

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



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**For:**

**Idaho Department of Fish and Game**

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**INSERT ELK SURVEY OBJECTIVES**

**METHODS**

**SAMPLING**

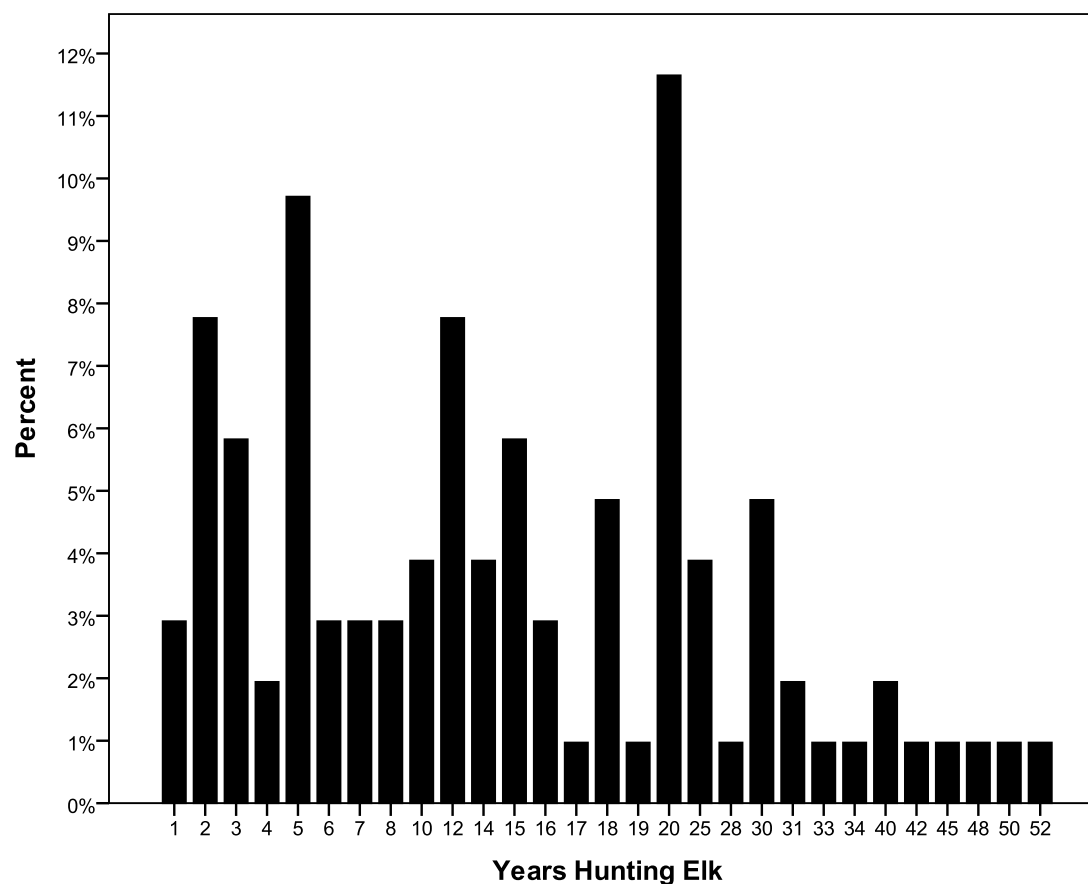
**RESPONSE RATE.**

## ELK HUNTER PROFILES

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

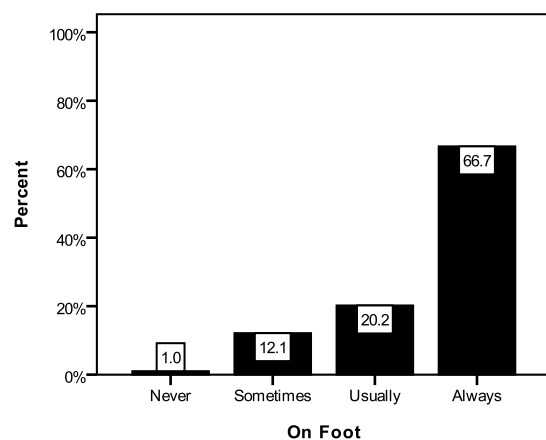
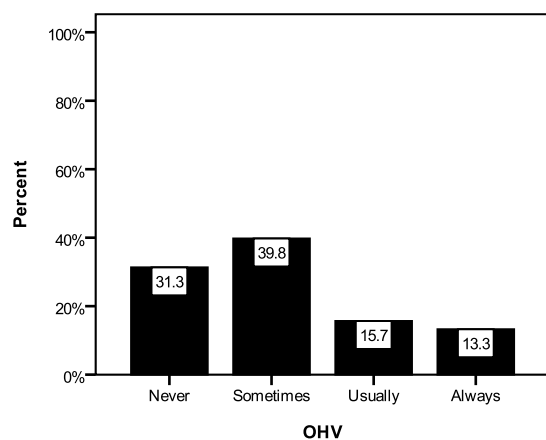
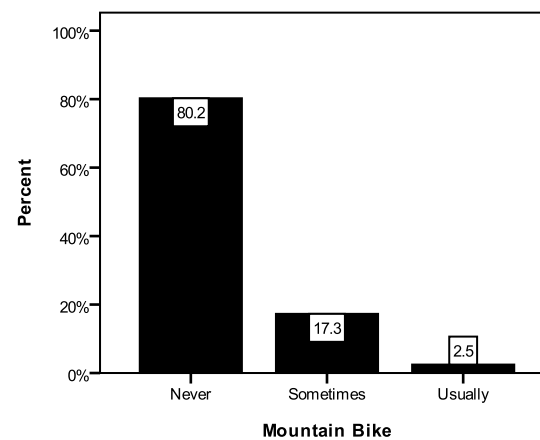
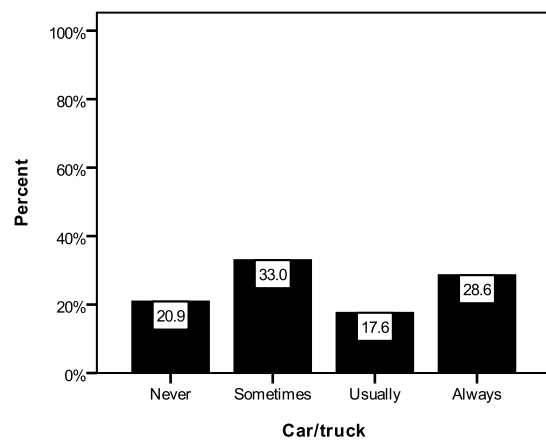
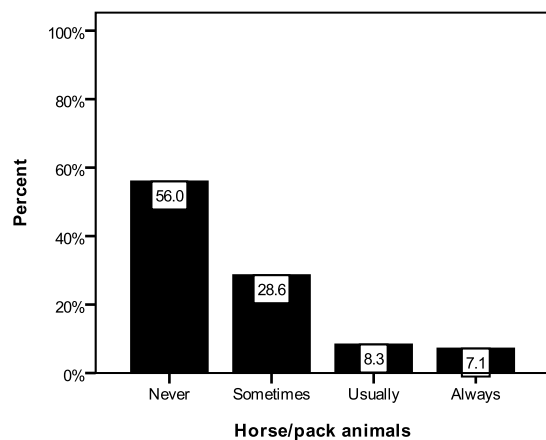
Now, some questions about your Idaho Elk hunting experiences and preferences.

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



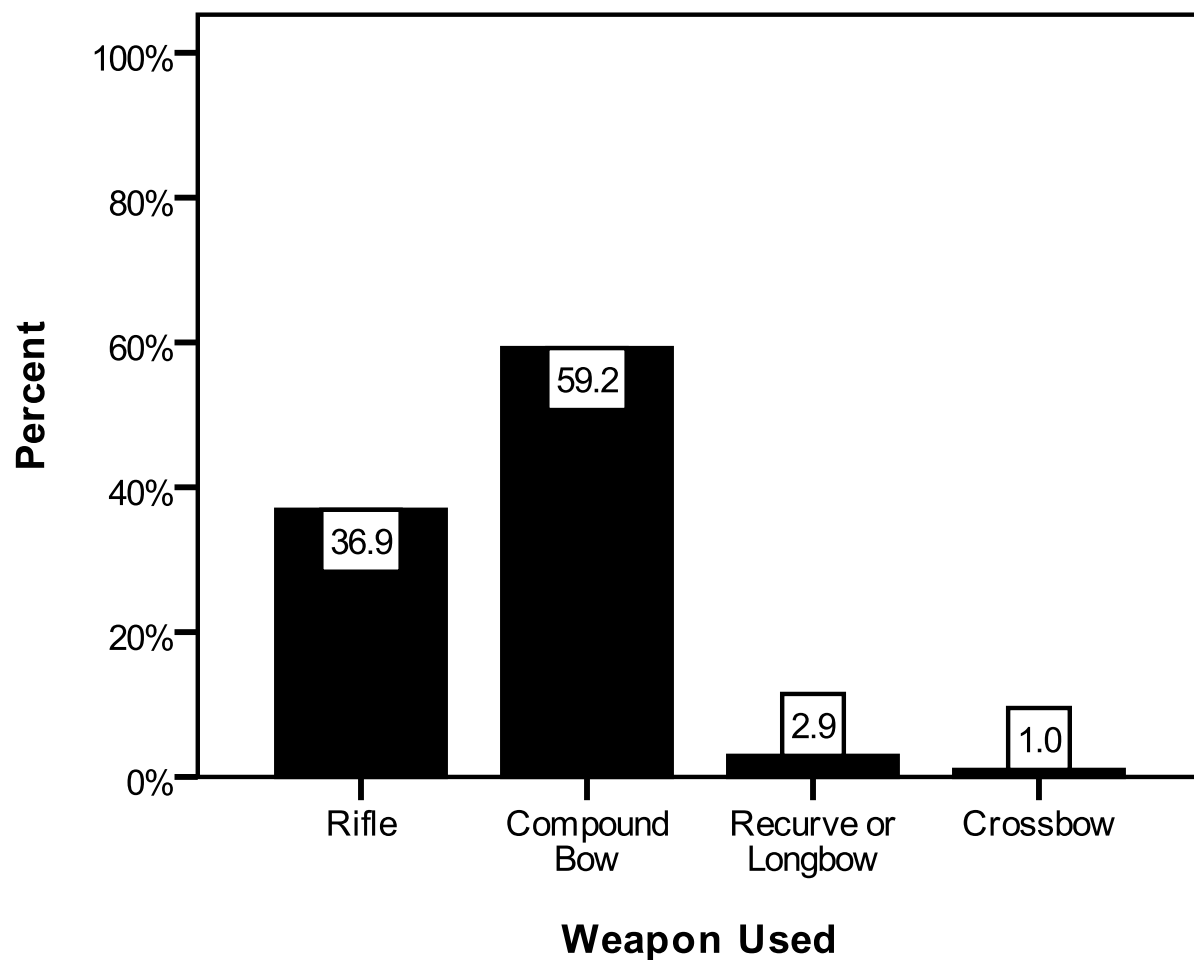
Q3: The response distribution is similar between the state average and the Smoky Mountain zone.

**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?**



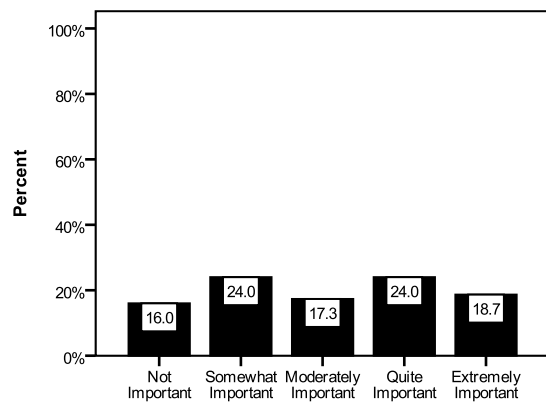
**Q7: The response distribution is similar between the state average and the Smoky Mountain zone.**

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

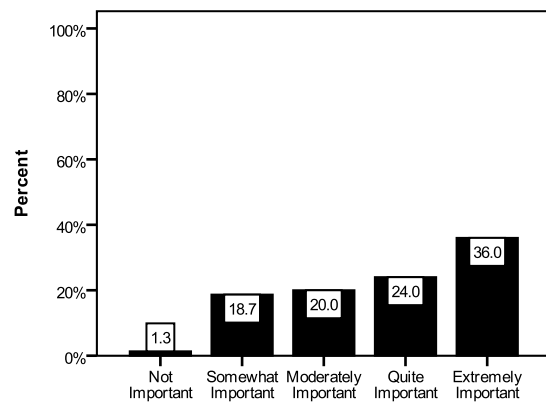


**Q8: Unlike the state average, over half of Smoky Mountain respondents reported that they typically use a compound bow when Elk hunting. However, over a third also use rifles.**

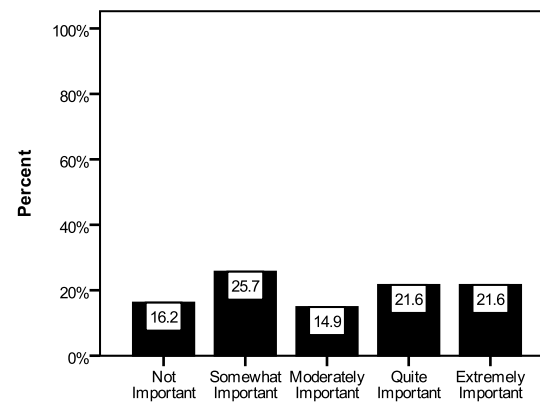
**10. How important was each of the following in your decision to hunt during Elk archery, short-range weapons or muzzleloader seasons?**



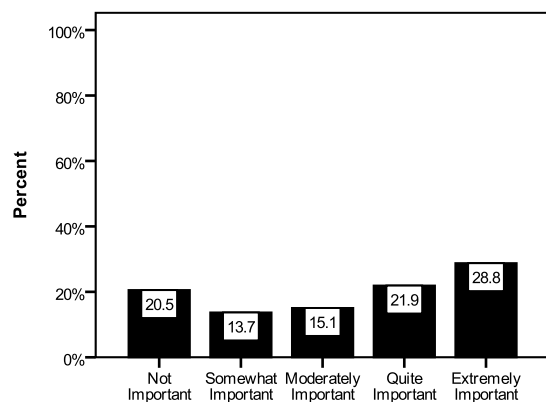
**Increase Challenge**



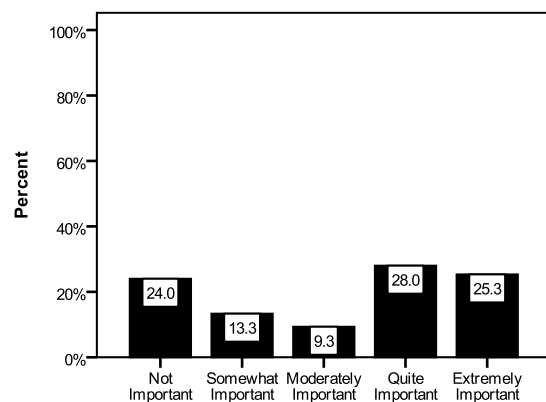
**Hunt With Few Hunters on Field**



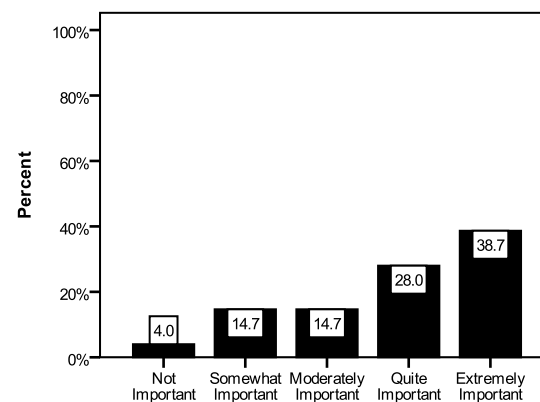
**Improve Chance of Harvesting**



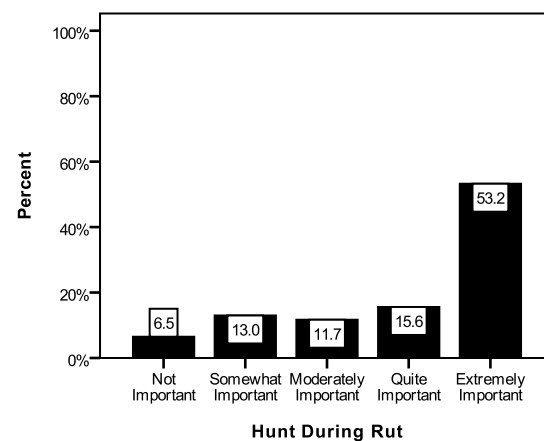
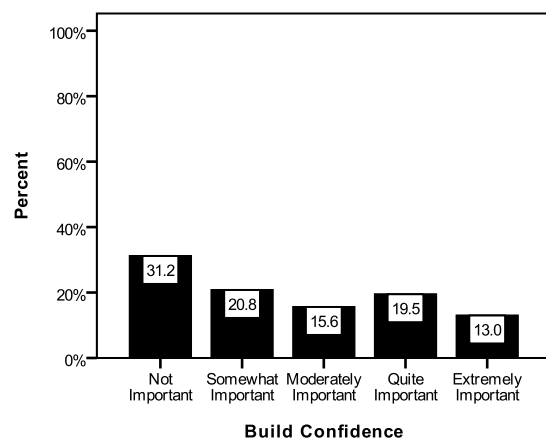
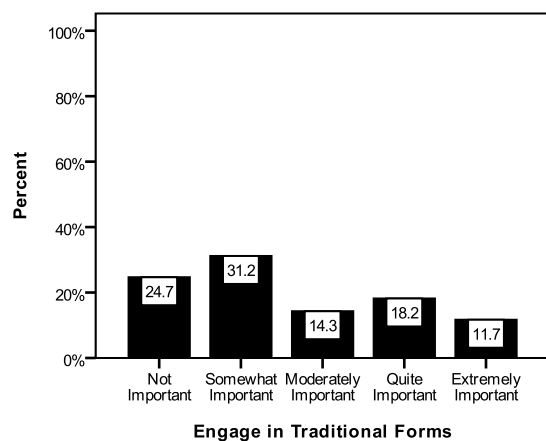
**Expand Hunting Season**



**Hunt in Zone Where Rifle Limited**

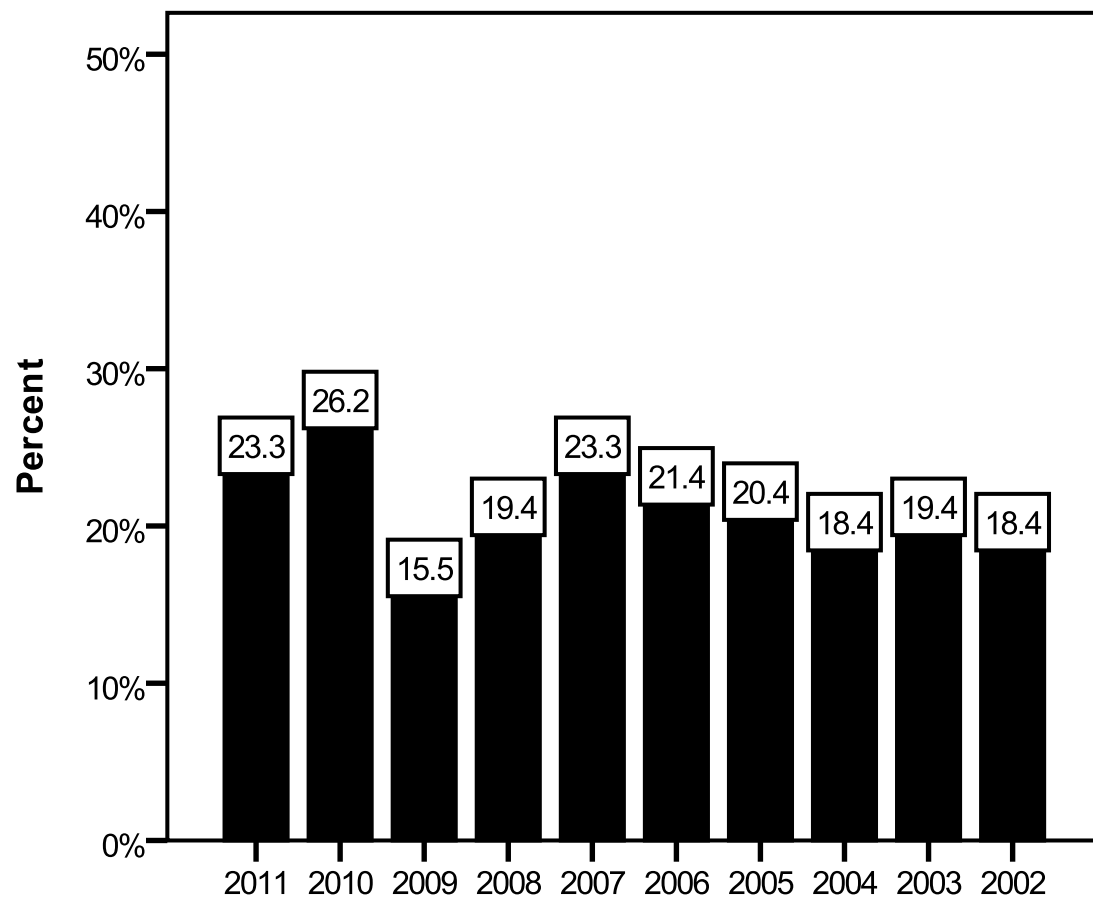


**Adventure**



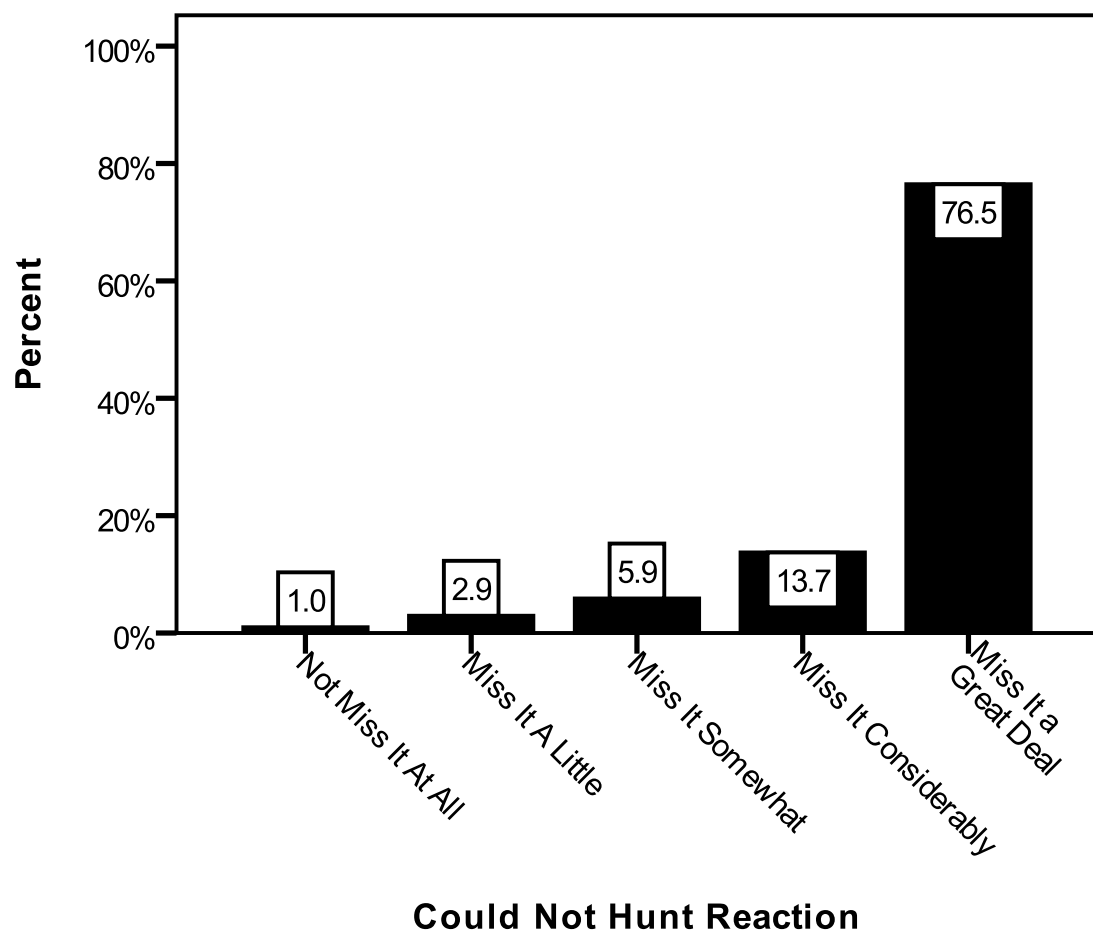
**Q10: The response distribution is similar between the state average and the Smoky Mountain zone.**

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



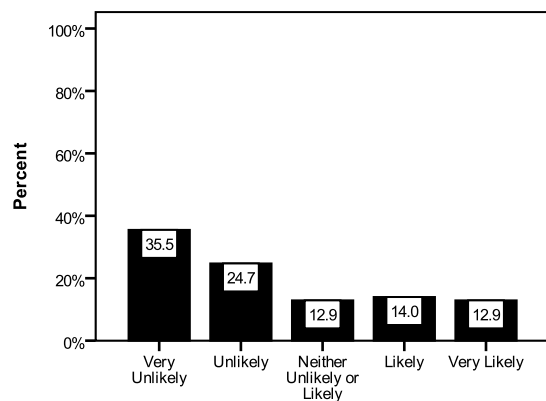
**Q11: Smoky Mountain hunters' harvest success has been lower than the state average over the past ten years, except in 2010 and 2011 where hunters in this zone saw slightly more success than other hunters in the state.**

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

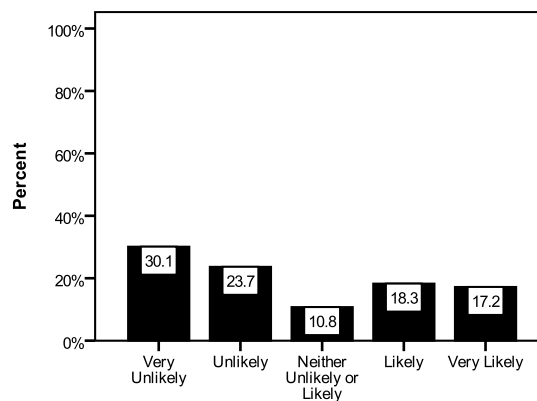


Q12: Like other hunters in the state, hunters in the Smoky Mountain zone would miss hunting Elk in Idaho a great deal, if they could not longer do so.

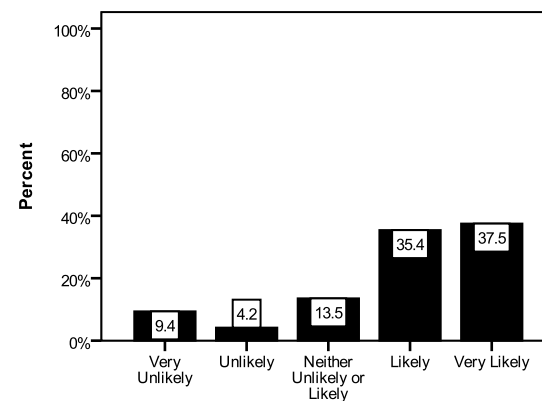
### 13. If you could not hunt Elk in Idaho, how would your hunting change?



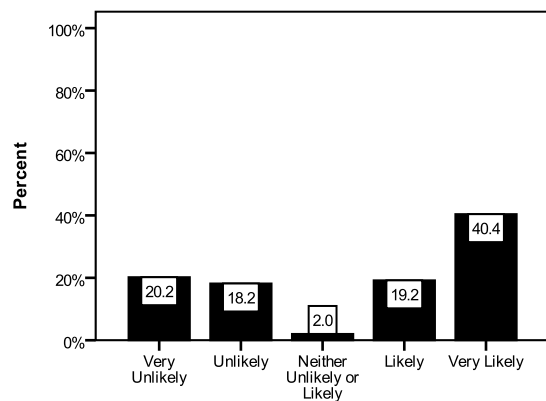
Hunt Waterfowl More



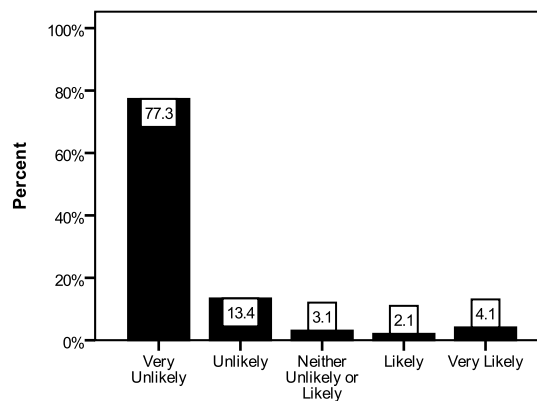
Hunt Upland Game More



More Time Hunting Other Game



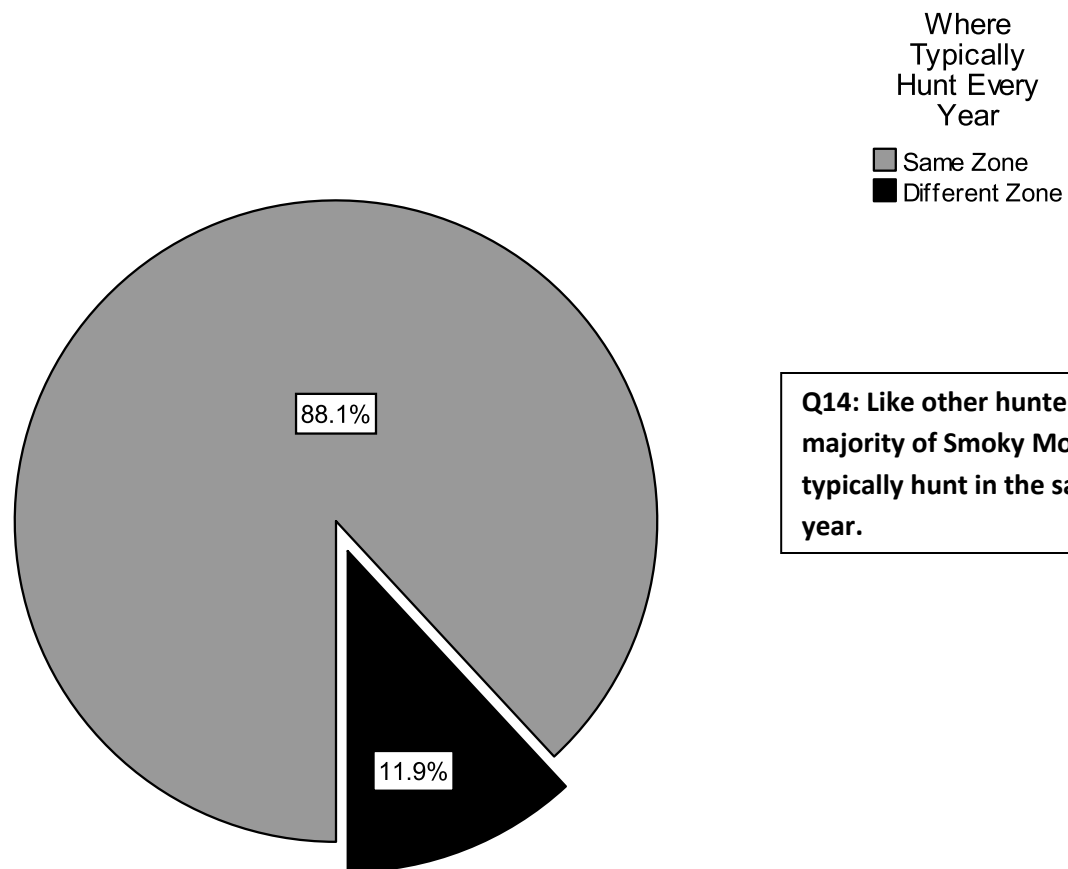
Hunt Elk in Other States



Not Hunt At All

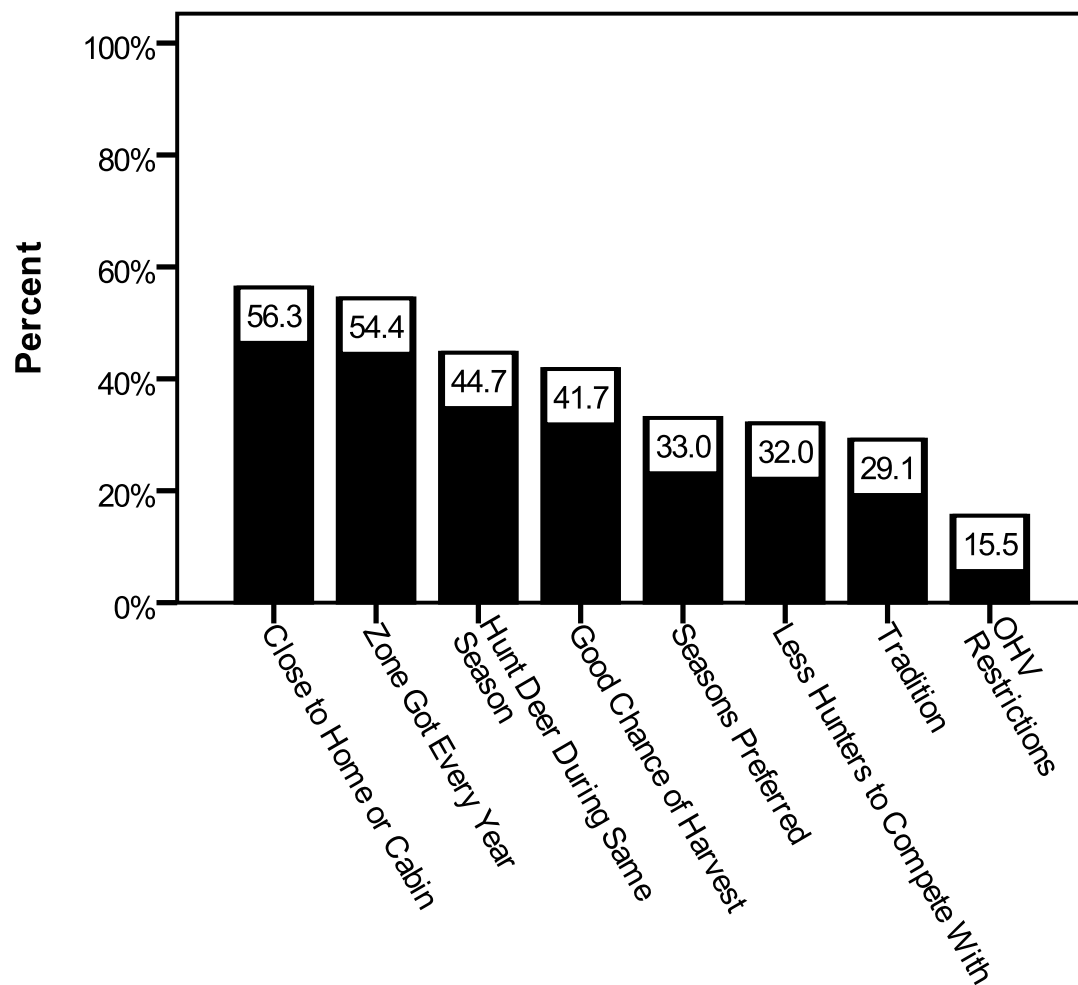
**Q13: The response distribution is similar between the state average and the Smoky Mountain zone. More hunters in this zone are very likely to spend more time hunting other game.**

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



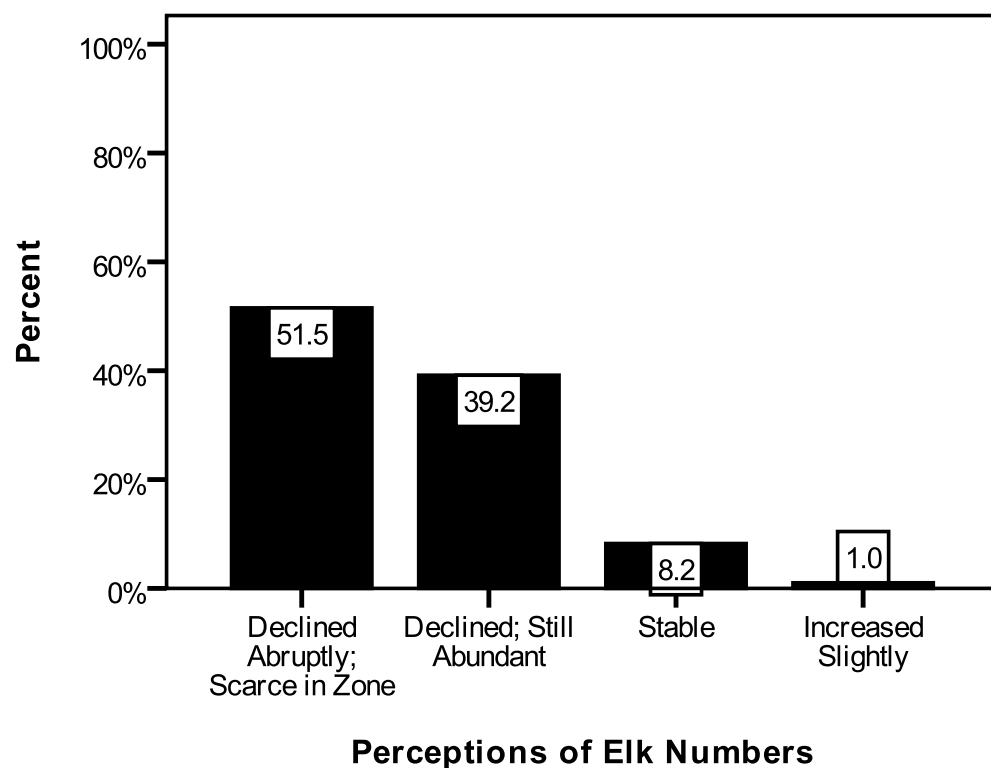
**Q14:** Like other hunters in the state, a majority of Smoky Mountain hunters typically hunt in the same zone every year.

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



Q16: The response distribution is similar between the state average and the Smoky Mountain zone.

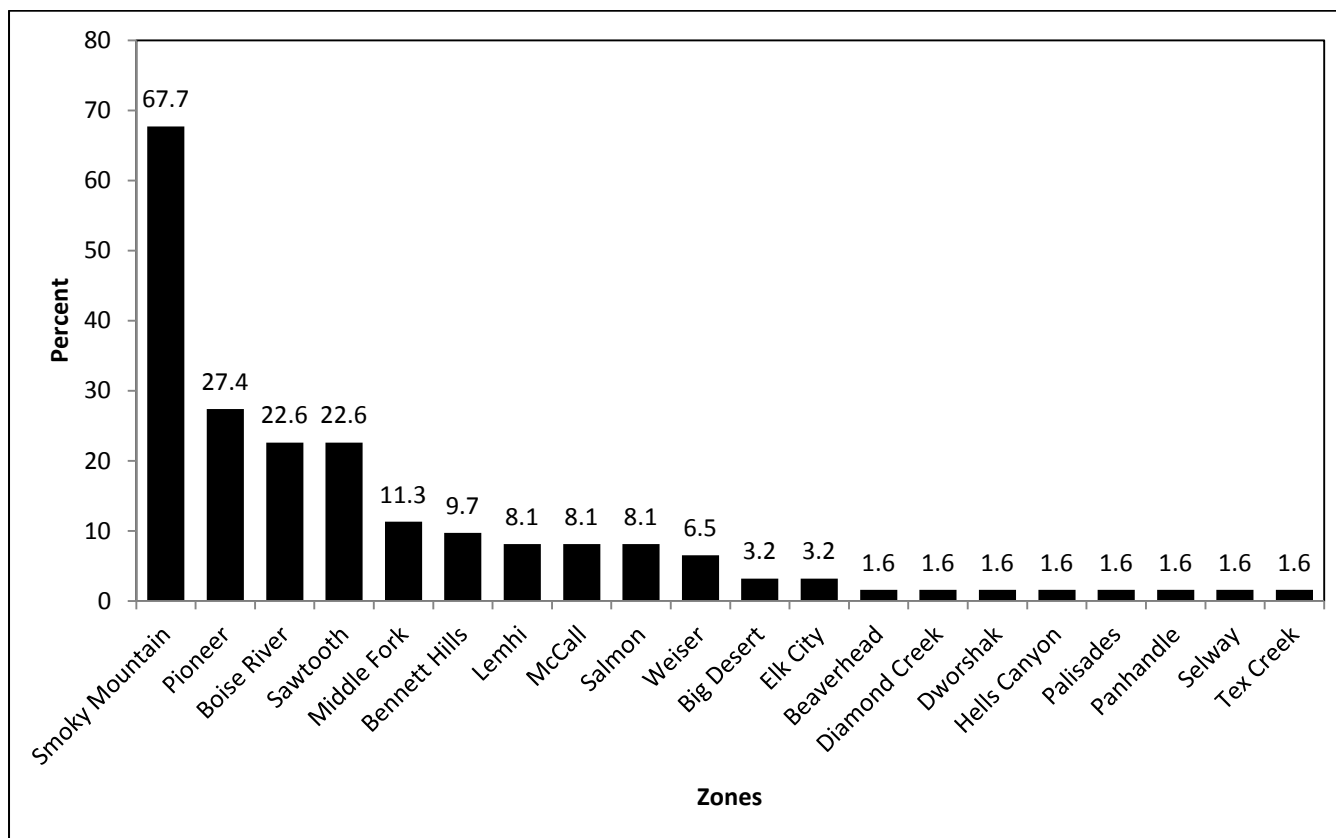
17. What are your perceptions of Elk numbers in the zone you hunted in 2011? Select the ONE statement from the list below that most closely matches your perceptions. (Please check only one response)



Q17: The response distribution is similar between the state average and the Smoky Mountain zone. Most hunters in this zone also perceive Elk numbers to have declined to some extent.

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

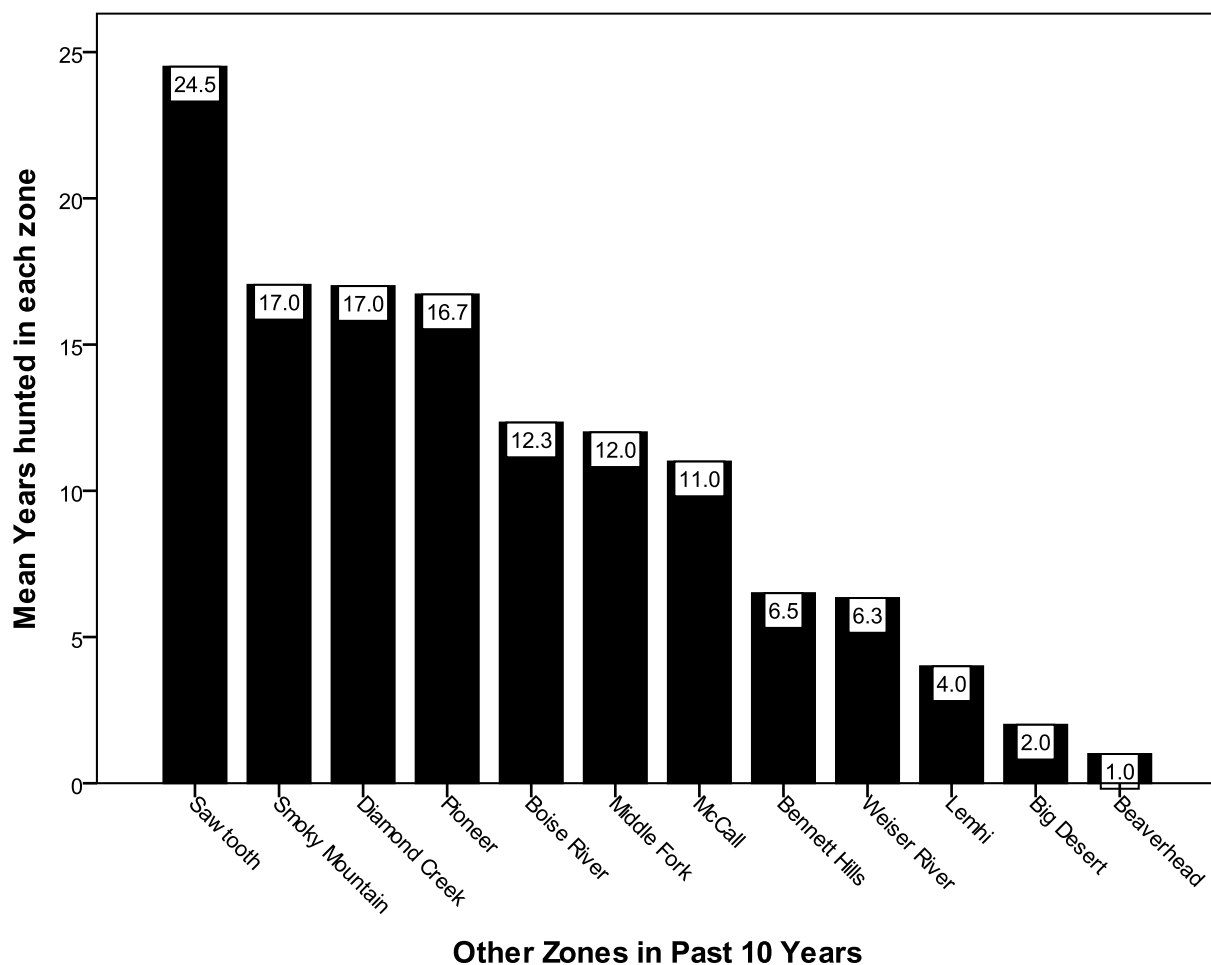
*(Please write in the Zone names, refer to map on page 5 for Zone names)*



**Q18: The Pioneer, Boise River and Sawtooth zones are other popular zones that respondents hunt in besides the Smoky Mountain zone.**

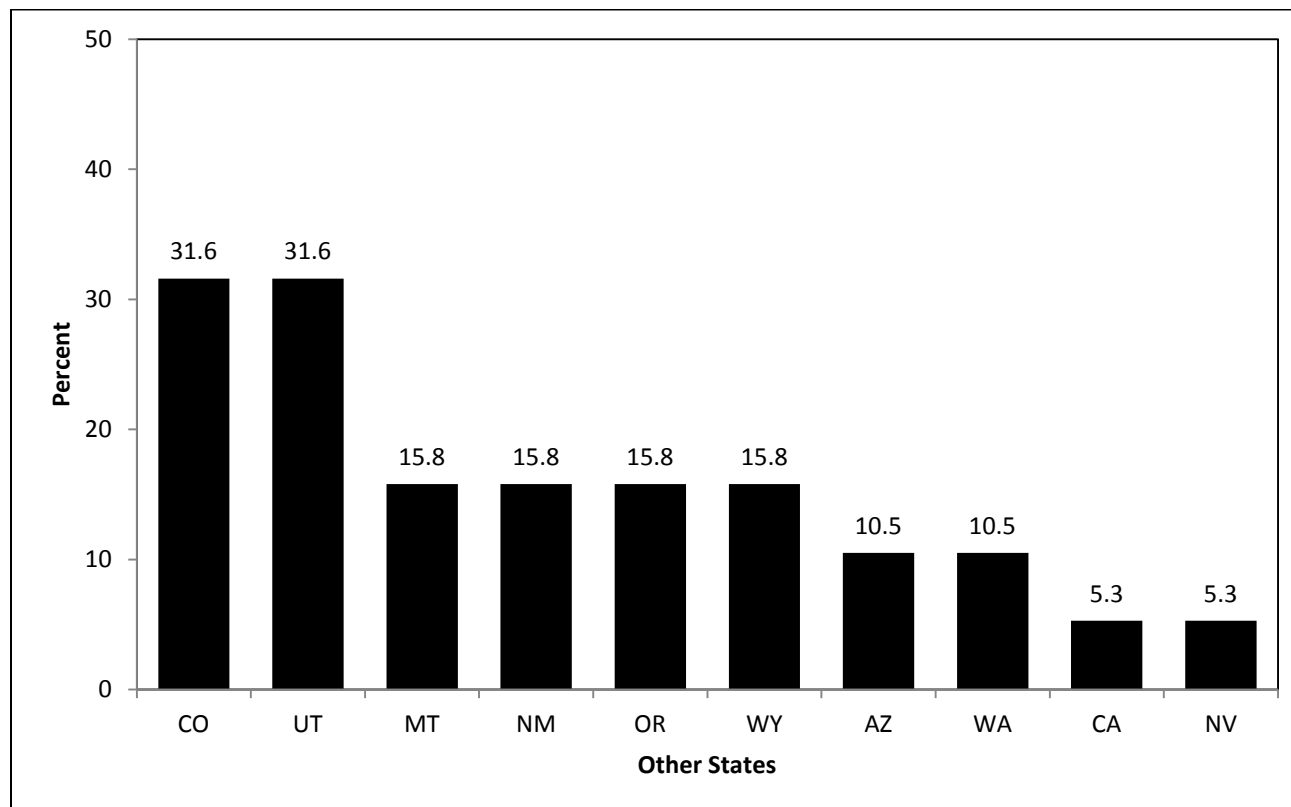
**20. How long have you hunted Elk in each of the zones you listed in Q-18?**

*(Please write in the name of the zone and number of years, refer to map on page 5 for Zone names)*



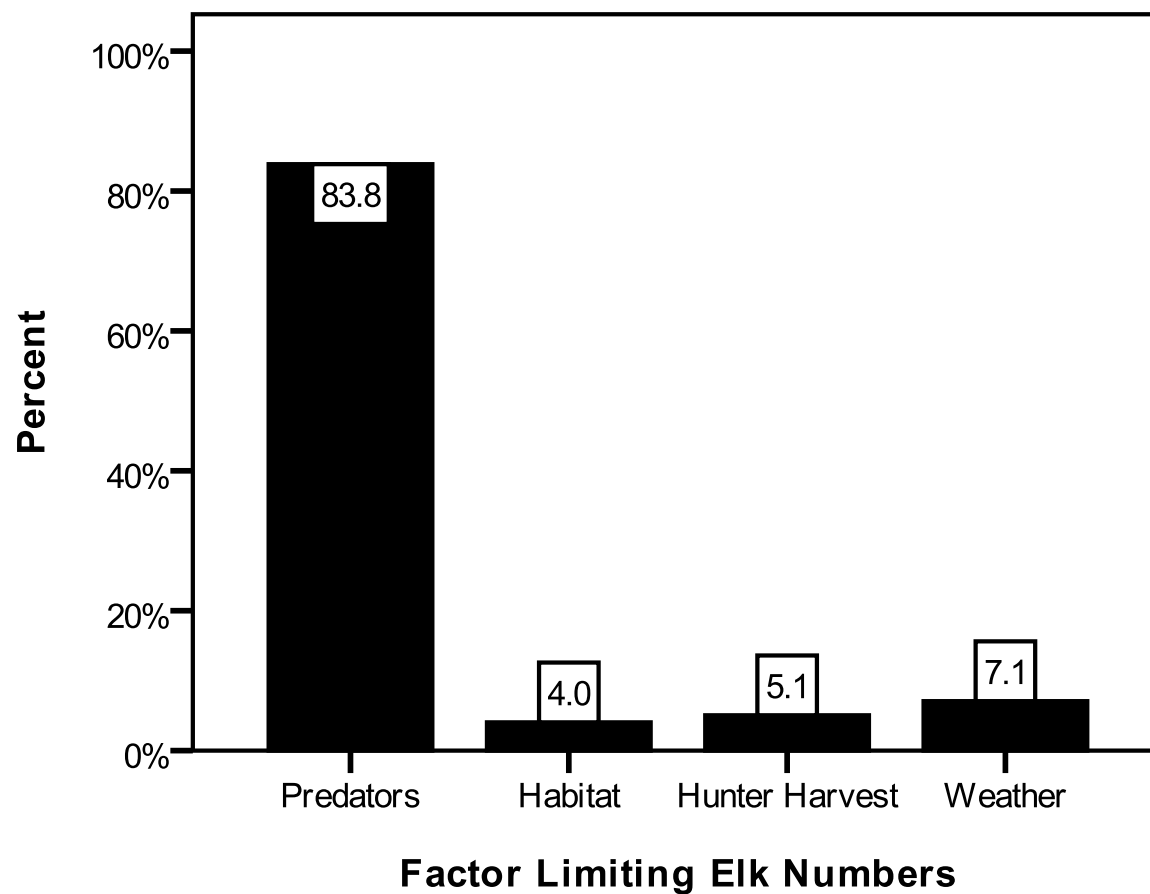
**Q20: The Sawtooth zone has been hunted the longest among respondents. The Smoky Mountain zone itself ranks second in duration.**

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



**Q21: About a third of Smoky Mountain hunters who hunt out-of-state have hunted in Colorado or Utah.**

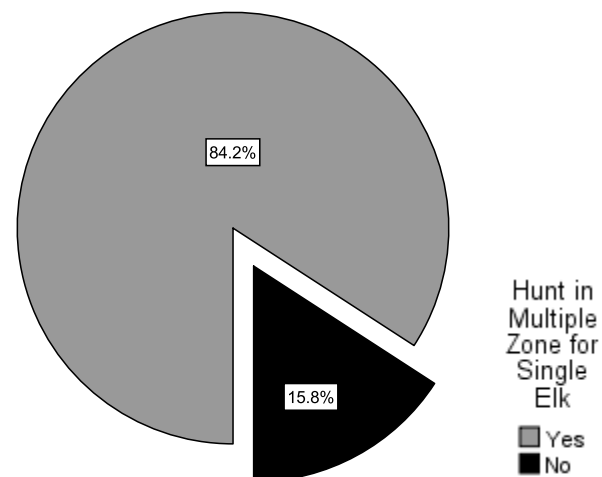
22. What do you believe is the primary factor limiting Elk numbers in the zone you hunted in 2011? (Check only ONE response)



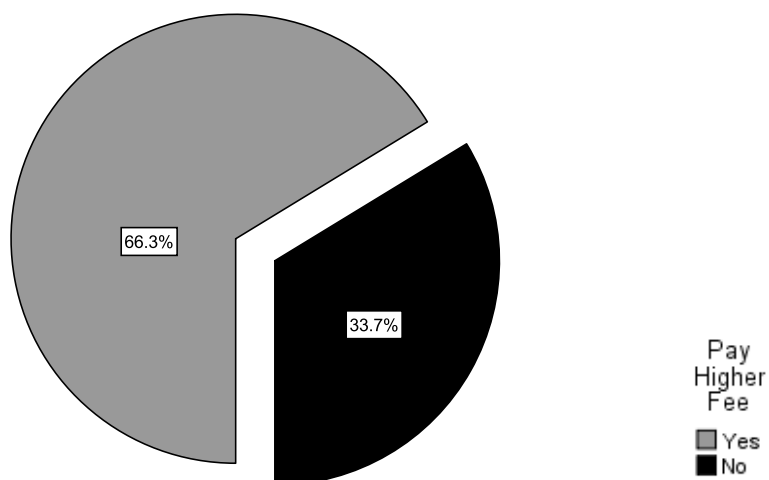
Q22: Similar to the state average, a majority of Smoky Mountain hunters believe that predators are the primary limiting factor for Elk numbers.

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

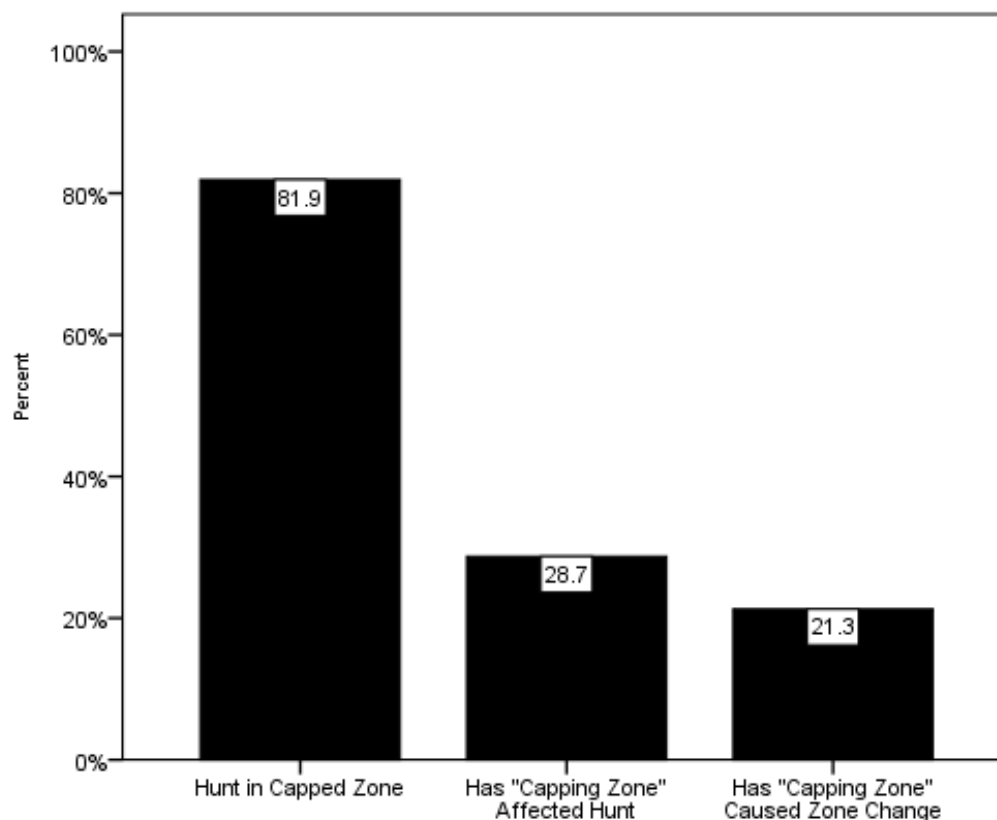
Like other hunters in the state, most hunters in the Smoky Mountain zone would like to be able to hunt for a single Elk in multiple zones in a year. About two-thirds of respondents said they would be willing to pay a higher fee to do so.



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:** The number of Smoky Mountain hunters who hunt in a capped zone almost doubles the state average. Over a quarter of respondents said that capping a zone has 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)

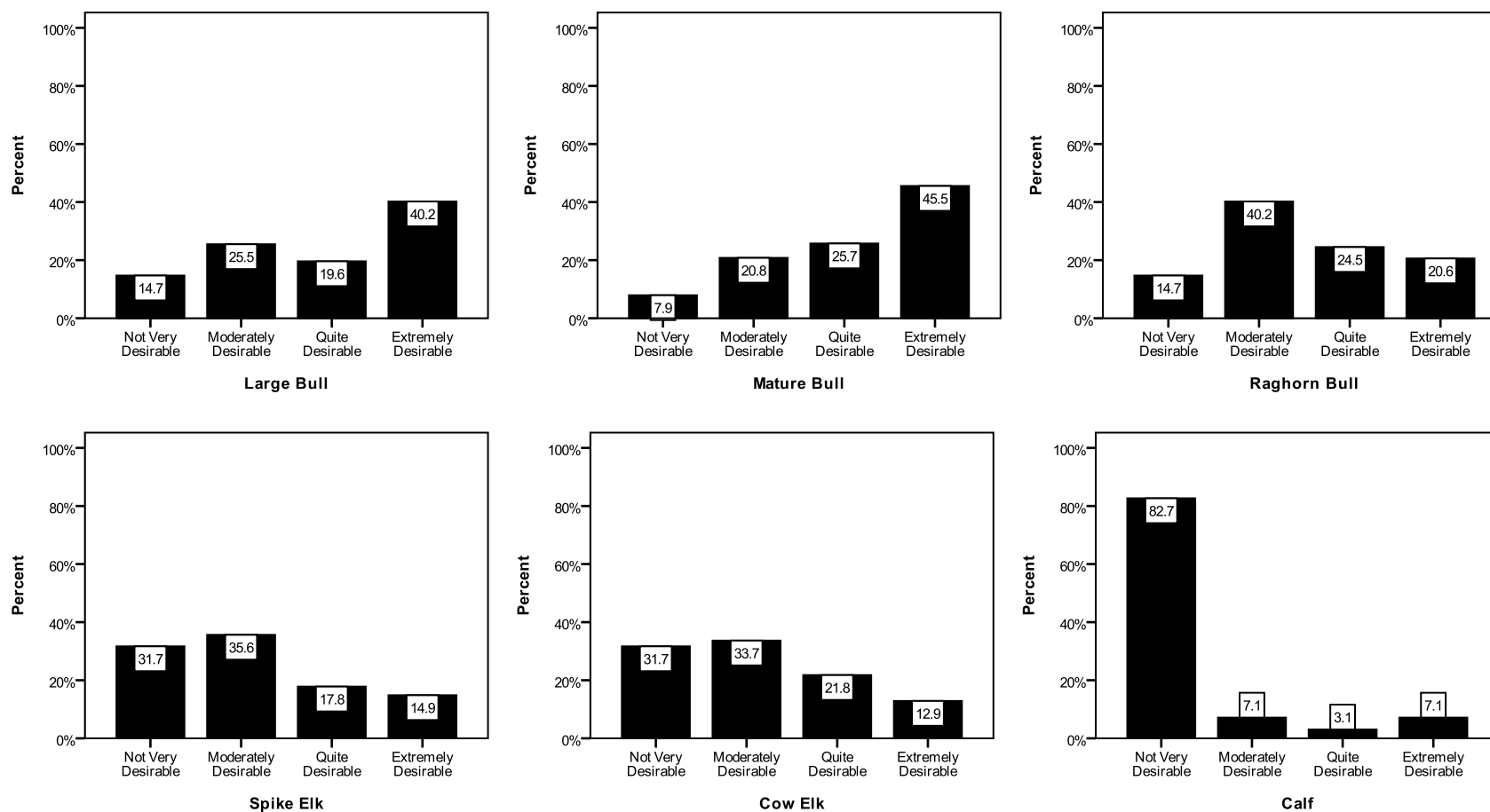


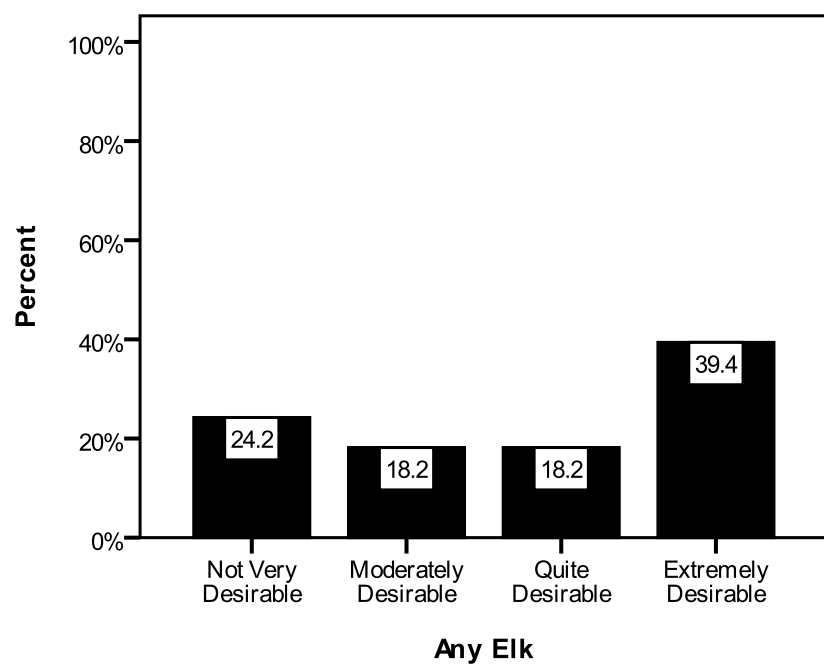
**Q26:** Unlike the state average, over half of hunters in the Smoky Mountain zone reported that Elk hunting has stayed the same after the zone was capped.

## 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.

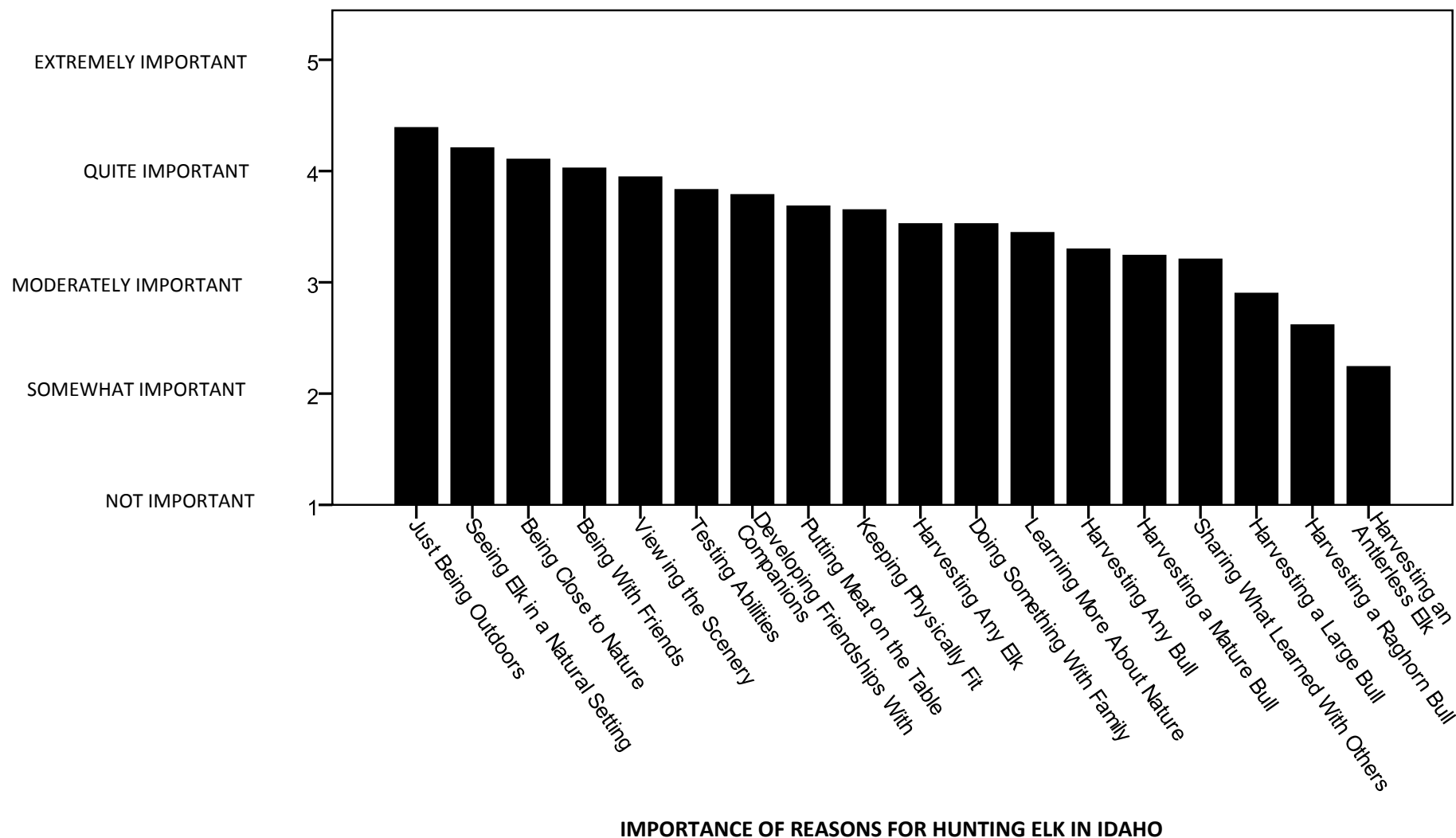
### 27. How desirable is it to you to harvest the following kinds of Elk?

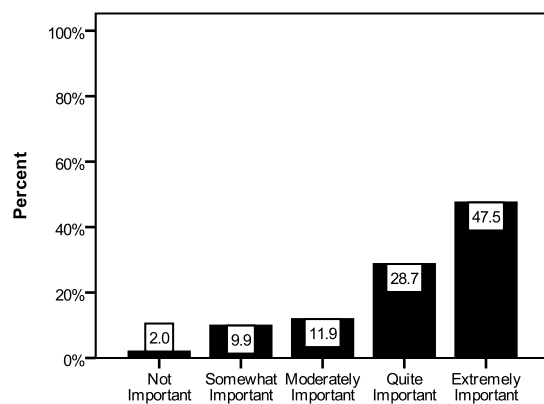




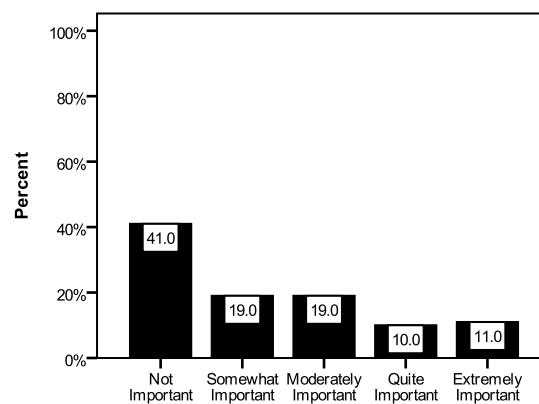
**Q27: The response distribution is similar between the state average and the Smoky Mountain zone.**

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?

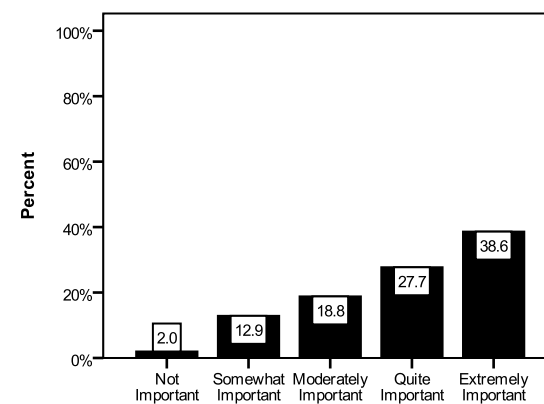




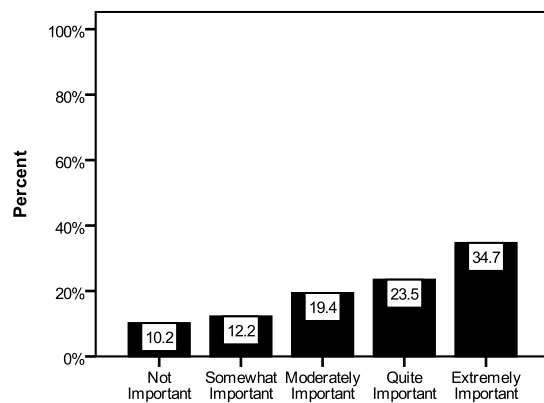
Being Close to Nature



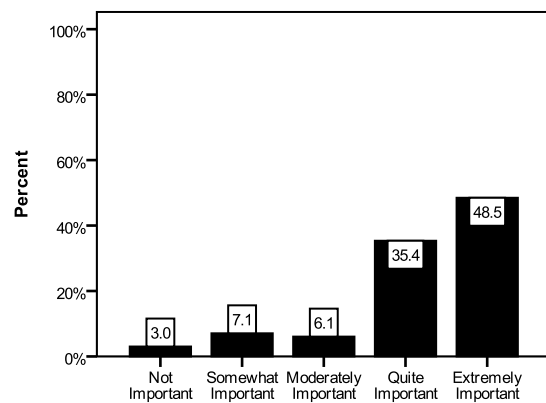
Harvesting an Antlerless Elk



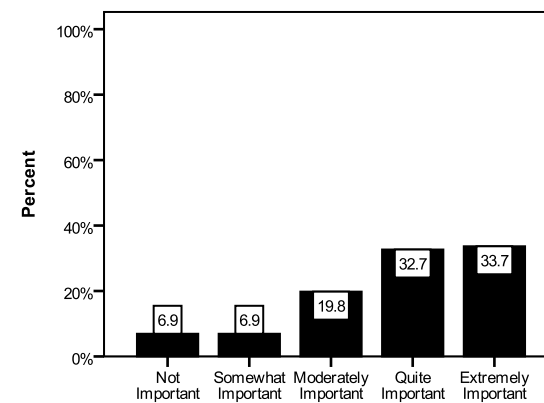
Viewing the Scenery



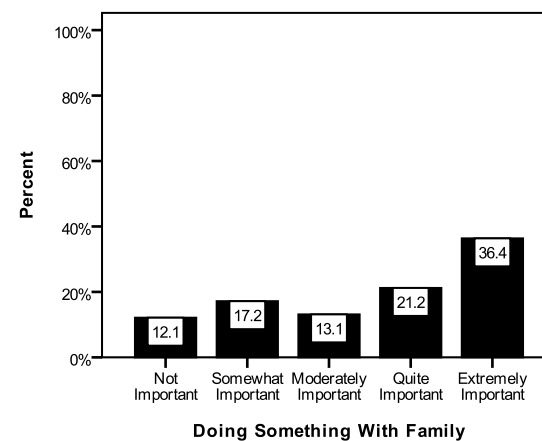
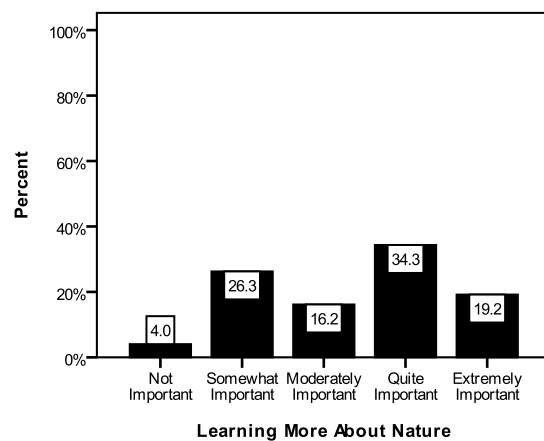
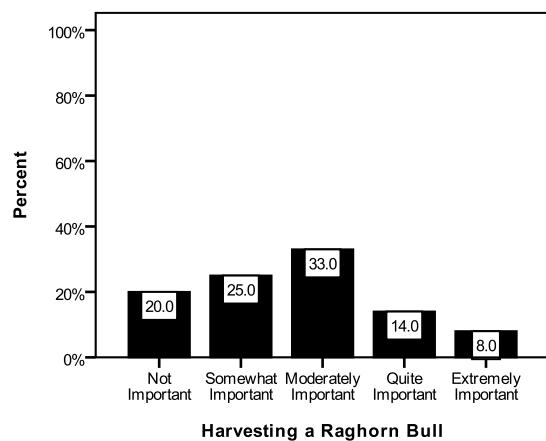
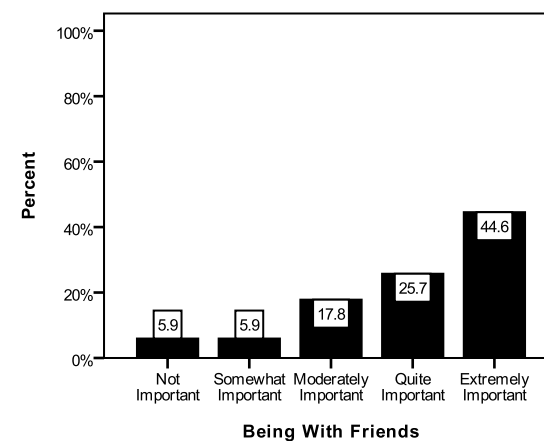
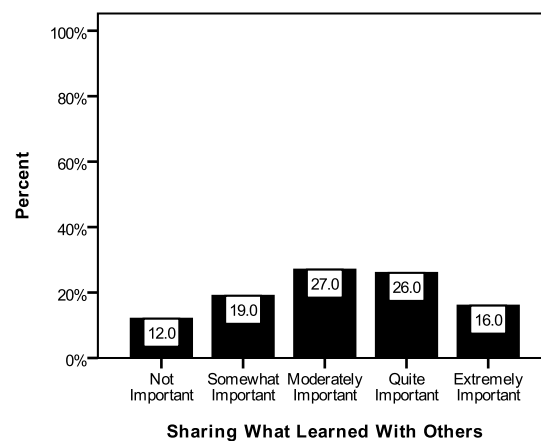
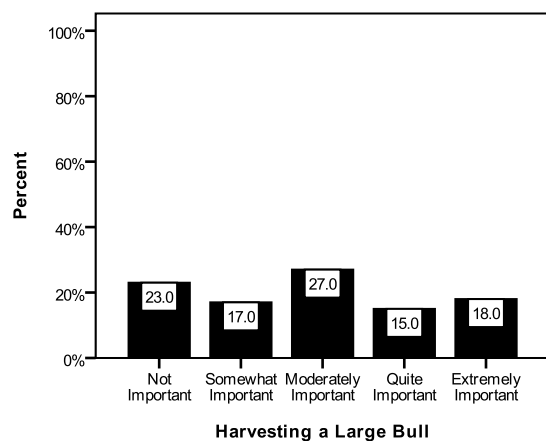
Harvesting Any Elk

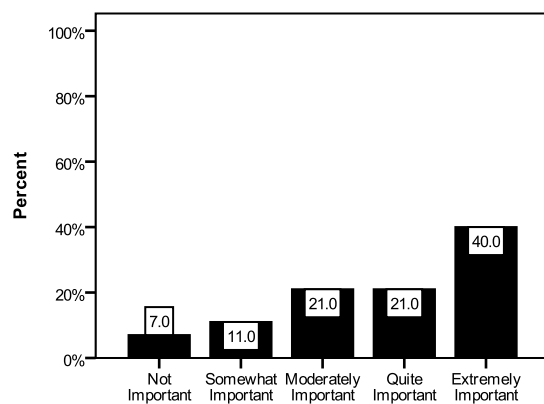


Seeing Elk in a Natural Setting

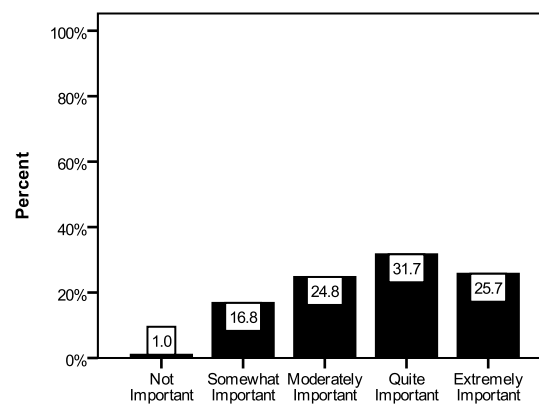


Testing Abilities

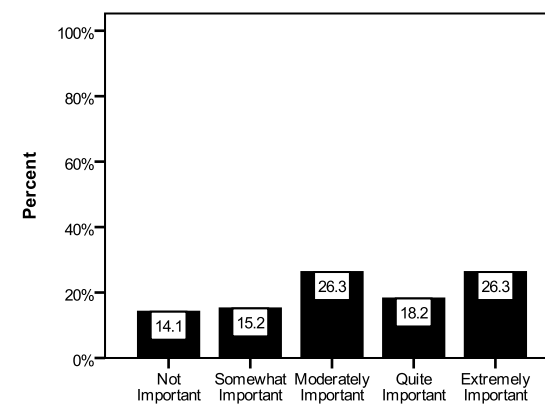




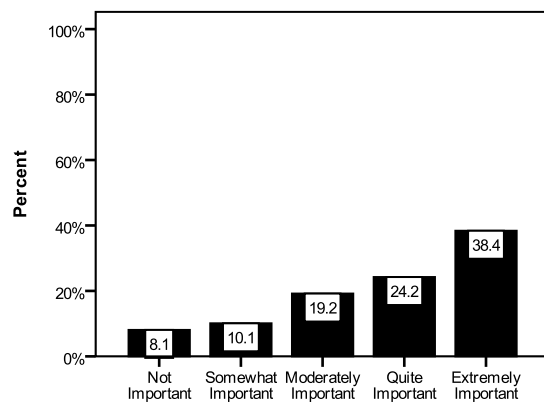
Putting Meat on the Table



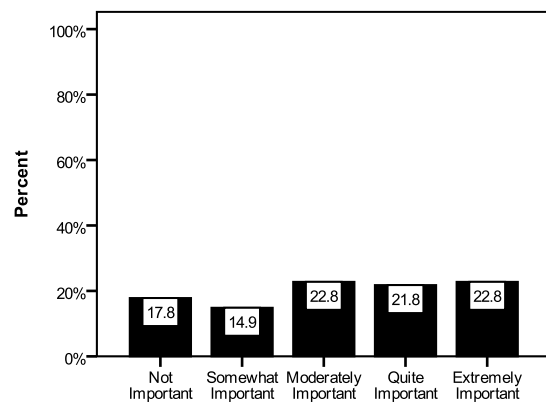
Keeping Physically Fit



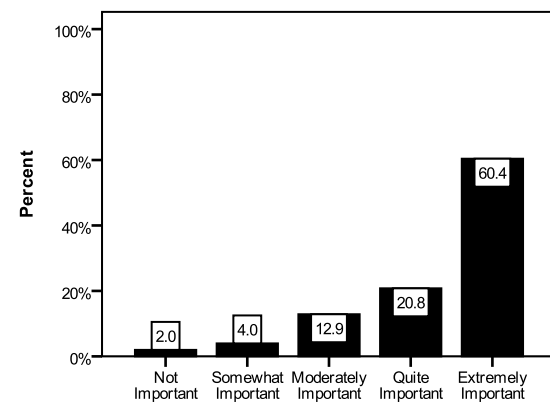
Harvesting Any Bull



Developing Friendships With Companions



Harvesting a Mature Bull

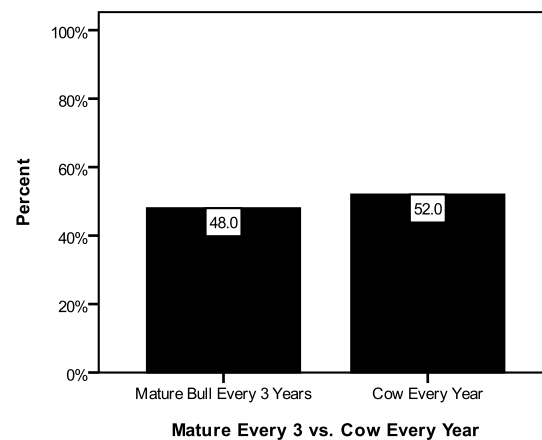
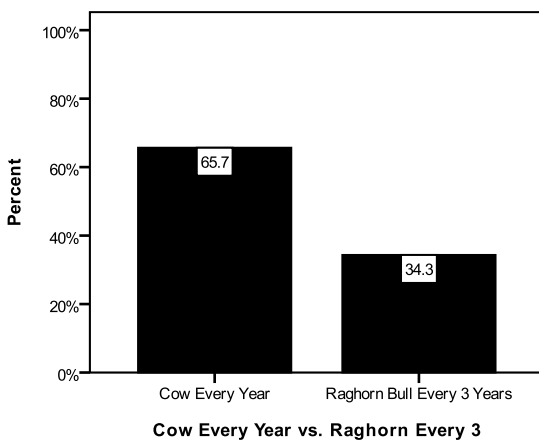
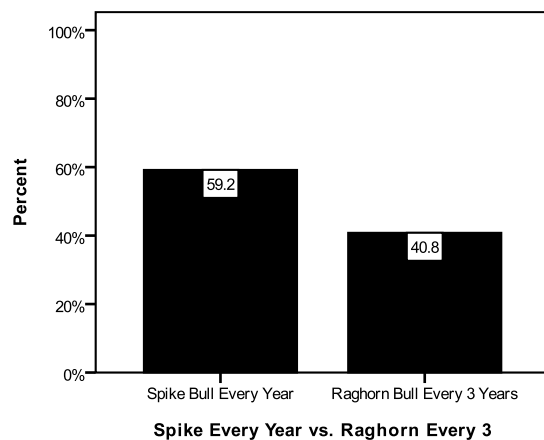
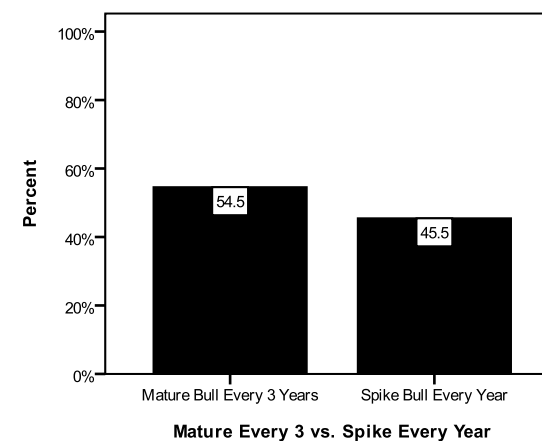
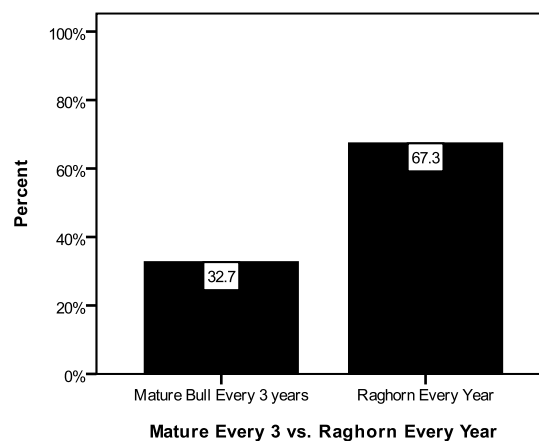
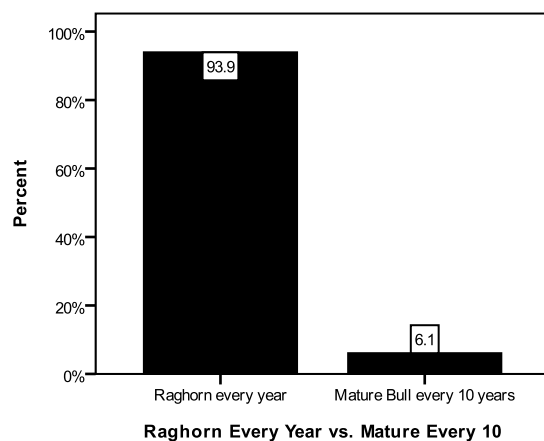


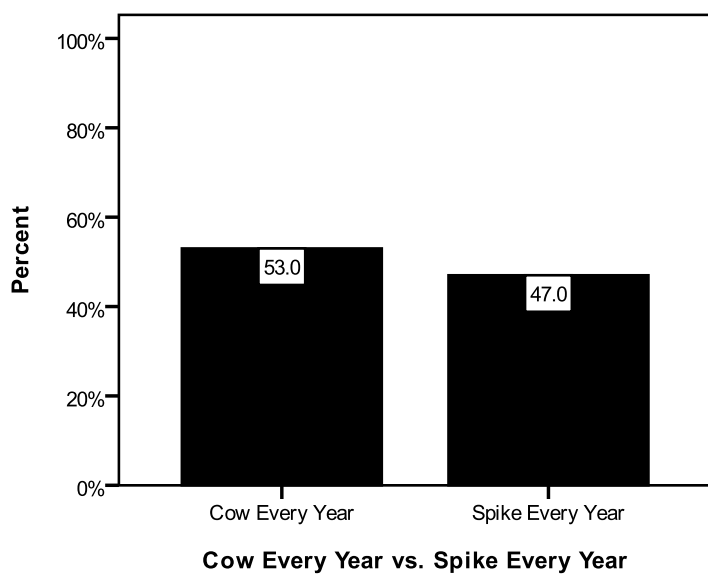
Just Being Outdoors

**Q28: The top five reasons are the same for both the state average and the Smoky Mountain zone.**

**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.**

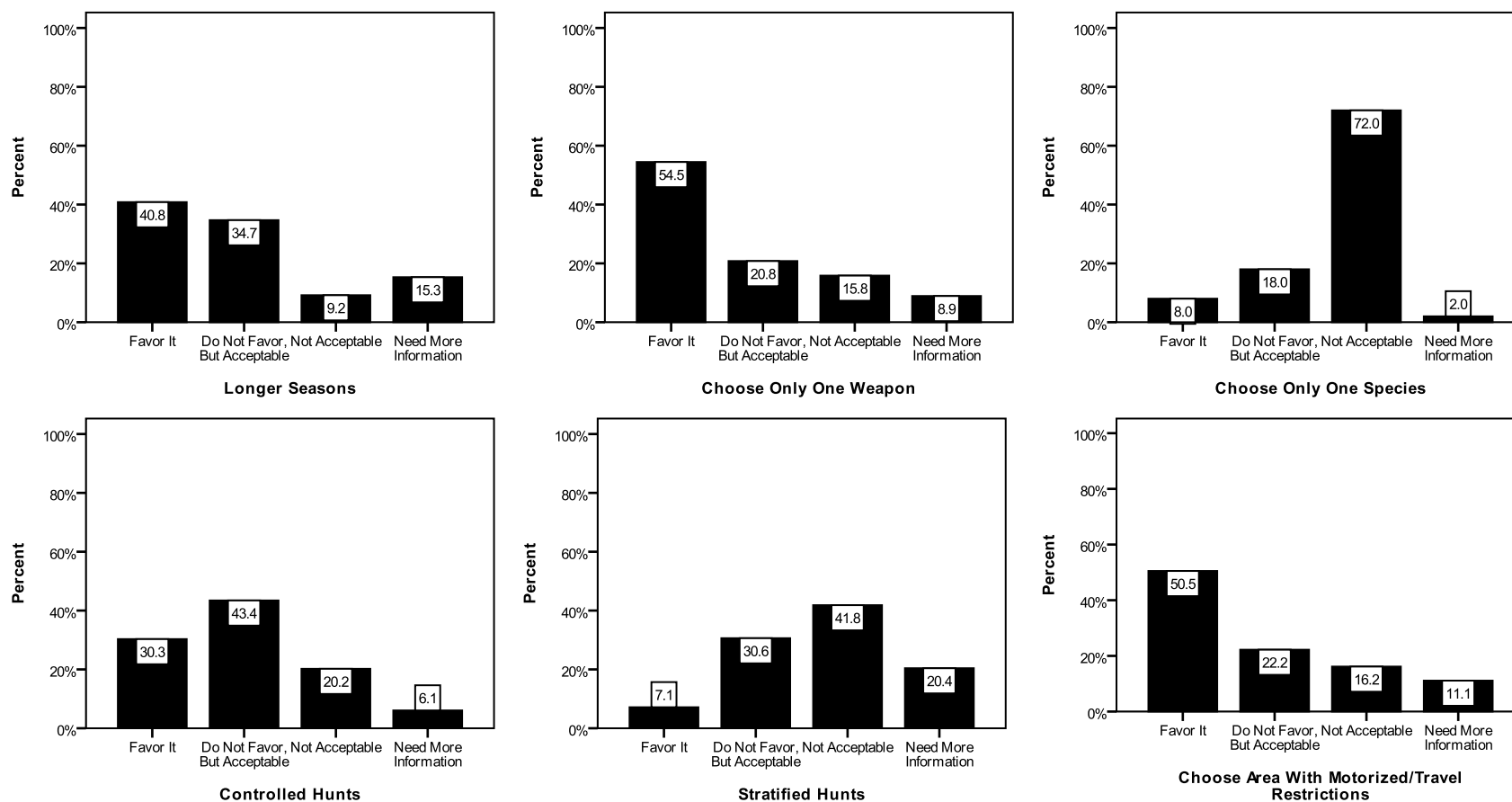


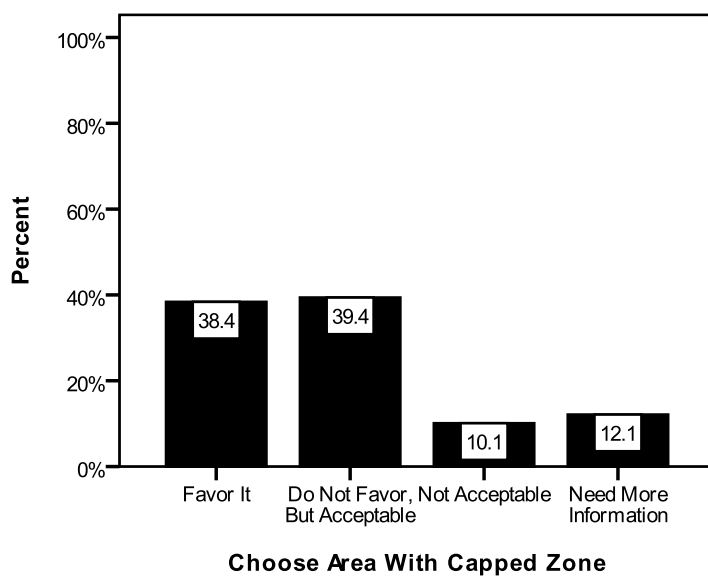


**Q32: The response distribution is similar between the state average and the Smoky Mountain zone.**

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

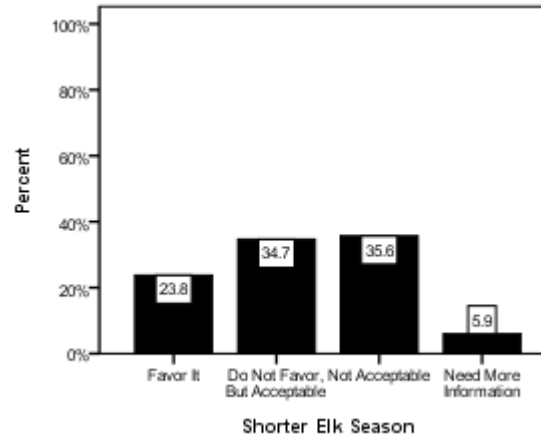
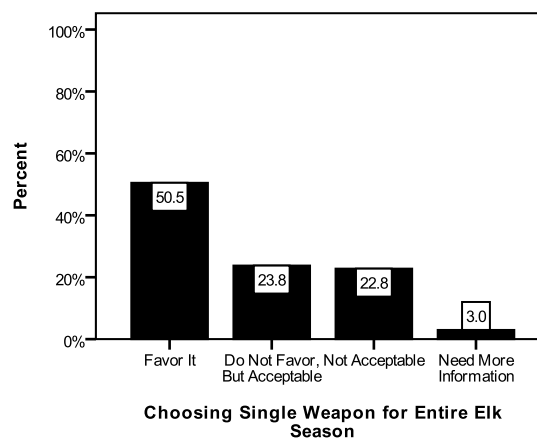
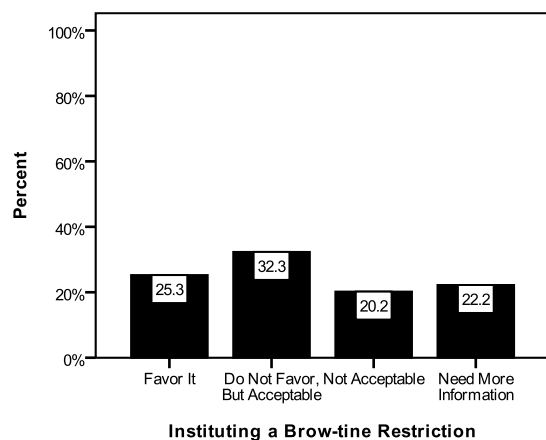
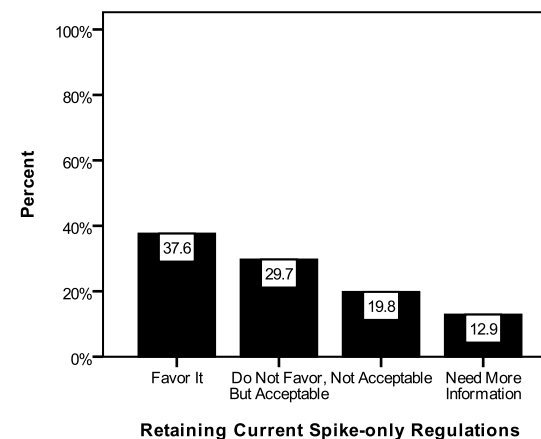
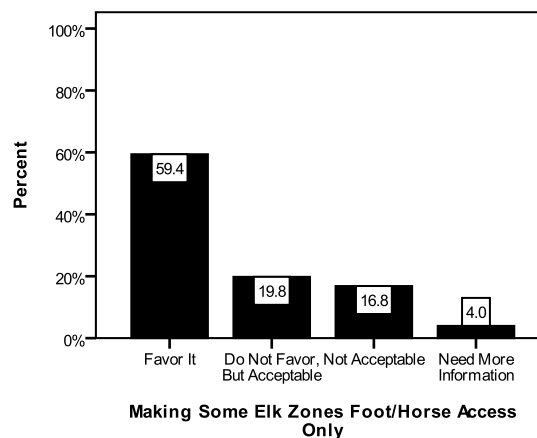
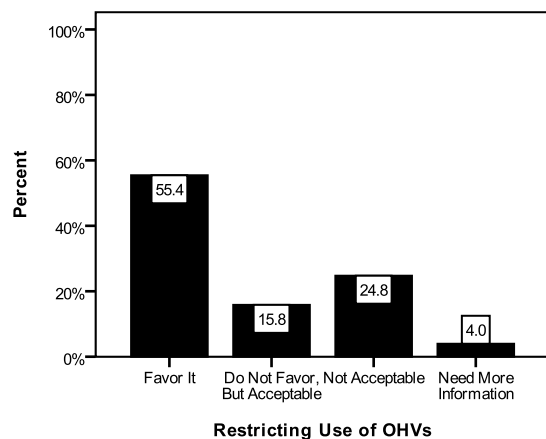
34. How do you feel about each of the following potential ways of improving Elk hunting, if needed?

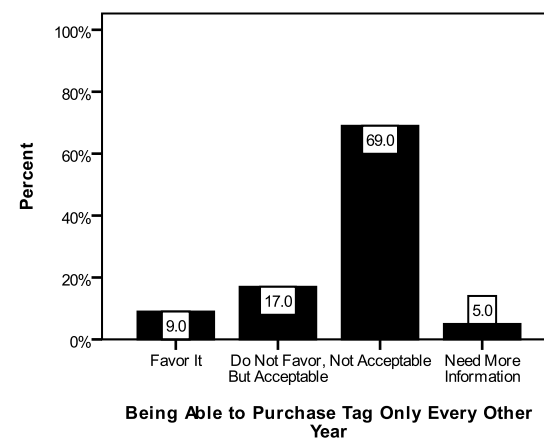
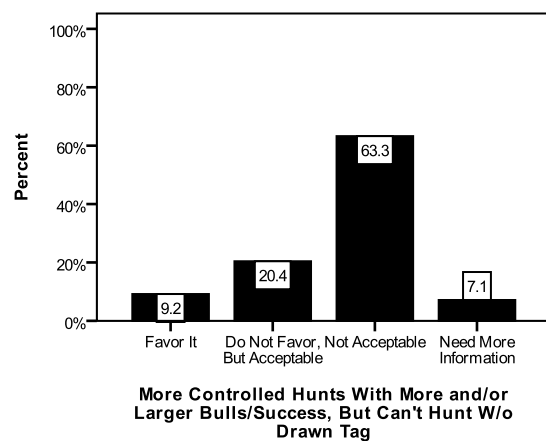
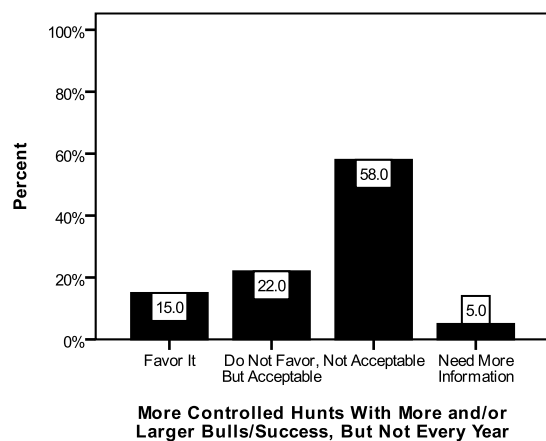




**Q34: The response distribution is similar between the state average and the Smoky Mountain zone. Slightly more hunters in this zone favor choosing an area with a capped zone.**

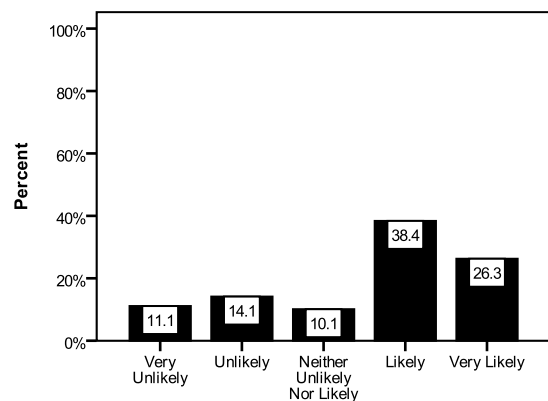
35. We would like to know how you feel about the following potential restrictions to increase the quality and size of Elk in Idaho and improve Elk hunting opportunities. Please indicate your opinion on the following potential restrictions.



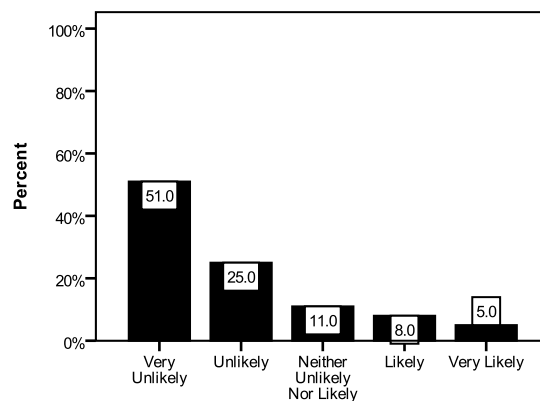


**Q35: The response distribution is similar between the state average and the Smoky Mountain zone. Slightly more hunters in this zone favor retaining current spike-only regulations.**

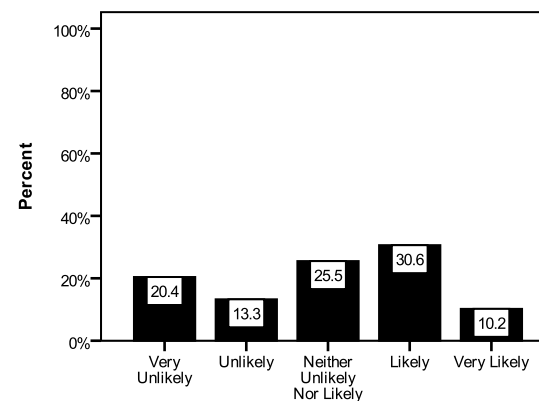
36. IF Idaho Fish and Game introduces restrictions that reduce Elk hunting opportunities to improve Elk populations, how would your hunting behavior change?



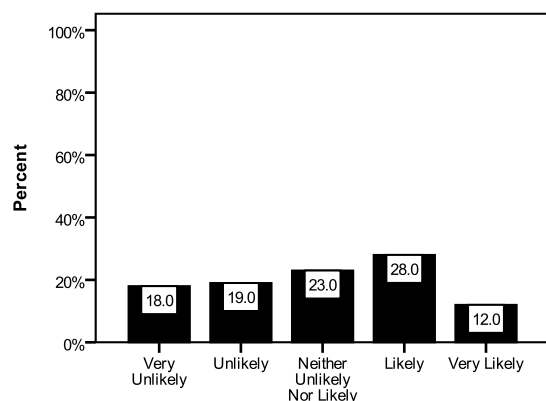
Hunt in Different Zones



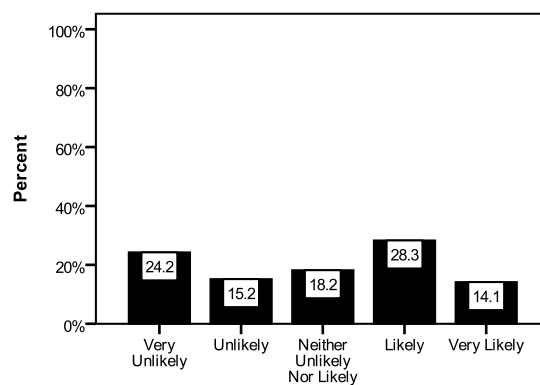
Quit Hunting Elk



Shift to Hunt Other Species



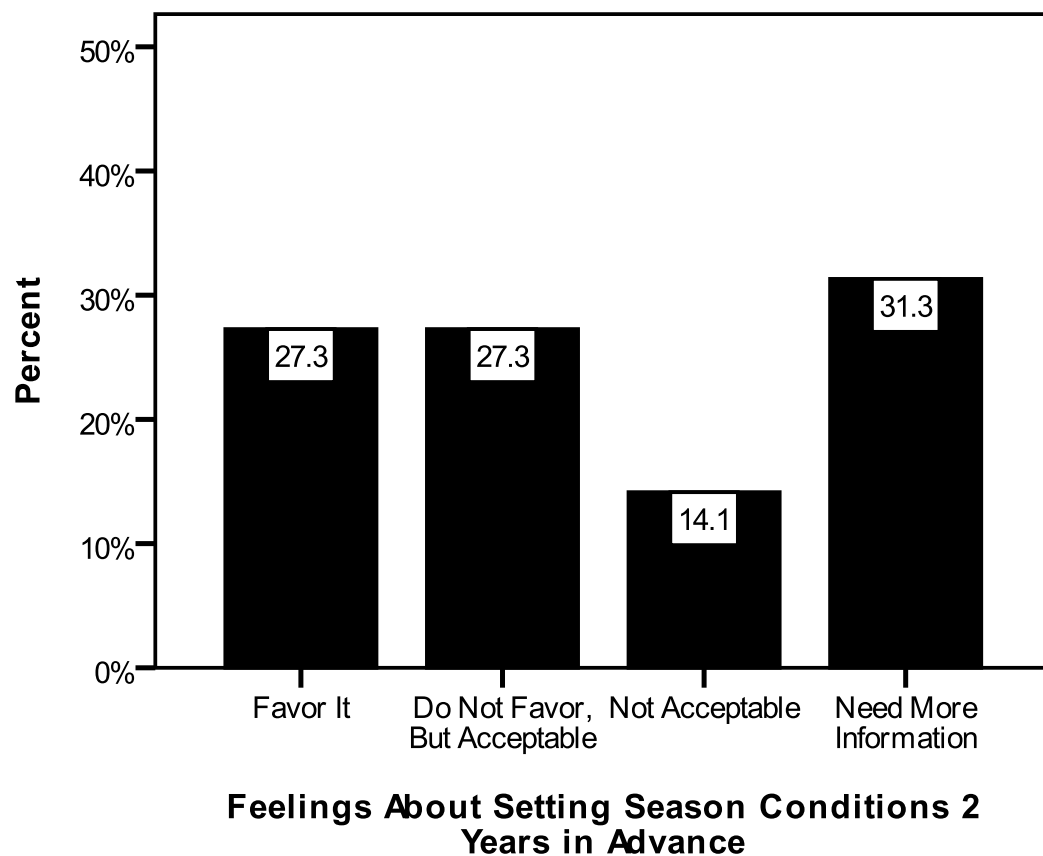
Not Change Hunting Behavior



Change Weapon Type for Increased Elk Hunting Opportunity

**Q36: The response distribution is similar between the state average and the Smoky Mountain zone.**

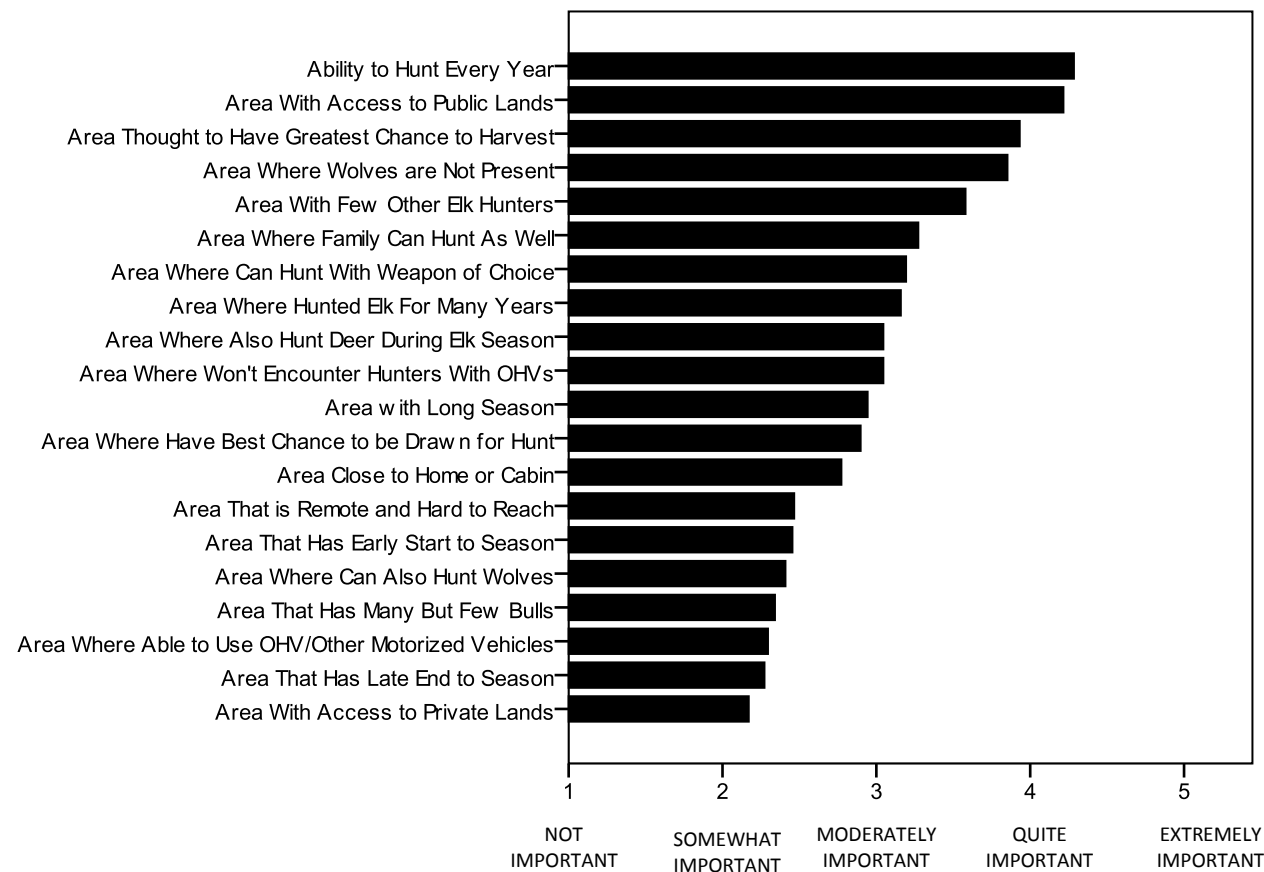
38. How would you feel about a big game regulation that sets the general season conditions for 2 years in advance, just like the current Moose, Mountain Goat, Bighorn Sheep, Upland Game, Turkey and Fishing regulations? *(Please check one response)*



Q38: The response distribution is similar between the state average and the Smoky Mountain zone.

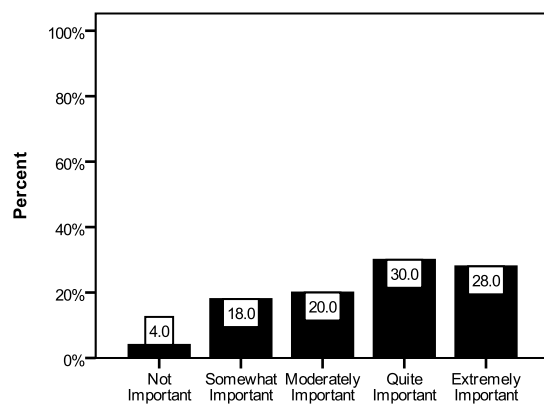
## WHEN AND WHERE TO HUNT

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?

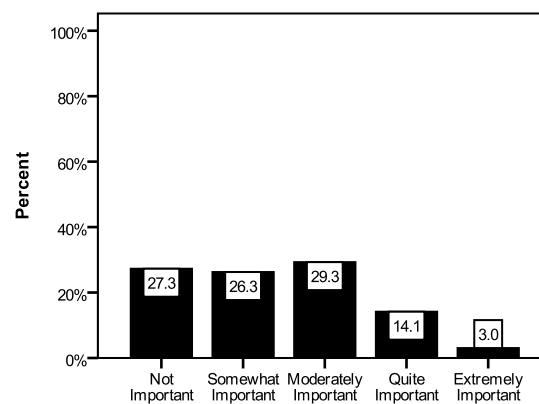


**Q29: The top five characteristics are the same for both the Smoky Mountain zone and the state average.**

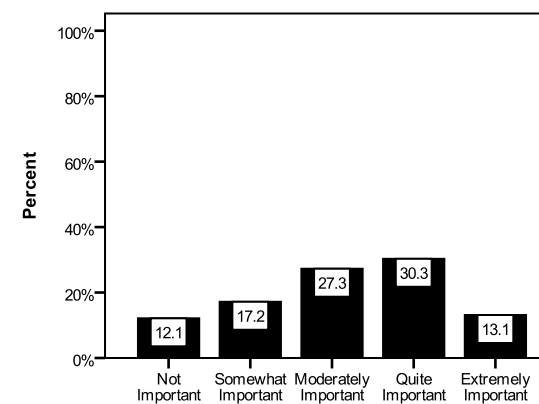
### CHARACTERISTICS AFFECTING CHOICE OF WHERE TO HUNT IN IDAHO



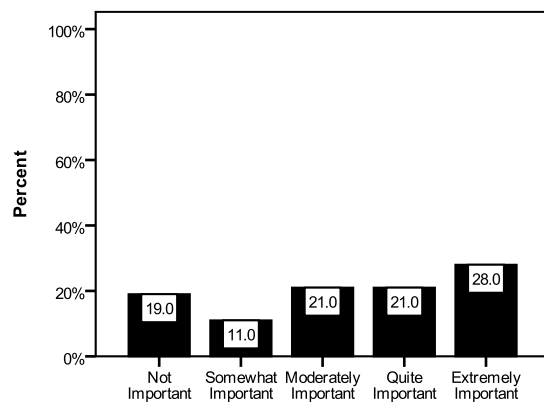
Area With Few Other Elk Hunters



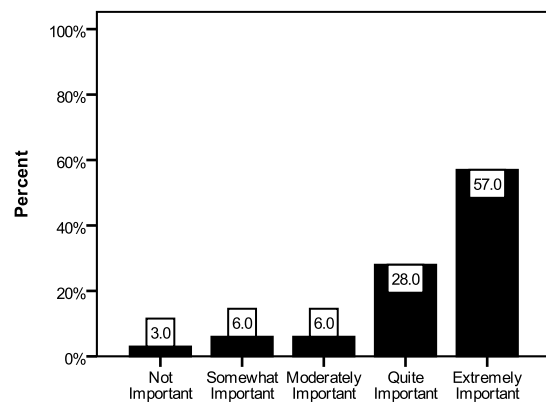
Area That Has Many But Few Bulls



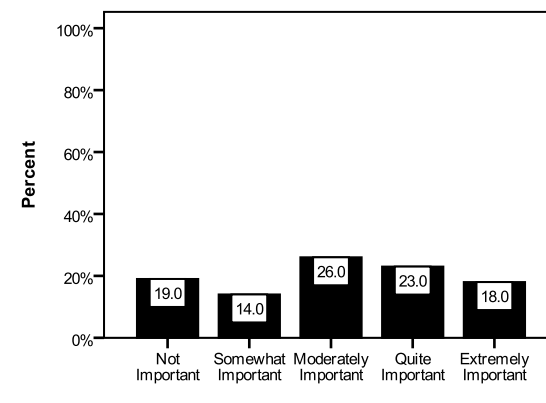
Area Where Hunted Elk For Many Years



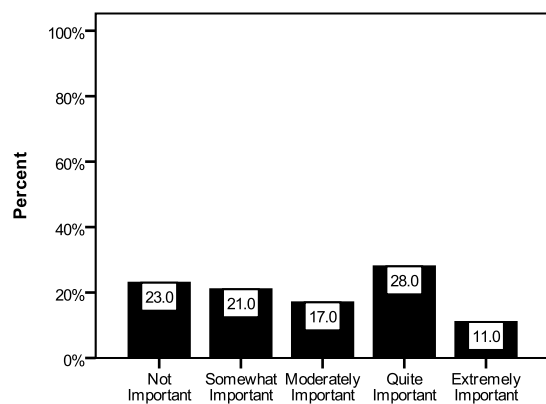
Area Where Family Can Hunt As Well



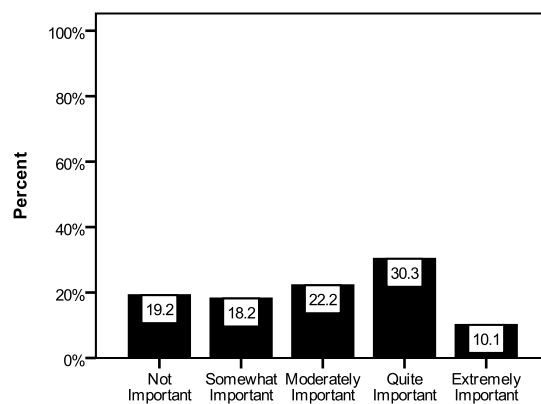
Ability to Hunt Every Year



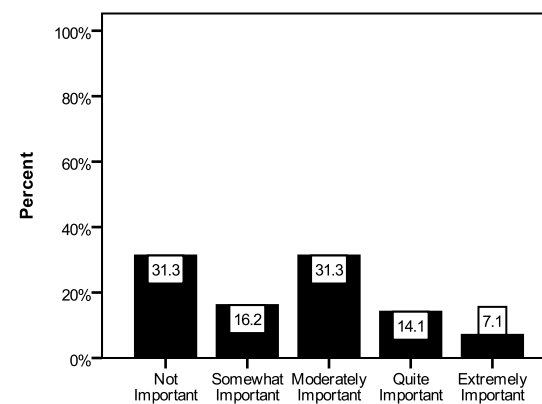
Area Where Also Hunt Deer During Elk Season



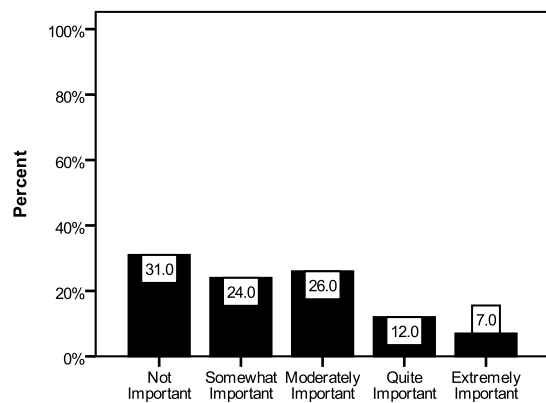
Area Close to Home or Cabin



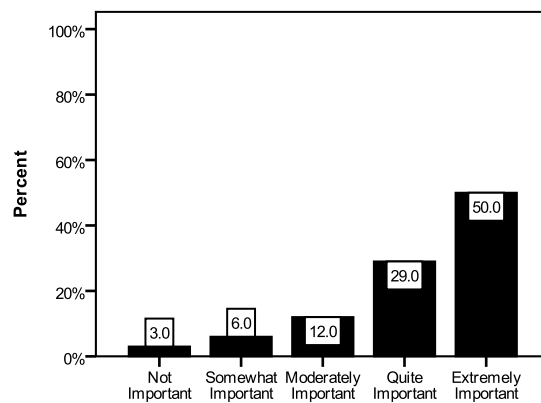
Area with Long Season



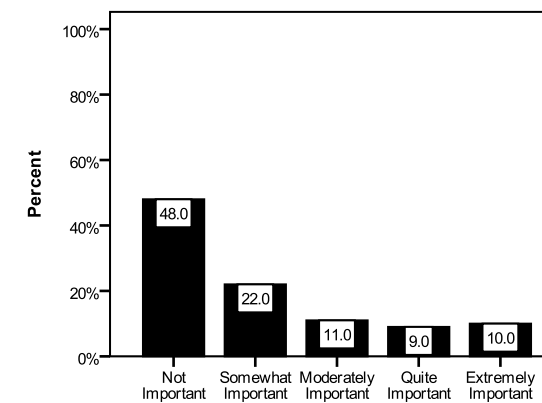
Area That is Remote and Hard to Reach



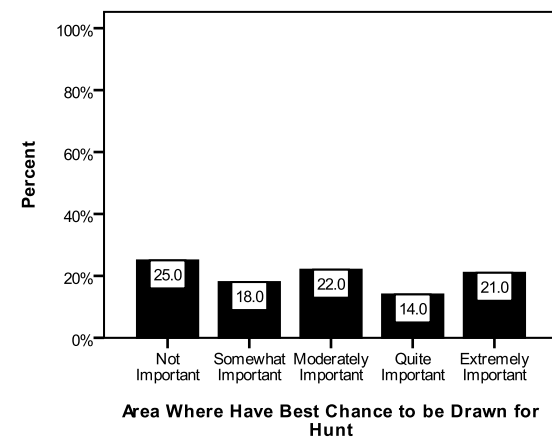
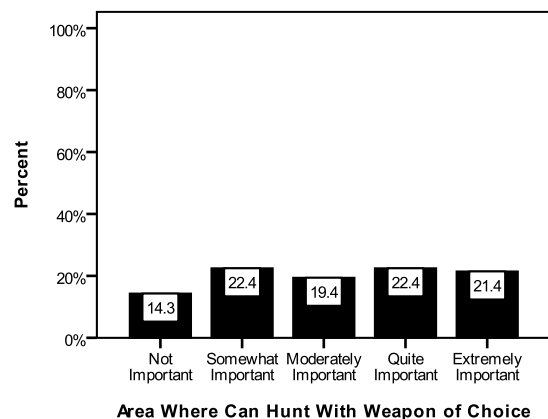
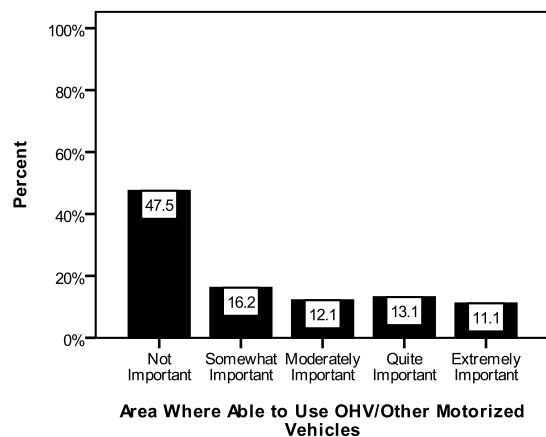
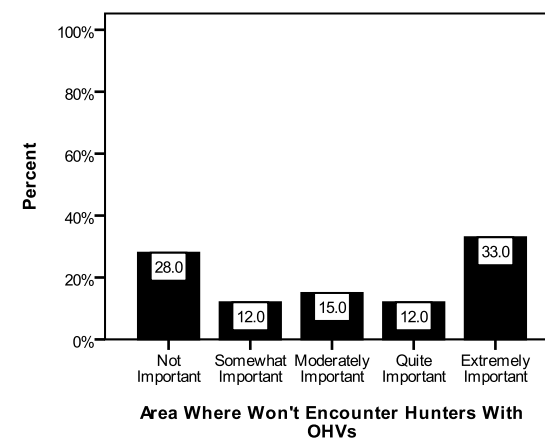
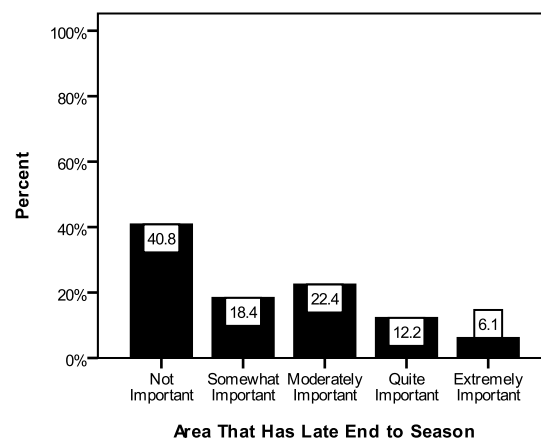
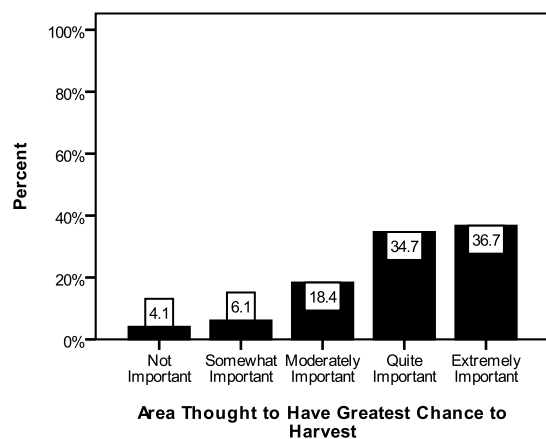
Area That Has Early Start to Season

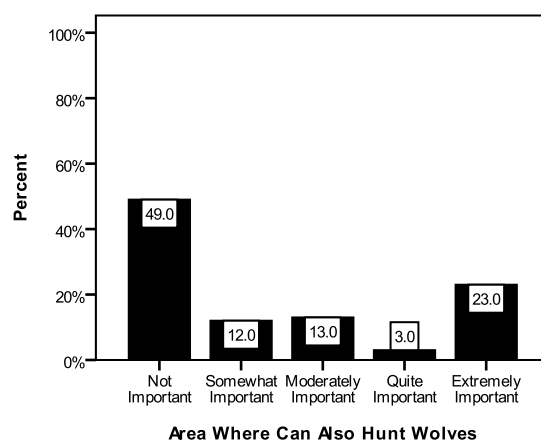
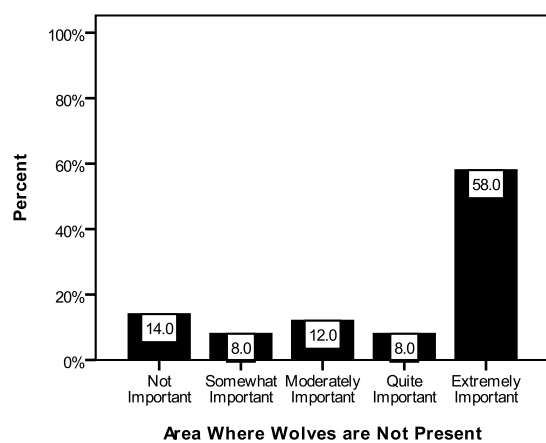


Area With Access to Public Lands

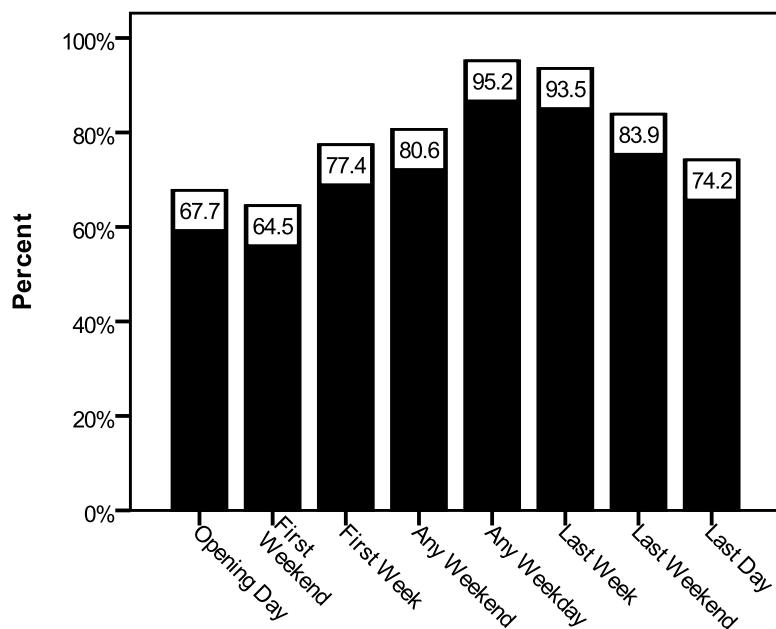


Area With Access to Private Lands

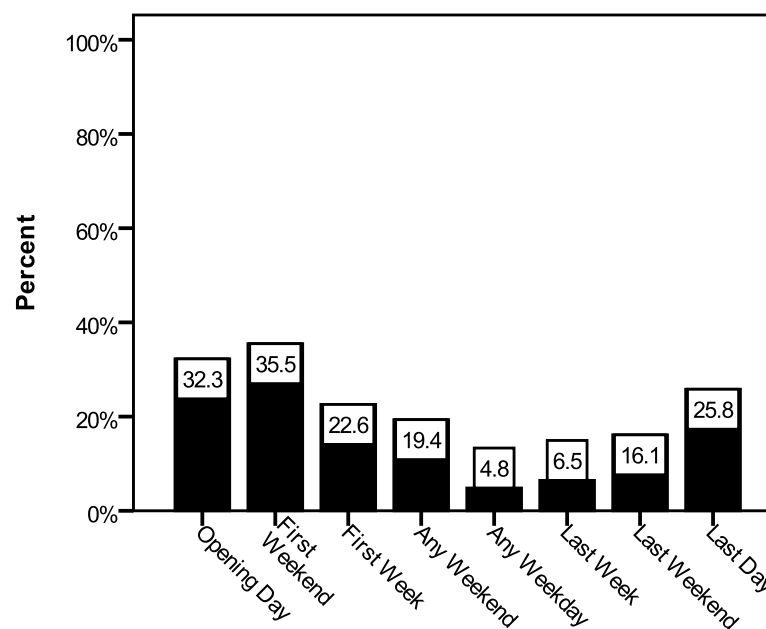




30. Are there any times during the general Elk hunting season in Idaho that you prefer or avoid? (Please check as many as apply)



TIMES PREFERRED DURING GENERAL ELK SEASON

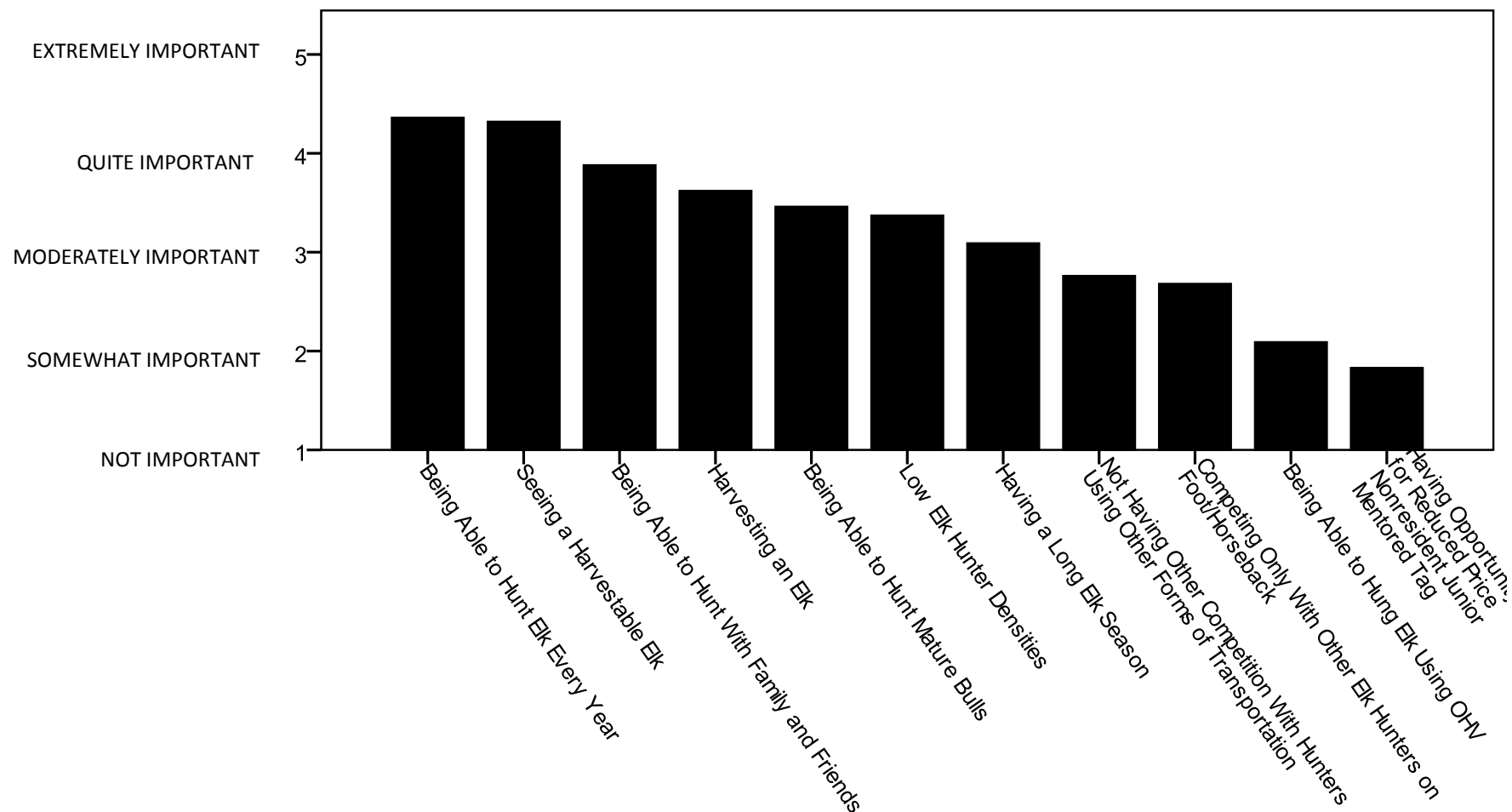


TIMES AVOIDED DURING GENERAL ELK SEASON

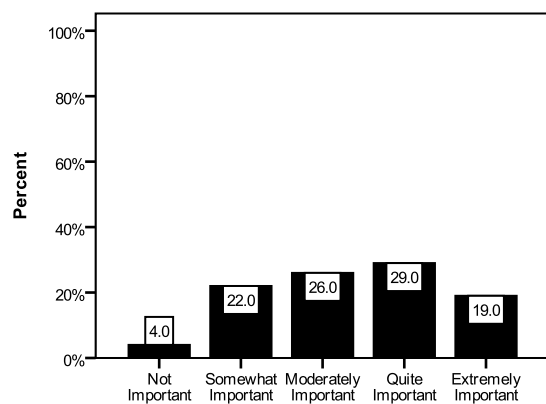
**Q30: The response distribution is similar between the state average and the Smoky Mountain zone. Weekdays are more preferable for both groups.**

## ATTRIBUTES OF A QUALITY ELK HUNTING EXPERIENCE

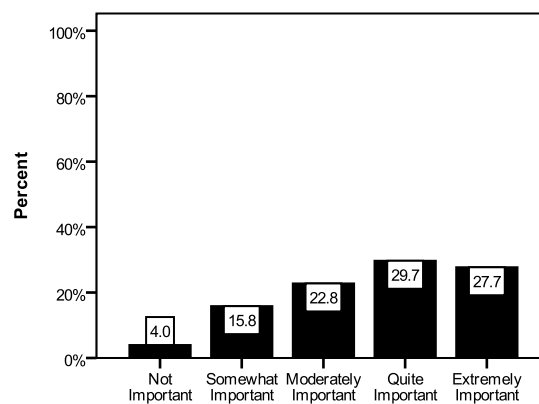
31. How important to you are each of these attributes for a quality Idaho Elk hunting experience?



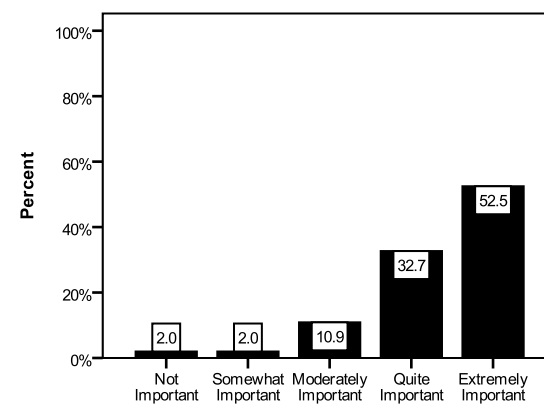
IMPORTANCE OF ATTRIBUTES FOR A QUALITY ELK HUNTING EXPERIENCE IN IDAHO



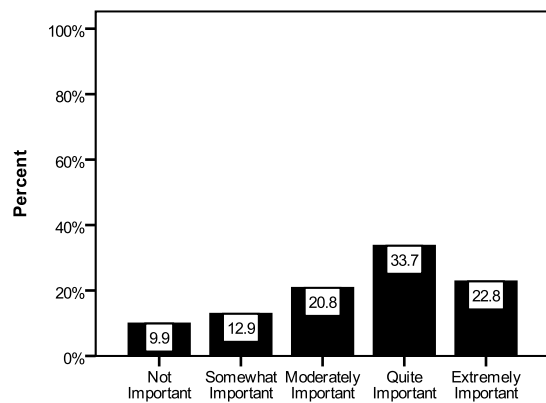
Low Elk Hunter Densities



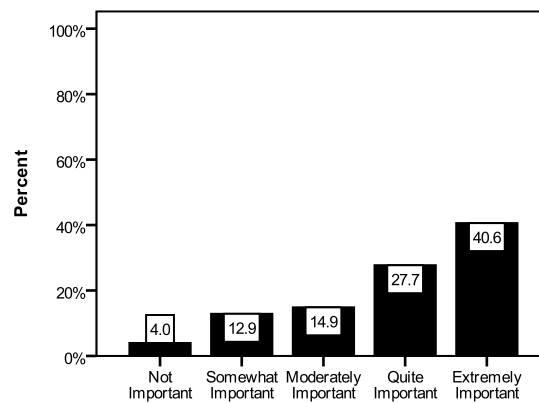
Harvesting an Elk



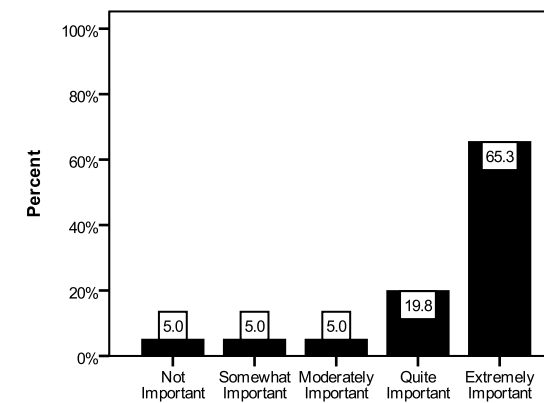
Seeing a Harvestable Elk



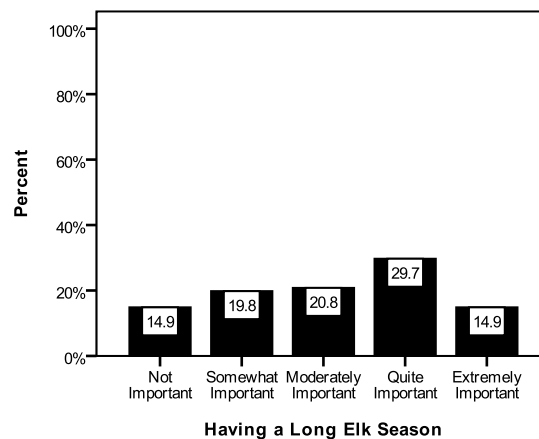
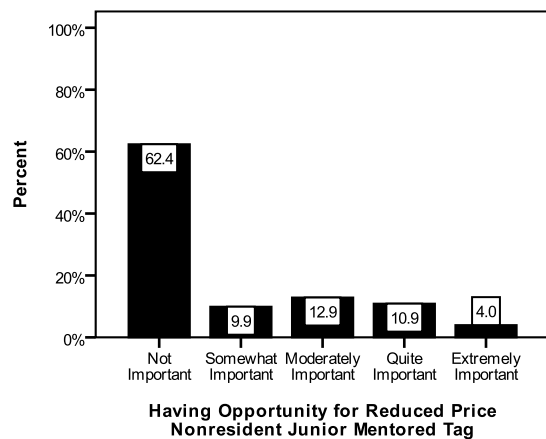
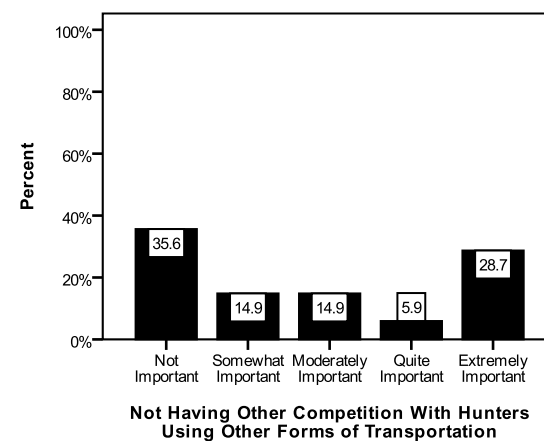
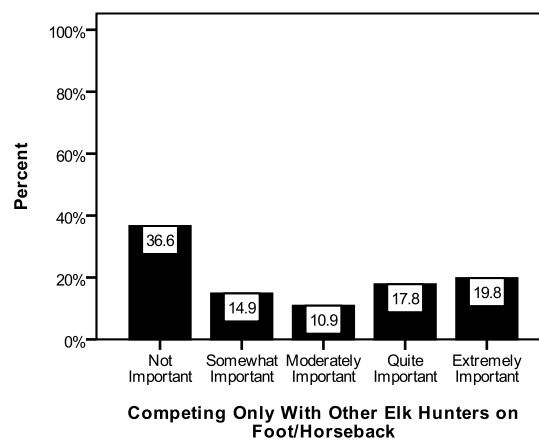
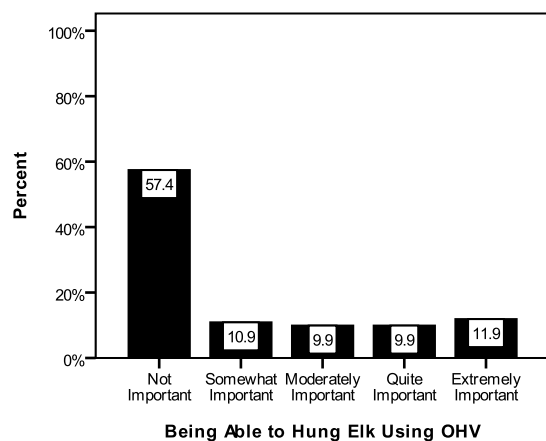
Being Able to Hunt Mature Bulls



Being Able to Hunt With Family and Friends



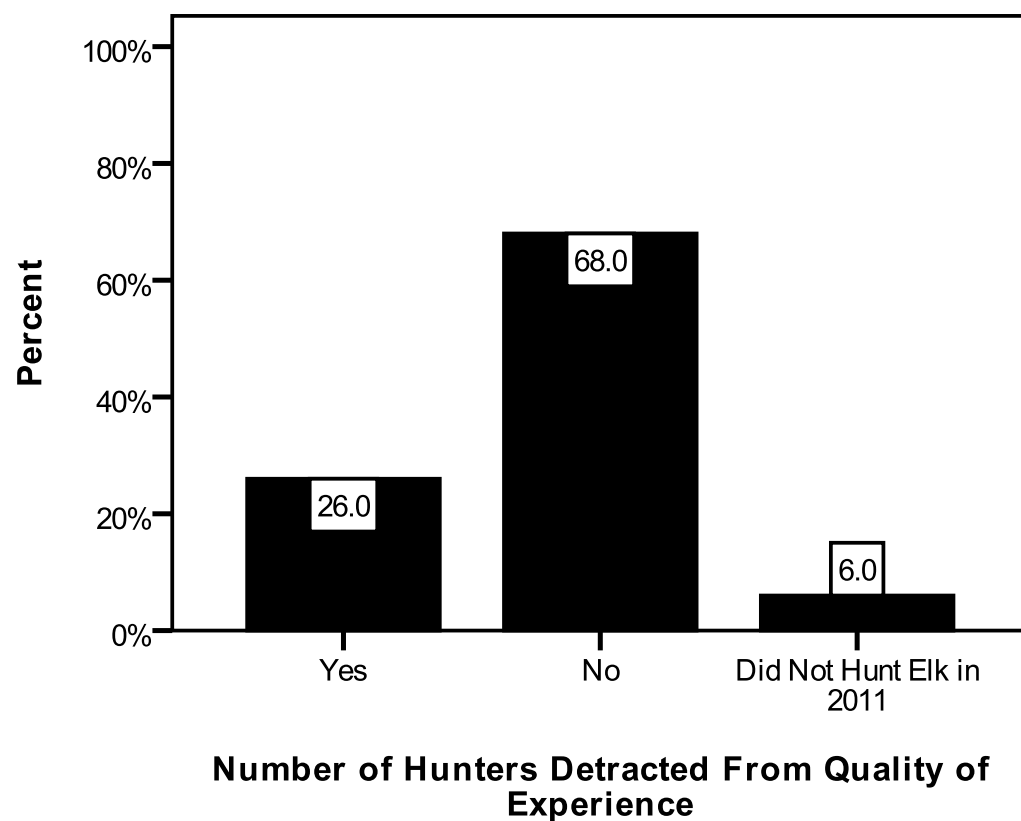
Being Able to Hunt Elk Every Year



**Q31: The top five attributes are the same for both the state average and the Smoky Mountain zone.**

## HUNTING SATISFACTION

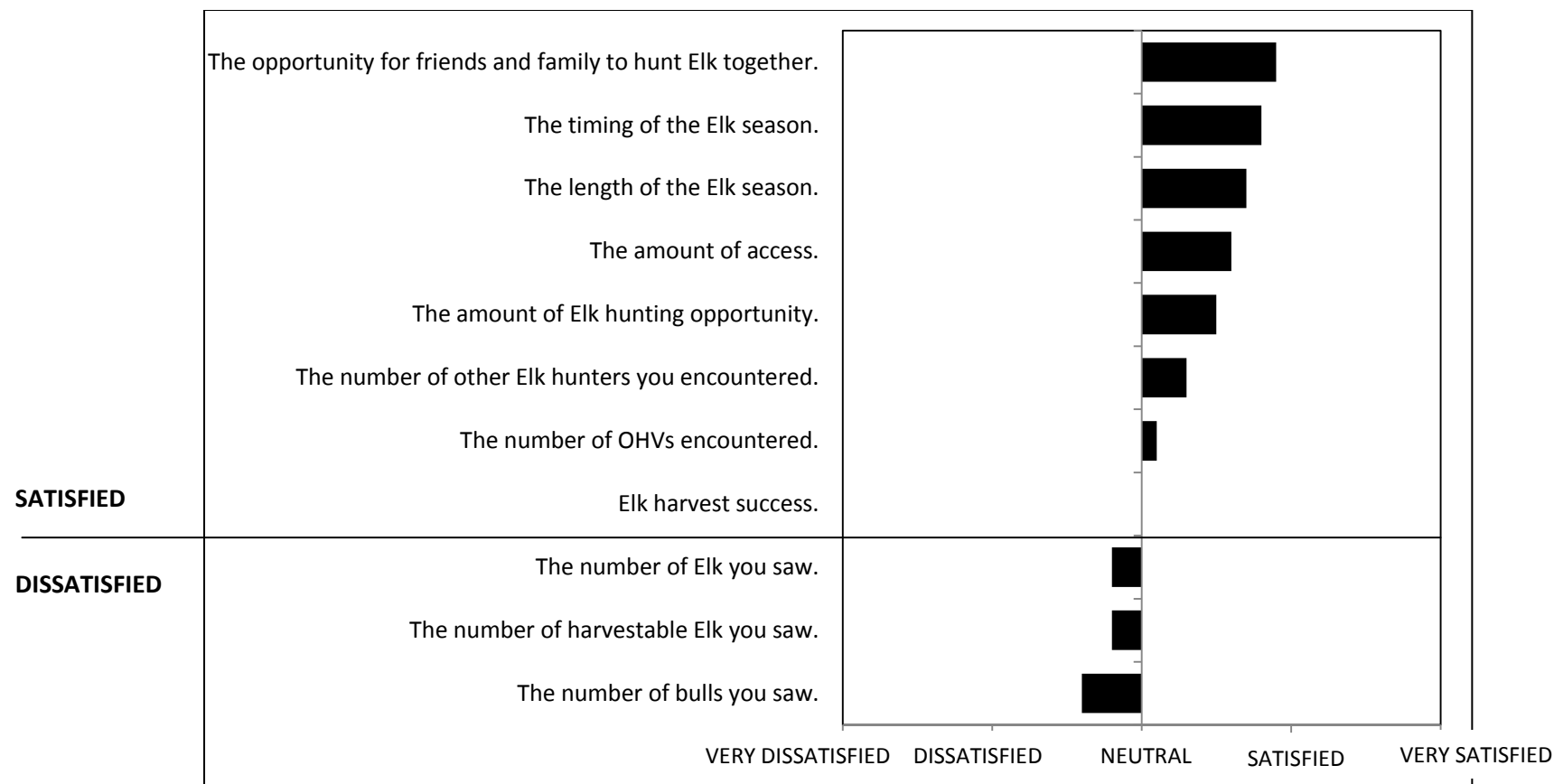
33. Were there times during your 2011 Elk season when the numbers of other hunters seriously detracted from the quality of your hunting experience? *(Please check one response)*



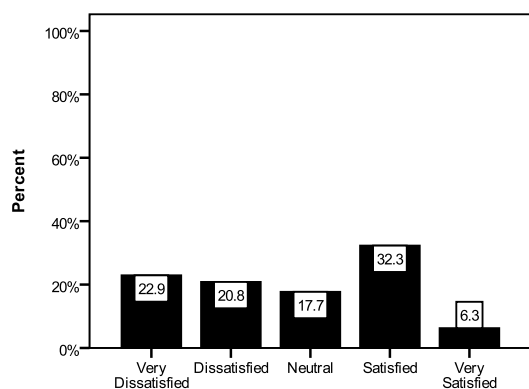
Q33: Like other hunters in the state, Smoky Mountain hunters responded that the numbers of other hunters did not detract from the quality of their hunting experience.

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

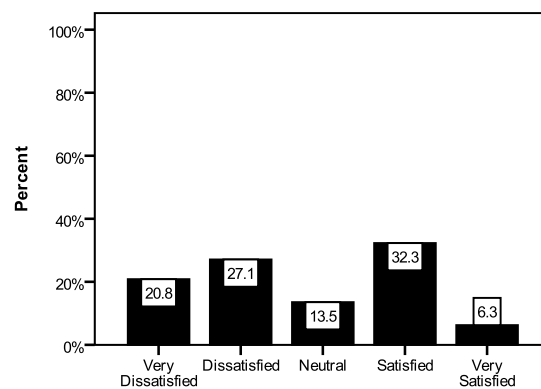
37. How satisfied were you with each of the following aspects of your 2011 Elk hunting experience?



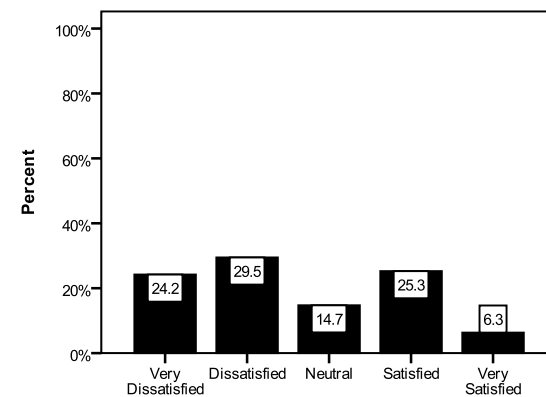
**SATISFACTION OF ASPECTS OF 2011 ELK HUNTING EXPERIENCE**



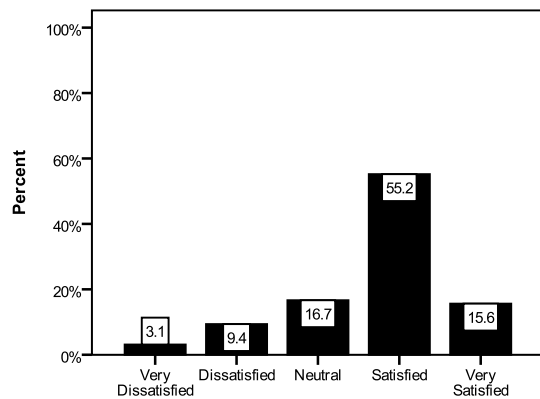
Number of Elk Seen



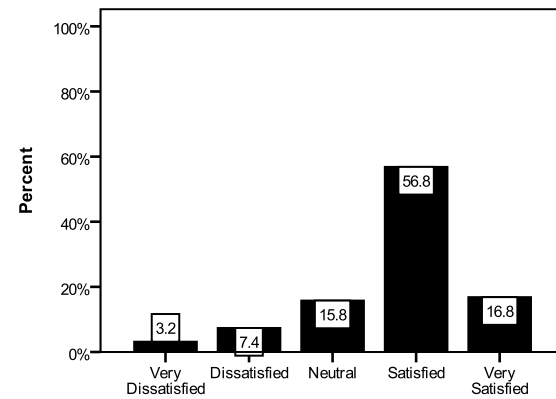
Number of Harvestable Elk Seen



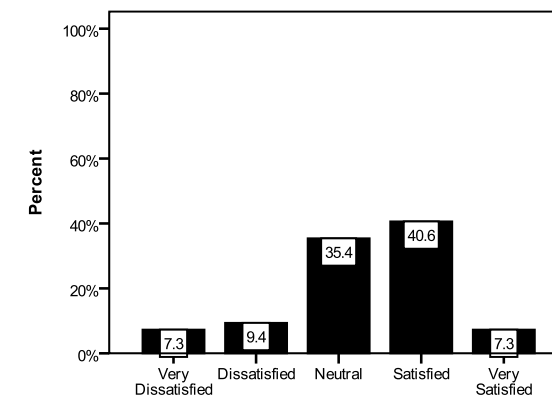
Number of Bulls Seen



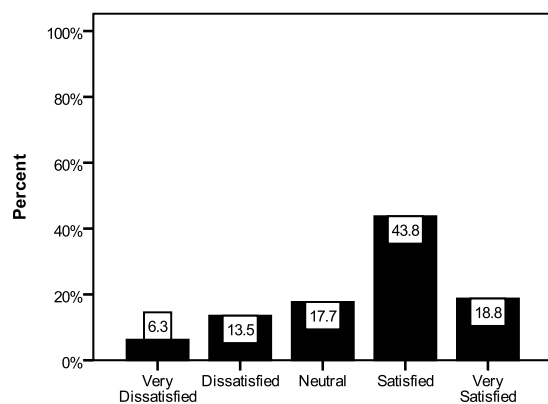
Length of Elk Season



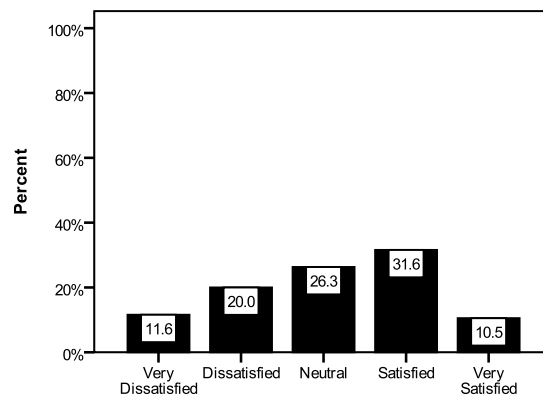
Timing of Elk Season



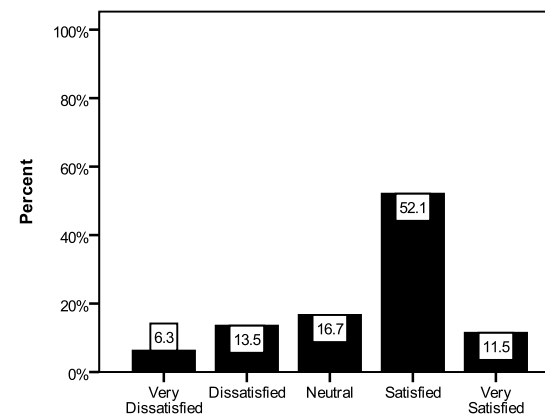
Number of Elk Hunters Encountered



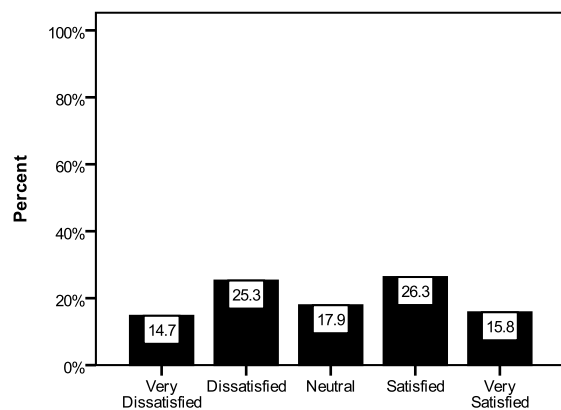
Amount of Access



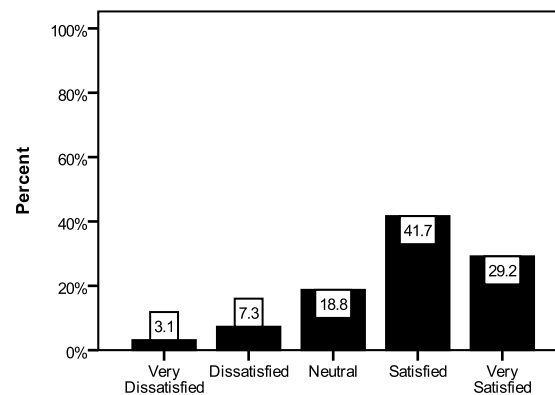
Number of OHVs Encountered



Amount of Elk Hunting Opportunity



Elk Harvest Success



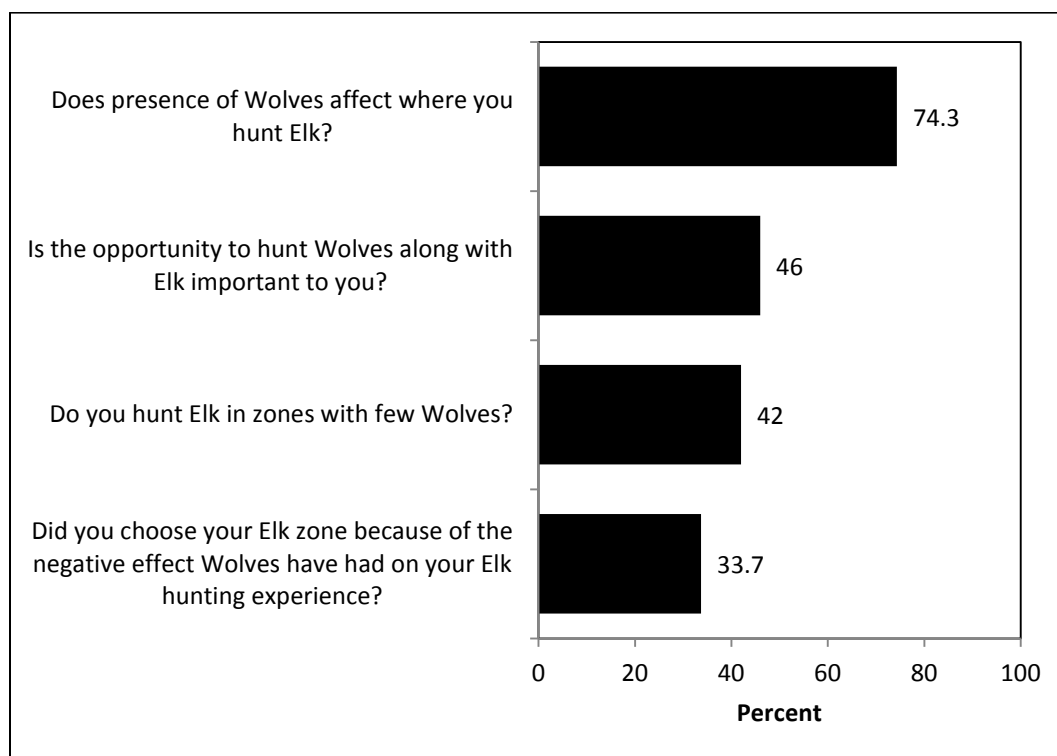
Opportunity for Family and Friends to Hunt Together

**Q37: Similar to other hunters, hunters in the Smoky Mountain zone were dissatisfied with the number of Elk they saw.**

## PERCEPTIONS OF PREDATORS

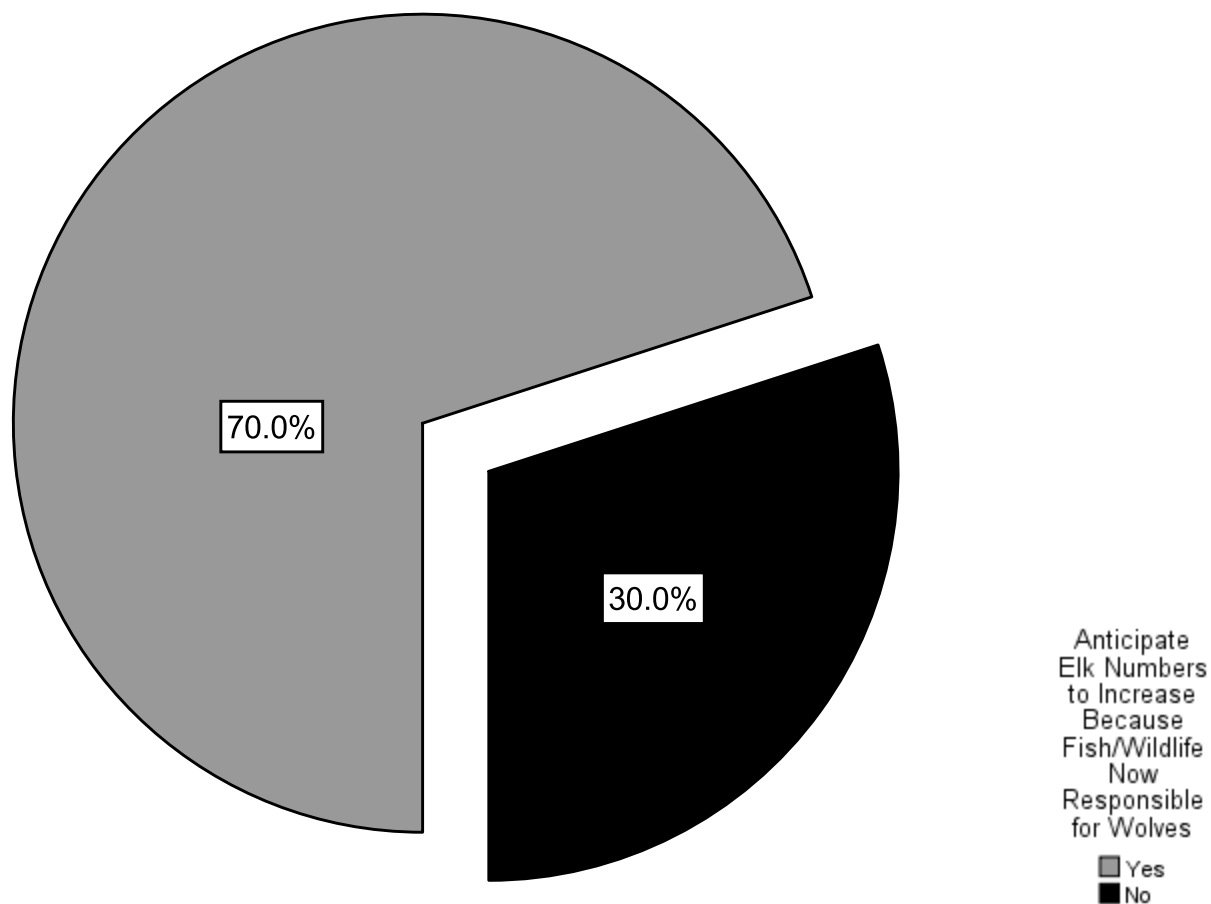
Two questions about predators in Idaho.

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



**Q39: The response distribution is similar between the state average and the Smoky Mountain zone. More hunters in this zone hunt Elk in zones where there are few Wolves.**

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



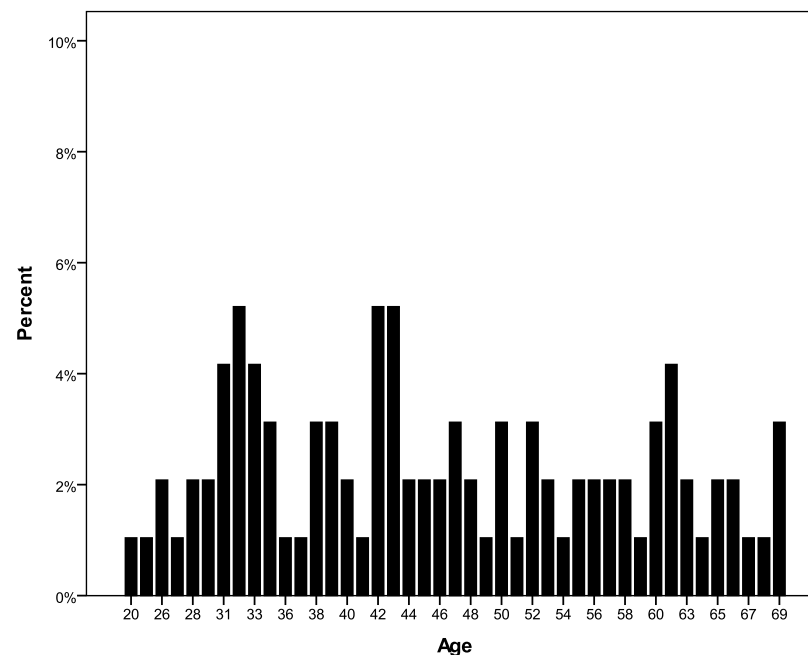
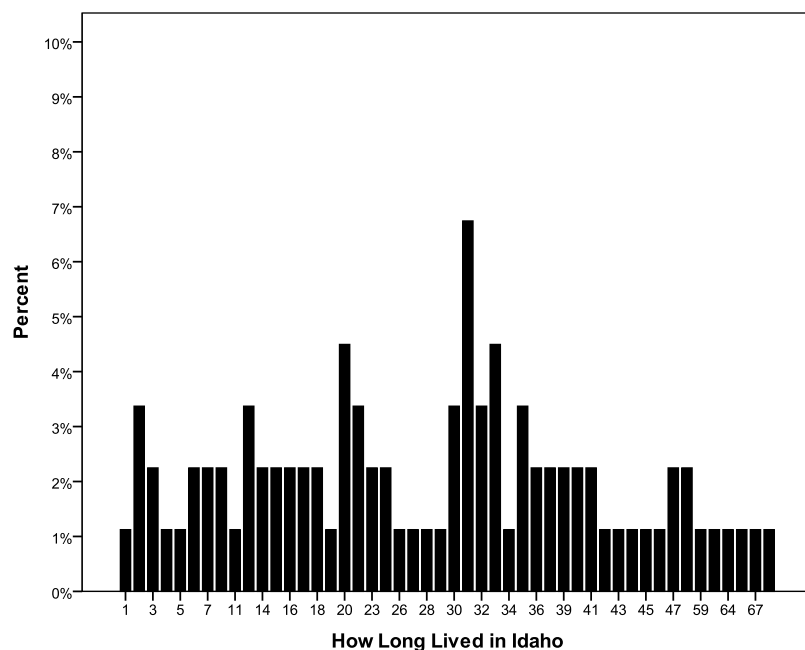
**Q40: Like other hunters in the state, most hunters in the Smoky Mountain zone anticipate Elk numbers to increase with IDFG management of Wolves.**

## 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 response distribution is similar between the state average and the Smoky Mountain zone for both Q42 and Q43.