

**ELK HUNTING IN IDAHO:  
UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS AND EXPERIENCES OF  
HUNTERS  
[BEAR RIVER ZONE]**



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**For:**

**Idaho Department of Fish and Game**

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**INSERT ELK SURVEY OBJECTIVES**

**METHODS**

**SAMPLING**

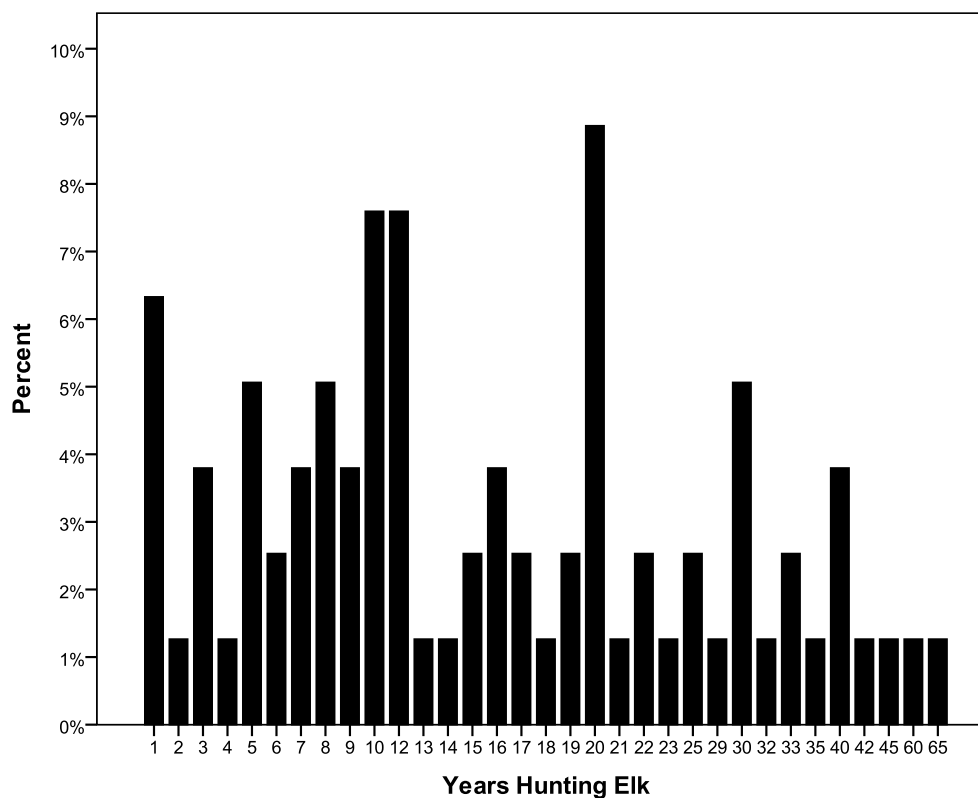
**RESPONSE RATE.**

## ELK HUNTER PROFILES

### (TRAVEL PATTERNS, HUNTING HISTORY, HARVEST SUCCESS, ZONE USE)

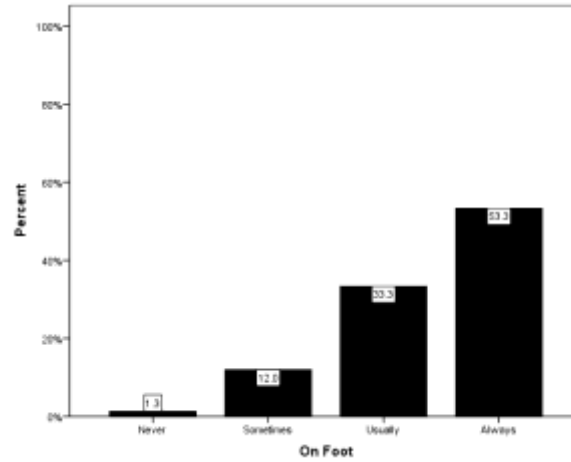
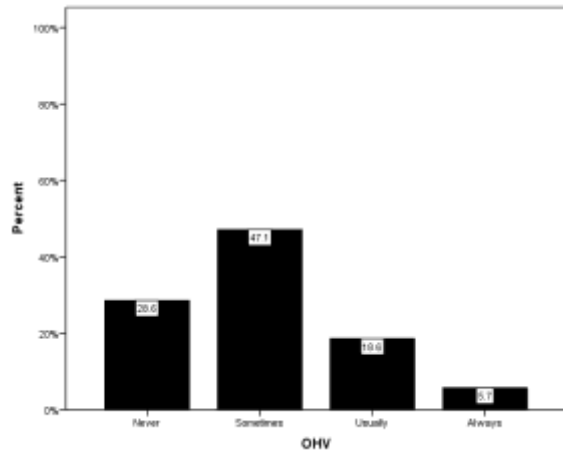
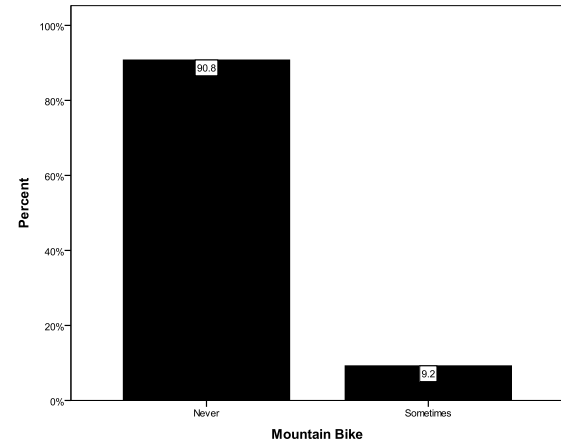
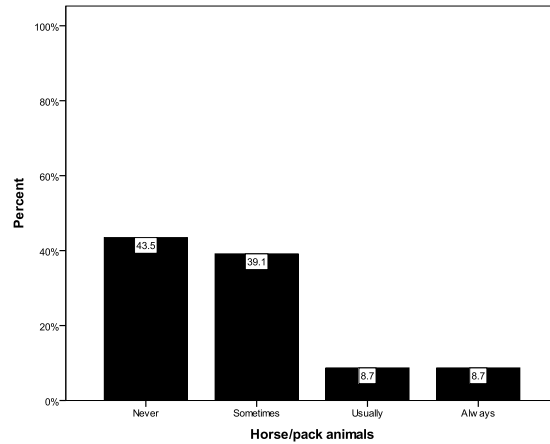
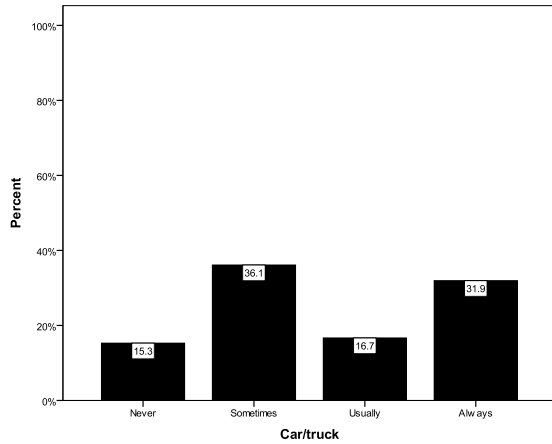
Now, some questions about your Idaho Elk hunting experiences and preferences.

3. About how many years have you hunted Elk in Idaho? *(Please enter the number of years)*



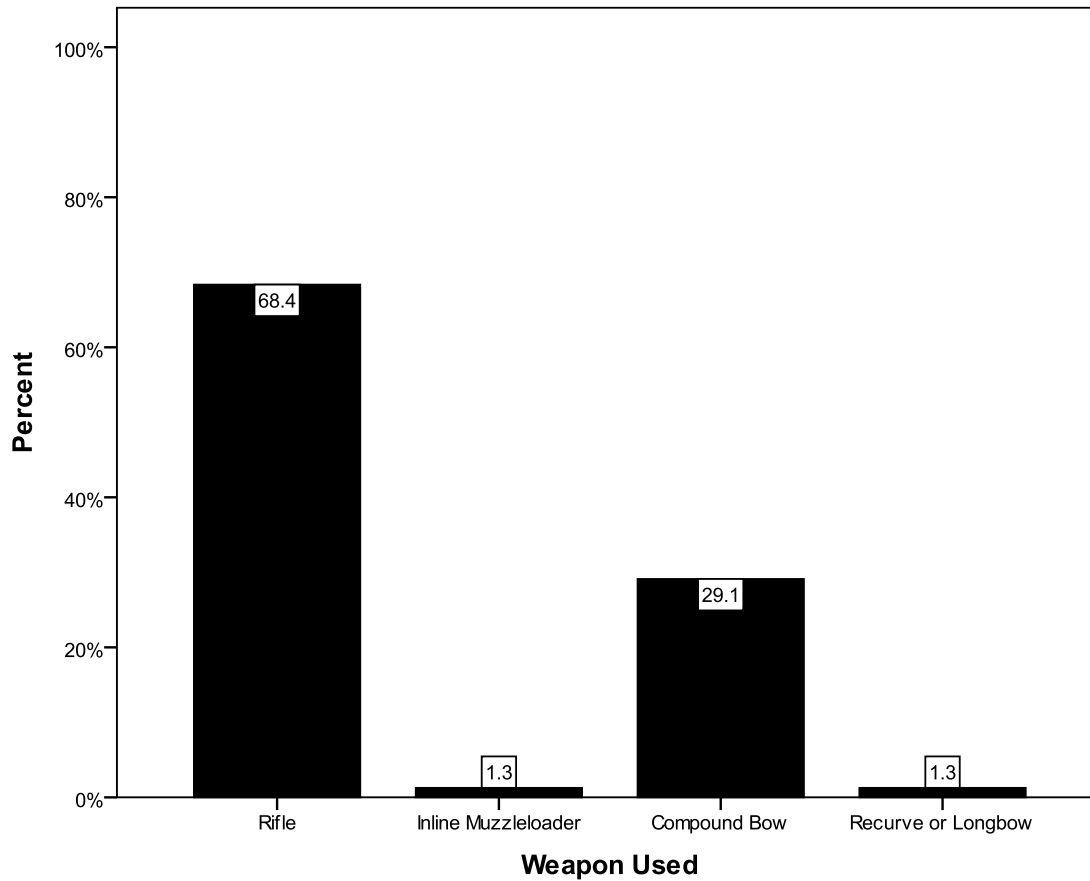
**Q3:** The distribution of responses for the number of years of hunting Elk in Idaho are similar between the Bear River zone and the state average.

**7. Excluding your travel to and from your home, how often do you use the following mode of transportation when you hunt Elk in Idaho?**



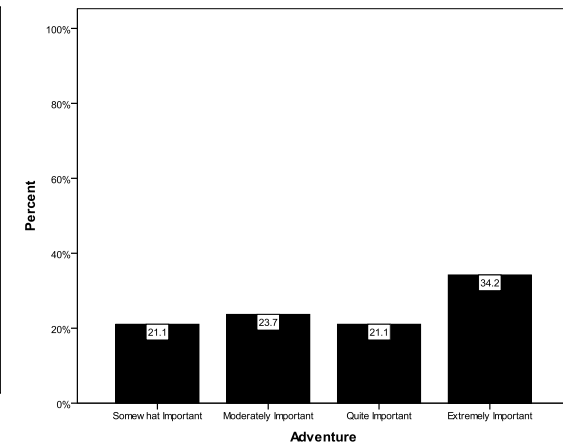
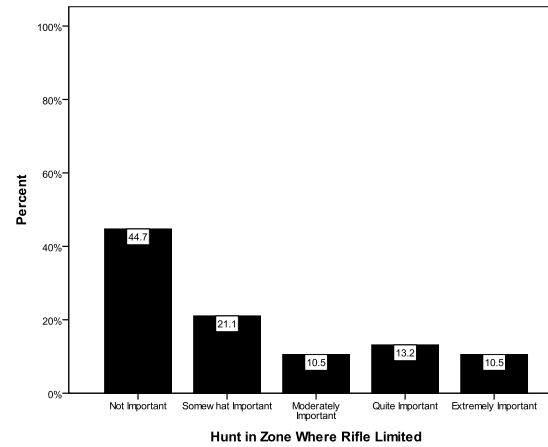
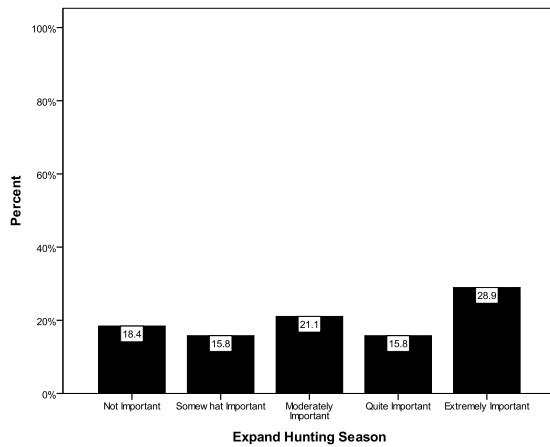
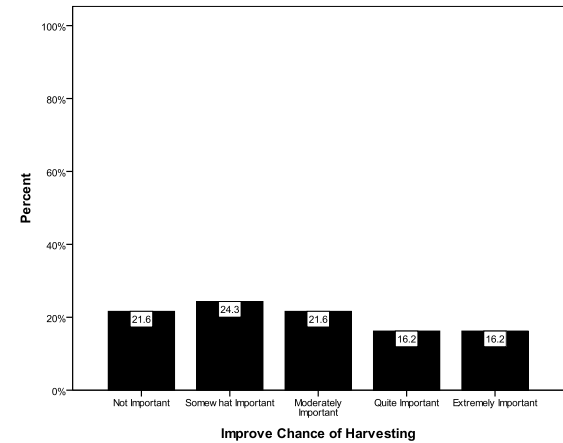
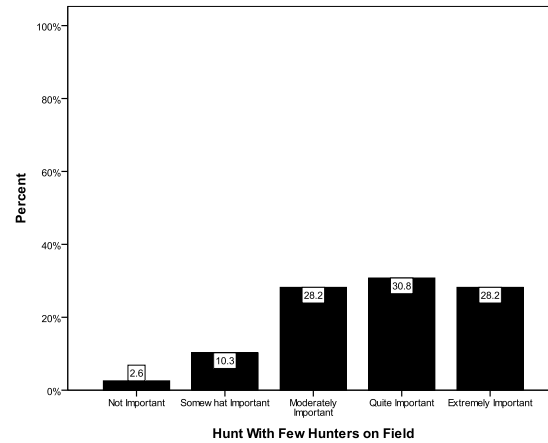
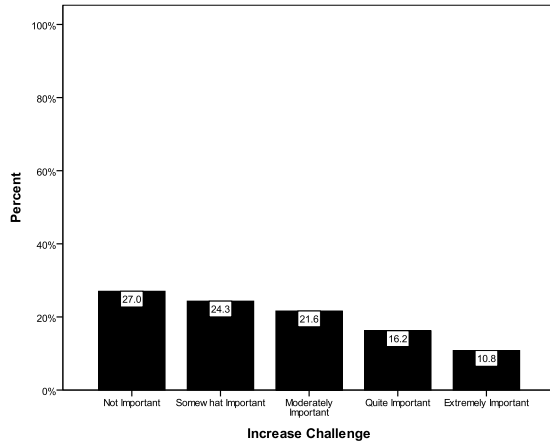
**Q7: The distribution of responses is similar between the Bear River zone and the state average. However, a larger portion of Bear River hunters uses OHVs when hunting, and mountain bikes are very rarely used among this population.**

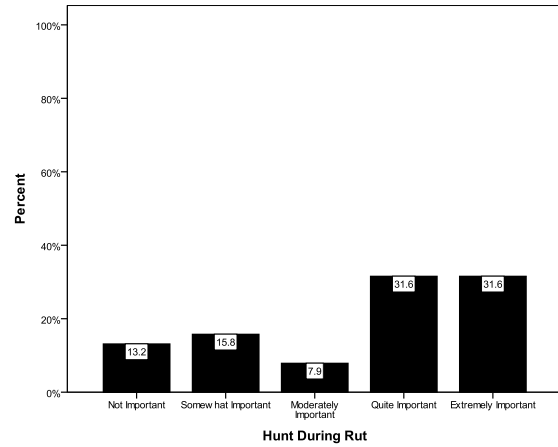
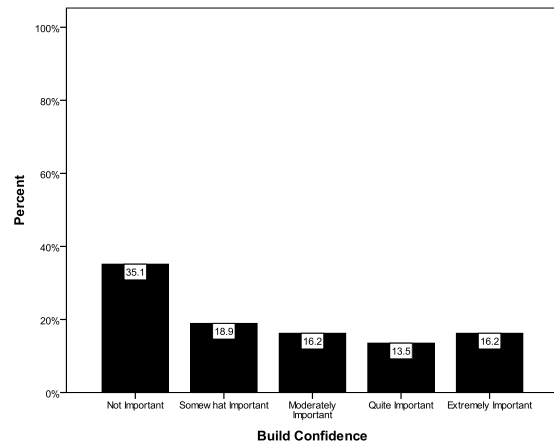
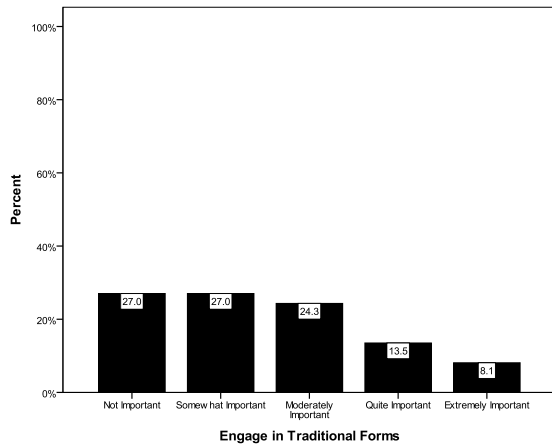
8. What type of weapon do you typically use to hunt Elk in Idaho? (Please check only one response)



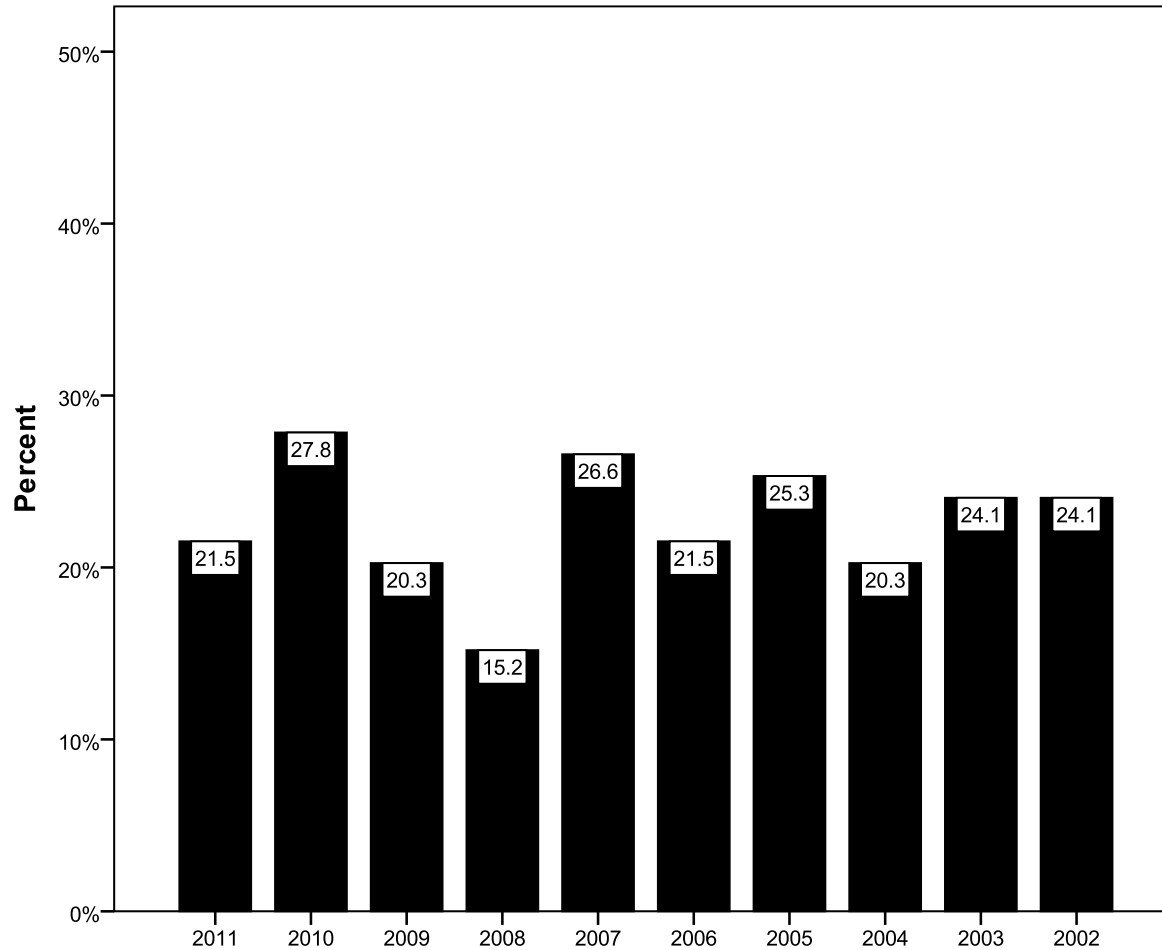
**Q8: Like other hunters in the state, the rifle and compound bow are the two most widely used weapons among Bear River hunters.**

10. How important was each of the following in your decision to hunt during Elk archery, short-range weapons or muzzleloader seasons?





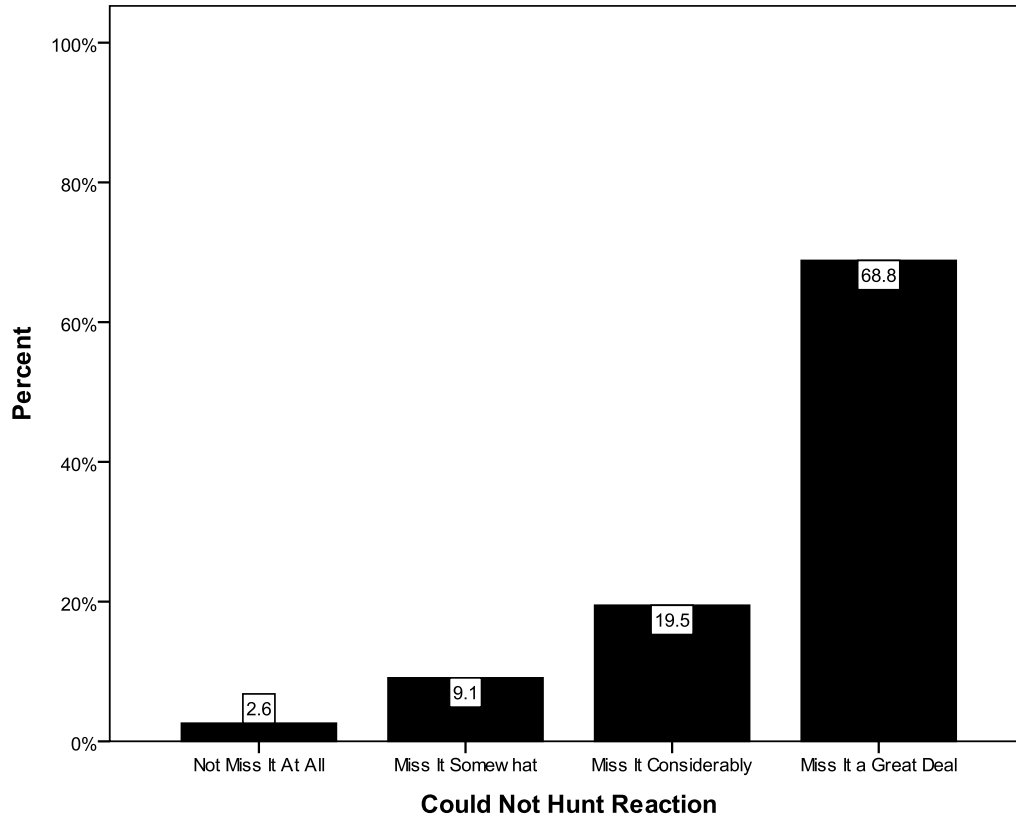
**Q10: The distribution of responses are similar between Bear River hunters and hunters throughout the state.**

**11. What has been your Elk harvesting success in Idaho? (Please check all that apply)**

**Q11: The pattern of harvest success is similar between Bear River and the state average. However, in 2008, Bear River harvest rates were less than the average by 7.3%.**

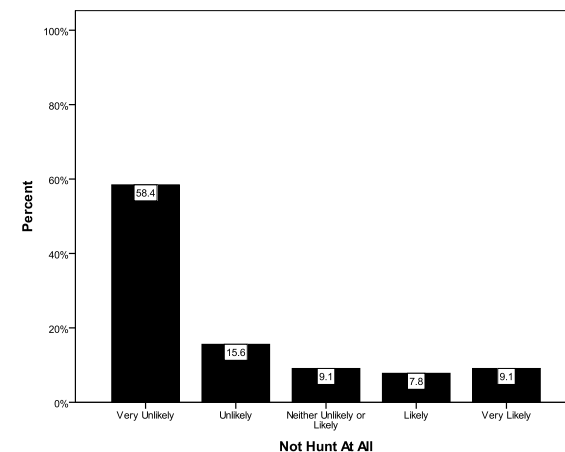
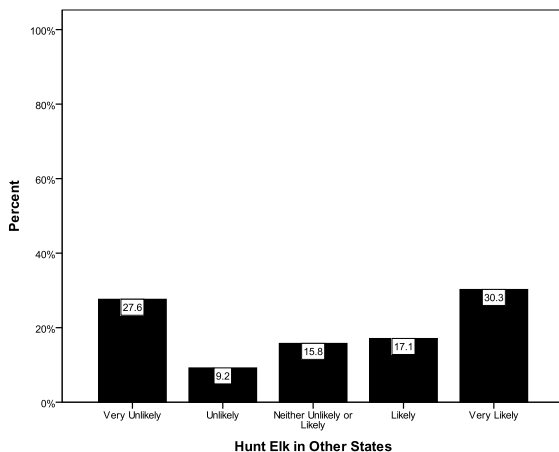
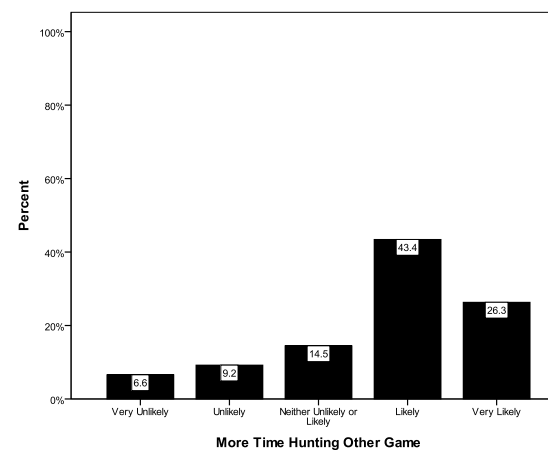
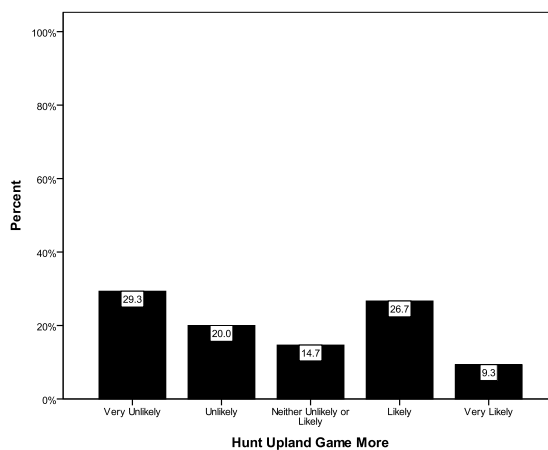
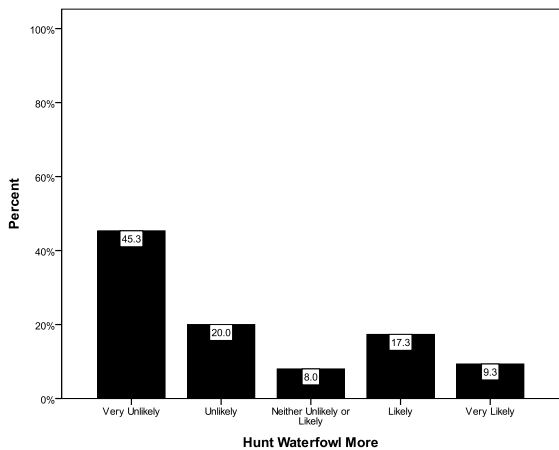


12. If you could not hunt Elk in Idaho, how would you react? (Please check only one response)



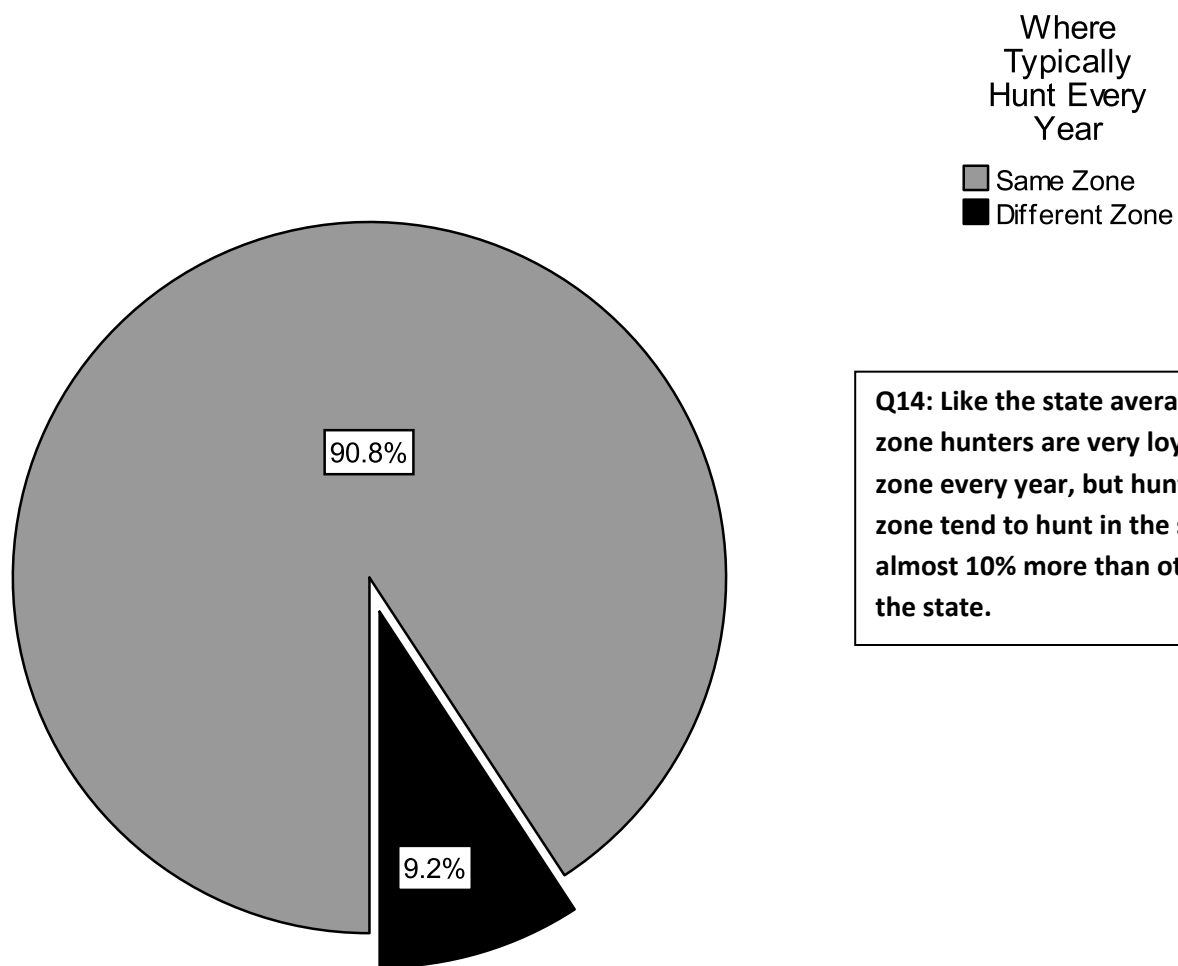
**Q12: The distribution of responses is similar between Bear Rive zone hunters and hunters across the state.**

### 13. If you could not hunt Elk in Idaho, how would your hunting change?



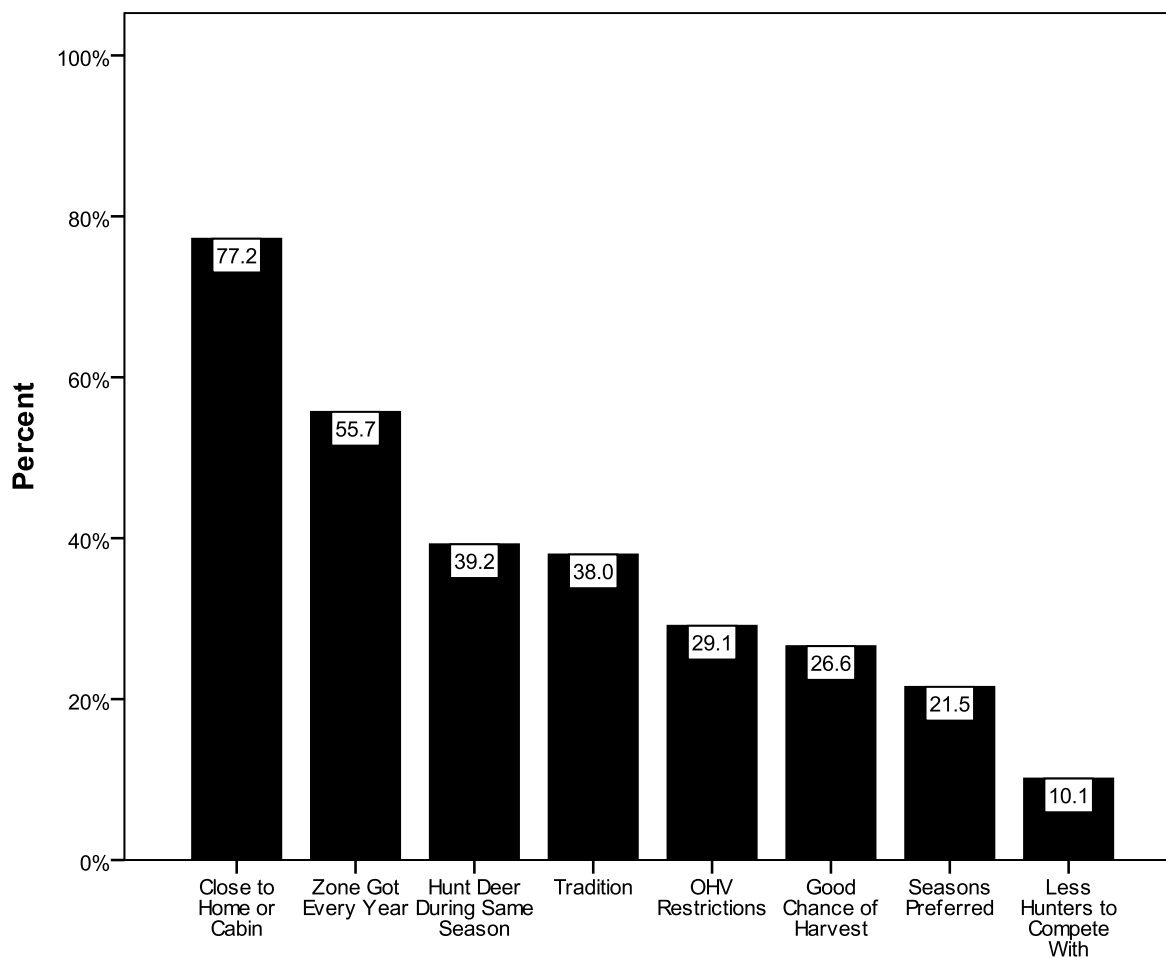
**Q13: The distribution of responses for how hunting would change for respondents is similar between the Bear River zone and the state average.**

14. Which of the following best describes where you typically hunt Elk in Idaho? (Please check only one response)



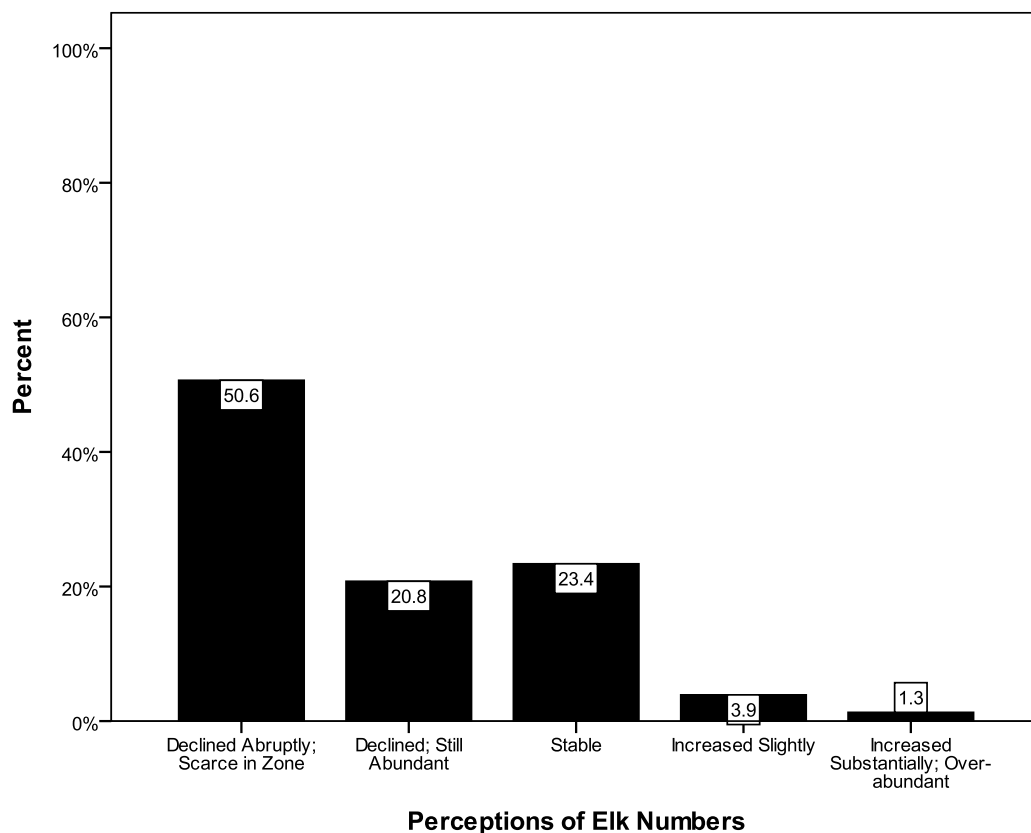
**Q14:** Like the state average, Bear River zone hunters are very loyal to the same zone every year, but hunters in this zone tend to hunt in the same zone almost 10% more than other hunters in the state.

16. What makes the zone(s) you marked in Q-15 desirable to hunt Elk? *(Please check all that apply)*



**Q16: The distribution of responses is similar between the Bear River zone and the state average. Bear River hunters particularly find the location of the zone as being desirable.**

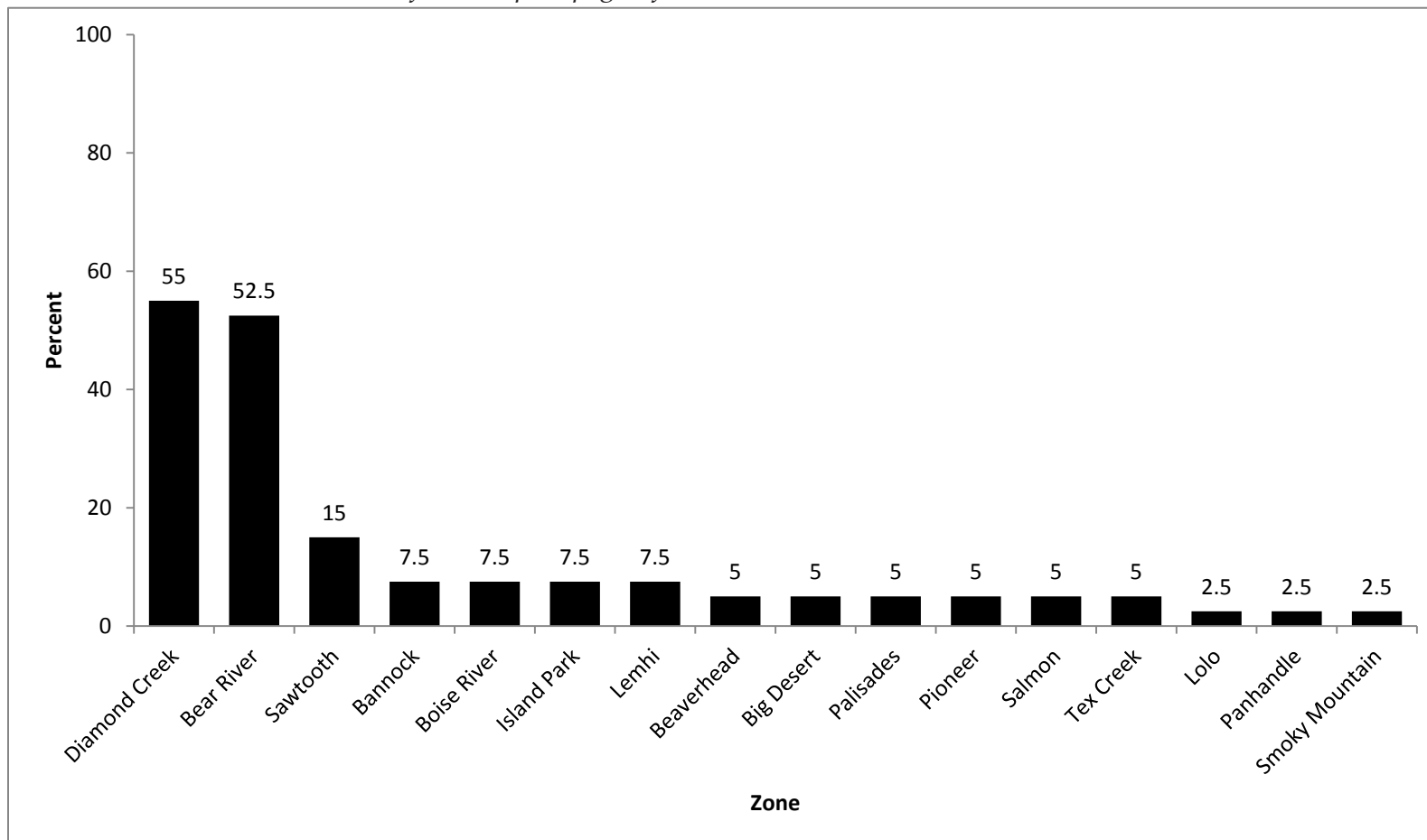
17. What are your perceptions of Elk numbers in the zone you hunted in 2011? Select the ONE statement from the list below that most closely matches your perceptions. (Please check only one response)



Q17: The distribution of responses and perceptions of Elk numbers is similar between the Bear River zone and the state average.

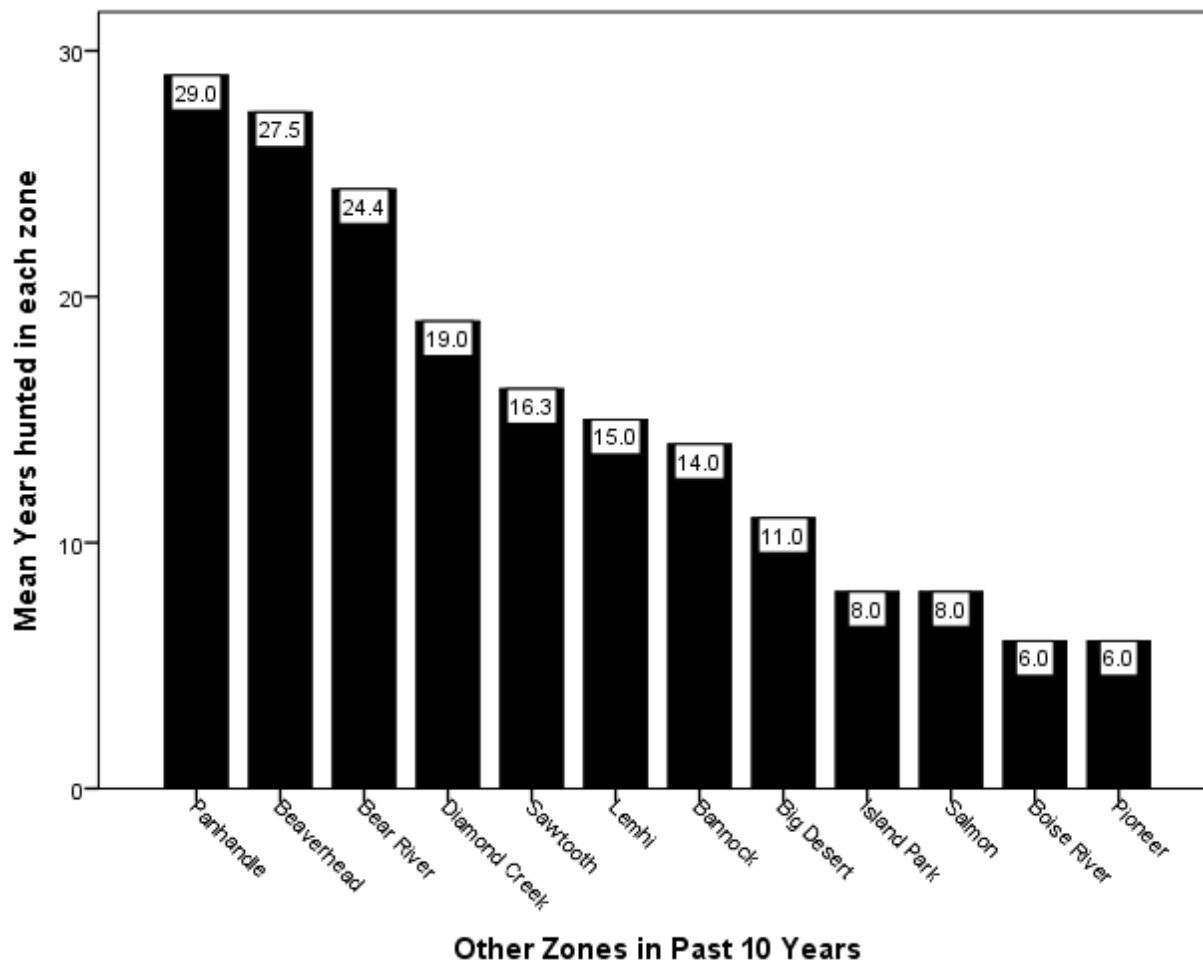
**18. If you hunted in more than one zone in the past 10 years, please list them below.**

*(Please write in the Zone names, refer to map on page 5 for Zone names)*



**Q18: The Diamond Creek and Sawtooth zones are the most popular zones to hunt in besides Bear River for zone respondents. Interestingly, Bear River zone hunters hunted the Diamond Creek zone than Bear River in the past 10 years.**

**20. How long have you hunted Elk in each of the zones you listed in Q-18?**  
*(Please write in the name of the zone and number of years, refer to map on page 5 for Zone names)*



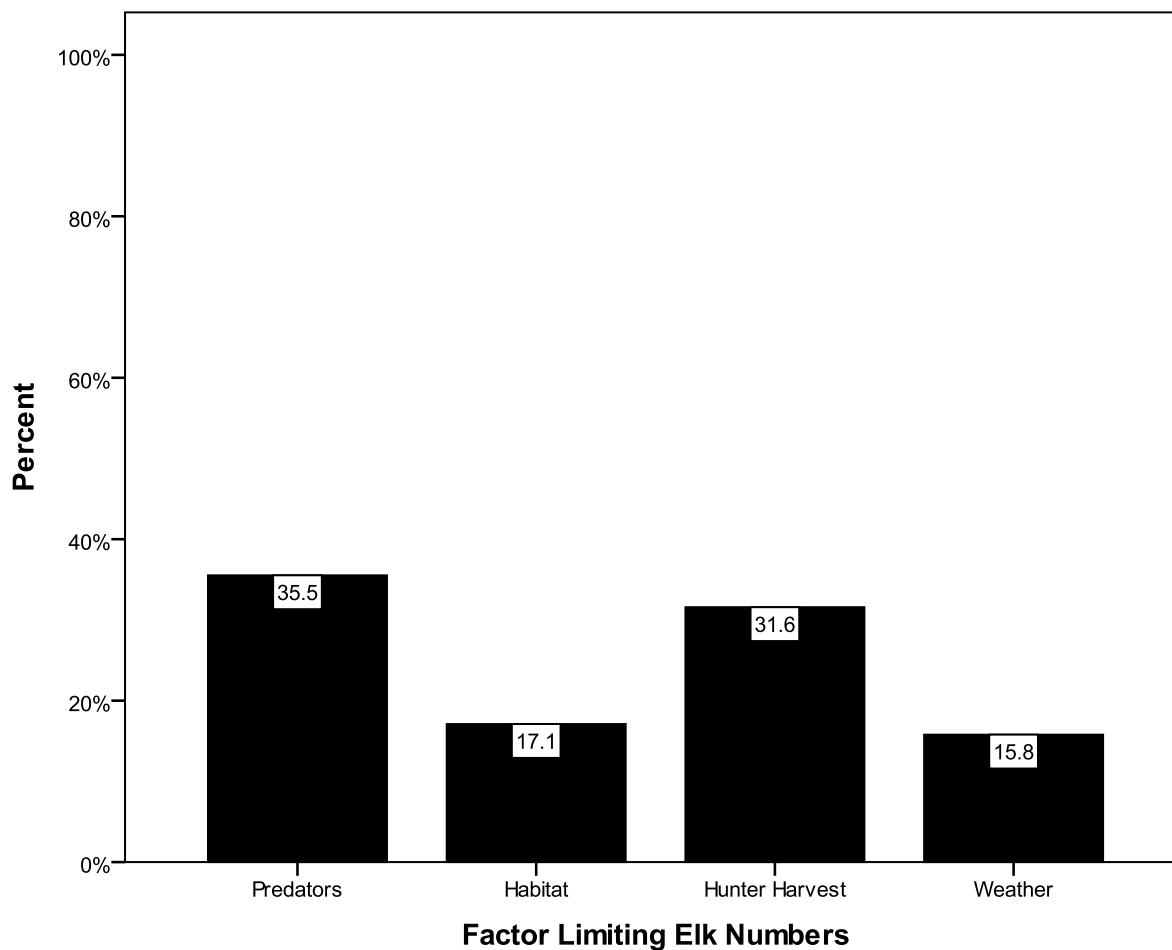
**Q20: Panhandle and Beaverhead zones have been hunted the longest among respondents. Bear River zone itself ranks third in duration.**

**21. Do you also hunt for Elk in other states? (Please check one response)**

**Q21: For respondents who have hunted in other states, a majority have hunted in Utah. Montana and New Mexico have also been popular locations.**



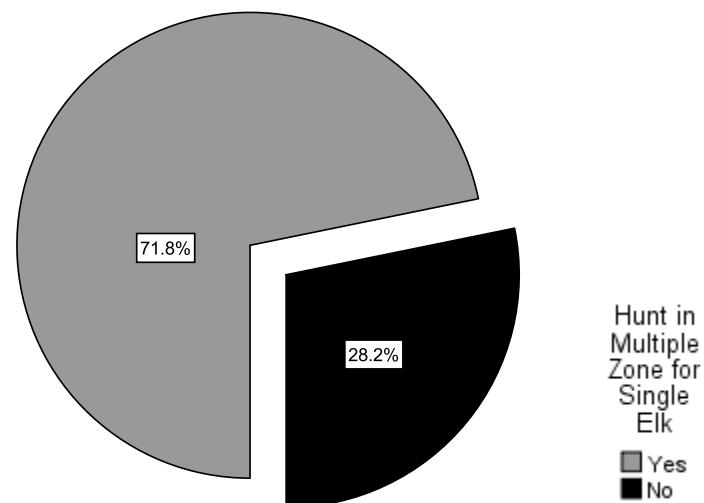
22. What do you believe is the primary factor limiting Elk numbers in the zone you hunted in 2011? (Check only ONE response)



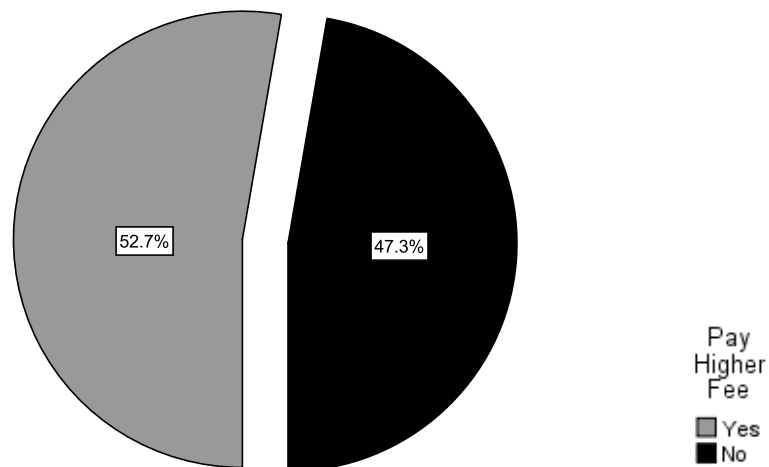
**Q22: Compared to 74.6% of hunters in the state, only 35.5% of hunters in the Bear River zone attribute limited Elk numbers to predators. About a third of hunters in this zone believe the cause is hunter harvest and about 10% more, over the state average, believe habitat is the primary factor.**

23. Would you like to be able to hunt in multiple zones in a year for a single Elk? (Please check one response)

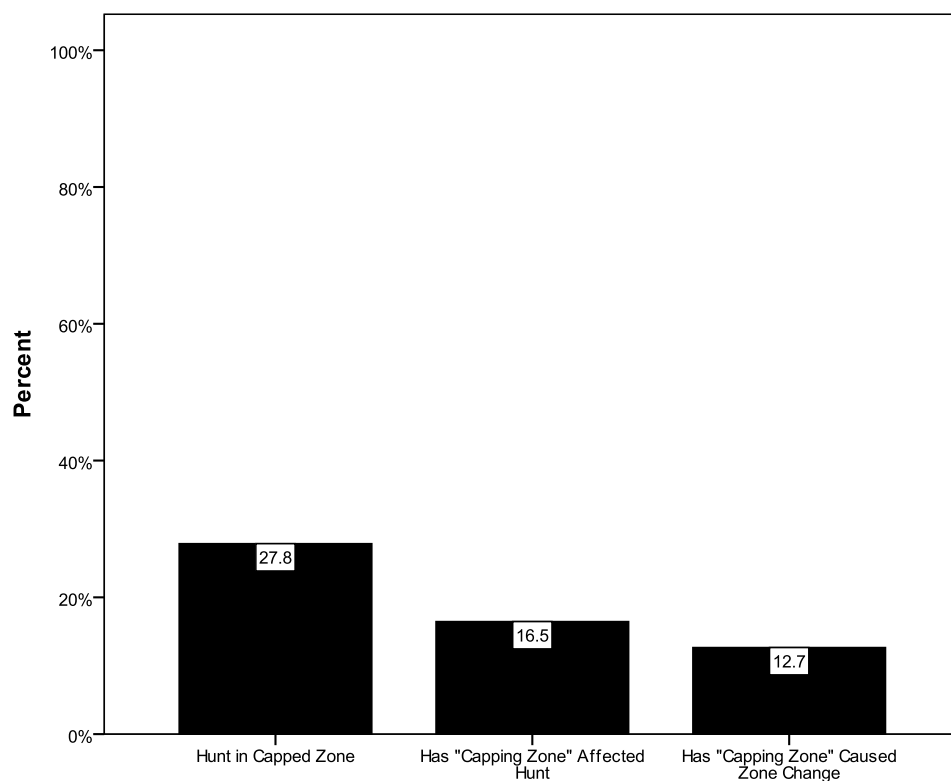
Like other hunters in the state, a majority of hunters in the Bear River zone would like to be able to hunt in multiple zones in a year for a single Elk. However, 7.5% more said they would not be willing to pay a higher fee to do so.



24. If YES, would you be willing to pay a higher fee (\$100 more for non-residents; \$30 more for residents) to do so? (Please check one response)

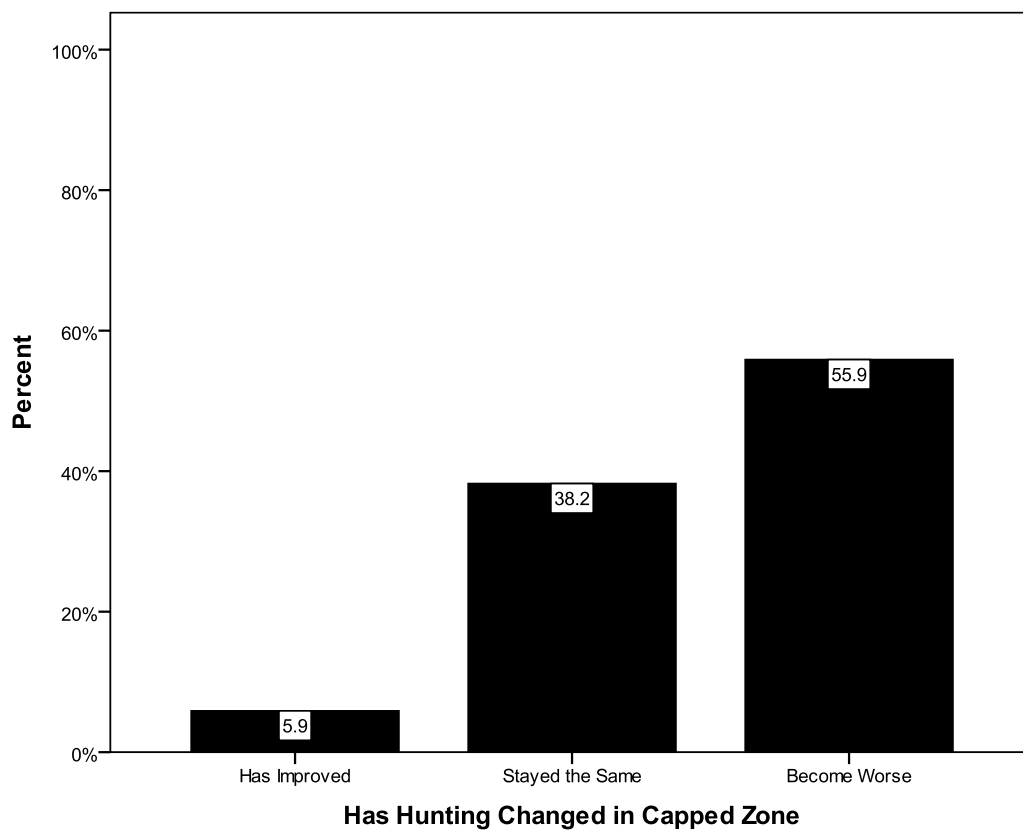


25. When the zone system was implemented the mechanism for reducing unlimited over-the-counter opportunity called "capping the zone" was developed by the department with the help of legislators, sportsmen and outfitters. This "capping the zone" is an allocation formula to distribute Elk tags to hunters (residents, nonresidents and outfitted residents) based on the historical use of the previous 5 years. What has been your experience with this management strategy? (Please circle one response for each question)



**Q25: About a quarter of respondents from the Bear River zone said that they hunt in a capped zone, and 16.5% said that capping a zone changes the hung. 12.7% of respondents said that they have changed zones because of zone caps.**

26. If you hunt in a “capped zone” has the Elk hunting changed since it was capped? (Please check one response)

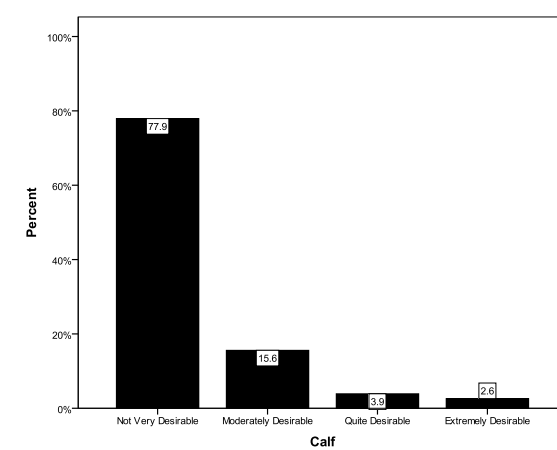
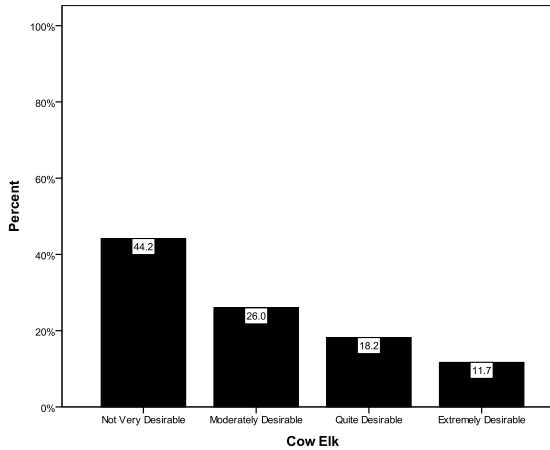
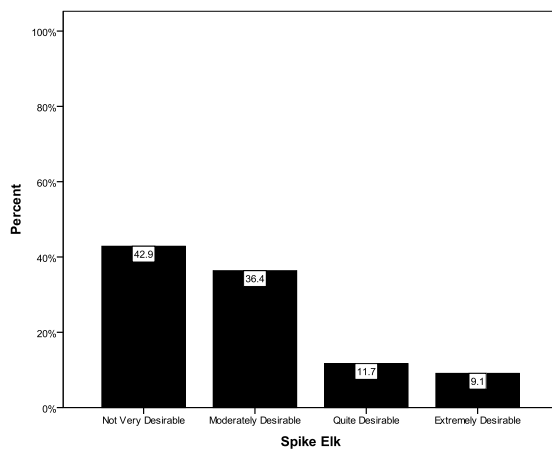
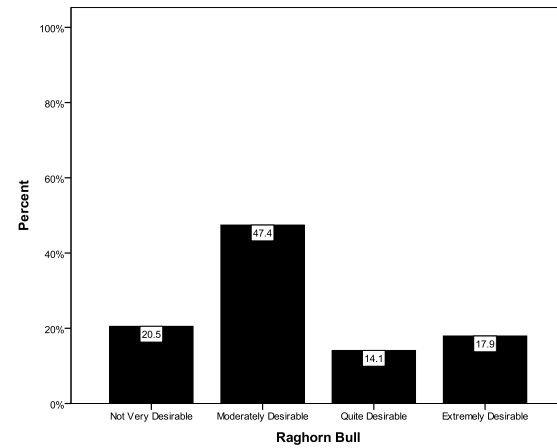
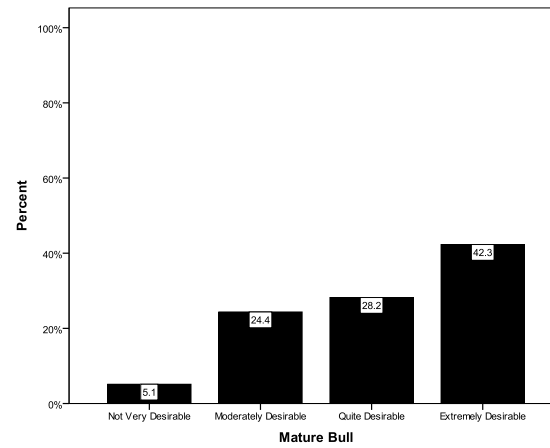
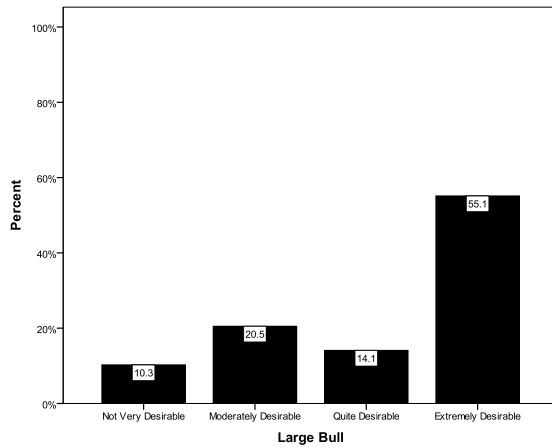


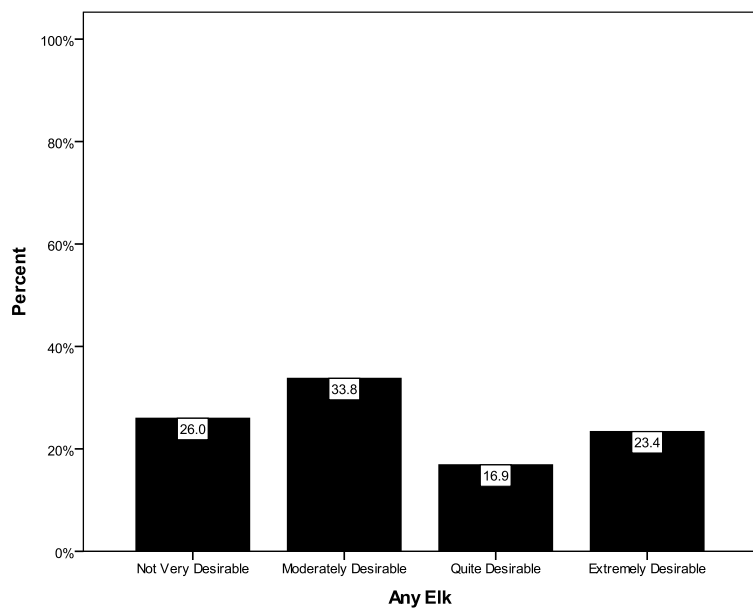
**Q26: Like other hunters in the state, about half hunters in the Bear River zone believe that Elk hunting has become worse in capped zones.**

# ELK HUNTING PREFERENCES AND MOTIVATIONS

In this section we seek an understanding of what you consider when deciding what kind of Elk to hunt and where to hunt them.

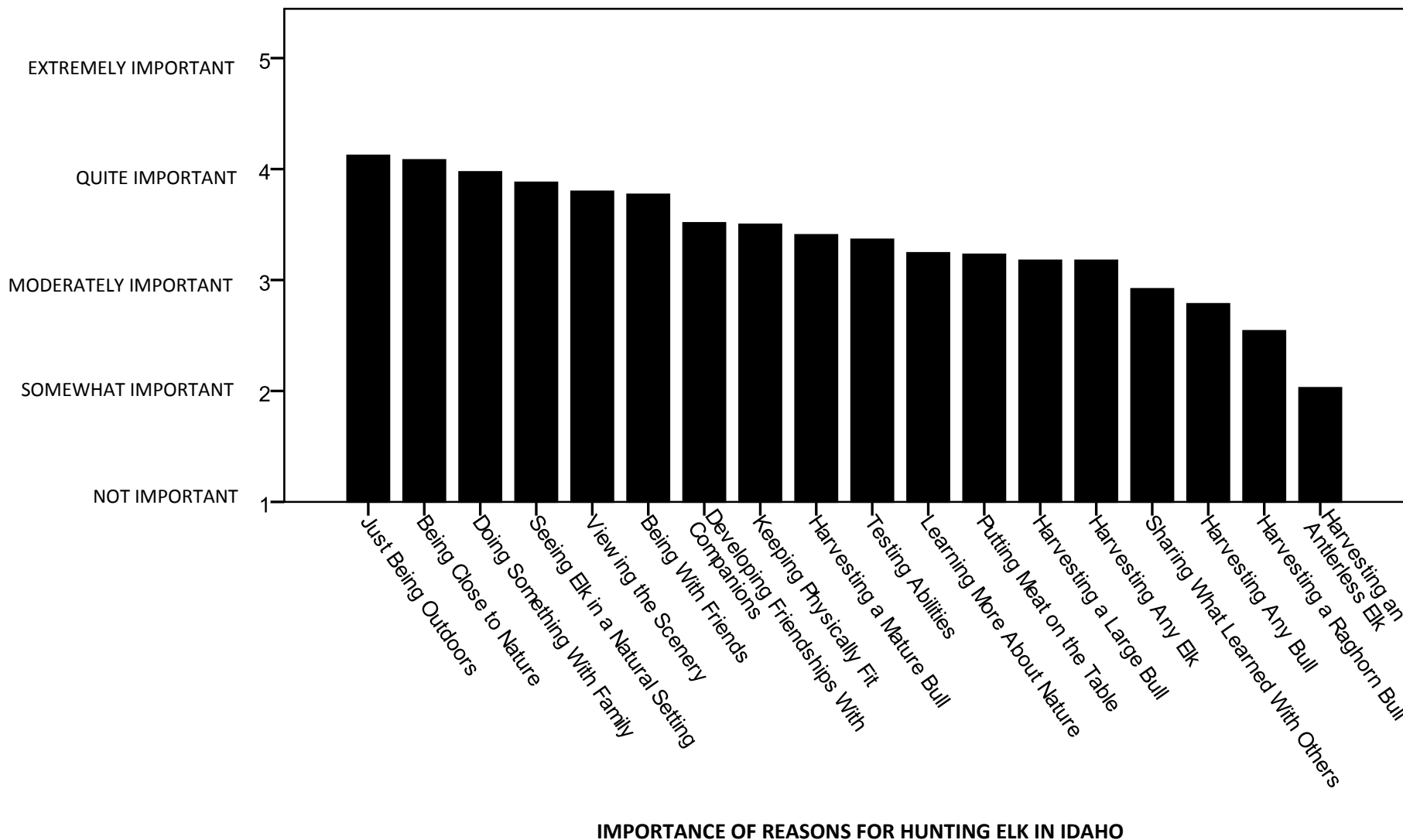
## 27. How desirable is it to you to harvest the following kinds of Elk?

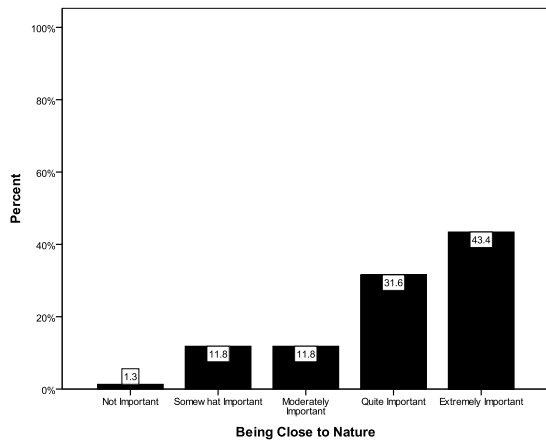




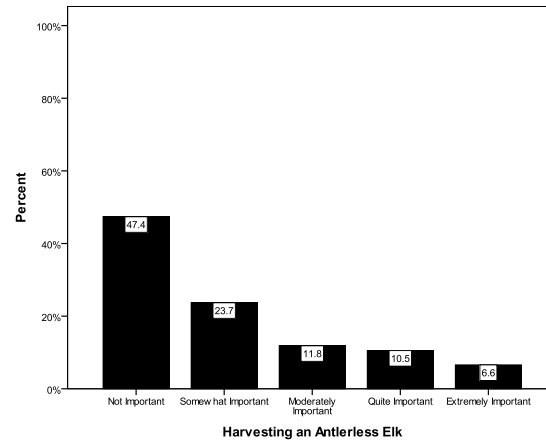
**Q27: The distribution of responses between hunters in the Bear River zone and hunters throughout the state is similar. Hunters in this zone tend to prefer more mature and larger bulls and find cow, spike, and raghorn Elk less desirable than the state average.**

28. Below is a list of possible reasons for hunting Elk in Idaho. How important to you is each of the following reasons for hunting Elk in Idaho?

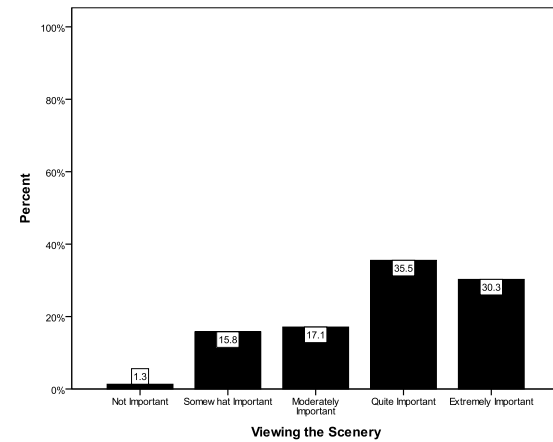




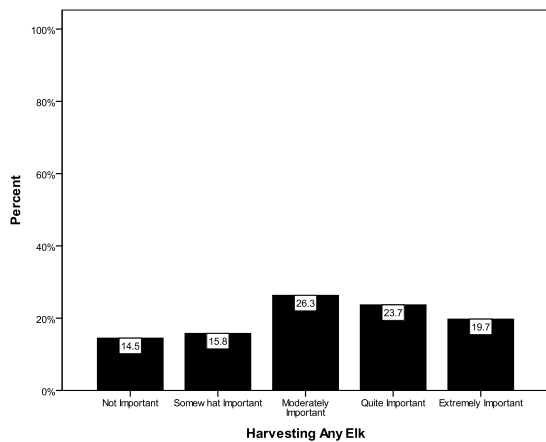
Being Close to Nature



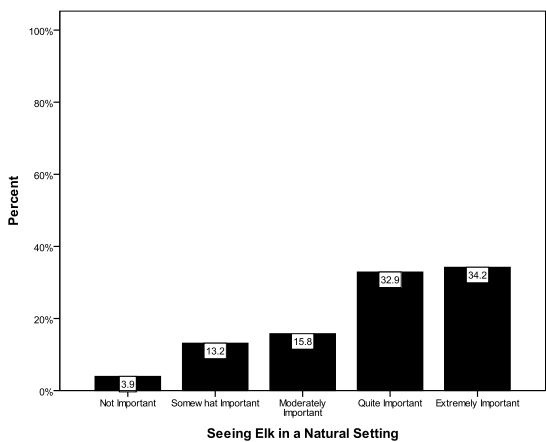
Harvesting an Antlerless Elk



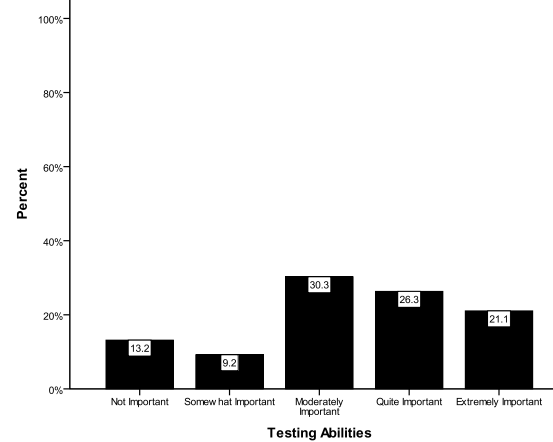
Viewing the Scenery



Harvesting Any Elk

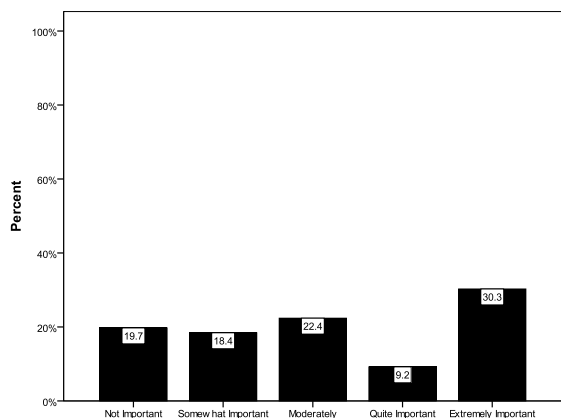


Seeing Elk in a Natural Setting

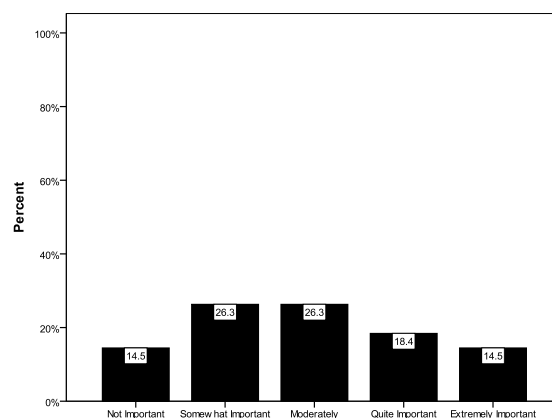


Testing Abilities

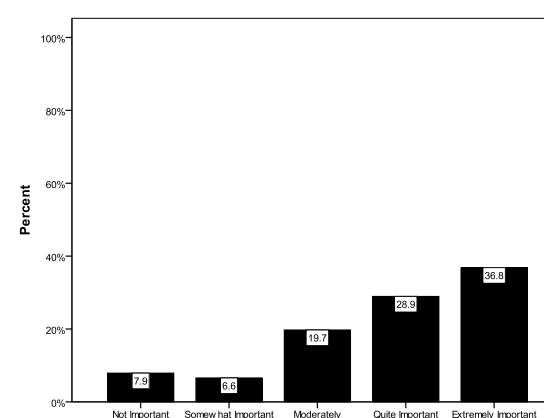




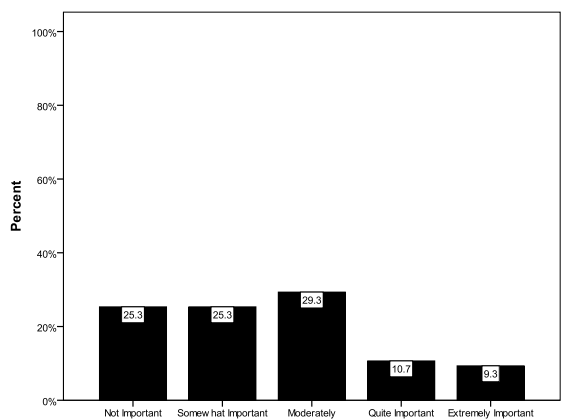
Harvesting a Large Bull



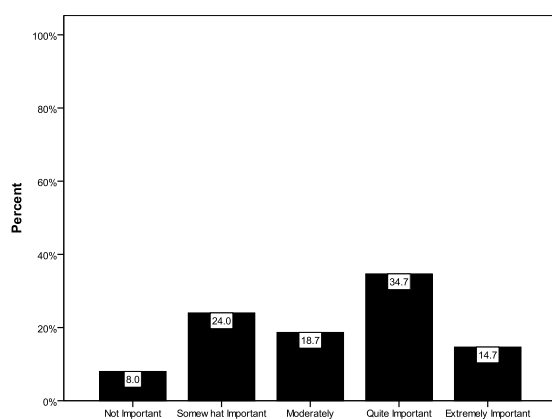
Sharing What Learned With Others



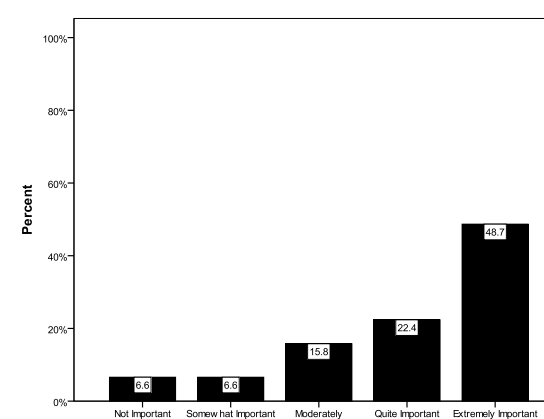
Being With Friends



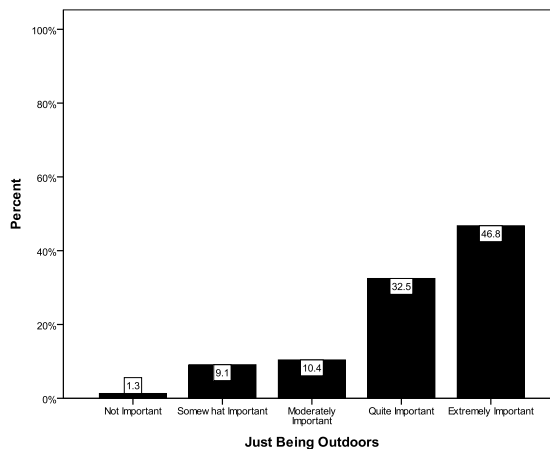
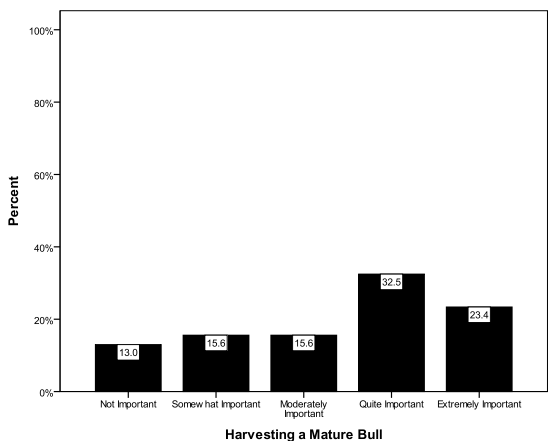
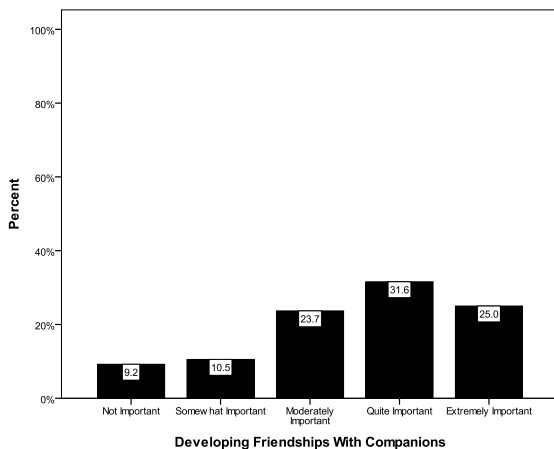
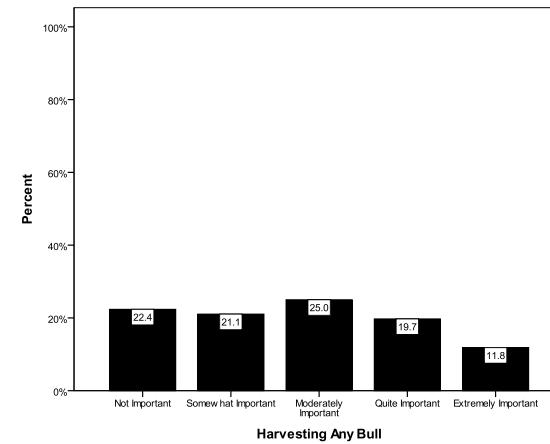
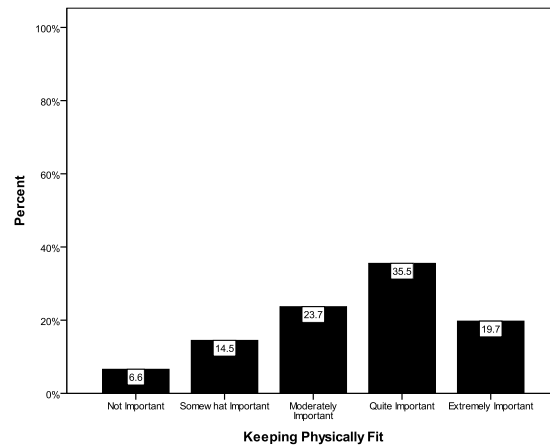
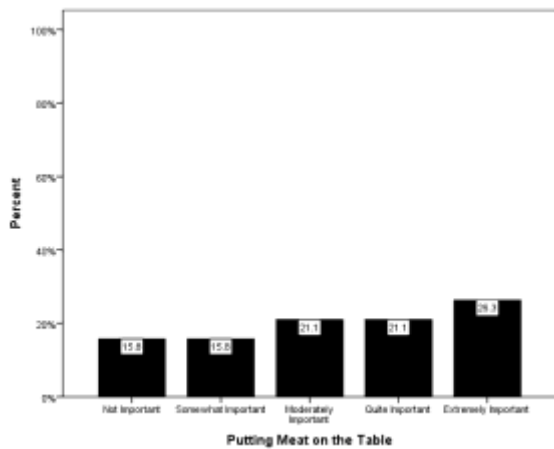
Harvesting a Raghorn Bull



Learning More About Nature



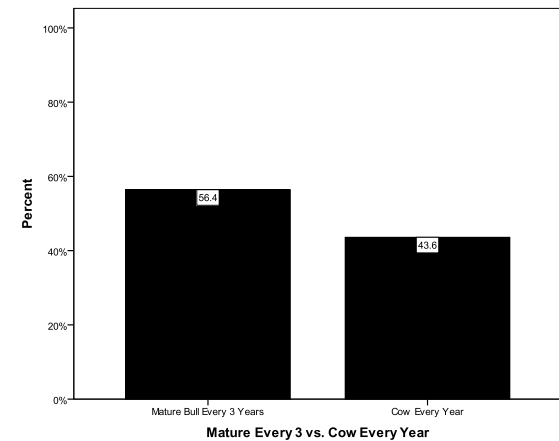
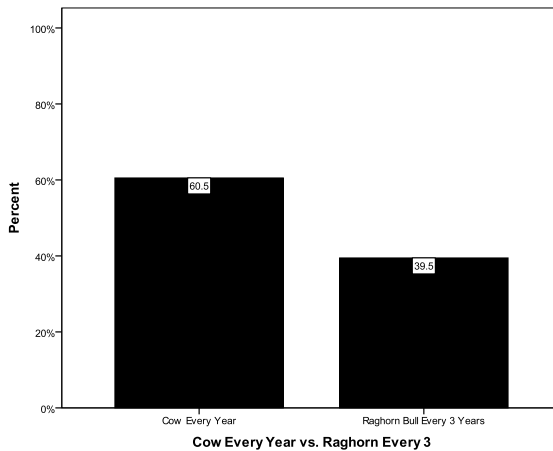
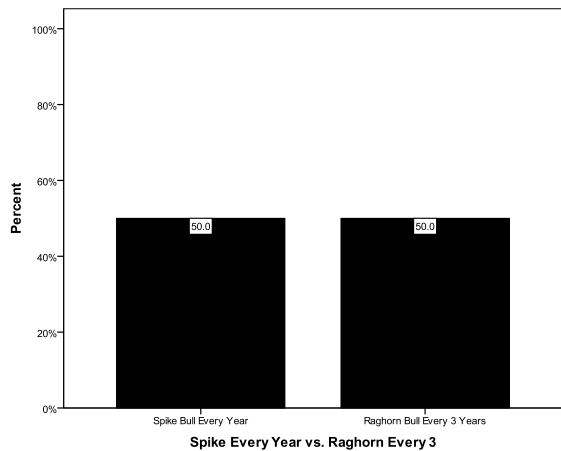
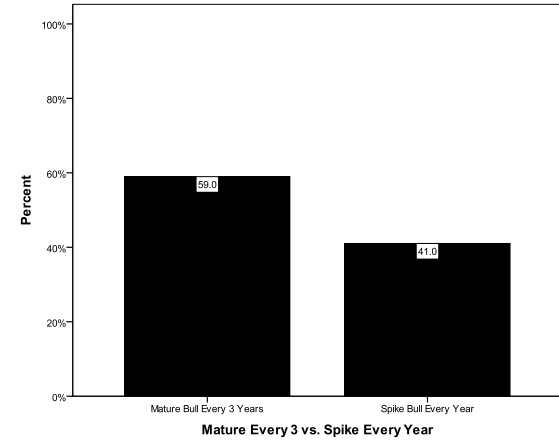
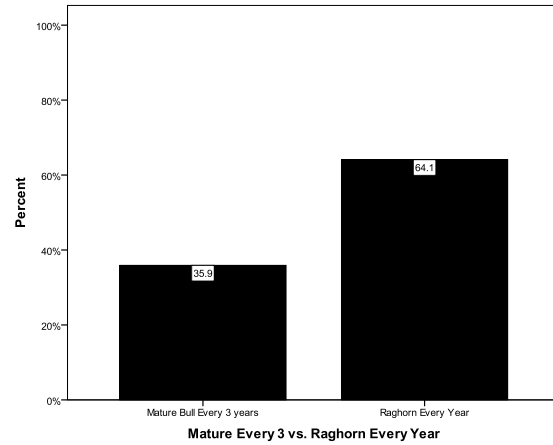
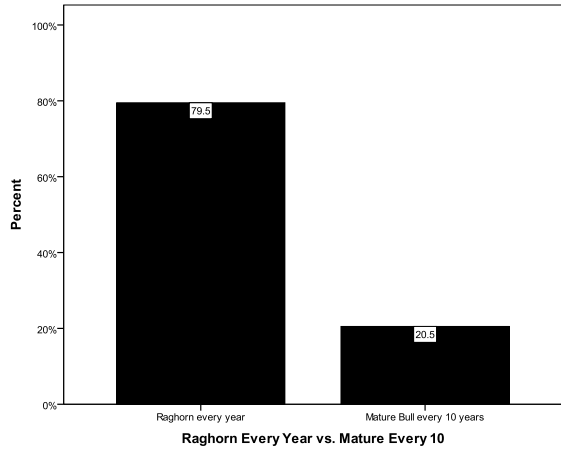
Doing Something With Family

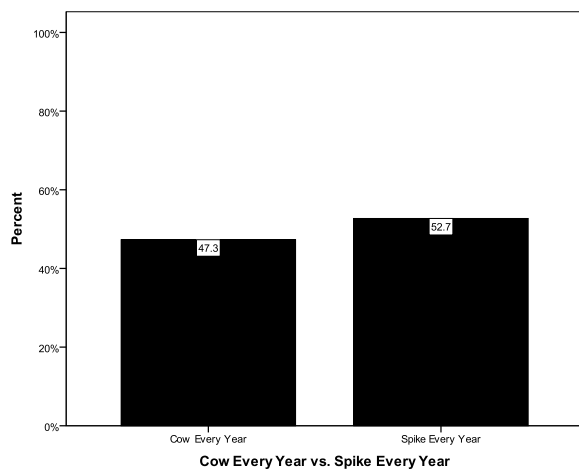


**Q28: The top six reasons for hunting Elk in Idaho were the same between the state average and Bear River respondents, while the remaining possible reasons varied slightly between the two groups.**

**Next, your opinions about some possible management options.**

**32. Managing to produce more large bull Elk would require reductions in bull harvest. Managers need to know whether hunters are willing make trade-offs between the size of bulls and the amount of opportunity to hunt. (For each of the following pairs of opportunity choices please indicate which one is most favorable to you by circling the appropriate letter) Please answer every one, even if you do not like either option.**

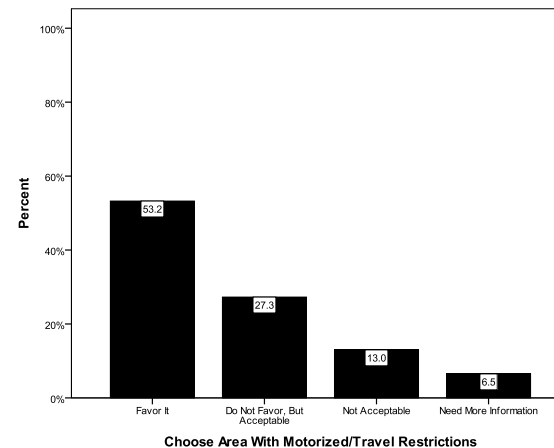
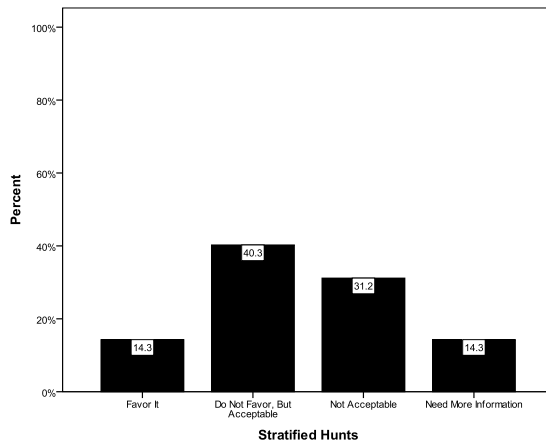
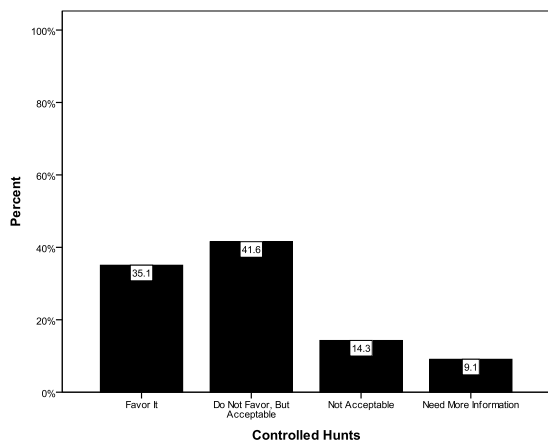
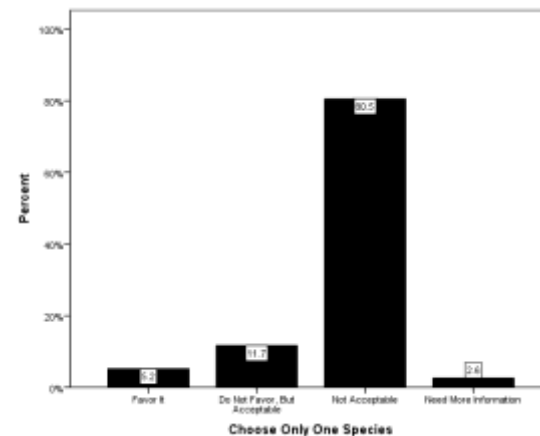
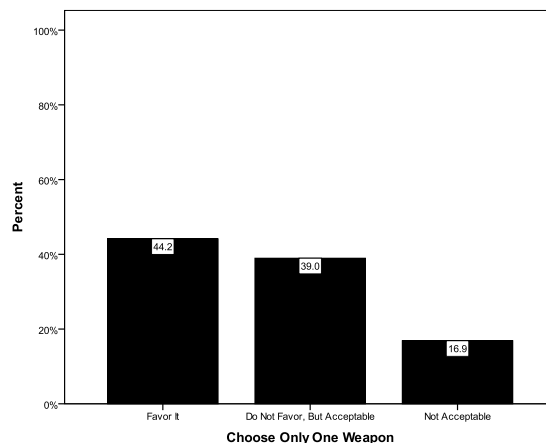
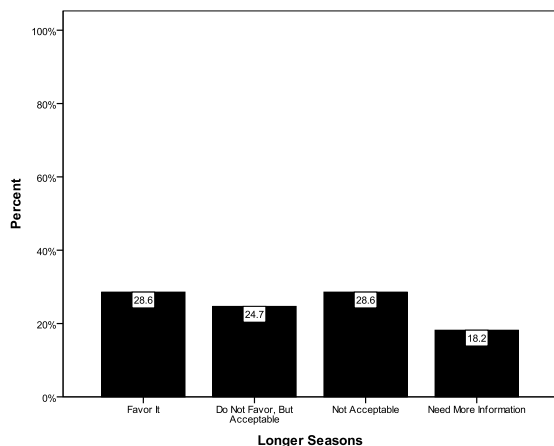


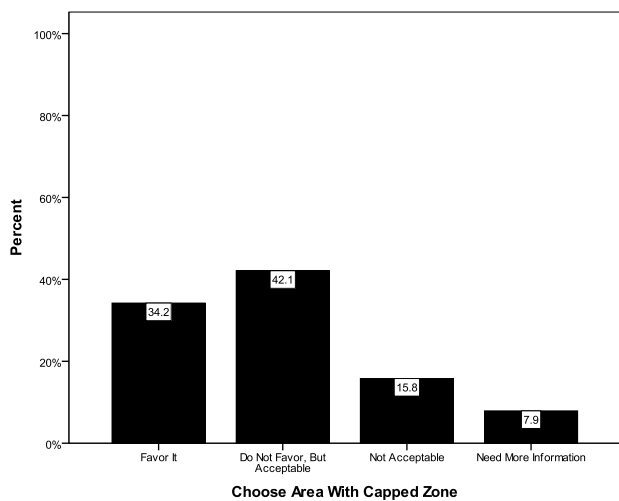


**Q32: Unlike the state average, Bear River hunters tend to preserve the opportunity to get larger Elk but less frequently, rather than solely the opportunity to hunt.**

# ACCEPTABILITY OF CURRENT AND PROPOSED MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND THE TRADE-OFFS INVOLVED

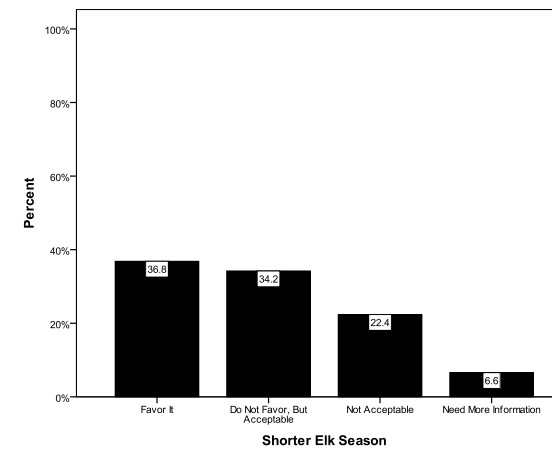
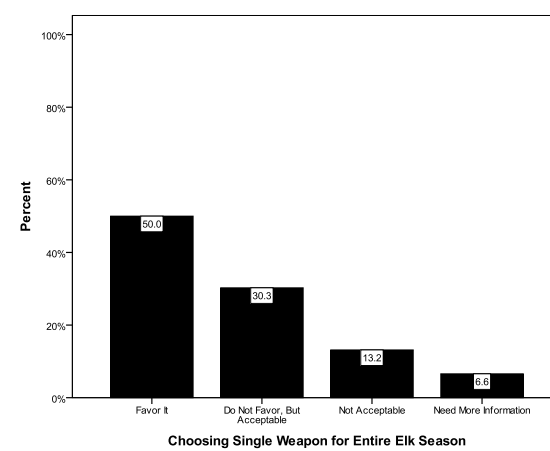
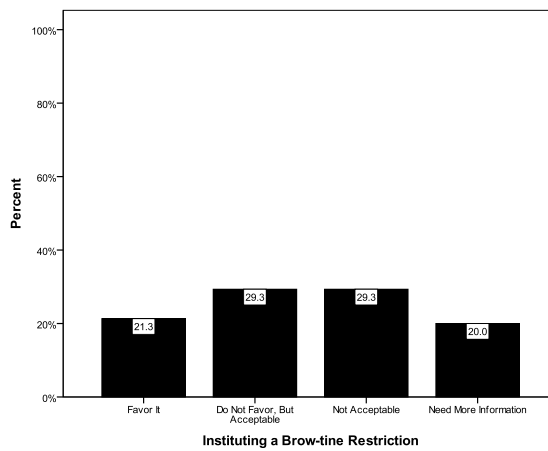
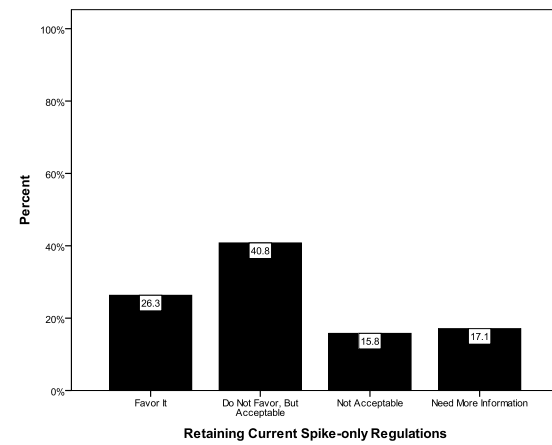
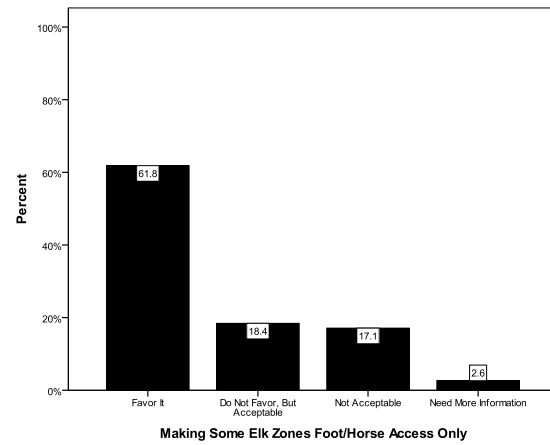
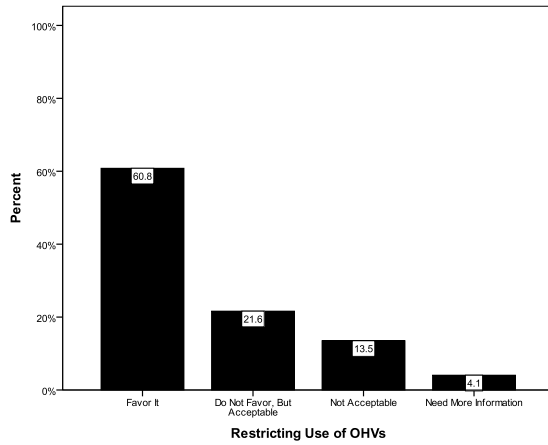
34. How do you feel about each of the following potential ways of improving Elk hunting, if needed?

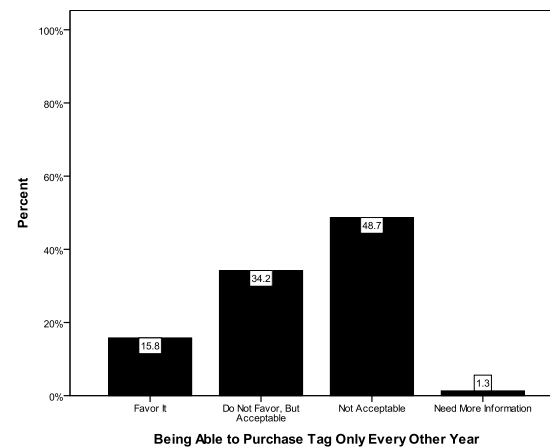
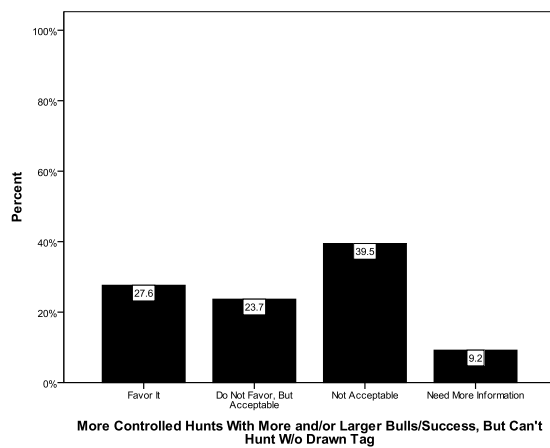
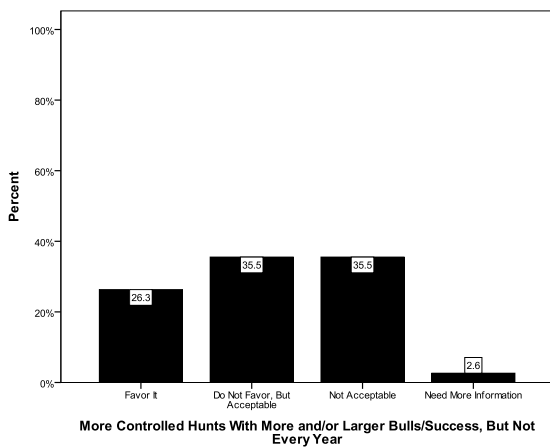




**Q34: The distribution of responses between Bear River hunters and the state average are similar. One difference is that hunters in this zone find stratified hunts more acceptable than other hunters in the state but still not favorable.**

35. We would like to know how you feel about the following potential restrictions to increase the quality and size of Elk in Idaho and improve Elk hunting opportunities. Please indicate your opinion on the following potential restrictions.

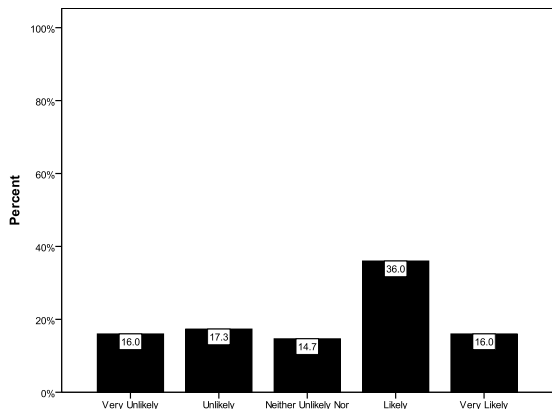




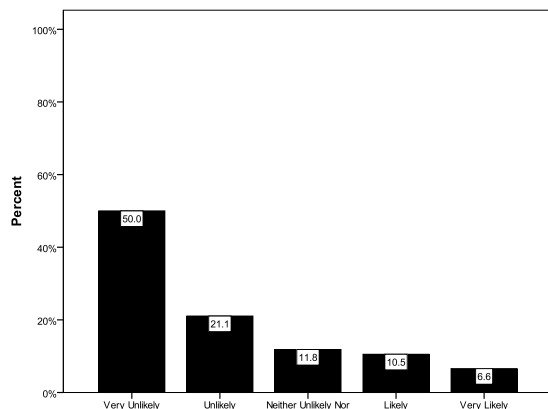
**Q35: The distribution of responses between the state average and the Bear River zone is fairly similar. A larger portion hunters in Bear River zone than the state favor a shorter Elk season and more controlled hunts with more and/or larger bulls/success, but not every year. They also are more accepting of a brow-tine restriction.**



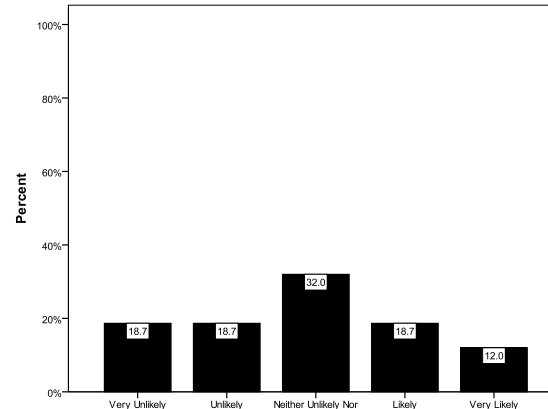
**36. *IF* Idaho Fish and Game introduces restrictions that reduce Elk hunting opportunities to improve Elk populations, how would your hunting behavior change?**



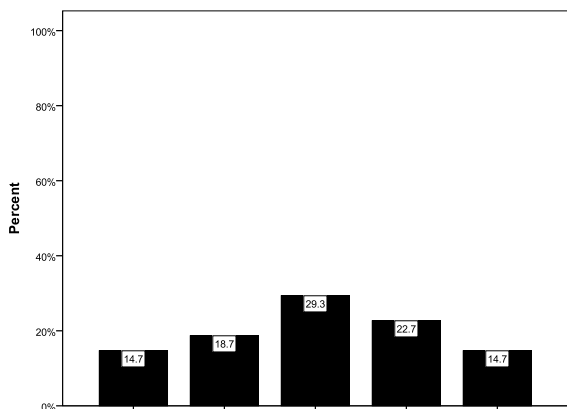
Hunt in Different Zones



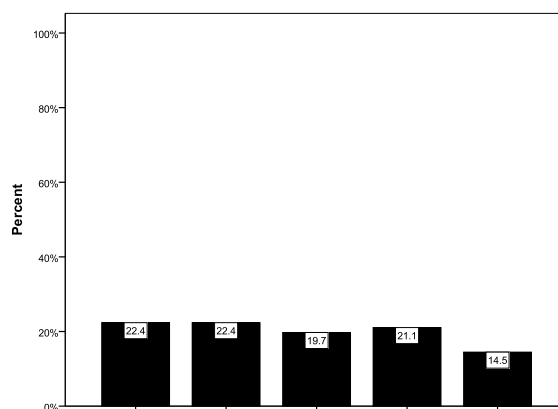
Quit Hunting Elk



Shift to Hunt Other Species



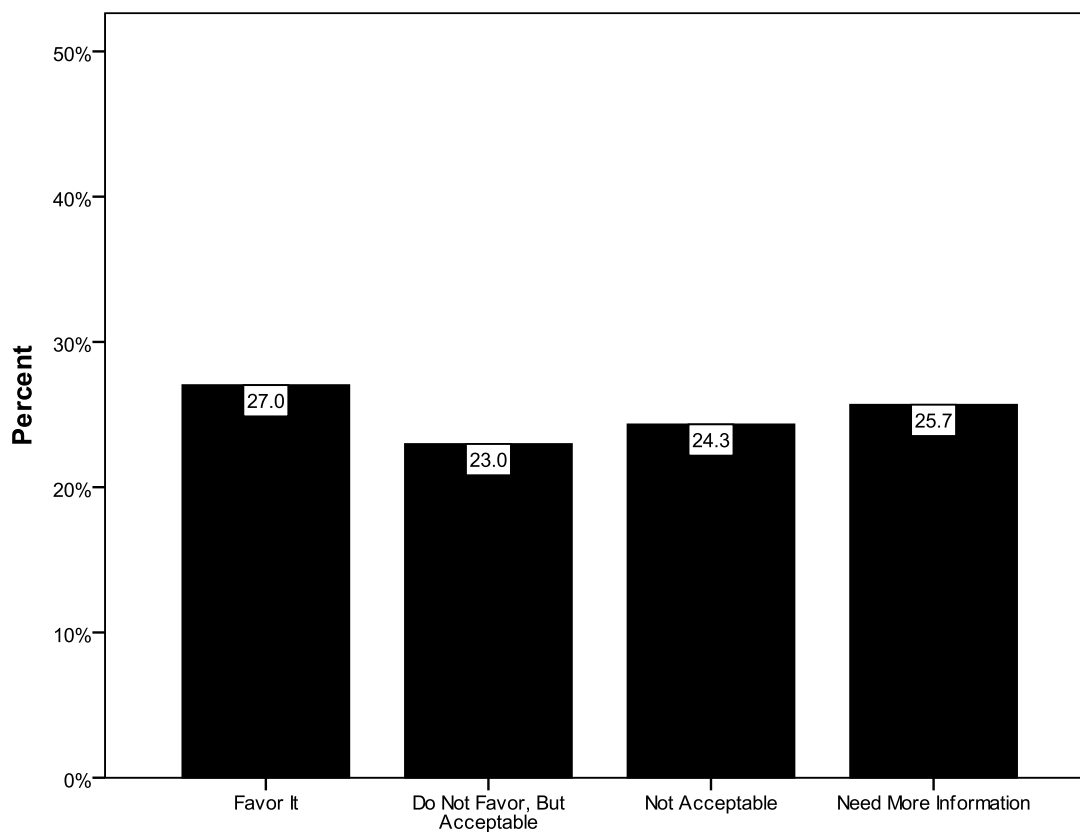
Not Change Hunting Behavior



Change Weapon Type for Increased Elk Hunting Opportunity

**Q36: The distribution of responses is similar between the state average and the Bear River zone.**

38. How would you feel about a big game regulation that sets the general season conditions for 2 years in advance, just like the current Moose, Mountain Goat, Bighorn Sheep, Upland Game, Turkey and Fishing regulations? (Please check one response)

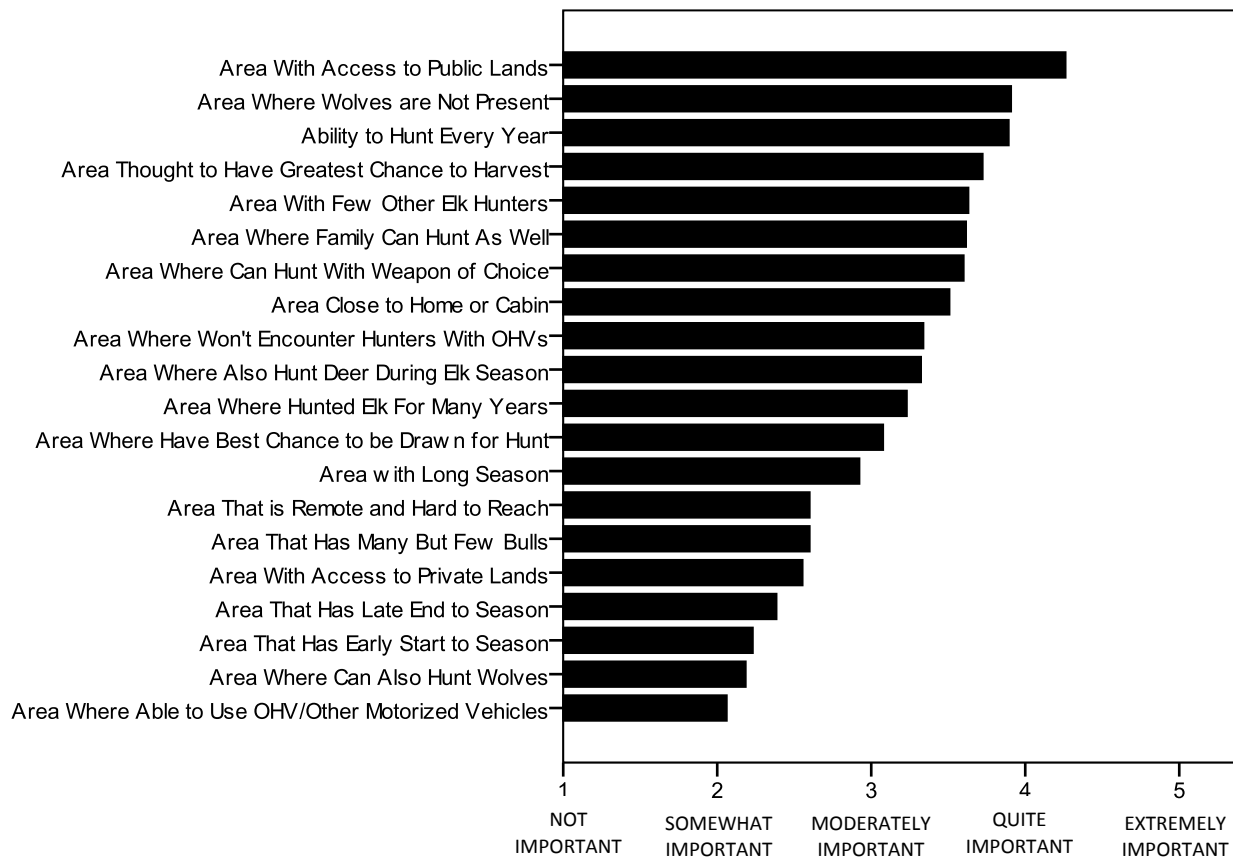


Feelings About Setting Season Conditions 2 Years in Advance

**Q38:** Although half of respondents favor or find this regulation acceptable, almost a quarter of hunters in the Bear River zone find this unacceptable, 8.7% more than the state average. Another quarter would also need more information.

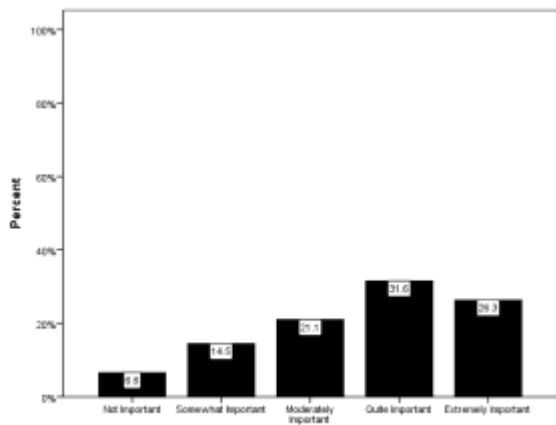
## WHEN AND WHERE TO HUNT

29. Each of the following characteristics may be things you consider when deciding where to hunt Elk in Idaho. How does each characteristic affect your choice of where to hunt Elk in Idaho?

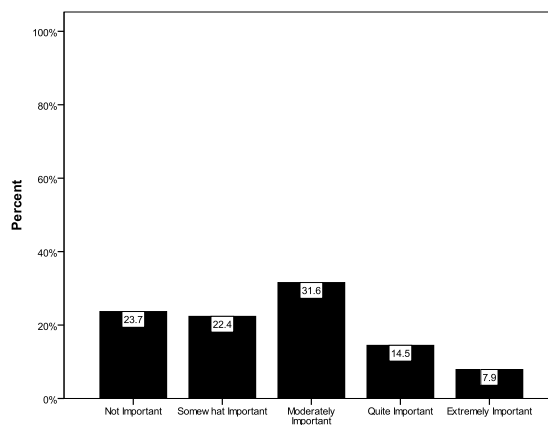


**Q29: The top five characteristics are the same between the state average and the Bear River zone.**

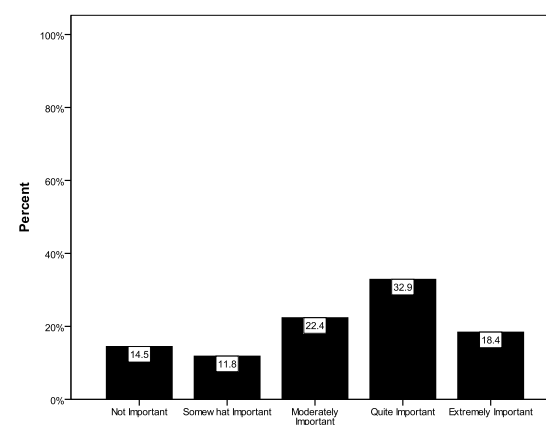
**CHARACTERISTICS AFFECTING CHOICE OF WHERE TO HUNT IN IDAHO**



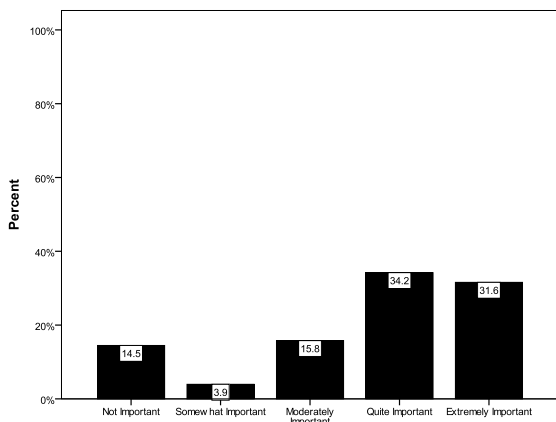
Area With Few Other Elk Hunters



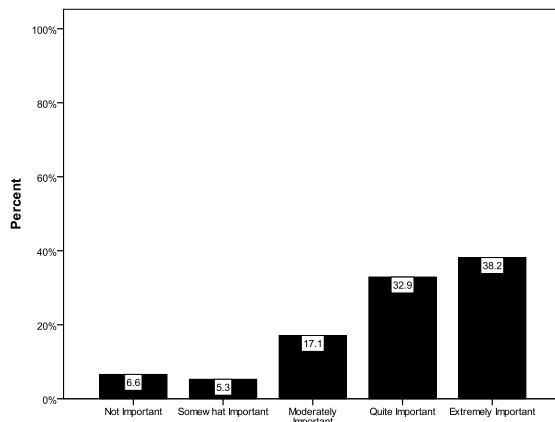
Area That Has Many But Few Bulls



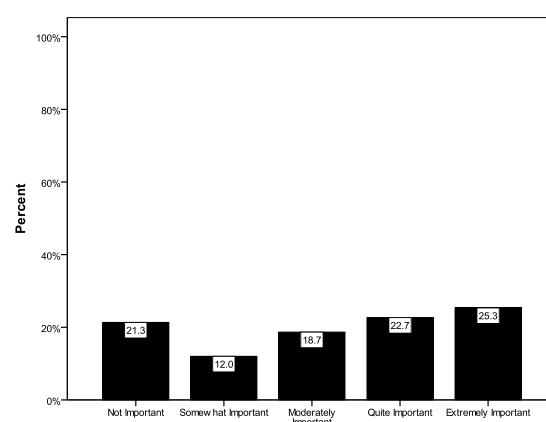
Area Where Hunted Elk For Many Years



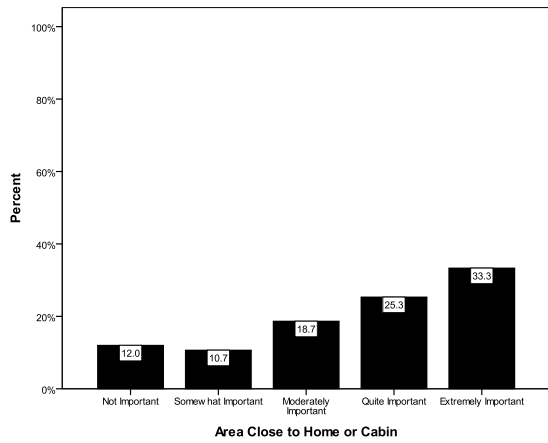
Area Where Family Can Hunt As Well



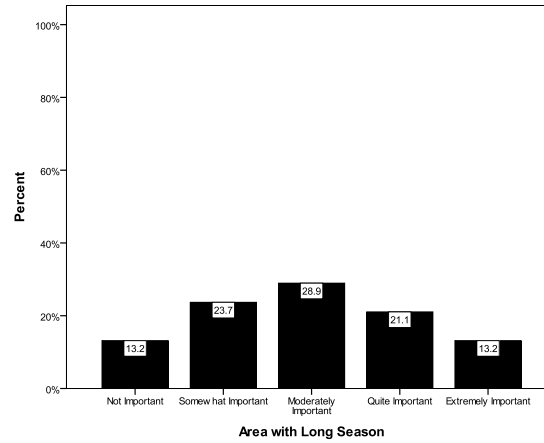
Ability to Hunt Every Year



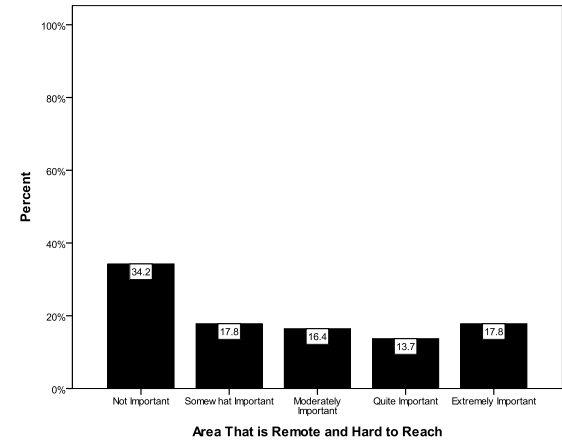
Area Where Also Hunt Deer During Elk Season



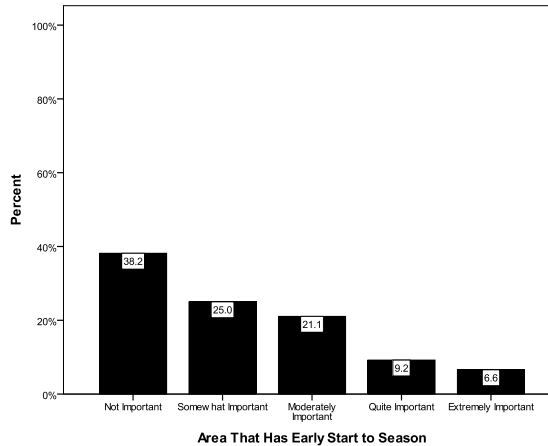
Area Close to Home or Cabin



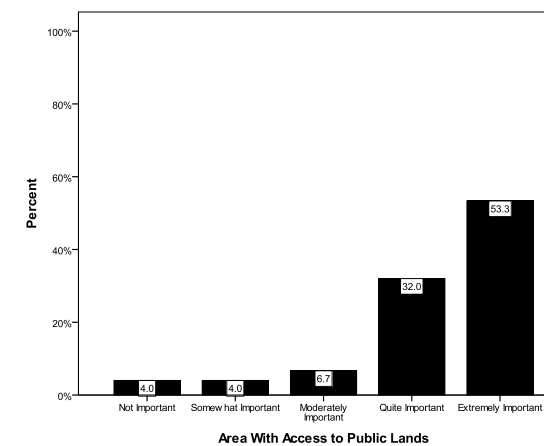
Area with Long Season



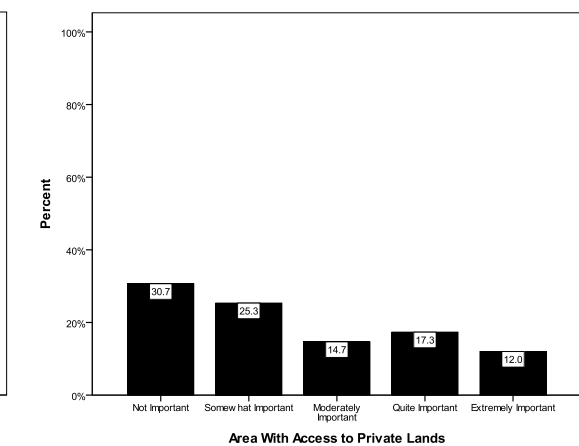
Area That is Remote and Hard to Reach



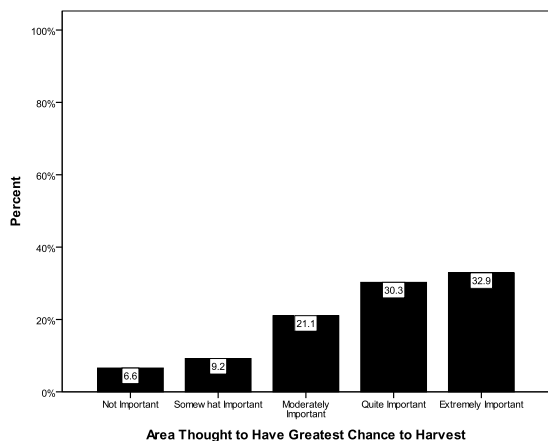
Area That Has Early Start to Season



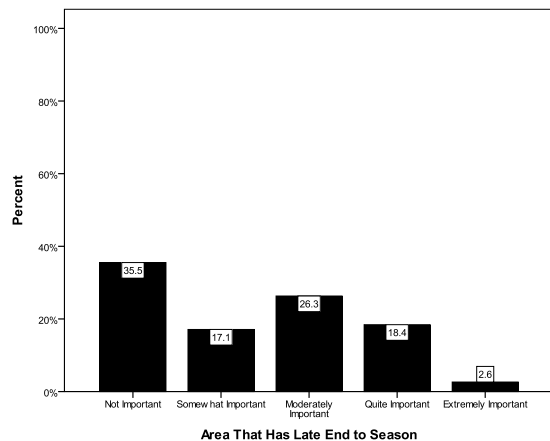
Area With Access to Public Lands



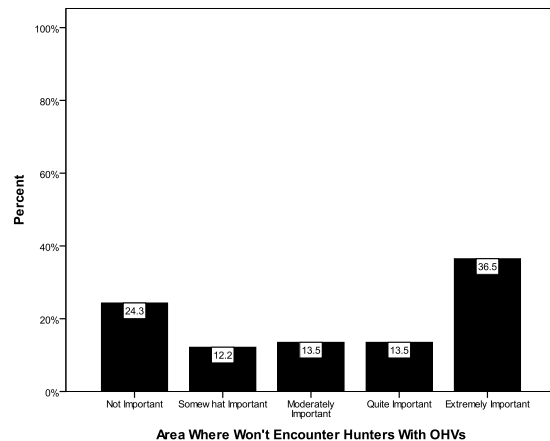
Area With Access to Private Lands



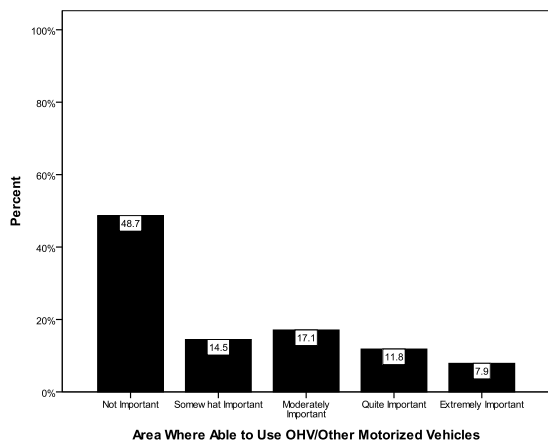
Area Thought to Have Greatest Chance to Harvest



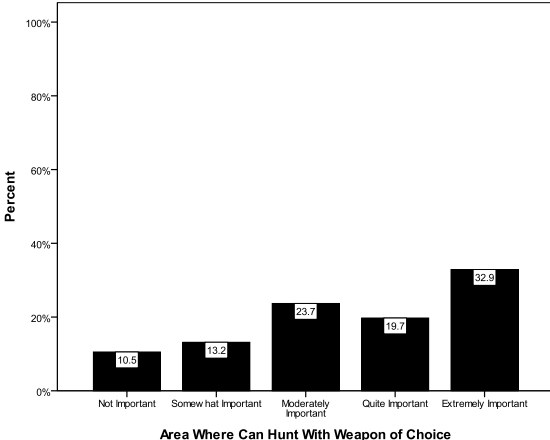
Area That Has Late End to Season



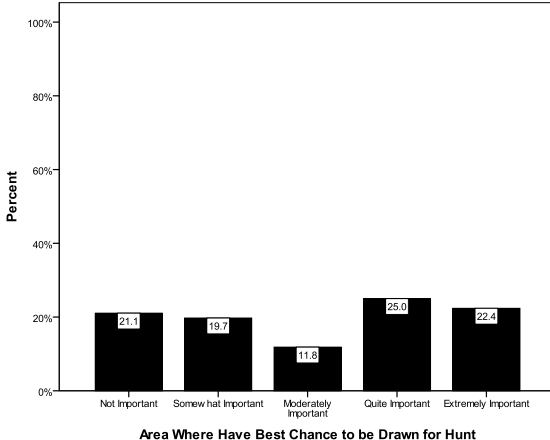
Area Where Won't Encounter Hunters With OHVs



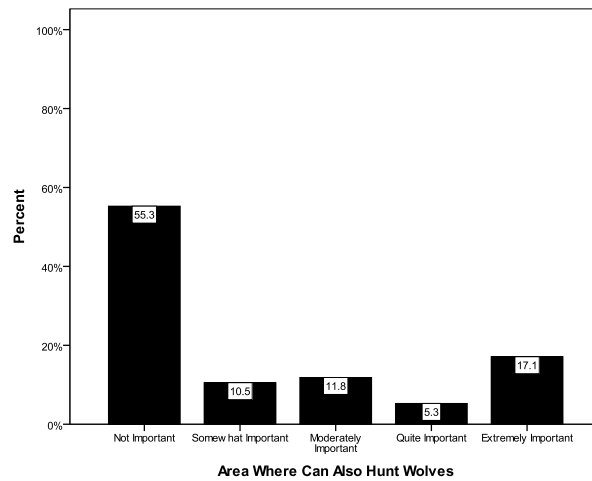
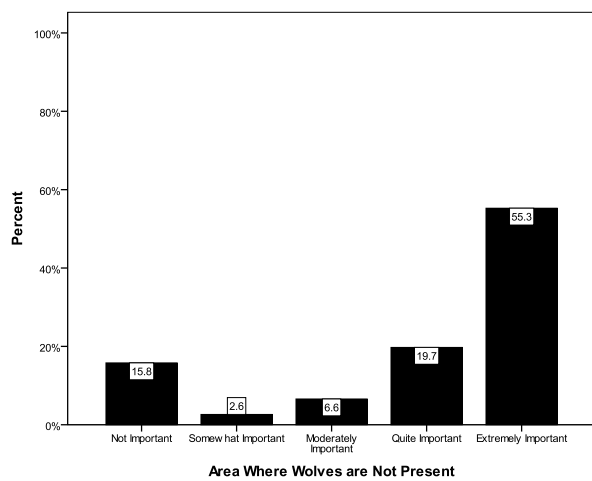
Area Where Able to Use OHV/Other Motorized Vehicles



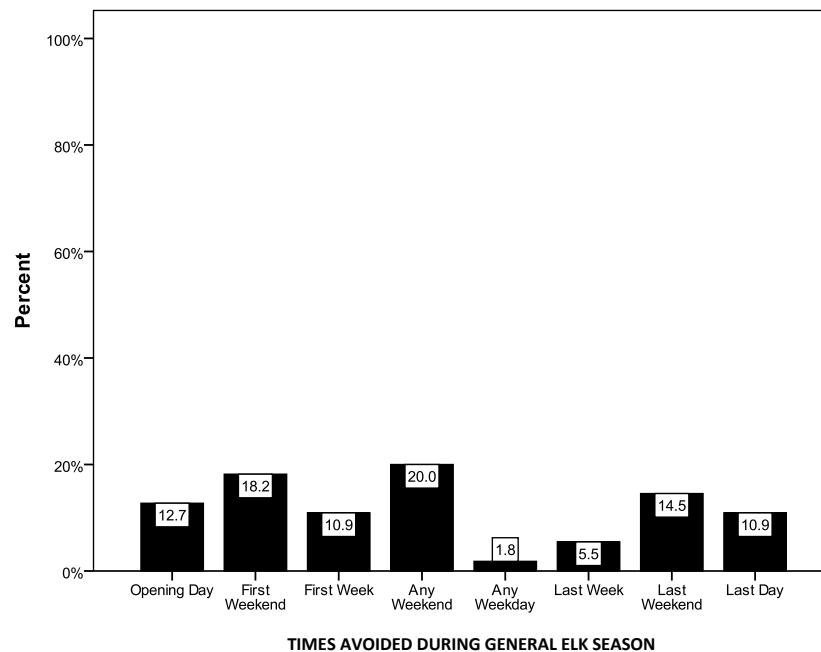
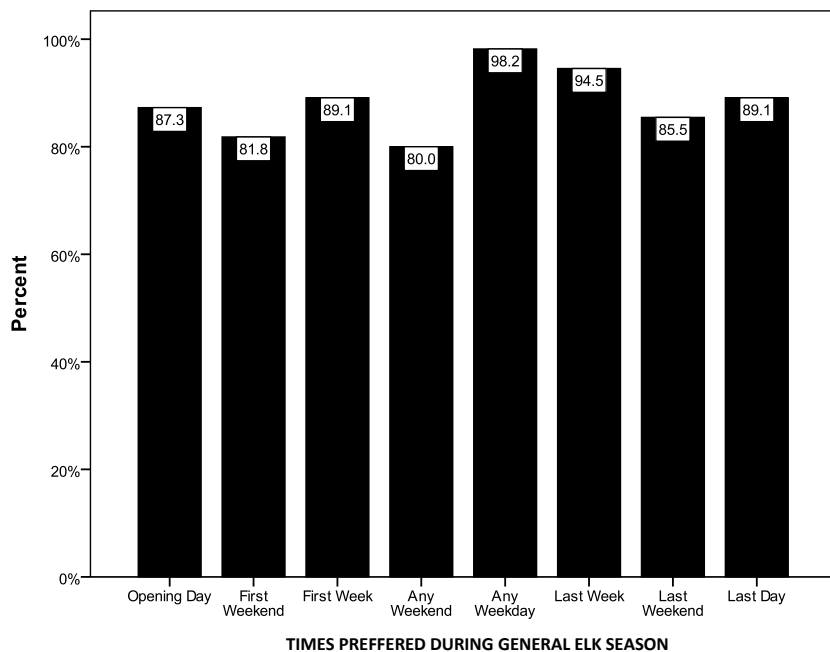
Area Where Can Hunt With Weapon of Choice



Area Where Have Best Chance to be Drawn for Hunt



30. Are there any times during the general Elk hunting season in Idaho that you prefer or avoid? (Please check as many as apply)

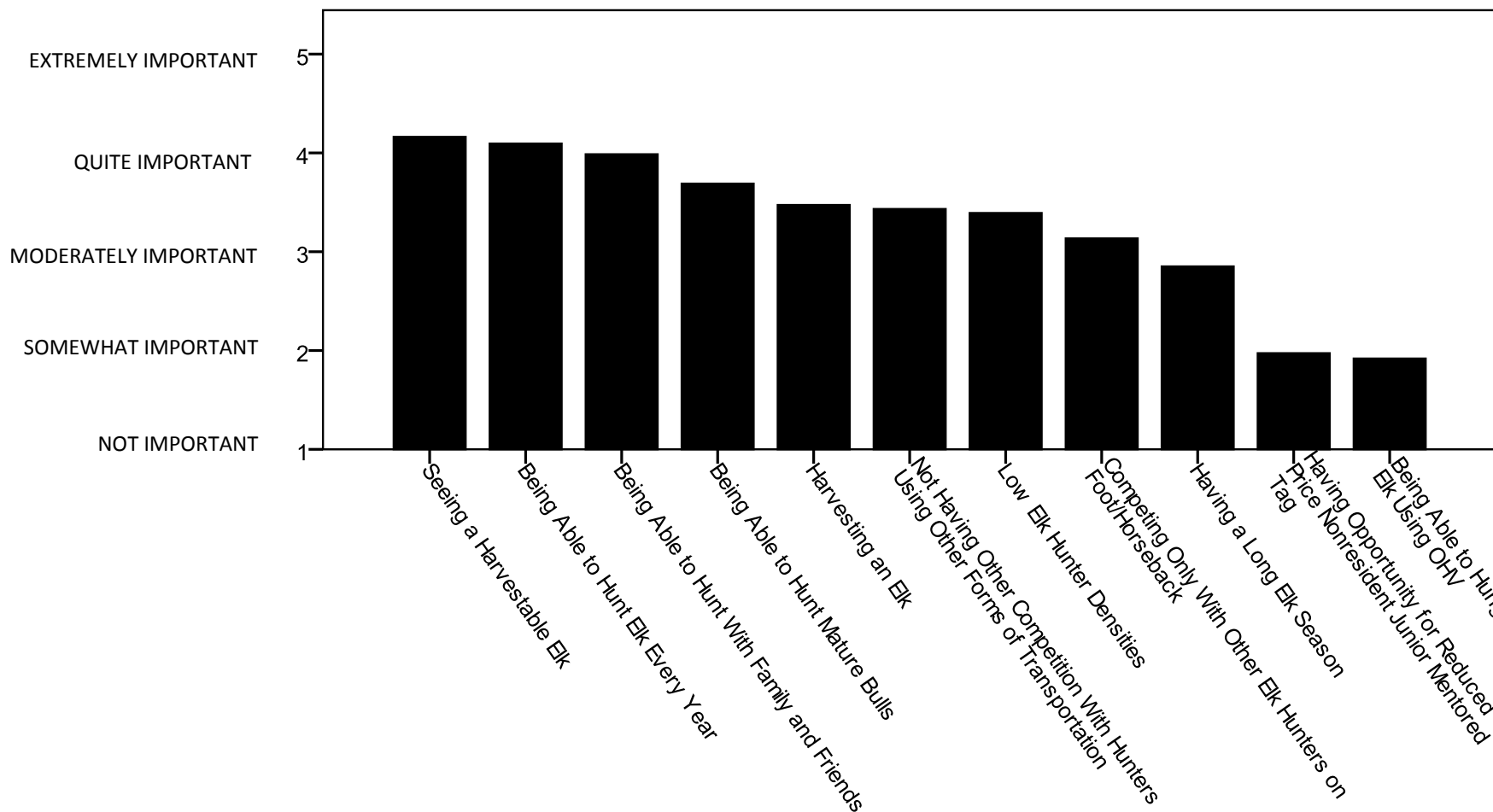


**Q30: Compared to the state average, hunters in the Bear River zone find most times preferable and avoid certain times less. Weekends and opening day are most avoided by both groups.**

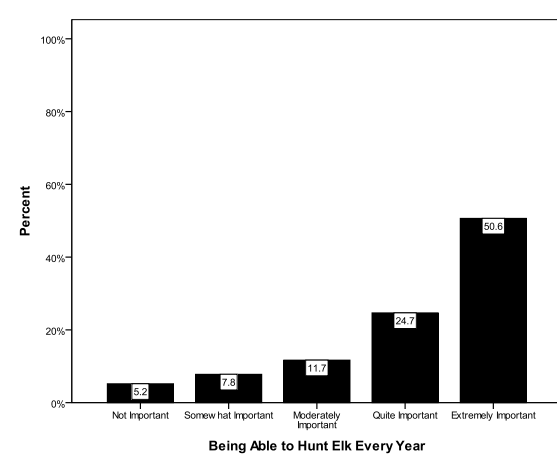
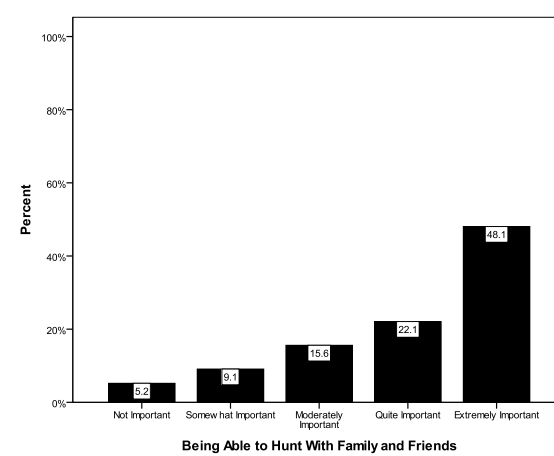
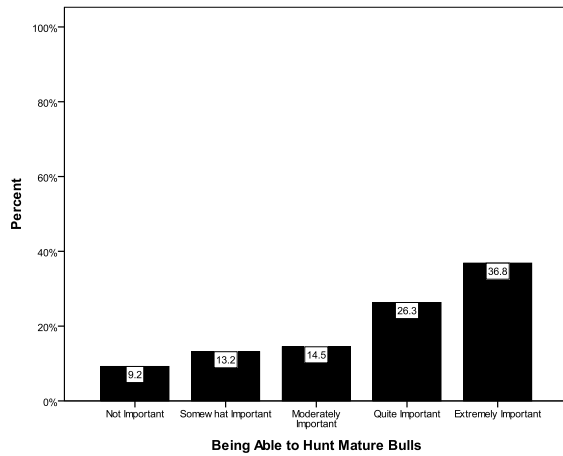
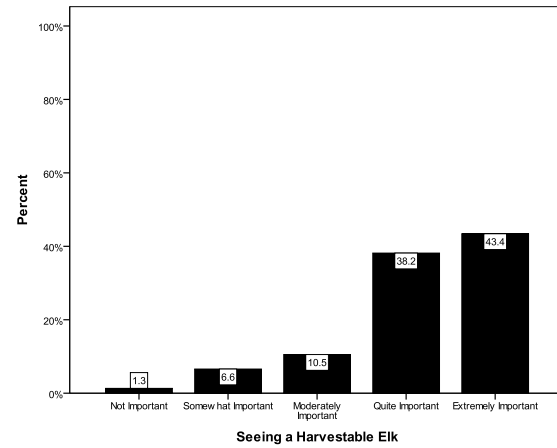
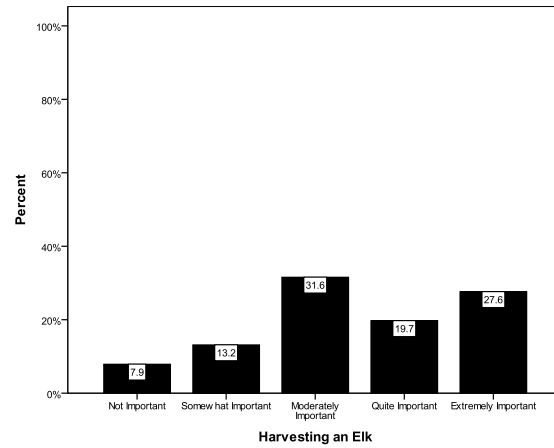
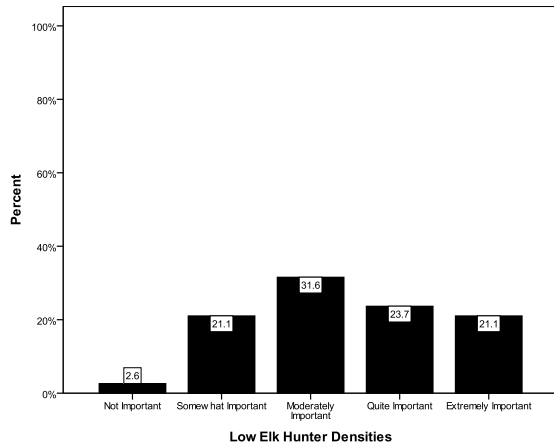


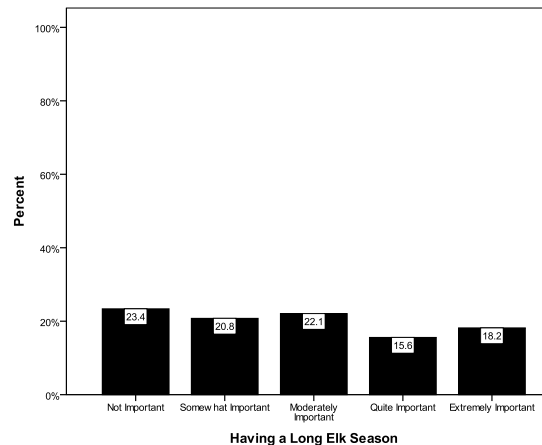
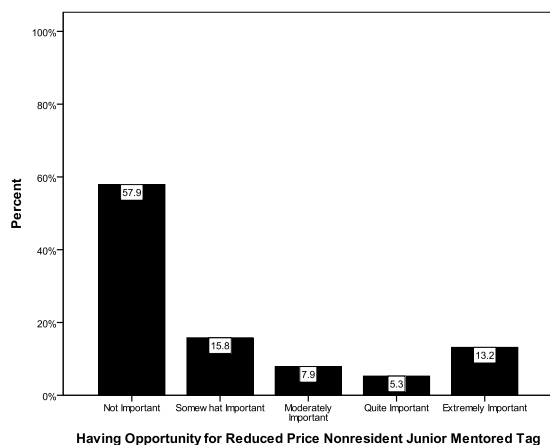
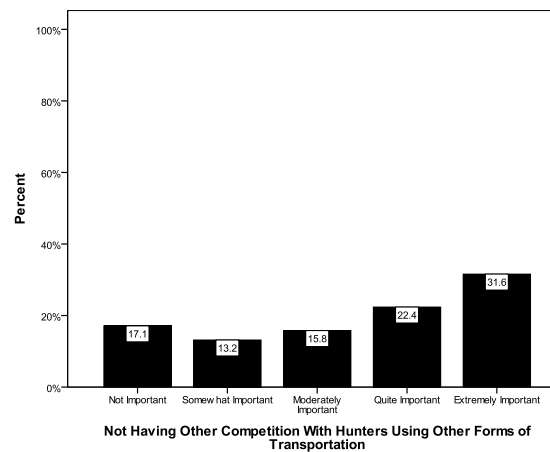
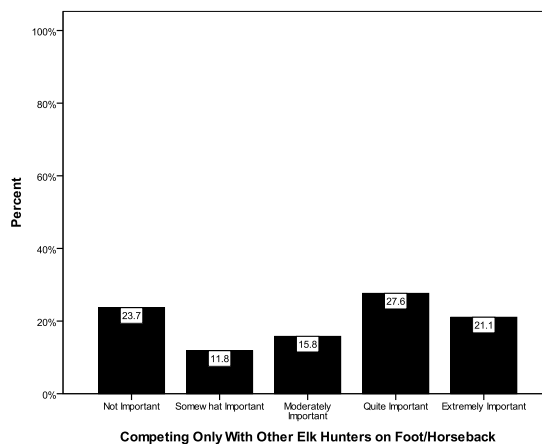
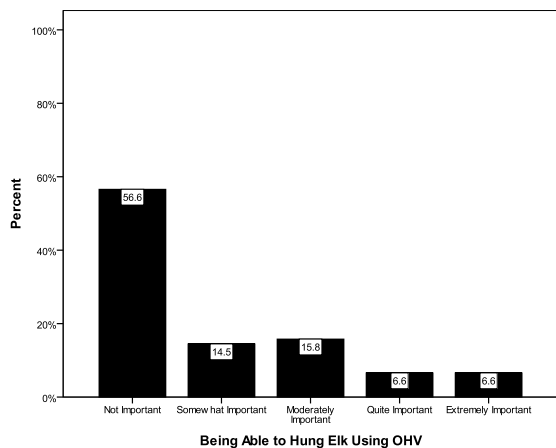
# ATTRIBUTES OF A QUALITY ELK HUNTING EXPERIENCE

31. How important to you are each of these attributes for a quality Idaho Elk hunting experience?



IMPORTANCE OF ATTRIBUTES FOR A QUALITY ELK HUNTING EXPERIENCE IN IDAHO

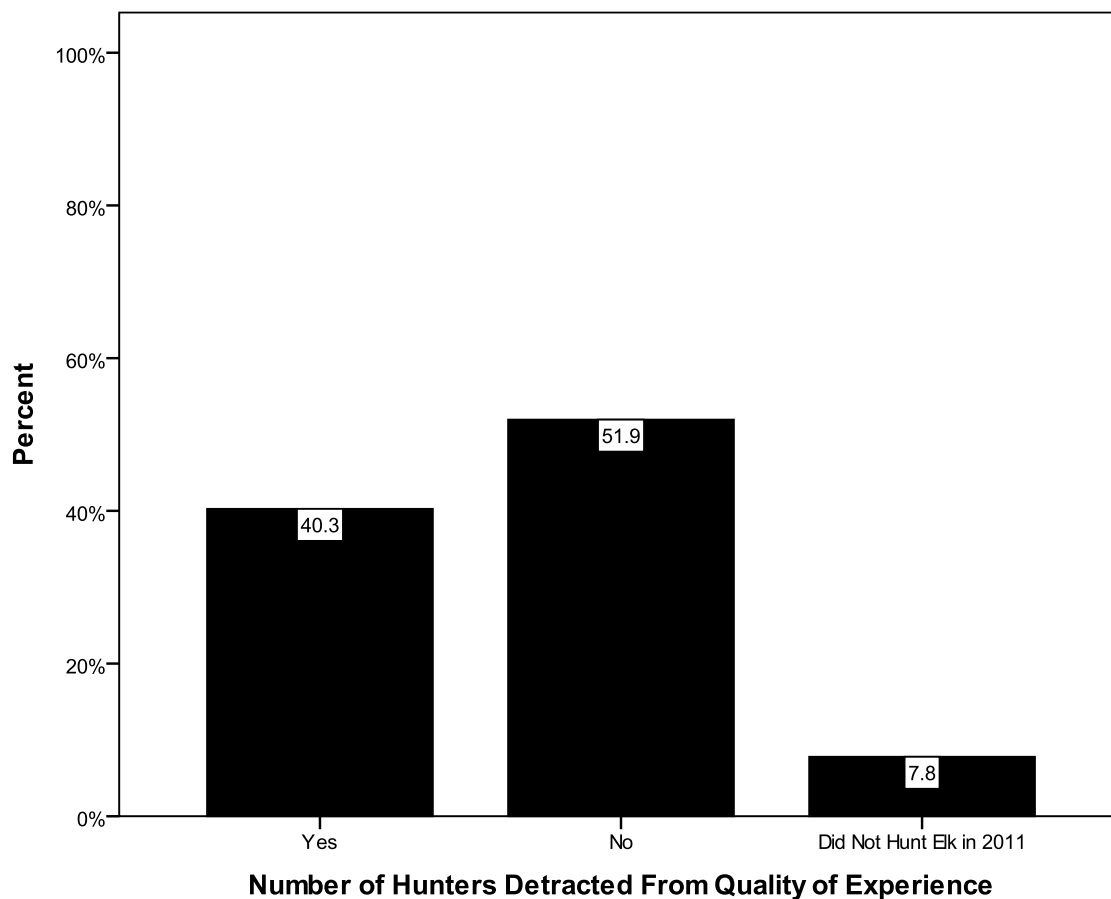




**Q31: The top five attributes are the most important attributes for a quality experience for both the state average and the Bear River zone.**

## HUNTING SATISFACTION

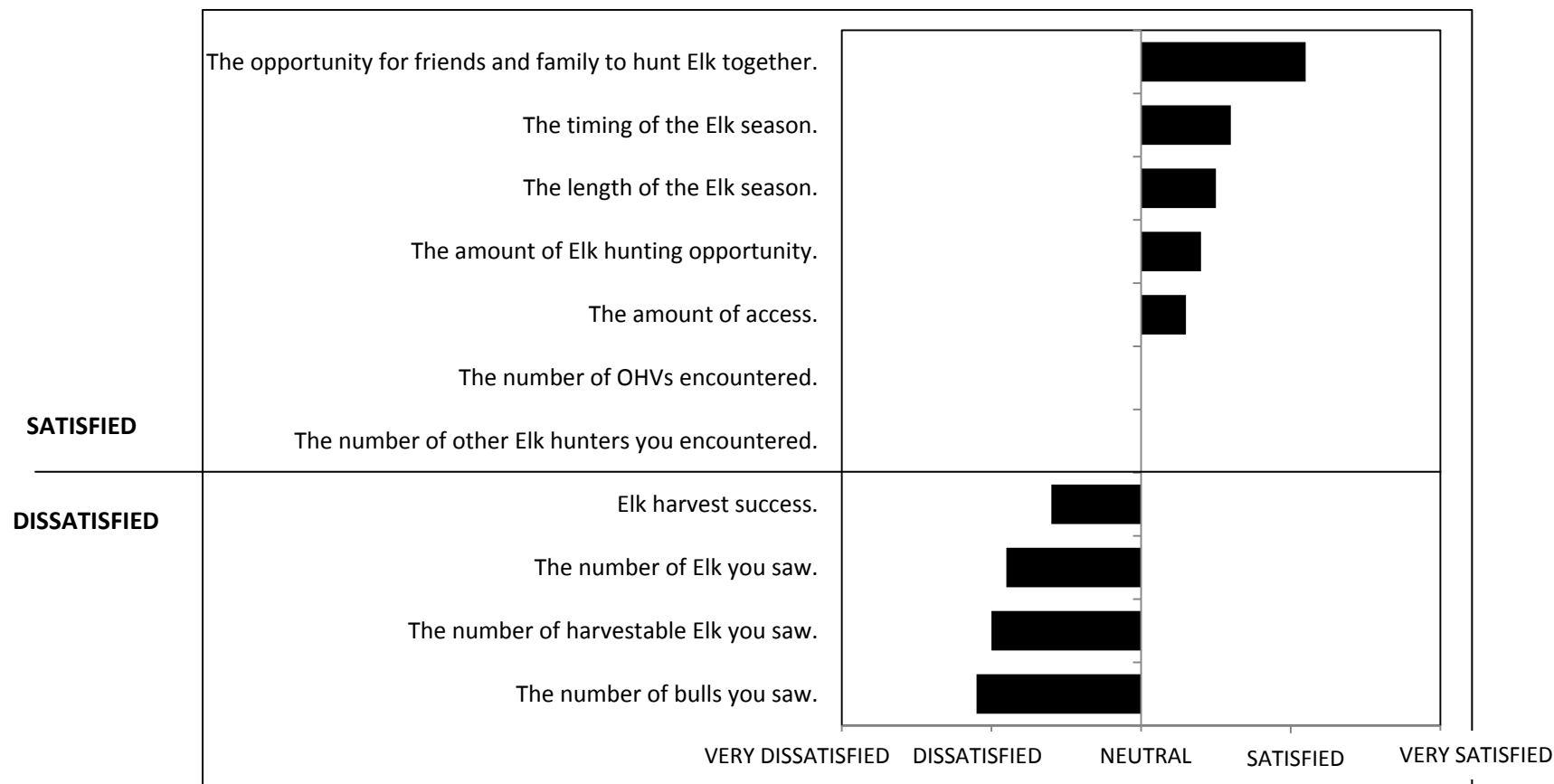
33. Were there times during your 2011 Elk season when the numbers of other hunters seriously detracted from the quality of your hunting experience? *(Please check one response)*



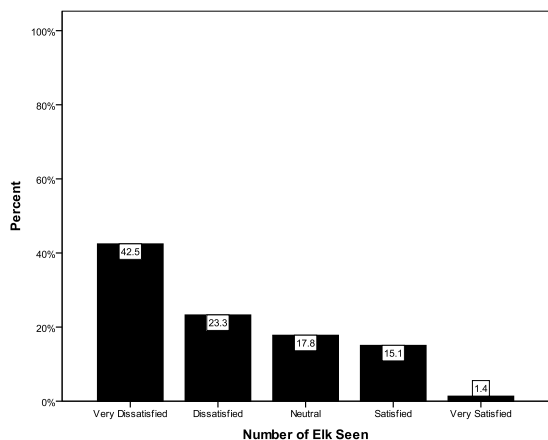
**Q33: The distribution of responses is similar between the state average and the respondents of the Bear River zone.**

**Now, some questions about the satisfaction you experienced with Elk hunting in Idaho in 2011.**

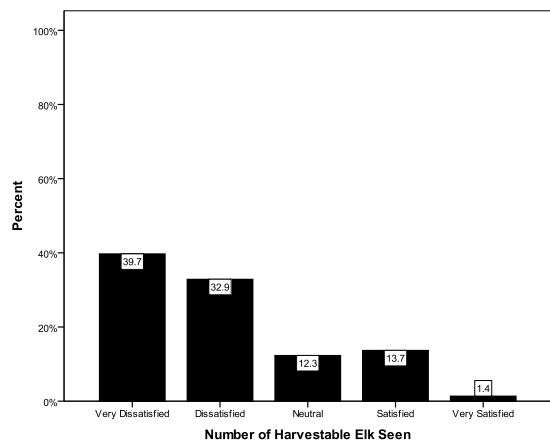
**37. How satisfied were you with each of the following aspects of your 2011 Elk hunting experience?**



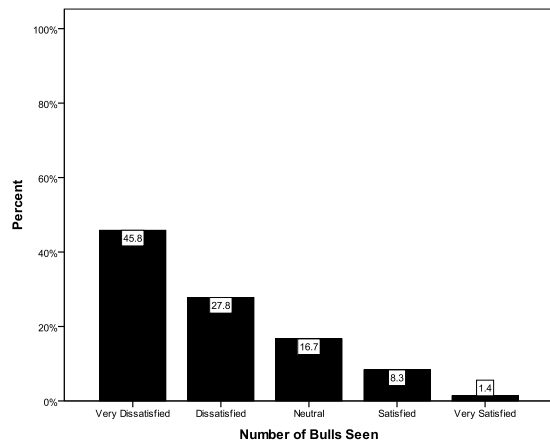
**SATISFACTION OF ASPECTS OF 2011 ELK HUNTING EXPERIENCE**



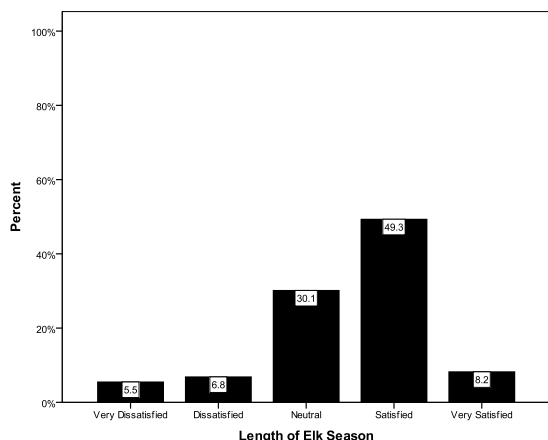
Number of Elk Seen



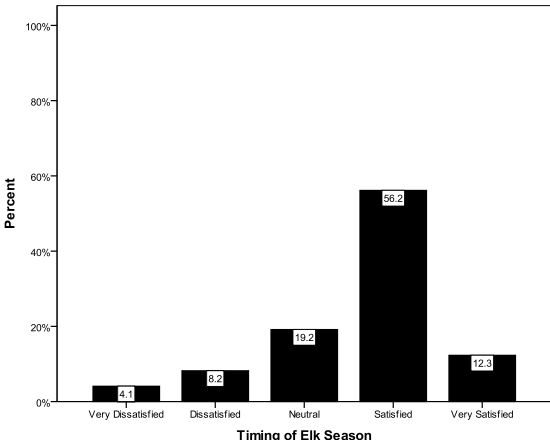
Number of Harvestable Elk Seen



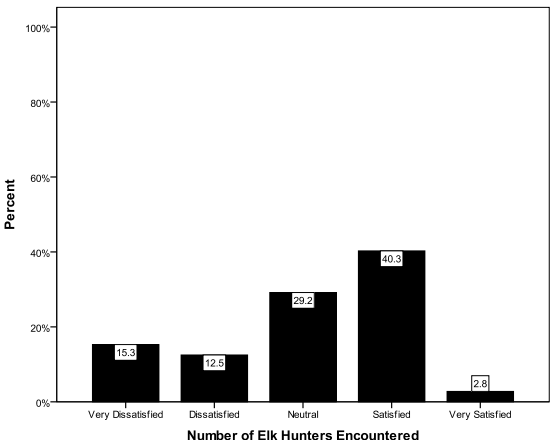
Number of Bulls Seen



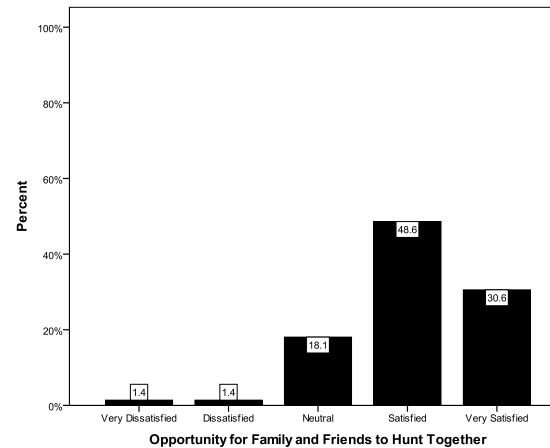
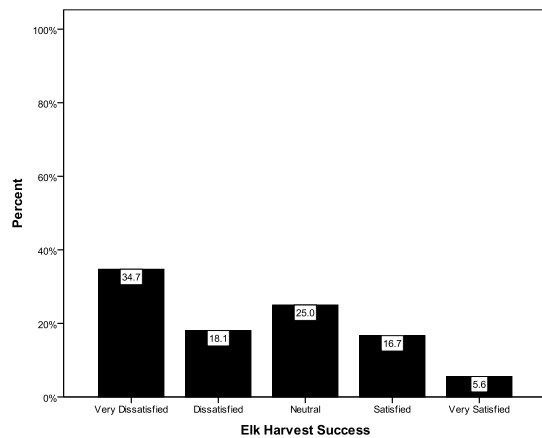
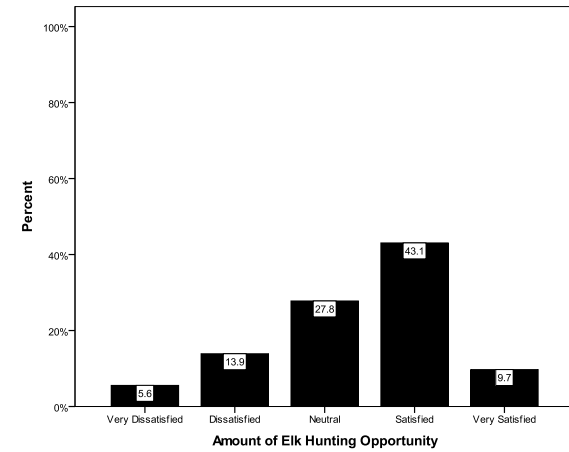
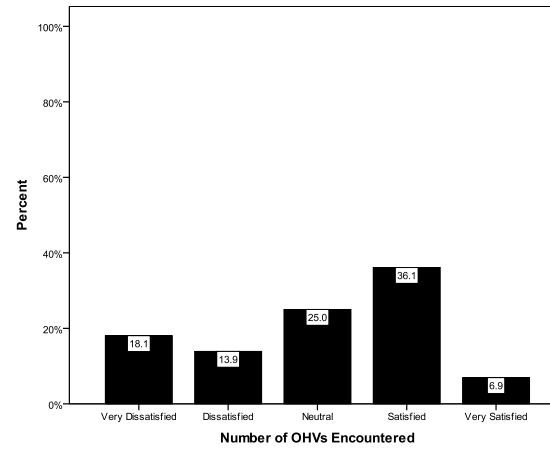
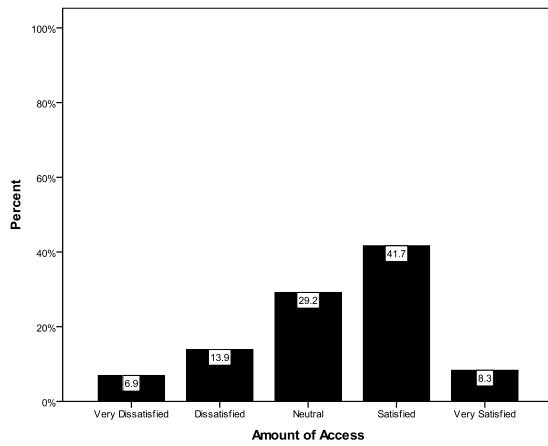
Length of Elk Season



Timing of Elk Season



Number of Elk Hunters Encountered

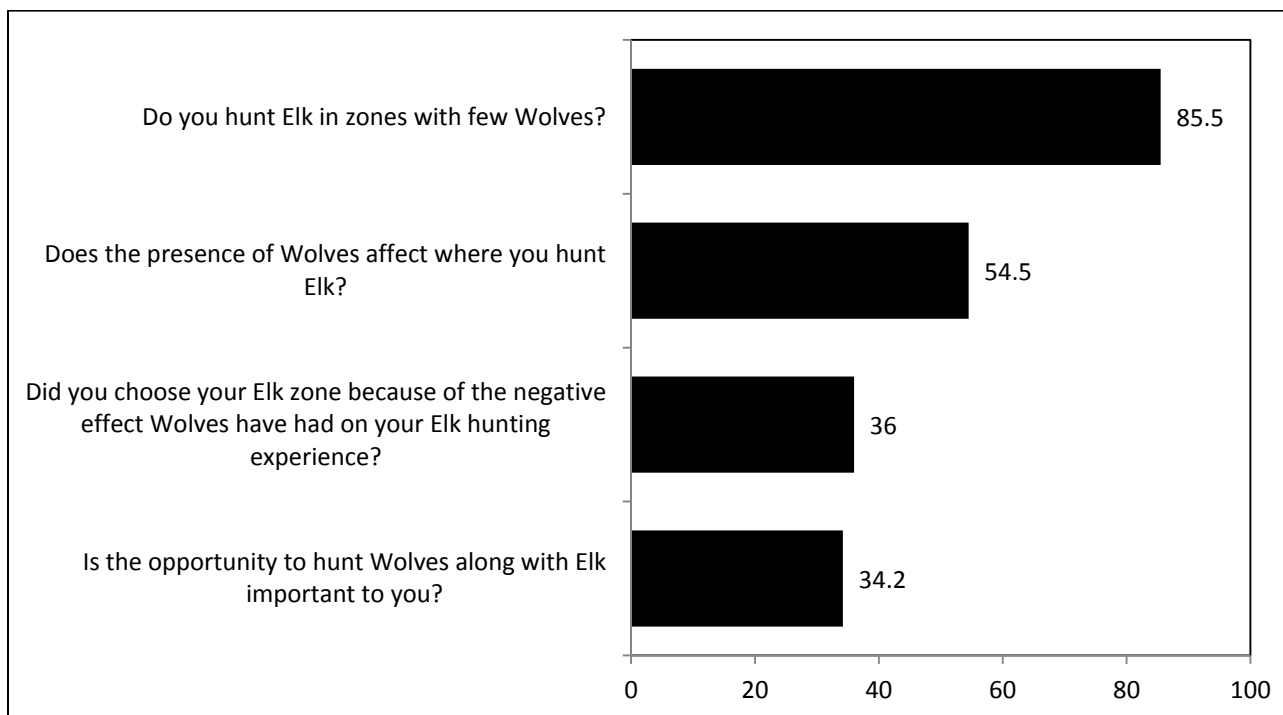


**Q37: Like other hunters in the state, those who hunt in the Bear River zone found Elk numbers and success as dissatisfying. Hunters in this zone are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the number of OHVs or hunters they encountered.**

## PERCEPTIONS OF PREDATORS

### Two questions about predators in Idaho.

39. How do Wolves affect your Idaho Elk hunting experience? *(Please circle one response for each item)*

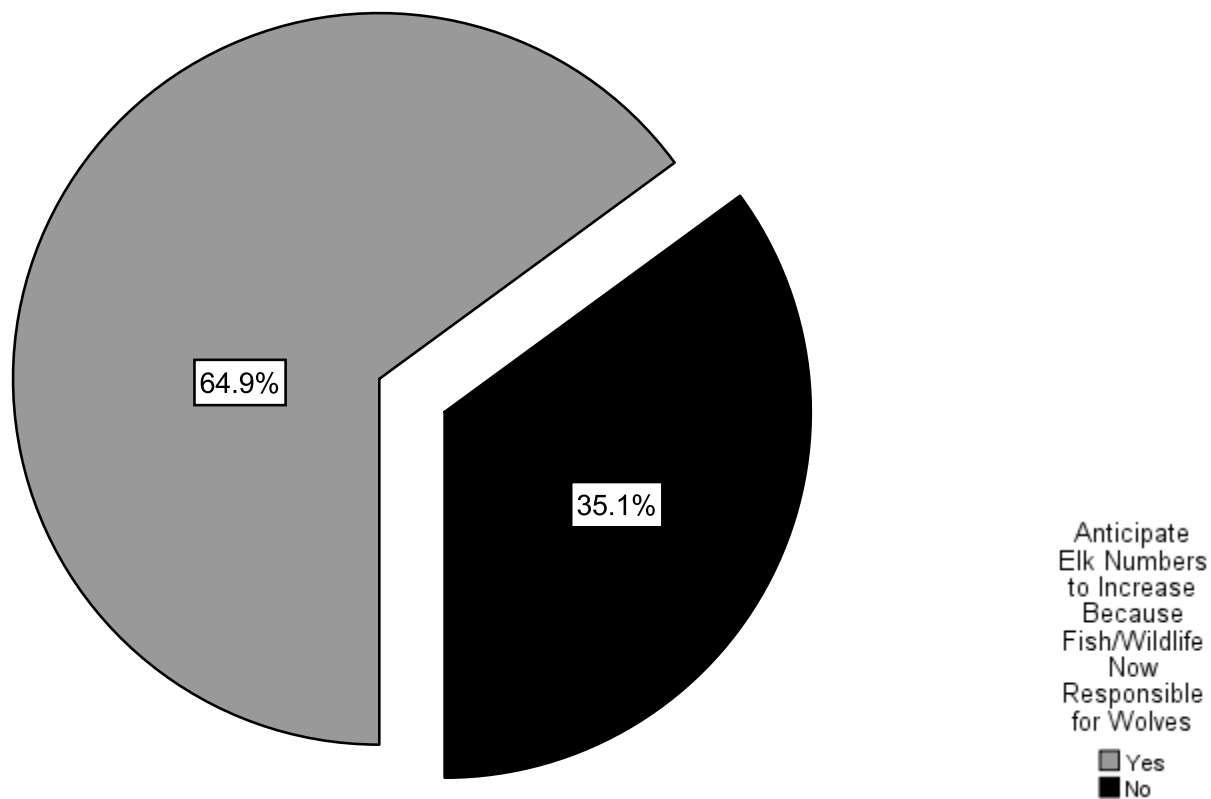


**Q39: Compared to the state average, about 50% more hunters from the Bear River zone said they hunt in zones with few Wolves. More hunters from this zone also reported that the presence of Wolves affects where they hunt and that they choose their zone because of the negative affect Wolves have had on their hunting experience, compared to other hunters in the state**



40. Do you anticipate Elk numbers to increase now that Idaho Fish and Game is responsible for managing wolves?  
(Please check one response)

YES     NO



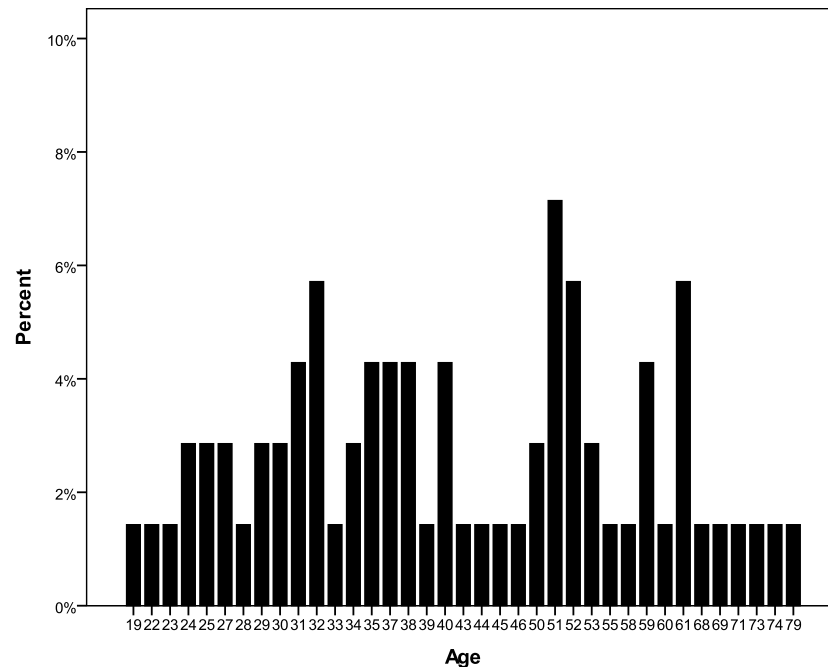
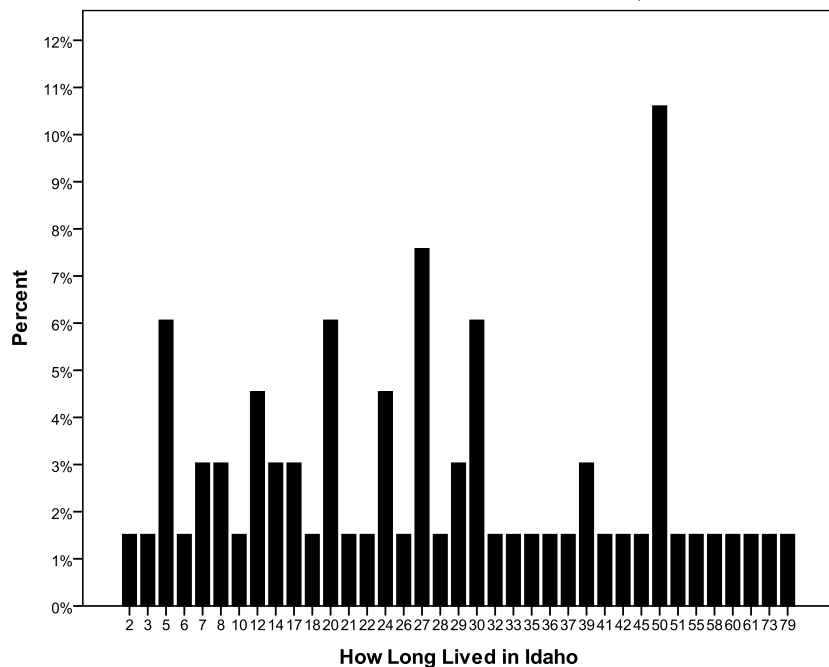
**Q40: The distribution of responses is similar between respondents of the Bear River zone and the state average.**

# DEMOGRAPHICS

**Finally, some questions about you!**

42. How long have you lived in Idaho? *(Please enter the number of years)*

43. When were you born? *(Please enter the year)*



The distribution of responses is similar between the state average and the hunters from the Bear River zone for both Q42 and Q43.