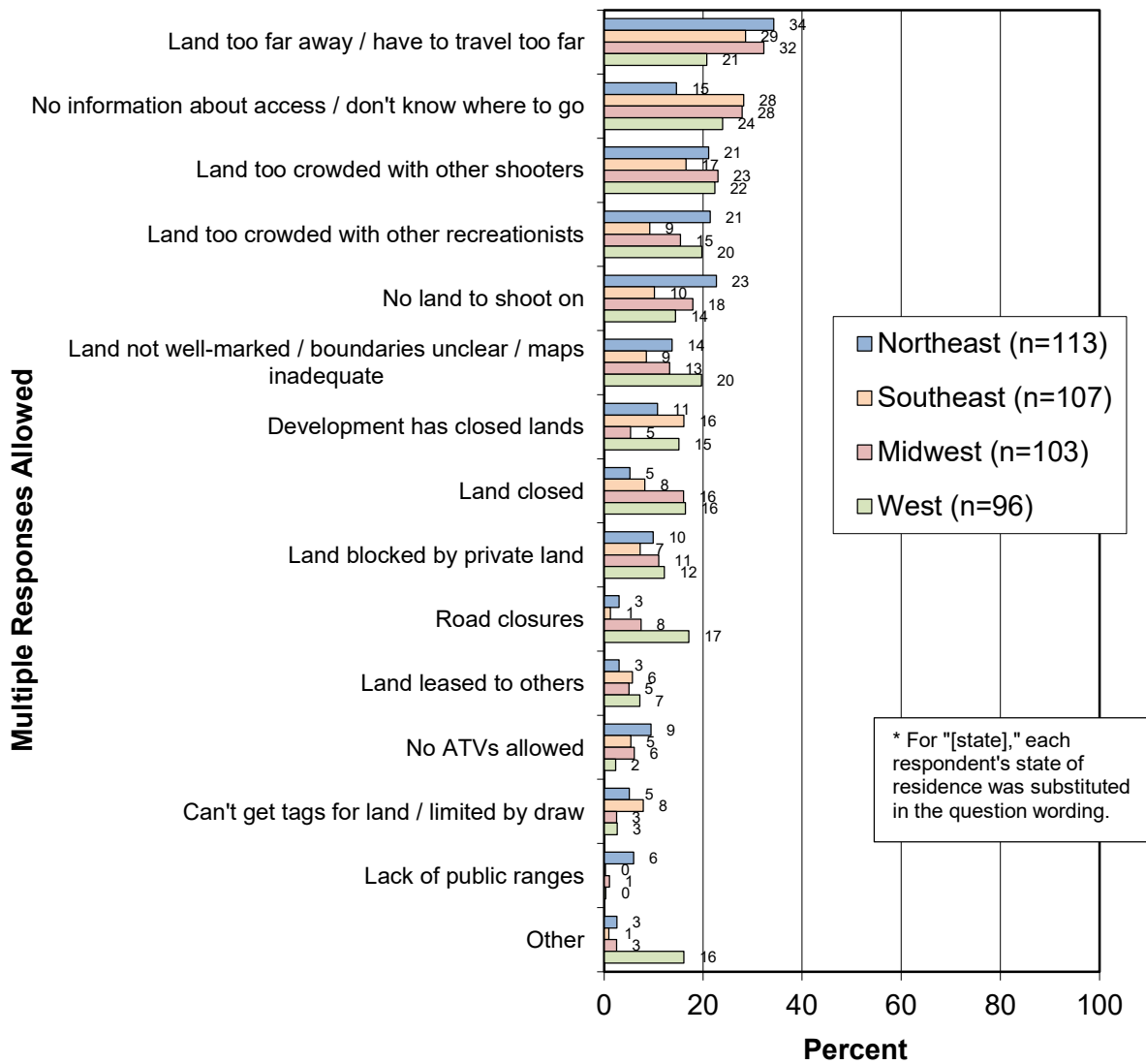
A majority of public land shooters (57%) rate access to public lands for shooting as *excellent* or *good*, compared to 38% who rate it *fair* or *poor*.



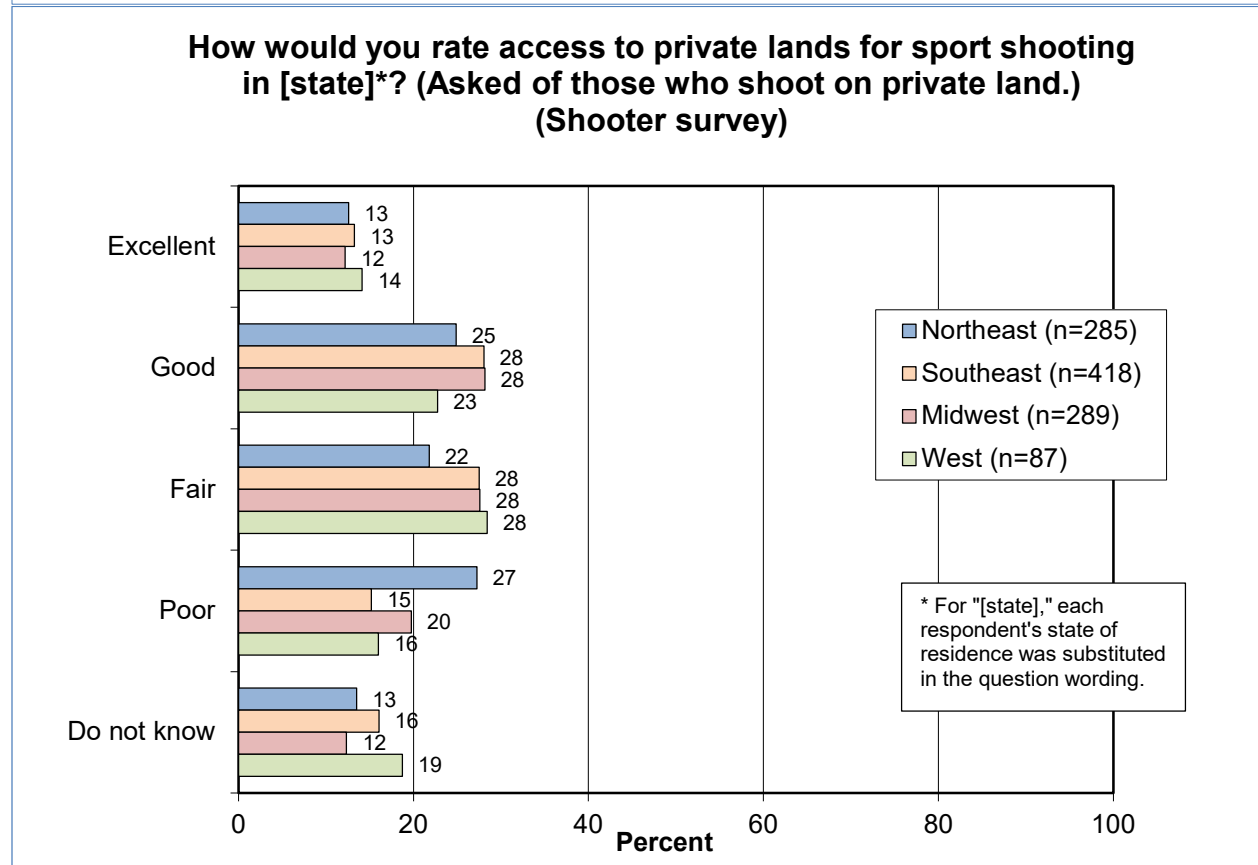
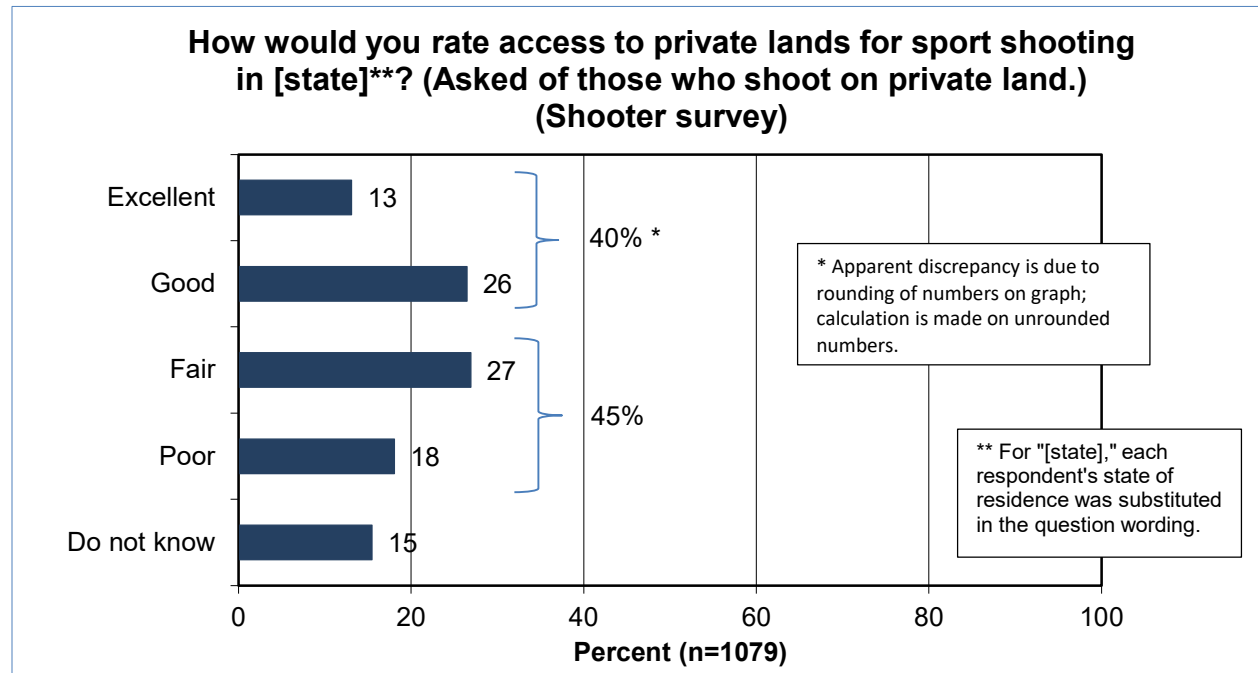
Among shooters who did not rate public shooting access as *excellent*, the top reasons given are travel distance, lack of access information, and crowding (shooters or other recreationists).



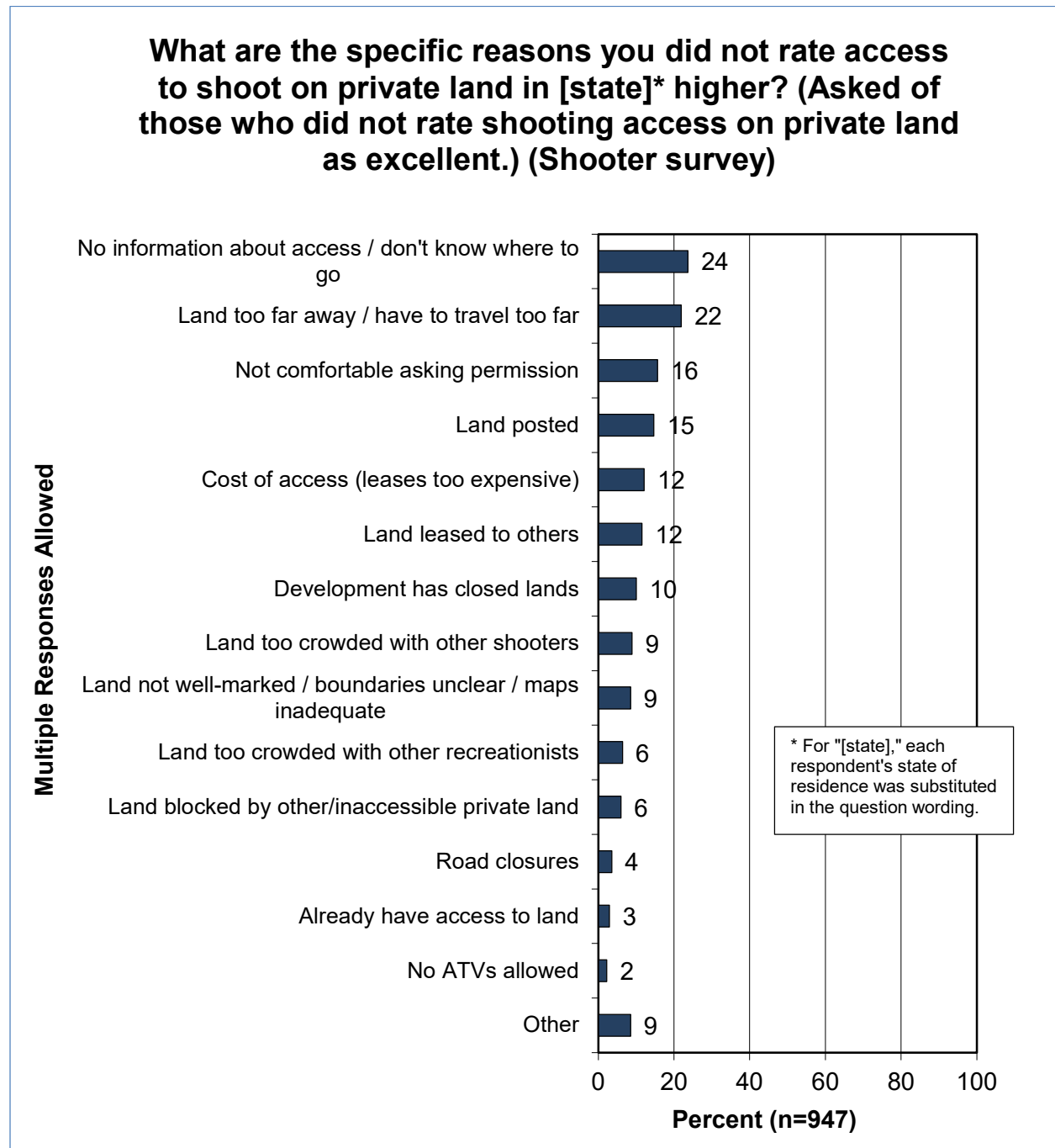
What are the specific reasons you did not rate access to shoot on public land in [state]* higher? (Asked of those who did not rate shooting access on public land as excellent.) (Shooter survey)



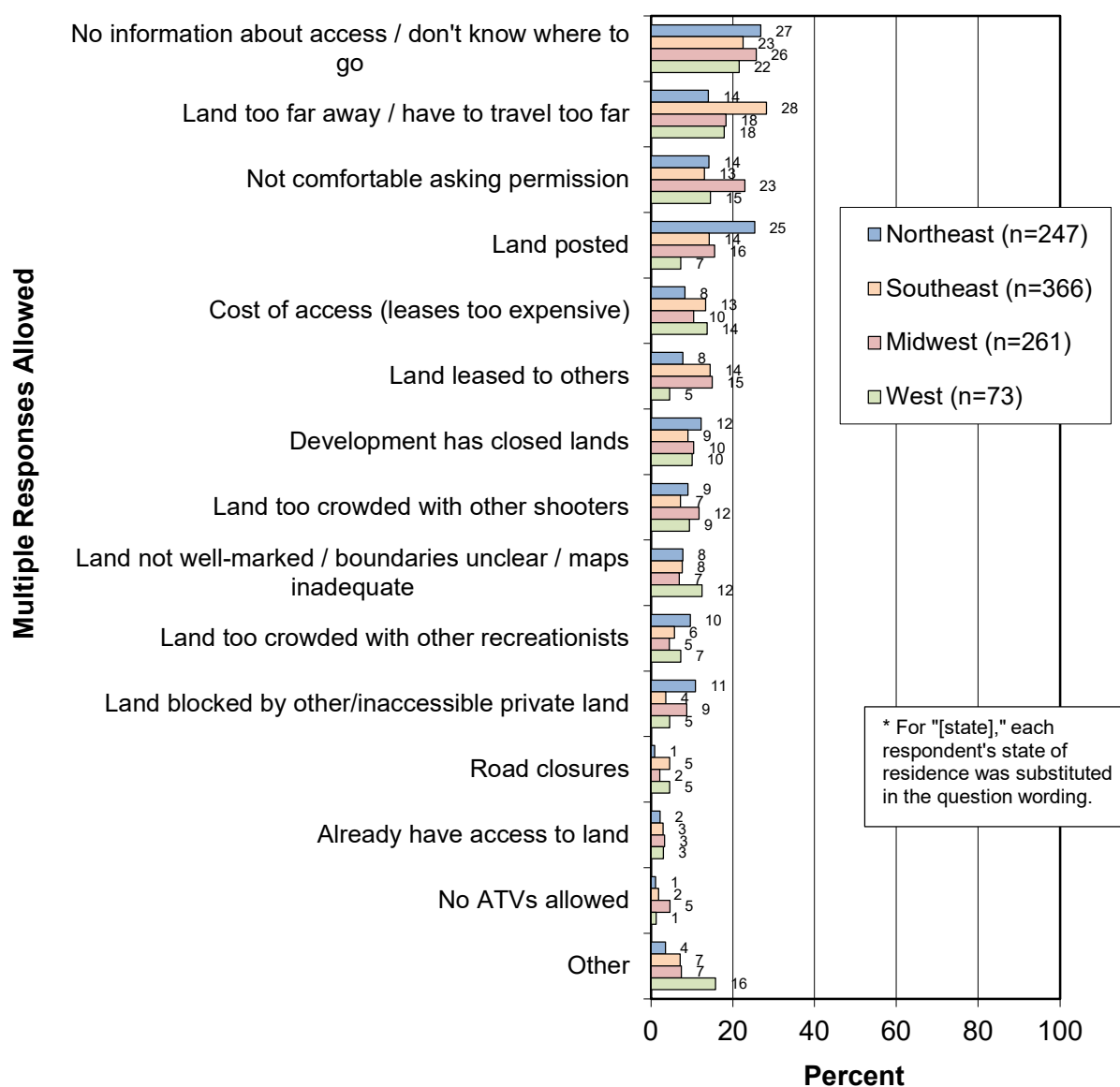
Ratings of private land access are lower than ratings for public access: 40% of private land shooters rate private access as *excellent* or *good*, while 45% rate it *fair* or *poor*.



Among those who did not rate access to shoot on private land as *excellent*, the top reasons given were the lack of access information, the travel distance, a feeling of discomfort asking permission, and that the land is posted.



What are the specific reasons you did not rate access to shoot on private land in [state]* higher? (Asked of those who did not rate shooting access on private land as excellent.) (Shooter survey)



SOURCES OF INFORMATION USED IN DECIDING WHERE TO SHOOT

MAJOR FINDINGS

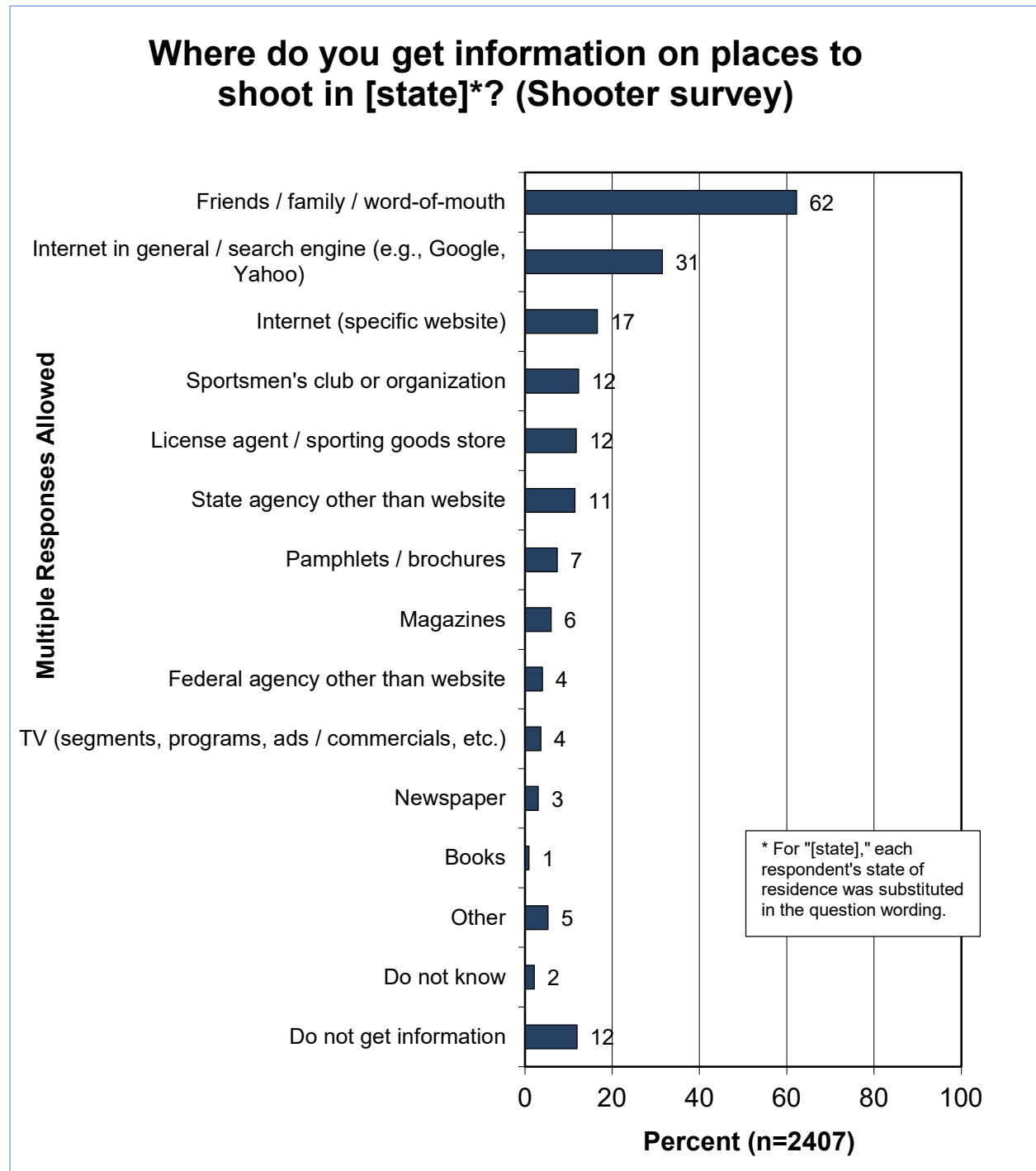
Friends, family, and word-of-mouth in general together is the top source of information on places to shoot, double the use of general internet searches. A substantial percentage use specific websites that they already know.

In this open-ended question, the large majority named friends/family/word-of-mouth (62%), followed by the internet in general (31%) and specific websites (17%).

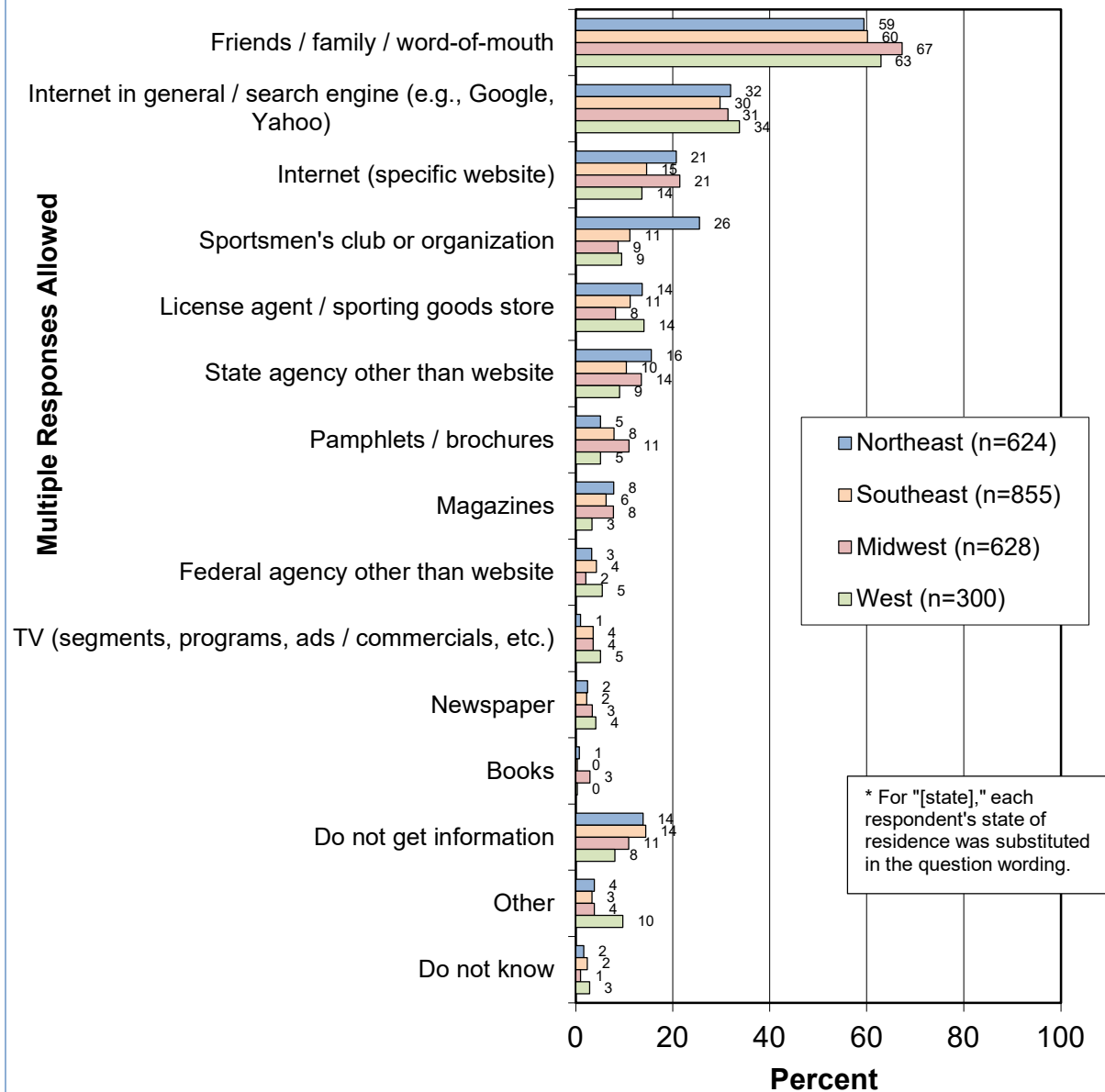
When asked directly, about a quarter of shooters had visited their state's wildlife agency website or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's website.

The list was presented to shooters: 27% had visited their state agency's website, 22% had visited the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's website, 15% had visited the U.S. Forest Service's website, and 12% had visited the Bureau of Land Management's website. Meanwhile, 46% had visited none of those websites.

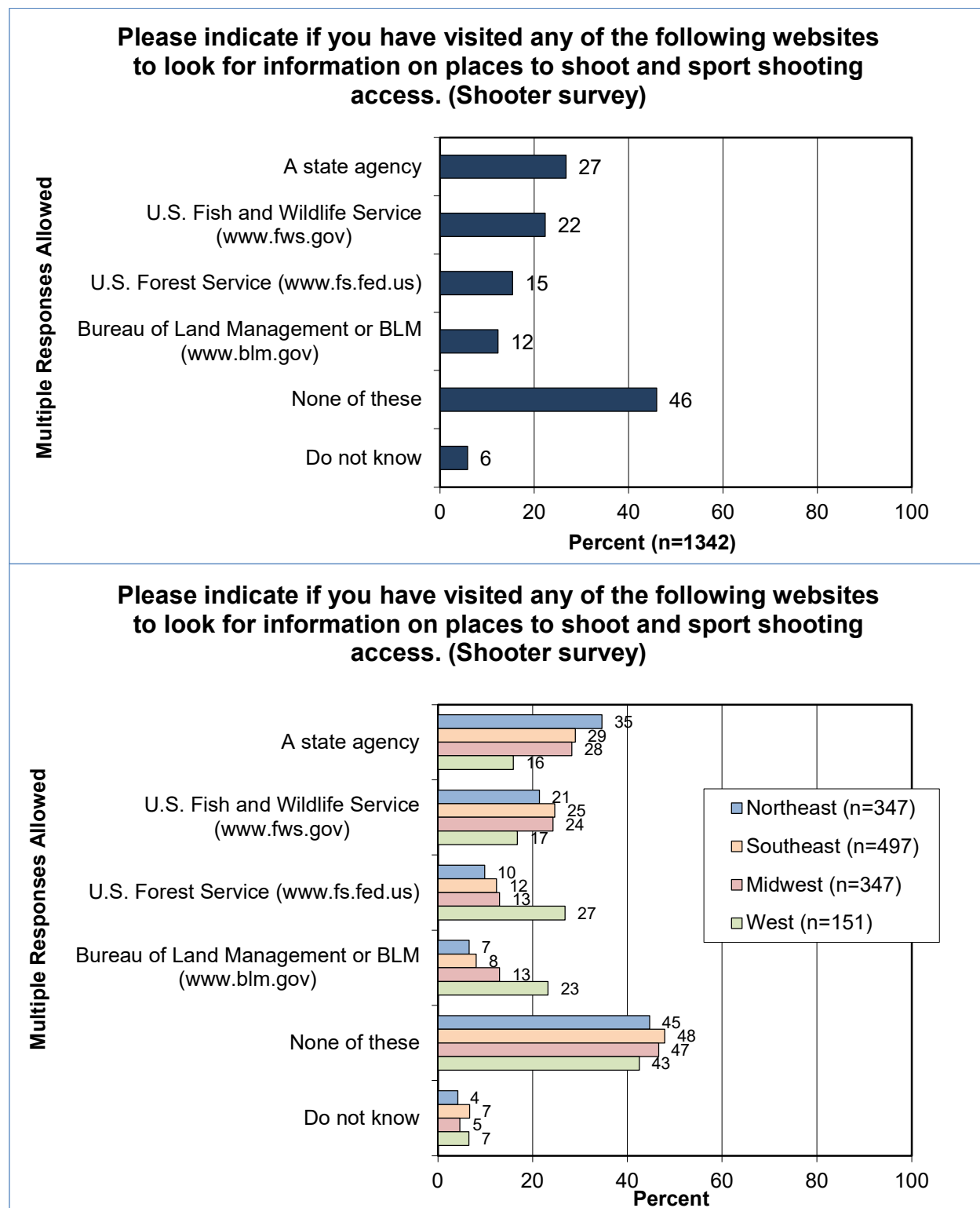
Nearly two thirds of shooters (62%) get their information on places to hunt through word-of-mouth. Other common sources of information include general internet searches (31%) and specific websites (17%).



Where do you get information on places to shoot in [state]*? (Shooter survey)



About half of shooters have used official government websites to find information on places to hunt, most commonly a state agency's site.



AWARENESS AND USE OF SHOOTING ACCESS PROGRAMS OR RESOURCES**MAJOR FINDINGS**

Shooters were asked about their awareness of various national and state programs or resources for access. Of the two national level resources, they were more aware of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's interactive map of shooting ranges than the letsgoshooting.org website.

Shooters were asked about two national resources and whatever programs were available in their state, choosing from a scale of *very aware*, *somewhat aware*, or *not at all aware*. Looking at the national resources, 40% were aware of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's interactive map of ranges (12% were *very aware*); note that the mapped ranges specifically are those supported by funding from Wildlife Restoration funds. Also, 23% were aware of the letsgoshooting.org website (5% were *very aware*).

Sport shooters were also asked about their participation in the listed programs and resources. Regarding the national resources, 10% of shooters used the interactive range map and 6% used letsgoshooting.org.

Sport shooters then rated the programs and resources (of which they were aware) for making access for shooting easier. For the national resources, the interactive range map was rated *excellent* or *good* by 58% of respondents, while letsgoshooting.org had 54% giving an *excellent* or *good* rating.

The same questions (awareness, participation, and ratings if aware) were asked of sport shooters for the programs and resources within their state of residence.

- Among the 19 participating states' programs, awareness was highest for the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) Public Shooting Ranges (42% of the state's shooters are *very aware*) and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (NJDEP's) 12 state-operated public shooting ranges (38%).
- Regarding participation rates, the NJDEP's public ranges (at 50%) and the MDC Public Shooting Ranges (43%) rank at the top again, along with Alabama Public Shooting Ranges (44%).
- The top ratings from those aware of the programs/resources are for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission-Managed Public Shooting Ranges (86% *excellent* or *good* ratings) and the Alabama Public Archery Parks (72%).

As was done in the hunter survey, the shooter survey asked about national resources pertaining to sport shooting access followed by specific questions about state programs or resources for sport shooting access. Of the two national resources, 40% were aware of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's interactive map of shooting ranges (12% were *very aware*) and 23% were aware of the letsgoshooting.org website (5% were *very aware*). In addition, awareness percentages of each state's programs and resources are shown in the tables.

The first set of tables shows sport shooters' awareness of national and state programs or resources, ranked in descending order of *very aware* percentages. The first table shows the two national resources, the second shows the top-ranked programs/resources among all the 19 participating states, and the third shows all the programs/resources within the 19 states.

Sport Shooters' Awareness of National Resources (Asked of All Shooters)

	Very aware	Somewhat aware	Not at all aware	Do not know
NATIONAL (Shooting Resources)				
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Interactive Map of Wildlife Restoration Supported Shooting Ranges	12	28	55	6
letsgoshooting.org (website) (also accessed through wheretoshoot.org)	5	18	69	7

Shooters' Awareness of State Programs or Resources (Asked of Shooters Within Their State of Residence) (Top-Ranked Programs/Resources)

	Very aware	Somewhat aware	Not at all aware	Do not know
State Shooting Programs or Resources				
MDC Public Shooting Ranges (Missouri)	42	36	20	3
NJDEP 12 state-operated shooting ranges (New Jersey)	38	36	19	7
Alabama Public Shooting Ranges	34	27	31	8
AGFC Shooting Ranges (Arkansas)	33	35	31	1
Arkansas Youth Shooting Sports Program	32	32	33	3
West Virginia Public Shooting Ranges	32	30	38	0
DNR Public Shooting Ranges (Indiana)	31	42	23	4
Arkansas National Archery in the Schools Program	27	22	49	1
Oklahoma WMA Shooting Ranges	27	35	36	2
Alabama Public Archery Parks	23	21	46	10

Shooters' Awareness of State Programs (Asked of Shooters Within Their State of Residence)

	Very aware	Somewhat aware	Not at all aware	Do not know
ALABAMA (Shooting Programs or Resources)				
Alabama Public Shooting Ranges	34	27	31	8
Alabama Public Archery Parks	23	21	46	10
ALASKA (Shooting Programs or Resources)				
Alaska State Shooting Ranges	8	70	22	0
Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) Alaska	7	15	77	1
Alaska Youth Shotgun Leagues	7	9	83	1
Alaska Mobile Shooting Clinics	2	3	93	1
ARKANSAS (Shooting Programs or Resources)				
AGFC Shooting Ranges	33	35	31	1
Arkansas Youth Shooting Sports Program	32	32	33	3
Arkansas National Archery in the Schools Program	27	22	49	1
AGFC Archery Only Ranges on WMAs	16	25	57	2
FLORIDA (Shooting Programs or Resources)				
FWC-Managed Public Shooting Ranges	15	30	43	11
INDIANA (Shooting Programs or Resources)				
DNR Public Shooting Ranges	31	42	23	4
KANSAS (Shooting Programs or Resources) (No State-Level Programs)				
MAINE (Shooting Programs or Resources)				
Maine Public Shooting Ranges	19	23	55	3
Maine 4-H Shooting Sports Program	5	33	57	5
MDIFW Shooting Range Locator Map	5	9	81	5
MASSACHUSETTS (Shooting Programs or Resources)				
Shooting Ranges in Massachusetts with public access, under the Range Grant Program https	6	43	46	5
MISSOURI (Shooting Programs or Resources)				
MDC Public Shooting Ranges	42	36	20	3
MDC Shooting Sports Basics and Education Seminars and Programs	17	48	32	3
Missouri Free Shooting Days	9	29	53	9
NEW JERSEY (Shooting Programs or Resources)				
NJDEP 12 state-operated shooting ranges	38	36	19	7
NEW YORK (Shooting Programs or Resources)				
Public Archery Range on Parcel 45 Wildlife Management Area	5	19	71	4
NORTH CAROLINA (Shooting Programs or Resources)				
North Carolina Public Shooting Ranges	14	32	52	3
OKLAHOMA (Shooting Programs or Resources)				
Oklahoma WMA Shooting Ranges	27	35	36	2
Oklahoma Scholastic Shooting Sports Program	16	32	49	3
Shotgun Training Education Program	13	31	55	2
OREGON (Shooting Programs or Resources)				
Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife EE Wilson Wildlife Area Archery and Shotgun Range	14	25	57	4
TEXAS (Shooting Programs or Resources) (No State-Level Programs)				
VERMONT (Shooting Programs or Resources)				
Hammond Cove Shooting Range Vermont Fish and Wildlife	10	10	50	30
West Mountain Shooting Range Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department	0	10	70	20
VIRGINIA (Shooting Programs or Resources)				
Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources Sighting-in Ranges	20	38	38	4
WEST VIRGINIA (Shooting Programs or Resources)				
West Virginia Public Shooting Ranges	32	30	38	0
WISCONSIN (Shooting Programs or Resources) (No State-Level Programs)				

Sport shooters' participation in the various programs or resources also was determined in the survey. Regarding the national resources, 10% of shooters used the interactive range map and 6% used letsgoshooting.org. Participation rates for the state programs and resources are also shown (top-ranked and overall for the 19 participating states).

Sport Shooters' Use of National Resources (Shown Out of All Shooters)

	Participation Rate
NATIONAL (Shooting Resources)	
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Interactive Map of Wildlife Restoration Supported Shooting Ranges	10
letsgoshooting.org (website) (also accessed through wheretoshoot.org)	6

Sport Shooters' Participation in State Programs or Resources (Shown Out of All Shooters Within Their State of Residence) (Top-Ranked Programs/Resources)

	Participation Rate
State Shooting Programs or Resources	
NJDEP 12 state-operated shooting ranges (New Jersey)	50
Alabama Public Shooting Ranges	44
MDC Public Shooting Ranges (Missouri)	43
DNR Public Shooting Ranges (Indiana)	37
West Virginia Public Shooting Ranges	32
Oklahoma WMA Shooting Ranges	29
Shooting Ranges in Massachusetts with public access, under the Range Grant Program https	25
Alaska State Shooting Ranges	24
FWC-Managed Public Shooting Ranges (Florida)	22
MDC Shooting Sports Basics and Education Seminars and Programs (Missouri)	17

Sport Shooters' Participation in State Programs or Resources (Shown Out of All Shooters Within Their State of Residence)

ALABAMA (Shooting Programs or Resources)	
Alabama Public Shooting Ranges	44
Alabama Public Archery Parks	13
ALASKA (Shooting Programs or Resources)	
Alaska State Shooting Ranges	24
Alaska Youth Shotgun Leagues	7
Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) Alaska	1
Alaska Mobile Shooting Clinics	1
ARKANSAS (Shooting Programs or Resources)	
AGFC Shooting Ranges	15
Arkansas Youth Shooting Sports Program	7
AGFC Archery Only Ranges on WMAs	6
Arkansas National Archery in the Schools Program	3
FLORIDA (Shooting Programs or Resources)	
FWC-Managed Public Shooting Ranges	22
INDIANA (Shooting Programs or Resources)	
DNR Public Shooting Ranges	37
KANSAS (Shooting Programs or Resources) (No State-Level Programs)	
MAINE (Shooting Programs or Resources)	
Maine Public Shooting Ranges	14
MDIFW Shooting Range Locator Map	3
Maine 4-H Shooting Sports Program	2
MASSACHUSETTS (Shooting Programs or Resources)	
Shooting Ranges in Massachusetts with public access, under the Range Grant Program https://www.mass.gov/info-details/range-grant-program	25
MISSOURI (Shooting Programs or Resources)	
MDC Public Shooting Ranges	43
MDC Shooting Sports Basics and Education Seminars and Programs	17
Missouri Free Shooting Days	9
NEW JERSEY (Shooting Programs or Resources)	
NJDEP 12 state-operated shooting ranges	50
NEW YORK (Shooting Programs or Resources)	
Public Archery Range on Parcel 45 Wildlife Management Area	5
NORTH CAROLINA (Shooting Programs or Resources)	
North Carolina Public Shooting Ranges	11
OKLAHOMA (Shooting Programs or Resources)	
Oklahoma WMA Shooting Ranges	29
Shotgun Training Education Program	5
Oklahoma Scholastic Shooting Sports Program	3
OREGON (Shooting Programs or Resources)	
Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife EE Wilson Wildlife Area Archery and Shotgun Range	12
TEXAS (Shooting Programs or Resources) (No State-Level Programs)	
VERMONT (Shooting Programs or Resources)	
Hammond Cove Shooting Range Vermont Fish and Wildlife	10
West Mountain Shooting Range Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department	0
VIRGINIA (Shooting Programs or Resources)	
Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources Sighting-in Ranges	17
WEST VIRGINIA (Shooting Programs or Resources)	
West Virginia Public Shooting Ranges	32
WISCONSIN (Shooting Programs or Resources) (No State-Level Programs)	

Shooters rated the programs and resources of which they were aware for making access for sport shooting easier, using an excellent-good-fair-poor scale. For the national resources, the interactive range map was rated *excellent* or *good* by 58% of respondents, while letsgoshooting.org had 54% giving an *excellent* or *good* rating. Ratings for the state shooting programs and resources are also shown (top-ranked and all programs among the 19 participating states).

Sport Shooters' Ratings of National Shooting Access Resources (Asked of Those Aware of the Resources)

Resources Rated (Rating for making access to land for sport shooting easier.)	Excellent	Good	Excellent or good combined*	Fair	Poor	Fair or poor combined*	Do not know / Does not apply
NATIONAL (Shooting Resources)							
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Interactive Map of Wildlife Restoration Supported Shooting Ranges	19	39	58	14	3	17	25
letsgoshooting.org (website) (also accessed through wheretoshoot.org)	18	36	54	18	3	20	26

*Summed on unrounded numbers (table values are shown as integers).

Sport Shooters' Ratings of State Shooting Access Programs or Resources (Asked of Those Aware of the Programs/Resources in Their State of Residence) (Top-Ranked Programs)

Programs or Resources Rated (Rating for making access to land for sport shooting easier.)	Excellent	Good	Excellent or good combined*	Fair	Poor	Fair or poor combined*	Do not know / Does not apply
State Shooting Programs or Resources							
Hammond Cove Shooting Range Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department (n=2 respondents)	100	0	100	0	0	0	0
West Mountain Shooting Range Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department (n=1 respondent)	100	0	100	0	0	0	0
FWC-Managed Public Shooting Ranges (Florida)	28	58	86	8	0	8	6
Alabama Public Archery Parks	16	56	72	6	1	7	20
Alabama Public Shooting Ranges	25	45	70	18	2	20	10
Shooting Ranges in Massachusetts with public access, under the Range Grant Program	9	61	70	17	0	17	13
MDC Public Shooting Ranges (Missouri)	31	39	70	17	1	18	12
MDC Shooting Sports Basics and Education Seminars and Programs (Missouri)	25	40	66	11	6	17	18
NJDEP 12 state-operated shooting ranges (New Jersey)	38	28	66	22	3	25	9
Arkansas National Archery in the Schools Program	54	10	64	6	0	6	30

*Summed on unrounded numbers (table values are shown as integers).

Sport Shooters' Ratings of State Shooting Access Programs or Resources (Asked of Those Aware of the Programs/Resources in Their State of Residence)

Programs or Resources Rated (Rating for making access to land for sport shooting easier.)	Excellent	Good	Excellent or good combined*	Fair	Poor	Fair or poor combined*	Do not know / Does not apply
ALABAMA (Shooting Programs or Resources)							
Alabama Public Archery Parks	16	56	72	6	1	7	20
Alabama Public Shooting Ranges	25	45	70	18	2	20	10
ALASKA (Shooting Programs or Resources)							
Alaska Mobile Shooting Clinics	0	60	60	20	0	20	20
Alaska Youth Shotgun Leagues	36	14	50	21	0	21	29
Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) Alaska	16	27	43	47	0	47	11
Alaska State Shooting Ranges	4	22	27	29	0	29	44
ARKANSAS (Shooting Programs or Resources)							
Arkansas National Archery in the Schools Program	54	10	64	6	0	6	30
Arkansas Youth Shooting Sports Program	46	14	60	5	0	5	36
AGFC Shooting Ranges	22	34	56	10	2	12	32
AGFC Archery Only Ranges on WMAs	32	20	52	13	0	13	36
FLORIDA (Shooting Programs or Resources)							
FWC-Managed Public Shooting Ranges	28	58	86	8	0	8	6
INDIANA (Shooting Programs or Resources)							
DNR Public Shooting Ranges	21	34	55	11	7	18	27
KANSAS (Shooting Programs or Resources) (No State-Level Programs)							
MAINE (Shooting Programs or Resources)							
Maine 4-H Shooting Sports Program	32	27	59	2	2	4	38
Maine Public Shooting Ranges	31	28	58	10	2	12	29
MDIFW Shooting Range Locator Map	26	21	47	11	0	11	42
MASSACHUSETTS (Shooting Programs or Resources)							
Shooting Ranges in Massachusetts with public access, under the Range Grant Program	9	61	70	17	0	17	13
MISSOURI (Shooting Programs or Resources)							
MDC Public Shooting Ranges	31	39	70	17	1	18	12
MDC Shooting Sports Basics and Education Seminars and Programs	25	40	66	11	6	17	18
Missouri Free Shooting Days	17	27	44	22	4	26	29
NEW JERSEY (Shooting Programs or Resources)							
NJDEP 12 state-operated shooting ranges	38	28	66	22	3	25	9
NEW YORK (Shooting Programs or Resources)							
Public Archery Range on Parcel 45 Wildlife Management Area	19	36	54	3	34	37	9

*Summed on unrounded numbers (table values are shown as integers).

Sport Shooters' Ratings of State Shooting Access Programs or Resources (Asked of Those Aware of the Programs/Resources in Their State of Residence) (Continued)

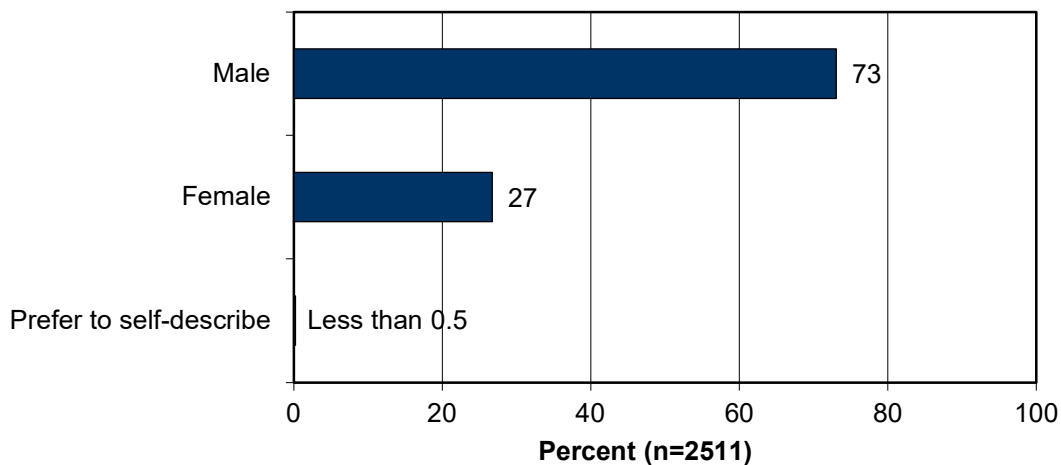
Programs or Resources Rated (Rating for making access to land for sport shooting easier.)	Excellent	Good	Excellent or good combined*	Fair	Poor	Fair or poor combined*	Do not know / Does not apply
NORTH CAROLINA (Shooting Programs or Resources)							
North Carolina Public Shooting Ranges	21	25	46	17	6	23	31
OKLAHOMA (Shooting Programs or Resources)							
Oklahoma Scholastic Shooting Sports Program	23	40	62	19	2	20	17
Shotgun Training Education Program	21	38	60	19	2	21	19
Oklahoma WMA Shooting Ranges	28	31	59	24	0	24	17
OREGON (Shooting Programs or Resources)							
Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife EE Wilson Wildlife Area Archery and Shotgun Range	21	19	40	16	2	18	42
TEXAS (Shooting Programs or Resources) (No State-Level Programs)							
VERMONT (Shooting Programs or Resources)							
Hammond Cove Shooting Range Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department	100	0	100	0	0	0	0
West Mountain Shooting Range Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department	100	0	100	0	0	0	0
VIRGINIA (Shooting Programs or Resources)							
Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources Sighting-in Ranges	19	44	64	6	6	12	24
WEST VIRGINIA (Shooting Programs or Resources)							
West Virginia Public Shooting Ranges	24	40	63	22	3	26	11
WISCONSIN (Shooting Programs or Resources) (No State-Level Programs)							

*Summed on unrounded numbers (table values are shown as integers).

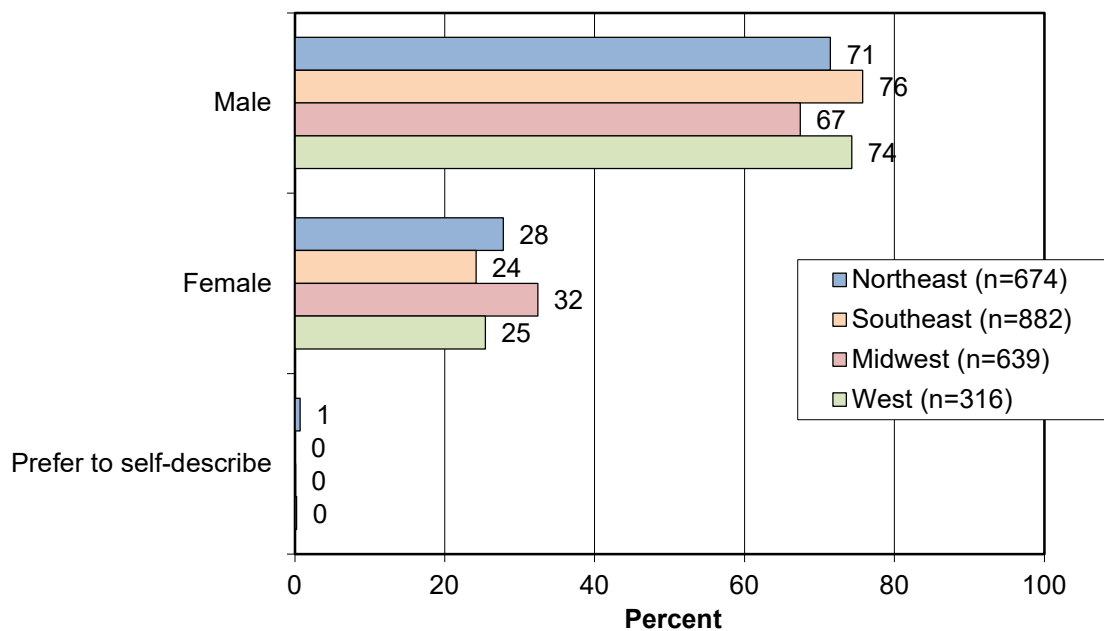
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SPORT SHOOTERS

Demographic information is obtained primarily for crosstabulations and further analyses. They are also gathered to ensure that the samples of shooters are representative of shooters in the real world. The survey collected data on gender, age, education, residential area (i.e., on the urban-rural continuum), the state of residency (not shown here but used to establish the regions), and the years of residency in that state.

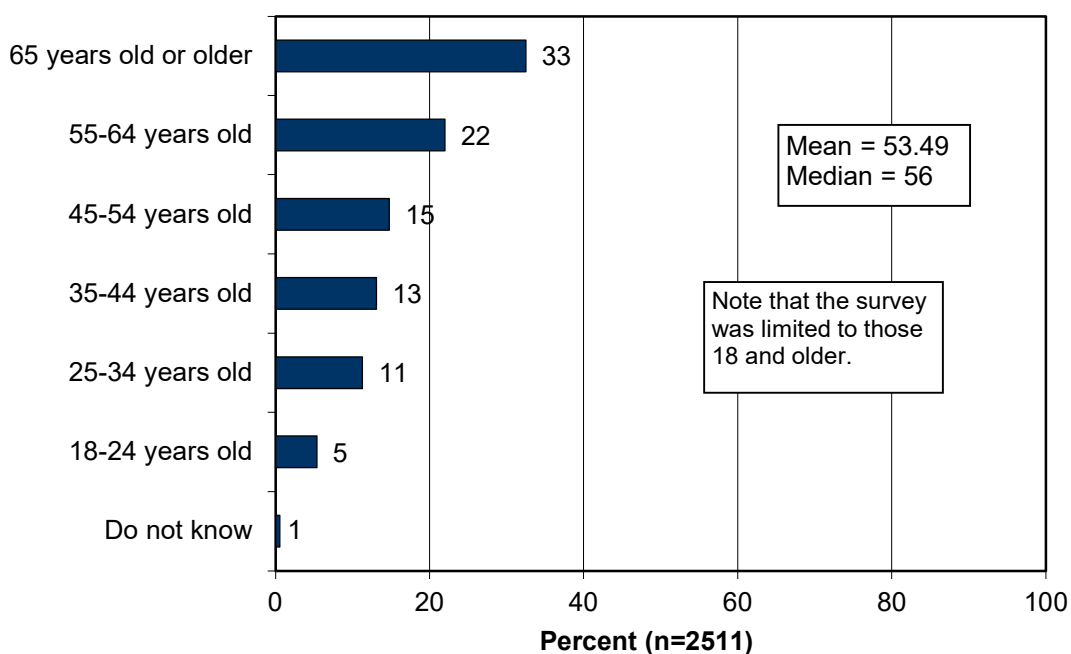
Are you...? (Gender question is in the online survey; observed but not asked in the telephone survey.) (Shooter survey)



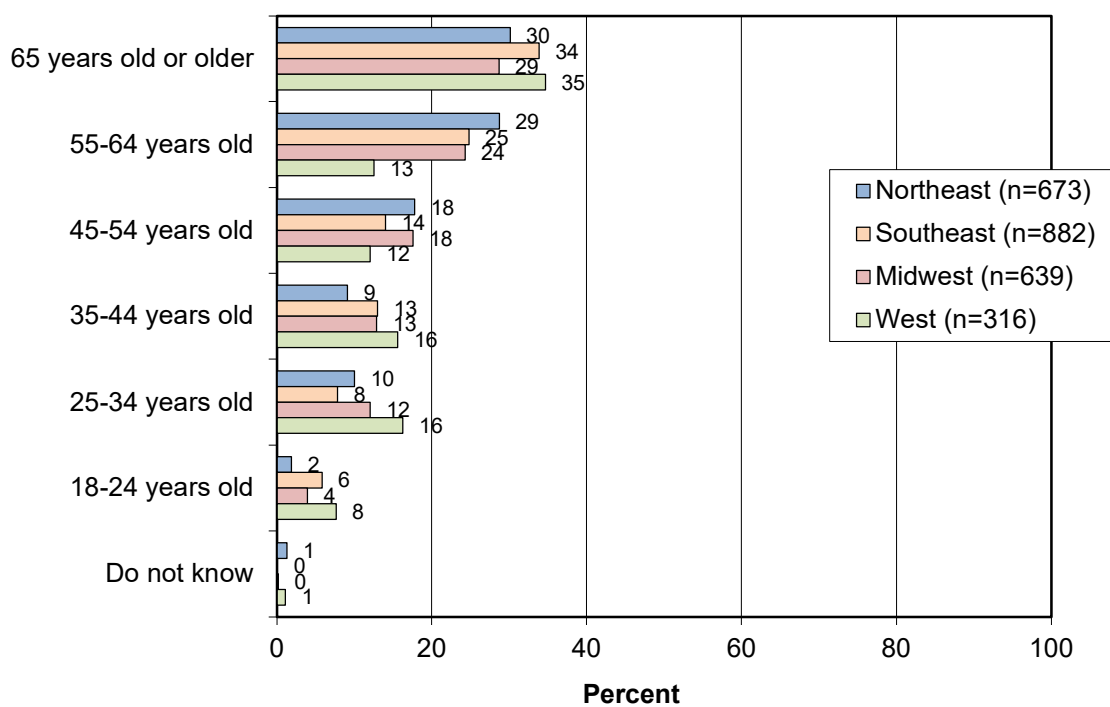
Are you...? (Gender question is in online survey; observed but not asked in telephone survey.) (Shooter survey)



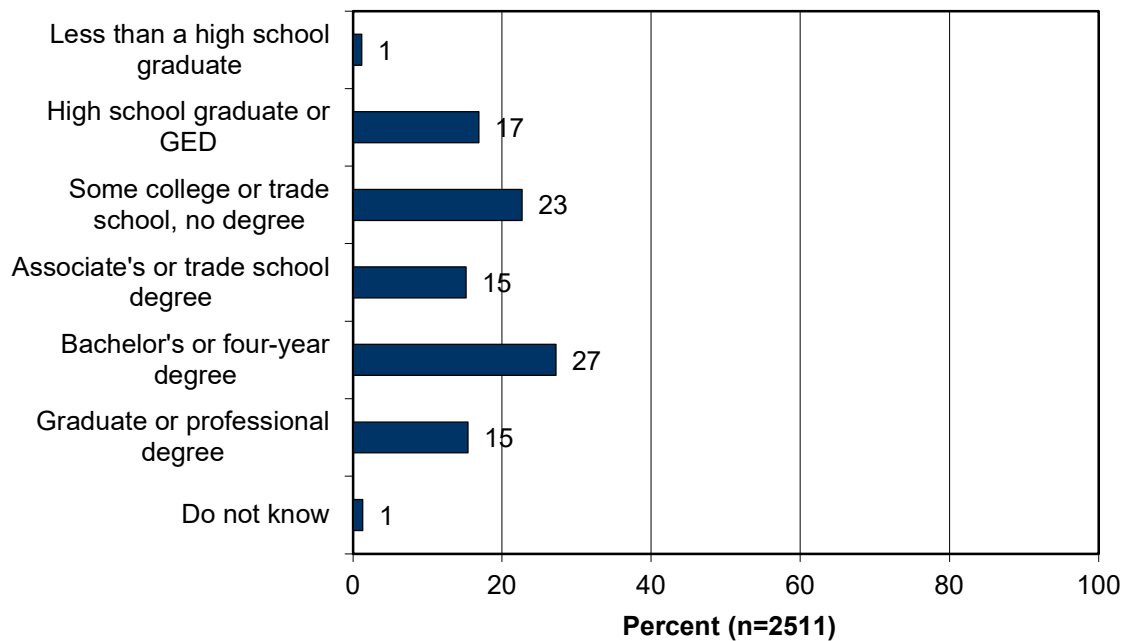
May I ask your age? (Shooter survey)



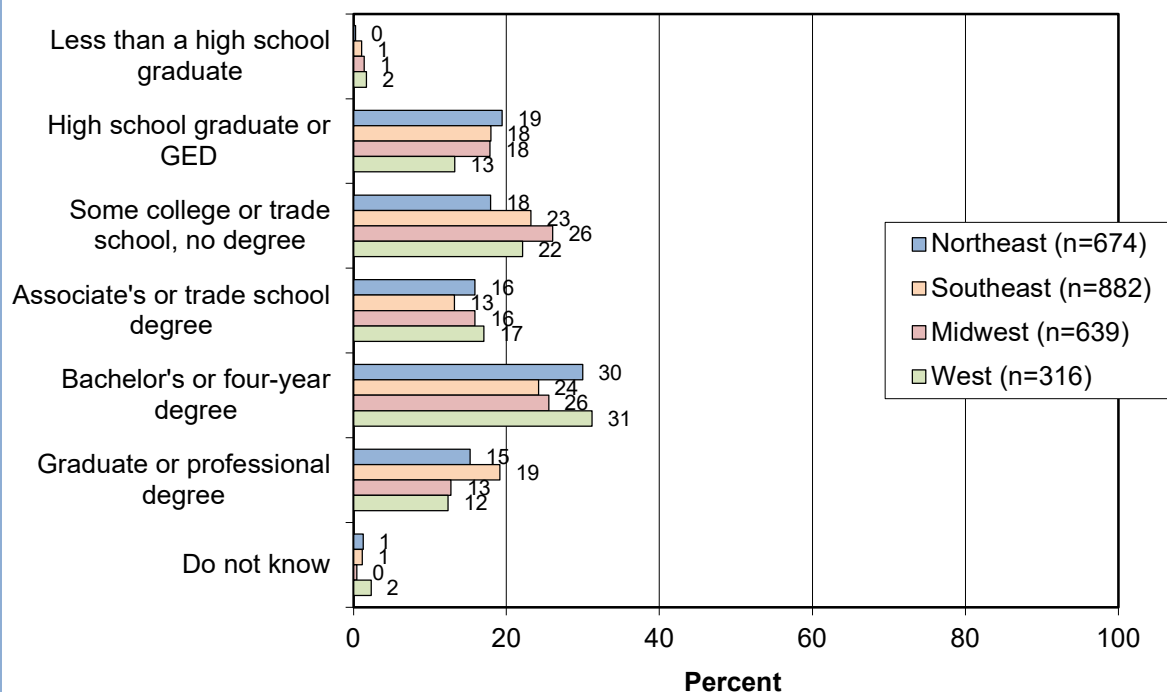
May I ask your age? (Shooter survey)



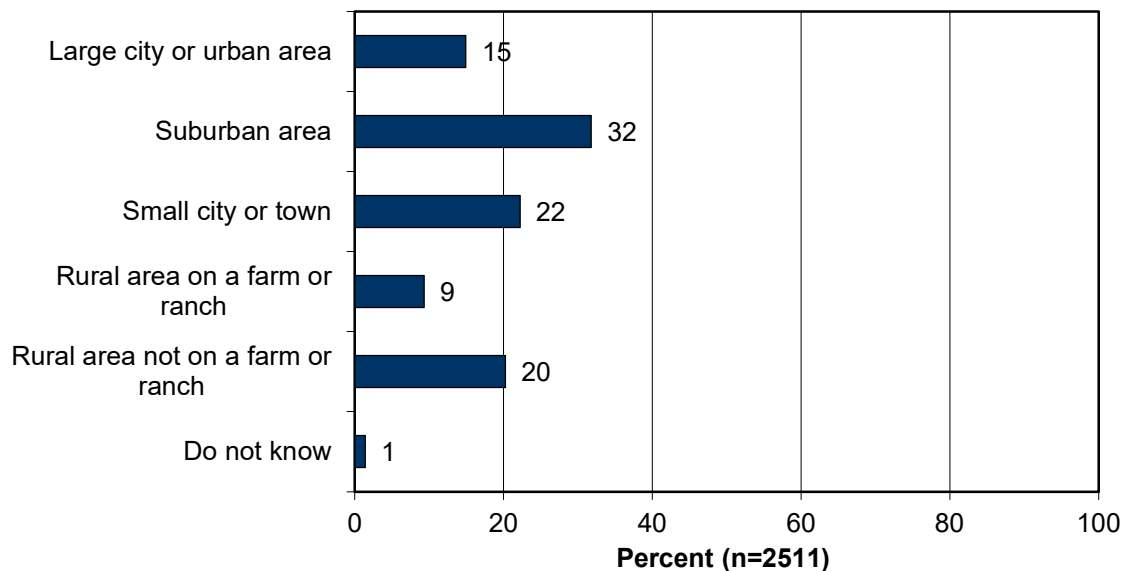
Which of the following statements best describes the highest level of formal education you have completed? (Shooter survey)



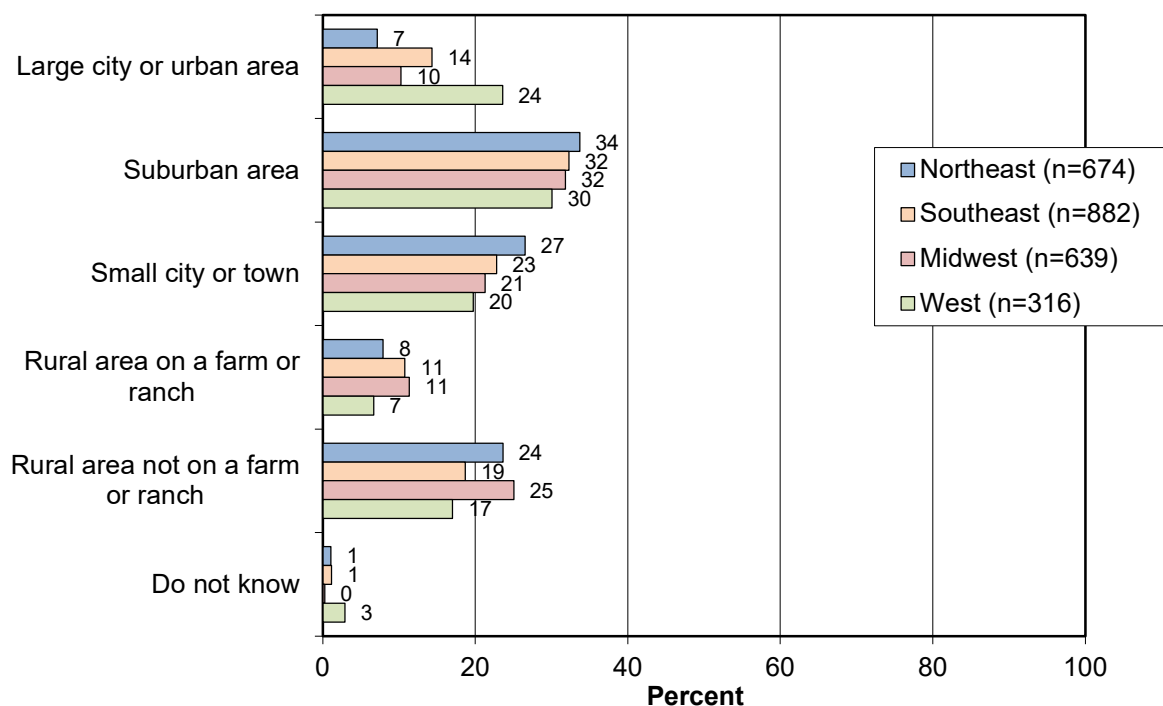
Which of the following statements best describes the highest level of formal education you have completed? (Shooter survey)



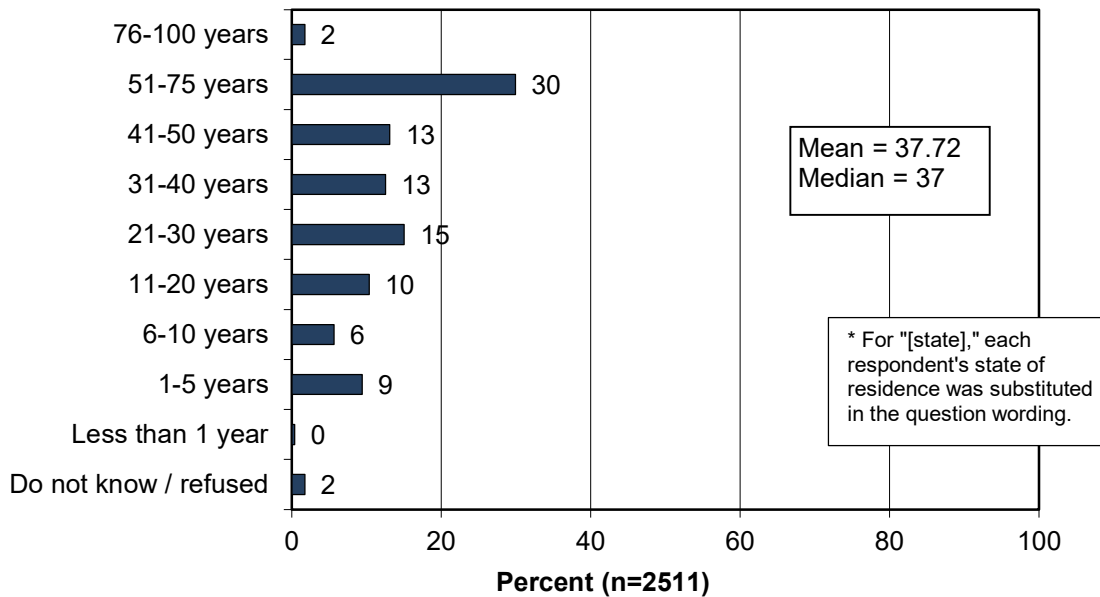
**Which of the following best describes where you currently live?
(Shooter survey)**



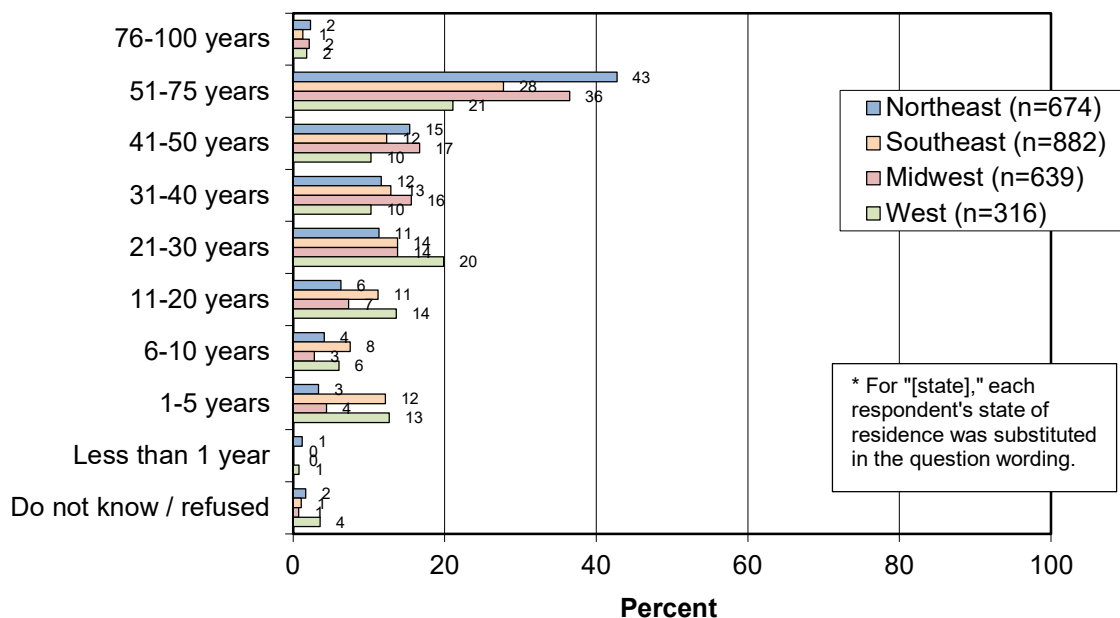
**Which of the following best describes where you currently live?
(Shooter survey)**



How many years have you been a resident of [state]*? (Shooter survey)

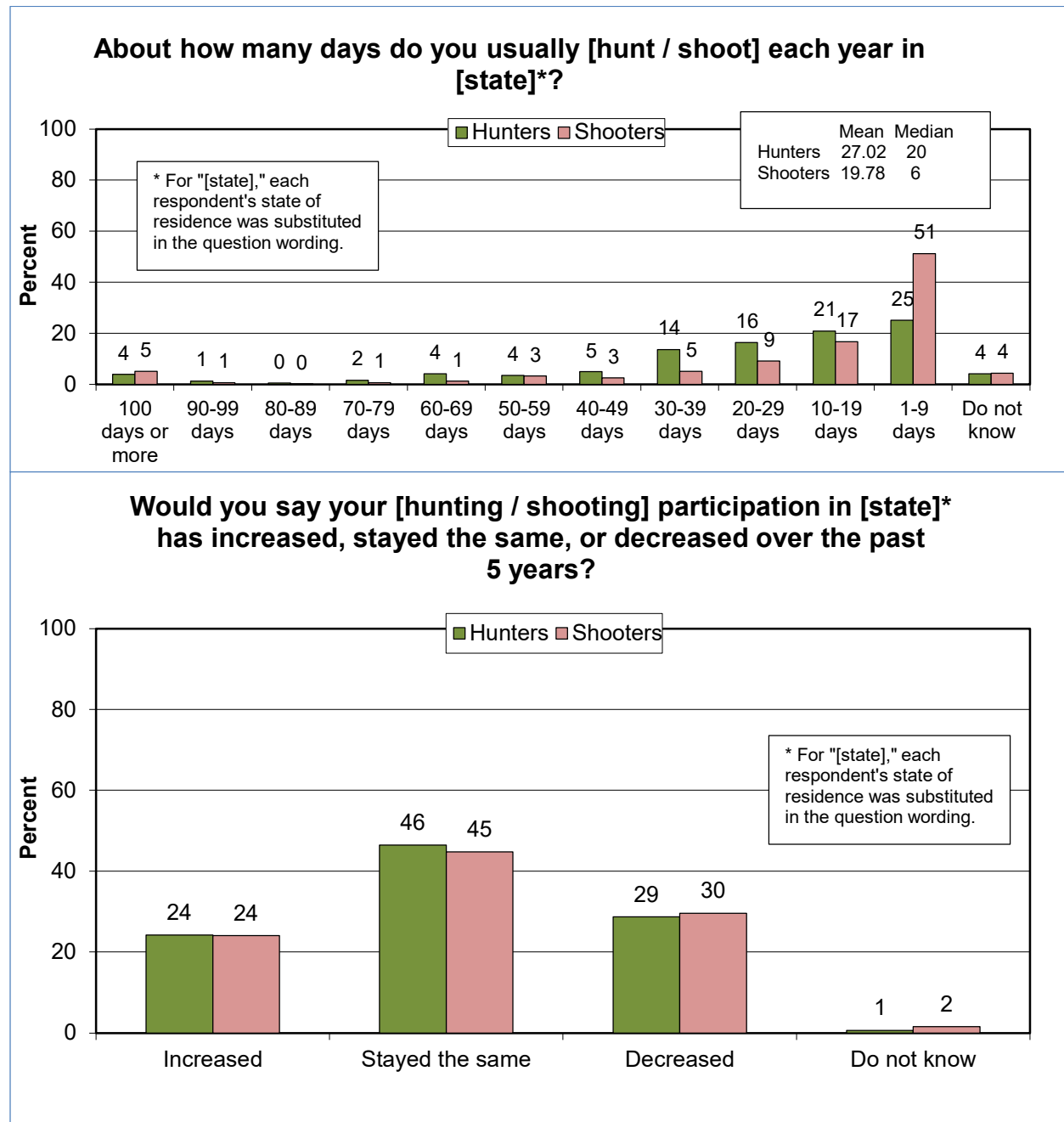


How many years have you been a resident of [state]*? (Shooter survey)

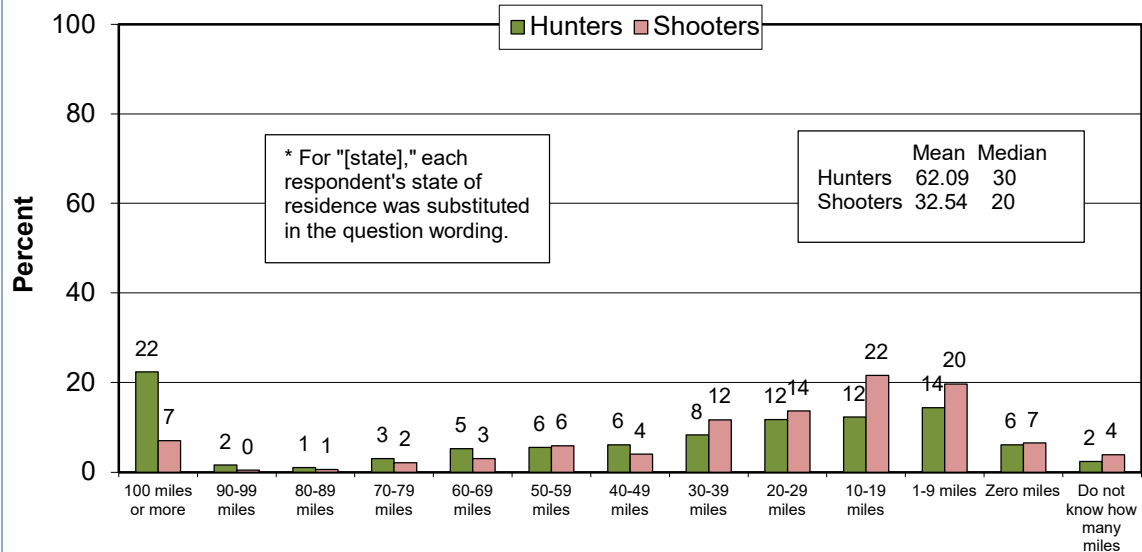


COMPARISONS OF HUNTER AND SHOOTER RESPONSES

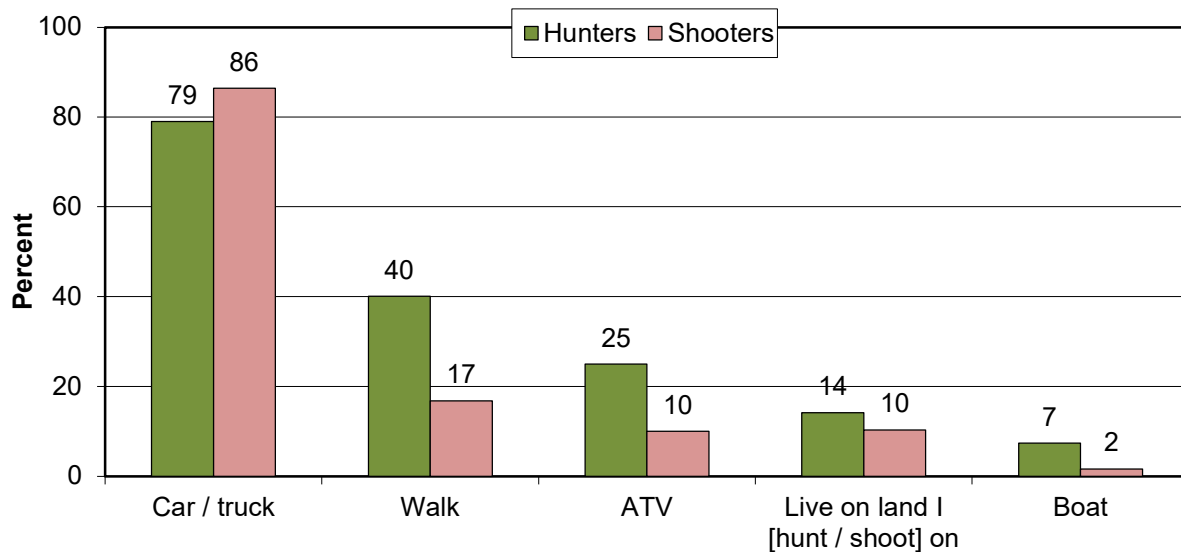
The survey questionnaires for hunters and sport shooters are largely identical (with slightly different wording tailored to the activity), so this chapter presents the results of the hunter and shooter surveys side-by-side for comparison.



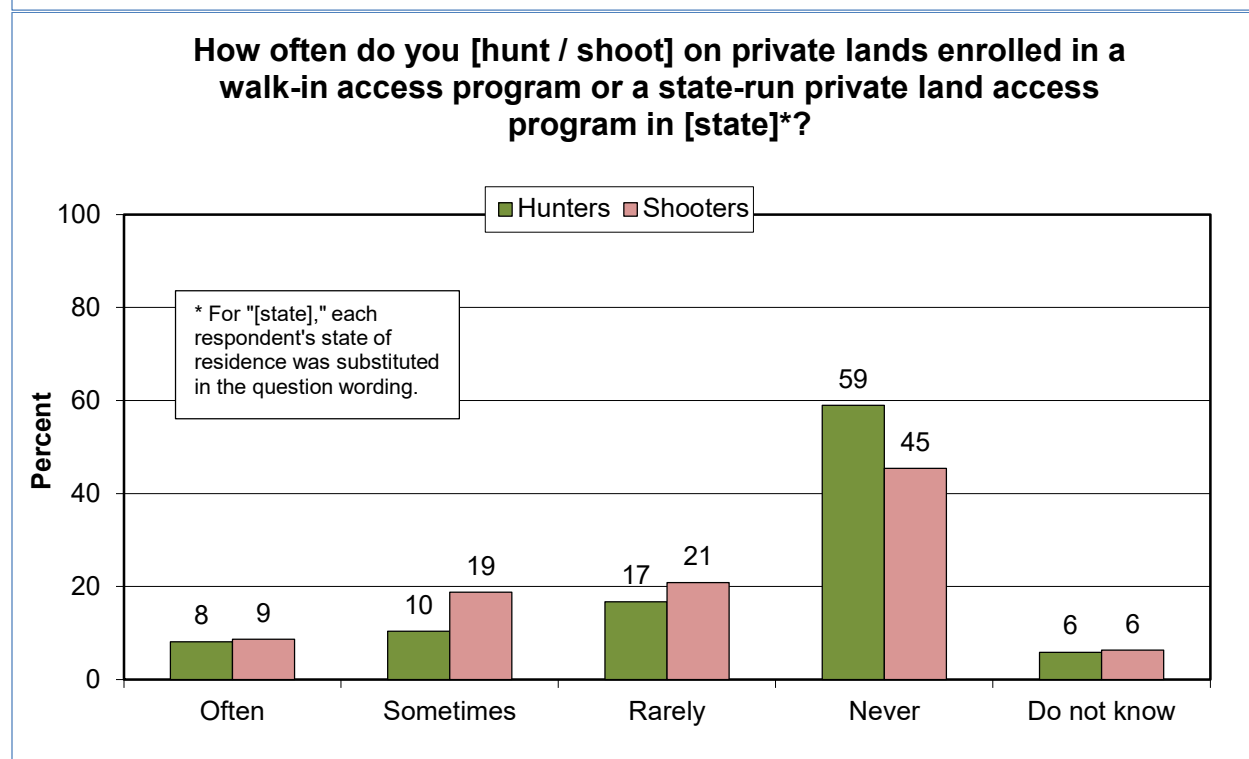
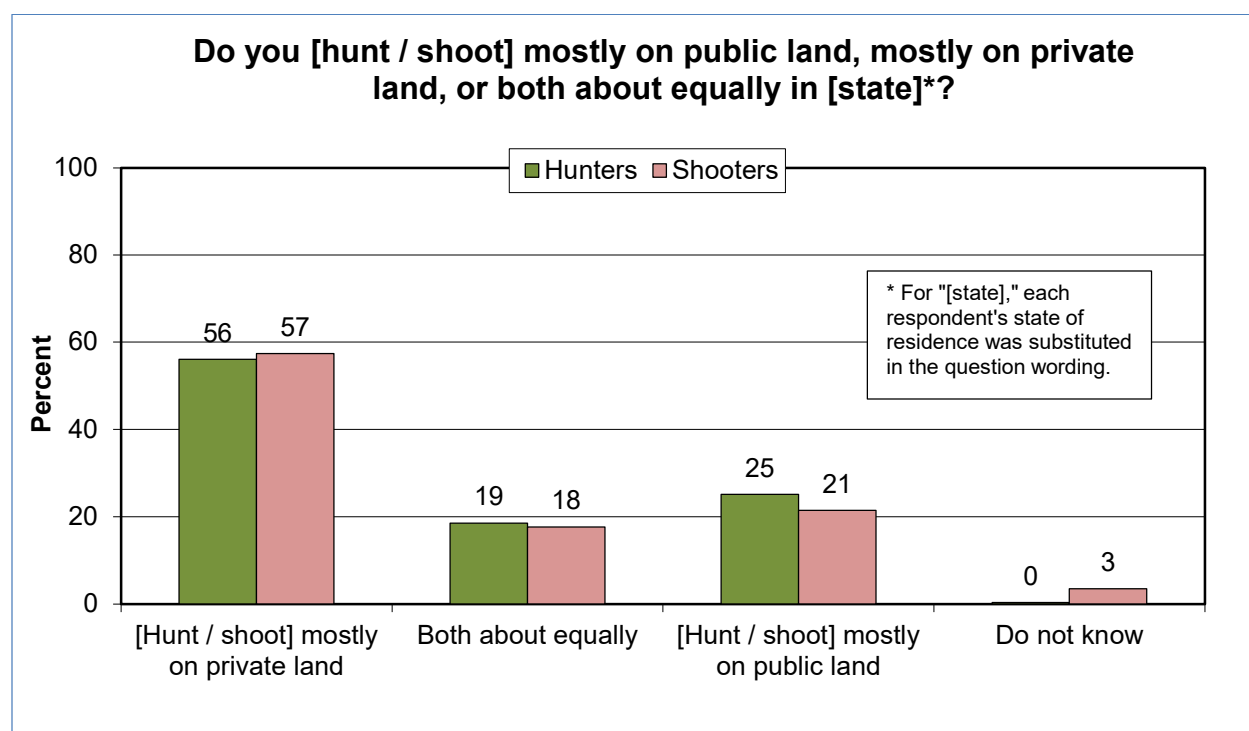
How far do you usually travel from home, one way, in miles, to [hunt / shoot] in [state]*?



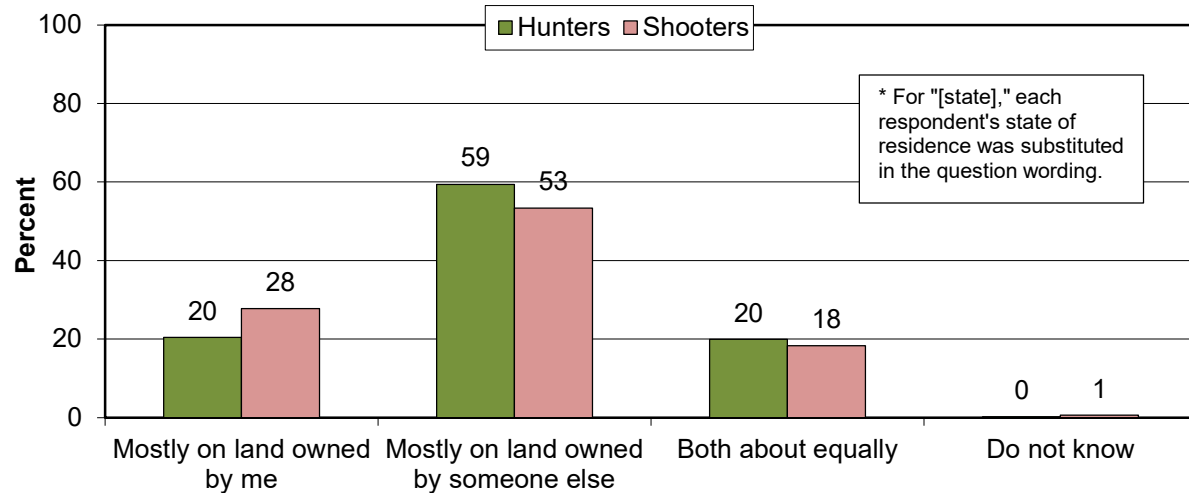
Which modes of transportation do you use to access the land you [hunt / shoot] on?



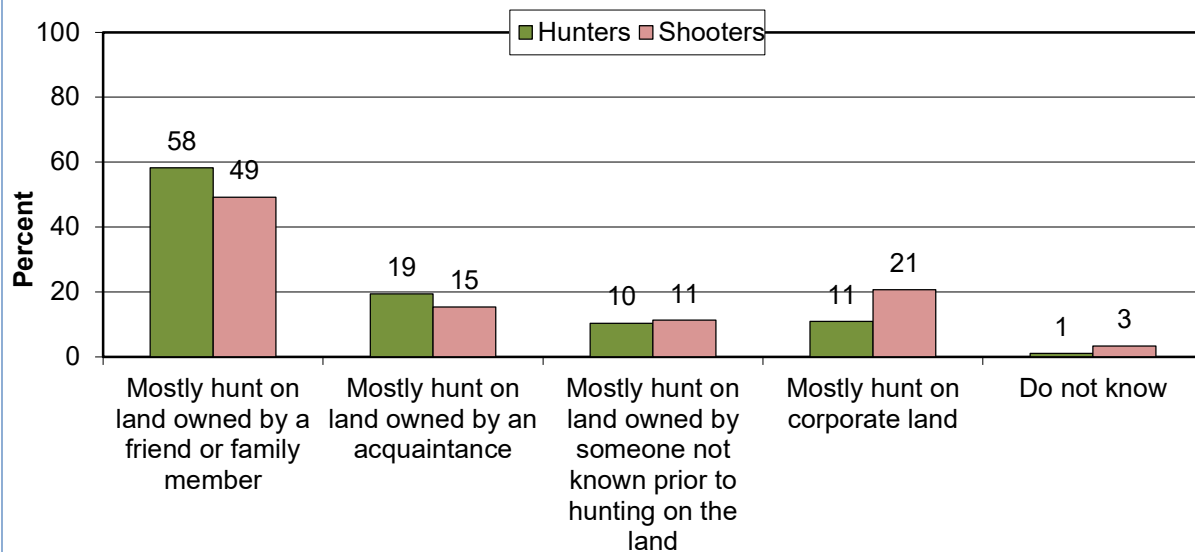
Multiple Responses Allowed

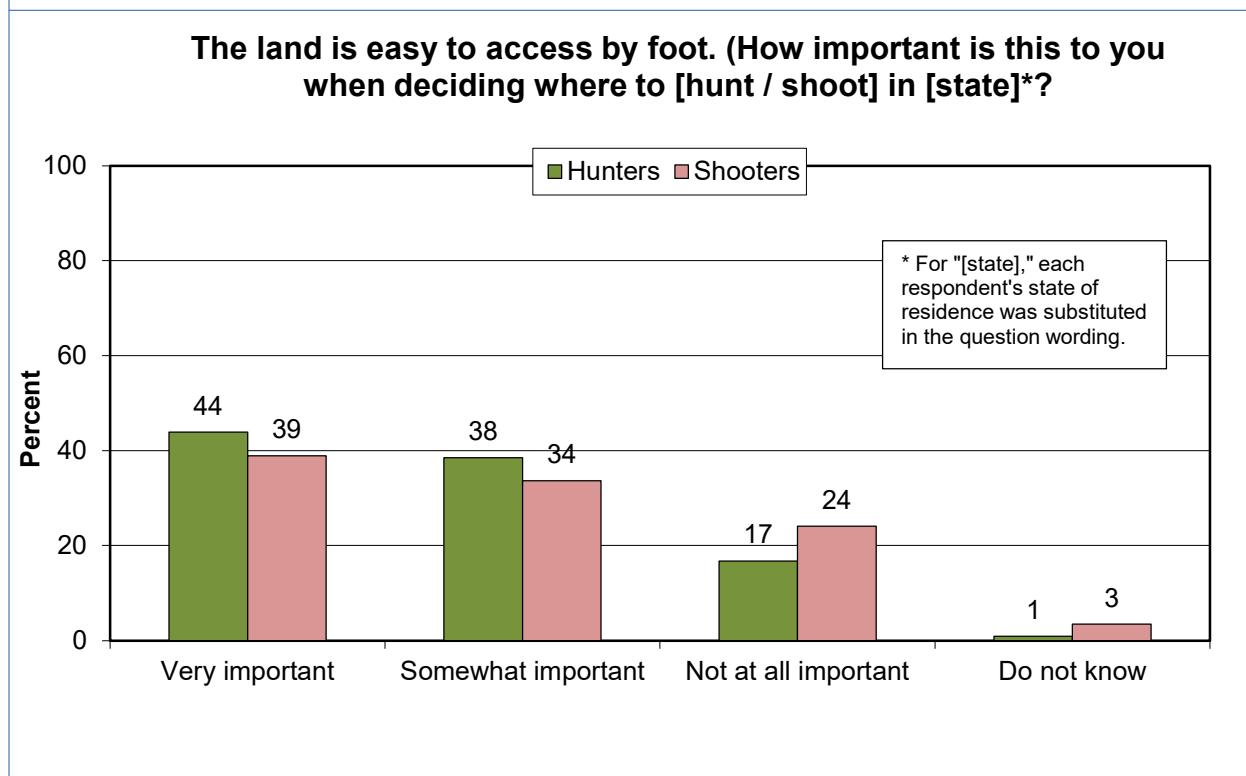
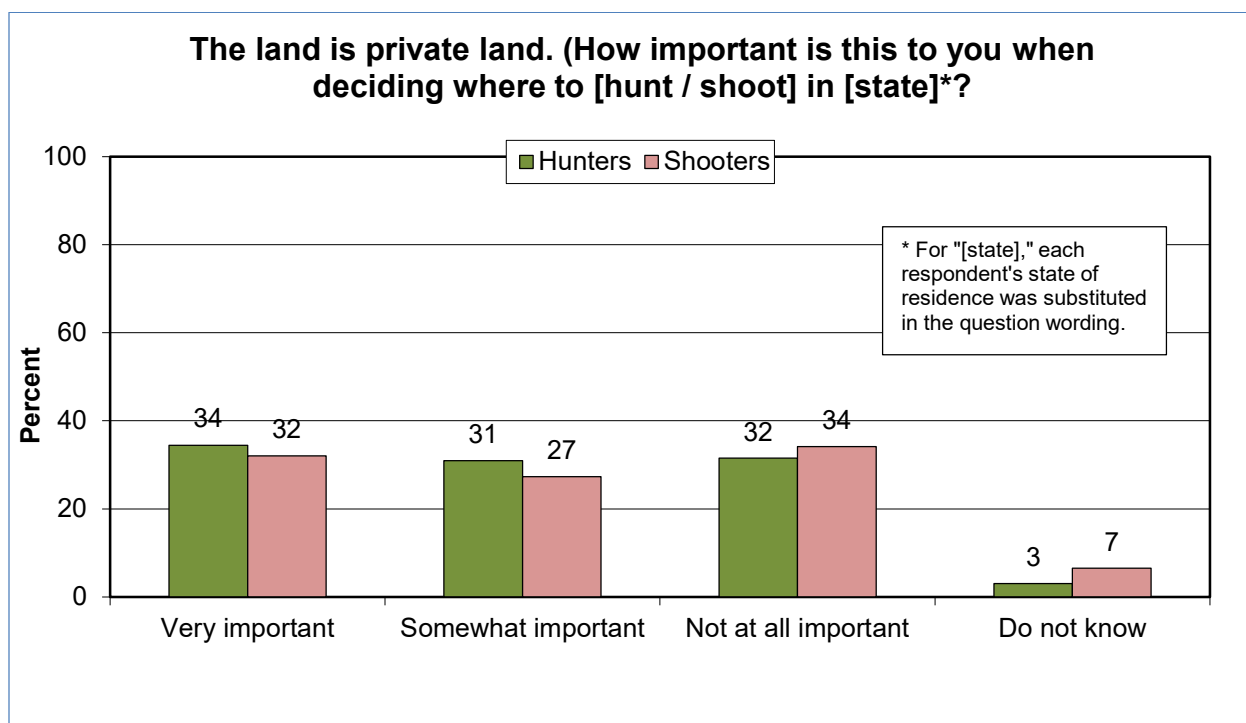


Do you [hunt / shoot] mostly on private land that is owned by you, mostly on private land that is owned by someone else, or both about equally in [state]*? (Asked of those who [hunt / shoot] on private land.)



Of the private land you [hunt / shoot] on that is owned by someone else, which of the following best describes the ownership of that land?



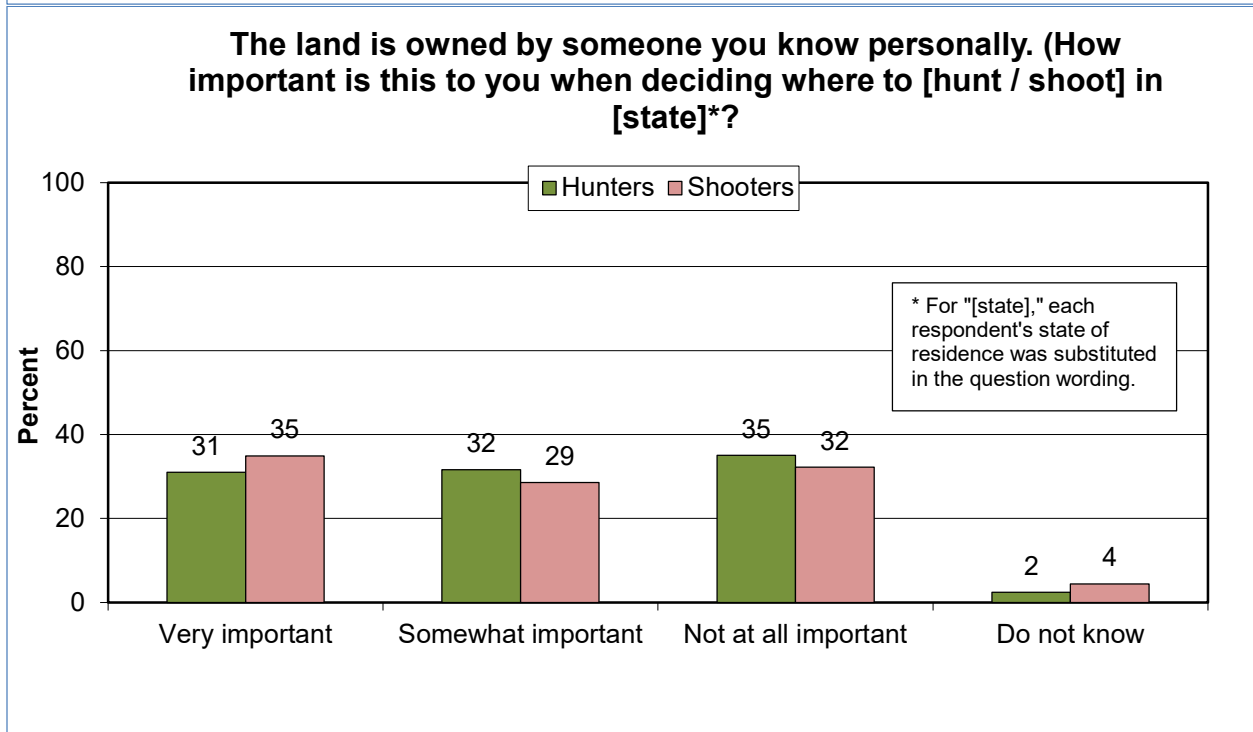
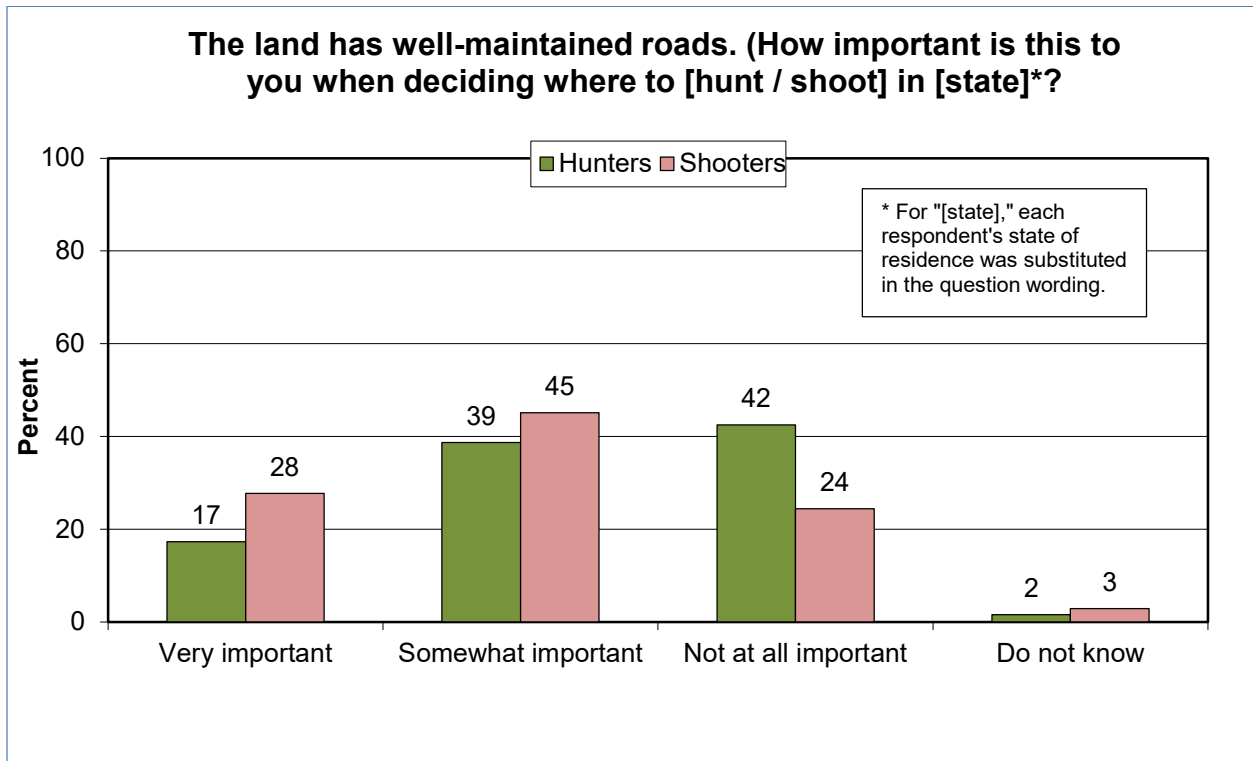


You can use ATVs or off-road vehicles. (How important is this to you when deciding where to [hunt / shoot] in [state]*?)

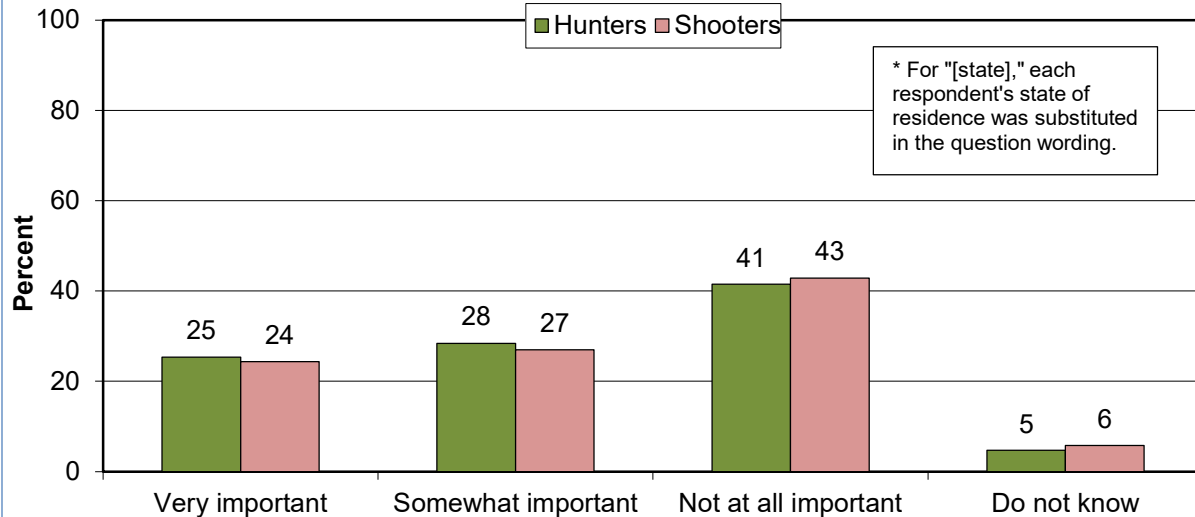


The land is familiar to you. (How important is this to you when deciding where to [hunt / shoot] in [state]*?)

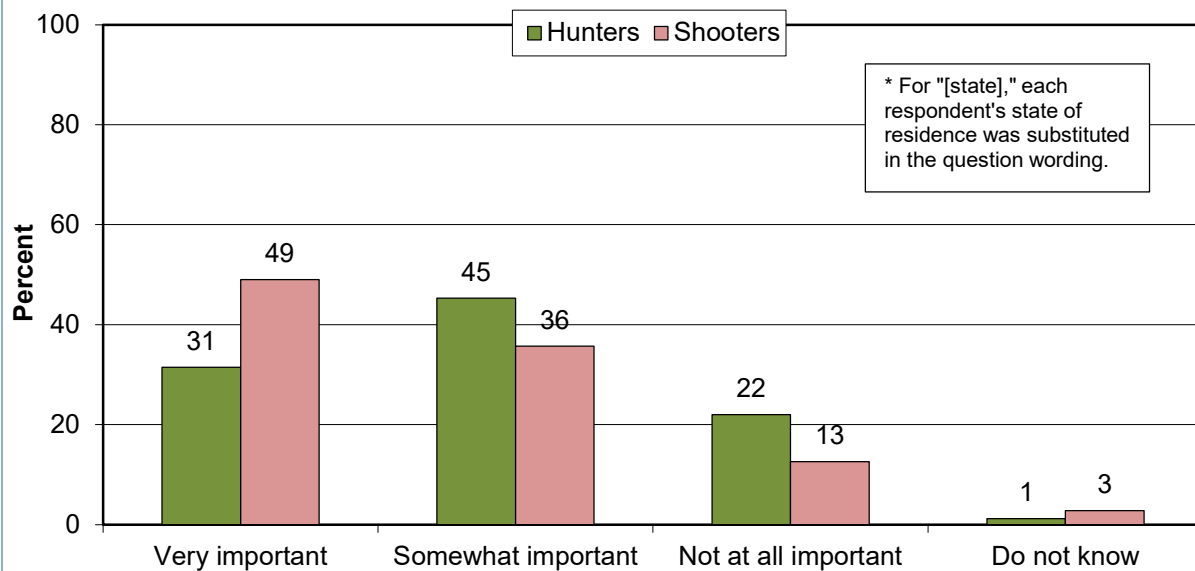




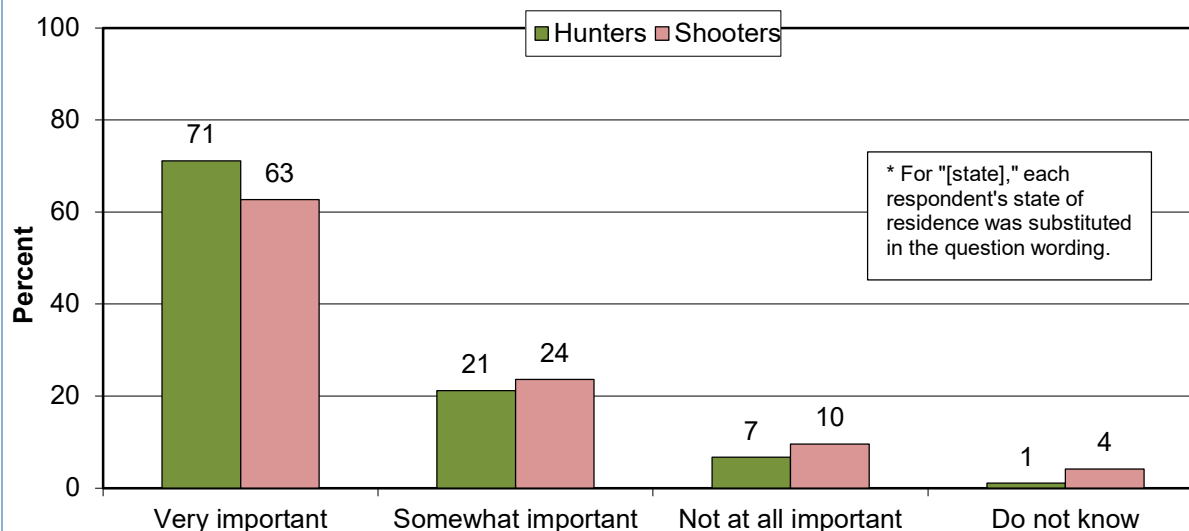
The land is public land. (How important is this to you when deciding where to [hunt / shoot] in [state]*?)



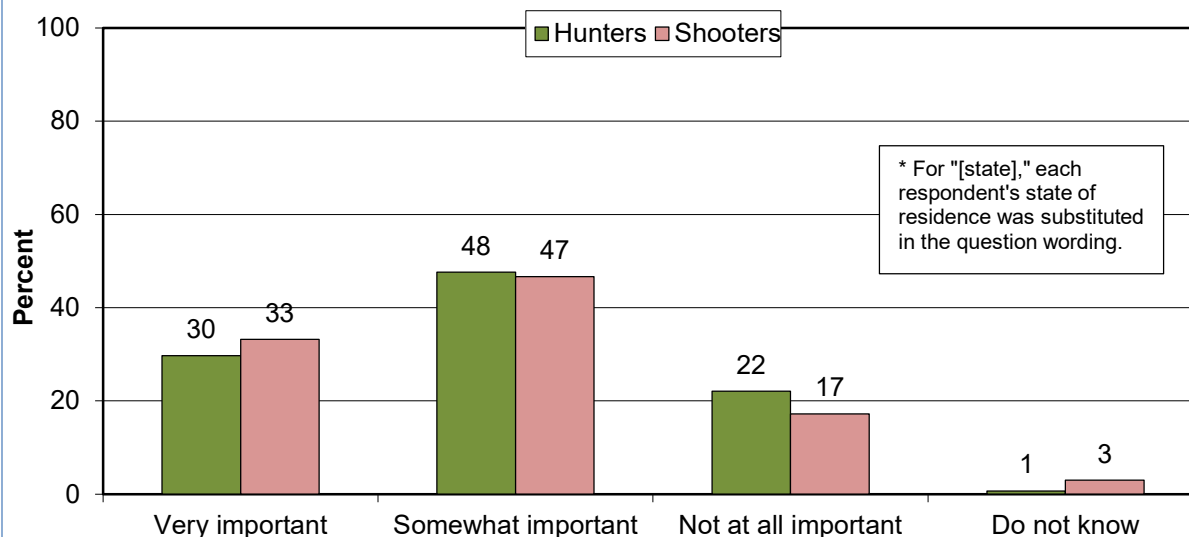
The land is easy to access by car or truck. (How important is this to you when deciding where to [hunt / shoot] in [state]*?)



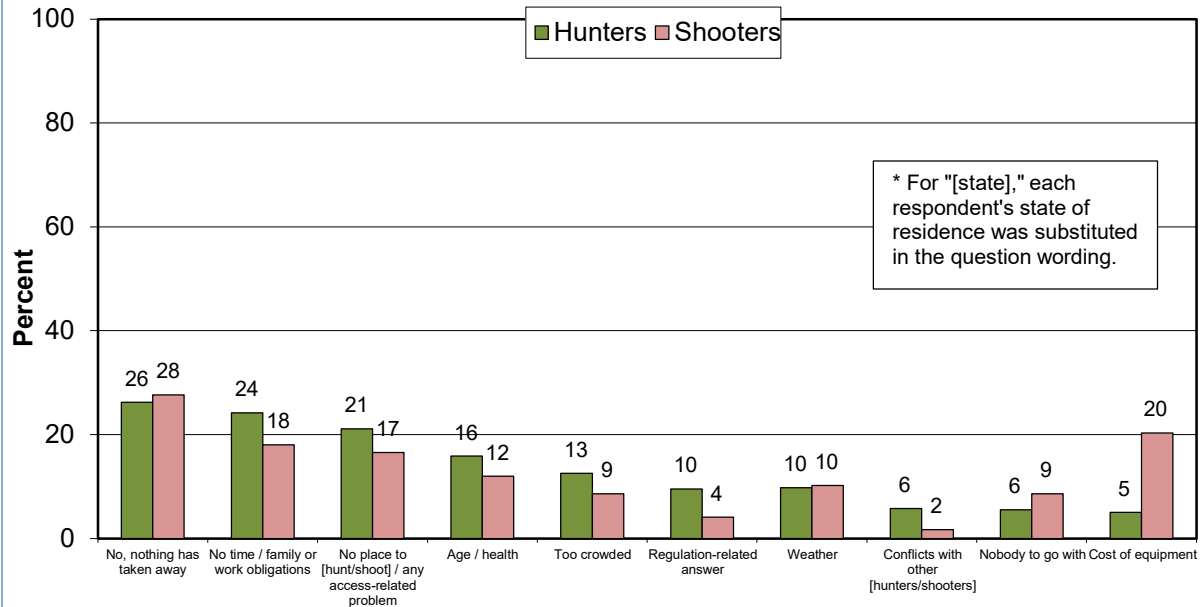
The land is not crowded with other sportsmen. (How important is this to you when deciding where to [hunt / shoot] in [state]*?)



The land is close to your home. (How important is this to you when deciding where to [hunt / shoot] in [state]*?)

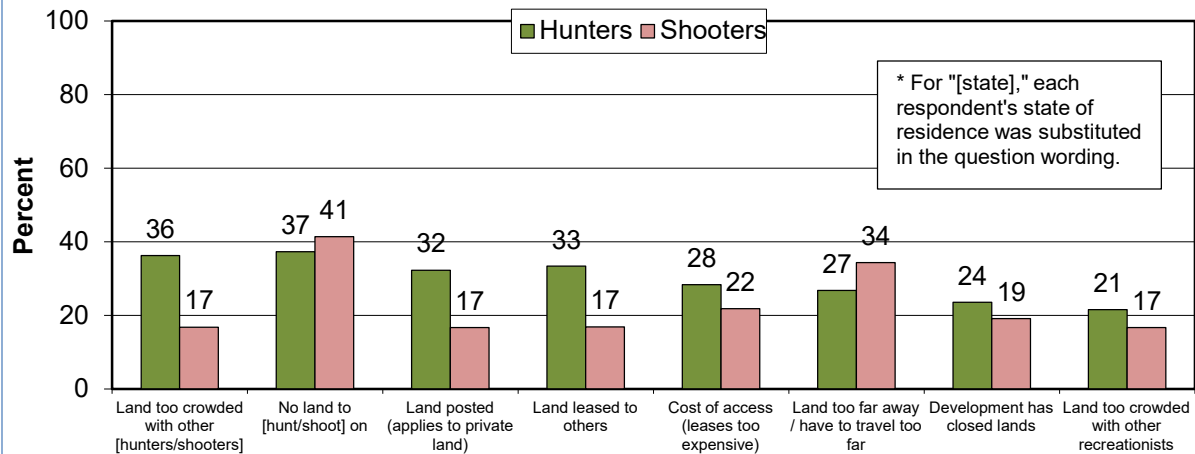


Are there any things that have taken away from your enjoyment of [hunting / shooting] in [state]*, even if they didn't prevent you from actually going? (Top responses)



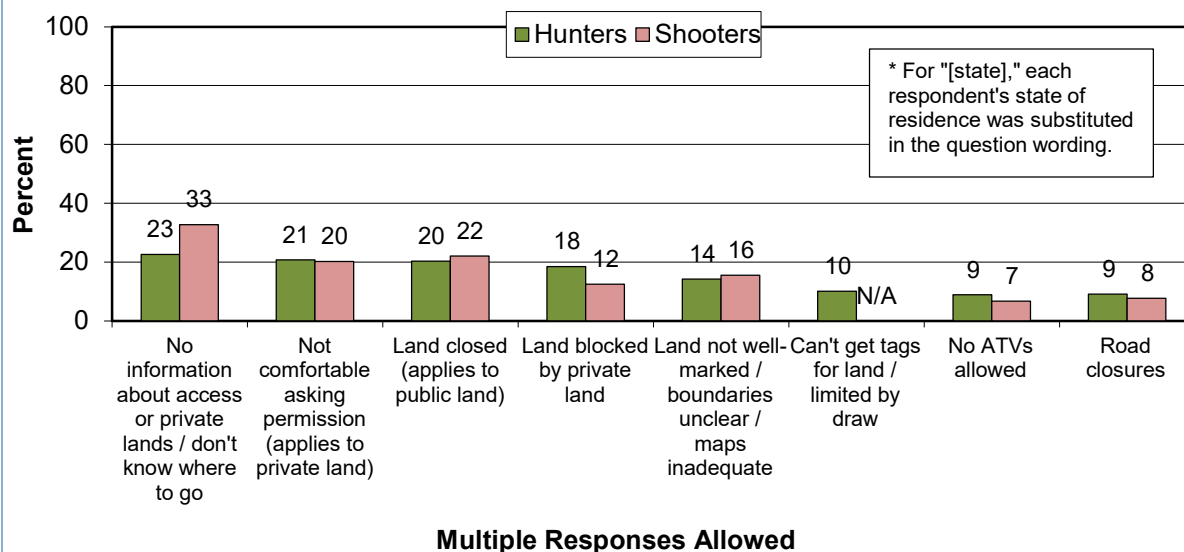
Multiple Responses Allowed

What are the specific access problems that have taken away from your [hunting / shooting] enjoyment in [state]*? (Asked of those who indicated that access problems have taken away from their enjoyment.) (Part 1)

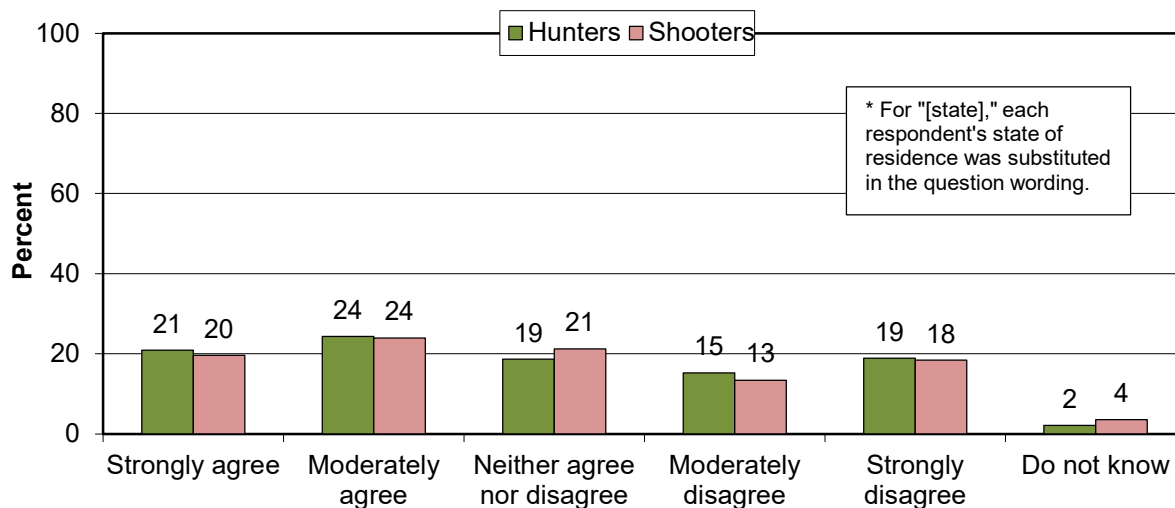


Multiple Responses Allowed

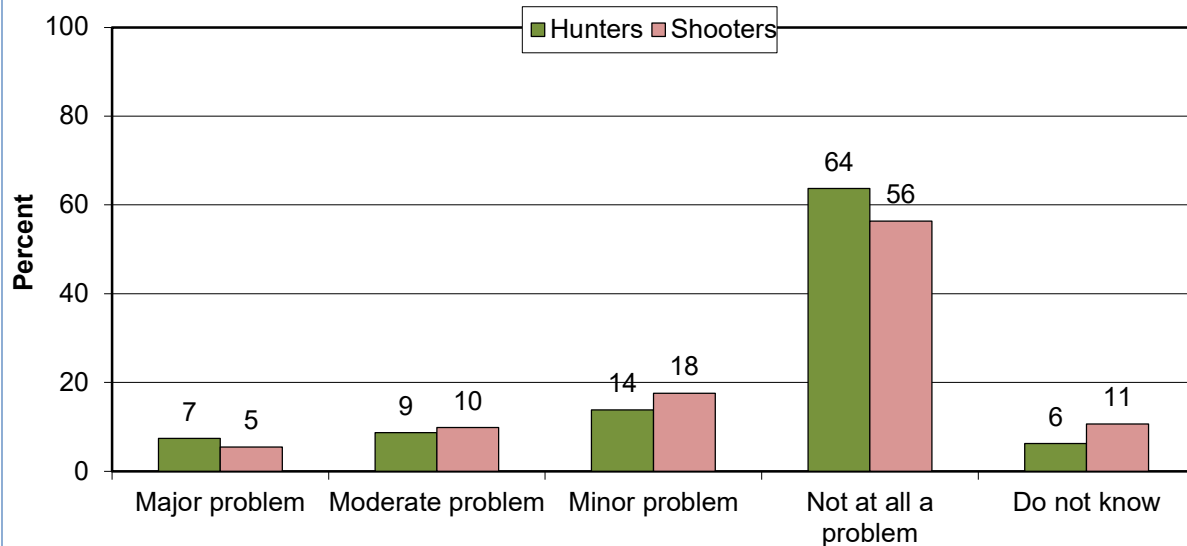
What are the specific access problems that have taken away from your [hunting / shooting] enjoyment in [state]*? (Asked of those who indicated that access problems have taken away from their enjoyment.) (Part 2)



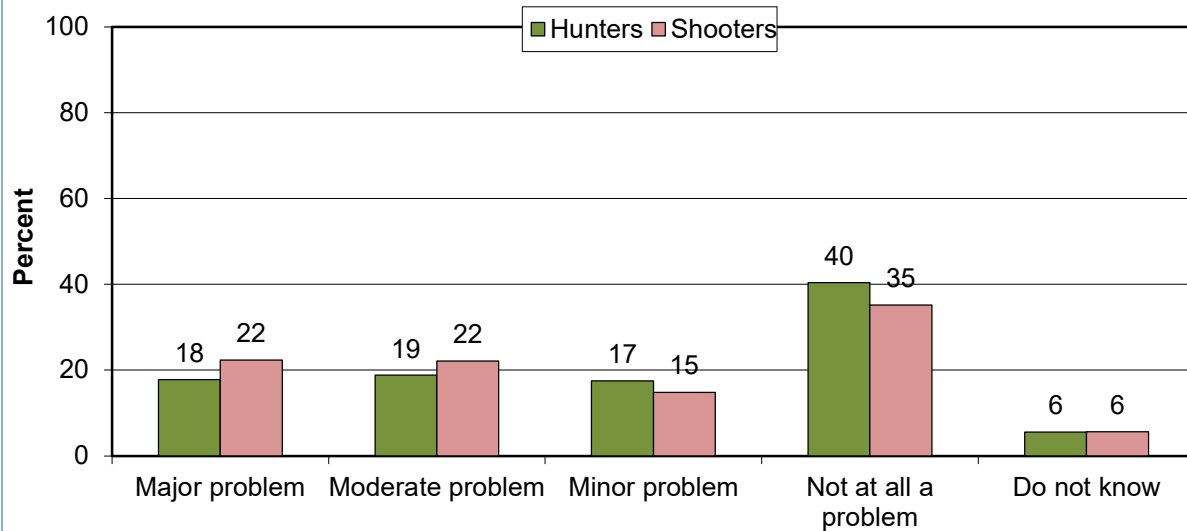
Do you agree or disagree that lack of access to [hunting lands / lands to shoot on] in [state]* has caused you to not [hunt any species / sport shoot] as much as you would like in the past 5 years?



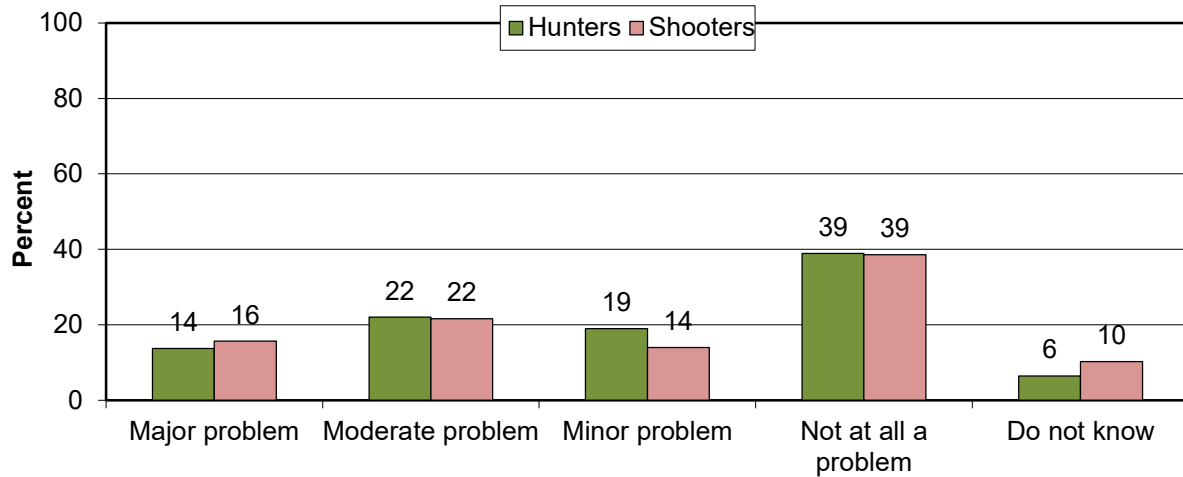
Road closures when [hunting / shooting]. (Has this been a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years?)



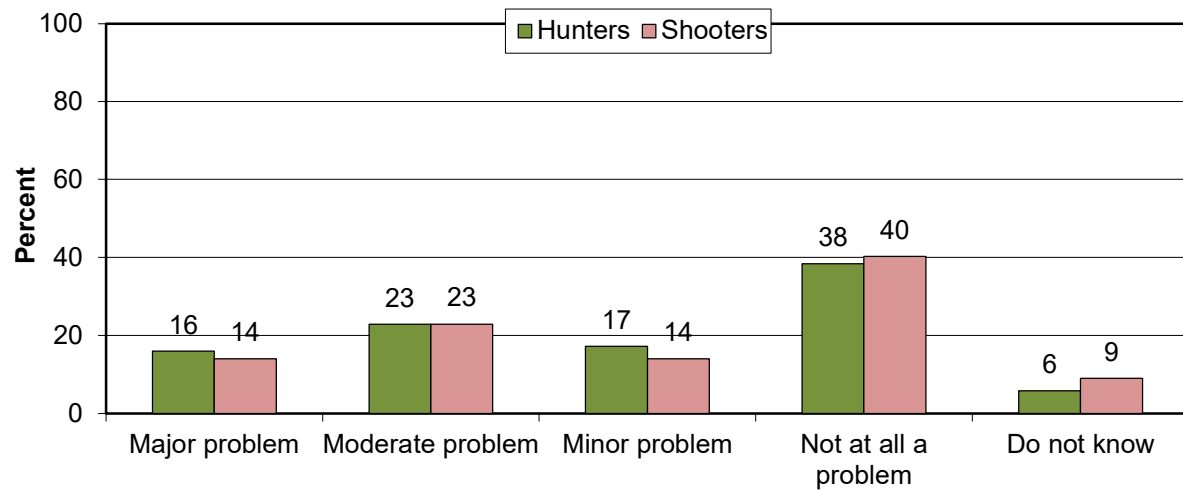
Less land on which to [hunt / shoot] due to development. (Has this been a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years?)



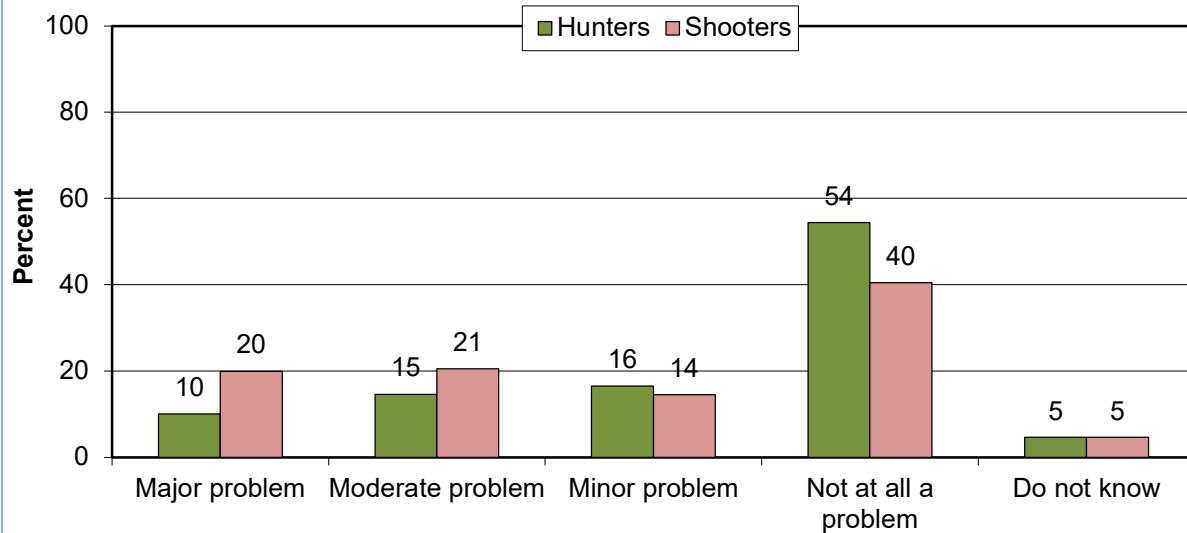
Less land on which to [hunt / shoot] because the land use has changed. (Has this been a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years?)



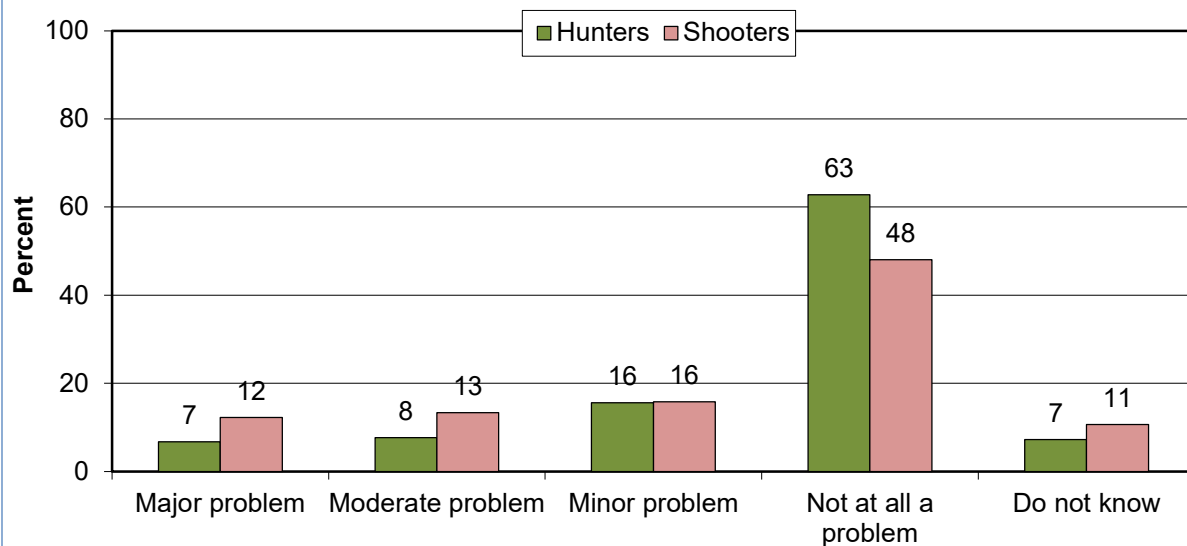
Less land on which to [hunt / shoot] due to private land ownership changes. (Has this been a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years?)



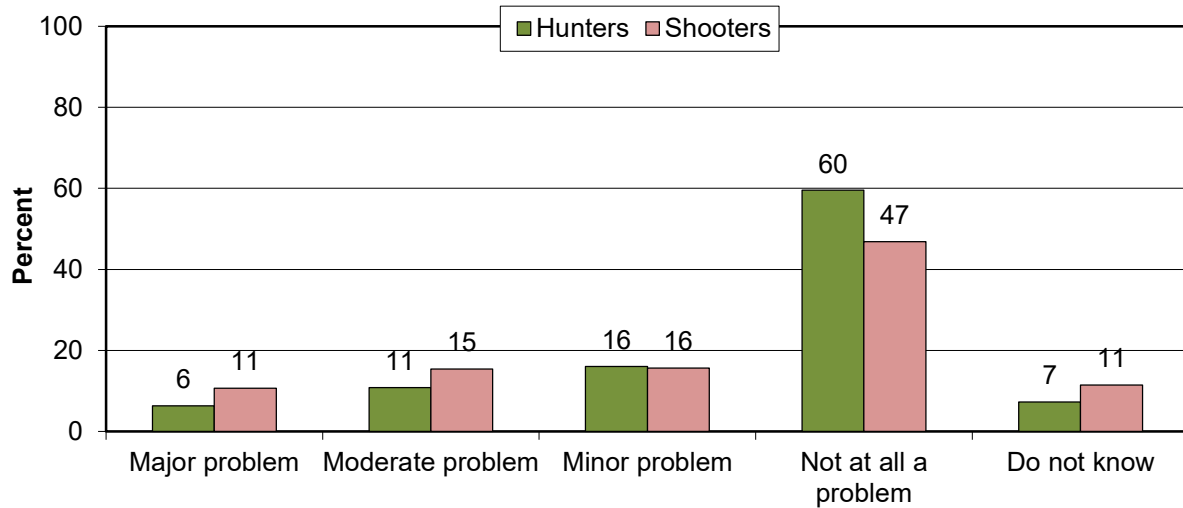
**Not having enough information about where to [hunt / shoot].
(Has this been a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years?)**



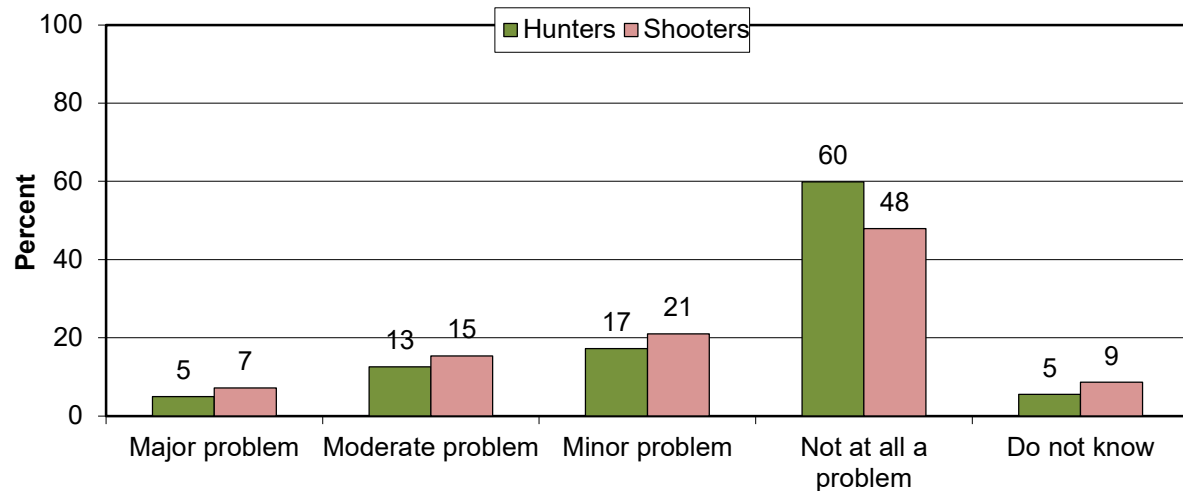
**The information about where to [hunt / shoot] being inaccurate.
(Has this been a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years?)**



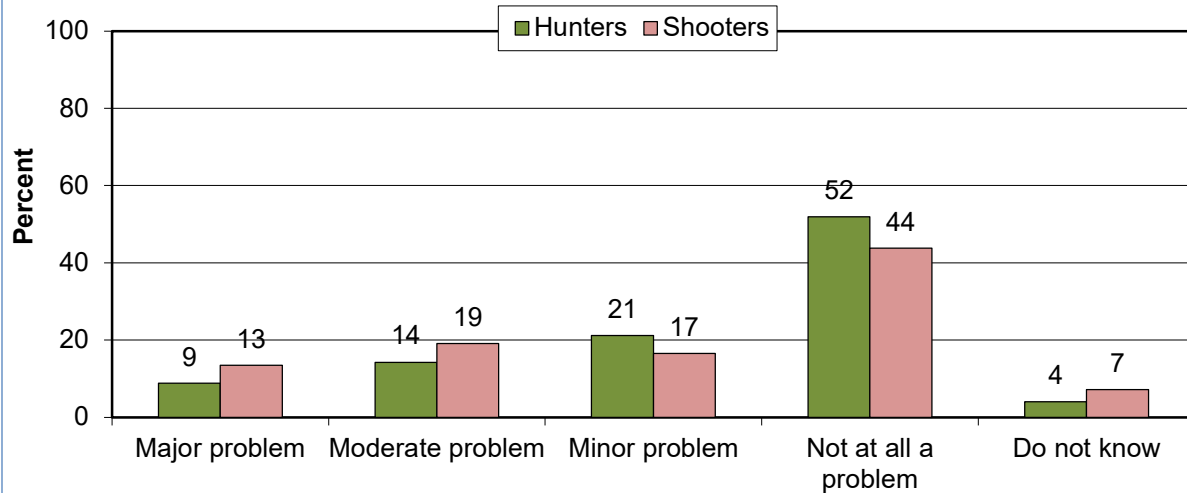
Having maps that show [huntable land / land to shoot on] but being unable to locate that land on the ground. (Has this been a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years?)



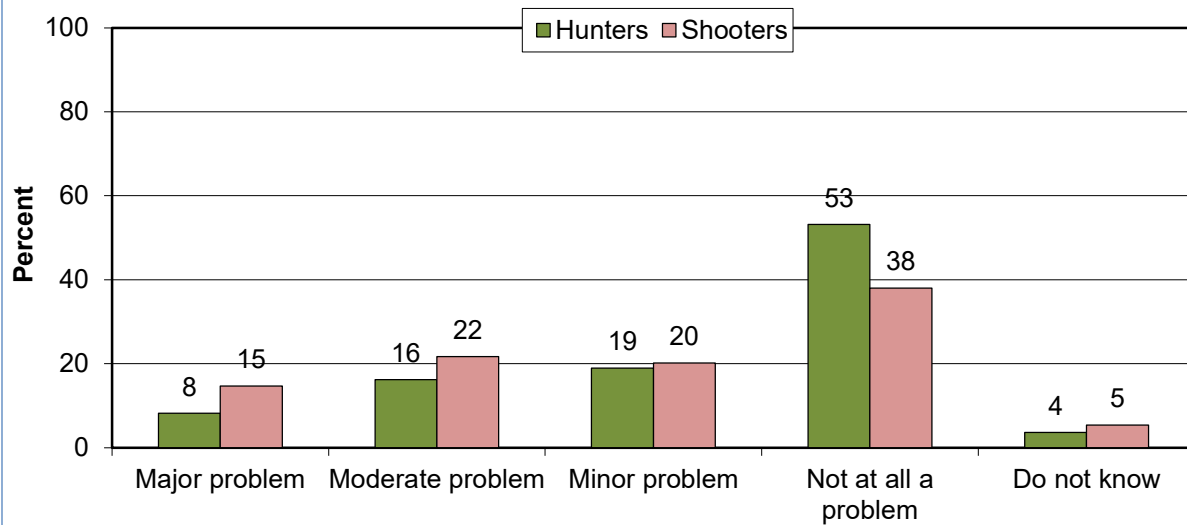
Being unable to locate a road or other access route to [huntable land / land to shoot on]. (Has this been a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years?)



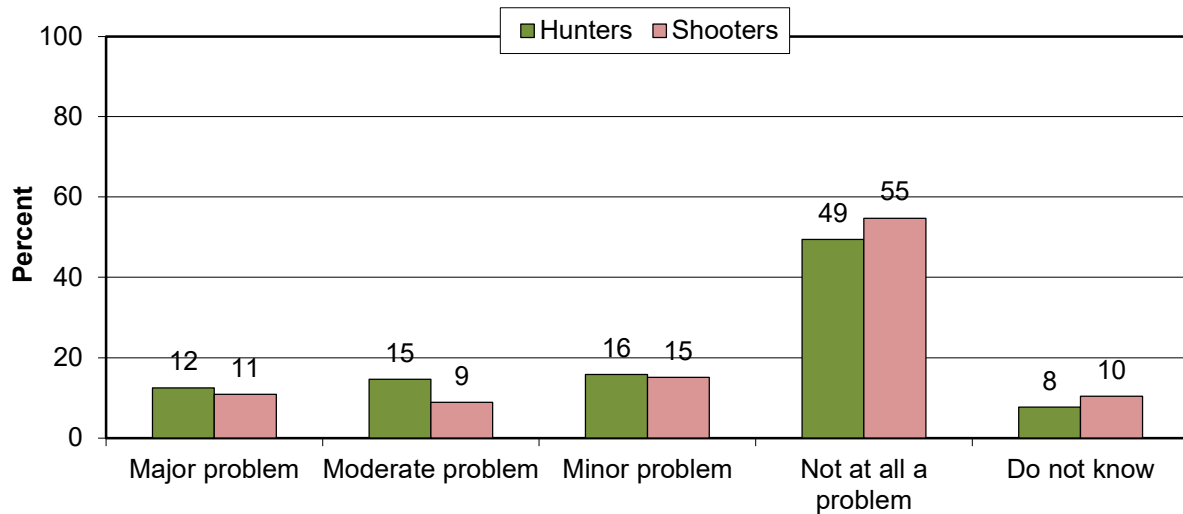
Not being sure of the boundaries of [huntable land / land to shoot on]. (Has this been a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years?)



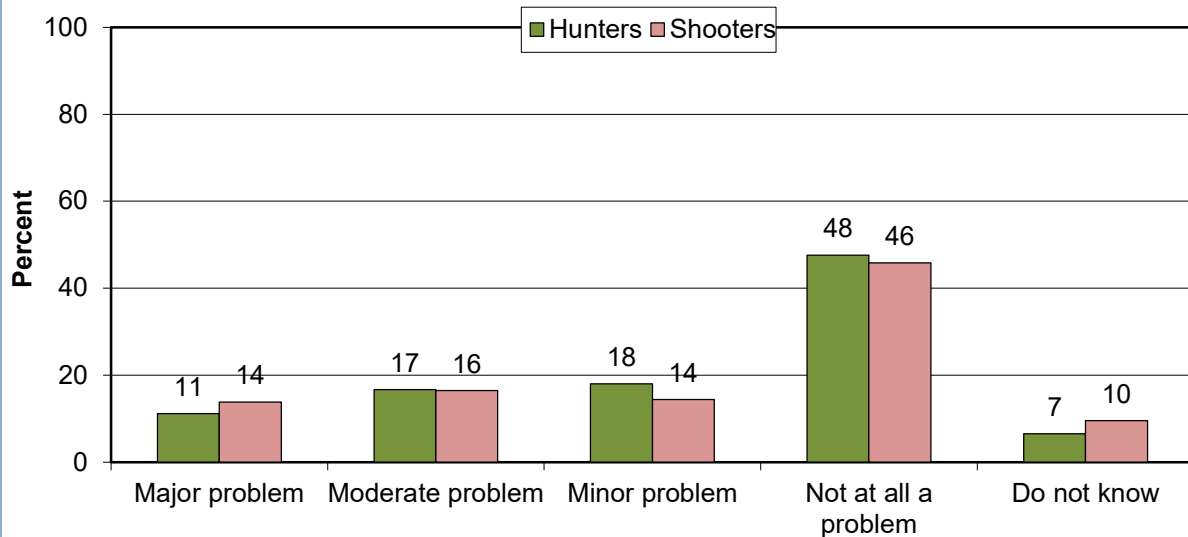
Having to travel too far to [hunt / shoot]. (Has this been a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years?)



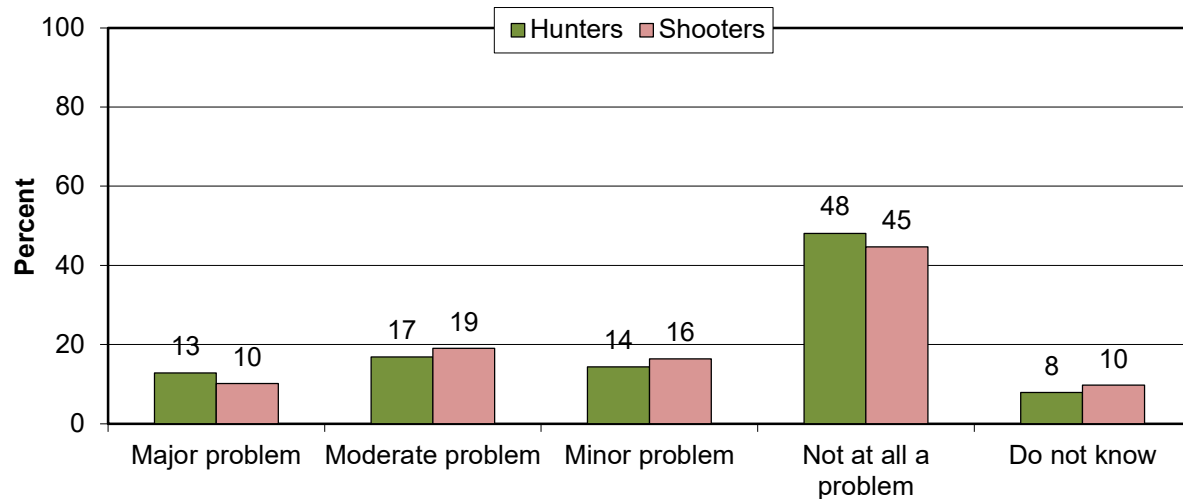
Being denied permission to [hunt / shoot] on somebody else's land. (Has this been a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years?)



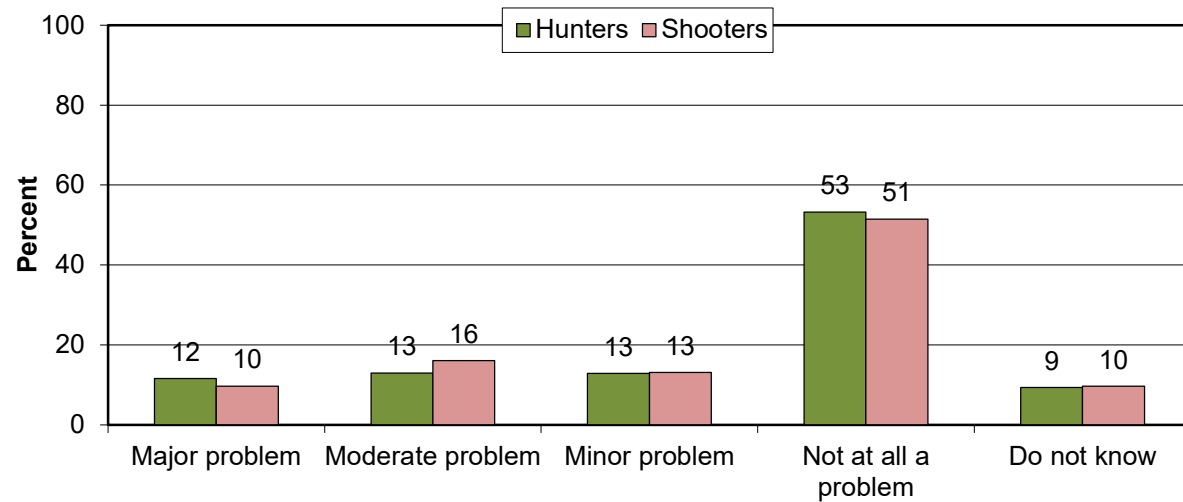
Not being able to find the landowner to ask permission. (Has this been a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years?)



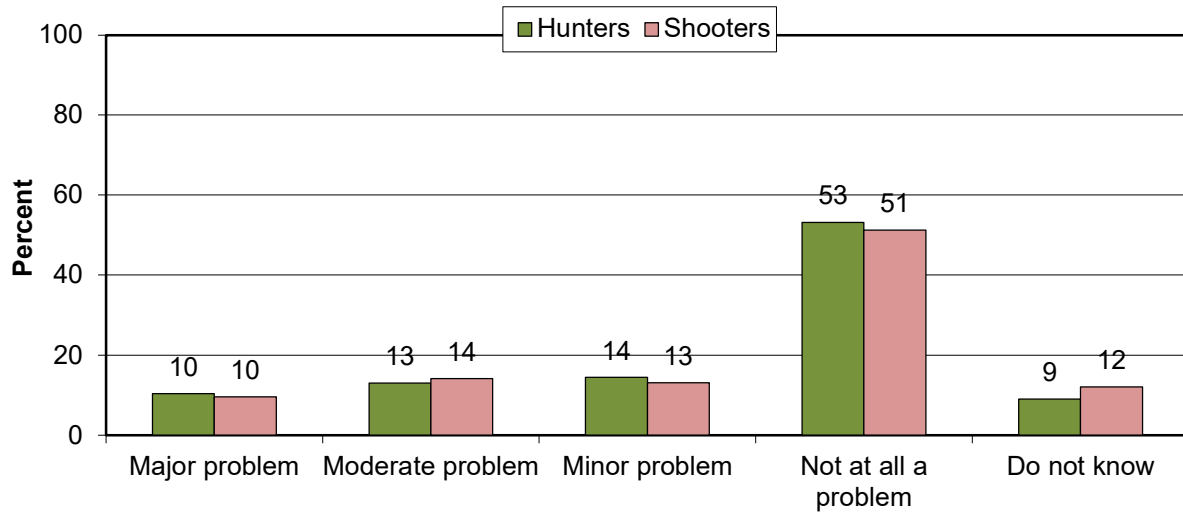
Finding previously open private land posted or closed by the landowner. (Has this been a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years?)



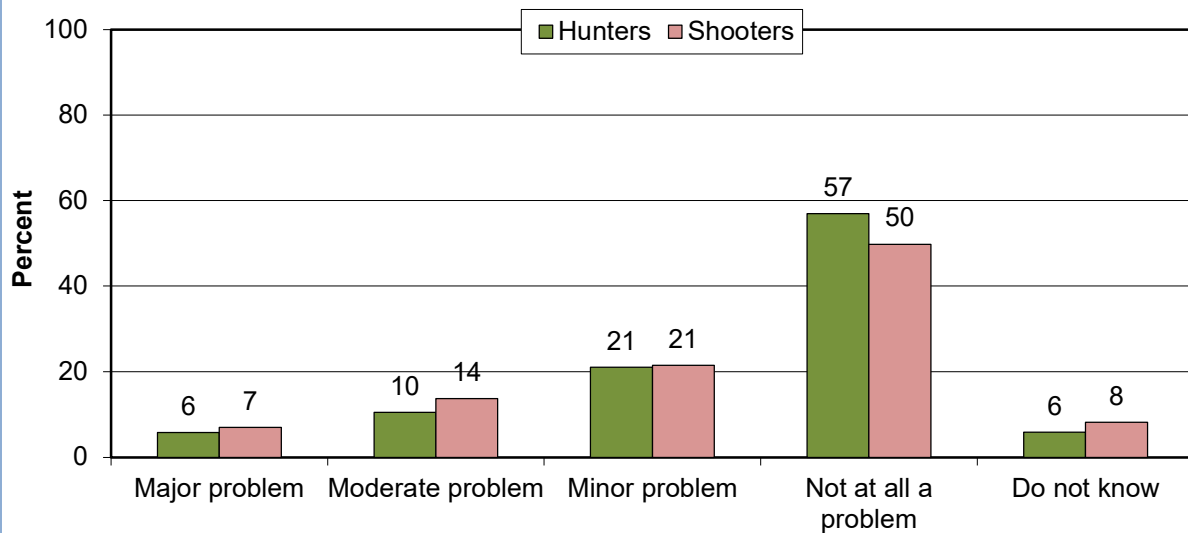
Finding previously open private land closed because a club has now leased it. (Has this been a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years?)



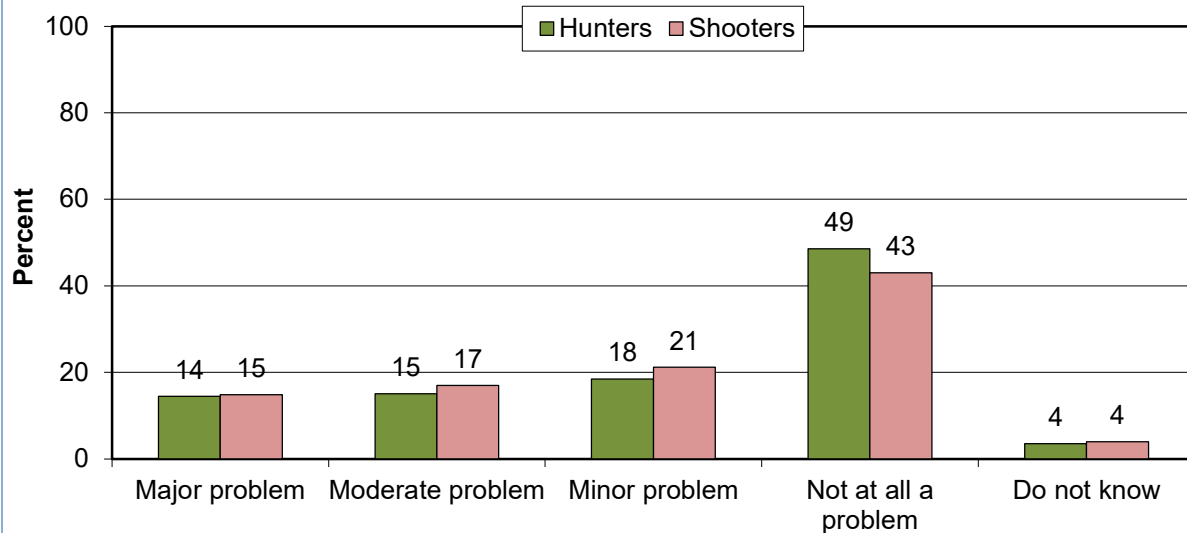
Private land blocking access to public land for [hunting / shooting]. (Has this been a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years?)



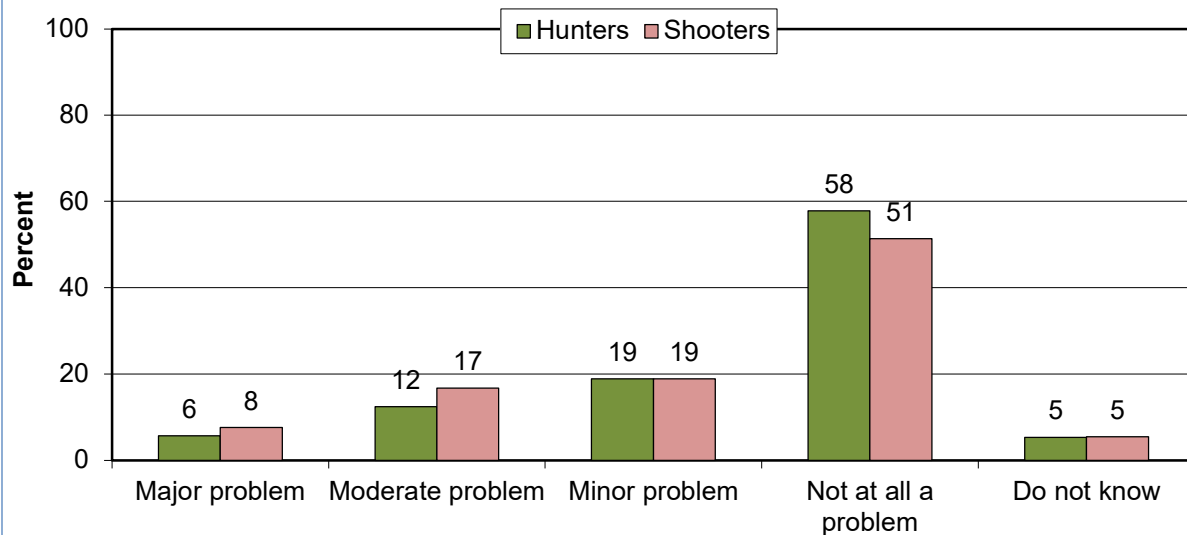
Poor maintenance of roads or trails. (Has this been a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years?)



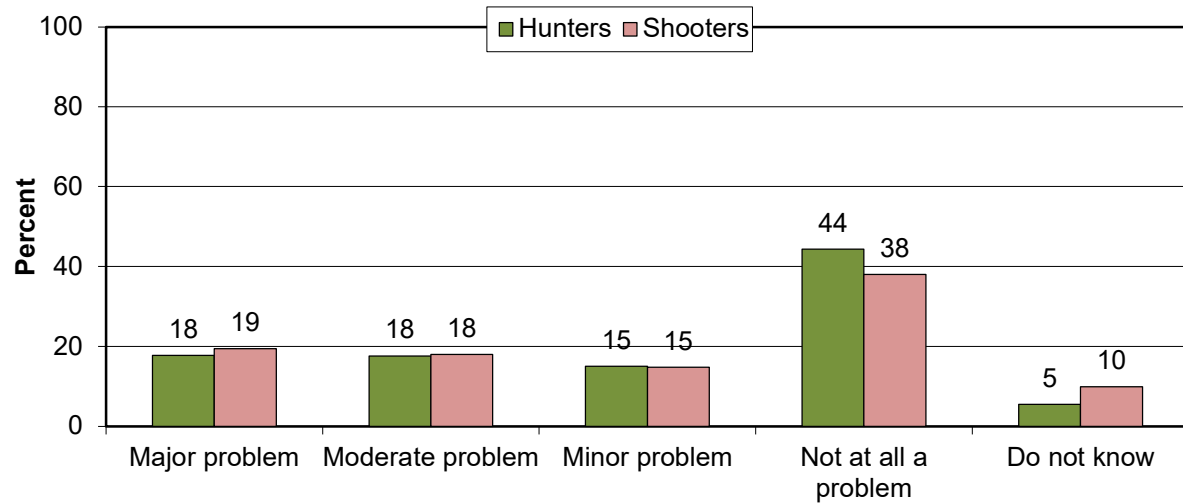
The cost of gas. (Has this been a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years?)



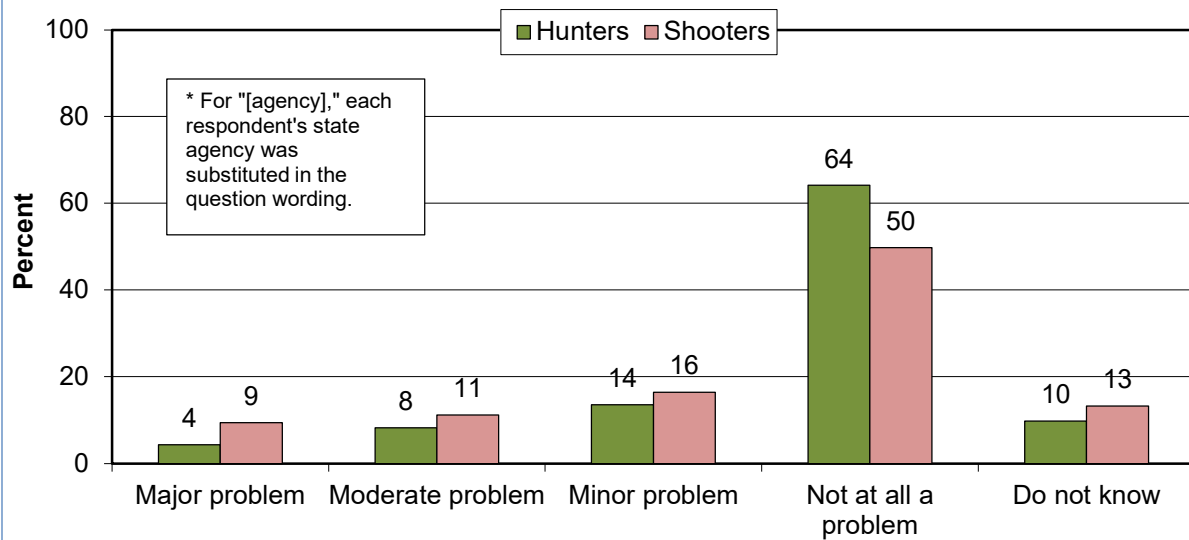
Not being able to find a good place to park your vehicle. (Has this been a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years?)



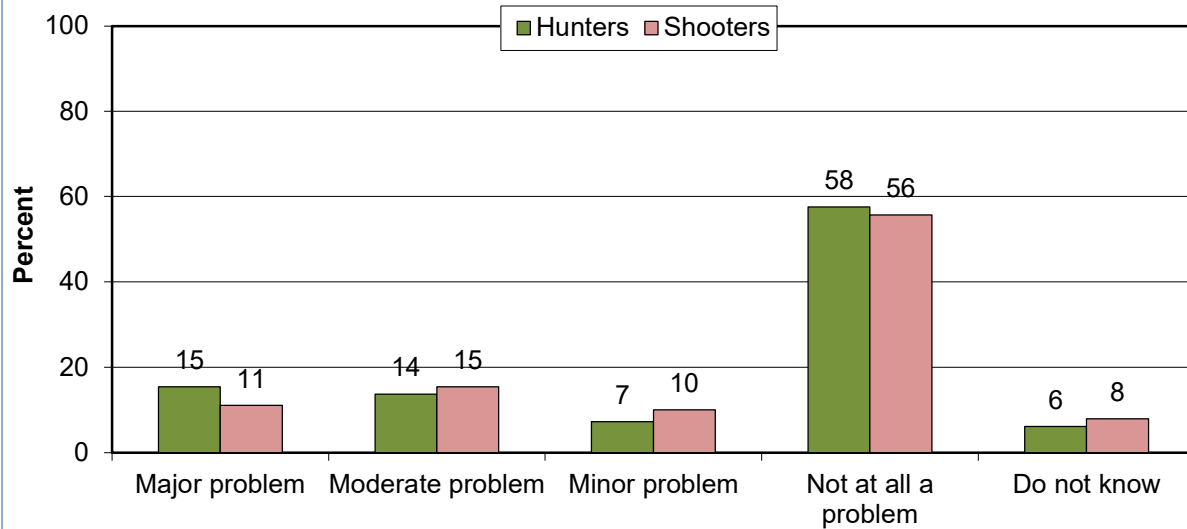
Housing or other developments making land not [hunnable / shootable]. (Has this been a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years?)



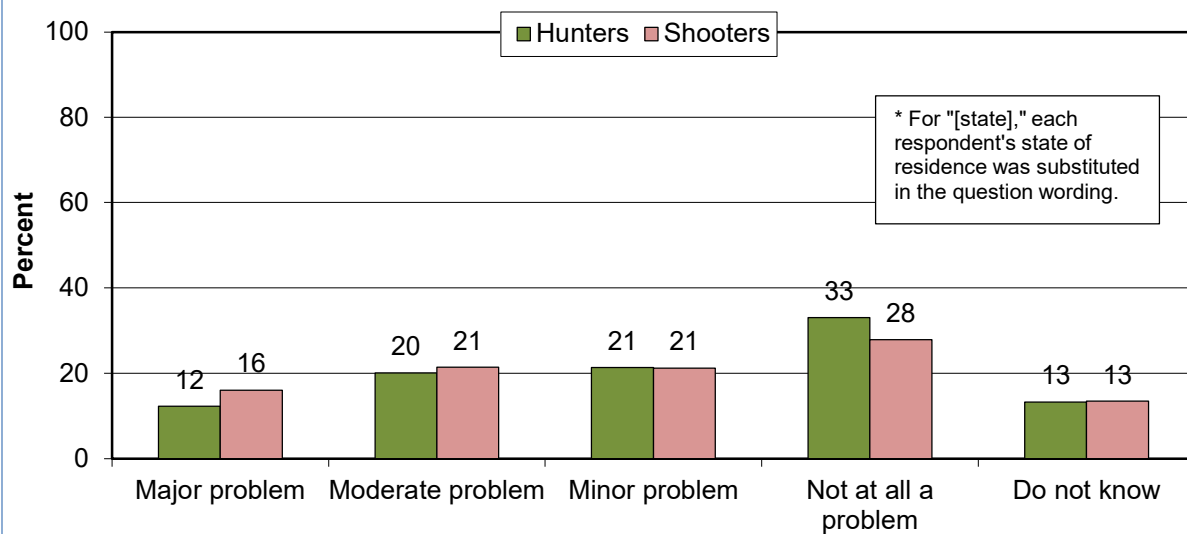
Information from [agency]* being out-of-date. (Has this been a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years?)



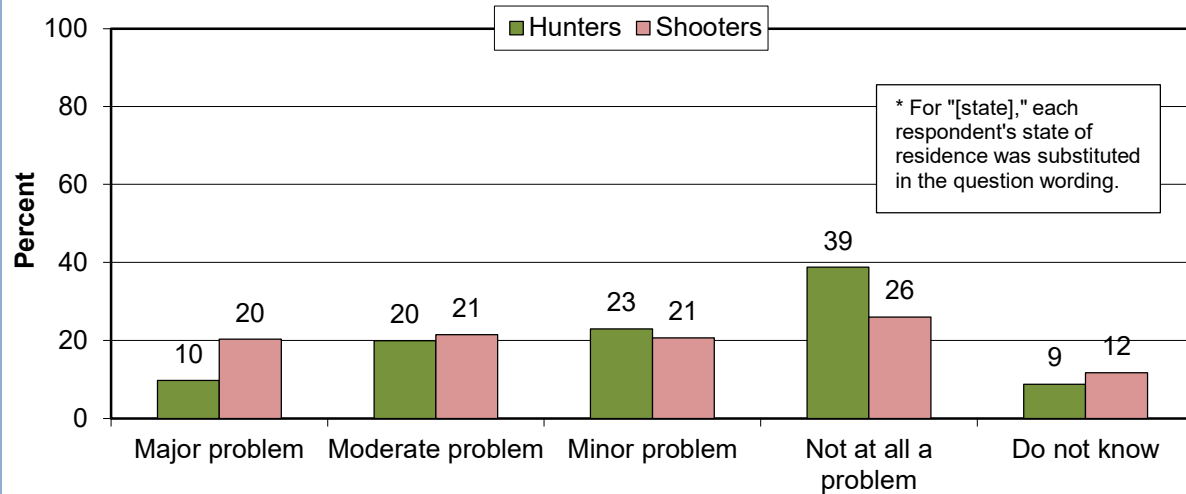
Access or leasing fees being expensive. (Has this been a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all for you in the past 5 years?)



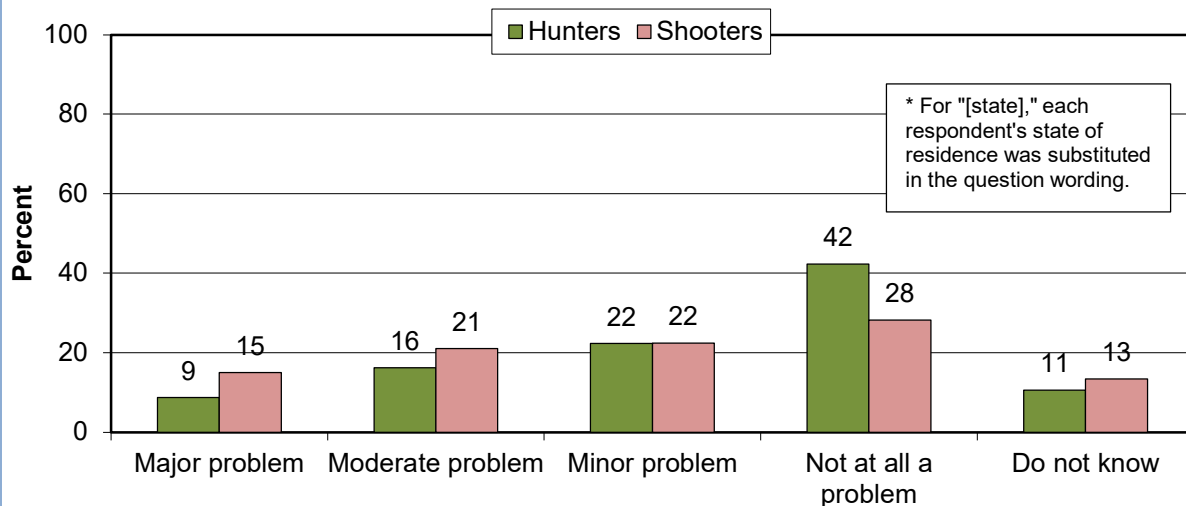
Poor management or allocation of uses of public land. (Do you think this is a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all in [state]* in general?)



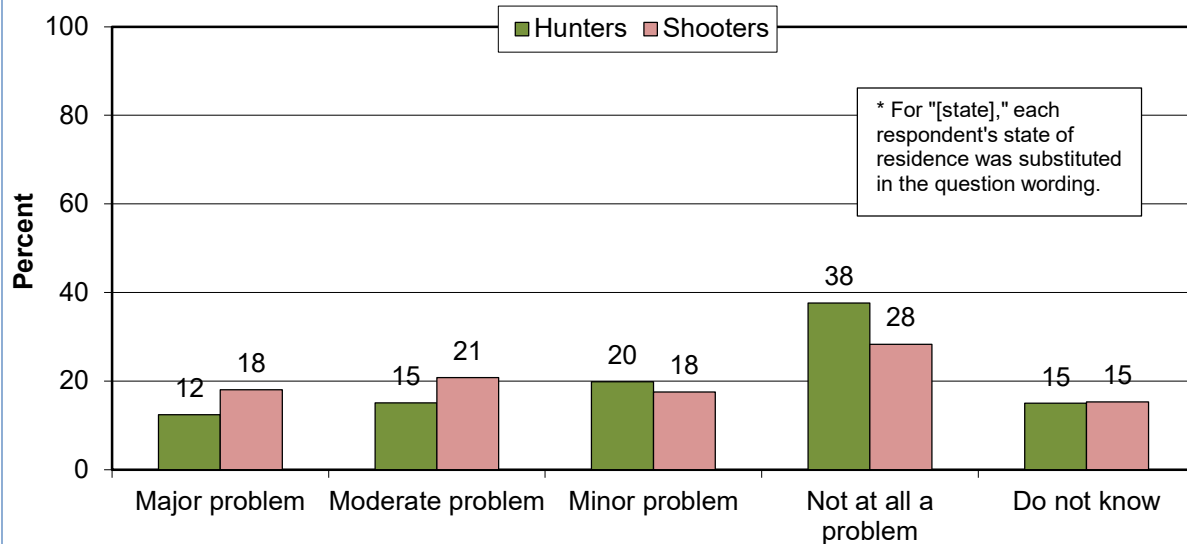
Lack of or unclear signs marking public [hunting / shooting] lands. (Do you think this is a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all in [state]* in general?)



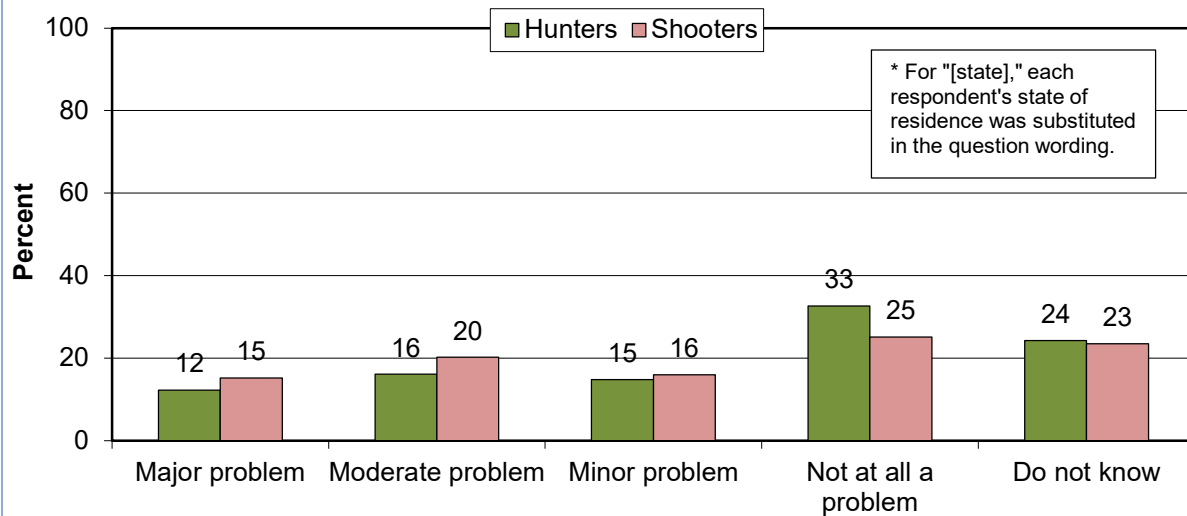
Restrictions on public land (e.g., ATV use restrictions or equipment restrictions). (Do you think this is a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all in [state]* in general?)



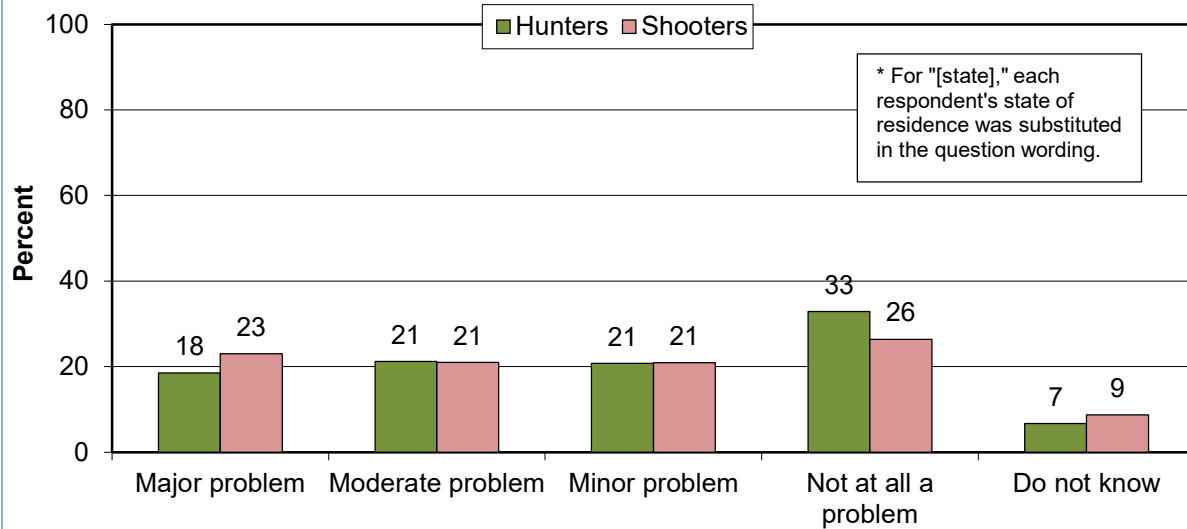
Closures of public land by government agencies. (Do you think this is a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all in [state]* in general?)



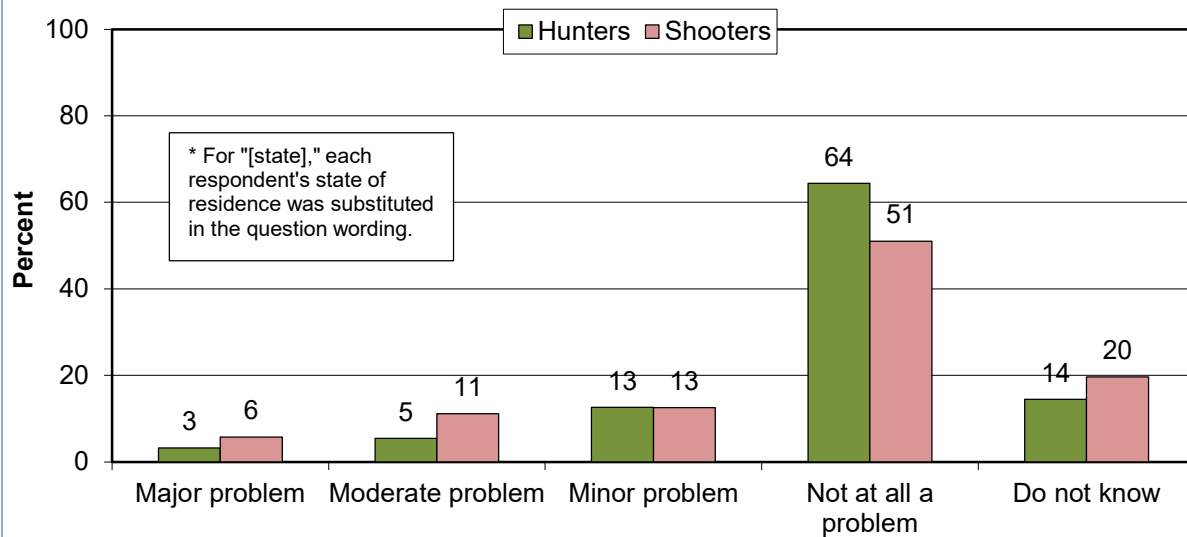
Not enough access to public lands for those with disabilities. (Do you think this is a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all in [state]* in general?)



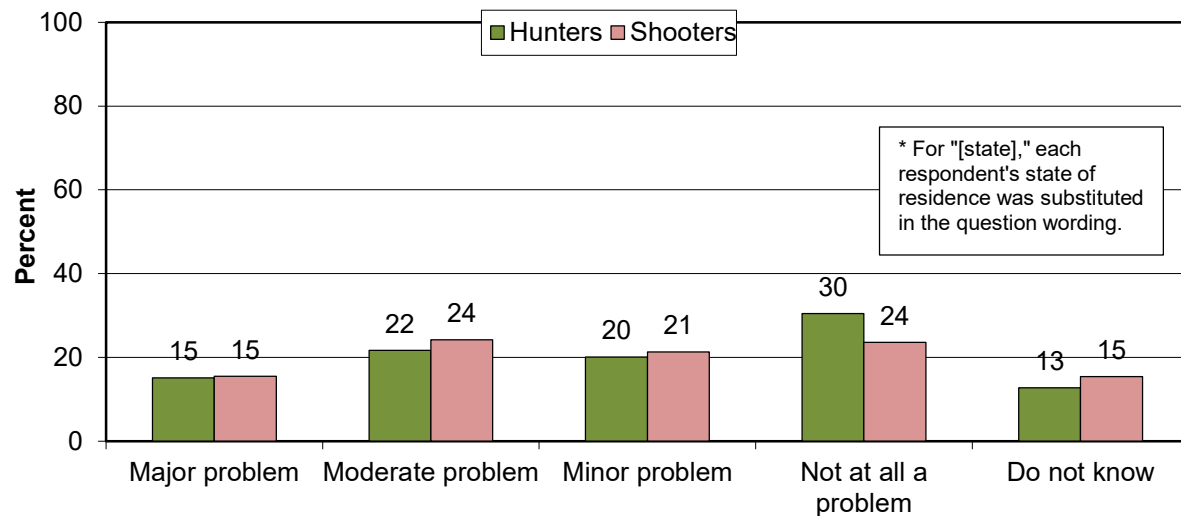
Housing and commercial development. (Do you think this is a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all in [state]* in general?)



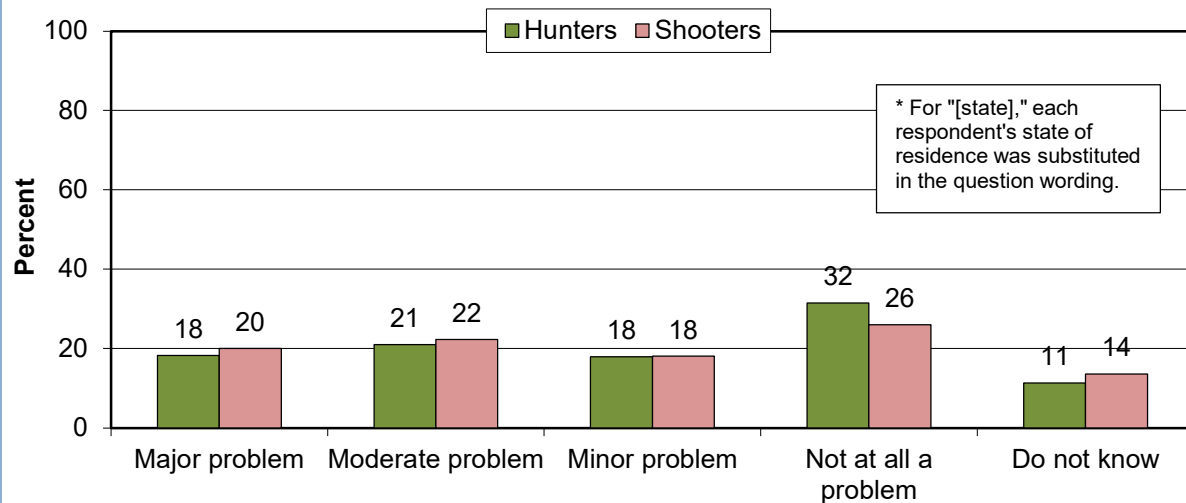
Gas and oil extraction on public lands. (Do you think this is a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all in [state]* in general?)



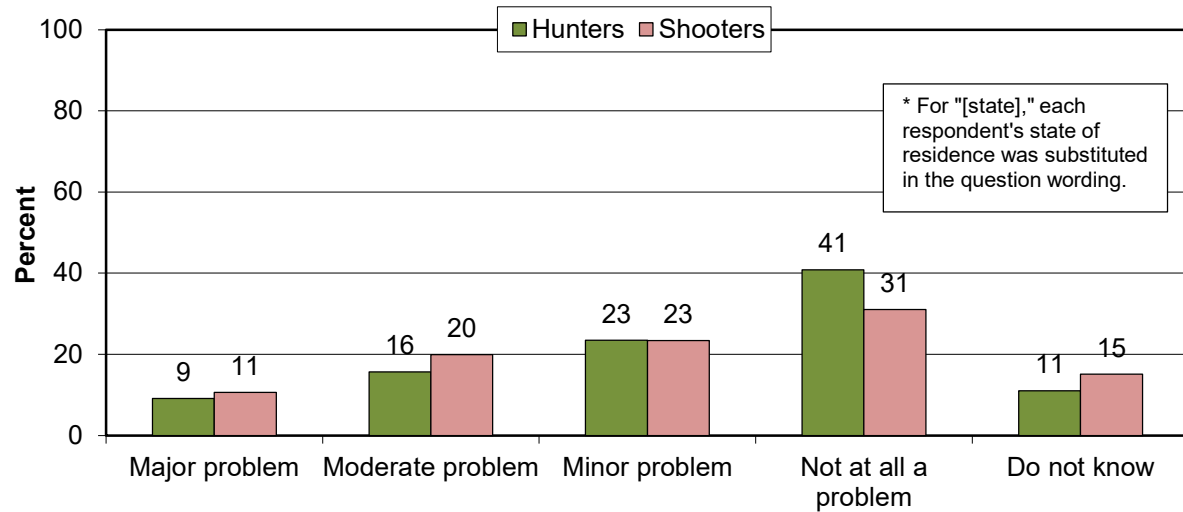
Public or private land tracts being broken up when sold or leased. (Do you think this is a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all in [state]* in general?)



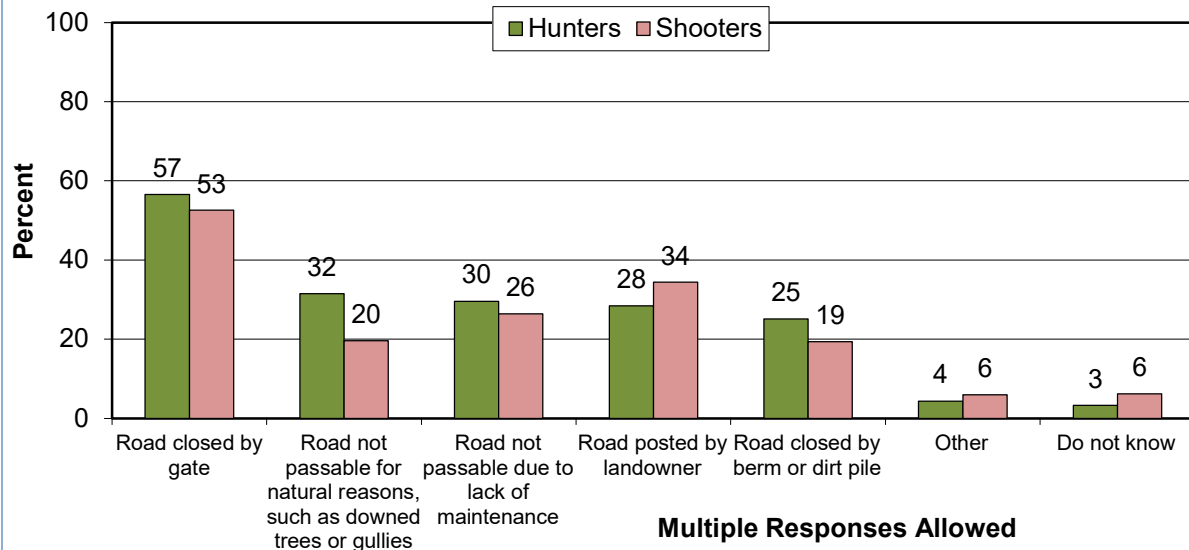
Private land posted or closed because the landowner is specifically concerned about liability. (Do you think this is a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all in [state]* in general?)



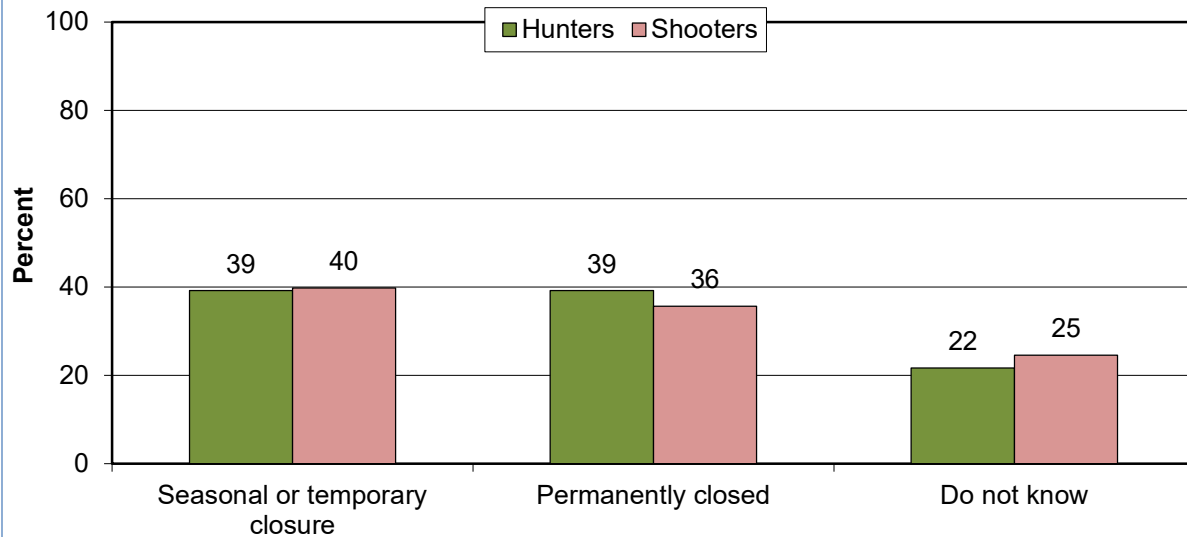
Management of land for purposes other than [hunting / shooting], such as timber cutting. (Do you think this is a major problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all in [state]* in general?)



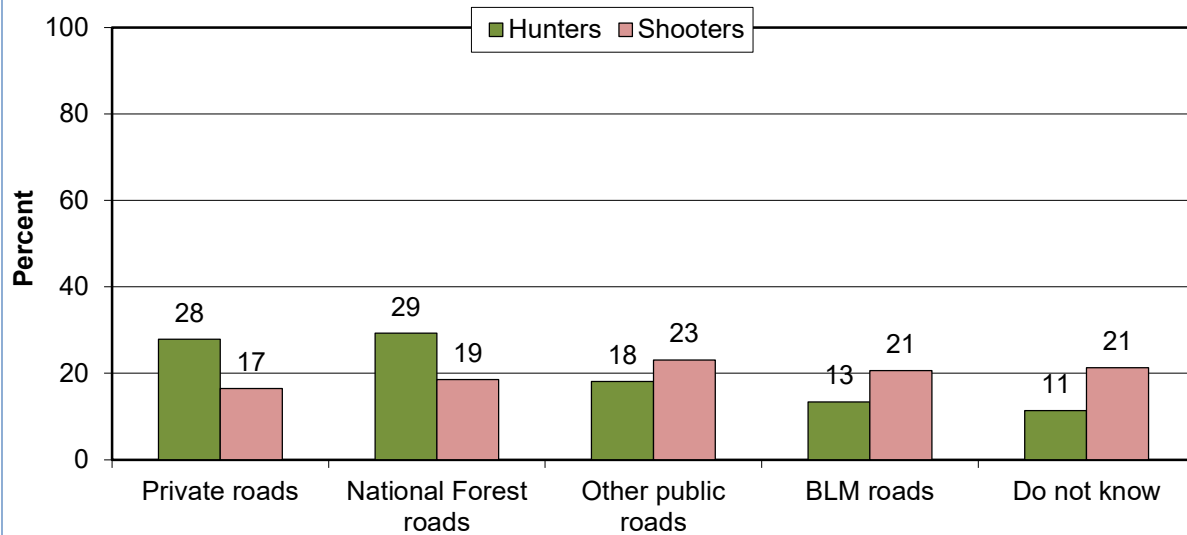
You indicated that road closures when [hunting / shooting] are a problem. Specifically, how were the roads closed? (Asked of those who said that road closures when [hunting / shooting] are a problem.)



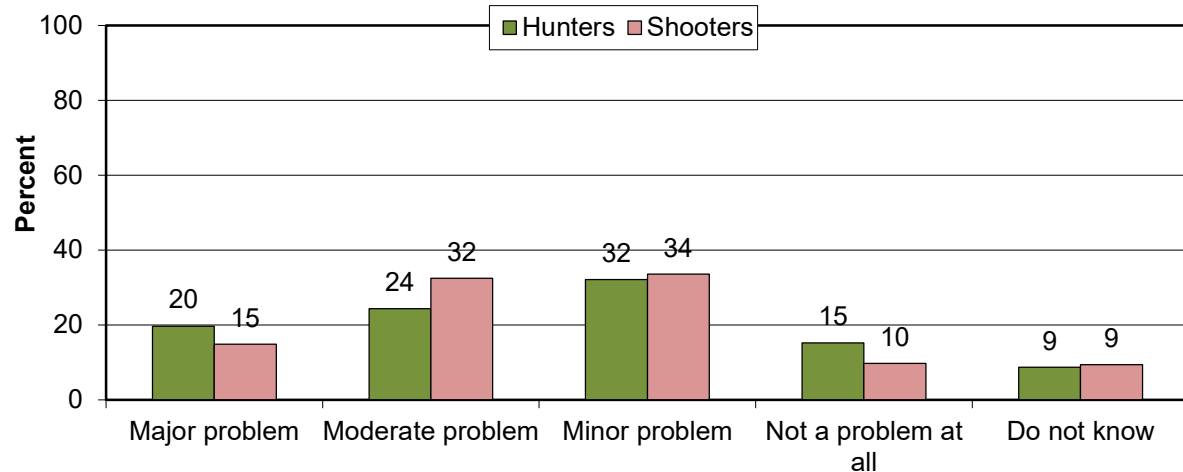
Was this a seasonal or temporary closure, or was it permanently closed? (Asked of those who said the road was closed by gate.)



Were the closed roads National Forest roads, BLM (Bureau of Land Management) roads, other public roads, or private roads? (Asked of those who said the road was closed by gate.)



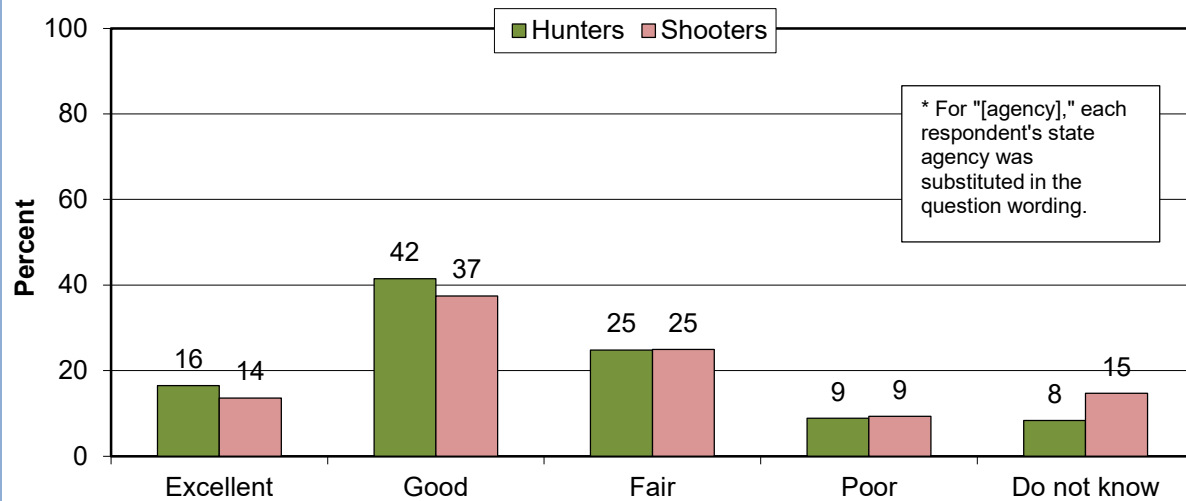
How much of a problem were landowners intentionally blocking or making it difficult to physically access public land [for hunting / for shooting]? (Asked of those who said that private land blocking access to public land for [hunting / shooting] is a problem.)



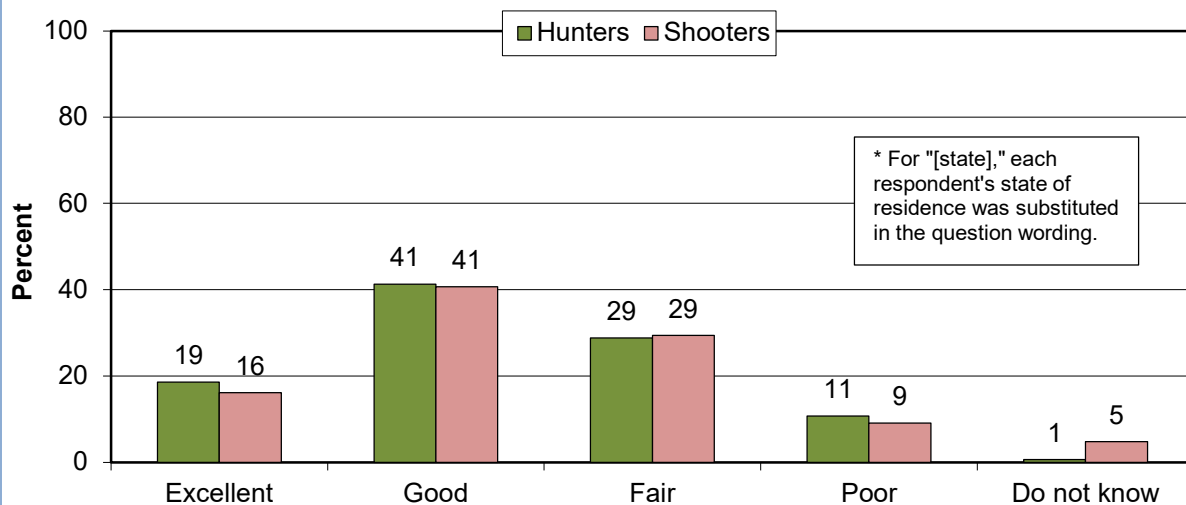
Overall, how would you rate access to lands for [hunting / shooting] in [state]*?



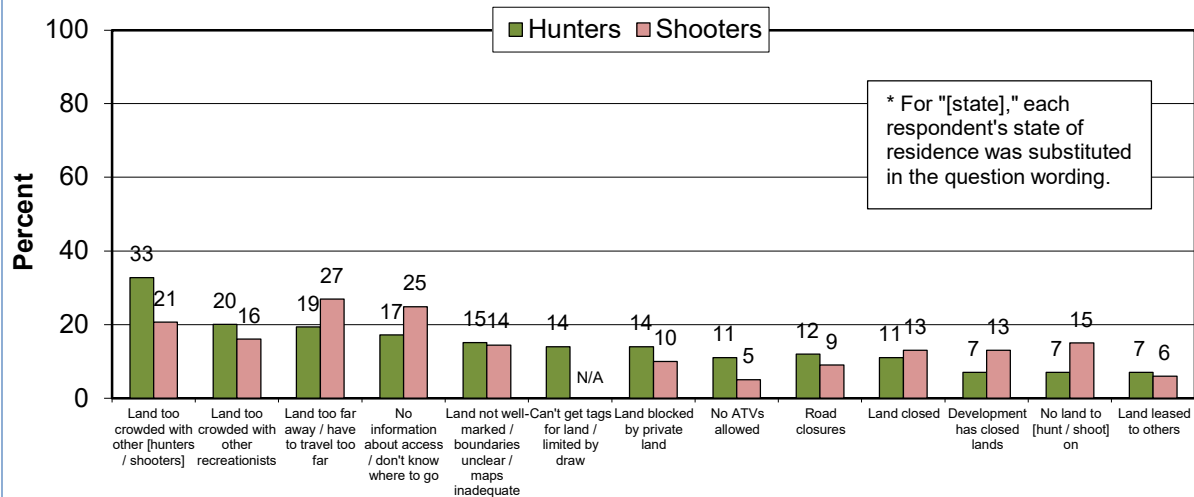
How would you rate the [agency]'s* management of access to lands for [hunting / shooting]?



How would you rate access to public lands for [hunting / shooting] in [state]?* (Asked of those who [hunt / shoot] on public land.)

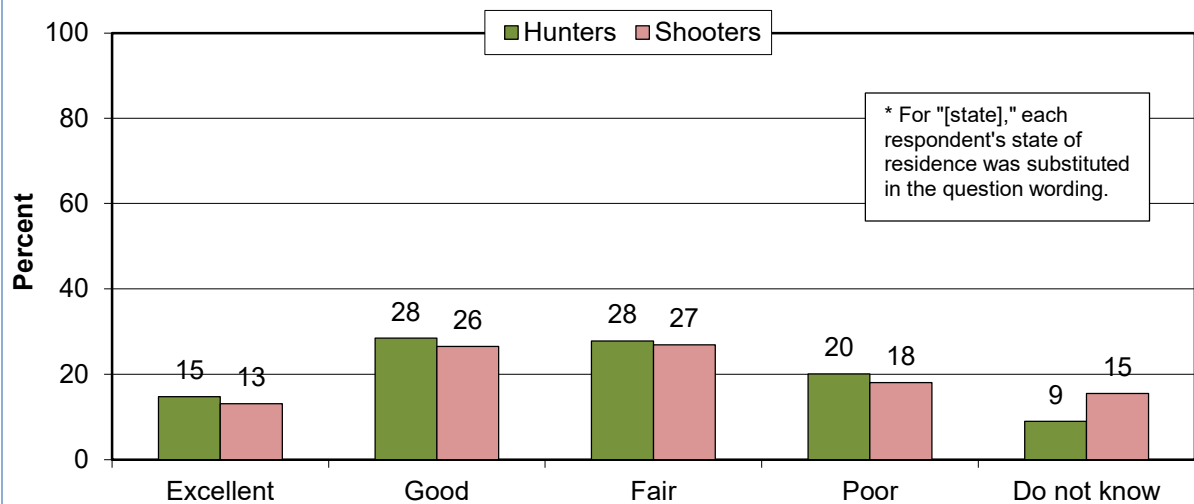


What are the specific reasons you did not rate access to [hunt / shoot] on public land in [state]* higher? (Asked of those who did not rate [hunting / shooting] access on public land as excellent.)

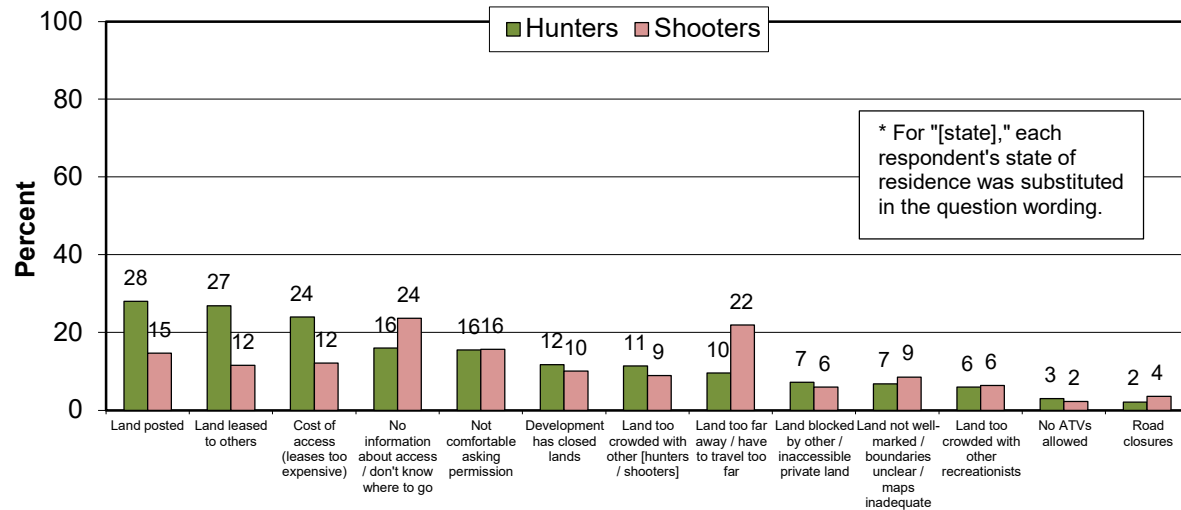


Multiple Responses Allowed

How would you rate access to private lands for [hunting / shooting] in [state]*? (Asked of those who [hunt / shoot] on private land.)

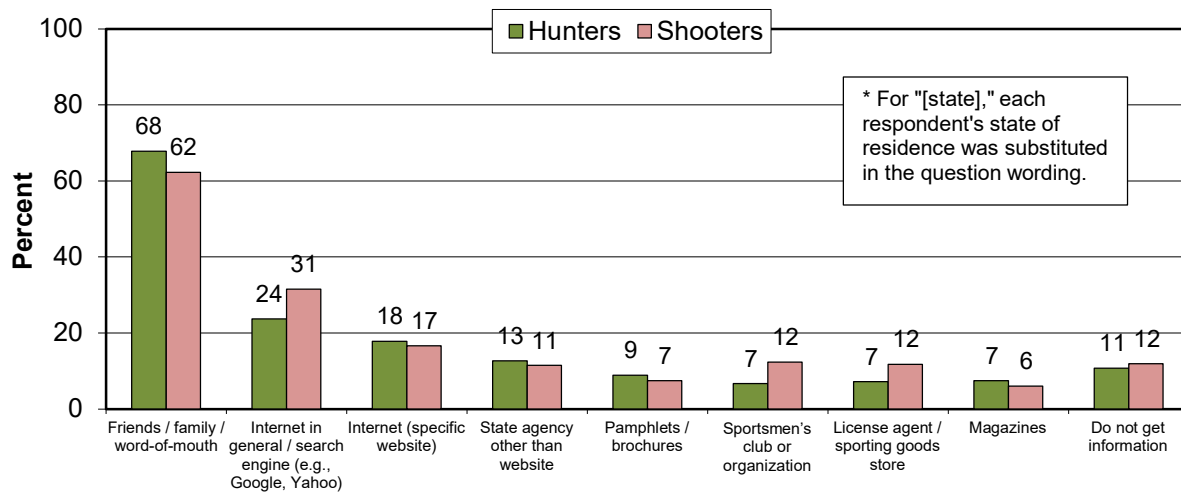


What are the specific reasons you did not rate access to [hunt / shoot] on private land in [state]* higher? (Asked of those who did not rate [hunting / shooting] access on private land as excellent.)

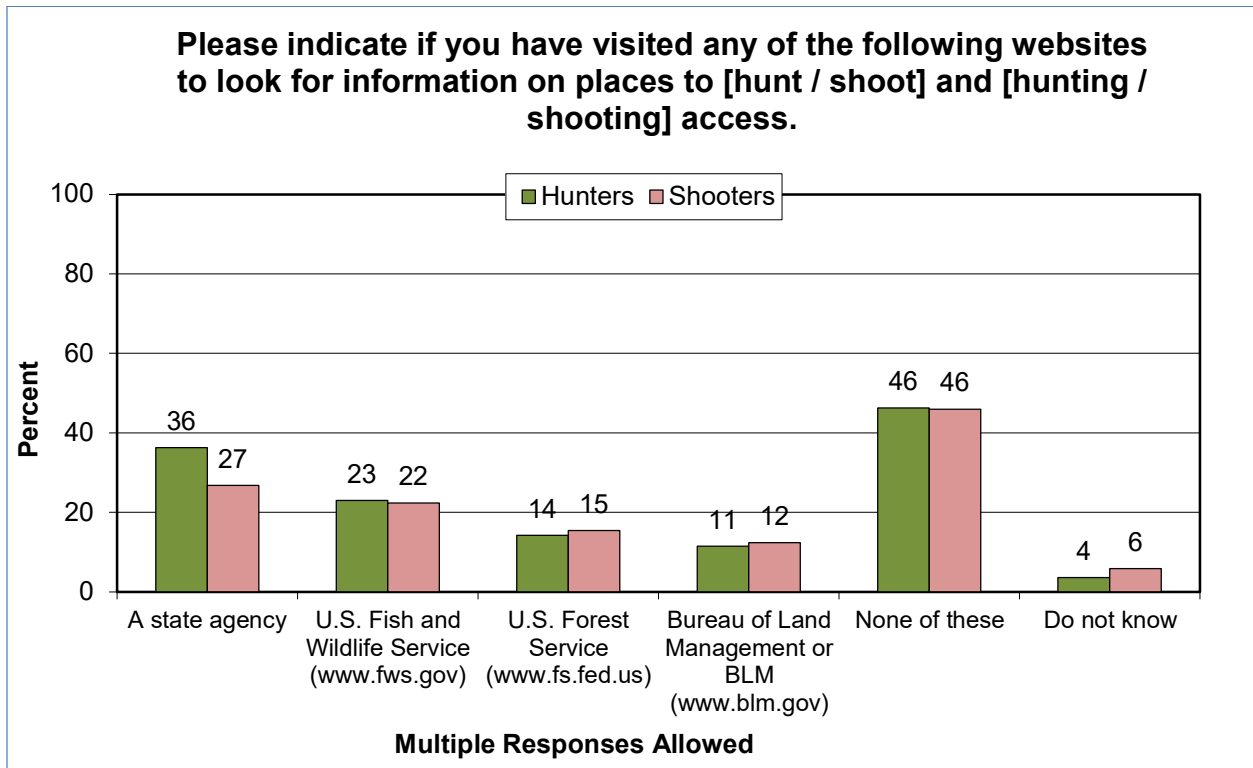


Multiple Responses Allowed

Where do you get information on places to [hunt / shoot] in [state]?* (Top responses)



Multiple Responses Allowed



IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

UNDERSTANDING HUNTING ACCESS ISSUES

Recommendation 1. Realize that hunting access issues are related to both physical and social/psychological aspects. Both of these aspects need to be addressed. If efforts to improve access concentrate only on the provision of physical opportunities and locations, a significant component of the hunting access issue may be missed. Social and psychological issues related to hunting access include hunters' awareness of hunting opportunities as well as their assumptions and perceptions regarding hunting access issues. For example, mapping programs and websites that identify hunting locations and opportunities address the social/psychological aspects of awareness and information.

Recommendation 2. Understand that hunting access issues can be categorized into five broad types of aspects: availability, accessibility, accommodation, awareness, and assumptions. As discussed in the 2010 access report, when designing comprehensive plans or programs to address access issues in a state or on a particular piece of land, it is important to consider the typology of hunting access factors. The factors that affect hunting participation include physical factors and social/psychological factors—the perceptions of hunters. It is important to note that access involves the physical opportunities and locations to hunt as well as hunters' awareness, perceptions, and attitudes regarding hunting access issues. The practical reality of whether fewer hunting opportunities exist and the perception that access is becoming a greater problem represent two separate, albeit related, issues. The reality of less hunting access is a physical constraint to hunting, whereas the perception that access is becoming more difficult is a psychological constraint.¹³ When addressing access issues, it is important to consider this typology of factors.

The physical aspects of access include:

- **Availability.** This pertains to the actual land available to hunt. Research has shown that the capacity for providing quality outdoor recreation opportunities is threatened by urban growth and development. Although the majority of U.S. residents participate in recreational activities on rural lands and this demand is expected to rise, the land base will likely remain stable or shrink.¹⁴ Changes in land use, including land conversion, subdivision, and development, continue to limit the amount of land available for recreational activities. In fact, research indicates that between 1982 and 1997, there was a 34% increase in the amount of land devoted to urban uses in the United States, primarily due to the conversion (i.e., development) of croplands and forests into urban/suburban and industrial land uses.¹⁵ As a result of anticipated urban expansion and population growth, researchers project that developed land areas will increase by

¹³ Responsive Management. *Issues related to hunting and fishing access in the United States: A literature review*. Produced for the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership.

¹⁴ Cordell, H., English, B., & Randall, S. (1993). *Effects of subdivision and access restrictions on private land recreation opportunities* (General Technical Report RM-213).

¹⁵ Alig, R.; J. Kline; and M. Lichtenstein. 2004. "Urbanization on the U.S. Landscape: Looking Ahead in the 21st Century." *Landscape and Urban Planning* 69(2–3), 219–234.

79% in the next 25 years, resulting in an increase from 5.2% to 9.2% of the proportion of the total land base in the United States that is developed.¹⁶ Because of these trends in land use, sustainable land management efforts are imperative for preserving land availability to provide outdoor recreation opportunities in the future.

Fish and wildlife agencies depend on recreational hunting as an integral component in the effective management and regulation of wildlife populations; in effect, recreational hunting “serves as an artificial means of predation now that natural predators no longer keep wildlife populations in balance.”¹⁷ Thus, although the availability of hunting lands is certainly important to hunter recruitment and retention, research also suggests that access for hunting is an important component in effective game management on these lands; that is, lack of access for hunting not only contributes to hunter cessation, but it also impacts wildlife managers’ capacity to manage wildlife.¹⁸ In fact, lack of access specifically to private lands may affect capacity to manage deer populations effectively for several reasons. Private land hunters are more likely than public land hunters to (1) have harvest success, (2) have a strong commitment to hunting, (3) demonstrate willingness to hunt antlerless deer, (4) spend more than the median amount of time hunting, and (5) continue hunting (i.e., private land hunters are *less* likely to desert the sport of hunting). Accordingly, it was suggested that “decreasing access to private lands may exacerbate already-recognized deficiencies in hunter capacity to manage deer.”¹⁹ As the aforementioned findings show, then, land availability and access issues are not only a concern for hunter recruitment and retention but for effective wildlife management.

- **Accessibility** pertains to the ability to get to the land. Often, problems with access are more closely related to accessibility rather than availability. In a 2008 study, hunters who had experienced access problems were asked whether the access problem was a lack of land (i.e., availability) on which to hunt or a situation where land existed that the hunter could not get to (i.e., accessibility). The majority of hunters with access problems (60%) indicated that land existed but they could not get to it, while 29% indicated that there was a lack of land. In fact, among active hunters, 68% reported that land existed but they were unable to get to it.²⁰

Lack of accessibility to land also occurs when private lands are leased to hunting clubs, which limits public access to that land. Hunting clubs that arrange for their members to

¹⁶Alig, R.; J. Kline; and M. Lichtenstein. 2004. “Urbanization on the U.S. Landscape: Looking Ahead in the 21st Century.” *Landscape and Urban Planning* 69(2–3), 219–234.

¹⁷ Backman, S., & Wright, B. (1993). An exploratory study of the relationship of attitude and the perception of constraints to hunting. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 11(2), 1–16.

¹⁸ Stedman, R., Bhandari, P., Luloff, A., Diefenbach, D., & Finley, J. (2008). Deer hunting on Pennsylvania’s public and private lands: A two-tiered system of hunters? *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*, 13, 222–233.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Responsive Management/National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF). (2008a). *The future of hunting and the shooting sports: Research-based recruitment and retention strategies*. Produced for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under Grant Agreement CT-M-6-0.

hunt on private lands take those private lands out of the “public” realm. Furthermore, those clubs can drive up leasing costs of other hunting lands, the result of which is increases in hunting club fees and fees for hunting land leases. This presents a problematic financial aspect of hunting access.

Accessibility issues include real and/or perceived “landlocked” hunting areas (e.g., public lands surrounded by private lands or public lands only accessible by remote access points), posted lands, closed lands, gated entries, illegally blocked access to public lands, and road closures. Accessibility issues differ on public versus private lands, as well. Fish and wildlife agencies often have more options available for managing public land under their jurisdiction, meaning that they can work to improve roads and reduce road closures into and on public lands. Conversely, working with private landowners to ensure hunting access is more complicated.

- **Accommodation** pertains to the ease of mobility and the experience once hunters are on the land. For example, as shown in this study, crowding is a major concern for providing positive hunting experiences and is closely related to access. Crowding may be a concern for hunters who are seeking isolated areas for hunting and prefer not to encounter others on their hunt. In this case, access issues are related to accommodation, and perhaps more specifically, the carrying capacity of the land itself. To complicate the issue even further, each hunter has his/her own tolerance threshold for the number of other hunters he/she encounters and how that impacts his/her hunting experience. While some hunters may have a higher threshold before they cite crowding as an access-related problem, other hunters may only be willing to tolerate one or two other recreationists before it has a negative impact on their hunting experience and becomes an important access issue. Whether it is an issue of carrying capacity or the individual hunter’s tolerance threshold for other recreationists, as urbanization continues to limit land access, crowding issues have remained a top-of-mind issue for hunters.

Other issues related to accommodation include, but are not limited to, road and trail conditions, prohibitions on vehicles, and distance traveled afoot for hunting. All of these factors limit hunting opportunities in some way. In some instances, the distance—though open to foot access—is too far for *feasible* access. Further, restrictions on ATVs and other vehicles can result in difficulties in trying to remove game harvested from woods and forests. Areas that fail to provide hunters with an opportunity to feasibly remove game are commonly viewed as lacking access.

The social/psychological aspects of access include:

- **Awareness** pertains to information and knowledge—to hunters’ awareness of the access options open to them. There is sometimes a disconnect between the amount of land actually available and a hunter’s awareness of this land. (The companion report for this study, *Assessing the Quality and Availability of Hunting and Shooting Access in the United States: Hunting and Shooting Access Inventory* (Responsive Management, 2021),

documents plentiful lands available for hunting across the country.) Although in some cases, there is clearly land available for hunting, hunters may lack awareness of the land, remote access points, and/or alternative routes to hunting land. As well, they may also think public land is land-locked. In other words, lack of *knowledge* of a place to hunt can be just as effective as an actual lack of places to hunt in preventing hunting.

Awareness also pertains to knowing where information can be found and how to use it. Many states lack a reliable, centralized location for the distribution of up-to-date information on the availability of and access to public and private hunting lands. Many hunters simply do not know where to find information on access and areas for hunting. At other times, maps are available but the information is not easily transferred to the ground—a map shows an available plot, but the plot cannot be located on the ground. In other instances, hunters are able to locate hunting lands shown as open on a map, only to discover that, in reality, such lands are either blocked, closed to the public, or have in some way been made inaccessible. Websites of state fish and wildlife agencies may represent the best locations for centralized, comprehensive listings of access locations and public and private hunting lands. The key is for state agencies to be able to provide consistently updated information regarding the availability of access and the status of hunting lands.

As shown in this study, there is a general lack of awareness of programs/resources designed to address hunting access issues. This study clearly shows the necessity of addressing hunters' awareness of access issues as well as the programs/resources that can minimize access problems.

- **Assumptions** pertain to hunters' perceptions about hunting opportunities. These include prevalent ideas that hunting opportunities are being threatened or other perceived barriers, regardless of whether they actually exist. Changes in land use from agriculturally zoned to residentially zoned and development of land have made more prevalent the idea that hunting opportunities are being threatened and have increased hunters' perception that hunting access is becoming worse. As hunters increasingly see the encroachment of development in their communities, they may assume that access is being threatened, even if they themselves have not experienced access problems. If hunters pass land that has been developed on the way to their favorite hunting spot, even though they may not have an access problem to the location of their choice, they may worry about the future encroachment or development of those lands. Other perceptions or fears may also contribute to access issues. For example, if a hunter is hesitant to obtain permission from a landowner, access can be, for all practical purposes, blocked by this hesitancy.

Well-designed plans and programs designed to address access issues should take a holistic approach that considers each of these factors. Ensuring that all five types of aspects are addressed will ensure that all aspects of access are covered by access programs/resources and, ultimately, help minimize hunters' frustrations with access problems.

Recommendation 3. Note that an important consideration of hunting access is whether the land is public or private. Consider these types of land separately. Hunting access issues vary on the two types of land, and some recommendations pertain only to one or the other. Also note that public hunting land is much more plentiful in the western United States; for example, nearly all of the 248 million acres of land managed by the Bureau of Land Management is located in the 11 contiguous western states and Alaska.²¹ Hunters and their access needs are not a monolith.

Recommendation 4. Understand the characteristics of hunters who report access issues.

This study offers additional analyses of hunters who indicated that access issues caused them *not* to hunt a species as much as they would have liked in the past 5 years. The analysis shows that these hunters are more likely to have the following characteristics:

- Hunts on public and private lands about equally
- Hunts upland game birds
- Resides in urban or suburban areas
- Hunts waterfowl

These analyses identify specific subgroups who are more likely, in comparison to other subgroups, to report access issues. The analyses are particularly useful in better understanding target audiences for the development of focused marketing and outreach efforts. Use the results of the demographic analyses in this study as an ongoing resource to help identify target markets.

Recommendation 5. Utilize this report as a tool for identifying target markets and implementing hunting access programs that work. Different groups of hunters encounter different issues with access, and the data in this report can help organizations identify target markets and implement the programs that have been identified as the most successful and effective. As shown above, the demographic analyses help identify audiences that should be targeted with outreach and programmatic efforts. Fish and wildlife agencies and other stakeholders should use a marketing approach with clearly defined goals and objectives to target these specific audiences. Tailor programs to address the concerns to these target markets and evaluate program efforts. Specifically, a marketing approach maintains the following order of decision-making: 1) specifically define goals; 2) identify groups within the overall pool of hunters and decide which ones should be targeted with certain programs/resources; 3) define specific and quantifiable objectives for each target market; 4) tailor programs/resources to each target market; and 5) evaluate the efforts directly to the established goals and objectives in terms of outcomes, not outputs.

Looking at one example, the results show that upland game bird hunters are more likely to report access issues than hunters who hunt other species. States that provide upland game bird hunting opportunities may consider offering special upland game bird hunts. Implementing special upland game bird hunts aimed at youth and based on fostering

²¹ Congressional Research Paper, *Hunting and Fishing on Federal Lands and Waters*, February 2018.

mentoring relationships will offer additional hunting opportunities and may help to improve hunters' frustrations with access issues. In this study, several special youth hunt programs are ranked as some of the most effective programs/resources for making hunting access easier, including Indiana Youth Hunting Days and Maine Youth Hunting Days.

Recommendation 6. Be aware of the strong link between effective marketing and outreach strategies and the success of programs/resources. According to this study, the Kansas Walk-In Hunting Access Program (WIHA) is the highest rated walk-in program (among hunters who were aware of the program). The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks has implemented numerous communications and outreach efforts designed to increase public awareness of WIHA opportunities, and this investment has paid off: 92% of Kansas hunters were very or somewhat aware of the WIHA program, making it the most well-known of all the national and state-sponsored programs/resources. Marketing, branding, and effective communications and outreach efforts have a clear impact on hunters' awareness of, participation in, and satisfaction with hunting access programs/resources.

Recommendation 7. The detailed source data in this report should be used in planning beyond the specific recommendations discussed in this section. For instance, the results showing the ranking of items that detracted from hunting enjoyment and participation are of immense value in determining agency priorities in designing and administering programs/resources. Additionally, the tables that show awareness of various programs/resources at the national and state level, as well as their effectiveness ratings, allow for an objective assessment of the effectiveness of these programs/resources and suggest areas in which these programs/resources need to be improved. In short, these tables suggest programs/resources for which more information is needed as well as programs/resources that need to have improved effectiveness ratings (i.e., have improved *implementation*). In addition, the trend comparisons of this hunting survey with the one conducted in 2010 illustrate areas in which further attention is needed.

Recommendation 8. The literature review that is documented in the Introduction section should also be consulted in planning.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE HUNTING ACCESS SURVEY

Recommendation 9. Understand the regional differences in the species sought by hunters.

White-tailed deer is the most hunted species by far, although this is not the case for West Region hunters (the survey is crosstabulated by the four major Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies regions: Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, and West); in the West, elk and mule deer are the most sought species. Similarly, dove and feral hog are hunted much more in the Southeast than in other regions. Promotional events such as youth hunts should be centered on species that are more likely to be seen and harvested, which could increase satisfaction for newcomers.

Recommendation 10. Planning efforts should consider the avidity of different hunter groups.

An encouraging finding from this study is that younger hunters (18 to 34 years old) are more likely than their older counterparts to hunt more than the median of 20 days each year. Marketing and promotion to retain these hunters could sustain participation numbers for years to come. Other avid groups to consider include waterfowl hunters, those who hunt public and private land about equally, Southeast Region hunters, and rural residents.

Recommendation 11. Special attention should be paid to hunters in the West Region.

A self-evaluation of hunting activity (framed over the past 5 years) showed that West Region hunters more often said that their hunting decreased (38%) than increased (20%). (Participation was stable in the other three regions.) Also, referring to the demographic analysis of hunting avidity discussed above, West Region/elk hunters are the least avid, next to female hunters.

Recommendation 12. Hunting opportunities near urban centers should be provided and promoted.

Although just under half of hunters overall travel more than 30 miles to hunt, over 84% of urban hunters do so. Travel distances are frequently cited as a constraint to hunting satisfaction or participation, so hunting opportunities closer to cities may appeal to this nontraditional hunting population.

Recommendation 13. Be cognizant that access to private lands is crucial to hunting participation.

Three-fourths of hunters nationally (75%) hunt private lands at least half the time, and these hunters are also the constituents who appear the most dissatisfied with overall hunting access in their state—meaning that one of the most valuable constituencies (numerically) is also one of the most dissatisfied. This is particularly applicable to the eastern states. Hunters were asked a series of questions regarding specific access issues that they had encountered during the previous 5 years: less land on which to hunt due to private land ownership changes (56% of hunters indicated this had been a problem) and finding previously opened private land sold and posted or closed by the new landowner (44% of hunters indicated this had been a problem) were among the top hunting access problems. Moreover, it is clear from the current study that hunters who hunt mostly on private lands appear more dissatisfied with overall hunting access in their state compared to hunters who hunt mostly on public lands.

Recommendation 14. Note that most private land hunters hunt on land owned by a friend or acquaintance.

Nearly a quarter of private land hunters (22%) hunt on their own land, while most of the remainder hunt on land owned by someone they know. This means that an untapped “market” exists of people who would benefit by a private lands access program—in other words, they already hunt on private land but limit themselves to people they know.

Recommendation 15. Facilitate programs/resources that both nurture relationships between hunters and landowners and increase hunting opportunities on private lands.

The fact that most hunters hunt either exclusively on private land or on both public and private land about equally complicates the issue of hunting access because state regulatory agencies are limited in their management of hunting opportunities on private lands. Nevertheless,

increasing hunting access on private lands is necessary for improving hunter satisfaction and preventing cessation, and it is important for agencies to facilitate programs/resources that both nurture relationships between hunters and landowners and increase hunting opportunities on private lands.

Recommendation 16. Ensure that programs/resources designed to increase hunting access on private lands address landowner concerns and issues. Hunters who said they have access problems frequently cited posted lands. Clearly, then, restricted access to private lands is a problem for hunters. For this reason, it is important for agencies to better understand the reasons why landowners choose to restrict access to their lands. The issues that influence a landowner's decision to restrict access to their property are numerous and varied. For this reason, programs/resources should be designed to address these issues.

Recommendation 17. Develop informational and educational outreach strategies designed to better inform landowners and address their reticence to open their lands. Research has shown that providing incentives and liability protection encourages landowners to open their property to hunting. Agencies should develop focused messages and communication strategies that are designed to educate landowners about the benefits of opening their lands to hunters. Landowners should be made aware of the conservation and habitat benefits of permitting hunting, and outreach should highlight the personal and/or financial benefits offered by various programs/resources designed to increase access to private lands. Appeals for landowners to help continue the hunting tradition can be effective as well. It is important that information and outreach targeting landowners address their concerns. For example, outreach to landowners should highlight program/resource elements and steps taken to directly address hunter ethics, safety, and liability concerns.

Recommendation 18. Recognize that private lands blocking public lands can be an important barrier for hunting access to public land and subsequent hunting participation. According to the study, 38% of hunters said that private land blocking access to public land for hunting was a major, moderate, or minor problem during the previous 5 years (this number was 29% in 2010). More importantly, most of this group believe that the private landowners are *intentionally* blocking access to public hunting lands.

Recommendation 19. Consider approaches for addressing issues with private lands blocking access to public hunting lands. The Making Public Lands Public (MPLP) initiative was launched in 2006 and has earmarked appropriation dollars to acquire access from willing property owners or to enhance access to Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service lands adjacent to private property. In 2019, at least \$15 million was appropriated from the Land and Water Conservation Fund for the purpose of increasing recreational access. Agencies should support the MPLP initiative and seek funding for similar projects in their state.

Recommendation 20. Be aware that crowding is the most important consideration for hunters choosing lands on which to hunt. When hunters were asked about the importance of 11 factors in their decisions regarding where to hunt, a single factor stands out markedly more important than the rest: that the land is not crowded with other sportsmen (71% say this is *very important* and 21% say it is *somewhat important*). Feeling unsafe because of other hunters is tangentially related to crowding because having too many hunters in an area may increase these problems. In turn, this impacts the overall natural and aesthetic characteristics of the hunting experience.

Recommendation 21. Understand that crowding is a complicated access issue because it relates to both the physical aspects of access (e.g., use levels, carrying capacity) as well as the social/psychological aspects (e.g., hunters' perceptions of crowding). While fish and wildlife agencies may be able to address the physical aspects of hunter density and carrying capacity by various regulations, such as limiting the number of hunters permitted to hunt in a given area, addressing the social/psychological aspects of crowding may prove more challenging.

Recommendation 22. Increase outreach aimed at reducing a hunter's level of *perceived* crowding, which can be effective in addressing concerns regarding actual crowding and, ultimately, hunting access. Research has shown that a hunter's expectations regarding the hunting experience as well as situational factors (e.g., hunter density) all influence the hunter's perception of crowding. One way that agencies can address the issue of perceived crowding is through information. Increasing information regarding hunter density and carrying capacity may influence hunters' expectations and tolerance, thereby changing hunters' perceptions of crowding. According to past research, information helps to minimize the effects of crowding through self-selected redistribution and through its impact on hunters' perceptions regarding crowding.²² In that study, information was distributed to hunters regarding the number of hunters and hunter density in hunting areas. In comparison to hunters who did not receive this information, hunters who received information reported feeling less crowded.

Recommendation 23. Increased information may impact hunters' preferences and behaviors regarding crowding. Information that identifies where hunters hunt and approximately how many hunters hunt a given area may help hunters' decision-making. With this information, hunters may change their hunting behaviors to avoid other hunters, thereby reducing crowding. Historic data on the number of hunters in a given Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) or a website or phone app giving real-time estimates of hunters in a WMU are possibilities to consider.

²² Heberlein, T., & Kuentzel, W. (2002). Too many hunters or not enough deer? Human and biological determinants of hunter satisfaction and quality. *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*, 7, 229–250.

Recommendation 24. Changes in land ownership must be addressed to counter hunters' access issues. The study included a series of 25 potential problems for hunters when hunting in the past 5 years. The items rated as the most problematic, when ranked by *major* or *moderate problem* combined, are less land on which to hunt due to private land ownership changes, less land on which to hunt due to development, less land on which to hunt because the land use has changed, housing or other developments making land not huntable, finding previously open private land sold and posted or closed by the new landowner, and finding previously open private land posted or closed by the landowner—all with 30% or more saying they were *major* or *moderate problems*. If possible, up-to-date records of land ownership should be made available to hunters.

Recommendation 25. Ensure the availability of and proper maintenance of road access. The majority of hunters (79%) indicate that they use a car or truck to access hunting lands. In a series of questions designed to determine access issues that affect hunters' decisions of where to hunt, 31% of hunters indicate that easy access by car or truck is a very important consideration when choosing lands on which to hunt, making poor maintenance and closed roads and trails an important access issue. When asked a series of questions specifically about access, 37% of hunters said not being able to find a good place to park their vehicle, 37% said poor maintenance of roads or trails, and 30% said road closures have been a major, moderate, or minor problem during the past 5 years (these percentages increased since 2010). Ensuring the availability and proper maintenance of road access to public lands will help increase hunting access for this group of hunters.

Recommendation 26. Be aware that a top-of-mind issue related to hunting access is land accessibility. Lack of access to land is an important dissatisfaction with or disincentive to participation among active hunters. Improving accessibility can be as effective as increasing actual acreage of hunting lands—it can “open” land that was considered to be closed.

Recommendation 27. Consider ways to address urbanization and housing developments in an attempt to address real issues with land availability. Urbanization and concomitant rural land loss remain a critical obstacle for access to hunting. Half of hunters in this study (50%) indicate that housing and commercial development has been a major, moderate, or minor problem in the past 5 years when hunting. Efforts to increase hunting opportunities and access, particularly near areas experiencing high levels of development, are important. In many ways, this is a reminder to enhance hunting opportunities near areas of high growth and development to counter the loss of available hunting lands in these areas.

Recommendation 28. Understand that accommodation is an important aspect of hunting access. Road and trail conditions, vehicle restrictions, and distance from roads for hunting all influence the ease of mobility once a hunter has accessed land, thereby impacting the overall hunting experience.

Recommendation 29. Consider the impact that ATV restrictions and limitations have on

hunters. In this study, 25% of hunters indicate that not having ATV access in general had been a major, moderate, or minor problem during the past 5 years, and 23% say that not being able to retrieve their harvest because of ATV restrictions was a problem during the past 5 years (both of these percentages increased since 2010). Of those hunters who reported that not being able to retrieve their harvest because of ATV restrictions was a problem, 38% agree that this had caused them to hunt less (fortunately, this is down from 51% in 2010). Areas that fail to provide hunters with an opportunity to feasibly remove game can be highly discouraging to hunters, especially those who are elderly or disabled.

Recommendation 30. Be aware that increasing ATV access may result in additional access problems, such as poor road conditions, perceptions of crowding, and reasons for dissatisfaction with other hunters and outdoor recreationists.

Note that ATV use runs the risk of alienating many hunters who do not use ATVs and who may be hunting, in part, for the aesthetic experience, which is consistently cited as an important motivation for hunting (for relaxation, to be in nature, for the scenery). ATV use may distract from the aesthetic experience, so caution should be exercised in promulgating any ATV regulations. It is important for land management and fish and wildlife agencies to consider all factors related to ATV use to determine the most effective approach for addressing these issues in their state.

Recommendation 31. Focus marketing or promotions on demographic groups that hunt less due to access issues.

Demographic analyses in the study show that those who hunt public and private land about equally, upland game bird and waterfowl hunters, and urban and suburban residents are the groups most likely to hunt less due to lack of access.

Recommendation 32. Land closures have an important impact on hunting participation, but to many hunters land closings appear arbitrary.

State land management and fish and wildlife agencies have some control over land closures, and such closures should be minimized. However, when land closures are necessary, agencies should ensure that up-to-date information is available to their constituents explaining where these closures occur and why they are necessary. This applies to road closures as well.

Recommendation 33. Communicate information on land management and resource allocation decisions to hunters.

The study shows that 53% of hunters think that poor management or allocation of uses of public land is a major, moderate, or minor problem in their state; this is a sizable increase from 2010 (39% stated it then). It is important for land management and fish and wildlife agencies to clearly communicate agency land management uses and objectives. Misconceptions regarding land use and resource allocation can be highly detrimental to hunters' attitudes about hunting access in their state.

Recommendation 34. Emphasize the importance of good hunter behavior in maintaining access. Good hunter behavior is crucial in maintaining hunting access, particularly access to private lands (but not exclusively to private lands, as poor hunter behavior can affect access decisions made by *public* land management agencies, as well). If hunters expect landowners to offer access to private property, they must follow strict guidelines of hunting ethics. In truth, most hunters appear to be aware that their behavior can have a profound impact on access.

Recommendation 35. Note that ratings of access have decreased since 2010, but not substantially. The study shows that 47% of hunters rate access to lands for hunting in their state as excellent or good, compared to 56% who gave these ratings in 2010. It is important to recognize that providing access and promoting this access should be considered a continuous, ongoing effort (in other words, a marathon, not a sprint). The companion report for this study, *Assessing the Quality and Availability of Hunting and Shooting Access in the United States: Hunting and Shooting Access Inventory* (Responsive Management, 2021), documents plentiful lands available for hunting across the country, so hunters' perceptions of access may not align with true hunting opportunities.

Recommendation 36. Also note that hunters' ratings of access are mostly moderate, suggesting that they are reachable through communication efforts. Ratings are generally not at the very top or bottom but are in the middle: good more than excellent at the top half of the scale, and fair more than poor in the lower half of the scale. Among hunters in the 19 states surveyed, 47% rate access excellent (12%) or good (35%), while 49% rate it fair (37%) or poor (12%).

Recommendation 37. State fish and wildlife agencies are seen as credible, so communication efforts should include the agency's name and logo. Ratings of hunters' state agency at managing access are better than the ratings of access itself, suggesting that some hunters do not blame the agency itself for access problems. The majority (58%) give a rating of excellent or good, compared to 34% giving a rating of fair or poor. Again, most ratings are in the middle (good or fair) rather than in the extremes (excellent or poor).

Recommendation 38. Understand that public land access gets better ratings than private land access. For public land: 60% rated it excellent or good, and 40% rated it fair or poor. For private land: 43% rated it excellent or good, and 48% rated it fair or poor.

Recommendation 39. Focus communication efforts on groups who gave lower ratings to access. Demographic analyses show that elk/West Region hunters, suburban residents, those who hunt public and private land about equally, and female hunters gave lower ratings for access than did hunters overall.

Recommendation 40. Ensure that dissemination of information is included in efforts to improve access. According to the current research, hunters identify the availability and distribution of additional *information* as an important factor in making hunting access

easier. Indeed, this study shows that many hunting access problems are due to a lack of information or misconceptions regarding hunting opportunities. While agencies find ways to manage the physical aspects of hunting access, such as increasing landowner/hunter partnerships, it appears that increasing information dissemination and outreach may be just as valuable in addressing hunting access issues. Furthermore, of all the national hunting access programs/resources discussed in this survey, the onX Map app was rated as the most effective for making hunting access easier, thereby underscoring the importance of addressing the informational aspect of access.

Recommendation 41. Ensure that there are high levels of public awareness on *how* to obtain information regarding hunting opportunities and access. It is important not only for agencies to provide additional information on hunting lands and hunting access, but also to ensure that there are high levels of public awareness on *how* to obtain and use this information. Lack of information can be as detrimental to participation as actual lack of land in preventing hunting. Furthermore, this is an aspect of access in which agencies and organizations can have a direct influence.

Recommendation 42. Make sure that information regarding hunting access is clear, timely, and accurate. Hunters experience access issues when they attempt to follow maps that are confusing or inaccurate, when information regarding hunting opportunities in their state is out-of-date, and when there is a disparity between information provided by agency maps and actual on-the-ground physical access. Many hunters said being confused by a state agency map that was hard to follow was a problem during the past 5 years when hunting. Additionally, many hunters said that having maps that show huntable land but being unable to locate that land on the ground was a problem.

Recommendation 43. Provide opportunities for and encourage hunters to report inaccuracies. To help alleviate frustration, states should provide an opportunity for hunters to report inaccurate maps and/or “random” road closings. Providing an outlet for hunters to report these issues would serve three purposes: 1) hunters would feel that they have an impact or voice in access problems, thereby lowering their frustration, 2) states will receive good, useful information about maps and agency information that can be corrected for future use, and 3) states could use this opportunity to inform hunters on why roads are closed so that it will no longer seem arbitrary or unnecessary. States should consider hosting a spot on their websites (if they do not already do so) that allows hunters to post comments about closings and inaccuracies in real-time, thereby reducing frustration among those who check the website comments prior to hunting.

Recommendation 44. Provide and maintain a statewide mapping system or atlas that clearly identifies public hunting areas. Fortunately, state agency websites typically offer a searchable map that identifies available hunting lands, along with valuable information such as game availability, dates of operation, and amenities. Over a third of hunters (36%) had visited their state agency’s website, and the use of such mapping resources is likely to increase as hunters become more aware of and comfortable with their usefulness.

Recommendation 45. Provide clearly marked boundaries and ensure appropriate signage in the field. Increasing a hunter's knowledge while afield is just as important as providing the right informational tools for the planning process. This is an area in which agencies can have great influence, and it also provides an opportunity for agencies to work with landowners and land management agencies to increase information and hunter awareness. Many of the problems reported by hunters are related to a lack of clearly marked boundaries and signage. In fact, a majority of hunters (54%) said that lack of or unclear signs marking public hunting lands was a major, moderate, or minor problem in accessing hunting land in their state, in general. Moreover, 44% of hunters said that not being sure of the boundaries of huntable land was a problem in the past 5 years when hunting. This could also be contributing to problems landowners have with hunting access, such as trespassing; that is, hunters may unintentionally trespass simply because they are unaware that they are on private property. These findings suggest that agencies need to take steps to increase information in the field.

Recommendation 46. Continue providing hunting access information with license applications. Overall, 20% of hunters get information on places to hunt through their license application or hunting regulations booklet.

Recommendation 47. State-sponsored walk-in access programs should be established (if not already) and vigorously promoted. Research shows that state-sponsored walk-in access programs are considered some of the most effective programs/resources for making hunting access easier. Walk-in access arrangements are mutually beneficial to both hunters and landowners. For landowners, enrollment in a walk-in access program may result in lease payments (where not prohibited), assistance with conservation and habitat enhancements, patrol and law enforcement, and liability immunity. For hunters, walk-in access programs provide access to private lands for free or for minimal costs and help reduce the crowding hunters experience on public lands. An encouraging finding from trends analysis shows that participation in walk-in access programs increased from 29% of hunters in 2010 to 35% in 2021. Participation in these programs should continue to rise as more landowners and hunters discover the benefits.

Recommendation 48. Continue increasing familiarity with and awareness of national programs/resources. Slightly over half of hunters are aware of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Waterfowl Production Areas, onX Maps, and the Conservation Reserve Program. On the other hand, awareness levels for letsgehunting.org (also accessed through wheretohunt.org) and the Open Fields Program were low. Fortunately, awareness of all these programs has increased since 2010 by 5% to 10%, so the outreach efforts are working. To maximize the benefits of these programs/resources, agencies need to continue their communications and outreach efforts and target specific markets.

Recommendation 49. Increase participation in national hunting access programs/resources that currently exist. While awareness levels were substantial for the Waterfowl Production Areas and the Conservation Reserve Program, participation in these programs was relatively

low (only 10% and 11% of hunters, respectively, used the programs). There is more robust usage of onX Maps (29% of hunters have used it), although that too is far below the level of awareness. This suggests that hunters are aware of the programs but may not be taking advantage of them; therefore, there is a need for increasing public outreach and communication regarding these national hunting access programs/resources that currently exist.

Recommendation 50. Realize that special hunting opportunities for youth are important.

Among the highly rated programs are programs designed to increase hunting access and opportunities for youth. In particular, Indiana Youth Hunting Days program was rated by 73% of hunters who were aware of the program as being excellent or good for increasing hunting access (the top ranked of all the state access programs). Other top youth hunt programs are Indiana Apprentice License (70% excellent or good ratings) and Maine Youth Hunting Days (also 70%). Past research has shown that initiation at a young age, initiation by hunting small game, and promoting a “hunting culture” are all important to successful hunting recruitment and retention.²³

Recommendation 51. Understand that the programs/resources rated most effective for making hunting access easier are youth hunts, Wildlife Management or Conservation Areas (WMAs or CAs), walk-in access programs, and mapping resources. State agencies and land planners should research the successful programs to see if any aspects can be adopted into their own management practices. The top-ranked resources, all with over two thirds of hunters (who are aware of the resources) rating them excellent or good, are Indiana Youth Hunting Days, WMAs in Massachusetts, Missouri CAs, New Jersey WMAs, Indiana Apprentice License, Maine Youth Hunting Days, direct emails from MassWildlife, the Kansas Walk-In Hunting Access (WIHA) Program, MassWildlife Lands Viewer, and Florida WMA brochures.

Recommendation 52. Use the table ranking the state programs as a resource for determining which programs have low effectiveness ratings. Using the opposite approach of the previous recommendation, take a closer look at the programs/resources that had low effectiveness ratings to determine if there are specific elements that can be improved.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE HUNTER TRENDS ANALYSIS

Recommendation 53. The detailed hunter trends graphs in this report should be used in planning beyond the specific recommendations discussed in this section. However, also note that series trend comparisons, such as the list of 25 potential problems encountered while hunting in the past 5 years, show the percentages of major, moderate, and minor

²³ Responsive Management. *Increasing hunting participation by investigating factors related to hunting license sales increases in 1992, 1999, and 2004 against 13 other years of hunting license sales decline between 1990-2005*. Produced in partnership with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources for the National Shooting Sports Foundation.

problems combined. For areas in which problems are shown to be getting worse, state agencies and stakeholders should also consult the graphs showing specific response percentages. Hunters who say that an access issue is a moderate or minor problem may not have decreased hunting satisfaction or participation due to the issue, whereas those who say something is a major problem are identifying a legitimate constraint.

Recommendation 54. Recognize that hunter behaviors and attitudes regarding species or species groups hunted; if their hunting participation has increased, stayed about the same, or decreased over the past 5 years; and the type of land hunted (public, private, or both) have changed very little since 2010. Knowing the level of consistency in these areas may help agencies be intuitive in their planning efforts.

Recommendation 55. Hunters are far less likely to say that familiarity with the land is important when deciding where to hunt, which provides an excellent marketing opportunity. The percentage who said that familiarity with the land is *very* important decreased from 58% in 2010 to 38% in 2021. Knowing this, agencies should tout the excitement of having new experiences or exploring new lands. Other findings in the series support this as well. Again considering the percentages of *very* important responses: land owned by someone they know decreased from 47% to 31%, land close to home decreased from 40% to 30%, and land easy to access by foot decreased from 51% to 44%.

Recommendation 56. Finding private land is less important to hunters, so agencies should promote public hunting opportunities. Trends analysis shows that the percentage of hunters who think that private land is *very* important in deciding where to hunt decreased from 43% to 34%. Vigorous campaigns for public hunting opportunities may reach persuadable hunters.

Recommendation 57. Note that, although lack of crowding is the top issue in choosing hunting lands, this too has decreased in importance. The percentage saying that this is *very* important decreased from 82% to 71%.

Recommendation 58. Communicate to hunters the reasons for management of land for purposes other than hunting (such as timber). Both surveys included a series of 10 potential problems and asked hunters to rate how much of a problem each is in their state in general. All 10 items were rated as more problematic in this survey compared to 2010. However, the largest increases are for issues in which state agencies have some control, with the issue named above showing the largest increase (going from 31% saying it is a major, moderate, or minor problem in 2010 to 49% in 2021). Similar issues also had the highest increases, with poor management or allocation of uses of public land going from 39% to 53% and closures of public land by government agencies going from 35% to 48%. If reasons for these actions are clearly communicated to hunters, they may feel less frustration at the unavailability of the lands.

Recommendation 59. Increase accessibility for the disabled on public lands. The percentage of hunters saying this is a major, moderate, or minor problem increased by 10%.

Recommendation 60. Add and maintain signage marking public hunting lands. The percentage of hunters saying this is a major, moderate, or minor problem increased from 42% to 54%. In addition to adding signs, if necessary, any vegetation obscuring existing signs should be trimmed to allow for greater visibility.

Recommendation 61. Provide a database of landowners willing to allow hunting on their property. In another series of questions were identical between the two surveys, the percentage of hunters saying that their inability to find landowners to ask for permission to hunt is a major, moderate, or minor problem when hunting in the past 5 years increased from 33% to 46%. The promotion (or creation) of a walk-in access program can ameliorate this issue, as can any other actions taken by an agency to act as a go-between for willing landowners and hunters.

Recommendation 62. Realize that the importance of disseminating information on hunting access is reinforced by the trends analysis. Increases in the percentages of hunters saying that the issues are problematic are observed for state agency information being out of date, not having information about where to hunt, being unsure about the boundaries of huntable land, inability to find a good place to park, inability to find a road or access route to the land, inaccurate information about where to hunt, and inability to locate land from maps on the ground. Again, providing and updating access information are within state agencies' control.

Recommendation 63. Maintain roads and trails. The percentage of hunters saying this is a major, moderate, or minor problem increased from 21% to 37%.

Recommendation 64. Add or maintain boat launches, if possible, and provide information on their locations. The percentage of hunters saying this is a major, moderate, or minor problem increased from 9% to 26%. Although it may be cost prohibitive to construct additional boat launches, it is possible that this is a perception issue that can be addressed with information to hunters.

Recommendation 65. Understand that, although most specific issues have higher percentages of hunters saying they are a problem, this is not reflected in hunting behavior. In fact, the percentage of those who strongly agree that lack of access cause them to not hunt as much as they would like in the past 5 years *decreased* from 31% to 21%.

Recommendation 66. Continue promoting walk-in access programs, because it is working. Participation in walk-in access programs increased from 29% in 2010 to 35% in 2021.

Recommendation 67. Look closely at trends crosstabulations to address user groups. The percentages discussed in this section are for hunters overall, but many trends (particularly the series) are also crosstabulated by hunter groups (e.g., primarily hunts upland game birds; mostly hunts public land). An access issue that is problematic for hunters overall may not be a problem for a specific user group. It is also worth noting that, despite large increases in certain issues being seen as problems for hunters, the overall percentage of hunters rating access to land as excellent or good only decreased from 56% in 2010 to 47% in 2021.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SHOOTING ACCESS SURVEY

Recommendation 68. Handguns, modern rifles, and shotguns are used by a majority of sport shooters, so clearly indicate the types that are allowed at ranges. In the past 5 years, 68% of sport shooters used handguns, 58% used modern rifles, and 56% used shotguns. State agency websites should include as much detail as possible about state-managed shooting ranges, particularly information on which firearms are allowed and/or designed for at the range.

Recommendation 69. Provide and promote archery opportunities. A substantial number of sport shooters participate in archery shooting: 30% have used archery equipment (not including crossbows) in the past 5 years, while 16% have used crossbows.

Recommendation 70. Many shooters use multiple types of equipment, so ranges designed for multiple equipment types would be attractive.

Recommendation 71. Demographic analysis should be consulted when planning outreach efforts. For example, female sport shooters are far more likely than males to primarily shoot with handguns (45% to 28%, respectively). Both shooting ranges and handgun sellers could find success marketing in media likely to be seen or heard by female shooters.

Recommendation 72. Planning efforts should consider the avidity of different shooter groups. Shooters who primarily use AR platform rifles are the group most likely to shoot more than the median of 6 days per year (65% do so, compared to 49% of shooters overall). In this example, the analysis suggests that ranges offering AR platform shooting may have a reliable constituency.

Recommendation 73. Focus on providing shooting access information to user groups who travel far to shoot. Demographic analysis shows that urban residents, West Region residents, those who shoot on public and private land about equally, and younger shooters (18 to 34 years old) are more likely than their counterparts to travel more than the median distance of 20 miles to shoot. It is possible that there are more shooting opportunities close to home than they realize, so information on shooting access should be targeted to these groups.

Recommendation 74. Be cognizant that access to private lands is crucial to sport shooting participation. Three-fourths of shooters nationally (75%) shoot on private lands at least half the time, and these shooters are also the constituents who appear the most dissatisfied with overall shooting access in their state—meaning that one of the most valuable constituencies (numerically) is also one of the most dissatisfied.

Recommendation 75. Note that most private land shooters shoot on land owned by a friend or acquaintance. Over a fifth of private land shooters (21%) shoot on their own land, while most of the remainder shoot on land owned by someone they know. This means that an untapped “market” exists of people who would benefit by a private lands access program—in other words, they already shoot on private land but limit themselves to people they know.

Recommendation 76. Shooting opportunities in or near urban centers should be provided and promoted. A majority of urban shooters (57%) travel more than 20 miles to shoot. Travel distances are frequently cited as a constraint to shooting satisfaction or participation, so shooting opportunities closer to cities or within city limits may appeal to this nontraditional shooting population.

Recommendation 77. Provide and promote or continue promoting walk-in access programs. Nearly half of shooters (48%) use access programs often, sometimes, or rarely, compared to 45% who never use them. It is expected that this participation rate will continue to rise as participants inform their friends and family of the convenience and enjoyment of using these programs.

Recommendation 78. Be aware that crowding is the most important consideration for shooters choosing lands on which to shoot. When shooters were asked about the importance of 10 factors in their decisions regarding where to shoot, a single factor stands out markedly more important than the rest: that the land is not crowded with other sportsmen (63% say this is *very* important and 24% say it is *somewhat* important).

Recommendation 79. Ensure that shooters going to a range have easy access by car or truck. Next to crowding, vehicle access was considered the most important aspect when deciding where to shoot.

Recommendation 80. Consider ways to reduce the cost of sport shooting. Cost is the top issue affecting sport shooters’ enjoyment. Although equipment and ammunition costs are outside of an agency’s control, range discounts or promotional events may be effective R3 tools.

Recommendation 81. Disseminate information about lands on which to shoot. Access is among the top issues affecting sport shooters’ enjoyment. The top access issues are a lack of land on which to shoot, land being too far away, and a lack of information about lands on

which to shoot. Addressing the last issue could clear up potential misperceptions about the other issues, if there are in fact nearby shooting ranges.

Recommendation 82. Focus marketing or promotions on demographic groups that shoot less due to access issues. Nearly half of shooters (43%) agree that lack of land to shoot on in their state caused them to shoot less than they would have liked in the past 5 years. Agreement is particularly high among young shooters, urban shooters, those who primarily shoot with modern rifles, and those who mostly shoot on public land.

Recommendation 83. Changes in land ownership must be addressed to counter shooters' access issues. The study included a series of 25 potential problems for shooters when shooting in the past 5 years. Items rated as problematic include less land on which to shoot due to private land ownership changes, less land on which to shoot due to development, less land on which to shoot because the land use has changed, housing or other developments making land unavailable for shooting, finding previously open private land sold and posted or closed by the new landowner, and finding previously open private land posted or closed by the landowner. If possible, up-to-date records of land ownership should be made available to hunters.

Recommendation 84. Facilitate programs/resources that both nurture relationships between shooters and landowners and increase shooting opportunities on private lands. Some of the top constraints named by shooters include land use changes, private land ownership changes, and finding previously open land closed by the landowner. The fact that most shooters shoot either exclusively on private land or on both public and private land about equally complicates the issue of shooting access because state regulatory agencies are limited in their management of shooting opportunities on private lands. Nevertheless, increasing shooting access on private lands is necessary for improving shooter satisfaction and preventing cessation, and it is important for agencies to facilitate programs/resources that both nurture relationships between shooters and landowners and increase shooting opportunities on private lands.

Recommendation 85. Ensure that programs/resources designed to increase shooting access on private lands address landowner concerns and issues. Shooters who said they have access problems frequently cited posted lands. Clearly, then, restricted access to private lands is a problem for sport shooters. For this reason, it is important for agencies to better understand the reasons why landowners choose to restrict access to their lands. The issues that influence a landowner's decision to restrict access to their property are numerous and varied. For this reason, programs/resources should be designed to address these issues.

Recommendation 86. Develop informational and educational outreach strategies designed to better inform landowners and address their reticence to open their lands. Research has shown that providing incentives and liability protection encourages landowners to open their property. Agencies should develop focused messages and communication strategies that are designed to educate landowners about the benefits of opening their lands to sport

shooters. Outreach should highlight the personal and/or financial benefits offered by various programs/resources designed to increase access to private lands. Appeals for landowners to help continue the shooting tradition can be effective as well. It is important that information and outreach targeting landowners address their concerns. For example, outreach to landowners should highlight program/resource elements and steps taken to directly address shooter ethics, safety, and liability concerns.

Recommendation 87. Note that shooters are divided in their ratings of access; however, ratings are mostly moderate, suggesting that they are reachable through communication efforts. Ratings are generally not at the very top or bottom but are in the middle: good more than excellent at the top half of the scale, and fair more than poor in the lower half of the scale. Among shooters in the 19 states surveyed, 45% rate access excellent (9%) or good (36%), while 47% rate it fair (33%) or poor (14%).

Recommendation 88. Understand that public land access gets far better ratings than private land access. This also suggests that state agencies have clout with many shooters and outreach can be effective. For public land: 57% rated it excellent or good, and 38% rated it fair or poor. For private land: 40% rated it excellent or good, and 45% rated it fair or poor.

Recommendation 89. Focus communication efforts on groups who gave lower ratings to access. Demographic analyses show that Northeast Region shooters, those who shoot mostly on private land, long-time residents of the state, and urban shooters gave lower ratings for access than did shooters overall.

Recommendation 90. Ensure that there are high levels of public awareness on *how* to obtain information regarding shooting opportunities and access. It is important not only for agencies to provide additional information on shooting lands and shooting access, but also to ensure that there are high levels of public awareness on *how* to obtain and use this information. Lack of information can be as detrimental to participation as actual lack of land in preventing shooting. Furthermore, this is an aspect of access in which agencies and organizations can have a direct influence.

Recommendation 91. Make sure that information regarding shooting access is clear, timely, and accurate. Shooters experience access issues when they attempt to follow maps that are confusing or inaccurate, when information regarding shooting opportunities in their state is out-of-date, when they are unsure of the boundaries of the land to shoot on, and when they have maps that show land for shooting but are unable to locate that land on the ground.

Recommendation 92. Provide opportunities for and encourage shooters to report inaccuracies. To help alleviate frustration, states should provide an opportunity for shooters to report inaccurate maps and/or “random” road closings. Providing an outlet for shooters to report these issues would serve three purposes: 1) shooters would feel that they have an impact or voice in access problems, thereby lowering their frustration, 2) states will receive

good, useful information about maps and agency information that can be corrected for future use, and 3) states could use this opportunity to inform shooters on why roads are closed so that it will no longer seem arbitrary or unnecessary. States should consider hosting a spot on their websites (if they do not already do so) that allows shooters to post comments about closings and inaccuracies in real-time, thereby reducing frustration among those who check the website comments prior to sport shooting.

Recommendation 93. Provide and maintain a statewide mapping system or atlas that clearly identifies public shooting ranges. Fortunately, many state agency websites offer a searchable map that identifies available state-managed shooting ranges, along with valuable information such as types of equipment allowed/designed for, dates and hours of operation, and amenities. Also, information on private shooting ranges should be provided, if possible. Over a quarter of shooters (27%) had visited their state agency's website, and the use of such mapping resources is likely to increase as shooters become more aware of and comfortable with their usefulness.

Recommendation 94. Provide clearly marked boundaries and ensure appropriate signage in the field. Increasing a shooter's knowledge while afield is just as important as providing the right informational tools for the planning process. This is an area in which agencies can have great influence. Many of the problems reported by shooters are related to a lack of clearly marked boundaries and signage. In fact, a majority of shooters (62%) said that lack of or unclear signs marking public hunting lands was a major, moderate, or minor problem in accessing hunting land in their state, in general. Moreover, 49% of shooters said that not being sure of the boundaries of land to shoot on was a problem in the past 5 years when shooting. Sport shooters may unintentionally trespass simply because they are unaware that they are on private property. These findings suggest that agencies need to take steps to increase information in the field.

Recommendation 95. Continue increasing familiarity with and awareness of national programs/resources. Looking at the two national shooting access programs, many sport shooters were aware of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's interactive map of ranges (40% total awareness, 12% very aware); however, awareness of letsgoshooting.org (also accessed through wheretoshoot.org) was relatively low (23% total awareness, 5% very aware). To maximize the benefits of these programs/resources, agencies need to continue their communications and outreach efforts and target specific markets.

Recommendation 96. Increase participation in national shooting access programs/resources that currently exist. Only 10% of shooters used the interactive map of ranges and 6% used letsgoshooting.org. This suggests that many shooters who are aware of the programs are not taking advantage of them; therefore, there is a need for increasing public outreach and communication regarding these national shooting access programs/resources that currently exist.

Recommendation 97. Realize that public or state-managed shooting ranges are important.

Unlike the national programs, participation in several state shooting programs is robust. The highest participation rates are observed for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's 12 state-operated shooting ranges, Alabama Public Shooting Ranges, the Missouri Department of Conservation Public Shooting Ranges, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Public Shooting Ranges, and West Virginia Public Shooting Ranges, all with one third to one half of their shooters using them.

Recommendation 98. State agencies and land planners should research the successful programs to see if any aspects can be adopted into their own management practices.

The top-ranked programs, all with combined excellent/good ratings of 70% or higher (among those aware of the program), are the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission-Managed Public Shooting Ranges, Alabama Public Archery Parks, Alabama Public Shooting Ranges, Shooting Ranges in Massachusetts with Public Access (under the Range Grant Program), and Missouri Department of Conservation Public Shooting Ranges.

Recommendation 99. Use the table ranking the state programs as a resource for determining which programs have low effectiveness ratings.

Using the opposite approach of the previous recommendation, take a closer look at the programs/resources that had low effectiveness ratings to determine if there are specific elements that can be improved.

States Participating in the Hunter and Shooter Access Survey

West Region	Midwest Region	Northeast Region	Southeast Region
Alaska	Indiana	Maine	Alabama
Oregon	Kansas	Massachusetts	Arkansas
	Missouri	New Jersey	Florida
	Oklahoma	New York	North Carolina
	Wisconsin	Vermont	Texas
			Virginia
			West Virginia



For the project, an attempt was made to obtain a licensed hunter sample from every state—each state’s wildlife agency was contacted about participating in the project. Nineteen states were able to participate, and confidentiality agreements were made between Responsive Management and each participating state. The licensed hunter samples were used only for this survey and deleted from Responsive Management’s database system upon completion of the project. Responsive Management does not maintain license databases in its system. The participating states’ wildlife agencies then provided samples of licensed hunters to Responsive Management for use in the hunter and shooter surveys.

For all the states except Alaska, the state databases contained hunter names and either a telephone number or an email address or both. Alaska’s database contained names only without telephone numbers or emails addresses. For that database, Responsive Management performed a reverse lookup to assign telephone numbers to the names. Responsive Management also de-duplicated the state samples provided (i.e., a hunter with multiple licenses was put into the sample only once so as to have the same chance of being selected in the random sampling as any other hunter) and drew the probability-based randomized survey samples from the de-duplicated lists.

To obtain sample of sport shooters who did not have a hunting license (i.e., would not have been in the samples provided by the state wildlife agencies), online sampling from Marketing Systems Group was used to supplement the overall shooter sample in each state. The final sample of shooters, therefore, consisted of both sport shooters who hunted and sport shooters who did not hunt, with weighting applied to ensure these proportions were representative of the states, regions, and the United States as a whole.

Once the respondent was reached, the survey path (hunter or sport shooter) and consequently the sample into which the respondent was assigned was determined by the participation questions. Those who had hunted but not done sport shooting were put into the hunter path (i.e., the hunter sample), while those who had done sport shooting but not hunting were put into the shooter path (shooter sample). Those who had both hunted and done sport shooting were randomly assigned into one of the paths, with subsequent weighting to account for this separation of people who could be in either the hunter sample or the shooter sample. (Those who had neither hunted nor done sport shooting in the previous 5 years were screened out of the survey. Additionally, to qualify for the survey, respondents had to be U.S. residents at least 18 years old.)

The samples were stratified by AFWA region, with a goal of at least 750 hunter surveys in each region and 250 shooter surveys in each region. Weighting was applied in the data analysis stage to account for size of hunter/shooter populations in each state, within each region, and within the United States as a whole so that each region sample was representative of that region and the overall sample was representative of the United States as a whole.

MULTI-MODAL SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

One phase was a telephone survey of those who were selected for this mode. The other phase was a closed online survey (closed means that a person surfing the internet could not access the survey) to those specifically invited and contacted using this mode, as explained below.

From the randomized pulled samples, respondents without an email address were contacted by telephone. Those with an email address were contacted by email. Nonrespondents to the email invitation to participate in the survey were sent reminder emails, and those who did not respond to the reminders were put into the telephone sample if a number was available. Attempting to make contact in multiple modes allows hunters to respond in the way most convenient to them.

For the telephone phase, telephone interviews were conducted Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Saturday from 12:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., and Sunday from 2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., local time, using interviewers with experience conducting computer-assisted surveys about hunting and sport shooting. A five-callback design was used to maintain the representativeness of the sample, 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 telephone phase of the survey was from April to August 2021.

For quality control, Survey Center Managers monitored some of the interviews in real time and provided feedback to the interviewers. To further ensure the integrity of the telephone survey data, Responsive Management has interviewers who have been trained according to the standards established by the Council of American Survey Research Organizations. 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 questionnaire.

For the online survey phase, email invitations to take the survey were sent to everyone in the online samples. An example of this email invitation is shown below. Reminder emails were sent to nonrespondents approximately 8 days after the first invitation and then 8 days after that first reminder (up to two email reminders were sent, for a total of three emails). The online survey was administered from April to September 2021.

Invitation to Take the Online Survey Sent to the Selected Sample

Hello [Contact Name],

The [National Shooting Sports Foundation \(NSSF\)](#) and [Responsive Management](#) are conducting a study with sportsmen under [a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service \(FWS\)](#) to better understand hunting and sport shooting participation. The results of this study will be used to assess and improve hunting and sport shooting opportunities nationwide, including your state, and we value your input on this important topic.

[Click Here to Start the Survey](#)

Please consider responding to this survey by June 28.

You are one of only a small number of sportsmen in your state randomly chosen to participate in this study. To ensure that results truly represent hunters and sport shooters, it is important that we hear from you. Your answers will be kept completely confidential and will not be associated with your name in any way.

Thank you for your time and willingness to participate and share your opinions:

[Click Here to Start the Survey](#)

Sincerely,

Dianne Vrablic, Industry Research Manager
National Shooting Sports Foundation

Mark Damian Duda, Executive Director
Responsive Management

After both the telephone and online surveys were obtained, the Survey Center Managers and/or statisticians checked each completed survey to ensure clarity and completeness. Additionally, the survey code included proprietary error checkers and other quality control checks. Responsive Management obtained 3,265 completed questionnaires in the hunting survey and 2,511 completed questionnaires in the shooting survey.

DATA ANALYSIS

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

On questions that asked respondents to provide a number (e.g., days of hunting), the graphs and/or tables may show ranges of numbers rather than the precise numbers. Nonetheless, in the survey each respondent provided a precise number, and the dataset includes this precise number, even if the graphs and/or tables only show ranges of numbers. Note that the calculation of means and medians used the precise numbers that the respondents provided.

Because the sampling included stratification into four AFWA regions with an equal goal in each region, results were weighted by state and region to ensure that each region sample and the nationwide sample was representative of the hunter and shooter populations in their proper geographic proportions.

SAMPLING ERRORS

Throughout this report, findings of the surveys are reported at a 95% confidence interval. For the sample of hunters, the sampling error is estimated to be at most plus or minus 1.715 percentage points. For the sample of sport shooters, the sampling error is estimated to be plus or minus 1.956 percentage points. The sampling errors were calculated using the formula described below, with sample sizes of 3,265 hunters and 2,511 sport shooters and artificially high population sizes to calculate the maximum possible errors.

Sampling Error Equation

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

Where: B = maximum sampling error (as decimal)
 N_p = pop. 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).

APPENDIX: LIST OF PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES IN THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

HUNTING PROGRAMS

(National) Open Fields Program

(National) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

This program provides technical and financial assistance to eligible farmers to address soil, water, wildlife, and related natural resource concerns on their lands in an environmentally beneficial manner. Some landowners in the program use the assistance to convert cropland into natural areas and wildlife habitat on which the landowner may allow public hunting.

(National) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Waterfowl Production Areas (WPAs)

WPAs are managed wetlands open to hunting.

(National) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Interactive Map of Wildlife Restoration Supported Shooting Ranges letsgohunting.org

(National) letsgohunting.org

(website) (also accessed through wheretohunt.org)

(National) letsgoshooting.org

(website) (also accessed through wheretoshoot.org)

(National) onX Maps - GPS Hunting Map App

(onxmaps.com)

Outdoor Alabama Interactive Map

(found on the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources website, OutdoorAlabama.com)

Alabama Forever Wild Land Trust Program

Alabama's Forever Wildlife Land Trust Program purchases tracts of land for hunting. (alabamaforeverwild.com)

Hunt Outdoor Alabama Program

The Hunt Outdoor Alabama Program provides hunting mentorship for youth.

Alabama Youth Dove Hunts

Alabama Adult Mentored Hunting Program

Alabama Physically Disabled Hunting Locations

Alabama's Physically Disabled Hunting Locations program provides access to hunting areas for those with physical disabilities.

Arkansas Waterfowl Rice Incentive Conservation Enhancement (WRICE) Program

The WRICE program was developed by Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) biologists to help keep waste rice available for ducks, geese, and other migrating birds when they pass through each winter. It has also expanded to allow weekend permitted public waterfowl hunting opportunities on participating rice fields.

Arkansas Urban Archery Hunt Program

The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) works with cities experiencing issues with wildlife damage from deer to create special hunting seasons to reducing herd numbers. The Arkansas Bowhunters Association and Bull Shoals Bowhunters Association work with the AGFC to manage these hunting opportunities and ensure safe, ethical hunts with special consideration for non-hunting Arkansans.

Arkansas Leased Land WMA Program

The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) purchases land or permanent hunting easements on land throughout the state whenever it has the opportunity and the land fits in with what can be managed for wildlife habitat. In some cases, however, large landowners, such as timber companies, have no desire to sell the land, but do lease out hunting rights on an annual basis. The AGFC works with these landowners to lease rights for large blocks of hunting property where few options exist for hunting on public land.

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission online maps

(www.agfc.com/en/resources/maps/)

Arkansas Hunt Natural Mentor Program

The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission's Hunt Natural The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission's Hunt Natural Mentor Program provides and increases hunting opportunities for beginning hunters.

Arkansas Outdoor Skills Program

The Outdoors Skills Program offers knowledge and hands-on experience to hone your skills in a variety of outdoors pursuits, including archery, conservation leadership, fishing, game-calling, hunting, marksmanship, paddle sports, trapping and wildlife-watching. Courses are offered year-round at Arkansas Game and Fish Commission nature centers and education centers.

Becoming an Outdoors-Woman Arkansas

Becoming an Outdoors-Woman is an outdoor skills workshops, classes, and camps designed for 18 years and older women. The program focuses on providing women the opportunity to learn skills and encourage participation in hunting, fishing, and other outdoor activities. These programs offer a supportive atmosphere where women can

learn skills that enhance their enjoyment of Arkansas outdoors. BOW classes range from introductory level to advanced outdoor training.

Arkansas Special Active Duty Military and Veteran Hunts

Arkansas Youth Hunts

Florida Private Lands Deer Management Program

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Private Lands Deer Management Program allows the FWC and private landowners to work closely together to improve wildlife habitat and hunting opportunities.

Florida Recreational Use Permit Program

Users pay a fee to hunt private land. Landowners are compensated with a percentage of the permit fees collected.

Florida Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs)

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) oversees more than 6 million acres of land established as wildlife management areas or wildlife and environmental areas.

Florida WMA Brochures

WMA brochures are available through a searchable database on the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) website. The brochures provide regulation summaries and maps for each of the 185 Wildlife Management Areas in Florida.

Florida WMA Finder

WMA Finder is an online search tool that allows hunters to find public hunting opportunities that fit their criteria.

Florida Deer Management Units (DMUs)

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) manages 12 Deer Management Units (DMUs) with unique antler point and antlerless season regulations based on local habitat quality, deer herd characteristics, and hunter preferences.

Florida Quota Hunt Program

The Quota Hunt Program prevents overcrowding and controls the harvest of game on wildlife management areas (WMAs), providing hunters with quality hunting experiences. Quotas (maximum number of hunters permitted on WMAs) are based on an area's size, habitat, game populations, and rules.

Florida Special Opportunity Permit Program

Special WMA hunts that are designed to provide an exceptionally high-quality hunting experience for a fee. Large tracts of public land with lots of game and low hunter quotas provide excellent opportunities to hunt for wild hogs, deer, and wild turkeys.

Youth Hunting Program of Florida

The Youth Hunting Program of Florida offers youth hunting experiences on private lands throughout the state.

Florida Operation Outdoor Freedom

Operation Outdoor Freedom is a program administered by the Florida Forest Service to provide wounded veterans hunting opportunities. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) partners with the Florida Forest Service to offer opportunities through the program on several state Wildlife Management Areas.

Indiana Private Lands Access Program (IPLA)

Indiana Private Lands Access Program (IPLA, formerly known as APPLE) offers financial incentives to landowners who allow controlled public access hunting on their private lands. Wildlife biologists also work with landowners to establish and improve habitat.

Indiana Our Community Hunter Access Program

The program provides community partners with financial and technical assistance to administer hunting programs in their communities. This program is specifically catered to white-tailed deer hunting and is designed to reduce human-wildlife conflict. (<https://www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/9420.htm>)

Indiana Where to Hunt Map

Online interactive map that includes locations and information about species available (<https://www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/5427.htm>).

Indiana Youth Hunting Days

Youth have the opportunity to experience a turkey or deer hunt in non-pressured environment with less people.

Indiana Apprentice License

The Apprentice License allows someone to participate in a hunt without completing the hunter education course (which is otherwise required) and without purchasing a full license. The holder of an apprentice license must be with an individual who has a full license.

Kansas Special Hunts on Public Lands

The Special Hunts on Public Lands are managed by the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism. These hunts are conducted on lands not normally open to hunts are conducted on lands not normally open to unrestricted hunting and provide pre-season or high-quality hunts on public lands for youth and adults.

Kansas Walk-In Hunting Access (WIHA) Program

The Kansas Walk-In Hunting Access (WIHA) program provides hunting access to private property. State law provides enrolled private landowners immunity from damages or injuries.

Kansas iWIHA Limited Access Hunts

The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism offers additional incentives to landowners who provide limited hunting access where it is needed the most. This program seeks to provide access for hunting opportunities in urban areas. The department selects a number of hunters that can access a site at any given time. Access is managed through iSportsman (<https://kdwpt.isportsman.net>).

Kansas Wildlife Areas

Wildlife areas are managed specifically for wildlife and hunting opportunities. Some wildlife areas offer special hunts. These special hunts may limit the number of hunters on the area on a given day through a random drawing, or they may provide youth and other first-time hunters with a quality experience.

Maine Outdoor Partners / Landowner Relations Program

The Outdoor Partners Program helps to provide funding to protect Maine's longstanding tradition of public access to privately owned land. The program works to preserve public access to private land by promoting responsible land use to the public; educating landowners about their rights, liabilities, and options; forming partnerships; and supporting landowners.

Maine Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs)

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife manages 69 Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) across the state. The mission and purpose of the state-owned WMAs is to provide a statewide, ecologically based system of land holdings for the protection and enhancement of important wildlife habitats that are also open to the public and provide opportunities for all types of public recreation. Maps to identify and locate WMAs in Maine are available on the department's website.

Maine Next Step Hunting Programs

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife offers a series of online and in-person workshops to help connect those who have recently completed hunter education with resources and information necessary to go hunting safely and successfully, including where to go hunting.

Maine Youth Hunting Days**Maine Adult Mentor Hunts for New Hunters****Maine GIS map of ranges available for hunting****MassWildlife Where to Hunt Webpage**

<https://www.mass.gov/where-to-hunt-in-massachusetts>

The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) offers a Where to Hunt webpage to help understand your options and learn about regulations and available tools to find your perfect hunting spot.

MassWildlife Facebook Page

The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) Facebook page offers outdoor and wildlife-related recreation information, including hunting opportunities and programs.

Direct Emails from MassWildlife

The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) sends direct emails to its constituents regarding agency news as well as hunting opportunities and programs.

MassWildlife Learn To Hunt Programs (e.g. Learn to Hunt Deer, Turkey Calling Clinics, Learn to Hunt Turkeys Clinic)

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/learn-to-hunt-programs>

Youth Deer Hunt Day

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/youth-deer-hunt-day>

Youth Turkey Hunt Program

<https://www.mass.gov/guides/youth-turkey-hunt-program>

Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) in Massachusetts

WMAs are public areas that are protected to provide habitat for wildlife and to give people a place to explore wild Massachusetts. These lands are free and open to the public for walking, hiking, hunting, fishing, trapping, and wildlife viewing.

Wildlife Conservation Easements

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/hunting-on-masswildlifelands>

MassWildlife Lands Viewer

<https://www.mass.gov/how-to/masswildlife-lands-viewer>

The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) Lands Viewer is an online tool that allows you to explore Wildlife Management Areas (WMA), Wildlife Conservation Easements (WCE), and other open space.

MassWildlife Outdoor Recreation Map

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/outdoor-recreation-map/download>

Missouri Conservation Areas

These are lands the Missouri Department of Conservation owns or manages for conservation and public use. There are currently more than 1,000 conservation areas scattered across the state. The public uses conservation areas primarily for fishing, hunting, nature observation, and conservation education.

Missouri Outdoor Recreational Access Program (MRAP)

The Missouri Department of Conservation created the Missouri Outdoor Recreational Access Program (MRAP) to increase outdoor recreational opportunities on private land.

Under this program, MDC provides annual incentive payments to private landowners who open their land for public recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing. The program also provides an interactive map to locate enrolled lands.

Missouri Where to Hunt & Shoot Interactive Maps

Maps to locate hunting areas in Missouri.

Missouri Managed Hunts

Missouri Department of Conservation offers managed hunts for multiple species to provide hunting opportunities for licensed hunters, youth, and hunters with disabilities.

New Jersey Public Deer Hunting Land (750,000 acres)

New Jersey has more than 750,000 acres of public land (state, federal, county, and municipal) available to the deer hunter.

<https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/huntland.htm>

New Jersey Public Turkey Hunting Land (22 turkey hunting areas)

New Jersey has 22 turkey hunting areas available.

https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/pdf/hunting/turkey_huntland.pdf

New Jersey Wildlife Management Areas (358,000 acres in 122 areas)

The New Jersey Wildlife Management Area (WMA) system has more than 358,000 acres in 122 areas for outdoor recreation, including hunting and fishing.

<https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/wmaland.htm>

https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/wma_roads.htm

New Jersey State Park and Forest Hunting Land Maps

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) provides information and maps for each State Park and Forest area that allows hunting. The information and maps can be accessed at

https://www.njparksandforests.org/parks/sps_hunting_maps.html

New Jersey Natural Lands and Trust Preserve

The New Jersey Natural Lands Trust was created to preserve land in its natural state for enjoyment by the public and to protect natural diversity through the acquisition of open space. The Trust acquires open space primarily by donations of land and easements. Each hunting season more than 3,500 hunters register to hunt deer at Trust preserves. The Trust allows deer hunting only at many of its preserves to maintain biodiversity. (The Trust does not allow hunting for waterfowl, small game, turkey or bear; it allows only deer hunting.)

<http://www.njnlt.org/hunters.htm>

New Jersey Hunting and Trapping Explorer

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish and Wildlife offers the Hunting and Trapping Explorer online application to help users plan their hunting or trapping outing and navigate in the field. The app provides interactive maps

of hunting and trapping zones for multiple wildlife species and information on seasons, regulations and harvest statistics. It also allows users to identify hunting and trapping zones for licensing, permitting and harvest reporting purposes. The app was launched in September 2020 and replaces the current Deer Hunting Location Viewer that will no longer be updated and will be removed at the end of the 2020-21 hunting seasons. https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/news/2020/hunt-trap_explorer.htm

NJ-Geo Web

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) offers NJ-GeoWeb on the ArcGIS Online platform. This application provides users access to DEP GIS data on the internet. Users can view, query and analyze the Department's GIS data with related environmental information. <https://www.nj.gov/dep/gis/geoweb splash.htm>

Take a Kid Hunting Program

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish and Wildlife's Take a Kid Hunting Program is designed to provide a quality hunting experience for properly licensed youth hunters. There are typically five youth hunting events: turkey, pheasant, upland birds, deer and waterfowl. The Take a Kid Hunting events increase a young hunter's opportunity for harvesting game in a setting which encourages responsible and safe hunting practices in a more relaxed setting. The program is coordinated by the division's R3 (Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation) Program. <https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/takekidhunting.htm>

Wading River WMA Blinds for Youth Waterfowl Hunters

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish and Wildlife, in partnership with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited, and the New Jersey Waterfowlers Association, has developed a Special Use Area for youth waterfowl hunters. The Wading River Special Use Area is an 86-acre parcel containing two impoundments within the 159-acre Wading River Wildlife Management Area, located in Bass River Township, Burlington County. Use of a blind is by in Bass River Township, Burlington County. Use of a blind is by registration only. <https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/wadingriverblinds.htm>

Veterans and Active Duty Military Waterfowl Hunting Days

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish and Wildlife offers annual Veterans and Active Duty Military Waterfowl Hunting Days, which are special hunting days for Veterans and Active Military personnel to recognize their service to our country. https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/yth-vet_waterfowl_day.htm

New York Motorized Access Program for People with Disabilities (MAPPWD)

The MAPPWD permit is a temporary permit that provides motor vehicle access to certain state lands administered by the New York Department of Environmental Conservation. MAPPWD permit holders are permitted uncommon access to activities

such as hunting, fishing, camping, and wildlife observation. The permit is only issued to qualified people with disabilities based on a completed application.

New York Fish and Wildlife Management Act (FWMA) Cooperative Areas

Through cooperative agreements under New York's Fish and Wildlife Management Act (FWMA), Cooperative Hunting Areas provide access and management services to privately-owned lands in order to increase public hunting opportunities.

New York Department of Environmental Conservation hunting permits for those with disabilities.

This includes a non-ambulatory hunting permit, modified archery permits, and permits for veterans with disabilities.

New York Department of Environmental Conservation state-owned land that provides access to hunters and trappers with disabilities**New York Department of Environmental Conservation Junior Hunter and Trapper opportunities****New York Department of Environmental Conservation Pheasant Hunt Program****North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission online game land maps**

(<https://www.ncpaws.org/ncwrcmaps/gamelands>)

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Permit Hunting Program

The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission provides permit hunting opportunities across the state. These hunts allow for managed participation and provide unique opportunities for special areas or species such as small game, big game, waterfowl, tundra swan, and furbearer trapping.

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Disabled Sportsman Permit Hunt Program

This program allows persons with limited physical mobility to operate vehicles on open-gated or designated roads on certain game lands otherwise closed to vehicular traffic.

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Disabled Access Permit

The Disabled Access Permit authorizes persons with limited physical mobility to operate vehicles, including ATVs, on any Commission-maintained road open for vehicular travel, those trails posted for vehicular travel, and on open-gated or ungated roads otherwise closed to vehicular traffic on game lands listed in the Disabled Access Program. The permit also allows access to special disabled hunting blinds designated for hunters with disabilities.

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Track Chair Program

The track chairs are equipped with rubberized tracks instead of wheels and two 12-volt batteries, allowing the user to overcome many types of terrain. Each chair is outfitted

with a fishing rod and long gun holder, providing greater access to hunting, shooting, angling and wildlife-watching opportunities for persons with disabilities.

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Huntmaster Lift Program

In an ongoing effort to provide opportunities for all of North Carolina's outdoor enthusiasts, the North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission offers public use of a Huntmaster Hunting Unit mobile hunting and wildlife viewing blind for organized disabled special-needs hunts.

Oklahoma Land Access Program (OLAP)

Administered by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, the Oklahoma Land Access Program (OLAP) provides financial incentives to landowners who allow public access for hunting, fishing, stream access, and wildlife viewing opportunities on private lands.

Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs)

Public land across the state open for hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreation.

Oklahoma Controlled Hunts

Oregon Access and Habitat (A&H) Program

Since its inception in 1993, the Access and Habitat Program has provided hunting access to over 8 million acres and improved over 1.6 million acres of wildlife habitat. Ninety percent of A&H projects provide public hunting opportunities on private lands.

Oregon Open Fields Program

The Open Fields Program provides block grants to state agencies and tribes to increase public hunting access to private land and improve wildlife habitat on enrolled lands.

Oregon Upland Cooperative Access Program (UCAP)

The Upland Cooperative Access Program (UCAP) is an incentive-based program designed to provide quality public hunting opportunities for upland game birds on private lands in Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, and Morrow counties in the Columbia Basin.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) Public Hunting Program

Find a place to hunt on over 1 million acres of publicly accessible land located throughout Texas. Hunt areas accessible land located throughout Texas. Hunt areas include property owned by TPWD, acreage leased by the department from other state and federal agencies, forest products industries, and other cooperating private landowners.

Texas Annual Public Hunting Permit (Walk-In)

The Annual Public Hunting Permit (also known as walk-in) provides hunting on nearly one million acres of land, including wildlife management areas, state parks, and approximately 120 dove and small game areas leased from private landowners.

Texas Interactive Map of Public Hunting Areas

(found on the Texas Parks and Wildlife website,
<https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/hunt/public/>)

Texas Drawn Hunts

The Public Hunt Drawing System provides opportunities to apply for a wide variety of supervised, drawn hunts, including special drawings for both adults and youth hunters.

Texas Mentored Hunting Workshops

Select state parks and wildlife management areas conduct mentored hunting workshops designed to introduce and educate beginning hunters and their mentors to the hunting experience.

Virginia Quota and Managed Hunts

Quota hunts and managed hunts provide hunters opportunities to access public lands that otherwise may be closed to hunting. Hunters can participate in random drawings to hunt waterfowl, white-tailed deer, black bear, quail, rabbits, and turkeys.

Virginia Public Opportunities for Wildlife-Related Recreation (POWRR) (formerly Public Access Lands for Sportsmen or PALS)

The Public Opportunities for Wildlife-Related Recreation (POWRR) program is a replacement and expansion of the Public Access for Outdoor Sportsman (PALS) program in Virginia. The program is a cooperative private/public lease agreement program that opens private land for public use for hunting, fishing, and wildlife-related recreation.

Virginia special youth hunts, such as the youth waterfowl and youth goose hunts**Virginia Find Game / Find Wildlife GIS Mapping System**

(<https://services.dwr.virginia.gov/findwildlifeva/#/findGame>)

Virginia *Notes from the Field* newsletter

The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources provides Notes from the Field (also known as Outdoor Report), which is an electronic outdoor report newsletter that includes hunting news, sometimes including information on when and where to hunt.

West Virginia Public Hunting Lands

The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Section, manages Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and state forests and offers national forest land (WMAs) and state forests and offers national forest land (through an agreement with the U.S. Forest Service) throughout the state that is open to hunting, fishing, and other wildlife-associated recreation.

West Virginia online interactive hunting and fishing map

(www.mapwv.gov/huntfish/map/)

West Virginia Private Lands Public Access Program

West Virginia Physically Challenged Hunter Access Trails

West Virginia offers 26 physically challenged hunter access trails on 13 Wildlife Management Areas and the National Forests within the state. These roads are open to Class Q license holders.

West Virginia Special Hunting Seasons

West Virginia offers special youth seasons for squirrels, waterfowl, black bear and antlerless deer with the majority of the state's public lands being open to these opportunities. The special antlerless deer season is also open to Senior Lifetime License holders and Class Q license holders.

West Virginia State Park Deer Hunting

West Virginia offers special deer hunting opportunities on select State Parks throughout West Virginia each year.

Wisconsin Voluntary Public Access (VPA) Program

The Voluntary Public Access (VPA) program offers private land for outdoor recreation by providing financial incentives to private landowners who open their property to public hunting, fishing, trapping and wildlife observation.

Wisconsin Turkey Hunter Access Program (THAP)

The Turkey Hunting Access Program (THAP) offers private land for turkey hunting opportunities by providing financial incentives to private landowners who allow access on their property to hunters.

Wisconsin Agricultural Damage Program

Farmers who receive agricultural damage shooting permits through this program have the option to provide some of their harvest authorizations to hunters who would like to help them shoot deer, bear, turkey, or geese that are damaging their crops. These permits are valid both inside and outside of the regular hunting seasons.

Wisconsin Managed Forest Law (MFL) Program

The Managed Forest Law (MFL) program is a landowner incentive program that encourages sustainable forestry on private woodlands in Wisconsin. Enrolled landowners must designate property as "Open" or "Closed" to public access for recreation and commit to a 25 or 50-year sustainable forest management plan.

SHOOTING PROGRAMS

Alabama Public Shooting Ranges

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources owns 12 public shooting ranges across the state and a partner shotgun range.

Alabama Public Archery Parks

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources owns 12 public archery parks across the state.

Alaska State Shooting Ranges

Alaska Department of Fish and Game operates three public shooting ranges, each offering a variety of opportunities to the public. They are located in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau.

Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) Alaska

The Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) Program provides hands-on workshops and classes to teach adults outdoor skills while building their confidence in their ability to get out and safely enjoy all that the outdoors has to offer. BOW helps women grow and become more confident by offering classes in an encouraging, supportive, and noncompetitive learning environment. BOW and Beyond BOW offerings are made possible by a cooperative effort between the Alaska Department of Fish & Game and the Outdoor Heritage Foundation of Alaska.

Alaska Youth Shotgun Leagues

The youth shotgun (sporting clays) league introduces kids, ages 10-15 to lifelong shooting skills that can be that can be used in the field and on the range. Safe firearm handling is the most important skill learned in this league. Conducted by the Outdoor Heritage Foundation of Alaska and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Alaska Mobile Shooting Clinics

Operated by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the mobile shooting sports program consists of a 5th-wheel mobile trailer fully equipped to conduct a wide variety of Hunter Information & Training activities. The mobile shooting sports trailer travels around Alaska. The heart of the mobile program is the laser-shot, interactive training system. The Mobile Shooting Sports trailer is also fully equipped with rifles, shotguns, and supporting equipment to conduct clinics in rifle marksmanship, basic reloading, map and compass, shotgun wing-shooting skills, muzzleloading skills, non-toxic shot waterfowl education, bowhunter education, hunter education, and both youth and women's beginning shooter programs.

(Arkansas) AGFC Shooting Ranges

The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) offers 3 public shooting ranges in the state.

(Arkansas) AGFC Archery Only Ranges on WMAs

The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) offers 12 public archery only ranges on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) in the state.

Arkansas National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP)

Arkansas Youth Shooting Sports Program (AYSSP)

Program conducted by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

(Florida) FWC-Managed Public Shooting Ranges

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) manages 11 public shooting ranges in the state.

(Indiana) DNR Public Shooting Ranges

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources operates public shooting ranges across the state.

Maine Public Shooting Ranges

The state and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife own and manage two public shooting ranges: Fryeburg Shooting Range and Summerhaven Shooting Area.

Maine 4-H Shooting Sports Program

The University of Maine 4-H Shooting Sports Program partners with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to help youth develop shooting sports knowledge, skills, and abilities.

(Maine) MDIFW Shooting Range Locator Map

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife provides an online map for hunters and shooters with location and contact information for shooting clubs and ranges across the state.

(Massachusetts) Shooting Ranges in Massachusetts with public access, under the Range Grant Program

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/shooting-ranges-withpublic-access>

- Bay Path
- Cape Cod Fish & Game
- Lowell
- Norco

(Missouri) MDC Public Shooting Ranges

The Missouri Department of Conservation operates several shooting ranges and outdoor education centers: Andy Dalton Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center, August A Busch Memorial Conservation Area Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center, Lake City Range, and Parma Woods Range and Training Center.

Missouri Free Shooting Days

The Missouri Department of Conservation periodically offers fee-free shooting days at its shooting ranges.

(Missouri) MDC Shooting Sports Basics and Education Seminars and Programs

The Missouri Department of Conservation periodically offers instructional seminars and programs at its ranges to teach firearm basics and safety, such as firearm selection, cleaning, optics, ammunition, archery, skeet, trap, nontoxic ammunition for hunting, and more.

(New Jersey) 12 state-operated shooting ranges

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish and Wildlife offers and maintains 12 shooting facilities located on state Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs).

<https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/ranges.htm>

New York Department of Environmental Conservation, Public Archery Range on Parcel 45 Wildlife Management Area**North Carolina Public Shooting Ranges**

The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission operates 8 public shooting ranges in the state:

- John Lentz Hunter Education Complex, Richmond County
- Flintlock Valley Shooting Range, Uwharrie National Forest, Montgomery County
- Foothills Public Shooting Complex, Cleveland County
- Wayne E. Smith Cold Mountain Shooting Range, Haywood County
- R. Wayne Bailey-Caswell Shooting Range, Caswell County
- Holly Shelter Shooting Range, Pender County
- Odom Shooting Range, Northampton County
- Wake County Firearms Education and Training Center, Wake County

Oklahoma WMA Shooting Ranges

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) offers public shooting ranges on 11 Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) in the state.

Oklahoma Scholastic Shooting Sports Program (OKSSSP)

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation's Oklahoma Scholastic Shooting Sports Program (OKSSSP) is a trap-based shotgun program, for 7th -12th grades, that is focused on providing a fun, safe environment for participating in shooting sports and reconnecting kids with the joy of being outdoors.

(Oklahoma) Shotgun Training Education Program (STEP)

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation's STEP program offers a broad range of learning opportunities for beginners as well as experienced hunters with special emphasis on teaching basic wing-shooting techniques and fundamentals. The

program projects a positive image toward hunting and general acceptance of responsible gun ownership.

Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife EE Wilson Wildlife Area Archery and Shotgun Range

(Vermont) Hammond Cover Shooting Range

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department free public shooting range.

(Vermont) West Mountain Shooting Range

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department free public shooting range.

Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) Sighting-in Ranges

DWR has public sighting-in ranges available at the Amelia, Chickahominy, C.F. Phelps, Clinch Mountain, Gathright, and White Oak Mountain Wildlife Management Areas.

West Virginia Public Shooting Ranges

There are 22 public shooting ranges on State Wildlife Management Areas, 2 ranges on State Forests, and 6 ranges with which the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources (WVDNR) cooperates with local or private entities.

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 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*.

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