

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



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For:

Idaho Department of Fish and Game

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INSERT ELK SURVEY OBJECTIVES

METHODS

SAMPLING

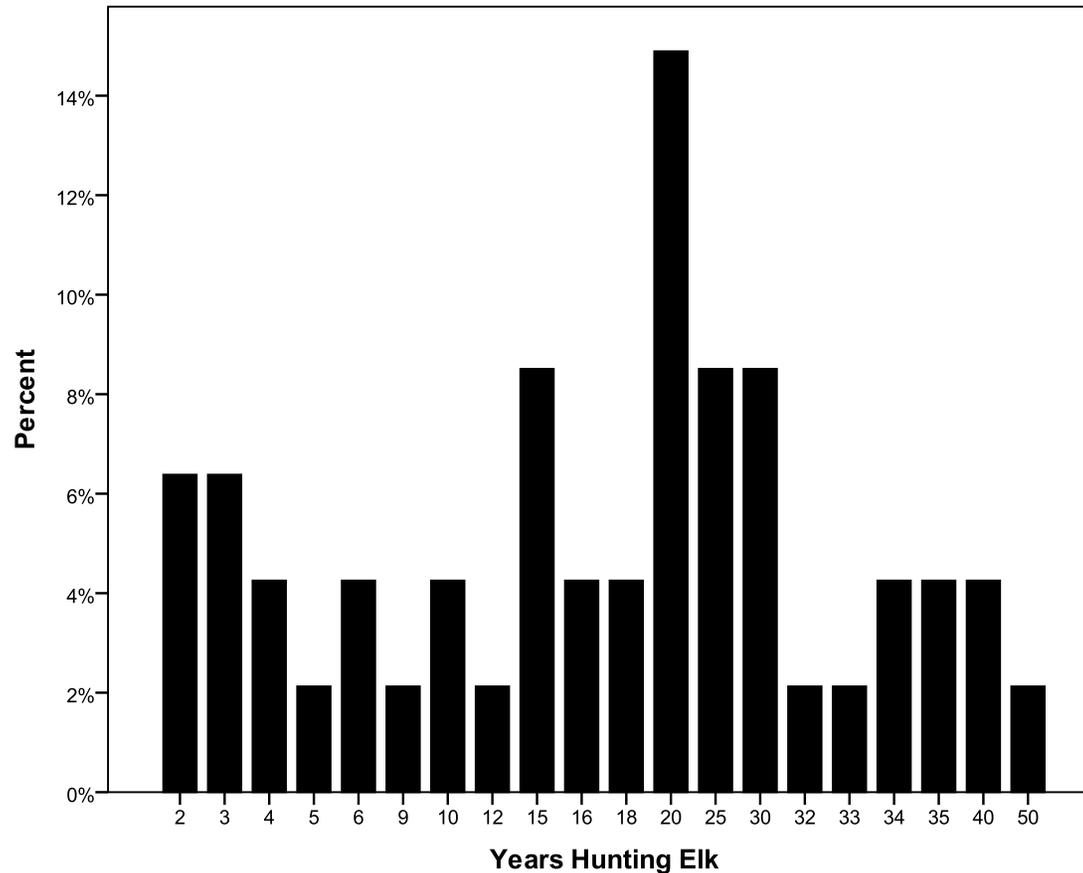
RESPONSE RATE.

ELK HUNTER PROFILES

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

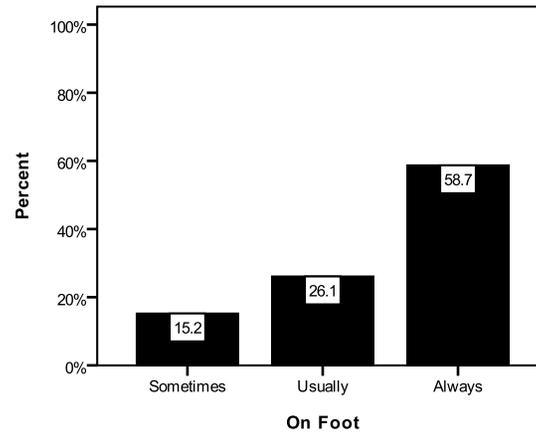
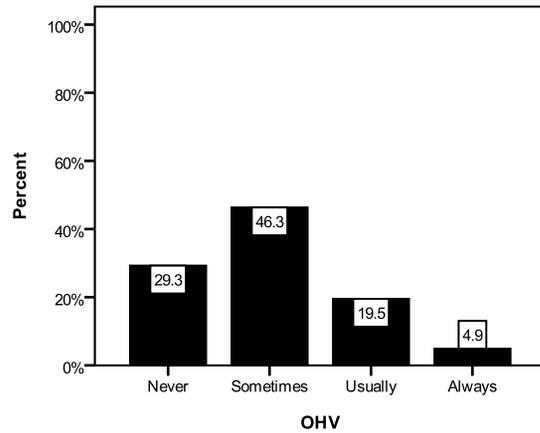
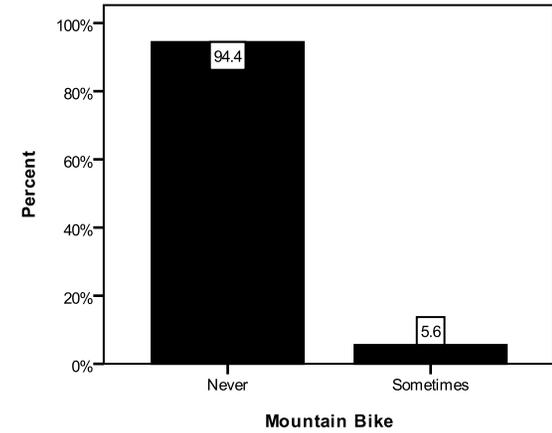
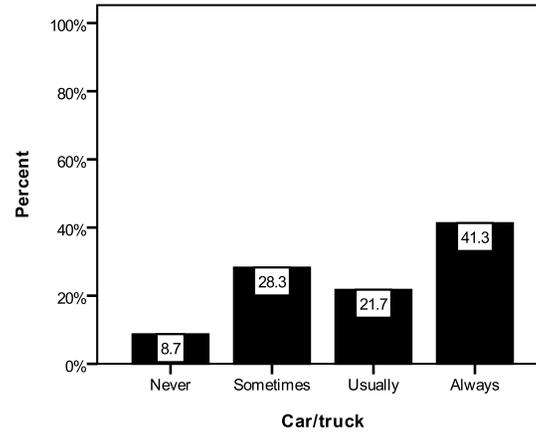
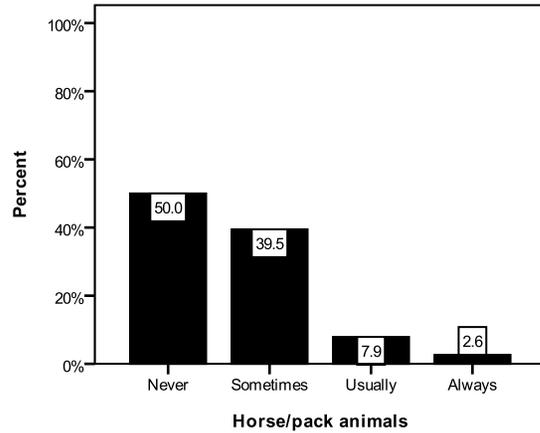
Now, some questions about your Idaho Elk hunting experiences and preferences.

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



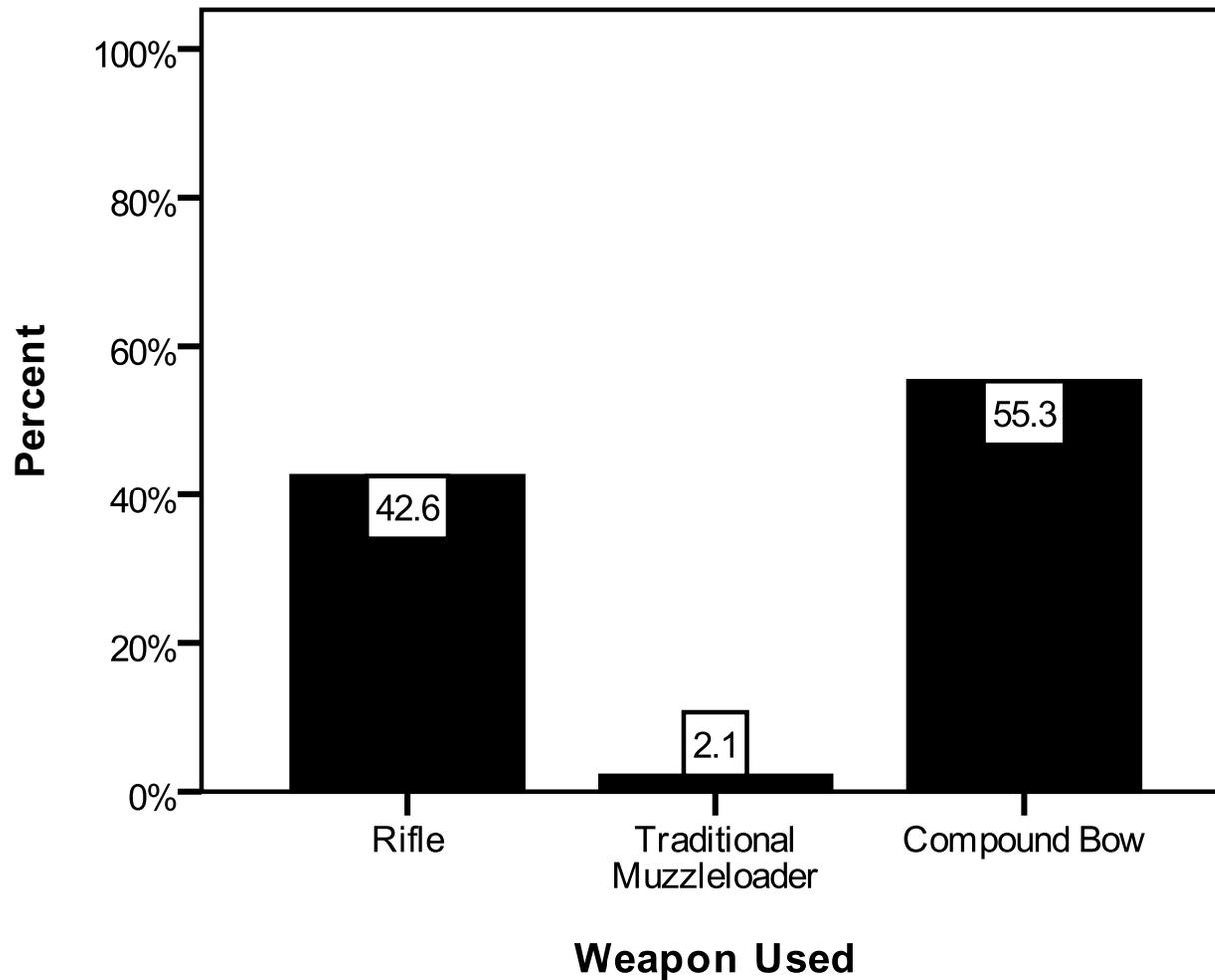
Q3: The distribution of responses for the number of years of hunting Elk in Idaho are similar between the Big Desert zone and the state average.

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?



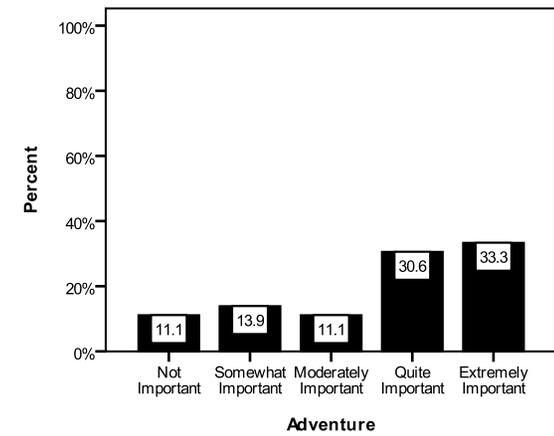
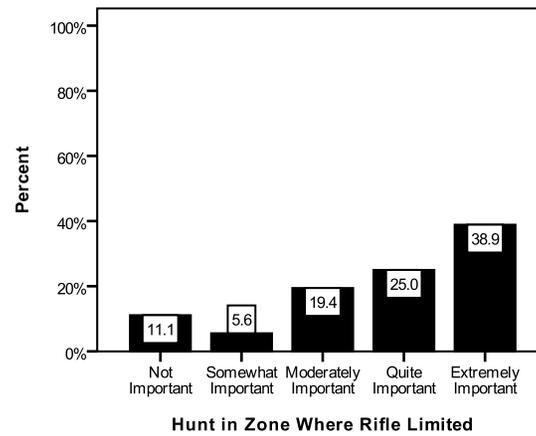
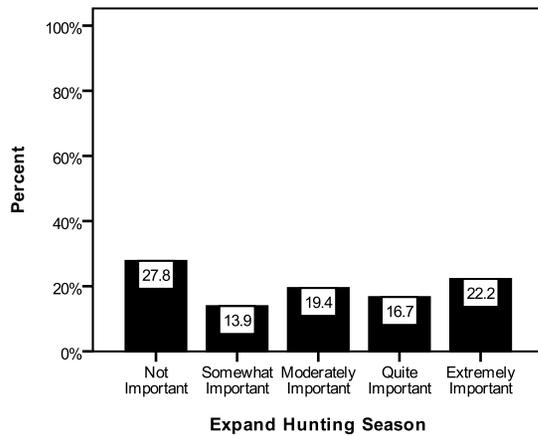
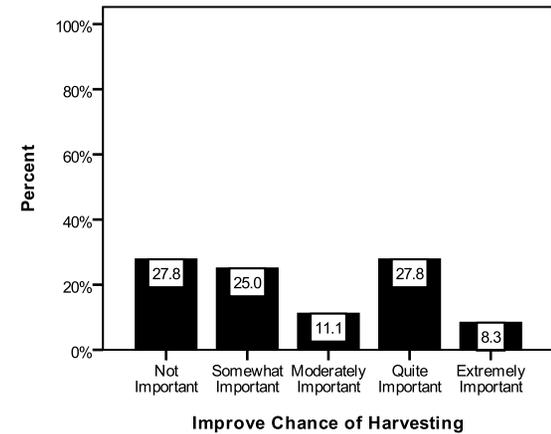
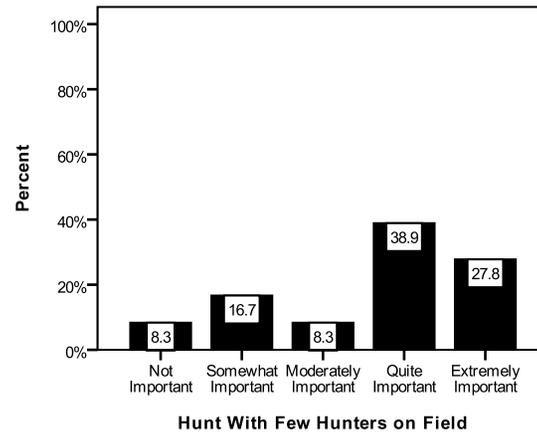
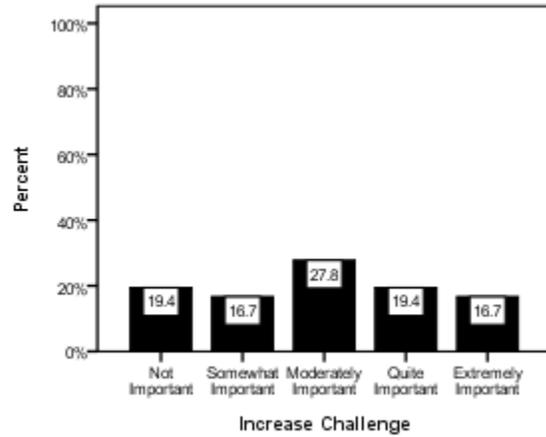
Q7: The distribution of responses is similar between the Big Desert zone and the state average. More hunters in this zone tend to use OHVs more frequently.

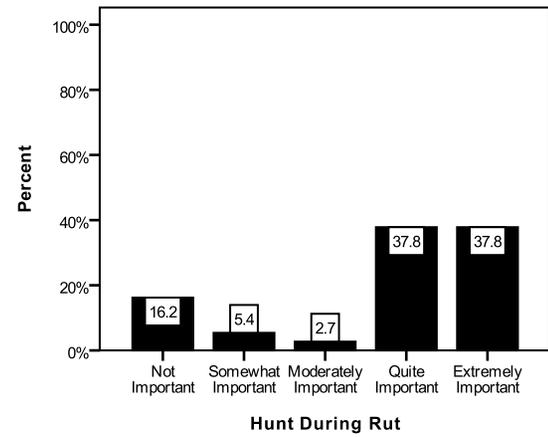
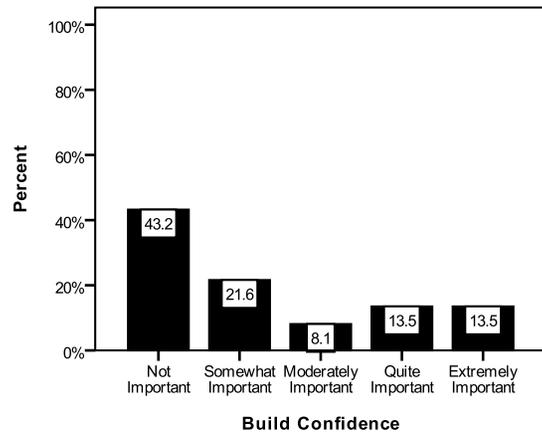
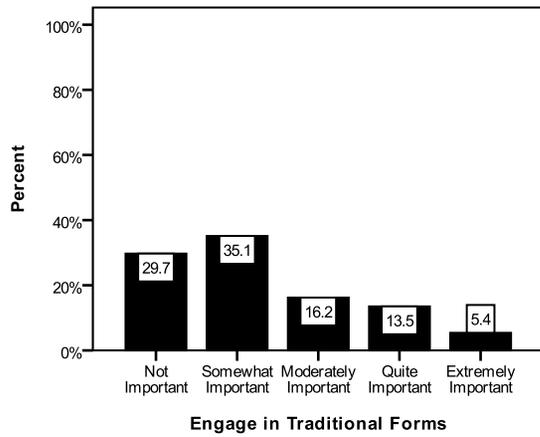
8. What type of weapon do you typically use to hunt Elk in Idaho? (Please check only one response)



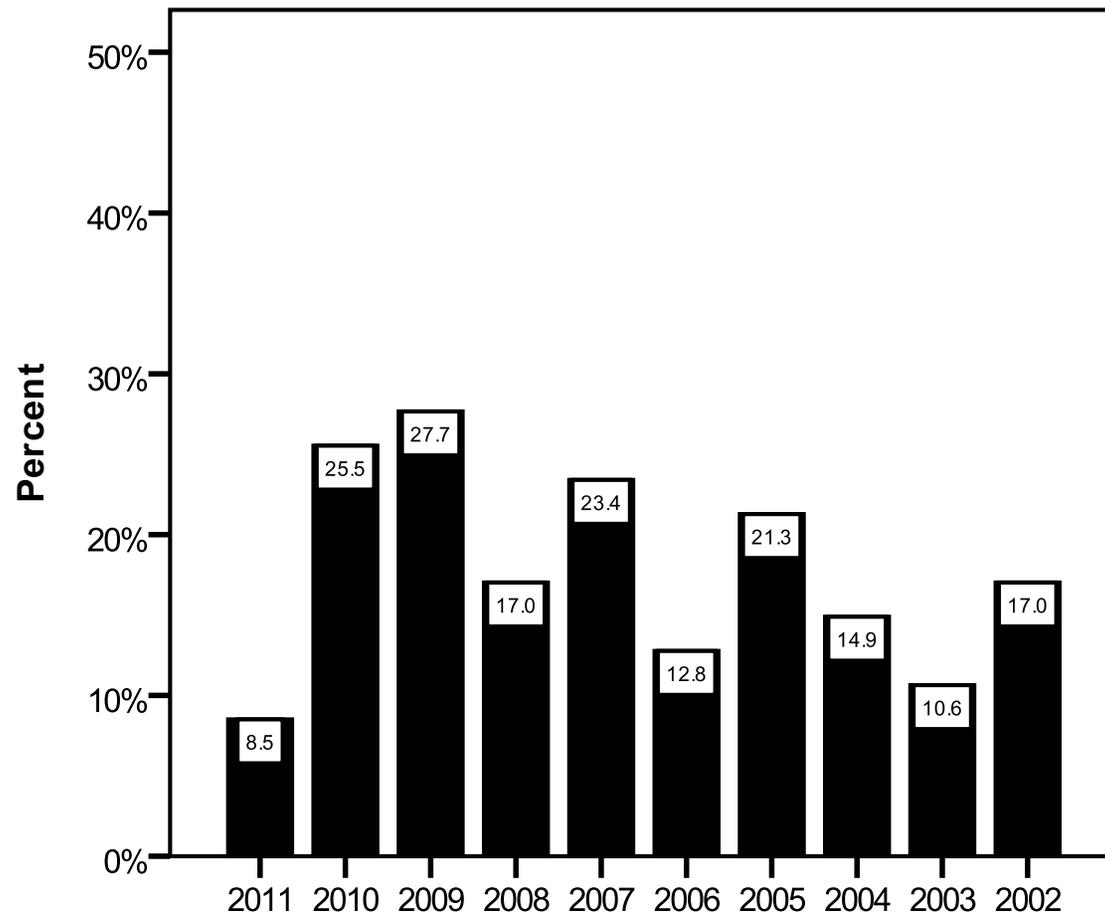
Q8: Like the state average, hunters in the Big Desert zone favor rifles and compound bows as the weapons they typically choose. However, unlike other hunters in the state, hunters in this zone favor the bow more than the rifle, with a 21.5% difference over the state average (33.8%).

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



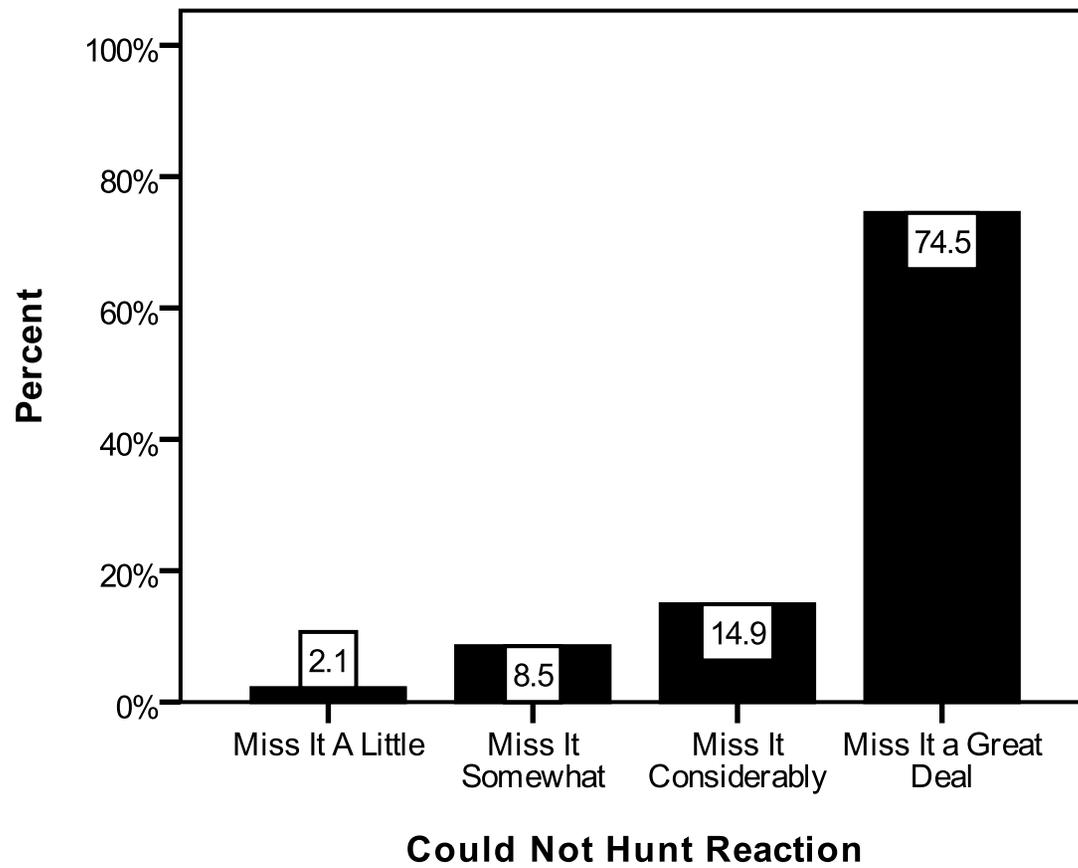


Q10: Levels of importance and the distribution of responses are similar between the state average and the Big Desert zone. However, hunters in this zone feel that being able to hunt in a rifle - limited zone is of most importance when deciding to hunt during these seasons.

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

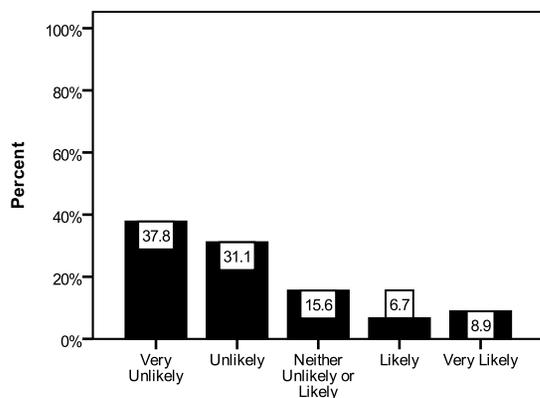
Q11: Compared to the state average, for most years, the harvest success of the Big Desert zone is much lower. Only in 2009 and 2010 were harvest rates higher than the average. In 2003, 2006, and 2011, Big Desert harvest was over 10% lower than the state average (11.5%, 10.4%, and 10.7% respectively).

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

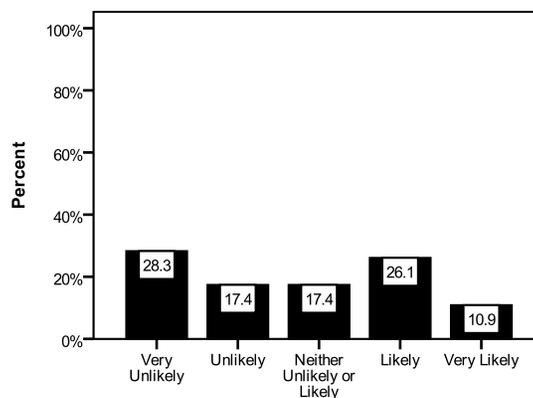


Q12: The distribution of responses is similar the Big Desert zone and the state average.

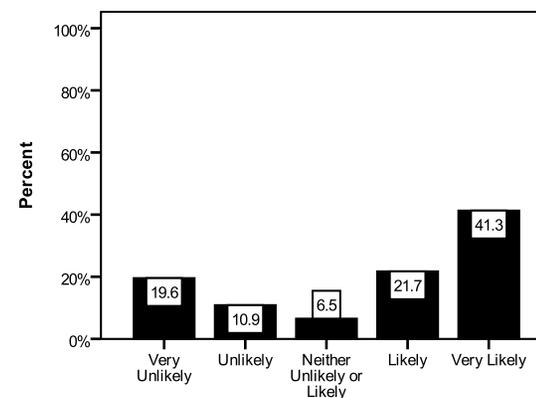
13. If you could not hunt Elk in Idaho, how would your hunting change?



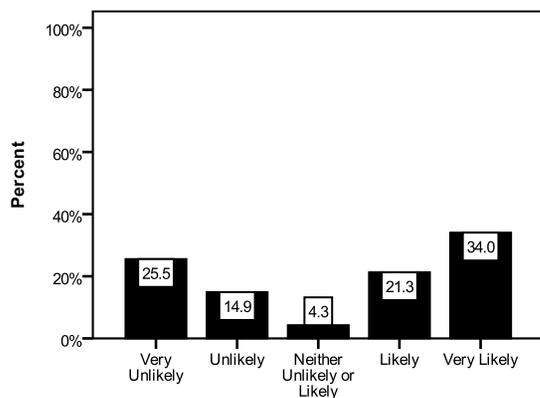
Hunt Waterfowl More



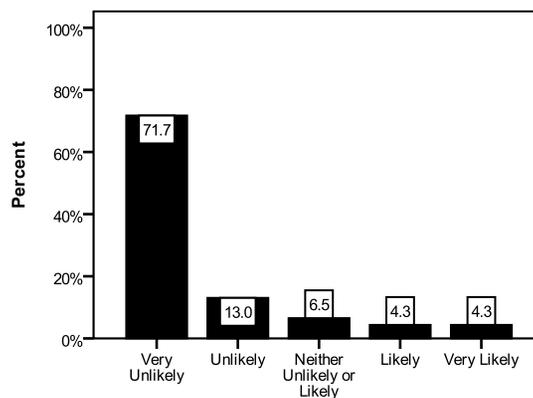
Hunt Upland Game More



More Time Hunting Other Game



Hunt Elk in Other States



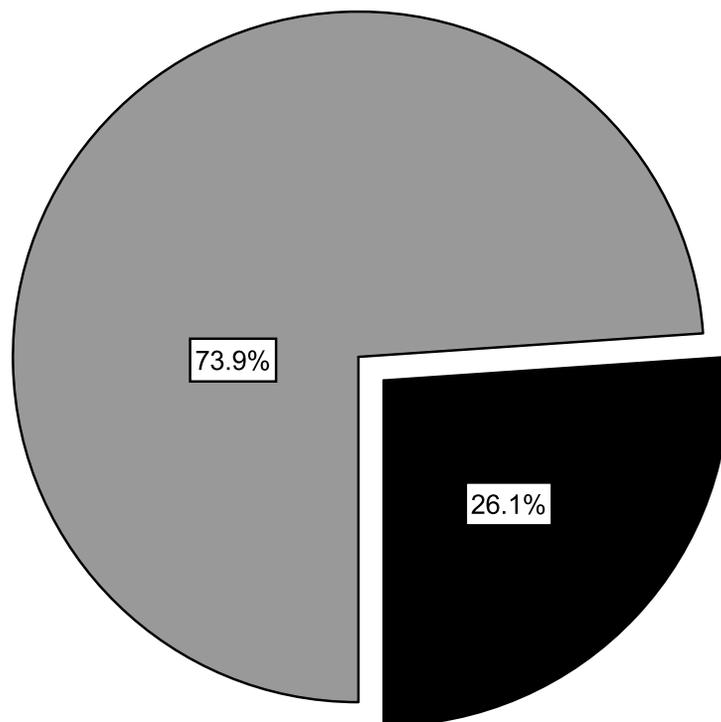
Not Hunt At All

Q13: The distribution of responses is similar between the state average and the Big Desert zone. Hunters in this zone are very likely to spend more time hunting other game.

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

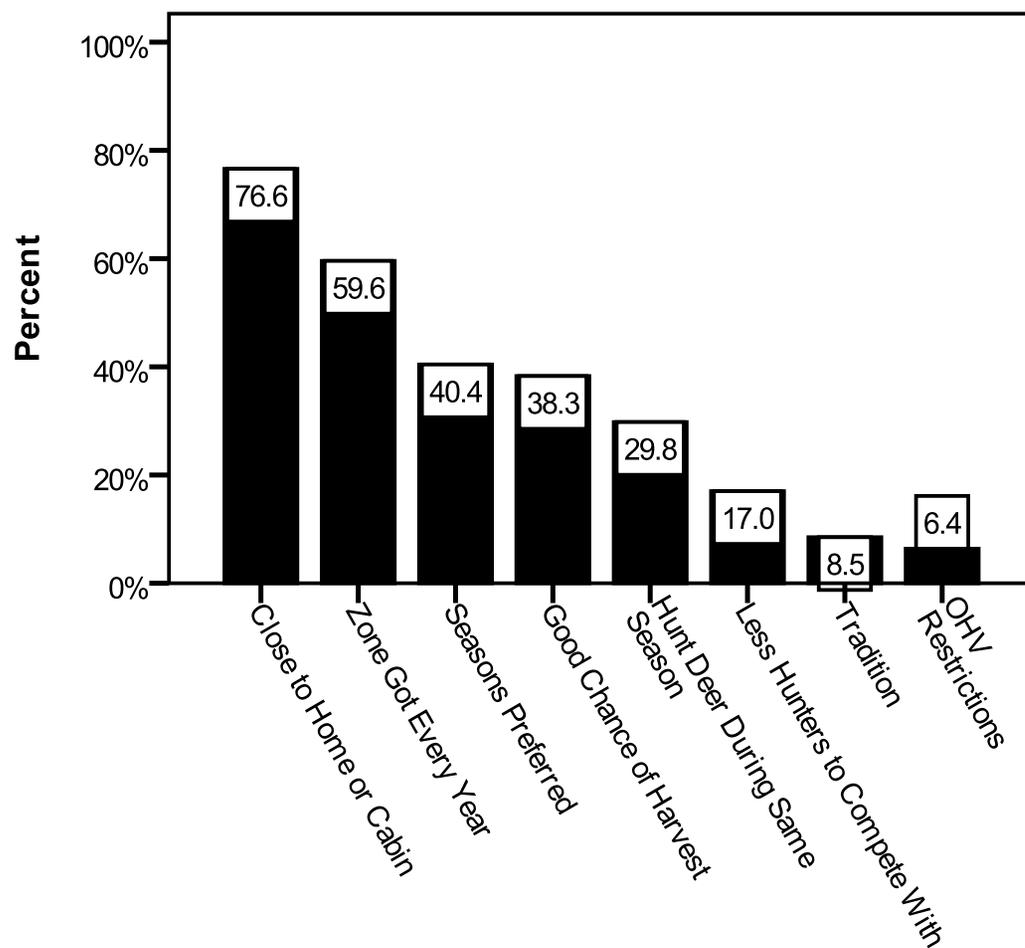
Where
Typically
Hunt Every
Year

- Same Zone
- Different Zone



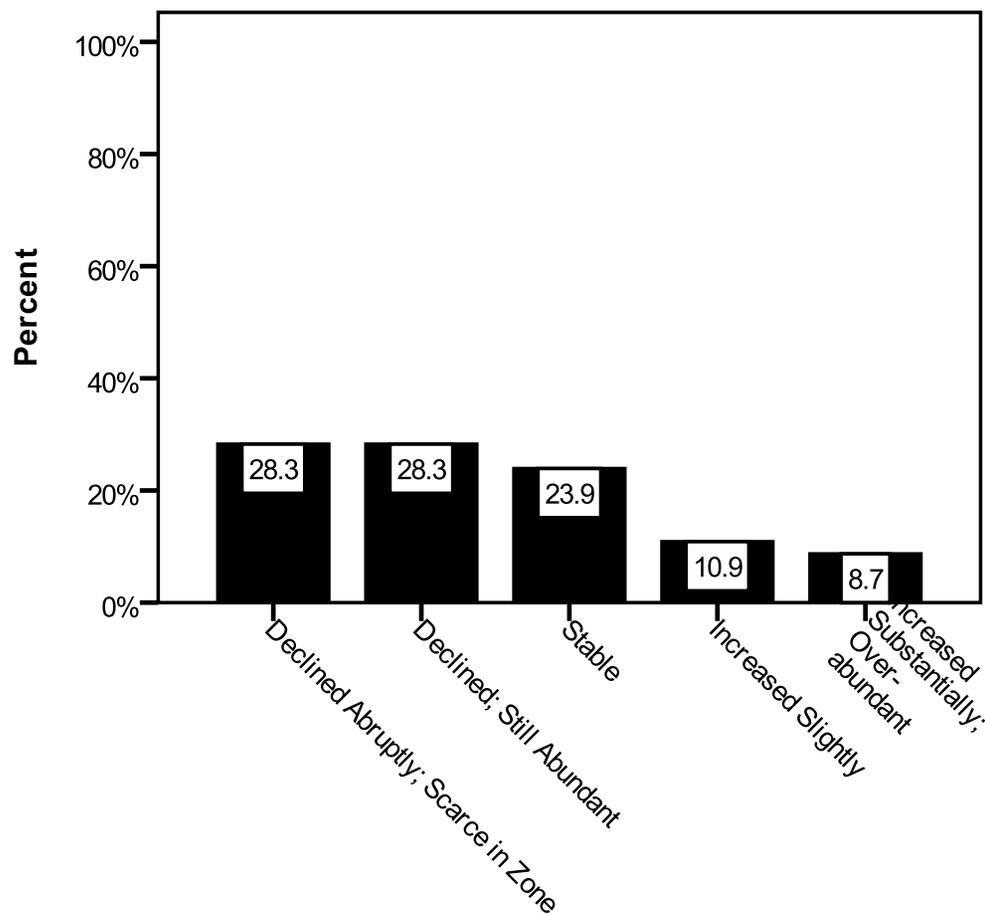
Q14: Like other hunters in the state, the hunters from the Big Desert zone typically hunt in the same zone every year.

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 state average and the Big Desert zone. Hunters in this zone reported that a zone with seasons preferred makes a zone more desirable than other attributes, compared to other hunters in the state.

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)

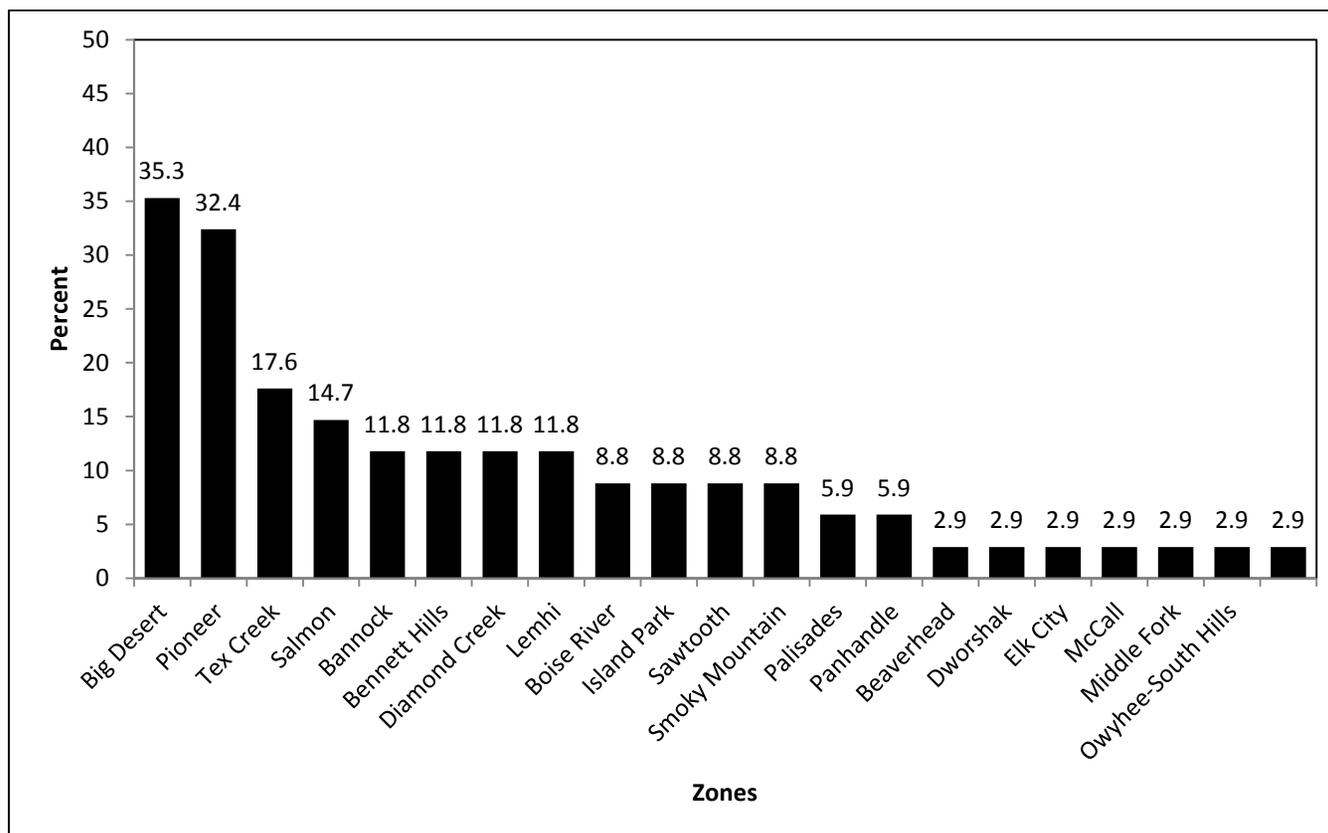


Perceptions of Elk Numbers

Q17: There is a larger variation in hunter's perceptions in the Big Desert zone than in the state average. More hunters from this zone perceive numbers to be state or to have increased. 7.9% more hunters in this zone felt that Elk numbers are overabundant than other hunters in the state (0.8%).

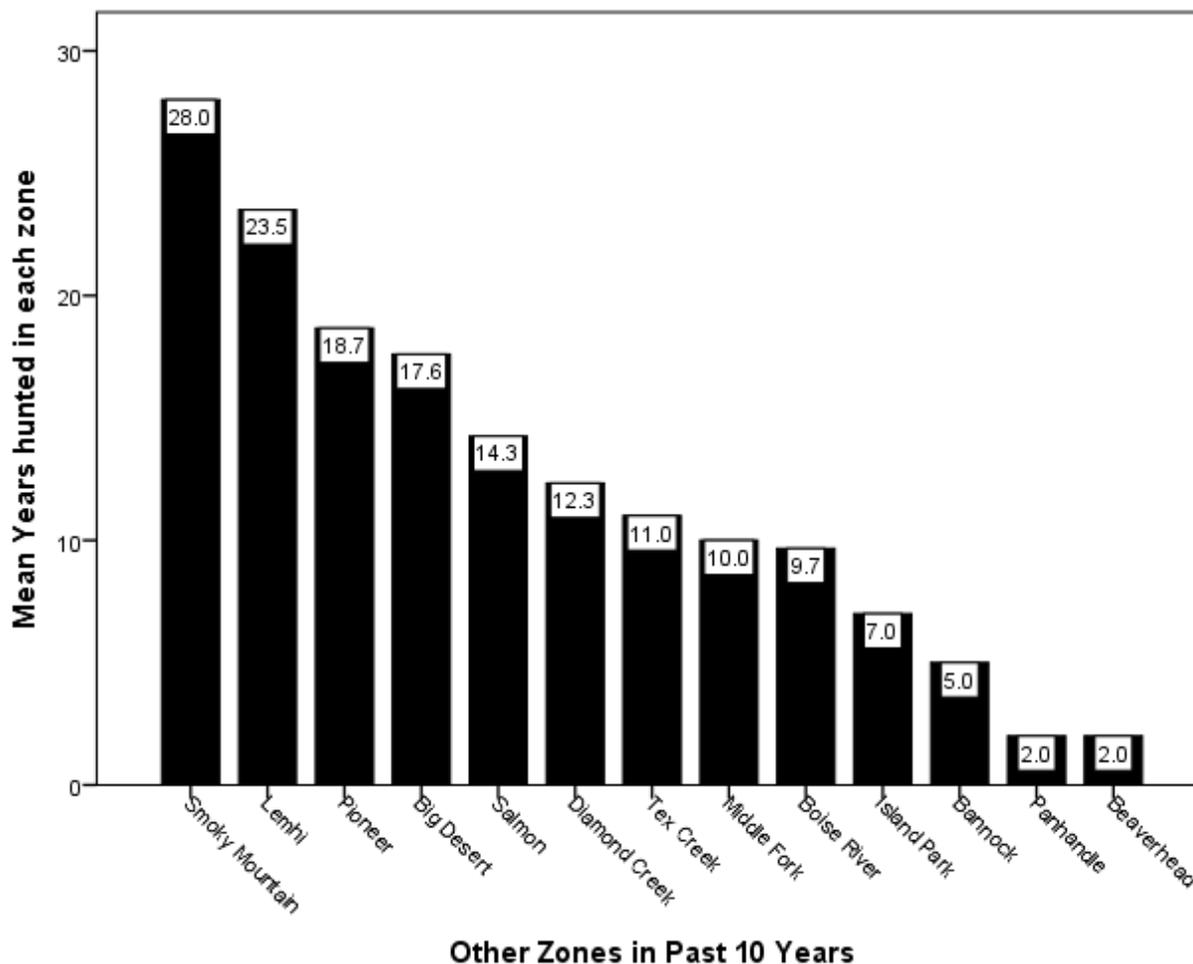
18. If you hunted in more than one zone in the past 10 years, please list them below.

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



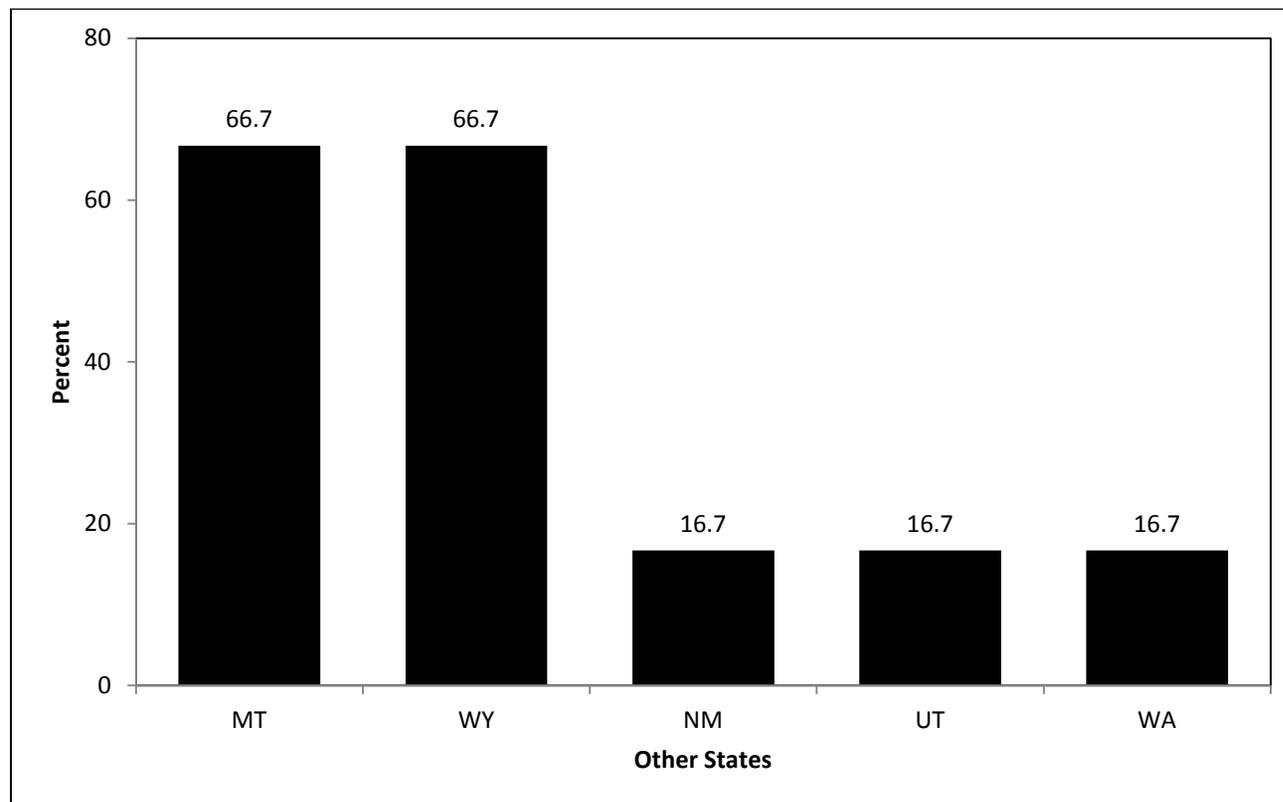
Q18: The Pioneer zone is the most popular zone to hunt in by respondents besides the Big Desert zone. The Tex Creek and Salmon zones are also popular.

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)



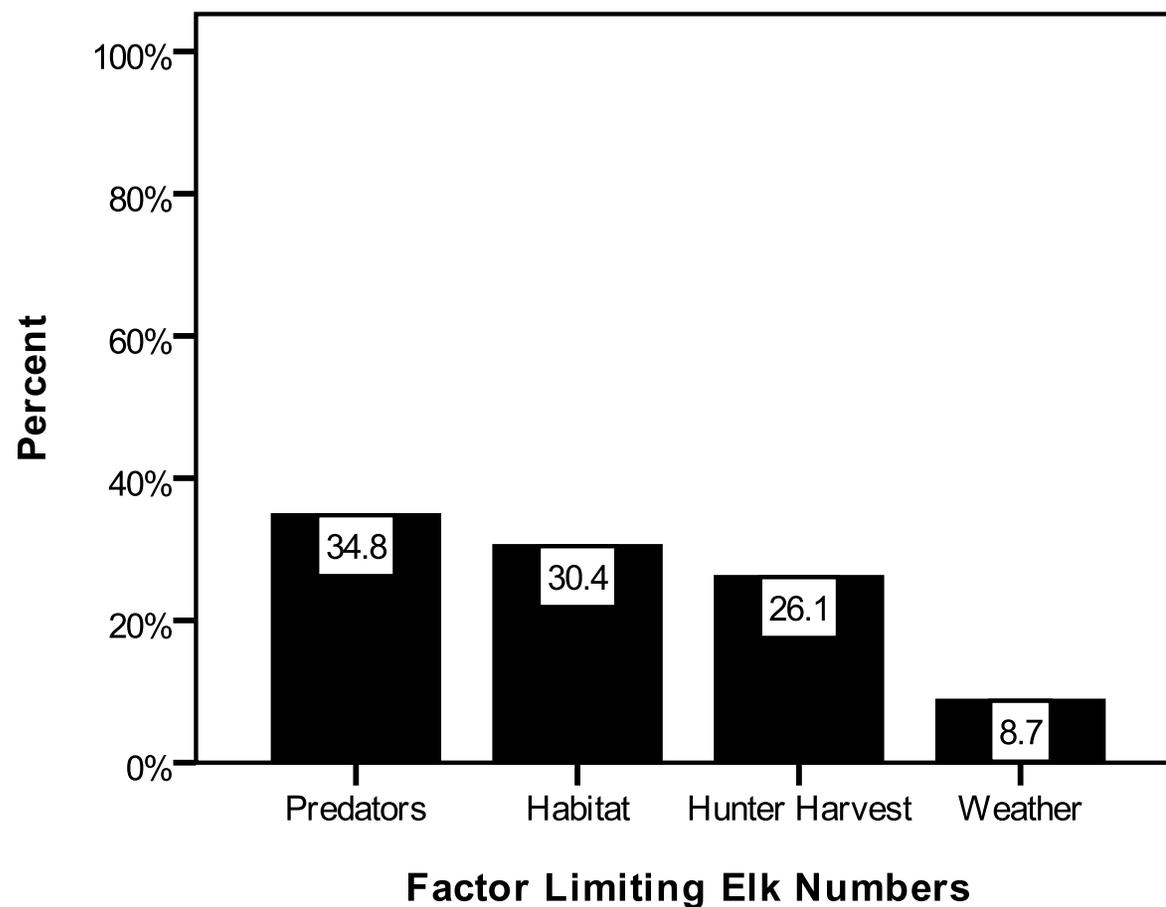
Q20: The Smoky Mountain and Lemhi zones have been hunted the longest among respondents. The Big Desert zone itself ranks fourth in duration.

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



Q21: Montana and Wyoming are the most popular destinations for Big Desert hunters who have hunted Elk out-of-state.

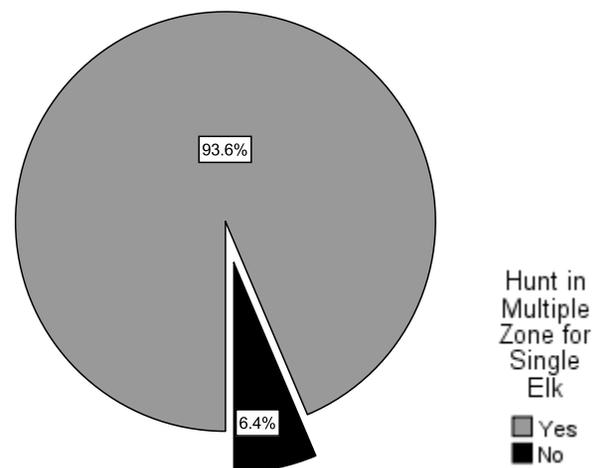
22. What do you believe is the primary factor limiting Elk numbers in the zone you hunted in 2011? (Check only ONE response)



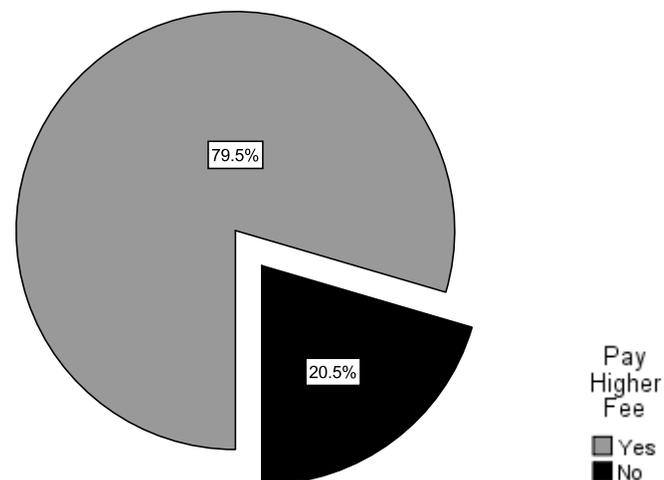
Q22: Unlike other hunters in the state, who attribute much of the limited Elk numbers to predators (74.6%), almost a third of hunters in the Big Desert zone attribute the cause to habitat and about a quarter to hunter harvest.

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

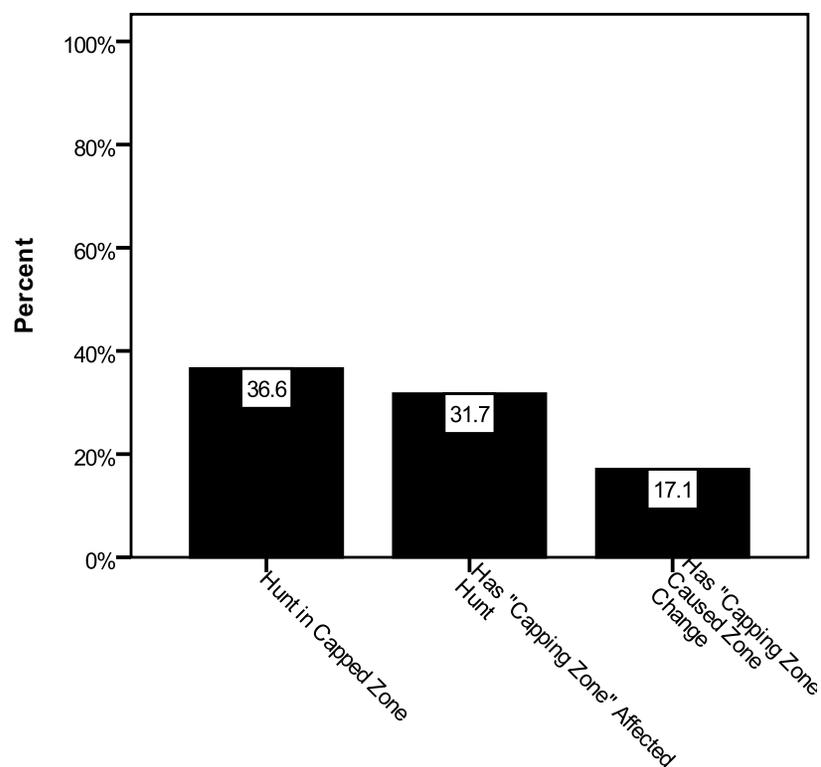
Like other hunters in the state, a majority of Big Desert hunters would like to be able to hunt in multiple zones for a single Elk in a year. A majority would also be willing to pay a higher fee to do so.



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)

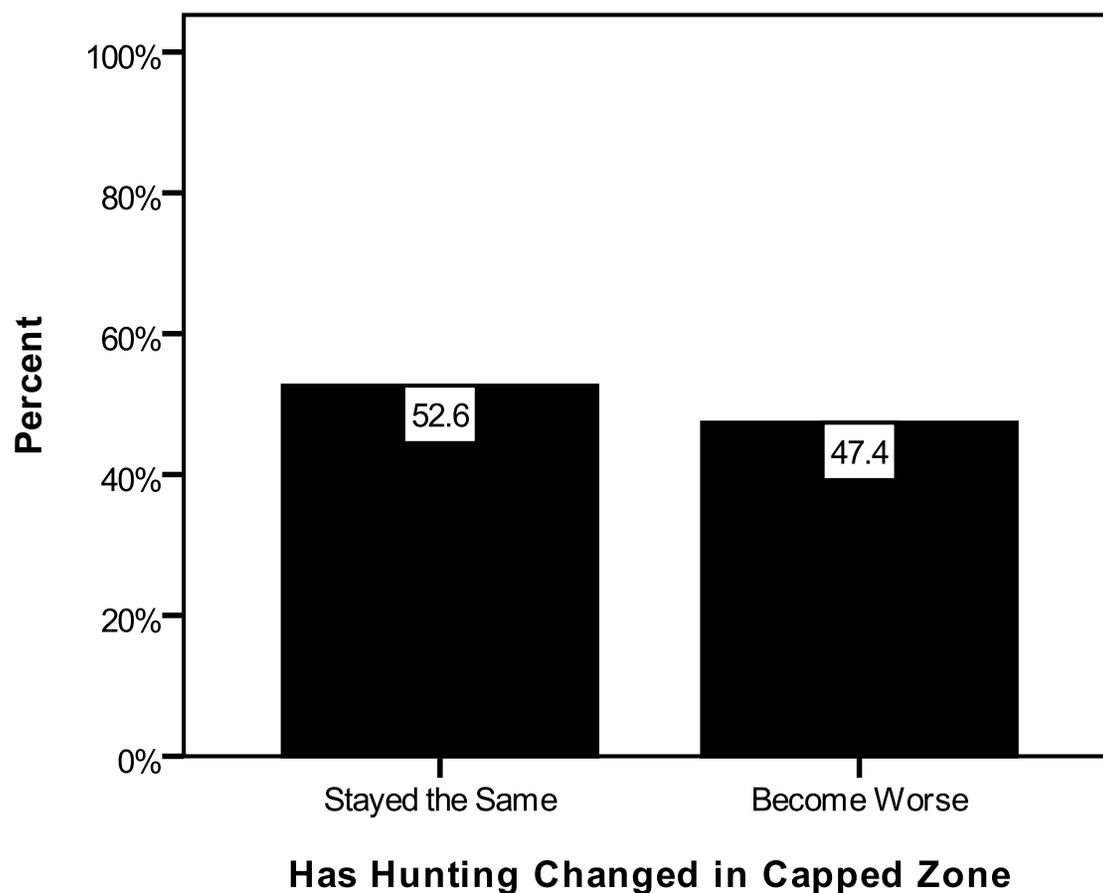


25. When the zone system was implemented the mechanism for reducing unlimited over-the-counter opportunity called "capping the zone" was developed by the department with the help of legislators, sportsmen and outfitters. This "capping the zone" is an allocation formula to distribute Elk tags to hunters (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 third of Big Desert hunters hunt in a capped zone, and a similar amount feel that capped zones have affected where they hunt.

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

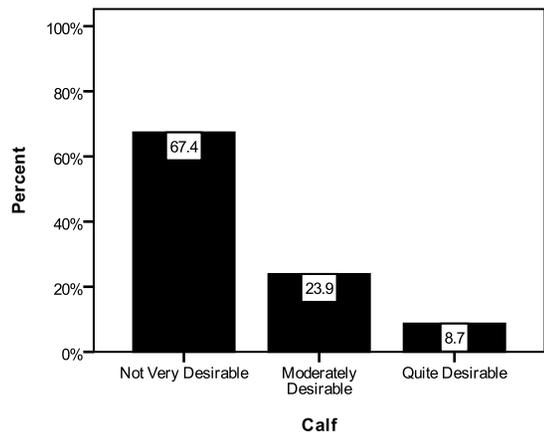
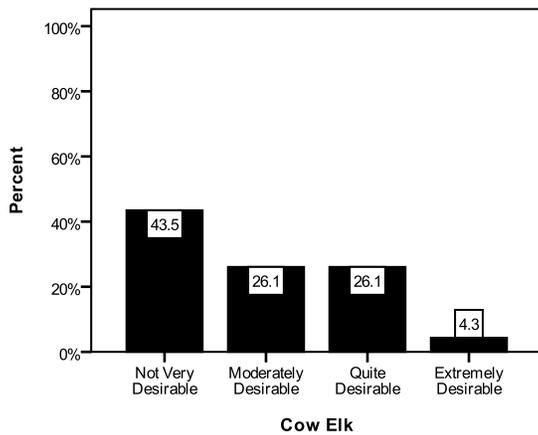
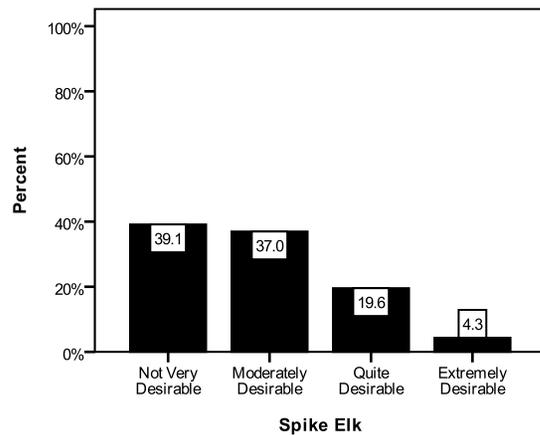
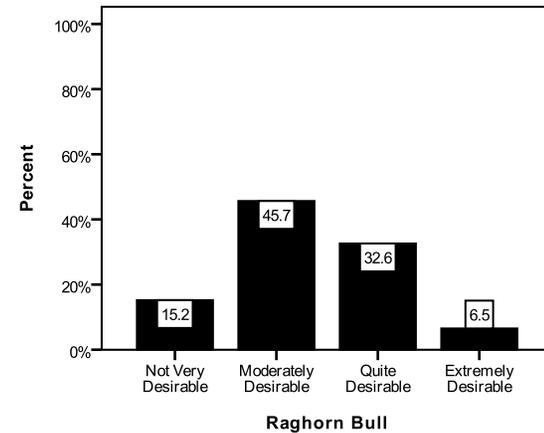
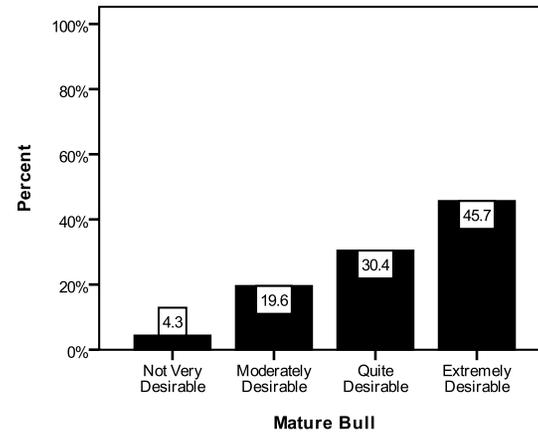
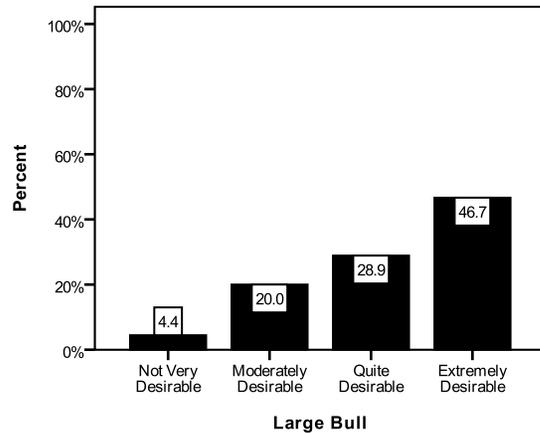


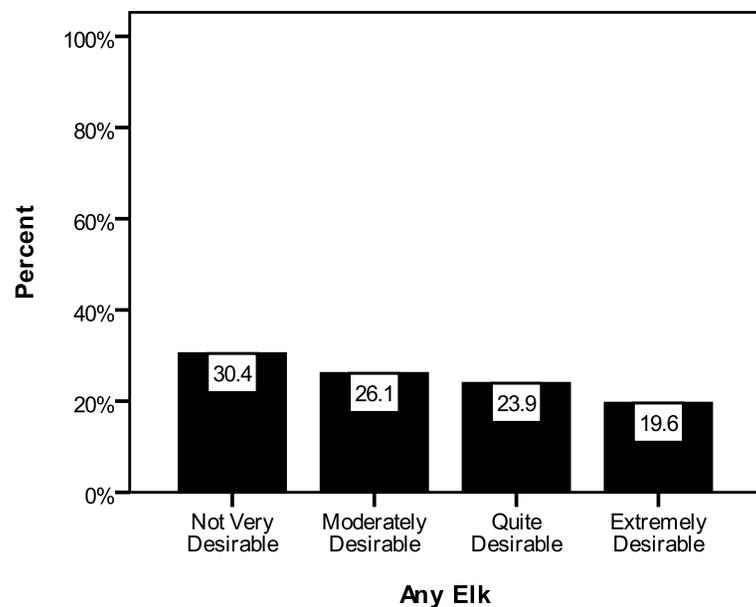
Q26: Unlike the state average, about half of Big Desert hunters believe that Elk hunting has stayed the same with capped zone implementations, 15.5% more than the state average. However, almost half do believe hunting has gotten worse.

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.

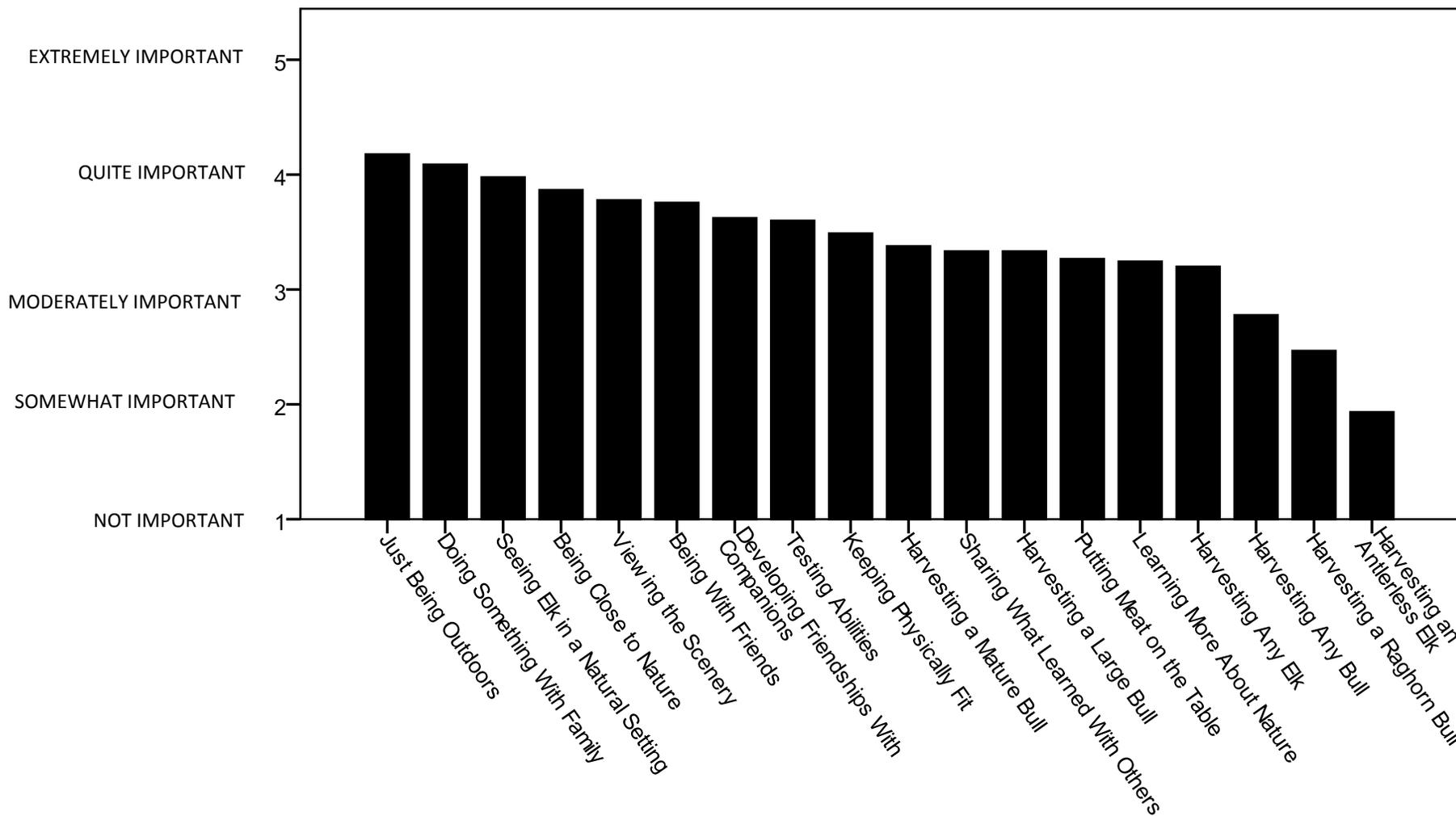
27. How desirable is it to you to harvest the following kinds of Elk?



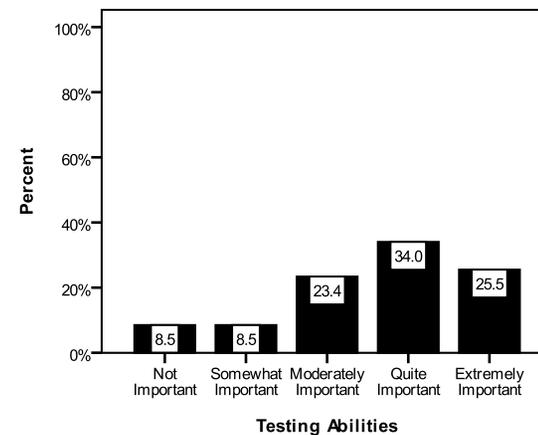
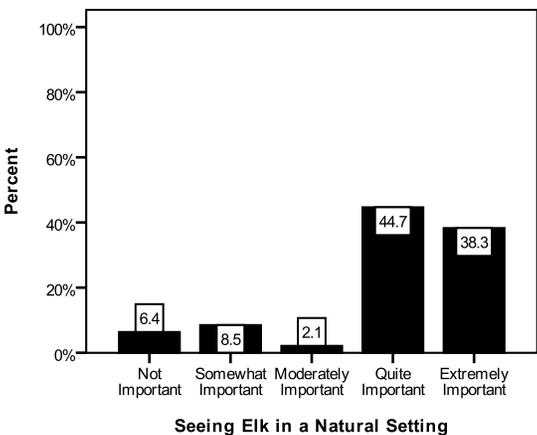
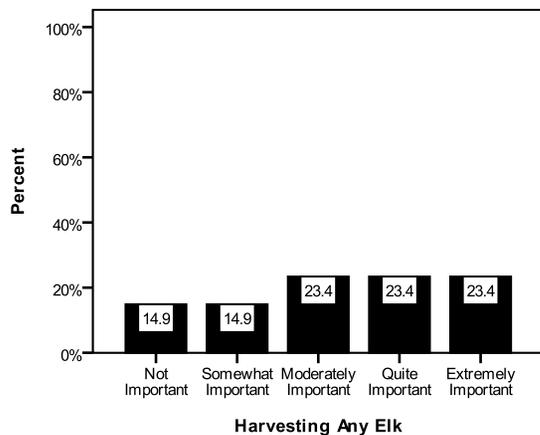
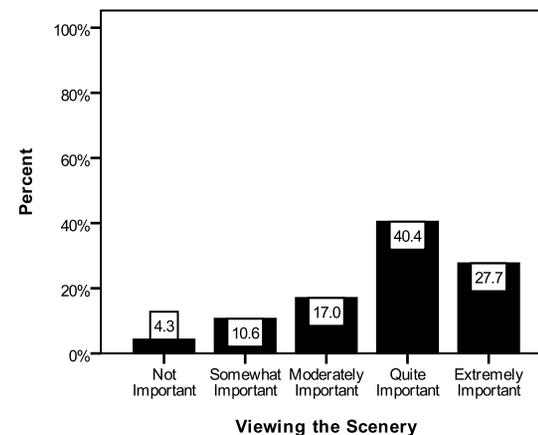
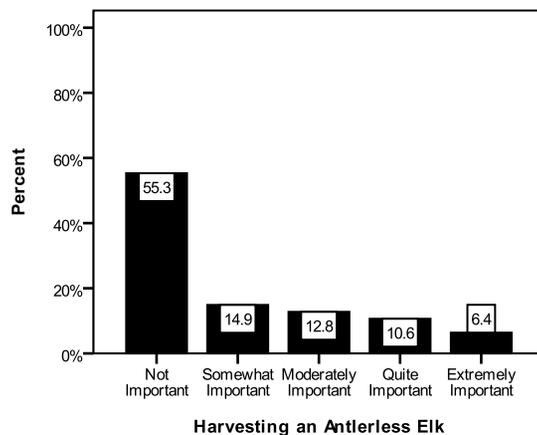
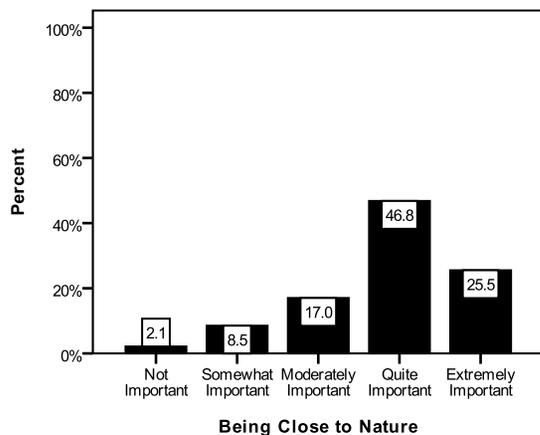


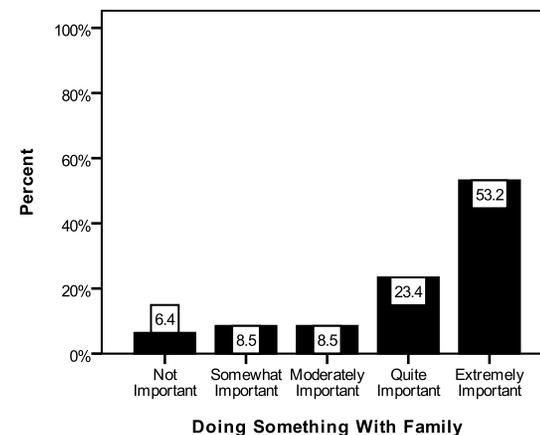
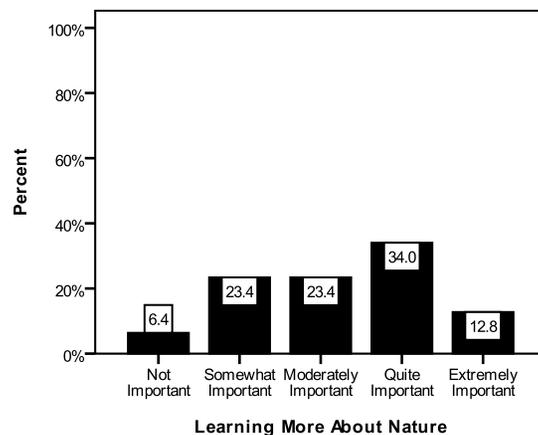
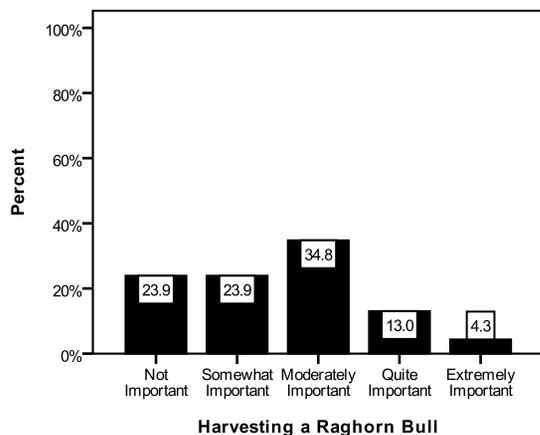
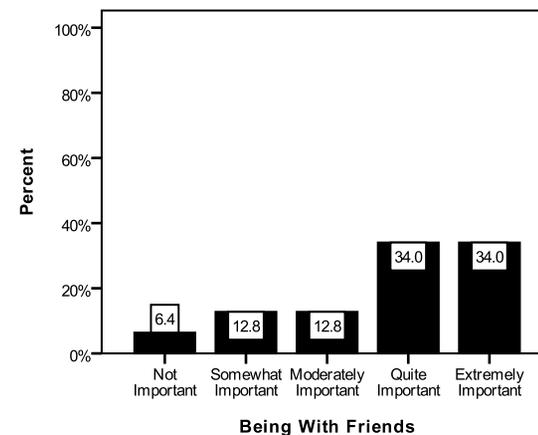
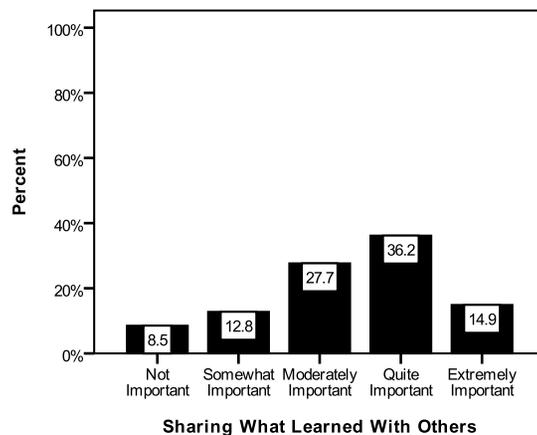
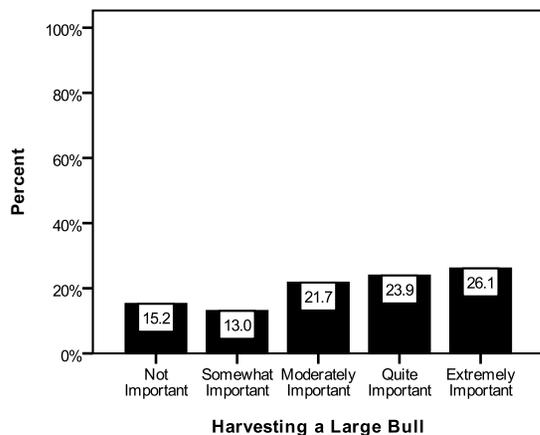
Q27: The distribution of responses between the state average and the Big Desert zone is similar. However, hunters in this zone find mature and large Elk slightly more desirable and spike or any Elk slightly less desirable.

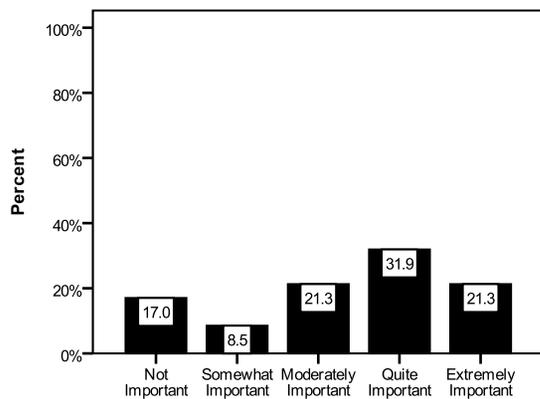
28. Below is a list of possible reasons for hunting Elk in Idaho. How important to you is each of the following reasons for hunting Elk in Idaho?



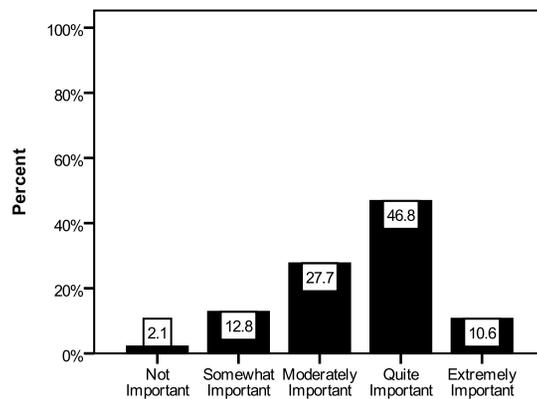
IMPORTANCE OF REASONS FOR HUNTING ELK IN IDAHO



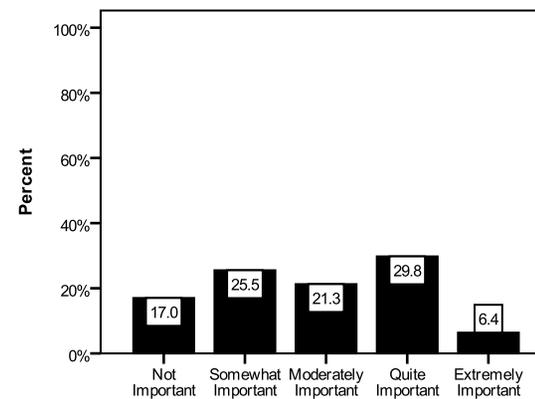




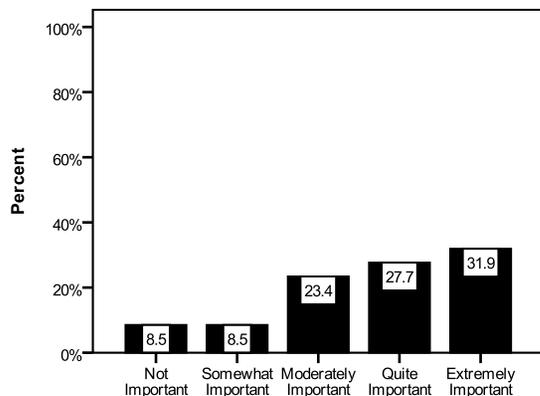
Putting Meat on the Table



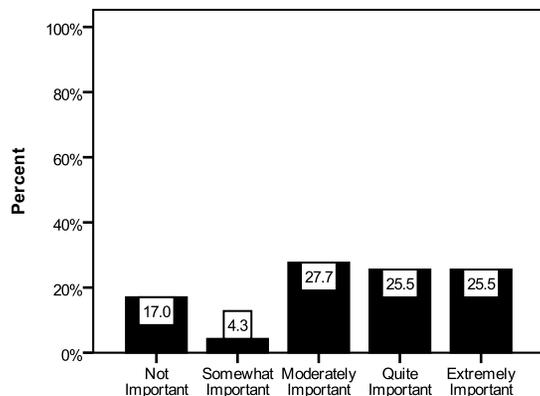
Keeping Physically Fit



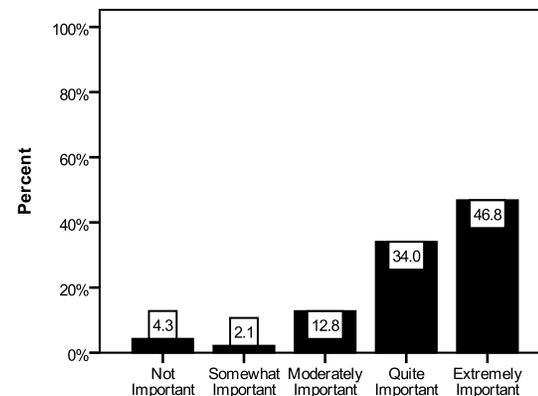
Harvesting Any Bull



Developing Friendships With Companions



Harvesting a Mature Bull

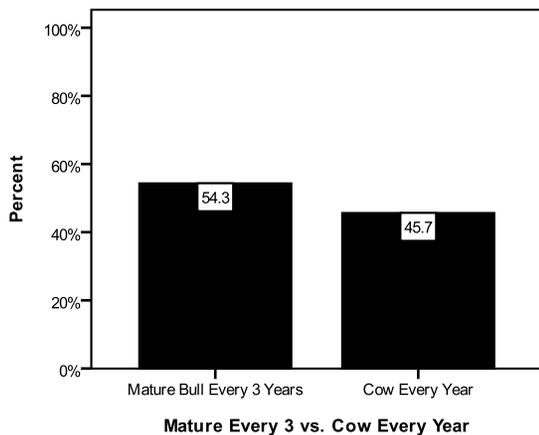
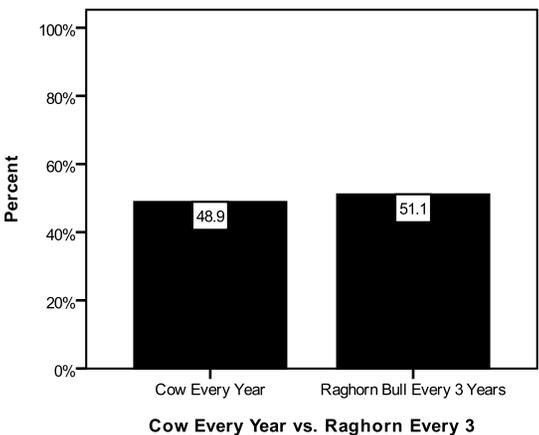
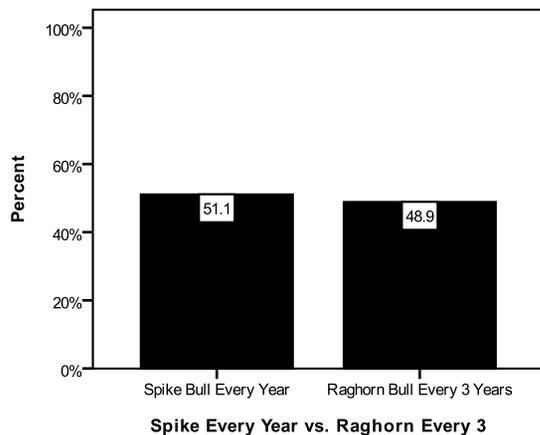
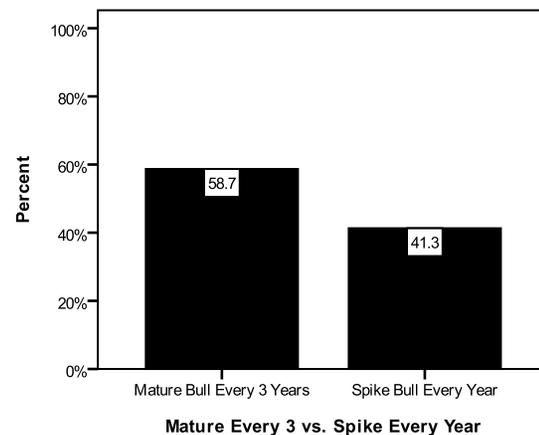
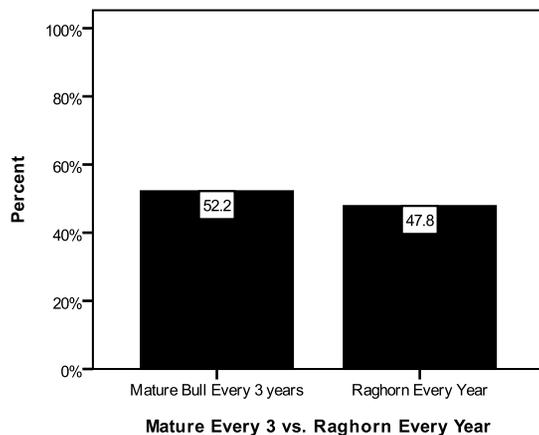
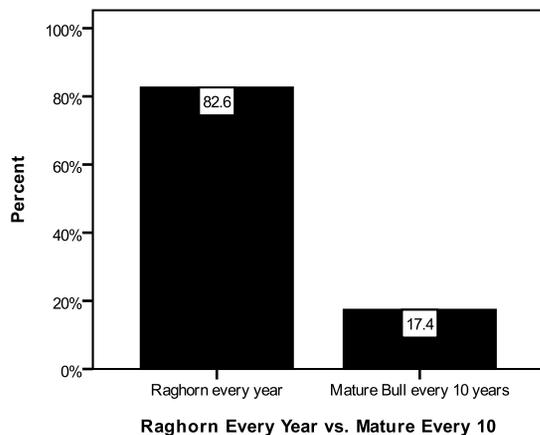


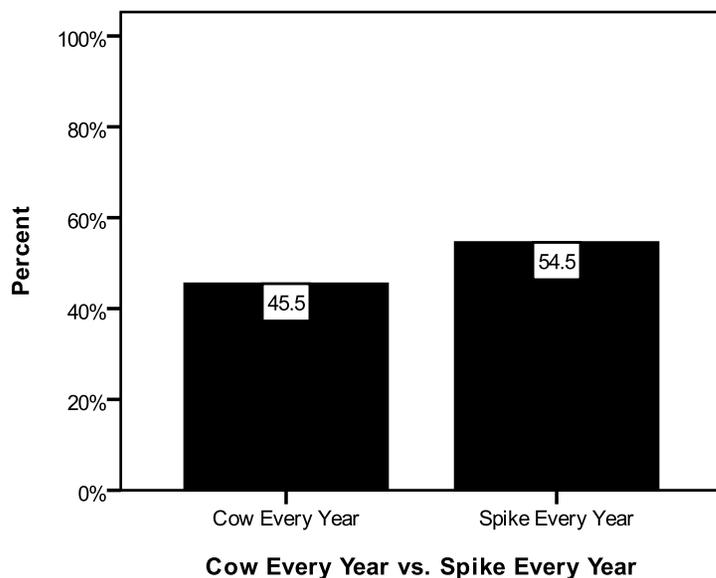
Just Being Outdoors

Q28: The top six reasons for hunting Elk are the same for the state average and Big Desert hunter.

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.

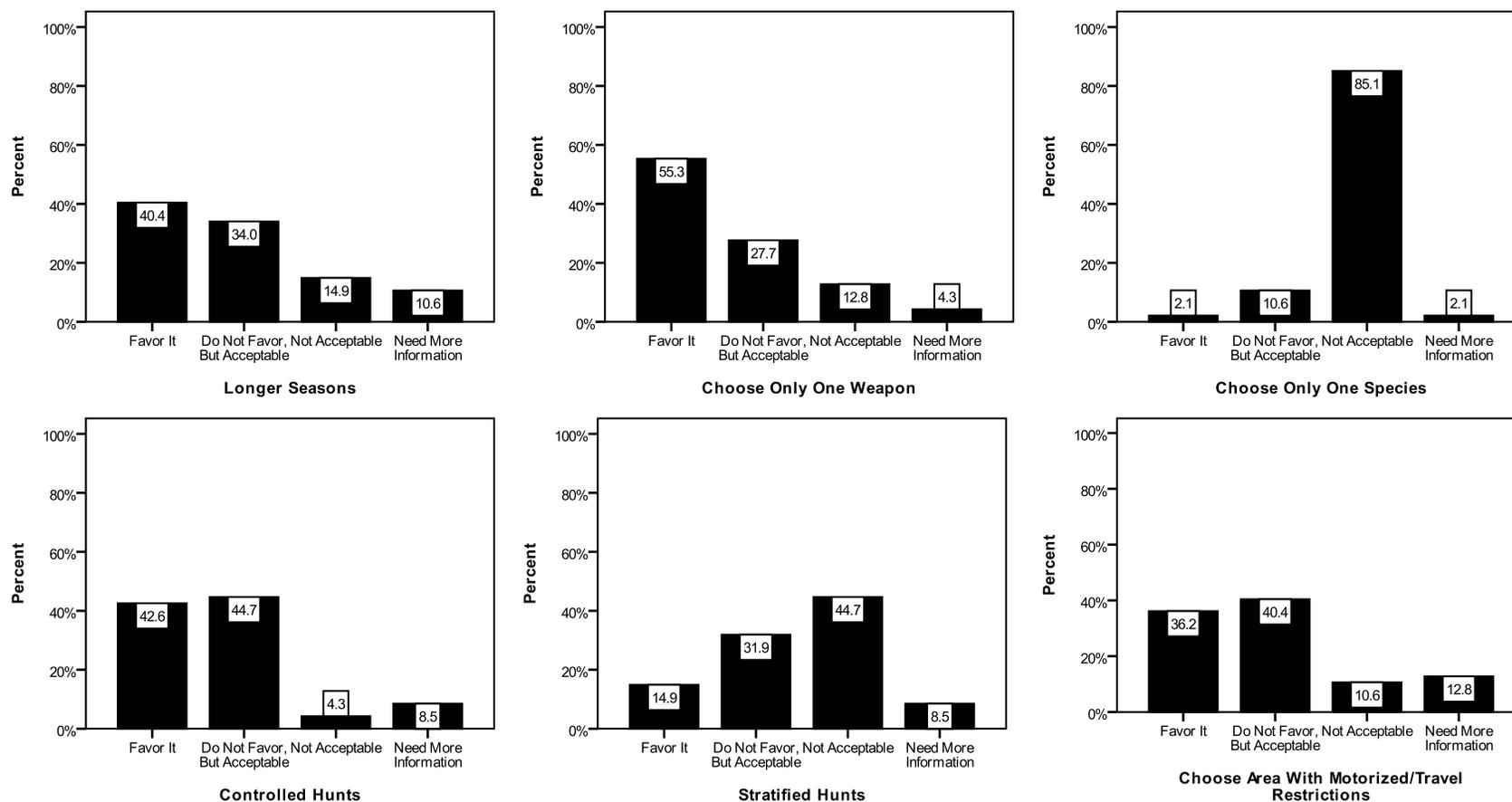


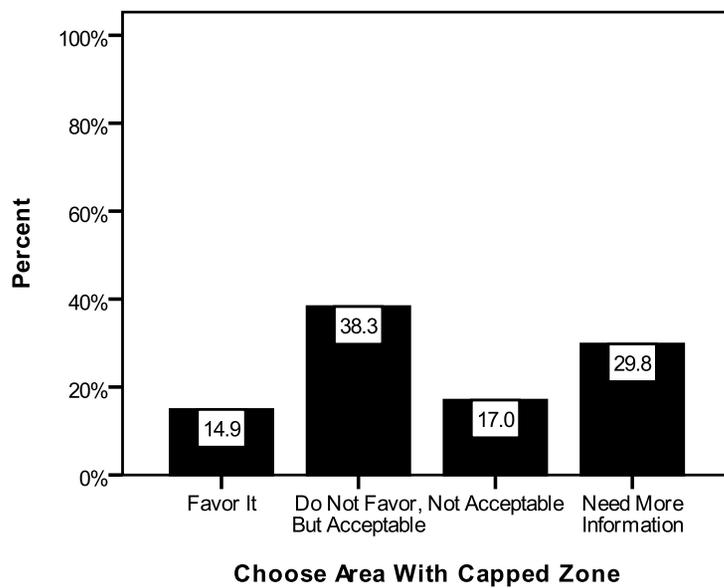


Q32: The distribution of responses is similar between the state average and the Big Desert zone. However, hunters in this zone would rather harvest a male Elk over a cow, despite size or opportunity to hunt.

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

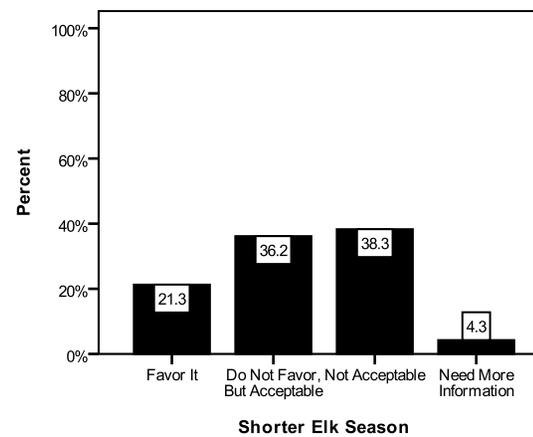
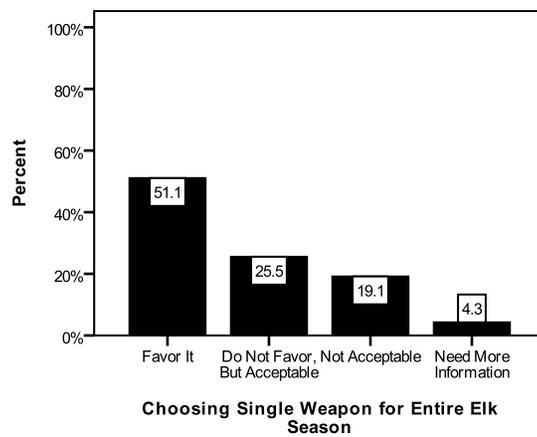
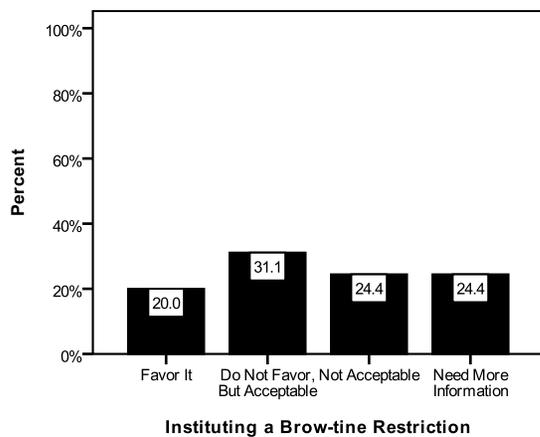
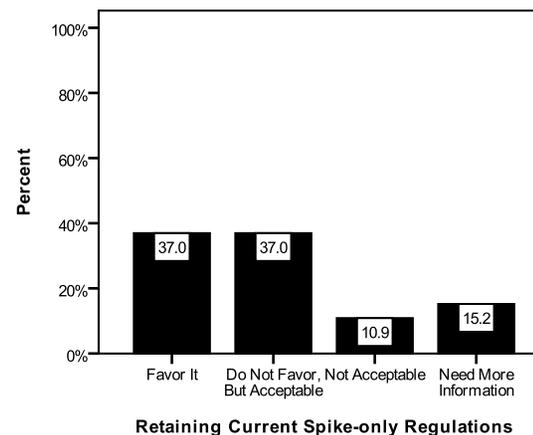
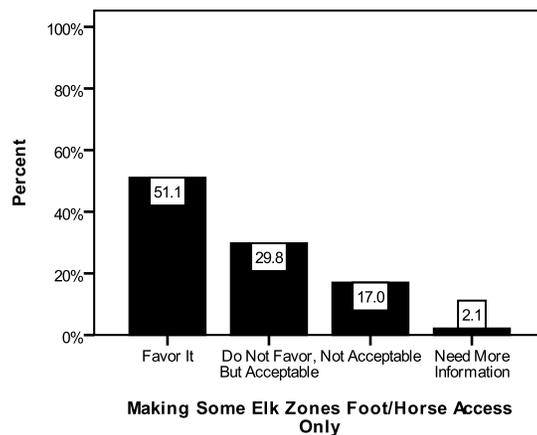
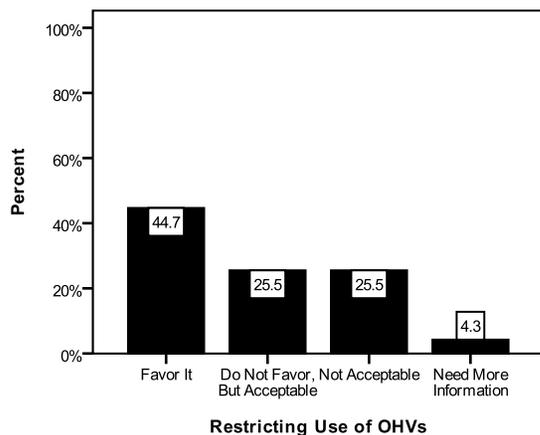
34. How do you feel about each of the following potential ways of improving Elk hunting, if needed?

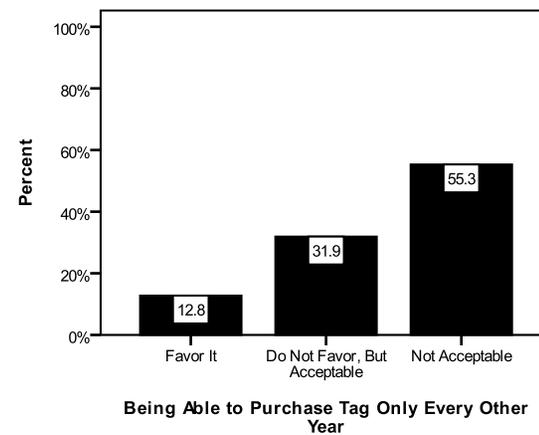
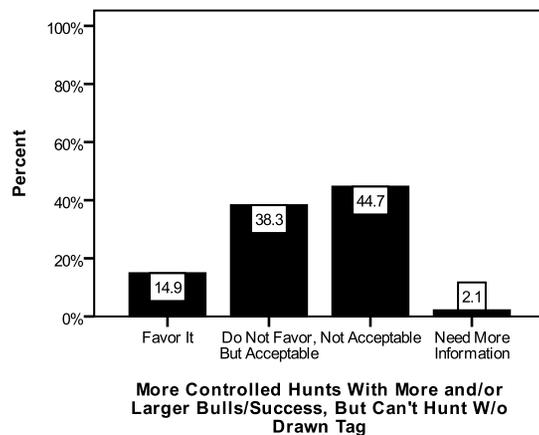
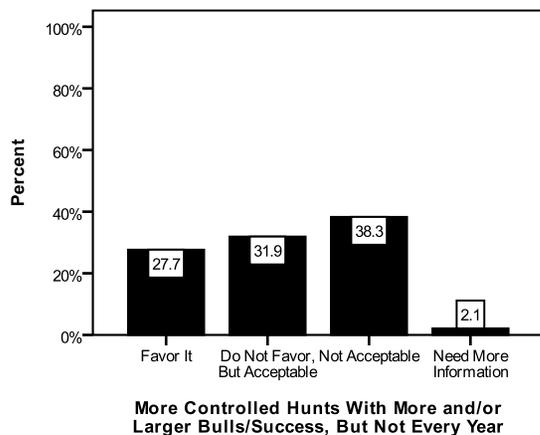




Q34: The distribution of responses between the state average and the Big Desert zone are similar. However, less hunters in this zone favor choosing an area with motorized/travel restriction, though they do still find it acceptable.

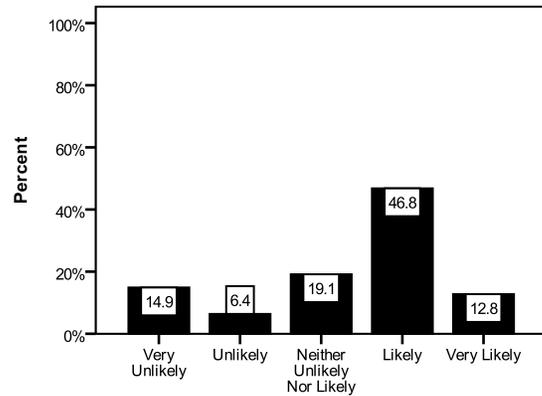
35. We would like to know how you feel about the following potential restrictions to increase the quality and size of Elk in Idaho and improve Elk hunting opportunities. Please indicate your opinion on the following potential restrictions.



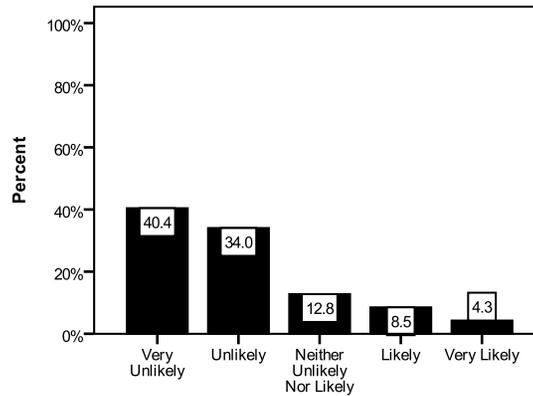


Q35: The distribution of responses is similar between the state average and the Big Desert zone.

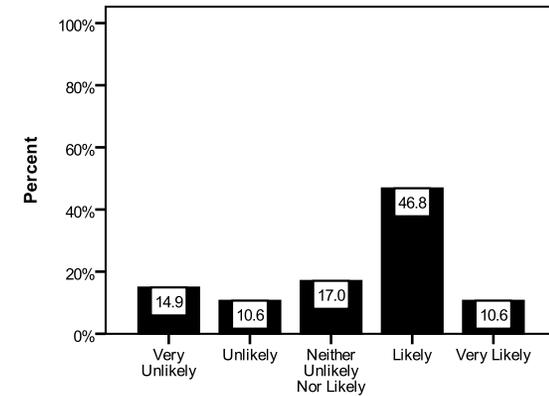
36. *IF* Idaho Fish and Game introduces restrictions that reduce Elk hunting opportunities to improve Elk populations, how would your hunting behavior change?



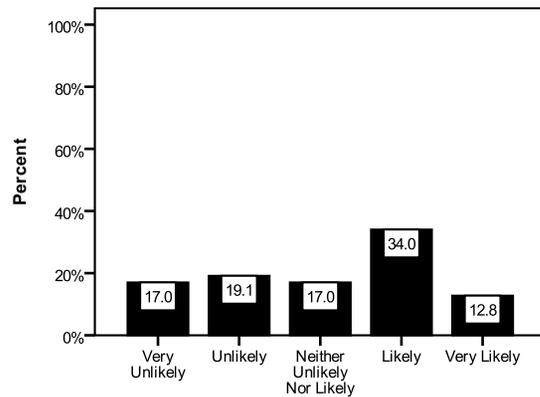
Hunt in Different Zones



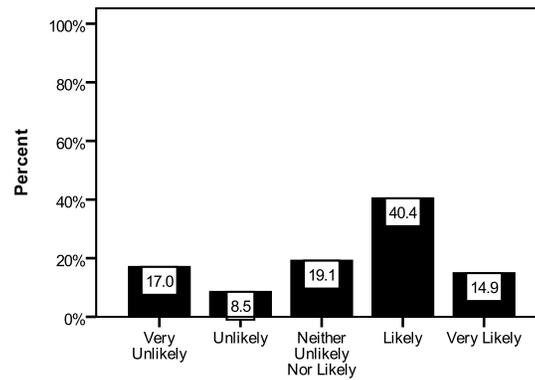
Quit Hunting Elk



Shift to Hunt Other Species



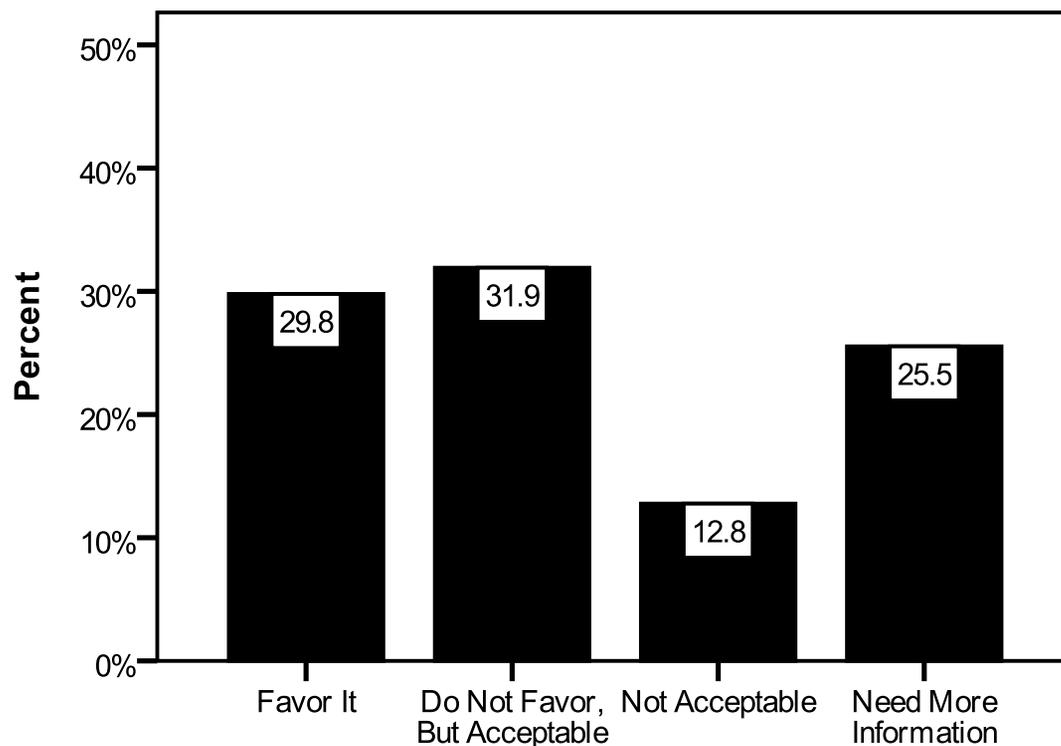
Not Change Hunting Behavior



Change Weapon Type for Increased Elk Hunting Opportunity

Q36: The distribution of responses is similar between the Big Desert zone and the state average. Hunters in this zone are more likely to shift to hunt other species or change weapon type to increase hunting opportunity.

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)

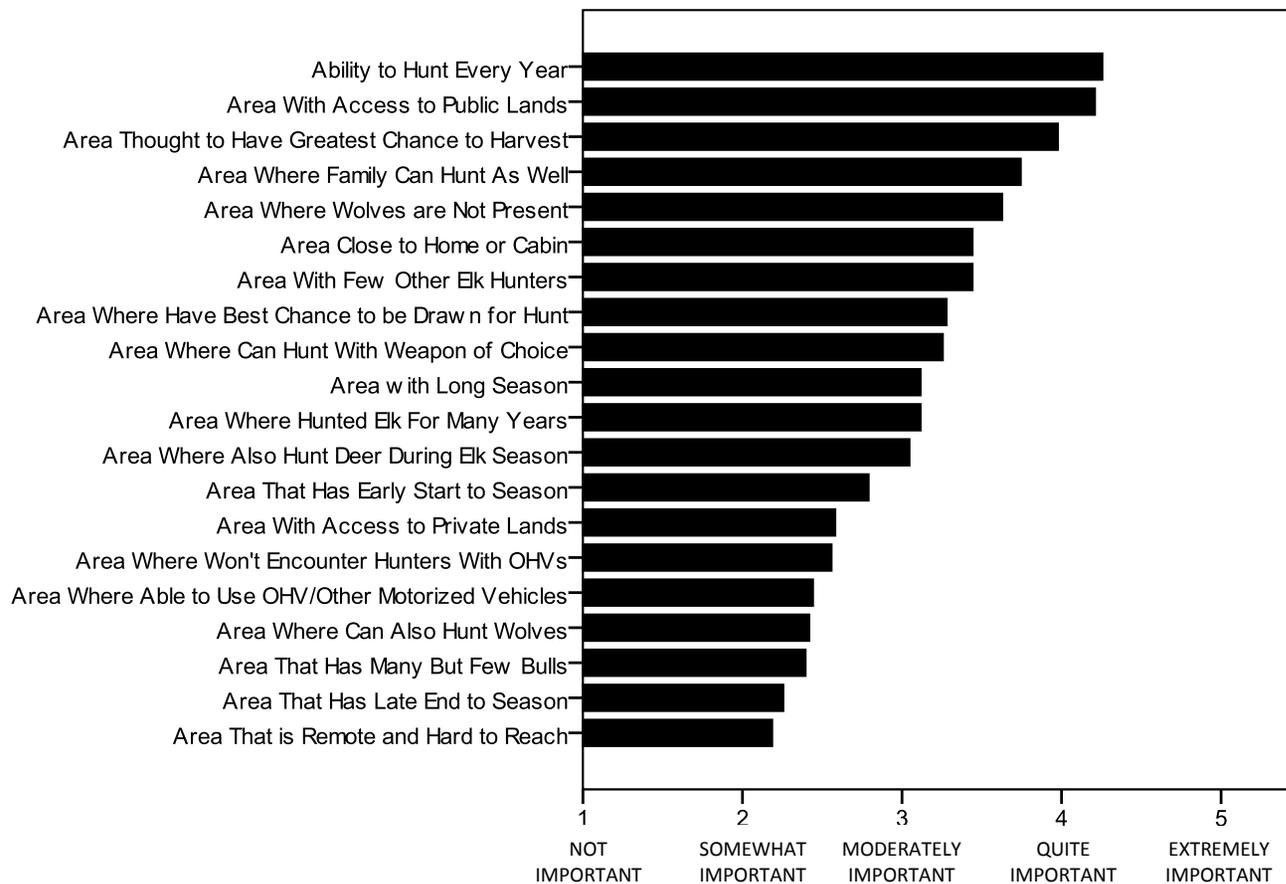


Feelings About Setting Season Conditions 2 Years in Advance

Q38: Hunters in this zone favor this regulation slightly less than the state average, but about a third still finds it acceptable.

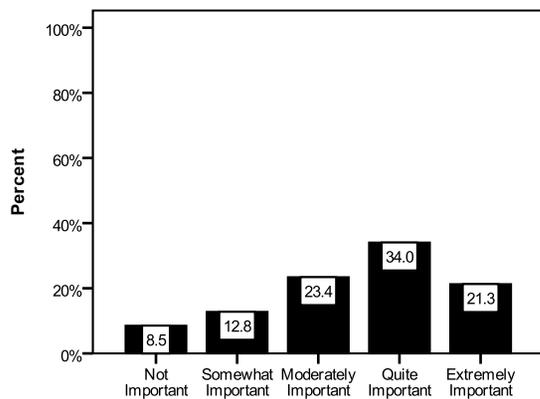
WHEN AND WHERE TO HUNT

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?

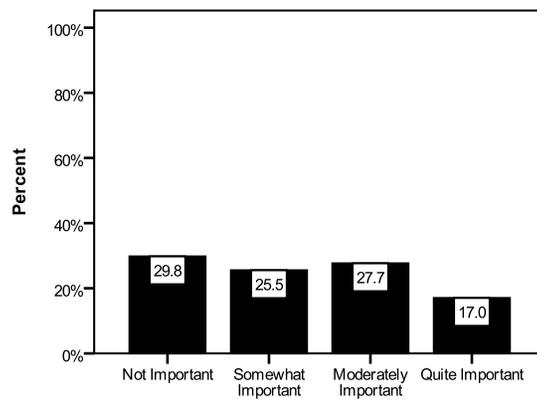


Q29: Five of the top six characteristics are ranked similarly by the Big Desert zone and the state average. Hunters in this zone, however, feel that an area close to a home/cabin is moderately to quite important in deciding where to hunt, to round out their top six.

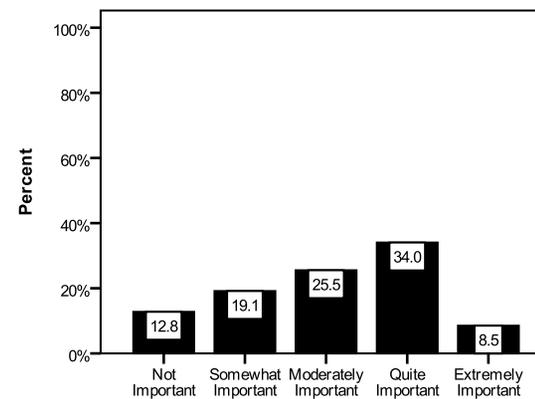
CHARACTERISTICS AFFECTING CHOICE OF WHERE TO HUNT IN IDAHO



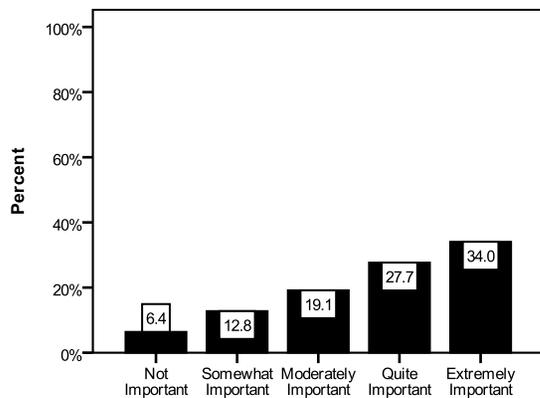
Area With Few Other Elk Hunters



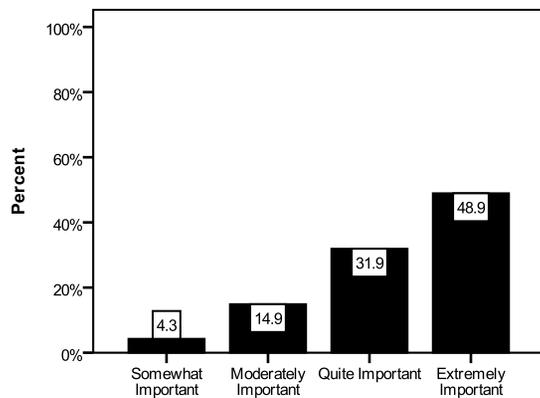
Area That Has Many But Few Bulls



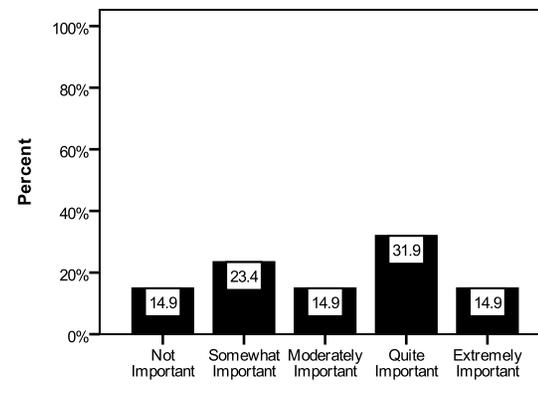
Area Where Hunted Elk For Many Years



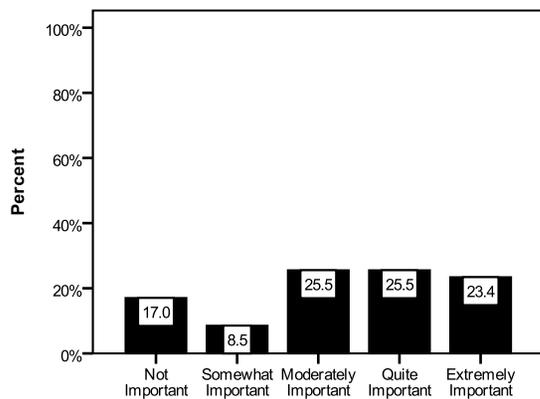
Area Where Family Can Hunt As Well



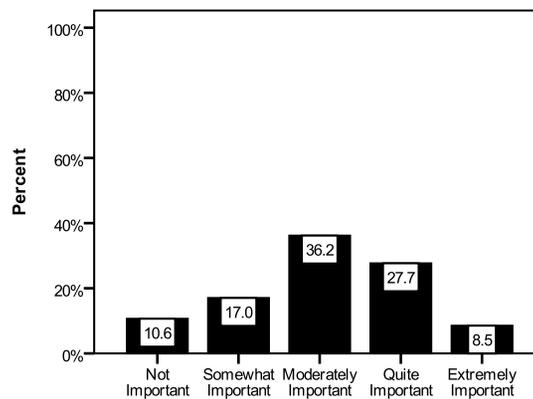
Ability to Hunt Every Year



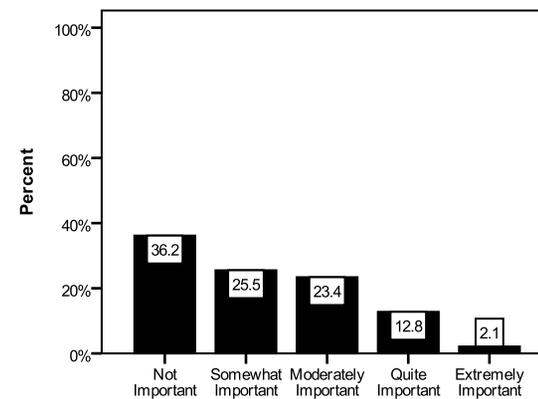
Area Where Also Hunt Deer During Elk Season



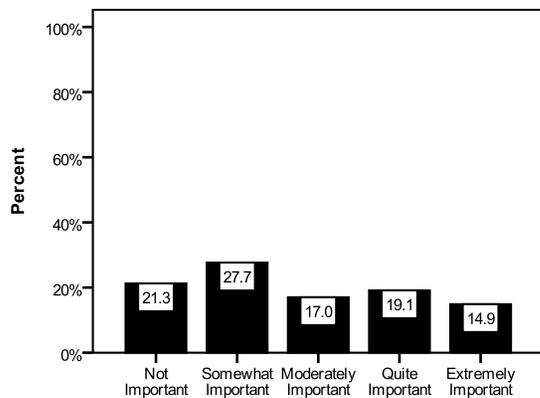
Area Close to Home or Cabin



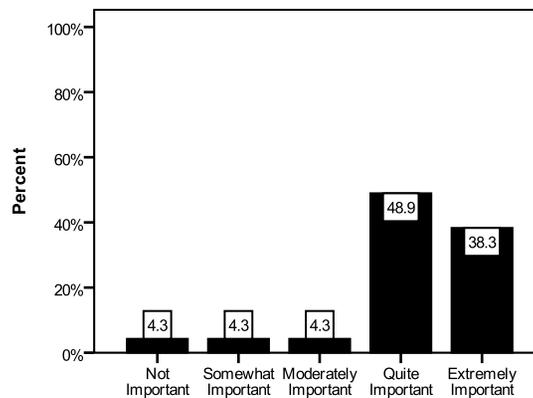
Area with Long Season



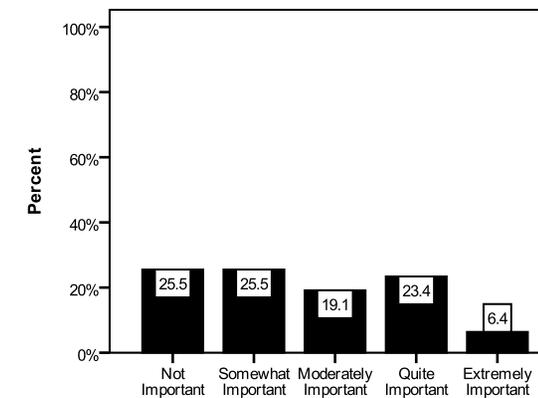
Area That is Remote and Hard to Reach



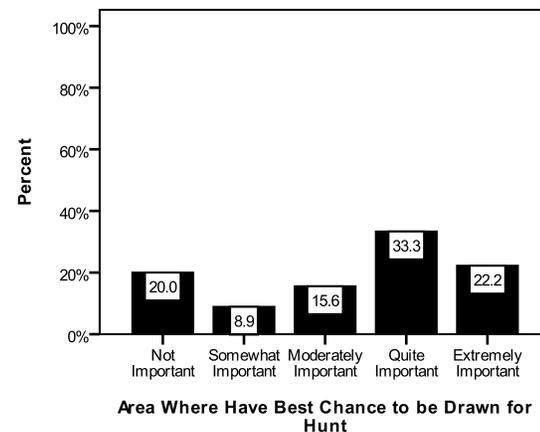
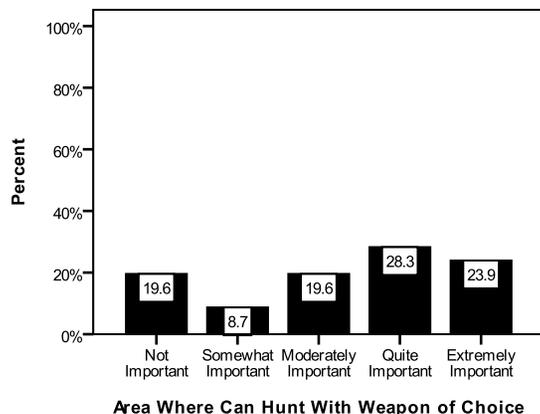
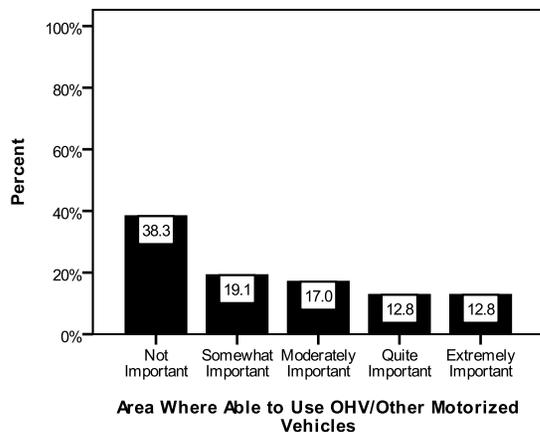
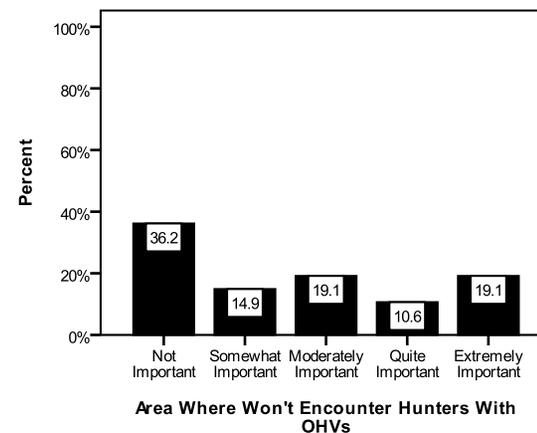
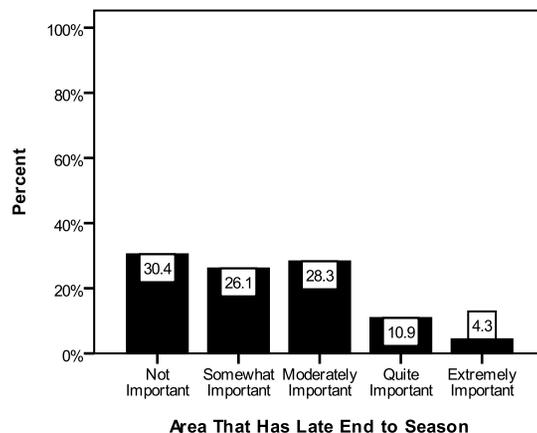
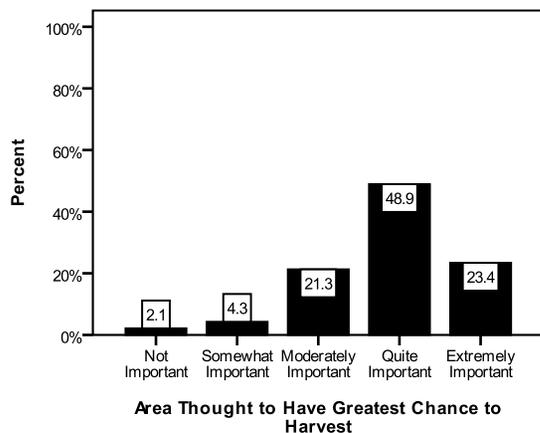
Area That Has Early Start to Season

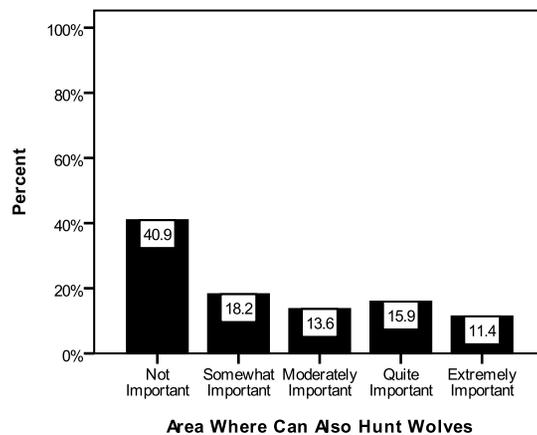
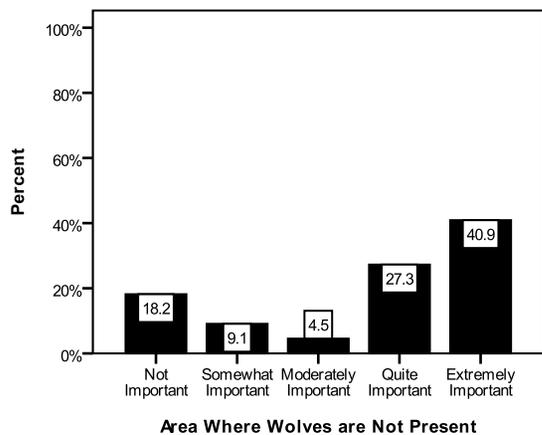


Area With Access to Public Lands

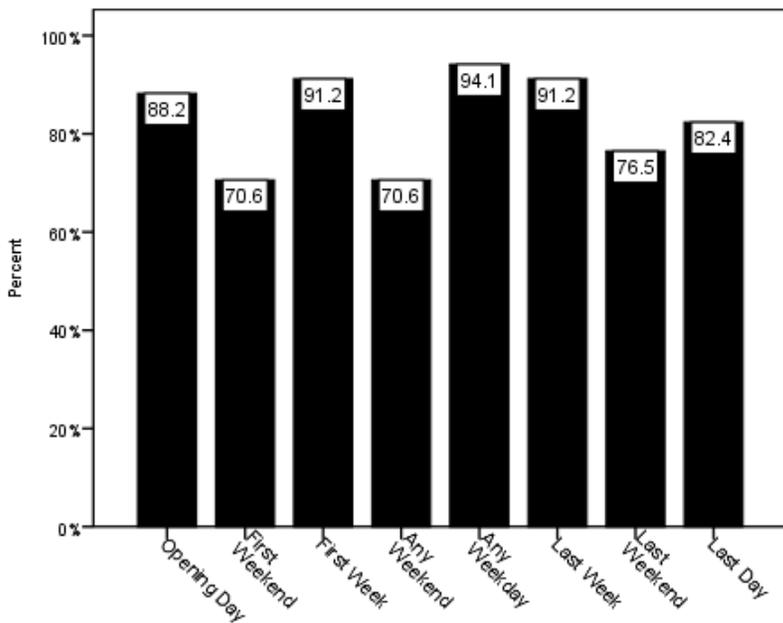


Area With Access to Private Lands

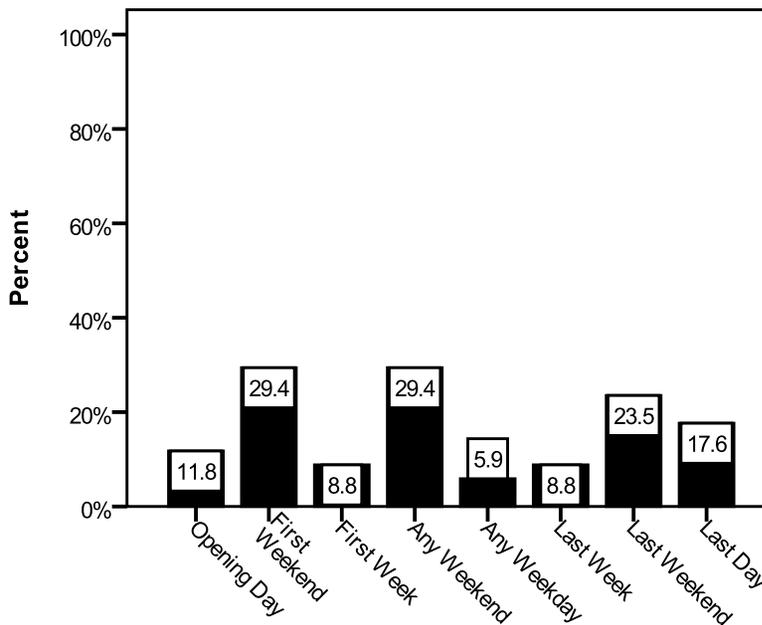




30. Are there any times during the general Elk hunting season in Idaho that you prefer or avoid? (Please check as many as apply)



TIMES PREFERRED DURING GENERAL ELK SEASON

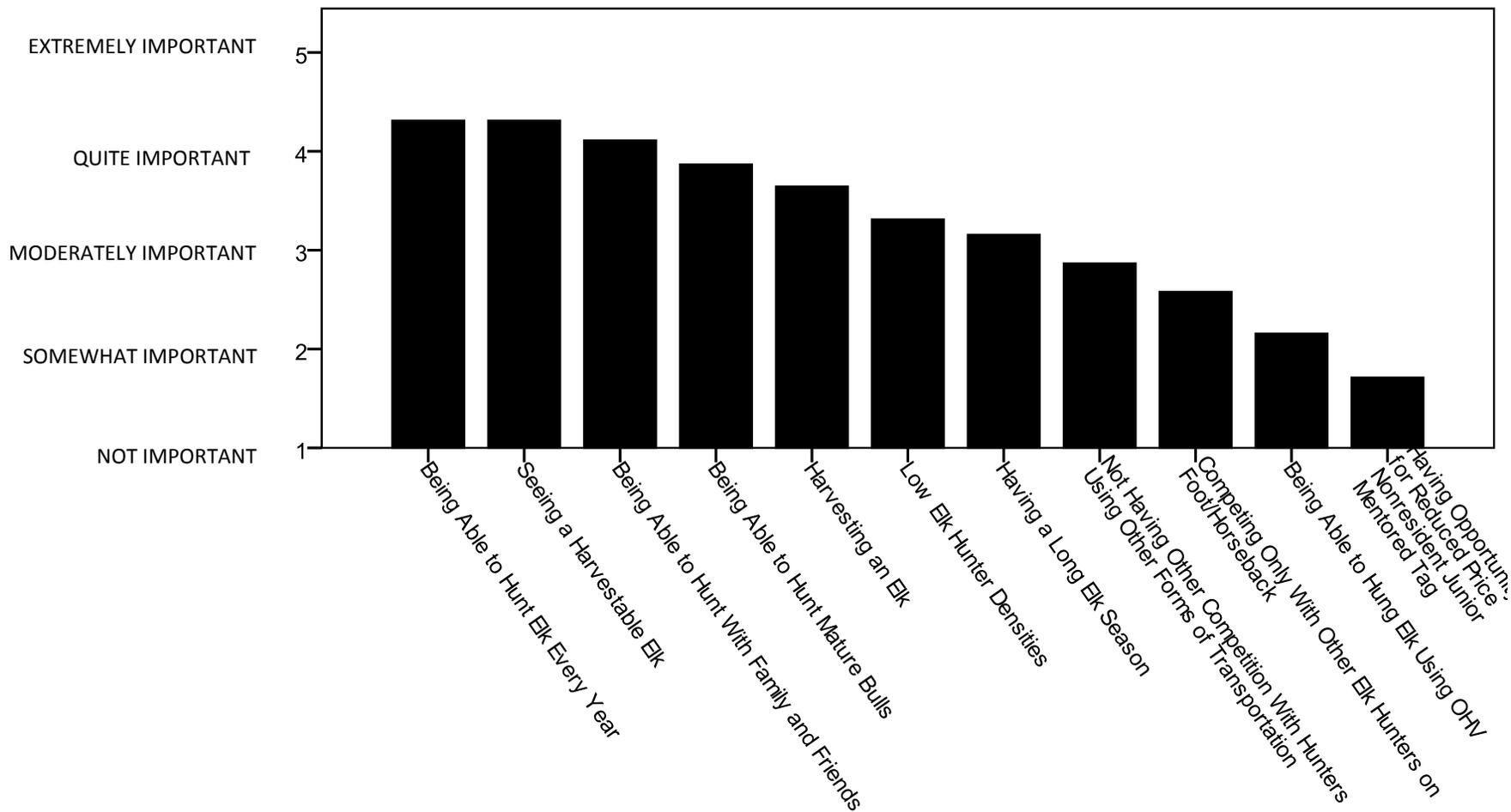


TIMES AVOIDED DURING GENERAL ELK SEASON

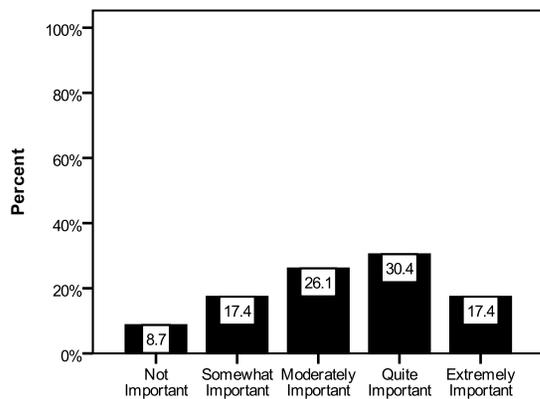
Q30: Like the state average, many hunters in the state zone prefer to hunt during the week and avoid hunting on the weekends.

ATTRIBUTES OF A QUALITY ELK HUNTING EXPERIENCE

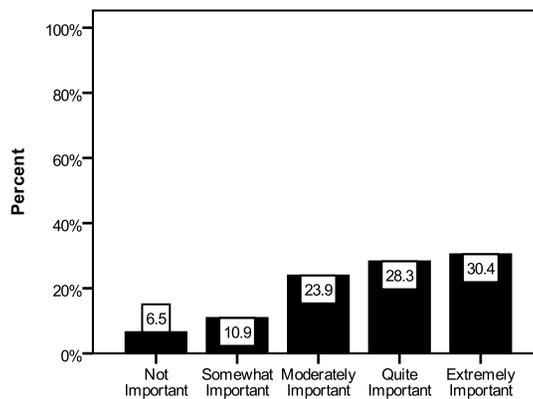
31. How important to you are each of these attributes for a quality Idaho Elk hunting experience?



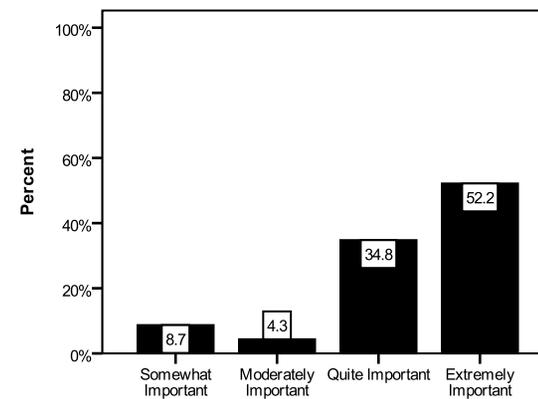
IMPORTANCE OF ATTRIBUTES FOR A QUALITY ELK HUNTING EXPERIENCE IN IDAHO



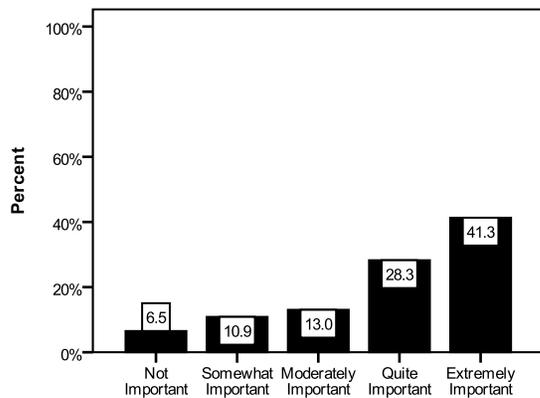
Low Elk Hunter Densities



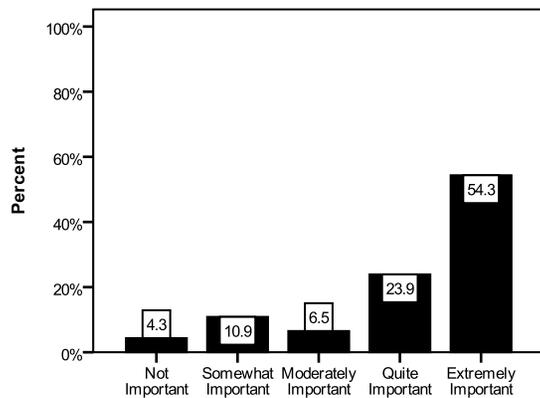
Harvesting an Elk



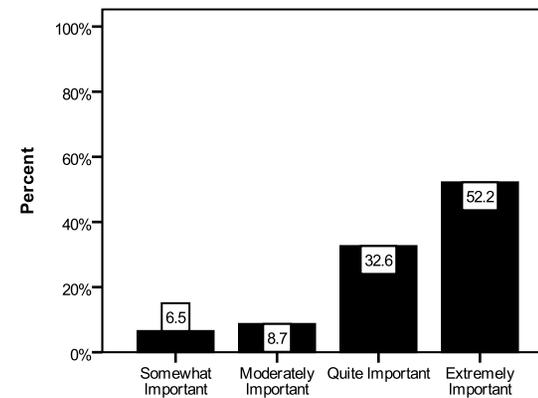
Seeing a Harvestable Elk



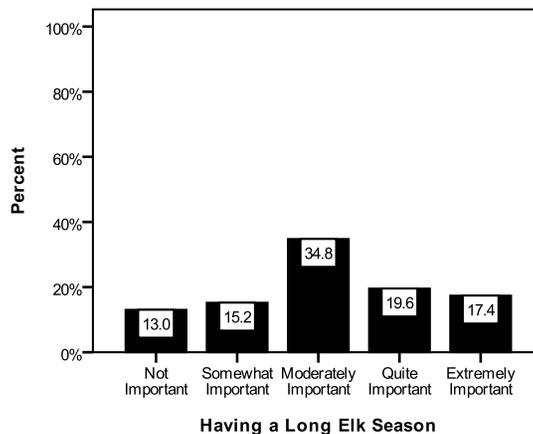
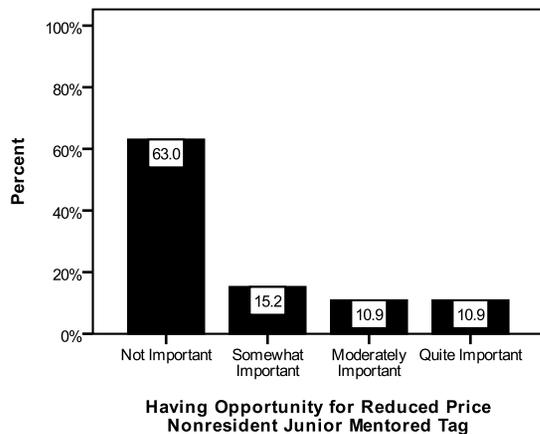
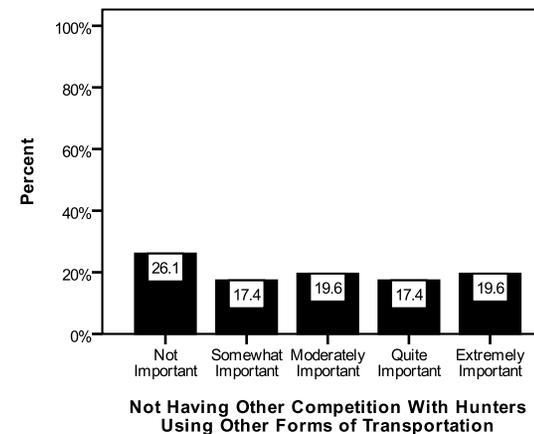
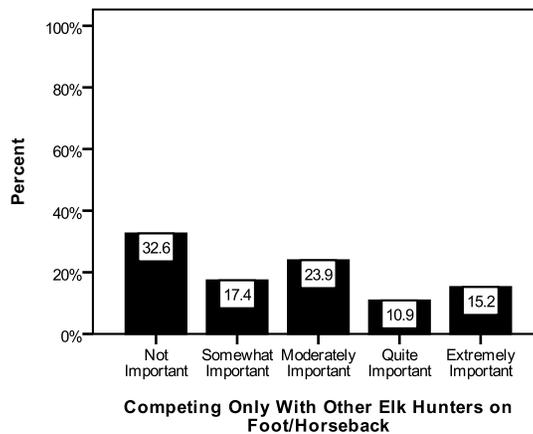
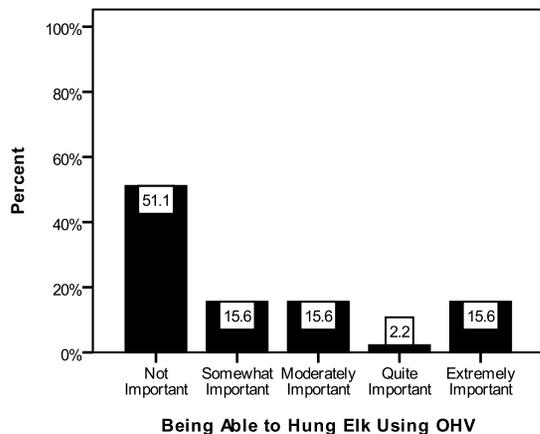
Being Able to Hunt Mature Bulls



Being Able to Hunt With Family and Friends



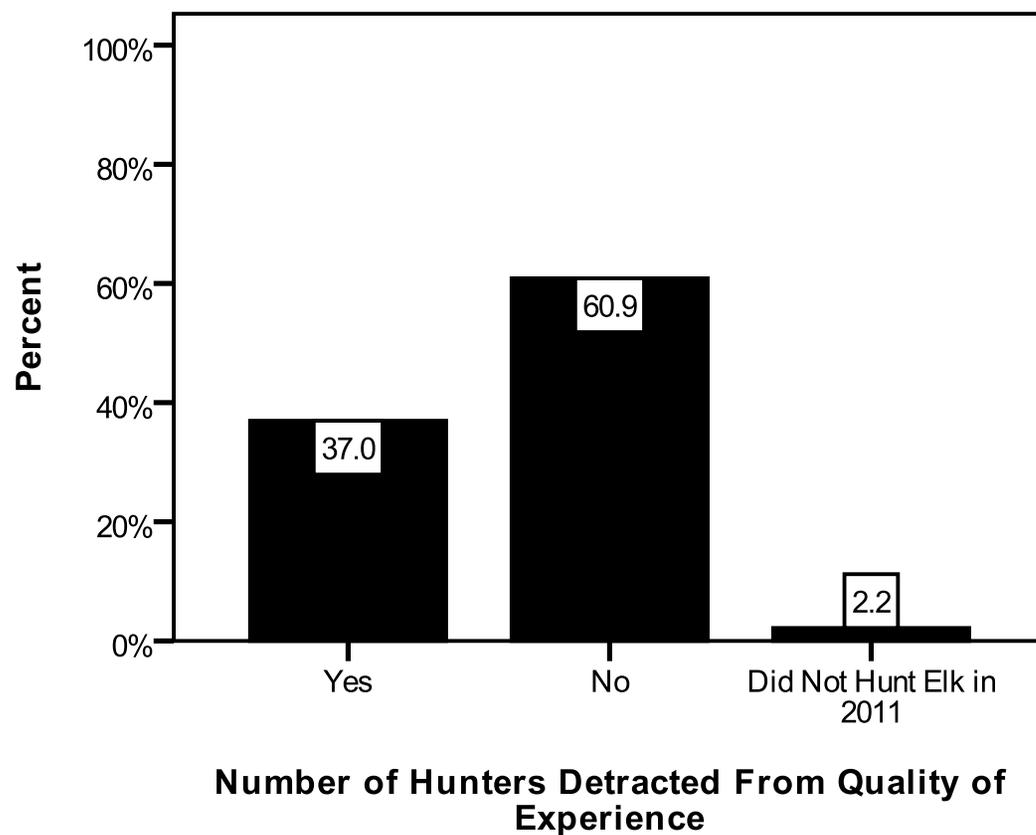
Being Able to Hunt Elk Every Year



Q31: The top five attributes for a what makes a quality hunting experience are the same for the Big Desert zone and the state average.

HUNTING SATISFACTION

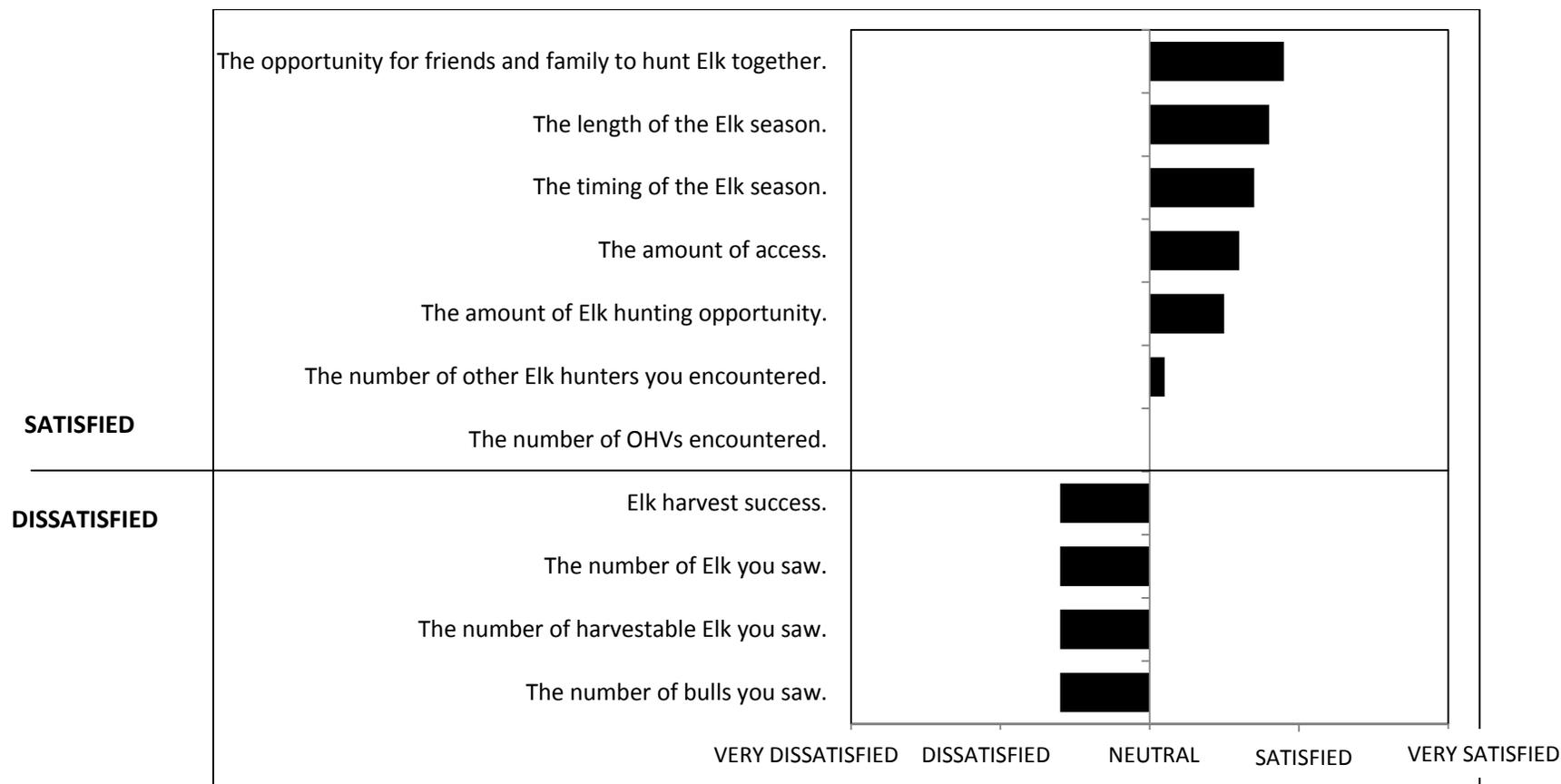
33. Were there times during your 2011 Elk season when the numbers of other hunters seriously detracted from the quality of your hunting experience? *(Please check one response)*



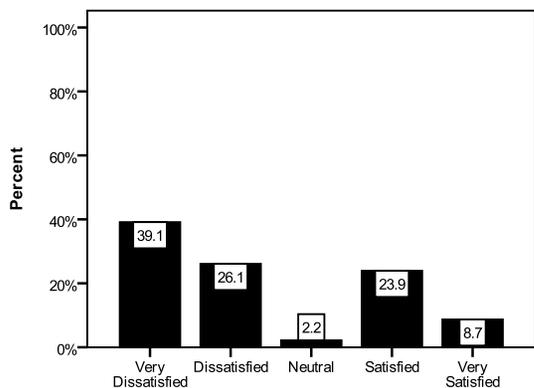
Q33: The distribution of responses is similar between the state average and the Big Desert zone.

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

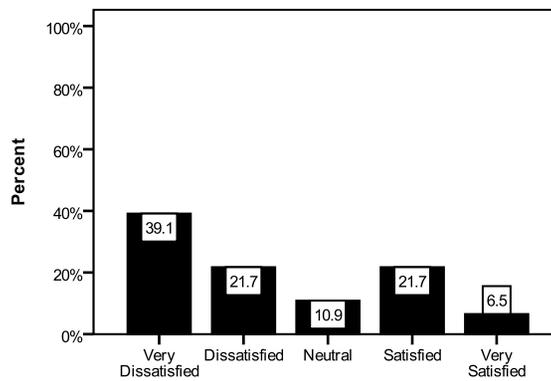
37. How satisfied were you with each of the following aspects of your 2011 Elk hunting experience?



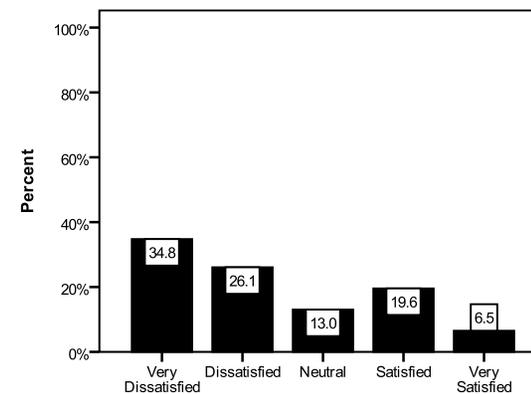
SATISFACTION OF ASPECTS OF 2011 ELK HUNTING EXPERIENCE



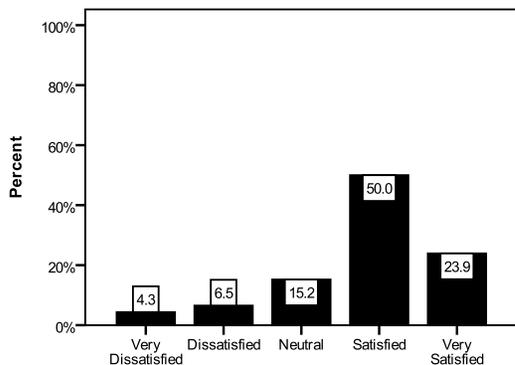
Number of Elk Seen



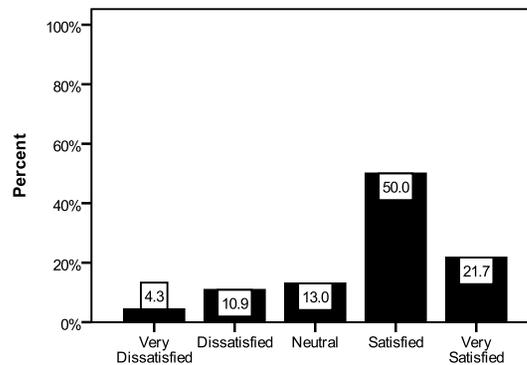
Number of Harvestable Elk Seen



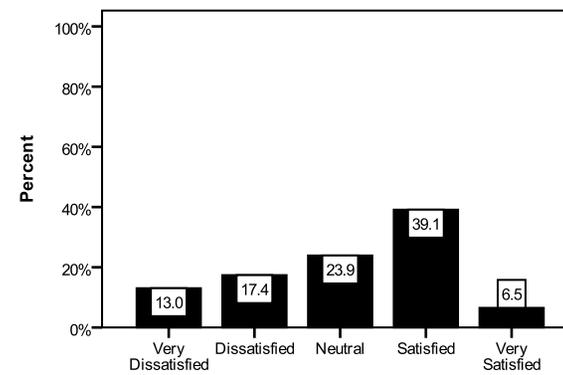
Number of Bulls Seen



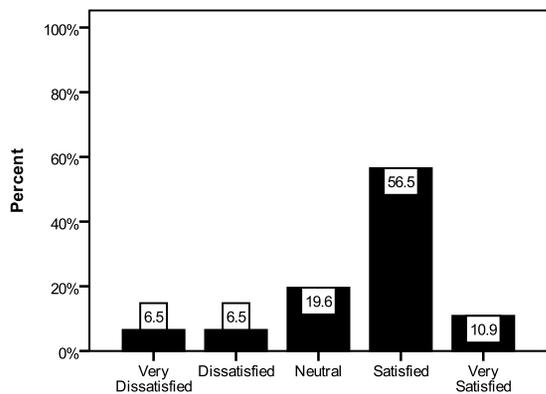
Length of Elk Season



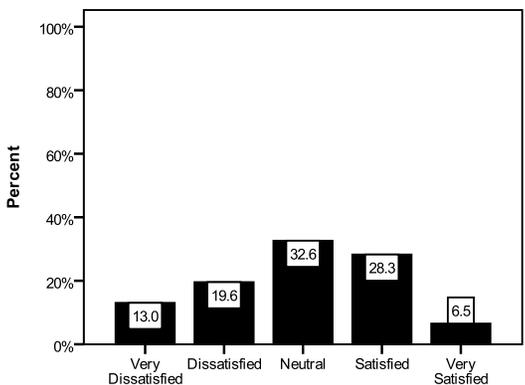
Timing of Elk Season



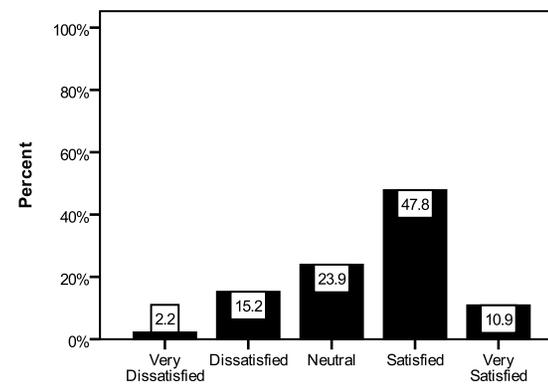
Number of Elk Hunters Encountered



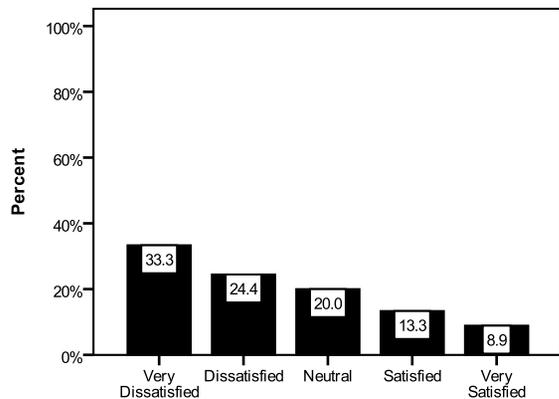
Amount of Access



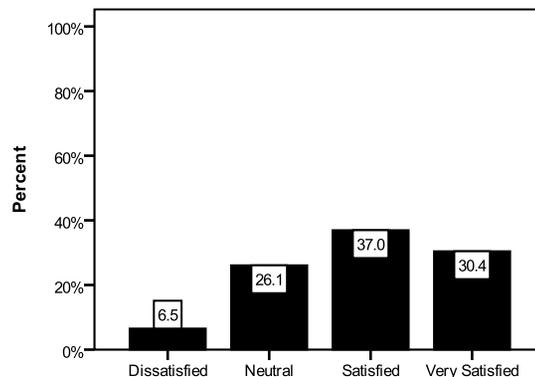
Number of OHVs Encountered



Amount of Elk Hunting Opportunity



Elk Harvest Success



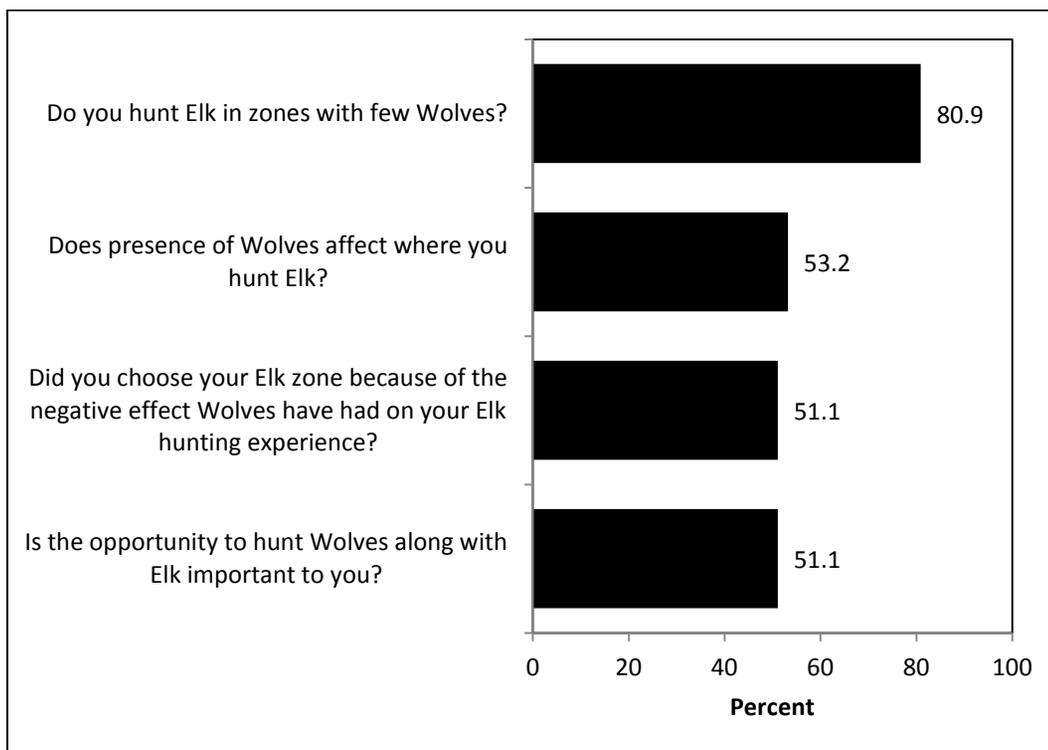
Opportunity for Family and Friends to Hunt Together

Q37: Like the state average, hunters in the Big Desert zone found that Elk numbers and success were dissatisfying in their 2011 hunting experience.

PERCEPTIONS OF PREDATORS

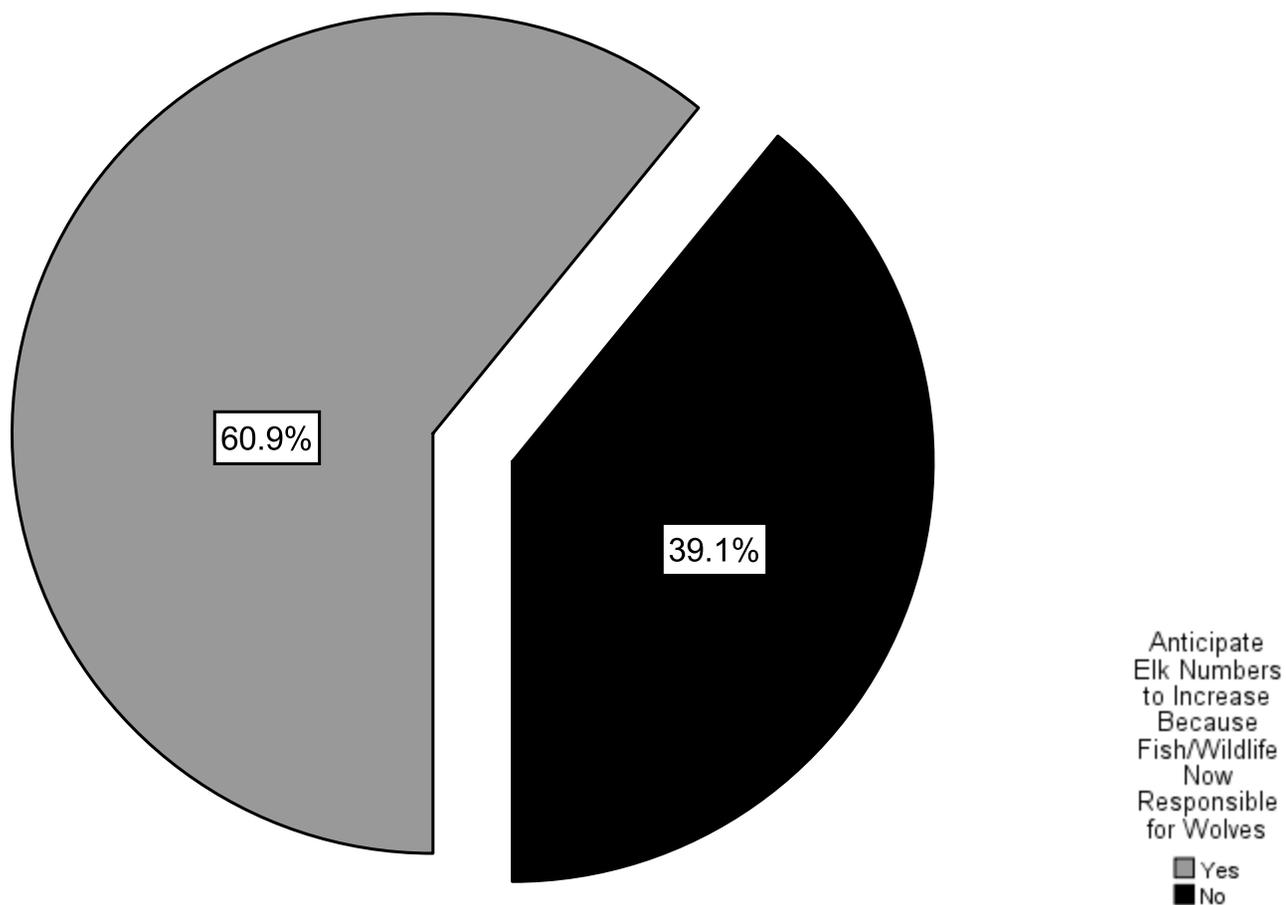
Two questions about predators in Idaho.

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



Q39: Almost 50% more hunters in the Big Desert zone hunt in zones with few Wolves, compared to the state average.

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



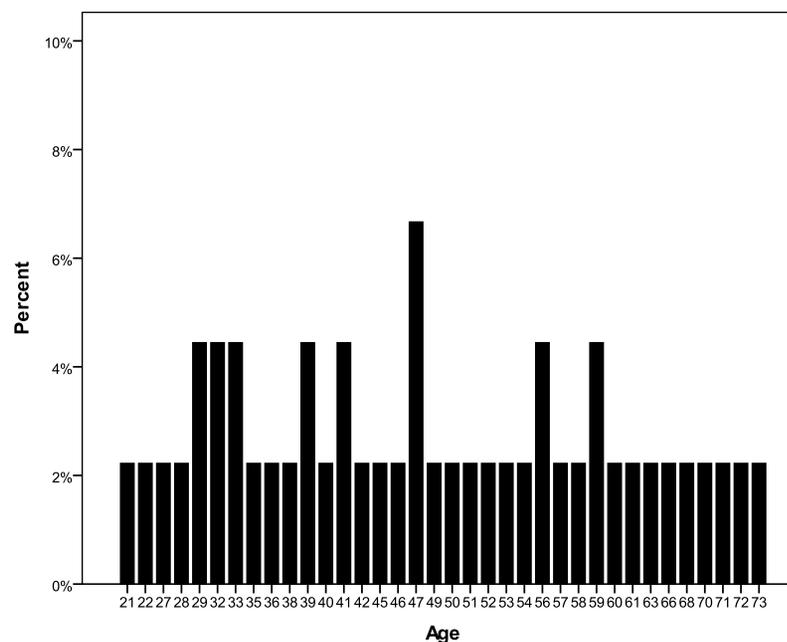
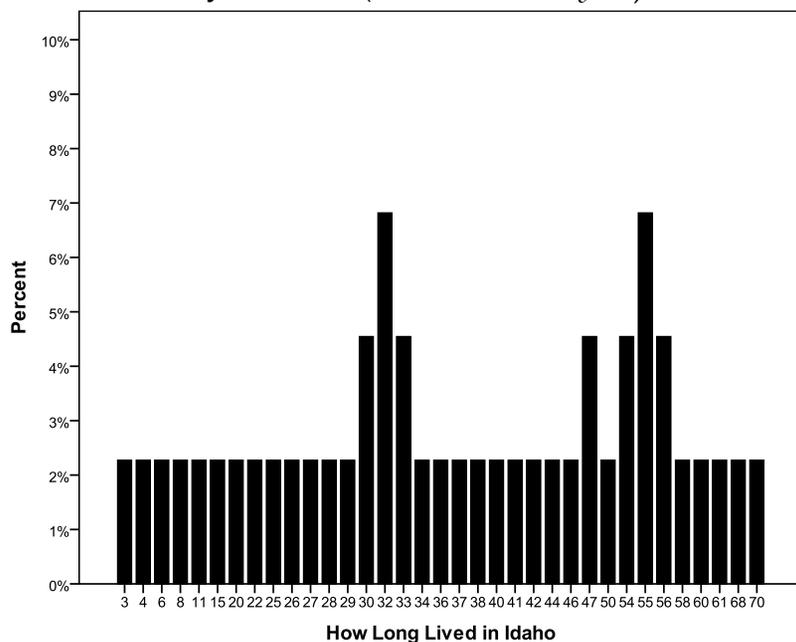
Q40: The distribution of responses is similar for the state average and the Big Desert zone.

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 Big Desert zone for both Q42 and Q43.