

**ELK HUNTING IN IDAHO:  
UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS AND EXPERIENCES OF  
HUNTERS: SAWTOOTH ZONE**



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**For:**

**Idaho Department of Fish and Game**

**August 2012**

**INSERT ELK SURVEY OBJECTIVES**

**METHODS**

**SAMPLING**

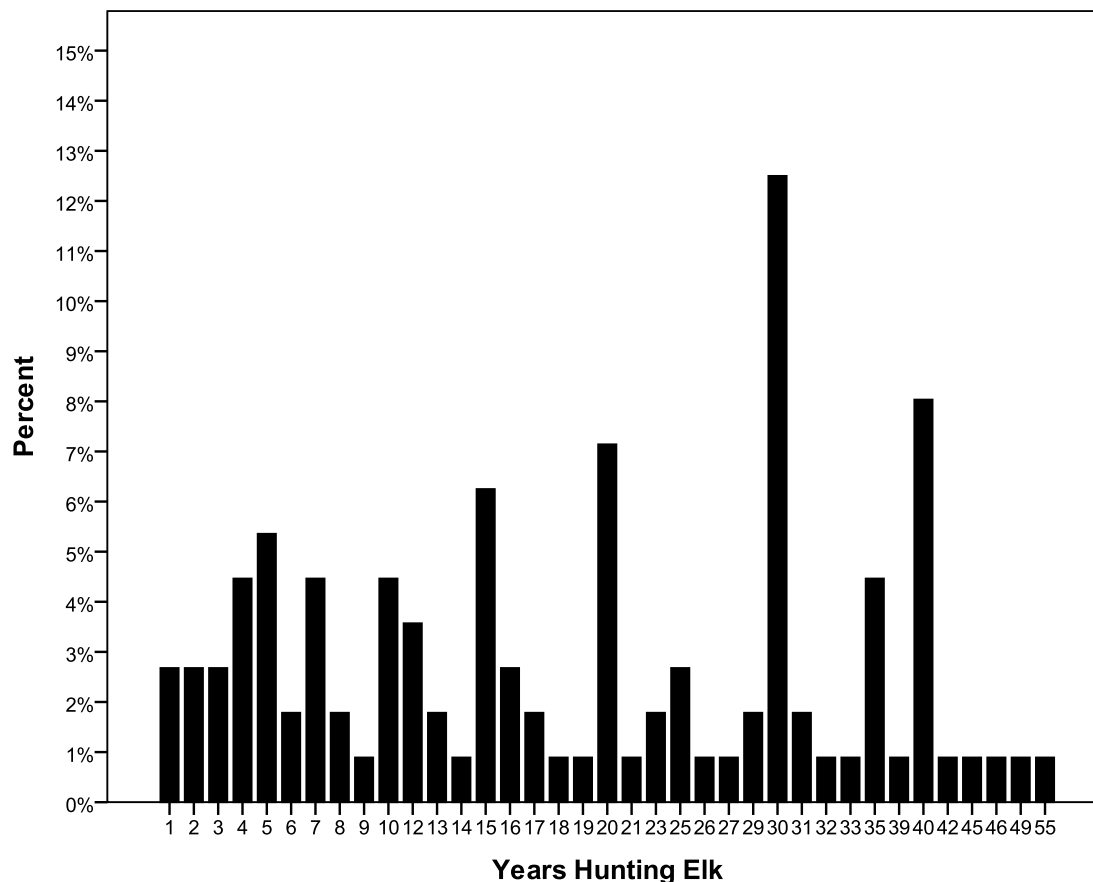
**RESPONSE RATE.**

# ELK HUNTER PROFILES

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

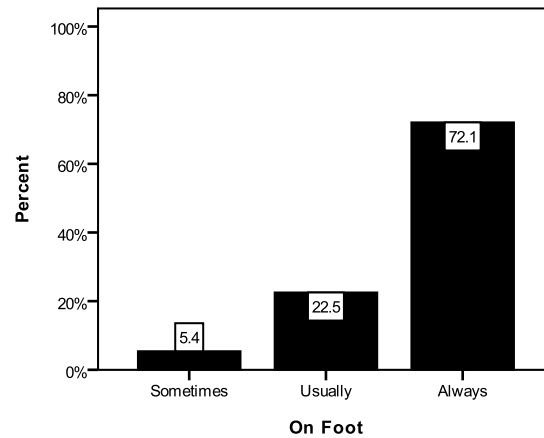
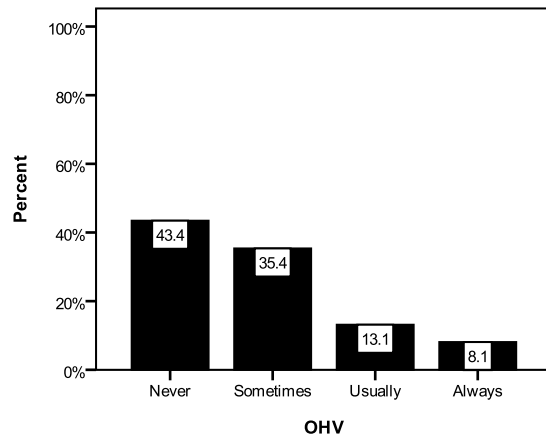
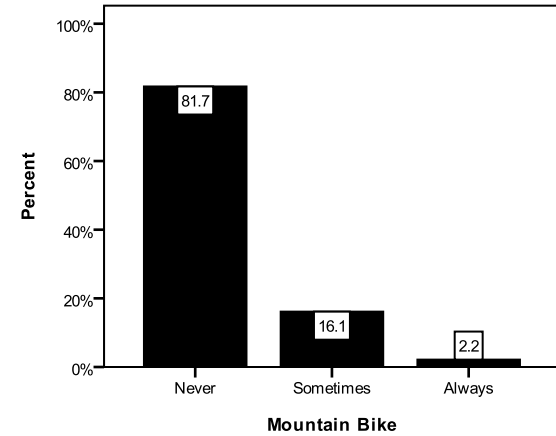
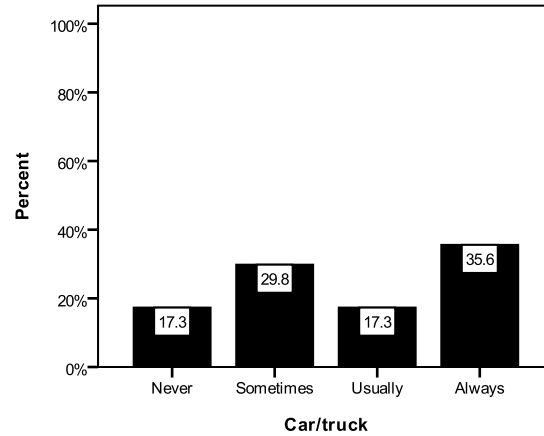
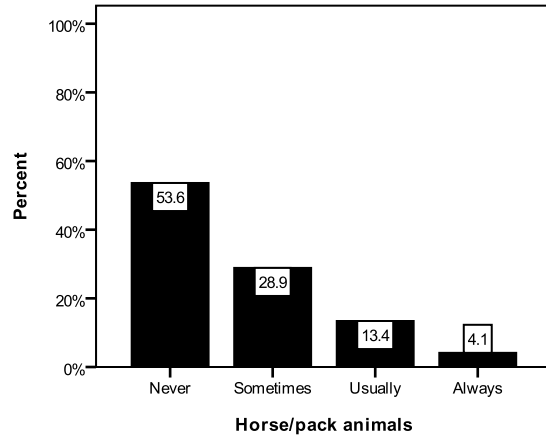
Now, some questions about your Idaho Elk hunting experiences and preferences.

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



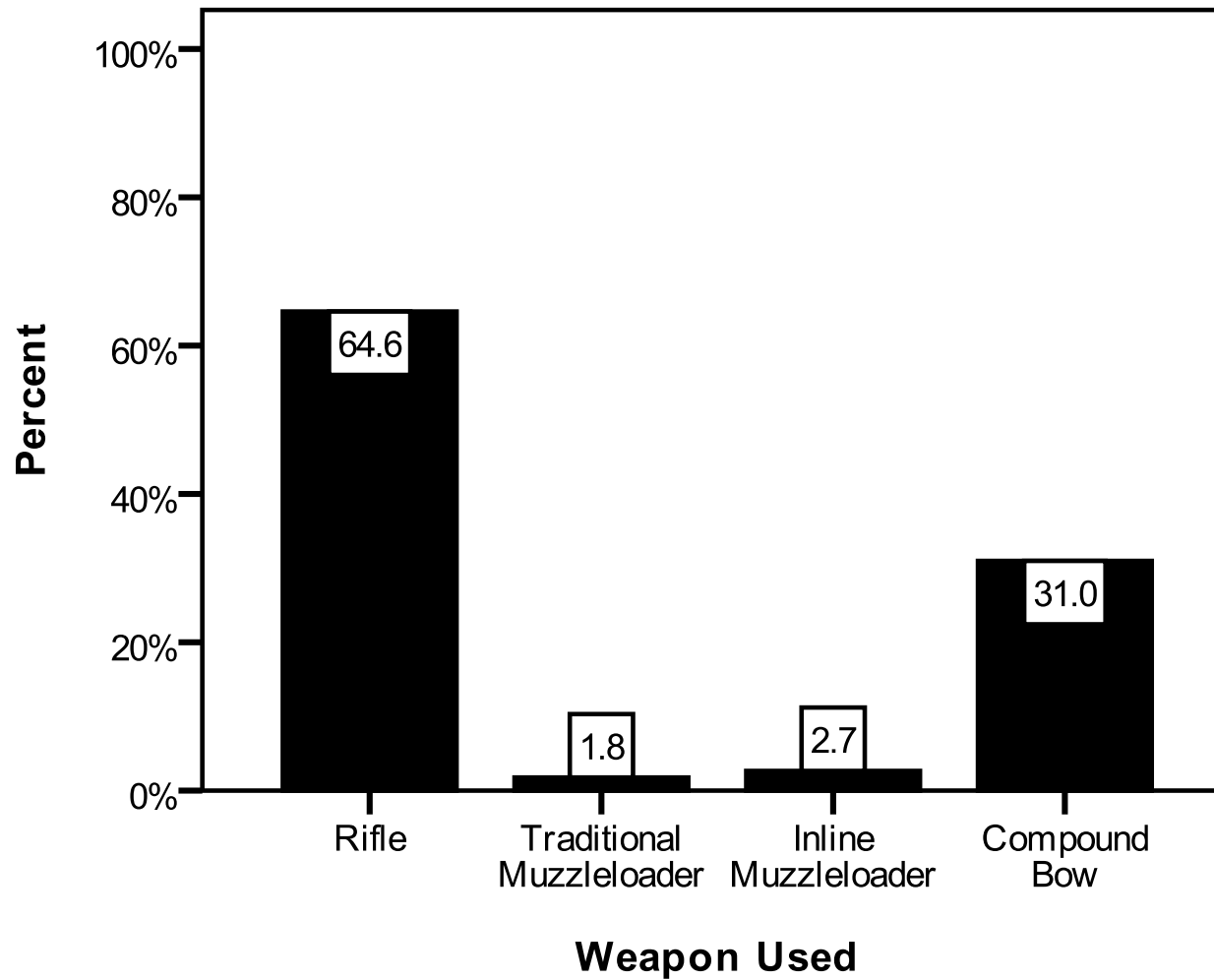
Q3: The range of years of hunting Elk in the Sawtooth zone is smaller than that of the state average. Most hunters have been hunting for less than 40 years.

**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?**



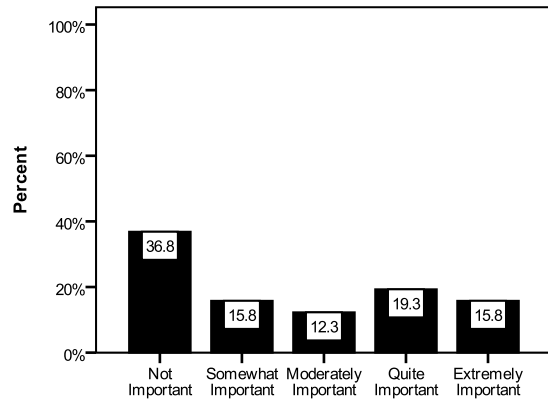
**Q7: The distribution of responses for modes of transportation are similar between the Sawtooth zone and the state average.**

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

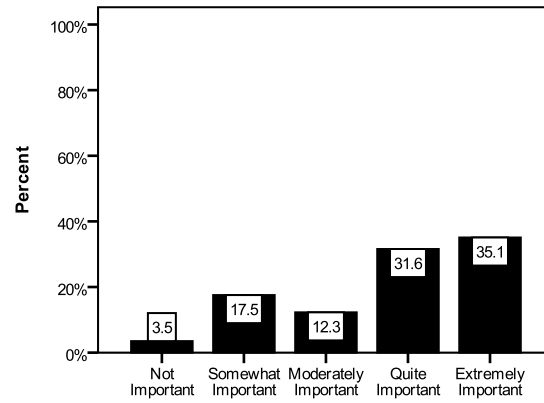


**Q8: Like state wide hunters, the rifle and compound bow are also the most commonly used weapons for hunters in the Sawtooth zone.**

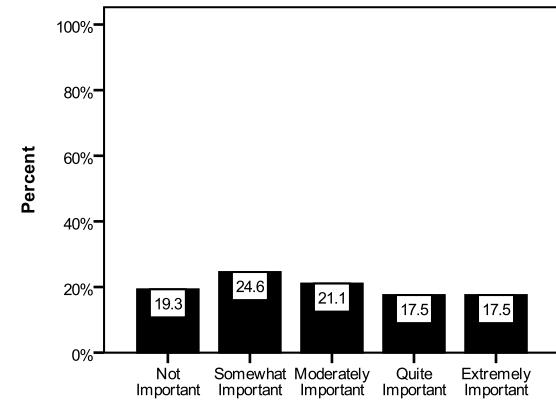
**10. How important was each of the following in your decision to hunt during Elk archery, short-range weapons or muzzleloader seasons?**



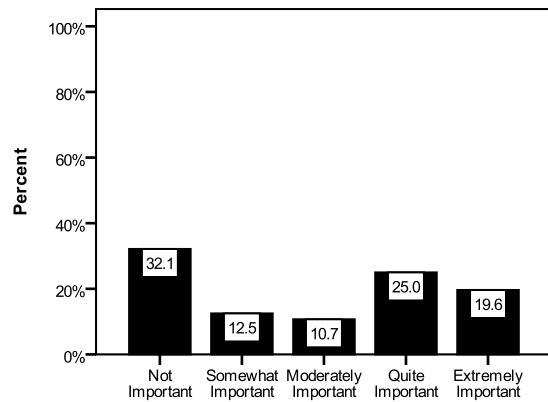
**Increase Challenge**



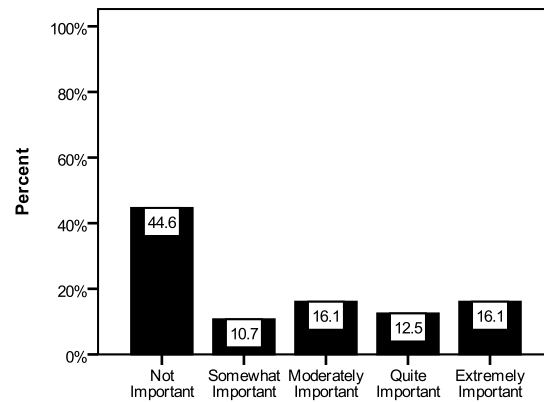
**Hunt With Few Hunters on Field**



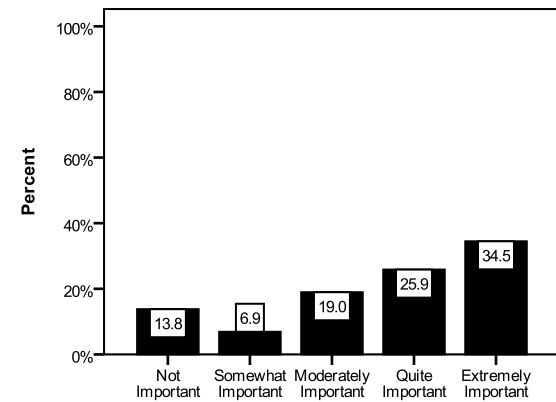
**Improve Chance of Harvesting**



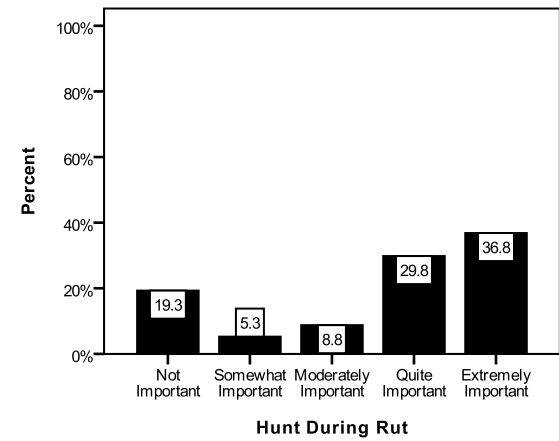
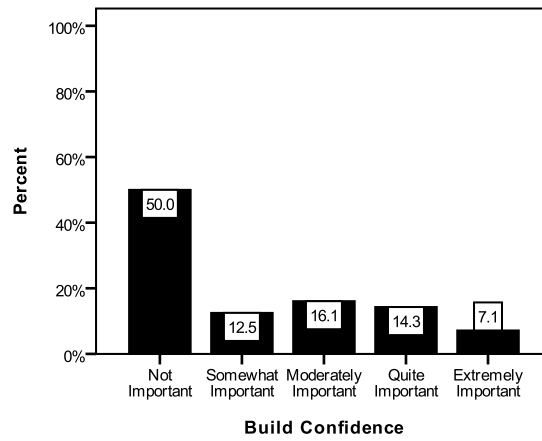
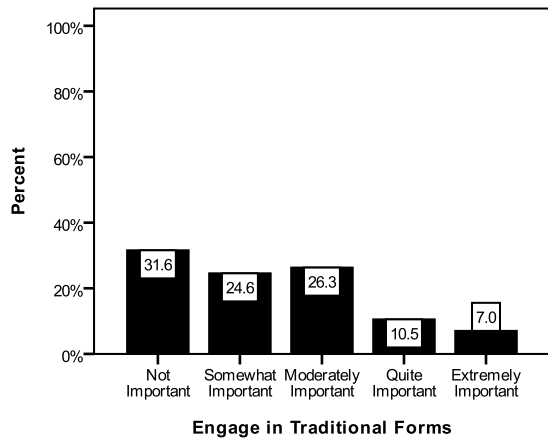
**Expand Hunting Season**



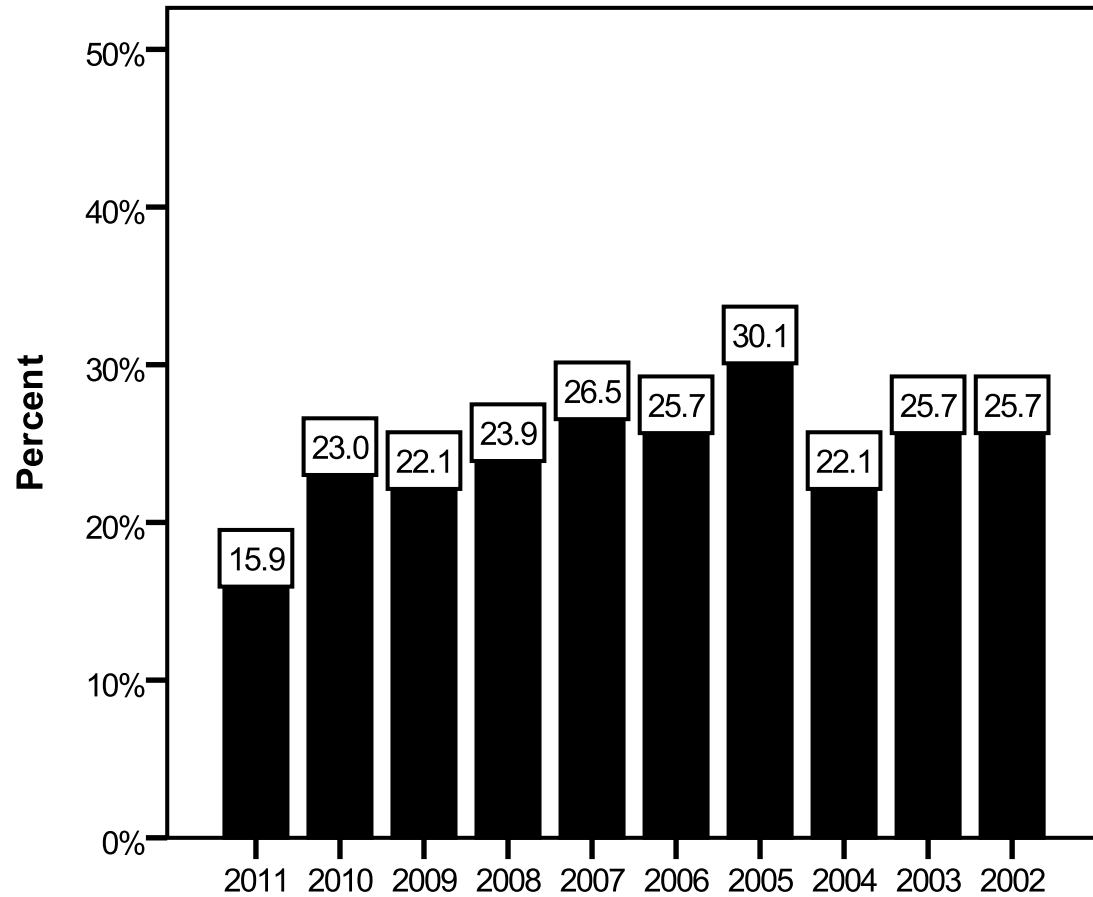
**Hunt in Zone Where Rifle Limited**



**Adventure**



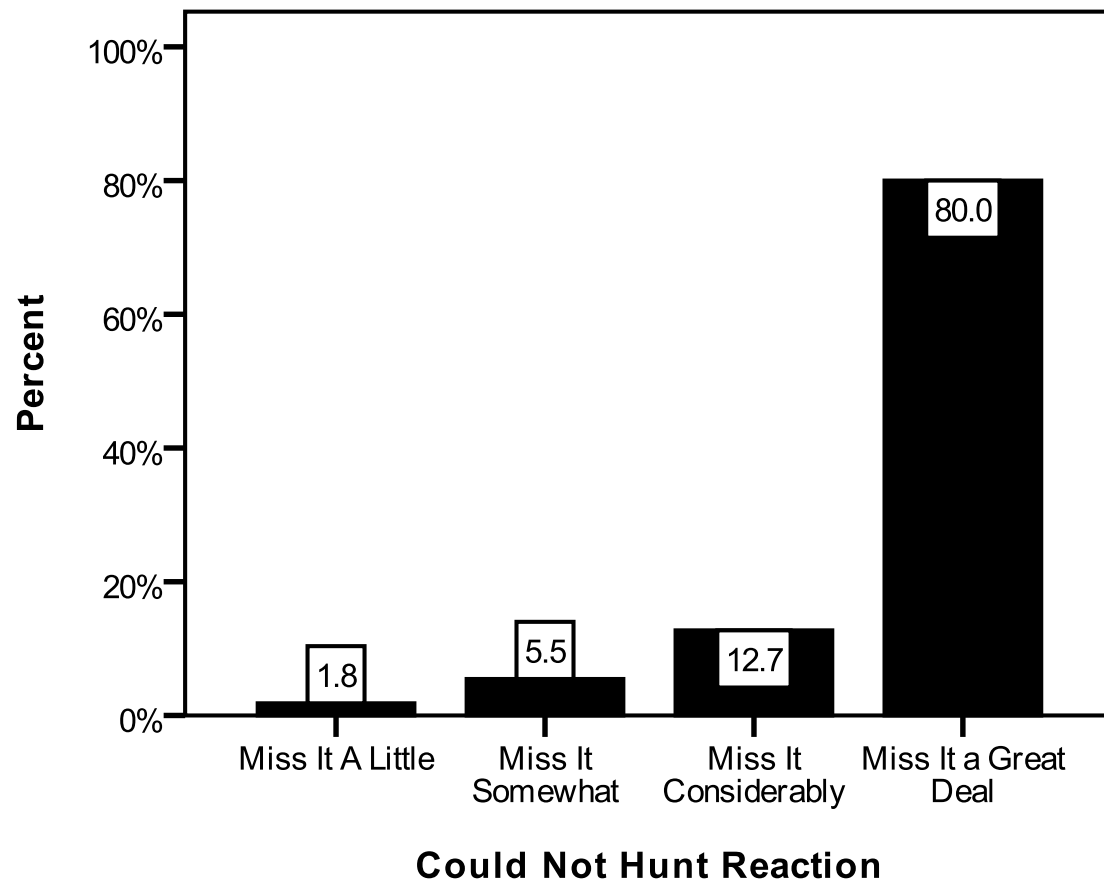
**Q10: The reasons for hunting during Elk archery, short-range weapon and muzzleloader seasons have similar distributions between the state average and the Sawtooth zone.**

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

**Q11:** The harvest success is similar between the Sawtooth zone and the state as a whole. However, success in 2011 is slightly lower for this zone than on average.

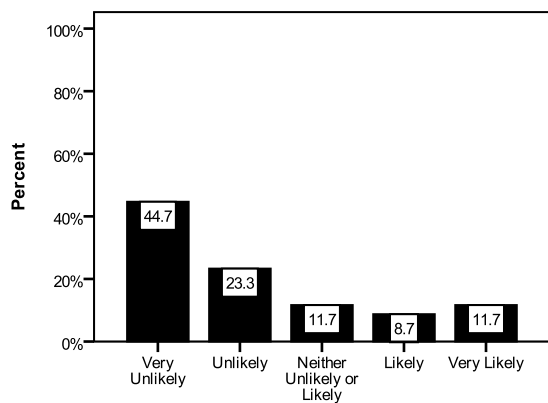


12. If you could not hunt Elk in Idaho, how would you react? (Please check only one response)

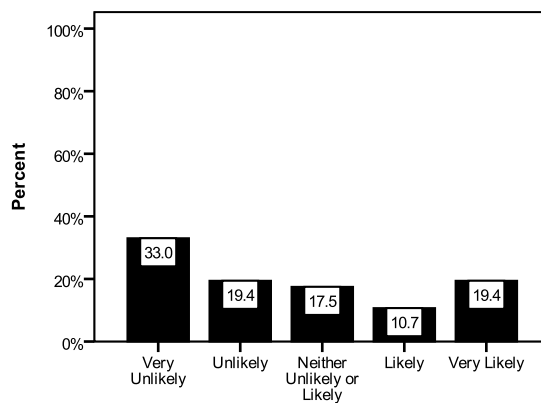


Q12: Like other hunters in the state, a majority of hunters in the Sawtooth zone would miss Elk hunting in Idaho a great deal if they could no longer.

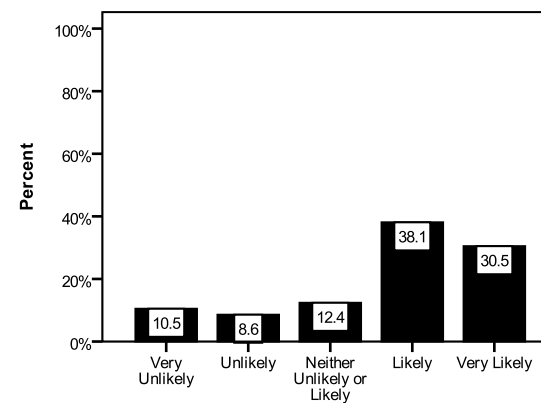
### 13. If you could not hunt Elk in Idaho, how would your hunting change?



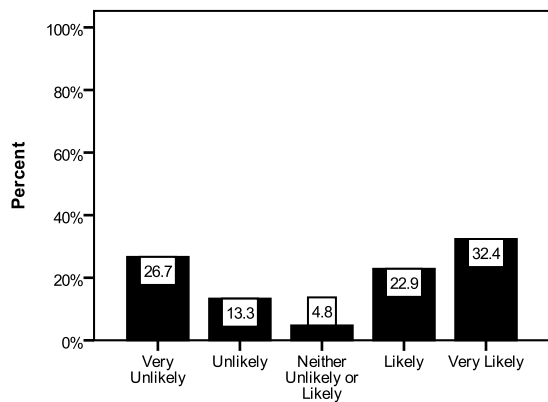
Hunt Waterfowl More



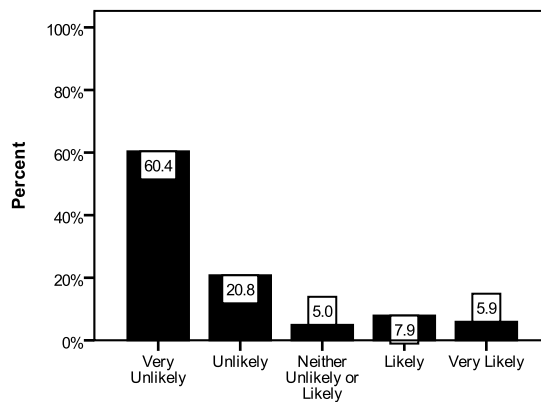
Hunt Upland Game More



More Time Hunting Other Game



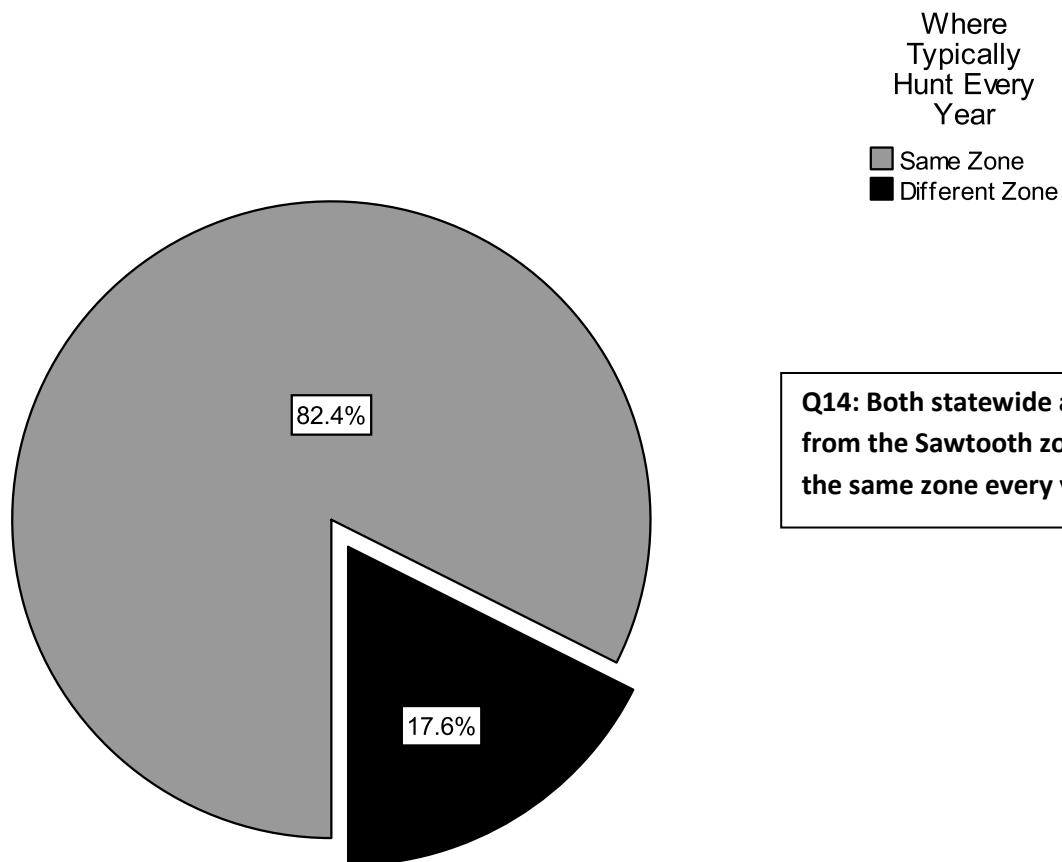
Hunt Elk in Other States



Not Hunt At All

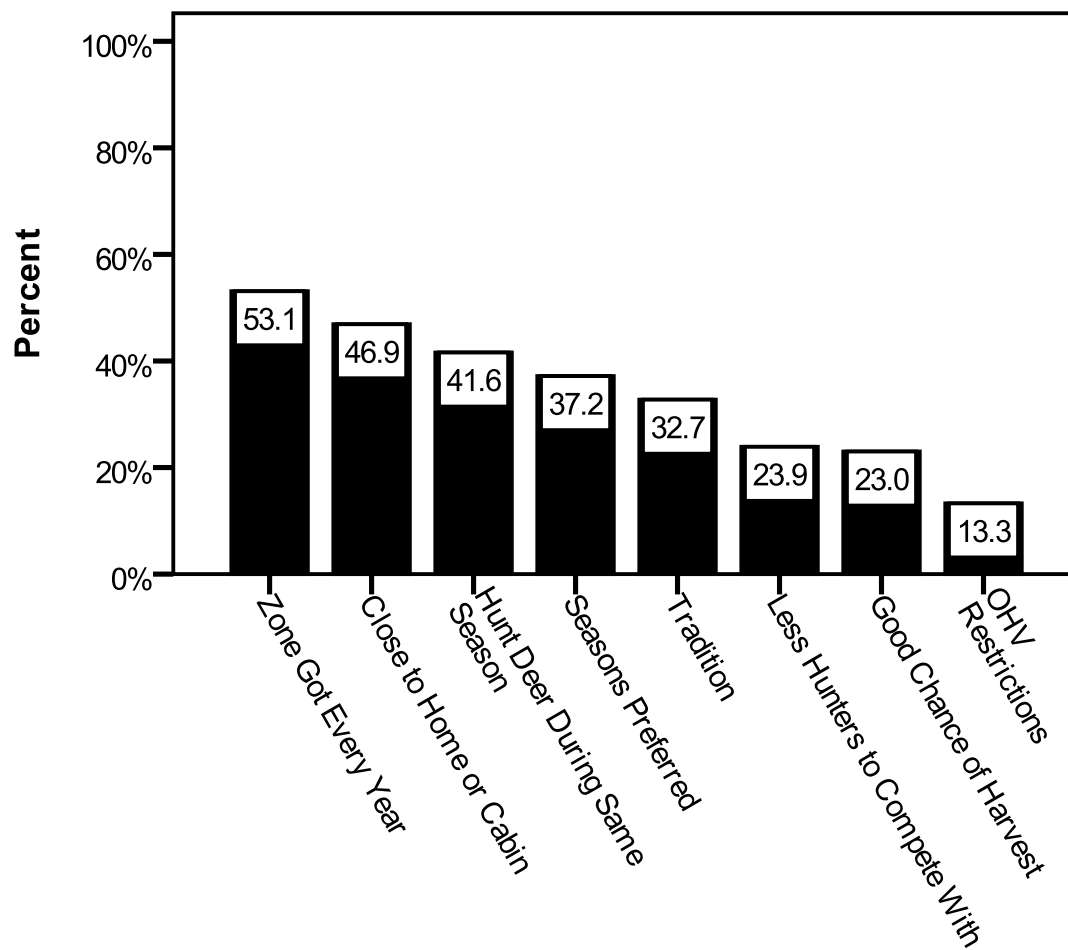
**Q13: The distribution of responses between the Sawtooth zone and the state average are very similar.**

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



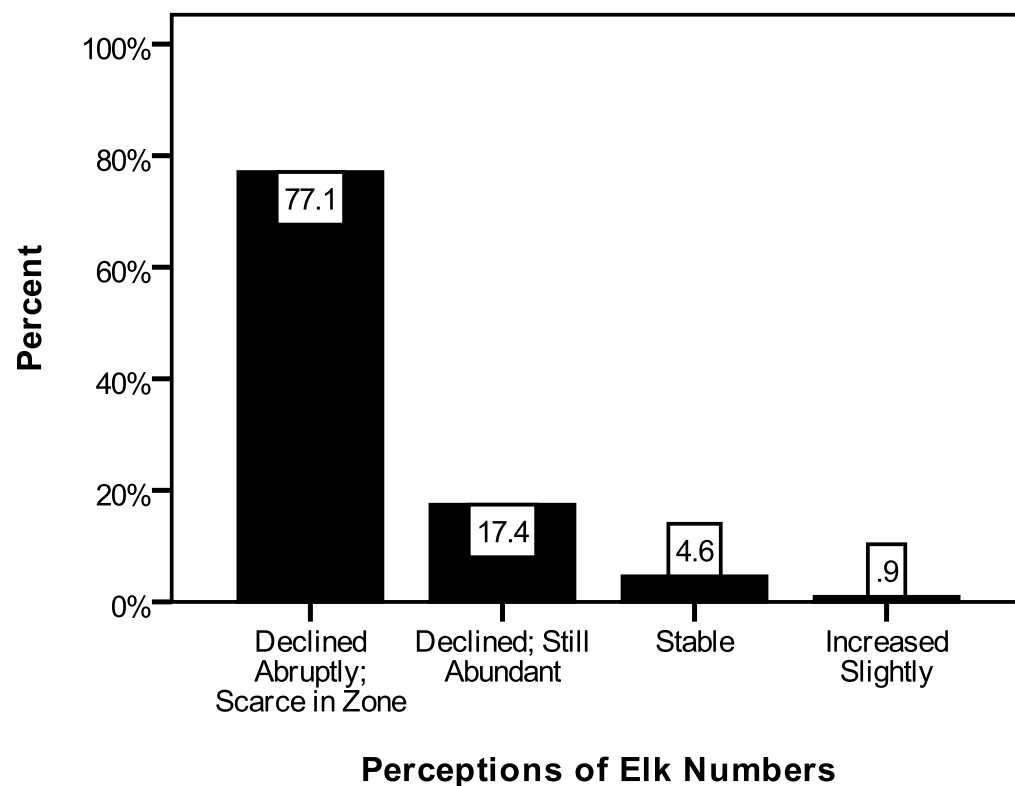
**Q14: Both statewide and respondents from the Sawtooth zone tend to hunt the same zone every year.**

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



**Q16: Hunters in the Sawtooth zone find that getting the zone they get every year is most desirable to them, unlike the state average which finds proximity to home or cabin as most important.**

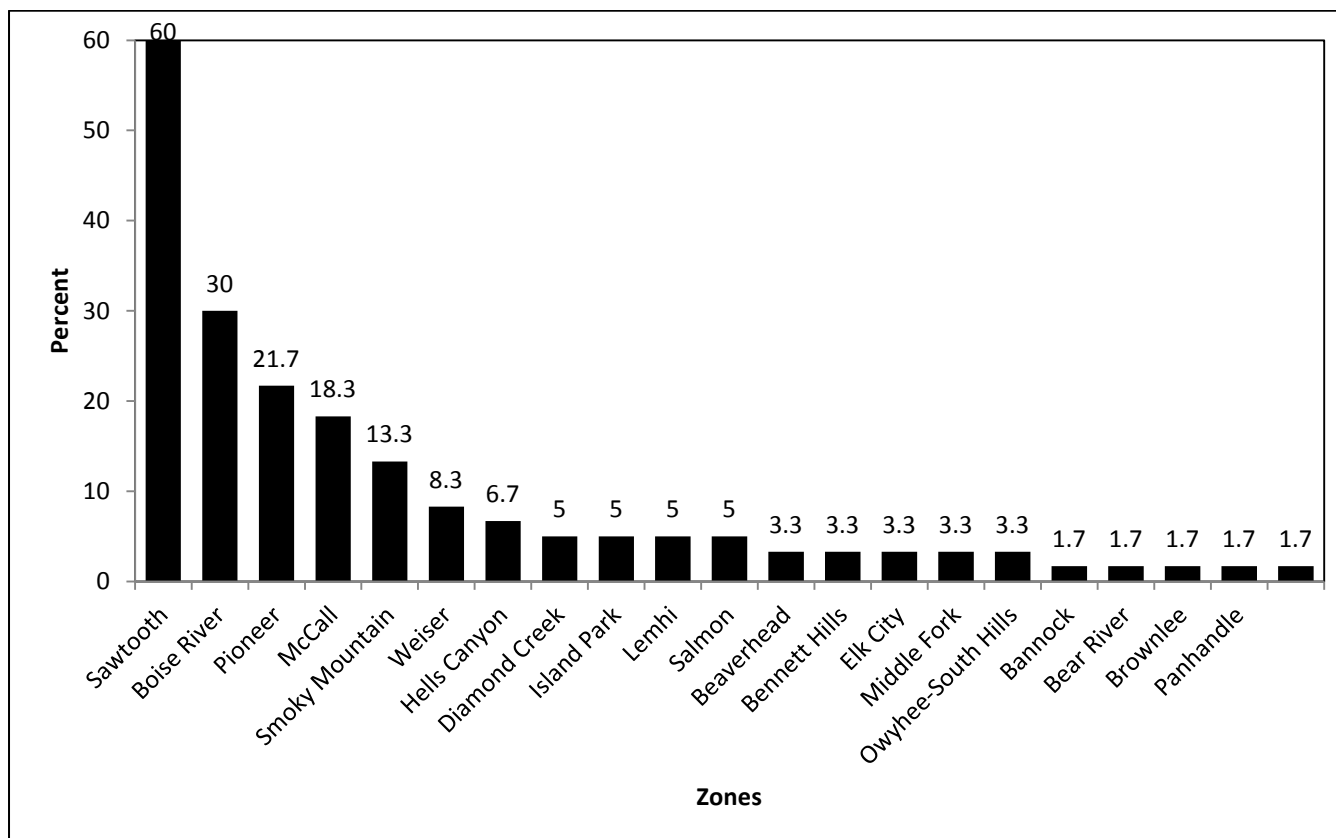
17. What are your perceptions of Elk numbers in the zone you hunted in 2011? Select the ONE statement from the list below that most closely matches your perceptions. (Please check only one response)



**Q17: The number of respondents from the Sawtooth zone, compared to the state average, the perceive Elk numbers to have declined abruptly increased by more than 25%. 13.3% less felt that numbers had declined but were still abundant, and the number of perceptions of stable numbers dropped by 9%.**

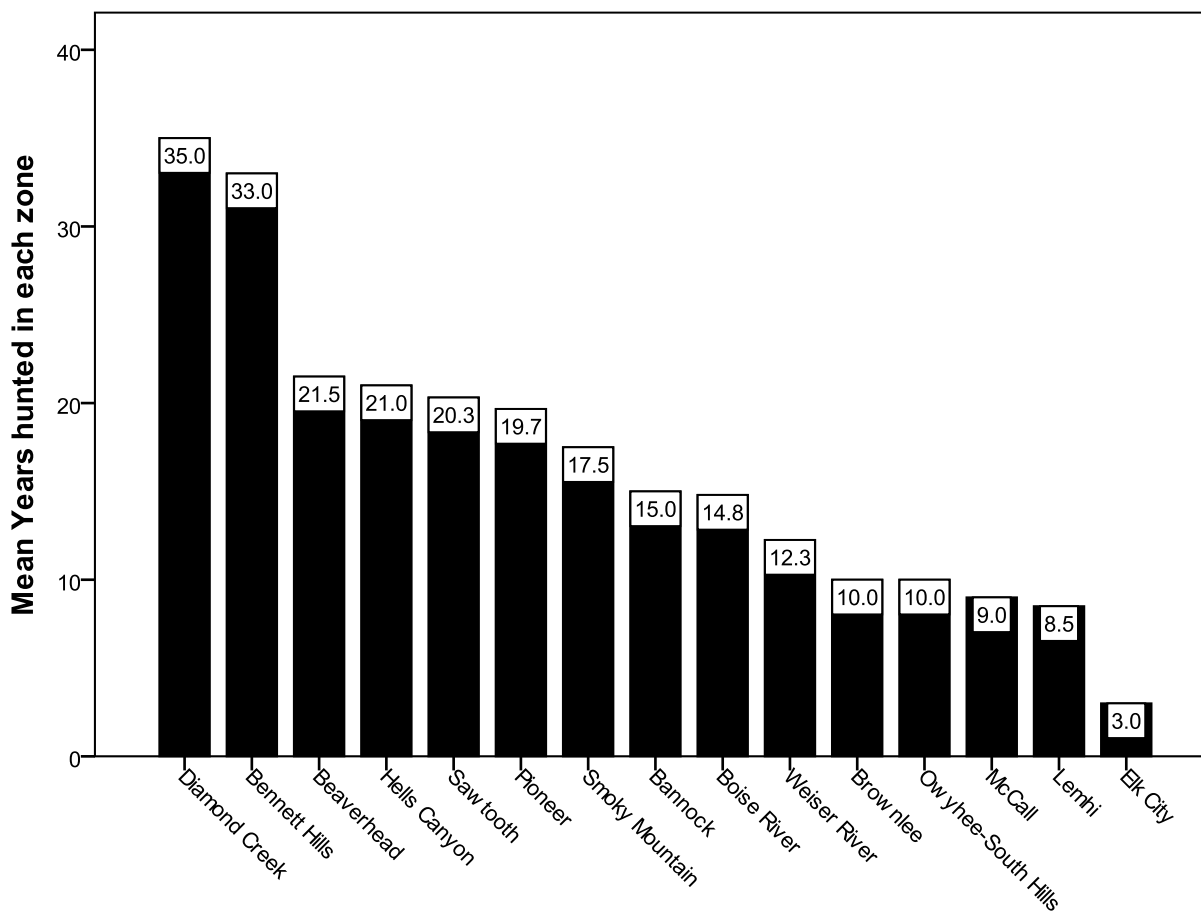
**18. If you hunted in more than one zone in the past 10 years, please list them below.**

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



**Q18: The Boise River, Pioneer, and McCall zones are the three most popular zones to hunt in besides the Sawtooth zone among Sawtooth respondents.**

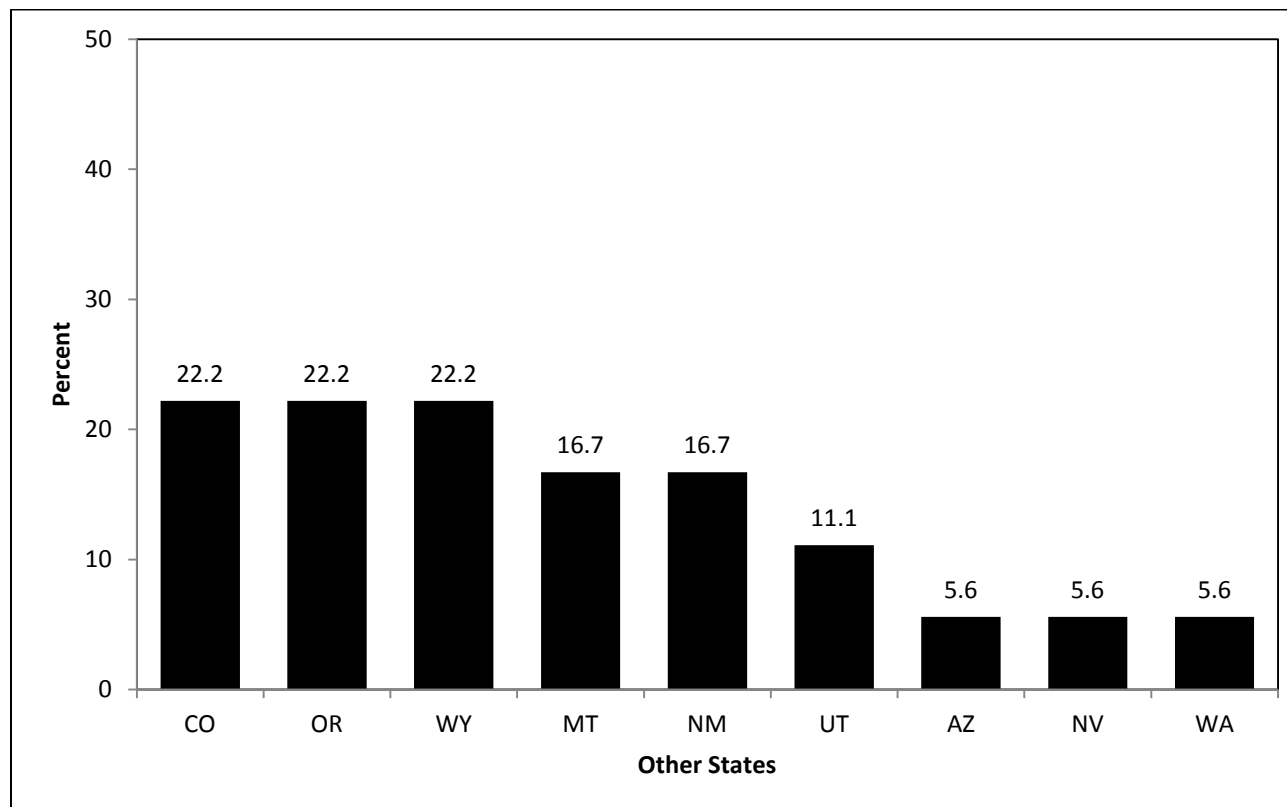
**20. How long have you hunted Elk in each of the zones you listed in Q-18?**  
*(Please write in the name of the zone and number of years, refer to map on page 5 for Zone names)*



**Q20: Diamond Creek and Bennett Hills zones have been hunted the longest among respondents. Sawtooth zone itself ranks fifth in duration.**

**Other Zones in Past 10 Years**

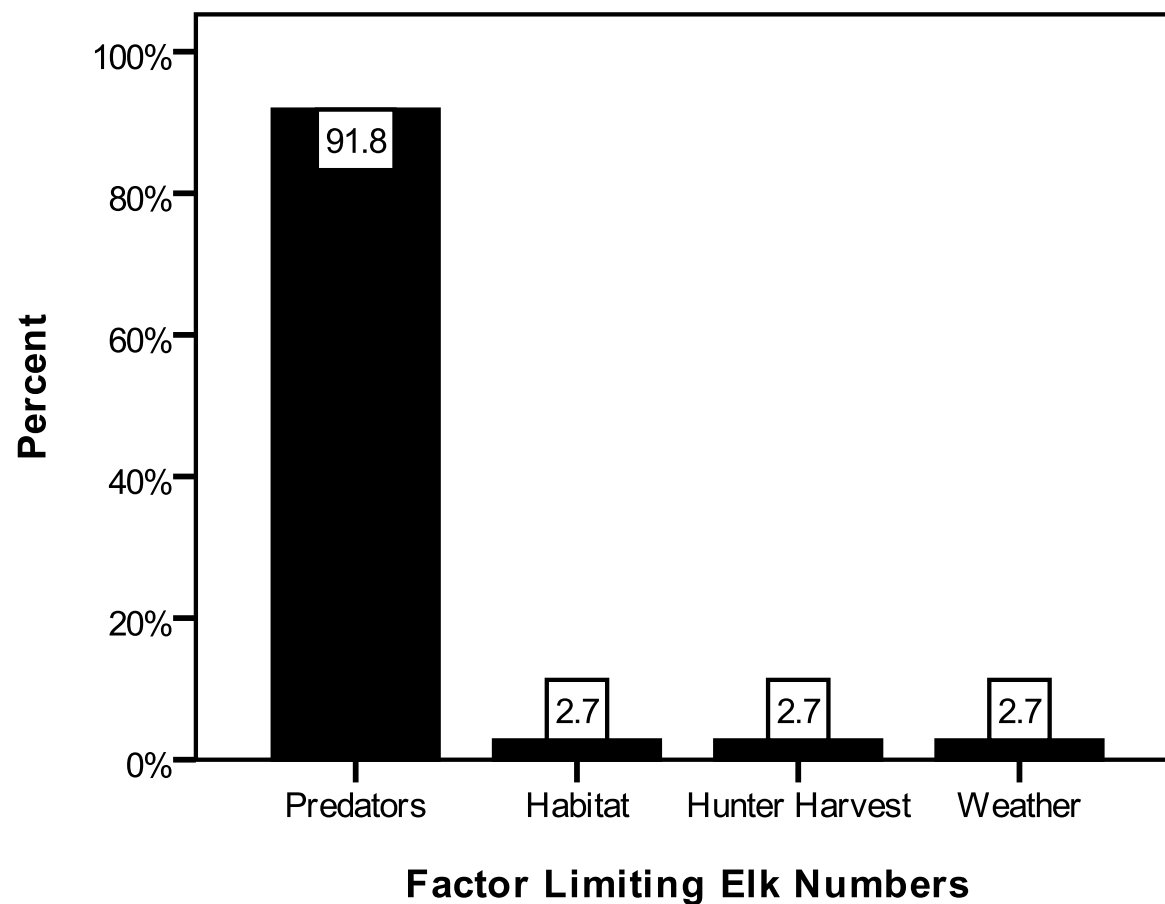
21. Do you also hunt for Elk in other states? (Please check one response)



**Q21: Colorado, Oregon, and Wyoming are the most frequented states among Sawtooth hunters.**



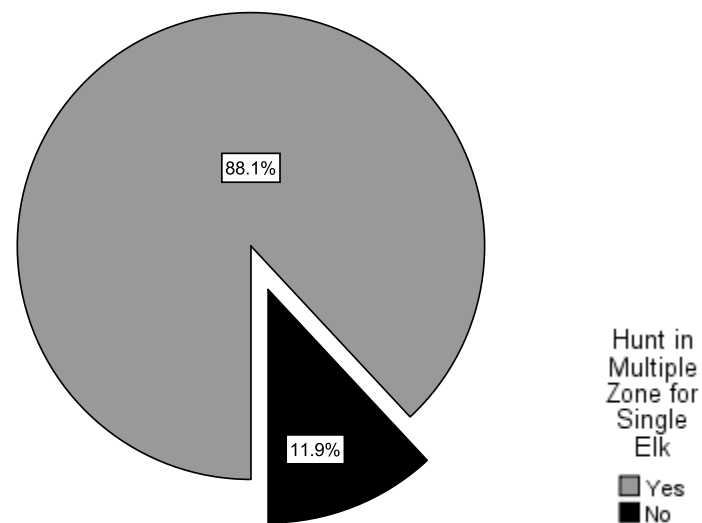
22. What do you believe is the primary factor limiting Elk numbers in the zone you hunted in 2011? (Check only ONE response)



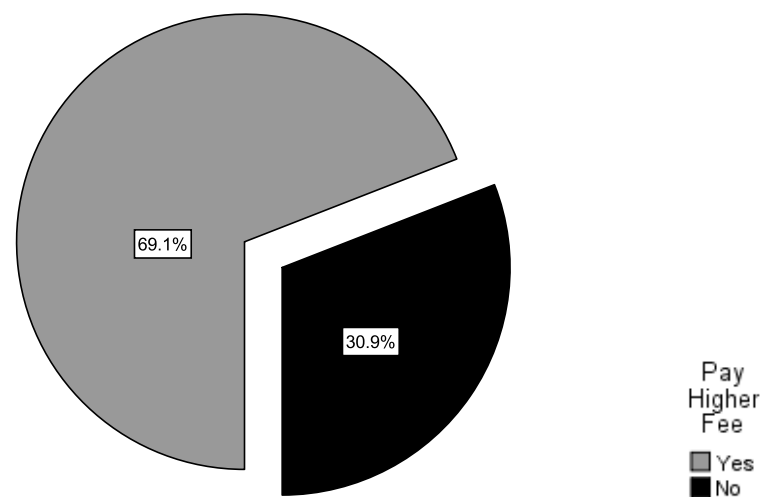
Q22: A vast majority of Sawtooth hunters believe that predators are the primary limiting factor on Elk numbers. That is a 17.2% increase over the state average.

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

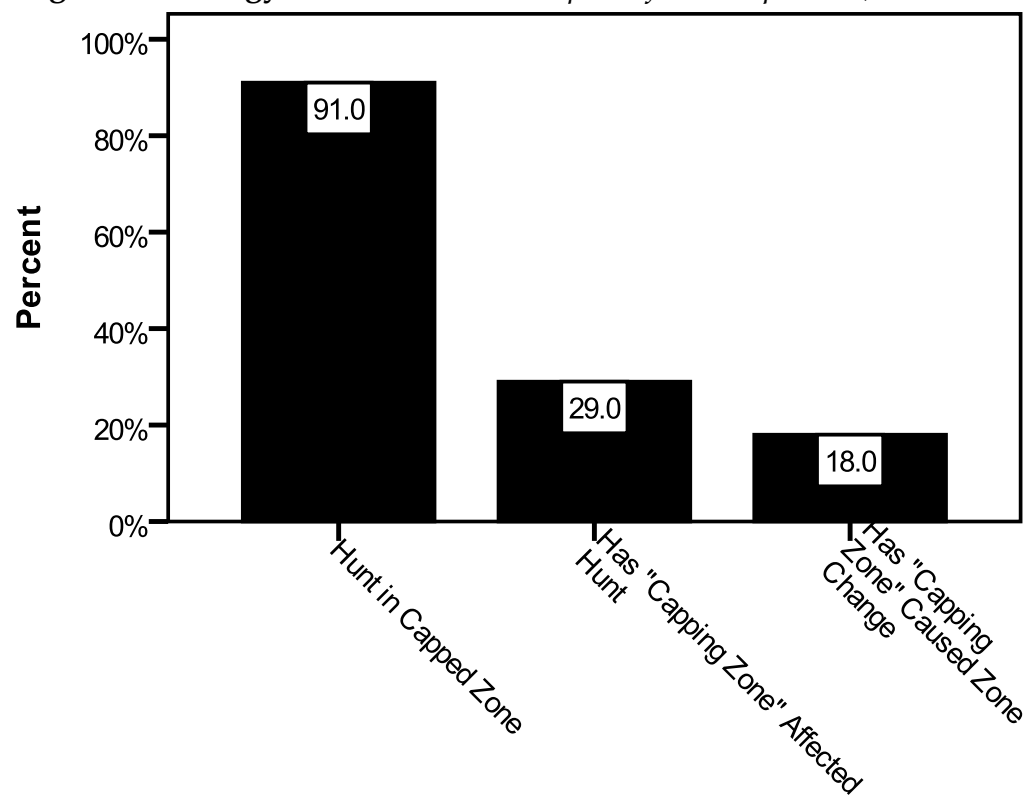
The distribution of responses between Sawtooth zone respondents and the state average are very similar for both Q23 and Q24.



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)

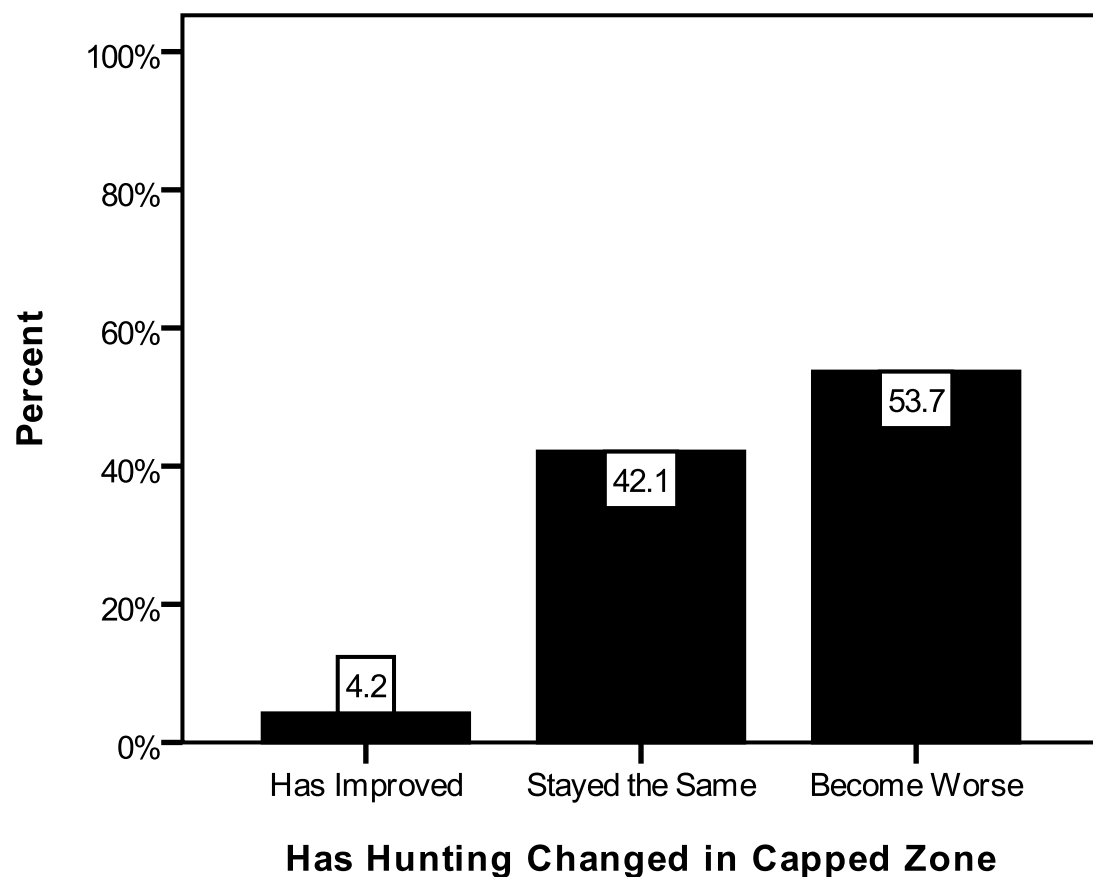


25. When the zone system was implemented the mechanism for reducing unlimited over-the-counter opportunity called “capping the zone” was developed by the department with the help of legislators, sportsmen and outfitters. This “capping the zone” is an allocation formula to distribute Elk tags to hunters (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: 91% of Sawtooth hunters have hunted in a capped zone, an almost 50% increase over the state average. Both groups feel similar about how “capping a zone” has affected hunting and caused zone changes.

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

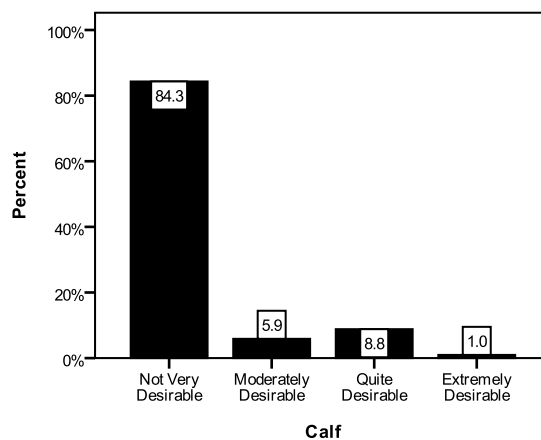
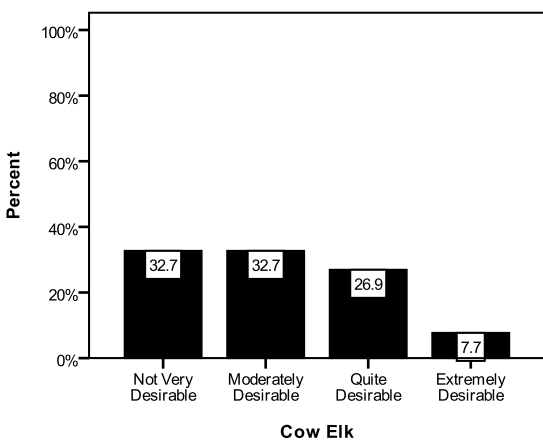
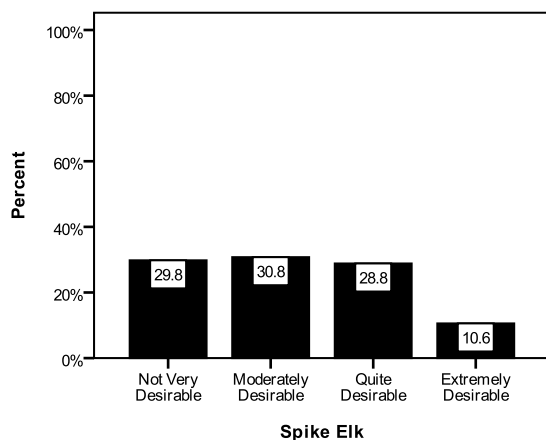
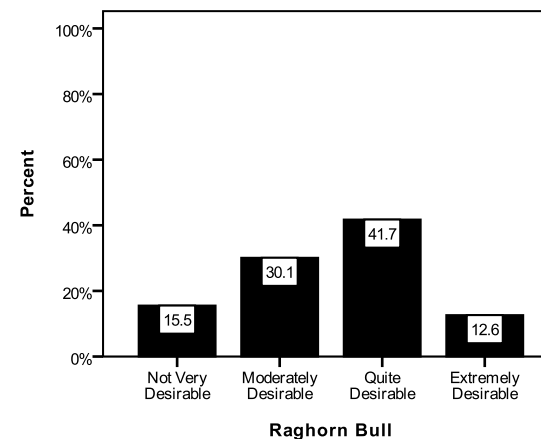
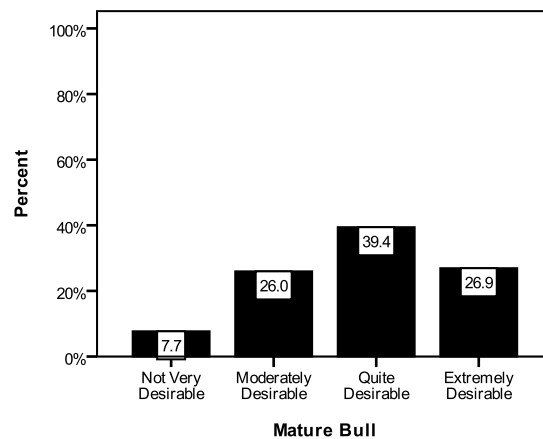
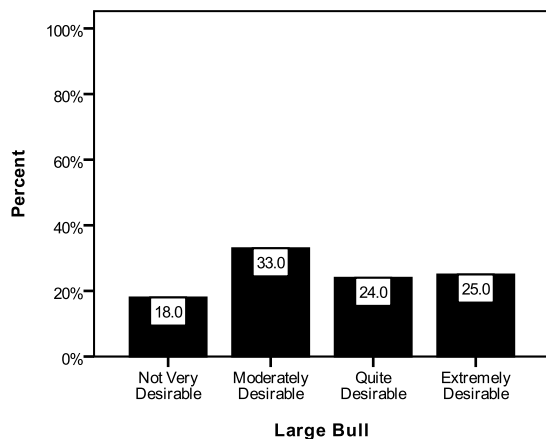


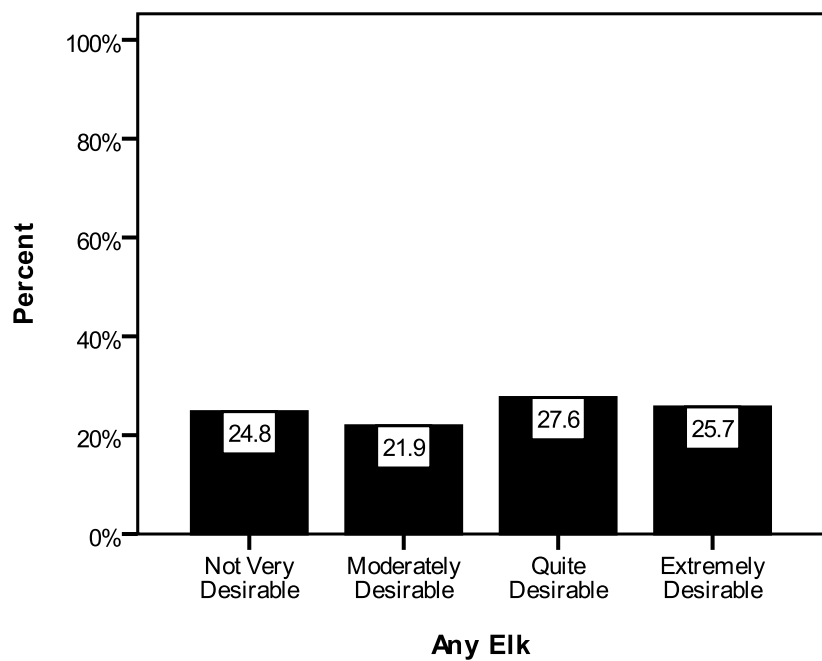
**Q26: Over half of the hunters who have hunted in a capped zone felt that it has made hunting worse. These responses are similar to those at the state level.**

# 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.

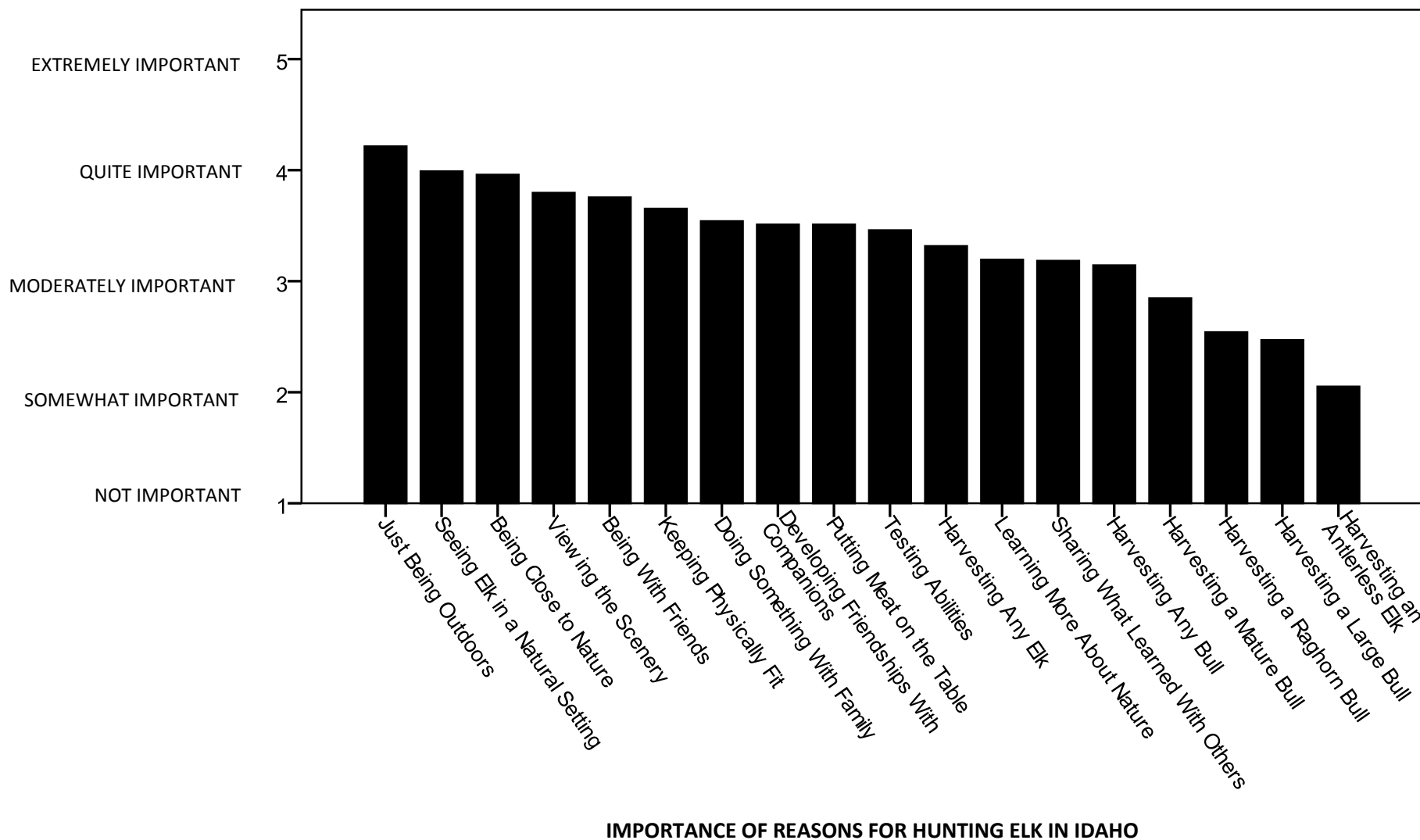
## 27. How desirable is it to you to harvest the following kinds of Elk?

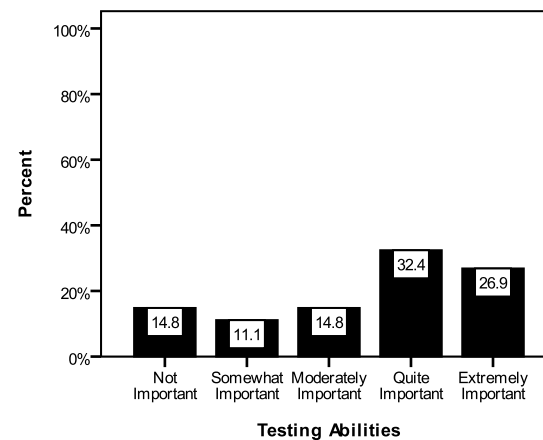
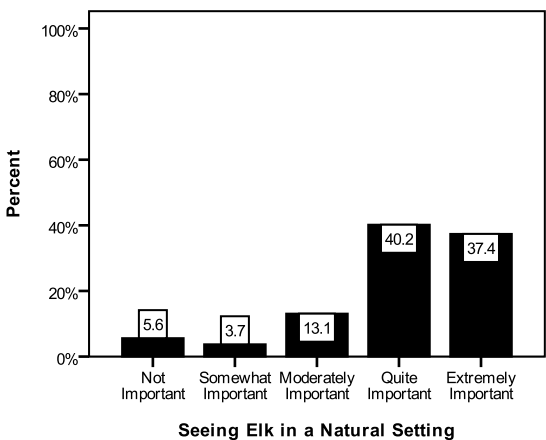
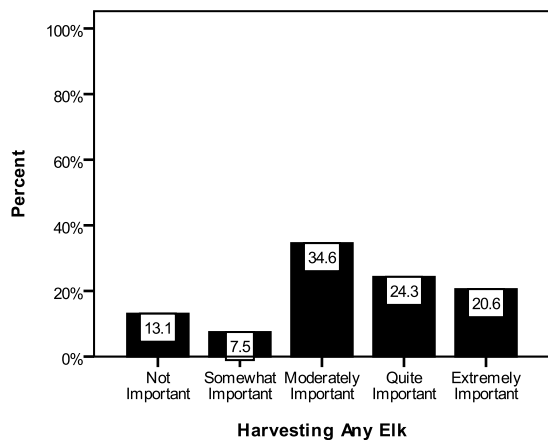
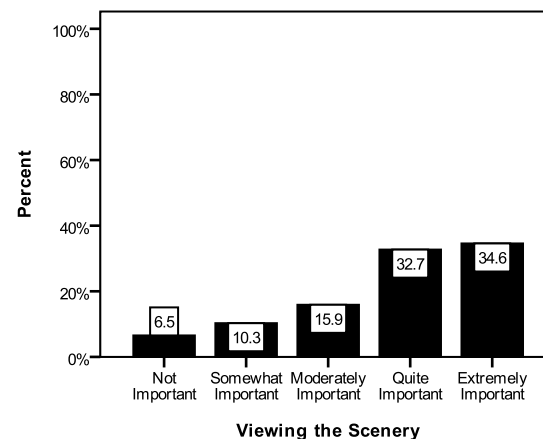
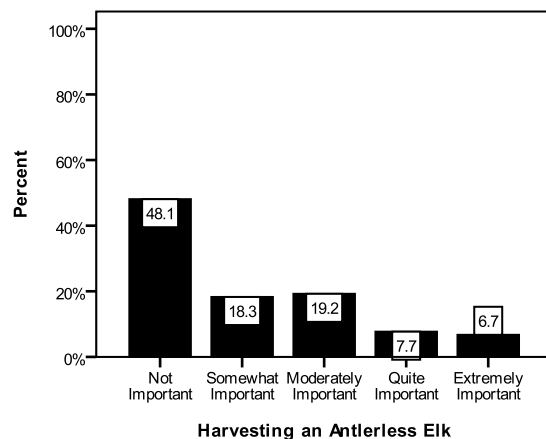
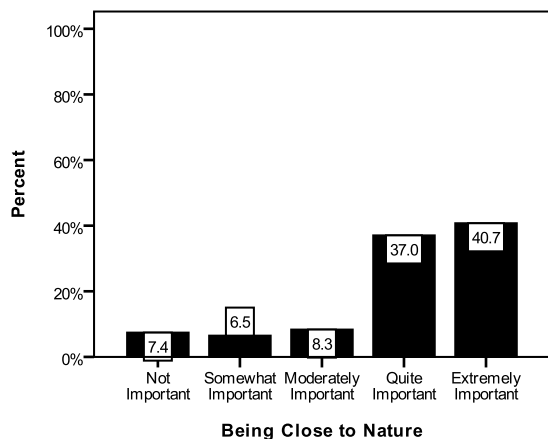




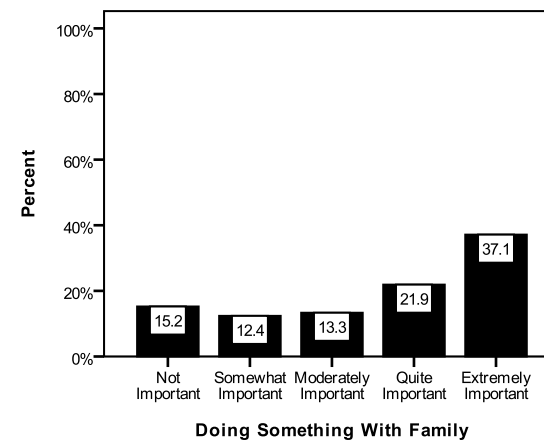
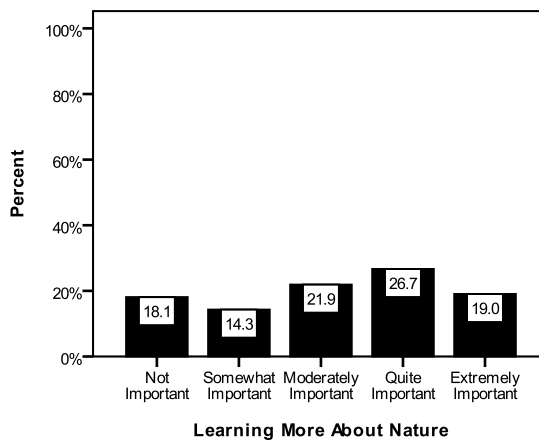
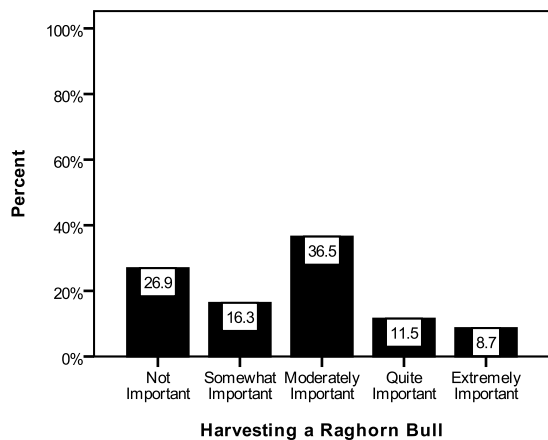
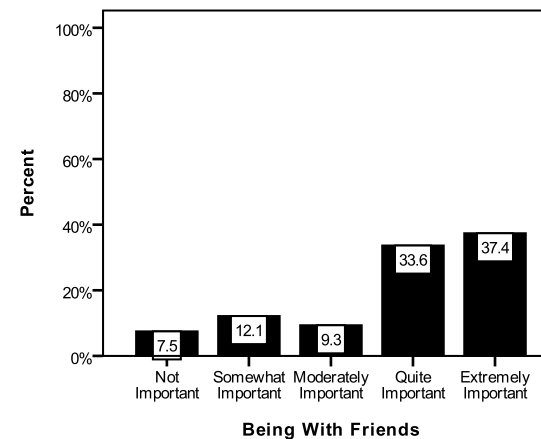
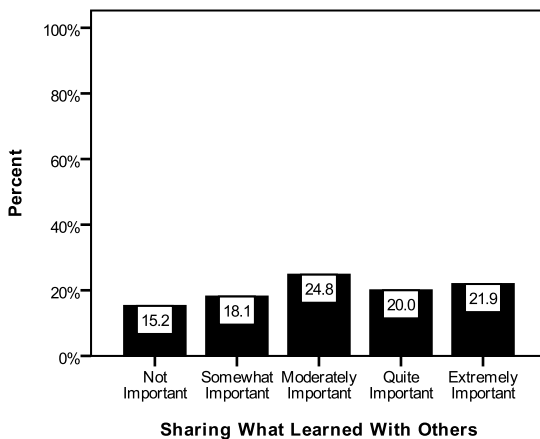
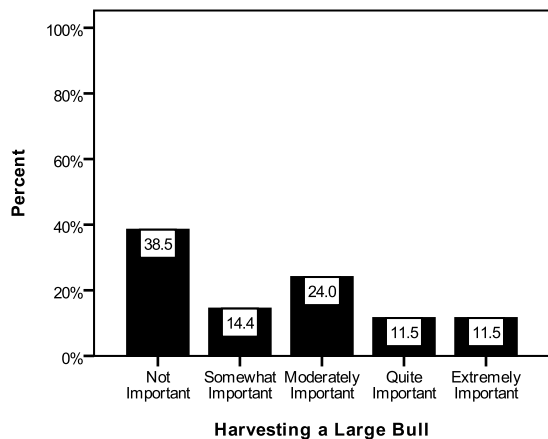
**Q27: Unlike the state average, Sawtooth hunters find harvesting a raghorn bull more desirable than a large bull. Both groups find harvesting a mature bull the most desirable and a harvest a calf the least desirable.**

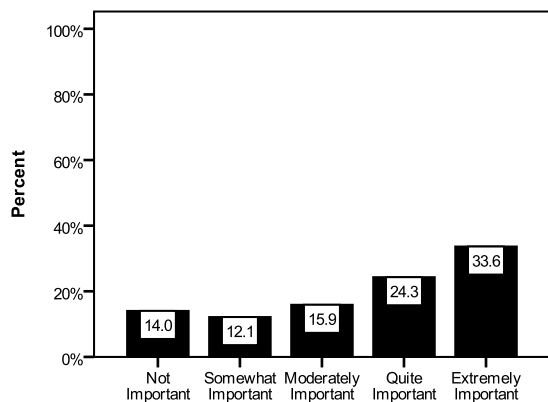
28. Below is a list of possible reasons for hunting Elk in Idaho. How important to you is each of the following reasons for hunting Elk in Idaho?



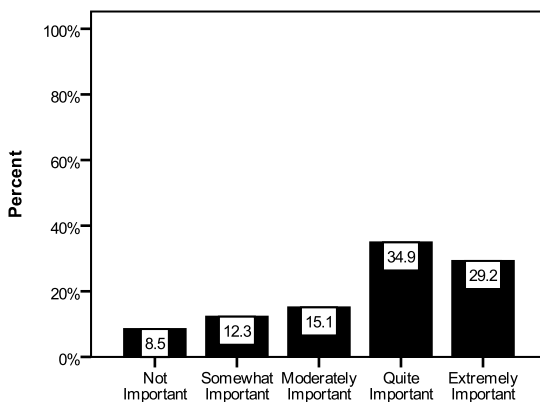




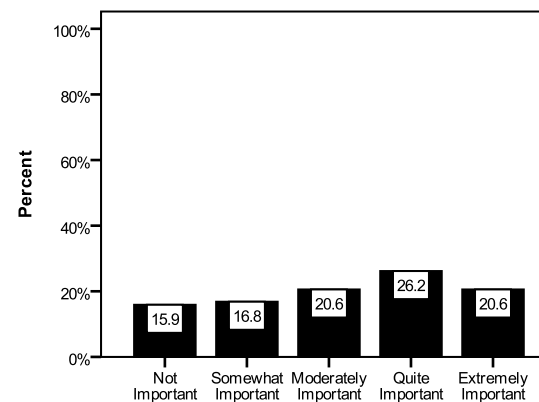




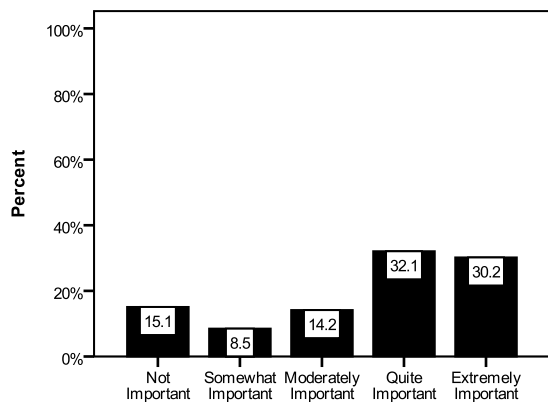
Putting Meat on the Table



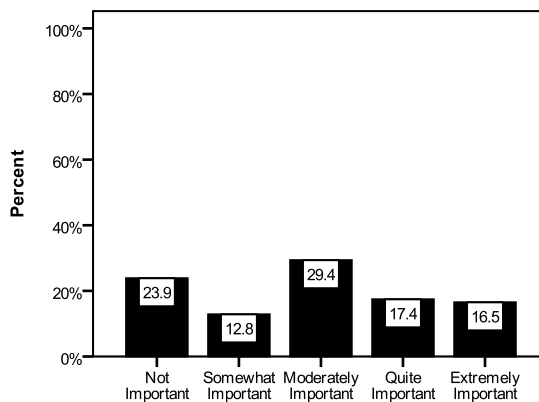
Keeping Physically Fit



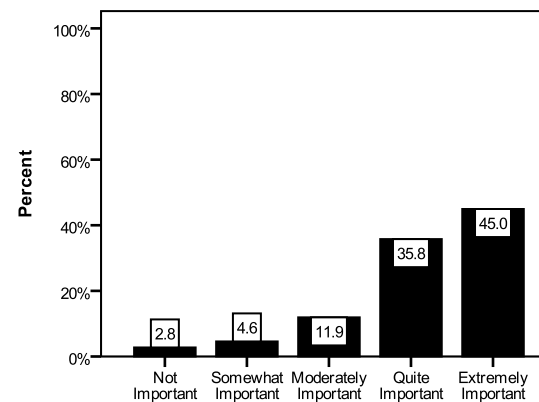
Harvesting Any Bull



Developing Friendships With Companions



Harvesting a Mature Bull

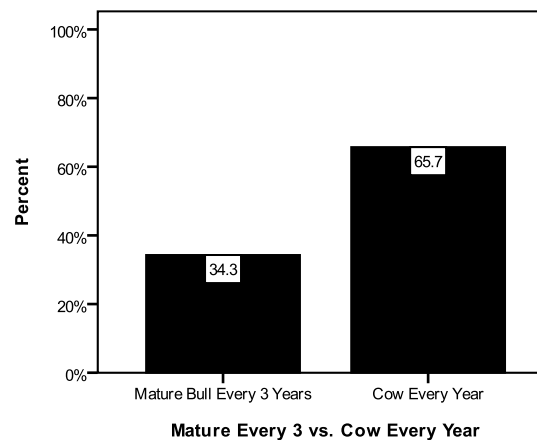
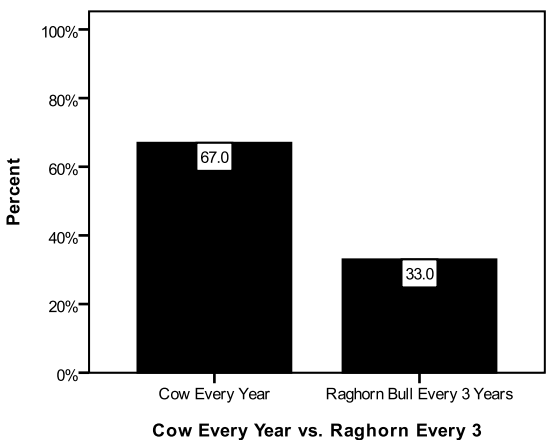
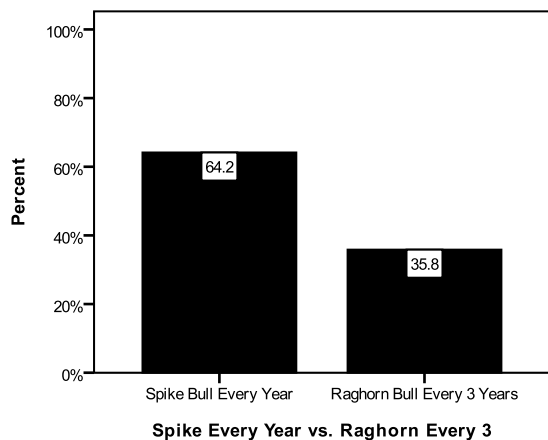
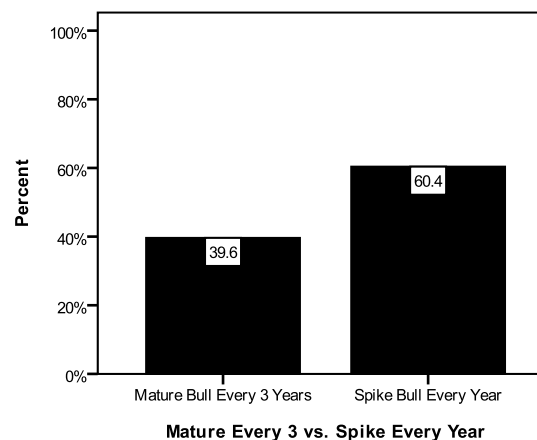
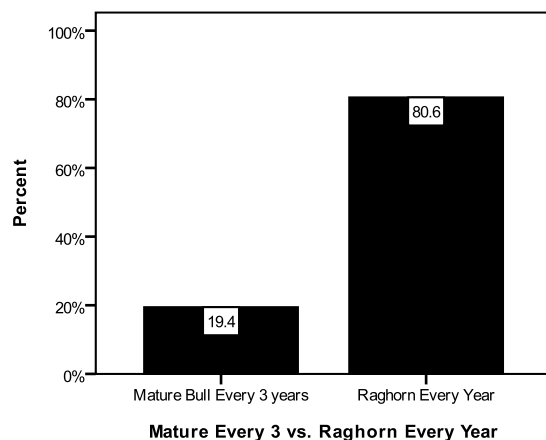
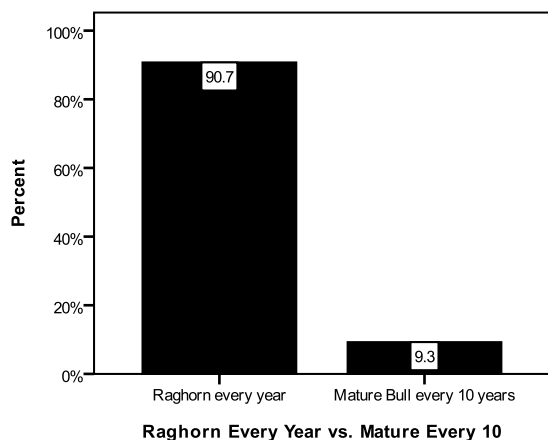


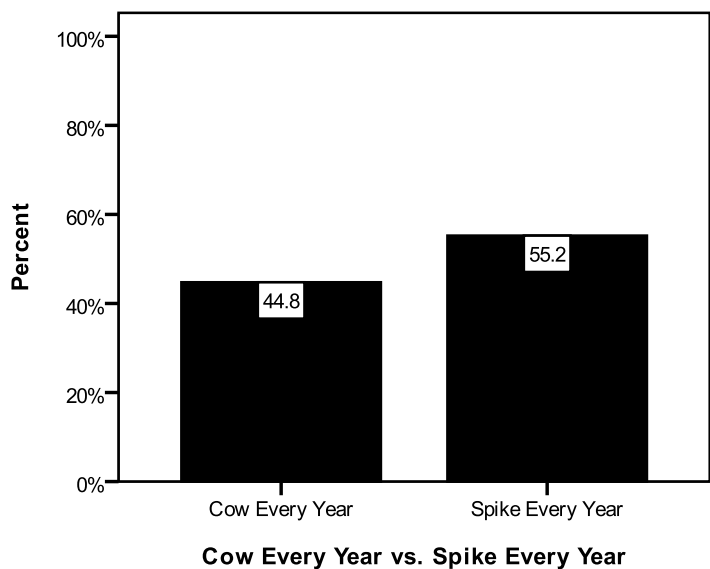
Just Being Outdoors

**Q28: The reasons for hunting Elk in Idaho and their importance have similar distributions between Sawtooth respondents and the state average. The top five reasons are the same.**

**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.**

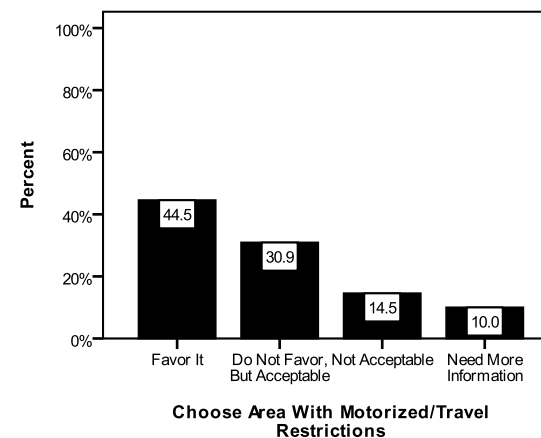
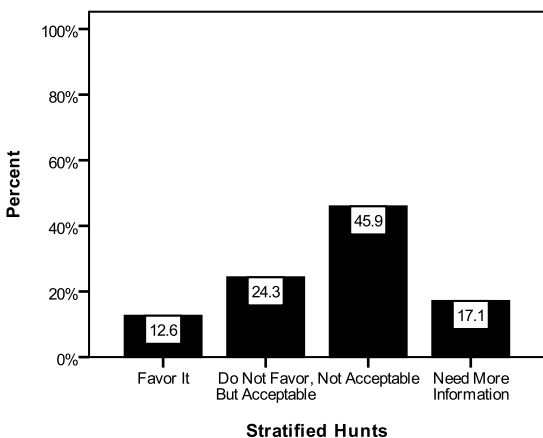
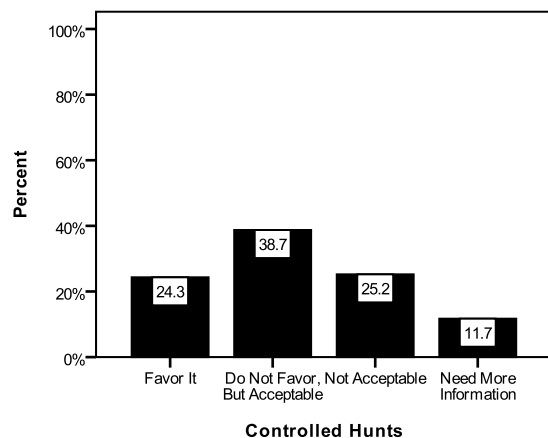
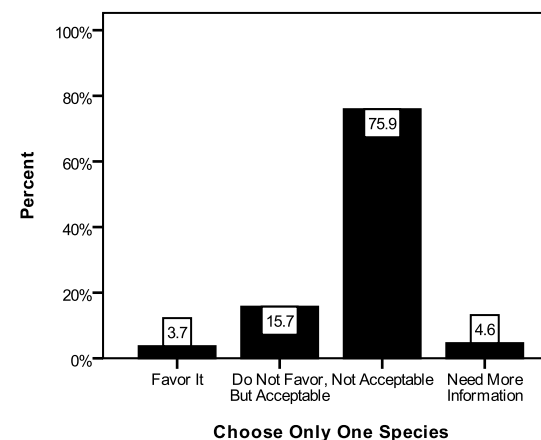
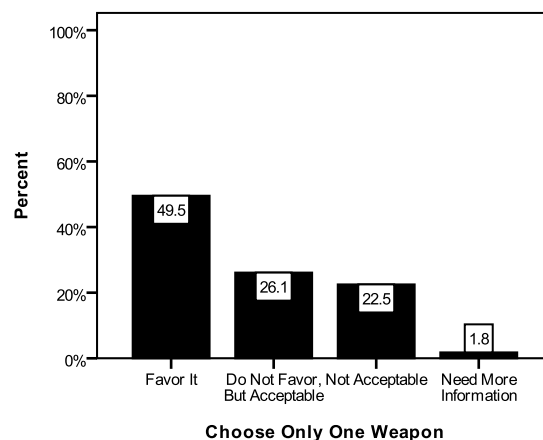
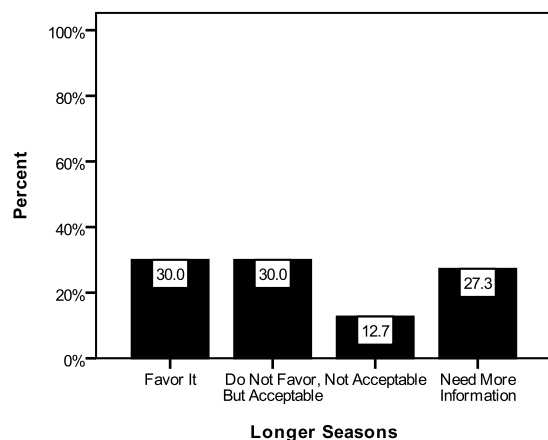


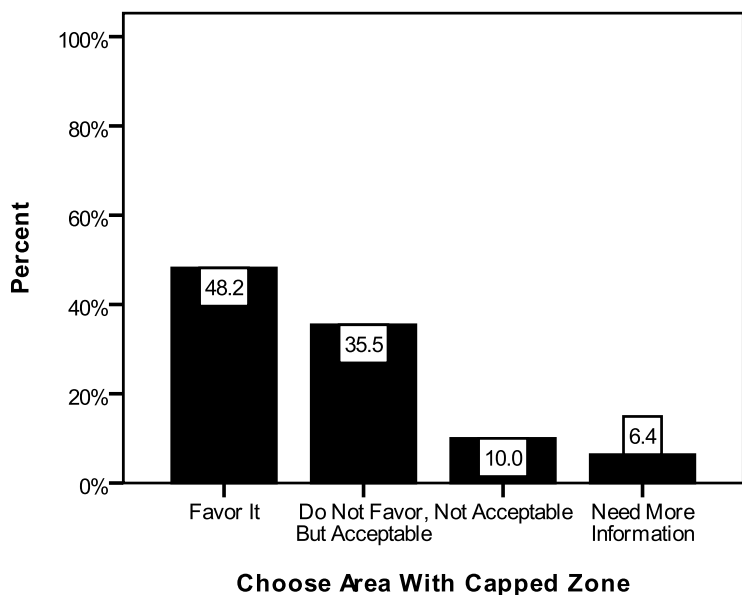


**Q32: The responses to tradeoffs between opportunity to hunt and the size of bulls are similar between Sawtooth respondents and the state average, with opportunity being of more importance than the opportunity for harvest.**

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

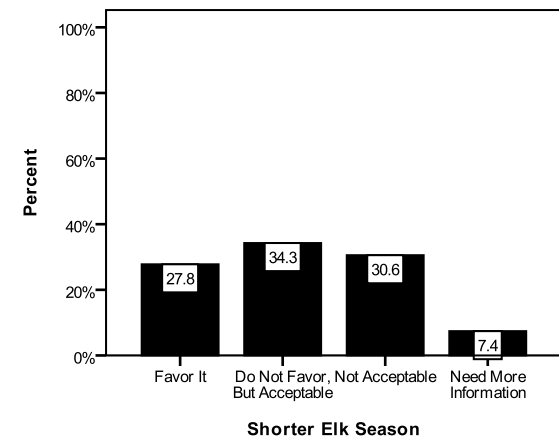
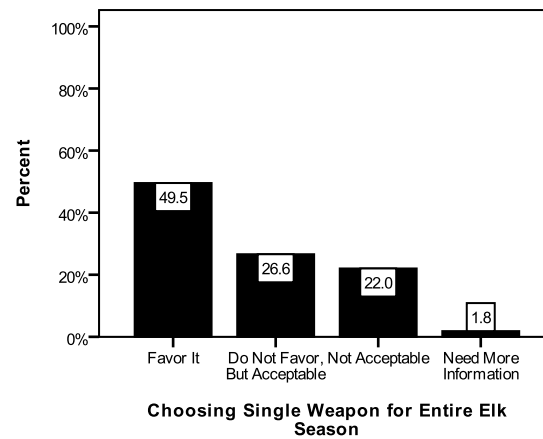
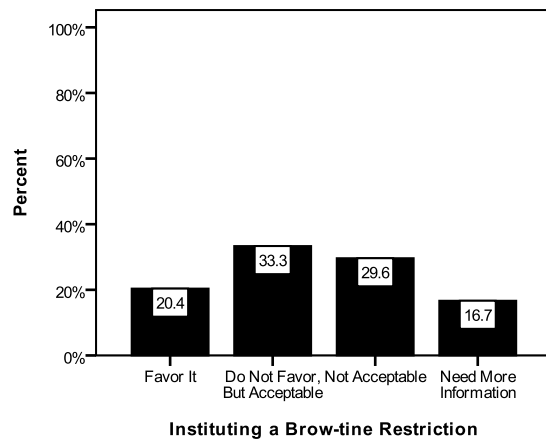
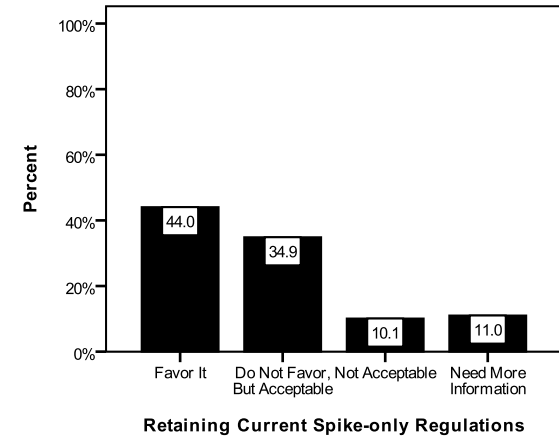
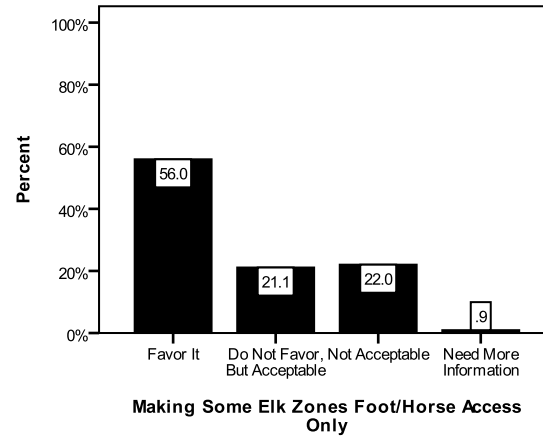
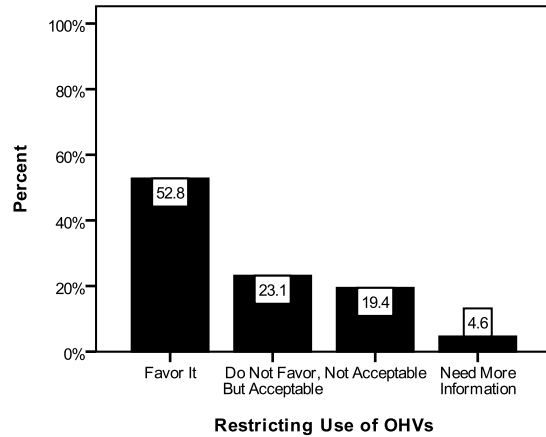
34. How do you feel about each of the following potential ways of improving Elk hunting, if needed?

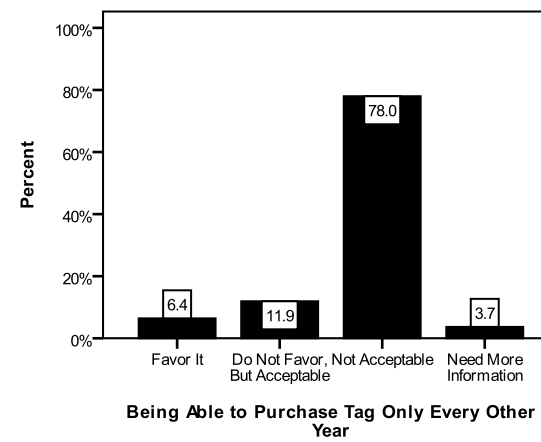
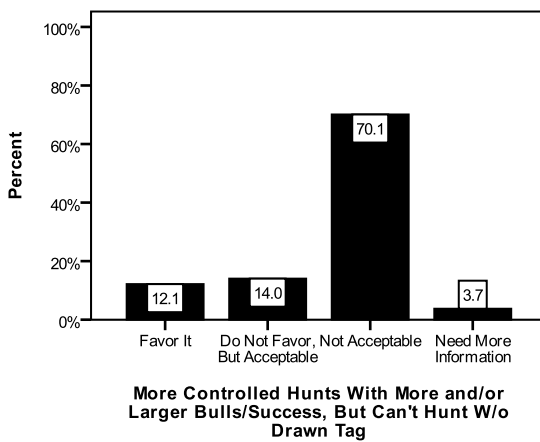
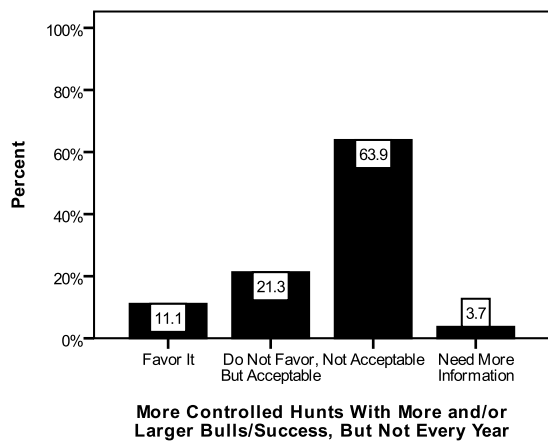




**Q34: The distribution for responses are similar between the Sawtooth zone and state average. However, the Sawtooth zone did find choosing and area with a capped zone as the most favorable management option.**

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.

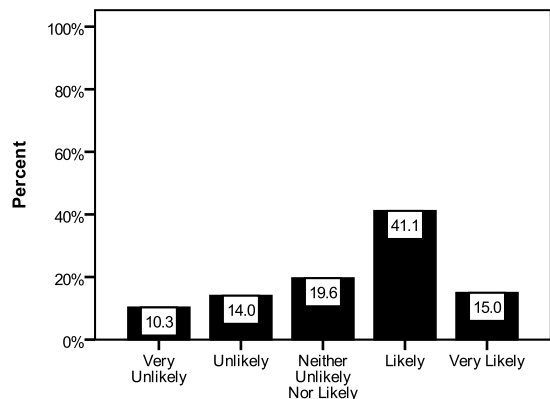




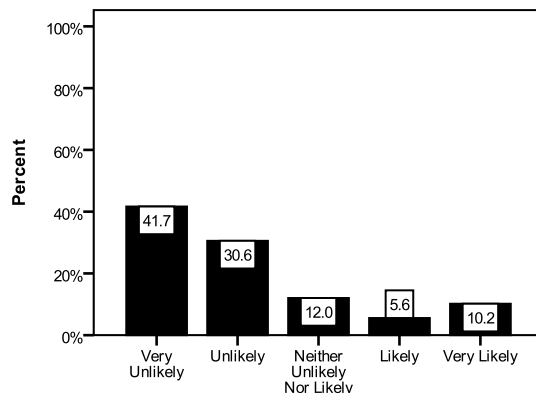
**Q35: The distribution of responses is very similar between the Sawtooth zone and the state average. Sawtooth respondents did, however, found retaining current spike-only regulations 16.9% more favorable than other hunters across the state.**



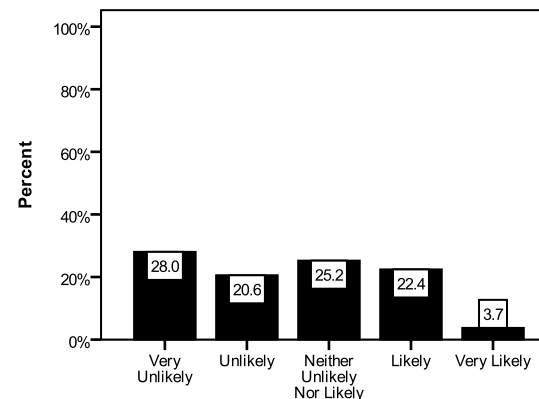
**36. *IF* Idaho Fish and Game introduces restrictions that reduce Elk hunting opportunities to improve Elk populations, how would your hunting behavior change?**



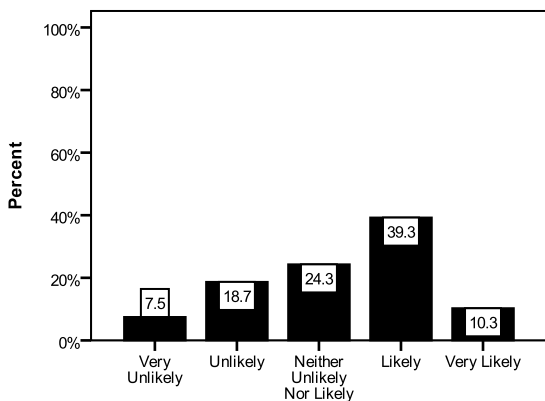
**Hunt in Different Zones**



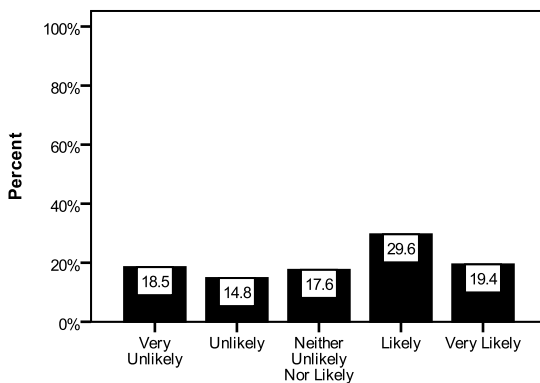
**Quit Hunting Elk**



**Shift to Hunt Other Species**



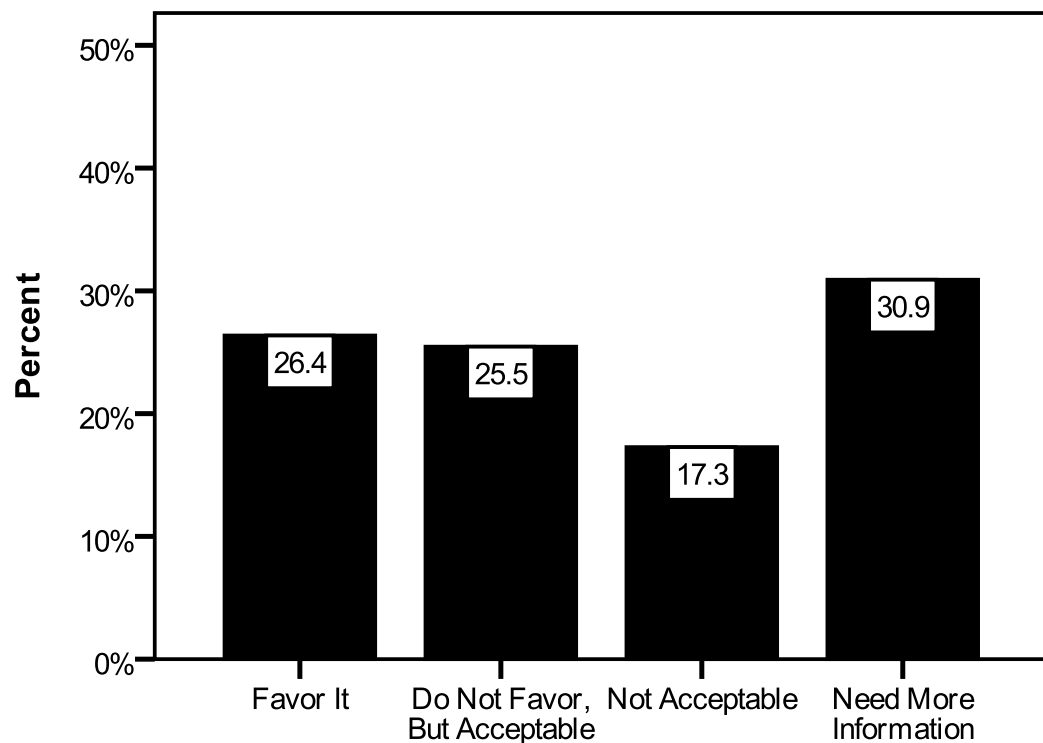
**Not Change Hunting Behavior**



**Change Weapon Type for Increased Elk Hunting Opportunity**

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

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)

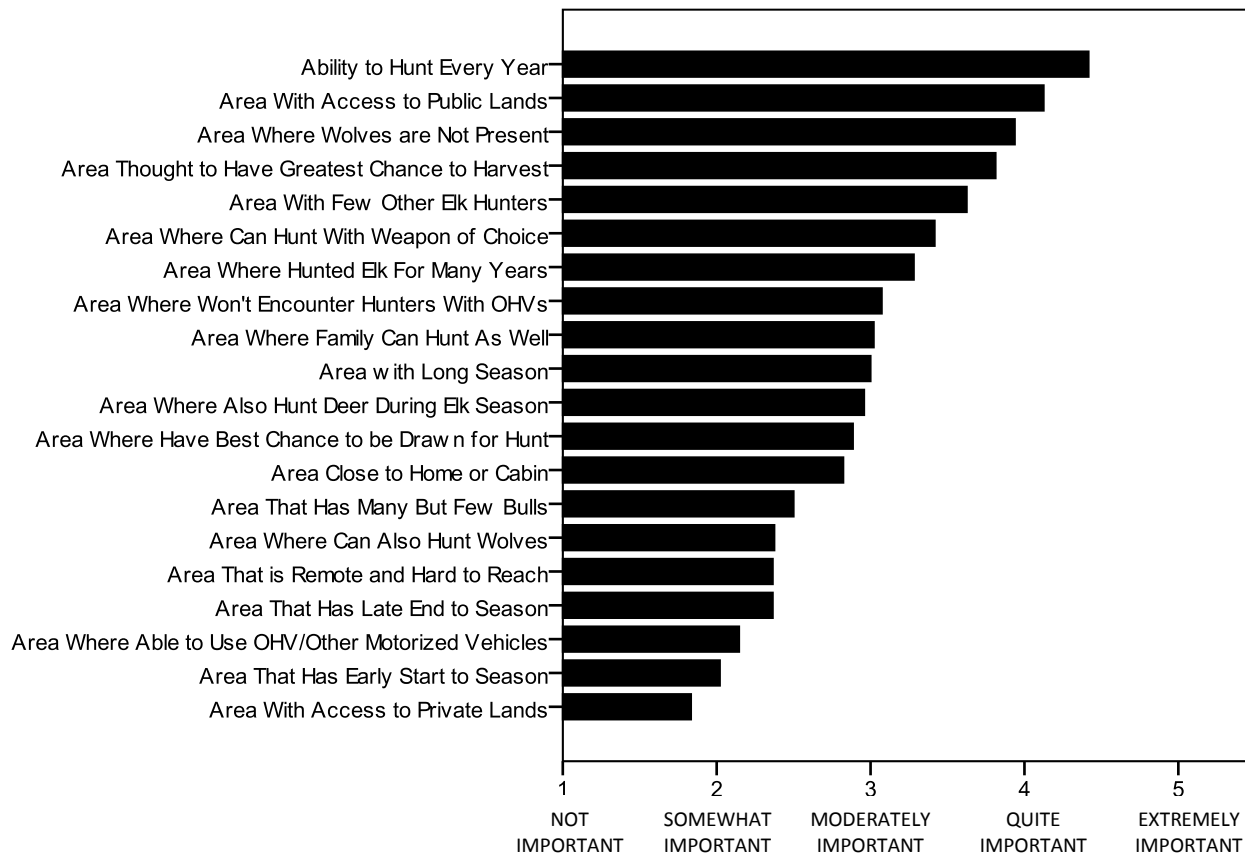


**Feelings About Setting Season Conditions 2 Years in Advance**

**Q38: Sawtooth respondents and those throughout the state feel similarly regarding setting season conditions two years in advance.**

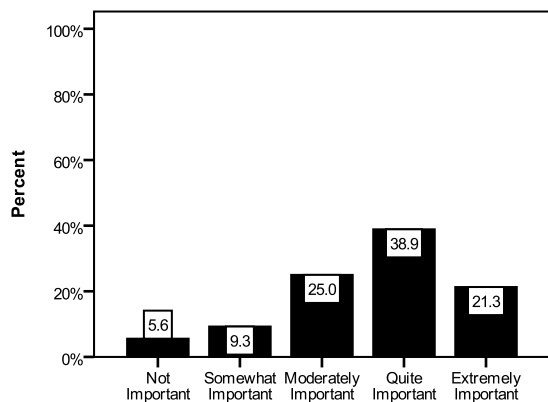
## WHEN AND WHERE TO HUNT

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?

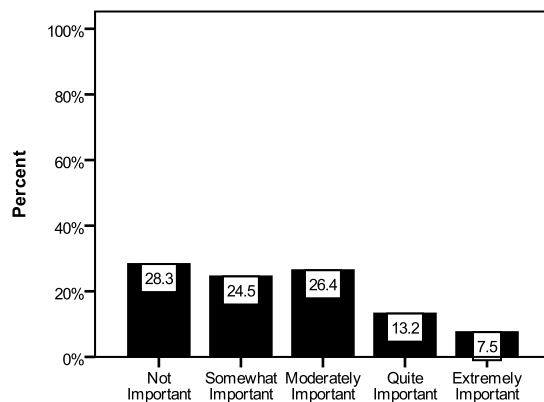


**Q29: The feelings of importance of characteristics are similar between Sawtooth respondents and the state average.**

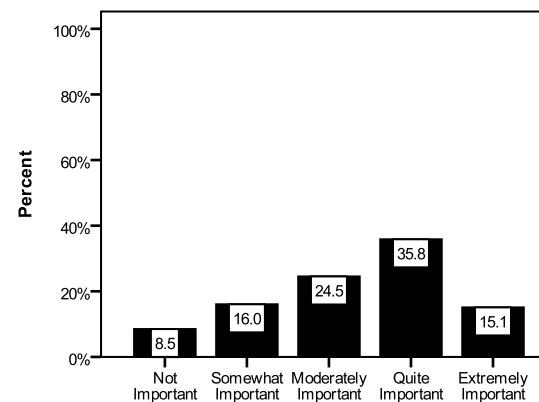
**CHARACTERISTICS AFFECTING CHOICE OF WHERE TO HUNT IN IDAHO**



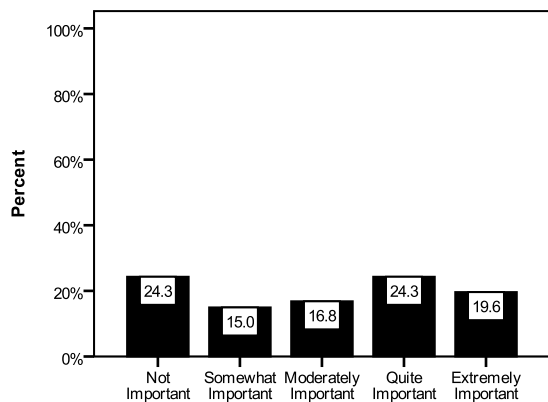
Area With Few Other Elk Hunters



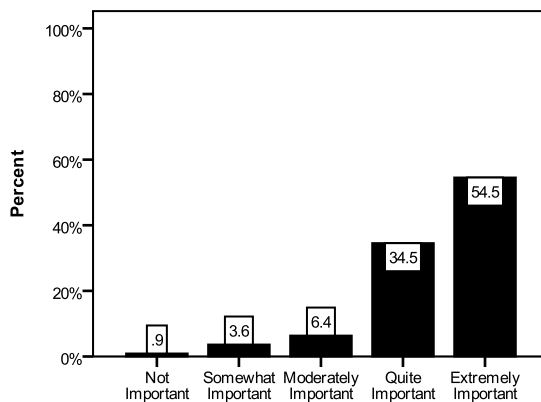
Area That Has Many But Few Bulls



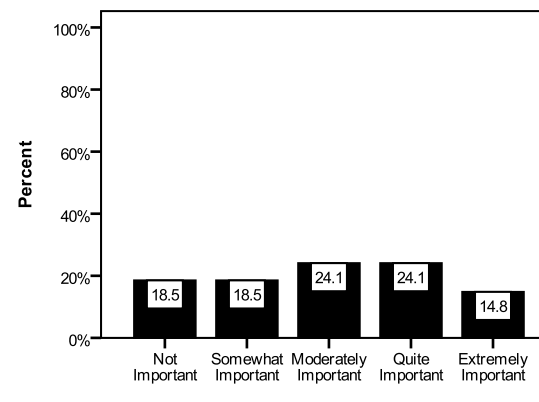
Area Where Hunted Elk For Many Years



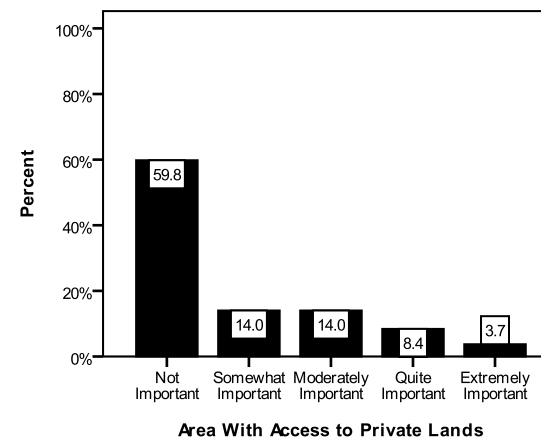
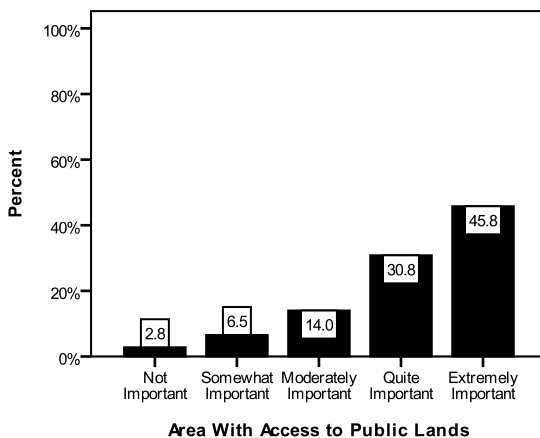
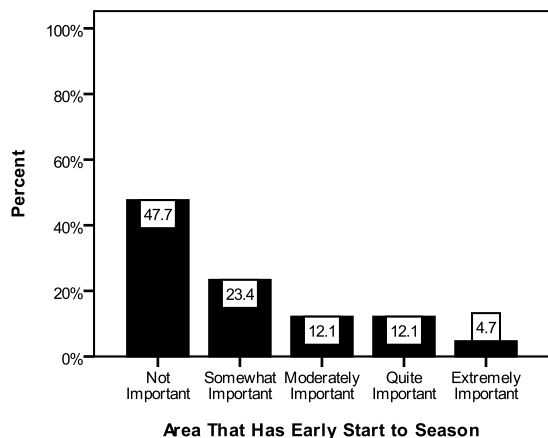
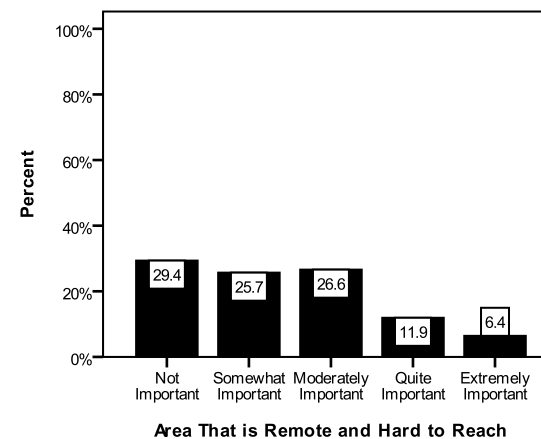
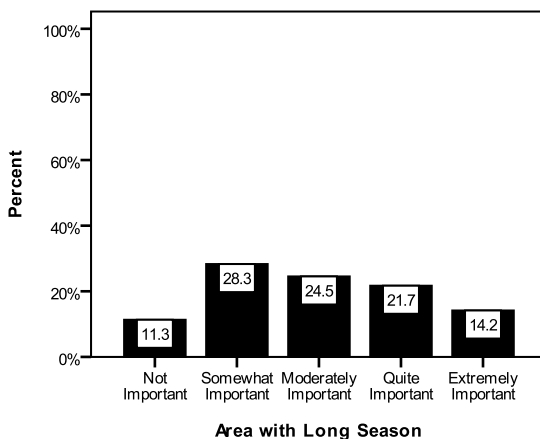
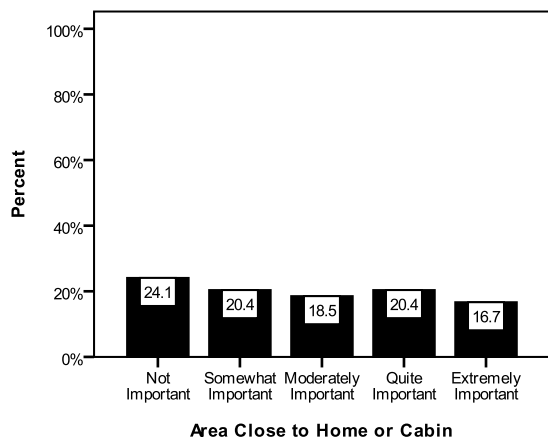
Area Where Family Can Hunt As Well

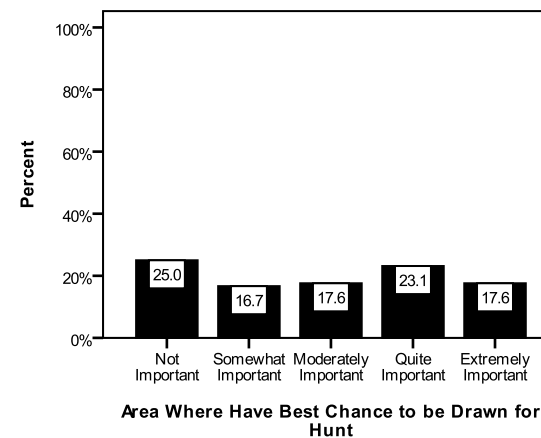
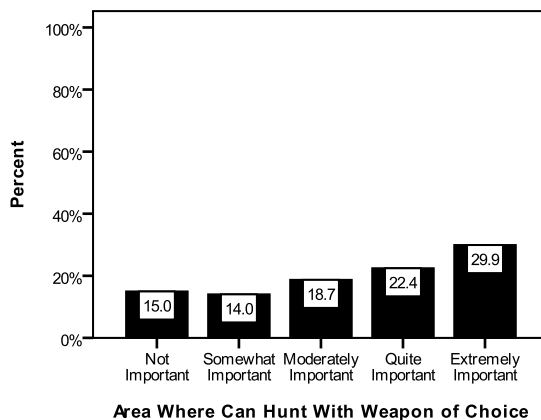
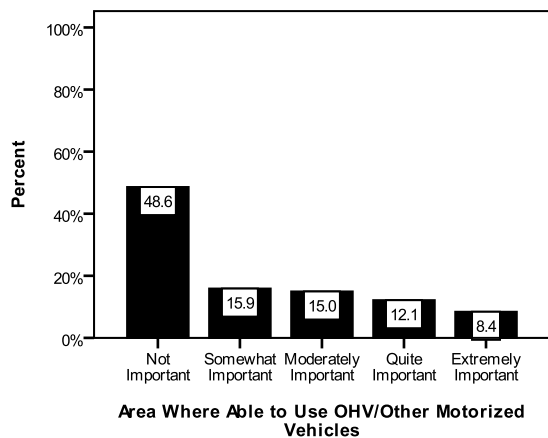
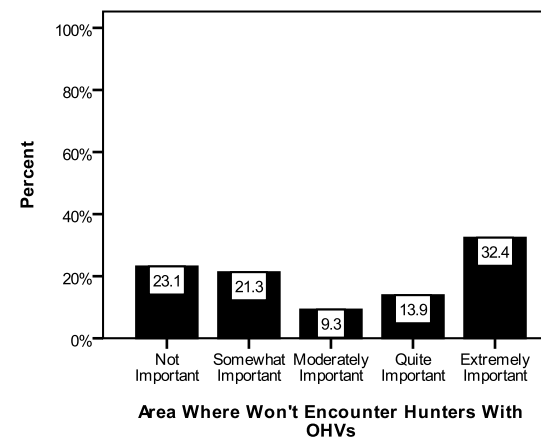
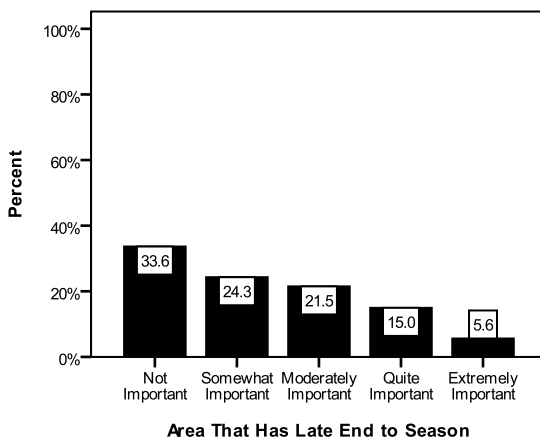
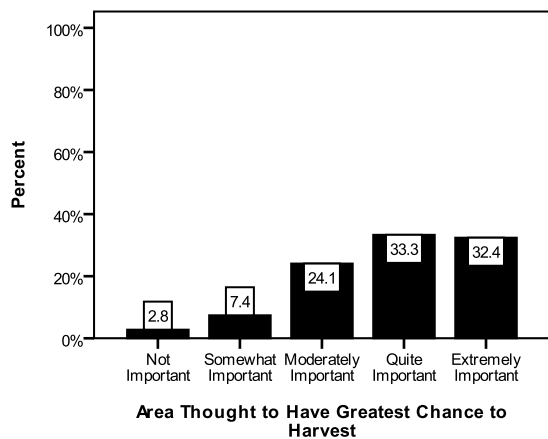


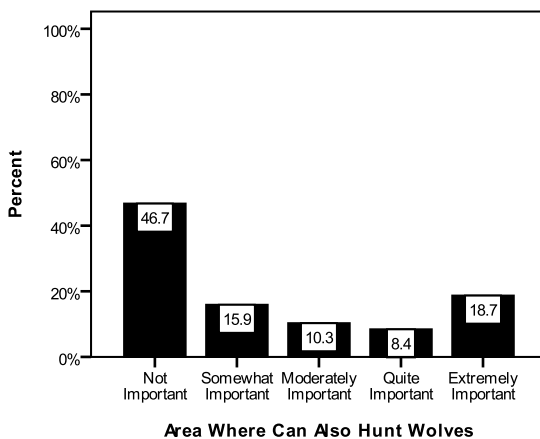
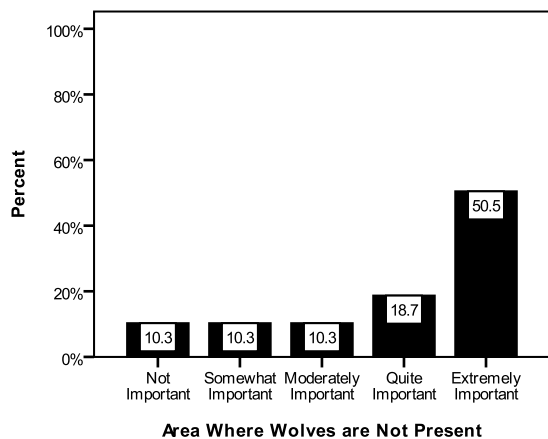
Ability to Hunt Every Year



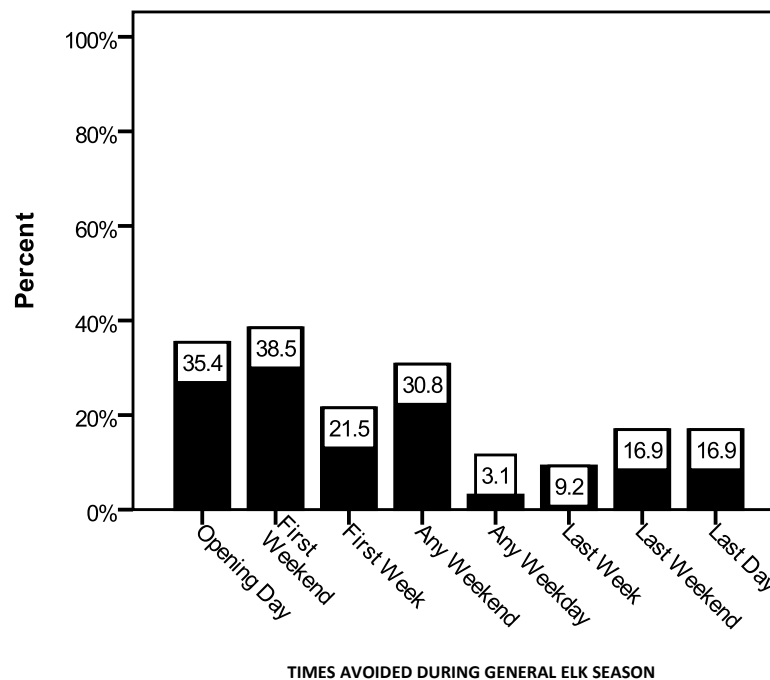
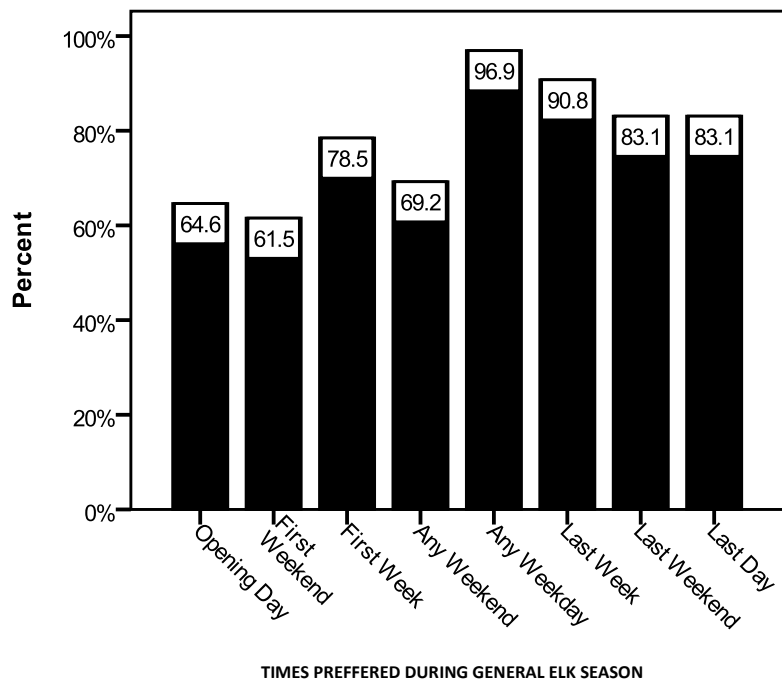
Area Where Also Hunt Deer During Elk Season







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

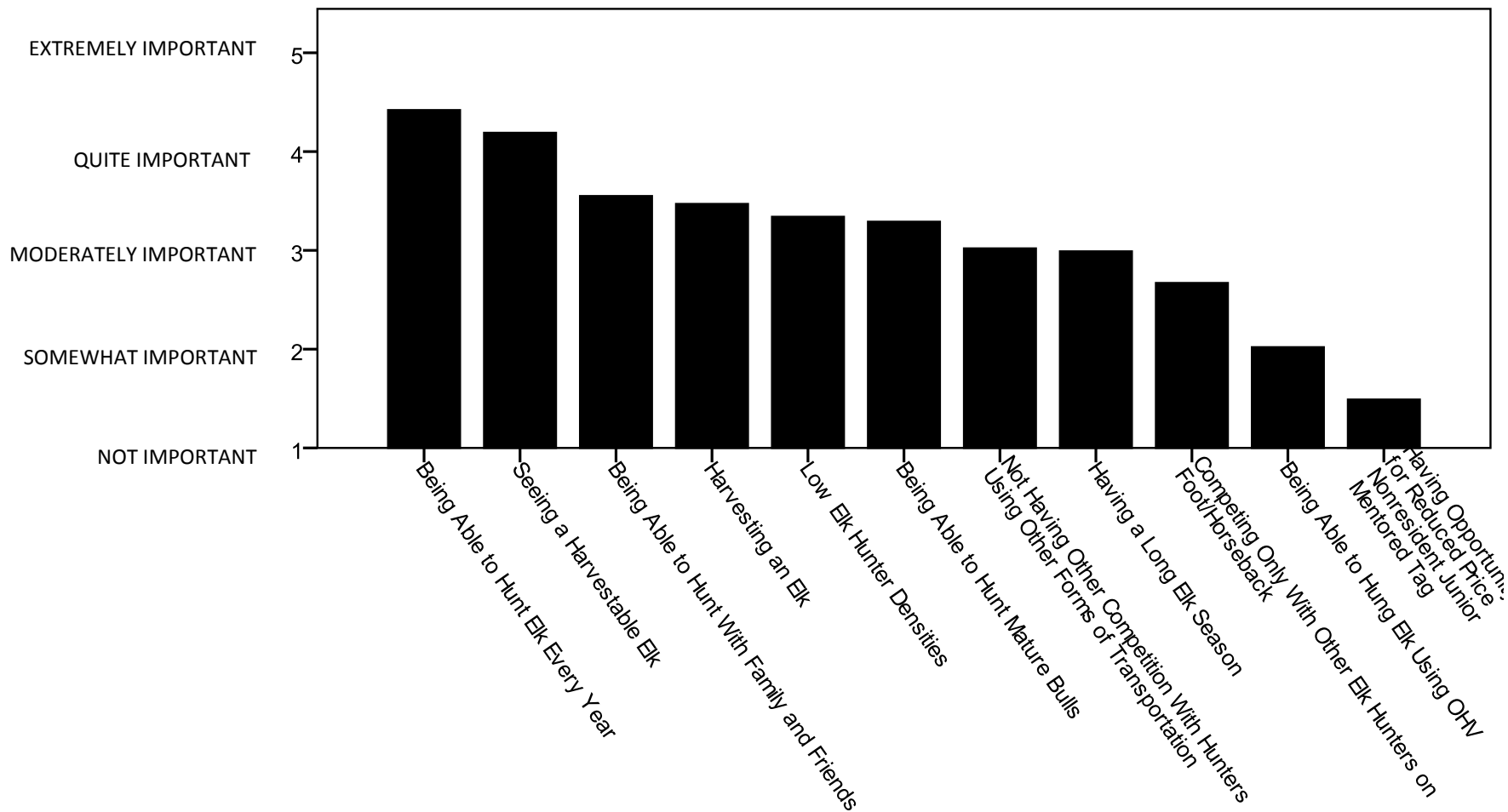


**Q30: The distribution of preferences between Sawtooth respondents and the state average are similar.**

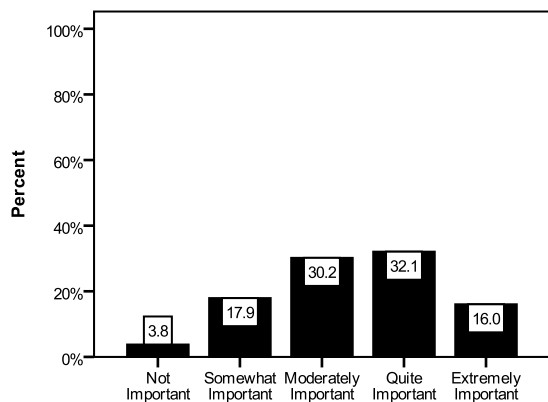


# ATTRIBUTES OF A QUALITY ELK HUNTING EXPERIENCE

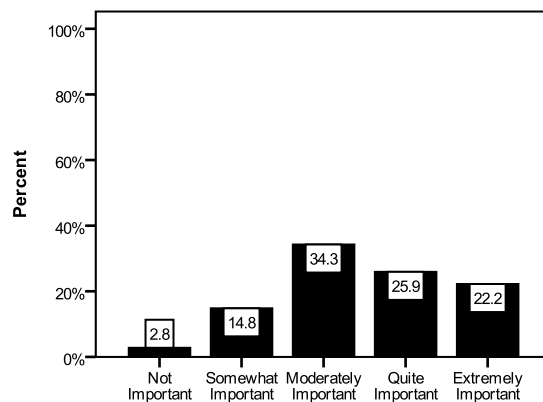
31. How important to you are each of these attributes for a quality Idaho Elk hunting experience?



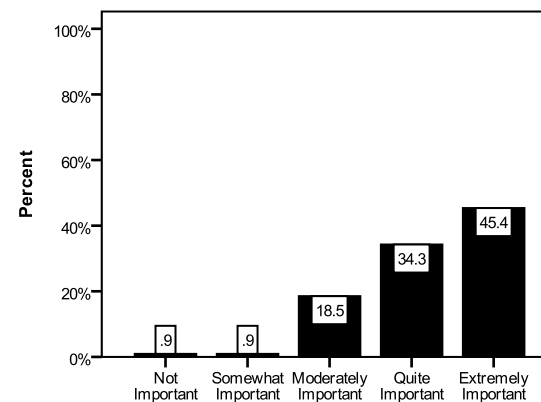
IMPORTANCE OF ATTRIBUTES FOR A QUALITY ELK HUNTING EXPERIENCE IN IDAHO



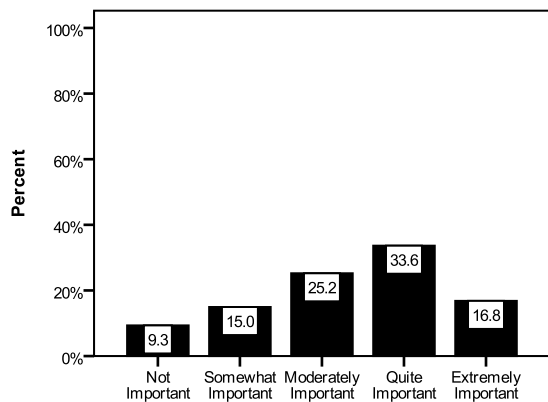
Low Elk Hunter Densities



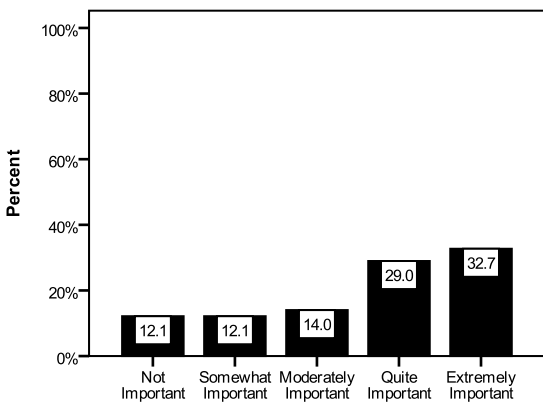
Harvesting an Elk



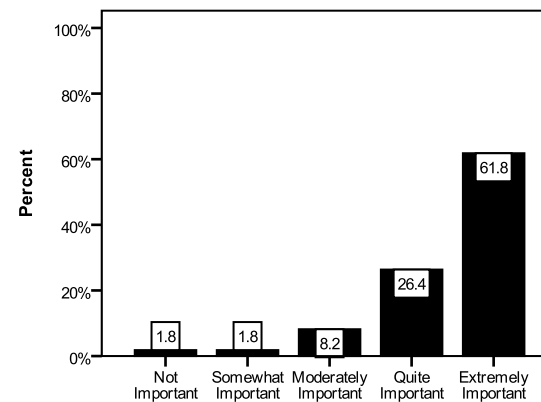
Seeing a Harvestable Elk



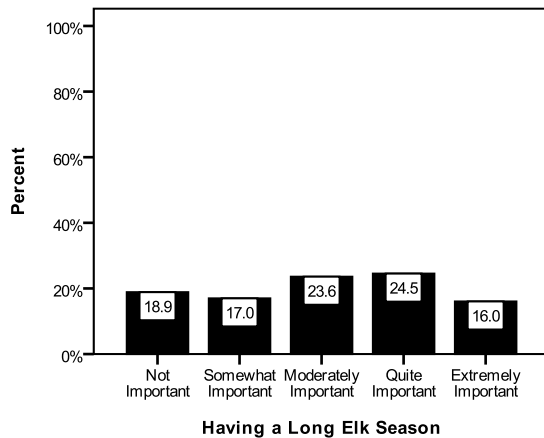
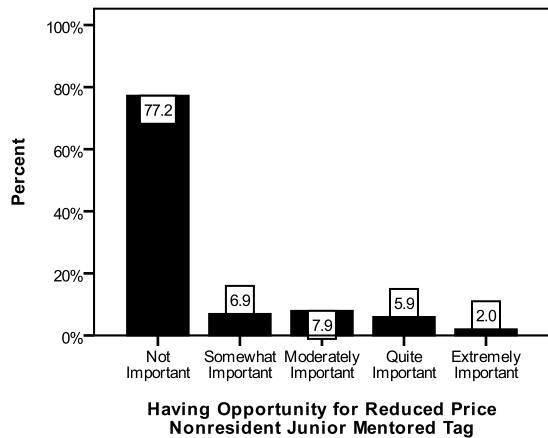
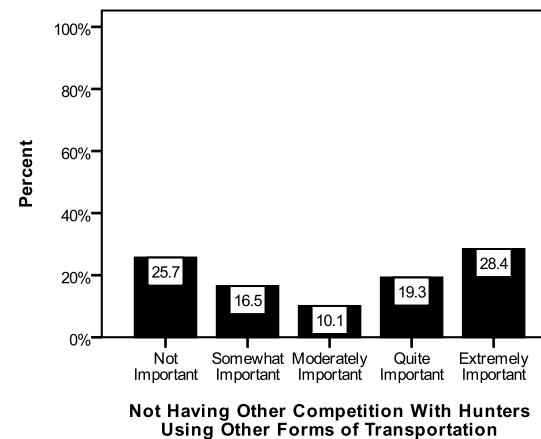
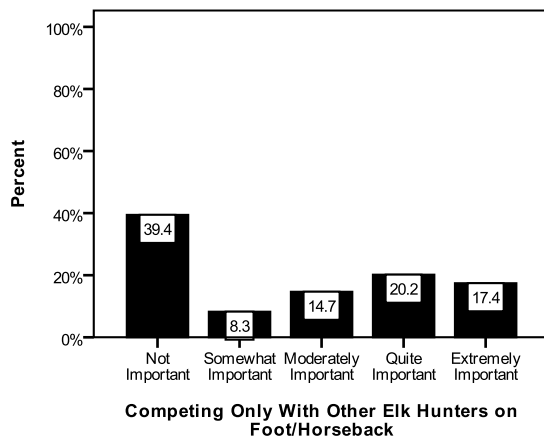
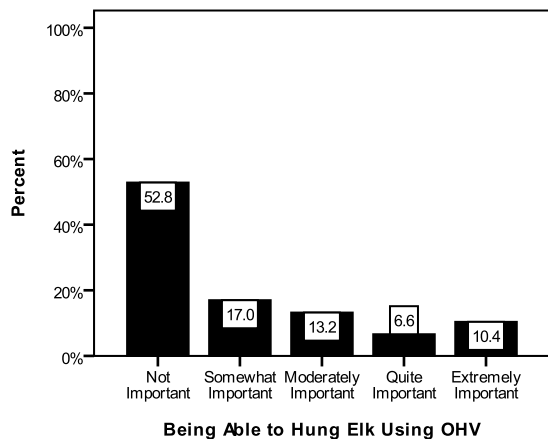
Being Able to Hunt Mature Bulls



Being Able to Hunt With Family and Friends



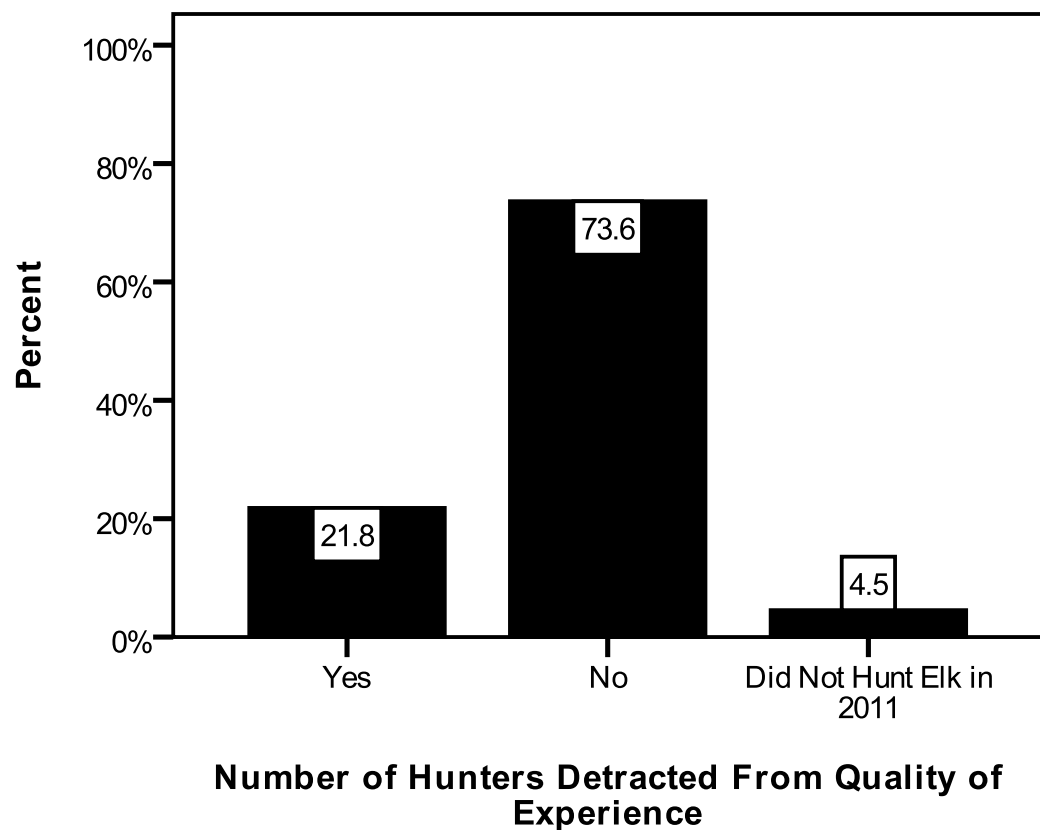
Being Able to Hunt Elk Every Year



**Q31: The distribution of responses pertaining to the importance of these attributes are similar between the Sawtooth zone and the state average.**

## HUNTING SATISFACTION

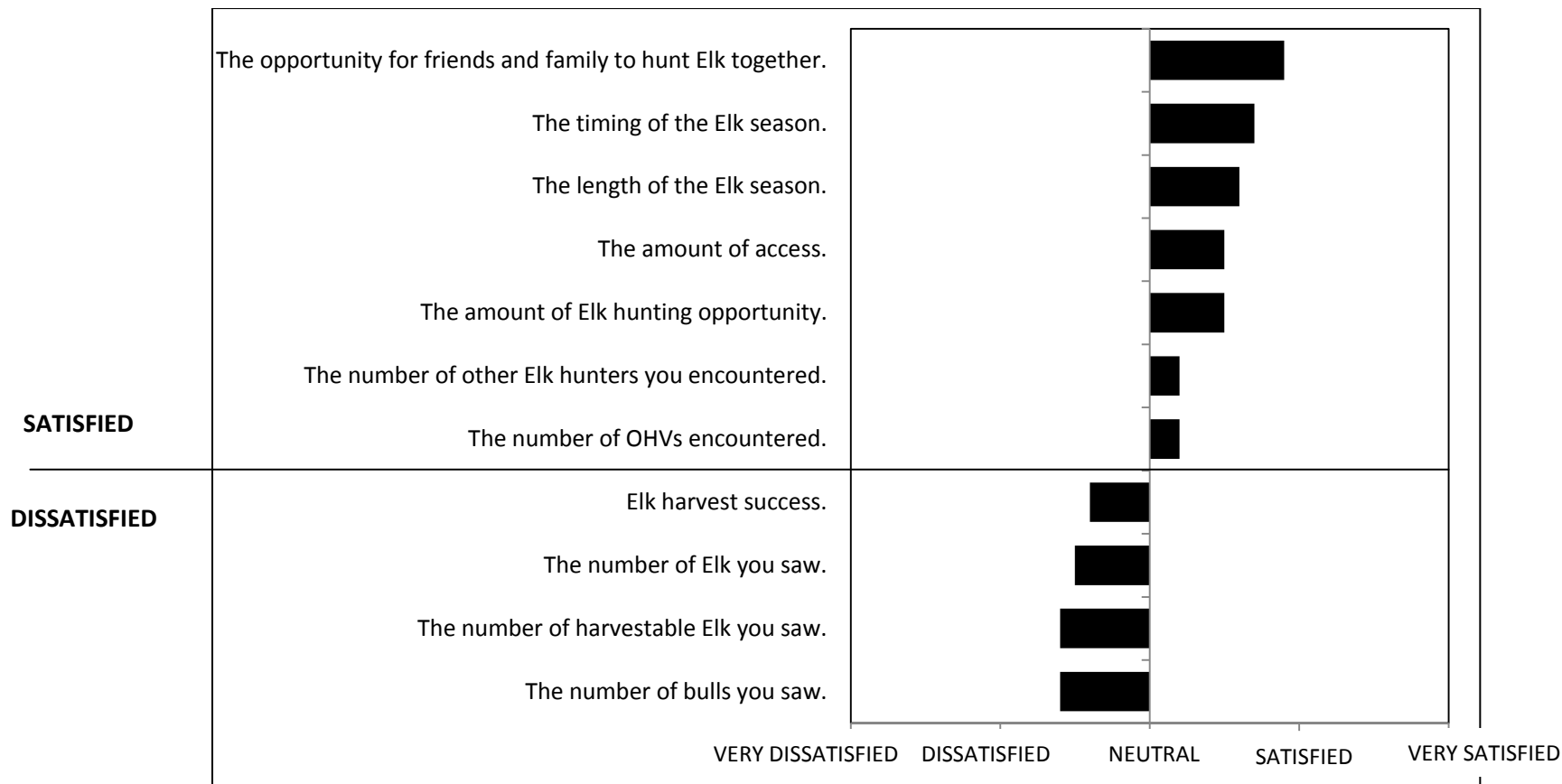
33. Were there times during your 2011 Elk season when the numbers of other hunters seriously detracted from the quality of your hunting experience? *(Please check one response)*



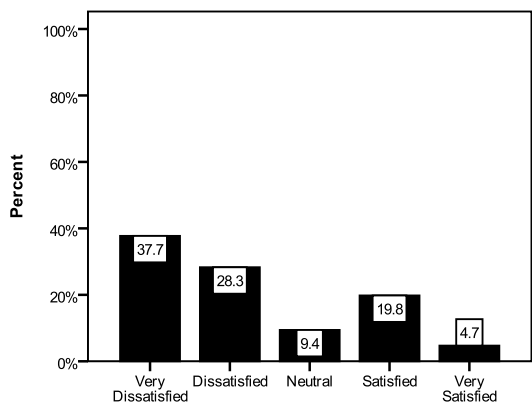
**Q33:** There is a 13.9% increase between the state average and the Sawtooth zone in that more hunters felt that other hunters did not detract from the quality of their hunting experience in the Sawtooth zone.

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

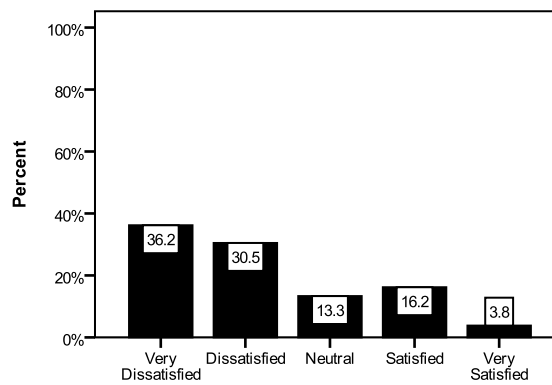
**37. How satisfied were you with each of the following aspects of your 2011 Elk hunting experience?**



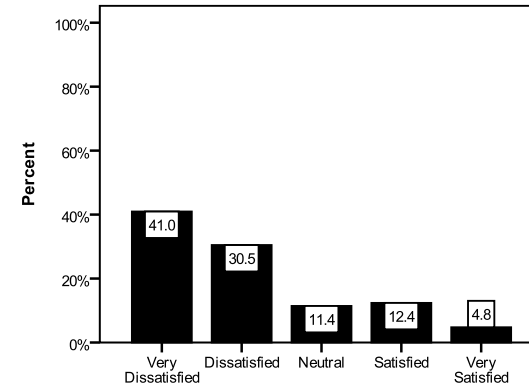
**SATISFACTION OF ASPECTS OF 2011 ELK HUNTING EXPERIENCE**



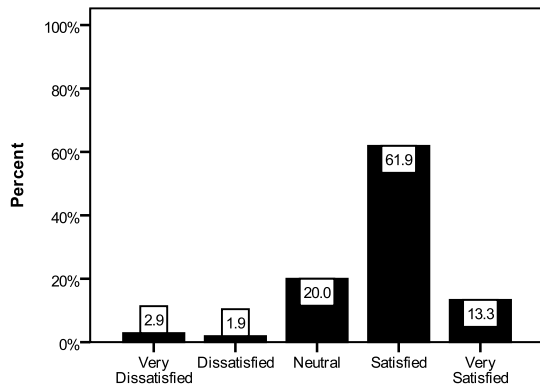
Number of Elk Seen



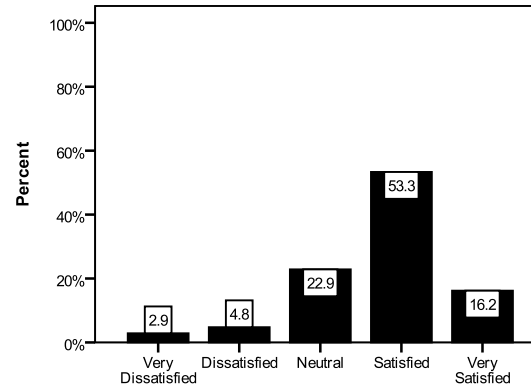
Number of Harvestable Elk Seen



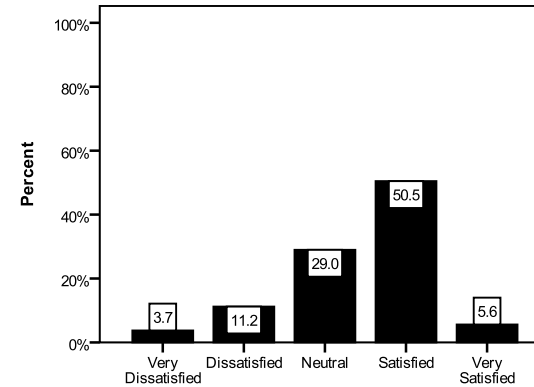
Number of Bulls Seen



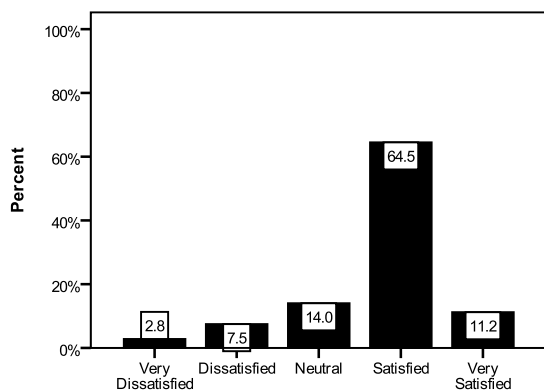
Length of Elk Season



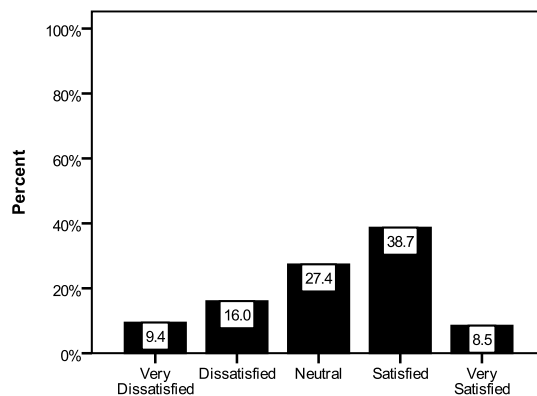
Timing of Elk Season



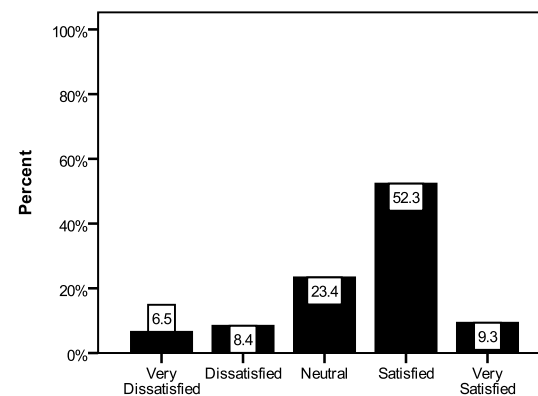
Number of Elk Hunters Encountered



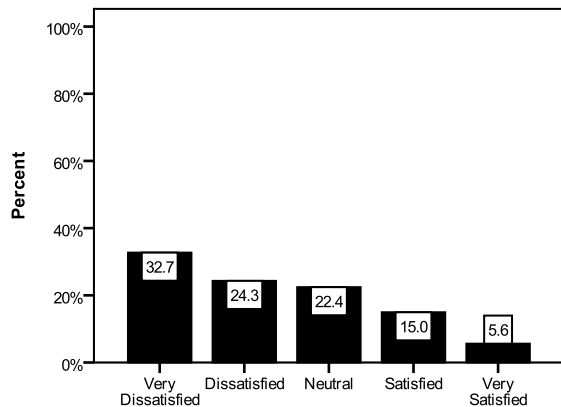
Amount of Access



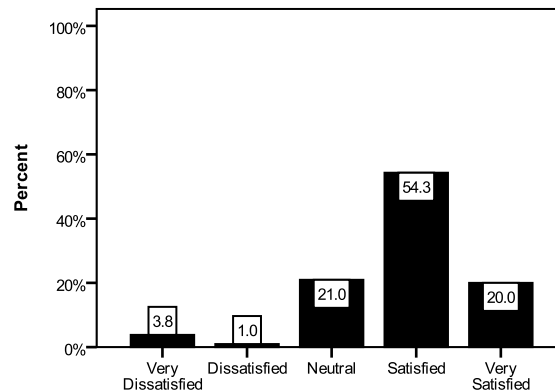
Number of OHVs Encountered



Amount of Elk Hunting Opportunity



Elk Harvest Success



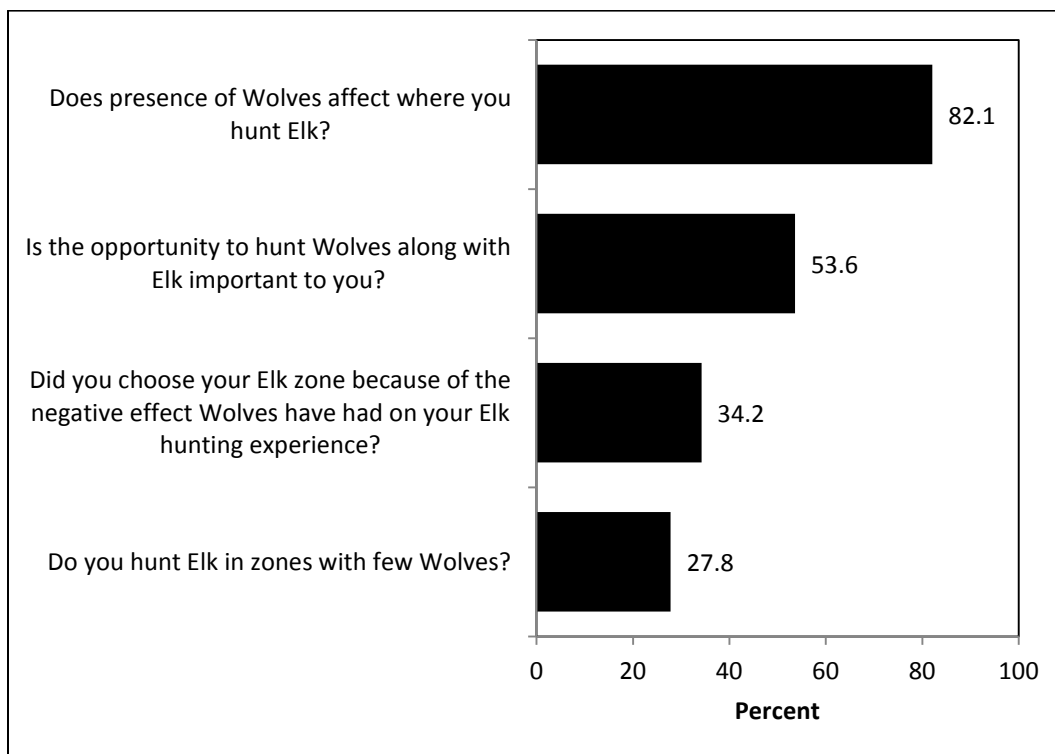
Opportunity for Family and Friends to Hunt Together

**Q37: The feelings of satisfaction between respondents in the Sawtooth zone and the state average are very similar.**

## PERCEPTIONS OF PREDATORS

### Two questions about predators in Idaho.

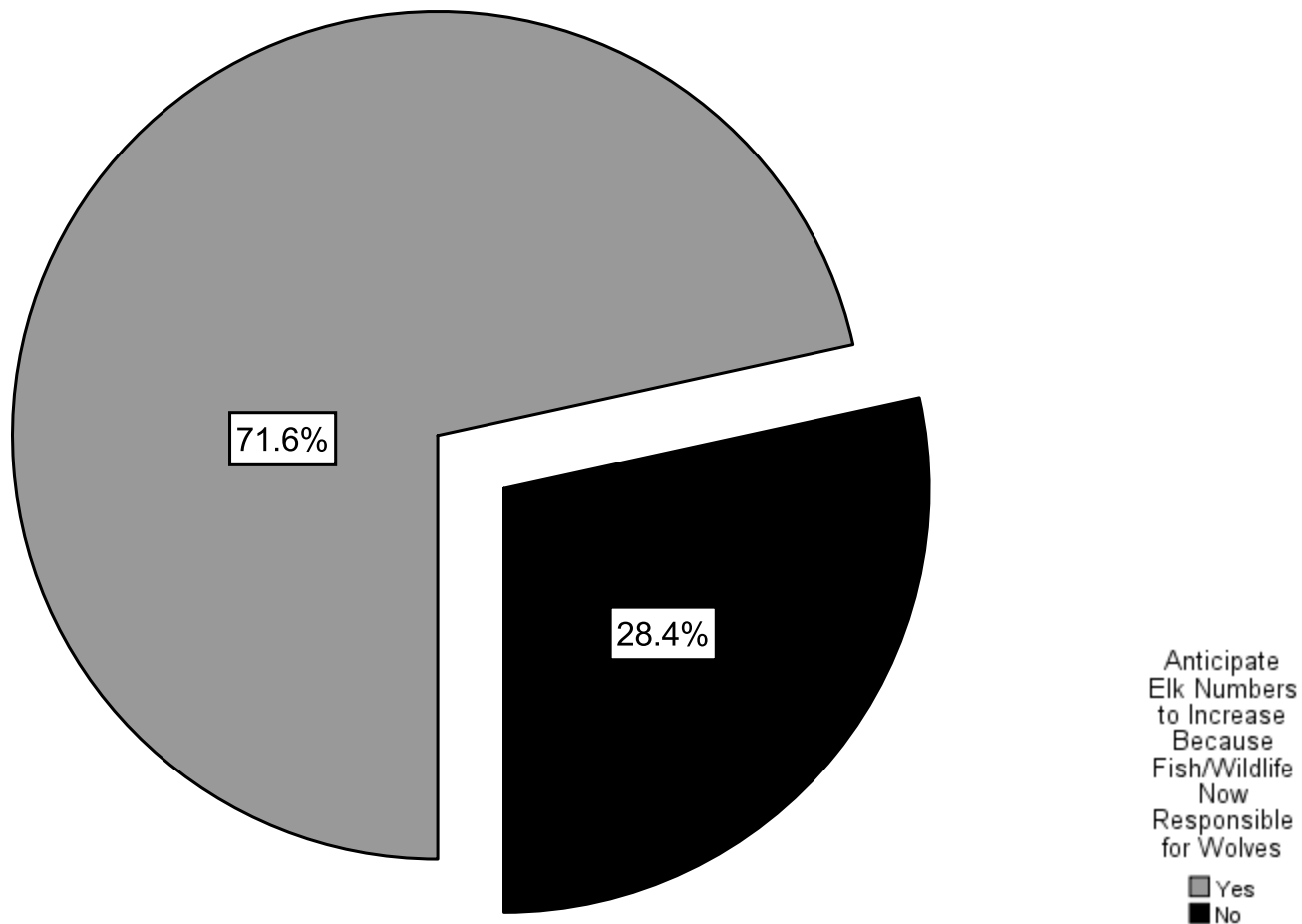
39. How do Wolves affect your Idaho Elk hunting experience? *(Please circle one response for each item)*



**Q39: The distribution of responses between that of the state average and the Sawtooth zone are similar.**



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



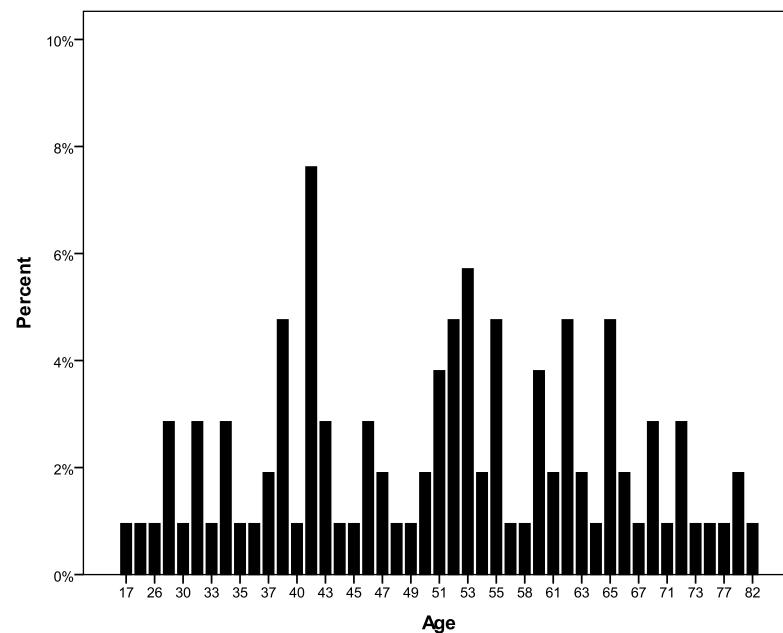
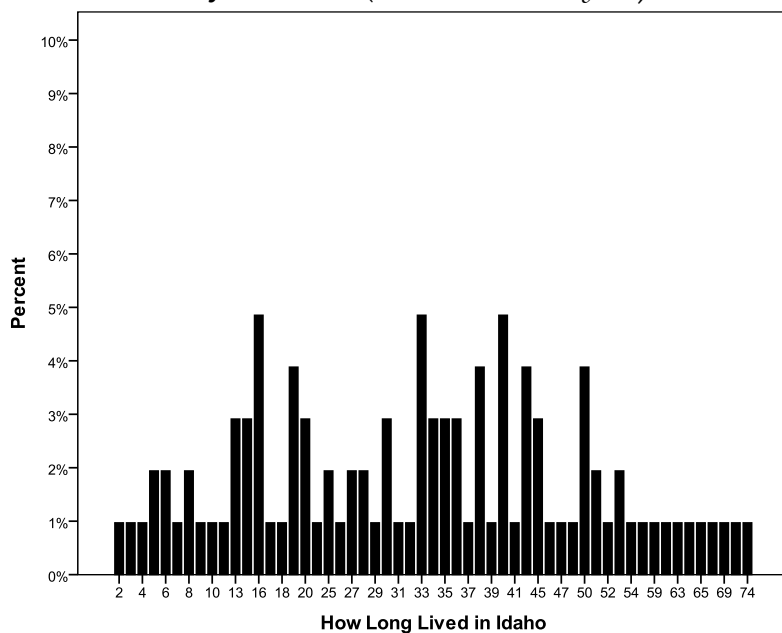
**Q40: Among Sawtooth respondents, almost a 10% increase over the state average anticipate the number of Elk to increase under IDFG Wolf management.**

# 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)*



Response distributions are similar for the Sawtooth zone and the state average for both how long respondents have lived in Idaho and age.