

The Human Dimensions of Furbearer Management in Maine



Conducted for the
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife



By Responsive Management

2020



THE HUMAN DIMENSIONS OF FURBEARER MANAGEMENT IN MAINE

2020

Responsive Management National Office

Mark Damian Duda, Executive Director
Martin Jones, Senior Research Associate
Tom Beppler, Senior Research Associate
Steven J. Bissell, Ph.D., Qualitative Research Associate
Amanda Center, Research Associate
Andrea Criscione, Senior Research Associate
Patrick Doherty, Research Associate
Gregory L. Hughes, P.E., Research Associate
Caroline Gerken, Survey Center Manager
Alison Lanier, Business Manager

130 Franklin Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801
540/432-1888
E-mail: mark@responsivemanagement.com
www.responsivemanagement.com

Acknowledgments

Responsive Management would like to thank the following people for their input, support, and guidance on this project:

Shevenell Webb, Furbearer and Small Mammal Biologist
Bob Cordes, Wildlife Special Projects Coordinator
Nate Webb, Wildlife Division Director

Steering Committee:

Sportsman's Alliance of Maine – Gerry Lavigne and Bob Noonan
Maine Forest Products Council – Nathan Kay
Humane Society of the U.S. – Katie Hansberry
Maine Farm Bureau – Julie Ann Smith
Maine Professional Guides – Don Kleiner
USDA Wildlife Services – Robin Dyer
Maine Trappers Association – James Cote
The Nature Conservancy – Nancy Sferra
Maine Chapter of The Wildlife Society – Adam Gravel
IFW Legislative Committee Rep – Scott Landry
Past IFW Advisory Council Rep – Don Dudley
Warden Service – Chris Cloutier

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (hereinafter referred to as the Department) was established to preserve, protect, and enhance the inland fisheries and wildlife resources of Maine. As part of this overall charge, the Department is mandated with using “regulated hunting, fishing, and trapping as the basis for the management of these resources whenever feasible” [PL 2015, c. 416, §1 (AMD)].

This study was conducted for the Department to obtain public input regarding the management of furbearers in the state, as well as to explore attitudes toward trapping, human-wildlife conflicts, and the Department itself. The overall project entailed input from thousands of Maine residents. Specifically, Responsive Management conducted a scientific multi-modal survey of Maine residents, hunters, trappers, and landowners (the survey provided complete coverage of the study population); focus groups with residents, hunters, trappers, and animal rights advocates; and regional public meetings open to the general population of Maine. Responsive Management also designed and maintained an online public forum that allowed for additional input from Maine residents and recreationists. This combination of scientific, probability-based sampling and non-scientific qualitative data collection ensured that *every Maine resident* had an opportunity to provide input for the project.

As part of this project, this report (535 pages) and an abridged version of this report (53 pages) were prepared. This is the full report.

Three quarters of Maine residents (75%) approve of trapping, while 17% disapprove (the rest are neutral). Two common reasons for opposing trapping are concern over perceived inhumane treatment and concern over accidental or non-target catch (in some cases, this latter concern stems from an assumption that trapping is not properly regulated or is not regulated enough).

The motivation or purpose of the trapping affects approval and disapproval: for example, trapping to resolve nuisance wildlife situations tends to be much more acceptable than trapping for recreation or for money. It is also the case that some people who initially think of themselves as opponents of trapping reconsider when presented with information that explains how and why the trapping is done, as well as the regulations that are in place to ensure the sustainability of the species being trapped. Awareness that the Department regulates trapping is high in Maine, but it is lowest among those who disapprove of trapping: only 69% of this group is aware that the Department regulates trapping, compared to 82% of residents overall.

The furbearer species for which Maine residents have the highest knowledge levels are skunk, raccoon, and coyote. On the other hand, the lowest knowledge levels are for marten and muskrat. Regarding furbearer population levels, more residents think that the population is *too high* than *too low* for coyote, skunk, raccoon, and fisher. On the other hand, more residents think that the population is *too low* than *too high* for otter, bobcat, fox, marten, muskrat, and beaver.

One of the key takeaways from the study is that public approval of trapping depends on trapping being done as humanely as possible to minimize any pain and suffering on the part of the animal. The reader is encouraged to review the full discussion of all major findings in Chapter 2. It is recommended that the data in this report be used as an ongoing resource, as the report contains detailed results from each component of the study data collection, including statewide and regional survey results on each of the ten furbearer species explored in the project. Decisions about furbearer management in Maine should be made with these data in mind.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction and Methodology	1
Multi-Modal Scientific Survey	2
Questionnaire Design	5
Survey Samples	5
Contact Procedures	7
Data Collection	13
Analysis of Survey Data	14
Demographic Analyses Graphs.....	15
Regional Public Meetings.....	17
Online Public Input Forum.....	19
Focus Groups.....	24
Focus Group Locations	24
Focus Group Participant Recruiting.....	25
Focus Group Discussion Guides and Analysis	25
2. Summary of Major Findings.....	26
Approval or Disapproval of Trapping	26
Motivations for Trapping	34
Dissatisfactions With Trapping and Constraints to Participation in Hunting and Trapping.....	35
Knowledge of and Opinions on Furbearers and Their Populations	36
Support for and Opposition to Furbearer Management.....	43
Conflicts With Wildlife	44
Opinions on the Department.....	46
Information Needs of the General Public, Hunters, Trappers, and Landowners	46
Animal Welfare Versus Animals Rights	50
3. General Population Survey Results	53
Participation in Hunting, Trapping, and Other Outdoor Recreation	53
Attitudes Toward Hunting and Trapping	66
Knowledge of and Attitudes Toward Furbearer Species.....	79
Beaver	79
Bobcat	83
Coyote	87
Fox	91
Raccoon.....	95
Skunk	99
Fisher.....	103
Marten	107
Otter	111
Muskrat	115
Summary Findings for All Furbearer Species.....	119
Attitudes Toward Furbearer Management.....	124
Human-Wildlife Conflicts	127

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

Perceptions and Ratings of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife	141
Demographic Data	144
4. Hunters and Trappers Survey Results	150
Participation in Hunting, Trapping, and Other Outdoor Recreation	150
Species Hunted and Trapped, Including Furbearer Species	153
Satisfaction With Hunting and Trapping Experiences	159
Constraints to Hunting and Trapping Participation	169
Motivations for Participating in Hunting and Trapping	176
Attitudes Toward Hunting and Trapping	178
Knowledge of and Attitudes Toward Furbearer Species	202
Beaver	202
Bobcat	214
Coyote	226
Fox	238
Raccoon	250
Skunk	262
Fisher	274
Marten	286
Otter	298
Muskrat	310
Summary Findings for All Furbearer Species	322
Attitudes Toward Furbearer Management	330
Human-Wildlife Conflicts	333
Perceptions and Ratings of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife	351
Demographic Data	354
5. Results Among Trapping Opponents	373
Participation in Hunting, Trapping, and Other Outdoor Recreation	374
Attitudes Toward Hunting and Trapping	376
Knowledge of and Attitudes Toward Furbearer Species	380
Beaver	381
Bobcat	383
Coyote	385
Fox	387
Raccoon	389
Skunk	391
Fisher	393
Marten	395
Otter	397
Muskrat	399
Summary Findings for All Furbearer Species	401
Attitudes Toward Furbearer Management	404
Human-Wildlife Conflicts	405
Perceptions and Ratings of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife	409
Demographic Data	410

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

6. Landowner Survey Results	413
Participation in Hunting, Trapping, and Other Outdoor Recreation	413
Attitudes Toward Hunting and Trapping	415
Knowledge of and Attitudes Toward Furbearer Species.....	420
Beaver	420
Bobcat	422
Coyote	424
Fox	426
Raccoon.....	428
Skunk	430
Fisher.....	432
Marten	434
Otter	436
Muskrat	438
Summary Findings for All Furbearer Species.....	440
Attitudes Toward Furbearer Management.....	443
Human-Wildlife Conflicts	444
Perceptions and Ratings of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife	451
Tables of Results Among Extremely Large Landowners.....	452
7. Findings From the Public Meetings.....	470
Portland Meeting Findings	470
General Furbearer Management.....	470
Coyote Management	470
Humaneness of Trapping	471
Trapping- and Furbearer-Related Education.....	471
Future of Trapping	471
Orono Meeting Findings.....	472
Research Study-Related Concerns and Questions	472
General Furbearer Management.....	472
Beaver Management.....	472
Trapping- and Furbearer-Related Education.....	472
Trapping Regulation Concerns	473
Future of Trapping	473
Augusta Meeting Findings	474
Research Study-Related Concerns and Questions	474
General Furbearer Management.....	474
Coyote Management	475
Lynx Management	475
Humaneness of Trapping	475
Collection of Biological Samples	476
Trapping Regulation Concerns	476
Presque Isle Meeting Findings	477
Coyote Management	477
Otter Management.....	478
Deer Management	478

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

Trapping- and Furbearer-Related Education.....	478
Trapping Regulation Concerns	478
Future of Trapping	479
8. Findings From the Online Forum	480
Comments That Apply to All Three Forums.....	480
General Furbearer Management Forum	481
Arguments in Support of and Against Trapping.....	481
Motivations for Trapping and Initiation into Trapping.....	482
Humaneness of Trapping	482
Education Regarding Trapping and Furbearer Species.....	482
Threatened and Endangered Species, and the Trapping of Non-Target Animals.....	483
Furbearer Management Issues.....	483
Human-Wildlife Conflict	484
Coyote Issues	484
Threats to Furbearer Species.....	485
Lynx Exclusion Devices and Related Issues.....	485
Furbearer Population Assessments by the Department and the Reputation of the Department.....	485
Concerns Over Project Data Collection	485
Hunting and Trapping Issues Forum	486
Image of Trappers	486
Arguments in Support of and Against Trapping.....	486
Motivations for Trapping and Initiation into Trapping.....	487
Humaneness of Trapping	487
Education Regarding Trapping and Furbearer Species.....	487
Trapping Non-Target Animals.....	487
Furbearer Management Issues.....	487
Human-Wildlife Conflict	488
Coyote Issues	488
Lynx Exclusion Devices and Related Issues.....	488
Other Hunting and Trapping Regulatory Concerns	488
Furbearer Population Assessments by the Department and the Reputation of the Department.....	489
Concerns Over Project Data Collection	489
Human-Wildlife Conflict Forum.....	489
Using Nuisance to Define Wildlife.....	490
Arguments in Support of Trapping	490
Education Regarding Trapping and Furbearer Species.....	490
Furbearer Management Issues.....	490
Human-Wildlife Conflict	491
Coyote Issues	491

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

9. Focus Group Results	493
Image of Trapping	494
Arguments in Support of Trapping.....	496
Motivations for Trapping and the Future of Trapping	498
Humaneness of Trapping.....	500
Education Related to Trapping.....	501
Trapping and Threatened/Endangered Species	502
General Furbearer Management.....	504
Human-Wildlife Conflicts	508
Coyote Issues.....	509
Threats to Furbearers	511
Lynx Exclusion Devices.....	511
Reputation of State Agencies	512
10. Comparison of Approval or Disapproval of Trapping in the U.S., Regionally, and in Three States, and Ratings of State Agencies	513
Appendix A: Survey Questions	517
About Responsive Management.....	535

1. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted for the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (hereinafter referred to as the Department) to obtain public input regarding the management of furbearers in the state. The study was conducted to assess the following:

- Public knowledge of and attitudes toward trapping in Maine.
- Knowledge of and attitudes toward furbearer species among residents, hunters, trappers, and landowners.
- Attitudes toward furbearer management.
- Reasons people support or oppose trapping.
- Human-wildlife conflicts.
- Participation in hunting and trapping, as well as other outdoor recreation, including wildlife-associated recreation.
- Motivations for participating in trapping.
- Species hunted and trapped, and use of furbearer species.
- Satisfactions and dissatisfactions with hunting and trapping, and constraints to participation.
- Perceptions of the Department among the four constituent groups (residents, hunters, trappers, and landowners).
- Regional differences in attitudes, opinions, perceptions, and preferences, with a regional breakdown of the state to include the North/East Region, the Central Region, and the South Region.

The overall project included the following components:

- A multi-modal scientific, probability-based survey, administered by Responsive Management, of the following populations:
 - General population of Maine residents.
 - Licensed hunters (both residents and nonresidents).
 - Licensed trappers (both residents and nonresidents).
 - Private landowners of large tracts of land.
 - Industrial/commercial landowners of extremely large tracts of timber land and/or other open land.
- Regional public meetings open to the general population of Maine, mediated by Responsive Management.
- An online public input forum open to the general population of Maine, facilitated by Responsive Management.
- Focus groups of residents, hunters, trappers, and animal rights advocates, conducted by Responsive Management.

As part of this project, this report (535 pages) and an abridged version of this report (53 pages) were prepared. This is the full report.

Specific details of the research methods are presented in the following pages.

MULTI-MODAL SCIENTIFIC SURVEY

The survey used a multi-modal approach that included multiple forms of contact (email, mail, and/or telephone) and two survey modes (online and telephone surveys). This multi-modal approach was used to ensure the most extensive coverage possible of each sample group, meaning potential respondents who could not be reached using one form of contact could be contacted using another.

As previously mentioned, the following five populations were sampled and surveyed: the general population of Maine residents (note that this group is interchangeably referred to as the general population or residents), licensed hunters, licensed trappers, private landowners of large tracts of land (25 acres or more), and a small group of commercial/industrial owners of extremely large tracts of land (100,000 acres or more). Some questions in the survey pertained to all five sample groups, while other questions were asked of only certain groups for which the questions were applicable.

The general population, licensed hunter, licensed trapper, and private landowner samples were each stratified by three regions in Maine: the North/East Region, the Central Region, and the South Region. The regions were determined by zip code. (See Figure 1.1 on page 4 for a map of the survey regions.) The licensed hunter and licensed trapper samples also included a nonresident stratum. The commercial/industrial landowner population is too small to sample; therefore, no stratification was used for this group and a census of the entire population was attempted. Overall, the surveys were administered from October to December 2019. Table 1.1 provides a breakdown of the sample groups, stratification, number of completed surveys, and survey administration. Table 1.2 shows the sampling errors.

Table 1.1. Survey Sample and Administration

Population	Sample Strata	Completed Surveys		Types of Contact	Survey Modes	Survey Administration Dates
		Strata	Total			
General Population (ages 18+)	North/East Region	212	621	Mail Telephone	Online Telephone	October 30 to November 22, 2019
	Central Region	207				
	South Region	202				
	Nonresidents					
Licensed Hunters (ages 16+)	North/East Region	338	1,245	Email Mail Telephone	Online Telephone	November 4 to November 22, 2019
	Central Region	355				
	South Region	300				
	Nonresidents	252				
Licensed Trappers (ages 16+)	North/East Region	179	541	Email Mail Telephone	Online Telephone	November 5 to November 22, 2019
	Central Region	199				
	South Region	108				
	Nonresidents	55				
Private Landowners (25+ acres)	North/East Region	100	305	Mail Telephone	Online Telephone	November 5 to November 22, 2019
	Central Region	103				
	South Region	102				
	Nonresidents					
Commercial/Industrial Landowners (100,000+ acres)			7	Email Telephone	Telephone	November 19 to December 2, 2019

Table 1.2. Sampling Errors

Population	Sample Strata	Population	Sample Size (Completed Surveys)	Sampling Error (Percentage Points)
General Population (ages 18+)	North/East Region	20,343	212	+/- 6.696
	Central Region	549,442	207	+/- 6.810
	South Region	592,846	202	+/- 6.894
	Nonresidents			
	Total	1,162,631	621	+/- 3.932
Licensed Hunters (ages 16+)	North/East Region	31,742	338	+/- 5.302
	Central Region	65,879	355	+/- 5.187
	South Region	42,170	300	+/- 5.638
	Nonresidents	24,539	252	+/- 6.142
	Total	164,330	1,245	+/- 2.767
Licensed Trappers (ages 16+)	North/East Region	1,222	179	+/- 6.770
	Central Region	1,734	199	+/- 6.538
	South Region	780	108	+/- 8.759
	Nonresidents	114	55	+/- 9.548
	Total	3,805	541	+/- 3.907
Private Landowners (25+ acres)	North/East Region	Undetermined	100	
	Central Region	Undetermined	103	
	South Region	Undetermined	102	
	Nonresidents			
	Total	Undetermined	305	
Commercial/ Industrial Landowners (100,000+ acres)	Total	12	7	

Note that the total number in the population of private landowners of 25 or more contiguous acres in Maine is not immediately discernible without extensive property and deed research in each individual county of Maine. While a sample of likely owners of large tracts of land was obtained from a professional sample provider, Responsive Management does not have a verifiable population size to calculate sampling error. Furthermore, the proportions of landowners within the total population cannot be calculated at the regional level; therefore, the strata data cannot be accurately weighted and put together proportionately to examine the results statewide. For this reason, the survey results for private landowners in this report are shown only by region and not statewide.

As previously mentioned, the commercial/industrial landowner population is too small to sample. A list of these extremely large landowners was provided by the Department, and only 12 unique records were in the database. Therefore, a census was attempted, and there is no sampling error to report.

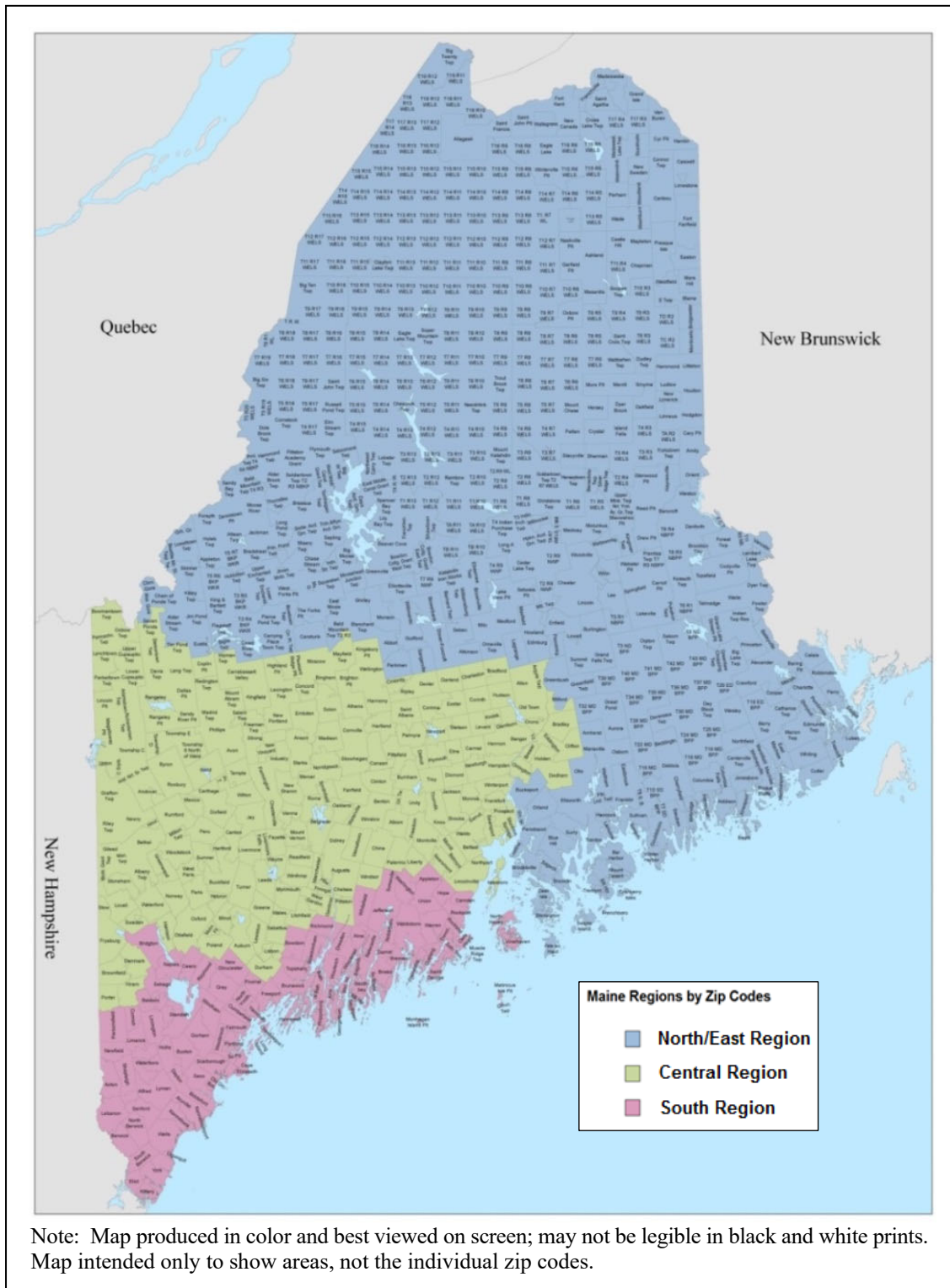


Figure 1.1. Maine Regions for Study

Note that other Department documents sometimes refer to the North/East Region as the “North/Downeast Region.”

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The survey questionnaire was developed cooperatively by the Department and Responsive Management, based on the goals of the study and the research team's familiarity with hunting, trapping, and furbearer management. The survey was computer coded for both online surveying and telephone surveying. The survey questions are shown in Appendix A.

The online survey was coded in an online survey platform. Note that the online survey was closed, meaning it was available only to respondents who were specifically selected for the survey and subsequently provided with the direct Uniform Resource Locator (URL) address (or web address) for the survey and a unique access code required to enter the survey. Respondents could complete the survey only once. The survey could not be accessed through a general internet search.

The telephone survey was coded using Responsive Management's computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system. Note that the computer only controls which questions are asked and allows for immediate data entry; the telephone survey is administered by a live interviewer.

For both online and telephone, the survey instrument was programmed to automatically skip questions that did not apply and to substitute phrases in the survey based upon previous responses, as necessary, for the logic and flow of the interviews. One survey questionnaire was used because the majority of questions were given to all sample groups, with different paths and the use of wording substitutions, where necessary, to make the wording specific to the group being surveyed.

Responsive Management conducted pre-tests of the survey questionnaire in both modes to ensure proper wording, flow, and logic in the surveys. Both the online and telephone versions produced data that could be exported directly into Responsive Management's data analyses programs.

SURVEY SAMPLES

The following five populations were surveyed for this study:

- General population of Maine residents ages 18 and older.
- Licensed hunters ages 16 and older.
- Licensed trappers ages 16 and older.
- Private landowners of tracts of land that are 25 or more contiguous acres.
- Commercial/industrial landowners of 100,000 acres or more.

This section provides pertinent details for each population and sample for this study. Note that licensed hunters and trappers are discussed together due to the similarities of the sampling process.

Sample of Residents

General population residents of Maine were sampled using an Address-Based System (ABS) to provide complete coverage and ensure that every Maine resident within a given region had an equal chance of being contacted for the survey. The ABS system samples physical addresses; every parcel of land with a residence and every lot in urban areas has an address associated with it, providing complete coverage when using ABS. The ABS general population resident sample was obtained from Marketing Systems Group (MSG), a firm specializing in providing scientific survey samples representative of the general population.

A reverse phone-match, which attaches a telephone number to an address, was also performed on the ABS sample. The reverse phone-match provided wireless and landline phone numbers, allowing potential respondents to be contacted by mail and/or phone to further ensure complete coverage. Multiple types of contact provided complete coverage regardless of whether residents had access to a telephone (to complete the survey by telephone) or the internet (to complete the survey online). The contact procedures are further discussed later in this section.

The sampling plan of the general population of Maine residents was designed to achieve a representative sample of residents both statewide and at the regional level for each of the Department's three regions (see Figure 1.1). The sample was stratified into the three regions previously discussed, with a pre-determined goal of completed surveys among residents in each region. Regional stratification was employed to achieve an acceptable sample size in each region (for the analysis of statewide results, the data were weighted so that the regions were in their proper proportions).

Samples of Hunters and Trappers

The Department provided a database of licensed hunters and another database of licensed trappers; each person in each database had a license that was valid for 2018 or 2019. Each database contained names and postal mail addresses of all hunters/trappers. Additionally, some of the hunters and trappers in the databases had telephone numbers and/or email addresses. From each database, a random sample was pulled for each of the three regions and for nonresidents. Potential respondents were contacted by email, mail, and telephone. The contact procedures are further discussed later in this section.

The sampling plan of licensed hunters and trappers was designed to achieve a representative sample of each population separately, both in its entirety and at the regional level for each of the Department's three regions (see Figure 1.1). The sample was stratified into the three regions previously discussed and included a fourth stratum of nonresident license holders, with a pre-determined goal of completed surveys in each stratum. Stratification was employed to achieve an acceptable sample size in each stratum.

For overall results, licensed hunters and licensed trappers were analyzed separately. The data were weighted so that the strata were in their proper proportions for each population, which were determined by their actual proportions in the databases. Note that some license holders were in both databases (i.e., they had both a hunting and a trapping license), and the sample design and subsequent tracking accounted for this, as each license holder was classified as being a hunter only, a trapper only, or as both. Those who are both a hunter and a trapper received the applicable survey questions for both groups and were included in the data and in the results for each separate sample.

Sample of Private Landowners

The sample of private landowners was obtained from a database of likely owners of large tracts of land, provided by MSG. A screener question in the survey ensured that all landowners owned at least 25 contiguous acres. Each record in the sample contained a name (albeit a few of the names were farm names rather than a person), a postal address, and a telephone number.

Potential respondents were contacted by mail and telephone. The contact procedures are further discussed later in this section.

The sample of private landowners was stratified into the three regions previously discussed (see Figure 1.1), with a pre-determined goal of completed surveys in each region. Stratification was employed to achieve an acceptable sample size in each region.

Note that the total number in the population of private landowners of 25 or more contiguous acres in Maine is not immediately discernible without extensive property and deed research in each individual county of Maine. The proportions of landowners within the total population also cannot be calculated at the regional level; therefore, the strata data cannot be accurately weighted and put together proportionately to examine the results statewide. For this reason, the survey results for private landowners in this report are shown only by region and not statewide.

Commercial / Industrial Landowners

A list of extremely large landowners was provided by the Department. Each of these landowners owned at least 100,000 acres and were typically commercial or industrial businesses. Each record in the database contained an entity name, a contact person, an email address, and a telephone number. There were 13 records in the database, but one was a duplicate, leaving a total of 12 extremely large landowners.

Responsive Management conducted a census of this group in that an attempt was made to survey an individual at every entity—in other words, these extremely large landowners were not sampled because all of them were contacted. This group was surveyed only by telephone, although initial contact was made by email. The contact procedures are further discussed later in this section.

Because this was a census, the results for this group are shown in tables that show the total number of respondents giving a particular response rather than percentages, which are unnecessary when reporting results with such a small population.

CONTACT PROCEDURES

Each group had different procedures for contact determined by available contact information, although there were similarities from group to group. During survey administration while potential respondents were being contacted, the Department posted an announcement on its website confirming the legitimacy of the study, explaining its purpose, and letting people know they could be contacted by Responsive Management to complete the survey. Figure 1.2 shows the Department website announcement.

The screenshot shows the website for the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife. The header includes the state logo, navigation links for Agencies, Online Services, and Help, and a search bar. The main navigation menu lists various categories like Hunting & Trapping, Fishing & Boating, and Game Warden. The page content is dated October 30, 2019, and features a news article titled "MDIFW NEWS: Responsive Management Conducting Furbearer Survey". The article text explains the survey's purpose, participation requirements, and provides contact information for the survey and a public forum. A photograph of a beaver is included on the right side of the article. The footer contains sections for Credits, Information, Connect with Us (with social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram), and Contact Information (including physical, mailing, and phone addresses).

Figure 1.2. Department Website Announcement Regarding the Survey

Contact of Residents

For the general population sample, all scientifically selected individuals had an address, and a phone-match provided telephone numbers when possible. Those with a telephone number were called by telephone, and those without a telephone number were mailed a postcard. As mentioned previously, this approach was used for complete coverage.

For those contacted by telephone, a five-callback design was used to maintain the representativeness of the telephone component of the sample, to avoid bias toward people easy to reach by telephone, and to provide an equal opportunity for all residents in the sample with a telephone number to participate. When a respondent 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 respondent. Telephone surveying times were Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Saturday from noon to 8:00 p.m., and Sunday from 2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., local time.

Those in the general population sample without a telephone number were sent a postcard, which provided a direct URL address for the survey to take it online, as well as a toll-free number to call if they preferred to take the survey by telephone. The toll-free number allowed respondents to contact Responsive Management to take the survey by telephone at that time or schedule another time for the telephone interview. The postcard included the logo of the Department to assure recipients that the survey was legitimate.

Each postcard included a unique access code that the respondent had to enter in the online survey or give to the interviewer to complete the survey by telephone. The access code served as a unique identifier and ensured that only those who were selected for the survey sample could take the survey, that respondents who had taken the survey would not be further contacted, and that respondents could take the survey only once. The survey could not be accessed through a general internet search. Figures 1.3 and 1.4 show the front and back of the postcard for the general population.



Figure 1.3. Front of the General Population Contact Postcard

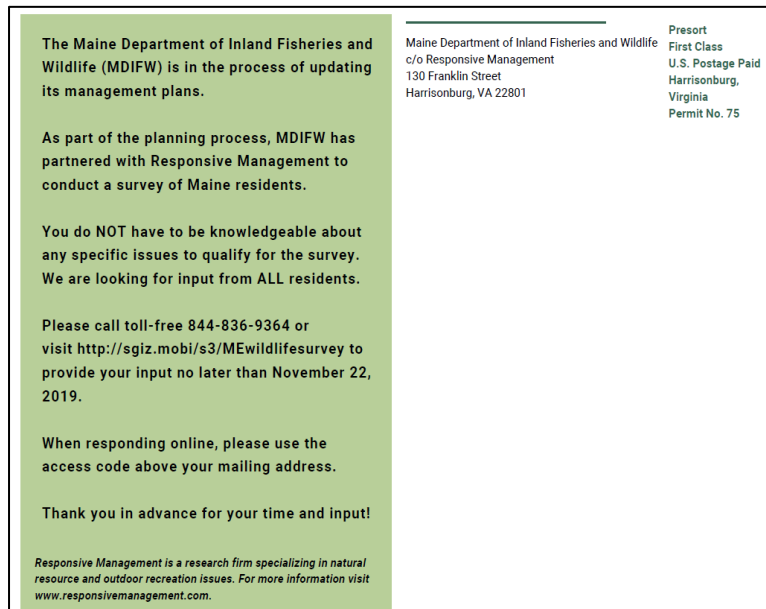


Figure 1.4. Back of the General Population Contact Postcard

Contact of Hunters and Trappers

The samples of hunters and trappers were randomly selected prior to determining the contact options for each respondent. In other words, the samples were completely random from the database of licensed hunters and licensed trappers. After they were selected, a determination was made regarding the contact procedures based on the forms of contact that the record for each potential respondent contained.

Those hunters and trappers in the sample with an email address were first contacted by email with an invitation to take the survey. The email contained a direct link to the online survey, as well as a brief description of the purpose of the survey. Note that incorrect and failed email addresses that could not be corrected were removed, and the hunter/trapper was then returned to the sample to be contacted by telephone (if a number was available) or by postcard, as described in the following pages.

As many as three emails were sent to hunters and trappers in the sample with valid email addresses: one initial email and two reminder emails. The initial emails were sent to hunters on November 4, 2019, and to trappers on November 5, 2019. Reminder emails were sent to both hunters and trappers who had not yet responded to the survey on November 8 and again on November 15, 2019. Three example emails are shown in the report. Figure 1.5 shows the emails sent to those in the sample who were only hunters or only trappers (each group was sent a separate email). Figure 1.6 shows the email sent to those who had both a hunting and trapping license.

Dear Licensed Hunter,

The [Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife \(MDIFW\)](#) is in the process of updating its statewide management plans and needs your feedback. As a licensed Maine hunter, we are asking you to please share your experiences and opinions with us.

[Click Here to Start the Survey](#)

To confirm that this survey is being conducted for MDIFW, please visit the Department's [website](#), scroll down the main page to LATEST NEWS on the left, and click on the 10/30/2019 news link, "Responsive Management Conducting Furbearer Survey." You can visit the MDIFW website here: <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/>.


For this study, MDIFW has contracted with Responsive Management, a survey research firm specializing in natural resource and outdoor recreation issues, to conduct a survey of Maine residents, hunters, trappers, and landowners. You are one of a small number of individuals with a Maine hunting license that has been chosen at random to participate, and your responses will represent many other hunters.

Your participation in the survey is entirely voluntary, and your response will never be shared with an outside party or linked to your name. The survey should take no more than 10 to 12 minutes to complete.

[Click Here to Start the Survey](#)

Thank you in advance for your time and participation. We look forward to your feedback.

Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife



Dear Licensed Trapper,

The [Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife \(MDIFW\)](#) is in the process of updating its statewide management plans and needs your feedback. As a licensed Maine trapper, we are asking you to please share your experiences and opinions with us.

[Click Here to Start the Survey](#)

To confirm that this survey is being conducted for MDIFW, please visit the Department's [website](#), scroll down the main page to LATEST NEWS on the left, and click on the 10/30/2019 news link, "Responsive Management Conducting Furbearer Survey." You can visit the MDIFW website here: <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/>.

For this study, MDIFW has contracted with Responsive Management, a survey research firm specializing in natural resource and outdoor recreation issues, to conduct a survey of Maine residents, hunters, trappers, and landowners. You are one of a small number of individuals with a Maine trapping license that has been chosen at random to participate, and your responses will represent many other trappers.

Your participation in the survey is entirely voluntary, and your response will never be shared with an outside party or linked to your name. The survey should take no more than 10 to 12 minutes to complete.

[Click Here to Start the Survey](#)

Thank you in advance for your time and participation. We look forward to your feedback.

Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife




Figure 1.5. Email Sent to Licensed Hunters (left) and Licensed Trappers (right) Inviting Them to Take the Survey

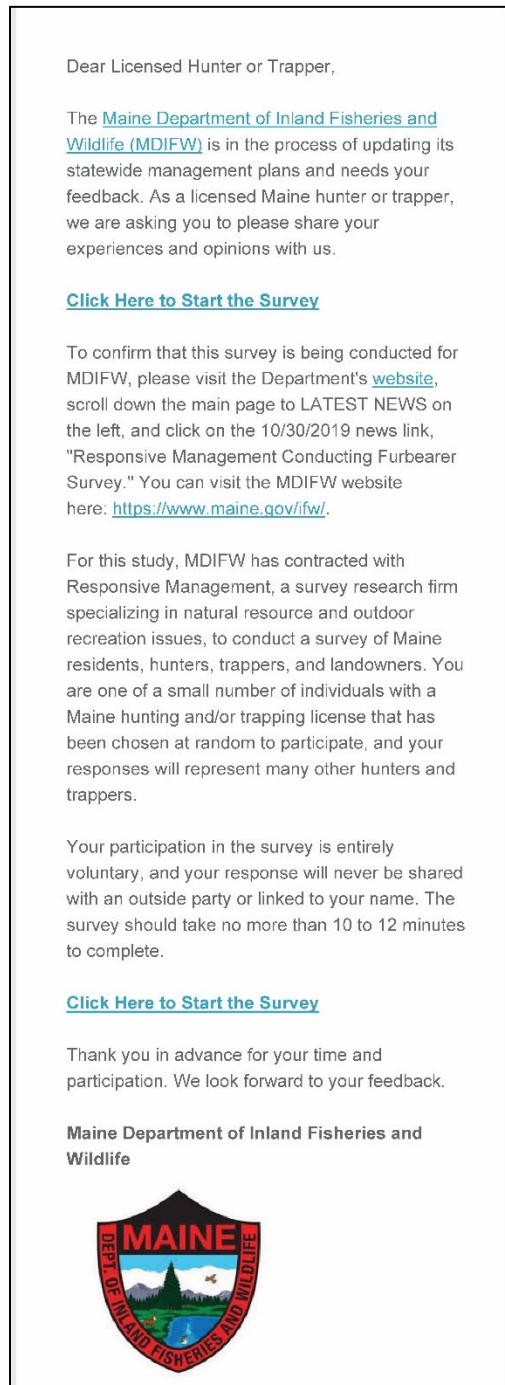


Figure 1.6. Email Sent to Those Who Had Both a Hunting and Trapping License Inviting Them to Take the Survey

For those contacted by telephone, the same five-callback design and calling times were used as with the general population to maintain the representativeness of the telephone component of the sample, to avoid bias toward people easy to reach by telephone, and to provide an equal opportunity for all hunters and trappers in the sample with a telephone number to participate.

Those hunters and trappers without either an email address or a telephone number were sent a postcard. The postcards were the same as the example for the general population shown previously (Figures 1.3 and 1.4) with slight wording adjustments so that it was directed toward hunters and trappers rather than Maine residents. Additionally, the direct URL address provided for the survey was different to assist with tracking samples. The postcards also included a toll-free number if potential respondents preferred to take the survey by telephone.

As with the general population postcards, each postcard included a unique access code that the hunter or trapper had to enter in the online survey or give to the interviewer to complete the survey by telephone. The access code served as a unique identifier and ensured that only those who were selected for the survey sample could take the survey, that respondents who had taken the survey would not be further contacted, and that respondents could take the survey only once. The survey could not be accessed through a general internet search.

Contact of Private Landowners

The sample of private landowners contained a name, postal address, and telephone number for each record. Potential respondents were contacted by mail and/or telephone. Those contacted by telephone were surveyed at that time, or an appointment time was set for a survey time that was more convenient to the landowner. Those contacted by postcard were provided a direct URL address for the survey to take it online, as well as a toll-free number to call if they preferred to take the survey by telephone.

For those contacted by telephone, the same five-callback design and calling times were used as with the general population and licensed hunters and trappers to maintain the representativeness of the telephone component of the sample, to avoid bias toward people easy to reach by telephone, and to provide an equal opportunity for all private landowners in the sample to participate.

For those contacted by mail, the postcards were the same as the example for the general population shown previously (Figures 1.3 and 1.4) with slight wording adjustments so that it was directed toward landowners. Additionally, the direct URL address for the survey was different to assist with tracking samples.

As with the general population and licensed hunter and trapper postcards, each postcard included a unique access code that the landowner had to enter in the online survey or give to the interviewer to complete the survey by telephone. The access code served as a unique identifier and ensured that only those who were selected for the survey sample could take the survey, that respondents who had taken the survey would not be further contacted, and that respondents could take the survey only once. The survey could not be accessed through a general internet search.

Contact of Commercial/Industrial Landowners

All landowners in the database of commercial/industrial landowners of at least 100,000 acres that was provided by the Department were contacted by email and telephone; all surveys were completed by telephone. The initial contact of the individual representatives for the entities in the database was made by email. The email message was personalized to the individual and requested a reply either by email or by calling Responsive Management to schedule a time for the survey to be administered.

Three days after the initial email was sent, those who had not responded were called to attempt to set up a time for the survey. Messages were left at those telephone numbers that were not answered. At least five attempts were made to contact each person who had not responded. In total, 7 of the 12 commercial/industrial landowners on the list were surveyed.

DATA COLLECTION

Contact and survey administration primarily occurred throughout November 2019; actual survey administration dates were provided previously in Table 1.1. This section provides descriptions of the data collection facilities and quality control procedures.

Data Collection and Surveying Facilities

A central data collection and polling site at the Responsive Management office allowed for rigorous quality control over the telephone interviews and online data collection. Responsive Management maintains its own in-house telephone interviewing and data gathering facilities. These facilities are staffed by interviewers and data managers with experience conducting computer-assisted telephone interviews and online surveys on the subjects of outdoor recreation and natural resources.

To ensure the integrity of the telephone survey data portion of the study, Responsive Management has interviewers who have been trained according to the standards established by the Council of American Survey Research Organizations. Methods of instruction include lecture and role-playing. The survey center managers and other professional staff conducted a project briefing with the interviewers prior to the administration of the survey. Interviewers were instructed on study goals and objectives, the details of the study, handling of survey questions, interview length, termination points and qualifiers for participation, interviewer instructions within the survey questionnaires, reading of the survey questions, skip patterns, and probing and clarifying techniques necessary for specific questions on the survey questionnaire.

Quality Control

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.

As previously discussed, the online survey was closed, meaning it was available only to respondents who were specifically selected for the survey and subsequently provided with a direct URL address for the survey and a unique access code required to enter the survey. The survey could not be accessed through a general internet search.

For the telephone interviews, the survey data were entered into the computer as each interview was being conducted, eliminating manual data entry after the completion of the survey and the concomitant data entry errors that may occur with manual data entry. The survey center managers and statisticians monitored the telephone data collection, including monitoring of the actual telephone interviews without the interviewers' knowledge to evaluate the performance of each interviewer and ensure the integrity of the data.

After both the online and telephone surveys were obtained, the survey center managers and/or statisticians checked each completed survey to ensure clarity and completeness. Table 1.1 (page 2) shows the number of completed surveys obtained for each population being surveyed, including the regional breakdown of the general population, licensed hunters and trappers, and private landowners.

ANALYSIS OF SURVEY DATA

The survey data were analyzed using IBM SPSS as well as Responsive Management's proprietary software. The general population data were weighted by age, gender, and outdoor recreation participation within each region, and then the regions were weighted to be in their proper proportions for statewide data. The hunters and trappers were weighted by region for overall results. No weighting was applied to the landowner data, and the landowner results are shown only by region.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSES GRAPHS

In addition to graphs depicting the results of each individual survey question, the report includes special graphs that show how various demographic groups respond to certain questions. An example is provided as Figure 1.7 on the following page. The example shows the percentages of the various groups who went hunting in Maine in the past 12 months.

Figure 1.7 shows that the overall hunting participation rate in the past 12 months among all residents is 13%, as indicated by the patterned bar. Those groups shown above the overall bar have a higher rate of hunting participation compared to residents overall. Meanwhile, those groups shown below the overall bar have a lower rate of hunting participation compared to residents overall.

When one group is above the overall bar (for instance, in this example, males), its counterpart (in this instance, females) is below the overall bar. The distance from the overall bar matters, as well. Those groups far from the overall bar have a marked difference from residents overall (in this example, all groups at 17% or higher or at 8% or lower). Those groups near the overall bar do not have a marked difference (in this example, all groups at 16% to 9%).

Additionally, the amount shown (for instance, that 41% of those who ever hunted went hunting in the past 12 months) means that the converse (59%, which is the converse of 41%) did *not* do that activity. In other words, the finding that 41% of those who ever hunted went hunting in the past 12 months means that 59% of those who ever hunted did *not* go hunting in the past 12 months. As an additional example, 20% of males went hunting in the past 12 months, meaning that 80% of males did *not* go hunting in the past 12 months.

The demographic variables examined are as follows:

- Gender (male, female).
- Age (younger than the median age, median age or older).
- Children in household (has children in household, does not have children in household).
- Education level (less than a bachelor's degree, bachelor's degree or higher).
- Residence (rural, small city or town, suburban, large city or urban area).
- Region (North/East Region, Central Region, South Region).

Strictly speaking, not all of the variables in these demographic analyses graphs are demographic, as some of them are based on participation in hunting and trapping, and some of them are based on opinion. These non-demographic variables are as follows:

- Trapping experience (has ever trapped, has never trapped).
- Hunting experience (has ever hunted, has never hunted).
- Approval/disapproval of trapping (approves of trapping, disapproves of trapping; this means that there is a third group that consists of those who answered “don't know” to the question or who are neutral, and they are not shown on the graph to improve legibility).

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 groups defined by the individual characteristics, which sometimes are mutually exclusive.

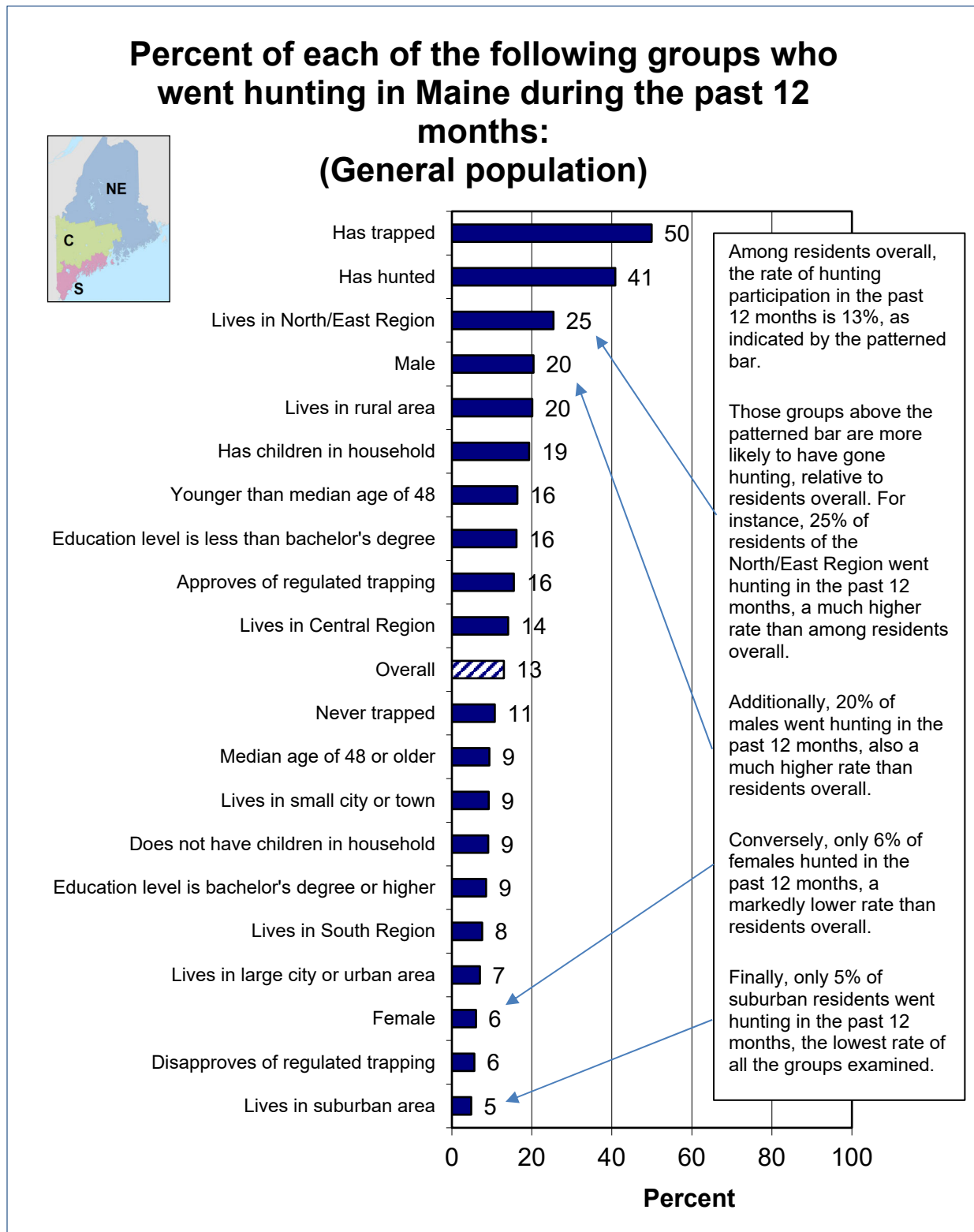


Figure 1.7. How to Interpret the Demographic Analyses Graphs

REGIONAL PUBLIC MEETINGS

To obtain public input from any Maine residents who chose to provide it, Responsive Management facilitated four public meetings. The ideal structure for public meetings combines a neutral, third-party mediator with an agency presence. These meetings followed that structure, mediated by Responsive Management's trained staff.

The meetings were publicized on the Department website (Figure 1.8 shows the website announcement), as well as in various news media outlets and the websites of Maine outdoors organizations. Additionally, emails were sent by the Department to its list of approximately 250,000 stakeholders. These emails were sent on November 8 and 19, and December 2, 2019.

The meetings were held in Portland on December 3, Orono on December 3, Augusta on December 4, and Presque Isle on December 5, 2019. The public meetings provided a structured open forum in which Maine residents were able to share with Department staff their thoughts on priority issues and concerns related to furbearer management and trapping in the state.

Each meeting was facilitated by Responsive Management staff and began with a brief presentation of selected results from the general population portion of the survey regarding furbearer management in the state. Rules for public input were then explained to the attendees, including one speaker at a time, a time limit for comments made during the meeting, restrictions on open debate and challenges to other members of the audience, and adherence to the established topic of the meeting. These rules are important because back-and-forth comments among participants are discouraged during professionally mediated public meetings.

Public meetings were held in hotel conference rooms (Portland, Orono, and Presque Isle) and a civic center (Augusta) and generally lasted approximately 2 to 3 hours. The public meeting schedule was distributed to major media and news outlets around the state several weeks prior to the meetings. The meeting schedule was also posted on sportsmen's blogs and outdoor interest websites and was included in an email message sent by the Department to all Maine hunting and trapping license holders with a valid email address. Responsive Management also publicized the meeting schedule via the online public forum devoted to furbearer management topics (see further discussion of the online forum in the next section).

The meeting contents were analyzed qualitatively for this report. As appropriate for research entailing observation and discussion, no quantitative statistical analyses were conducted on the comments from the public meetings.

The screenshot shows the website for the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife. The page features a navigation menu with categories like 'About', 'Hunting & Trapping', 'Fishing & Boating', 'ATV & Snowmobile', 'Fish & Wildlife', 'Game Wardens', 'Maine Wildlife Park', 'Programs & Resources', and 'News & Events'. The main content area displays a news article dated November 15, 2019, titled 'MDIFW NEWS: Department Seeks Public Input On Maine's Furbearers At Public Meetings And Online Forum'. The article text includes: 'For Immediate Release: November 15, 2019', 'Department Seeks Public Input On Maine's Furbearers At Public Meetings And Online Forum', 'AUGUSTA, Maine -- The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife wants to hear your ideas and opinions about the management of Maines furbearers - a diverse group of mammals that includes coyote, red and gray fox, bobcat, fisher, marten, raccoon, skunk, short and long-tailed weasels, mink, otter, beaver, muskrat, and opossum.', 'During the first week of December, the Department will hold a series of statewide public meetings that will focus on furbearers. The meetings are designed to gather ideas and information from the public that will help shape management of these species over the next fifteen years.', '“We are looking for input from the public that will help guide our furbearer management efforts over the next fifteen years,” said Nate Webb. Weve already conducted extensive public surveys, but this is your chance to provide additional input on the management of these species for years to come.', 'In addition to public meetings, IFW is creating a dedicated online forum at <https://www.maine-furbearerforum.org/> to provide a further opportunity for residents to voice their opinions on furbearer issues.', 'Starting November 7, residents will be able to access the online forum website and leave comments and suggestions at <https://www.maine-furbearerforum.org/>. The website will stay live until December 7, at which point comments will be reviewed. Residents are encouraged to log onto the website during the month of November to submit responses to prepared questions as well as interact with one another in an exchange of opinions and ideas.', 'There will also be a series of public meetings around the state to hear peoples thoughts and ideas regarding species management. A list of locations and time and date are listed below.', 'Furbearer Management Public Meetings', 'Portland: Tuesday, December 3 at 6:30 p.m.; Fireside Inn and Suites 81 Riverside Street, Portland, ME 04103', 'Orono: Tuesday, December 3 at 6:30 p.m; Black Bear Inn, 4 Godfrey Drive, Orono, ME 04473', 'Augusta: Wednesday, December 4 at 6:30 p.m.; Augusta Civic Center, 76 Community Drive, Augusta, ME 04330', 'Presque Isle: Thursday, December 5 at 6:30 p.m.; Northeastland Hotel, 436 Maine Street, Presque Isle, ME 04769', 'The meetings and online forum are part of a larger study designed to assess priorities for furbearer management, including the issues residents see as important; their attitudes toward the current and desired population levels of various species; management techniques for these species; and any ideas for potential changes to the current management programs. Input from the public will help MDIFW create the best management plans possible.', 'MDIFW contracted with Responsive Management, an internationally recognized public opinion research firm, to conduct the research for the state. Responsive Management is handling the facilitation of the public meetings as well as the administration of the online forum. The firm has also conducted focus groups and surveys with Maine residents, hunters, trappers, and landowners as part of the research.', 'Maine residents may have received a call, email, or letter in recent weeks inviting them to participate in one of the scientific surveys conducted for the project. The next phase of the project calls for a wider opportunity for residents to submit comments and suggestions in an open-ended manner via the public meetings and online forum. For more information about Responsive Management, please visit www.ResponsiveManagement.com.', 'For further information about the research study, please contact Nate Webb, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, at nathan.webb@maine.gov.', '#'

The footer contains sections for 'Credits', 'Information' (with links to Maine.gov, Site Policies, Accessibility, Document Viewers, MDIFW Home, and Sitemap), 'Connect with Us' (with social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram), and 'Contact Information' (with physical and mailing addresses, phone, fax, TTY, and email).

Figure 1.8. Department Website Announcement Regarding the Public Meetings and Online Public Input Forum

ONLINE PUBLIC INPUT FORUM

To gather additional qualitative data and to provide the opportunity for all Maine residents to contribute their opinions and provide input on furbearer management, the researchers developed an online public forum featuring open-ended discussion threads. The primary purpose of the online forum was to allow the public—particularly those who could not attend any of the public meetings or who were hesitant to speak in front of others at a public meeting—to provide input. The online forum was available to the public November to December 2019.

The forum was maintained on a dedicated website (www.maine-furbearer-forum.org). The forum homepage (shown in Figure 1.9) explained that the research was being conducted by Responsive Management, explained what furbearers are, and explained other elements of the project. The online forum was live prior to the public meetings, and the homepage indicated when and where the public meetings would be held.

An *About the Project* page was included that explained that the Department was updating its statewide furbearer management plan, thus putting the project in context, and again explained that the research was being conducted by Responsive Management (Figure 1.10). This page listed the information being sought from this study.

The overall forum website included sub-forum pages on specific aspects of the issues. The sub-forum themes were general furbearer management issues (Figure 1.11), hunting and trapping issues (Figure 1.12), and human-wildlife conflicts, or nuisance wildlife, issues (Figure 1.13). Hereinafter, the term “forum” will be used to refer to any one of these three sub-forums. Each forum posed questions as a way to facilitate discussion and comments on the page.

Another page on the forum website was dedicated to information about the public meetings, encouraging all who wanted to participate to attend (Figure 1.14). The page showed the times and locations of the public meetings.

Contributors to the forum could comment anonymously or include personal information. As indicated previously, within each forum, specific questions about current and possible future furbearer management strategies were posed to get the discussion started; however, although questions and potential topics were offered by the researchers, contributors were encouraged to discuss other topics, as long as they pertained to furbearer management in the state. Forum visitors had the opportunity to engage with one another in a typical online discussion format, as well. Responsive Management maintained a moderating presence in each forum (e.g., removing comments that violated forum rules, such as those that personally attacked other commenters) but otherwise did not engage with forum participants in any way. Nine comments were removed by the forum moderator; however, every comment deleted from the public forum was saved by Responsive Management and later included in the analysis of forum content.

Finally, a contact page within the forum provided an email address at which to contact Responsive Management for any questions that contributors might have or to send completely confidential comments (Figure 1.15).

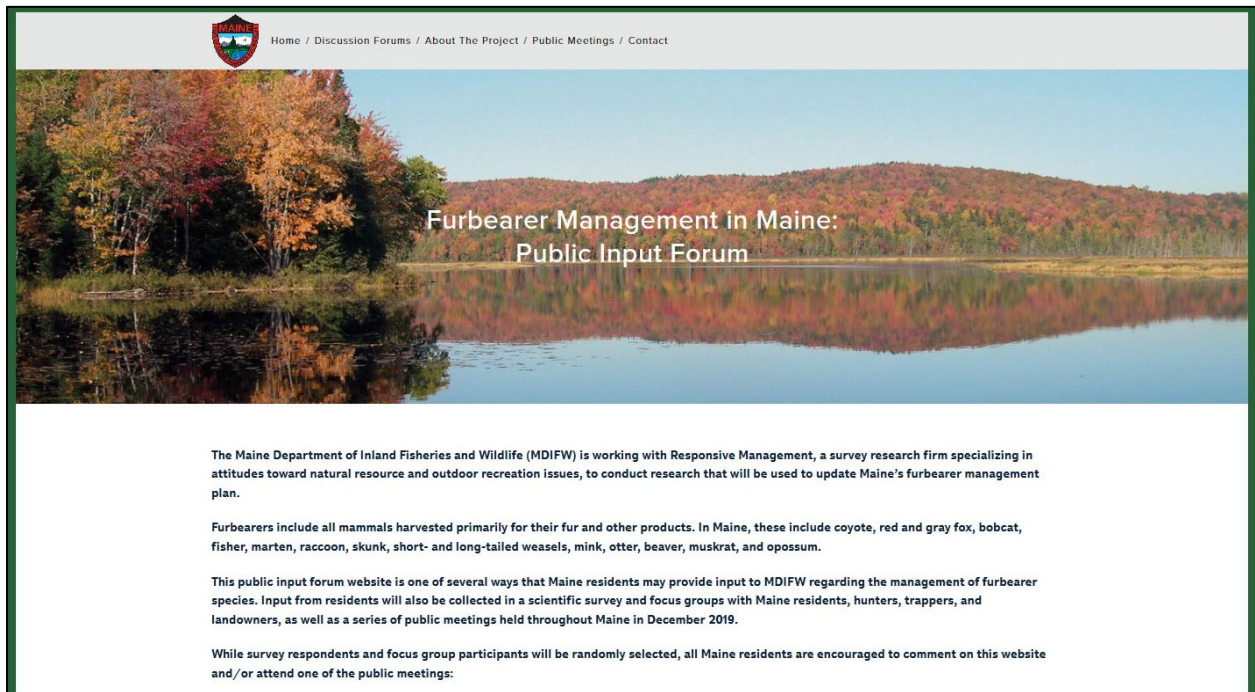


Figure 1.9. Online Forum Homepage

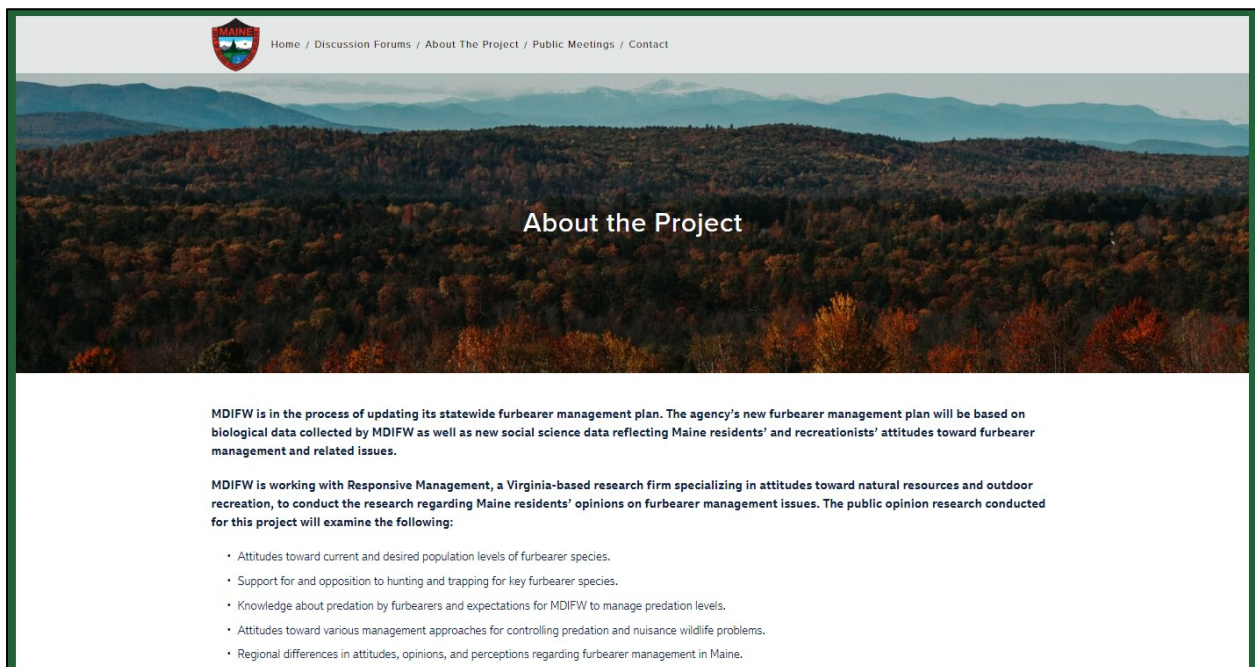


Figure 1.10. About the Project Page

Home / Discussion Forums / About The Project / Public Meetings / Contact

General Furbearer Management Issues

Maine's furbearer species include coyote, red and gray fox, bobcat, fisher, marten, raccoon, skunk, short- and long-tailed weasels, mink, otter, beaver, muskrat, and opossum.

Consider the following questions:

- Do you have any thoughts or concerns about the management of furbearers in Maine that you would like MDIFW to know about?
- Are you concerned about any furbearer species in particular? Which ones? Why?
- What specific information about furbearer management would you like to have from MDIFW?
- What issues about furbearer management should MDIFW consider in the future?

Please click on the "Comment" link below to post a comment.

Figure 1.11. General Furbearer Management Issues Forum

Home / Discussion Forums / About The Project / Public Meetings / Contact

Hunting and Trapping Issues

Maine's furbearer species include coyote, red and gray fox, bobcat, fisher, marten, raccoon, skunk, short- and long-tailed weasels, mink, otter, beaver, muskrat, and opossum.

Consider the following questions:

- Do you hunt or trap furbearers? What would you like MDIFW to know about your experiences hunting and trapping furbearers in Maine?
- Do you have thoughts or concerns about current practices and regulations related to furbearer hunting and trapping in Maine? If so, what are they?
- What specific information about furbearer hunting and trapping in Maine would you like to have from MDIFW?
- What issues about furbearer hunting and trapping in Maine should MDIFW consider in the future?

Please click on the "Comment" link below to post a comment.

Figure 1.12. Hunting and Trapping Issues Forum

Home / Discussion Forums / About The Project / Public Meetings / Contact

Nuisance Wildlife Issues

Maine's furbearer species include coyote, red and gray fox, bobcat, fisher, marten, raccoon, skunk, short- and long-tailed weasels, mink, otter, beaver, muskrat, and opossum.

Consider the following questions:

- What problems or issues, if any, have you had with nuisance furbearers in Maine?
- What should be the role of MDIFW in the management of nuisance wildlife in Maine? Should MDIFW have a different role when dealing with larger nuisance species like deer and bear than when dealing with small furbearer species?
- What role should regulated hunting and trapping play in the management of nuisance furbearers?
- What specific information about nuisance furbearers in Maine would you like to have from MDIFW?
- What issues about nuisance furbearer management should MDIFW consider in the future?

Figure 1.13. Nuisance Wildlife Issues Forum

Home / Discussion Forums / About The Project / Public Meetings / Contact

Public Meetings

Maine residents are encouraged to attend one of the four public meetings on furbearer management that will be held this December in Portland, Orono, Augusta, and Presque Isle.

The meetings will be facilitated by Responsive Management, and staff from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife will be present to listen to public input.

The public meeting schedule is as follows:

Portland	Orono	Augusta	Presque Isle
Tuesday, December 3 6:30 p.m. Fireside Inn and Suites 81 Riverside Street Portland, Maine 04103	Tuesday, December 3 6:30 p.m. Black Bear Inn 4 Godfrey Drive Orono, Maine 04473	Wednesday, December 4 6:30 p.m. Augusta Civic Center 76 Community Drive Augusta, Maine 04330	Thursday, December 5 6:30 p.m. Northeastland Hotel 436 Maine Street Presque Isle, Maine 04769

Figure 1.14. Information Page About Public Meetings

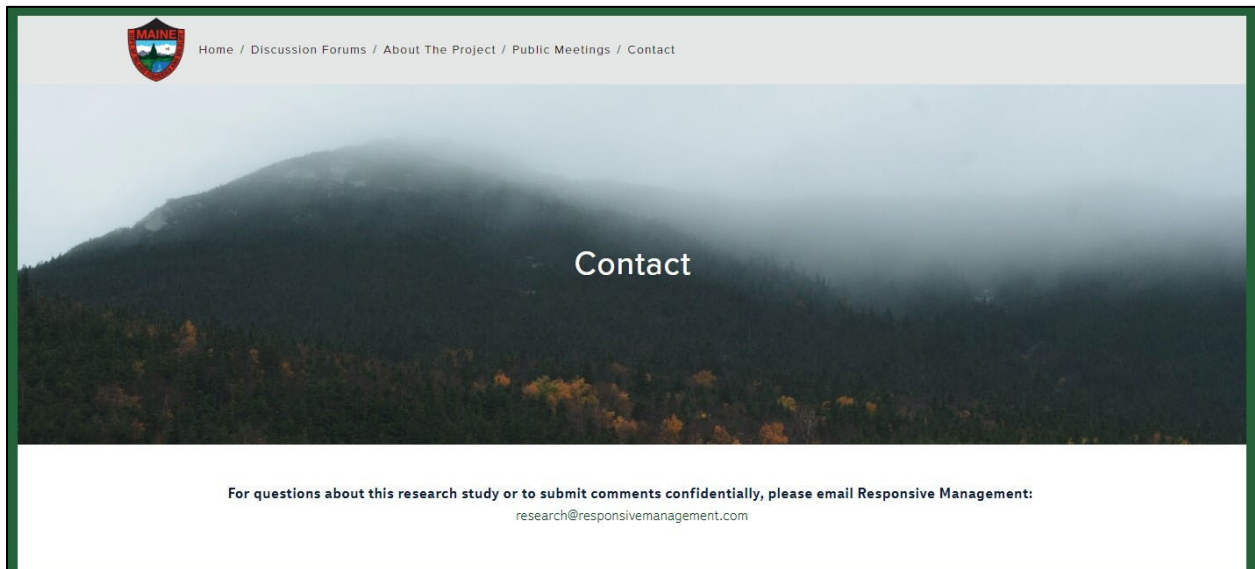


Figure 1.15. Contact Page for the Forum

Responsive Management coordinated with the Department to launch the online forum. The Department distributed releases and several reminders to a variety of outlets in an effort to ensure widespread awareness of the forum opportunity among Maine residents, hunters, trappers, and landowners. The news releases were sent to media outlets and outdoor interest websites, and email messages were sent to hunting and trapping license holders and others on the Department's email lists. The news releases and email messages included information on the forum purpose, website address, launch date, and active dates. Notices were also posted on the Department's website and social media platforms (Figure 1.8 on page 18 shows the Department's website announcement). After forum comments were submitted and the forum had been deactivated, Responsive Management conducted a content analysis of the results and discussion themes.

In addition to the online forum, Responsive Management maintained a dedicated email address available for residents to provide direct input into the study. This email address was listed on the online forum website as well as in news releases pertaining to the project. Comments from these confidential emails were considered and analyzed along with the other forum data.

FOCUS GROUPS

The project entailed four focus groups with the general population, hunters, trappers, and animal rights advocates held in Portland, Orono, and Presque Isle. The focus groups entailed in-depth, structured discussions with small groups (approximately 10 individuals) about their attitudes toward trapping and furbearer management in Maine. The use of focus groups is an accepted research technique for the qualitative exploration of attitudes, opinions, perceptions, motivations, constraints, and behaviors. Focus groups provide researchers with insights, new hypotheses, and understanding through the process of interaction.

Focus groups allow for extensive open-ended responses to questions, probing, follow-up questions, group discussion, and observation of emotional responses to topics—aspects that cannot be measured in a quantitative survey. Qualitative research sacrifices reliability for increased validity. This means that, although focus group findings cannot be replicated statistically as can survey findings (high reliability), they provide researchers with a more detailed understanding of the topics or issues of concern in the study (high validity).

The focus groups were conducted using a discussion guide. Each focus group was moderated by one of Responsive Management's trained moderators with extensive knowledge of hunting, trapping, outdoor recreation, and wildlife management. The moderators, through the use of the discussion guide, kept the discussions within design parameters without exerting a strong influence on the discussion content. In this sense, the focus groups were non-directive group discussions that exposed the spontaneous attitudes, insights, and perceptions of participants regarding furbearer species in Maine and regulated trapping, their opinions on priority furbearer management issues, and other topics relevant to furbearer and wildlife management. All focus group discussions were recorded for further analysis. At the end of the focus groups, any questions that participants had regarding the study were answered.

Focus groups differ from public meetings and any open public forum in that focus group participants are not self-selected for participation. Anyone can attend public meetings or post comments to online forums, but focus group participants are selected and recruited from a scientific random sample of the population being studied. Screener questions are administered during the recruitment process to ensure the focus group participants meet the requirements for the group. The recruitment process is discussed later in this section.

FOCUS GROUP LOCATIONS

As indicated above, the focus groups were conducted in three locations as follows: a general population group in Orono on December 2, an animal rights group in Portland on December 2, a group of hunters and trappers in Presque Isle on December 4, and a general population group also in Portland on December 5, 2019. Host facilities and reservations were coordinated by Responsive Management in consultation with the Department; facilities included a professional focus group research facility as well as hotel conference rooms. Responsive Management ensured that each focus group room was set up appropriately, including seating, recording equipment, and food arrangements. Refreshments were provided to focus group participants, and each group discussion was approximately 2 hours in duration.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT RECRUITING

Responsive Management coordinated the recruitment of the focus groups, which was done either directly by Responsive Management or by the focus group facility staff (depending on the group). Among those who met the criteria for the focus groups (e.g., hunters), the selection was random. In this way, special interest groups or others with an agenda (i.e., either for or against trapping) could not “pack” the focus group in an attempt to sway or influence the research, which would negatively affect the utility of the findings. Focus group recruiters contacted potential participants by telephone and email. Potential participants were given a brief summary of the focus group topic, fully screened using a screener questionnaire, and, if qualified, confirmed for attendance. The screener ensured that the focus group participants met the criteria established for each specific group, as well as applicable age requirements.

Confirmed participants were emailed or mailed (based on personal preference) a confirmation that included the date, time, and location of the focus group, as well as a map and directions to the focus group facility. Each participant was offered a reminder call before the focus group and provided a telephone number for directions or last-minute questions. To encourage participation, a monetary incentive of \$100 to \$125 was given to participants.

During the recruitment process, the recruiting manager maintained a progress table for each focus group that included participant name, address, contact telephone number, and essential participant characteristics. Each focus group’s target was 10 participants. The recruiting manager ensured that all confirmation emails or letters were sent promptly to participants and that reminder telephone calls were made, as necessary, before the focus group. Reminder calls and interaction with potential participants helped ensure their attendance, resulting in quality participation.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDES AND ANALYSIS

Each focus group was conducted using a discussion guide that allowed for consistency in the data collection. The discussion guide for each group included general questions as well as more specific questions addressing attitudes toward furbearer species and furbearer management concerns, as well as other pertinent topics such as regulated trapping and human-wildlife conflicts. Responsive Management conducted qualitative analyses of the focus groups through direct observation of the discussions by the moderators as well as through later observation and analysis of the recordings by other researchers. The organization and development of findings served as a third review of the focus groups as part of the qualitative analyses.

2. SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The following are the major findings from the research. These findings are a synthesis of all of the research components: the survey of the general population of Maine, the survey of hunters and trappers, a special data run of trapping opponents from the general population survey, the survey of large landowners, the public meetings, the online forum, and the focus groups.

The findings are arranged by theme because all of the components were used to develop the findings within each theme. Note that this section includes many references to figures and tables shown in other chapters of the report (these references begin with the chapter number); in other cases, certain figures and tables are also shown here for the reader's convenience. Finally, a few figures are unique to this chapter, having been produced for this summary specifically.

The summary of major findings starts with a look at approval or disapproval of trapping and the nuances of those opinions.

APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL OF TRAPPING

- **Three quarters of Maine residents (75%) approve of regulated trapping in general, while 17% disapprove (the rest being neutral).**

Strong approval was at 44%, and moderate approval was at 31% (see Figure 3.15). Note, however, that the 17% of Maine residents who *disapprove* of regulated trapping is not an insubstantial segment of the population: this equates to 806,717 adult Maine residents who approve of regulated trapping and 184,613 who disapprove. (Note that these figures do not include residents who gave a neutral or “don't know” response to the trapping approval/disapproval question.)

- **There are some regional differences in approval and disapproval of trapping. For the regional analysis of this question, the North/East Region was divided into its constituent parts (i.e., the North Region and the East Region) as shown in Figure 2.1. The East Region has the lowest approval of trapping by far.**

Approval of regulated trapping in the East Region is at 55%, compared to 78% in the North Region (summed on unrounded numbers), 75% in the Central Region, and 77% in the South Region. Disapproval of regulated trapping is at 31% in the East Region, compared to 20% in the North Region, 13% in the Central Region (summed on unrounded numbers), and 19% of the South Region.

The division of the North/East into separate regions for this analysis was done because the initial survey result—that the North/East Region as a whole showed lower approval of trapping than did the South Region—seemed counterintuitive to the researchers. Separating the North/East Region into its constituent regions allowed for analysis of approval in the separate regions, thereby helping to clarify the findings.

Note that this is the only survey question for which the North/East Region was divided into its constituent parts. In other words, it is the only survey question that entailed analysis by four regions instead of three (the three-region approach was decided on by the steering committee at the outset of the project so that the furbearer survey sampling stratification

would be consistent with the approach used for a big game management study conducted by Responsive Management for the Department in 2016).

In reading the entire report, keep in mind that findings ascribed to the North/East Region as a whole reflect the merging of the North Region and the East Region (and any attendant differences between residents' attitudes and characteristics in the two regions) into a single study region.

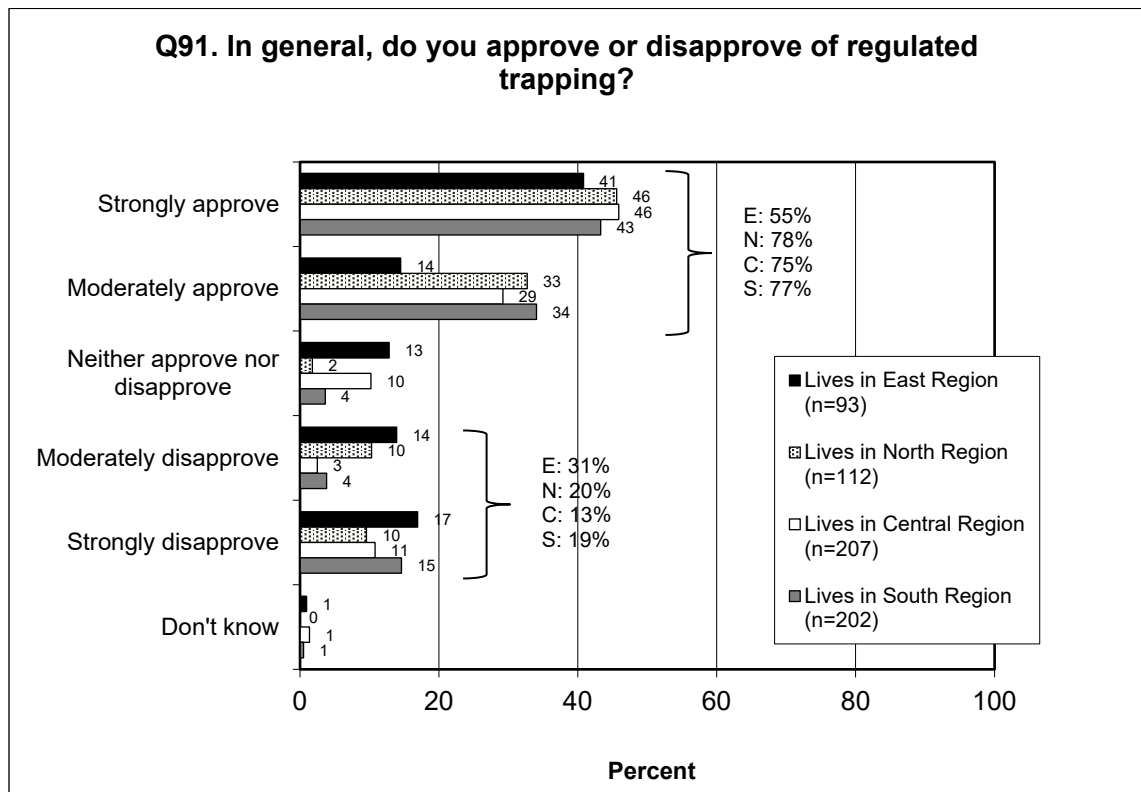


Figure 2.1. Approval and Disapproval of Regulated Trapping by Four State Regions

The research explored more about approval and disapproval of trapping among various demographic and attitudinal groups, as detailed Table 2.1. The table looks at approval and disapproval among various groups based on demographic characteristics.

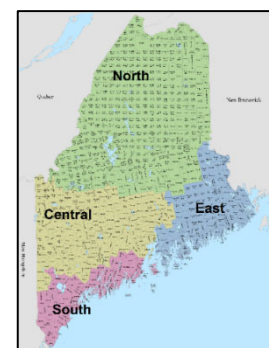


Table 2.1. Approval and Disapproval of Regulated Trapping by Various Groups Based on Demographic Characteristics

Respondent Group (by Demographic Characteristic)	Percent Who Approve of Regulated Trapping	Percent Who Disapprove of Regulated Trapping
General population	75	17
Licensed hunters (from hunter survey)	84	5
Licensed trappers (from trapper survey)	90	4
Landowners (from landowner survey)	76	16
Industrial/commercial landowners (from industrial/commercial landowner survey)	100	0
Anglers	85	8
Had problems with wildlife in past 2 years	83	12
Did not have problems with wildlife in past 2 years	70	21
Knows or ever knew a trapper (among non-trappers)	81	13
Never knew a trapper (among non-trappers)	67	23
Male	84	11
Female	67	23
White	77	17
Non-white	75	22
Lives in North Region	78	20
Lives in East Region	55	31
Lives in Central Region	75	13
Lives in South Region	77	19
Education level less than bachelor's degree	78	17
Education level of bachelor's degree or higher	75	17
Has children in household	82	10
Does not have children in household	73	21
Large city or urban area	81	11
Suburban area	81	9
Small city or town	79	15
Rural area on a farm	71	24
Rural area not on a farm	69	23
Younger than median age of 48	85	9
Median age of 48 or older	69	24
Table is based on responses to the survey question, "In general, do you approve or disapprove of regulated trapping?" Neutral and "don't know" responses are not included in the table.		

- **Characteristics associated with disapproval of regulated trapping include being female and being the median age of 48 years old or older.**

Strong disapproval of trapping among older and/or rural females is so persistent that it appears to influence a few other findings that run somewhat counter to expectations. For example, the survey found that residents of rural areas approve of trapping at lower rates than do residents of urban and suburban areas. A separate analysis comparing rural and non-rural males and females found that much of the overall disapproval among rural residents is driven by rural females, who are statistically more likely to *strongly* disapprove of trapping ($p < 0.01$) (Figure 2.2).

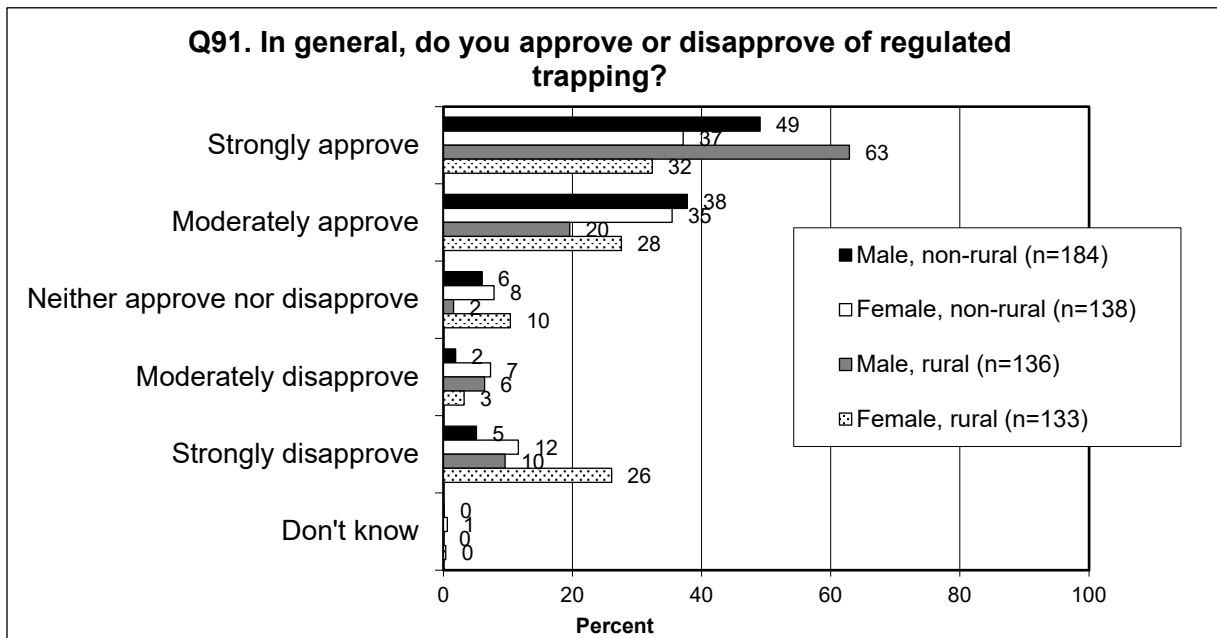


Figure 2.2. Approval and Disapproval of Regulated Trapping Among Rural and Non-Rural Males and Females

Similarly, the survey found that older residents approve of trapping at a lower rate than do younger residents: this tendency was influenced by older females, who are statistically more likely to *strongly* disapprove of trapping ($p < 0.01$) (also influential in this regard is the high rate of strong approval of trapping among younger males) (see Figure 2.3).

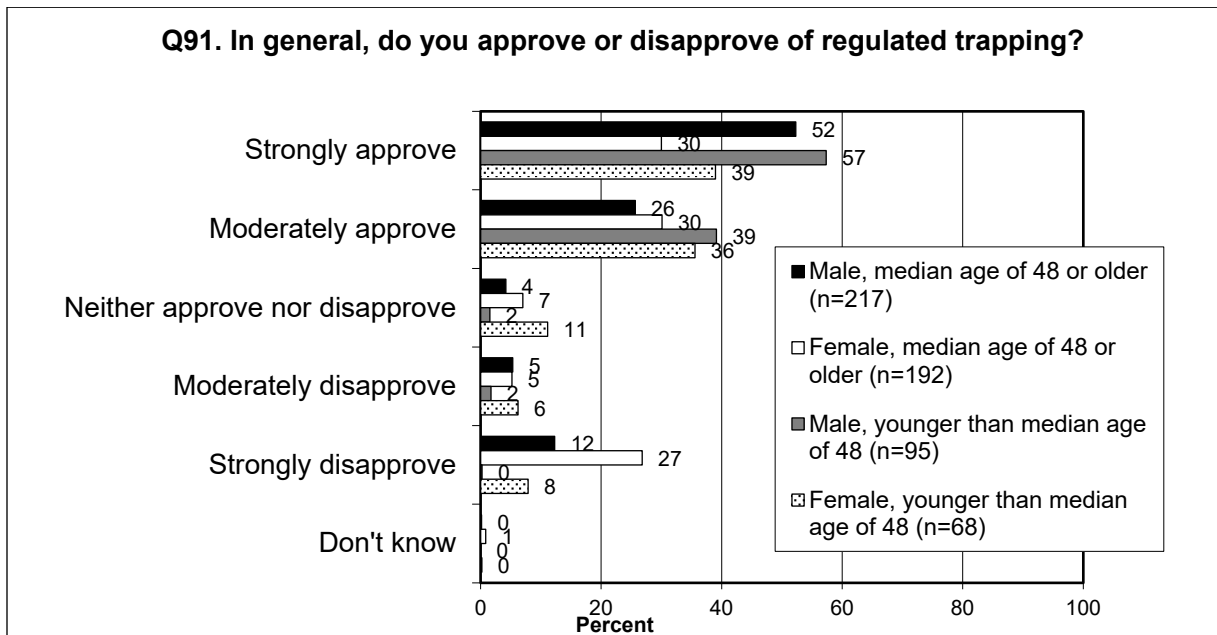


Figure 2.3. Approval and Disapproval of Regulated Trapping Among Younger and Older Males and Females

It is also possible that the phrase “regulated trapping” (as opposed to “legal trapping” or simply “trapping”) may have led to an alternate interpretation of the survey question regarding basic approval or disapproval. Respondents predisposed to being supportive of trapping may have interpreted the question as asking about *further* regulation of trapping, rather than simply trapping that is *regulated* as opposed to *unregulated*—this may have been objectionable to those who feel that trapping in Maine is already regulated enough, or that it is their inherent right to trap without regulation. This may have caused these individuals to say they strongly or moderately disapproved of what they perceived as additional trapping regulations.

- **An examination of other research about trapping shows that Maine is in the higher tier of states for approval of trapping.**

The last chapter of this report cites the studies used in this analysis, which looked at the U.S. as a whole and its component regions in one study and three states in another study. As can be seen in Figure 2.4, Wisconsin, Maine, and Indiana are in a markedly higher tier than the other entities.

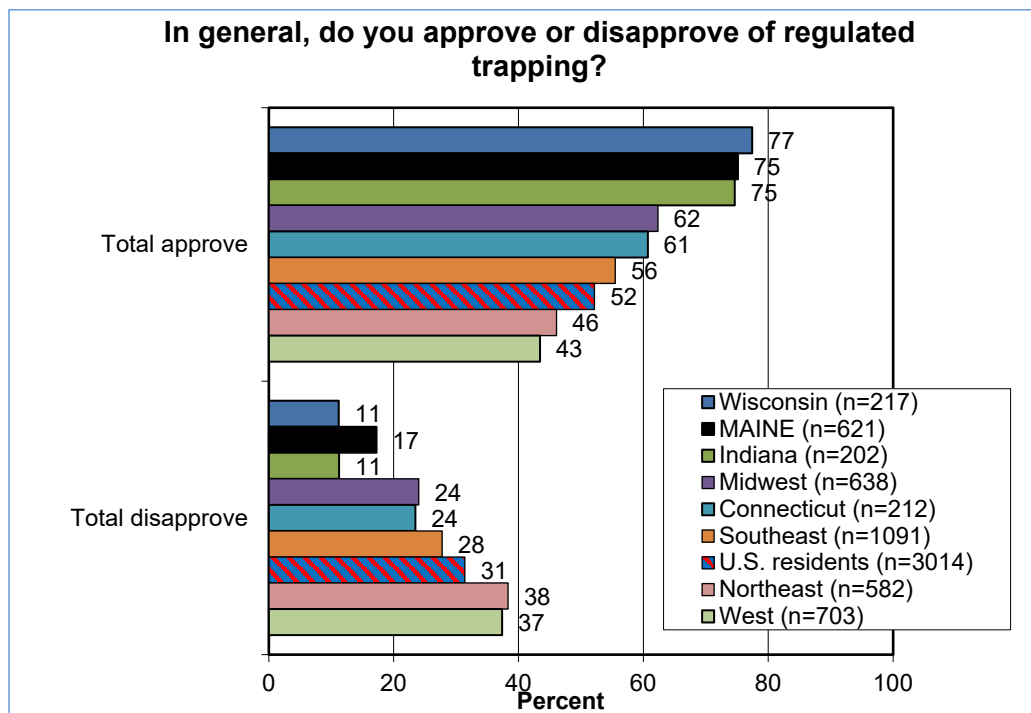


Figure 2.4. Approval and Disapproval of Regulated Trapping in the U.S., Its Regions, and Various States

- **Landowners are not any more approving or disapproving of trapping than the population as a whole, even though they experience more wildlife conflicts than do Maine residents in general.**

From 53% to 61% of large landowners experienced conflicts with wildlife in the 2 years prior to the survey (as shown in Figure 6.54). This is much higher than the rate among residents overall (37% among residents overall, as shown in Figure 3.120). However, rates of approval of trapping among landowners (73% to 81%, as shown in Figure 6.4) are about the

same as among residents overall (75%, as shown in Figure 3.15). Disapproval is about the same, as well. The bottom line is that even though large landowners had a greater rate of wildlife conflict, they are about the same as the general population in approval or disapproval of trapping. Table 2.2 looks at approval and disapproval among various groups based on attitudinal characteristics.

- **Disapproval of trapping does not always mean that the person wants to prohibit it entirely. While some people certainly want to prohibit trapping, some Maine residents who disapprove think other people should be allowed to trap.**

Among those who disapprove of trapping (hereinafter in this section referred to as “trapping opponents”), 39% nonetheless agree that people should have the freedom to choose to participate in trapping if they want to do so (see Figure 5.4). This means that not all trapping opponents want trapping outlawed. Interestingly, more people disagree that people should have the freedom to trap than disapprove of trapping itself (Figures 3.15 and 3.16). This suggests that people may not see trapping as a right.

Table 2.2. Approval and Disapproval of Regulated Trapping by Various Groups Based on Attitudinal Characteristics

Respondent Group (by Attitudinal Characteristic)	Percent Who Approve of Regulated Trapping	Percent Who Disapprove of Regulated Trapping
Aware that trapping is regulated by MDIFW	78	15
Not aware that trapping is regulated by MDIFW	61	29
Rates MDIFW as excellent in managing trapping	88	7
Rates MDIFW as fair or poor in managing trapping	54	40
Agrees that trapping is ok if animal dies quickly	88	5
Disagrees that trapping is ok if animal dies quickly	38	55
Agrees that trapping is ok if animals accidentally caught can be released	85	8
Disagrees that trapping is ok if animals accidentally caught can be released	27	65
Agrees that people are free to trap if they want to	82	10
Disagrees that people are free to trap if they want to	54	43
Agrees that trapping is more humane due to improvements in traps in past 10 years	87	8
Disagrees that trapping is more humane due to improvements in traps in past 10 years	50	43
Agrees that endangered species are used for fur	80	15
Disagrees that endangered species are used for fur	78	15
Agrees that trapping can make species endangered or extinct	68	24
Disagrees that trapping can make species endangered or extinct	82	11
Supports managing furbearers to reduce wildlife diseases	83	10
Opposes managing furbearers to reduce wildlife diseases	28	72
Table is based on responses to the survey question, “In general, do you approve or disapprove of regulated trapping?” Neutral and “don’t know” responses are not included in the table.		

One of the important takeaways from this study is that not all trapping opponents are alike in their disapproval of trapping. Some people disapprove of trapping in absolute terms, while others lean toward disapproval without feeling strongly. As discussed later in this section, the motivation or purpose of the trapping also matters: for example, trapping to resolve nuisance wildlife situations tends to be much more acceptable than trapping for recreation or for money. Note the following exchange from the Portland general population focus group:

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: That doesn't seem right, recreationally, it just seems like the cruelty is the point of that.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: It [referring specifically to trapping as recreation] makes my stomach hurt. It really does.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #3: It sounds more like sport and not for the right purpose.

Discussion in Portland general population focus group

It is also the case that some people who initially think of themselves as opponents of trapping reconsider when presented with information that explains how and why the trapping is done, as well as the regulations that are in place to ensure the sustainability of the species being trapped.

- **A segment of trapping opponents disapprove of trapping on moralistic grounds: that is, that the killing of any animal is incontrovertibly wrong from a moral standpoint.¹**

The qualitative research in particular, including comments from the forum and some of the public meetings and focus groups, suggests that a certain segment of Maine residents are firm in this position—see the following comment from a Portland focus group participant:

No, there is nothing humane about it. There is no humane way to trap an animal. It is absolutely cruel.

Portland general population focus group

- **Two common reasons for opposing trapping are concern over perceived inhumane treatment and concern over accidental or non-target catch; in some cases, this latter concern stems from an assumption that trapping is not properly regulated or is not regulated enough.**

Focus group participants in general expressed concern about the humaneness (or lack thereof) of various aspects of trapping. Many also indicated that they worried about pets or non-target animals being accidentally trapped:

¹ Kellert, S.R. 1980. American attitudes toward and knowledge of animals: An update. *International Journal for the Study of Animal Problems*. 1(2): 87-119.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: I think there's a lot of traps out there that some of these animals get caught in, and they're not intended to catch. I didn't hear a thing, but over the last 20 years it comes out about especially the issue of trying to limit certain types of hunting or trapping, particularly trapping and [certain animals] being endangered. Not only [does trapping cause animals to be] endangered but also, it's inhumane.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: I would agree with that. I would absolutely agree with that. They run that ad on the snow leopards, [and] they show the one that's limping around with a trap on its leg. That's really inhumane. It's one of these Nature Centers, \$19 a month to save the snow leopards.... But it drives home that there are people out there that are doing this trapping that they're not necessarily there when the animal gets trapped, then it just has to suffer until somebody comes along.

Discussion in Portland general population focus group

The survey found that disapproval of trapping is lower if non-trappers can be assured that accidentally caught animals can be released: 17% of Maine residents disapprove of trapping overall, while 14% disagree that trapping is okay if animals accidentally caught can be released (as shown in Figures 3.15 and 3.27).

Additionally, more than a third of trapping opponents (37%) agree that trapping is okay if animals that are accidentally caught can be released (see Figure 5.8). This reiterates that the accidental trapping of non-target animals is a concern among trapping opponents.

- **Although the trapping community has taken steps to improve traps to reduce animal suffering, which would seem to alleviate the concerns of many regarding trapping, there is some skepticism among the general public that traps have been improved to achieve this goal.**

Improvements in traps made towards the goal of making trapping more humane are not known or believed among trapping opponents. Only 22% of trapping opponents agree with the statement, "Because of improvements in traps, trapping is more humane today than it was 10 years ago." More of them disagree (28%) than agree, and the largest group consists of those who neither agree nor disagree or who do not know (50% of trapping opponents).

- **Related to perceptions of whether trapping can be humane is the motivation for trapping. In particular, some people generally oppose the concept of "recreational trapping" but, at the same time, approve of calling a licensed trapper or animal control professional to address a wildlife conflict. In short, the reason for trapping affects people's approval or disapproval. Ecological and conflict-resolution reasons are often deemed to be legitimate reasons for trapping, while recreation is more often frowned upon.**

For many people, nuisance management is perceived as a necessity, and this perception allows them to overcome their distaste for trapping. Most of the focus groups had at least a few people who indicated that, while they were not completely comfortable with the basic concept of trapping animals, they recognized the problems that beaver and fisher can cause (the latter seems to be widely regarded as a threat to pet cats). It is interesting that most people seem to recognize that human-wildlife conflicts generally do not resolve on their

own—given this recognition of the need for wildlife management, the question becomes how to go about it in the most humane way possible.

- **Another factor that is associated with disapproval of trapping is that some Maine residents think that trapping causes species to become endangered or extinct. Outreach that addresses this issue is important.**

Nearly three quarters of trapping opponents (72%) think that regulated trapping can cause wildlife species to become endangered or extinct. Additionally, 7% gave a neither/don't know response, meaning that 79% of trapping opponents have an incorrect notion about trapping and endangered species (see Figure 5.11). Outreach about trapping in Maine not being a danger to wildlife populations would help alleviate the problem of this misperception.

- **Simply informing residents that trapping is regulated by the Department is important outreach.**

Awareness that the Department regulates trapping is high in Maine, but it is lowest among those who disapprove of trapping: only 69% of this group is aware that the Department regulates trapping, compared to 82% of residents overall. This suggests that outreach to trapping opponents needs to stress that the state regulates its trapping (see Figure 3.23).

When looking specifically at trapping opponents, it was found that the majority of them (58%) answered, “Don't know,” to the question about rating the Department at regulating and managing trapping (see Figure 5.59). This further suggests that simple information about the Department's trapping management program would be important.

- **In the end, trappers, non-trappers, and trapping opponents alike want what is best for Maine's wildlife.**

A number of trappers in the public meetings made an effort to explain to anti-trappers in attendance that trappers do indeed care deeply about wildlife and the sustainability of wildlife populations. Separately, many trapping opponents expressed similar sentiments about themselves. While not an overwhelmingly common occurrence, it is promising nonetheless that certain members of the two sides took the time to express conciliatory statements in the public venues. Despite the contentious nature of the subject matter, a major takeaway from the project is that trappers, non-trappers, trapping opponents, and the Department itself all share as a chief concern the well-being of Maine's wildlife populations.

MOTIVATIONS FOR TRAPPING

- **Previously, the findings showed that the recreational aspects of trapping were not supported by the public. However, among trappers themselves, the recreational aspects are important.**

The top motivation for trapping, among those who do so, is for the recreational aspects (65% of trappers give this reason). This exceeds the percentage who do so for species management (37% give this reason) (see Figure 4.27).

DISSATISFACTIONS WITH TRAPPING AND CONSTRAINTS TO PARTICIPATION IN HUNTING AND TRAPPING

- **Most constraints to participation in trapping (as well as hunting) are social. However, addressing issues surrounding lynx exclusion devices would help ameliorate some of the dissatisfactions that trappers have with trapping. (Although this project was concerned more with trapping than hunting, it is worth noting that the lack of Sunday hunting was commonly mentioned as a dissatisfaction with hunting.)**

Most constraints to participation in hunting and trapping are social—lack of time being the most common constraint given by hunters as something that prevented them from hunting as much as they would have liked (see Figure 4.20). No Sunday hunting was a top reason among those that the Department can do something about—13% of hunters said that this was a reason that they did not hunt as much as they would have liked. Among trappers, the most prominent reason for not trapping as much as they would have liked is the required use of lynx exclusion devices (Figure 4.22).

The question discussed above asked about constraints to trapping participation—things that may have prevented participation. Another question asked about dissatisfactions, regardless of whether that dissatisfaction made for less participation. The top reason among trappers for being dissatisfied with trapping in Maine is the lynx exclusion device. Of those who were not very satisfied, a prominent reason given for not being more satisfied was the use of lynx exclusion devices (see Figure 4.17). Nearly a quarter who got the question named this reason.

Another source of some dissatisfaction among trappers was the decline in prices for furbearer pelts. Interestingly, this issue was much more prominent in the qualitative research than in the survey: the topic was covered in comments in the forum and at some of the public meetings and focus groups, but emerged only as a lower-tier item of dissatisfaction in the survey of trappers. It may be that the majority of trappers have adapted to the “new normal” of lower prices (relative to historical highs), while the issue remains frustrating for a vocal minority. The following exchanges from the Presque Isle and Orono focus groups are instructive in this regard:

MODERATOR: What motivates people to trap?

Used to be good money. But now, it's in my blood.

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: The artificial stuff [furs and clothing] is good and getting so much better and better. ... That in itself makes the demand go down, which makes the price go down, which makes people like me go snowmobiling instead of trapping. ... If we could still get the prices we got back in the '70s, then I would be a trapper.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: Right, you could really supplement your income by running some trap lines.

Discussion in Orono general population focus group

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: The price of pelts is down a fair amount.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: People don't wanna wear fur.

Discussion in Orono general population focus group

KNOWLEDGE OF AND OPINIONS ON FURBEARERS AND THEIR POPULATIONS

The previous sections discussed trapping specifically. Another important aspect of this project was to learn about the public's knowledge of various furbearer species and their opinions on whether to control their populations, as well as how those populations might be controlled.

- **The species for which residents have the highest knowledge levels are skunk, raccoon, and coyote. On the other hand, the lowest knowledge levels are regarding marten and muskrat.**

Table 2.3, which summarizes Maine residents' self-reported knowledge levels of each of the ten furbearer species explored in the research, is ranked by the "great deal and moderate amount combined" values:

Table 2.3. How much would you say you know about [species]? (General population)

	A great deal	A moderate amount	A great deal and moderate amount combined	A little	Nothing at all	Don't know
Skunk	15	37	52	34	10	3
Raccoon	16	34	50	39	11	0
Coyote	14	33	47	36	16	1
Fox	9	33	42	40	16	1
Beaver	4	29	33	44	19	4
Fisher	2	24	27	38	34	2
Otter	3	21	25	55	18	2
Bobcat	3	21	24	49	26	1
Muskrat	2	12	14	40	42	4
Marten	1	8	9	44	42	4

Green shading indicates the highest knowledge levels among all the species, showing all within 5 percentage points of the top species. Red shading indicates the lowest knowledge levels among all the species, showing all within 5 percentage points of the lowest species. Any apparent discrepancies in the sums are caused by rounding in the table; all sums are calculated on unrounded numbers.

North/East Region residents are the most knowledgeable, in general, showing the highest self-professed knowledge of the regions for seven of the ten species considered (Table 2.4). On the other hand, South Region and Central Region residents have the lowest levels of self-professed knowledge, in general—each of these regions has the lowest knowledge level for four species.

Table 2.4. How much would you say you know about [species]? (By Region) (General population)

	A great deal			A moderate amount			A great deal and moderate amount combined			A little			Nothing at all		
	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S
Skunk	14	11	20	38	41	33	53	51	54	31	38	33	15	8	10
Raccoon	27	16	12	31	35	34	58	51	46	40	34	43	3	15	11
Coyote	25	19	4	34	31	35	59	50	39	32	31	43	9	19	16
Fox	12	10	6	50	26	34	61	36	40	28	43	43	10	18	16
Beaver	10	6	1	17	18	42	27	23	43	41	51	40	25	21	15
Fisher	3	2	2	16	24	27	20	27	29	47	38	34	34	36	32
Otter	15	1	2	31	27	13	46	29	15	30	57	61	25	14	20
Bobcat	7	1	3	23	19	23	30	20	27	47	47	52	23	31	22
Muskrat	0	1	3	23	11	11	23	12	14	37	45	35	38	41	44
Marten	2	2	0	14	7	5	15	9	6	40	50	40	43	35	50

Green shading indicates the highest knowledge level within the regions; when the regions are within 5 percentage points of the highest, they are also shaded. Red shading indicates the lowest knowledge level within the regions; when the regions are within 5 percentage points of the lowest, they are also shaded. Regarding skunk, no region is markedly higher than the others. Any apparent discrepancies in the sums are caused by rounding in the table; all sums are calculated on unrounded numbers. “Don’t know” not shown to improve table legibility.

One aspect of furbearer management is the public’s perceptions of what is meant by the term, “furbearers.” Several of the focus groups began with an exercise in which participants were asked to write down as many furbearer species as they could think of; the results of this exercise from the Portland and Orono groups, shown in Table 2.5, suggest that many residents perceive any furred animal to constitute a furbearer species:

Table 2.5. Furbearer Species Named by Portland and Orono Focus Group Participants

Portland Participant	Species Named
1	Deer, gerbil, bear, panda, coyote, wolf, opossum, badger, mouse, rat, moose, elk, polar bear, weasel, fisher, camel, horse, cow, ox, rabbit, squirrel, skunk, ermine, mink, seal pup, cougar, mountain lion, lion, cheetah, leopard, lynx
2	Fox, mink, bear, beaver, puma, squirrel, porcupine, raccoon
3	Deer, fox, moose, raccoon, coyote, bear
4	Bear, deer, fox, rabbit, mink, raccoon, wolf, mountain lion, beaver
5	Brown bear, black bear, polar bear, fur seal, seal lion, beaver, deer, moose, lynx, wolf, coyote, mouse, rat, squirrel, chipmunk, elk, boar, fox
6	Bear, fox, coyote, deer, lynx
7	Bear, deer, moose, fox, raccoon, skunk, opossum, coyote, wolf, bobcat, mountain lion, lynx, mouse, rat, porcupine, mole, groundhog, beaver
8	Fox, rabbit, wildcat, bear, deer, moose, beaver
9	[blank]
10	Bear, wolf, mink, rabbit, deer
Orono Participant	Species Named
1	Pine marten, fisher, ermine, bear, coyote, beaver
2	Bear, raccoon, skunk, coyote, fisher, moose, deer, bobcat
3	Bear, raccoon, squirrel, fox, moose, coyote, fisher, deer
4	Bear, beaver, deer, moose, marten, skunk, raccoon
5	Fox, lynx, bobcat, bear, beaver, raccoon, marten, weasel, coyote, fisher
6	Coyote, mink, beaver, otter, muskrat, raccoon, weasel, pine marten
7	Muskrat, raccoon, bear, mink, weasel, moose, deer, bobcat, skunk, beaver, ermine, lynx
8	Lynx, bear, rodents, fisher
9	Raccoon, beaver, koala, cats, squirrel

- **Regarding furbearer population levels, more residents think that the population is too high than too low for four species: coyote, skunk, raccoon, and fisher. On the other hand, more residents think that the population is too low than too high for six species: otter, bobcat, fox, marten, muskrat, and beaver.**

Table 2.6, which summarizes Maine residents' opinions on furbearer population levels, is ranked by the "too high" column.

Table 2.6. In your opinion, is the [species] population in the area where you live too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no [species] in the area where you live? (General population)

	Too high	About right	Too low	None in area	Don't know
Coyote	27	30	2	22	19
Skunk	17	55	12	9	8
Raccoon	14	53	9	12	13
Fisher	11	22	7	40	20
Fox	10	47	16	17	9
Beaver	4	31	6	37	21
Bobcat	4	16	14	38	27
Marten	2	15	6	42	35
Muskrat	2	21	5	33	40
Otter	0	19	15	47	20

Red shading indicates that “too high” exceeds “too low”; green shading indicates that “too low” exceeds “too high.”

As shown in Table 2.7, coyote has more residents saying the population is too high than too low across all three regions. On the other hand, for bobcat, fox, marten, and otter, more residents say the populations are too low than too high across all three regions.

Table 2.7. In your opinion, is the [species] population in the area where you live too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no [species] in the area where you live? (By Region) (General population)

	Too high			About right			Too low			None in area			Don't know		
	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S
Coyote	27	30	24	38	31	26	6	1	0	10	16	31	19	22	18
Skunk	20	24	9	52	54	56	15	7	14	10	9	9	3	6	12
Raccoon	31	16	7	55	42	60	5	7	11	5	15	12	4	19	10
Fisher	6	13	12	21	25	19	15	3	6	25	47	40	32	12	23
Fox	10	10	9	68	45	41	12	19	16	4	13	28	6	13	6
Beaver	11	3	2	32	35	28	6	6	7	19	37	43	32	19	21
Bobcat	0	2	9	17	23	7	27	6	18	42	47	27	14	21	39
Marten	0	3	1	24	21	4	8	6	7	33	52	36	34	19	52
Muskrat	3	3	0	37	20	18	5	3	7	28	36	32	28	38	44
Otter	0	0	0	43	19	11	14	13	16	23	51	49	20	17	23

Red shading indicates that “too high” exceeds “too low” in that region; green shading indicates that “too low” exceeds “too high” in that region.

- **The most support of trapping to help manage populations is for coyote, skunk, raccoon, and fisher. The most opposition is for trapping bobcat and fox. Note, however, that support exceeds opposition for all species, and a majority of Maine residents support trapping all species except bobcat.**

Table 2.8 summarizes the statewide results regarding support and opposition to trapping as a method to help manage each furbearer species; it is ranked by overall support. Table 2.9 shows the regional results on these questions, ranked in the same order.

Table 2.8. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the [species] populations in Maine? (General population)

	Strongly support	Overall support	Neither	Strongly oppose	Overall oppose	Don't know
Coyote	40	71	1	16	20	8
Skunk	36	69	5	14	21	5
Raccoon	28	68	2	17	24	6
Fisher	28	66	8	10	18	8
Beaver	40	63	5	14	20	12
Otter	21	62	3	16	26	8
Muskrat	39	62	1	15	20	17
Fox	26	58	4	18	34	3
Marten	22	58	8	12	17	17
Bobcat	21	48	4	24	32	15

Green shading indicates the highest support among all the species, showing all within 5 percentage points of the top species. Red shading indicates the highest opposition among all the species, showing all within 5 percentage points of the top species.

Table 2.9. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the [species] populations in Maine? (By Region) (General population)

	Strongly support			Overall support			Neither			Strongly oppose			Overall oppose		
	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S
Coyote	38	34	46	57	76	74	1	0	1	22	17	12	26	24	14
Skunk	33	44	31	58	84	60	12	4	3	15	7	19	30	8	29
Raccoon	43	21	29	71	79	57	2	2	3	13	12	22	27	16	31
Fisher	28	33	24	64	87	48	9	4	12	11	4	15	16	5	29
Beaver	32	45	38	45	59	71	26	1	3	9	11	17	17	23	18
Otter	28	23	18	55	64	63	0	6	2	24	15	14	38	25	23
Muskrat	45	35	41	69	57	64	3	0	2	14	16	14	18	23	18
Fox	33	19	30	65	47	67	2	6	4	17	17	21	31	44	26
Marten	28	24	18	66	60	52	3	14	3	15	13	10	18	17	18
Bobcat	12	17	31	28	42	64	12	0	5	33	29	15	37	40	21

Green shading indicates the highest support among all the species within that region, showing all within 5 percentage points of the top species. Red shading indicates the highest opposition among all the species within that region, showing all within 5 percentage points of the top species. "Don't know" not shown to improve table legibility.

- **Coyotes are the least favorably viewed species, based on the percentage of residents saying that they are a nuisance or are dangerous. This is followed by skunks, fishers, and raccoons. On the other hand, foxes are the most favorably viewed, followed by beaver.**

Table 2.10 is ranked by the values for "enjoy seeing and having them around home."

Table 2.11 shows the regional results and is ranked the same way.

Table 2.10. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about [species] around your home or in your area? (General population)

	None around	Enjoy seeing and having them around home	Enjoy seeing and having them but worry about problems	Regard them as a nuisance	Regard them as dangerous	Nuisance and dangerous combined	No feeling	Don't know
Fox	21	32	21	2	5	7	16	3
Beaver	41	25	14	4	0	4	13	3
Skunk	18	18	16	24	2	26	19	3
Raccoon	22	16	14	17	3	20	26	2
Muskrat	41	16	4	3	0	3	29	7
Otter	57	14	4	1	0	1	19	6
Bobcat	50	10	7	1	5	6	23	4
Marten	50	10	3	5	1	5	20	11
Coyote	24	8	14	22	15	38	12	3
Fisher	40	8	5	8	17	25	16	5

Dark green shading indicates the highest in the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response among all the species. Green shading indicates that the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response exceeds nuisance/dangerous combined. Dark red shading indicates the highest in the combined nuisance/dangerous among all the species. Red shading indicates that the nuisance/dangerous combined response exceeds the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response.

Table 2.11. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about [species] around your home or in your area? (By Region) (General population)

	Enjoy seeing and having them around home			Enjoy seeing and having them but worry about problems			Regard them as a nuisance			Regard them as dangerous			Nuisance and dangerous combined		
	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S
Fox	37	30	33	25	22	19	9	0	1	8	3	5	16	3	6
Beaver	30	17	29	10	19	12	9	4	2	0	1	0	9	5	2
Skunk	8	9	28	18	22	11	25	27	20	2	5	1	27	32	21
Raccoon	14	5	27	22	11	14	34	22	7	4	4	2	38	25	9
Muskrat	10	12	21	4	7	1	2	6	1	0	0	0	2	6	1
Otter	26	18	7	11	5	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	2	0
Bobcat	13	9	11	8	7	6	0	1	1	2	3	9	2	4	10
Marten	10	7	13	3	5	0	4	8	2	2	0	1	5	8	3
Coyote	6	12	5	30	14	8	25	23	21	12	15	17	37	38	38
Fisher	18	4	7	8	4	6	6	8	10	12	26	11	17	34	20

Dark green shading indicates the highest in the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response among all the species in that region. Green shading indicates that the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response exceeds nuisance/dangerous combined in each region. Dark red shading indicates the highest in the combined nuisance/dangerous among all the species in that region. Red shading indicates that the nuisance/dangerous combined response exceeds the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response in each region. Some responses not shown to improve table legibility.

- **There may be a need for outreach that explains that certain furbearer species play an important role in the ecosystem.**

Questions asked residents to indicate how beneficial they think certain species are. At the bottom were coyote, fisher, raccoon, and skunk (see Table 3.9). While they have an important place in the ecosystem, it may be that the public is unaware of these species’ role in the ecosystem. Additionally, some of the public feels that there are too many of these species, which may lower the rating they give to its importance. The benefits of having a species will decline when the species’ populations start to exceed carrying capacity—for

instance, to use a non-furbearer as an example, when deer overpopulate, they become harmful rather than beneficial to the ecosystem because of their over-browsing. The overall finding here suggests that outreach about the importance of managing these species would need to include information on their roles in the ecosystem as well.

- **Landowners have a slightly different perception of the species that cause them concern, compared to the general population. Landowners show high concern about beaver, coyote, raccoon, and skunk. Note, however, that landowners like having beaver around if damage can be minimized.**

Among landowners, the species whose populations they most commonly think are too high are beaver, coyote, raccoon, and skunk (see Table 6.2). This compares to coyote, fisher, raccoon, and skunk as being the species whose populations are commonly thought to be too high among the general population. Beaver is on the list for landowners, likely because of flooding problems on land as well as damage to trees, while fisher is not. Recall that fisher are seen as lethal threats to pets, which is perhaps why they are on the list of low acceptance among the general public.

Interestingly, beaver is seen by landowners as being a population that is too high, but it is one of the species that has the highest percentages of landowners who enjoy seeing them and having them around (see Table 6.4). The four species that have the highest percentage of landowners who think that they are a nuisance or dangerous are coyote, fisher, raccoon, and skunk.

- **Coyote management in Maine is a highly salient issue. The research suggests that concern over coyote populations in Maine is not limited to hunters and trappers, although these groups tended to be the most vocal in their concern on the topic. Of particular concern to hunters is the predation of deer by coyotes. Many focus group participants talked of often seeing coyote tracks alongside deer tracks, as well as other signs of predation on deer by coyotes.**

The large majority of hunters (70%) and trappers (72%) think that coyote populations are too high (see Table 4.5). No other species is near that. Similarly, coyote has more general population residents saying the population is too high than too low across all three regions (see Table 3.4). These findings make clear that coyote management is a prominent issue among Maine residents.

Coyote management was also a recurring theme in the forum comments from non-hunters and non-trappers, and in the focus group discussions with general population residents. The following comments are representative of the sentiments of many focus group participants and forum commenters:

I have a negative attitude toward coyotes because of the...deer. Whether you go snowmobiling or anything in the wintertime, you're likely to come across a shredded up deer in the middle of the trail because they can't get away the way the coyotes can. So that's really my motivator initially to start coyote hunting to protect deer.

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

I'd like to get rid of coyotes.

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

I have three packs of coyotes in my backyard. And they've come close. The scariest thing was there was over a dozen of them, practically surrounding us [in our tent as we were camping in the backyard].

Portland general population focus group

Back when we used to really control them [coyotes], we could use snares.

Orono general population focus group

Coyote management was also covered extensively in many of the comments made by citizens at the public meetings in Presque Isle, Portland, and Augusta. The recurring topic related to coyote management during these meetings was the effect of coyote on Maine's deer populations, particularly in northern Maine. The perception that Maine's coyote populations are increasing appears to be fairly widespread.

- **Finally regarding furbearer species is the finding that the public knows very little about muskrat and marten, so some informational outreach would be useful to the public about these species.**

The highest knowledge levels among Maine residents are for coyote, raccoon, and skunk, while the lowest levels are for muskrat and marten (see Table 3.1). Information about furbearers needs to be basic about these latter species, as people do not know much about them. Knowledge levels are also low for bobcat, otter, and fisher, particularly among South Region residents (see Table 3.2).

SUPPORT FOR AND OPPOSITION TO FURBEARER MANAGEMENT

- **The overwhelming majority of Maine residents (81% of them) support furbearer management to reduce diseases.**

Overall support for furbearer management to reduce wildlife diseases that could affect people, pets, and other wildlife is robust: 81% of Maine residents support it, and only 10% oppose. Opposition is highest in the South Region, but only at 13%, not extremely higher than the other regions, which are at 9% (North/East Region) and 7% (Central Region) (see Figures 3.116 and 3.117).

In looking at demographic and attitudinal groups (shown in the demographic analyses graphs, Figures 3.118 and 3.119), the least likely to support furbearer management are, not surprisingly, those who disapprove of regulated trapping. Nonetheless, 48% of those who disapprove of trapping are still supportive of managing furbearer populations to control disease (see Figure 5.52).

- **There is a segment of the population that is adamant that wildlife can regulate itself and needs no management from humans—for these residents, furbearers are no exception.** As explained above, the quantitative data indicates that one in ten Maine residents oppose furbearer management to reduce wildlife diseases that could affect people, pets, and other

wildlife. A more general sentiment (i.e., about wildlife in general, not specific to furbearers) was expressed by multiple participants across the focus groups; it was not uncommon for these individuals to base their opposition to wildlife management on the premise that humans have encroached on wildlife habitat. These findings suggest that some Maine residents simply flatly oppose the idea of human beings managing wildlife. Note the following representative comments from two of the focus groups:

I am a huge proponent of not managing species, and actually truly protecting them. And coyotes is number one on my list, and we are treating them so unethically with any sort of management.

Portland animal rights focus group

Suppose there were no humans in Maine, these wildlife populations would be regulated by nature whether it be disease, starvation, or predators. Us being thrown in the mix is really throwing this off, because we are putting houses where predators used to be, and it's like we've created this problem, how are we going to fix this? Why is it the animals' fault that we felt like showing up here?

Portland general population focus group

CONFLICTS WITH WILDLIFE

- **Human-wildlife conflicts are common, with more than a third of Maine residents having experienced conflicts with wildlife in the two years previous to the survey. (Note that the question did not limit conflicts to the furbearer species, and deer is often mentioned as causing conflicts with residents.)**

More than a third of Maine residents say that they experienced conflicts with wildlife in the past two years (see Figure 3.120). In particular, residents of the North/East Region have a high percentage who have experienced conflicts (Figure 3.121). The furbearer species being the most involved in human-wildlife conflict are raccoon, skunk, fox, and coyote (Figure 2.5).

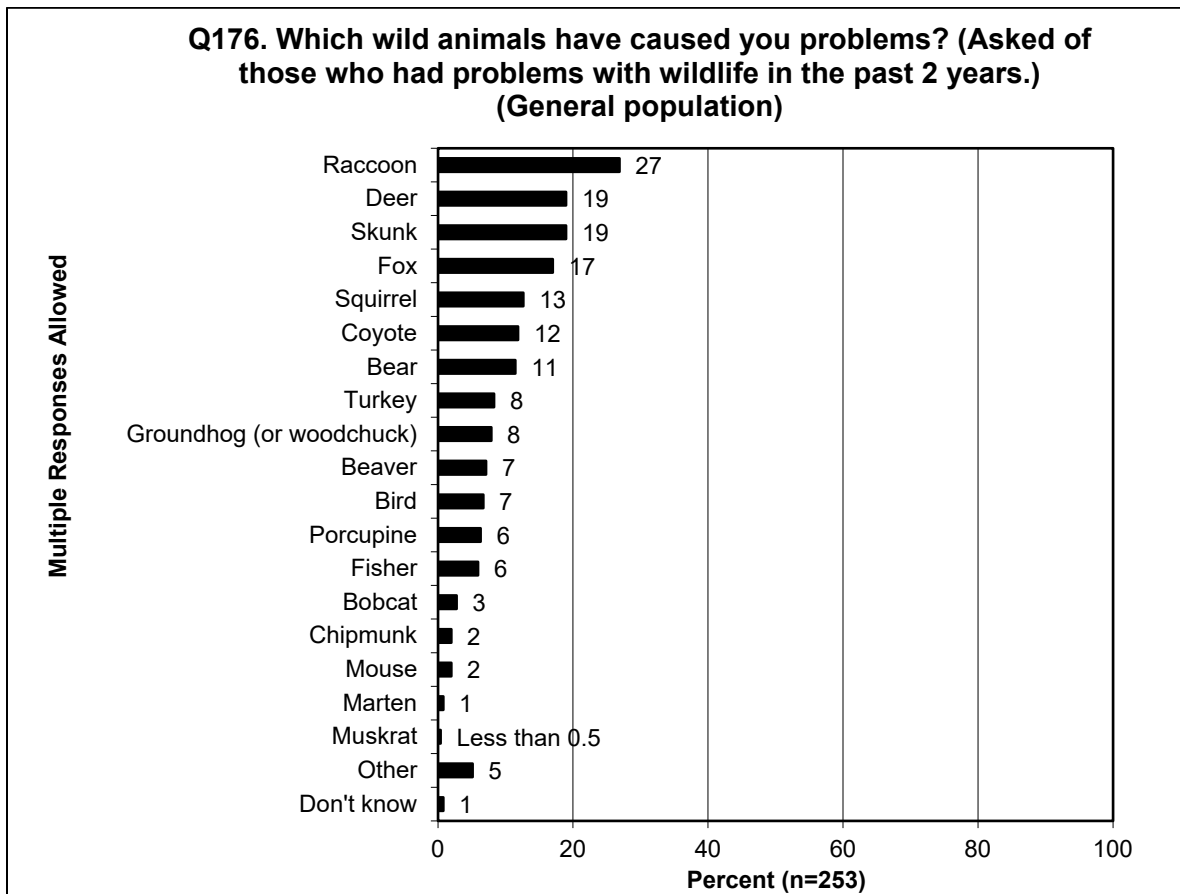


Figure 2.5. Types of Wild Animals or Birds That Caused Problems (General Population)

- **The majority of landowners (53% to 61%) experienced conflicts with wildlife in the previous two years.**

When asked if they had experienced any problems with wildlife in the past two years, 53% of North/East Region landowners, 61% of Central Region landowners, and 60% of South Region landowners indicated in the affirmative (see Figure 6.54).

While deer is the most common species with which landowners have conflicts, five species of furbearers are commonly involved in conflict: beaver, coyote, fox, raccoon, and skunk (see Figures 6.55 and 6.56). In this open-ended question of landowners who had conflicts, note that fisher is low on the list, suggesting that actual problems with fisher are less common than the perceived antipathy towards them.

Among landowners, damage to crops/gardens is the top-named problem with wildlife (see Figure 6.57). Furbearers are rarely among the species that do such damage; deer are more often responsible for this type of damage. It is worth noting that landowners are much more likely than residents overall to kill the animal at the source of the conflict (see Figure 6.58).

- **Although some Maine residents oppose “recreational trapping,” they may still call a licensed trapper or animal control professional, who may use trapping to address the conflict.**

In particular, the focus groups had people who were unenthusiastic about trapping but who indicated that they saw the need for controlling some wildlife that cause problems, and that trapping is one of the ways to do so.

OPINIONS ON THE DEPARTMENT

- **Ratings of the Department’s management of trapping are more positive than negative. However, many residents do not know what rating to give—they simply do not know much about the Department or its trapping management. Outreach that explains that the Department manages trapping and explains some of how it is done would fill this information void.**

A large percentage of Maine residents answered, “Don’t know,” regarding rating the Department in its management of trapping (38% did so) (see Figure 3.137). Among those who gave a rating, they were mostly positive: 56% rated the agency excellent or good, while only 6% rated the Department fair or poor. Note that the “Don’t know” response was particularly common among Central and South Region residents (Figure 3.138).

(Interestingly, Maine has a lower percentage of “don’t know” responses than other states that Responsive Management has studied—see the last chapter in this report. This leaves a greater percentage to give an actual rating, which is partly why Maine’s ratings are higher than the other states’ ratings.)

While landowners give positive ratings to the Department’s regulation and management of trapping at a much greater rate than negative ratings, a large portion of them (from 25% to 29%) do not know what rating to give (see Figure 6.62).

- **The majority of trappers (60%) give a rating of excellent or good to the Department’s regulation and management of trapping.**

However, 26% of trappers give a fair rating, while another 12% give a poor rating (see Figure 4.199; the sum is on unrounded numbers in that figure). While no follow-up question was asked regarding reasons for these ratings, previous findings about lynx exclusion devices would indicate that some of the dissatisfaction could be attributed to these devices.

Additionally, comments from trappers in the online forum, public meetings, and focus groups suggest that concern about opposition to trapping and frustration with certain trapping regulations (such as restrictions on the use of snares or drags) could also figure into the lower ratings.

INFORMATION NEEDS OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC, HUNTERS, TRAPPERS, AND LANDOWNERS

- **All of the research suggested that Maine residents in general do not know much about trapping.**

The general population focus groups suggested that basic impressions of trapping among non-trappers are sometimes based on the most egregious examples of trapping mishaps (unintended catch of pets or non-target species) or inhumane situations (animals being left to

suffer in traps for long periods of time). In many cases, the biological reasons for trapping do not appear to be well understood. Also, many people appear to automatically assume the generic term “trapping” refers to lethal traps and not live traps.

In the survey, the most common answer to the question asking Maine residents to rate the Department’s management of trapping in Maine, using an excellent-good-fair-poor scale, was “Don’t know” (note that this lack of information was reiterated by the focus group research). This suggests that a fairly large percentage of state residents may need information to assure them that the Department is properly managing trapping. This is particularly true of Central and South Region residents (Figure 3.138).

Even landowners have information gaps regarding trapping. While landowners give positive ratings of the Department’s regulation and management of trapping at a much greater rate than negative ratings, a large portion of them (from 25% to 29%) do not know what rating to give (see Figure 6.62). This suggests that this group could benefit from information explaining the role of the Department in regulating and managing trapping in Maine.

- **The research suggests that the more people know about trapping, the more likely they are to approve of it.**

Recall that 78% of those who are aware that trapping is regulated by the Department approve of trapping, compared to just 61% of those who are *not* aware; and that 81% of Maine non-trappers who know or ever knew a trapper approve of trapping, compared to only 67% of non-trappers who *never* knew a trapper (see Tables 2.1 and 2.2 presented earlier in this chapter). The differences in approval rates among these groups are statistically significant ($p < 0.01$).

The qualitative data also support the idea that the more people know about trapping, the more likely they are to approve of it. Based on the researchers’ observations of the focus group discussions, many people may be willing to reconsider their initial opinion of trapping if they are presented with compelling information that they did not know before: that trapping regulations have the sustainability of the species as the top priority, that trapping is based on science, that trapping helps rare species such as the piping plover, that trapping promotes healthy populations, that traps have been refined over the years through best management practices to make them more humane, and that the traps used for trapping are also used by biologists to study wildlife.

In the Portland and Orono focus groups of general population residents, these pieces of information resulted in several people reconsidering their initial opposition to trapping. In fact, at least a few people in the Portland group did not seem to realize that trapping is regulated at all—some of them were surprised to learn about basic regulations such as that trapping is allowed only for certain species, that trappers have to check traps every 24 hours, that only certain types of traps are allowed, and so on. The following discussion from the Orono focus group speaks to this point:

MODERATOR: Does your opinion of trapping change if you know that trapping is sanctioned by the government?

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: These people who work for the government do way more research and are way more knowledgeable [than the general population]—it's literally their job to know about this stuff—so if they're saying it's okay, you should probably just trust their judgement.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: If they [agency personnel] say it's okay.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #3: Trapping based on science...sustainability.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #4: I agree with that; it's what they do.

Discussion in Orono general population focus group

This suggests the importance of the Department filling in some of the knowledge gaps about the extent to which trapping is regulated.

In terms of knowing trappers themselves, one of the interesting findings from the survey is that trappers and non-trappers have similar rates of participation in various outdoor activities (though trappers tend to be slightly more avid in several of the activities). This suggests that, in terms of their general outdoor interests, trappers look fairly similar to the “average” Maine resident (Figure 2.6):

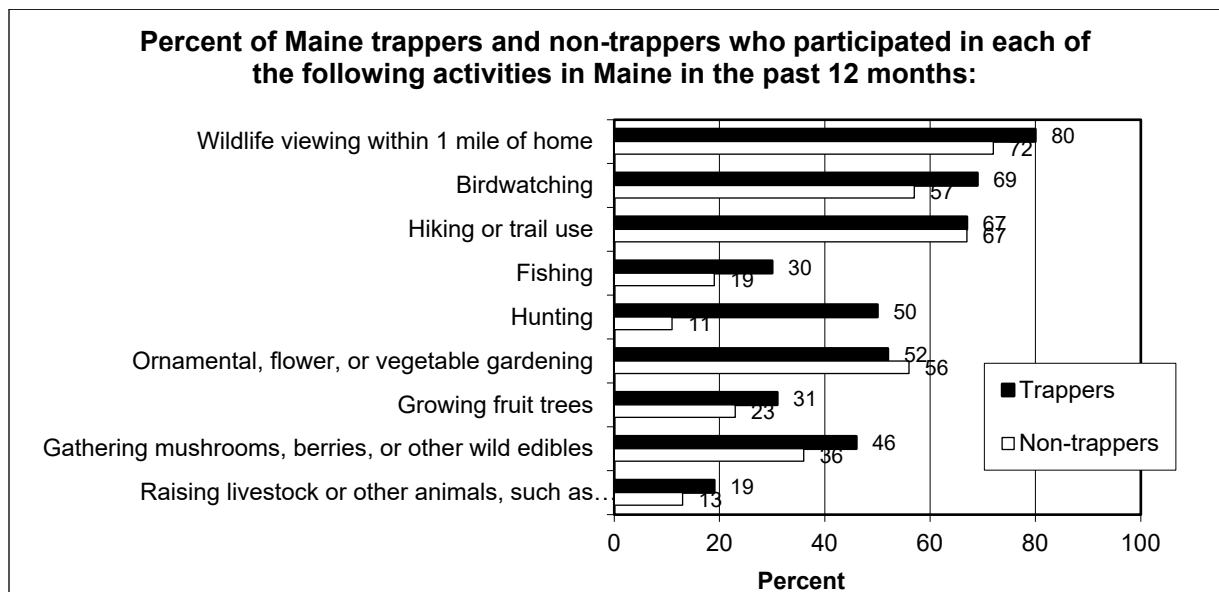


Figure 2.6. Participation in Outdoor Activities Among Maine Trappers and Non-Trappers

- In general, everyone seems to want more information.**

The research indicates that many trappers feel that trapping and trappers themselves are misunderstood; they support the idea of public education and outreach to correct misperceptions about trapping in Maine. There was also some interest among members of the general population in education and outreach on trapping: a number of people in the focus groups and public meetings, upon receiving some basic information about how and why trapping is done, suggested that the Department should be getting more information about trapping out to the public. The exchanges below from the focus groups are instructive:

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: I knew some of that. I didn't know you needed education to get a license.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: I did, and it's [the trapping education course] pretty in depth.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #3: I didn't [know that an educational course was required to get a license], and I'm happy to hear it. I think it's good, because they're monitoring. If you have to prove your bag limit and tag the pelts, they know who's out there and how much you're getting.

Discussion in Portland general population focus group

I feel like those statistics [the percentage of survey respondents who approved or disapproved of trapping, which was told to focus group participants] can be affected by education. I didn't know what it [the term "trapping"] meant. Even after discussing this, I'm still confused about what trapping is or what the point is.

Portland animal rights focus group

Taxes...and fees [for hunting and trapping]: I didn't realize they were going to conservation efforts.

Orono general population focus group

- **The perceived (incorrect) link between regulated trapping in Maine and the endangerment or extinction of species needs to be broken. This is an important subject for outreach to the general public, landowners, and even hunters and trappers.**

A sizeable portion of Maine residents—52%—do not know that endangered species are *not* used to make fur clothing: only 48% disagreed with the statement, “Endangered species...are frequently used to make fur clothing.” Meanwhile, 26% agreed and another 26% either did not know or gave a neutral response (see Figure 3.32). Likewise, two thirds of Maine residents did *not* know that regulated trapping in Maine does not cause species to become endangered or extinct: only 33% disagreed with the statement, “Even though trapping is regulated by the State, regulated trapping can still cause wildlife species to become endangered or extinct” (see Figure 3.33). On this question, 50% agreed, and another 17% answered neutrally or did not know.

Even among hunters and trappers, there is a substantial percentage who agree that endangered species are used to make fur clothing (12% of hunters and 10% of trappers) (see Figure 4.49). Therefore, even these groups need to know that this is not the case in the United States. The same is true regarding whether trapping causes species to become endangered, with 20% of hunters and 15% of trappers agreeing that trapping does this (Figure 4.52).

Although landowners tend to be more knowledgeable about some aspects of trapping than are residents in general, there is still a need for outreach. In the statement that “trapping can still cause wildlife species to become endangered or extinct,” a higher percentage of landowners (from 40% to 47%) disagree (the correct answer) than residents overall (only 33% disagree). Nonetheless, there are still large percentages of landowners who need to be

informed that this is not true—from 53% to 60% of landowners have an incorrect perception of this (see Figure 6.12).

A large percentage of trapping opponents (72% of them) agree that regulated trapping can cause wildlife species to become endangered or extinct (and another 7% give a neither/don't know response) (see Figure 5.11). This is a sizable portion with an incorrect notion about trapping and endangered species, and their disapproval of trapping would appear to be reinforced by this incorrect notion. Outreach about trapping in Maine not endangering wildlife populations is essential to address this misperception.

- **Many Maine residents either are not aware or do not believe that improvements have been made to traps over the past decades.**

That improvements in traps have made trapping more humane than it was decades ago is not fully believed by residents, as 30% responded with “don't know” on the question about this (Figure 3.30), and another 12% did not agree or disagree. The “don't know” responses are particularly high among South Region residents, at 35% among this group (see Figure 3.31).

Similarly, some trapping opponents do not know about such improvements, and others are skeptical about them. More trapping opponents disagree (28%) than agree (22%) that, because of improvements in traps, trapping is more humane today than it was in the past. Furthermore, about half of trapping opponents neither agree nor disagree or do not know (50% of trapping opponents).

ANIMAL WELFARE AND FURBEARER MANAGEMENT

This last section does not come directly from the research for this project, but it is relevant to understanding how Maine residents relate to trapping and the use of animals by humans.

The use of animals, including the management of wildlife through trapping, exists on a continuum of acceptability. At one extreme end is the animal rights mindset: the belief that animals have rights like humans and should not be used by humans in any way. At the other extreme end is the dominionistic mindset: the belief that animals may be used by humans regardless of the animal's welfare or rights. The middle of the continuum is defined by the animal welfare mindset, and this is where the vast majority of Americans reside: the belief that animals may be used by humans as long as the animals do not experience undue pain and suffering. (These data come from previous Responsive Management research.)

If they are not wildly different than most Americans (and there is no evidence in the research for this project that suggests that they are), most Maine residents consent to the use of animals, provided the animals do not experience undue pain and suffering. (From the research conducted for this furbearer management project, it is known that the majority of Maine residents approve of regulated trapping.)

Trapping, like any other consumptive use of wildlife carried out in a responsible and ethical manner, must be done in the context of animal welfare. This means that trapping must be done as humanely as possible, with care taken to minimize any pain and suffering on the part of the animal. It means that trappers themselves must behave in a way that is consistent with the animal

welfare philosophy, both when trapping and when acting as proponents of trapping. And it means that the Department must think of trapping in this context when setting regulations and communicating with the public about trapping. (To be clear, there is nothing in the research that suggests that trappers or the Department behave in a way that is inconsistent with animal welfare.)

The alternative is for regulated trapping in Maine to be viewed as a dominionistic activity, that is, an activity done without regard for the pain and suffering of the wildlife. Responsive Management’s research suggests that only a small minority of Americans (and, it follows, Mainers) identify with the dominionistic mindset. As a result, activities that are widely viewed as dominionistic have a tendency to push people in the direction of the opposite extreme, which would serve to increase opposition to regulated trapping and other activities that actually reside in the realm of animal welfare.

Awareness of the continuum in Figure 2.7 (which shows behaviors and practices associated with each of the three mindsets) should inform how people think about, participate in, and communicate about trapping in Maine.

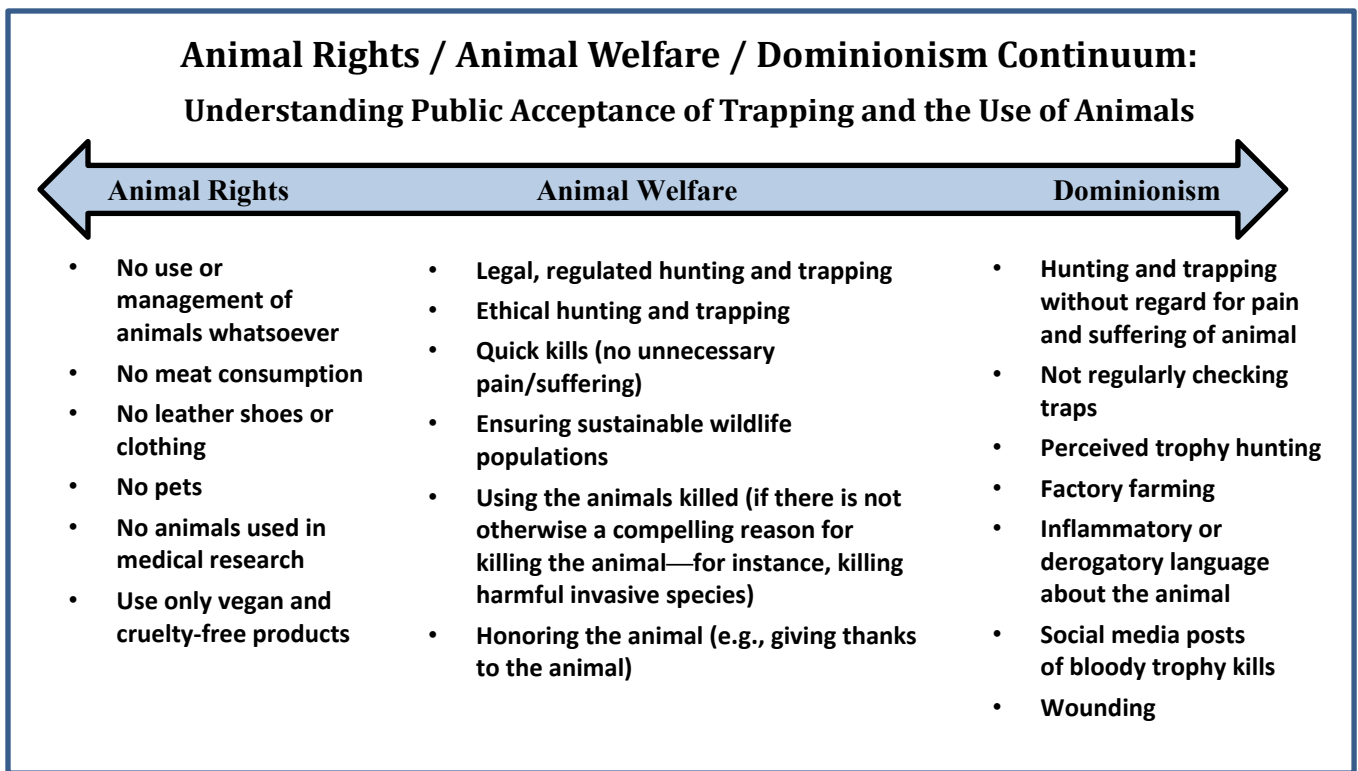


Figure 2.7. Animal Rights-Animal Welfare-Dominionism Continuum

The research that supports the above findings (with the exception of the animal welfare section) is contained in the rest of this report. There are eight components of the report that follow in the subsequent chapters, covering all of the ways that input was obtained for this project. The following chapters are:

- General Population Survey Results
- Hunters and Trappers Survey Results
- Results Among Trapping Opponents
- Landowner Survey Results
- Findings From the Public Meetings
- Findings From the Online Forum
- Focus Group Results
- Comparison of Approval or Disapproval of Trapping in the U.S., Regionally, and in Three States, and Ratings of State Agencies

3. GENERAL POPULATION SURVEY RESULTS

The five groups surveyed were the general population (also referred to as residents), hunters, trappers, landowners of 25 acres or more, and lastly commercial/industrial owners of very large parcels of land. Based on these groups, the results are presented in this and the three subsequent chapters:

- General population survey results.
- Results among hunters and trappers.
- Results among trapping opponents from among the general population (as determined from a question in the survey).
- Landowner survey results.

This chapter presents the results among the entire general population sample. This survey sample represents Maine residents 18 years old and older. The survey was conducted by telephone and online. The results are reported based on themes rather than in the exact order of the survey. The full methodology is detailed in the first chapter of this report.

PARTICIPATION IN HUNTING, TRAPPING, AND OTHER OUTDOOR RECREATION

The survey asked about outdoor recreation within a 12-month timeframe; the most popular among Maine residents are viewing wildlife within a mile of home (73% did this in the past 12 months), hiking/trail use (67%), birdwatching (58%), and gardening (56%)—all with a majority participating in them (Figure 3.1).

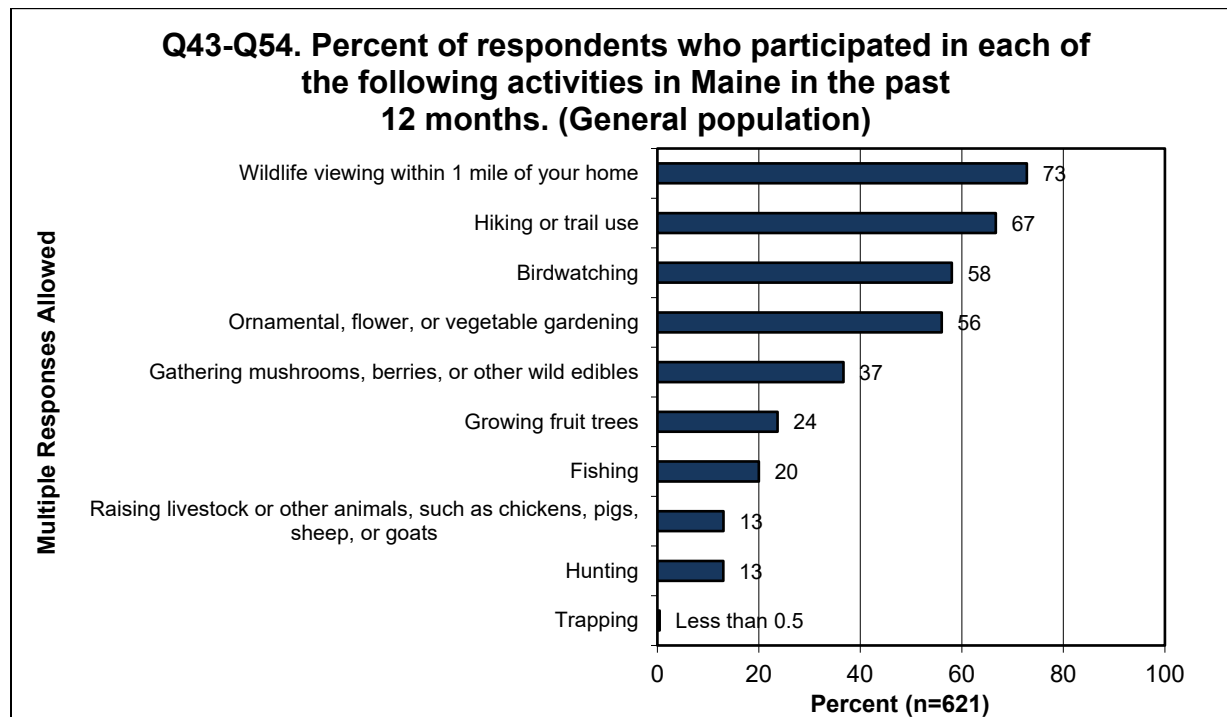


Figure 3.1. Participation in Outdoor Recreation in the Past 12 Months (General Population)

Figure 3.2 shows the results regarding participation in outdoor recreation regionally. North/East Region residents have the highest percentage who view wildlife near home, gather edibles, grow fruit trees, and hunt. The highest rate of gardening and of raising livestock or other animals is in the Central Region. The South Region leads in hiking and birdwatching.

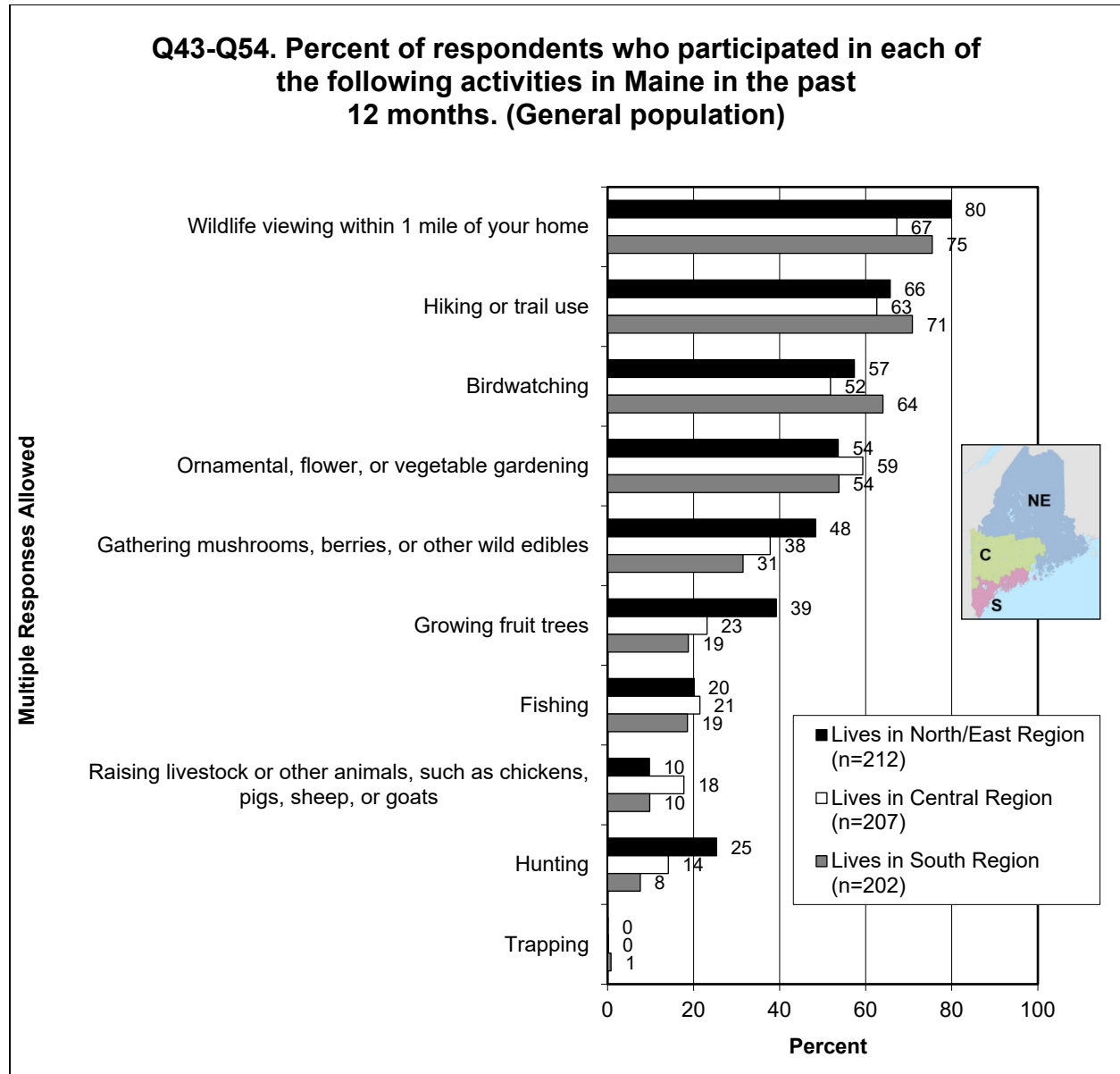


Figure 3.2. Participation in Outdoor Recreation in the Past 12 Months, by Region (General Population)

For each of the outdoor activities asked about in the survey, a demographic analyses graph is included showing the groups with the highest rates of participation in the given activity (Figures 3.3 through 3.11). Note that trapping is not included because its overall rate was too low for the analyses to be conducted. These graphs are presented in the order of popularity of the activity.



Figure 3.3. Characteristics of Those Who Viewed Wildlife (General Population)

See pages 15 through 16 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

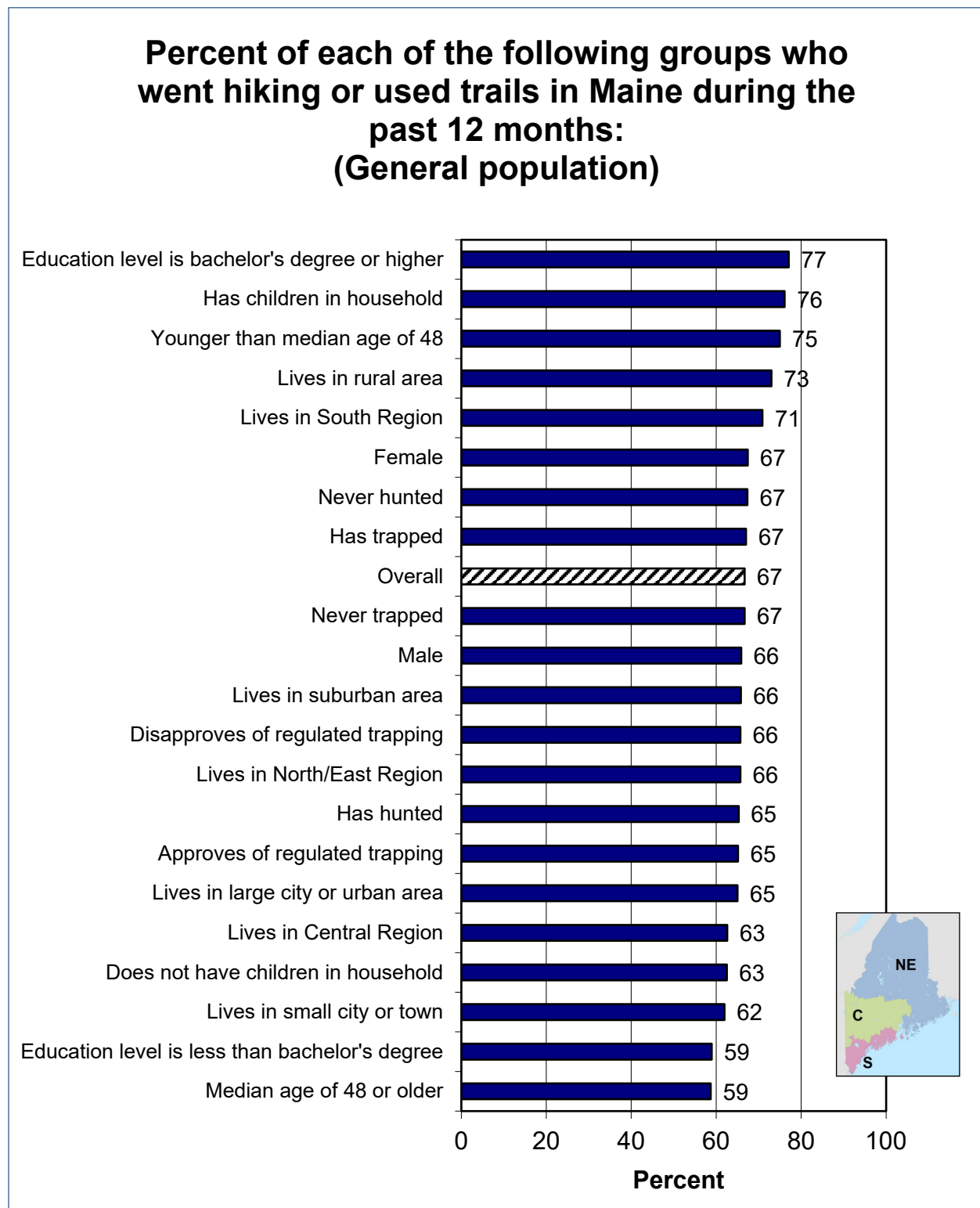


Figure 3.4. Characteristics of Those Who Hiked/Used Trails (General Population)

See pages 15 through 16 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

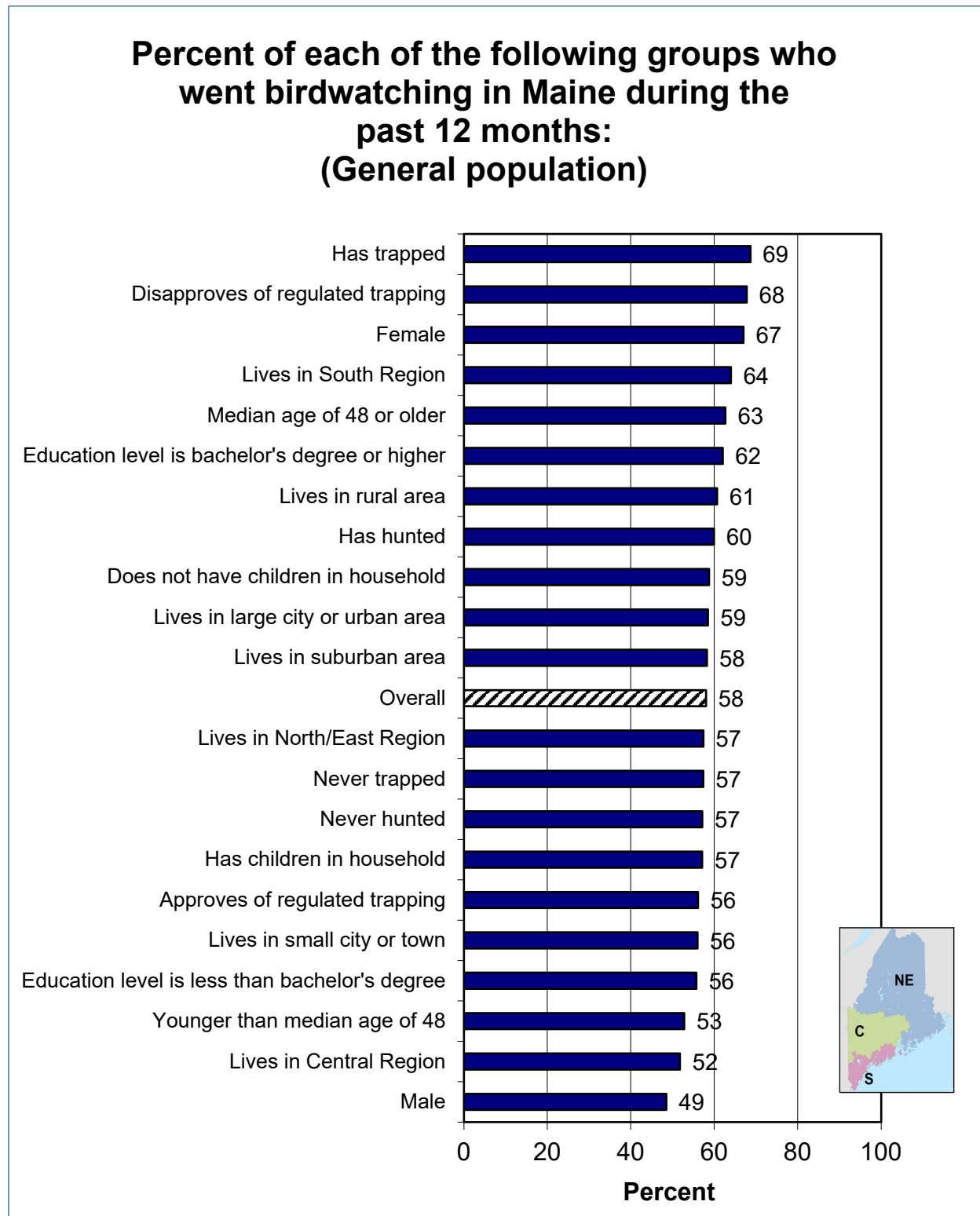


Figure 3.5. Characteristics of Those Who Went Birdwatching (General Population)
See pages 15 through 16 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

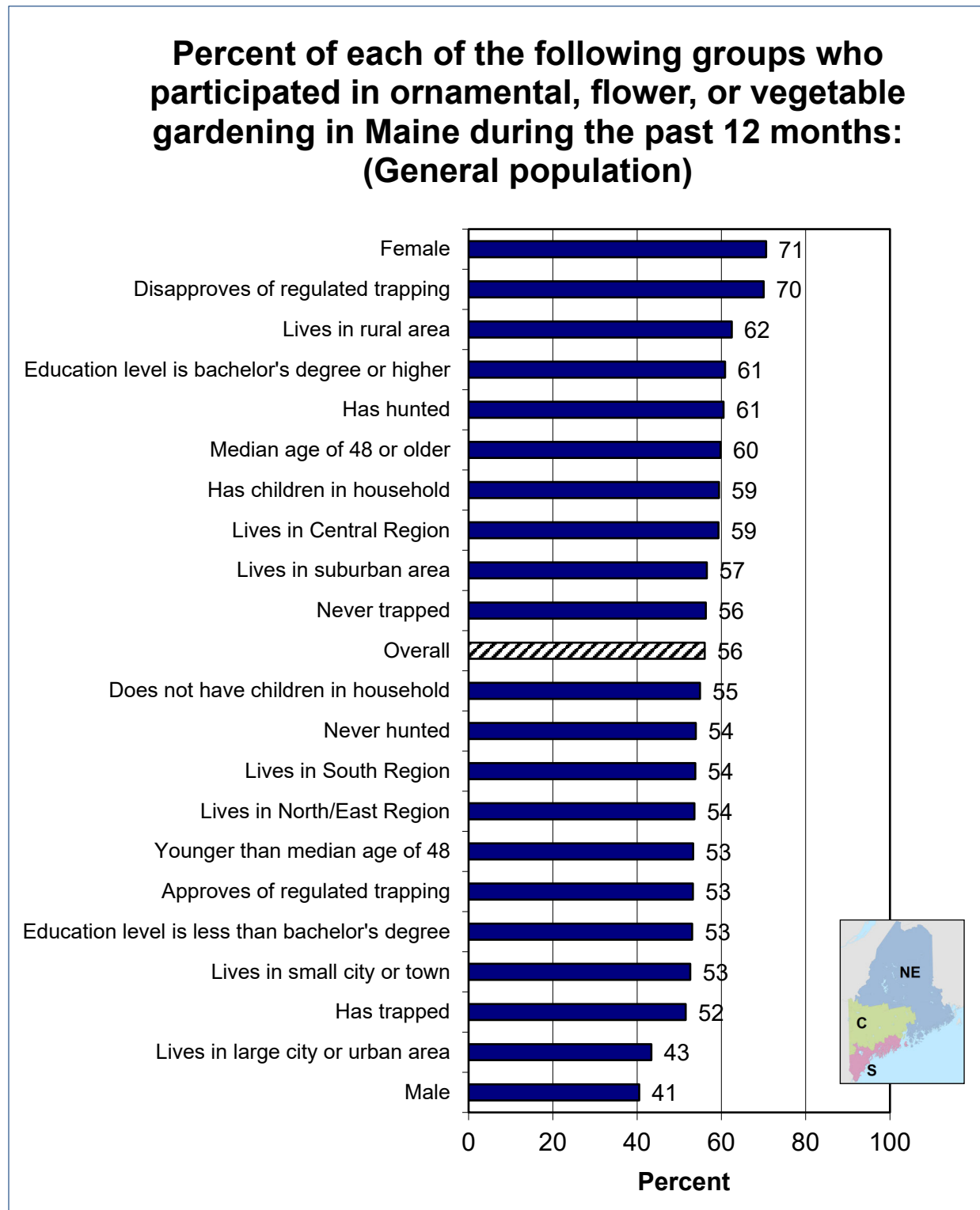


Figure 3.6. Characteristics of Those Who Gardened (General Population)

See pages 15 through 16 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

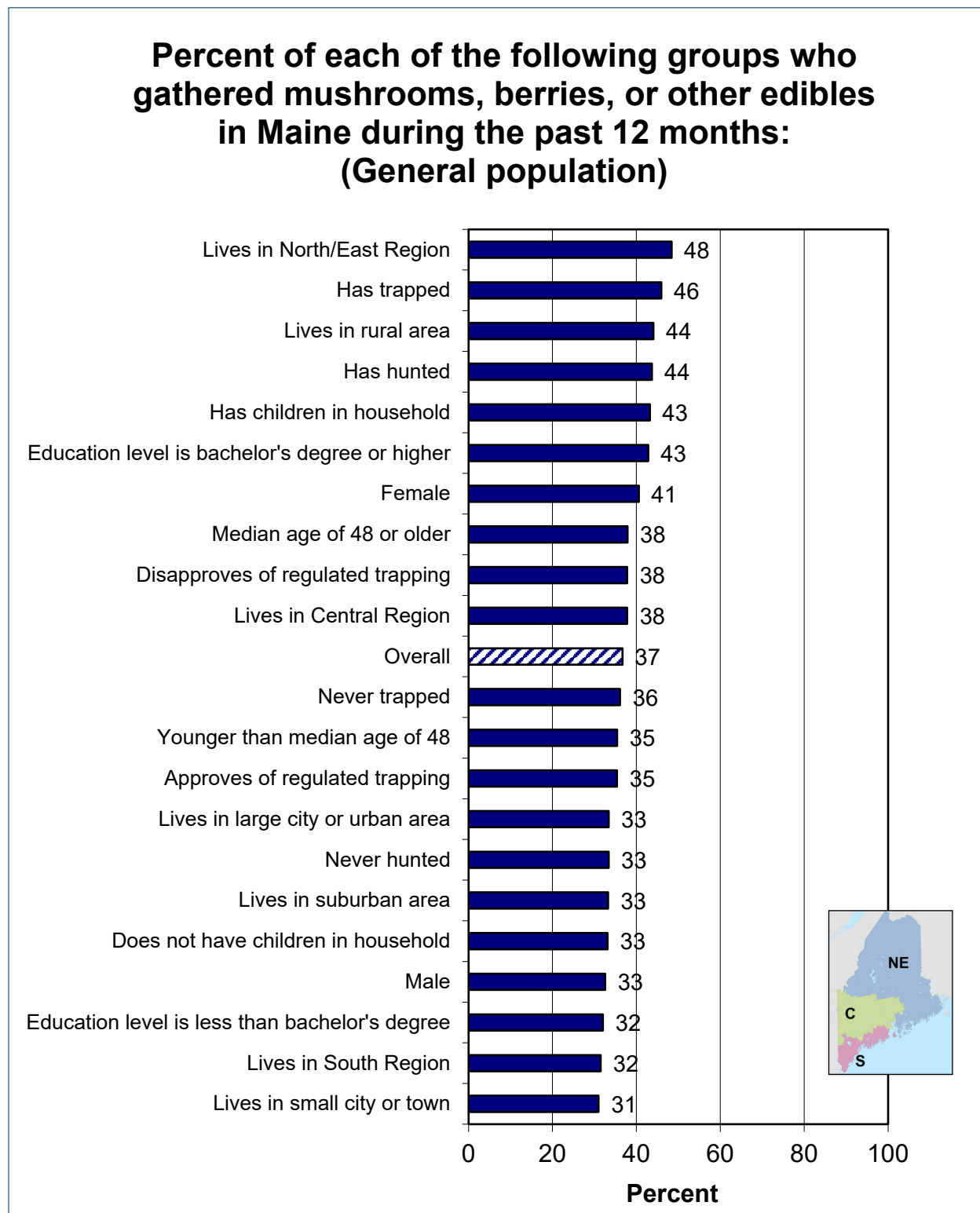


Figure 3.7. Characteristics of Those Who Gathered Edibles (General Population)
See pages 15 through 16 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

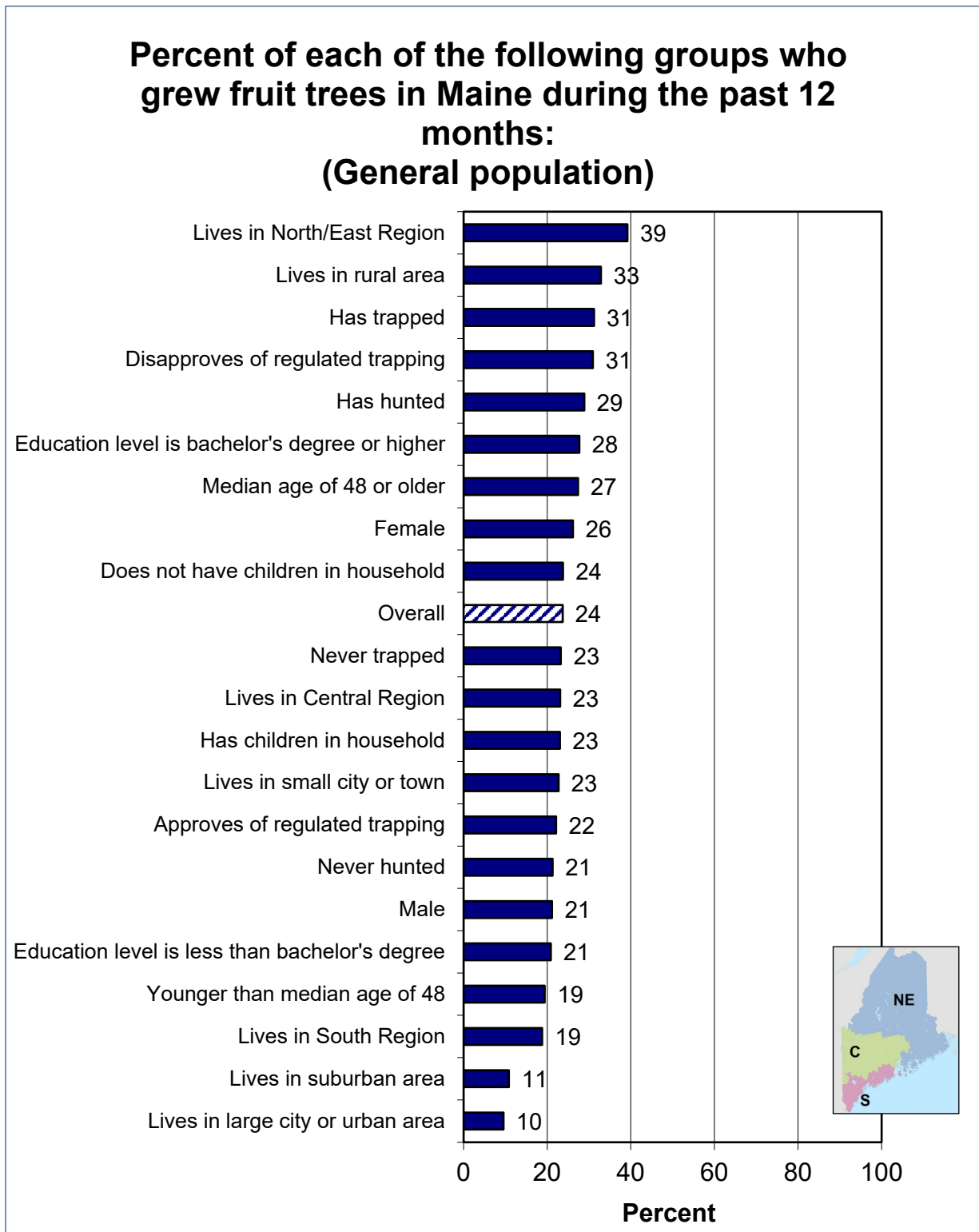


Figure 3.8. Characteristics of Those Who Grew Fruit Trees (General Population)

See pages 15 through 16 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

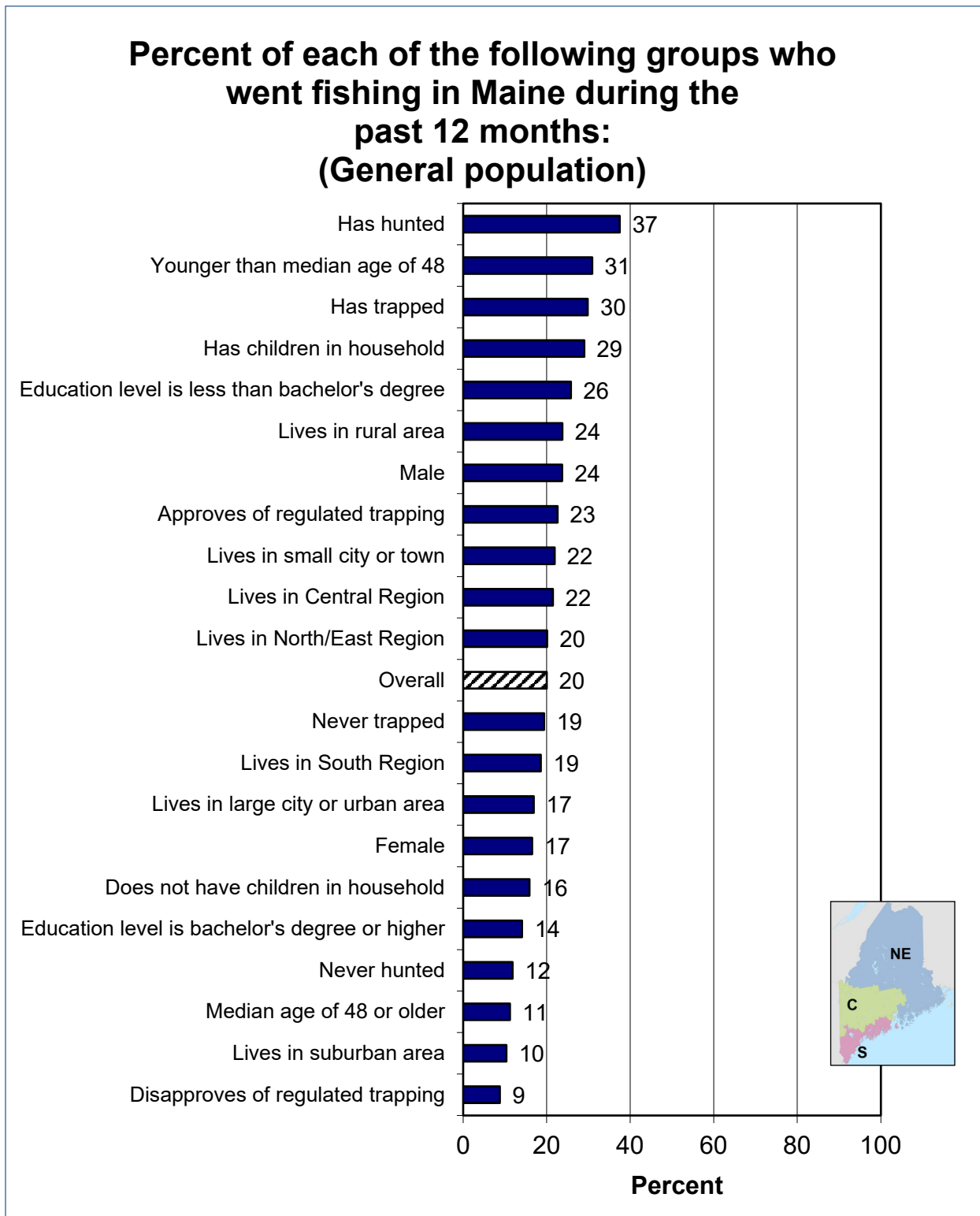


Figure 3.9. Characteristics of Those Who Went Fishing (General Population)

See pages 15 through 16 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

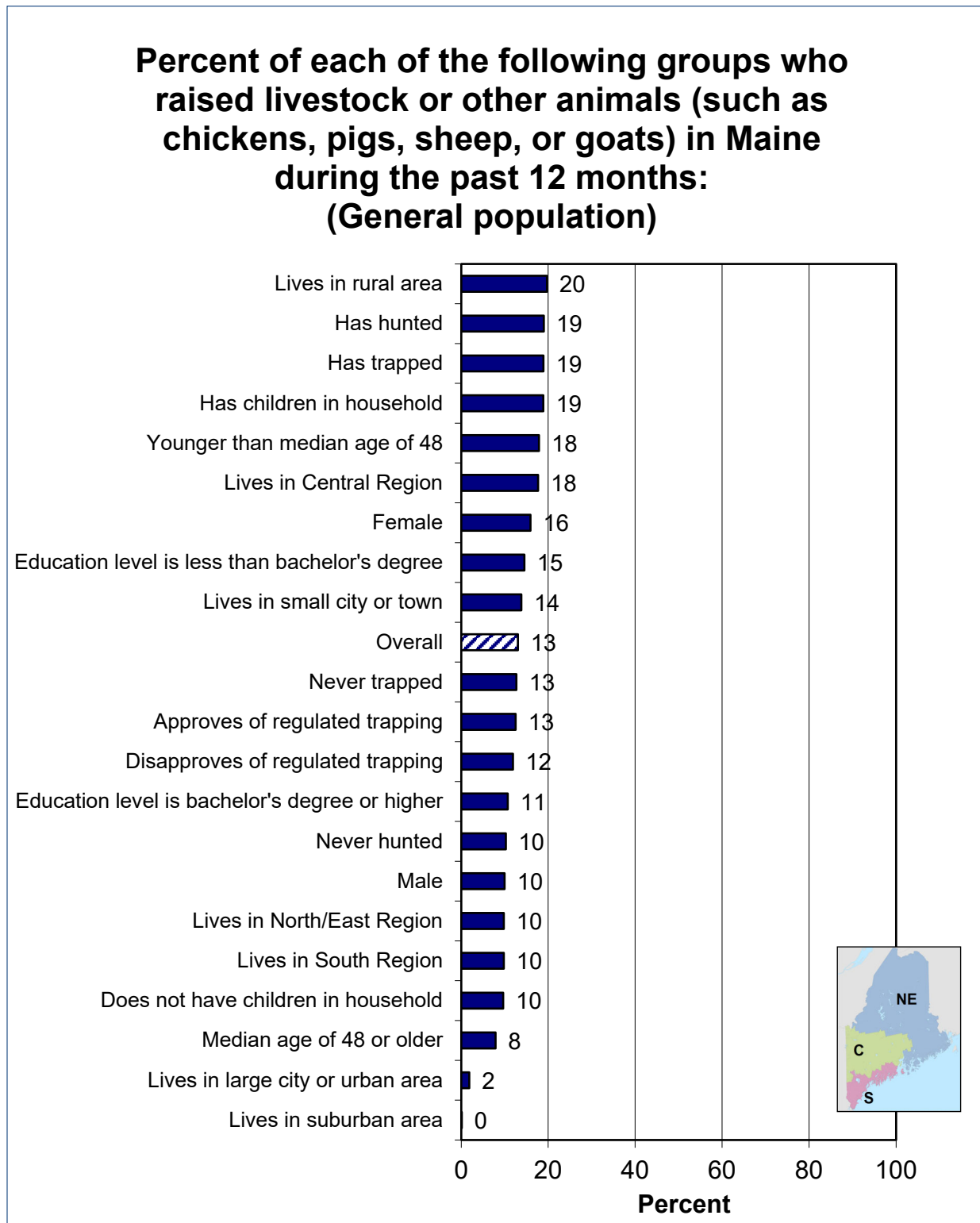


Figure 3.10. Characteristics of Those Who Raised Livestock (General Population)

See pages 15 through 16 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

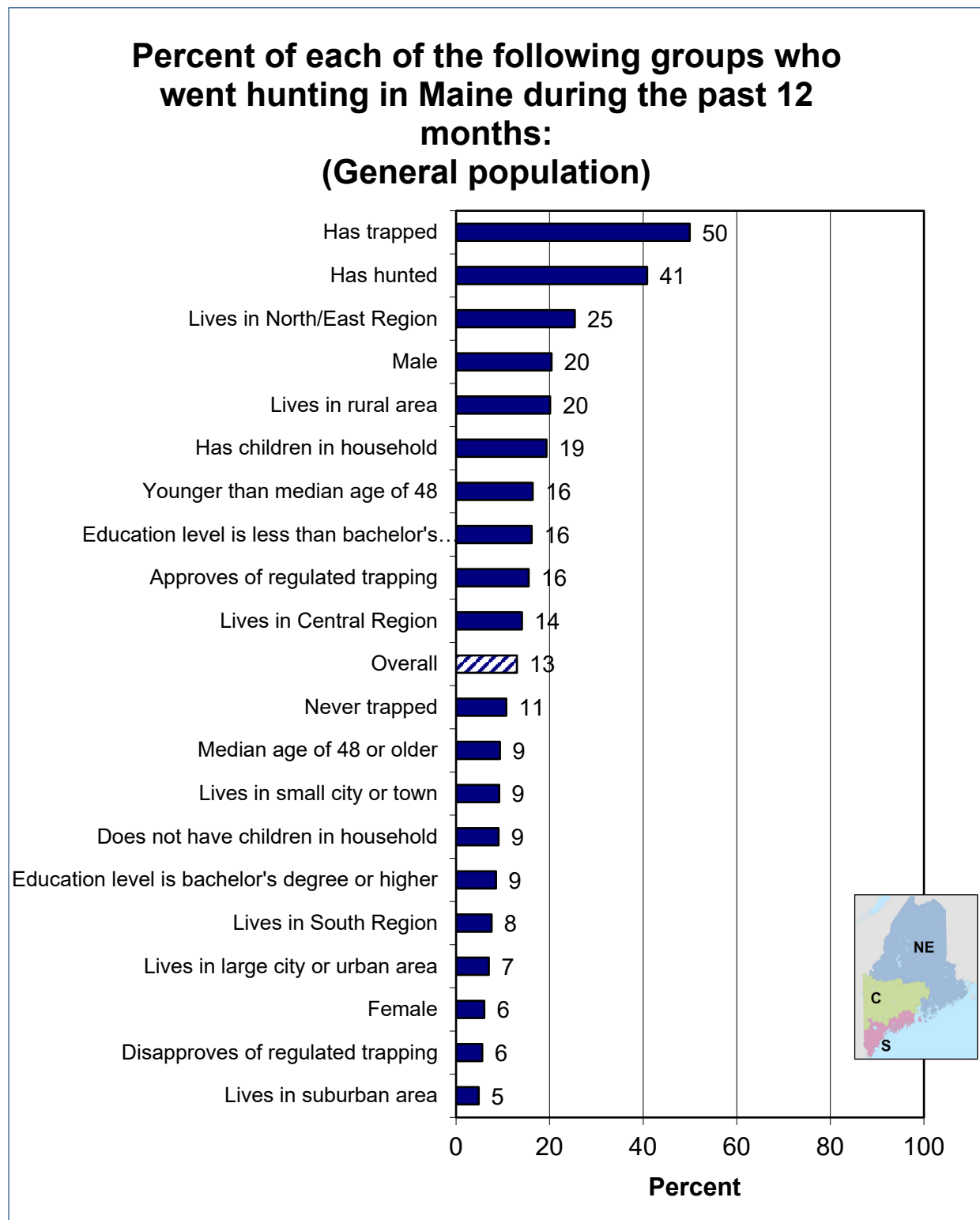


Figure 3.11. Characteristics of Those Who Hunted (General Population)
 See pages 15 through 16 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

Switching to no timeframe (i.e. at any time in a person's life), about a third of Maine residents (32%) have participated in hunting at some time in their lives, while 6% have participated in trapping at some time (Figure 3.12).

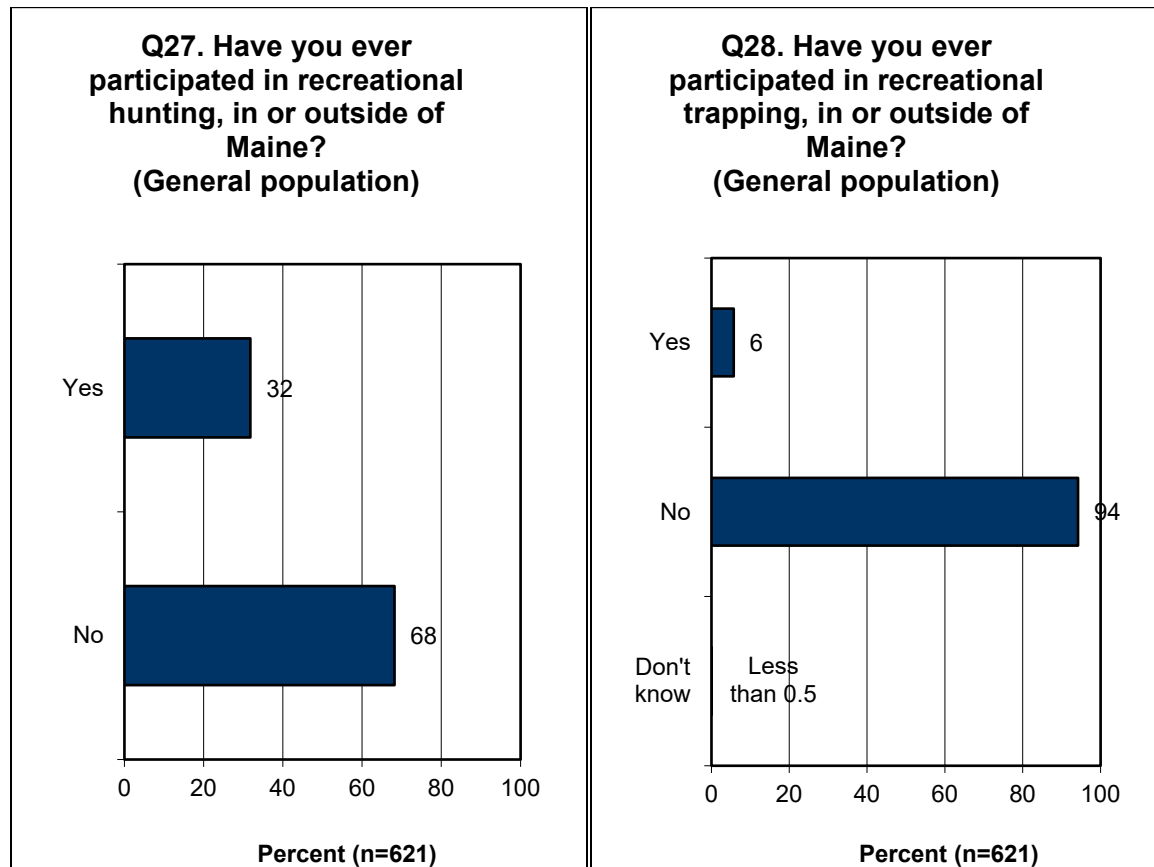


Figure 3.12. Participation in Hunting and Trapping, Lifetime (General Population)

Graphs show how the regions fall out in these results. North/East Region residents have a markedly higher rate of hunting, compared to residents of the other regions, as shown in Figure 3.13. Regarding trapping, the rates of participation do not differ greatly by region, as demonstrated in Figure 3.14.

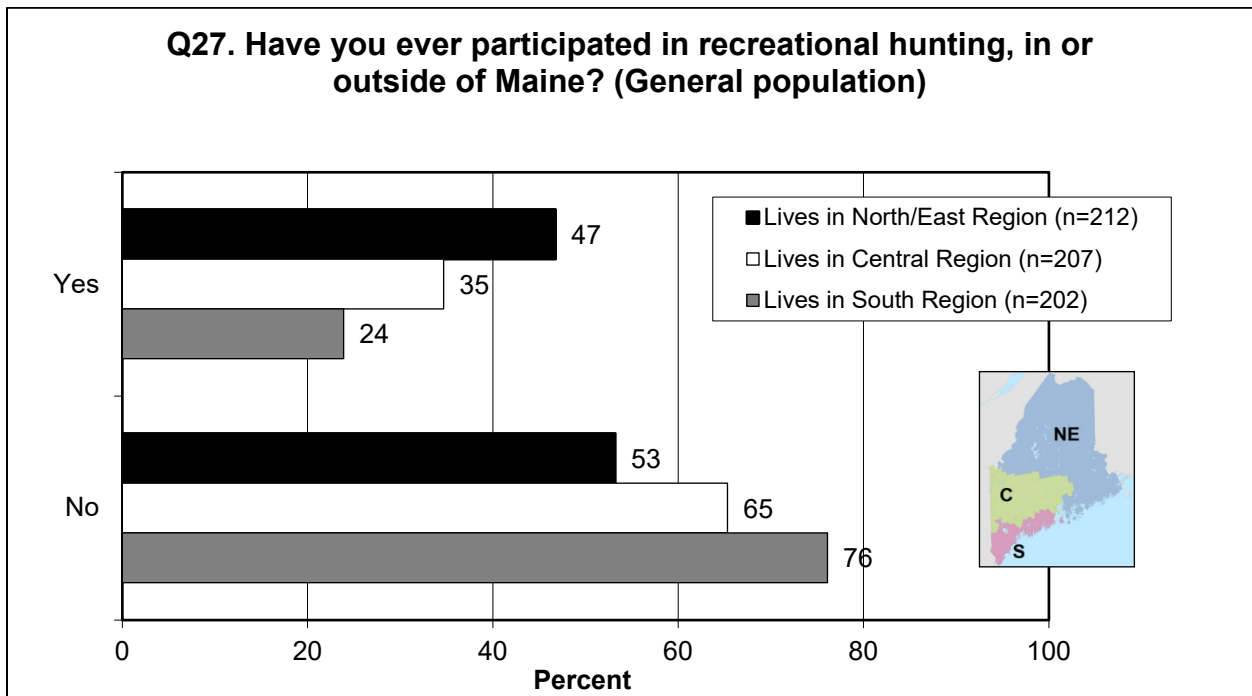


Figure 3.13. Participation in Hunting, Lifetime, by Region (General Population)

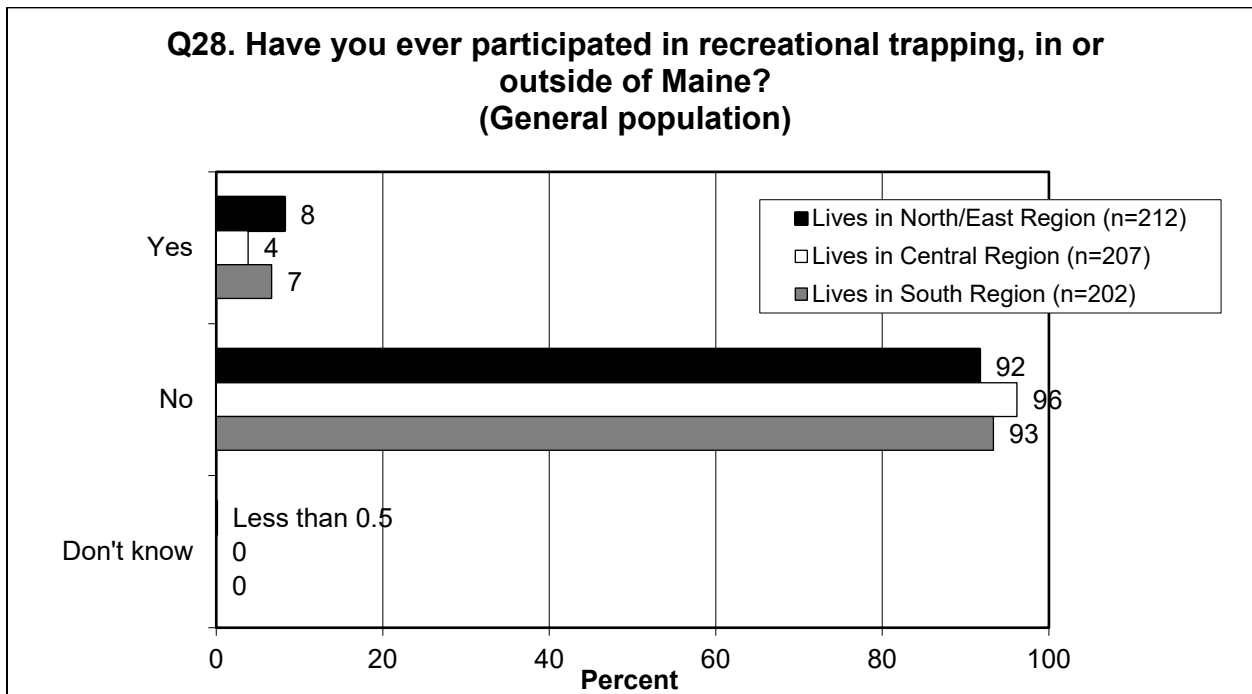


Figure 3.14. Participation in Trapping, Lifetime, by Region (General Population)

ATTITUDES TOWARD HUNTING AND TRAPPING

Figure 3.15 shows that three quarters of residents (75%) approve of regulated trapping, while disapproval stands at 17%. Another question asked about people's rights to trap: 71% agree people should be able to participate in trapping if they want to, while 23% disagree (Figure 3.16). (See the final chapter for an examination of other studies' results on these questions.)

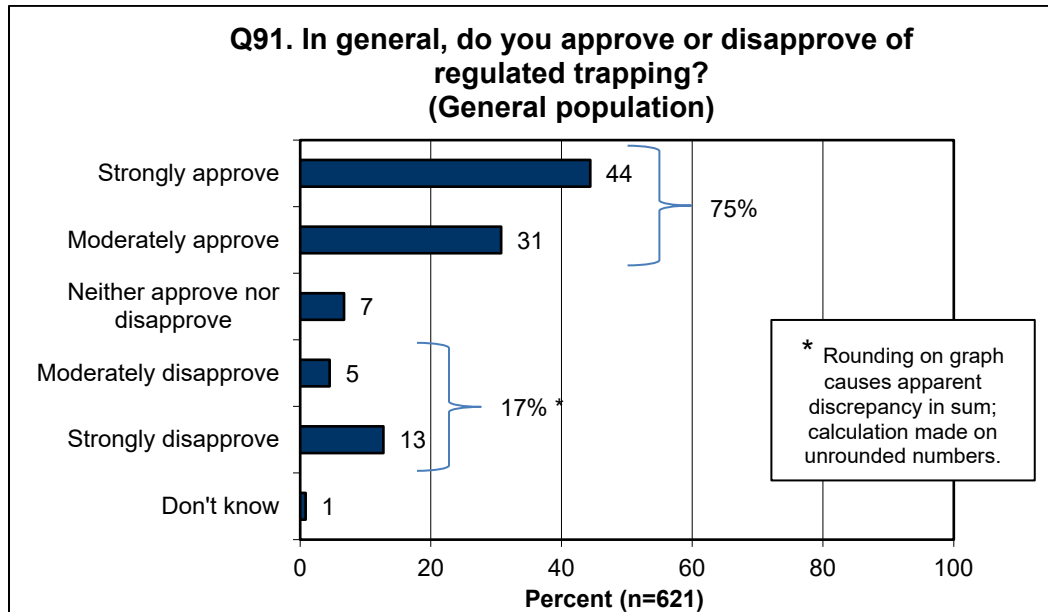


Figure 3.15. Approval or Disapproval of Trapping (General Population)

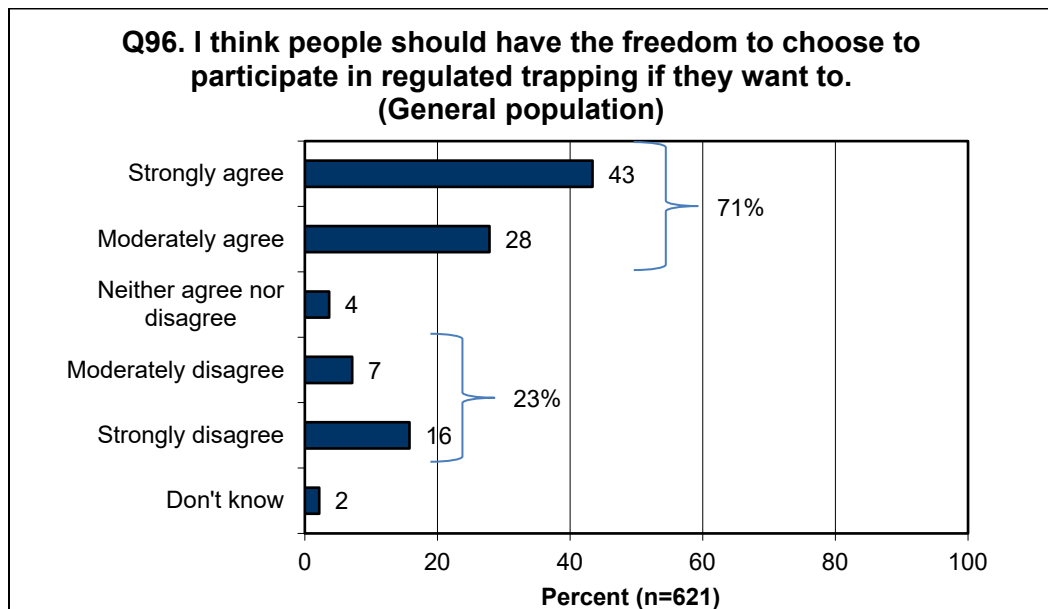


Figure 3.16. Opinion on Rights of Others to Trap (General Population)

Regional results are shown in Figure 3.17. For the regional analysis of this question, the North/East Region was divided into its constituent parts (i.e., the North Region and the East

Region) because the constituent parts are so far apart on this question. Approval of regulated trapping in the East Region is at 55%, compared to 78% in the North Region, 75% in the Central Region, and 77% in the South Region. Disapproval of regulated trapping is at 31% in the East Region, compared to 20% in the North Region, 13% in the Central Region, and 19% of the South Region.

The division of the North/East into separate regions for this analysis was done because the initial survey result—that the North/East Region as a whole showed lower approval of trapping than did the South Region—seemed counterintuitive to the researchers. Separating the North/East Region into its constituent regions allowed for analysis of approval in the separate regions, thereby helping to clarify the findings.

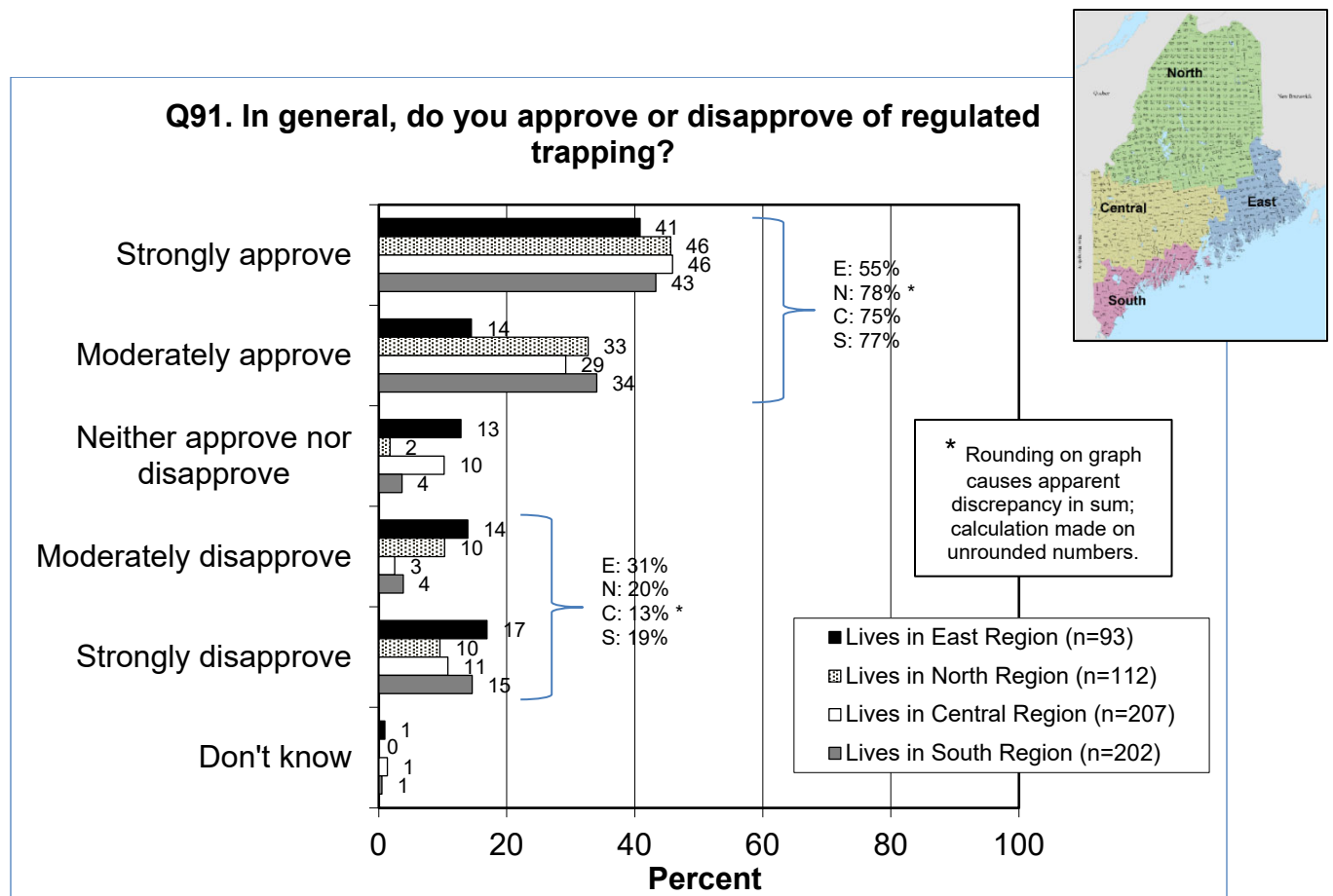


Figure 3.17. Approval or Disapproval of Trapping, by Region (General Population)

Note that this is the only survey question for which the North/East Region was divided into its constituent parts. In other words, it is the only survey question that entailed analysis by four regions instead of three (the three-region approach was decided on by the steering committee at the outset of the project so that the furbearer survey sampling stratification would be consistent with the approach used for a big game management study conducted by Responsive Management for the Department in 2016).

Regarding whether other people should have the freedom to choose, the Central and North/East Regions have the highest percentages agreeing (Figure 3.18).

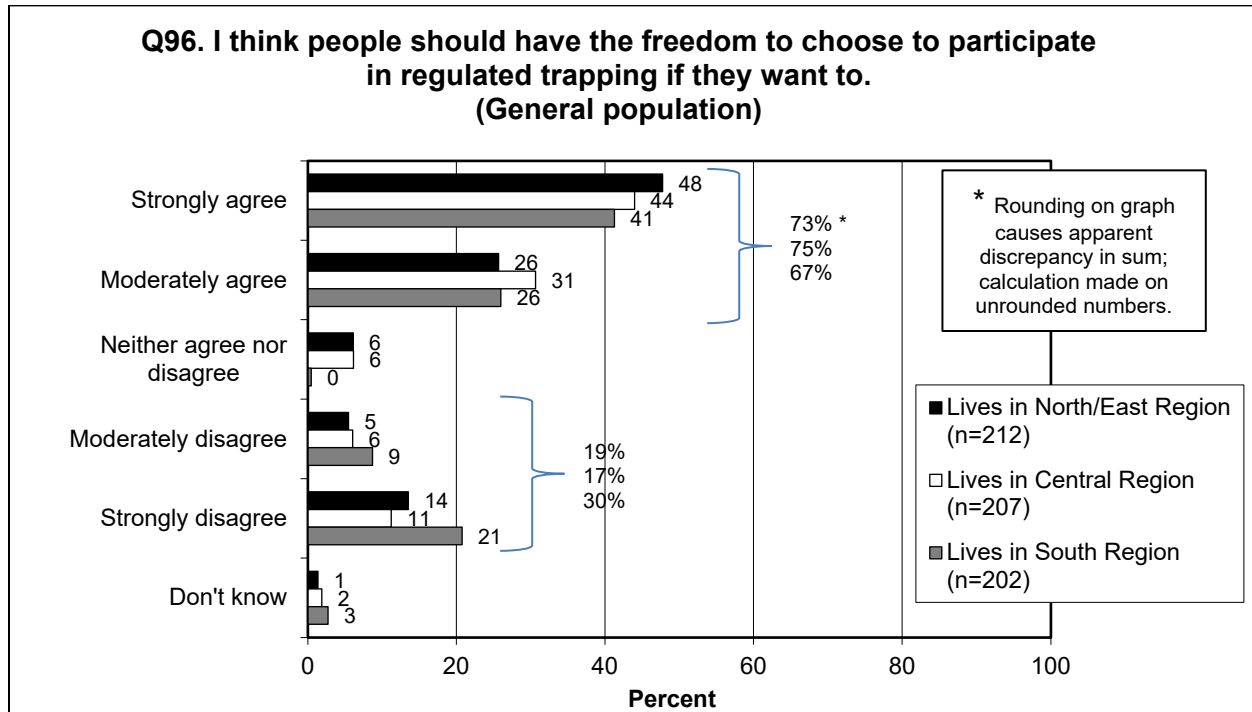


Figure 3.18. Opinion on Rights of Others to Trap, by Region (General Population)

A more nuanced view of the regional results on approval or disapproval of trapping was given by dividing the North/East Region into its constituent parts (refer to Figure 2.1 for a map showing Maine divided into four regions). When that was done, the results show that the East Region had low approval, while the North had high approval. Specifically, approval in the East Region is at 57%, compared to 79% in the North Region, 75% in the Central Region, and 77% in the South Region. Disapproval is at 30% in the East Region, compared to 20% in the North Region, 13% in the Central Region, and 18% of the South Region.

Demographic analyses graphs were made for those who approve or disapprove of regulated trapping. Figure 3.19 shows that approval of trapping is associated with being young, being male, being a hunter, having children in the household, and living in any residential area other than a rural area. On the other hand, Figure 3.20 shows that disapproval is associated with living in the North/East Region, living in a rural area, being female, being older, and not having children in the household.

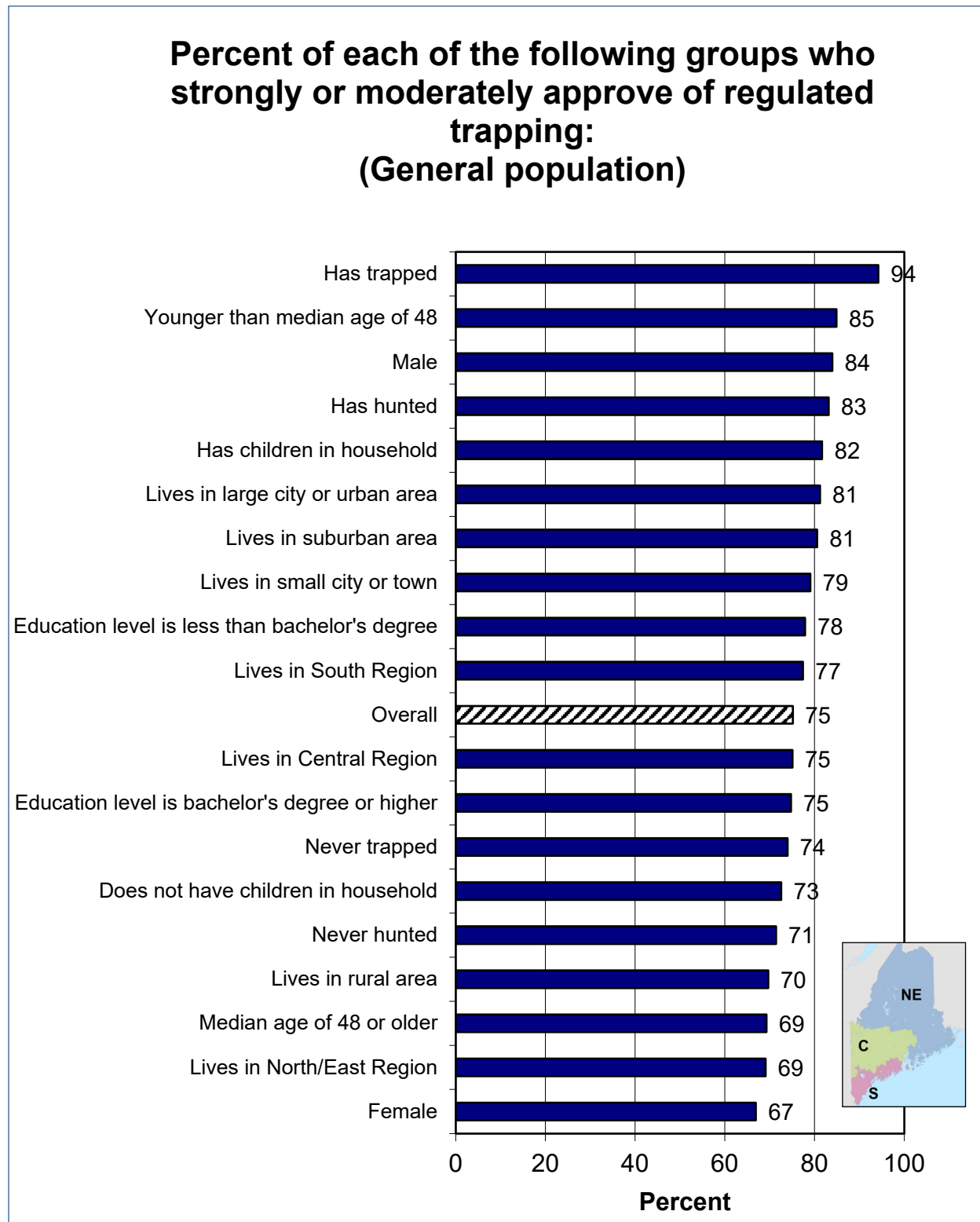


Figure 3.19. Characteristics of Those Who Approve of Trapping (General Population)
See pages 15 through 16 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

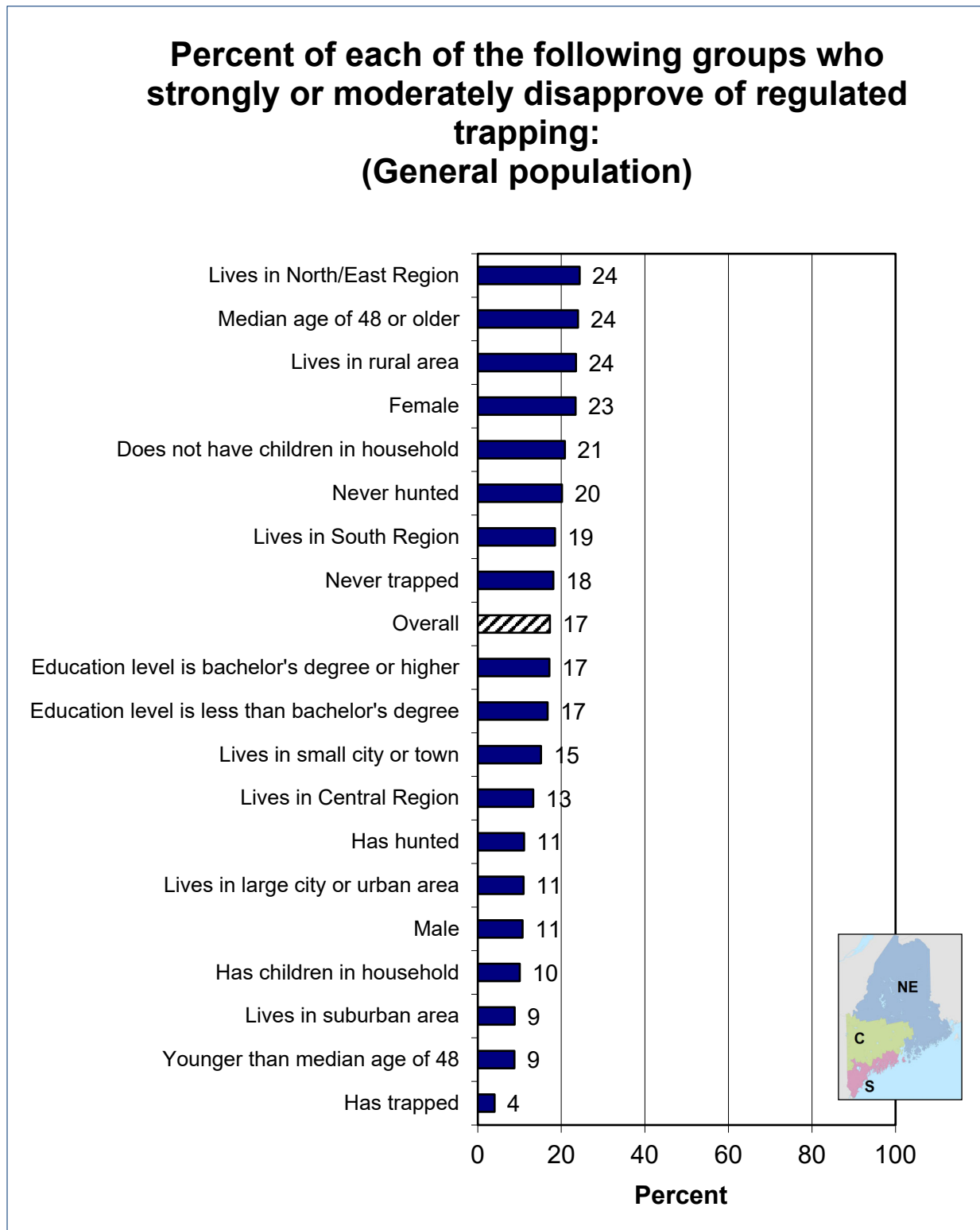


Figure 3.20. Characteristics of Those Who Disapprove of Trapping (General Population)
See pages 15 through 16 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

The large majority of Maine residents (82%) were aware that trapping is regulated in Maine by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (Figure 3.21), with almost no differences regionally (Figure 3.22). The demographic analyses found that characteristics associated with being aware that trapping is regulated by the Department (in addition to the obvious ones that the person has trapped or hunted) include being male, being in the lower educational bracket, and living in a rural area (Figure 3.23).

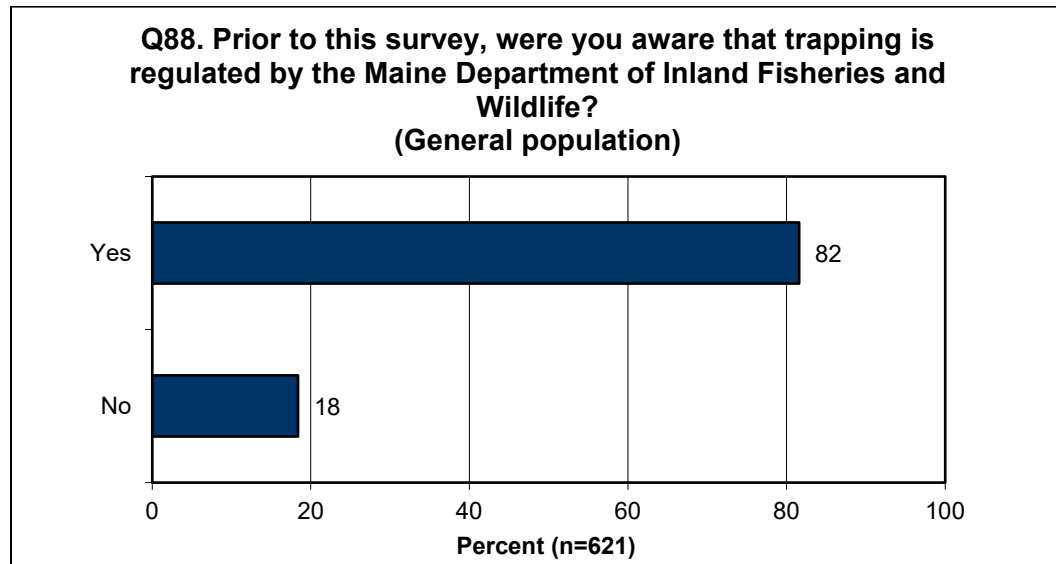


Figure 3.21. Awareness That Trapping Is Regulated by the Department (General Population)

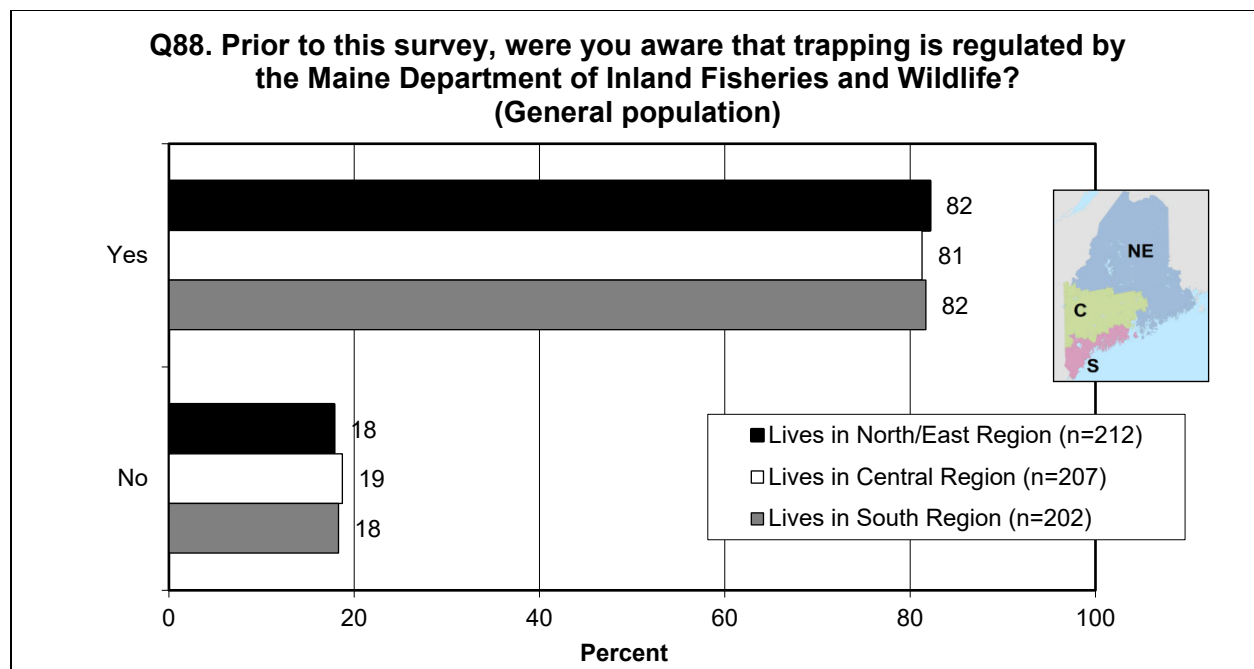


Figure 3.22. Awareness That Trapping Is Regulated by the Department, by Region (General Population)

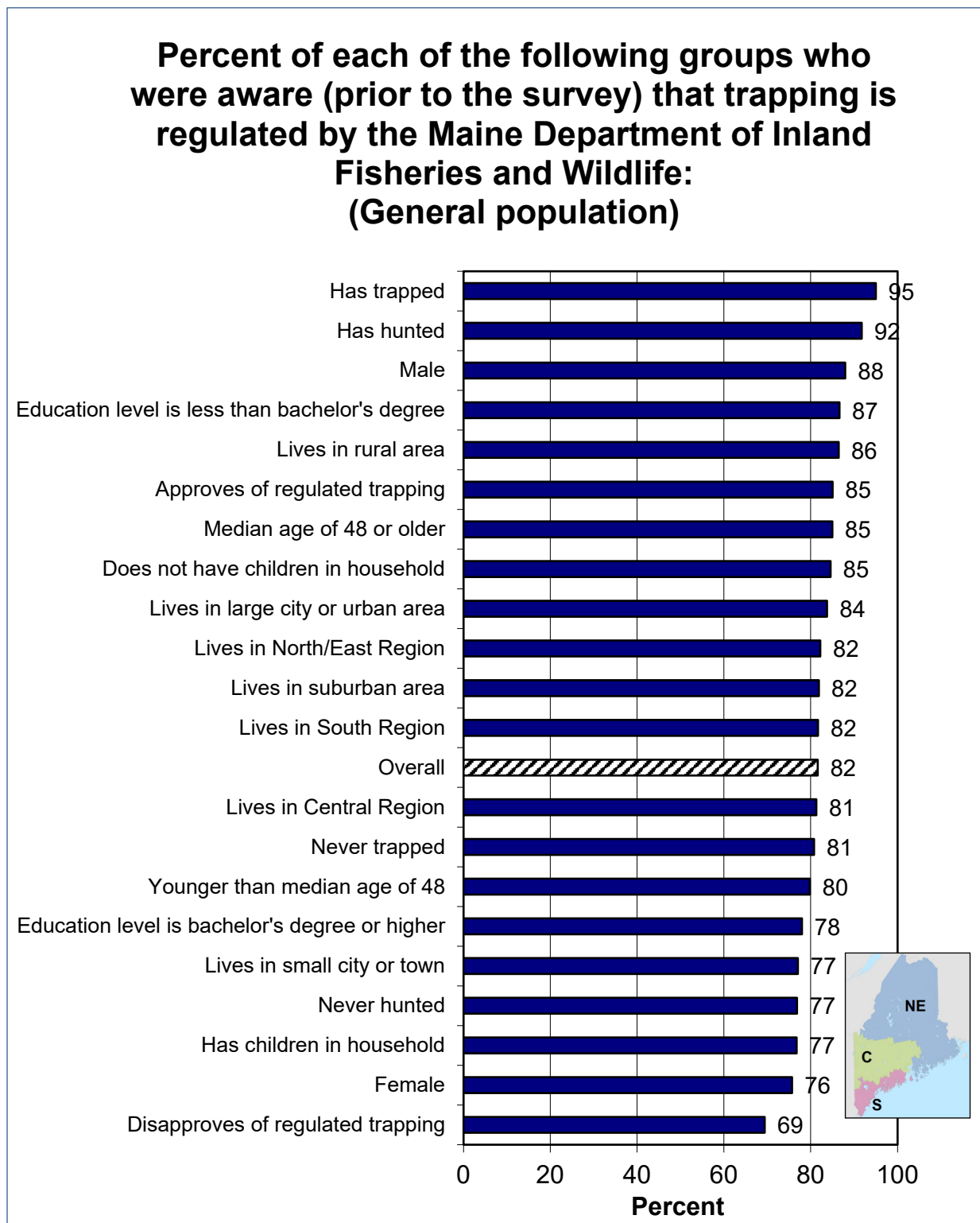


Figure 3.23. Awareness That Trapping Is Regulated by the Department, by Region (General Population)

See pages 15 through 16 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

Just under half of residents who have never trapped know or have known a person who is a trapper or has trapped wild animals; add this to those who have trapped, and half of residents (50%) know someone who is a trapper or has trapped, or they have personally trapped (Figure 3.24). North/East Region residents have the highest percentage who know a trapper as well as know a trapper/are a trapper (Figure 3.25).

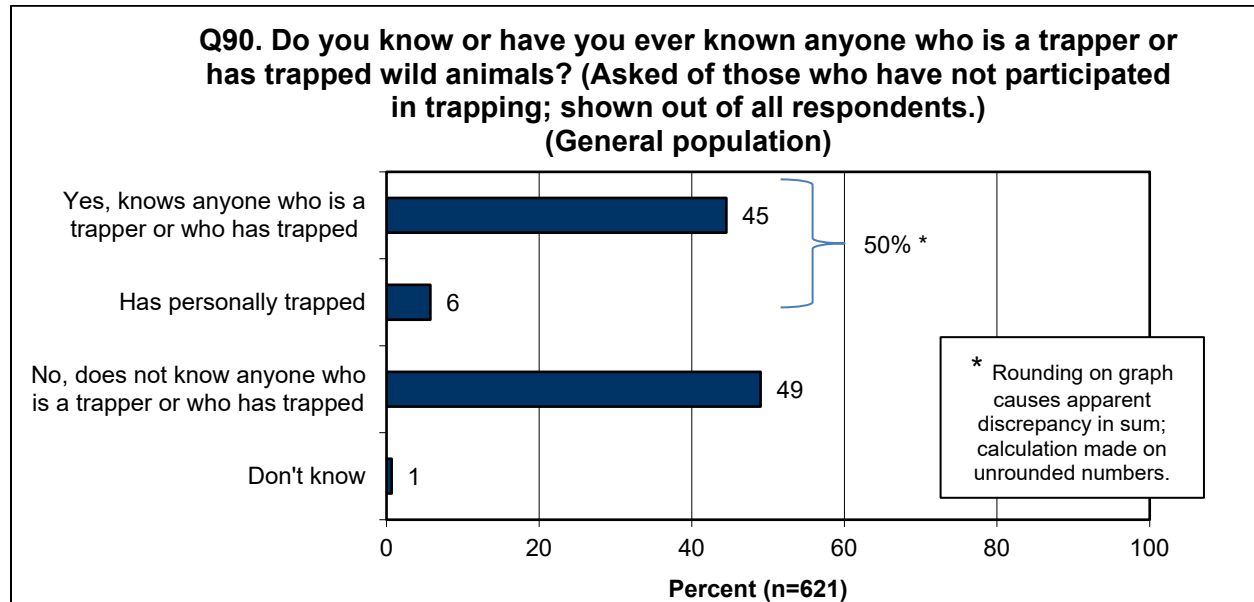


Figure 3.24. Knowing a Trapper (General Population)

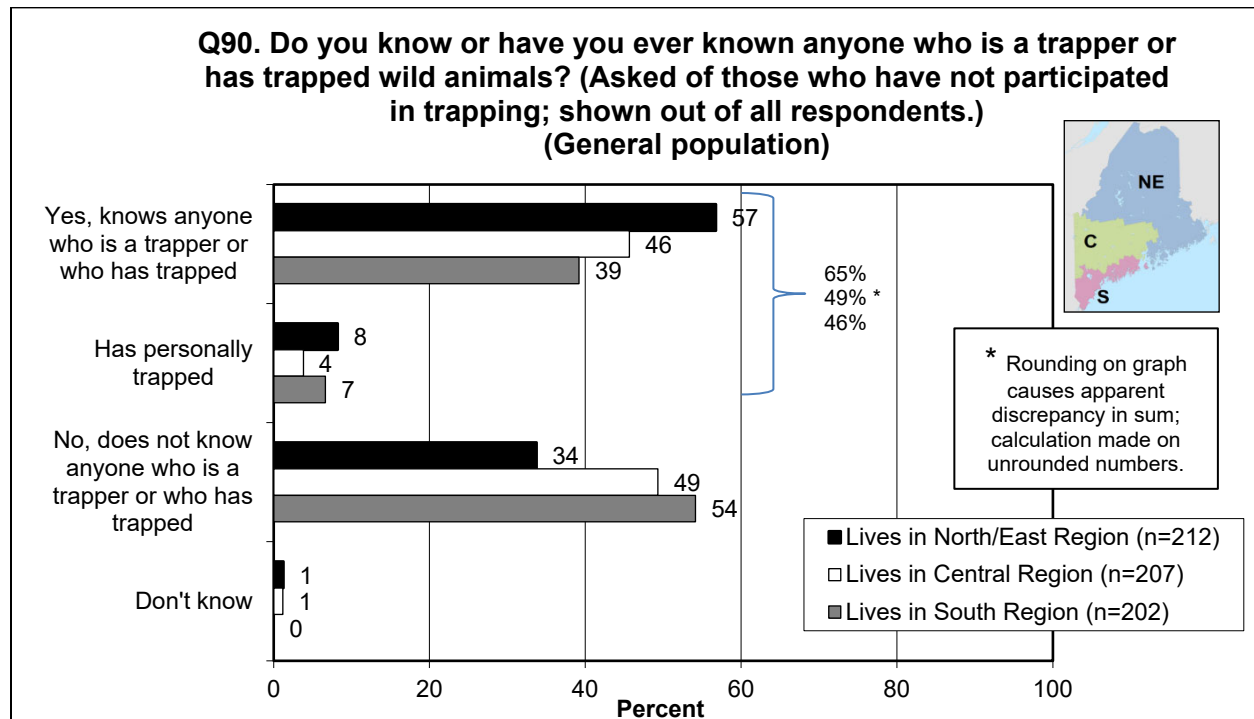


Figure 3.25. Knowing a Trapper, by Region (General Population)

Three questions explored residents' opinions related to the humaneness of trapping, each being an agree-disagree question. The majority of residents agree (65%) that trapping is okay if the animals die quickly (Figure 3.26), and the large majority agree (78%) that trapping is okay if animals that are accidentally caught can be released (Figure 3.27). Regional results are shown in Figures 3.28 and 3.29.

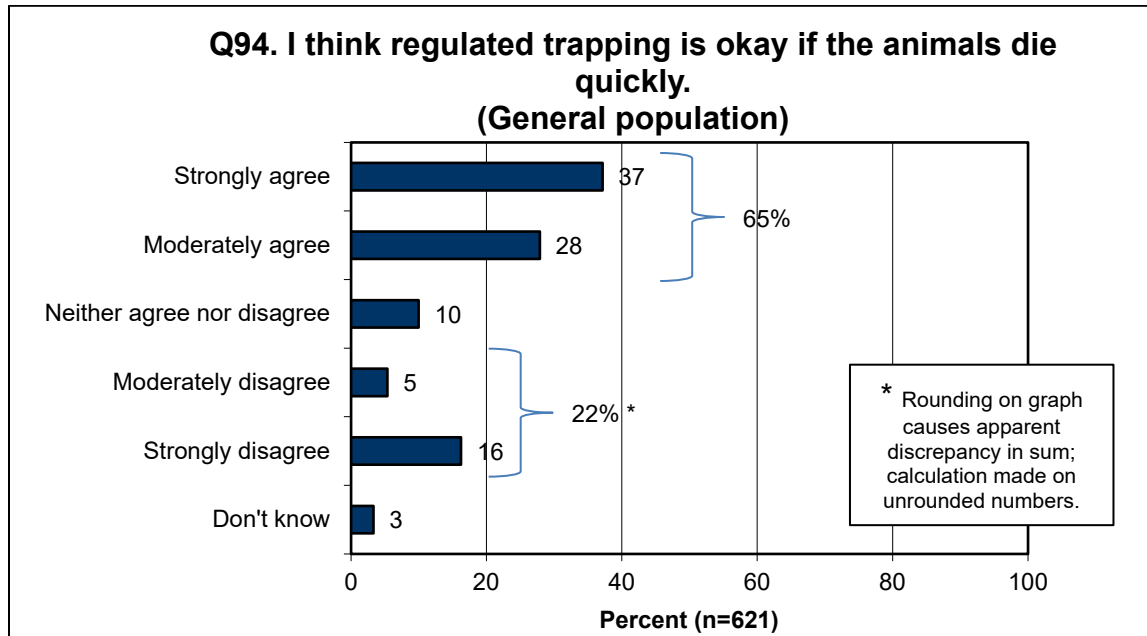


Figure 3.26. Opinion on Trapping If the Animal Dies Quickly (General Population)

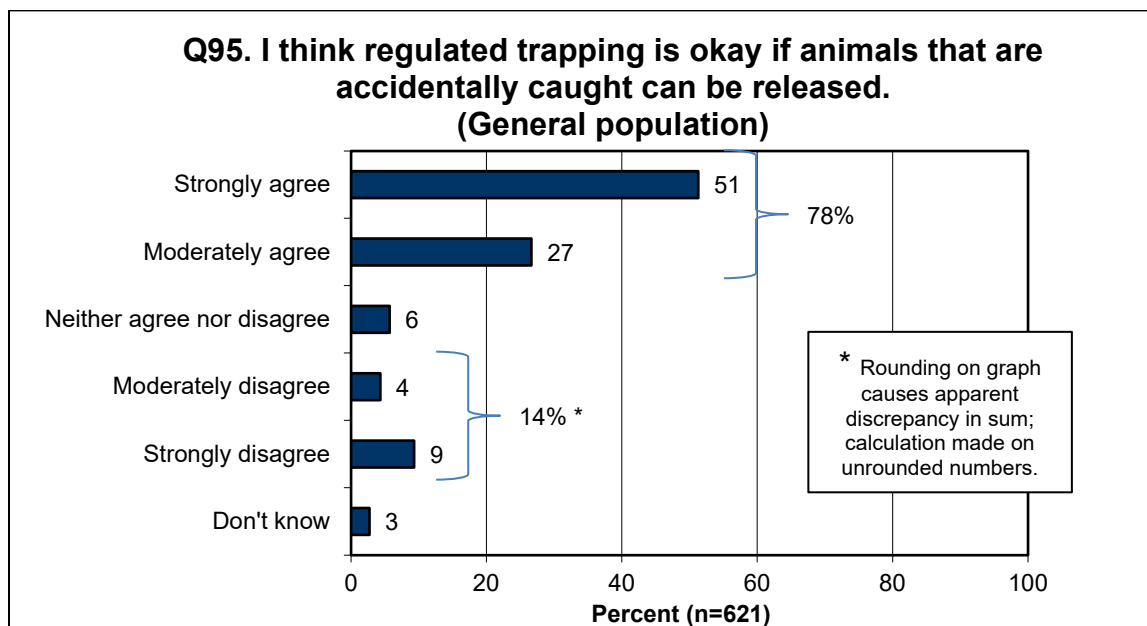


Figure 3.27. Opinions on Trapping If Accidentally Caught Animals Can Be Released (General Population)

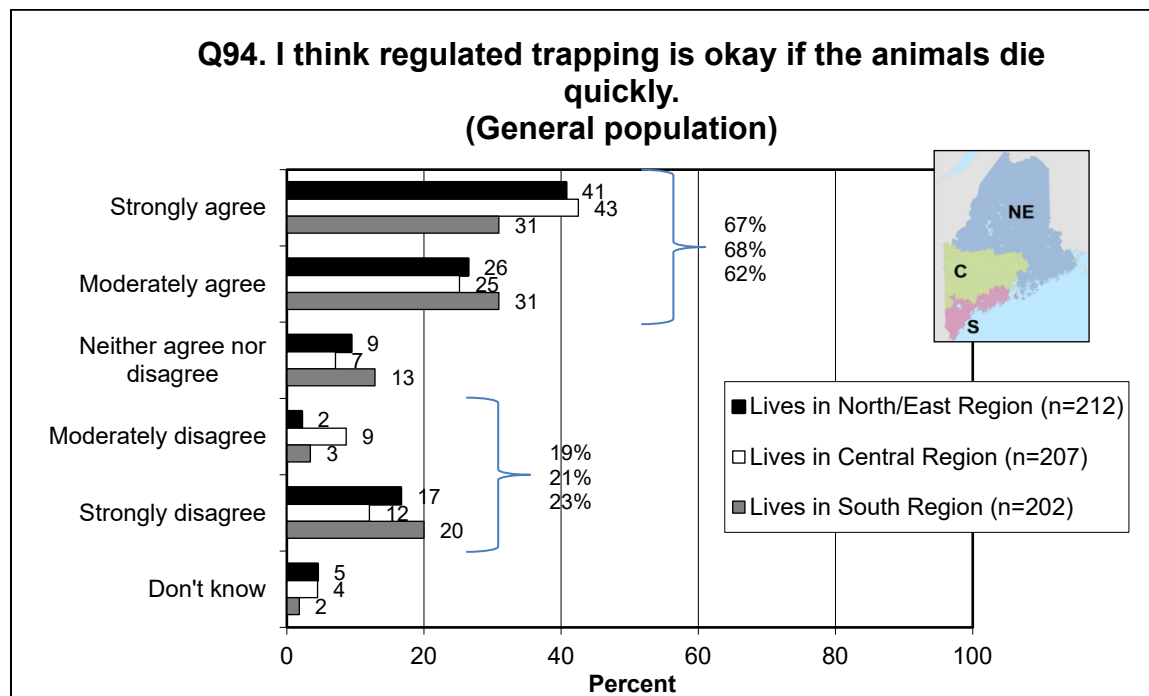


Figure 3.28. Opinion on Trapping If the Animal Dies Quickly, by Region (General Population)

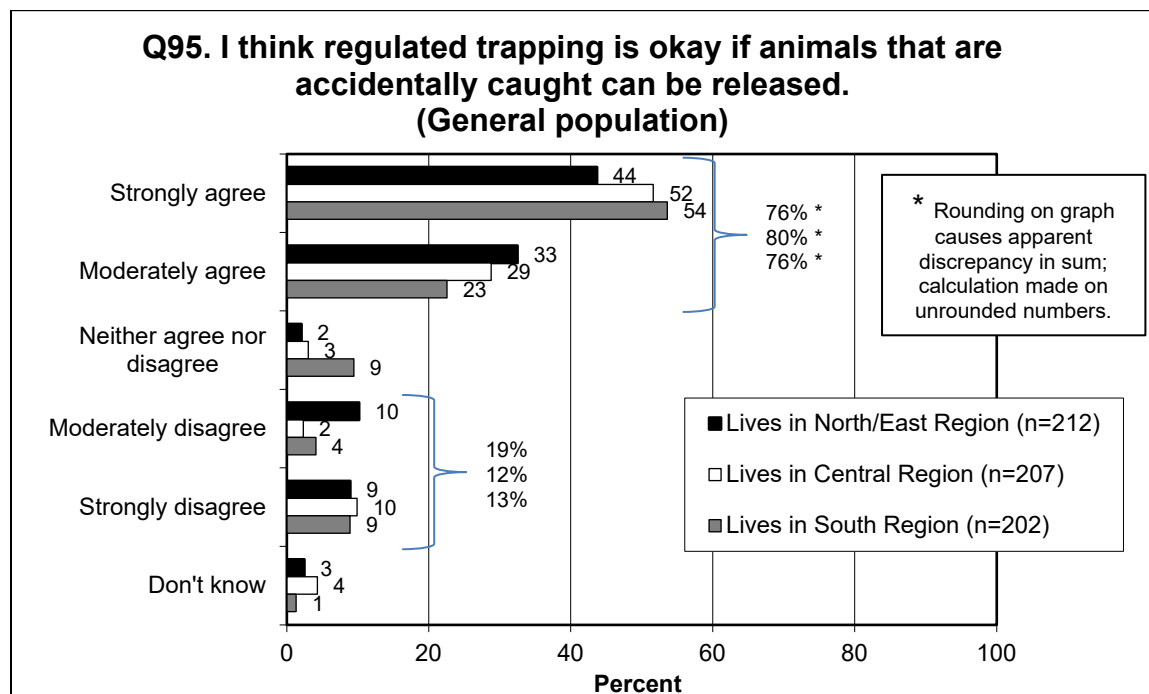


Figure 3.29. Opinions on Trapping If Accidentally Caught Animals Can Be Released, by Region (General Population)

The third question related to the humanness of trapping asked if people thought that trapping was more humane than it was 10 years ago because of improvements in traps. As shown in

Figure 3.30, a large percentage of residents do not know (30%); otherwise, more of them agree with this statement (47%) than disagree with it (11%). Regionally, the highest agreement is among residents of the North/East Region (Figure 3.31).

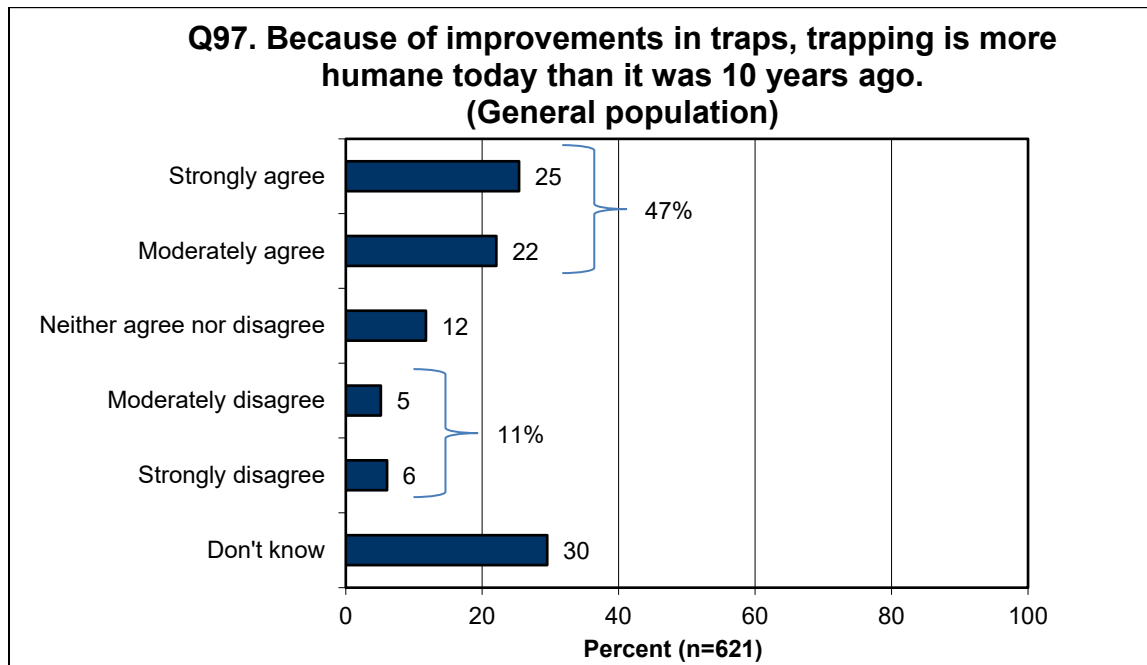


Figure 3.30. Opinion on Trapping If Informed That Improvements in Traps Make It More Humane Than It Was 10 Years Ago (General Population)

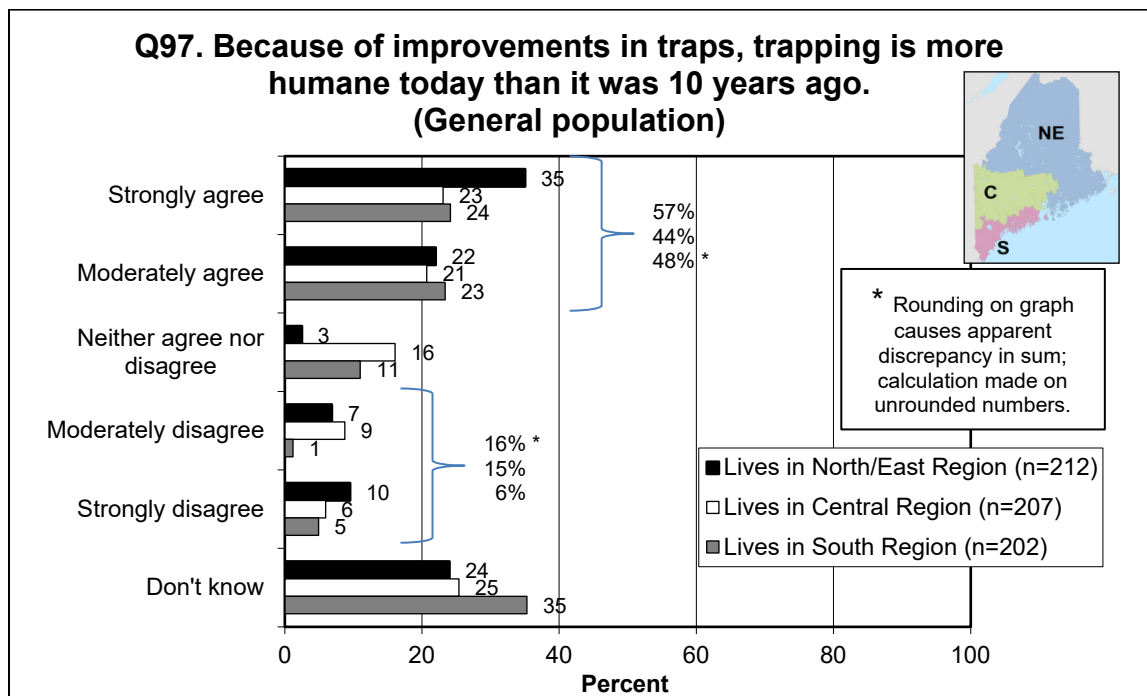


Figure 3.31. Opinion on Trapping If Informed That Improvements in Traps Make It More Humane Than It Was 10 Years Ago, by Region (General Population)

Two questions explored perceptions on trapping’s effect on species’ populations and the species’ long-term survivability. In reality in the United States, trapping is regulated so that endangered species are not legally trapped and legal trapping does not endanger species’ survivability. Despite this, 26% of residents incorrectly agree that endangered species are used to make fur clothing, 4% neither agree nor disagree, and another 23% did not know the answer (a sum of 52% with an incorrect perception of this—summed on unrounded numbers) (Figure 3.32). Additionally, 50% agree that regulated trapping can cause species to become endangered or extinct, 7% neither agree nor disagree, and 10% do not know (a sum of 67%) (Figure 3.33). Regional results are shown in Figures 3.34 and 3.35; the South Region appears to be the most misinformed.

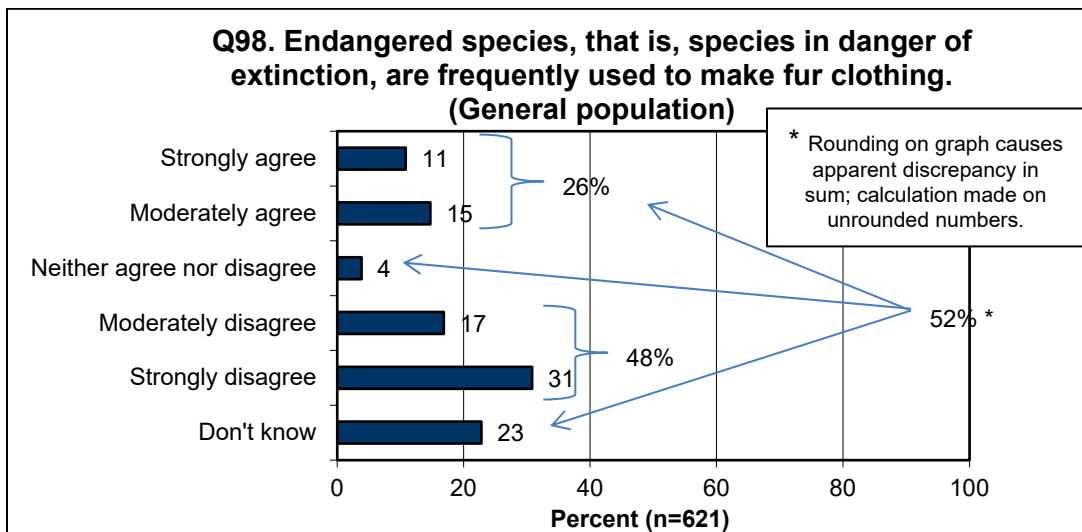


Figure 3.32. Perceptions Regarding Trapping and Endangered Species (General Population)

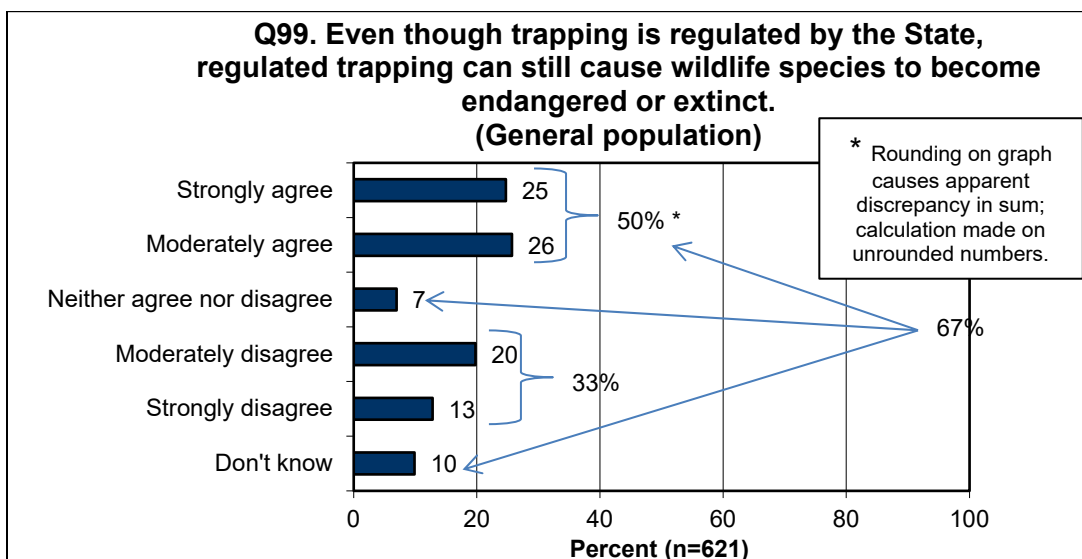


Figure 3.33. Perceptions Regarding Whether Trapping Endangers Species Populations (General Population)

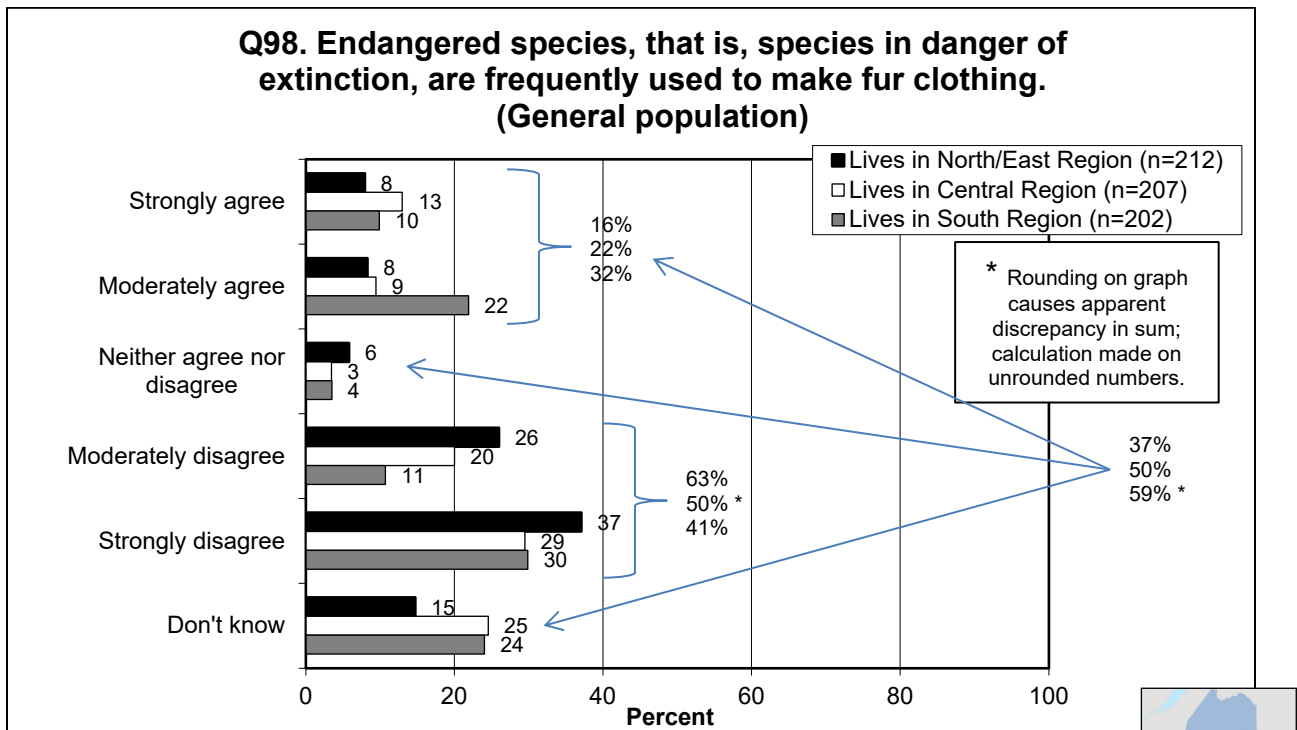


Figure 3.34. Perceptions Regarding Trapping and Endangered Species (General Population)

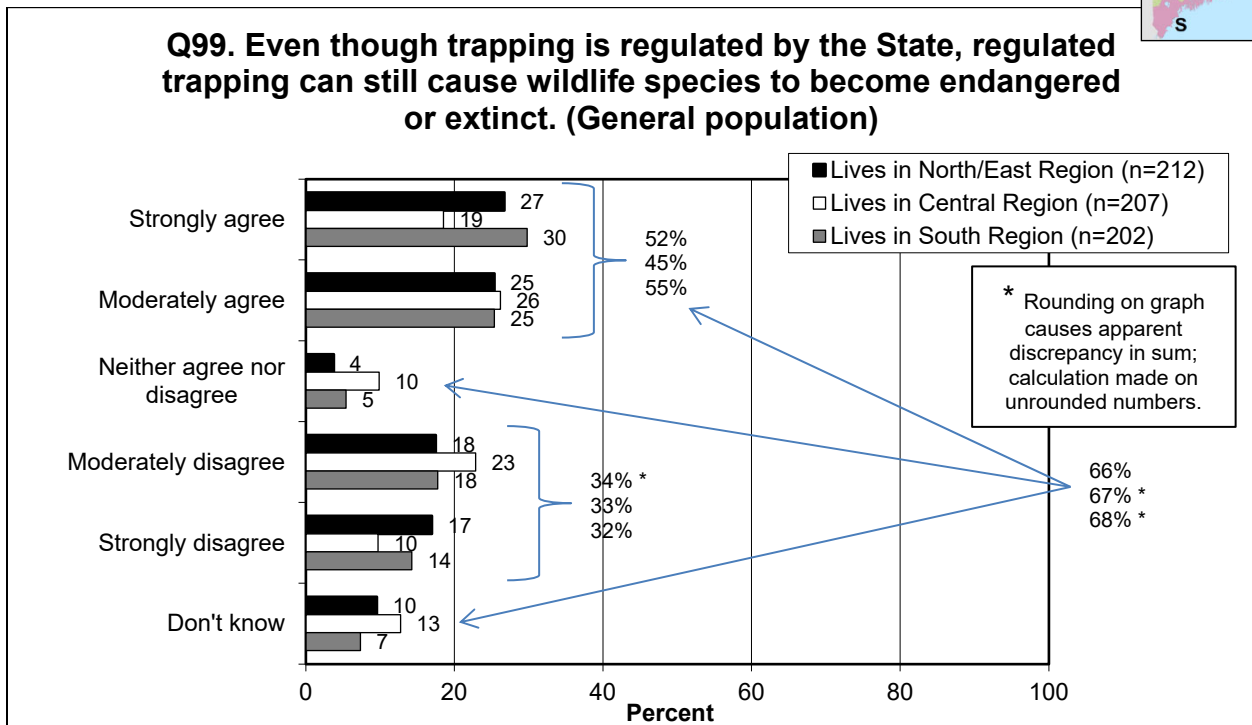
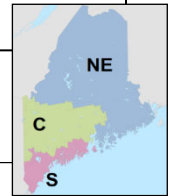


Figure 3.35. Perceptions Regarding Whether Trapping Endangers Species Populations (General Population)

KNOWLEDGE OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARD FURBEARER SPECIES

The survey asked about ten species: beaver, bobcat, coyote, fox, raccoon, skunk, fisher, marten, otter, and muskrat. Each is discussed on its own, and then some summary tables are presented showing all the species together.

BEAVER

A third of residents (33%) say that they know a great deal or a moderate amount about beavers (Figure 3.36). Most of those who have beaver around their residential area are comfortable with the beaver population: 31% say it is about right, while only 4% say it is too high, and 6% say it is too low (Figure 3.37).

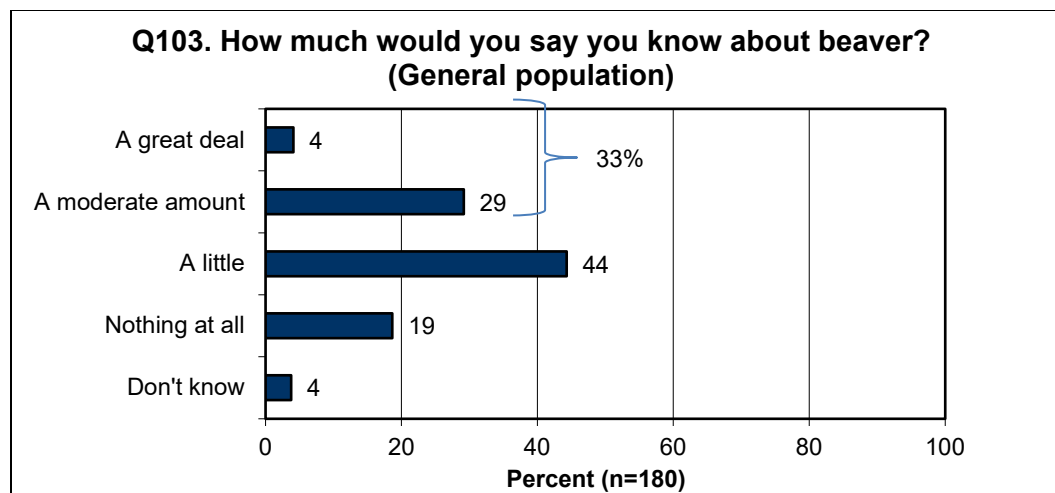


Figure 3.36. Knowledge of Beavers (General Population)

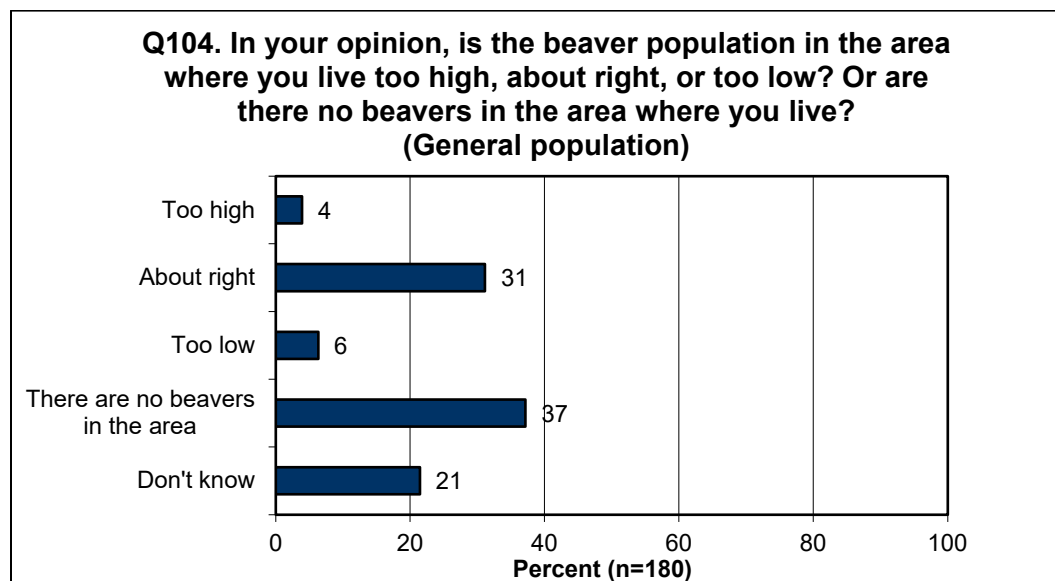


Figure 3.37. Opinion on the Beaver Population (General Population)

There is more support for (63%) than opposition to (20%) regulated trapping as a method to manage beaver populations (Figure 3.38). On the tolerance scale in Figure 3.39, residents are fairly tolerant of beavers, with 25% in the most tolerant response, and only 4% saying that beavers are a nuisance or are dangerous. Residents also rated how beneficial it is to have beavers in Maine, on a 0 to 10 scale, with 0 being not at all beneficial and 10 being extremely beneficial: the mean rating was 7.6 (the highest mean of all the species).

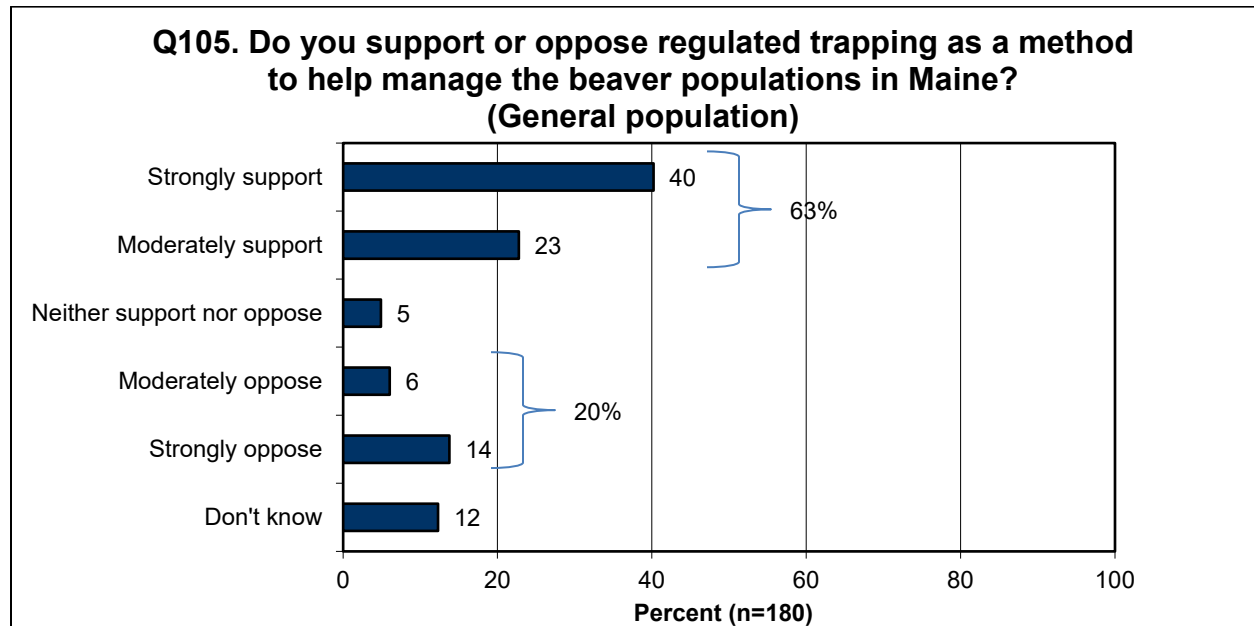


Figure 3.38. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Beaver Populations (General Population)

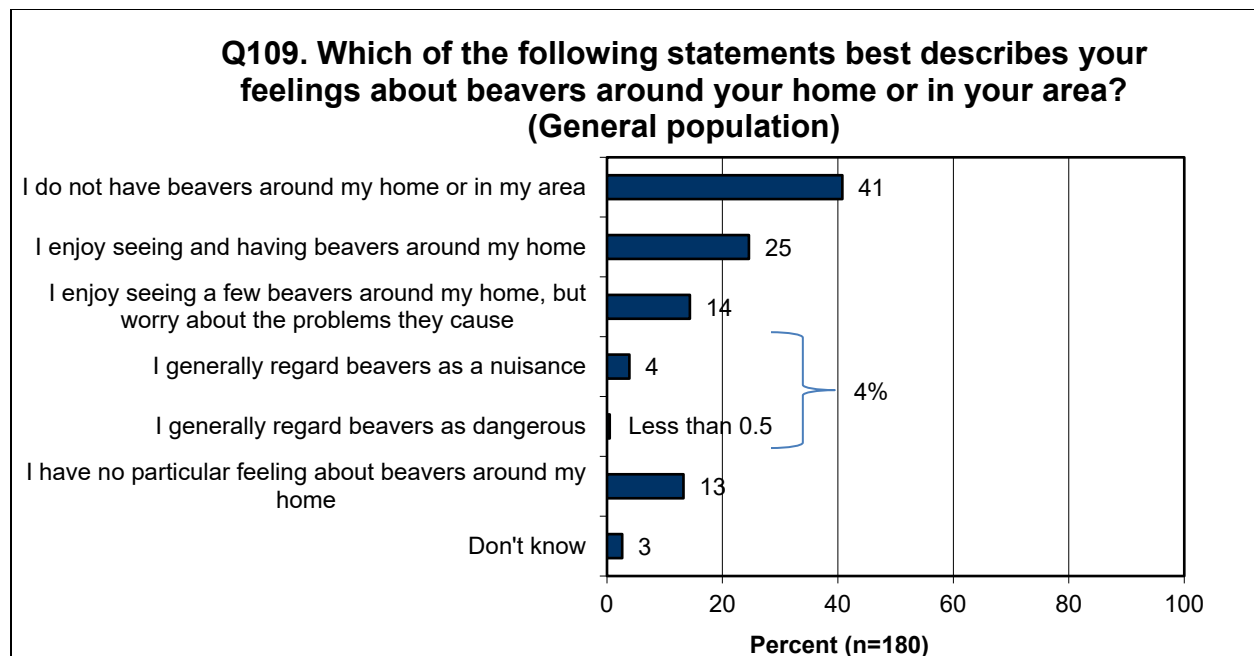


Figure 3.39. Feelings About Beavers (General Population)

South Region residents appear to be the most knowledgeable about beavers (Figure 3.40). North/East Region residents have the highest percentage who say that the beaver population in their area is too high (Figure 3.41).

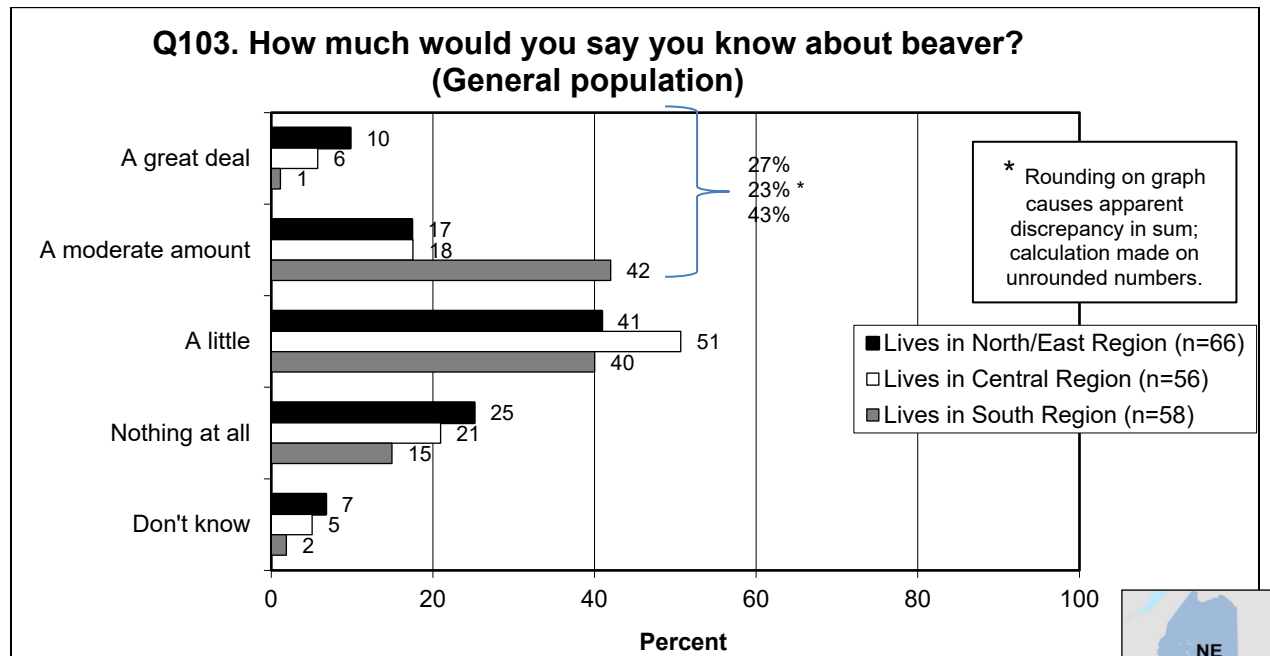


Figure 3.40. Knowledge of Beavers (General Population)

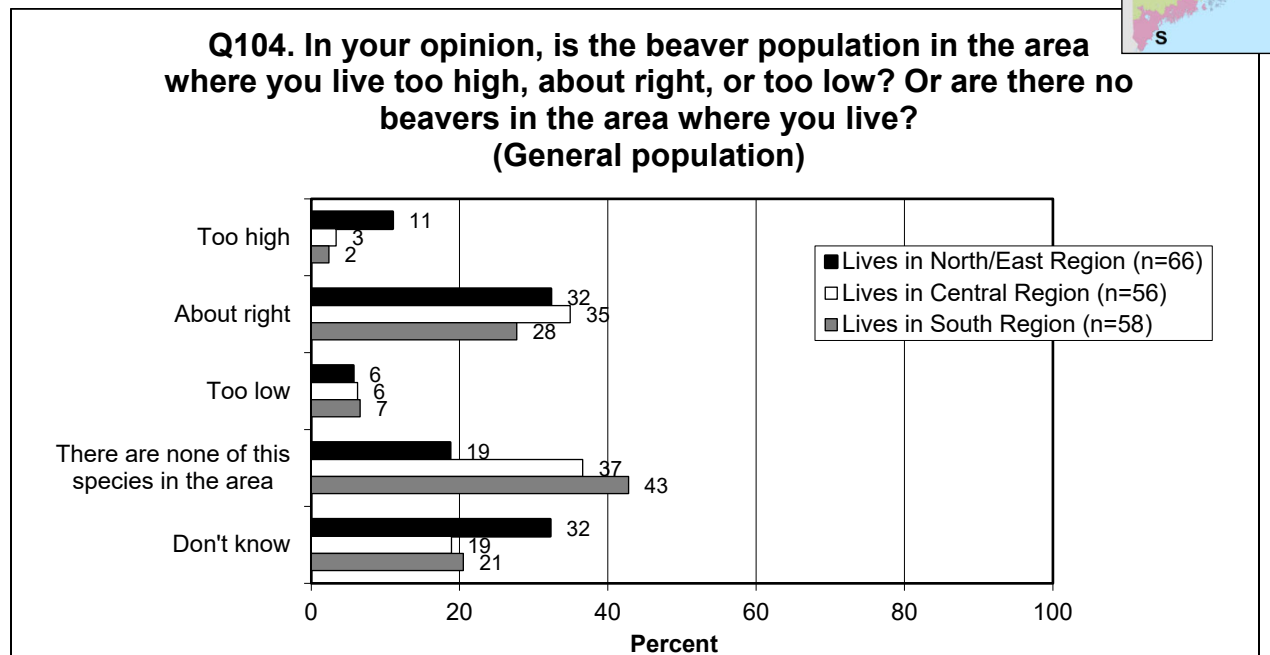


Figure 3.41. Opinion on the Beaver Population (General Population)

South Region residents have the highest support for trapping as a method to help manage beaver populations (Figure 3.42). North/East Region residents are the most intolerant of beavers (Figure 3.43). The mean ratings of how beneficial it is to have beavers in Maine were 6.7 in the North/East Region, 7.1 in the Central Region, and 8.3 in the South Region.

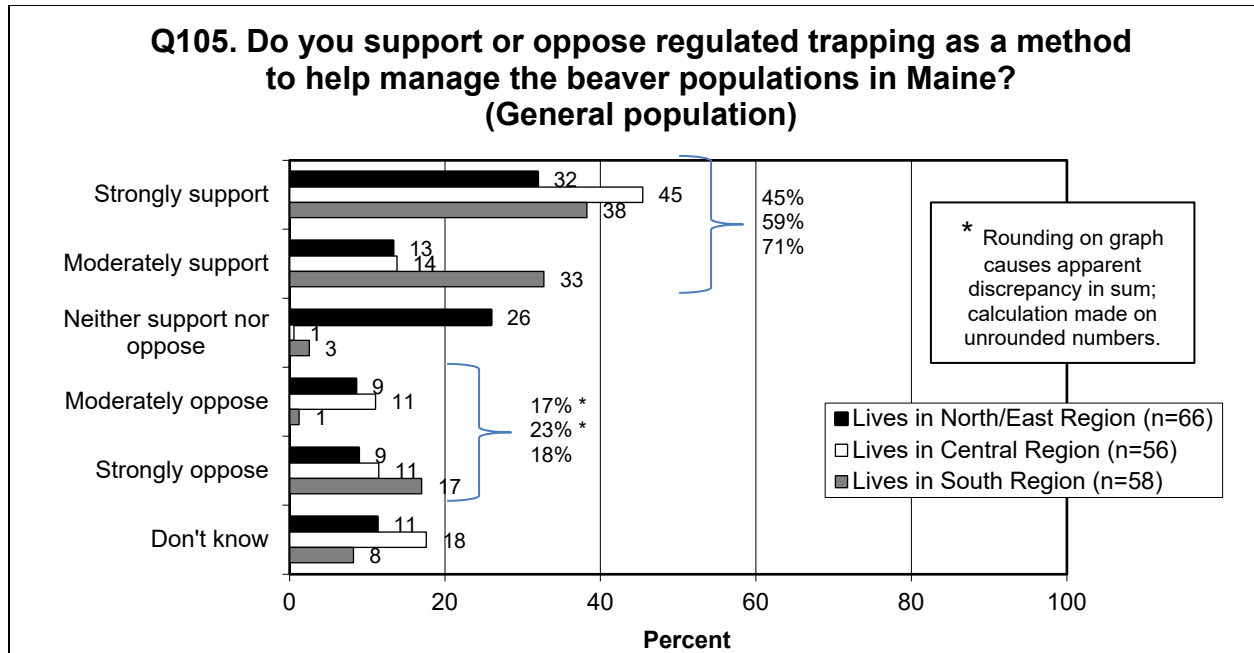


Figure 3.42. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Beaver Populations (General Population)

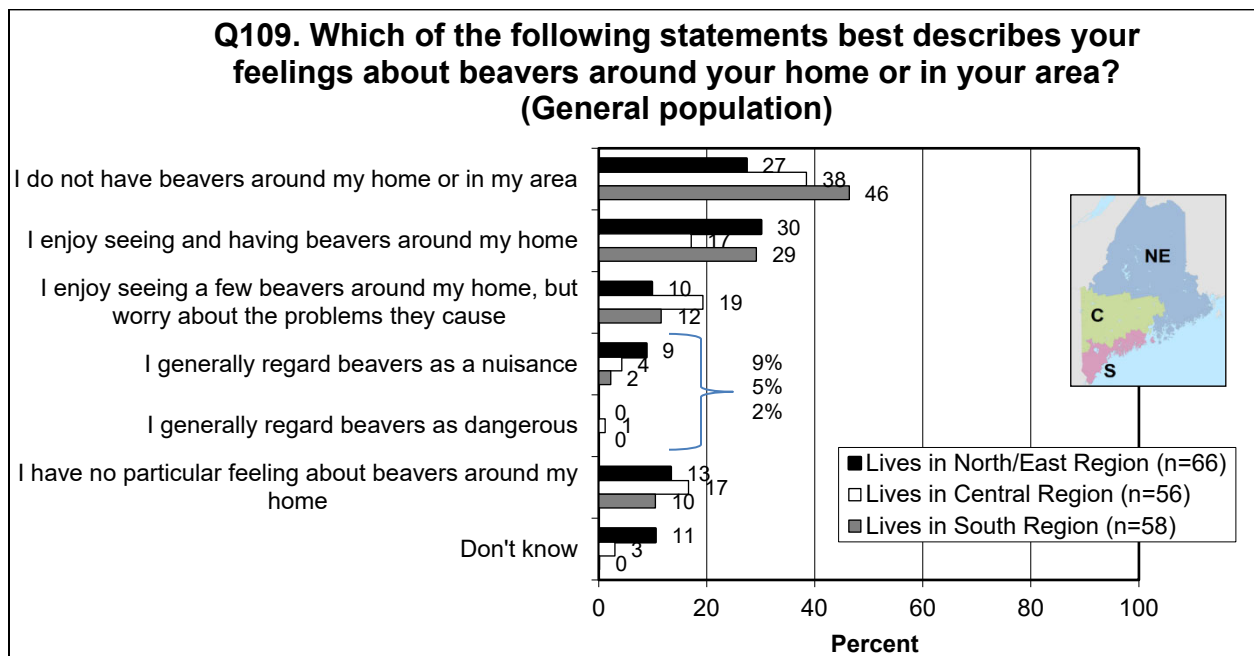


Figure 3.43. Feelings About Beavers (General Population)

BOBCAT

About a quarter of residents (24%) say that they know a great deal or a moderate amount about bobcats (Figure 3.44). A greater percentage of residents say that the bobcat population in their area is about right (16%) or say it is too low (14%) than say it is too high (only 4%) (Figure 3.45).

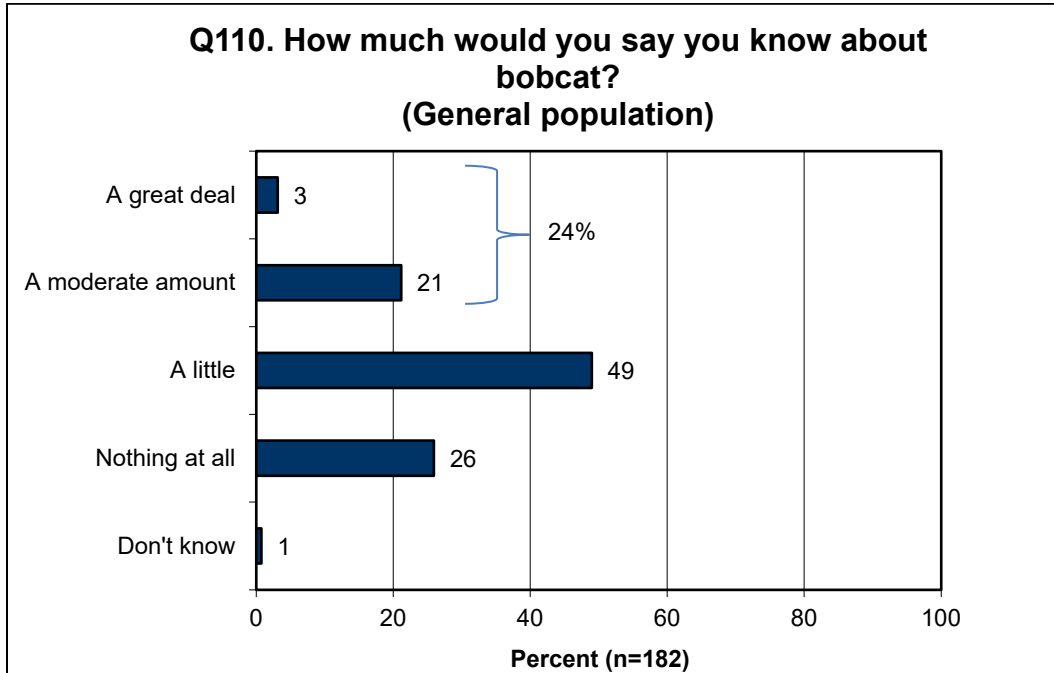


Figure 3.44. Knowledge of Bobcats (General Population)

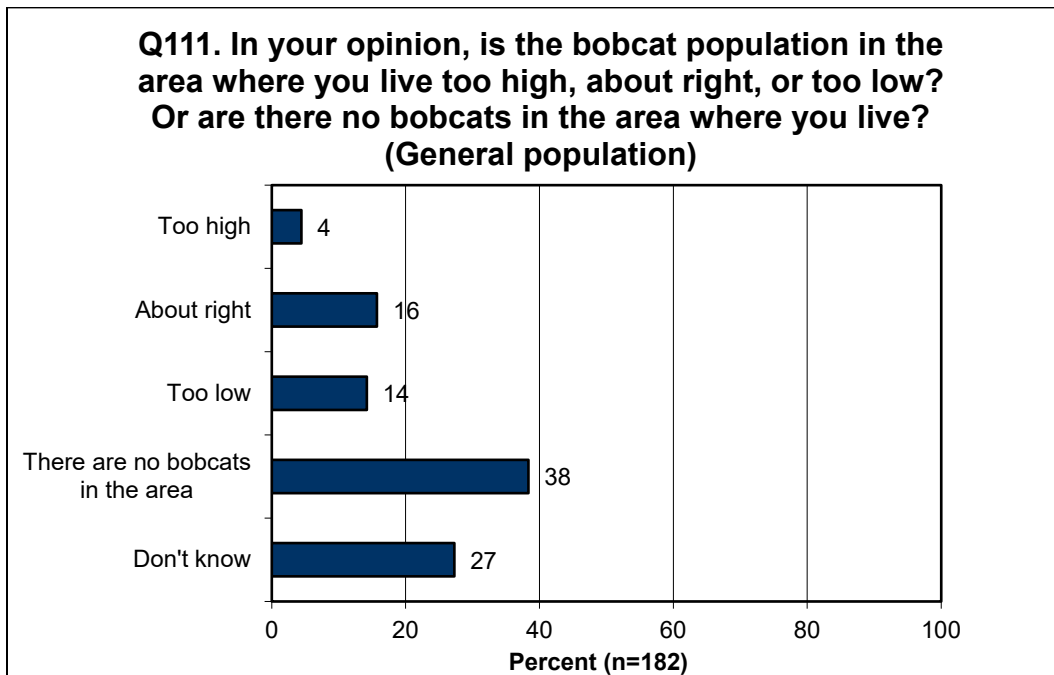


Figure 3.45. Opinion on the Bobcat Population (General Population)

There is slightly more support for (48%) than opposition to (32%) regulated trapping as a method to manage bobcat populations (Figure 3.46). On the tolerance scale in Figure 3.47, residents are somewhat tolerant of bobcats, with 10% in the most tolerant response, which is slightly more than the percentage saying that bobcats are a nuisance or are dangerous (6%). Residents also rated how beneficial it is to have bobcats in Maine, on a 0 to 10 scale, with 0 being not at all beneficial and 10 being extremely beneficial: the mean rating was 7.3.

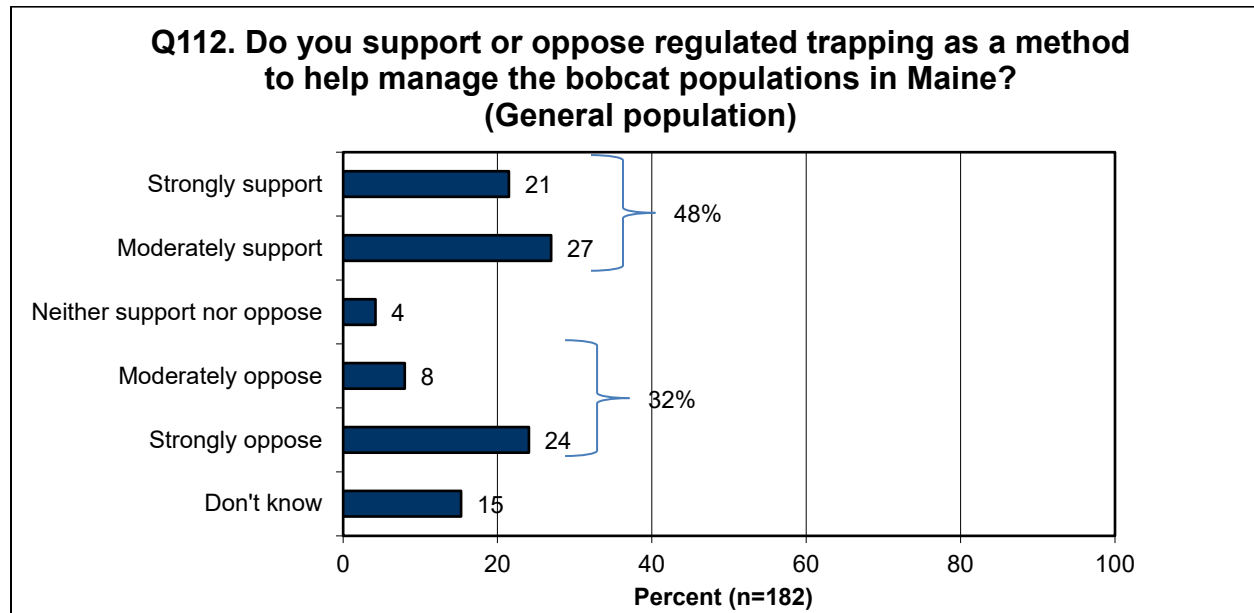


Figure 3.46. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Bobcat Populations (General Population)

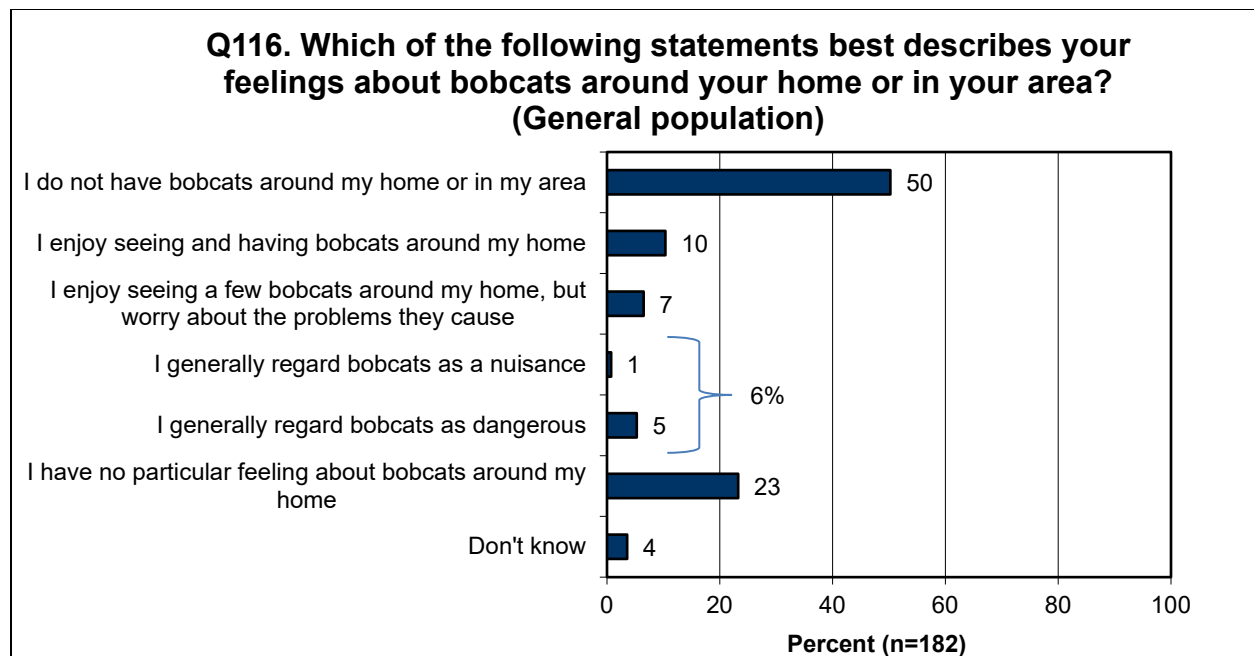


Figure 3.47. Feelings About Bobcats (General Population)

Central Region residents have the lowest self-professed knowledge levels (Figure 3.48). South Region residents have the greatest percentage saying that the bobcat population is too high (Figure 3.49).

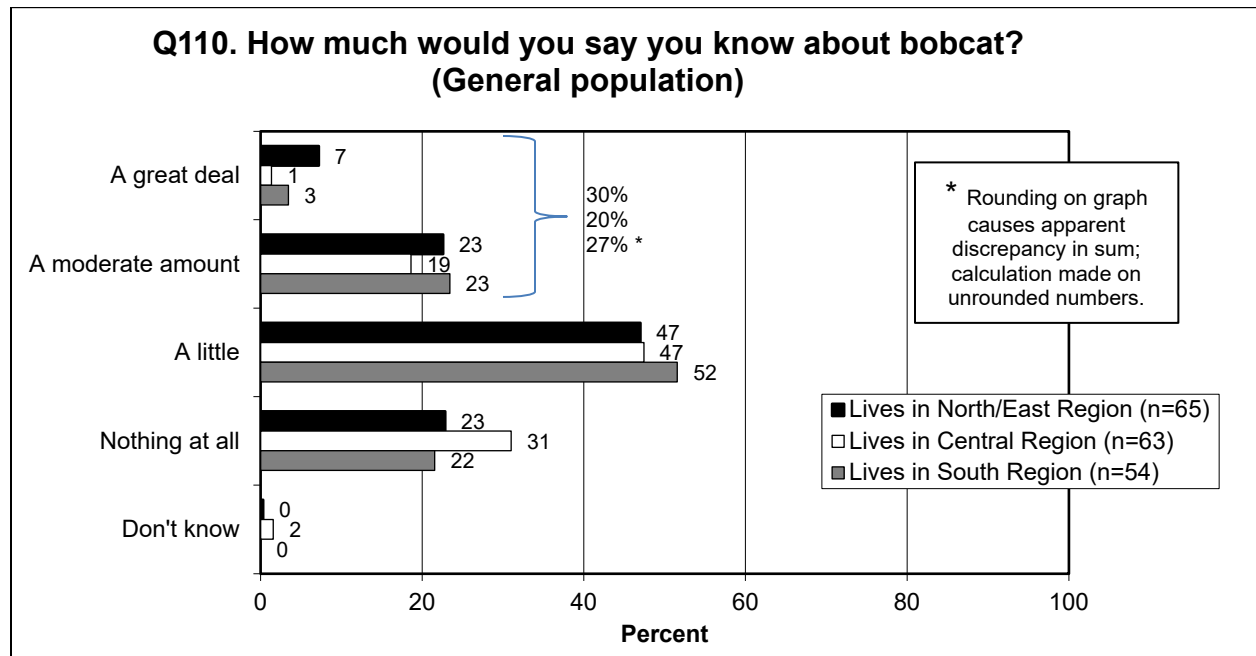


Figure 3.48. Knowledge of Bobcats (General Population)

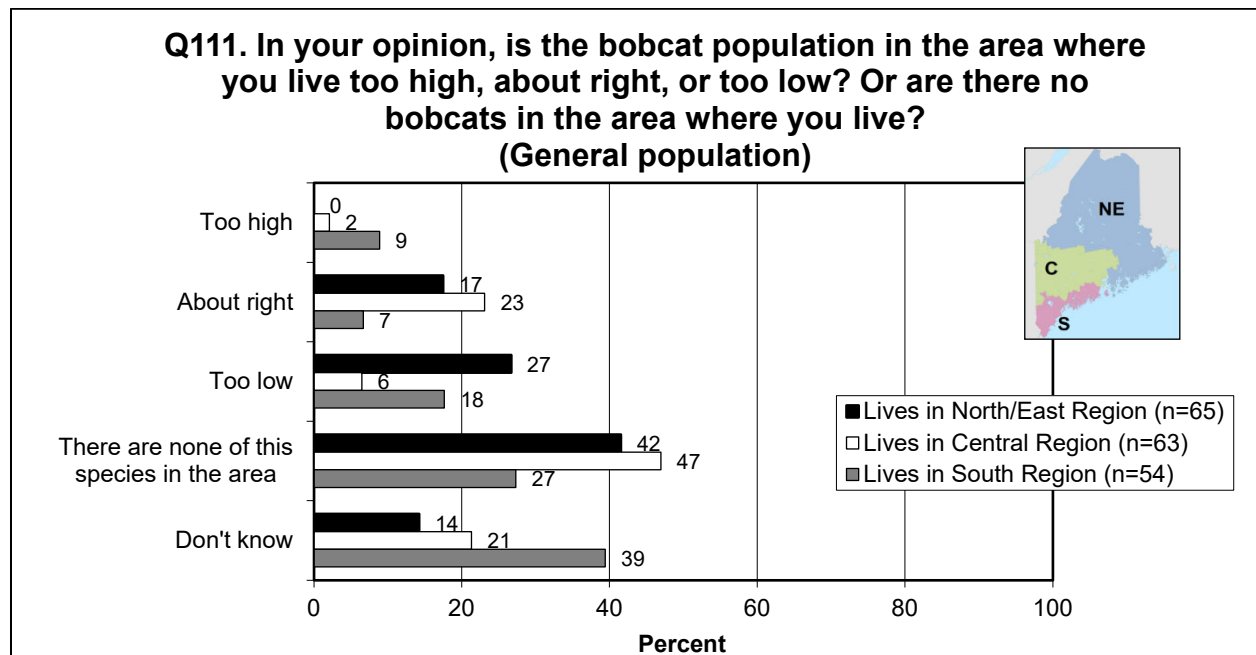


Figure 3.49. Opinion on the Bobcat Population (General Population)

The highest support, by far, for trapping as a method to help manage bobcat populations is in the South Region (Figure 3.50). South Region residents are the most intolerant of bobcats (Figure 3.51). The mean ratings of how beneficial it is to have bobcats in Maine were 7.6 in the North/East Region, 6.7 in the Central Region, and 8.0 in the South Region.

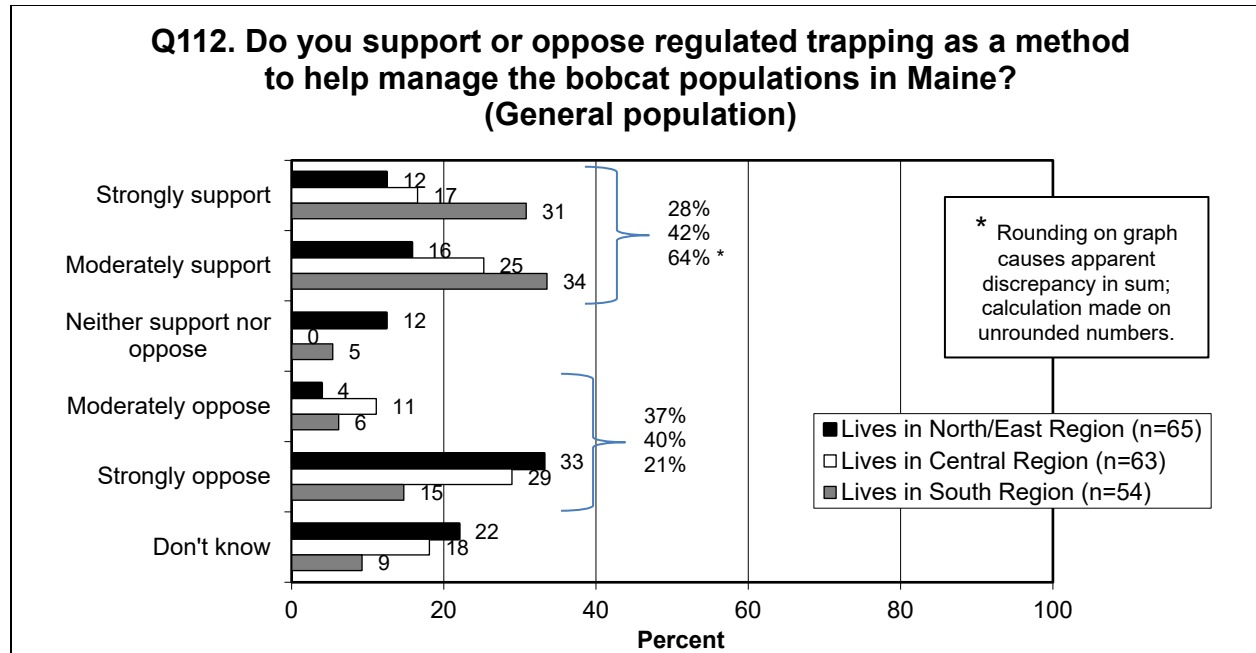


Figure 3.50. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Bobcat Populations (General Population)

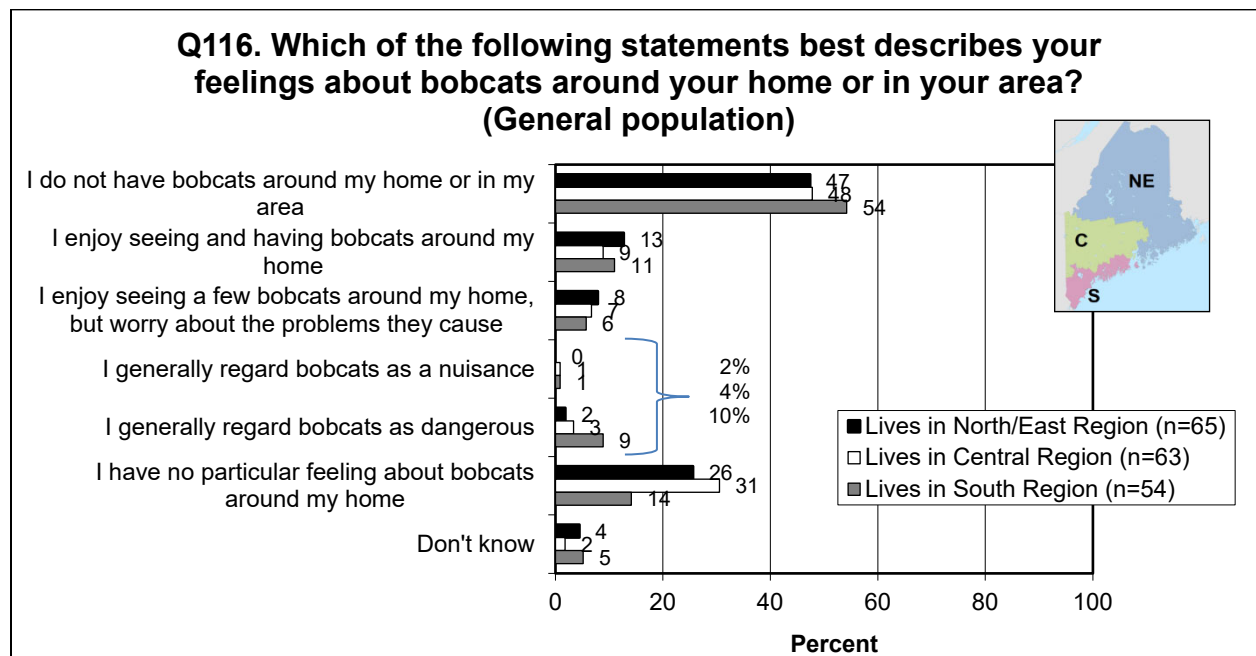


Figure 3.51. Feelings About Bobcats (General Population)

COYOTE

Almost half of residents (47%) say that they know a great deal or a moderate amount about coyotes (Figure 3.52). The percentage of residents saying that the coyote population in their area is too high (27%) far exceeds the percentage saying it is too low (only 2%), while 30% say it is about right (Figure 3.53).

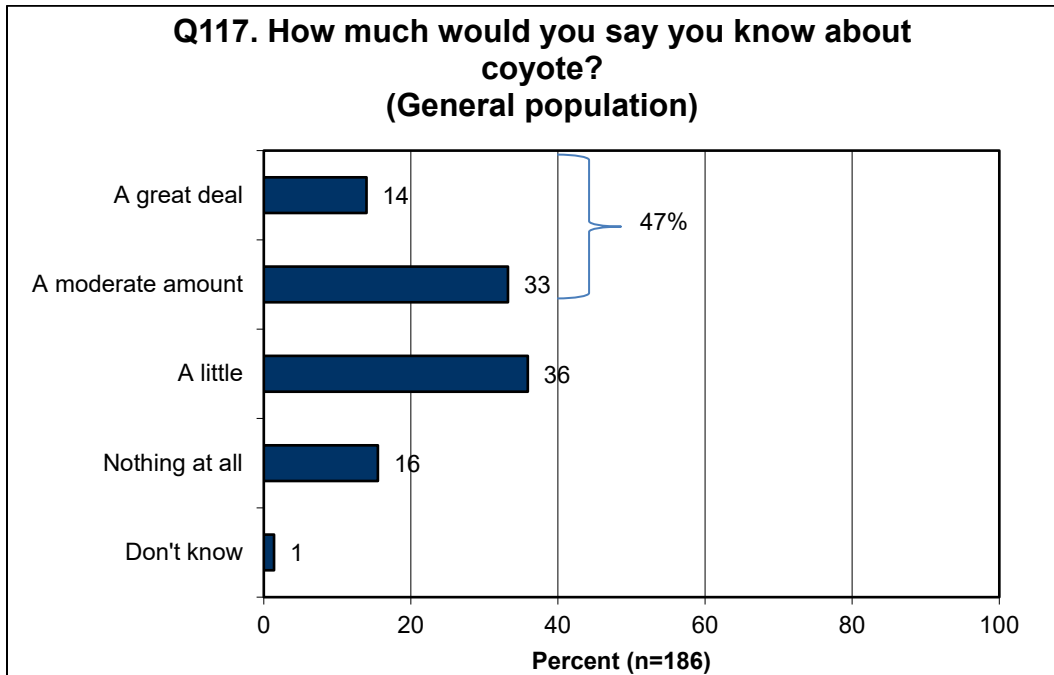


Figure 3.52. Knowledge of Coyotes (General Population)

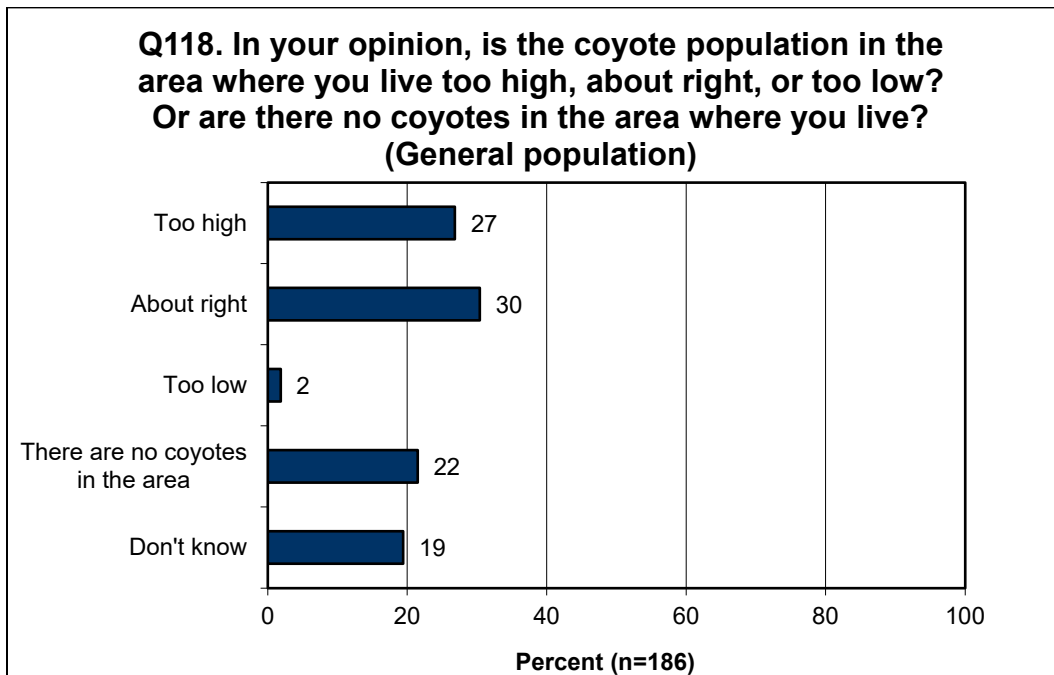


Figure 3.53. Opinion on the Coyote Population (General Population)

There is considerably more support for (71%) than opposition to (20%) regulated trapping as a method to manage coyote populations (Figure 3.54). On the tolerance scale in Figure 3.55, residents are much more intolerant of coyotes than tolerant: 8% are in the most tolerant response, compared to 38% saying that coyotes are a nuisance or are dangerous. Residents also rated how beneficial it is to have coyotes in Maine, on a 0 to 10 scale, with 0 being not at all beneficial and 10 being extremely beneficial: the mean rating was 5.1 (the lowest mean of all the species).

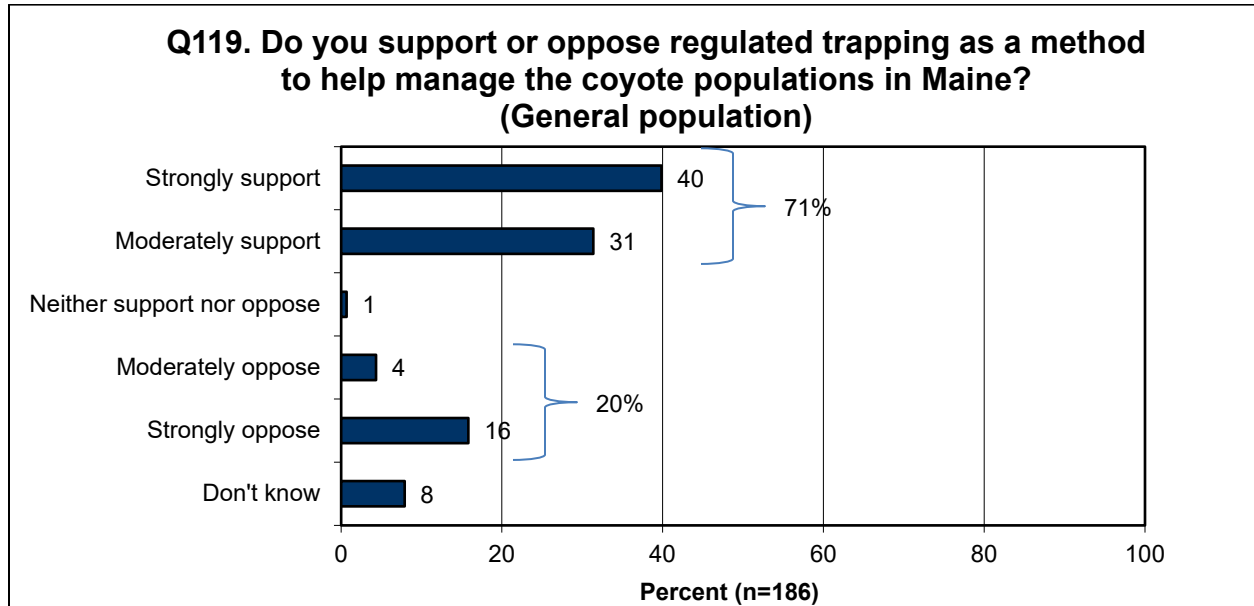


Figure 3.54. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Coyote Populations (General Population)

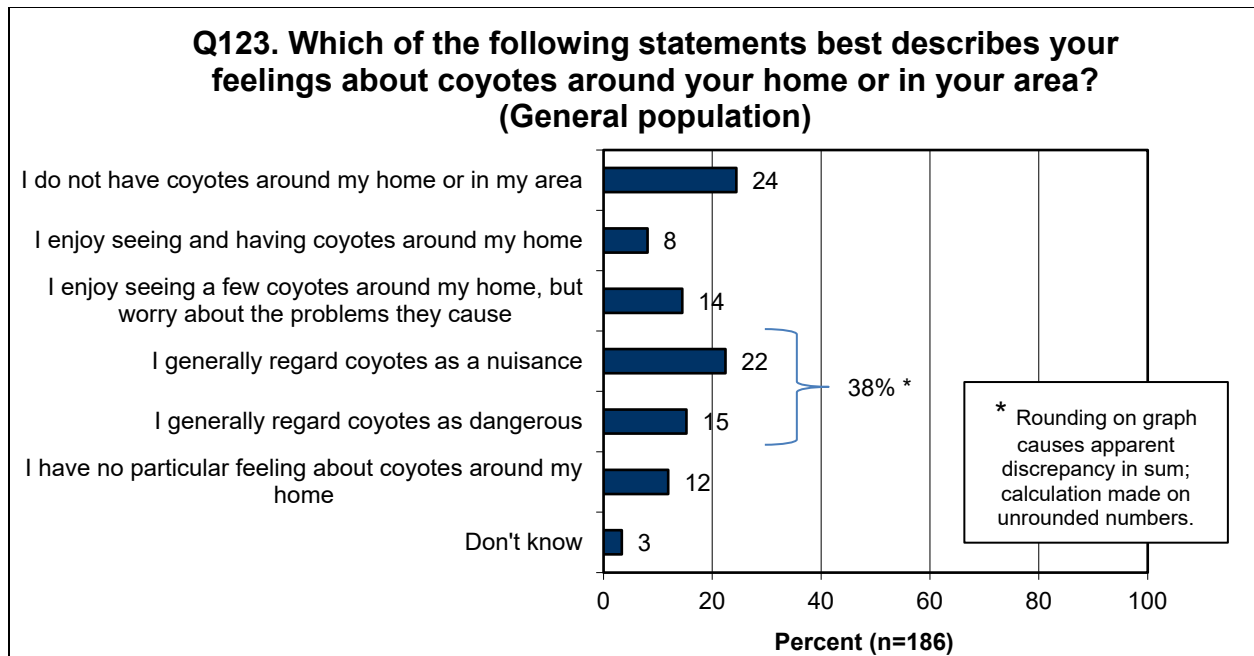


Figure 3.55. Feelings About Coyotes (General Population)

North/East Region residents are the most knowledgeable about coyotes (Figure 3.56). The regions are not markedly different regarding thinking the coyote population is too high—no more than 6 percentage points separate the regions—while the North/East Region has the highest percentage of residents who say that the population is about right (Figure 3.57).

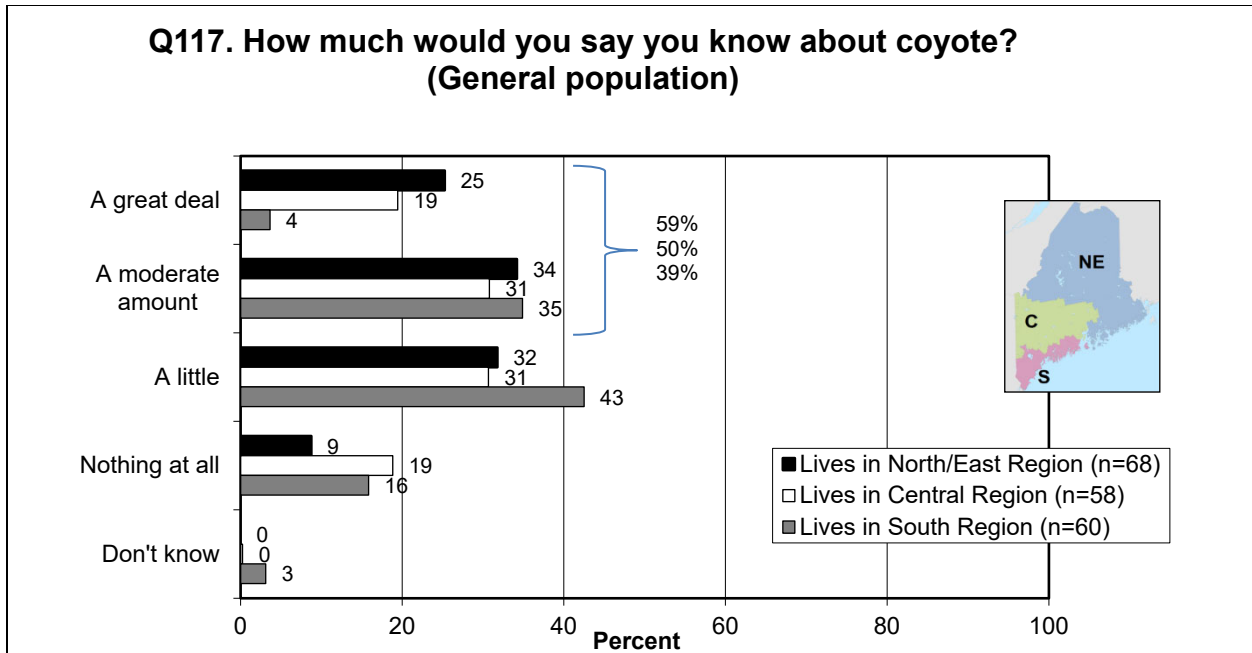


Figure 3.56. Knowledge of Coyotes (General Population)

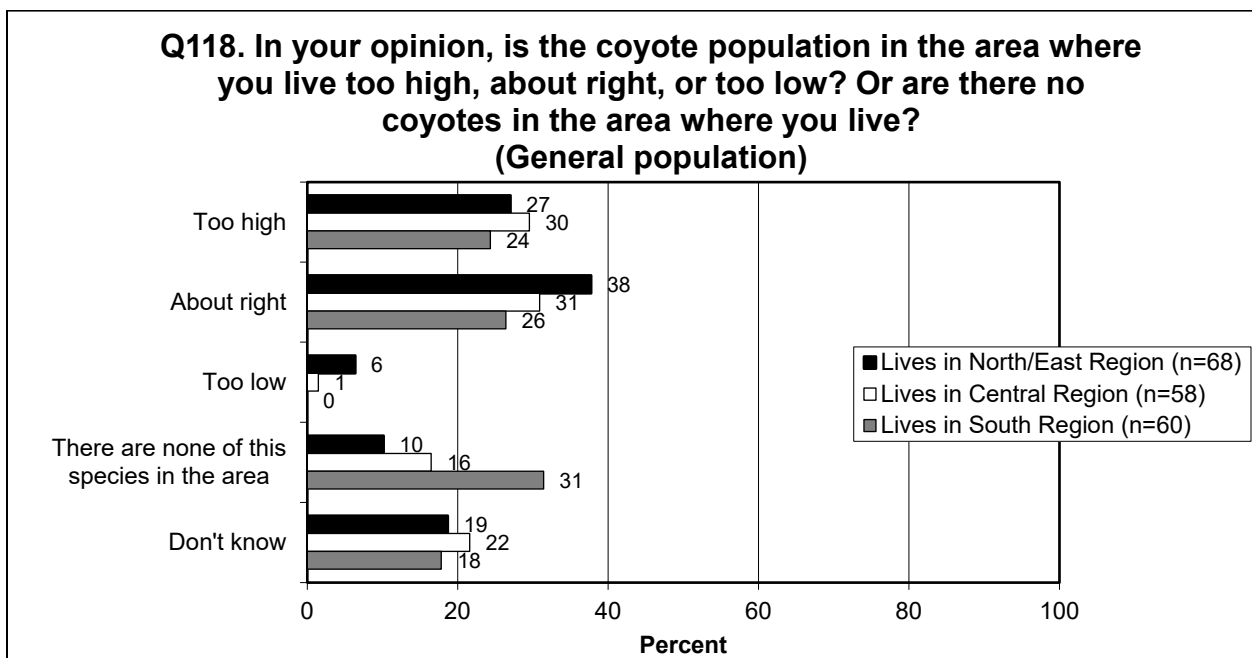


Figure 3.57. Opinion on the Coyote Population (General Population)

Residents of the Central and South Regions have the highest percentages in support of trapping as a method to help manage coyote populations (Figure 3.58). The three regions are about the same in the percentage thinking that coyotes are a nuisance or are dangerous (Figure 3.59). The mean ratings of how beneficial it is to have coyotes in Maine were 5.1 in the North/East Region, 4.9 in the Central Region, and 5.3 in the South Region.

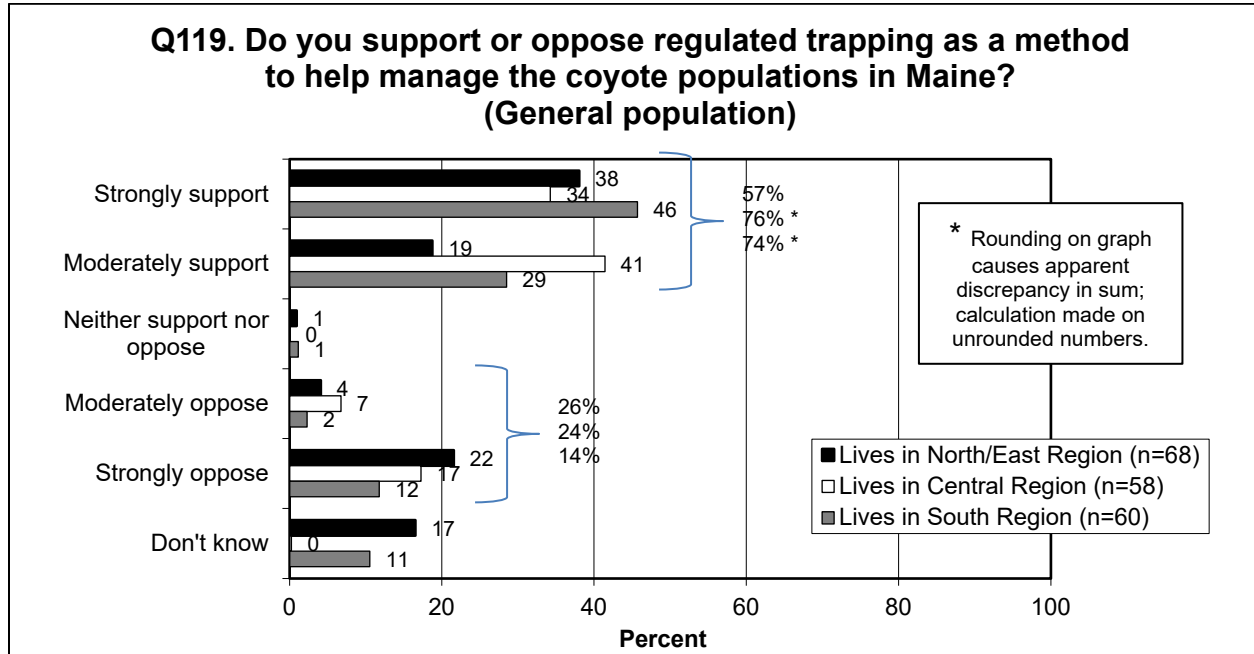


Figure 3.58. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Coyote Populations (General Population)

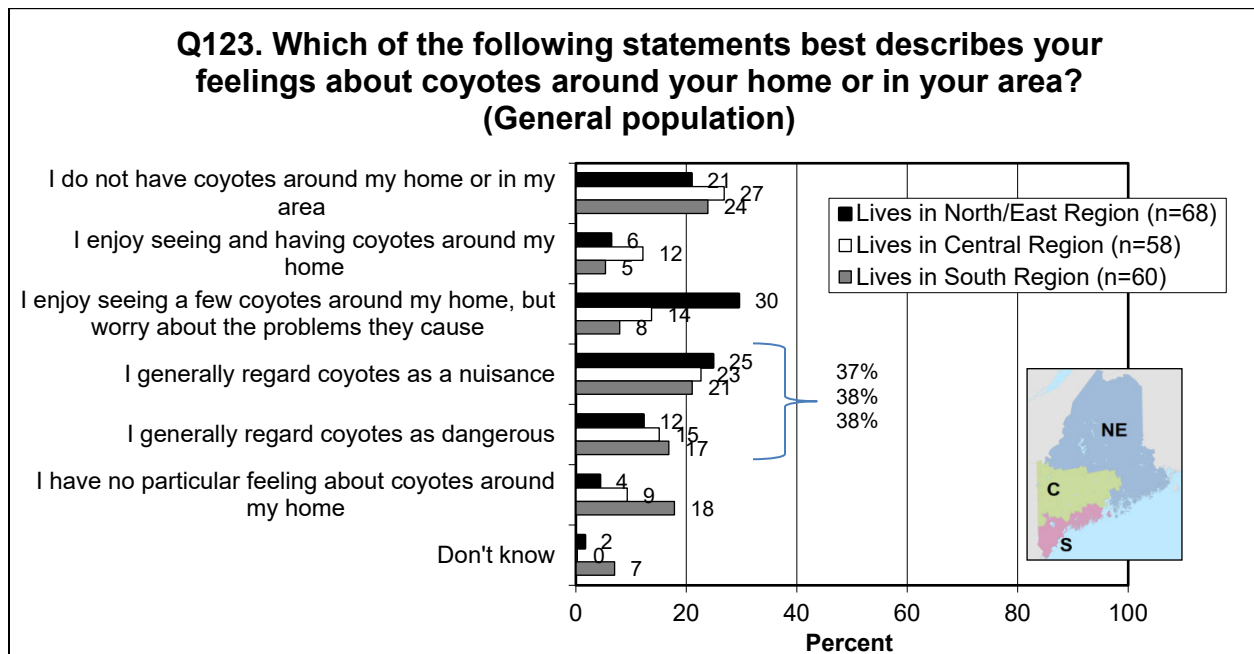


Figure 3.59. Feelings About Coyotes (General Population)

FOX

A substantial percentage of residents (42%) say that they know a great deal or a moderate amount about foxes (Figure 3.60). Most commonly, residents think the fox population in their area is about right (47%), far exceeding either those who think it is too high (10%) or too low (16%) (Figure 3.61).

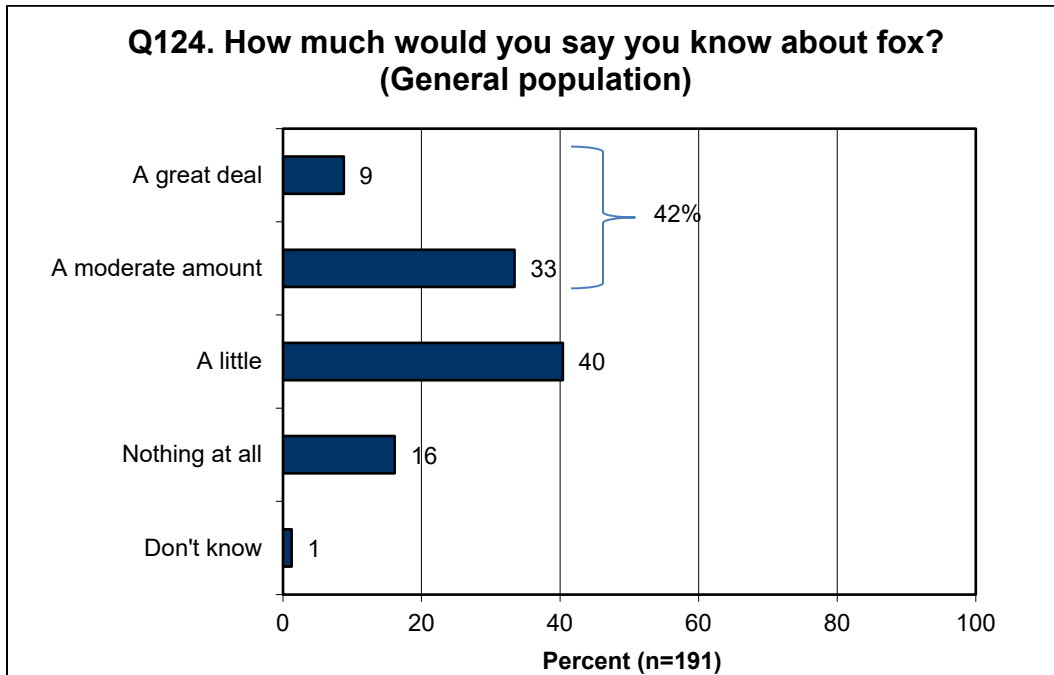


Figure 3.60. Knowledge of Foxes (General Population)

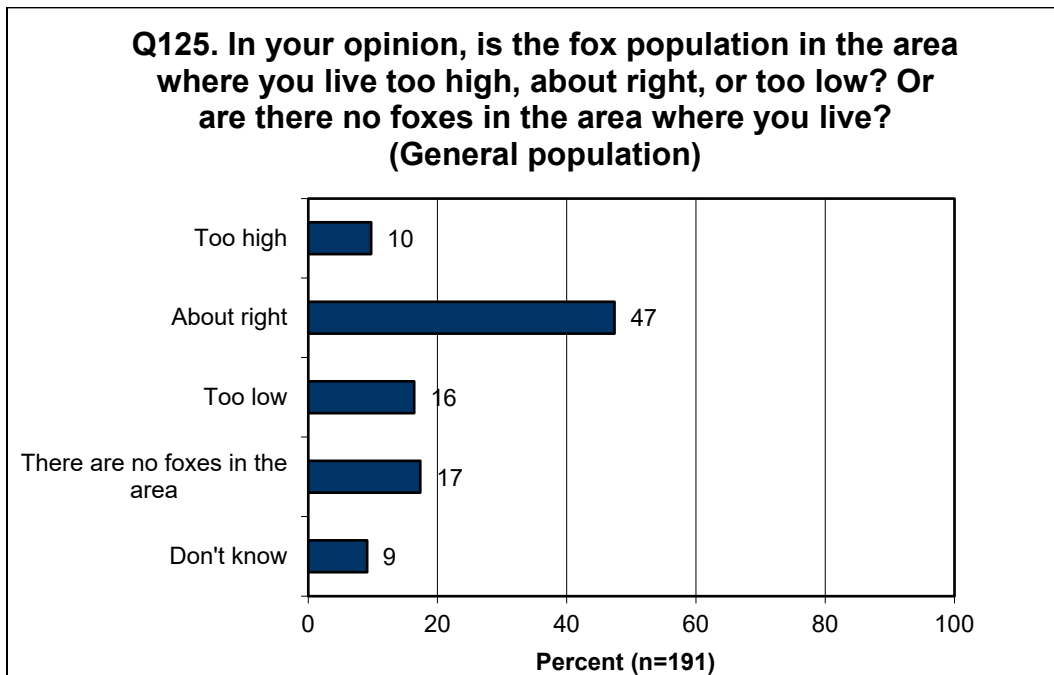


Figure 3.61. Opinion on the Fox Population (General Population)

There is more support for (58%) than opposition to (34%) regulated trapping as a method to manage fox populations (Figure 3.62). On the tolerance scale in Figure 3.63, residents are quite tolerant of foxes, with 32% in the most tolerant response and only 7% saying that foxes are a nuisance or are dangerous. Residents also rated how beneficial it is to have foxes in Maine, on a 0 to 10 scale, with 0 being not at all beneficial and 10 being extremely beneficial: the mean rating was 7.0.

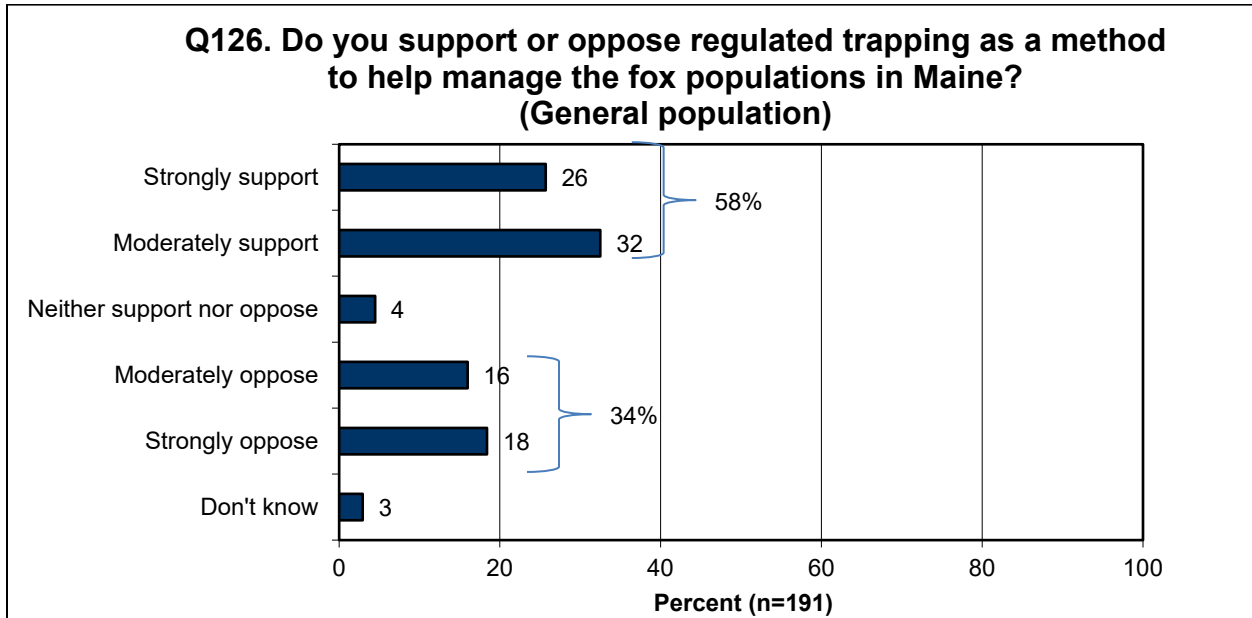


Figure 3.62. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Fox Populations (General Population)

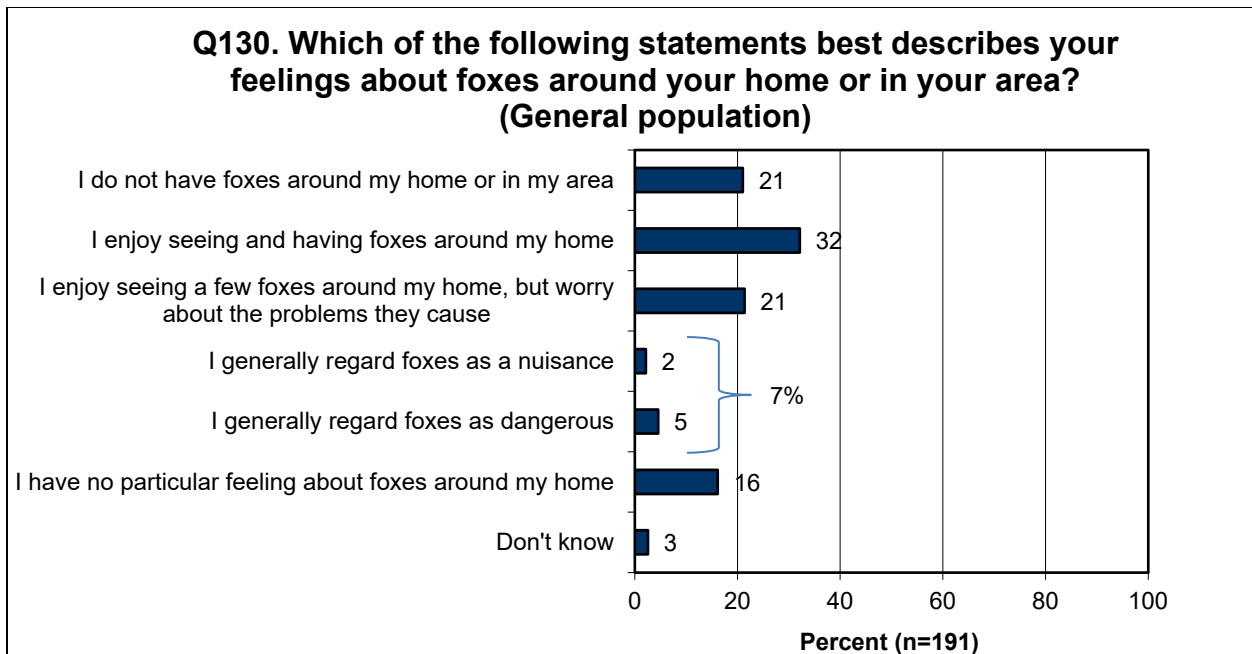


Figure 3.63. Feelings About Foxes (General Population)

North/East Region residents report the highest knowledge level (Figure 3.64). Those same residents have the highest percentage saying the fox population is about right; the regions are not much different regarding the percentages saying the population is too high (Figure 3.65).

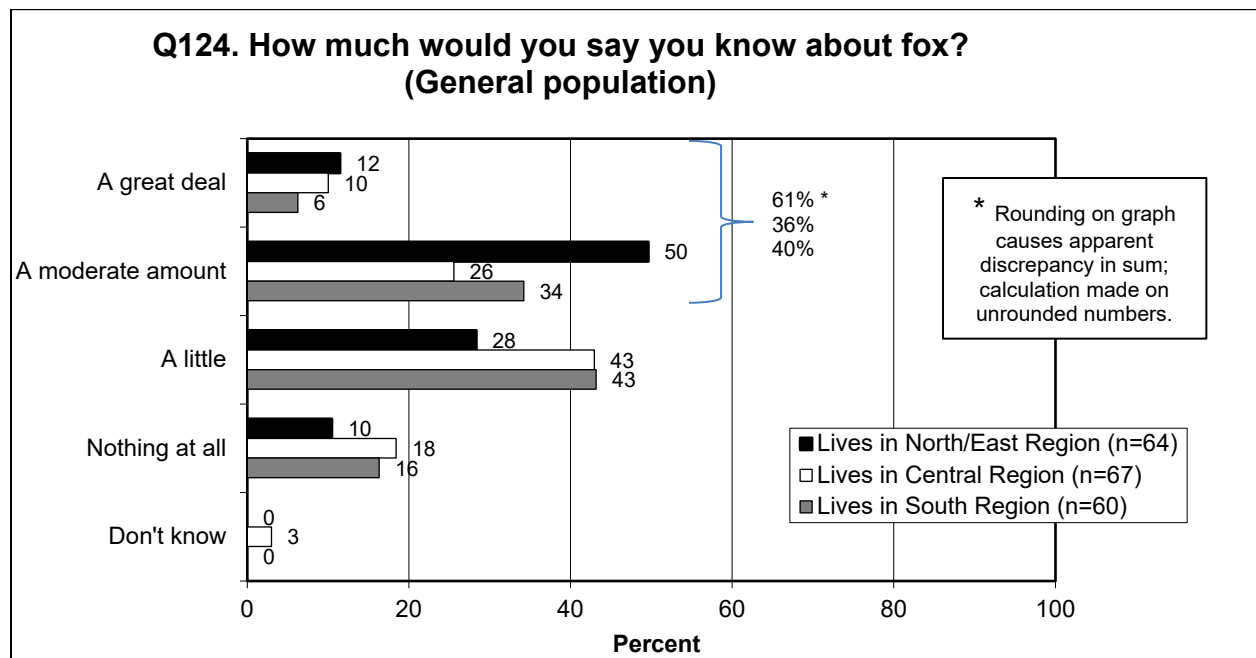


Figure 3.64. Knowledge of Foxes (General Population)

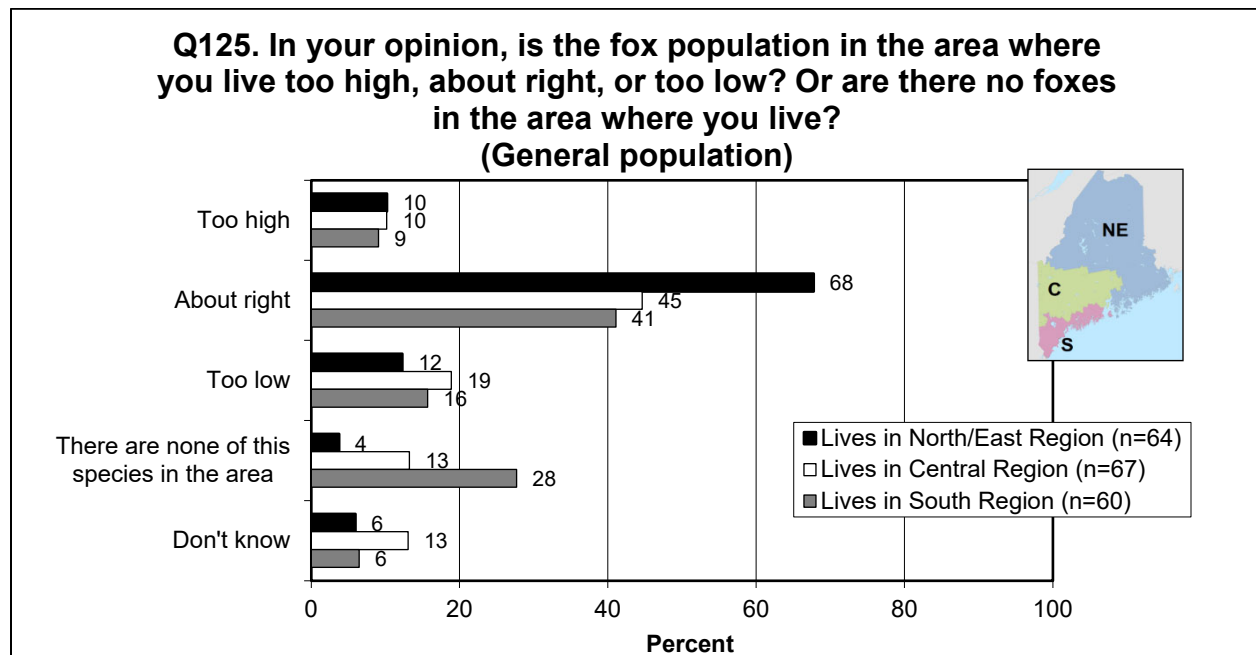


Figure 3.65. Opinion on the Fox Population (General Population)

North/East and South Region residents have the most support for trapping as a method to help manage the fox populations (Figure 3.66). North/East Region residents are the most intolerant of foxes (Figure 3.67). The mean ratings of how beneficial it is to have foxes in Maine were 6.9 in the North/East Region, 6.7 in the Central Region, and 7.3 in the South Region.

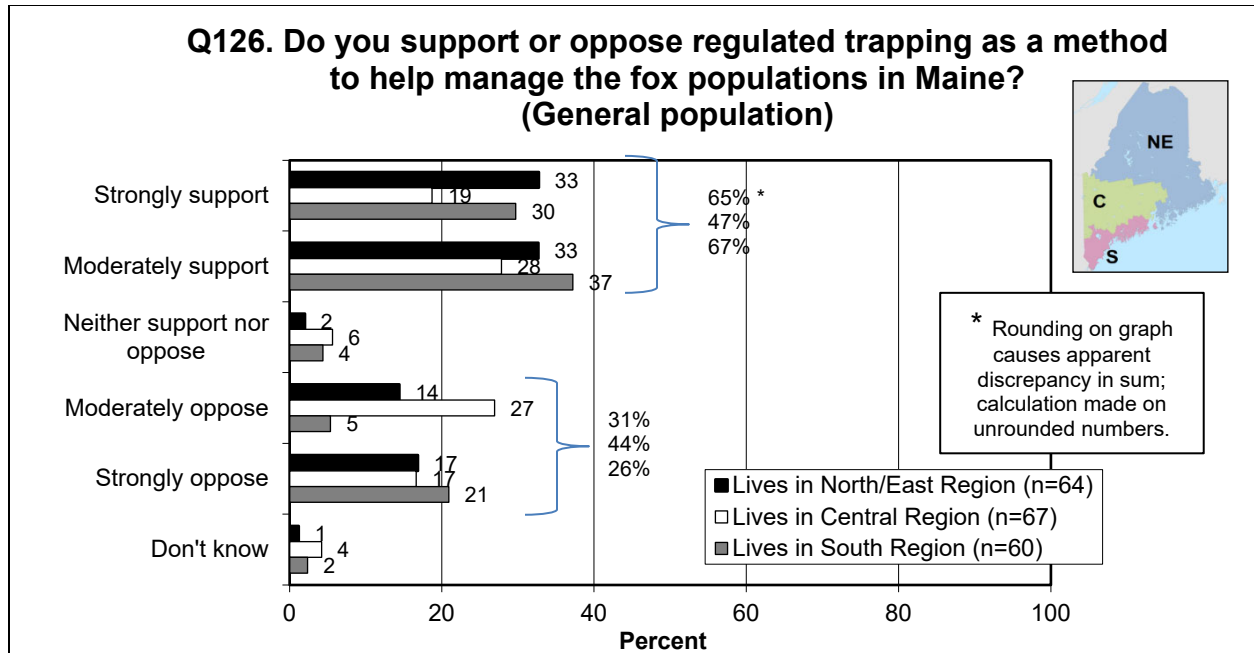


Figure 3.66. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Fox Populations (General Population)

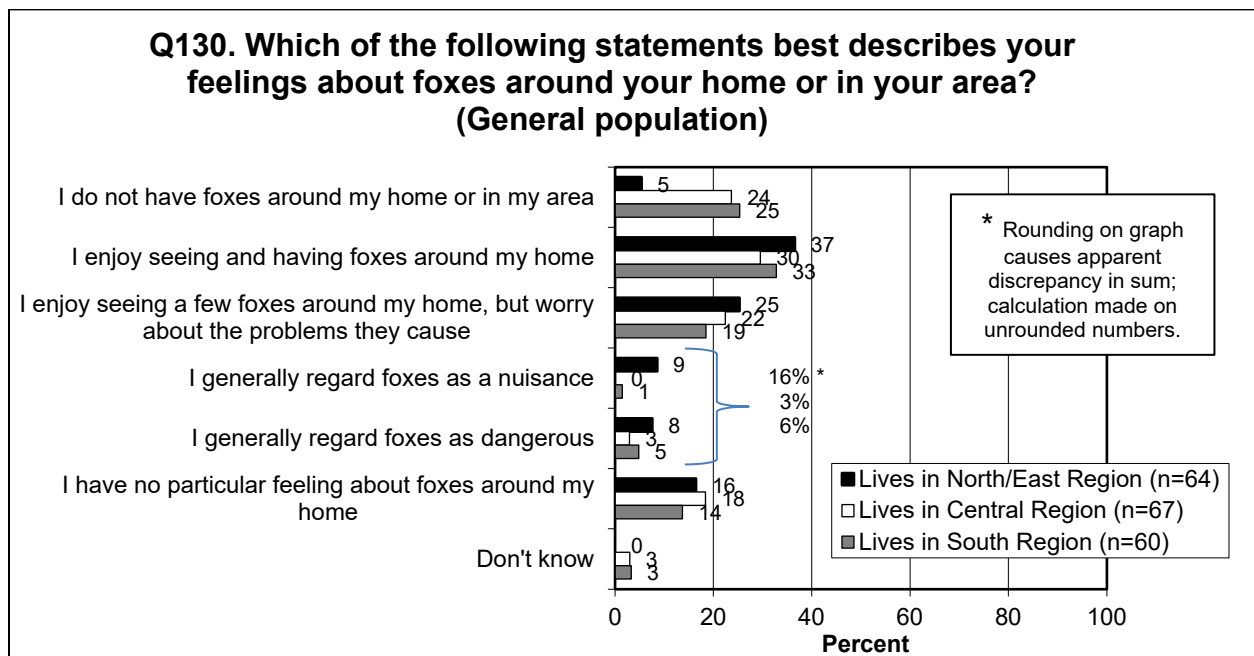


Figure 3.67. Feelings About Foxes (General Population)

RACCOON

Half of residents (50%) say that they know a great deal or a moderate amount about raccoons (Figure 3.68). Residents most commonly say that the raccoon population in their area is about right (53%), which is much greater than the percentage who think it is too high (14%) or too low (9%) (Figure 3.69).

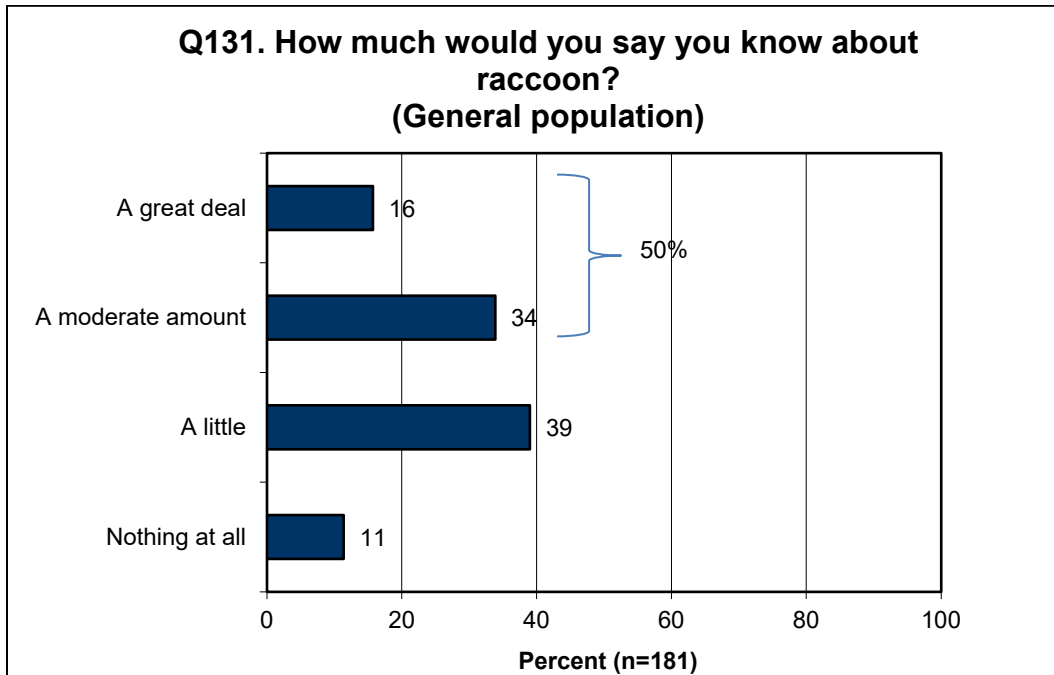


Figure 3.68. Knowledge of Raccoons (General Population)

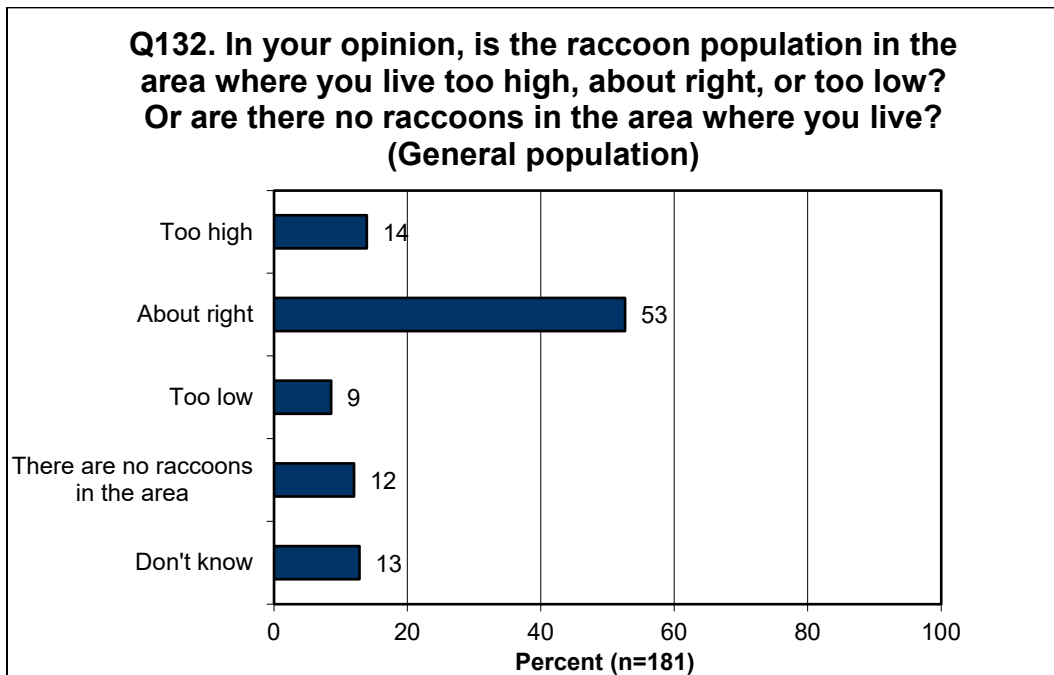


Figure 3.69. Opinion on the Raccoon Population (General Population)

There is more support for (68%) than opposition to (24%) regulated trapping as a method to manage raccoon populations (Figure 3.70). As shown in Figure 3.71, residents are about even regarding being tolerant or intolerant of raccoons: 16% are in the most tolerant response, but 20% say that raccoons are a nuisance or are dangerous. Residents also rated how beneficial it is to have raccoons in Maine, on a 0 to 10 scale, with 0 being not at all beneficial and 10 being extremely beneficial: the mean rating was 6.0.

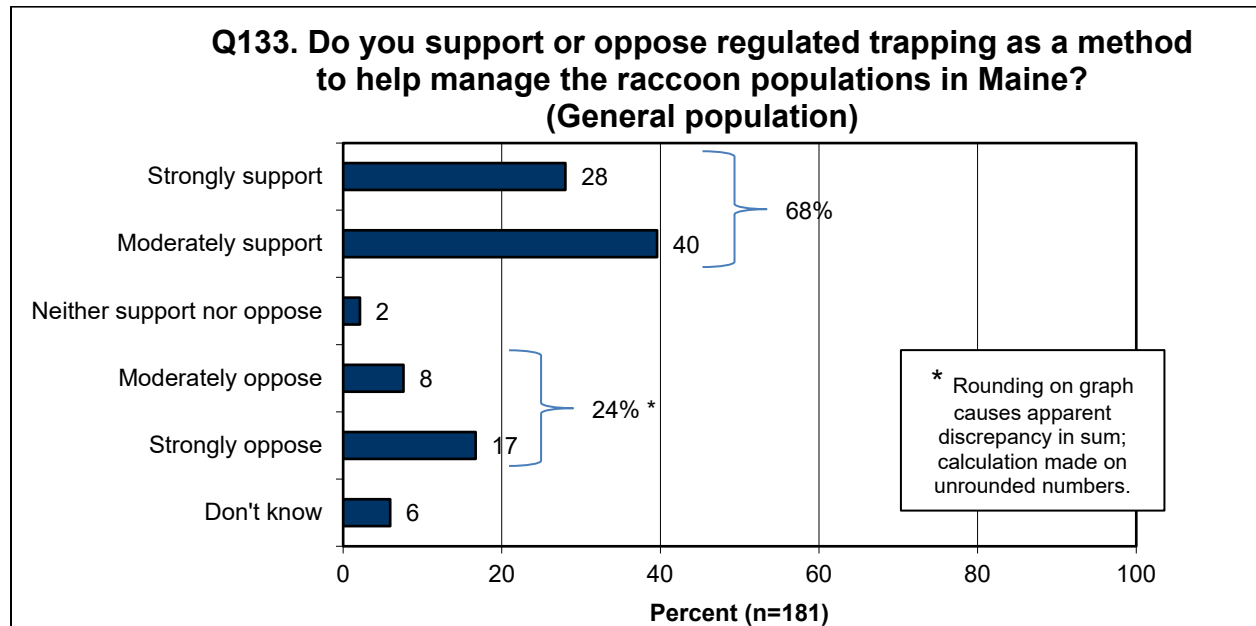


Figure 3.70. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Raccoon Populations (General Population)

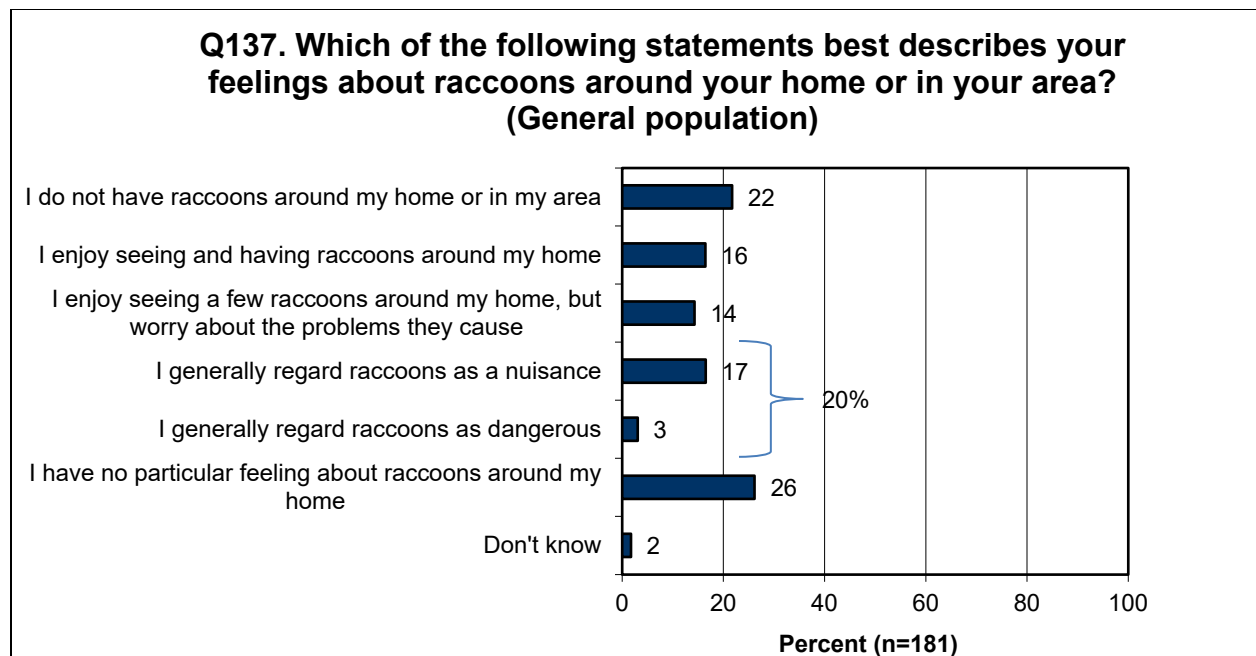


Figure 3.71. Feelings About Raccoons (General Population)

North/East Region residents are the most knowledgeable about raccoons (Figure 3.72), and they have the highest percentage who say that the raccoon population where they live is too high (Figure 3.73).

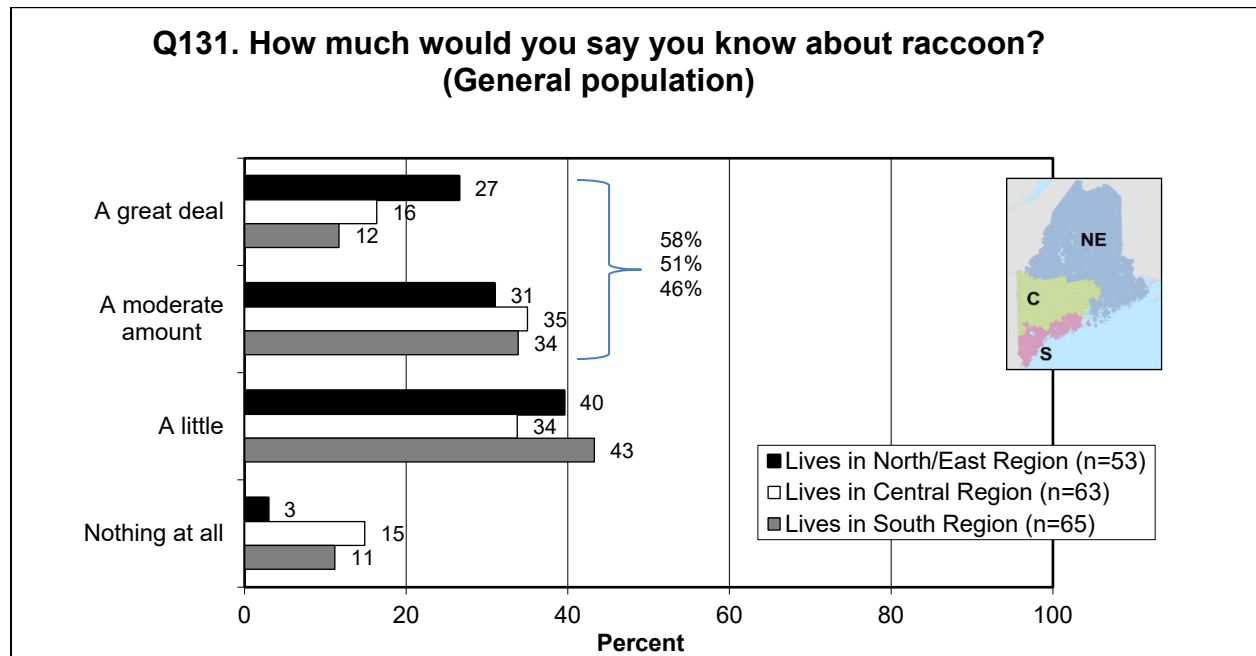


Figure 3.72. Knowledge of Raccoons (General Population)

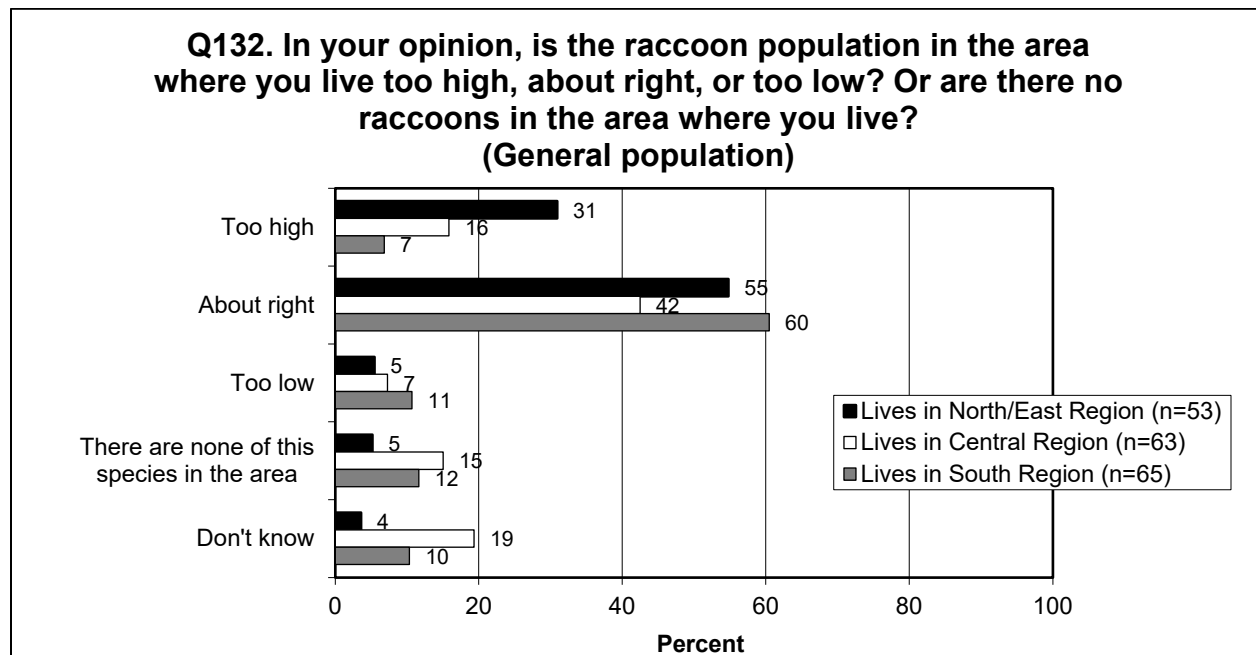


Figure 3.73. Opinion on the Raccoon Population (General Population)

Central Region residents have the highest percentage in support of trapping as a method to help manage raccoon populations in Maine (Figure 3.74). North/East Region residents are the most intolerant of raccoons (Figure 3.75). The mean ratings of how beneficial it is to have raccoons in Maine were 4.9 in the North/East Region, 5.8 in the Central Region, and 6.5 in the South Region.

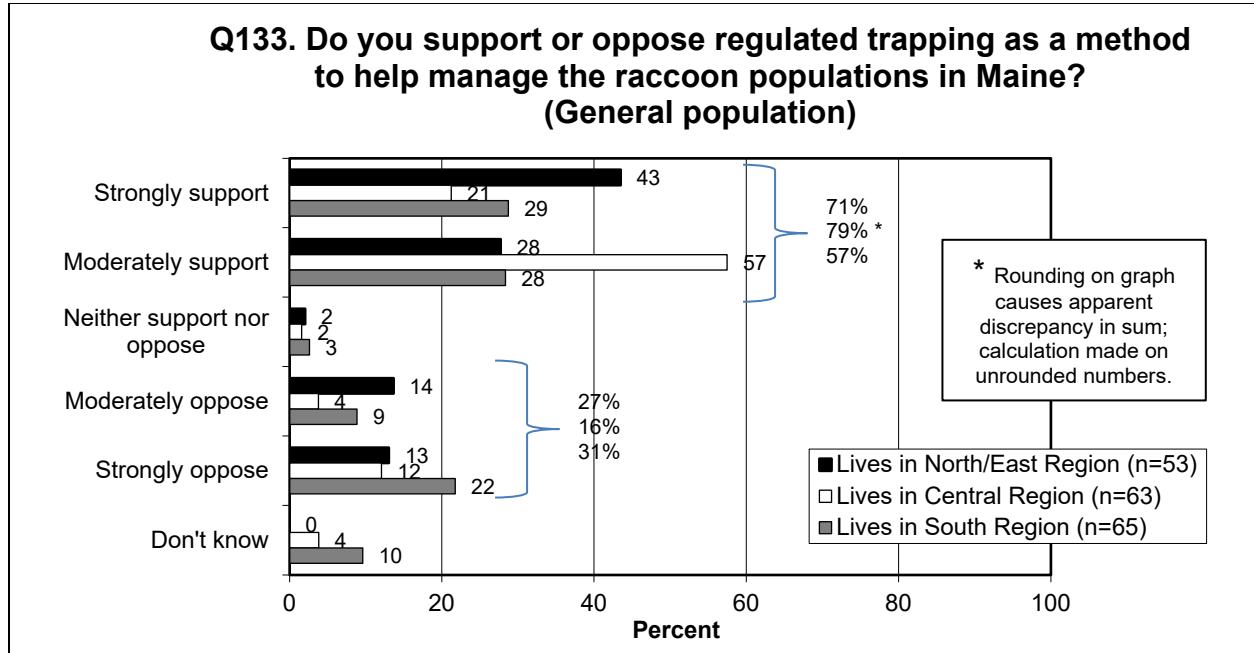


Figure 3.74. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Raccoon Populations (General Population)

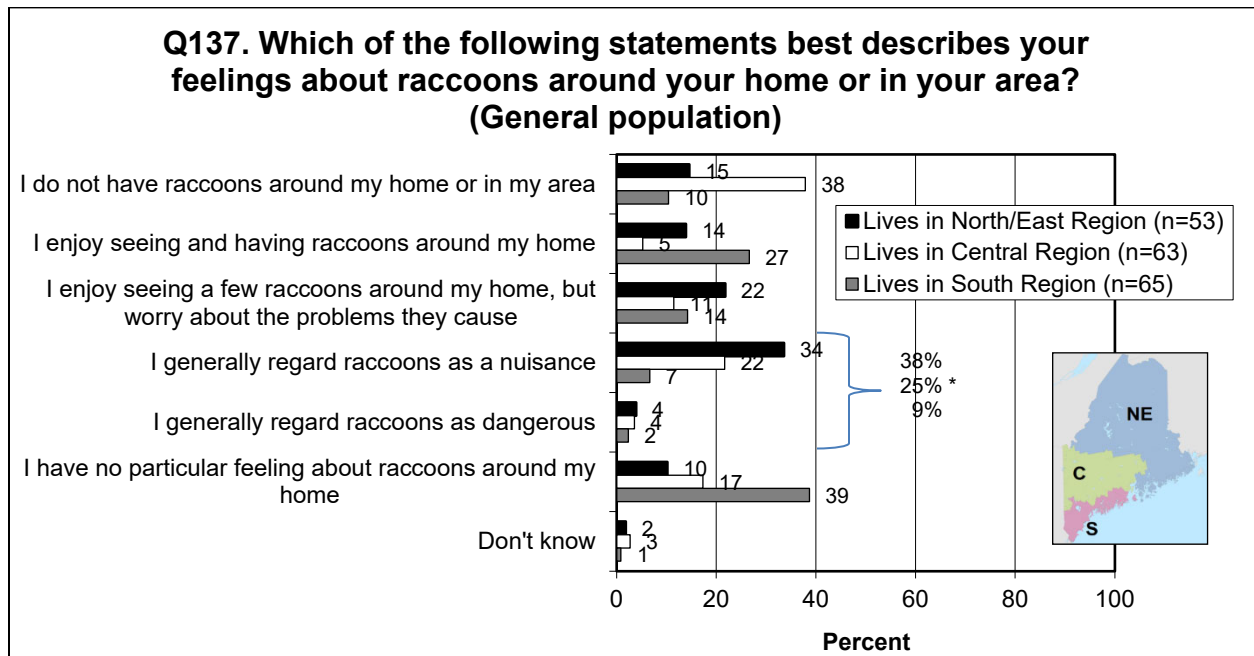


Figure 3.75. Feelings About Raccoons (General Population)

SKUNK

More than half of residents (52%) say that they know a great deal or a moderate amount about skunks (Figure 3.76). As shown in Figure 3.77, residents most commonly think the skunk population in their area is about right (55%), exceeding either the percentage who think it is too high (17%) or too low (12%).

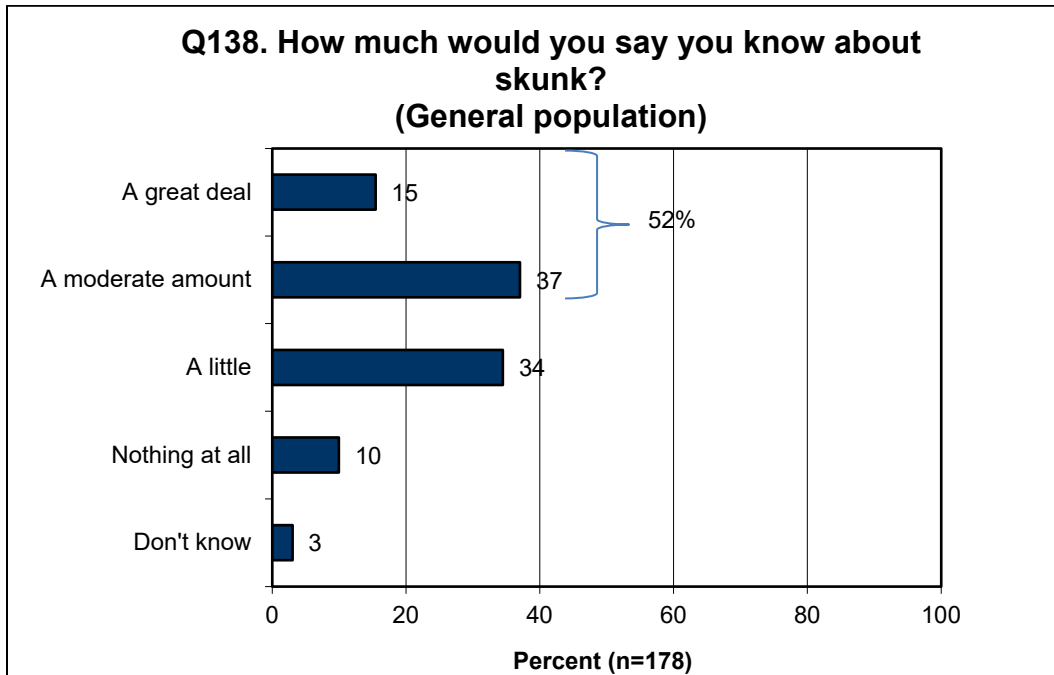


Figure 3.76. Knowledge of Skunks (General Population)

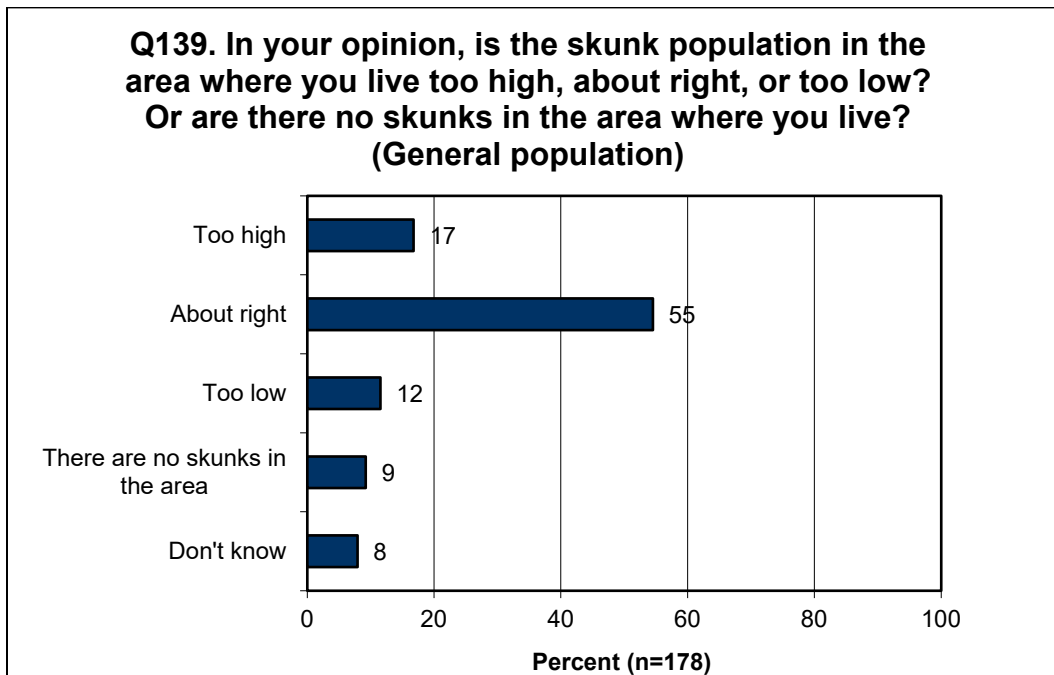


Figure 3.77. Opinion on the Skunk Population (General Population)

There is more than three times as much support for (69%) than opposition to (21%) regulated trapping as a method to manage skunk populations (Figure 3.78). On the tolerance scale, residents are somewhat intolerant of skunks, as 18% are in the most tolerant response, but 26% are saying that skunks are a nuisance or are dangerous (Figure 3.79). Residents also rated how beneficial it is to have skunks in Maine, on a 0 to 10 scale, with 0 being not at all beneficial and 10 being extremely beneficial: the mean rating was 5.7.

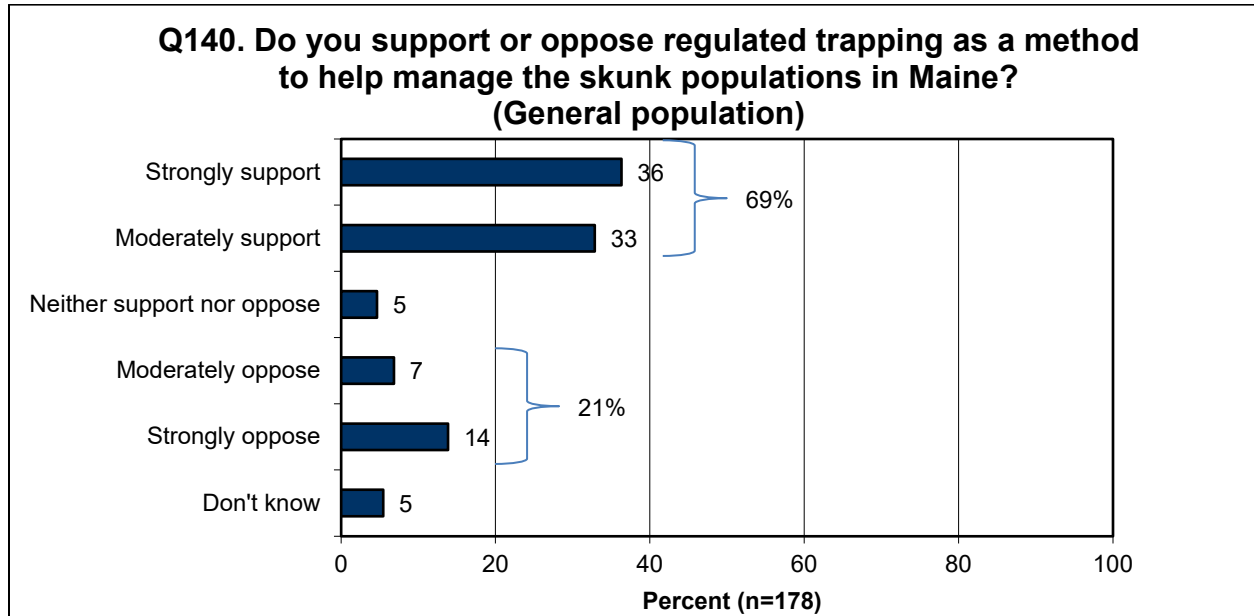


Figure 3.78. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Skunk Populations (General Population)

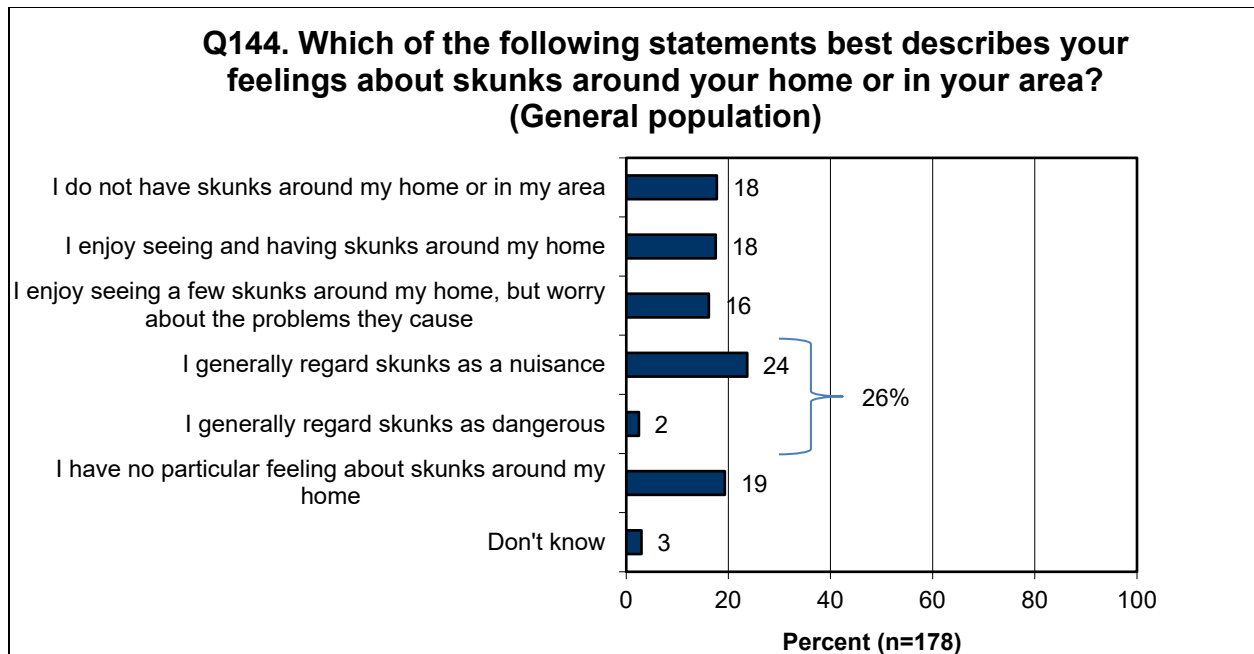


Figure 3.79. Feelings About Skunks (General Population)

The regions are not markedly different in the percentages of residents who say that they know a great deal or a moderate amount (Figure 3.80). Central and North/East Region residents have the highest percentage who think the skunk populations are too high (Figure 3.81).

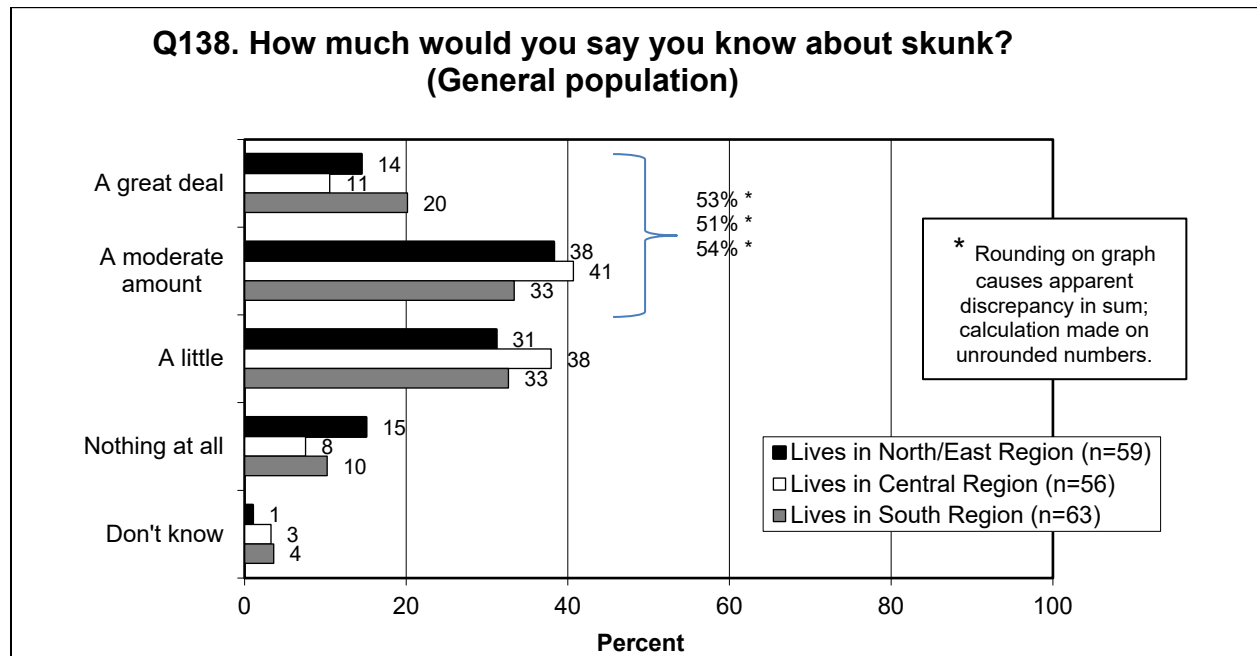


Figure 3.80. Knowledge of Skunks (General Population)

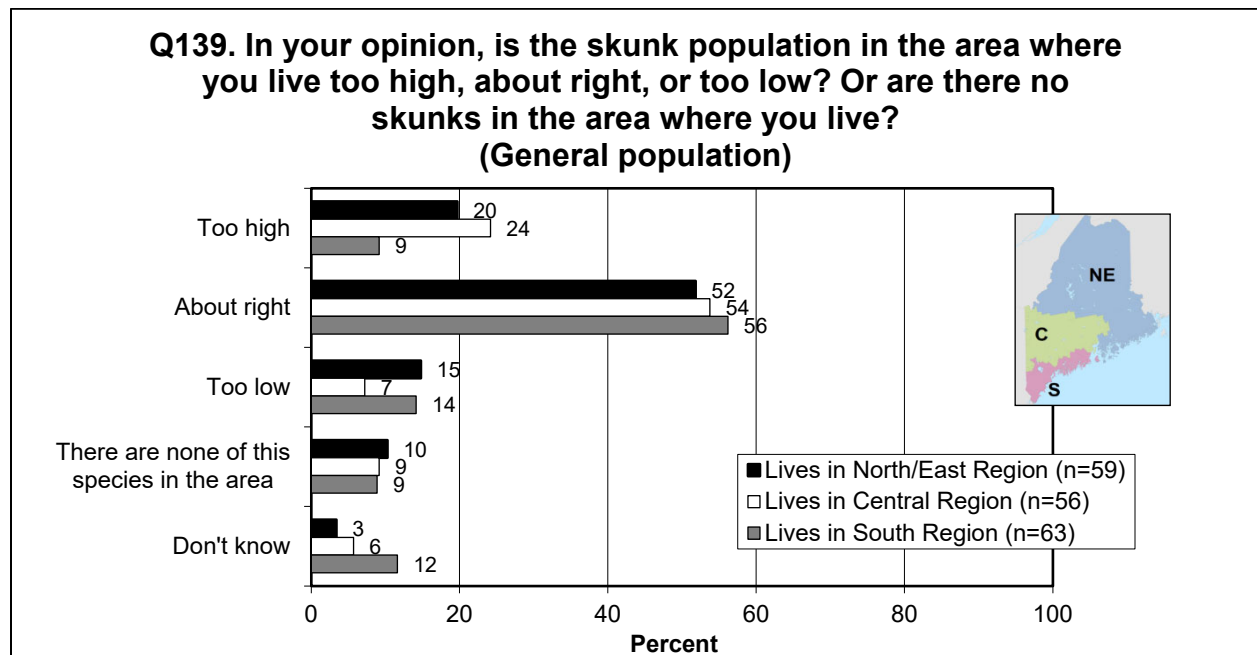


Figure 3.81. Opinion on the Skunk Population (General Population)

Central Region residents have the highest support for trapping as a way to help manage the skunk populations in Maine (Figure 3.82). Central Region residents also show the highest intolerance of skunks (Figure 3.83). The mean ratings of how beneficial it is to have skunks in Maine were 5.2 in the North/East Region, 4.9 in the Central Region, and 6.6 in the South Region.

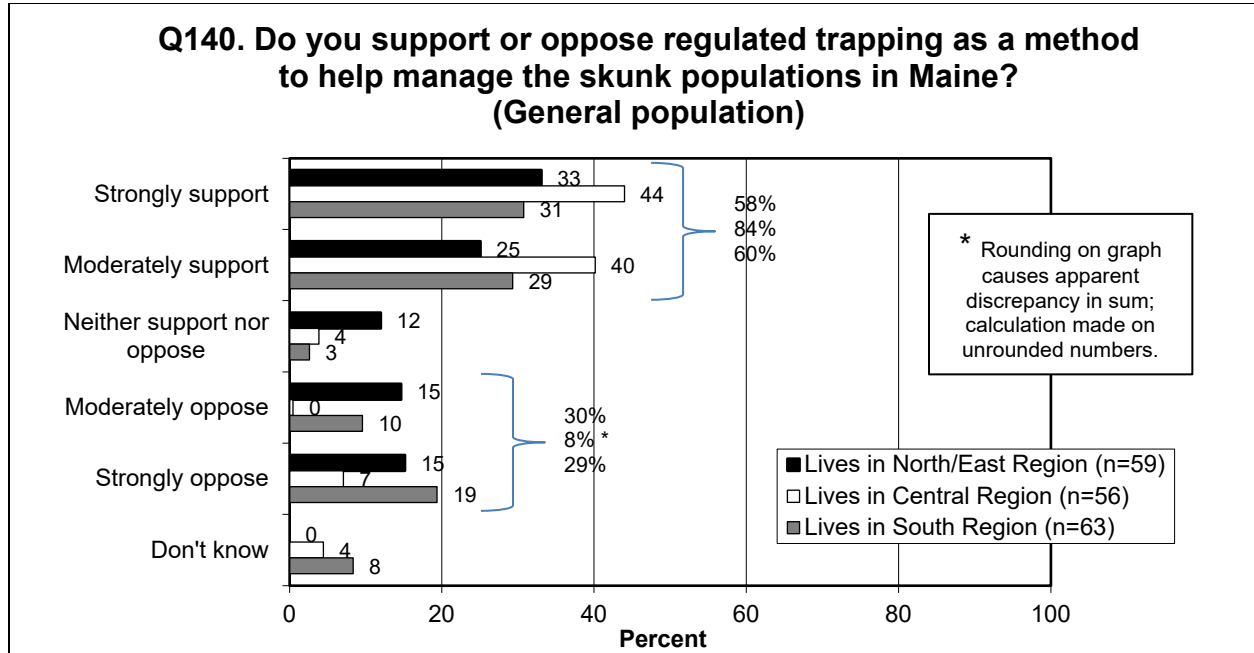


Figure 3.82. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Skunk Populations (General Population)

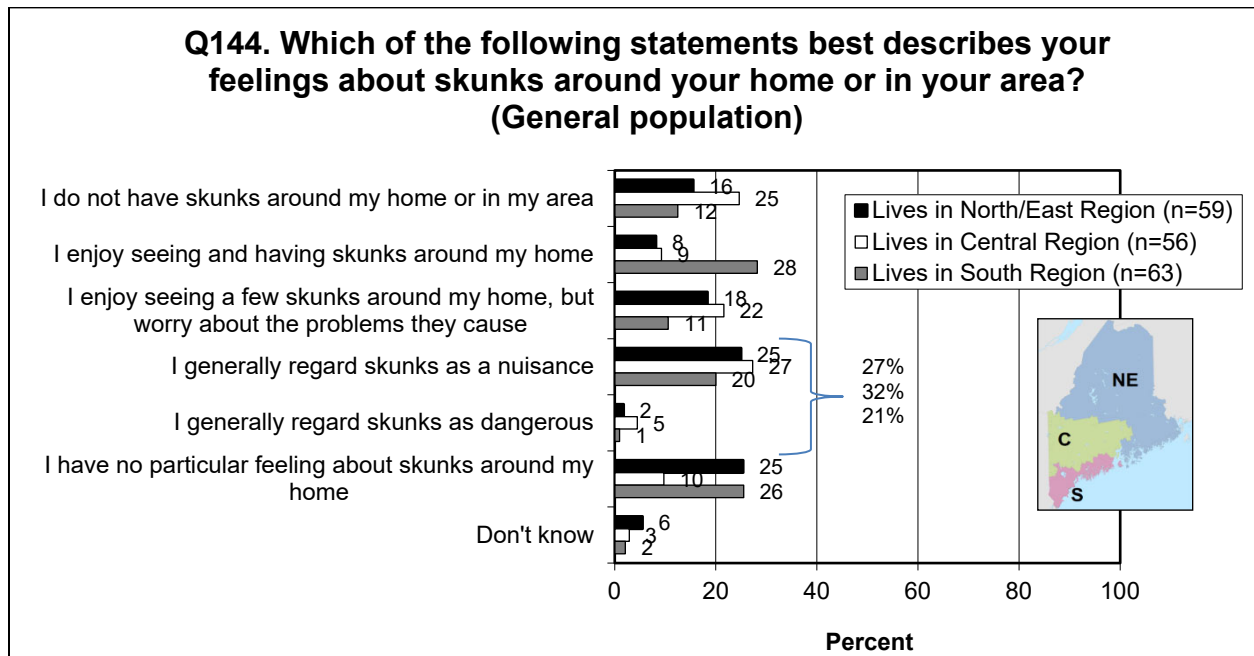


Figure 3.83. Feelings About Skunks (General Population)

FISHER

Just over a quarter of residents (27%) say that they know a great deal or a moderate amount about fishers (Figure 3.84). More residents say that the fisher population in their area is about right (22%) than say either too high (11%) or too low (7%) (Figure 3.85).

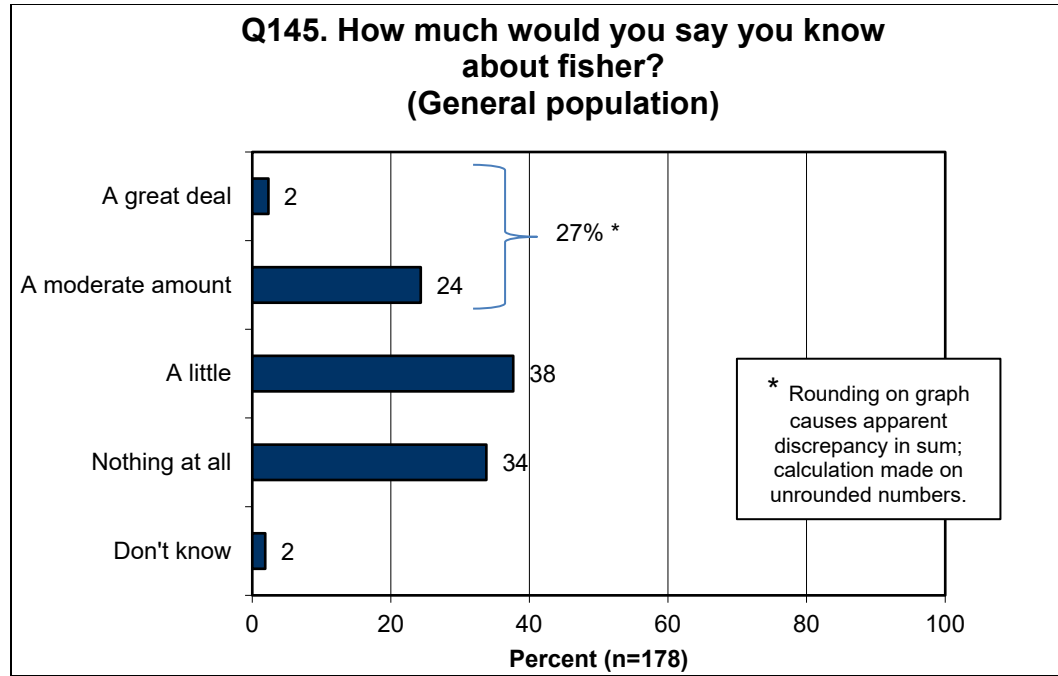


Figure 3.84. Knowledge of Fishers (General Population)

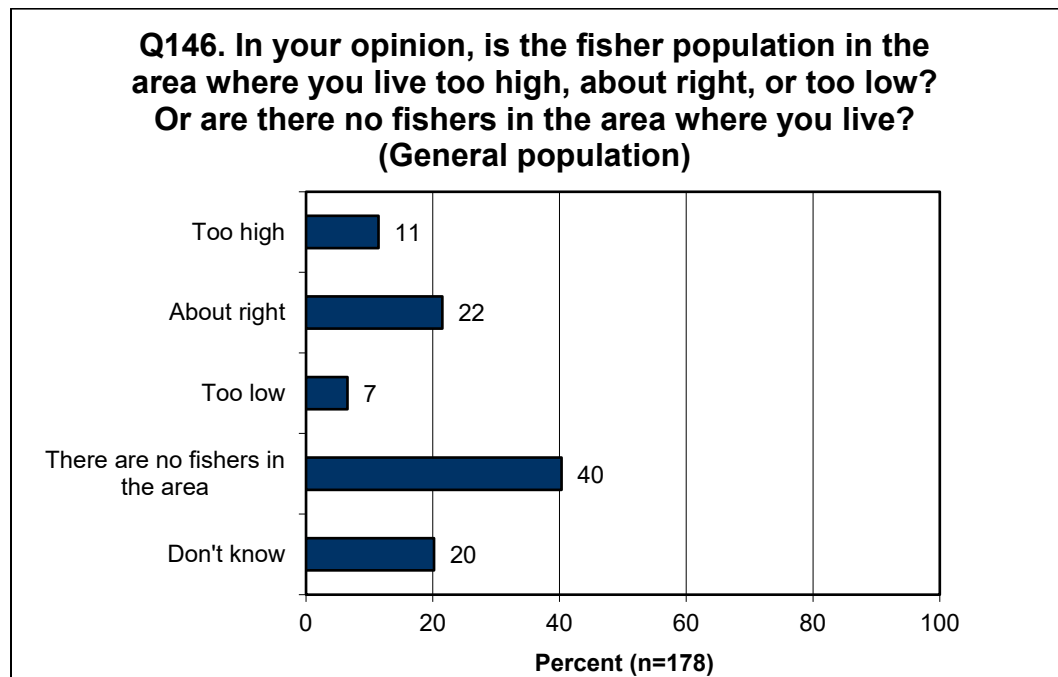


Figure 3.85. Opinion on the Fisher Population (General Population)

There is much more support for (66%) than opposition to (18%) regulated trapping as a method to manage fisher populations (Figure 3.86). On the tolerance scale in Figure 3.87, residents show more intolerance than tolerance of fishers, as only 8% are in the most tolerant response, while 25% say that fishers are a nuisance or are dangerous. Residents also rated how beneficial it is to have fishers in Maine, on a 0 to 10 scale, with 0 being not at all beneficial and 10 being extremely beneficial: the mean rating was 5.4.

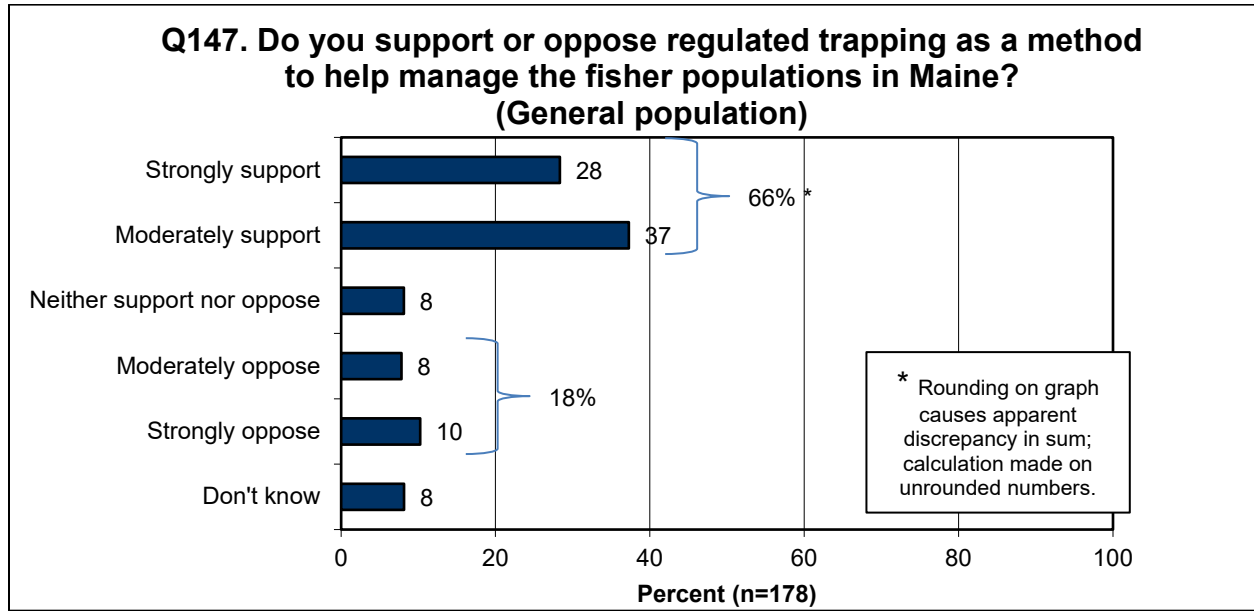


Figure 3.86. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Fisher Populations (General Population)

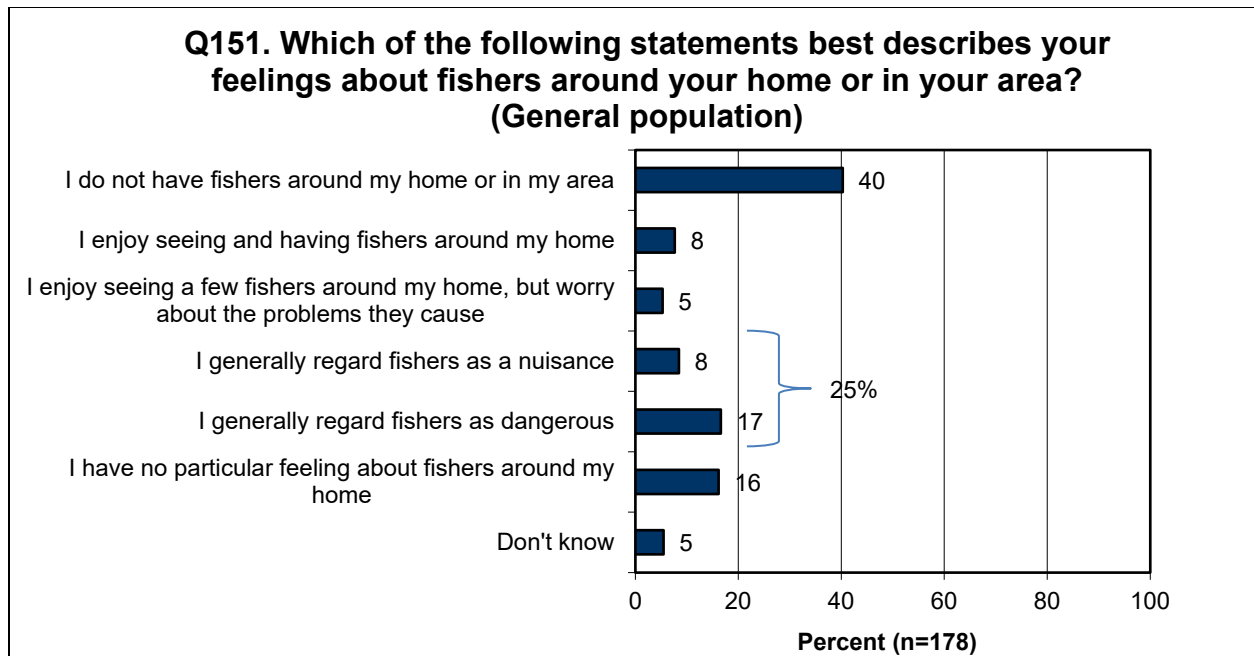


Figure 3.87. Feelings About Fishers (General Population)

Central and South Region residents have the highest self-professed knowledge levels (Figure 3.88), and they have the highest percentage saying that the fisher populations where they live are too high (Figure 3.89).

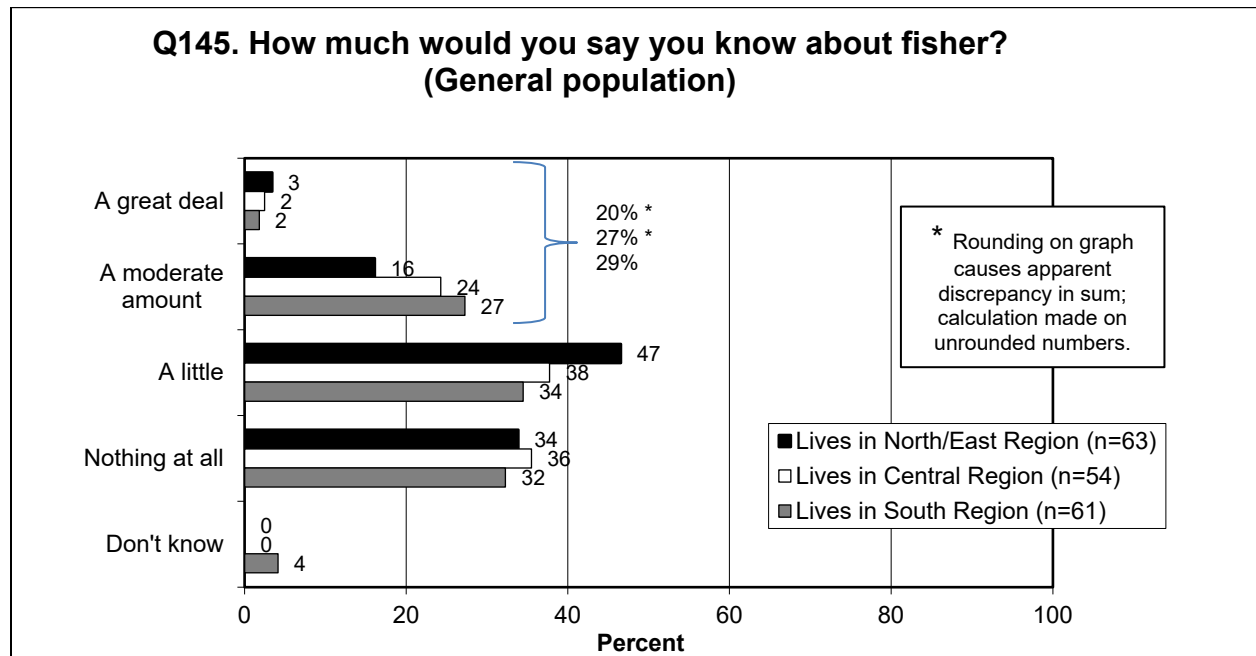


Figure 3.88. Knowledge of Fishers (General Population)

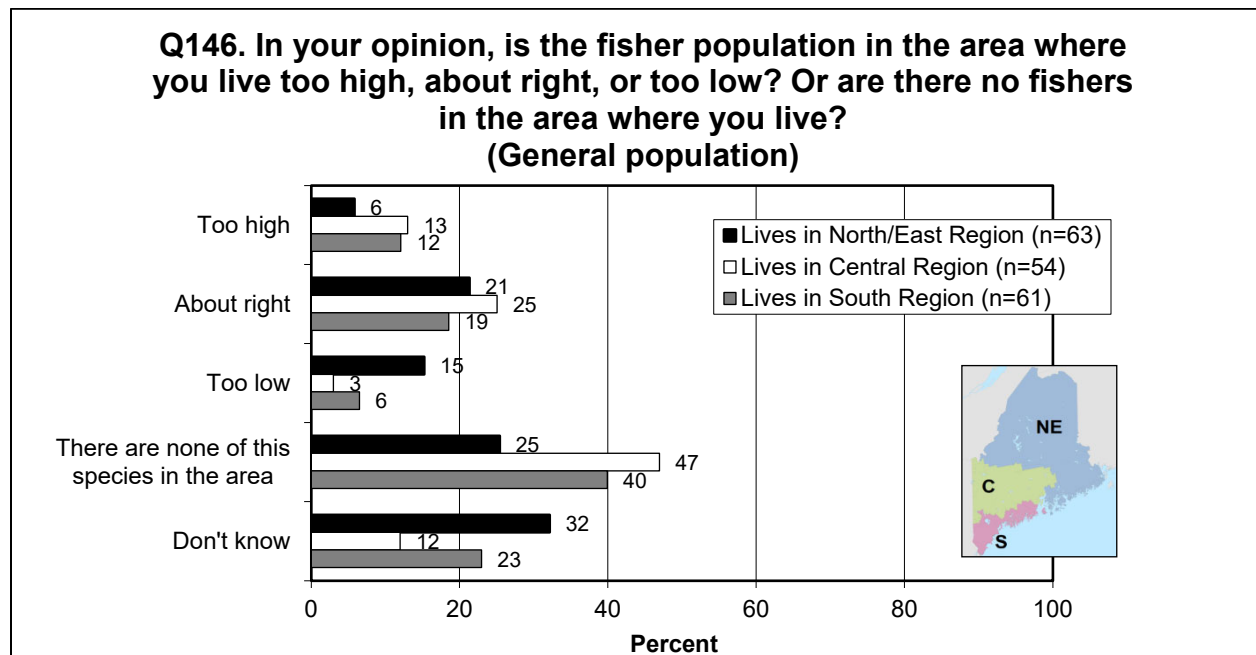


Figure 3.89. Opinion on the Fisher Population (General Population)

Central Region residents have the highest support for trapping as a way to help manage fisher populations (Figure 3.90), and they have the most intolerance of fishers (Figure 3.91). The mean ratings of how beneficial it is to have fishers in Maine were 5.9 in the North/East Region, 4.8 in the Central Region, and 5.8 in the South Region.

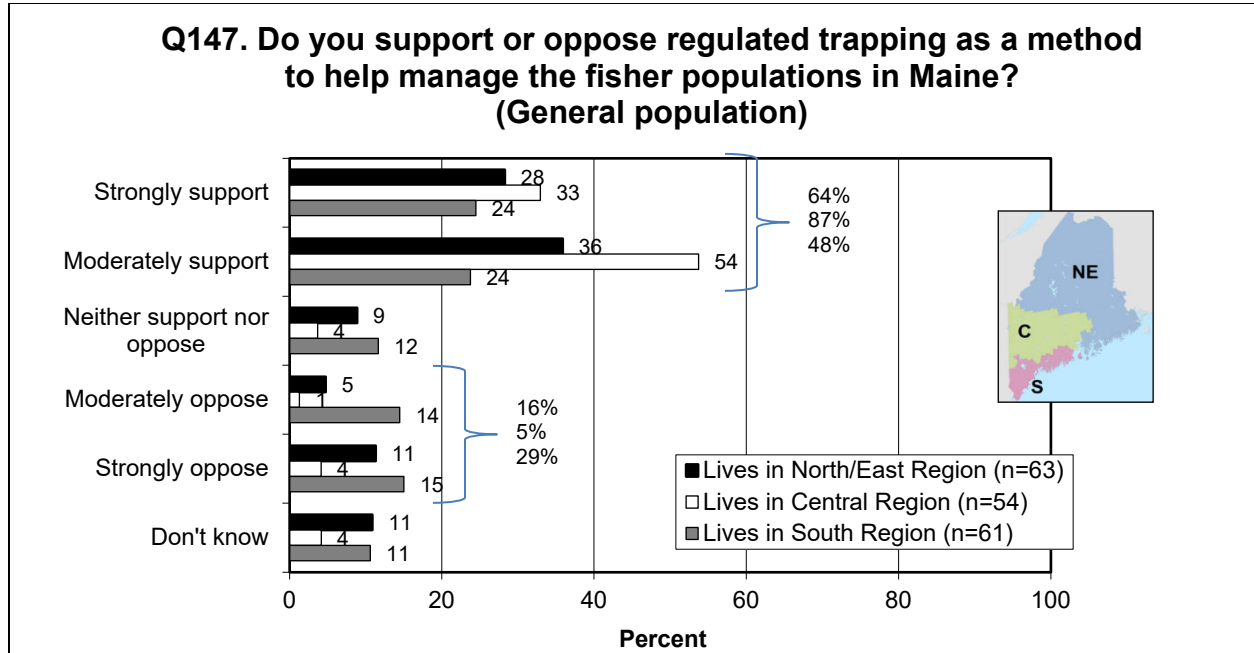


Figure 3.90. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Fisher Populations (General Population)

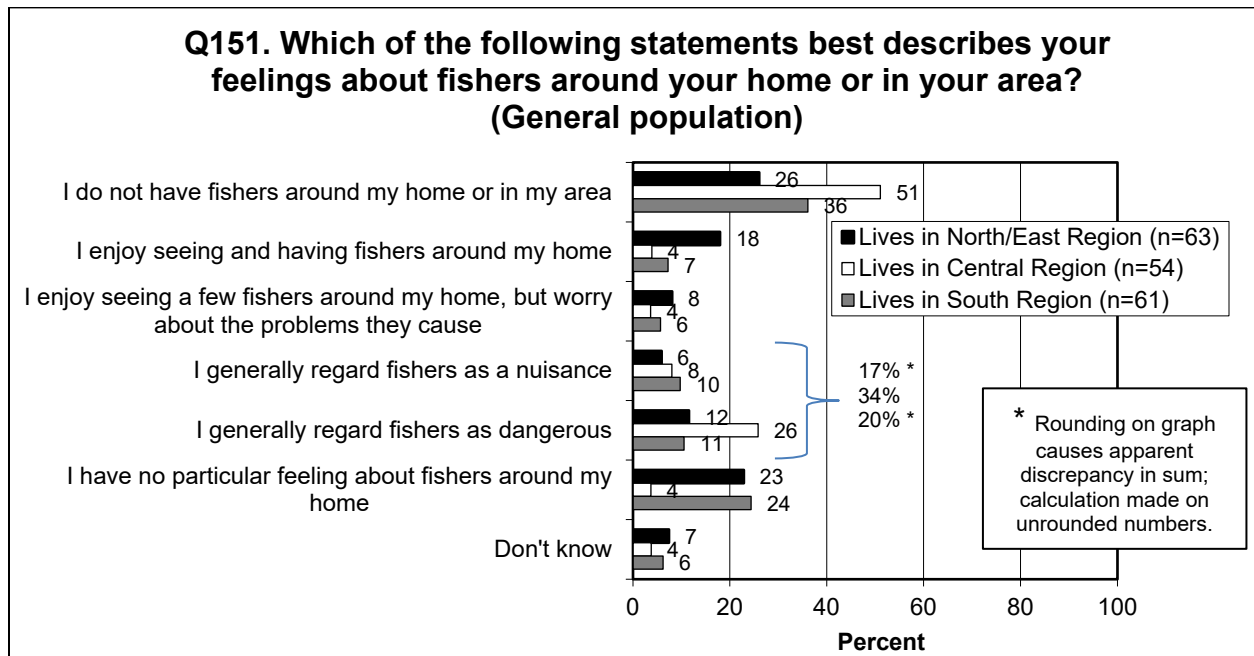


Figure 3.91. Feelings About Fishers (General Population)

MARTEN

Only a small percentage of residents (9%) say that they know a great deal or a moderate amount about martens (Figure 3.92). The percentage of residents who say that the marten population is about right (15%) exceeds the percentages who say either that it is too high (2%) or too low (6%) (Figure 3.93).

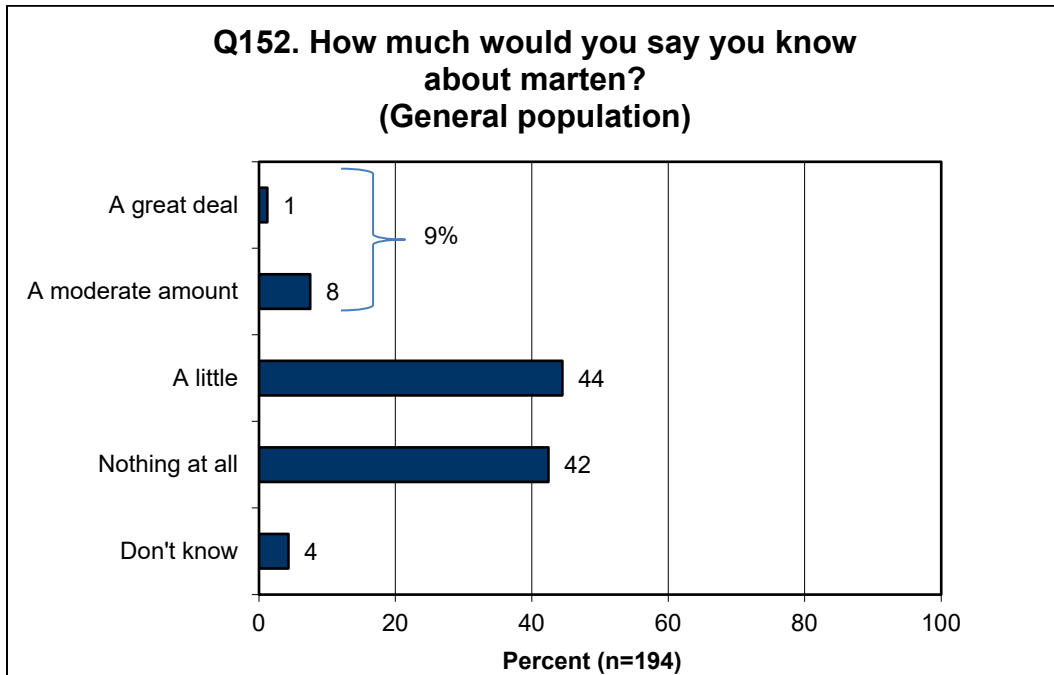


Figure 3.92. Knowledge of Martens (General Population)

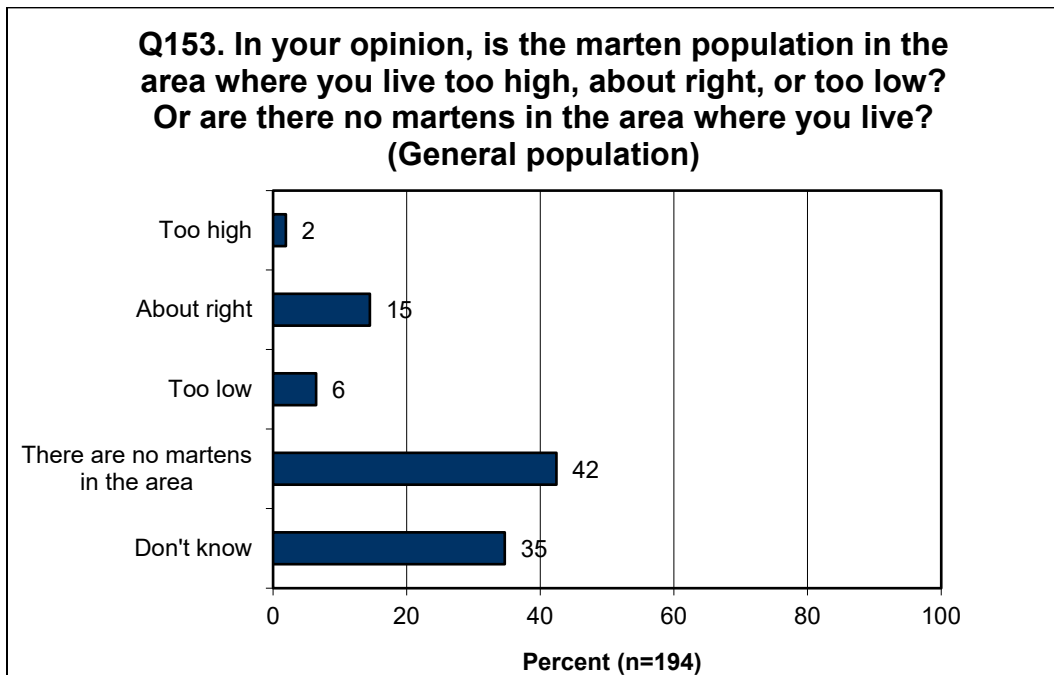


Figure 3.93. Opinion on the Marten Population (General Population)

There is more support for (58%) than opposition to (17%) regulated trapping as a method to manage marten populations (Figure 3.94). On the tolerance scale, residents are a little more tolerant than intolerant of martens, but only slightly, with 10% in the most tolerant response but 5% saying that martens are a nuisance or are dangerous (Figure 3.95). Residents also rated how beneficial it is to have martens in Maine, on a 0 to 10 scale, with 0 being not at all beneficial and 10 being extremely beneficial: the mean rating was 6.2.

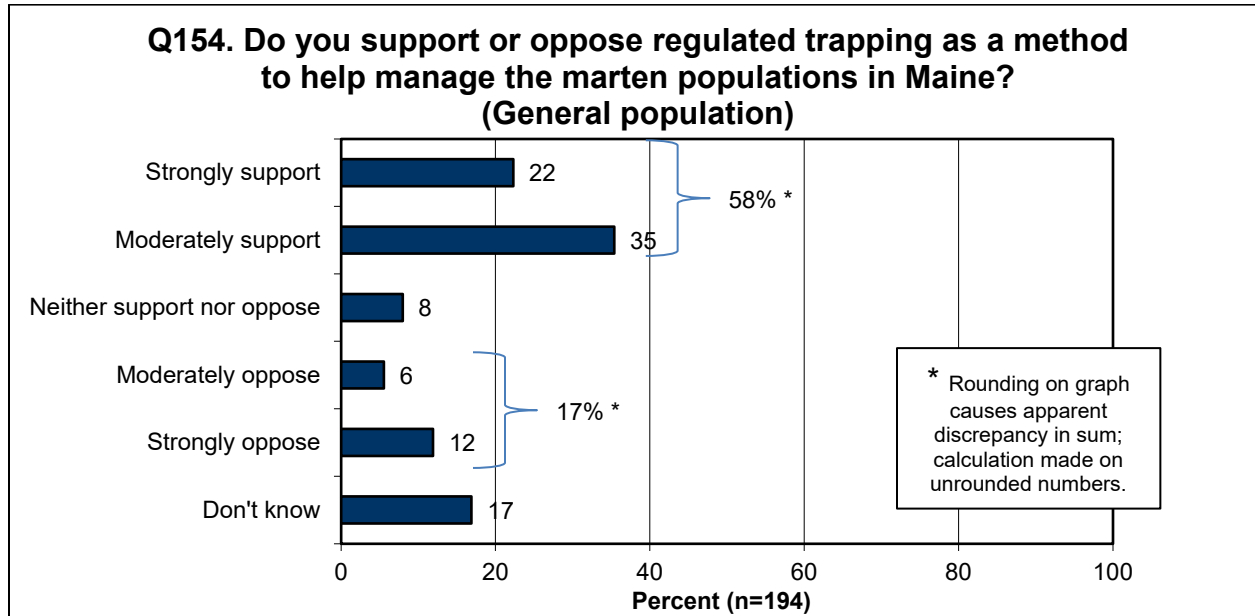


Figure 3.94. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Marten Populations (General Population)

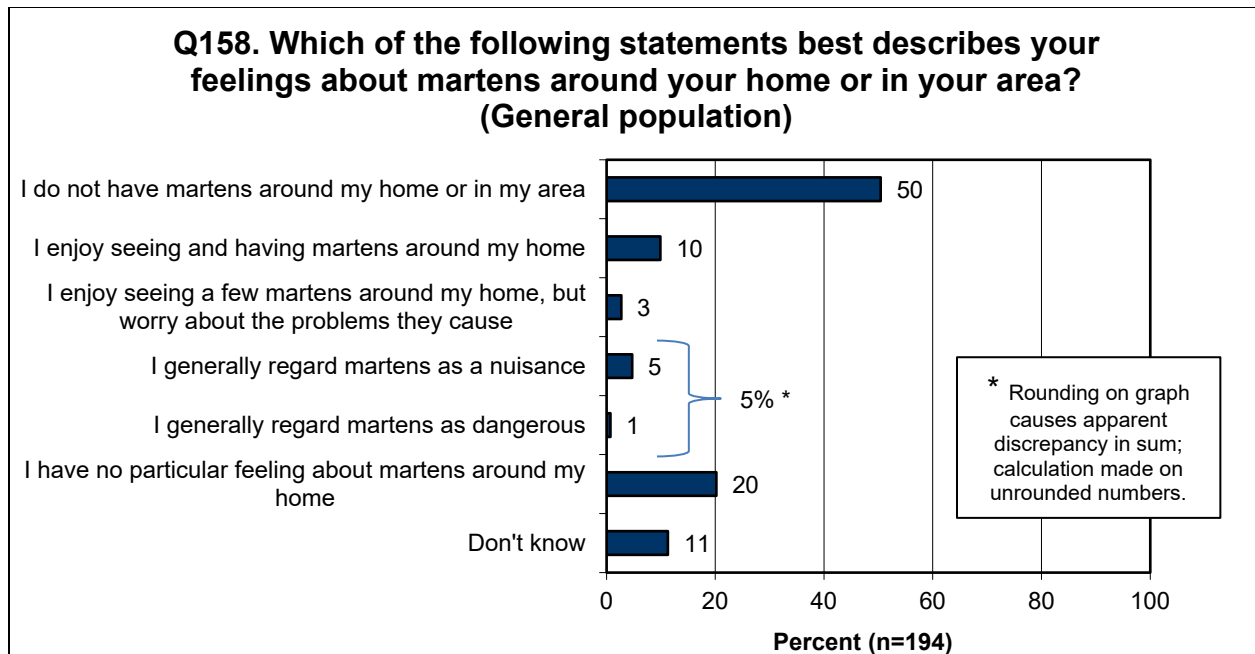


Figure 3.95. Feelings About Martens (General Population)

The highest self-professed knowledge level about martens is among North/East Region residents (Figure 3.96). None of the regions have a high percentage of residents saying that the marten populations are too high (Figure 3.97).

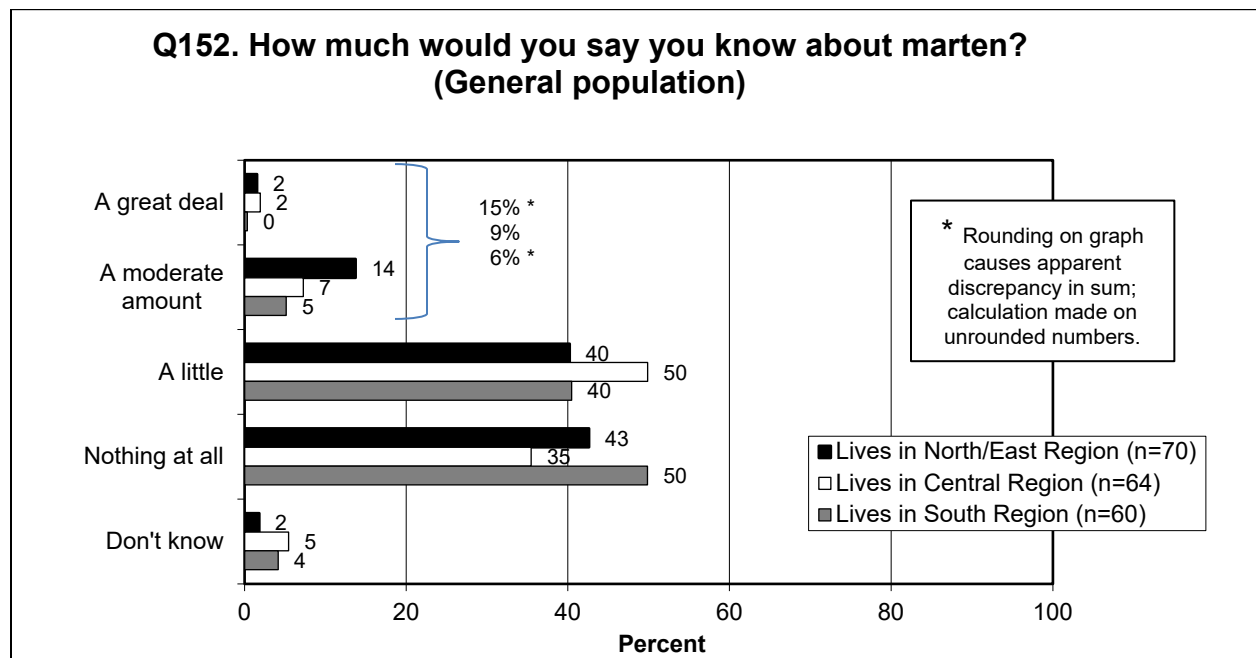


Figure 3.96. Knowledge of Martens (General Population)

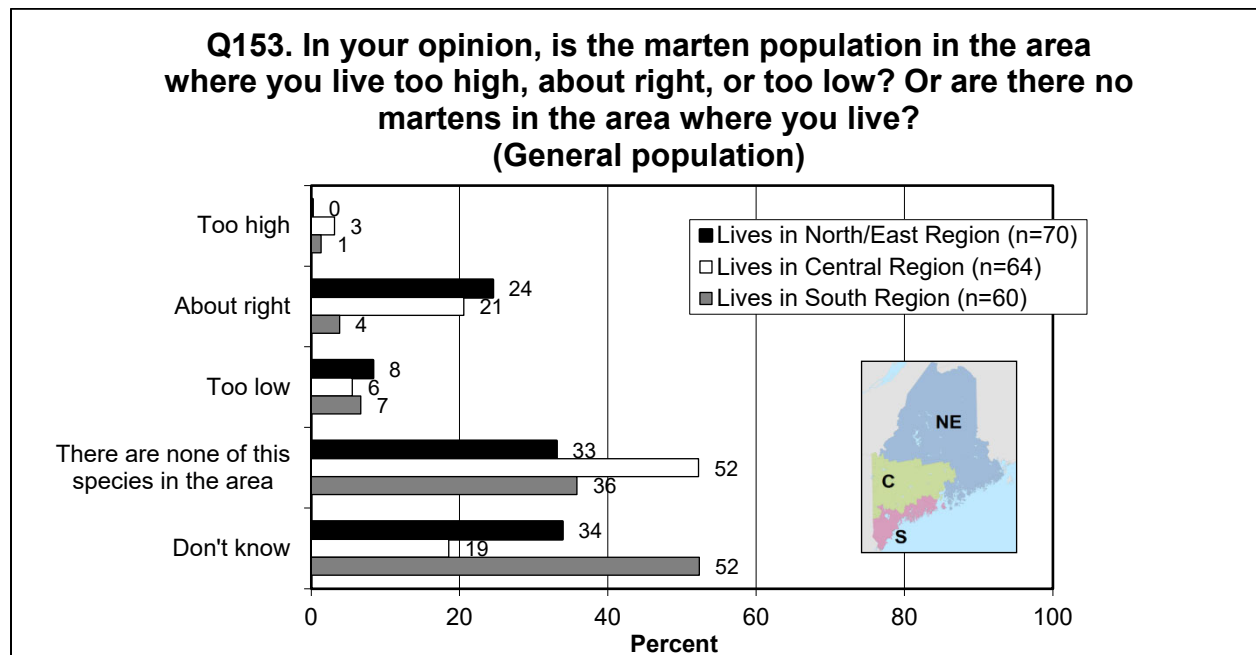


Figure 3.97. Opinion on the Marten Population (General Population)

North/East Region residents have the highest percentage who support trapping as a method to help manage marten populations in Maine (Figure 3.98). The regions are not markedly different regarding intolerance with martens (Figure 3.99). The mean ratings of how beneficial it is to have martens in Maine were 6.0 in the North/East Region, 6.3 in the Central Region, and 6.1 in the South Region.

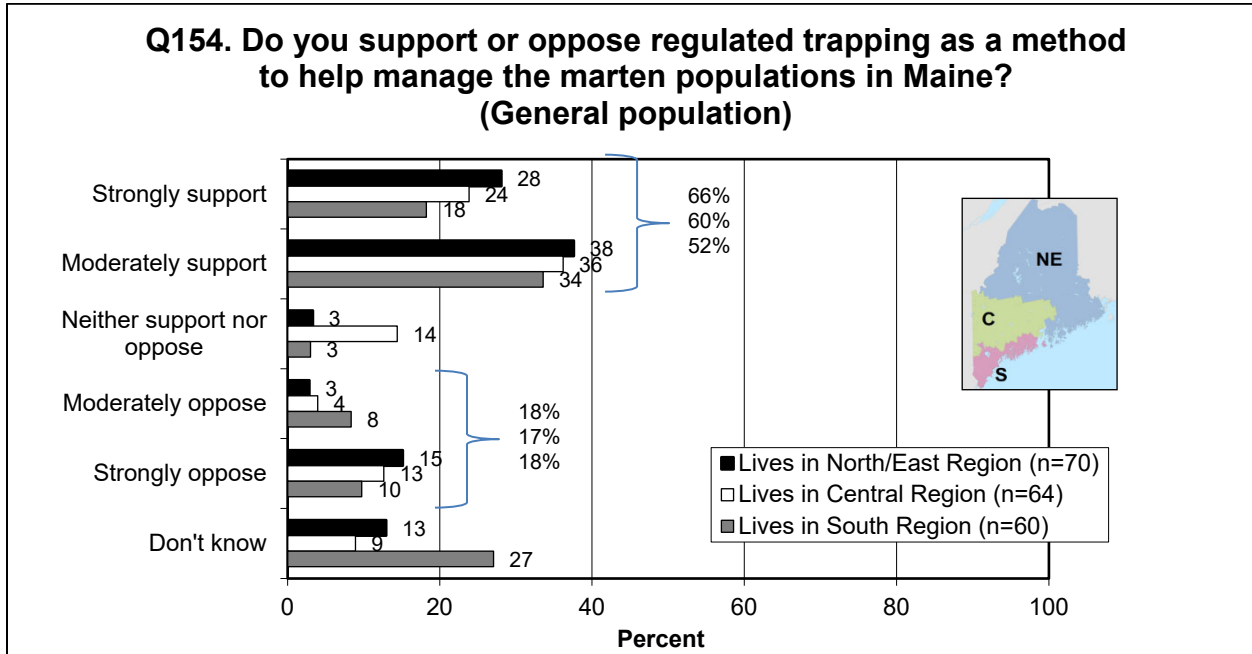


Figure 3.98. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Marten Populations (General Population)

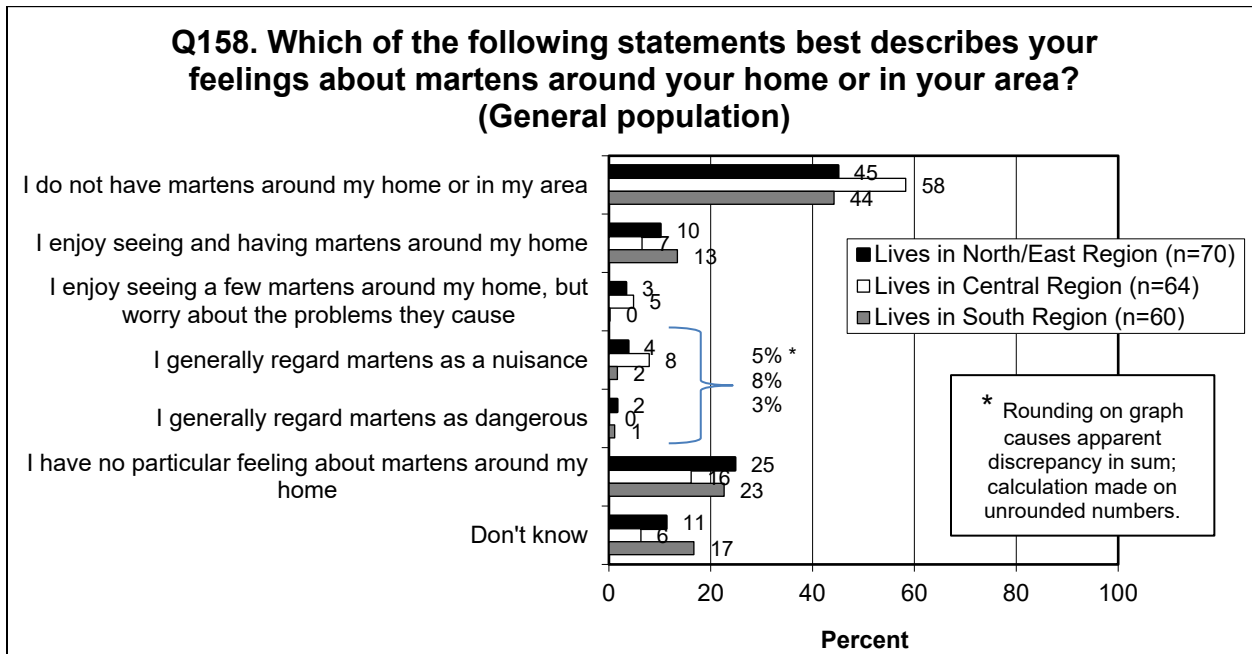


Figure 3.99. Feelings About Martens (General Population)

OTTER

A quarter of residents (25%) say that they know a great deal or a moderate amount about otters (Figure 3.100). No residents say that the otter population in their area is too high; otherwise, they are about evenly split between saying about right (19%) and too low (15%) (Figure 3.101).

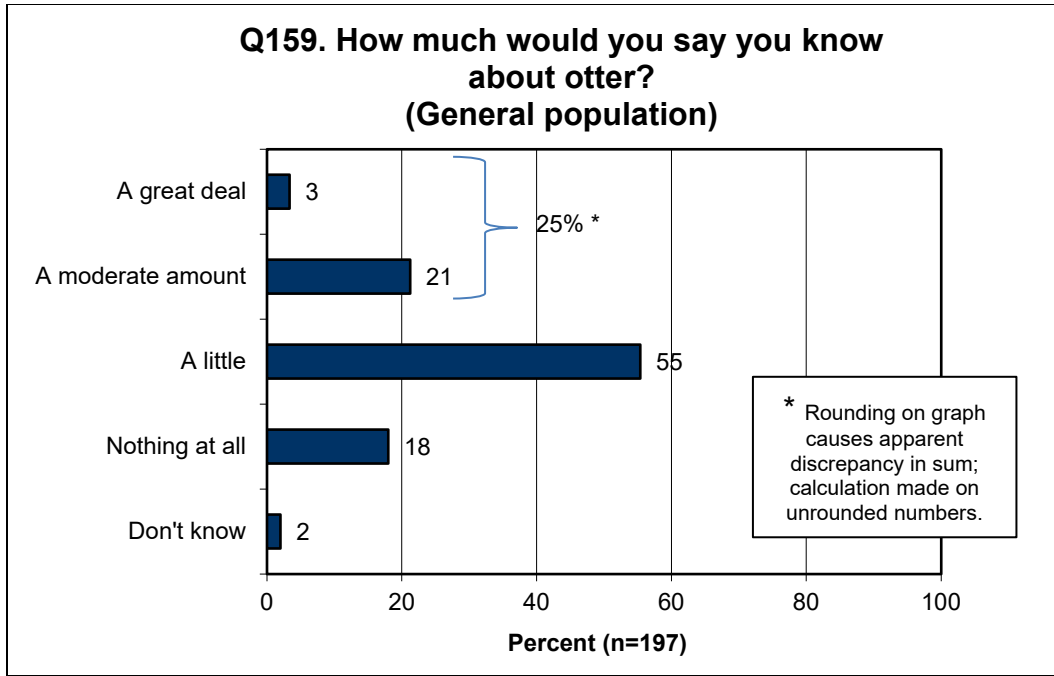


Figure 3.100. Knowledge of Otters (General Population)

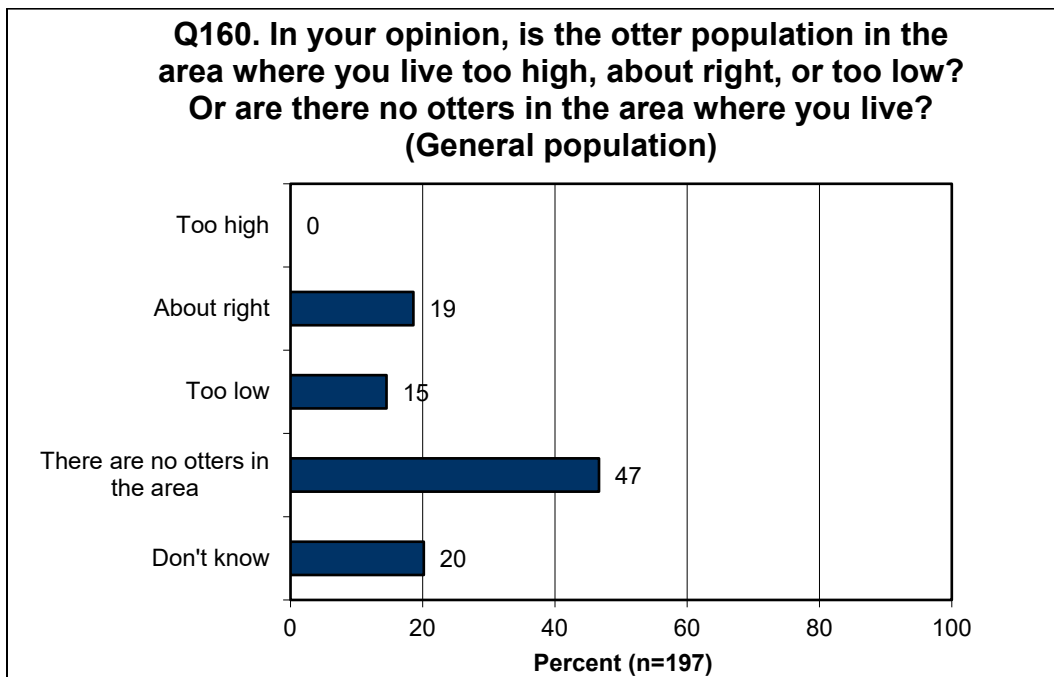


Figure 3.101. Opinion on the Otter Population (General Population)

There is more support for (62%) than opposition to (26%) regulated trapping as a method to manage otter populations (Figure 3.102). On the tolerance scale in Figure 3.103, residents are fairly tolerant of otters, with 14% in the most tolerant response, and only 1% saying that otters are a nuisance or are dangerous. Residents also rated how beneficial it is to have otters in Maine, on a 0 to 10 scale, with 0 being not at all beneficial and 10 being extremely beneficial: the mean rating was 7.3.

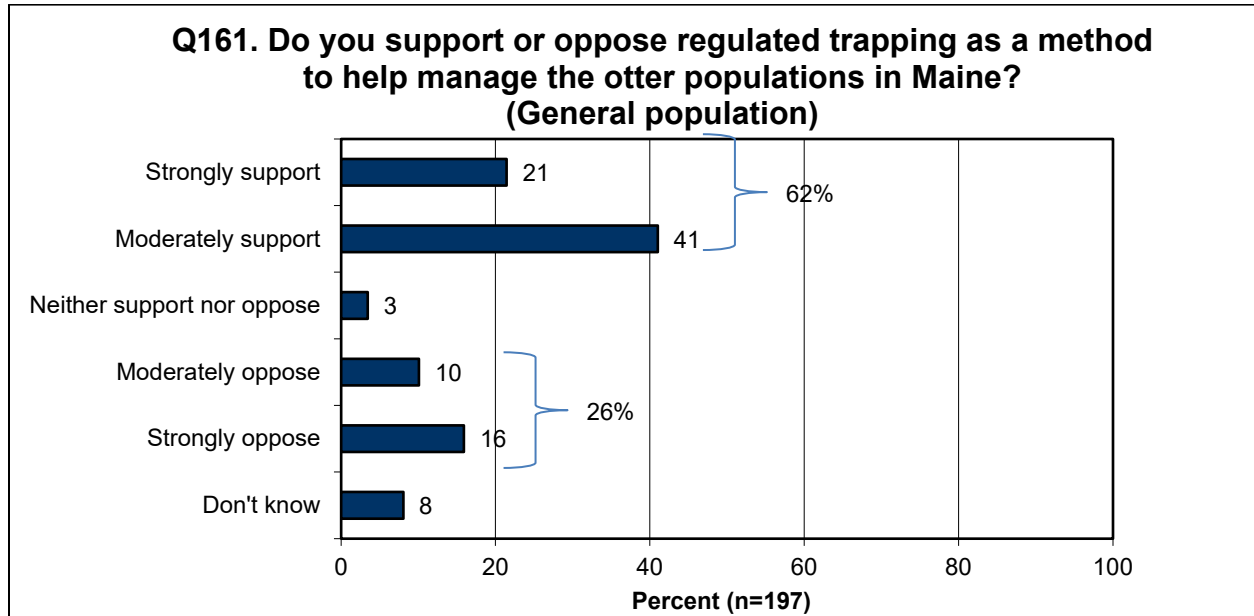


Figure 3.102. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Otter Populations (General Population)

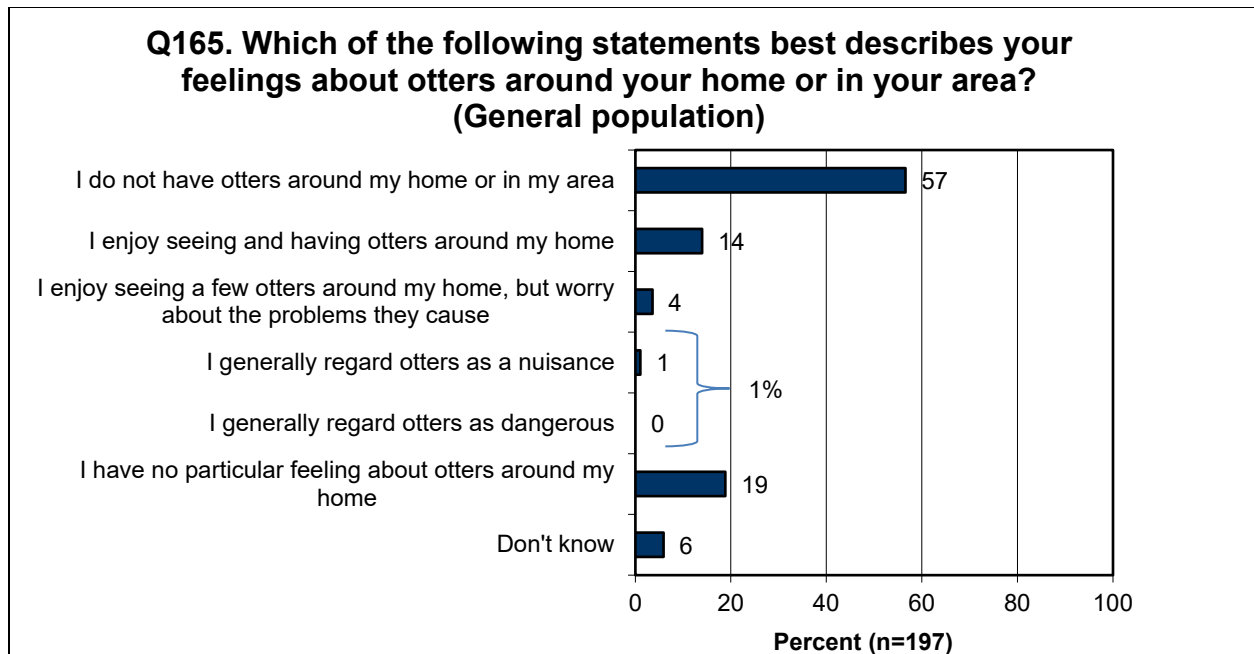


Figure 3.103. Feelings About Otters (General Population)

The highest knowledge level about otters is among North/East Region residents (Figure 3.104). No residents from any region say that the otter population where they live is too high (Figure 3.105). North/East Region residents have the highest percentage saying that the otter population where they live is about right.

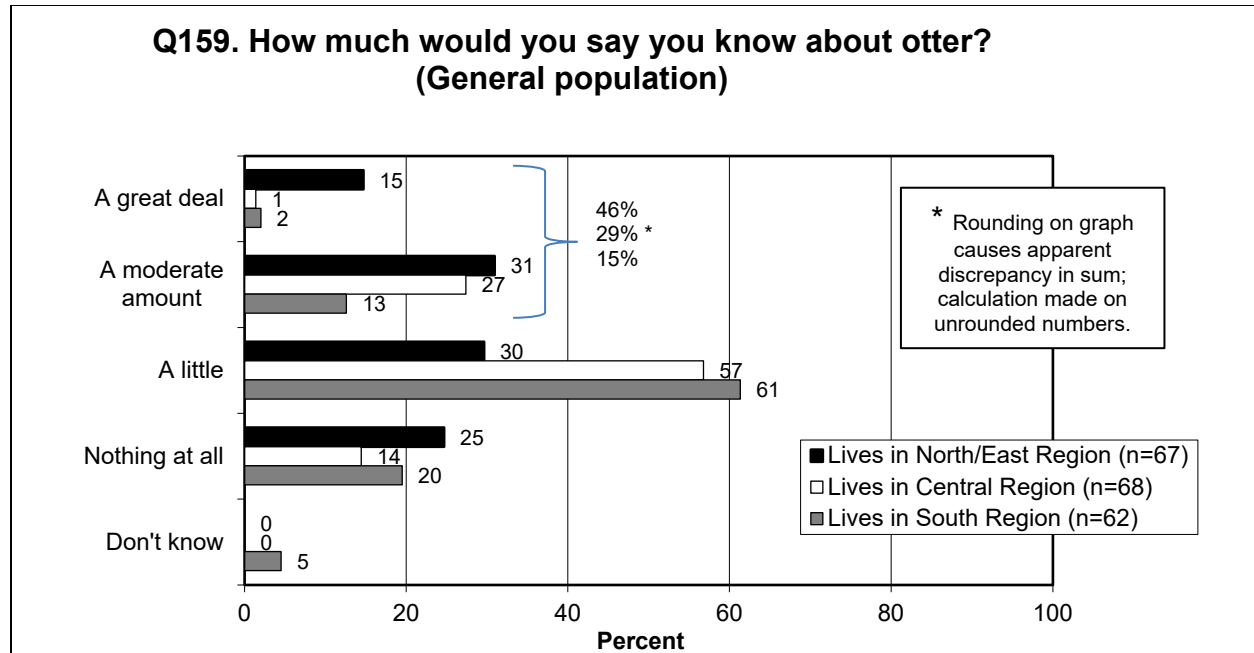


Figure 3.104. Knowledge of Otters (General Population)

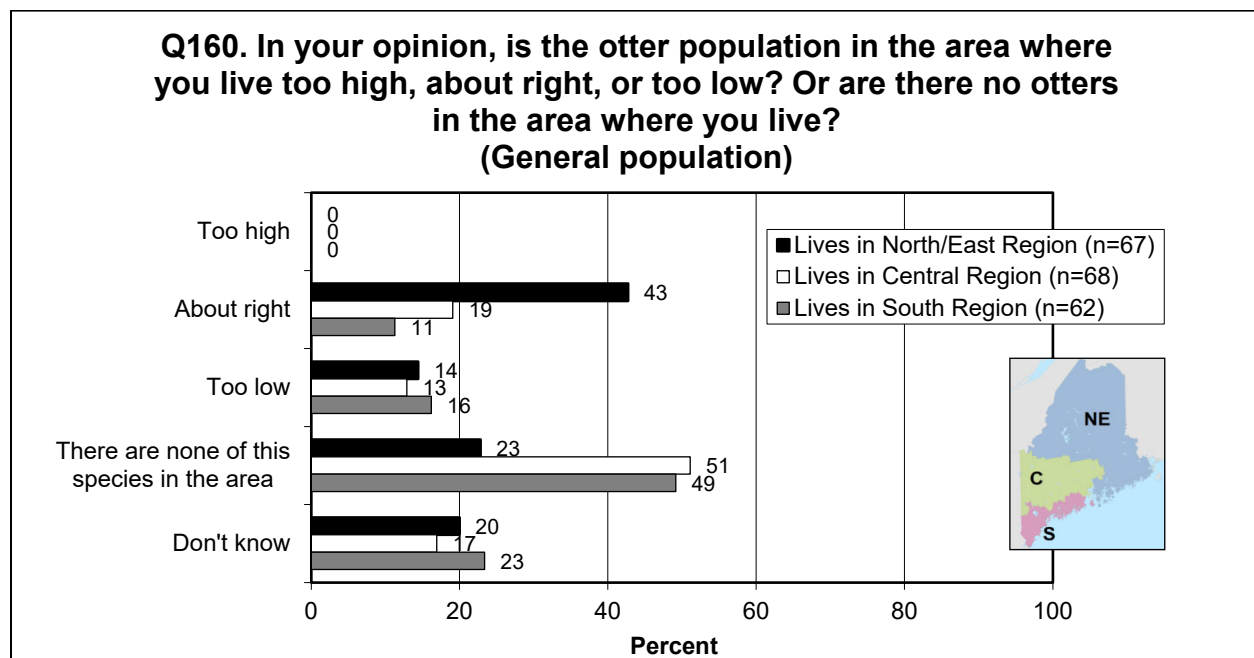


Figure 3.105. Opinion on the Otter Population (General Population)

Central and South Region residents have the most support for trapping as a way to help manage otter populations (Figure 3.106). Intolerance rates are very low across all the regions (Figure 3.107). The mean ratings of how beneficial it is to have otters in Maine were 7.0 in the North/East Region, 7.3 in the Central Region, and 7.4 in the South Region.

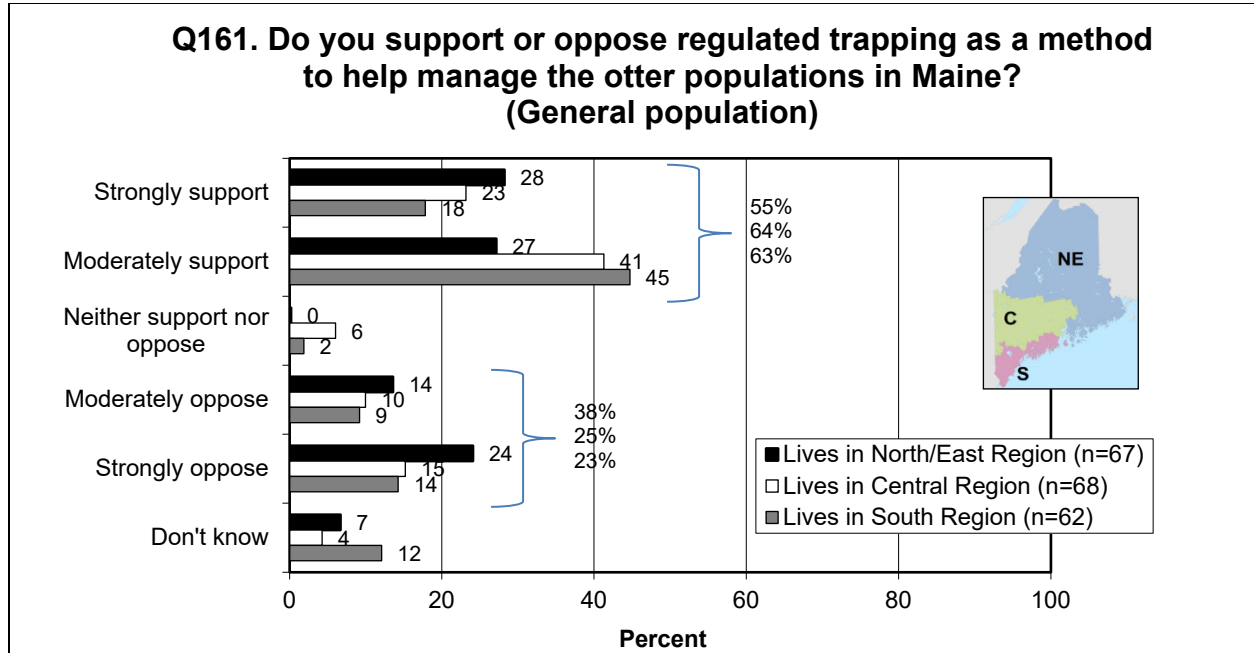


Figure 3.106. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Otter Populations (General Population)

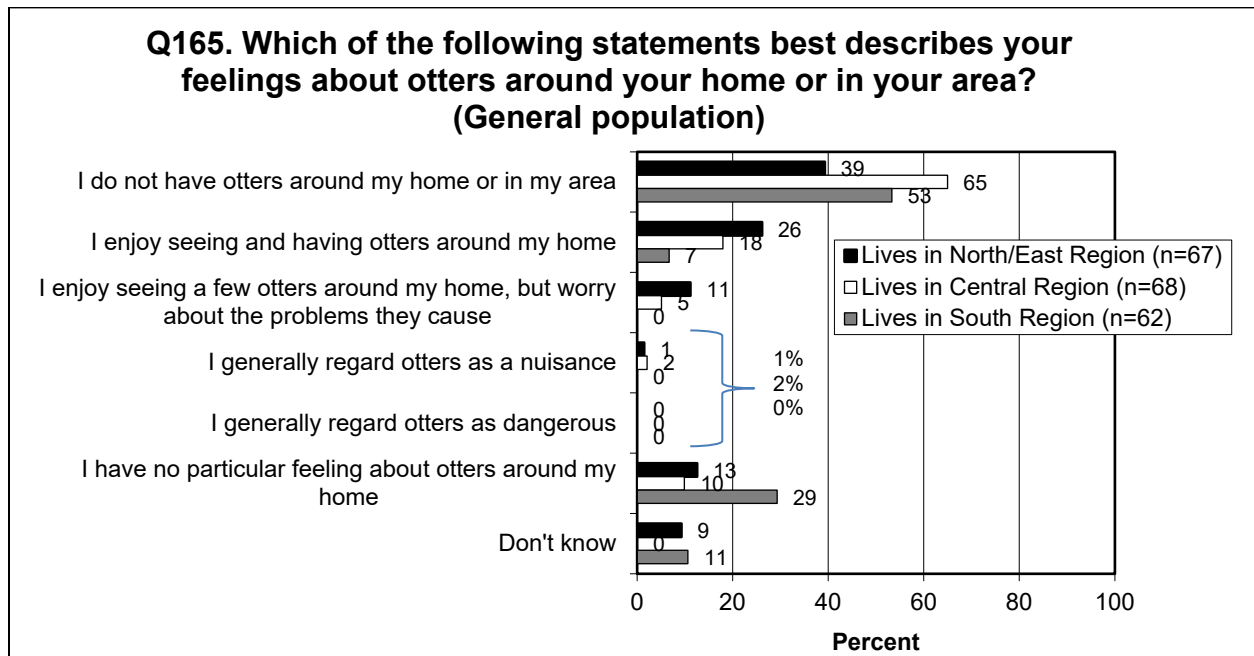


Figure 3.107. Feelings About Otters (General Population)

MUSKRAT

A small percentage of residents (14%) say that they know a great deal or a moderate amount about muskrats (Figure 3.108). A much higher percentage of residents say that the muskrat population in their area is about right (21%) than say it is too high (2%) or too low (5%) (Figure 3.109).

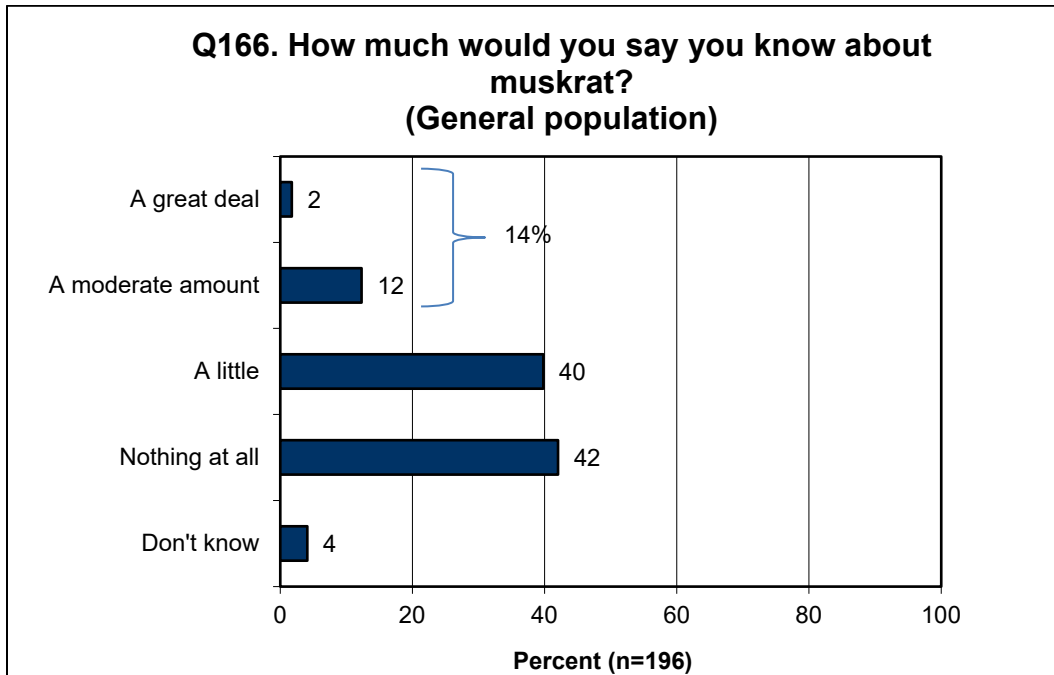


Figure 3.108. Knowledge of Muskrats (General Population)

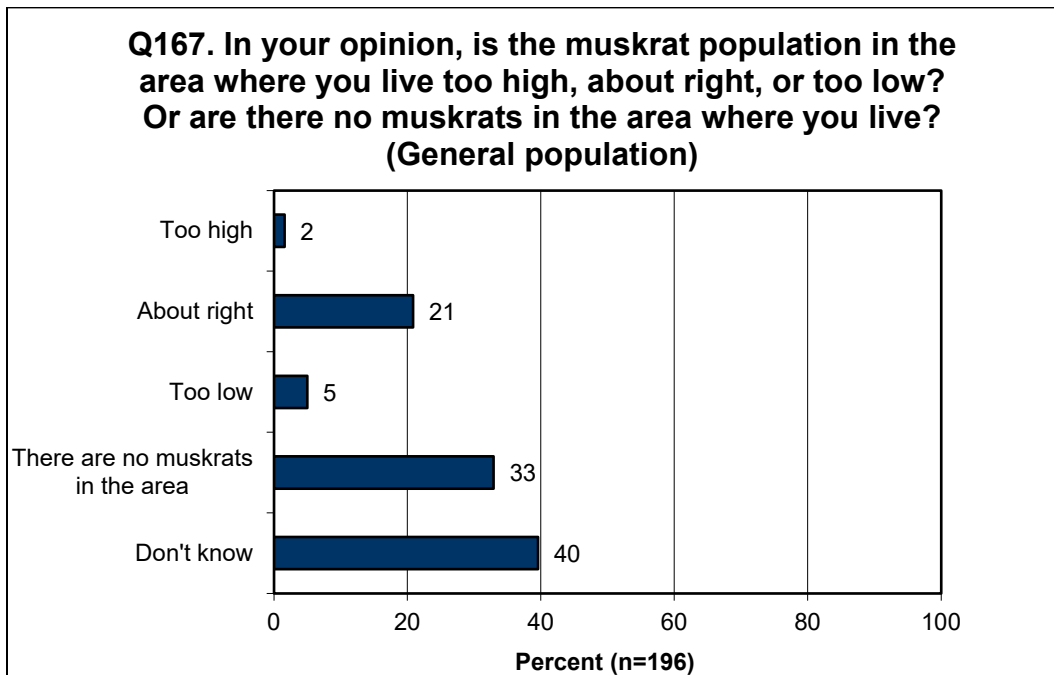


Figure 3.109. Opinion on the Muskrat Population (General Population)

There is about three times more support for (62%) than opposition to (20%) regulated trapping as a method to manage muskrat populations (Figure 3.110). As shown in Figure 3.111, residents are fairly tolerant of muskrats, with 16% in the most tolerant response, and only 3% saying that muskrats are a nuisance or are dangerous. Residents also rated how beneficial it is to have muskrats in Maine, on a 0 to 10 scale, with 0 being not at all beneficial and 10 being extremely beneficial: the mean rating was 7.1.

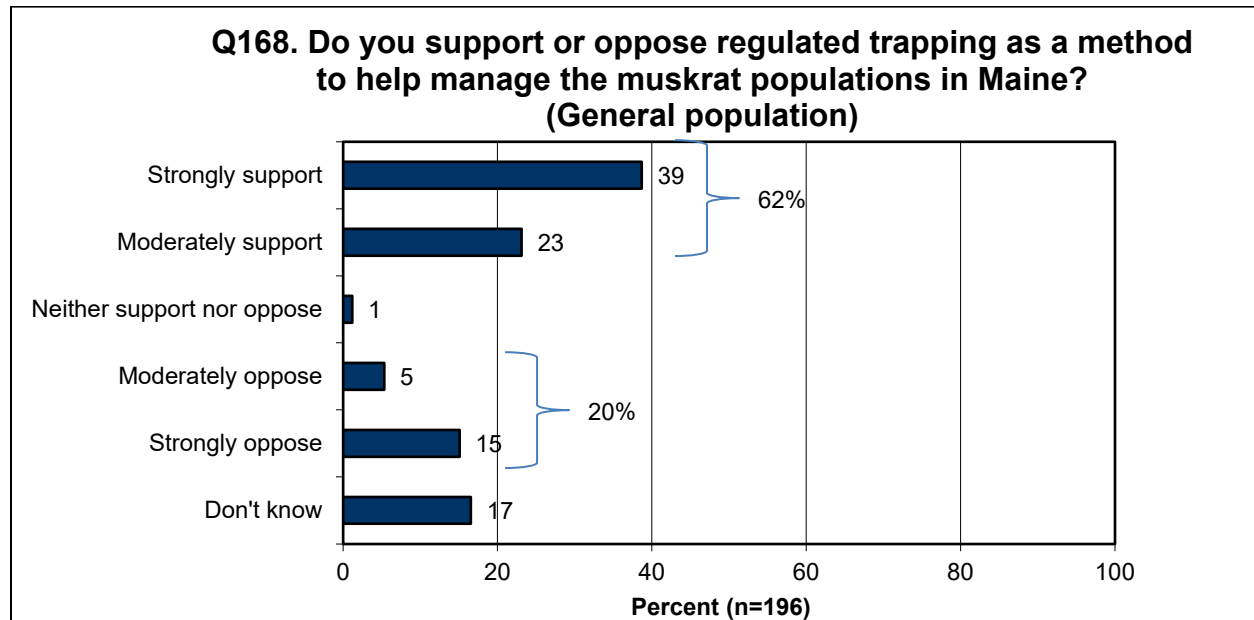


Figure 3.110. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Muskrat Populations (General Population)

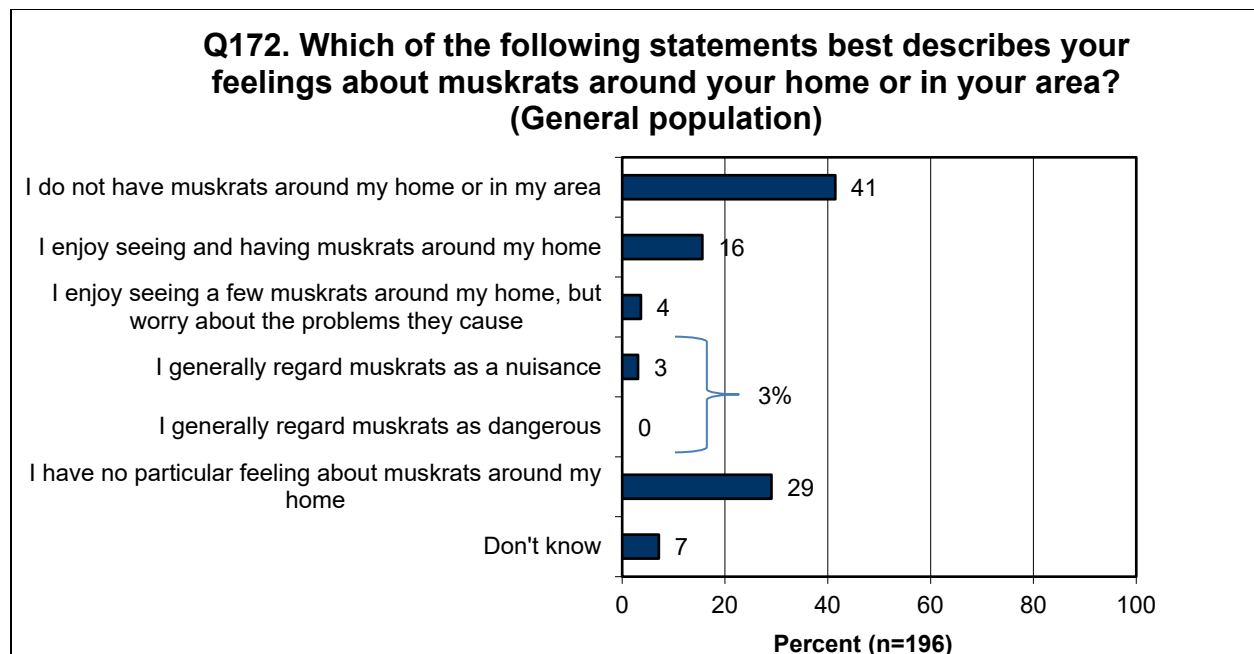


Figure 3.111. Feelings About Muskrats (General Population)

Self-professed knowledge about muskrats is highest among North/East Region residents (Figure 3.112). Very low percentages in the regions think that the muskrat population is too high; North/East Region residents have the highest percentage saying the population in their area is about right (Figure 3.113).

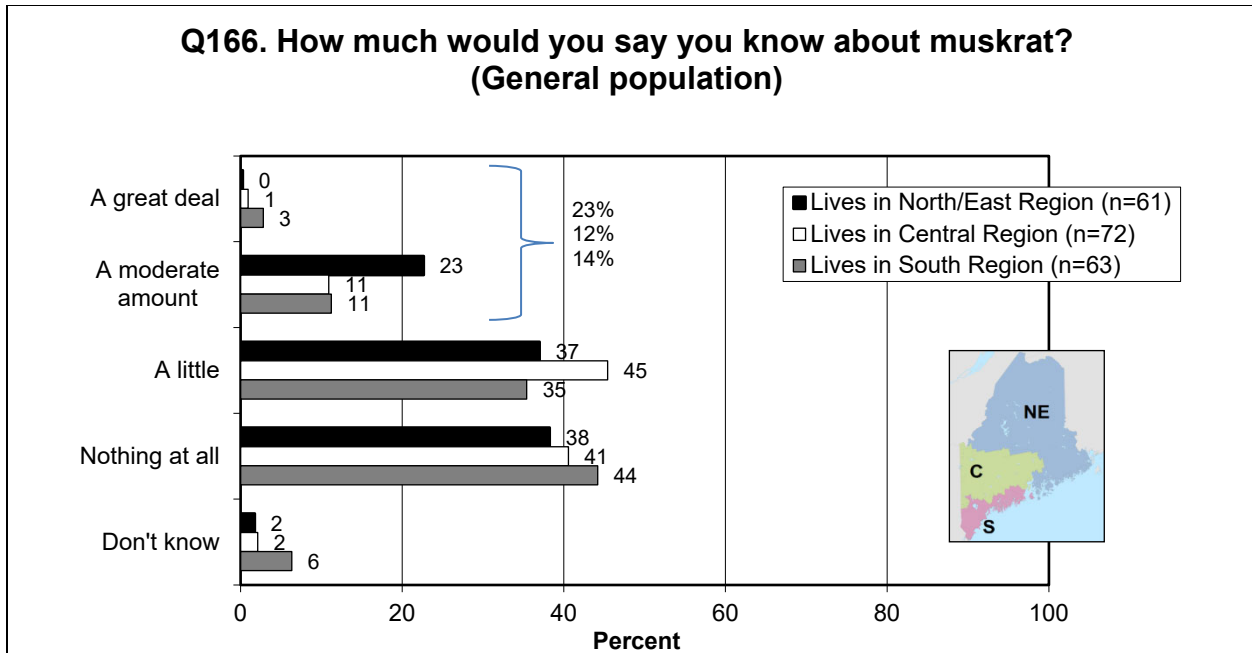


Figure 3.112. Knowledge of Muskrats (General Population)

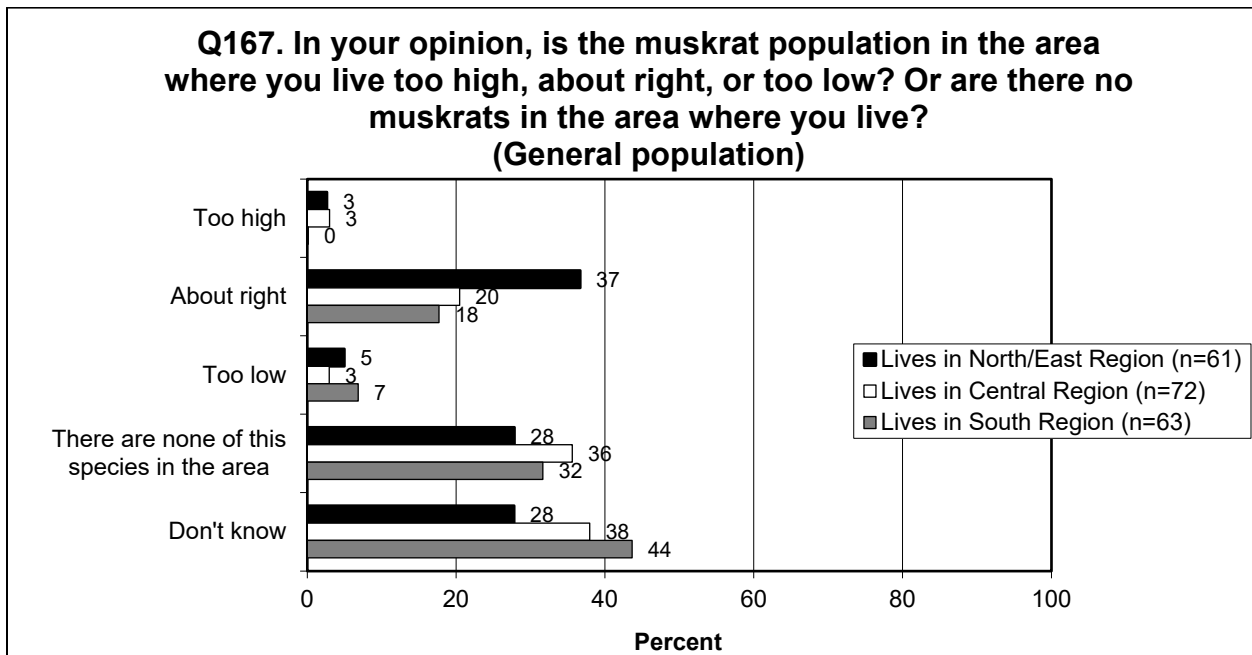


Figure 3.113. Opinion on the Muskrat Population (General Population)

The highest support for trapping as a way to help manage muskrat populations is among North/East and South Region residents (Figure 3.114). Intolerance is fairly low among residents of the regions—the highest being 6% among Central Region residents (Figure 3.115). The mean ratings of how beneficial it is to have muskrats in Maine were 6.1 in the North/East Region, 7.0 in the Central Region, and 7.3 in the South Region.

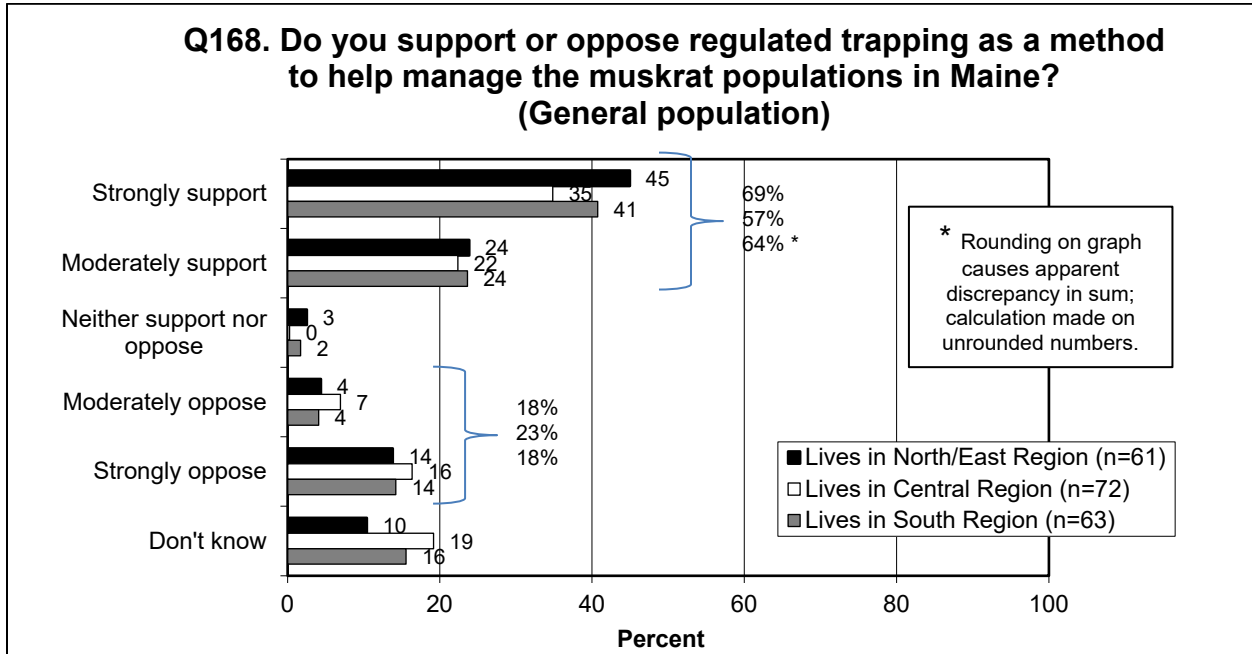


Figure 3.114. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Muskrat Populations (General Population)

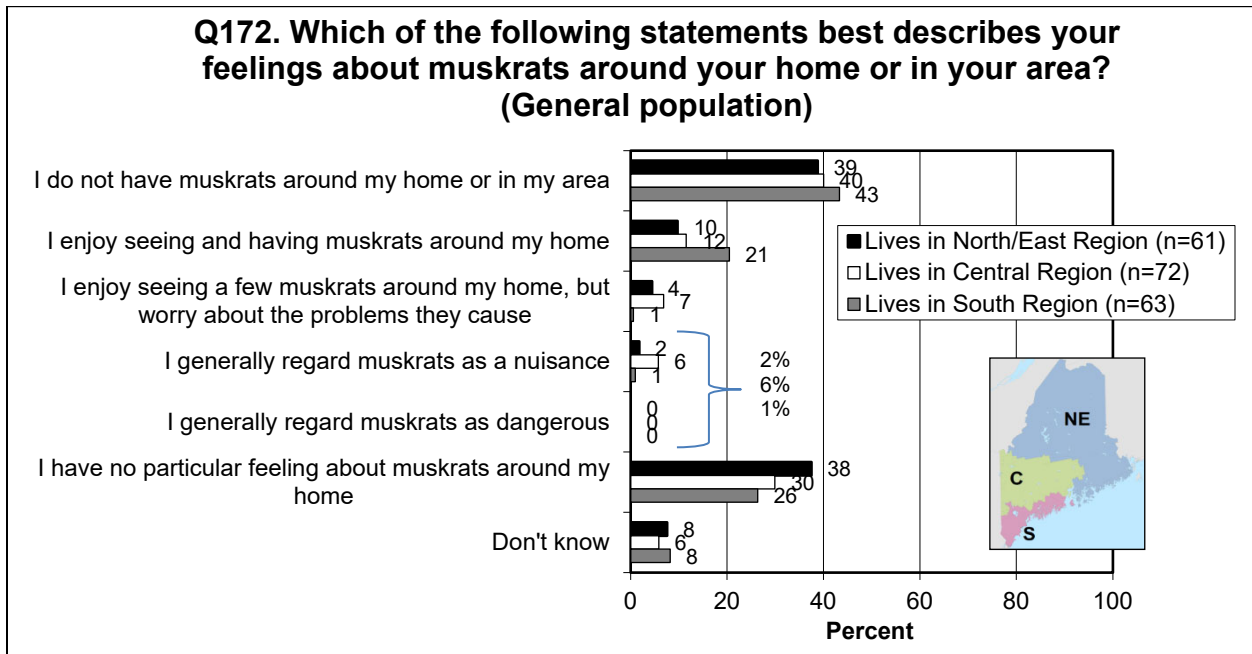


Figure 3.115. Feelings About Muskrats (General Population)

SUMMARY FINDINGS FOR ALL FURBEARER SPECIES

Table 3.1 shows that the species for which residents have the highest knowledge levels are skunk, raccoon, and coyote. On the other hand, the lowest knowledge levels are regarding marten and muskrat. The table is ranked by the “great deal and moderate amount combined” values.

Table 3.1. How much would you say you know about [species]? (General population)

	A great deal	A moderate amount	A great deal and moderate amount combined	A little	Nothing at all	Don't know
Skunk	15	37	52	34	10	3
Raccoon	16	34	50	39	11	0
Coyote	14	33	47	36	16	1
Fox	9	33	42	40	16	1
Beaver	4	29	33	44	19	4
Fisher	2	24	27	38	34	2
Otter	3	21	25	55	18	2
Bobcat	3	21	24	49	26	1
Muskrat	2	12	14	40	42	4
Marten	1	8	9	44	42	4

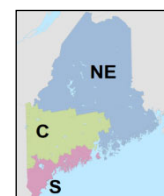
Green shading indicates the highest knowledge levels among all the species, showing all within 5 percentage points of the top species. Red shading indicates the lowest knowledge levels among all the species, showing all within 5 percentage points of the lowest species. Any apparent discrepancies in the sums are caused by rounding in the table; all sums are calculated on unrounded numbers.

North/East Region residents are the most knowledgeable, in general, showing the highest self-professed knowledge of the regions for seven of the ten species considered (Table 3.2). On the other hand, South Region and Central Region residents have the lowest levels of self-professed knowledge, in general—each of these regions has the lowest knowledge level for four species. The table is ranked by the overall amount (which is not shown in the table).

Table 3.2. How much would you say you know about [species]? (By Region) (General population)

	A great deal			A moderate amount			A great deal and moderate amount combined			A little			Nothing at all		
	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S
Skunk	14	11	20	38	41	33	53	51	54	31	38	33	15	8	10
Raccoon	27	16	12	31	35	34	58	51	46	40	34	43	3	15	11
Coyote	25	19	4	34	31	35	59	50	39	32	31	43	9	19	16
Fox	12	10	6	50	26	34	61	36	40	28	43	43	10	18	16
Beaver	10	6	1	17	18	42	27	23	43	41	51	40	25	21	15
Fisher	3	2	2	16	24	27	20	27	29	47	38	34	34	36	32
Otter	15	1	2	31	27	13	46	29	15	30	57	61	25	14	20
Bobcat	7	1	3	23	19	23	30	20	27	47	47	52	23	31	22
Muskrat	0	1	3	23	11	11	23	12	14	37	45	35	38	41	44
Marten	2	2	0	14	7	5	15	9	6	40	50	40	43	35	50

Green shading indicates the highest knowledge level within the regions; when the regions are within 5 percentage points of the highest, they are also shaded. Red shading indicates the lowest knowledge level within the regions; when the regions are within 5 percentage points of the lowest, they are also shaded. Regarding skunk, no region is markedly higher than the others. Any apparent discrepancies in the sums are caused by rounding in the table; all sums are calculated on unrounded numbers. “Don't know” not shown to improve table legibility.



More residents think that the population is too high than too low for four species: coyote, skunk, raccoon, and fisher (Table 3.3). On the other hand, more residents think that the population is too low than too high for six species: otter, bobcat, fox, marten, muskrat, and beaver. The table is ranked by the “too high” column.

Table 3.3. In your opinion, is the [species] population in the area where you live too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no [species] in the area where you live? (General population)

	Too high	About right	Too low	None in area	Don't know
Coyote	27	30	2	22	19
Skunk	17	55	12	9	8
Raccoon	14	53	9	12	13
Fisher	11	22	7	40	20
Fox	10	47	16	17	9
Beaver	4	31	6	37	21
Bobcat	4	16	14	38	27
Marten	2	15	6	42	35
Muskrat	2	21	5	33	40
Otter	0	19	15	47	20

Red shading indicates that “too high” exceeds “too low”; green shading indicates that “too low” exceeds “too high.”

As shown in Table 3.4, coyote has more residents saying the population is too high than too low across all three regions. On the other hand, for bobcat, fox, marten, and otter, more residents say the populations are too low than too high across all three regions. The table is ranked in the same order as Table 3.3.

Table 3.4. In your opinion, is the [species] population in the area where you live too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no [species] in the area where you live? (By Region) (General population)

	Too high			About right			Too low			None in area			Don't know		
	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S
Coyote	27	30	24	38	31	26	6	1	0	10	16	31	19	22	18
Skunk	20	24	9	52	54	56	15	7	14	10	9	9	3	6	12
Raccoon	31	16	7	55	42	60	5	7	11	5	15	12	4	19	10
Fisher	6	13	12	21	25	19	15	3	6	25	47	40	32	12	23
Fox	10	10	9	68	45	41	12	19	16	4	13	28	6	13	6
Beaver	11	3	2	32	35	28	6	6	7	19	37	43	32	19	21
Bobcat	0	2	9	17	23	7	27	6	18	42	47	27	14	21	39
Marten	0	3	1	24	21	4	8	6	7	33	52	36	34	19	52
Muskrat	3	3	0	37	20	18	5	3	7	28	36	32	28	38	44
Otter	0	0	0	43	19	11	14	13	16	23	51	49	20	17	23

Red shading indicates that “too high” exceeds “too low” in that region; green shading indicates that “too low” exceeds “too high” in that region.

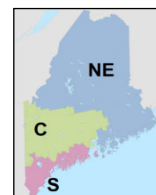


Table 3.5 shows that the most support of trapping to help manage populations is for coyote, skunk, raccoon, and fisher. The most opposition is for trapping bobcat and fox. Note, however, that support exceeds opposition for all species, and there is a majority of residents in support for trapping all species except bobcat. The table is ranked by overall support. Table 3.6 shows the regional results on these questions, and it is ranked in the same order as Table 3.5.

Table 3.5. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the [species] populations in Maine? (General population)

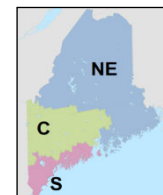
	Strongly support	Overall support	Neither	Strongly oppose	Overall oppose	Don't know
Coyote	40	71	1	16	20	8
Skunk	36	69	5	14	21	5
Raccoon	28	68	2	17	24	6
Fisher	28	66	8	10	18	8
Beaver	40	63	5	14	20	12
Otter	21	62	3	16	26	8
Muskrat	39	62	1	15	20	17
Fox	26	58	4	18	34	3
Marten	22	58	8	12	17	17
Bobcat	21	48	4	24	32	15

Green shading indicates the highest support among all the species, showing all within 5 percentage points of the top species. Red shading indicates the highest opposition among all the species, showing all within 5 percentage points of the top species.

Table 3.6. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the [species] populations in Maine? (By Region) (General population)

	Strongly support			Overall support			Neither			Strongly oppose			Overall oppose		
	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S
Coyote	38	34	46	57	76	74	1	0	1	22	17	12	26	24	14
Skunk	33	44	31	58	84	60	12	4	3	15	7	19	30	8	29
Raccoon	43	21	29	71	79	57	2	2	3	13	12	22	27	16	31
Fisher	28	33	24	64	87	48	9	4	12	11	4	15	16	5	29
Beaver	32	45	38	45	59	71	26	1	3	9	11	17	17	23	18
Otter	28	23	18	55	64	63	0	6	2	24	15	14	38	25	23
Muskrat	45	35	41	69	57	64	3	0	2	14	16	14	18	23	18
Fox	33	19	30	65	47	67	2	6	4	17	17	21	31	44	26
Marten	28	24	18	66	60	52	3	14	3	15	13	10	18	17	18
Bobcat	12	17	31	28	42	64	12	0	5	33	29	15	37	40	21

Green shading indicates the highest support among all the species within that region, showing all within 5 percentage points of the top species. Red shading indicates the highest opposition among all the species within that region, showing all within 5 percentage points of the top species. "Don't know" not shown to improve table legibility.



Coyotes are the least favorably viewed species, with 38% of residents saying that they are a nuisance or are dangerous (Table 3.7). This is followed by skunks (26% say that they are a nuisance or are dangerous), fishers (25%), and raccoons (20%). On the other hand, foxes are the most favorably viewed, followed by beaver. The table is ranked by the values for “enjoy seeing and having them around home.” Table 3.8 shows the regional results; it is ranked the same as Table 3.7.

Table 3.7. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about [species] around your home or in your area? (General population)

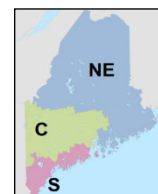
	None around	Enjoy seeing and having them around home	Enjoy seeing and having them but worry about problems	Regard them as a nuisance	Regard them as dangerous	Nuisance and dangerous combined	No feeling	Don't know
Fox	21	32	21	2	5	7	16	3
Beaver	41	25	14	4	0	4	13	3
Skunk	18	18	16	24	2	26	19	3
Raccoon	22	16	14	17	3	20	26	2
Muskrat	41	16	4	3	0	3	29	7
Otter	57	14	4	1	0	1	19	6
Bobcat	50	10	7	1	5	6	23	4
Marten	50	10	3	5	1	5	20	11
Coyote	24	8	14	22	15	38	12	3
Fisher	40	8	5	8	17	25	16	5

Dark green shading indicates the highest in the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response among all the species. Green shading indicates that the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response exceeds nuisance/dangerous combined. Dark red shading indicates the highest in the combined nuisance/dangerous among all the species. Red shading indicates that the nuisance/dangerous combined response exceeds the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response.

Table 3.8. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about [species] around your home or in your area? (By Region) (General population)

	Enjoy seeing and having them around home			Enjoy seeing and having them but worry about problems			Regard them as a nuisance			Regard them as dangerous			Nuisance and dangerous combined		
	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S
Fox	37	30	33	25	22	19	9	0	1	8	3	5	16	3	6
Beaver	30	17	29	10	19	12	9	4	2	0	1	0	9	5	2
Skunk	8	9	28	18	22	11	25	27	20	2	5	1	27	32	21
Raccoon	14	5	27	22	11	14	34	22	7	4	4	2	38	25	9
Muskrat	10	12	21	4	7	1	2	6	1	0	0	0	2	6	1
Otter	26	18	7	11	5	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	2	0
Bobcat	13	9	11	8	7	6	0	1	1	2	3	9	2	4	10
Marten	10	7	13	3	5	0	4	8	2	2	0	1	5	8	3
Coyote	6	12	5	30	14	8	25	23	21	12	15	17	37	38	38
Fisher	18	4	7	8	4	6	6	8	10	12	26	11	17	34	20

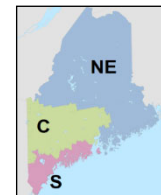
Dark green shading indicates the highest in the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response among all the species in that region. Green shading indicates that the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response exceeds nuisance/dangerous combined in each region. Dark red shading indicates the highest in the combined nuisance/dangerous among all the species in that region. Red shading indicates that the nuisance/dangerous combined response exceeds the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response in each region. Some responses not shown to improve table legibility.



The species that residents consider to be the most beneficial are beaver, bobcat, otter, and muskrat (Table 3.9). Those considered least beneficial are coyote, fisher, and skunk. In general, South Region residents give the highest ratings, while the lowest ratings are split between the North/East and Central Regions. This table is ranked by the overall mean scores.

Table 3.9. How beneficial do you consider it to have [species] in Maine, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all beneficial and 10 is extremely beneficial? (Overall and by Region) (General population)

	Mean Ratings			
	Overall	North/East Region	Central Region	South Region
Beaver	7.6	6.7	7.1	8.3
Bobcat	7.3	7.6	6.7	8.0
Otter	7.3	7.0	7.3	7.4
Muskrat	7.1	6.1	7.0	7.3
Fox	7.0	6.9	6.7	7.3
Marten	6.2	6.0	6.3	6.1
Raccoon	6.0	4.9	5.8	6.5
Skunk	5.7	5.2	4.9	6.6
Fisher	5.4	5.9	4.8	5.8
Coyote	5.1	5.1	4.9	5.3



Dark green shading indicates the highest mean rating overall among all the species. Light green shading indicates the region that has the highest mean for each species. Dark red shading indicates the lowest mean rating overall among all the species. Light red shading indicates the region that has the lowest mean for each species.

ATTITUDES TOWARD FURBEARER MANAGEMENT

A large majority of residents (81%) support managing furbearer populations to reduce wildlife diseases that could affect people, pets, and other wildlife (Figure 3.116). Support is high in all the regions, with Central Region residents having the highest percentage in support (84%) (Figure 3.117).

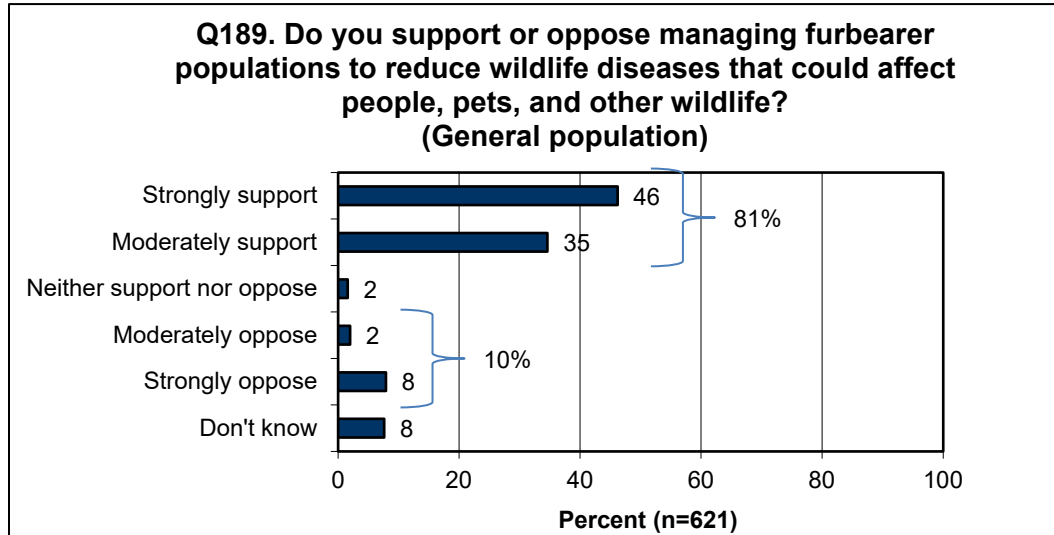


Figure 3.116. Support for or Opposition to Managing Furbearer Populations to Reduce Wildlife Diseases (General Population)

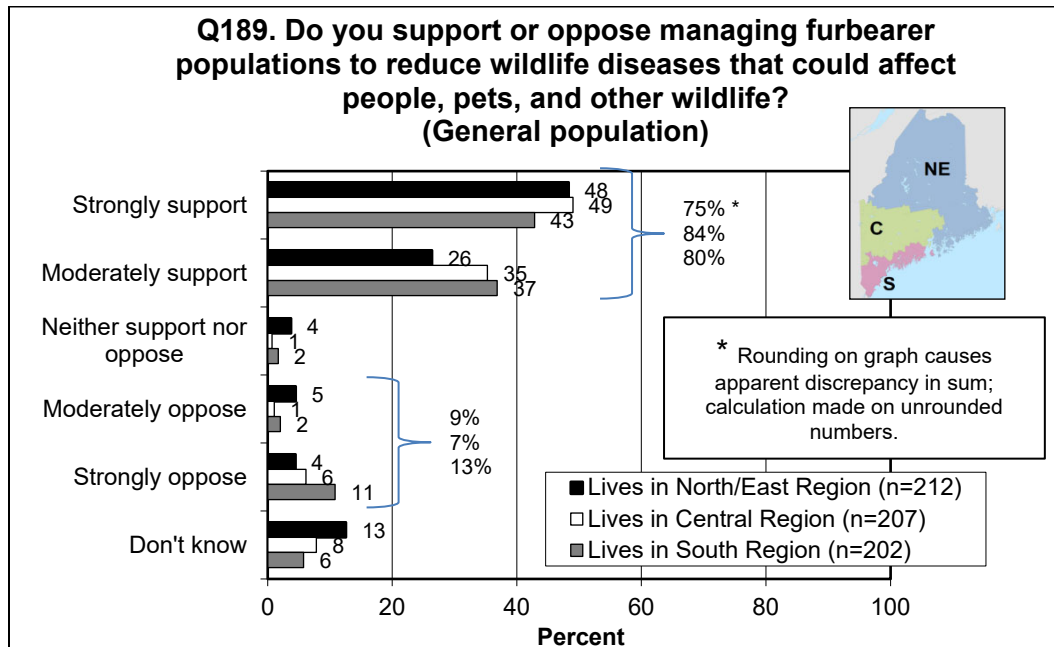


Figure 3.117. Support for or Opposition to Managing Furbearer Populations to Reduce Wildlife Diseases, by Region (General Population)

The characteristics associated with supporting the management of furbearer populations to reduce wildlife diseases that could affect people, pets, and livestock include being younger, living in any non-rural area (a suburban area, a large city/urban area, or a small city/town), having children in the household, being male, and living in the Central Region (Figure 3.118).

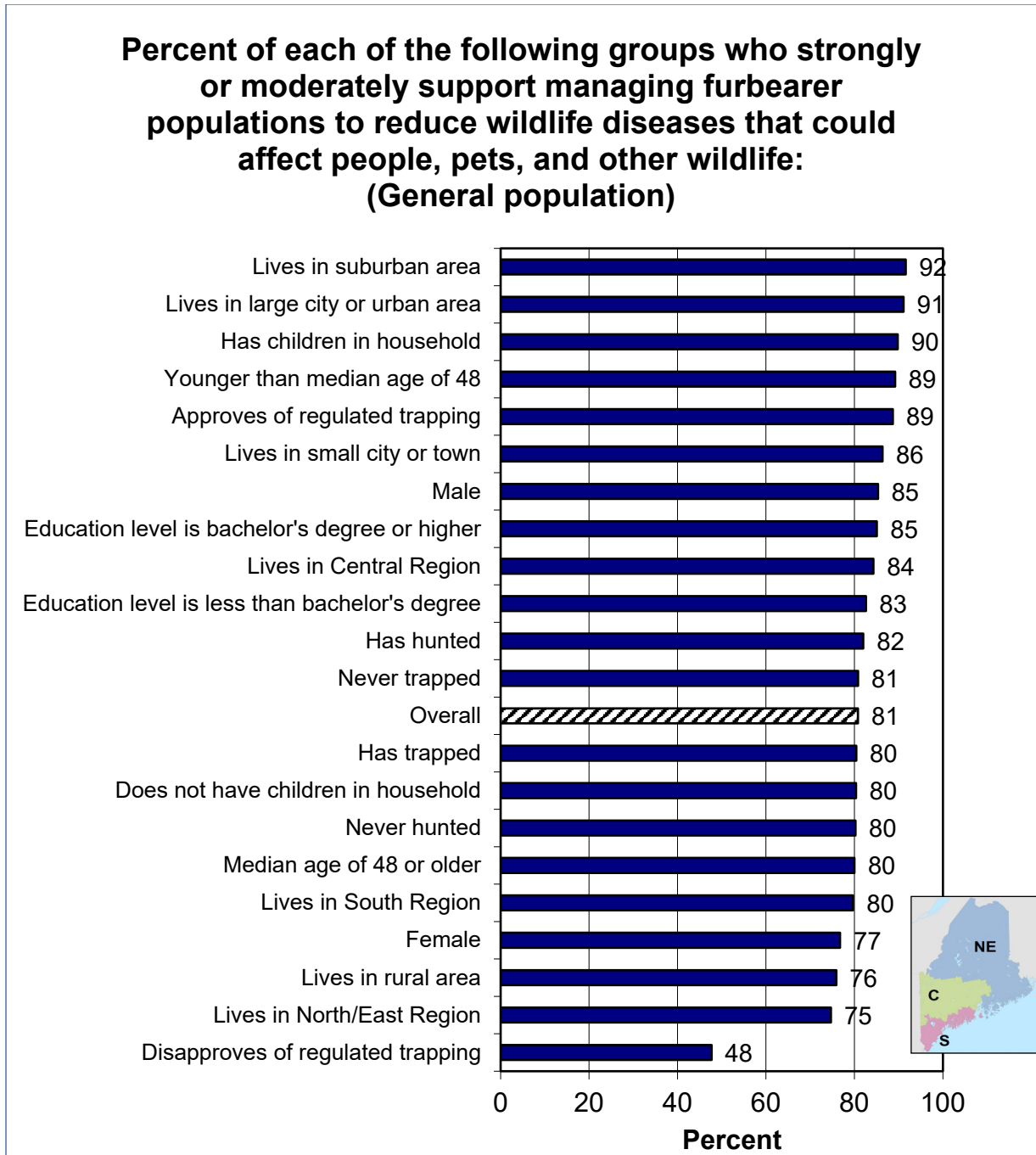


Figure 3.118. Characteristics of Those Who Support Managing Furbearer Populations to Reduce Wildlife Diseases (General Population)

See pages 15 through 16 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

The characteristics associated with opposing the management of furbearer populations to reduce wildlife diseases that could affect people, pets, and livestock include disapproving of trapping, living in a rural area, being older, and living in the South Region (Figure 3.119).

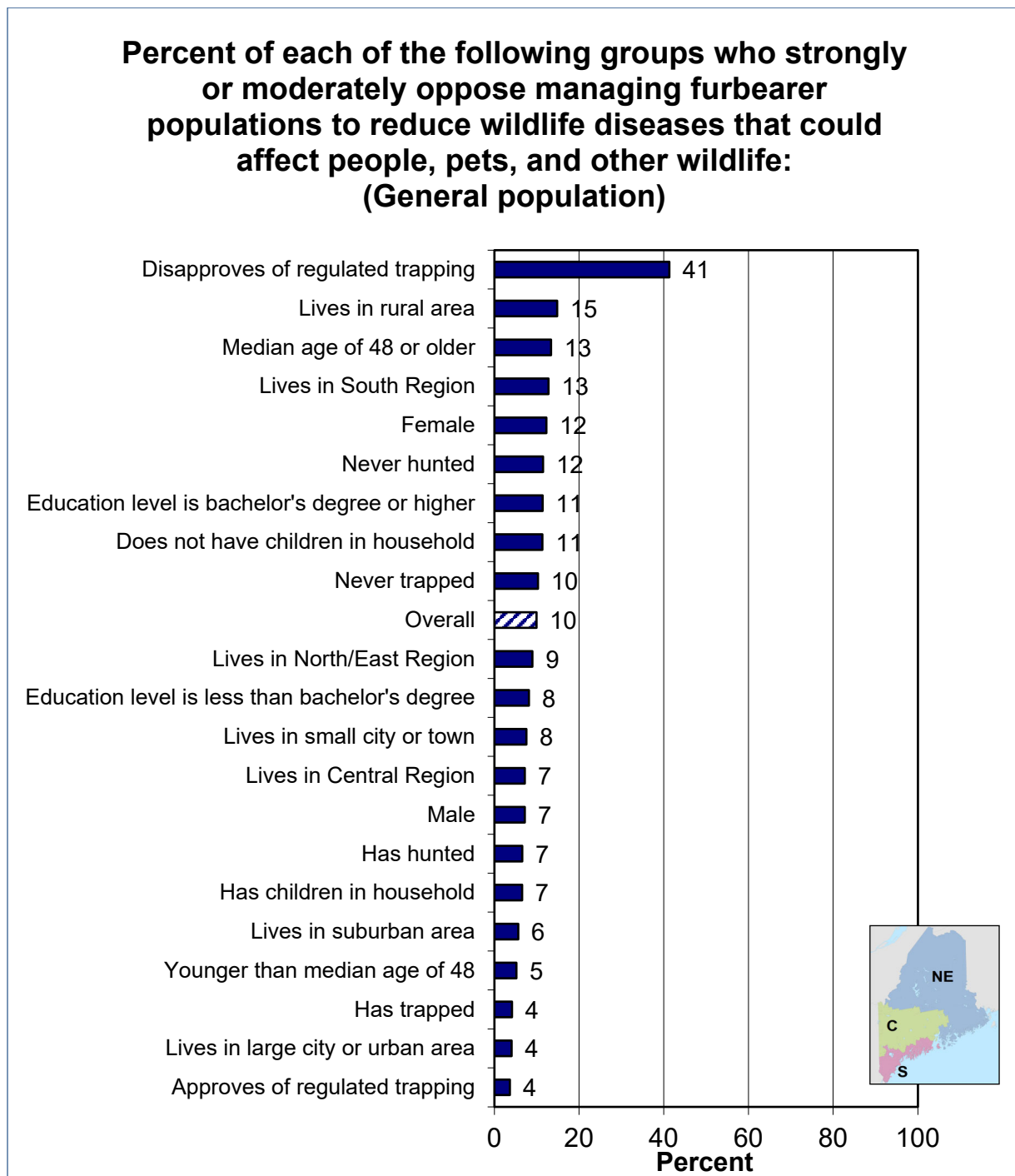


Figure 3.119. Characteristics of Those Who Oppose Managing Furbearer Populations to Reduce Wildlife Diseases (General Population)

See pages 15 through 16 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICTS

More than a third of residents (37%) had problems with wild animals or birds within the past 2 years (Figure 3.120), with the North/East Region having the highest percentage of residents who had problems (45%) (Figure 3.121). The demographic analyses found the characteristics that are associated with having problems include living in a rural area, being younger, and living in the North/East Region (Figure 3.122).

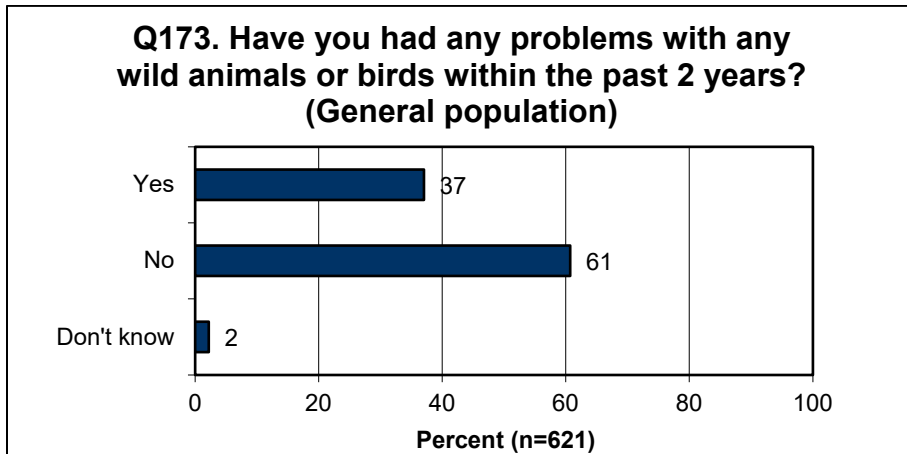


Figure 3.120. Problems With Wild Animals or Birds (General Population)

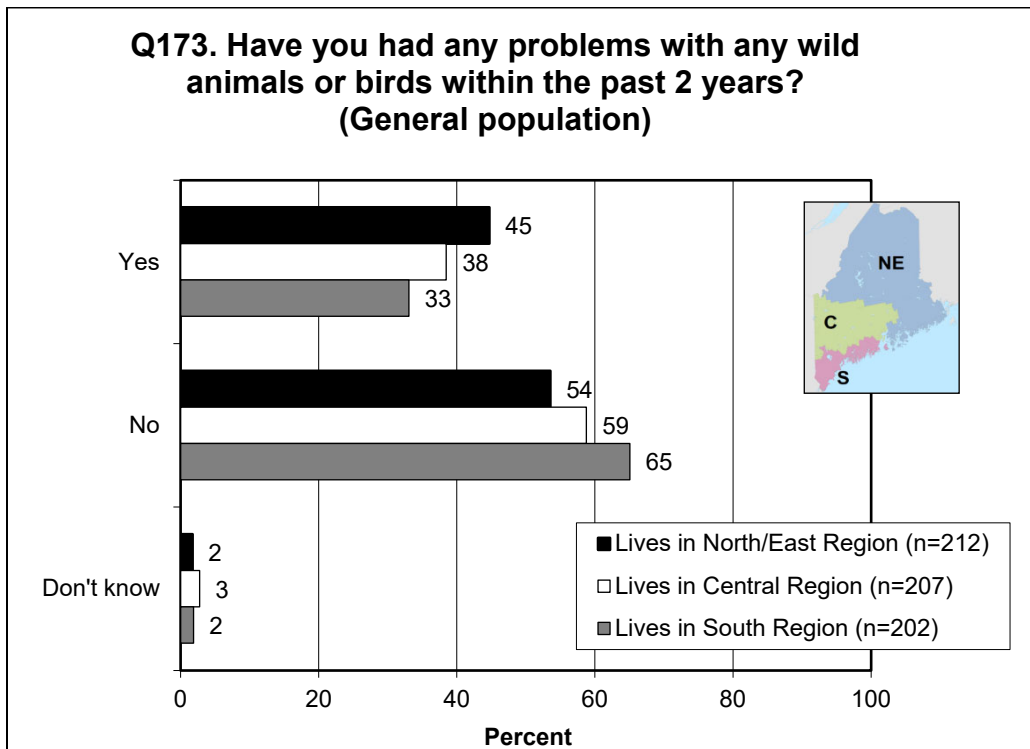


Figure 3.121. Problems With Wild Animals or Birds, by Region (General Population)

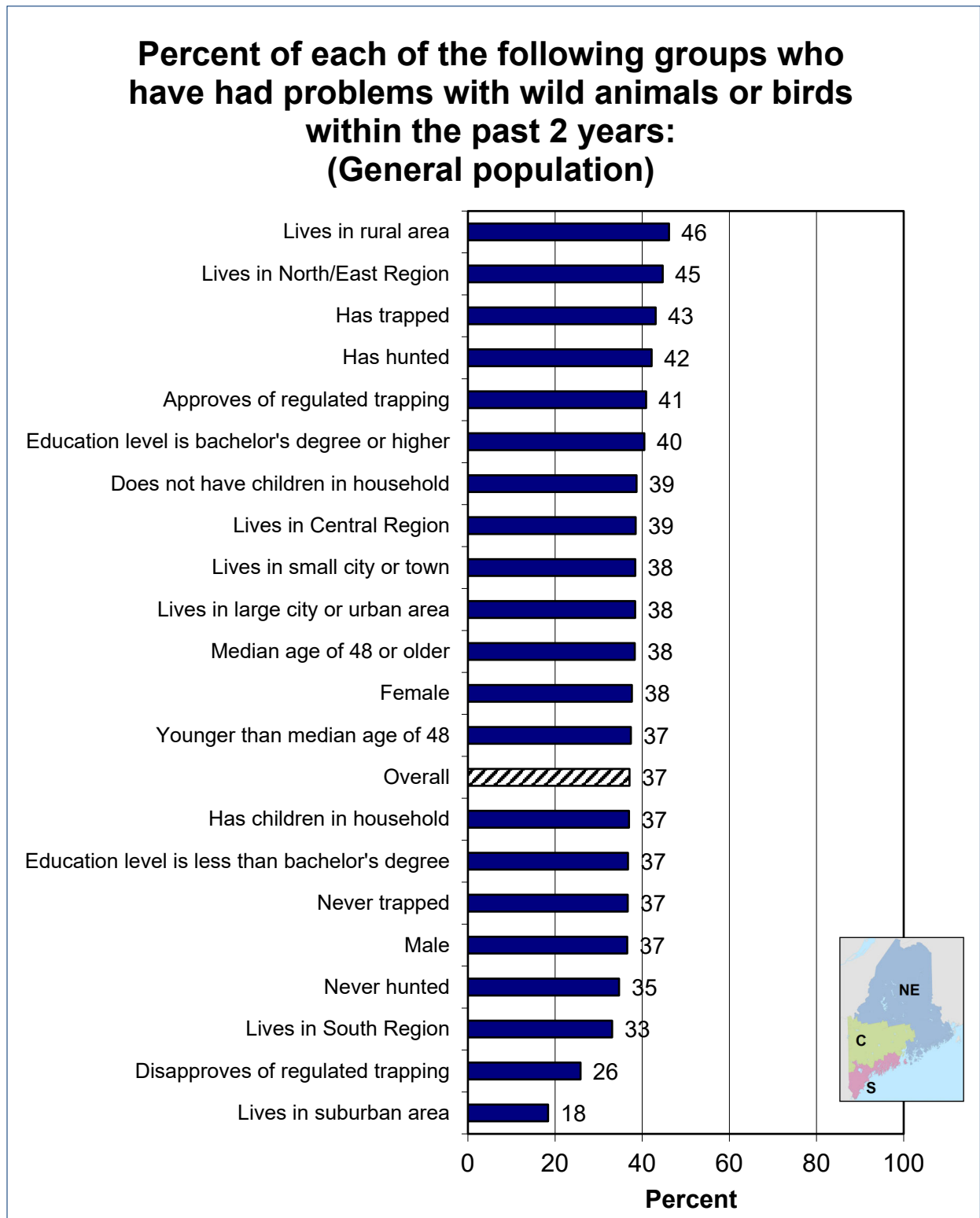


Figure 3.122. Characteristics of Those Who Had Problems With Wild Animals or Birds (General Population)

See pages 15 through 16 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

The most problematic animals are raccoons, deer, skunks, foxes, squirrels, coyotes, and bears (Figure 3.123).

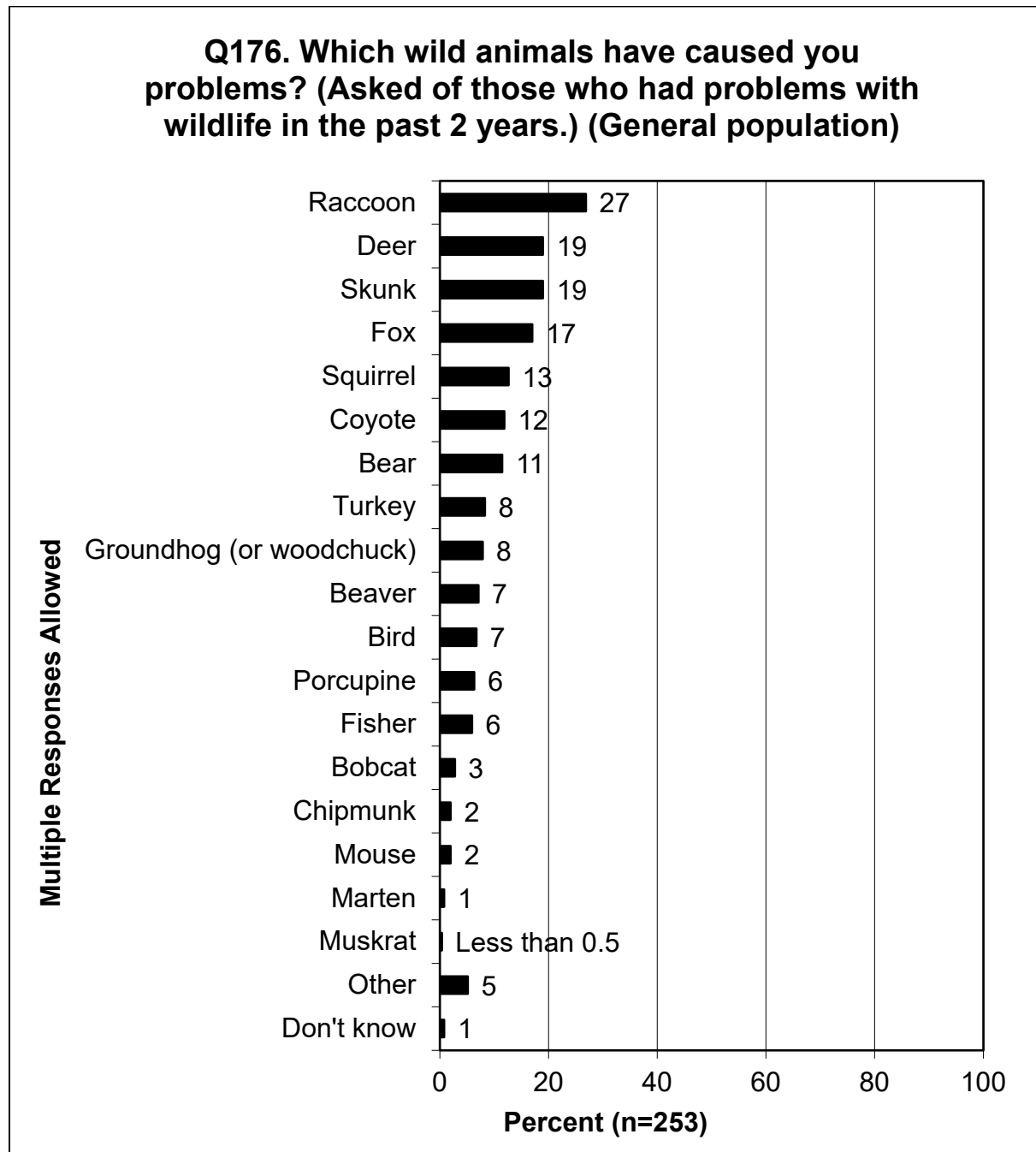


Figure 3.123. Types of Wild Animals or Birds That Caused Problems (General Population)

There are regional differences in the types of animals causing problems (Figures 3.124 and 3.125). In particular, the South Region has markedly fewer problems, compared to the other regions, with skunk, bear, and beaver. Because the list of animals is long, the results are shown on two graphs.

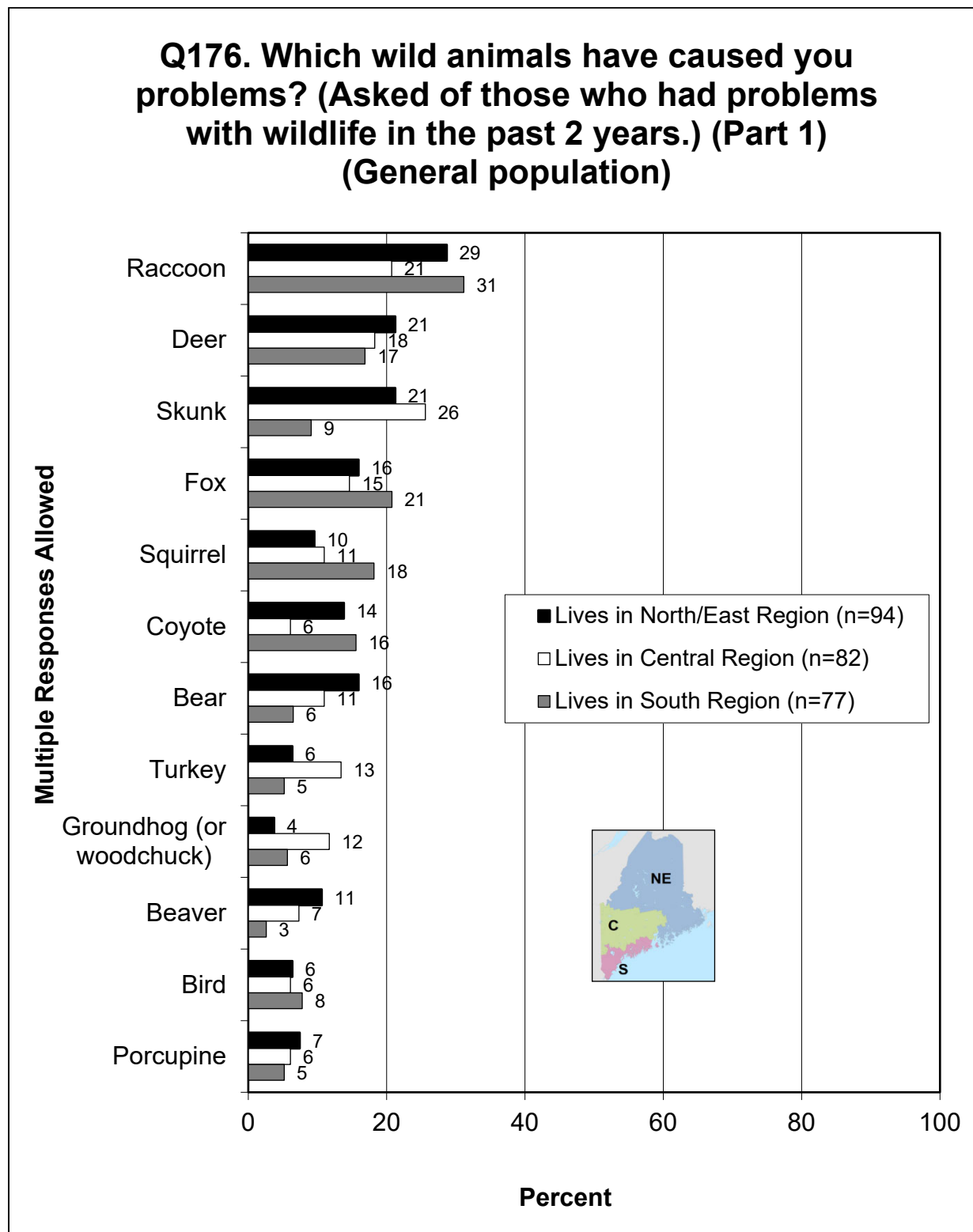


Figure 3.124. Types of Wild Animals or Birds That Caused Problems, by Region, Part 1 (General Population)

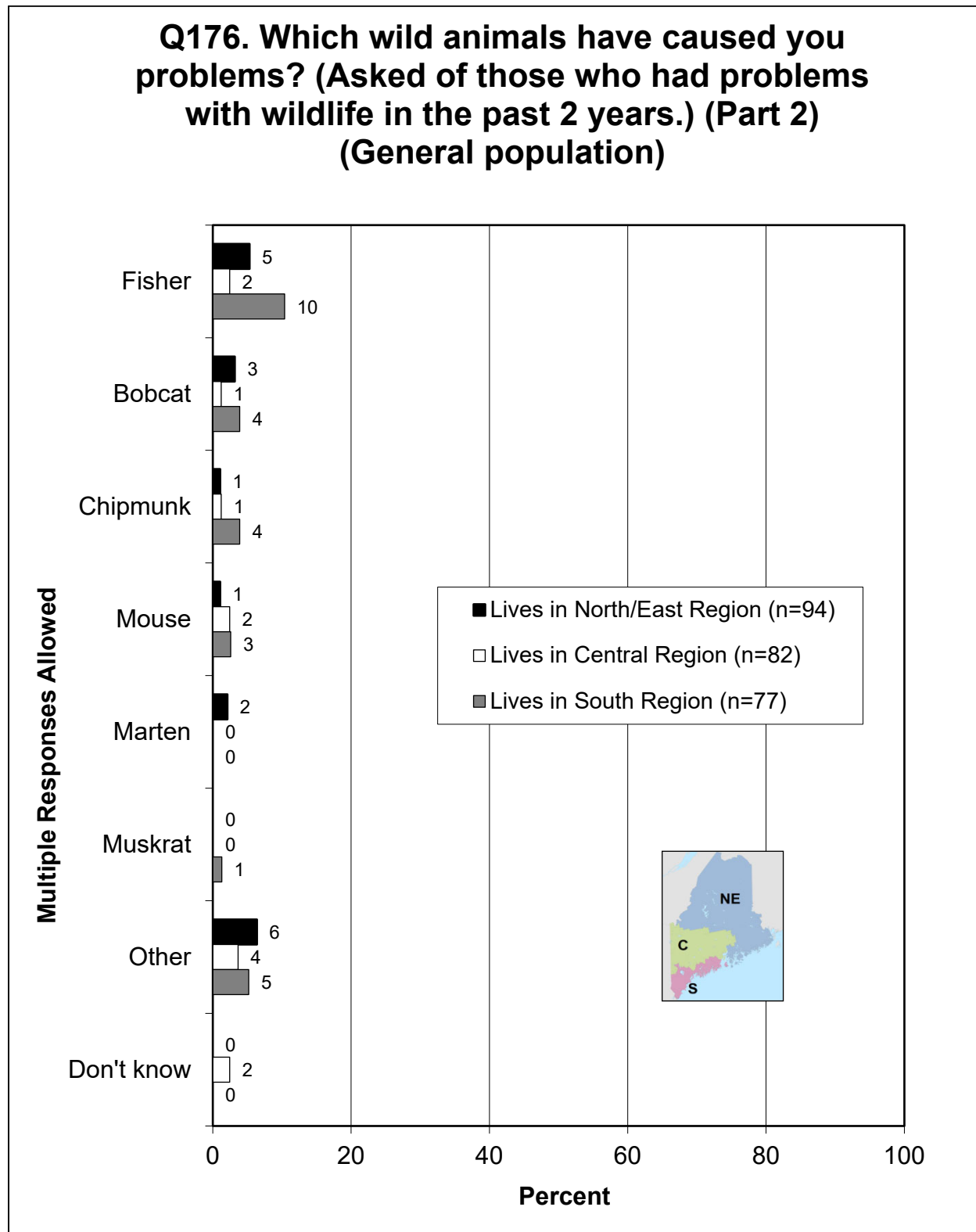


Figure 3.125. Types of Wild Animals or Birds That Caused Problems, by Region, Part 2 (General Population)

The most common problems are damage to crops and gardens (39% of those who had problems reported this), damage to human property (30%), getting into garbage (21%), threat to pets (18%), and threat to livestock (16%) (Figure 3.126). The graph shows the full list. Figure 3.127 shows the regional results; the regions are not markedly different from one another.

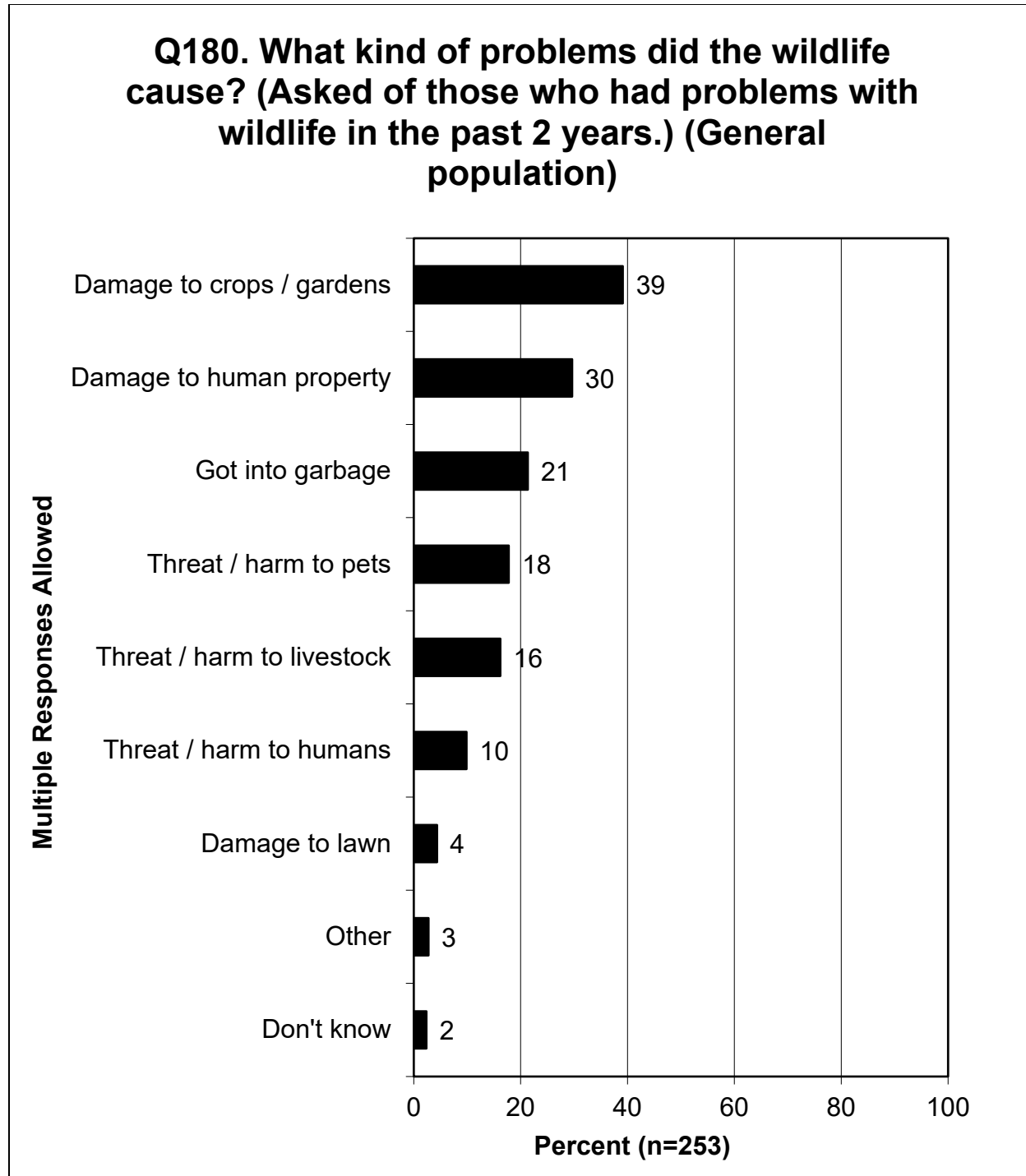


Figure 3.126. Types of Problems Caused by Wild Animals or Birds (General Population)

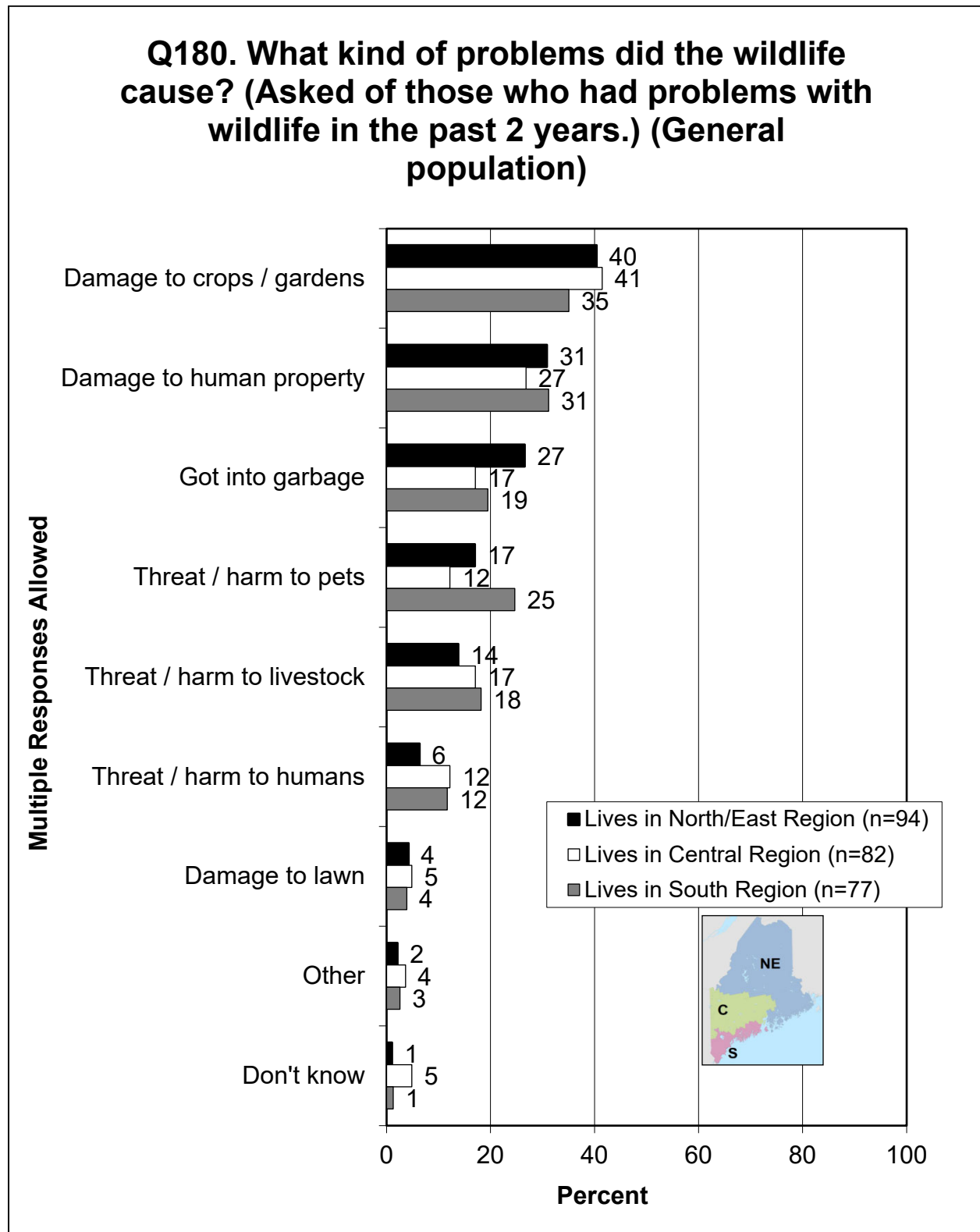


Figure 3.127. Types of Problems Caused by Wild Animals or Birds, by Region (General Population)

Using deterrents and killing the offending animal(s) are the most common ways that residents addressed the wildlife problems (among those who had problems) (Figure 3.128). Other common ways include putting up fencing, capturing and relocating the animal(s), and allowing trapping on the property. Figure 3.129 shows the regional results; North/East Region residents are the most likely to kill the offending animal(s).

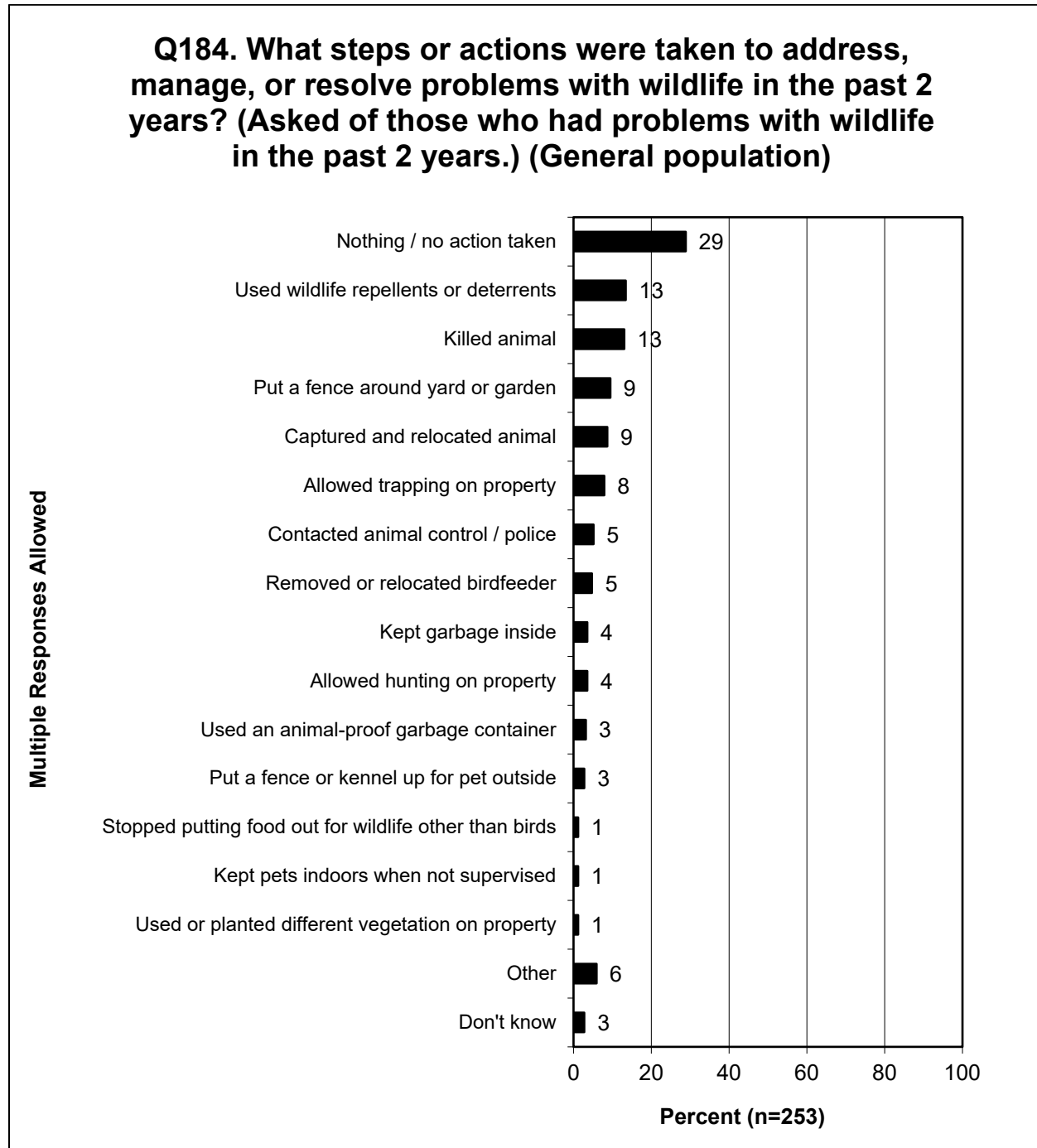


Figure 3.128. Actions Taken to Address Problems Caused by Wild Animals or Birds (General Population)

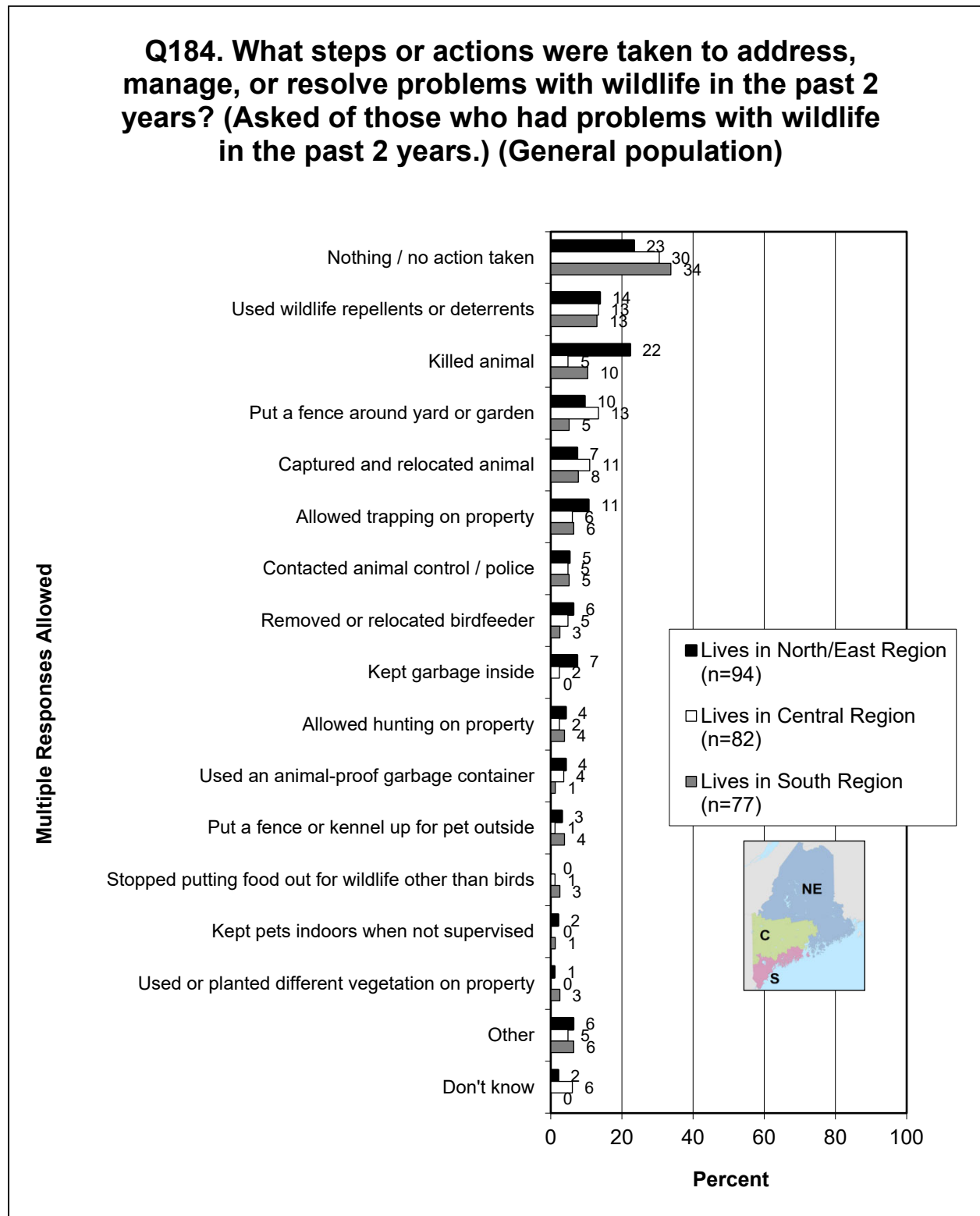


Figure 3.129. Actions Taken to Address Problems Caused by Wild Animals or Birds, by Region (General Population)

Only 6% of those who had problems hired a person or company to resolve the problems with wildlife (Figure 3.130). Residents of the North/East and Central Regions had the highest percentage who hired a person or company to resolve the problems (Figure 3.131).

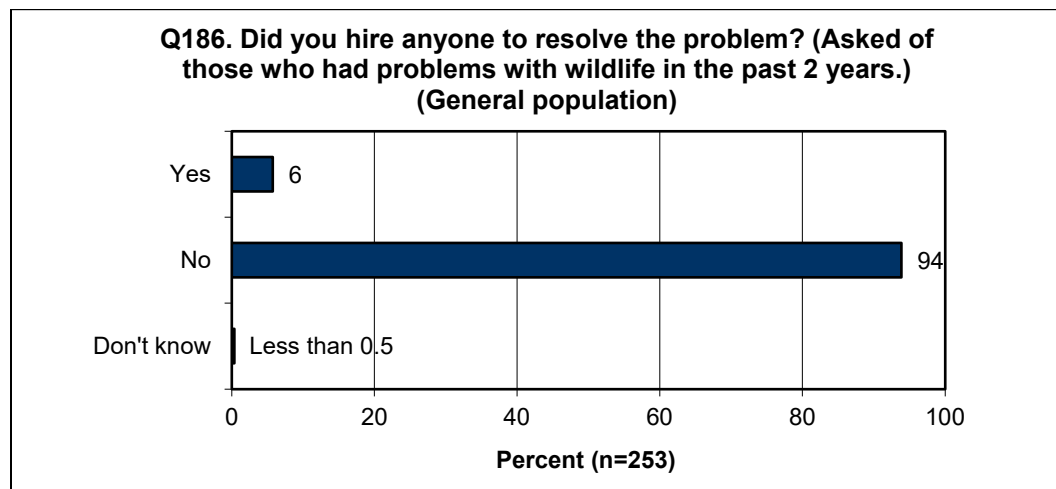


Figure 3.130. Hiring Anyone to Resolve Wildlife Problems (General Population)

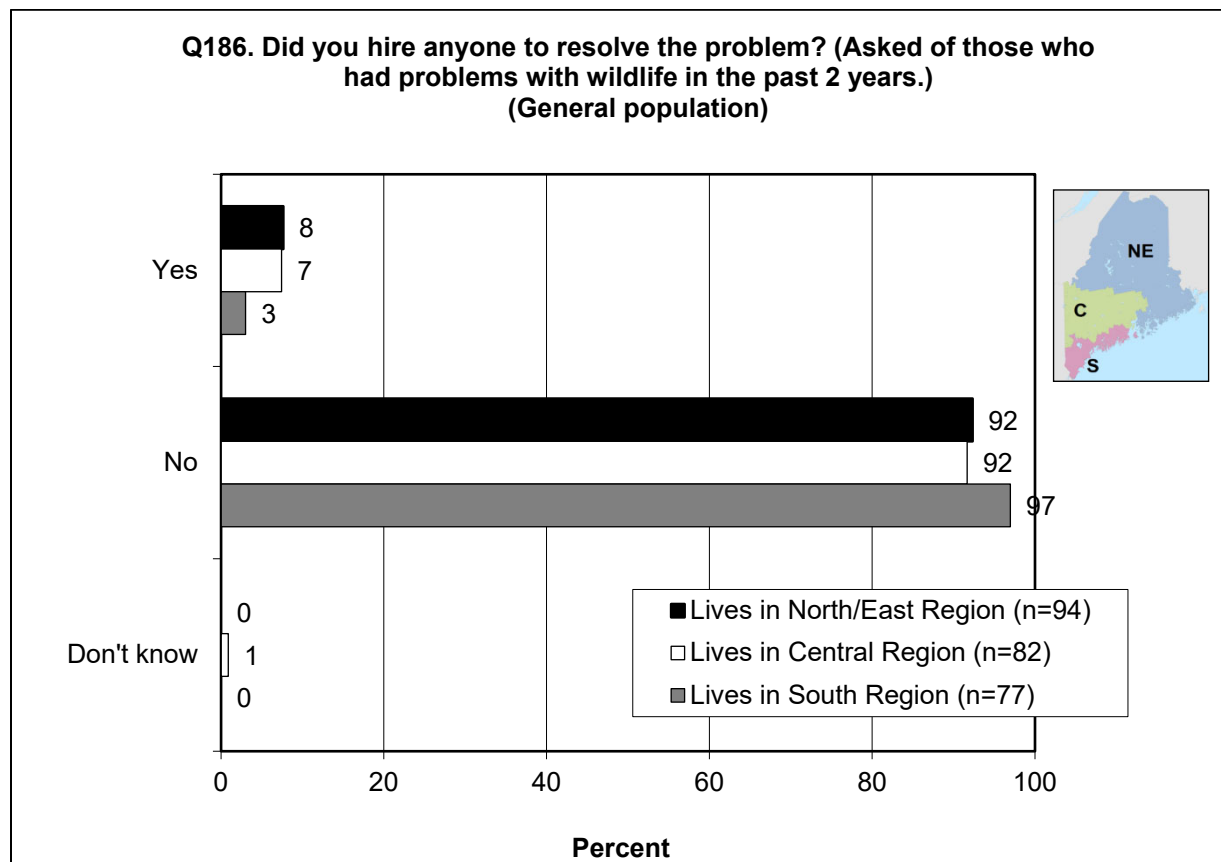


Figure 3.131. Hiring Anyone to Resolve Wildlife Problems, by Region (General Population)

Of those residents who had problems with wildlife and who hired help to address the problems, the majority (59% of these residents) were provided with information on non-lethal methods to resolve the problems (Figure 3.132). Note that, because the question was a skip-out asked only of those who had hired someone to help them, the question has a low sample size; the low sample size also precludes a regional graph being run.

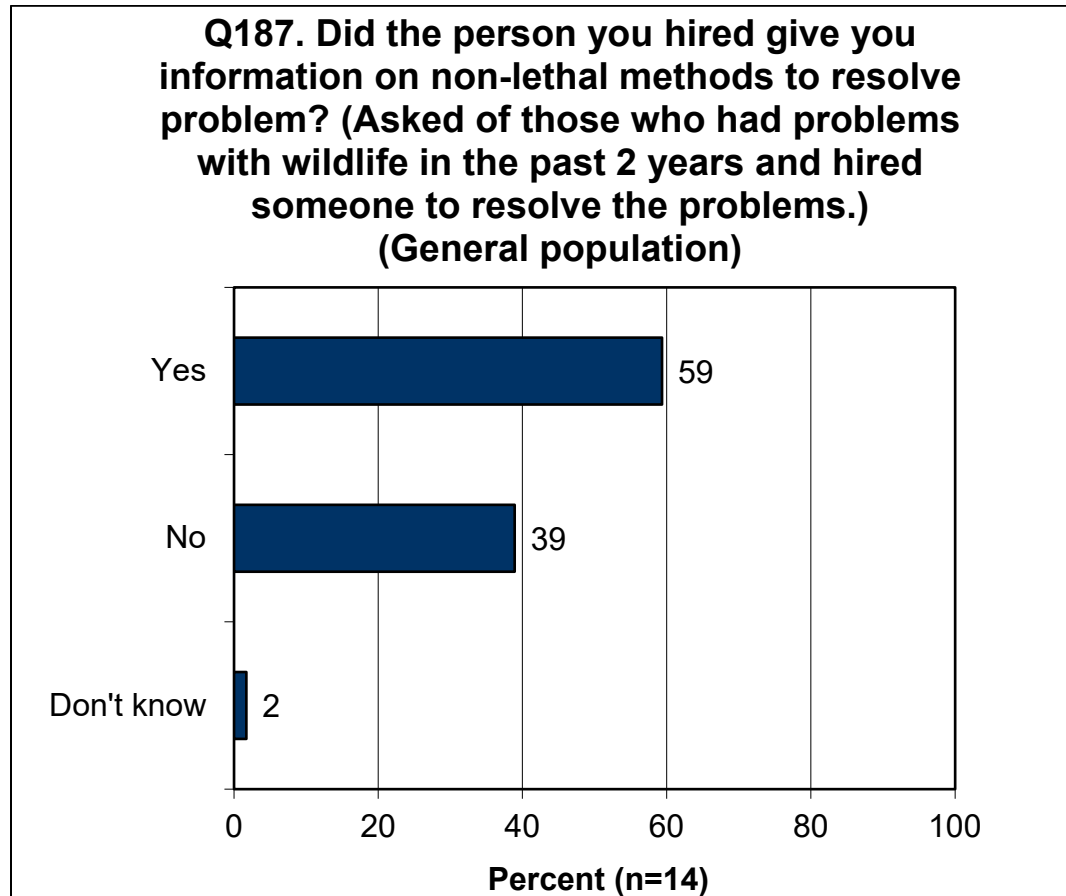


Figure 3.132. Information on Non-Lethal Methods (General Population)

All residents were asked about their support for or opposition to trapping as a way to resolve problems with wildlife in general, regardless of whether they had experienced any problems (i.e., the question was asked of all respondents). The large majority of residents (72%) support trapping as a way to resolve problems, while a not insubstantial percentage (19%) oppose (Figure 3.133). Residents of the South Region have the least support and the most opposition, as shown in Figure 3.134.

Demographic analyses show the characteristics associated with supporting trapping as a way to resolve problems with wildlife (Figure 3.135). These include being young, having participated in trapping and/or hunting, being male, having children in the household, living in a large city or urban area, having an education level of less than a bachelor’s degree, and living in the Central Region. Figure 3.136 shows the characteristics associated with opposing.

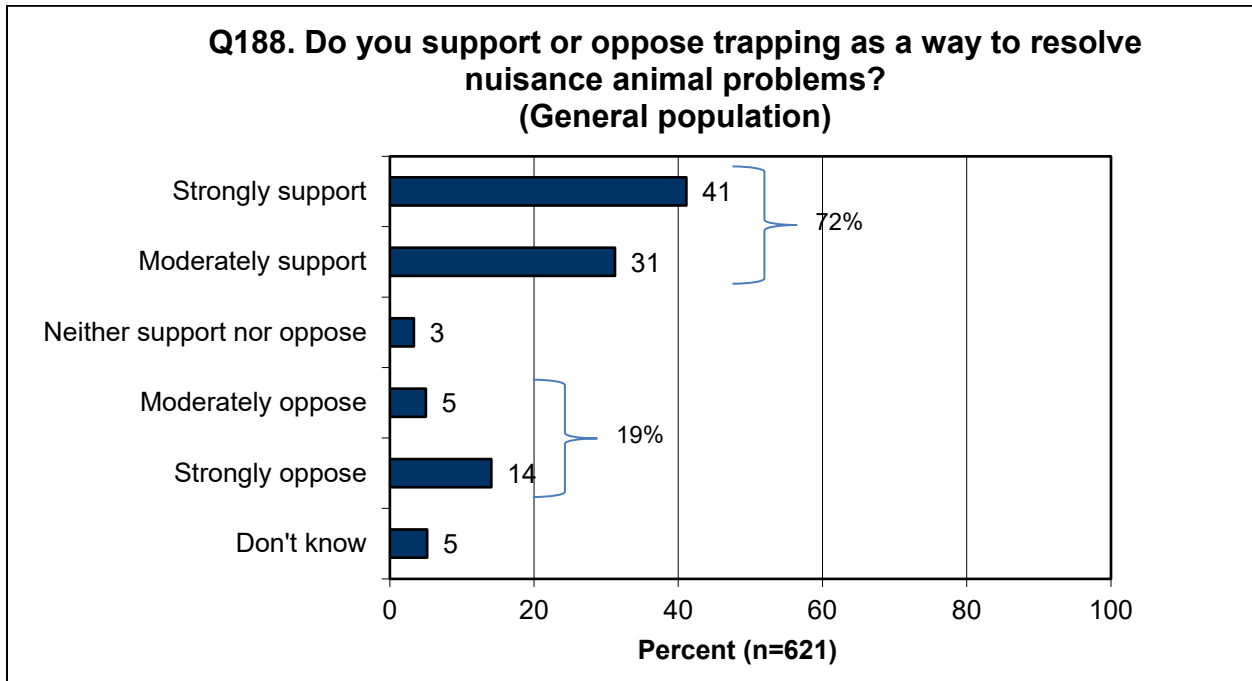


Figure 3.133. Support for or Opposition to Trapping as a Way to Resolve Wildlife Problems (General Population)

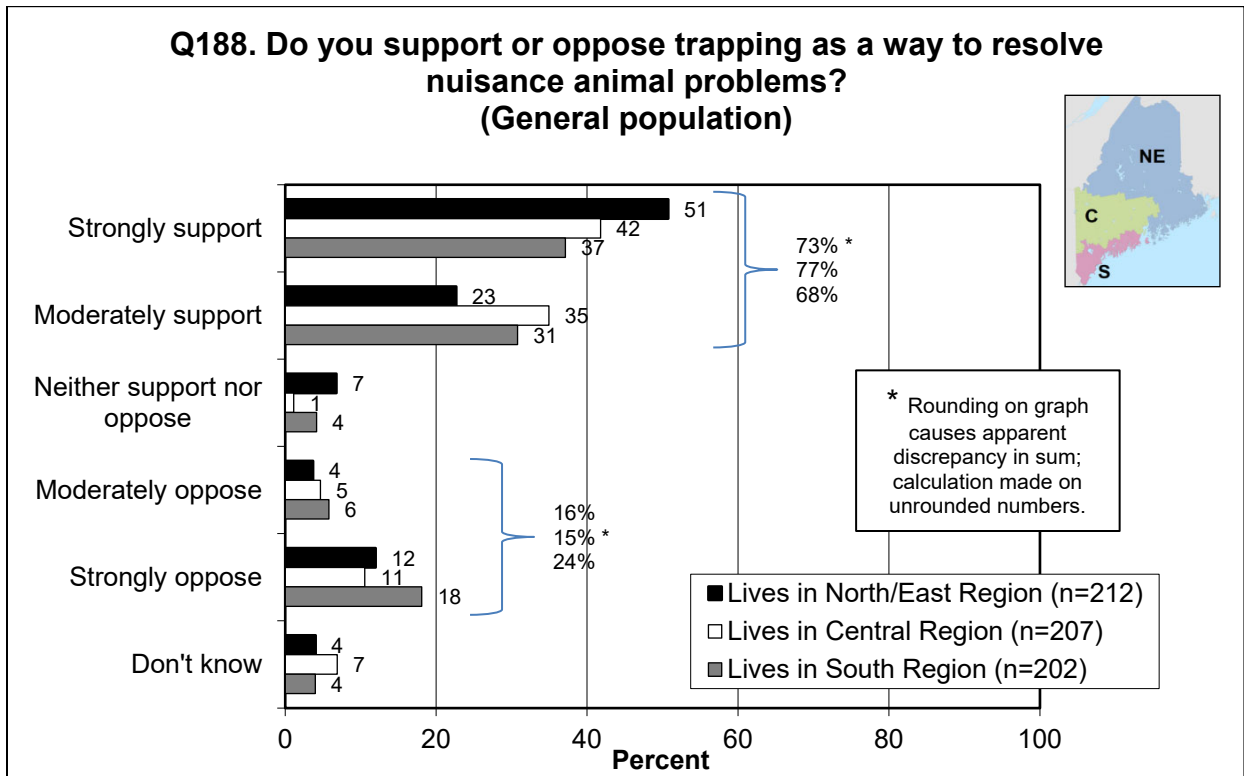


Figure 3.134. Support for or Opposition to Trapping as a Way to Resolve Wildlife Problems, by Region (General Population)

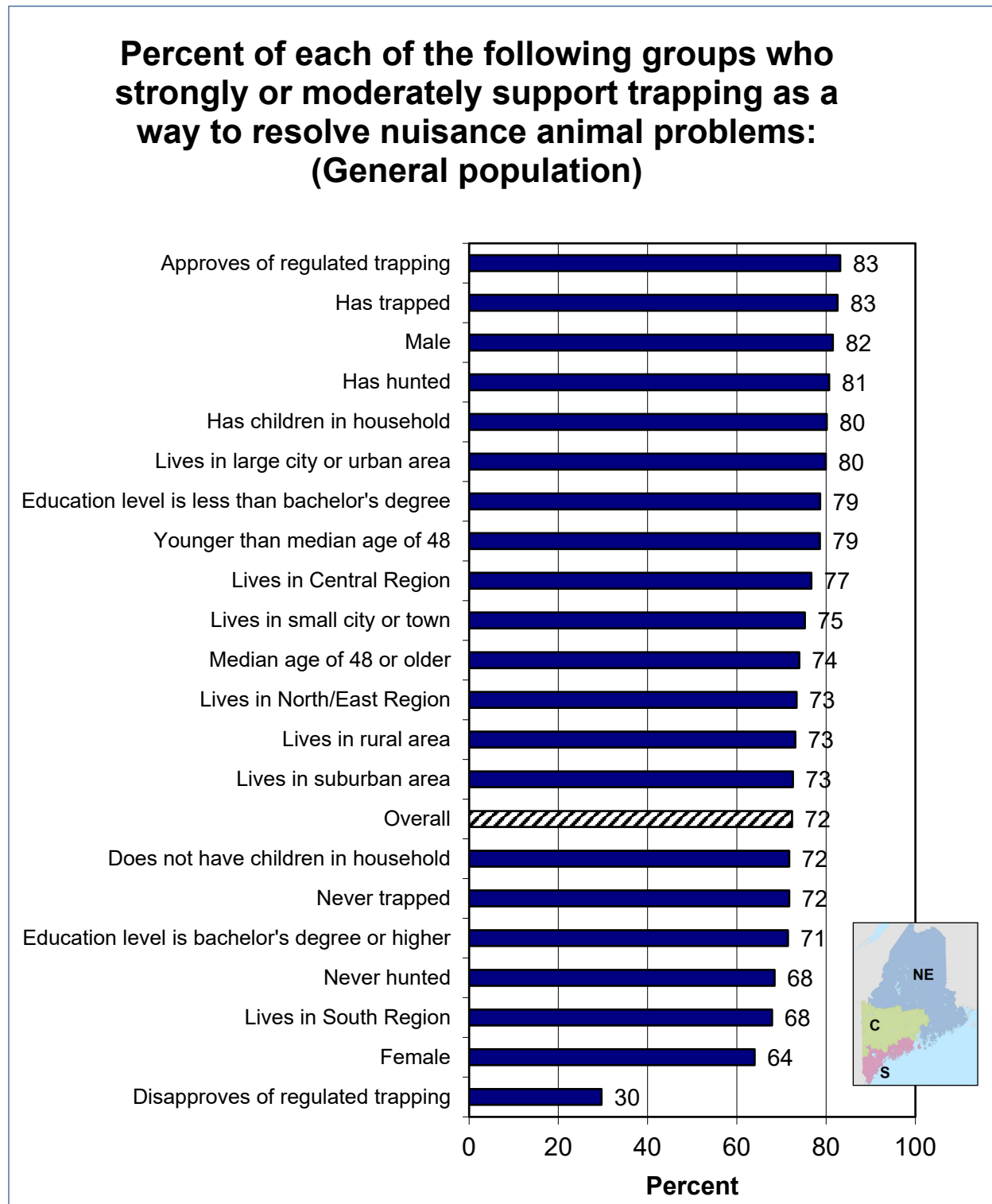


Figure 3.135. Characteristics of Those Who Support Trapping as a Way to Resolve Wildlife Problems (General Population)

See pages 15 through 16 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

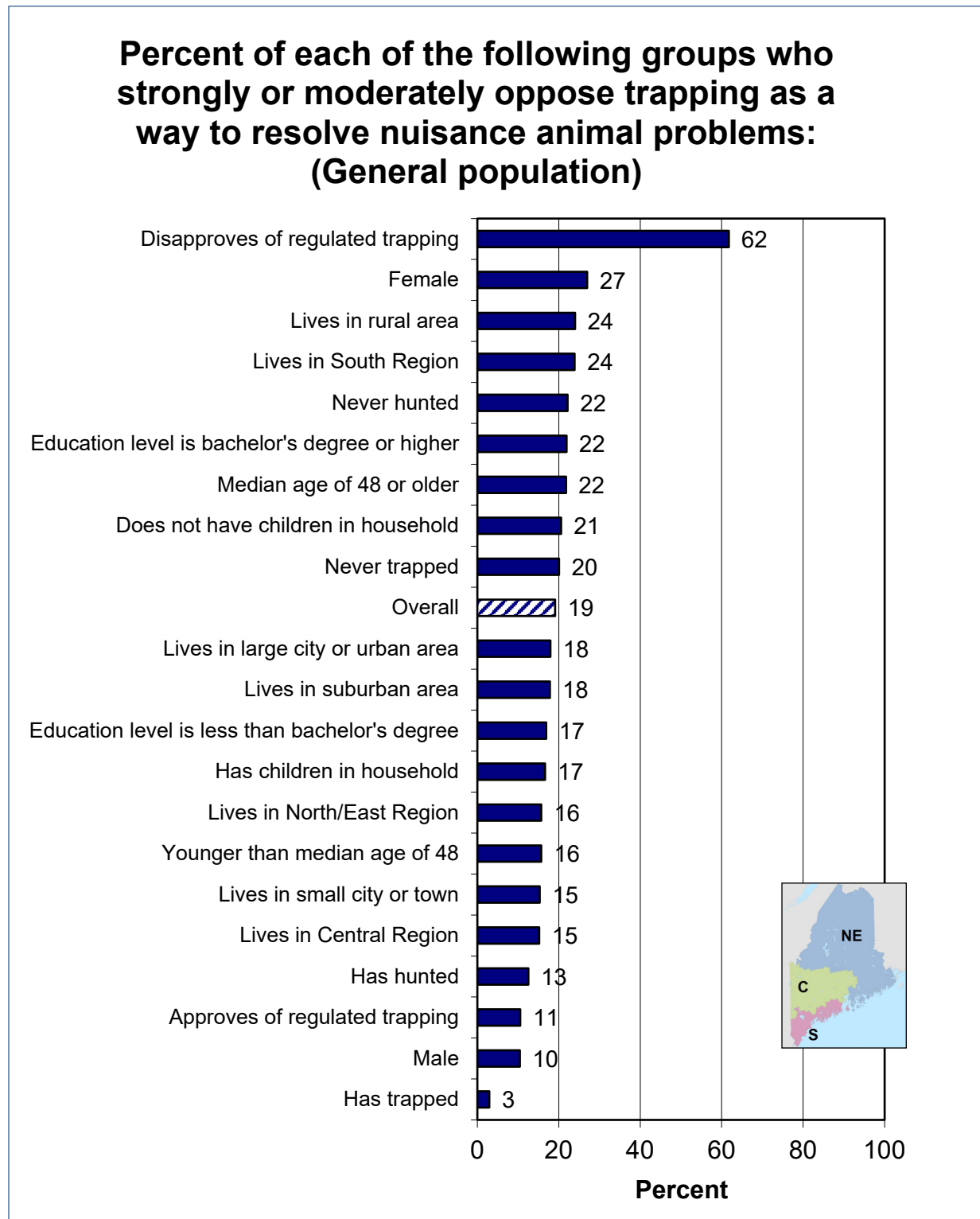


Figure 3.136. Characteristics of Those Who Support Trapping as a Way to Resolve Wildlife Problems (General Population)

See pages 15 through 16 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

PERCEPTIONS AND RATINGS OF THE MAINE DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

Most commonly, residents do not know what rating to give the Department at regulating and managing trapping in Maine: 38% did not know (Figure 3.137). Otherwise, *excellent* and *good* ratings (56% combined) far exceed *fair* and *poor* ratings (6% combined). Residents of the North/East Region give the best ratings (63% in the *excellent* or *good* ratings, compared to 55% among residents of the other two regions) (Figure 3.138).

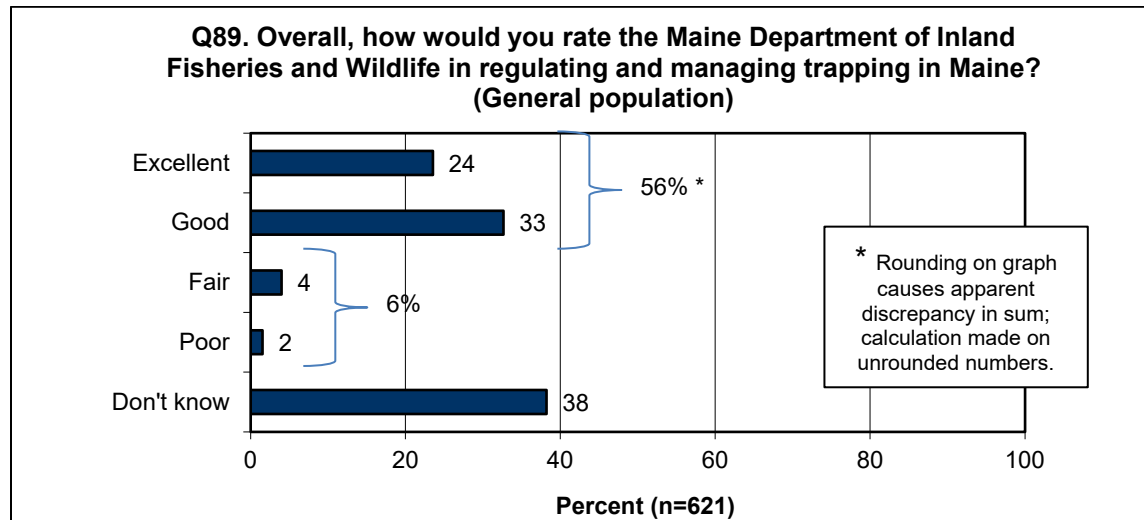


Figure 3.137. Ratings of the Department at Regulating and Managing Trapping (General Population)

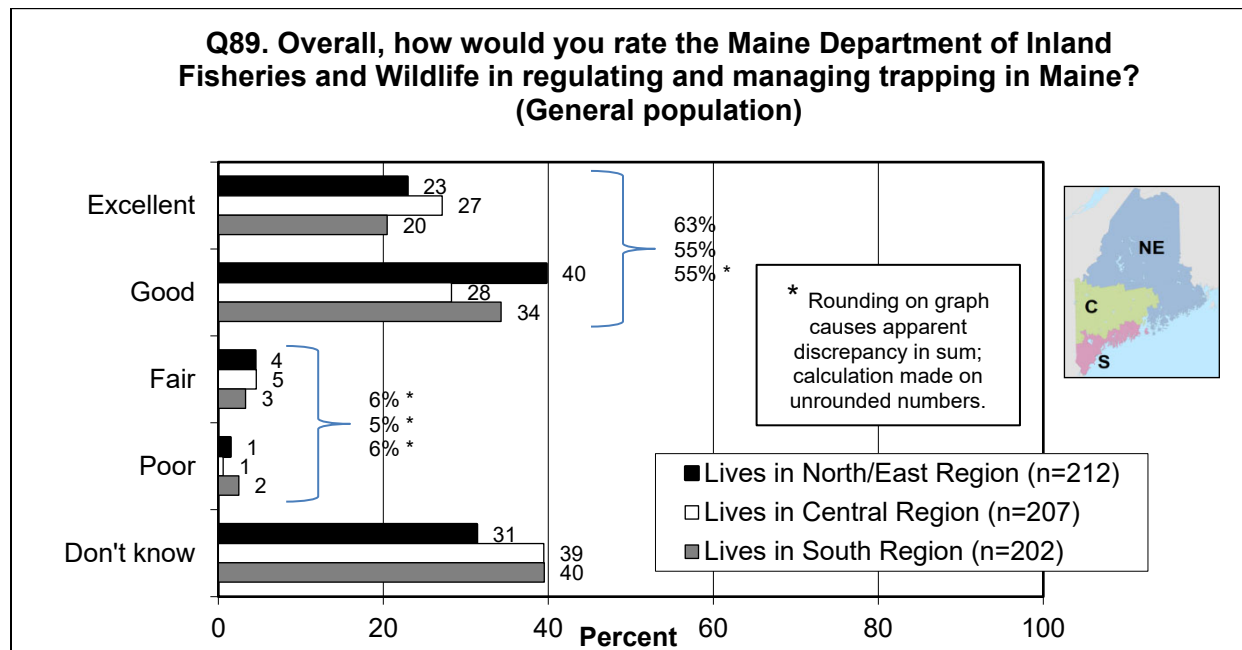


Figure 3.138. Ratings of the Department at Regulating and Managing Trapping, by Region (General Population)

Demographic analyses show that the characteristics associated with giving a rating of *excellent* or *good* include living in a large city or urban area, being in the lower educational bracket, having children in the household, and living in the North/East Region (Figure 3.139). On the other hand, Figure 3.140 shows the characteristics of those giving a *fair* or *poor* rating. The reason that “has trapped” is at the top of both graphs is that they have definite opinions on the question; therefore, they have low rates giving responses of “don’t know” to the question.

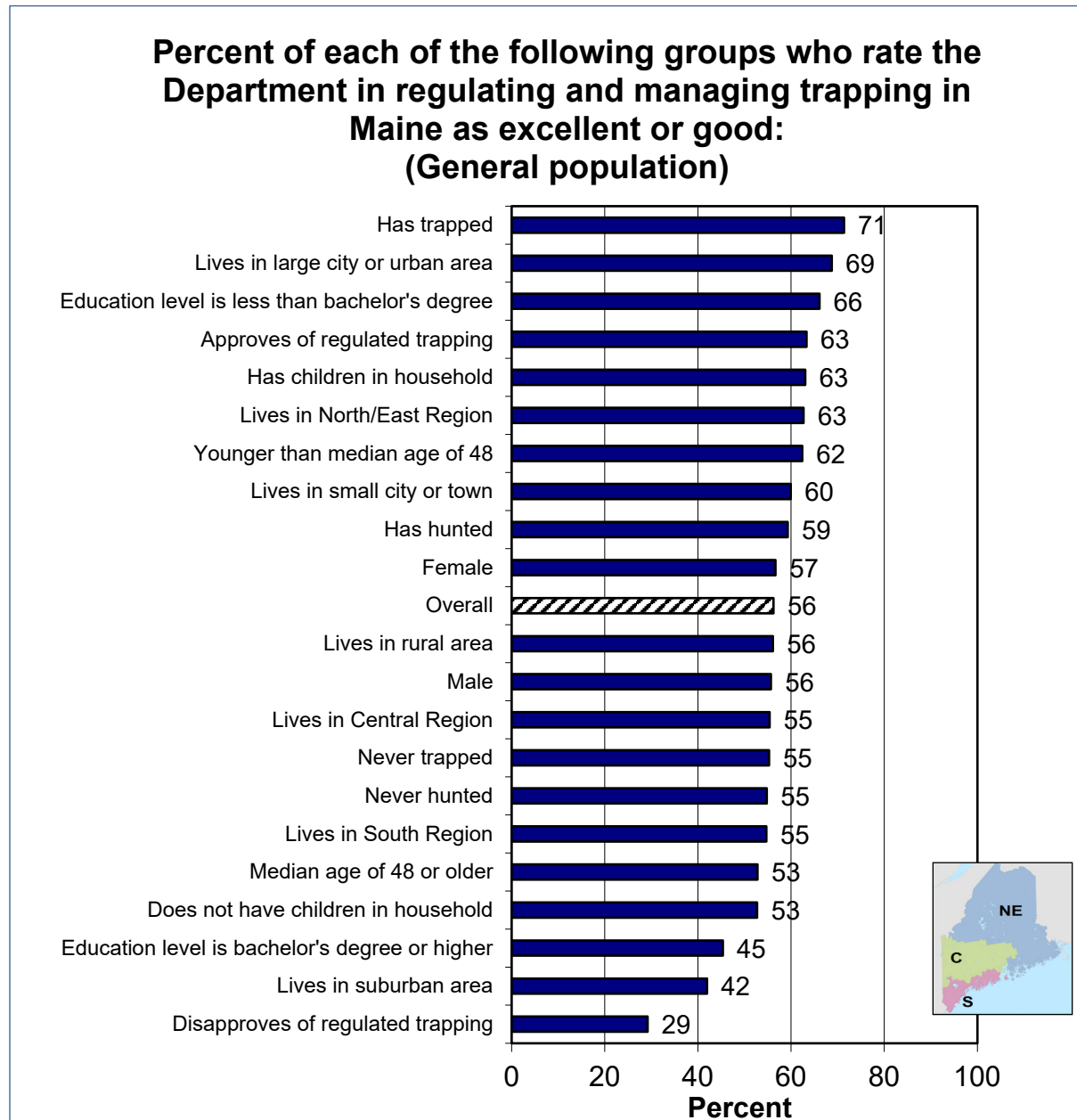


Figure 3.139. Characteristics of Those Who Rate the Department Excellent or Good at Regulating and Managing Trapping (General Population)

See pages 15 through 16 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

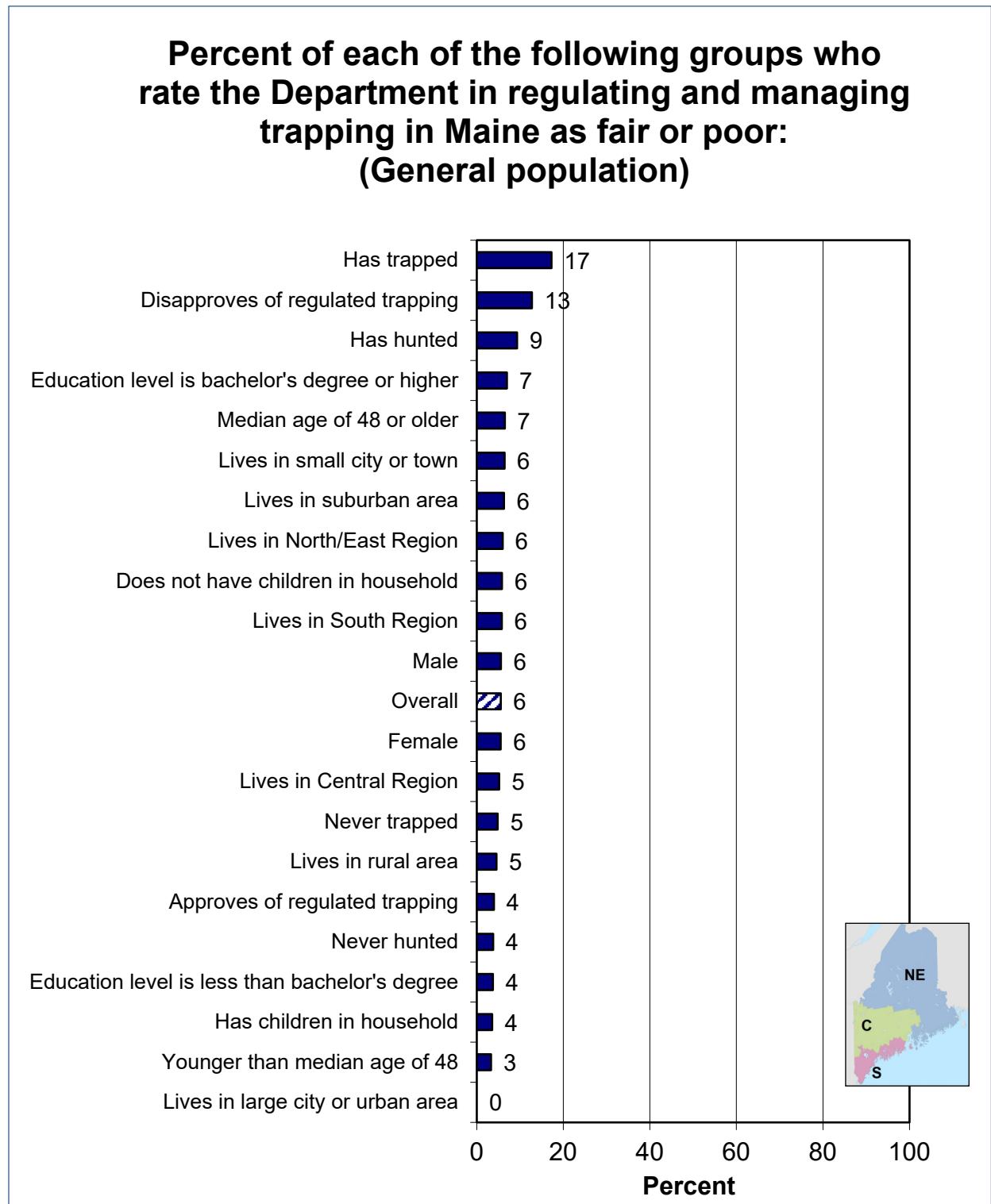


Figure 3.140. Characteristics of Those Who Rate the Department Fair or Poor at Regulating and Managing Trapping (General Population)

See pages 15 through 16 for an explanation of how to interpret these demographic analyses graphs.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

The following demographic data were gathered in the survey primarily for crosstabulations and demographic analyses:

- Gender (Figures 3.141 and 3.142).
- Age (Figures 3.143 and 3.144).
- Ethnic background (Figures 3.145 and 3.146).
- Education level (Figures 3.147 and 3.148).
- Children in the household (Figures 3.149 and 3.150).
- Residential area (i.e., urban-rural continuum) (Figures 3.151 and 3.152).

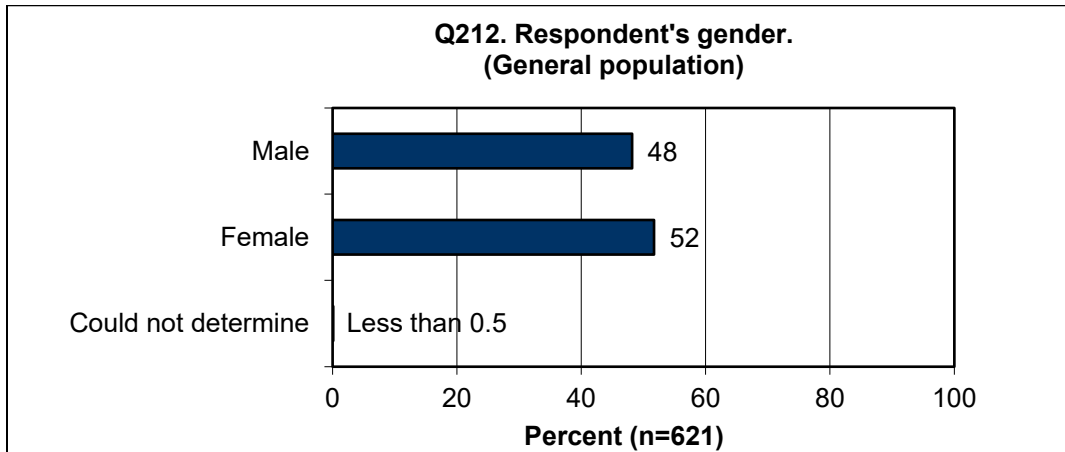


Figure 3.141. Gender of Respondents (General Population)

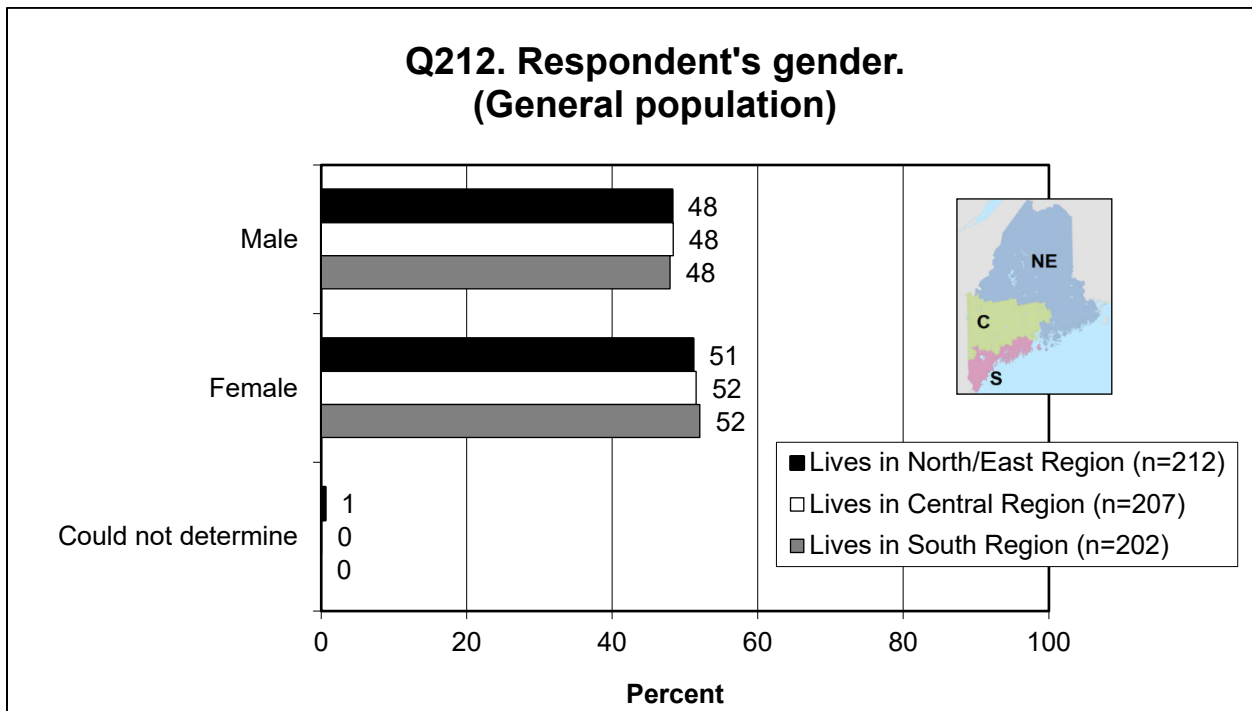


Figure 3.142. Gender of Respondents, by Region (General Population)

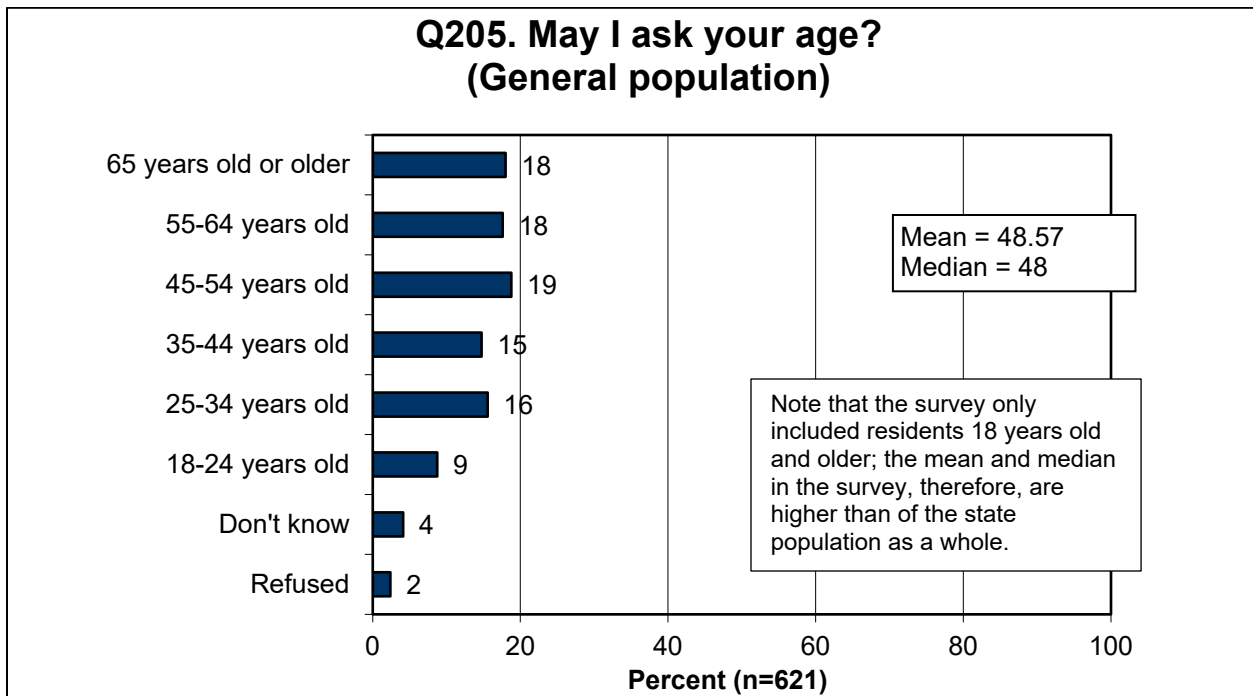


Figure 3.143. Age of Respondents (General Population)

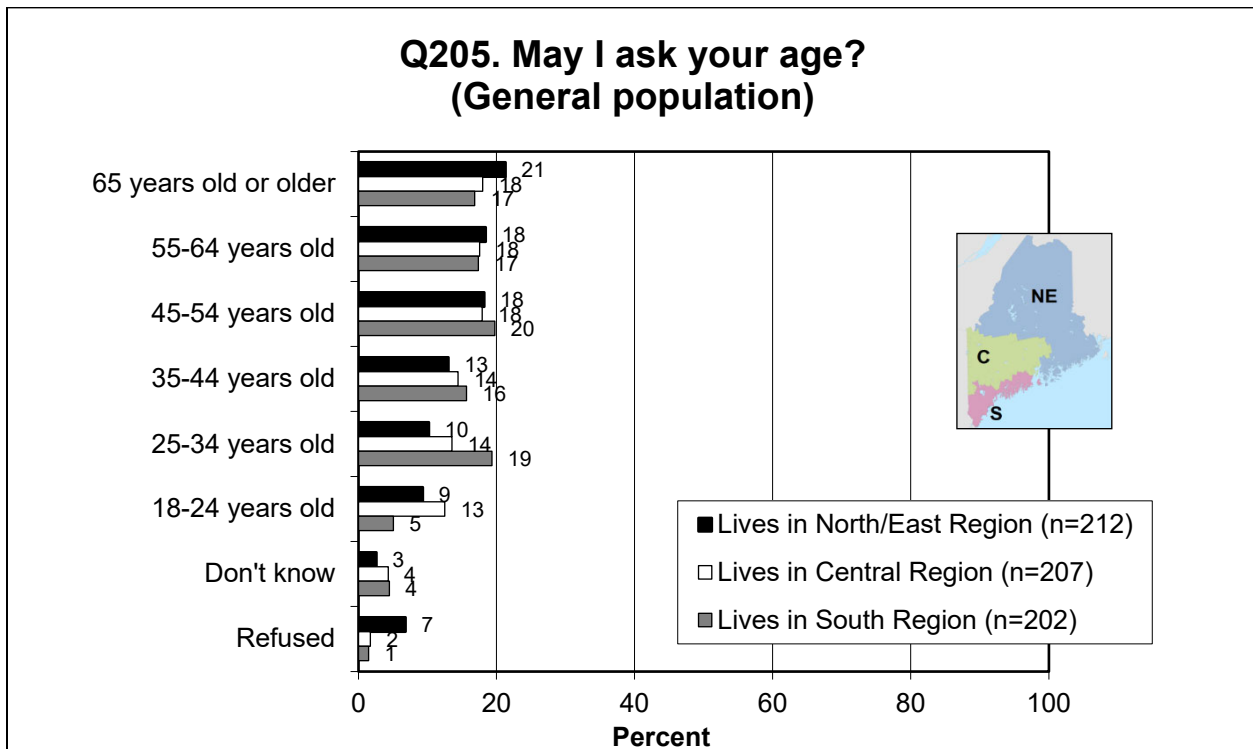


Figure 3.144. Age of Respondents, by Region (General Population)

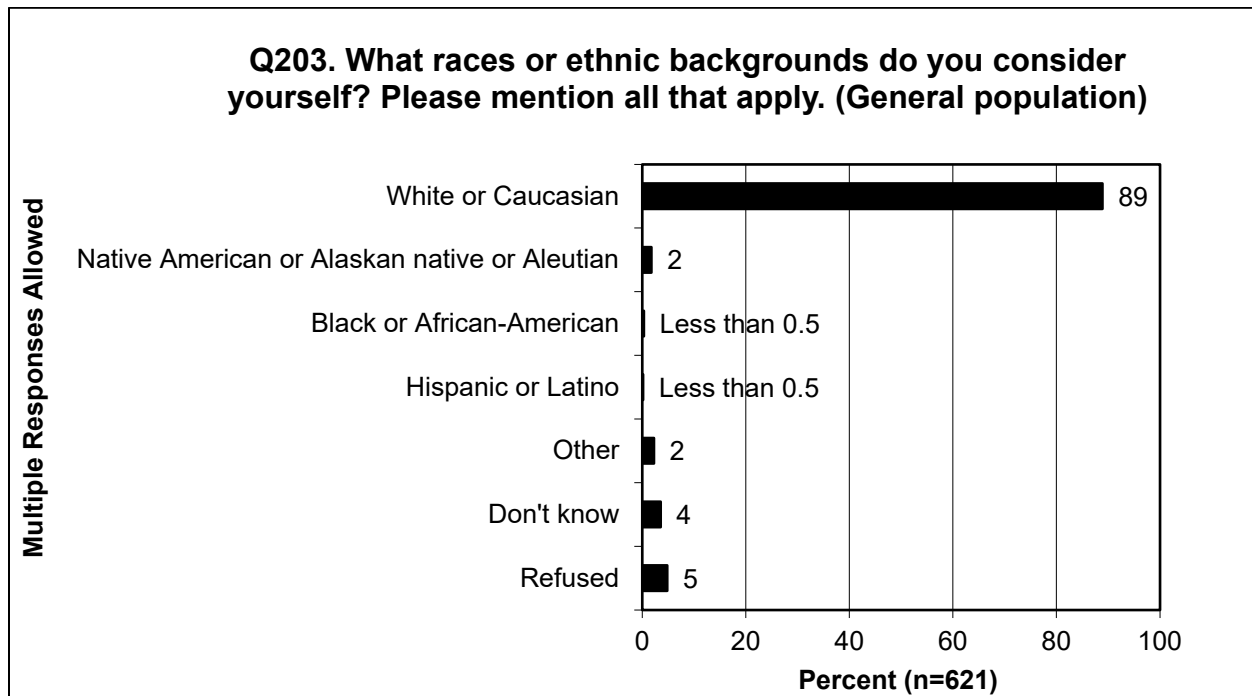


Figure 3.145. Ethnic Background of Respondents (General Population)

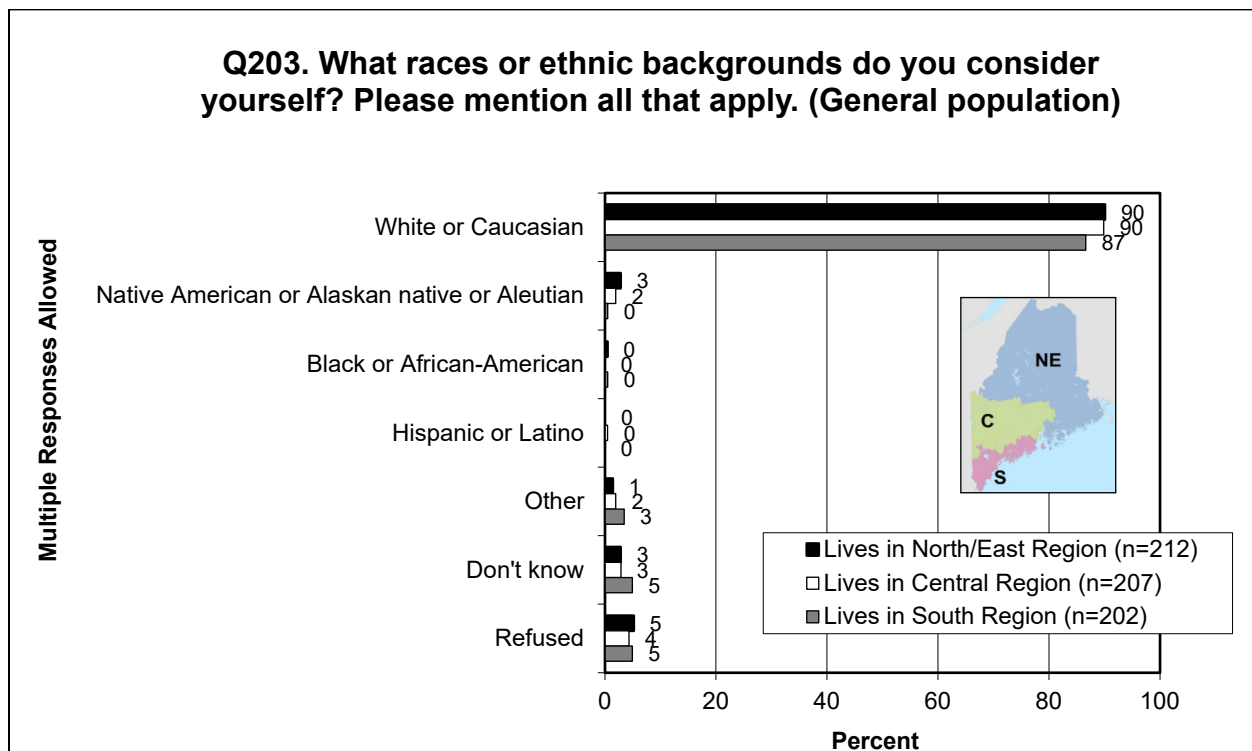


Figure 3.146. Ethnic Background of Respondents, by Region (General Population)

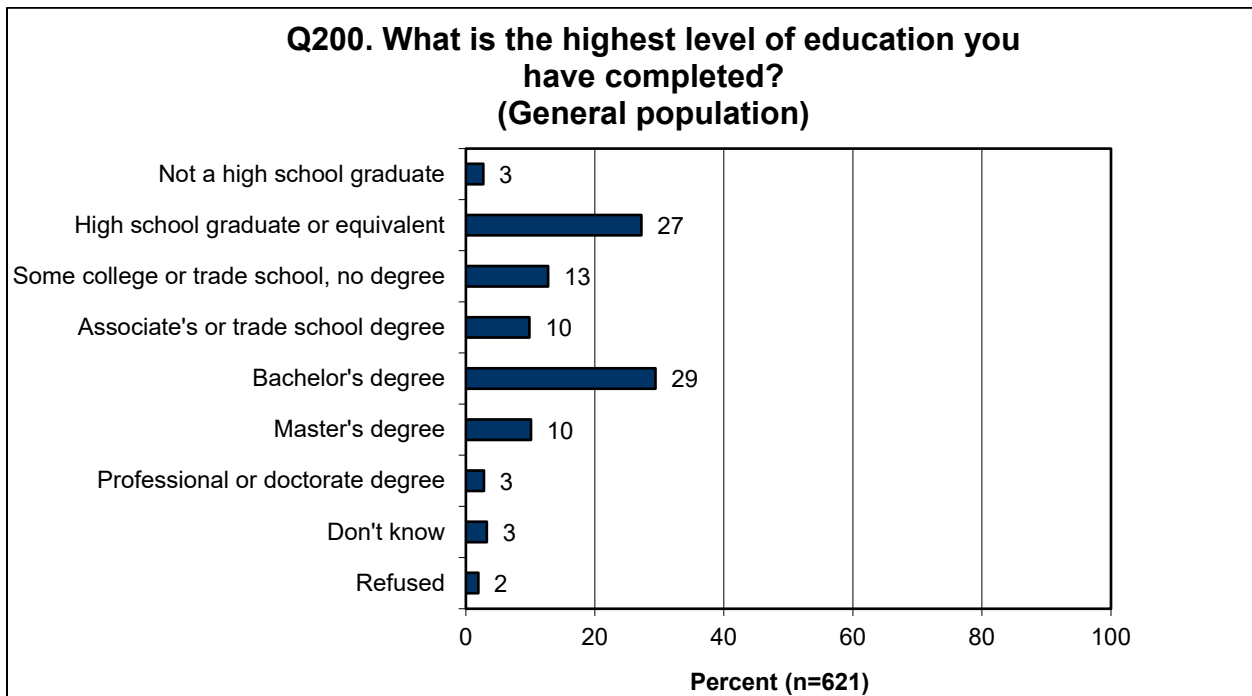


Figure 3.147. Education Level of Respondents (General Population)

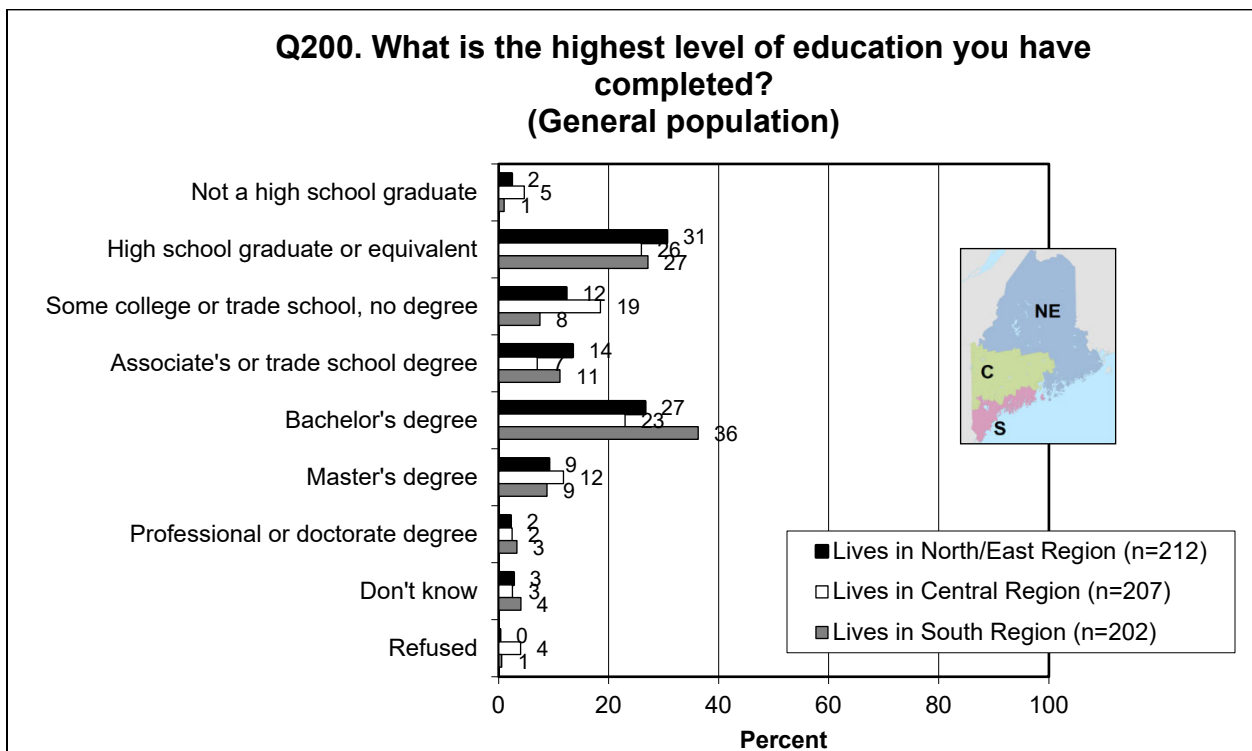


Figure 3.148. Education Level of Respondents, by Region (General Population)

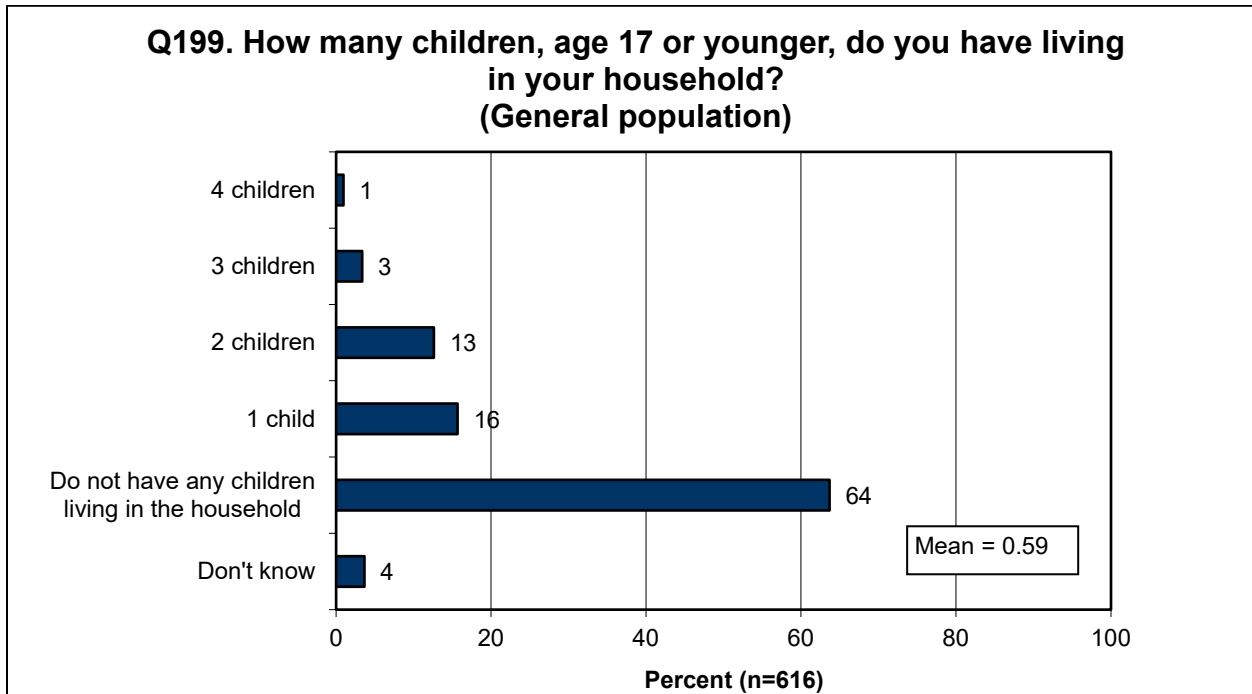


Figure 3.149. Number of Children in the Household (General Population)

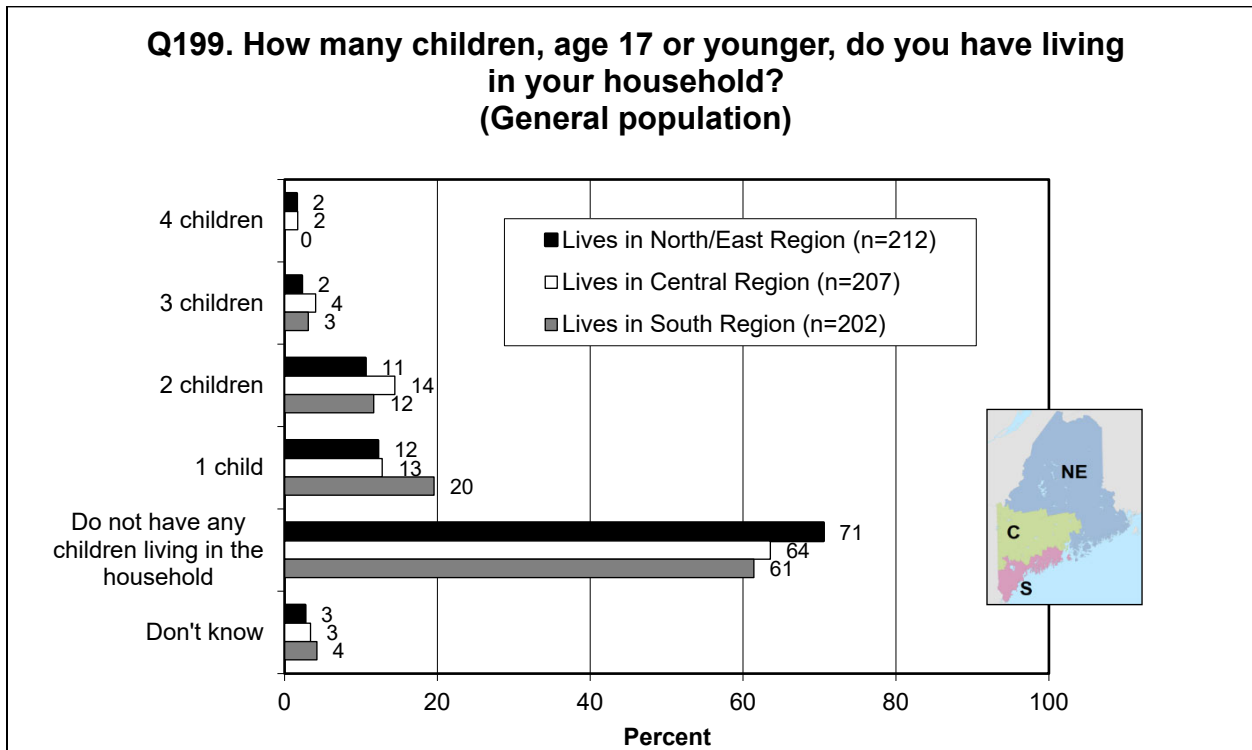


Figure 3.150. Number of Children in the Household, by Region (General Population)

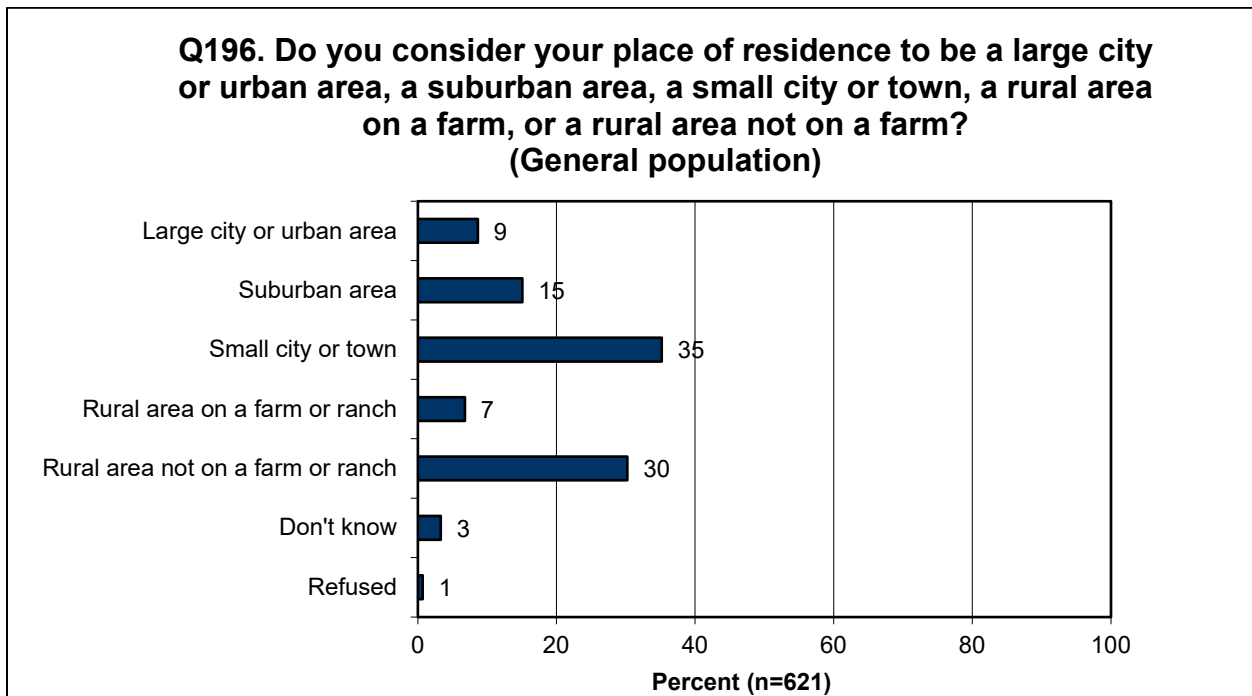


Figure 3.151. Place of Residence (General Population)

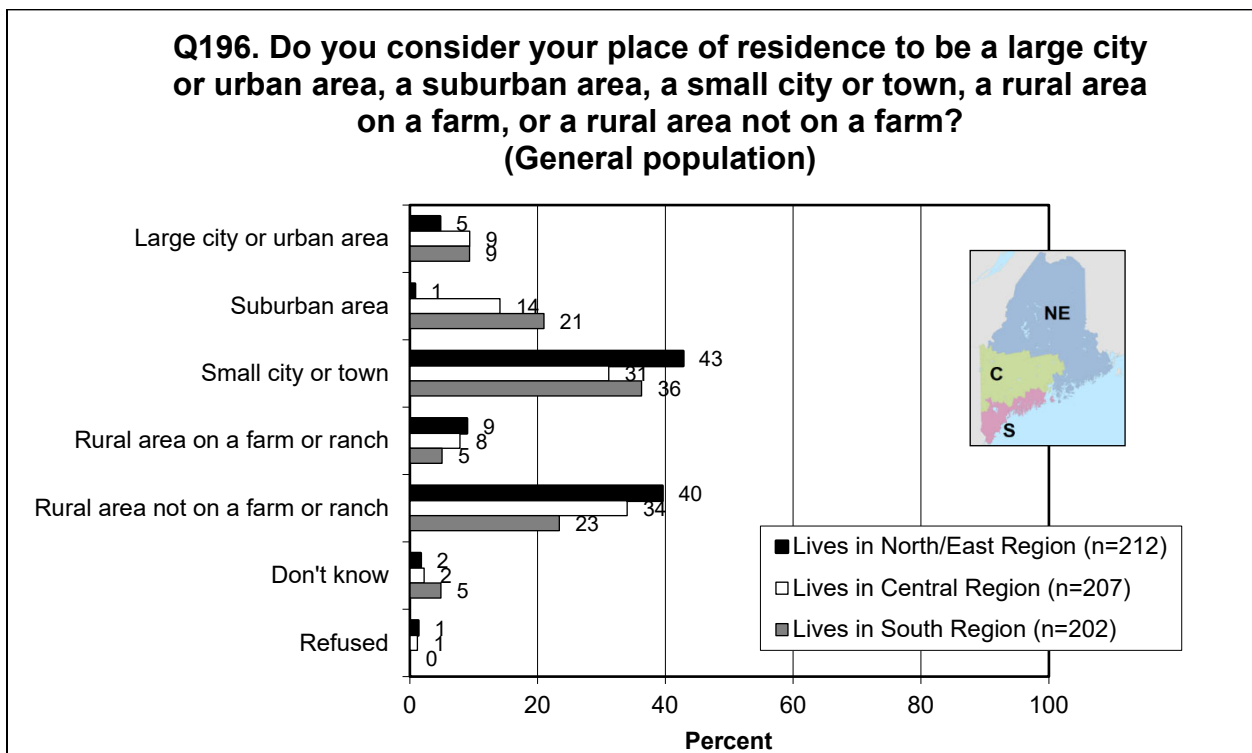


Figure 3.152. Place of Residence, by Region (General Population)

4. HUNTERS AND TRAPPERS SURVEY RESULTS

This chapter presents the results among holders of hunting or trapping licenses valid for 2018 or 2019 who are 16 years old or older (hereinafter referred to simply as “hunters” or “trappers”). The survey was conducted by telephone and online. The results are reported based on themes rather than in the exact order of the survey. The full methodology is detailed in the first chapter of this report.

PARTICIPATION IN HUNTING, TRAPPING, AND OTHER OUTDOOR RECREATION

Hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing are the top activities for hunters and trappers (Figure 4.1). Note that the survey screener only required that the respondent have a valid hunting or trapping license; they need not have participated in hunting or trapping in the past 12 months. Some respondents had both types of licenses.

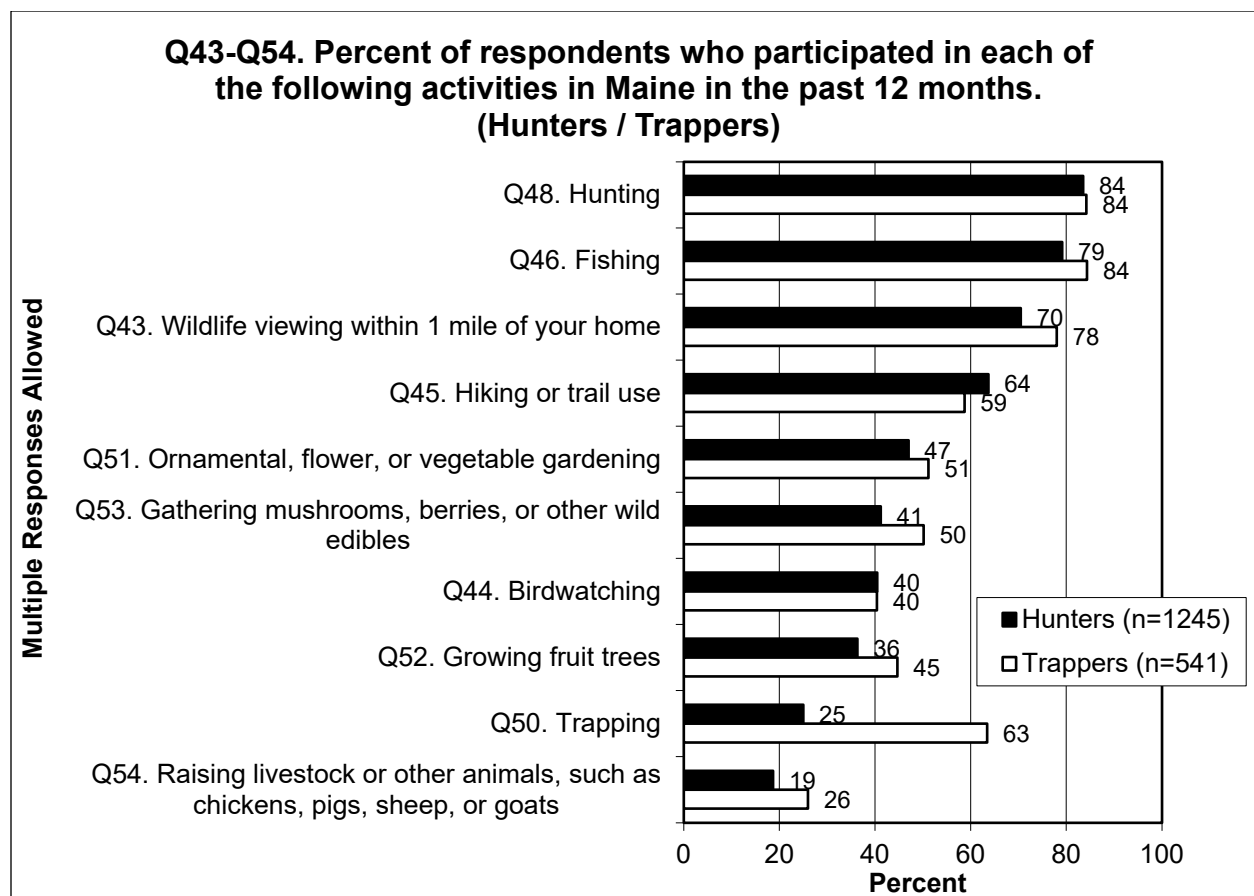


Figure 4.1. Participation in Outdoor Recreation in the Past 12 Months (Hunters / Trappers)

Figure 4.2 shows the regional breakdown of the hunting license holder sample, and Figure 4.3 shows the breakdown of the trapping license holder sample. In each of the samples, one “region” consists of out-of-state license holders. Note that the results in Figure 4.1 were weighted so that the regions were in their proper proportions; as Figures 4.2 and 4.3 show, the samples were stratified to get a certain amount in each region and were not sampled proportionally to their actual population of hunters and trappers.

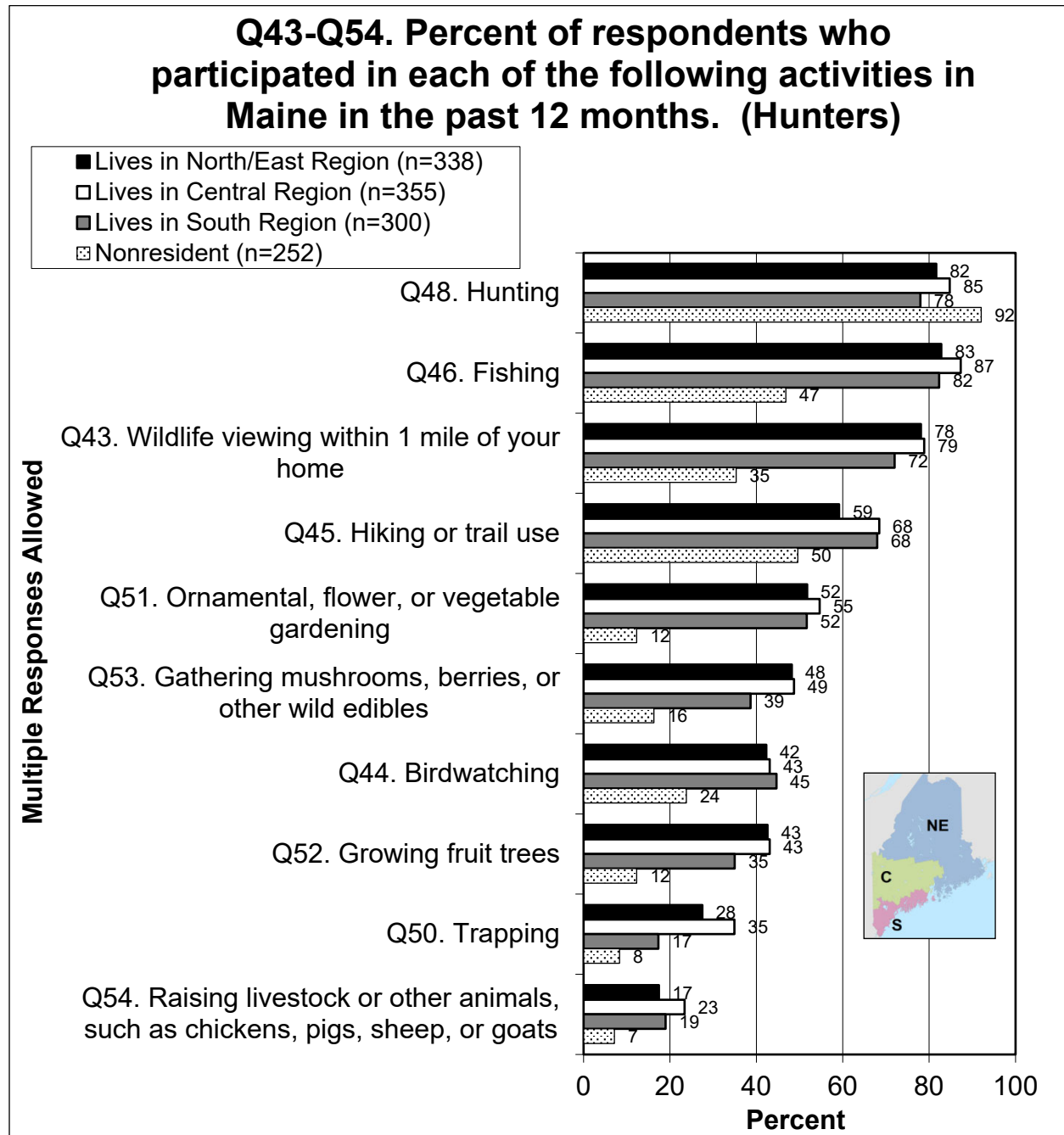


Figure 4.2. Participation in Outdoor Recreation in the Past 12 Months, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

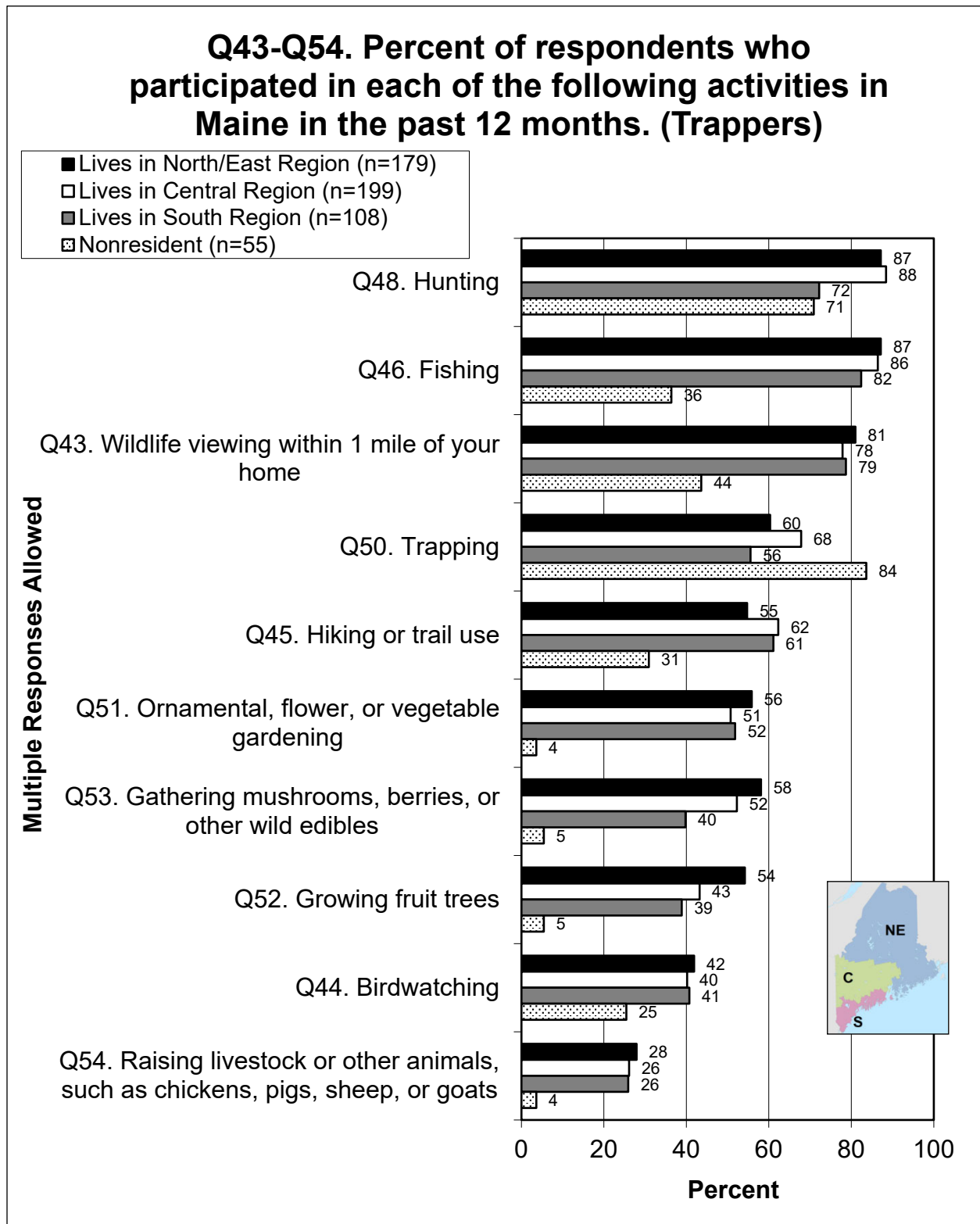


Figure 4.3. Participation in Outdoor Recreation in the Past 12 Months, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

SPECIES HUNTED AND TRAPPED, INCLUDING FURBEARER SPECIES

Figure 4.4 shows that deer are the most-hunted species in Maine (88%), followed by ruffed grouse (54%). All other species are at less than a quarter of hunters. Figures 4.5 and 4.6 show regional results; nonresidents are markedly different from the in-state regions.

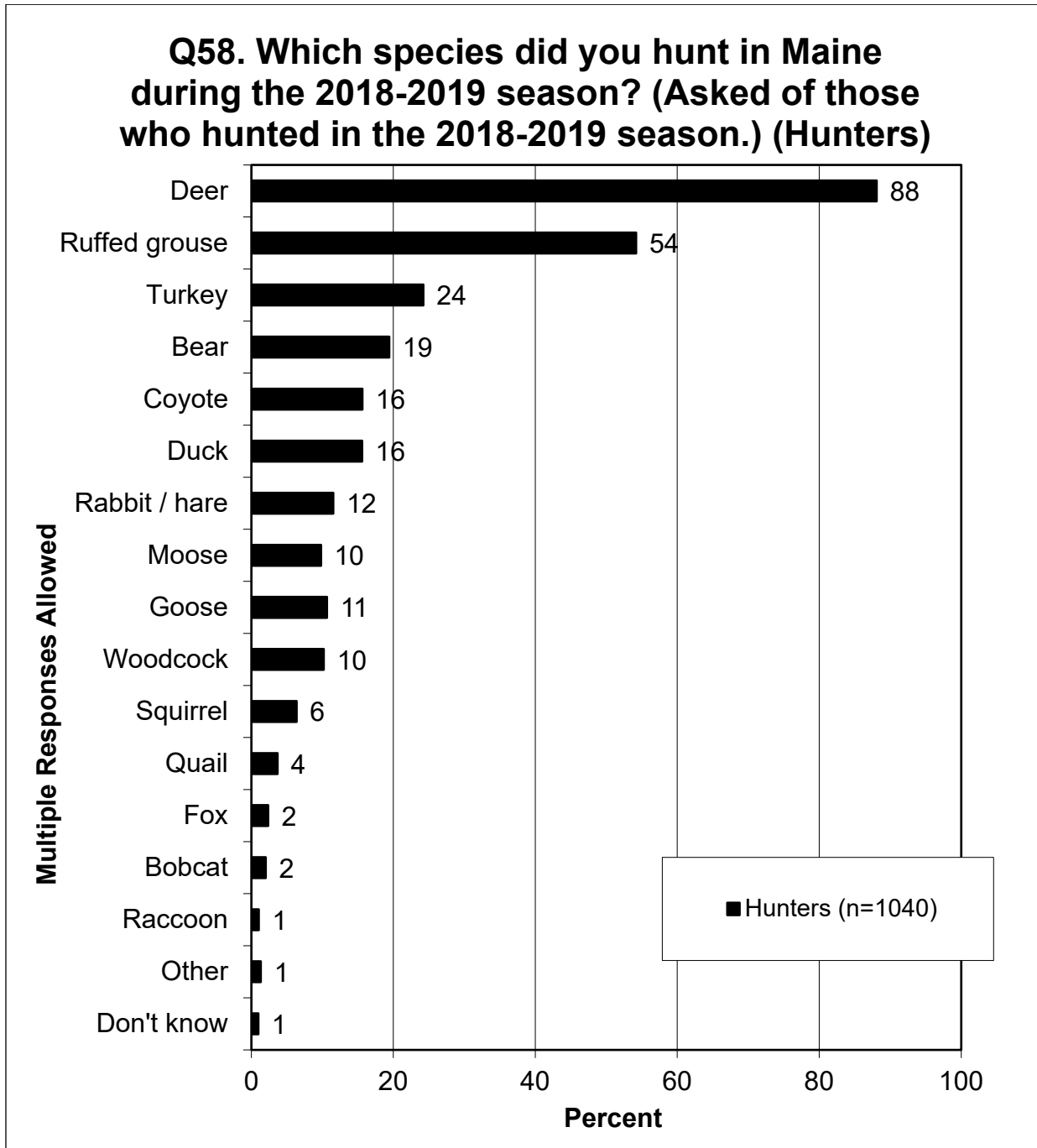


Figure 4.4. Species Hunted (Hunters)

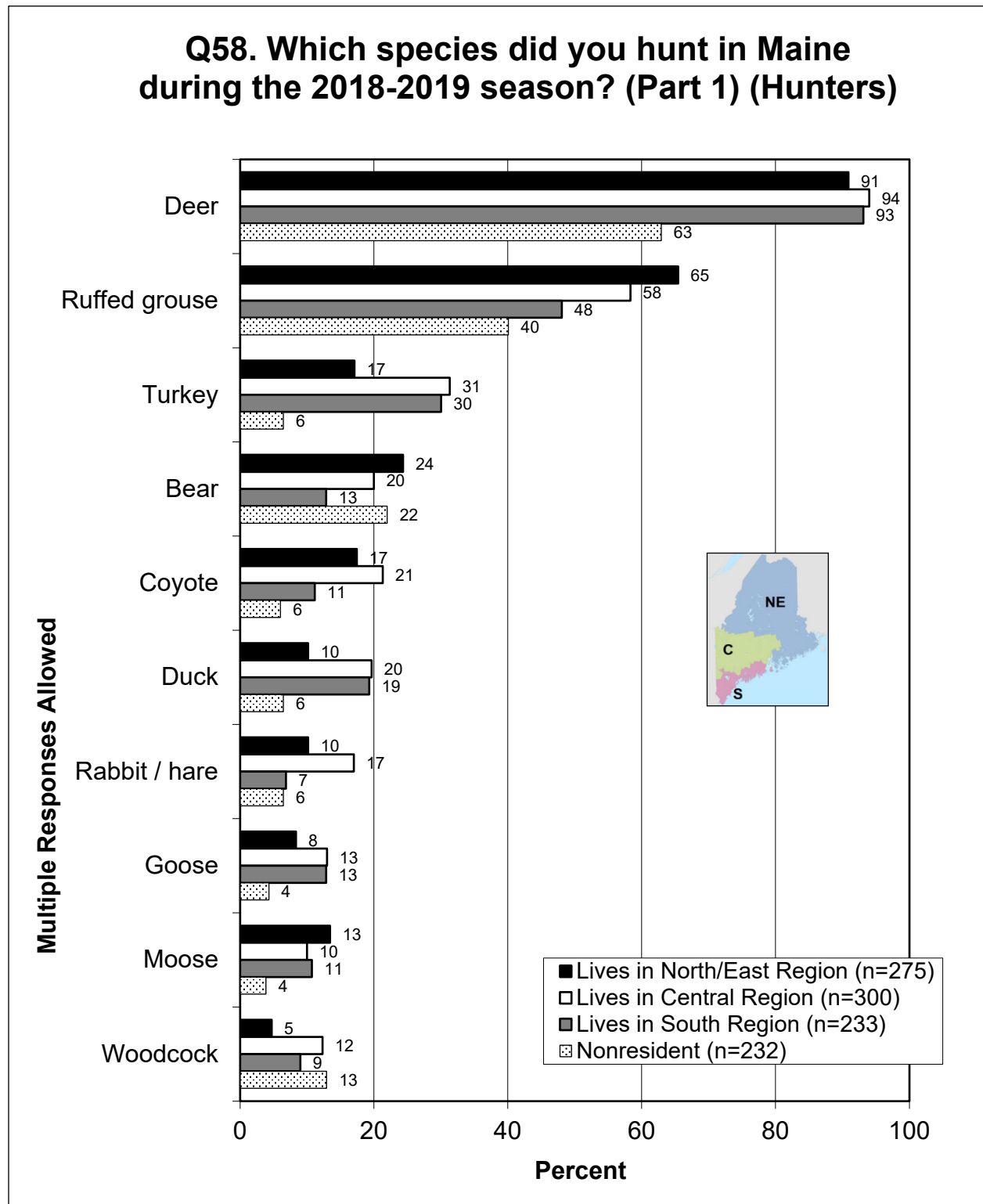


Figure 4.5. Species Hunted, Regional Hunter Breakdown, Part 1 (Hunters)

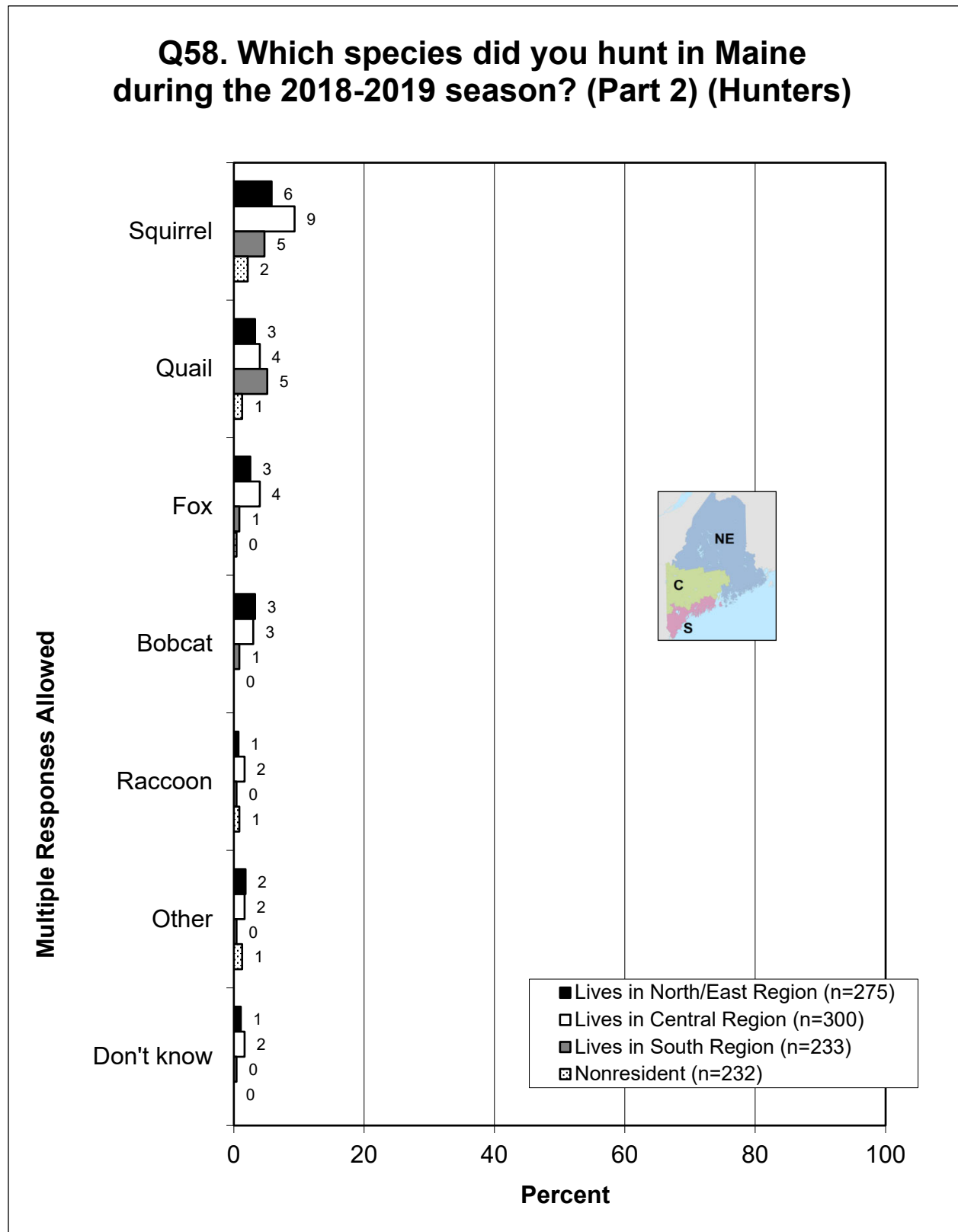


Figure 4.6. Species Hunted, Regional Hunter Breakdown, Part 2 (Hunters)

Figure 4.7 shows species trapped: beaver and coyote are the most popular, more distantly followed by fox, muskrat, and fisher. The regional breakdown is shown in Figures 4.8 and 4.9, with nonresidents composing a “region.”

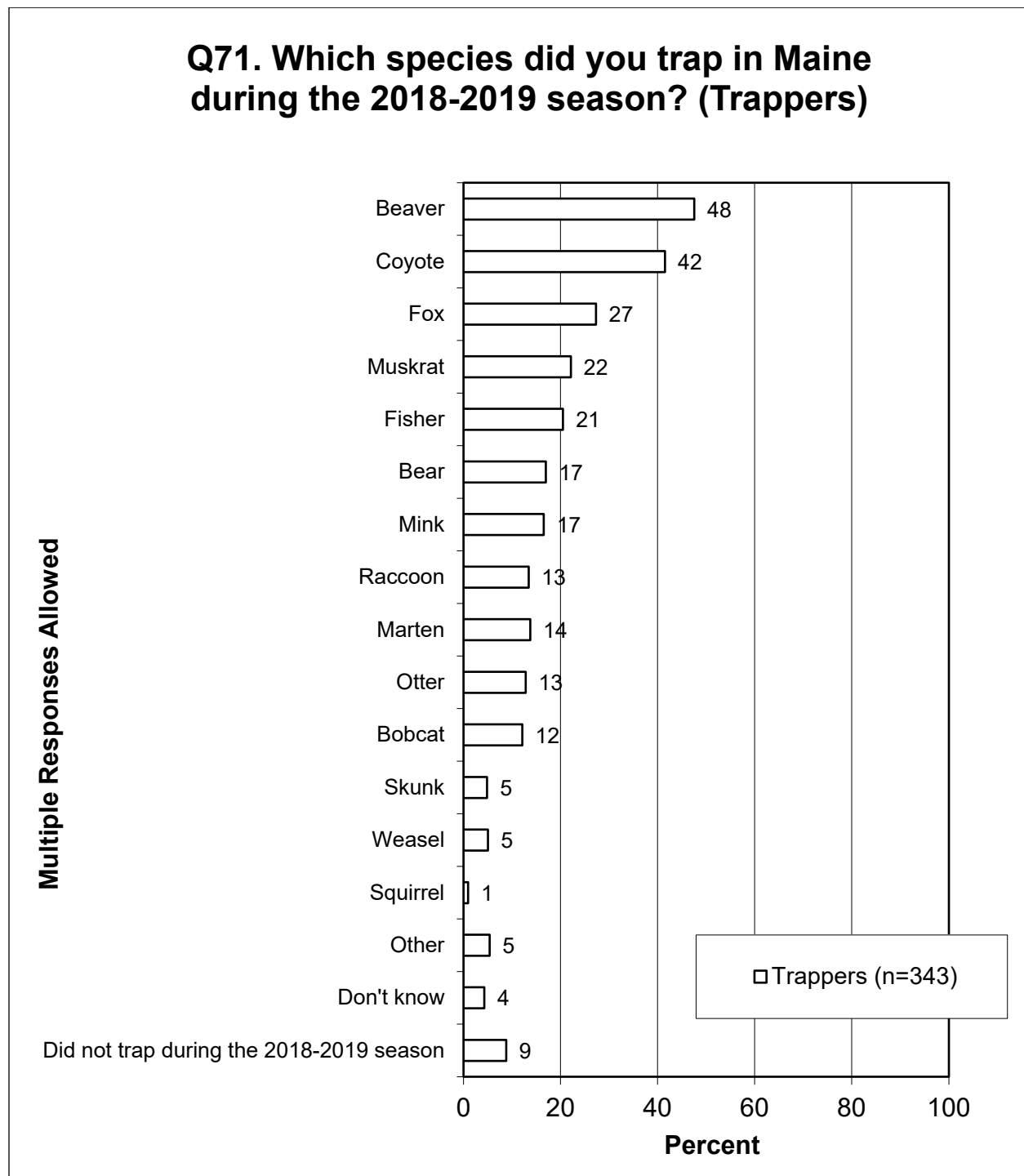


Figure 4.7. Species Trapped (Trappers)

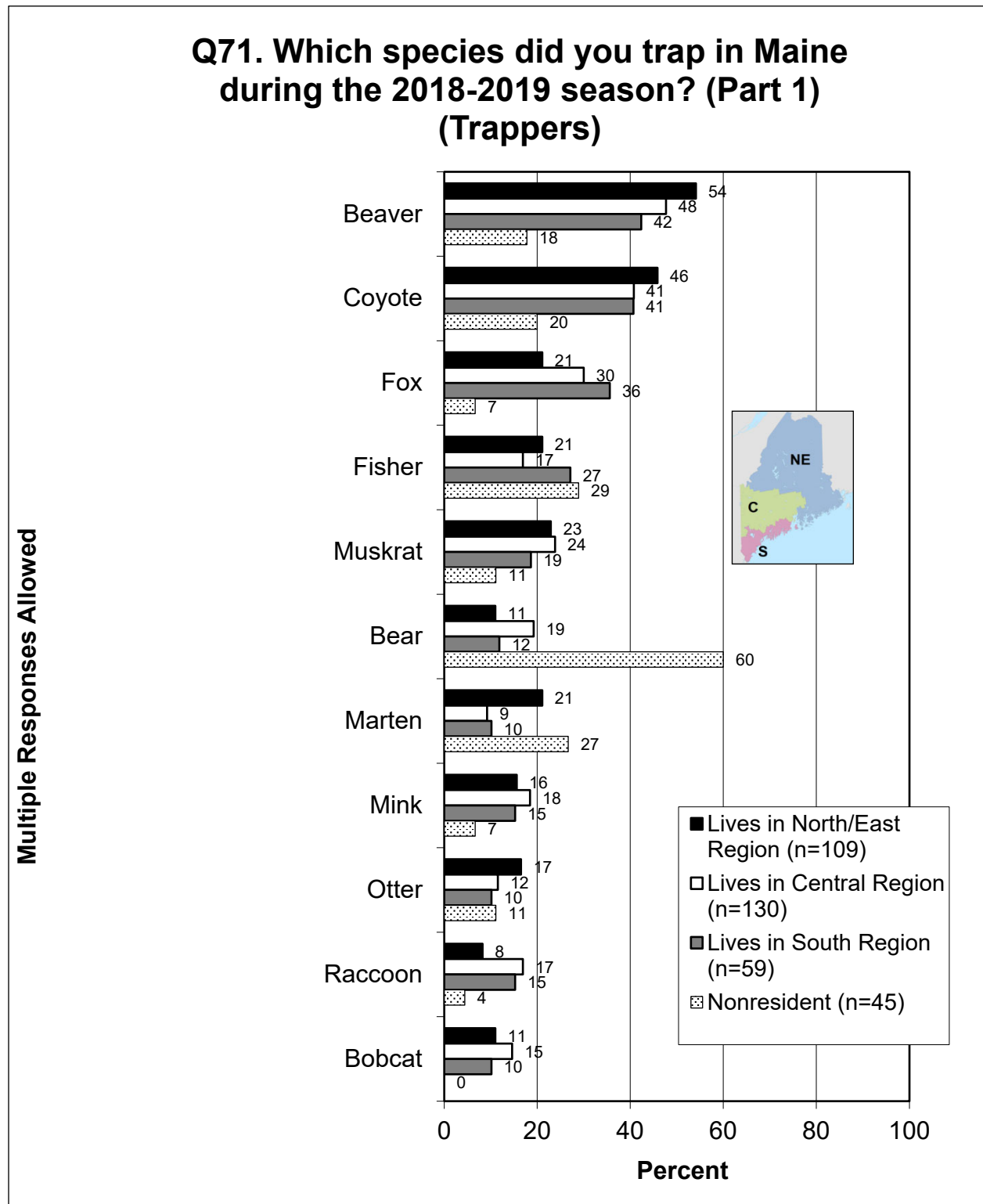


Figure 4.8. Species Trapped, Regional Trapper Breakdown, Part 1 (Trappers)

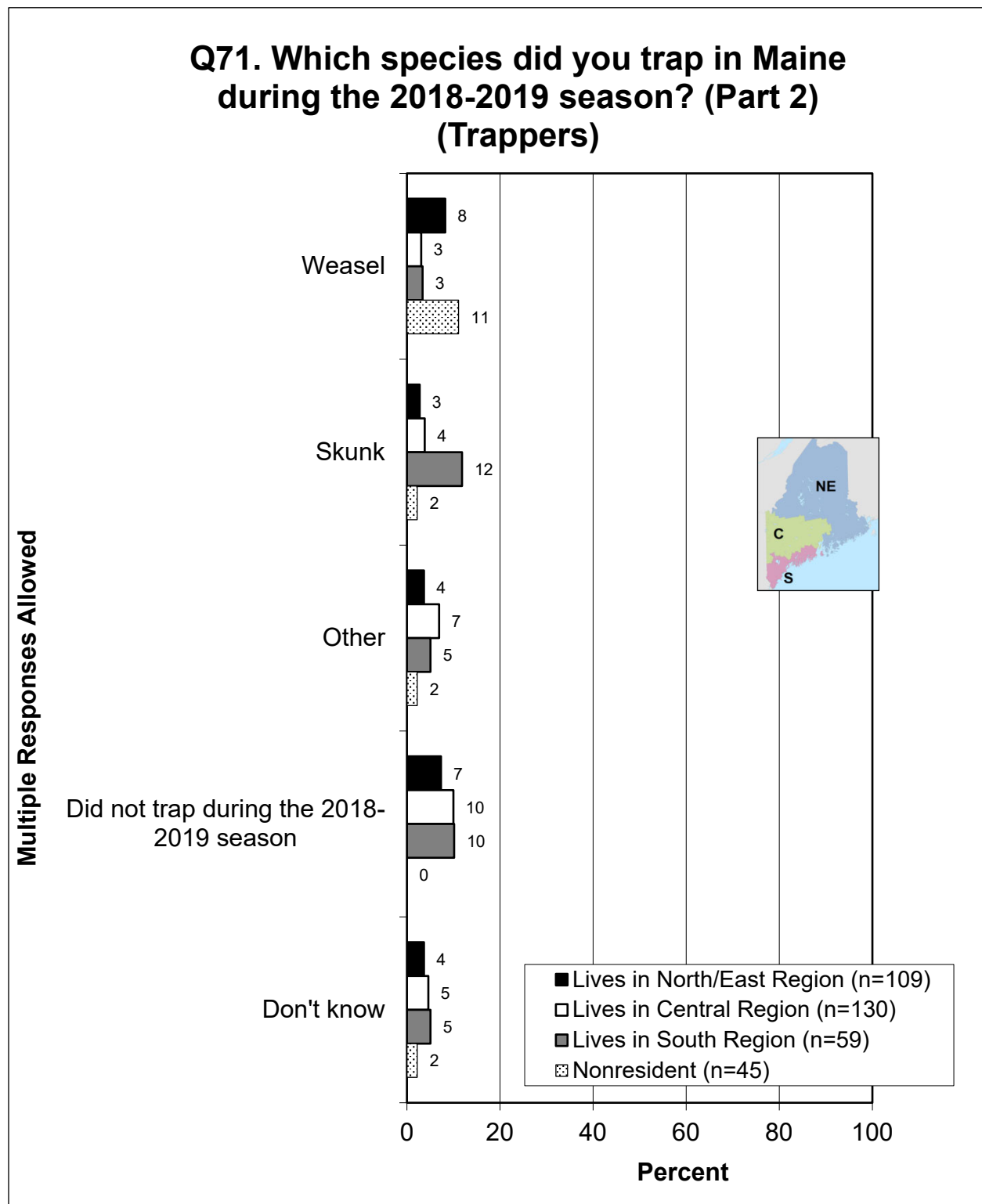


Figure 4.9. Species Trapped, Regional Trapper Breakdown, Part 2 (Trappers)

SATISFACTION WITH HUNTING AND TRAPPING EXPERIENCES

The large majority of hunters are satisfied with their hunting experiences: 82% were very or somewhat satisfied, while only 9% were dissatisfied, as shown in Figure 4.10 (the question was limited to those who had hunted in the 2018-2019 season). The regional breakdown is shown in Figure 4.11; hunters who live in the North/East Region are markedly less satisfied, compared to the other regions. A lack of game was the top reason for not being very satisfied (Figure 4.12). Among the regional results in Figures 4.13 and 4.14, lack of game was more of a problem in the North/East Region and among nonresidents. Access was more of an issue in the South Region than in the other regions.

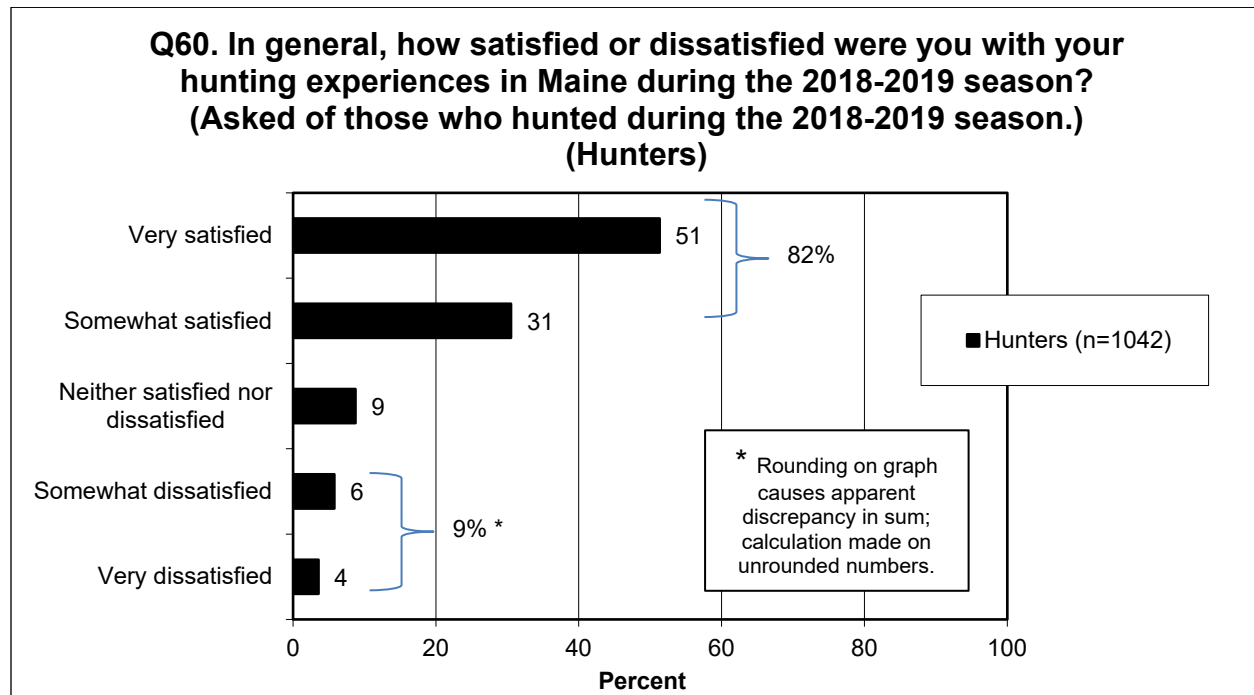


Figure 4.10. Satisfaction or Dissatisfaction with Hunting Experiences (Hunters)

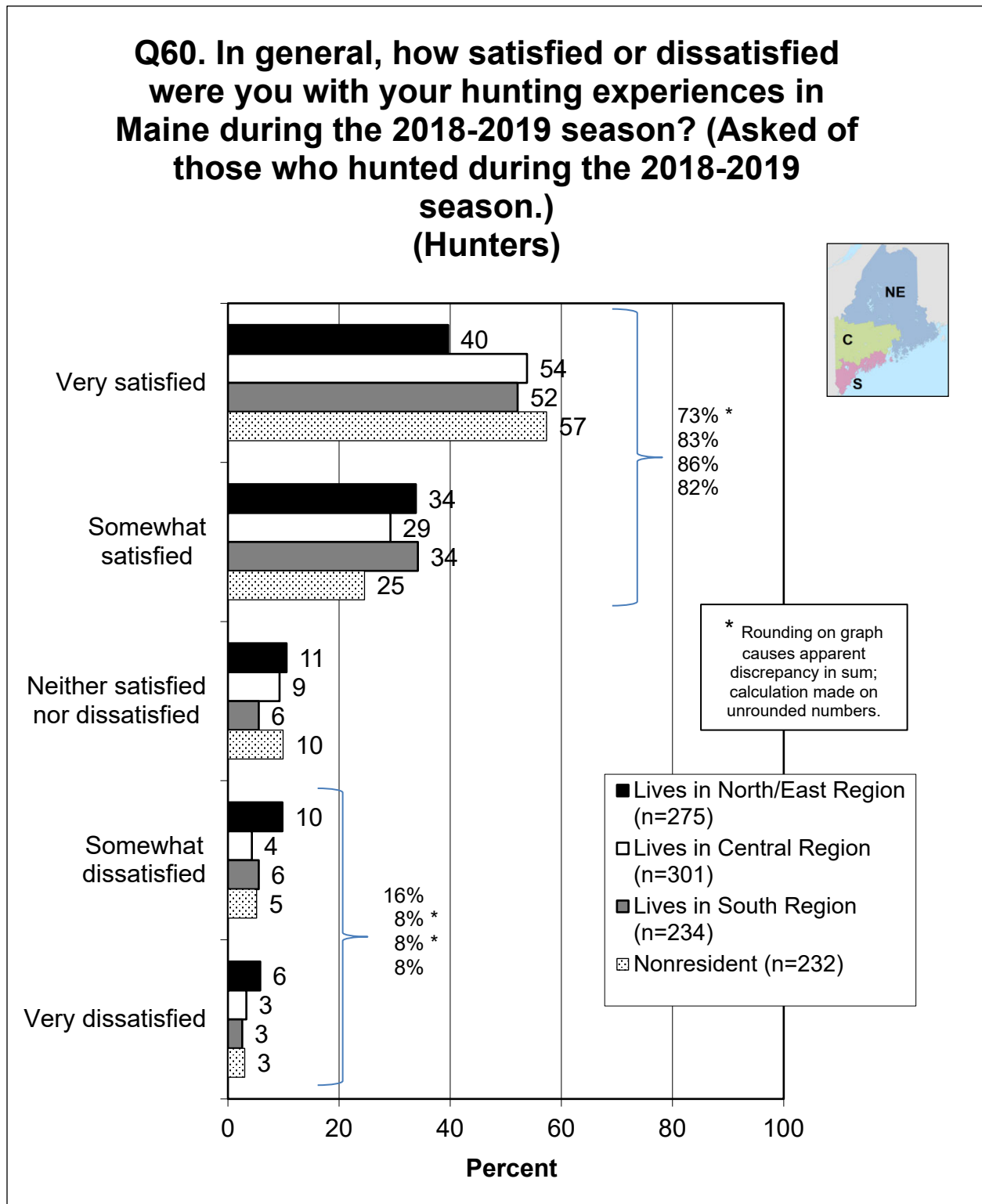


Figure 4.11. Satisfaction or Dissatisfaction with Hunting Experiences, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

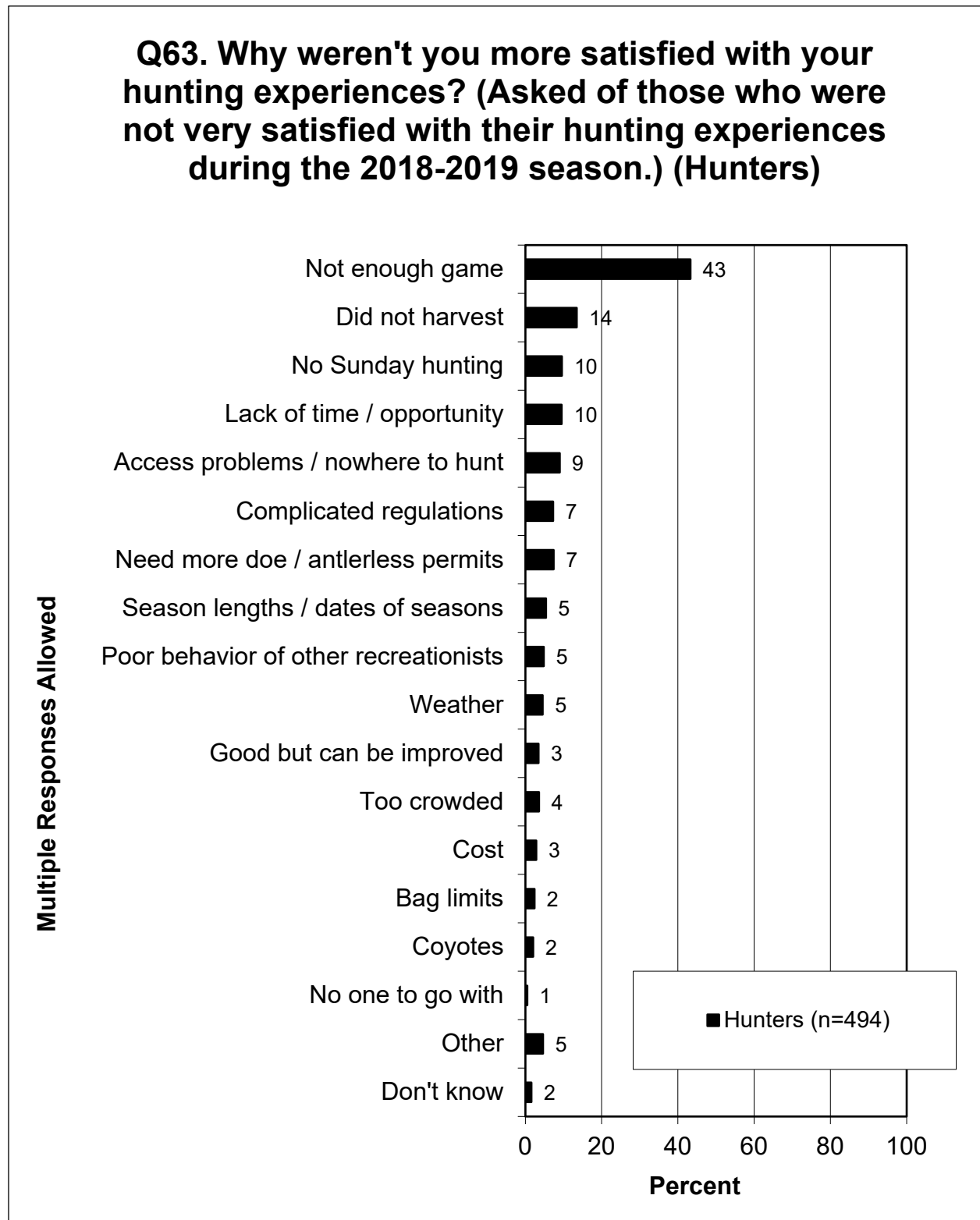


Figure 4.12. Reasons for Not Being More Satisfied with Hunting Experiences (Hunters)

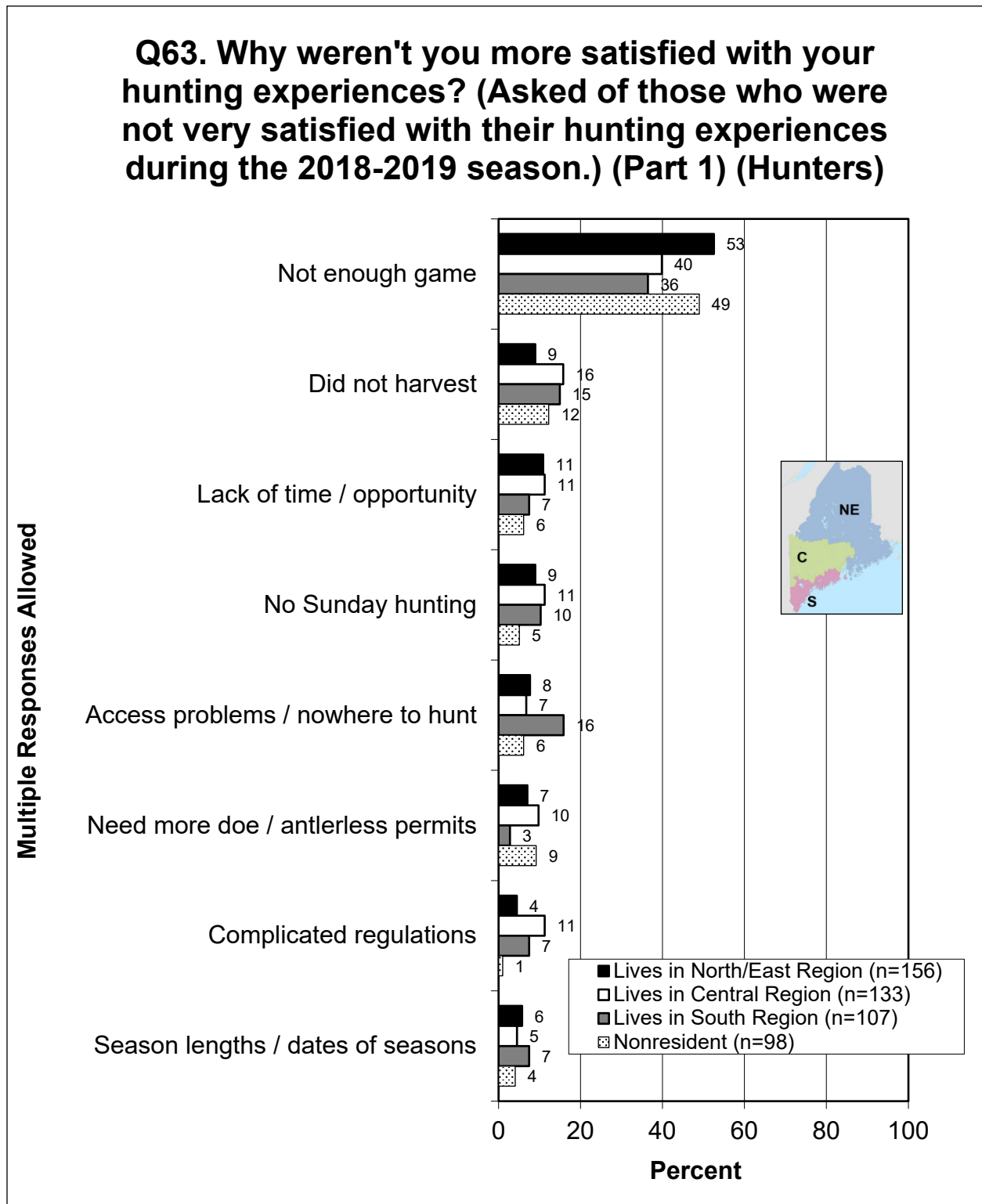


Figure 4.13. Reasons for Not Being More Satisfied with Hunting Experiences, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Part 1) (Hunters)

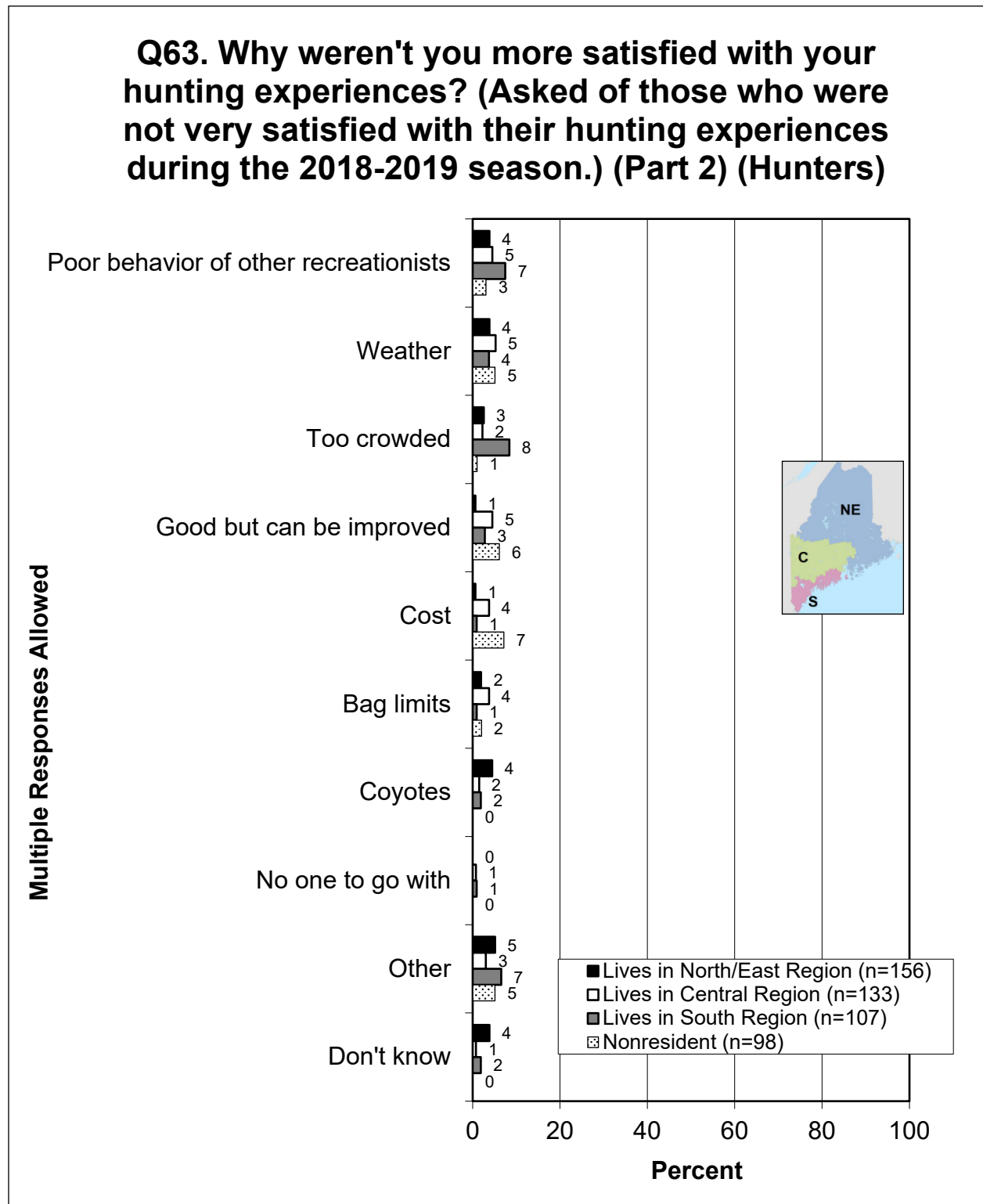


Figure 4.14. Reasons for Not Being More Satisfied with Hunting Experiences, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Part 2) (Hunters)

Figure 4.15 shows that the large majority of trappers (71%) were satisfied with their trapping experiences in Maine during the 2018-2019 season, although 14% were dissatisfied (asked of those who had trapped in the 2018-2019 season). Satisfaction was highest among nonresidents rather than residents of any of the in-state regions (Figure 4.16). A large source of dissatisfaction was the use of lynx exclusionary devices (Figure 4.17), particularly among in-state trappers (Figures 4.18 and 4.19).

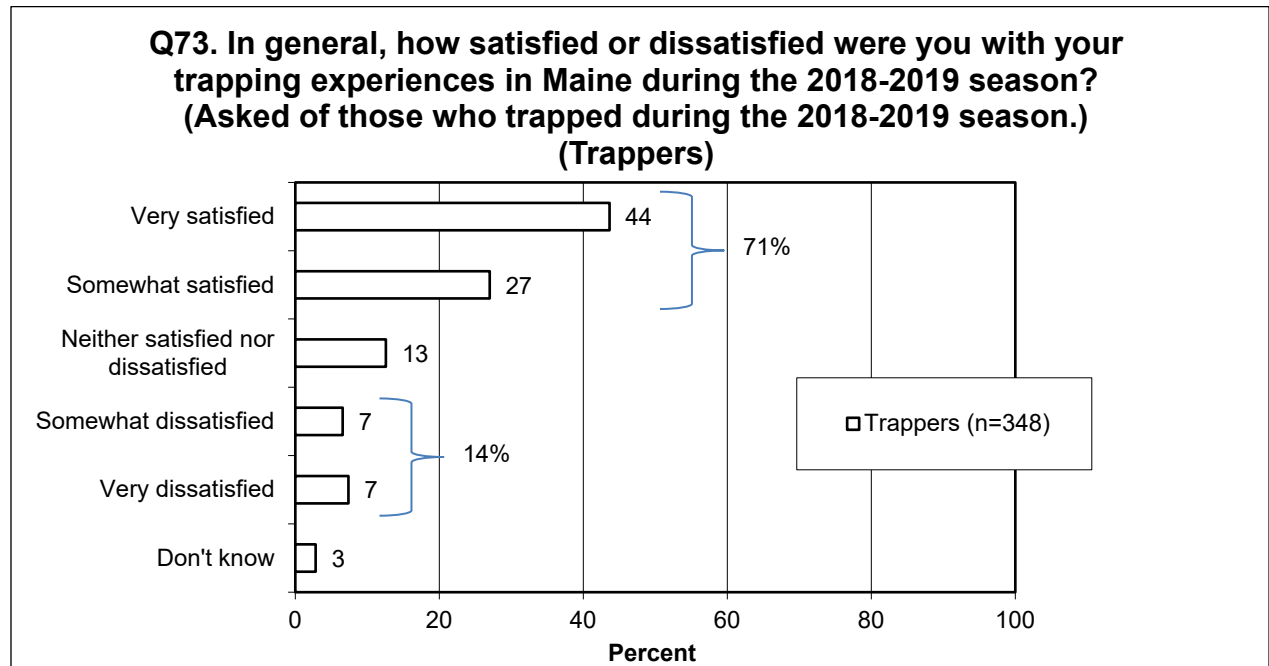


Figure 4.15. Satisfaction or Dissatisfaction with Trapping Experiences (Trappers)

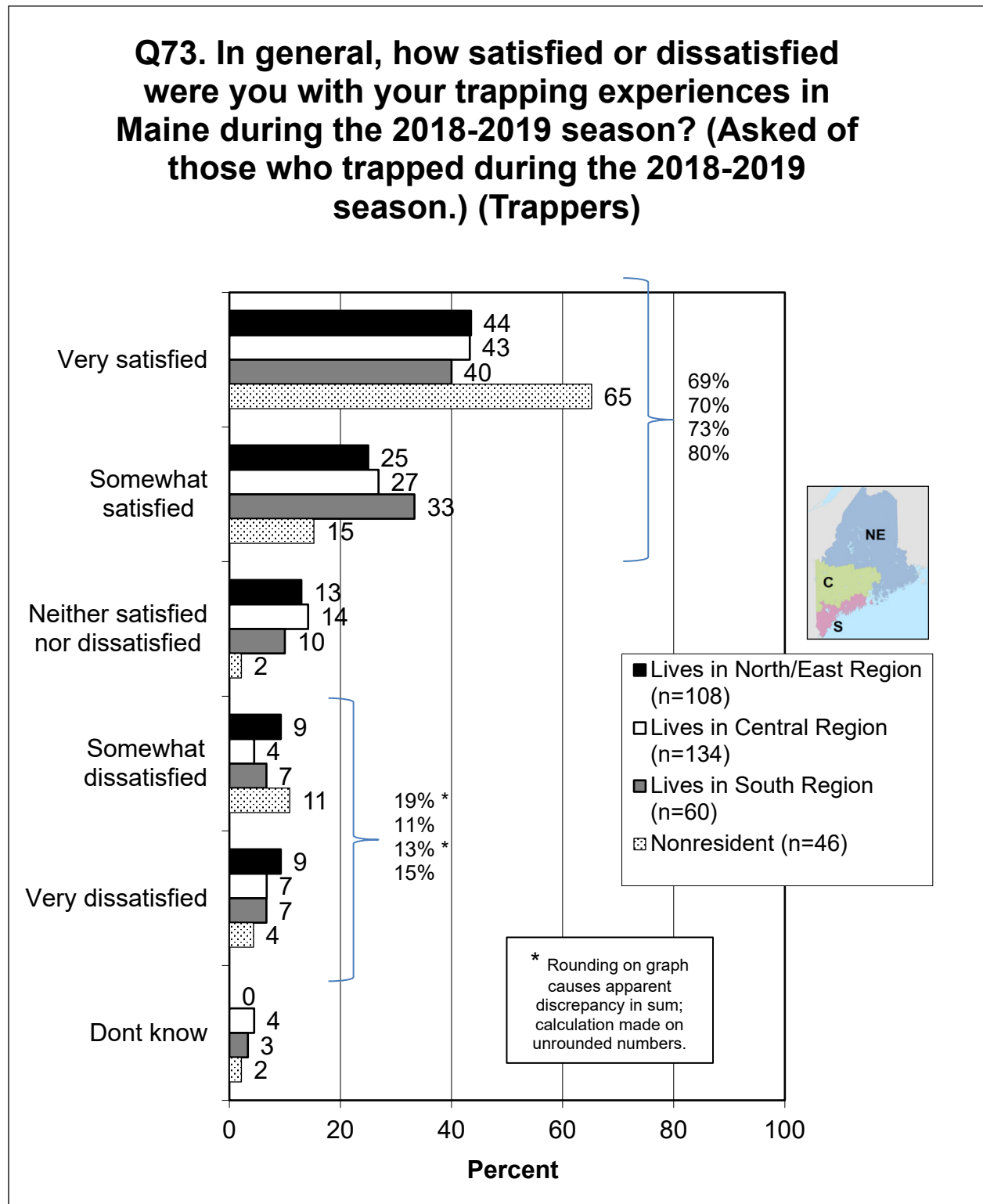


Figure 4.16. Satisfaction or Dissatisfaction with Trapping Experiences, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

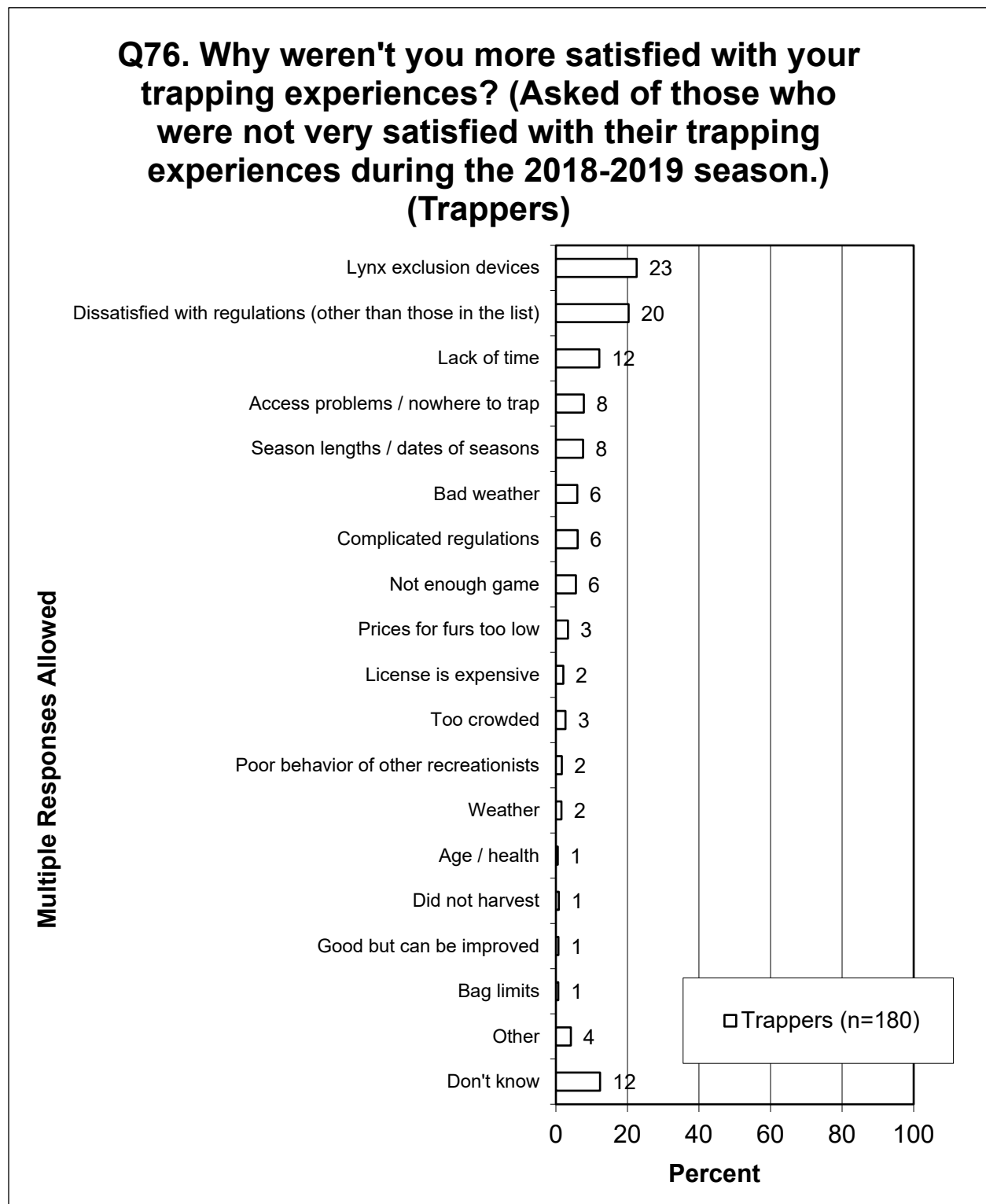


Figure 4.17. Reasons for Not Being More Satisfied with Trapping Experiences (Trappers)

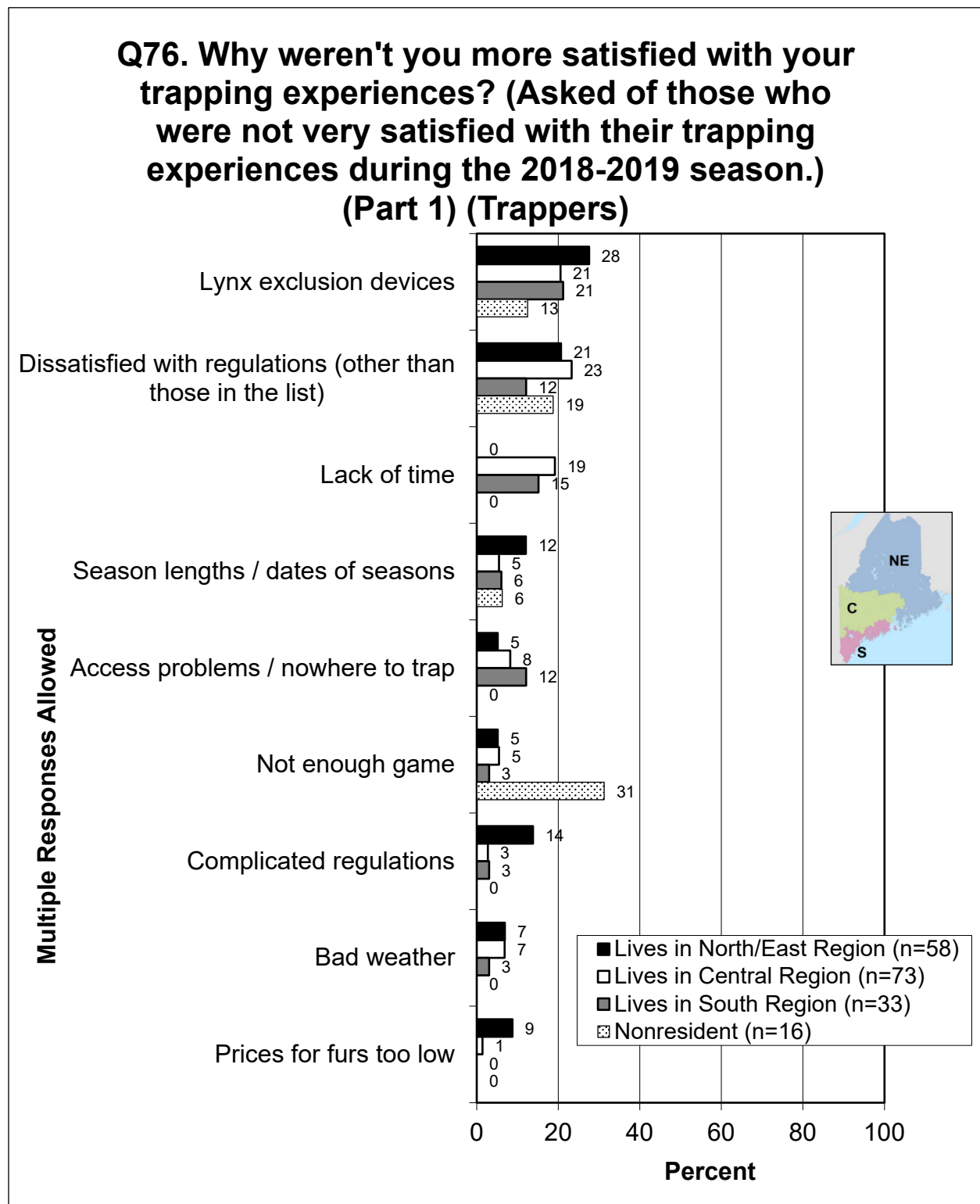


Figure 4.18. Reasons for Not Being More Satisfied with Trapping Experiences, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Part 1) (Trappers)

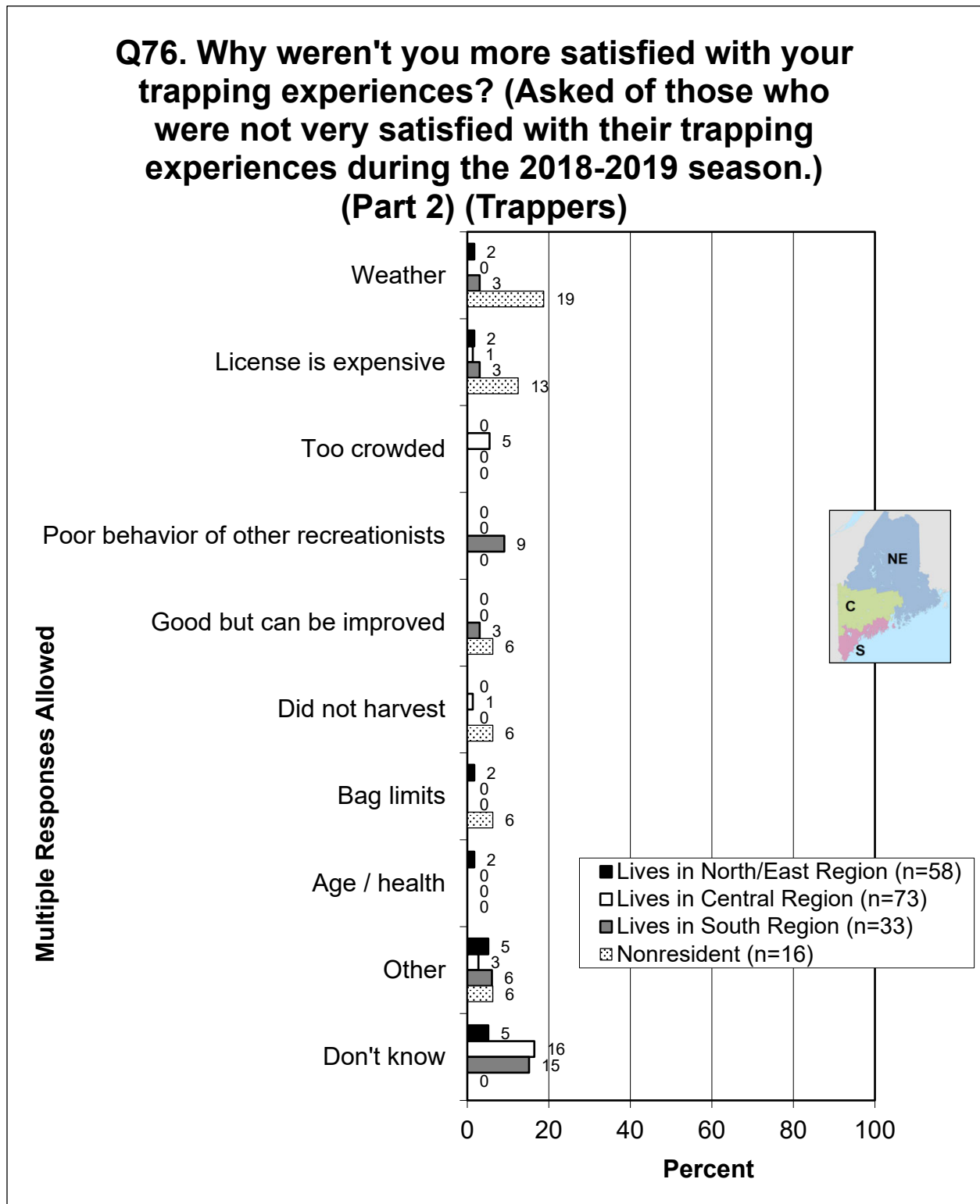


Figure 4.19. Reasons for Not Being More Satisfied with Trapping Experiences, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Part 2) (Trappers)

CONSTRAINTS TO HUNTING AND TRAPPING PARTICIPATION

The personal reason of lack of time was the biggest constraint to hunting participation among hunters in the sample, with the lack of Sunday hunting a distant second in the ranking (Figure 4.20). Interestingly, lack of time was more of an issue among hunters living in the Central and South Regions rather than in the North/East Region (or the nonresident “region”) (Figure 4.21).

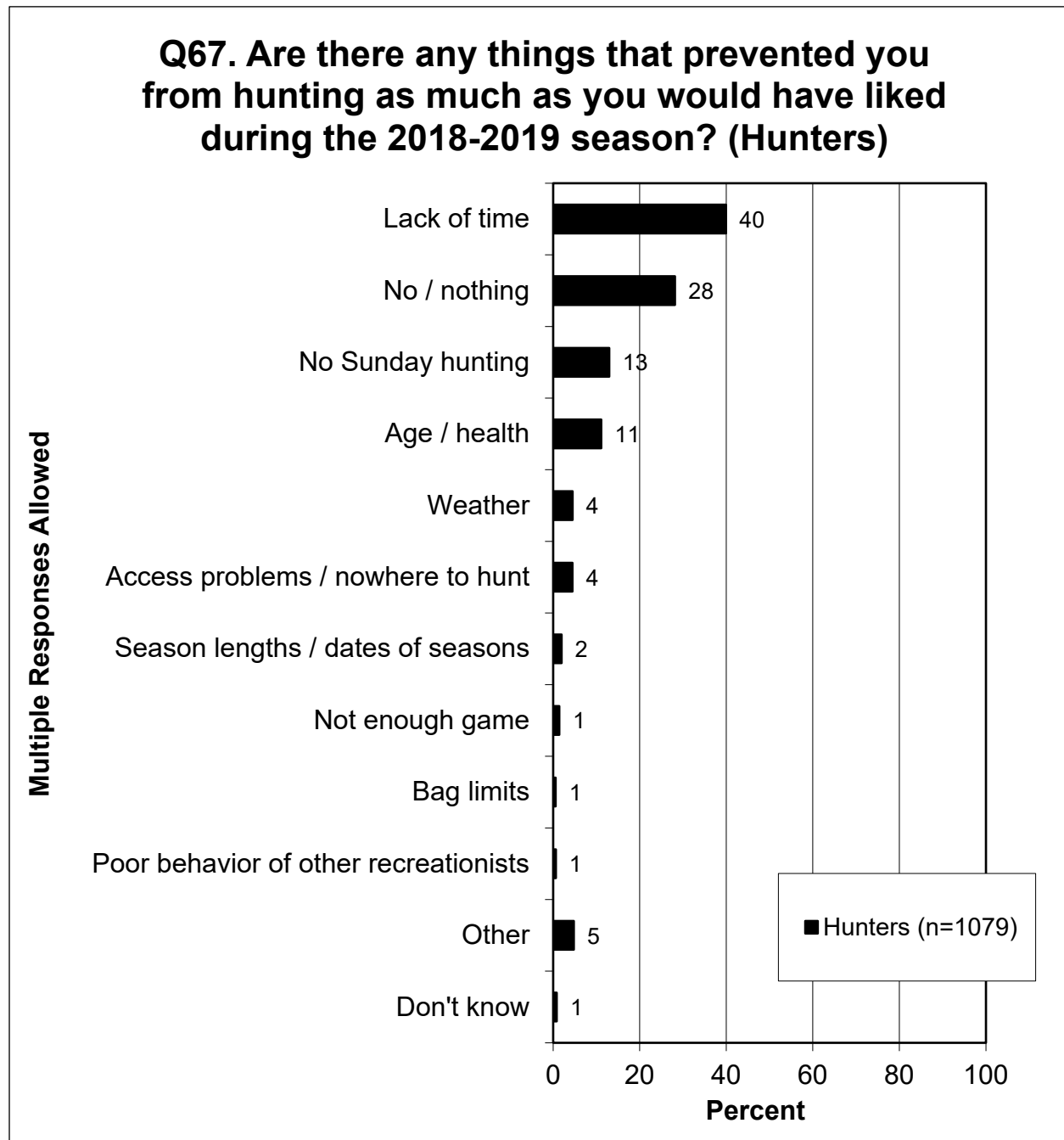


Figure 4.20. Constraints to Hunting Participation (Hunters)

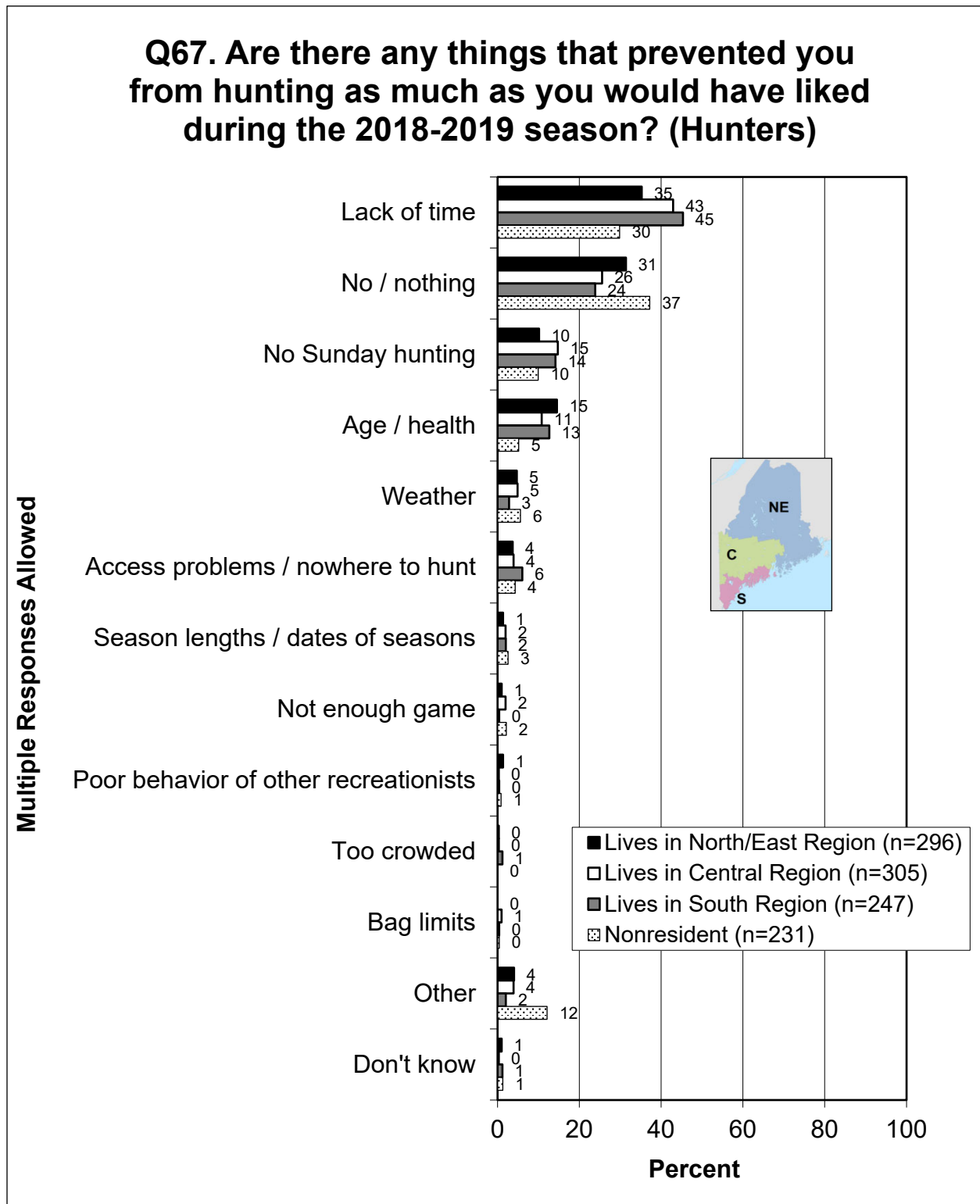


Figure 4.21. Constraints to Hunting Participation, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

A lack of time was the biggest constraint among trappers, with age/health being a distant second (Figure 4.22). A not insubstantial percentage cited lynx exclusion devices, and those devices were more of an issue in the North/East and Central Regions, as shown in the regional breakdowns (Figures 4.23 and 4.24).

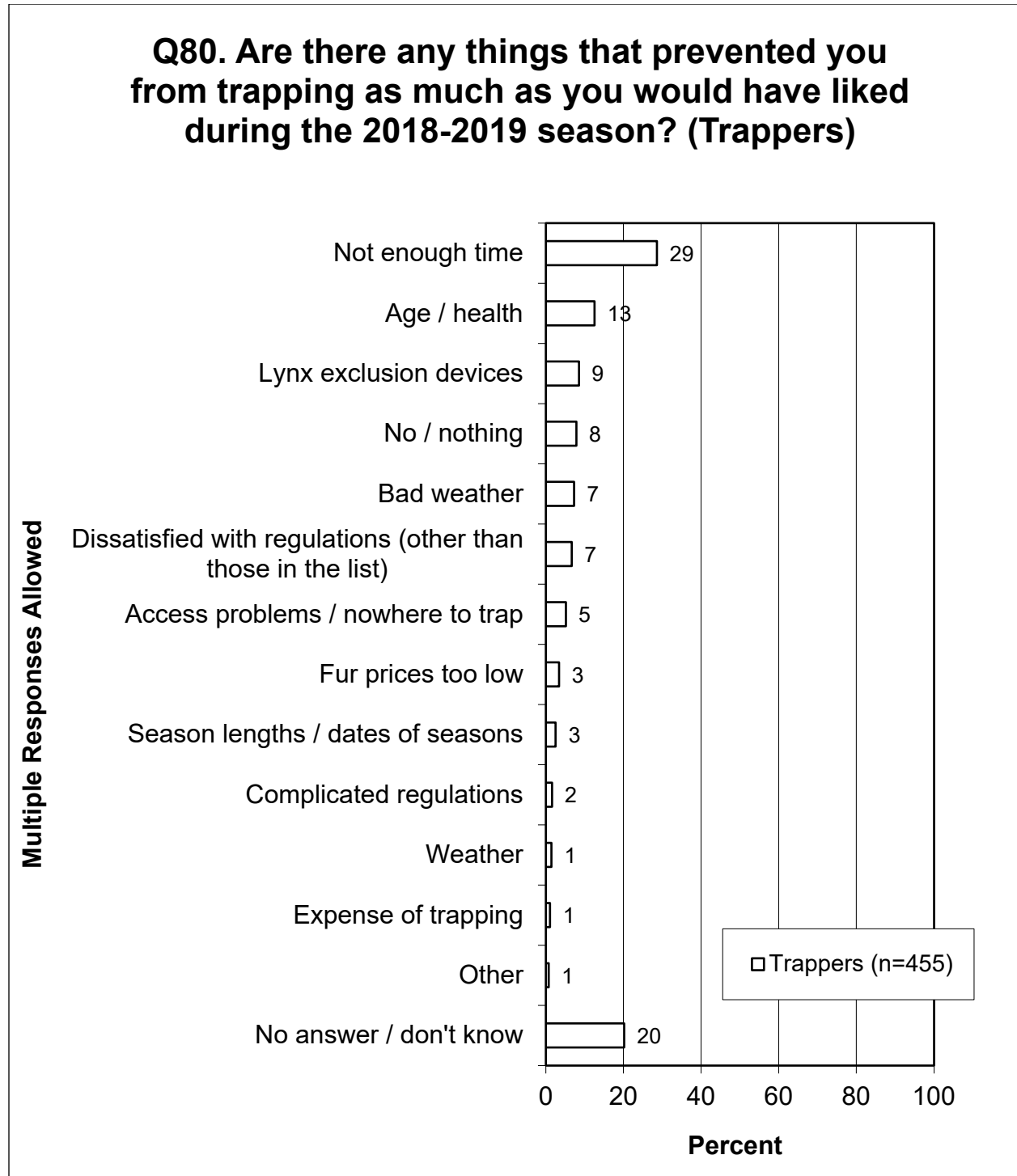


Figure 4.22. Constraints to Trapping Participation (Trappers)

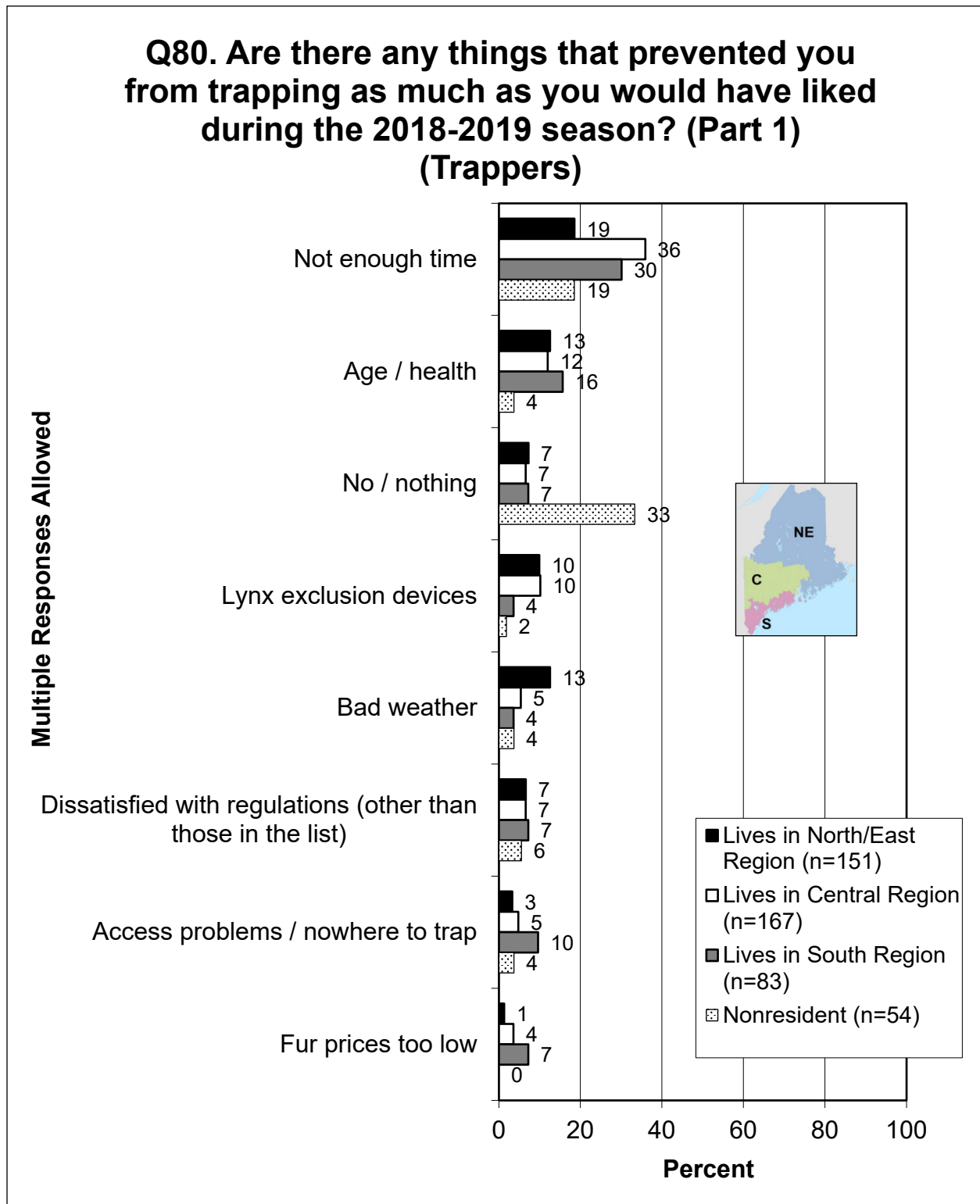


Figure 4.23. Constraints to Trapping Participation, Regional Trapper Breakdown, Part 1 (Trappers)

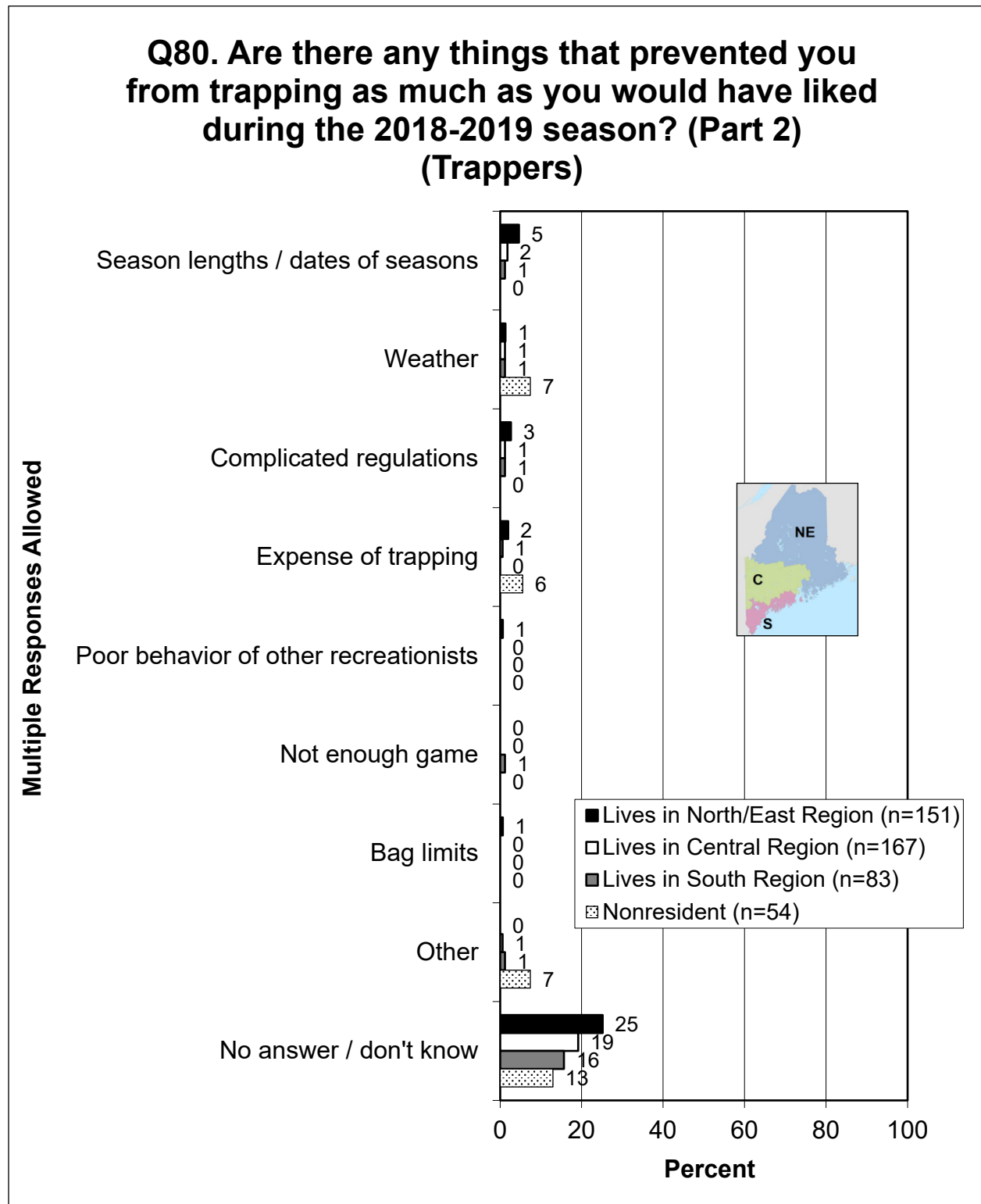


Figure 4.24. Constraints to Trapping Participation, Regional Trapper Breakdown, Part 2 (Trappers)

Hunters who had never trapped were asked why they had not done so, given that both activities entail harvesting wildlife, and the lack of interest was the top reason given (Figure 4.25). Only a small percentage of hunters (6%) say it is because they feel that trapping is cruel or that they disapprove of it. Figure 4.26 shows the regional results.

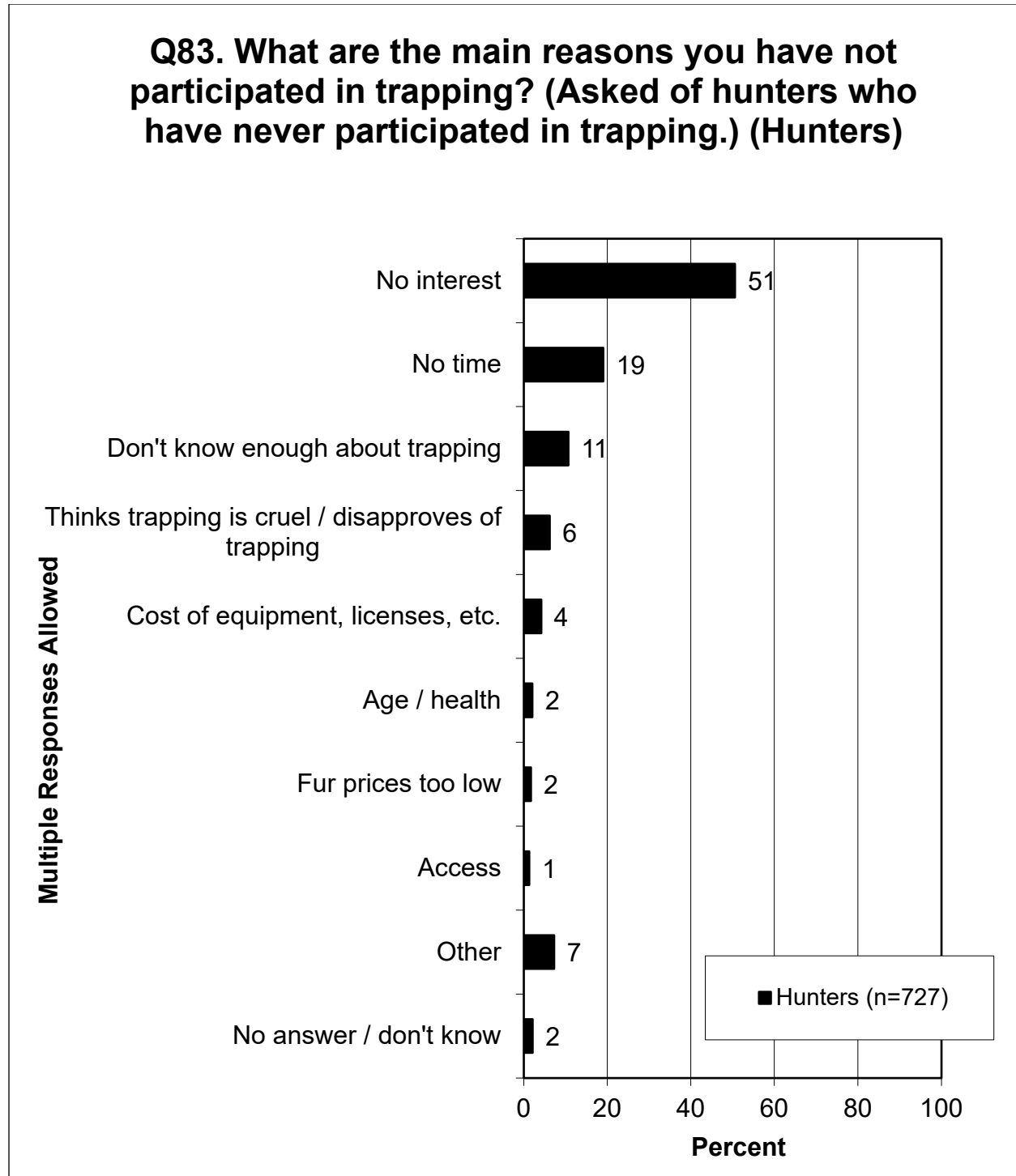


Figure 4.25. Reasons Hunters Have Never Trapped (Hunters)

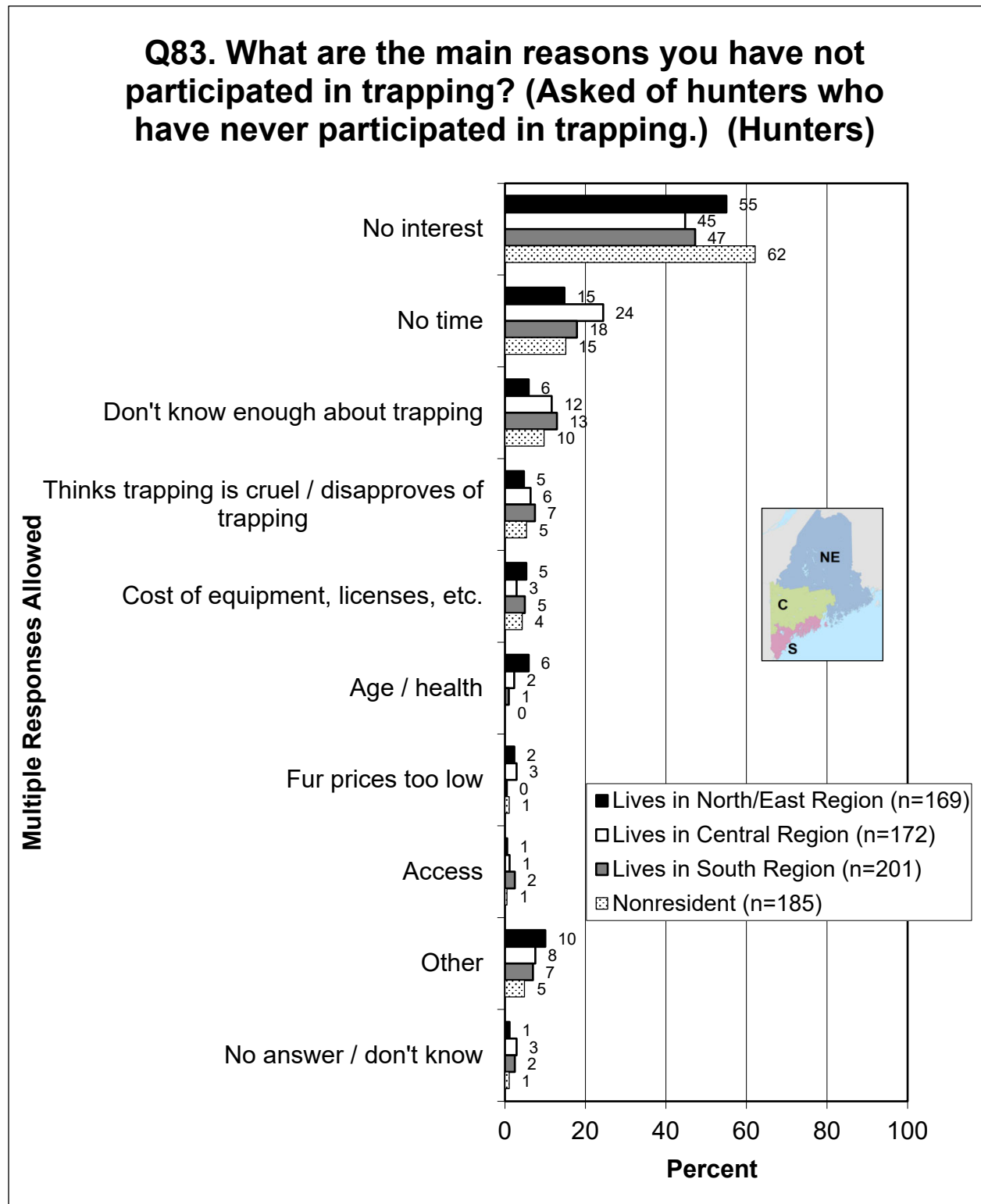


Figure 4.26. Reasons Hunters Have Never Trapped, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

MOTIVATIONS FOR PARTICIPATING IN HUNTING AND TRAPPING

Recreational reasons are the most important, when trappers are asked to say the main reasons that they participate in trapping (65% give a recreational reason) (Figure 4.27). Nonetheless, more than a third (37%) do so to help control animal populations for damage control. South Region trappers have the highest percentage who trap for animal population control/damage control (Figure 4.28).

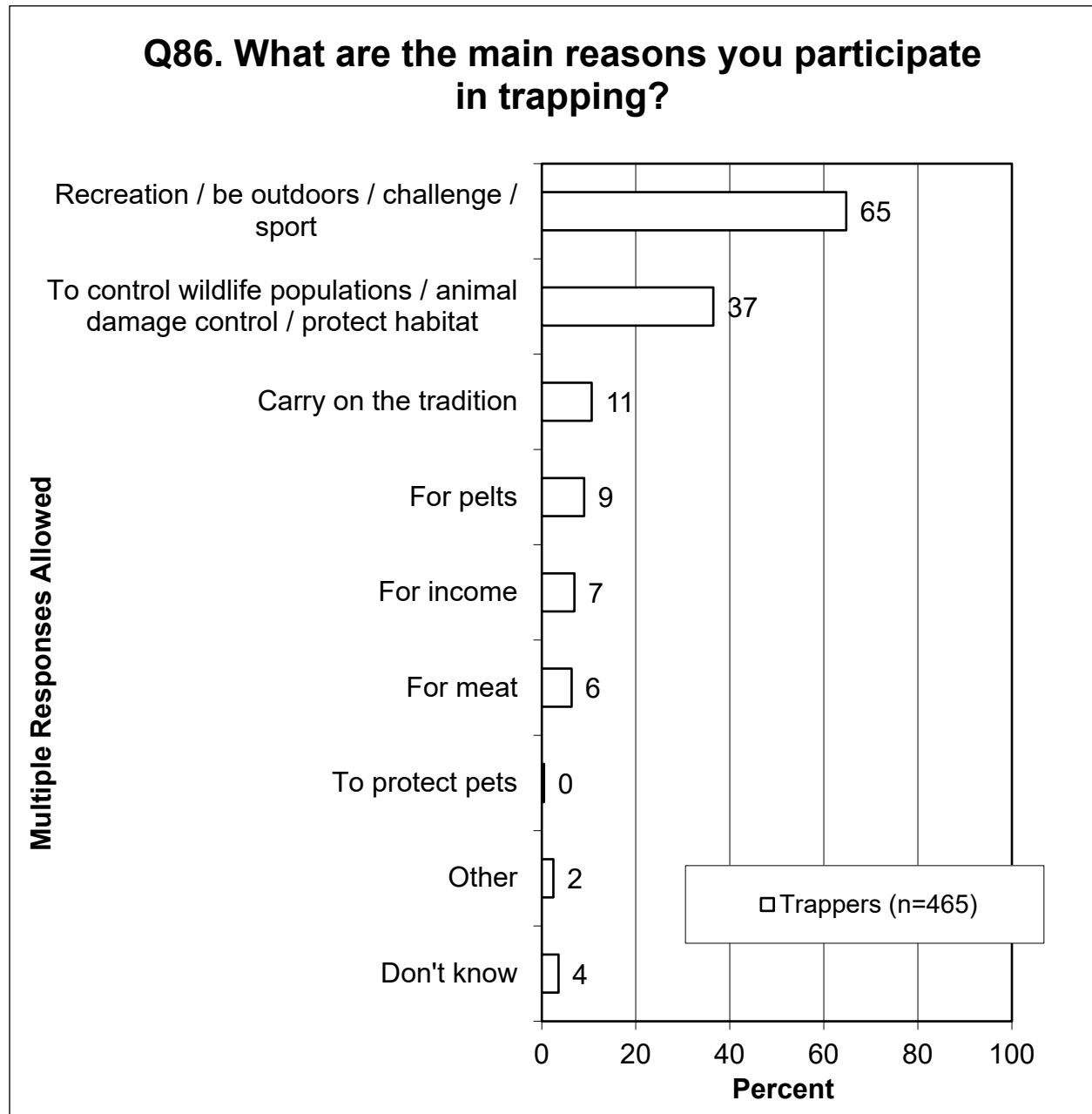


Figure 4.27. Reasons for Participating in Trapping (Trappers)

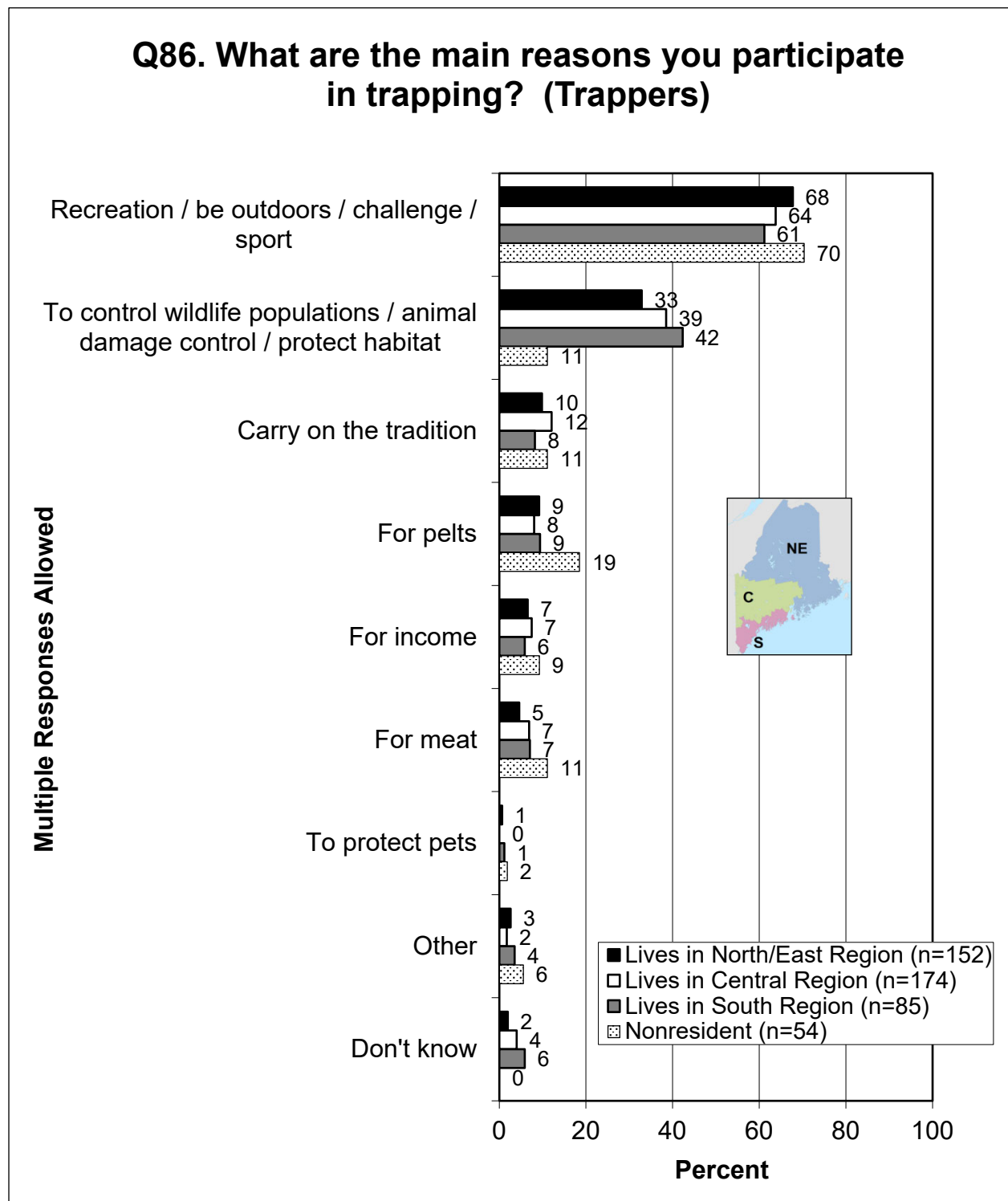


Figure 4.28. Reasons for Participating in Trapping, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

ATTITUDES TOWARD HUNTING AND TRAPPING

The large majority of hunters (84%) and trappers (90%) approve of regulated trapping, while disapproval is low (5% among hunters and 4% among trappers) (Figure 4.29). The finding that a small percentage of trappers disapprove of trapping suggests that some aspect of trapping is objectionable to them rather than trapping as a whole because they have a trapping license—a screener in the survey ensured that only trappers holding a valid trapping license in 2018 or 2019 were surveyed. Regionally, there are little marked differences in approval or disapproval among hunters (Figure 4.30), while the differences among trappers are small—a slightly greater percentage of Central Region trappers disapprove, compared to the other regions (Figure 4.31).

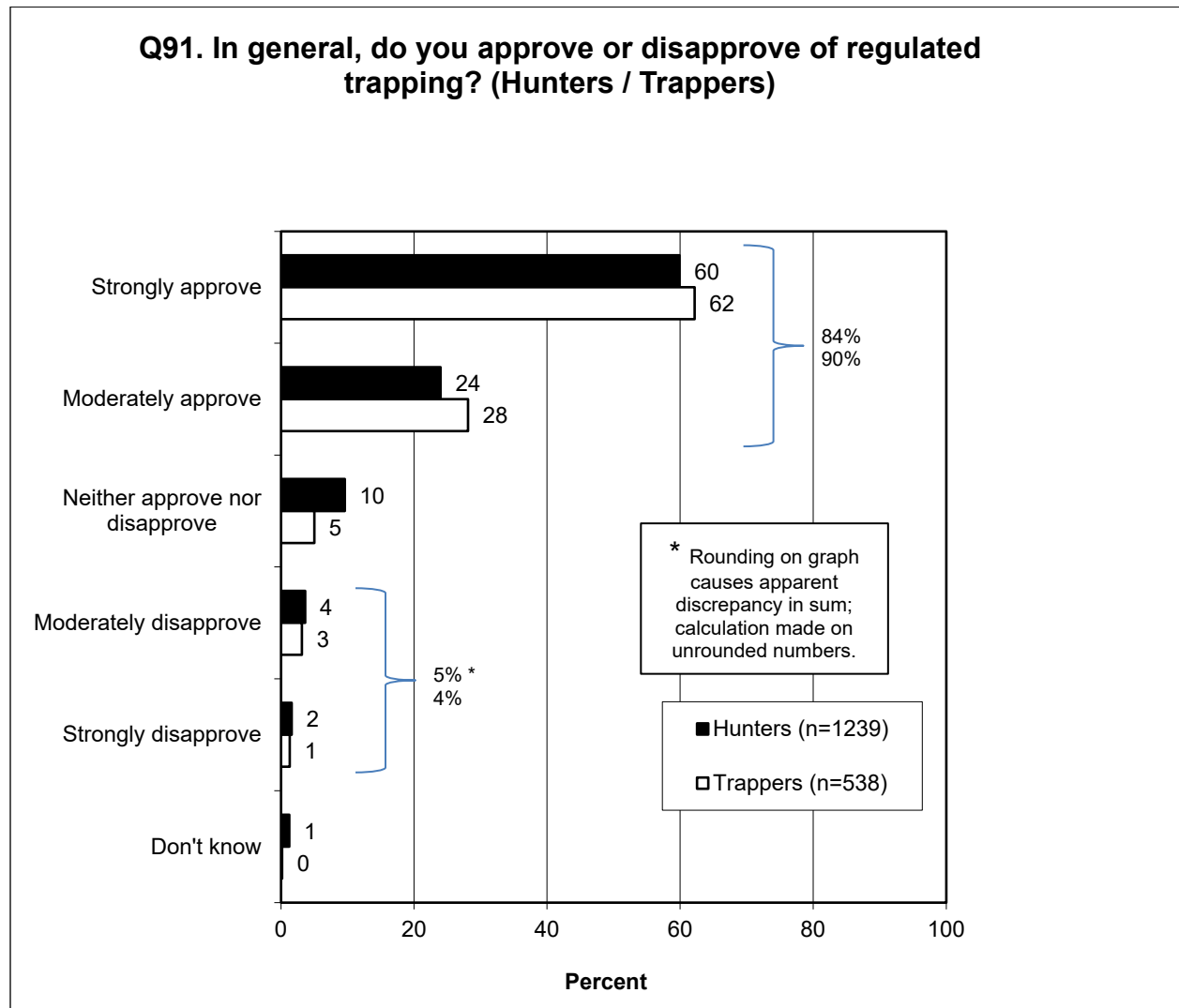


Figure 4.29. Approval or Disapproval of Trapping (Hunters / Trappers)

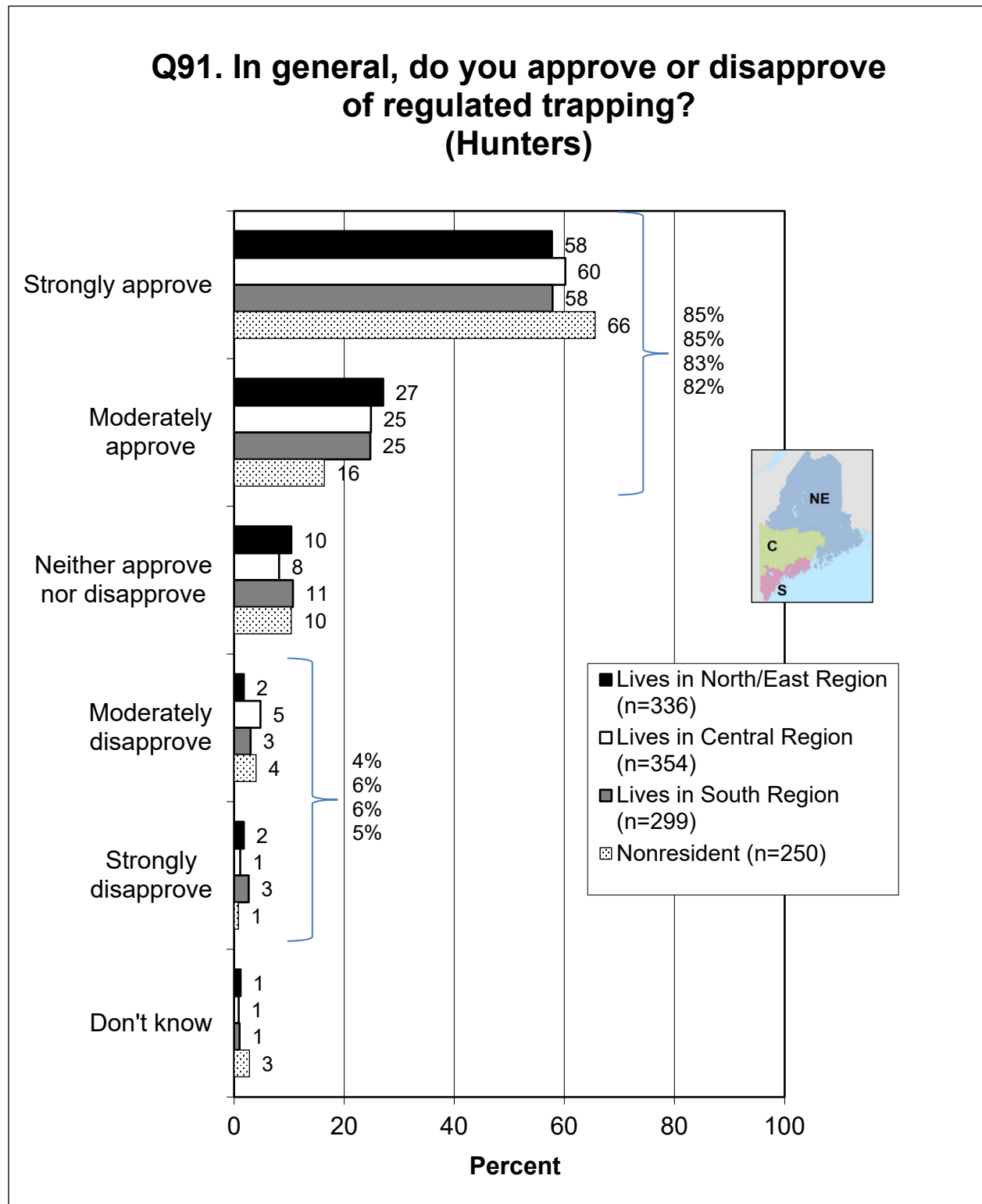


Figure 4.30. Approval or Disapproval of Trapping, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

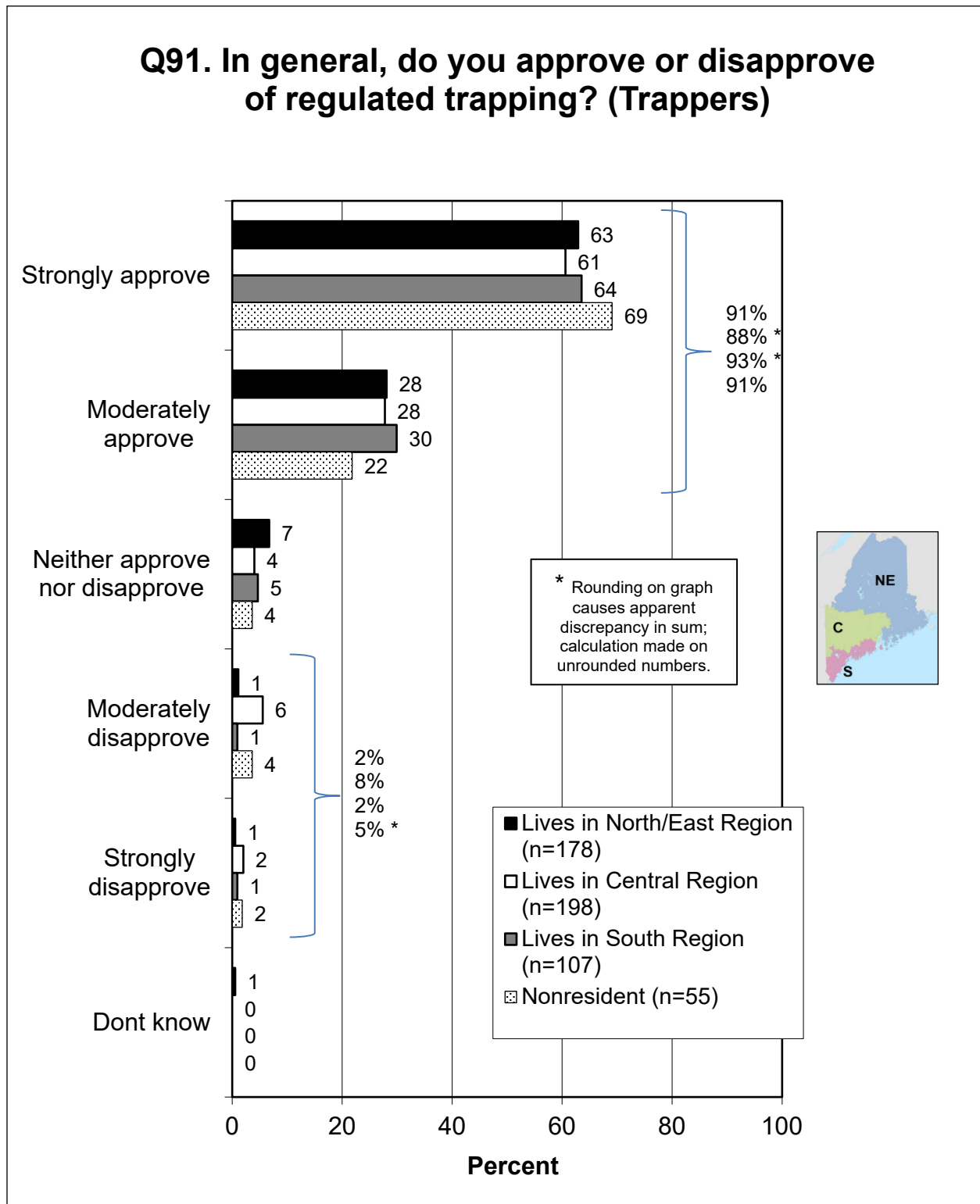


Figure 4.31. Approval or Disapproval of Trapping, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Regardless of how they personally feel, respondents answered regarding others’ rights to trap, as shown in Figure 4.32. A large percentage of each group—85% of hunters and 86% of trappers—agree that people should have the freedom to choose to participate in regulated trapping if they want to. Regional differences are only slight, with North/East hunters and trappers at a slightly higher percentage in the *strongly* agree response, compared to the other in-state regions (Figures 4.33 and 4.34).

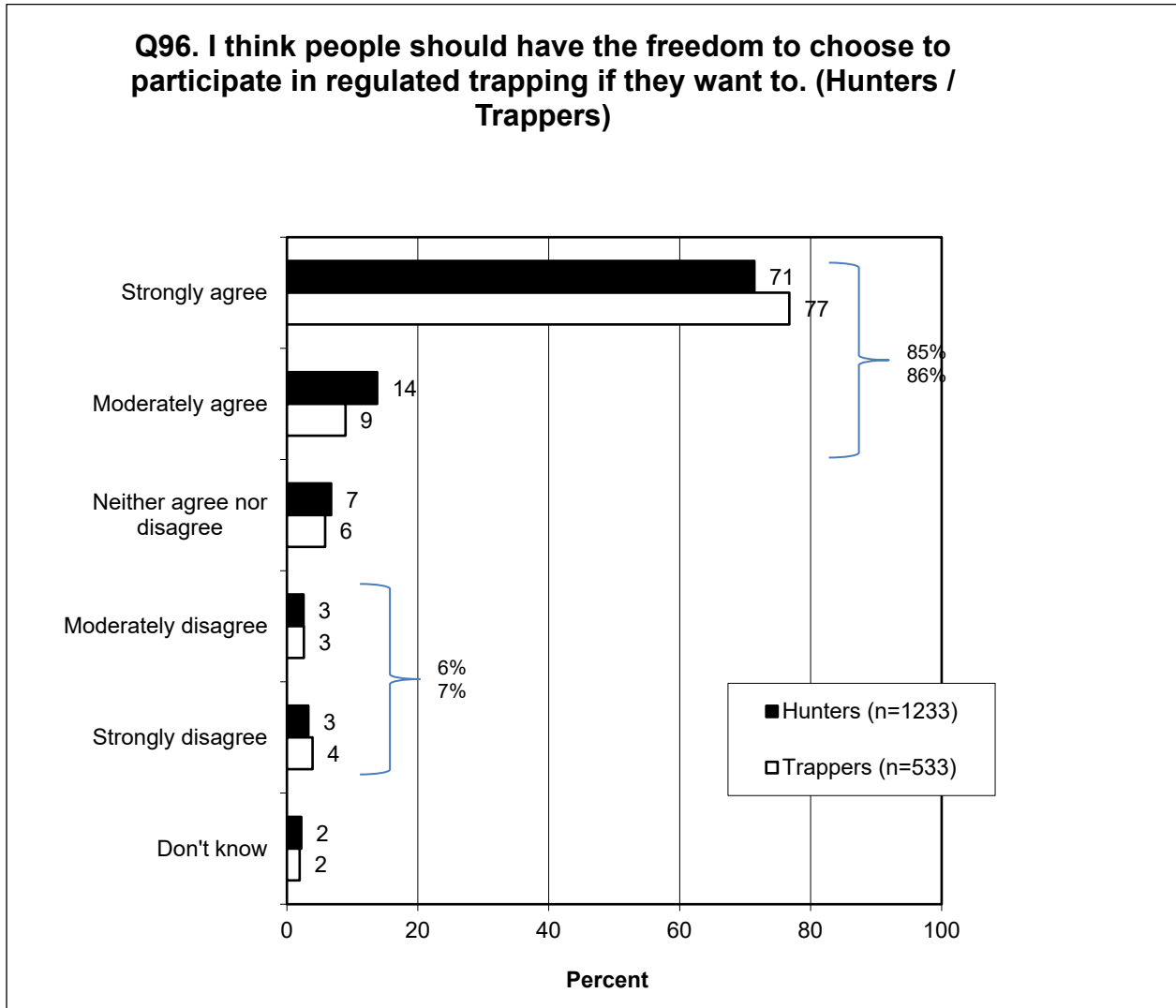


Figure 4.32. Opinion on Rights of Others to Trap (Hunters / Trappers)

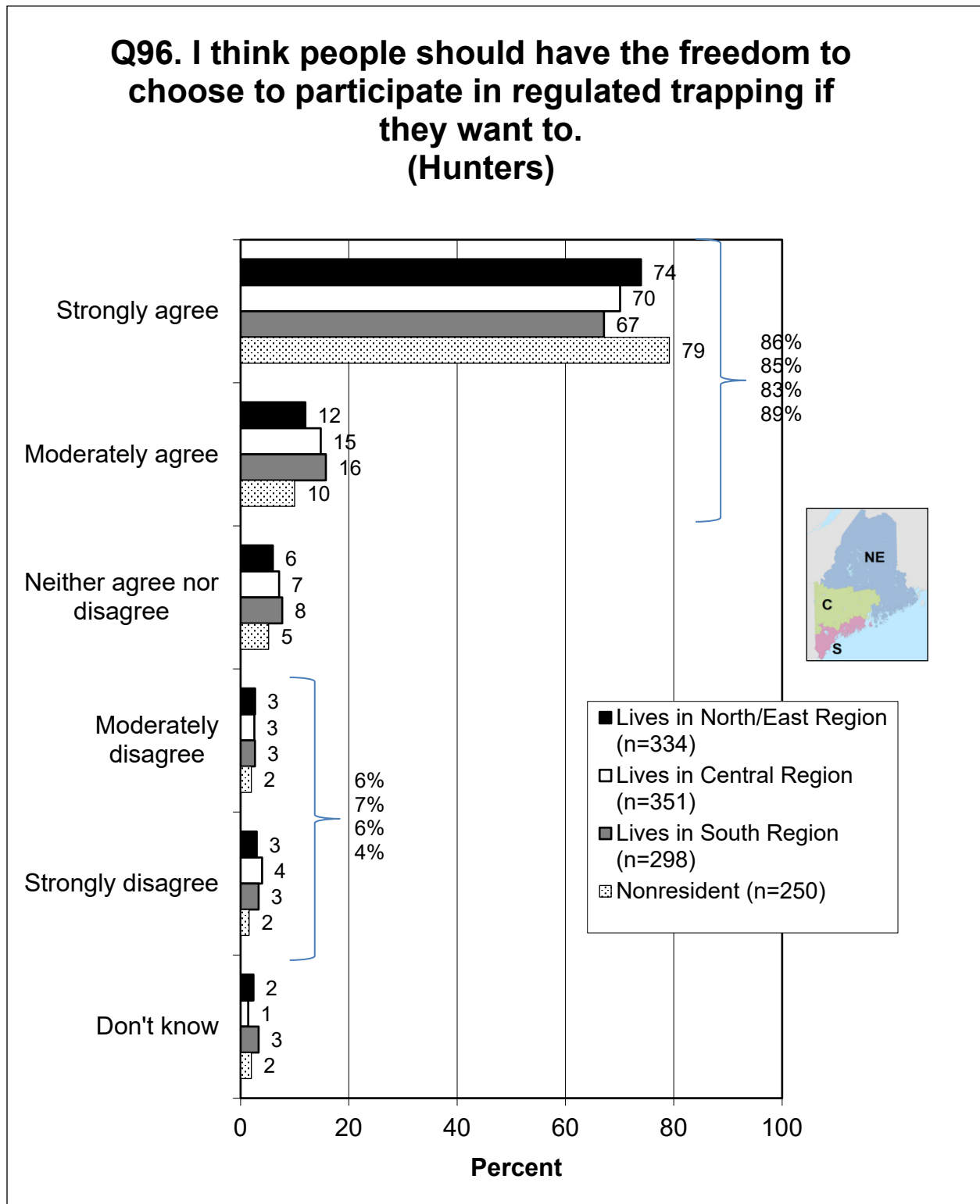


Figure 4.33. Opinion on Rights of Others to Trap, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

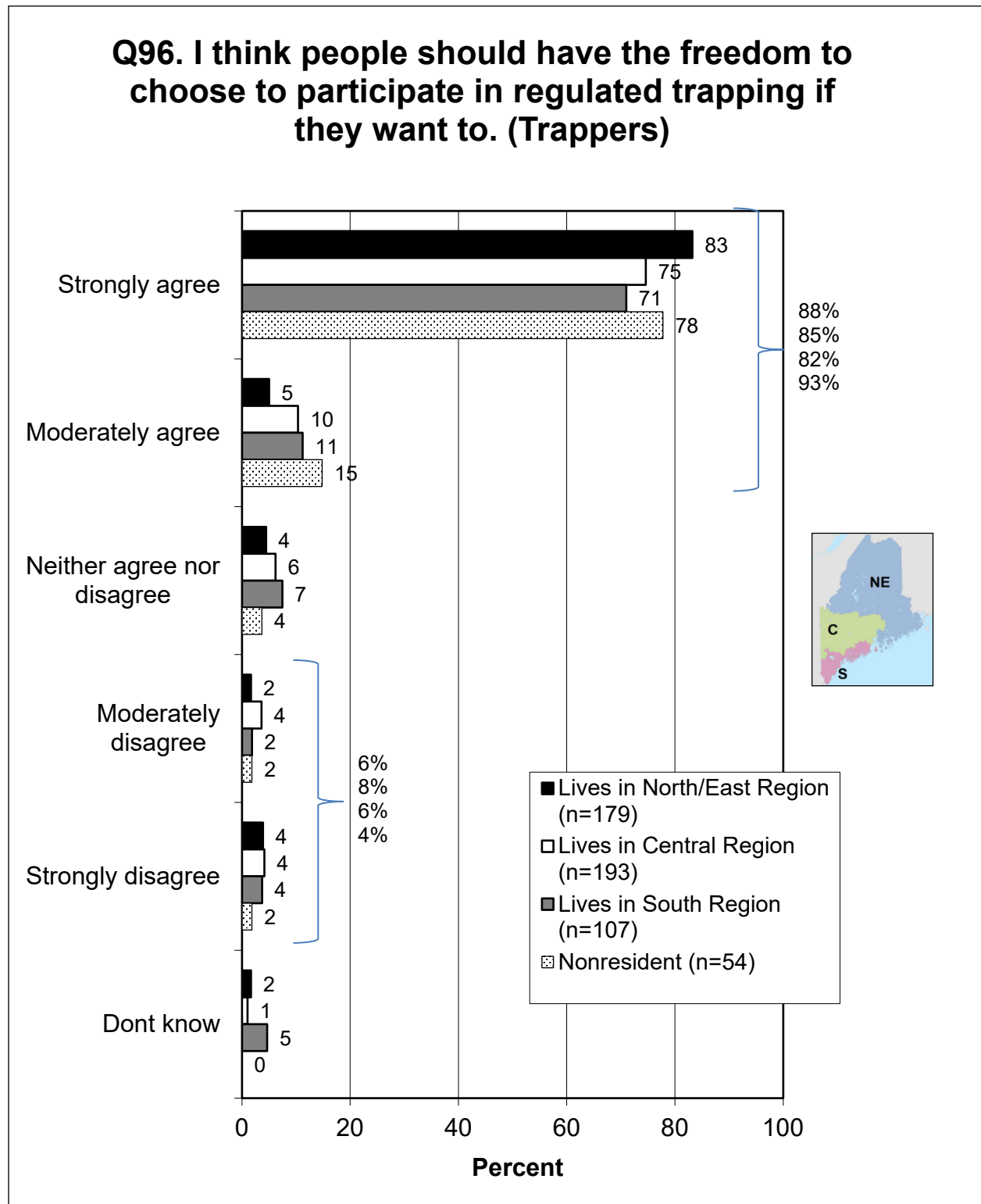


Figure 4.34. Opinion on Rights of Others to Trap, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Awareness that trapping is regulated by the Department is almost universal among hunters and trappers, with 97% and 99%, respectively, being aware of this fact (Figure 4.35). This is true across regions (Figures 4.36 and 4.37).

Three quarters of hunters who have not trapped know or have known a person who is a trapper or who has trapped wild animals (Figure 4.38). A greater percentage of North/East Region and Central Region hunters know or have known a trapper, compared to the South Region and to nonresident trappers (Figure 4.39).

A majority of hunters (67%) and trappers (59%) agree that regulated trapping is okay if the animals die quickly, while 8% and 11%, respectively, disagree (Figure 4.40). A large percentage of both groups responded neutrally. Regionally, North/East Region and nonresident hunters and trappers have higher percentages agreeing, compared to Central and South Region hunters and trappers (Figures 4.41 and 4.42). Similar majorities of hunters (69%) and trappers (71%) agree that trapping is okay if animals that are accidentally caught can be released (Figure 4.43). There are no marked differences regionally among hunters (Figure 4.44), but there is a difference regionally among trappers, with nonresident trappers having the highest percentage agreeing (Figure 4.45).

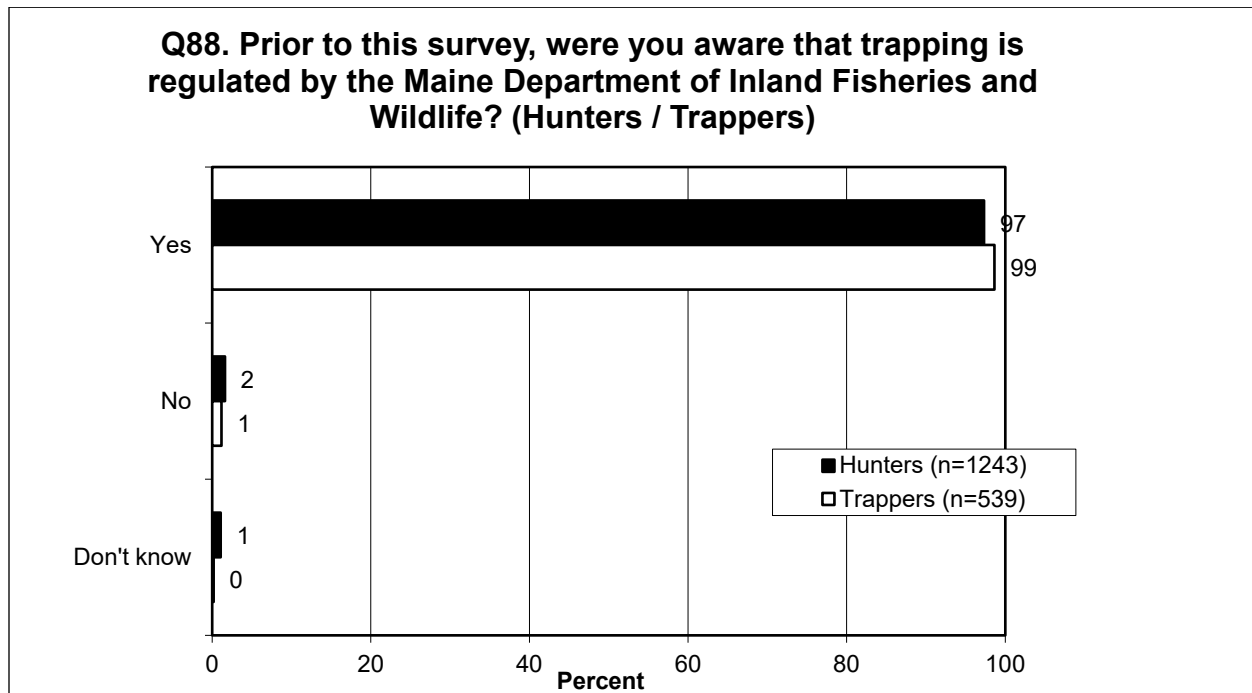


Figure 4.35. Awareness That Trapping Is Regulated by the Department (Hunters / Trappers)

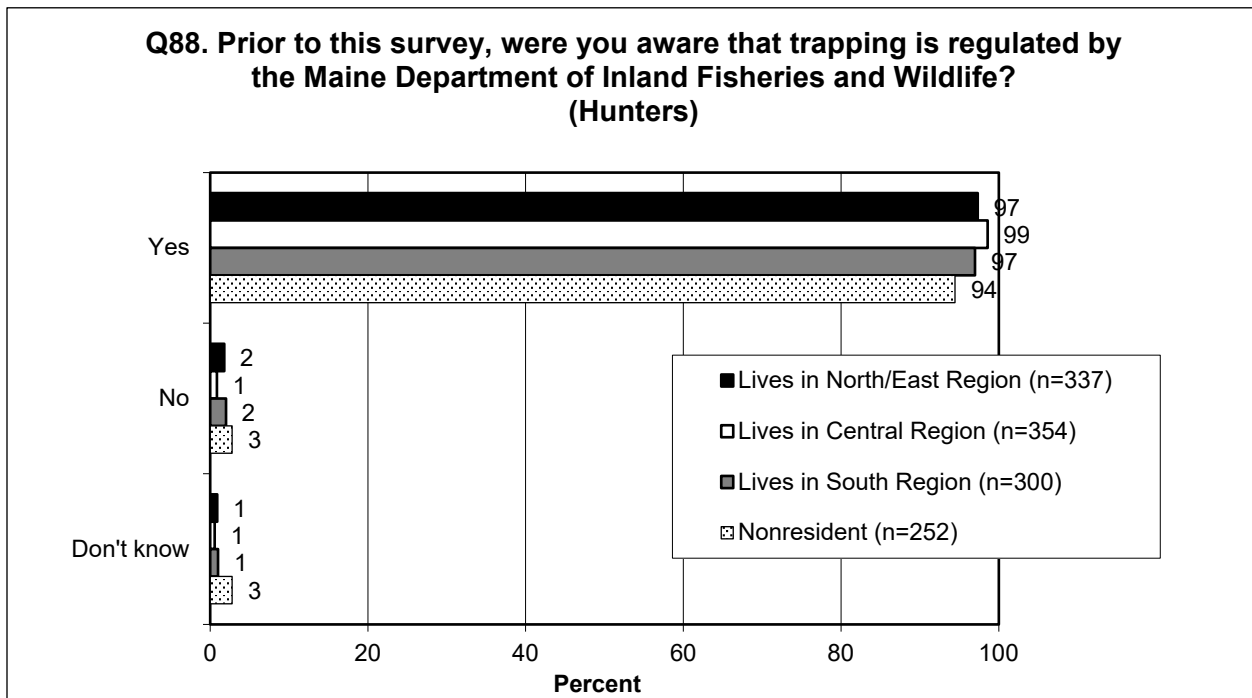


Figure 4.36. Awareness That Trapping Is Regulated by the Department, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

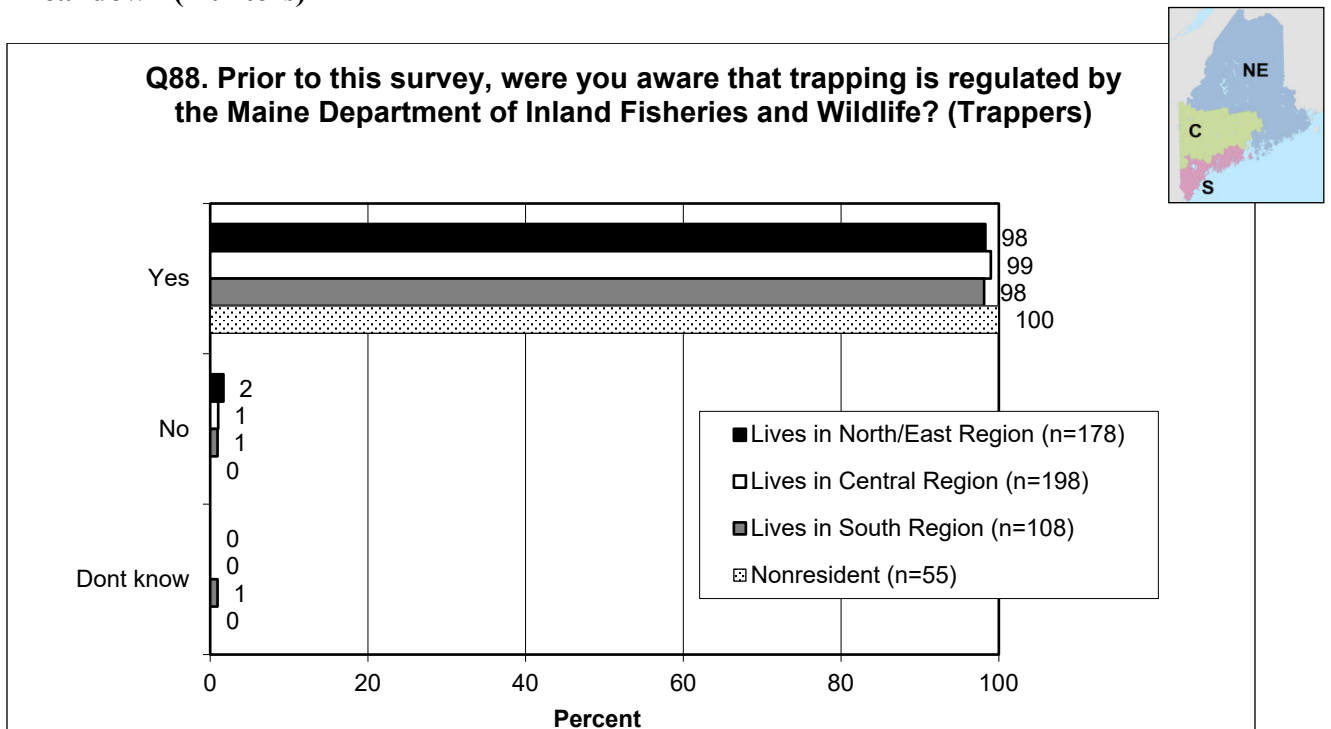


Figure 4.37. Awareness That Trapping Is Regulated by the Department, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

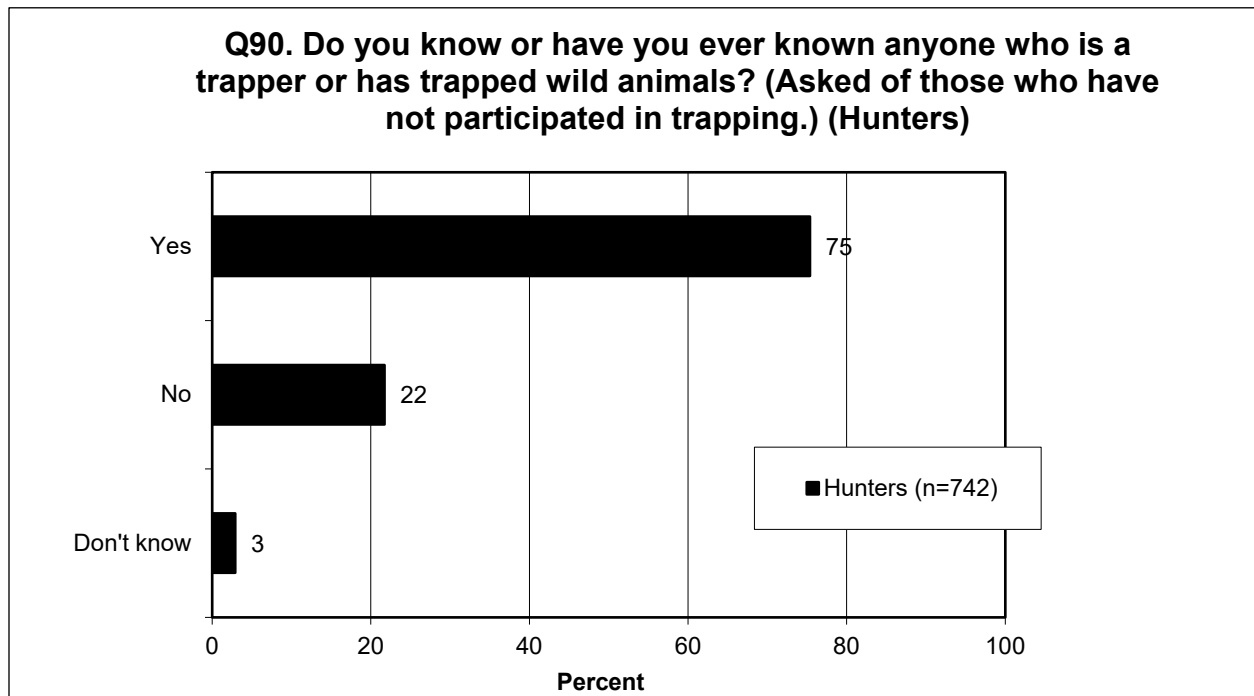


Figure 4.38. Knowing a Trapper (Hunters)

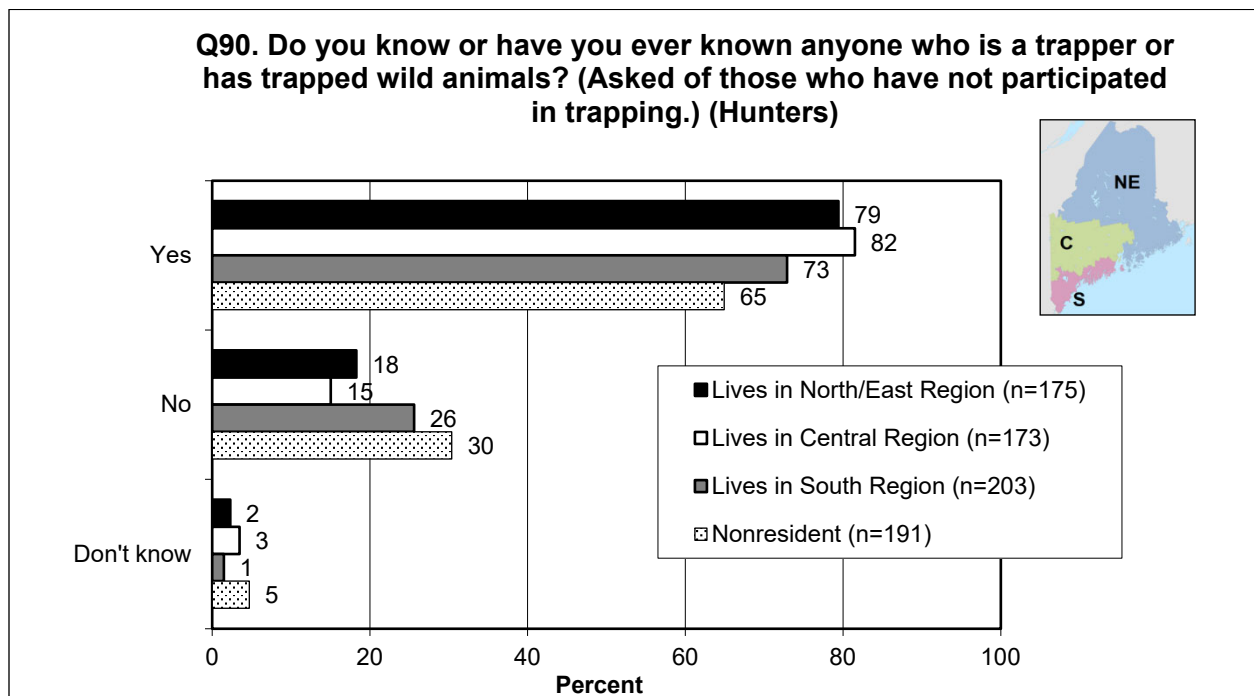


Figure 4.39. Knowing a Trapper, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

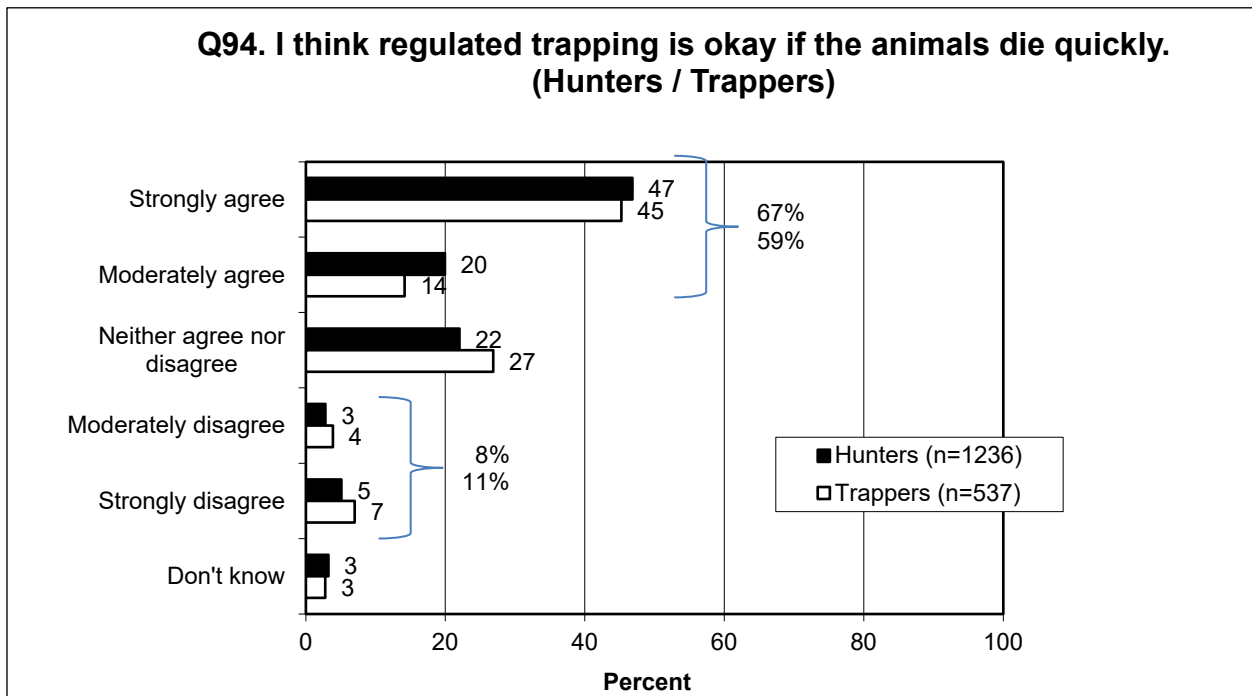


Figure 4.40. Opinion on Trapping If the Animal Dies Quickly (Hunters / Trappers)

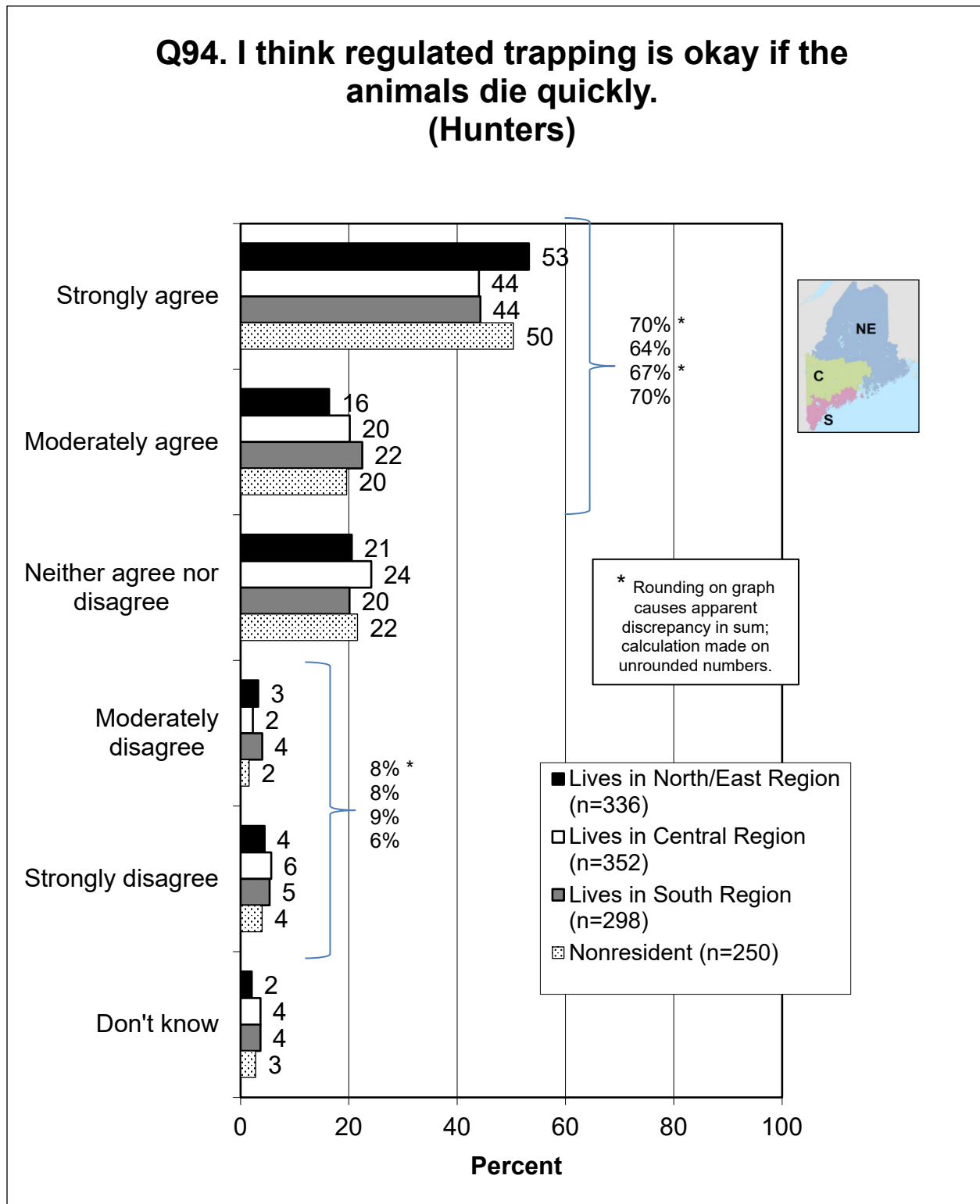


Figure 4.41. Opinion on Trapping If the Animal Dies Quickly, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

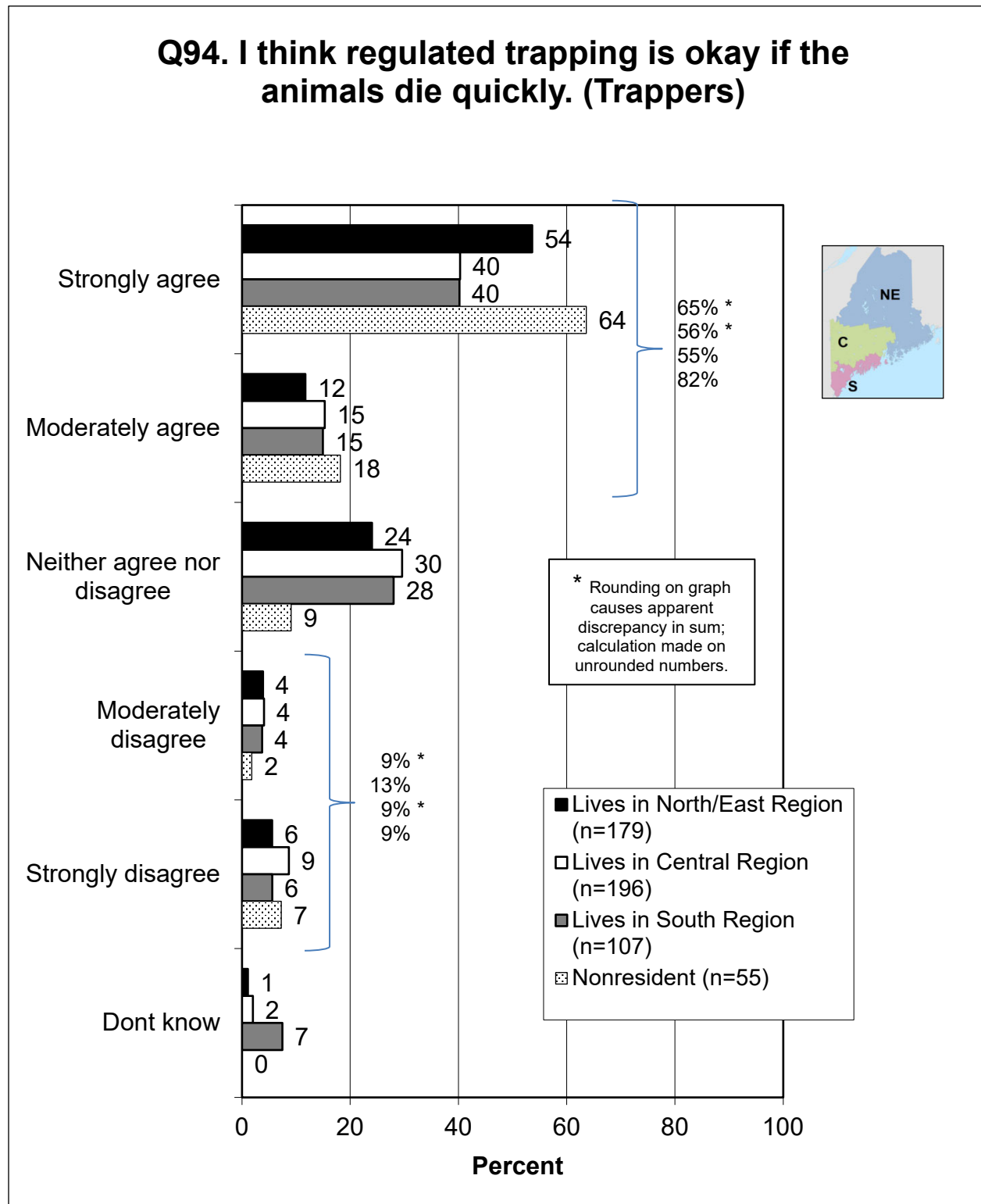


Figure 4.42. Opinion on Trapping If the Animal Dies Quickly, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

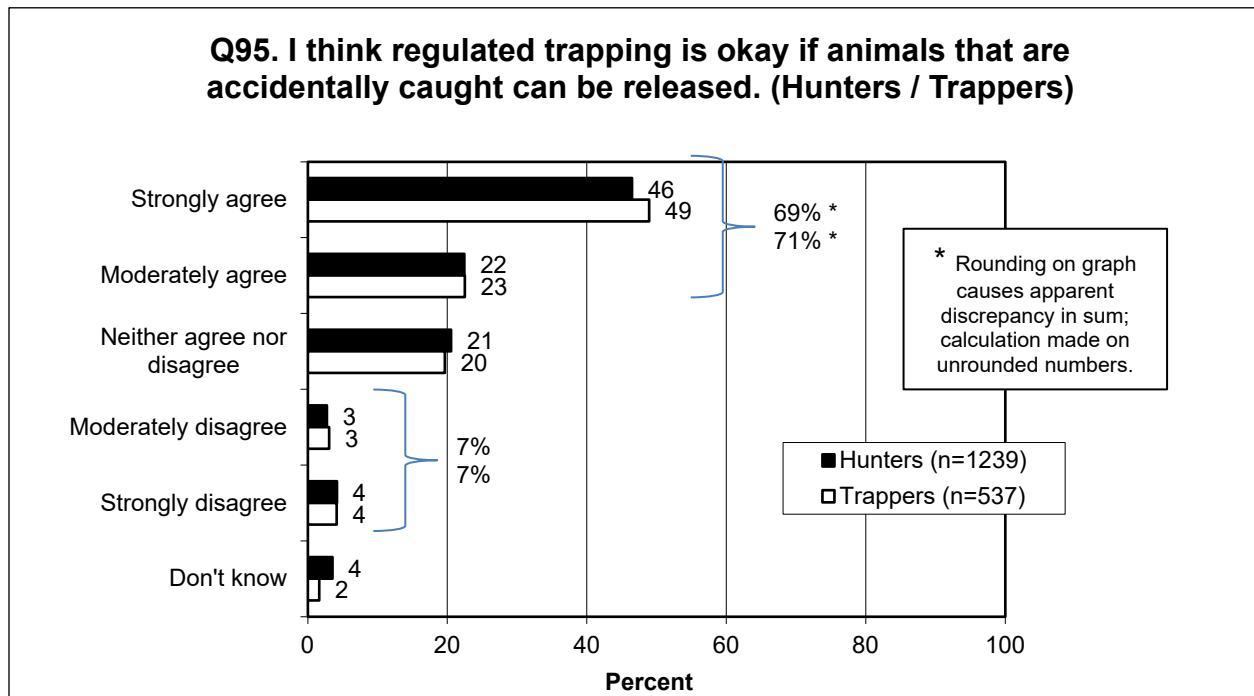


Figure 4.43. Opinions on Trapping If Accidentally Caught Animals Can Be Released (Hunters / Trappers)

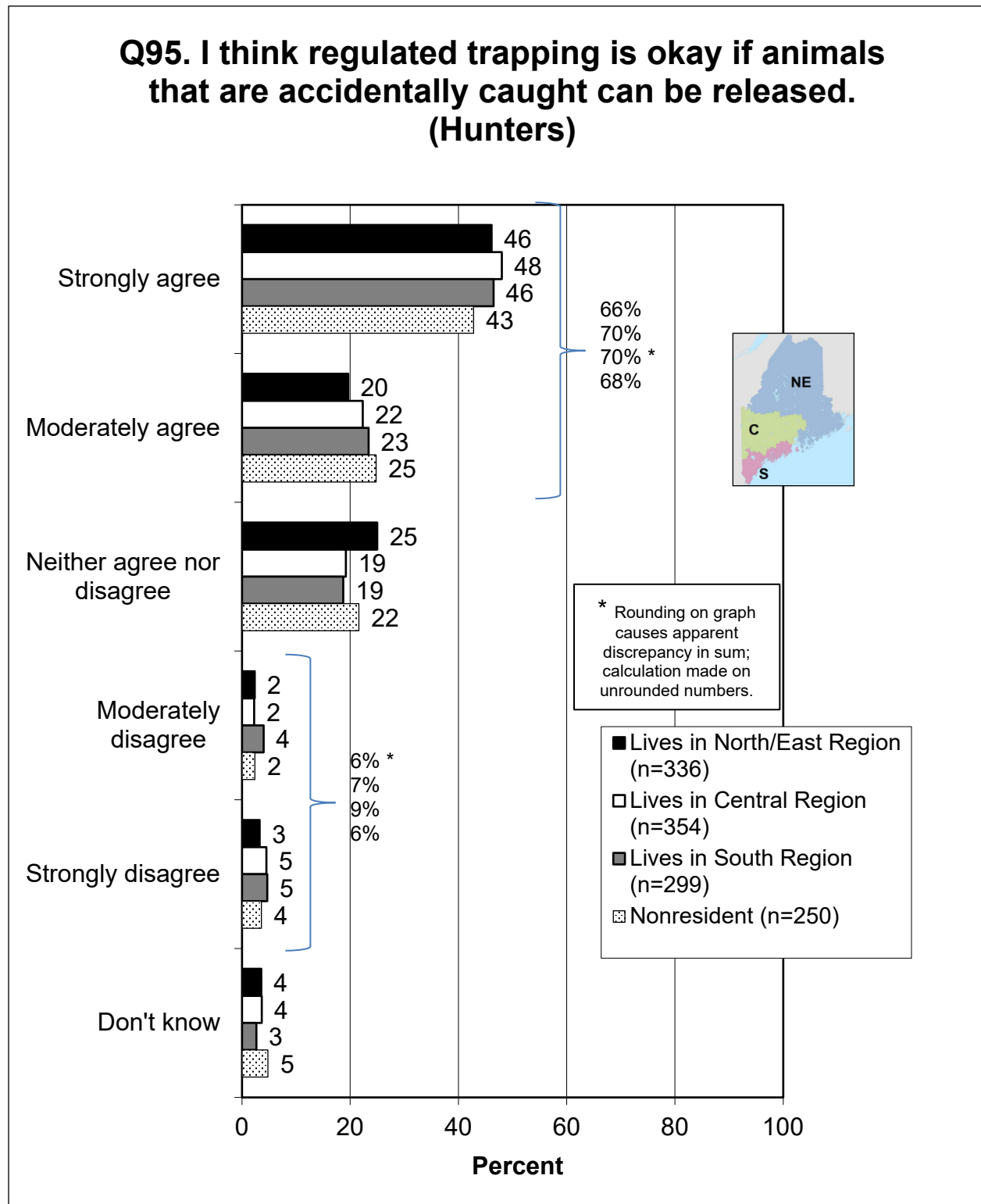


Figure 4.44. Opinions on Trapping If Accidentally Caught Animals Can Be Released, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

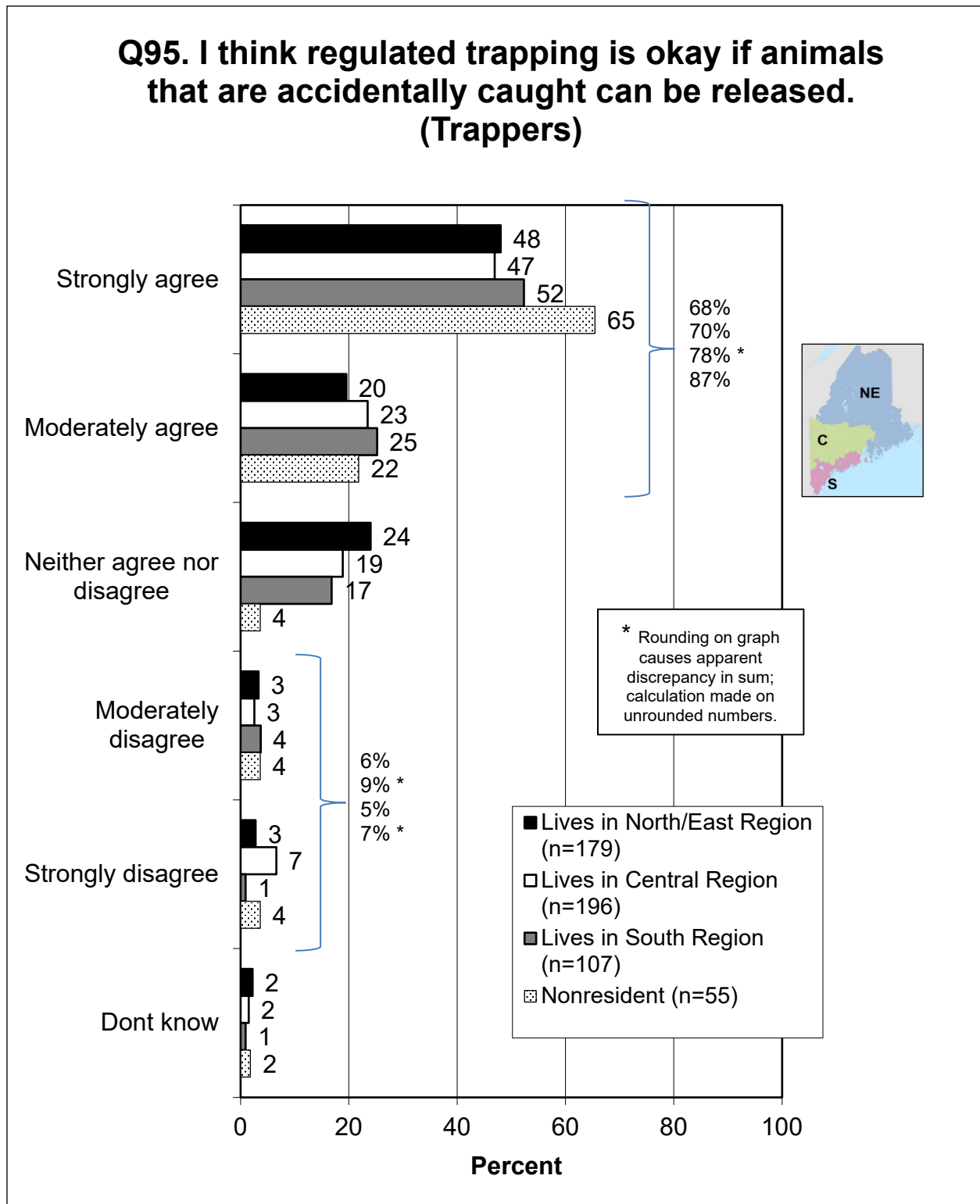


Figure 4.45. Opinions on Trapping If Accidentally Caught Animals Can Be Released, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Most hunters (63%) and three quarters of trappers (75%) agree that trapping is more humane, compared to 10 years previous, because of improvements to traps (Figure 4.46). There are higher percentages in the neither response than in the disagree responses combined. The hunting regional breakdown shows little difference among the regions (Figure 4.47); however, the trapping regional breakdown shows that North/East Region trappers have the lowest percentage who *strongly* agree (Figure 4.48).

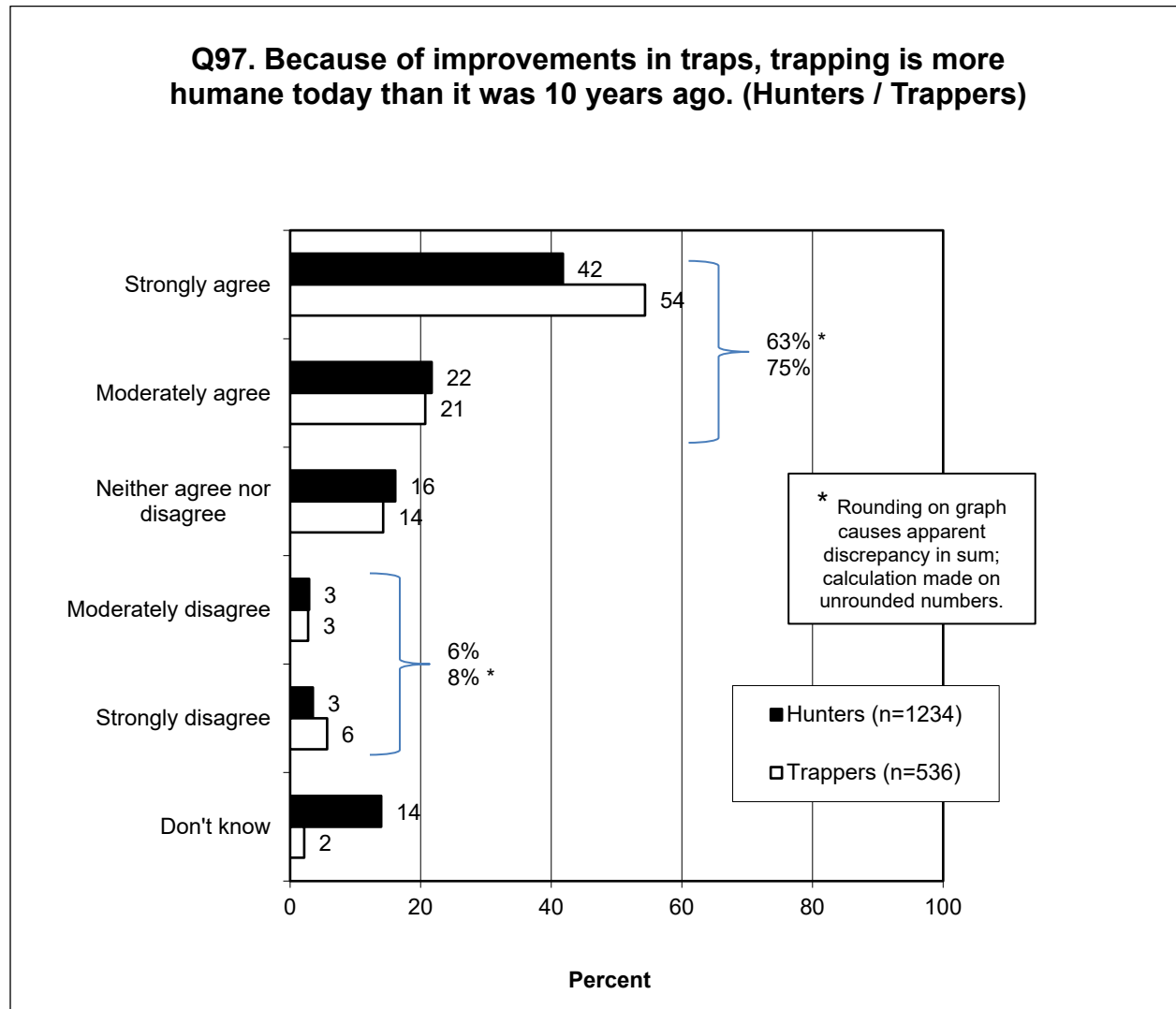


Figure 4.46. Opinion on Trapping If Informed That Improvements in Traps Make It More Humane Than It Was 10 Years Ago (Hunters / Trappers)

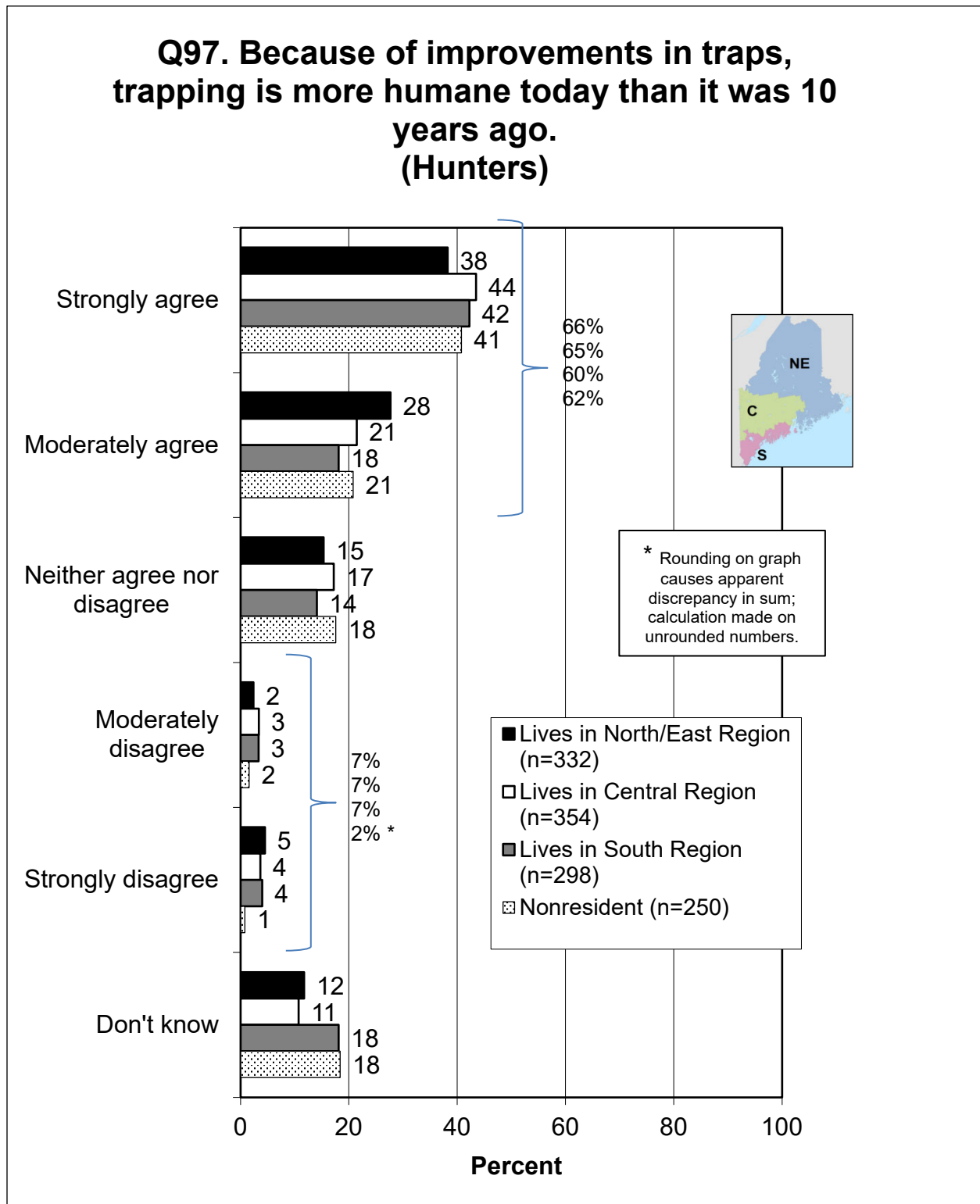


Figure 4.47. Opinion on Trapping If Informed That Improvements in Traps Make It More Humane Than It Was 10 Years Ago, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

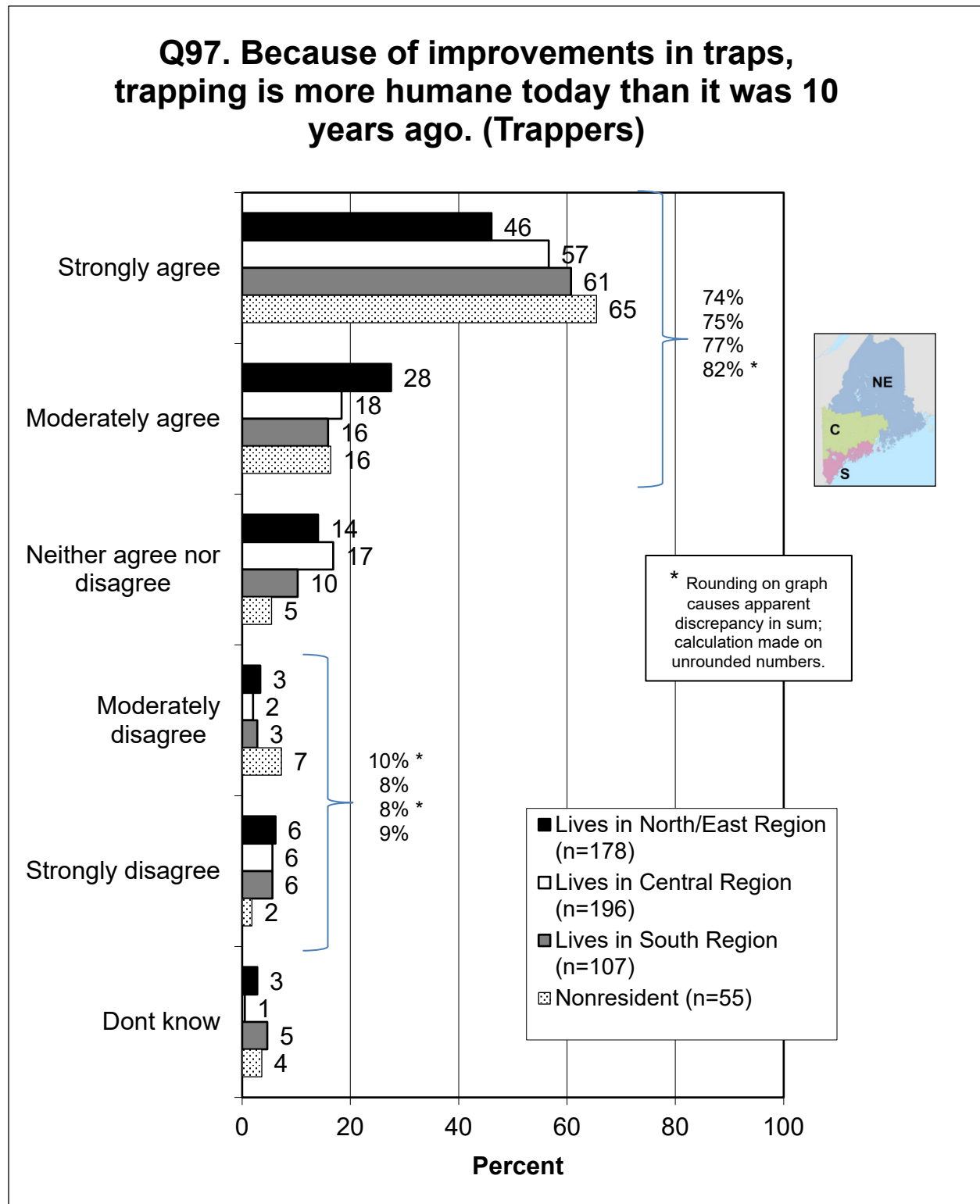


Figure 4.48. Opinion on Trapping If Informed That Improvements in Traps Make It More Humane Than It Was 10 Years Ago, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

While the majority of hunters (57%) and trappers (68%) disagree that endangered species are frequently used to make fur clothing, there are still substantial percentages who are misinformed on this issue—with 12% of hunters and 10% of trappers agreeing (Figure 4.49). In fact, summing all of the responses other than the disagree responses shows that 43% of hunters and 32% of trappers did not correctly disagree with the statement. There are no marked differences regionally among hunters (Figure 4.50), but there are among trappers, with North/East and South Region trappers having the highest percentages who are misinformed on the issue (i.e., the highest percentage who did not disagree) (Figure 4.51).

In a similar question about perceptions of trapping's effect on endangered species, the majority of hunters (61%) and trappers (73%) disagree that regulated trapping can still cause wildlife species to become endangered or extinct (Figure 4.52). Again, though, that means that 39% of hunters and 27% of trappers have a misperception about this issue (i.e., they did not disagree). Regional results among hunters shows that South Region hunters have a slightly lower percentage disagreeing (Figure 4.53). The in-state regions are about the same among trappers, although nonresident trappers have a slightly higher percentage who correctly disagree (Figure 4.54).

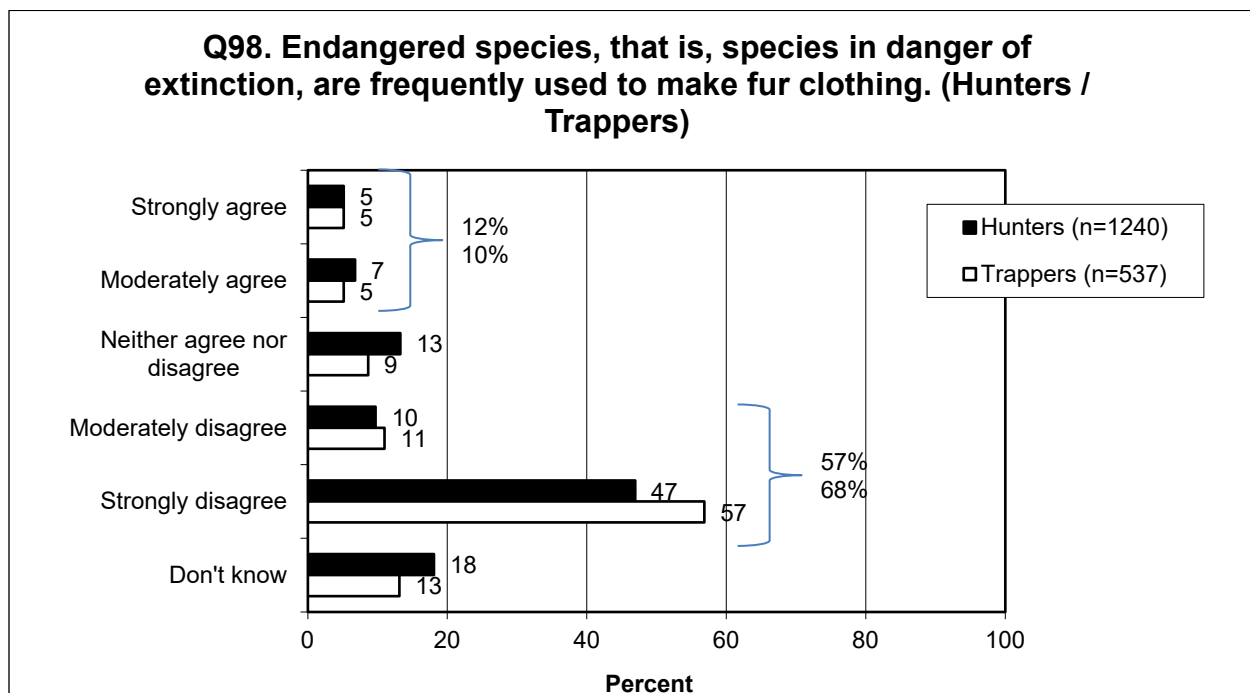


Figure 4.49. Perceptions Regarding Trapping and Endangered Species (Hunters / Trappers)

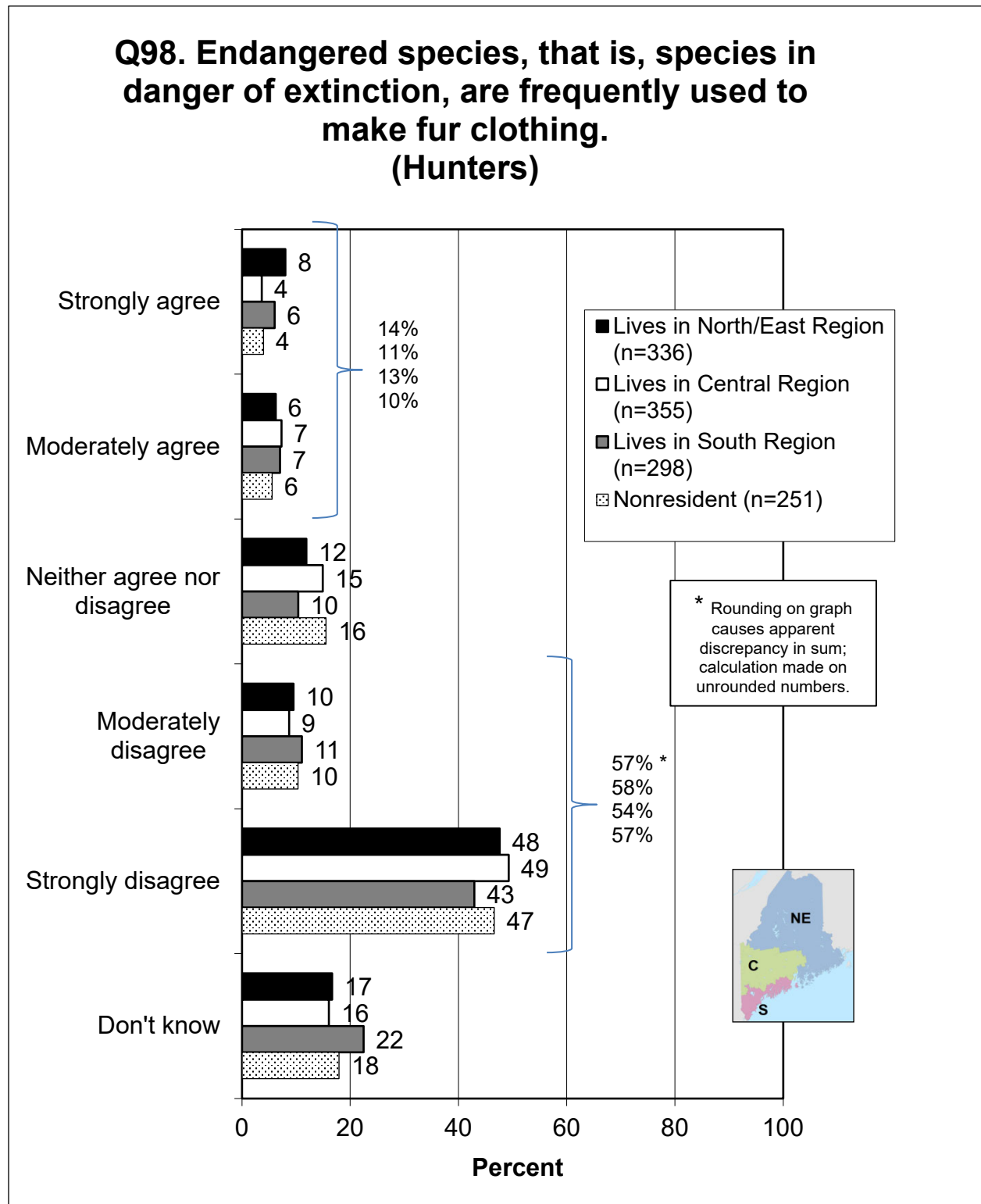


Figure 4.50. Perceptions Regarding Trapping and Endangered Species, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

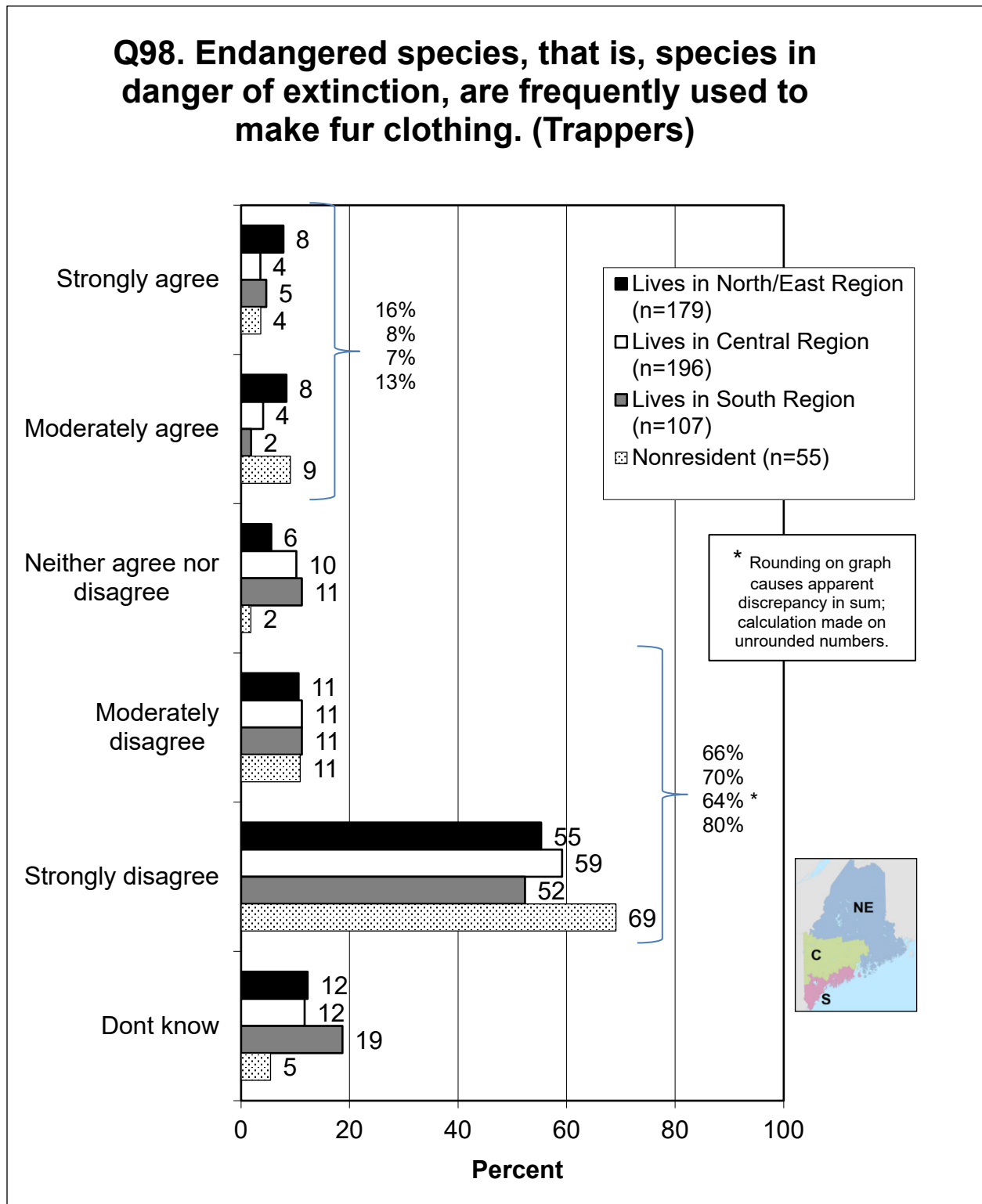


Figure 4.51. Perceptions Regarding Trapping and Endangered Species, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

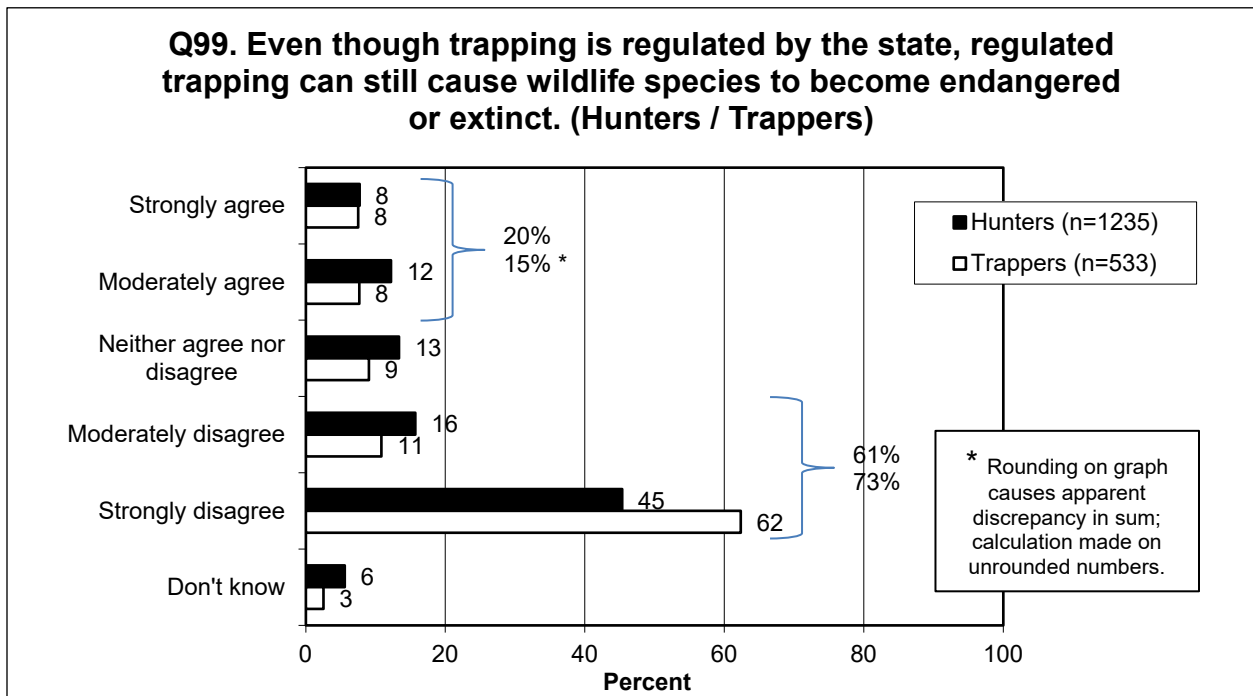


Figure 4.52. Perceptions Regarding Whether Trapping Endangers Species Populations (Hunters / Trappers)

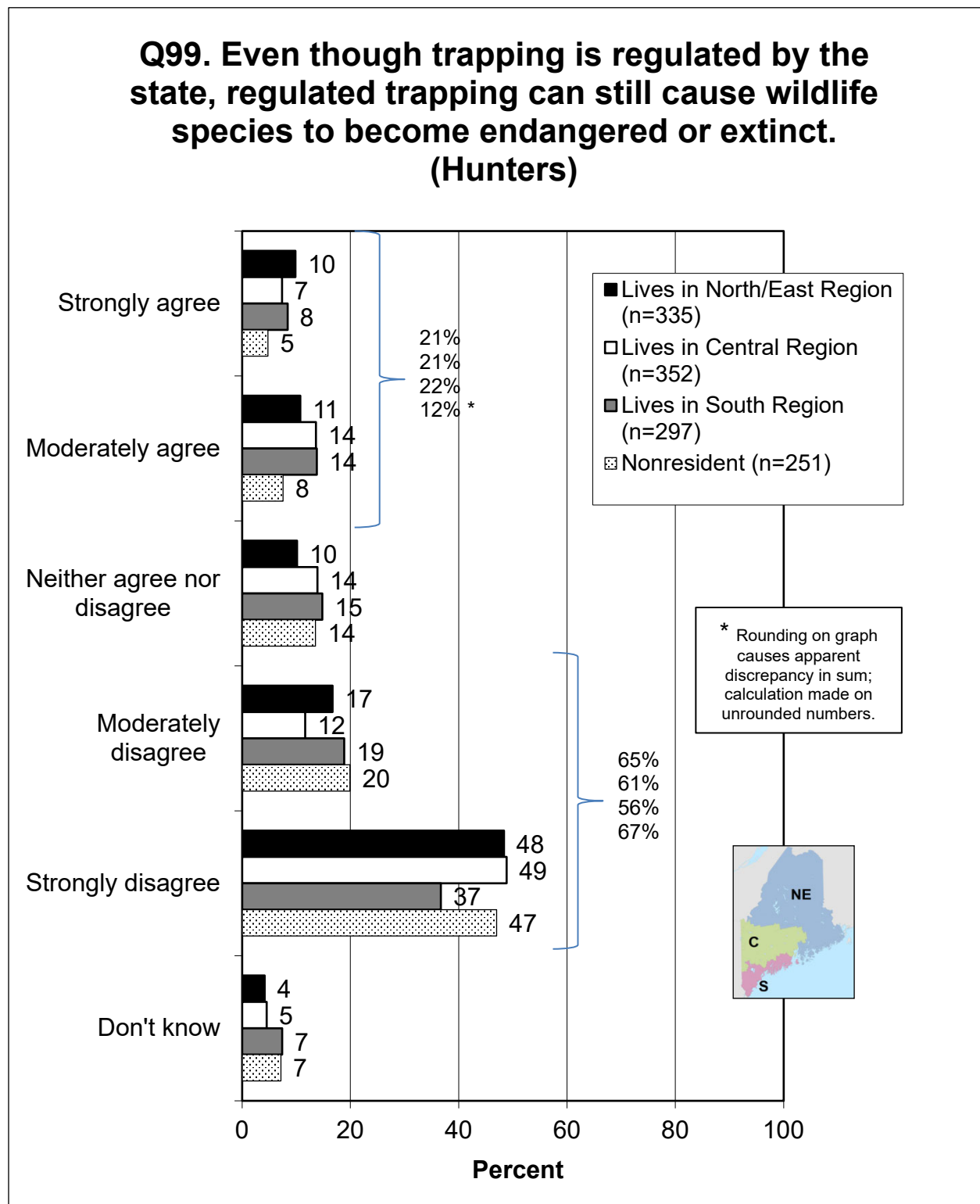


Figure 4.53. Perceptions Regarding Whether Trapping Endangers Species Populations, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

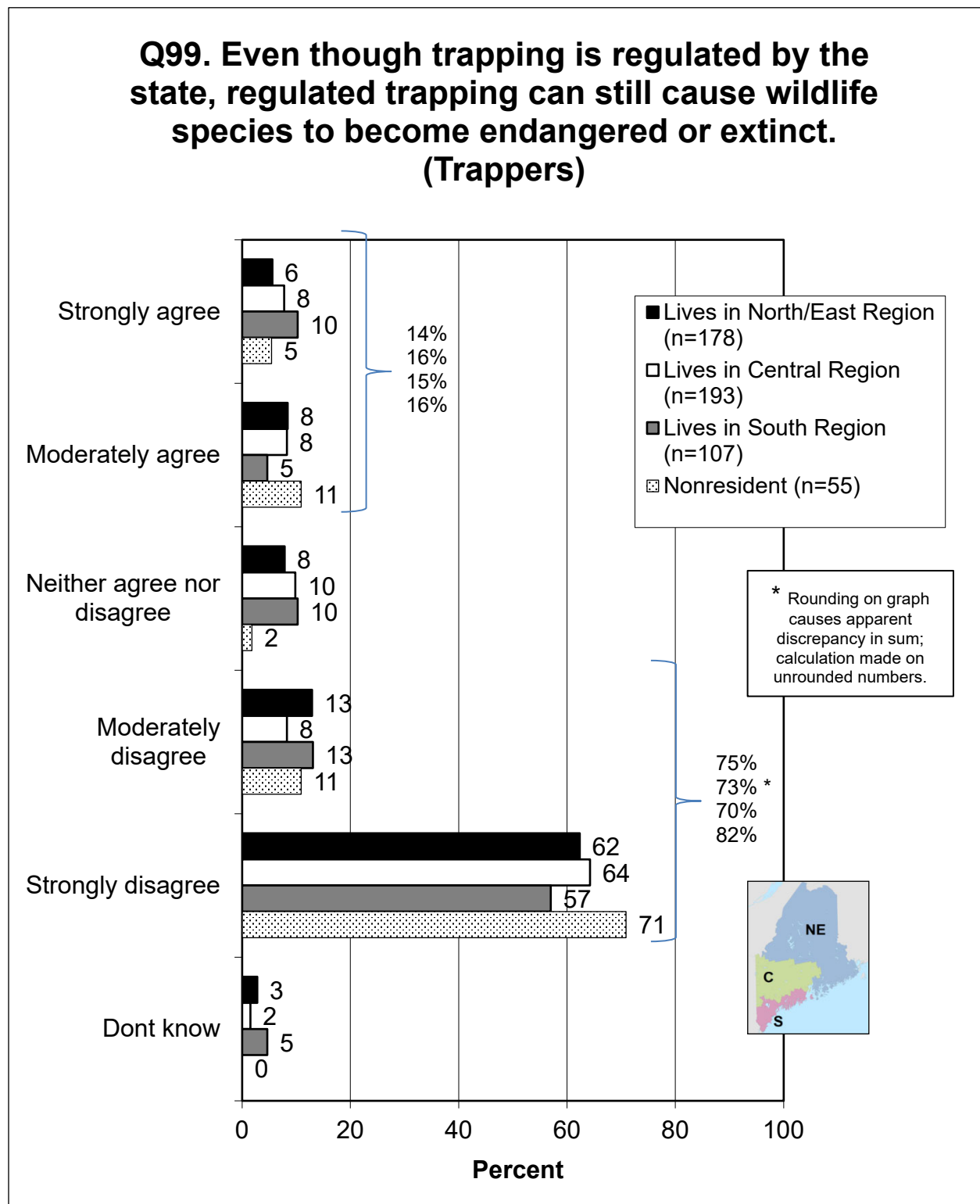


Figure 4.54. Perceptions Regarding Whether Trapping Endangers Species Populations, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

KNOWLEDGE OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARD FURBEARER SPECIES

The survey asked about ten species: beaver, bobcat, coyote, fox, raccoon, skunk, fisher, marten, otter, and muskrat. Each is discussed on its own, and then some summary tables are presented showing all the species together.

In this section, the regional breakdown does not show nonresidents because the questions are meant to pertain to Maine itself (e.g., is the population too high, about right, or too low where you live).

BEAVER

Trappers' self-professed knowledge level about beavers is higher than that of hunters (Figure 4.55). Regionally, the highest knowledge levels are among Central Region hunters and trappers (Figures 4.56 and 4.57).

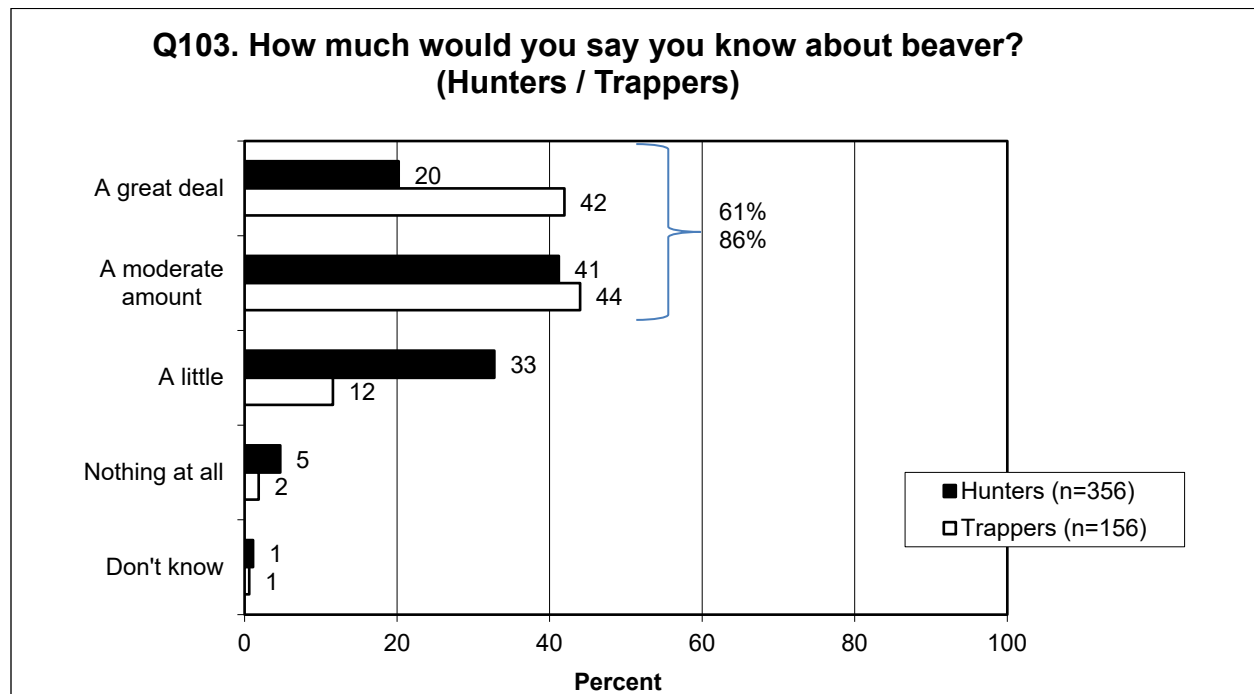


Figure 4.55. Knowledge of Beavers (Hunters / Trappers)

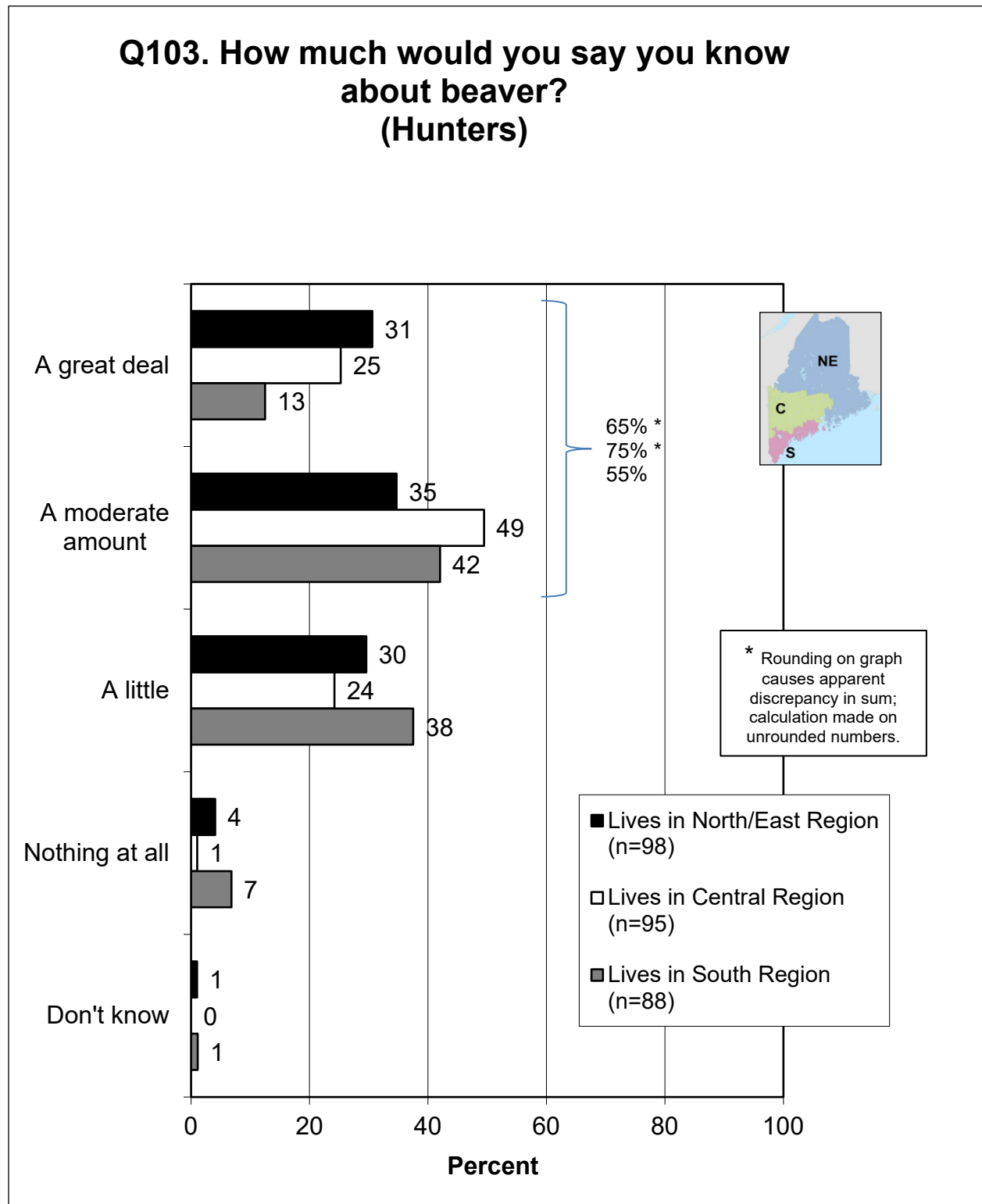


Figure 4.56. Knowledge of Beavers, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

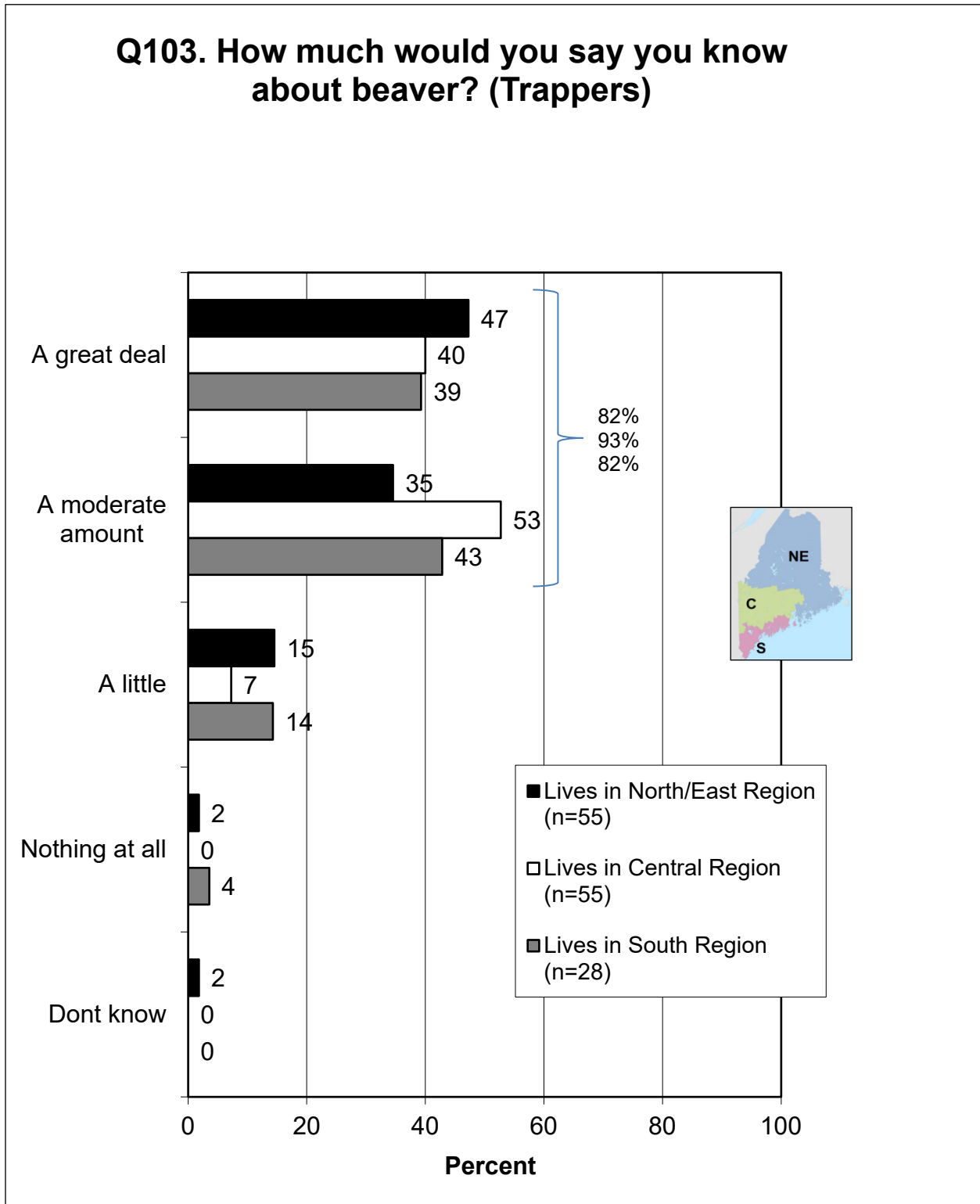


Figure 4.57. Knowledge of Beavers, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Hunters and trappers are more likely to think that the beaver population is too high than too low, although the most common response for both groups is that the population is about right (Figure 4.58). North/East Region hunters and trappers have the highest percentages saying that the population is too high (Figures 4.59 and 4.60).

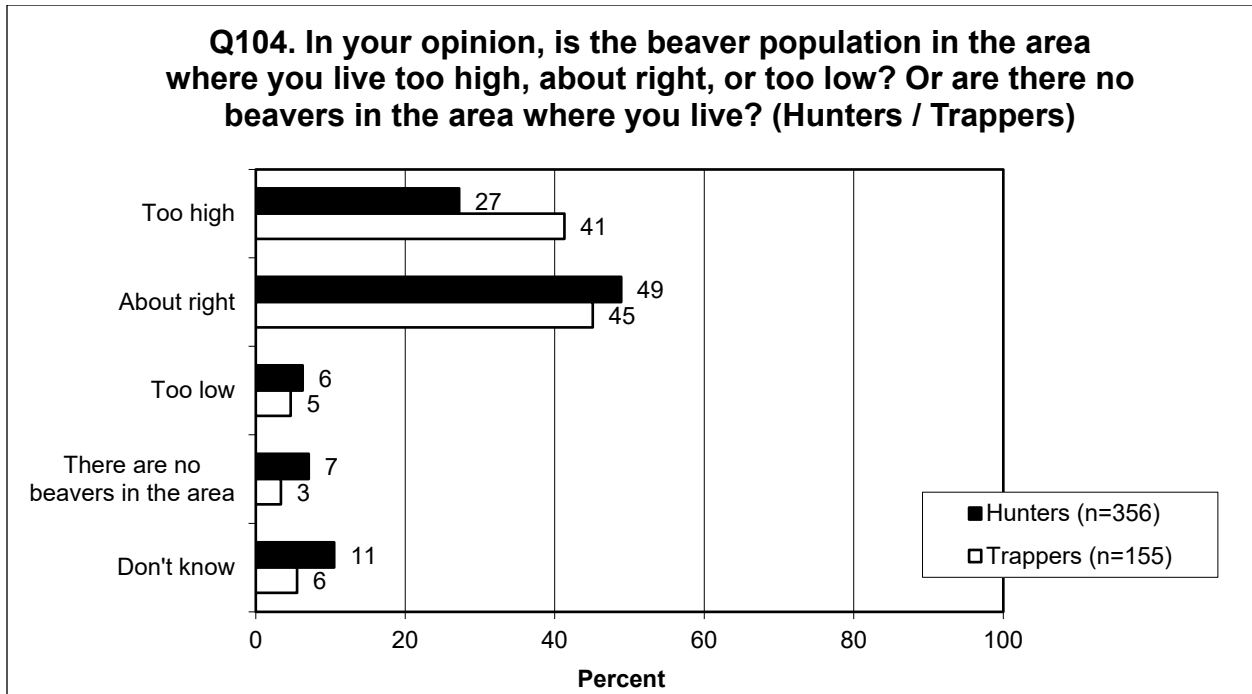


Figure 4.58. Opinion on the Beaver Population (Hunters / Trappers)

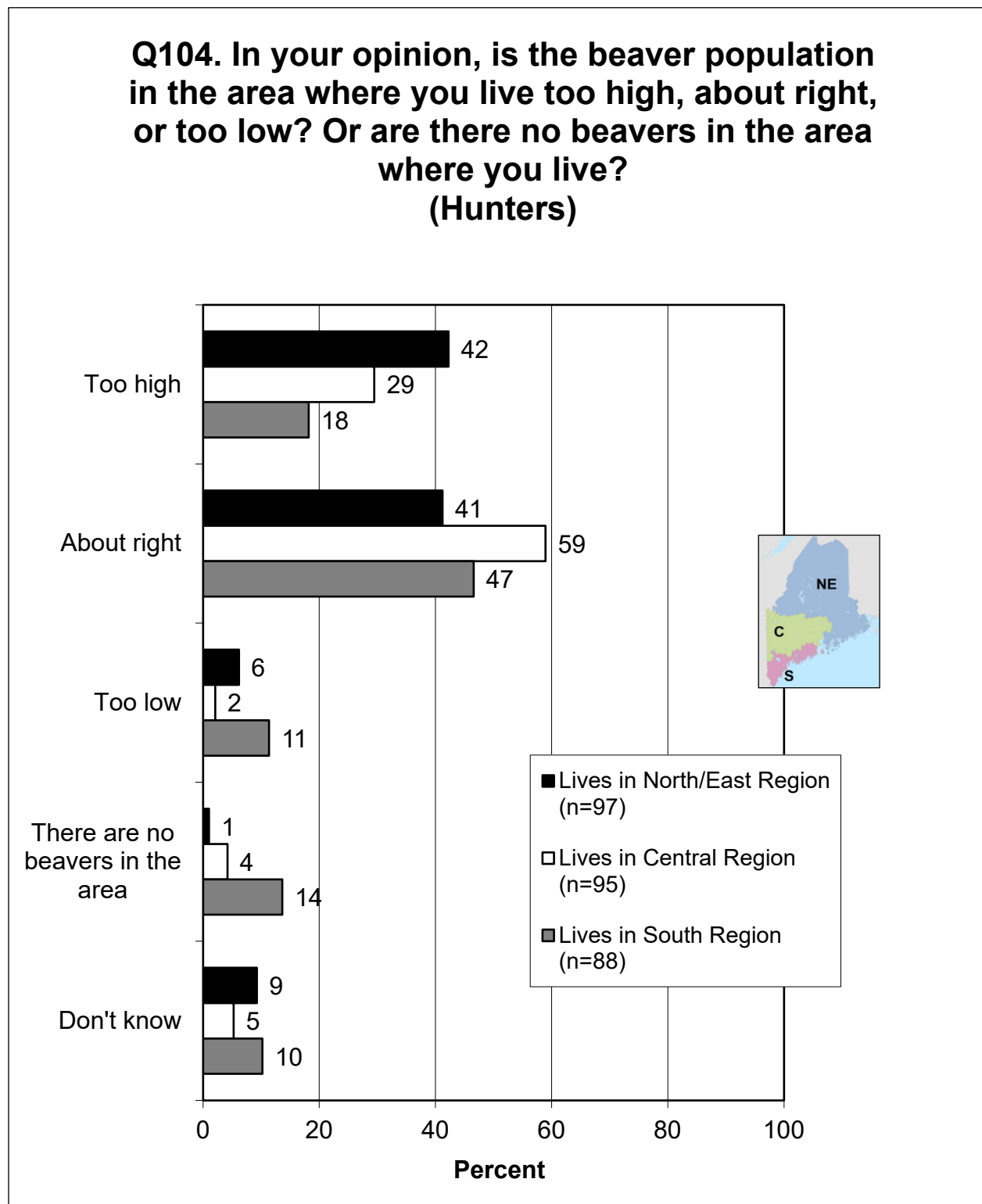


Figure 4.59. Opinion on the Beaver Population, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

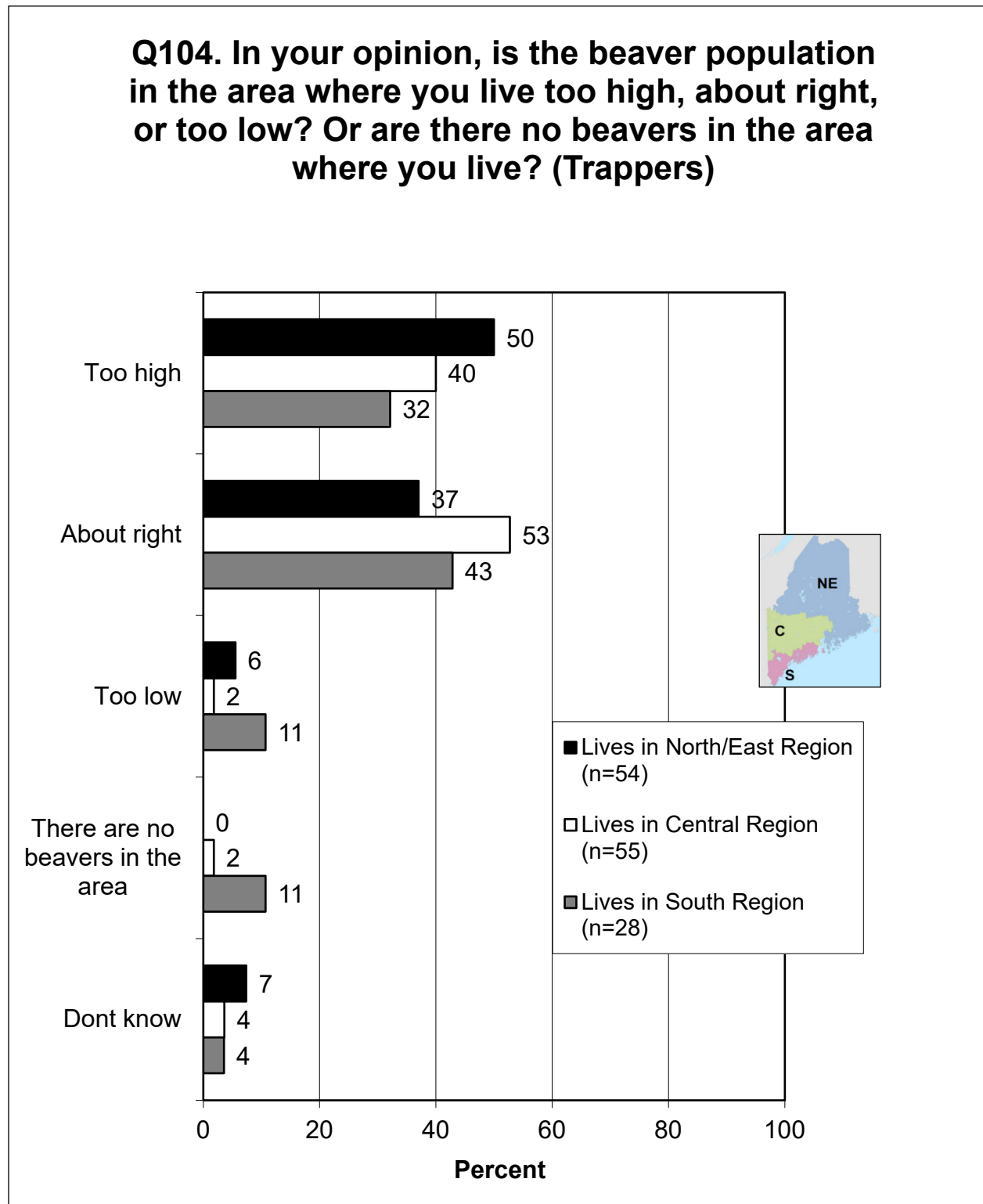


Figure 4.60. Opinion on the Beaver Population, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Support for regulated trapping as a method to help manage beaver populations is very high: 87% and 89% of hunters and trappers, respectively, support (Figure 4.61). The highest *strong* support is among North/East Region hunters and trappers (Figures 4.62 and 4.63).

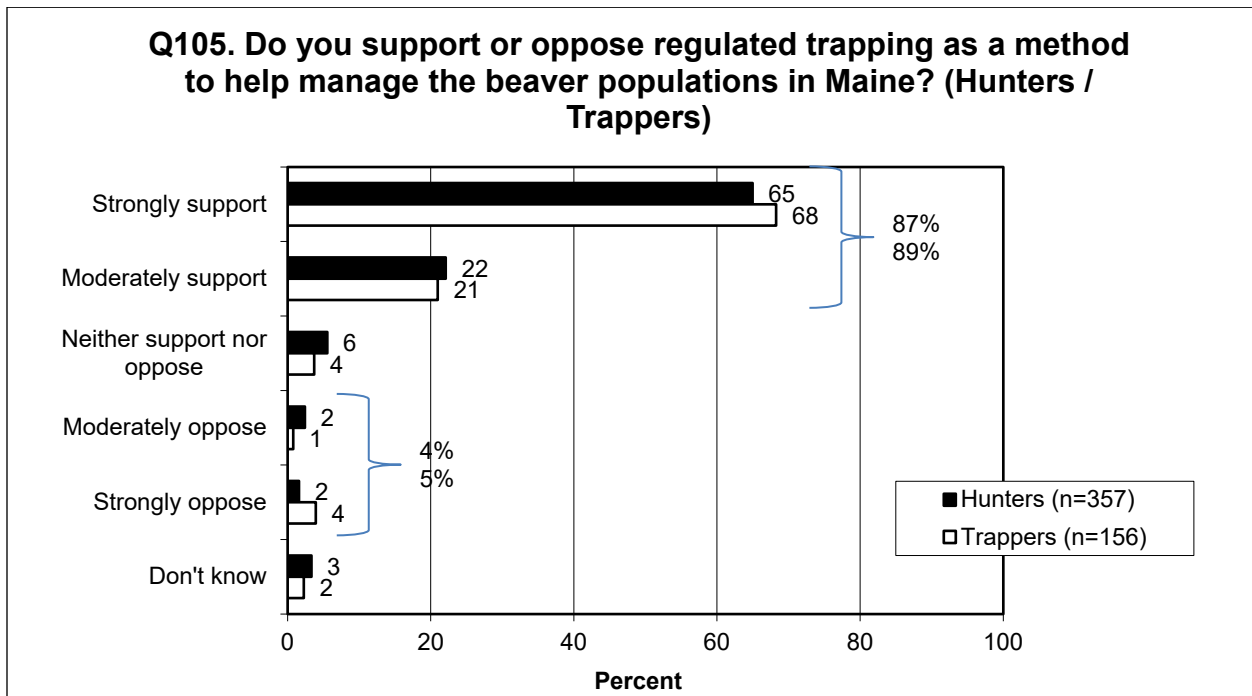


Figure 4.61. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Beaver Populations (Hunters / Trappers)

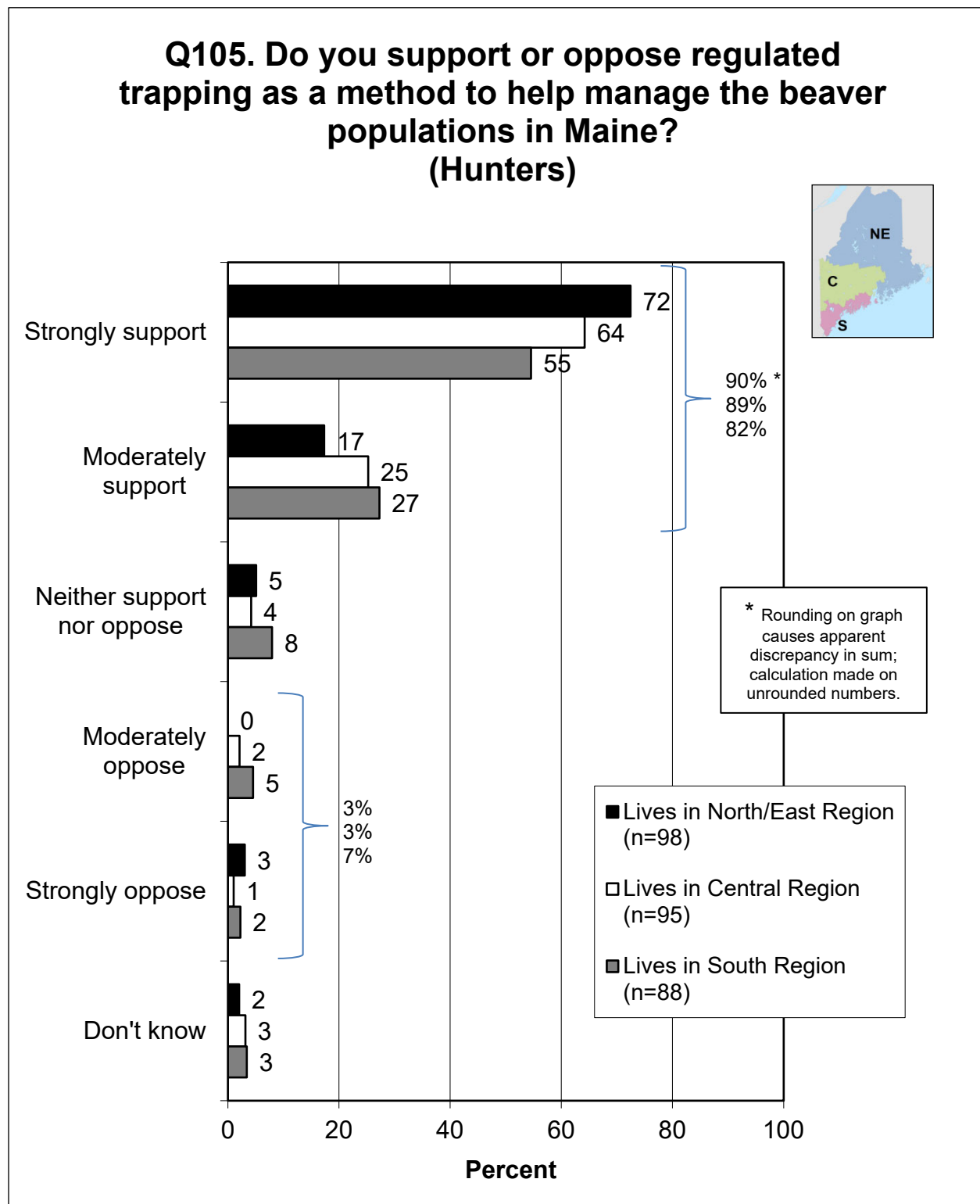


Figure 4.62. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Beaver Populations, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

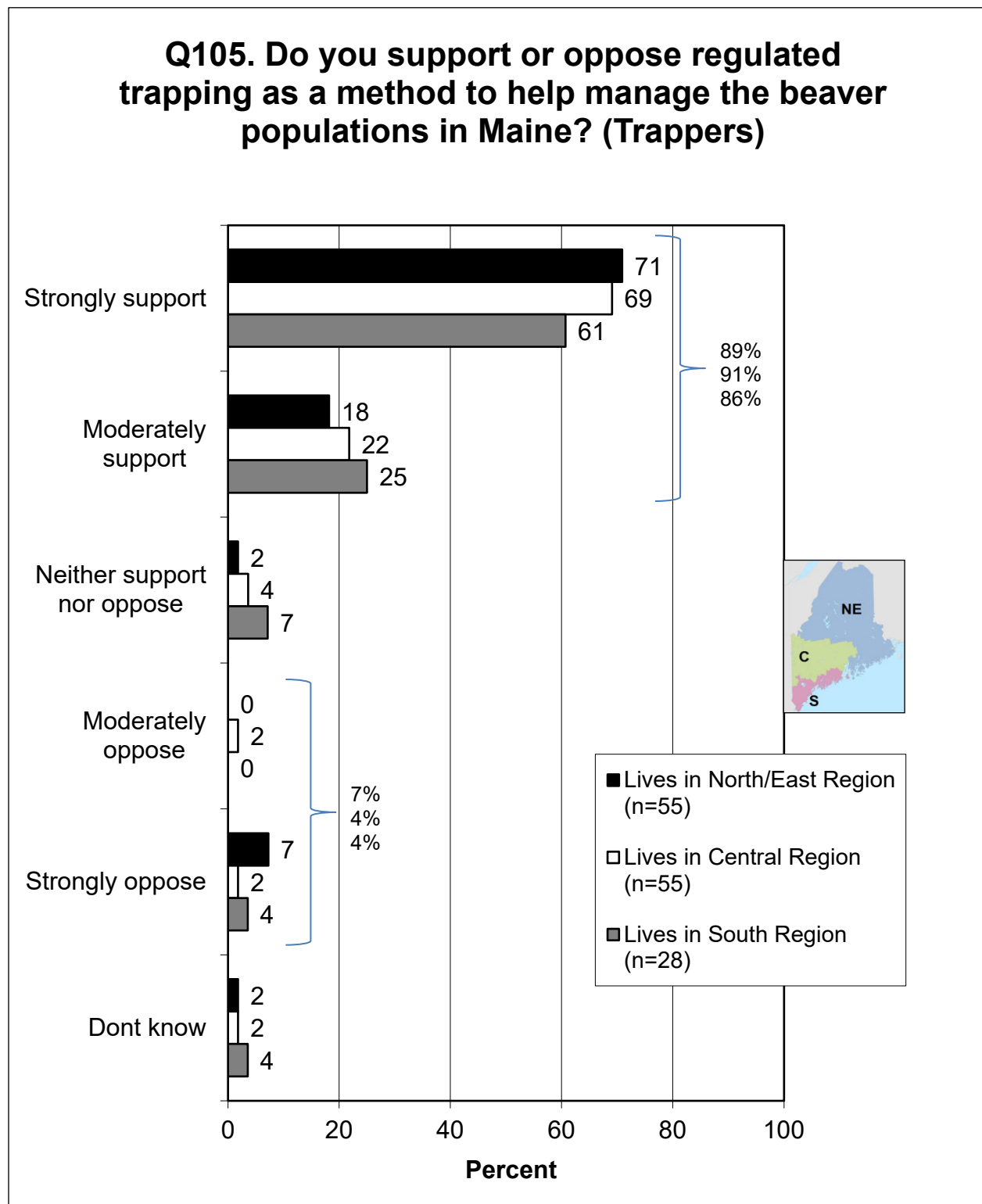


Figure 4.63. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Beaver Populations, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Hunters and trappers are more tolerant than intolerant of beavers (Figure 4.64). The regional breakdown shows a higher percentage of North/East Region hunters, compared to the other two in-state regions, who regard beavers as a nuisance (Figure 4.65). North/East and Central Region trappers have a higher percentage who like seeing beavers around but worry about the problems that they cause, compared to South Region trappers (Figure 4.66).

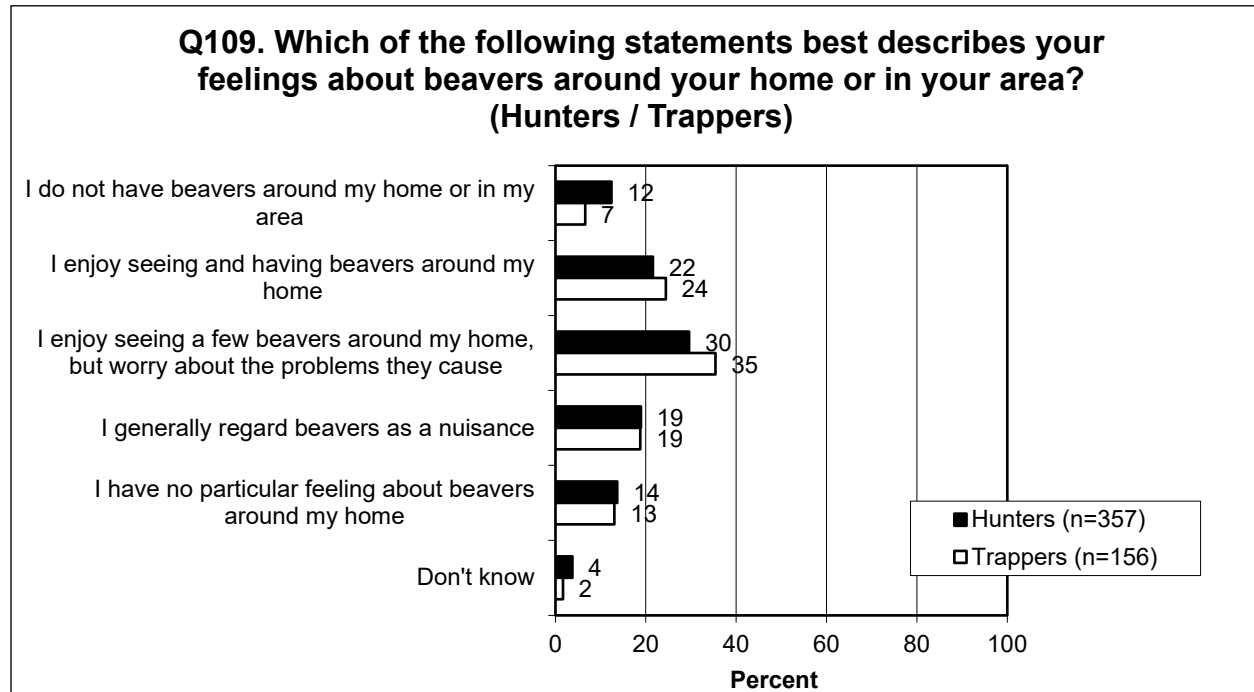


Figure 4.64. Feelings About Beavers (Hunters / Trappers)

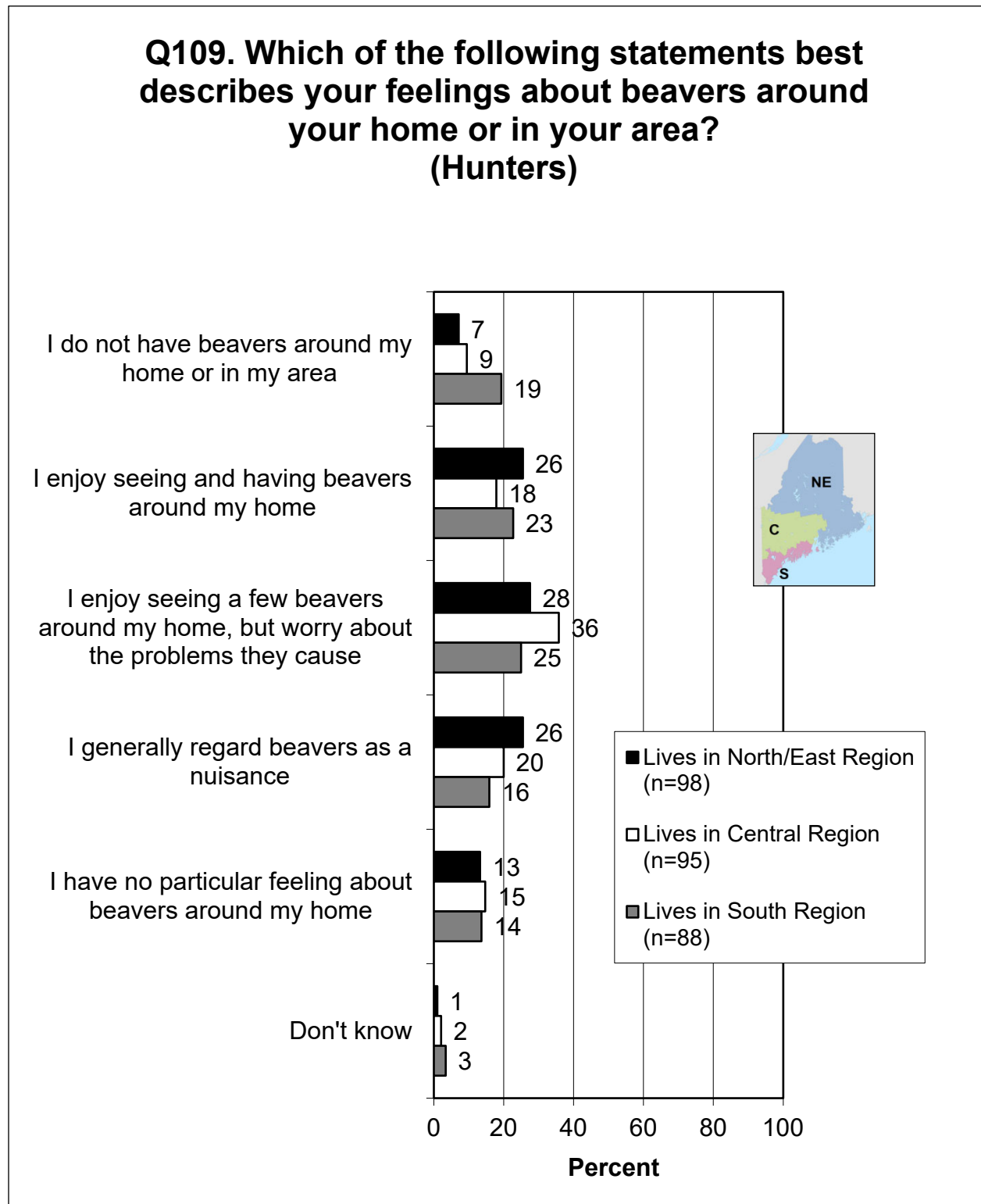


Figure 4.65. Feelings About Beavers, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

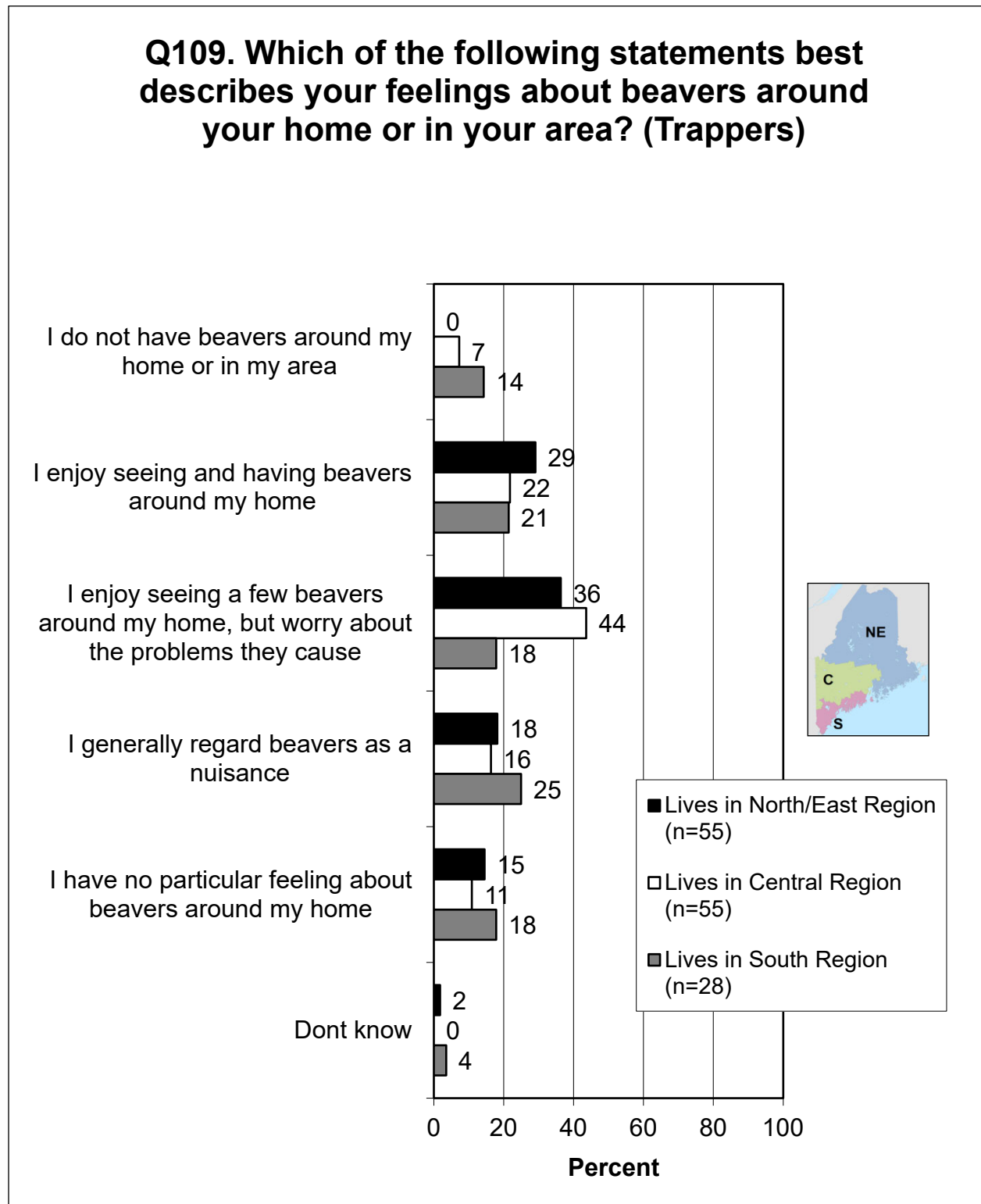


Figure 4.66. Feelings About Beavers, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

BOBCAT

Trappers' self-professed knowledge level about bobcats is just slightly higher than that of hunters (Figure 4.67). Regionally among hunters, the highest knowledge levels are among Central Region hunters (Figure 4.68). The regions are not much different among trappers (Figure 4.69).

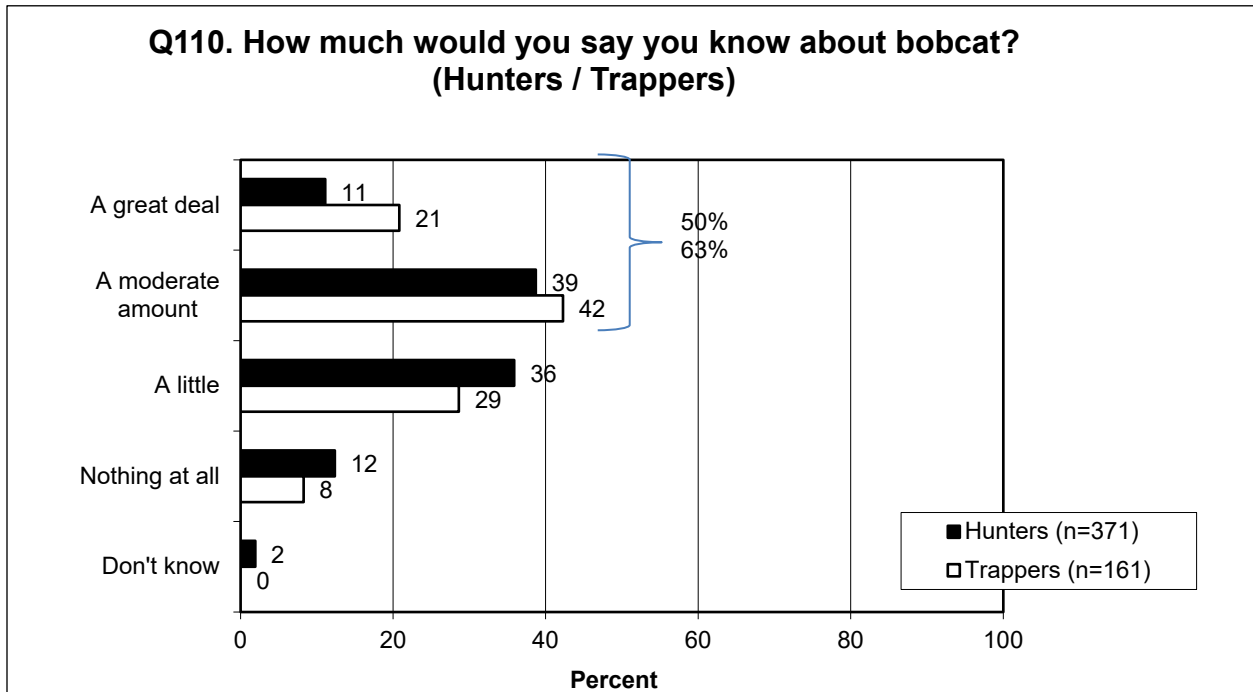


Figure 4.67. Knowledge of Bobcats (Hunters / Trappers)

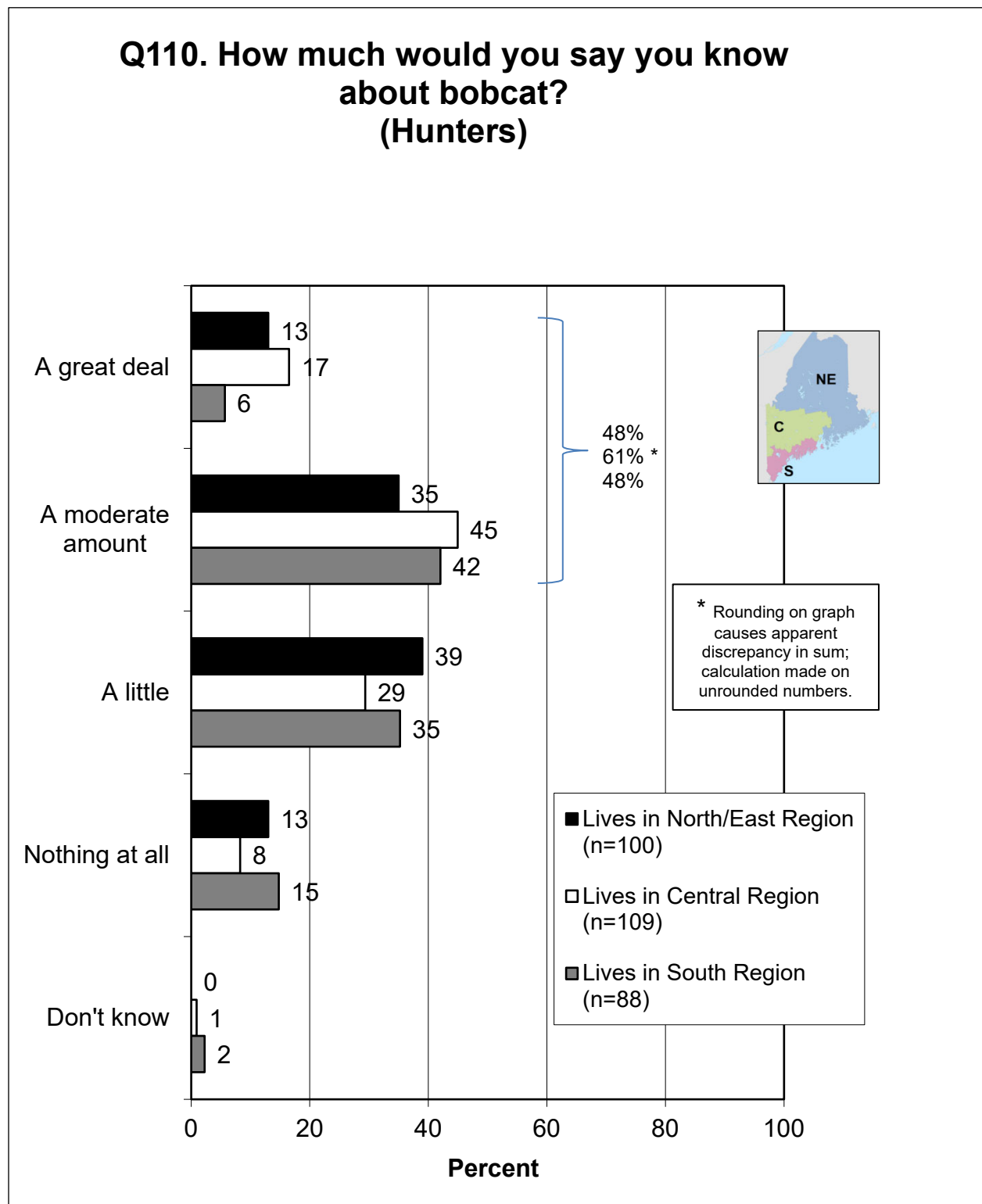


Figure 4.68. Knowledge of Bobcats, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

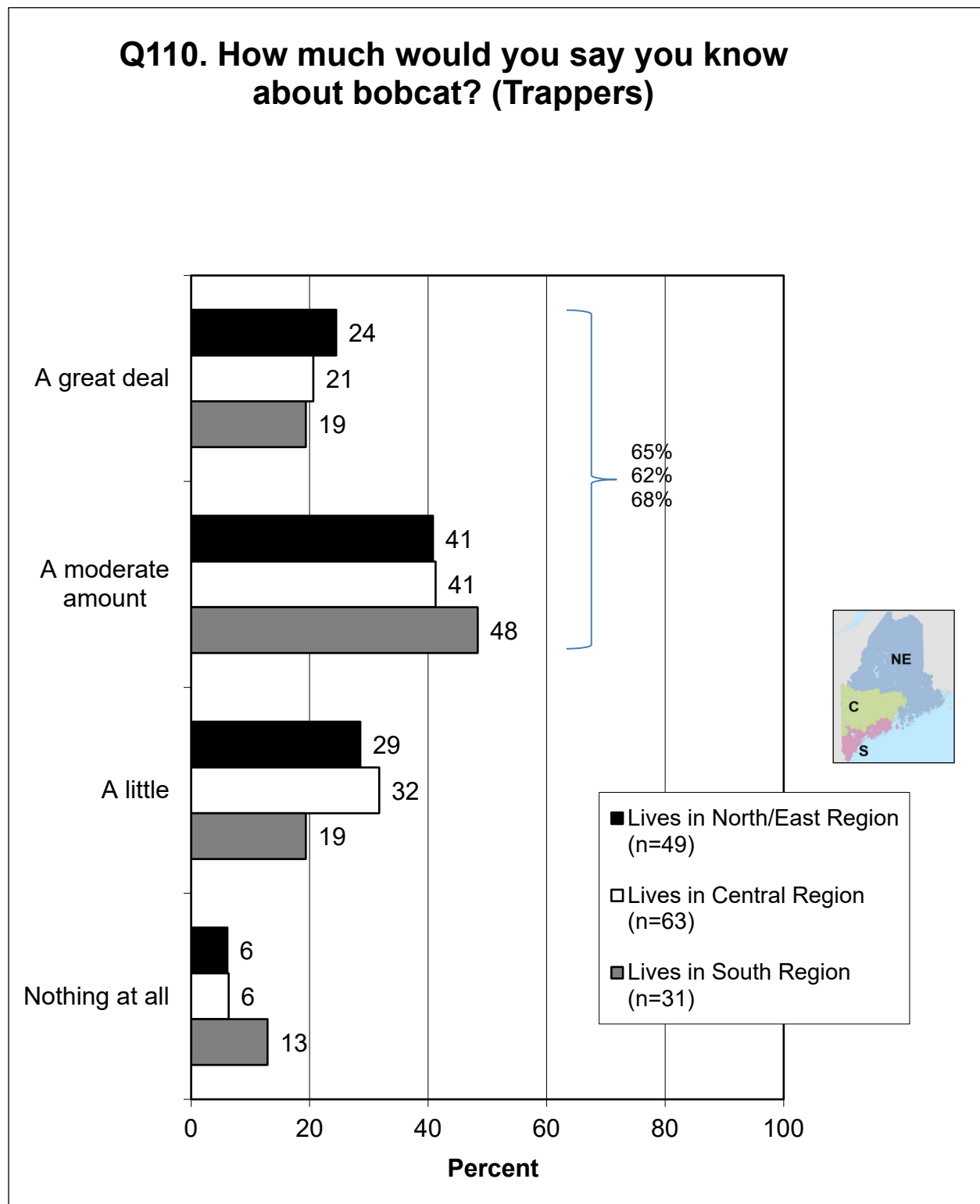


Figure 4.69. Knowledge of Bobcats, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Hunters and trappers have greater percentages who think the bobcat population is too low than think it is too high, although both groups’ most common response is that the population is about right (Figure 4.70). Central Region hunters have the highest percentage in the hunter regional breakdown who think the bobcat population is about right (Figure 4.71). North/East Region trappers have the highest percentage thinking that the bobcat population is too low (Figure 4.72).

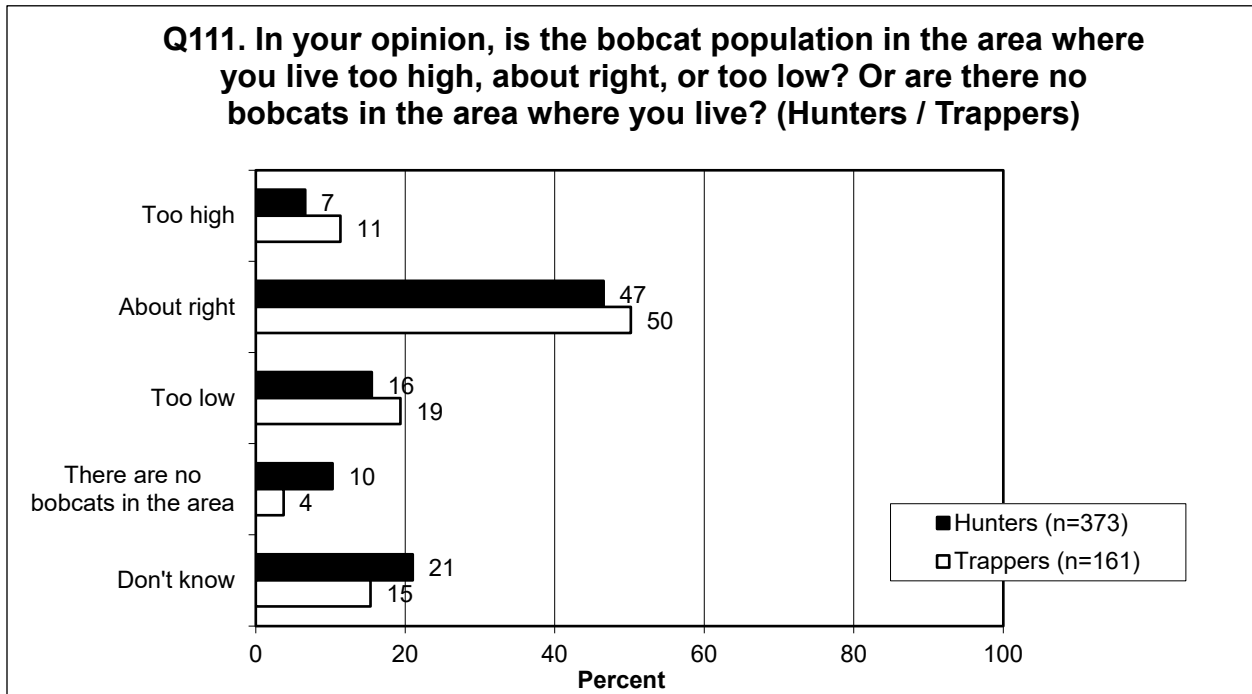


Figure 4.70. Opinion on the Bobcat Population (Hunters / Trappers)

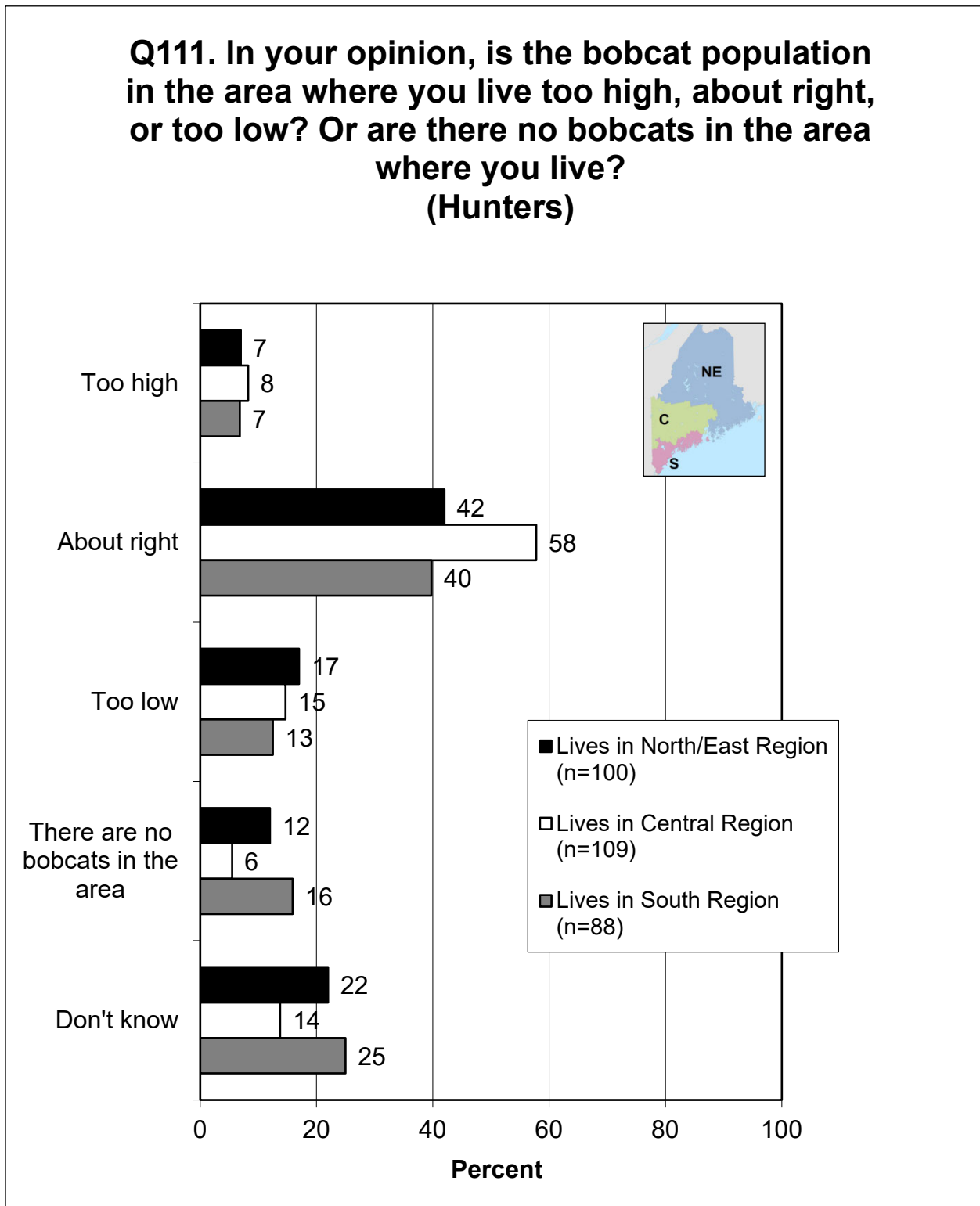


Figure 4.71. Opinion on the Bobcat Population, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

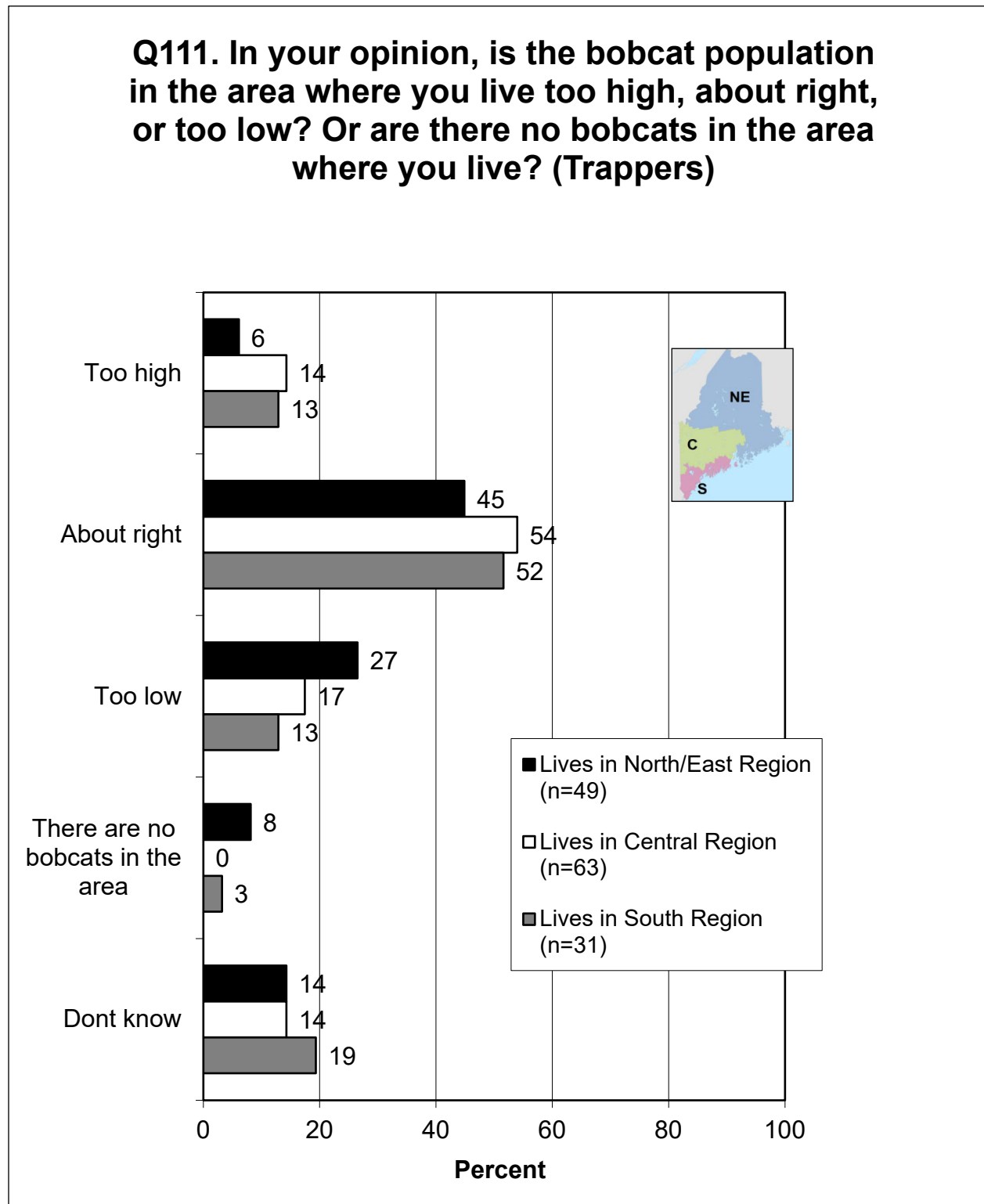


Figure 4.72. Opinion on the Bobcat Population, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Support is high (66% of hunters and 79% of trappers) for regulated trapping as a method to help manage the bobcat populations in Maine (Figure 4.73). Opposition is the same (at 11% among both groups). Support is highest among Central Region hunters and trappers (Figures 4.74 and 4.75).

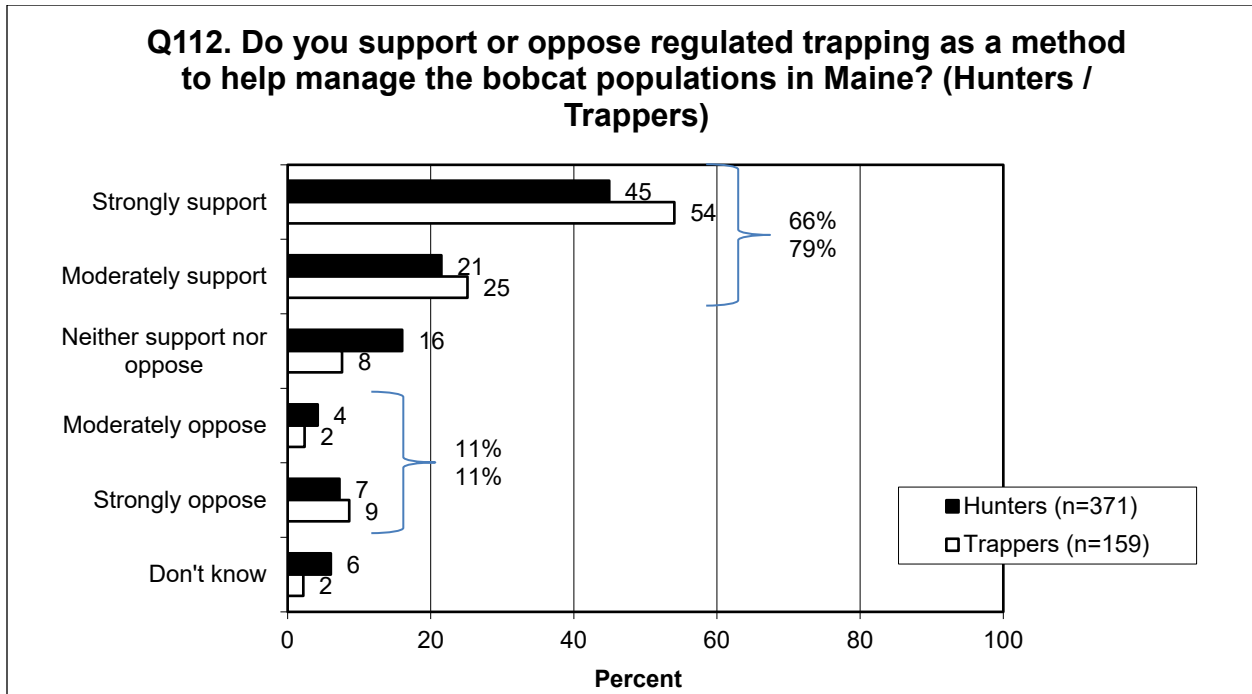


Figure 4.73. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Bobcat Populations (Hunters / Trappers)

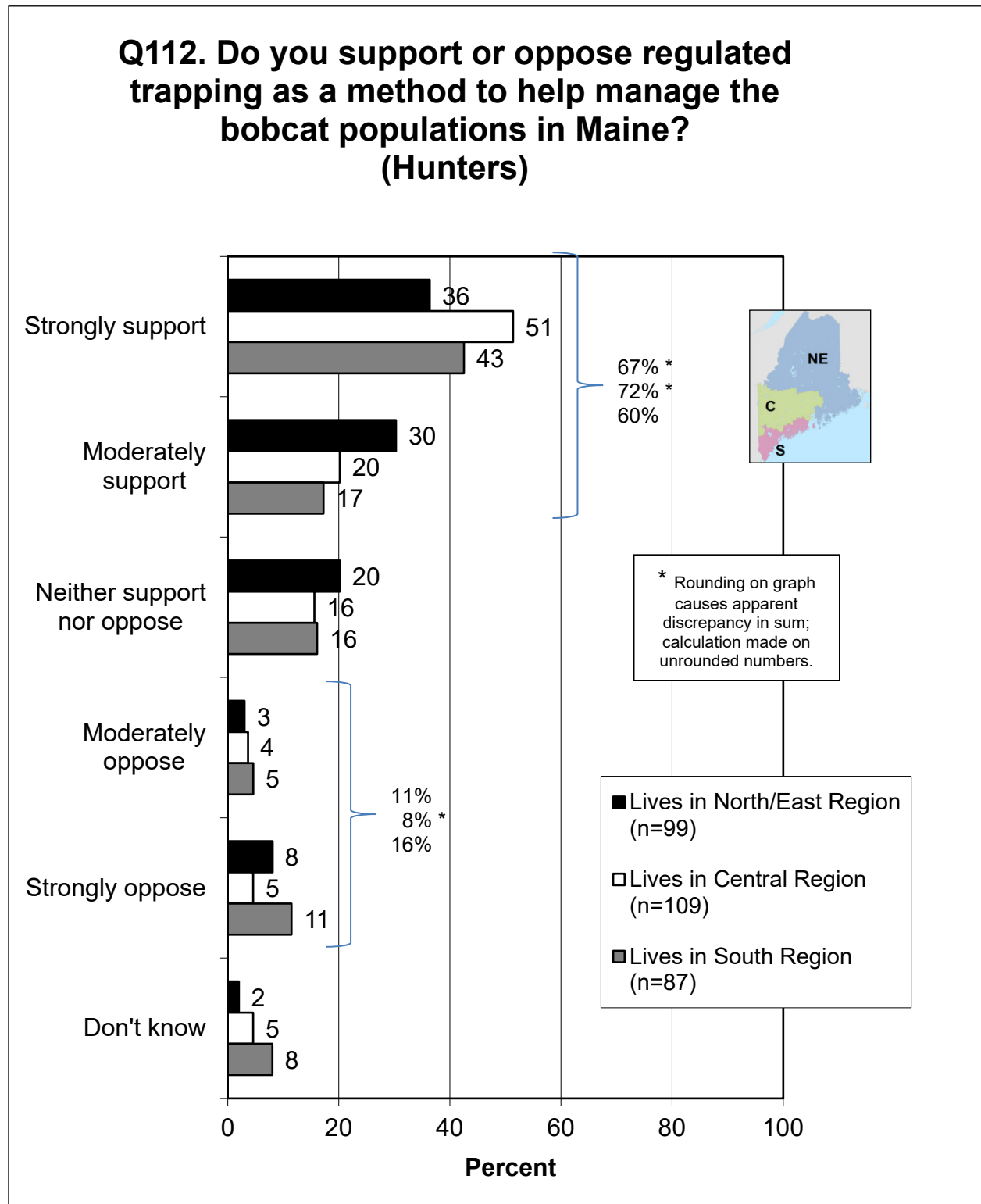


Figure 4.74. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Bobcat Populations, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

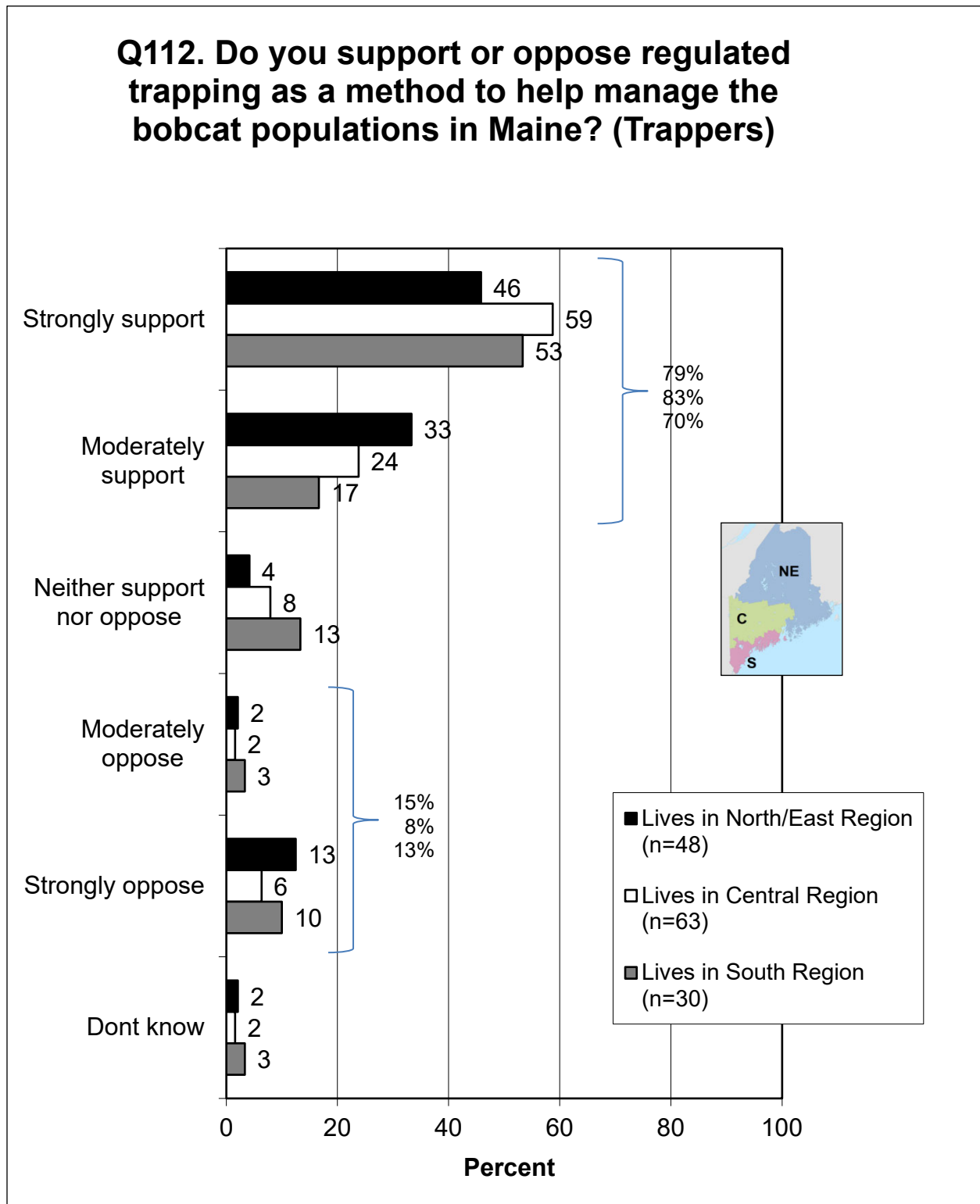


Figure 4.75. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Bobcat Populations, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Tolerance of bobcats is quite high compared to the nuisance and dangerous responses (Figure 4.76). In both cases, intolerance is highest among Central Region hunters and trappers, but only slightly (Figures 4.77 and 4.78).

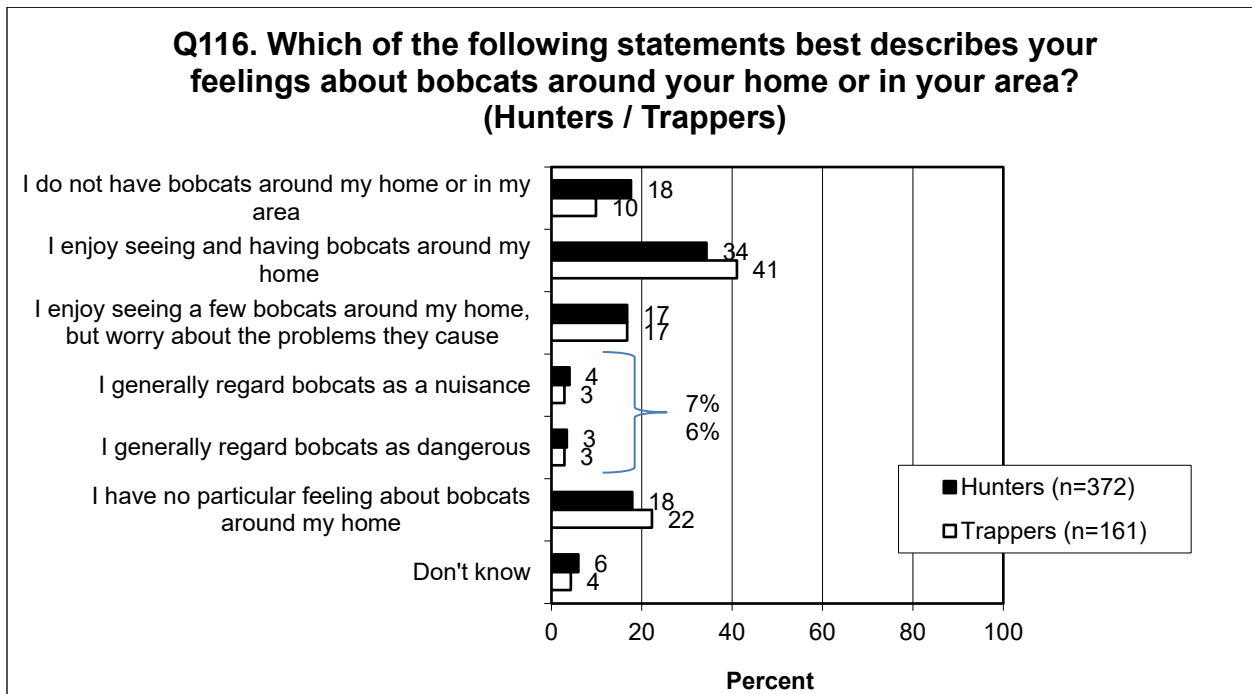


Figure 4.76. Feelings About Bobcats (Hunters / Trappers)

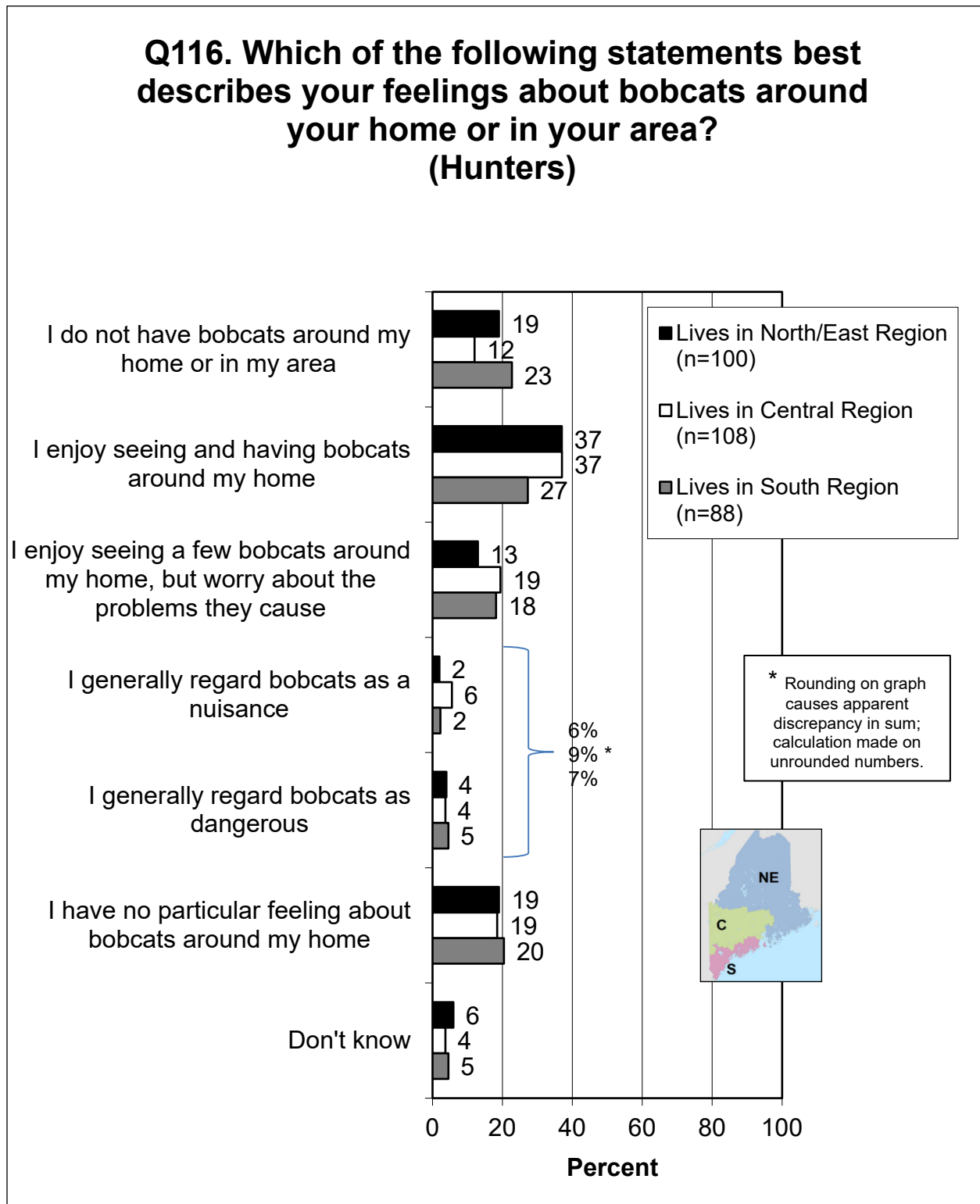


Figure 4.77. Feelings About Bobcats, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

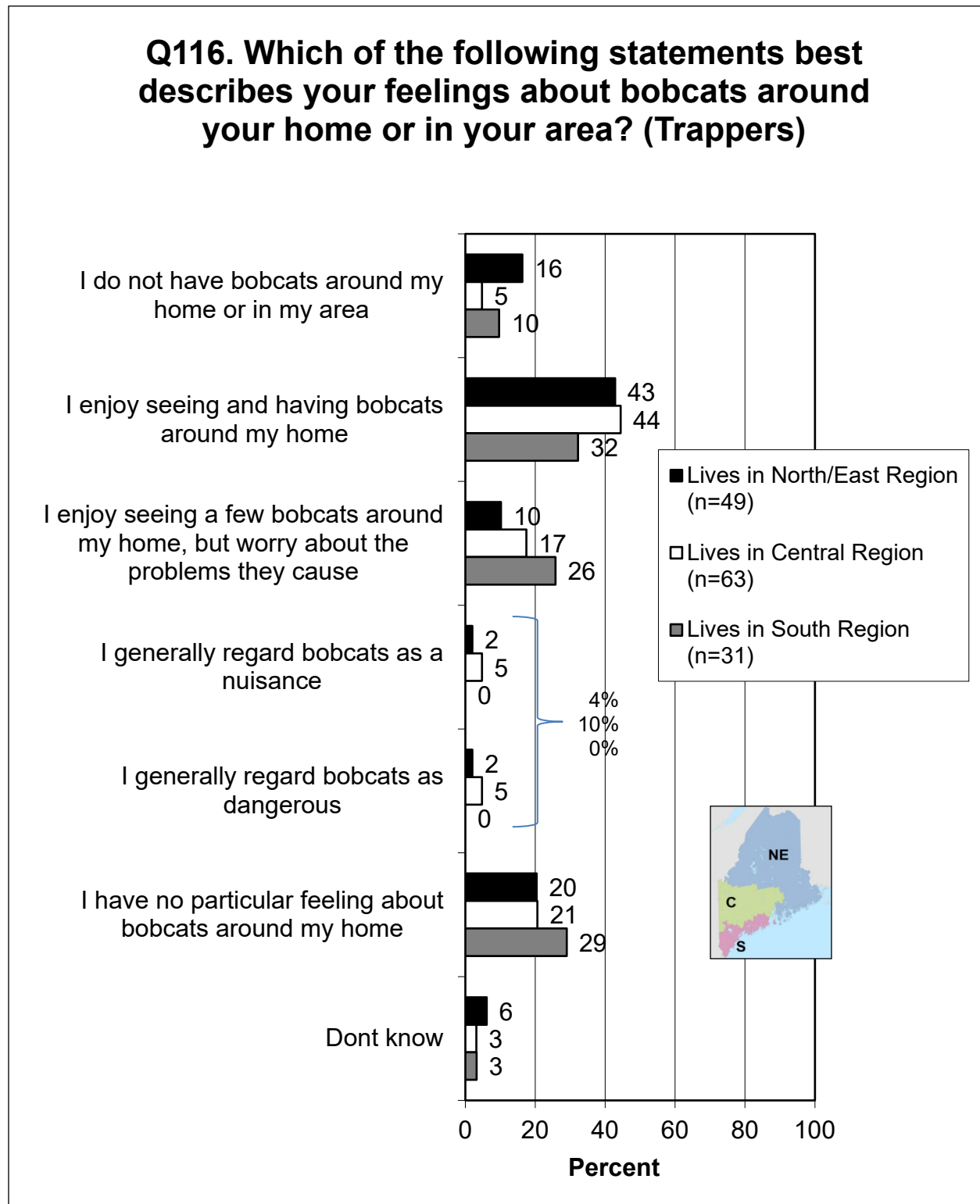


Figure 4.78. Feelings About Bobcats, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

COYOTE

Trappers' self-professed knowledge level about coyotes is higher than that of hunters, although both percentages are high (Figure 4.79). Regionally among hunters, the highest knowledge levels are among Central Region hunters (Figure 4.80). The regions are not much different among trappers (Figure 4.81).

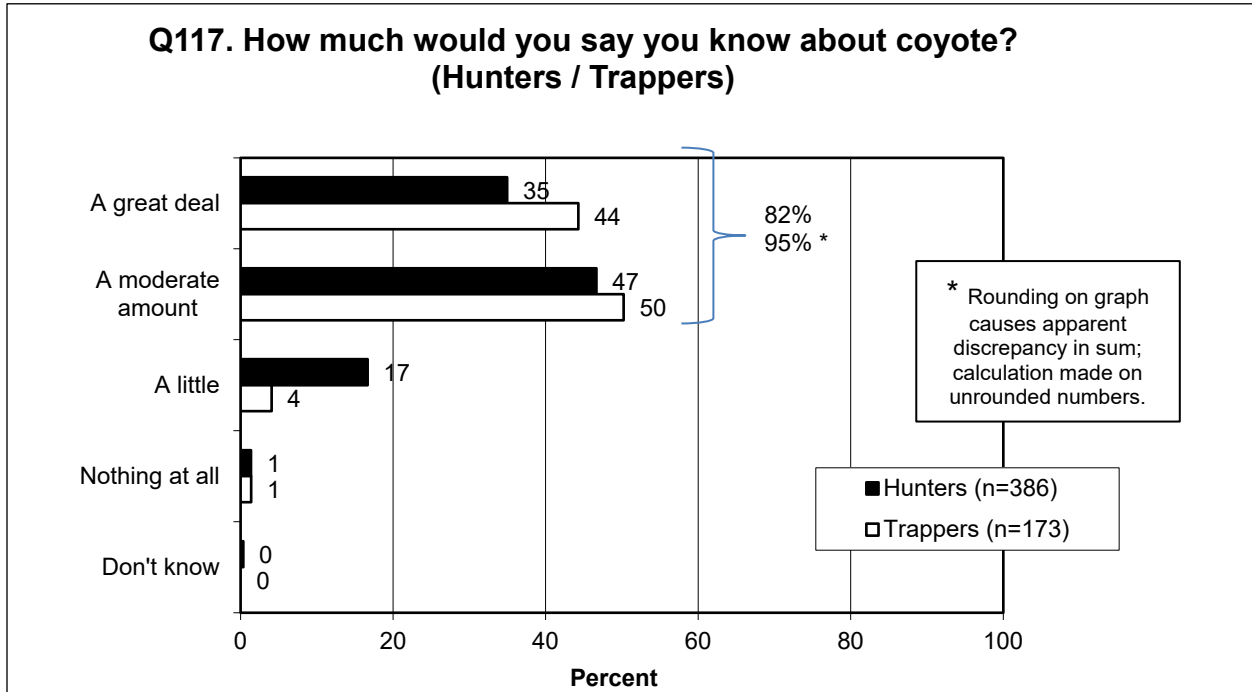


Figure 4.79. Knowledge of Coyotes (Hunters / Trappers)

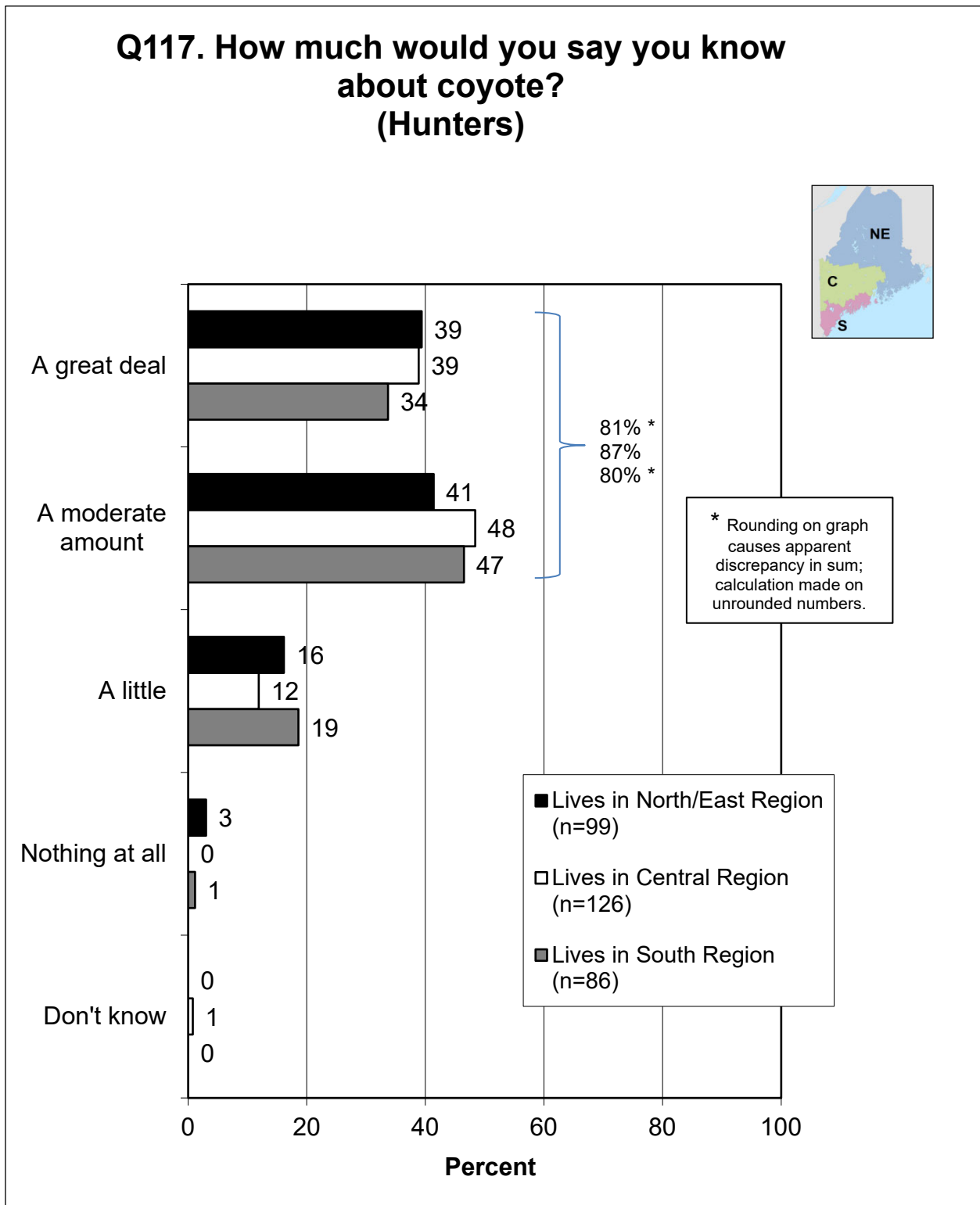


Figure 4.80. Knowledge of Coyotes, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

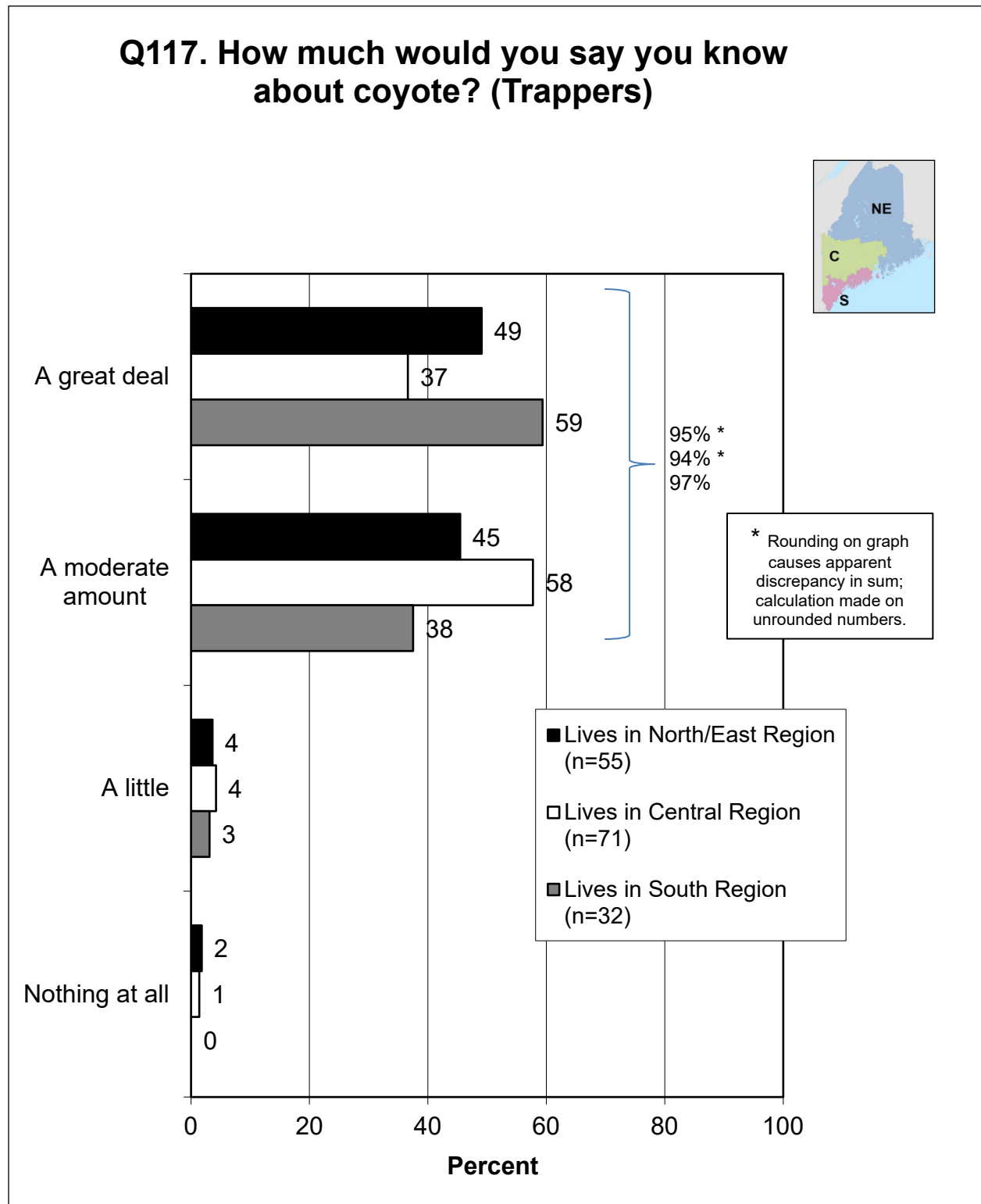


Figure 4.81. Knowledge of Coyotes, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Almost three quarters of hunters and trappers think that the coyote population is too high in their area (Figure 4.82). North/East Region hunters have the highest percentage of the three regions who think that the population is too high (Figure 4.83). In the trapping regional breakdown, the regions are not markedly different (Figure 4.84).

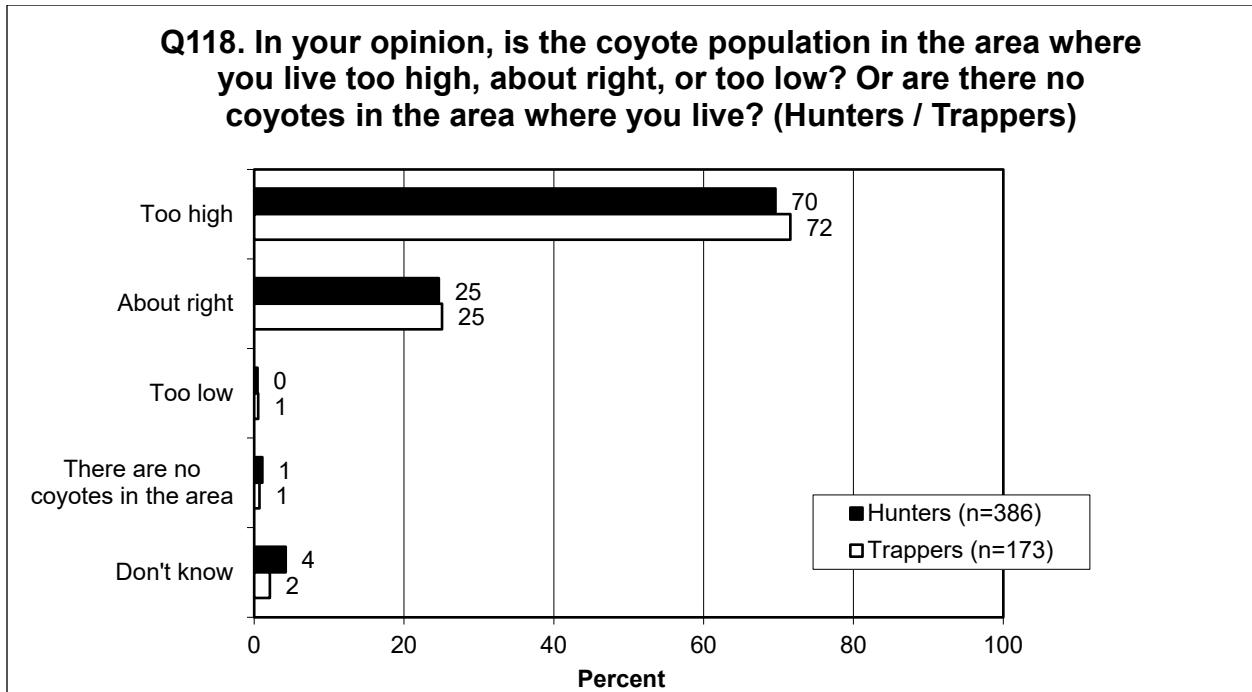


Figure 4.82. Opinion on the Coyote Population (Hunters / Trappers)

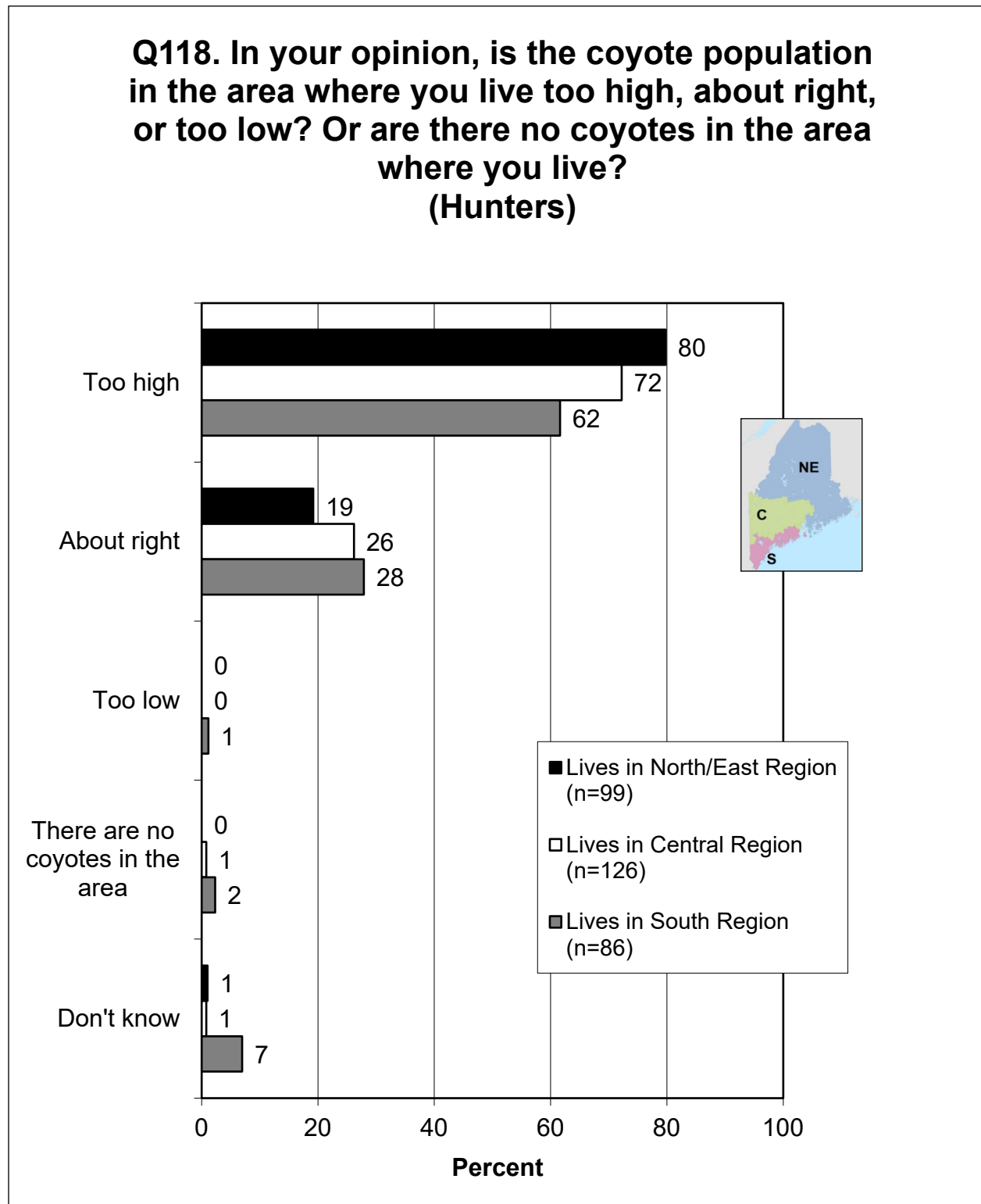


Figure 4.83. Opinion on the Coyote Population, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

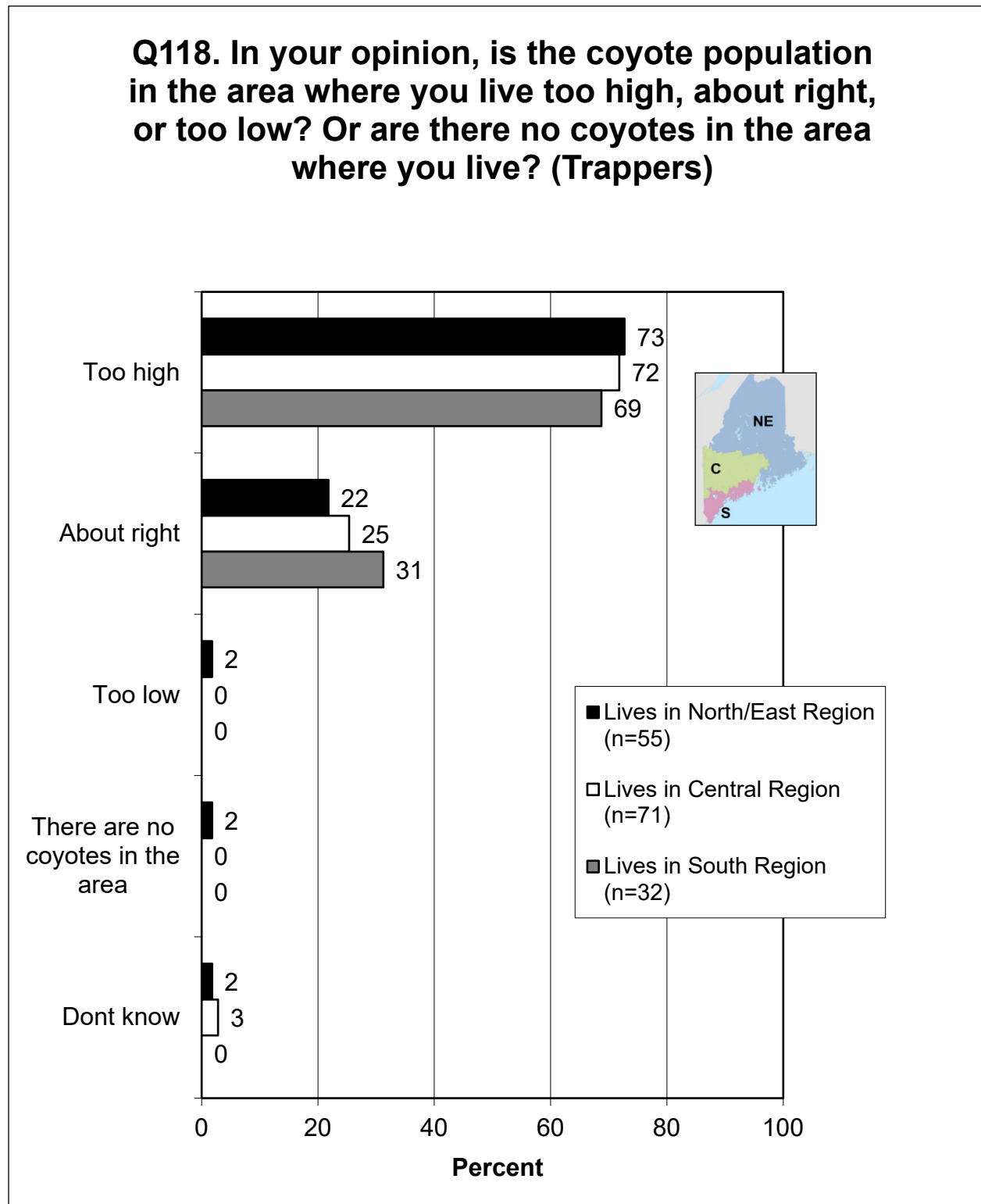


Figure 4.84. Opinion on the Coyote Population, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Support for trapping as a method to control coyotes is extremely high among hunters (87% support) and trappers (90%), with very little opposition (5% and 6%) (Figure 4.85). The regions are not markedly different from one another (Figures 4.86 and 4.87).

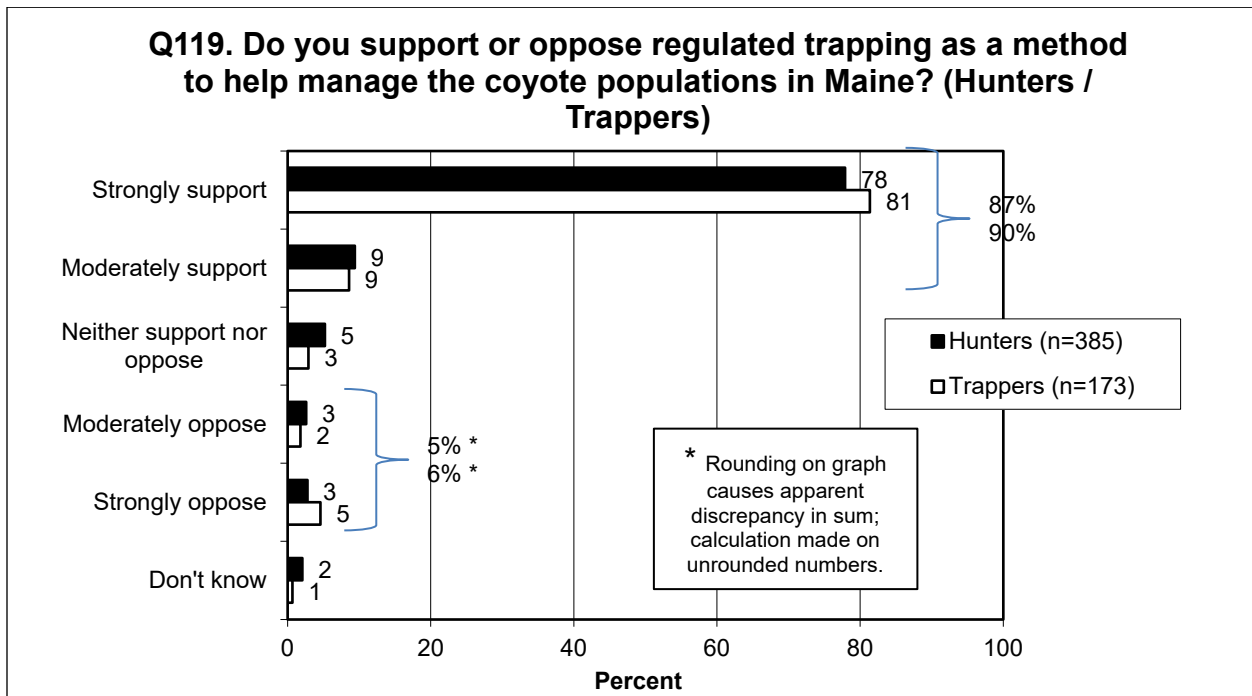


Figure 4.85. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Coyote Populations (Hunters / Trappers)

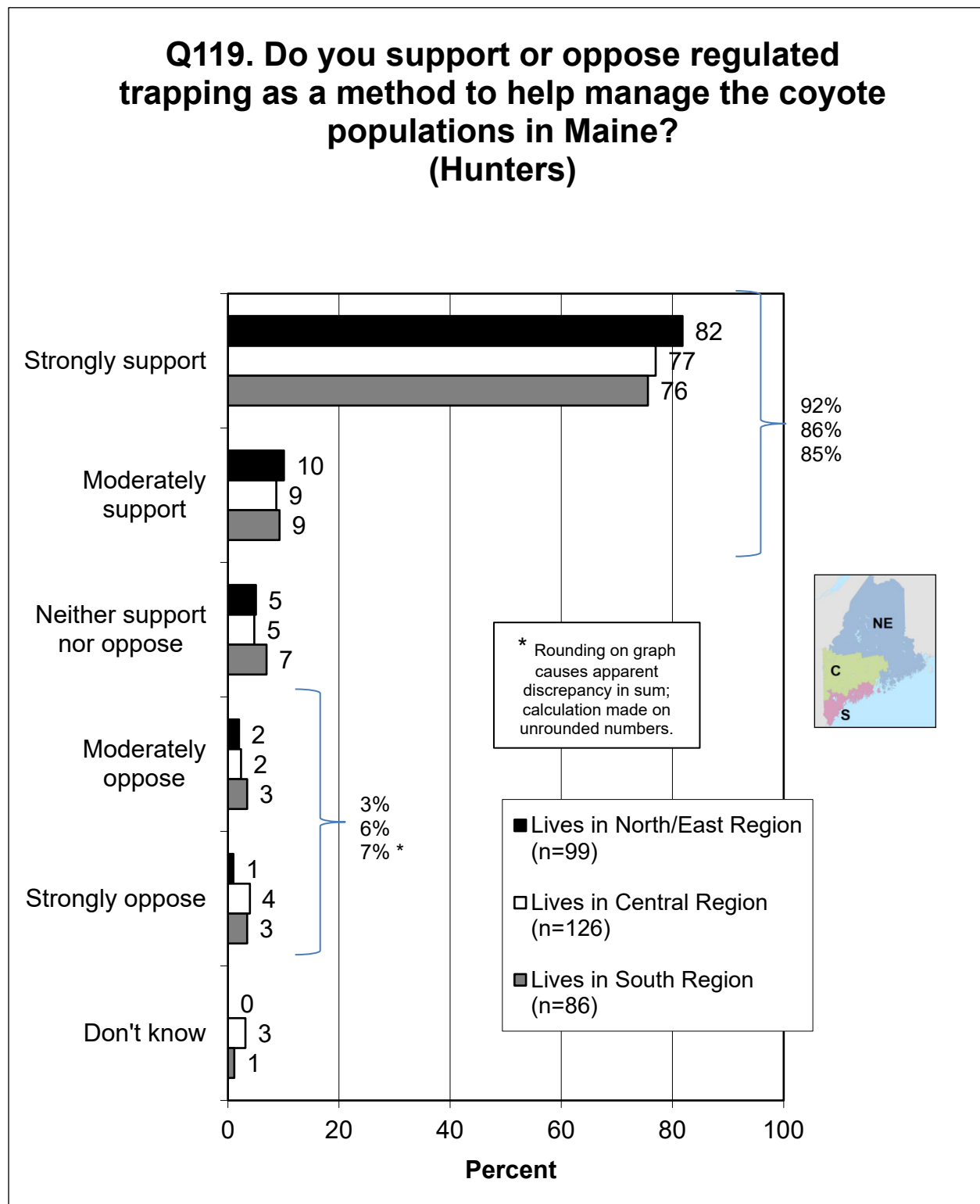


Figure 4.86. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Coyote Populations, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

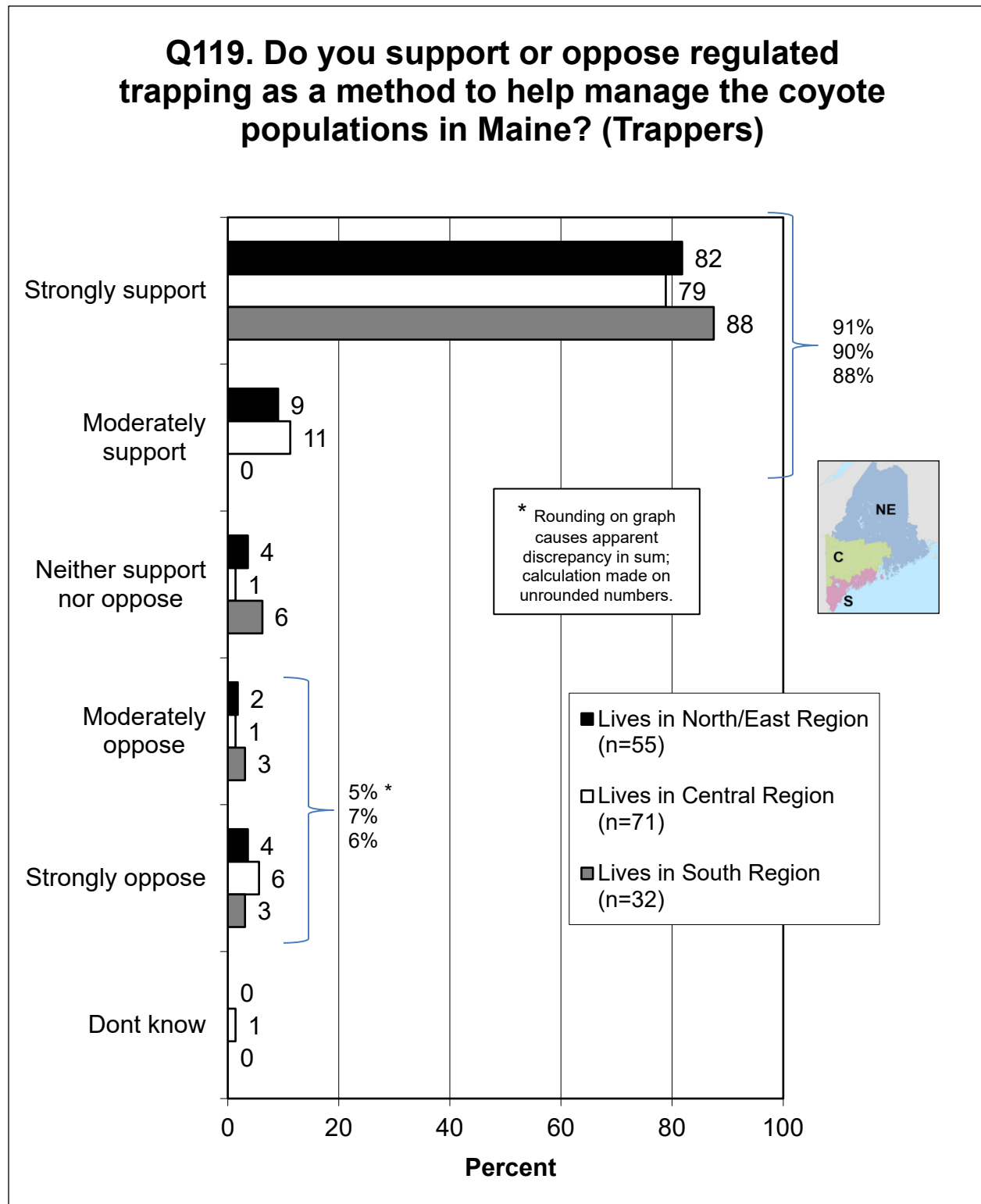


Figure 4.87. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Coyote Populations, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

The levels of intolerance are high for coyotes: 66% of hunters and 64% of trappers say that coyotes are a nuisance or are dangerous (Figure 4.88). The regions are not markedly different from one another (Figures 4.89 and 4.90).

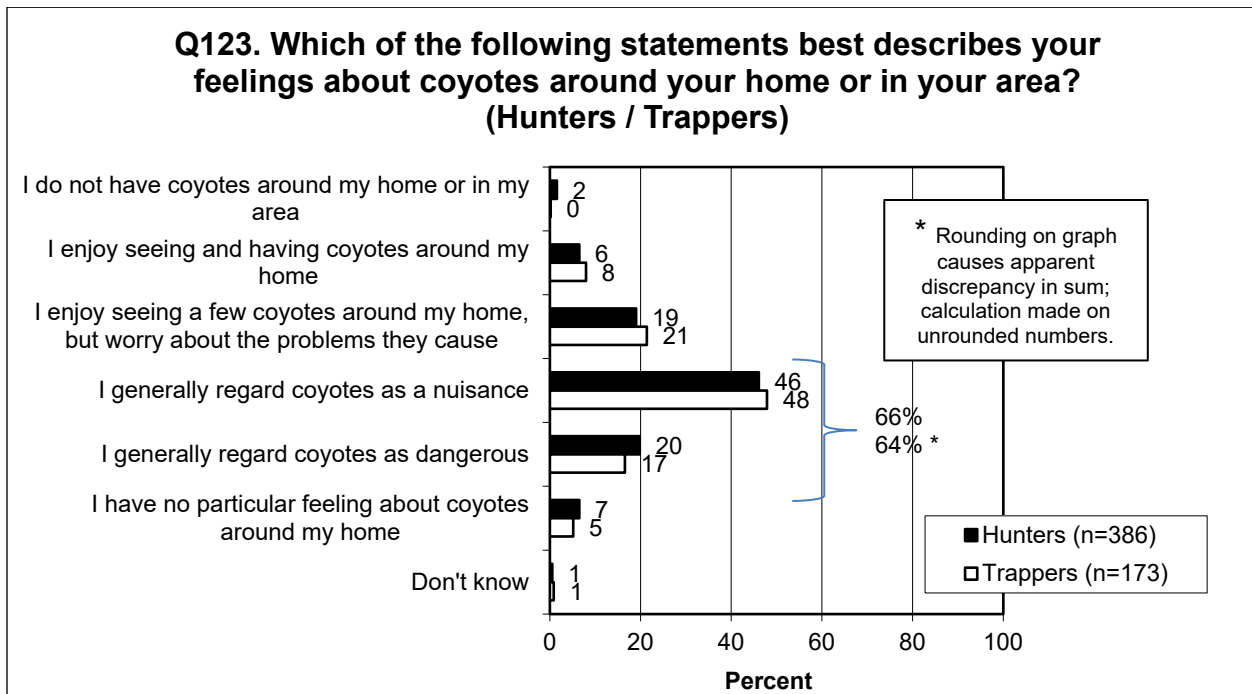


Figure 4.88. Feelings About Coyotes (Hunters / Trappers)

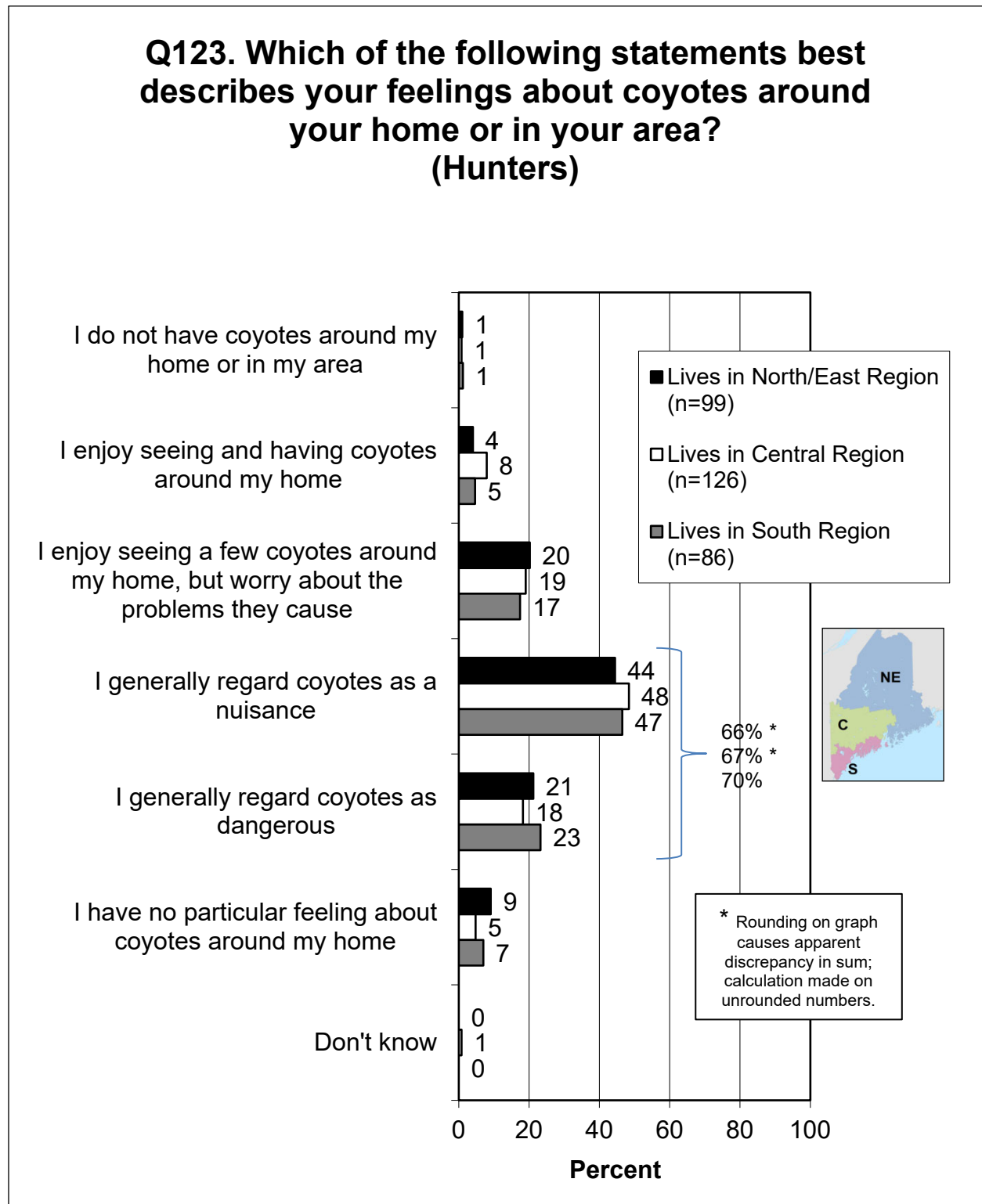


Figure 4.89. Feelings About Coyotes, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

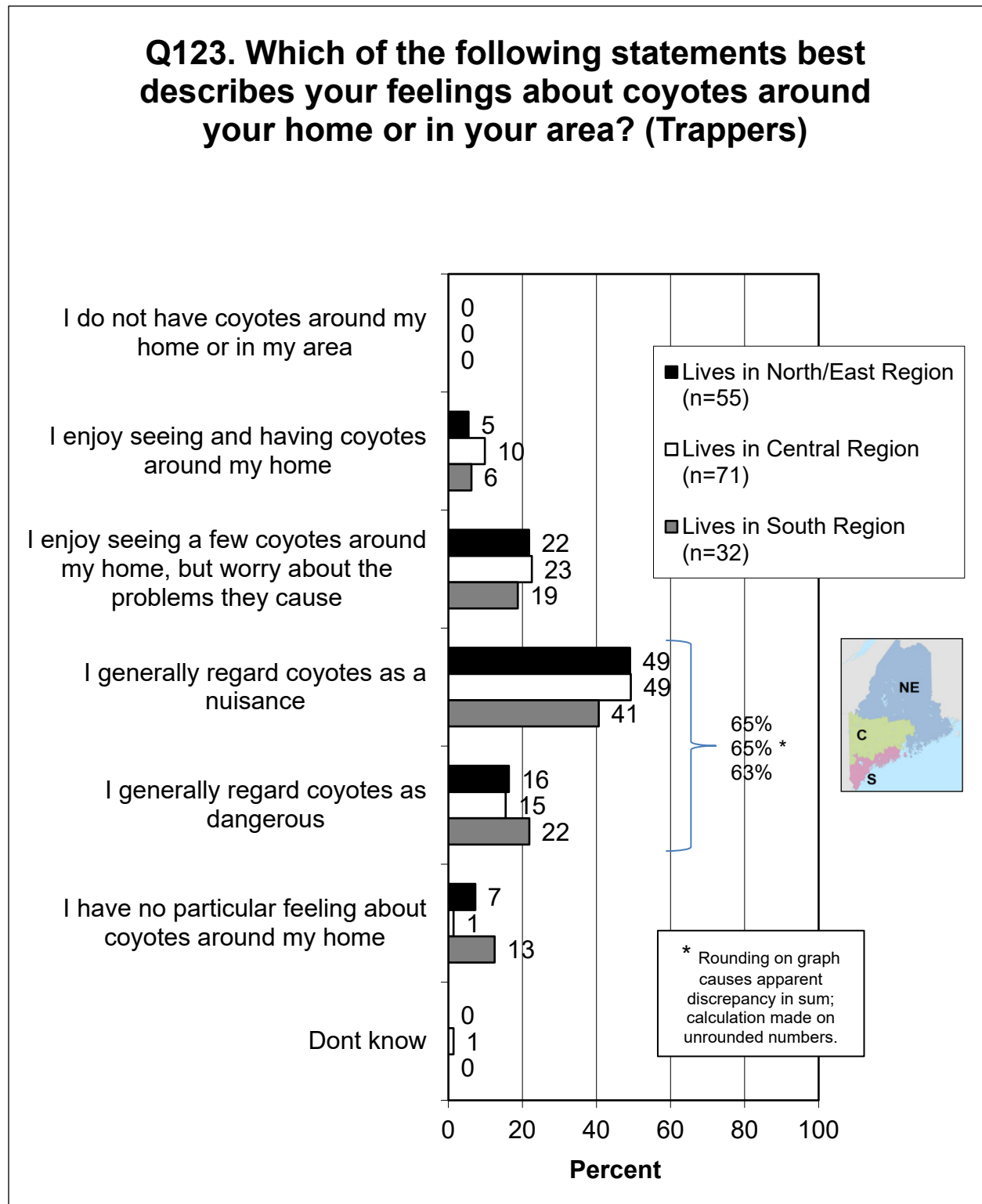


Figure 4.90. Feelings About Coyotes, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

FOX

Trappers' self-professed knowledge level about foxes is higher than that of hunters (Figure 4.91). Regionally among hunters, the highest knowledge levels are among Central Region hunters (Figure 4.92). In the trapping breakdown, South Region trappers have a lower self-professed knowledge level than do trappers from the other regions (Figure 4.93).

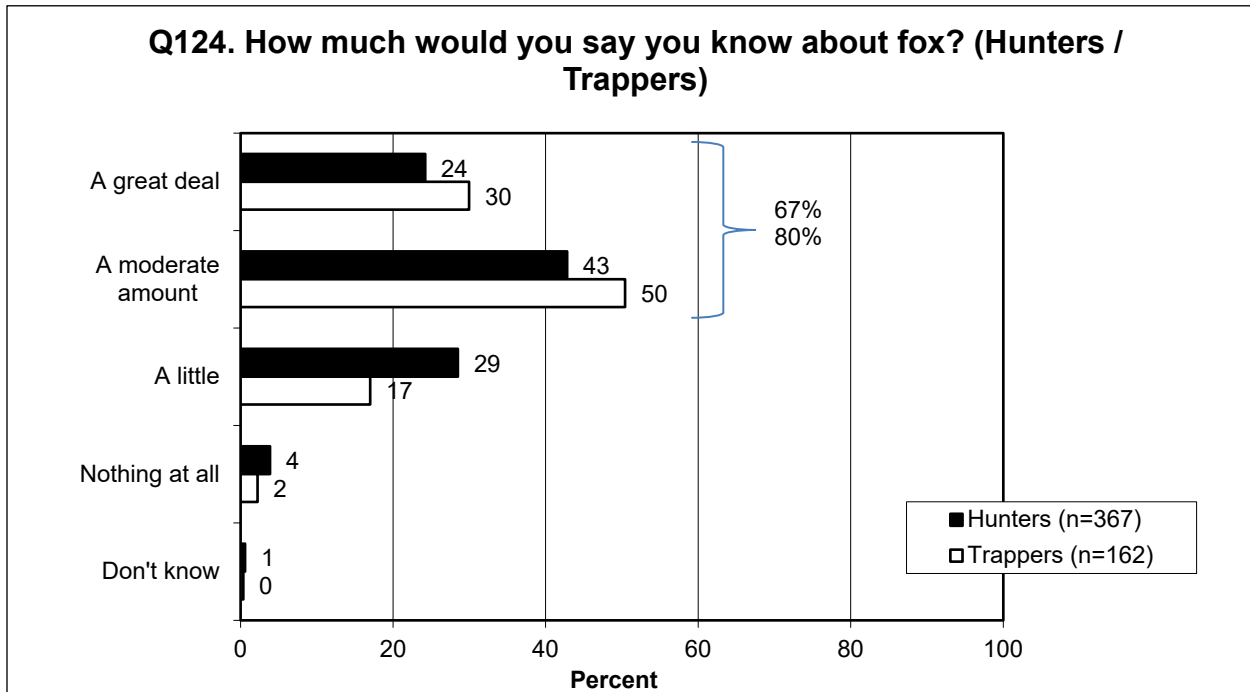


Figure 4.91. Knowledge of Foxes (Hunters / Trappers)

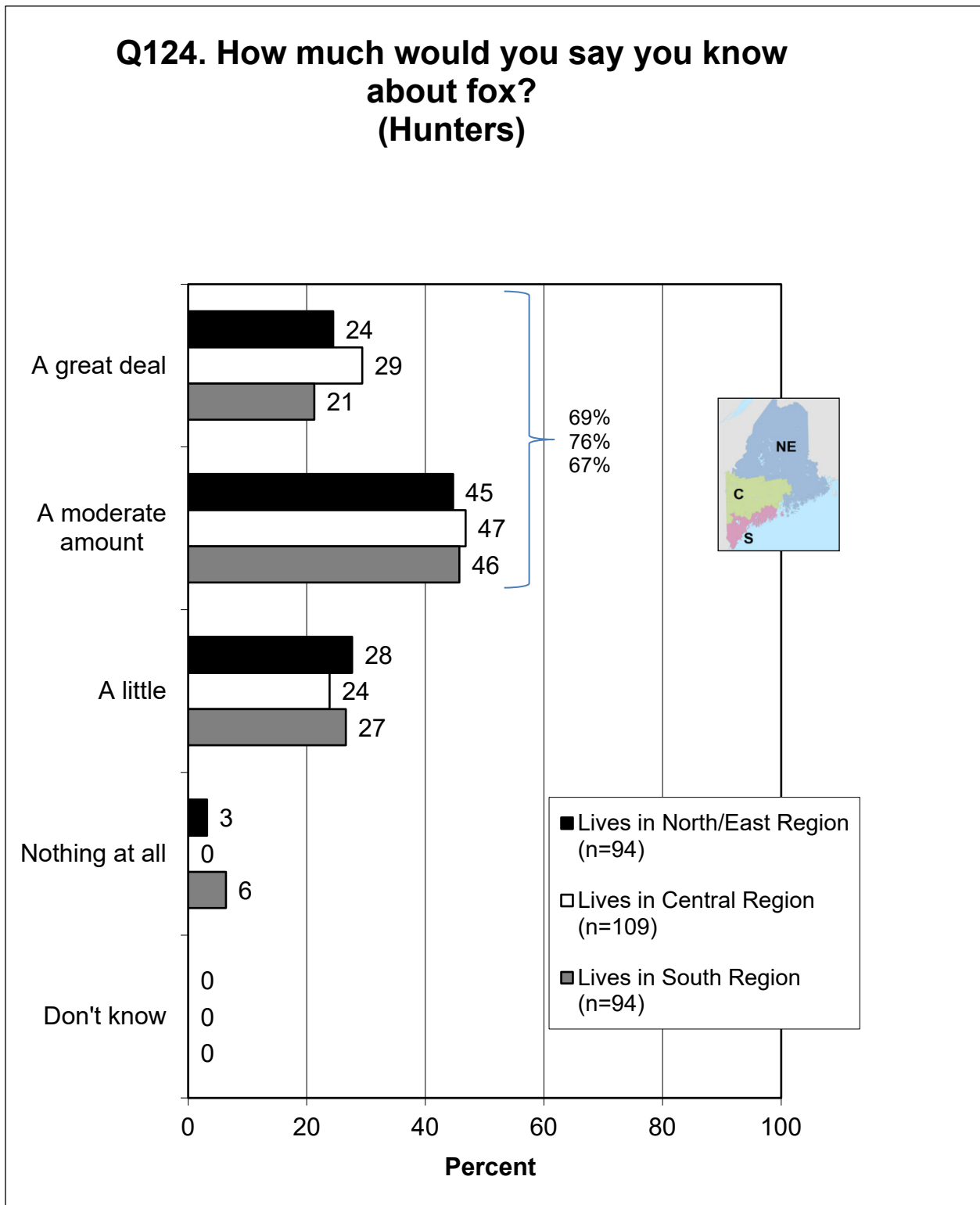


Figure 4.92. Knowledge of Foxes, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

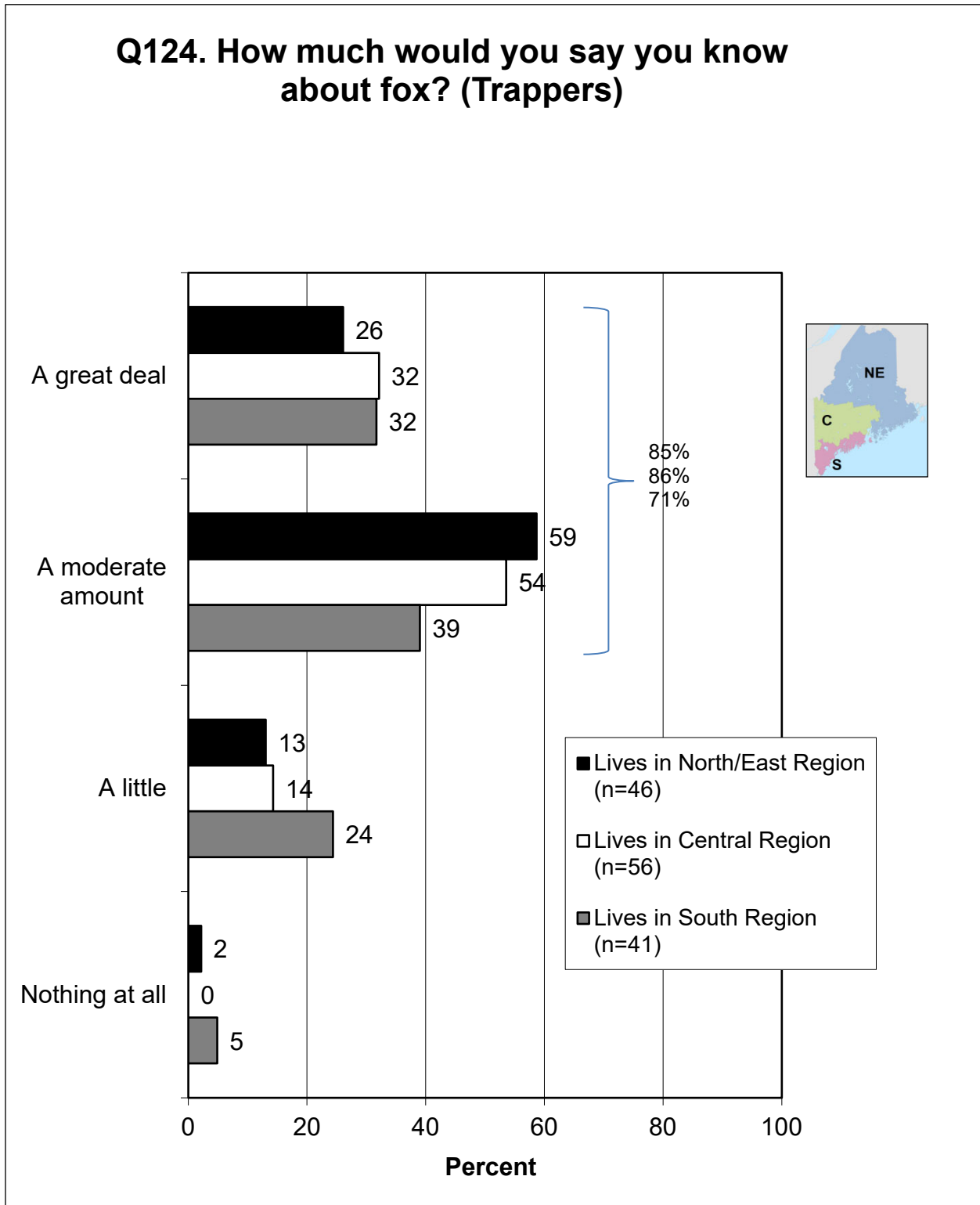


Figure 4.93. Knowledge of Foxes, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Most commonly, hunters and trappers say that the fox population in their area is about right, and they are otherwise about evenly split between saying too high or too low (Figure 4.94). Regionally, hunters are about the same across the three regions (Figure 4.95); South Region trappers have the highest percentage who say that the fox population is too high (Figure 4.96).

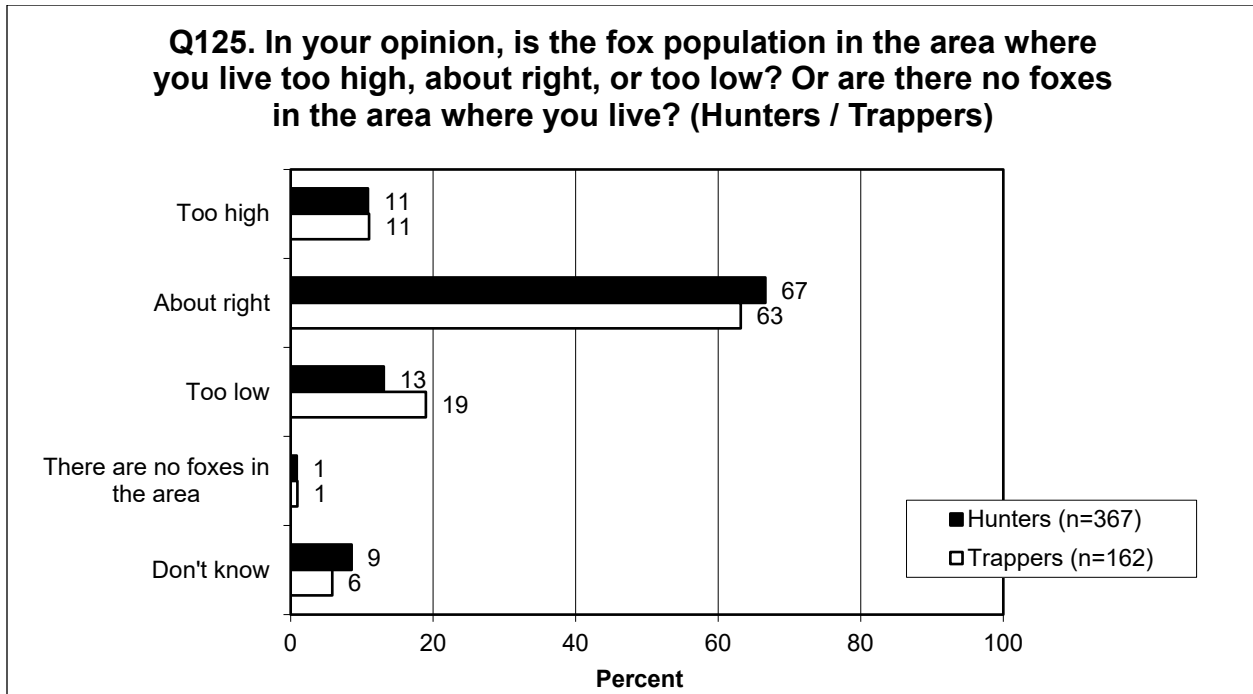


Figure 4.94. Opinion on the Fox Population (Hunters / Trappers)

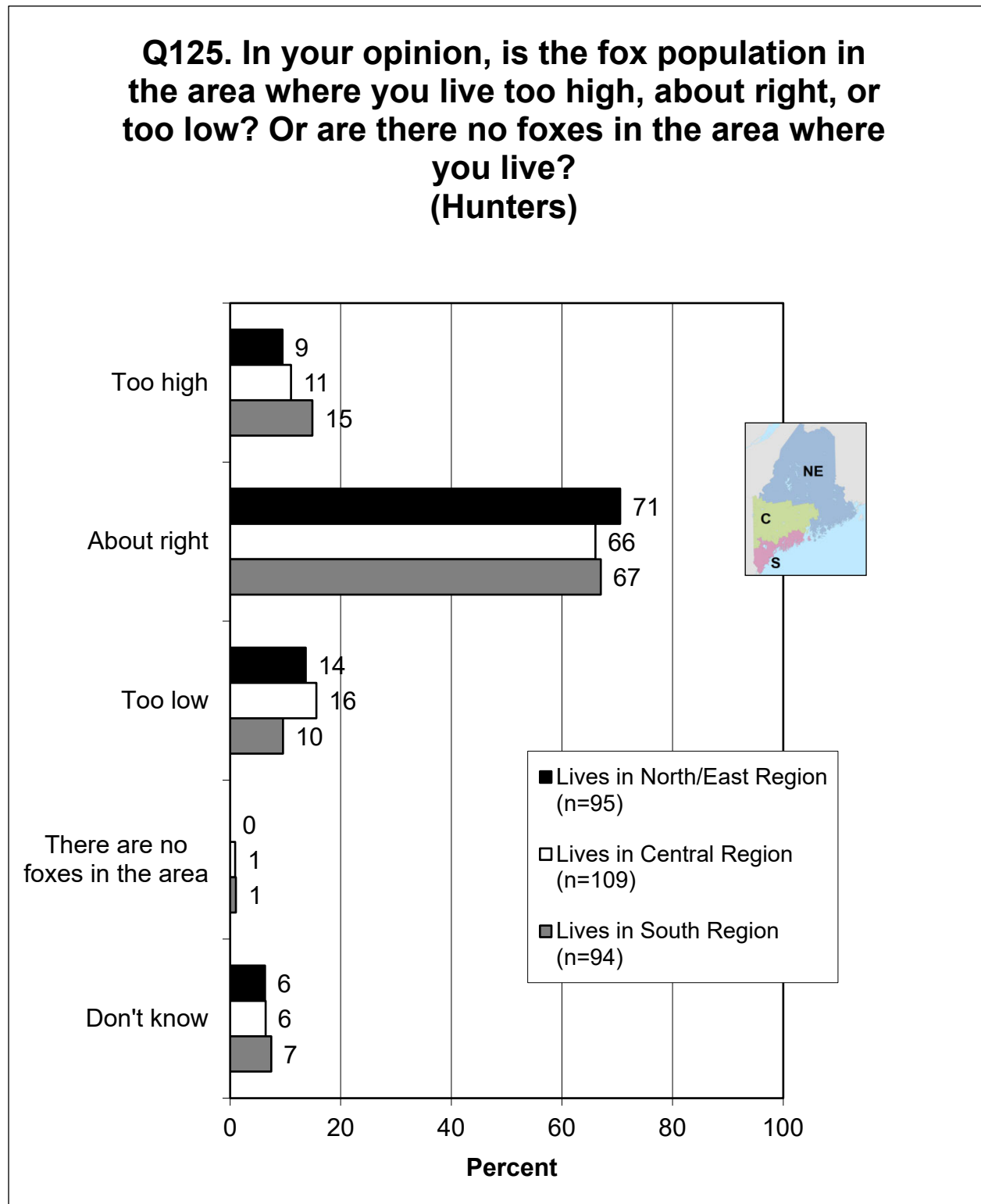


Figure 4.95. Opinion on the Fox Population, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

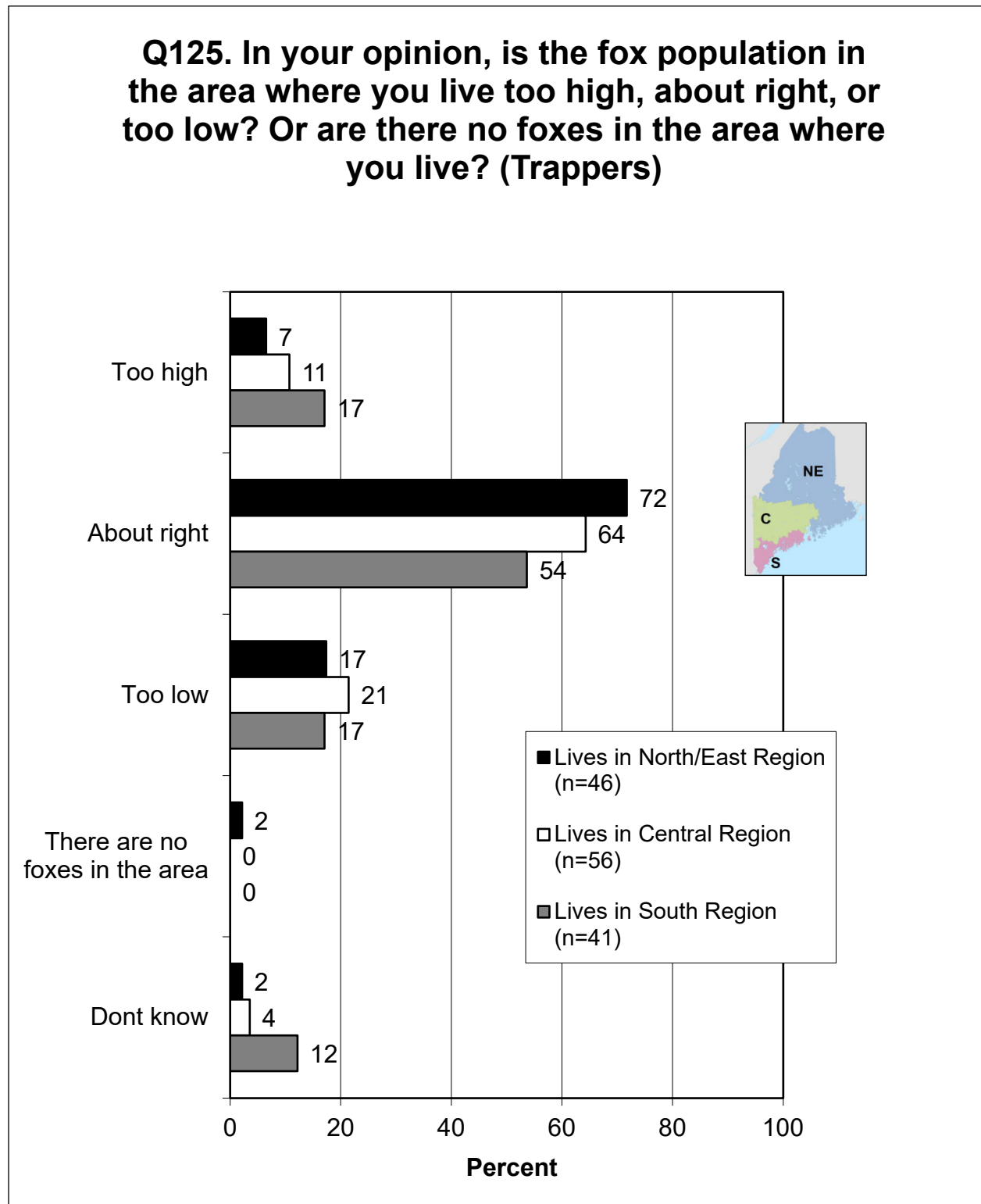


Figure 4.96. Opinion on the Fox Population, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Although the majority of hunters and trappers think that the population of foxes is about right, the large majority of them also support trapping as a method to control fox populations—with trappers more likely to support (Figure 4.97). Regionally, South Region hunters and trappers have the least support (although a large majority of them still support) (Figures 4.98 and 4.99).

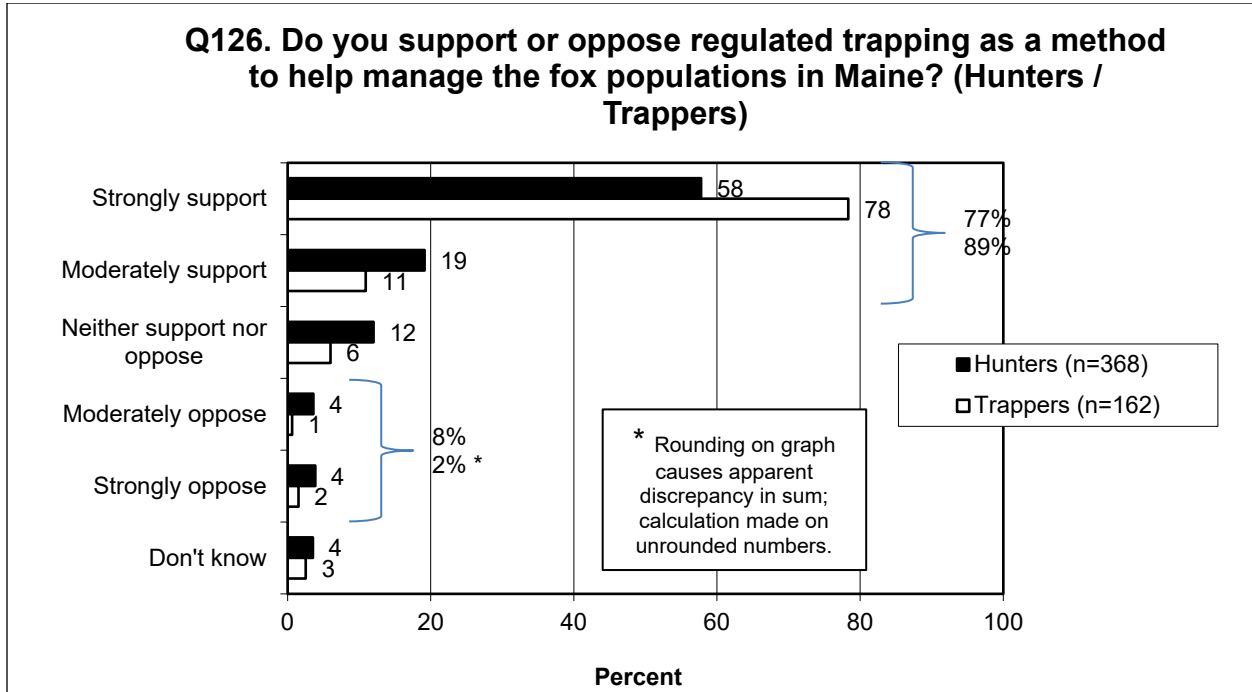


Figure 4.97. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Fox Populations (Hunters / Trappers)

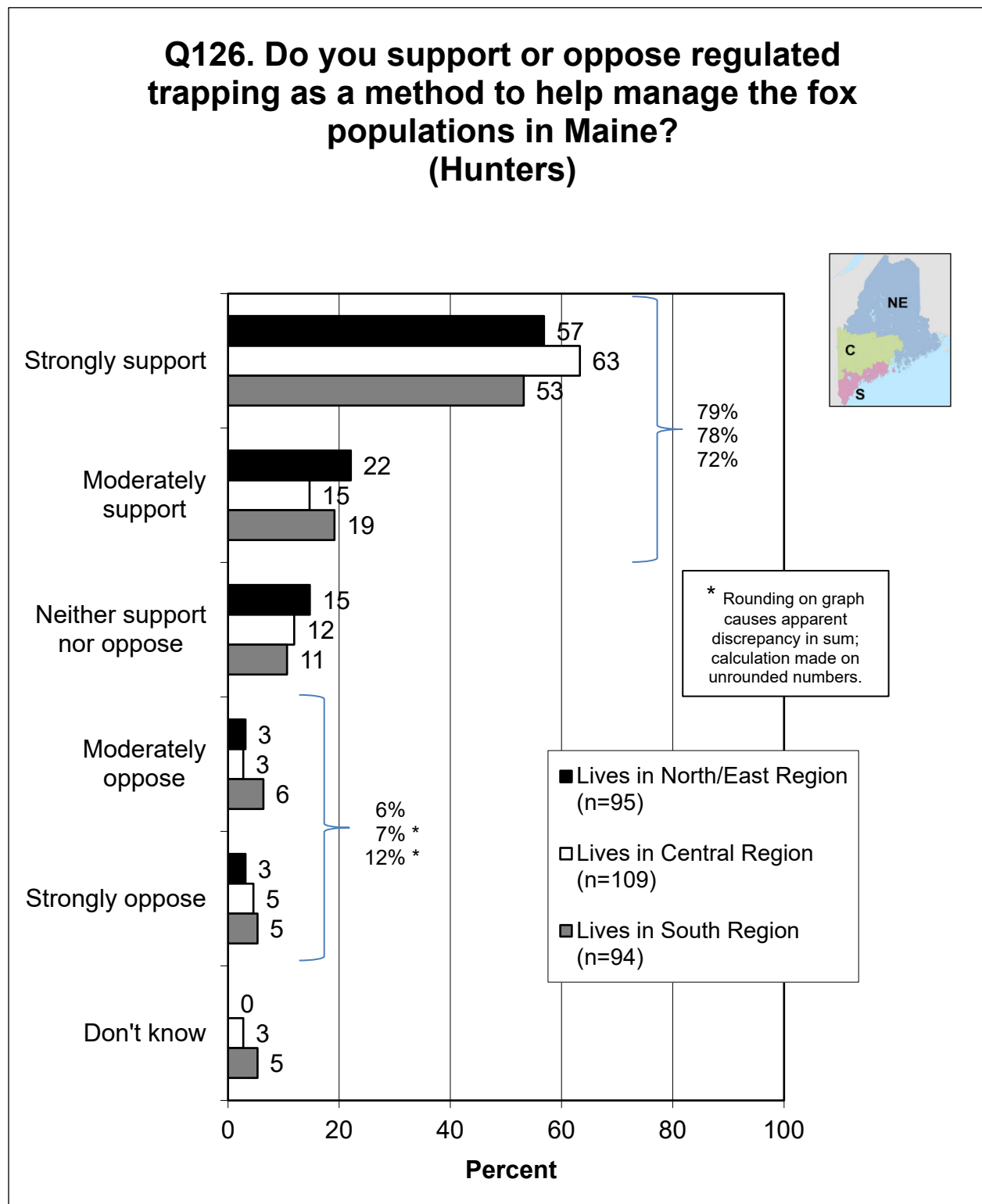


Figure 4.98. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Fox Populations, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

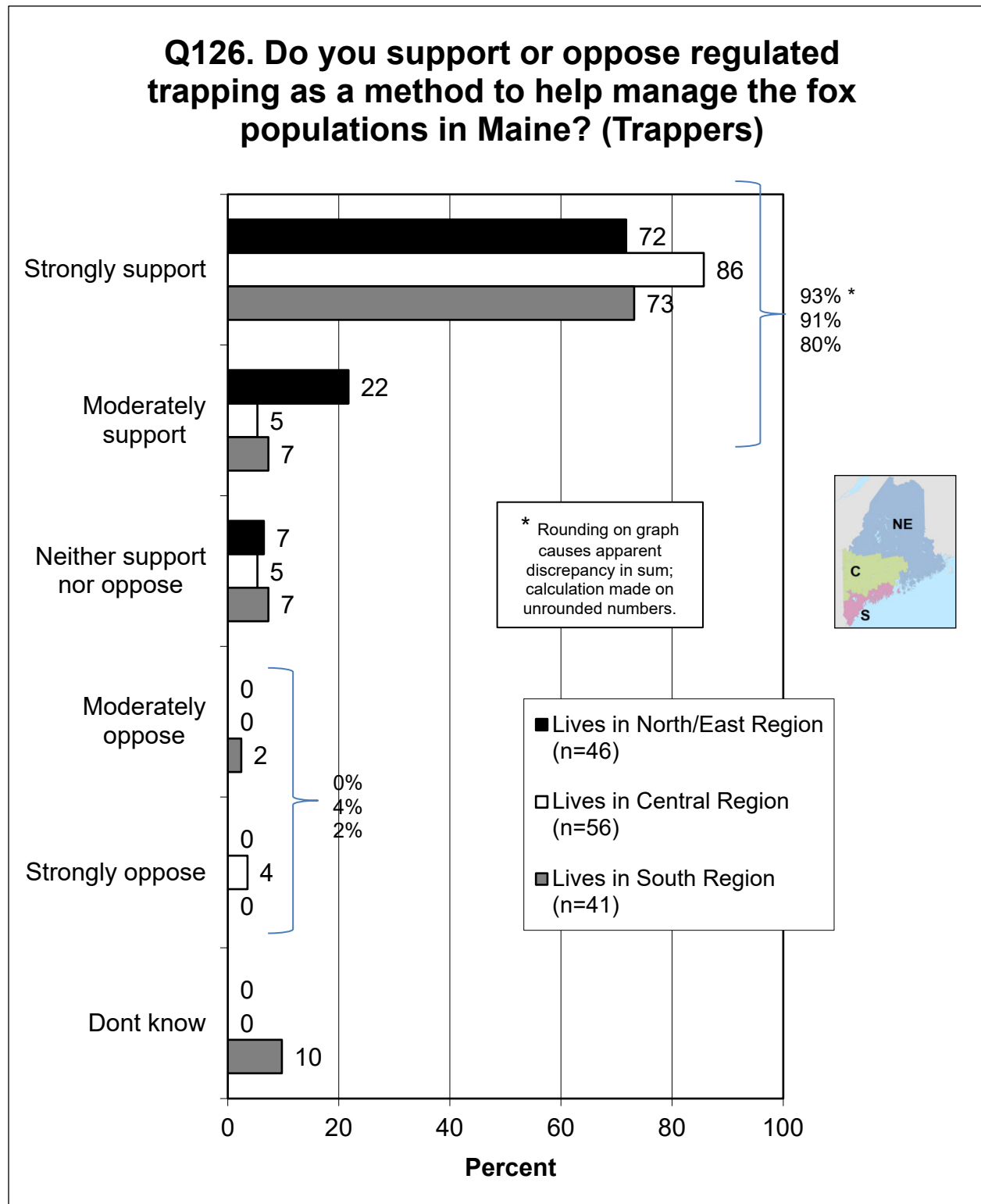


Figure 4.99. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Fox Populations, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Hunters and trappers are much more tolerant than intolerant of foxes (Figure 4.100). Central Region hunters and trappers show the most intolerance (Figures 4.101 and 4.102).

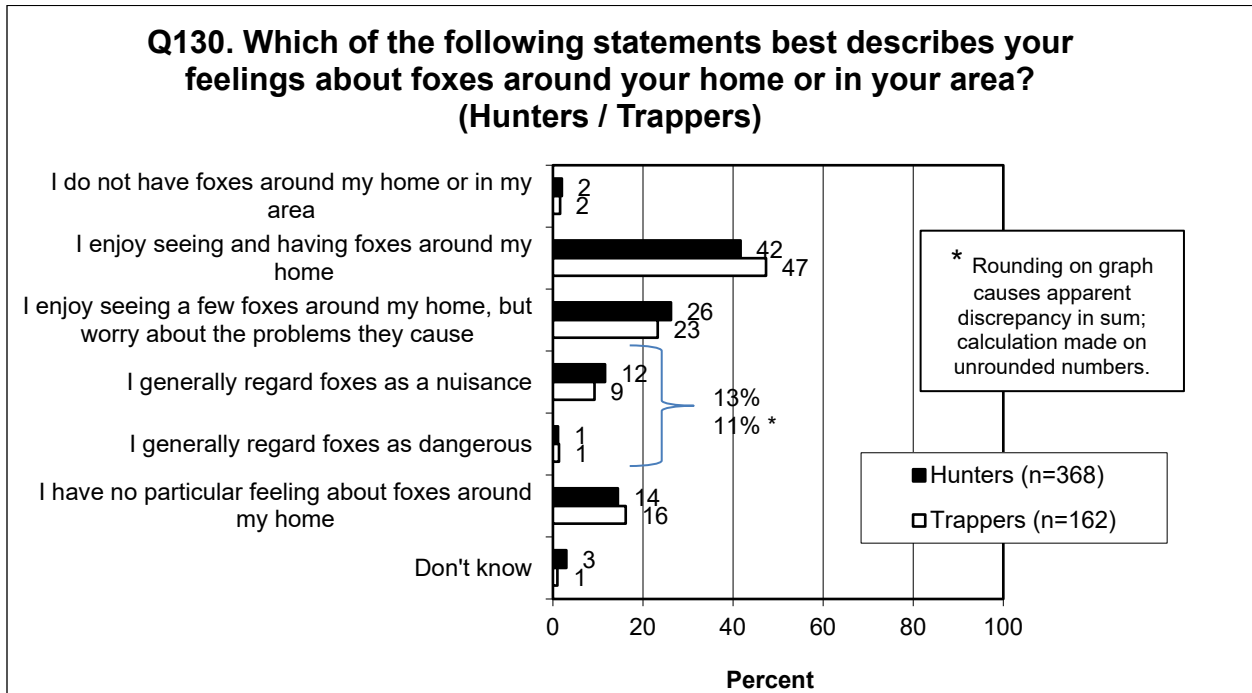


Figure 4.100. Feelings About Foxes (Hunters / Trappers)

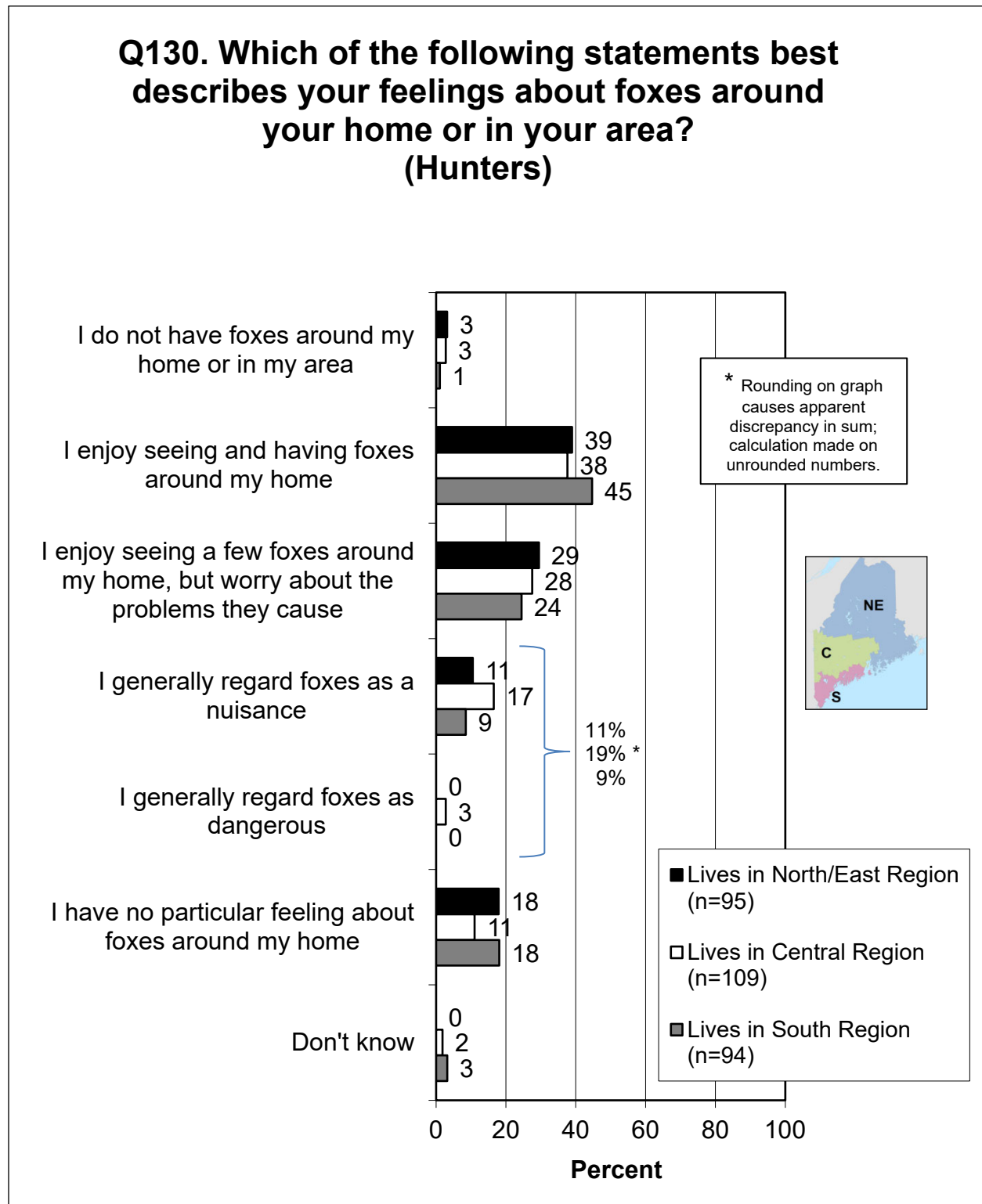


Figure 4.101. Feelings About Foxes, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

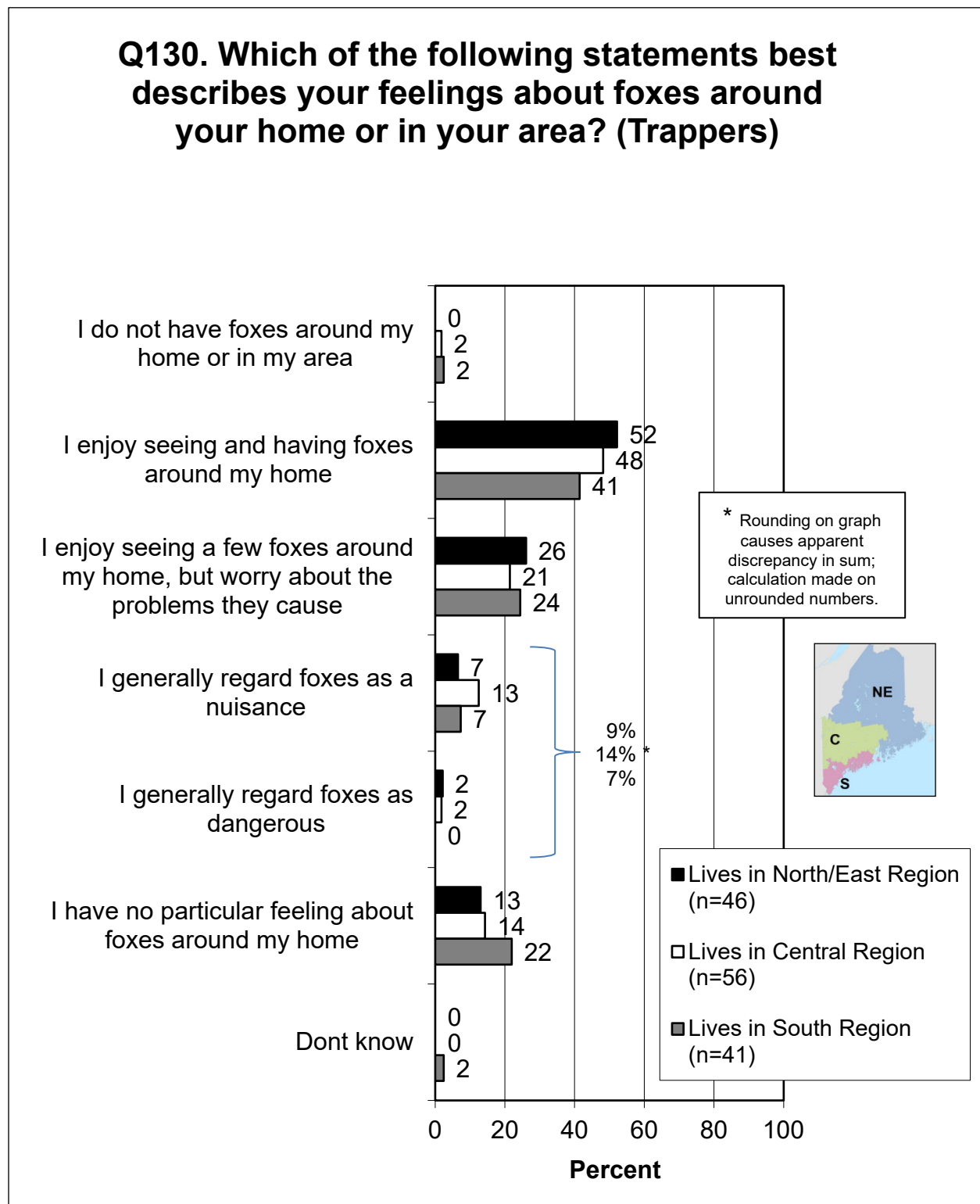


Figure 4.102. Feelings About Foxes, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

RACCOON

Trappers' self-professed knowledge level about raccoons is a bit higher than that of hunters (Figure 4.103). Regionally, the lowest knowledge levels are among hunters and trappers who live in the South Region (Figures 4.104 and 4.105).

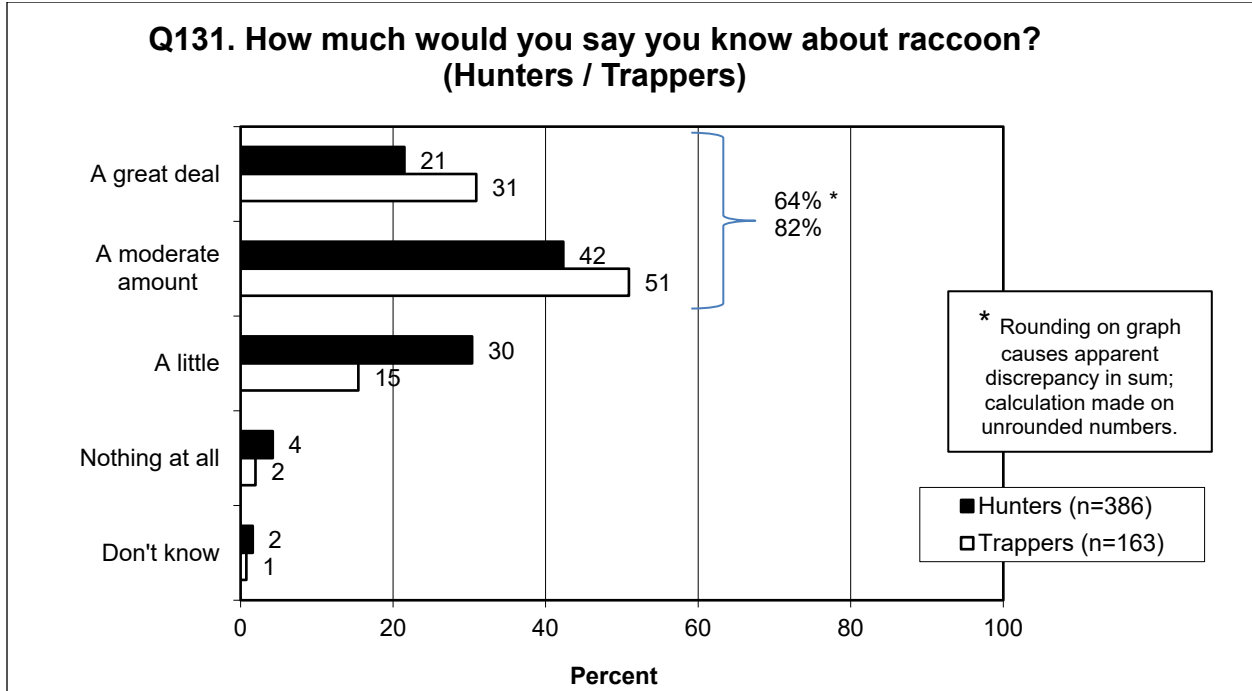


Figure 4.103. Knowledge of Raccoons (Hunters / Trappers)

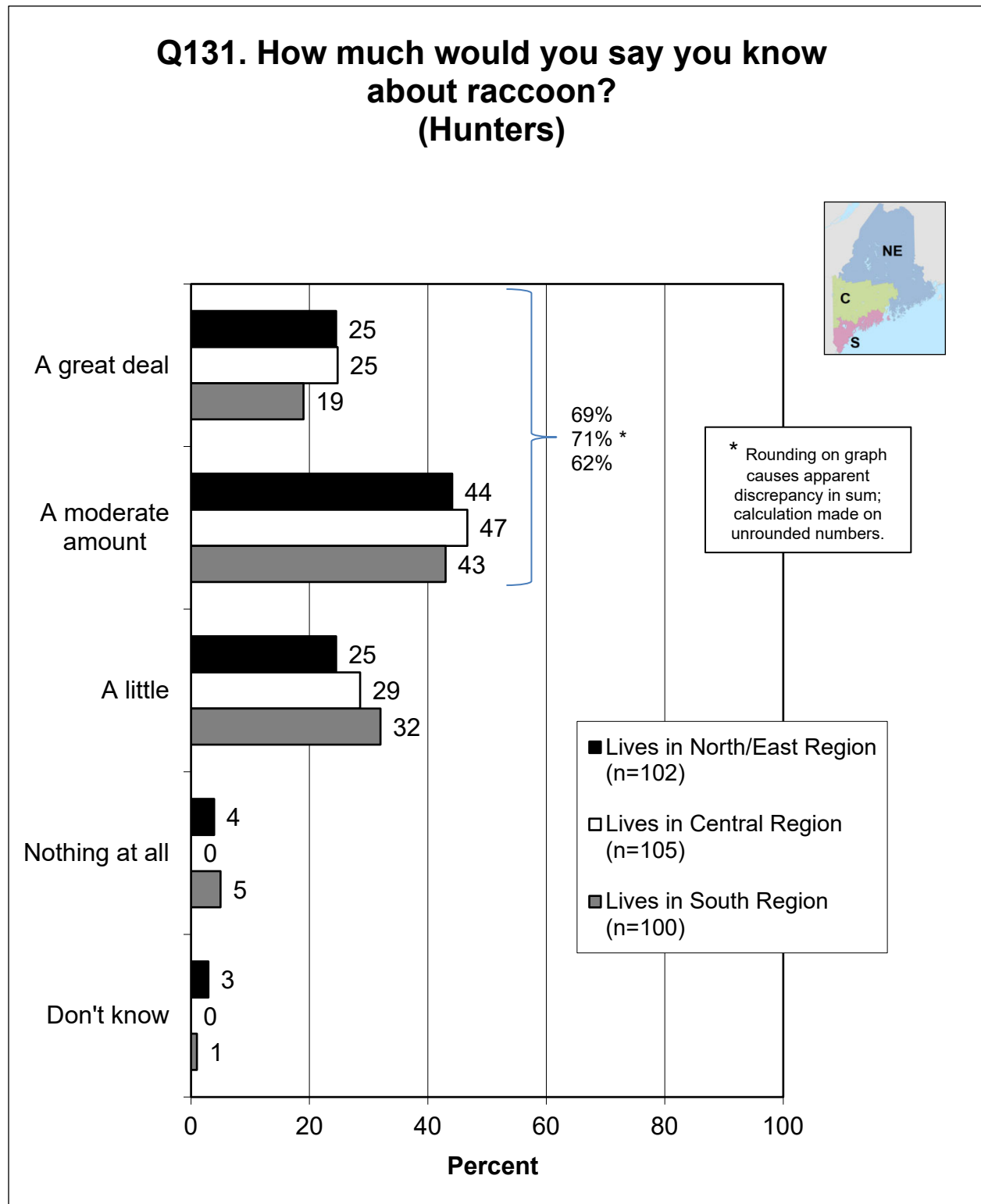


Figure 4.104. Knowledge of Raccoons, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

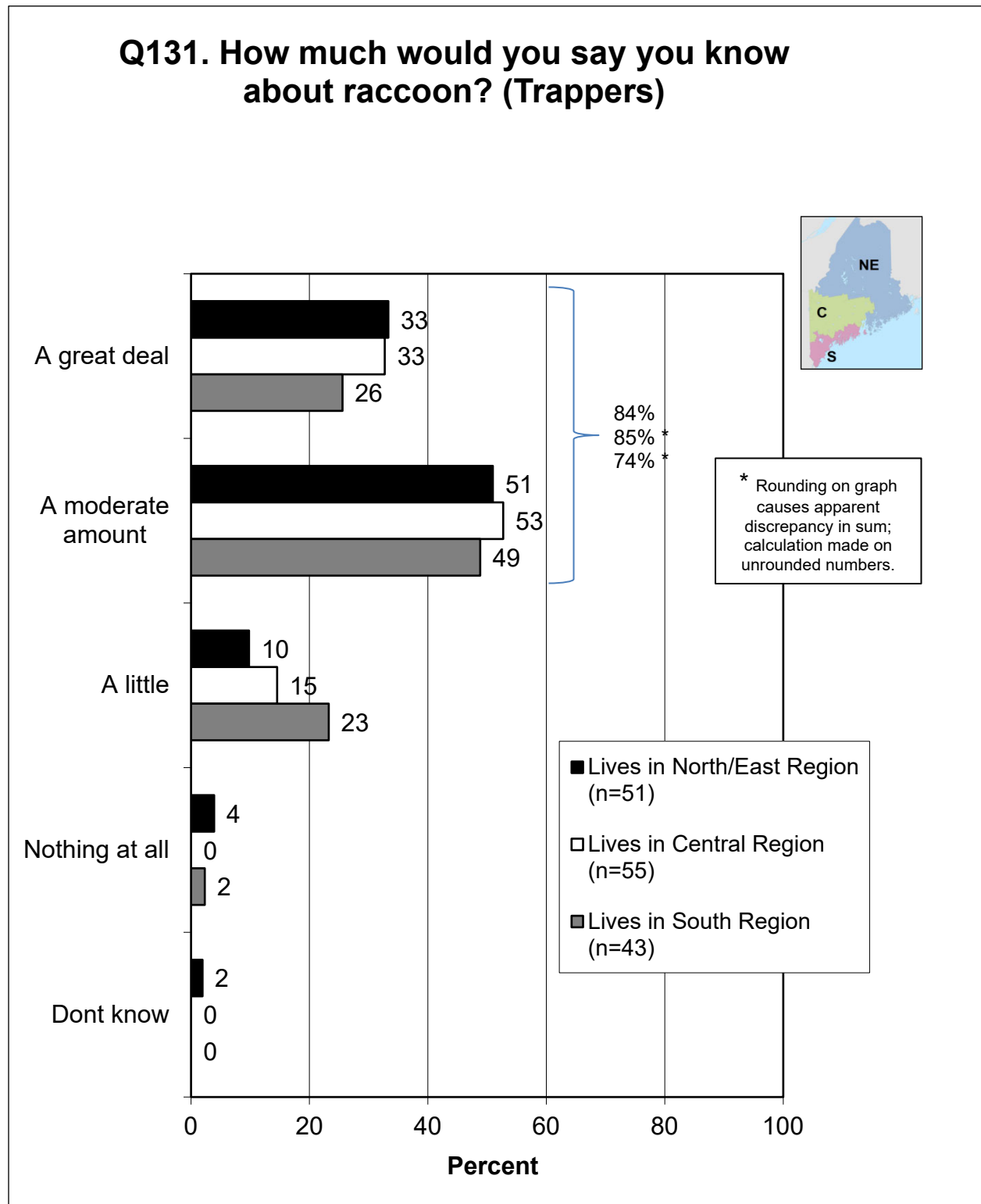


Figure 4.105. Knowledge of Raccoons, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Although the majority of hunters (60%) and trappers (52%) think the raccoon population in their area is about right, there are substantial percentages who think that it is too high (21% of hunters and 35% of trappers) (Figure 4.106). North/East Region hunters and trappers have the highest percentage who think the population is too high, as shown in Figures 4.107 and 4.108.

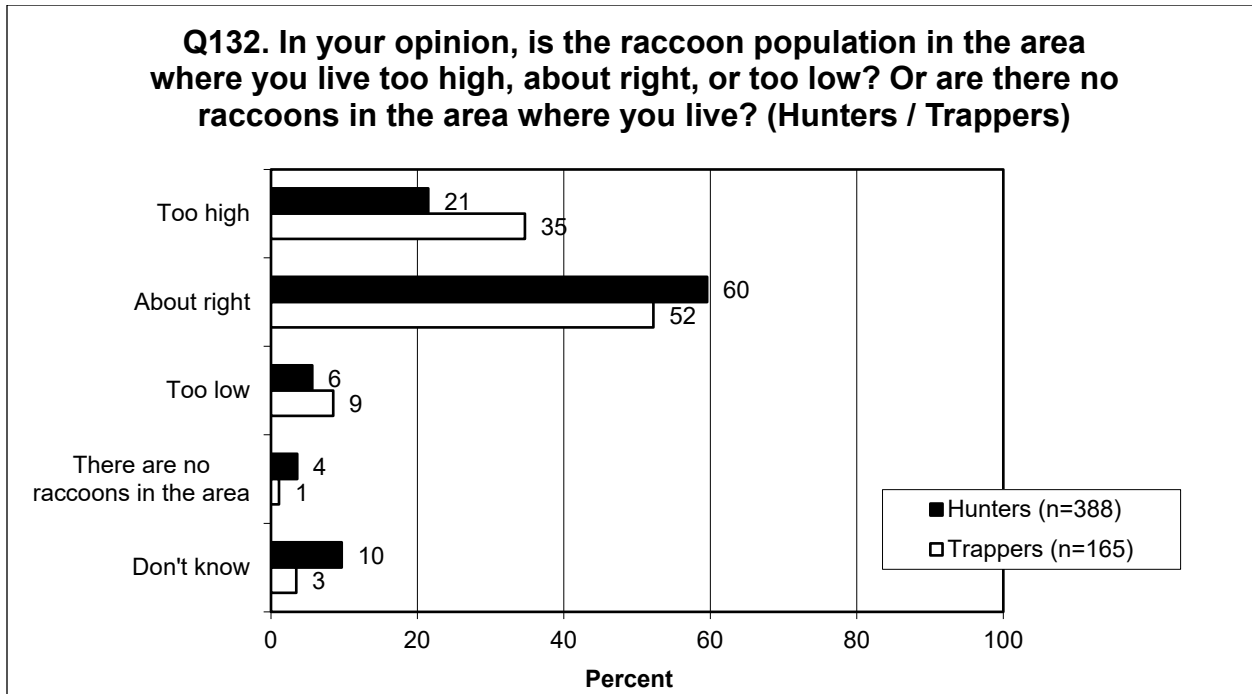


Figure 4.106. Opinion on the Raccoon Population (Hunters / Trappers)

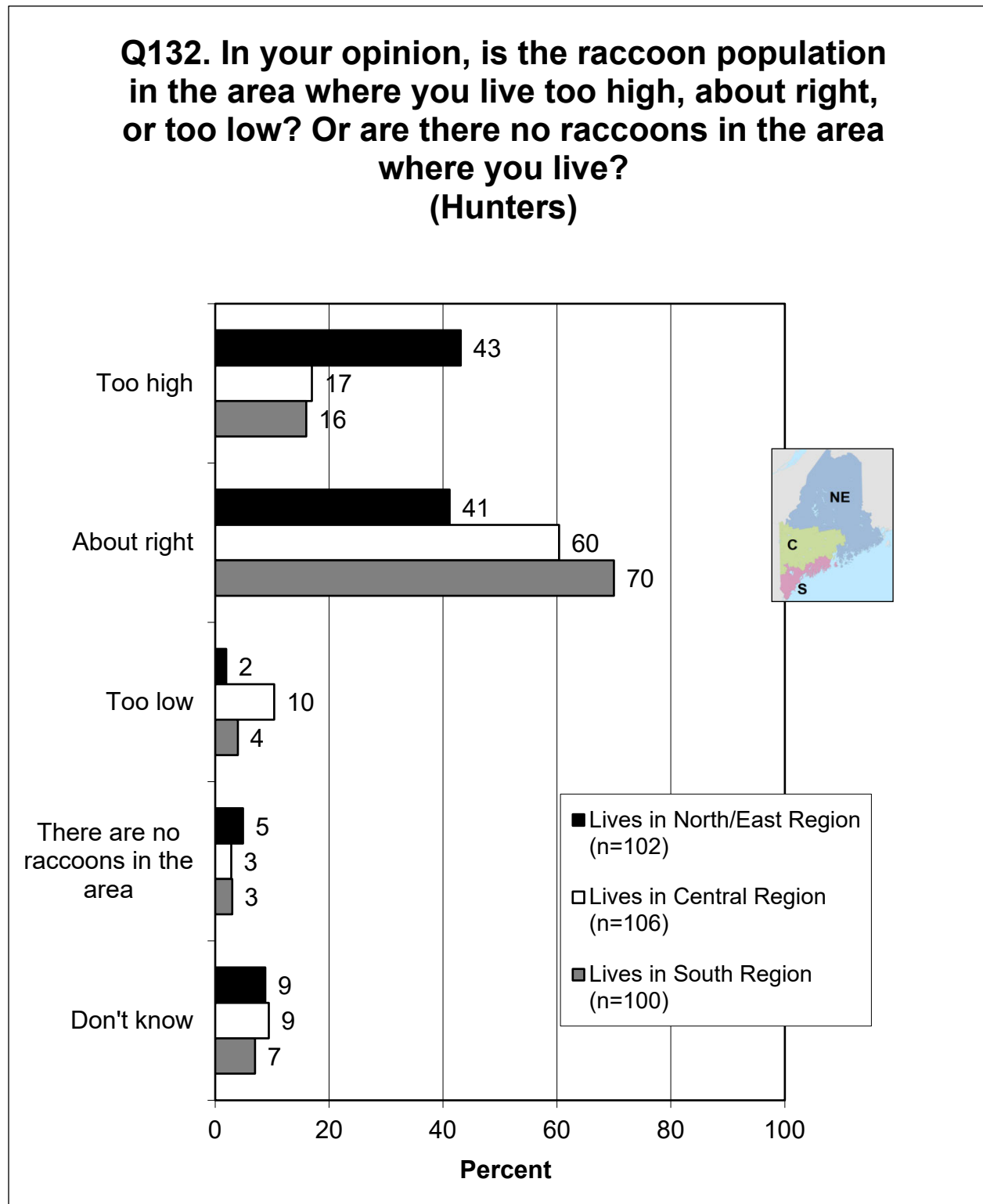


Figure 4.107. Opinion on the Raccoon Population, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

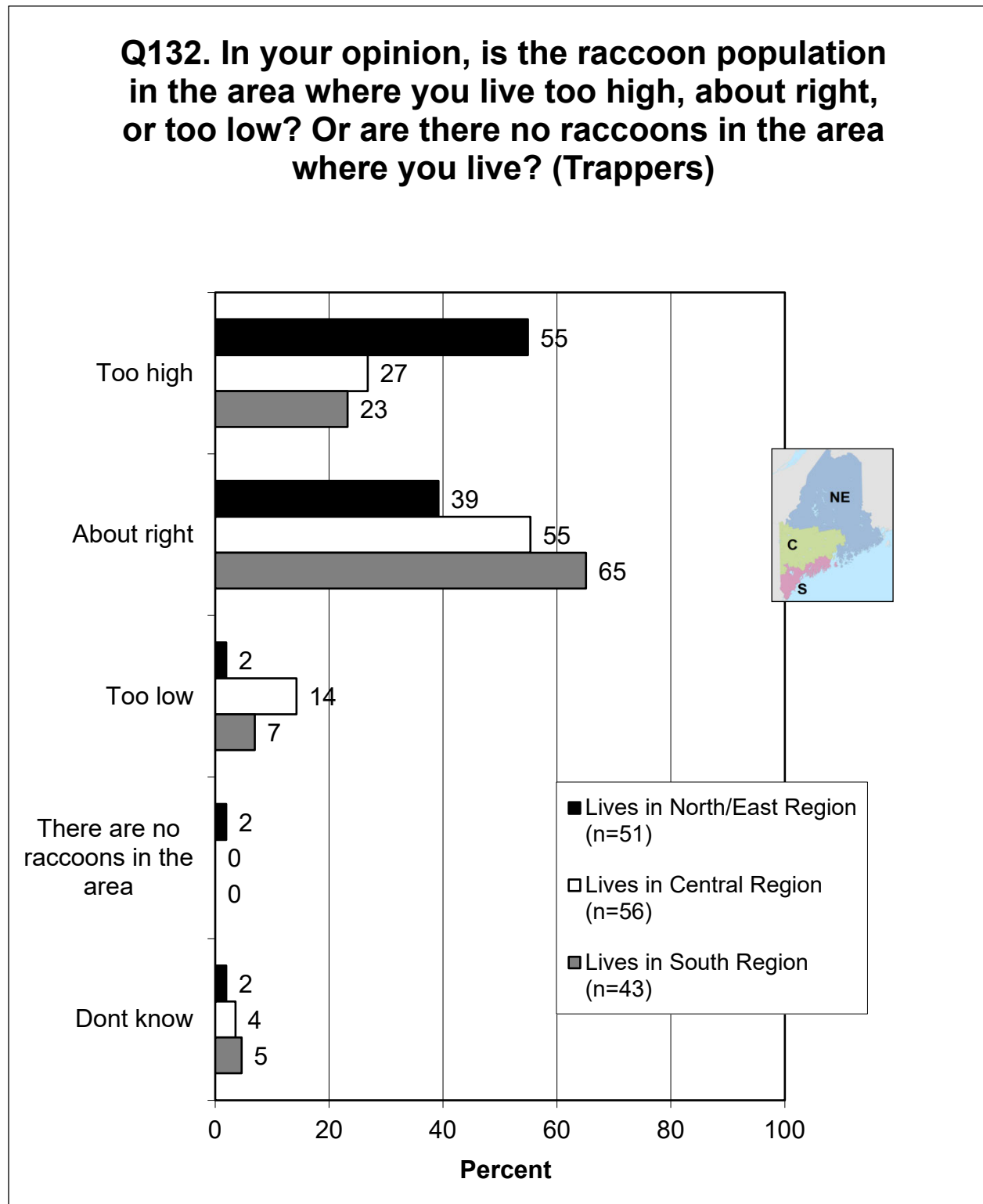


Figure 4.108. Opinion on the Raccoon Population, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Support is high for trapping as a method to help manage raccoon populations in Maine (Figure 4.109). Overall support is about the same across the regions among hunters and trappers, although *strong* support is higher among North/East hunters and North/East and Central trappers (Figures 4.110 and 4.111).

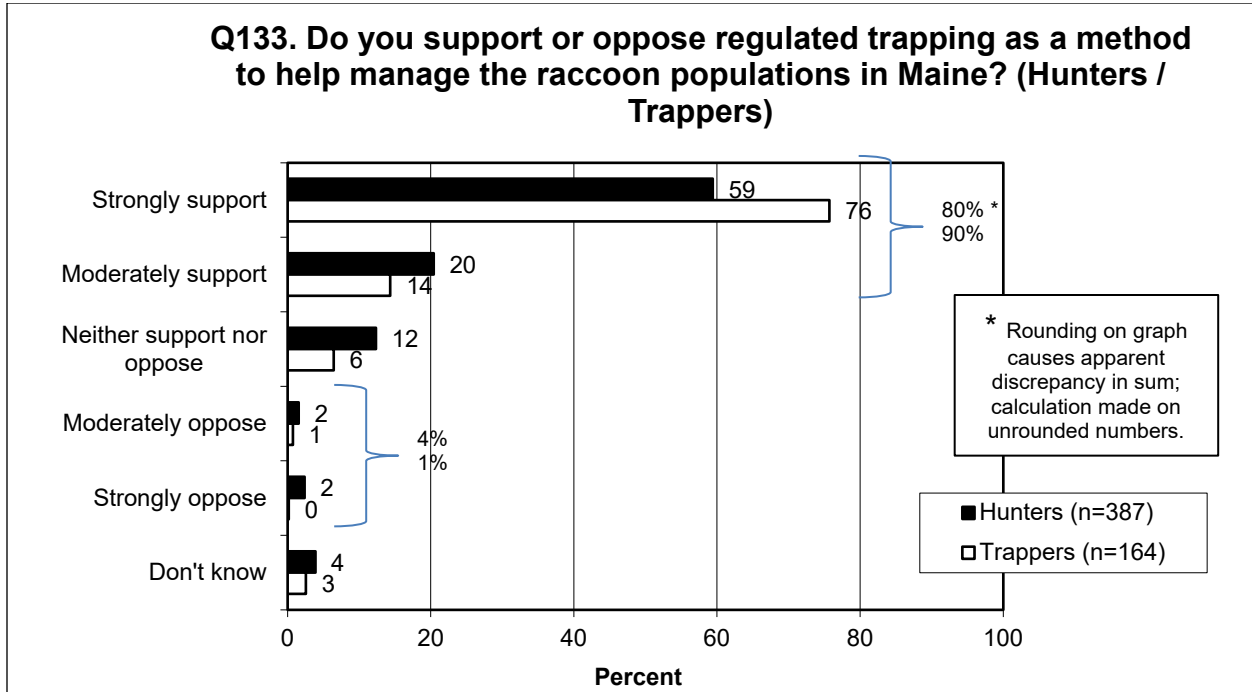


Figure 4.109. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Raccoon Populations (Hunters / Trappers)

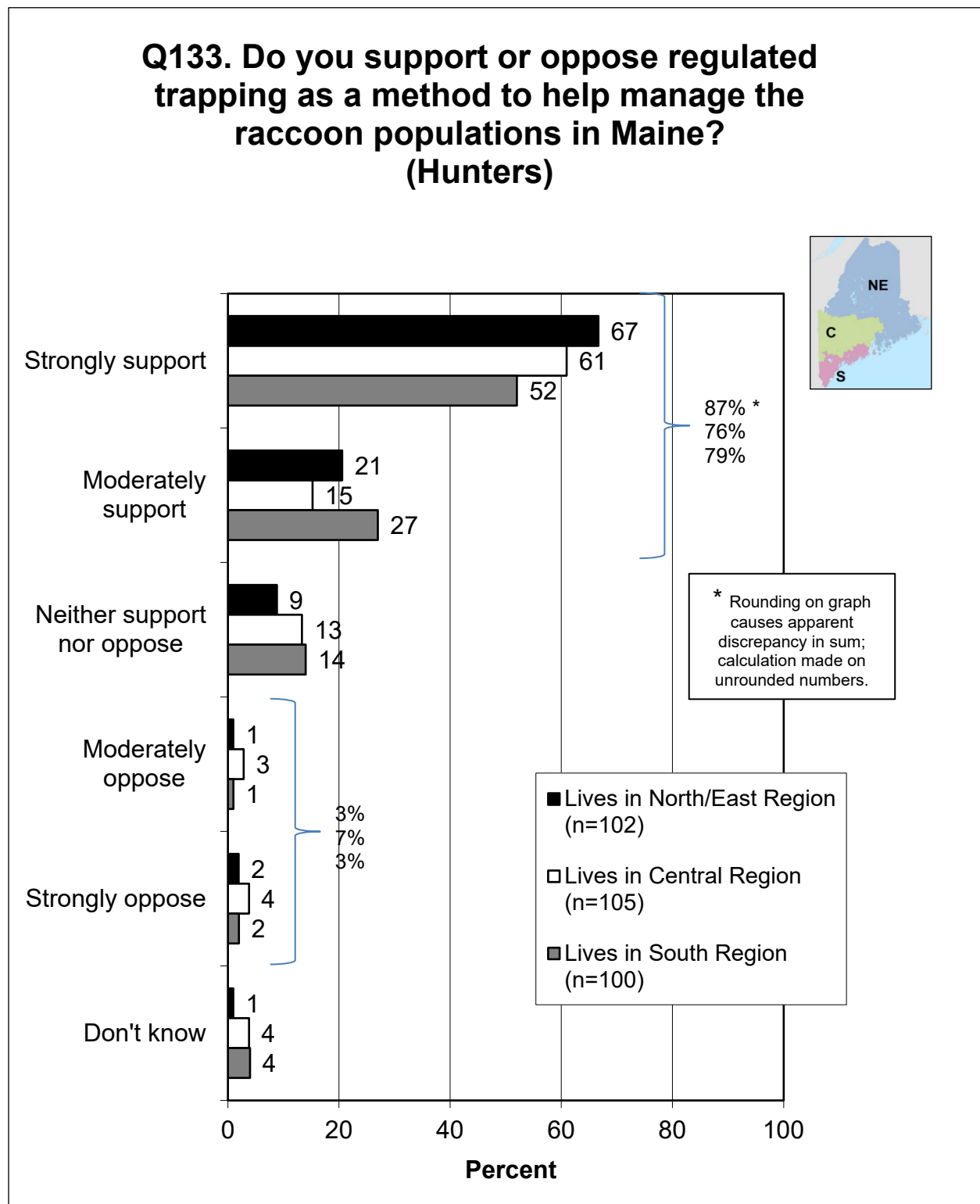


Figure 4.110. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Raccoon Populations, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

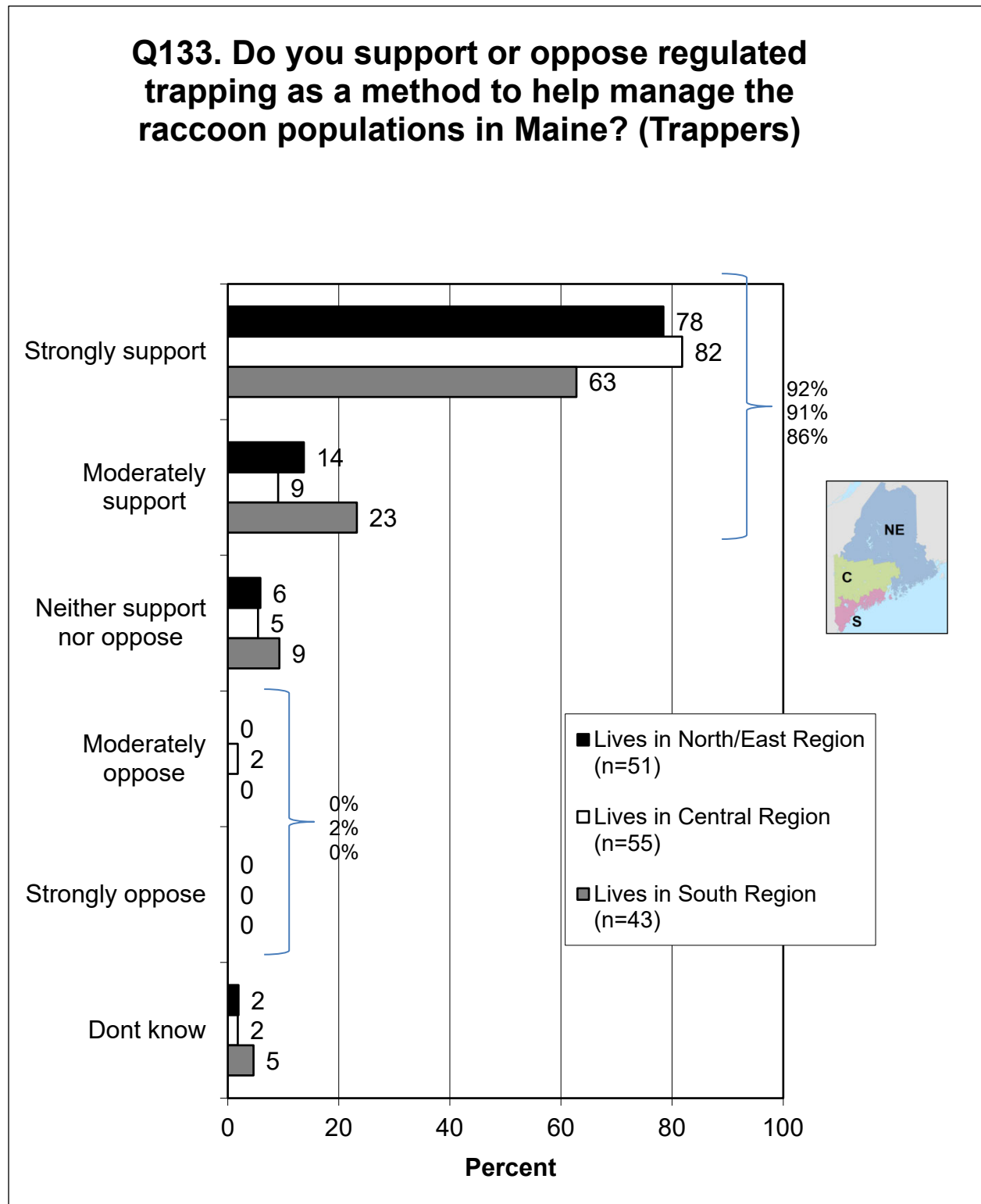


Figure 4.111. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Raccoon Populations, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Intolerance of raccoons is high, with more than a third of hunters and trappers regarding them as a nuisance or as dangerous (Figure 4.112). In particular, North/East Region hunters and trappers think of raccoons as a nuisance or dangerous (Figures 4.113 and 4.114).

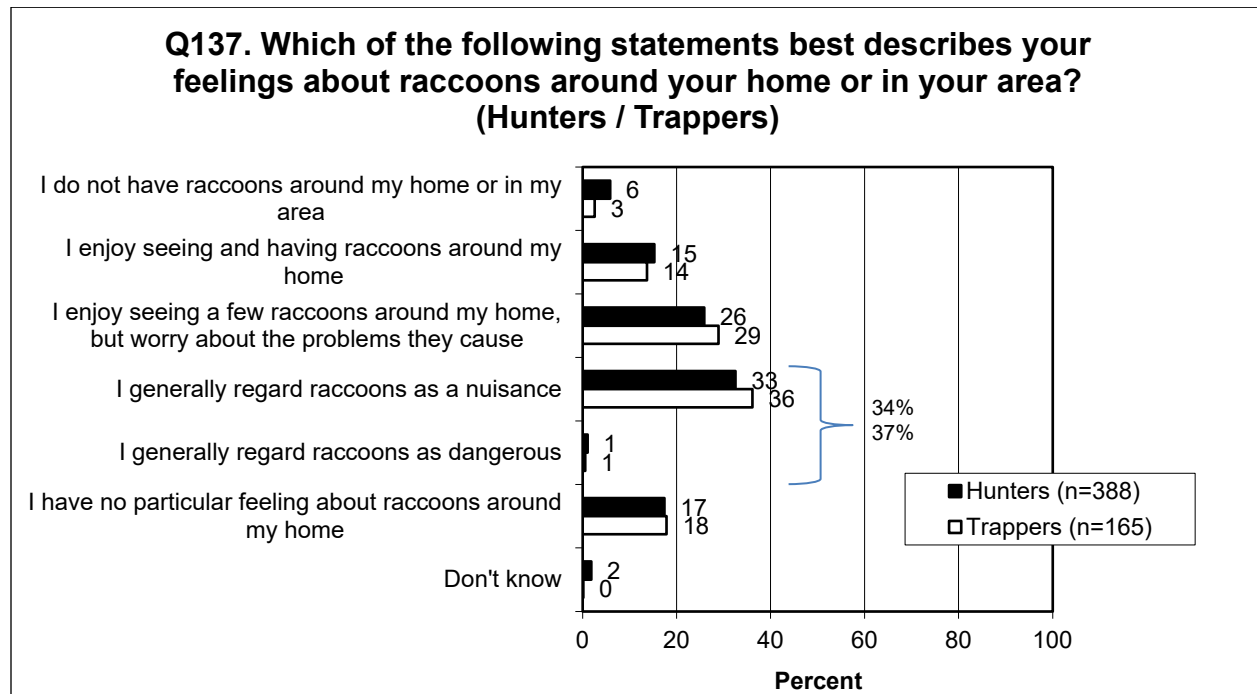


Figure 4.112. Feelings About Raccoons (Hunters / Trappers)

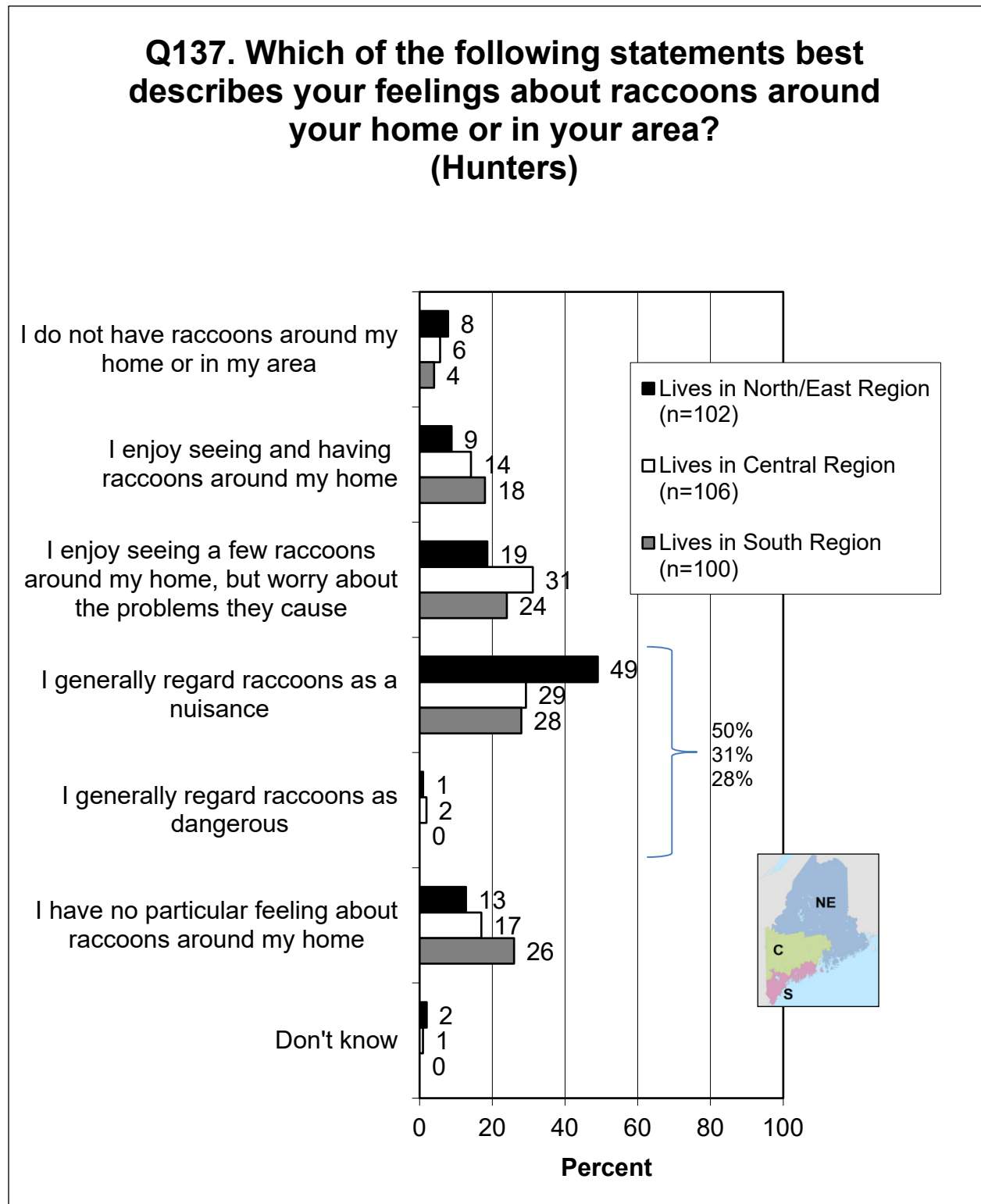


Figure 4.113. Feelings About Raccoons, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

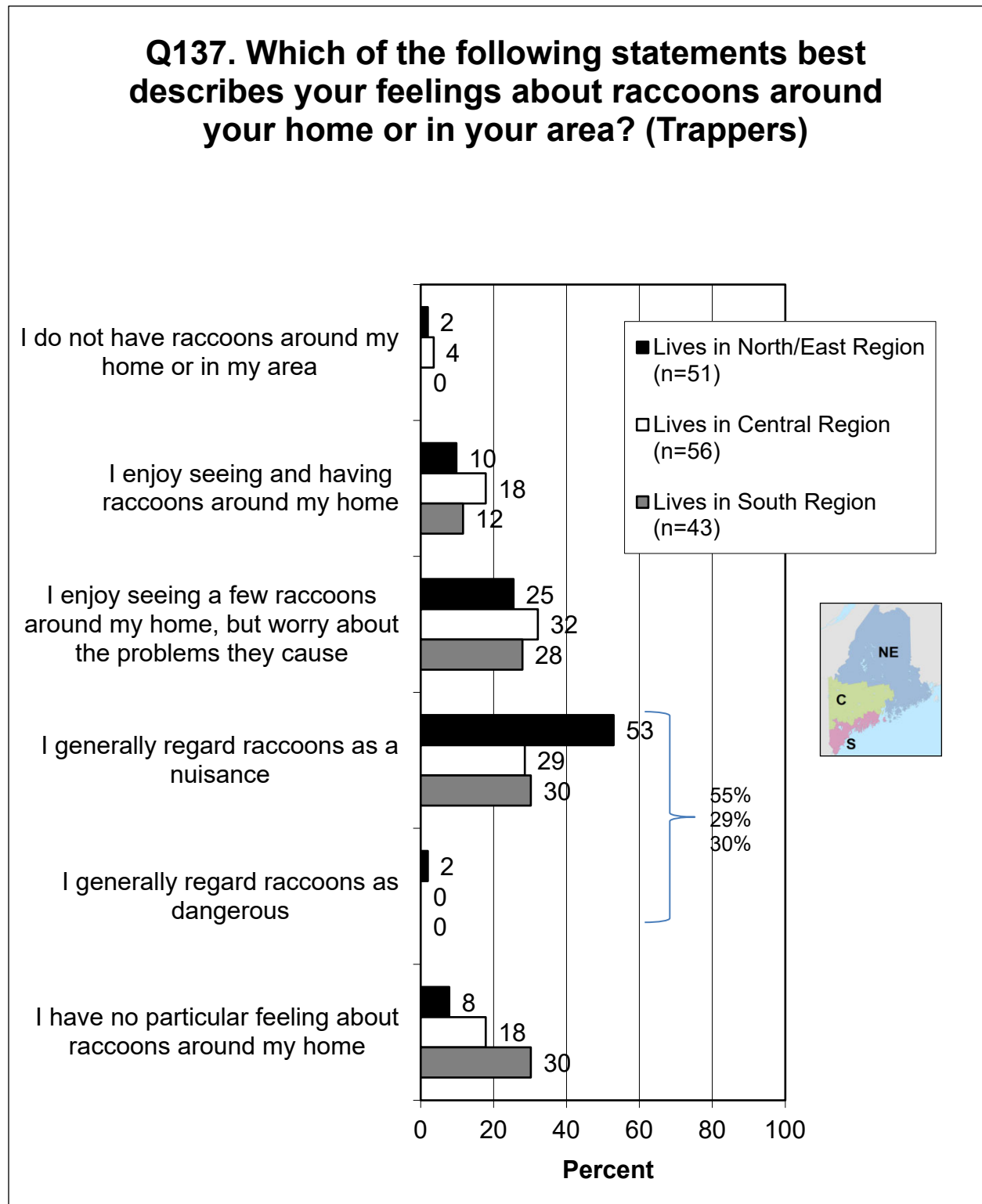


Figure 4.114. Feelings About Raccoons, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

SKUNK

Trappers' self-professed knowledge level about skunks is higher than that of hunters (Figure 4.115). The lowest knowledge levels regionally are among South Region hunters and trappers (Figures 4.116 and 4.117).

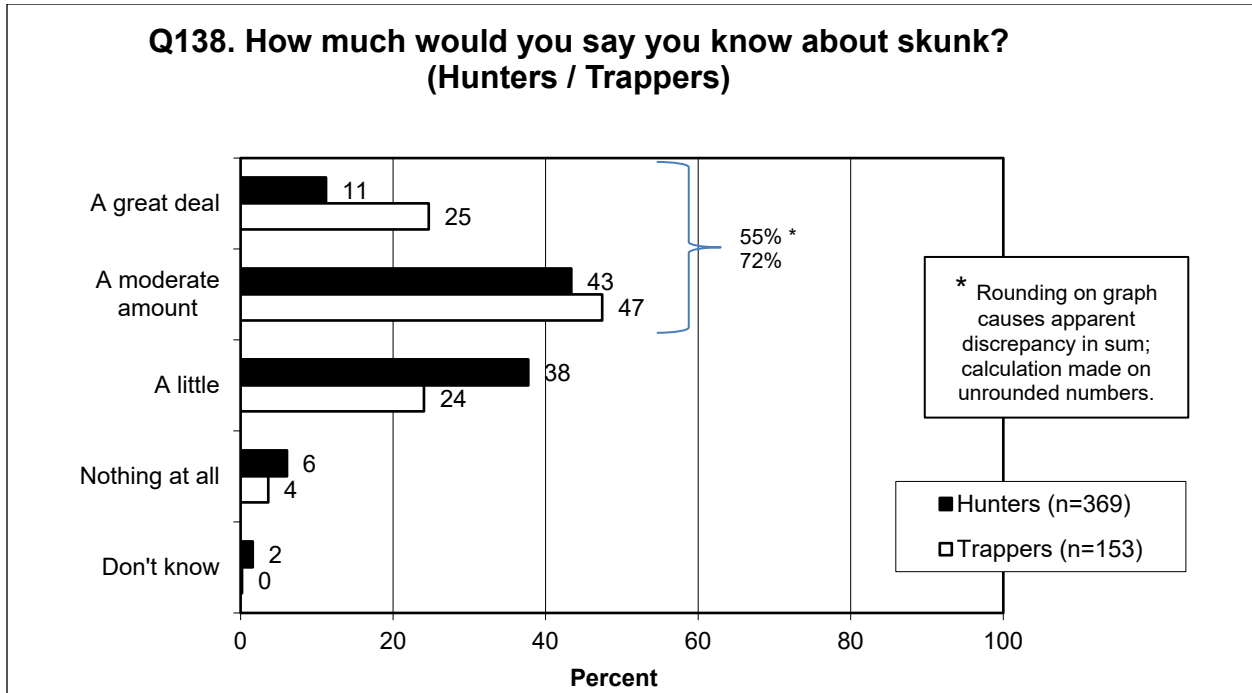


Figure 4.115. Knowledge of Skunks (Hunters / Trappers)

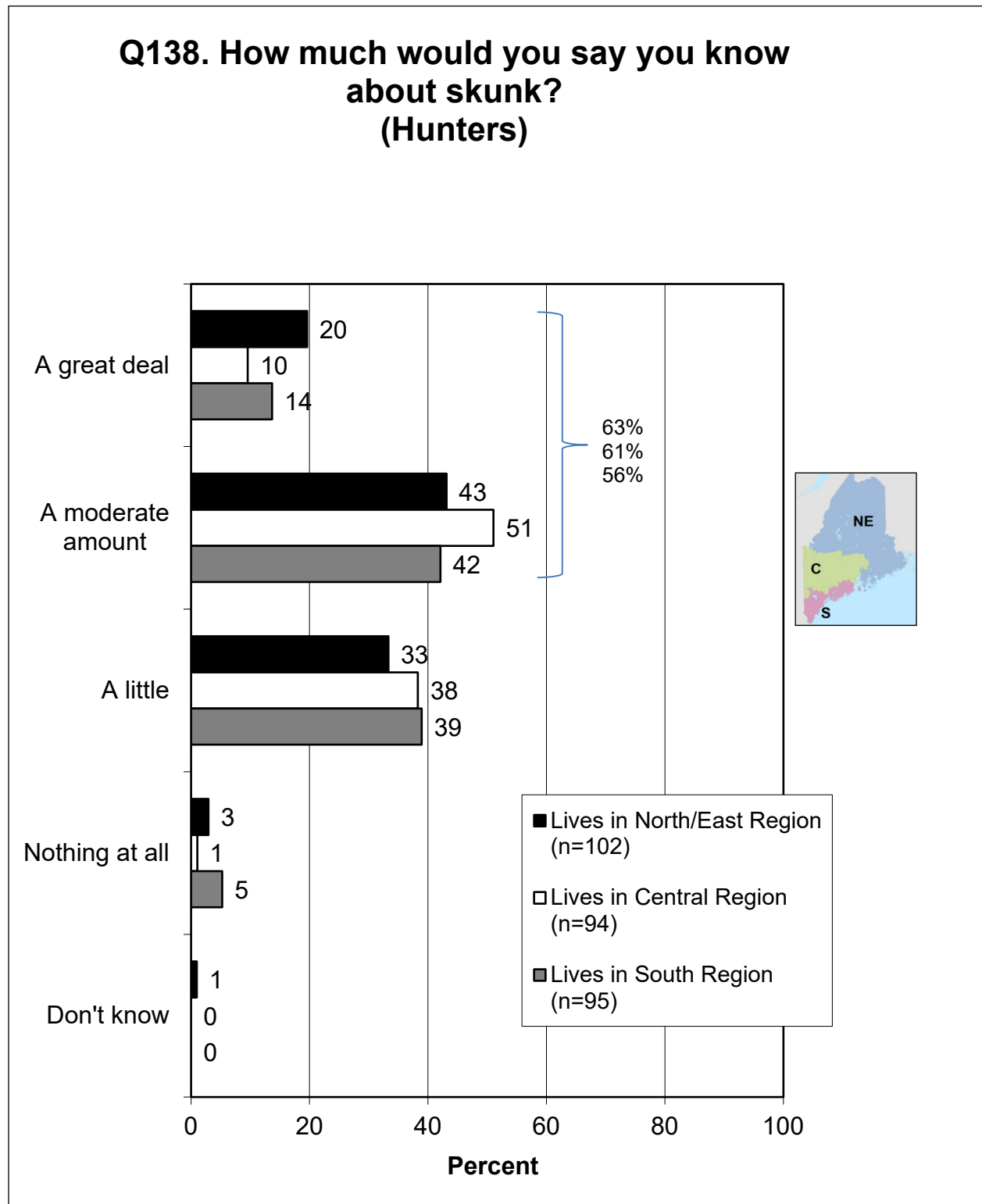


Figure 4.116. Knowledge of Skunks, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

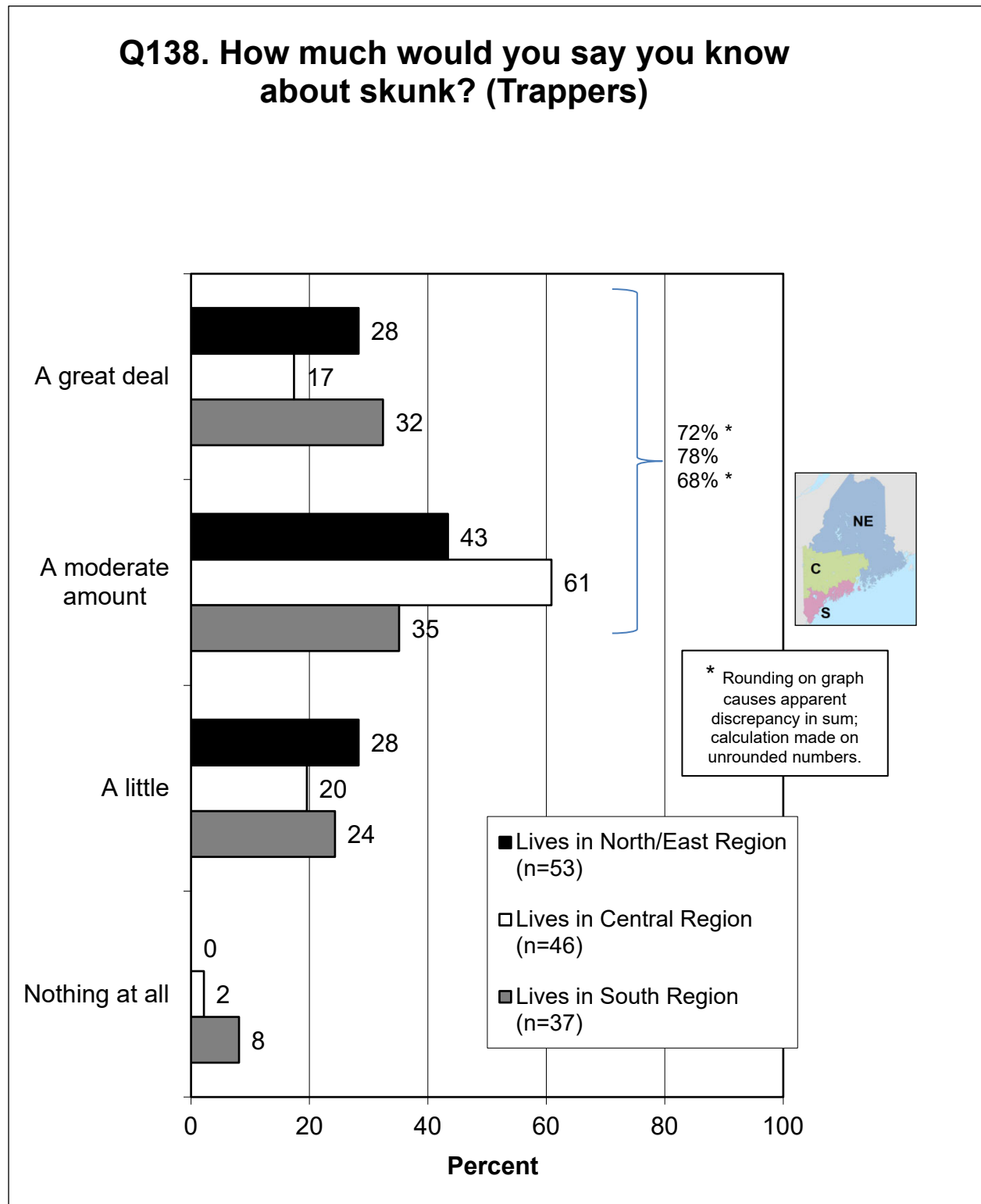


Figure 4.117. Knowledge of Skunks, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

The majority of hunters (56%) and trappers (64%) think the skunk population in their area is about right; nonetheless, there are substantial percentages who think that it is too high (27% of hunters and 28% of trappers) (Figure 4.118). North/East Region hunters and trappers have the highest percentage who think the skunk population is too high (Figures 4.119 and 4.120).

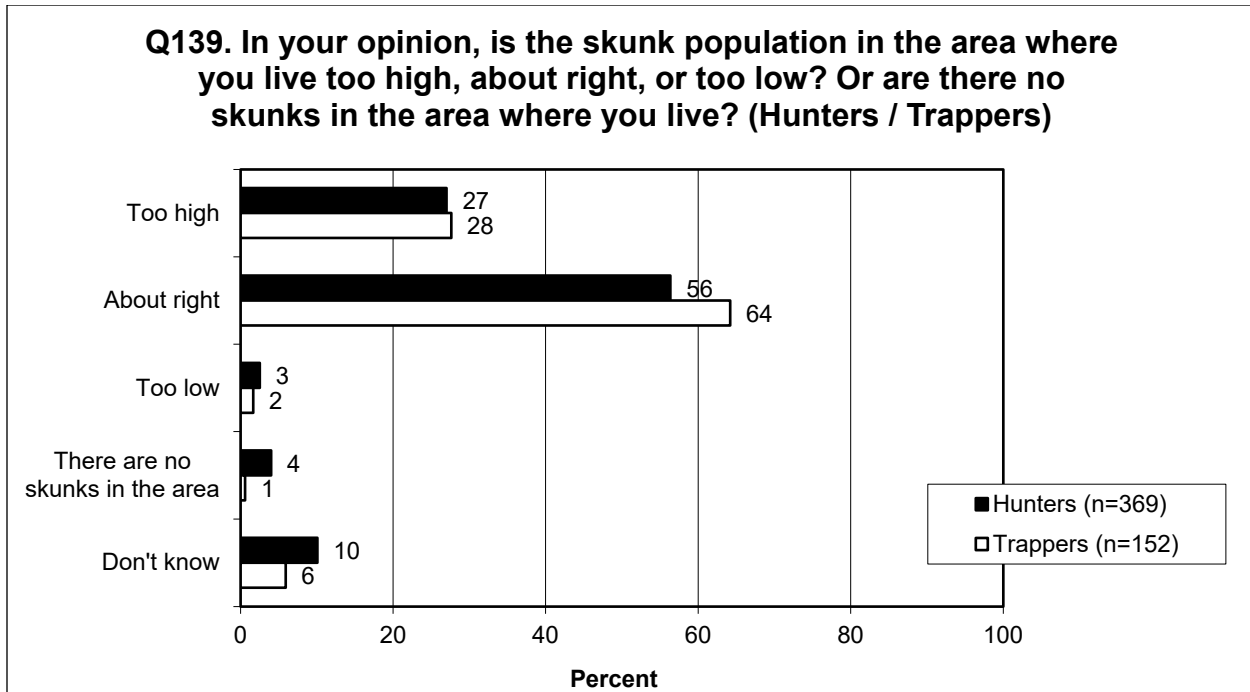


Figure 4.118. Opinion on the Skunk Population (Hunters / Trappers)

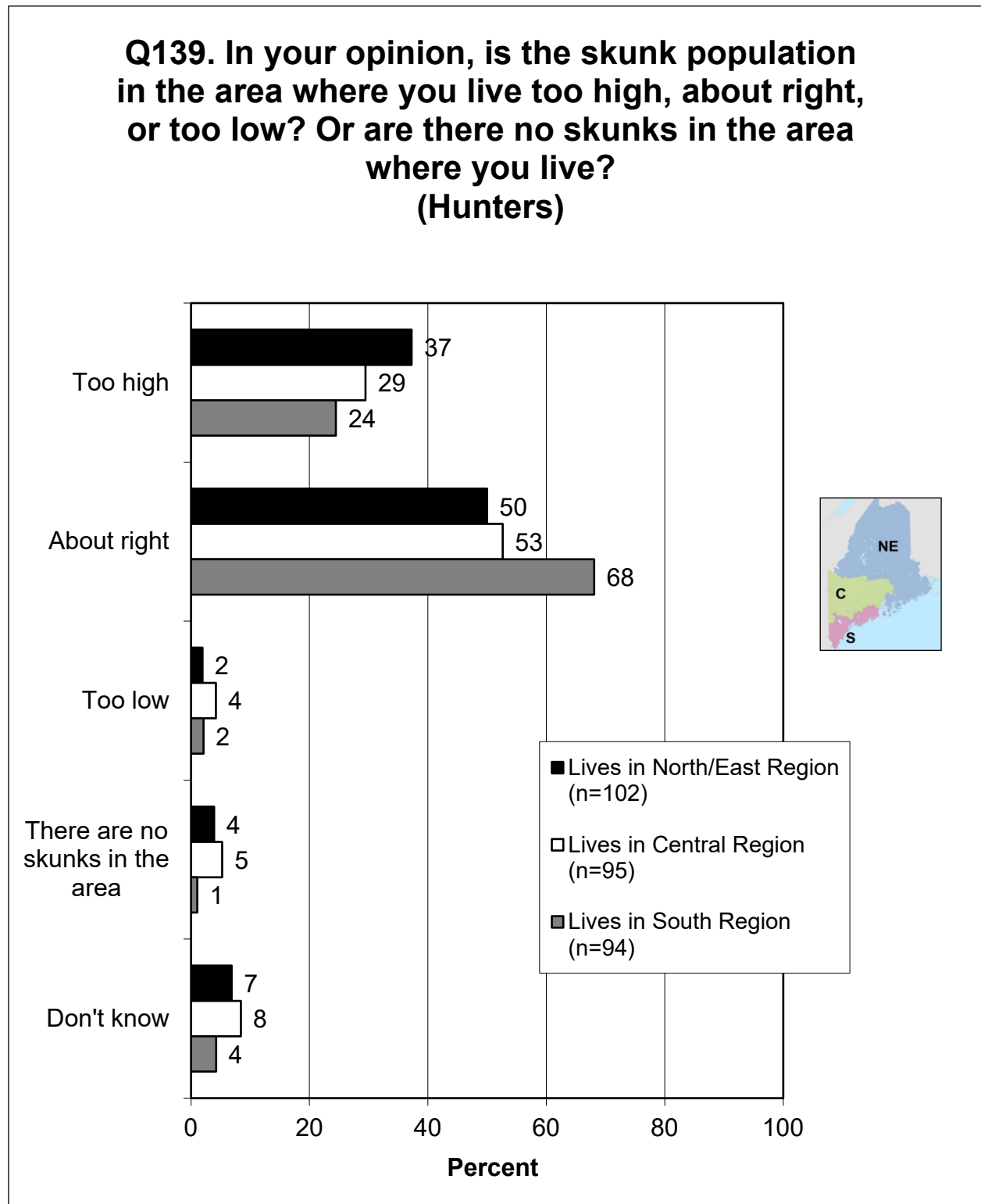


Figure 4.119. Opinion on the Skunk Population, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

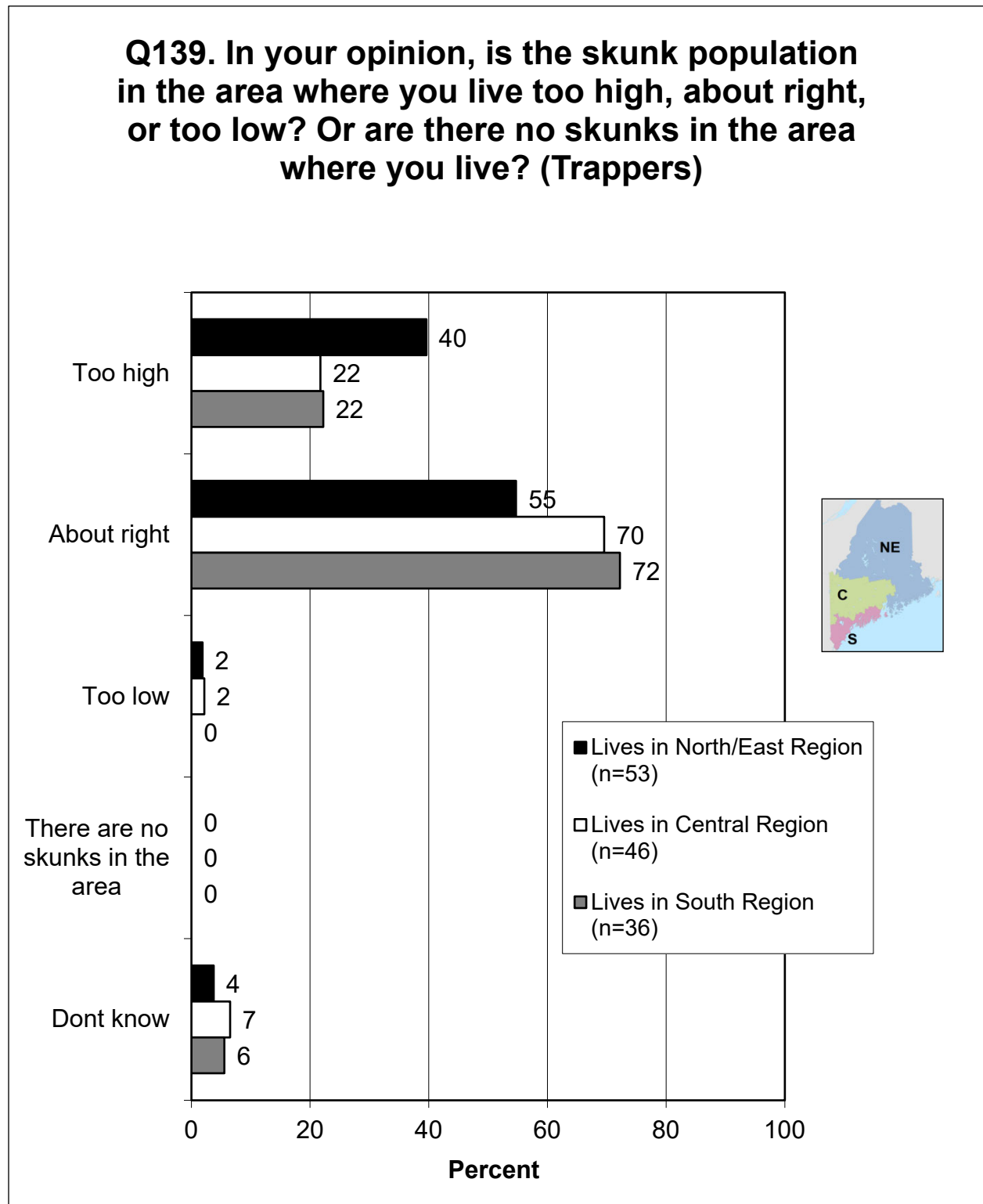


Figure 4.120. Opinion on the Skunk Population, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

In Maine, support is high for trapping as a method to help manage skunk populations, with very little opposition (Figure 4.121). Support is highest among South Region hunters and trappers (Figures 4.122 and 4.123).

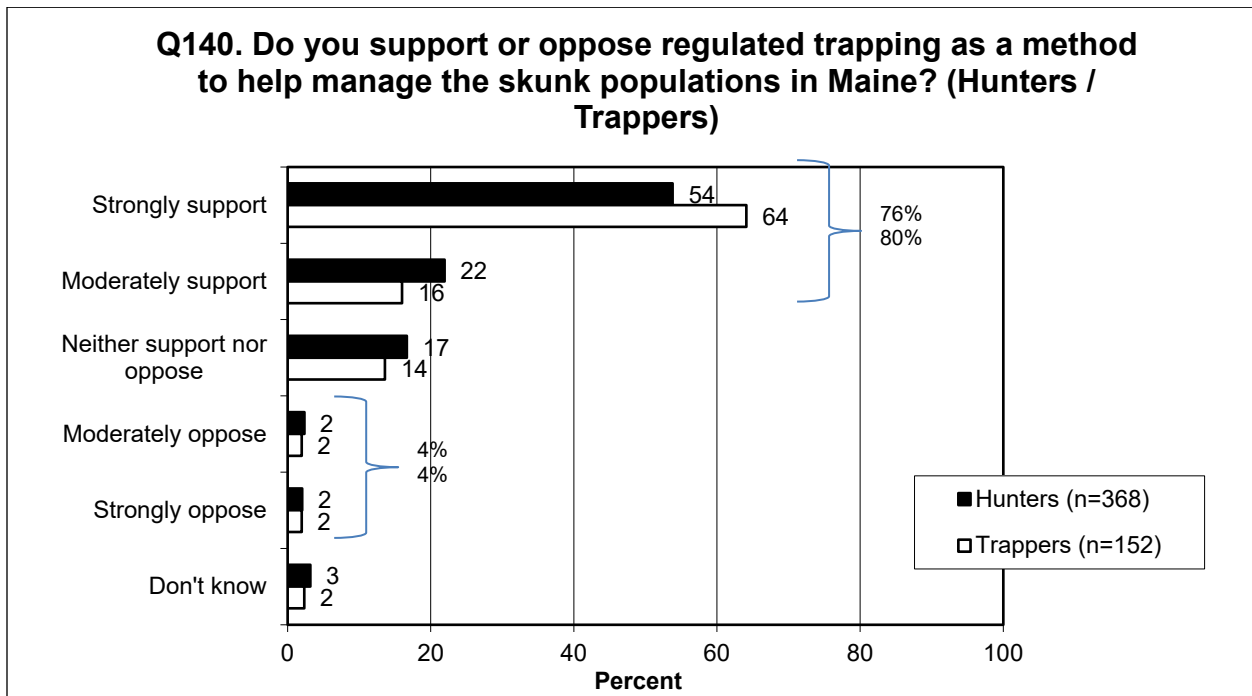


Figure 4.121. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Skunk Populations (Hunters / Trappers)

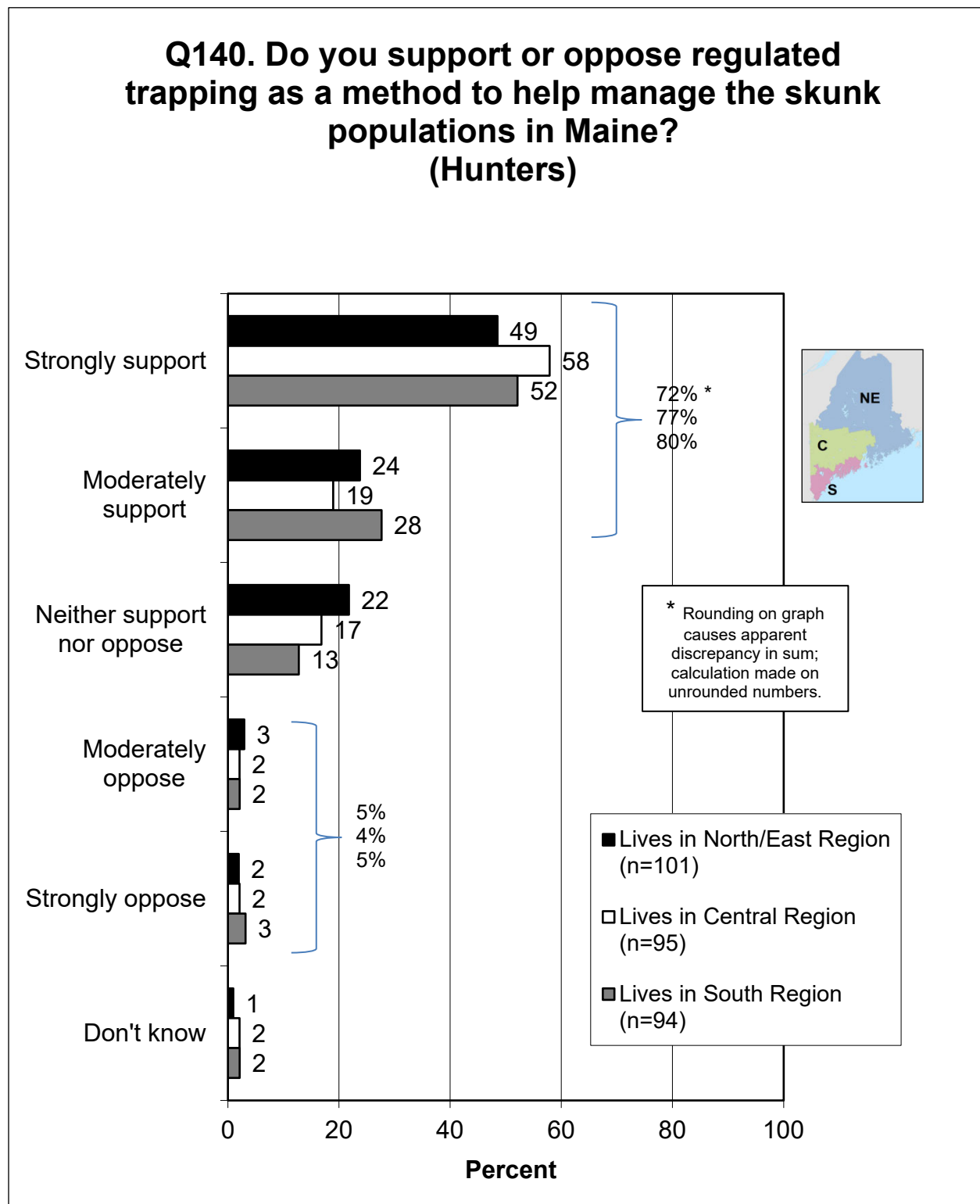


Figure 4.122. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Skunk Populations, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

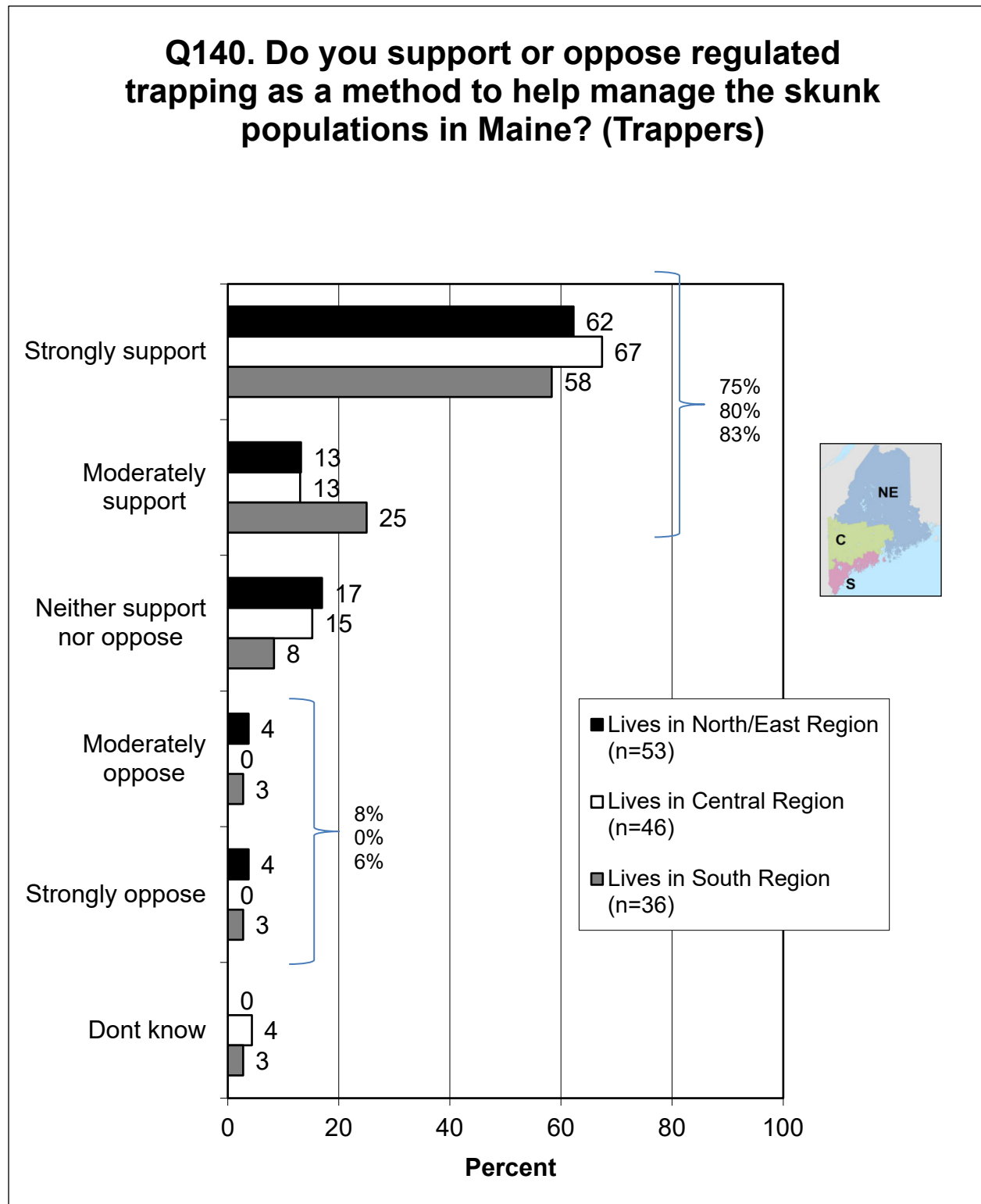


Figure 4.123. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Skunk Populations, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Intolerance of skunks is quite high, with nearly half of hunters and trappers regarding them as a nuisance (Figure 4.124). In particular, North/East Region hunters and trappers think of skunks as a nuisance (Figures 4.125 and 4.126).

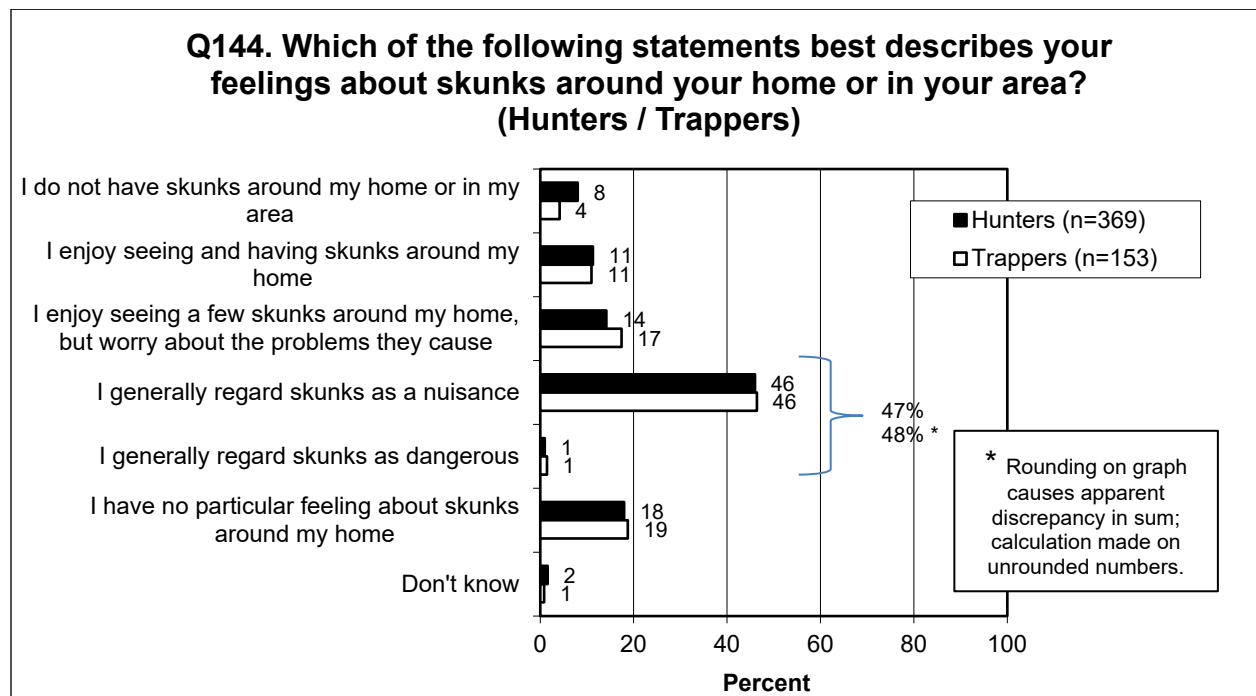


Figure 4.124. Feelings About Skunks (Hunters / Trappers)

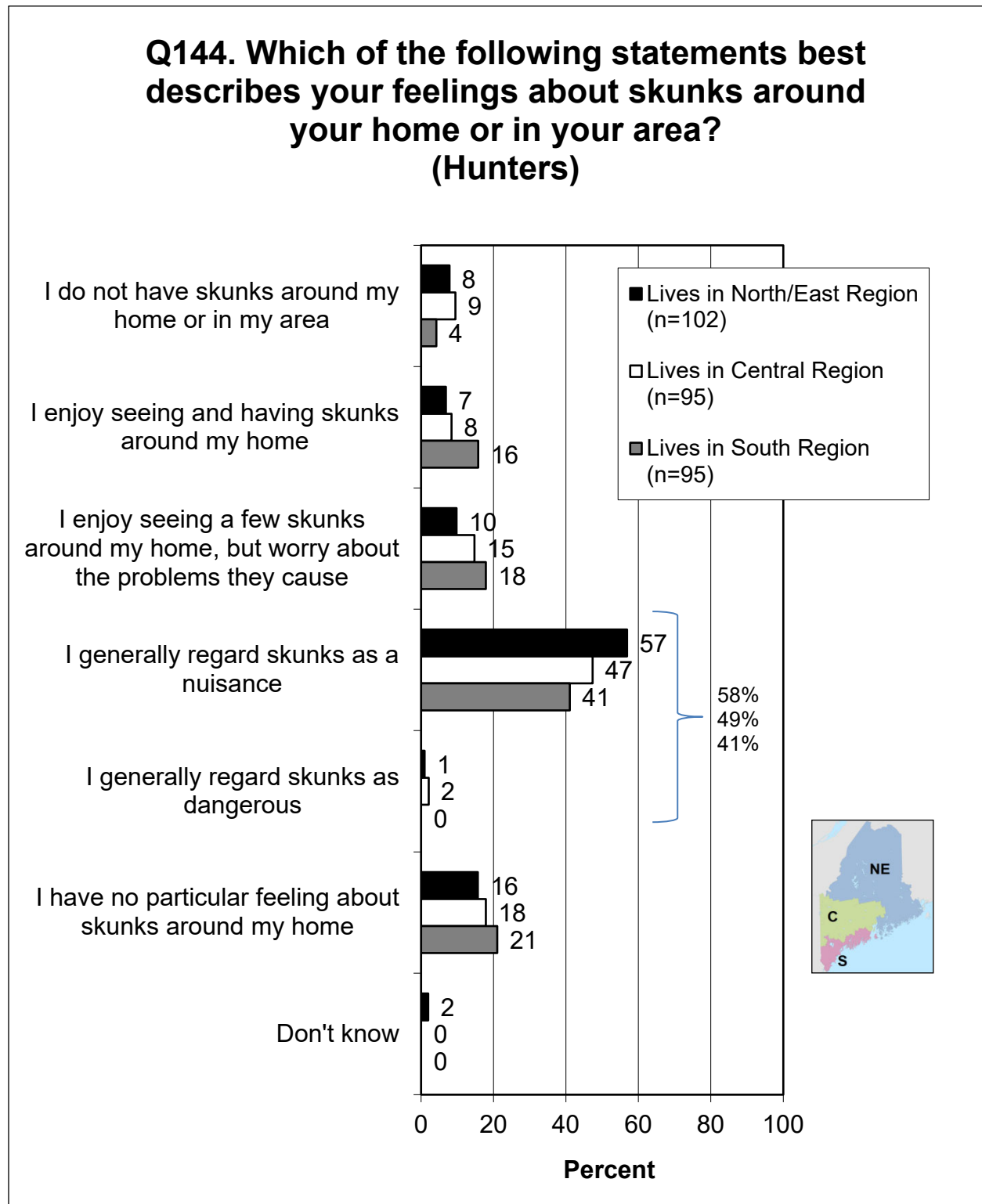


Figure 4.125. Feelings About Skunks, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

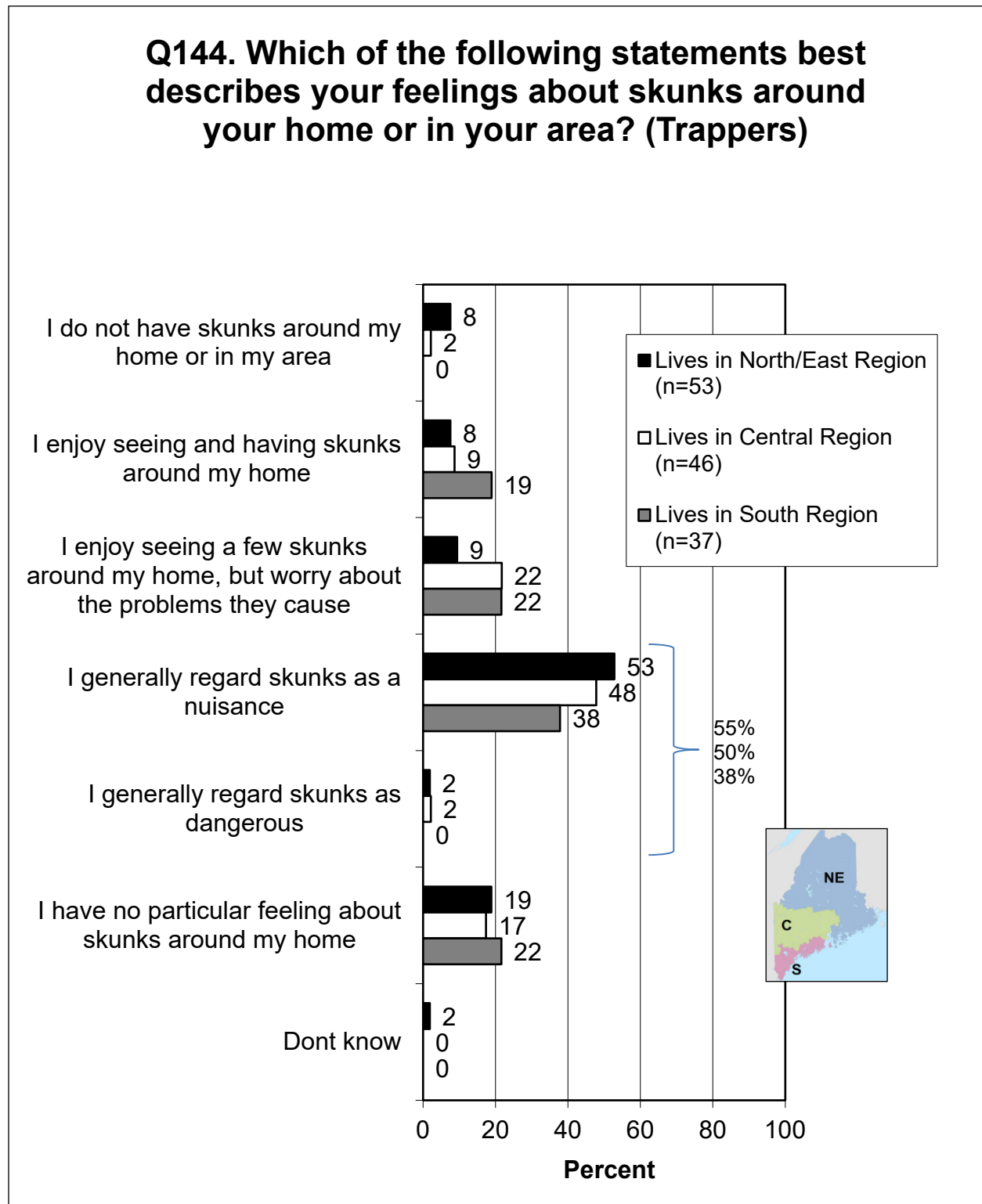


Figure 4.126. Feelings About Skunks, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

FISHER

Trappers' self-professed knowledge level about fishers is much higher than that of hunters (Figure 4.127). The lowest knowledge levels regionally are among South Region hunters and trappers (Figures 4.128 and 4.129).

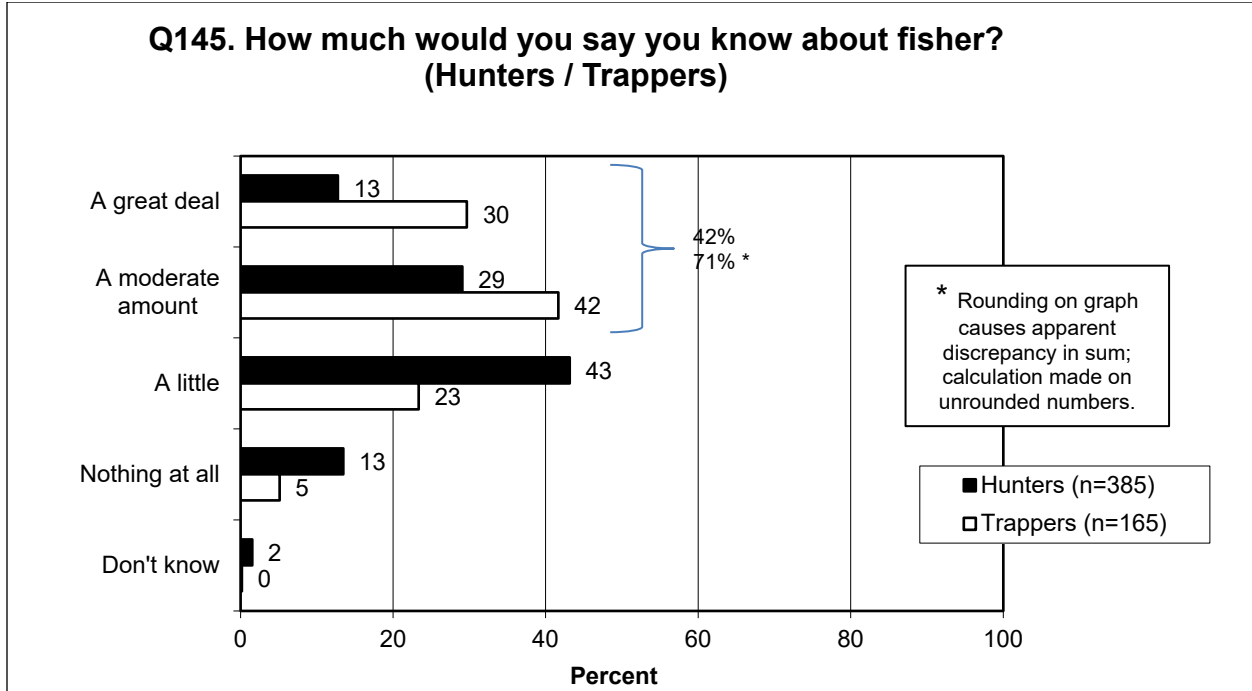


Figure 4.127. Knowledge of Fishers (Hunters / Trappers)

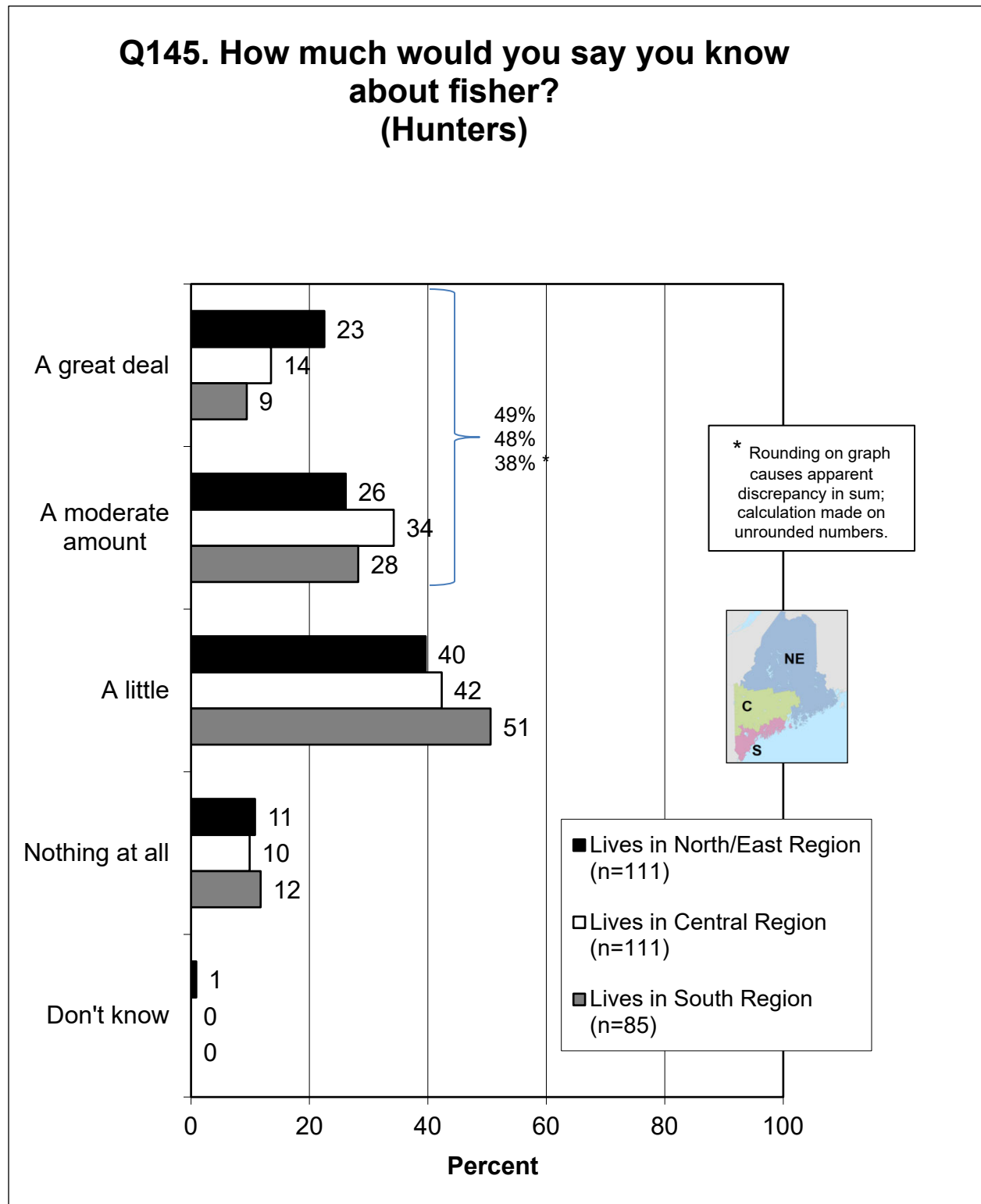


Figure 4.128. Knowledge of Fishers, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

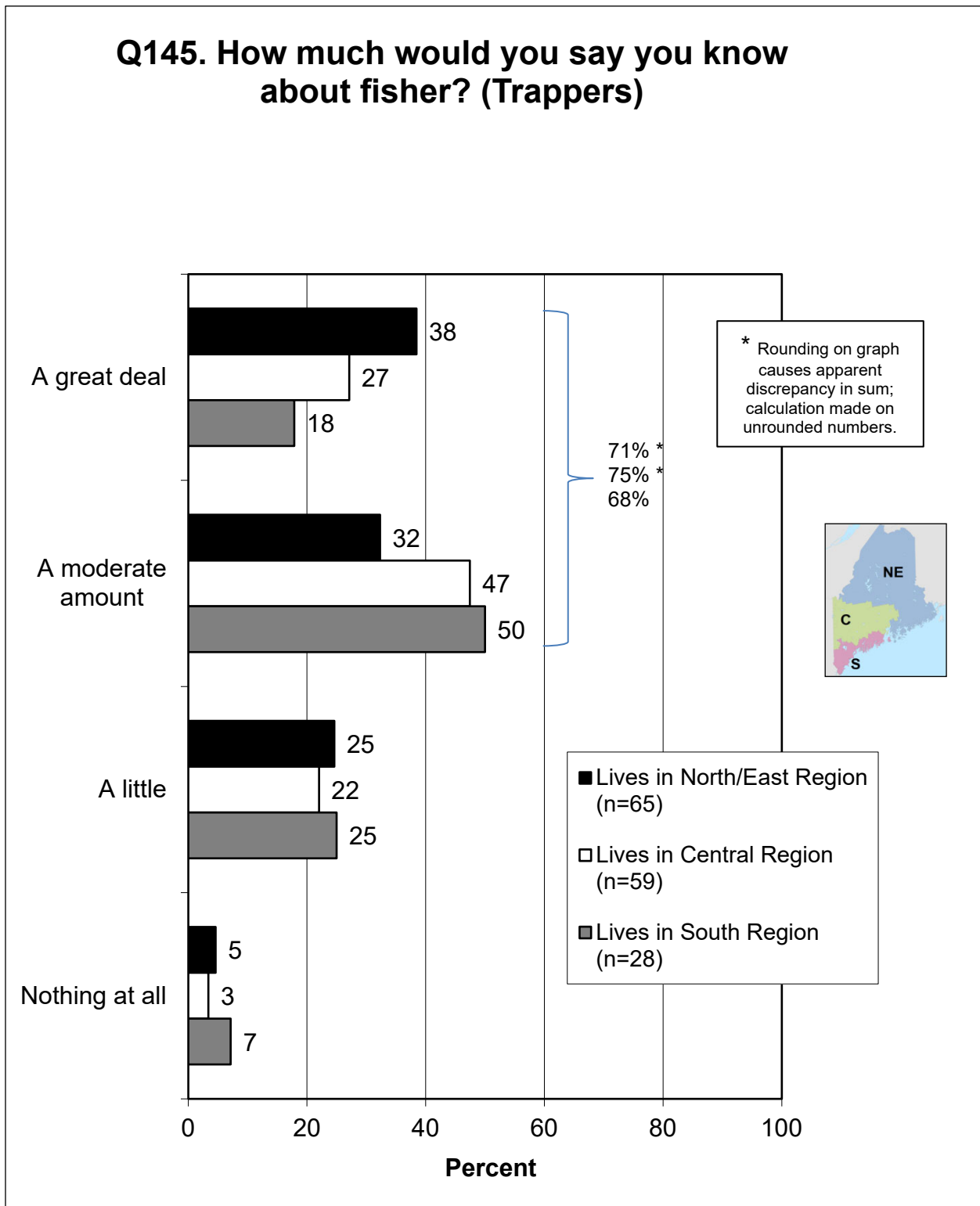


Figure 4.129. Knowledge of Fishers, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

The most common response among hunters and trappers regarding the fisher population is that it is about right; otherwise, greater percentages think it is too low than too high (Figure 4.130). The regional differences are shown in Figures 4.131 and 4.132. Prominent among the differences is that Central Region trappers are the most likely to think the population is too low.

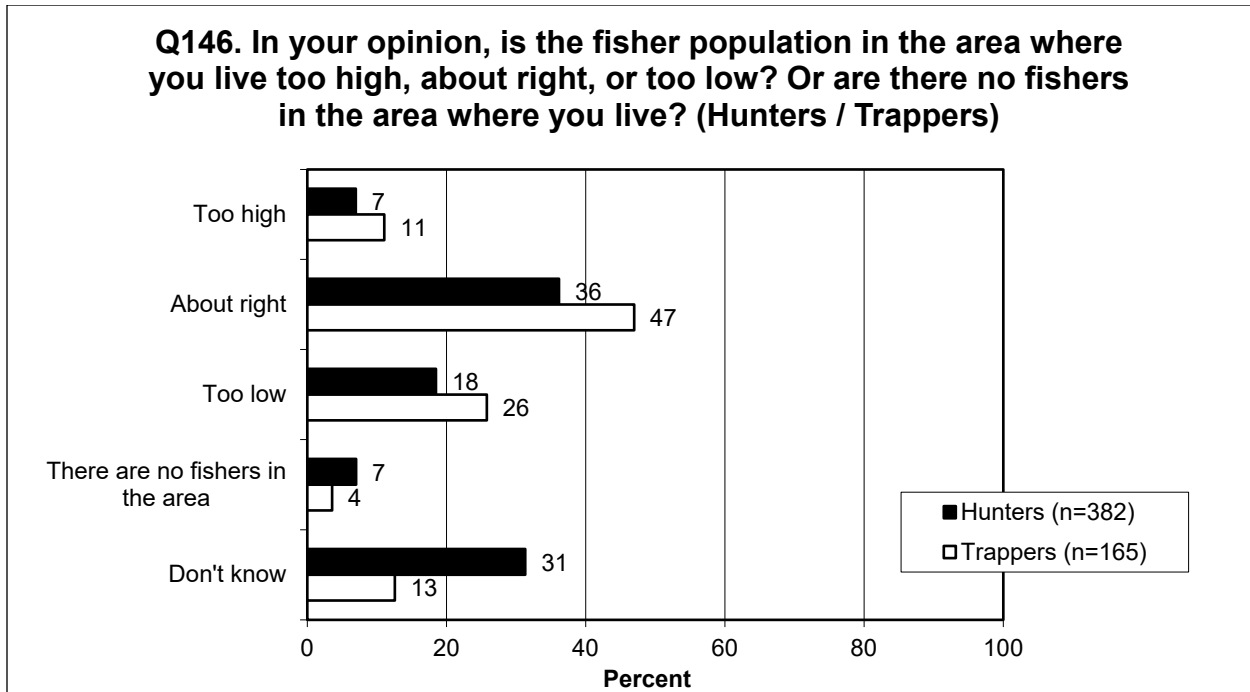


Figure 4.130. Opinion on the Fisher Population (Hunters / Trappers)

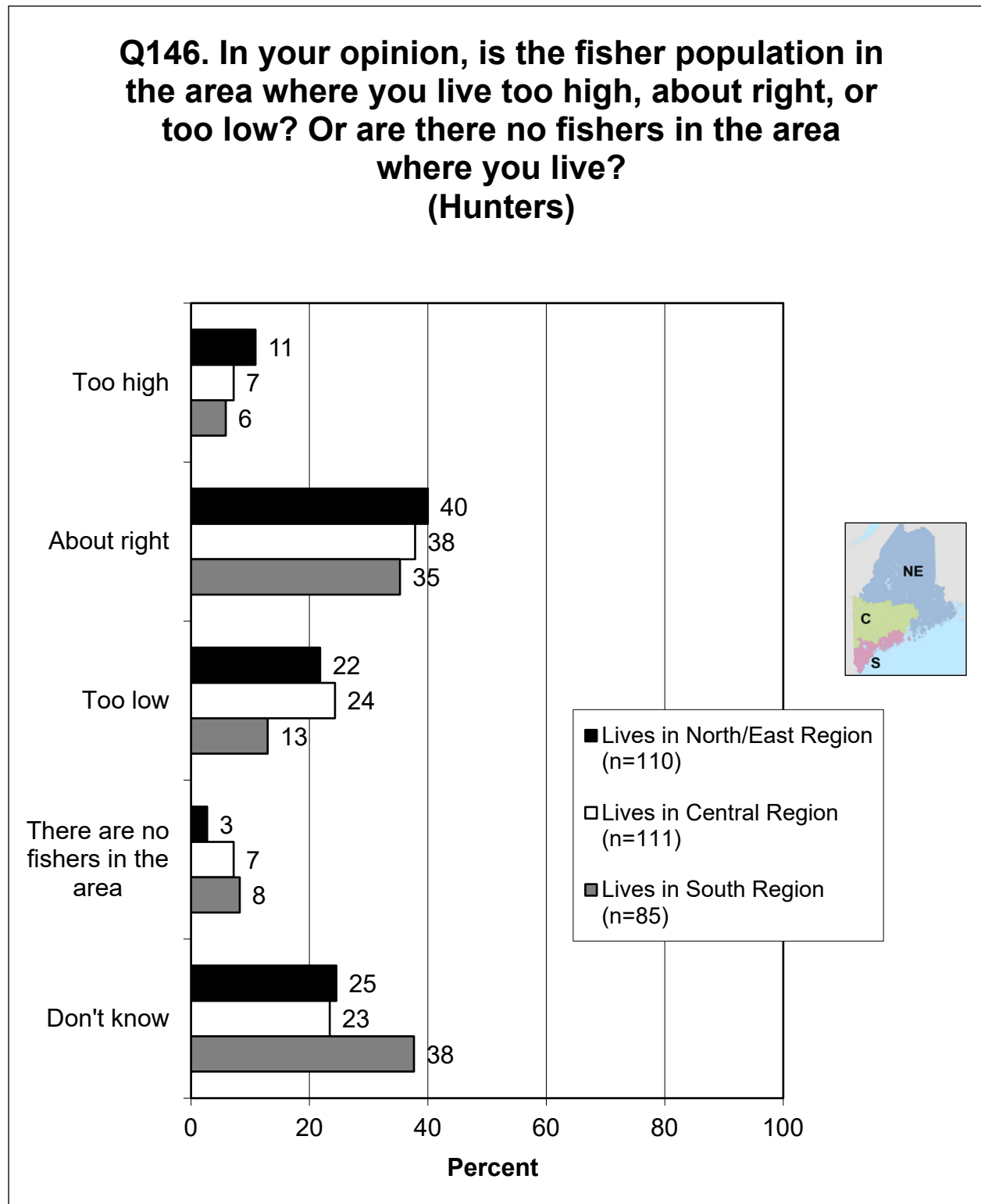


Figure 4.131. Opinion on the Fisher Population, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

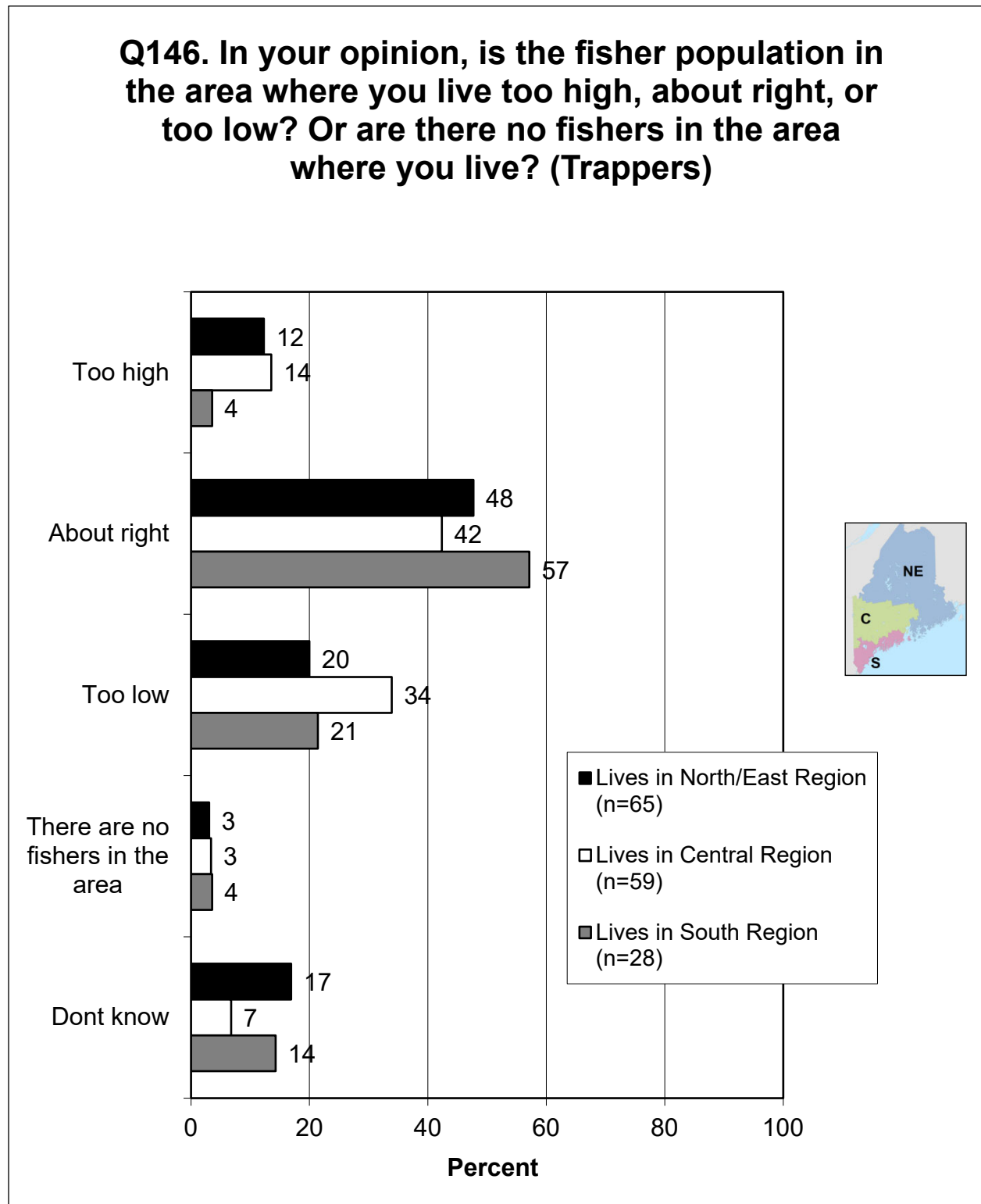


Figure 4.132. Opinion on the Fisher Population, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Support is high for trapping as a method to help manage fisher populations in Maine (Figure 4.133). The regions are not markedly different from one another (Figures 4.134 and 4.135).

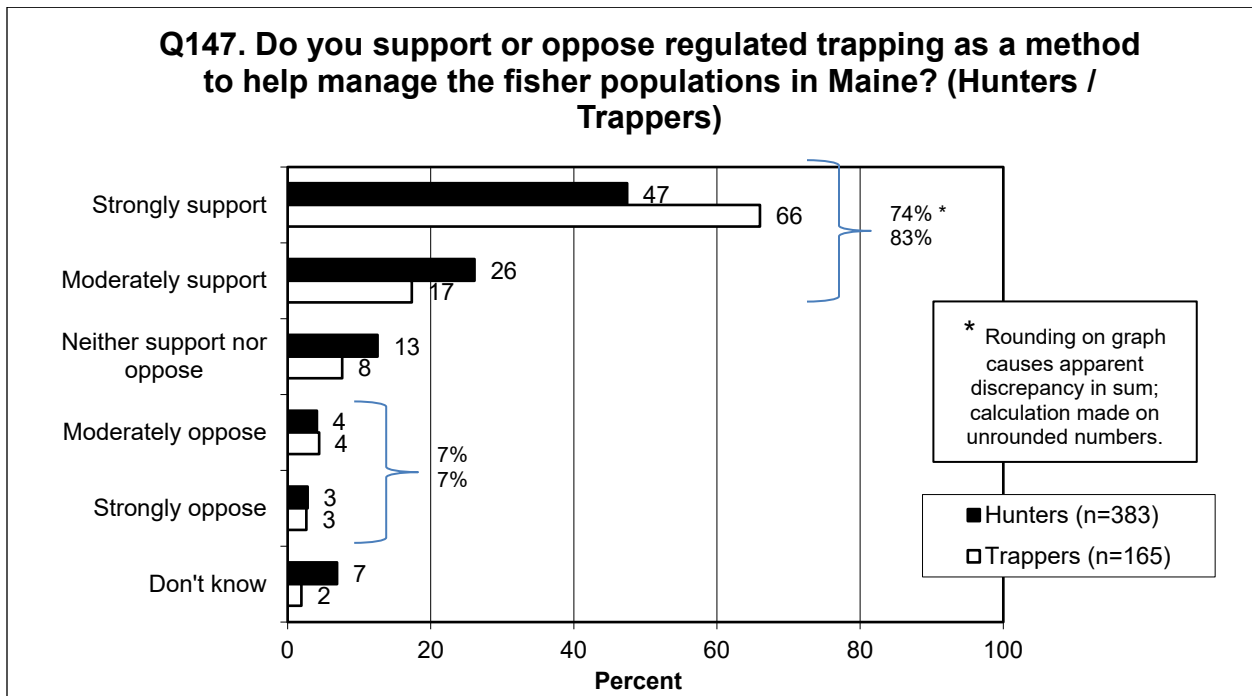


Figure 4.133. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Fisher Populations (Hunters / Trappers)

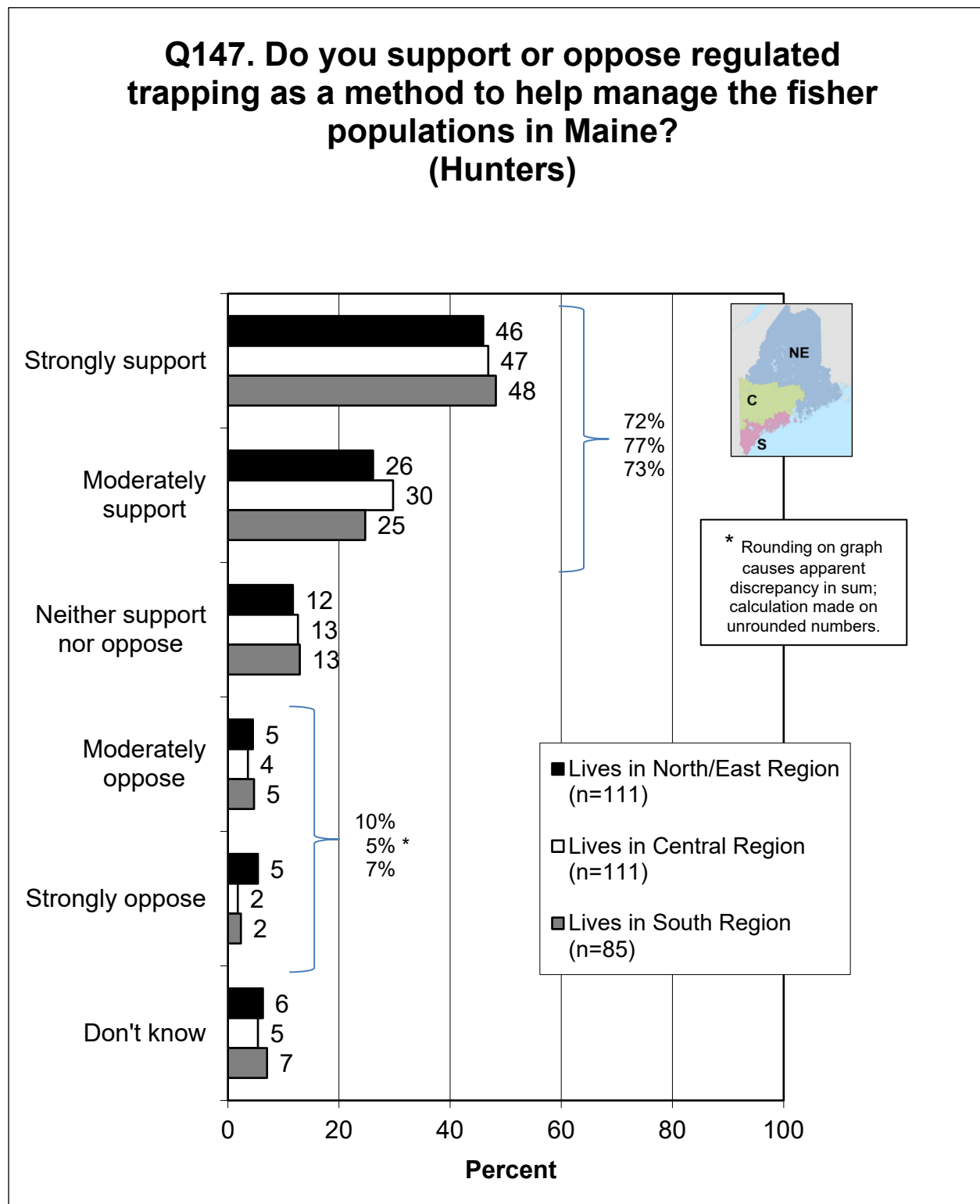


Figure 4.134. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Fisher Populations, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

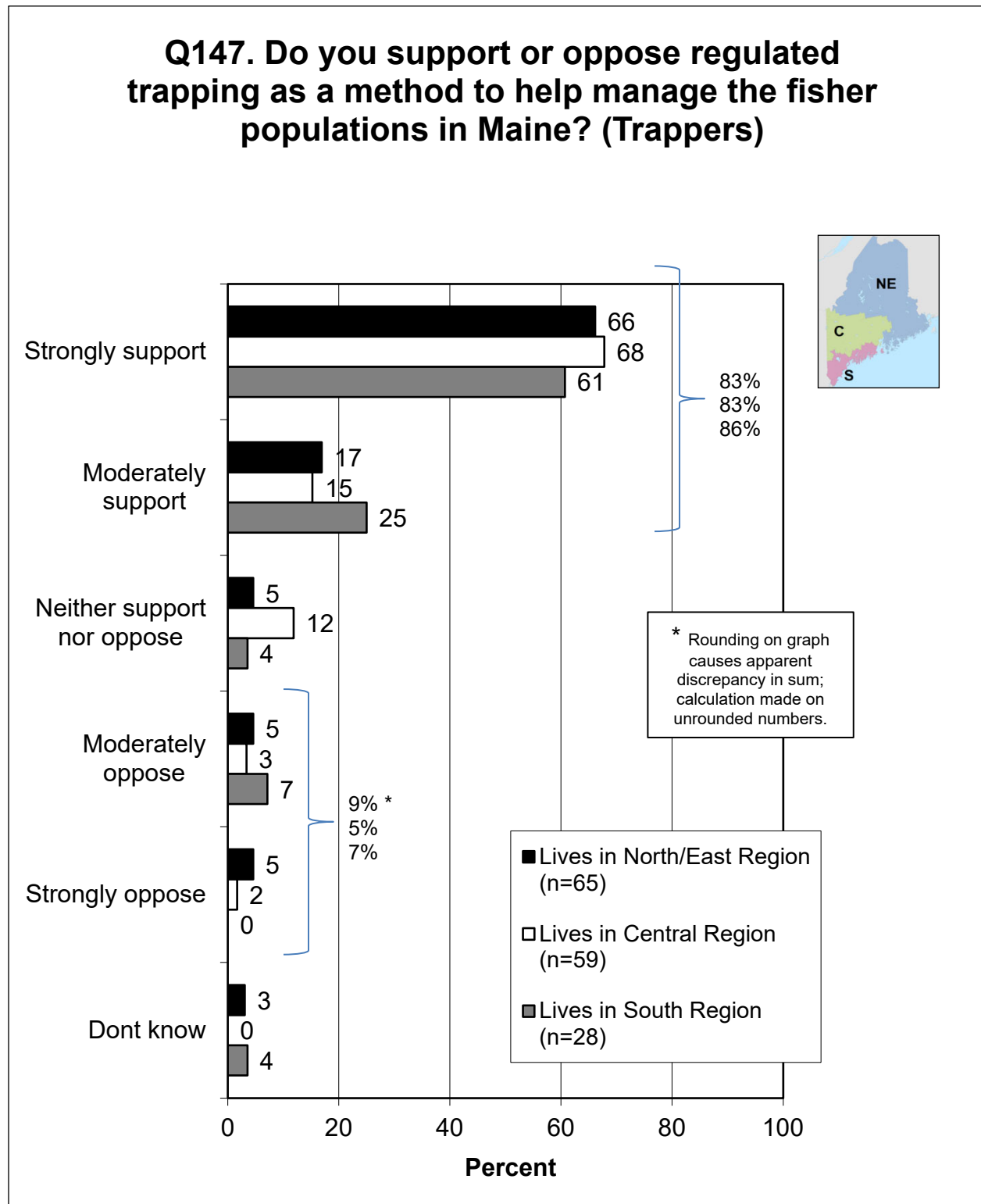


Figure 4.135. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Fisher Populations, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Tolerance far exceeds intolerance of fishers (Figure 4.136), with no marked differences among the regions (Figures 4.137 and 4.138).

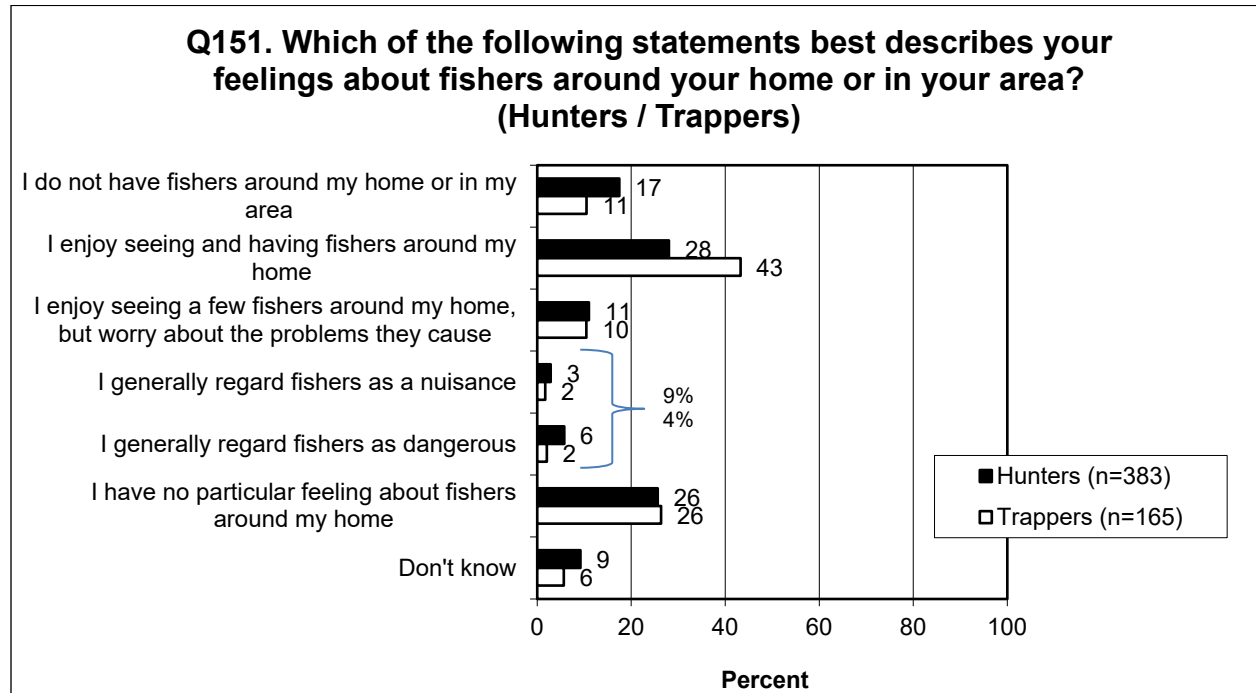


Figure 4.136. Feelings About Fishers (Hunters / Trappers)

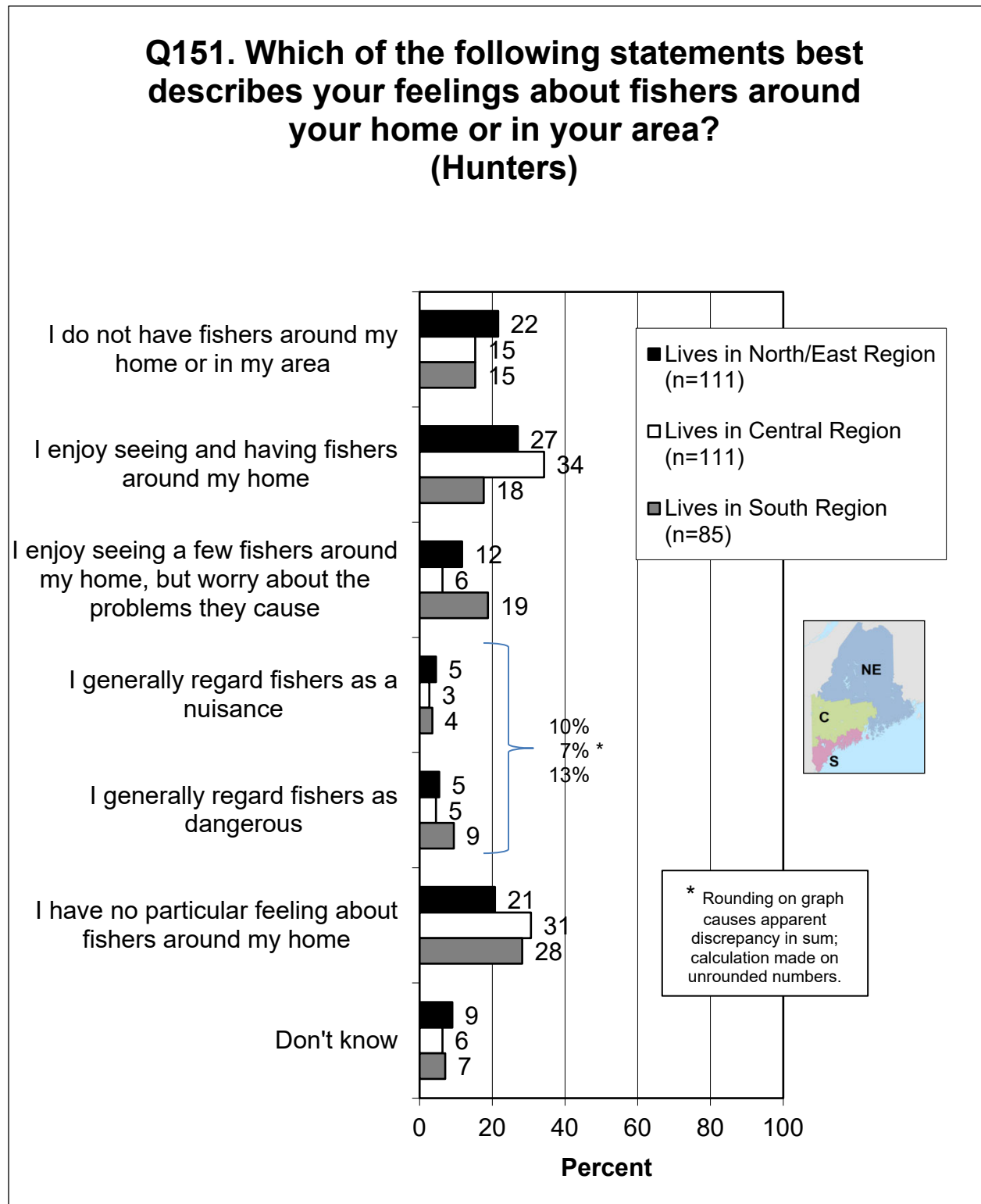


Figure 4.137. Feelings About Fishers, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

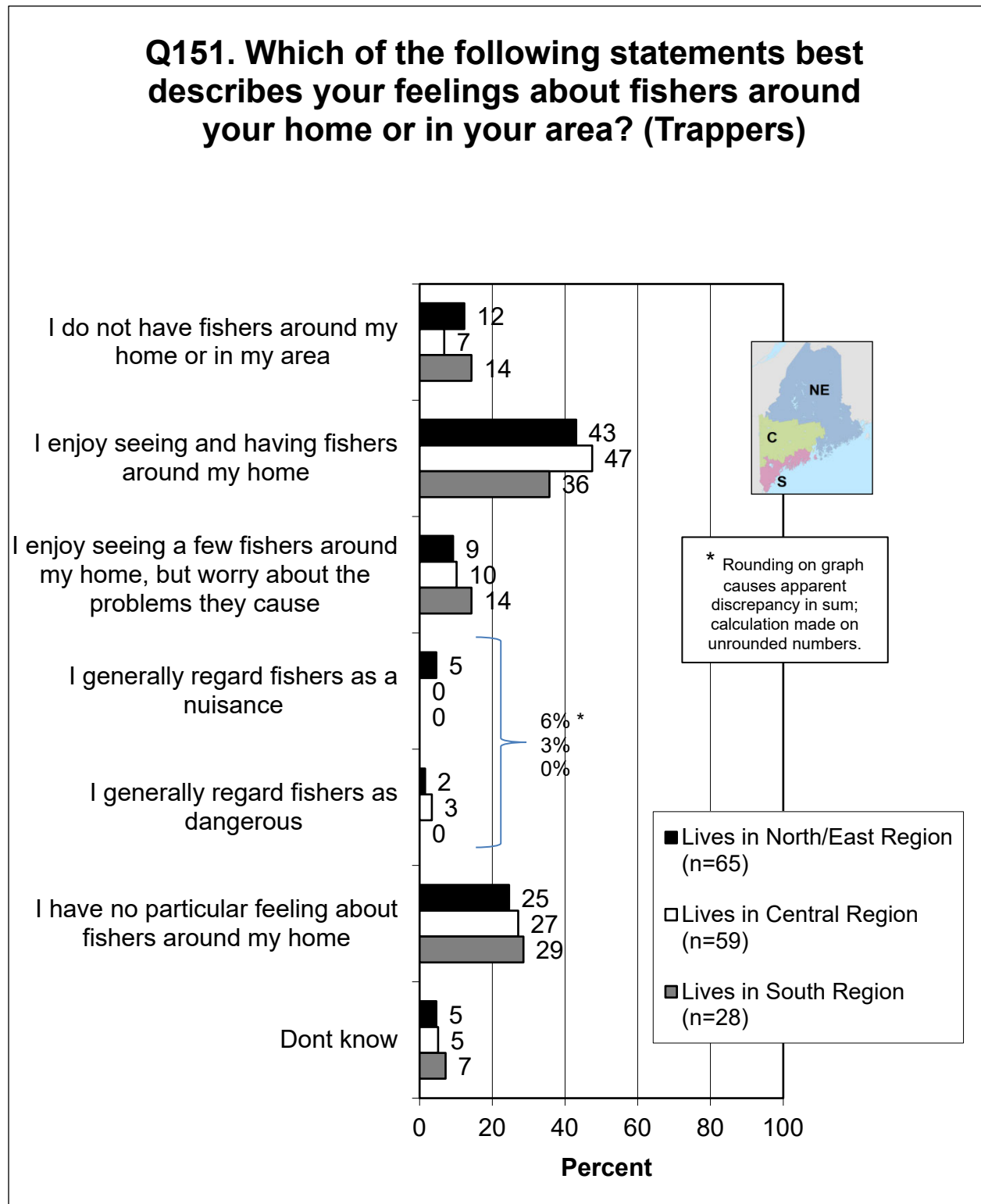


Figure 4.138. Feelings About Fishers, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

MARTEN

Trappers' self-professed knowledge level about martens is markedly higher than that of hunters (Figure 4.139). The lowest knowledge levels regionally by far are among South Region hunters and trappers (Figures 4.140 and 4.141).

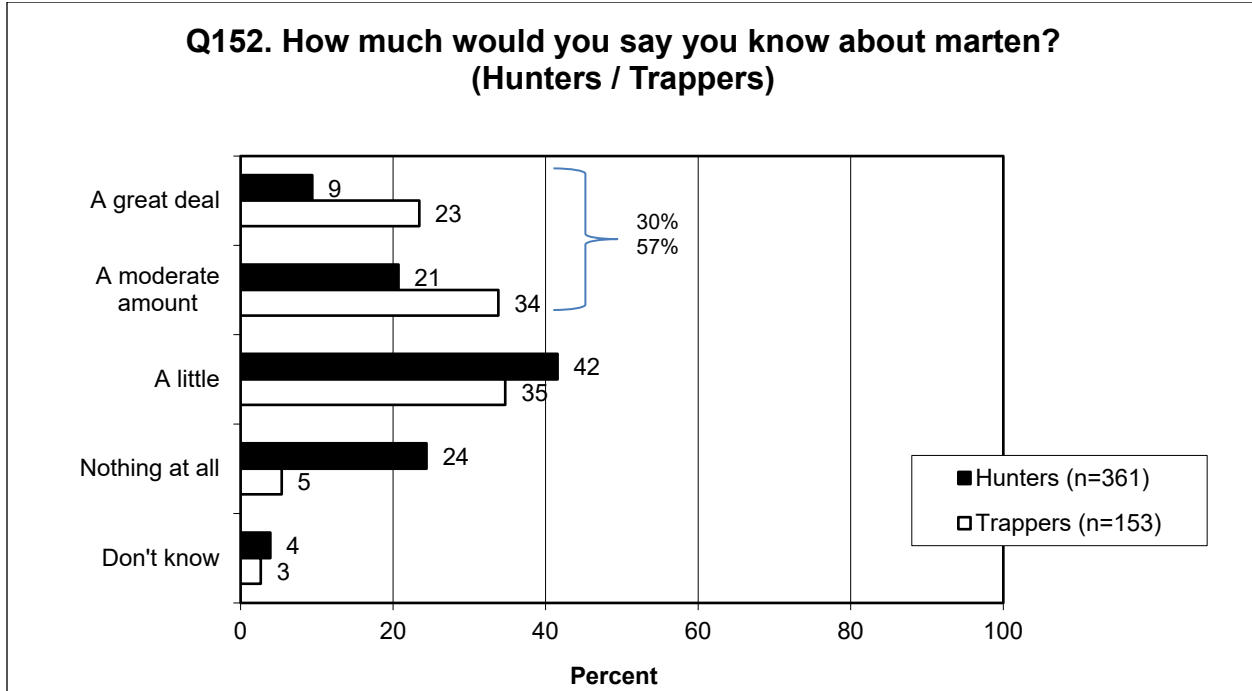


Figure 4.139. Knowledge of Martens (Hunters / Trappers)

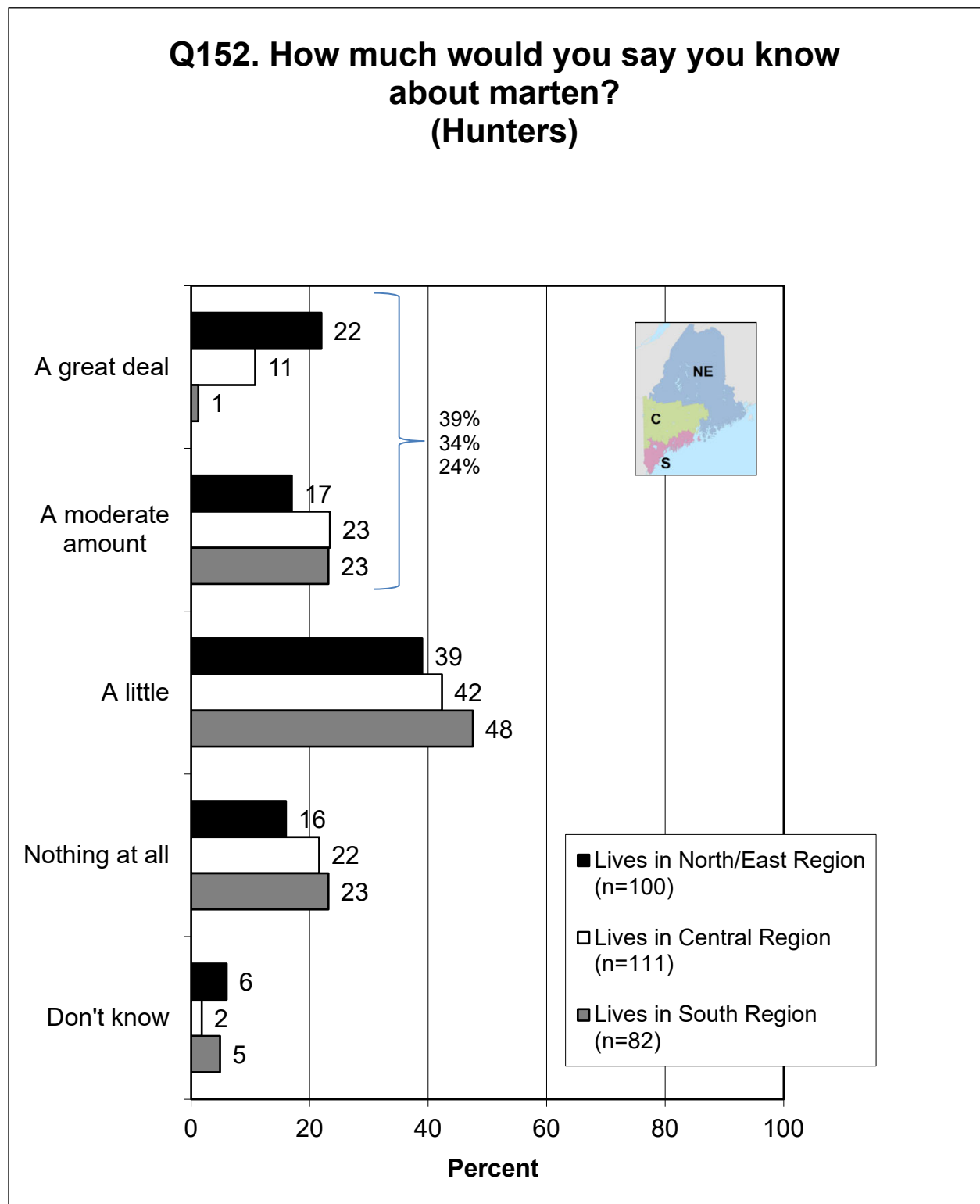


Figure 4.140. Knowledge of Martens, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

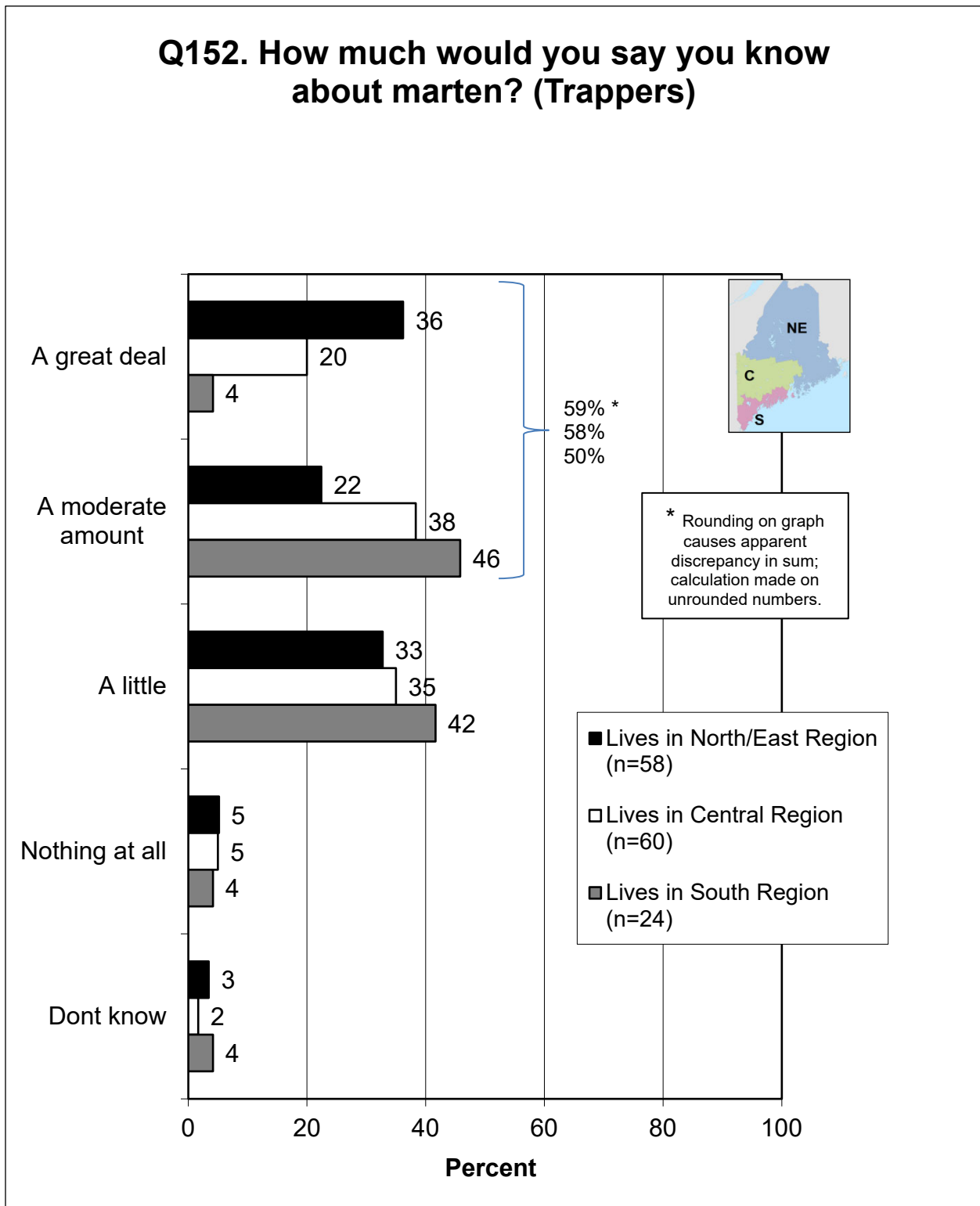


Figure 4.141. Knowledge of Martens, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

There are greater percentages of hunters and trappers who think that the marten population in their area is too low than too high (Figure 4.142). Most of the regional differences are caused by the percentages who indicated that there are no martens in their area or who responded with “don’t know” on the question (Figures 4.143 and 4.144).

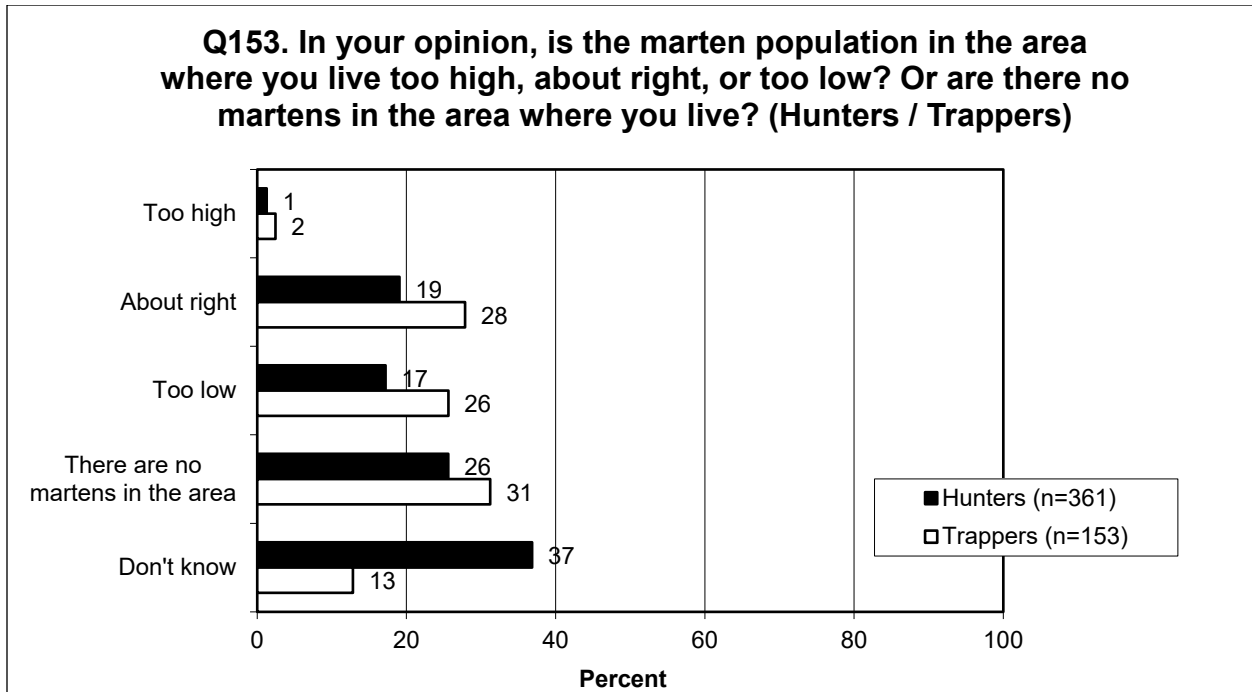


Figure 4.142. Opinion on the Marten Population (Hunters / Trappers)

Q153. In your opinion, is the marten population in the area where you live too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no martens in the area where you live? (Hunters)

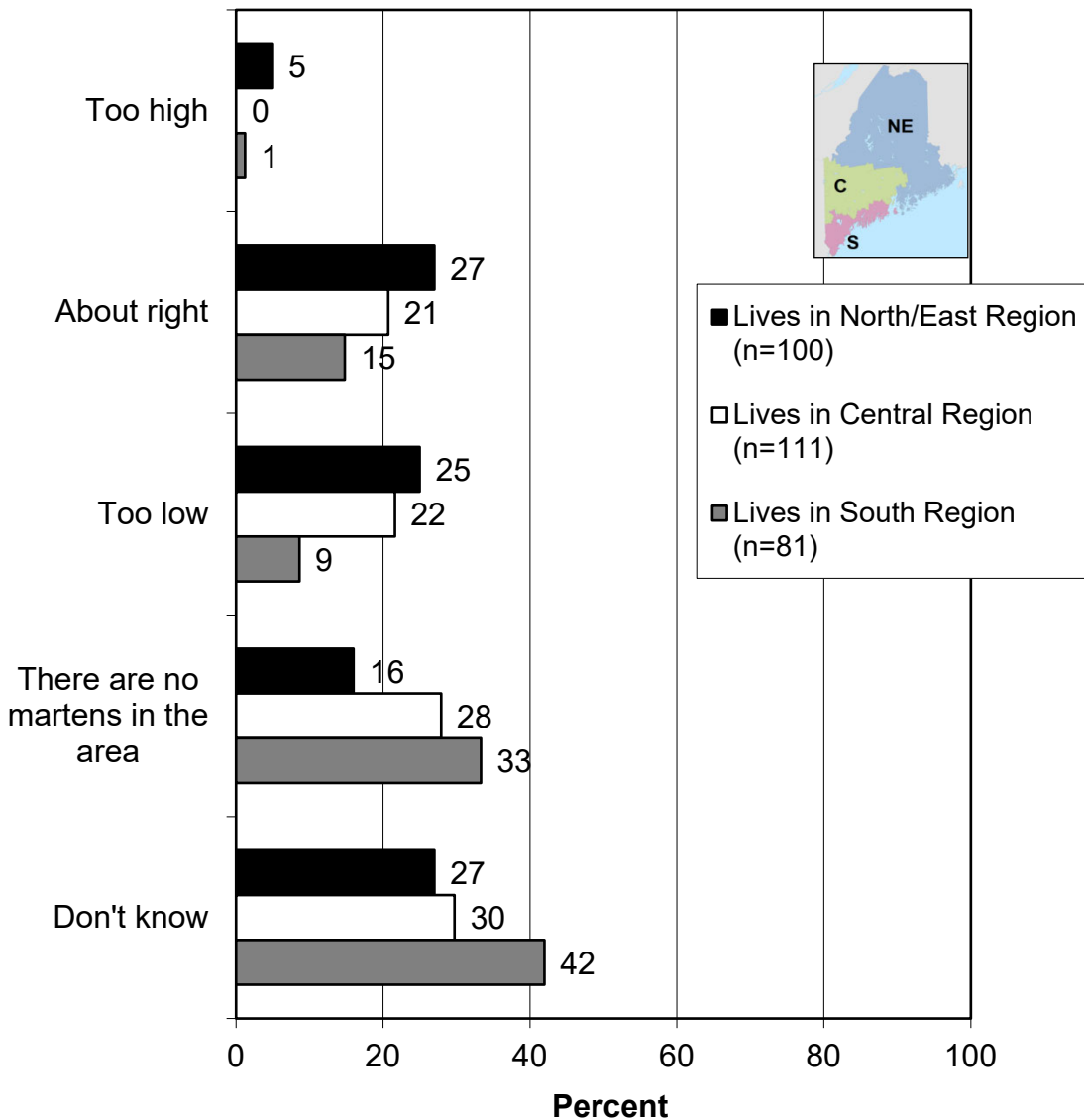


Figure 4.143. Opinion on the Marten Population, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

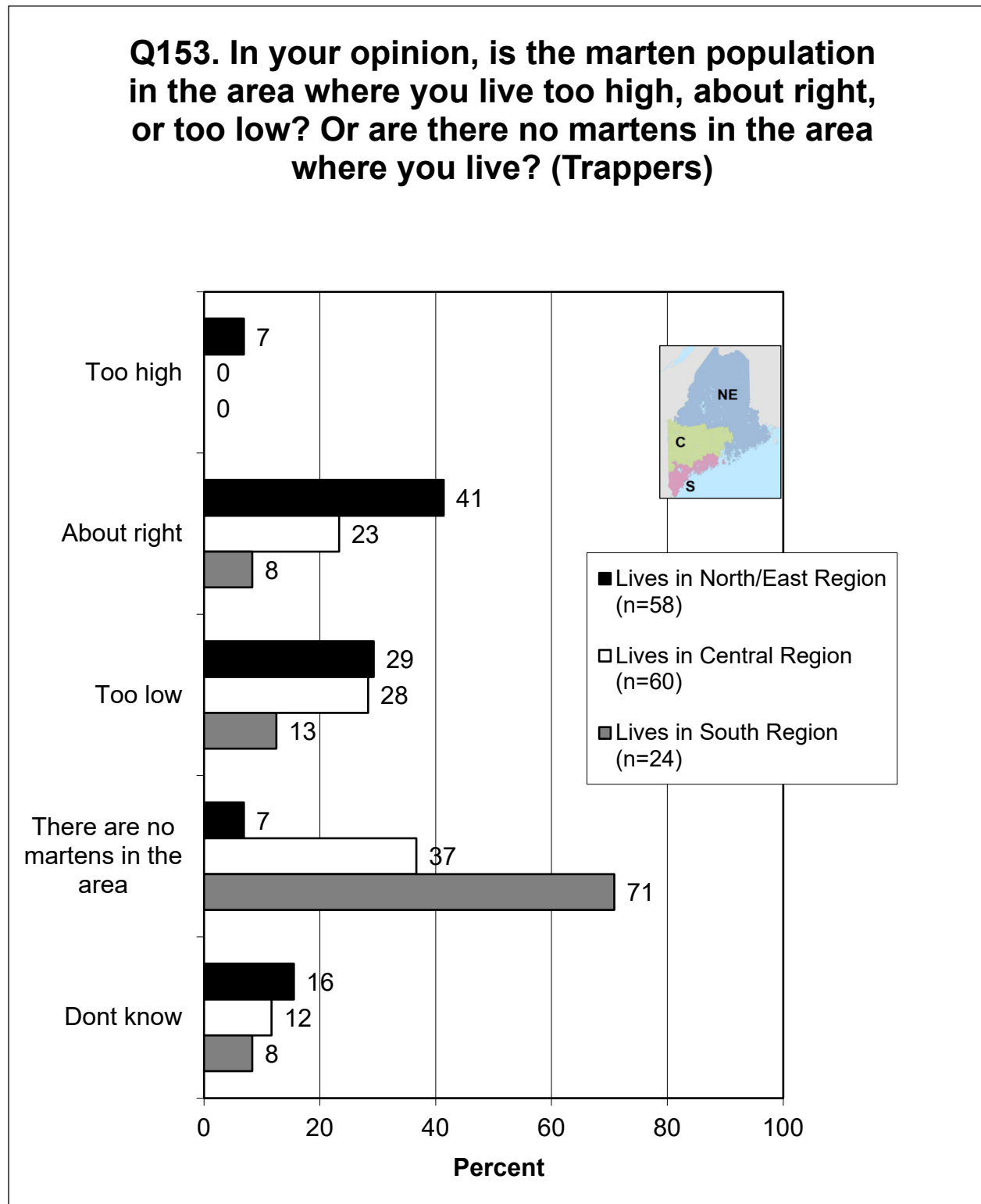


Figure 4.144. Opinion on the Marten Population, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Majorities of hunters and trappers support regulated trapping as a method to help manage fisher populations in Maine (Figure 4.145). The least support among hunters is in the South Region (Figure 4.146). The trapper regional breakdown is also included in Figure 4.147, with no marked differences in overall support or opposition.

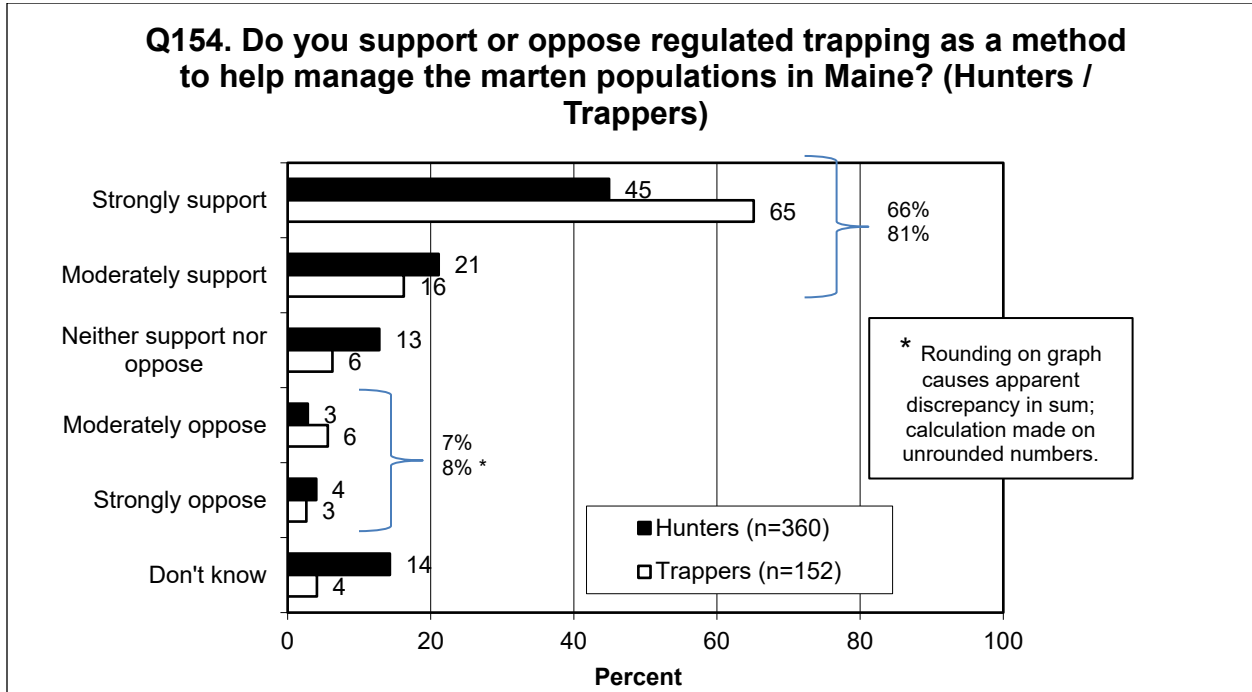


Figure 4.145. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Marten Populations (Hunters / Trappers)

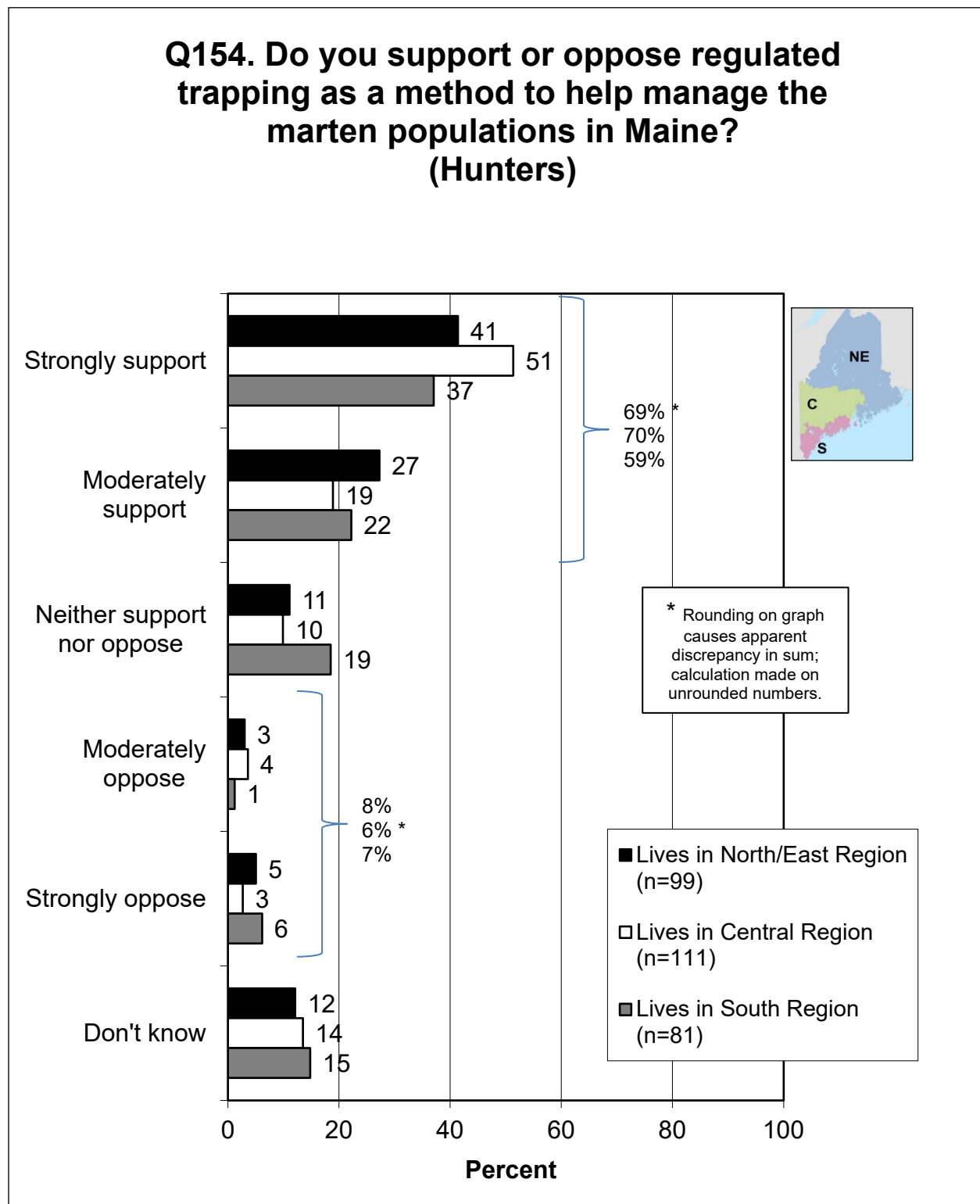


Figure 4.146. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Marten Populations, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

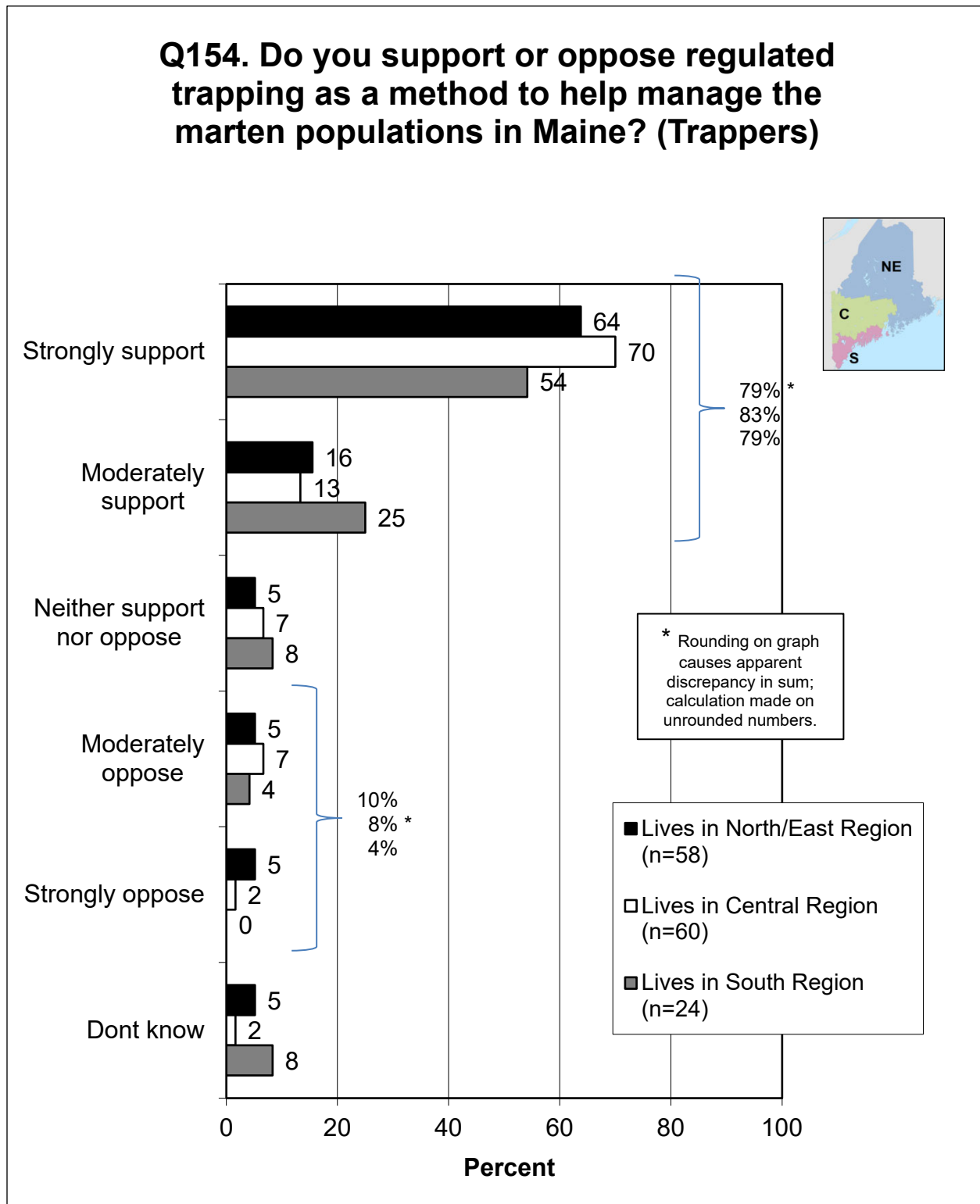


Figure 4.147. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Marten Populations, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Tolerance of martens is high among both hunters and trappers (Figure 4.148) and across the regions (Figures 4.149 and 4.150).

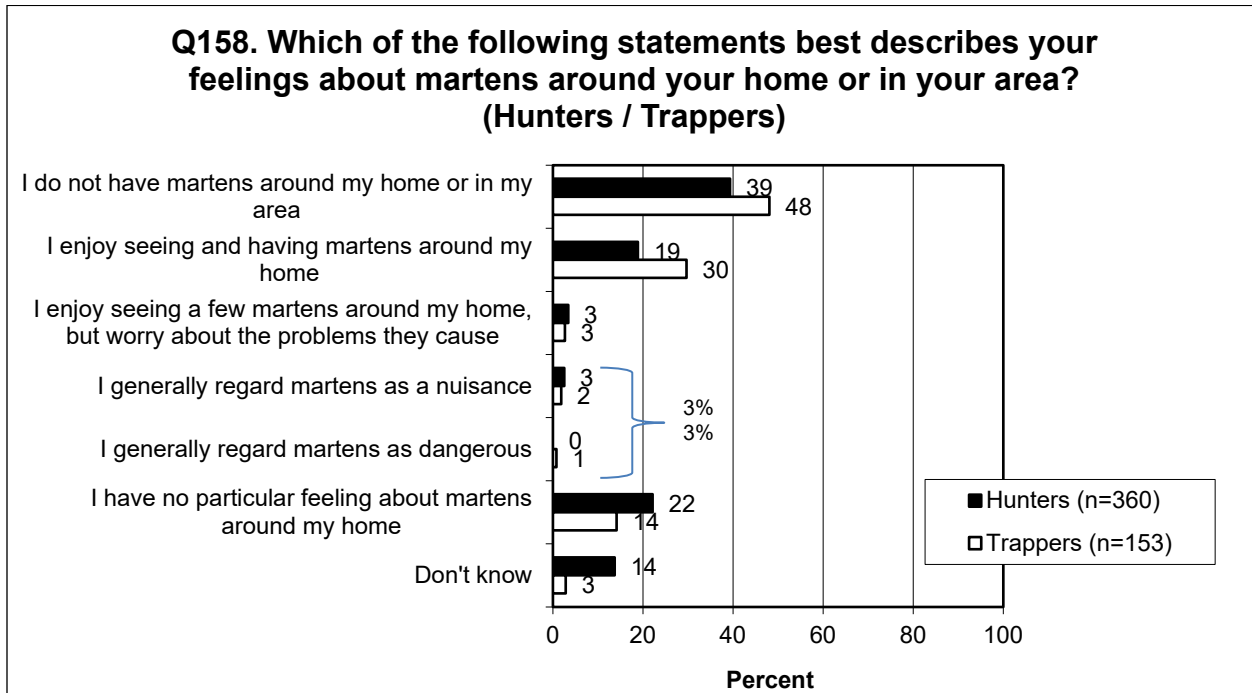


Figure 4.148. Feelings About Martens (Hunters / Trappers)

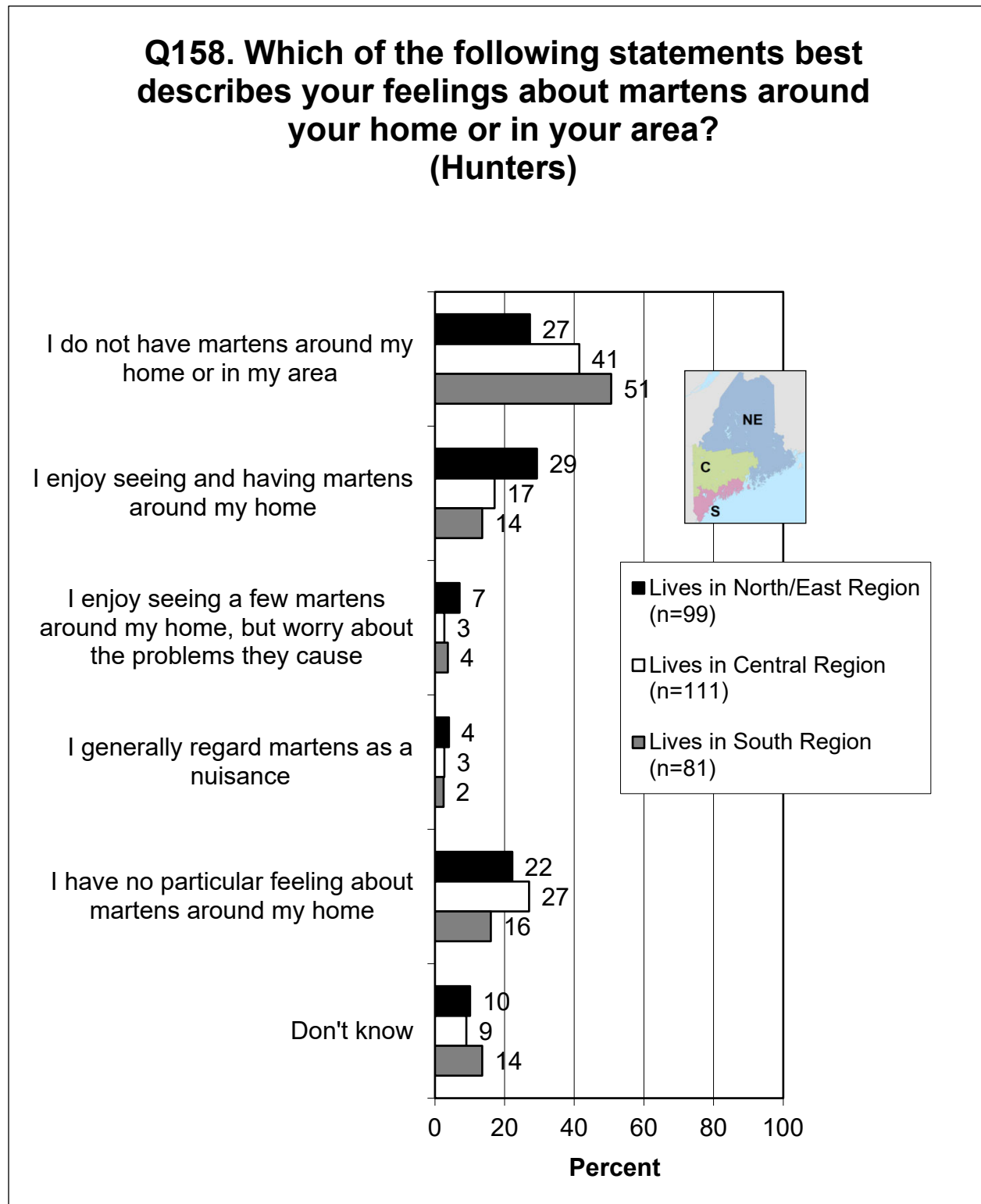


Figure 4.149. Feelings About Martens, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

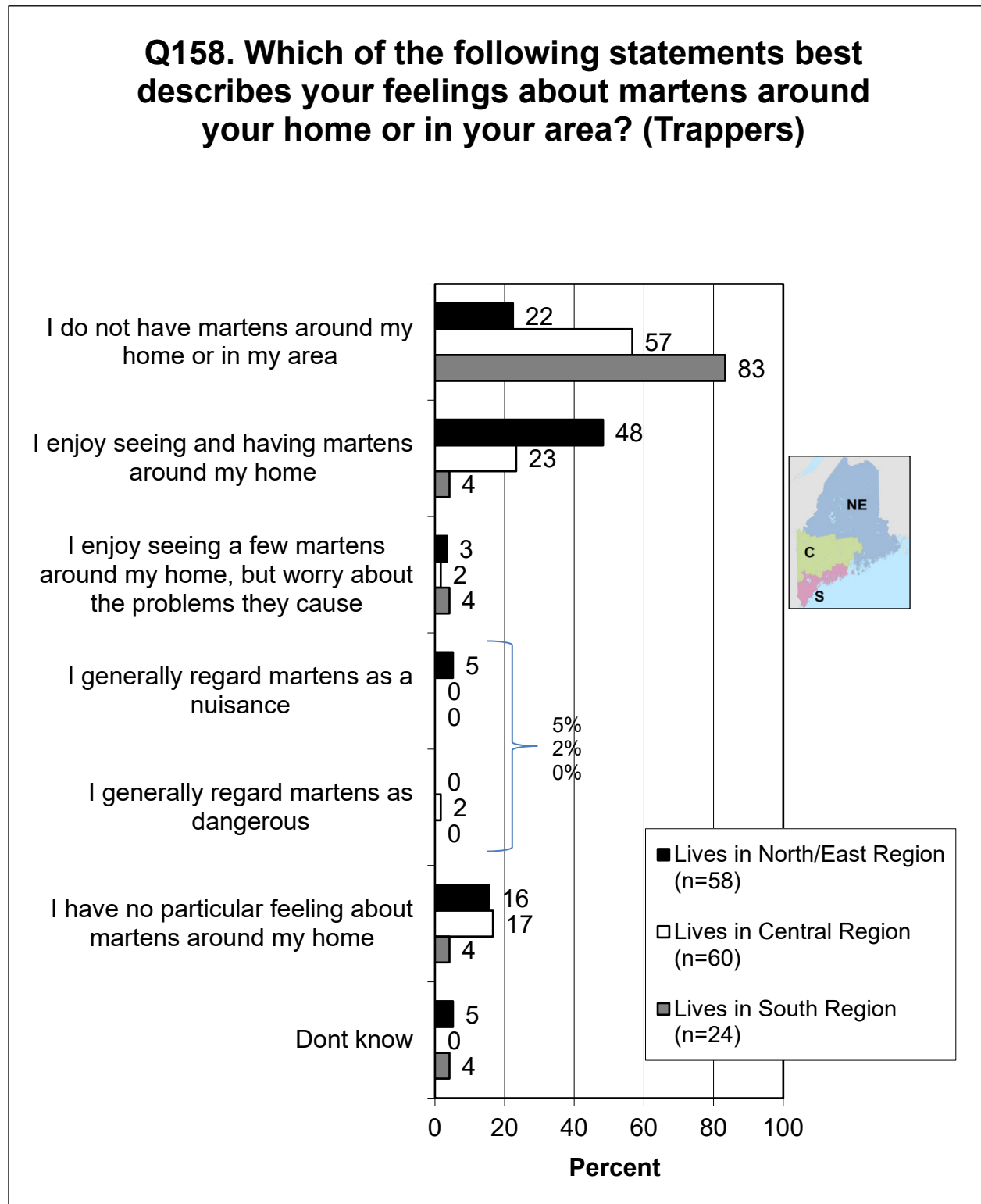


Figure 4.150. Feelings About Martens, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

OTTER

Trappers' self-professed knowledge level about otters is much higher than that of hunters (Figure 4.151). Among hunters, the highest knowledge level regionally is among those from the North/East Region (Figure 4.152). In the trapping regional breakdown, those from the North/East and South Regions have a higher self-professed knowledge level about otters than do Central Region trappers (Figure 4.153).

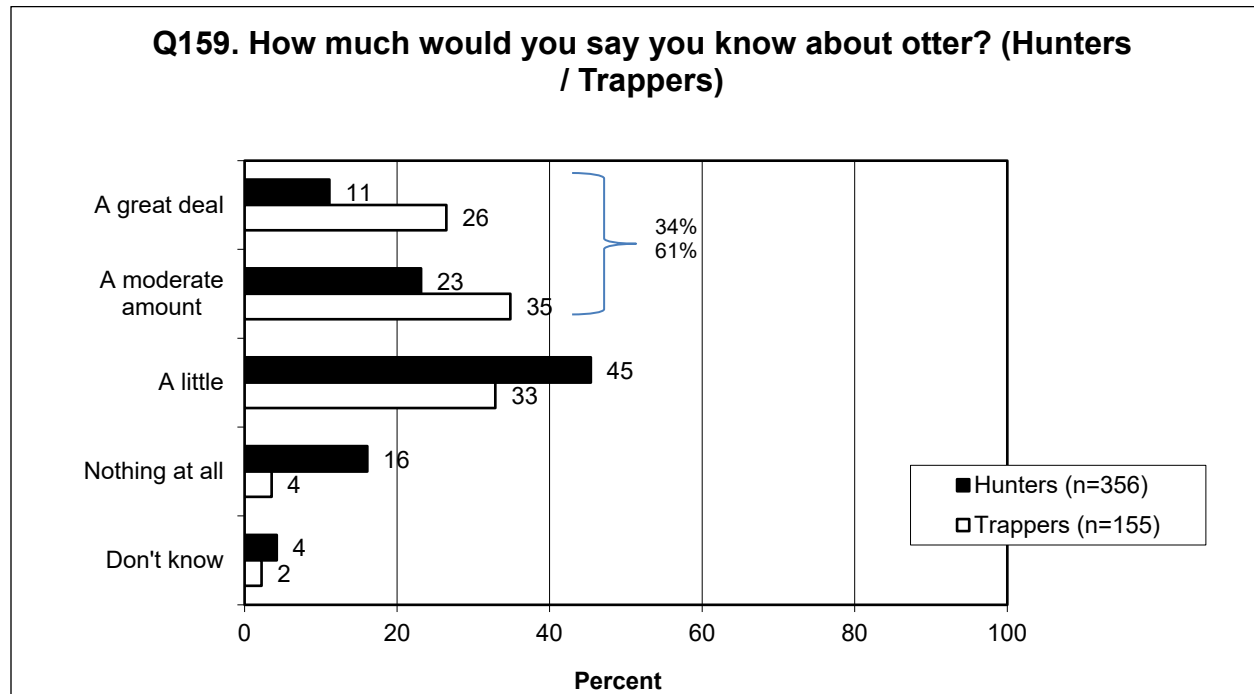


Figure 4.151. Knowledge of Otters (Hunters / Trappers)

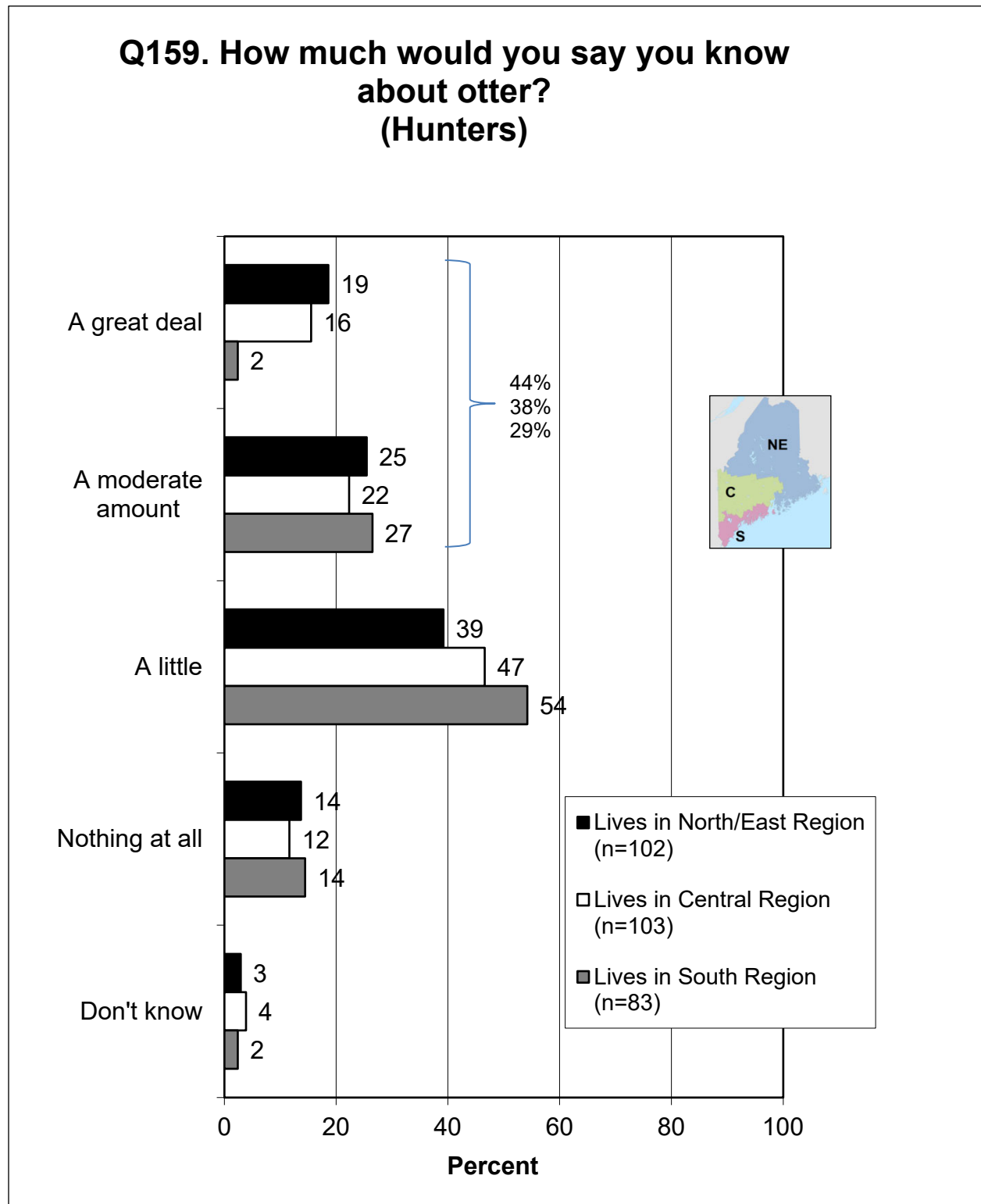


Figure 4.152. Knowledge of Otters, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

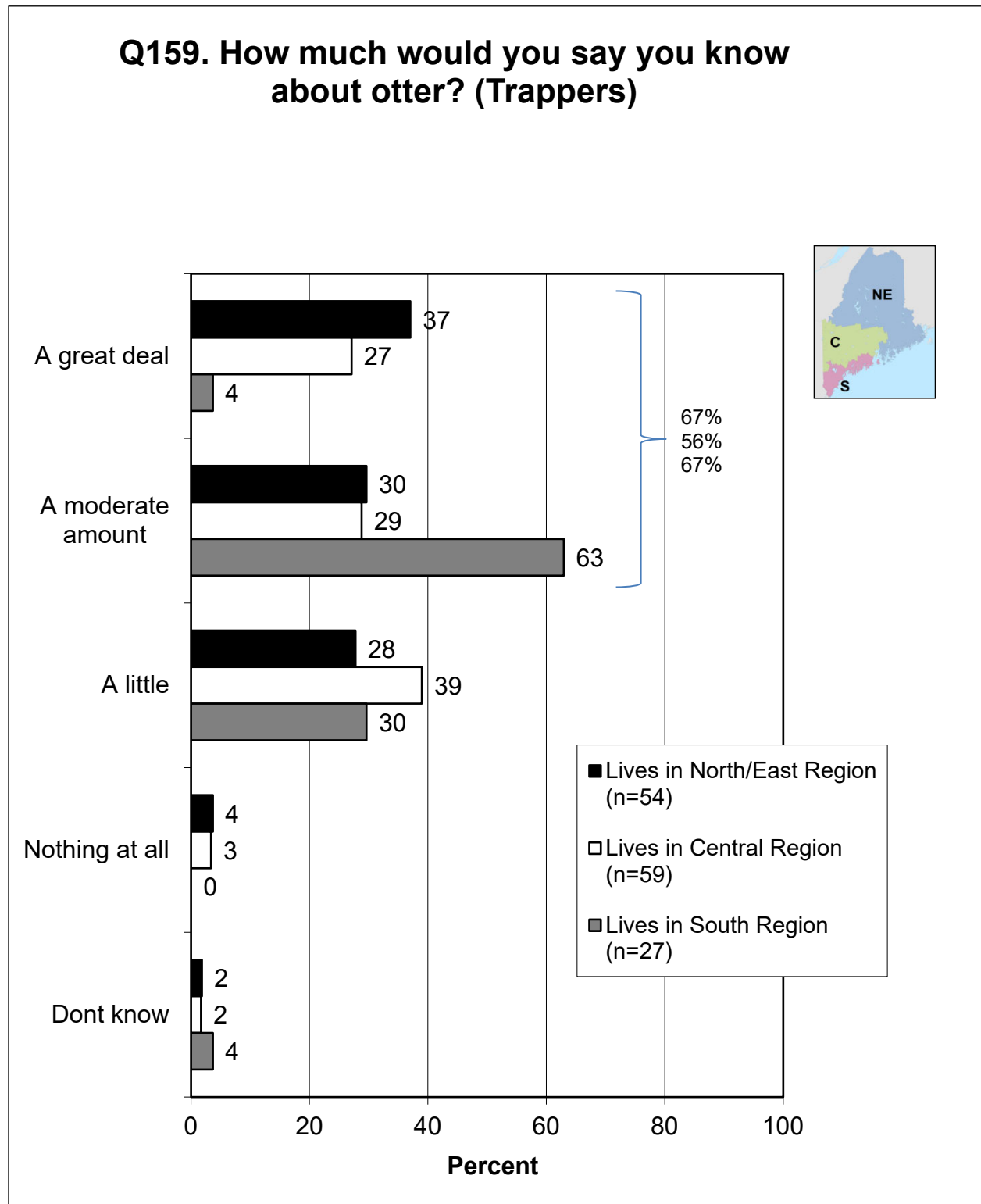


Figure 4.153. Knowledge of Otters, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Most commonly, hunters and trappers think the otter population in their area is about right (Figure 4.154). South Region hunters and trappers are the least likely to say the population is about right (Figures 4.155 and 4.156).

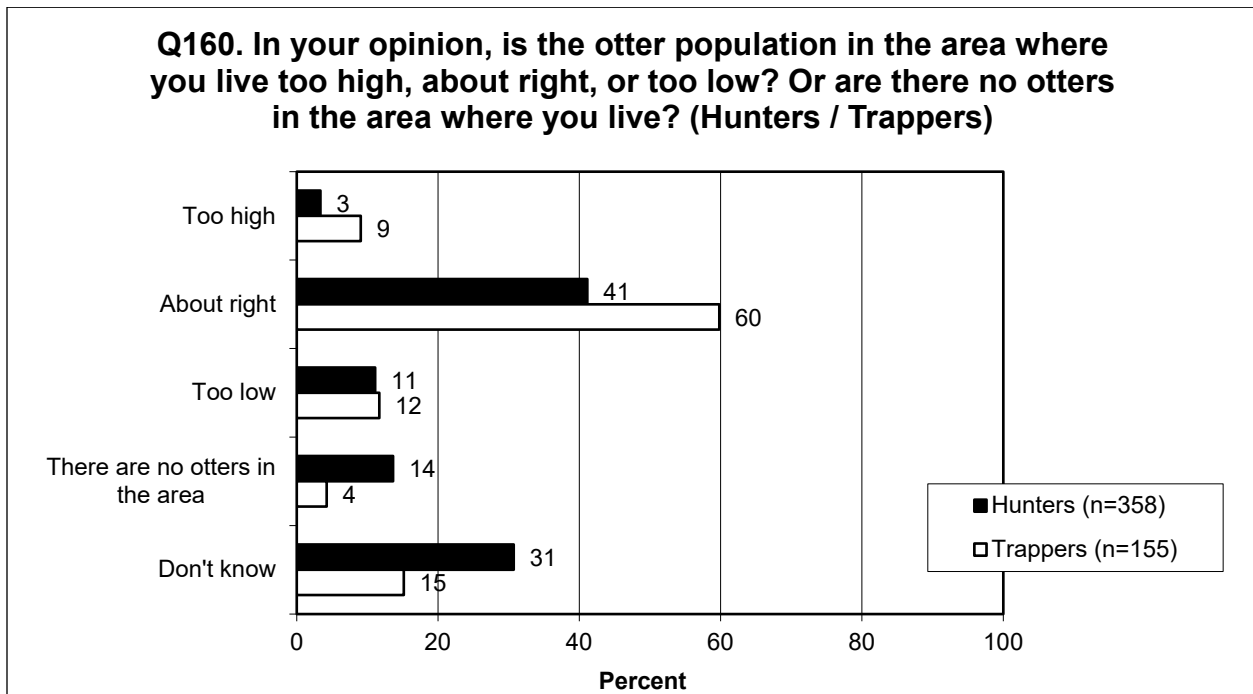


Figure 4.154. Opinion on the Otter Population (Hunters / Trappers)

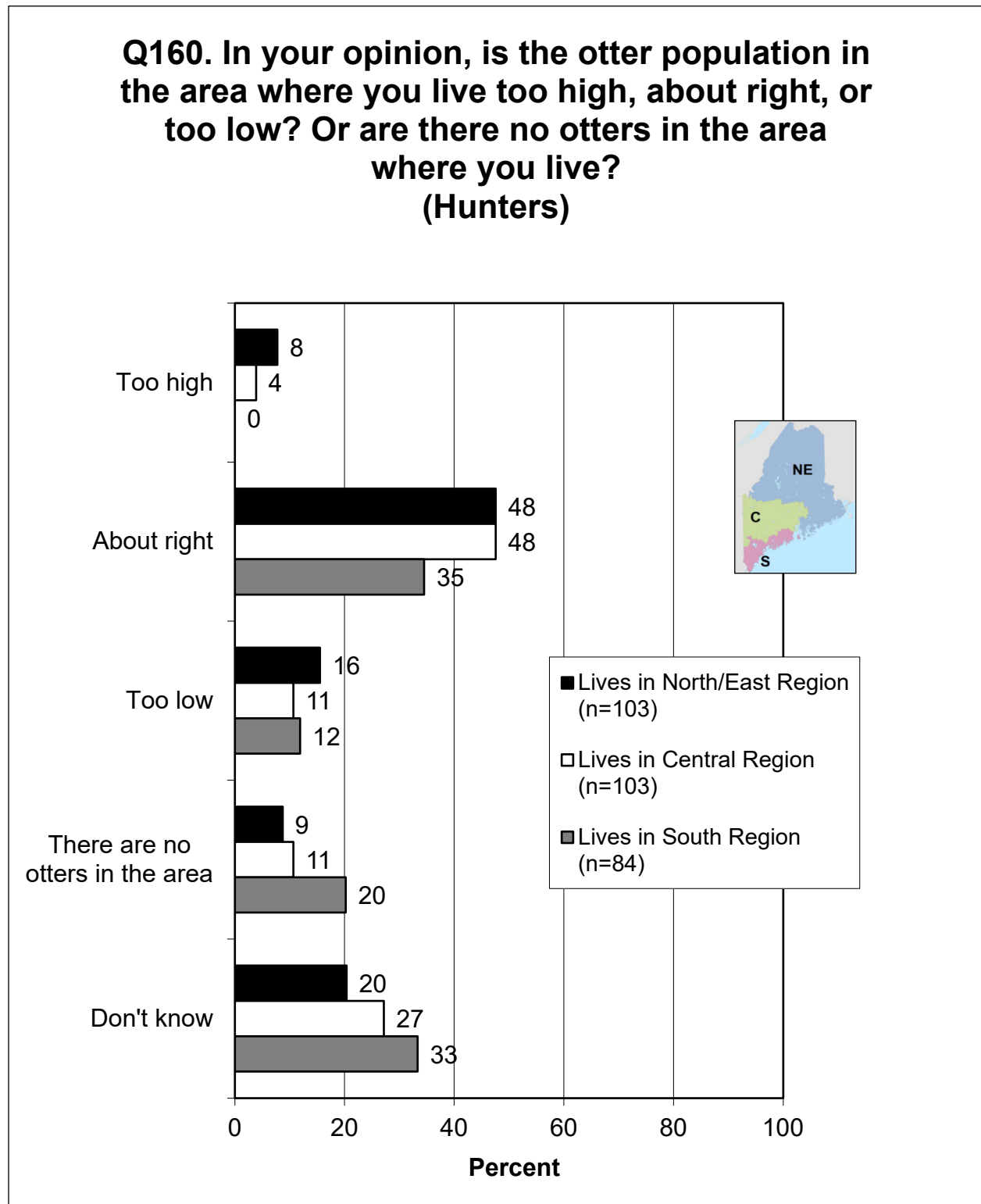


Figure 4.155. Opinion on the Otter Population, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

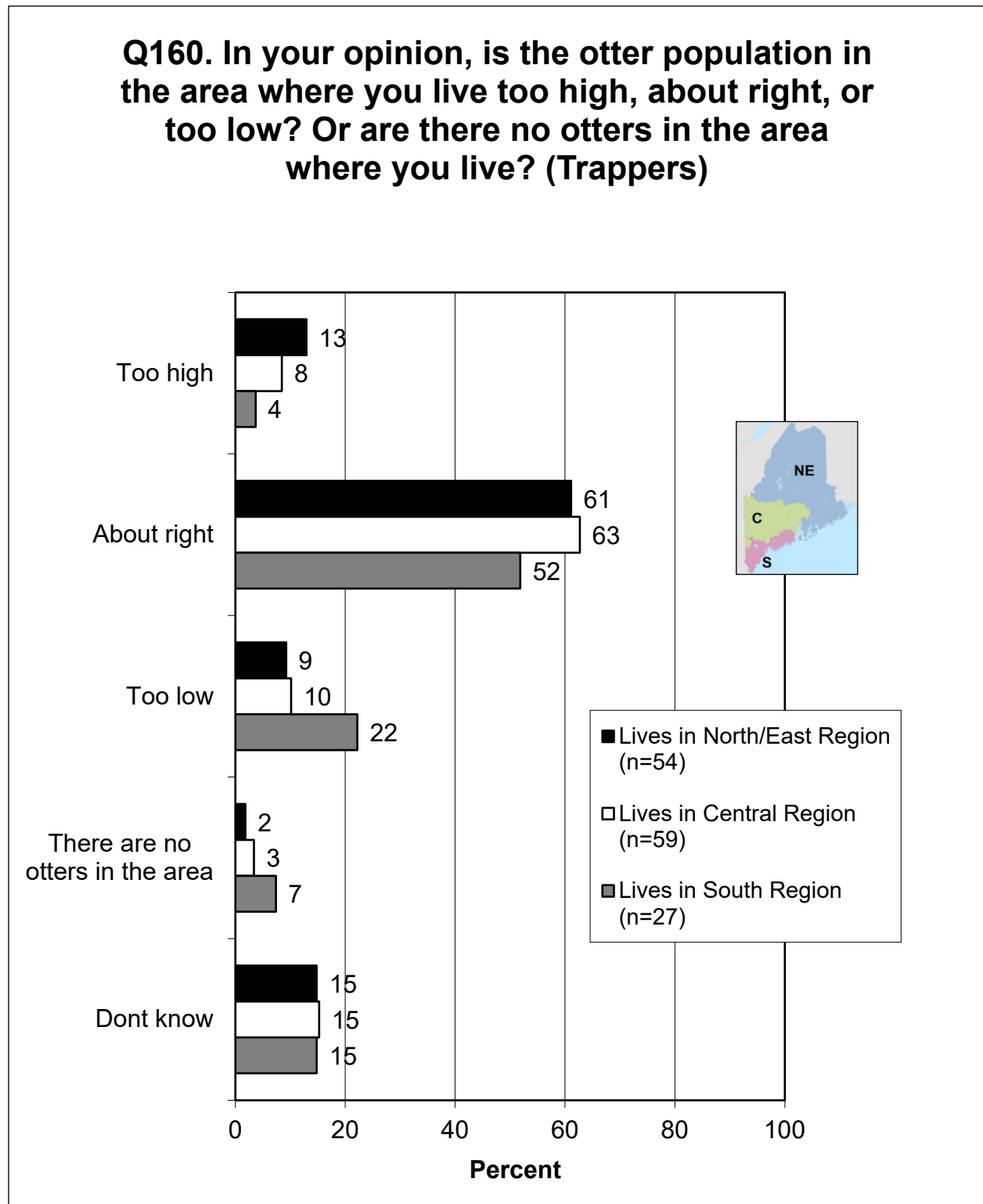


Figure 4.156. Opinion on the Otter Population, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Support is high for trapping as a method to help manage otter populations in Maine (Figure 4.157). Among hunters, overall support is lowest in the South Region (Figure 4.158). In the trapping regional breakdown, Central Region trappers have the highest percentage who support (Figure 4.159).

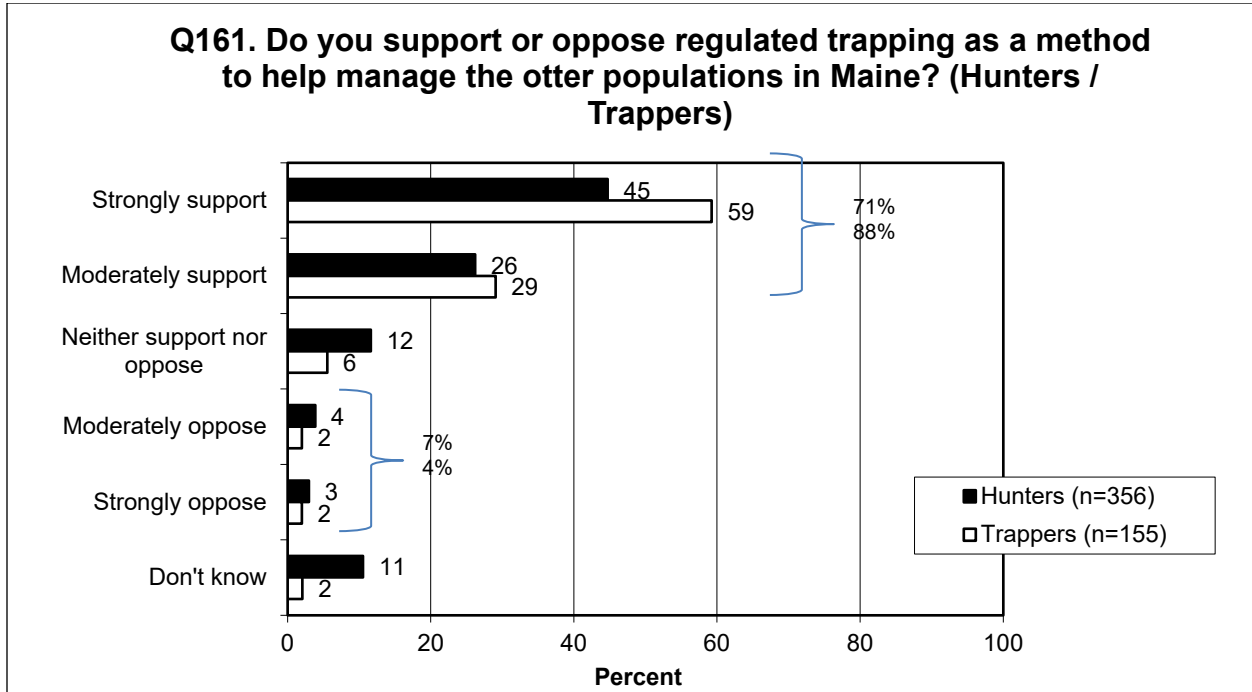


Figure 4.157. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Otter Populations (Hunters / Trappers)

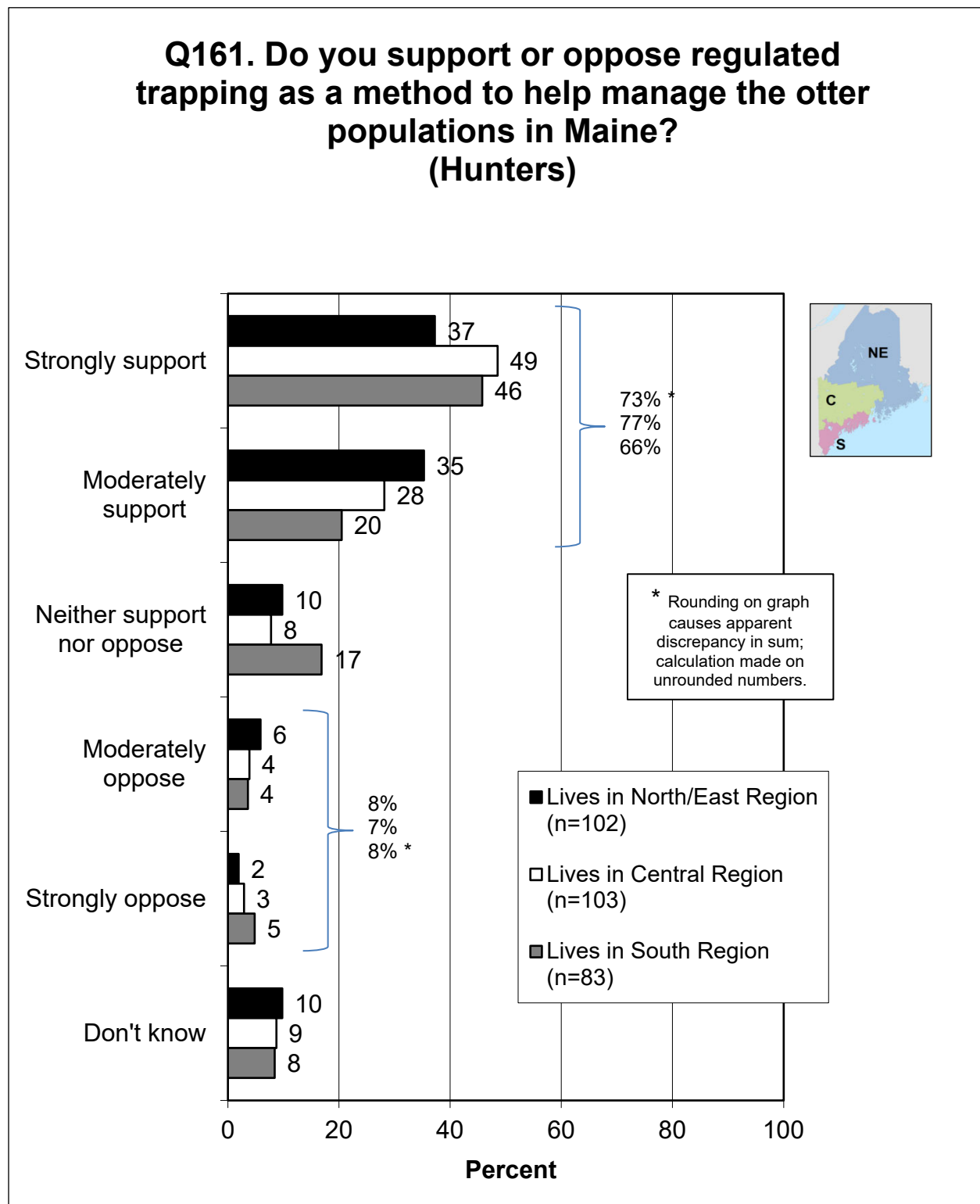


Figure 4.158. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Otter Populations, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

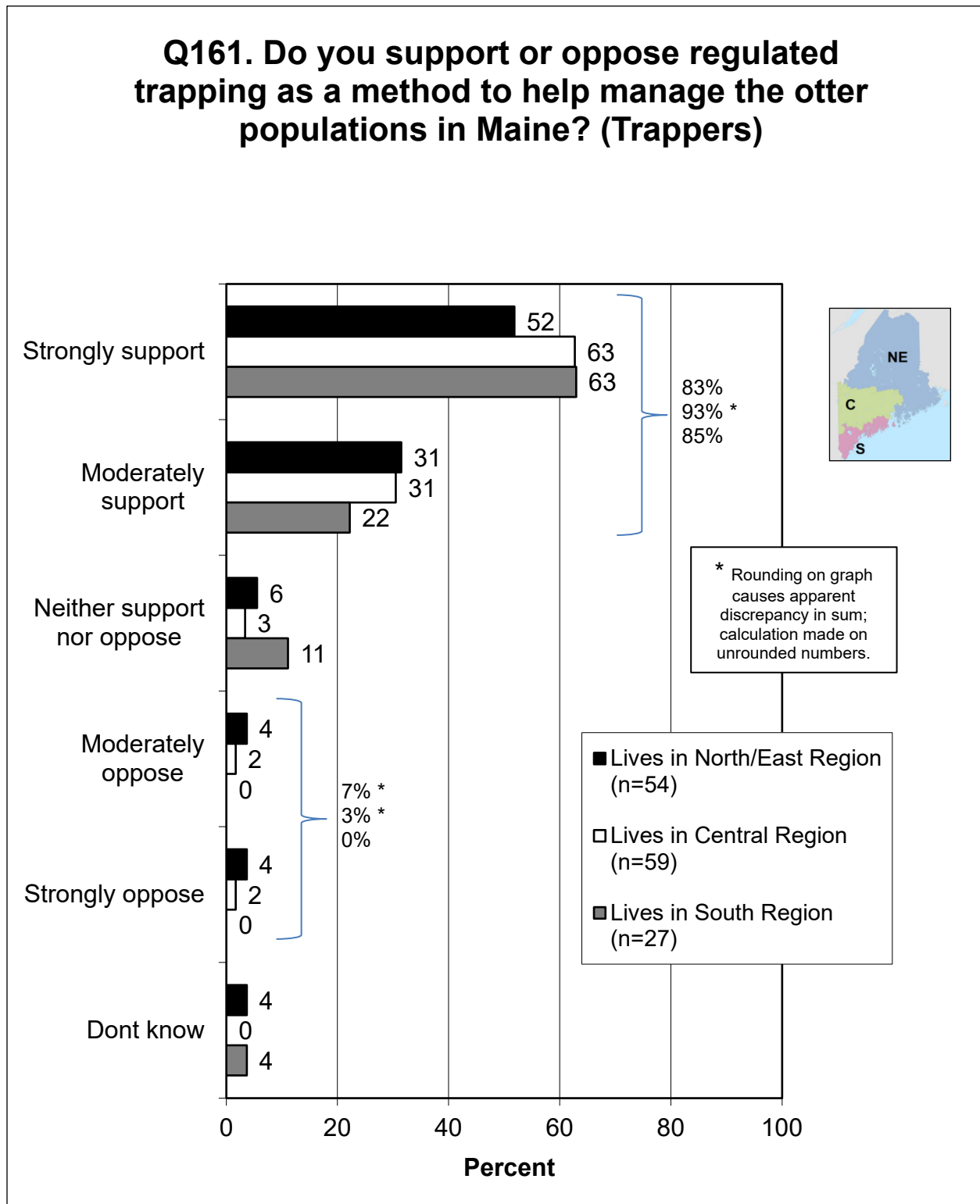


Figure 4.159. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Otter Populations, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Tolerance of otters is high (Figure 4.160). This holds true across the regions (Figures 4.161 and 4.162).

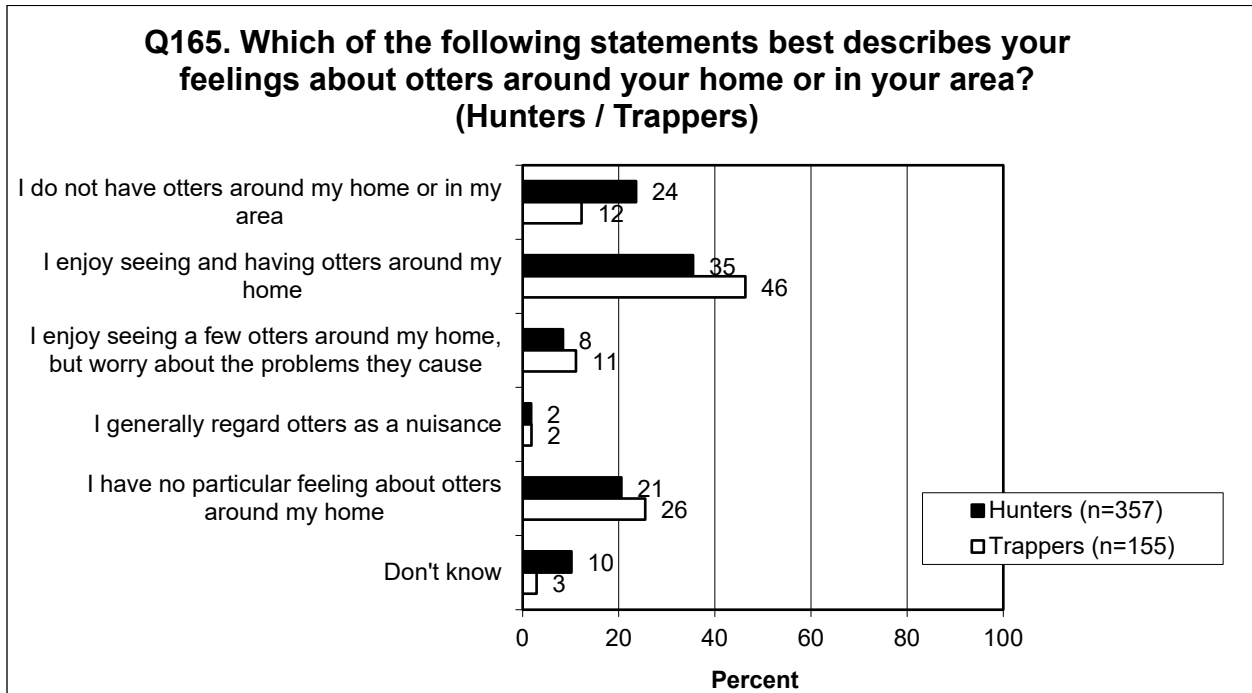


Figure 4.160. Feelings About Otters (Hunters / Trappers)

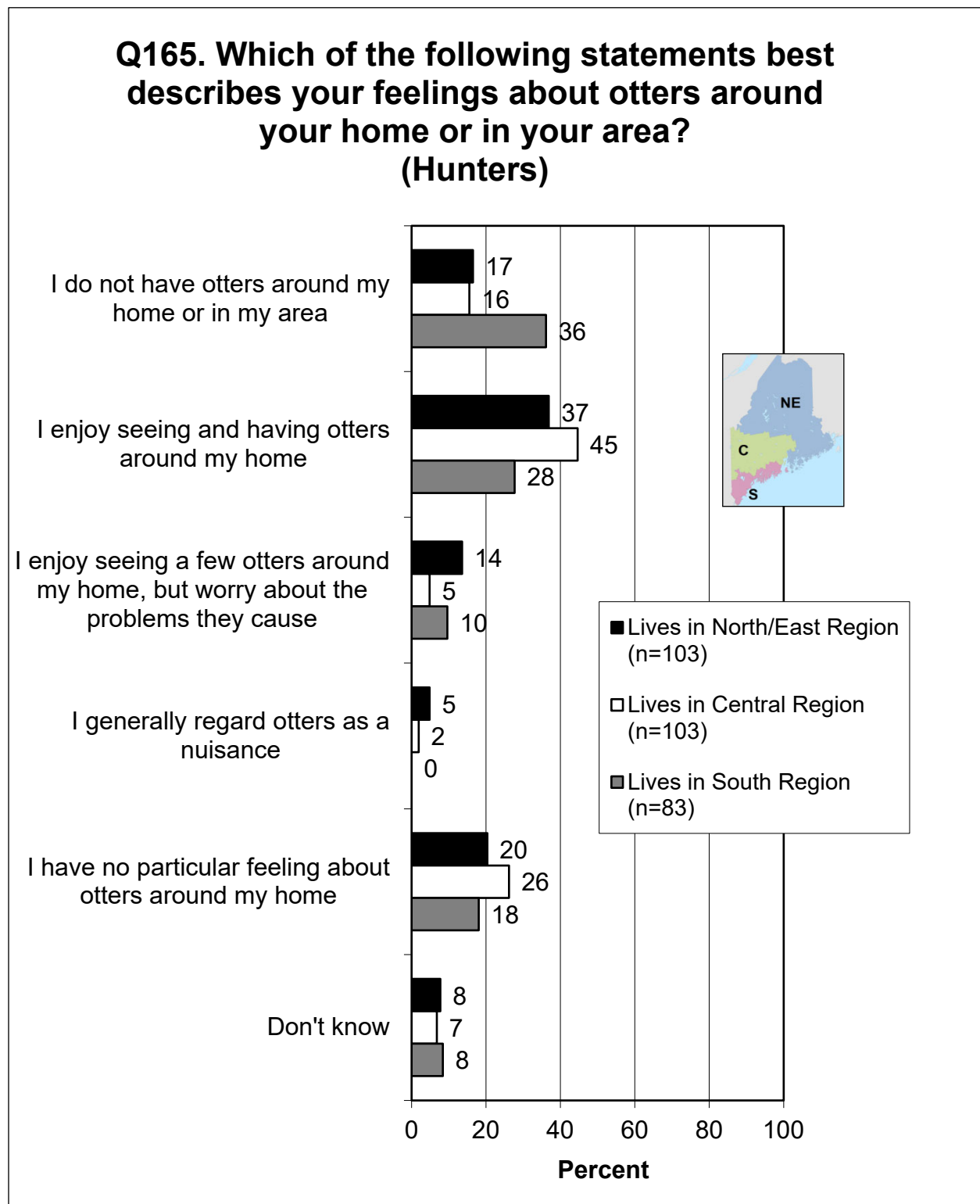


Figure 4.161. Feelings About Otters, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

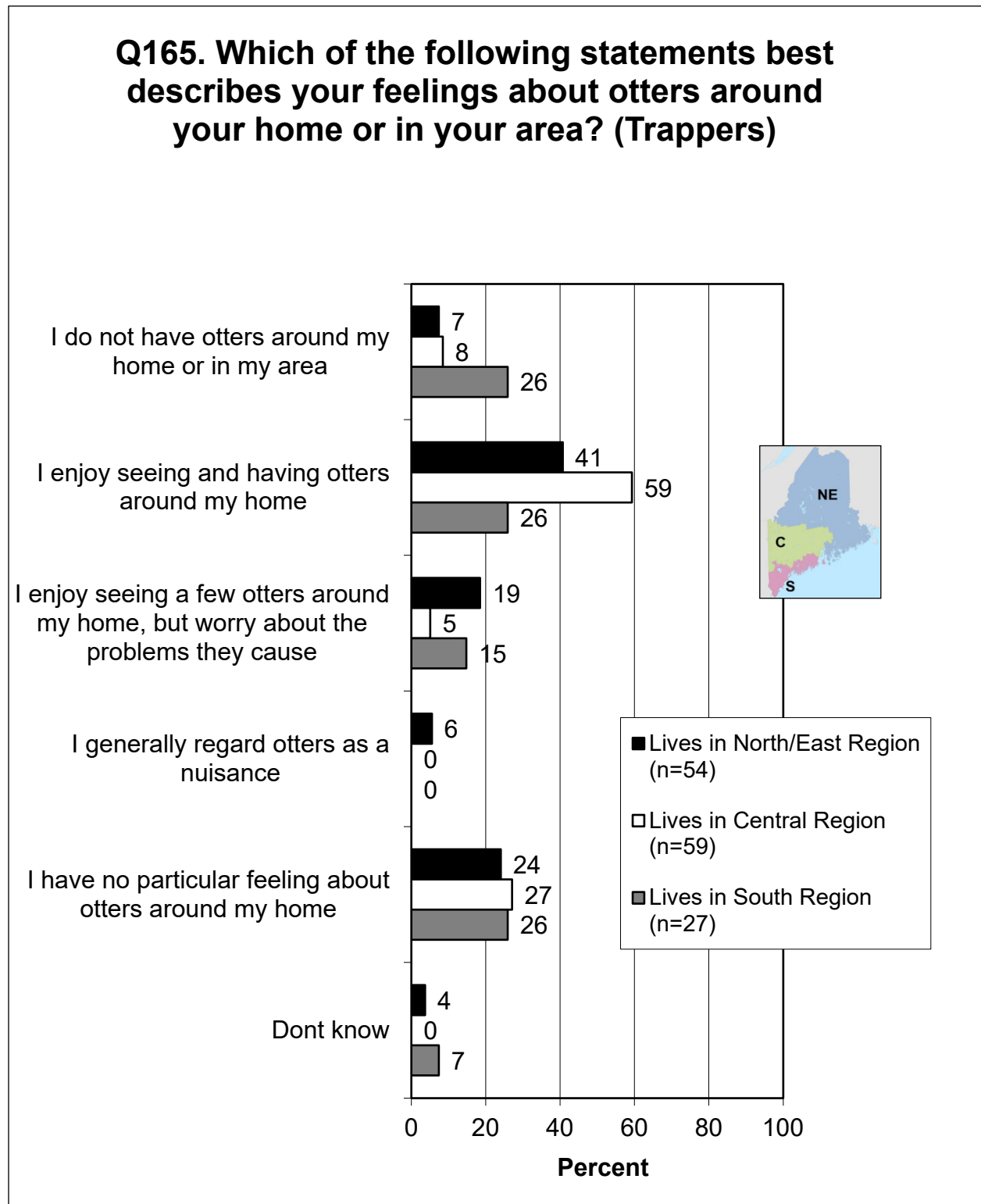


Figure 4.162. Feelings About Otters, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

MUSKRAT

Trappers' self-professed knowledge level about muskrats is much higher than that of hunters (Figure 4.163). The lowest knowledge levels regionally are among South Region hunters and trappers (Figures 4.164 and 4.165).

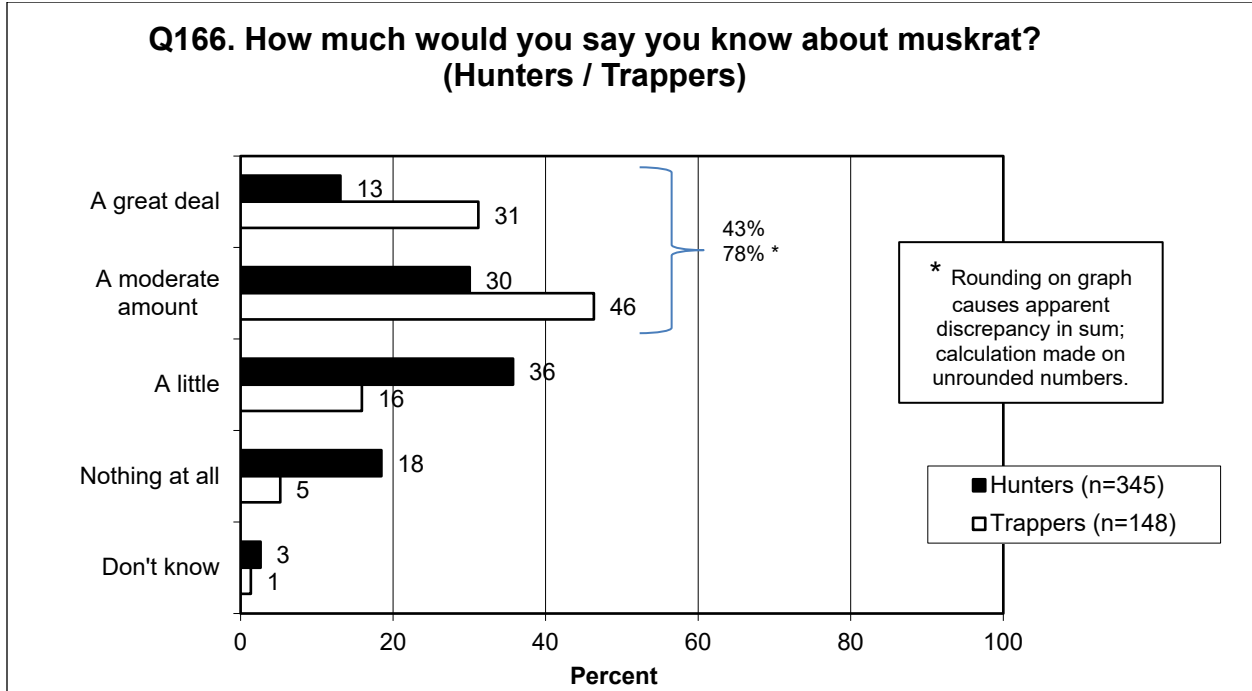


Figure 4.163. Knowledge of Muskrats (Hunters / Trappers)

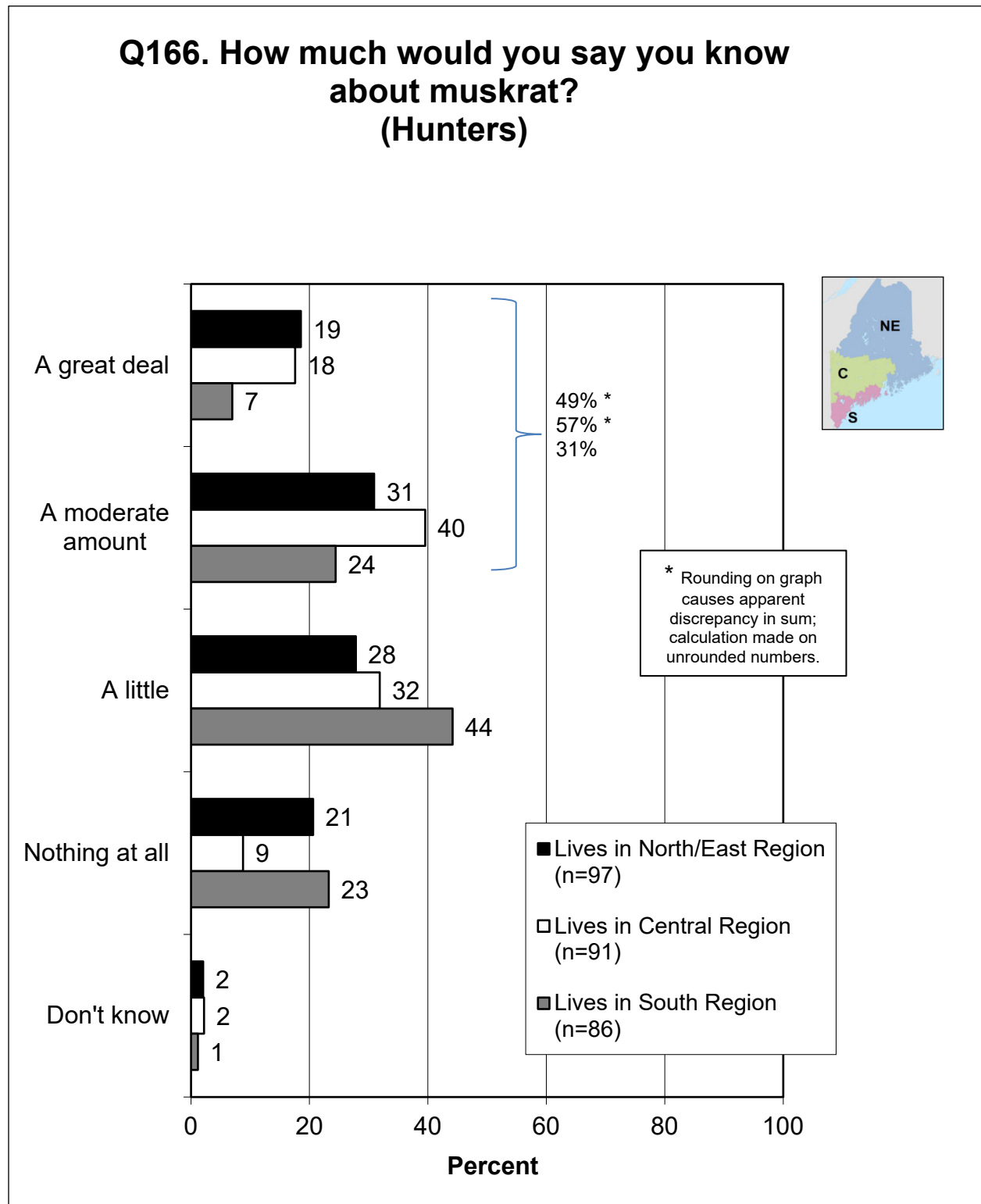


Figure 4.164. Knowledge of Muskrats, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

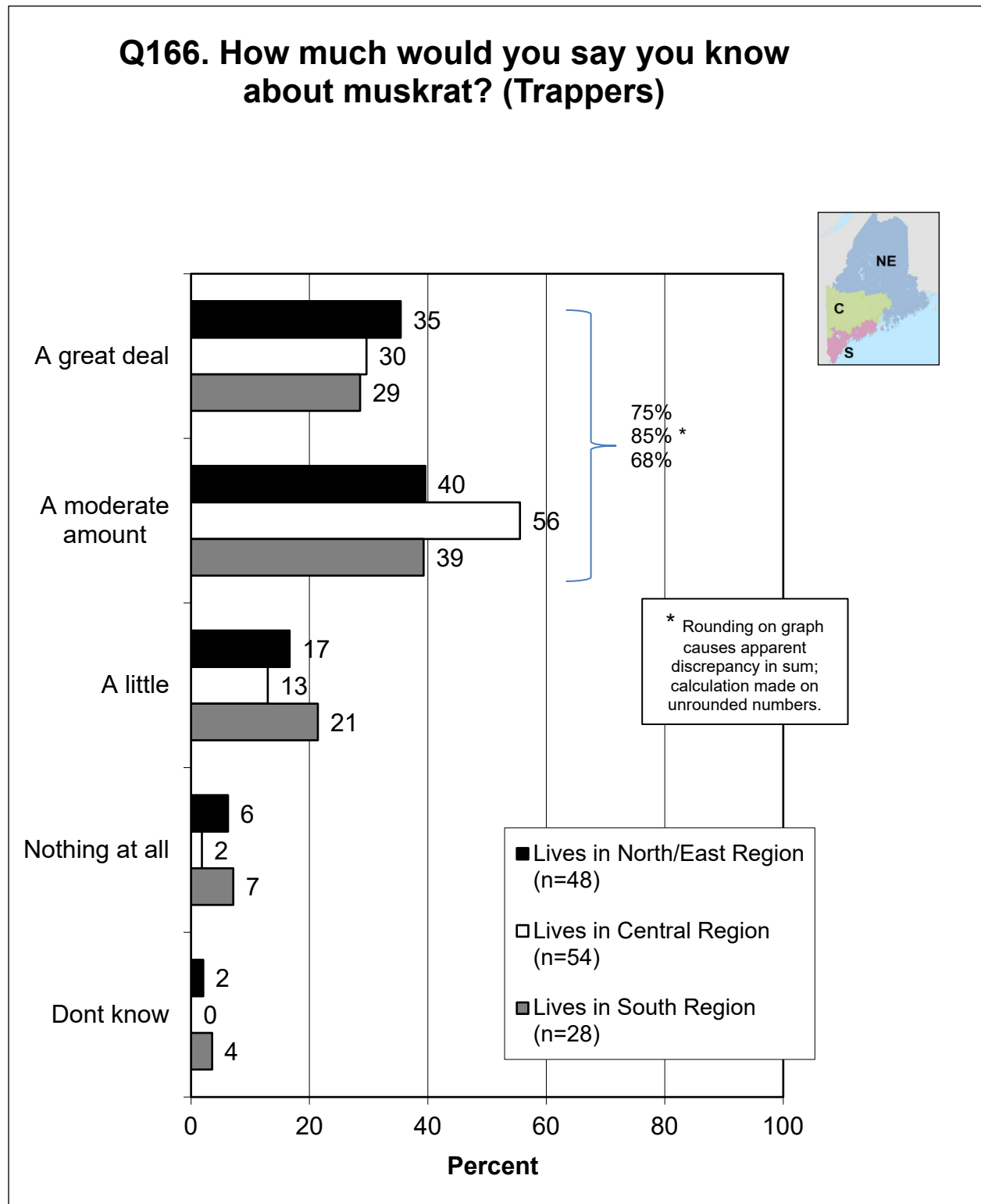


Figure 4.165. Knowledge of Muskrats, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Most commonly, hunters and trappers think the muskrat population is about right in their area; otherwise, they are more likely to say it is too low than to say it is too high (Figure 4.166). The regions are not greatly different from one another (Figures 4.167 and 4.168).

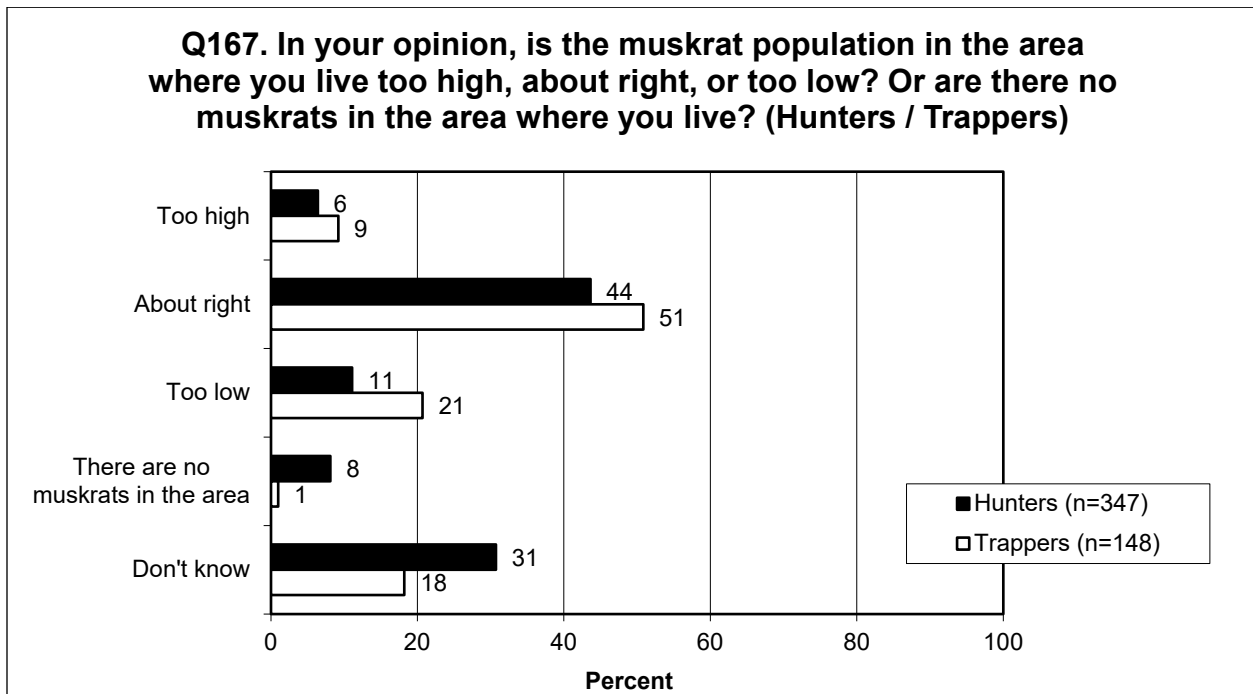


Figure 4.166. Opinion on the Muskrat Population (Hunters / Trappers)

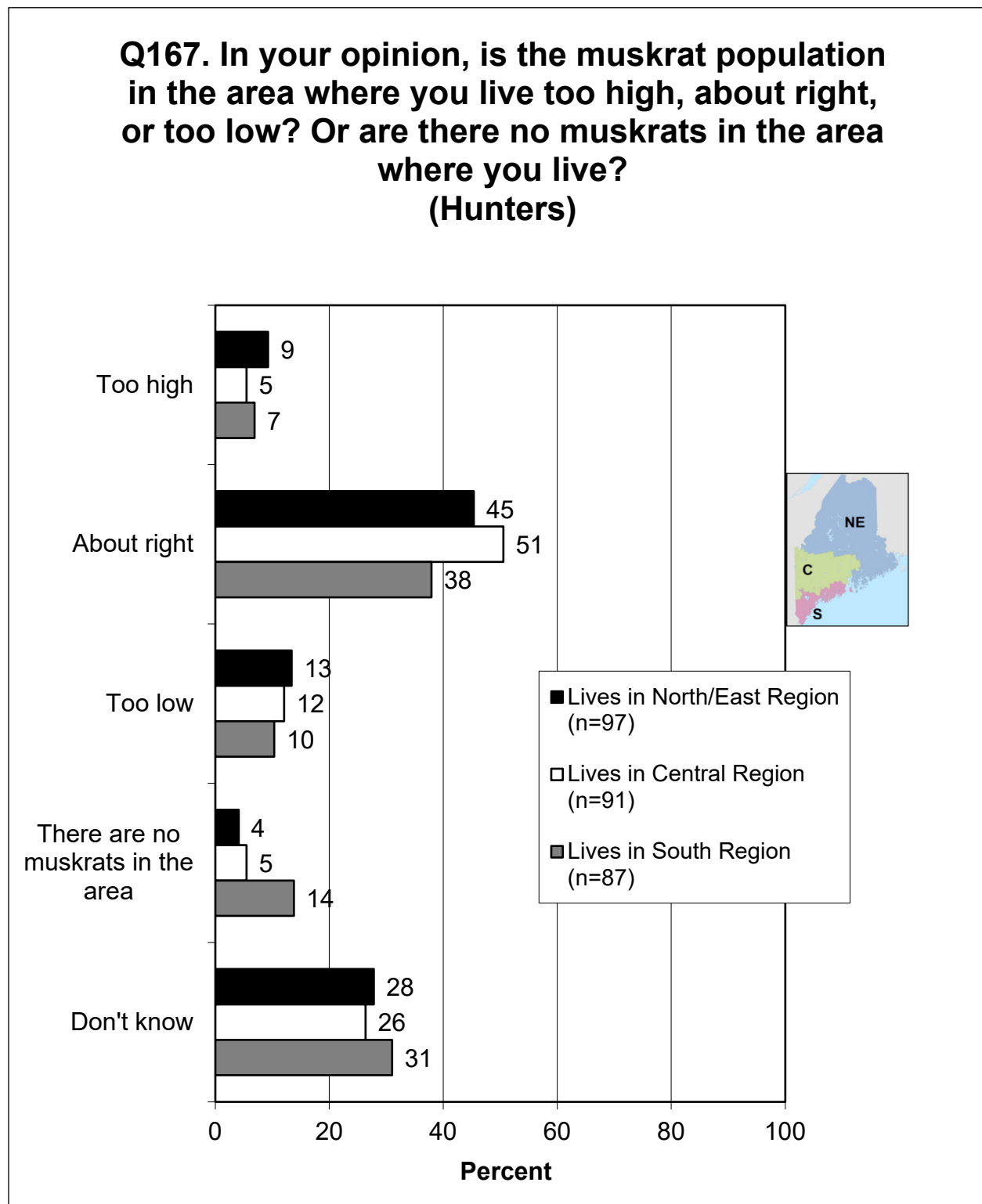


Figure 4.167. Opinion on the Muskrat Population, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

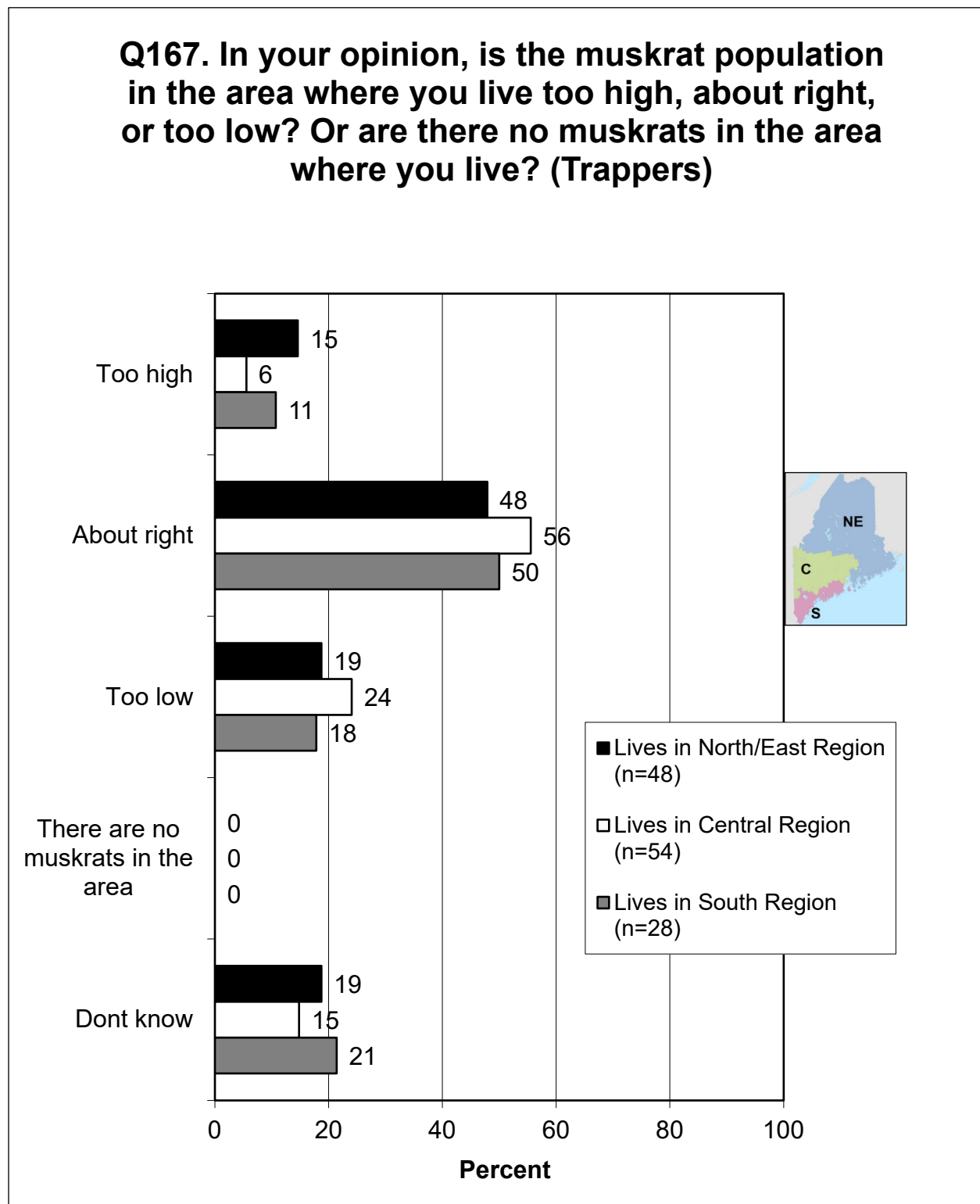


Figure 4.168. Opinion on the Muskrat Population, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Support is high in Maine for trapping as a method to help manage muskrat populations (Figure 4.169). Support is lowest among South Region hunters and trappers (Figures 4.170 and 4.171).

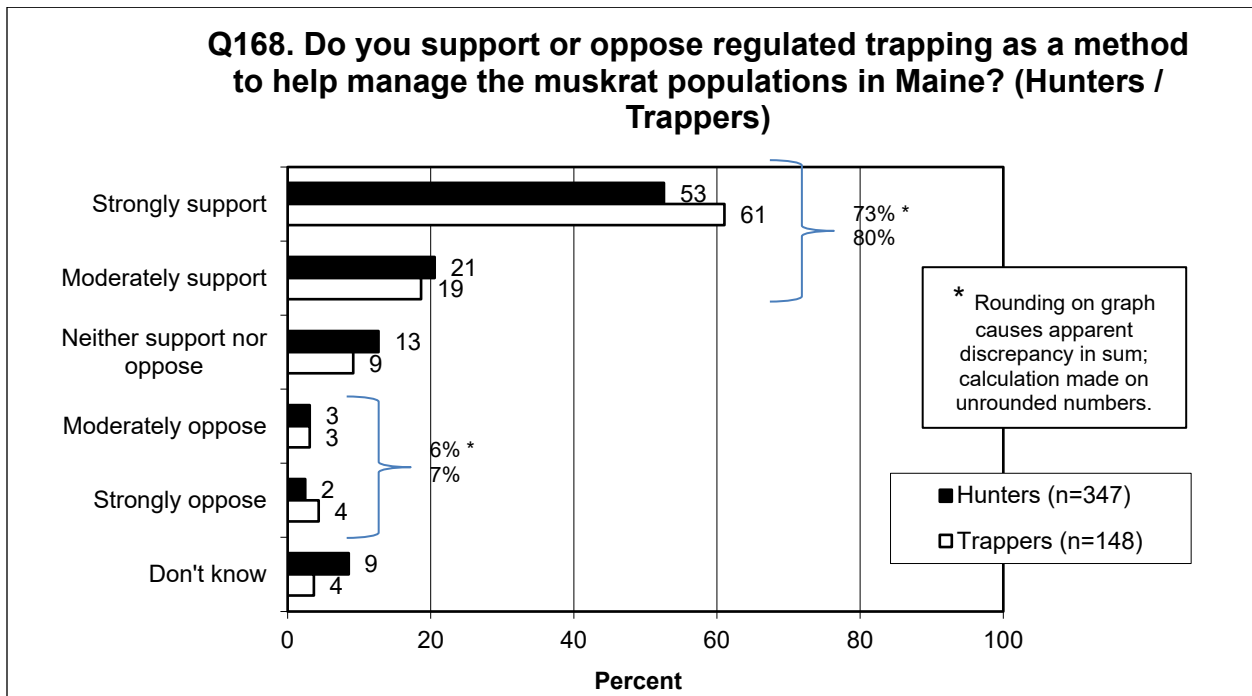


Figure 4.169. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Muskrat Populations (Hunters / Trappers)

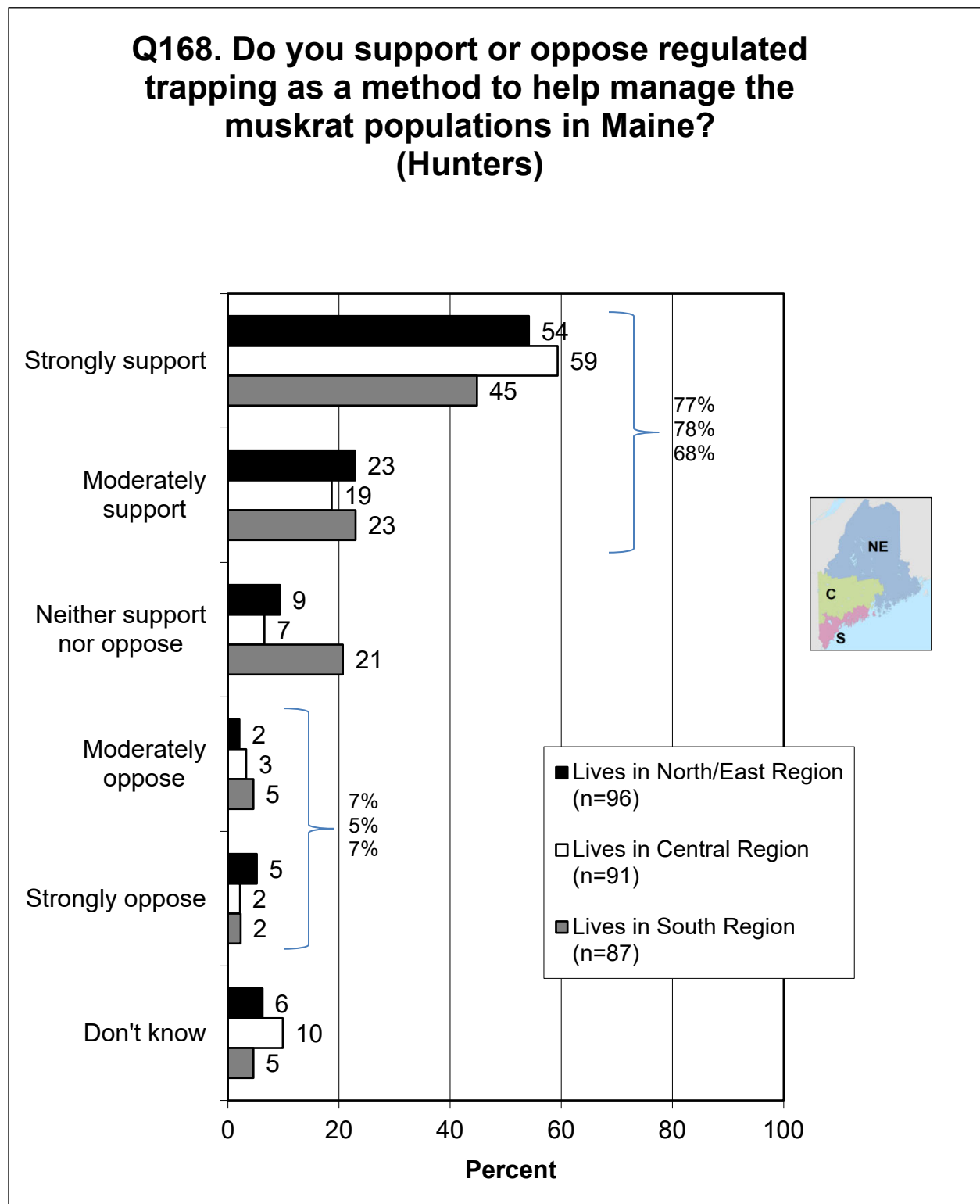


Figure 4.170. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Muskrat Populations, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

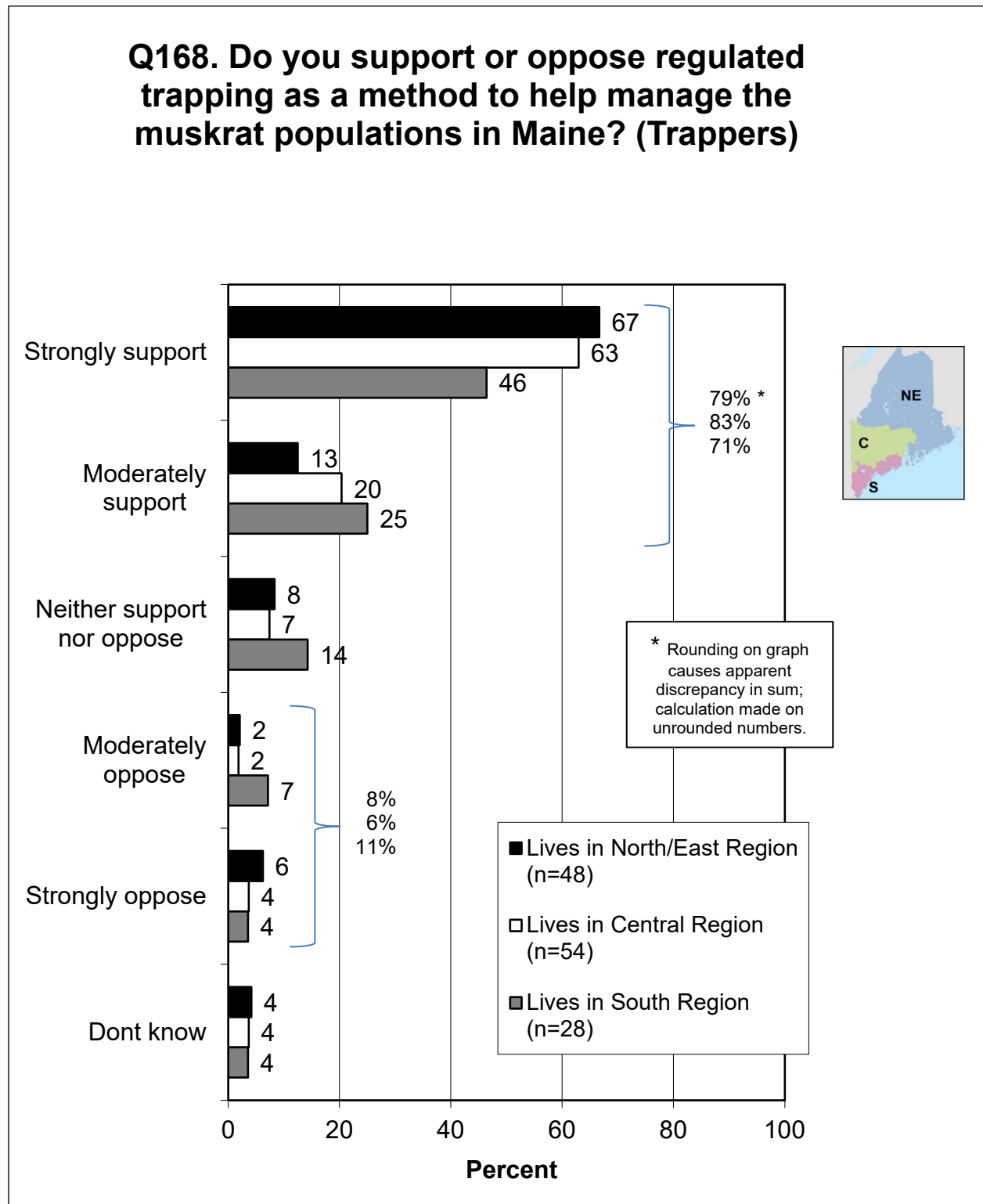


Figure 4.171. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Muskrat Populations, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

Muskrats are highly tolerated among hunters and trappers (Figure 4.172). This holds true across the regions (Figures 4.173 and 4.174).

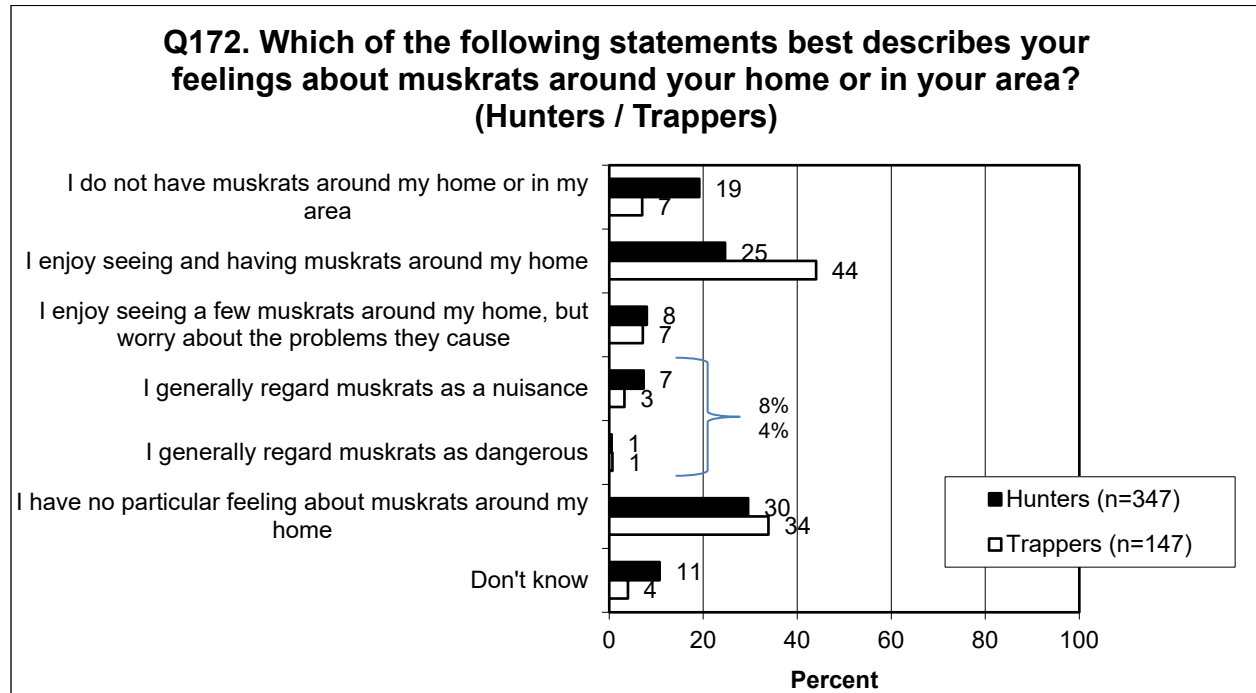


Figure 4.172. Feelings About Muskrats (Hunters / Trappers)

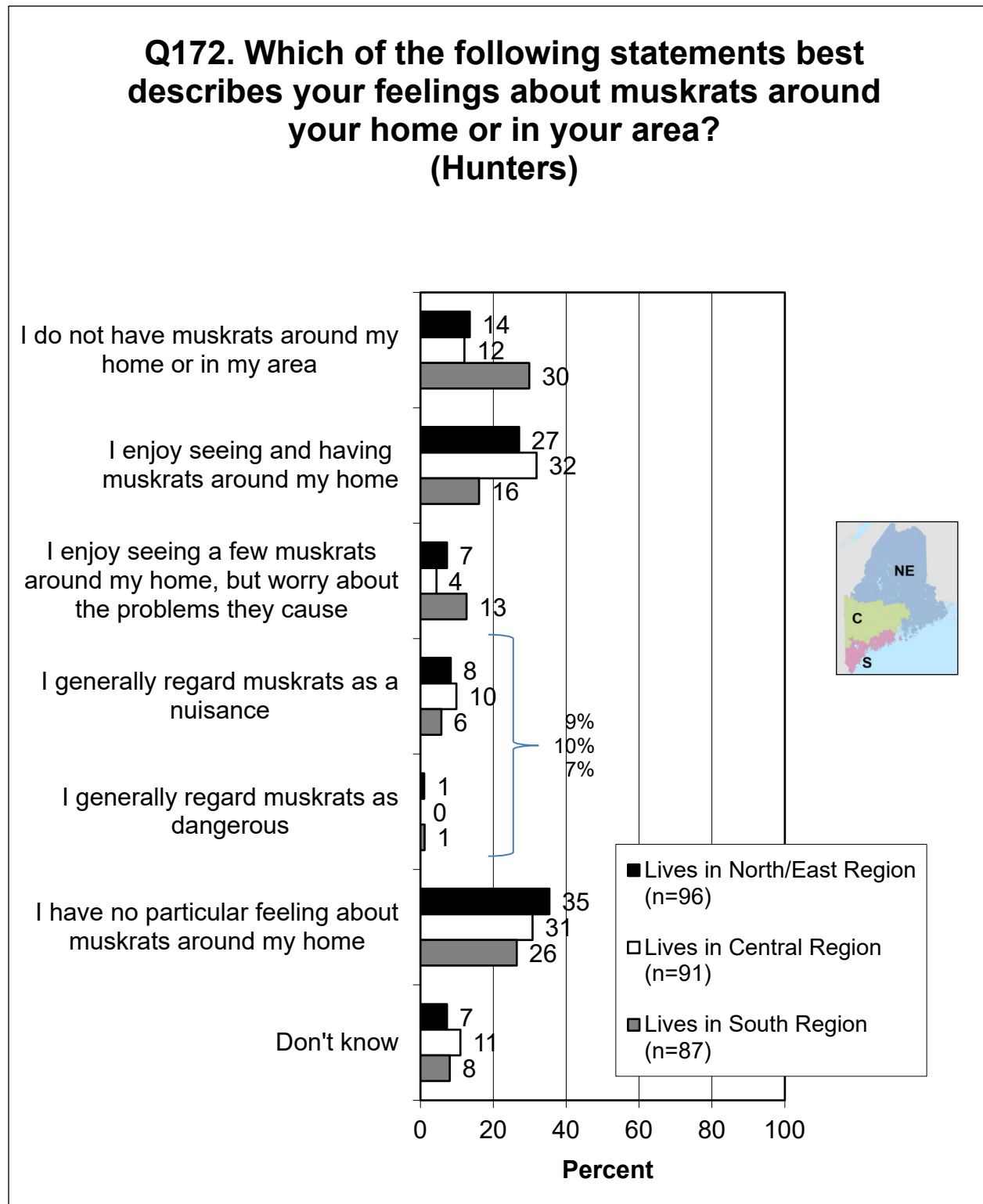


Figure 4.173. Feelings About Muskrats, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

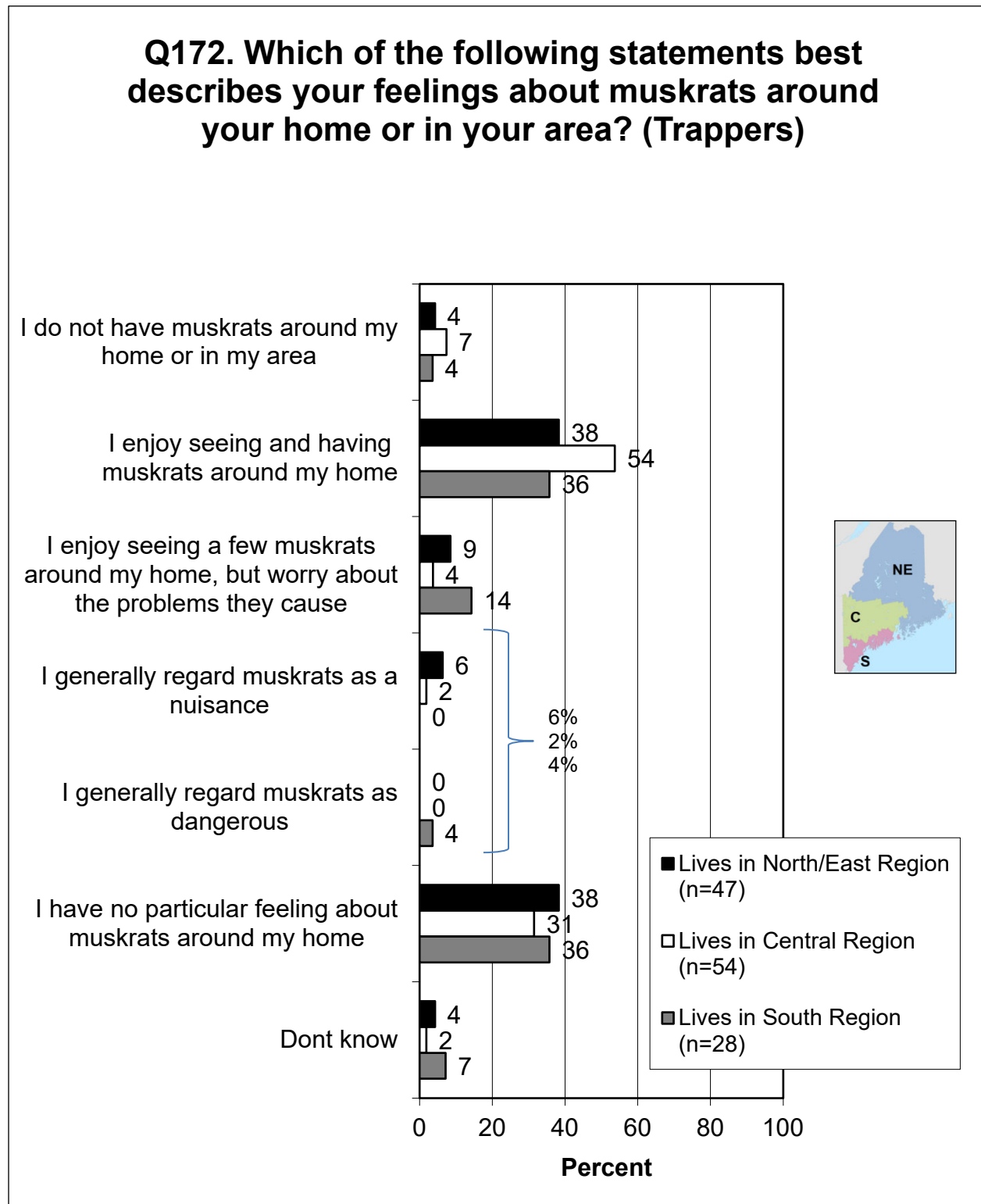


Figure 4.174. Feelings About Muskrats, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

SUMMARY FINDINGS FOR ALL FURBEARER SPECIES

Table 4.1 shows that the species about which hunters have the highest knowledge levels is coyote, more distantly followed by fox, raccoon, and beaver. Among trappers, those species about which they have the highest knowledge levels are coyote and beaver, with raccoon, fox, and muskrat not far behind (Table 4.2). In general, trappers have higher self-professed knowledge levels. The tables are ranked by the “great deal and moderate amount combined” values.

Table 4.1. How much would you say you know about [species]? (Hunters)

	A great deal	A moderate amount	A great deal and moderate amount combined	A little	Nothing at all	Don't know
Coyote	35	47	82	17	1	0
Fox	24	43	67	29	4	1
Raccoon	21	42	64	30	4	2
Beaver	20	41	61	33	5	1
Skunk	11	43	55	38	6	2
Bobcat	11	39	50	36	12	2
Muskrat	13	30	43	36	18	3
Fisher	13	29	42	43	13	2
Otter	11	23	34	45	16	4
Marten	9	21	30	42	24	4

Green shading indicates the highest knowledge levels among all the species, showing all within 5 percentage points of the top species. Red shading indicates the lowest knowledge levels among all the species, showing all within 5 percentage points of the lowest species. Any apparent discrepancies in the sums are caused by rounding in the table; all sums are calculated on unrounded numbers.

Table 4.2. How much would you say you know about [species]? (Trappers)

	A great deal	A moderate amount	A great deal and moderate amount combined	A little	Nothing at all	Don't know
Coyote	44	50	95	4	1	0
Beaver	42	44	86	12	2	1
Raccoon	31	51	82	15	2	1
Fox	30	50	80	17	2	0
Muskrat	31	46	78	16	5	1
Skunk	25	47	72	24	4	0
Fisher	30	42	71	23	5	0
Bobcat	21	42	63	29	8	0
Otter	26	35	61	33	4	2
Marten	23	34	57	35	5	3

Green shading indicates the highest knowledge levels among all the species, showing all within 5 percentage points of the top species. Red shading indicates the lowest knowledge levels among all the species, showing all within 5 percentage points of the lowest species. Any apparent discrepancies in the sums are caused by rounding in the table; all sums are calculated on unrounded numbers.

Tables 4.3 and 4.4 show regional results; they are ranked by the overall amount (which is not shown in the tables). Central Region hunters and trappers have the highest self-professed knowledge levels in general, and South Region hunters and trappers have the lowest self-professed knowledge levels.

Table 4.3. How much would you say you know about [species]? (By Region) (Hunters)

	A great deal			A moderate amount			A great deal and moderate amount combined			A little			Nothing at all		
	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S
Coyote	39	39	34	41	48	47	81	87	80	16	12	19	3	0	1
Fox	24	29	21	45	47	46	69	76	67	28	24	27	3	0	6
Raccoon	25	25	19	44	47	43	69	71	62	25	29	32	4	0	5
Beaver	31	25	13	35	49	42	65	75	55	30	24	38	4	1	7
Skunk	20	10	14	43	51	42	63	61	56	33	38	39	3	1	5
Bobcat	13	17	6	35	45	42	48	61	48	39	29	35	13	8	15
Muskrat	19	18	7	31	40	24	49	57	31	28	32	44	21	9	23
Fisher	23	14	9	26	34	28	49	48	38	40	42	51	11	10	12
Otter	19	16	2	25	22	27	44	38	29	39	47	54	14	12	14
Marten	22	11	1	17	23	23	39	34	24	39	42	48	16	22	23

Green shading indicates the highest knowledge level within the regions; when the regions are within 5 percentage points of the highest, they are also shaded. Red shading indicates the lowest knowledge level within the regions; when the regions are within 5 percentage points of the lowest, they are also shaded. Any apparent discrepancies in the sums are caused by rounding in the table; all sums are calculated on unrounded numbers. “Don’t know” not shown to improve table legibility.

Table 4.4. How much would you say you know about [species]? (By Region) (Trappers)

	A great deal			A moderate amount			A great deal and moderate amount combined			A little			Nothing at all		
	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S
Coyote	49	37	59	45	58	38	95	94	97	4	4	3	2	1	0
Beaver	47	40	39	35	53	43	82	93	82	15	7	14	2	0	4
Raccoon	33	33	26	51	53	49	84	85	74	10	15	23	4	0	2
Fox	26	32	32	59	54	39	85	86	71	13	14	24	2	0	5
Muskrat	35	30	29	40	56	39	75	85	68	17	13	21	6	2	7
Skunk	28	17	32	43	61	35	72	78	68	28	20	24	0	2	8
Fisher	38	27	18	32	47	50	71	75	68	25	22	25	5	3	7
Bobcat	24	21	19	41	41	48	65	62	68	29	32	19	6	6	13
Otter	37	27	4	30	29	63	67	56	67	28	39	30	4	3	0
Marten	36	20	4	22	38	46	59	58	50	33	35	42	5	5	4

Green shading indicates the highest knowledge level within the regions; when the regions are within 5 percentage points of the highest, they are also shaded. Red shading indicates the lowest knowledge level within the regions; when the regions are within 5 percentage points of the lowest, they are also shaded. Regarding coyote, no region is markedly higher than the others. Any apparent discrepancies in the sums are caused by rounding in the table; all sums are calculated on unrounded numbers. “Don’t know” not shown to improve table legibility.



Tables 4.5 and 4.6 are ranked by the “too high” column. Among both hunters and trappers, coyote, skunk, beaver, and raccoon are seen as too populous. Regional results, which are ranked in the same order as the overall results, are shown in Tables 4.7 and 4.8.

Table 4.5. In your opinion, is the [species] population in the area where you live too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no [species] in the area where you live? (Hunters)

	Too high	About right	Too low	None in area	Don't know
Coyote	70	25	0	1	4
Skunk	27	56	3	4	10
Beaver	27	49	6	7	11
Raccoon	21	60	6	4	10
Fox	11	67	13	1	9
Fisher	7	36	18	7	31
Bobcat	7	47	16	10	21
Muskrat	6	44	11	8	31
Otter	3	41	11	14	31
Marten	1	19	17	26	37

Red shading indicates that “too high” exceeds “too low”; green shading indicates that “too low” exceeds “too high.”

Table 4.6. In your opinion, is the [species] population in the area where you live too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no [species] in the area where you live? (Trappers)

	Too high	About right	Too low	None in area	Don't know
Coyote	72	25	1	1	2
Beaver	41	45	5	3	6
Raccoon	35	52	9	1	3
Skunk	28	64	2	1	6
Fisher	11	47	26	4	13
Fox	11	63	19	1	6
Bobcat	11	50	19	4	15
Muskrat	9	51	21	1	18
Otter	9	60	12	4	15
Marten	2	28	26	31	13

Red shading indicates that “too high” exceeds “too low”; green shading indicates that “too low” exceeds “too high.”

Table 4.7. In your opinion, is the [species] population in the area where you live too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no [species] in the area where you live? (By Region) (Hunters)

	Too high			About right			Too low			None in area			Don't know		
	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S
Coyote	80	72	62	19	26	28	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	1	7
Skunk	37	29	24	50	53	68	2	4	2	4	5	1	7	8	4
Beaver	42	29	18	41	59	47	6	2	11	1	4	14	9	5	10
Raccoon	43	17	16	41	60	70	2	10	4	5	3	3	9	9	7
Fox	9	11	15	71	66	67	14	16	10	0	1	1	6	6	7
Fisher	11	7	6	40	38	35	22	24	13	3	7	8	25	23	38
Bobcat	7	8	7	42	58	40	17	15	13	12	6	16	22	14	25
Muskrat	9	5	7	45	51	38	13	12	10	4	5	14	28	26	31
Otter	8	4	0	48	48	35	16	11	12	9	11	20	20	27	33
Marten	5	0	1	27	21	15	25	22	9	16	28	33	27	30	42

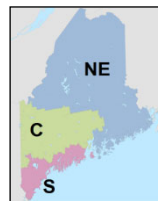
Red shading indicates that “too high” exceeds “too low” in that region; green shading indicates that “too low” exceeds “too high” in that region.



Table 4.8. In your opinion, is the [species] population in the area where you live too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no [species] in the area where you live? (By Region) (Trappers)

	Too high			About right			Too low			None in area			Don't know		
	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S
Coyote	73	72	69	22	25	31	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	3	0
Beaver	50	40	32	37	53	43	6	2	11	0	2	11	7	4	4
Raccoon	55	27	23	39	55	65	2	14	7	2	0	0	2	4	5
Skunk	40	22	22	55	70	72	2	2	0	0	0	0	4	7	6
Fisher	12	14	4	48	42	57	20	34	21	3	3	4	17	7	14
Fox	7	11	17	72	64	54	17	21	17	2	0	0	2	4	12
Bobcat	6	14	13	45	54	52	27	17	13	8	0	3	14	14	19
Muskrat	15	6	11	48	56	50	19	24	18	0	0	0	19	15	21
Otter	13	8	4	61	63	52	9	10	22	2	3	7	15	15	15
Marten	7	0	0	41	23	8	29	28	13	7	37	71	16	12	8

Red shading indicates that “too high” exceeds “too low” in that region; green shading indicates that “too low” exceeds “too high” in that region.



In Table 4.9 showing results among hunters, overall support for trapping as a method to help manage the various species ranges from 87% for coyote and beaver down to 66% for marten and bobcat. The table is ranked by overall support. Table 4.10 shows the results among trappers, where overall support for trapping as a method to help manage the various species ranges from 90% for coyote and raccoon down to 79% for bobcat. The tables are ranked by overall support. Tables 4.11 and 4.12 show regional results on these questions, and they are ranked in the same order as the overall results tables.

Table 4.9. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the [species] populations in Maine? (Hunters)

	Strongly support	Overall support	Neither	Strongly oppose	Overall oppose	Don't know
Coyote	78	87	5	3	5	2
Beaver	65	87	6	2	4	3
Raccoon	59	80	12	2	4	4
Fox	58	77	12	4	8	4
Skunk	54	76	17	2	4	3
Fisher	47	74	13	3	7	7
Muskrat	53	73	13	2	6	9
Otter	45	71	12	3	7	11
Marten	45	66	13	4	7	14
Bobcat	45	66	16	7	11	6

Green shading indicates the highest support among all the species, showing all within 5 percentage points of the top species. Red shading indicates the highest opposition among all the species, showing all within 5 percentage points of the top species.

Table 4.10. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the [species] populations in Maine? (Trappers)

	Strongly support	Overall support	Neither	Strongly oppose	Overall oppose	Don't know
Coyote	81	90	3	5	6	1
Raccoon	76	90	6	0	1	3
Beaver	68	89	4	4	5	2
Fox	78	89	6	2	2	3
Otter	59	88	6	2	4	2
Fisher	66	83	8	3	7	2
Marten	65	81	6	3	8	4
Skunk	64	80	14	2	4	2
Muskrat	61	80	9	4	7	4
Bobcat	54	79	8	9	11	2

Green shading indicates the highest support among all the species, showing all within 5 percentage points of the top species. Red shading indicates the highest opposition among all the species, showing all within 5 percentage points of the top species.

Table 4.11. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the [species] populations in Maine? (By Region) (Hunters)

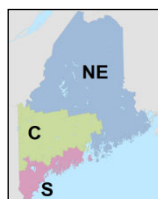
	Strongly support			Overall support			Neither			Strongly oppose			Overall oppose		
	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S
Coyote	82	77	76	92	86	85	5	5	7	1	4	3	3	6	7
Beaver	72	64	55	90	89	82	5	4	8	3	1	2	3	3	7
Raccoon	67	61	52	87	76	79	9	13	14	2	4	2	3	7	3
Fox	57	63	53	79	78	72	15	12	11	3	5	5	6	7	12
Skunk	49	58	52	72	77	80	22	17	13	2	2	3	5	4	5
Fisher	46	47	48	72	77	73	12	13	13	5	2	2	10	5	7
Muskrat	54	59	45	77	78	68	9	7	21	5	2	2	7	5	7
Otter	37	49	46	73	77	66	10	8	17	2	3	5	8	7	8
Marten	41	51	37	69	70	59	11	10	19	5	3	6	8	6	7
Bobcat	36	51	43	67	72	60	20	16	16	8	5	11	11	8	16

Green shading indicates the highest support among all the species within that region, showing all within 5 percentage points of the top species. Red shading indicates the highest opposition among all the species within that region, showing all within 5 percentage points of the top species; note that the Central Region has no opposition that is 5 percentage points more than any other. "Don't know" not shown to improve table legibility.

Table 4.12. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the [species] populations in Maine? (By Region) (Trappers)

	Strongly support			Overall support			Neither			Strongly oppose			Overall oppose		
	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S
Coyote	82	79	88	91	90	88	4	1	6	4	6	3	5	7	6
Raccoon	78	82	63	92	91	86	6	5	9	0	0	0	0	2	0
Beaver	71	69	61	89	91	86	2	4	7	7	2	4	7	4	4
Fox	72	86	73	93	91	80	7	5	7	0	4	0	0	4	2
Otter	52	63	63	83	93	85	6	3	11	4	2	0	7	3	0
Fisher	66	68	61	83	83	86	5	12	4	5	2	0	9	5	7
Marten	64	70	54	79	83	79	5	7	8	5	2	0	10	8	4
Skunk	62	67	58	75	80	83	17	15	8	4	0	3	8	0	6
Muskrat	67	63	46	79	83	71	8	7	14	6	4	4	8	6	11
Bobcat	46	59	53	79	83	70	4	8	13	13	6	10	15	8	13

Green shading indicates the highest support among all the species within that region, showing all within 5 percentage points of the top species. Red shading indicates the highest opposition among all the species within that region, showing all within 5 percentage points of the top species. "Don't know" not shown to improve table legibility.



Tables 4.13 and 4.14 are ranked by the values for “enjoy seeing and having them around home.” Fox and otter top the rankings for both hunters and trappers. Tables 4.15 and 4.16 show the regional results, ranked in the same order as the overall tables.

Table 4.13. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about [species] around your home or in your area? (Hunters)

	None around	Enjoy seeing and having them around home	Enjoy seeing and having them but worry about problems	Regard them as a nuisance	Regard them as dangerous	Nuisance and dangerous combined	No feeling	Don't know
Fox	2	42	26	12	1	13	14	3
Otter	24	35	8	2	0	2	21	10
Bobcat	18	34	17	4	3	7	18	6
Fisher	17	28	11	3	6	9	26	9
Muskrat	19	25	8	7	1	8	30	11
Beaver	12	22	30	19	0	19	14	4
Marten	39	19	3	3	0	3	22	14
Raccoon	6	15	26	33	1	34	17	2
Skunk	8	11	14	46	1	47	18	2
Coyote	2	6	19	46	20	66	7	1

Dark green shading indicates the highest in the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response among all the species. Green shading indicates that the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response exceeds nuisance/dangerous combined. Dark red shading indicates the highest in the combined nuisance/dangerous among all the species. Red shading indicates that the nuisance/dangerous combined response exceeds the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response.

Table 4.14. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about [species] around your home or in your area? (Trappers)

	None around	Enjoy seeing and having them around home	Enjoy seeing and having them but worry about problems	Regard them as a nuisance	Regard them as dangerous	Nuisance and dangerous combined	No feeling	Don't know
Fox	2	47	23	9	1	11	16	1
Otter	12	46	11	2	0	2	26	3
Muskrat	7	44	7	3	1	4	34	4
Fisher	11	43	10	2	2	4	26	6
Bobcat	10	41	17	3	3	6	22	4
Marten	48	30	3	2	1	3	14	3
Beaver	7	24	35	19	0	19	13	2
Raccoon	3	14	29	36	1	37	18	0
Skunk	4	11	17	46	1	48	19	1
Coyote	0	8	21	48	17	64	5	1

Dark green shading indicates the highest in the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response among all the species. Green shading indicates that the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response exceeds nuisance/dangerous combined. Dark red shading indicates the highest in the combined nuisance/dangerous among all the species. Red shading indicates that the nuisance/dangerous combined response exceeds the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response.

Table 4.15. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about [species] around your home or in your area? (By Region) (Hunters)

	Enjoy seeing and having them around home			Enjoy seeing and having them but worry about problems			Regard them as a nuisance			Regard them as dangerous			Nuisance and dangerous combined		
	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S
Fox	39	38	45	29	28	24	11	17	9	0	3	0	11	19	9
Otter	37	45	28	14	5	10	5	2	0	0	0	0	5	2	0
Bobcat	37	37	27	13	19	18	2	6	2	4	4	5	6	9	7
Fisher	27	34	18	12	6	19	5	3	4	5	5	9	10	7	13
Muskrat	27	32	16	7	4	13	8	10	6	1	0	1	9	10	7
Beaver	26	18	23	28	36	25	26	20	16	0	0	0	26	20	16
Marten	29	17	14	7	3	4	4	3	2	0	0	0	4	3	2
Raccoon	9	14	18	19	31	24	49	29	28	1	2	0	50	31	28
Skunk	7	8	16	10	15	18	57	47	41	1	2	0	58	49	41
Coyote	4	8	5	20	19	17	44	48	47	21	18	23	66	67	70

Dark green shading indicates the highest in the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response among all the species in that region. Green shading indicates that the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response exceeds nuisance/dangerous combined in each region. Dark red shading indicates the highest in the combined nuisance/dangerous among all the species in that region. Red shading indicates that the nuisance/dangerous combined response exceeds the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response in each region. Some responses not shown to improve table legibility.

Table 4.16. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about [species] around your home or in your area? (By Region) (Trappers)

	Enjoy seeing and having them around home			Enjoy seeing and having them but worry about problems			Regard them as a nuisance			Regard them as dangerous			Nuisance and dangerous combined		
	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S
Fox	52	48	41	26	21	24	7	13	7	2	2	0	9	14	7
Otter	41	59	26	19	5	15	6	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0
Muskrat	38	54	36	9	4	14	6	2	0	0	0	4	6	2	4
Fisher	43	47	36	9	10	14	5	0	0	2	3	0	6	3	0
Bobcat	43	44	32	10	17	26	2	5	0	2	5	0	4	10	0
Marten	48	23	4	3	2	4	5	0	0	0	2	0	5	2	0
Beaver	29	22	21	36	44	18	18	16	25	0	0	0	18	16	25
Raccoon	10	18	12	25	32	28	53	29	30	2	0	0	55	29	30
Skunk	8	9	19	9	22	22	53	48	38	2	2	0	55	50	38
Coyote	5	10	6	22	23	19	49	49	41	16	15	22	65	65	63

Dark green shading indicates the highest in the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response among all the species in that region. Green shading indicates that the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response exceeds nuisance/dangerous combined in each region. Dark red shading indicates the highest in the combined nuisance/dangerous among all the species in that region. Red shading indicates that the nuisance/dangerous combined response exceeds the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response in each region. Some responses not shown to improve table legibility.

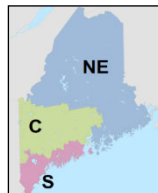


Table 4.17 shows that hunters perceive otter, marten, and bobcat to be the most beneficial species, while raccoon, skunk, and coyote are seen as the least beneficial. Trappers see marten, fisher, and otter as being the most beneficial, and they are similar to hunters in perceiving raccoon, skunk, and coyote as the least beneficial (Table 4.18). These tables are ranked by the overall mean scores.

Table 4.17. How beneficial do you consider it to have [species] in Maine, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all beneficial and 10 is extremely beneficial? (Overall and by Region) (Hunters)

	Mean Ratings			
	Overall	North/East Region	Central Region	South Region
Otter	7.6	7.1	7.6	7.8
Marten	7.5	7.5	7.4	7.4
Bobcat	7.4	7.6	7.5	7.1
Fox	7.1	7.0	6.9	7.5
Fisher	7.1	7.0	7.2	6.8
Beaver	7.0	6.7	7.0	7.0
Muskrat	7.0	7.0	7.1	6.7
Raccoon	5.8	4.9	5.8	6.1
Skunk	5.2	4.5	5.0	5.6
Coyote	3.2	2.8	3.1	3.2

Dark green shading indicates the highest mean rating overall among all the species. Light green shading indicates the region that has the highest mean for each species. Dark red shading indicates the lowest mean rating overall among all the species. Light red shading indicates the region that has the lowest mean for each species.



Table 4.18. How beneficial do you consider it to have [species] in Maine, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all beneficial and 10 is extremely beneficial? (Overall and by Region) (Trappers)

	Mean Ratings			
	Overall	North/East Region	Central Region	South Region
Marten	8.2	8.1	8.1	8.7
Fisher	8.1	7.8	8.2	8.1
Otter	7.9	7.5	7.9	8.2
Bobcat	7.7	7.6	7.7	8.0
Muskrat	7.7	7.4	7.8	7.6
Beaver	7.3	7.0	7.5	7.1
Fox	7.3	7.4	7.1	7.4
Raccoon	5.8	4.8	6.0	6.4
Skunk	5.5	4.8	5.9	5.9
Coyote	3.0	2.5	3.1	3.2

Dark green shading indicates the highest mean rating overall among all the species. Light green shading indicates the region that has the highest mean for each species. Dark red shading indicates the lowest mean rating overall among all the species. Light red shading indicates the region that has the lowest mean for each species.

ATTITUDES TOWARD FURBEARER MANAGEMENT

Overwhelming majorities of hunters (92%) and trappers (96%) support the management of furbearer populations, with only 2% or less opposing (Figure 4.175). Support is consistently high across all regions and among nonresidents, as shown in Figures 4.176 and 4.177.

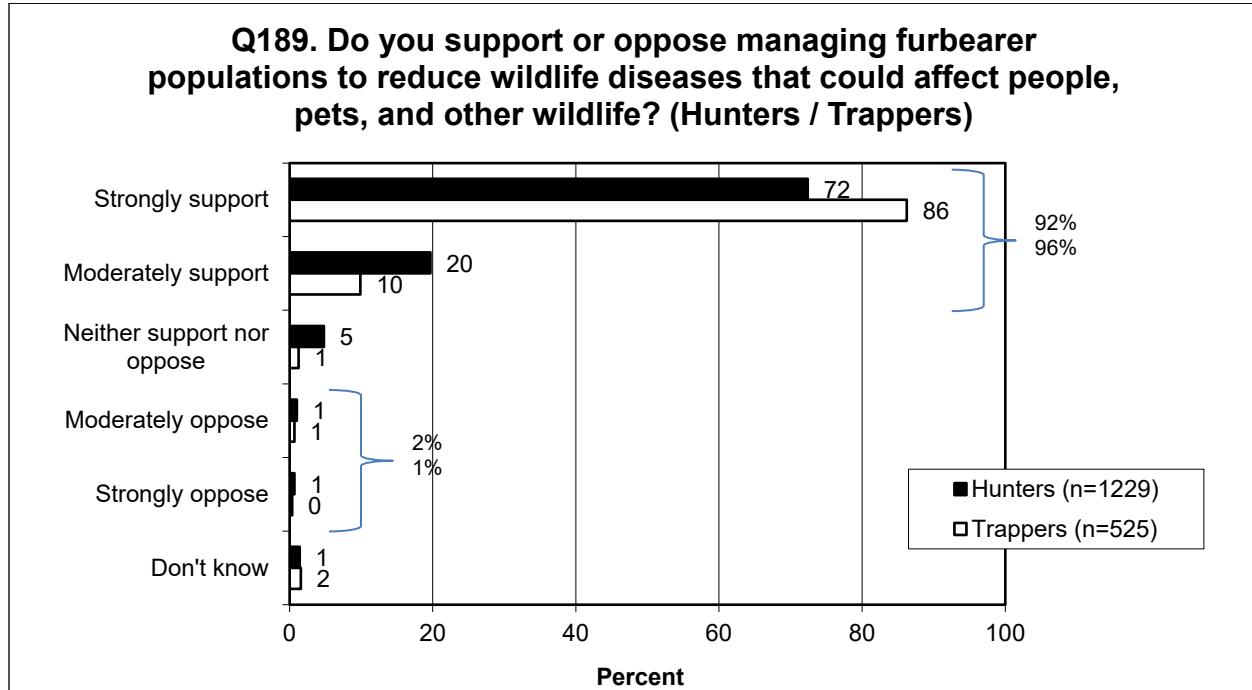


Figure 4.175. Support for or Opposition to Managing Furbearer Populations to Reduce Wildlife Diseases (Hunters / Trappers)

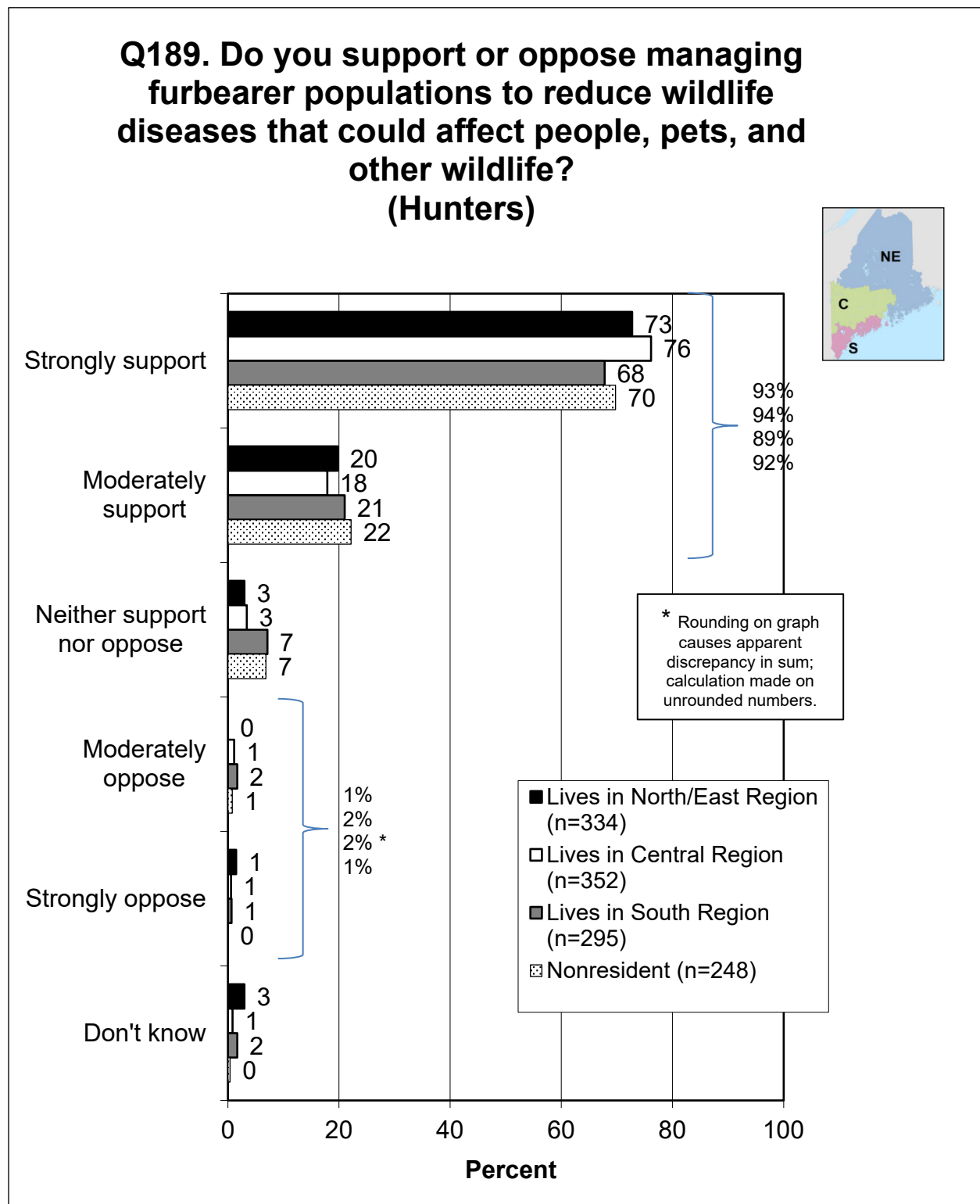


Figure 4.176. Support for or Opposition to Managing Furbearer Populations to Reduce Wildlife Diseases, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

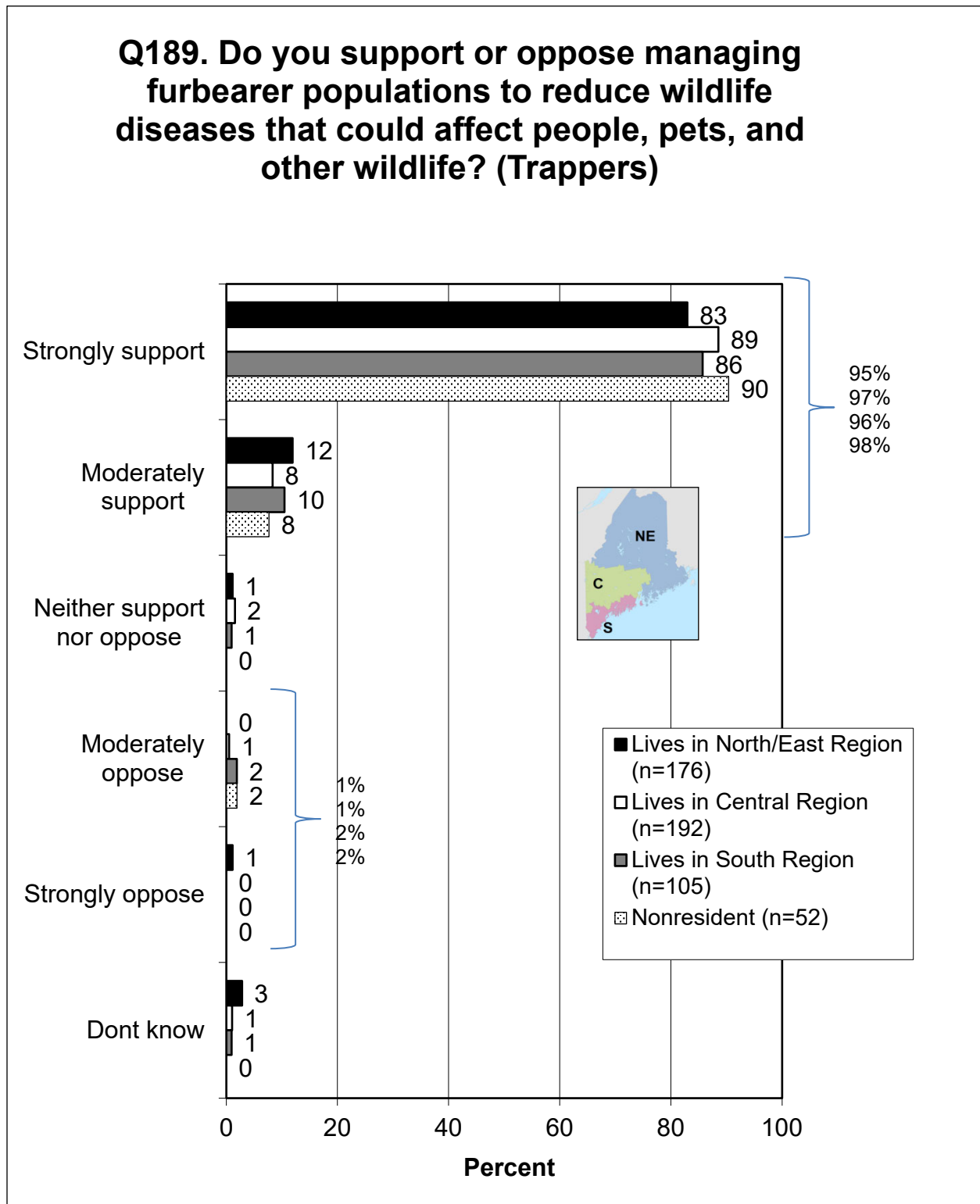


Figure 4.177. Support for or Opposition to Managing Furbearer Populations to Reduce Wildlife Diseases, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICTS

About half of hunters and trappers have had problems with wildlife or birds in the past 2 years (Figure 4.178). For both hunters (Figure 4.179) and trappers (Figure 4.180), those living in the North/East Region have the highest incidence of problems from wild animals or birds.

Raccoon, skunk, beaver, fox, and coyote are the most common culprits in the problems, with deer, squirrel/chipmunk, and bear just under them (Figure 4.181). Regional results are shown for hunters (Figures 4.182 and 4.183) and trappers (Figures 4.184 and 4.185).

The most common types of problems among hunters and trappers include damage to crops and gardens, threat to livestock (with livestock being broadly defined to include fowl), damage to human property, getting into garbage, flooding, and threat or harm to pets (Figure 4.186). Regional results are shown for hunters (Figure 4.187) and trappers (Figure 4.188). To address the problems, the most common actions are to allow trapping on the property, killing the animal(s), capturing and relocating the animal(s), and using fencing (Figure 4.189). Regional results are shown in Figures 4.190 and 4.191.

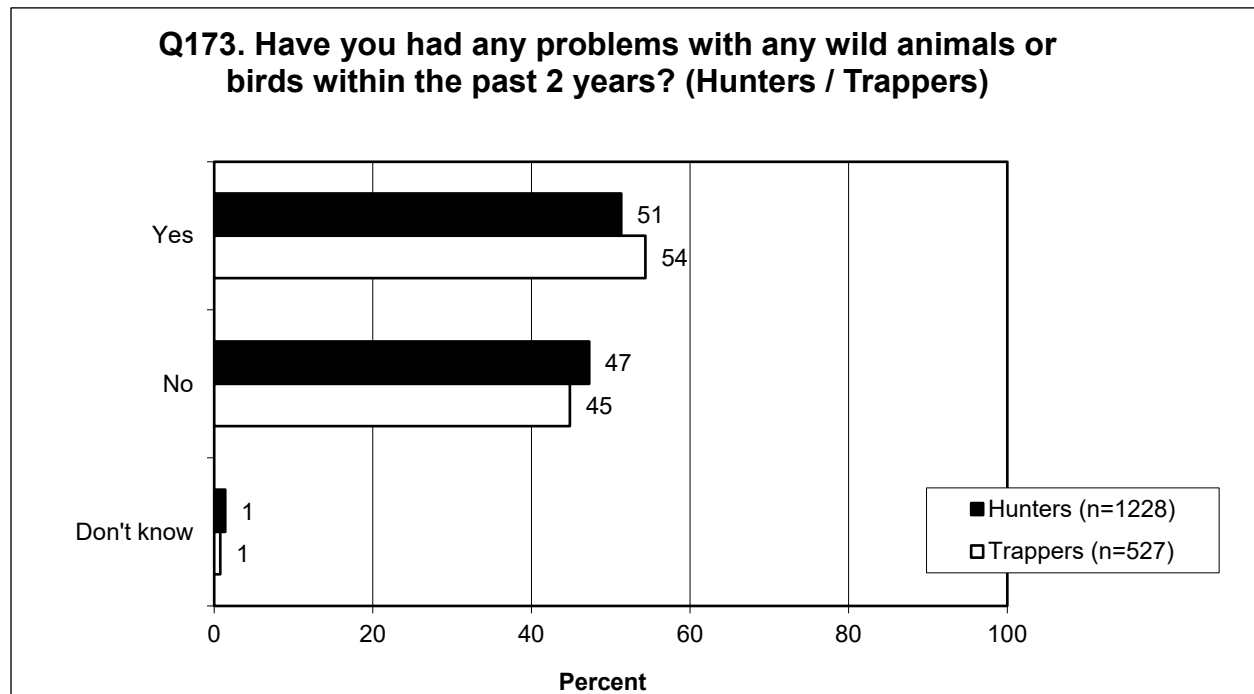


Figure 4.178. Problems With Wild Animals or Birds (Hunters / Trappers)

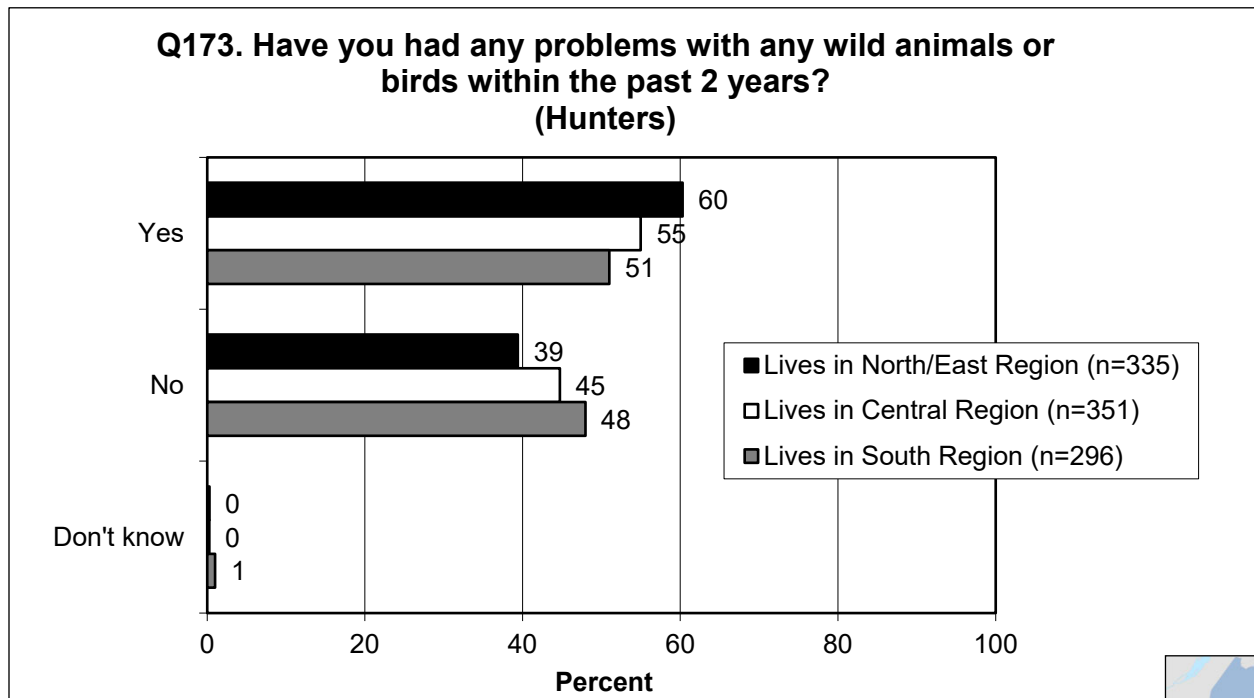


Figure 4.179. Problems With Wild Animals or Birds, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

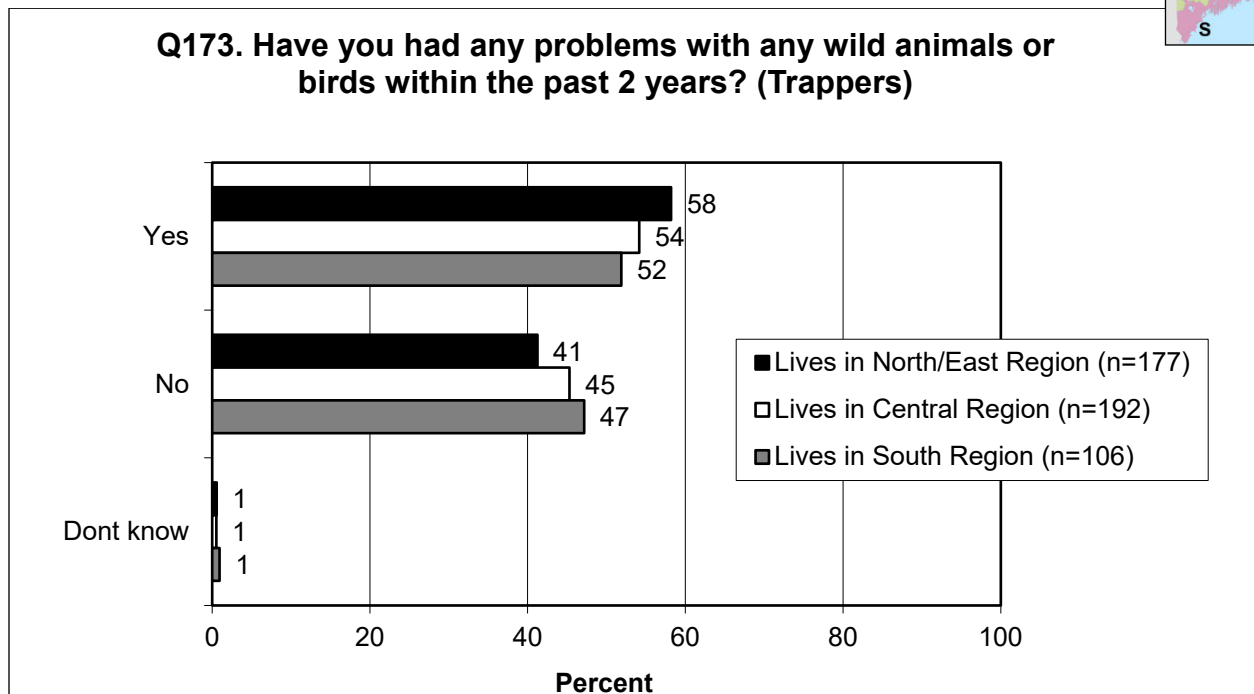
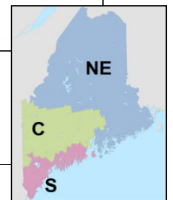


Figure 4.180. Problems With Wild Animals or Birds, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

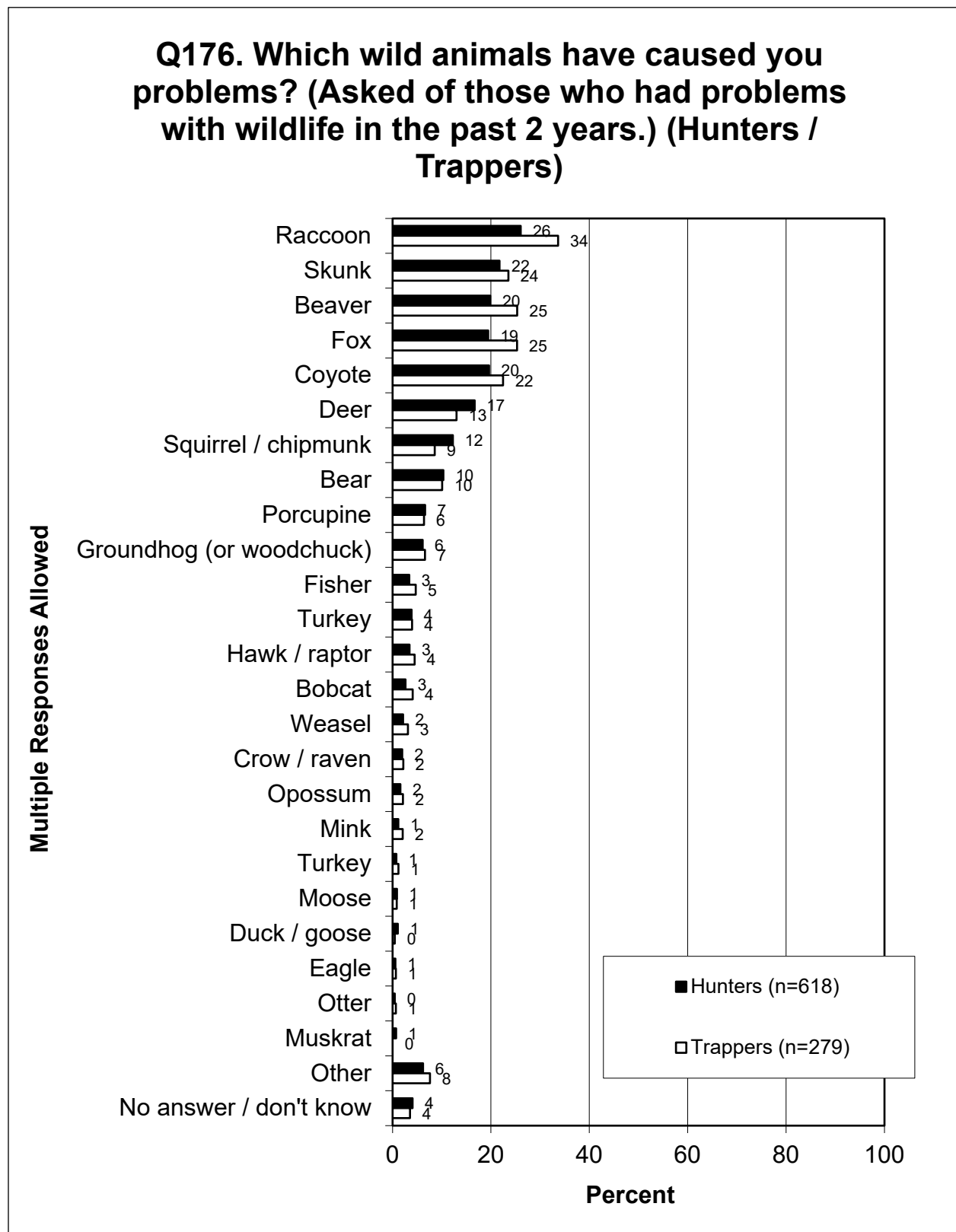


Figure 4.181. Types of Wild Animals or Birds That Caused Problems (Hunters / Trappers)

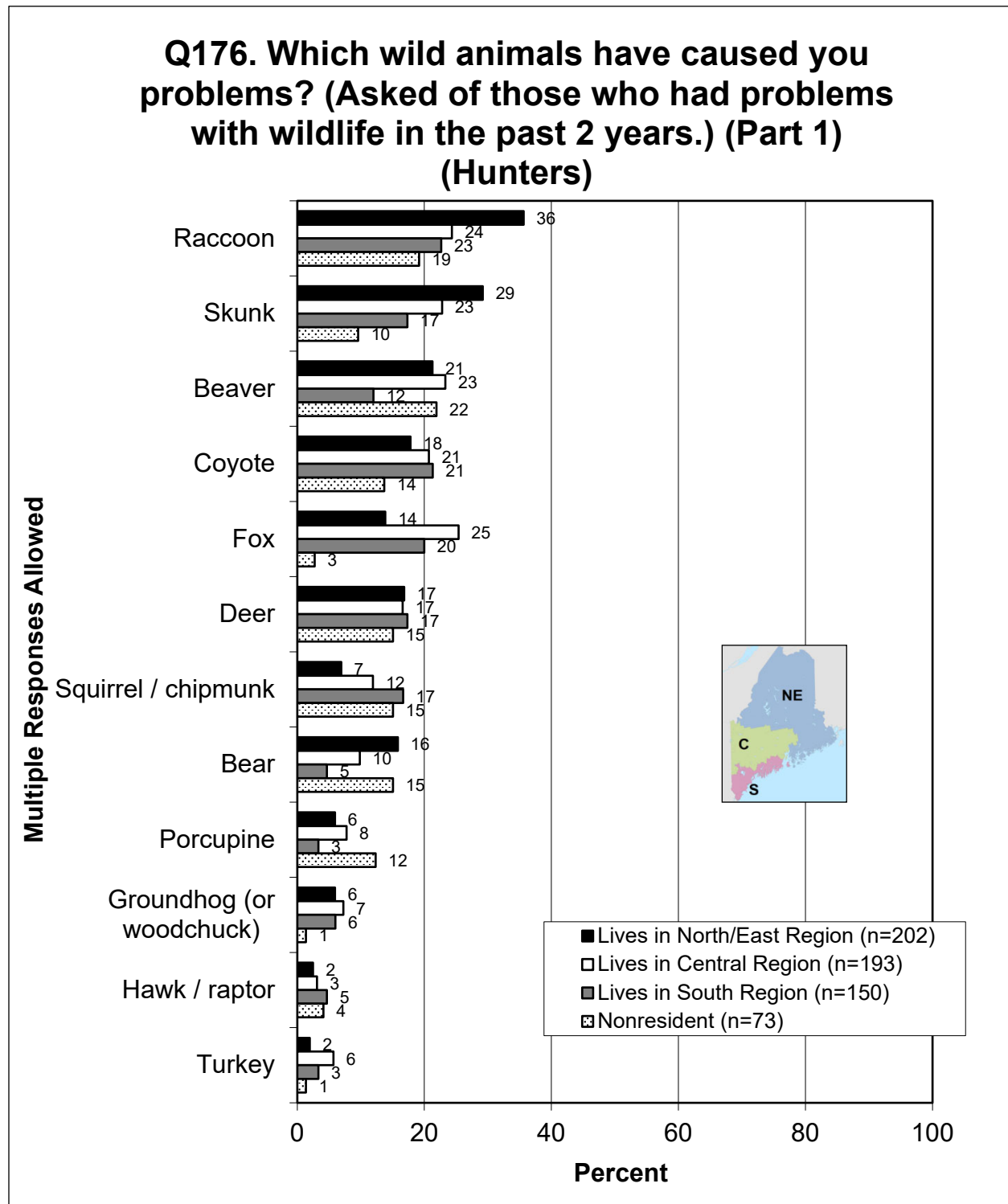


Figure 4.182. Types of Wild Animals or Birds That Caused Problems, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Part 1) (Hunters)

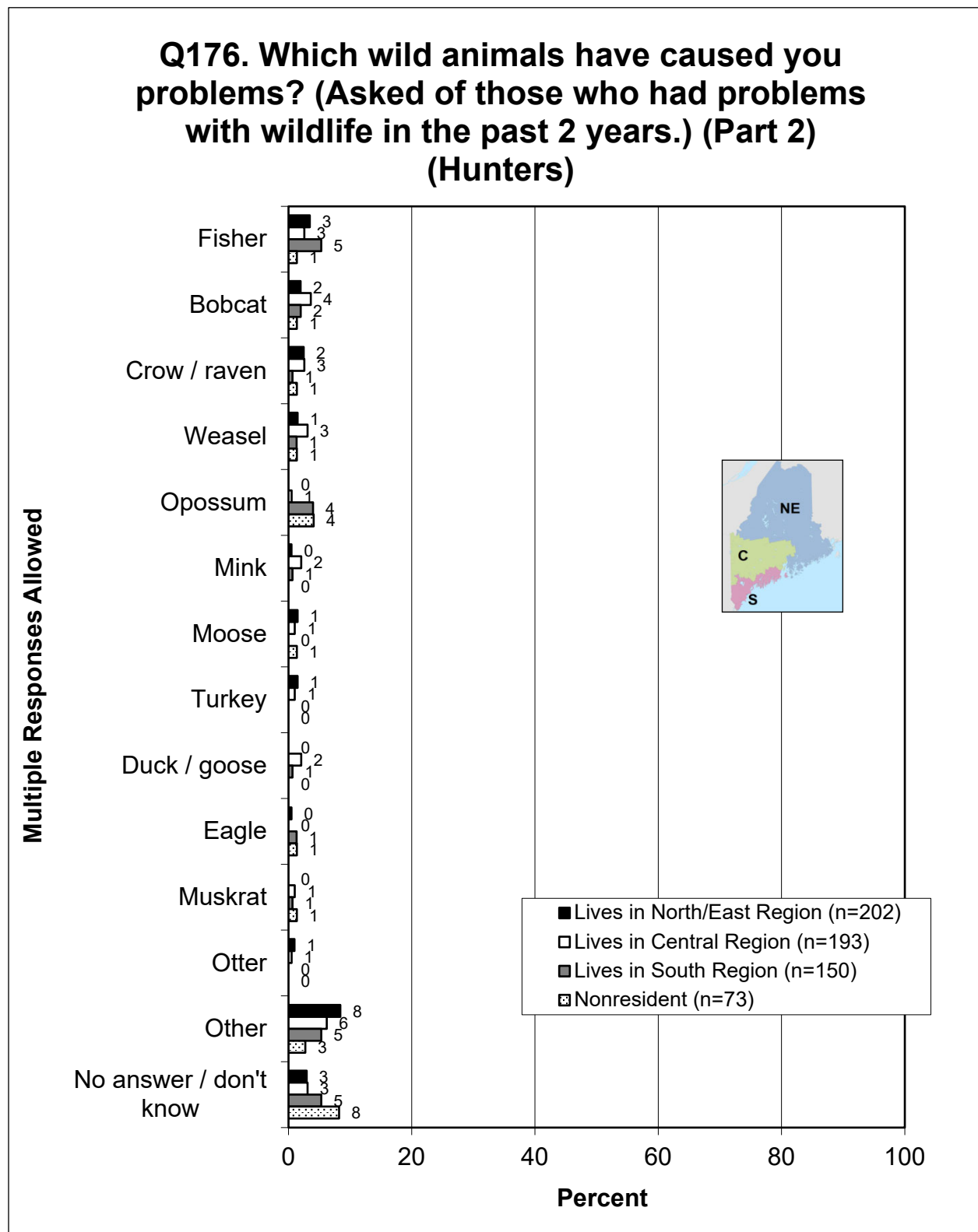


Figure 4.183. Types of Wild Animals or Birds That Caused Problems, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Part 2) (Hunters)

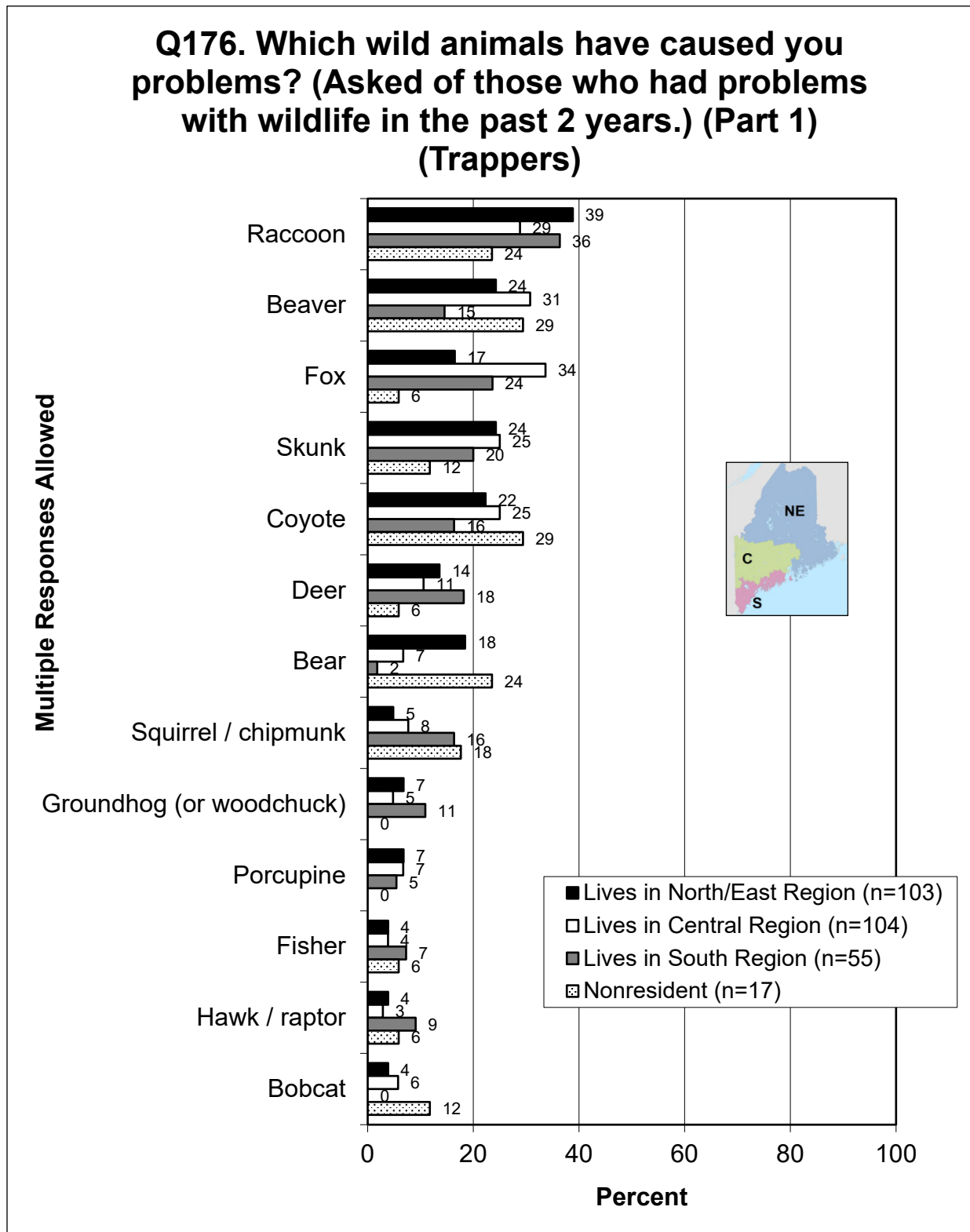


Figure 4.184. Types of Wild Animals or Birds That Caused Problems, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Part 1) (Trappers)

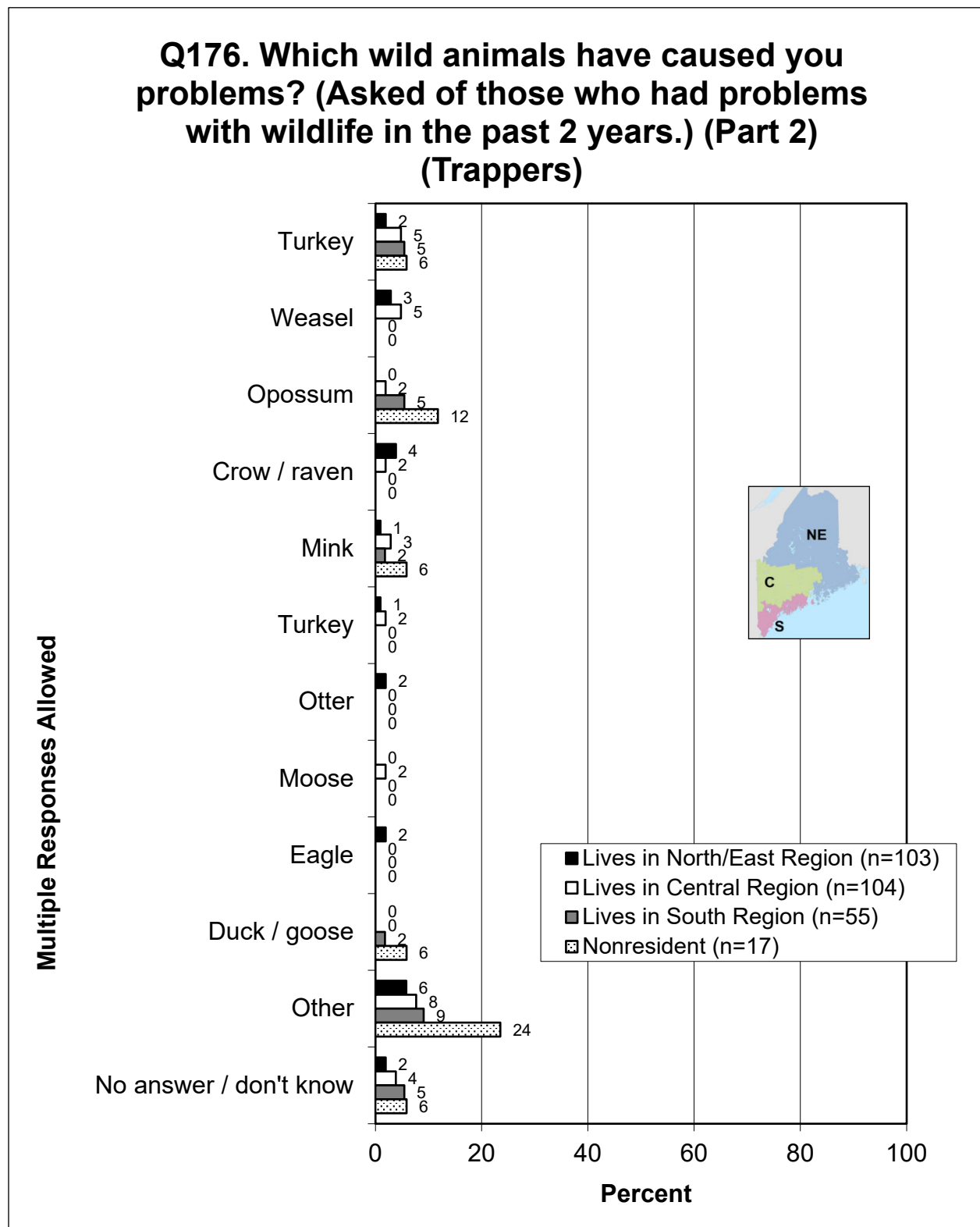


Figure 4.185. Types of Wild Animals or Birds That Caused Problems, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Part 2) (Trappers)

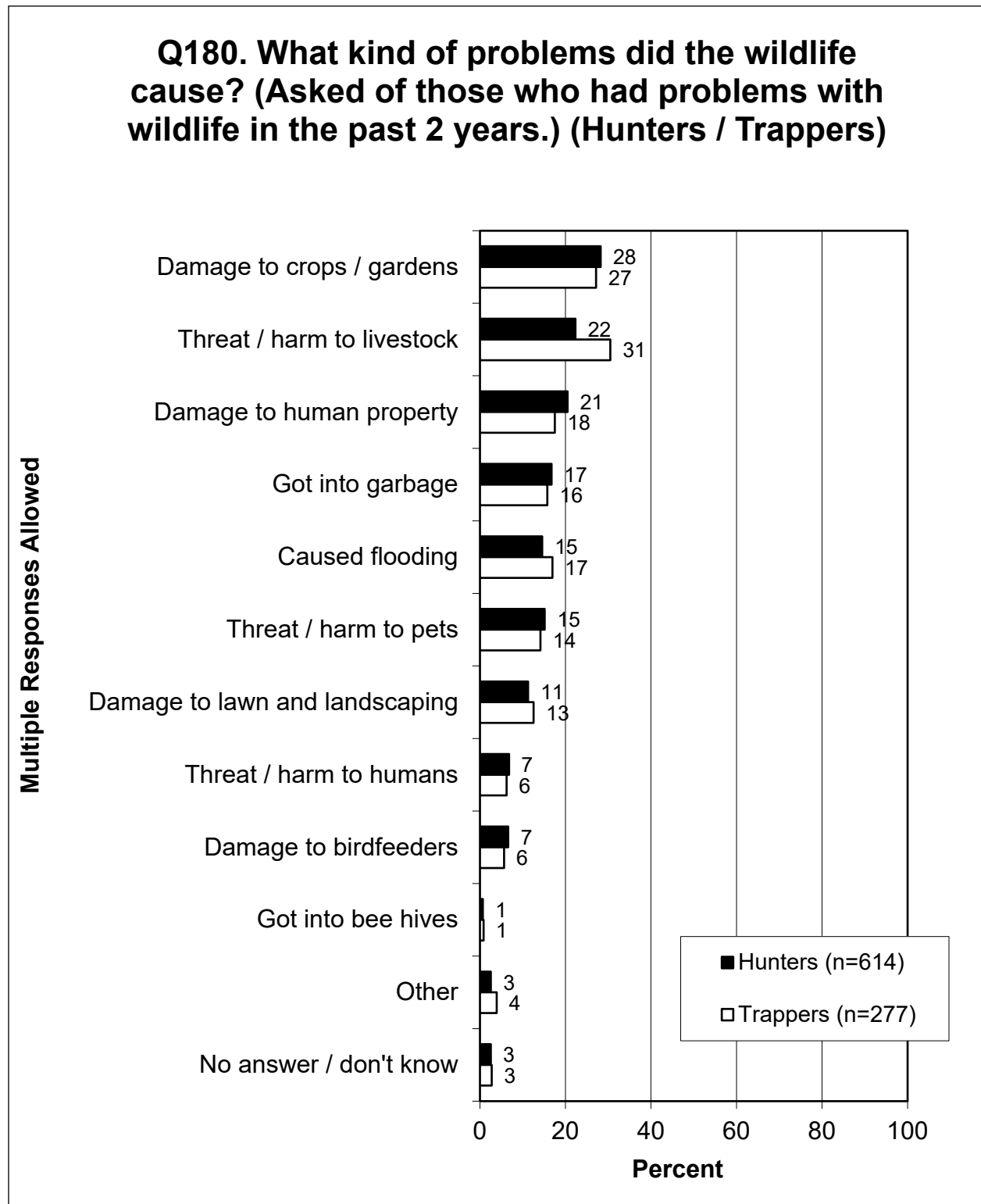


Figure 4.186. Types of Problems Caused by Wild Animals or Birds (Hunters / Trappers)

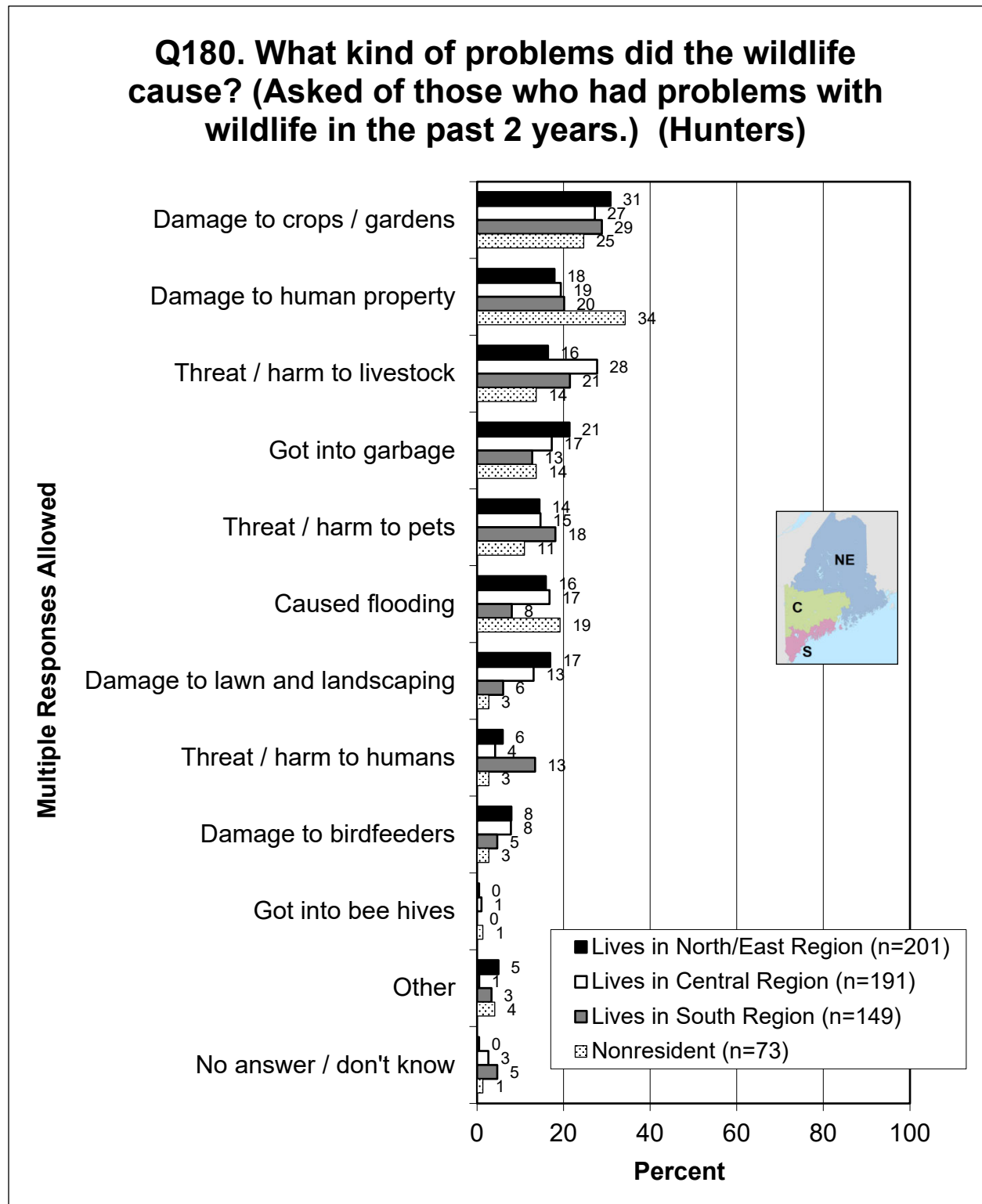


Figure 4.187. Types of Problems Caused by Wild Animals or Birds, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

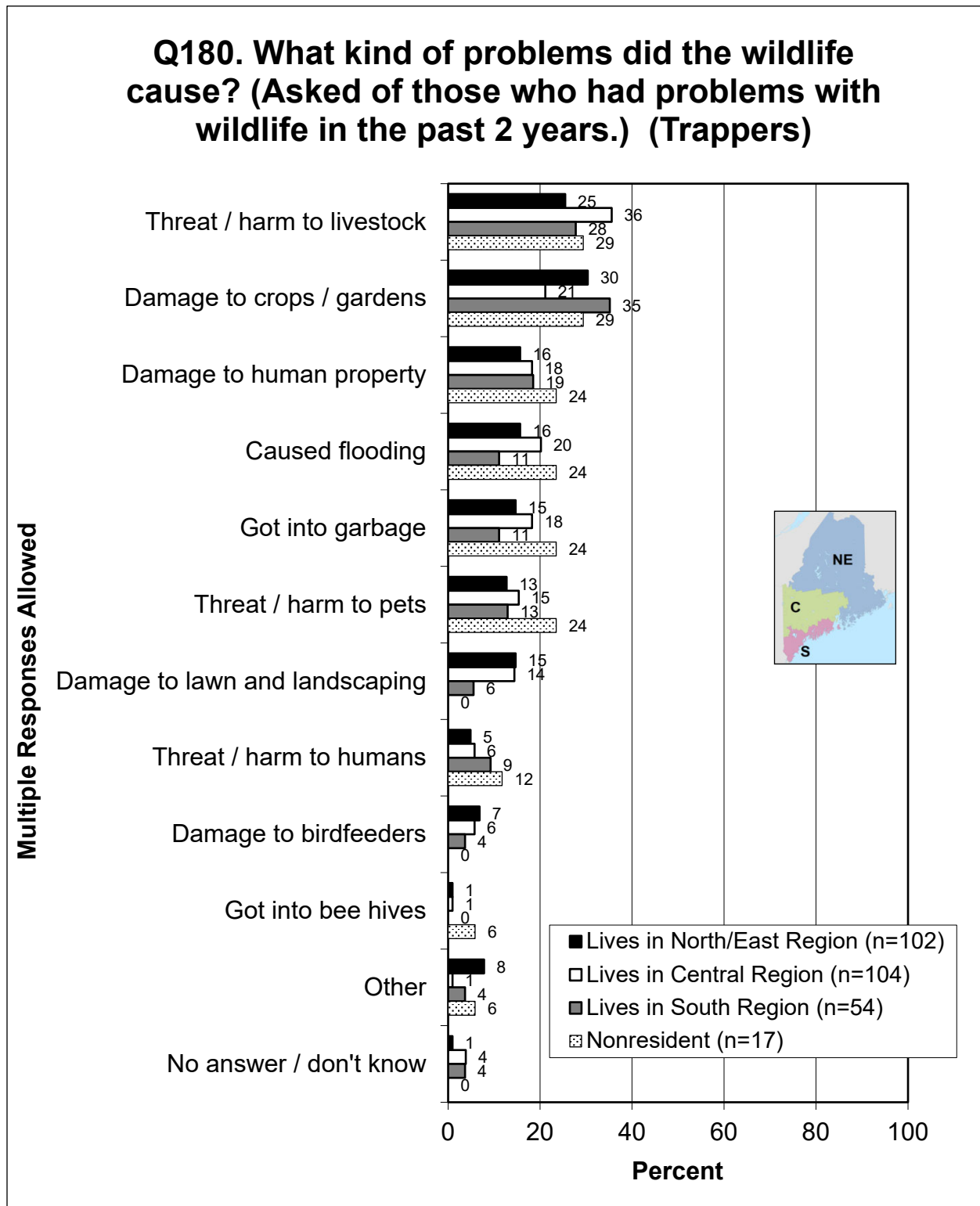


Figure 4.188. Types of Problems Caused by Wild Animals or Birds, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

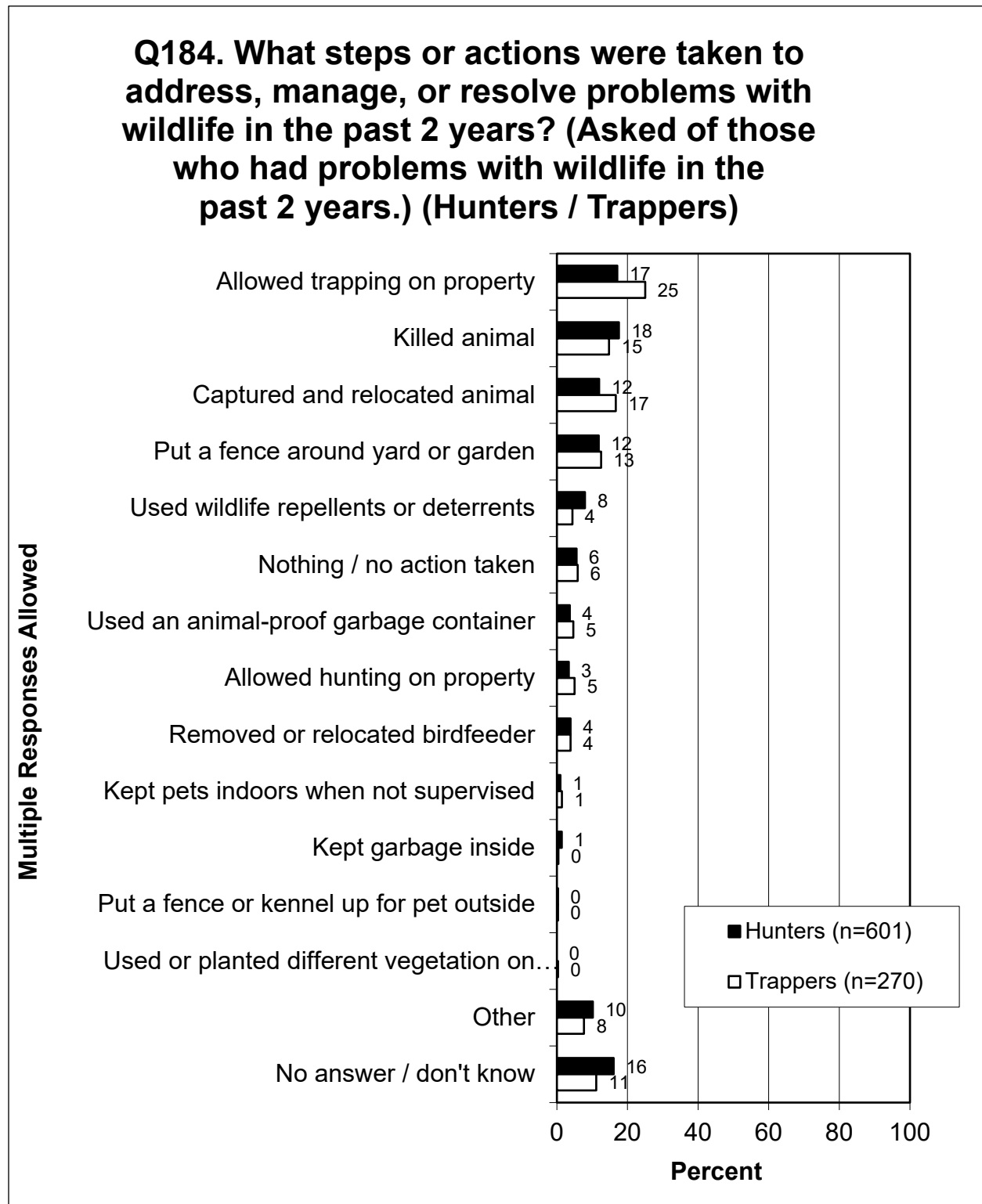


Figure 4.189. Actions Taken to Address Problems Caused by Wild Animals or Birds (Hunters / Trappers)

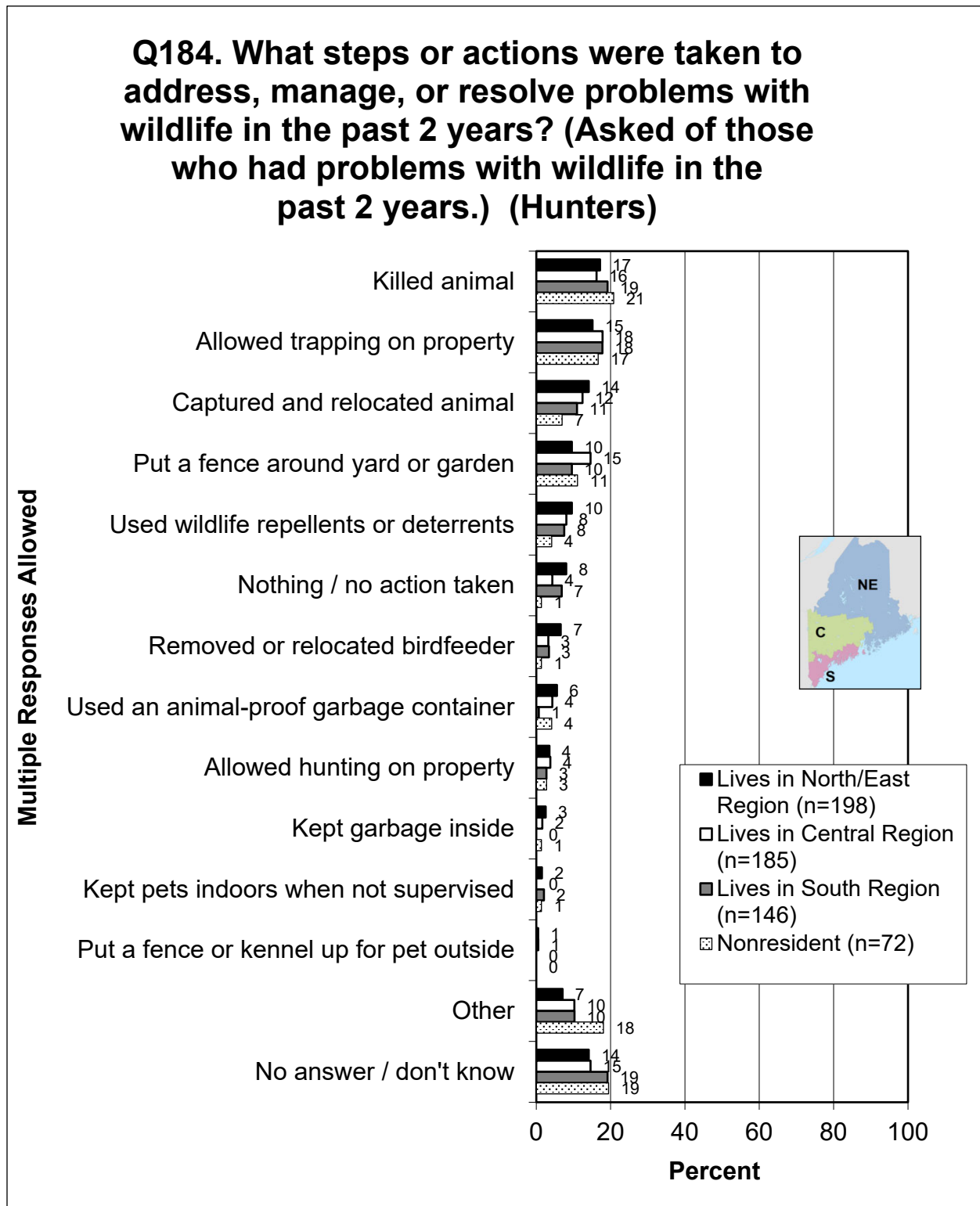


Figure 4.190. Actions Taken to Address Problems Caused by Wild Animals or Birds, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

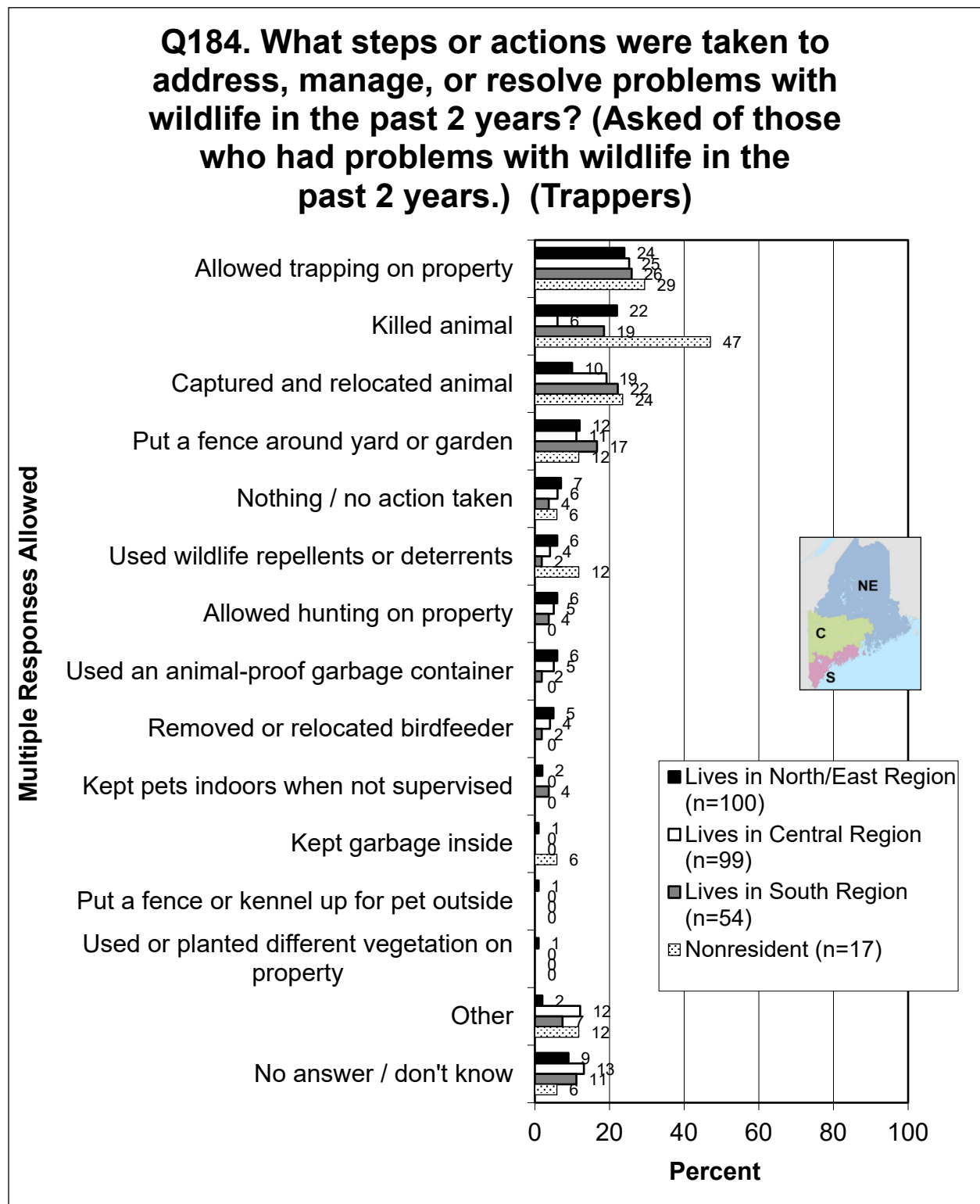


Figure 4.191. Actions Taken to Address Problems Caused by Wild Animals or Birds, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

The overwhelming majority of hunters (95%) and trappers (98%) handle the wildlife problems themselves, choosing not to hire anyone to help resolve the problem (Figure 4.192). There is little difference among the regions on this question (Figures 4.193 and 4.194). Half of hunters who did hire someone to help resolve the problem indicated that information about non-lethal ways to address the problem was offered (Figure 4.195); the sample is too small on this question for results among trappers or for regional results to be shown.

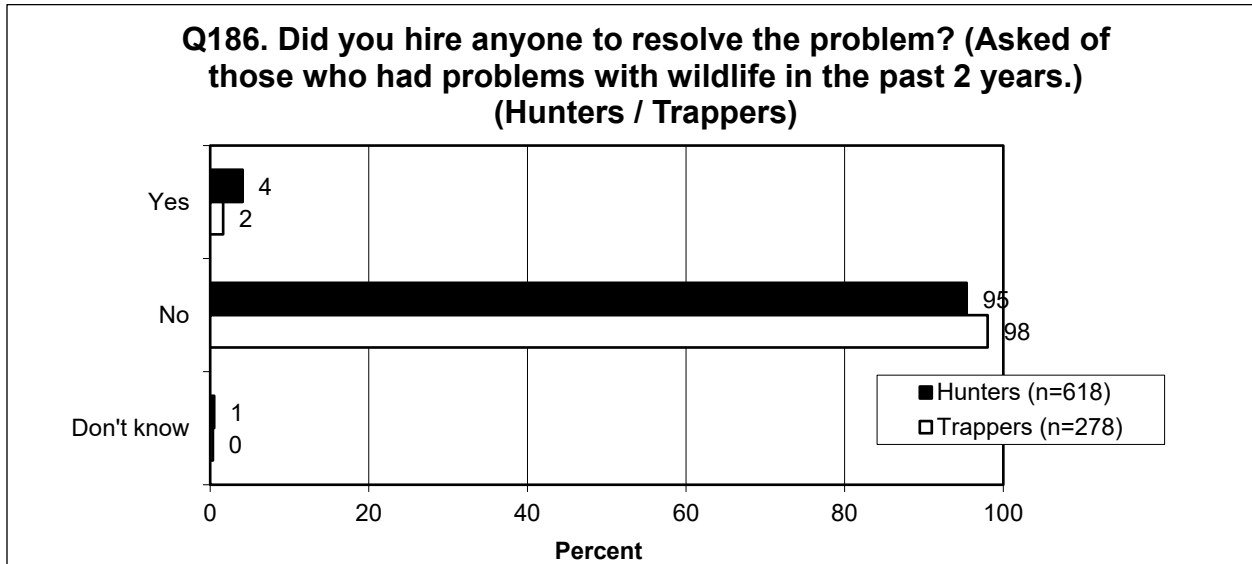


Figure 4.192. Hiring Anyone to Resolve Wildlife Problems (Hunters / Trappers)

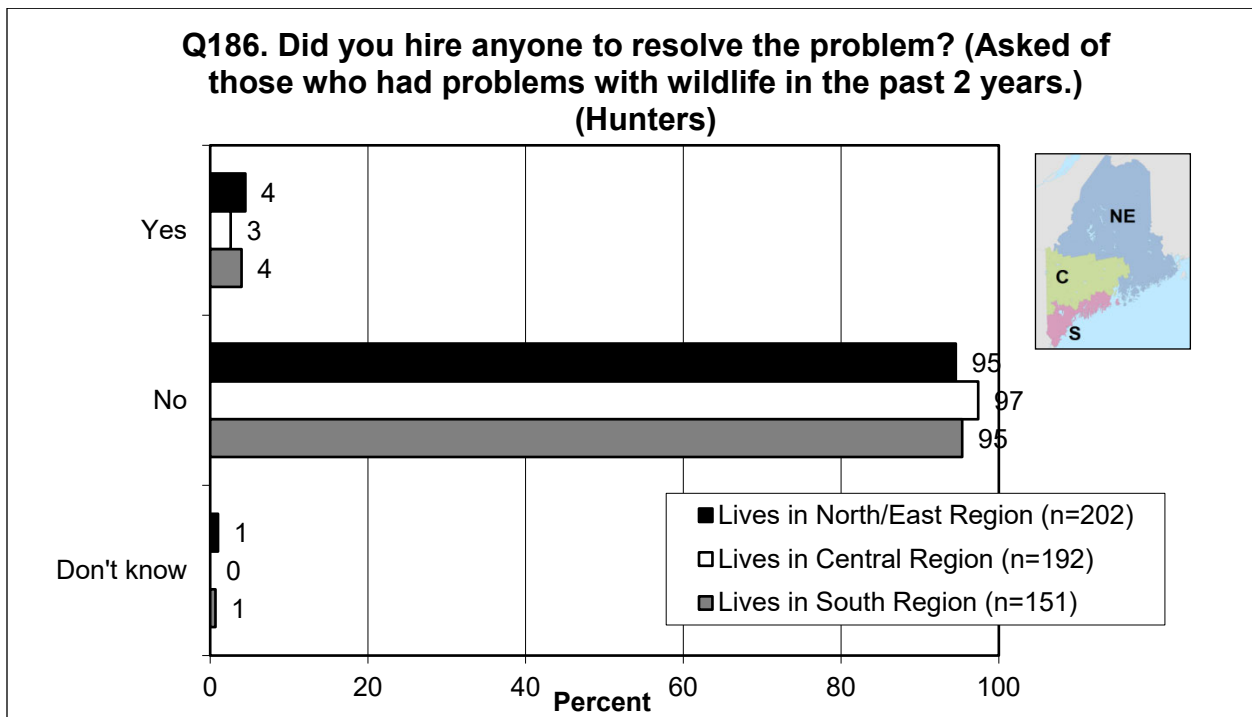


Figure 4.193. Hiring Anyone to Resolve Wildlife Problems, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

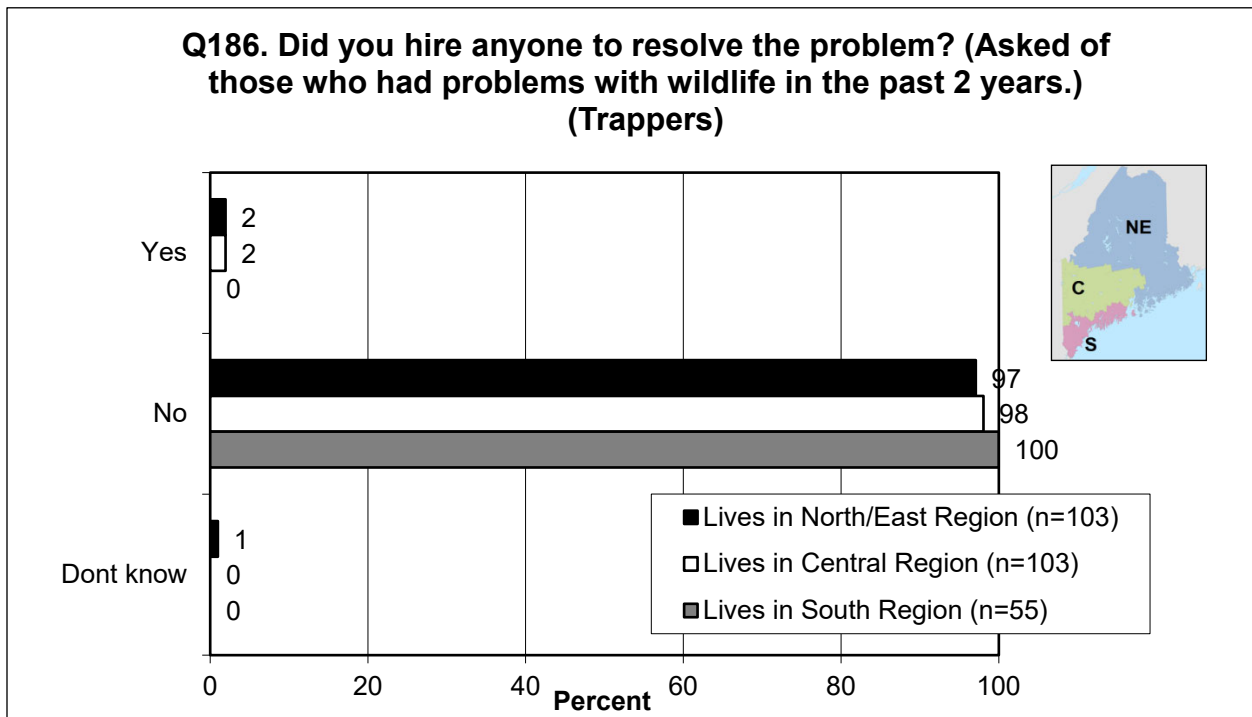


Figure 4.194. Hiring Anyone to Resolve Wildlife Problems, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

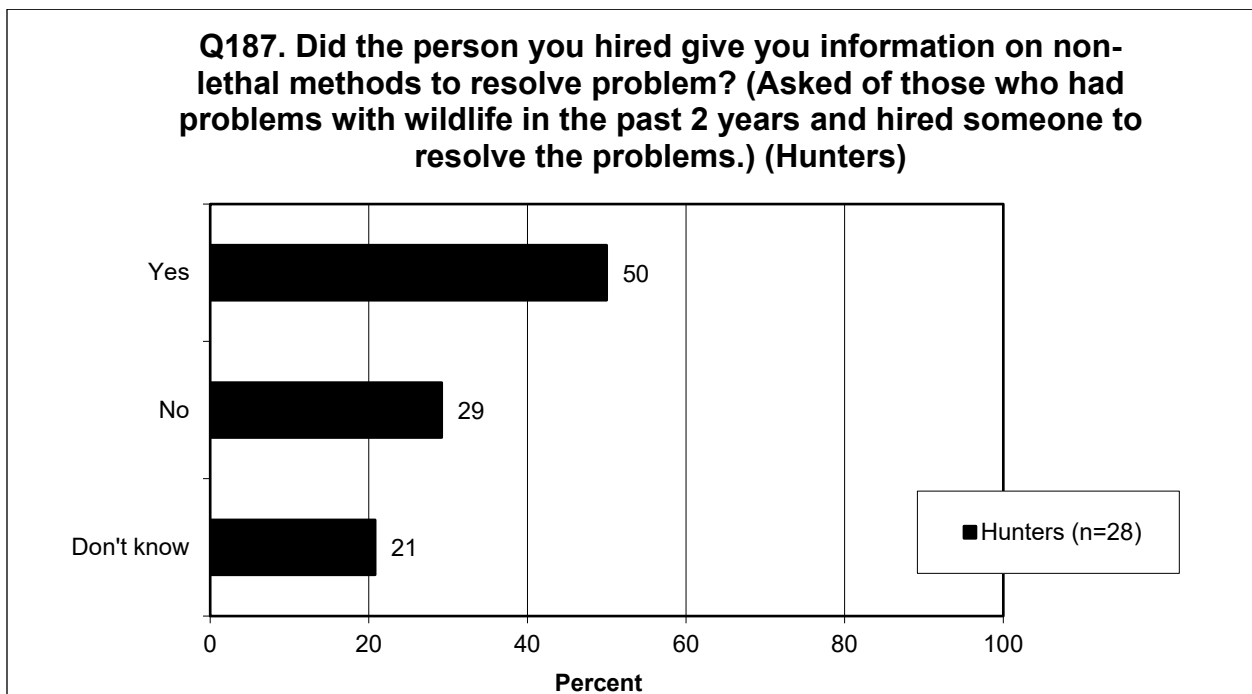


Figure 4.195. Information on Non-Lethal Methods (Hunters)

The final question in this section found overwhelming support for trapping as a way to resolve problems with wildlife: 92% of hunters and 98% of trappers support (Figure 4.196). Support is consistently high across all of the regions among hunters (Figure 4.197) and trappers (Figure 4.198).

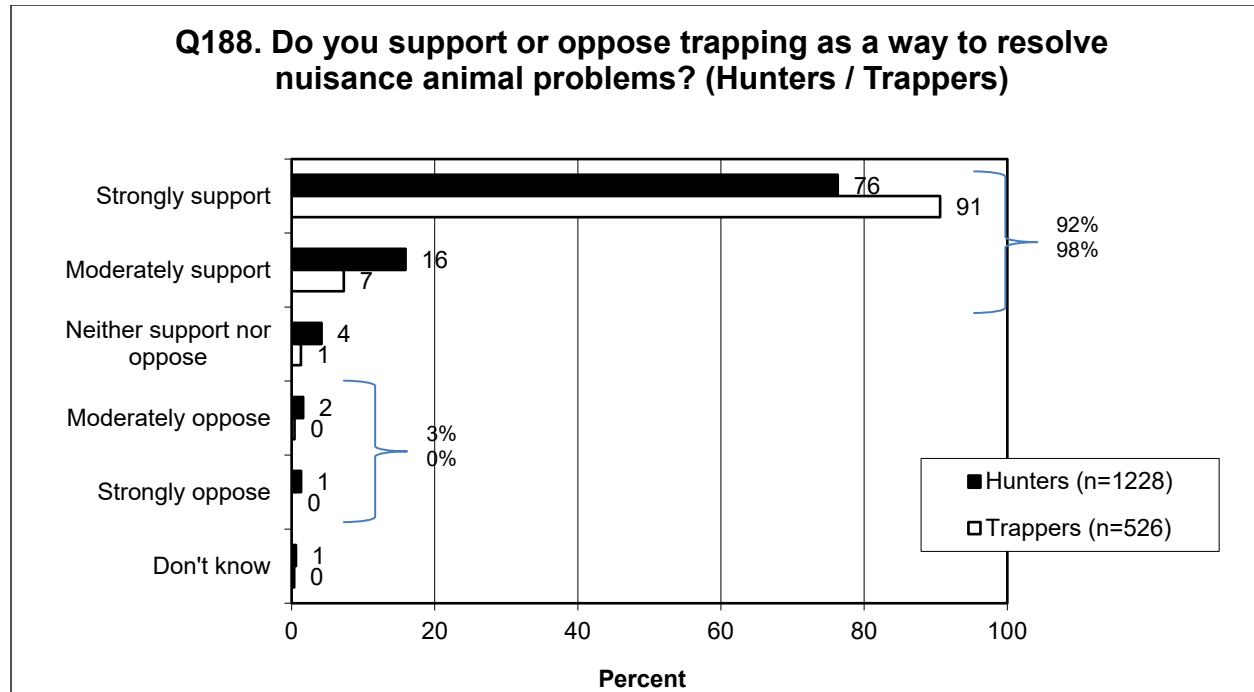


Figure 4.196. Support for or Opposition to Trapping as a Way to Resolve Wildlife Problems (Hunters / Trappers)

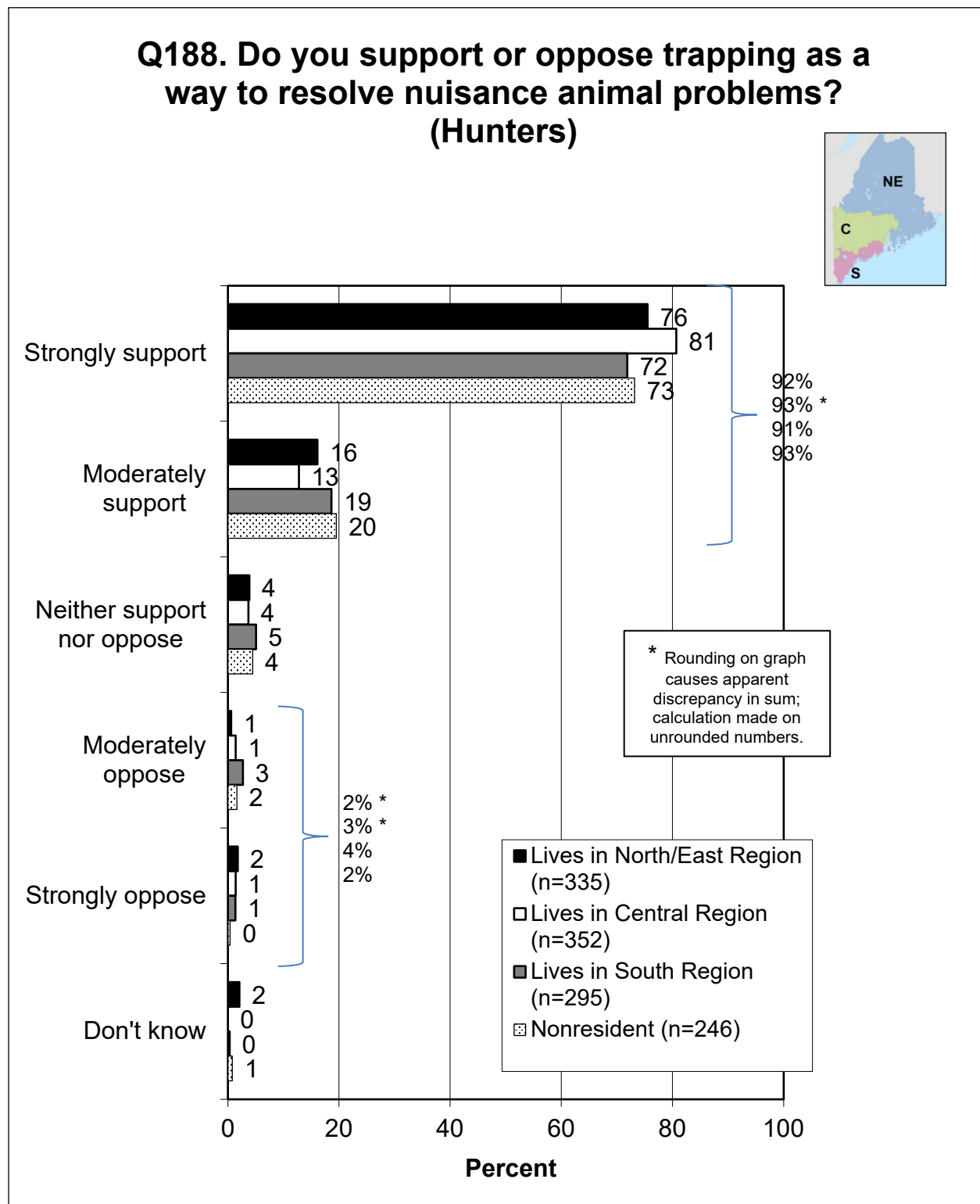


Figure 4.197. Support for or Opposition to Trapping as a Way to Resolve Wildlife Problems, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

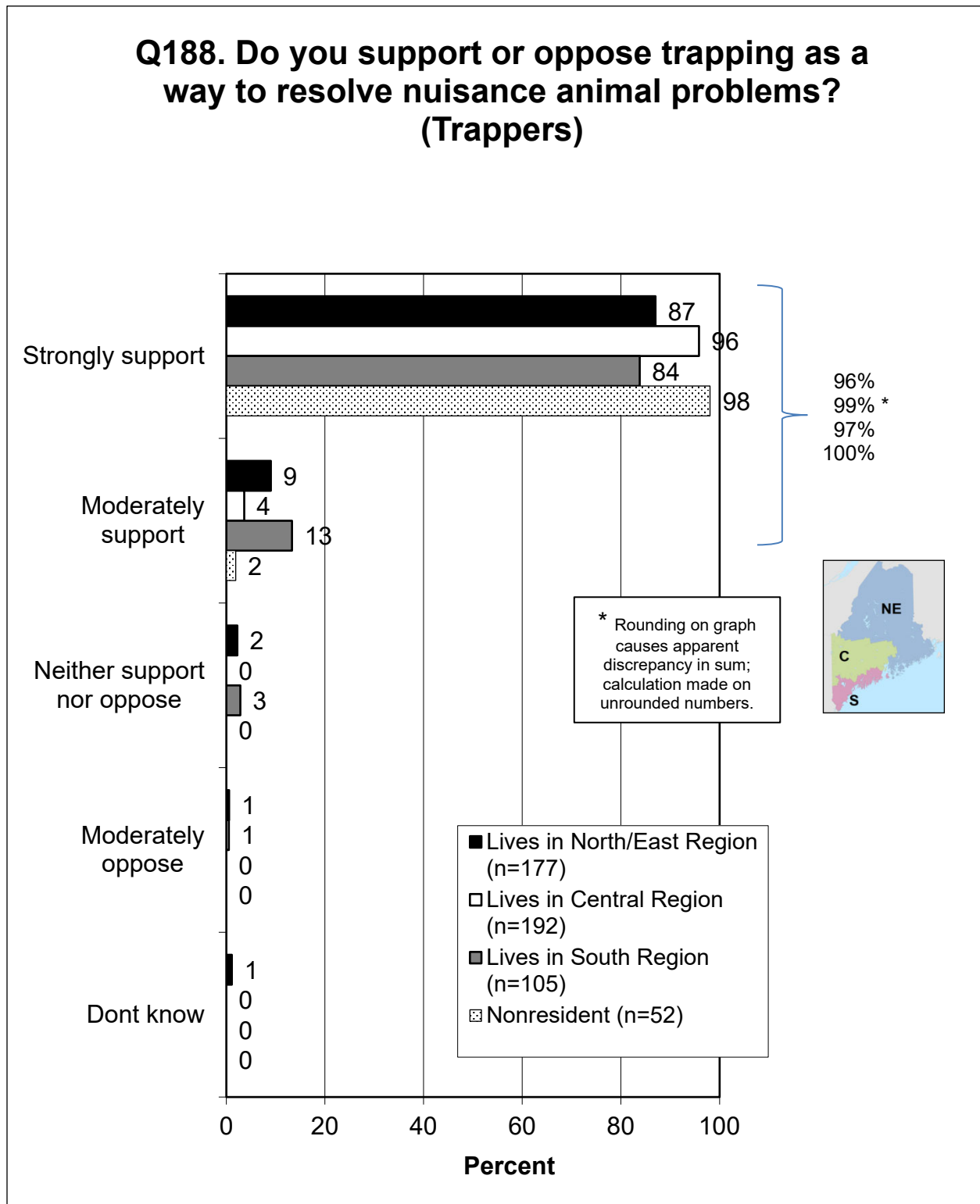


Figure 4.198. Support for or Opposition to Trapping as a Way to Resolve Wildlife Problems, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

PERCEPTIONS AND RATINGS OF THE MAINE DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

Half of hunters (50%) and a bit more than half of trappers (60%) give a rating in the top half of the scale, when asked to rate the Department at regulating and managing trapping in Maine (Figure 4.199). However, 14% of hunters and 26% of trappers gave a fair rating, while another 5% of hunters and 12% of trappers gave a poor rating. Note that the full name of the Department was used in the question.

Regionally, hunters from the Central and North/East Regions have the highest percentages giving a rating in the bottom half of the scale (fair or poor) (Figure 4.200). Likewise, trappers from these same two regions have the highest percentages giving these low ratings (Figure 4.201).

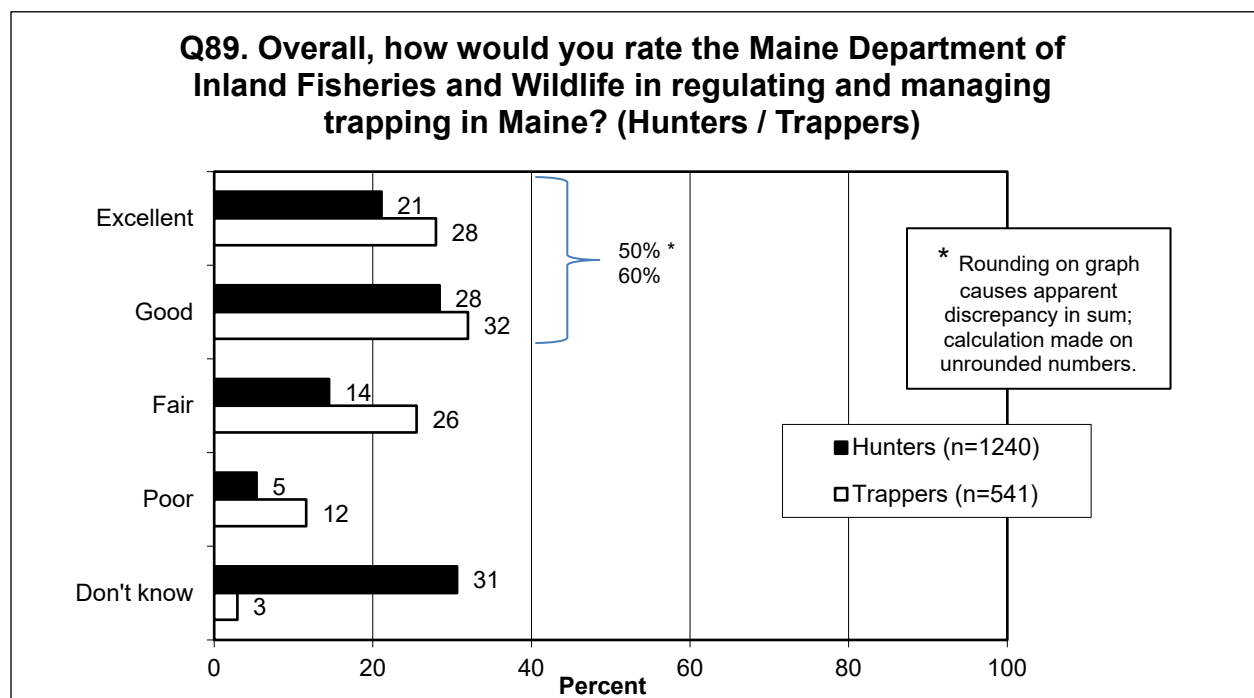


Figure 4.199. Ratings of the Department at Regulating and Managing Trapping (Hunters / Trappers)

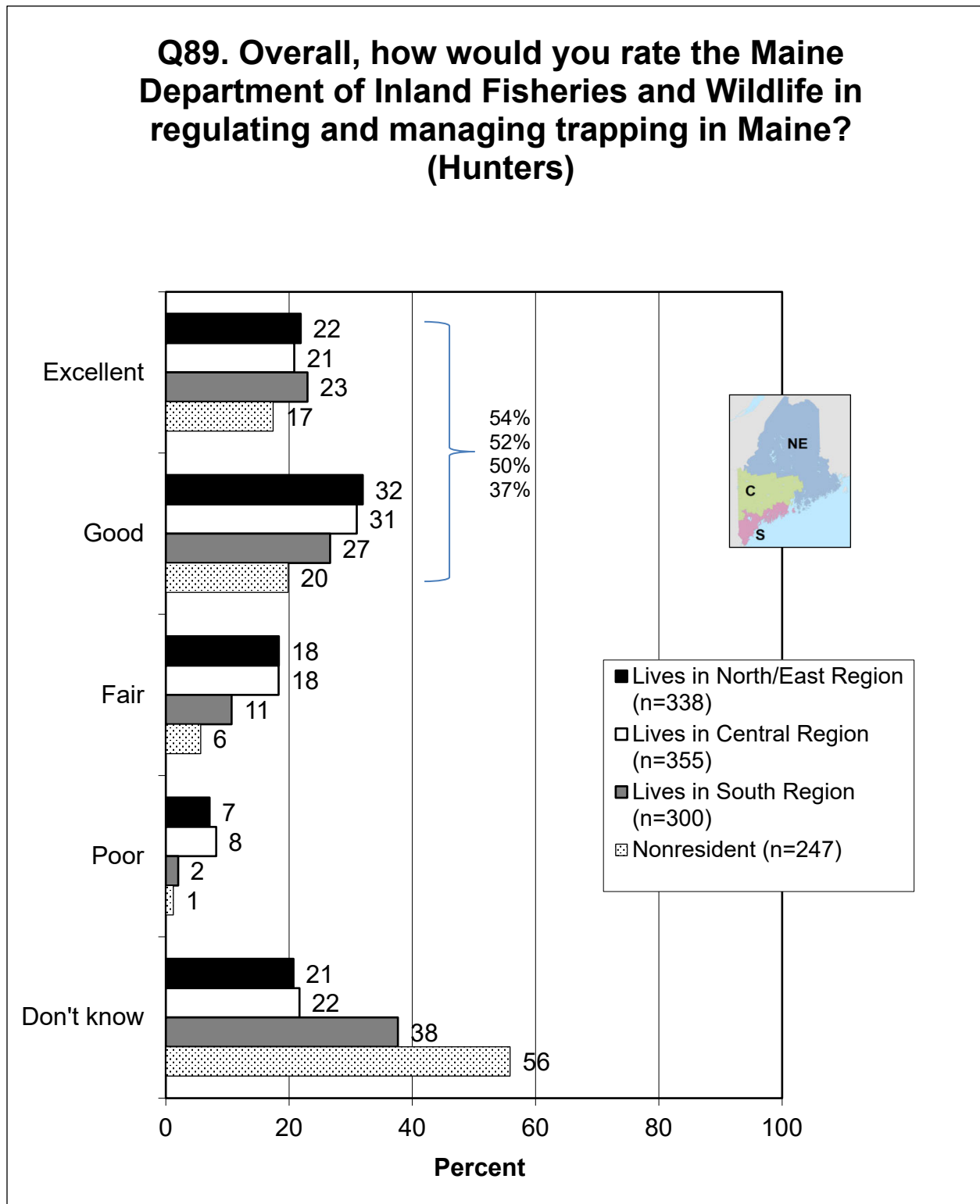


Figure 4.200. Ratings of the Department at Regulating and Managing Trapping, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

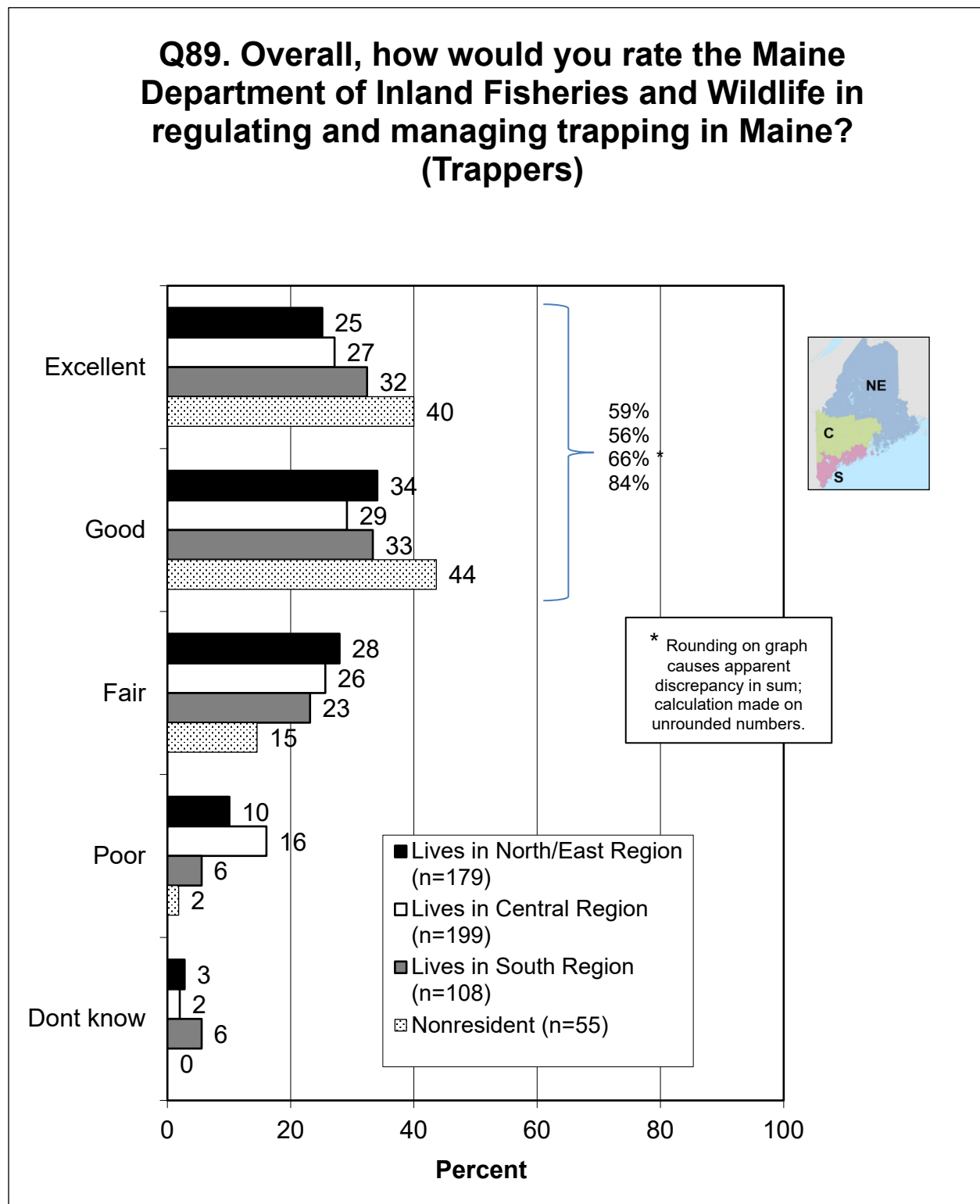


Figure 4.201. Ratings of the Department at Regulating and Managing Trapping, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

The following demographic data were gathered in the survey primarily for crosstabulations and demographic analyses:

- Gender (Figures 4.202 through 4.204).
- Age (Figures 4.205 through 4.207).
- Ethnic background (Figures 4.208 through 4.210).
- Education level (Figures 4.211 through 4.213).
- Children in the household (Figures 4.214 through 4.216).
- Maine residency (Figure 4.217).
- Residential area (i.e., urban-rural continuum) (Figures 4.218 through 4.220).

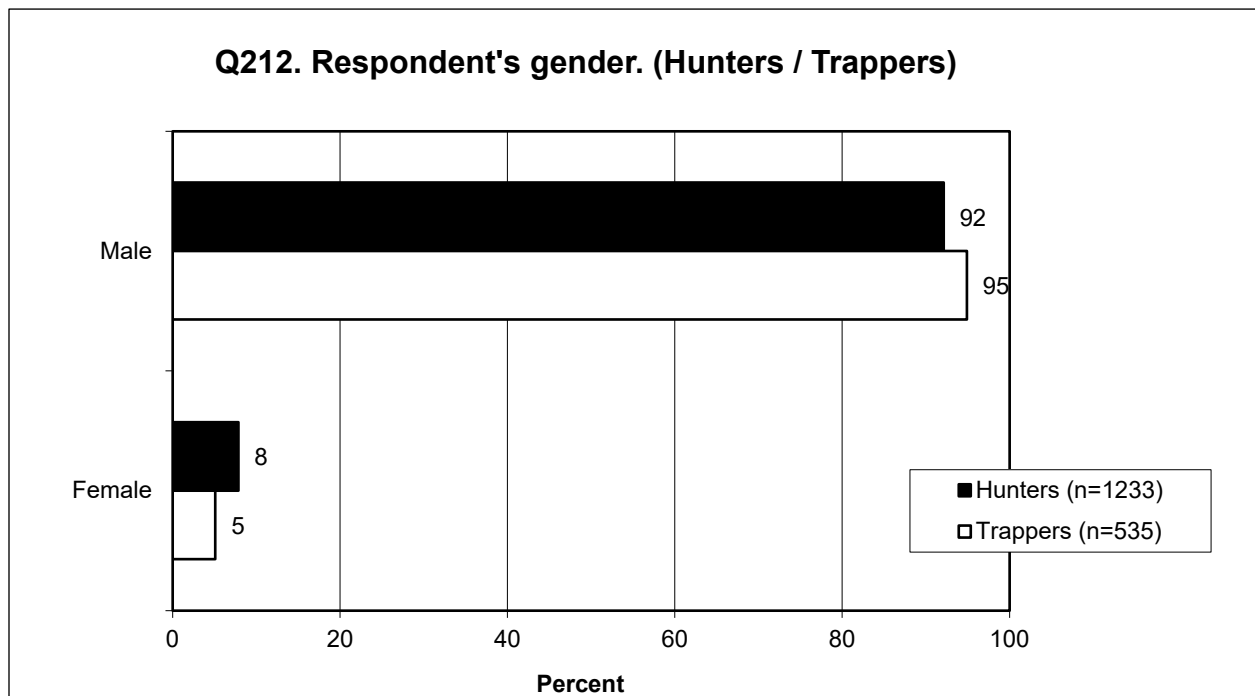


Figure 4.202. Gender of Respondents (Hunters / Trappers)

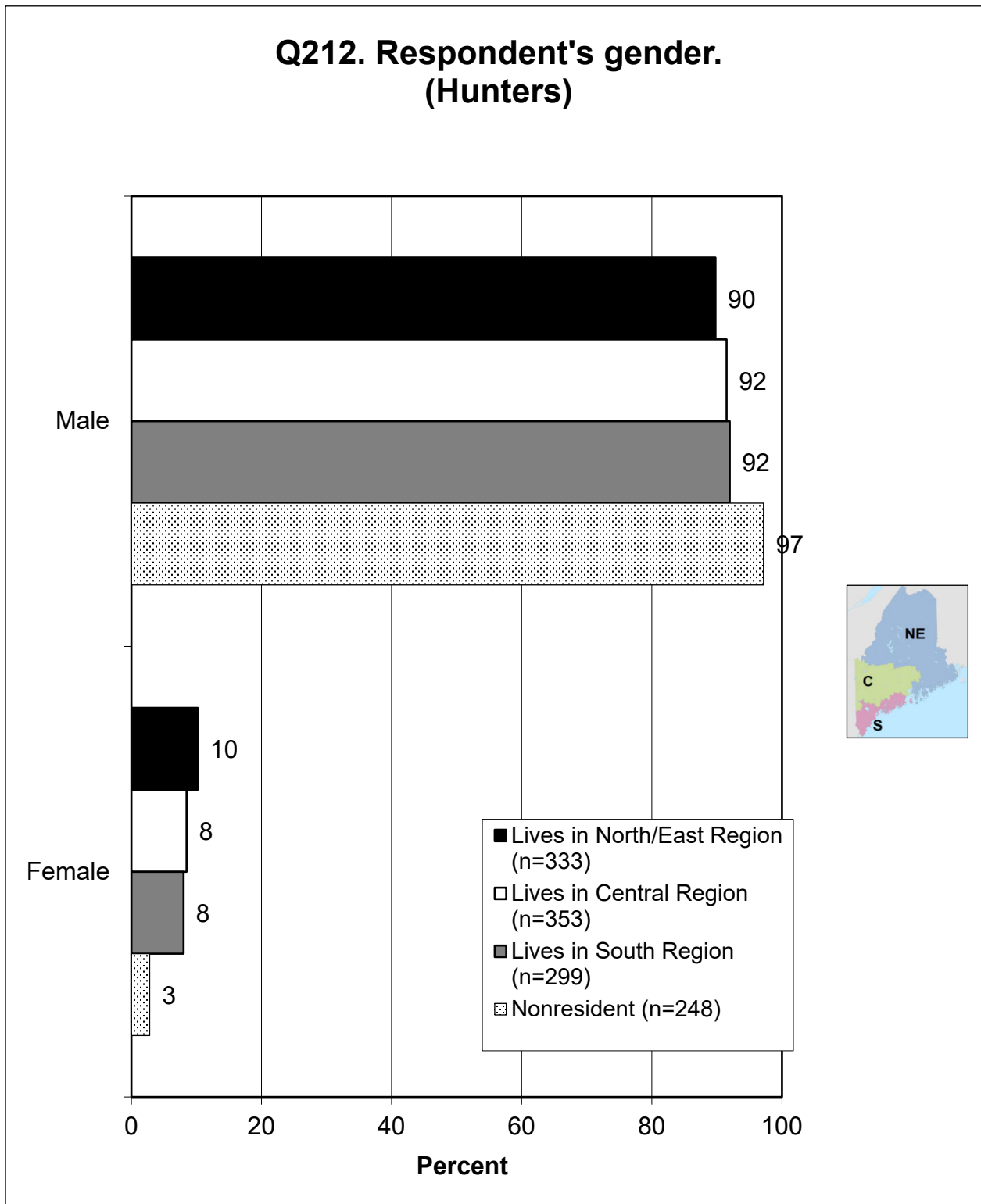


Figure 4.203. Gender of Respondents, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

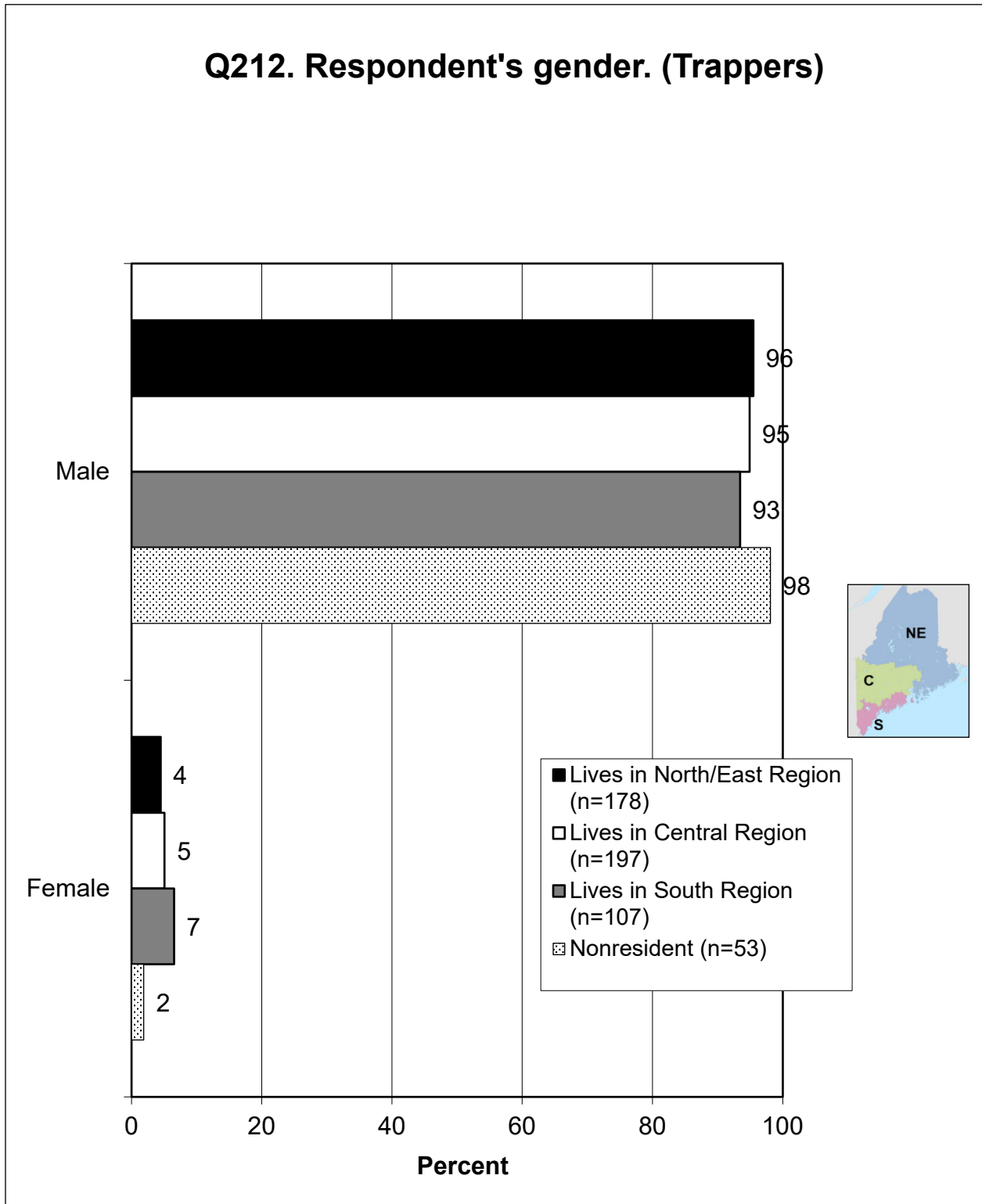


Figure 4.204. Gender of Respondents, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

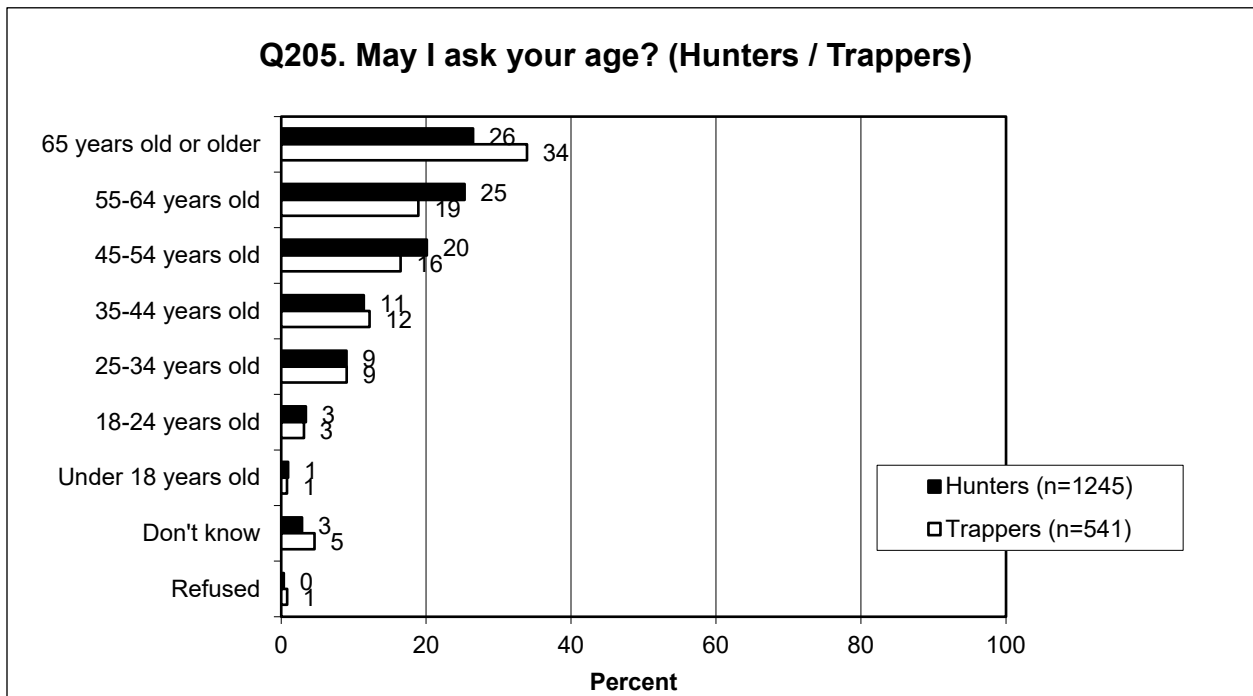


Figure 4.205. Age of Respondents (Hunters / Trappers)

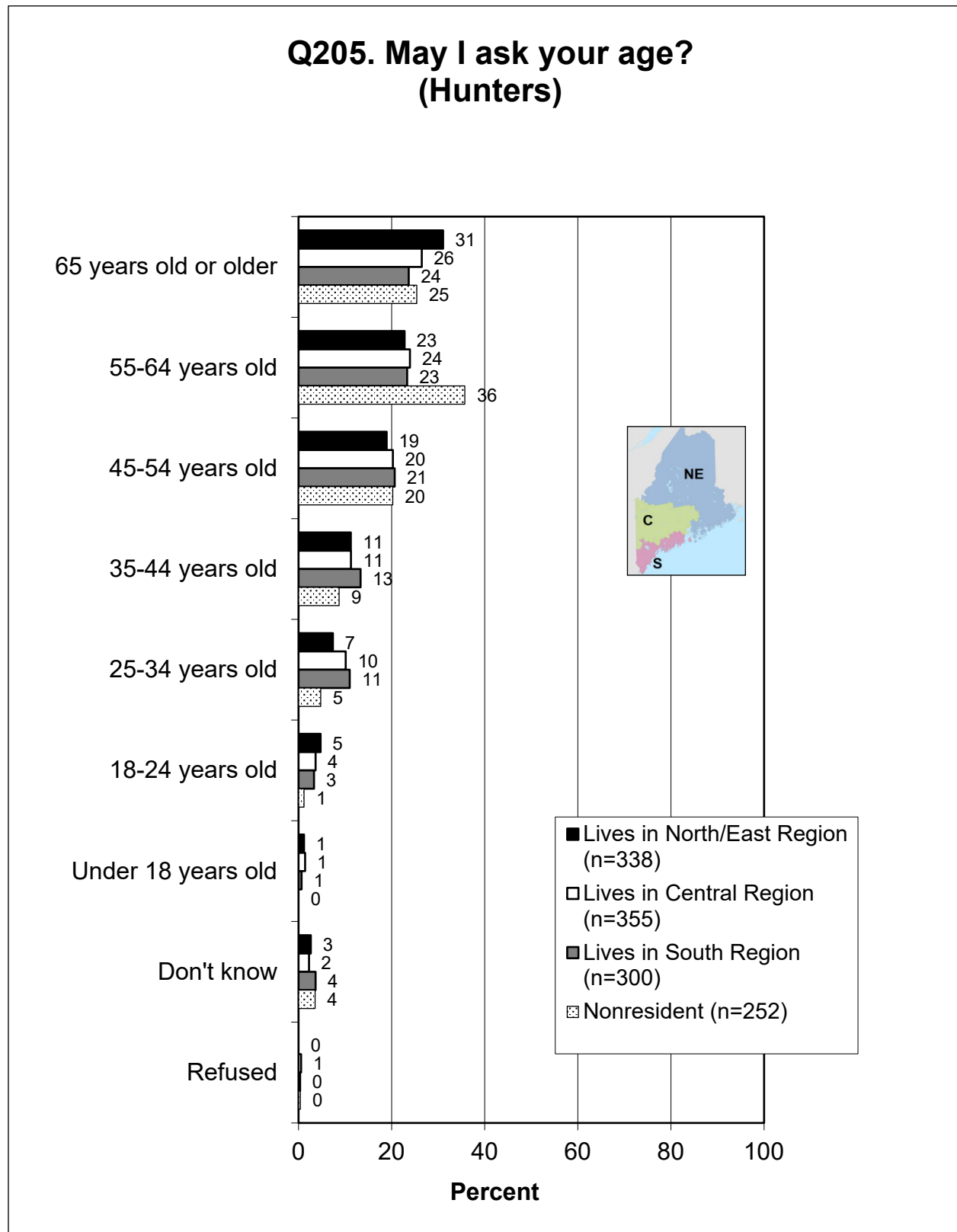


Figure 4.206. Age of Respondents, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

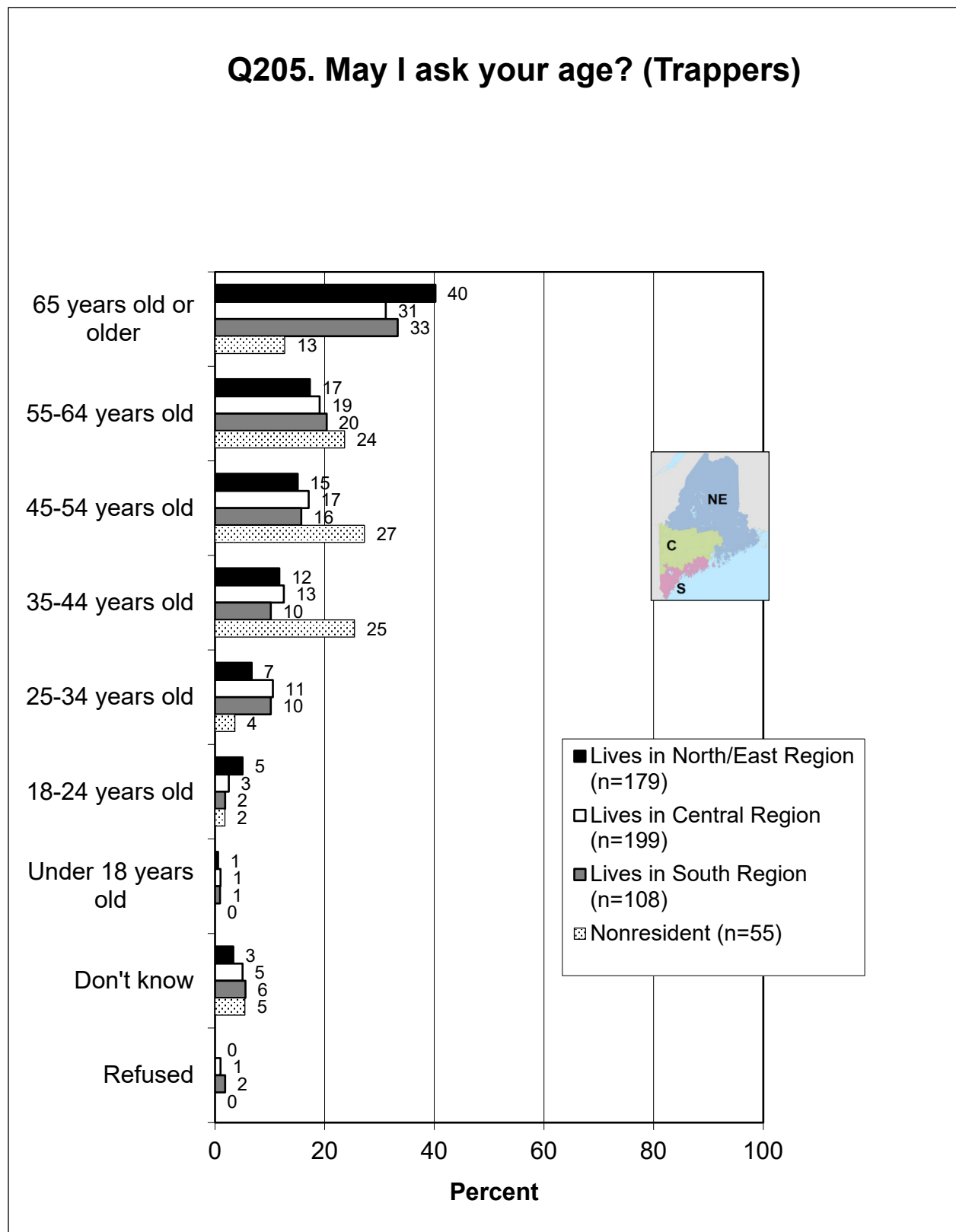


Figure 4.207. Age of Respondents, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

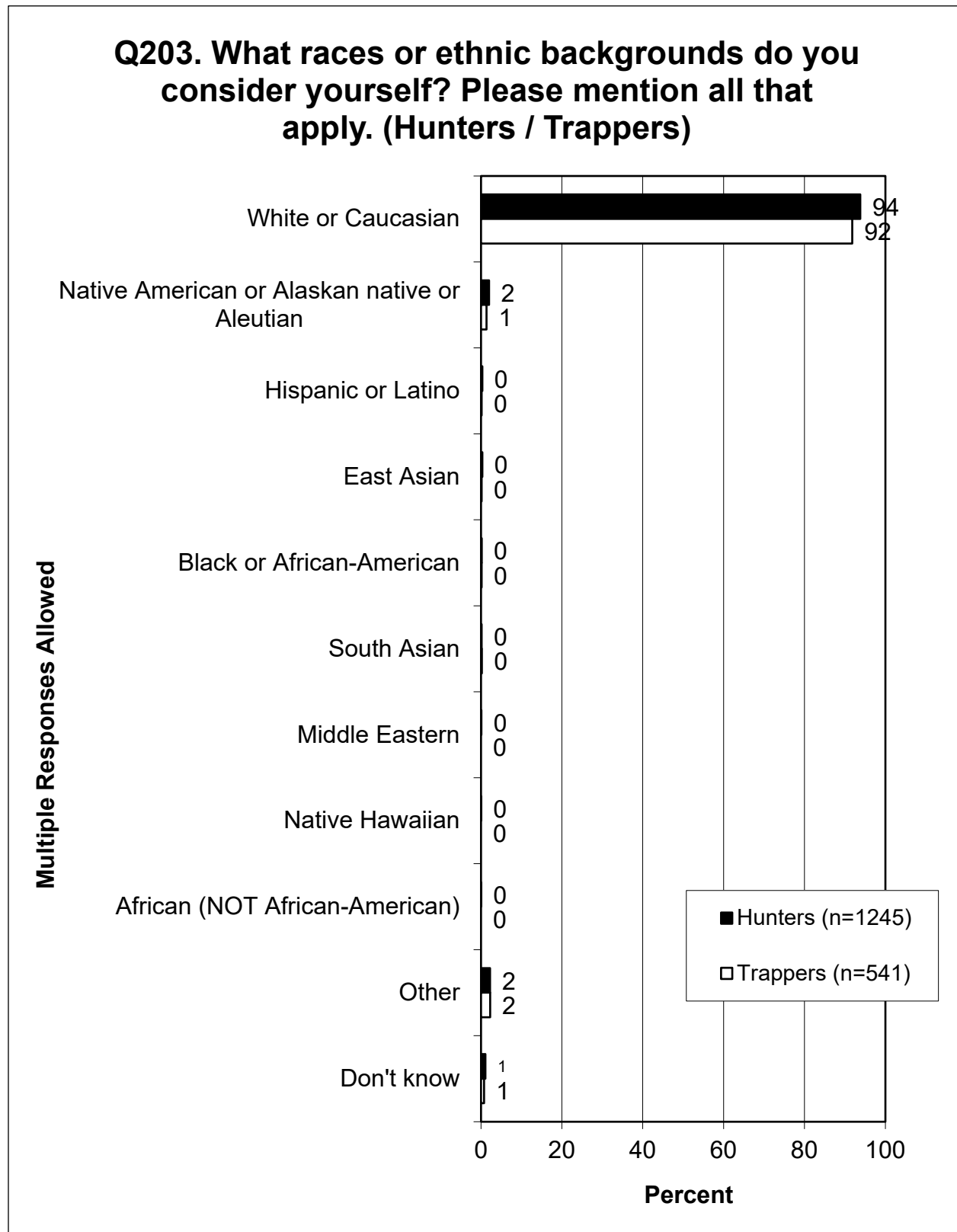


Figure 4.208. Ethnic Background of Respondents (Hunters / Trappers)

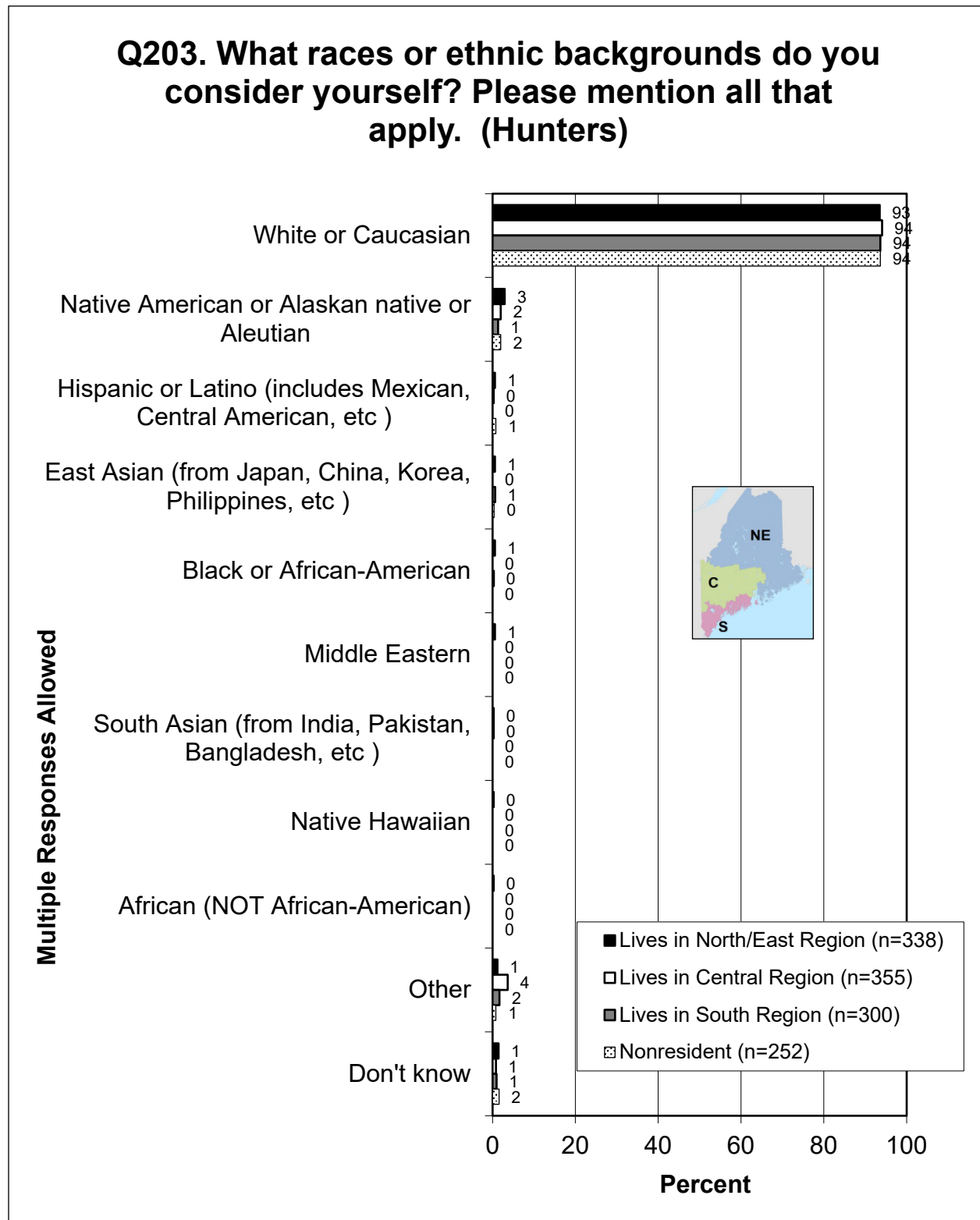


Figure 4.209. Ethnic Background of Respondents, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

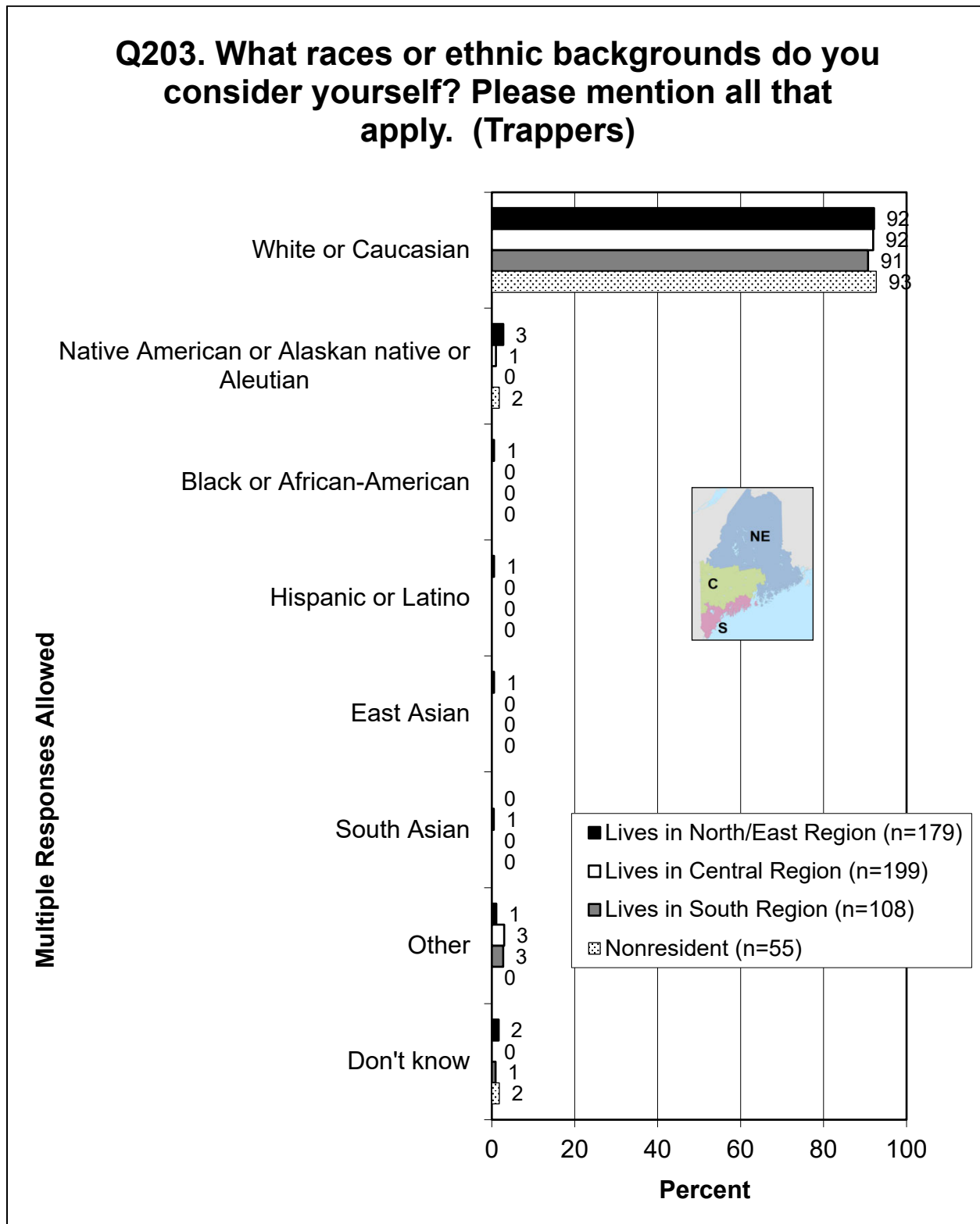


Figure 4.210. Ethnic Background of Respondents, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

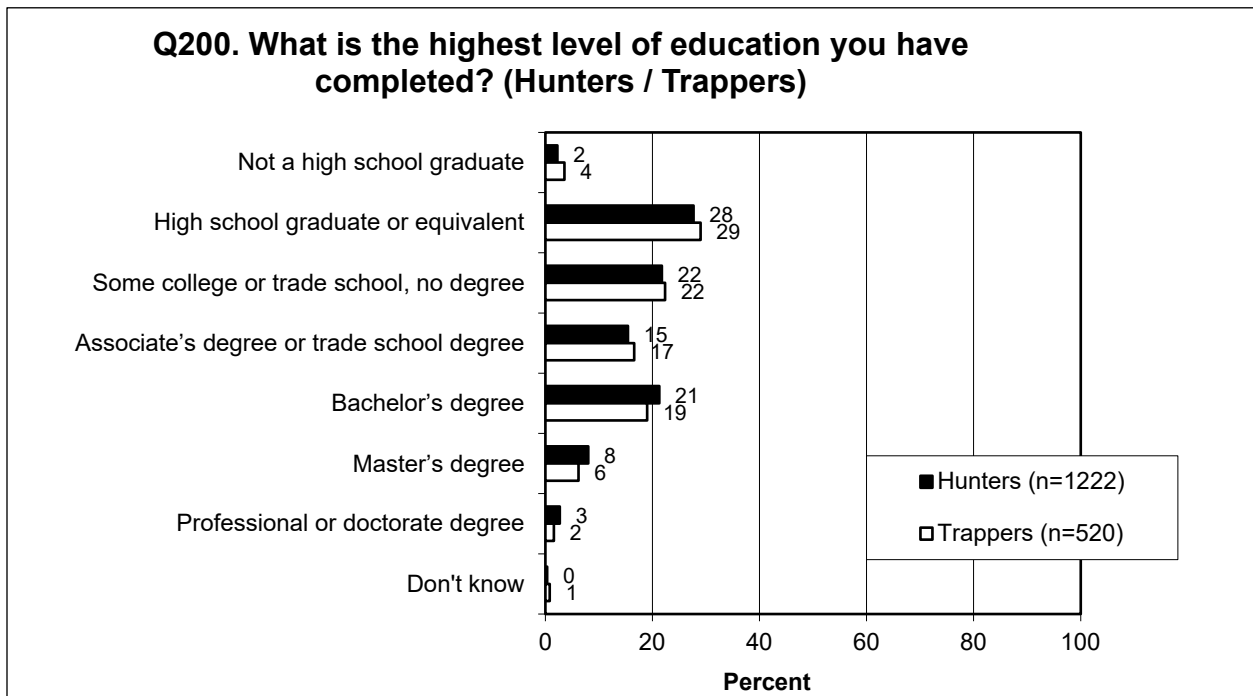


Figure 4.211. Education Level of Respondents (Hunters / Trappers)

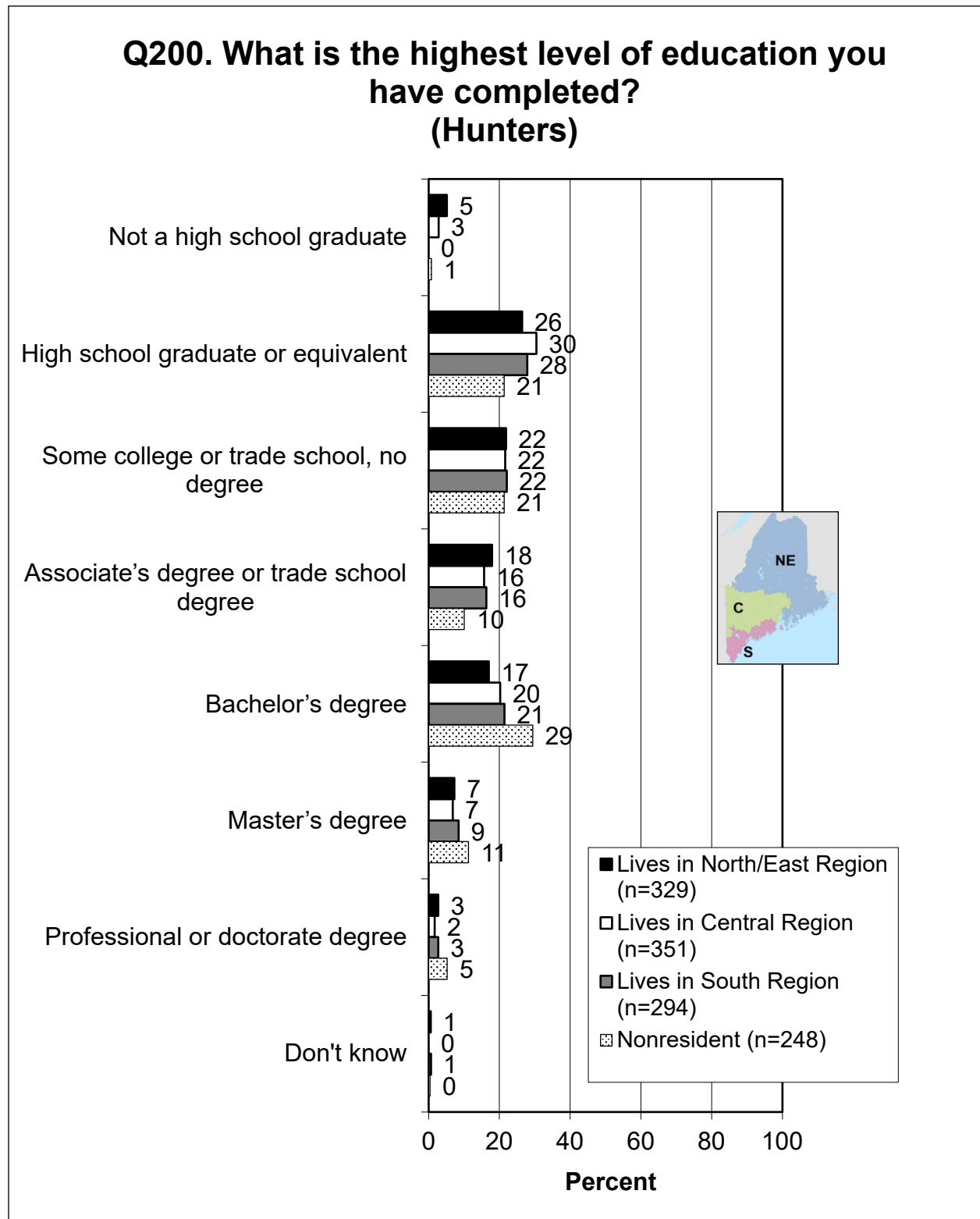


Figure 4.212. Education Level of Respondents, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

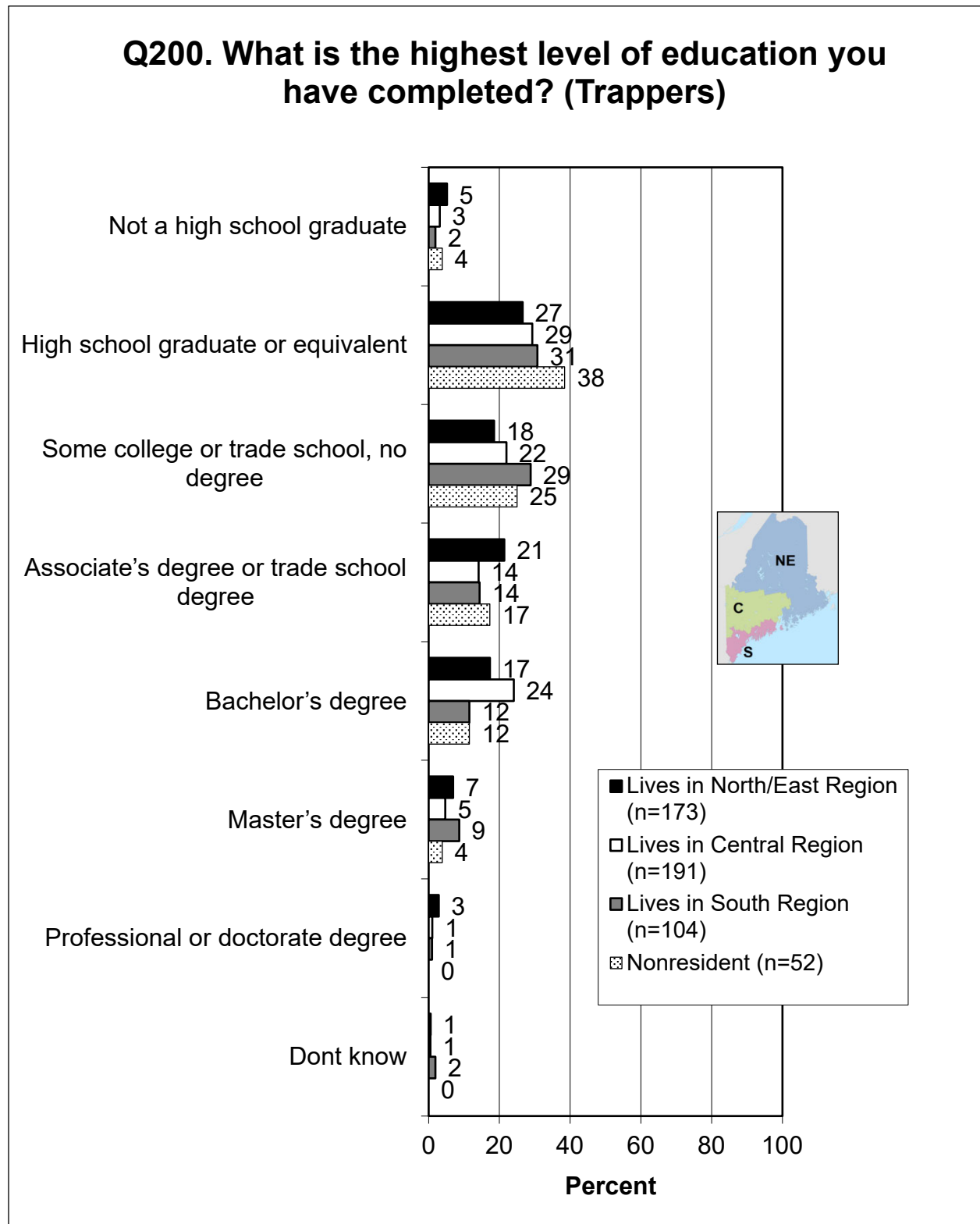


Figure 4.213. Education Level of Respondents, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

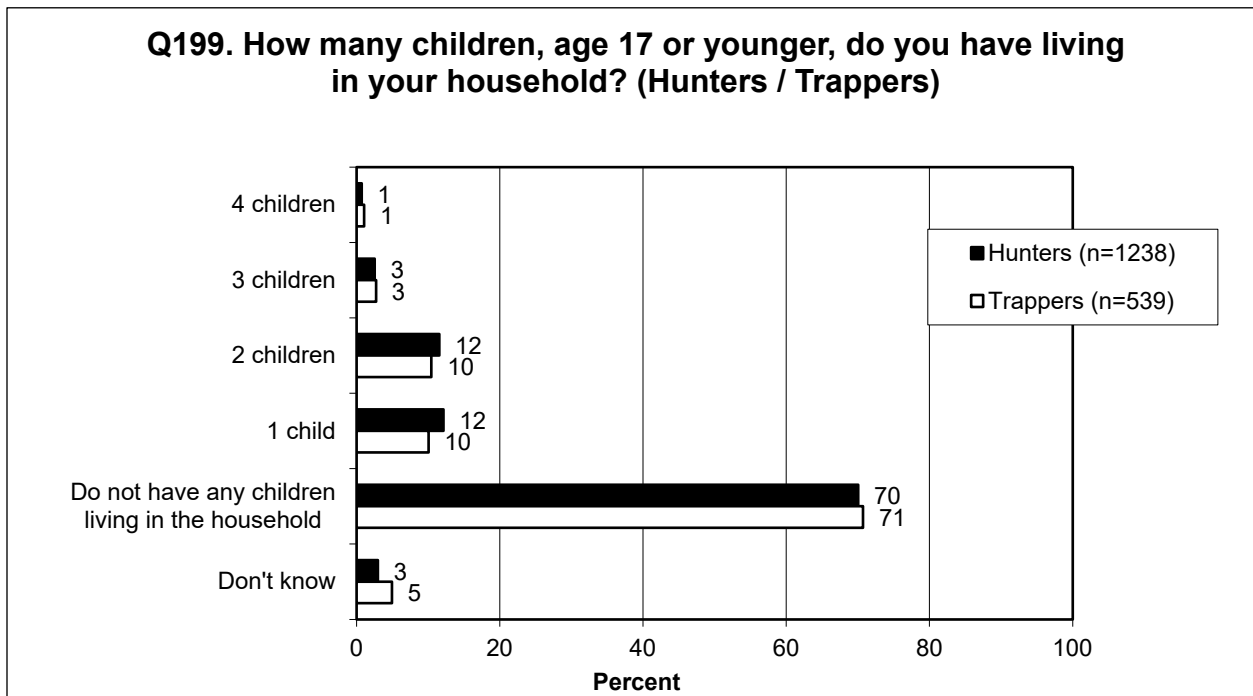


Figure 4.214. Number of Children in the Household (Hunters / Trappers)

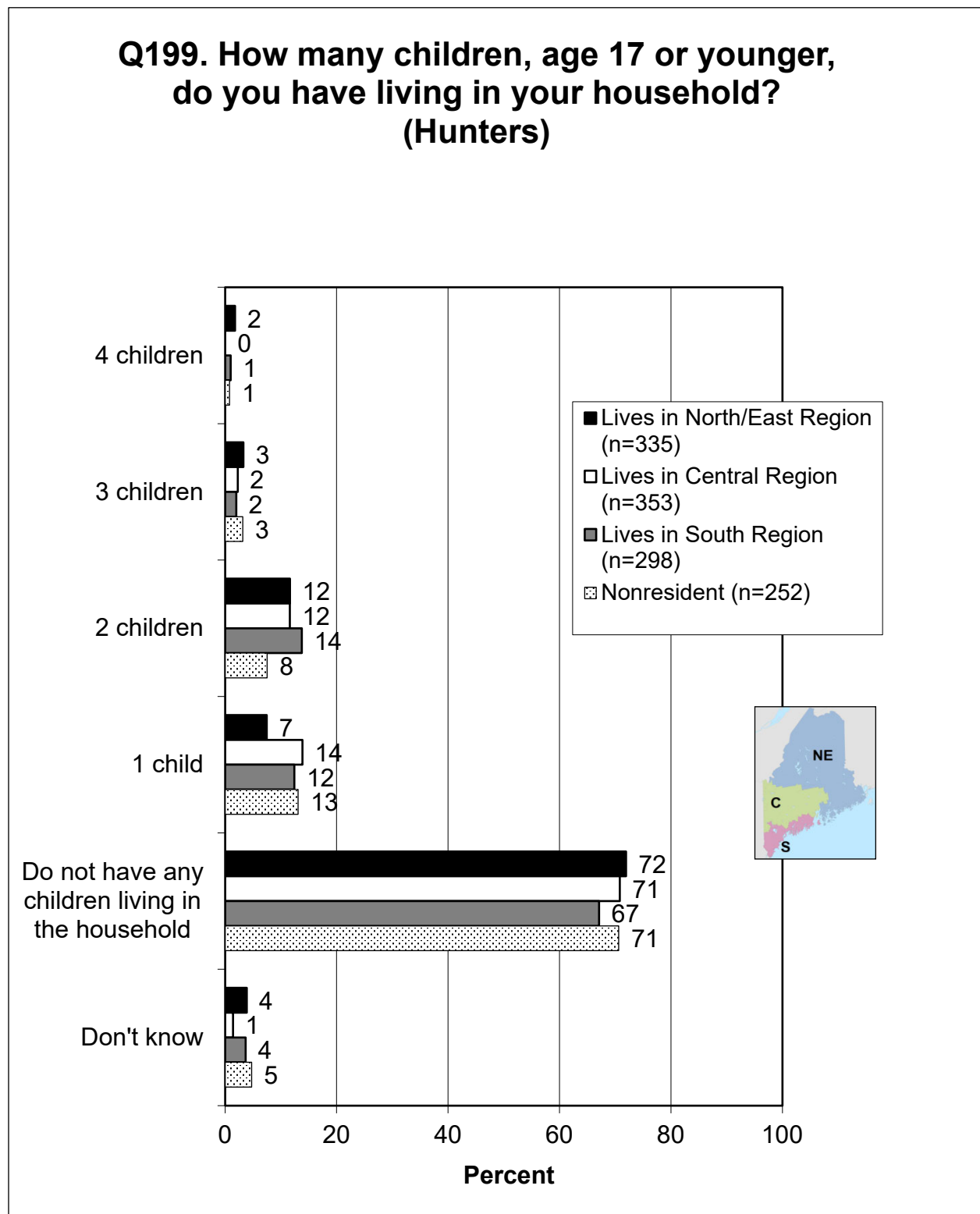


Figure 4.215. Number of Children in the Household, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

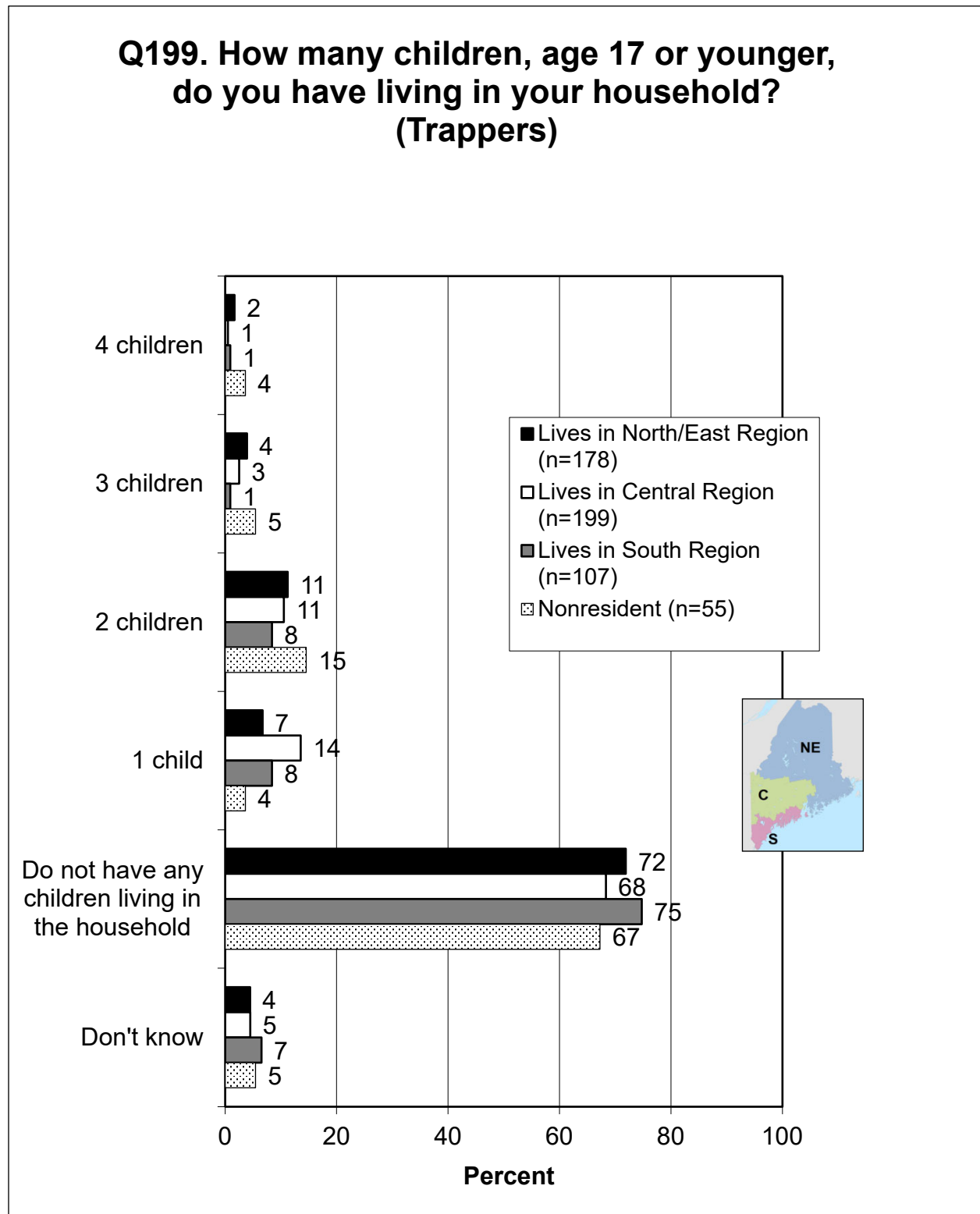


Figure 4.216. Number of Children in the Household, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

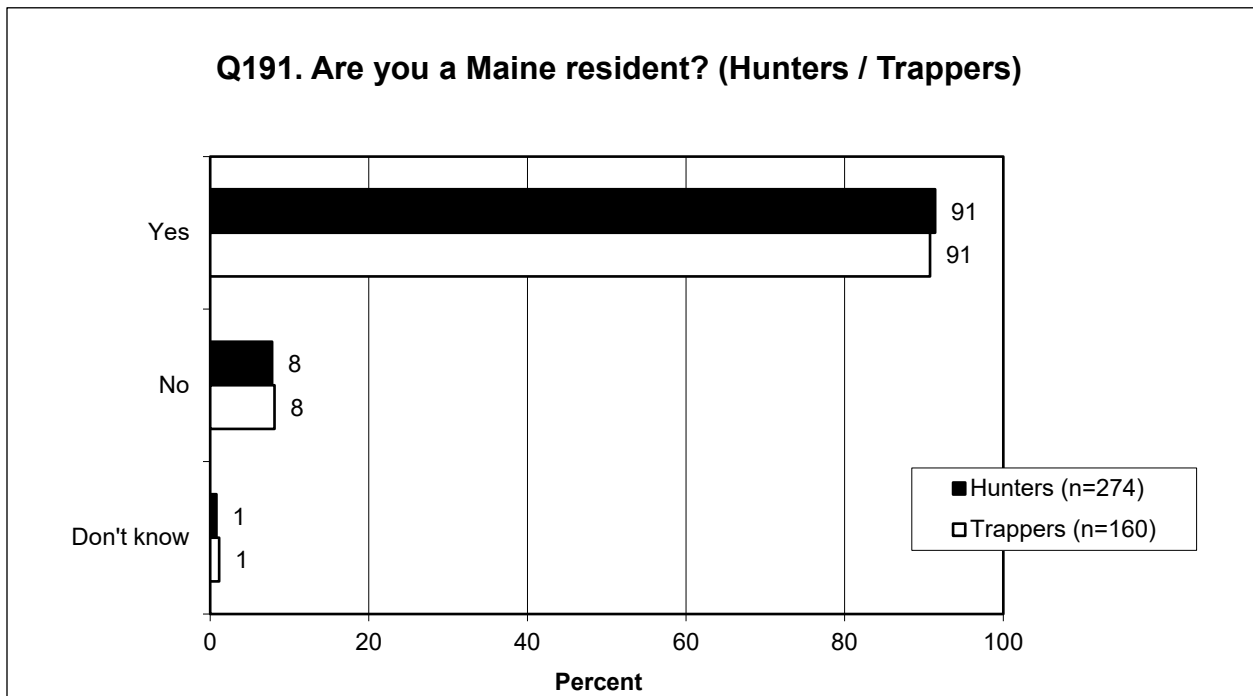


Figure 4.217. Maine Residency (Hunters / Trappers)

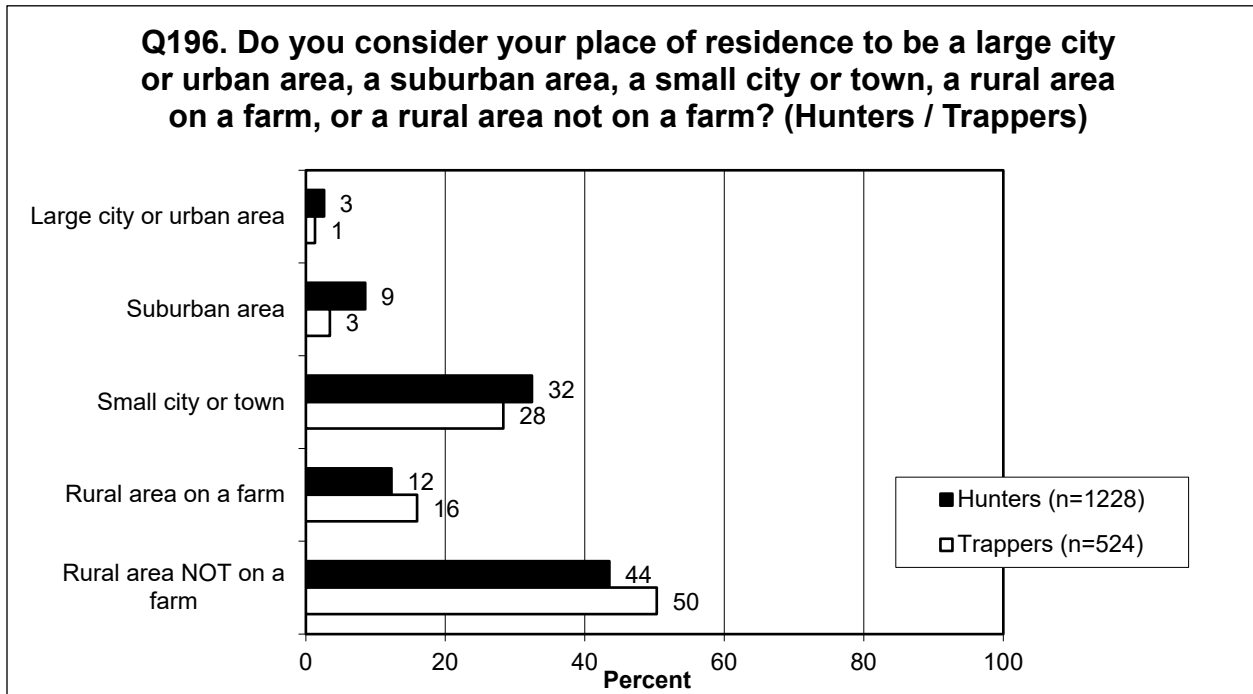


Figure 4.218. Place of Residence (Hunters / Trappers)

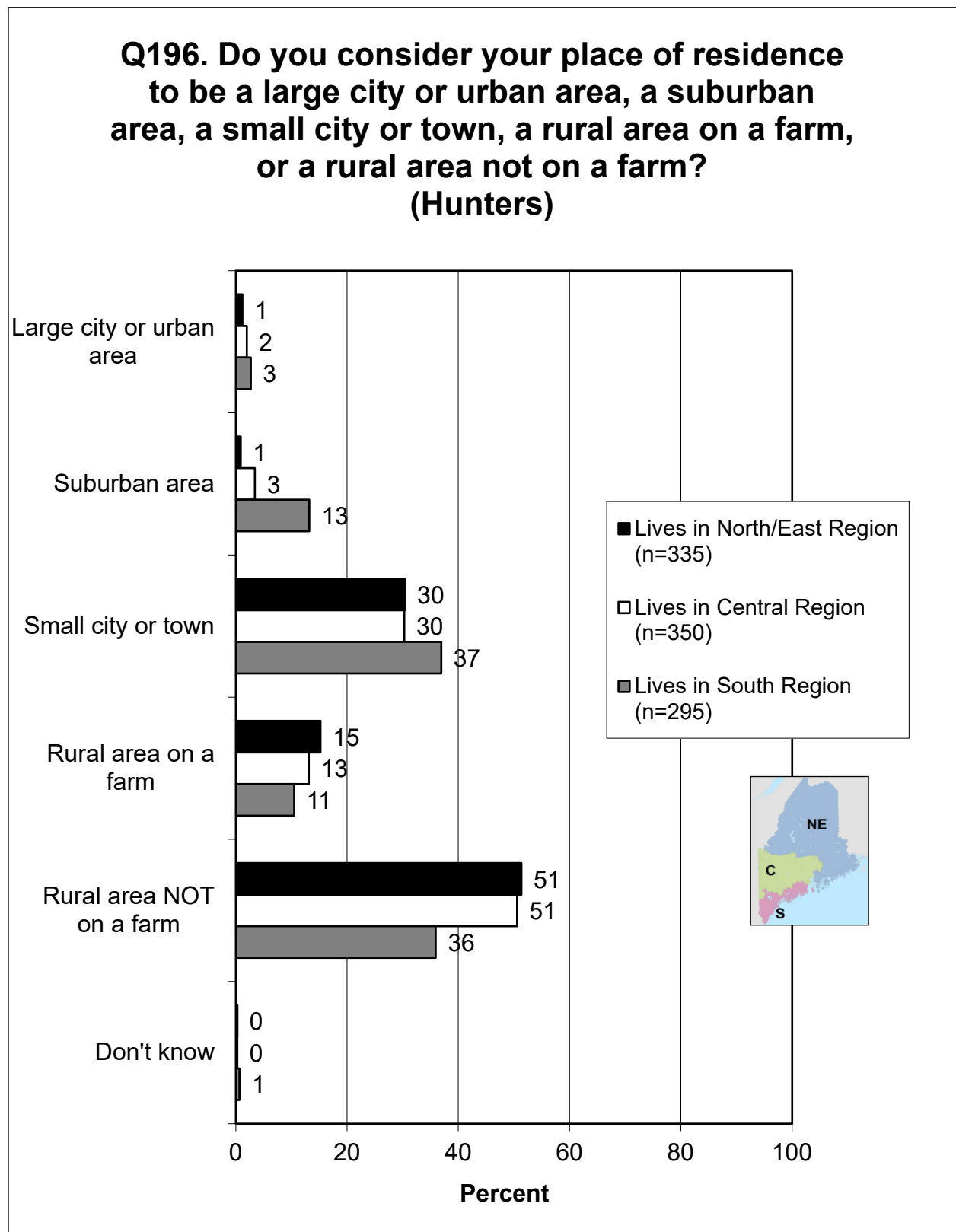


Figure 4.219. Place of Residence, Regional Hunter Breakdown (Hunters)

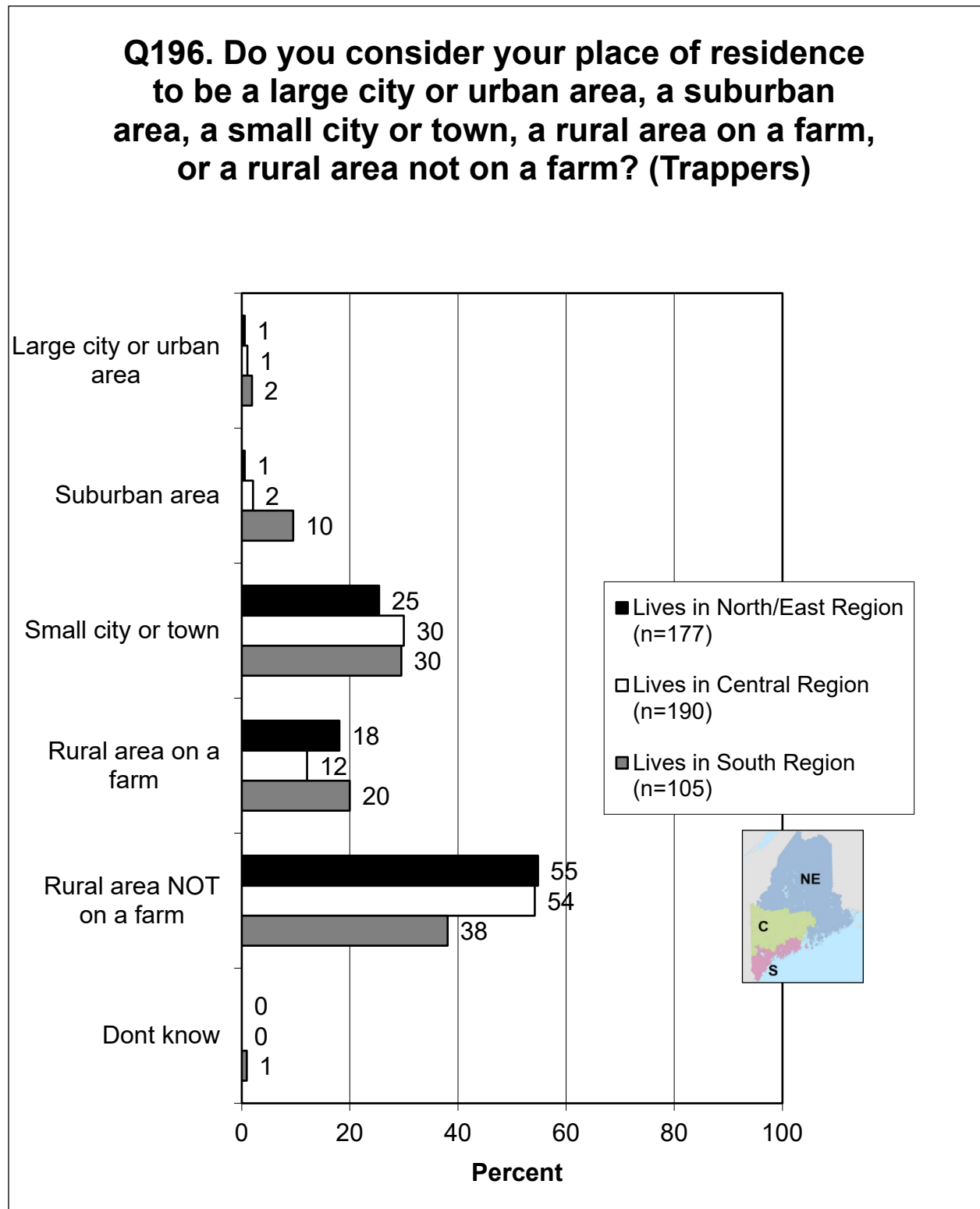


Figure 4.220. Place of Residence, Regional Trapper Breakdown (Trappers)

5. RESULTS AMONG TRAPPING OPPONENTS

These results are among the general population sample who indicated that they disapprove of trapping (i.e., there was not a separate survey of trapping opponents). Specifically, the question used for this criteria was as follows:

In general, do you approve or disapprove of regulated trapping?

- Strongly approve
- Moderately approve
- Neither approve nor disapprove
- Moderately disapprove
- Strongly disapprove
- Don't know

All those who gave either of the disapprove responses are considered trapping opponents for this data run. The question results for this are shown in Figure 5.1 (note that this is the same graph shown as Figure 3.15 in Chapter 3).

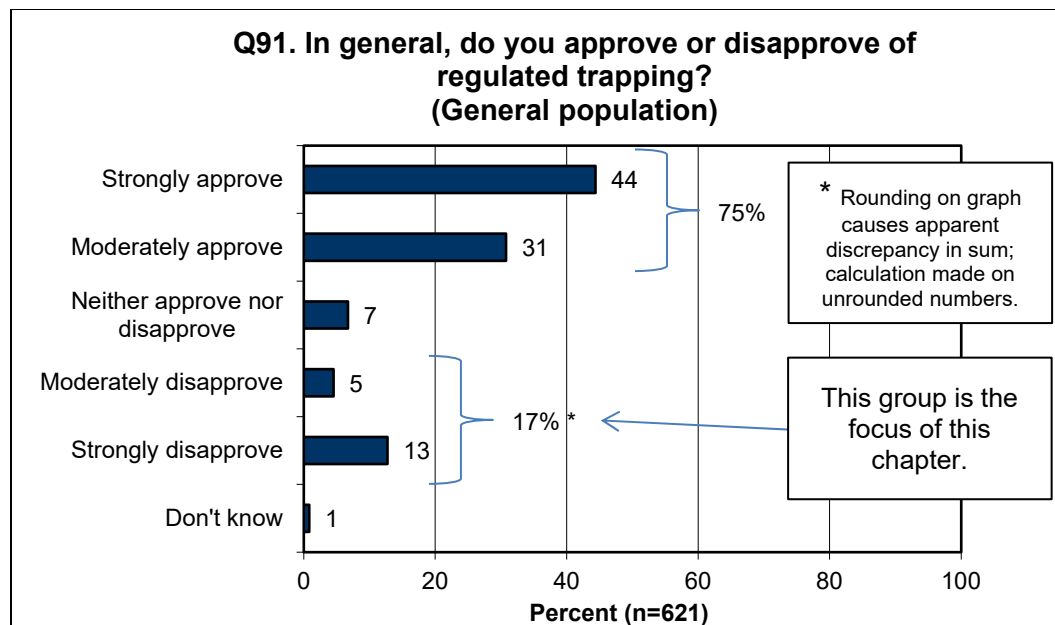


Figure 5.1. Approval or Disapproval of Trapping (General Population)

The general population survey from which these results among trapping opponents were extracted was conducted by telephone and online. The results are reported based on themes rather than in the exact order of the survey.

Because the sample of residents who disapprove of trapping is low (only 17% disapproved), further breaking them down into regions makes the samples sizes too low for statistically valid results. For this reason, only overall results are shown. No regional graphs are included in this chapter.

PARTICIPATION IN HUNTING, TRAPPING, AND OTHER OUTDOOR RECREATION

Figure 5.2 shows the activities of trapping opponents: large majorities have viewed wildlife, gardened, birdwatched, and hiked or used a trail. A small percentage (6%) have even hunted, although, not surprisingly, none have trapped in the past 12 months.

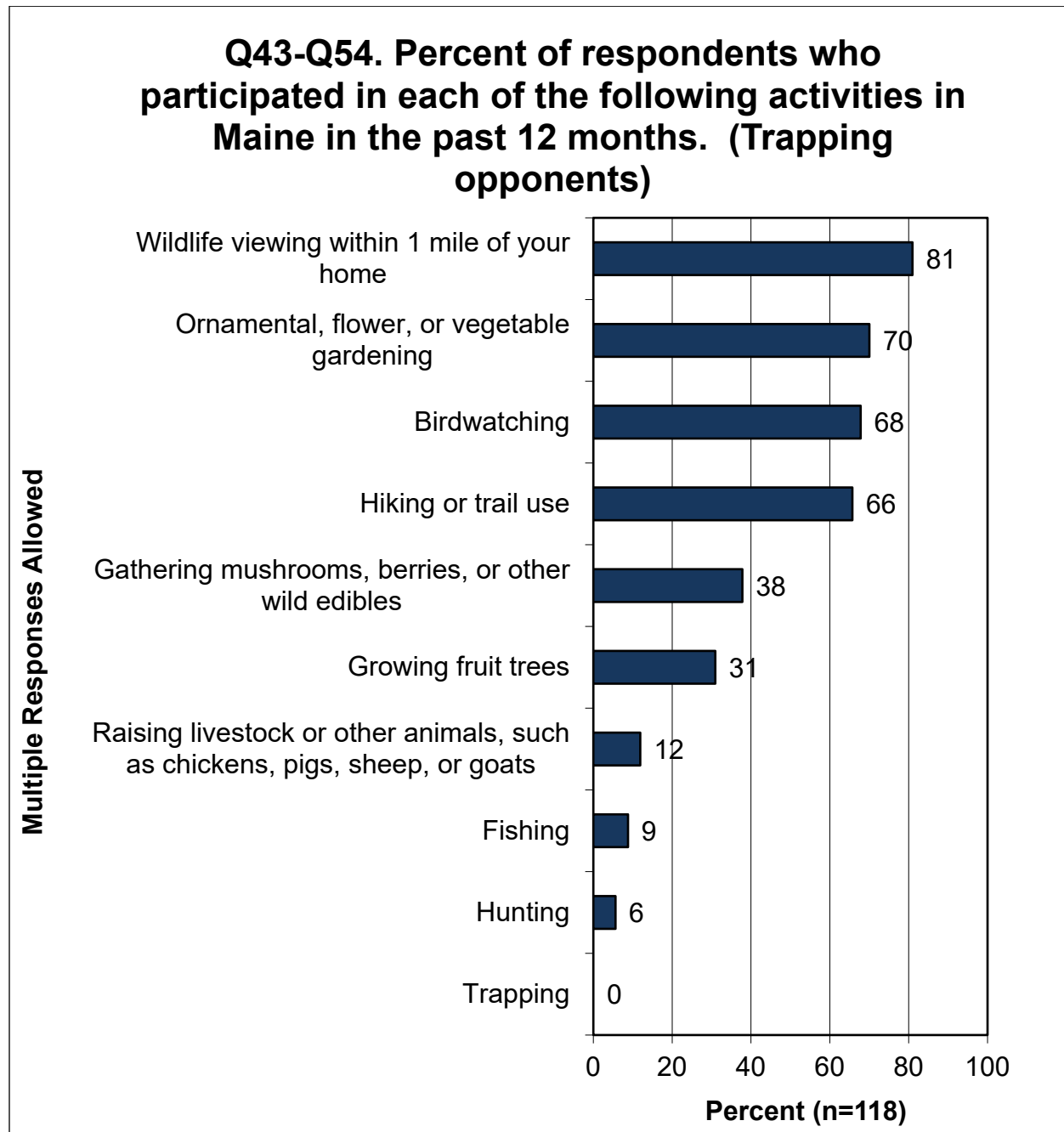


Figure 5.2. Participation in Outdoor Recreation in the Past 12 Months (Trapping Opponents)

Despite disapproving of trapping at this juncture of their lives, a small percentage of trapping opponents have hunted at some time, and a very small percentage have trapped at some time in their lives (Figure 5.3).

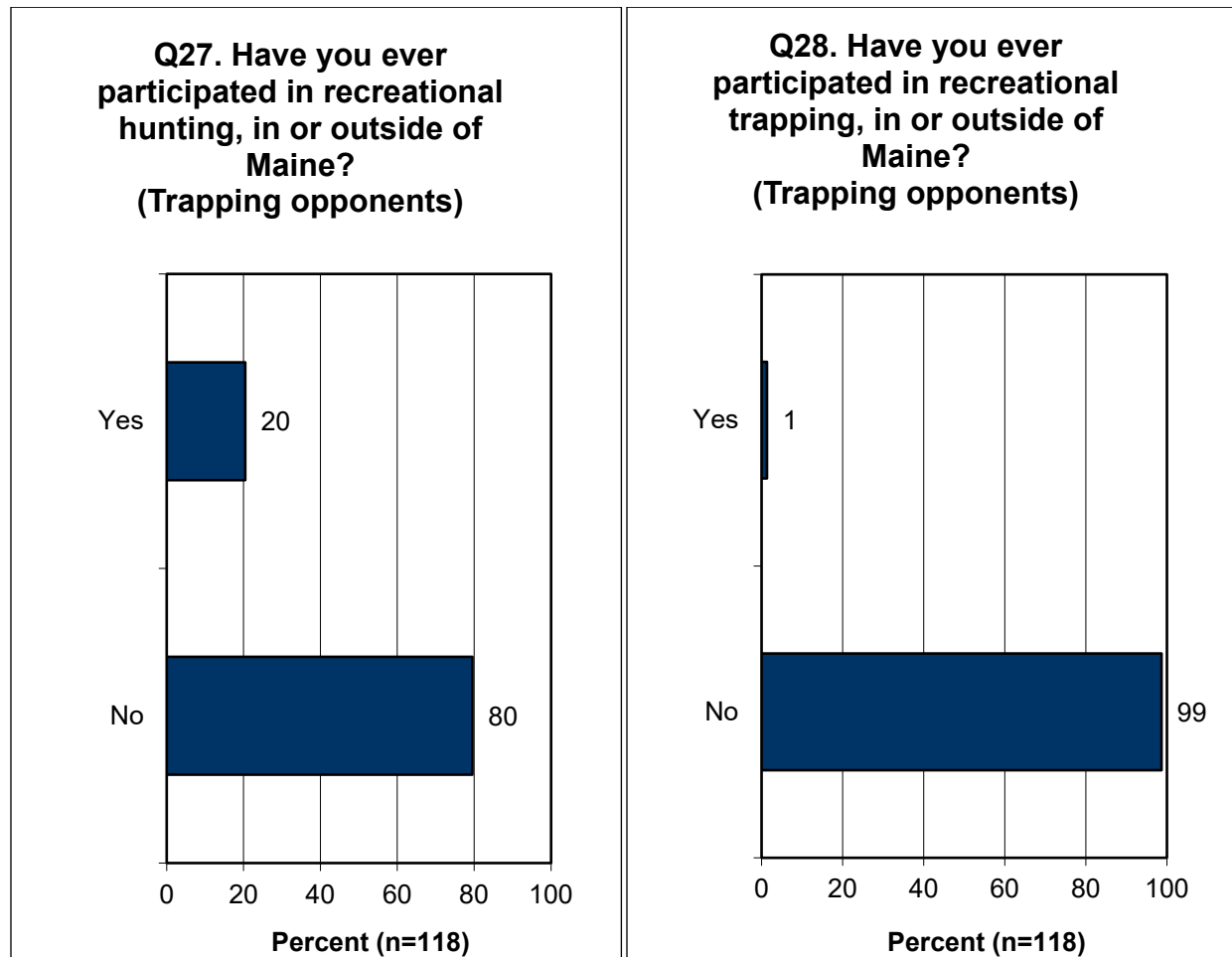


Figure 5.3. Participation in Hunting and Trapping, Lifetime (Trapping Opponents)

ATTITUDES TOWARD HUNTING AND TRAPPING

There is more disagreement (57%) than agreement (39%) that people should be able to trap if they want to (Figure 5.4). Although all the trapping opponents disapprove of trapping, it is noteworthy that 39% agree that others should be allowed to trap if they want to. Figure 5.5 shows that most of them knew that trapping is regulated by the Department.

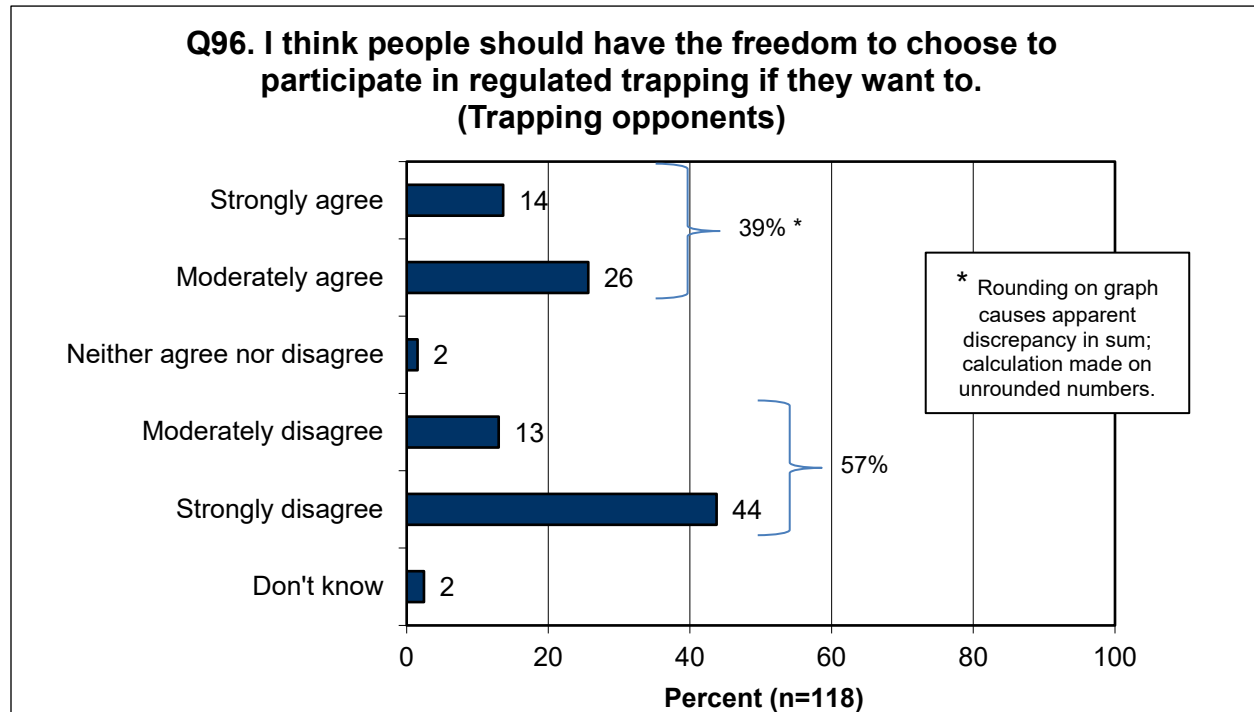


Figure 5.4. Opinion on Rights of Others to Trap (Trapping Opponents)

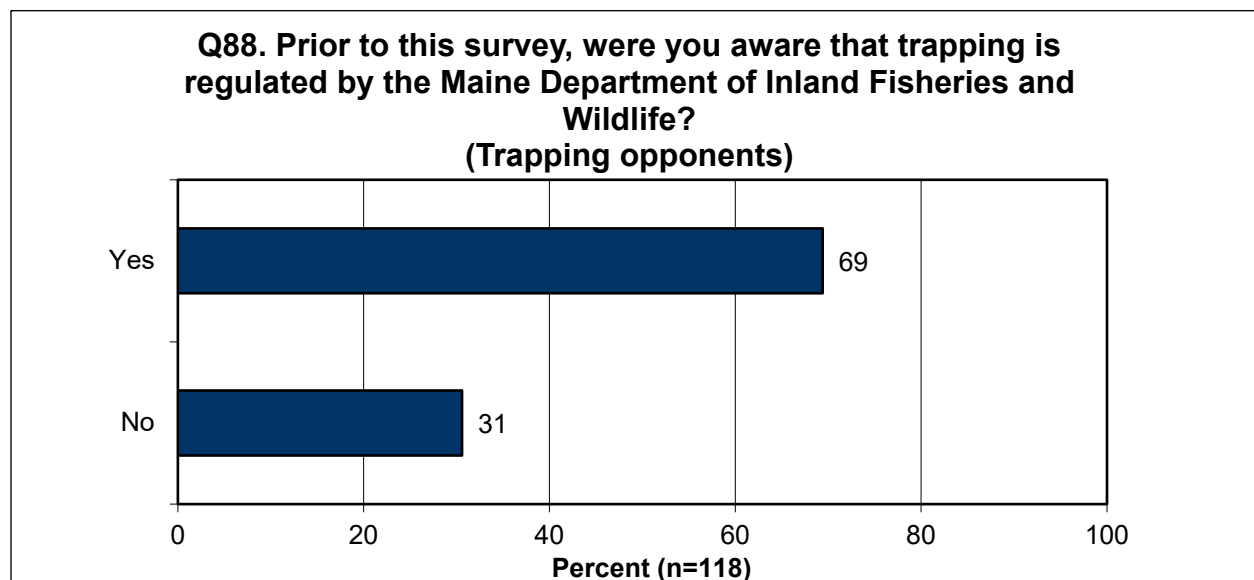


Figure 5.5. Awareness That Trapping Is Regulated by the Department (Trapping Opponents)

About a third of trapping opponents know someone who is a trapper or who has trapped (Figure 5.6).

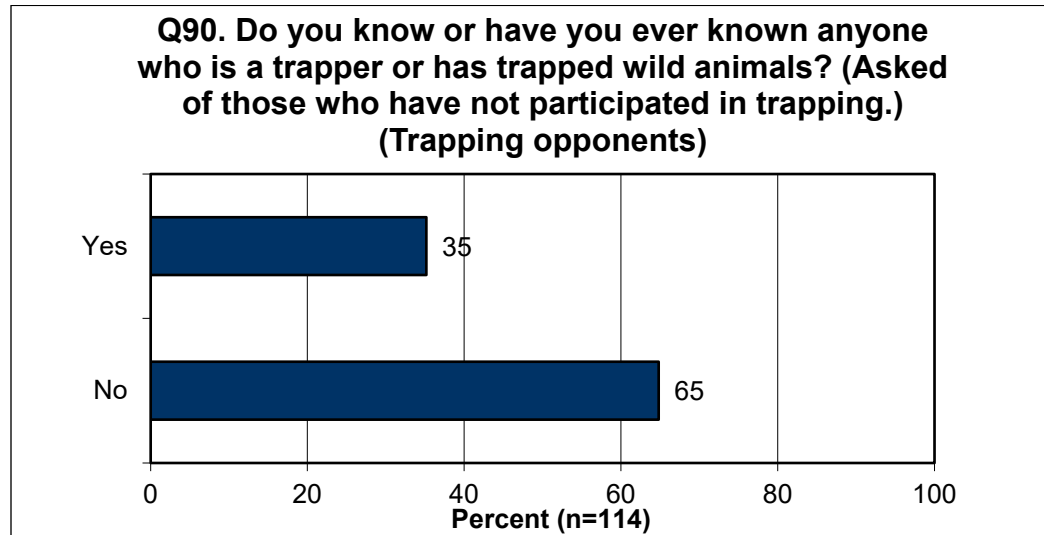


Figure 5.6. Knowing a Trapper (Trapping Opponents)

Disagreement (68%) far exceeds agreement (19%) among trapping opponents that regulated trapping is okay if the animals die quickly (Figure 5.7). While disagreement again exceeds agreement for the next question, they are closer together: 51% disagree but 37% agree that trapping is okay if accidentally caught animals can be released (Figure 5.8). Disagreement and agreement are very close (with a high percentage of “don’t know” responses) that trapping is more humane now compared to 10 years ago because of improvements to traps (Figure 5.9).

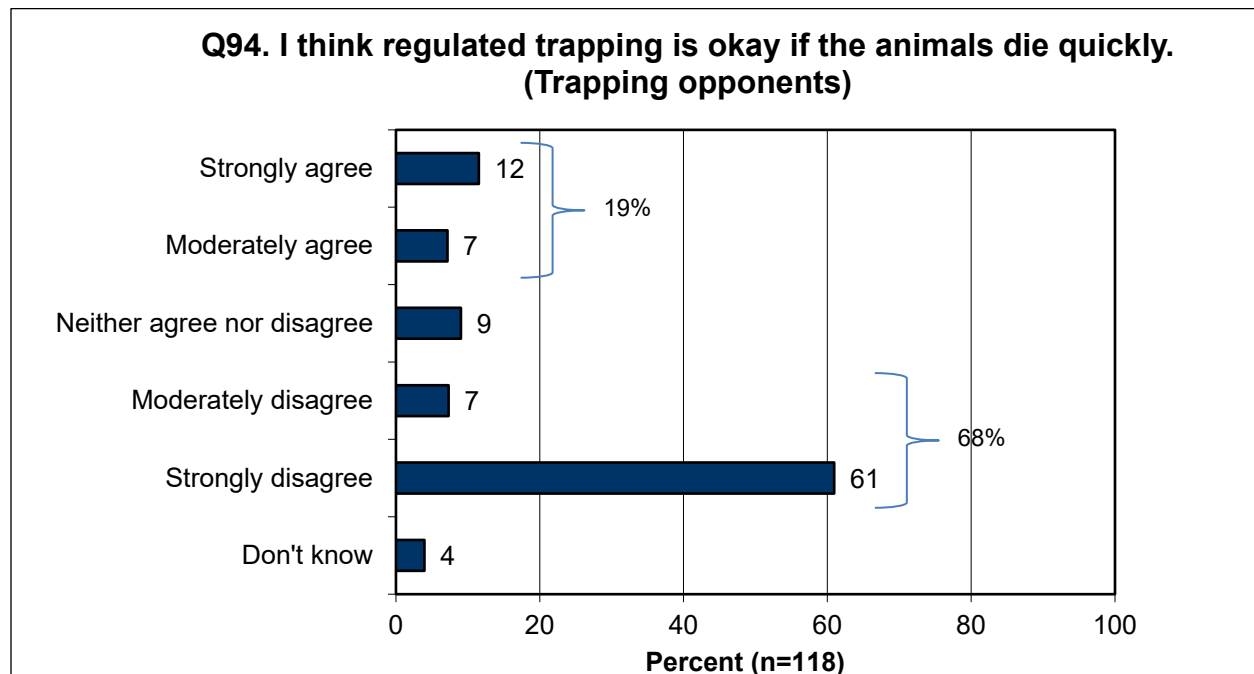


Figure 5.7. Opinion on Trapping If the Animal Dies Quickly (Trapping Opponents)

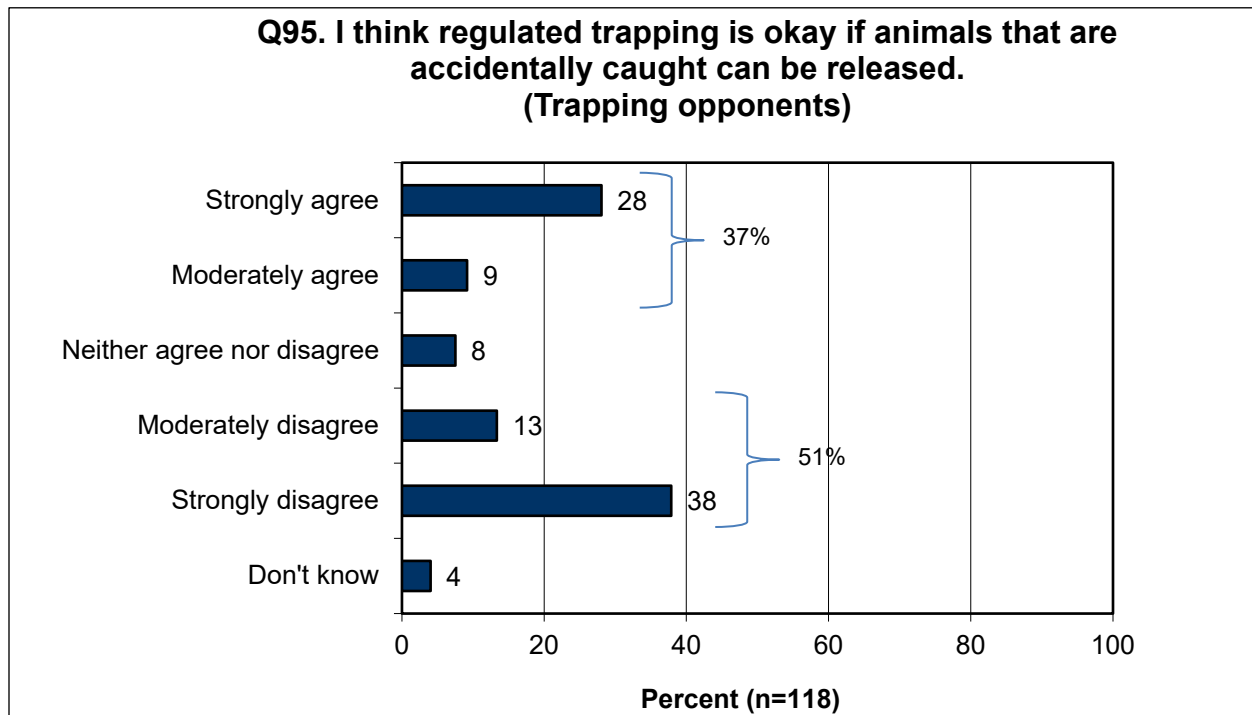


Figure 5.8. Opinion on Trapping If Accidentally Caught Animals Can Be Released (Trapping Opponents)

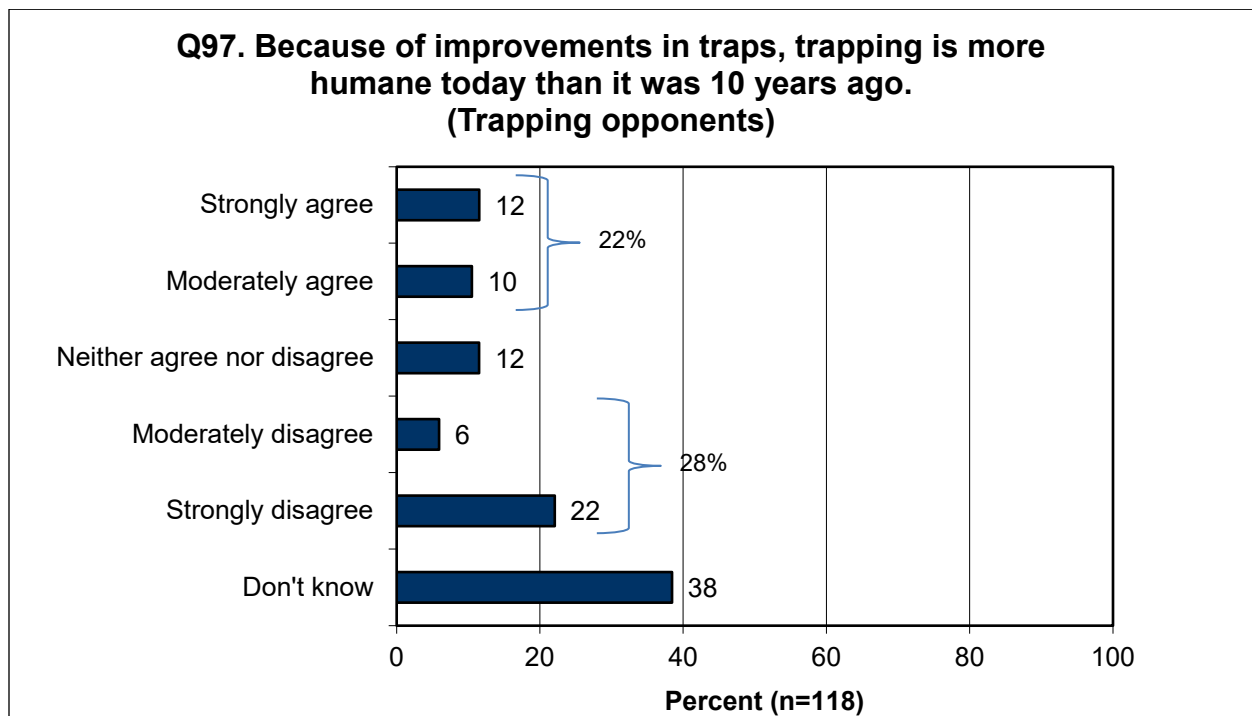


Figure 5.9. Opinion on Trapping If Informed That Improvements in Traps Make It More Humane Than It Was 10 Years Ago (Trapping Opponents)

Figure 5.10 shows that 22% of trapping opponents erroneously think that endangered species are frequently used to make fur clothing. Adding that to those who neither agreed nor disagreed and those who responded that they do not know means that 58% of trapping opponents have an erroneous perception about this issue. The results are even more extreme regarding whether regulated trapping causes wildlife to become endangered or extinct: 72% agree with the erroneous statement, and in total (with “neither” and “don’t know” responses) 79% have an erroneous perception (Figure 5.11).

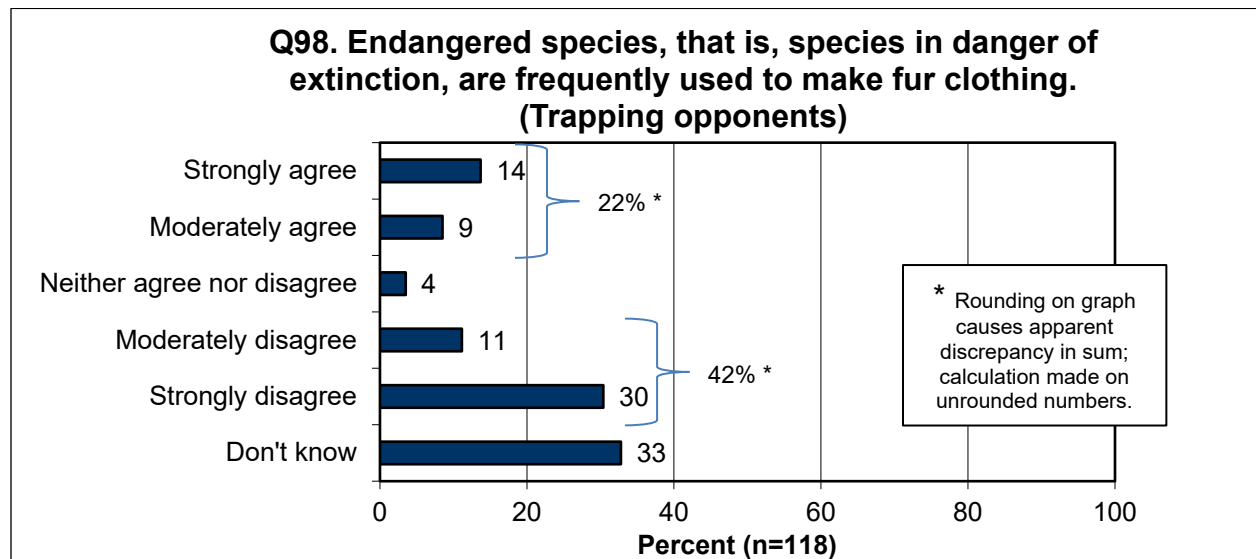


Figure 5.10. Perceptions Regarding Trapping and Endangered Species (Trapping Opponents)

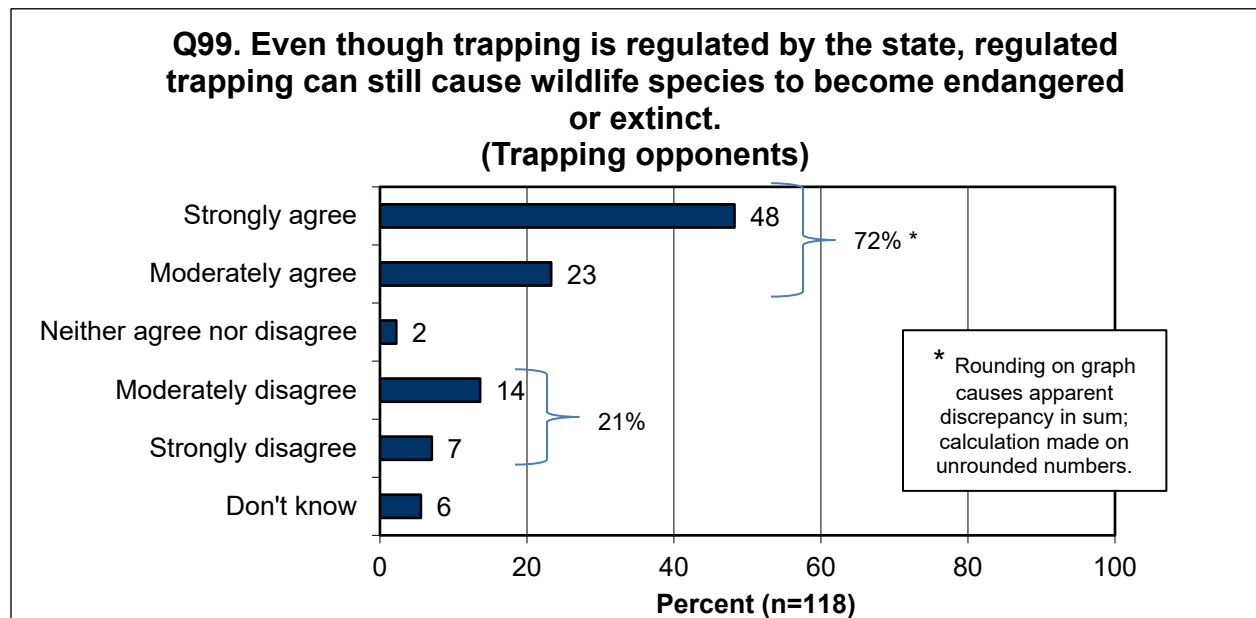


Figure 5.11. Perceptions Regarding Whether Trapping Endangers Species Populations (Trapping Opponents)

KNOWLEDGE OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARD FURBEARER SPECIES

The survey asked about ten species: beaver, bobcat, coyote, fox, raccoon, skunk, fisher, marten, otter, and muskrat. Each is presented on its own; they are not discussed individually but are discussed in totality in the section that presents summary tables showing all the species together.

The figure numbers for each species are as follows:

- Beaver: Figures 5.12 to 5.15.
- Bobcat: Figures 5.16 to 5.19.
- Coyote: Figures 5.20 to 5.23.
- Fox: Figures 5.24 to 5.27.
- Raccoon: Figures 5.28 to 5.31.
- Skunk: Figures 5.32 to 5.35.
- Fisher: Figures 5.36 to 5.39.
- Marten: Figures 5.40 to 5.43.
- Otter: Figures 5.44 to 5.47.
- Muskrat: Figures 5.48 to 5.51.

These sections are followed by the summary section.

BEAVER

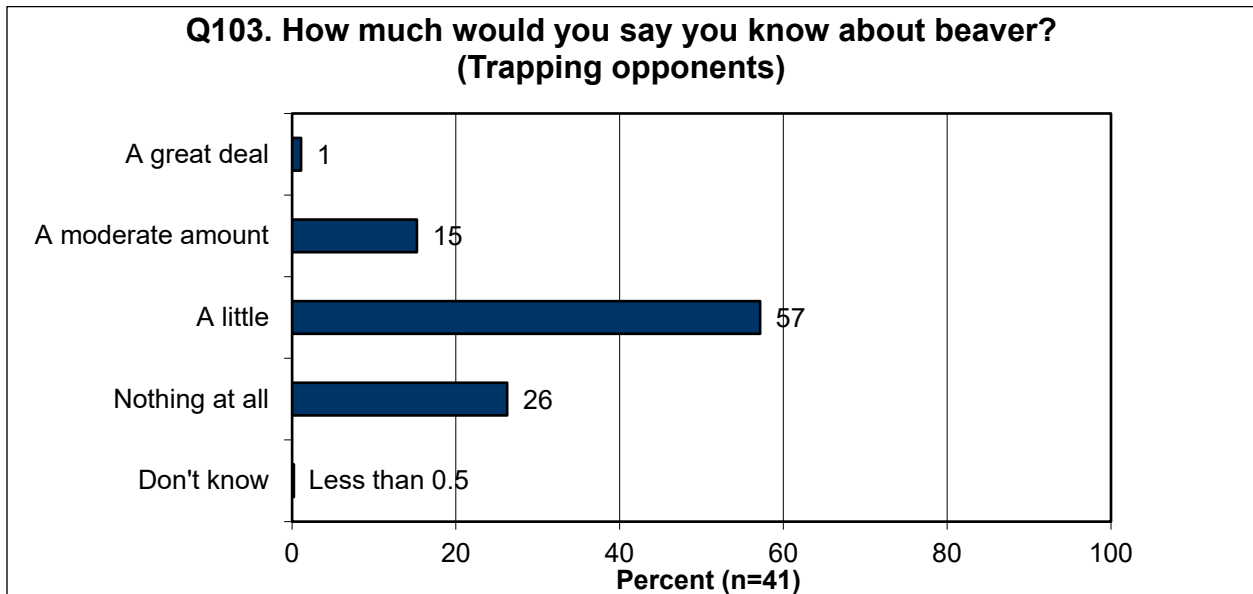


Figure 5.12. Knowledge of Beavers (Trapping Opponents)

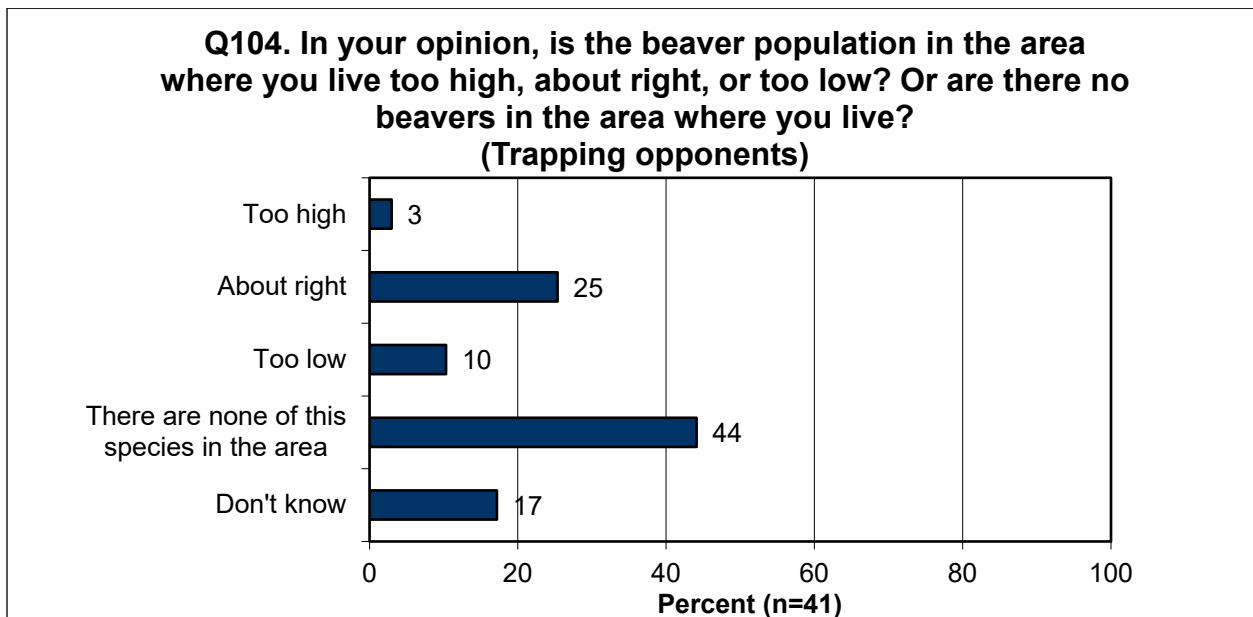


Figure 5.13. Opinion on the Beaver Population (Trapping Opponents)

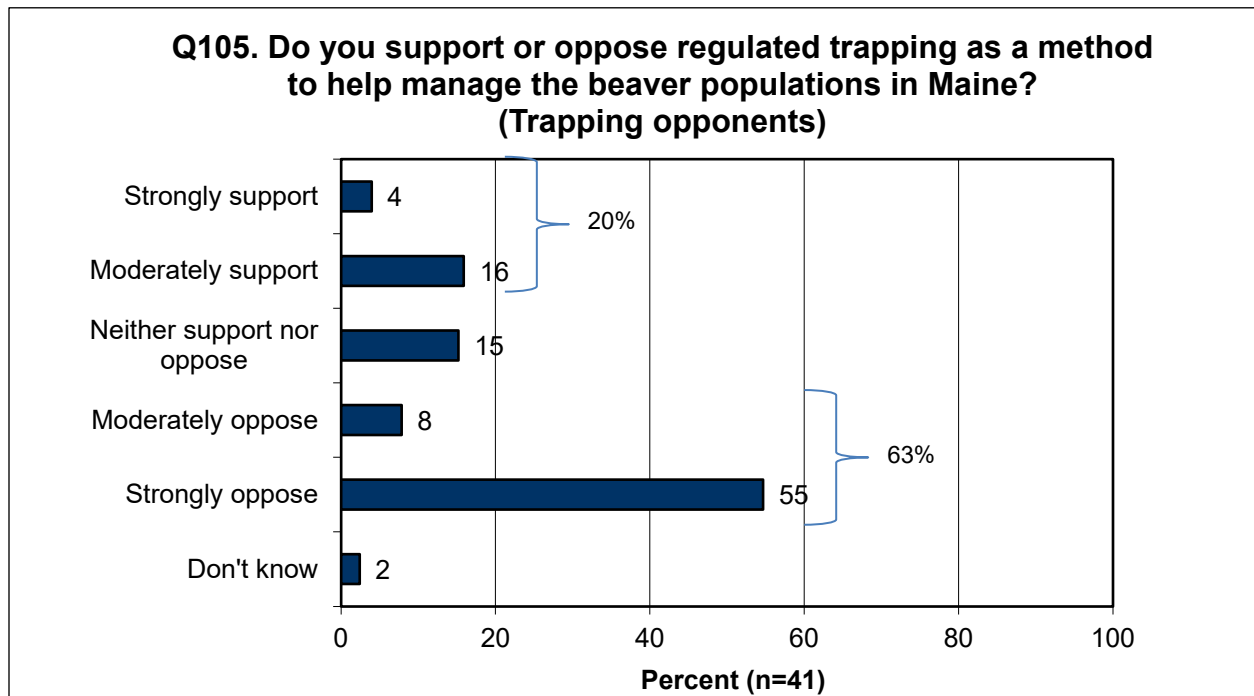


Figure 5.14. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Beaver Populations (Trapping Opponents)

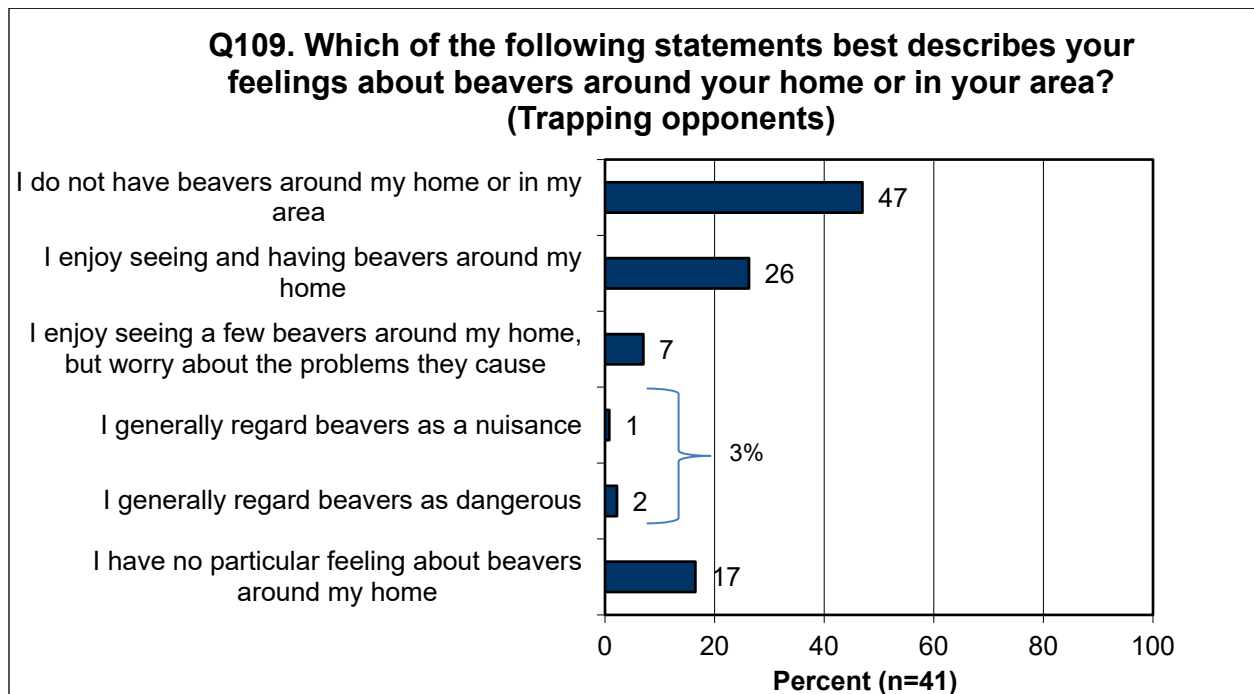


Figure 5.15. Feelings About Beavers (Trapping Opponents)

BOBCAT

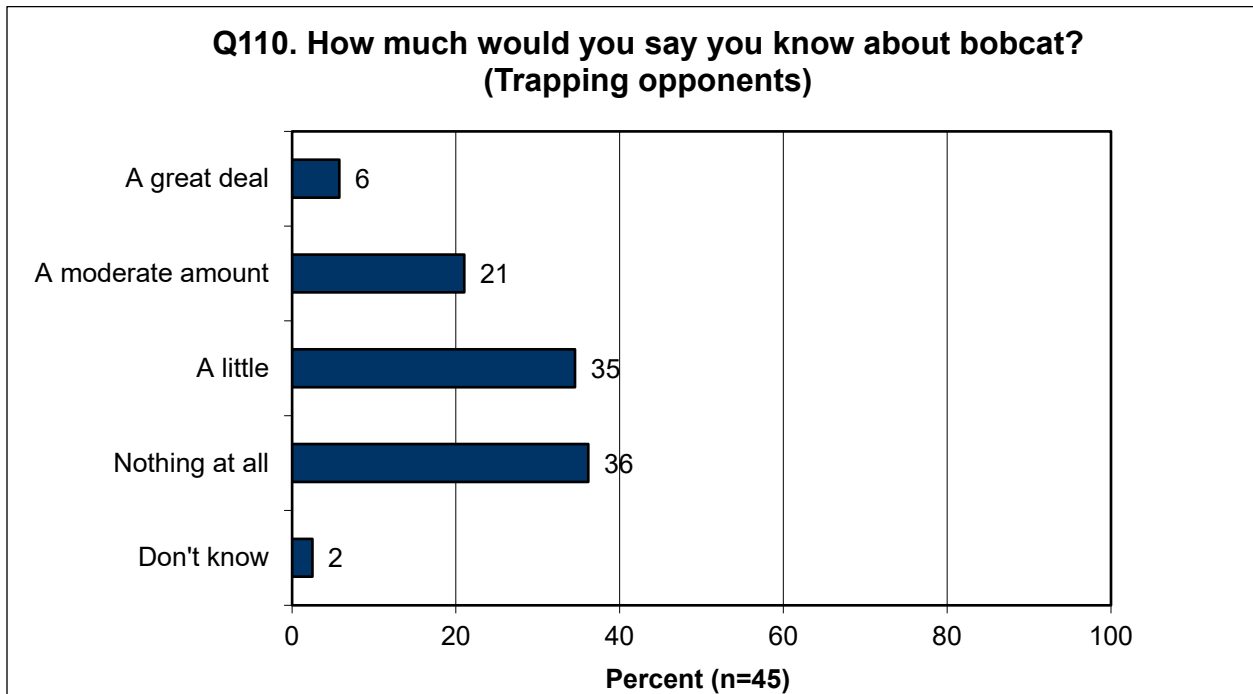


Figure 5.16. Knowledge of Bobcats (Trapping Opponents)

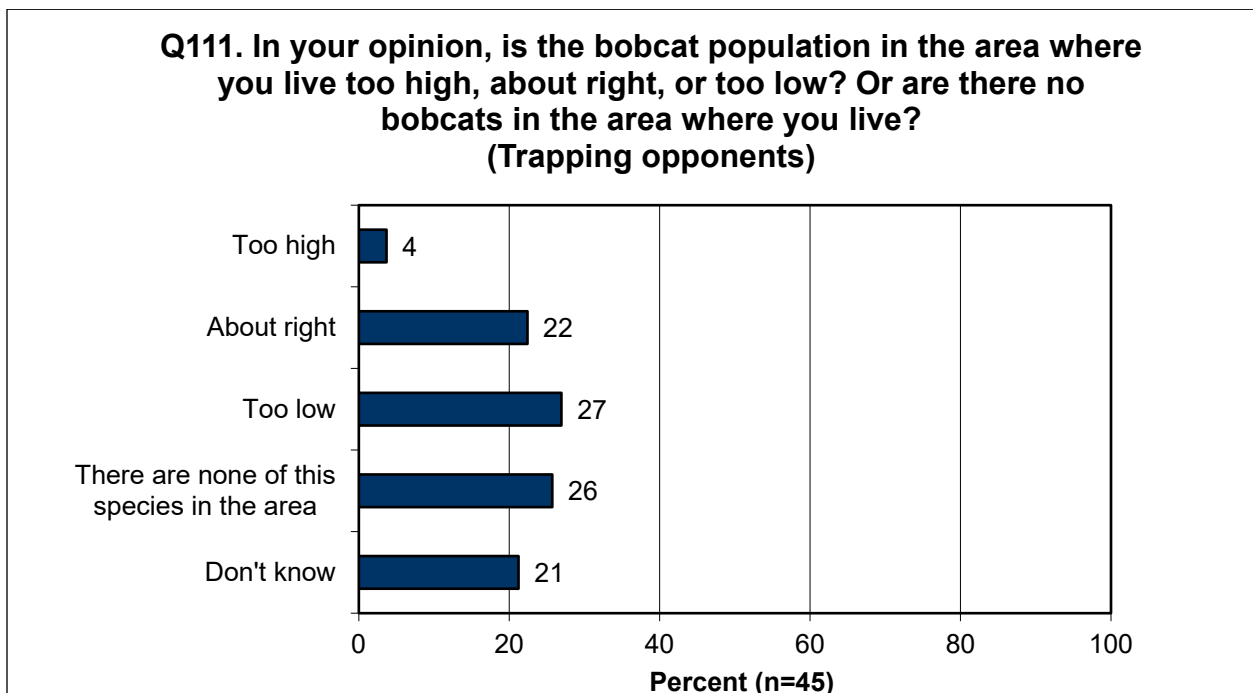


Figure 5.17. Opinion on the Bobcat Population (Trapping Opponents)

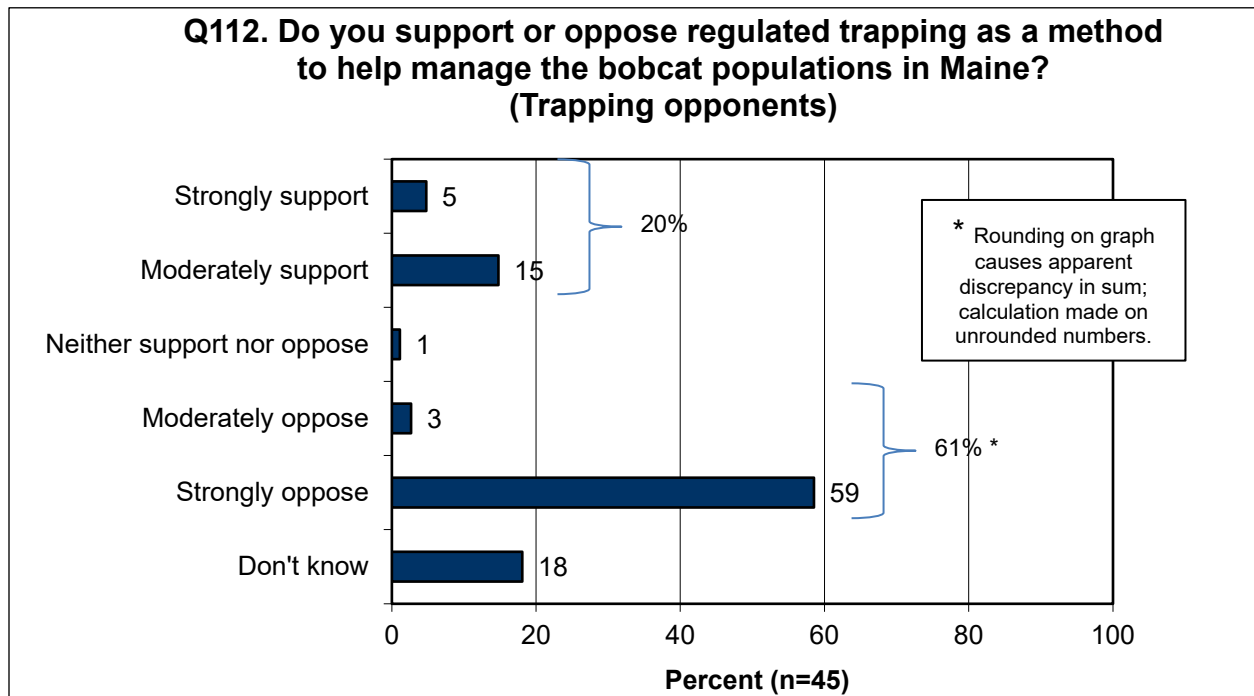


Figure 5.18. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Bobcat Populations (Trapping Opponents)

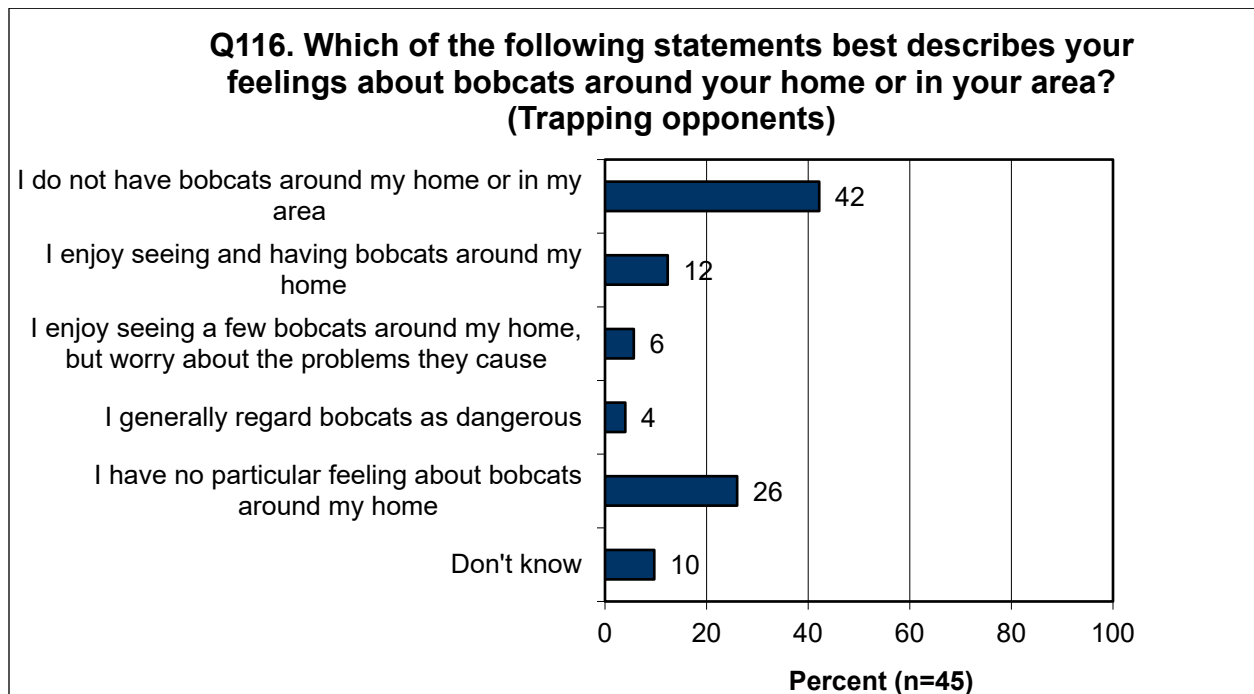


Figure 5.19. Feelings About Bobcats (Trapping Opponents)

COYOTE

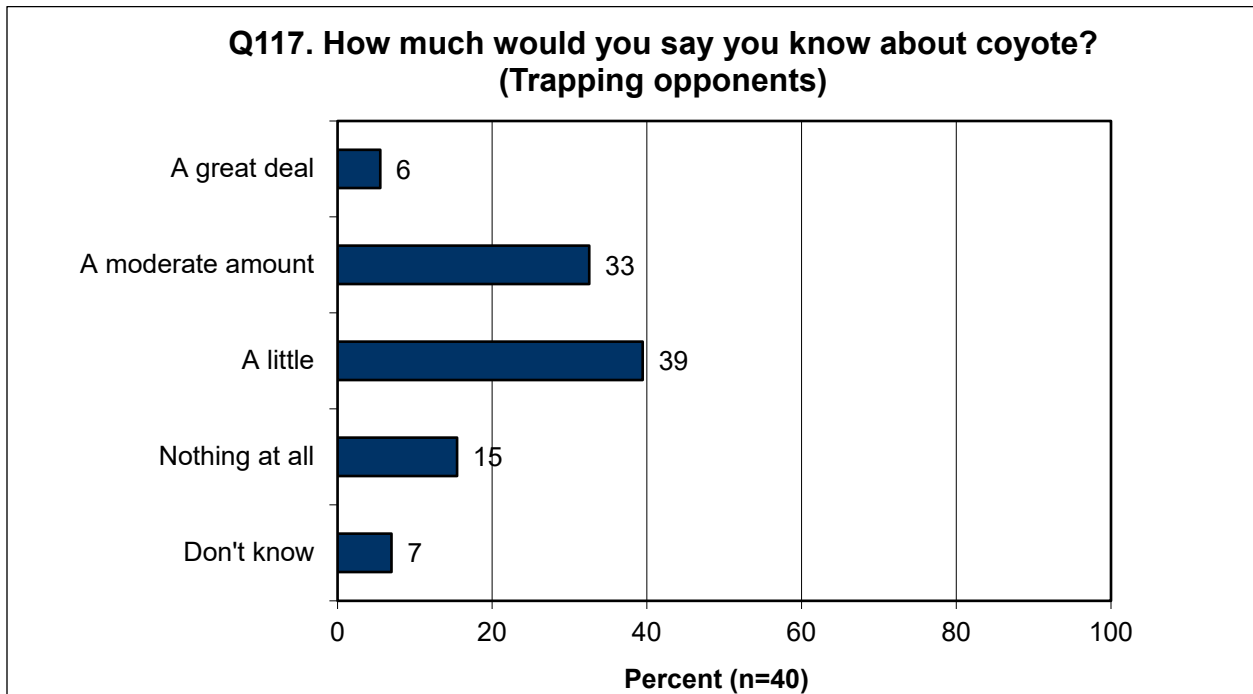


Figure 5.20. Knowledge of Coyotes (Trapping Opponents)

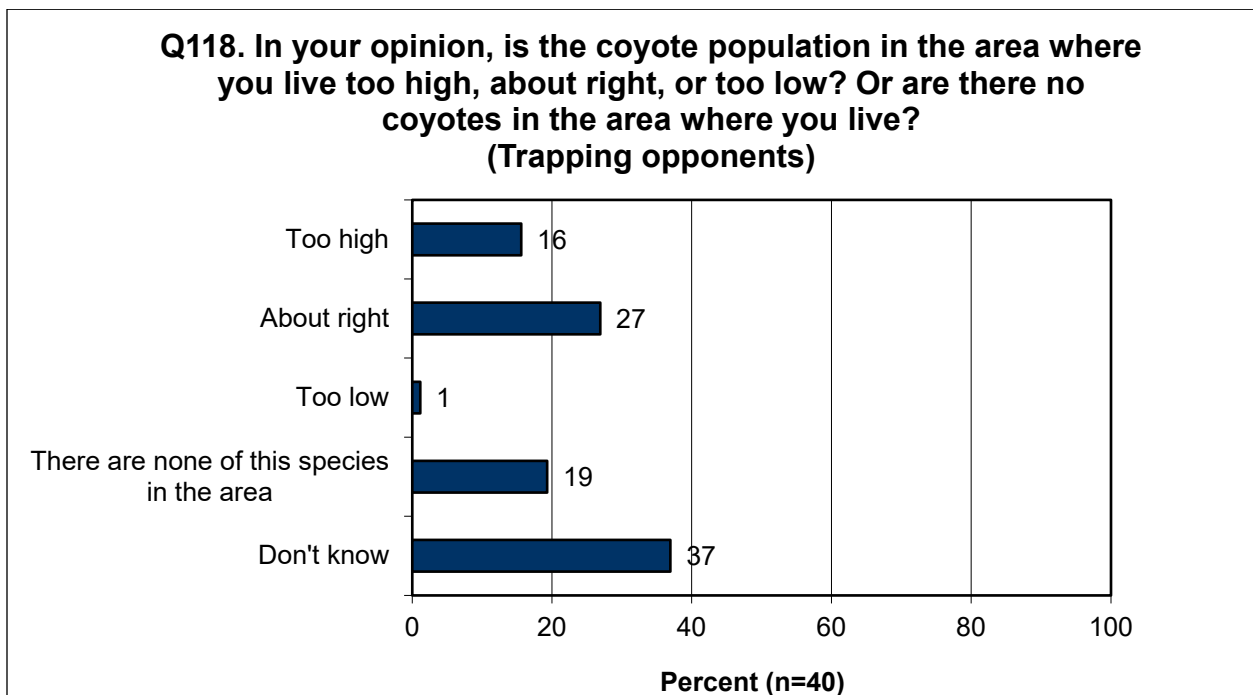


Figure 5.21. Opinion on the Coyote Population (Trapping Opponents)

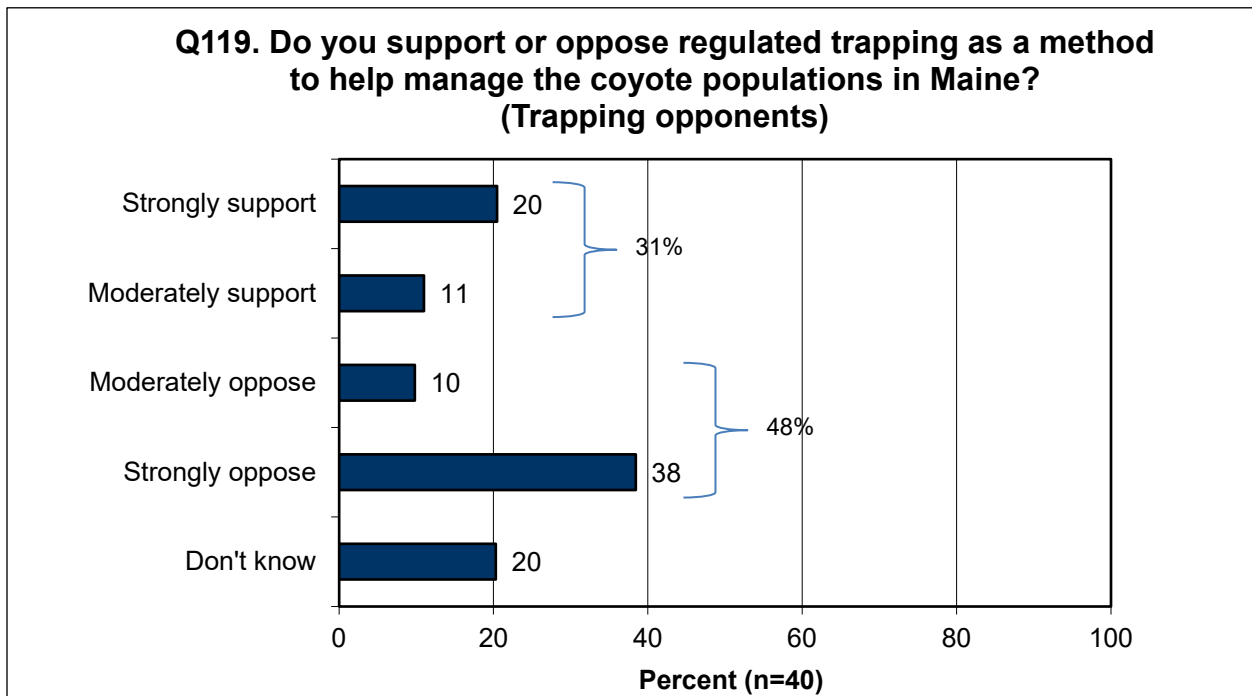


Figure 5.22. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Coyote Populations (Trapping Opponents)

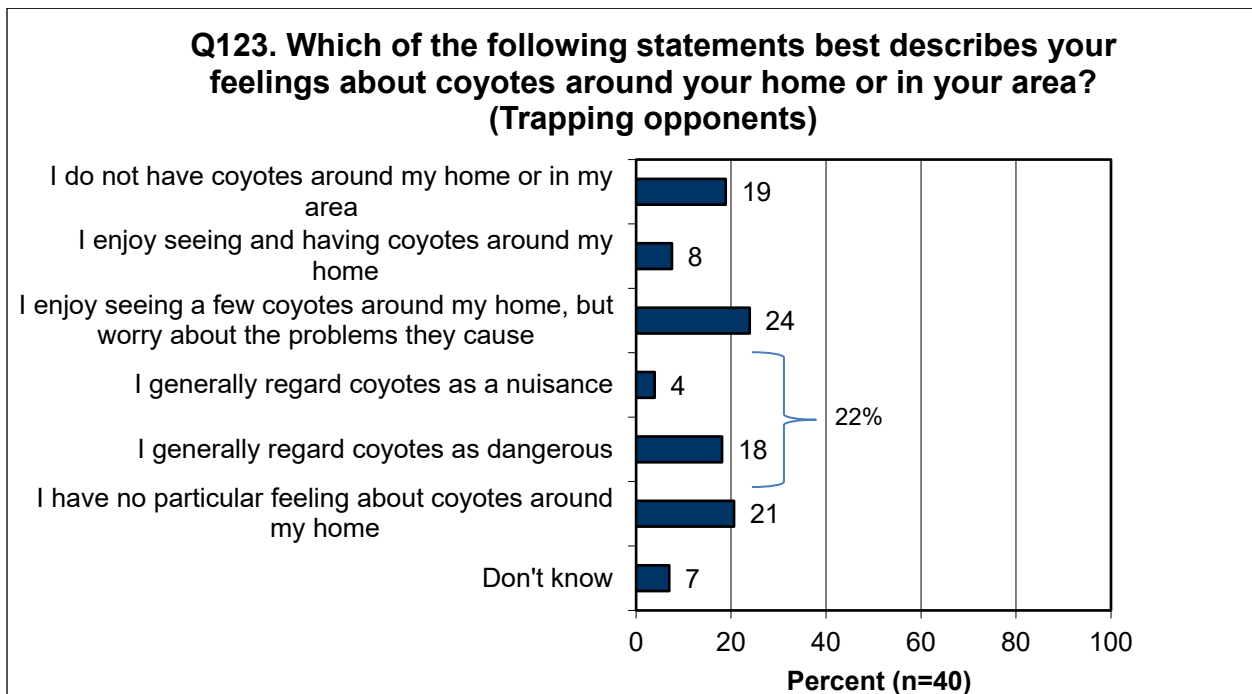


Figure 5.23. Feelings About Coyotes (Trapping Opponents)

FOX

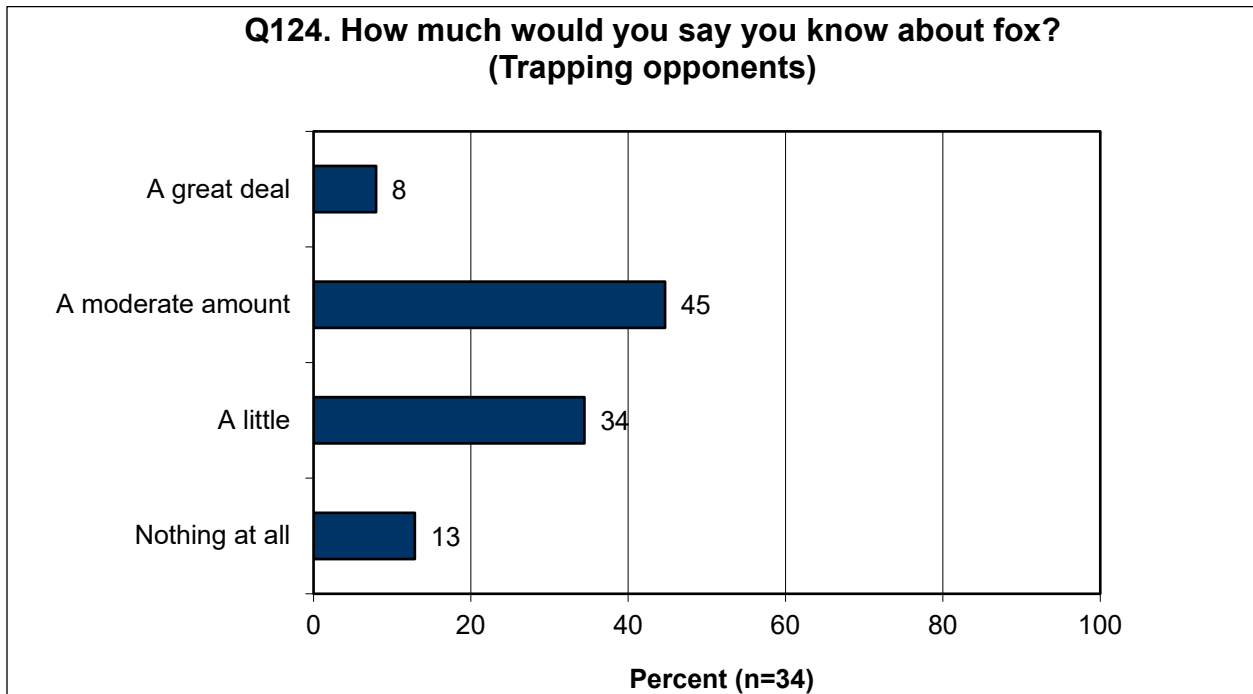


Figure 5.24. Knowledge of Foxes (Trapping Opponents)

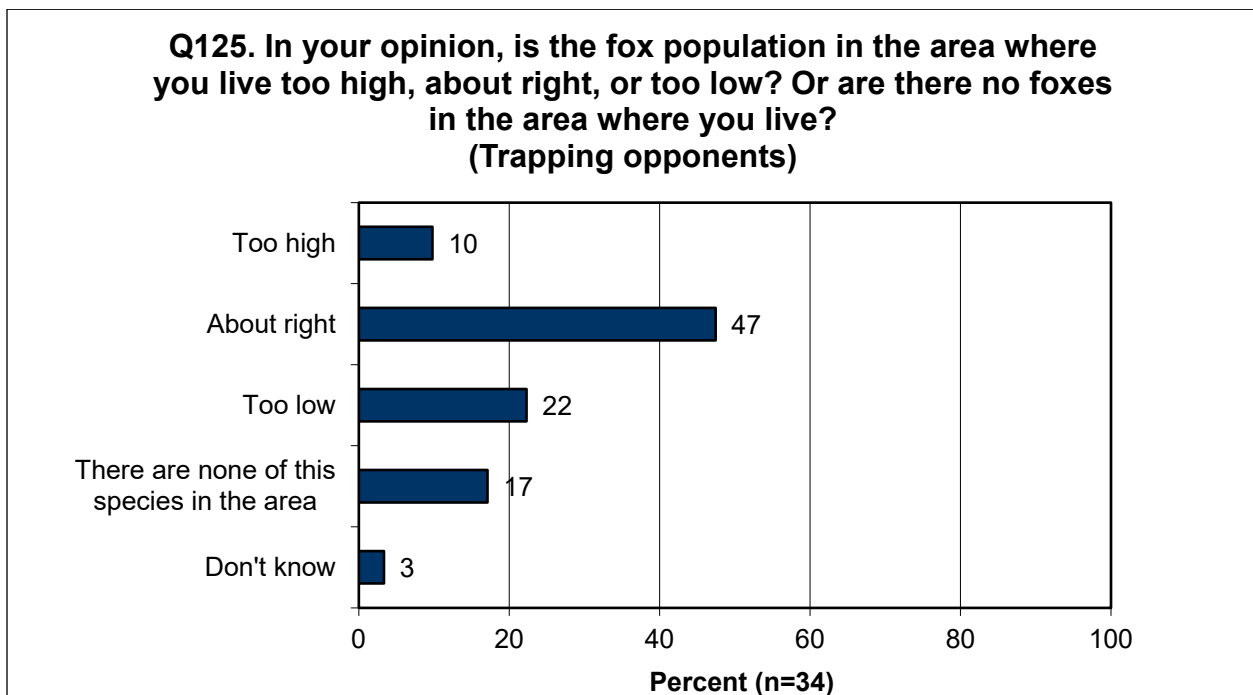


Figure 5.25. Opinion on the Fox Population (Trapping Opponents)

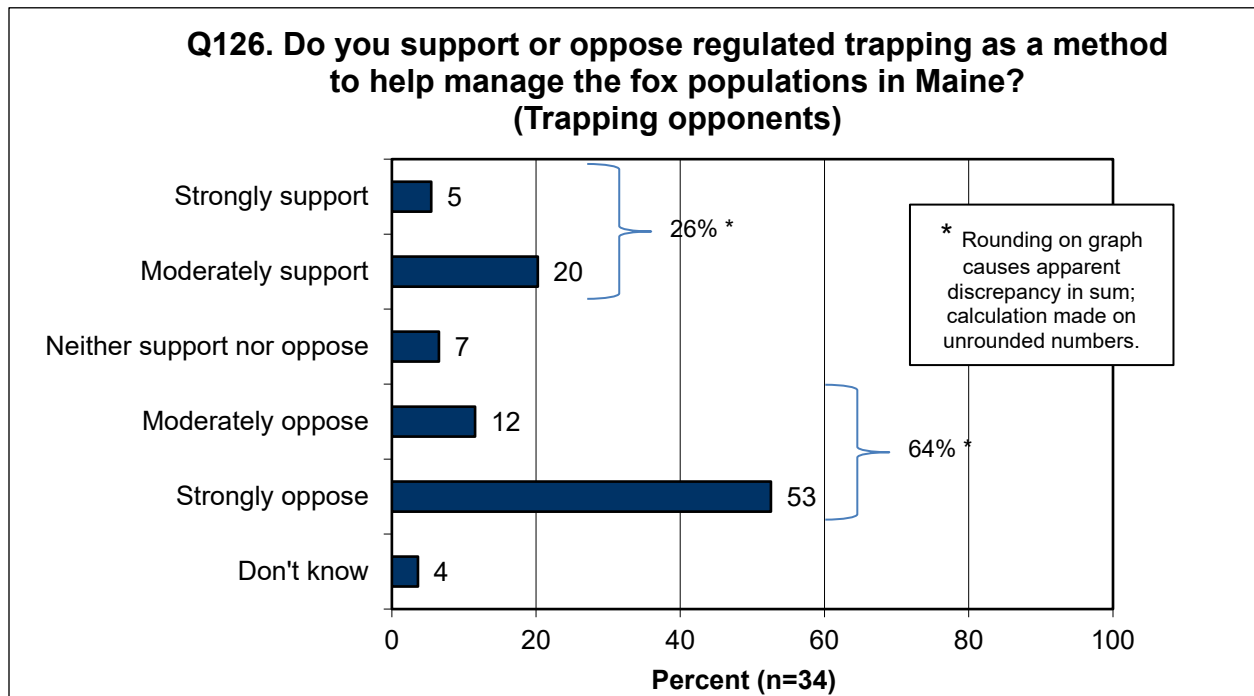


Figure 5.26. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Fox Populations (Trapping Opponents)

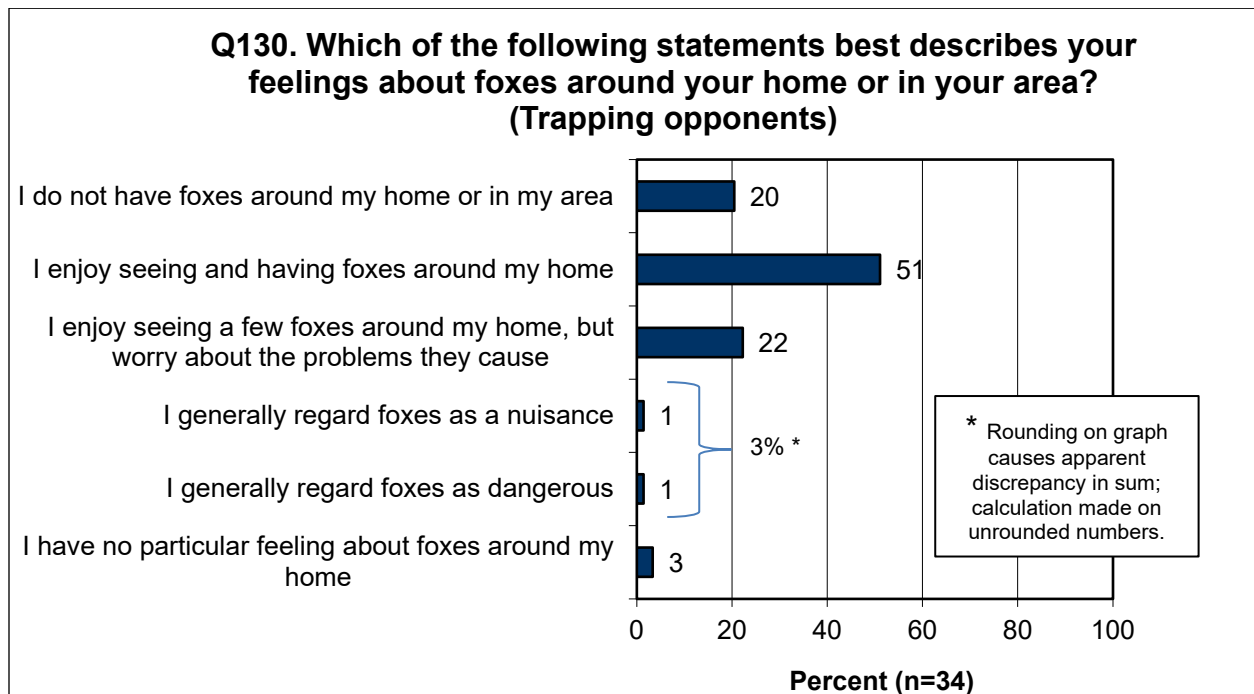


Figure 5.27. Feelings About Foxes (Trapping Opponents)

RACCOON

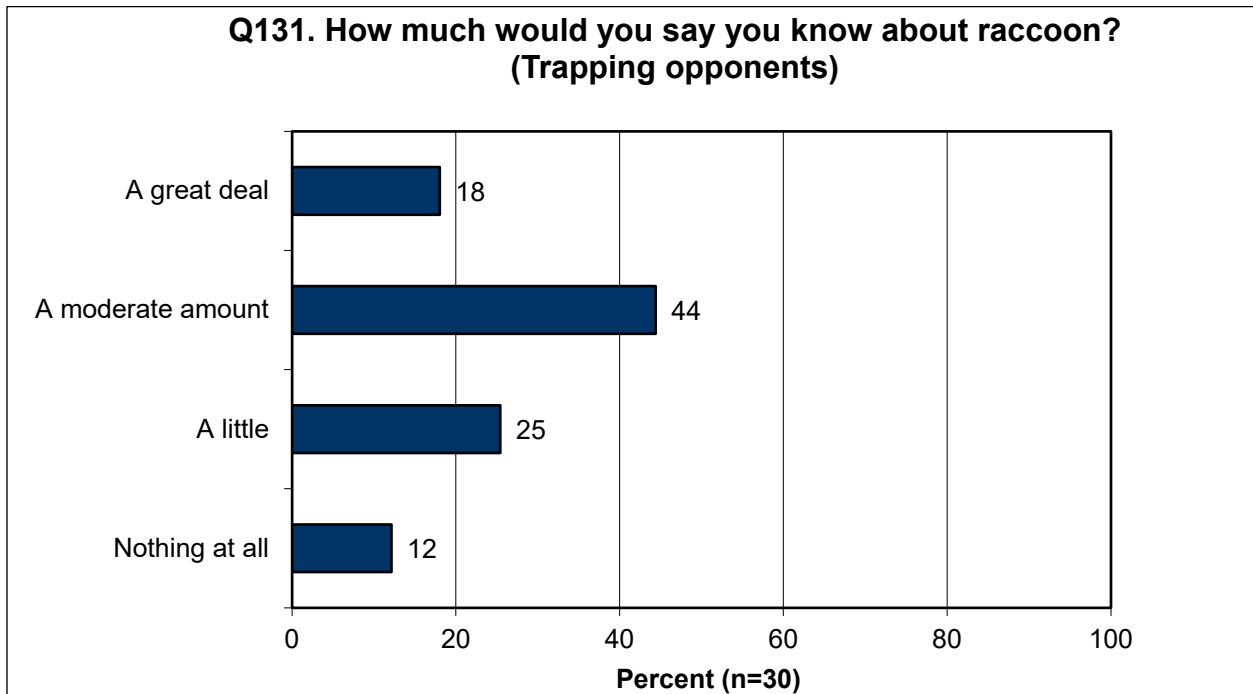


Figure 5.28. Knowledge of Raccoons (Trapping Opponents)

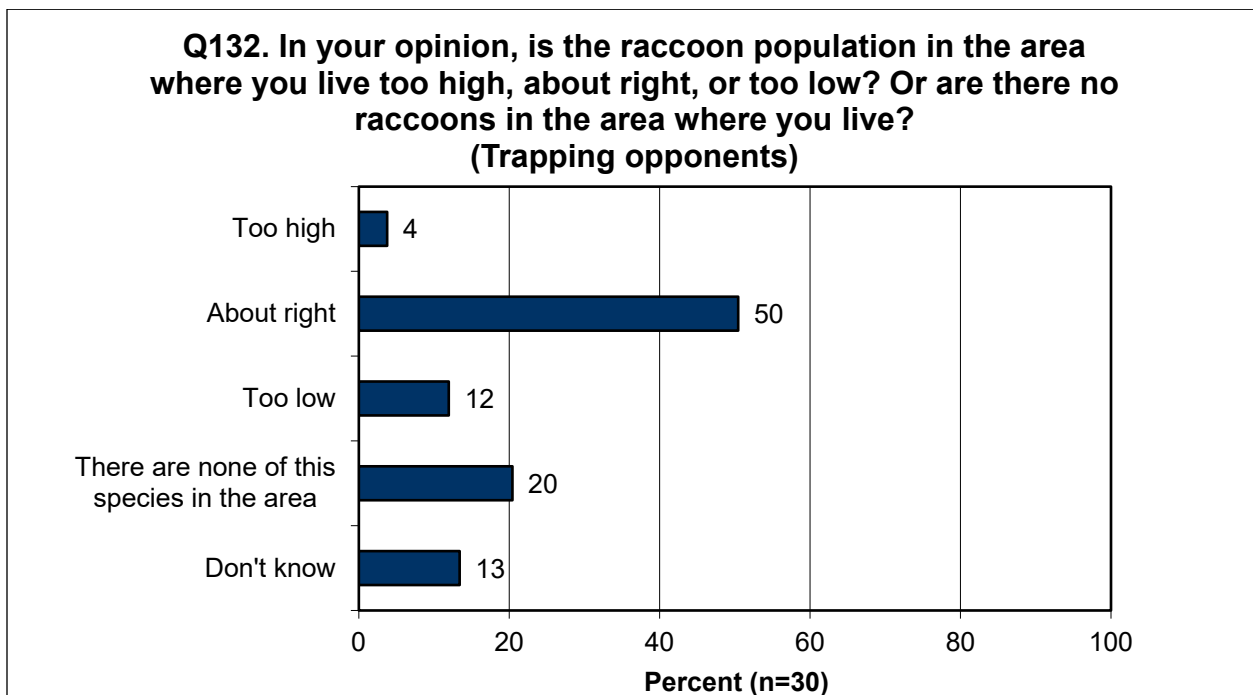


Figure 5.29. Opinion on the Raccoon Population (Trapping Opponents)

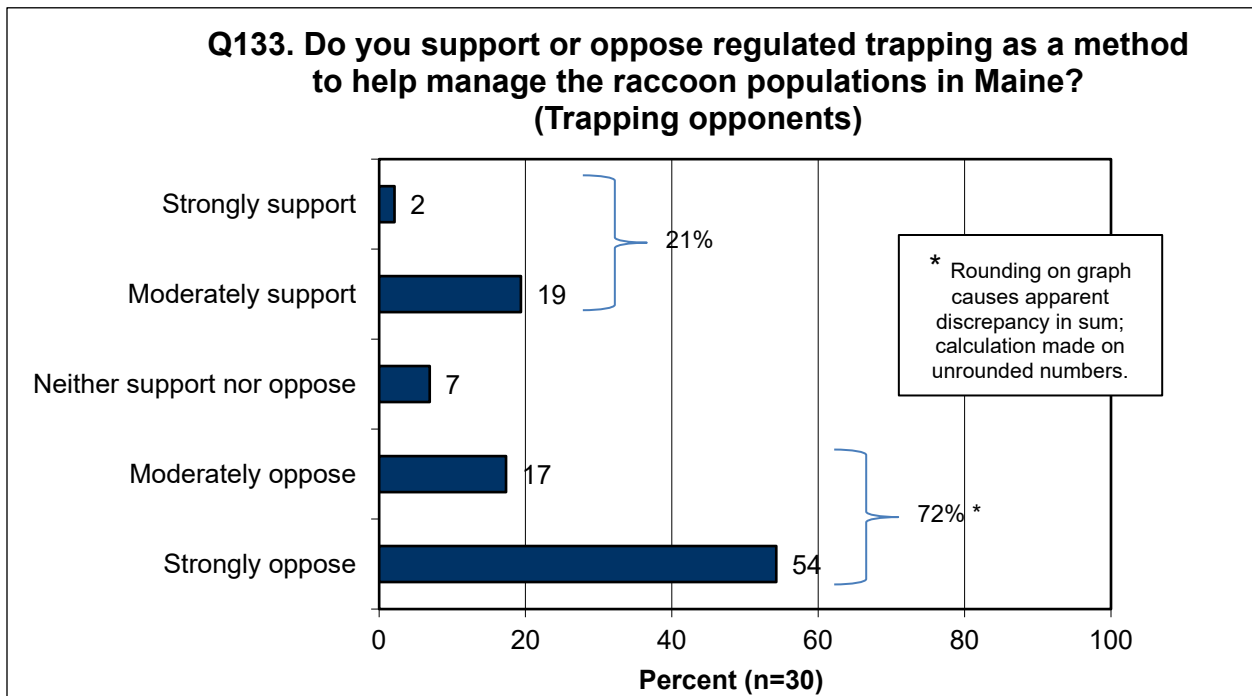


Figure 5.30. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Raccoon Populations (Trapping Opponents)

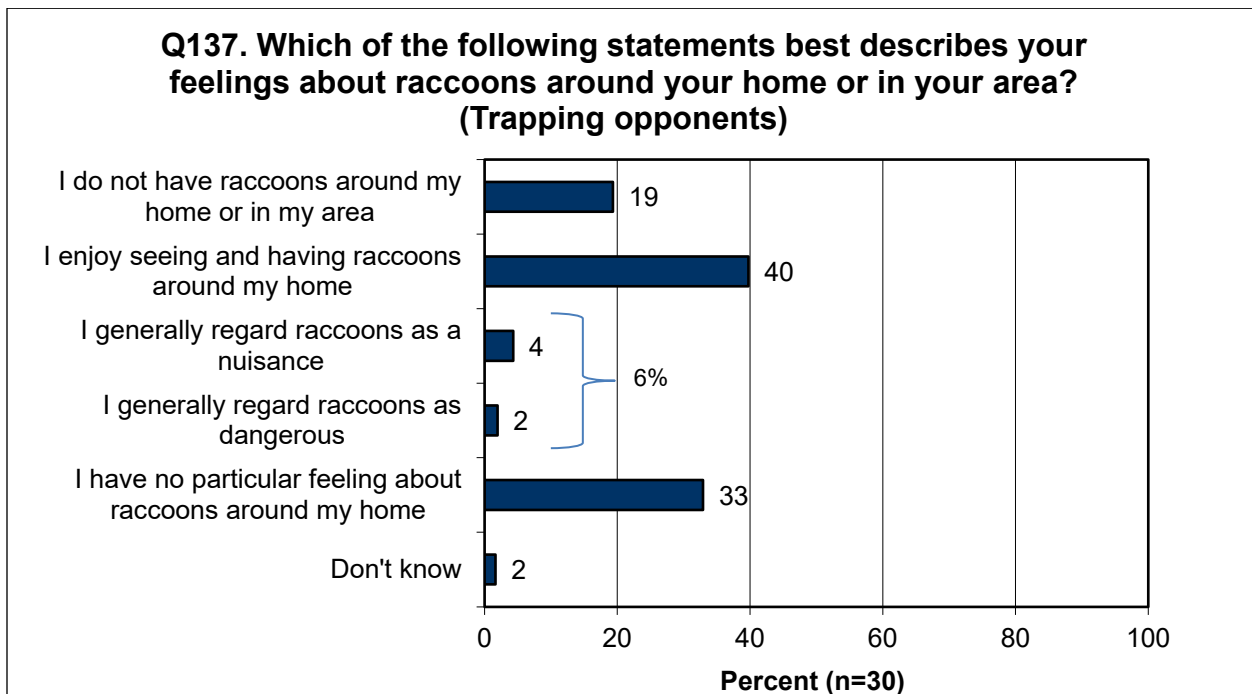


Figure 5.31. Feelings About Raccoon (Trapping Opponents)

SKUNK

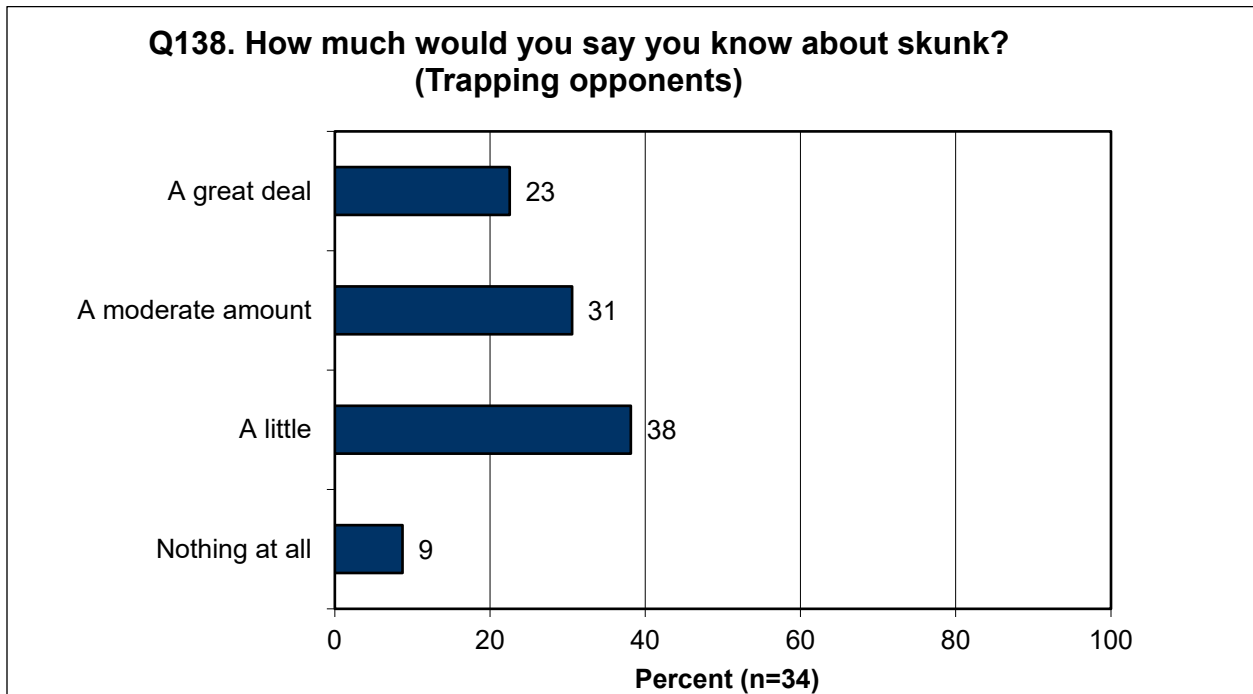


Figure 5.32. Knowledge of Skunks (Trapping Opponents)

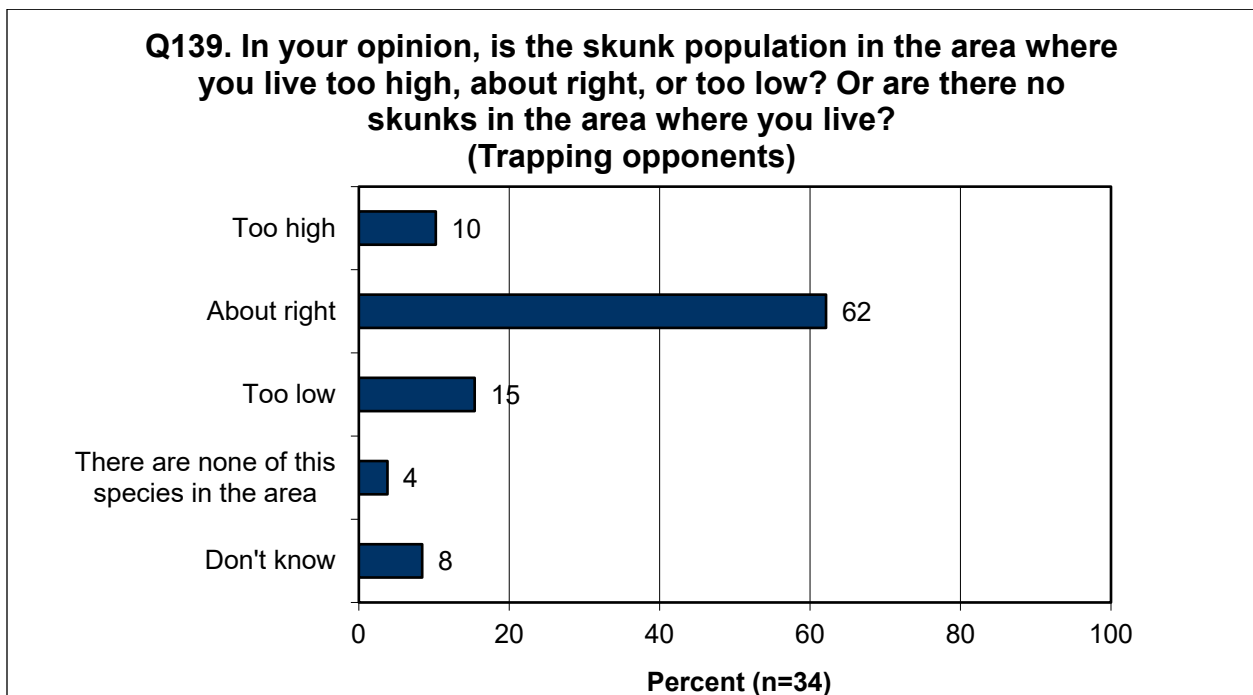


Figure 5.33. Opinion on the Skunk Population (Trapping Opponents)

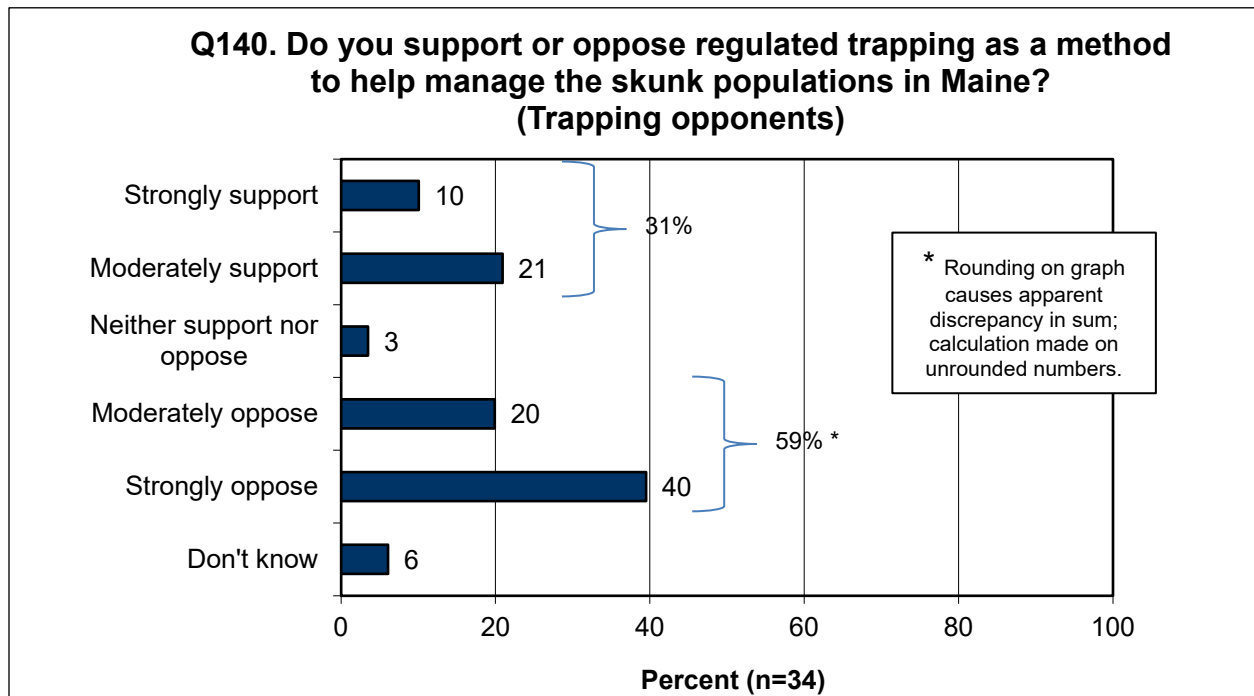


Figure 5.34. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Skunk Populations (Trapping Opponents)

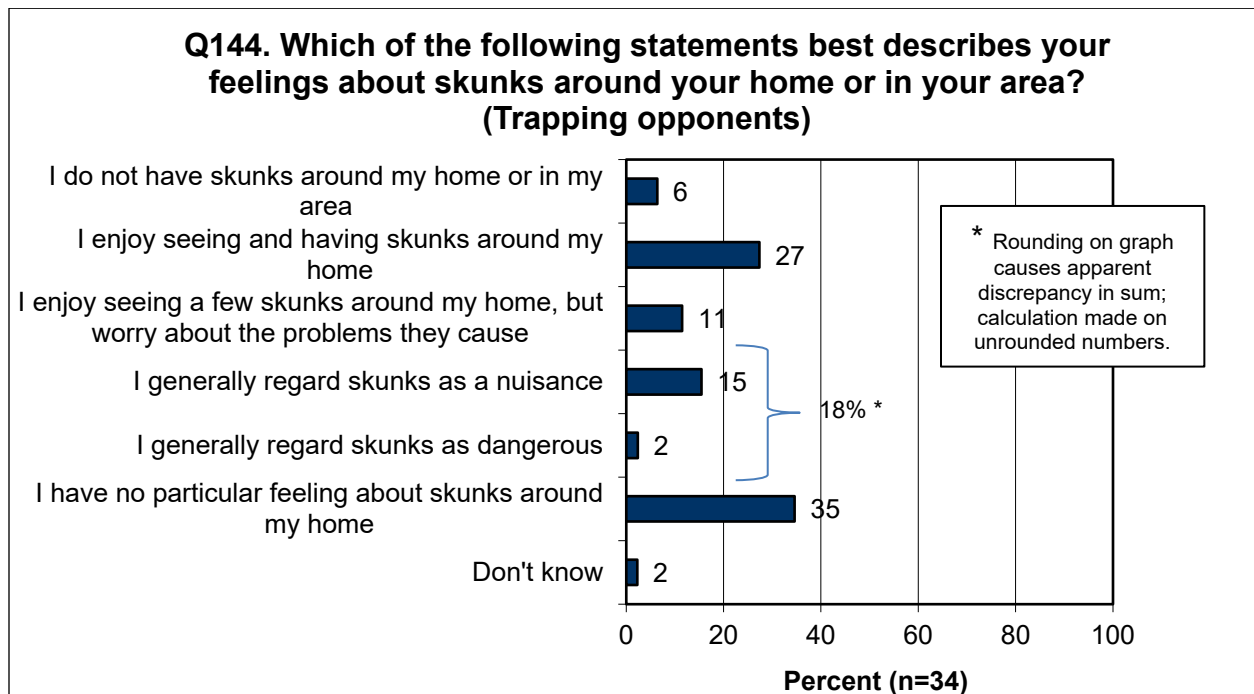


Figure 5.35. Feelings About Skunk (Trapping Opponents)

FISHER

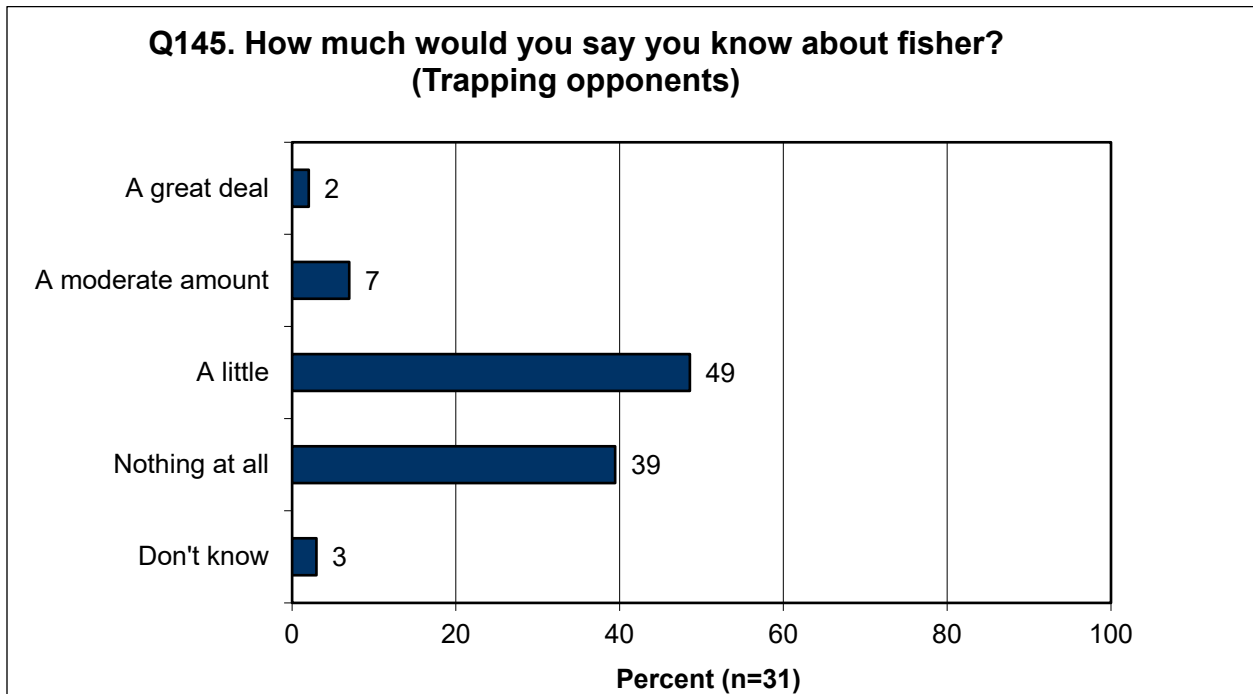


Figure 5.36. Knowledge of Fishers (Trapping Opponents)

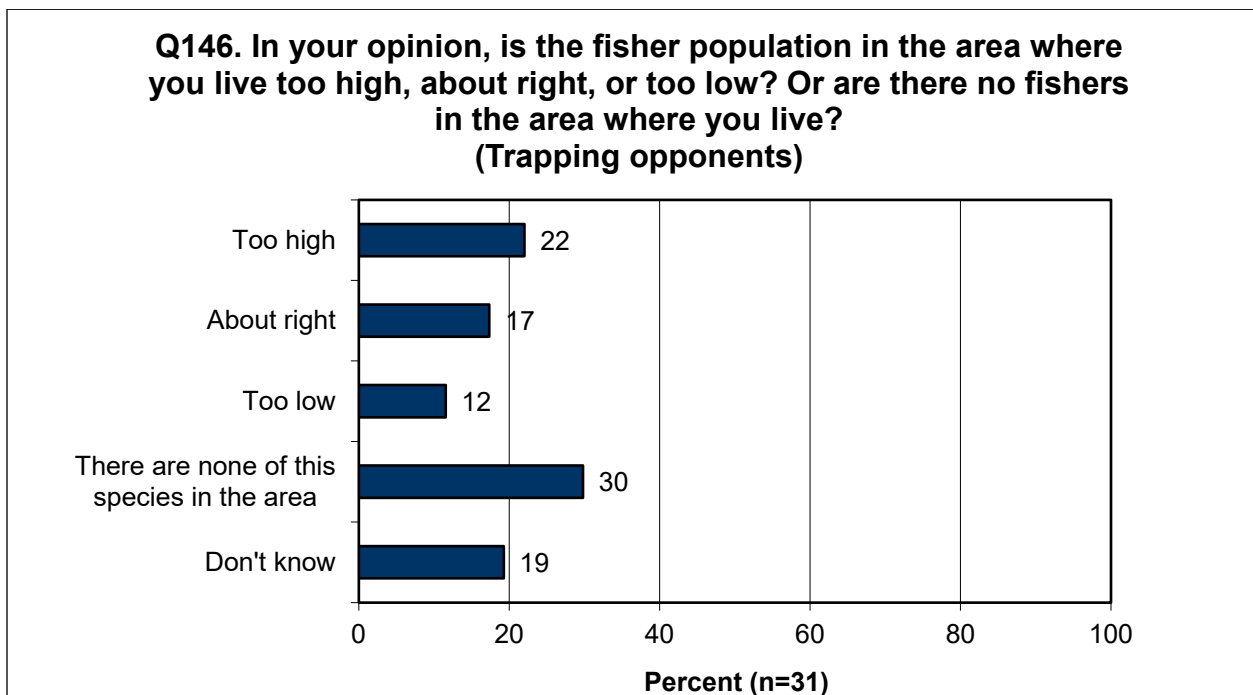


Figure 5.37. Opinion on the Fisher Population (Trapping Opponents)

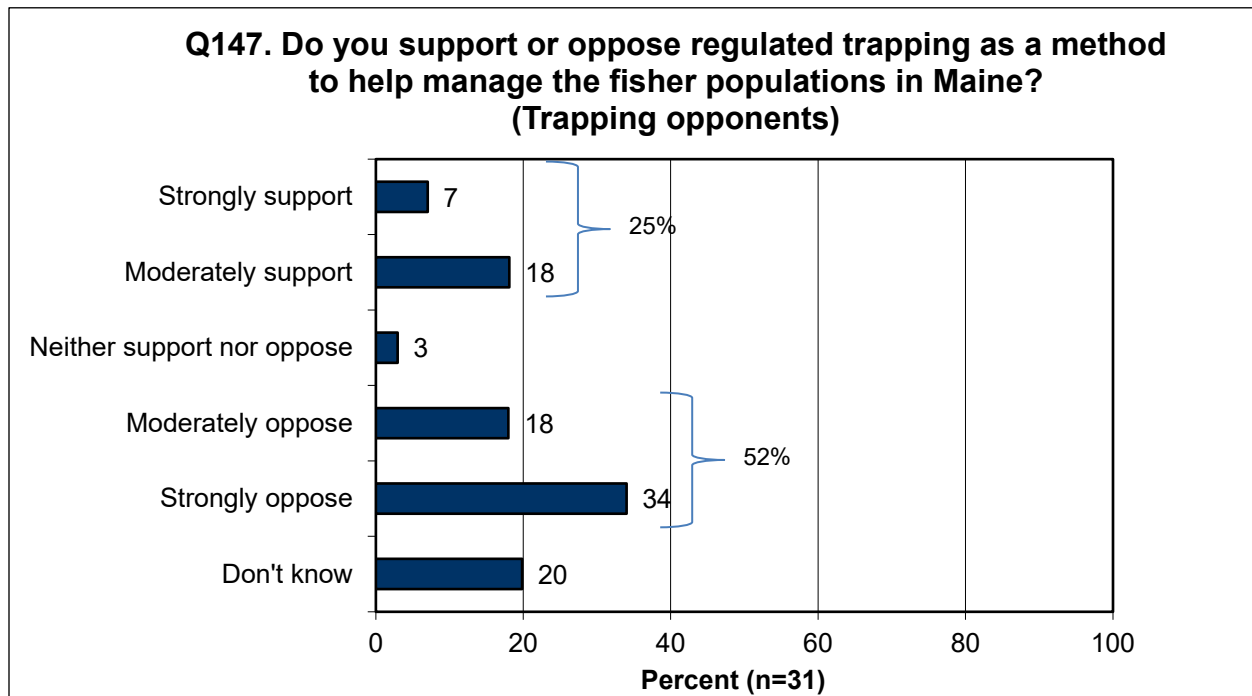


Figure 5.38. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Fisher Populations (Trapping Opponents)

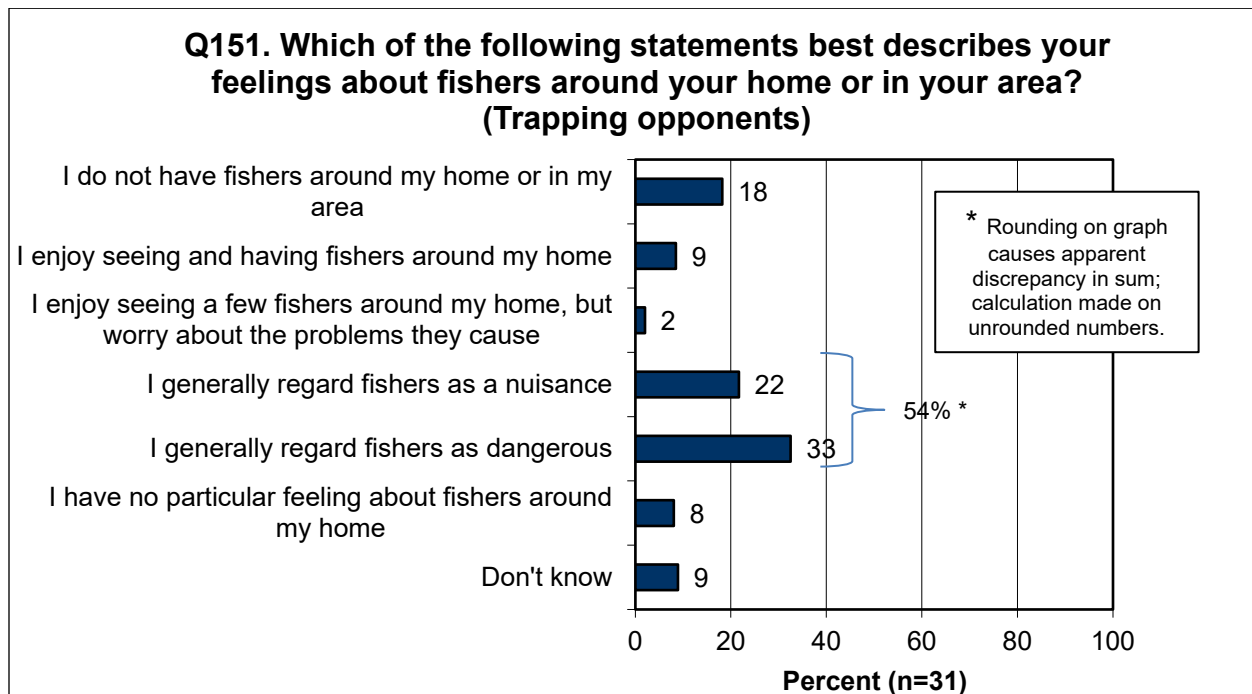


Figure 5.39. Feelings About Fishers (Trapping Opponents)

MARTEN

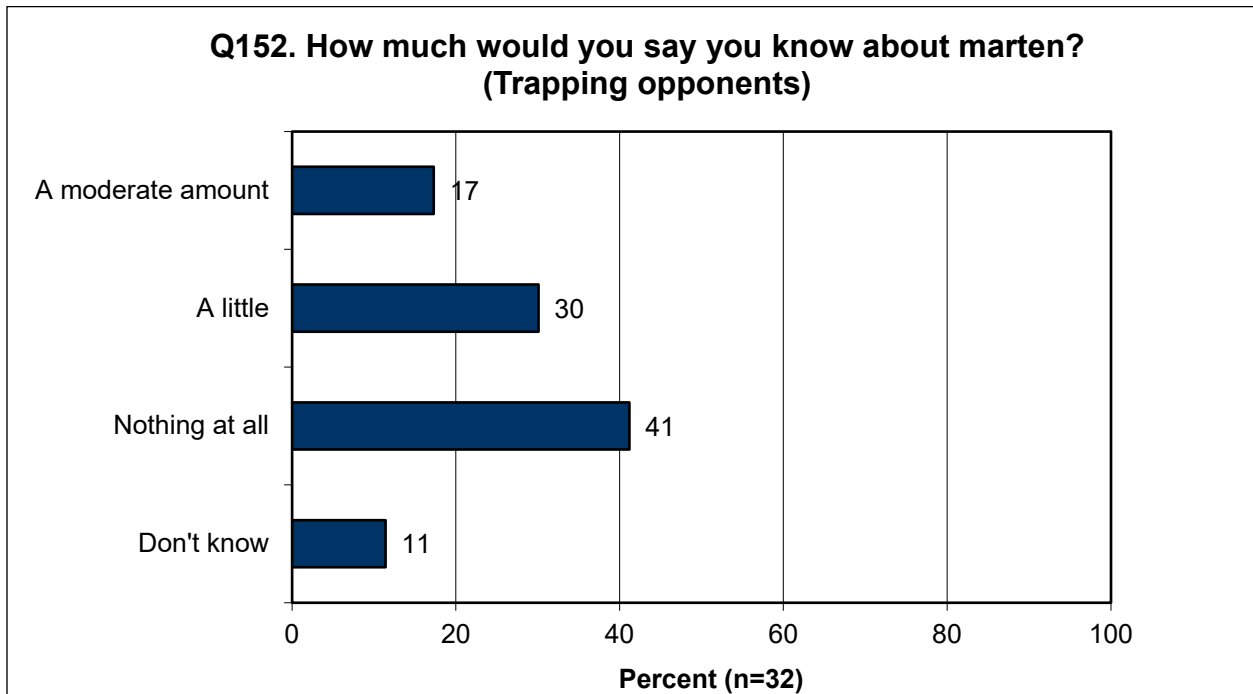


Figure 5.40. Knowledge of Martens (Trapping Opponents)

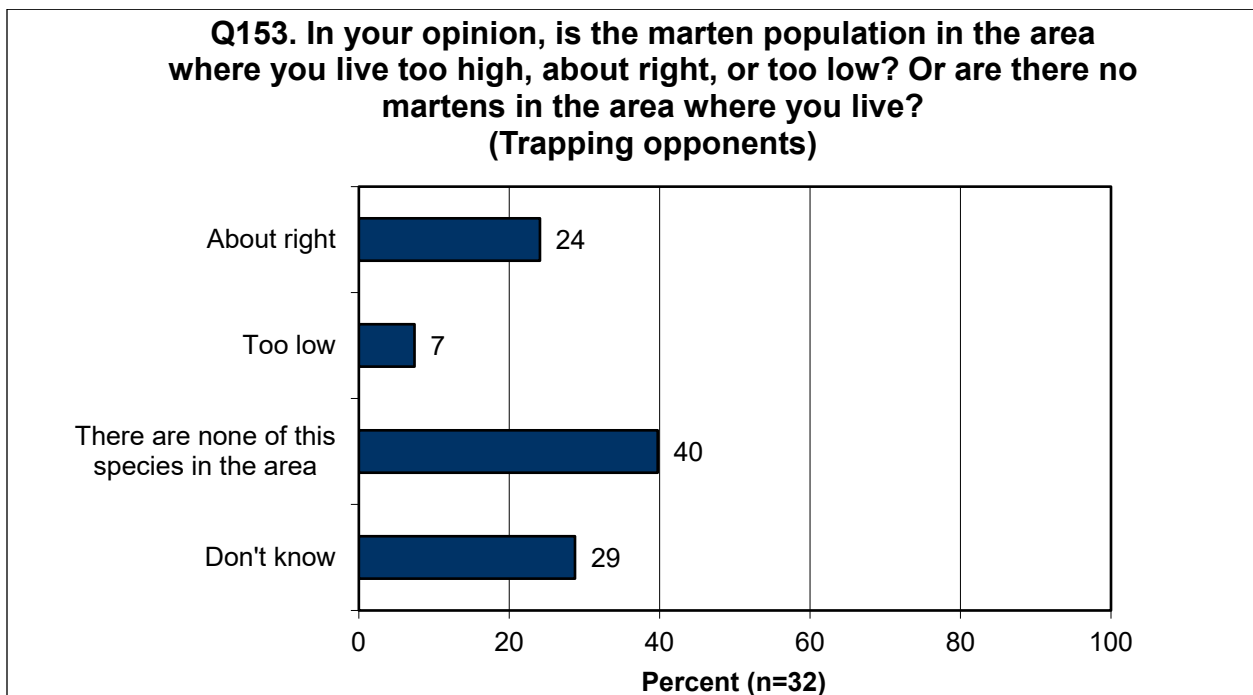


Figure 5.41. Opinion on the Marten Population (Trapping Opponents)

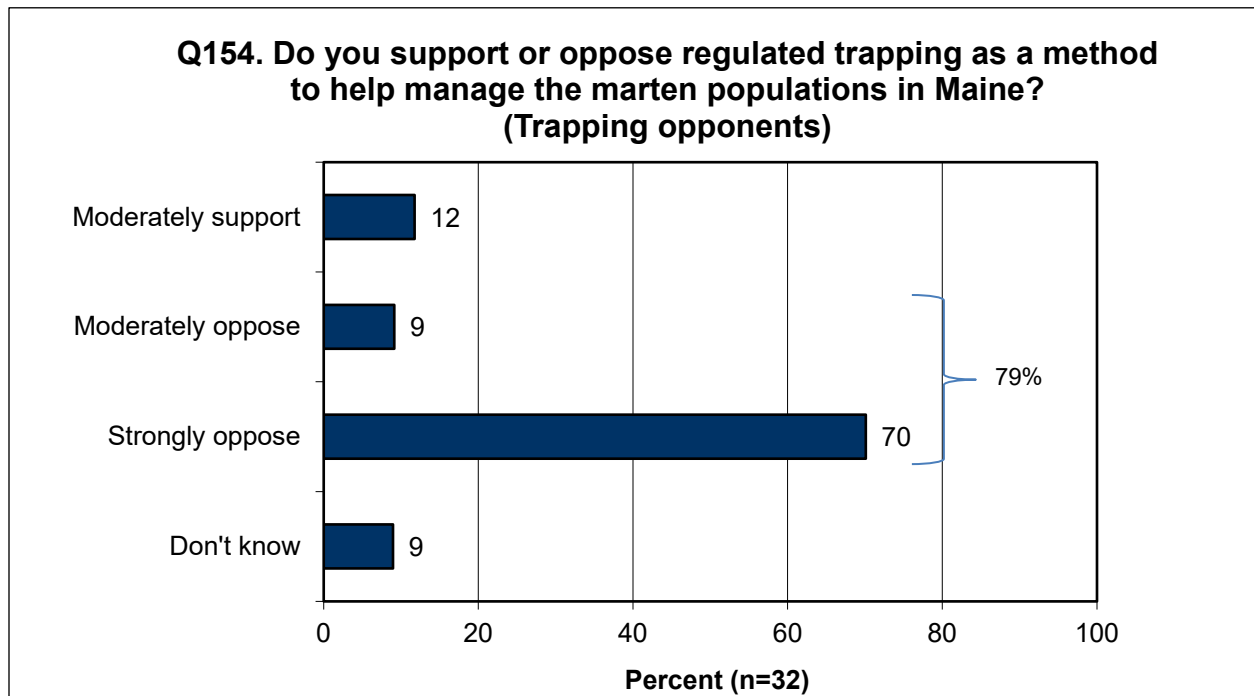


Figure 5.42. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Marten Populations (Trapping Opponents)

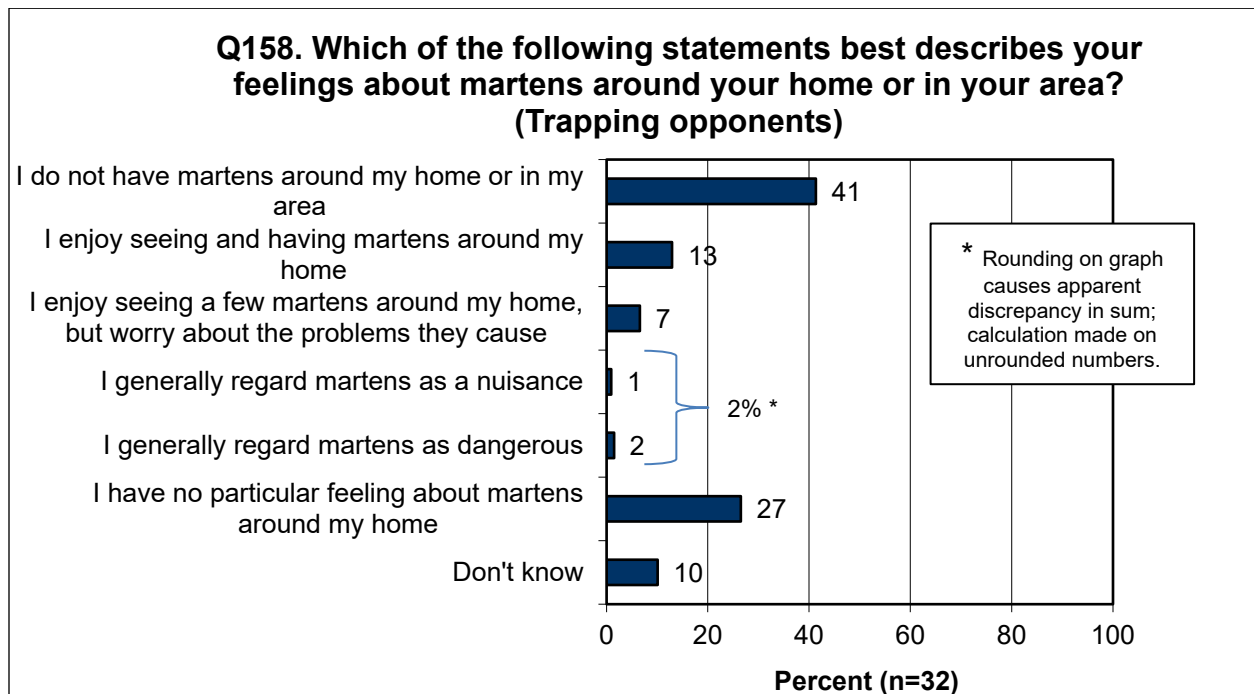


Figure 5.43. Feelings About Martens (Trapping Opponents)

OTTER

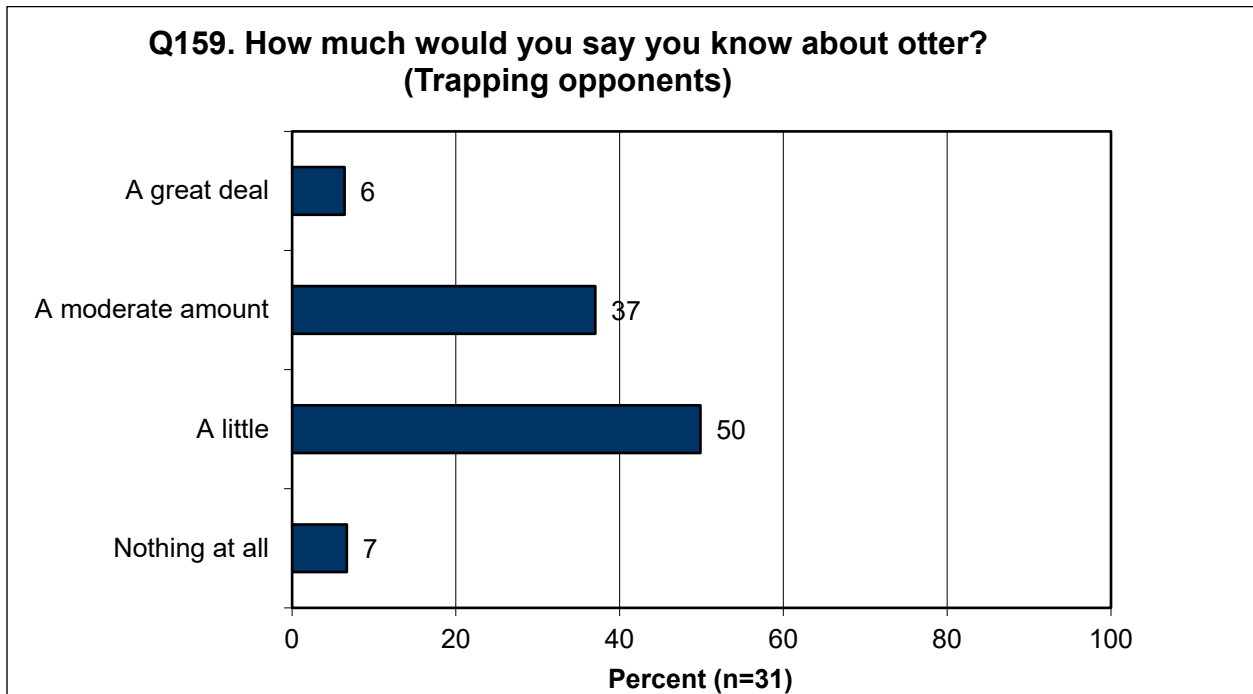


Figure 5.44. Knowledge of Otters (Trapping Opponents)

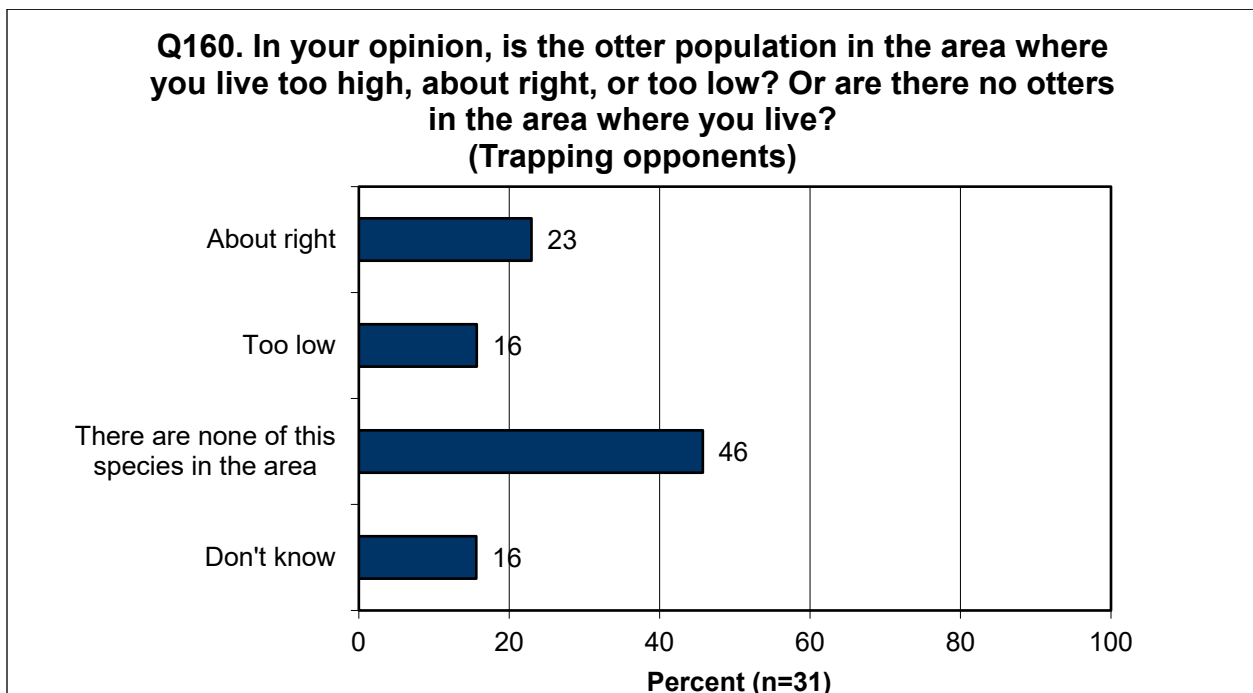


Figure 5.45. Opinion on the Otter Population (Trapping Opponents)

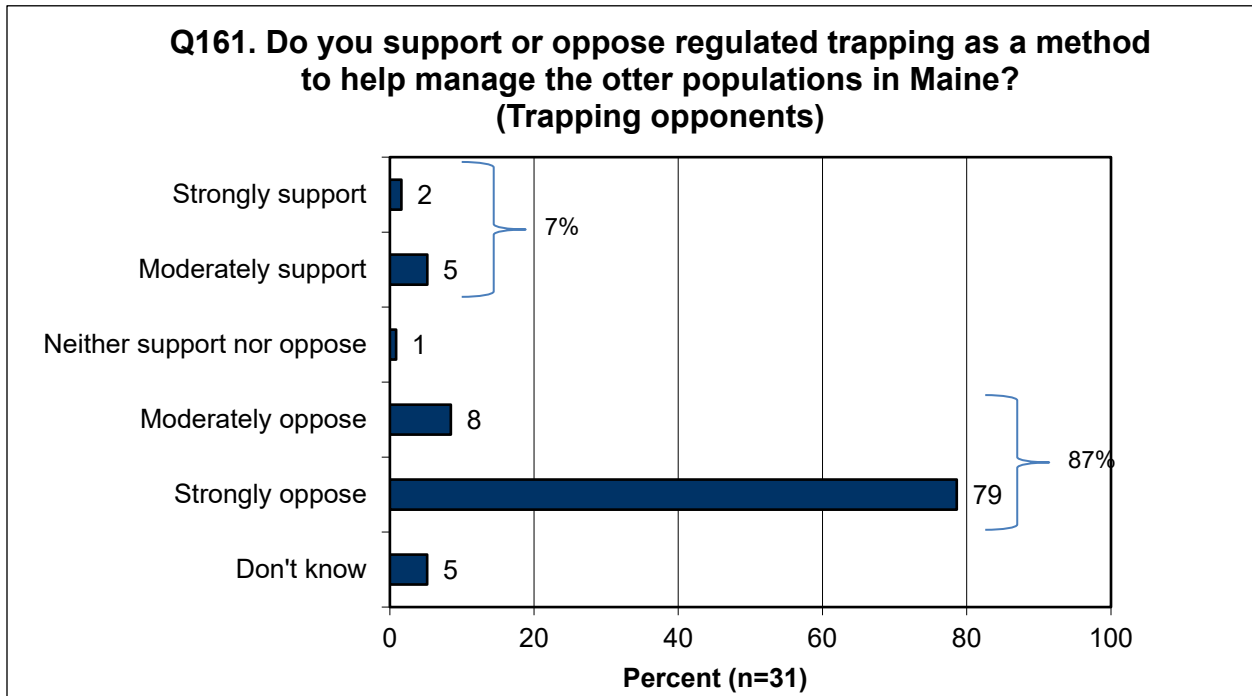


Figure 5.46. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Otter Populations (Trapping Opponents)

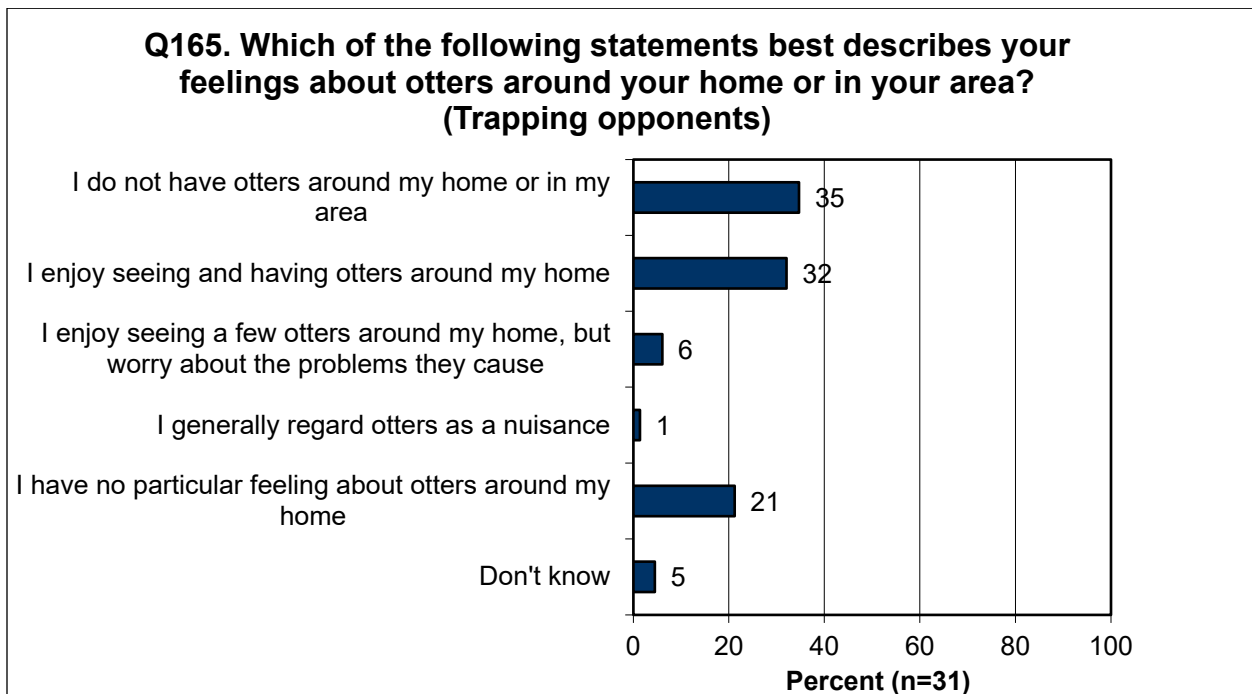


Figure 5.47. Feelings About Otters (Trapping Opponents)

MUSKRAT

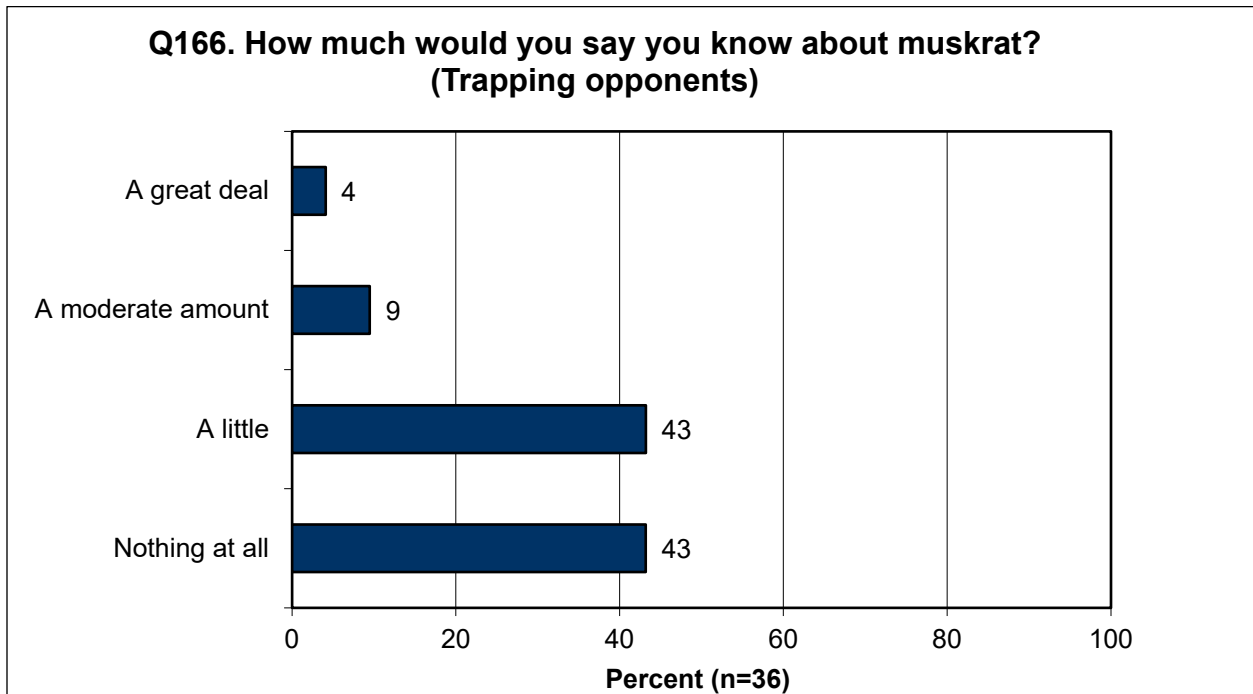


Figure 5.48. Knowledge of Muskrats (Trapping Opponents)

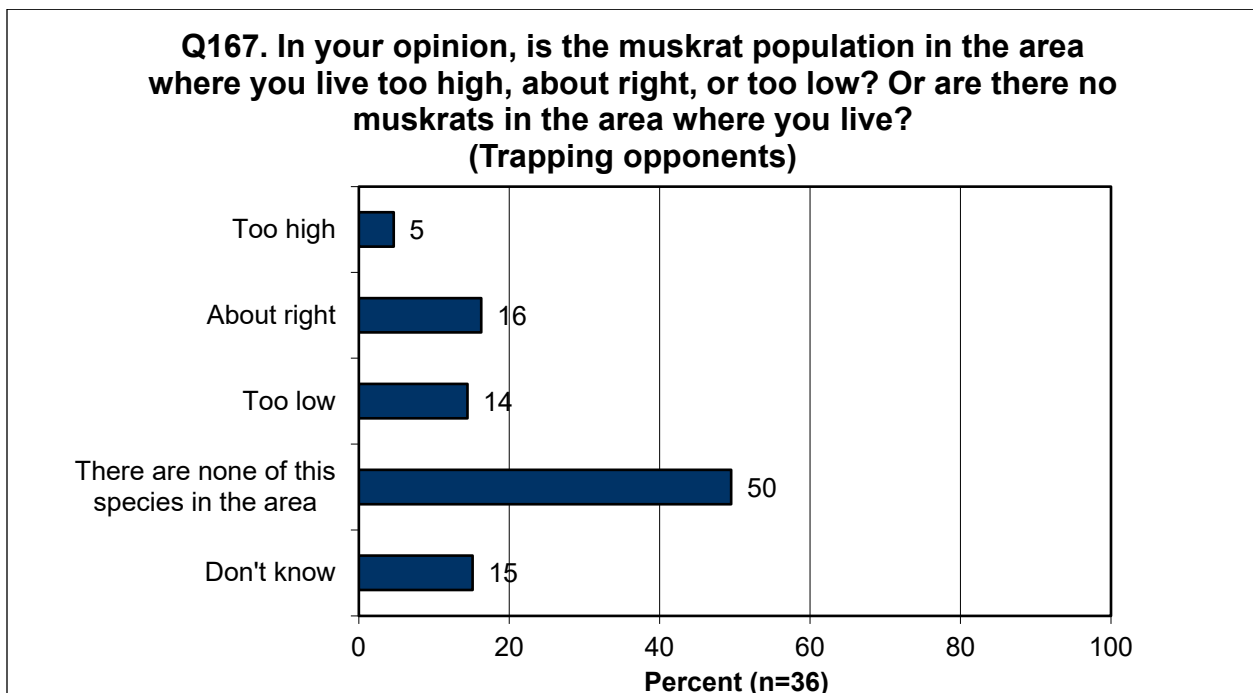


Figure 5.49. Opinion on the Muskrat Population (Trapping Opponents)

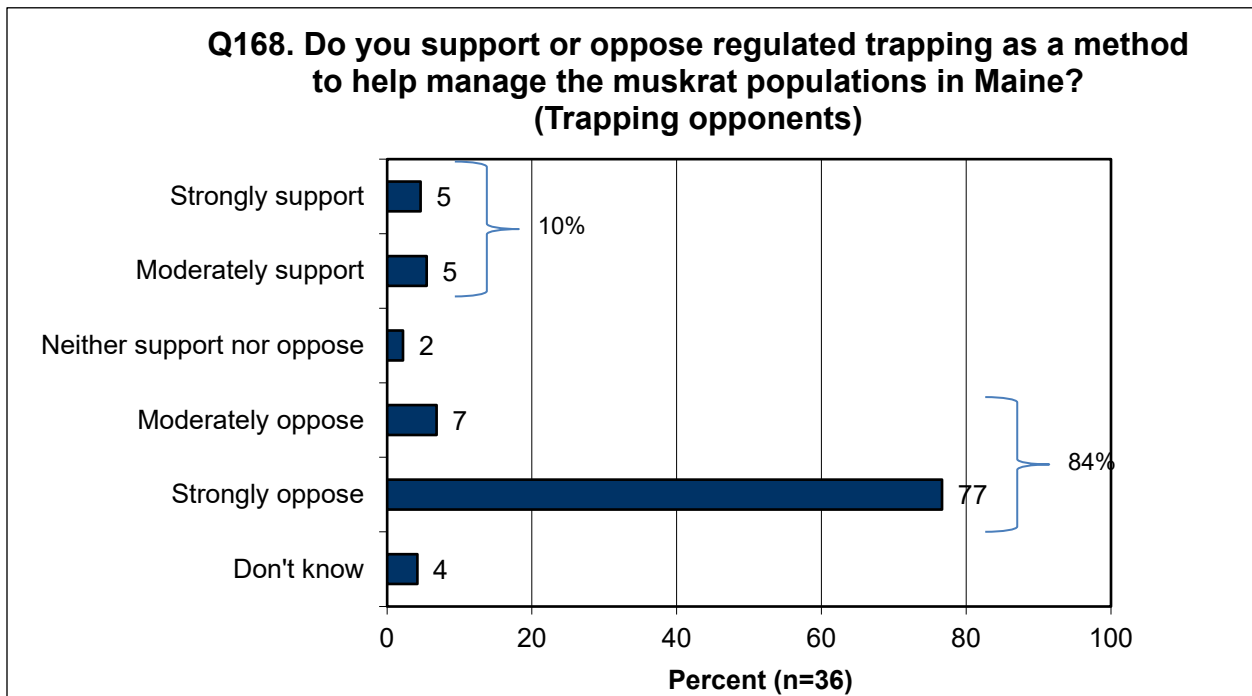


Figure 5.50. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Muskrat Populations (Trapping Opponents)

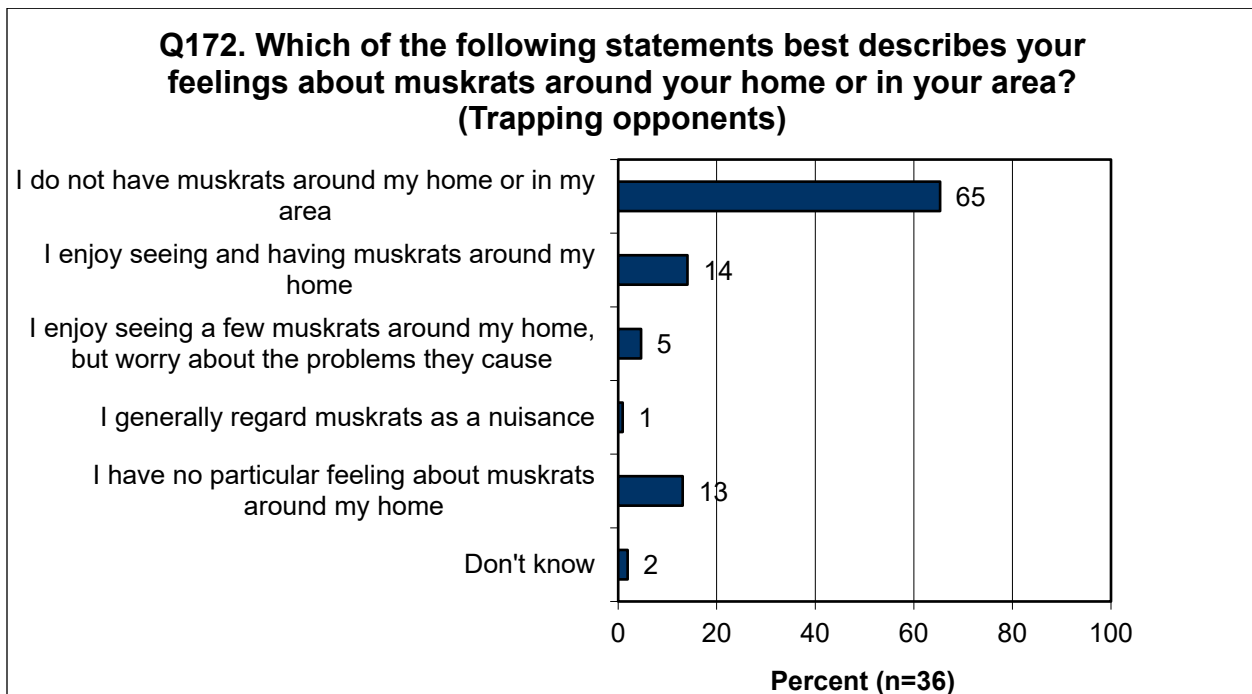


Figure 5.51. Feelings About Muskrats (Trapping Opponents)

SUMMARY FINDINGS FOR ALL FURBEARER SPECIES

The highest self-professed knowledge level is for raccoon, while knowledge levels of fisher and muskrat are low (Table 5.1). The table is ranked by the “great deal and moderate amount combined” values.

Table 5.1. How much would you say you know about [species]? (Trapping Opponents)

	A great deal	A moderate amount	A great deal and moderate amount combined	A little	Nothing at all	Don't know
Raccoon	18	44	62	25	12	0
Fox	8	45	53	34	13	0
Skunk	23	31	53	38	9	0
Otter	6	37	43	50	7	0
Coyote	6	33	38	39	15	7
Bobcat	6	21	27	35	36	2
Marten	0	17	17	30	41	11
Beaver	1	15	16	57	26	0
Muskrat	4	9	14	43	43	0
Fisher	2	7	9	49	39	3

Green shading indicates the highest knowledge levels among all the species, showing all within 5 percentage points of the top species. Red shading indicates the lowest knowledge levels among all the species, showing all within 5 percentage points of the lowest species. Any apparent discrepancies in the sums are caused by rounding in the table; all sums are calculated on unrounded numbers.

More trapping opponents think the fisher and coyote populations are too high than too low (Table 5.2). For all other species, there is a higher percentage of trapping opponents saying the population is too low than too high. The table is ranked by the values in the “too high” column.

Table 5.2. In your opinion, is the [species] population in the area where you live too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no [species] in the area where you live? (Trapping Opponents)

	Too high	About right	Too low	None in area	Don't know
Fisher	22	17	12	30	19
Coyote	16	27	1	19	37
Fox	10	47	22	17	3
Skunk	10	62	15	4	8
Muskrat	5	16	14	50	15
Bobcat	4	22	27	26	21
Raccoon	4	50	12	20	13
Beaver	3	25	10	44	17
Marten	0	24	7	40	29
Otter	0	23	16	46	16

Red shading indicates that “too high” exceeds “too low”; green shading indicates that “too low” exceeds “too high.”

The most support is for trapping coyote, skunk, and fox to help manage their populations (Table 5.3). The most opposition is for trapping otter and muskrats. The table is ranked by overall support.

Table 5.3. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the [species] population in Maine? (Trapping Opponents)

	Strongly support	Overall support	Neither	Strongly oppose	Overall oppose	Don't know
Coyote	20	31	0	38	48	20
Skunk	10	31	3	40	59	6
Fox	5	26	7	53	64	4
Fisher	7	25	3	34	52	20
Raccoon	2	21	7	54	72	0
Bobcat	5	20	1	59	61	18
Beaver	4	20	15	55	63	2
Marten	0	12	0	70	79	9
Muskrat	5	10	2	77	84	4
Otter	2	7	1	79	87	5

Green shading indicates the highest support among all the species, showing all within 5 percentage points of the top species. Red shading indicates the highest opposition among all the species, showing all within 5 percentage points of the top species.

Table 5.4 shows that fox is the most favored species for seeing and having them around; fisher and coyote are the least favored. The table is ranked by the values in the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” column.

Table 5.4. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about [species] around your home or in your area? (Trapping Opponents)

	None around	Enjoy seeing and having them around home	Enjoy seeing and having them but worry about problems	Regard them as a nuisance	Regard them as dangerous	Nuisance and dangerous combined	No feeling	Don't know
Fox	20	51	22	1	1	3	3	0
Raccoon	19	40	0	4	2	6	33	2
Otter	35	32	6	1	0	1	21	5
Skunk	6	27	11	15	2	18	35	2
Beaver	47	26	7	1	2	3	17	0
Muskrat	65	14	5	1	0	1	13	2
Marten	41	13	7	1	2	2	27	10
Bobcat	42	12	6	0	4	4	26	10
Fisher	18	9	2	22	33	54	8	9
Coyote	19	8	24	4	18	22	21	7

Dark green shading indicates the highest in the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response among all the species. Green shading indicates that the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response exceeds nuisance/dangerous combined. Dark red shading indicates the highest in the combined nuisance/dangerous among all the species. Red shading indicates that the nuisance/dangerous combined response exceeds the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response.

Beaver is perceived to be the most beneficial to Maine, while fisher is seen as the least beneficial (Table 5.5).

Table 5.5. How beneficial do you consider it to have [species] in Maine, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all beneficial and 10 is extremely beneficial? (Trapping Opponents)

	Mean Ratings
Beaver	8.5
Fox	8.3
Otter	8.0
Muskrat	8.0
Bobcat	7.8
Marten	7.7
Raccoon	7.6
Skunk	6.8
Coyote	6.7
Fisher	5.6

ATTITUDES TOWARD FURBEARER MANAGEMENT

Trapping opponents are about evenly split between support for (48%) and opposition to (41%) managing furbearer populations to reduce wildlife diseases that could affect people, pets, and other wildlife (Figure 5.52). Note that most of the opposition is *strong* opposition (33%).

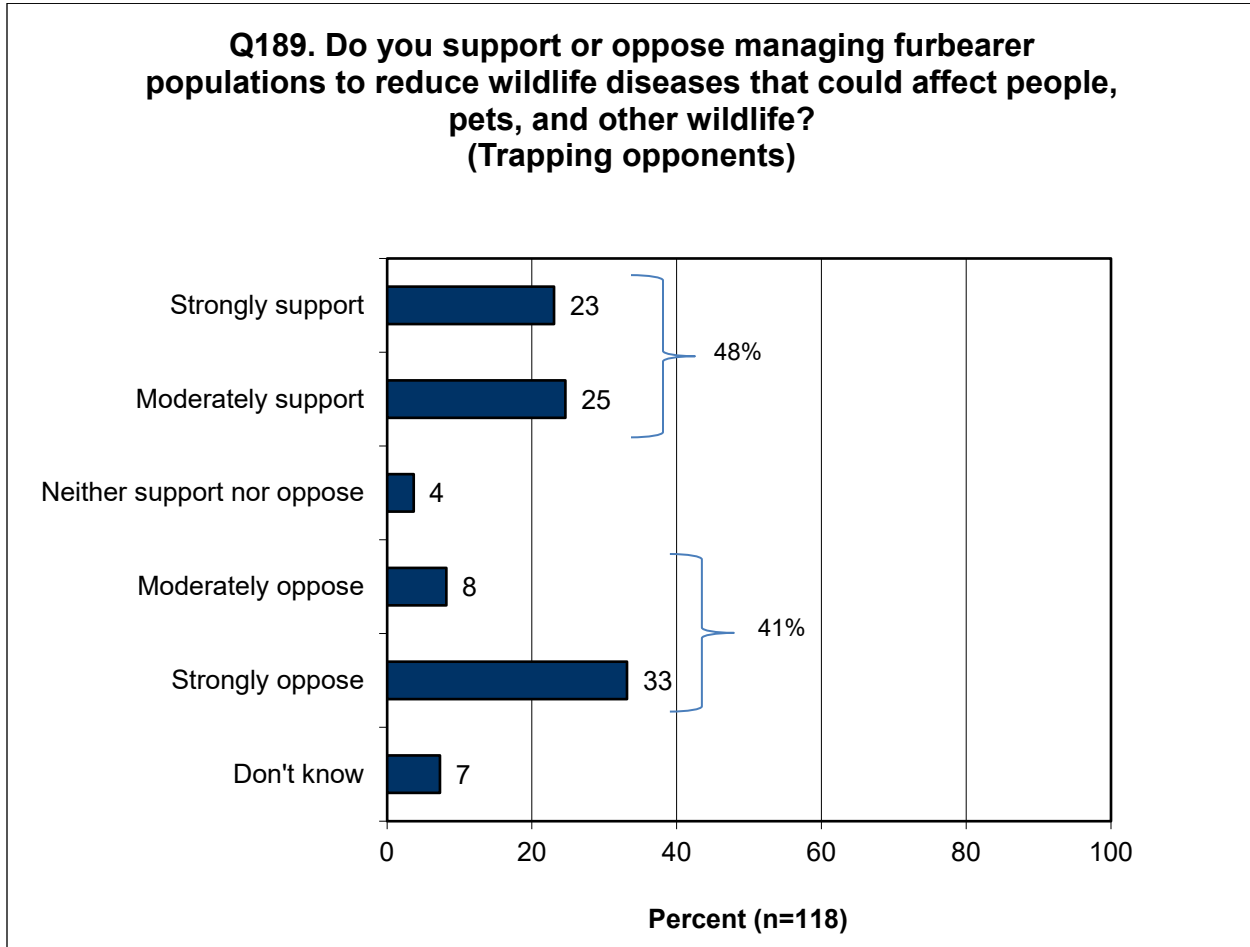


Figure 5.52. Support for or Opposition to Managing Furbearer Populations to Reduce Wildlife Diseases (Trapping Opponents)

HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICTS

About a quarter of trapping opponents (26%) have had problems with wild animals or birds in the past 2 years (Figure 5.53). Deer and raccoon are the most common culprits, with skunk and fisher not far behind (Figure 5.54).

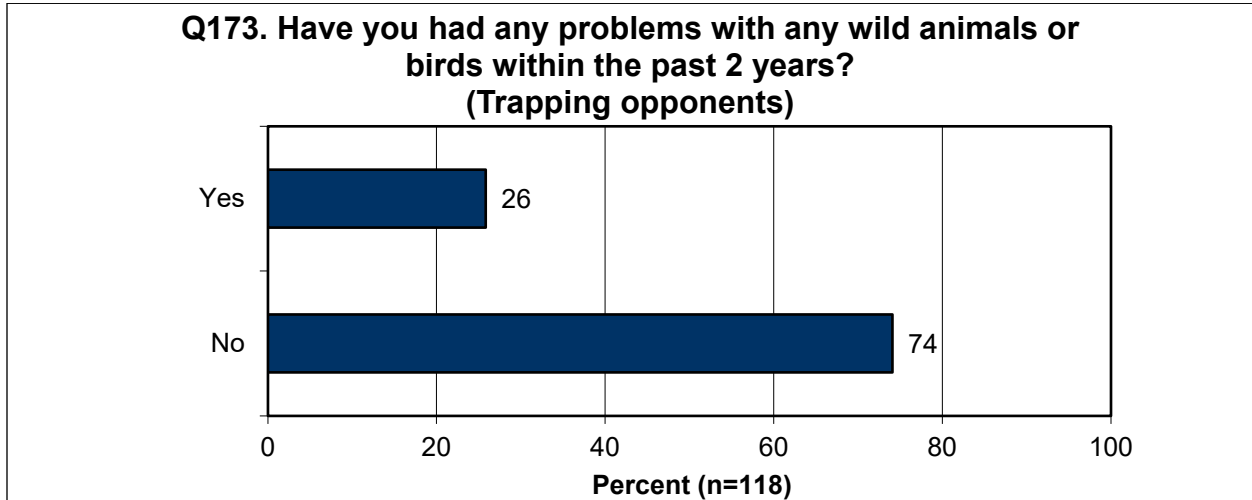


Figure 5.53. Problems With Wild Animals or Birds (Trapping Opponents)

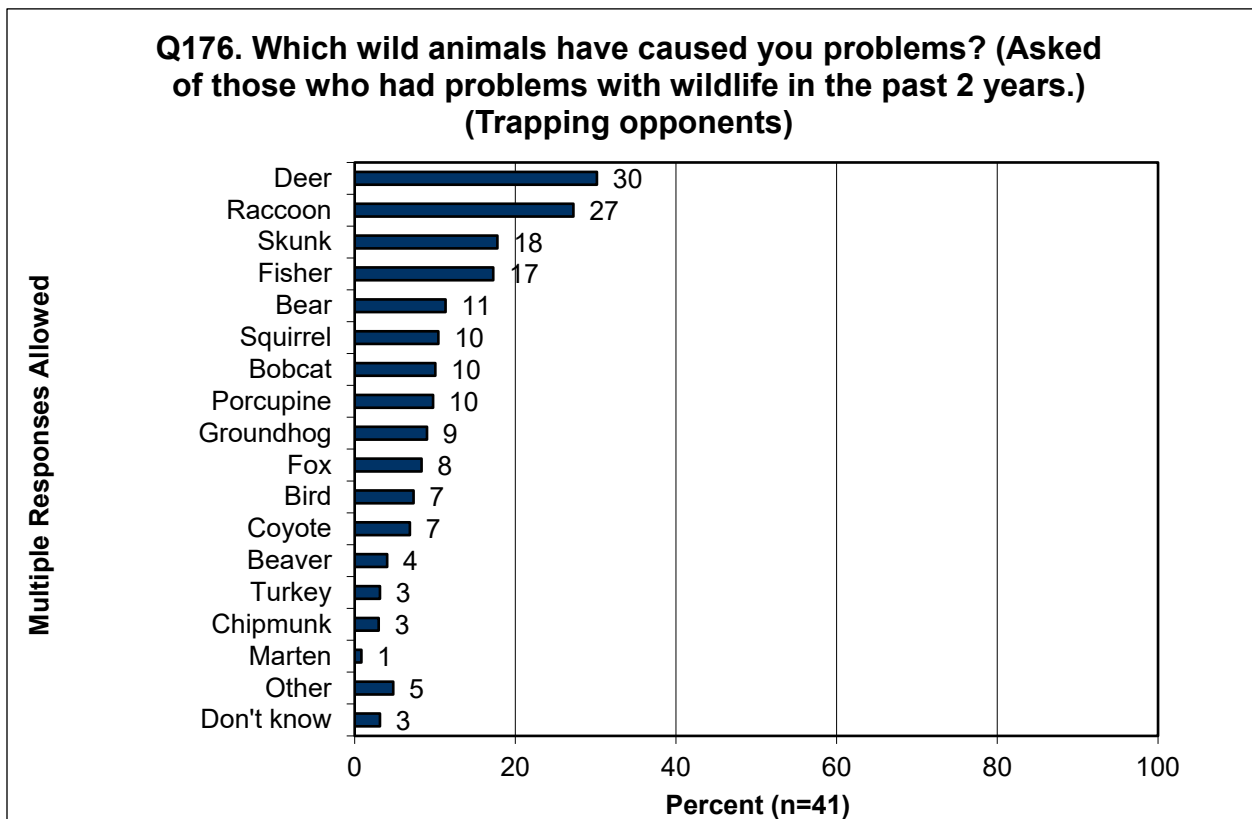


Figure 5.54. Types of Wild Animals or Birds That Caused Problems (Trapping Opponents)

Damage to gardens and human property are the most common problems among the trapping opponents in the survey who had problems with wildlife (Figure 5.55).

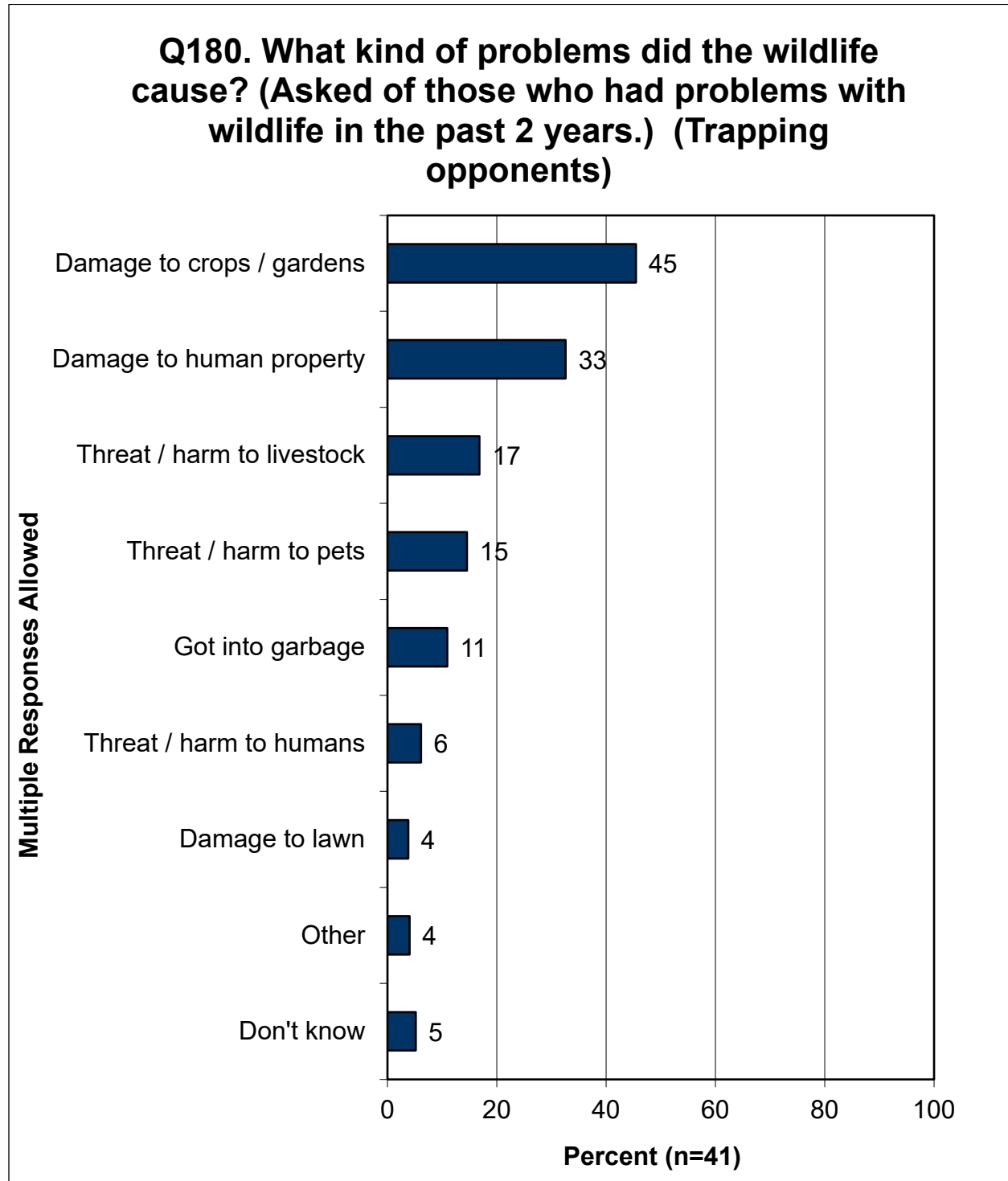


Figure 5.55. Types of Problems Caused by Wild Animals or Birds (Trapping Opponents)

Deterrents and fences are the most common ways that trapping opponents had addressed the problem, although 11% had allowed trapping to address the problem (Figure 5.56).

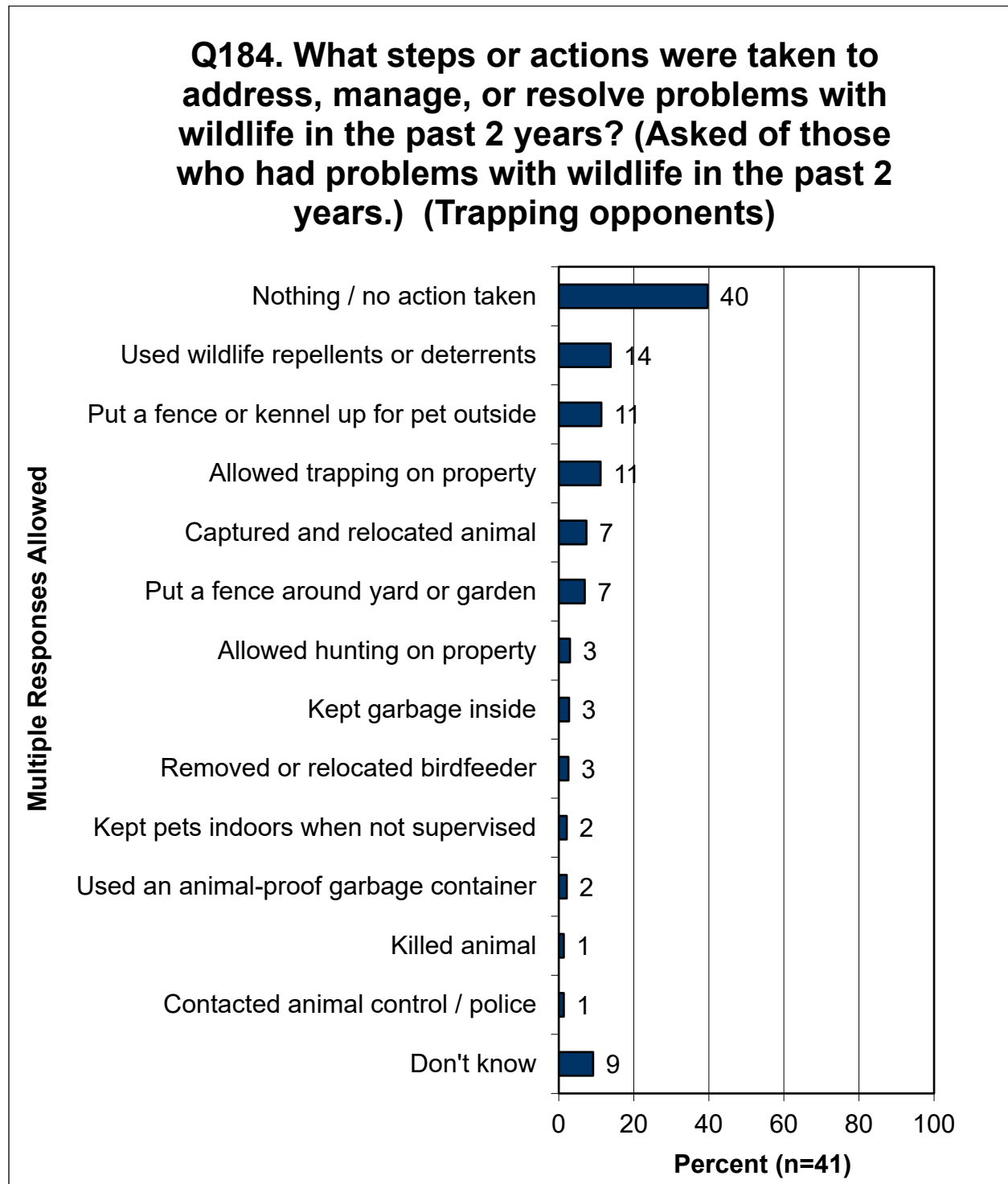


Figure 5.56. Actions Taken to Address Problems Caused by Wild Animals or Birds (Trapping Opponents)

None of the trapping opponents indicated that they had hired anyone to address the problem with wildlife (Figure 5.57).

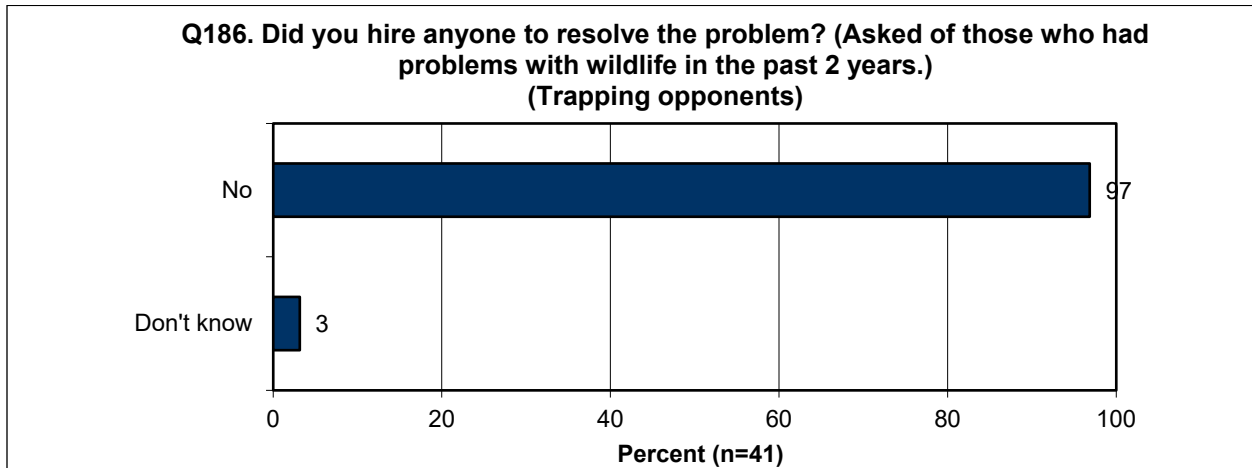


Figure 5.57. Hiring Anyone to Resolve Wildlife Problems (Trapping Opponents)

Figure 5.58 shows much more opposition to (62%) than support for (30%) trapping as a way to resolve problems with wildlife, among the trapping opponents in the survey.

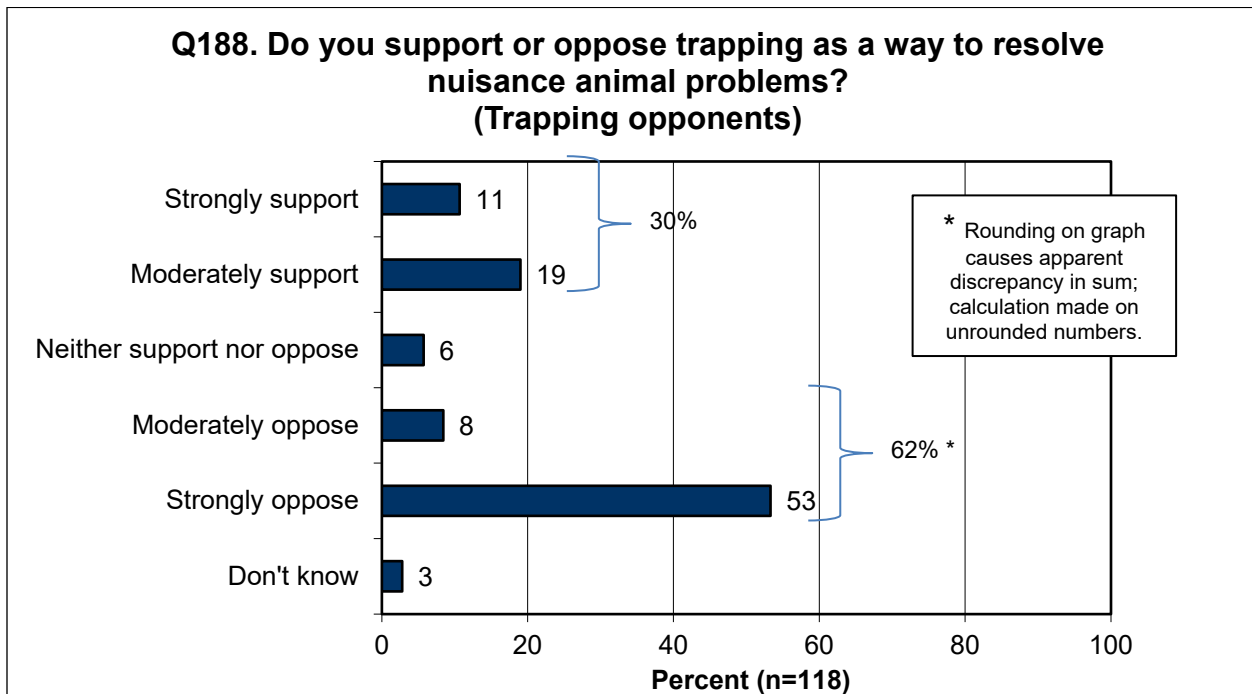


Figure 5.58. Support for or Opposition to Trapping as a Way to Resolve Wildlife Problems (Trapping Opponents)

PERCEPTIONS AND RATINGS OF THE MAINE DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

The majority of trapping opponents did not know what rating to give the Department at regulating and managing trapping (58% did not know) (Figure 5.59). Otherwise, ratings in the top half of the scale (29%) exceed those giving a *fair* (9%) or *poor* (3%) rating.

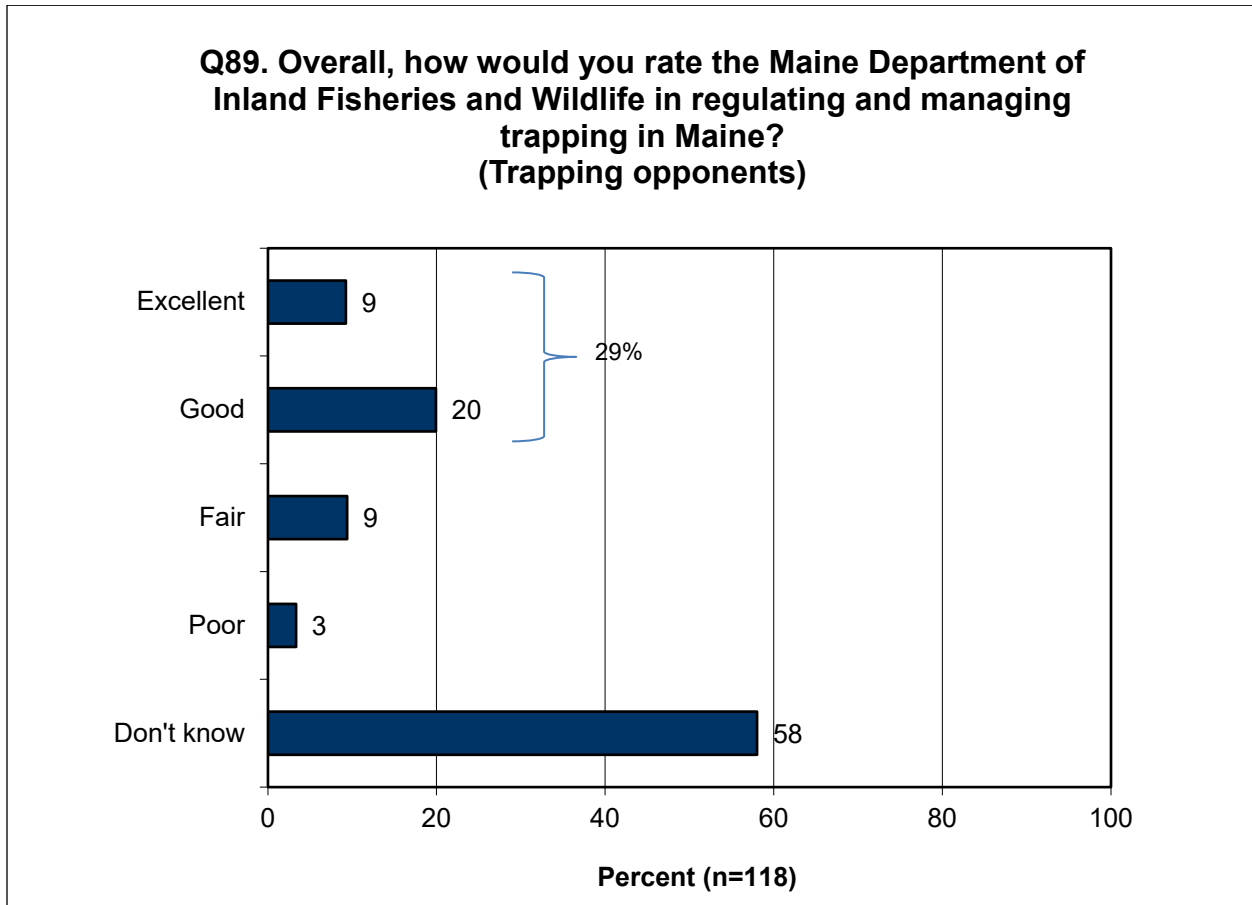


Figure 5.59. Ratings of the Department at Regulating and Managing Trapping (Trapping Opponents)

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Trapping opponents are predominantly women (Figure 5.60), and they tend to be older age groups (Figure 5.61). Ethnicity is shown in Figure 5.62. The education level is widespread, with no one category dominating (Figure 5.63). Most do not have children (Figure 5.64), and the majority are from either a rural area or a small city/town (Figure 5.65).

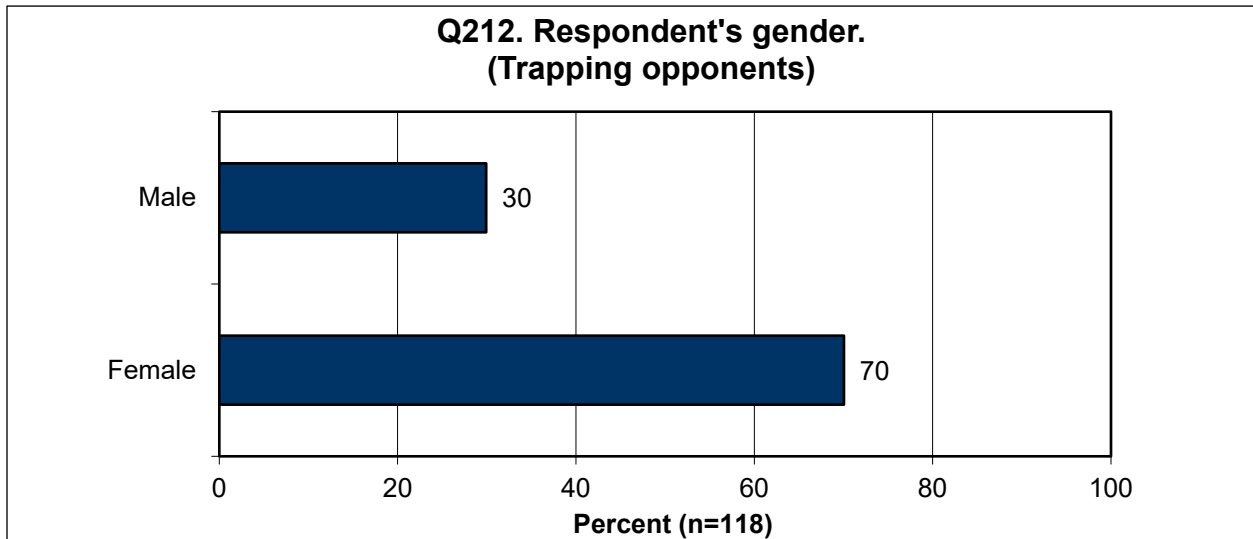


Figure 5.60. Gender of Respondents (Trapping Opponents)

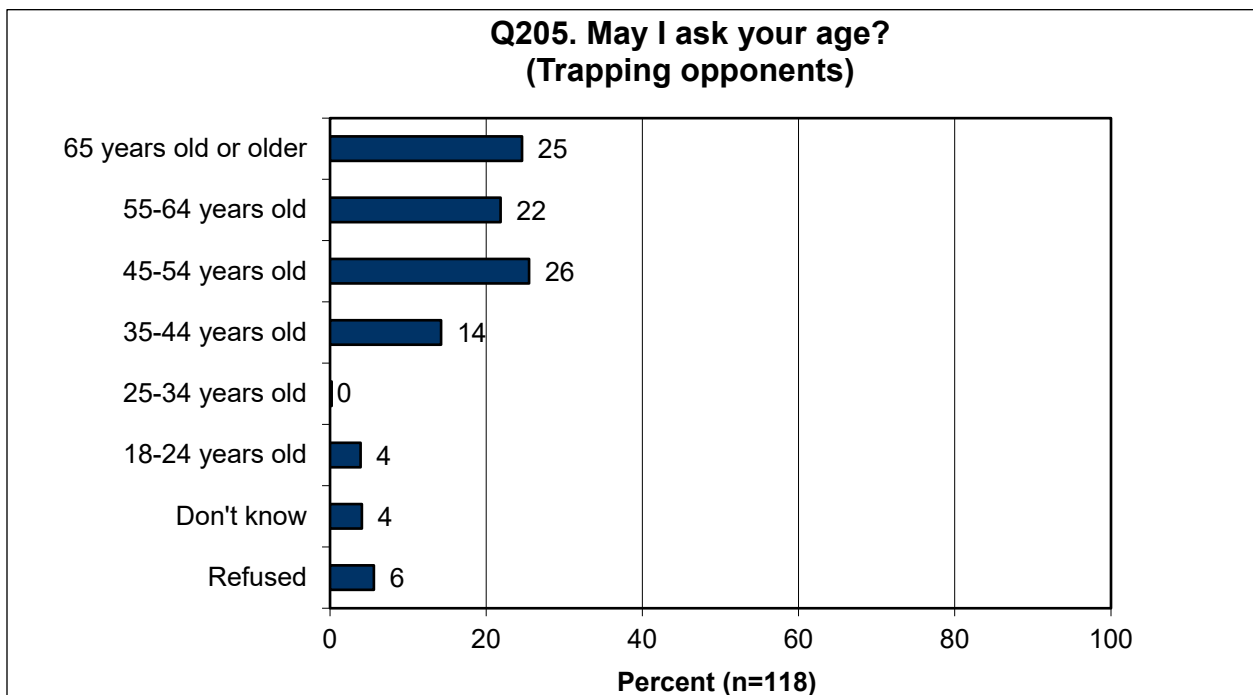


Figure 5.61. Age of Respondents (Trapping Opponents)

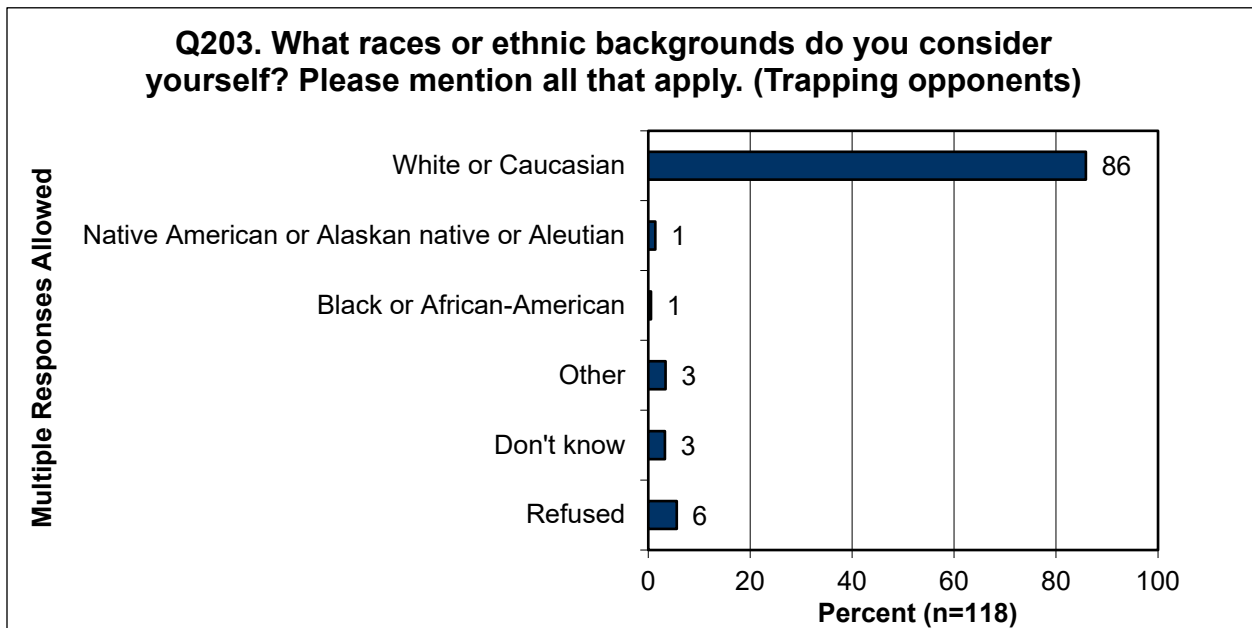


Figure 5.62. Ethnic Background of Respondents (Trapping Opponents)

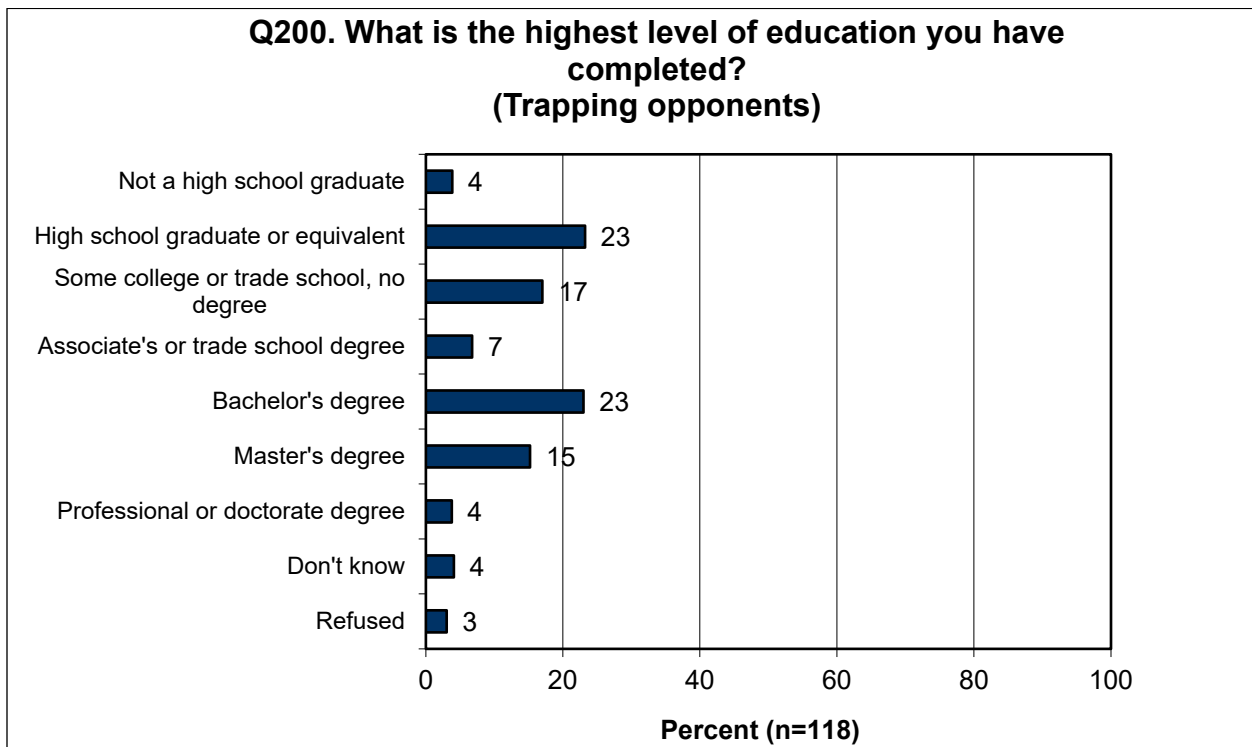


Figure 5.63. Education Level of Respondents (Trapping Opponents)

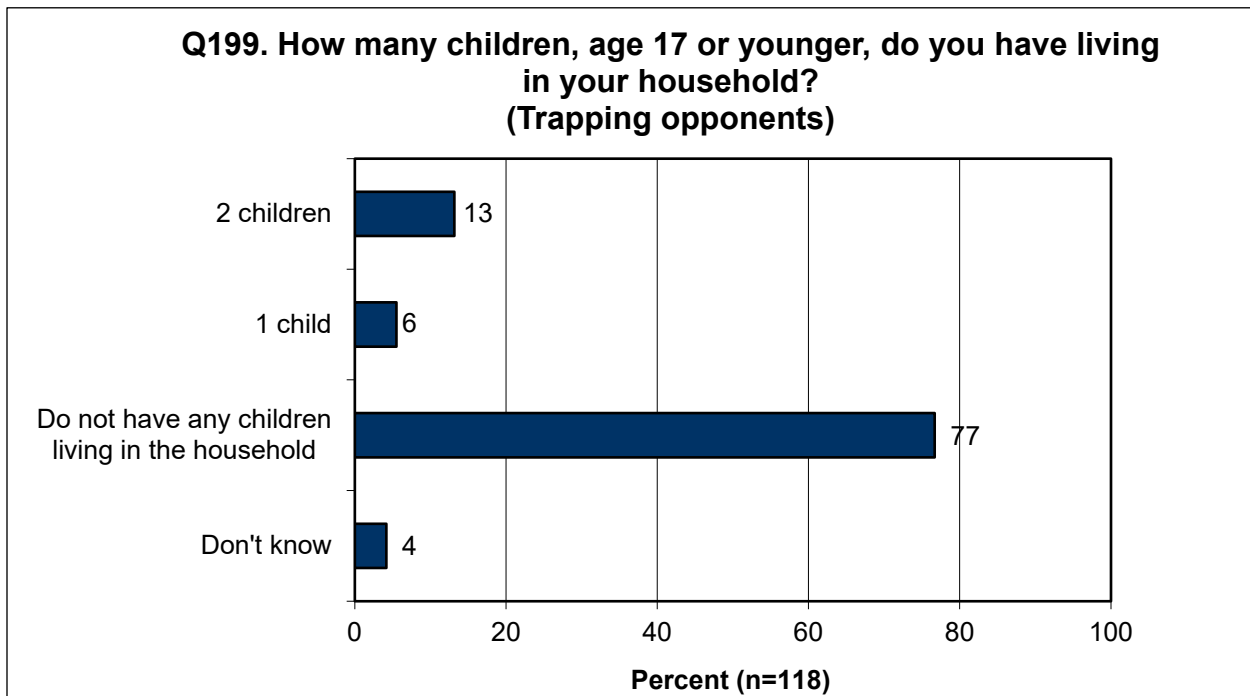


Figure 5.64. Number of Children in the Household (Trapping Opponents)

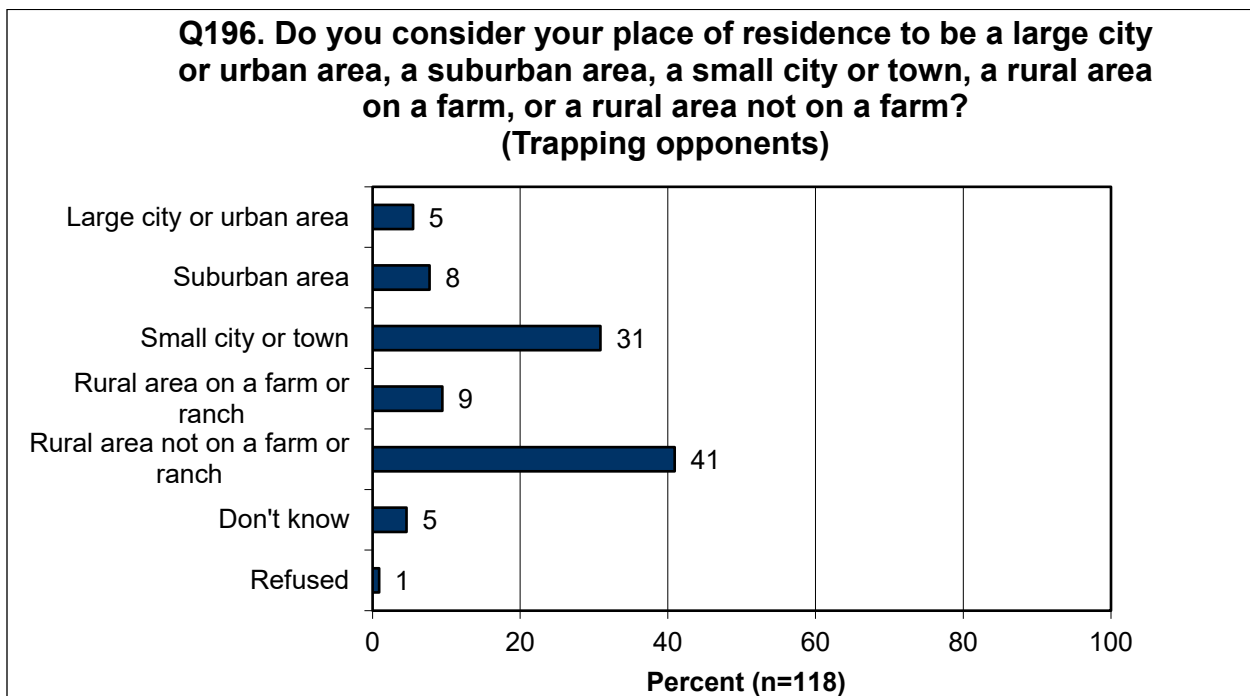


Figure 5.65. Place of Residence (Trapping Opponents)

6. LANDOWNER SURVEY RESULTS

This chapter presents the results among landowners. There were two landowner groups: the “regular” landowners, which consisted of individual landowners who owned 25 or more acres (often farmers), and large landowners, which were commercial and industrial owners with very large tracts. The “regular” landowners’ results are presented and discussed first in graphs and tables, followed by the results of the large landowners exclusively in tables because the low sample size precludes making percentages of the results. Note that the results are reported based on themes rather than in the exact order of the survey. Although the labels say “Lives in...,” note that not all landowners lived on the property in question. Also note that the landowners were sampled in each region separately and are not shown together as one group because there was no way to weight the groups into a single overall sample, as the actual populations of large landowners are not known in each region.

PARTICIPATION IN HUNTING, TRAPPING, AND OTHER OUTDOOR RECREATION

Participation in various outdoor activities in a 12-month timeframe is shown in Figure 6.1. Wildlife viewing and gardening are, in general, the most popular.

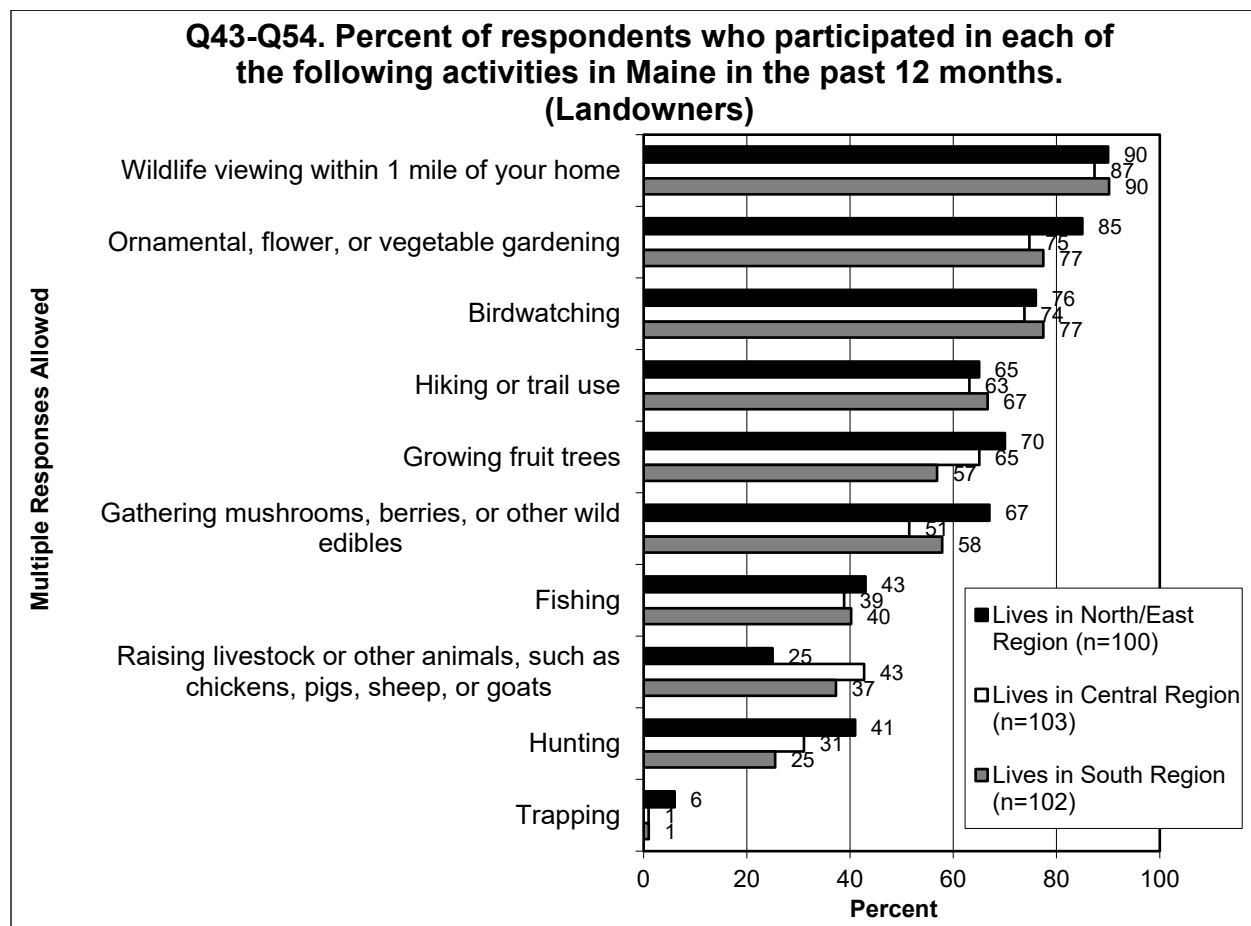


Figure 6.1. Participation in Outdoor Recreation in the Past 12 Months (Landowners)

Majorities of landowners have recreationally hunted in their lives (Figure 6.2). From 9% to 20% have trapped at some time (Figure 6.3).

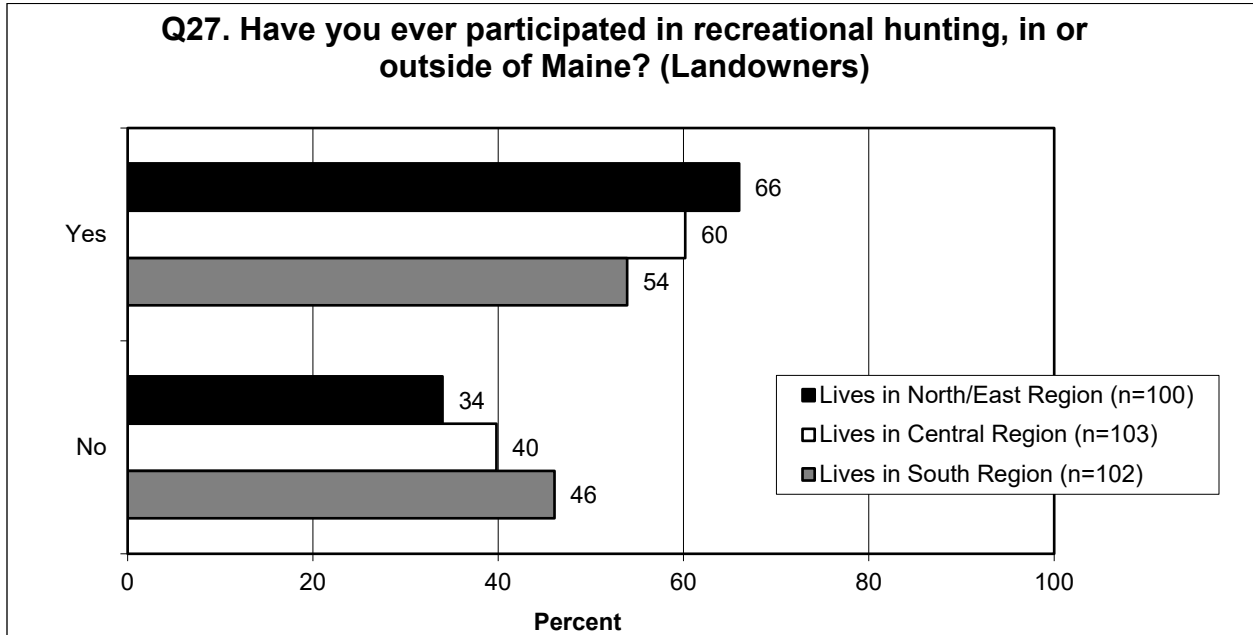


Figure 6.2. Participation in Hunting, Lifetime (Landowners)

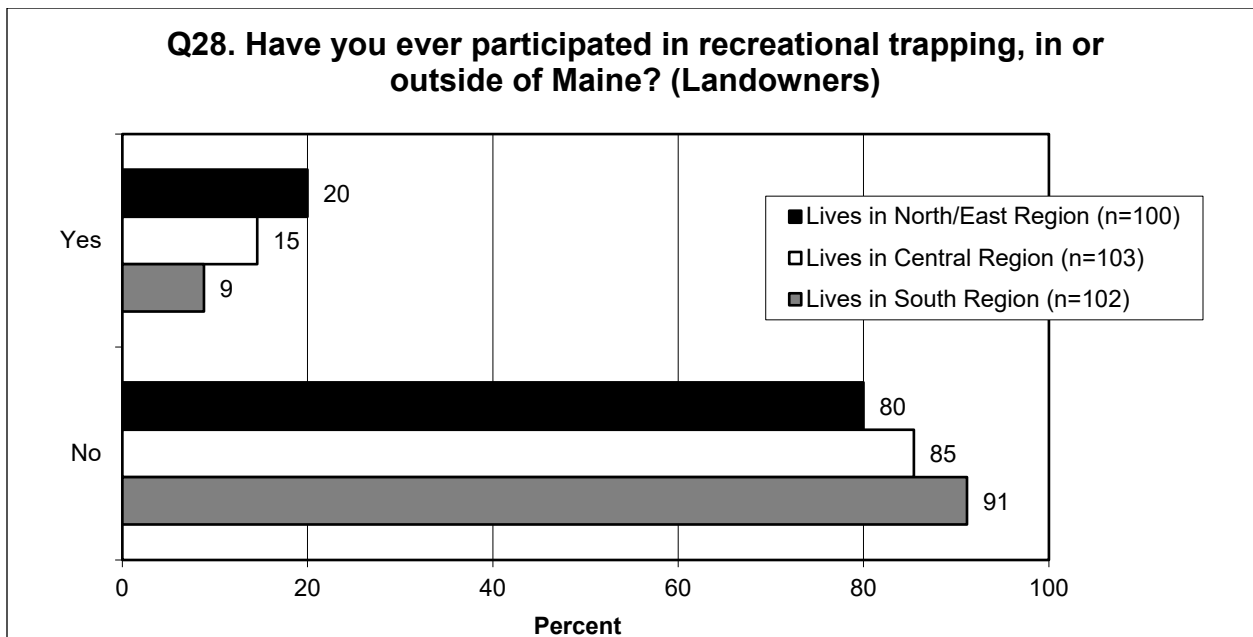


Figure 6.3. Participation in Trapping, Lifetime (Landowners)

ATTITUDES TOWARD HUNTING AND TRAPPING

Large majorities of landowners (from 73% to 81%) approve of trapping (Figure 6.4). Similar percentages think people should be able to trap if they want to (Figure 6.5).

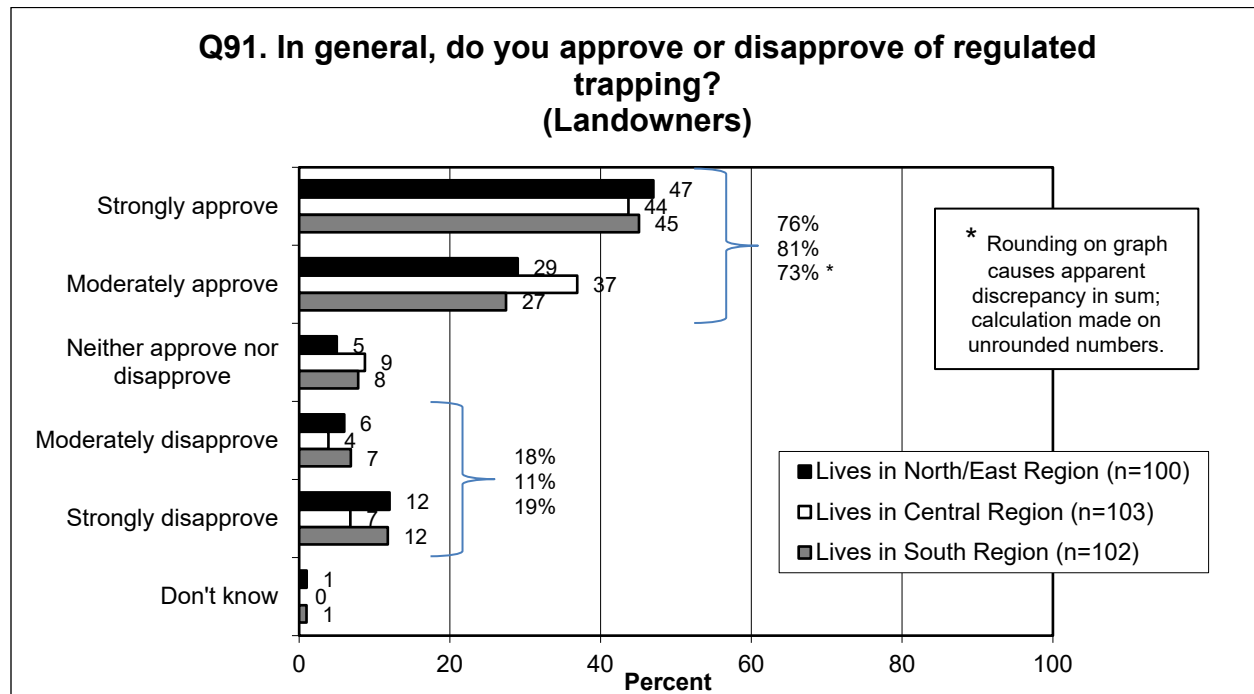


Figure 6.4. Approval or Disapproval of Trapping (Landowners)

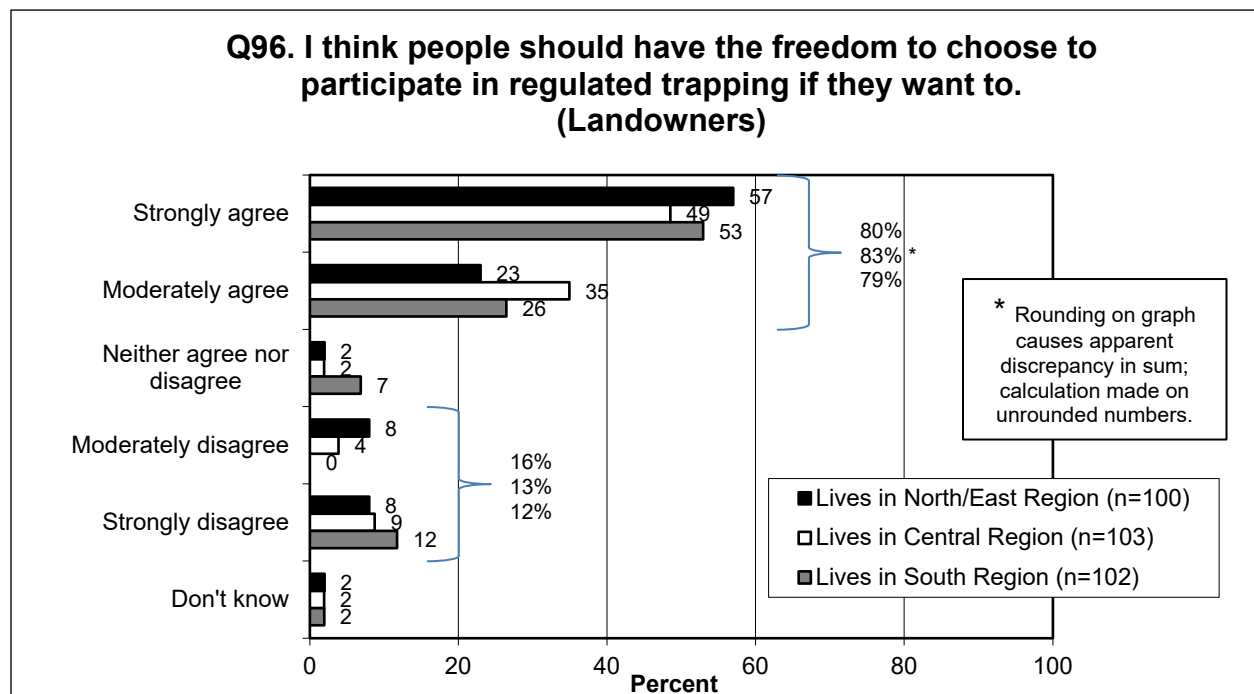


Figure 6.5. Opinion on Rights of Others to Trap (Landowners)

Overwhelming majorities of landowners were aware prior to the survey that trapping is regulated by the Department (Figure 6.6). Also, large majorities know or have known a trapper or someone who has trapped (Figure 6.7).

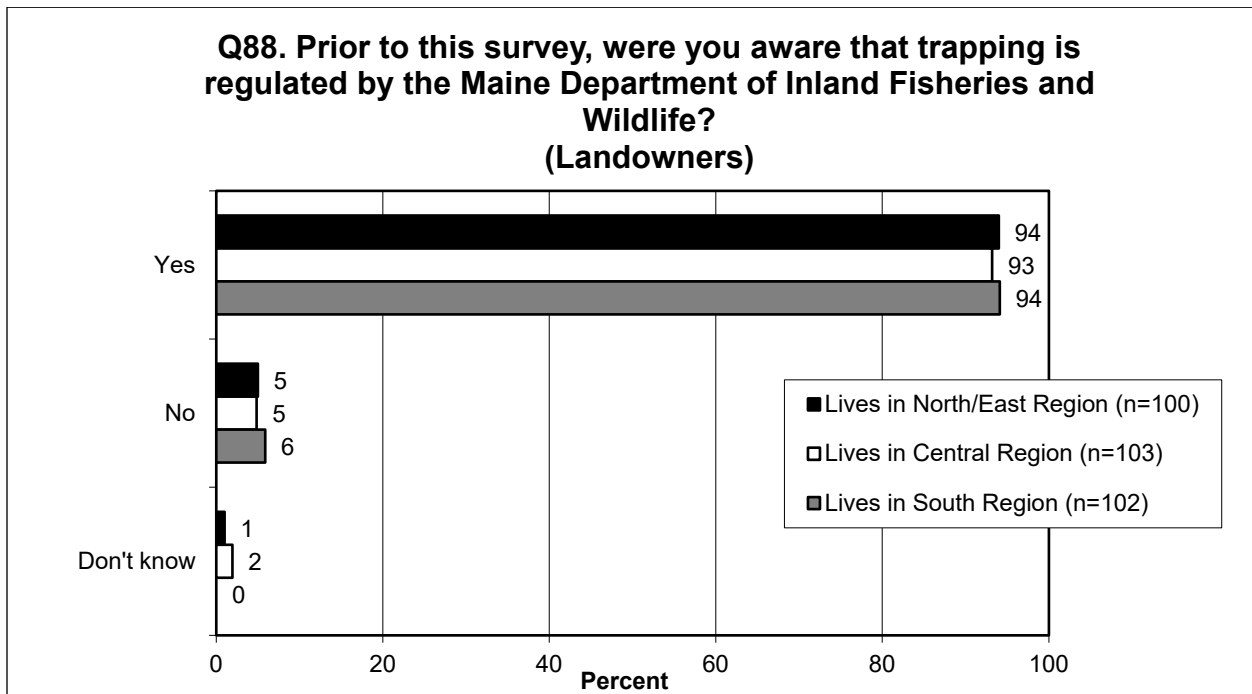


Figure 6.6. Awareness That Trapping Is Regulated by the Department (Landowners)

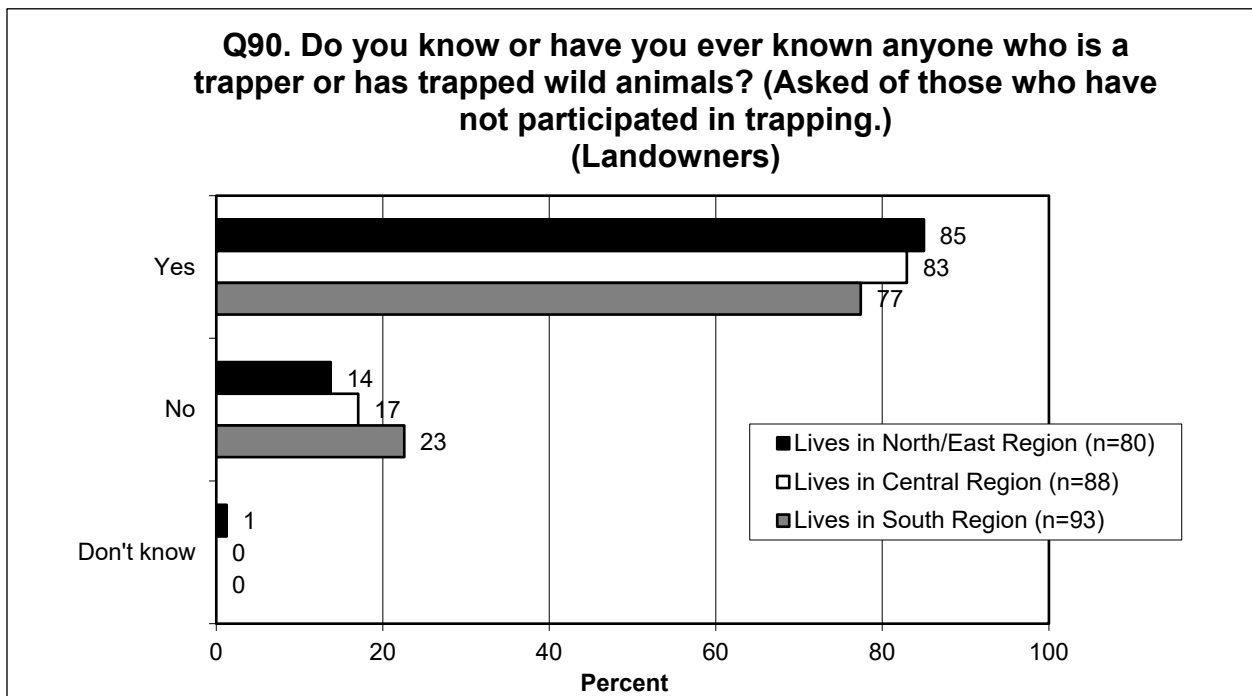


Figure 6.7. Knowing a Trapper (Landowners)

Large majorities of landowners agree that trapping is okay if the animals die quickly (Figure 6.8) and if accidentally caught animals can be released (Figure 6.9).

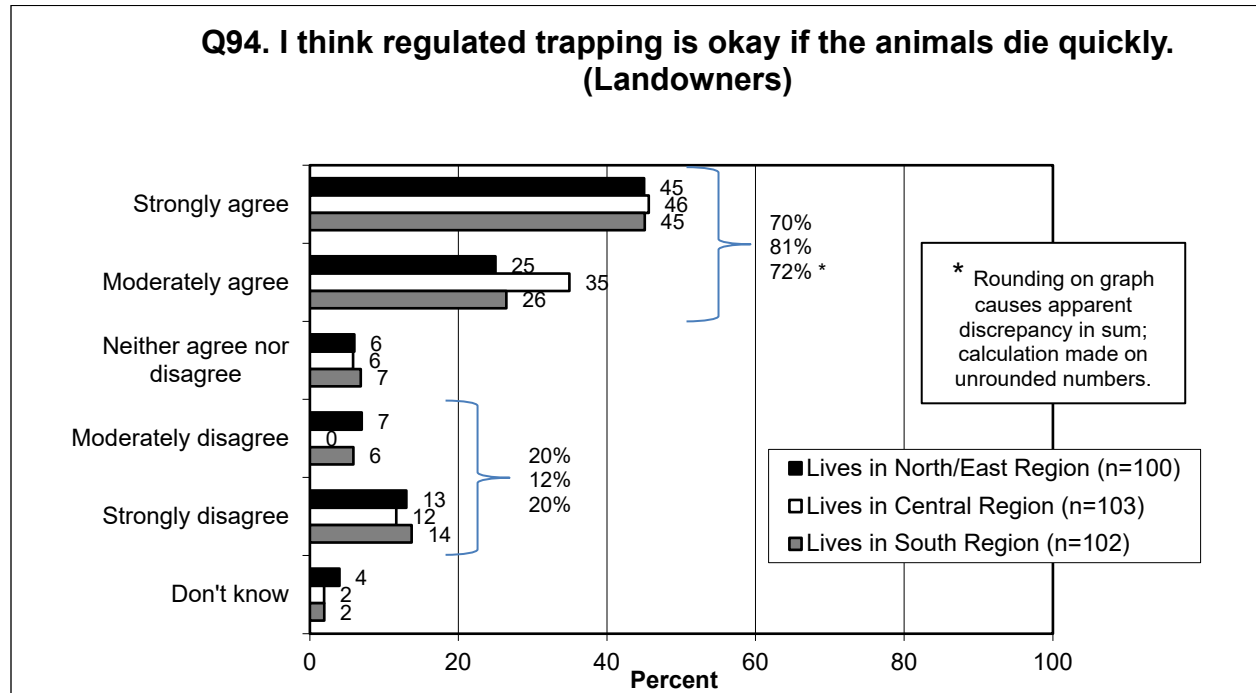


Figure 6.8. Opinion on Trapping If the Animal Dies Quickly (Landowners)

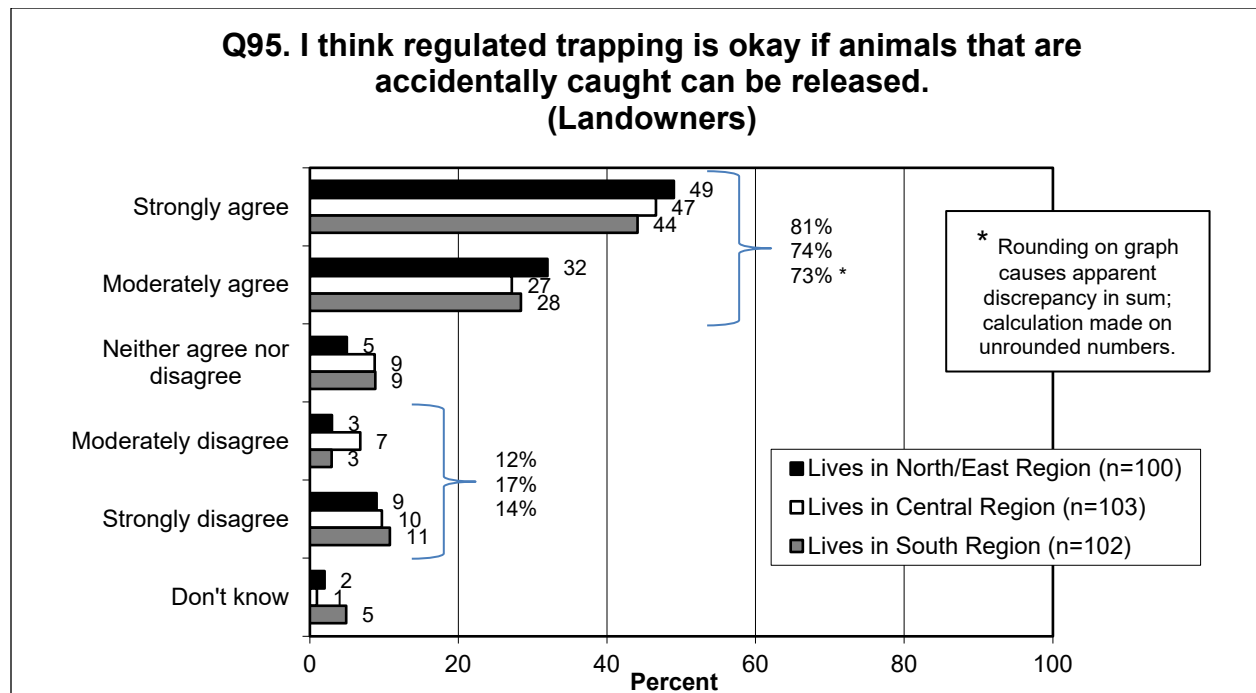


Figure 6.9. Opinion on Trapping If Accidentally Caught Animals Can Be Released (Landowners)

There is more agreement than disagreement that trapping is more humane now compared to 10 years ago because of improvements in traps (Figure 6.10).

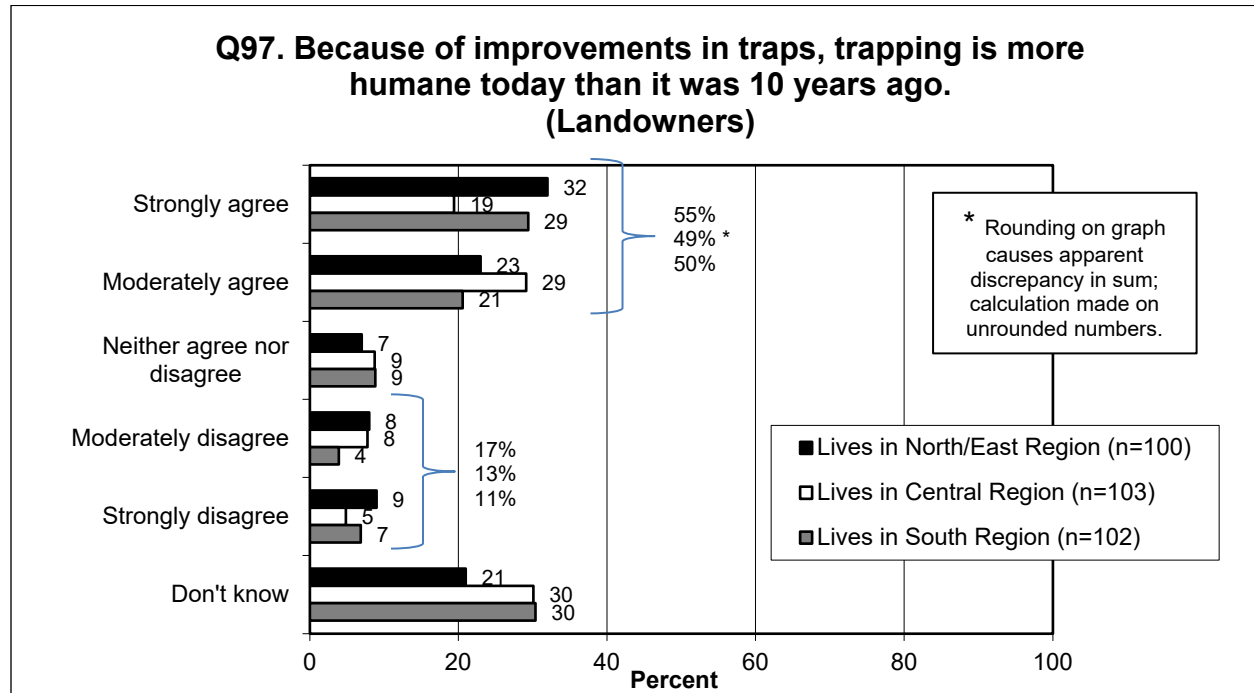


Figure 6.10. Opinion on Trapping If Informed That Improvements in Traps Make It More Humane Than It Was 10 Years Ago (Landowners)

The survey explored perceptions on trapping’s effect on species’ populations as well as the species’ long-term survivability. Note that trapping in the United States is regulated so that endangered species are not legally trapped and legal trapping does not endanger species’ survivability. Fortunately, most landowners disagree that endangered species are used to make fur clothing (Figure 6.11). However, landowners are somewhat split between agreeing or disagreeing that regulated trapping can cause species to become endangered or extinct (Figure 6.12).

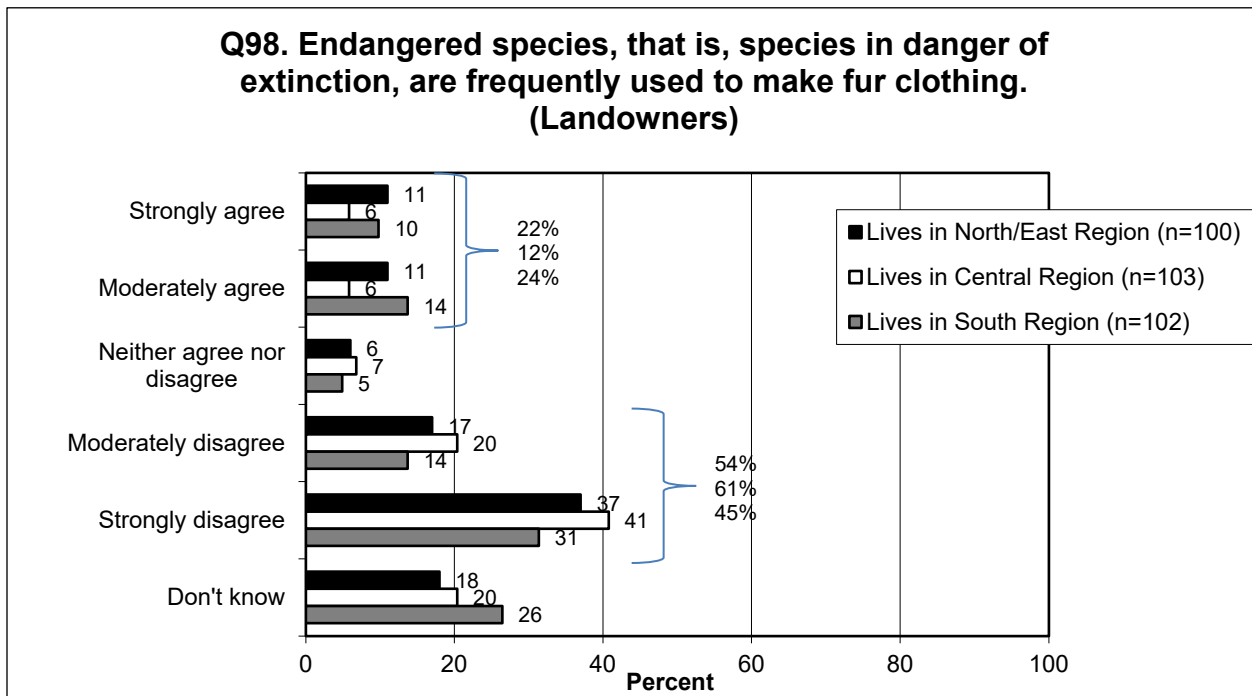


Figure 6.11. Perceptions Regarding Trapping and Endangered Species (Landowners)

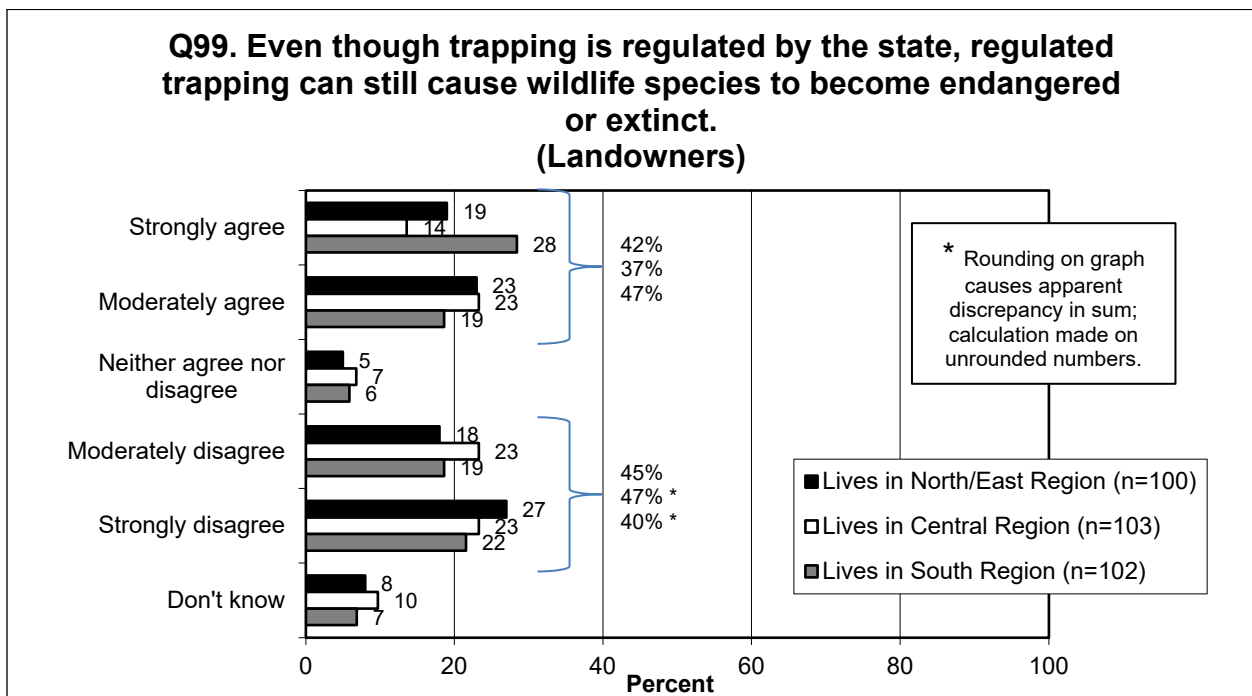


Figure 6.12. Perceptions Regarding Whether Trapping Endangers Species Populations (Landowners)

KNOWLEDGE OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARD FURBEARER SPECIES

The survey asked about ten species: beaver, bobcat, coyote, fox, raccoon, skunk, fisher, marten, otter, and muskrat. Each is discussed on its own, and then some summary graphs are presented showing all the species together.

BEAVER

Knowledge levels regarding beaver are shown in Figure 6.13. Majorities of landowners think the beaver population where they live is about right (Figure 6.14).

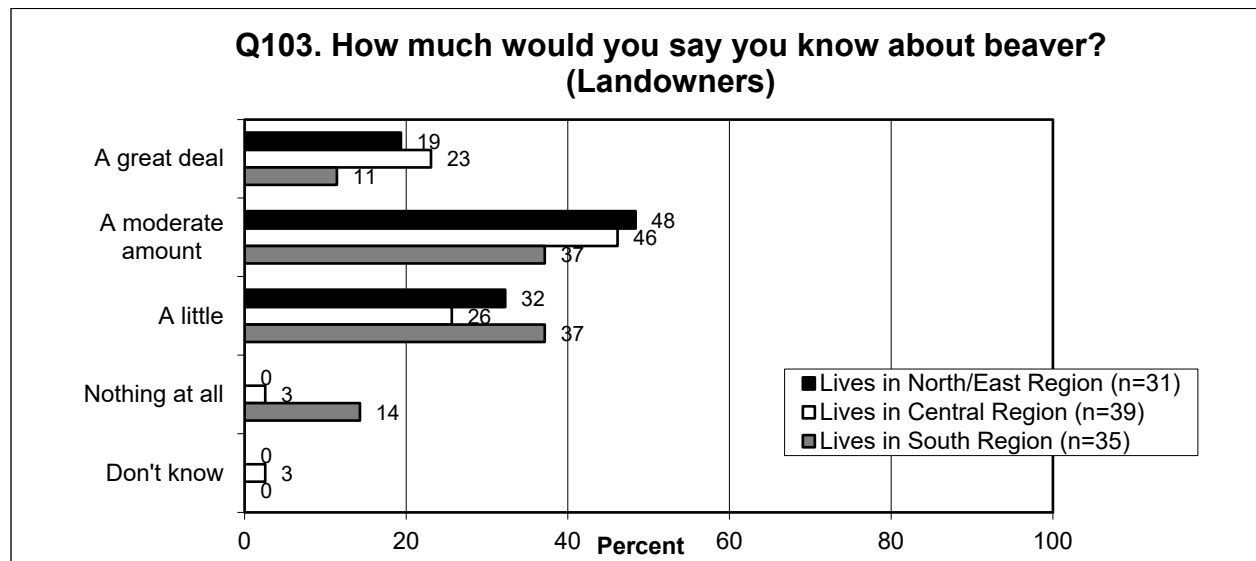


Figure 6.13. Knowledge of Beavers (Landowners)

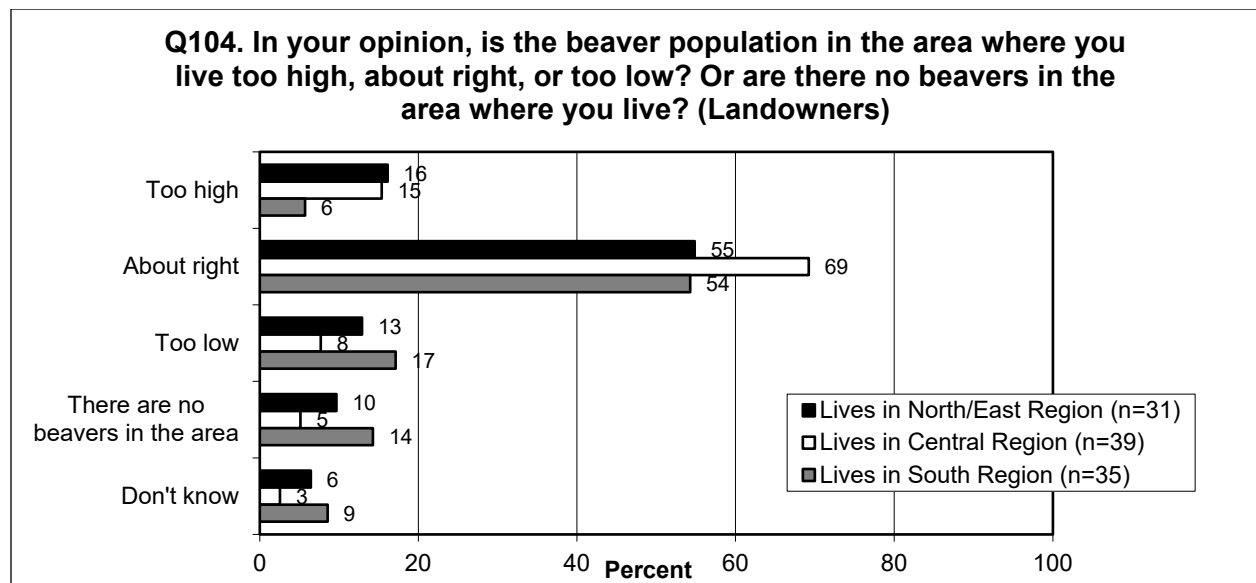


Figure 6.14. Opinion on the Beaver Population (Landowners)

Support for trapping beavers as a method to manage their populations is high among landowners (Figure 6.15). Feelings about beaver are shown in Figure 6.16; landowners are generally tolerant of beavers.

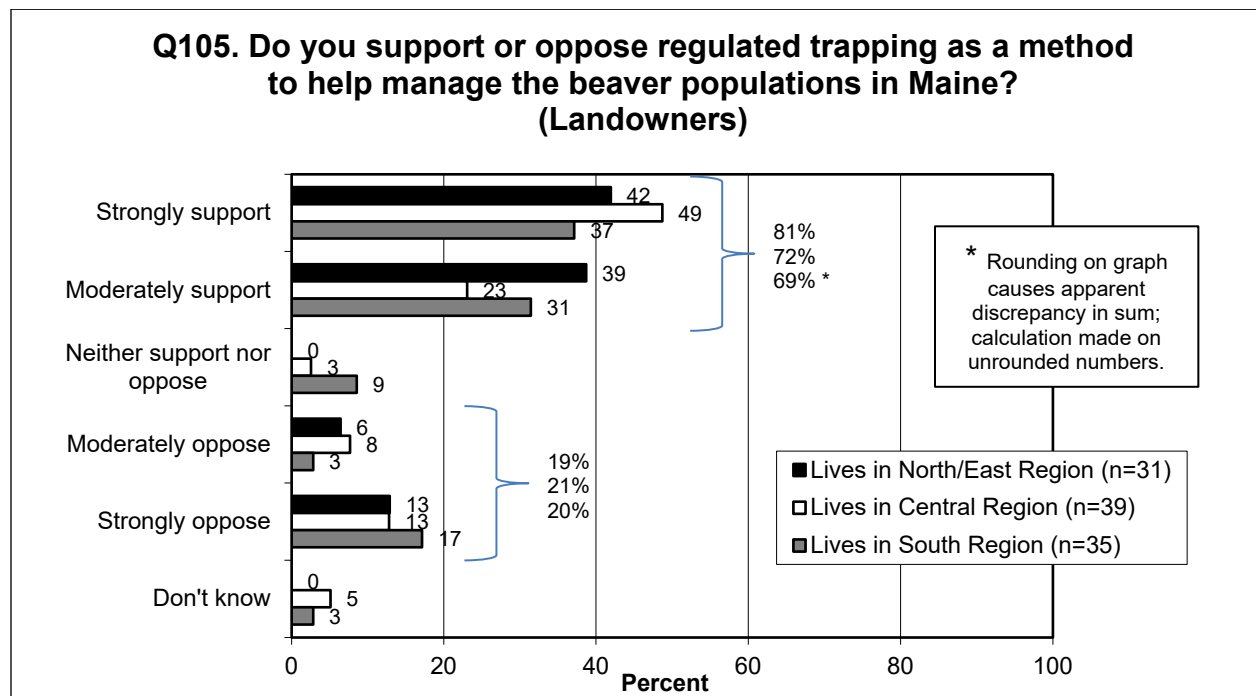


Figure 6.15. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Beaver Populations (Landowners)

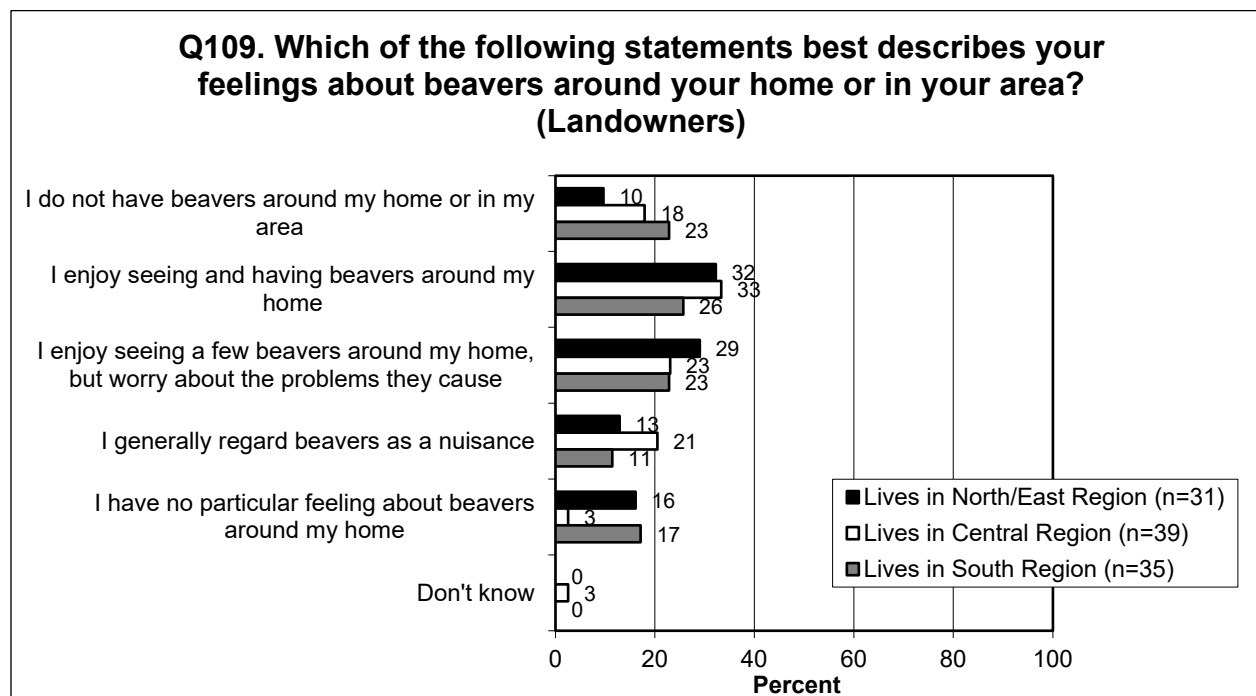


Figure 6.16. Feelings About Beavers (Landowners)

BOBCAT

Knowledge levels regarding bobcat are shown in Figure 6.17. A little under half of landowners think the bobcat population where they live is about right (Figure 6.18).

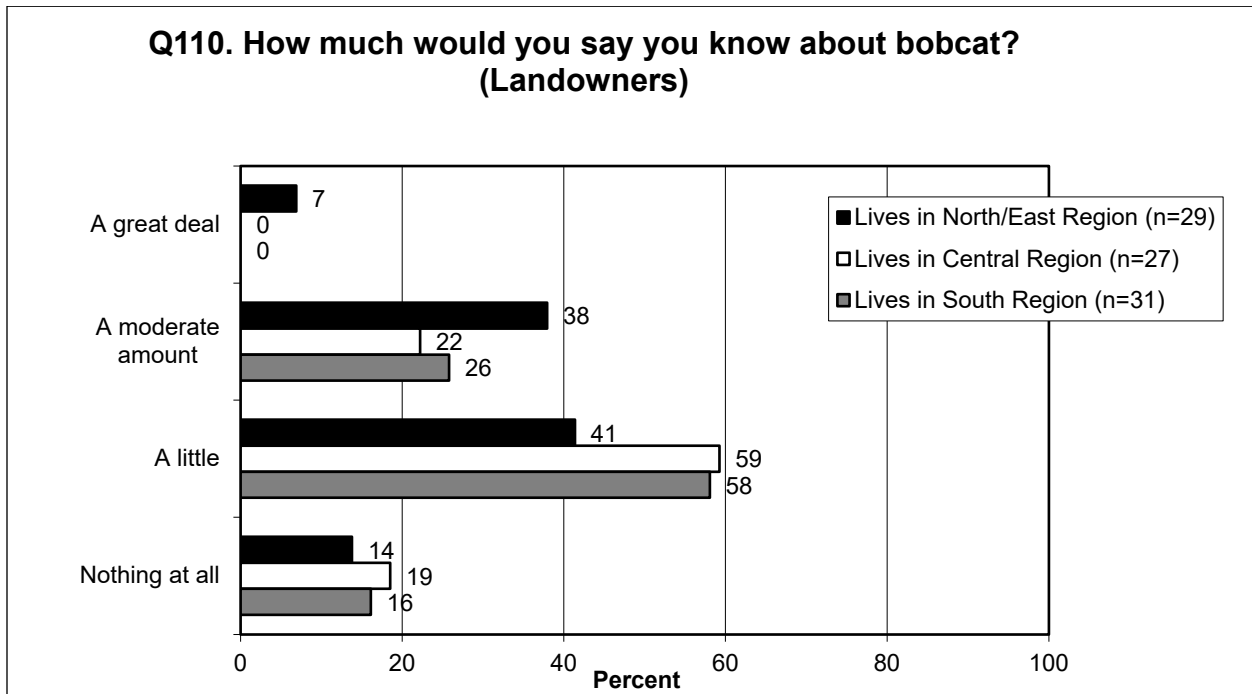


Figure 6.17. Knowledge of Bobcats (Landowners)

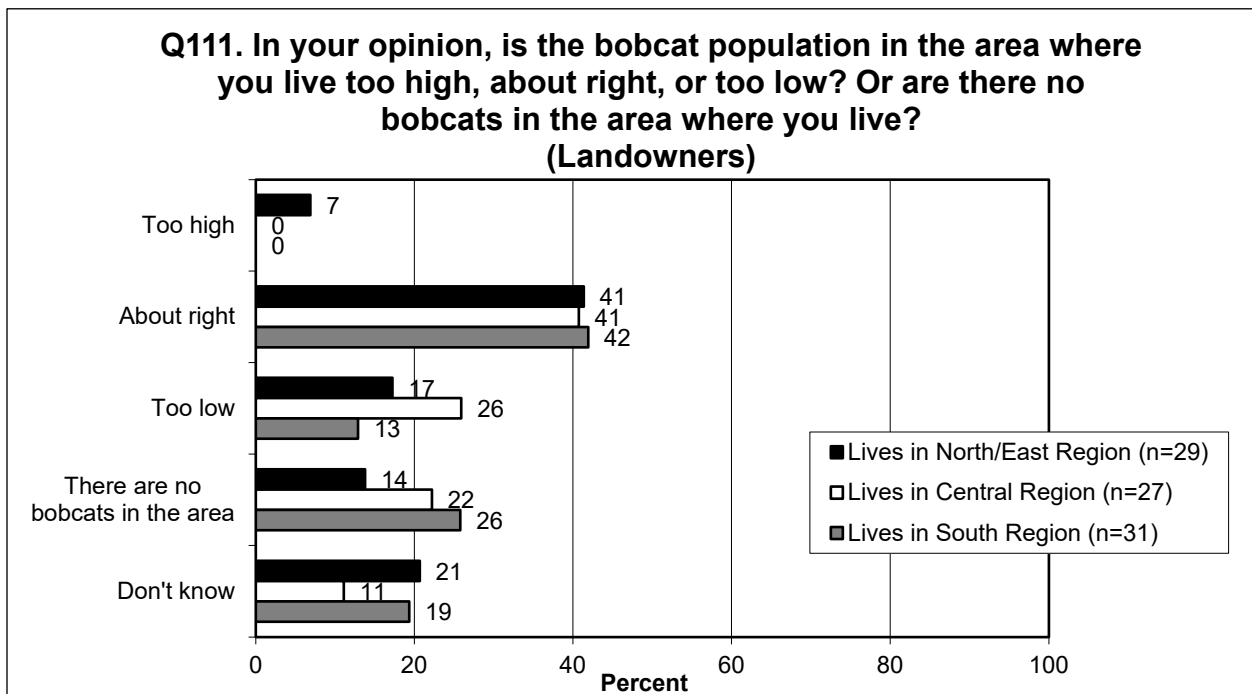


Figure 6.18. Opinion on the Bobcat Population (Landowners)

Support for trapping bobcats as a method to manage their populations is moderate among landowners, although opposition is substantial (Figure 6.19). Feelings about bobcat are shown in Figure 6.20; landowners are generally tolerant of bobcats.

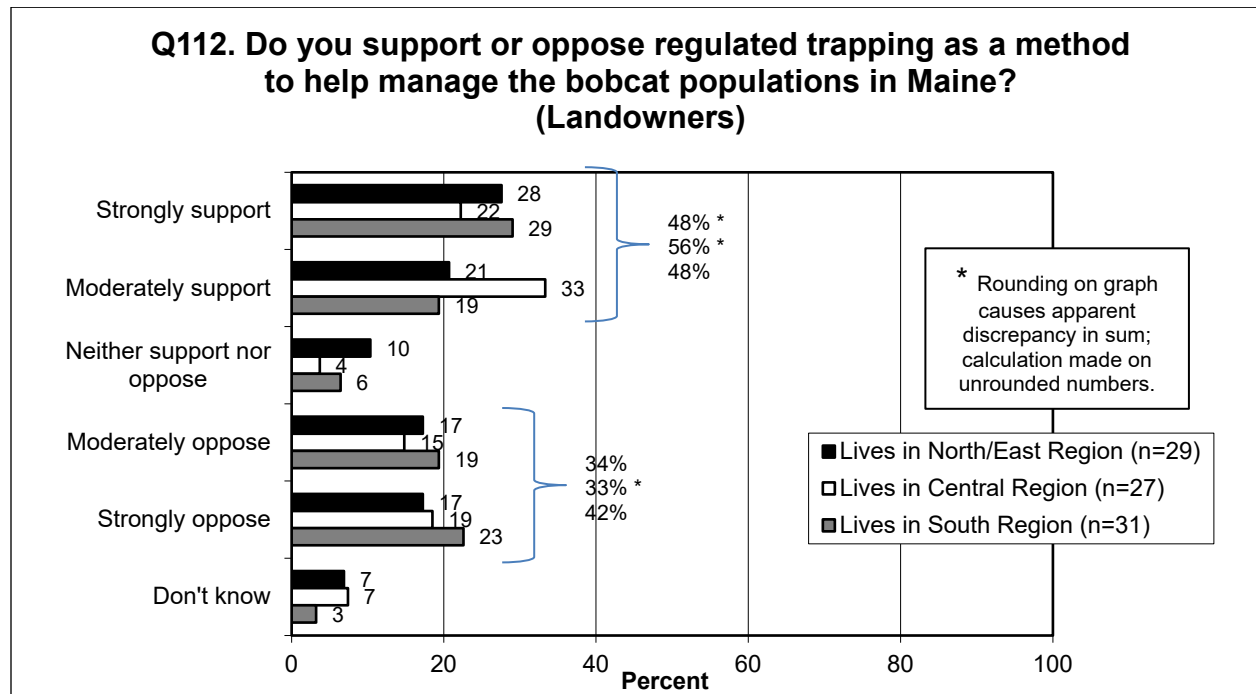


Figure 6.19. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Bobcat Populations (Landowners)

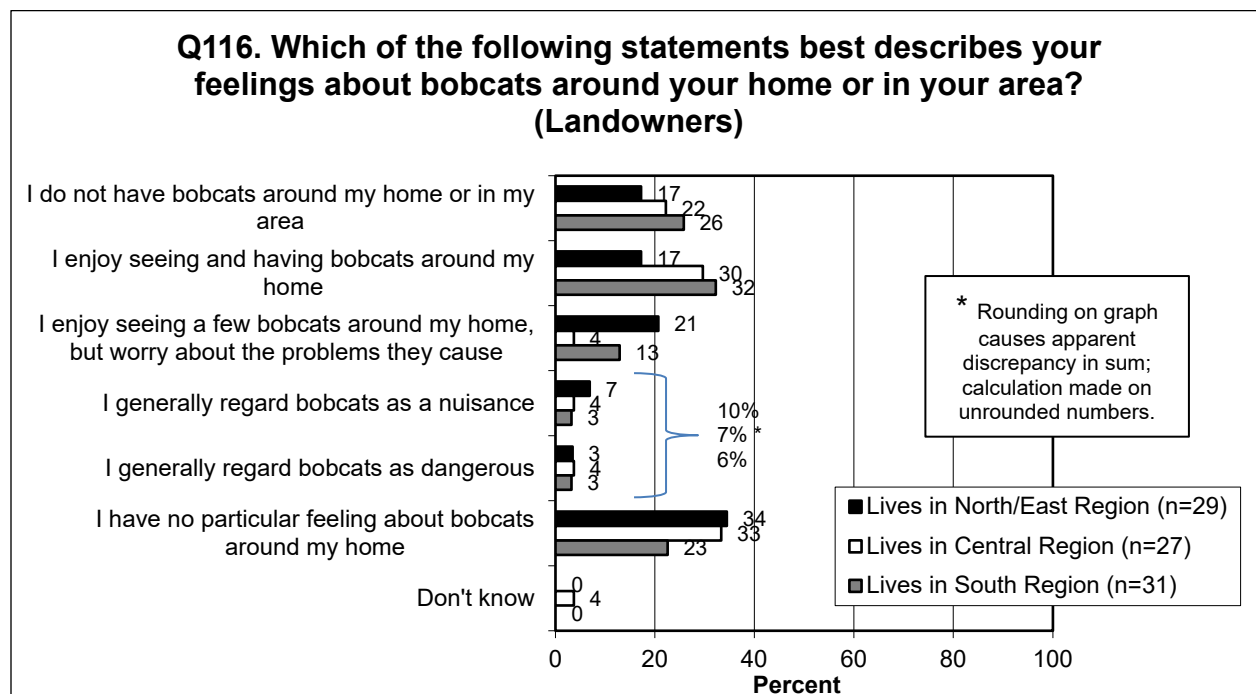


Figure 6.20. Feelings About Bobcats (Landowners)

COYOTE

Knowledge levels regarding coyote are shown in Figure 6.21. Fairly high percentages of landowners think the coyote population where they live is too high (Figure 6.22).

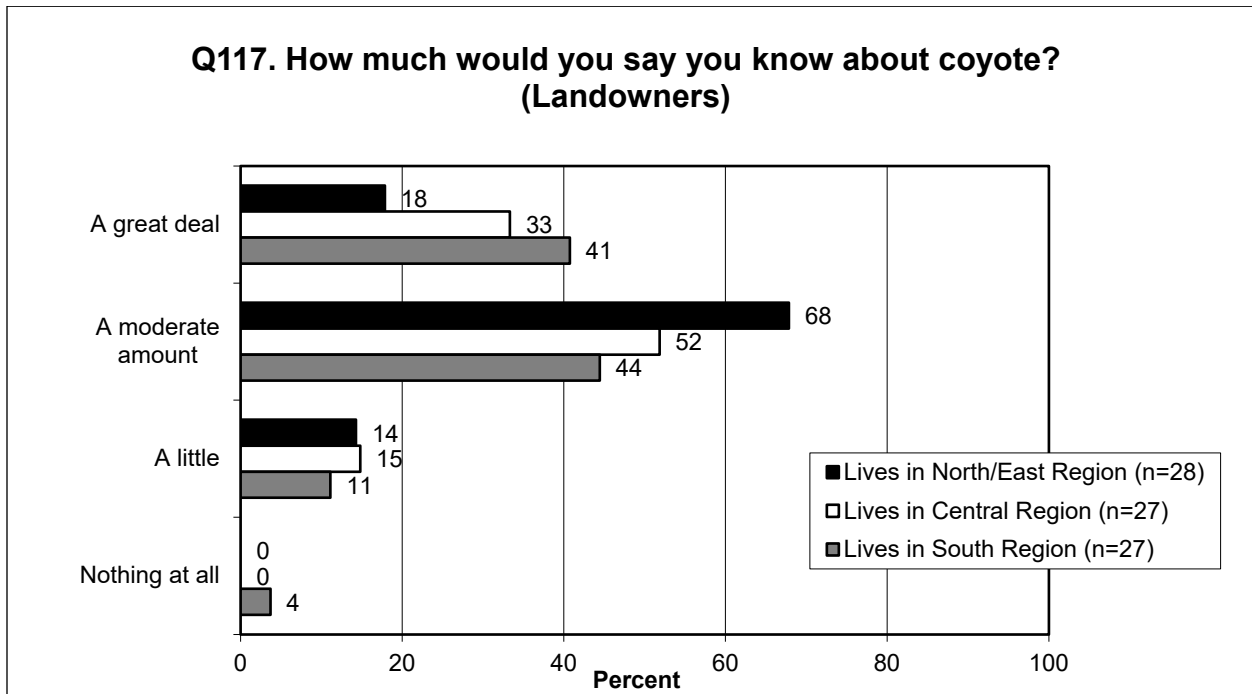


Figure 6.21. Knowledge of Coyotes (Landowners)

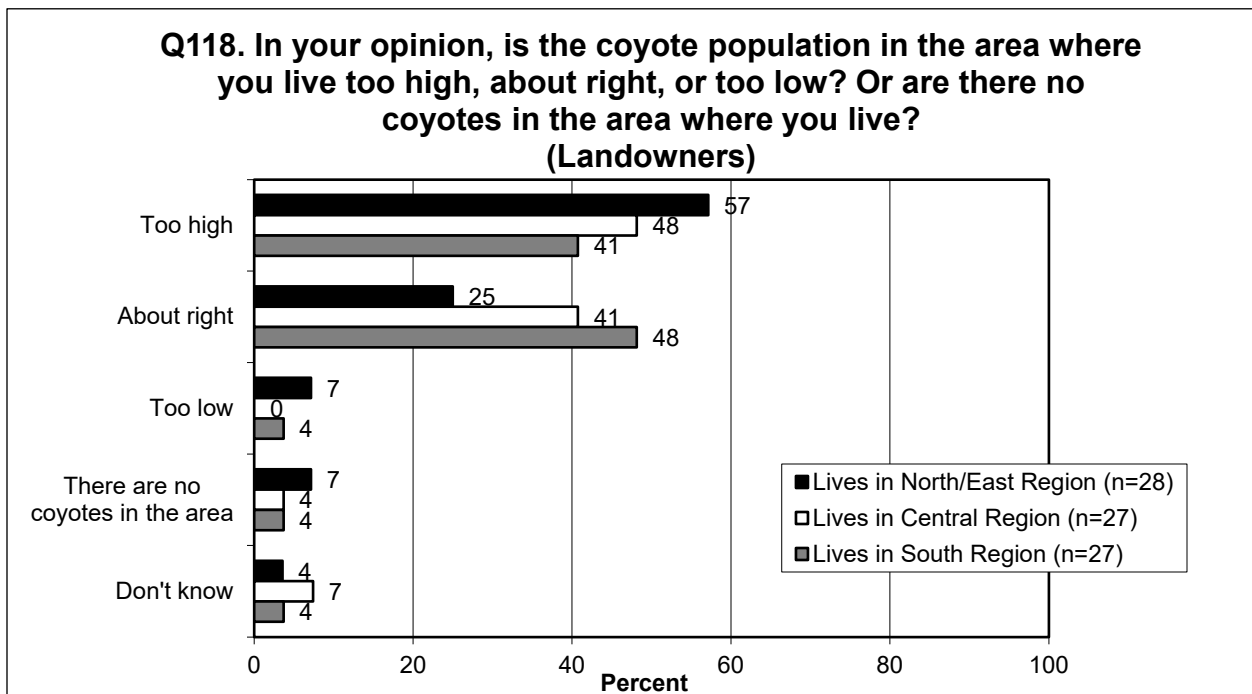


Figure 6.22. Opinion on the Coyote Population (Landowners)

Support for trapping coyotes as a method to manage their populations is quite high among landowners (Figure 6.23). Feelings about coyote are shown in Figure 6.24; landowners are generally intolerant of coyotes.

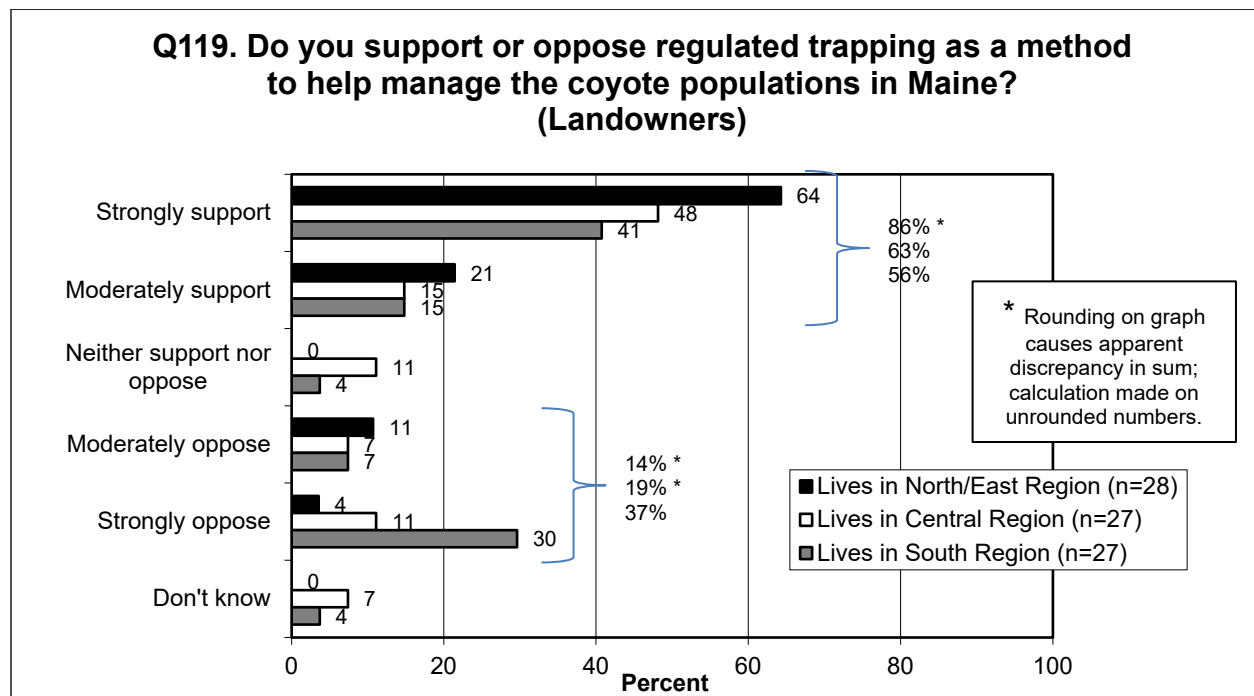


Figure 6.23. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Coyote Populations (Landowners)

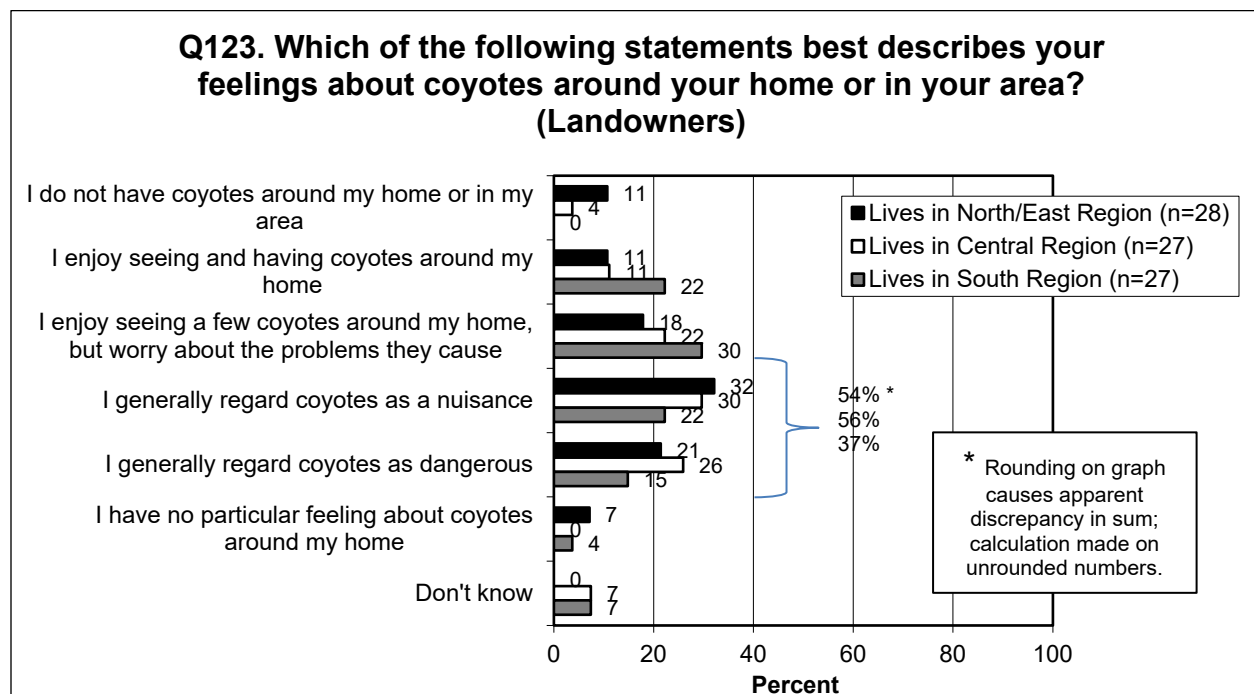


Figure 6.24. Feelings About Coyotes (Landowners)

FOX

Knowledge levels regarding fox are shown in Figure 6.25. Large majorities of landowners think the fox population where they live is about right (Figure 6.26).

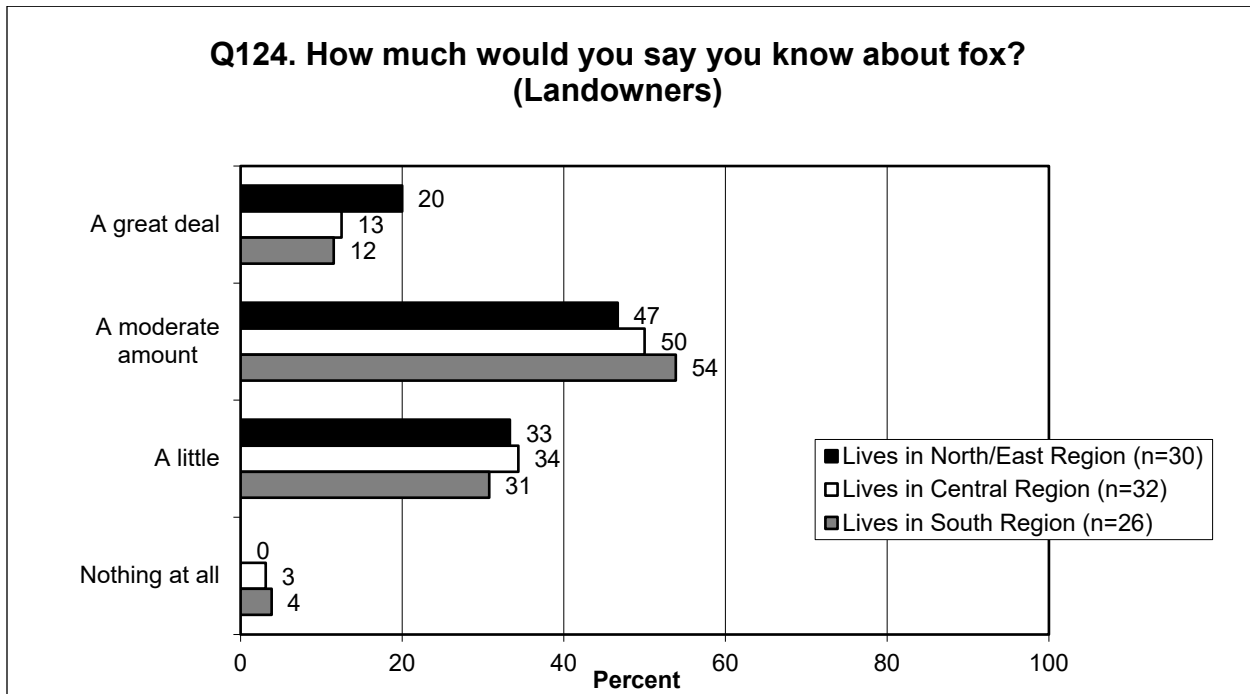


Figure 6.25. Knowledge of Foxes (Landowners)

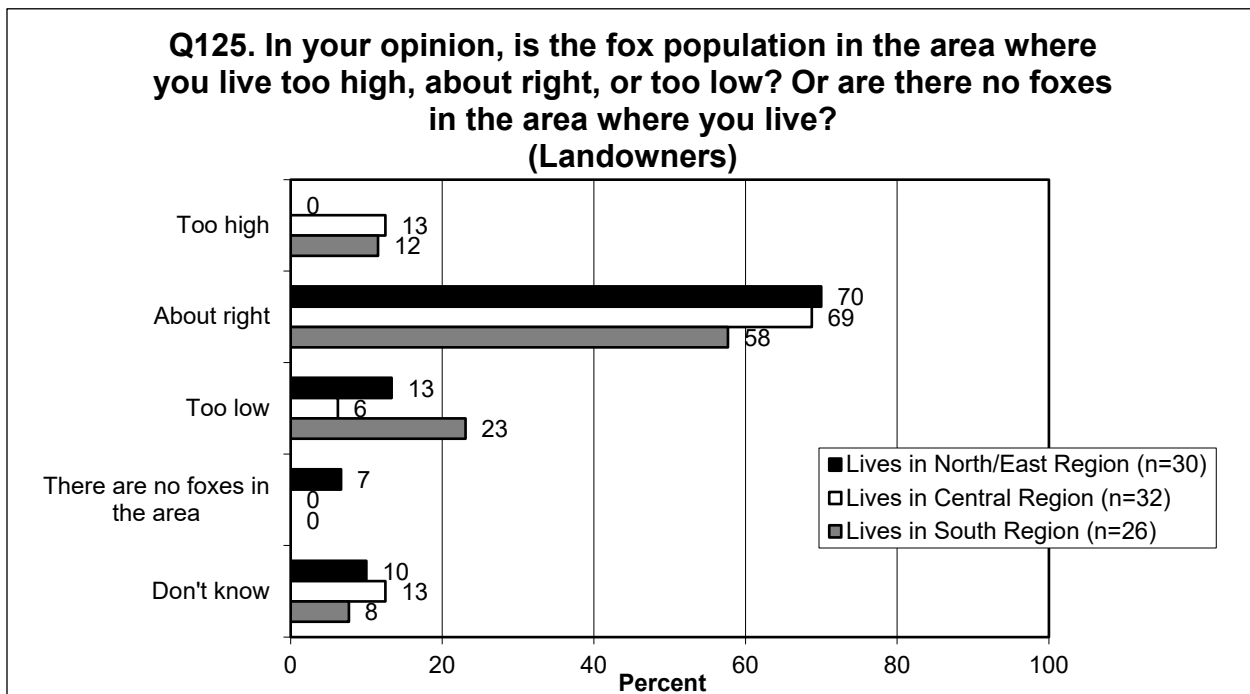


Figure 6.26. Opinion on the Fox Population (Landowners)

Support for trapping foxes as a method to manage their populations is high among landowners (Figure 6.27). Feelings about fox are shown in Figure 6.28; landowners are fairly tolerant of foxes.

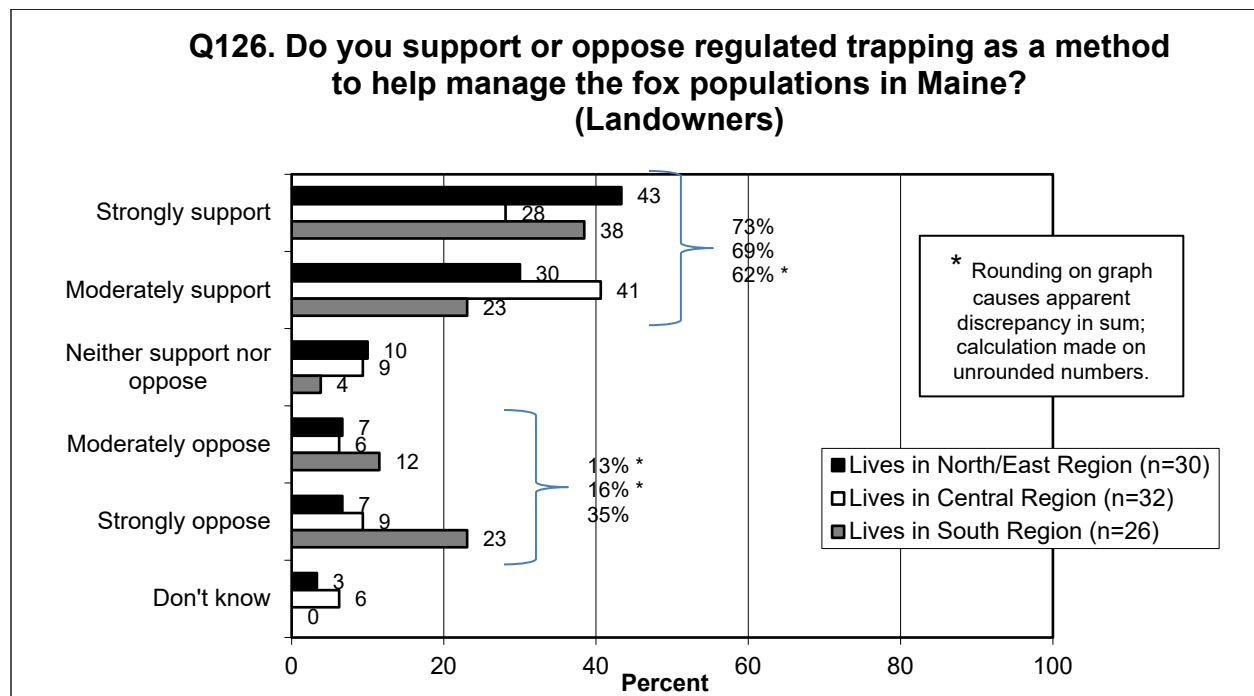


Figure 6.27. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Fox Populations (Landowners)

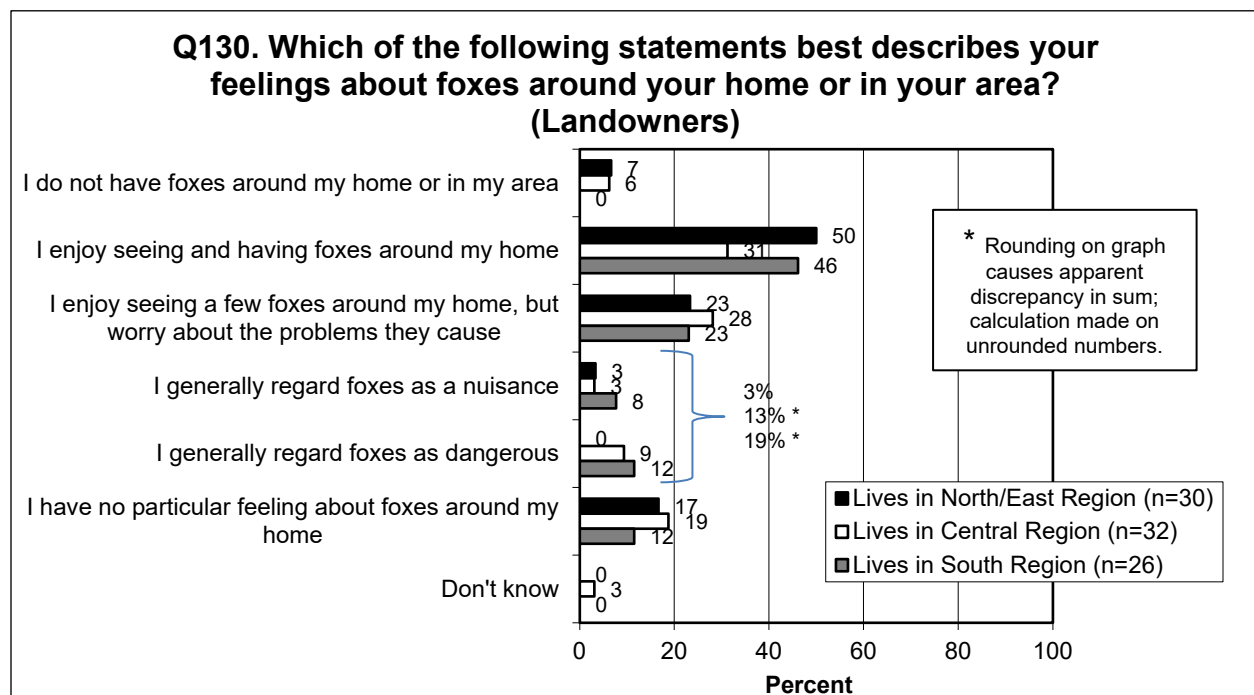


Figure 6.28. Feelings About Foxes (Landowners)

RACCOON

Knowledge levels regarding raccoon are shown in Figure 6.29. Majorities of landowners think the raccoon population where they live is about right (Figure 6.30).

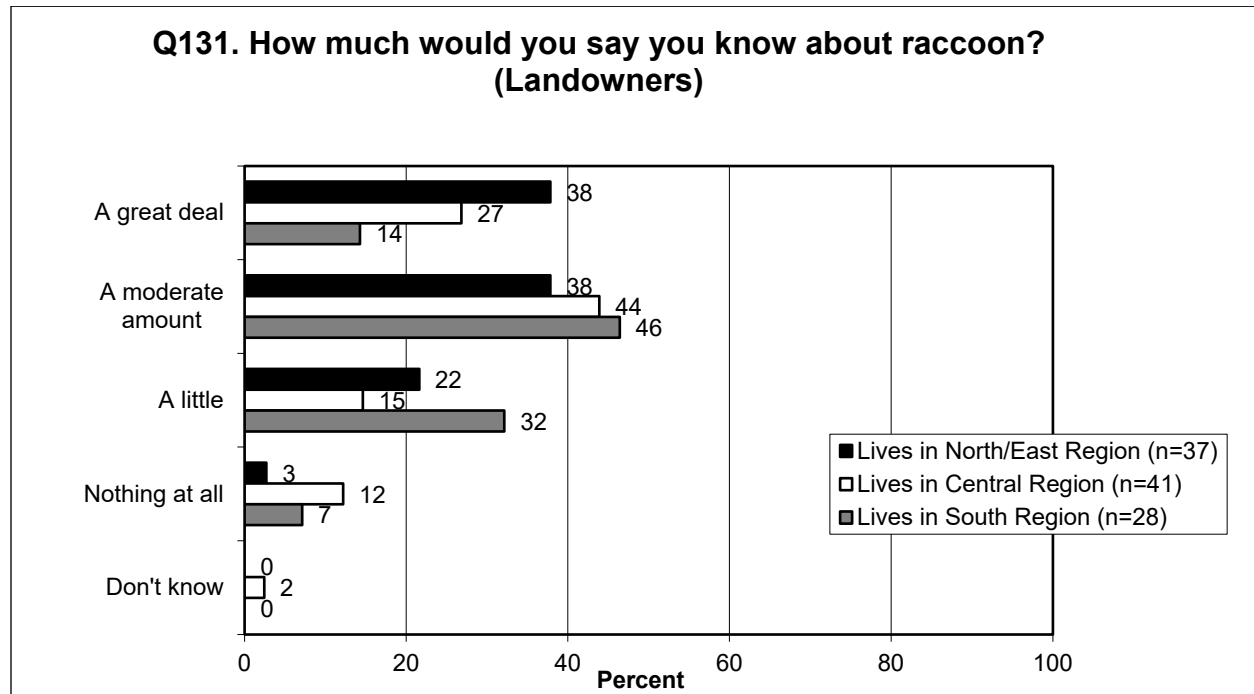


Figure 6.29. Knowledge of Raccoons (Landowners)

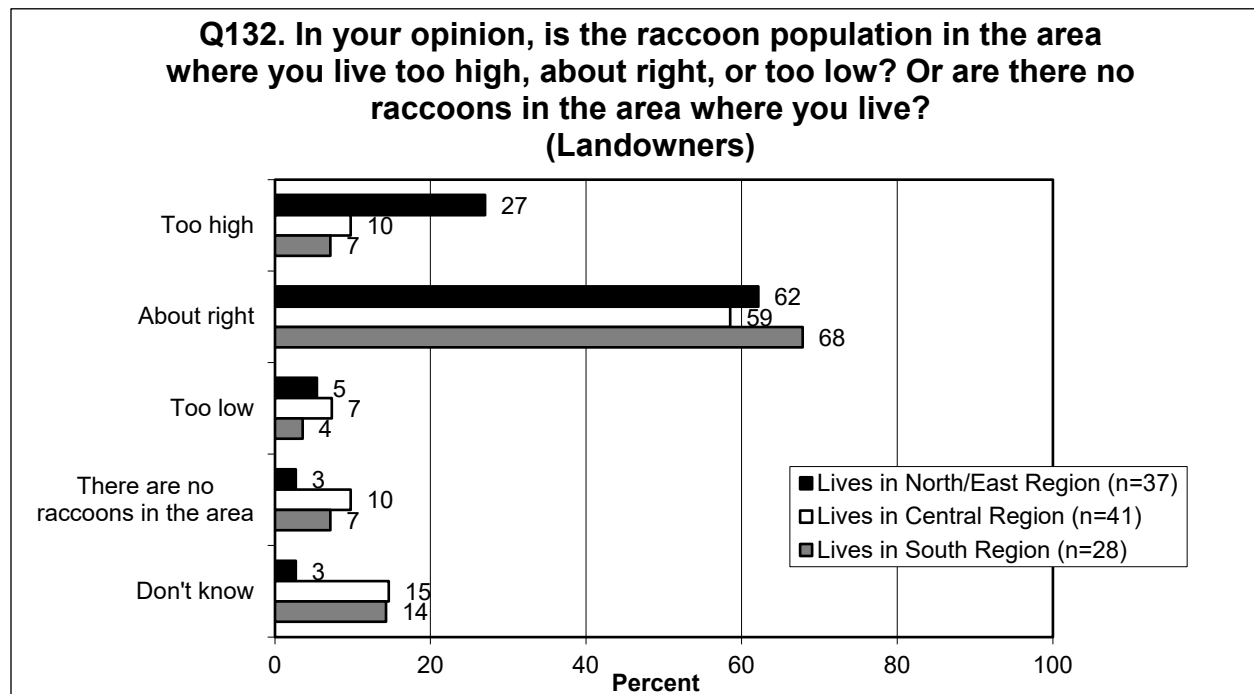


Figure 6.30. Opinion on the Raccoon Population (Landowners)

Support for trapping raccoons as a method to manage their populations is high among landowners (Figure 6.31). Feelings about raccoon are shown in Figure 6.32; intolerance of raccoons is substantial.

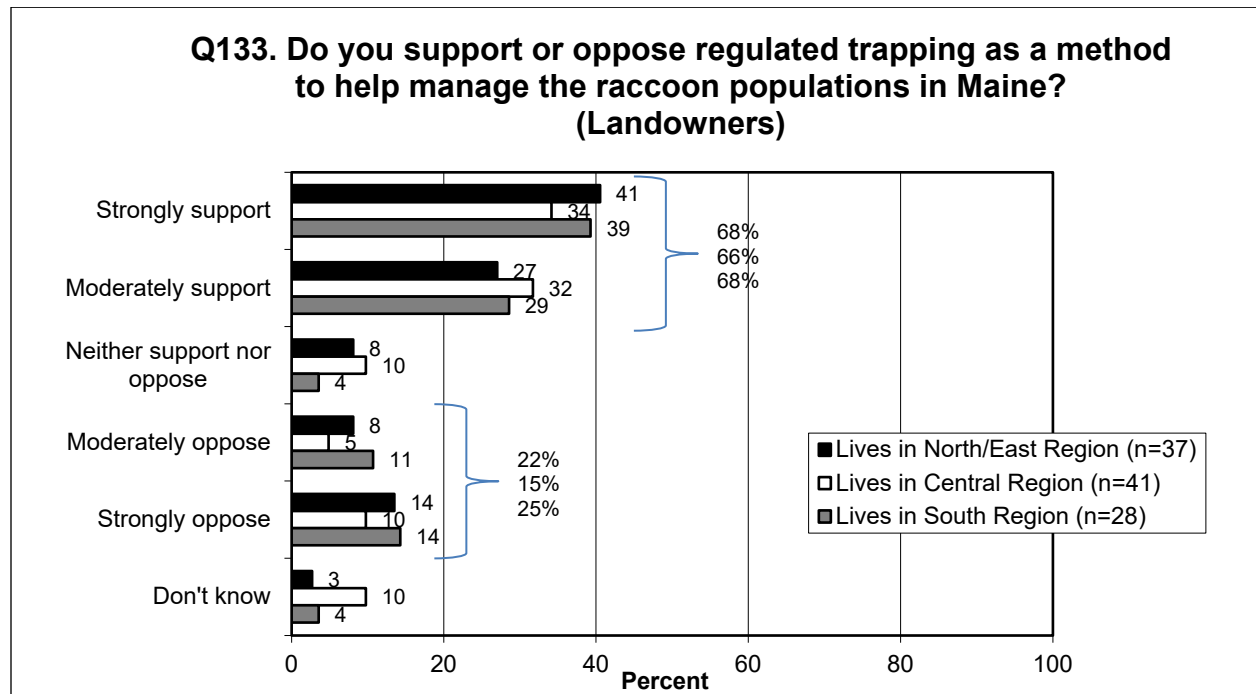


Figure 6.31. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Raccoon Populations (Landowners)

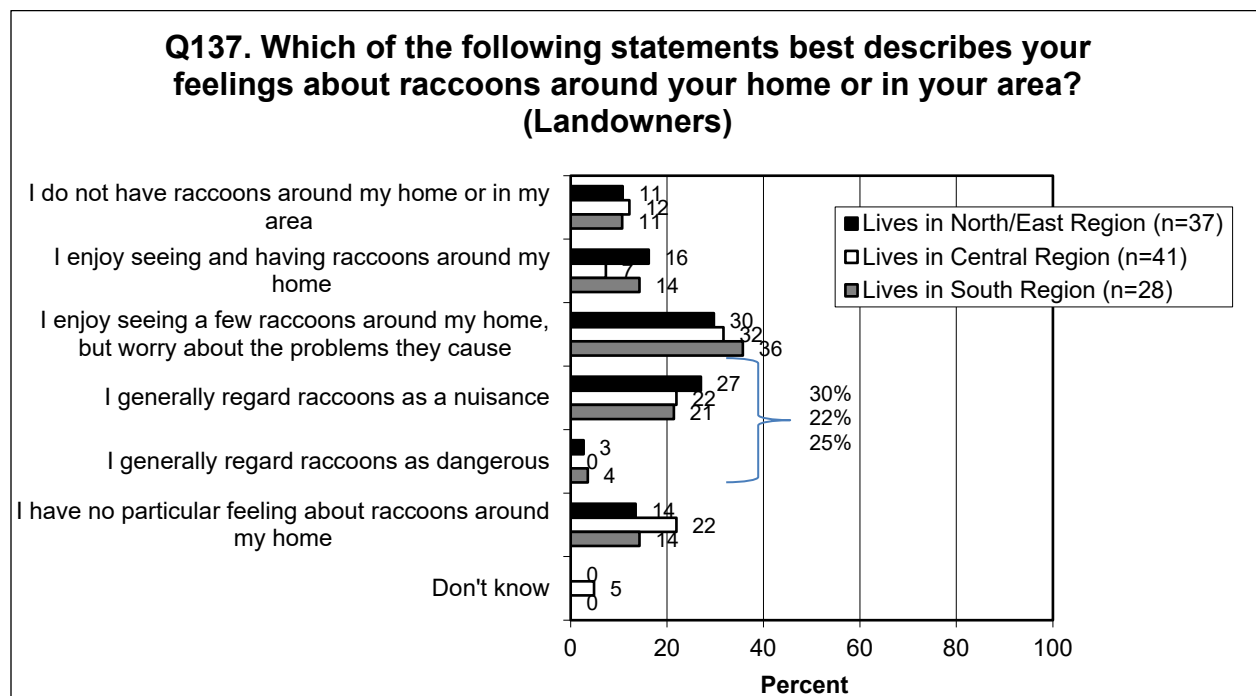


Figure 6.32. Feelings About Raccoons (Landowners)

SKUNK

Knowledge levels regarding skunk are shown in Figure 6.33. Majorities of landowners in the North/East and Central Regions, but just less than a majority in the South Region, think the skunk population where they live is about right (Figure 6.34).

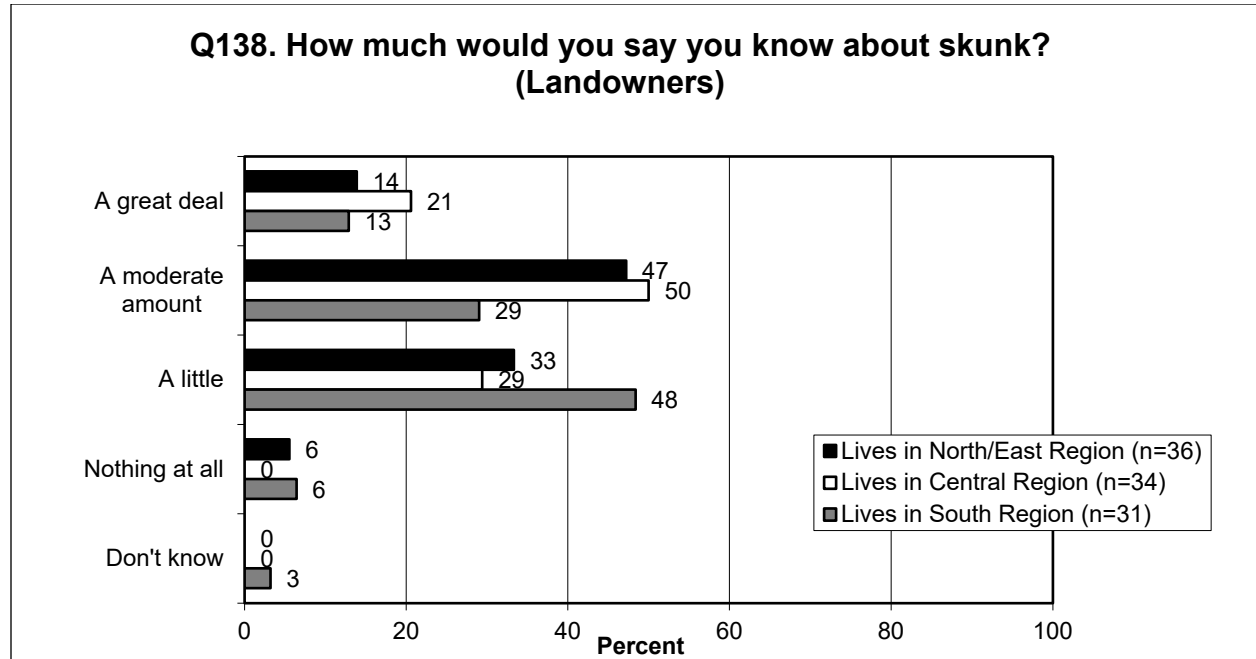


Figure 6.33. Knowledge of Skunks (Landowners)

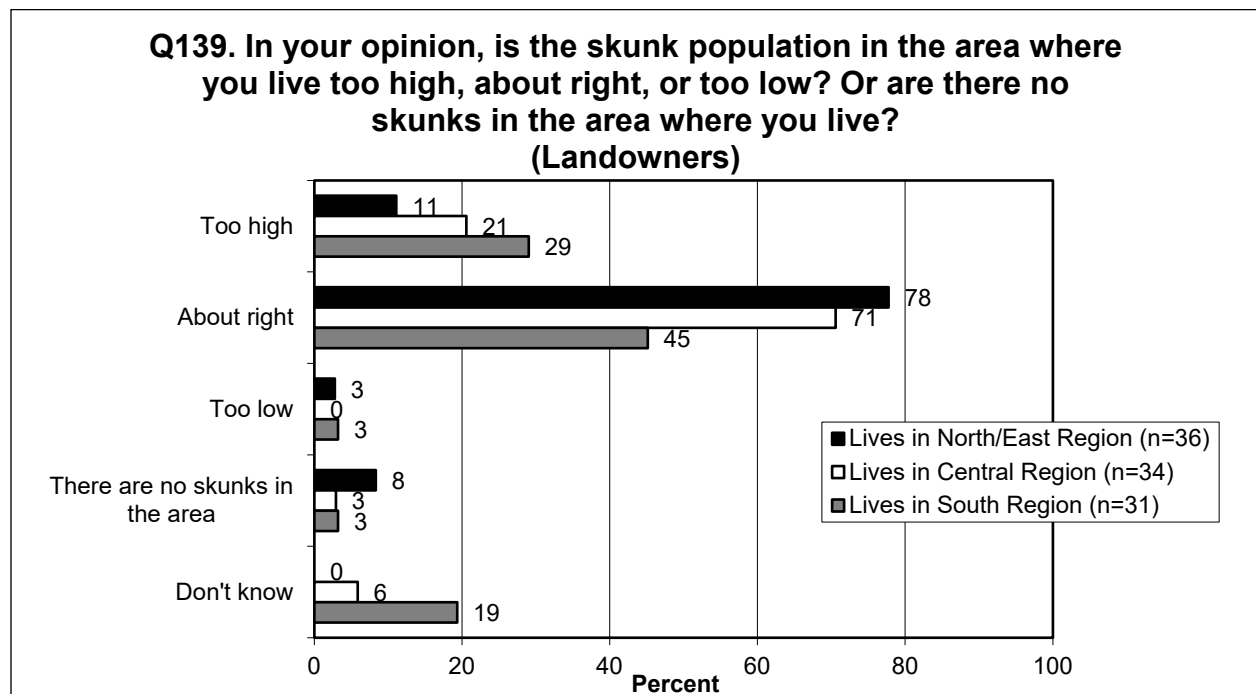


Figure 6.34. Opinion on the Skunk Population (Landowners)

Support for trapping skunks as a method to manage their populations is fairly high among landowners (Figure 6.35). Feelings about skunk are shown in Figure 6.36; landowners show a high level of intolerance toward skunks.

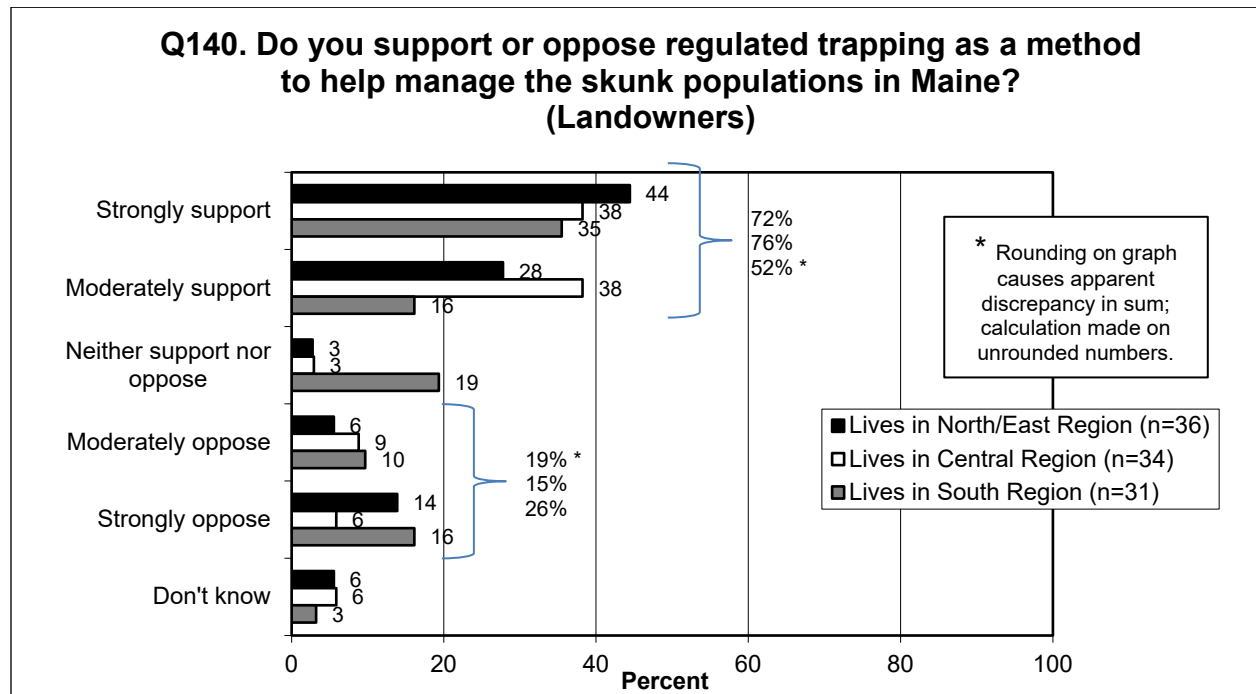


Figure 6.35. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Skunk Populations (Landowners)

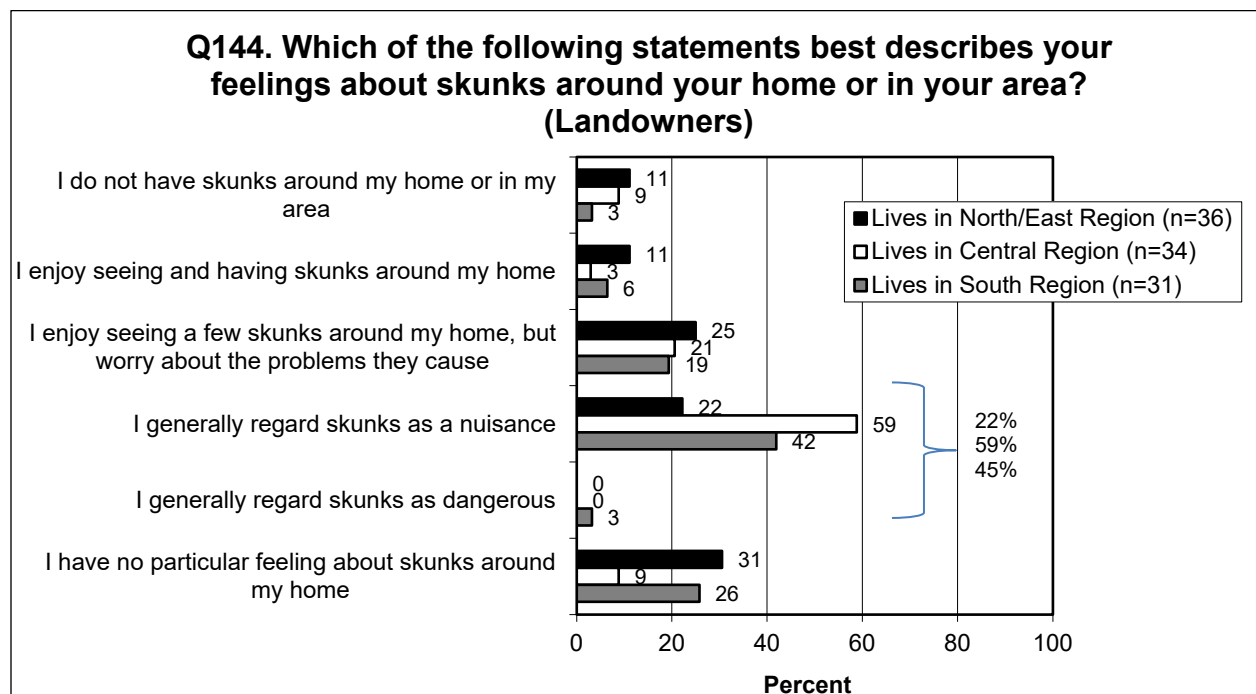


Figure 6.36. Feelings About Skunks (Landowners)

FISHER

Knowledge levels regarding fisher are shown in Figure 6.37. Just under half of landowners think the fisher population where they live is about right (Figure 6.38).

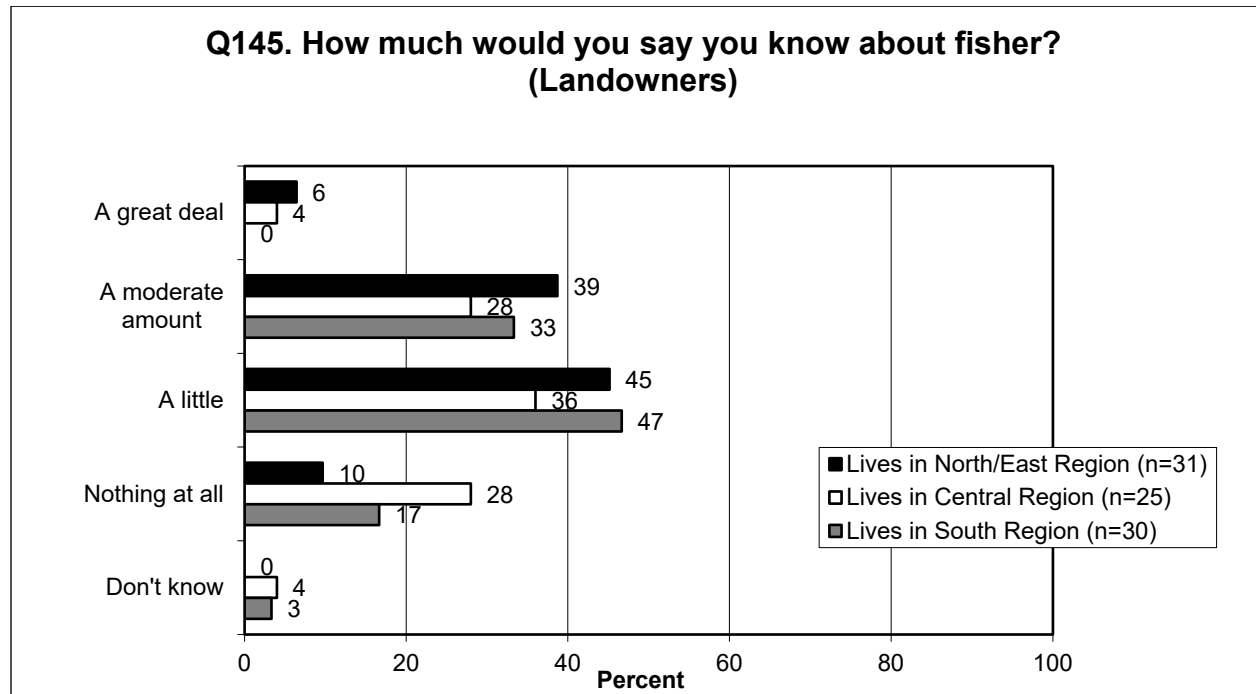


Figure 6.37. Knowledge of Fishers (Landowners)

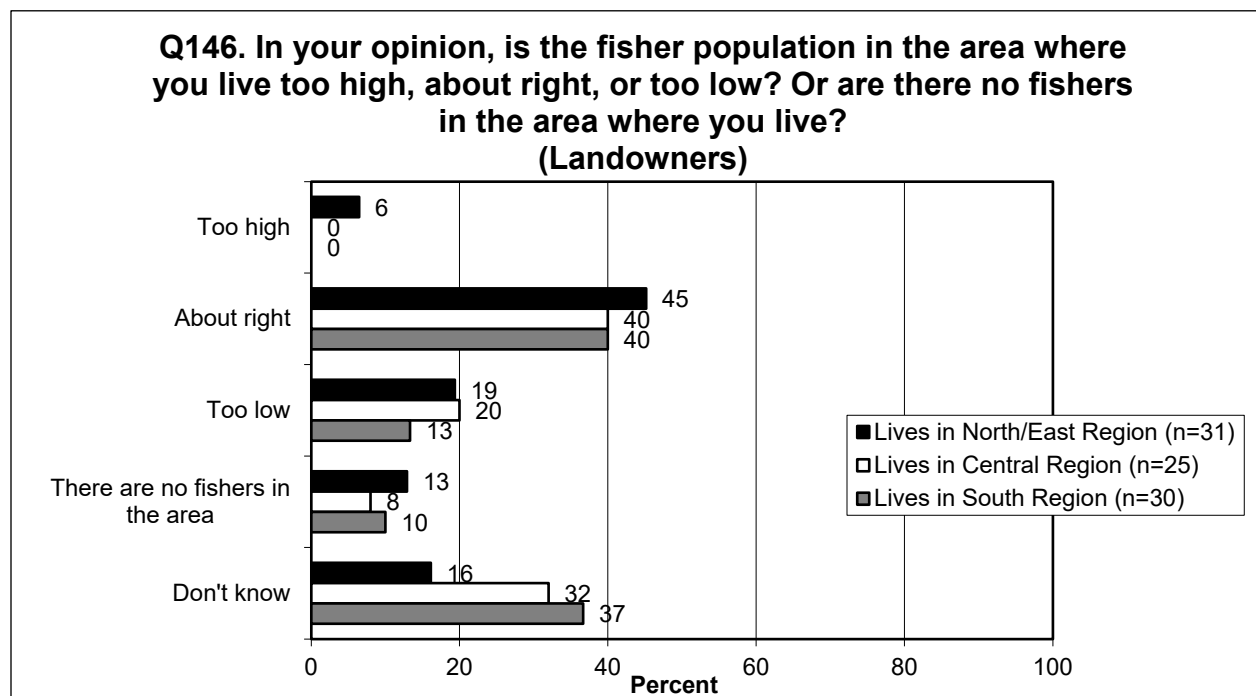


Figure 6.38. Opinion on the Fisher Population (Landowners)

Support for trapping fishers as a method to manage their populations is moderate among landowners, although higher in the North/East Region (Figure 6.39). Feelings about fisher are shown in Figure 6.40; landowners show substantial intolerance toward fishers.

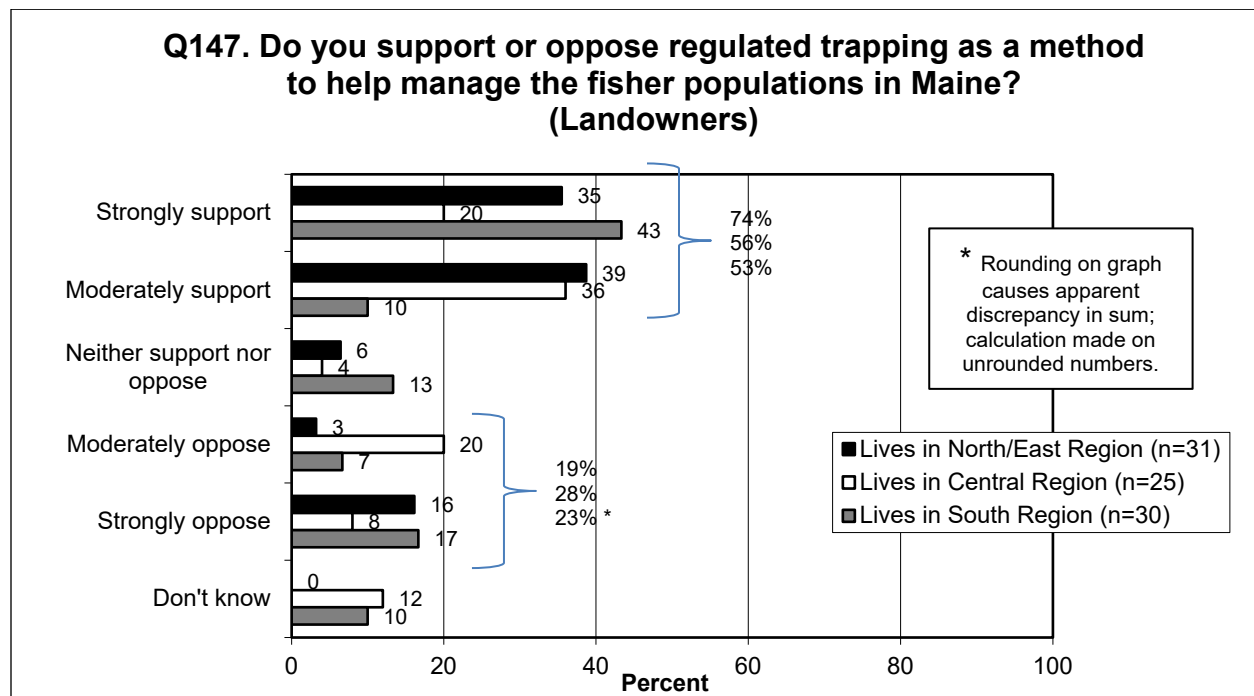


Figure 6.39. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Fisher Populations (Landowners)

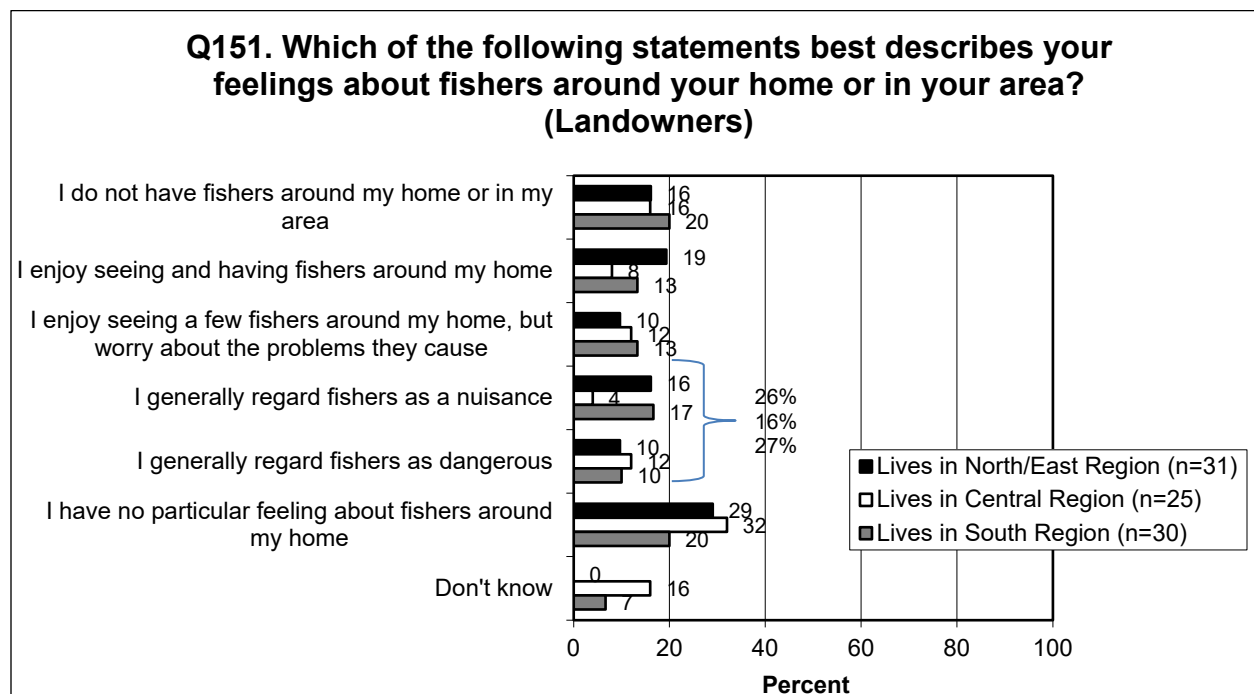


Figure 6.40. Feelings About Fishers (Landowners)

MARTEN

Knowledge levels regarding marten are shown in Figure 6.41. None think that the marten population where they live is too high; otherwise, they generally have a higher percentage in the “about right” response than in the “too low” response (Figure 6.42).

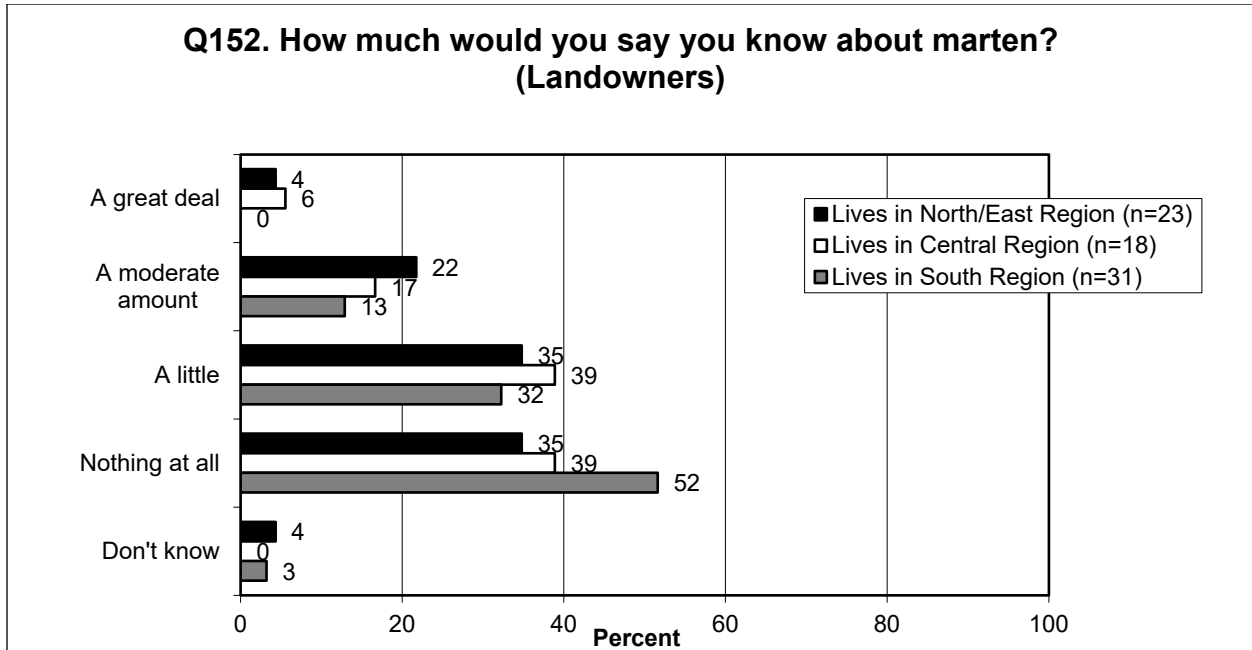


Figure 6.41. Knowledge of Martens (Landowners)

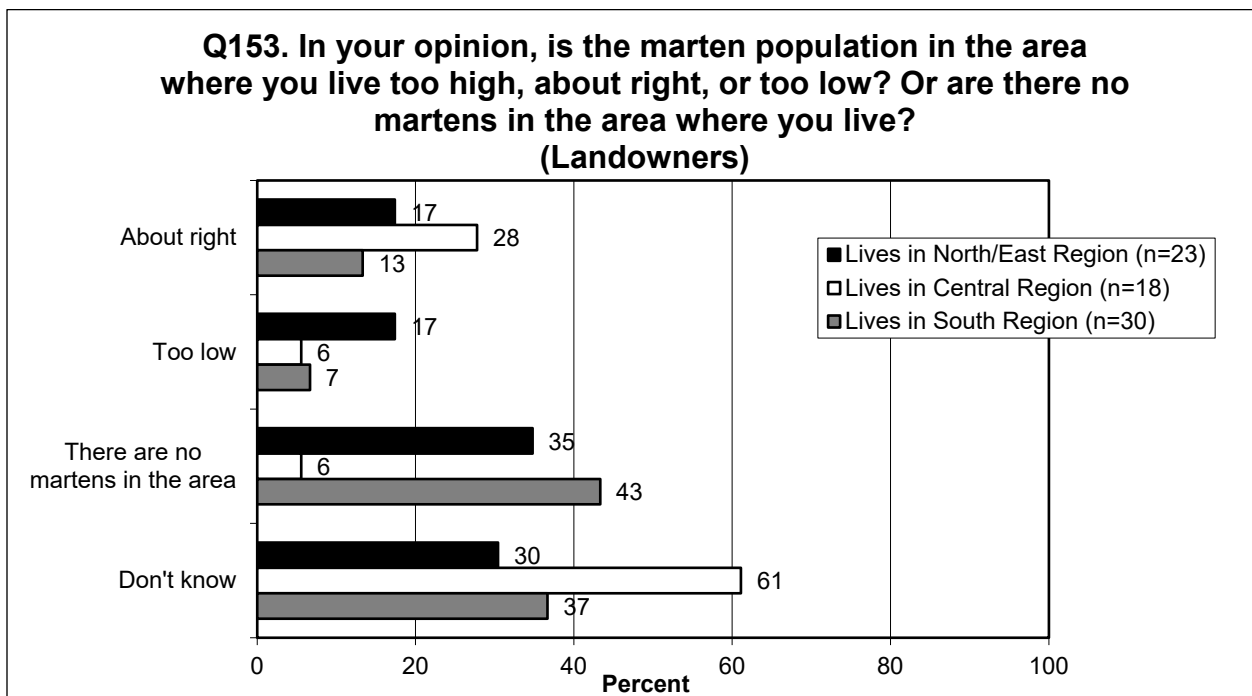


Figure 6.42. Opinion on the Marten Population (Landowners)

Support for trapping martens as a method to manage their populations is moderate among landowners (Figure 6.43). Feelings about marten are shown in Figure 6.44; landowners are generally tolerant of martens.

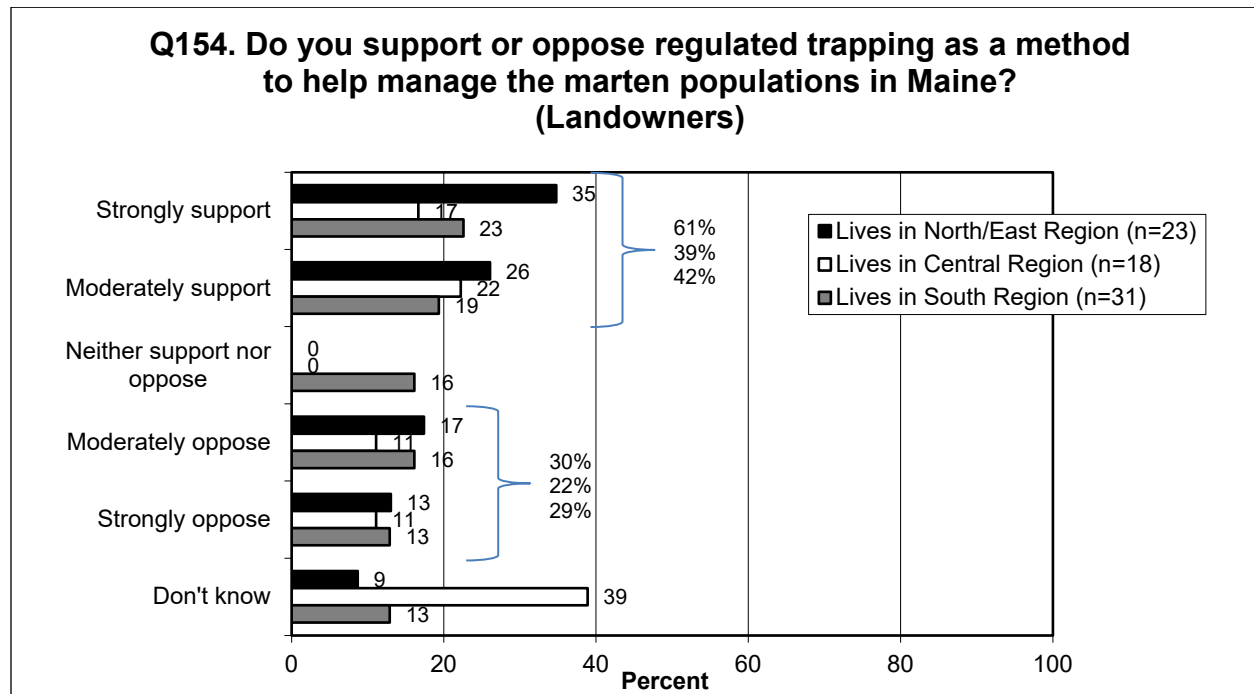


Figure 6.43. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Marten Populations (Landowners)

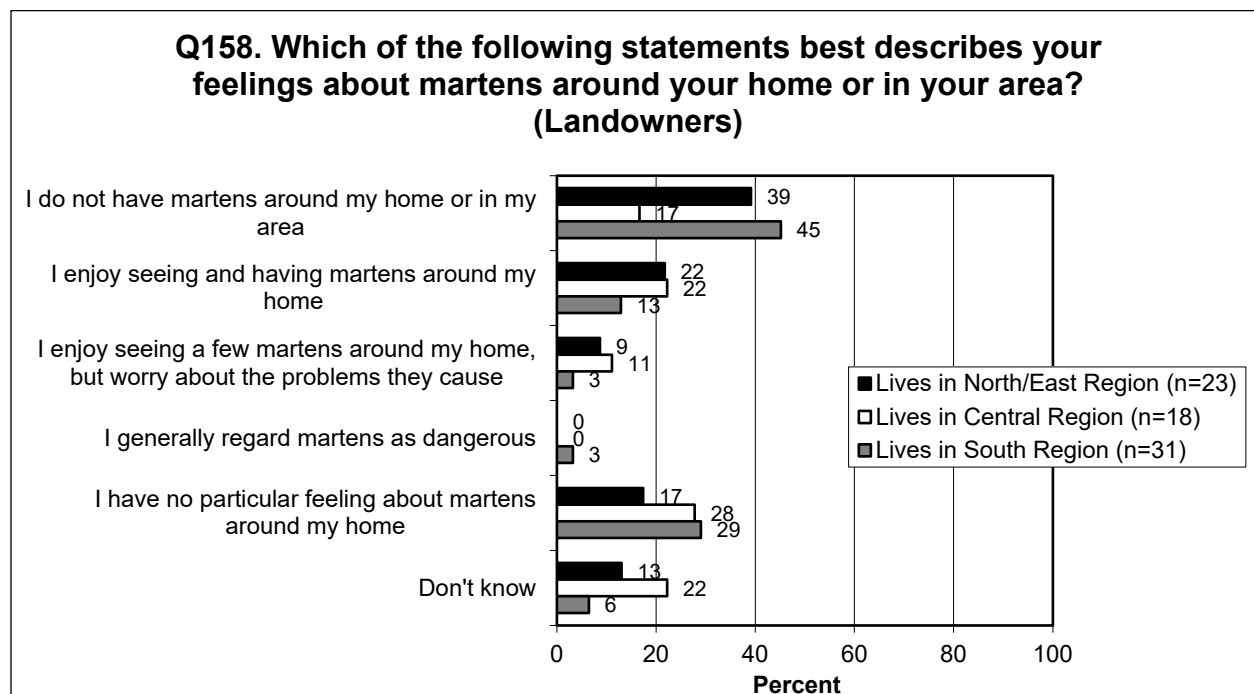


Figure 6.44. Feelings About Martens (Landowners)

OTTER

Knowledge levels regarding otter are shown in Figure 6.45. More landowners think the otter population where they live is about right than think the population is too low, while a very low percentage in the Central Region and none in the other regions say that the population is too high (Figure 6.46).

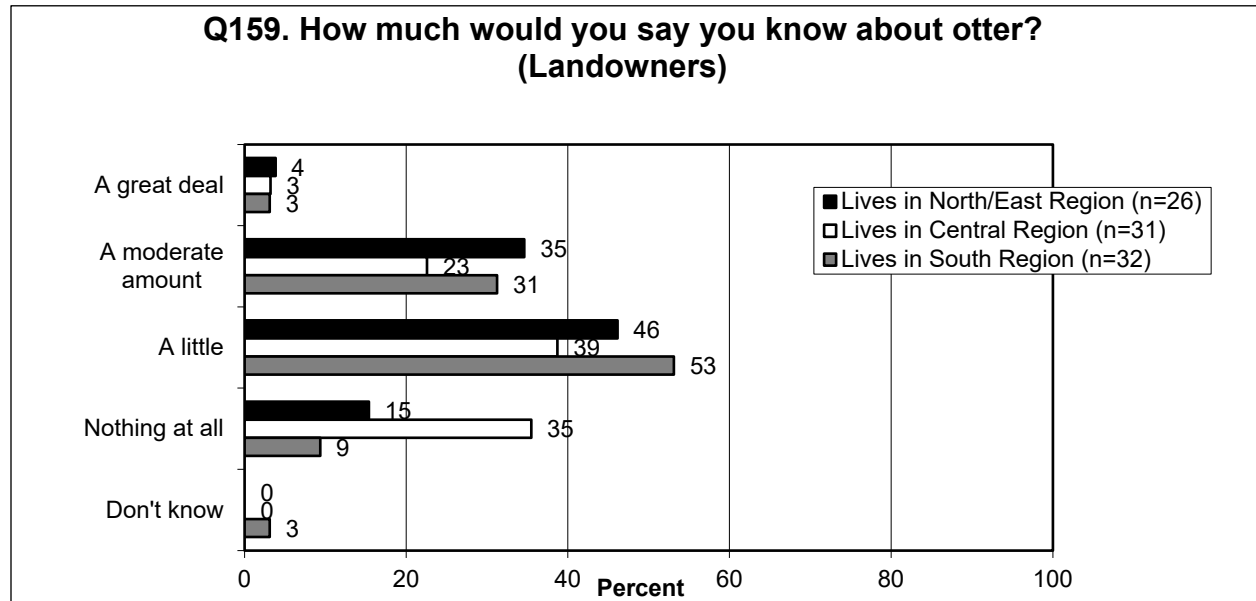


Figure 6.45. Knowledge of Otters (Landowners)

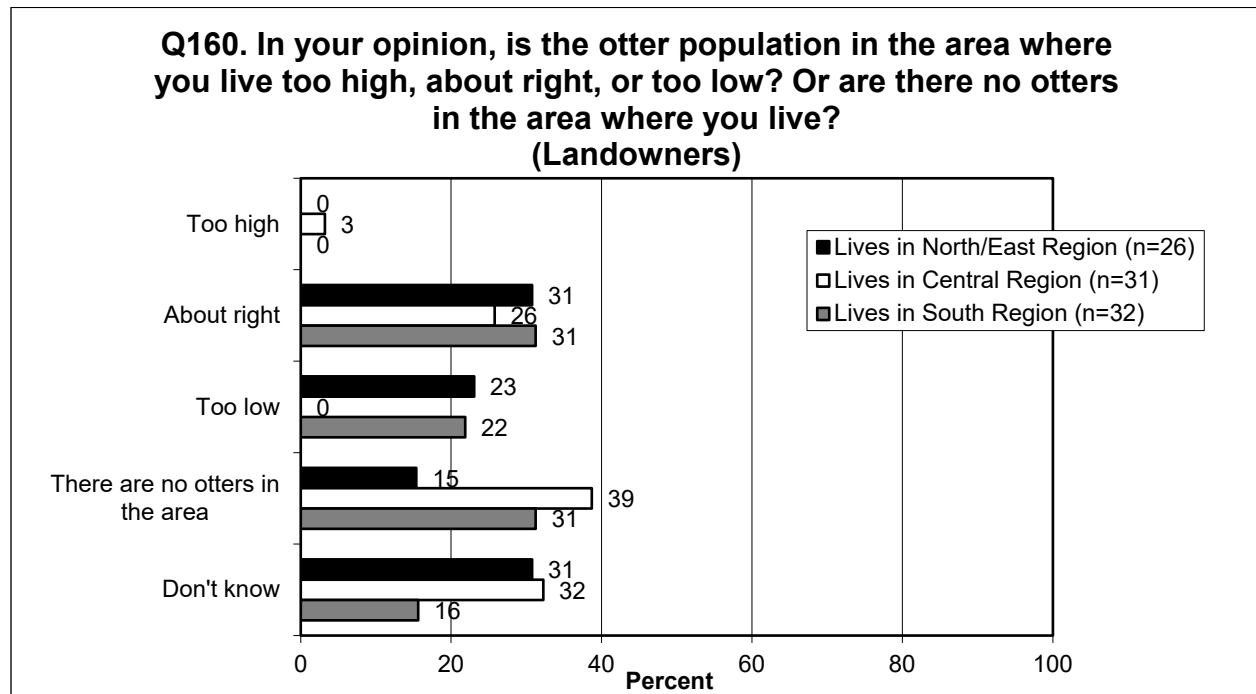


Figure 6.46. Opinion on the Otter Population (Landowners)

Support for trapping otters as a method to manage their populations is just a little higher than opposition among landowners (Figure 6.47). No landowners gave either of the two intolerant responses regarding their feelings about otters (Figure 6.48).

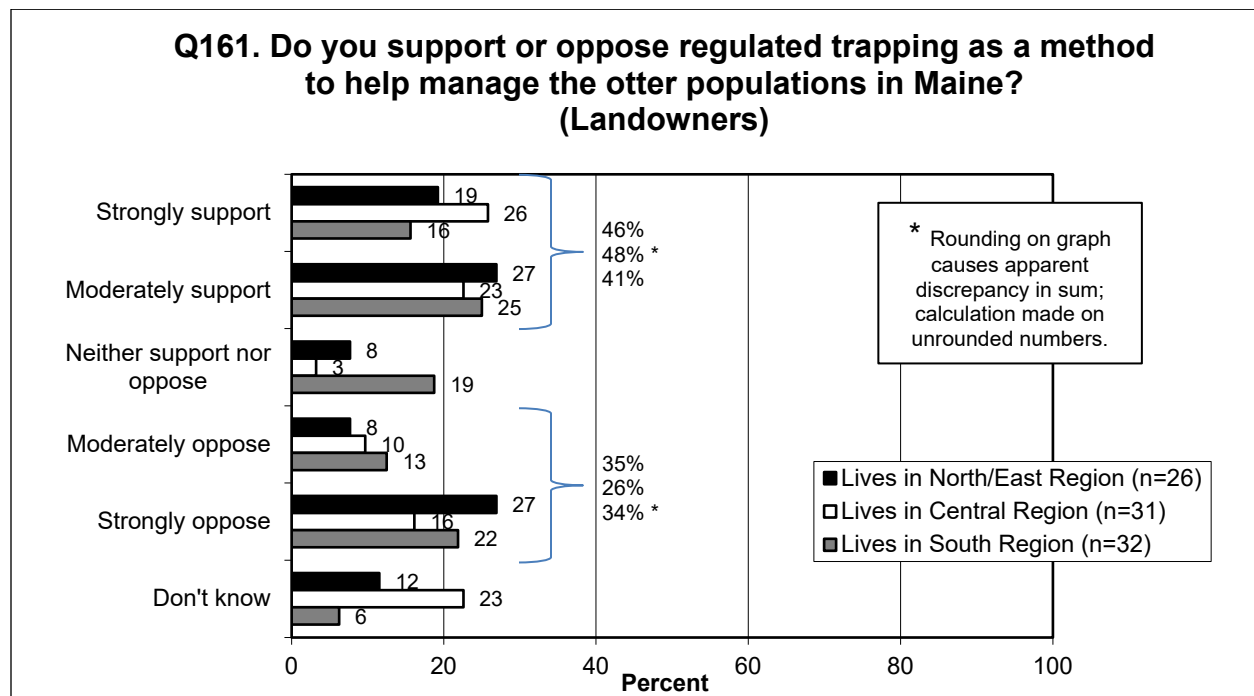


Figure 6.47. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Otter Populations (Landowners)

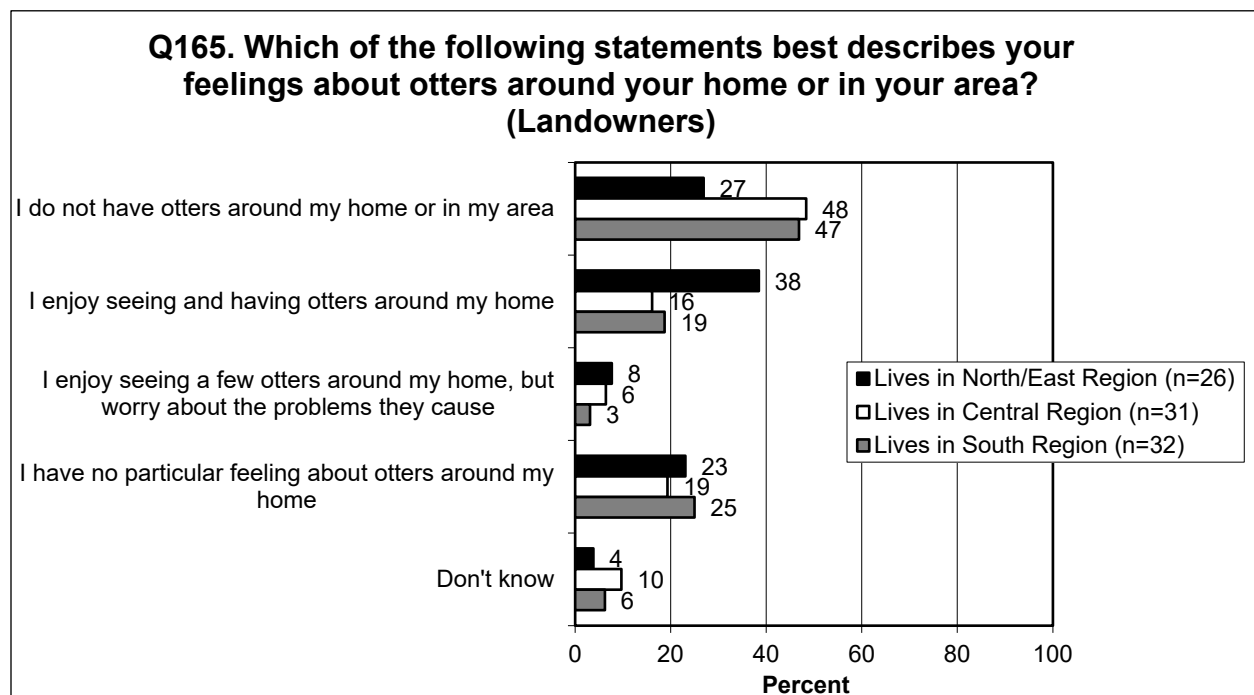


Figure 6.48. Feelings About Otters (Landowners)

MUSKRAT

Knowledge levels regarding muskrat are shown in Figure 6.49. More landowners think the muskrat population where they live is about right than think the population is too high or too low (Figure 6.50).

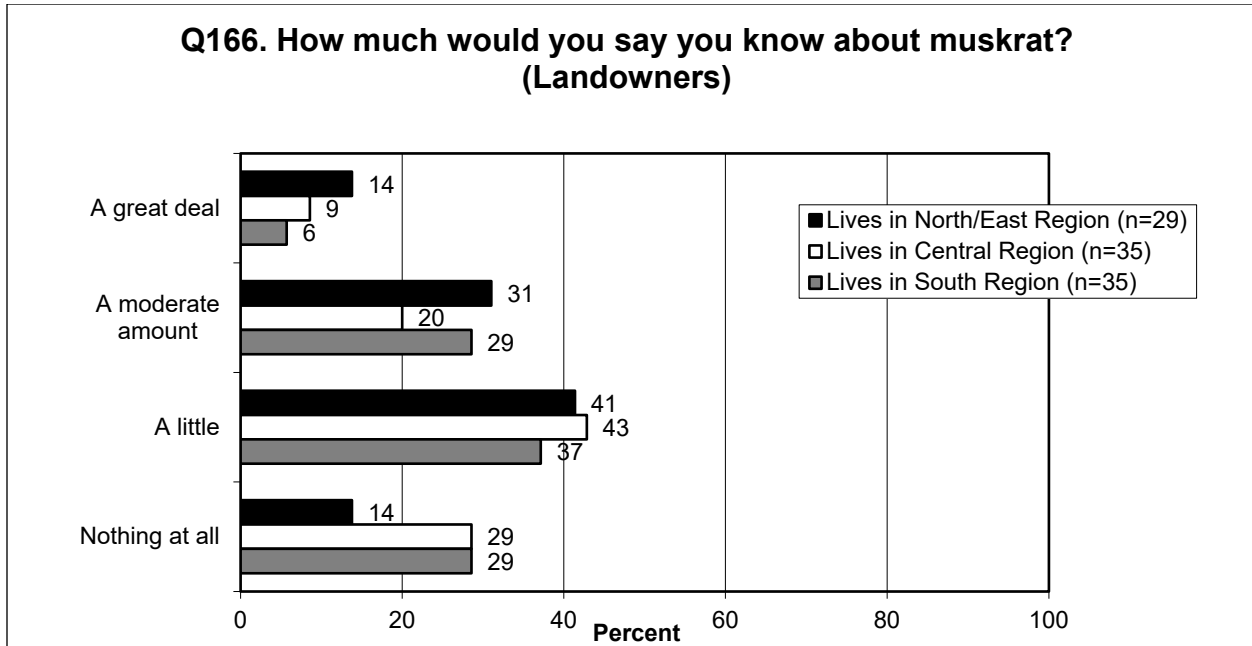


Figure 6.49. Knowledge of Muskrats (Landowners)

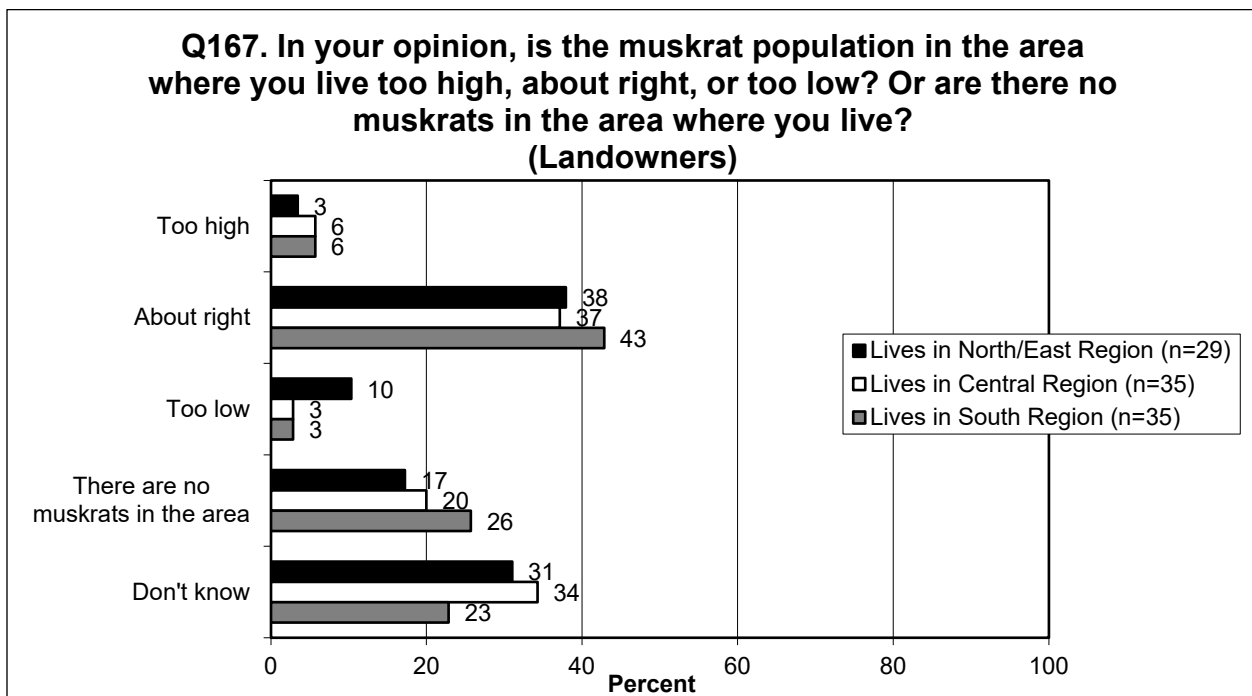


Figure 6.50. Opinion on the Muskrat Population (Landowners)

Support for trapping muskrats as a method to manage their populations is high among landowners (Figure 6.51). Feelings about muskrat are shown in Figure 6.52; landowners are generally tolerant of muskrats.

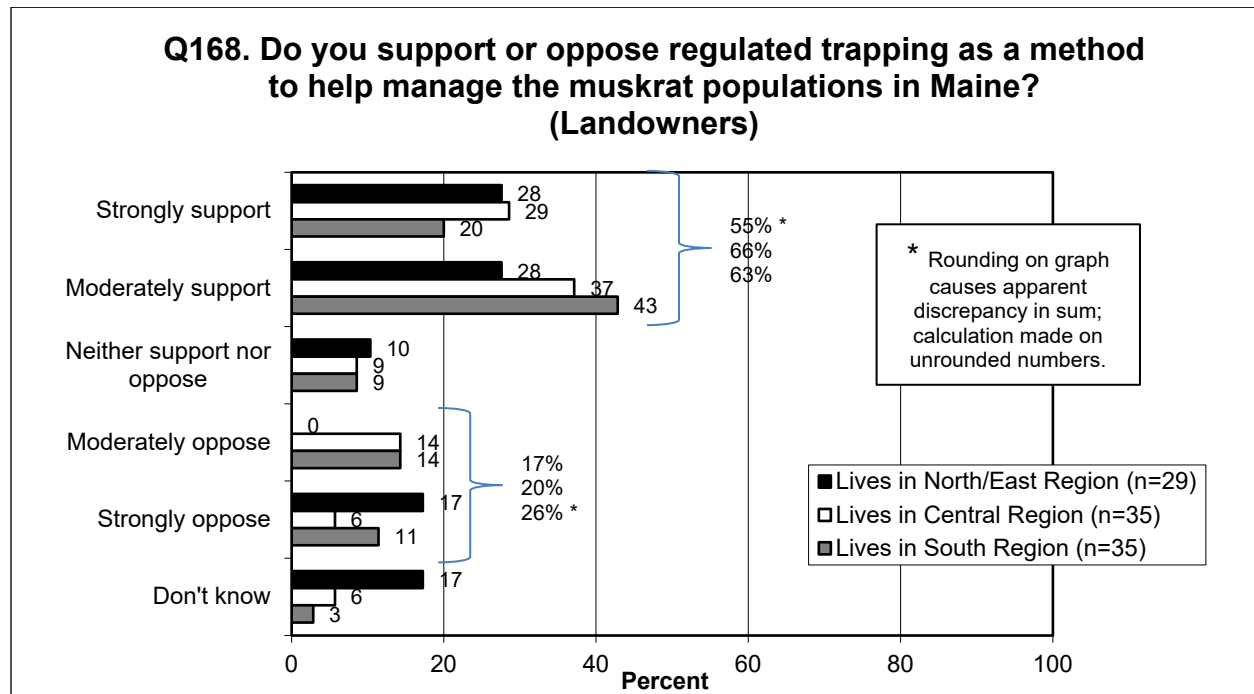


Figure 6.51. Support/Opposition to Trapping to Manage Muskrat Populations (Landowners)

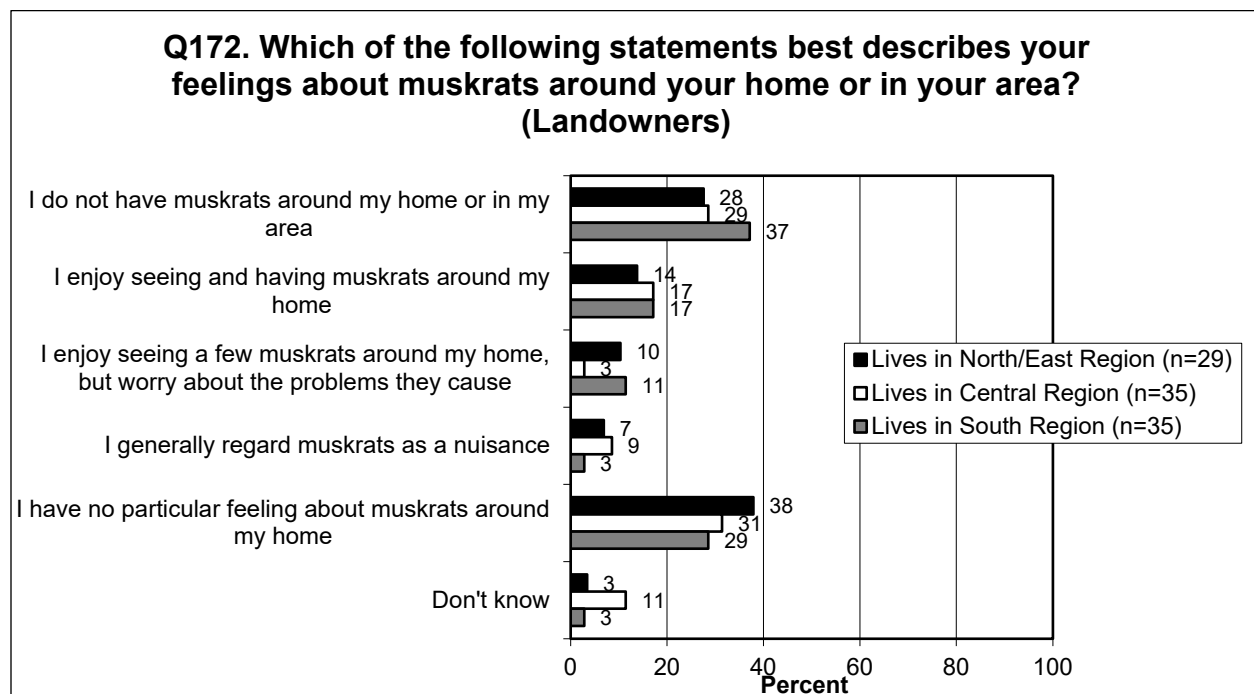


Figure 6.52. Feelings About Muskrats (Landowners)

SUMMARY FINDINGS FOR ALL FURBEARER SPECIES

Landowners from the North/East Region generally have the highest self-professed knowledge of the species (Table 6.1). This table is ranked by “great deal and moderate amount combined” as a whole across the three regions. Bobcat, fisher, marten, otter (in two of the regions), and fox (in two of the regions) are generally felt to be too low—measured by more landowners saying the species population is too low than too high (Table 6.2). On the other hand, coyote, raccoon, and skunk are generally felt to be too high. Opinions on beaver and muskrat are mixed. This table is ranked by the “too high” values as a whole across the three regions.

Table 6.1. How much would you say you know about [species]? (Landowners)

	A great deal			A moderate amount			A great deal and moderate amount combined			A little			Nothing at all		
	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S
Coyote	18	33	41	68	52	44	86	85	85	14	15	11	0	0	4
Raccoon	38	27	14	38	44	46	76	71	61	22	15	32	3	12	7
Fox	20	13	12	47	50	54	67	63	65	33	34	31	0	3	4
Beaver	19	23	11	48	46	37	68	69	49	32	26	37	0	3	14
Skunk	14	21	13	47	50	29	61	71	42	33	29	48	6	0	6
Fisher	6	4	0	39	28	33	45	32	33	45	36	47	10	28	17
Muskrat	14	9	6	31	20	29	45	29	34	41	43	37	14	29	29
Otter	4	3	3	35	23	31	38	26	34	46	39	53	15	35	9
Bobcat	7	0	0	38	22	26	45	22	26	41	59	58	14	19	16
Marten	4	6	0	22	17	13	26	22	13	35	39	32	35	39	52

Green shading indicates the highest knowledge level within the regions; when the regions are within 5 percentage points of the highest, they are also shaded. Red shading indicates the lowest knowledge level within the regions; when the regions are within 5 percentage points of the lowest, they are also shaded. Regarding coyote and fox, no region is markedly higher than the others. Any apparent discrepancies in the sums are caused by rounding in the table; all sums are calculated on unrounded numbers. “Don’t know” not shown to improve table legibility.

Table 6.2. In your opinion, is the [species] population in the area where you live too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no [species] in the area where you live? (Landowners)

	Too high			About right			Too low			None in area			Don’t know		
	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S
Coyote	57	48	41	25	41	48	7	0	4	7	4	4	4	7	4
Skunk	11	21	29	78	71	45	3	0	3	8	3	3	0	6	19
Raccoon	27	10	7	62	59	68	5	7	4	3	10	7	3	15	14
Beaver	16	15	6	55	69	54	13	8	17	10	5	14	6	3	9
Fox	0	13	12	70	69	58	13	6	23	7	0	0	10	13	8
Muskrat	3	6	6	38	37	43	10	3	3	17	20	26	31	34	23
Bobcat	7	0	0	41	41	42	17	26	13	14	22	26	21	11	19
Fisher	6	0	0	45	40	40	19	20	13	13	8	10	16	32	37
Otter	0	3	0	31	26	31	23	0	22	15	39	31	31	32	16
Marten	0	0	0	17	28	13	17	6	7	35	6	43	30	61	37

Red shading indicates that “too high” exceeds “too low” in that region; green shading indicates that “too low” exceeds “too high” in that region.

The highest support is for trapping beaver, coyote, raccoon, and skunk, as a method to help manage their populations (Table 6.3). This table is ranked by overall support across all three regions. The most tolerated species are fox, beaver, bobcat, marten, otter, and muskrat, while the least tolerated are coyote, skunk, raccoon, and fisher (Table 6.4). This table is ranked by the values in the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” columns as a whole across the three regions.

Table 6.3. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the [species] populations in Maine? (Landowners)

	Strongly support			Overall support			Neither			Strongly oppose			Overall oppose		
	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S
Beaver	42	49	37	81	72	69	0	3	9	13	13	17	19	21	20
Coyote	64	48	41	86	63	56	0	11	4	4	11	30	14	19	37
Fox	43	28	38	73	69	62	10	9	4	7	9	23	13	16	35
Raccoon	41	34	39	68	66	68	8	10	4	14	10	14	22	15	25
Skunk	44	38	35	72	76	52	3	3	19	14	6	16	19	15	26
Muskrat	28	29	20	55	66	63	10	9	9	17	6	11	17	20	26
Fisher	35	20	43	74	56	53	6	4	13	16	8	17	19	28	23
Bobcat	28	22	29	48	56	48	10	4	6	17	19	23	34	33	42
Marten	35	17	23	61	39	42	0	0	16	13	11	13	30	22	29
Otter	19	26	16	46	48	41	8	3	19	27	16	22	35	26	34

Green shading indicates the highest support among all the species within that region, showing all within 5 percentage points of the top species. Red shading indicates the highest opposition among all the species within that region, showing all within 5 percentage points of the top species. “Don’t know” not shown to improve table legibility.

Table 6.4. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about [species] around your home or in your area? (Landowners)

	Enjoy seeing and having them around home			Enjoy seeing and having them but worry about problems			Regard them as a nuisance			Regard them as dangerous			Nuisance and dangerous combined		
	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S	NE	C	S
Fox	50	31	46	23	28	23	3	3	8	0	9	12	3	13	19
Beaver	32	33	26	29	23	23	13	21	11	0	0	0	13	21	11
Bobcat	17	30	32	21	4	13	7	4	3	3	4	3	10	7	6
Otter	38	16	19	8	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Marten	22	22	13	9	11	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
Muskrat	14	17	17	10	3	11	7	9	3	0	0	0	7	9	3
Coyote	11	11	22	18	22	30	32	30	22	21	26	15	54	56	37
Fisher	19	8	13	10	12	13	16	4	17	10	12	10	26	16	27
Raccoon	16	7	14	30	32	36	27	22	21	3	0	4	30	22	25
Skunk	11	3	6	25	21	19	22	59	42	0	0	3	22	59	45

Dark green shading indicates the highest in the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response among all the species in that region. Green shading indicates that the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response exceeds nuisance/dangerous combined in each region. Dark red shading indicates the highest in the combined nuisance/dangerous among all the species in that region. Red shading indicates that the nuisance/dangerous combined response exceeds the “enjoy seeing and having them around home” response in each region. Some responses not shown to improve table legibility.

South Region landowners perceive the species in the survey as having the most benefit to Maine, while Central Region landowners perceive them as having the least benefit (Table 6.5). The table is ranked by the mean as a whole across the three regions.

Table 6.5. How beneficial do you consider it to have [species] in Maine, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all beneficial and 10 is extremely beneficial? (Landowners)

	Mean Ratings		
	North/East Region	Central Region	South Region
Otter	6.8	6.8	7.1
Fox	6.8	6.1	7.4
Bobcat	6.1	6.3	7.7
Beaver	6.4	6.2	7.1
Fisher	6.2	5.8	6.4
Marten	6.0	5.5	5.4
Muskrat	5.4	5.3	6.1
Raccoon	5.8	5.1	5.5
Skunk	5.8	4.1	5.3
Coyote	3.9	3.8	5.0

Light green shading indicates the region that has the highest mean for each species. Light red shading indicates the region that has the lowest mean for each species.

ATTITUDES TOWARD FURBEARER MANAGEMENT

Large majorities of landowners (from 74% to 87%) support managing furbearer populations to reduce wildlife diseases, with landowners from the North/East Region having the highest support (Figure 6.53).

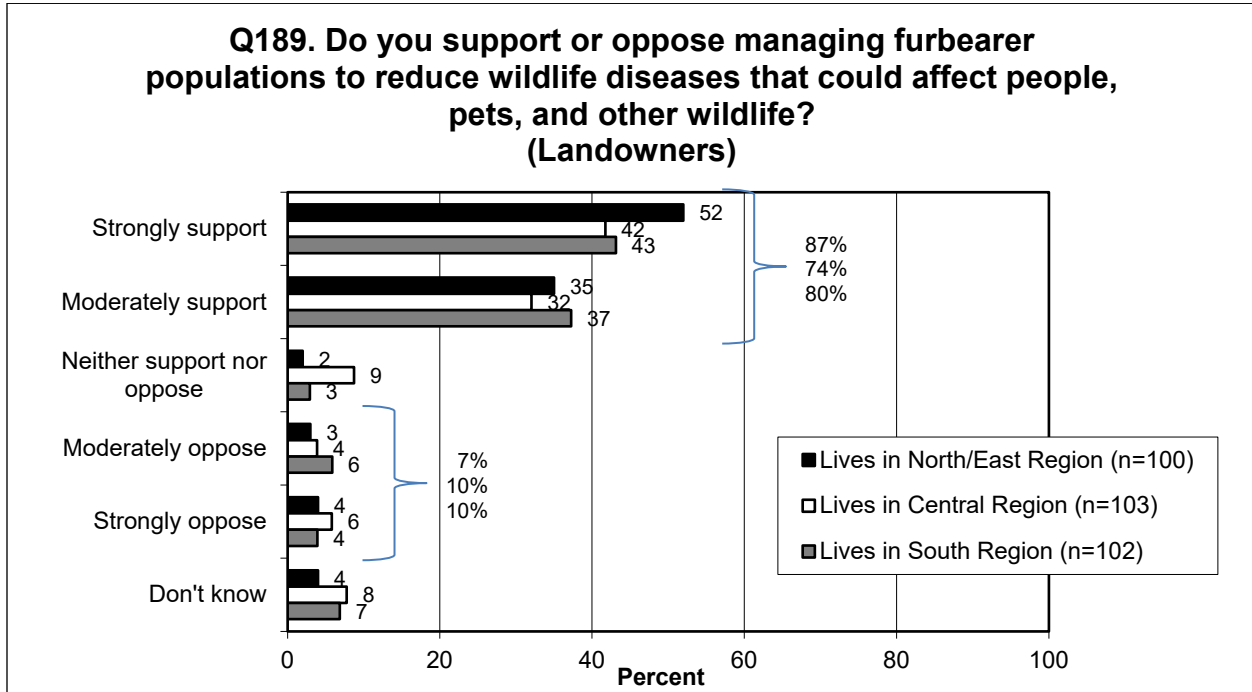


Figure 6.53. Support for or Opposition to Managing Furbearer Populations to Reduce Wildlife Diseases (Landowners)

HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICTS

A majority of landowners in each region had conflicts with wildlife, with Central and South Region landowners having the highest rate of experiencing problems (Figure 6.54). Deer, coyote, and raccoon are the most common problem-makers (although the ranking varies by region—deer being the worst in the Central and South Regions, but raccoon being the worst in the North/East Region—beating out deer by 3 percentage points in that region) (Figures 6.55 and 6.56).

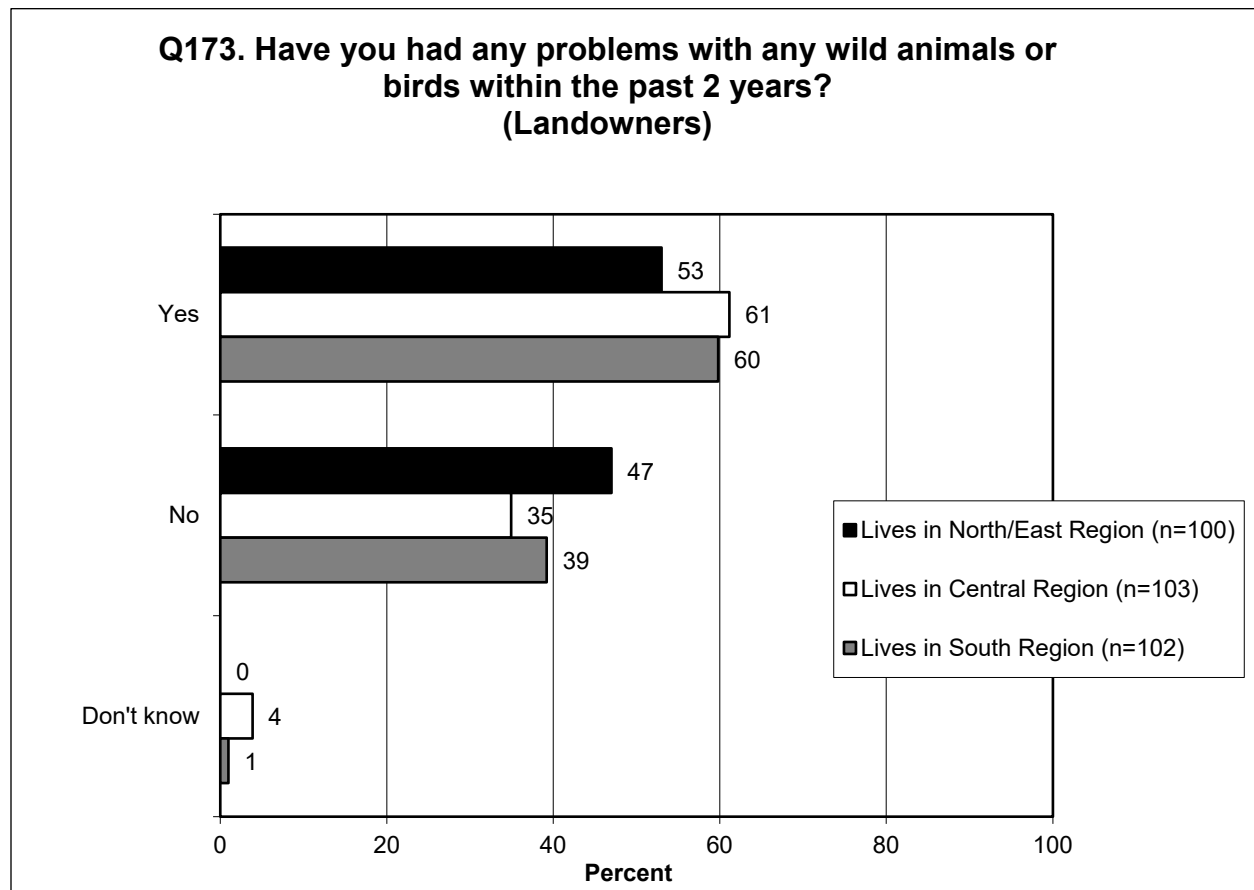


Figure 6.54. Problems With Wild Animals or Birds (Landowners)

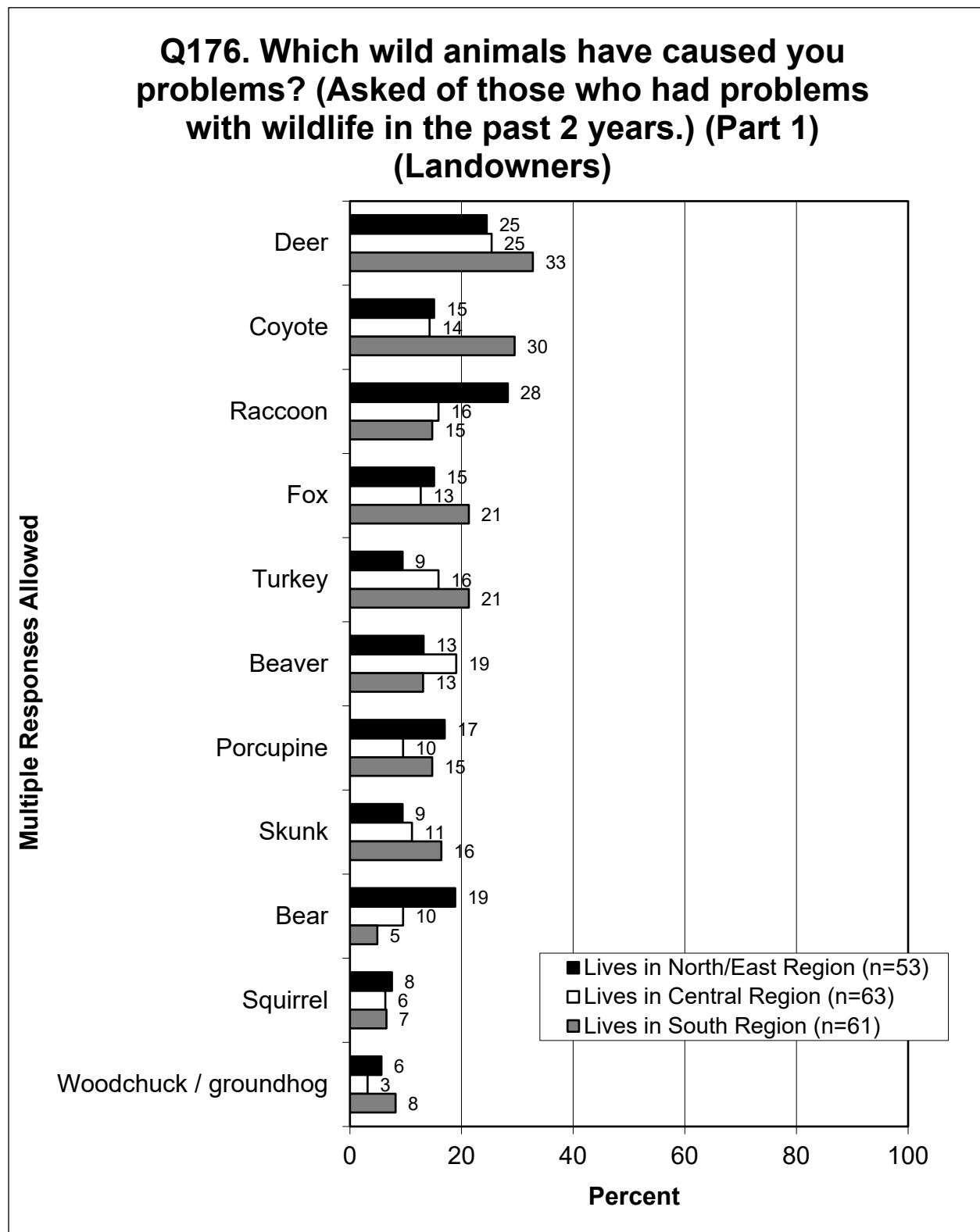


Figure 6.55. Types of Wild Animals or Birds That Caused Problems, Part 1 (Landowners)

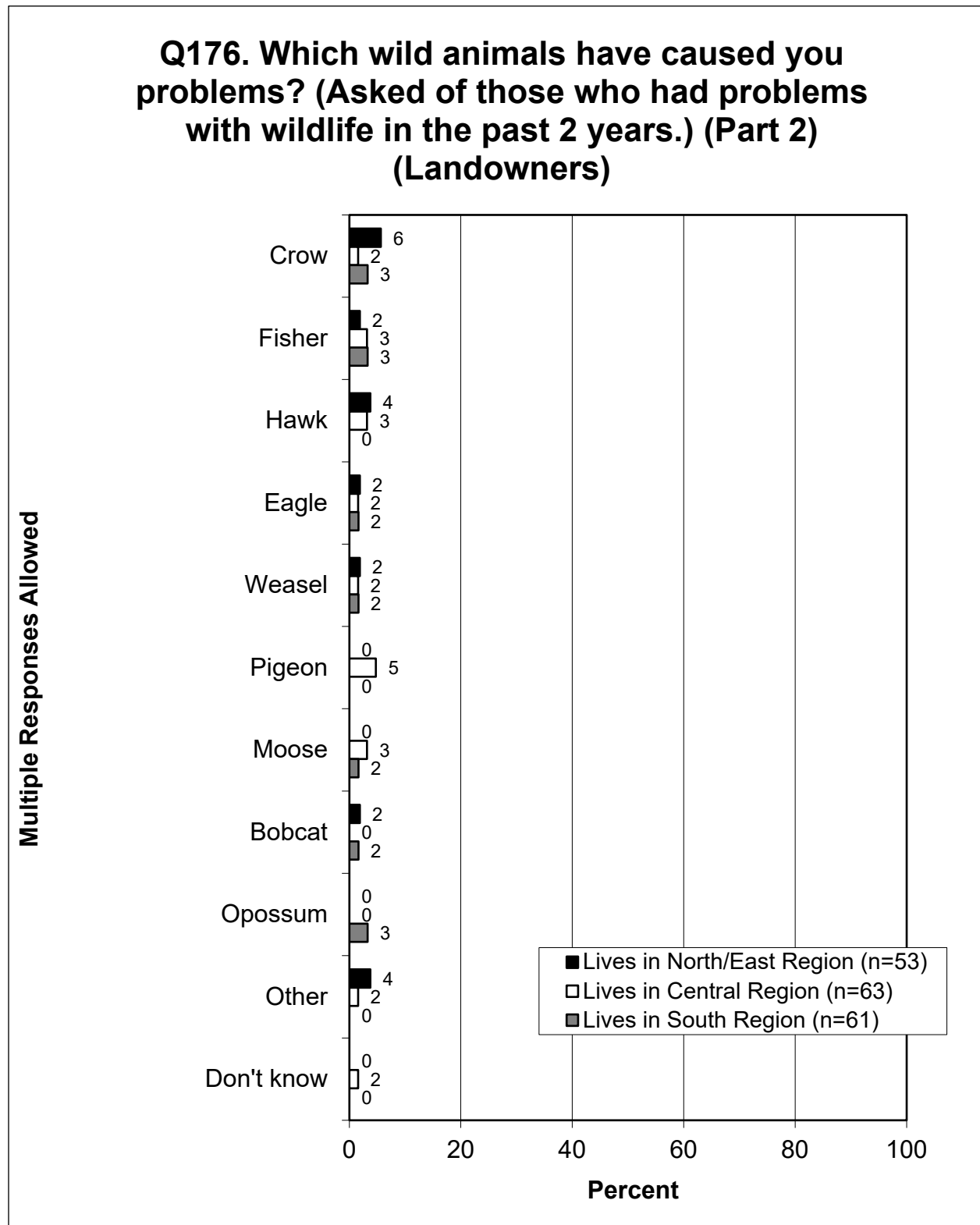


Figure 6.56. Types of Wild Animals or Birds That Caused Problems, Part 2 (Landowners)

Damage to crops and gardens is the most common problem among landowners (Figure 6.57). Other common problems include threat or harm to livestock (this includes chickens, using “livestock” in the broadest terms), damage to human property, threat or harm to pets, getting into garbage, and flooding from beavers.

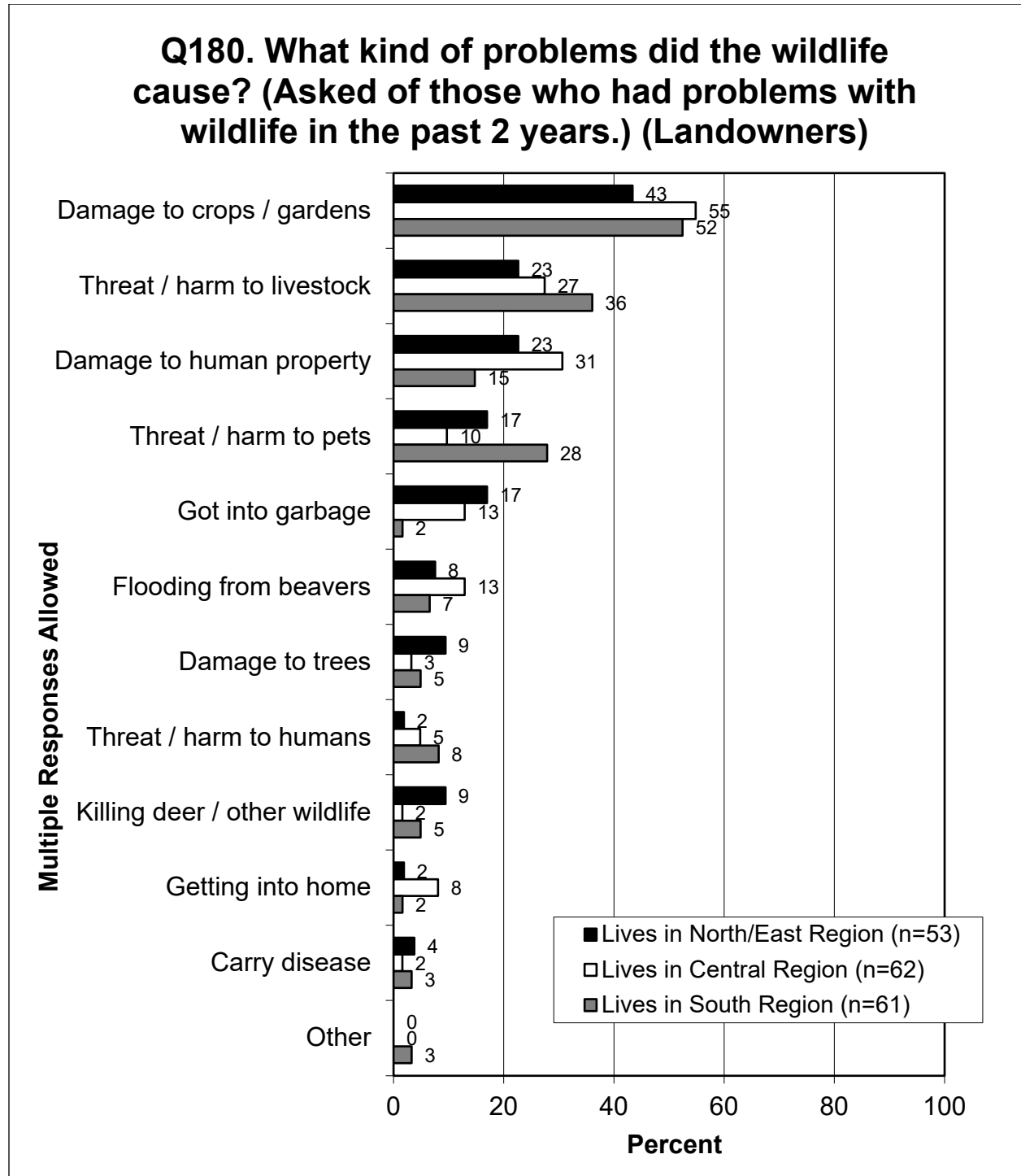


Figure 6.57. Types of Problems Caused by Wild Animals or Birds (Landowners)

Figure 6.58 shows the full range of actions taken to address the wildlife causing problems. Prominent among them are killing the animal, allowing trapping, using fencing, using deterrents, and relocating the animal.

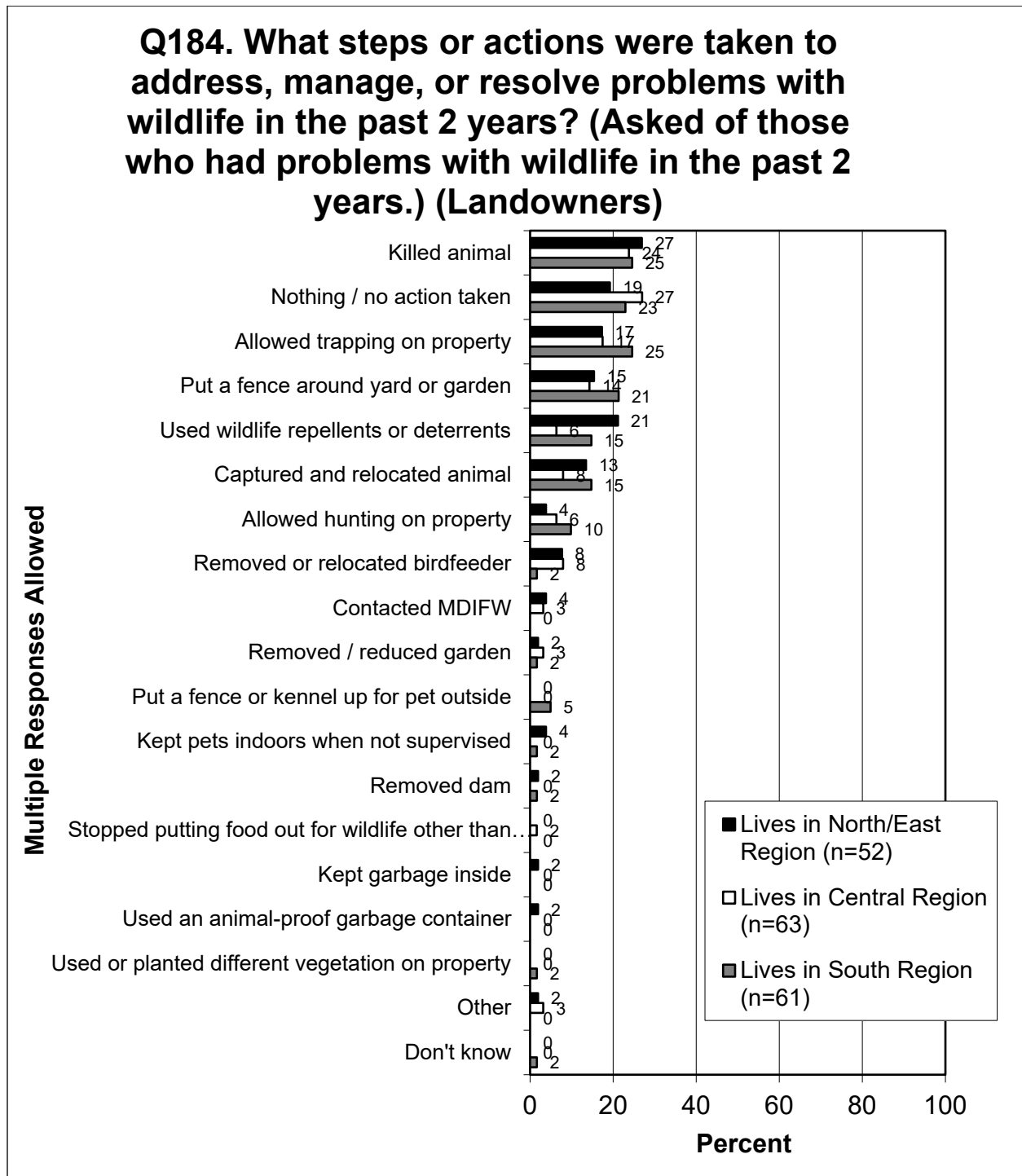


Figure 6.58. Actions Taken to Address Problems Caused by Wild Animals or Birds (Landowners)

From 6% to 10% of landowners who had problems hired someone to help resolve the problems (Figure 6.59). Most of the time, the person hired did not provide information on non-lethal means to the landowners to address the problem animals (Figure 6.60).

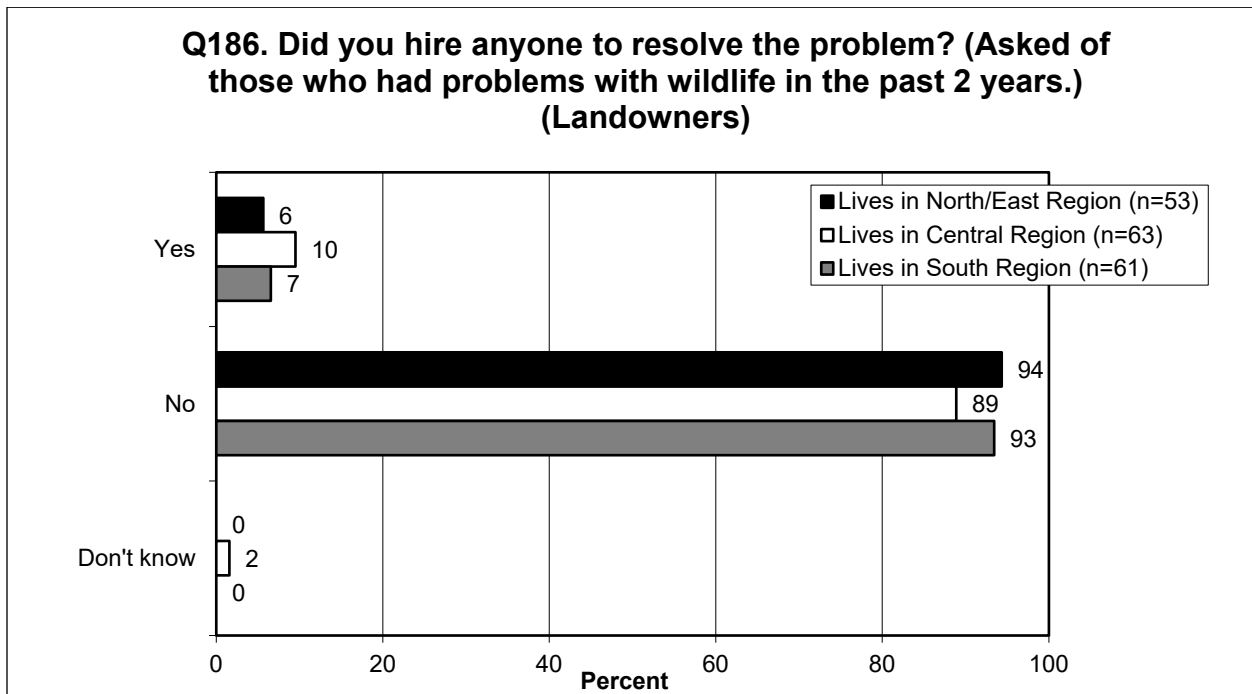


Figure 6.59. Hiring Anyone to Resolve Wildlife Problems (Landowners)

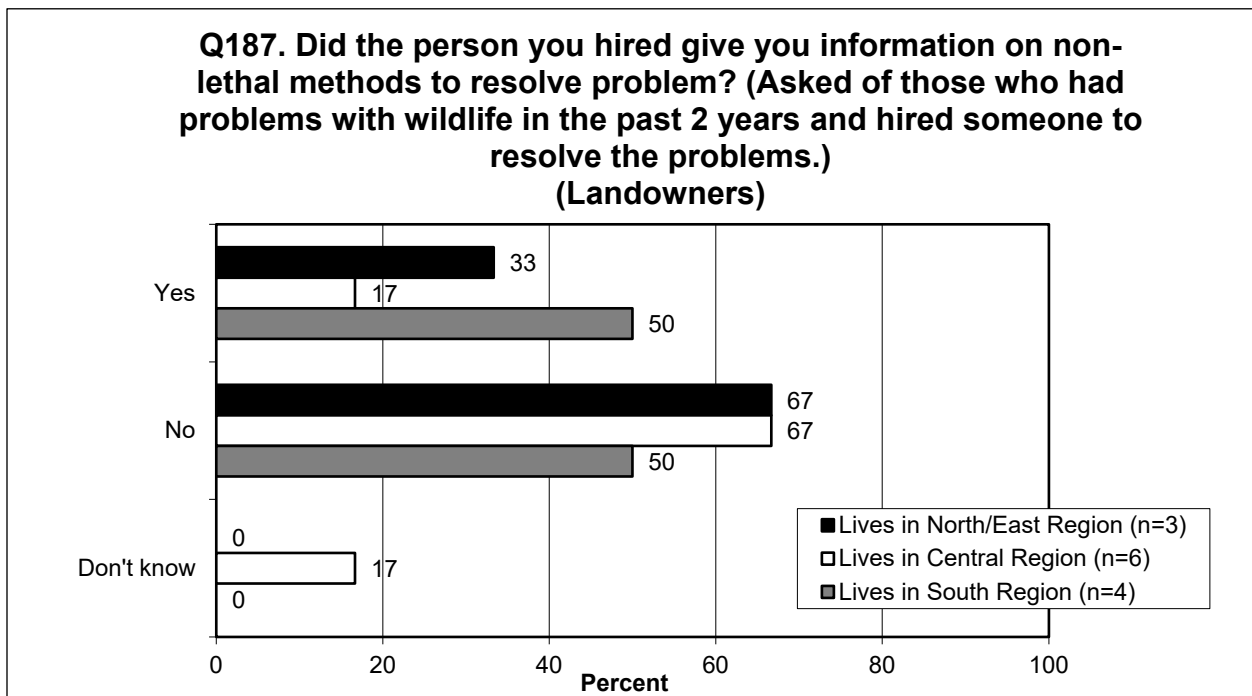


Figure 6.60. Information on Non-Lethal Methods (Landowners)

Among landowners, support for trapping as a way to resolve problems with wildlife is very high—at 75% or higher (Figure 6.61). The most opposition—albeit only at 16%—is in the South Region.

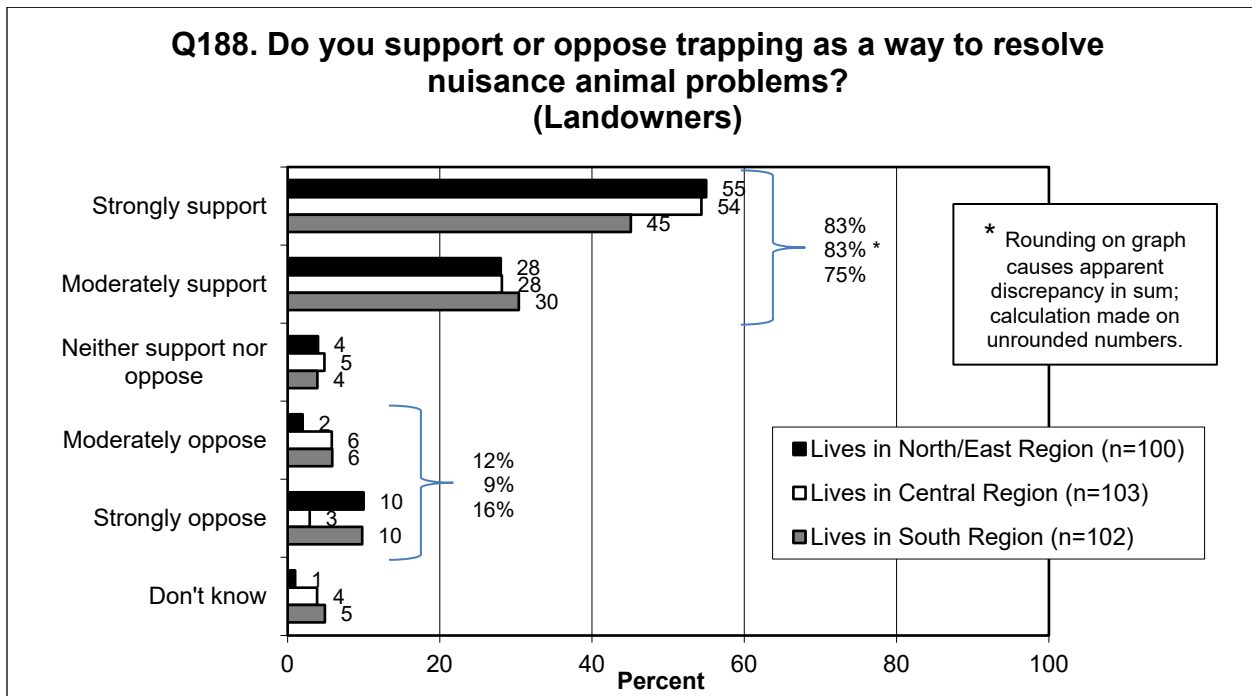


Figure 6.61. Support for or Opposition to Trapping as a Way to Resolve Wildlife Problems (Landowners)

PERCEPTIONS AND RATINGS OF THE MAINE DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

Landowners’ ratings of the Department at regulating and managing trapping in Maine are positive, with large majorities in the top half of the scale (*excellent* or *good*), and very low percentages saying that the Department is doing a *poor* job (Figure 6.62).

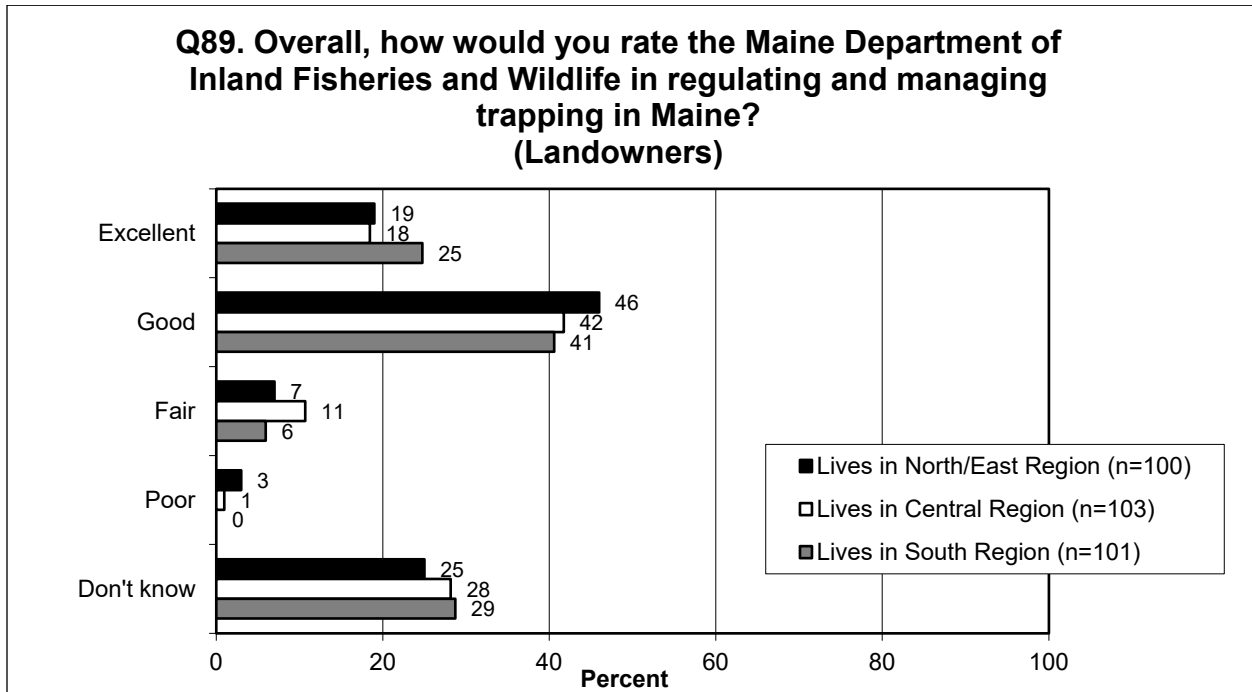


Figure 6.62. Ratings of the Department at Regulating and Managing Trapping (Landowners)

TABLES OF RESULTS AMONG EXTREMELY LARGE LANDOWNERS

The tables below show the results among the owners of extremely large tracts of land in Maine. The tables show the number giving the response rather than percentage. Of the 12 contacts that were valid, 7 of them participated in the survey, so all questions show 7 total responses.

PARTICIPATION IN HUNTING, TRAPPING, AND OTHER OUTDOOR RECREATION

Table 6.6. Have you ever participated in recreational hunting, in or outside of Maine?

Response	Number giving response
Yes	7

Table 6.7. Have you ever participated in recreational trapping, in or outside of Maine?

Response	Number giving response
Yes	3
No	4

ATTITUDES TOWARD HUNTING AND TRAPPING

Table 6.8. In general, do you approve or disapprove of regulated trapping?

Response	Number giving response
Strongly approve	7

Table 6.9. Prior to this survey, were you aware that trapping is regulated by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife?

Response	Number giving response
Yes	7

Table 6.10. Is hunting allowed on the largest tract of land you own or manage in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
Yes	7

Table 6.11. Have you had any conflicts with hunters on the largest tract of land you own or manage in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
Yes	6
No	1

Table 6.12. Is trapping allowed on the largest tract of land you own or manage in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
Yes	7

Table 6.13. Have you had any conflicts with trappers on the largest tract of land you own or manage in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
No	7

Table 6.14. Do you know, or have you ever known, anyone who is a trapper or has trapped wild animals?

Response	Number giving response
Yes	4
Don't know	3

Table 6.15. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with this statement: I think regulated trapping is okay if the animals die quickly.

Response	Number giving response
Strongly agree	6
Moderately agree	1

Table 6.16. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with this statement: I think regulated trapping is okay if animals that are accidentally caught could be released.

Response	Number giving response
Strongly agree	6
Moderately agree	1

Table 6.17. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with this statement: I think people should have the freedom to choose to participate in regulated trapping if they want to.

Response	Number giving response
Strongly agree	7

Table 6.18. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with this statement: Because of improvements in traps, trapping is more humane today than it was 10 years ago.

Response	Number giving response
Strongly agree	4
Moderately agree	1
Don't know	2

Table 6.19. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with this statement: Endangered species, meaning species in danger of extinction, are frequently used to make fur clothing.

Response	Number giving response
Strongly disagree	7

Table 6.20. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with this statement: Even though trapping is regulated by the state, regulated trapping can still cause wildlife species to become endangered or extinct.

Response	Number giving response
Moderately agree	1
Moderately disagree	2
Strongly disagree	4

KNOWLEDGE OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARD FURBEARER SPECIES

Table 6.21. How much would you say you know about beaver in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
A great deal	6
A moderate amount	1

Table 6.22. In your opinion, is the beaver population on the land you own or manage too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no beavers on the land you own or manage in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
Too high	7

Table 6.23. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the beaver populations in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
Strongly support	6
Strongly oppose	1

Table 6.24. How beneficial do you consider it to have beavers in Maine, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all beneficial and 10 is extremely beneficial?

Rating	Number giving response
10 (Extremely beneficial)	1
8	2
5	2
3	1
Don't know	1

Table 6.25. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about beavers on or around the land you own or manage in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
I enjoy seeing a few beavers on or around the land I own or manage in Maine, but worry about the problems they cause	2
I generally regard beavers as a nuisance	5

Table 6.26. How much would you say you know about bobcat in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
A great deal	3
A moderate amount	1
A little	3

Table 6.27. In your opinion, is the bobcat population on the land you own or manage too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no bobcats on the land you own or manage in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
About right	6
There are no bobcats in the area	1

Table 6.28. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the bobcat populations in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
Strongly support	4
Don't know	3

Table 6.29. How beneficial do you consider it to have bobcats in Maine, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all beneficial and 10 is extremely beneficial?

Rating	Number giving response
10 (Extremely beneficial)	5
7	1
5	1

Table 6.30. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about bobcats on or around the land you own or manage in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
I do not have bobcats on or around the land I own or manage in Maine	1
I enjoy seeing and having bobcats on or around the land I own or manage in Maine	5
Don't know	1

Table 6.31. How much would you say you know about coyote in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
A great deal	5
A moderate amount	2

Table 6.32. In your opinion, is the coyote population on the land you own or manage too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no coyotes on the land you own or manage in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
Too high	3
About right	3
Too low	1

Table 6.33. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the coyote populations in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
Strongly support	5
Moderately support	1
Strongly oppose	1

Table 6.34. How beneficial do you consider it to have coyotes in Maine, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all beneficial and 10 is extremely beneficial?

Rating	Number giving response
10 (Extremely beneficial)	1
7	1
5	3
4	1
Don't know	1

Table 6.35. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about coyotes on or around the land you own or manage in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
I enjoy seeing a few coyotes on or around the land I own or manage in Maine, but worry about the problems they cause	3
I generally regard coyotes as a nuisance	3
I have no particular feeling about coyotes on or around the land I own or manage in Maine	1

Table 6.36. How much would you say you know about fox in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
A great deal	3
A moderate amount	2
A little	2

Table 6.37. In your opinion, is the fox population on the land you own or manage too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no foxes on the land you own or manage in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
About right	4
Don't know	3

Table 6.38. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the fox populations in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
Strongly support	5
Moderately support	1
Don't know	1

Table 6.39. How beneficial do you consider it to have foxes in Maine, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all beneficial and 10 is extremely beneficial?

Rating	Number giving response
10 (Extremely beneficial)	4
7	1
6	1
5	1

Table 6.40. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about foxes on or around the land you own or manage in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
I enjoy seeing and having foxes on or around the land I own or manage in Maine	5
I enjoy seeing a few foxes on or around the land I own or manage in Maine, but worry about the problems they cause	1
Don't know	1

Table 6.41. How much would you say you know about raccoon in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
A great deal	2
A moderate amount	3
A little	2

Table 6.42. In your opinion, is the raccoon population on the land you own or manage too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no raccoons on the land you own or manage in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
Too high	3
About right	3
There are no raccoons in the area	1

Table 6.43. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the raccoon populations in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
Strongly support	7

Table 6.44. How beneficial do you consider it to have raccoons in Maine, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all beneficial and 10 is extremely beneficial?

Rating	Number giving response
10 (Extremely beneficial)	1
8	1
5	4
4	1

Table 6.45. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about raccoons on or around the land you own or manage in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
I do not have raccoons on or around the land I own or manage in Maine	1
I enjoy seeing and having raccoons on or around the land I own or manage in Maine	1
I enjoy seeing a few raccoons on or around the land I own or manage in Maine, but worry about the problems they cause	3
I generally regard raccoons as a nuisance	1
I have no particular feeling about raccoons on or around the land I own or manage in Maine	1

Table 6.46. How much would you say you know about skunk in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
A great deal	3
A moderate amount	3
A little	1

Table 6.47. In your opinion, is the skunk population on the land you own or manage too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no skunks on the land you own or manage in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
Too high	2
About right	3
Don't know	2

Table 6.48. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the skunk populations in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
Strongly support	6
Don't know	1

Table 6.49. How beneficial do you consider it to have skunks in Maine, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all beneficial and 10 is extremely beneficial?

Rating	Number giving response
10 (Extremely beneficial)	1
8	2
5	1
4	1
3	1
Don't know	1

Table 6.50. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about skunks on or around the land you own or manage in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
I enjoy seeing and having skunks on or around the land I own or manage in Maine	3
I enjoy seeing a few skunks on or around the land I own or manage in Maine, but worry about the problems they cause	1
I generally regard skunks as a nuisance	2
I have no particular feeling about skunks on or around the land I own or manage in Maine	1

Table 6.51. How much would you say you know about fisher in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
A great deal	2
A moderate amount	1
A little	3
Nothing at all	1

Table 6.52. In your opinion, is the fisher population on the land you own or manage too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no fishers on the land you own or manage in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
About right	5
Don't know	2

Table 6.53. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the fisher populations in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
Strongly support	5
Don't know	2

Table 6.54. How beneficial do you consider it to have fishers in Maine, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all beneficial and 10 is extremely beneficial?

Rating	Number giving response
10 (Extremely beneficial)	2
8	1
7	1
5	1
Don't know	2

Table 6.55. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about fishers on or around the land you own or manage in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
I enjoy seeing and having fishers on or around the land I own or manage in Maine	4
I enjoy seeing a few fishers on or around the land I own or manage in Maine, but worry about the problems they cause	1
Don't know	2

Table 6.56. How much would you say you know about marten in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
A great deal	3
A moderate amount	2
A little	1
Don't know	1

Table 6.57. In your opinion, is the marten population on the land you own or manage too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no martens on the land you own or manage in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
About right	5
Don't know	2

Table 6.58. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the marten populations in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
Strongly support	4
Moderately support	1
Neither support nor oppose	1
Don't know	1

Table 6.59. How beneficial do you consider it to have martens in Maine, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all beneficial and 10 is extremely beneficial?

Rating	Number giving response
10 (Extremely beneficial)	2
9	1
8	1
5	2
Don't know	1

Table 6.60. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about martens on or around the land you own or manage in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
I enjoy seeing and having martens on or around the land I own or manage in Maine	5
Don't know	2

Table 6.61. How much would you say you know about otter in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
A great deal	2
A moderate amount	2
A little	3

Table 6.62. In your opinion, is the otter population on the land you own or manage too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no otters on the land you own or manage in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
About right	7

Table 6.63. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the otter populations in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
Strongly support	5
Moderately support	1
Don't know	1

Table 6.64. How beneficial do you consider it to have otters in Maine, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all beneficial and 10 is extremely beneficial?

Rating	Number giving response
10 (Extremely beneficial)	4
8	1
5	1
Don't know	1

Table 6.65. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about otters on or around the land you own or manage in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
I enjoy seeing and having otters on or around the land I own or manage in Maine	5
I enjoy seeing a few otters on or around the land I own or manage in Maine, but worry about the problems they cause	1
I have no particular feeling about otters on or around the land I own or manage in Maine	1

Table 6.66. How much would you say you know about muskrat in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
A great deal	2
A moderate amount	2
A little	3

Table 6.67. In your opinion, is the muskrat population on the land you own or manage too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no muskrats on the land you own or manage in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
Too high	1
About right	4
Don't know	2

Table 6.68. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the muskrat populations in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
Strongly support	6
Moderately support	1

Table 6.69. How beneficial do you consider it to have muskrats in Maine, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all beneficial and 10 is extremely beneficial?

Rating	Number giving response
10 (Extremely beneficial)	4
5	2
Don't know	1

Table 6.70. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about muskrats on or around the land you own or manage in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
I enjoy seeing and having muskrats on or around the land I own or manage in Maine	4
I enjoy seeing a few muskrats on or around the land I own or manage in Maine, but worry about the problems they cause	1
I have no particular feeling about muskrats on or around the land I own or manage in Maine	2

ATTITUDES TOWARD FURBEARER MANAGEMENT**Table 6.71. Do you support or oppose managing furbearer populations to reduce wildlife diseases that could affect people, pets, and other wildlife?**

Response	Number giving response
Strongly support	7

HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICTS

Table 6.72. Have you had any problems with any wild animals or birds on the land you own or manage in Maine the past 2 years?

Response	Number giving response
Yes	6
No	1

Table 6.73. Which wild animals have caused problems?

Response	Number giving response
(No response)	1
Beaver	2
Beaver flooding is a huge issue	1
Beavers. Too many moose, IFW needs to split its zone to get more people to hunt near Quebec border. More hunters need to be up north. The moose are killing hardwood forests.	1
Beavers and coyotes are a problem	1
Beavers, owls	1

Table 6.74. What kind of problems did the wildlife cause?

Response	Number giving response
(No response)	1
Beaver flooding is a big issue; moose and tick problem is a major issue; deer population had a tough winter; the eagle population is strong; the bear population is extremely high, so some issues with those.	1
Beavers causing damage and owls have been killing chickens and ravens stealing their eggs	1
Damage to roads	1
Eat trees and block culverts and flood roads, and the coyotes are eating the deer and leaving the bodies behind	1
Flooding land and flooding roads	1
Flooding of the roads and damage. A lot of wash-out and erosion.	1

Table 6.75. What steps or actions were taken to address, manage, or resolve problems with wildlife in the past 2 years?

Response	Number giving response
(No response)	1
Allowed trapping, installed beaver deceivers that fool beavers from damming culverts, work with animal control	1
APHIS program with trapping for lethal and non-lethal	1
Bounty on beaver to trap them	1
Cooperate with state and federal government to trap beaver. The state allows hunting of coyotes on the land.	1
Hired trappers, IFW allows deadly force.	1
We contact IFW and hire damage control agents to remove them. We build beaver deceivers and put them in the road. We put out both kill and live traps. Sometimes we relocate the beavers.	1

Table 6.76. Did you hire anyone to resolve the problem(s)?

Response	Number giving response
Yes	6
Don't know	1

Table 6.77. Did the person you hired give you information on non-lethal methods to resolve the problem(s)?

Response	Number giving response
Yes	5
No	1
Don't know	1

Table 6.78. Do you support or oppose trapping as a way to resolve nuisance animal problems?

Response	Number giving response
Strongly support	6
Don't know	1

PERCEPTIONS AND RATINGS OF THE MAINE DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

Table 6.79. Overall, how would you rate the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife in regulating and managing trapping in Maine?

Response	Number giving response
Excellent	5
Good	2

7. FINDINGS FROM THE PUBLIC MEETINGS

Speakers at the furbearer management public meetings covered a number of topics; this chapter is not intended to record every comment or concern relating to furbearer management or trapping that was raised in the meetings. Rather, this chapter's goal is to convey the general feelings of the meetings and to discuss some of the broad topics raised. Although this chapter is based on notes taken by the research team at the meetings, Department staff also attended each meeting and took notes of the concerns raised. Therefore, any comment that is not specifically addressed in this report was, nonetheless, heard and considered by Department staff.

When assessing the results of the public meetings, note that public meetings generally attract only the most avid and dedicated constituents. It would be inappropriate to draw any kind of *quantitative* conclusions based on the comments made in the meetings, as these remarks represent only the interests and opinions of a particularly engaged subset of the Maine public. At the same time, the comments are worth considering because they reflect the positions of potentially influential opinion leaders in the community.

In this chapter, meeting findings are presented by location (Portland, Orono, Augusta, and Presque Isle) and then by topic within each location.

PORTLAND MEETING FINDINGS

The Portland public meeting was held on December 3, 2019. This meeting was attended by 15 members of the public, who discussed the topics below.

GENERAL FURBEARER MANAGEMENT

Some comments were about furbearer management in general—that it be done for the primary benefit of wildlife—and that trapping remain a viable option for managing furbearers. Other comments were about specific species, which are included here except for comments about coyotes, which are included in their own section further on.

- One person commented that wildlife management should be determined based on what is best for the wildlife.
- One person advocated keeping current Maine trapping programs in place, and further recommended that Maine hire more field biologists to better understand furbearer population levels and management needs and concerns.
- One person recommended that the Department conduct more muskrat studies to better understand the populations of this species.
- One person commented that beaver populations in Maine have increased, leading to more nuisance issues from this species.

COYOTE MANAGEMENT

The general tone of comments about coyotes was that they need to be controlled. In particular, they were felt to be harming deer populations.

- Several public comments reflected concern about coyote management in Maine and associated hunting and trapping regulations for coyote.

- A few people expressed support for more effective management of the coyote population, which some perceived to be increasing.
- There was concern about the effect of coyotes on the deer population in northern Maine (one person indicated that deer tracks now tend to always be accompanied by coyote tracks and another person suggested that coyotes appear to be preying on deer of all ages and size, rather than just weak or young deer).
- One person commented about the need for coyote control in and around deer wintering areas; it was pointed out that hounds are an effective means of coyote control.

HUMANENESS OF TRAPPING

The humaneness of trapping was questioned, while others defended trapping as not being inhumane. Best management practices were mentioned as being thoroughly covered in trapping education programs, but it was also mentioned that some trappers were unaware of them.

- One person questioned how regulated trapping could ever be “humane enough.”
- It was mentioned that newer, more modern traps are designed to be more humane.
- One speaker suggested that many trappers are not aware of Best Management Practices for trapping, such as practices for trap placement, bag limits, and target species.
- In contrast to the above comment, one person mentioned that Best Management Practices for trapping are taught in every trapper education course and covered in trapping regulations.

TRAPPING- AND FURBEARER-RELATED EDUCATION

Comments were centered on the need for more information to be disseminated. There were some non-trappers who wanted to know more about trapping.

- In general, several speakers expressed a desire for more information from the Department about trapping in Maine (it was also pointed out that to effectively understand wildlife management and trapping in Maine, one must observe things firsthand in the field).
- There was interest in communicating trapping Best Management Practices to the Maine general public.
- A person who self-identified as an opponent of trapping nonetheless expressed interest in learning more about regulated trapping.

FUTURE OF TRAPPING

Some comments expressed the desire that trapping remain legal and that it is integral to wildlife management. There was concern that out-of-state interests might unduly influence the decisions made regarding trapping within the state. Some comments expressed disappointment with the bad image of trapping among the public.

- One person remarked that the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation is “the envy of the world” and provides an ethical framework in which trapping takes place (this person also noted that trappers are not “the bad guys”).
- A few comments warned against allowing out-of-state interests to dictate wildlife management policy in Maine (it was pointed out that wildlife management should be left to

trained biologists instead of members of the general public); similarly, a few people spoke about the need to manage resources based on fact and not emotion.

- Describing perceived anti-fur sentiment, a person commented that his wife was no longer able to wear a fur coat that she had received as a gift for fear of public ridicule and opposition.

ORONO MEETING FINDINGS

The Orono public meeting was held on December 3, 2019; 21 members of the public attended. The topics discussed included those outlined below.

RESEARCH STUDY-RELATED CONCERNS AND QUESTIONS

The research process itself was the topic of some discussion, with people wanting to know more about it.

- A few people expressed interest in learning more about the Department's planning process for the furbearer management study, the general goals of the data collection, and the timeline for study results and management plan updates.

GENERAL FURBEARER MANAGEMENT

There was support for managing furbearers. It was felt that such management was necessary to prevent some of these animals from becoming a nuisance problem. Other comments were specific to beaver, which are discussed in the next section.

- One person suggested that furbearer species in general need to be managed as a resource and not a nuisance.

BEAVER MANAGEMENT

Beavers were generally acknowledged as being an important part of the ecosystem. There was concern, however, that they could become a nuisance problem if not managed.

- A person who self-identified as a duck hunter commented about the problem of beavers damming roads and killing crops as a result (in making this comment, the speaker also affirmed the ecological importance of beavers to Maine). The speaker suggested that landowners should be allowed to kill beavers as necessary to resolve nuisance issues, and that the state should resolve the "gray area" of Maine's current policy regarding beavers.
- One person expressed concern that beaver, if not managed properly by the state, could be treated "like vermin" and killed indiscriminately. This person reiterated the importance of managing beaver populations to prevent such a scenario.

TRAPPING- AND FURBEARER-RELATED EDUCATION

Most calls for education were for educating the general public about the utility of trapping in managing wildlife.

- A person suggested that many younger Maine residents are not aware of why regulated trapping is done. In making this point, the person noted the importance that the Department

provide information to the public about how and why the agency manages furbearer populations. The person suggested that the Department advertise trapping courses that serve as opportunities to learn about various furbearer species.

- Another person commented about the basic importance of educating the public about the science of trapping and why regulated trapping is done.

TRAPPING REGULATION CONCERNS

Some comments concerned the trapping licensing procedures, wanting them to be easier. Other comments were about regulations regarding when certain animals could be taken as well as regulations concerning the traps themselves.

- One person recommended that the test and certification for a trapping license be obtainable in one session instead of two—it was mentioned that requiring trappers to complete two sessions in two different locations is inconvenient for many people (Pennsylvania’s trapping course was cited as a useful example of a shorter course covering the same basic information). This speaker also suggested that the state allow trappers to print out licenses online rather than requiring them to travel to the Department’s Augusta office to obtain their trapping license.
- One person suggested that trapping in Maine may be overregulated, especially in terms of the regulations for coyote, guidelines for the capture of lynx, and restrictions related to the trapping of beaver during the winter. The person indicated that Maine is not adequately utilizing its “opportunity and resources.”
- A speaker suggested that Mainers should be allowed to harvest fox and bobcat at night when hunting coyotes over bait.
- Two speakers expressed support for the use of cable restraints by trappers (it was mentioned that the use of cable restraints is currently not permitted for most species).

FUTURE OF TRAPPING

Most comments were supportive of trapping. It was said to be important to wildlife management and to address human-wildlife conflict. There was some pessimism regarding the long-term future of trapping.

- Discussing the importance of trapping to Maine, one person observed that most trapping is done in a “legal, traditional, honorable, and sustainable way.” The person also suggested that many people who publicly oppose trapping are still willing to hire trappers or other specialists to resolve nuisance wildlife issues. It was mentioned that trappers have helped to improve methods to ensure the ethical treatment of wildlife, yet still face vocal opposition by some members of the public. The speaker indicated that trapping is important to Maine and ought to continue.
- One person suggested that trapping in Maine should be allowed to continue and that furbearer species in general need to be managed as a resource and not a nuisance.
- A speaker suggested that trapping is a “dying trade” and that the Department should help promote trapping so that it continues. The person also commented about the importance of trapping to Maine’s forestry industry.

AUGUSTA MEETING FINDINGS

The Augusta public meeting was held on December 4, 2019; 41 members of the public attended. The topics addressed are presented below.

RESEARCH STUDY-RELATED CONCERNS AND QUESTIONS

There was extensive discussion of the research procedures. While some meeting attendees were appreciative that the public could provide input, there was concern expressed that public opinion might be overly influential at the expense of biological science.

- Several people asked about the extent to which the study results would influence future laws and regulations on trapping and furbearer management in Maine.
- A few people expressed concern that the Department could rely too much on input from the general public when formulating wildlife management plans.
- One person suggested that more public meetings on furbearer management could have been held in a wider variety of locations around Maine.
- One person suggested that developers in Maine should have been surveyed as part of the study data collection.
- A few people said that disparaging remarks in the online public input forum had discouraged them from commenting further.
- One person suggested that it was important to define motivations for trapping (for money, for population control, for recreation, to resolve nuisance wildlife conflicts) in survey questions measuring approval of trapping.
- It was asked whether the perception of the meaning of the term “trapping” in the general population survey affected the rate of approval.

GENERAL FURBEARER MANAGEMENT

Many comments were that there was a need to manage wildlife, including furbearers. Commenters said that this management needed to be scientific, not based on emotion. Some people commented on specific aspects of furbearer management. There was also appreciation that the Department sought public input. (Some comments specific to coyote and lynx management are discussed in their own sections.)

- One person affirmed the basic need for active wildlife management while also mentioning that furbearer species are harvested as humanely as possible by trappers and hunters.
- One comment was that it is important that the Department set the rules for hunting, fishing, and trapping based on science and not “feelings.”
- Some comments were that the Department is doing a good job managing wildlife and keeping nuisance problems down.
- A longtime trapper mentioned always trapping more females than males; the person speculated that this was a function of females being hungrier due to the need to provide for their young.
- One person expressed gratitude toward the Department for keeping open the “lines of communication” with constituents and members of the public regarding furbearer management in general.

COYOTE MANAGEMENT

The coyote population was perceived to be on the rise, and the effect of coyotes on other species was a concern. Some commented on the human-coyote problems that had occurred. Some comments were that the decrease in the coyote population in their area had the perceived benefit of allowing other wildlife to become populated.

- It was suggested by several people that coyote populations in Maine appear to be on the rise. Commenters also indicated their feeling that balancing predator management with the needs of other species is important.
- Another person emphasized the need for coyote management by pointing out that coyotes have attacked dogs and cats in some areas of Maine, as well as that coyotes consume a sizable number of deer in different parts of the state.
- Others mentioned that the overkilling of coyote in some parts of the state has led to a resurgence of species like rabbit and partridge.

LYNX MANAGEMENT

One person was against the lynx exclusion devices and the efforts to protect the Canada lynx. Others wanted them to be modified.

- A person questioned whether license revenues from Maine hunters and trappers are used to pay for Canada lynx-related decision-making and management (if so, he was against it). The person further questioned whether federal regulations related to lynx could impact Maine state laws and regulations on trapping and whether there should be a lynx regulations “impact statement.”
- One comment addressed a recommendation to redesign lynx exclusion devices to make the boxes longer, especially for fisher traps.
- On the subject of lynx exclusion devices, a trapper asked whether data exists regarding the rates of trapping female versus male species. This person also commented that the listing of Canada lynx as an endangered species has had potentially unintended consequences, such as the effects associated with eliminating coyote control programs near deer wintering areas.

HUMANENESS OF TRAPPING

There were many comments pertaining to humaneness issues—many attendees expressed their opinion that trapping was inhumane, while others indicated that trappers care about humaneness and about wildlife.

- A person expressed opposition to the concept of trapping as a recreational activity. Given the number of people interested in viewing (but not killing) wildlife, the person suggested that hunters and trappers consider taking people on photo safaris to allow them to observe fox, beaver, and other furbearer species in the wild (“moose safaris” in Downeast Maine was mentioned as an example of this concept). It was recommended that the Department help facilitate such non-consumptive safaris.
- A person expressed opposition to trapping on spiritual and philosophical grounds, including the desire to avoid causing harm to living things. The person emphasized the importance of those with differing beliefs to work toward common goals with regard to the welfare of

wildlife. The person further commented that, if trapping must be done, it should be done in the most humane ways possible. The person also mentioned the obligation of the Department to remain fair and unbiased in providing accurate information on the populations of various Maine wildlife species.

- One person pointed out that the issue of “humaneness” also applies to the prey of furbearers, including domesticated cats that may be killed by fishers. This person suggested that some trappers are “reluctant trappers” in that they trap out of necessity but take no pleasure in it.
- A person who self-identified as a trapper stated that many members of the public incorrectly regard trappers as “bloodthirsty killers.” This person said that most trappers love and respect wildlife and desire that their populations remain stable and healthy. The person reiterated a point made earlier that people of differing beliefs about wildlife should nonetheless work toward common goals to benefit the animals.
- It was suggested that hunters and trappers must remain respectful of wildlife, especially by avoiding taking pictures of harvested animals that may be viewed as disrespectful.
- One person suggested that it sometimes takes too long for biologists and/or game wardens to reach non-target animals that have been incidentally trapped (as an example, the person claimed that a lynx remained trapped for hours before a Department official could assist in its removal from the trap).

COLLECTION OF BIOLOGICAL SAMPLES

This was the only meeting in which this topic came up. There was interest in the data collected. A commenter also wondered whether trapping was the best way to collect data.

- At least two people expressed interest in being able to access the biological data collected by trappers, such as age results for various species. One person commented that it would be interesting to look at such data in the context of current trapping regulations and anecdotal observations of furbearer population trends.
- At least one trapper expressed interest in obtaining the Department’s fisher predation report.
- Another person asked about the basic purpose of the biological samples collected by trappers, and whether it would be possible to collect such data without killing the animals.

TRAPPING REGULATION CONCERNS

Specific disparate aspects of the trapping regulations were discussed, which are presented below.

- One person stated that public information on trapping from the Department should use language that is accessible and understandable to non-trappers and the general public.
- Department staff were asked about the potential for more restrictive bag limits on bobcat and otter to be introduced.
- One person questioned whether the Department has considered moving to a quota-based system rather than individual bag limits (it was suggested that the former could be more beneficial to furbearer species).
- One person recommended allowing trappers to use drags (i.e., anchoring devices) in certain zones.

- It was suggested that fisher harvest (and overall trapping for fisher) has declined following the move to lynx exclusion devices for fisher traps. Another suggestion was to allow trappers to keep fisher during the early season to provide more opportunity for trappers.
- Regarding non-target catch, a trapper mentioned having to release fisher and bobcat that were caught too early in the season; this person noted that trappers are allowed to keep incidental raccoon and opossum but not fisher and bobcat.

PRESQUE ISLE MEETING FINDINGS

The Presque Isle public meeting was held on December 5, 2019; 49 members of the public attended. Public comments addressed the topics presented below.

COYOTE MANAGEMENT

This public meeting had many comments about coyotes. Many comments were about the high population of coyote and their effects on other species, including deer. There were several comments about specific aspects of coyote hunting and trapping. One comment was whether research on coyotes in northern Maine is available. There was also the observation that northern Maine is different than the rest of the state regarding residents' experiences with coyotes.

- It was stated that the deer herd in northern Maine appears to be dramatically declining, while coyote appear to be reproducing at a much higher rate than deer.
- A person questioned whether more needed to be done in terms of coyote management, observing that deer tracks are now rarely seen and that the coyote population appears to be increasing.
- A comment reflected the perception of excessive predation on deer from coyote and bear during the spring.
- A person suggested sharing with those opposed to trapping data on the number of deer killed by coyote.
- One person asked whether the Department was considering ending its predator management program for coyote.
- A person expressed support for the use of dogs in coyote hunting, mentioning that farmers rely on hunters to control crop damage.
- A person who self-identified as a trapper suggested that coyotes have become more difficult to manage in northern Maine due to trap size reductions and restrictions on drags.
- In a similar comment, another person said that restrictions on snares and drags has made it more difficult to trap coyotes in northern Maine; the amount of snow in the region was also named as a challenge to coyote management.
- A person asked whether the Department was considering shortening the coyote trapping season, banning the use of hounds, and eliminating the coyote control program (the source of this speculation was attributed to the Sportsmen's Alliance of Maine).
- A person who self-identified as a farmer suggested that the coyote trapping season should not be shortened to the point that coyotes would not be able to be harvested in March and April.
- A person asked Department staff about the availability of scientific research on coyotes in northern Maine; one study mentioned as an example (though not specific to Maine) examined the effects on white-tailed deer from coyote colonization in six states. It was

thought that a similar study needed to be conducted in a state or region with a climate similar to that in northern Maine.

- It was stated that, because northern Maine is a unique area, the coyote situation there is likely to be much different than what residents in other parts of the state experience on a regular basis in terms of problems with coyote.

OTTER MANAGEMENT

There was a comment about otter management.

- One person asked Department staff about the reasoning behind the regulation requiring trappers to register otter caught out of season within ten days.

DEER MANAGEMENT

Deer were mentioned in the meeting, even though deer is not one of the furbearer species.

- While deer management was not one of the study topics, one person at the Presque Isle meeting spoke about car accidents involving deer in the Allagash region of Maine—this was attributed to the prevalence of deer feeding near roads. The person recommended shortening the deer hunting season due to the perceived excessive pressure on deer in the area.

TRAPPING- AND FURBEARER-RELATED EDUCATION

Education and outreach was suggested for non-trappers in the southern part of Maine, where people might not be as familiar with trapping.

- One person suggested that the Department should increase its education and public information on trapping in the southern part of Maine, where people may be less familiar with regulated trapping and its role in furbearer management (it was suggested that the Maine Trappers Association could assist the Department in this endeavor).

TRAPPING REGULATION CONCERNS

Regulatory concerns were expressed, with little commonality between any of the suggestions.

- One comment reflected opposition to all trapping bag limits, and support for a coyote hunting season (rather than year-round hunting of coyote).
- One person suggested that the Department should lengthen trapping seasons in the northern part of the state due to the weather—it was mentioned that the weather effectively cuts short the trapping seasons in northern Maine (this person also recommended allowing trappers to use drags and snares).
- A comment reflected opposition to the lynx exclusion devices for marten and fisher traps due to the perceived inconvenience of transporting and setting them in snowy areas. The speaker further recommended allowing trappers to use drags and establishing a longer trapping season for coyote.
- One person questioned why black bears are not considered a “trappable” furbearer.

- A further comment dealt with the problem of receiving conflicting advice on furbearer management from Department biologists and game wardens (i.e., when one source recommends a course of action inconsistent with the recommendation from the other source).

FUTURE OF TRAPPING

Some comments pertained to the viability of trapping in the future, calling for more education among non-trappers to garner support. One comment suggested that recruiting new trappers is difficult because of some of the regulations. Attendees also expressed concern about anti-trappers and their effects on the acceptability of trapping.

- One person commented that it was important for the Department to promote trapping and publicly support trappers, adding that tools for and methods of trapping should not be further restricted. The person also recommended more public education and outreach on trapping in order to recruit new trappers in Maine.
- Another meeting attendee suggested that regulations related to fisher and lynx have discouraged many current trappers and dissuaded prospective trappers from taking part in the activity.
- A person who self-identified as a trapper suggested that trapping opponents have been allowed to control the terms of the debate about trapping. The person remarked that trappers need more support from the Department.

8. FINDINGS FROM THE ONLINE FORUM

The online forum comprised three sub-forums on the following topics: general furbearer management, hunting and trapping issues, and human-wildlife conflict. Hereinafter, the term “forum” will be used to refer to any one of these three sub-forums.

In the introduction to each forum, a set of basic questions was posed to people to consider in their comments. Each introduction was tailored to its specific forum. All were simply questions to consider; it is important to note that online contributors were not limited to these questions/topics but could provide any comment that they wished.

The efficacy of any suggestions is not discussed in this report; only that a suggestion was made. Likewise, any claims made in the online forum regarding how management is currently being done were not vetted to assess whether the claim is correct; again, the report simply indicates perceptions of online forum commenters, not whether they are correct or incorrect in those perceptions.

The online forum was monitored by Responsive Management. At the beginning of each forum, rules of conduct were listed. Violations of the rules resulted in removal of comments. Nine comments were removed by the forum moderator; however, every question deleted from the public forum was saved by Responsive Management and later included in the analysis of forum content.

One goal of the online forum has already been achieved: the comments presented are public and, as such, have already influenced the conversation about furbearer management. A secondary goal of the online forum is achieved by this report, which summarizes and condenses the numerous comments received (the three forums had a total of 600 comments, including deleted and emailed comments). The full forum comments were provided to the Department.

In the analysis of each forum, the number of comments and the number of contributors will be included in order to help better understand the level of interest in and activity on the forum. Please note that contributors could change their username or comment anonymously; therefore, it is not possible to say with certainty that each contributor is a unique commenter.

This report is not intended to archive each comment received. Additionally, direct quotations from the forum are not included in this summary. An archival copy of the online forum, which includes every comment submitted (with the exception of the nine comments that were deleted from the forum), was released in a separate document as a supplement to this report.

COMMENTS THAT APPLY TO ALL THREE FORUMS

In all three forums, the majority of the comments were about the perceived inhumaneness of trapping. This was a top-of-mind issue for many commenters. Another finding that applies to all three forums is that more comments were posted by trapping opponents than by trapping proponents.

GENERAL FURBEARER MANAGEMENT FORUM

The general furbearer management forum received more than 200 comments from 109 contributors. There were a range of topics addressed in this forum, although the majority of the comments focused on whether trapping should continue in Maine. Many contributors felt that trapping is an inhumane practice that no longer yields enough economic benefits to support its continued use as a tool of wildlife management. Other contributors argued that trapping remains an important management tool and is integral in the gathering of important population data of many furbearing species.

Contributors also discussed issues associated with coyotes, including whether or not hunting and trapping of coyotes should continue or is ethical; the role coyotes play in the population control of ungulates, furbearers, and other small mammals; and whether the coyote population is too high or too low. The lynx population was also mentioned, which many in the northern part of the state expressed is in need of additional management to better control the increases in the population. Some comments pertained to the importance of educating people (particularly in urban and suburban areas) on how to prevent human-wildlife conflict.

Finally, there was some discussion about the reliability of data collected for furbearer management, both in terms of collecting data for an agency that some believe relies too heavily on funding from hunting and trapping, and using an outside organization (Responsive Management) that some contributors perceived as pro-hunting/pro-trapping. The results are summarized by theme below.

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF AND AGAINST TRAPPING

Some of the supportive comments indicated that trapping is needed to manage furbearer species, which are thought to become overpopulated without trapping. The overpopulation, in turn, is felt to cause problems to both humans (e.g., raccoons getting into trash) and other species (e.g., too much deer predation by coyotes). Some comments on this theme discussed California, where an overabundance of nutria was attributed to a ban on trapping them.

Tradition was also raised in support of trapping. Many commenters referenced the long history of trapping in the state and felt that the tradition was important. Tradition also refers to a history within families—with children having been taught by fathers. This was thought to be an important reason to keep trapping legal in Maine.

Finally on the pro-trapping side of the argument, there was concern expressed that many trapping opponents arguments are based on emotion rather than an objective view of the activity.

The arguments against trapping often centered around the perceived inhumaneness of it, particularly the painful and slow death for many trapped animals. Some comments indicated that hunting could be used to manage these species, as hunting generally produces a quick, less tortuous death.

The pro-trapping argument that it is a tradition was countered by those who felt that tradition was simply not a good enough reason to continue it. Their argument was that the tradition was outdated.

There was concern expressed about the inadvertent trapping of pets, as an argument against trapping.

Another argument raised against trapping is the perception that the meat is not used, since most furbearers are not eaten. This argument was supported by some people who indicated their approval of hunting (because the meat, such as venison, is generally eaten) but who are against trapping. The feeling is that trapping, because the animal is not eaten, is equated to “trophy” hunting, which is also disapproved of by many people.

A further argument raised against trapping is that the furs are not as useful anymore. Commenters acknowledge that there is less demand for furs and fur clothing/accessories. This argument posits that the incentive for trapping is declining, so there is less need for trapping. There is also a feeling among some that, because of the decline in the usefulness of furs, there is no reason that wildlife management of these furbearer species could not be handled by hunting them instead of trapping (note that shooting furbearers often makes the pelts less useful because of the holes in the pelt, ergo one reason to trap them instead of shoot them).

MOTIVATIONS FOR TRAPPING AND INITIATION INTO TRAPPING

There is felt to be less motivation for trapping nowadays because of the decline in fur prices as well as outright bans—the entire business is felt to be less lucrative.

There was some interest expressed in trapping, but it was felt to be difficult to become a trapper. Lack of knowledge of how to get into it and a perceived high initial upfront cost were acknowledged as a constraint to becoming a trapper. This constraint, it was felt, outweighed the motivations to get started in trapping.

HUMANENESS OF TRAPPING

As indicated previously, this forum was the same as the others in that the perceived inhumanness of trapping was a very common theme. The traps were said to be painful and slow. Additionally, there was concern about injury to pets.

EDUCATION REGARDING TRAPPING AND FURBEARER SPECIES

There were several aspects of education that were raised. One was education about furbearer species themselves and the state’s wildlife management efforts in general. There was thought to be a lack of education on this aspect, particularly in urban and more populated areas. People simply know very little about some of these species, and they know little about the state’s current approach to managing these species.

Another aspect of education was about the science behind wildlife management. Many commenters wanted to see more of the science—they want to know the background—the why—of decisions that are being made. There was a feeling that more outreach on this could help address the public’s concerns.

A third aspect of education was the need to educate people how to better live with wildlife. This theme pertains to human-wildlife conflicts, but it is the preventive side of the issue, as opposed to addressing animals that have already become a nuisance. In short, some commenters expressed dismay that people did not know what they could do to prevent conflicts.

A final aspect of education relates to the courses that trappers take to become licensed. There was the desire expressed that the course be offered as a 1-day class. Further, some commenters were concerned about the lack of available classes. Commenters described needing to travel long distances to go to classes, and they felt that times were not always convenient.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES, AND THE TRAPPING OF NON-TARGET ANIMALS

There was a lot of concern expressed regarding incidental trapping and killing of non-targeted species. There were fears that trapping, because of incidental trapping rather than targeted trapping of legal species, could harm the populations of threatened or endangered species. The accidental trapping of lynx was discussed in particular.

FURBEARER MANAGEMENT ISSUES

There are several aspects in the overarching topic of furbearer management. The first pertains to the public's feelings about the species themselves and the sizes of their populations. A commonly mentioned species was coyote, thought by many to be overabundant. Coyotes are also thought to cause many problems and to be a threat to humans, pets, and livestock (using livestock in the broadest terms to include poultry). On the other hand, other commenters pointed out the benefits to the ecosystem provided by coyotes. Because of the large number of comments about coyotes, they are discussed further in their own section and so are not further discussed on their own here.

Other furbearer species about which opinions were commonly expressed in the online forum include beavers. While problems with beavers were mentioned—such as flooding—there were comments about the benefits to the environment that beavers provide. Beavers were said to help address contaminants in waterways. A few comments indicated that marten and fisher were overabundant in some areas.

Another aspect is whether there is a need to manage species. If there is a need, some commenters wanted to see the science behind wildlife management decisions. Others argued for non-consumptive ways to address wildlife management, or for those non-consumptive ways to be included in the overall mix of wildlife management efforts. Regarding whether there is a need to manage species, California's experience with nutria was mentioned, where an overabundance of nutria was said to be caused by a ban on trapping them.

A third aspect, given that some species may need to be managed, is the best way to manage species and whether trapping has a place in wildlife management. Some of this naturally leads back into ground that has already been covered—arguments for or against trapping—but one issue in particular that pertains to furbearer management is incidental trapping of other wildlife. There is concern that using trapping as a management tool for one species may cause problems with another species because of incidental trapping.

A final aspect is who should be making decisions regarding the management (or non-management) of furbearer species. Some commenters indicated their feelings that taxpayers should be in control—in short because it is their money being used. Others are more cautious, wanting the public to be heard but for the decisions to primarily rest on the expertise of agency biologists and scientists. With this expertise in mind, some commenters indicated that biologists have made mistakes in the past, so they want more than just agency personnel involved in the decision making.

HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT

Both the actual problems and ways to prevent problems were mentioned. Regarding the first—actual problems—coyotes were often mentioned, so much so that they have their own section below that is devoted to them.

Other problems commonly mentioned include flooding caused by beavers. Many commenters feel that Maine has too many beavers.

Prevention was also a topic in the comments. There was the opinion offered that people need to do more to prevent problems in the first place. Fencing was mentioned (the use of fences, not swords) as a deterrent that was too infrequently used. Other preventive measures mentioned include the better disposal of garbage to prevent, for instance, raccoons from getting into people's trashcans.

COYOTE ISSUES

As indicated above, coyotes were quite commonly mentioned in comments. They are felt to be on the increase, and they are not well liked (or at least are liked with caveats). One common complaint is that coyotes attack pets and livestock and can even threaten people.

Other complaints that were related to the large size of the coyote population include the perceived damage to the deer population caused by coyotes. Deer predation was thought to be huge, and some worried that the deer population could go, or already is, too low. Hunters in particular want to see more deer.

Other comments pointed out perceived benefits to the ecosystem provided by coyotes. The predation of deer is felt to keep Lyme disease-carrying ticks in check, as well as Chronic Wasting Disease in deer (Chronic Wasting Disease is a disease that attacks the brains of deer and is lethal, spread through body fluids—although its transmission is not thoroughly understood). Coyotes are also said to eat smaller mammals, such as mice, that also carry ticks and disease.

One regulatory concern was expressed about the *hunting* of coyotes. The open season on them was thought by some non-hunters to be dangerous for other recreationists and for residents. In short, they felt that the woods were unsafe because of coyote hunting. (This was countered, however, by some who oppose trapping and want to see coyotes controlled through hunting.)

THREATS TO FURBEARER SPECIES

The largest threats to furbearer species were felt to come in two forms: threats to their habitat and to the environment, and threats to their populations by trapping. Regarding the former, it is widely acknowledged that habitat is disappearing as humans develop more of the land for their own purposes. Water quality issues were also raised as harming furbearer populations.

The second form of threat—trapping—was perceived to be the result of the trapping of inadvertent species rather than trapping of targeted species. The targeted species were felt to be safe in general because they are subject to regulations. However, there was concern about incidental trapping and that trapping could therefore harm the populations of other furbearer species.

LYNX EXCLUSION DEVICES AND RELATED ISSUES

The lynx population is perceived to be expanding in Maine. Some feel that the increase is such that they question the reason for requiring lynx exclusion devices. Others are worried that too many lynx still get trapped by accident.

Comments regarding lynx populations seemed to be correlated with the residence of the contributor to the forum. Among those who indicated that they lived in the northern part of the state, there was more support for lynx trapping. Among those who resided in the southern part of the state, there was concern about the health of the lynx populations.

FURBEARER POPULATION ASSESSMENTS BY THE DEPARTMENT AND THE REPUTATION OF THE DEPARTMENT

As alluded to above, some are questioning the Department's assessment of the lynx population. Many comments presented the opinion that the lynx are doing well and are expanding their population. People also want to see the science behind population assessments and, ergo, the decisions being made regarding wildlife management. Some comments suggested that biologists have not always been correct in the past.

CONCERNS OVER PROJECT DATA COLLECTION

The final topic about which there were a few comments was the data collection for this project. A comment suggested data collection for this project was for public relations regarding trapping rather than research about trapping. Another comment reflected the perception that the questions to start the discussion in the forum were biased or misleading.

It was acknowledged, however, that the effort to consider all opinions was good. It was said that wildlife management decisions should include (but not be hostage to) public opinion.

HUNTING AND TRAPPING ISSUES FORUM

The hunting and trapping forum saw by far the largest number of comments posted (nearly 300 comments were posted by 129 contributors), although many comments did not constitute unique threads of thought but rather were parts of back-and-forth exchanges. Many of these exchanges typically involved only a small number of very prolific commenters, at times as few as two individuals (as an example, just one commenter was responsible for nearly 15% of the total number of comments posted in the hunting and trapping forum).

Three topics were most frequently discussed in this forum: concerns over whether trapping should continue in Maine, the hunting and trapping of coyotes, and the Department's methods of wildlife management. Also discussed in this forum were the health of the lynx population; the reliability and efficacy of data collected for this study; and the stringency of trapping regulations, both in terms of needing more/stricter regulations and in terms of needing fewer/less strict regulation.

IMAGE OF TRAPPERS

Some comments presented trappers as people who only consider the money they will get for furs, regardless of the costs to the species or the ecosystem. Trappers were also perceived by many to be uneducated and unfeeling, particularly regarding the suffering of animals. Some comments suggested that best management practices are not being promoted or followed. In general, the comments showed that feelings regarding trappers among many in the public are negative. Some contributors felt that promoting trapping and showing good depictions of trappers could help ameliorate negative perceptions.

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF AND AGAINST TRAPPING

In this forum, one argument in favor of trapping was to manage furbearer species. This forum mentioned that California had a ban on trapping nutria and that it had caused an overpopulation problem that was detrimental to the ecosystem.

In this forum, there were many more arguments against trapping than for it. These arguments against trapping included that the trapped animals are not generally used for food, and it was deemed wasteful to trap an animal to use its fur but waste its meat. There were also comments against the use of fur, as well. Other arguments against trapping centered on inadvertent trapping of other species, as well as of pets.

Interestingly, there were many comments that expressed support for hunting while still expressing anti-trapping sentiments.

Finally, some comments expressed the desire to have non-lethal methods of wildlife management promoted.

MOTIVATIONS FOR TRAPPING AND INITIATION INTO TRAPPING

The most important motivation in this forum for trapping was to help the deer population by hunting and trapping coyotes. Some hunters target coyote when they see them primarily because of the coyotes' effect on the deer population.

HUMANENESS OF TRAPPING

As with the other forums, the perceived cruelty of trapping was mentioned often. (There was less concern about cruelty in hunting, as hunting was thought to produce quicker kills and less suffering, although the wounding of animals that are not tracked down was mentioned.) The long period of time when animals might be in a trap, as well as the slow death of the animal, were seen as inhumane. (Some argued that the conibear trap was an instant killer that should be used, if the concern is prolonged suffering of animals.)

Regarding prolonged suffering of animals, there were comments about whether trappers are monitored, particularly regarding the length of time between checking traps. The 24-hour period was seen by some as being quite long.

The humaneness of trapping was also looked at in light of furs used for clothing. There were some comments that showed lack of support for using furs for clothing.

There was concern expressed about the need for trappers to follow the best management practices. Some felt more education was needed (for trappers) about this.

EDUCATION REGARDING TRAPPING AND FURBEARER SPECIES

In this forum, education-related comments focused on the perceived lack of education to hunters and trappers. It was thought by some that hunters and trappers needed education on best management practices. There were some commenters, however, that highlighted the effort required to complete the course and get a license.

TRAPPING NON-TARGET ANIMALS

There were some comments about inadvertent trapping and that it might harm some species. While targeted species, being abundant, were not of concern, there was some concern about species that might be accidentally caught.

FURBEARER MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Many comments about furbearers were specifically about coyotes; therefore, coyotes are discussed in their own section further on. The rest of this section looks at furbearers other than coyote.

A general comment (i.e., not pertaining to just a single species) was that predators in general should *not* be trapped because there should be more of them. Comments suggested that those predators play an important role in keeping ecosystems healthy by limiting the size of small mammal and deer populations—it is acknowledged that the overabundance of those latter species can cause damage to habitat, such as when deer over-browse.

There were comments about the lynx population—whether it was increasing and whether it was at a sufficient size. Some comments suggested that lynx are quite common, while other comments suggested that they are not. In other words, opinion goes both ways regarding the lynx population in Maine.

Some comments suggested that more non-lethal means should be explored, if furbearer populations do, indeed, need to be controlled. Additionally, non-lethal methods to control the problems that furbearers may cause were promoted in the comments, such as beaver deceivers. (Although there is a company called “Beaver Deceivers LLC,” its name is apparently used in the forum as a generic reference to the devices that protect culverts from being intentionally clogged by beavers.)

Finally, comments brought up the nutria in California, where their over-abundance was thought to be the result of a ban on trapping them. This was an argument, of course, in support of trapping some of the furbearer species.

HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT

The hunting and trapping forum did not receive many comments related to human-wildlife conflict, since there was an entire forum devoted to that. Nonetheless, there were comments that raccoons are abundant, perhaps too much so, as well as beaver. These species cause many conflicts with humans, including getting into trash (raccoon) and causing flooding (beavers).

COYOTE ISSUES

Some felt that there were too many coyotes in Maine, more than ever before, some indicated. The high coyote population is also the cause, according to many comments, of the lower deer population. In response to this, some commenters wanted a longer coyote season, and others called for a general lifting of restrictions on coyote hunting and trapping.

Others questioned whether trapping was effective for controlling coyote. The question was raised that, if trapping is an effective form of wildlife management, why are coyote populations continuing to grow?

Finally, others were happy to see large coyote populations. The animal is believed to keep other furbearer and small mammal populations in check.

One final thread of comments pertained to chasing coyotes with hounds. This form of hunting was not supported in the comments.

LYNX EXCLUSION DEVICES AND RELATED ISSUES

Trappers commented that they wanted to be able to use larger traps that maintain lynx exclusion guidelines but allow for better trapping of marten and fisher.

OTHER HUNTING AND TRAPPING REGULATORY CONCERNS

One aspect commented on were seasons and season lengths. There were comments that the fox and coyote seasons should be extended.

Some comments were aimed at the enforcement of the regulations rather than the regulations themselves. For instance, some commenters expressed doubts that the time requirements for checking traps was sufficiently monitored. Whether the time interval should be shorter than it currently is was also questioned.

Regarding hunting and dogs, some comments were critical of coyote chases with hounds as being inhumane. Commenters expressed their desires that they had more help from the Department in controlling hunters, particularly hunters with dogs, on their land—or more exactly, in keeping hunters and dogs off their land. Comments indicated that dogs used in hunting were causing damage to private property; the commenters questioned whether there were enough regulations in place to prevent damage.

Some comments asked that Sunday hunting be allowed for all small game and furbearers.

Some comments pertained to the process to get a license, wanting it to be easier and quicker. Their perception was that recruitment was stifled because of this.

FURBEARER POPULATION ASSESSMENTS BY THE DEPARTMENT AND THE REPUTATION OF THE DEPARTMENT

According to some commenters, the lynx population is bigger than the Department thinks it is. This is leading to doubts about lynx regulations. Others were not sure of the size of the lynx population but acknowledged that the Department needed to use trapping to get a better estimate of the population. (This was an assumed reference to non-lethal trapping.) On the other hand, some commenters defended the Department and its biologists as being credible and trustworthy.

Commenters expressed their opinion that lynx should be more regionally managed rather than managed as a single entity statewide.

There is one implication that is not positive regarding the credibility of the Department, which is that the Department has a financial interest in selling trapping licenses and in preserving trapping. This leads to doubts about the objectivity of the Department when assessing trapping issues. Along these lines, the comments suggested that some of the Department funding should come from non-consumptive activities, thereby making the Department more objective in wildlife management.

CONCERNS OVER PROJECT DATA COLLECTION

A few forum participants were skeptical about how much their voices would be heard, although others expressed gratitude for being given a forum in which they could offer their opinion.

HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT FORUM

The human-wildlife conflict forum (labeled *Nuisance Wildlife Issues* on the online forum) received the fewest comments (65 comments from 44 contributors). The most common topic was the coyote population in Maine in general, as well as a discussion that included both positive and negative impressions of the current management approach. Other frequently discussed issues included damage to roads and structures from beavers, human encroachment into and destruction of wildlife habitat, and the need to provide education in order to reduce human-wildlife conflict. A discussion about terminology was also made to lead off this section, and it pertains to the very definition of nuisance animals: the negative perceptions of the term *nuisance* when defining wildlife.

USING NUISANCE TO DEFINE WILDLIFE

Many of the comments in this forum addressed the term *nuisance* being used to define wildlife. Contributors argued that most human-animal conflict is a direct result of human behavior, which includes habitat destruction. Without adequate habitat, some reasoned, wildlife has no choice but to move into more densely populated regions, which leads to an increase in the number of human-animal conflicts being reported. For some people, the reasoning is that animals are simply being animals trying to live, and the term *nuisance* masks the actual root of the problems in many of these cases: humans. Some comments indicated that people have to learn to prevent the conflicts on their end, thereby taking the animals' incentive away from being a nuisance. Nonetheless, there was the acknowledgement that, even if humans follow the best practices, there will still be conflicts with wildlife.

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF TRAPPING

The comments included both people who support trapping and those who do not. Some commenters wanted more tools to control beaver in particular, which included trapping and relocating, where feasible. Control of feral cats was also the subject of some comments. However, some contributors to the forum indicated that, regardless of the degree of nuisance, they did not feel lethal trapping was an acceptable response.

EDUCATION REGARDING TRAPPING AND FURBEARER SPECIES

Comments pertaining to education were focused on educating homeowners on steps they can take to prevent conflicts with animals. Things mentioned included deterrents, proper garbage disposal, and protection of pets. Education specifically pertaining to coyotes and how to live with coyotes was often mentioned.

FURBEARER MANAGEMENT ISSUES

There were comments focused on managing furbearers and other animals for the good of the animals themselves as well as for the habitat at large. In this regard, beavers were discussed, including the complaint that the trapping of beavers is causing wetlands to dry up. Commenters indicated that beavers are good for helping make habitat.

Less favorably viewed were coyotes, and rabid foxes were mentioned as a problem. Another problem mentioned that pertains to furbearer management is that closely massed wildlife has led to increases in wildlife disease. In particular, ticks are said to be out of control in many parts of the state. These comments indicate a desire to manage wildlife, including furbearers.

HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT

Several issues were raised in the forum directly pertaining to human-wildlife conflict. A most basic concern was that the public needed to be educated about preventing conflicts with animals. Deterrents, proper garbage disposal, and protection of pets were mentioned. Education specifically pertaining to coyotes and how to live with coyotes was often mentioned; more about coyotes is included in the next section, which is solely devoted to them.

Beavers and flooding were also commonly mentioned in the forum. Landowners wanted more ability and more tools to address the problems. Commenters wanted to know things such as how to relocate an animal, if medications could be put out to prevent rabies, and how beaver deceivers are used. There were some comments in support of allowing homeowners to trap beaver without licenses as a way to address problems.

Bobcats were also commonly mentioned as creating problems. They prey on chickens and may also threaten pets.

Some commenters showed the desire to use alternatives to trapping to address human-wildlife conflicts. These alternatives include the aforementioned beaver deceivers. Commenters also noted the benefits to habitat that beavers provide and wanted conflict issues to be addressed with this in mind. Commenters also discussed the conflict problem from the animals' perspective, pointing out that problems are a results of human encroachment into wild animals' habitat.

COYOTE ISSUES

Coyote predation on deer was discussed fairly extensively, with some disagreement as to the exact effect of coyotes on the populations of other species in Maine. Some commenters asserted that coyotes have had a definite negative impact on the deer population, specifically through the reduction of the overall population, while others suggested that coyotes have been in Maine for a number of years and have had a positive impact on the deer population. Many commenters felt that coyotes played an important role in maintaining healthy deer populations, especially through the predation of sick deer and in turn the reduction of the number of ticks transferring from deer to humans and other animals.

Coyotes were often mentioned in regard to direct conflicts with humans, and some commenters wanted more education available pertaining to preventing conflict with coyotes. Several commenters suggested that the Department could help reduce fear associated with coyotes and potential attacks by clearly labeling public paths and posting notices in areas with vibrant coyote populations.

Many forum contributors felt that the coyote population has grown too large. Contributors discussed seeing deer carcasses, as well as evidence of other animals that had been preyed upon by coyotes. Contributors also expressed concern for their own welfare and for that of pets and other domesticated and farmed animals.

Some commenters indicated that the northern part of the state has greater coyote issues. Nonetheless, coyotes were acknowledged to be widespread.

9. FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

This chapter details the qualitative findings of the focus groups with the general public, hunters and trappers, and anti-trappers. The criteria for hunters and trappers and the criteria for anti-trappers for the purposes of the focus groups are shown in Table 9.1.

Note that the term *anti-trappers* refers to only the focus group participants who met the aforementioned criteria and who are discussed in this chapter; the term *trapping opponents* used in Chapter 5 is not synonymous, as that refers only to those who did not approve of trapping in the survey results. It is likely that some of those who met the criteria as *trapping opponent* in the survey would not have met the criteria to be in the focus group of *anti-trappers*, as the term *anti-trappers* in this chapter is much more stringent.

The results are reported based on themes that emerged from the qualitative portion of the research. The full methodology of the focus groups is detailed in the first chapter of this report.

Table 9.1. Focus Group Criteria for Hunters and Trappers and Anti-Trappers

Questions in Focus Group Recruiting Screener for Hunters and Trappers	Response
Our records show that you are a licensed [hunter / trapper]. Is that correct?	Must answer yes.
Did you [hunt / trap] any furbearer species during the most recent hunting season in Maine? Furbearer species include coyote, fox, bobcat, fisher, marten, raccoon, skunk, weasel, mink, otter, beaver, muskrat, and opossum.	Must answer yes.
Which furbearer species did you [hunt / trap] during the most recent hunting season in Maine?	Must have hunted/trapped at least one of the furbearer species
Questions in Focus Group Recruiting Screener for Anti-Trappers	Response
For the following 3 statements, please choose the one that best describes your beliefs: Animals have rights like humans and should not be used in any way. Animals can be used by humans, as long as the animal does not experience undue pain and suffering. Animals can be used by humans regardless of the animal’s welfare or rights.	Must answer that animals have rights like humans and should not be used in any way.
Do you approve or disapprove of legal, regulated hunting? Strongly approve Moderately approve Neither approve nor disapprove Moderately disapprove Strongly disapprove Don’t know/no opinion	Must answer moderately or strongly disapprove.
Do you approve or disapprove of the regulated trapping of furbearer species like coyote, fox, bobcat, and beaver? Strongly approve Moderately approve Neither approve nor disapprove Moderately disapprove Strongly disapprove Don’t know/no opinion	Must answer moderately or strongly disapprove.
Questions in Focus Group Recruiting Screener for All Potential Participants	Response
Are you or any member of your family employed by any of the following types of companies? a) a marketing, advertising, communications, or political-related business? Y/N? b) a state or federal agency? Y/N? c) a hunting or fishing – related business? Y/N?	Must answer no on each one.

Note that the quotations include conversational exchanges. The first person in a conversation is labeled “FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1”; the second person in the conversation is then labeled “FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2”; and so on. When the next conversation is quoted, the numbering starts back at #1. In other words, “FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1” in one conversation is not necessarily the same person also labeled as “FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1” in the next conversation. This is pointed out because otherwise the reader might think that only four focus group participants were quoted; in reality, quotations were drawn from every focus group participant.

IMAGE OF TRAPPING

There are two aspects of the image of trapping. The first is the image of the activity of trapping, and the second is the image of trappers themselves. Regarding the image of trapping, much of the discussion in the focus groups centered around the perceived cruelty of trapping.

Steel trap, on the ground. Some animal's got its paw in the trap, and it's going to be there until he chews it off, then he dies, or someone sees and comes and takes it off.

“Trapping,” the word alone, I associate with the suffering of an animal, and I don't know if I can undo that correlation.

Portland animal rights focus group

The things he was saying earlier about trapping the wrong animals and long periods of time where they're trying to get out, and that makes me sad and upset. I don't really know enough to know how often it happens, where it happens, or anything like that.

Portland general population focus group

[Speaking about what trappers think that non-trappers think.] They think, “You're gonna hurt the cute little cuddly animal...they're in pain the whole time they're in the trap.”

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

On the other hand, the image of trappers themselves was more positive. This is not to say that all perceptions of trappers are wholly positive, as they are inextricably tied into the activity, which some people react to negatively. There was also a perceived difference between ethical trappers, which were acknowledged to exist, and unethical trappers, which also were felt to exist in Maine.

My perception of a trapper is actually someone who is pretty in tune with their backyard, pretty intensely in tune with acres and acres and acres of the Maine forest. Which I have a lot of respect for that type of person. ... My stereotypical Maine trapper, I would think of someone who knows Maine very well.

Portland animal rights focus group

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: [My opinion is] definitely mixed. I know some very responsible trappers who are good at it and fairly humane about it and make good use of the meat or the fur or skin, but I assume that there are so many irresponsible trappers that are greedy and indiscriminate and not empathetic. Would I feel like it should be banned? You're always going to have people doing illegal things no matter what. I'm in the middle, because I understand both sides and perspectives

very well. The people I know who are good trappers and humane about it are very responsible stewards of the land and this planet. And my opposite stereotype is of the redneck who is out there indiscriminately trapping and catching the wrong things and not giving a shit. But how do you police that?

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: I'm the same. It's very nuanced. You can't just say, "No, no trapping at all" or "Everyone trap everything all around the state." Anyone proposing a law to ban it or expand it should be really precise about what's going on.

Discussion in Portland general population focus group

I know a couple who are responsible and feel more tied to the land and nature, but I also know the stereotypes of the redneck, the ones who party all the time and are kind of lazy. It may be a family tradition and what they were raised to do, and they feel that it's their right to do it, but they may be sloppy about it and not very humane.

Portland general population focus group

I think they're talking about people who trap for the fur, to kill for the fur.

Portland animal rights focus group

The discussion moved to the terminology of trapping and whether certain terms might be better for the image of trapping. Some of the trappers in the focus groups indicated that a better encompassing term would be "furbearer management," taking the word, "trapping," out of the mix altogether.

I would think that the PETA [People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals] folks or non-educated or not caring people would find the term, "trapping," derogatory and cruel. Maybe dressing it up a little bit...would be effective in the public perception.

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

[Call it] "furbearer management." That's a friendlier term if you get the word "trap" out of it.

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

As part of the discussion about terminology, the phrase "regulated trapping" was discussed. Some were glad to know that there were regulations, but others felt that the words modifying trapping were window dressing, so to speak, or were hiding the true nature of trapping.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: It [the term "regulated trapping"] sounds like thinly veiled jargon.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: Exactly.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #3: I could not agree more with that. It sounds like a political spin on trapping, honestly.

Discussion in Portland animal rights focus group

Absent regulation [trapping] is still going to happen. With regulation at least there's a better chance that it's going to be done appropriately.

Portland general population focus group

The term "recreational trapping" was generally not well received. For some people, it seemed abhorrent to trap an animal for recreation.

If it's necessary for overpopulation, that's one thing.

Portland general population focus group

Recreational trapping. Nobody out there is really trapping to put food on the table to support their family. So everything they are doing is recreational. So whether or not it's humane, they're out there for recreation.

Portland general population focus group

Folks I had in mind before who I think are responsible trappers are doing it recreationally. I think most trapping is done recreationally; but some is done responsibly, and some isn't. Recreational isn't something I am interested in at all, but I don't have a feeling of blanket banning it.

Portland general population focus group

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF TRAPPING

Some of the more effective arguments in support of trapping were that it is regulated, that there have been efforts to make the activity more humane, and that it can help in conservation of other species. For instance, the plover was discussed as possibly benefiting from trapping its predators; indeed, the decline of the plover population was attributed to having too many foxes at the shore.

Regarding that trapping is regulated, the state was deemed to have sufficient knowledge to be relied upon to properly regulate trapping.

MODERATOR: Does your opinion of trapping change if you know that trapping is sanctioned by the government?

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: These people who work for the government do way more research and are way more knowledgeable [than the general population]—it's literally their job to know about this stuff—so if they're saying it's okay, you should probably just trust their judgement.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: If they [agency personnel] say it's okay.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #3: Trapping based on science...sustainability.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #4: I agree with that; it's what they do.

Discussion in Orono general population focus group

The discussion about efforts to make trapping more humane resonated with some people. After initial discussion in each group about making trapping more humane (i.e., there was discussion both before and after the following facts were read to focus group participants), the focus group participants were informed of this:

For the past 20 years, state wildlife agencies have worked closely with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, state trapping associations, and veterinarians to develop best management practices for trapping. This program has established high-quality standards for modern-day trapping to be efficient, selective, practical, safe, and humane.

The moderator then continued the conversation about efforts to make trapping more humane in the past couple of decades. The tone of the discussion changed a bit after the information was given.

I didn't realize that was happening...but it's encouraging.

Orono general population focus group

While there was skepticism about the efforts, these efforts to make trapping more humane were verified by trappers within one of the general population focus groups. (Note that the general population group recruiting screener for the focus groups did not ask the participant if he/she trapped or did not trap, so trappers were included within the general population group as a matter of random chance.)

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: You can't use that one anymore; you can't have those kind of teeth anymore.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: I have something hanging on the wall at camp that can't be used.

Discussion in Orono general population focus group

The need for furbearer management was deemed to be a good argument in support of trapping. (Note that there is more about furbearer management in a later section of this chapter.)

If we don't sell licenses and let the trappers control it [the population], then the state is going to have to pay people to go out and control it. ... So we can either make money from it or we can spend the money on the control.

Orono general population focus group

Some of the arguments fell flat on people whose initial feelings were against trapping or who were ambivalent about it. Many focus group participants indicated that the arguments sounded good but could not be trusted.

MODERATOR: Does your opinion of trapping change if you know that the whole animal is used?

That sounds good, but I don't know how true that is.

Orono general population focus group

MODERATOR: What about that Game Wardens enforce trapping laws?

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: It's a little too hard for Game Wardens to regulate everybody...there's a lot of woods.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: Their territories are huge.

Discussion in Orono general population focus group

You talk about regulating the industry, that sounds great, but the [Trump] administration just shut down and fired hundreds of people. The whole system is gone. There is no regulation anymore.

Portland general population focus group

MOTIVATIONS FOR TRAPPING AND THE FUTURE OF TRAPPING

Trappers had their own motivations for trapping, generally centered around tradition, making money, being with family, and being out in nature. Of course, they rarely attributed only a single motivation to their participation; usually a mix of motivations were discussed.

MODERATOR: What motivates people to trap?

Used to be good money. But now, it's in my blood.

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

Because I like wildlife and I like the action of going and killing a coyote in my trap, or seeing muskrat in my trap; I just like that type of activity if I get the chance.

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

It started out more or less...I like to get outdoors and just do things out in nature, and lately the last few years it's been more to spend time with my father.

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

It is worth noting that the financial incentives to trap are not what they used to be.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: The artificial stuff [furs and clothing] is good and getting so much better and better. ... That in itself makes the demand go down, which makes the price go down, which makes people like me go snowmobiling instead of trapping. ... If we could still get the prices we got back in the '70s, then I would be a trapper.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: Right, you could really supplement your income by running some trap lines.

Discussion in Orono general population focus group

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: The price of pelts is down a fair amount.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: People don't wanna wear fur.

Discussion in Orono general population focus group

Furbearer management was also mentioned as a motivation, but usually not given the importance of the above-named motivations. As part of the furbearer management aspect, there was a discussion of the impacts of not having trapping as an activity.

I'd be curious to know what the impact would be...let's say...there was no trapping, what kind of impact would that be?

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

The discussion also touched on the motivations that would prompt a person to start trapping, as well as whether the state should promote it. In this regard, the financial incentives were deemed to be paramount in getting more people to trap. One financial incentive that was not deemed to be worthwhile was a bounty on coyotes, as the consensus was that a bounty program is expensive for little gain.

To help farmers; they'll pay you a fee.

Orono general population focus group

If I was to get an interest in trapping because there was money to be made and I was retired and had that time, how many roadblocks are there to me becoming a trapper? It's pretty large capital investment.

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

MODERATOR: Should the state promote trapping?

There's only so many dollars in any budget, so if the state is looking for where they should focus their trapping dollars, it's the market that drives interest, so as long as they make it not cost-prohibitive to get into it on their end, and the market comes back...people will get in, because then they want to make money off it with high fur prices.

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: The only way to do that [encourage more trapping] is to artificially inflate the price, and you don't really wanna do that, or...I know the Maine Fish and Game Department did a coyote bounty type of thing a few years ago, and it ended up costing us a small fortune for just a few coyotes, so it didn't work. I mean, we tried.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: I don't think it was a few; it was a lot.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: Yeah, but it cost an awful lot per coyote. ... For the money we spent, it really wasn't worth it. Even someone like me who wants to see 'em all gone, is gonna say, "No it wasn't worth it."

Discussion in Orono general population focus group

HUMANENESS OF TRAPPING

As discussed above, opinions on trapping for many people are inextricably tied to the perceptions that it is not humane. One of the aspects that was felt to be the most inhumane by focus group participants is that the animal may be suffering for a long time. Although traps are required to be checked at intervals specified in the regulations, many people pointed out that this still meant the animal was in the trap for a long time.

No, there is nothing humane about it. There is no humane way to trap an animal. It is absolutely cruel.

Portland general population focus group

I think there is a big difference in shooting an animal and trapping an animal and having them sit there for hours or days suffering. There is no need to have to trap an animal like that.

Portland animal rights focus group

You don't know how long it's been there. It's been there less than 24 hours, but it could be 23:59, and you don't know. Unless you have a camera attached to your phone, and you can check it. That would be a good idea. If you were forced to have a doorbell-type camera on your trap, that would be a thing to look into.

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

While some trappers in the group pointed out that they obeyed regulations and felt that other trappers were like them in that regard, many people in the focus groups suggested that not all trapping regulations would be obeyed.

It's illegal trapping that concerns me, and the fact that they're supposed to go check their trap every 2 hours or 4 hours and they're not. They're going days without checking their traps, so the animals are laying there suffering, dying slowly, starving, scared, in pain. It's horrible.

Portland general population focus group

“Recreational trapping” was particularly abhorrent to many people in the focus groups. When trapping was seen as a necessary action in response to a need (which included human-wildlife conflicts, habitat/conservation management objectives, research, meat, and pelts), it was more accepted. But when trapping had the word “recreational” attached to it, there was strong reaction against it.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: That doesn't seem right, recreationally, it just seems like the cruelty is the point of that.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: It [referring specifically to trapping as recreation] makes my stomach hurt. It really does.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #3: It sounds more like sport and not for the right purpose.

Discussion in Portland general population focus group

MODERATOR: When is trapping not appropriate?
If it's entertainment...if you get enjoyment out of it.

Orono general population focus group

EDUCATION RELATED TO TRAPPING

The trappers and hunters in the focus groups felt that most of the general population of Maine, particularly those around Portland, were misinformed about trapping and furbearer management. Additionally, many of those who did not trap or hunt acknowledged that they did not know much about trapping. Some of them also acknowledged that they learned much of what they currently know about trapping from the 2014 voter referendum.

They [the general population] get a lot of misinformation.

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

I understand what hunting is about and getting meat from a deer or larger animal, but I don't understand the practicality [of trapping]. And it's probably just my lack of knowledge, but I don't understand where the market is for the meat or the fur from these small animals. Certainly in the past, in our history it's been necessary, but we're more of a society now where...you don't have to go trapping anymore to get your food on the table. So to me, it's a sporting game versus something necessary that has to be done.

Portland general population focus group

There was a lack of knowledge regarding all the uses of the trapped animal (referring to lethal trapping). There was also a lack of knowledge on the regulations, as well as that there are regulations at all.

I know people who have trapped when I was in high school, but where is the market? Is there still a market? And if there is a market,...how do you learn to do it? Do you learn from someone? Does the father teach the son or daughter? Is it passed on? I don't know. Am I for it or against it? It's hard to say, because I don't know trappers anymore. Do we really need it? [Perhaps yes] if it was a subsistence lifestyle necessary for living. Maybe if you can get money from it, and you do it humanely, I'm for it. I just don't know if that situation still exists.

Portland general population focus group

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: I knew some of that. I didn't know you needed education to get a license.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: I did, and it's [the trapping education course] pretty in depth.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #3: I didn't [know that an educational course was required to get a license], and I'm happy to hear it. I think it's good, because they're monitoring. If you have to prove your bag limit and tag the pelts, they know who's out there and how much you're getting.

Discussion in Portland general population focus group

I feel like those statistics [the percentage of survey respondents who approved or disapproved of trapping, which was told to focus group participants] can be affected by education. I didn't know what it [the term "trapping"] meant. Even after discussing this, I'm still confused about what trapping is or what the point is.

Portland animal rights focus group

There was also felt to be much ignorance of the animals themselves, particularly those animals that do not regularly come into residential areas (in other words, other than coyote, raccoon, and skunk).

I don't think people have a lot of knowledge. Yeah, raccoon, coyote, but no, not about muskrat, marten, and fisher. I had never seen one until I started putting out bait.

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

The majority of people live in town, and the skunk and raccoon are in town. So they see them all the time. But the other ones, people don't know much about so maybe [they think] the population is low if they don't see them. But they don't know any better.

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

Like you do see a lot of foxes and skunks and raccoons. The other ones, because we're in southern Maine and it's more populated, we just don't really see them. I'm sure they're just way up north in the North Woods. It's not something I really think about down here.

Portland general population focus group

There was ignorance about the funds generated by trapping and about the use of those funds for conservation efforts.

Taxes...and fees [for hunting and trapping]: I didn't realize they were going to conservation efforts.

Orono general population focus group

TRAPPING AND THREATENED/ENDANGERED SPECIES

Regulated trapping in the United States does not allow the trapping of threatened or endangered species to harvest the pelts. Nor is it legal in the United States to sell fur products from endangered species. While this was acknowledged by focus group participants, some of the discussion centered on *unintentional* trapping of threatened and endangered species as being a potential threat. In short, there was a discussion that a trapper may not intend to trap an endangered species but may inadvertently trap it. Even when some general population focus group participants who had trapped assured other participants that endangered animals inadvertently trapped would be reported, other participants did not believe this to be a realistic view.

I think [species could become endangered] especially because of the environmental implications. That the weather is changing the land, and the land is changing how much the animals can forage, and there is pollution in the cities, and the water is

toxic, not to be such a doomsdayer, but yeah, absolutely because the parameters keep changing. It's pretty hard to regulate something when the science keeps changing daily, monthly, about what's available for food.

Portland animal rights focus group

FOCUS GROUP MODERATOR: Can regulated trapping cause a species to go extinct?

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: Yeah...because if you're trying to trap coyote...and a red fox goes into it, how likely are you to report that to the Game Wardens and biologists? [The non-target species] would definitely dwindle because you're not going to...report that bobcat, and that is one less bobcat that the biologists [account] for.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: Almost all that stuff does get reported because, as long as you report it, you're not in trouble. If you try to keep it without reporting it, now you're gonna get in trouble.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: What's to stop you from reporting it five times?

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: They'll tell you, "You can't trap there anymore."

Discussion in Orono general population focus group

How do you even know what animal you're going to trap?

Portland animal rights focus group

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: I think there's a lot of traps out there that some of these animals get caught in, and they're not intended to catch. I didn't hear a thing, but over the last 20 years it comes out about especially the issue of trying to limit certain types of hunting or trapping, particularly trapping and [certain animals] being endangered. Not only [does trapping cause animals to be] endangered but also, it's inhumane.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: I would agree with that. I would absolutely agree with that. They run that ad on the snow leopards, [and] they show the one that's limping around with a trap on its leg. That's really inhumane. It's one of these Nature Centers, \$19 a month to save the snow leopards.... But it drives home that there are people out there that are doing this trapping that they're not necessarily there when the animal gets trapped, then it just has to suffer until somebody comes along.

Discussion in Portland general population focus group

Regarding whether there are financial incentives to trap endangered species, a focus group participant pointed out that there is no legal financial incentive.

It's pointless to even do it [because nobody will buy it].

Orono general population focus group

Regulation was seen by some as ensuring that threatened or endangered species would not be harmed.

I think trapping to kill, basing this assumption on fishing practices; we haven't had a shrimp season for 5 years. That's a positive regulation. I am assuming regulations for trapping would act in a similar way so that it would not result in a species disappearing.

Portland animal rights focus group

The laws got a little more strict on how things are done.

Orono general population focus group

GENERAL FURBEARER MANAGEMENT

The above discussion pertained to the activity of trapping. Another aspect of the discussion centered on furbearer animals themselves. There was a discussion about the animal populations and about the appropriateness of managing furbearers. (Note that this discussion then led to a discussion of human-wildlife conflicts, which has its own section after this one.)

One aspect of furbearer management is the public's perceptions of what is meant by the term, "furbearers." For the purposes of Maine's regulations regarding trapping, furbearers are strictly defined; however, the term could be taken more broadly describing any furred animal. Indeed, when focus group participants were asked to write down the species that they felt were referenced by the term, some included such species as leopard and cheetah. Table 9.2 shows the responses from the focus groups in Portland and Orono.

There is obviously a difference between species that can legally be trapped and species that may be considered furbearers. Therefore, perhaps one of the challenges of getting public acceptance of furbearer management is to properly define it in the public's eyes. As the quotation below shows, a few of the species that some people thought of when they heard the term "furbearer species" are specifically not included in the furbearer species in Maine that can be trapped.

MODERATOR: What comes to mind when you hear the phrase, "furbearer species"?

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT: Rabbit, squirrel, skunk, minx, seal pup, cheetah, leopard, moose, elk, polar bear, badger, panda....

Portland general population focus group

This confusion in the term "furbearers" was also illustrated by the following quotation:

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: Are they what you would make into coats and furs and hats? Some of them you would. But is that why they're furbearers?

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: It's a smaller animal classification, I think. I think some of them could be used that way. It's possible.

Discussion in Portland general population focus group

Table 9.2. Furbearer Species Named by Focus Group Participants

Portland Participant	Species Named
1	Deer, gerbil, bear, panda, coyote, wolf, opossum, badger, mouse, rat, moose, elk, polar bear, weasel, fisher, camel, horse, cow, ox, rabbit, squirrel, skunk, ermine, mink, seal pup, cougar, mountain lion, lion, cheetah, leopard, lynx
2	Fox, mink, bear, beaver, puma, squirrel, porcupine, raccoon
3	Deer, fox, moose, raccoon, coyote, bear
4	Bear, deer, fox, rabbit, mink, raccoon, wolf, mountain lion, beaver
5	Brown bear, black bear, polar bear, fur seal, seal lion, beaver, deer, moose, lynx, wolf, coyote, mouse, rat, squirrel, chipmunk, elk, boar, fox
6	Bear, fox, coyote, deer, lynx
7	Bear, deer, moose, fox, raccoon, skunk, opossum, coyote, wolf, bobcat, mountain lion, lynx, mouse, rat, porcupine, mole, groundhog, beaver
8	Fox, rabbit, wildcat, bear, deer, moose, beaver
9	[blank]
10	Bear, wolf, mink, rabbit, deer
Orono Participant	Species Named
1	Pine marten, fisher, ermine, bear, coyote, beaver
2	Bear, raccoon, skunk, coyote, fisher, moose, deer, bobcat
3	Bear, raccoon, squirrel, fox, moose, coyote, fisher, deer
4	Bear, beaver, deer, moose, marten, skunk, raccoon
5	Fox, lynx, bobcat, bear, beaver, raccoon, marten, weasel, coyote, fisher
6	Coyote, mink, beaver, otter, muskrat, raccoon, weasel, pine marten
7	Muskrat, raccoon, bear, mink, weasel, moose, deer, bobcat, skunk, beaver, ermine, lynx
8	Lynx, bear, rodents, fisher
9	Raccoon, beaver, koala, cats, squirrel

The actual definition aside, another aspect of furbearer management is the public’s perceptions of the health and size of various populations of furbearer species. This ties in to the question if there is a need for furbearer management.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: No one’s trapping raccoon.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: There’s tons of them.

Discussion in Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

I had a bear bait this year, and I had a cell-service camera on it to send pictures to my phone, and I’d have 12 to 15 coons on it every night.

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

I am a huge proponent of not managing species, and actually truly protecting them. And coyotes is number one on my list, and we are treating them so unethically with any sort of management.

Portland animal rights focus group

I think the interest is what species is going up, which species is going down and why? We've changed our river practices or logging or agricultural practices. I think the management should be linked to deeper questions of what's going on. I think if we weren't here everything would be kind of perfectly in balance. We have created systems that have affected a natural balance. We need to focus on where we cause problems.

Portland animal rights focus group

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: I think of a marten or a weasel, and what do they do? They're basically food for coyotes and bobcats.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: But then more coyotes are trapped and killed, then there are more martens, then the more you want to trap them. It's a vicious cycle.

Discussion in Portland general population focus group

Growing up in Portland, I more recently have been seeing a lot more furbearers.... A couple of days ago I saw a fox running around town. I don't want to wait until the day that we see foxes running around and people running around downtown, because that's dangerous. Dangerous for the foxes and could be for us as well.

Portland animal rights focus group

As far as fisher goes, you're going to catch more fishers when you're trapping around the farmland than you are in the big woods. [MODERATOR: How are the populations doing? Increasing? Staying the same?] I think around the farmlands, they're increasing.

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

The years I catch more fisher tend to be when the marten catch is low. When the marten catch is good, there aren't as many fishers it seems like. That's like over the course of 4 or 5 years. It's not a long-term period.

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

A third aspect on which the focus groups shed some light is people's reactions to and feelings about certain species themselves. The furbearer species were not uniformly reacted to. Some were not as highly regarded as others. Focus group participants acknowledged that perceptions of a species population may be tied to feelings about the animals—that animals considered more of a nuisance may be seen as being too plentiful—a subjective opinion that may have no relation to the species' true population.

A mix of positive and negative, for example I've been learning more about opossums recently and they are actually really excellent for tick and other insect management so I feel very positive about opossums. Opossums are good at eating a massive amount of ticks, so ecologically the tick population IS in check to a degree if there are a good number of opossums around. I feel a little more negative about skunks. They are very cute animals but I feel a little more negative about them. We had indoor cats. Fishers are a big threat to cats. They could potentially eat them, kill them.

Portland animal rights focus group

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: I love all of them. Opossums are really good for controlling other things.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: They get a bad rep, but they eat a ton of ticks.

Discussion in Portland general population focus group

They're all cute and furry.

Orono general population focus group

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: Fishers are nasty. We have a lot of them in Maine.

They're very vicious. My brother has caught a lot of them, and they are very aggressive. And they are really hard to kill, too. I don't see what the purpose of them is.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: I think they are known to kill housecats.

Discussion in Portland general population focus group

I thought it was a lady in the woods [referring to the sound fishers make]. It's a fisher....

That's the only one that really freaked me out.

Orono general population focus group

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: Essentially all provide something to our universe: keep rodent populations down, and what else do they do?

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: Either they eat something or get eaten.

Discussion in Portland general population focus group

I have concern with coyote. Several years ago we were out at Cape Elizabeth walking and on the way back it looked like a German shepherd, it looked like a manged coyote [i.e., a coyote with mange]. So we stopped and we're thinking "Oh God, we're at the end of a dead end road." I was so glad that it meandered off into the woods. The fox, surprisingly, you hear a lot up in the Brunswick area they've had a lot of rabid fox and attacks, so that would cause me concern. Bobcat, I enjoyed the one up at the Gray Animal Farm. A lot of these animals the raccoons we've seen, skunks, opossums, and opossums especially, they tend to invade some areas they can inhabit. Some people say "Oh God, there's a lot of rats in there," but they're mistaken.

Portland general population focus group

I think it's more of a fact that they're a bigger nuisance, so it's easier to think there are too many of them.

Portland general population focus group

Who is it up to to say there are too many? Who's to say?

Portland general population focus group

Years ago, it would be like "Look, a fox!" a rarity, but now, it's like oh yeah, they cut through the yard every day.

Portland general population focus group

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: I think there's too many skunks.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: You do? I never see them.

Discussion in Portland general population focus group

HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICTS

The discussion of furbearer management, and whether there is a need to manage them, led to discussions of human-wildlife conflicts.

They are all good, but they are not meant to cohabitate with us. They need their space.

Portland animal rights focus group

Suppose there were no humans in Maine, these wildlife populations would be regulated by nature whether it be disease, starvation, or predators. Us being thrown in the mix is really throwing this off, because we are putting houses where predators used to be, and it's like we've created this problem, how are we going to fix this? Why is it the animals' fault that we felt like showing up here?

Portland general population focus group

Beavers can be an incredible nuisance now that people don't trap them anymore.

Orono general population focus group

Most of them are not in the local areas or at least they don't show themselves too often aside from raccoon or skunk or opossums. Raccoons get a little brazen sometimes. If they like their environment, they'll start showing themselves a little more. My parents used to have chickens, and they would kill and eat the chickens a lot.

Portland general population focus group

Raccoons and fox used to be a problem around my area. Unfortunately, it's just in their nature.

Portland general population focus group

Every dog owner in Maine, their dog has been skunked, their dog has been skunked at one time or another.

Portland general population focus group

I saw a raccoon and a skunk fight over some trash in the back yard once. It was actually pretty crazy. And then the skunk ran after our roommate.

Orono general population focus group

I know for a while it was thought that beavers were a real nuisance to humankind because of their dams and floods, but scientists have been coming out recently saying we are a lot more dependent on them for the wetlands that they create, and that we actually need to back off and let them be more. So often I think what's determining overpopulation is how healthy the population is. Are they surviving well in their numbers. Are there diseases that are getting passed around too frequently, because there are too many of them?

Portland general population focus group

A skunk is not inherently a nuisance. We're the nuisance.

Portland animal rights focus group

I manage some parks, and beavers are a problem for us every summer. And it's in...city limits, not that you can shoot them anyways. It costs us money every summer; I gotta hire someone to come get 'em out, and they're back every year.

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

I think you can have overpopulation, but...there seems to be a correlation between animals that have positive or negative impressions and whether people think they are overpopulated or underpopulated. People think that river otters are super cute so of course they're going to think we don't have enough of them versus skunks, they spray our dog, they're overpopulated. The thing I was going to say about fishers, and I don't know this for sure so I could be very well mistaken, but I think the fisher population is not significantly high. I think they've actually been suffering in terms of a lower population level. But I think that's a great example: people see fishers as a species that's dangerous, because of that they think there is too high of a population of fishers, even if there isn't.

Portland animal rights focus group

COYOTE ISSUES

Feelings about coyotes to many focus group participants are that they are generally a nuisance, but not always in the same way that humans have conflicts with other furbearers. Some of the other furbearers directly impact humans (and coyotes do, too, when attacking pets or making people feel nervous), but much of the discussion of coyotes was how they affected the deer population.

I have a negative attitude toward coyotes because of the...deer. Whether you go snowmobiling or anything in the wintertime, you're likely to come across a shredded up deer in the middle of the trail because they can't get away the way the coyotes can. So that's really my motivator initially to start coyote hunting to protect deer.

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

If the State of Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife is so concerned about the coyotes killing the deer, why do they charge you four dollars for a night hunting permit?

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

I'd like to get rid of coyotes. I spend a week up in the Maine woods, and I was up there when we had that first big snow, and it was all coyote tracks. I saw two deer tracks, two sets of tracks. It was pretty distressing. [MODERATOR: Did you get a deer?] No. Just coyote tracks everywhere.

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

Wherever you see deer tracks, there's dog [coyote] tracks. It's a nightmare; they're running the deer to death. So I think they should just let us hunt them as often...as we want, night or day.

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

I have three packs of coyotes in my backyard. And they've come close. The scariest thing was there was over a dozen of them, practically surrounding us [in our tent as we were camping in the backyard].

Portland general population focus group

Nonetheless, some focus group participants were sympathetic to coyotes, noting that they are part of the whole ecosystem and have their place. Others also noted that coyotes are part of the cultural milieu.

[Coyotes] are such a part of American folklore and legend. They show up in so many westerns, both older and modern westerns, and Native American folklore. They're like the romanticized American animal in a way. Almost like the American mascot.

Portland general population focus group

One note about allowing coyotes to be trapped is that farmers, who have reasons to extirpate coyotes from their farms to protect livestock, may not have time to hunt them instead of trap them. A farmer in one of the groups also wanted a quick way to trap them, not wanting to devote time that he felt he did not have to set certain types of traps.

Back when we used to really control them [coyotes], we could use snares.

Orono general population focus group

It would be nice to be able to snare them [coyote]. Me and my brother did that. They used to let us use snares back in the '80s and '90s. You could set your snares low enough so the deer couldn't get in them. They took that away from us. We took quite a few coyote that way.

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

Coyotes, I hunt them all I can and try to trap, but...snaring would be easier for me, because...I do farm work, so I only have a couple hours a day to try to go set those footholds. I don't get a lot of them out, but if I had snares...I'd have more chance with the coyotes.

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

THREATS TO FURBEARERS

The biggest threats to furbearers were thought to be environmental degradation and loss of habitat. Trapping was not seen by most people in the focus groups to be a threat (except the inadvertent trapping of threatened or endangered species as previously discussed).

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: Encroachment on their environment. The expansion of communities.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: And roads. Getting hit by cars.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #3: That and the pollution in our rivers. I live on a river and when I was really young there were schools of frogs that you'd just hear croaking at night. And there would be an entire chorus all night long, and now I hear maybe one or two croaks throughout summer. And I've heard, again it's anecdotal, [we have] a lot of different chemicals going into the water, and that affects the population of those.

Discussion in Portland general population focus group

I think the landowners are doing all the clearcutting again, and there goes the habitat for the deer and for every animal up there. Clearcutting in the Oxbow area. I go 20 miles without setting a trap. This fall is something else. They just clear cut that around Oxbow road. Libby's camp there? Gone.

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

As far as clearcutting area on the farmland, deer come in to eat if you cut down or select cut, not clearcut, if you select cut, they come in until the food is all chewed off the branches. A couple of years they are going to be there then they move out, it seems like. Clearcutting won't hurt the deer around the farmland that much. But it might affect fisher.

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

LYNX EXCLUSION DEVICES

The trappers in the focus groups all complained about the lynx exclusion devices. Some had stopped trapping certain species because of the devices, complaining that their targeted species would not go into the traps with the lynx exclusion devices. Others inadvertently trapped lynx and described the efforts required of them to address the inadvertently trapped lynx.

With these new devices that they make us use for fisher and marten, they ain't going inside them devices, so they're going to be overpopulated here very soon.

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

I know of...a Connecticut couple [that] traps coyotes. Last year they caught 15 lynx and every time they get a lynx they gotta call about it to the Warden. After they caught 6 or 7 of them, they told the people catching the lynx, "Just release them. Don't call us no more."

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

The discussions also focused on the lynx population—they are thought by some to be plentiful—and the problems that lynx cause.

[A friend] has a camp. We put a beaver carcass up a tree, ...and you have lynx up there grabbing and pulling it down. We have pictures. Four of them sleeping around that carcass.

Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

A lot of people I know really cut back hunting when they came out with [regulations on] lynx. [Sarcastically] “Rare” or “extinct” or whatever. I’ve seen more of them than ever. Whoever says that we don’t have lynx in Maine is crazy; they need to come with me. Who came up with that [the lynx regulations]? ... I would love to see the research that says we don’t have lynx.

Orono general population focus group

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #1: You go snow sledding some of these trails through Oxbow and Ashton, those lynx lay right down on the trail, and as you’re coming up to them they’ll get up and move off about 20 feet and they’ll sit down and watch you go by.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #2: I’ve seen more lynx now in the last 5 years than I’ve seen all my life.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT #3: Same here. I had not seen one until the last 5 to 6 years.

Discussion in Presque Isle hunter/trapper focus group

REPUTATION OF STATE AGENCIES

The final aspect of the focus group discussions to be highlighted in this chapter relates to the credibility of the state itself and its agencies. Focus group participants generally held the Department in high esteem, even those who were not much enamored with trapping. A previous quote (see the section, “Arguments in Support of Trapping”) showed that one focus group participant felt that the Department studies and knows about the issues and can be trusted. This was the general feeling in all of the focus groups.

MODERATOR: Would you trust the Department?

Yeah. I think we’re on the same page.

Portland animal rights focus group

[Addressing human-wildlife conflicts] should really be left up to the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. That is an organization that is for the conservation of animals and wildlife, and I think if you go to privatized trappers then they could do who knows what with the animals. They could slaughter them, and that’s terrible. You need people who have a significant amount of knowledge and training about the subject of trapping to handle the situation properly.

Portland animal rights focus group

10. COMPARISON OF APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL OF TRAPPING IN THE U.S., REGIONALLY, AND IN THREE STATES, AND RATINGS OF STATE AGENCIES

Two past Responsive Management studies asked about approval or disapproval of regulated trapping:

NSSF Report: Americans’ Attitudes Toward Hunting, Fishing, Sport Shooting, and Trapping. 2019. Conducted for the National Shooting Sports Foundation.

Awareness of and Attitudes Toward Trapping Issues in Connecticut, Indiana, and Wisconsin. 2016. Conducted for the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

Both of the surveys for these reports included this question:

In general, do you approve or disapprove of regulated trapping?

The results are shown in Table 10.1, and they are compared to the results from Maine.

Table 10.1. Approval of Trapping in the U.S. and U.S. Regions, Three States, and Maine

Question: In general, do you approve or disapprove of regulated trapping?	NSSF Report					AFWA Report			This Report
	U.S. residents (n=3014)	Northeast (n=582)	Southeast (n=1091)	Midwest (n=638)	West (n=703)	Connecticut (n=212)	Indiana (n=202)	Wisconsin (n=217)	MAINE (n=621)
Strongly approve	29	22	30	38	25	26	41	37	44
Moderately approve	23	24	25	25	18	34	33	41	31
Total approve	52	46	56	62	43	61	75	77	75
Neither approve nor disapprove	11	11	12	8	13	11	11	7	7
Moderately disapprove	10	11	9	8	14	9	4	3	5
Strongly disapprove	21	27	19	16	24	15	7	9	13
Total disapprove	31	38	28	24	37	24	11	11	17
Don't know	5	5	5	5	6	5	3	4	1

Because the table has so many columns, it would be difficult to digest in a graph without first combining responses. Figure 10.1 shows the total who approve and the total who disapprove (the neutral and “don’t know” responses are removed). Note that Figure 10.1 shows the groups ranked by total approval; the U.S. as a whole is shown by the red and blue patterned bar, and Maine is shown by the black bar. Wisconsin, Maine, and Indiana have the highest approval, in a tier markedly above the rest.

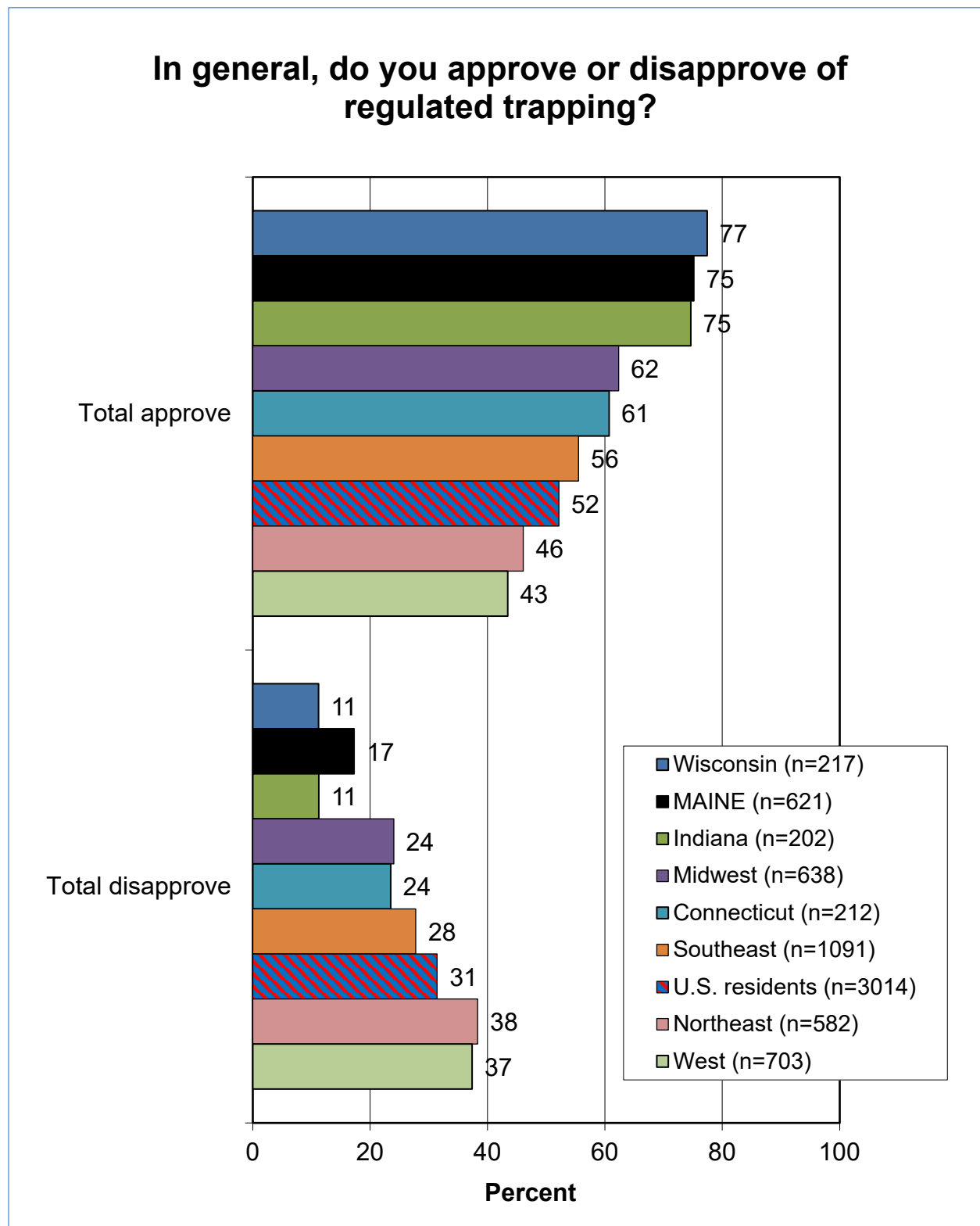


Figure 10.1. Approval and Disapproval of Trapping Among Various Groups

Figure 10.2 looks at another similar question to only the three-state study (the NSSF study did not include this question) regarding the freedom to trap. The comparison suggests that Maine residents (71% agree) have markedly lower agreement to this statement than Indiana and Wisconsin residents (at 82% and 79% agreement). But Maine is well above Connecticut in agreement with the statement.

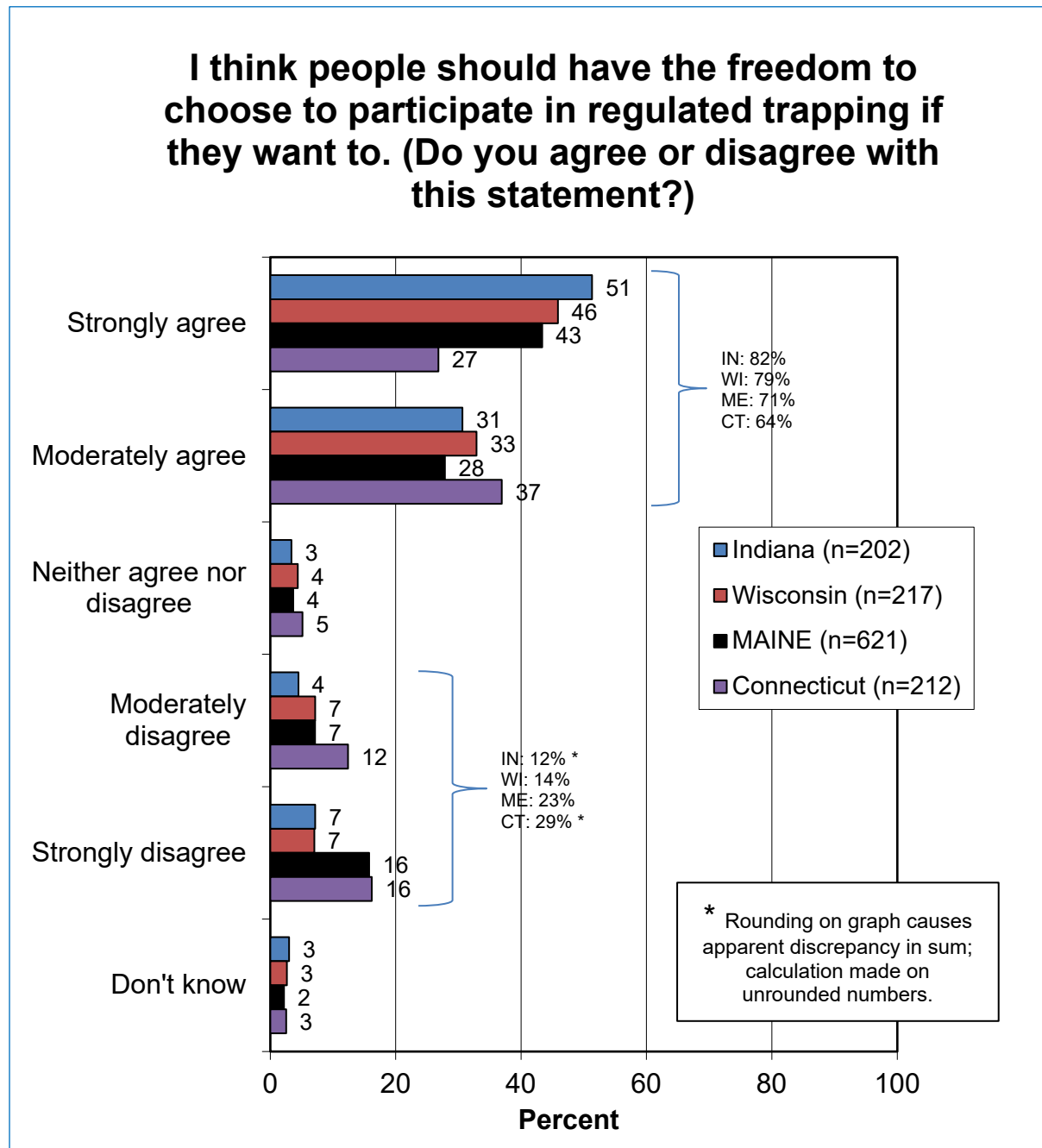


Figure 10.2. Agreement or Disagreement Regarding the Freedom to Trap Among Three States Compared to Maine

Another question that was the same between surveys asked respondents to rate their state wildlife agency at regulating and managing trapping (Figure 10.3). Maine residents had a much lower rate of saying that they did not know, which gave them a higher percentage giving an actual rating. Maine had a markedly higher percentage, relative to the other states, giving a rating in the top half of the scale (excellent or good): 56% in Maine versus no more than 39% in the other three states. Maine is shown with the black bar.

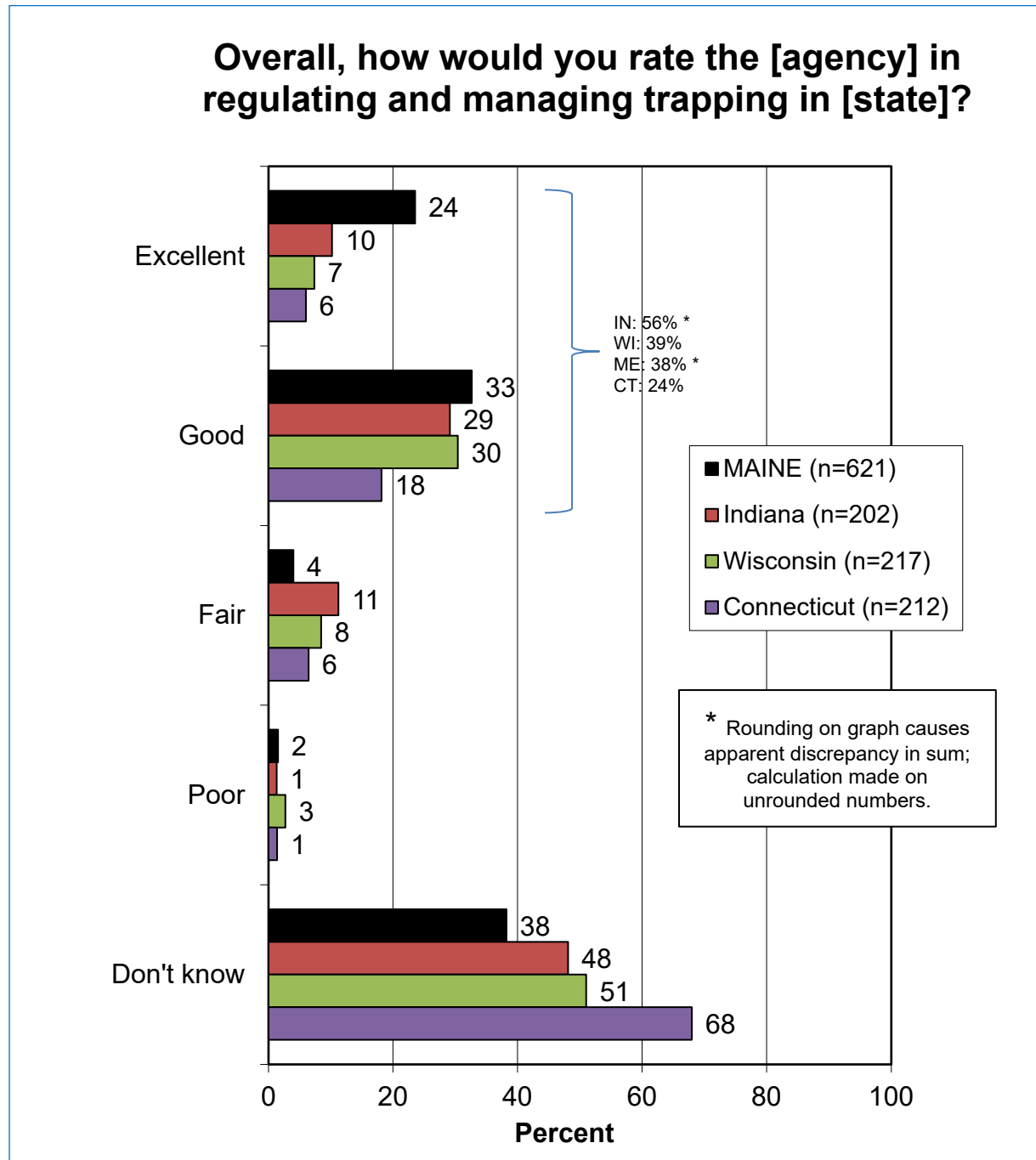


Figure 10.3. State Agency Ratings

APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONS

Maine Furbearer Survey

NOTE: SOME ERROR HANDLERS HAVE BEEN REMOVED FROM THE CODE FOR READABILITY. EVERY STATEMENT OR COMPUTATION IN THE CODE IS NUMBERED, AND MANY OF THESE ARE NOT SHOWN; FOR THIS REASON, THE NUMBERING SOMETIMES SKIPS. ANSWER SETS AND CODE/LOGIC STATEMENTS ARE INDENTED.

SOME QUESTIONS HAVE ANSWER SETS THAT ARE PRESENTED TO THE RESPONDENT; OTHER ANSWER SETS ARE NOT PRESENTED TO THE RESPONDENT BUT ARE USED BY THE INTERVIEWER FOR ENTERING THE GIST OF THE RESPONSE. IF THE RESPONSE DOES NOT MATCH ANY OF THE EXISTING RESPONSES ON THESE OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS, THE INTERVIEWER SELECTS “OTHER” AND THEN ENTERS THE RESPONSE. THESE “OTHER” RESPONSE SETS ARE THEN RECODED BY ANALYSTS INTO LOGICAL RESPONSE CATEGORIES IN THE DATA ANALYSIS. FOR THIS REASON, SOME GRAPHS SHOW MORE RESPONSES THAN WERE IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

“DNR” IS SHORTCUT INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERVIEWERS; IT MEANS “DO NOT READ.”

SINGLE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS START RESPONSE NUMBERING AT 2; MULTIPLE RESPONSE QUESTIONS START RESPONSE NUMBERING AT 1.

4. ENTER SAMPLE FROM CALL SHEET

- 2. General population
- 3. Hunters
- 4. Trappers
- 5. Both hunters and trappers
- 6. Landowners

5. Hello, my name is _____, and I am calling on behalf of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to ask some questions about wildlife and wildlife management in the state.

IF (#4 = 2) GO TO #7

6. May I please speak with _____?

7. Your answers are very important to this study. Do you have a few minutes to answer some questions for me?

(IF ASKED: We are not selling anything or asking for donations.)

(IF NECESSARY: You do not have to know much or have any interest in wildlife to answer. The Department would like to know more about everyone's opinions and knowledge, regardless of experience or interest.)

[AGE SCREENER ASKED OF GENERAL POPULATION AND LANDOWNERS]

11. Are you at least 18 years old?

[AGE SCREENER ASKED OF HUNTERS AND TRAPPERS]

13. Are you at least 16 years old?

[SCREENER ASKED OF GENERAL POPULATION]

16. Are you a Maine resident?

[SCREENER ASKED OF HUNTERS; MUST HAVE HAD A LICENSE]

19. Our records indicate that you had a HUNTING license for 2018 or 2019. Is this correct? [SCREENER]

[ASKED OF HUNTING LICENSE HOLDERS]

21. What is the MOST RECENT YEAR you participated in recreational HUNTING, in or outside of Maine?
SKIP TO QUESTION 29

[SCREENER ASKED OF TRAPPERS; MUST HAVE HAD A LICENSE]

23. Our records indicate that you had a TRAPPING license for the 2018-2019 season. Is this correct? [SCREENER]

[ASKED OF TRAPPING LICENSE HOLDERS]

25. What is the MOST RECENT YEAR you participated in recreational TRAPPING, in or outside of Maine?
SKIP TO QUESTION 29

[BOTH QUESTIONS ASKED OF GENERAL POPULATION AND LANDOWNERS]

27. Have you EVER participated in recreational HUNTING, in or outside of Maine?

2. Yes
 3. No
 4. (DNR) Don't know

28. Have you EVER participated in recreational TRAPPING, in or outside of Maine?

2. Yes
 3. No
 4. (DNR) Don't know

[ASKED OF ALL RESPONDENTS; IT IS A SCREENER FOR LANDOWNERS, AS THEY HAD TO OWN AT LEAST 25 ACRES IN WITHIN A SINGLE TRACT TO BE IN THE SURVEY]

29. Do you own land in Maine?

2. Yes (GO TO QUESTION 30)
 3. No
 4. (DNR) Don't know

IF ((#4 = 6) AND (#29 > 2)) OUT OF SURVEY [SCREENER FOR LANDOWNERS—NEED TO OWN LAND]
 SKIP TO QUESTION 41

30. How many total acres do you own in Maine?

acres

IF ((#4 = 6) AND (#33 < 25)) OUT OF SURVEY [SCREENER—LANDOWNERS NEED AT LEAST 25 ACRES]
 IF ((#4 < 6) AND (#33 < 25)) GO TO #41
 SKIP TO QUESTION 37

37. Is this largest tract of land located in a single county, or multiple counties?

2. Single county
 3. Multiple counties (GO TO QUESTION 40)
 4. (DNR) Don't know

38. In which county is this tract of land? (the largest tract of land you own in Maine)

(ENTER COUNTY CODE)

SKIP TO QUESTION 41

40. In which counties is your largest tract located?

(ENTER COUNTY CODES OR NAMES)

PARTICIPATION SERIES

41. Next, I am going to read a list of activities, and I would like to know if you, personally, have participated in each in Maine in the past 12 months. Have you participated in...?

42. Computer chooses a random starting question

- 1. (GO TO QUESTION 43)
- 2. (GO TO QUESTION 44)
- 3. (GO TO QUESTION 45)
- 4. (GO TO QUESTION 46)
- 5. (GO TO QUESTION 47)
- 6. (GO TO QUESTION 49)
- 7. (GO TO QUESTION 51)
- 8. (GO TO QUESTION 52)
- 9. (GO TO QUESTION 53)
- 10. (GO TO QUESTION 54)

ALL HAVE A YES-NO ANSWER SET

43. Wildlife viewing within 1 mile of your home

44. Birdwatching

45. Hiking or trail use

46. Fishing

47. Determines which group the respondent is a part of.

- 1. Never hunted, skip next
- 2. Ever hunted (GO TO QUESTION 48)

COMPUTE IF (#27 > 2) 1

COMPUTE 2

SKIP TO QUESTION 49

48. Hunting

49. Determines which group the respondent is a part of.

- 1. Never trapped, skip next
- 2. Ever trapped (GO TO QUESTION 50)

COMPUTE IF (#28 > 2) 1

COMPUTE 2

SKIP TO QUESTION 51

50. Trapping

51. Ornamental, flower, or vegetable gardening

52. Growing fruit trees

53. Gathering mushrooms, berries, or other wild edibles

54. Raising livestock or other animals, such as chickens, pigs, sheep, or goats

END OF PARTICIPATION SERIES

55. Determines which group the respondent is a part of.

- 1. Hunters (GO TO QUESTION 58)
- 2. Trappers (GO TO QUESTION 71)
- 3. Gen pop or landowners

COMPUTE IF ((#4 = 3) OR (#4 = 5)) 1

COMPUTE IF (#4 = 4) 2

COMPUTE 3

SKIP TO QUESTION 82

58. Which species did you hunt in Maine during the 2018-2019 season?

(DO NOT READ LIST; CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- 1. Did not hunt during the 2018-2019 season
- 2. Deer
- 3. Bear
- 4. Moose
- 5. Turkey
- 6. Ruffed grouse
- 7. Quail
- 8. Duck
- 9. Squirrel
- 10. Bobcat
- 11. Fox
- 12. Raccoon
- 13. Beaver
- 14. Otter
- 15. Coyote
- 16. Muskrat
- 17. Other [DATA CAPTURED AT Q59]
- 18. Don't know

IF (#58 @ 1) GO TO #67

60. In general, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with your hunting experiences in Maine during the 2018-2019 season?

- 2. Very satisfied (GO TO QUESTION 67)
- 3. Somewhat satisfied
- 4. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- 5. Somewhat dissatisfied
- 6. Very dissatisfied
- 7. (DNR) Don't know

SKIP TO QUESTION 63

63. Why weren't you more satisfied with your hunting experiences?

(DO NOT READ LIST; CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- 1. Good but can be improved
- 2. Access problems / nowhere to hunt
- 3. Too crowded
- 4. Poor behavior of other recreationists
- 5. Not enough game
- 6. Did not harvest
- 7. Complicated regulations
- 8. Bag limits
- 9. Weather
- 10. Season lengths / dates of seasons
- 11. No one to go with
- 12. Other [DATA CAPTURED AT Q64]
- 13. Don't know

67. Are there any things that prevented you from hunting as much as you would have liked during the 2018-2019 season? (IF YES: What are they?)

(DO NOT READ LIST; CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- 1. No / nothing
- 2. Age / health
- 3. Access problems / nowhere to hunt
- 4. Too crowded
- 5. Poor behavior of other recreationists
- 6. Not enough game
- 7. Complicated regulations
- 8. Bag limits
- 9. Weather
- 10. Season lengths / dates of seasons
- 11. No one to go with
- 12. Other [DATA CAPTURED AT Q68]
- 13. Don't know

IF (#4 = 5) GO TO #71

SKIP TO QUESTION 82

71. Which species did you trap in Maine during the 2018-2019 season?

(DO NOT READ LIST; CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- 1. Did not trap during the 2018-2019 season
- 2. Deer
- 3. Bear
- 4. Moose
- 5. Turkey
- 6. Ruffed grouse
- 7. Quail
- 8. Duck
- 9. Squirrel
- 10. Bobcat
- 11. Fox
- 12. Raccoon
- 13. Beaver
- 14. Otter
- 15. Coyote
- 16. Muskrat
- 17. Other [DATA CAPTURED AT Q 72]
- 18. Don't know

IF (#71 @ 1) GO TO #80

73. In general, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with your trapping experiences in Maine during the 2018-2019 season?

- 2. Very satisfied (GO TO QUESTION 80)
- 3. Somewhat satisfied
- 4. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- 5. Somewhat dissatisfied
- 6. Very dissatisfied
- 7. (DNR) Don't know

76. Why weren't you more satisfied with your trapping experiences?

(DO NOT READ LIST; CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- 1. Good but can be improved
- 2. Access problems / nowhere to hunt
- 3. Too crowded
- 4. Poor behavior of other recreationists
- 5. Not enough game
- 6. Did not harvest
- 7. Complicated regulations
- 8. Bag limits
- 9. Weather
- 10. Season lengths / dates of seasons
- 11. No one to go with
- 12. Other [DATA CAPTURED AT Q77]
- 13. Don't know

80. Are there any things that prevented you from trapping as much as you would have liked during the 2018-2019 season? (IF YES: What are they?)

(DO NOT READ LIST; CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- 1. No / nothing
- 2. Age / health
- 3. Access problems / nowhere to trap
- 4. Too crowded
- 5. Poor behavior of other recreationists
- 6. Not enough game
- 7. Complicated regulations
- 8. Bag limits
- 9. Weather
- 10. Season lengths / dates of seasons
- 11. No one to go with
- 12. Other [DATA CAPTURED AT Q81]
- 13. Don't know

82. Determines which group the respondent is a part of.

- 1. Hunters who never trapped (GO TO QUESTION 83)
- 2. Trappers (GO TO QUESTION 86)
- 3. The rest

COMPUTE IF (((#4 = 3) OR (#4 = 5)) AND (#28 > 2)) 1

COMPUTE IF ((#4 = 4) OR (#4 = 5)) 2

COMPUTE 3

SKIP TO QUESTION 88

83. What are the main reasons you have not participated in trapping?

SKIP TO QUESTION 88

86. What are the main reasons you participate in trapping?

(DO NOT READ LIST; CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- 1. For income
- 2. For food
- 3. For fur
- 4. For recreation
- 5. To control wildlife populations / protect habitat
- 6. To reduce damage to crops and gardens
- 7. To reduce damage to human property (e.g., garbage, buildings)
- 8. To protect pets
- 9. To protect livestock
- 10. Other [DATA CAPTURED AT Q87]
- 11. Don't know

88. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife regulates trapping in the state. Regulated means that the agency requires participants to buy licenses and limits how, when, which animals, types of traps, and how many animals can be legally trapped.

Prior to this survey, were you aware that trapping is regulated by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife?

- 2. Yes
- 3. No
- 4. (DNR) Don't know

89. Overall, how would you rate the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife in regulating and managing trapping in Maine?

- 2. Excellent
 - 3. Good
 - 4. Fair
 - 5. Poor
 - 6. (DNR) Don't know
- IF (#28 > 2) GO TO #90
SKIP TO QUESTION 91

90. Do you know or have you ever known anyone who is a trapper or has trapped wild animals?

- 2. Yes
- 3. No
- 4. (DNR) Don't know

91. In general, do you approve or disapprove of regulated trapping?

- 2. Strongly approve
- 3. Moderately approve
- 4. Neither approve nor disapprove
- 5. Moderately disapprove
- 6. Strongly disapprove
- 7. (DNR) Don't know

TRAPPING PRACTICES SERIES

92. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. The first statement is...
(IF ASKED: The statements refer to trapping practices in the U.S. in general, NOT worldwide.)

93. Computer chooses a random starting question

- 1. (GO TO QUESTION 94)
- 2. (GO TO QUESTION 95)
- 3. (GO TO QUESTION 96)
- 4. (GO TO QUESTION 97)
- 5. (GO TO QUESTION 98)
- 6. (GO TO QUESTION 99)

ALL HAVE THIS REMINDER AND ANSWER SET:

(Do you agree or disagree with this statement?)

- 2. Strongly agree
- 3. Moderately agree
- 4. Neither agree nor disagree
- 5. Moderately disagree
- 6. Strongly disagree
- 7. (DNR) Don't know

94. I think regulated trapping is okay if the animals die quickly.

95. I think regulated trapping is okay if animals that are accidentally caught could be released.

96. I think people should have the freedom to choose to participate in regulated trapping if they want to.

97. Because of improvements in traps, trapping is more humane today than it was 10 years ago.

98. Endangered species, meaning species in danger of extinction, ARE frequently used to make fur clothing.

99. Even though trapping is regulated by the state, regulated trapping can still cause wildlife species to become endangered or extinct.

END OF TRAPPING PRACTICES SERIES

FURBEARER SPECIES SERIES; THERE ARE FIVE QUESTIONS FOR EACH SPECIES

100. Next, I have some questions about the management of some specific furbearer species in Maine. Management of wildlife includes preservation, protection, enhancement, and harvest.

101. Please indicate how much you would say you know about each of the following furbearer species in Maine.

102. Computer chooses a random starting question

- 1. (GO TO QUESTION 103)
- 2. (GO TO QUESTION 110)
- 3. (GO TO QUESTION 117)
- 4. (GO TO QUESTION 124)
- 5. (GO TO QUESTION 131)
- 6. (GO TO QUESTION 138)
- 7. (GO TO QUESTION 145)
- 8. (GO TO QUESTION 152)
- 9. (GO TO QUESTION 159)
- 10. (GO TO QUESTION 166)

BEAVER

103. How about beaver?

(How much would you say you know about this species in Maine?)

- 2. A great deal
- 3. A moderate amount
- 4. A little
- 5. Nothing at all
- 6. (DNR) Don't know

104. In your opinion, is the beaver population in the area where you live too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no beavers in the area where you live?

- 2. Too high
- 3. About right
- 4. Too low
- 5. There are no beavers in the area
- 6. (DNR) Don't know

105. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the beaver populations in Maine?

- 2. Strongly support
- 3. Moderately support
- 4. Neither support nor oppose
- 5. Moderately oppose
- 6. Strongly oppose
- 7. (DNR) Don't know

106. How beneficial do you consider it to have beavers in Maine, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all beneficial and 10 is extremely beneficial?

109. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about beavers around your home or in your area?

(READ LIST; CHECK ONLY ONE)

- 2. I do not have beavers around my home or in my area
- 3. I enjoy seeing and having beavers around my home
- 4. I enjoy seeing a few beavers around my home, but worry about
- 5. the problems they cause (GO TO QUESTION 109)
- 6. I generally regard beavers as a nuisance
- 7. I generally regard beavers as dangerous
- 8. I have no particular feeling about beavers around my home
- 9. (DNR) Don't know

BACK INTO LOOP

BOBCAT

110. How about bobcat?

(How much would you say you know about this species in Maine?)

- 2. A great deal
- 3. A moderate amount
- 4. A little
- 5. Nothing at all
- 6. (DNR) Don't know

111. In your opinion, is the bobcat population in the area where you live too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no bobcats in the area where you live?

- 2. Too high
- 3. About right
- 4. Too low
- 5. There are no bobcats in the area
- 6. (DNR) Don't know

112. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the bobcat populations in Maine?

- 2. Strongly support
- 3. Moderately support
- 4. Neither support nor oppose
- 5. Moderately oppose
- 6. Strongly oppose
- 7. (DNR) Don't know

113. How beneficial do you consider it to have bobcats in Maine, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all beneficial and 10 is extremely beneficial?

116. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about bobcats around your home or in your area?

(READ LIST; CHECK ONLY ONE)

- 2. I do not have bobcats around my home or in my area
- 3. I enjoy seeing and having bobcats around my home
- 4. I enjoy seeing a few bobcats around my home, but worry about
- 5. the problems they cause (GO TO QUESTION 116)
- 6. I generally regard bobcats as a nuisance
- 7. I generally regard bobcats as dangerous
- 8. I have no particular feeling about bobcats around my home
- 9. (DNR) Don't know

BACK INTO LOOP

COYOTE

117. How about coyote?

(How much would you say you know about this species in Maine?)

- 2. A great deal
- 3. A moderate amount
- 4. A little
- 5. Nothing at all
- 6. (DNR) Don't know

118. In your opinion, is the coyote population in the area where you live too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no coyotes in the area where you live?

- 2. Too high
- 3. About right
- 4. Too low
- 5. There are no coyotes in the area
- 6. (DNR) Don't know

119. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the coyote populations in Maine?

- 2. Strongly support
- 3. Moderately support
- 4. Neither support nor oppose
- 5. Moderately oppose
- 6. Strongly oppose
- 7. (DNR) Don't know

120. How beneficial do you consider it to have coyotes in Maine, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all beneficial and 10 is extremely beneficial?

123. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about coyotes around your home or in your area?

(READ LIST; CHECK ONLY ONE)

- 2. I do not have coyotes around my home or in my area
- 3. I enjoy seeing and having coyotes around my home
- 4. I enjoy seeing a few coyotes around my home, but worry about
- 5. the problems they cause (GO TO QUESTION 123)
- 6. I generally regard coyotes as a nuisance
- 7. I generally regard coyotes as dangerous
- 8. I have no particular feeling about coyotes around my home
- 9. (DNR) Don't know

BACK INTO LOOP

FOX

124. How about fox?

(How much would you say you know about this species in Maine?)

- 2. A great deal
- 3. A moderate amount
- 4. A little
- 5. Nothing at all
- 6. (DNR) Don't know

125. In your opinion, is the fox population in the area where you live too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no foxes in the area where you live?

- 2. Too high
- 3. About right
- 4. Too low
- 5. There are no foxes in the area
- 6. (DNR) Don't know

126. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the fox populations in Maine?

- 2. Strongly support
- 3. Moderately support
- 4. Neither support nor oppose
- 5. Moderately oppose
- 6. Strongly oppose
- 7. (DNR) Don't know

127. How beneficial do you consider it to have foxes in Maine, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all beneficial and 10 is extremely beneficial?

130. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about foxes around your home or in your area?

(READ LIST; CHECK ONLY ONE)

- 2. I do not have foxes around my home or in my area
- 3. I enjoy seeing and having foxes around my home
- 4. I enjoy seeing a few foxes around my home, but worry about
- 5. the problems they cause (GO TO QUESTION 130)
- 6. I generally regard foxes as a nuisance
- 7. I generally regard foxes as dangerous
- 8. I have no particular feeling about foxes around my home
- 9. (DNR) Don't know

BACK INTO LOOP

RACCOON

131. How about raccoon?

(How much would you say you know about this species in Maine?)

- 2. A great deal
- 3. A moderate amount
- 4. A little
- 5. Nothing at all
- 6. (DNR) Don't know

132. In your opinion, is the raccoon population in the area where you live too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no raccoons in the area where you live?

- 2. Too high
- 3. About right
- 4. Too low
- 5. There are no raccoons in the area
- 6. (DNR) Don't know

133. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the raccoon populations in Maine?

- 2. Strongly support
- 3. Moderately support
- 4. Neither support nor oppose
- 5. Moderately oppose
- 6. Strongly oppose
- 7. (DNR) Don't know

134. How beneficial do you consider it to have raccoons in Maine, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all beneficial and 10 is extremely beneficial?

137. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about raccoons around your home or in your area?

(READ LIST; CHECK ONLY ONE)

- 2. I do not have raccoons around my home or in my area
- 3. I enjoy seeing and having raccoons around my home
- 4. I enjoy seeing a few raccoons around my home, but worry about
- 5. the problems they cause (GO TO QUESTION 137)
- 6. I generally regard raccoons as a nuisance
- 7. I generally regard raccoons as dangerous
- 8. I have no particular feeling about raccoons around my home
- 9. (DNR) Don't know

BACK INTO LOOP

SKUNK

138. How about skunk?

(How much would you say you know about this species in Maine?)

2. A great deal
 3. A moderate amount
 4. A little
 5. Nothing at all
 6. (DNR) Don't know

139. In your opinion, is the skunk population in the area where you live too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no skunks in the area where you live?

2. Too high
 3. About right
 4. Too low
 5. There are no skunks in the area
 6. (DNR) Don't know

140. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the skunk populations in Maine?

2. Strongly support
 3. Moderately support
 4. Neither support nor oppose
 5. Moderately oppose
 6. Strongly oppose
 7. (DNR) Don't know

141. How beneficial do you consider it to have skunks in Maine, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all beneficial and 10 is extremely beneficial?

144. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about skunks around your home or in your area?

(READ LIST; CHECK ONLY ONE)

2. I do not have skunks around my home or in my area
 3. I enjoy seeing and having skunks around my home
 4. I enjoy seeing a few skunks around my home, but worry about
 5. the problems they cause (GO TO QUESTION 144)
 6. I generally regard skunks as a nuisance
 7. I generally regard skunks as dangerous
 8. I have no particular feeling about skunks around my home
 9. (DNR) Don't know

BACK INTO LOOP

FISHER

145. How about fisher?

(How much would you say you know about this species in Maine?)

2. A great deal
 3. A moderate amount
 4. A little
 5. Nothing at all
 6. (DNR) Don't know

146. In your opinion, is the fisher population in the area where you live too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no fishers in the area where you live?

2. Too high
 3. About right
 4. Too low
 5. There are no fishers in the area
 6. (DNR) Don't know

147. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the fisher populations in Maine?

- 2. Strongly support
- 3. Moderately support
- 4. Neither support nor oppose
- 5. Moderately oppose
- 6. Strongly oppose
- 7. (DNR) Don't know

148. How beneficial do you consider it to have fishers in Maine, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all beneficial and 10 is extremely beneficial?

151. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about fishers around your home or in your area?

(READ LIST; CHECK ONLY ONE)

- 2. I do not have fishers around my home or in my area
- 3. I enjoy seeing and having fishers around my home
- 4. I enjoy seeing a few fishers around my home, but worry about
- 5. the problems they cause (GO TO QUESTION 151)
- 6. I generally regard fishers as a nuisance
- 7. I generally regard fishers as dangerous
- 8. I have no particular feeling about fishers around my home
- 9. (DNR) Don't know

BACK INTO LOOP

MARTEN

152. How about marten?

(How much would you say you know about this species in Maine?)

- 2. A great deal
- 3. A moderate amount
- 4. A little
- 5. Nothing at all
- 6. (DNR) Don't know

153. In your opinion, is the marten population in the area where you live too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no martens in the area where you live?

- 2. Too high
- 3. About right
- 4. Too low
- 5. There are no martens in the area
- 6. (DNR) Don't know

154. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the marten populations in Maine?

- 2. Strongly support
- 3. Moderately support
- 4. Neither support nor oppose
- 5. Moderately oppose
- 6. Strongly oppose
- 7. (DNR) Don't know

155. How beneficial do you consider it to have martens in Maine, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all beneficial and 10 is extremely beneficial?

158. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about martens around your home or in your area?

(READ LIST; CHECK ONLY ONE)

- 2. I do not have martens around my home or in my area
- 3. I enjoy seeing and having martens around my home
- 4. I enjoy seeing a few martens around my home, but worry about
- 5. the problems they cause (GO TO QUESTION 158)
- 6. I generally regard martens as a nuisance
- 7. I generally regard martens as dangerous
- 8. I have no particular feeling about martens around my home
- 9. (DNR) Don't know

BACK INTO LOOP

OTTER

159. How about otter?

(How much would you say you know about this species in Maine?)

- 2. A great deal
- 3. A moderate amount
- 4. A little
- 5. Nothing at all
- 6. (DNR) Don't know

160. In your opinion, is the otter population in the area where you live too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no otters in the area where you live?

- 2. Too high
- 3. About right
- 4. Too low
- 5. There are no otters in the area
- 6. (DNR) Don't know

161. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the otter populations in Maine?

- 2. Strongly support
- 3. Moderately support
- 4. Neither support nor oppose
- 5. Moderately oppose
- 6. Strongly oppose
- 7. (DNR) Don't know

162. How beneficial do you consider it to have otters in Maine, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all beneficial and 10 is extremely beneficial?

165. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about otters around your home or in your area?

(READ LIST; CHECK ONLY ONE)

- 2. I do not have otters around my home or in my area
- 3. I enjoy seeing and having otters around my home
- 4. I enjoy seeing a few otters around my home, but worry about
- 5. the problems they cause (GO TO QUESTION 165)
- 6. I generally regard otters as a nuisance
- 7. I generally regard otters as dangerous
- 8. I have no particular feeling about otters around my home
- 9. (DNR) Don't know

BACK INTO LOOP

MUSKRAT

166. How about muskrat?

(How much would you say you know about this species in Maine?)

- 2. A great deal
- 3. A moderate amount
- 4. A little
- 5. Nothing at all
- 6. (DNR) Don't know

167. In your opinion, is the muskrat population in the area where you live too high, about right, or too low? Or are there no muskrats in the area where you live?

- 2. Too high
- 3. About right
- 4. Too low
- 5. There are no muskrats in the area
- 6. (DNR) Don't know

168. Do you support or oppose regulated trapping as a method to help manage the muskrat populations in Maine?

- 2. Strongly support
- 3. Moderately support
- 4. Neither support nor oppose
- 5. Moderately oppose
- 6. Strongly oppose
- 7. (DNR) Don't know

169. How beneficial do you consider it to have muskrats in Maine, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all beneficial and 10 is extremely beneficial?

172. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about muskrats around your home or in your area?

(READ LIST; CHECK ONLY ONE)

- 2. I do not have muskrats around my home or in my area
- 3. I enjoy seeing and having muskrats around my home
- 4. I enjoy seeing a few muskrats around my home, but worry about
- 5. the problems they cause (GO TO QUESTION 172)
- 6. I generally regard muskrats as a nuisance
- 7. I generally regard muskrats as dangerous
- 8. I have no particular feeling about muskrats around my home
- 9. (DNR) Don't know

BACK INTO LOOP

=====

END OF FURBEARER SPECIES SERIES

=====

173. Have you had any problems with any wild animals or birds within the past 2 years? This could include but is not limited to: seeing sick or injured animals, damage to gardens, pets or livestock missing or killed, wild animals in yard or house, wild animals getting into garbage, and beaver flooding or killing of trees.

- 2. Yes (GO TO QUESTION 176)
 - 3. No
 - 4. (DNR) Don't know
- SKIP TO QUESTION 188

176. Which wild animals have caused you problems?

(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- 1. Deer
- 2. Bear
- 3. Turkey
- 4. Beaver
- 5. Bobcat
- 6. Coyote
- 7. Fox
- 8. Raccoon
- 9. Skunk
- 10. Fisher
- 11. Marten
- 12. Otter
- 13. Muskrat
- 14. Other [DATA CAPTURED AT Q177]
- 15. Don't know

180. What kind of problems did the wildlife cause?

(DO NOT READ LIST; CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- 1. Got into garbage
- 2. Damage to crops / gardens
- 3. Damage to human property (e.g., buildings, vehicles)
- 4. Threat / harm to humans
- 5. Threat / harm to pets
- 6. Threat / harm to livestock
- 7. Other [DATA CAPTURED AT Q181]
- 8. Don't know

184. What steps or actions were taken to address, manage, or resolve problems with wildlife in the past 2 years?

(DO NOT READ LIST; CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- 1. Nothing / no action taken
- 2. Removed or relocated birdfeeder
- 3. Stopped putting food out for wildlife other than birds
- 4. Stopped leaving food for pet outside
- 5. Put a fence or kennel up for pet outside
- 6. Kept pets indoors when not supervised
- 7. Kept garbage inside
- 8. Used an animal-proof garbage container
- 9. Put a fence around yard or garden
- 10. Used wildlife repellents or deterrents
- 11. Used or planted different vegetation on property
- 12. Allowed hunting on property
- 13. Allowed trapping on property
- 14. Killed animal
- 15. Captured and relocated animal
- 16. Other [DATA CAPTURED AT Q185]
- 17. Don't know

186. Did you hire anyone to resolve the problem(s)?

- 2. Yes (GO TO QUESTION 187)
 - 3. No
 - 4. (DNR) Don't know
- SKIP TO QUESTION 188

187. Did the person you hired give you information on non-lethal methods to resolve problem(s)?

- 2. Yes
- 3. No
- 4. (DNR) Don't know

188. Do you support or oppose trapping as a way to resolve nuisance animal problems?

- 2. Strongly support
- 3. Moderately support
- 4. Neither support nor oppose
- 5. Moderately oppose
- 6. Strongly oppose
- 7. (DNR) Don't know

189. Do you support or oppose managing furbearer populations to reduce wildlife diseases that could affect people, pets, and other wildlife?

- 2. Strongly support
- 3. Moderately support
- 4. Neither support nor oppose
- 5. Moderately oppose
- 6. Strongly oppose
- 7. (DNR) Don't know

190. Great, we're just about through. The final questions are for background information and help us analyze the results.

- IF (#4 > 2) GO TO #191
- IF (#16 = 2) GO TO #192
- SKIP TO QUESTION 196

191. Are you a Maine resident?

- 2. Yes (GO TO QUESTION 192)
 - 3. No
 - 4. (DNR) Don't know
- SKIP TO QUESTION 196

192. What county do you live in?

(ENTER COUNTY CODE)
□□□

194. What is your zip code?

□□□□□□

196. 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 a rural area NOT on a farm?

- 2. Large city or urban area
- 3. Suburban area
- 4. Small city or town
- 5. Rural area on a farm
- 6. Rural area NOT on a farm
- 7. (DNR) Don't know
- 8. (DNR) Refused

197. How many children, age 17 or younger, do you have living in your household?

□□□

200. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- 2. Not a high school graduate
- 3. High school graduate or equivalent
- 4. Some college or trade school, no degree
- 5. Associate's or trade school degree
- 6. Bachelor's degree
- 7. Master's degree
- 8. Professional or doctorate degree (e.g., M.D., Ph.D.)
- 9. (DNR) Don't know
- 10. (DNR) Refused

203. What races or ethnic backgrounds do you consider yourself? Please mention all that apply.

(DO NOT READ LIST)

- 1. White or Caucasian
- 2. Black or African-American
- 3. Hispanic or Latino
- 4. Native American or Alaskan native or Aleutian
- 5. Native Hawaiian
- 6. Middle Eastern
- 7. East Asian
- 8. South Asian
- 9. African (NOT African-American)
- 10. Other [DATA CAPTURED AT Q204]
- 11. Don't know
- 12. Refused

205. May I ask your age?

years old

209. That's the end of the survey. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

210. ENTER REGION FROM CALLSHEET

- 2. North/East
- 3. Central
- 4. South
- 5. Remainder

212. OBSERVE AND RECORD RESPONDENT'S GENDER.

- 2. Male
- 3. Female
- 4. Don't know

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 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*.

responsivemanagement.com