Deer Hunter Survey: Attitudes, Opinions, Preferences, and Effort

Photo: Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department

Conducted for the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department

2024

RESPONSIVE MANAGEMENT

Deer Hunter Survey:
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Responsive Management conducted this study for the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department (hereinafter referred to as the Department) to assess deer hunting effort and deer hunters' attitudes and opinions regarding hunting regulations and the management of deer in Vermont. The study entailed a scientific multimodal survey of resident and non-resident Vermont hunting license holders who hunted deer.

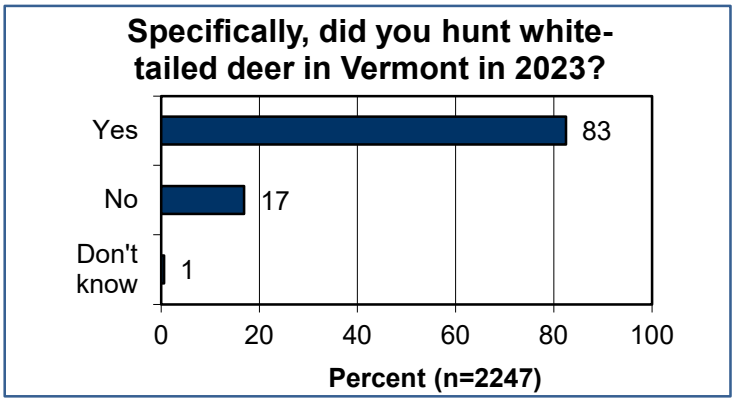
The telephone and online versions of the questionnaire were developed cooperatively by Responsive Management and the Department. The survey was coded for integration in Responsive Management's computer-assisted telephone interviewing system as well as for the online survey platform.

For the survey, the Department provided a database of licensed hunters. To qualify for the survey, license holders had to be at least 18 years old and had to have hunted deer in Vermont within the previous 5 years.

The survey was conducted in May 2024. Responsive Management obtained 2,247 completed questionnaires from deer hunters. The analysis of data was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics as well as proprietary software developed by Responsive Management. The analysis included a breakdown of the data by region of residency, as shown in the map in the body of the report. A fifth "region" is shown on the graphs consisting of non-residents.

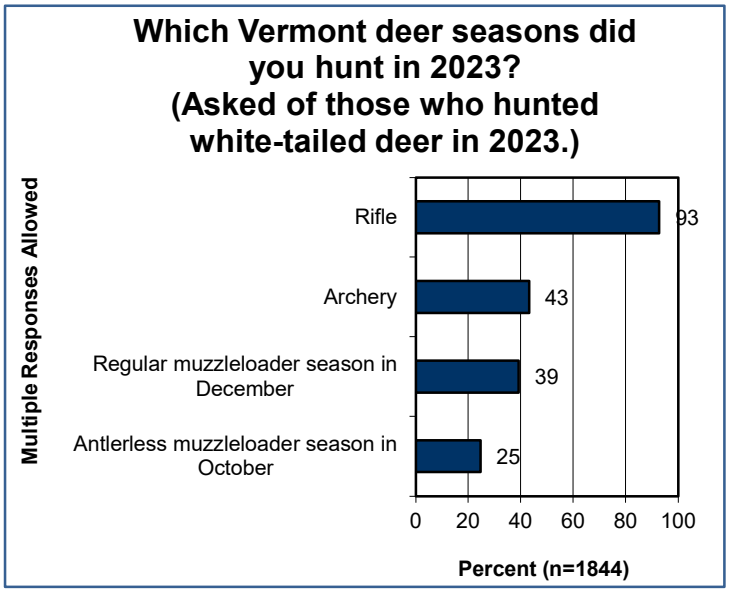
PARTICIPATION IN DEER HUNTING

The entire sample of deer hunters had hunted white-tailed deer in Vermont within the previous 5 years. A very large proportion of them (87%) had hunted in Vermont within the previous 12 months.

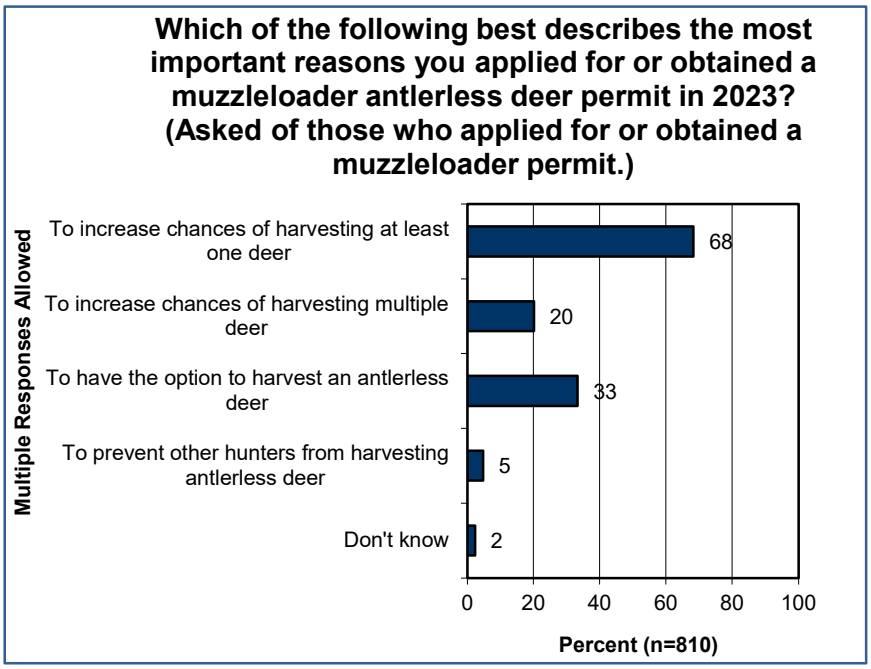


The rate of hunting white-tailed deer in 2023 is at 83% (the previous question asked about any hunting; this is specific to deer). Non-residents had the lowest rate in the regional analysis.

The rifle deer season is the most popular, with nearly all deer hunters hunting that season (93% did so). Archery and regular muzzleloader seasons are in the next tier: 43% and 39% participating during those seasons, respectively. Meanwhile, a quarter of deer hunters who hunted in 2023 (25%) did so during the antlerless muzzleloader season in October.



Among those who hunted in 2023, a little under half (43%) applied for a muzzleloader antlerless deer permit. Regionally, deer hunters from the Greater Chittenden Region had the highest rate of applying; non-residents had the lowest rate. Meanwhile, the rate of actually obtaining a muzzleloader antlerless permit was just slightly lower than the application rate: 39% of 2023 deer hunters obtained one.



Four possible reasons for applying for or obtaining a muzzleloader antlerless deer permit were presented to hunters (who had applied or obtained one). The most popular reason was to increase their chances of harvesting at least one deer.

LOCATION OF DEER HUNTING

Deer hunting was well spread among the various Wildlife Management Units (WMUs), with use rates ranging from 1% to 10%. The most popular were WMUs B and J2. The body of the report shows the full listing; all of the WMUs had hunters who said it was their most-hunted WMU.

DEER HARVEST

Among 2023 deer hunters, 29% harvested a deer, 21% harvested a buck, and 11% harvested an antlerless deer. Most who harvested only took one deer. The rate of deer harvest was highest in the Greater Chittenden and Central Vermont Regions. The rate of buck harvest did not markedly differ among hunters from the various regions. The rate of antlerless harvest was highest in the Greater Chittenden and Northeast Kingdom Regions. Note that the regional breakdown is by hunter residence, not the location of hunting.

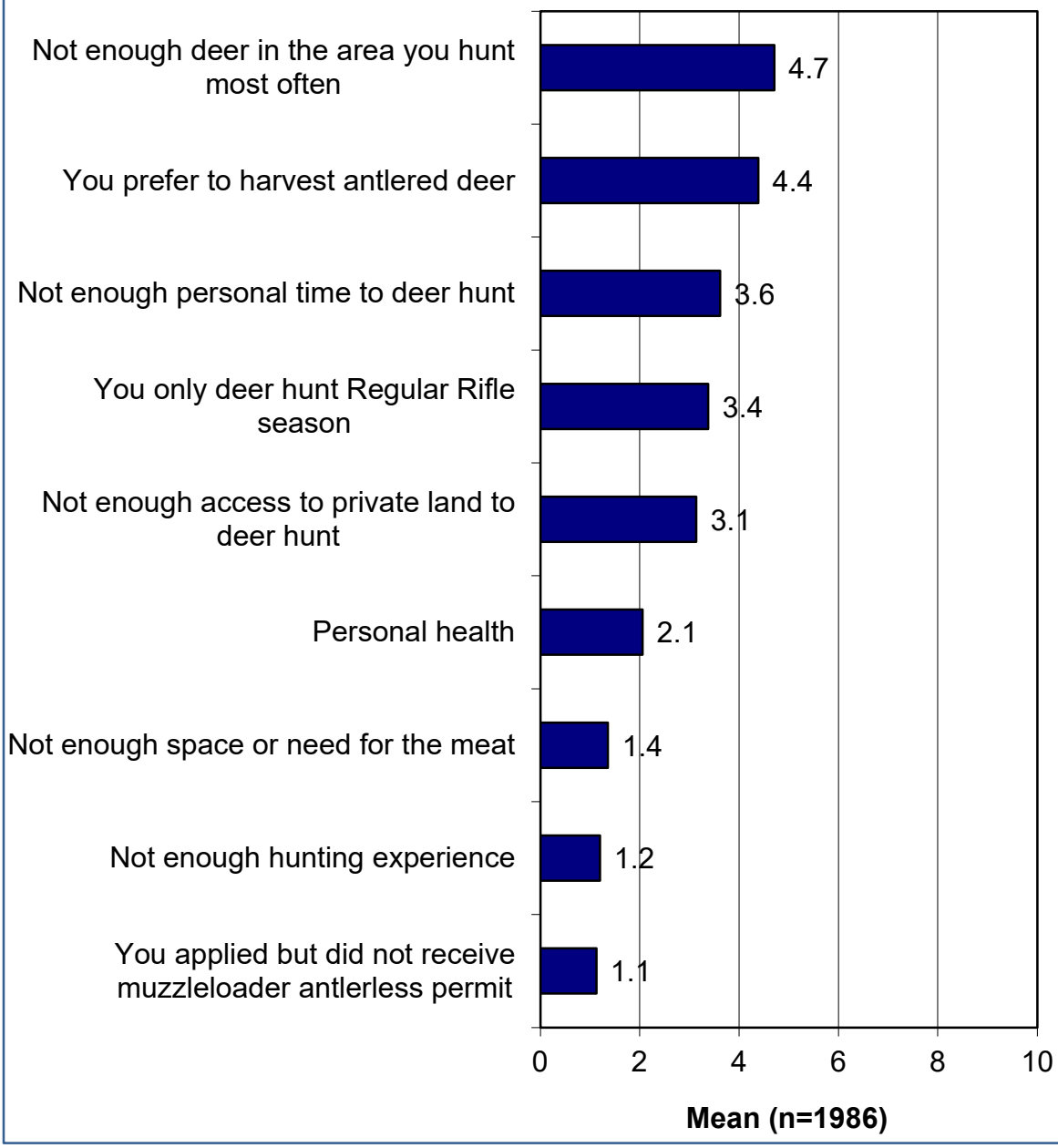
In the past 3 years, 39% of deer hunters had harvested a buck. About a quarter of deer hunters (24%) had harvested an antlerless deer in the past 3 years.

Nearly all deer hunters (91%) wanted to harvest a buck in 2023, and just more than half (56%) wanted to harvest an antlerless deer in 2023.

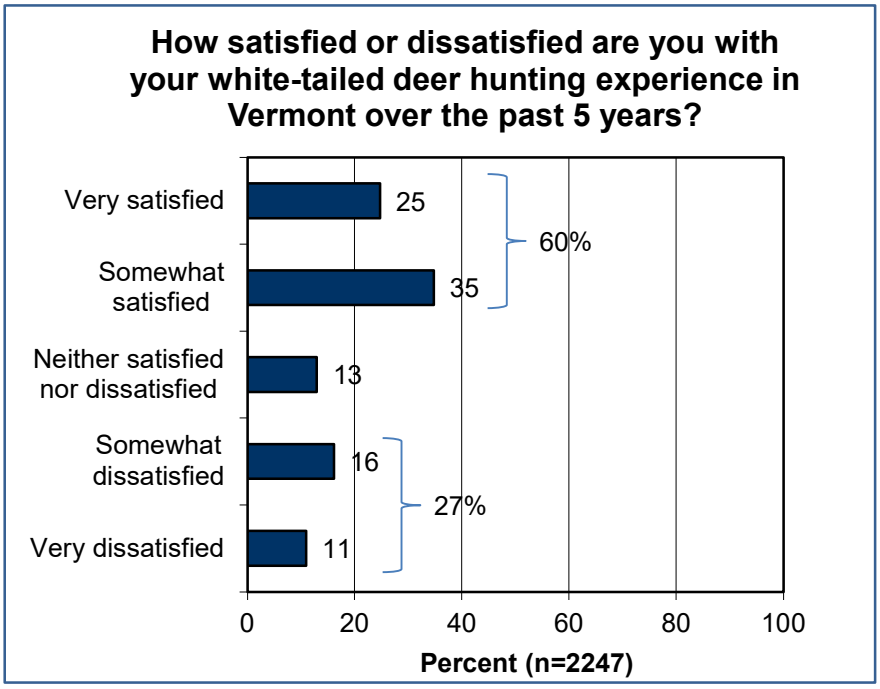
About three quarters of those who received a muzzleloader permit (78%) attempted to harvest an antlerless deer with a muzzleloader in 2023.

The survey presented nine possible factors that might have played a role in the lack of antlerless deer harvest among deer hunters, asking them to rate each possible reason on a 0 to 10 scale. None of the reasons had a mean rating higher than the midpoint (5). The most important reasons were a lack of enough deer in the hunt area and simply the hunter's desire to harvest an antlered deer. Regionally, lack of deer as a reason was rated the highest in the Northeast Kingdom. Lack of access was rated the highest in the Greater Chittenden Region. The overall graph appears on the next page.

How much of an influence did this have on you not harvesting an antlerless deer, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is no influence at all and 10 is a great deal of influence. (Asked of those who did not harvest an antlerless deer.)

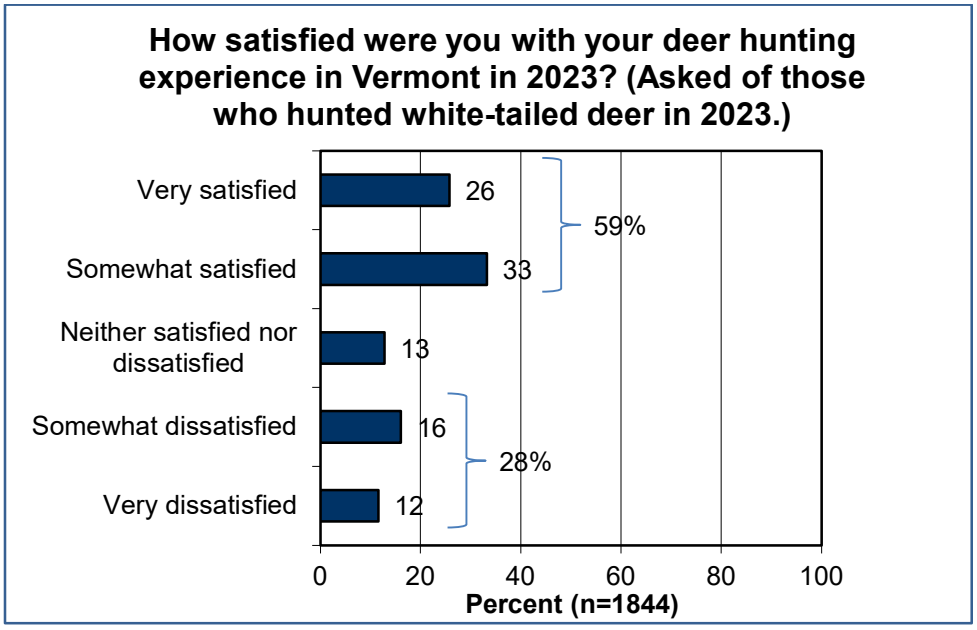


SATISFACTION WITH DEER HUNTING IN VERMONT

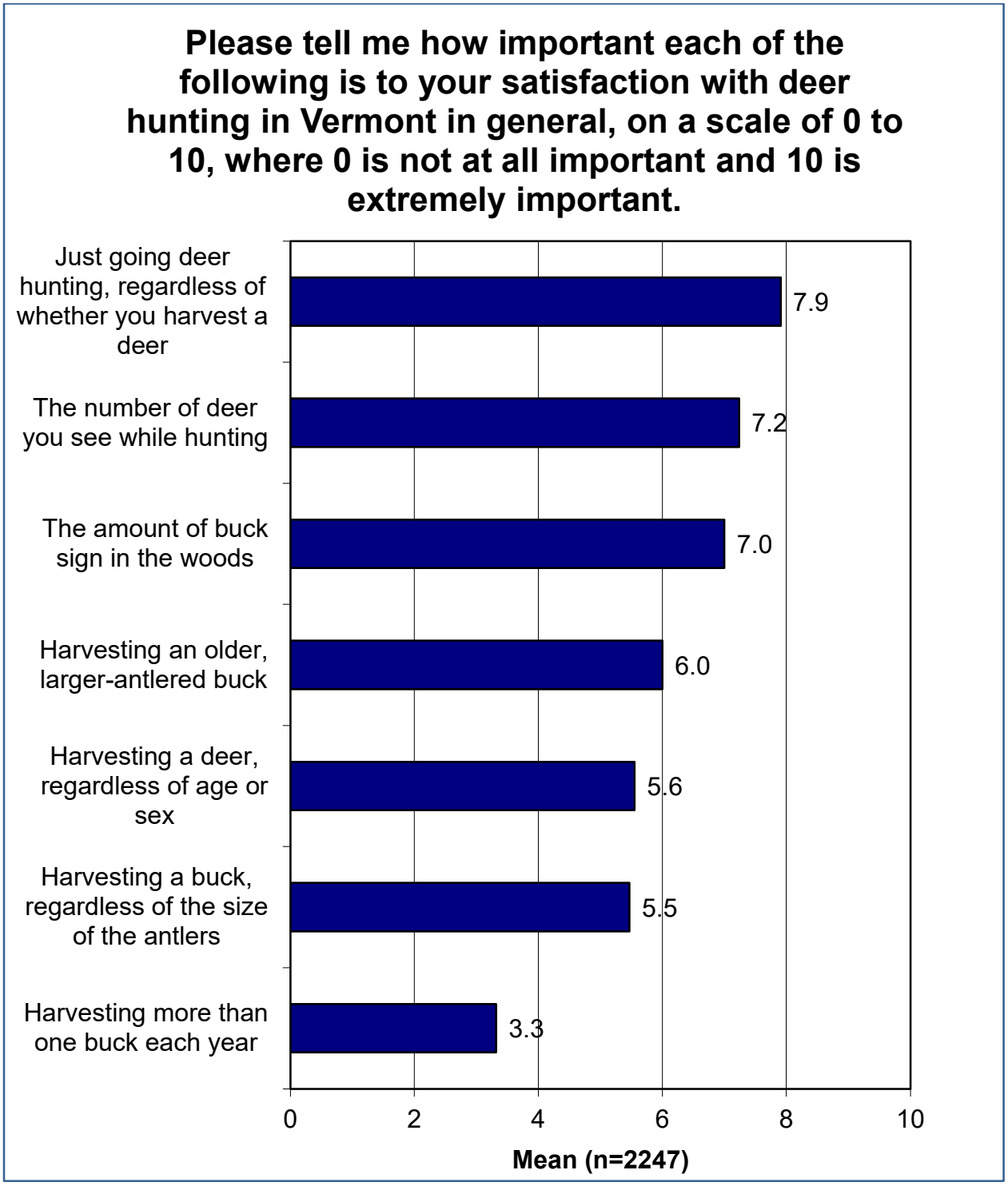


Satisfaction with deer hunting over the past 5 years stands at 60%, while 27% are dissatisfied. Satisfaction is highest among non-residents. It is lowest among hunters from the Northeast Kingdom and Southern Vermont Regions.

The next graph shows satisfaction in 2023. Among hunters active in that year, 59% were satisfied, while 28% were dissatisfied. Satisfaction was highest among non-residents and lowest among Northeast Kingdom and Southern Vermont Region hunters.

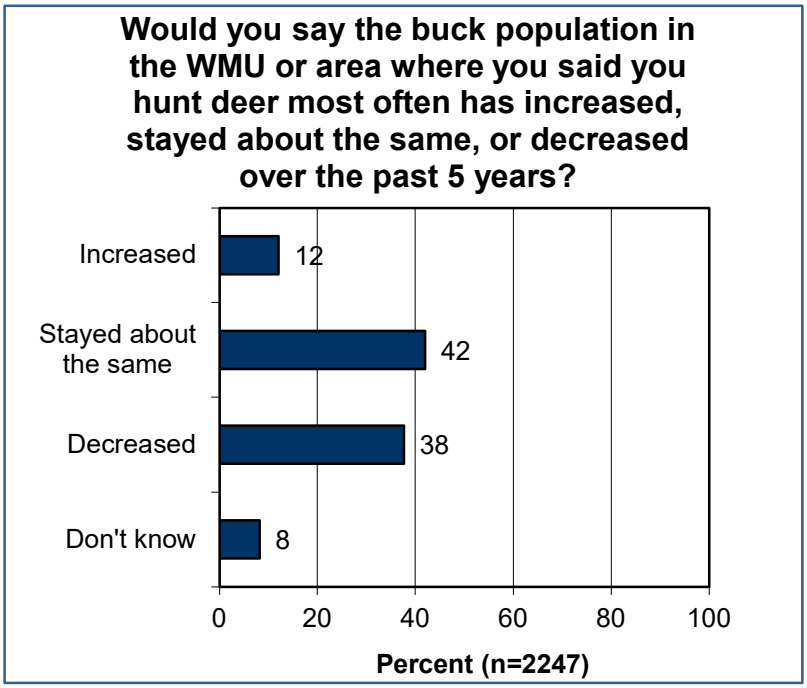


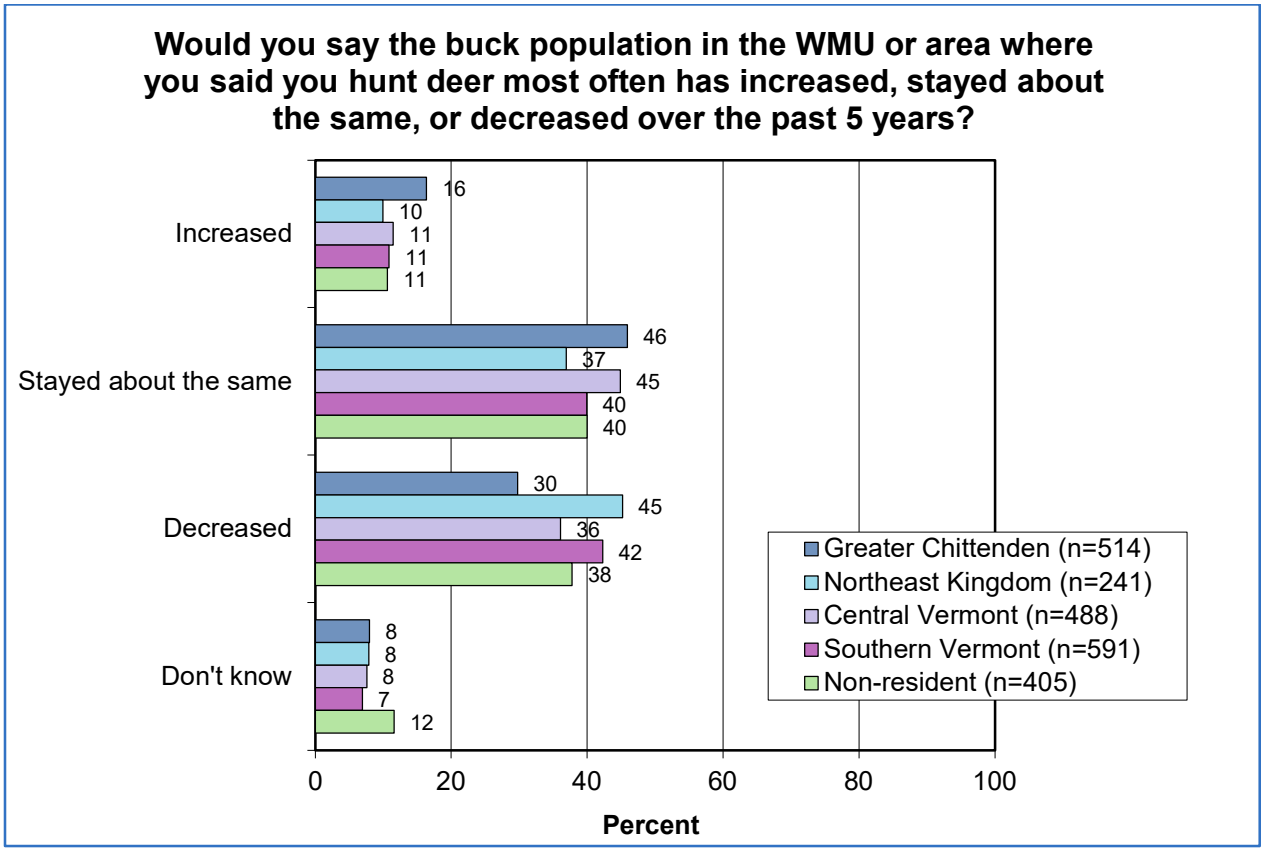
The factors that play a role in satisfaction are shown in the next graph. Three factors stand out above the others: just going hunting, number of deer *seen*, and the amount of buck sign found in the woods and fields. Harvesting *multiple* bucks is the least important factor.

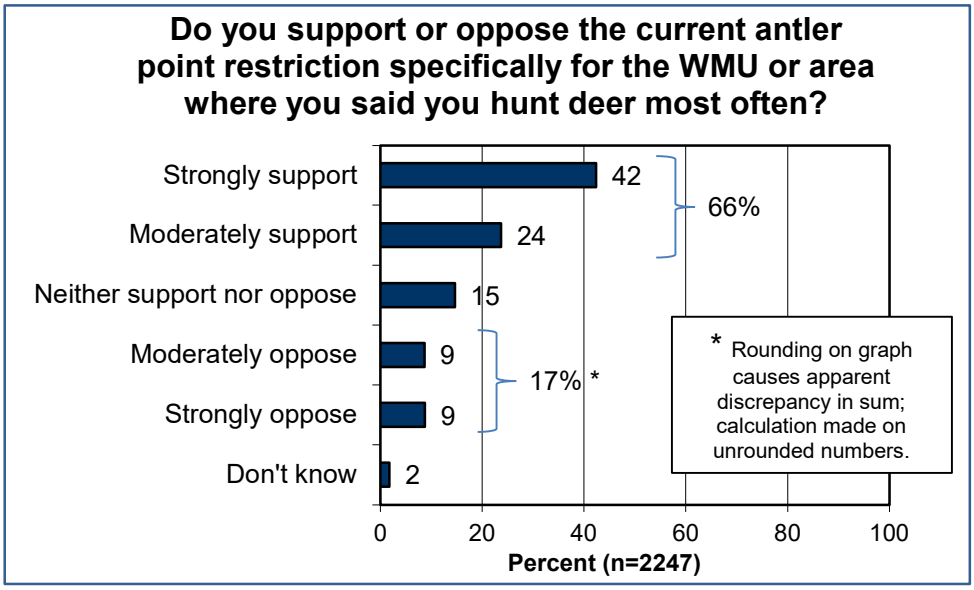


OPINIONS ON DEER POPULATIONS, DEER MANAGEMENT, AND DEER HUNTING REGULATIONS

Most commonly, deer hunters think the buck population where they hunt most often has remained the same over the past 5 years (42%), but nearly the same percentage think it has decreased (38%). Only 12% think it has increased. The apparent decrease is highest in the Northeast Kingdom and Southern Vermont Regions. The Greater Chittenden Region has the highest percentage perceiving an increase.

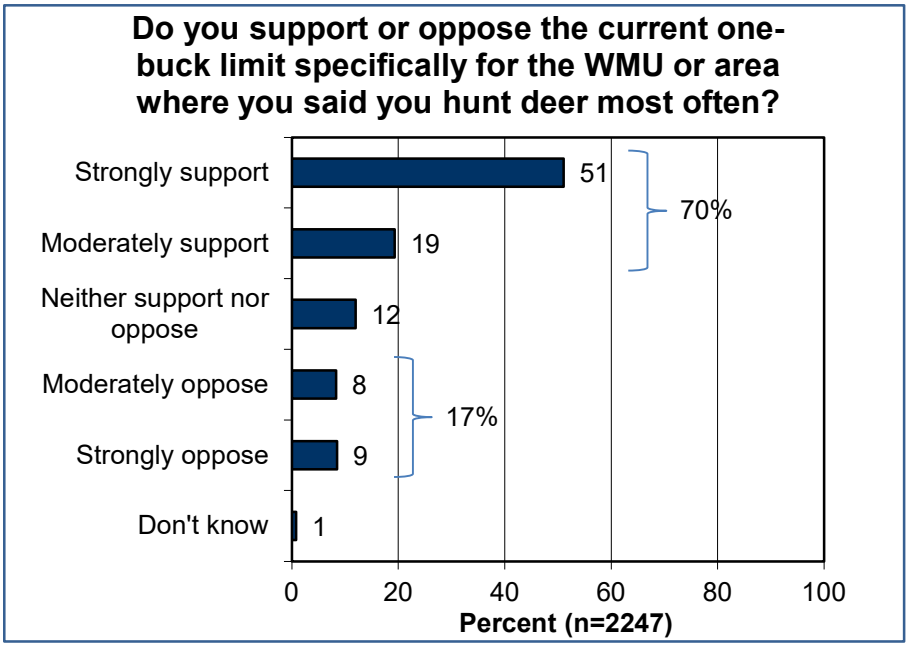






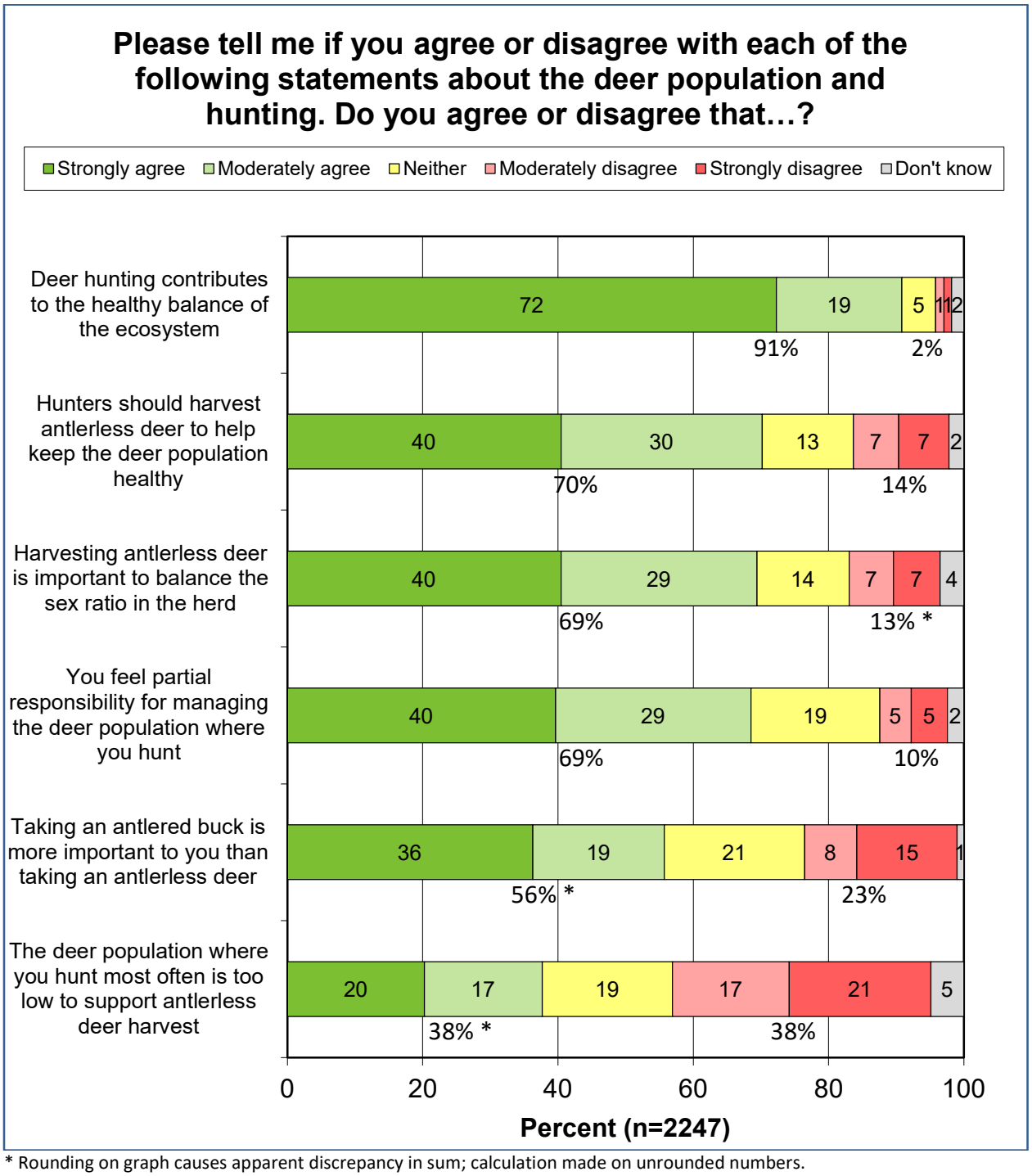
Support for (66%) is nearly 4 times higher than opposition to (17%) the current antler point restriction in deer hunters' most commonly hunted area.

Support for the current one-buck limit far exceeds opposition to it: 70% support, while only 17% oppose. Support is highest among hunters from the Northeast Kingdom and from out of state.

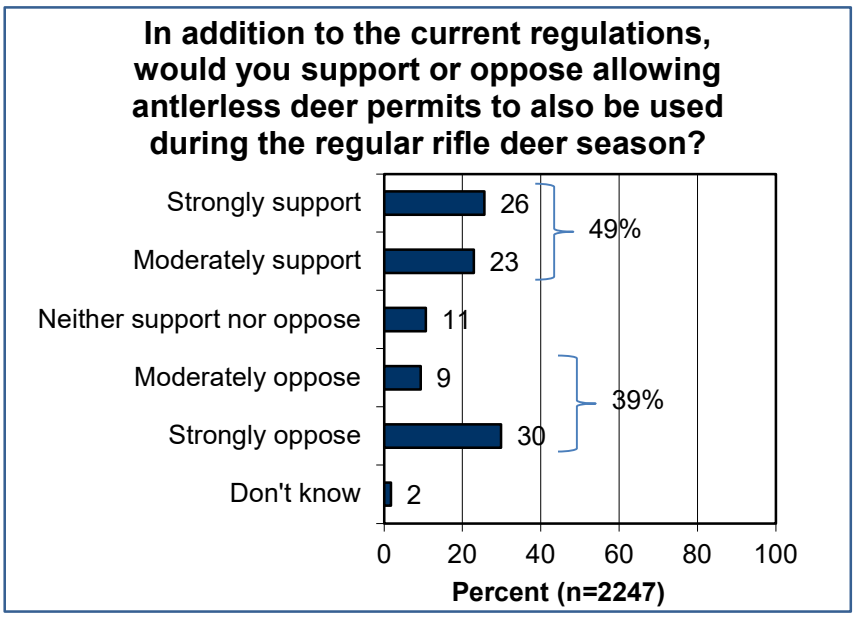


Support for a management strategy that increases the number of older, larger bucks far exceeds opposition to it: 68% support, while only 11% oppose. Support is markedly lower among hunters from the Northeast Kingdom, compared to their counterparts in the other regions.

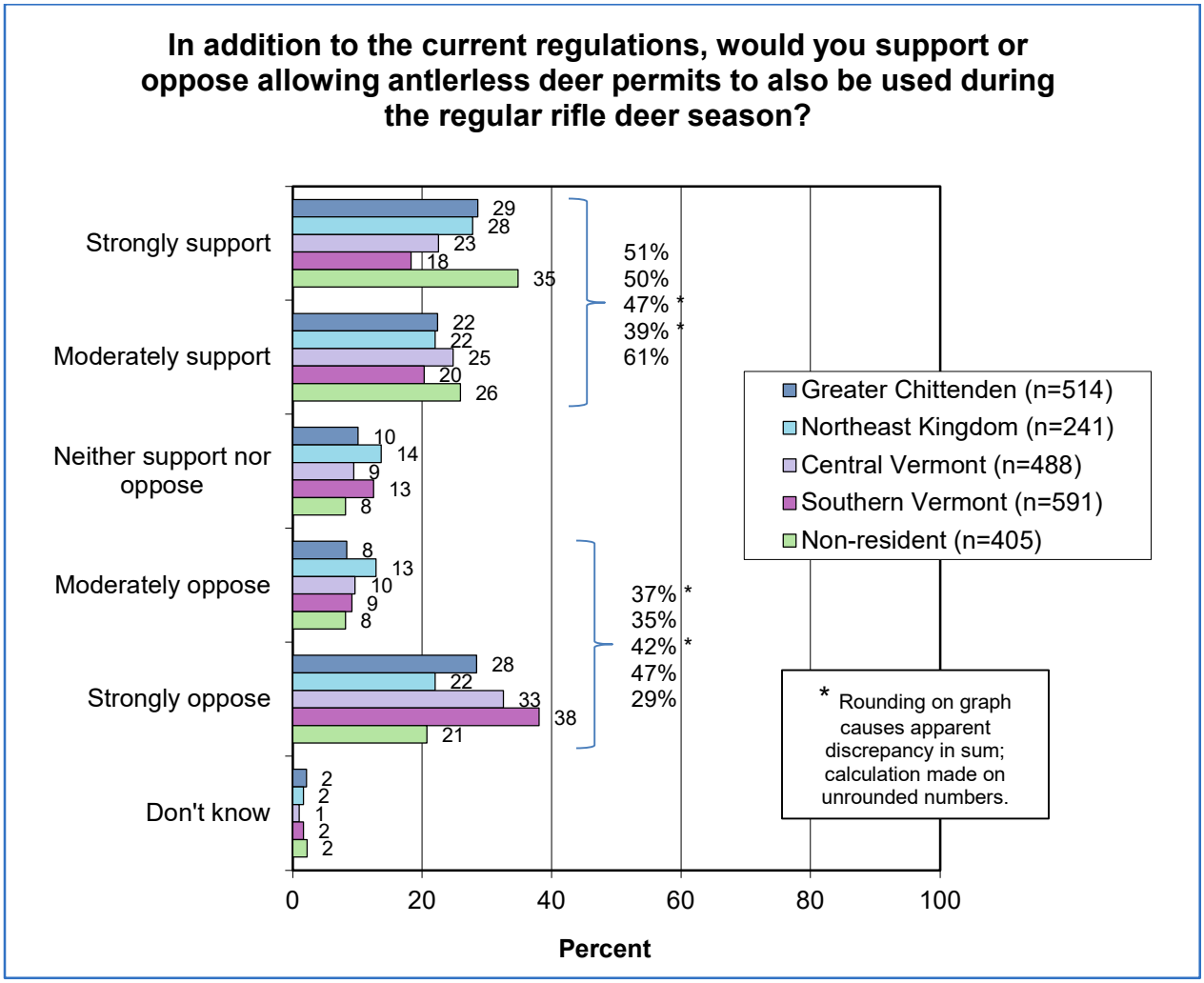
Six statements about deer hunting and deer management (and hunting's role in management) were presented to deer hunters. An overwhelming majority (91%) agree that deer hunting contributes to the healthy balance of the ecosystem. Three other statements are in the next tier, with 69% or 70% agreeing: that hunters should harvest antlerless deer to keep the population healthy and to balance the sex ratio, and that the hunter feels partial responsibility for managing the deer population.



* Rounding on graph causes apparent discrepancy in sum; calculation made on unrounded numbers.

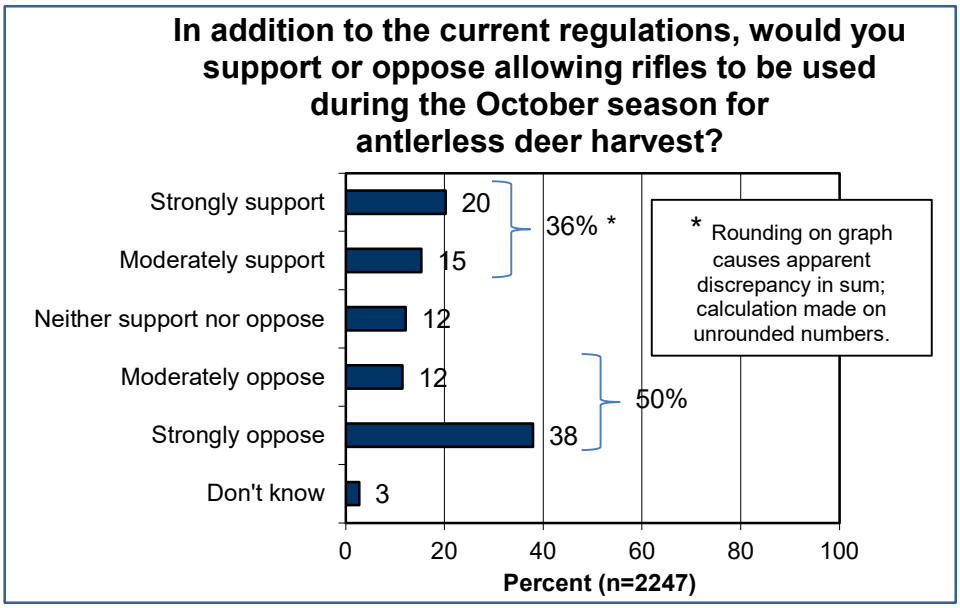


Opinion is somewhat split regarding support for or opposition to allowing antlerless deer permits to also be used during the regular rifle season. While 49% support it, 39% oppose it. Support is markedly lower in the Southern Vermont Region. Support is highest among non-resident deer hunters.



The survey results suggest that allowing the use of antlerless deer permits during the regular rifle season would result in more deer hunting days among Vermont deer hunters. The percentage saying their participation would increase (22%) is more than 3 times greater than the percentage saying their participation would decrease (7%). Meanwhile, 67% think that their number of days would stay about the same. The expected increase would be greatest among Greater Chittenden Region hunters.

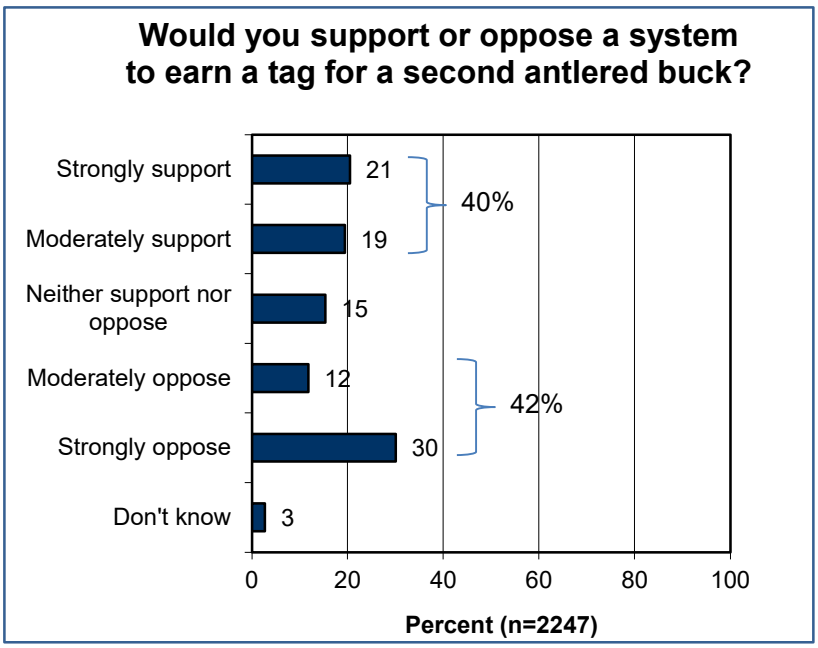
Likewise, the use of antlerless deer permits during the regular rifle season would increase the likelihood of greater harvest numbers of antlerless deer: 43% say that they would increase their antlerless deer harvest. This is almost the same percentage whose harvest would stay about the same (44%) and well above the percentage whose harvest would decrease (8%). Hunters from the Southern Vermont and Central Vermont Regions would be the *least* likely to increase their harvest of antlerless deer.



Opposition to (50%) exceeds support for (36%) allowing rifles to be used during the October season for antlerless deer harvest. Support is greatest among hunters from the Greater Chittenden Region; opposition is greatest among hunters from the Southern Vermont Region.

The results of the survey suggest that the use of rifles during the October season with an antlerless permit would increase the days of deer hunting: 25% say that they would increase their days compared to 11% who say it would decrease their days. In the middle, 59% say their number of days would stay about the same. The results suggest that it would also likely increase the harvest of antlerless deer.

While support for (40%) and opposition to (42%) are fairly close for a system to earn a tag for a second antlered buck, most of the opposition is *strong*, while support is evenly distributed between *strong* and *moderate* support. Follow-up questions suggest that such a system would increase deer hunter days and harvest.



Finally in this section of the report, a summary table is included for the reader's convenience showing the results of all of the support-oppose questions that were shown previously.

Question	S. Support	M. Support	Total Support	Neither	M. Oppose	S. Oppose	Total Oppose
Current antler point restriction	42	24	66	15	9	9	17
Current one-buck limit	51	19	70	12	8	9	17
Management to increase number of older, larger bucks	40	27	68	20	5	5	11
Allowing antlerless deer permits to also be used during regular rifle season	26	23	49	11	9	30	39
Allowing rifles to be used during the October season for antlerless deer harvest	20	15	36	12	12	38	50
System to earn a tag for a second antlered buck	21	19	40	15	12	30	42
Percentages in the table rounded to the integer level; all sums calculated on unrounded numbers.							

VENISON SHARING AND DONATION

Sharing deer meat is almost ubiquitous, as 83% of Vermont deer hunters have shared deer meat. Hunters from the Northeast Kingdom are the *least* likely to have shared deer meat.

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INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Responsive Management conducted this study for the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department (hereinafter referred to as the Department) to assess deer hunting effort and deer hunters' attitudes and opinions regarding hunting regulations and the management of deer in Vermont. The study entailed a scientific multimodal survey of resident and non-resident Vermont hunting license holders who hunted deer. Specific aspects of the survey methodology are discussed below.

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The telephone and online versions of the questionnaire were developed cooperatively by Responsive Management and the Department. There were slight differences between the telephone and online versions of the questionnaire to accommodate each survey mode, but otherwise the versions were identical.

To qualify for the survey, license holders had to be at least 18 years old and had to have hunted deer in Vermont within the previous 5 years.

The survey was coded for integration in Responsive Management's computer-assisted telephone interviewing system as well as for the online survey platform. An important aspect of the telephone surveying effort was that the computer controlled which questions were asked, but the surveys were conducted by live interviewers. Additionally, for both the online and telephone versions of the survey, the questionnaire was programmed to branch and substitute phrases in the survey based on previous responses to ensure the integrity and consistency of the data collection. The survey questionnaire also contained error checkers and computation statements to ensure quality and consistent data.

SURVEY SAMPLING

For the survey, the Department provided a database of licensed hunters. Responsive Management selected the survey sample from among *all* eligible license holders in the database, regardless of the contact information available for each individual (phone number and/or email address). The sample was randomly selected to ensure a scientifically valid survey sample. Therefore, the survey sample was representative of *all* licensed hunters in the database. Only after being selected for the sample were respondents contacted and given a choice of survey modes.

This multimodal approach is superior to the use of only a single mode of data collection in that it ensured that all hunters had a variety of opportunities and means to participate in the study. For example, conducting the survey *entirely* online would likely have excluded many respondents who are less comfortable using the internet, as might be the case with older hunters.

As noted by Dillman et al., the multimodal, multi-contact approach to the data collection that was used typically leads to the highest possible response rate.[1] The multimodal approach also

[1] Dillman, D.A.; J.D. Smyth; and L.M. Christian. 2009. *Internet, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method*, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

avoided the pitfalls of an open-ended online survey in that it established a closed population of respondents for the survey; in other words, only randomly selected license holders from the database had the link to complete the online survey. Further, these individuals were contacted by telephone in follow-up phases to encourage their participation in the survey, thereby increasing the response rate. This approach resulted in timely and accurate data collection.

MULTIMODAL SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

As previously mentioned, the surveys were conducted by telephone and online. The multimodal approach to data collection ensured the best possible representation of the target population: combined telephone and online data collection ensured maximum coverage that included representation from hunters who may otherwise be difficult to reach by telephone, including young hunters. It also yielded a high response rate, increased the representativeness of the sample, and reduced bias.

Contact method depended on the information available in the sample. For those contacted by telephone, the interviews were conducted Monday through Friday from noon to 9:00 p.m. and Saturday from noon to 7:00 p.m., local time, using interviewers with experience conducting computer-assisted surveys about wildlife management and outdoor recreation. A five-callback design was used to avoid bias toward people easy to reach by telephone and to provide an equal opportunity for all to participate. When a hunter could not be reached on the first call, subsequent calls were placed on different days of the week and at different times of the day. The survey was conducted at the time of initial contact, or a callback time was set that was more convenient for the hunter.

Those with a cellular number who could not be reached after five attempts were sent a text message from a Vermont phone number inviting them to participate in the survey online. Those who did not respond to the text were called at least one more time, and then a reminder text was sent to nonrespondents approximately a week after the initial text invitation. The text message provided a link to the online survey featuring an introduction with more information and instructions to begin the survey. The text and online survey introduction are shown below and on the following page.

Text Message

Hello [name]! This is Amanda from Responsive Management. The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department would like to hear from you about your hunting experiences and wildlife management in the state! Please consider providing your feedback by responding to this survey [survey link].

Online Survey Introduction and Instructions Linked to Text Message

This study is being conducted for the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department to learn more about hunting participation and experiences for several different species in Vermont.

As a Vermont hunter, your answers are very important to this study. We are surveying both resident and non-resident licensed Vermont hunters. If you currently live outside of Vermont but have hunted in Vermont in the past 5 years, we would still appreciate your feedback.

Responsive Management, an independent research firm that specializes in natural resource and outdoor recreation issues, is conducting this survey in partnership with the Department. If you need technical assistance with the survey, please contact Responsive Management via email at research@responsivemanagement.com.

Thank you for your time and willingness to participate.

Please click "Next" below to begin the survey.

All hunters in the sample with an email address (excluding those who had already been reached by telephone) were sent an initial email invitation, shown below. After the initial email was sent to licensed hunters, a reminder email was sent to nonrespondents approximately 5 days following the original email invitation. As shown in the example that follows, a support email address at Responsive Management was provided for email recipients who needed assistance with the survey.

Initial Email Invitation to Take the Survey

Hello [name],

We are conducting a study for the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department to learn more about hunting participation and experiences in Vermont. The results of this study will help develop and improve hunting opportunities and wildlife management in Vermont.

As a Vermont hunter, your answers to this survey are very important to this study. We are surveying both resident and non-resident licensed Vermont hunters.

Click Here to Start the Survey

Thank you for your time and willingness to participate. Depending on the species you have hunted in Vermont, the survey may take anywhere from 5 to 15 minutes. Again, we greatly appreciate your time and your input.

Responsive Management, an independent research firm that specializes in natural resource and outdoor recreation issues, is conducting this survey on behalf of the Department. If you need technical assistance with the survey, please contact Responsive Management via email at research@responsivemanagement.com.

Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department

The survey was conducted in May 2024. Responsive Management obtained 2,247 completed questionnaires from deer hunters.

SURVEY QUALITY CONTROL

For both the online and telephone versions of the questionnaire, error checkers and computation statements ensured that quality and consistent data were obtained. Additionally, for quality control, Survey Center managers monitored the telephone interviews in real time and provided feedback to the interviewers.

To ensure the integrity of the telephone survey data, Responsive Management has interviewers who have been trained according to the highest industry standards established by the American Association for Public Opinion Research. Methods of instruction included lectures and role-playing. The Survey Center managers and other professional staff conducted briefings with the interviewers prior to the administration of this survey. Interviewers were instructed on type of study, study goals and objectives, handling of survey questions, interview length, termination points and qualifiers for participation, interviewer instructions within the survey questionnaire, reading of the survey questions, skip patterns, and probing and clarifying techniques necessary for specific questions on the survey questionnaires.

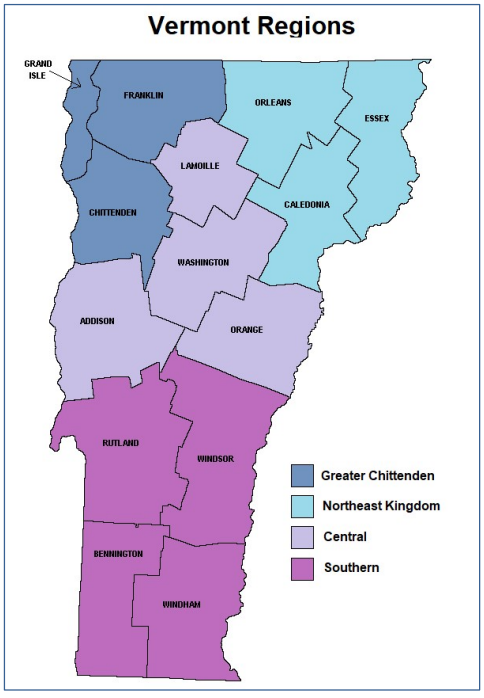
After the surveys were obtained, the Survey Center managers and statisticians checked each completed survey to ensure clarity and completeness. Also note that no partially filled questionnaires were kept; only fully completed questionnaires were used.

DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of data was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics as well as proprietary software developed by Responsive Management. The weighting parameters considered the type of survey medium (telephone or online), residency status (resident or non-resident), and demographic information so that the final results are fully representative of deer hunters in Vermont.

The analysis included a breakdown of the data by region of residency, as shown in the accompanying map. A fifth "region" is shown on the graphs consisting of non-residents.

The analysis also examined trends based on similar questions asked in Responsive Management's 2018 big game survey conducted for the Department. Only those questions with similar wording could be compared in the trends analysis, and only closed-ended questions could be compared, as there are too many confounding factors for open-ended questions to be compared.



Throughout this report, findings of the survey are reported at a 95% confidence interval. For the entire sample of deer hunters, the sampling error is at most plus or minus 2.04 percentage points. This means that if the survey were conducted 100 times on different samples that were selected in the same way, the findings of 95 out of the 100 surveys would fall within plus or minus 2.04 percentage points of each other. Sampling error was calculated using the formula described below, with a sample size of 2,247 and a population size of 96,409 hunters in the state.

Sampling Error Equation (Dillman Method)

$$B = \left(\sqrt{\frac{\frac{N_p(.25)}{N_s} - .25}{N_p - 1}} \right) (1.96)$$

Where: B = maximum sampling error (as decimal)
N_P = pop. size (i.e., total number who could be surveyed)
N_S = sample size (i.e., total number of respondents surveyed)

Derived from formula: p. 206 in Dillman, D. A. 2000. *Mail and Internet Surveys*. John Wiley & Sons, NY.

Note: This is a simplified version of the formula that calculates the *maximum* sampling error using a 50:50 split (the most conservative calculation because a 50:50 split would give maximum variation).

The analysis of open-ended questions (those questions for which no answer set is provided) entailed having the analysts examine each verbatim response. Specifically, the analysts read through all of the verbatim open-ended responses and assigned them into response categories, at which point the responses could be quantified and presented in "Multiple Responses Allowed" graphs. Overall, analysts categorized several hundred open-ended responses.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

In examining the results, it is important to be aware that the questionnaire included several types of questions:

- Single response questions: Some questions allowed only a single response.
- Multiple response questions: Other questions allowed respondents to give more than one response or choose all that apply. Those that allowed more than a single response are indicated on the graphs with the label, "Multiple Responses Allowed."
- Closed-ended questions had an answer set from which to choose.
- Open-ended questions are those in which no answer set was presented to the respondents; rather, they responded with anything that came to mind from the question.
- Scaled questions: Some closed-ended questions (but not all) were in a scale, such as those that ranged from very satisfied to very dissatisfied or those that were on a 0 to 10 scale.
- Series questions: Many questions are part of a series, and the results are primarily intended to be examined relative to the other questions in that series (although results of the questions individually can also be valuable). Typically, results of all questions in a series are shown together.

Graphs typically show results rounded to the nearest integer; however, all data are stored in decimal format, and all calculations were performed on unrounded numbers. For this reason, some graphs may not sum to exactly 100% because of this rounding on the graphs.

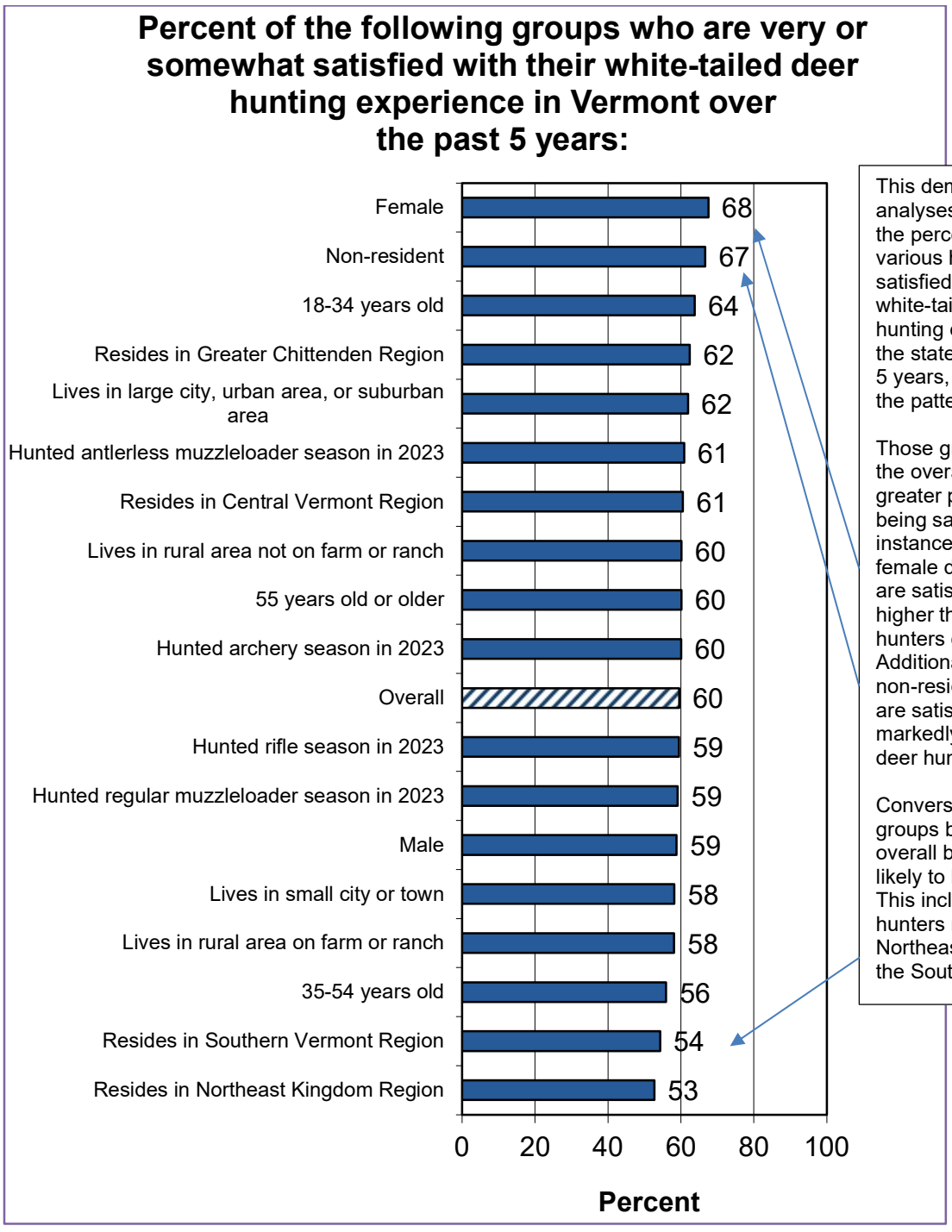
On some graphs, the "don't know" responses (as well as refused, etc.) are not shown for legibility, particularly at percentages of 1% or less, although they remain in the data. The sum of all the percentages shown may not total to 100% on some of these graphs.

In addition to graphs depicting the results of the individual survey questions, the report includes special graphs that show how various demographic groups (e.g., males) respond to certain questions, hereinafter referred to as demographic analyses graphs. Not all the questions were analyzed in this way; questions chosen for these analyses are those deemed to be of the most interest or utility. The example on the following page explains how to interpret these graphs.

This example shows the percentage of various deer hunter groups who are satisfied with their deer hunting in Vermont over the past 5 years. Among Vermont deer hunters overall, 60% are satisfied, as shown by the patterned bar. Those deer hunter groups shown above the overall bar have a higher percentage who are satisfied, compared to Vermont deer hunters overall. Meanwhile, those groups below the overall bar have a lower rate of being satisfied, compared to Vermont deer hunters overall.

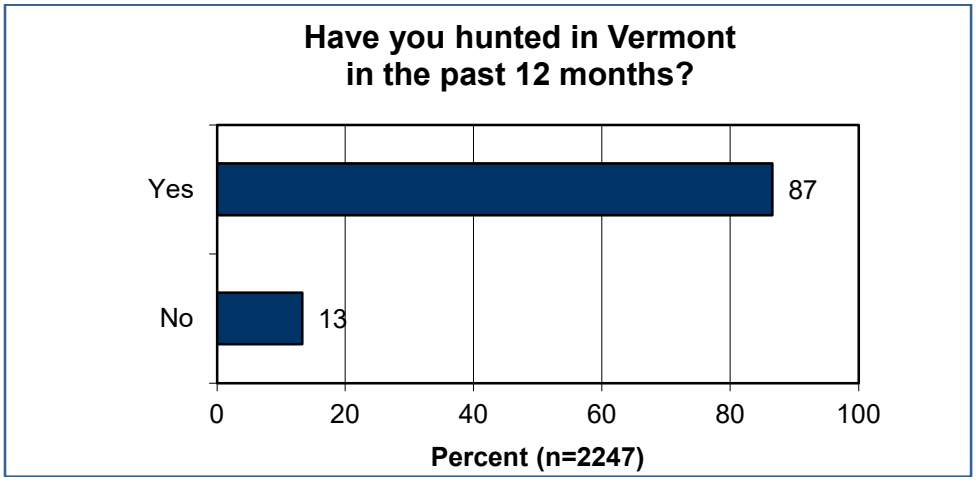
When one group is above the overall bar (for instance, in this example, female deer hunters), its counterpart or one of its counterparts (in this instance, male deer hunters) will be below the overall bar. The distance from the overall bar matters, as well. If a group is close to the overall bar (for instance, deer hunters 55 years old or older in this example), then the group should not be considered markedly different from deer hunters overall. A rule of thumb is that the difference should be 5 percentage points or more for the difference to be noteworthy.

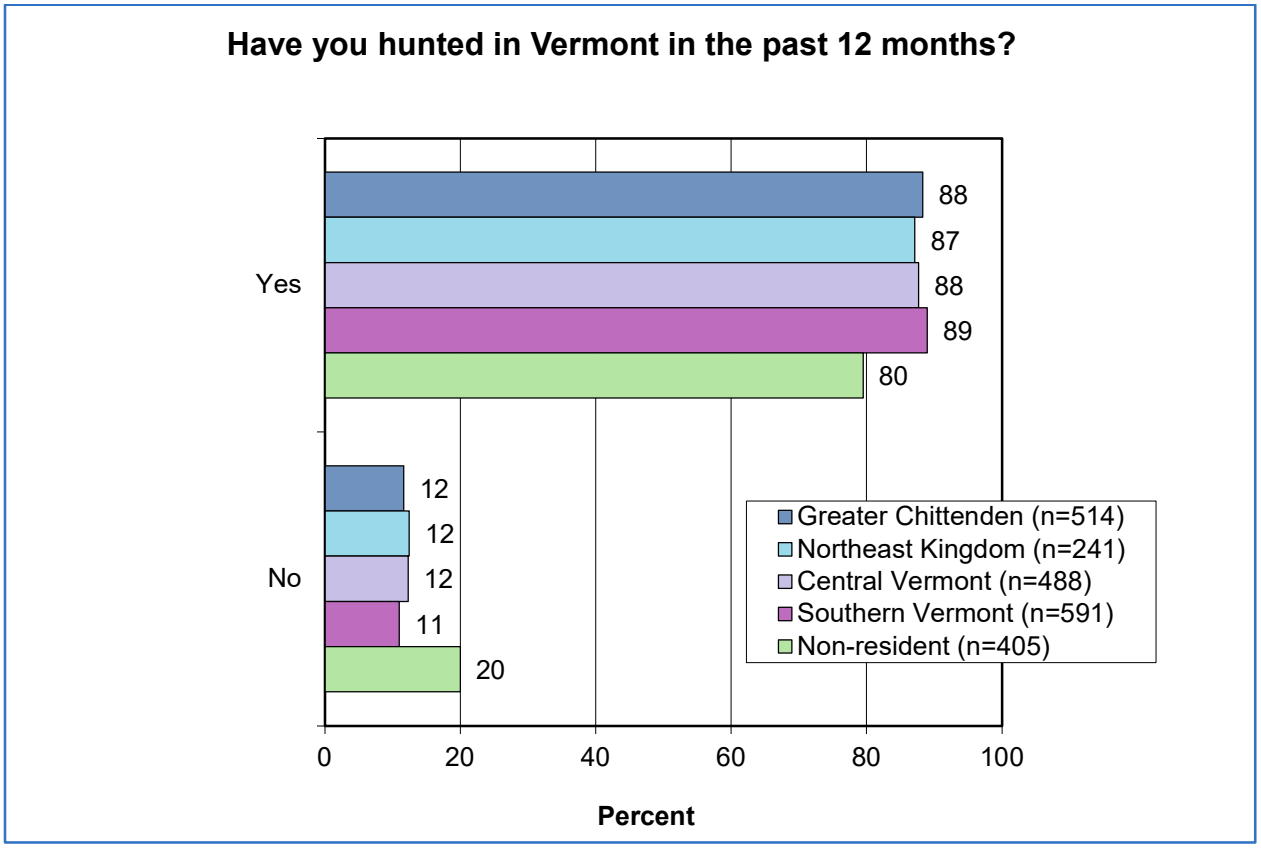
Note that the characteristics are not meant to describe a single person or a person that has all the traits. Rather, the analysis looks at each group defined by the individual characteristic on its own then looks at the next group, which sometimes are mutually exclusive.


Percent of the following groups who are very or somewhat satisfied with their white-tailed deer hunting experience in Vermont over the past 5 years:
Female 68
Non-resident 67
18-34 years old 64
Resides in Greater Chittenden Region 62
Lives in large city, urban area, or suburban area 62
Hunted antlerless muzzleloader season in 2023 61
Resides in Central Vermont Region 61
Lives in rural area not on farm or ranch 60
55 years old or older 60
Hunted archery season in 2023 60
Overall 60
Hunted rifle season in 2023 59
Hunted regular muzzleloader season in 2023 59
Male 59
Lives in small city or town 58
Lives in rural area on farm or ranch 58
35-54 years old 56
Resides in Southern Vermont Region 54
Resides in Northeast Kingdom Region 53
0 20 40 60 80 100
Percent
This demographic analyses graph shows the percentages of various hunter groups satisfied with their white-tailed deer hunting experience in the state in the past 5 years, as shown by the patterned bar.
Those groups above the overall bar have a greater percentage being satisfied. For instance, 68% of female deer hunters are satisfied, much higher than deer hunters overall. Additionally, 67% of non-resident hunters are satisfied, also markedly higher than deer hunters overall.
Conversely, those groups below the overall bar are less likely to be satisfied. This includes deer hunters residing in the Northeast Kingdom or the Southern Region.

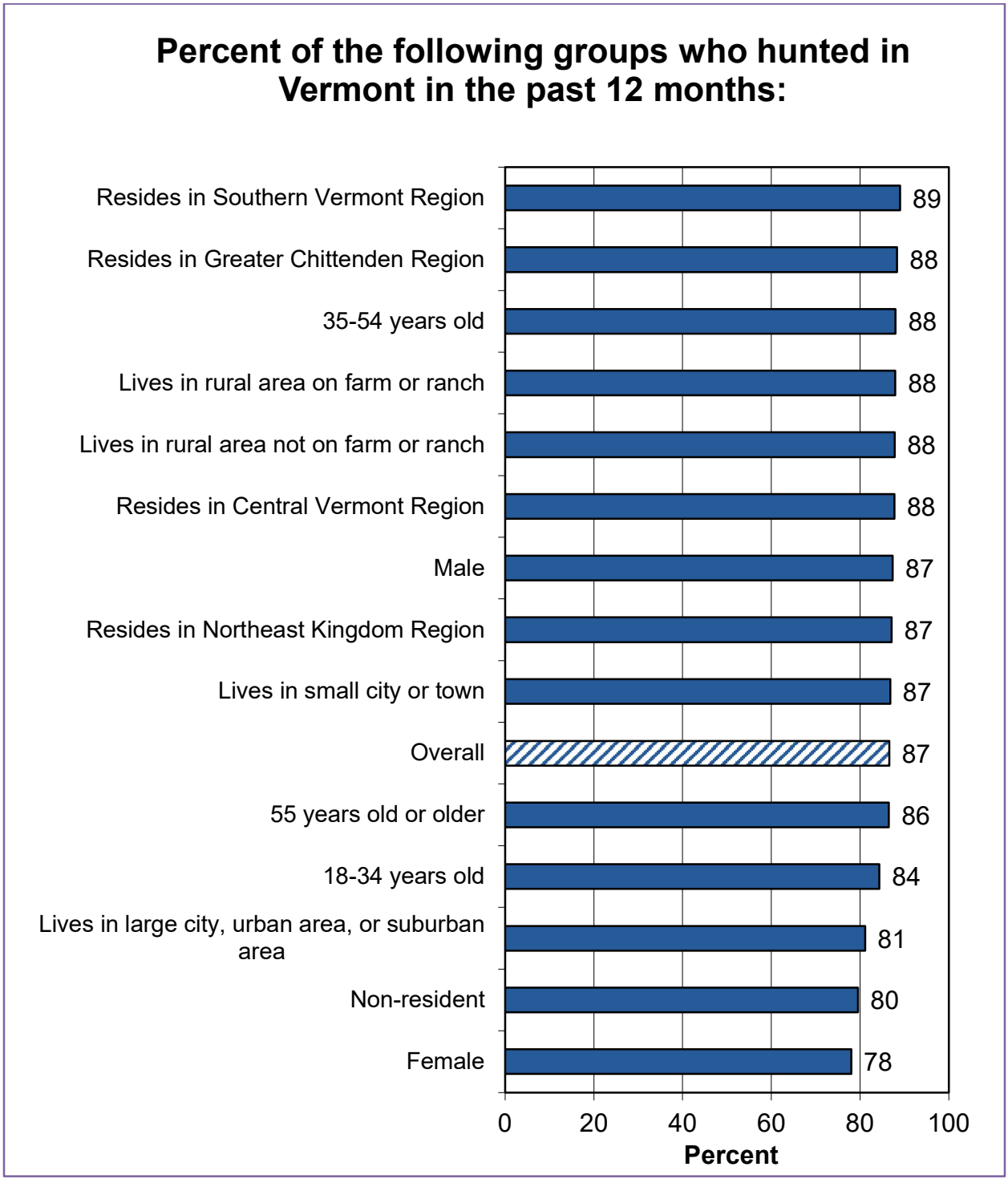
PARTICIPATION IN DEER HUNTING

The entire sample of deer hunters had hunted white-tailed deer in Vermont within the previous 5 years. A very large proportion of them (87%) had done any type of hunting in Vermont within the previous 12 months. The regions were quite similar, although non-residents have a lower rate than resident deer hunters.

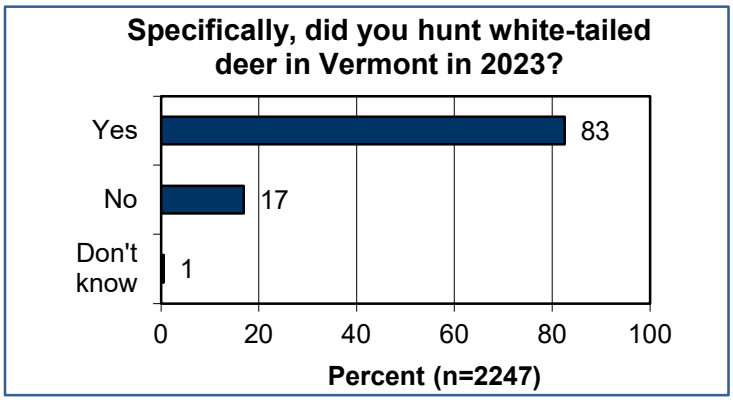




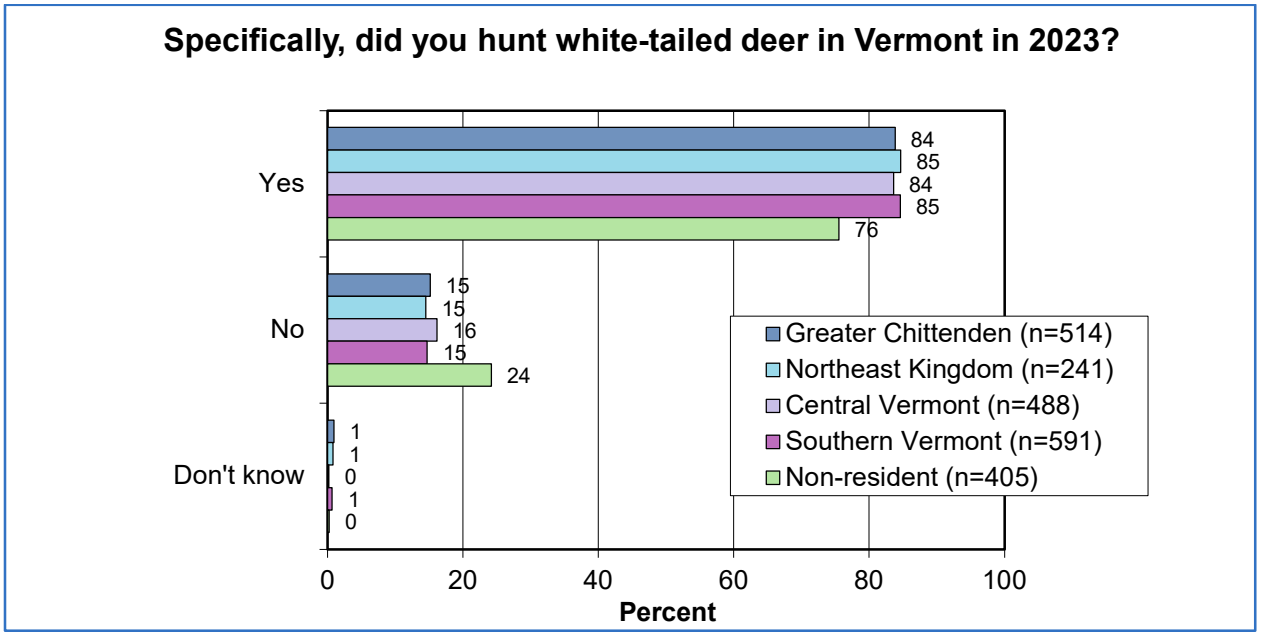
There is little difference at the top end of the demographic analyses graph for hunting in the previous 12 months: the top group is only 2 percentage points above deer hunters overall. At the lower end, three groups of deer hunters are markedly lower in their rate of hunting in the previous 12 months: female deer hunters, non-resident deer hunters, and those hunters living in urban/suburban areas of the state.

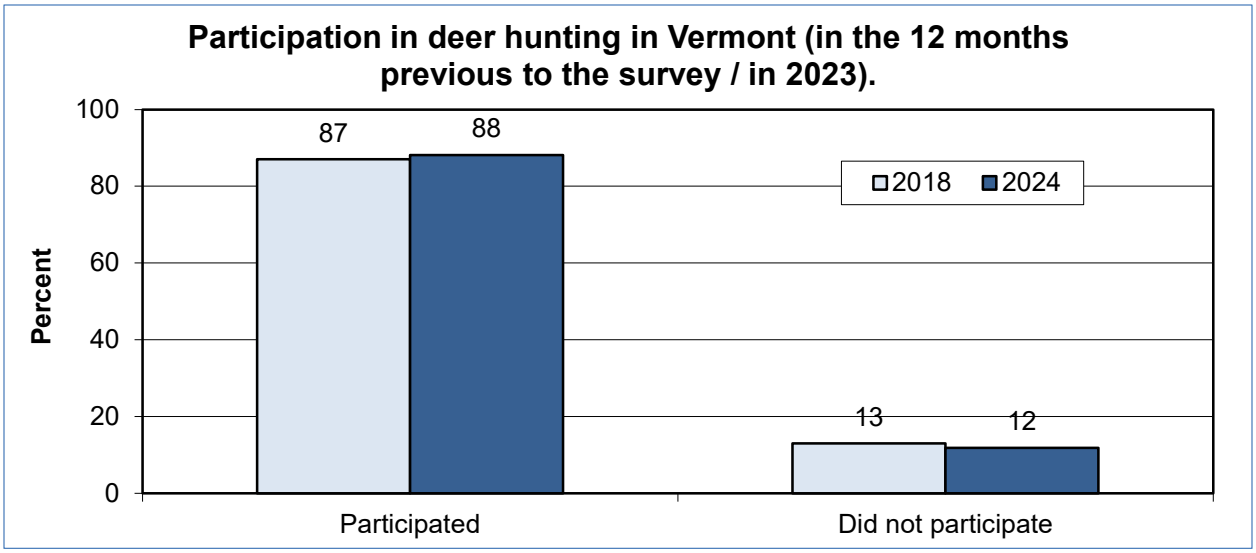


See pages 6-7 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.



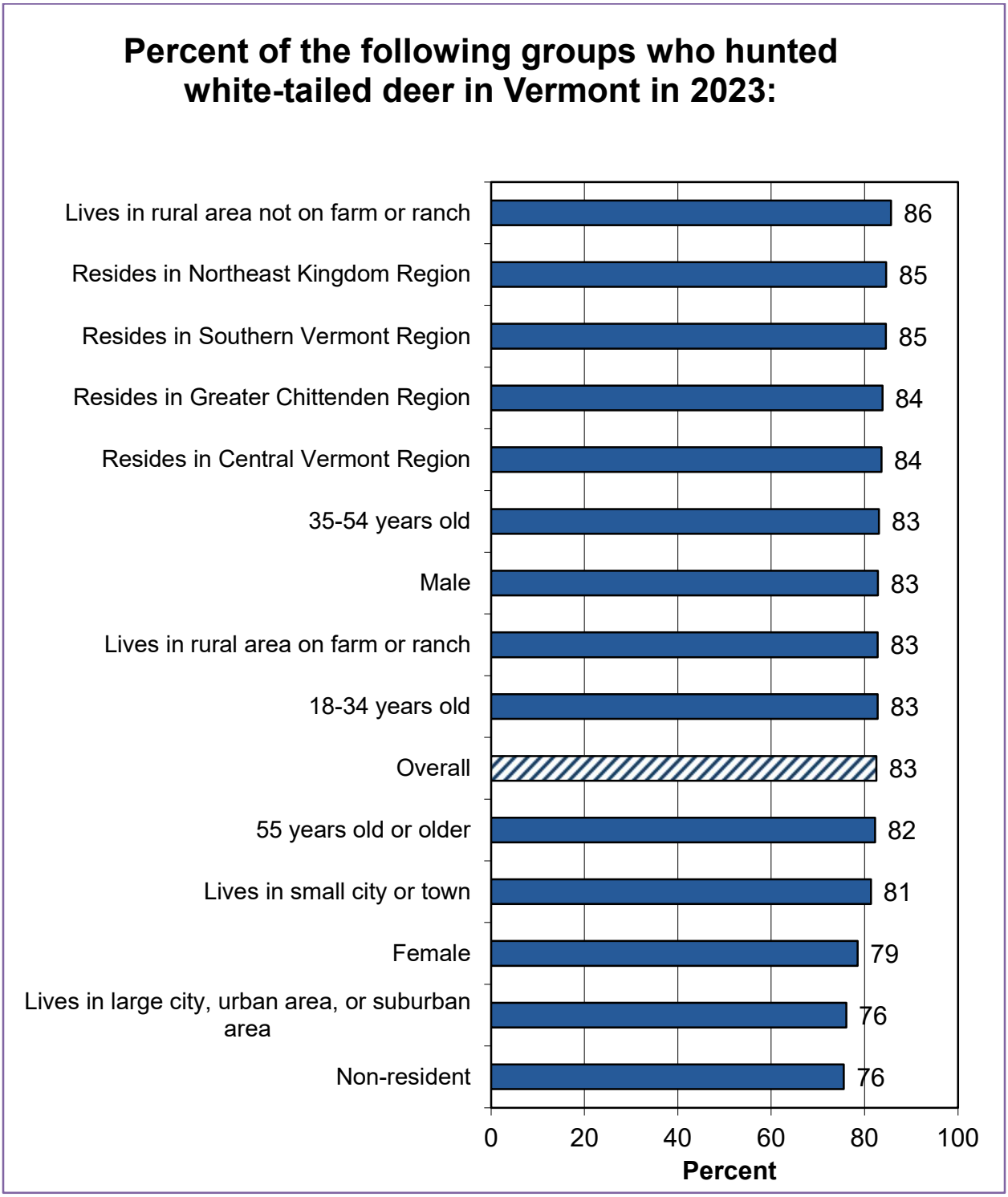
The rate of hunting white-tailed deer in 2023 is at 83% (the previous question asked about any hunting; this is specific to deer). Non-residents had the lowest rate in the regional graph. The trend shows almost no change in the rate of deer hunting in the 12-month period previous to the survey.





The 2018 percentage was calculated based on questions about seasons hunted and pertained to the 12 months previous to the survey. The 2024 percentage was based on a question that asked about participation in 2023. (The graph uses the years of the survey to identify the 2018 and 2024 surveys.)

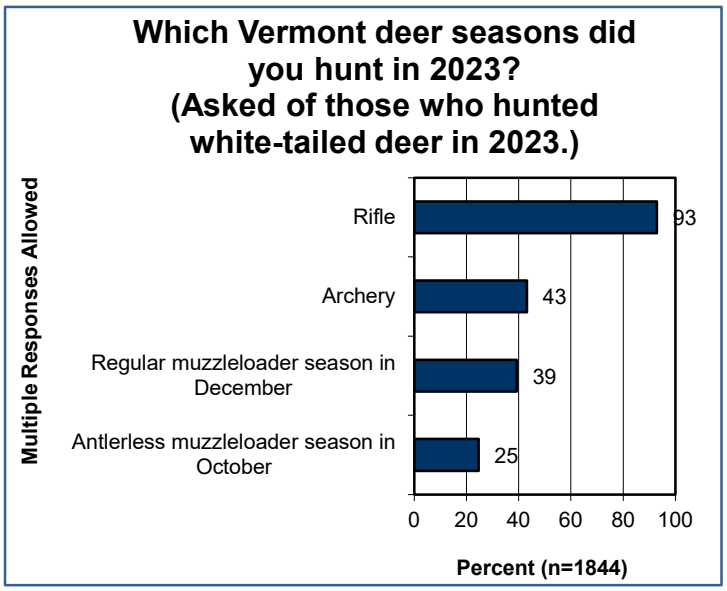
Again, at the top of the demographic analyses graph, there are no marked differences in the rate of hunting white-tailed deer in the state in 2023, the top group being only 3 percentage points above deer hunters overall. At the lower end, non-resident deer hunters and those deer hunters living in urban/suburban areas have markedly lower rates.



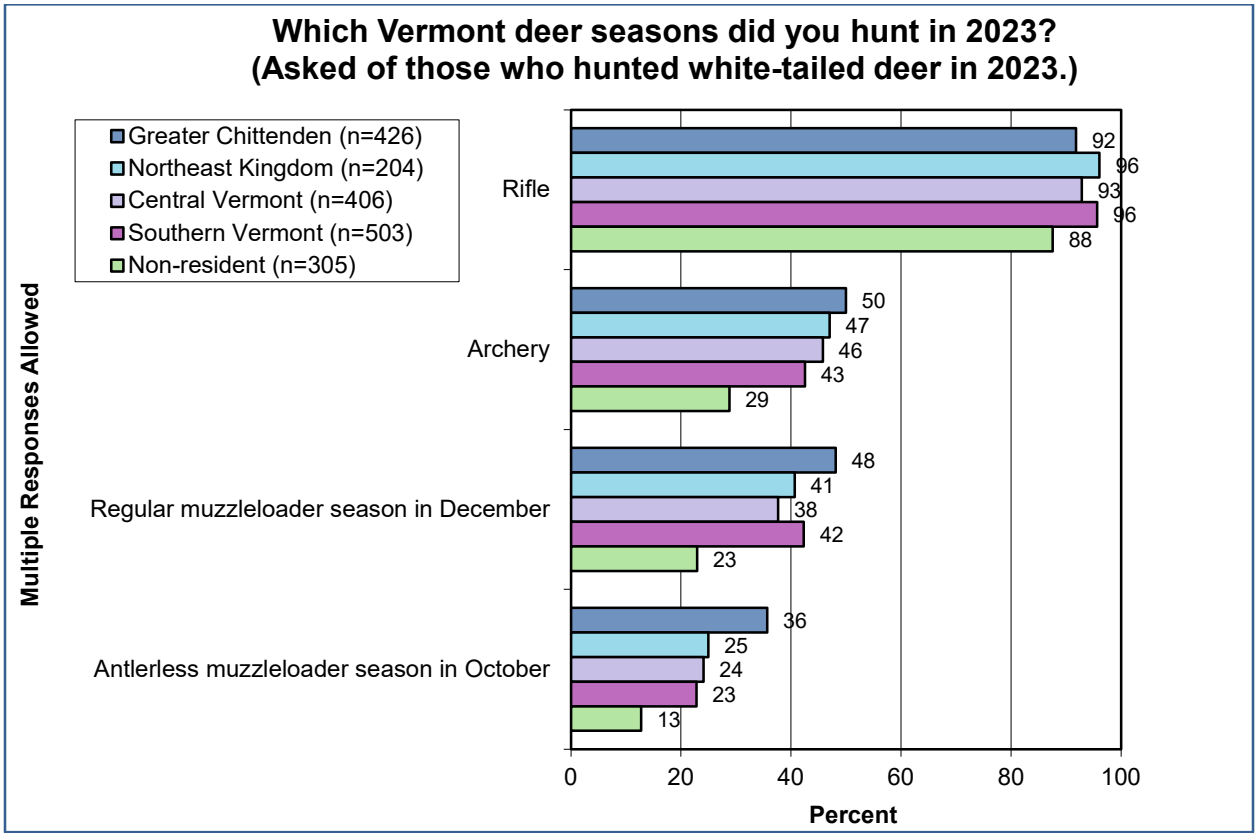
See pages 6-7 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

The rifle deer season is the most popular, with nearly all deer hunters hunting that season (93% did so). Archery and regular muzzleloader seasons are in the next tier: 43% and 39% participating during those seasons, respectively. Meanwhile, a quarter of deer hunters who hunted in 2023 (25%) did so during the antlerless muzzleloader season in October. For reference, the dates of the seasons are shown below in chronological order:

- Archery deer season was October 1 through November 10 and November 27 through December 15, 2023. It was closed during the regular rifle season.
- Antlerless muzzleloader deer season was October 26 through October 29, 2023.
- Rifle deer season was November 11 through November 26, 2023.
- Regular muzzleloader deer season was December 2 through December 10, 2023.



The regional crosstabulation shows that non-residents have a lower participation rate in all but the rifle season. Note that the regional breakdown is by residency, not by location of hunting.



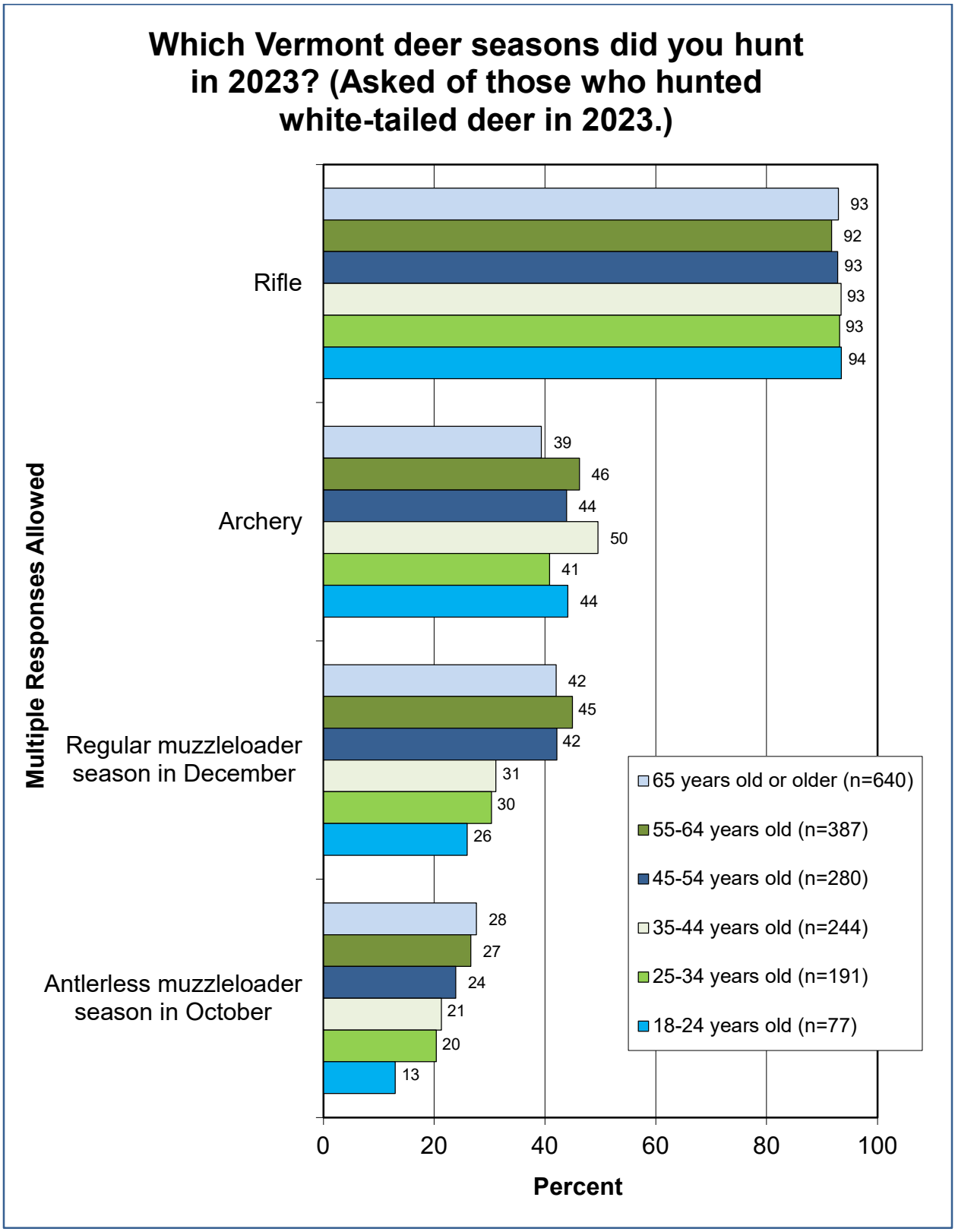
The table below includes every combination of seasons that hunters could have hunted. The percentages can be summed in any way the reader would like. For instance, those who did rifle season with any other season, or those who only did one season. The bold lines delineate sections as follows: the first shows those who did only a single season, the next shows those who did two of the four seasons, the next shows three season combinations, and then is the single row for those who did all four seasons.

Rifle	Archery	Regular muzzleloader season in December	Antlerless muzzleloader season in October	Group	Percentage
x				1. Rifle only	37.3
	x			2. Archery only	3.7
		x		3. Regular muzzleloader only	1.0
			x	4. Antlerless only	0.4
x	x			5. Rifle and Archery	14.5
x		x		6. Rifle and Regular muzzleloader	9.7
x			x	7. Rifle and Antlerless	1.6
	x	x		8. Archery and Regular muzzleloader	0.5
	x		x	9. Archery and Antlerless	0.4
		x	x	10. Regular muzzleloader and Antlerless	0.3
x	x	x		11. Rifle, Archery, and Regular muzzleloader	8.3
x	x		x	12. Rifle, Archery, and Antlerless	2.4
x		x	x	13. Rifle, Regular muzzleloader, and Antlerless	6.0
	x	x	x	14. Archery, Regular muzzleloader, and Antlerless	0.4
x	x	x	x	15. All four seasons	13.1
				Total	100

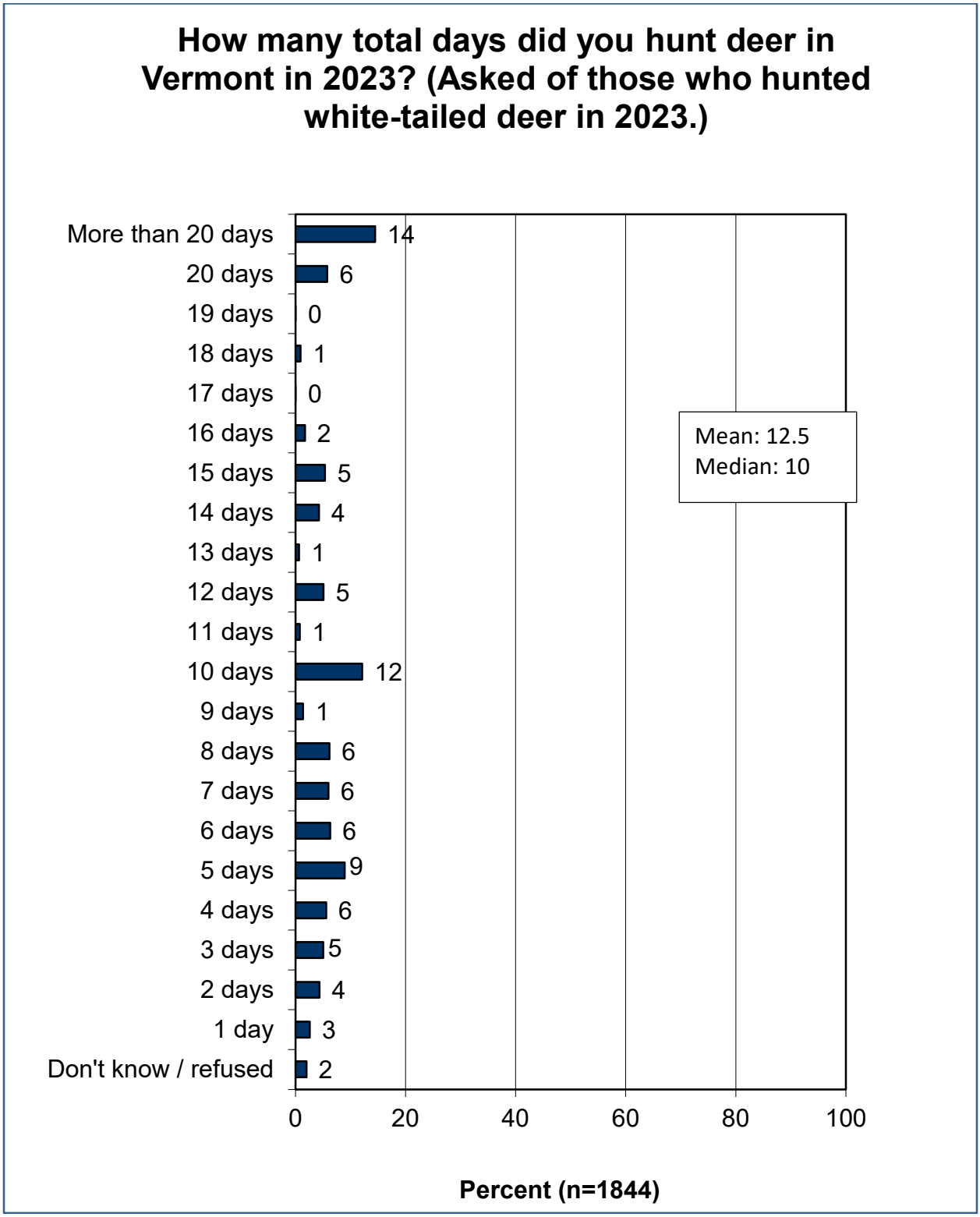
Among the findings:

- 42% hunted only one season.
- 56% hunted rifle season along with another season.
- 40% hunted archery along with another season.
- 24% hunted antlerless season along with another season.

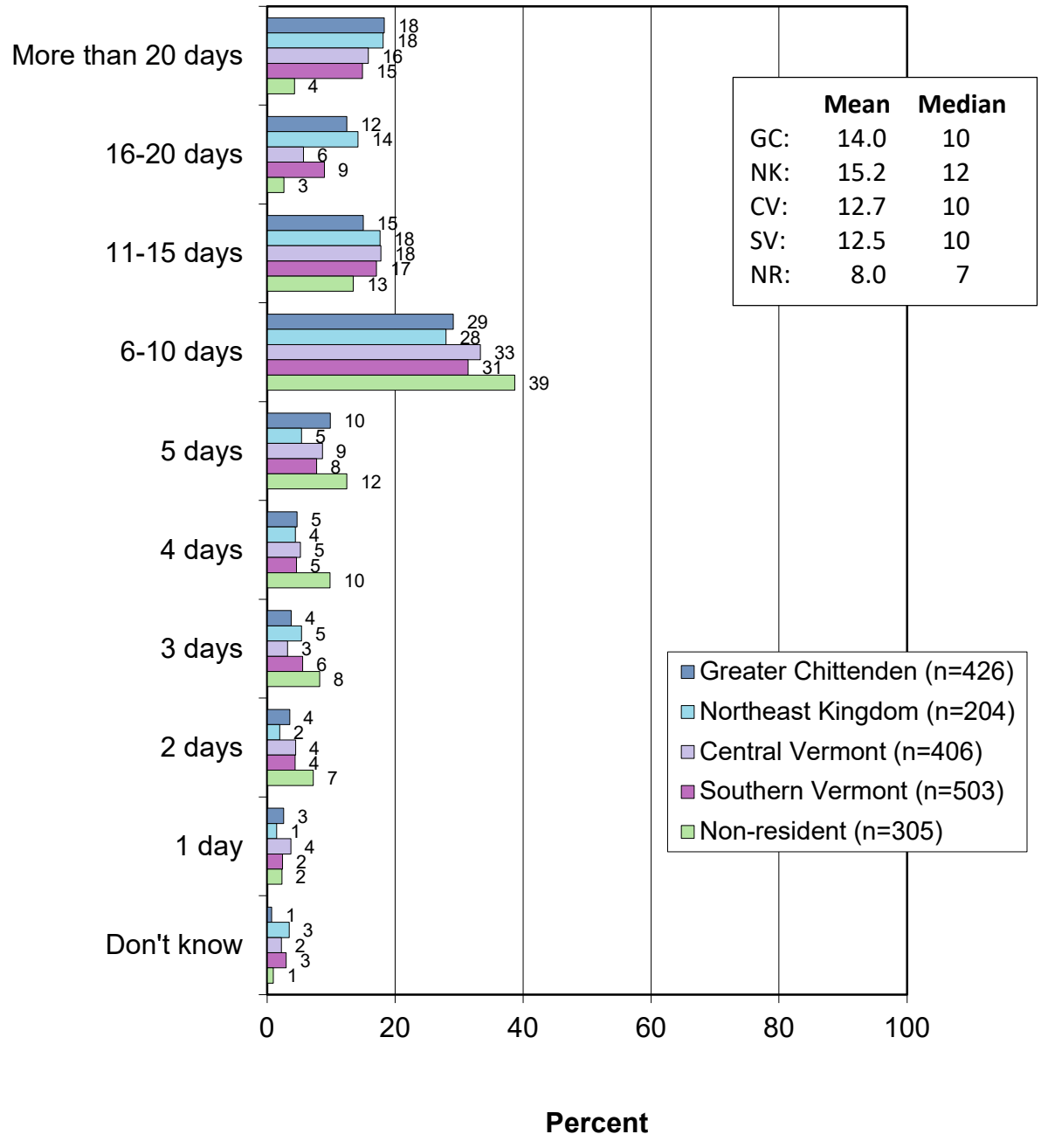
The analysis also looked how age affected seasons hunted. The most notable difference by age is that the muzzleloader seasons are skewed to the older age ranges.



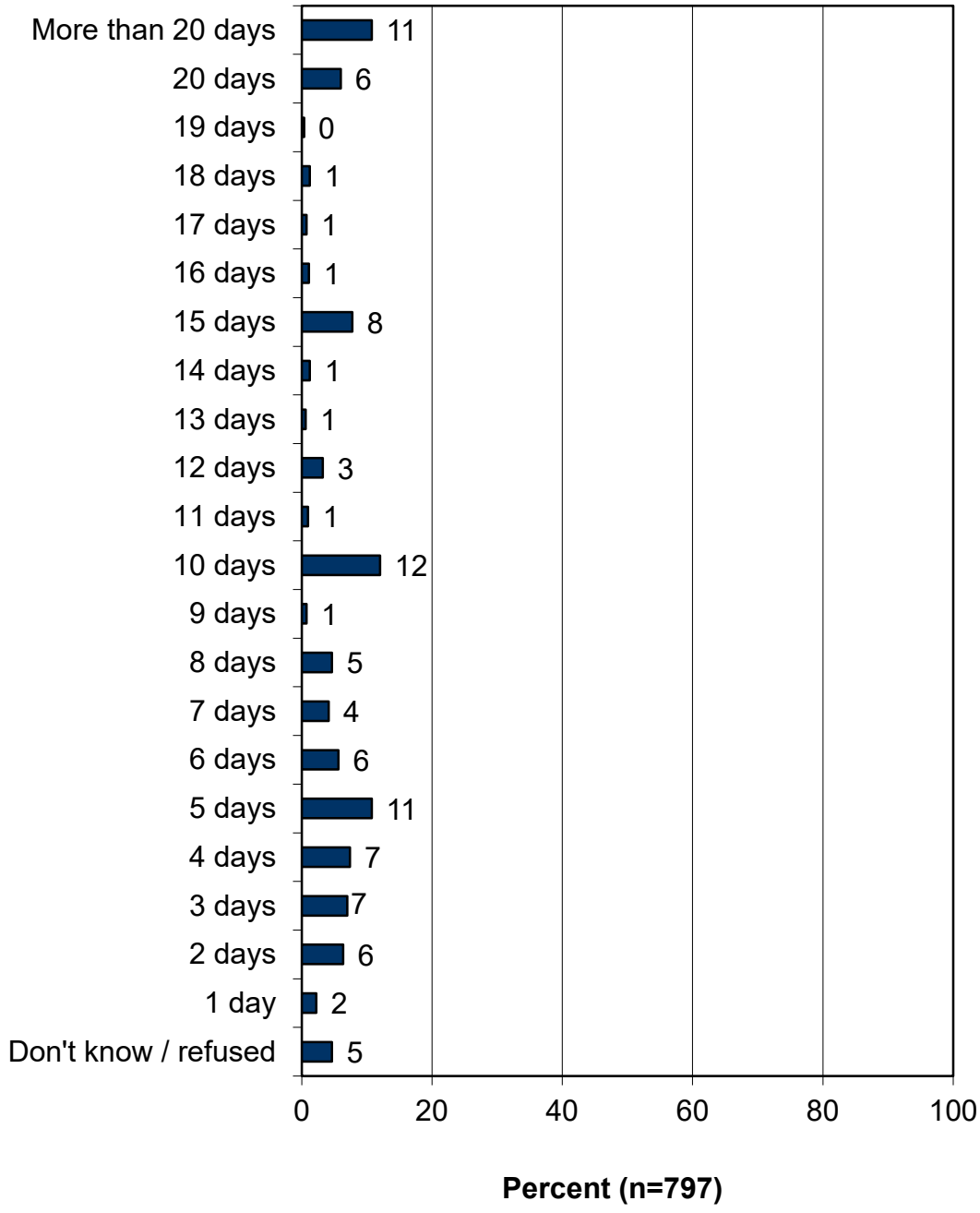
This and the following pages show days hunted overall and in the various seasons. (The graphs of the crosstabulations show ranges of days rather than individual days for any amount more than 5 days, as the graphs are not legible otherwise.)



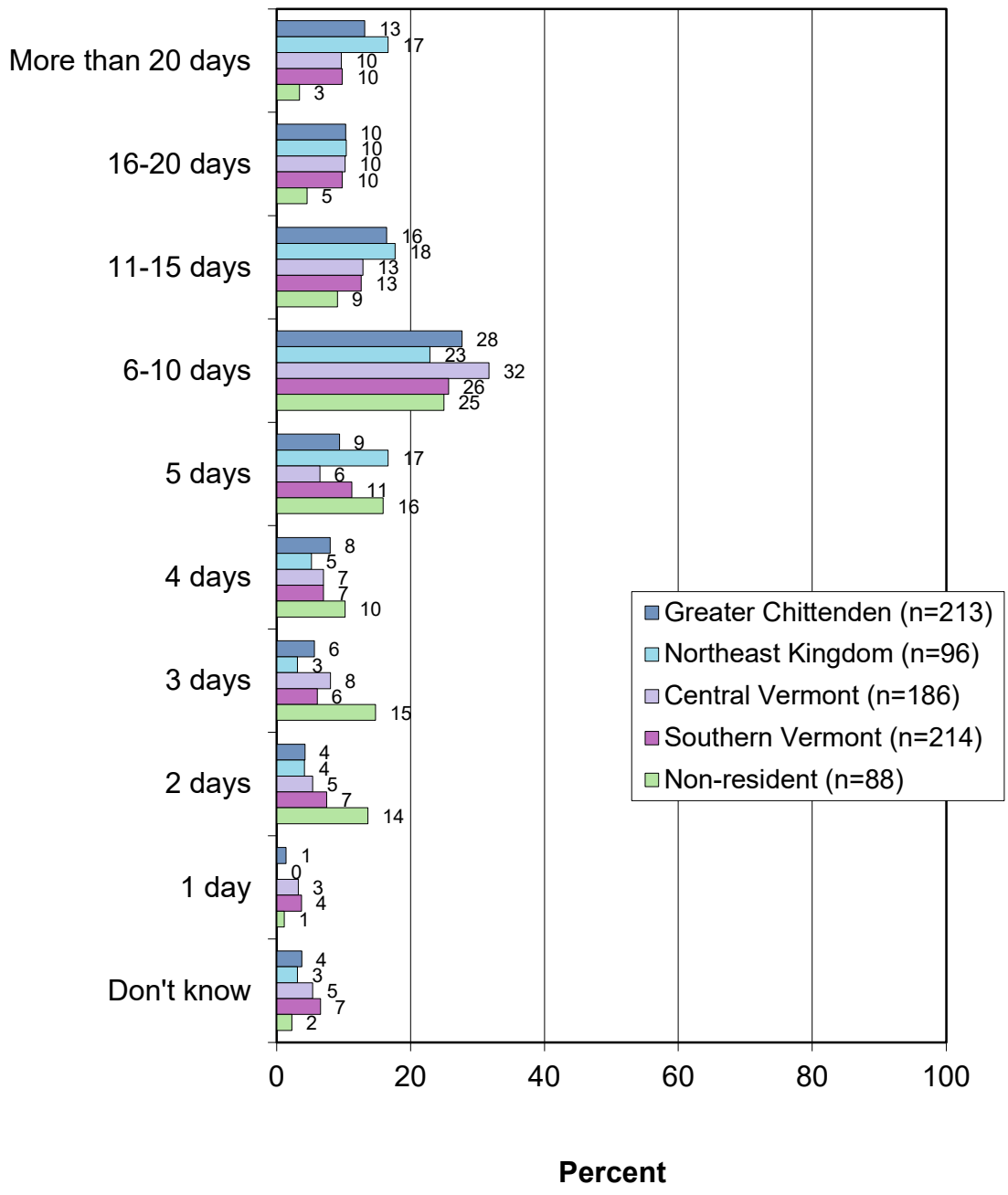
How many total days did you hunt deer in Vermont in 2023? (Asked of those who hunted white-tailed deer in 2023.)



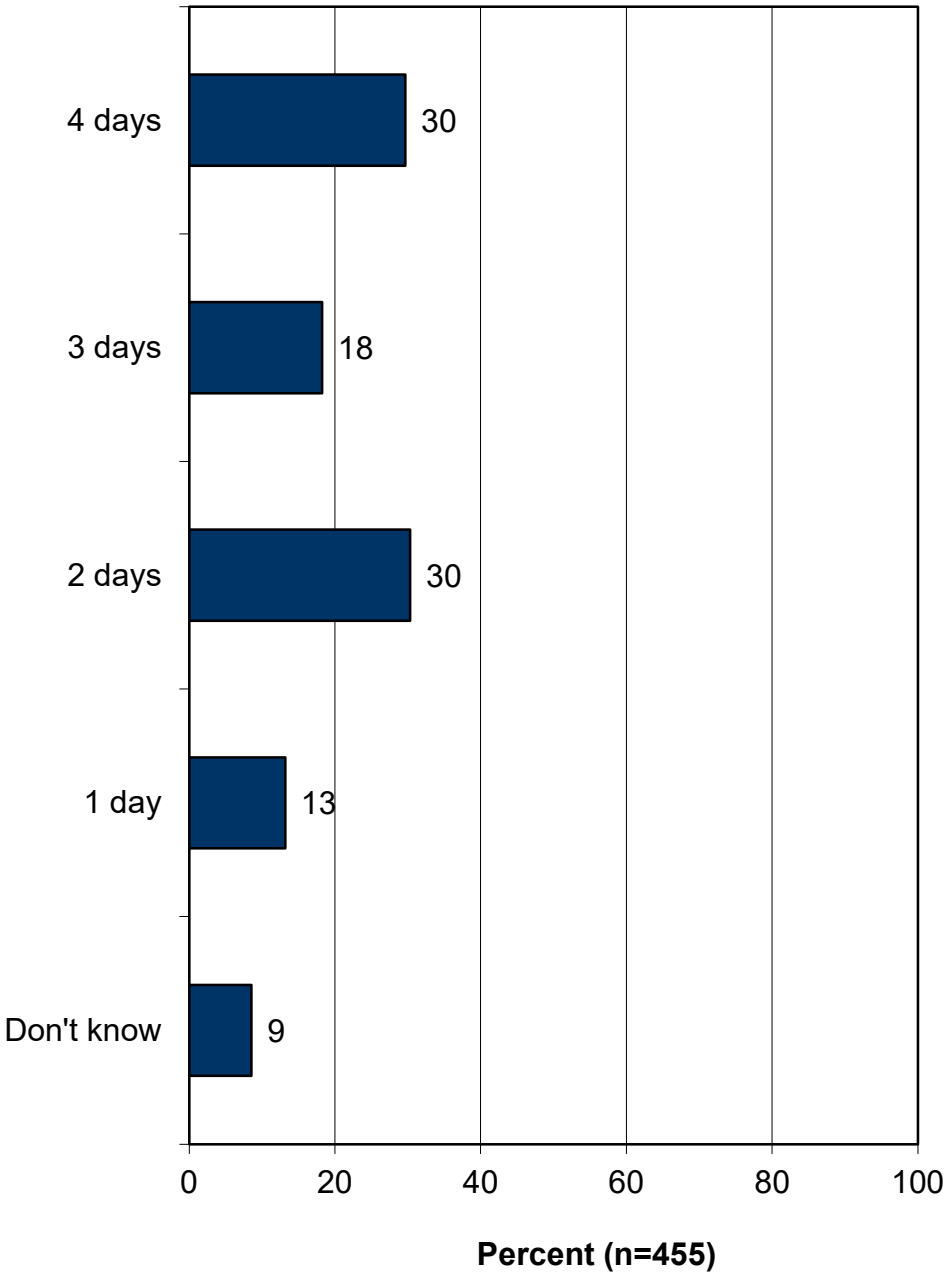
How many days did you hunt during archery deer season in 2023? (Asked of those who hunted white-tailed deer in the archery deer season.)



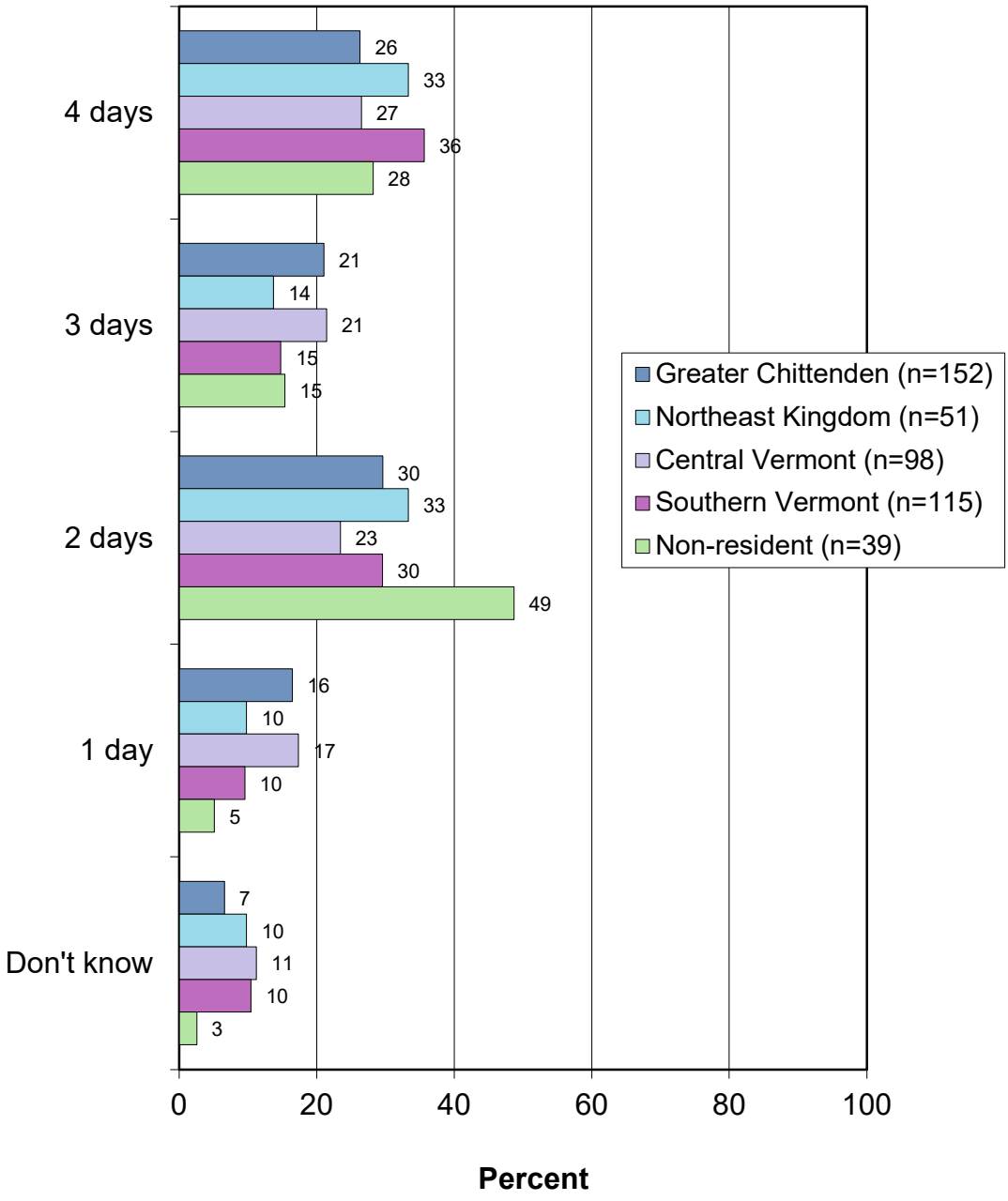
How many days did you hunt during archery deer season in 2023? (Asked of those who hunted white-tailed deer in the archery deer season.)



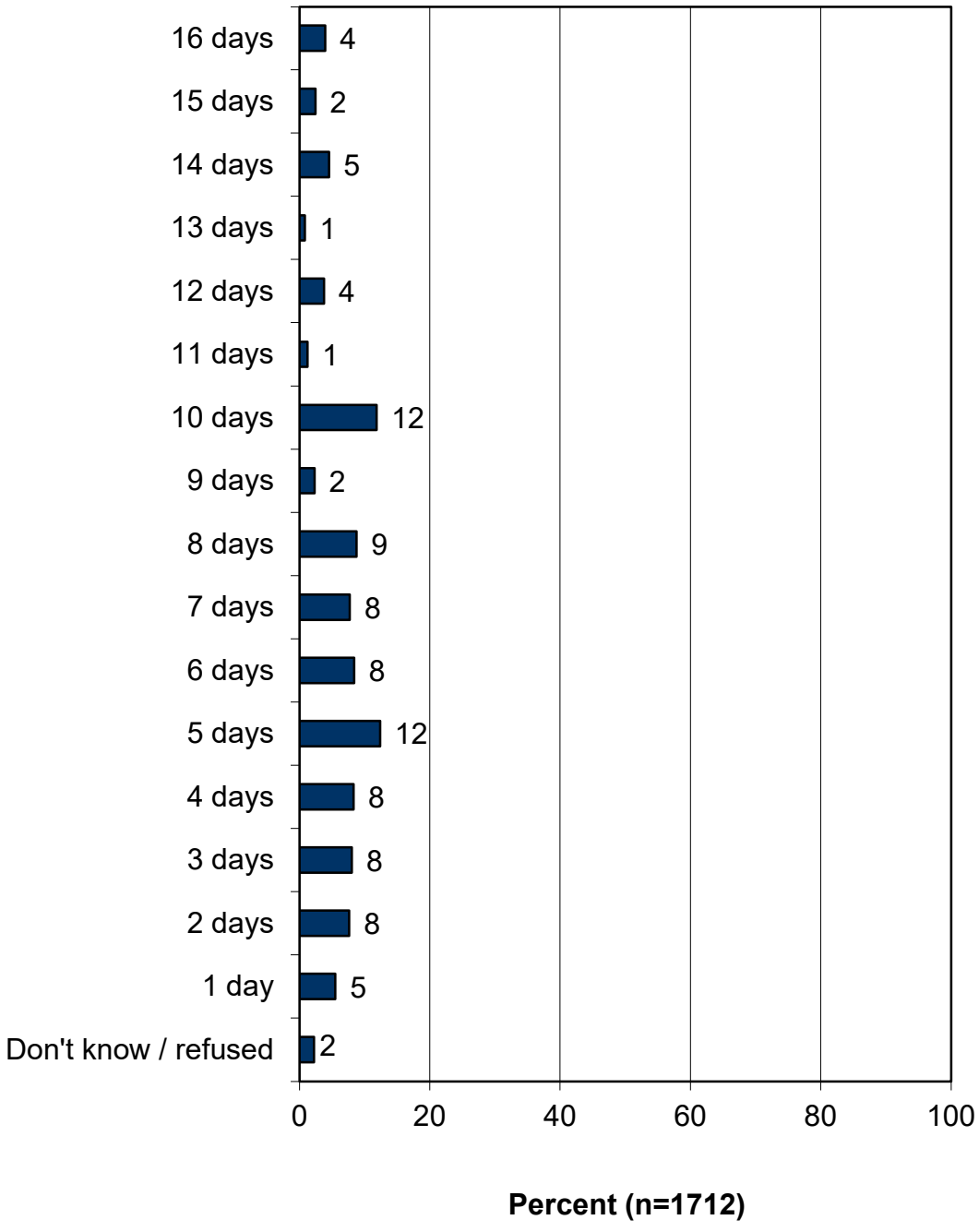
How many days did you hunt during antlerless muzzleloader deer season in October 2023? (Asked of those who hunted white-tailed deer in the antlerless muzzleloader deer season in October.)



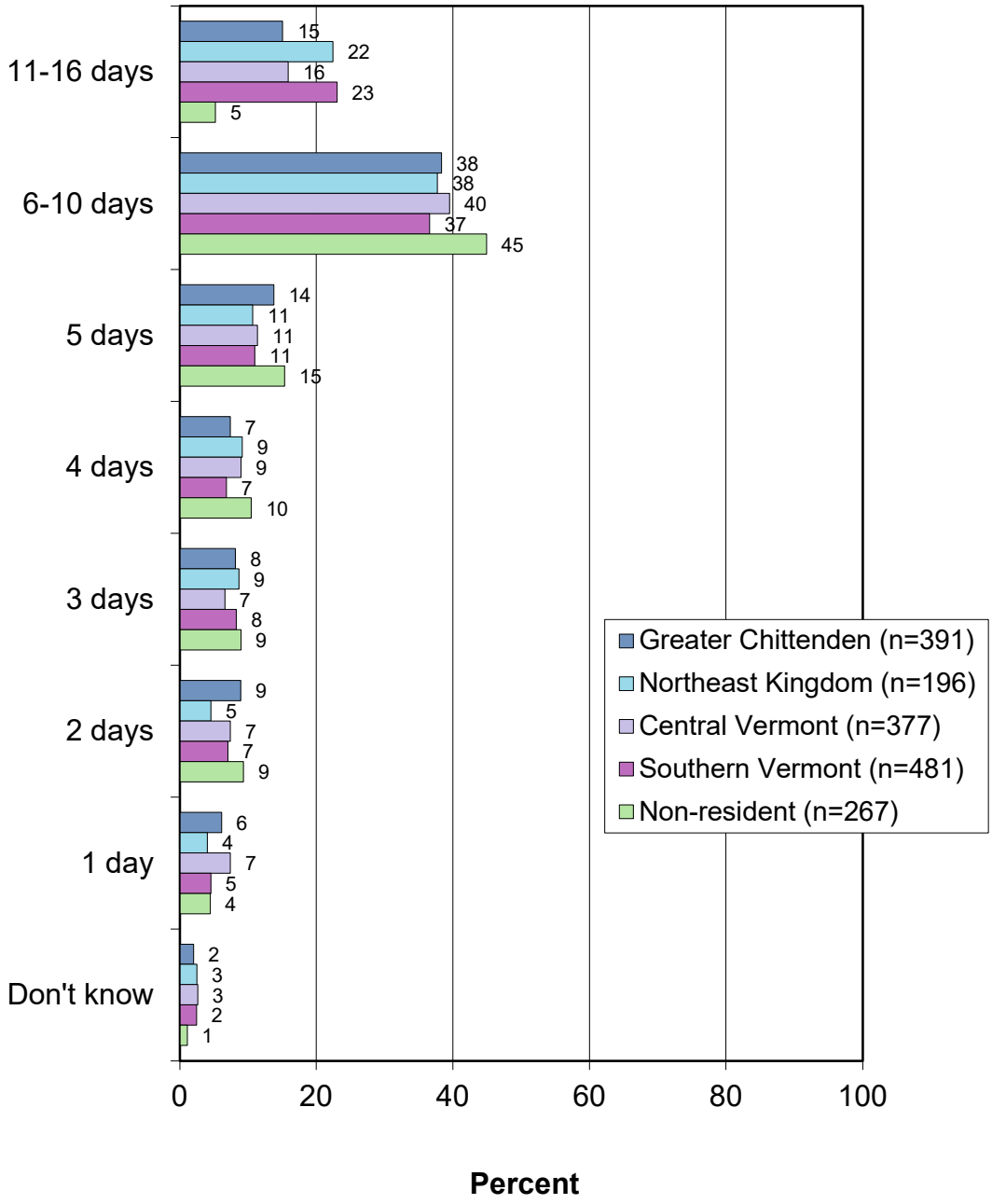
How many days did you hunt during antlerless muzzleloader deer season in October 2023? (Asked of those who hunted white-tailed deer in the antlerless muzzleloader deer season in October.)



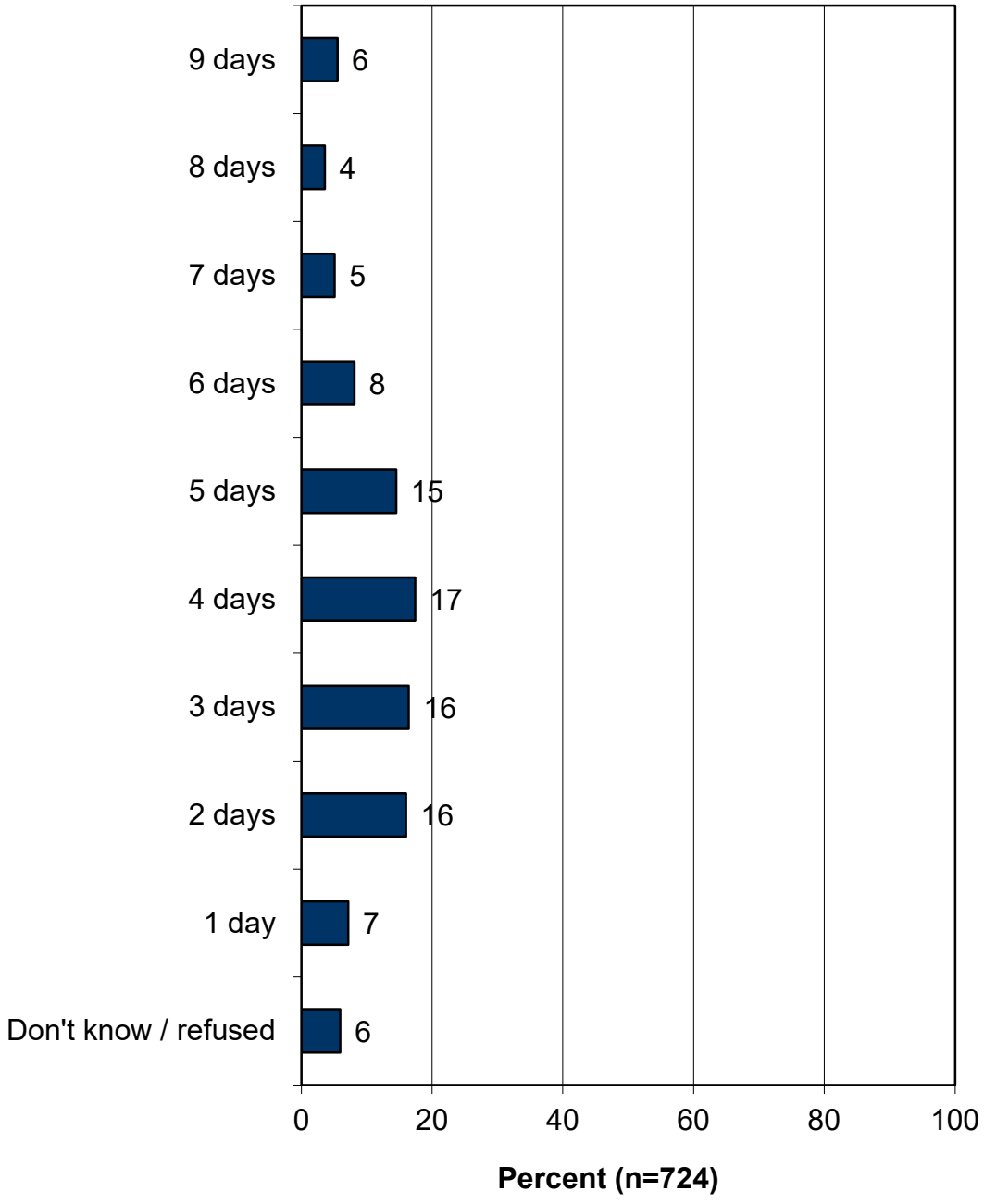
How many days did you hunt during rifle deer season in 2023? (Asked of those who hunted white-tailed deer in the rifle deer season.)



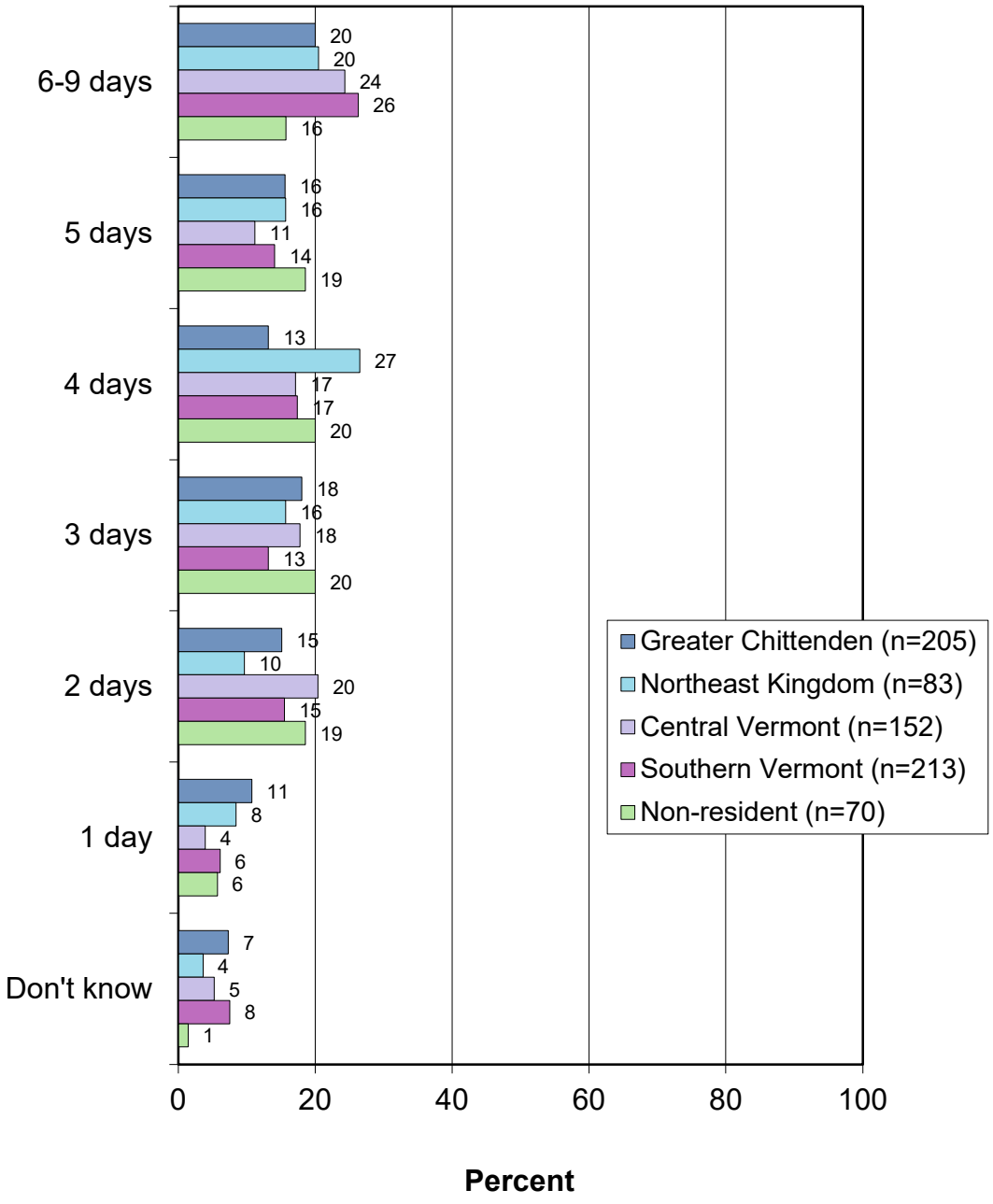
How many days did you hunt during rifle deer season in 2023? (Asked of those who hunted white-tailed deer in the rifle deer season.)

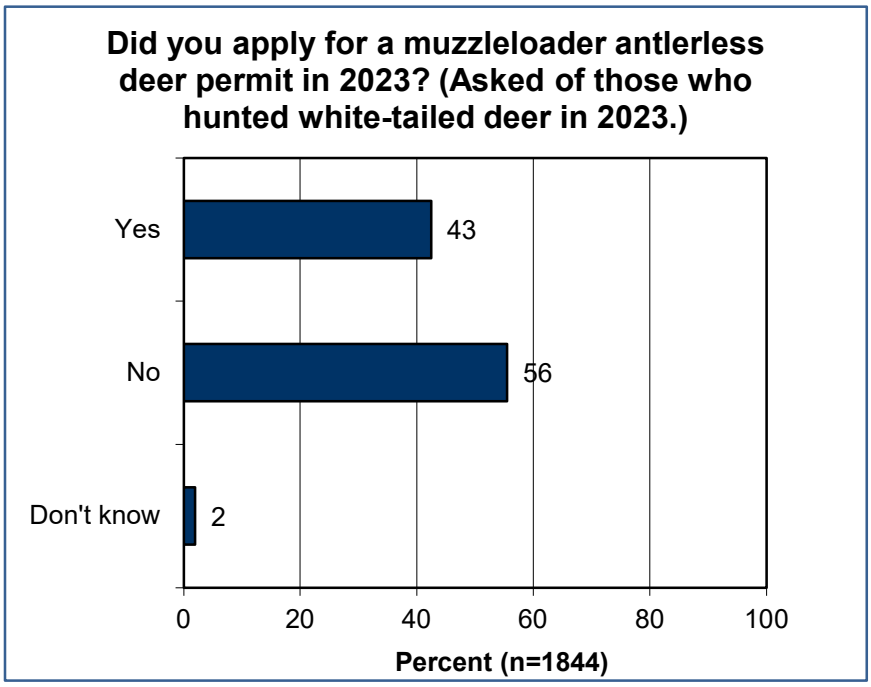


How many days did you hunt during the regular muzzleloader deer season in December 2023? (Asked of those who hunted white-tailed deer in the regular muzzleloader deer season.)

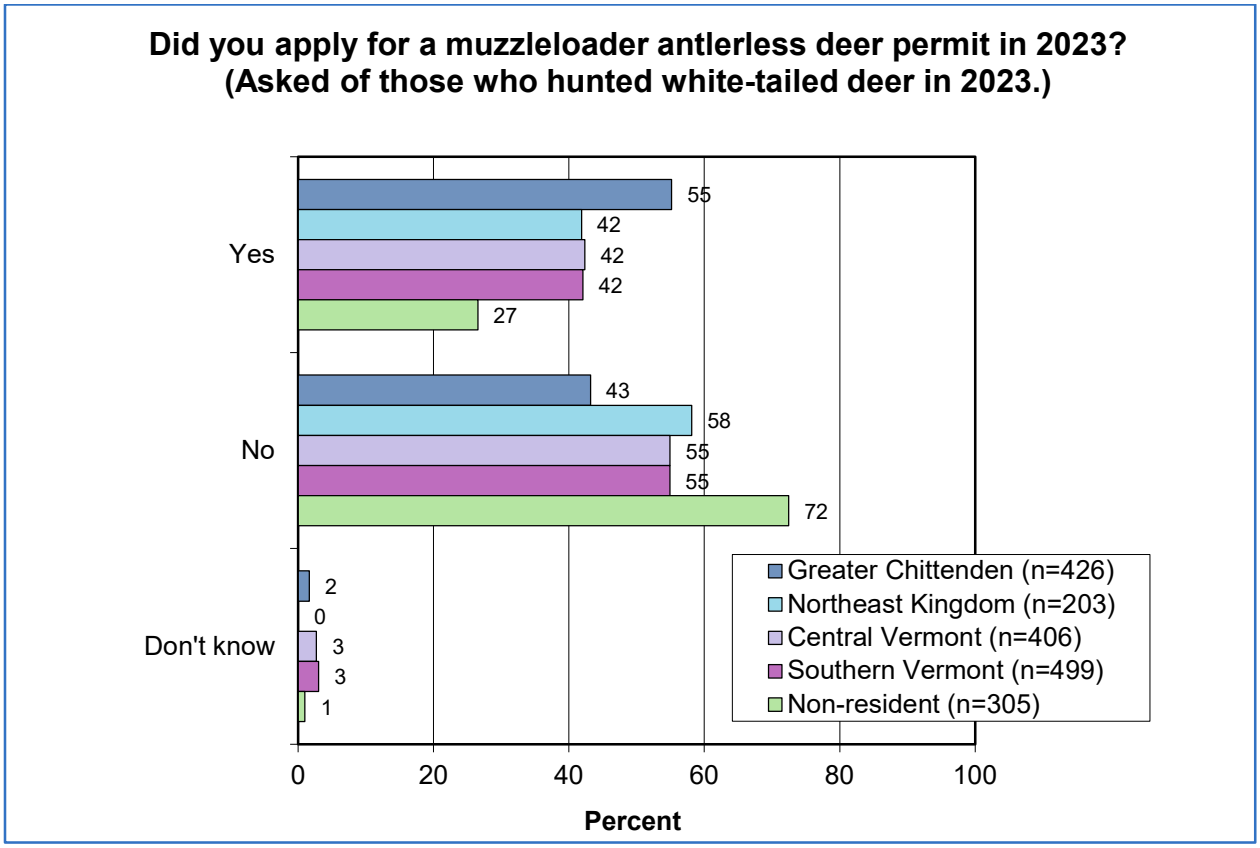


How many days did you hunt during the regular muzzleloader deer season in December 2023? (Asked of those who hunted white-tailed deer in the regular muzzleloader deer season.)



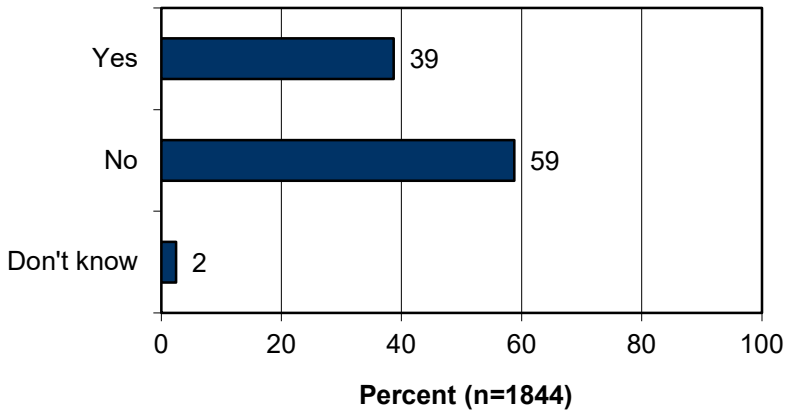


Among those who hunted in 2023, a little under half (43%) applied for a muzzleloader antlerless deer permit. Regionally, deer hunters from the Greater Chittenden Region had the highest rate of applying; non-residents had the lowest rate.

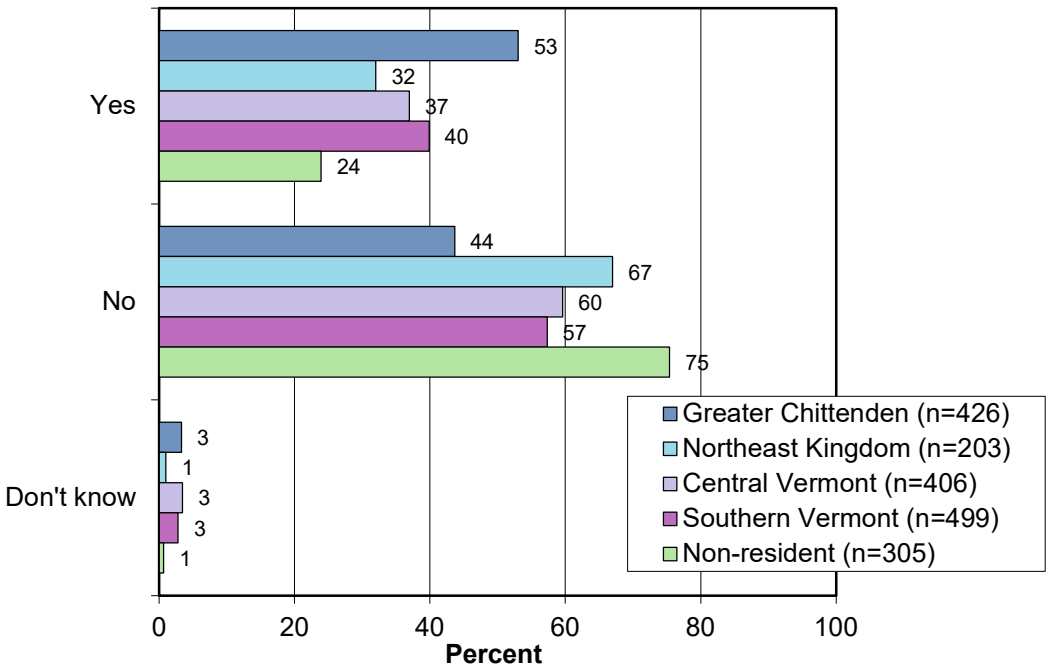


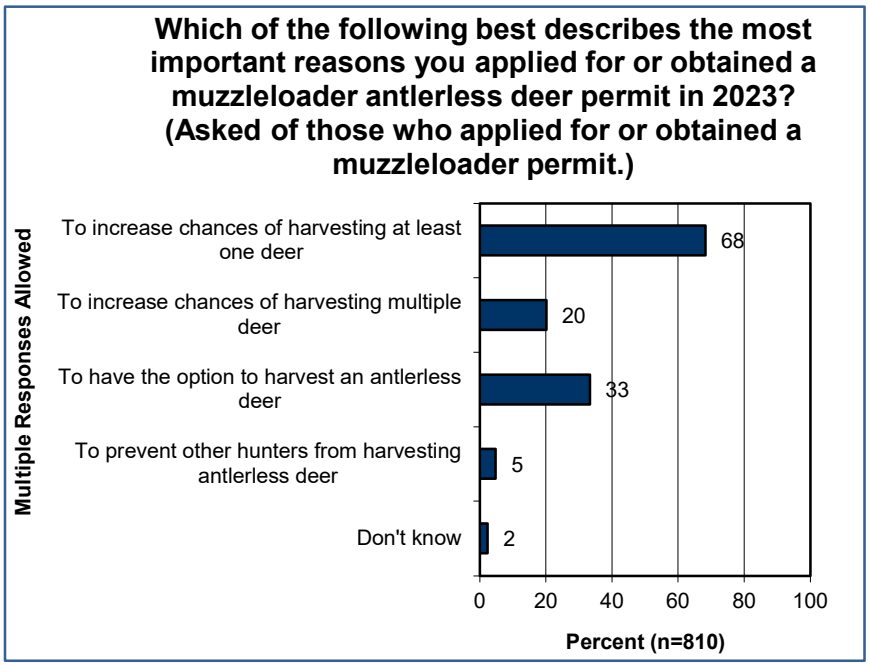
The rate of actually obtaining a muzzleloader antlerless permit was just slightly lower than the application rate: 39% of 2023 deer hunters obtained one.

Including permits you applied for, as well as permits you purchased from unallocated or leftover permits after the lottery, did you receive at least one muzzleloader antlerless deer permit in 2023? (Asked of those who hunted white-tailed deer in 2023.)

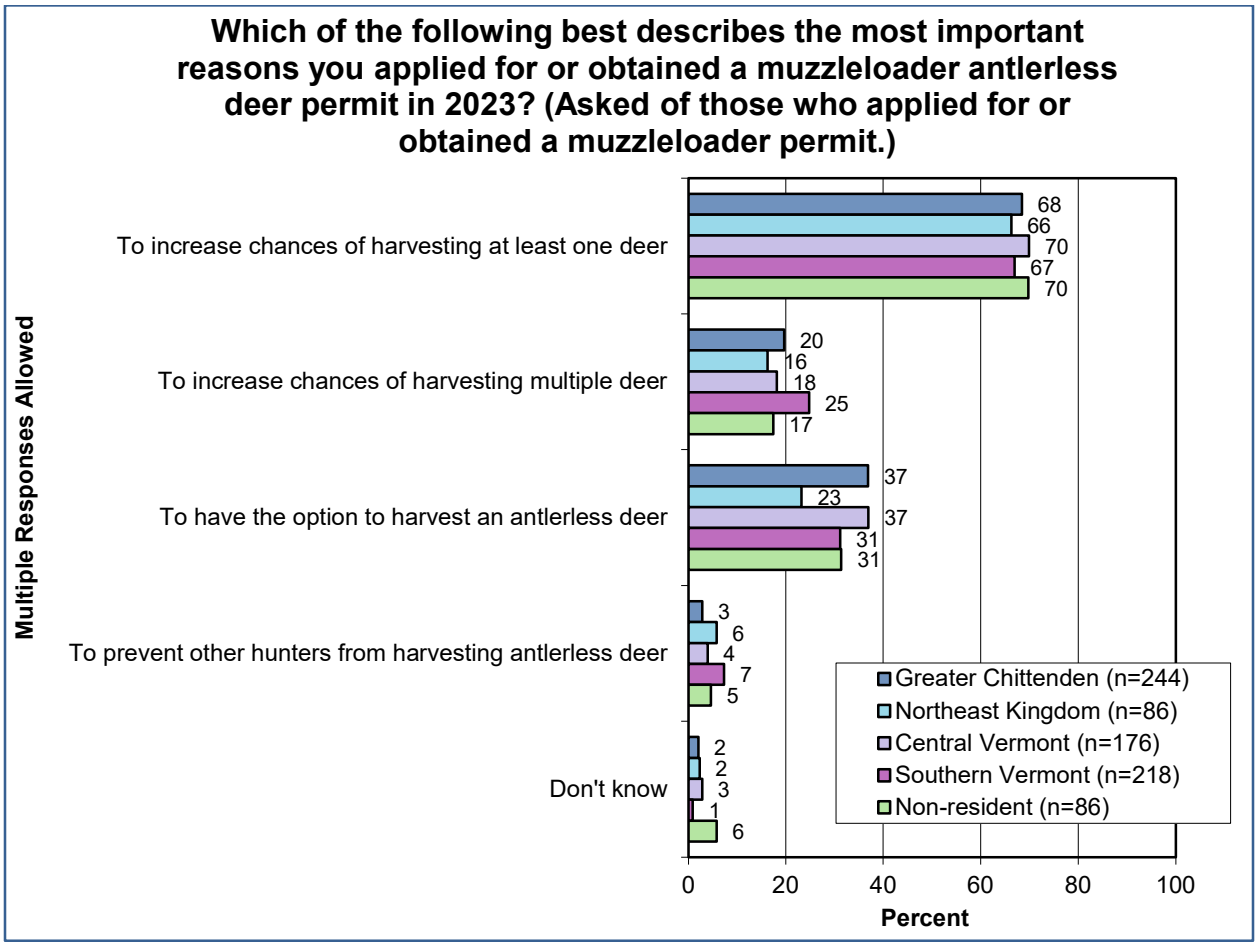


Including permits you applied for, as well as permits you purchased from unallocated or leftover permits after the lottery, did you receive at least one muzzleloader antlerless deer permit in 2023? (Asked of those who hunted white-tailed deer in 2023.)

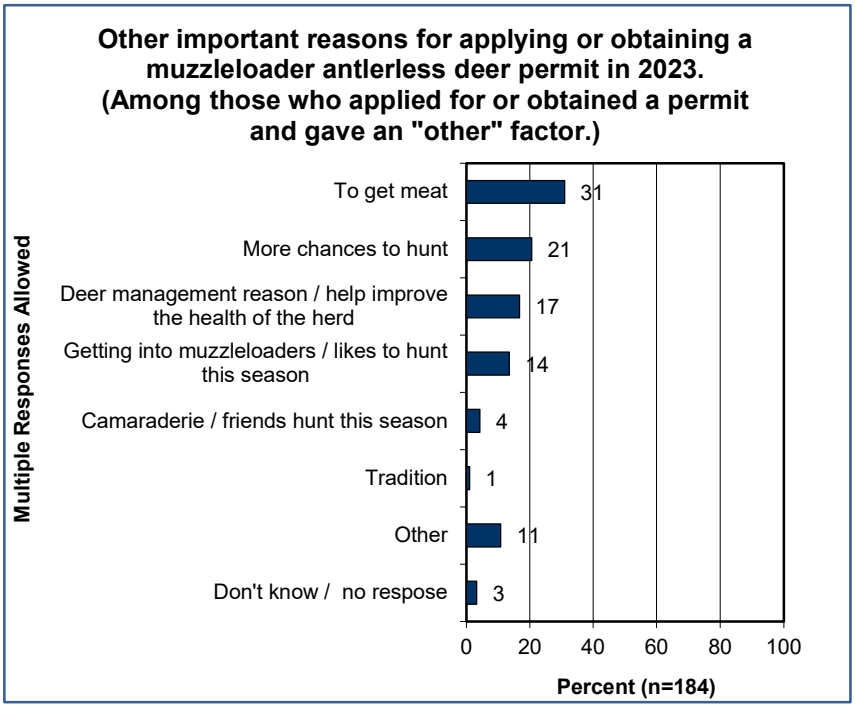


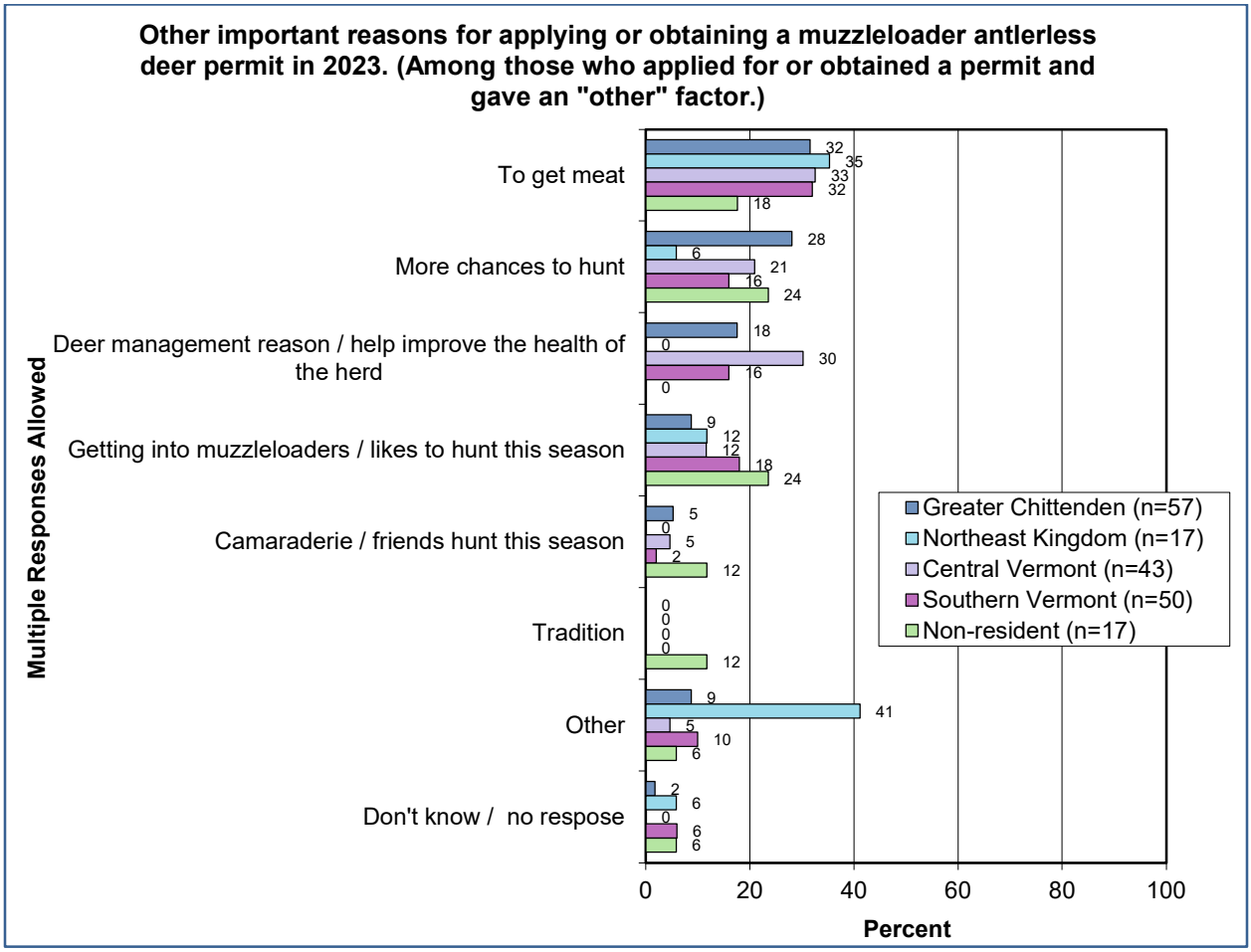


Four possible reasons for applying for or obtaining a muzzleloader antlerless deer permit were presented to hunters (who had applied or obtained one). The most popular reason was to increase their chances of harvesting at least one deer.



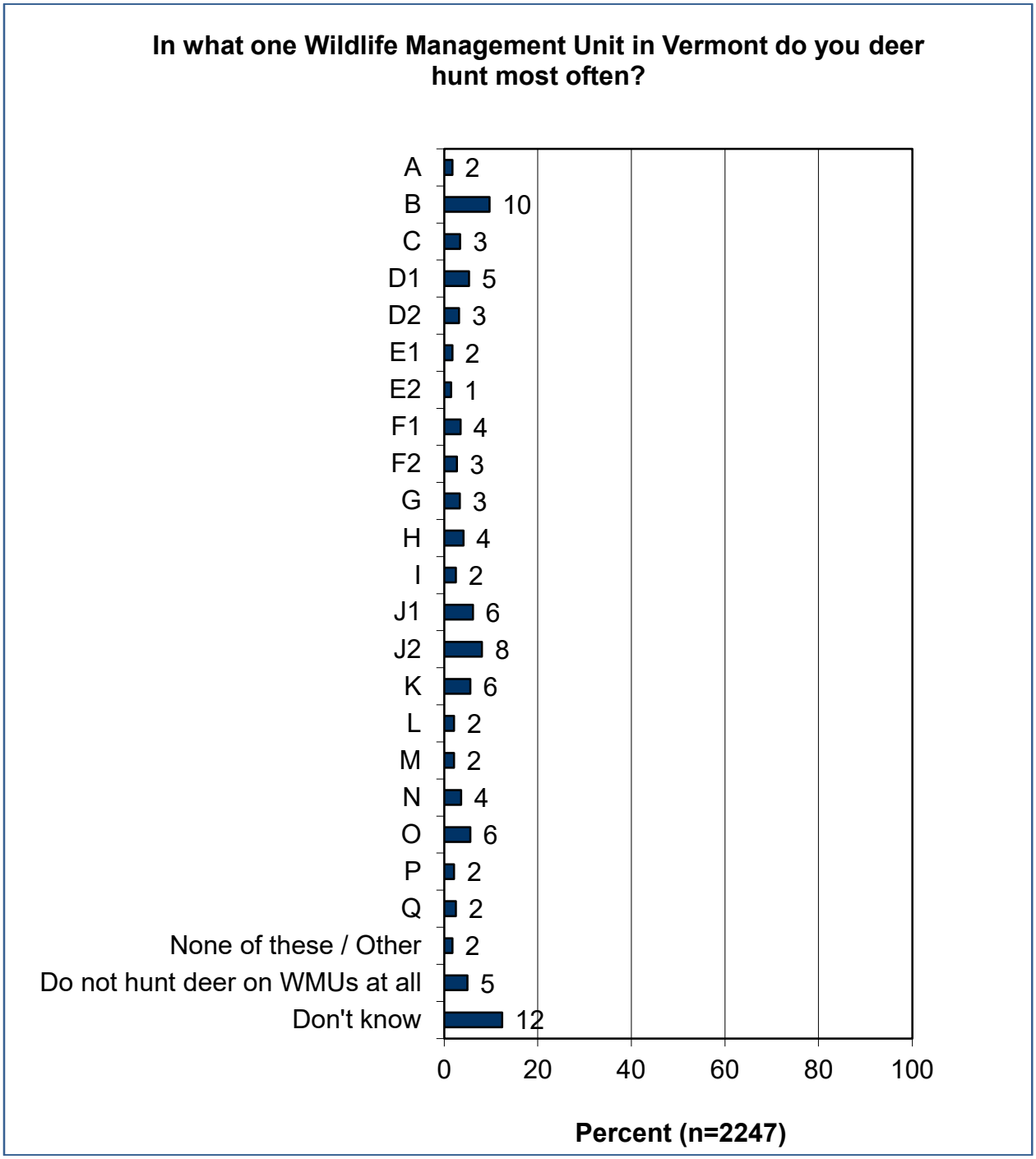
In follow-up to the question about reasons for applying for a muzzleloader antlerless deer permit—in which the reasons were presented to the respondent—was an open-ended question about any other reasons for doing so. To get meat is the top reason by far, followed by doing so to increase opportunities to hunt, for deer management, and a liking of muzzleloading hunting. The regional graph is shown, but note that some regions had few respondents had another reason.



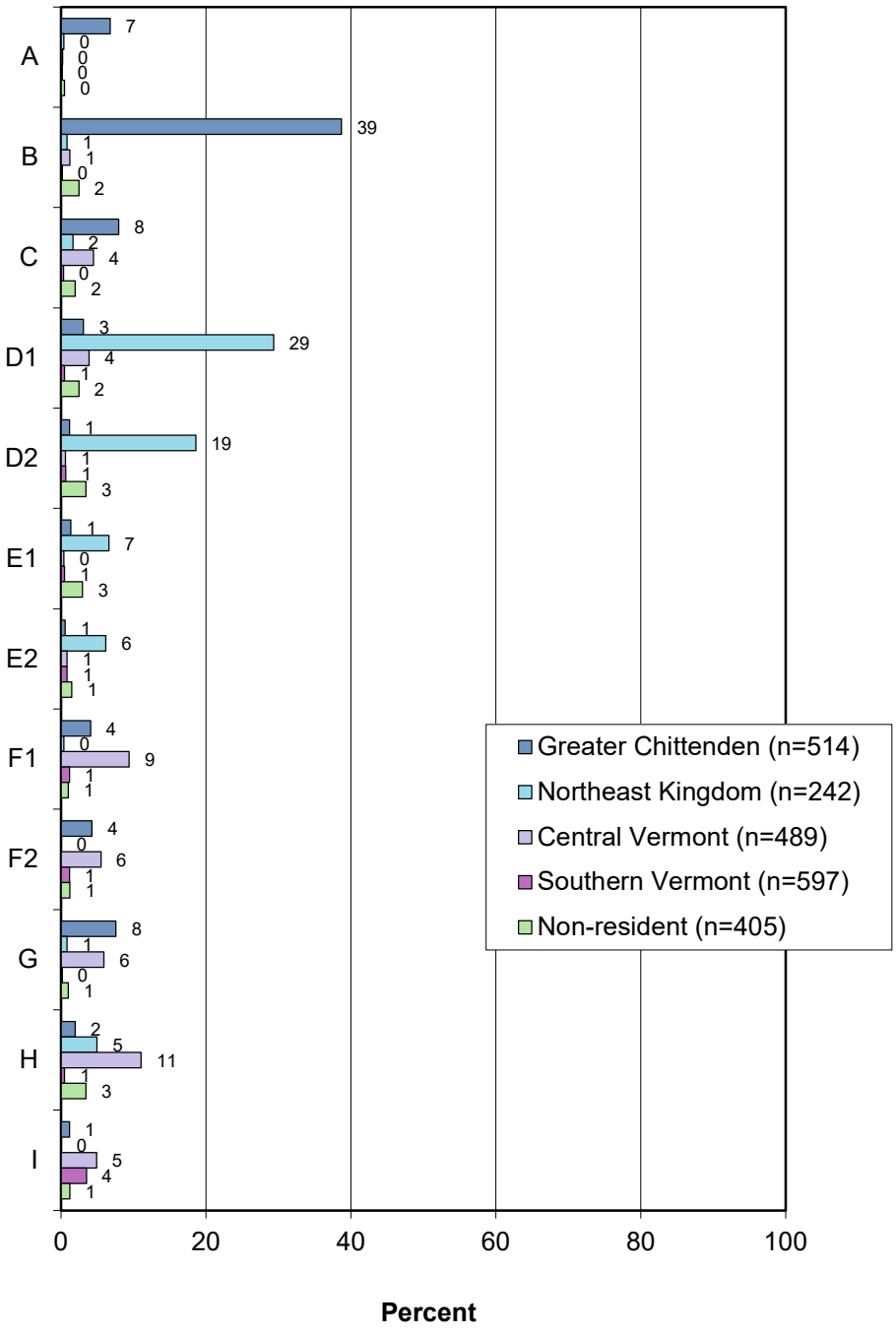


LOCATION OF DEER HUNTING

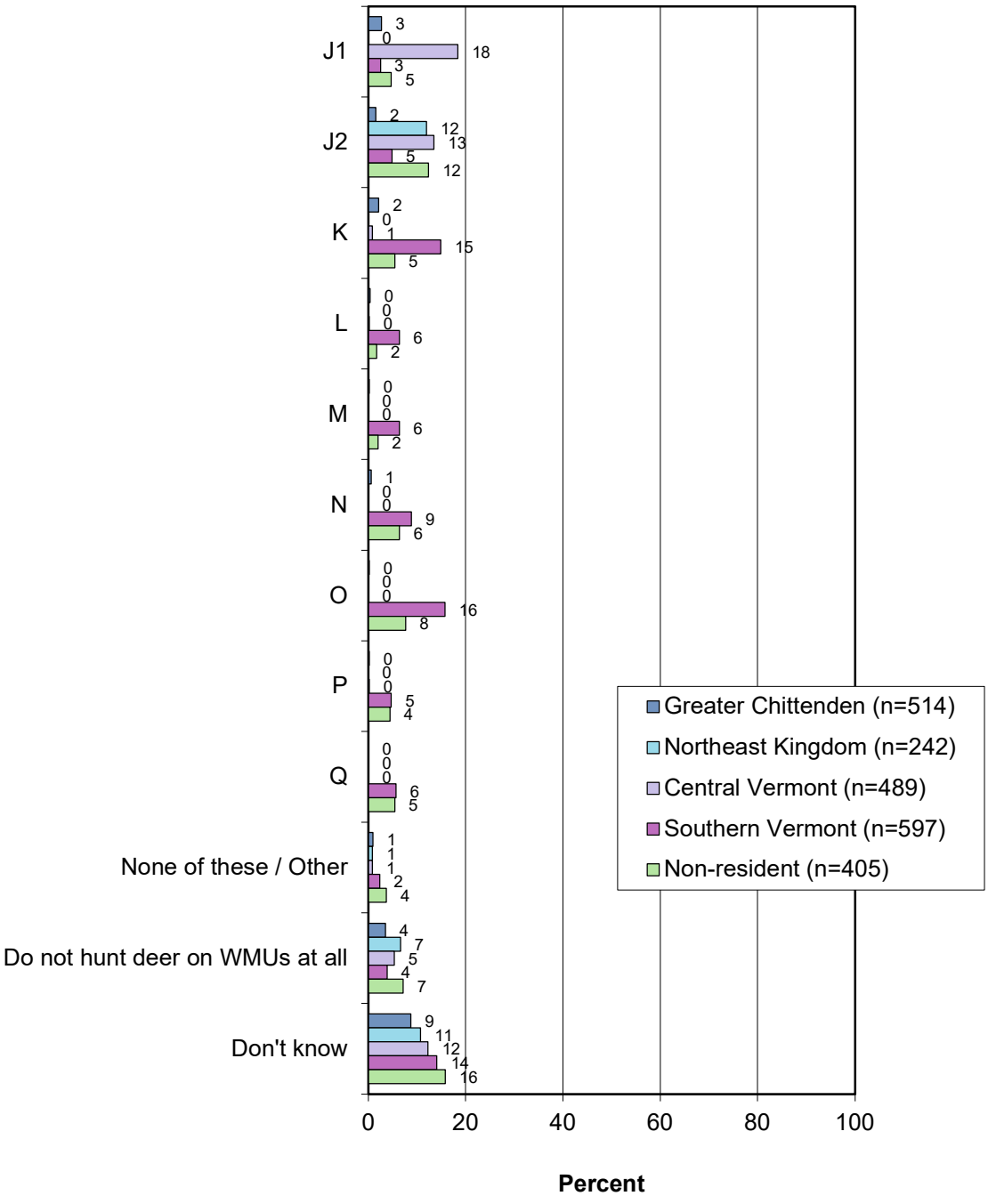
Deer hunting was well spread among the various Wildlife Management Units (WMUs), with use rates ranging from 1% to 10%. The most popular were WMUs B and J2. Obviously, the regional results (following pages) are greatly affected by where the deer hunter lives—but note that the regional split is based on residence, not location of hunting.



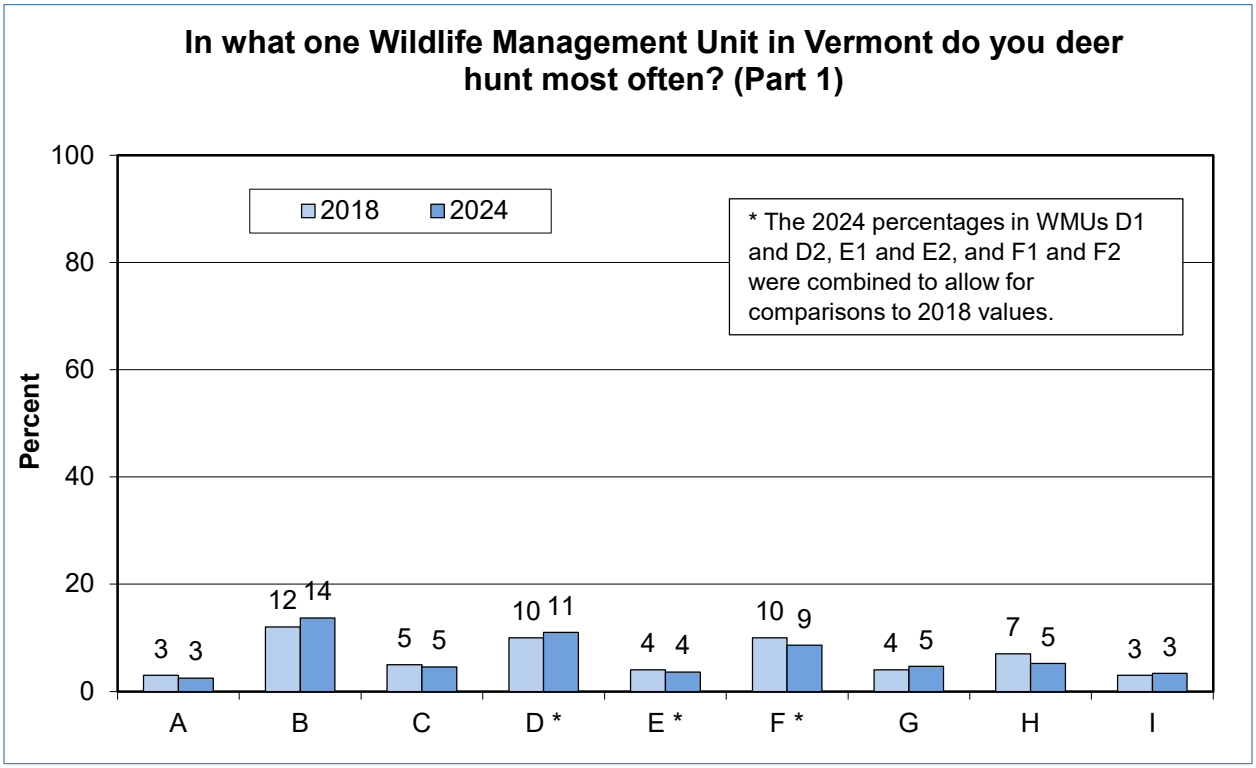
In what one Wildlife Management Unit in Vermont do you deer hunt most often? (Asked of those who hunted white-tailed deer.) (Part 1)

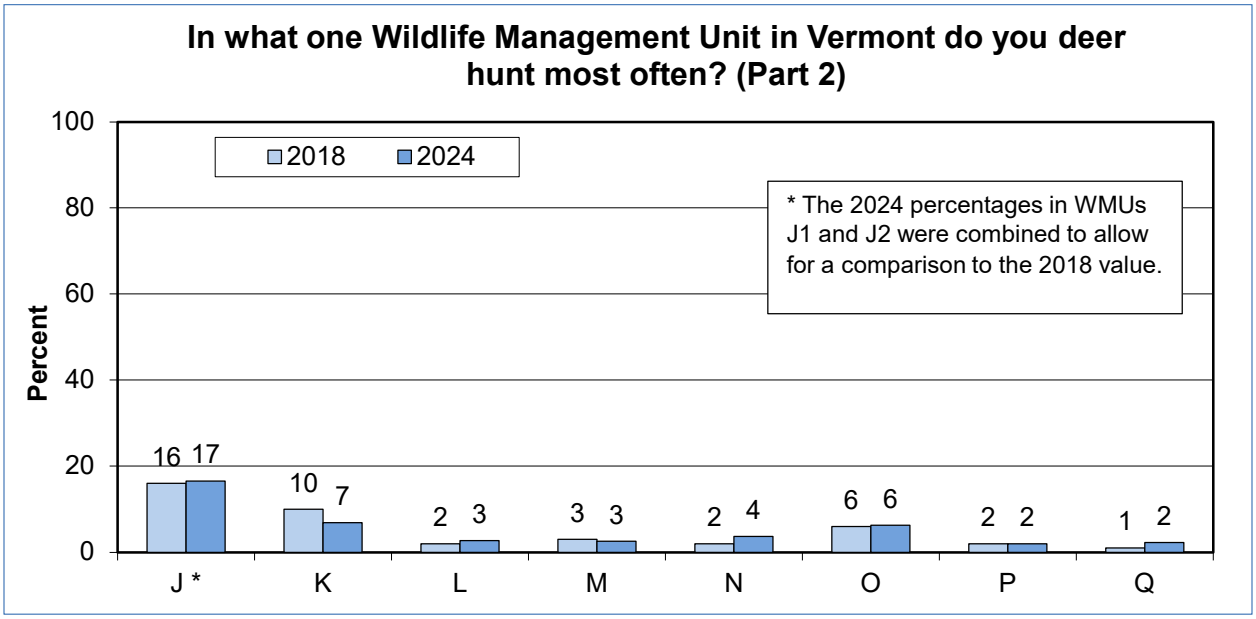


In what one Wildlife Management Unit in Vermont do you deer hunt most often? (Asked of those who hunted white-tailed deer.) (Part 2)



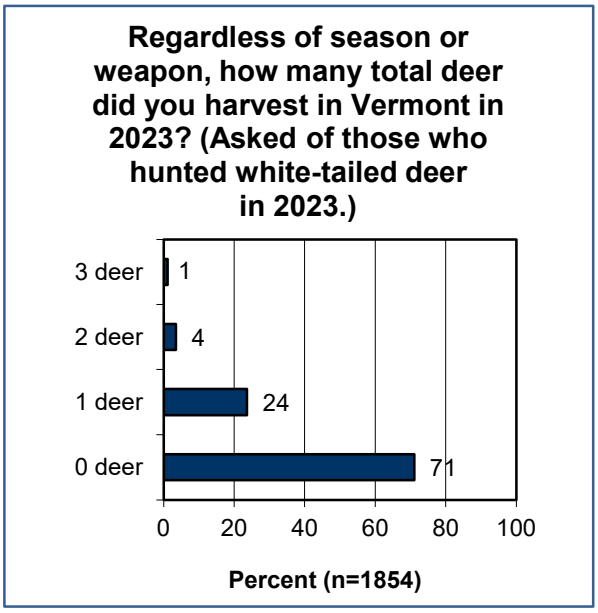
Trends graphs are included below. For the most part, those WMUs popular in 2018 remained the most popular in the current survey. For the specific percentages in the trends graph, the 2024 data had all those who did not name a WMU removed, with the resulting percentages recalculated; this was done to be comparable to 2018 data, which also did not include those who did not name a WMU.

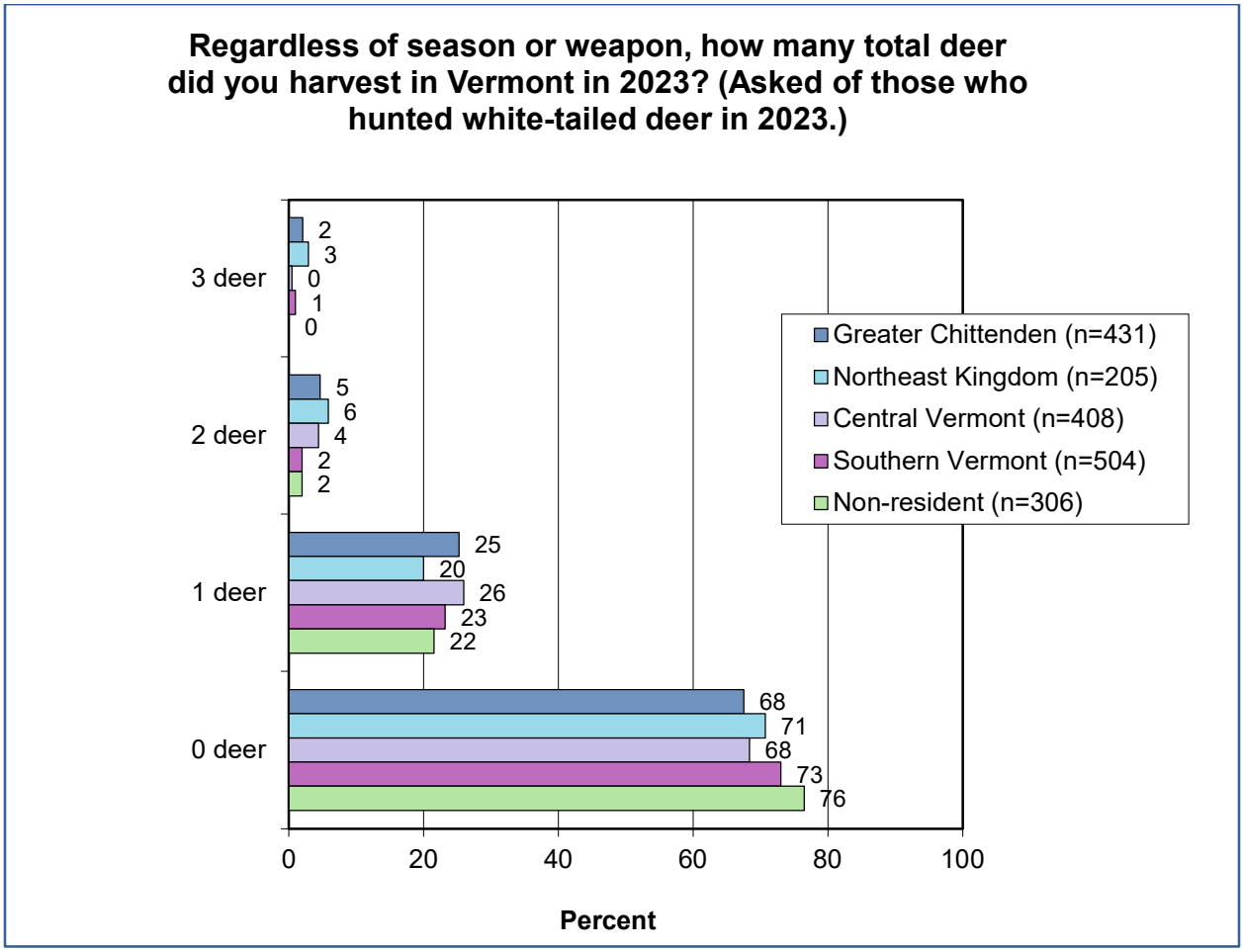




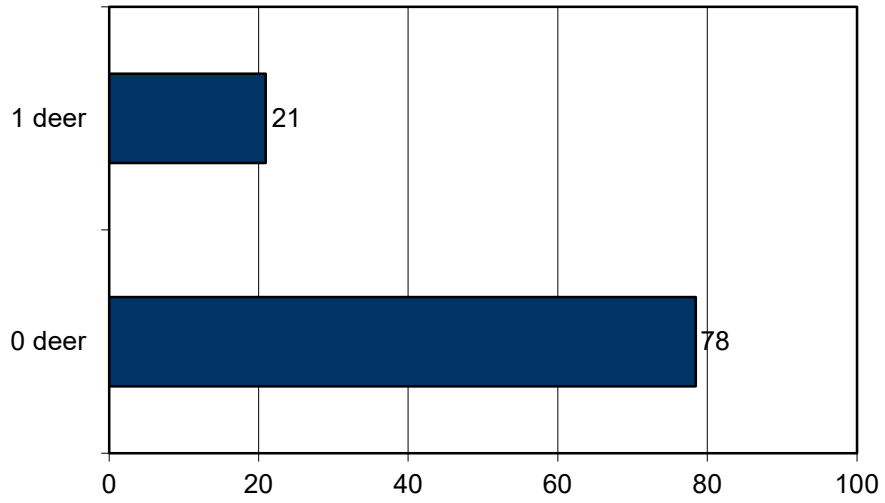
DEER HARVEST

Among 2023 deer hunters, 29% harvested a deer, 21% harvested a buck, and 11% harvested an antlerless deer (these latter graphs are shown on subsequent pages). Most who harvested only took one deer. The rate of deer harvest was highest in the Greater Chittenden and Central Vermont Regions. The rate of buck harvest did not markedly differ among hunters from the various regions. The rate of antlerless harvest was highest among hunters from the Greater Chittenden and Northeast Kingdom Regions. Note that the regional breakdown is by hunter residence, not the location of hunting.

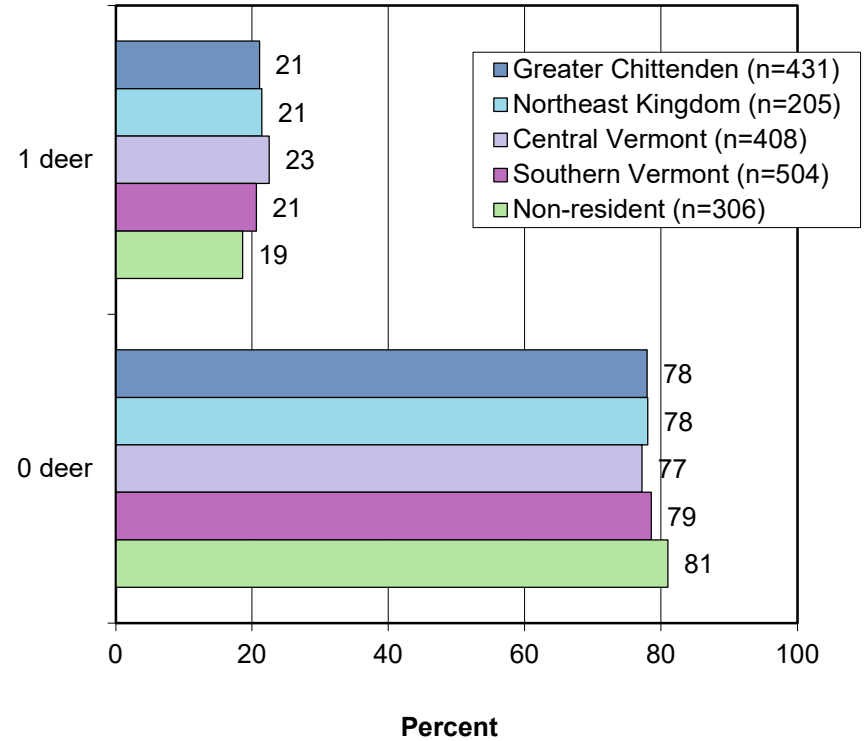




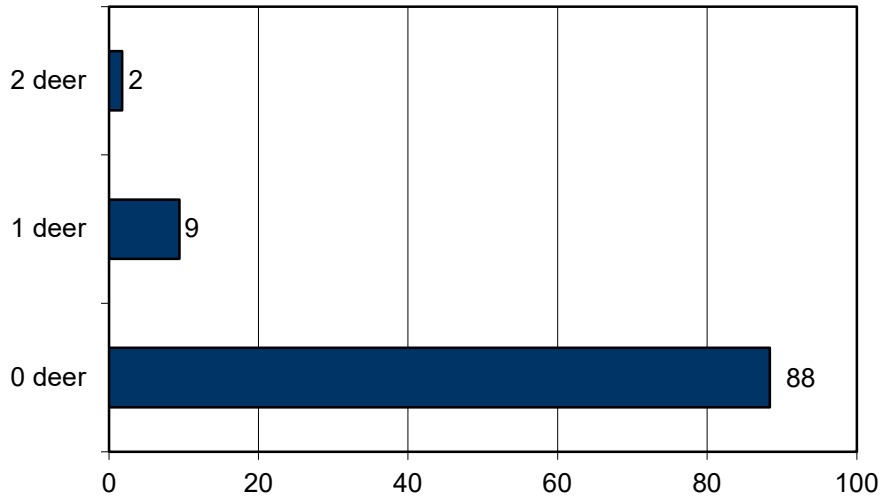
Bucks harvested. (Asked of those who hunted white-tailed deer in 2023.)



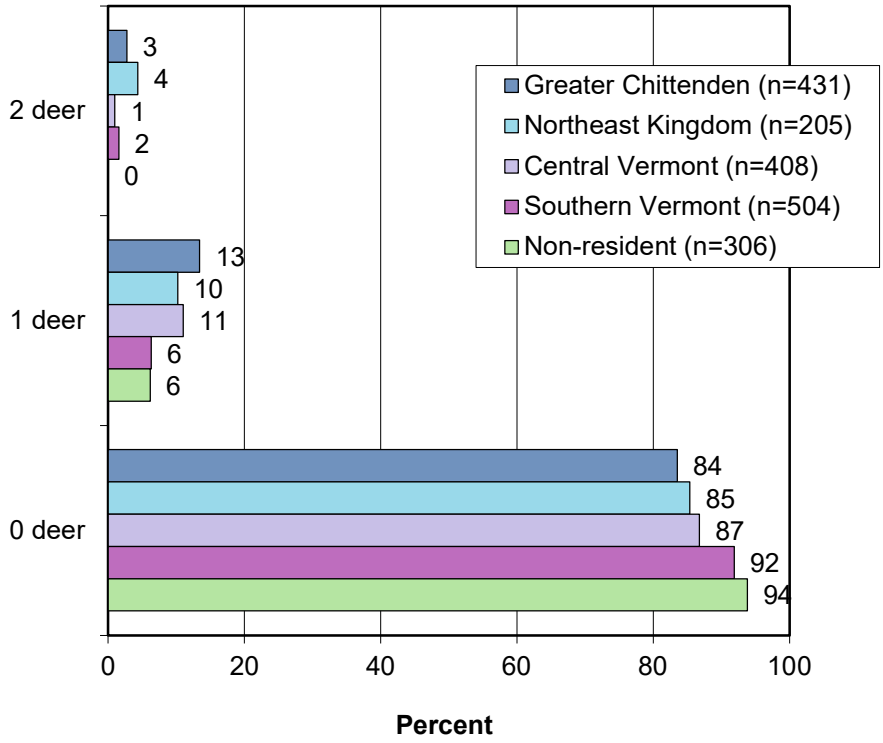
Bucks harvested. (Asked of those who hunted white-tailed deer in 2023.)

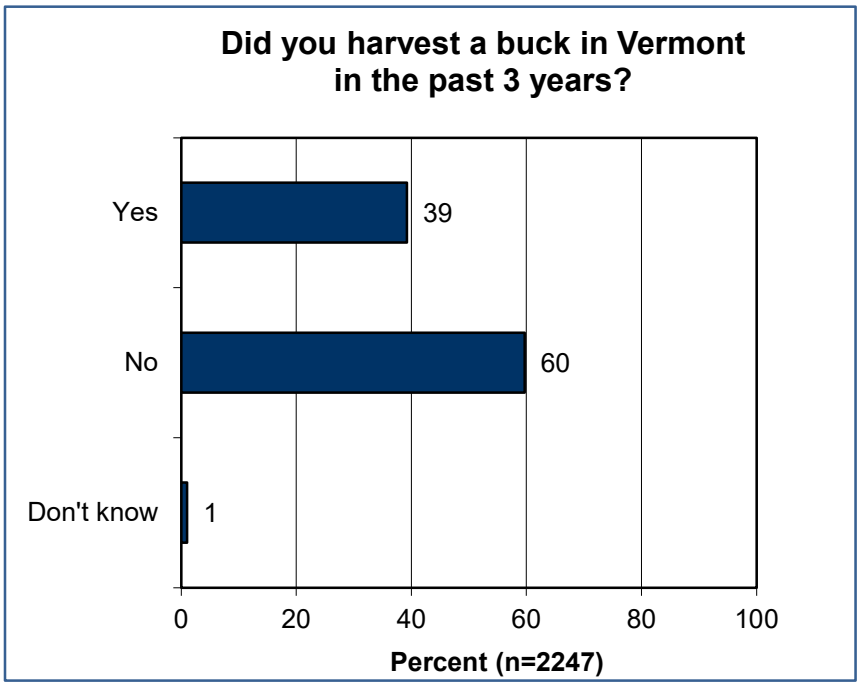


How many antlerless deer did you harvest in Vermont in 2023?
(Asked of those who hunted white-tailed deer in 2023.)

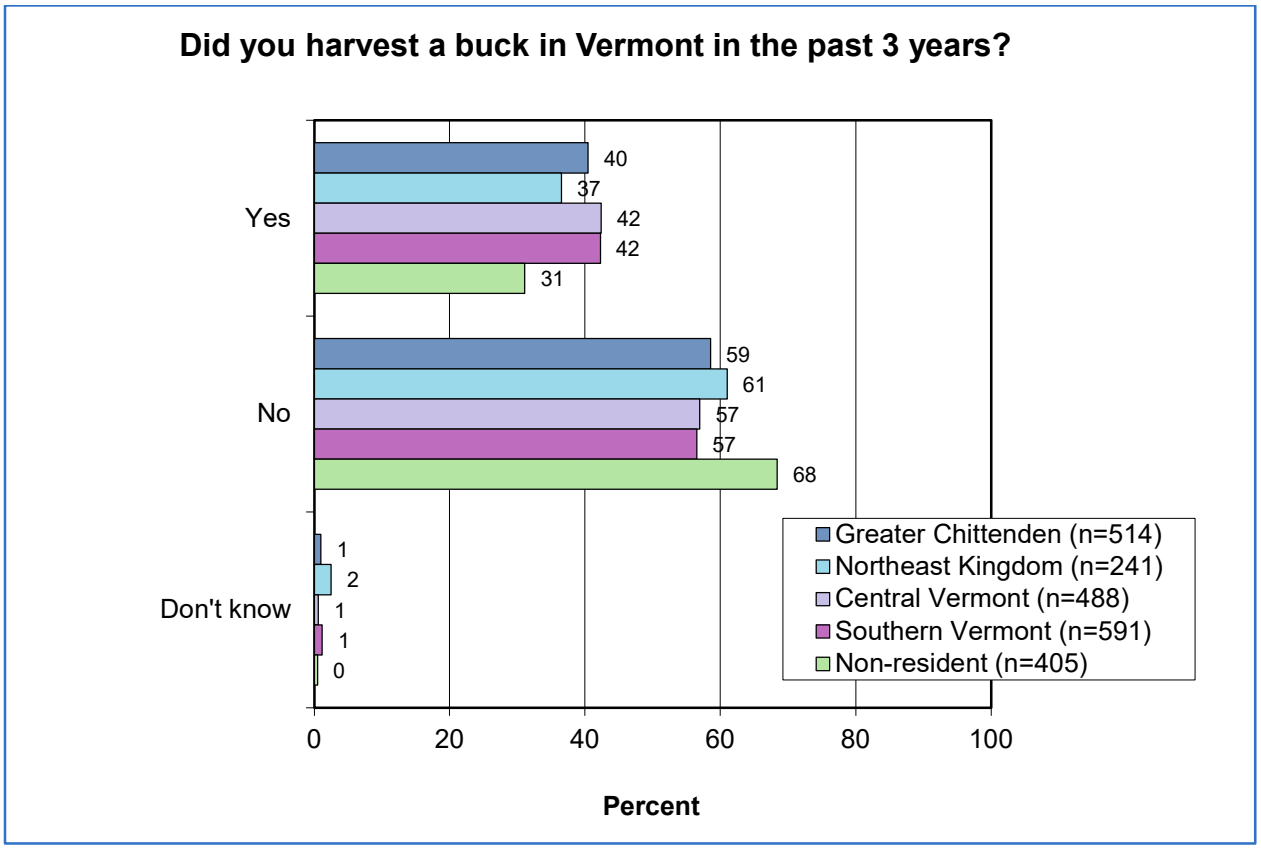


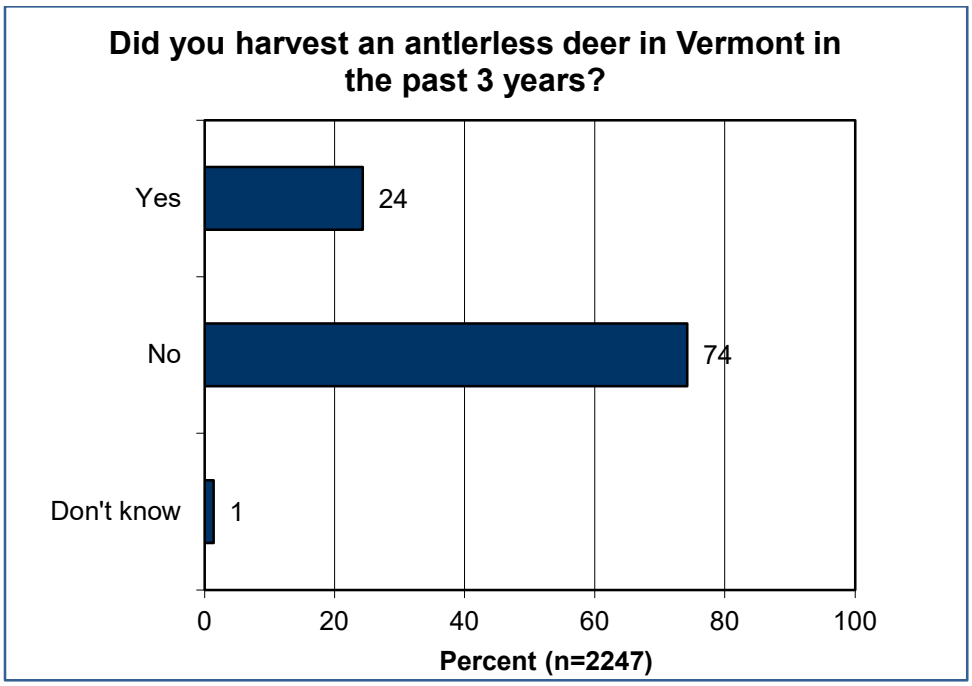
How many antlerless deer did you harvest in Vermont in 2023?
(Asked of those who hunted white-tailed deer in 2023.)

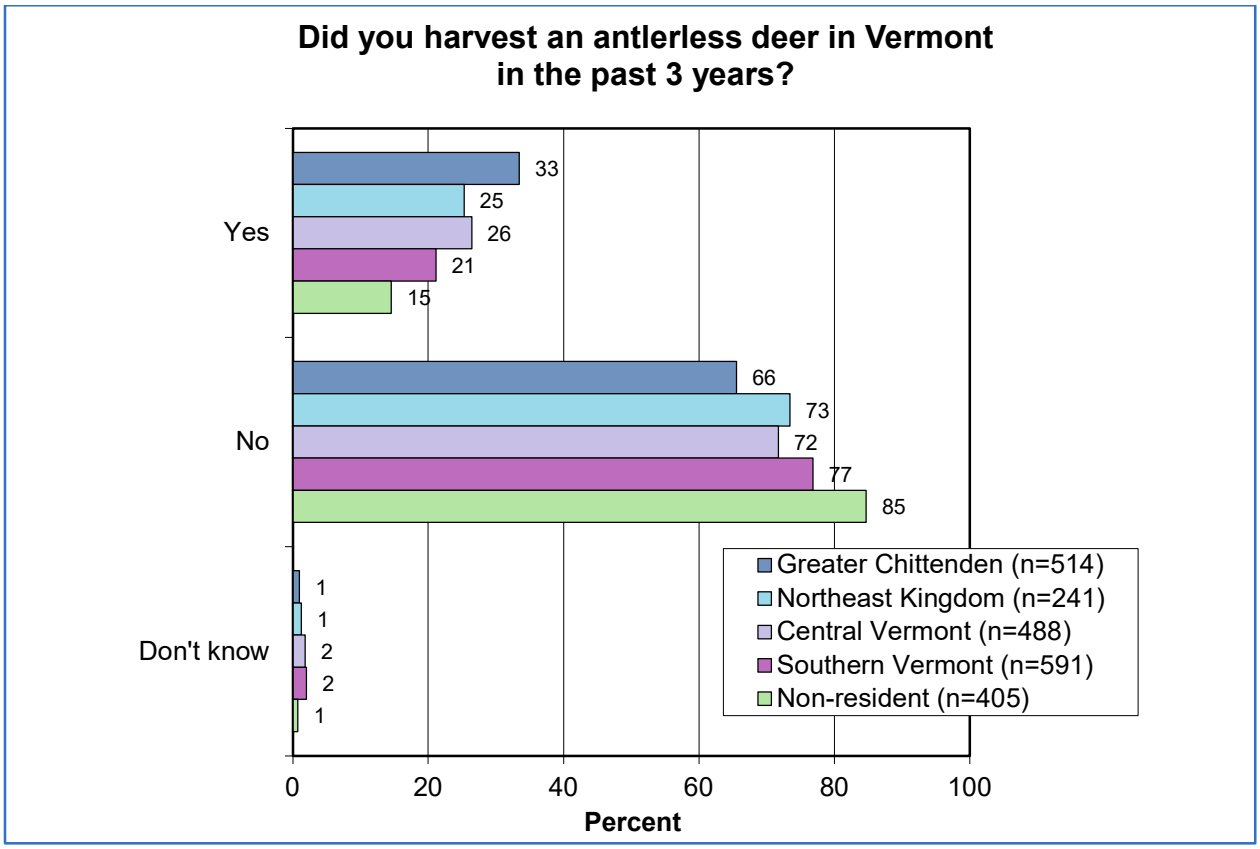




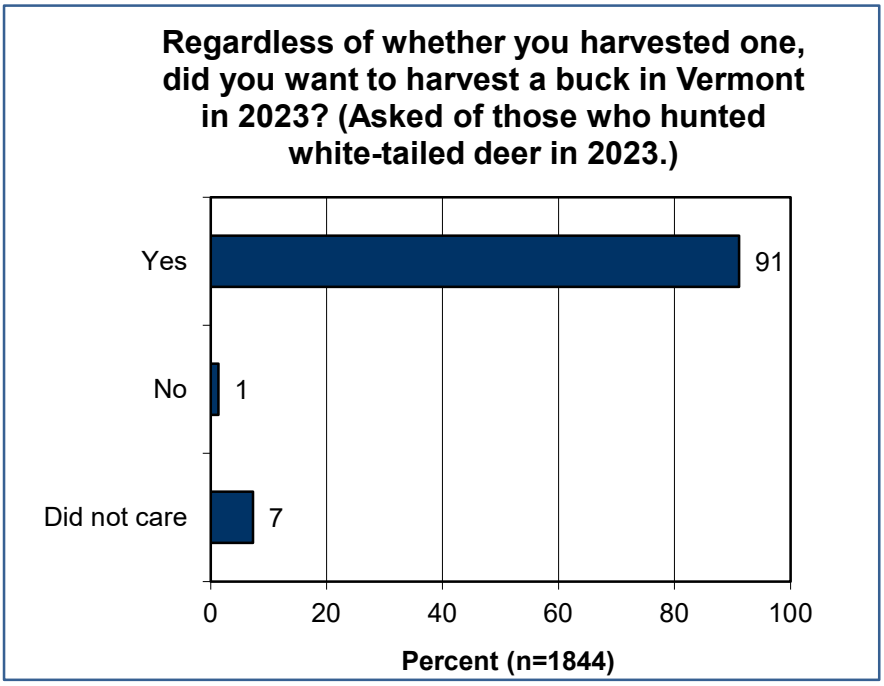
In the past 3 years, 39% of deer hunters had harvested a buck; non-residents were the least likely to have harvested a buck. About a quarter of deer hunters (24%) had harvested an antlerless deer in the past 3 years (next page).

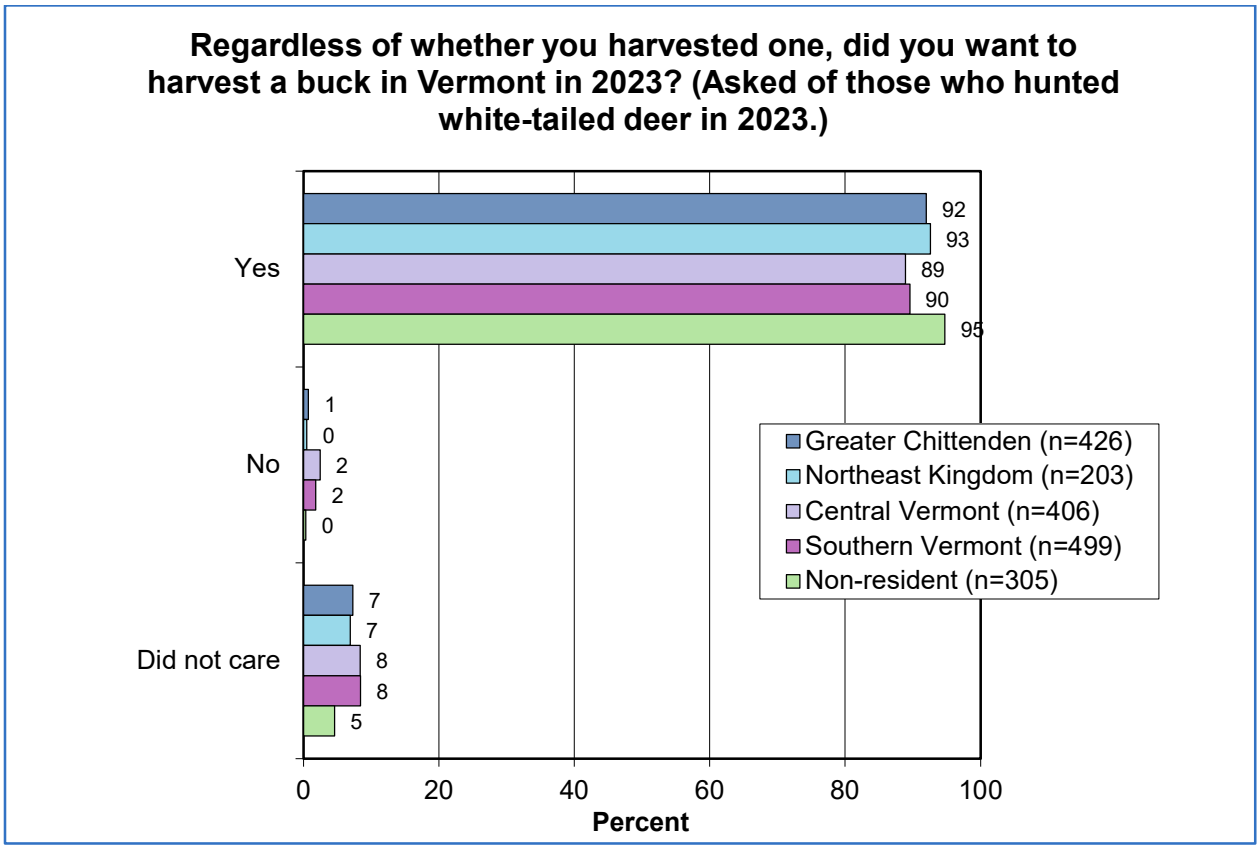



Did you harvest an antlerless deer in Vermont in the past 3 years?
Yes
No
Don't know
24
74
1
0
20
40
60
80
100
Percent (n=2247)

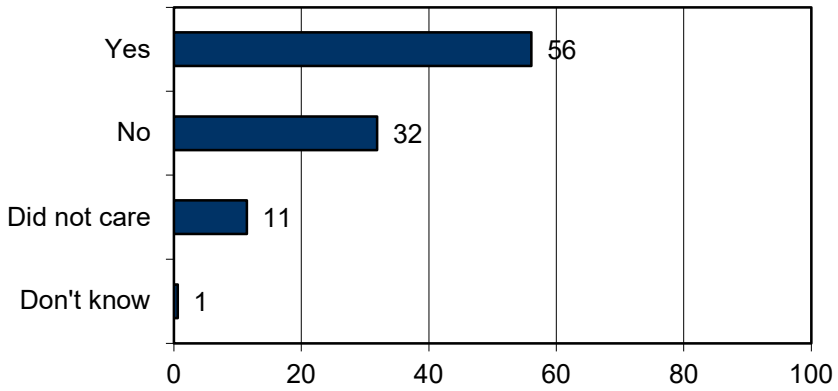

Did you harvest an antlerless deer in Vermont in the past 3 years?
Yes
No
Don't know
33
25
26
21
15
66
73
72
77
85
1
1
2
2
1
Greater Chittenden (n=514)
Northeast Kingdom (n=241)
Central Vermont (n=488)
Southern Vermont (n=591)
Non-resident (n=405)
0
20
40
60
80
100
Percent

This page and the next show whether deer hunters who hunted in 2023 wanted to harvest a buck and an antlerless deer. Nearly all wanted to harvest a buck in 2023, and just more than half wanted to harvest an antlerless deer in 2023. Graphs are then included on subsequent pages showing whether deer hunters wanted to harvest bucks and antlerless deer in the previous 3-year period.

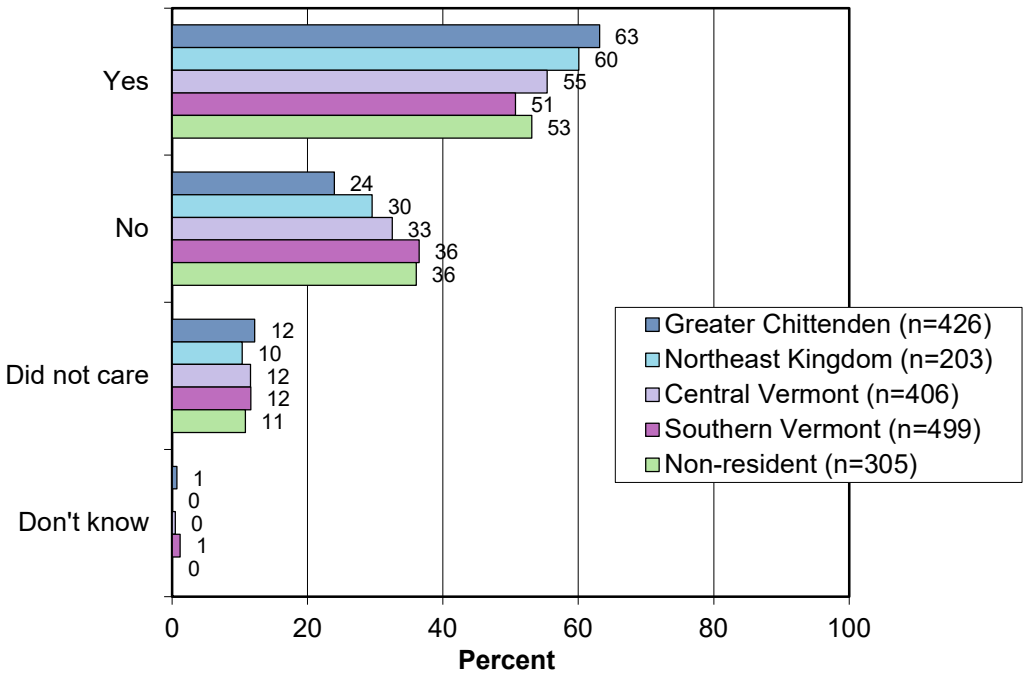


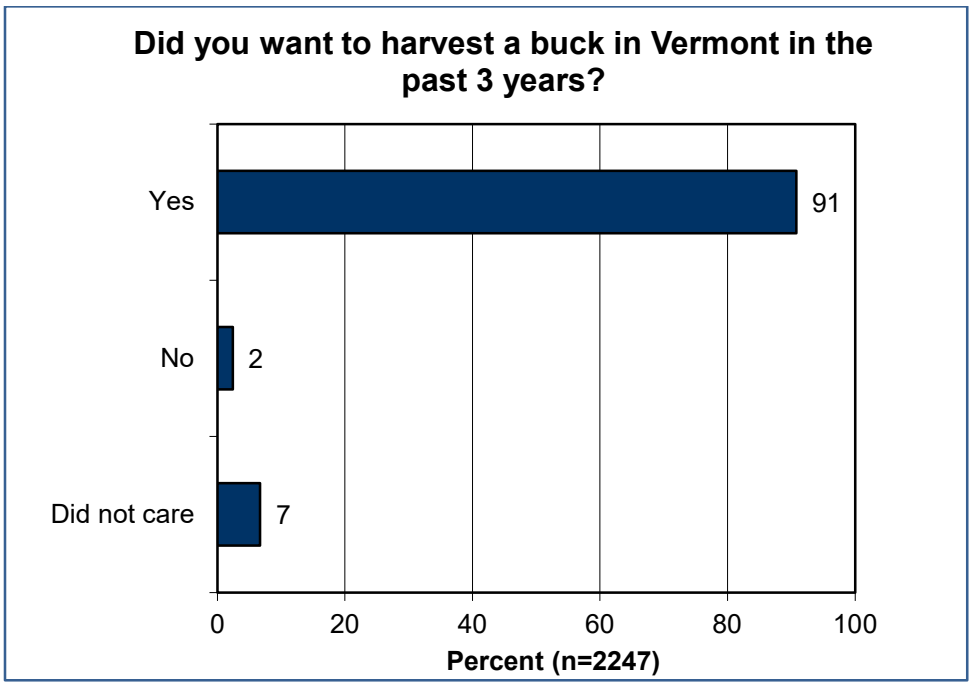


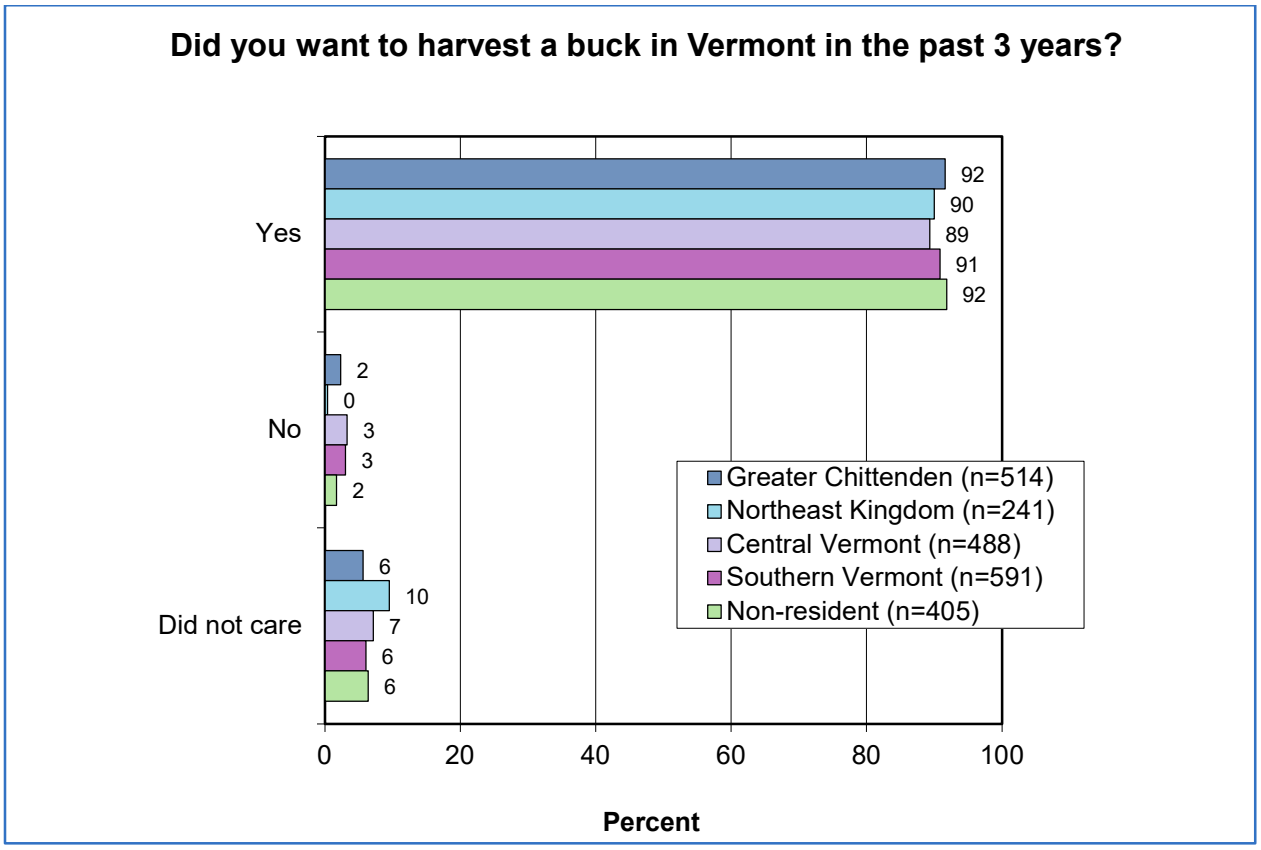
Regardless of whether you harvested one, did you want to harvest an antlerless deer in Vermont in 2023? (Asked of those who hunted white-tailed deer in 2023.)

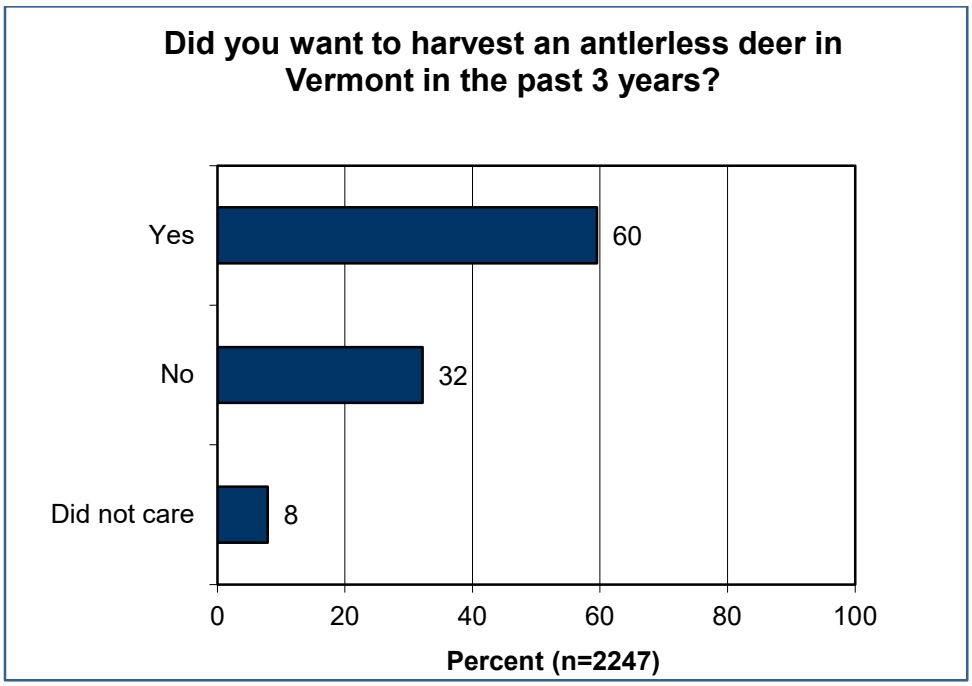


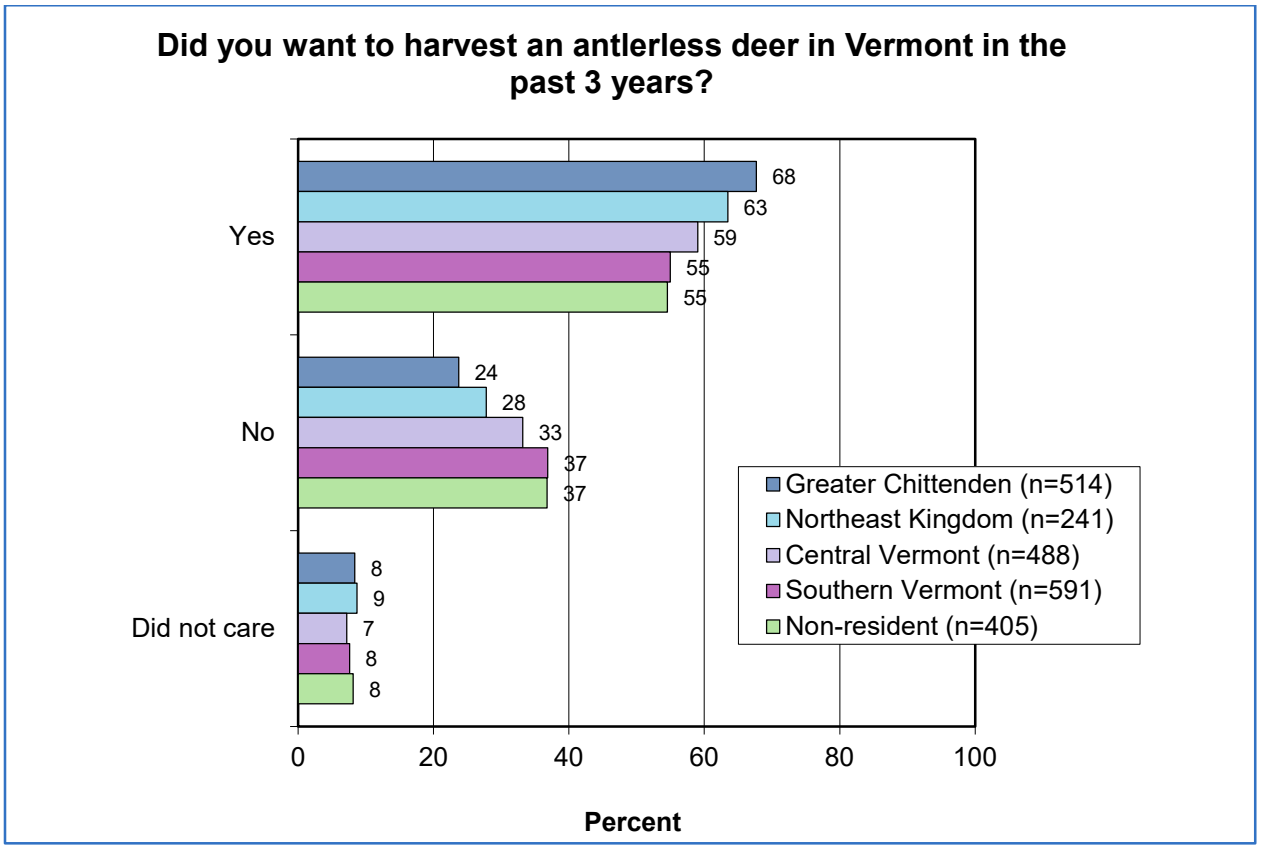
Regardless of whether you harvested one, did you want to harvest an antlerless deer in Vermont in 2023? (Asked of those who hunted white-tailed deer in 2023.)



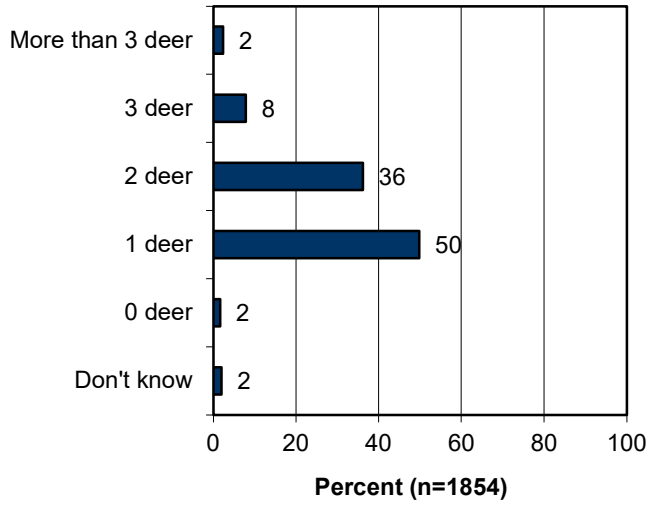

Did you want to harvest a buck in Vermont in the past 3 years?
Yes
No
Did not care
91
2
7
0
20
40
60
80
100
Percent (n=2247)


Did you want to harvest a buck in Vermont in the past 3 years?
Yes
No
Did not care
92
90
89
91
92
2
0
3
3
2
6
10
7
6
6
Greater Chittenden (n=514)
Northeast Kingdom (n=241)
Central Vermont (n=488)
Southern Vermont (n=591)
Non-resident (n=405)
0
20
40
60
80
100
Percent


Did you want to harvest an antlerless deer in Vermont in the past 3 years?
Yes
No
Did not care
60
32
8
0
20
40
60
80
100
Percent (n=2247)

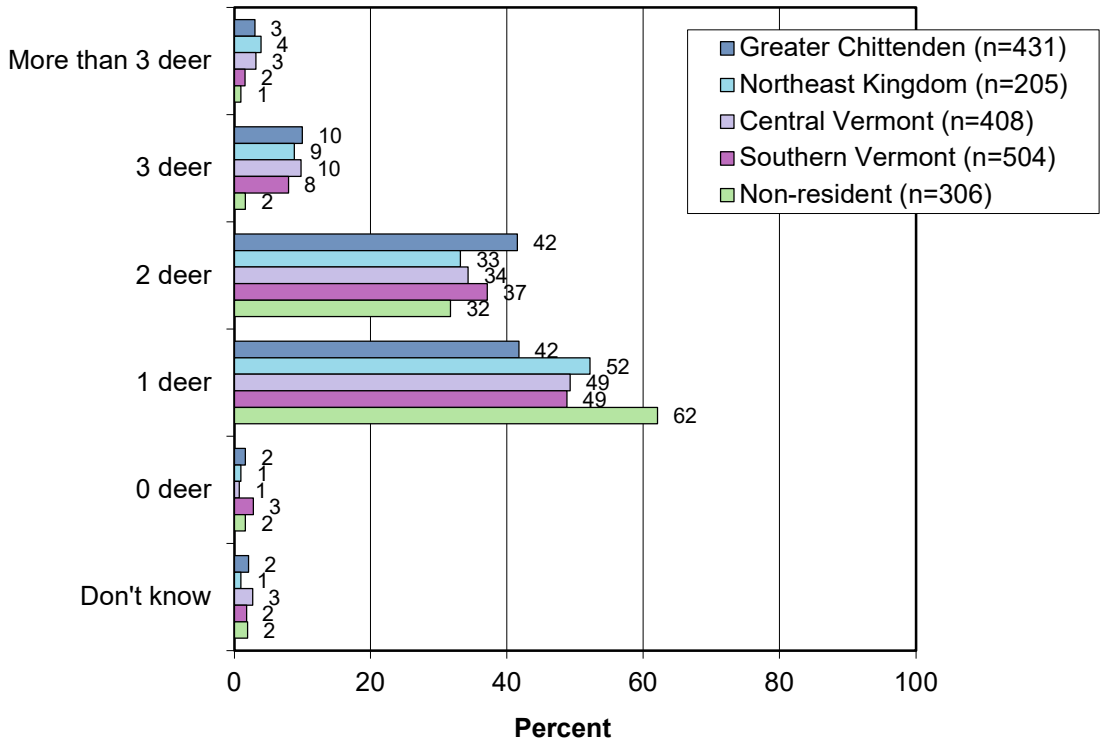

Did you want to harvest an antlerless deer in Vermont in the past 3 years?
Yes
No
Did not care
68
63
59
55
55
24
28
33
37
37
8
9
7
8
8
Greater Chittenden (n=514)
Northeast Kingdom (n=241)
Central Vermont (n=488)
Southern Vermont (n=591)
Non-resident (n=405)
0
20
40
60
80
100
Percent

Regardless of the current limit, how many total deer, including bucks and antlerless, would you have preferred to harvest in Vermont in 2023? (Asked of those who hunted white-tailed deer in 2023.)

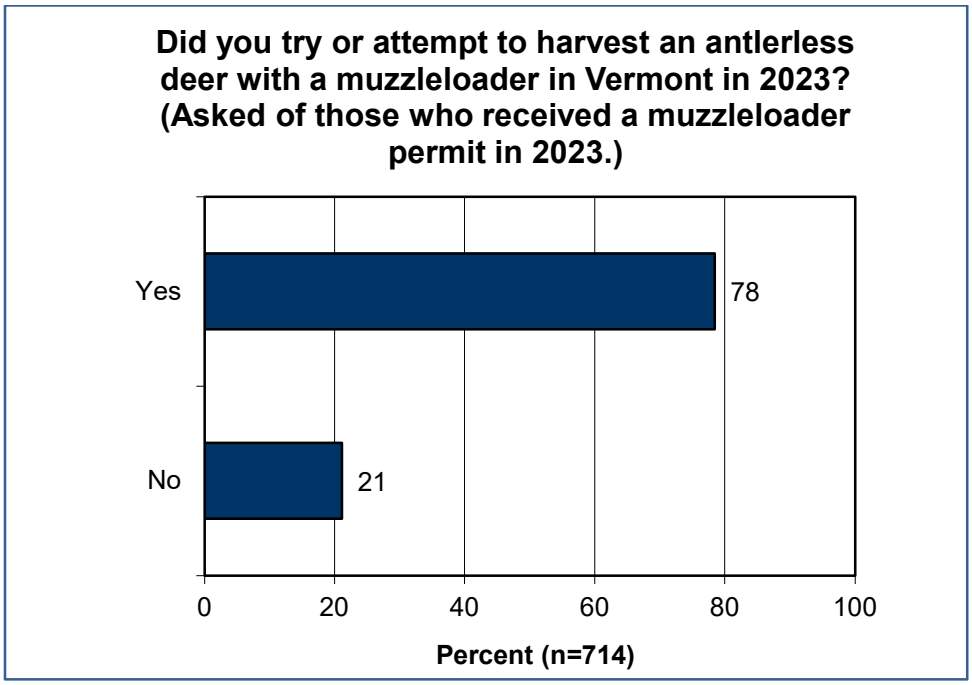


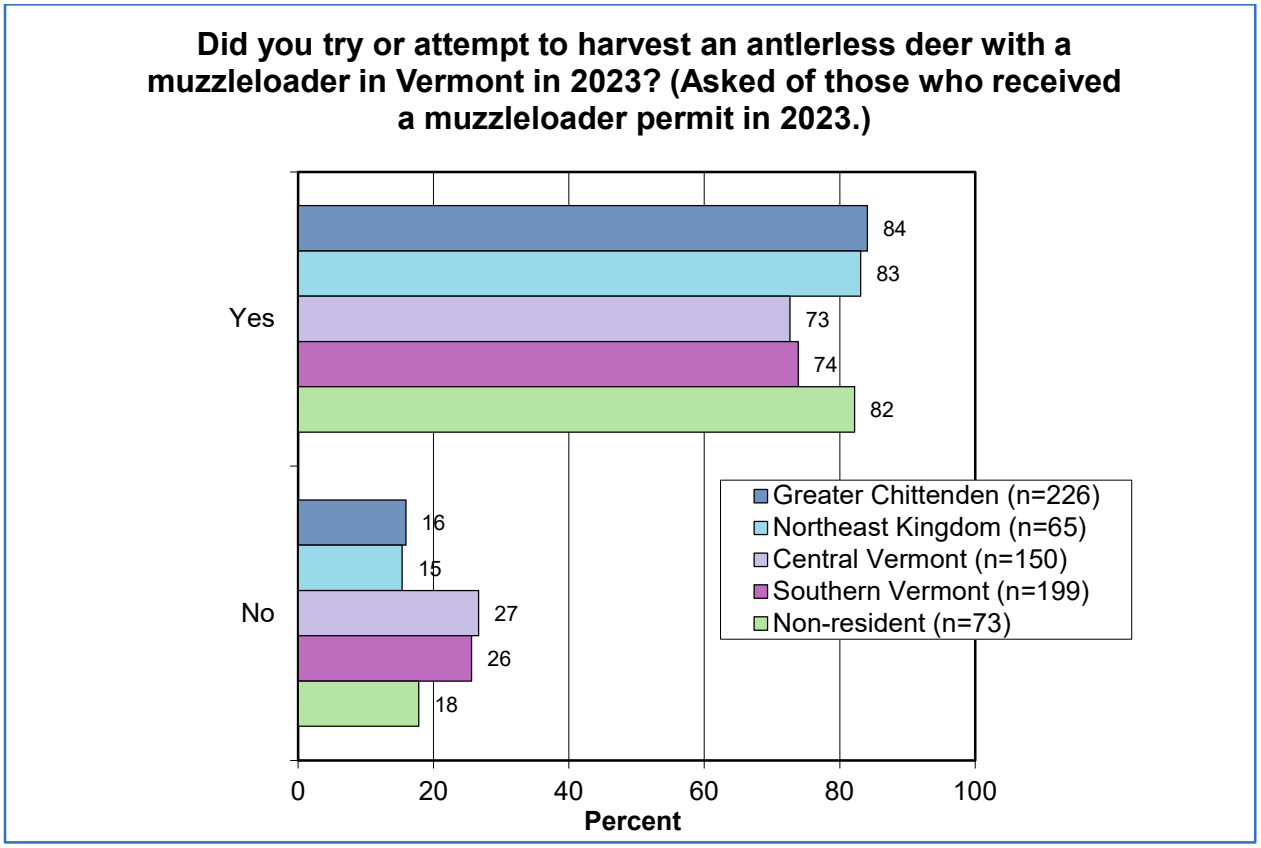
The survey also asked about preferred harvest, regardless of how many deer that hunters had actually taken. Of those who had hunted in the previous year, half would have been content with getting a single deer, while about a third would have liked to harvest two deer.

Regardless of the current limit, how many total deer, including bucks and antlerless, would you have preferred to harvest in Vermont in 2023? (Asked of those who hunted white-tailed deer in 2023.)

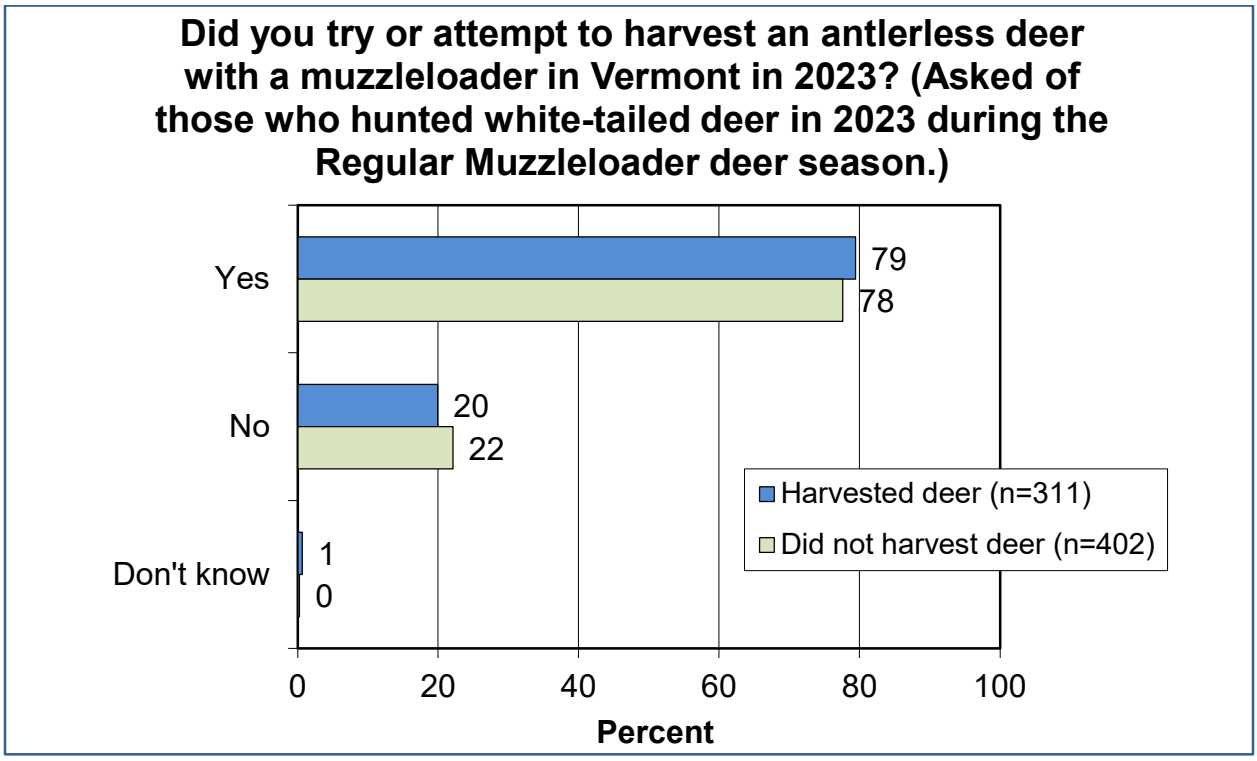


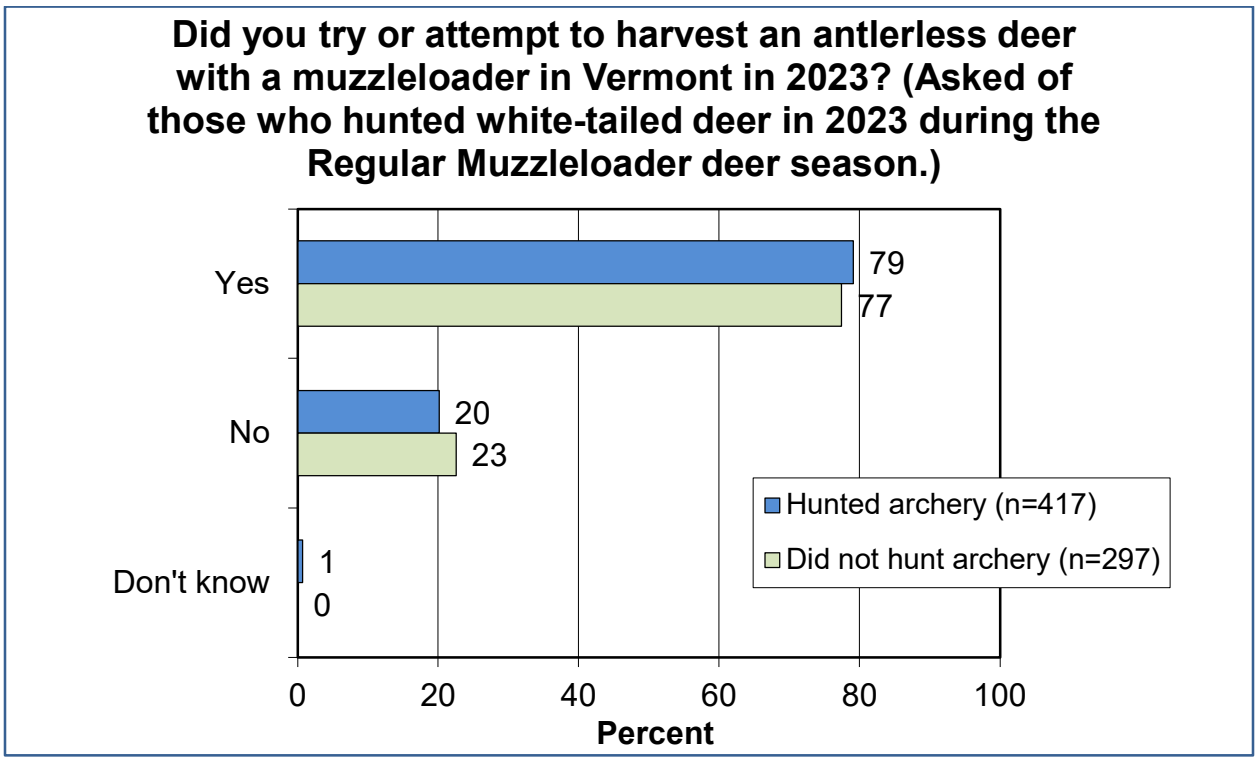
About three quarters of those who received a muzzleloader permit attempted to harvest an antlerless deer with a muzzleloader in 2023.





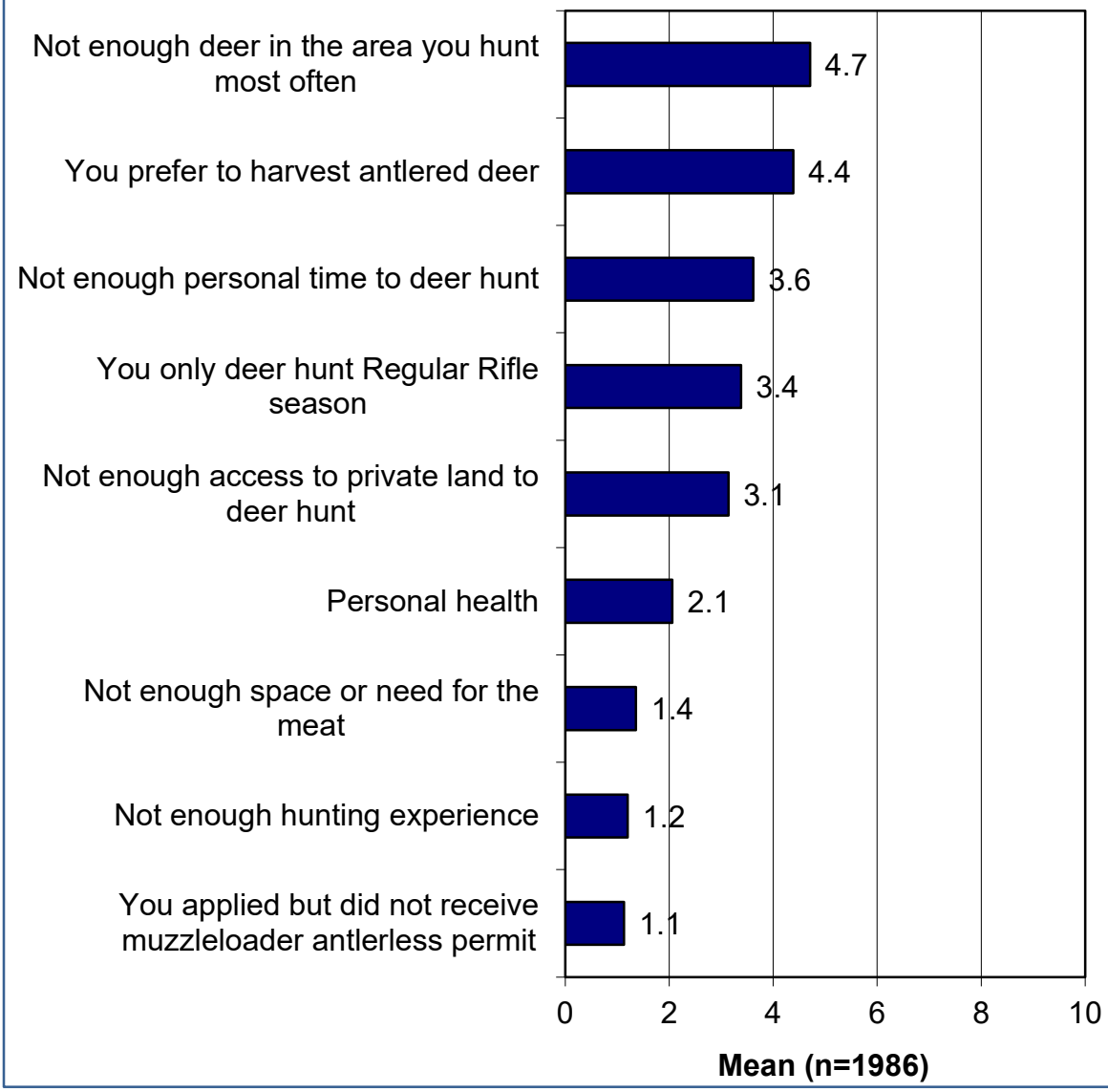
Two data runs of this question showed almost no difference between those who harvested a deer and those who did not, regarding their attempt to harvest an antlerless deer with a muzzleloader. The second data run of those who hunted in the archery season found no marked difference, as well.



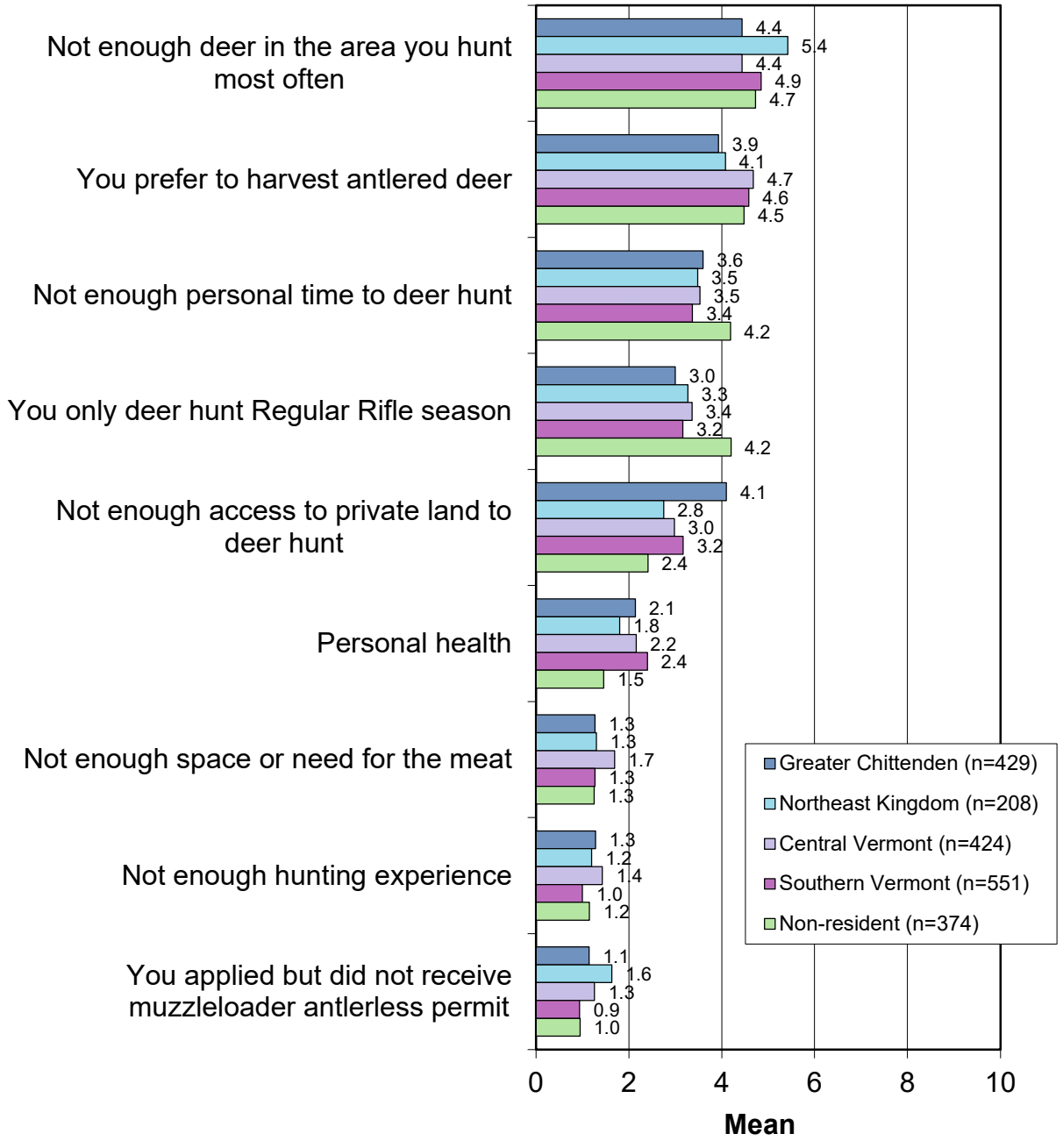


The survey presented nine possible factors that might have played a role in the lack of antlerless deer harvest among deer hunters, asking them to rate each possible reason on a 0 to 10 scale. None of the reasons had a mean rating higher than the midpoint (5). The most important reasons were a lack of enough deer in the hunt area and simply the hunter's desire to harvest an antlered deer. Regionally, as shown on the following page, lack of deer as a reason was rated the highest in the Northeast Kingdom. Lack of access was rated the highest in the Greater Chittenden Region.

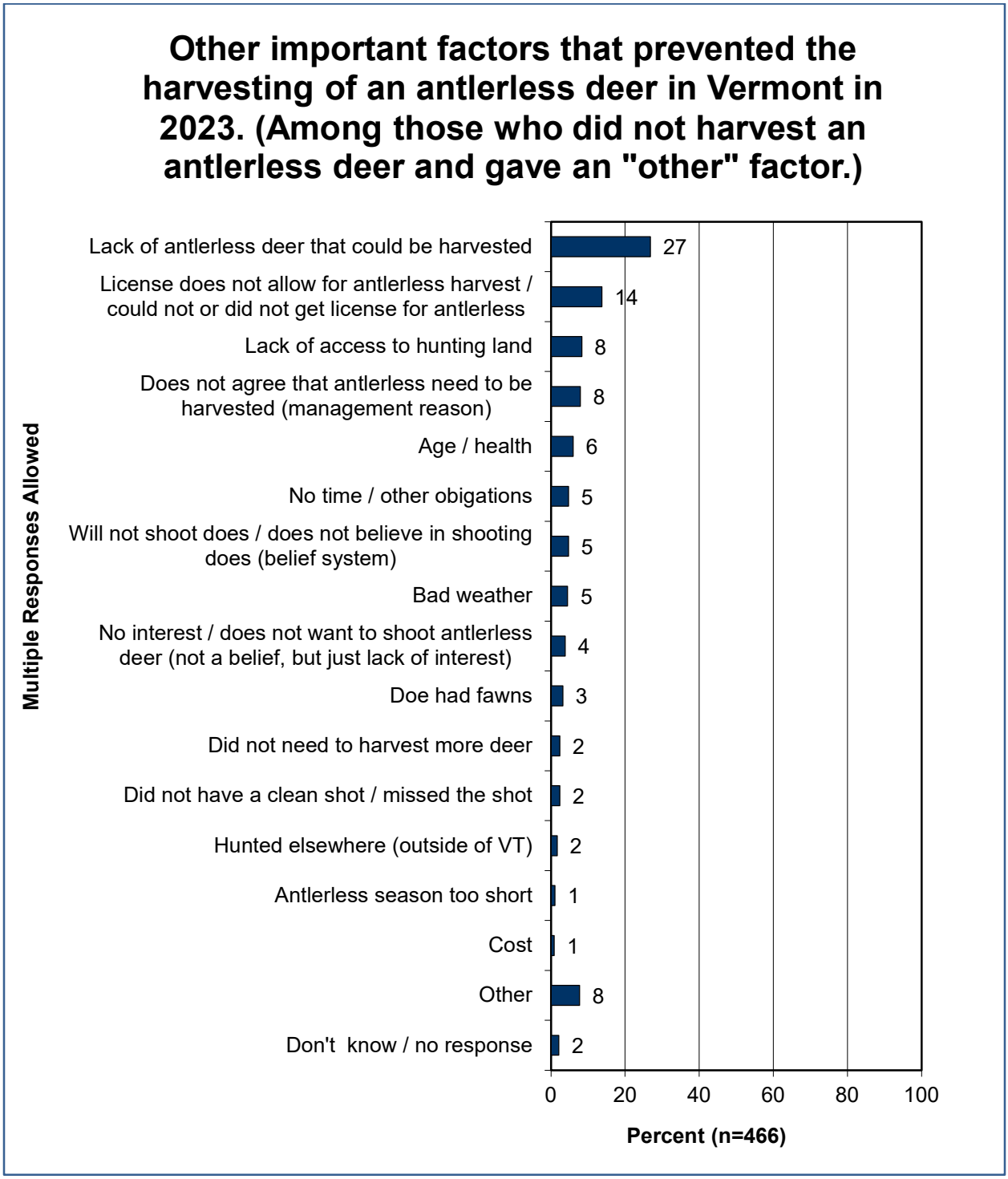
How much of an influence did this have on you not harvesting an antlerless deer, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is no influence at all and 10 is a great deal of influence. (Asked of those who did not harvest an antlerless deer.)



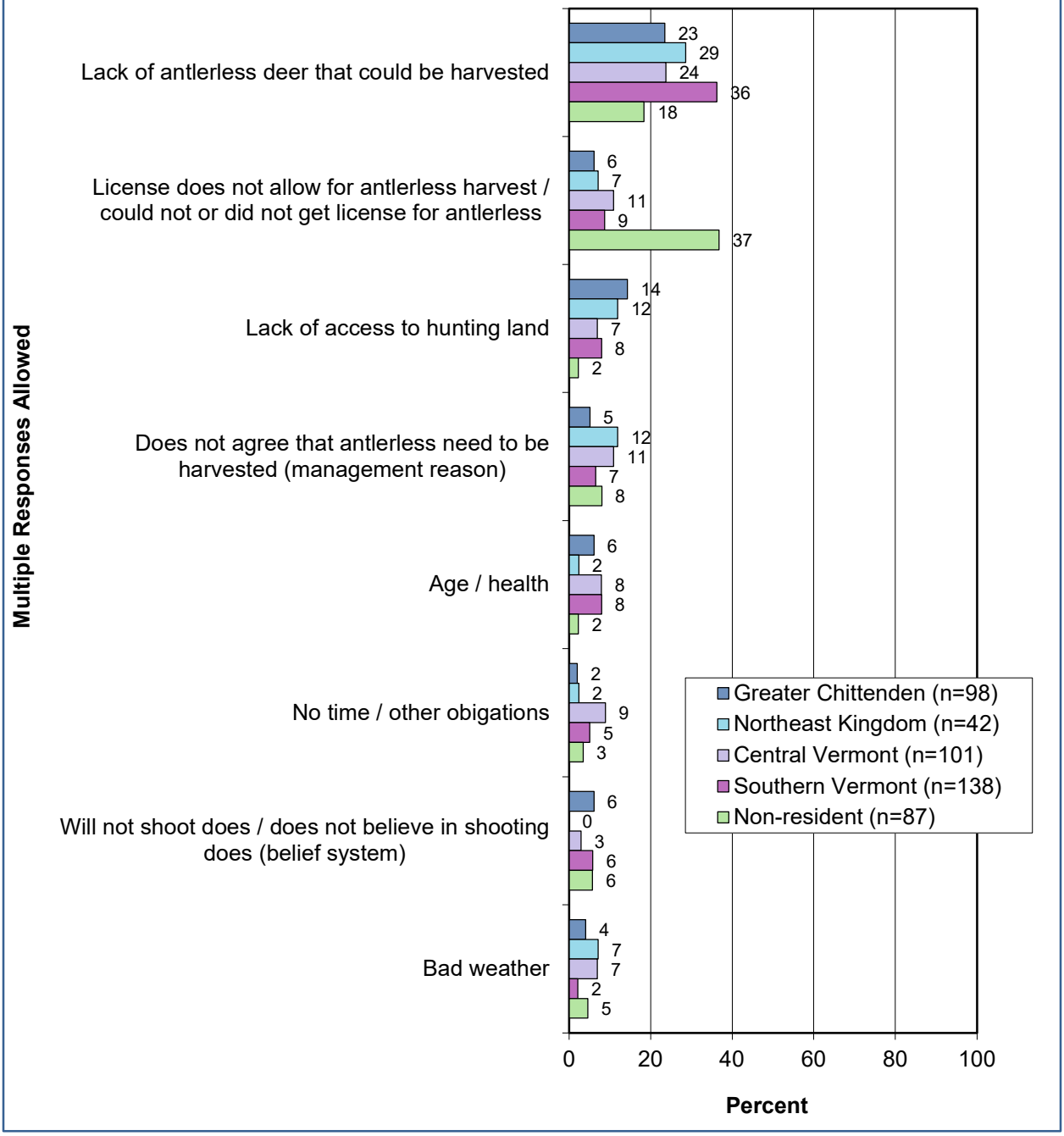
How much of an influence did this have on you not harvesting an antlerless deer, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is no influence at all and 10 is a great deal of influence. (Asked of those who did not harvest an antlerless deer.)



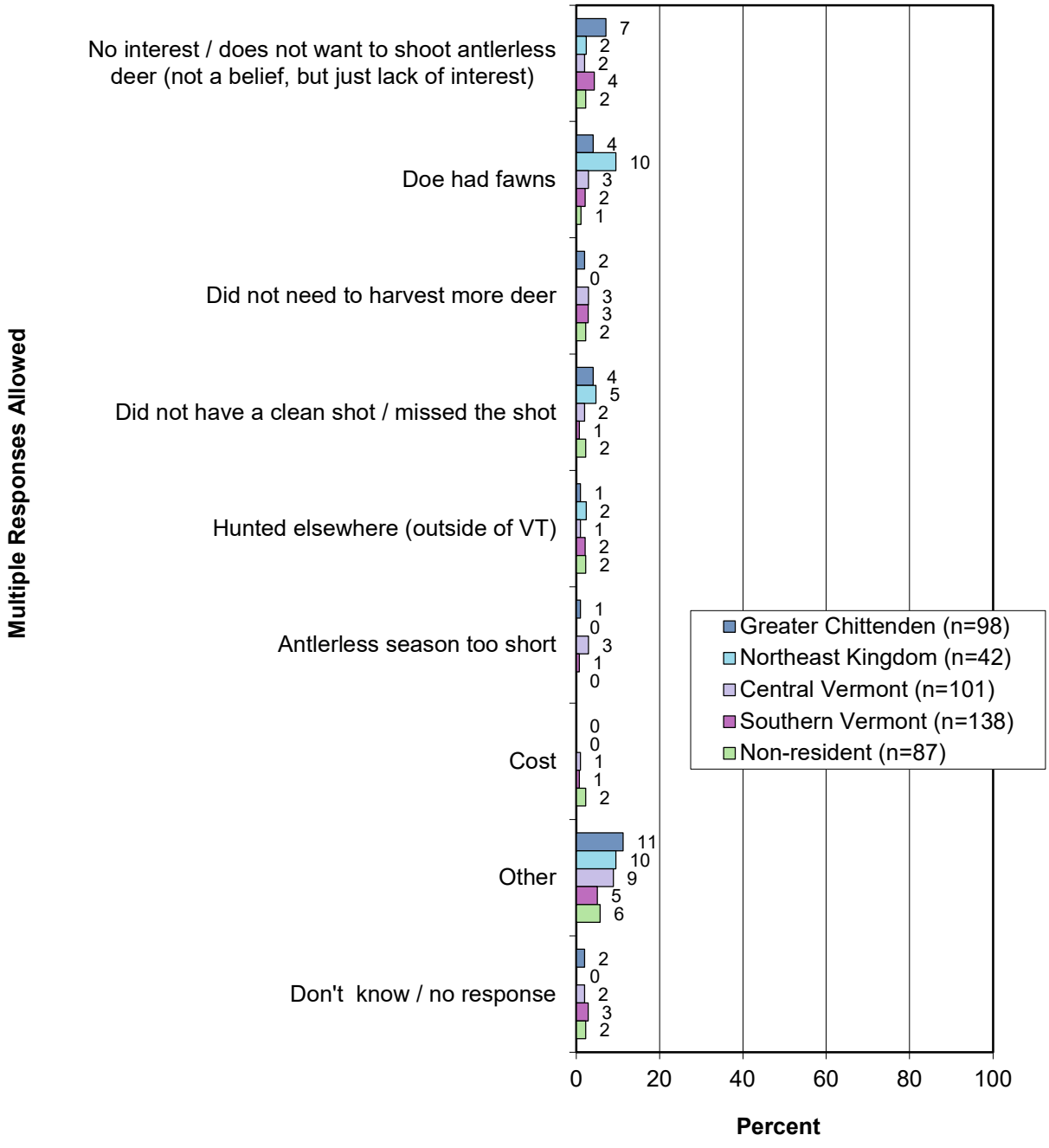
An open-ended question followed the series of questions about factors in *not* harvesting an antlerless deer. The top response category was a lack of antlerless deer—something that was actually included in the aforementioned series of questions. Next in the ranking of factors is that the hunter's license did not allow for antlerless harvest. The full list is shown in the graph, with the regional graphs on the next pages.



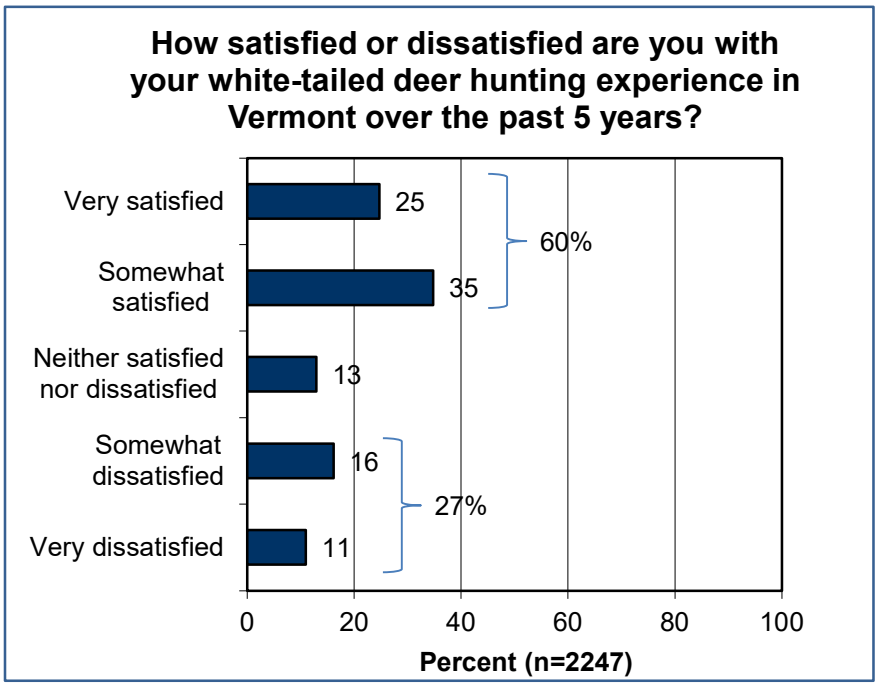
Other important factors that prevented the harvesting of an antlerless deer in Vermont in 2023. (Among those who did not harvest an antlerless deer and gave an "other" factor.) (Part 1)



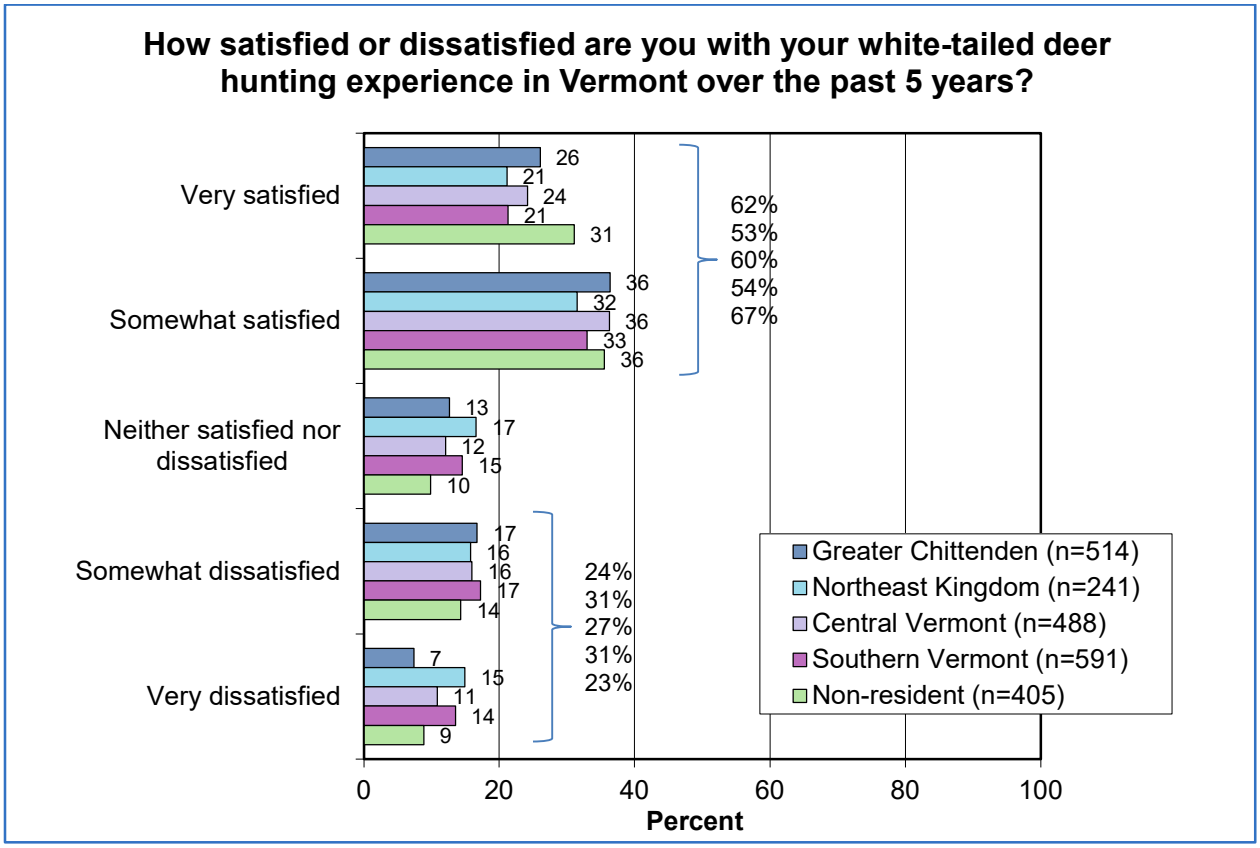
Other important factors that prevented the harvesting of an antlerless deer in Vermont in 2023. (Among those who did not harvest an antlerless deer and gave an "other" factor.) (Part 2)



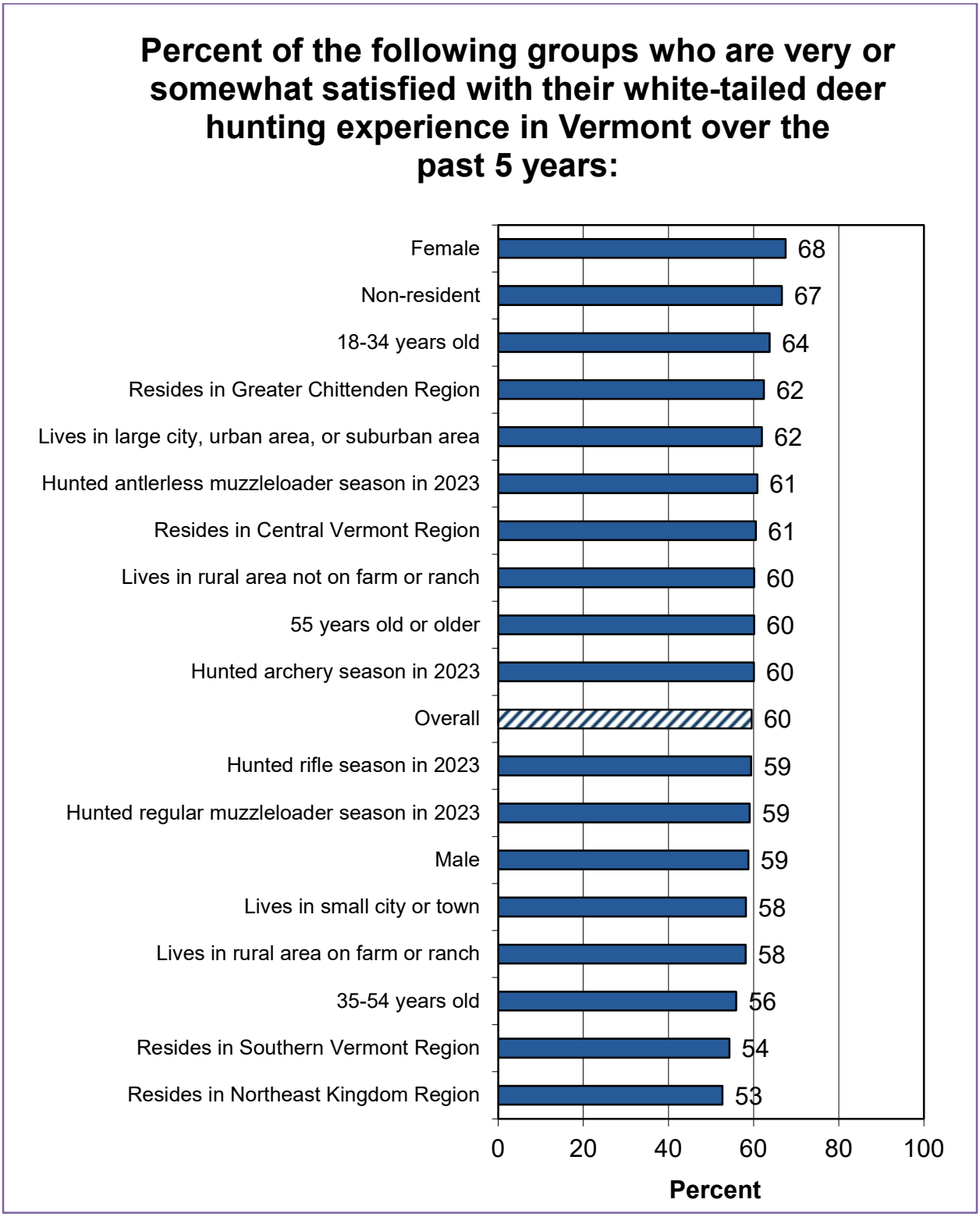
SATISFACTION WITH DEER HUNTING IN VERMONT



Satisfaction with deer hunting over the past 5 years stands at 60%, while 27% are dissatisfied. Satisfaction is highest among non-residents. It is lowest among hunters from the Northeast Kingdom and Southern Vermont Regions.

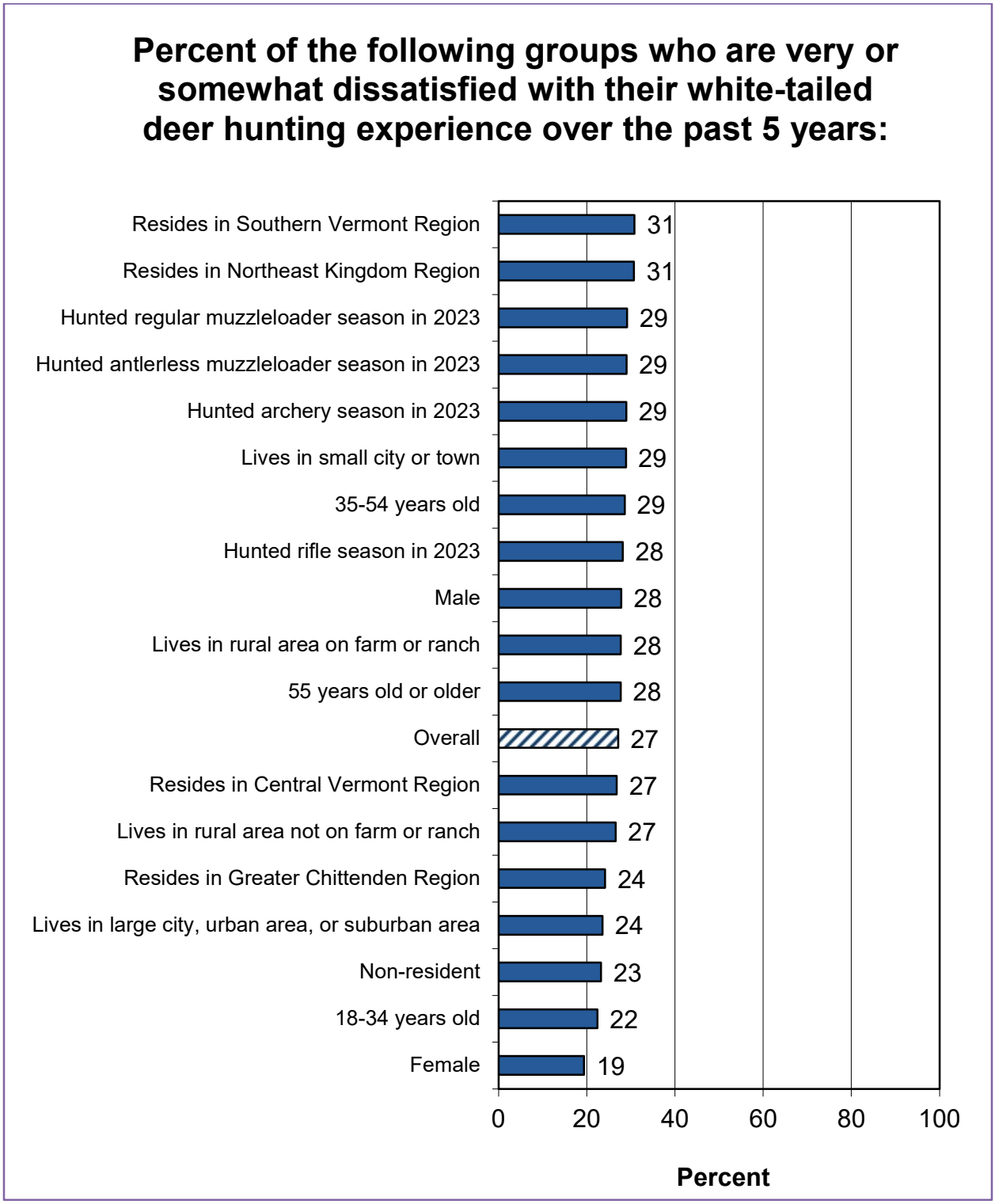


Female deer hunters and non-resident deer hunters are the most satisfied, as shown in the demographic analyses graph. The least satisfied groups are deer hunters from the Northeast Kingdom and Southern Vermont Regions.



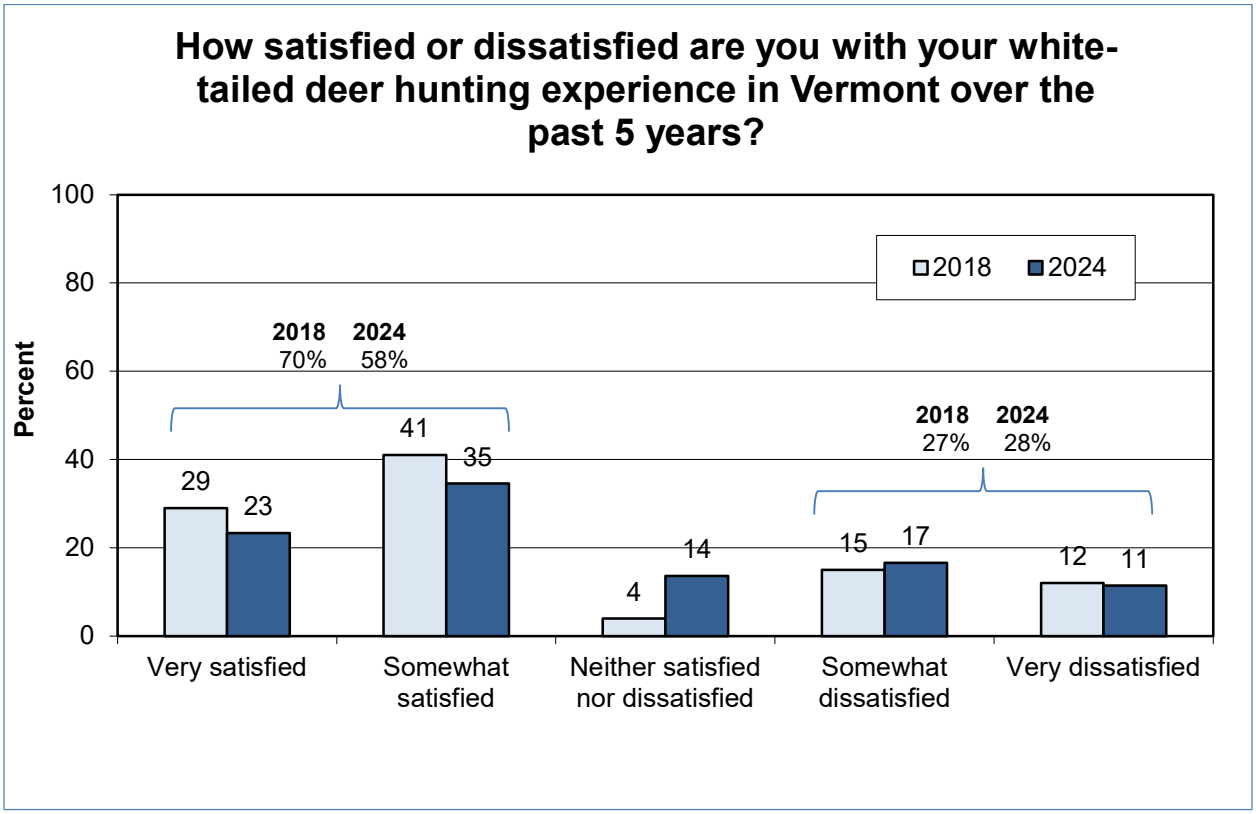
See pages 6-7 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

Dissatisfaction does not markedly differ at the top of the demographic analyses graph, with the highest dissatisfaction (31% among Southern Vermont and Northeast Kingdom Region hunters) not being markedly higher than dissatisfaction overall (27%).

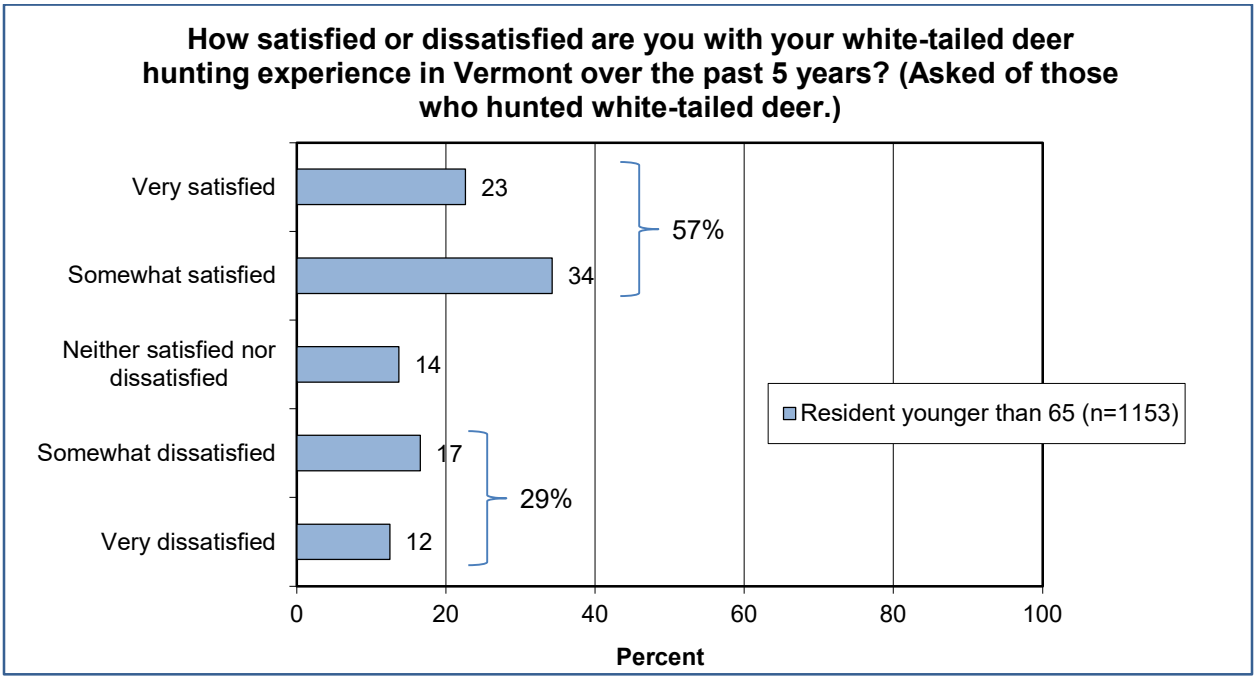


See pages 6-7 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

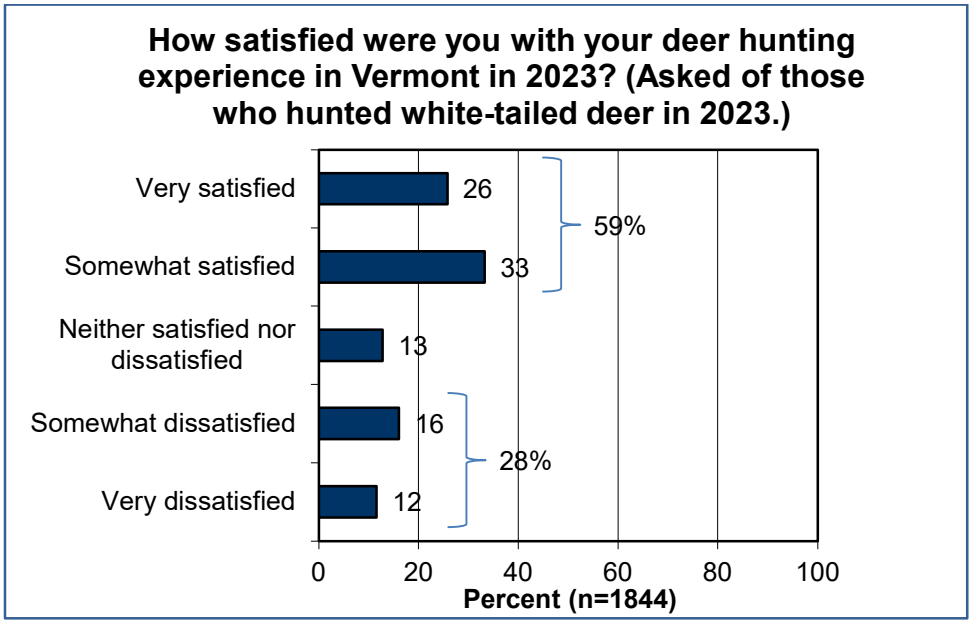
There was a gain in the neutral response at the expense of satisfaction from 2018 to 2024. Overall dissatisfaction remained the same in the two years.

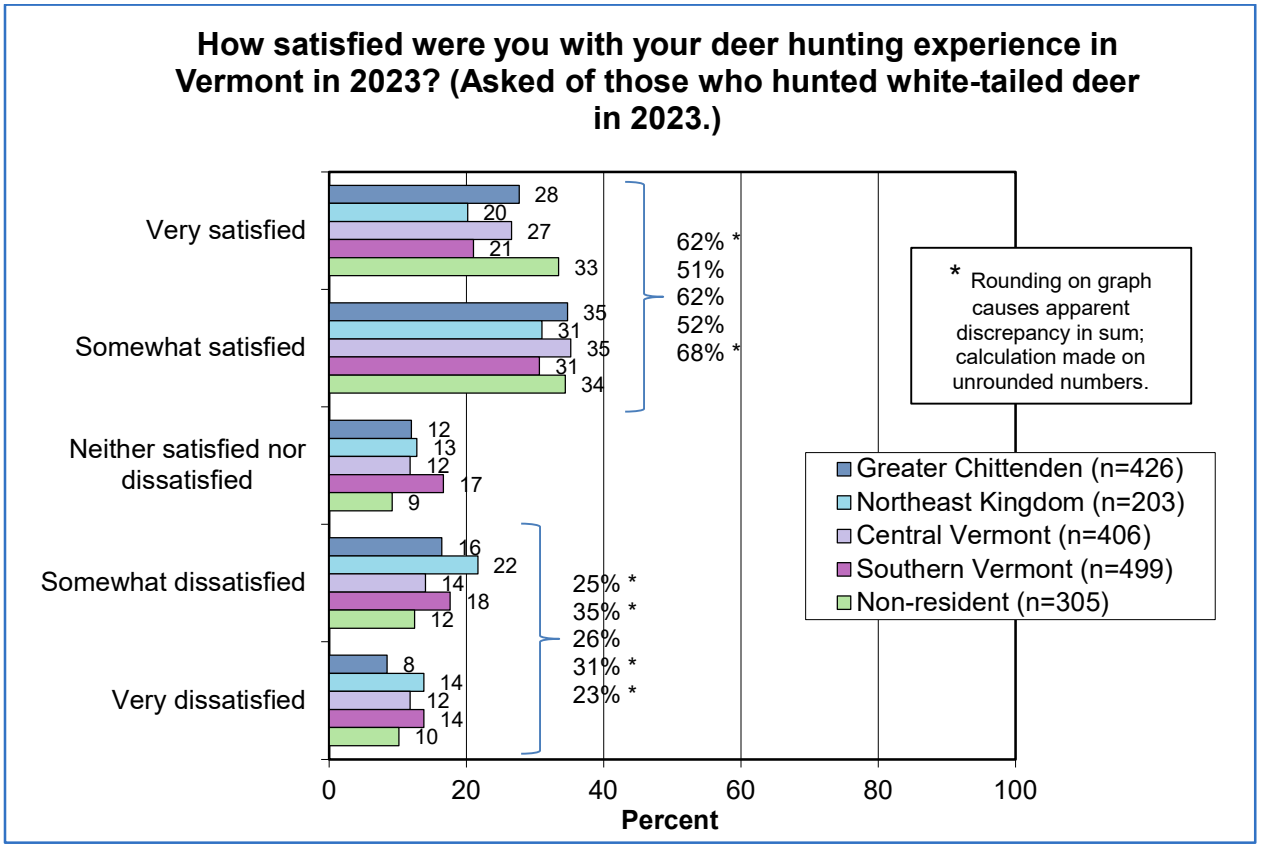


The next graph shows satisfaction among residents who are younger than 65 years old.

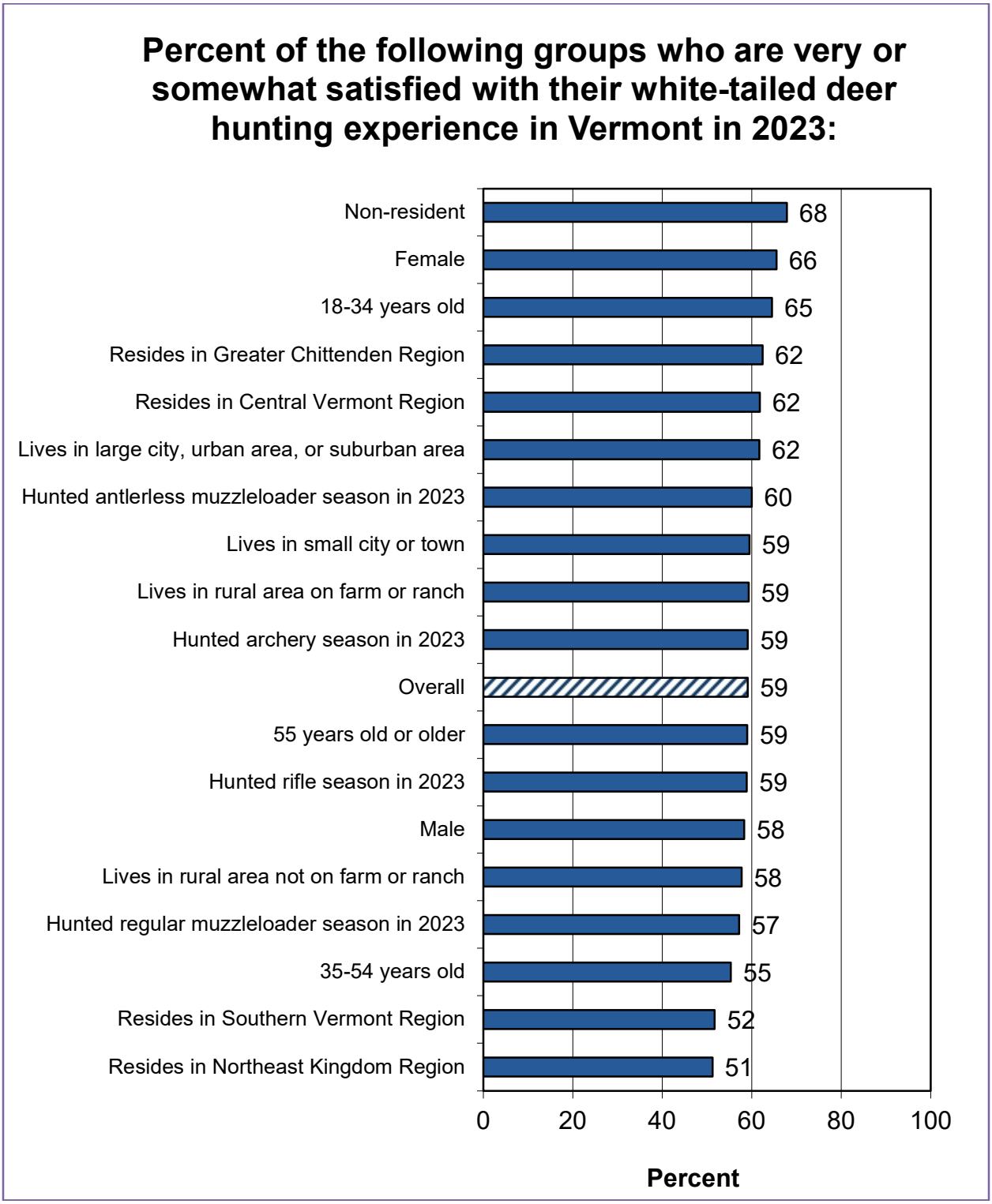


The next graphs show satisfaction in 2023. Among hunters active in that year, 59% were satisfied, while 28% were dissatisfied. Satisfaction was highest among non-residents and lowest among Northeast Kingdom and Southern Vermont Region hunters. (Again, note that the regional breakdown is by hunter residence, which might not necessarily be the location of hunting.)



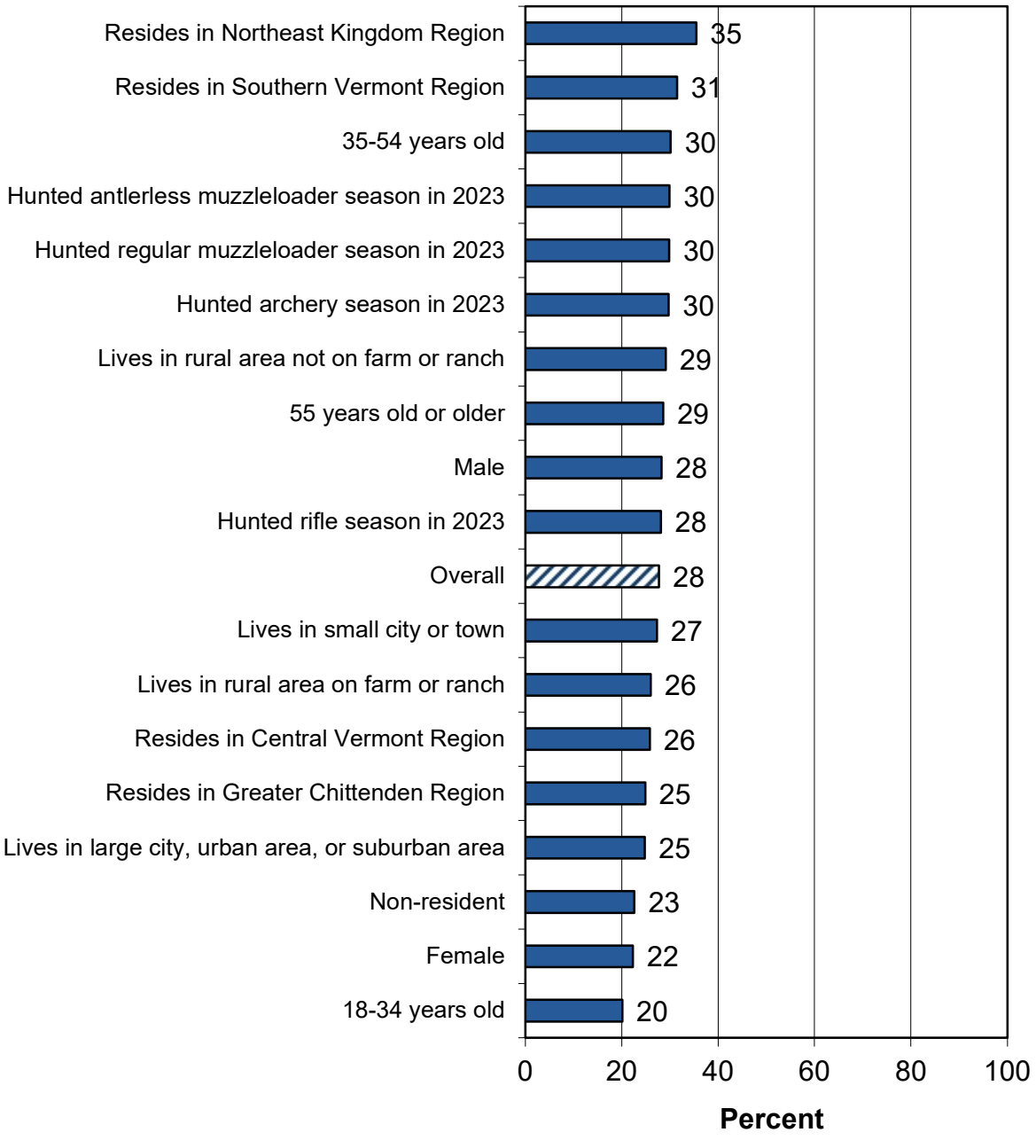


Satisfaction with 2023 deer hunting was highest among non-residents, female deer hunters, and young deer hunters. Meanwhile, dissatisfaction in 2023 was markedly higher among Northeast Kingdom hunters than among deer hunters overall, as shown on the following page.



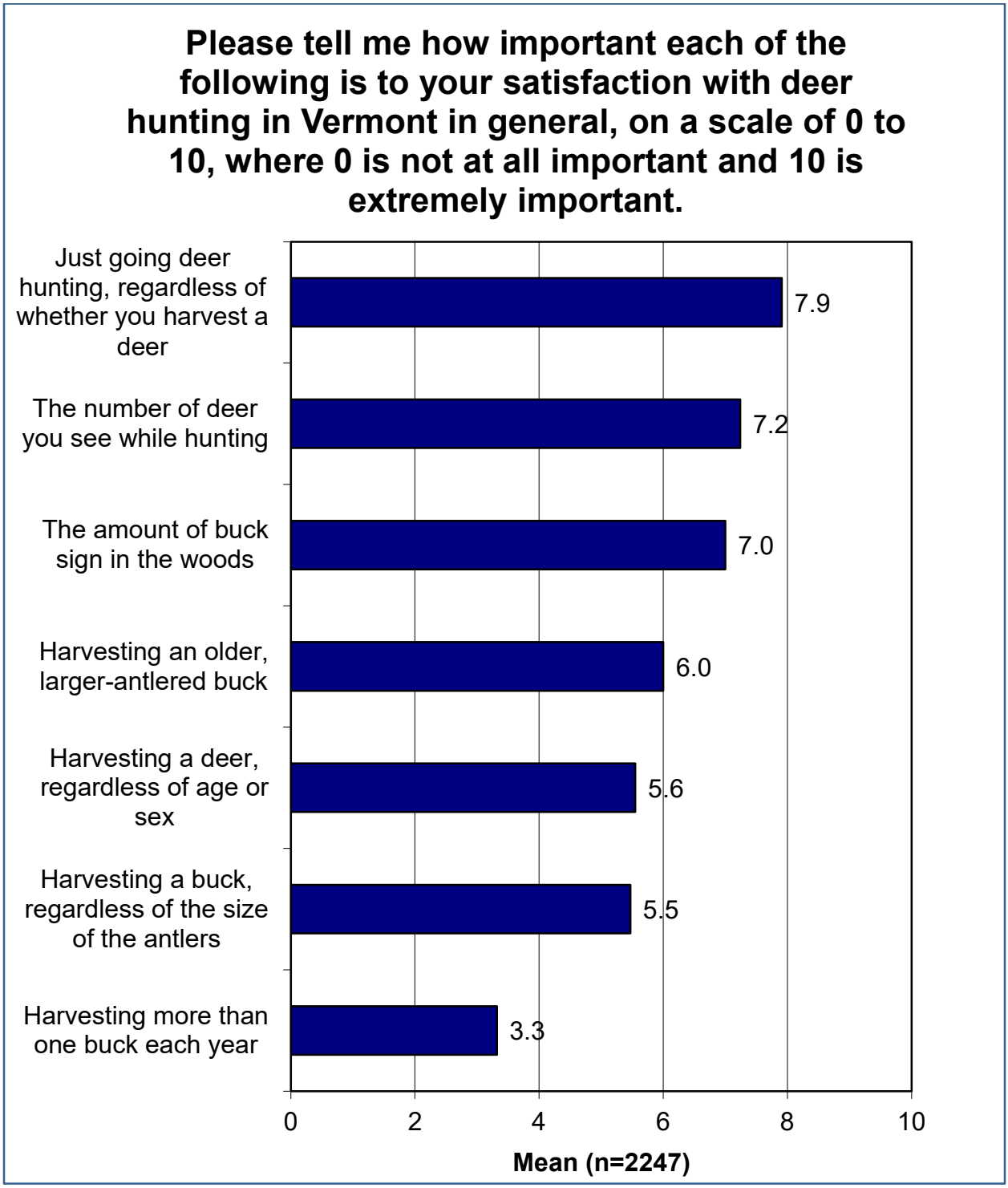
See pages 6-7 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

Percent of the following groups who are very or somewhat dissatisfied with their white-tailed deer hunting experience in Vermont in 2023:

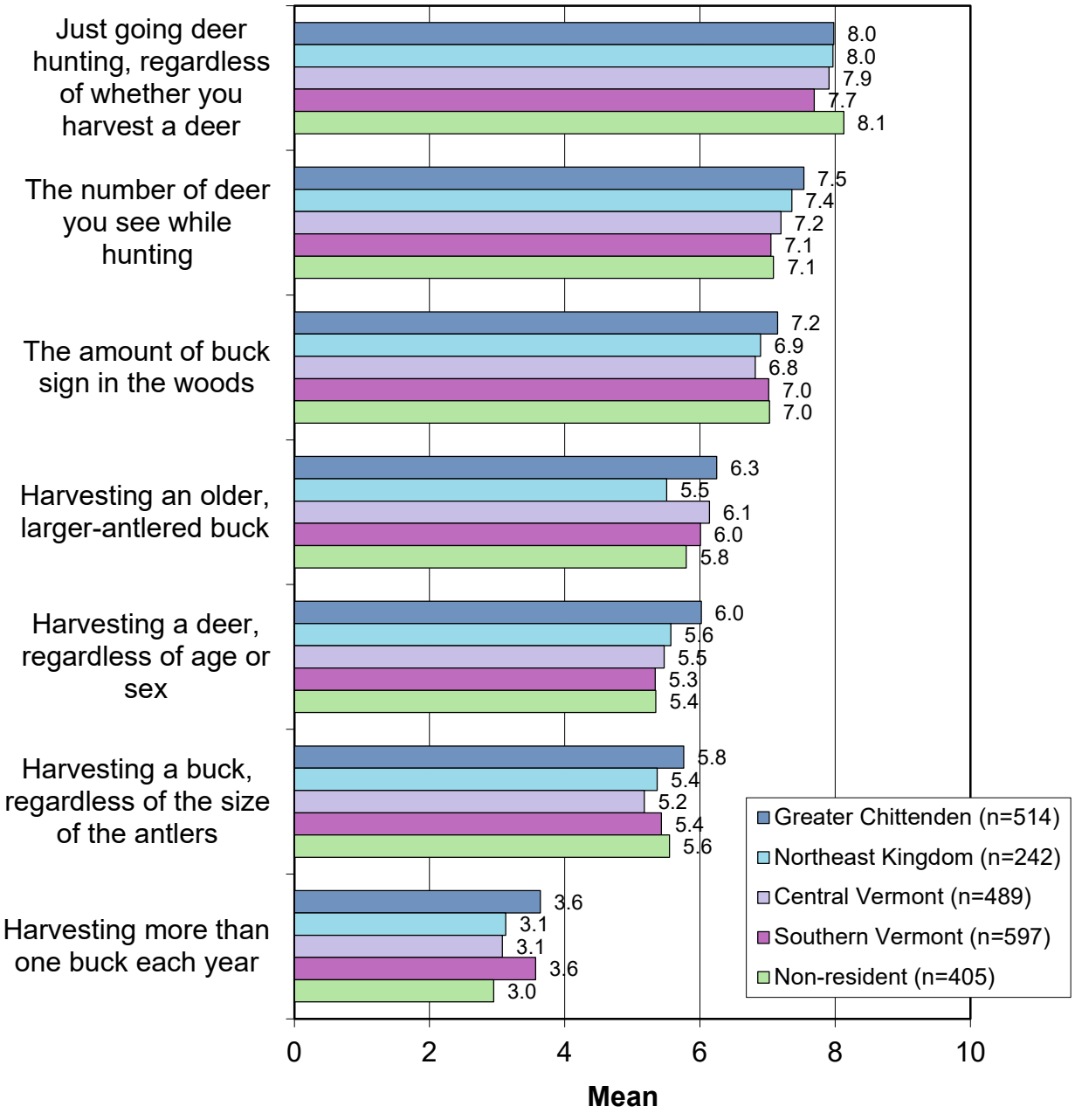


See pages 6-7 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

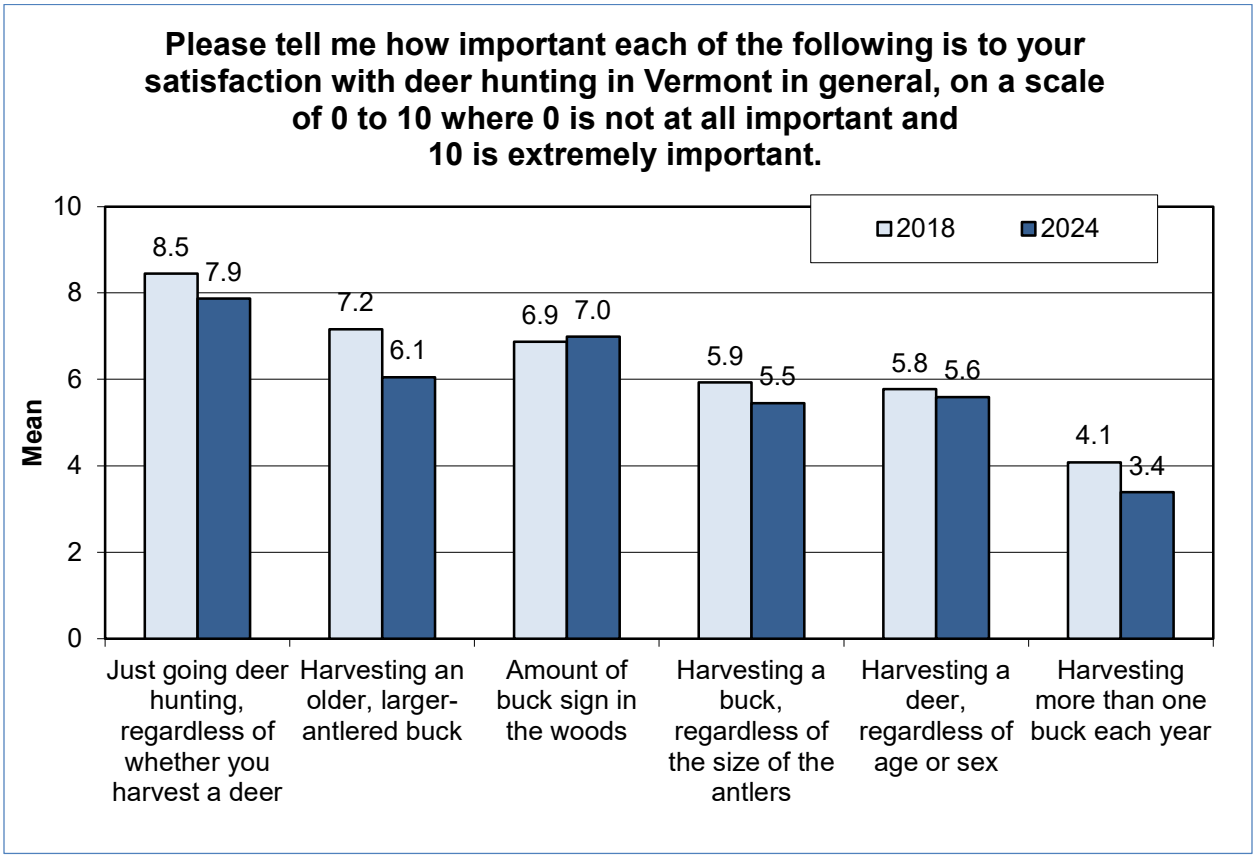
The factors that play a role in satisfaction are shown in the accompanying graph. Three factors stand out above the others: just going hunting, number of deer *seen*, and the amount of buck sign found in the woods and fields. Harvesting *multiple* bucks is the least important factor. The regional graph is included on the following page, as well.



Please tell me how important each of the following is to your satisfaction with deer hunting in Vermont in general, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all important and 10 is extremely important.



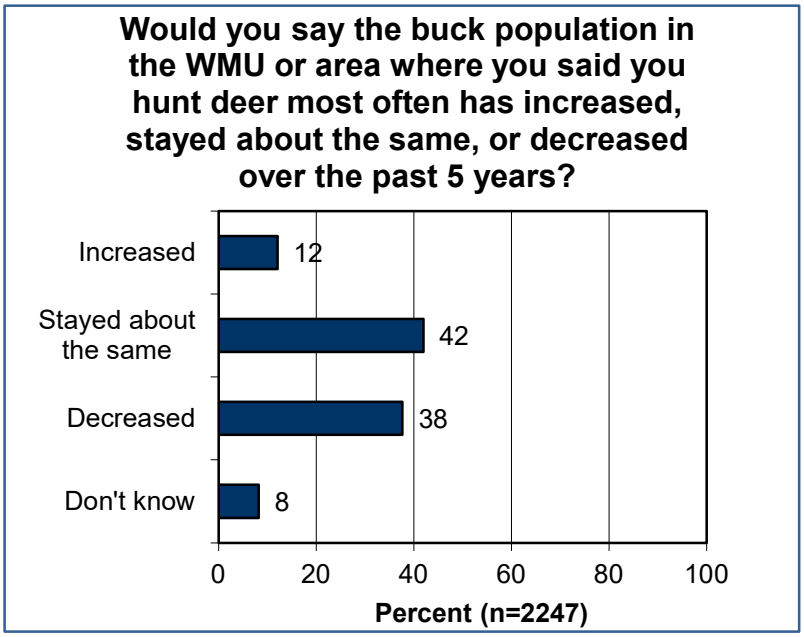
Trends of the above series of questions were run. For most of the factors related to satisfaction, the mean importance rating has gone down slightly. There was a more substantial drop in one: harvesting an older, larger antlered buck.

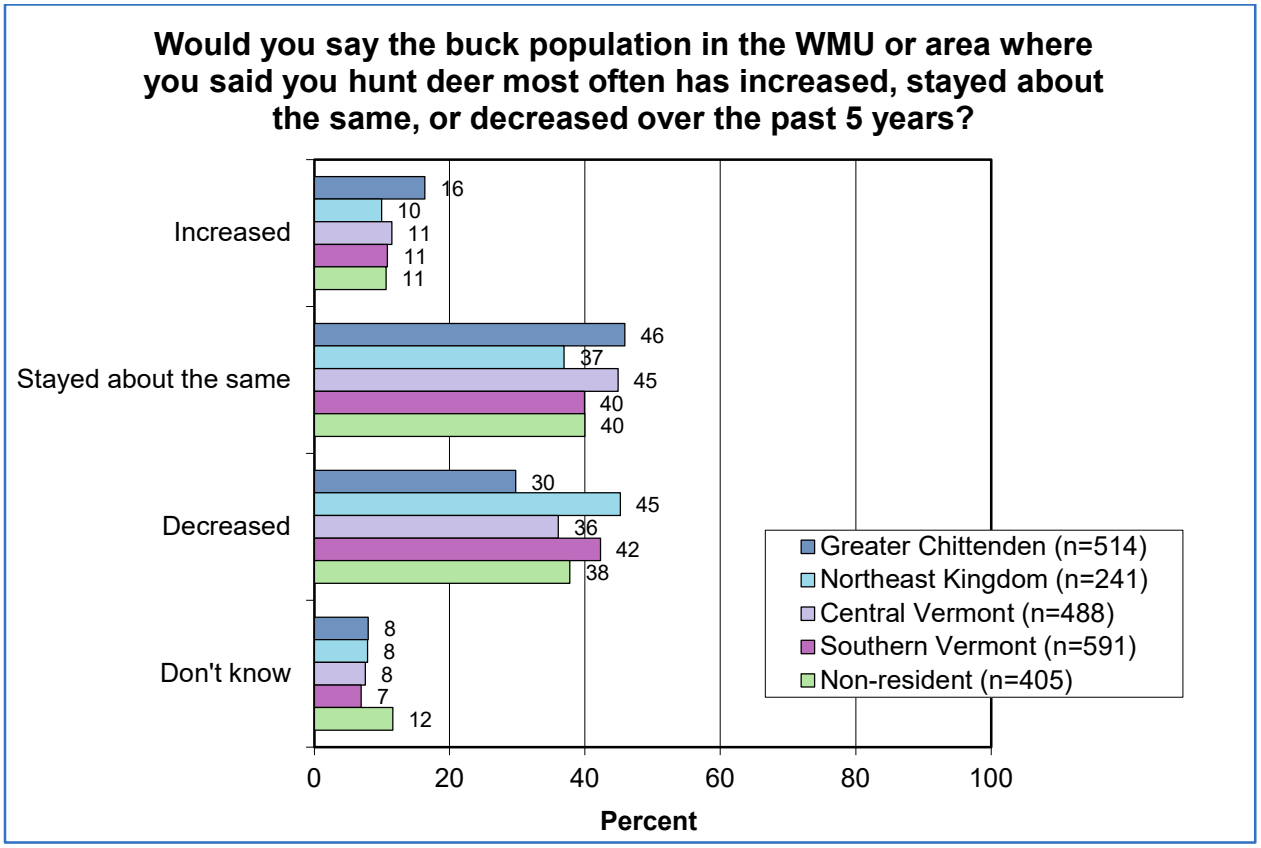


OPINIONS ON DEER POPULATIONS, DEER MANAGEMENT, AND DEER HUNTING REGULATIONS

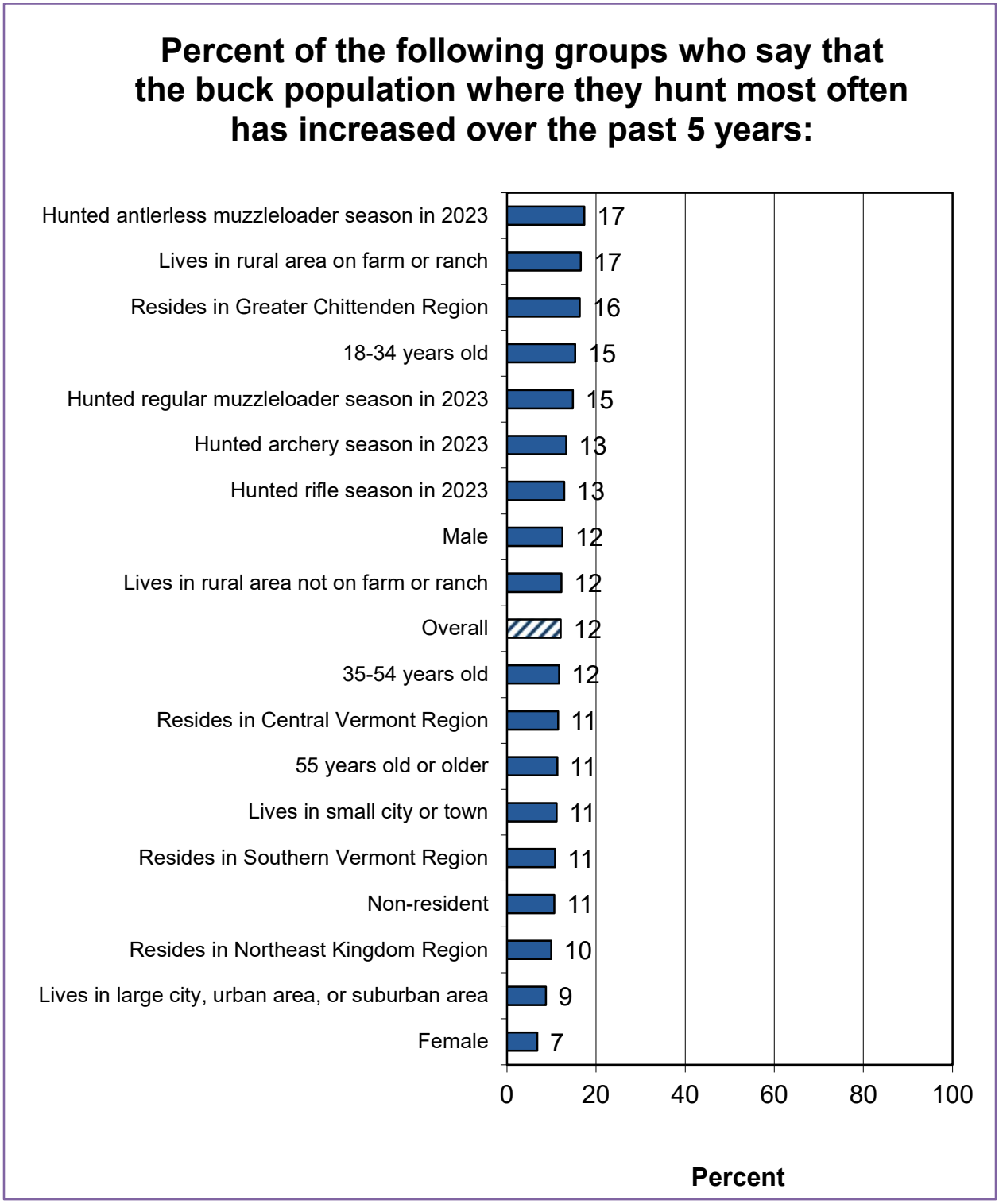
OPINIONS ON BUCK POPULATION

Most commonly, deer hunters think the buck population where they hunt most often has remained the same over the past 5 years (42%), but nearly the same percentage think it has decreased (38%). Only 12% think it has increased. The apparent decrease is highest among hunters from the Northeast Kingdom and Southern Vermont Regions. The Greater Chittenden Region has the highest percentage perceiving an increase.



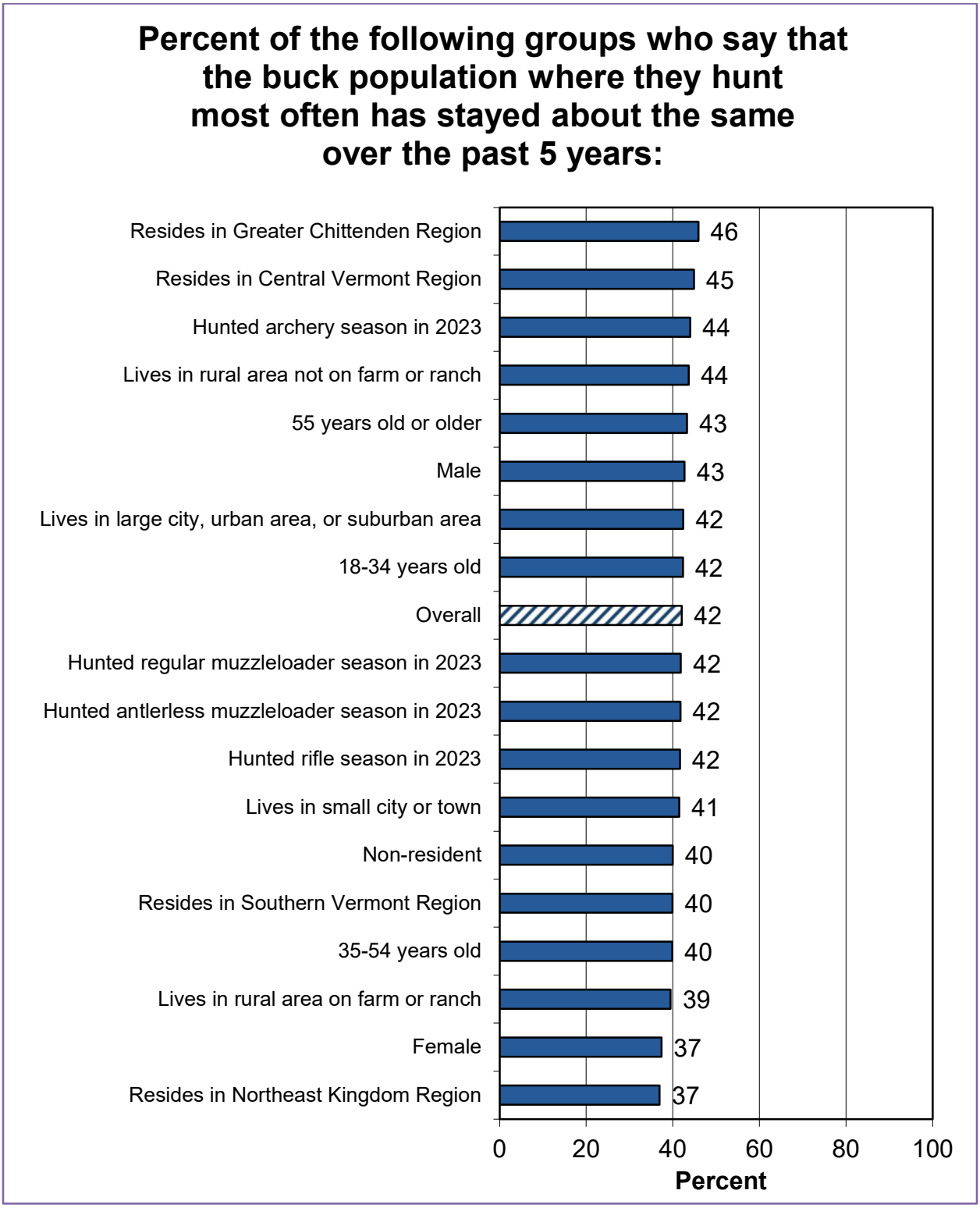


Two deer hunter groups are markedly more likely to say that the buck population has increased where they hunt: those hunting the antlerless muzzleloader season in 2023 and rural deer hunters living on a farm or ranch.



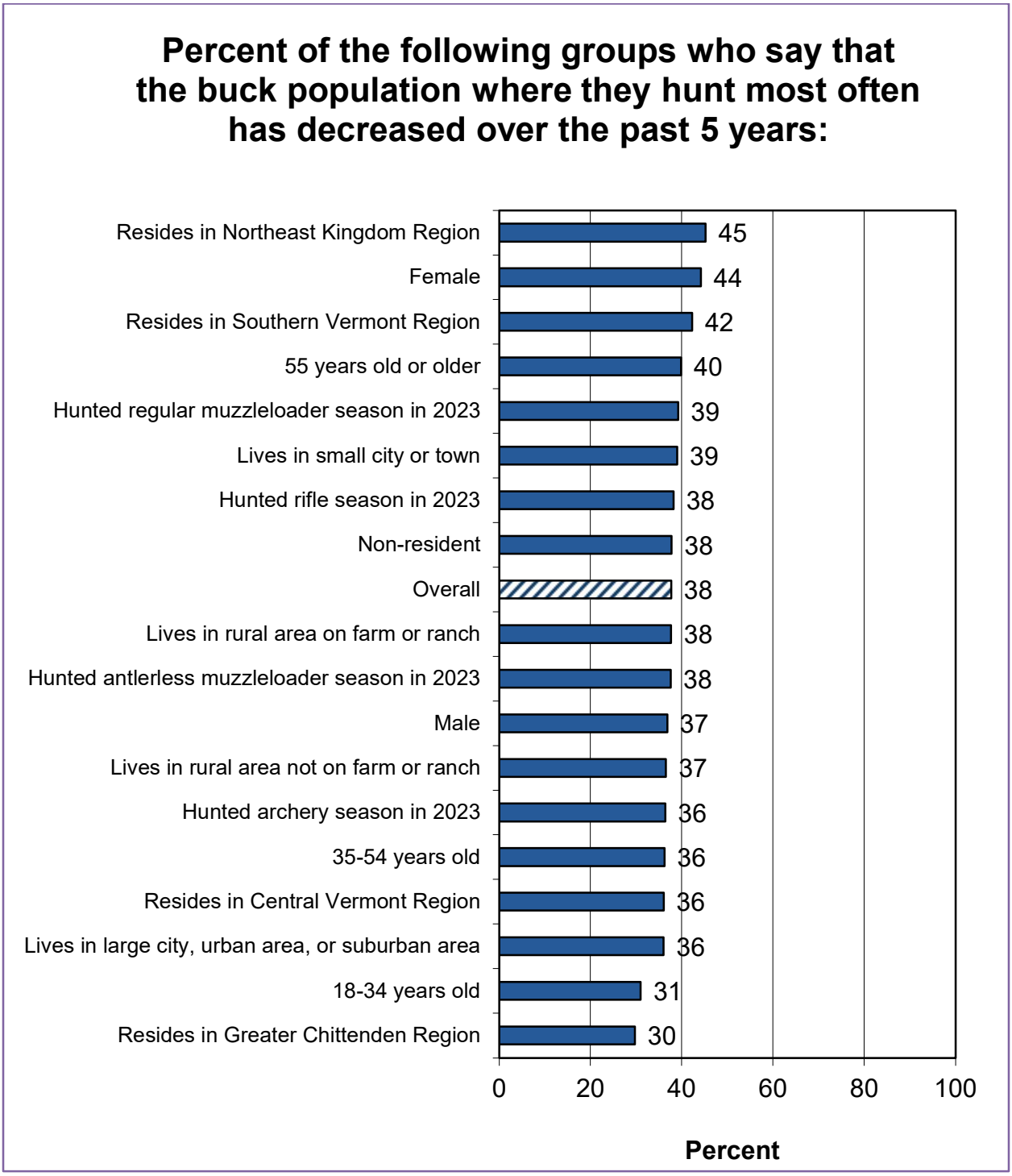
See pages 6-7 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

No group markedly differs from deer hunters overall in perceptions of a stable buck population over the past 5 years.



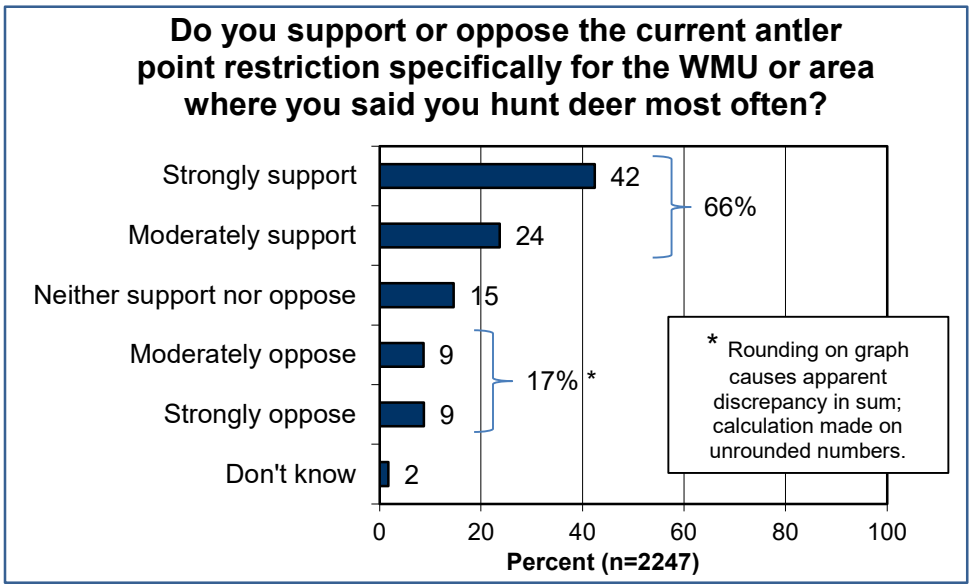
See pages 6-7 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

Finally, deer hunters from the Northeast Kingdom and female deer hunters are markedly more likely to say that the buck population has decreased in their hunt area over the past 5 years, compared to deer hunters overall.

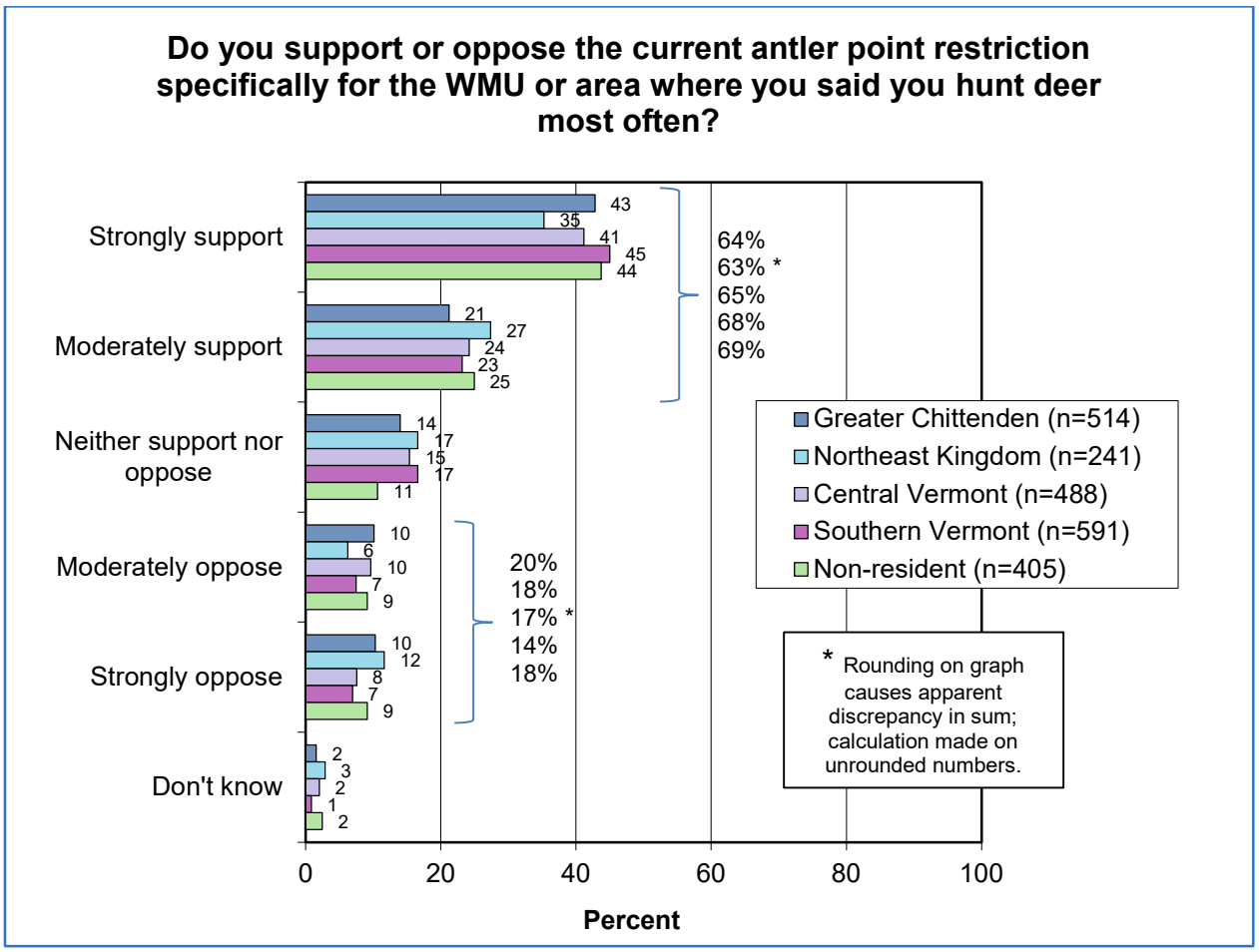


See pages 6-7 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

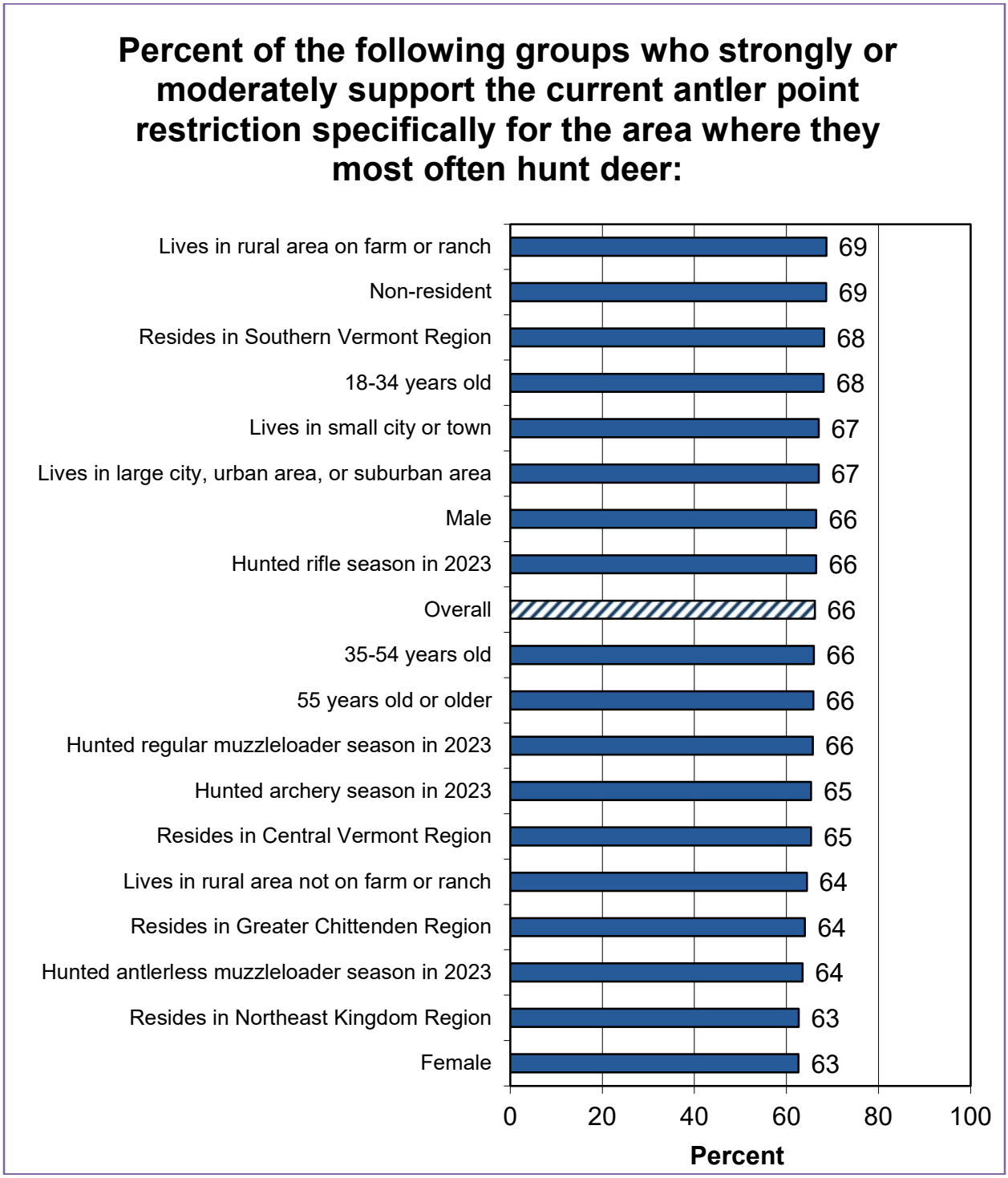
ANTLER POINT RESTRICTIONS



Support for (66%) is nearly 4 times higher than opposition to (17%) the current antler point restriction in deer hunters' most commonly hunted area. The regional differences are minor.

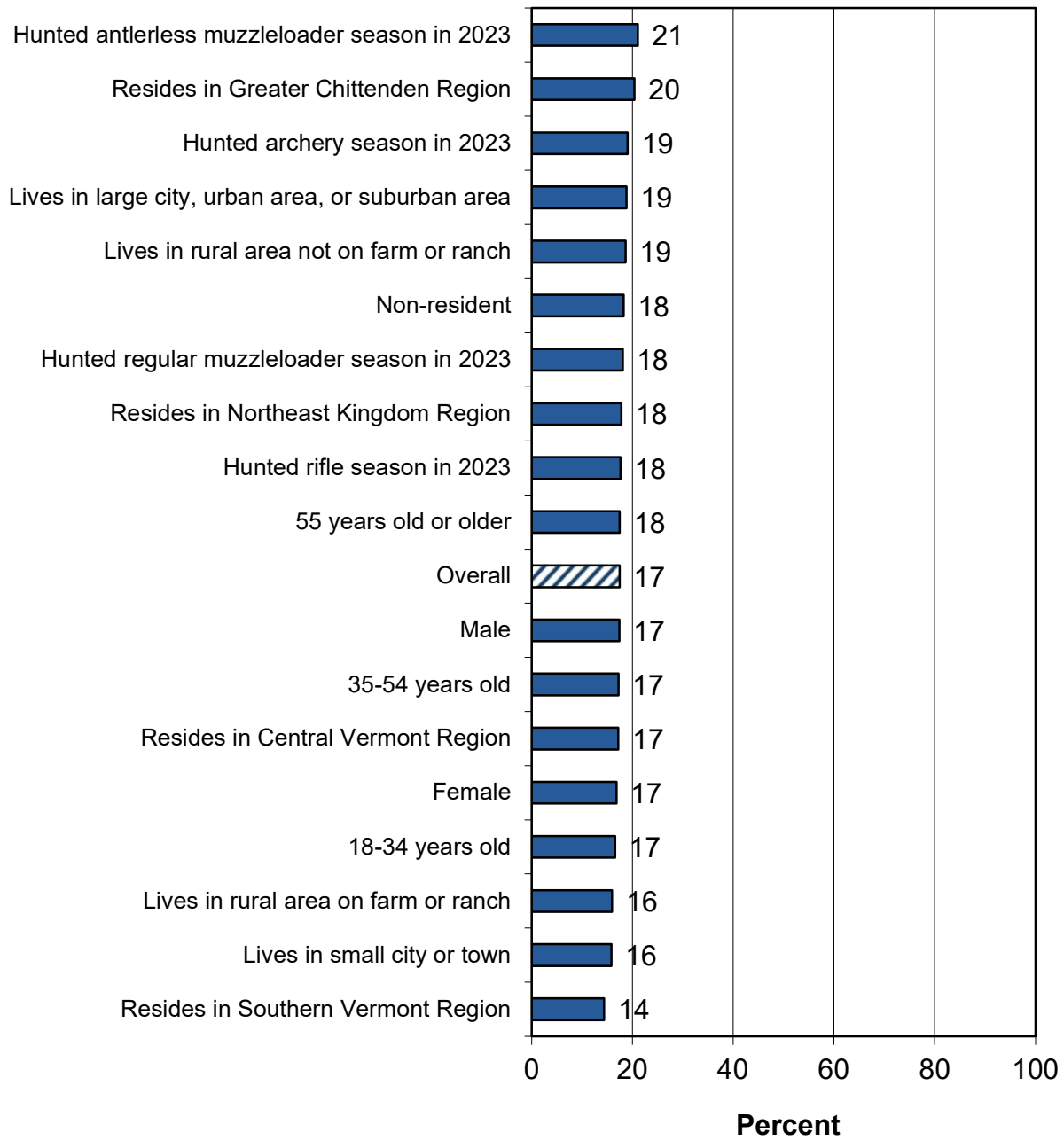


The demographic analyses found almost no differences among deer hunter groups on this question about current antler point restrictions: the entire range of support goes from only 63% to 69%, and the entire range of opposition goes from 14% to 21%.



See pages 6-7 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

Percent of the following groups who strongly or moderately oppose the current antler point restriction specifically for the area where they most often hunt deer:

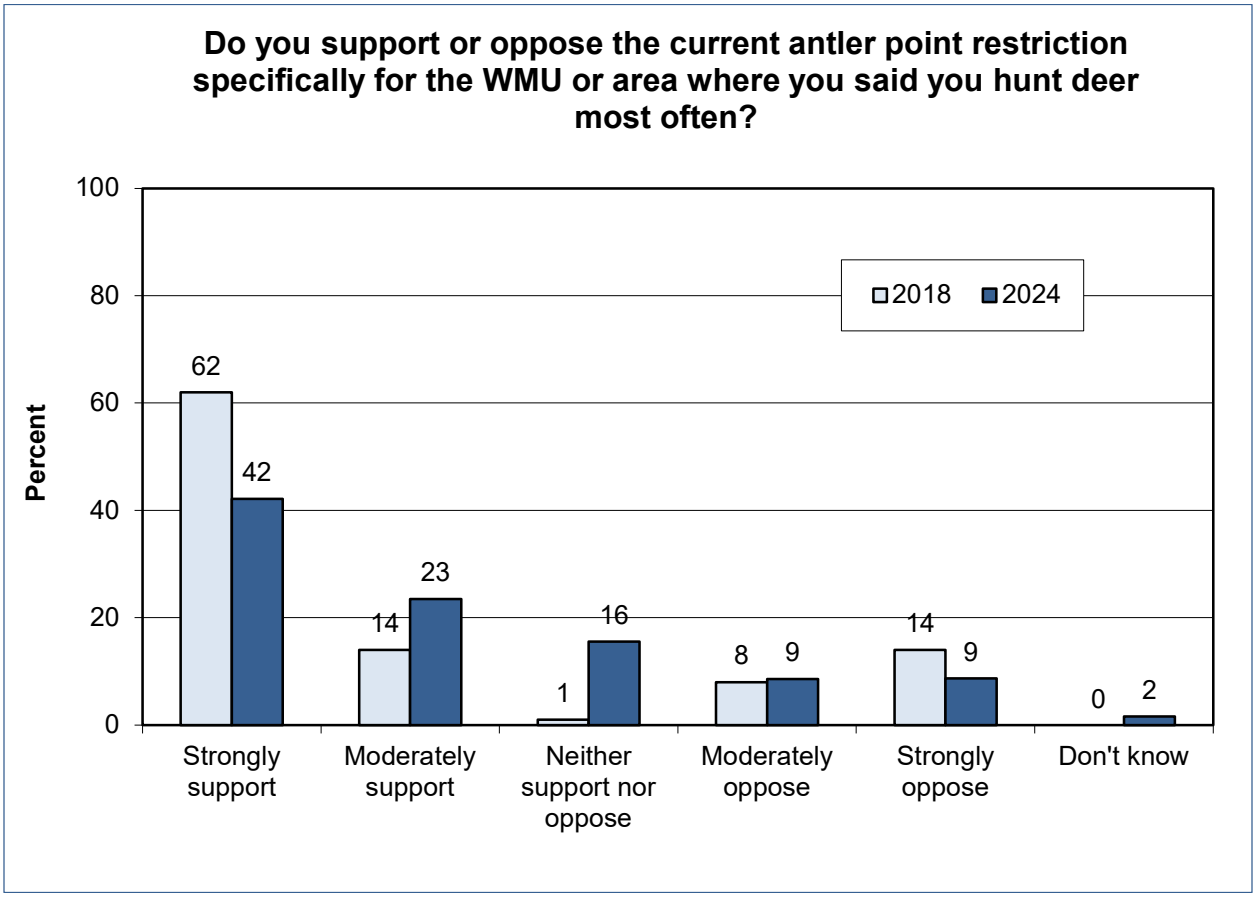


See pages 6-7 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

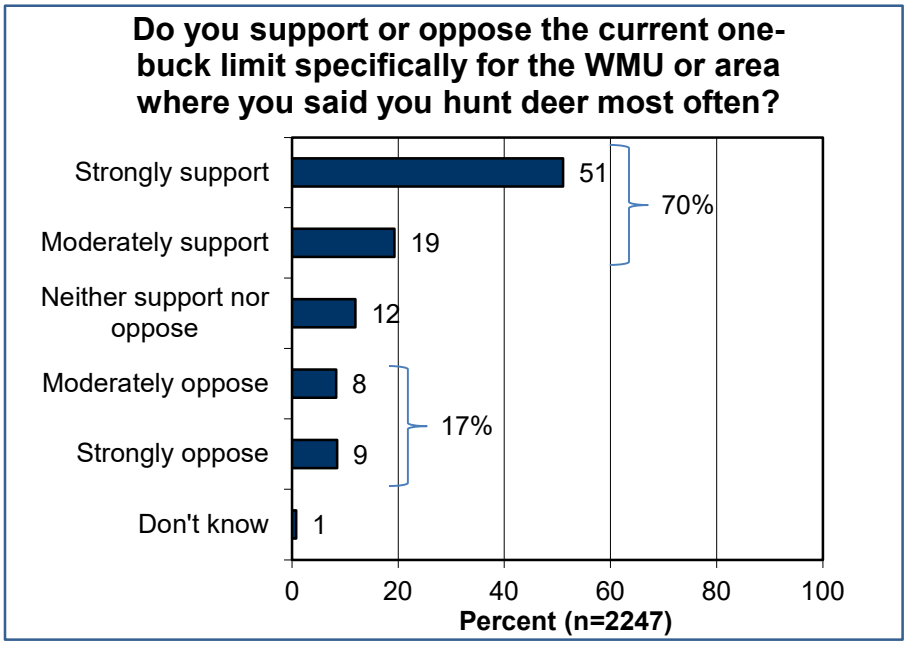
The following table shows a breakdown of support/opposition to the antler point restriction question by WMU most often hunted. Note that the sample size, designated as the n-value in statistical notation, is low for the WMUs. This can lead to wide fluctuations from one WMU to another.

Do you support or oppose the current antler point restriction specifically for the WMU or area where you said you hunt deer most often?							
WMU	**n-value**	**Percentage giving response:**					
		Strongly support	**Moderately support**	**Neither**	**Moderately oppose**	**Strongly oppose**	**Don't know**
A	40	48	8	15	13	13	5
B	218	42	26	11	11	10	0
C	77	42	17	17	12	9	4
D1	119	30	29	16	7	18	1
D2	72	39	22	18	8	10	3
E1	40	40	18	28	10	3	3
E2	33	42	30	18	0	9	0
F1	79	42	23	9	14	11	1
F2	61	52	23	11	8	5	0
G	75	43	19	12	12	12	3
H	93	38	30	11	10	11	1
I	56	41	23	14	11	7	4
J1	138	38	27	20	9	6	1
J2	182	42	26	11	9	10	2
K	126	45	18	17	10	7	2
L	48	44	27	13	8	6	2
M	47	43	19	19	6	13	0
N	82	51	20	13	9	6	1
O	126	47	20	18	6	9	1
P	48	40	27	15	10	8	0
Q	56	46	27	7	9	7	4

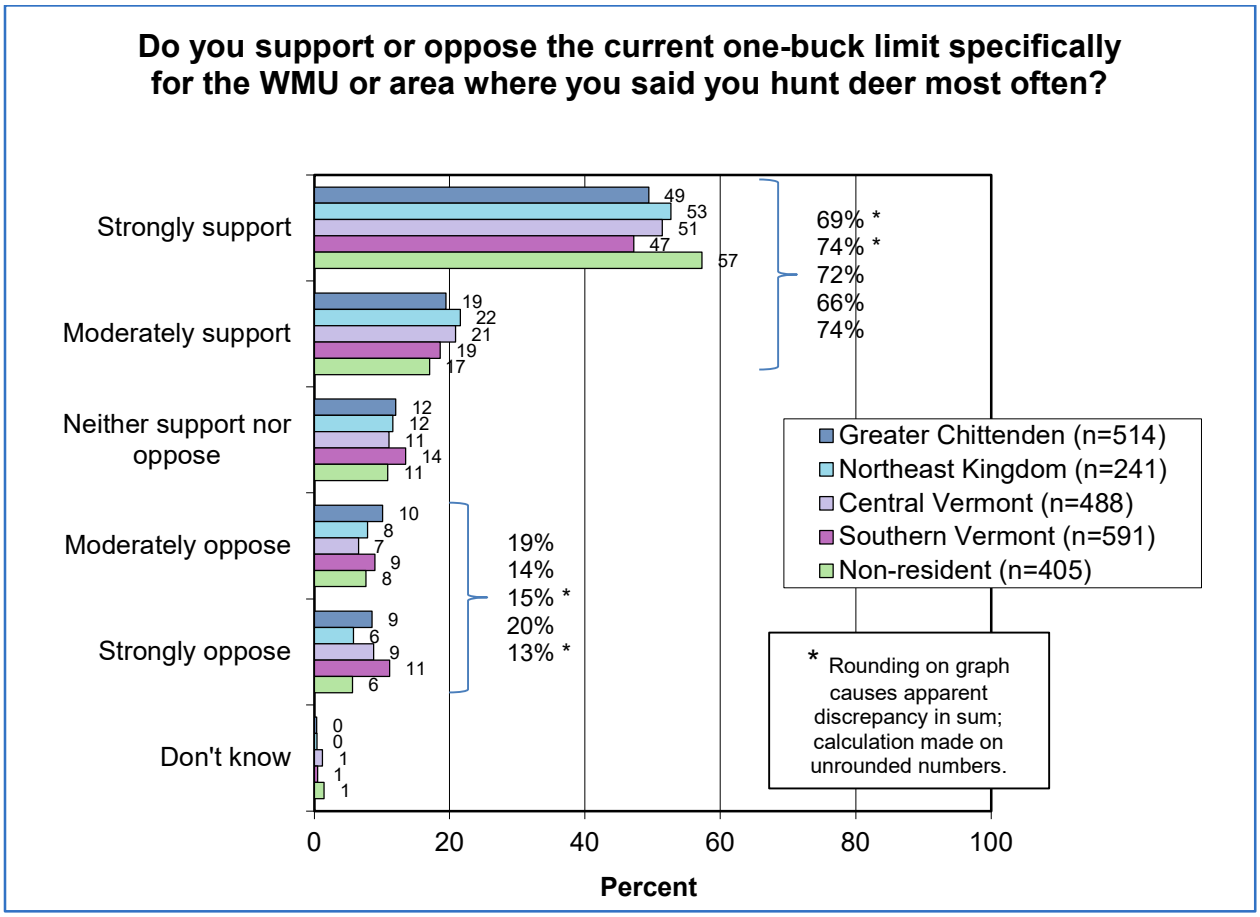
In these trends, the 2024 data are among residents only to be comparable to the 2018 survey. Although there is a decrease in *strong* support, there is a rise in *moderate* support. Opposition goes down a bit in 2024, compared to 2018.



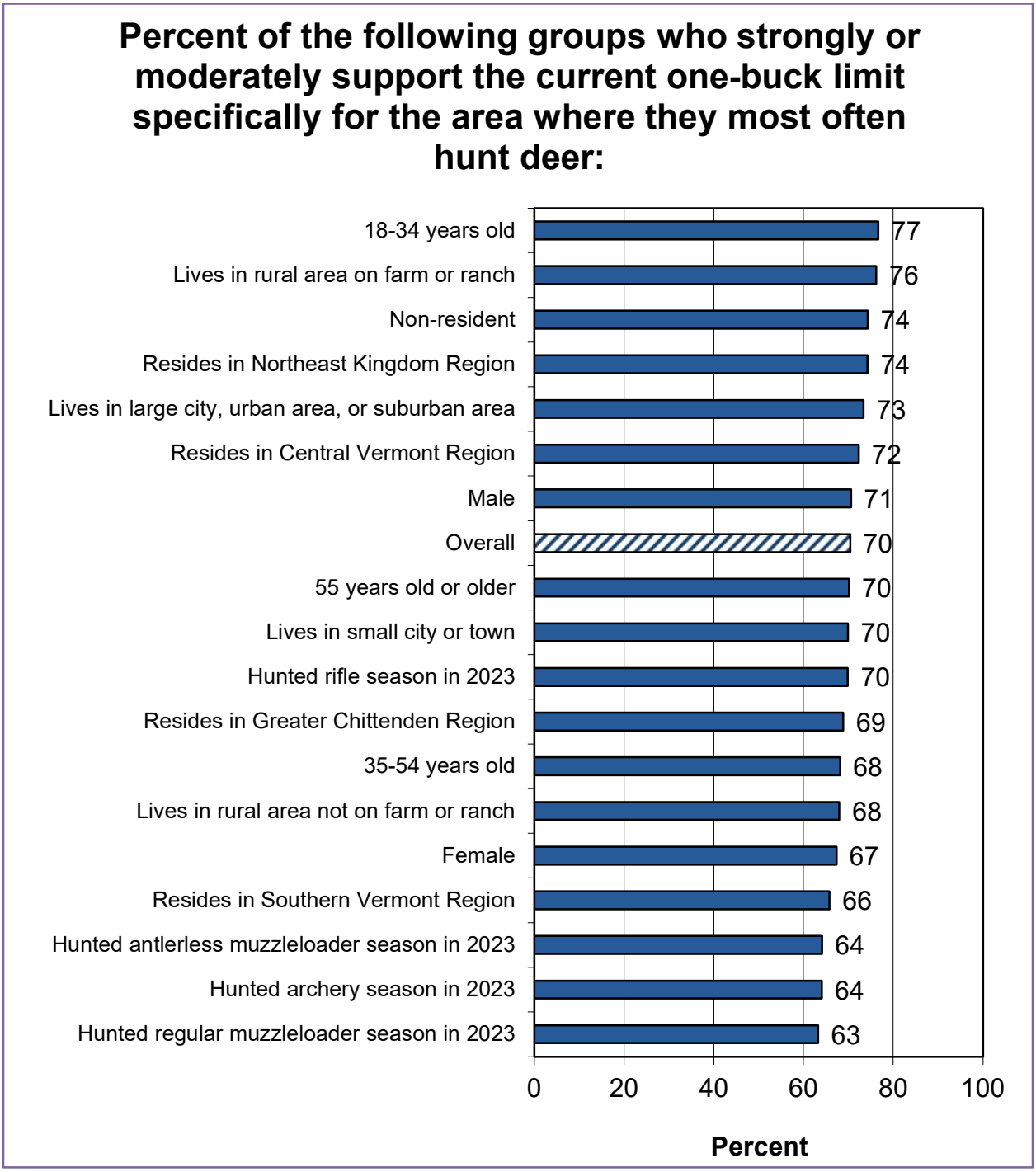
ONE-BUCK LIMIT



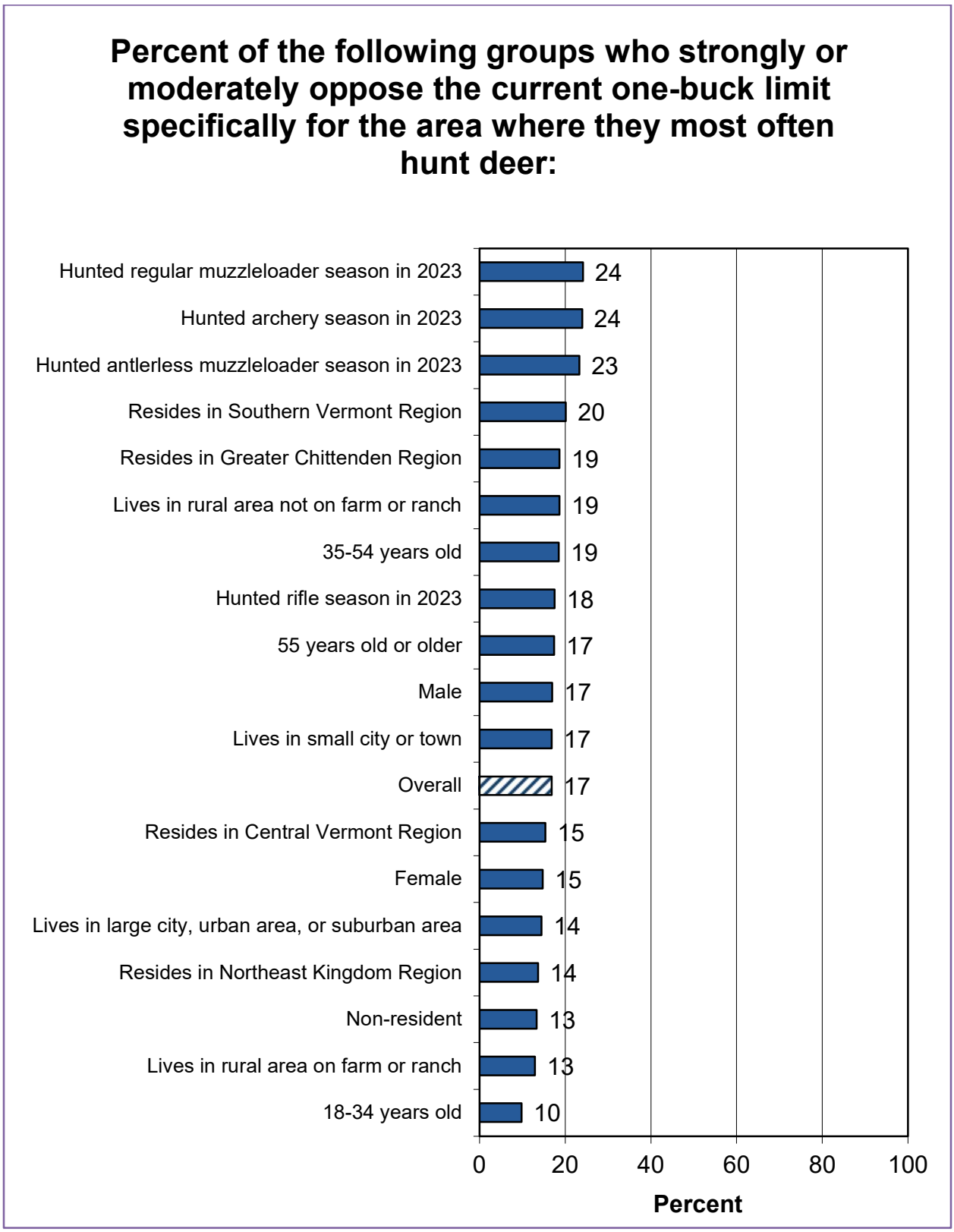
Support for the current one-buck limit far exceeds opposition to it: 70% support, while only 17% oppose. Support is highest among hunters from the Northeast Kingdom and from out of state.



Young deer hunters and rural deer hunters (who live on a farm or ranch) are the most likely to support the current one-buck limit. Meanwhile, opposition (next page) is highest among deer hunters who hunted any of these three seasons in 2023: the regular muzzleloader season, the archery season, or the antlerless muzzleloader season.



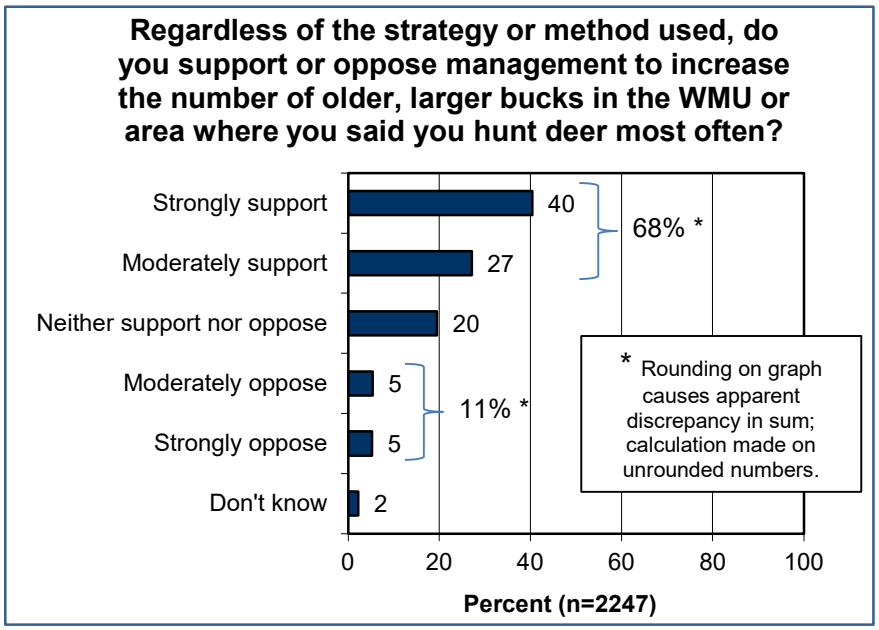
See pages 6-7 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

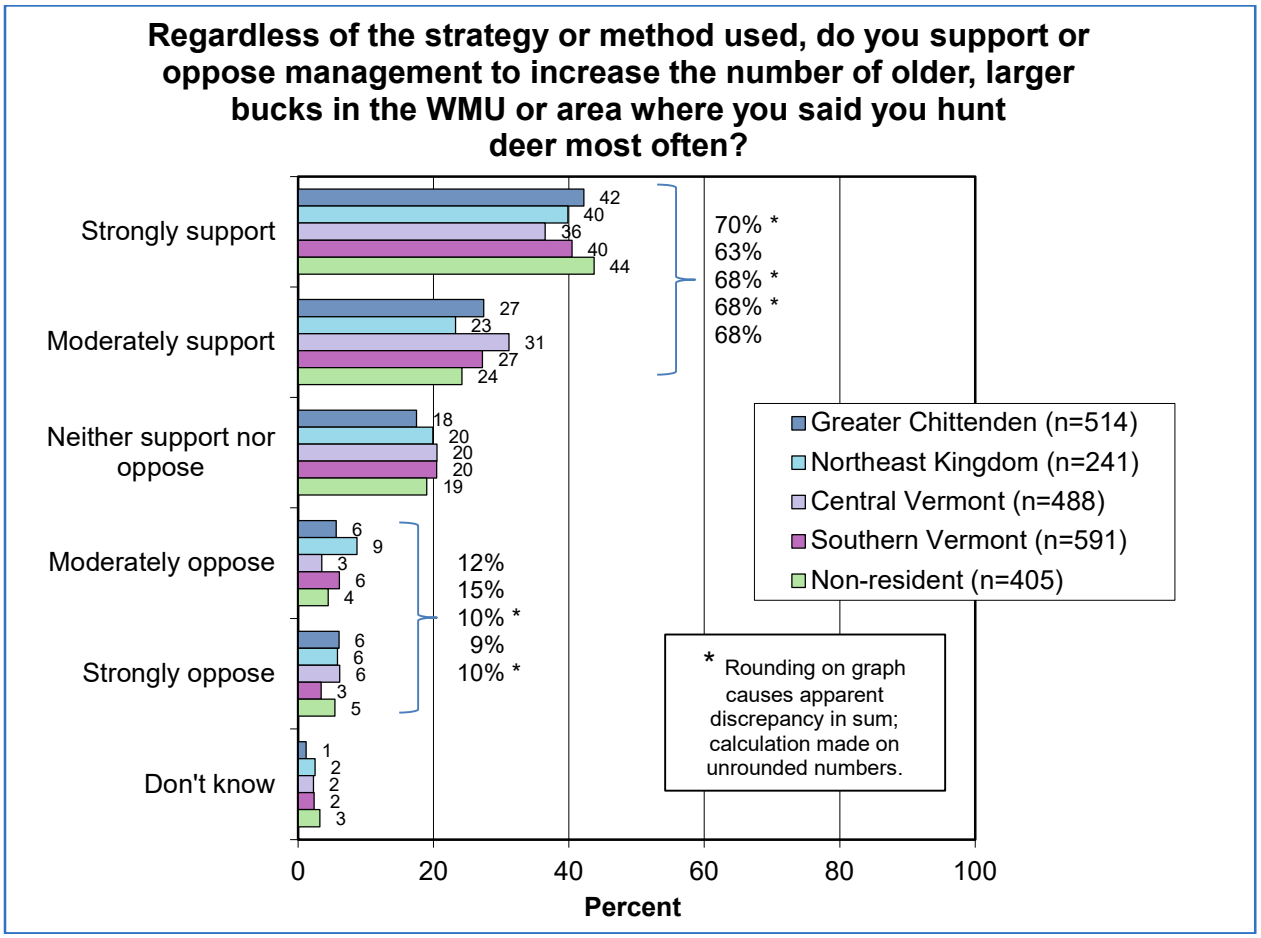


See pages 6-7 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

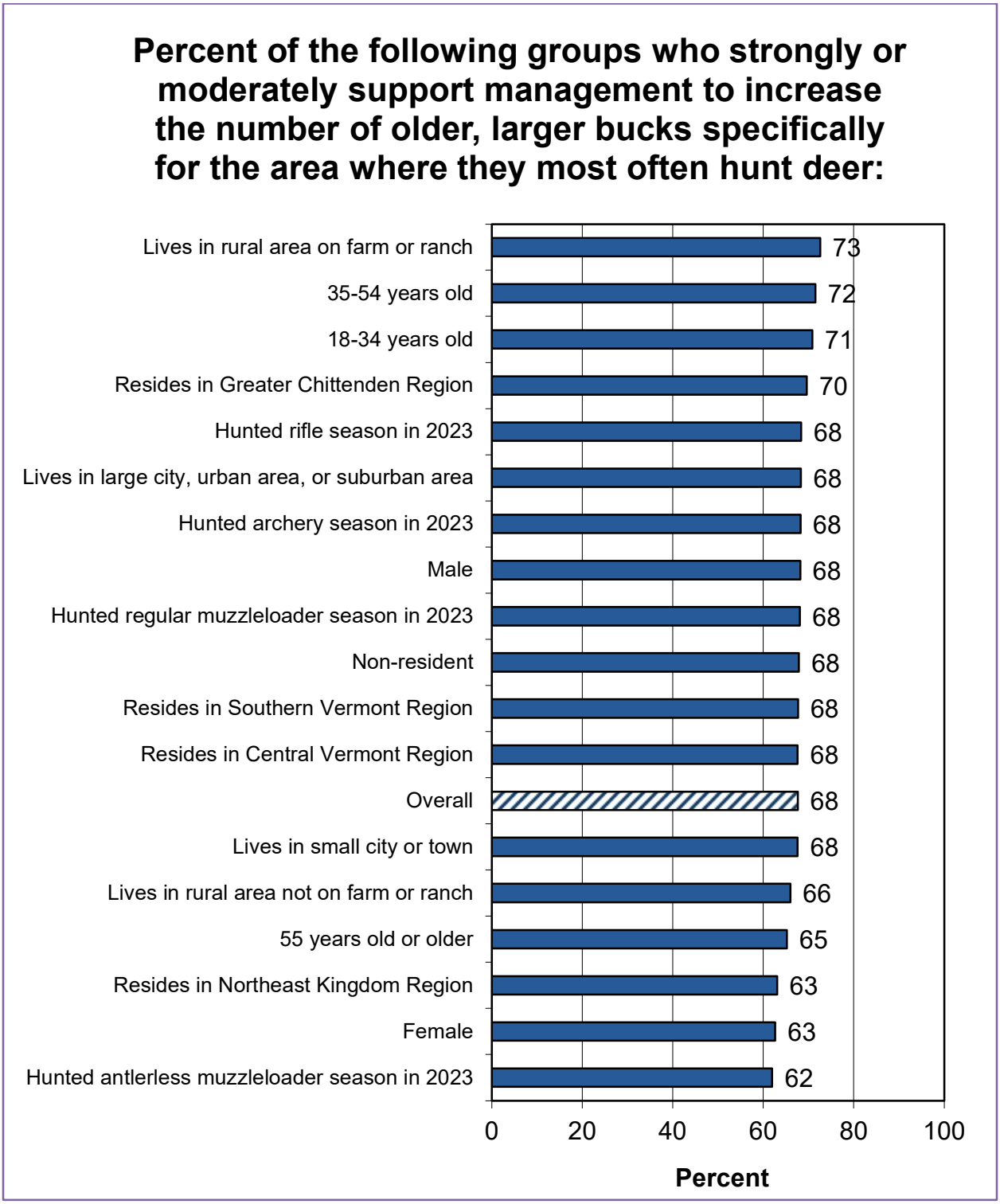
MANAGEMENT TO INCREASE OLDER, LARGER BUCKS

Support for a management strategy that increases the number of older, larger bucks far exceeds opposition to it: 68% support, while only 11% oppose. Support is markedly lower among hunters from the Northeast Kingdom, compared to their counterparts in the other regions.



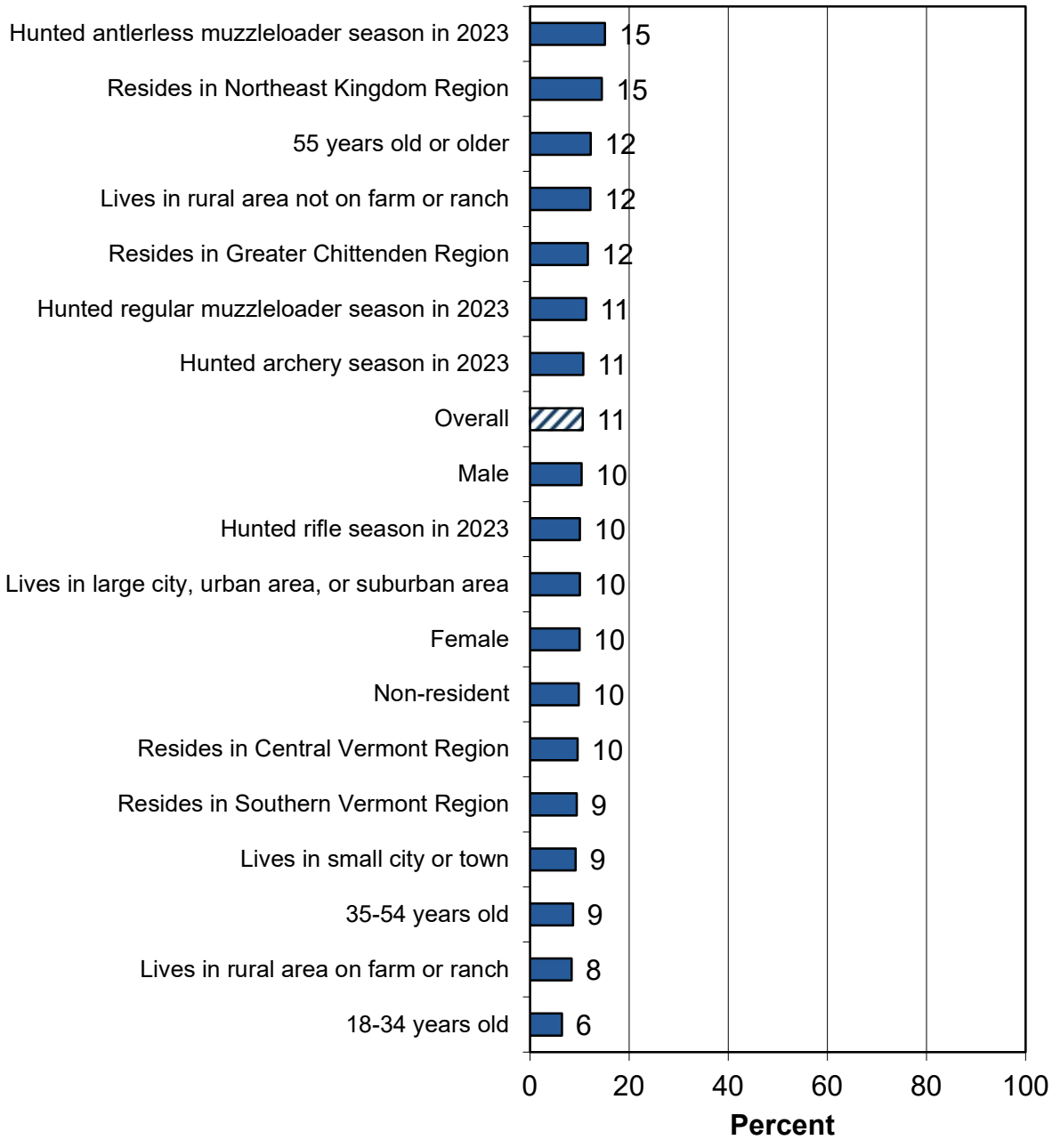


One deer hunter group is markedly higher in support for the management strategy to increase the number of older, larger bucks: deer hunters who live on a farm or ranch. Opposition does not greatly differ among deer hunter groups (following page).



See pages 6-7 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

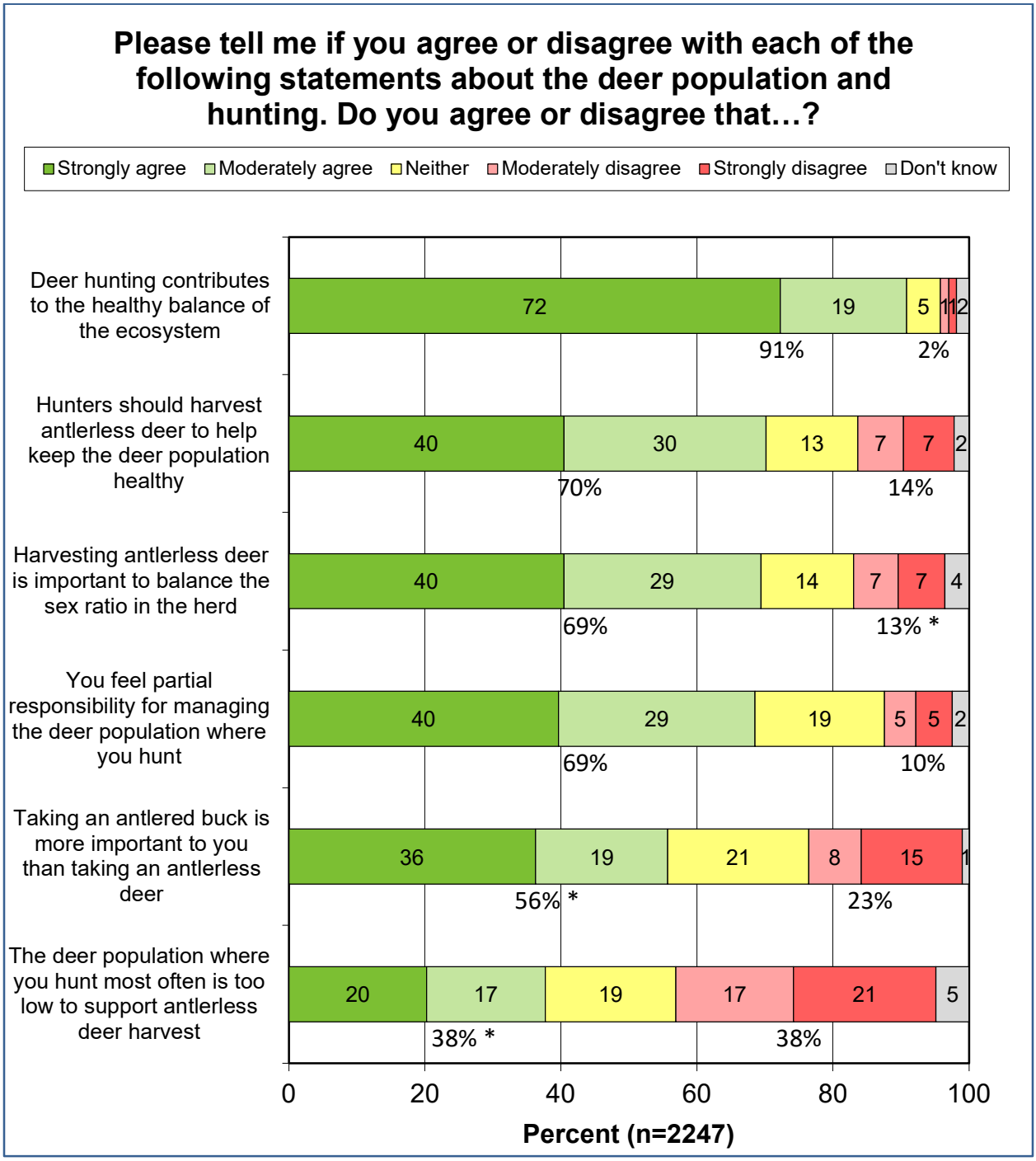
Percent of the following groups who strongly or moderately oppose management to increase the number of older, larger bucks specifically for the area where they most often hunt deer:



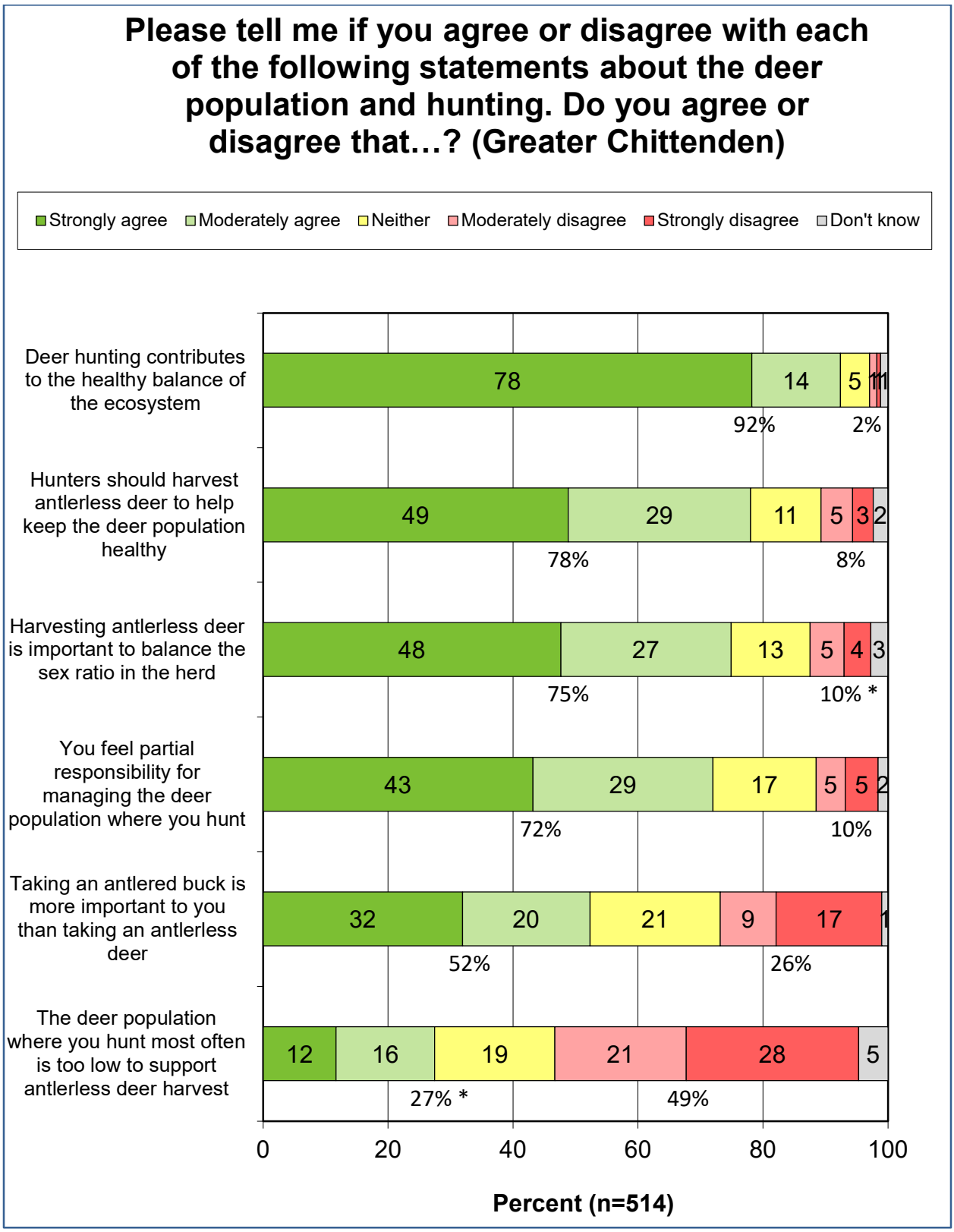
See pages 6-7 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

STATEMENTS ABOUT DEER HUNTING AND MANAGEMENT

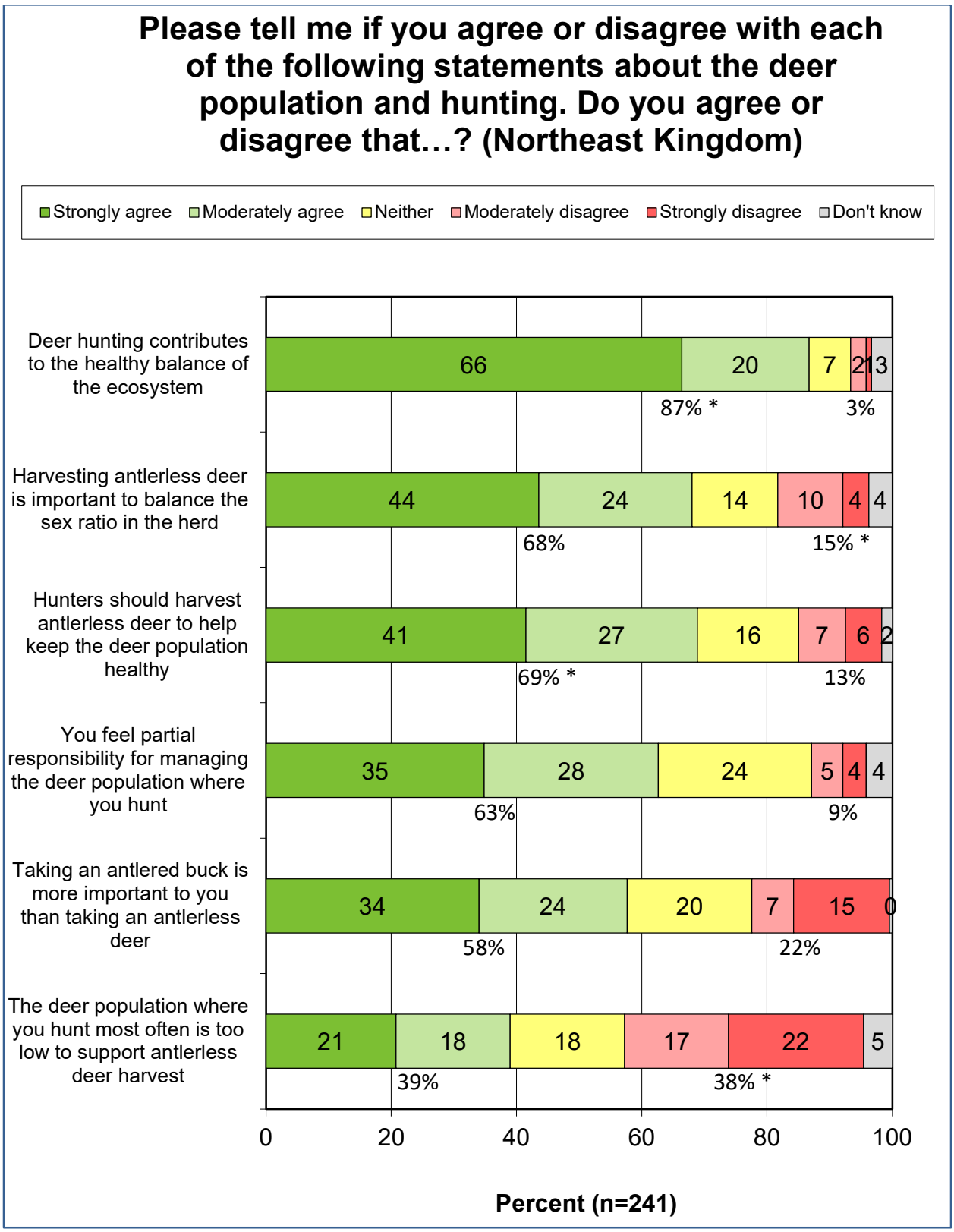
Six statements about deer hunting and deer management (and hunting's role in management) were presented to deer hunters. An overwhelming majority (91%) agree that deer hunting contributes to the healthy balance of the ecosystem. Three other statements are in the next tier, with 69% or 70% agreeing: that hunters should harvest antlerless deer to keep the population healthy and to balance the sex ratio, and that the hunter feels partial responsibility for managing the deer population. More than half simply feel that taking an antlered deer is more important to them. Each region has its own graph on the following pages.



* Rounding on graph causes apparent discrepancy in sum; calculation made on unrounded numbers.

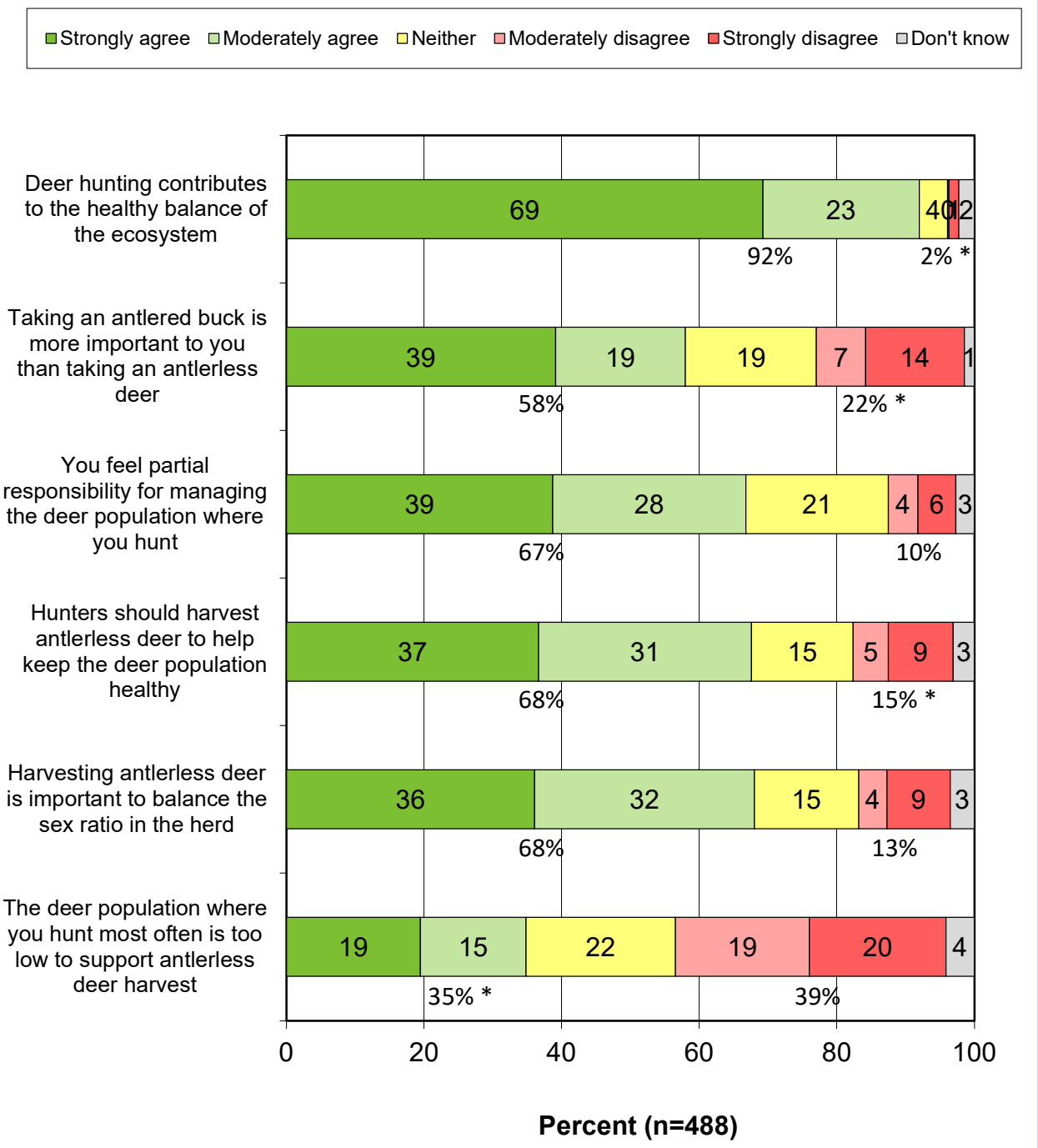


* Rounding on graph causes apparent discrepancy in sum; calculation made on unrounded numbers.

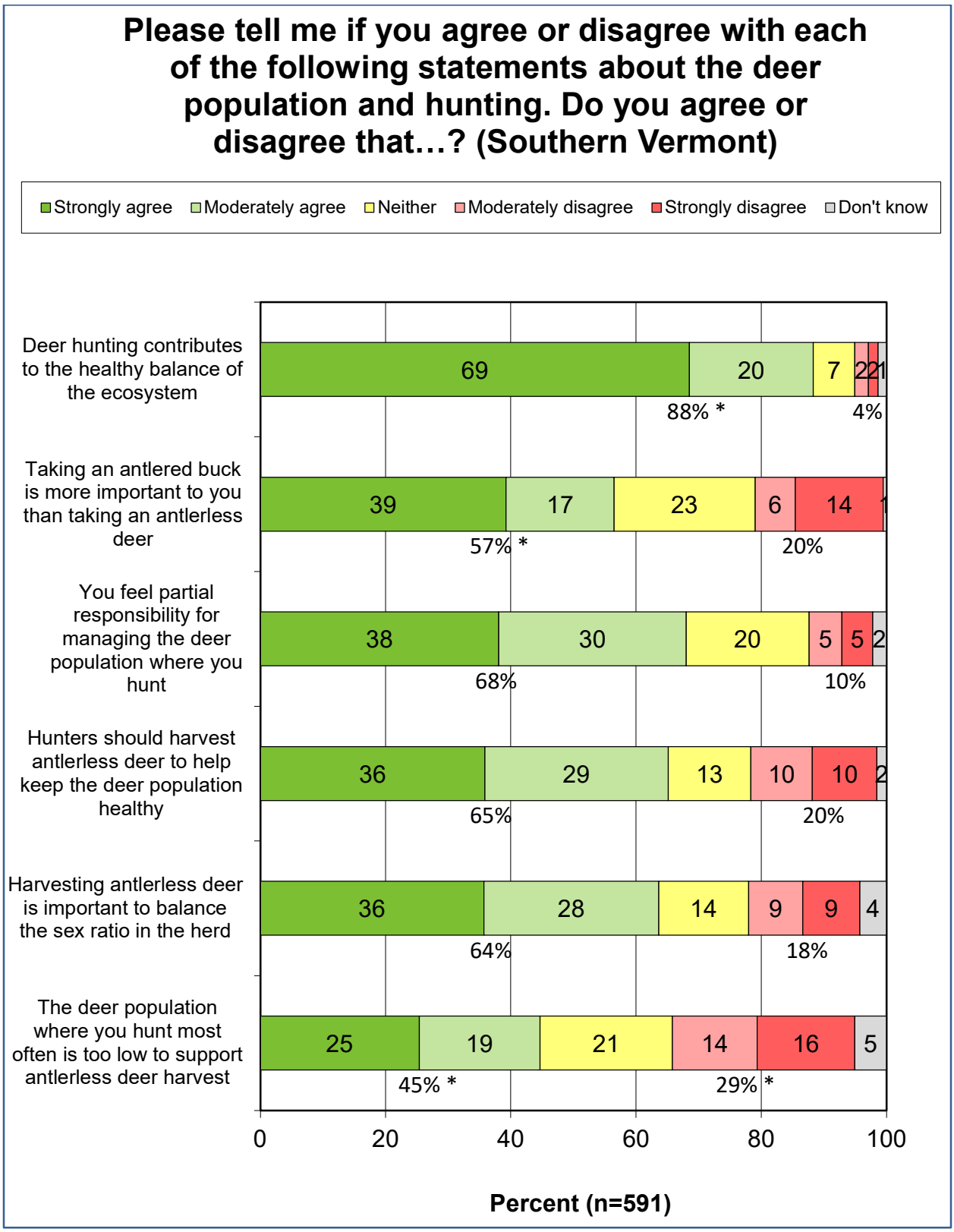


* Rounding on graph causes apparent discrepancy in sum; calculation made on unrounded numbers.

Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the deer population and hunting. Do you agree or disagree that…? (Central Vermont)

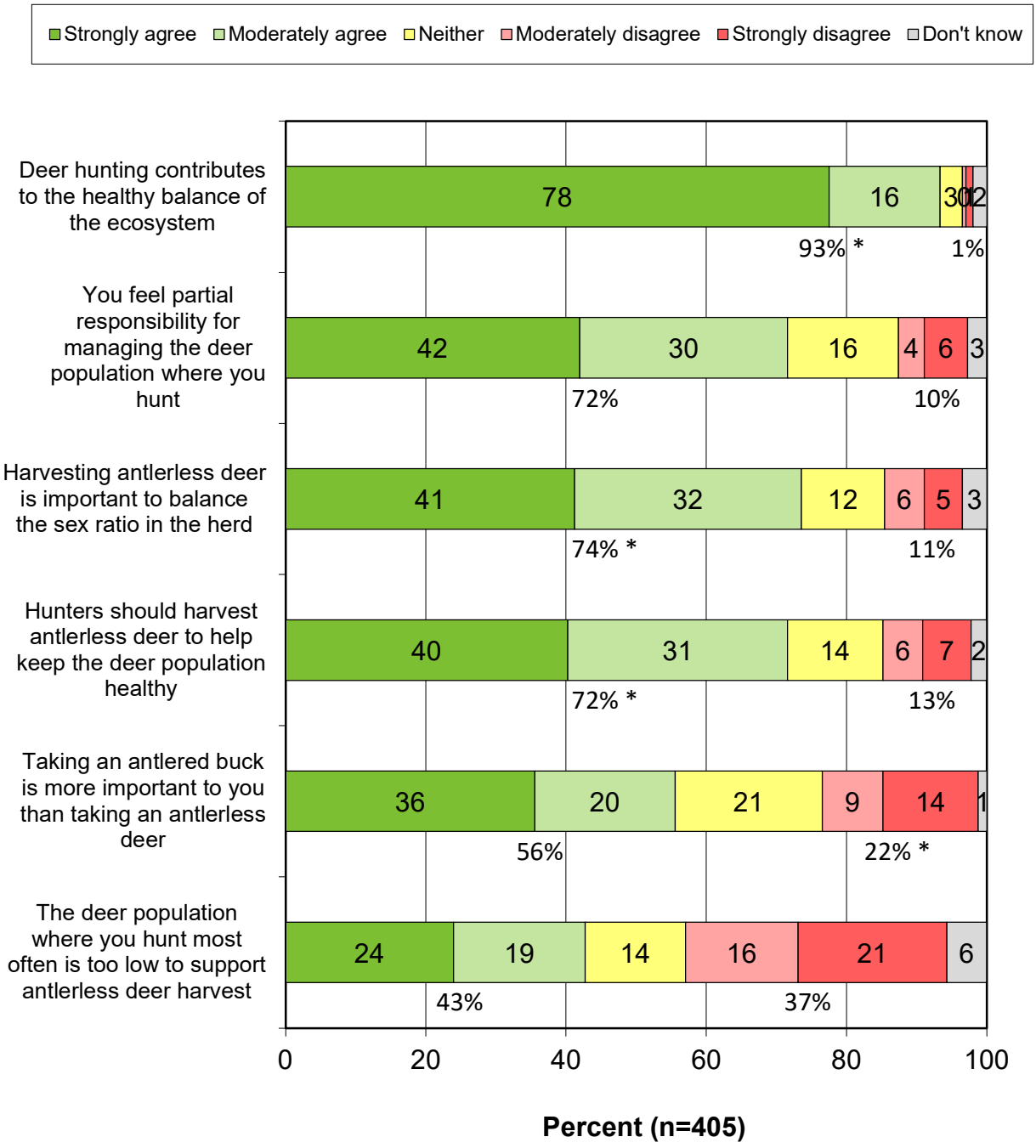


* Rounding on graph causes apparent discrepancy in sum; calculation made on unrounded numbers.



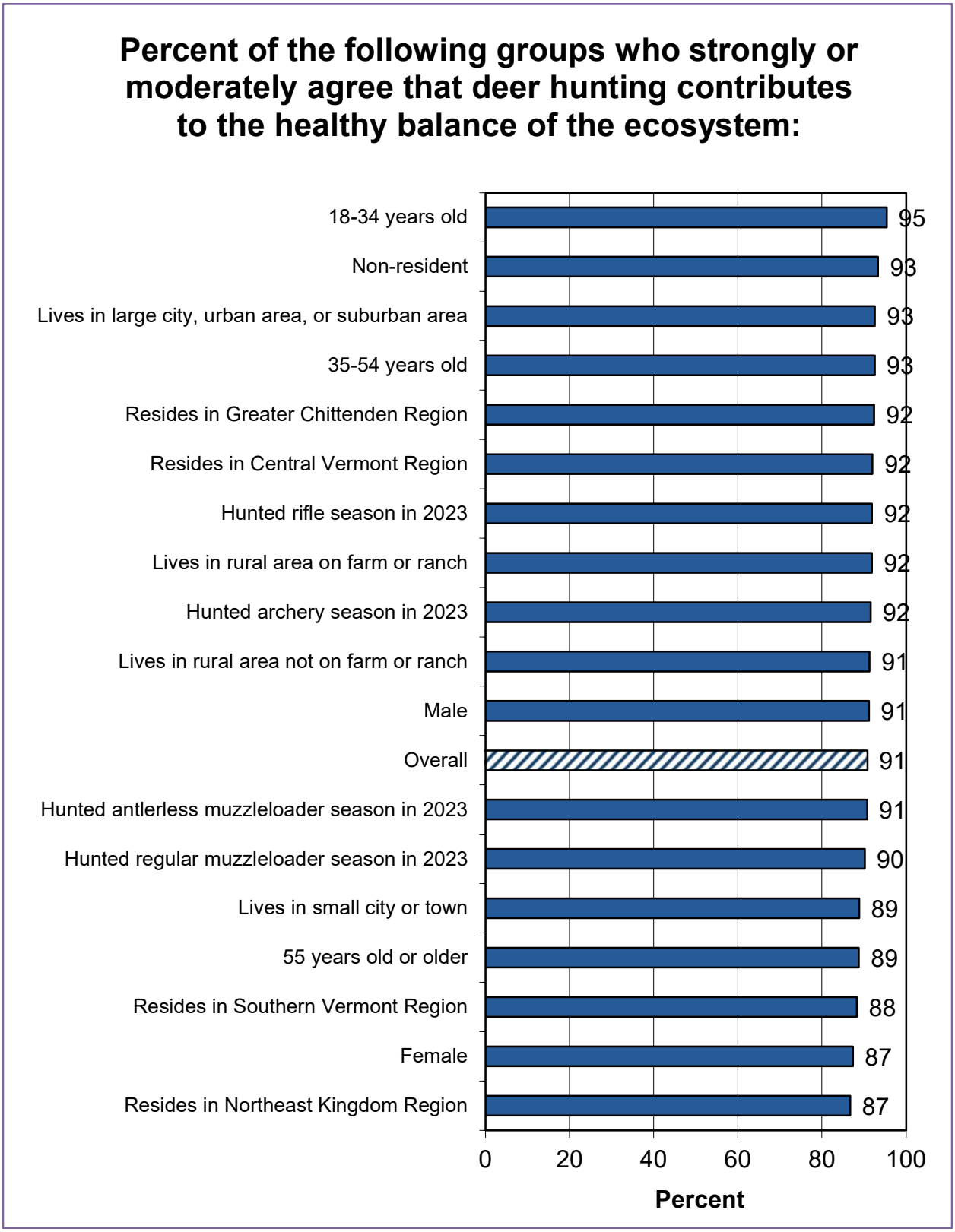
* Rounding on graph causes apparent discrepancy in sum; calculation made on unrounded numbers.

Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the deer population and hunting. Do you agree or disagree that…? (Non-resident)



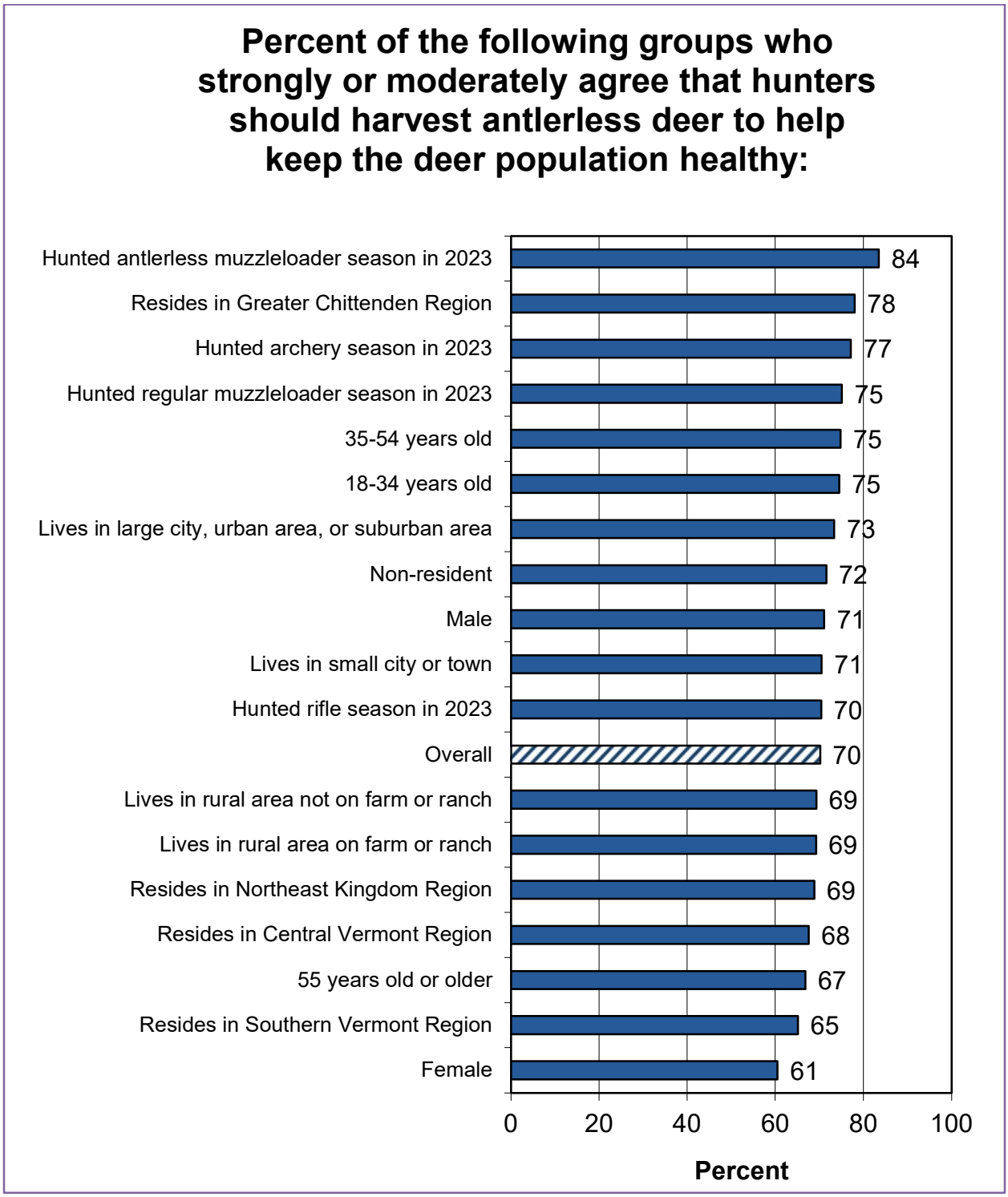
* Rounding on graph causes apparent discrepancy in sum; calculation made on unrounded numbers.

There is no marked difference in the groups that agree that deer hunting contributes to the healthy balance of the ecosystem.



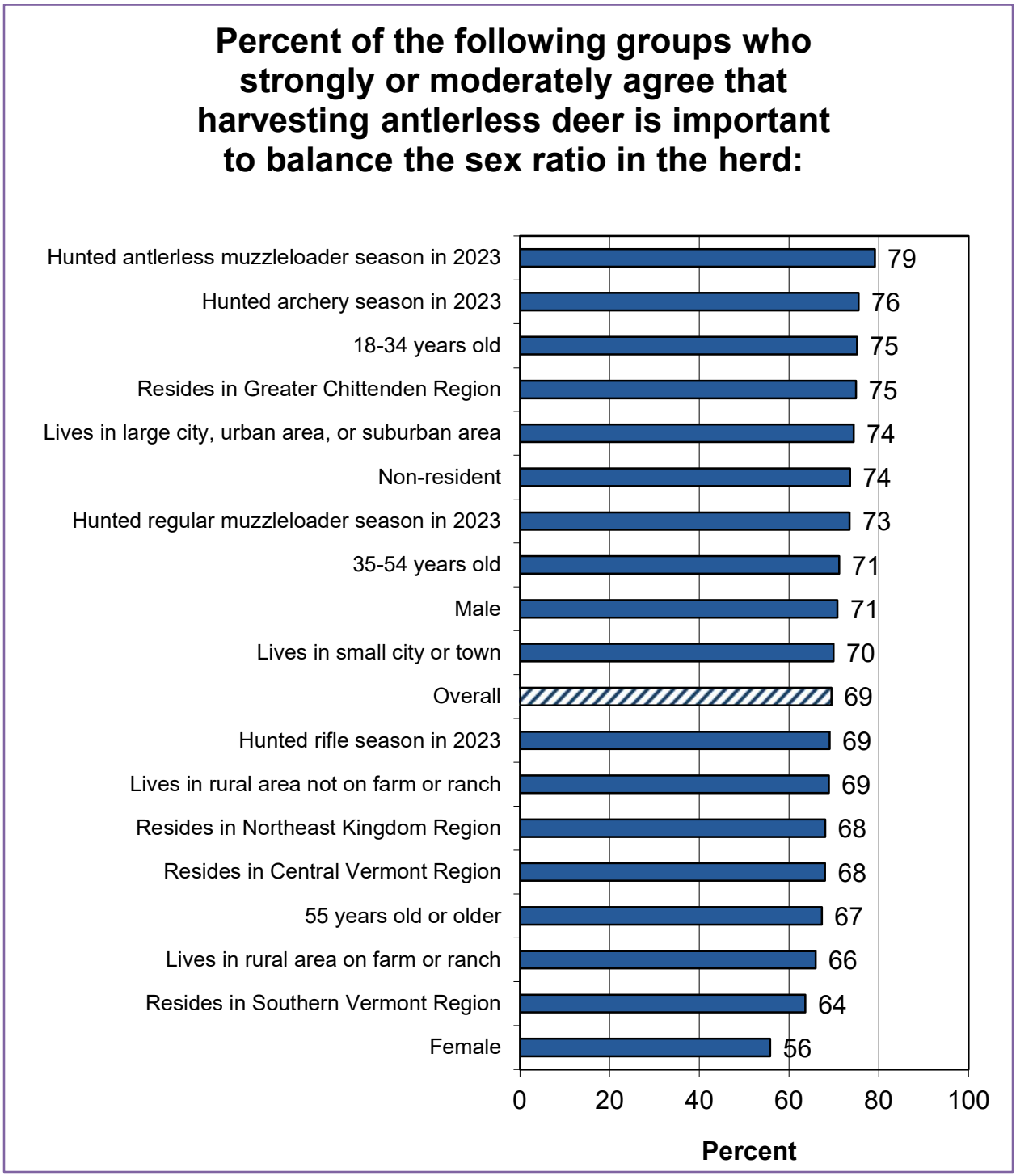
See pages 6-7 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

Six groups of deer hunters are markedly more in agreement that hunters should harvest antlerless deer to keep the population healthy: those hunting the antlerless muzzleloader season, hunters from the Greater Chittenden Region, those hunting the archery season, those hunting the regular muzzleloader season, middle-aged hunters, and younger hunters.



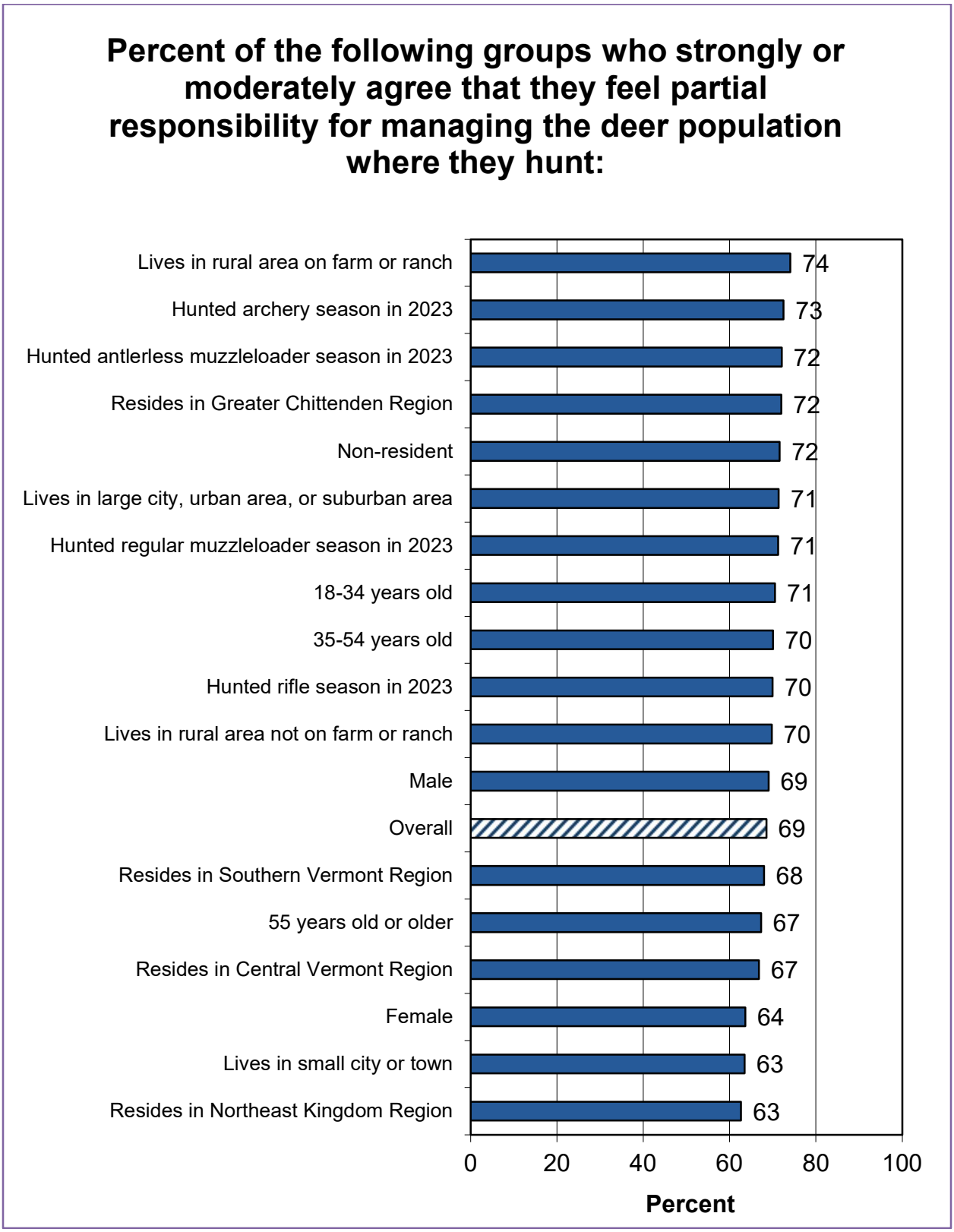
See pages 6-7 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

Likewise, six groups of deer hunters are markedly more in agreement that hunters should harvest antlerless deer to balance the sex ratio: those hunting the antlerless muzzleloader season, those hunting the archery season, young hunters, hunters from the Greater Chittenden Region, hunters from urban/suburban areas, and non-resident hunters.



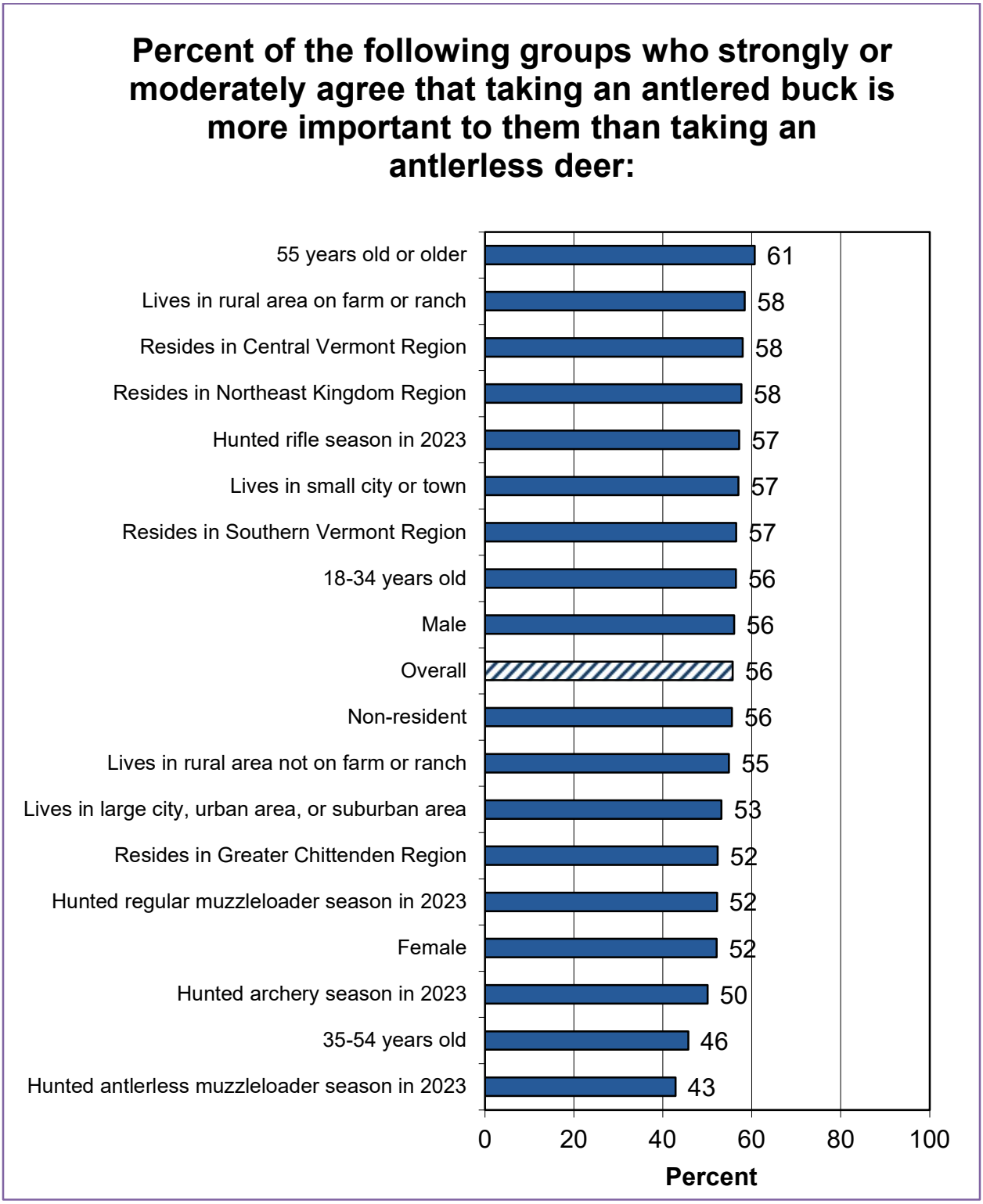
See pages 6-7 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

Hunters who live on a farm or ranch are the one group markedly more likely to agree that they feel partial responsibility for managing the deer population where they hunt.



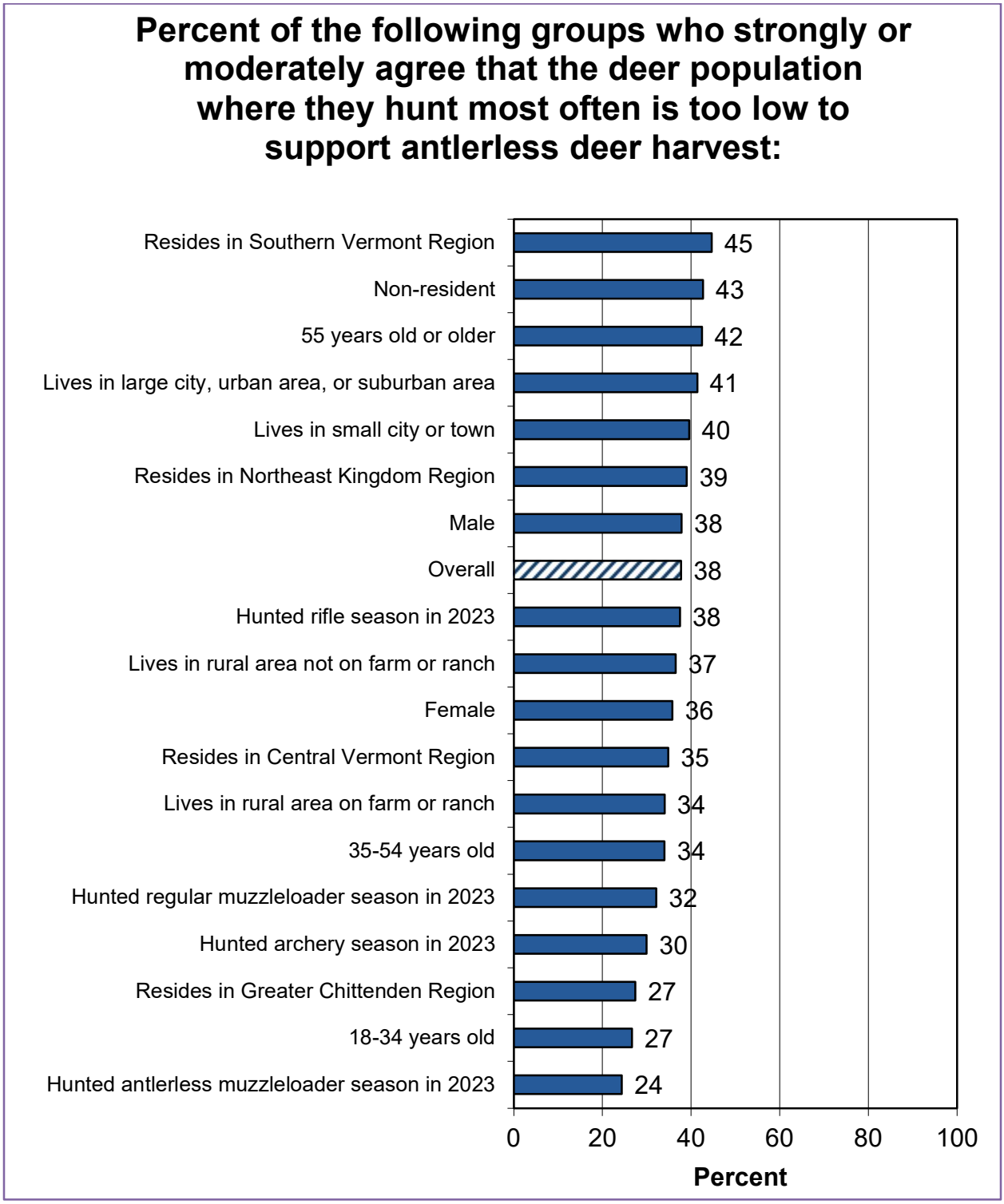
See pages 6-7 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

Older deer hunters are the single group being markedly more likely to agree that taking an antlered buck is more important to them than taking an antlerless deer.



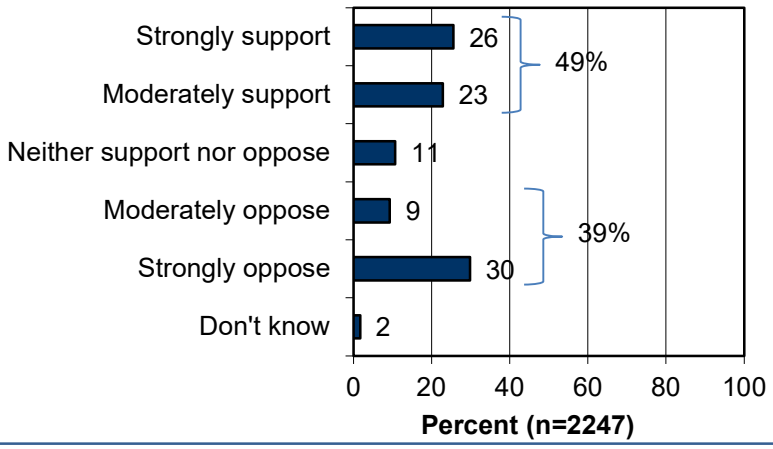
See pages 6-7 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

Finally, agreement that the deer population is too low to support an antlerless deer harvest in their hunt area is markedly higher among deer hunters from the Southern Vermont Region and from non-resident deer hunters than among deer hunters overall.

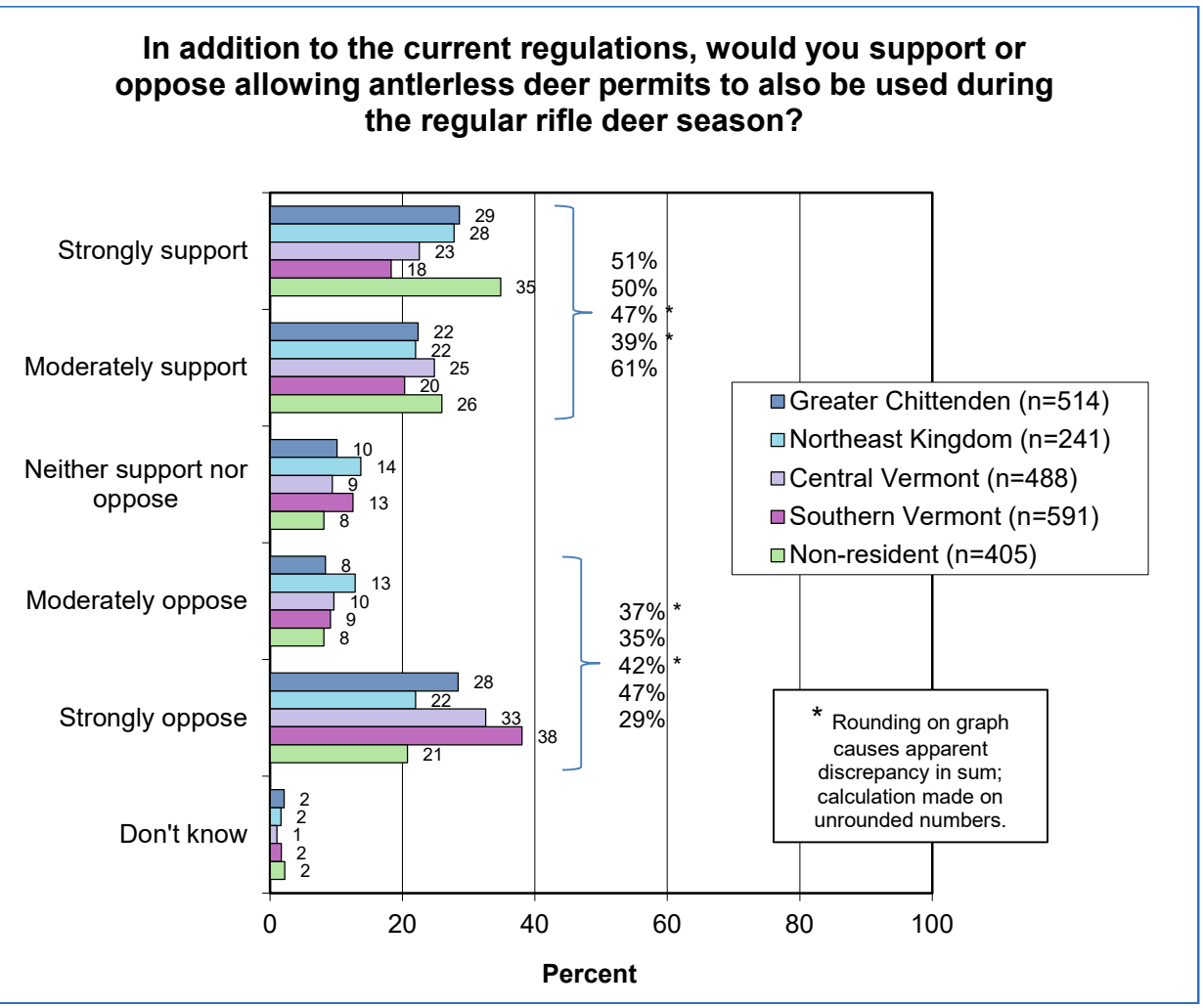


See pages 6-7 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

ANTLERLESS DEER PERMITS AND HARVEST

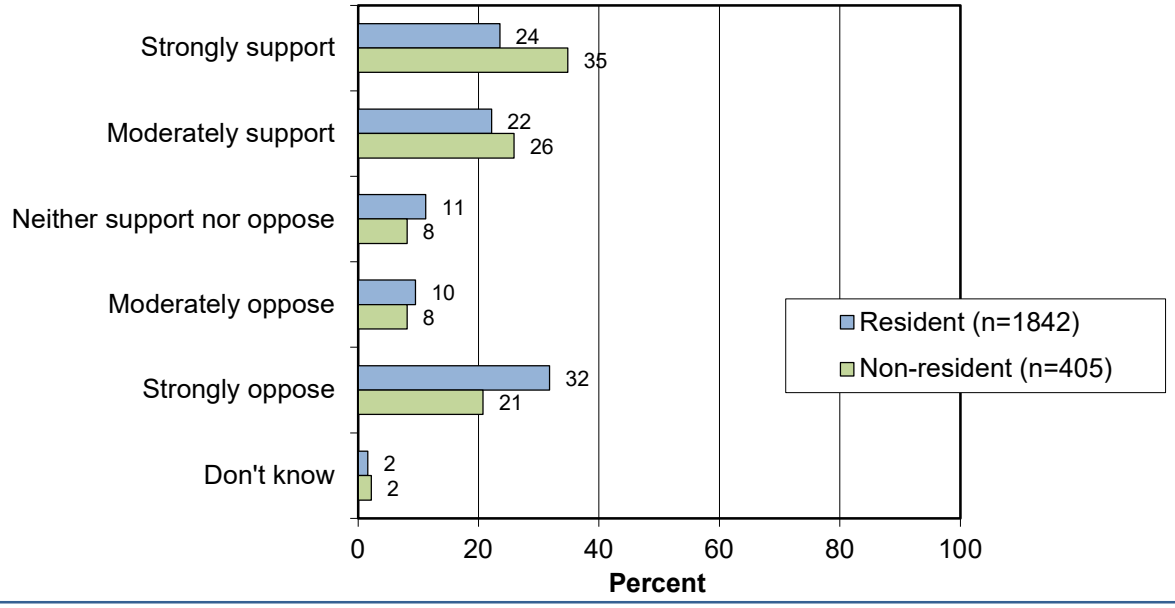


Opinion is somewhat split regarding support for or opposition to allowing antlerless deer permits to also be used during the regular rifle season. While 49% support it, 39% oppose it. Support is markedly lower among hunters from the Southern Vermont Region. Support is highest among non-resident deer hunters.

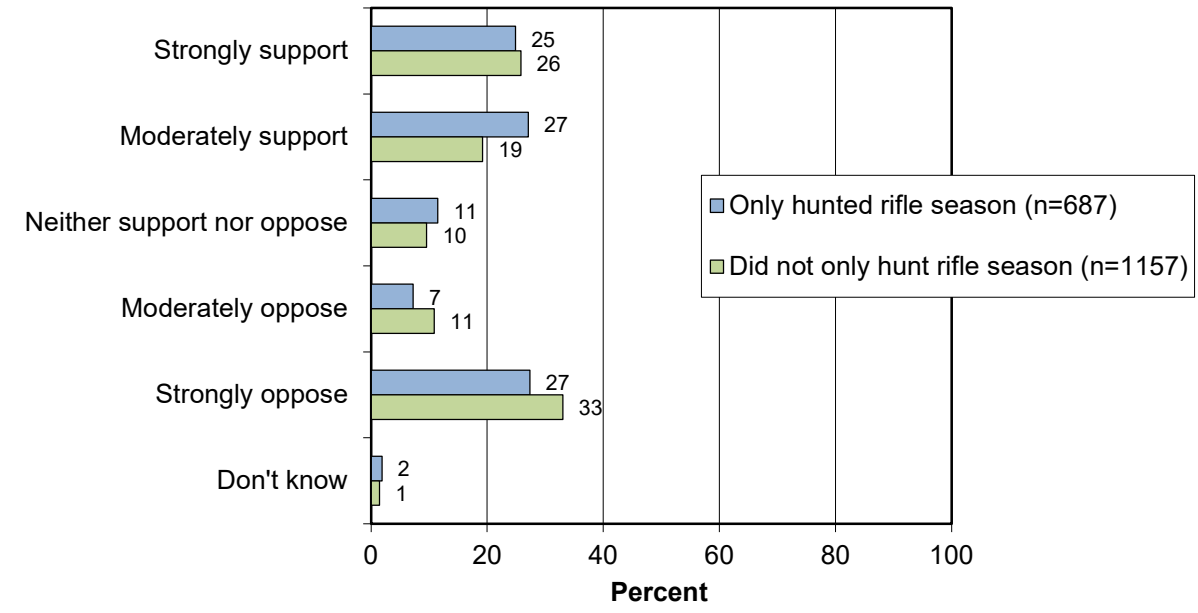


Crosstabulations are included by residency status and by whether the hunter had hunted the rifle season. The following page includes a crosstabulation by age, but only among residents.

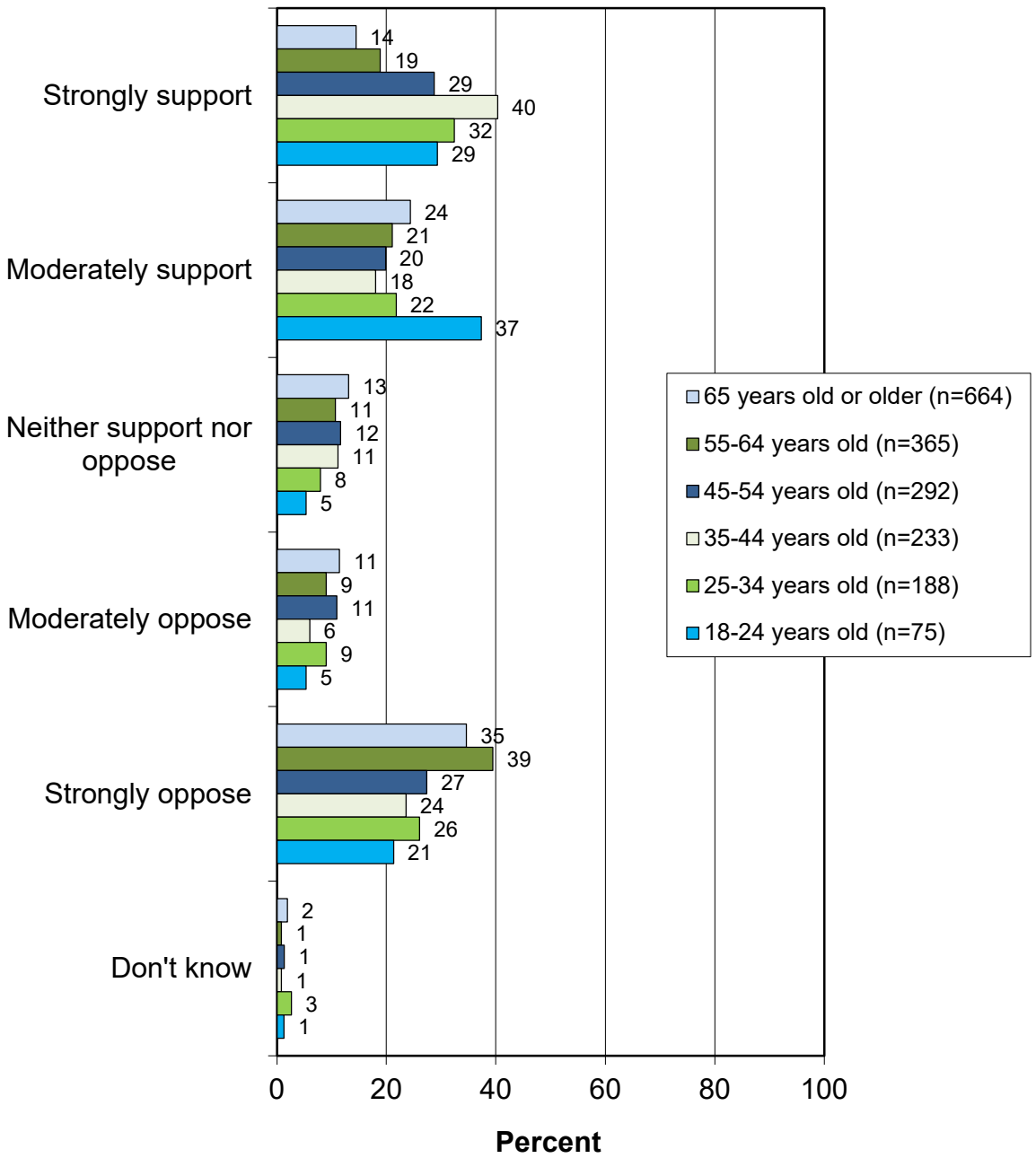
In addition to the current regulations, would you support or oppose allowing antlerless deer permits to also be used during the regular rifle deer season?



In addition to the current regulations, would you support or oppose allowing antlerless deer permits to also be used during the regular rifle deer season?

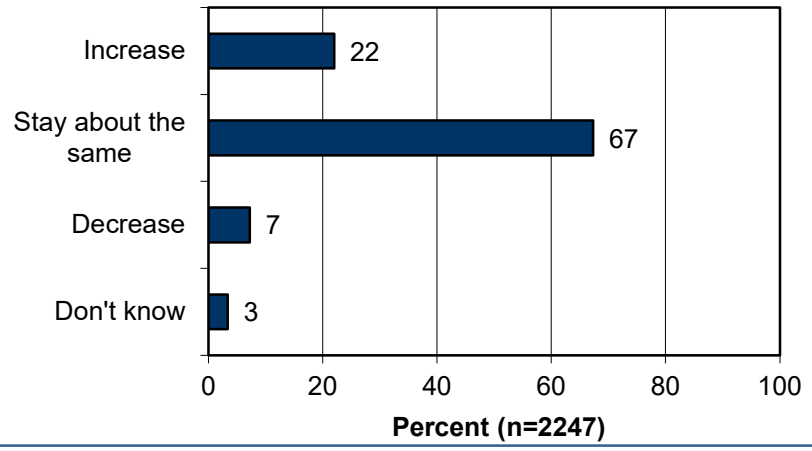


In addition to the current regulations, would you support or oppose allowing antlerless deer permits to also be used during the regular rifle deer season? (Among residents only.)

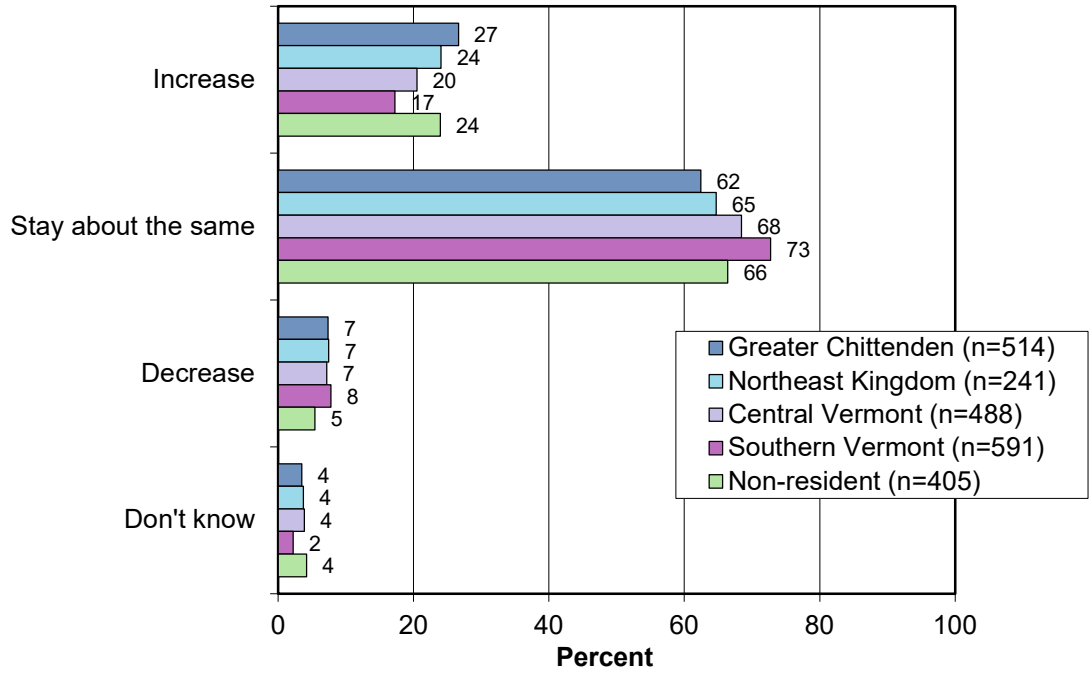


The survey results suggest that allowing the use of antlerless deer permits during the regular rifle season would result in more deer hunting days among Vermont deer hunters. The percentage saying their participation would increase is more than 3 times greater than the percentage saying their participation would decrease. The expected increase would be greatest among Greater Chittenden Region hunters.

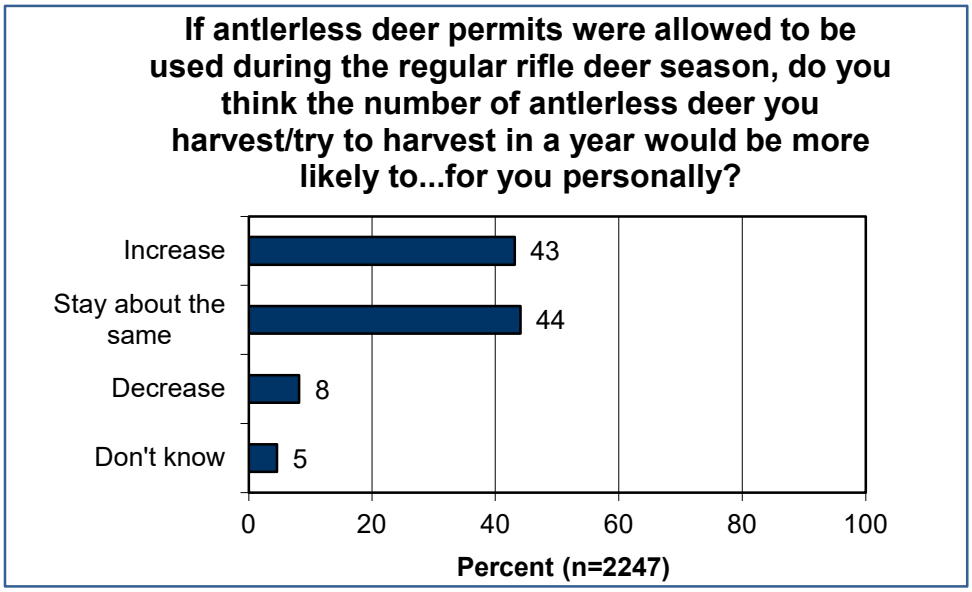
If antlerless deer permits were allowed to be used during the regular rifle deer season, do you think the number of days you deer hunt in a year would be more likely to...for you personally?

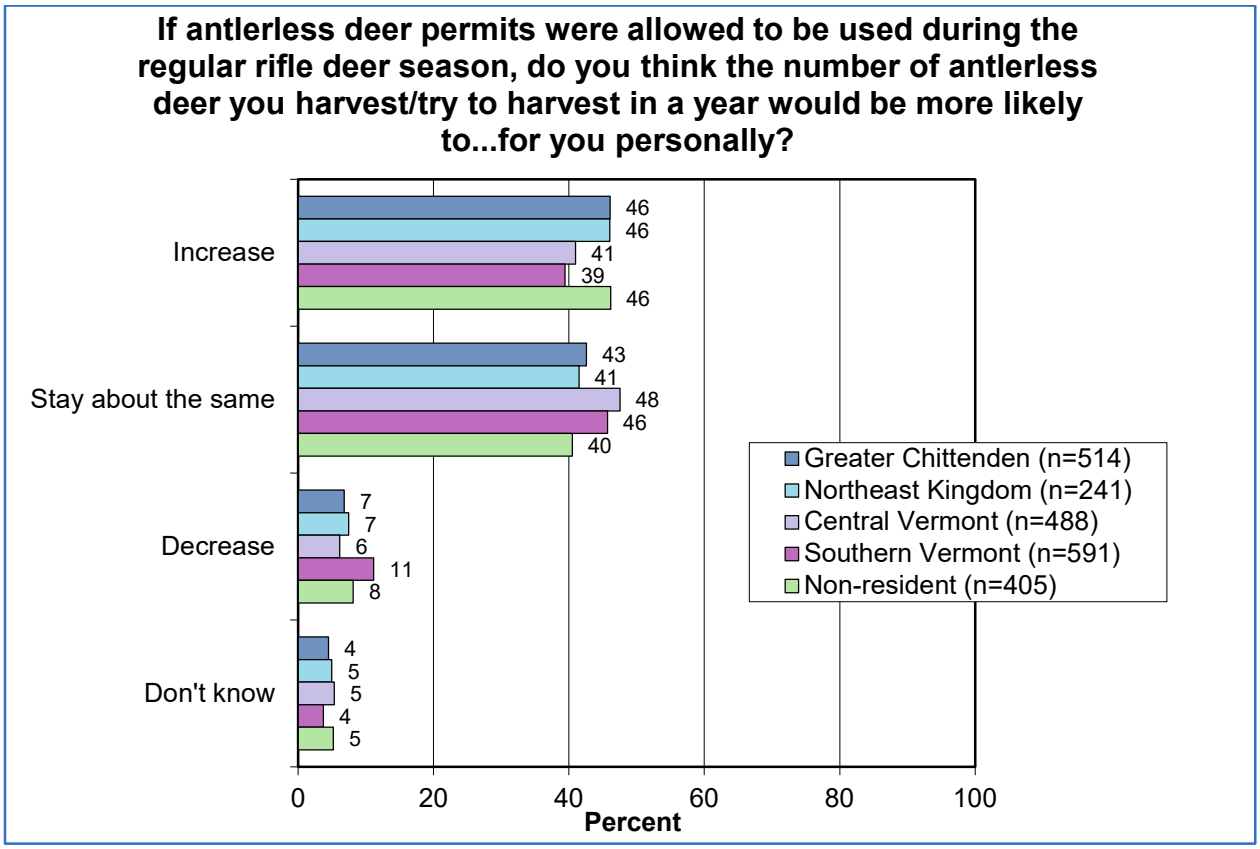


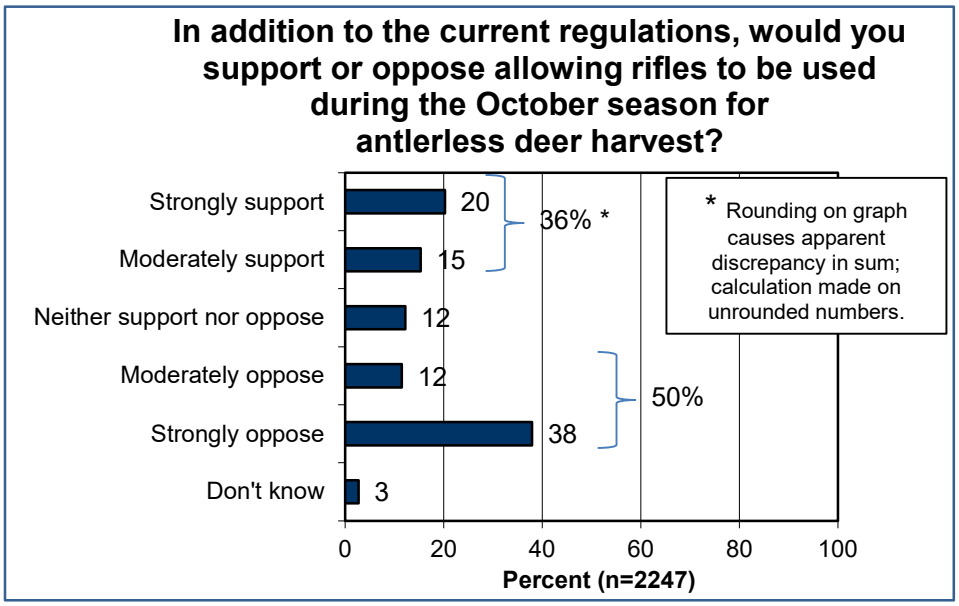
If antlerless deer permits were allowed to be used during the regular rifle deer season, do you think the number of days you deer hunt in a year would be more likely to...for you personally?



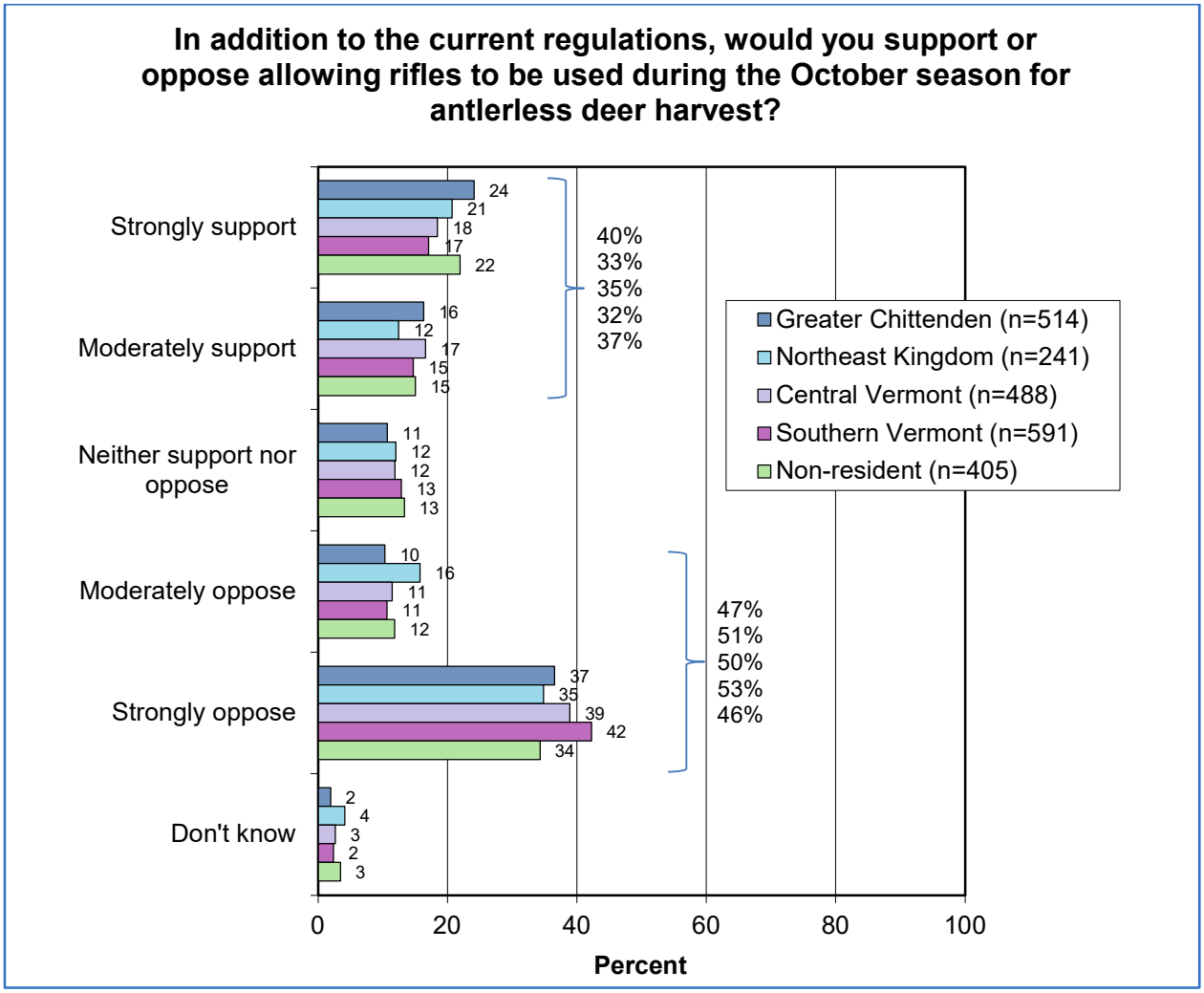
Likewise, the use of antlerless deer permits during the regular rifle season would increase the likelihood of greater harvest numbers of antlerless deer: 43% say that they would increase their antlerless deer harvest. This is almost the same percentage whose harvest would stay about the same (44%) and well above the percentage whose harvest would decrease (8%). Hunters from the Southern Vermont and Central Vermont Regions would be the *least* likely to increase their harvest of antlerless deer.





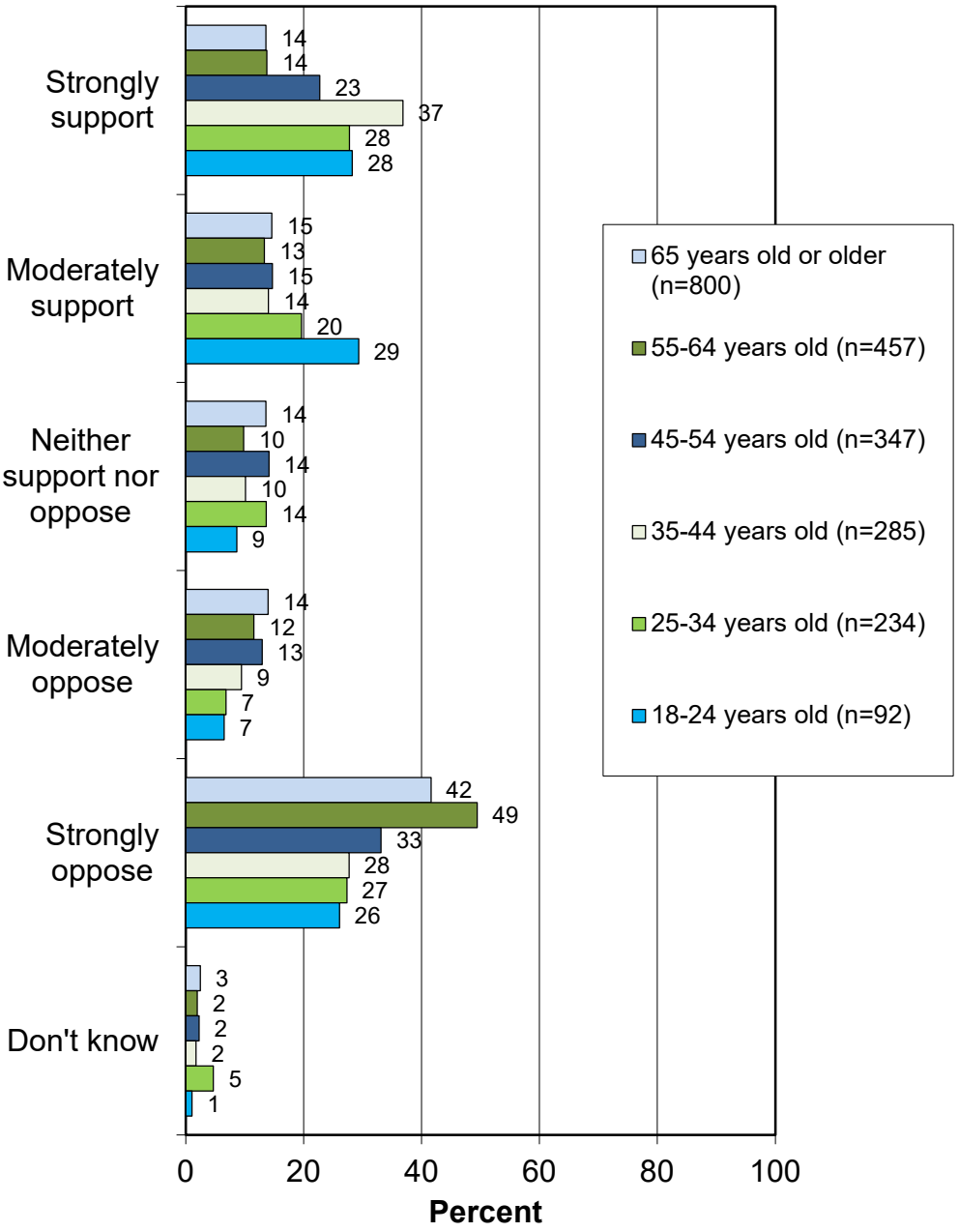


Opposition to (50%) exceeds support for (36%) allowing rifles to be used during the October season for antlerless deer harvest. Support is greatest among hunters from the Greater Chittenden Region; opposition is greatest among hunters from the Southern Vermont Region.

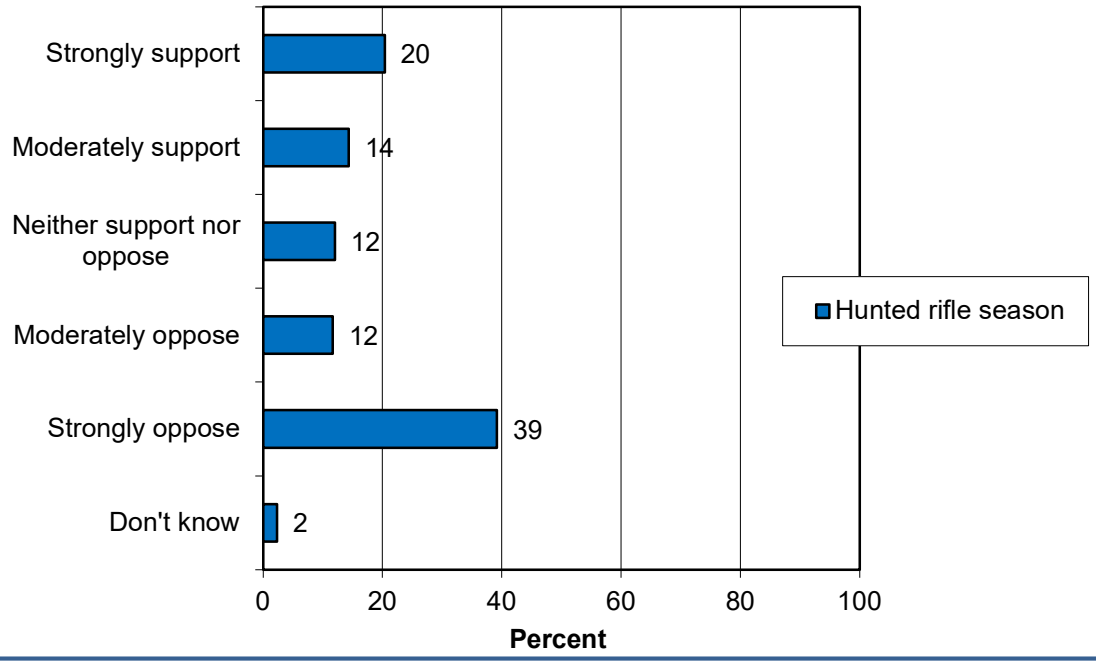


Two additional crosstabulations are included. The first shows the question crosstabulated by age among residents only. Then the results crosstabulated by season hunted is shown.

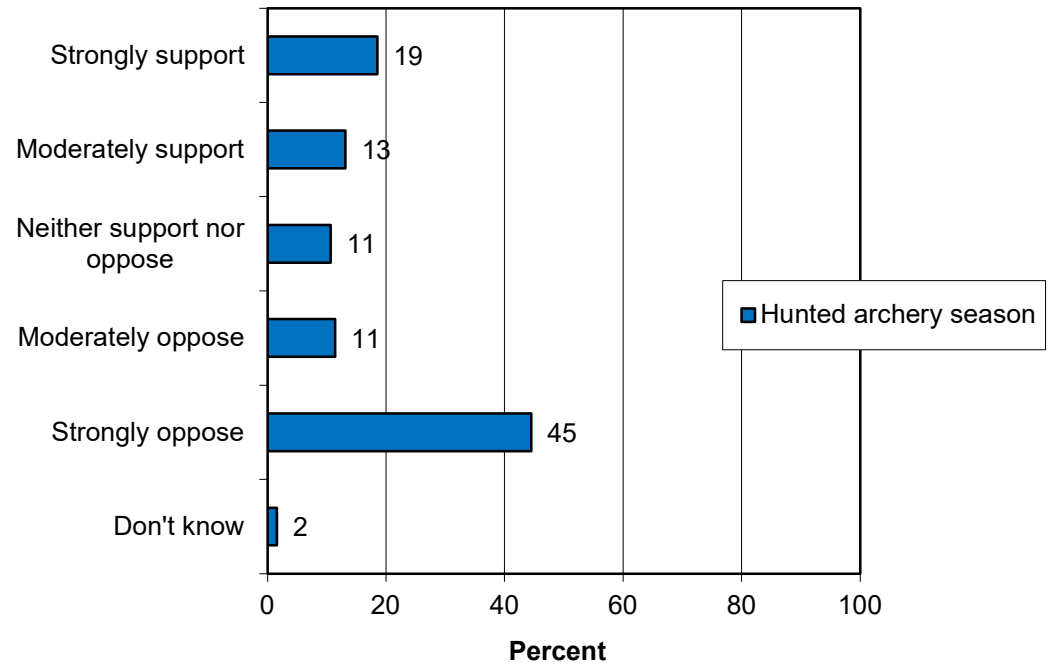
In addition to the current regulations, would you support or oppose allowing rifles to be used during the October season for antlerless deer harvest? (Among residents only.)



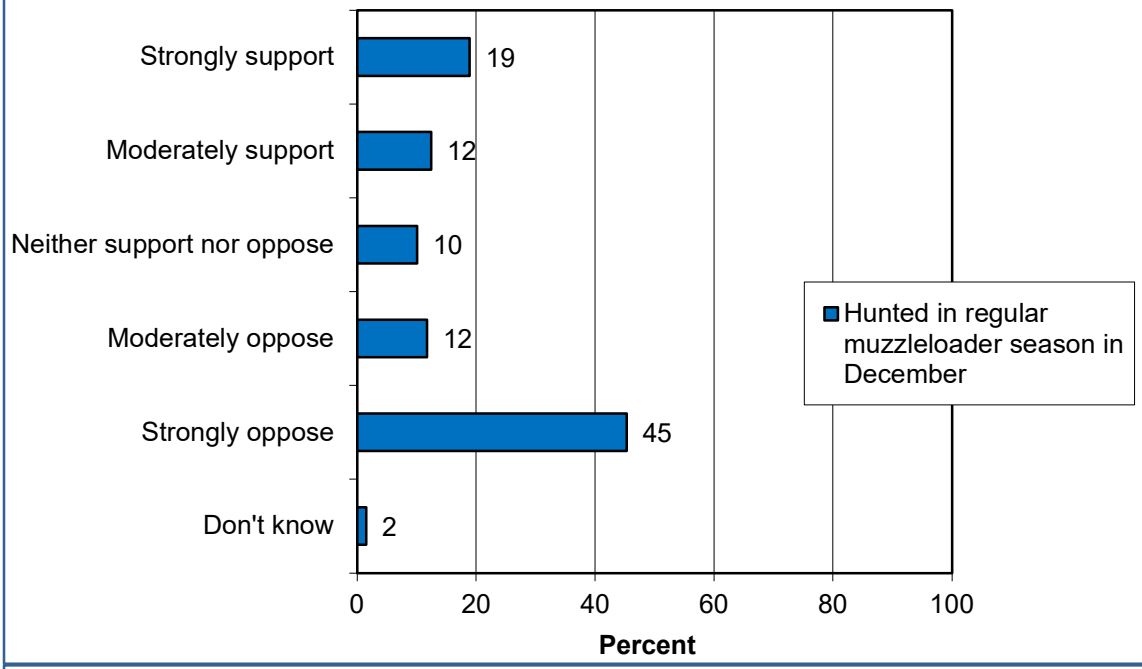
In addition to the current regulations, would you support or oppose allowing rifles to be used during the October season for antlerless deer harvest? (Among residents only.)



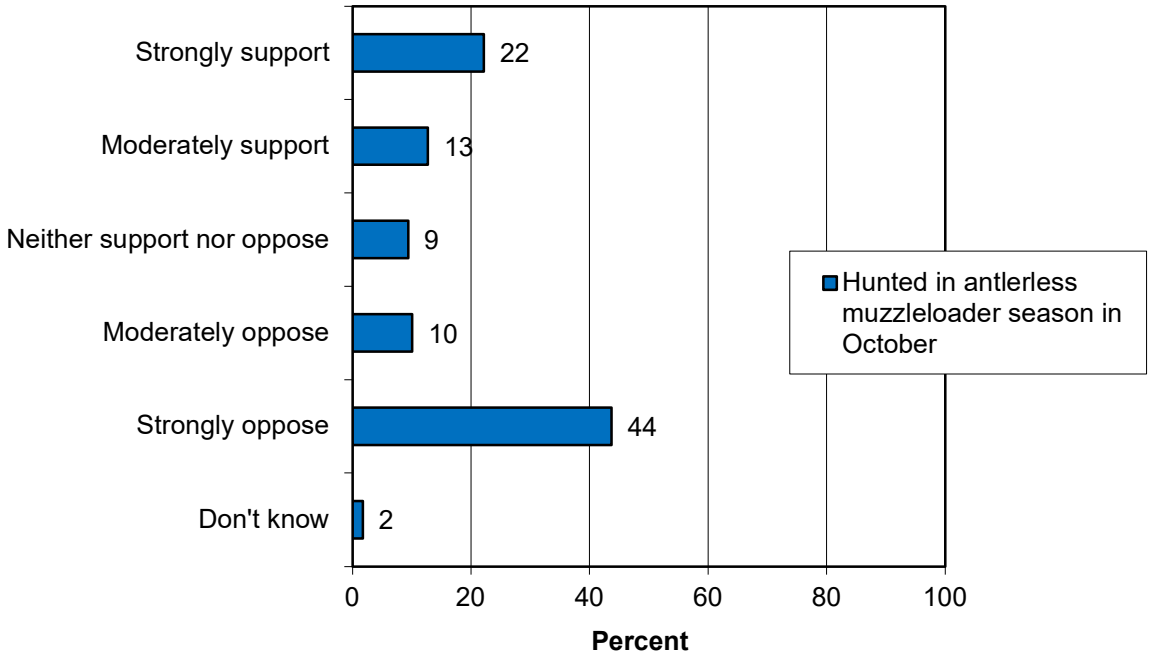
In addition to the current regulations, would you support or oppose allowing rifles to be used during the October season for antlerless deer harvest? (Among residents only.)

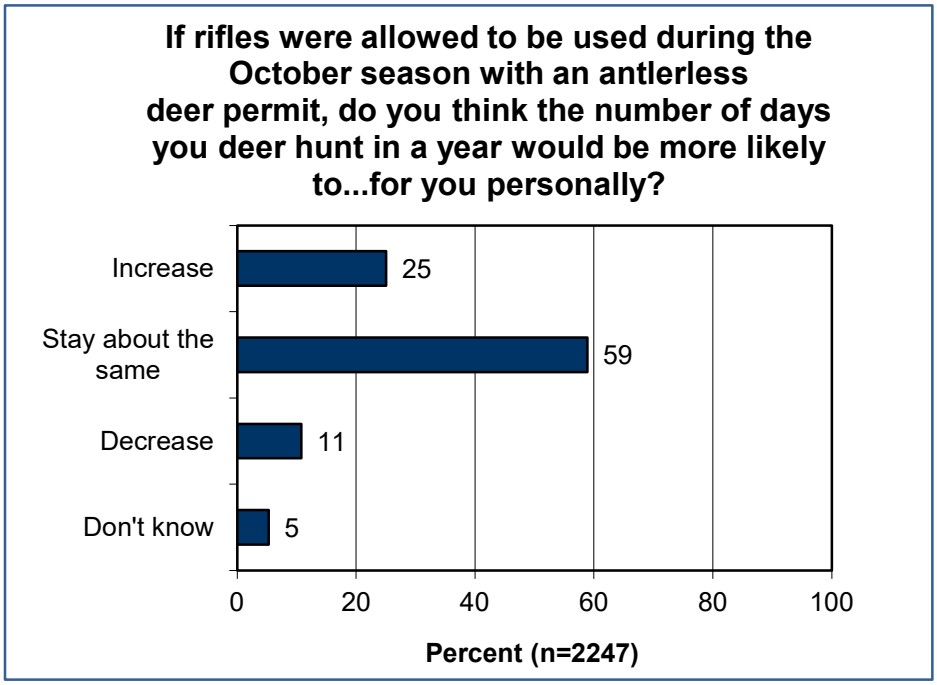


In addition to the current regulations, would you support or oppose allowing rifles to be used during the October season for antlerless deer harvest? (Among residents only.)

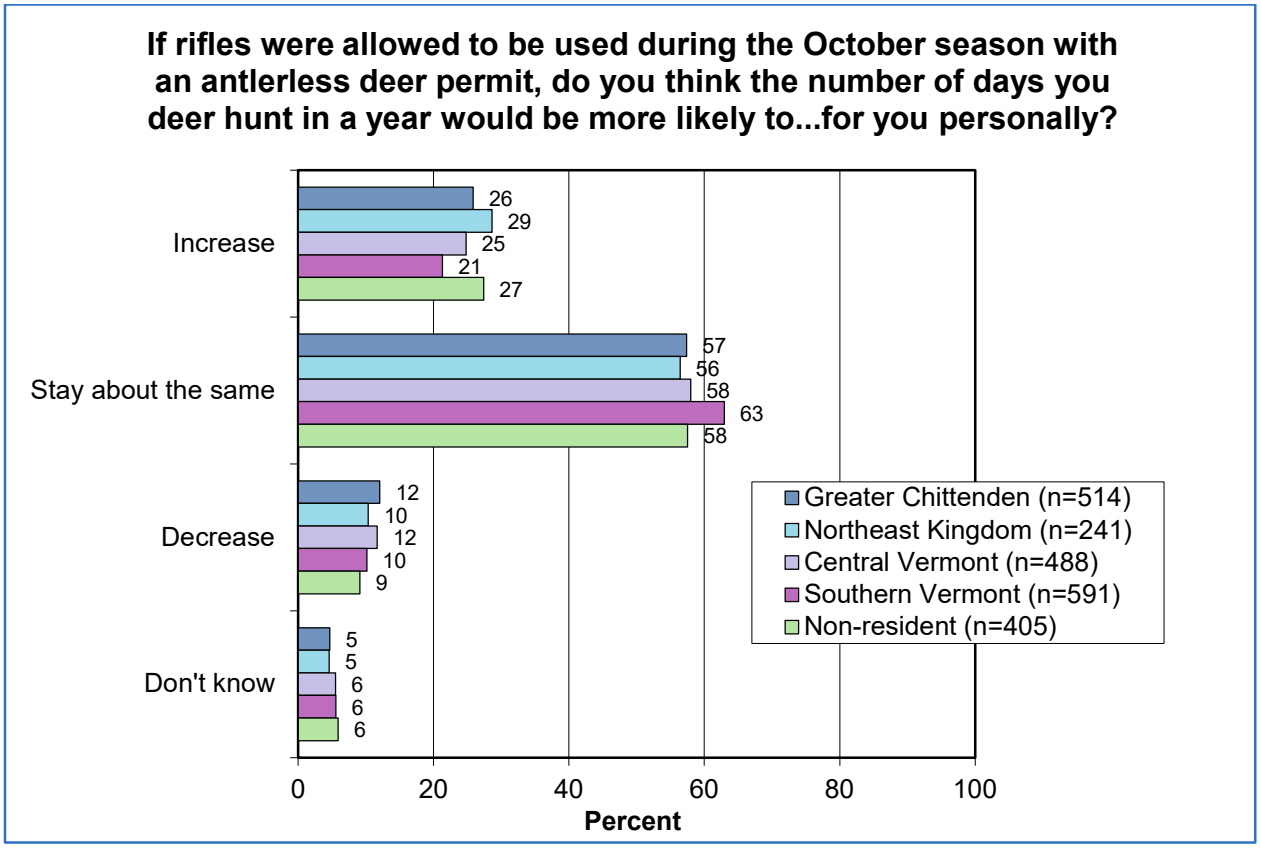


In addition to the current regulations, would you support or oppose allowing rifles to be used during the October season for antlerless deer harvest? (Among residents only.)

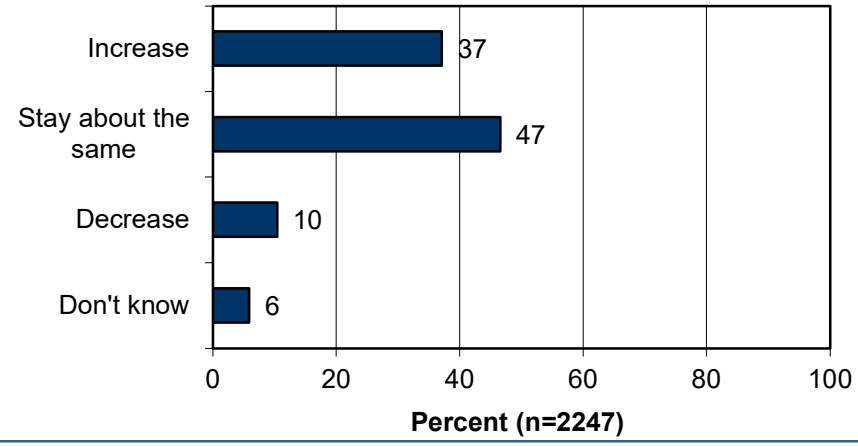




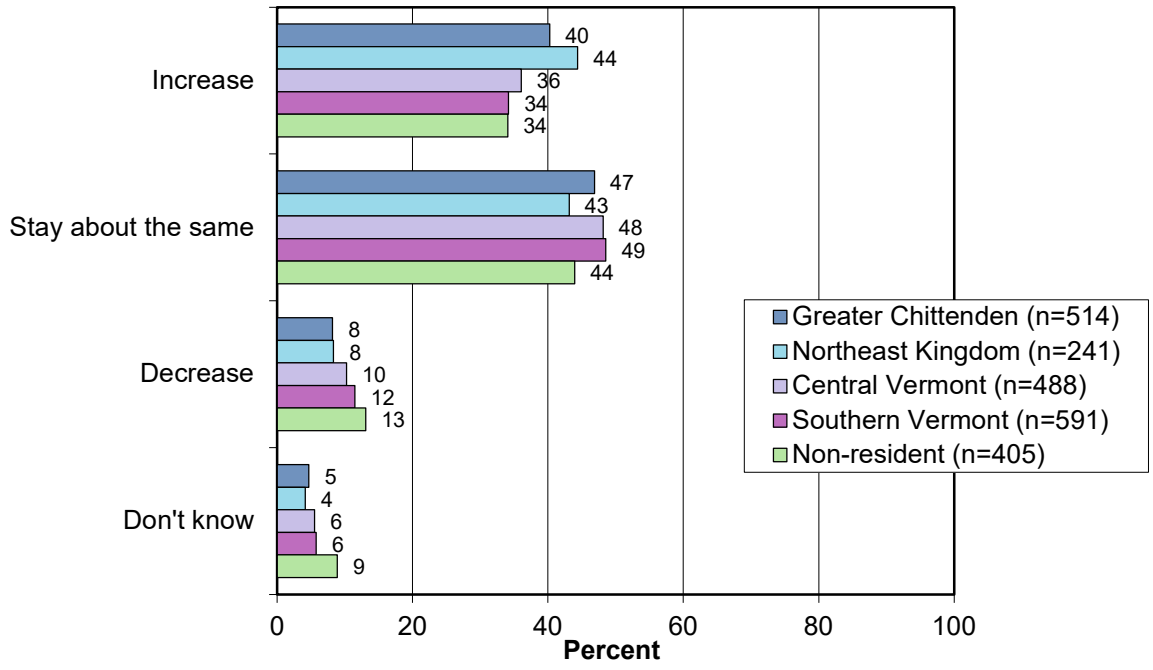
The results of the survey suggest that the use of rifles during the October season with an antlerless permit would increase the days of deer hunting, as shown on the graphs on this page. It would also likely increase the harvest of antlerless deer, as shown on the graphs on the following page.



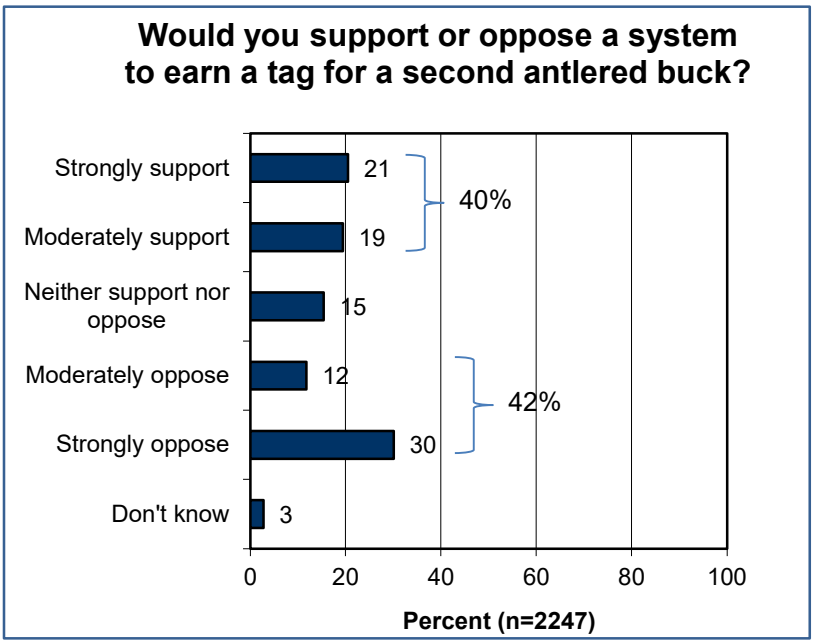
If rifles were allowed to be used during the October season with an antlerless deer permit, do you think the number of antlerless deer you harvest/try to harvest in a year would be more likely to...for you personally?

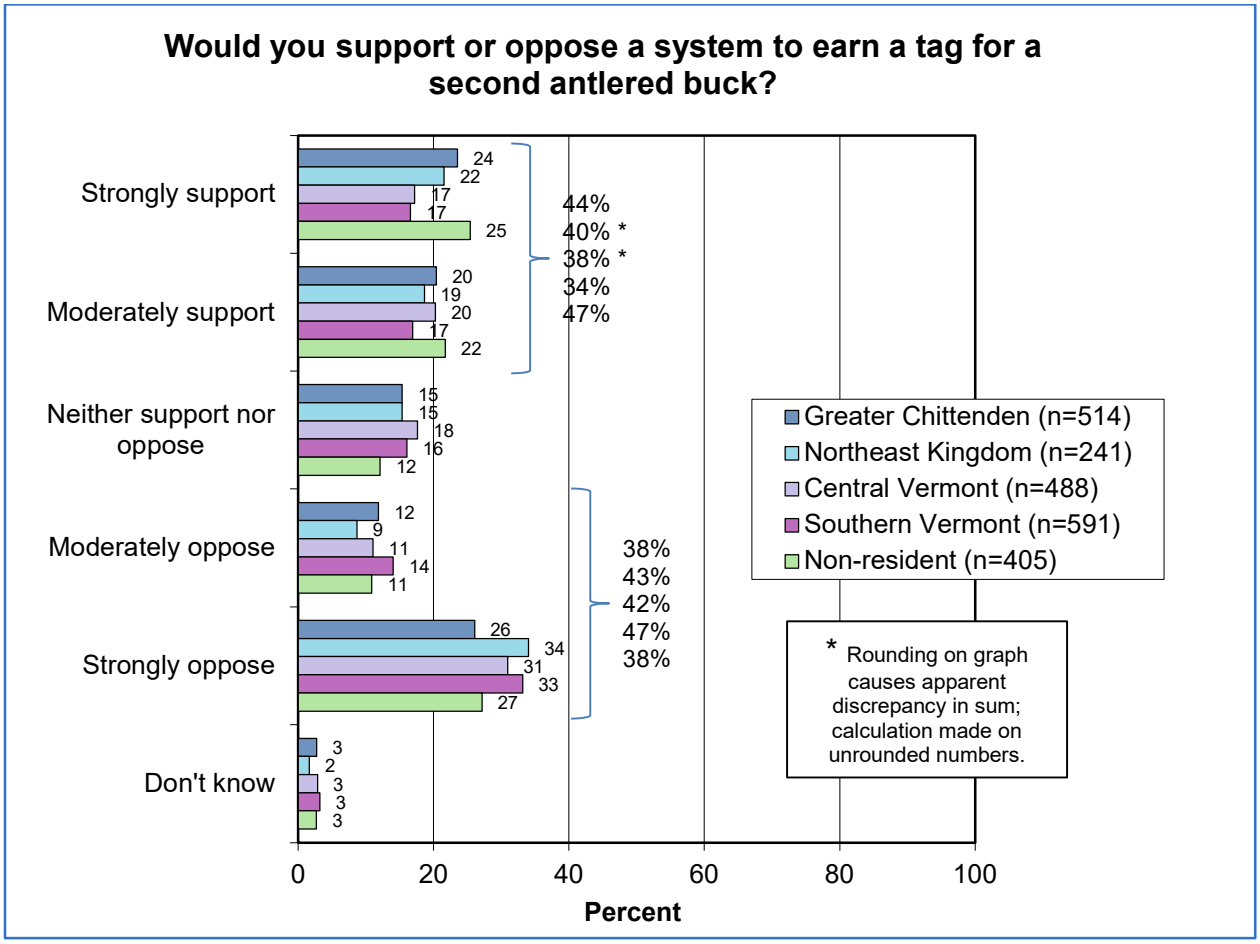


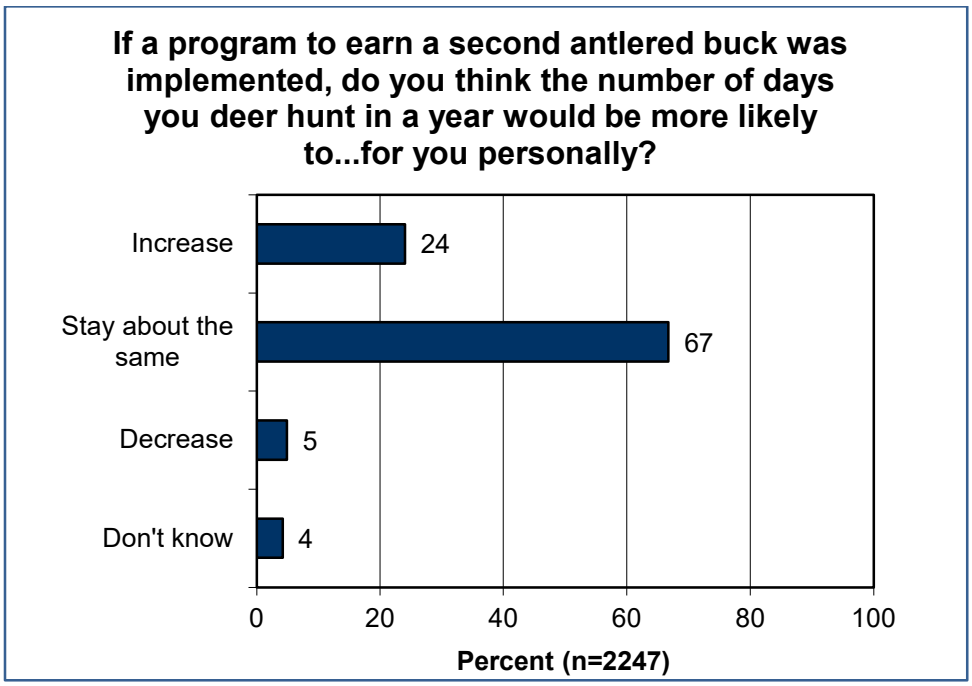
If rifles were allowed to be used during the October season with an antlerless deer permit, do you think the number of antlerless deer you harvest/try to harvest in a year would be more likely to...for you personally?

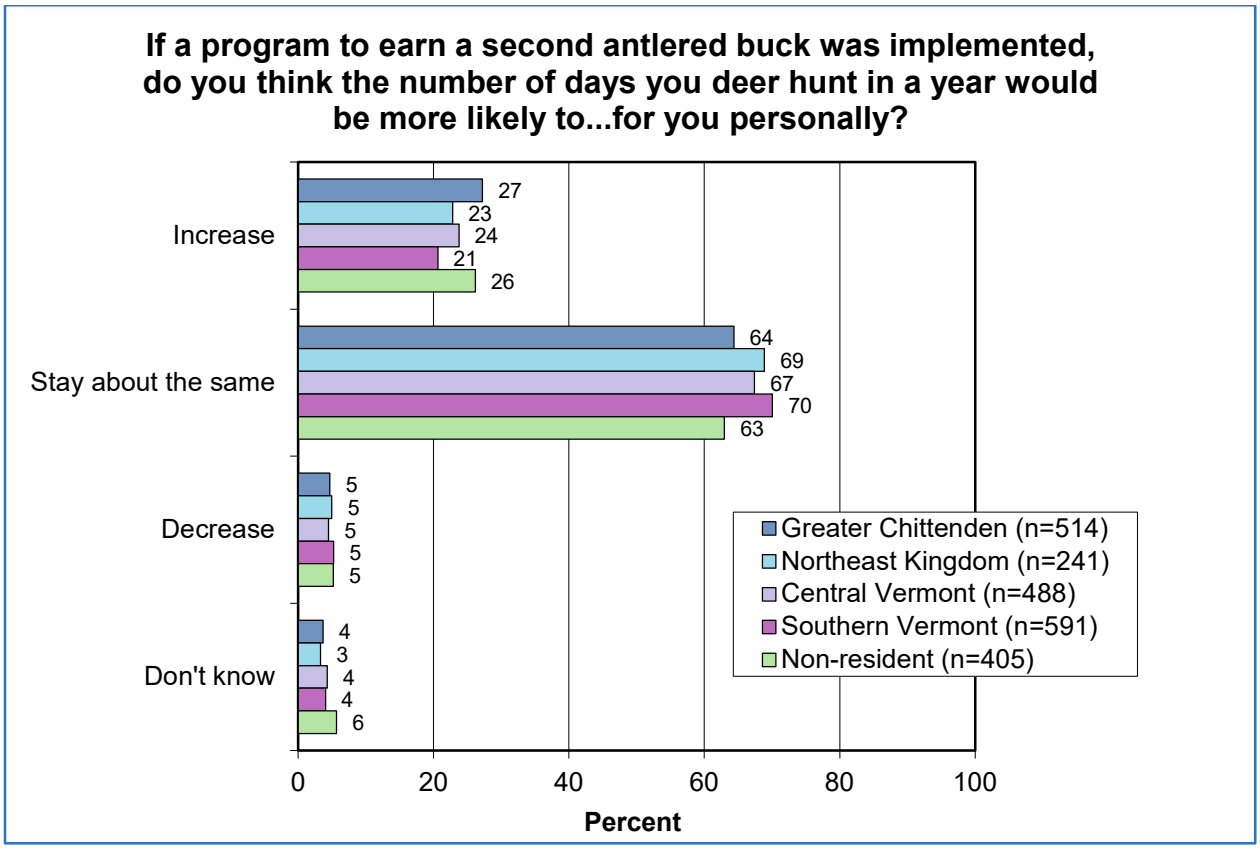


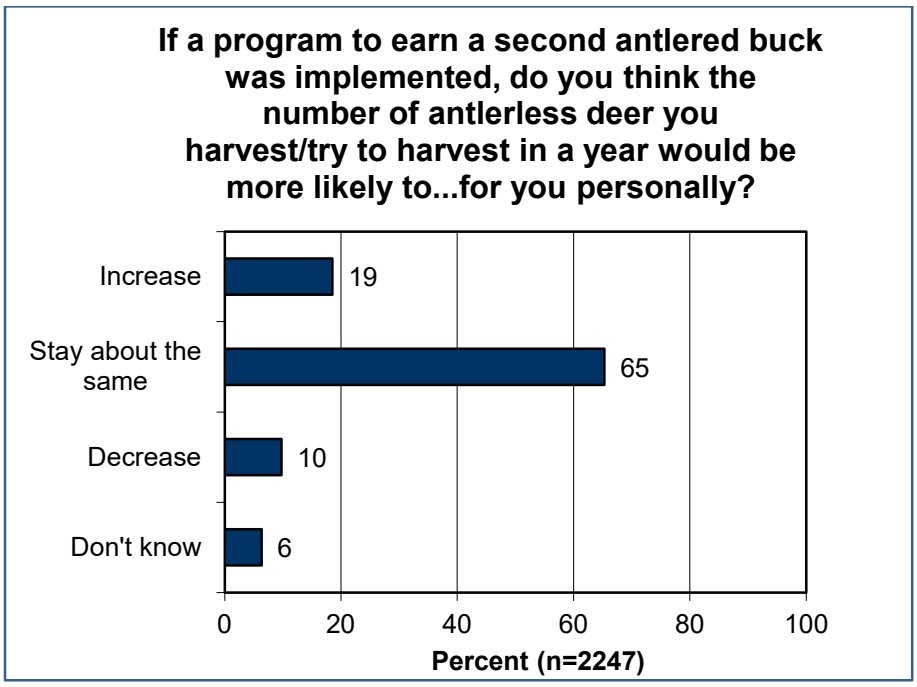
While support for (40%) and opposition to (42%) are fairly close for a system to earn a tag for a second antlered buck, most of the opposition is *strong*, while support is evenly distributed between *strong* and *moderate* support. Graphs on the following pages suggest that such a system would increase deer hunter days and harvest of antlerless deer (although *stay the same* is the most common answer by far in both questions).



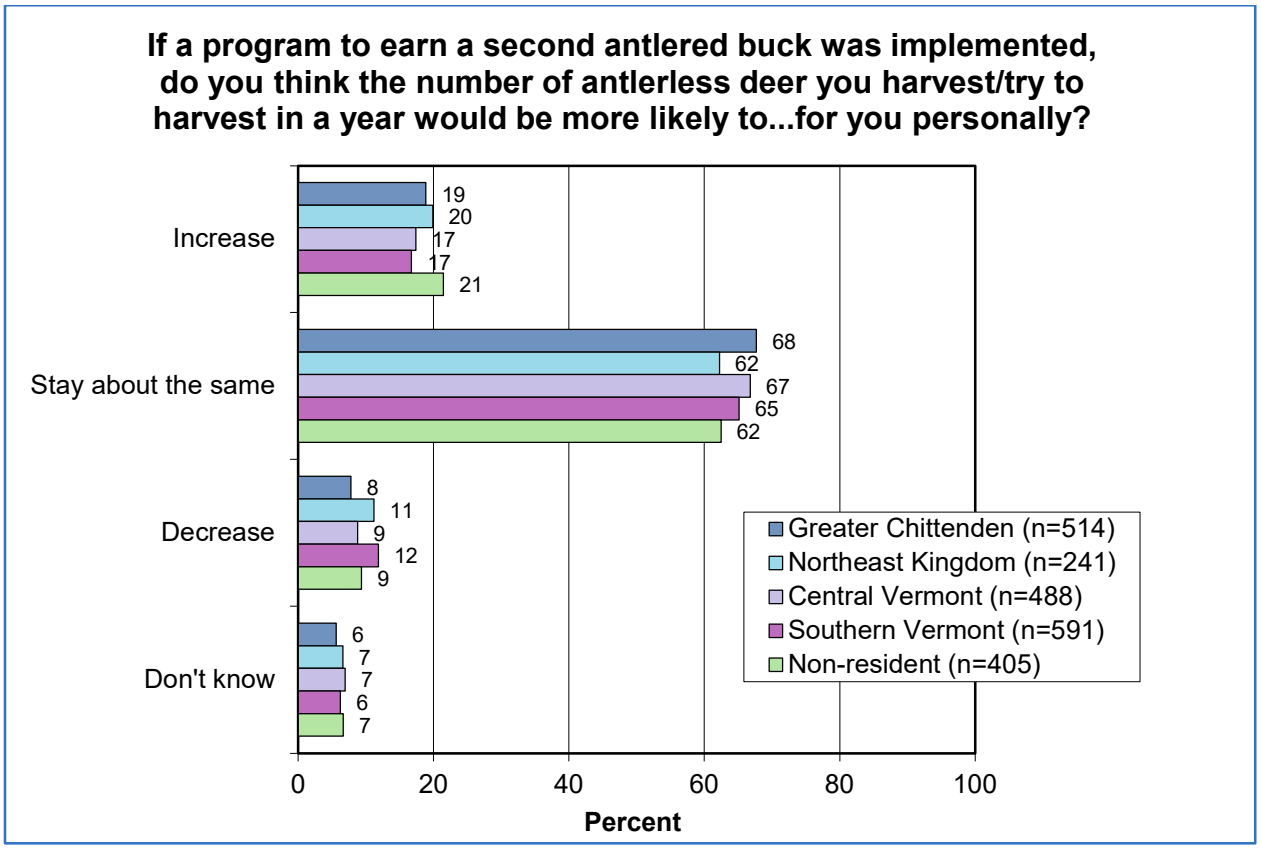



If a program to earn a second antlered buck was implemented, do you think the number of days you deer hunt in a year would be more likely to...for you personally?
Increase
24
Stay about the same
67
Decrease
5
Don't know
4
0
20
40
60
80
100
Percent (n=2247)


If a program to earn a second antlered buck was implemented, do you think the number of days you deer hunt in a year would be more likely to...for you personally?
Increase
27
23
24
21
26
Stay about the same
64
69
67
70
63
Decrease
5
5
5
5
5
Don't know
4
3
4
4
6
Greater Chittenden (n=514)
Northeast Kingdom (n=241)
Central Vermont (n=488)
Southern Vermont (n=591)
Non-resident (n=405)
0
20
40
60
80
100
Percent



The program would increase *antlerless* harvest because it would require that an antlerless deer were taken to earn that second buck tag.



SUMMARY OF SUPPORT AND OPPOSE QUESTIONS

Finally in this section of the report, a summary table is included for the reader's convenience showing the results of all of the support-oppose questions that were shown previously.

Among All Deer Hunters							
Question	**S. Support**	**M. Support**	**Total Support**	**Neither**	**M. Oppose**	**S. Oppose**	**Total Oppose**
Current antler point restriction	42	24	66	15	9	9	17
Current one-buck limit	51	19	70	12	8	9	17
Management to increase number of older, larger bucks	40	27	68	20	5	5	11
Allowing antlerless deer permits to also be used during regular rifle season	26	23	49	11	9	30	39
Allowing rifles to be used during the October season for antlerless deer harvest	20	15	36	12	12	38	50
System to earn a tag for a second antlered buck	21	19	40	15	12	30	42
Percentages in the table rounded to the integer level; all sums calculated on unrounded numbers.							

A second table shows these results only among residents.

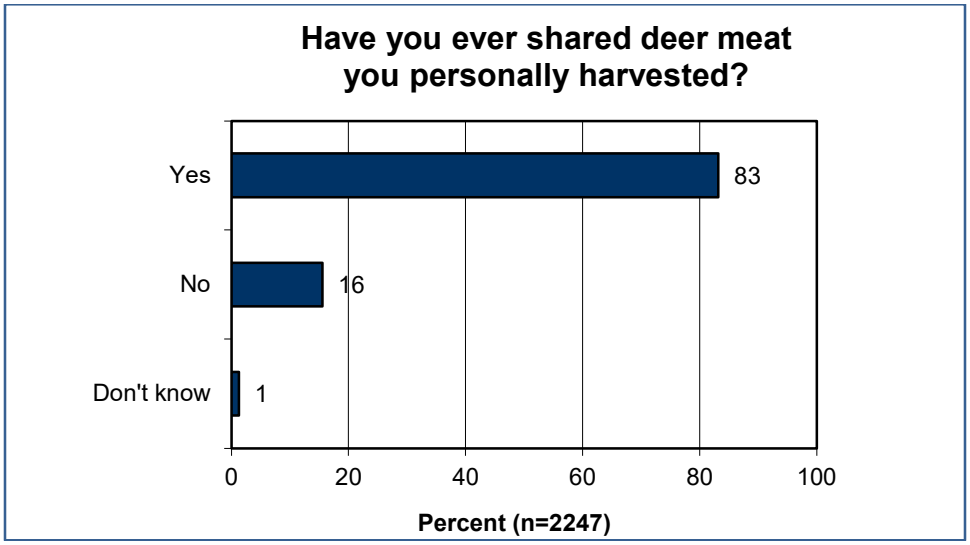
Among Resident Deer Hunters							
Question	**S. Support**	**M. Support**	**Total Support**	**Neither**	**M. Oppose**	**S. Oppose**	**Total Oppose**
Current antler point restriction	42	23	66	16	9	9	17
Current one-buck limit	50	20	70	12	8	9	18
Management to increase number of older, larger bucks	40	28	68	20	6	5	11
Allowing antlerless deer permits to also be used during regular rifle season	24	22	46	11	10	32	41
Allowing rifles to be used during the October season for antlerless deer harvest	20	15	35	12	11	39	50
System to earn a tag for a second antlered buck	19	19	38	16	12	31	43
Percentages in the table rounded to the integer level; all sums calculated on unrounded numbers.							

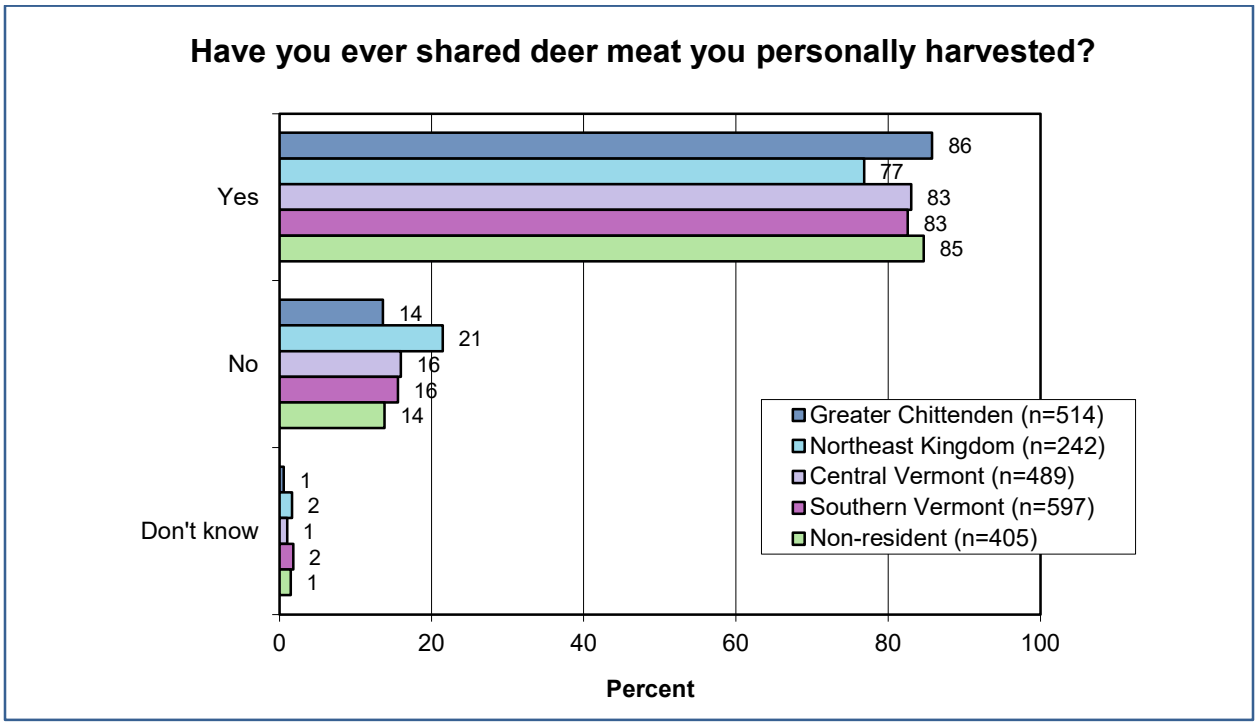
Trends are shown for these questions that were asked in the 2018 survey, among residents only.

Among Resident Deer Hunters														
Question	**S. Support**		**M. Support**		**Total Support**		**Neither**		**M. Oppose**		**S. Oppose**		**Total Oppose**	
	2018	**2024**	**2018**	**2024**	**2018**		**2024**		**2018**		**2024**		**2018**	
Current antler point restriction	62	42	14	23	77	66	1	16	8	9	14	9	21	17
Management to increase number of older, larger bucks	46	40	28	28	74	68	5	20	7	6	9	5	17	11
Percentages in the table rounded to the integer level; all sums calculated on unrounded numbers.														

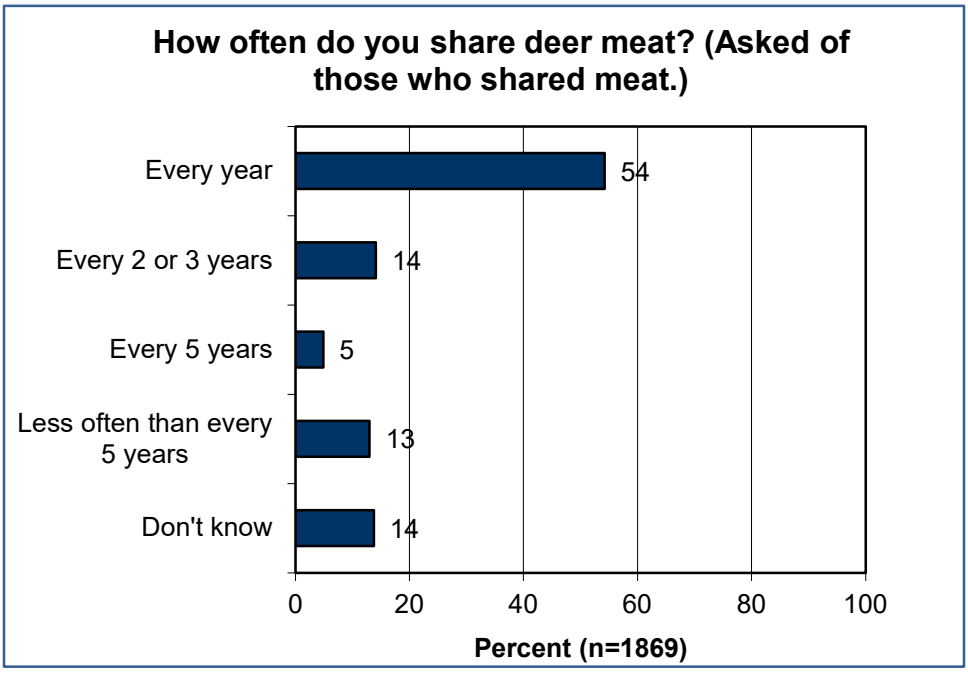
VENISON SHARING AND DONATION

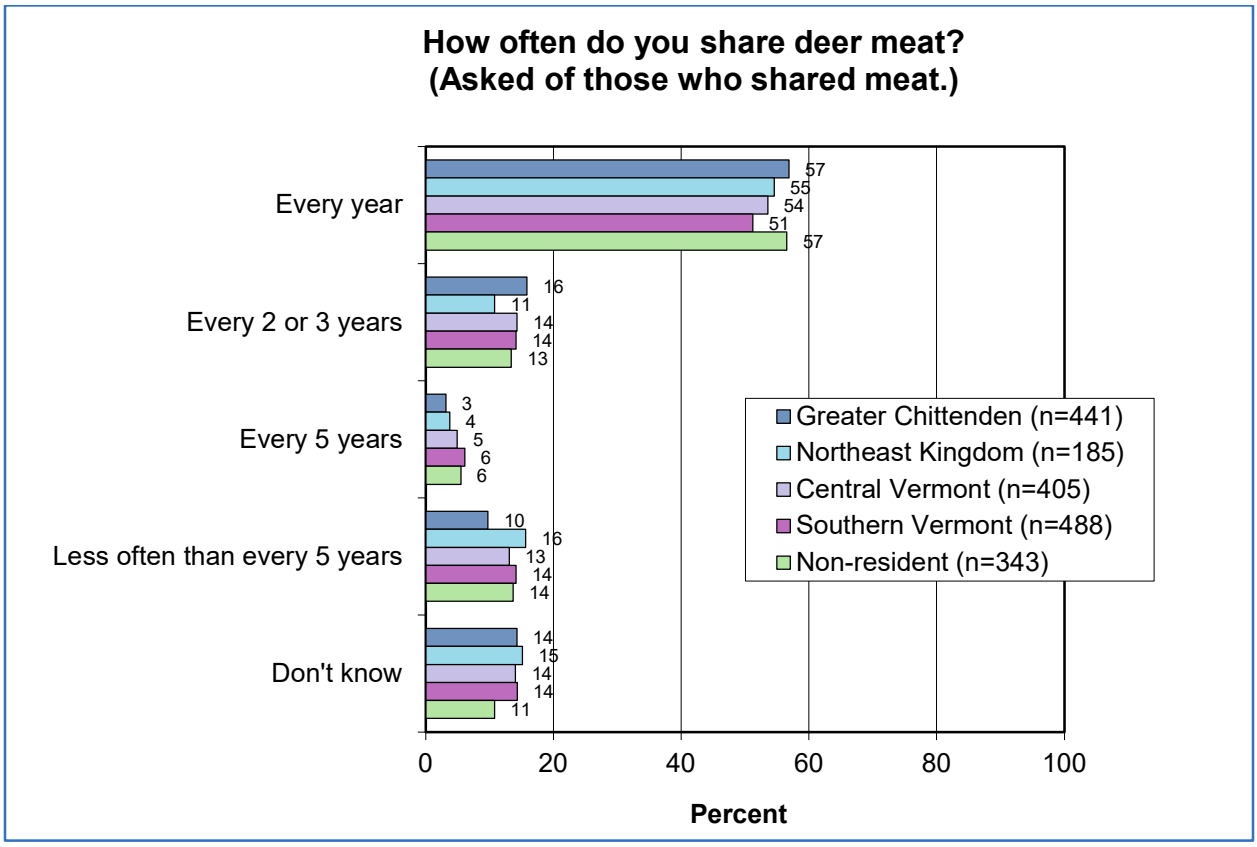
Sharing deer meat is almost ubiquitous, as 83% of Vermont deer hunters have shared deer meat. Hunters from the Northeast Kingdom are the *least* likely to have shared deer meat.



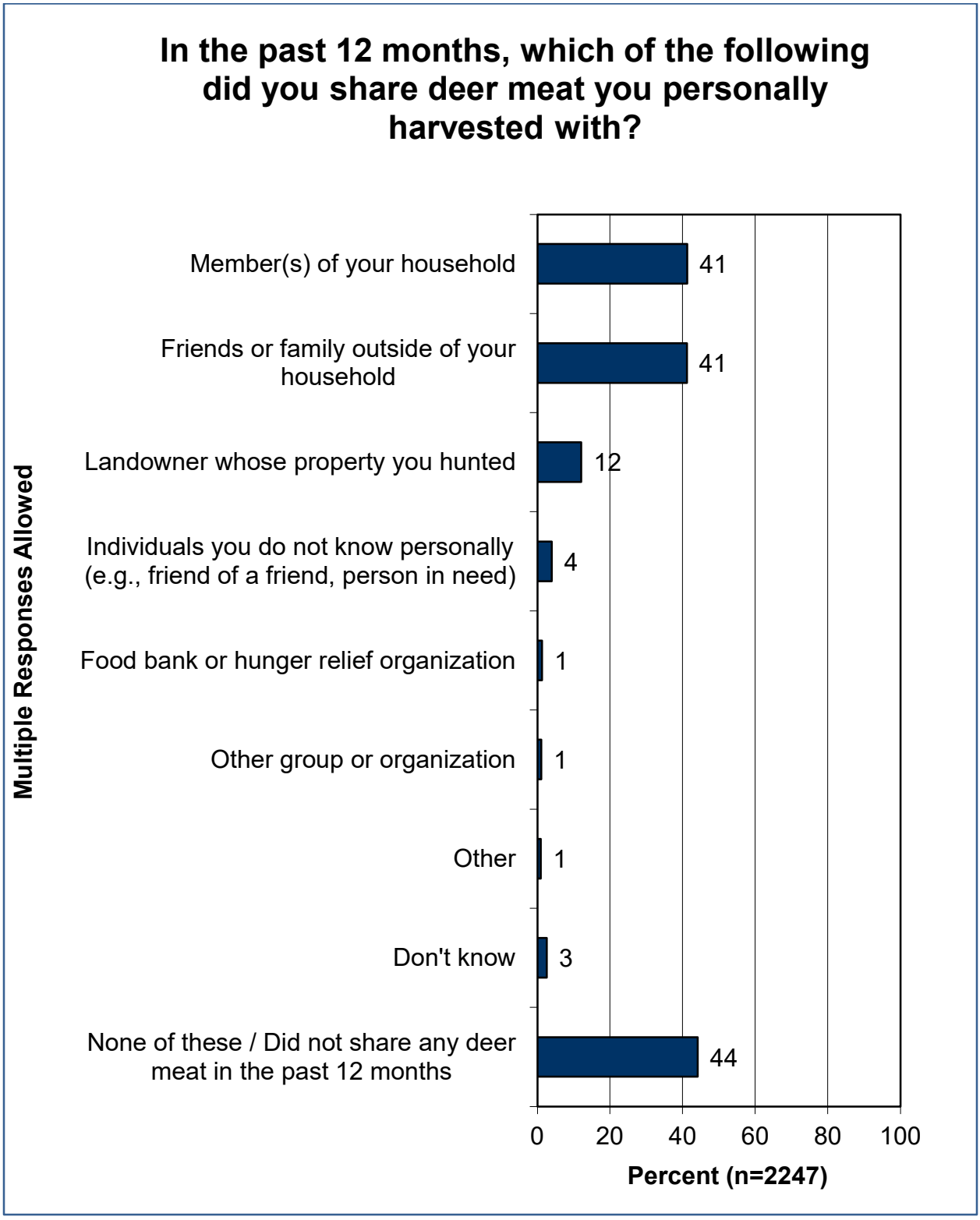


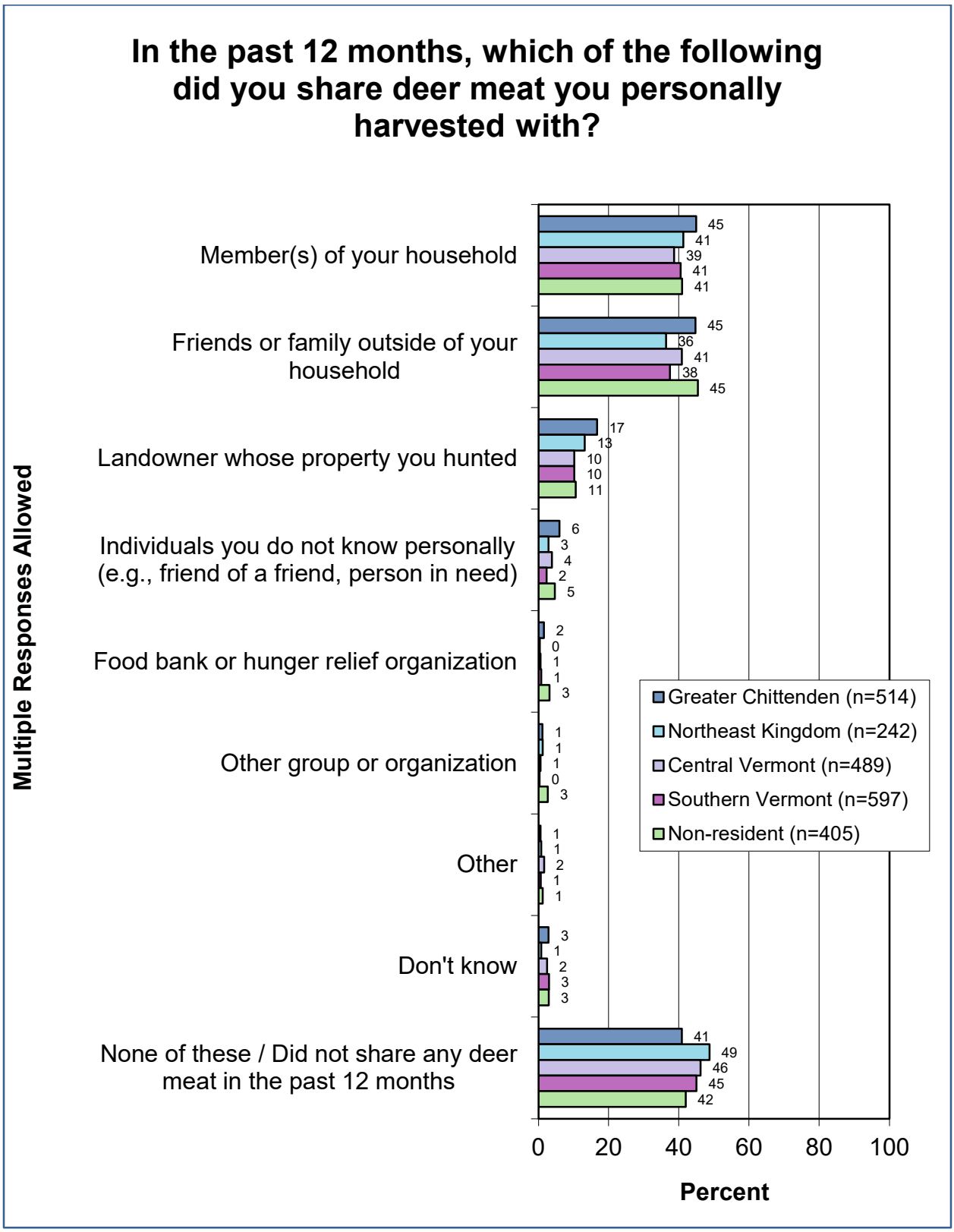
Most deer hunters who share venison do so every year (54% do so every year). The regional graph is included, with only small differences among hunters from the various regions.





All deer hunters were asked to name whom they shared deer meat with, as shown in the graphs that follow. Deer hunters who share their meat are more likely to share meat with members of their households and friends and family than with anyone else or an organization.

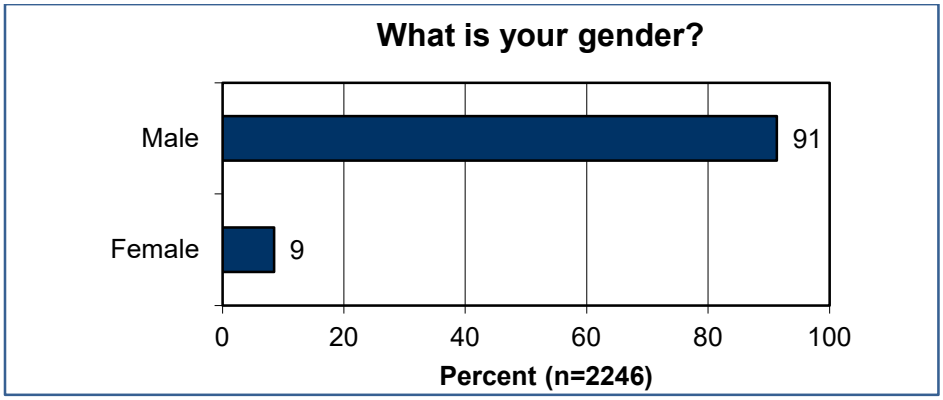


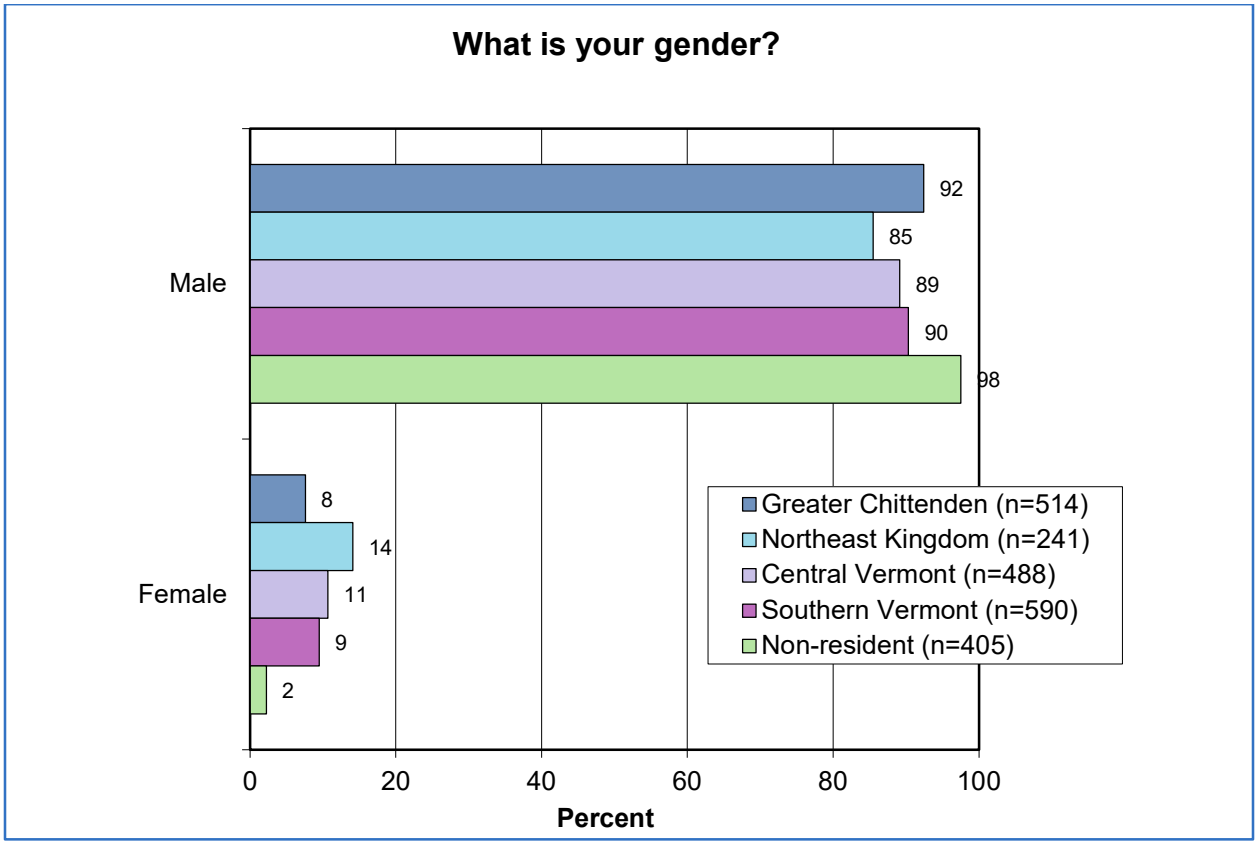

In the past 12 months, which of the following did you share deer meat you personally harvested with?
Multiple Responses Allowed
Member(s) of your household
45
41
39
41
41
Friends or family outside of your household
45
36
41
38
45
Landowner whose property you hunted
17
13
10
10
11
Individuals you do not know personally (e.g., friend of a friend, person in need)
6
3
4
2
5
Food bank or hunger relief organization
2
0
1
1
3
Other group or organization
1
1
1
0
3
Other
1
1
2
1
1
Don't know
3
1
2
3
3
None of these / Did not share any deer meat in the past 12 months
41
49
46
45
42
Greater Chittenden (n=514)
Northeast Kingdom (n=242)
Central Vermont (n=489)
Southern Vermont (n=597)
Non-resident (n=405)
0
20
40
60
80
100
Percent

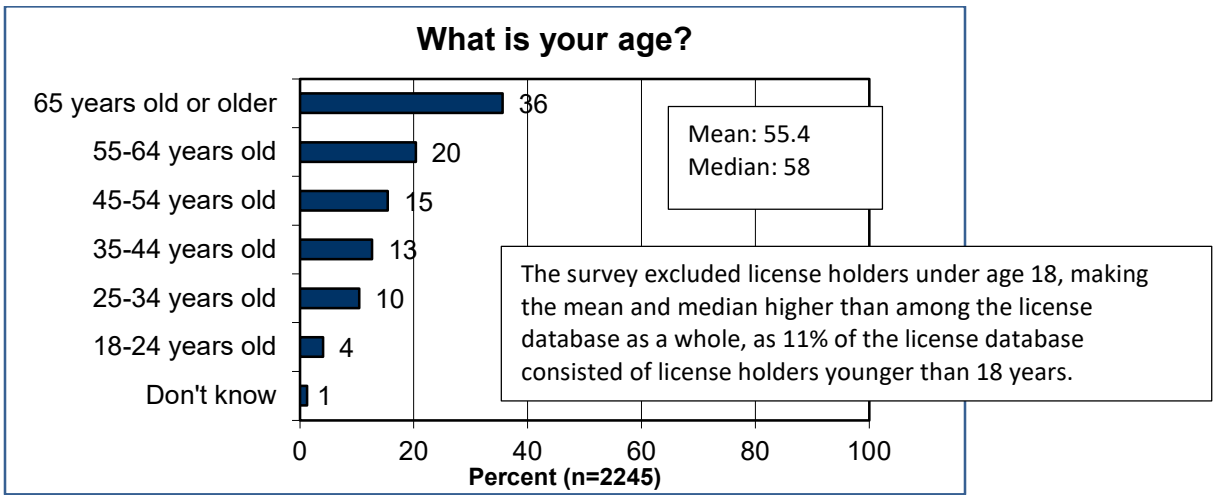
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

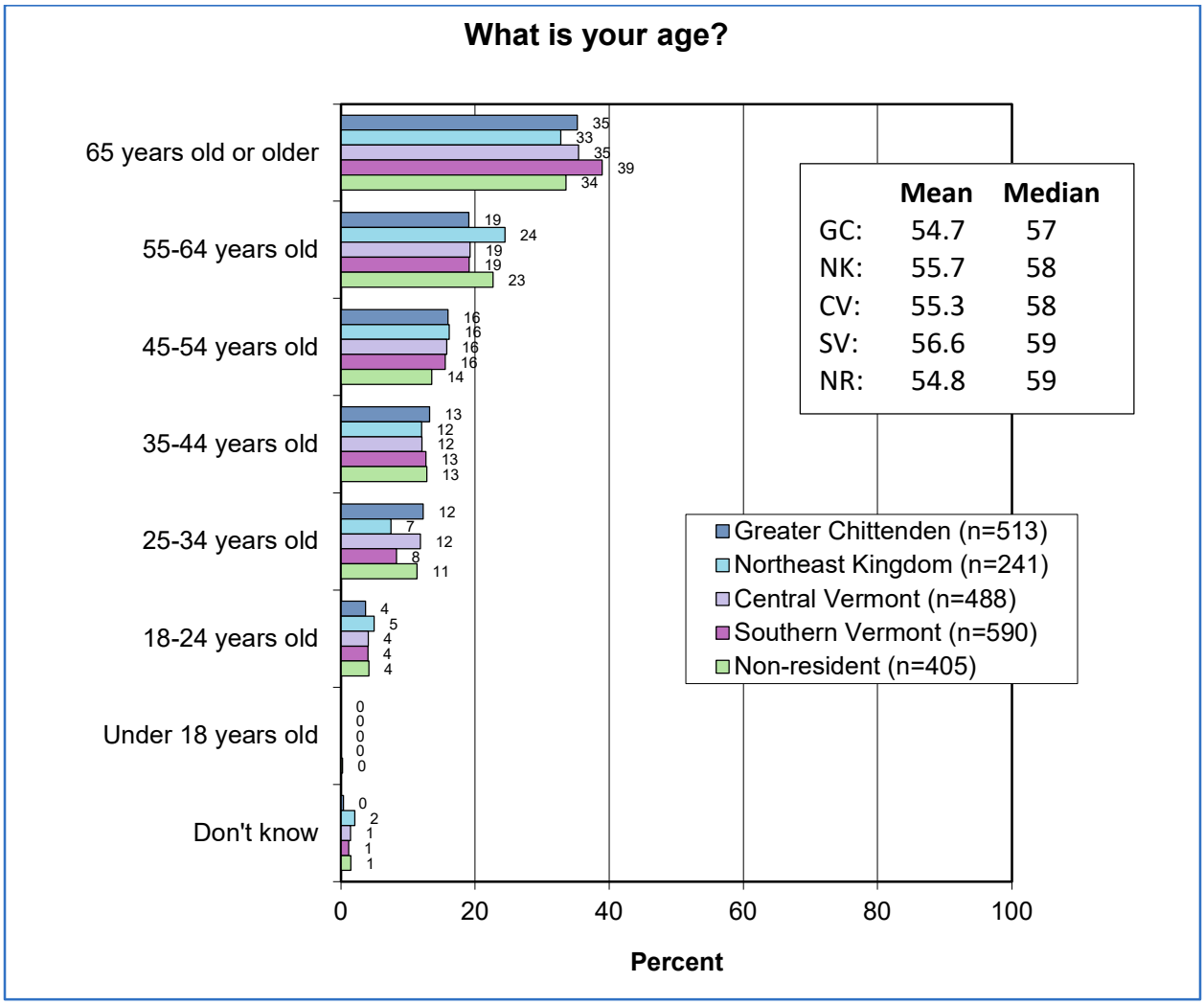
The survey obtained the following demographic information, which was primarily for use in crosstabulations of the data:

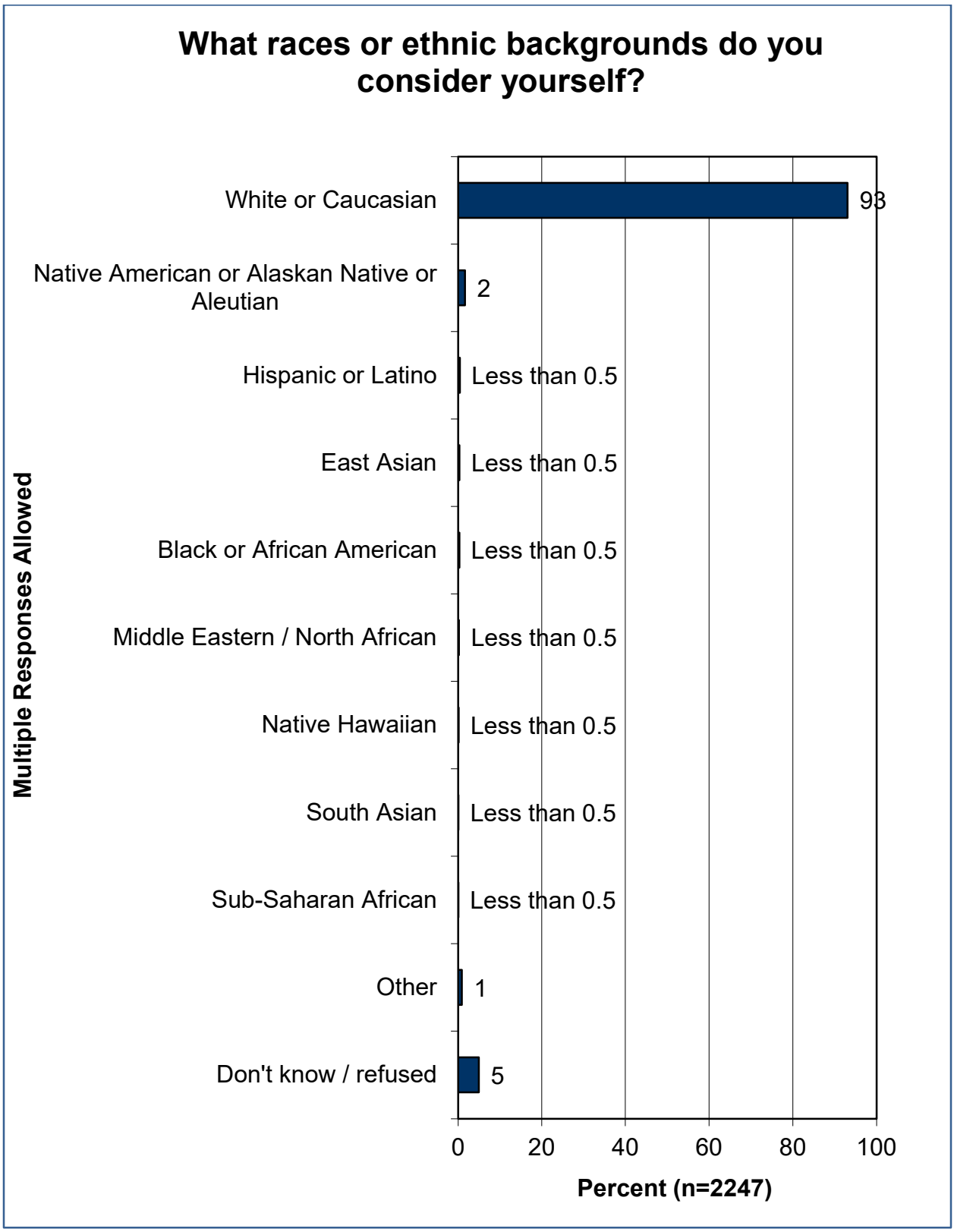
- Gender.
- Age.
- Ethnicity.
- Location.
- Urban-rural residence.

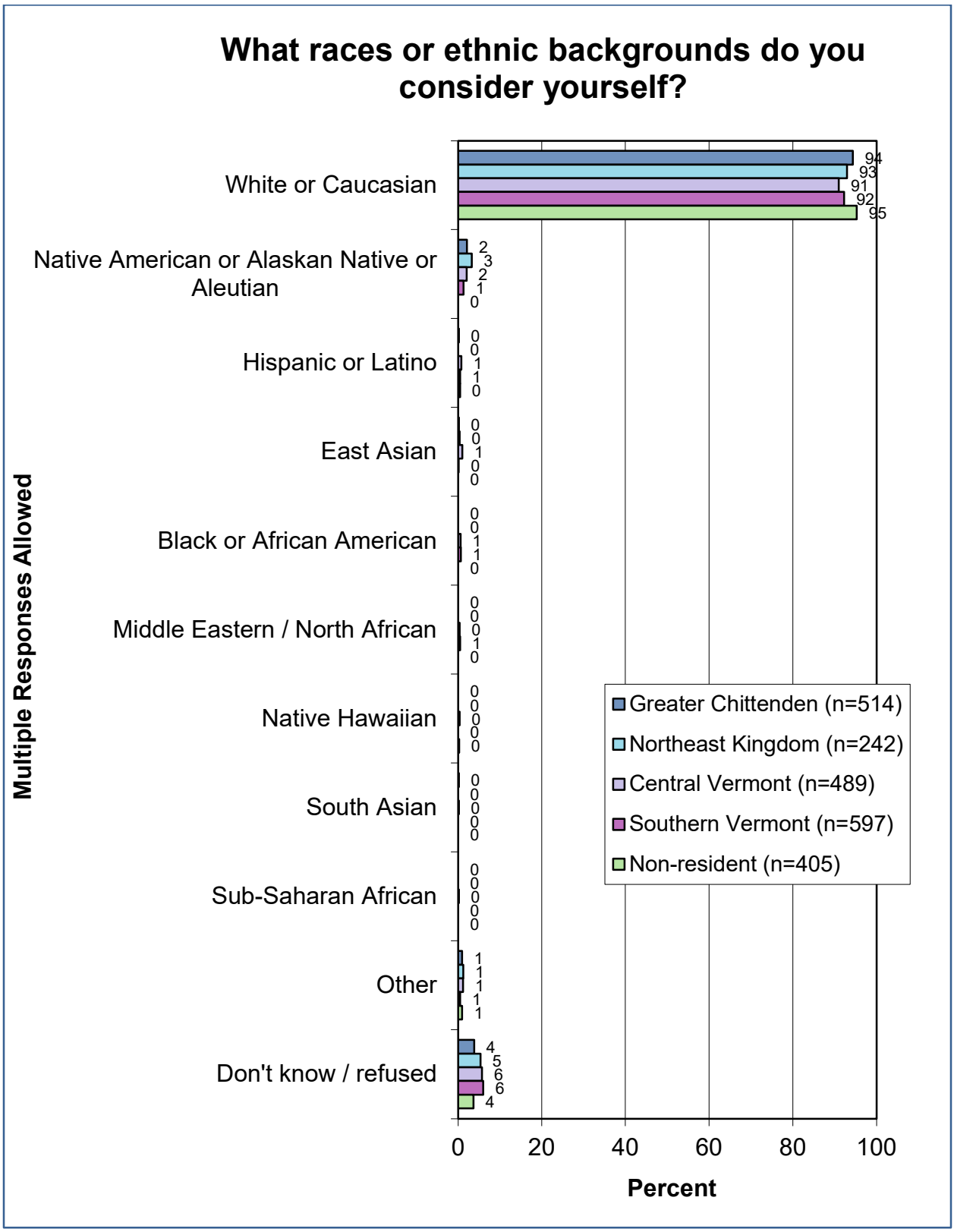


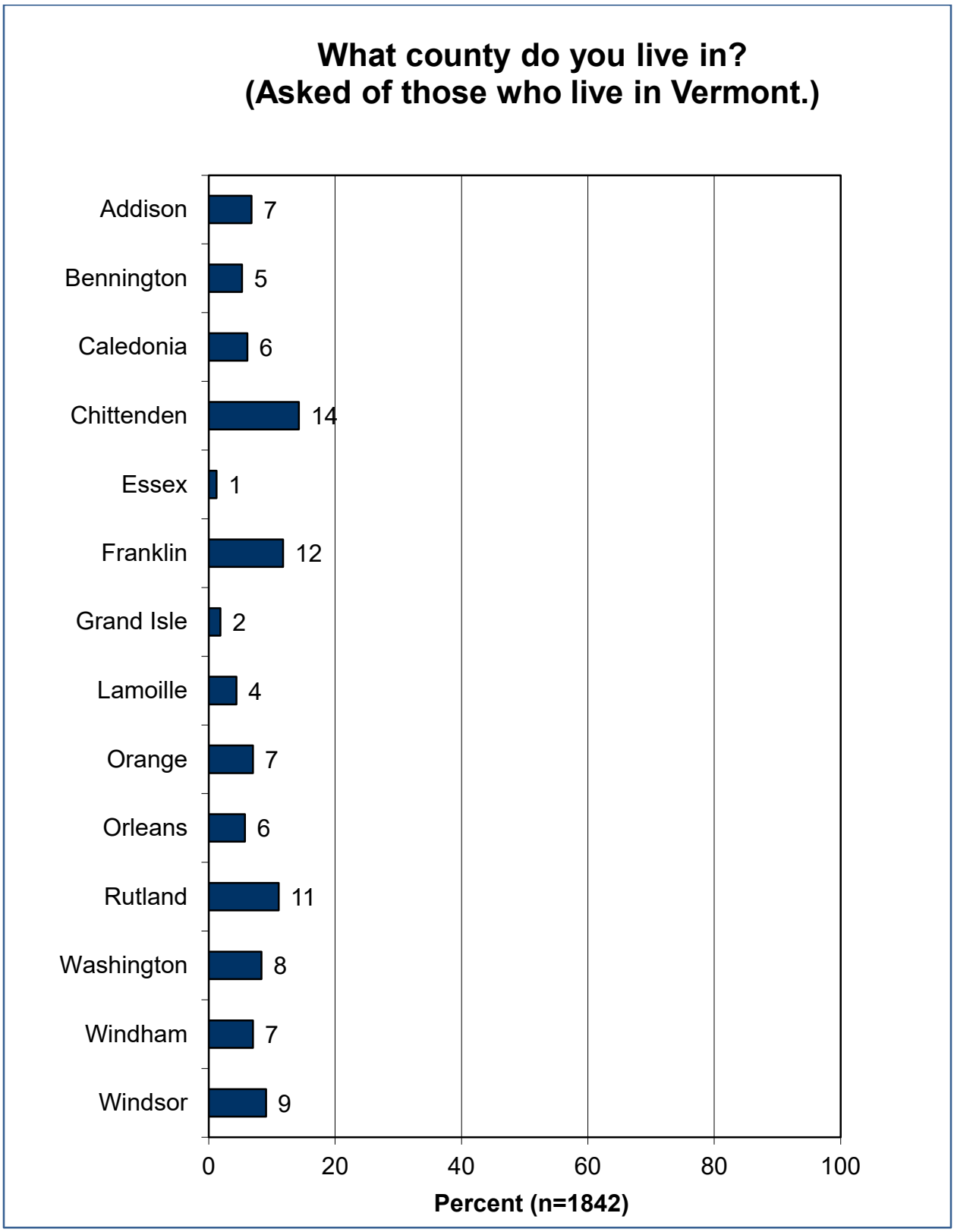



What is your age?
65 years old or older
55-64 years old
45-54 years old
35-44 years old
25-34 years old
18-24 years old
Don't know
36
20
15
13
10
4
1
Mean: 55.4
Median: 58
The survey excluded license holders under age 18, making the mean and median higher than among the license database as a whole, as 11% of the license database consisted of license holders younger than 18 years.
0
20
40
60
80
100
Percent (n=2245)

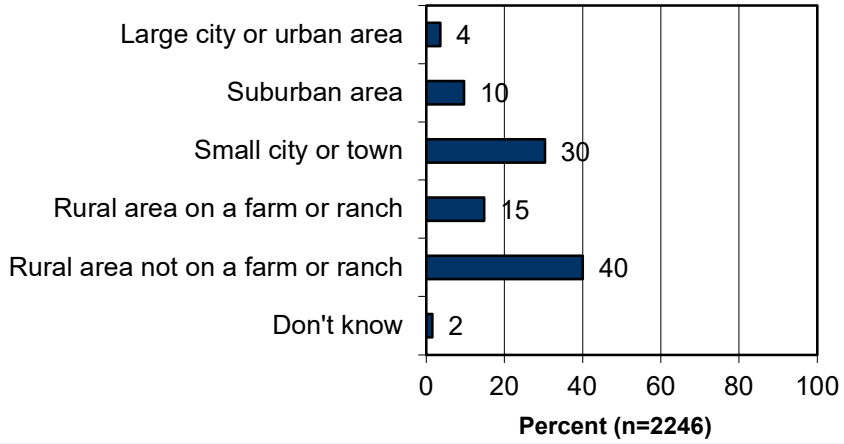

What is your age?
65 years old or older
55-64 years old
45-54 years old
35-44 years old
25-34 years old
18-24 years old
Under 18 years old
Don't know
Mean Median
GC: 54.7 57
NK: 55.7 58
CV: 55.3 58
SV: 56.6 59
NR: 54.8 59
Greater Chittenden (n=513)
Northeast Kingdom (n=241)
Central Vermont (n=488)
Southern Vermont (n=590)
Non-resident (n=405)
0
20
40
60
80
100
Percent


What races or ethnic backgrounds do you consider yourself?
White or Caucasian
93
Native American or Alaskan Native or Aleutian
2
Hispanic or Latino
Less than 0.5
East Asian
Less than 0.5
Black or African American
Less than 0.5
Middle Eastern / North African
Less than 0.5
Native Hawaiian
Less than 0.5
South Asian
Less than 0.5
Sub-Saharan African
Less than 0.5
Other
1
Don't know / refused
5
0
20
40
60
80
100
Percent (n=2247)
Multiple Responses Allowed

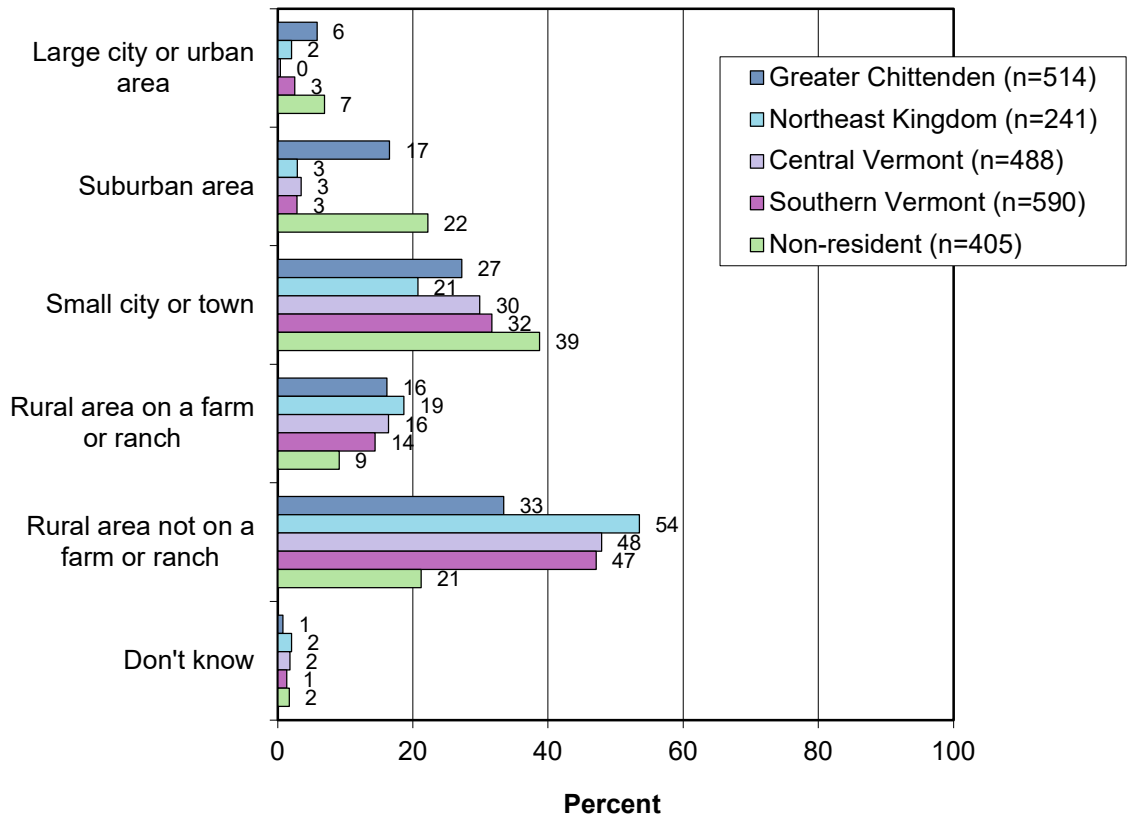

What races or ethnic backgrounds do you consider yourself?
Multiple Responses Allowed
White or Caucasian
Native American or Alaskan Native or Aleutian
Hispanic or Latino
East Asian
Black or African American
Middle Eastern / North African
Native Hawaiian
South Asian
Sub-Saharan African
Other
Don't know / refused
94 93 91 92 95
2 3 2 1 0
0 0 1 1 0
0 0 1 0 0
0 0 1 1 0
0 0 0 1 0
0 0 0 0 0
0 0 0 0 0
0 0 0 0 0
1 1 1 1 1
4 5 6 6 4
Greater Chittenden (n=514)
Northeast Kingdom (n=242)
Central Vermont (n=489)
Southern Vermont (n=597)
Non-resident (n=405)
0 20 40 60 80 100
Percent


What county do you live in?
(Asked of those who live in Vermont.)
Addison 7
Bennington 5
Caledonia 6
Chittenden 14
Essex 1
Franklin 12
Grand Isle 2
Lamoille 4
Orange 7
Orleans 6
Rutland 11
Washington 8
Windham 7
Windsor 9
0
20
40
60
80
100
Percent (n=1842)

Do you consider your place of residence to be a large city or urban area, a suburban area, a small city or town, a rural area on a farm or ranch, or a rural area not on a farm or ranch?



Do you consider your place of residence to be a large city or urban area, a suburban area, a small city or town, a rural area on a farm or ranch, or a rural area not on a farm or ranch?



ABOUT RESPONSIVE MANAGEMENT

Responsive Management is an internationally recognized survey research firm specializing in natural resource and outdoor recreation issues. Our mission is to help natural resource and outdoor recreation agencies, businesses, and organizations better understand and work with their constituents, customers, and the public.

Focusing only on natural resource and outdoor recreation issues, Responsive Management has conducted telephone, mail, and online surveys, as well as multi-modal surveys, on-site intercepts, focus groups, public meetings, personal interviews, needs assessments, program evaluations, marketing and communication plans, and other forms of human dimensions research measuring how people relate to the natural world for more than 30 years. Utilizing our in-house, full-service survey facilities with 75 professional interviewers, we have conducted studies in all 50 states and 15 countries worldwide, totaling more than 1,000 human dimensions projects *only* on natural resource and outdoor recreation issues.

Responsive Management has conducted research for every state fish and wildlife agency and every federal natural resource agency, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Coast Guard, and the National Marine Fisheries Service. Additionally, we have also provided research for all the major conservation NGOs including the Archery Trade Association, the American Sportfishing Association, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Dallas Safari Club, Ducks Unlimited, Environmental Defense Fund, the Izaak Walton League of America, the National Rifle Association, the National Shooting Sports Foundation, the National Wildlife Federation, the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Safari Club International, the Sierra Club, Trout Unlimited, and the Wildlife Management Institute.

Other nonprofit and NGO clients include the American Museum of Natural History, the BoatUS Foundation, the National Association of Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs, the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, and the Ocean Conservancy. As well, Responsive Management conducts market research and product testing for numerous outdoor recreation manufacturers and industry leaders, such as Winchester Ammunition, Vista Outdoor (whose brands include Federal Premium, CamelBak, Bushnell, Primos, and more), Trijicon, Yamaha, and others.

Responsive Management also provides data collection for the nation's top universities, including Auburn University, Clemson University, Colorado State University, Duke University, George Mason University, Michigan State University, Mississippi State University, North Carolina State University, Oregon State University, Penn State University, Rutgers University, Stanford University, Texas Tech, University of California-Davis, University of Florida, University of Montana, University of New Hampshire, University of Southern California, Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia Tech, West Virginia University, Yale University, and many more.

Our research has been upheld in U.S. Courts, used in peer-reviewed journals, and presented at major wildlife and natural resource conferences around the world. Responsive Management's research has also been featured in many of the nation's top media, including *Newsweek*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, CNN, National Public Radio, and on the front pages of *The Washington Post* and *USA Today*.

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