

NSSF® Report

# AMERICANS ATTITUDES

Toward Hunting,  
Fishing, Sport Shooting  
and Trapping **2019**



 **RESPONSIVE  
MANAGEMENT**

Conducted for the  
National Shooting Sports Foundation®  
by Responsive Management



THE FIREARMS INDUSTRY TRADE ASSOCIATION |

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# **AMERICANS' ATTITUDES TOWARD HUNTING, FISHING, SPORT SHOOTING, AND TRAPPING**



**Conducted for the Association of Fish and  
Wildlife Agencies Under Multistate Conservation  
Grant Number F19AP00100**

**National Shooting Sports Foundation and  
Responsive Management**

**2019**

# **AMERICANS' ATTITUDES TOWARD HUNTING, FISHING, SPORT SHOOTING, AND TRAPPING**

**2019**

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Although NSSF partnered with Responsive Management for this report and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies provided funding for it, any errors in the report are the sole responsibility of Responsive Management.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study was conducted by Responsive Management and the National Shooting Sports Foundation to assess trends in Americans' attitudes toward hunting, fishing, sport shooting, and trapping. Responsive Management has tracked public attitudes on the four activities in various forms since 1995, and the study makes use of this trend data by examining how Americans' attitudes have changed over the years.<sup>1</sup> The project was funded by a Multistate Conservation Grant from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. The study entailed a scientific telephone survey of adult Americans, ages 18 and older. Details of the survey methodology are shown in the body of the report.

Overall, 80% of Americans approve of legal hunting. Approval of hunting is highest in the Midwest (at 86% approval) and is lowest in the Northeast (72%). Americans' level of approval of hunting has remained generally consistent over the past quarter century, with a gradual increase in approval since 1995 when approval was at 73%.

However, approval of hunting varies considerably depending on the stated reason for hunting. When the reasons are utilitarian in nature—for meat, to protect humans or property, for wildlife management—approval is very high, but hunting drops substantially when the reason is for the sport or for the challenge; meanwhile, less than a third of Americans approve of hunting for a trophy. Nonetheless, approval of these less popular hunting motivations has rebounded following rather sharp declines in 2016 (note that administration of the 2016 survey followed several high-profile news stories that depicted trophy hunting in a negative light).

The species being hunted also affects approval of hunting. Hunting of ungulates and waterfowl is more accepted than hunting of predator species, while the hunting of African lions and elephants has even less approval among Americans. Similarly, approval of hunting depends on the technique being used, especially the extent to which the technique in question allows for fair chase (i.e., whether the animal has a reasonable chance to evade the hunter). For example, more Americans approve of hunting with archery equipment than approve of hunting with high-tech gear or hunting on property that has a high fence around it.

The survey findings suggest that fishing is less controversial than hunting: 93% of Americans approve of legal recreational fishing (compared to 80% who approve of legal hunting). Like hunting, however, approval of fishing depends on the motivation: more Americans approve of fishing for food than fishing for the sport, for the challenge, or for a trophy fish. Meanwhile, most methods of fishing have high approval, with the exceptions of gigging and snagging.

The survey also examined attitudes toward shooting, finding that 81% of Americans approve of legal recreational shooting. This finding is consistent with the approval rates for shooting found in previous survey years, with the exception of a slight dip in approval in 2011.

Trapping is more controversial than the other outdoor recreational activities explored in this study. Public opinion on regulated trapping is split: 52% of Americans approve while 31% disapprove. Again, attitudes appear to be influenced by the stated motivation for the activity: there is relatively high approval of trapping for wildlife restoration, population control, food, and property protection, but less approval of trapping for money, fur clothing, and recreation.

Higher approval of all four activities (hunting, fishing, shooting, and trapping) is correlated with being male, white, living in a rural area, living in the Midwest or Southeast regions, and growing up with firearms. Conversely, *lower* approval of the activities is associated with being female, Hispanic, black, living in an urban area, living in the Northeast or West regions, and *not* growing up with firearms.

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<sup>1</sup> For the trend results in this report, comparisons of the new data are made only to previous Responsive Management survey questions that used consistent wording.

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## **INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY**

This study was conducted by Responsive Management and the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) to measure Americans' attitudes toward hunting, fishing, sport shooting, and trapping. Responsive Management has tracked public attitudes on the four activities in various forms since 1995, and the study makes use of this trend data by examining how Americans' attitudes have changed over the years.<sup>1</sup> The study also examines how approval of hunting, fishing, and trapping varies by motivation, species, and method. The study entailed a scientific telephone survey of adult Americans, ages 18 and older. Data from the survey were weighted to ensure that the results were representative of adult Americans as a whole.

In the survey, the four activities are referred to as follows: "legal hunting," "legal recreational fishing," "legal recreational shooting," and "regulated trapping." The qualifying terms before each activity serve to exclude any illegal or improper variations of the activity, as might be the case if a respondent were to interpret the single term "hunting" as being inclusive of poaching.

The project was funded by a Multistate Conservation Grant from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA). Previous similar trend surveys have been funded by a variety of partners and grants, including through the National Shooting Sports Foundation, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Multistate Conservation Grant Program, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Hunters' Leadership Forum, the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the Southeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

Other sources for the data used in the hunting, fishing, and trapping trend analysis include surveys for the Professional Outdoor Media Association and the Archery Trade Association; additionally, the trend analysis on shooting uses data from a survey by Roper Starch Worldwide. Sample sizes for these surveys range from 800 to 5,103, with sampling error ranging from plus or minus 1.4 to 3.5 percentage points. All telephone surveys administered since 2006 entailed landlines and cell phones called in their proper state and regional proportions.

Specific aspects of the research methodology are discussed below.

### **USE OF TELEPHONES FOR THE SURVEY**

For the survey, telephones were selected as the preferred sampling medium because of the almost universal ownership of telephones among Americans (both landlines and cell phones were called in their exact state and regional proportions). Additionally, telephone surveys, relative to mail or Internet surveys, allow for more scientific sampling and data collection, provide higher quality data, obtain higher response rates, are more timely, and are more cost-effective. Telephone surveys also have better representation of the sample than mail surveys because the latter systematically exclude those who are not literate enough to complete the surveys or who would be intimidated by having to complete a written survey—by an estimate of the U.S. Department of Education's National Institute of Literacy (2016), up to 43% of the general population read no higher than a "basic level," suggesting that they would be reticent to

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<sup>1</sup> For the trend results in this report, comparisons of the new data are made only to previous Responsive Management survey questions that used consistent wording.

complete a written survey. Finally, telephone surveys also have fewer negative effects on the environment than do mail surveys because of reduced use of paper and reduced energy consumption for delivering and returning the questionnaires.

## **QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN**

The telephone survey questionnaire was developed cooperatively by Responsive Management and NSSF, based on the research team's familiarity with similar surveys. In addition, the questionnaire in part included questions from previous surveys to allow for a trend analysis. Responsive Management conducted pre-tests of the questionnaire to ensure proper wording, flow, and logic in the survey.

## **SURVEY SAMPLE**

The sample of adult Americans was obtained from Dynata (formerly known as Survey Sampling International), a firm that specializes in providing scientifically valid samples for survey research. The sample included both landlines and cell phones, which were called in the exact proportions that they exist on a state-by-state and regional basis—the resulting national sample was representative of all Americans living in households with a landline, cell phone, or both. A probability-based selection process ensured that each eligible American had an equal chance of being selected for the survey. This process ensured that the sample was valid because every resident had a known chance of participating in the survey.

Responsive Management obtained a total of 3,014 completed interviews. The sample size is less than 3,014 on some graphs because certain questions were asked only of a random subset of the entire sample. This was done to minimize respondent burden by reducing the overall survey length for each respondent.

## **TELEPHONE INTERVIEWING FACILITIES**

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

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



## **INTERVIEWING DATES AND TIMES**

Telephone surveying times are Monday through Friday from noon to 9:00 p.m., Saturday from noon to 5:00 p.m., and Sunday from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., local time. A five-callback design was used to maintain the representativeness of the sample, to avoid bias toward people easy to reach by telephone, and to provide an equal opportunity for all 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 in January 2019.

## **TELEPHONE SURVEY DATA COLLECTION AND QUALITY CONTROL**

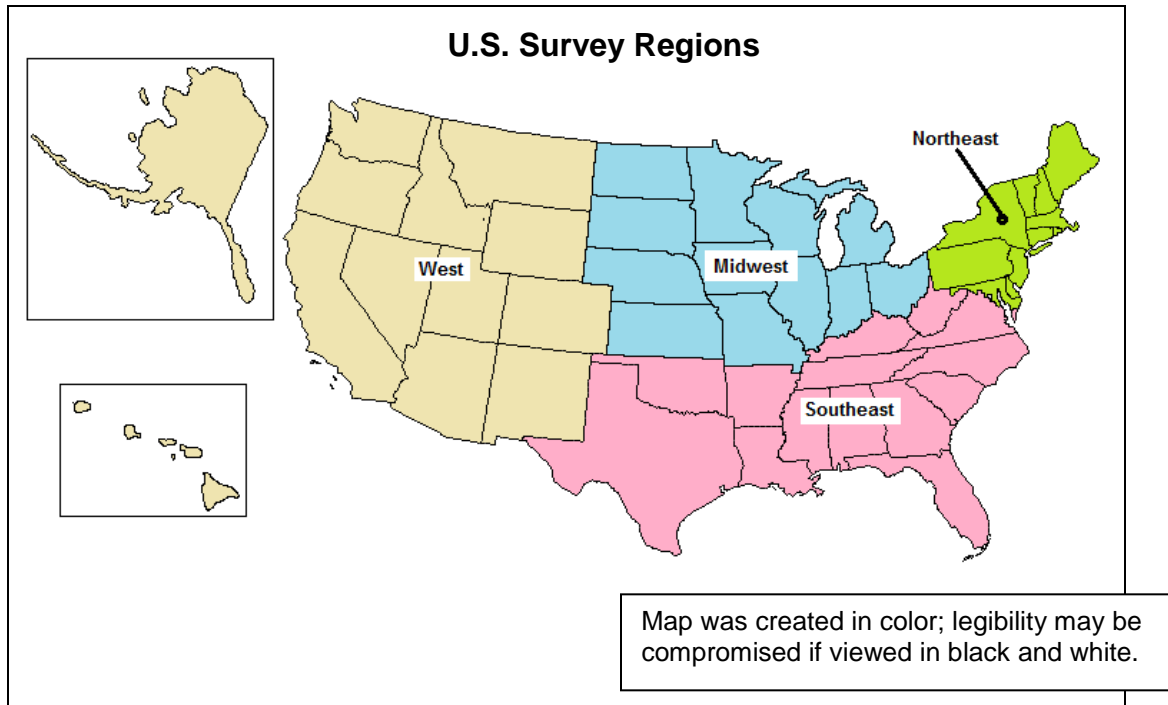
The software used for data collection was Questionnaire Programming Language (QPL). The survey data were entered into the computer as each interview was being conducted, eliminating manual data entry after the completion of the survey and the concomitant data entry errors that may occur with manual data entry. The survey questionnaire was programmed so that QPL branched, coded, and substituted phrases in the survey based on previous responses to ensure the integrity and consistency of the data collection.

The Survey Center Managers and statisticians monitored the 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. The survey questionnaire itself contains error checkers and computation statements to ensure quality and consistent data. After the surveys were obtained by the interviewers, the Survey Center Managers and/or statisticians checked each completed survey to ensure clarity and completeness.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

The analysis of data was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics as well as proprietary software developed by Responsive Management. The survey data were weighted by age, gender, race/ethnicity, and geographic region, based on the latest population proportions obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. Note that this weighting resulted in only minimal adjustments to the results (typically 1-2%), as the raw data collected were quite close to actual population proportions. The findings shown in this report are representative of adult Americans as a whole (see the "Demographics" section at the end of the report for a breakdown of the characteristics of adult Americans used for the weighting of survey data).

For all questions in the survey, crosstabulations were run to compare and contrast regional differences. The four geographic regions used for these analyses are shown in the map on the following page.



## SAMPLING ERROR

Throughout this report, findings of the telephone survey are reported at a 95% confidence interval. For the entire sample of adult Americans, the sampling error is at most plus or minus 1.76 percentage points. This means that if the survey were conducted 100 times on different samples that were selected in the same way, the findings of 95 out of the 100 surveys would fall within plus or minus 1.76 percentage points of each other. Sampling error was calculated using the formula described below, with a sample size of 3,014 and a population size of 253,227,600 adult Americans.

### Sampling Error Equation

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

Where: B = maximum sampling error (as decimal)  
 $N_p$  = population size (i.e., total number who could be surveyed)  
 $N_s$  = sample size (i.e., total number of respondents surveyed)

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

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

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRESENTATION OF RESULTS IN THE REPORT**

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

- Closed-ended questions have an answer set from which to choose.
- Single or multiple response questions: Some questions allow only a single response, while other questions allow respondents to give more than one response or choose all that apply. Those that allow more than a single response are indicated on the graphs with the label, "Multiple Responses Allowed."
- Scaled questions: Many closed-ended questions (but not all) are in a scale, such as excellent-good-fair-poor.
- Series questions: Many questions are part of a series, and the results are primarily intended to be examined relative to the other questions in that series (although results of the questions individually can also be valuable). Typically, results of all questions in a series are shown together.

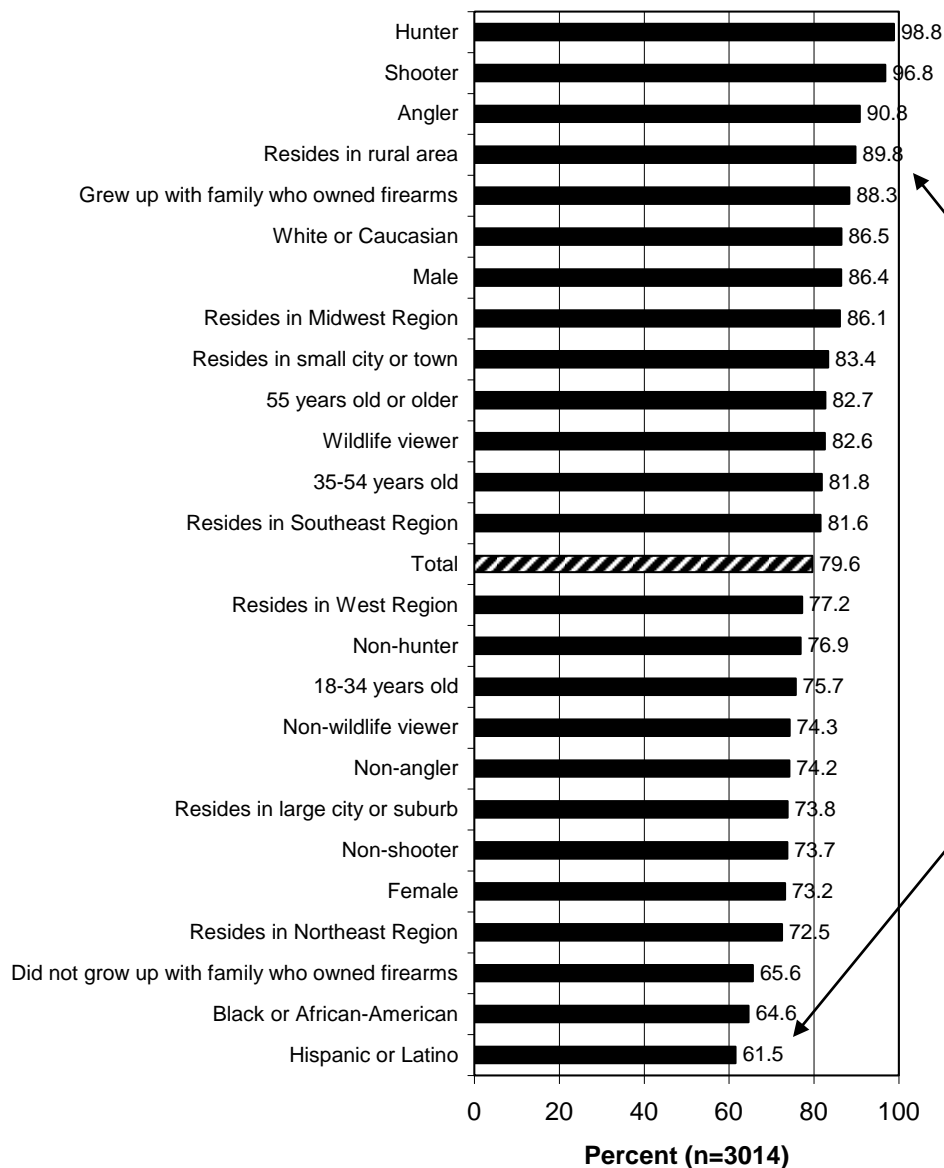
Some graphs show an average, either the mean or median (or both). The mean is simply the sum of all numbers divided by the number of respondents. Because outliers (extremely high or low numbers relative to most of the other responses) may skew the mean, the median may be shown. The median is the number at which half the sample is above and the other half is below. In other words, a median of 150 means that half the sample gave an answer of more than 150 and the other half gave an answer of less than 150.

Most graphs show results rounded to the nearest integer; however, all data are stored in decimal format, and all calculations are performed on unrounded numbers. For this reason, some results may not sum to exactly 100% because of this rounding on the graphs. Additionally, rounding may cause apparent discrepancies of 1 percentage point between the graphs and the reported results of combined responses (e.g., when "strongly approve" and "moderately approve" are summed to determine the total percentage of approval).

## DEMOGRAPHIC CORRELATION GRAPHS AND HOW TO INTERPRET THEM

Special graphs that show many demographic variables as they relate to a single question are included in this report. As shown in the example below, the graph shows the overall results regarding the percentage who approve of hunting in the striped bar, as well as the percentage of specific demographic groups that approve of hunting in the solid bars. All groups above the striped bar have a higher percentage approving of hunting—in other words, these groups have a higher likelihood of approving of hunting. On the other hand, all groups below the striped bar have a lower percentage approving of hunting.

### Percent of each of the following groups who approve of legal hunting:



This graph looks at approval of legal hunting. The striped bar shows that 79.6% of adult Americans approve of hunting.

Rural residents are more likely than the general population overall to approve of hunting, with 89.8% who do so.

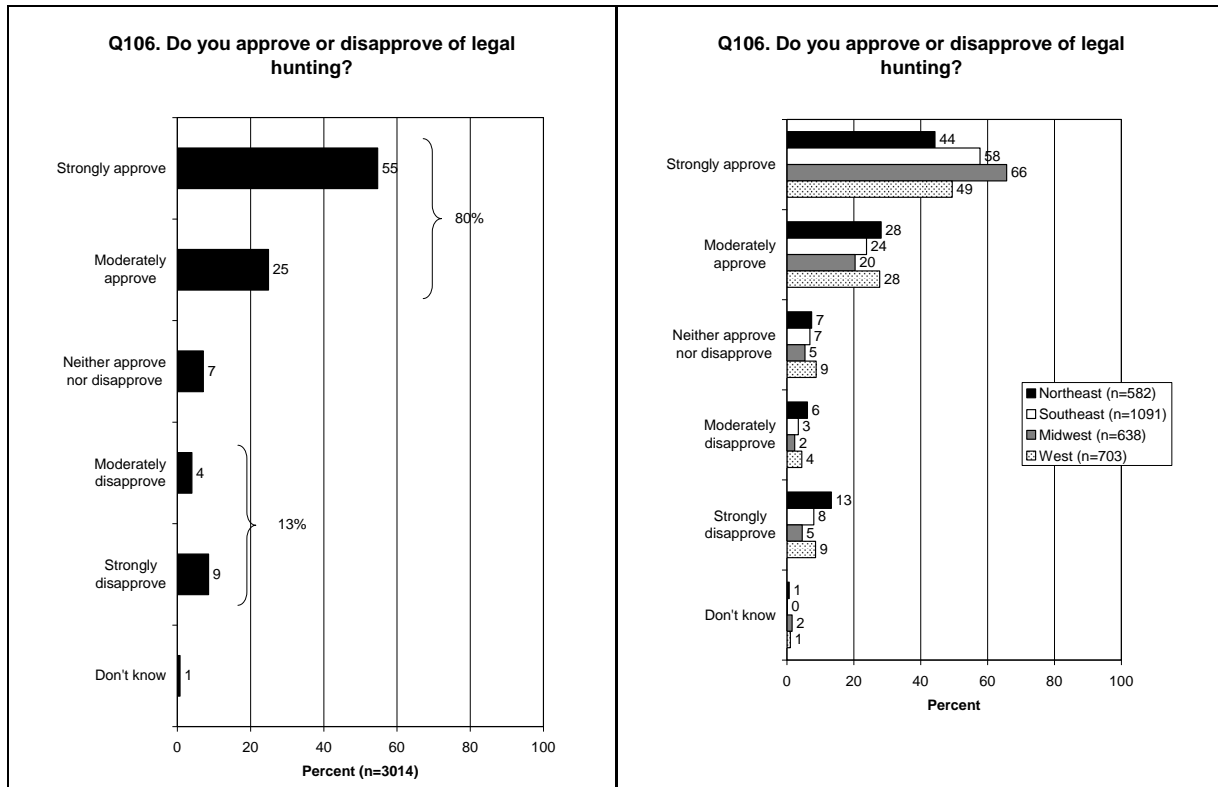
Conversely, those groups below the striped bar are less likely to approve of hunting than are residents overall.

For instance, Hispanic residents (61.5%) are less likely to approve of hunting than are residents overall.

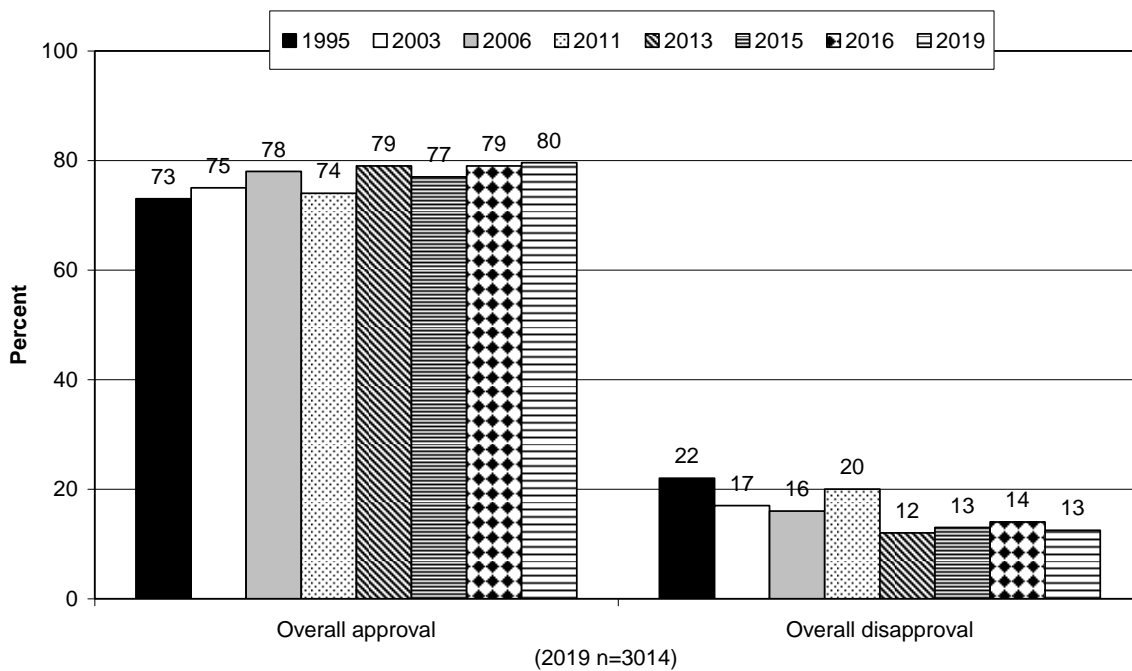
## ATTITUDES TOWARD HUNTING IN THE UNITED STATES

### ATTITUDES TOWARD HUNTING IN GENERAL

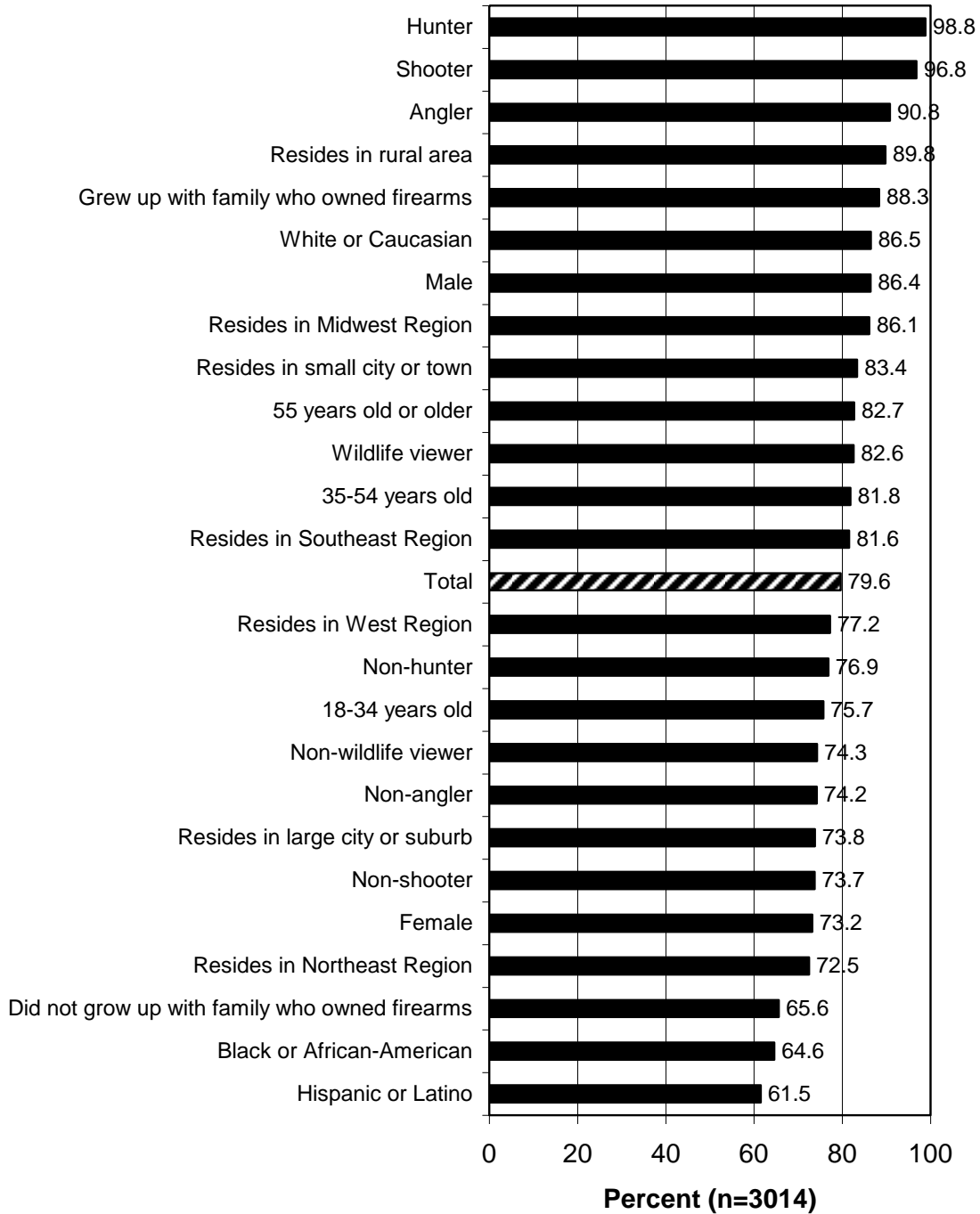
- Overall, 4 out of 5 Americans approve of hunting when the activity is asked about in a general sense. (Note that the survey asked about *legal* hunting so that poaching or other illegal activities would not be considered in the responses.)
  - Differences in approval rates can be observed between the geographic regions, as well. Regional crosstabulations show that approval of hunting is highest in the Midwest (66% of residents *strongly* approve and 20% *moderately* approve, for an overall approval of 86%) and lowest in the Northeast (72% overall approval).
  - Americans' level of approval for hunting has remained generally consistent over the past quarter century, with a gradual uptick since 1995 when approval was at 73% (in fact, the current approval level of 80% is the highest yet among the study years).
  - Sport shooters and anglers are more likely to approve of hunting than the average American. Other groups associated with higher levels of approval of hunting are those who live in rural areas, those who grew up in a family that owned firearms, white residents, and male residents. On the other hand, groups associated with lower levels of approval of hunting include Hispanic residents, those who did *not* grow up in a family that owned firearms, black residents, Northeast region residents, and female residents. (Note that the demographic correlation graphs of those who approve and disapprove of hunting are largely the inverse of each other; however, they are not quite mirror images due to neutral and "don't know/refused" responses.)
  
- The survey also asked respondents, regardless of their personal opinion of hunting, if they agree or disagree that it is acceptable for other people to hunt provided they do so legally and in accordance with hunting laws and regulations. Most Americans (92%) agree that it is acceptable, compared to only 6% who disagree. Given that the initial question showed that 13% of Americans disapprove of hunting, this follow-up question suggests that just over half of those who disapprove nonetheless feel that others should have the right to hunt.
  - There was little variation between the regions on overall agreement, although *strong* agreement was highest in the Midwest and Southeast regions.
  - There was a slight decrease in overall agreement compared to 2011.



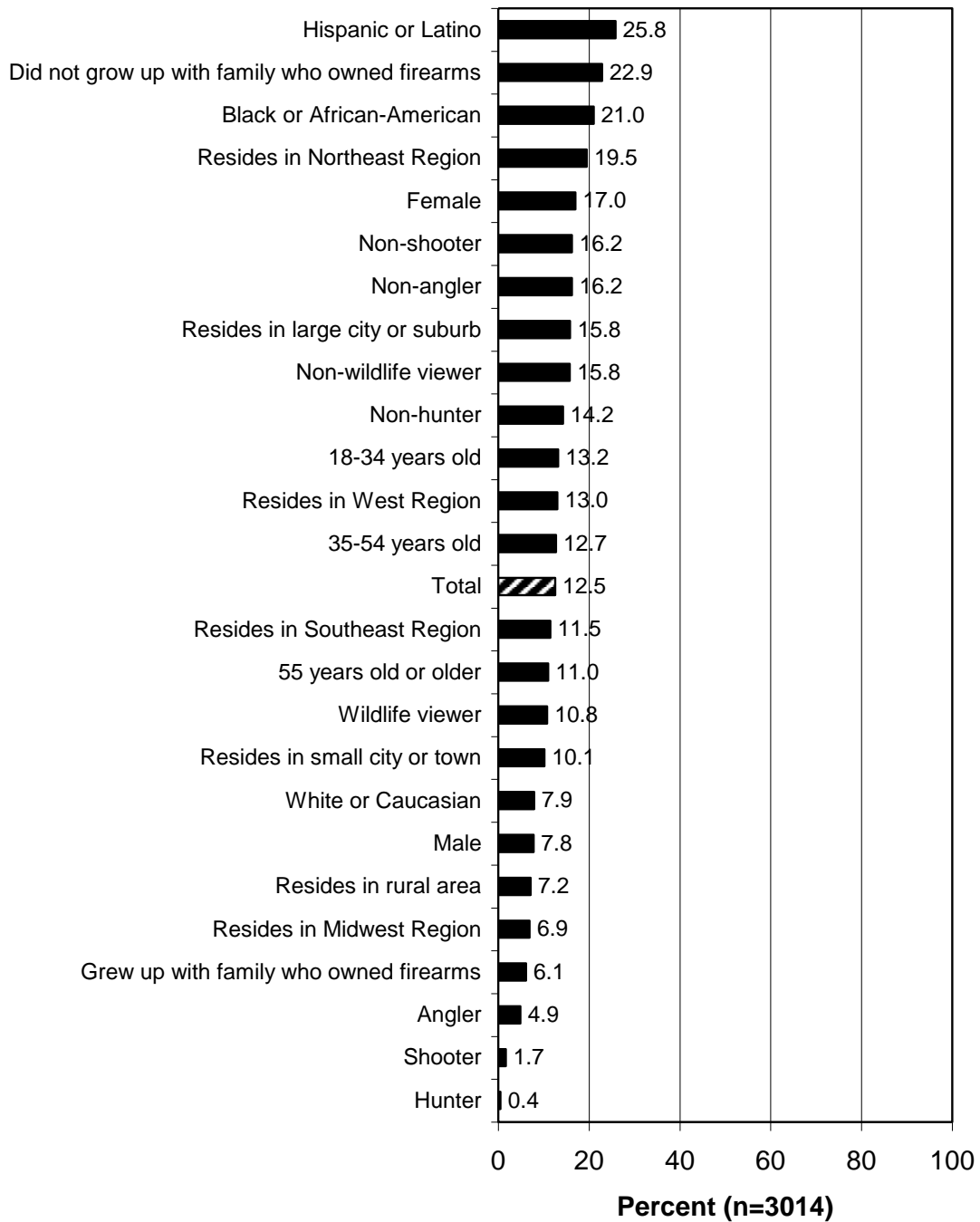
**Q106. Do you approve or disapprove of legal hunting?**



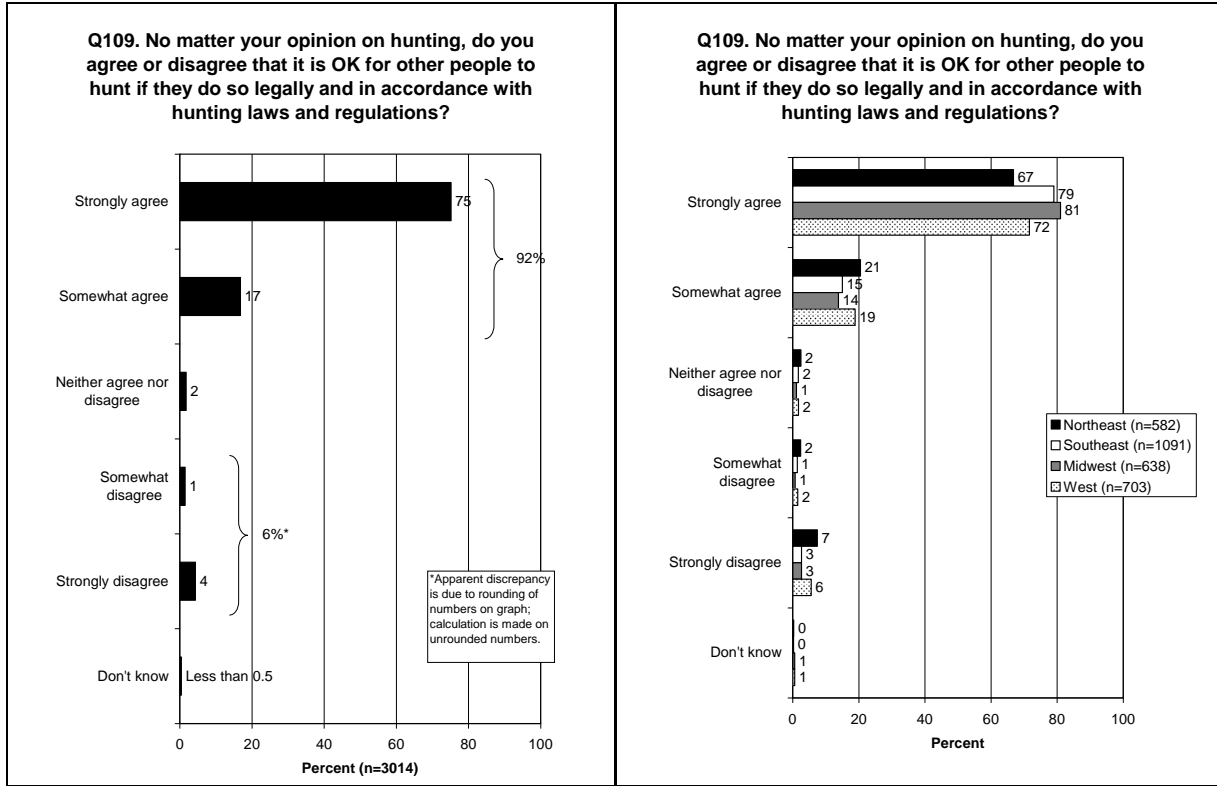
**Percent of each of the following groups who approve of legal hunting:**



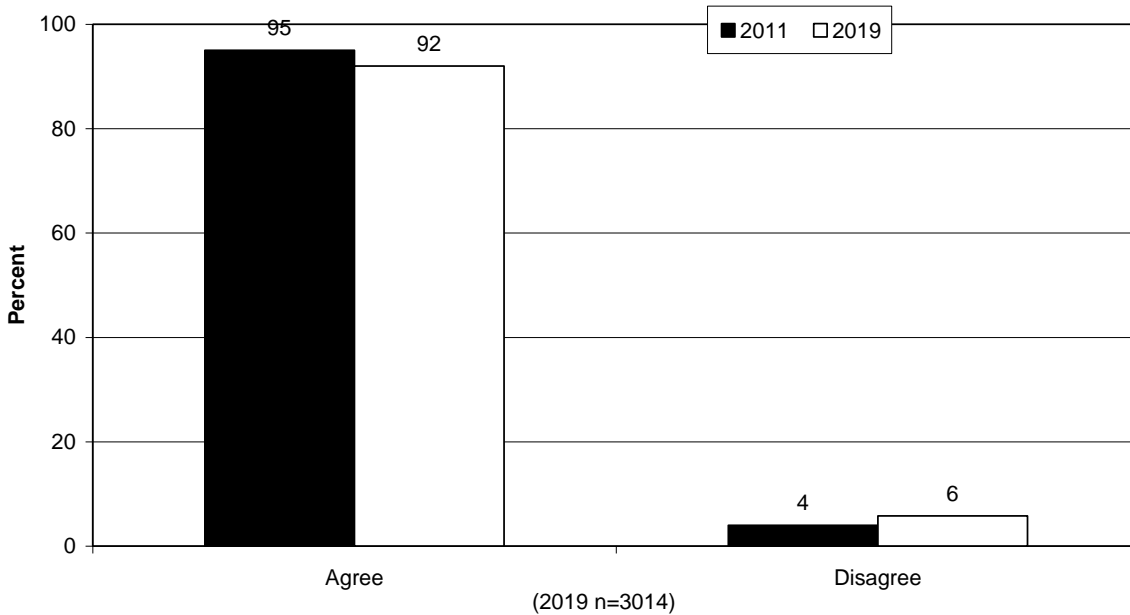
**Percent of each of the following groups who disapprove of legal hunting:**







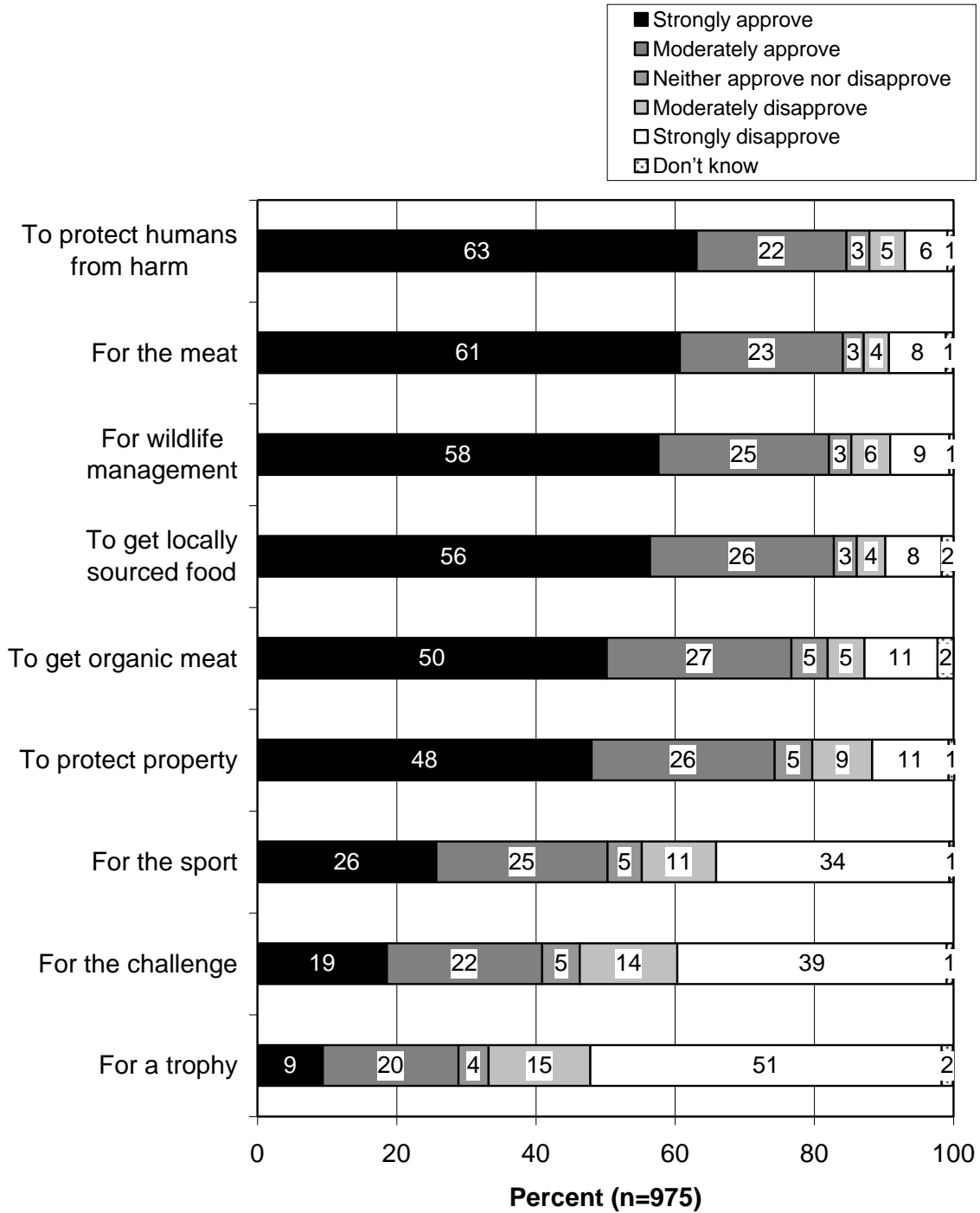
**Q109. No matter your opinion on hunting, do you agree or disagree that it is OK for other people to hunt if they do so legally and in accordance with hunting laws and regulations?**



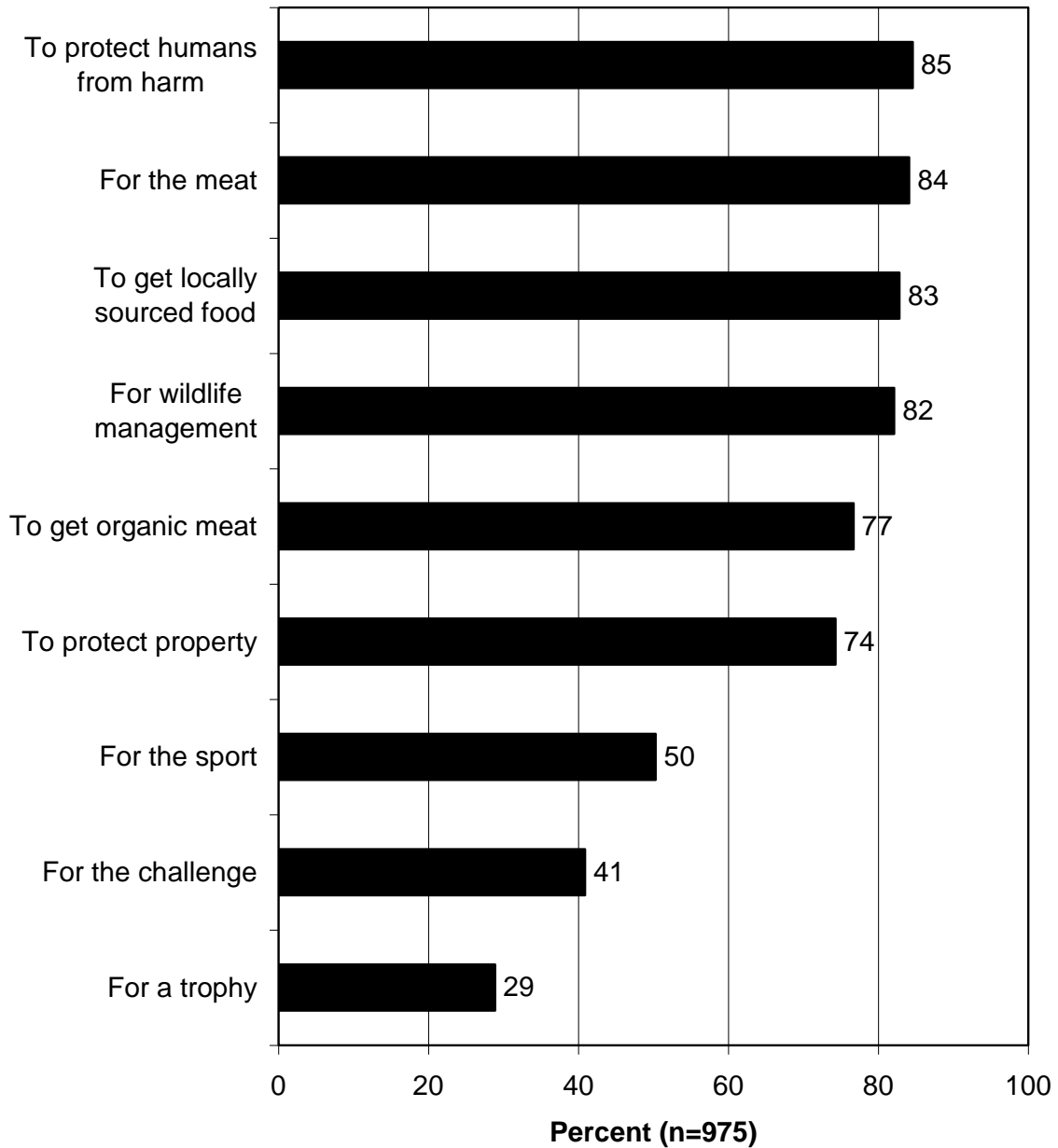
## MOTIVATIONS FOR HUNTING

- Approval of hunting varies considerably depending on the stated reasons for hunting. When the reasons are utilitarian in nature—for meat, to protect humans or property, for wildlife management—approval is very high. In addition, a strong majority of Americans are supportive of hunting to obtain organic meat or locally sourced food. On the other hand, approval of hunting drops substantially when the reasons are for the sport, the challenge, or a trophy. The motivations for hunting asked about in the survey and the percentages who approve of each are listed below, in descending order of *strong* approval:
  - To protect humans from harm (85% approve; 63% *strongly* approve)
  - For the meat (84% approve; 61% *strongly* approve)
  - For wildlife management (82% approve; 58% *strongly* approve)
  - To get locally sourced food (83% approve; 56% *strongly* approve)
  - To get organic meat (77% approve; 50% *strongly* approve)
  - To protect property (74% approve; 48% *strongly* approve)
  - For the sport (50% approve; 26% *strongly* approve)
  - For the challenge (41% approve; 19% *strongly* approve)
  - For a trophy (29% approve; 9% *strongly* approve)
    - The nationwide results for this series of motivations are shown together on one graph for comparison. This is followed by graphs showing the series results within each region, as well as the regional crosstabulation for each motivation individually.
    - The trend graph shows that the percentages who approve of hunting for the sport, for the challenge, and for a trophy have returned to 2006 levels after showing sharp declines in 2016.
- The preceding series showed a high level of approval of hunting for the meat. The survey also asked respondents if they had eaten wild-caught game meat, such as venison or deer, wild turkey, boar, buffalo, or duck in the 12 months prior to the survey; less than half of Americans (43%) had done so.
  - Residents of the Midwest are the most likely to have done so: at 55%, the Midwest is the only region in which a majority of its residents have eaten game meat.

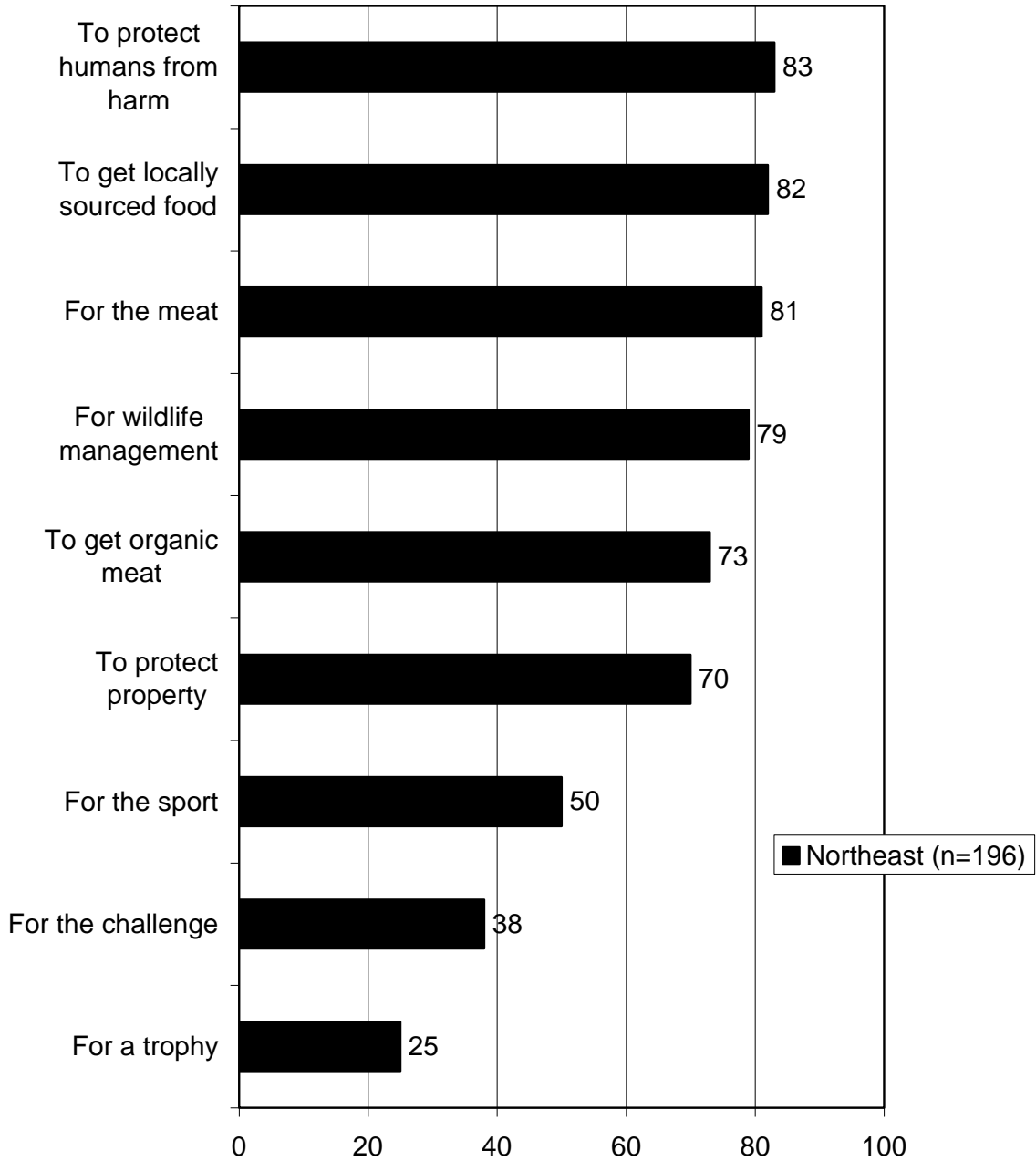
**Percent that [approve / disapprove] of hunting for each of the following reasons:**



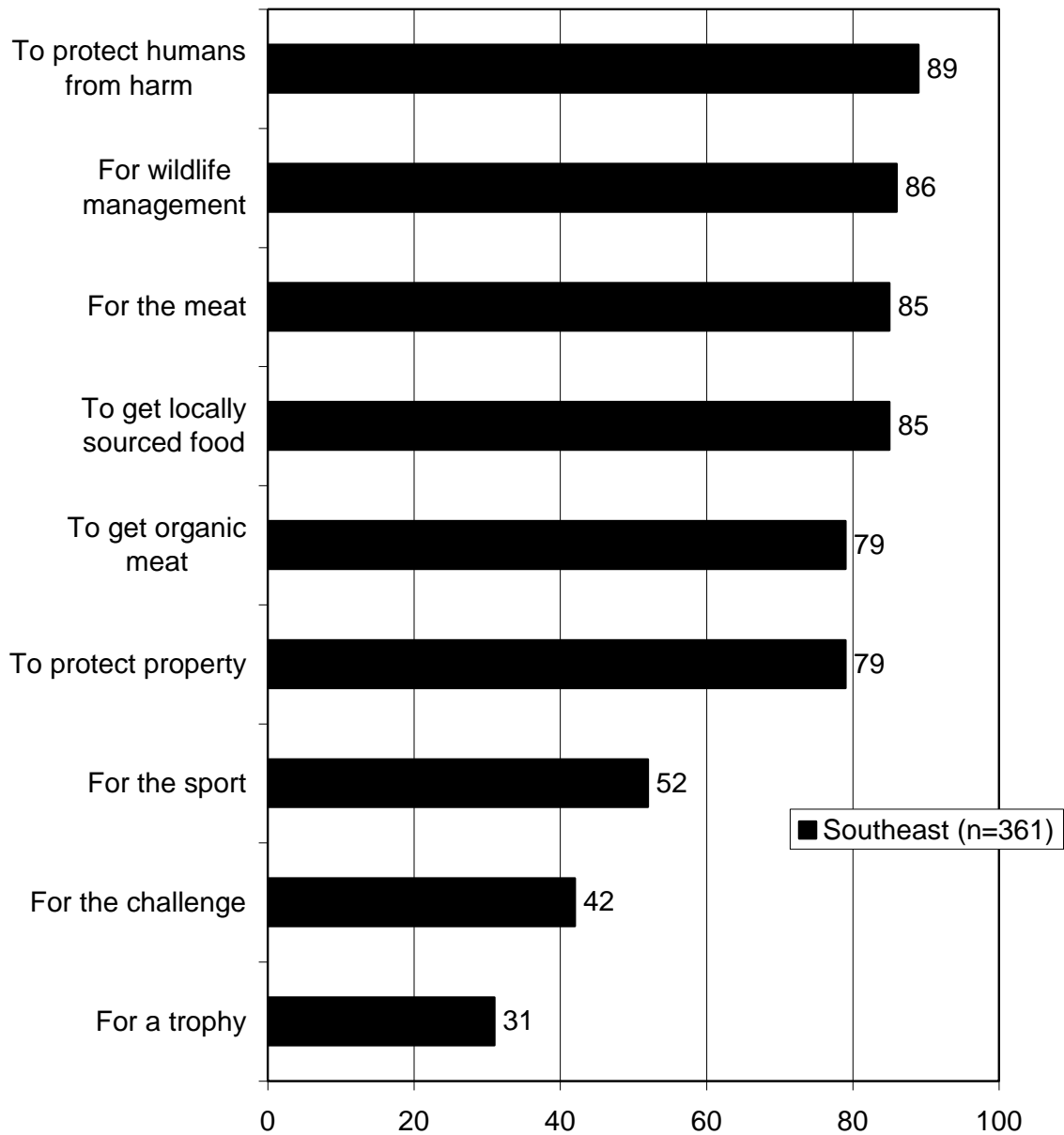
**Percent that strongly approve or moderately approve of hunting for each of the following reasons:**



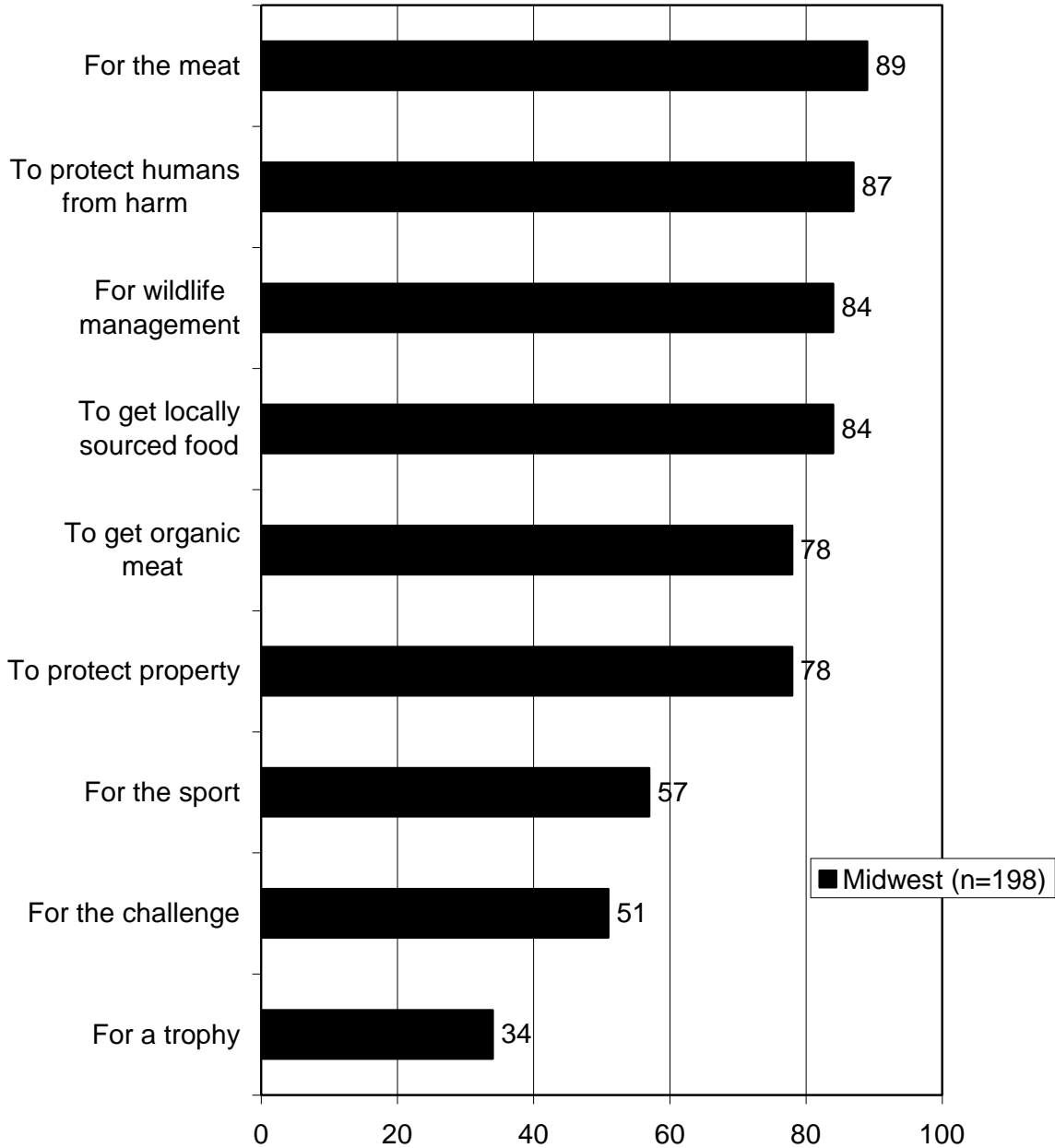
**Percent that strongly or moderately approve of hunting for each of the following reasons:  
(Northeast Region)**



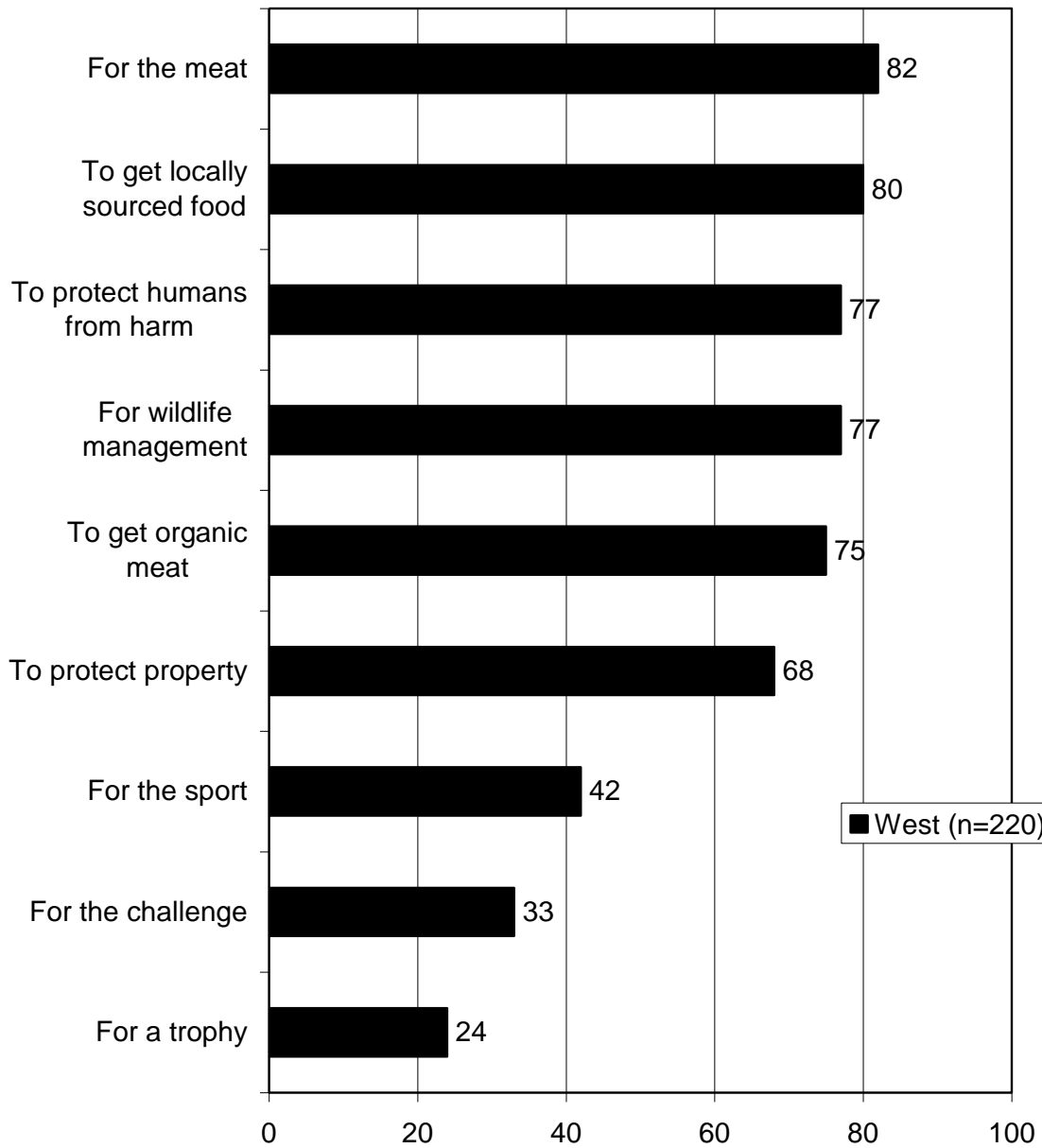
**Percent that strongly or moderately approve of  
hunting for each of the following reasons:  
(Southeast Region)**



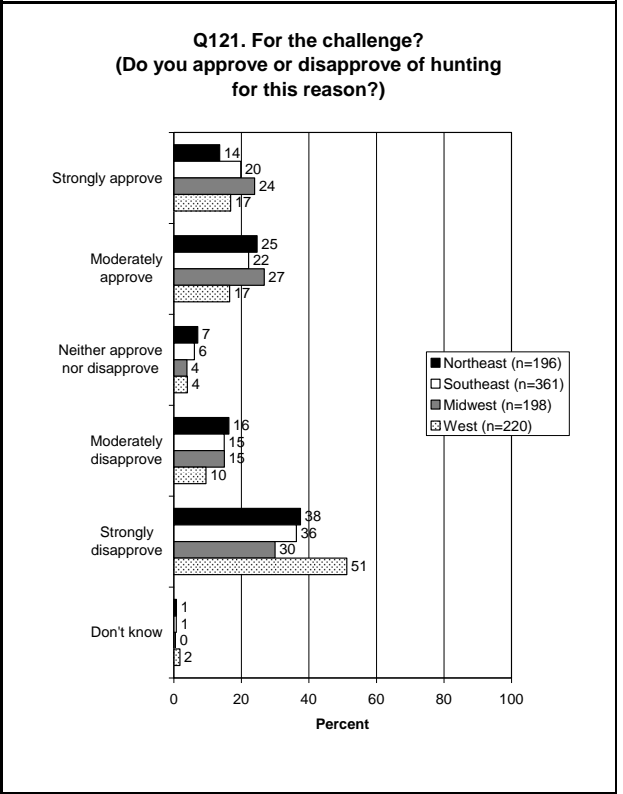
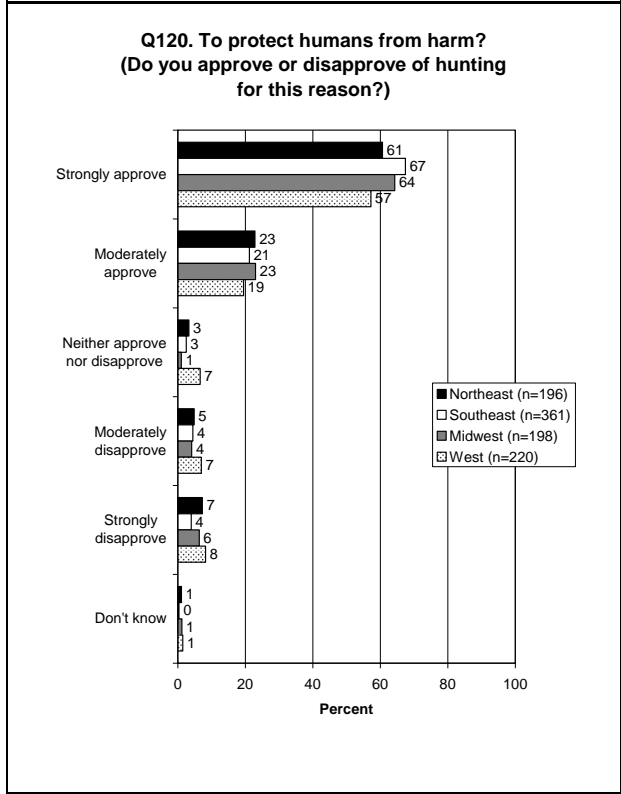
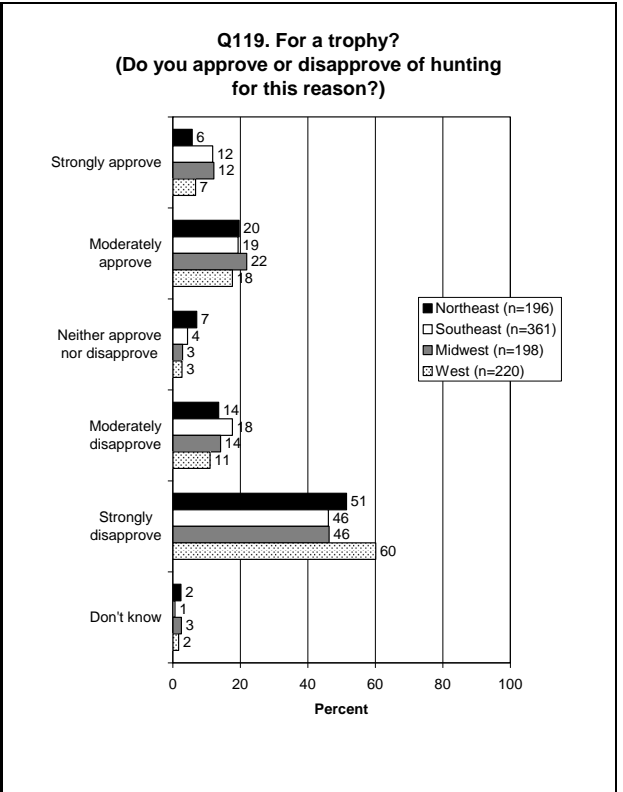
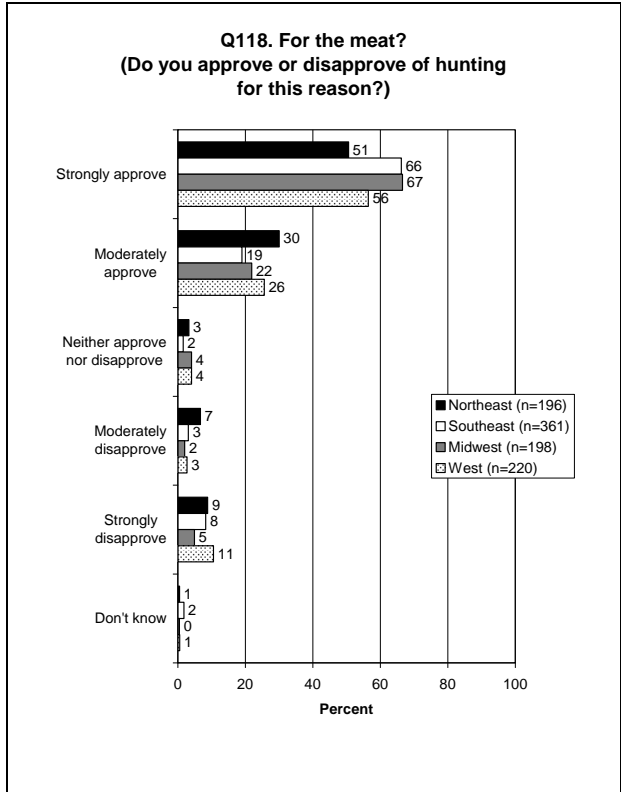
**Percent that strongly or moderately approve of hunting for each of the following reasons:  
(Midwest Region)**

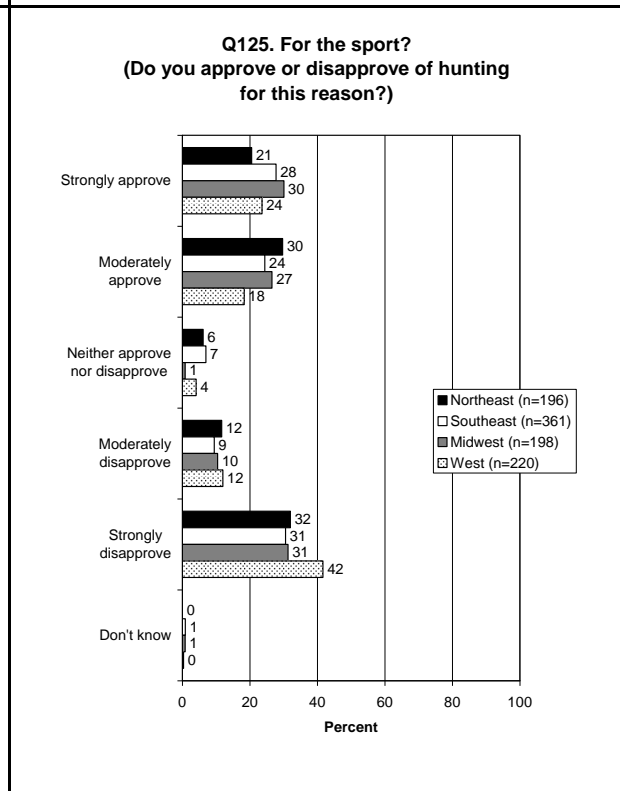
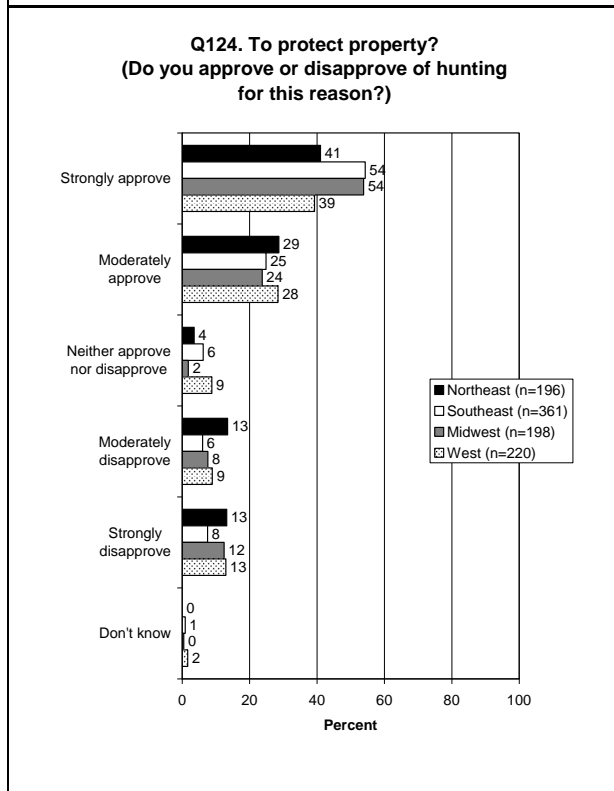
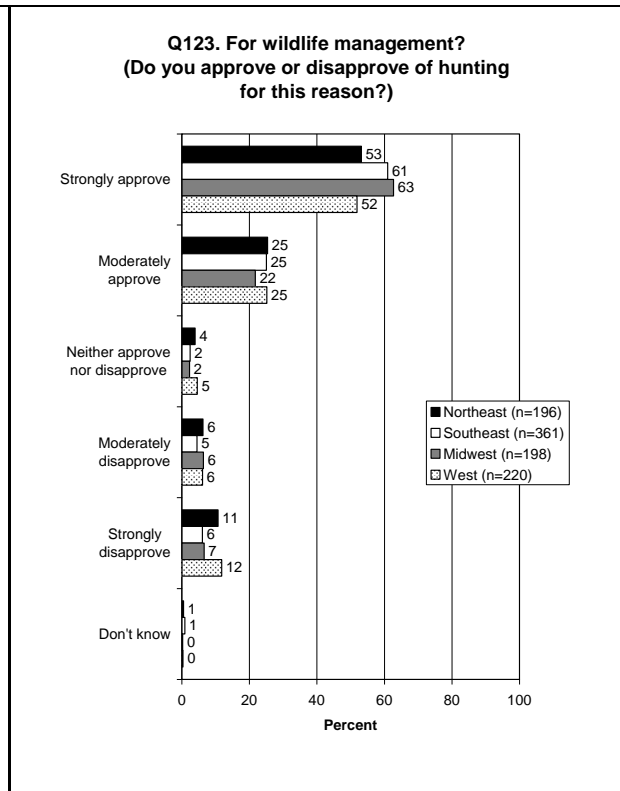
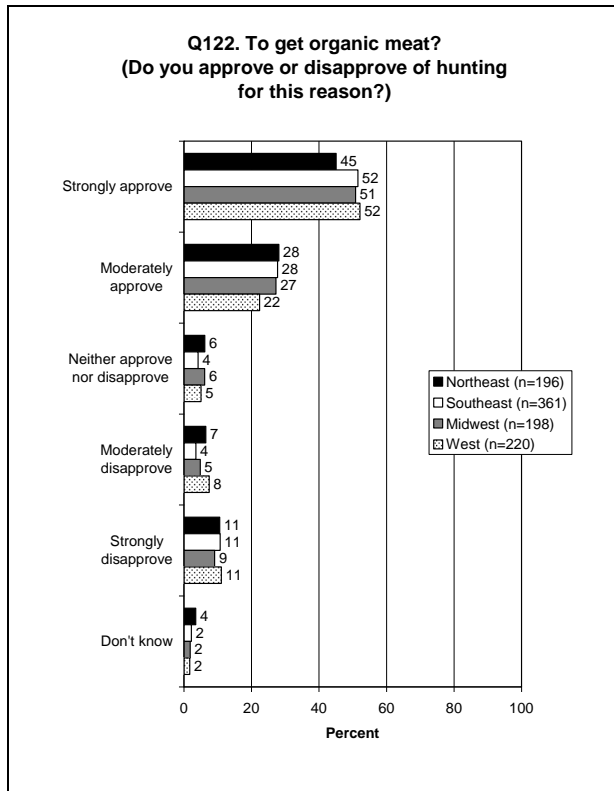


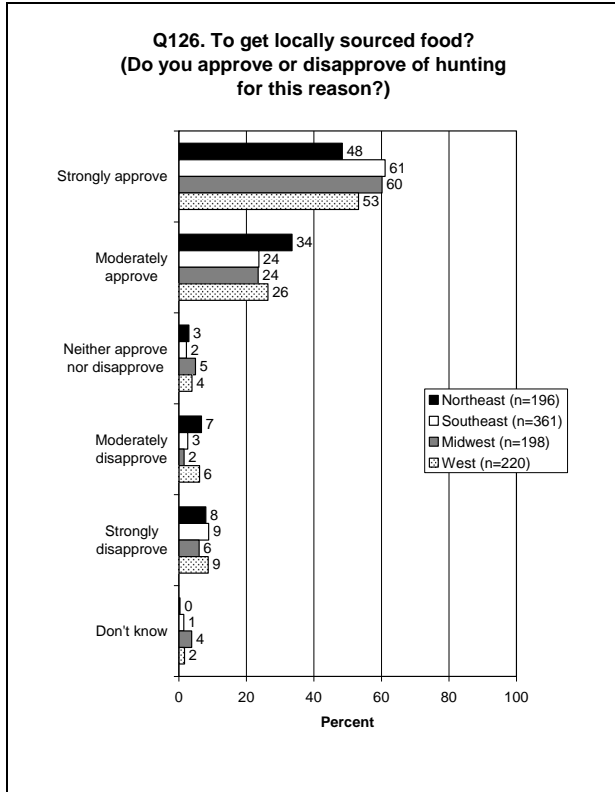
**Percent that strongly or moderately approve of  
hunting for each of the following reasons:  
(West Region)**



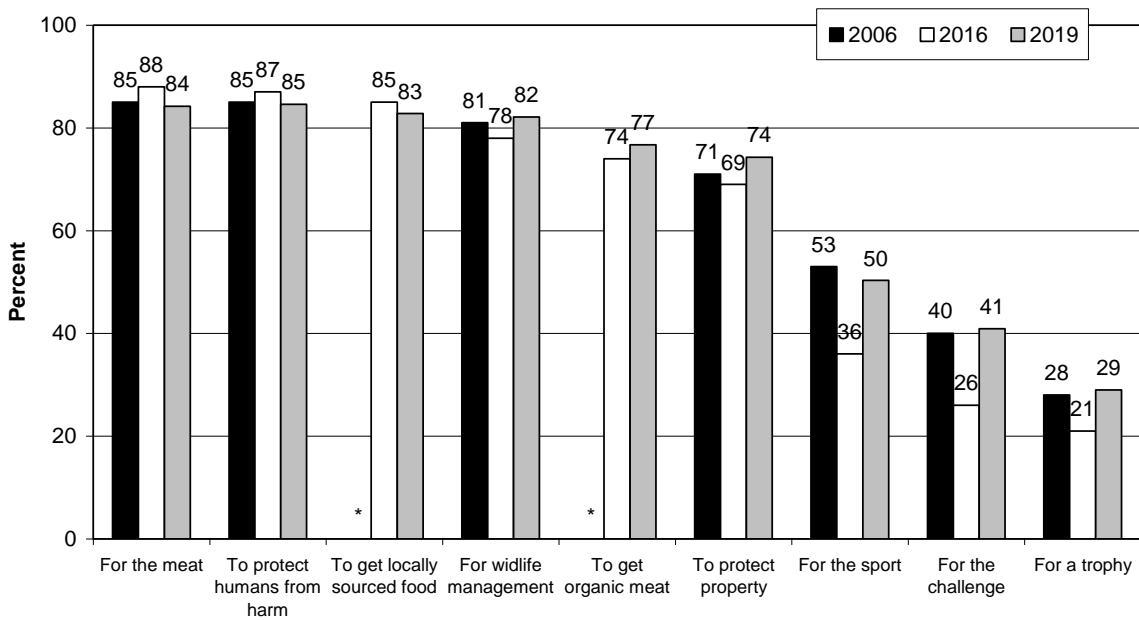








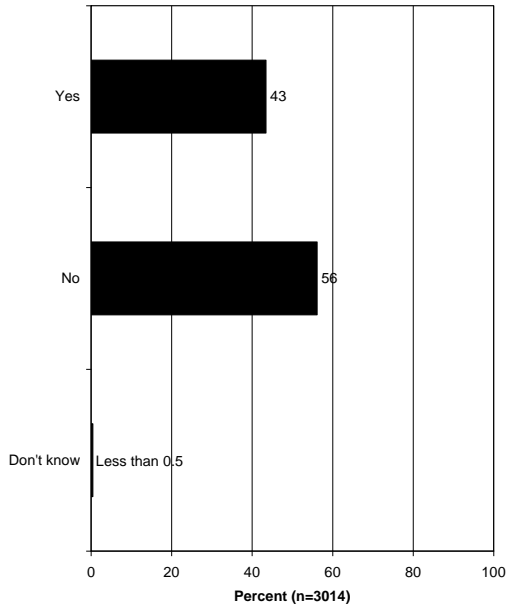
**Q118-125. Percent who strongly or moderately approve of hunting for the following motivations:**



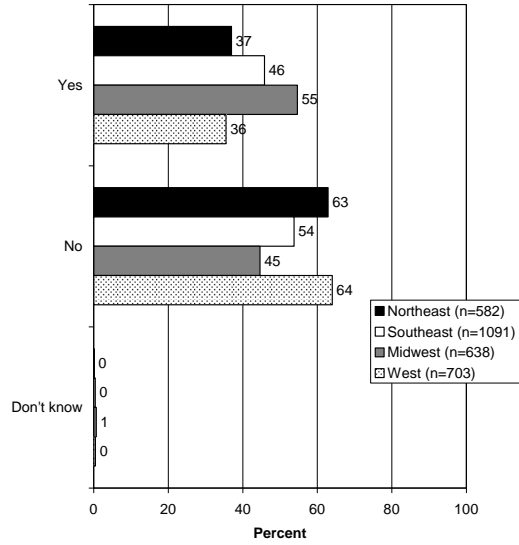
\*Motivation not asked about in 2006 survey

(2019 n=3014)

**Q111. Not including meat from farm-raised sources, ordered at restaurants, or bought at stores, have you eaten any wild-caught game meat, such as venison or deer, wild turkey, boar, buffalo, or duck, in the past 12 months?**



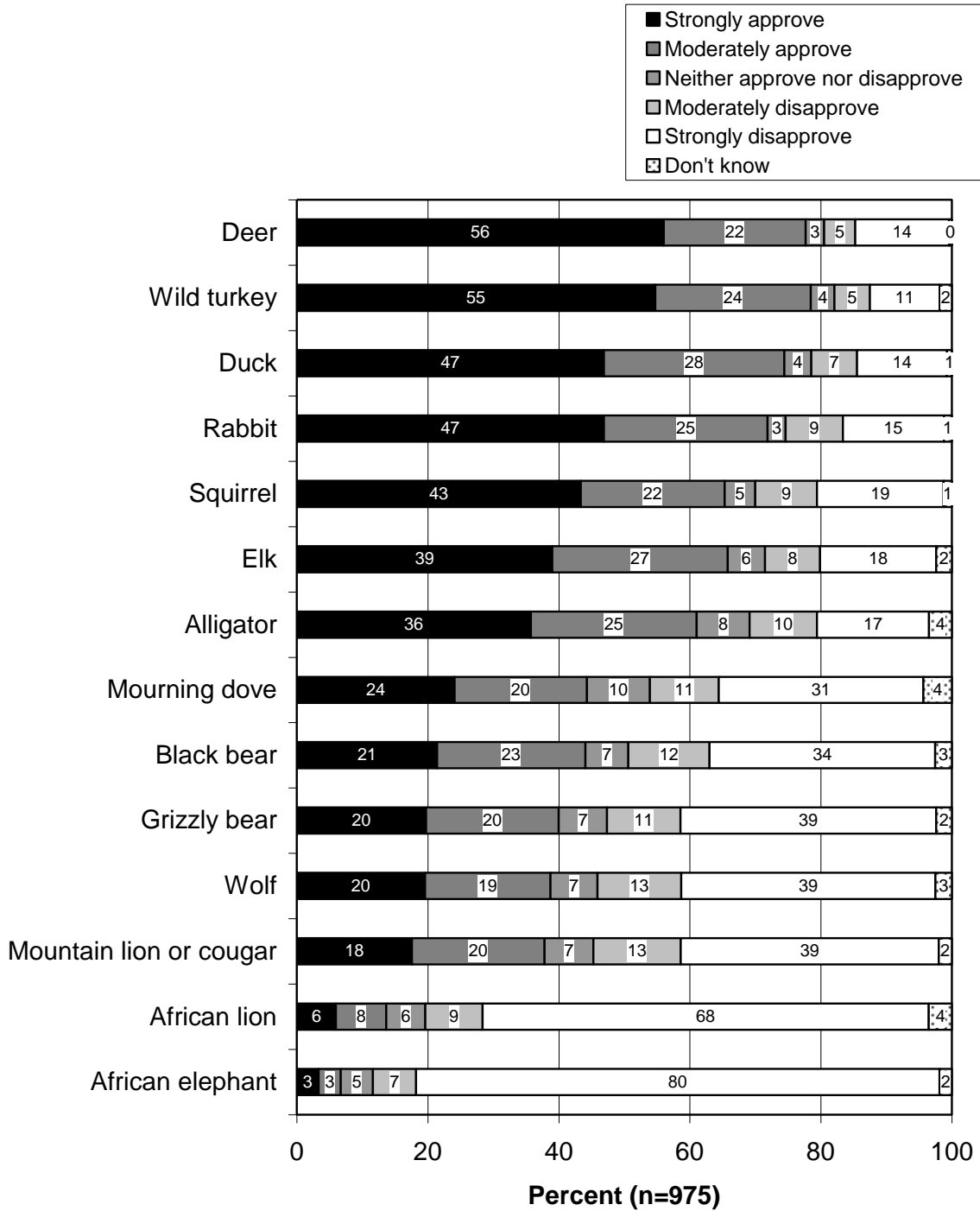
**Q111. Not including meat from farm-raised sources, ordered at restaurants, or bought at stores, have you eaten any wild-caught game meat, such as venison or deer, wild turkey, boar, buffalo, or duck, in the past 12 months?**



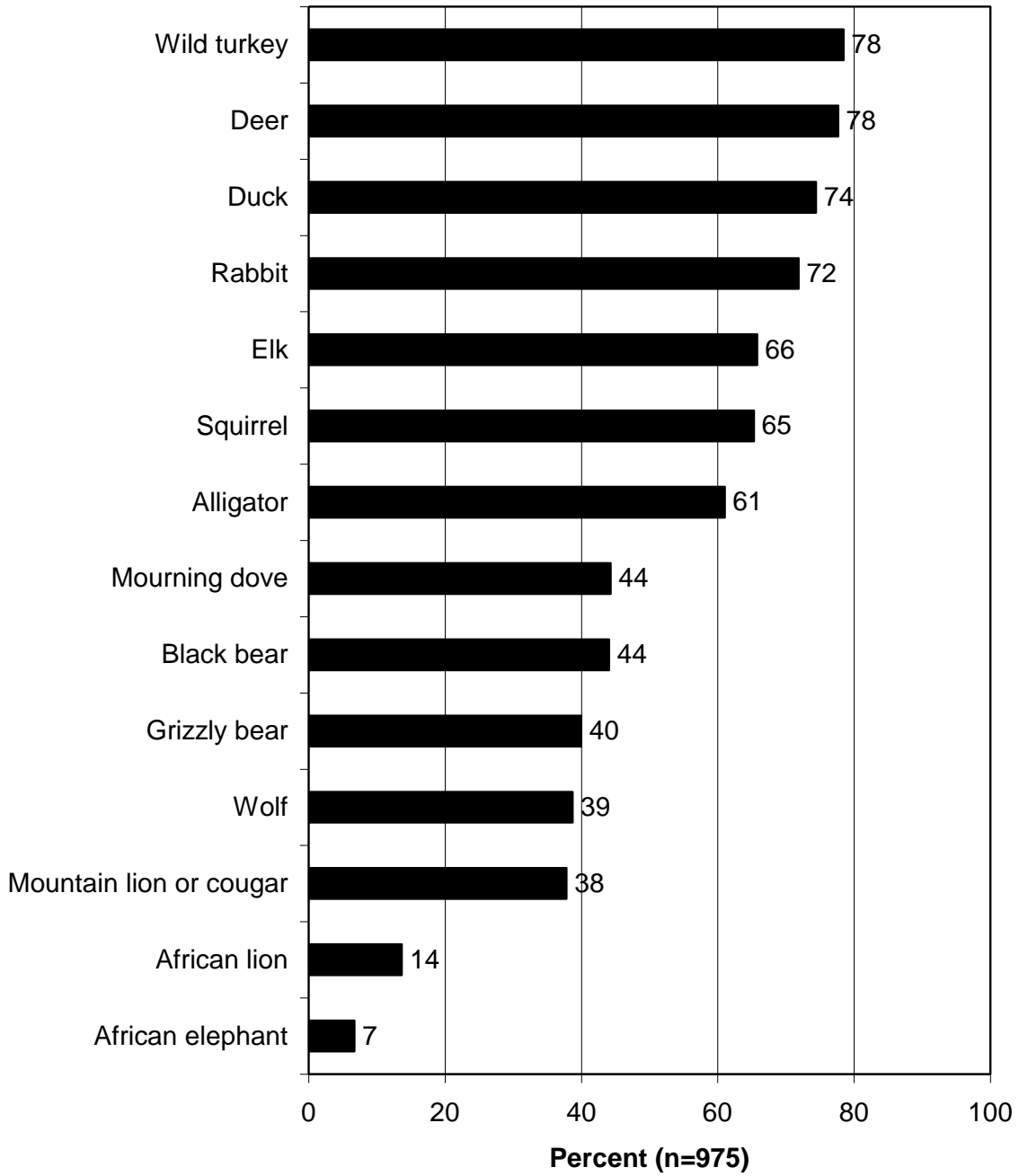
## ATTITUDES TOWARD HUNTING DIFFERENT SPECIES

- Attitudes toward hunting vary according to the species being hunted. This study, consistent with others, shows that hunting of ungulates, such as deer and elk, or waterfowl is more acceptable than is hunting of predators, such as bear, mountain lions, or wolves. Meanwhile, less than a fifth of Americans approve of hunting for exotic species such as African lions and elephants. The species asked about in the survey and the percentages who approve of hunting each are listed below, in descending order of *strong* approval:
- Deer (78% approve; 56% *strongly* approve)
  - Wild turkey (78% approve; 55% *strongly* approve)
  - Duck (74% approve; 47% *strongly* approve)
  - Rabbit (72% approve; 47% *strongly* approve)
  - Squirrel (65% approve; 43% *strongly* approve)
  - Elk (66% approve; 39% *strongly* approve)
  - Alligator (61% approve; 36% *strongly* approve)
  - Mourning dove (44% approve; 24% *strongly* approve)
  - Black bear (44% approve; 21% *strongly* approve)
  - Grizzly bear (40% approve; 20% *strongly* approve)
  - Wolf (39% approve; 20% *strongly* approve)
  - Mountain lion or cougar (38% approve; 18% *strongly* approve)
  - African lion (14% approve; 6% *strongly* approve)
  - African elephant (7% approve; 3% *strongly* approve)
    - The nationwide results for this series of species are shown together on one graph, followed by graphs showing the series results within each region and the regional crosstabulation for each species individually.
    - The trend graph shows that approval of hunting black bear and wild turkey has increased since 2016.
    - It is interesting to note that there is *no* species for which hunting approval is as high as it is for hunting in general. This suggests that, for some, it is easier to approve of hunting in general when specific animals are not being considered.

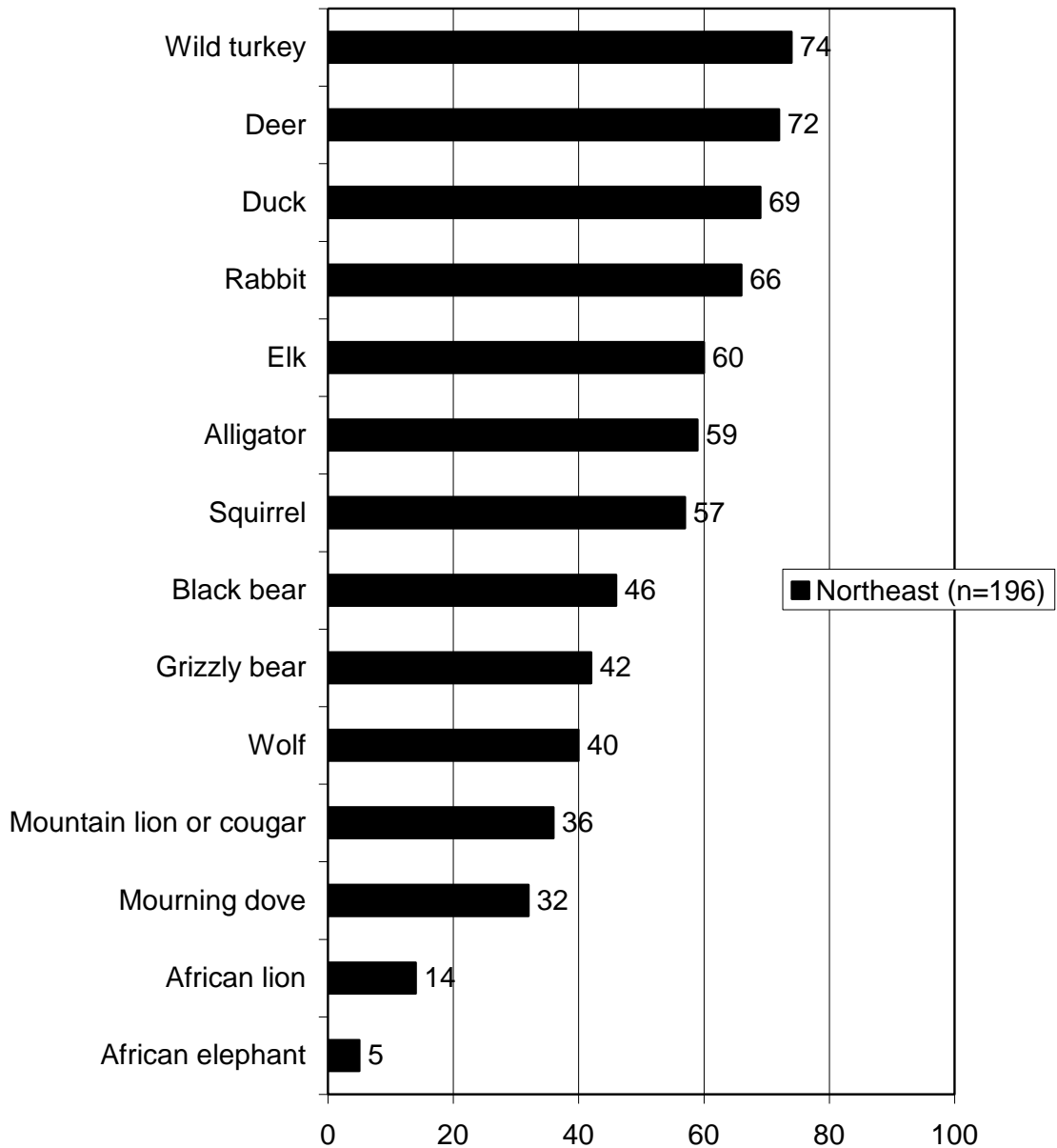
**Percent that [approve / disapprove] of hunting each of the following species:**



**Percent that strongly approve or moderately approve of hunting each of the following species:**

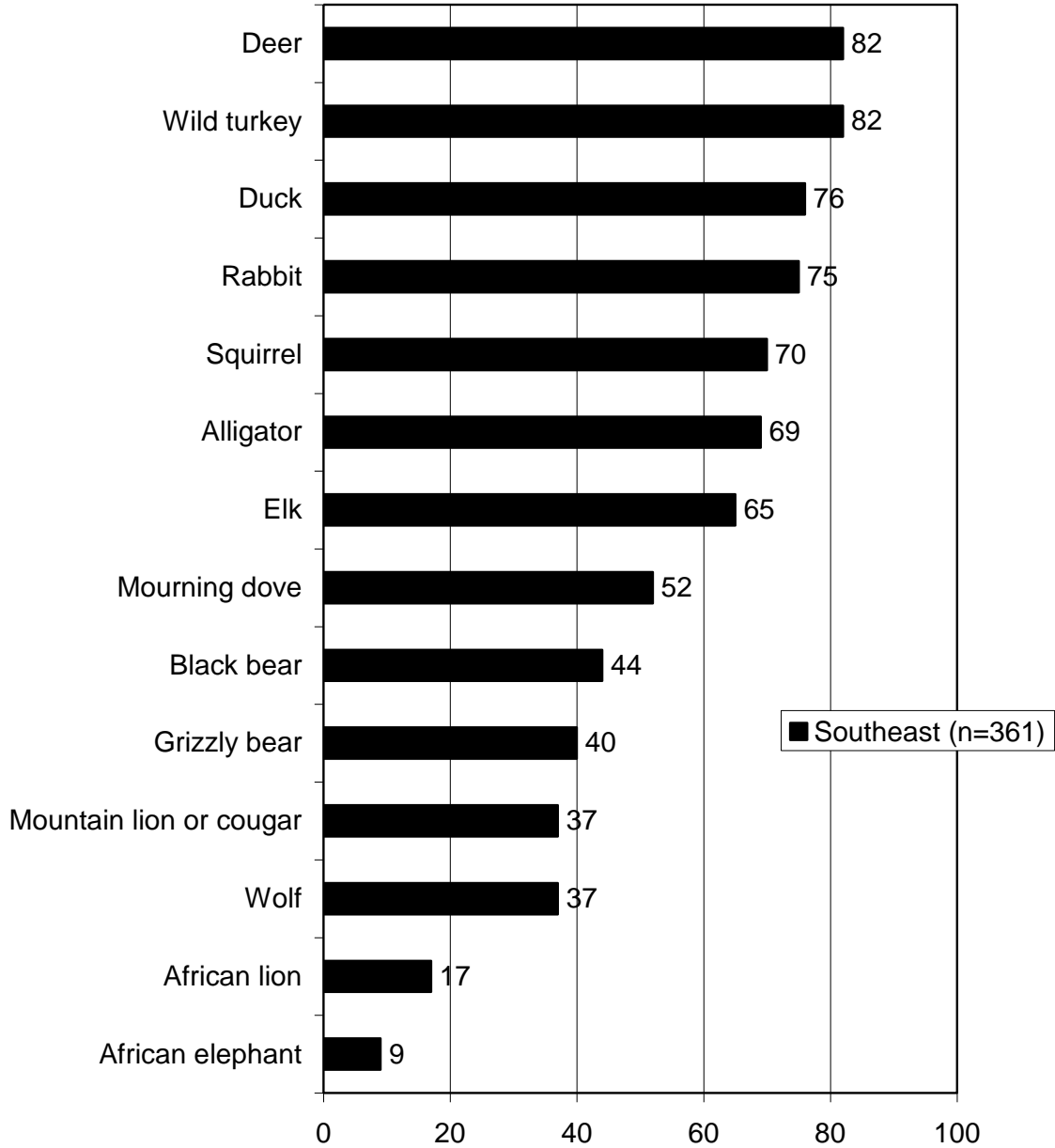


**Percent that strongly or moderately approve of  
hunting each of the following species:  
(Northeast Region)**

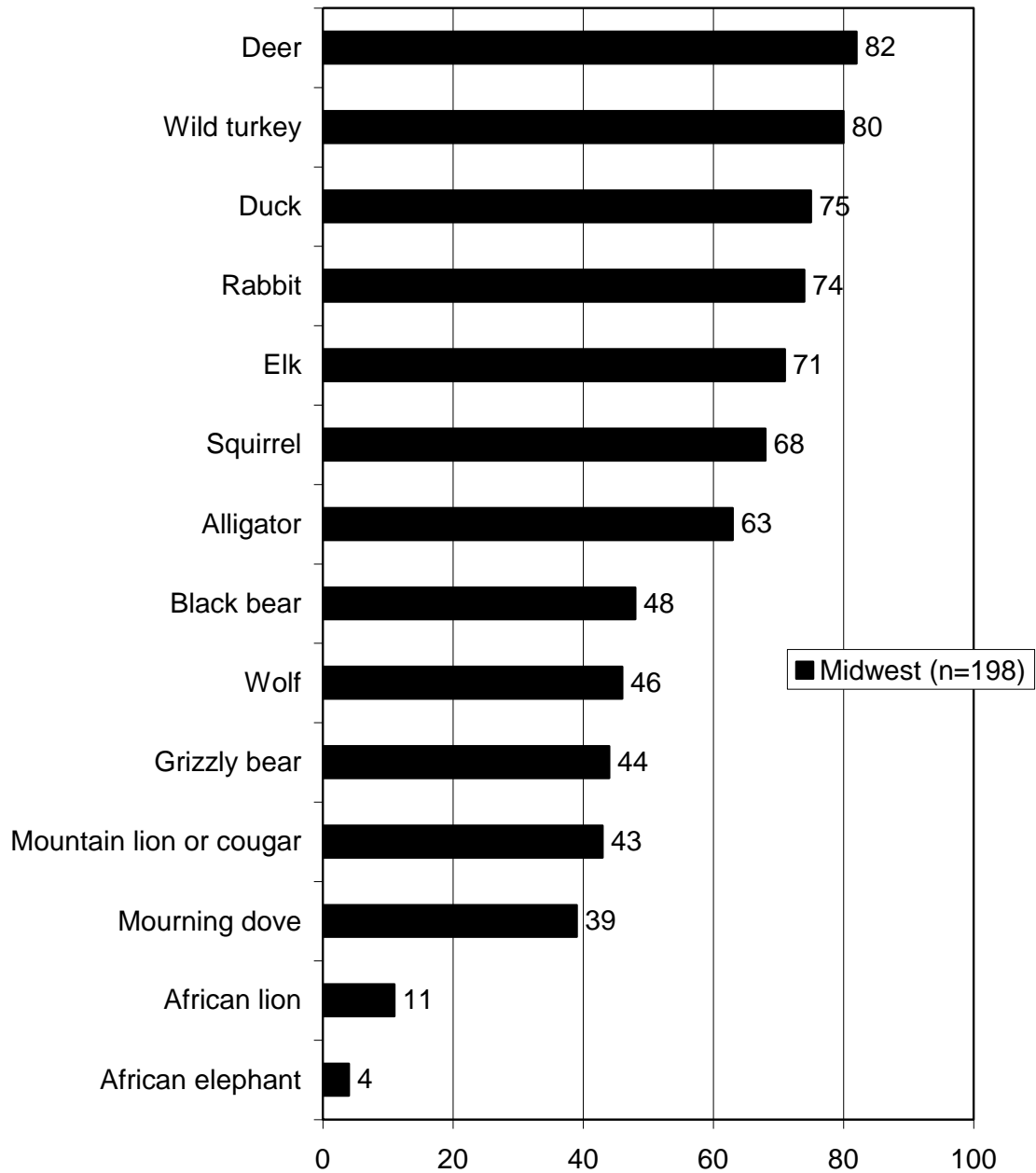




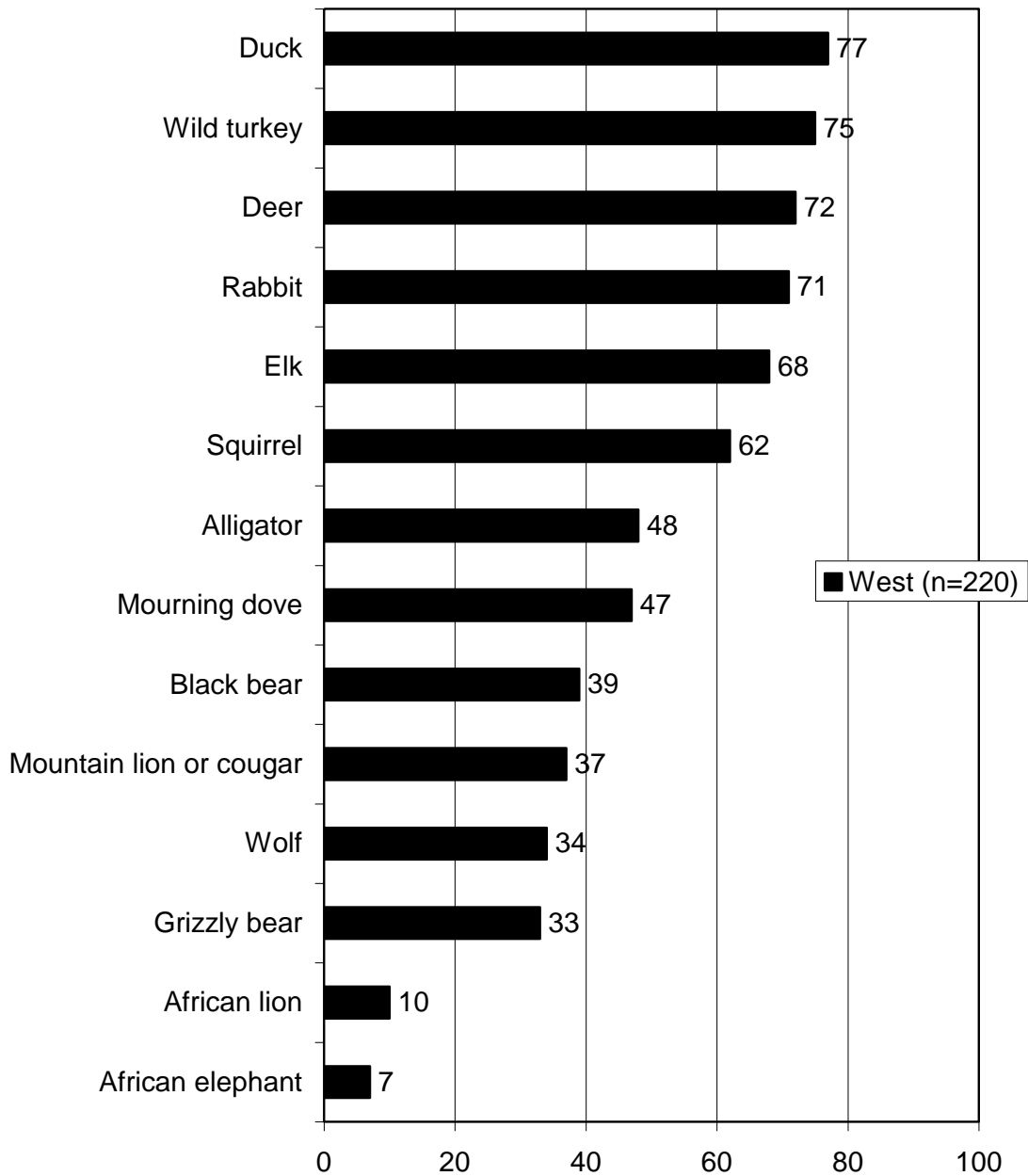
**Percent that strongly or moderately approve of hunting each of the following species:  
(Southeast Region)**

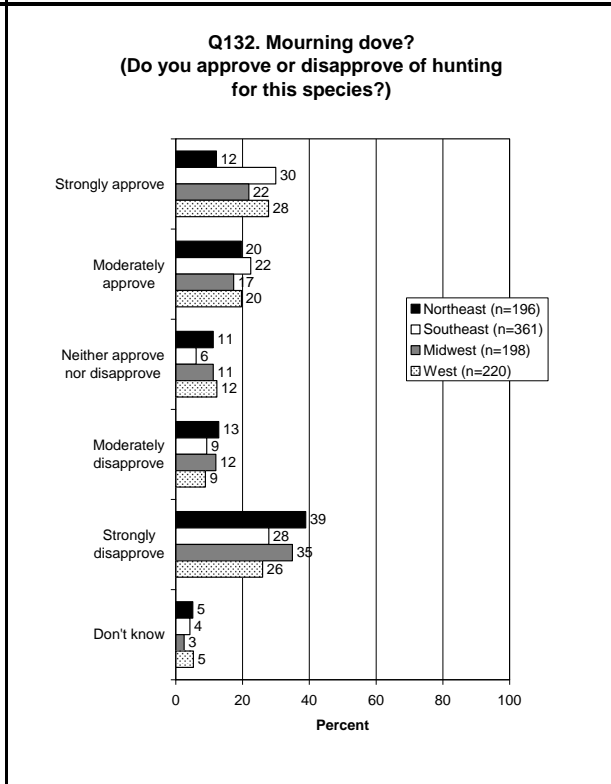
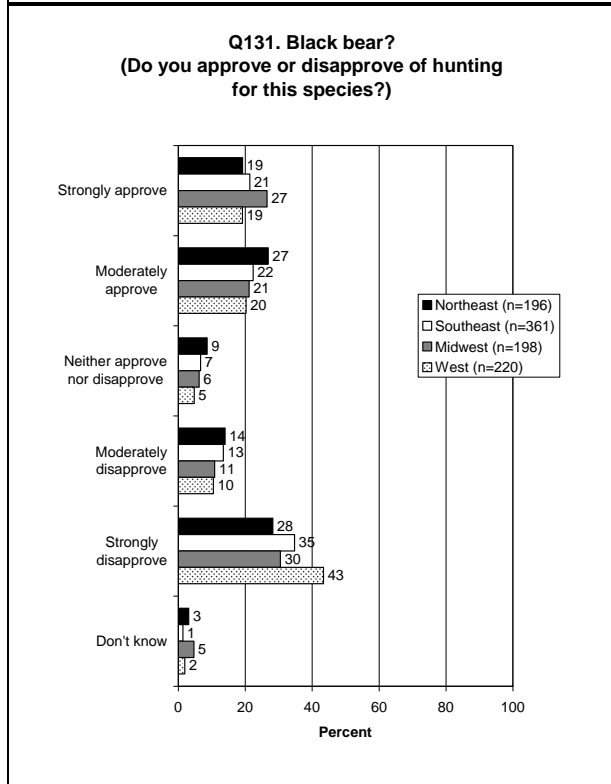
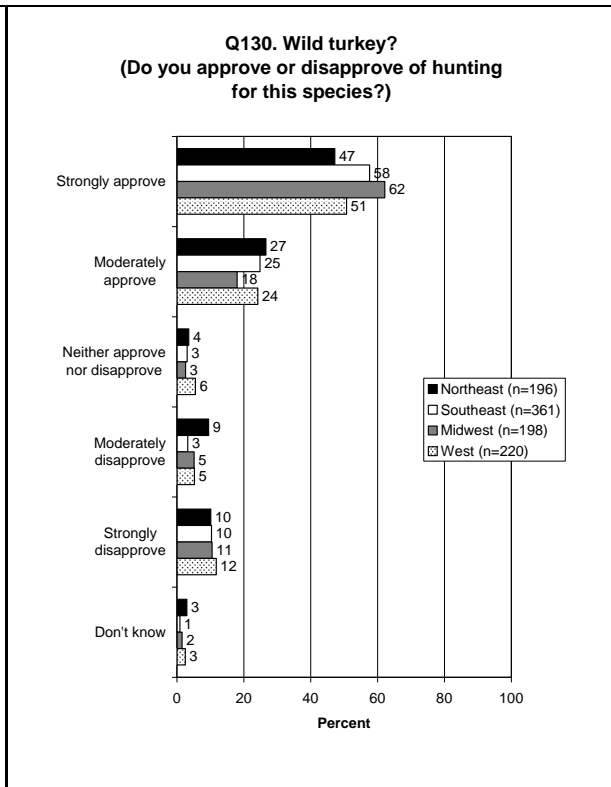
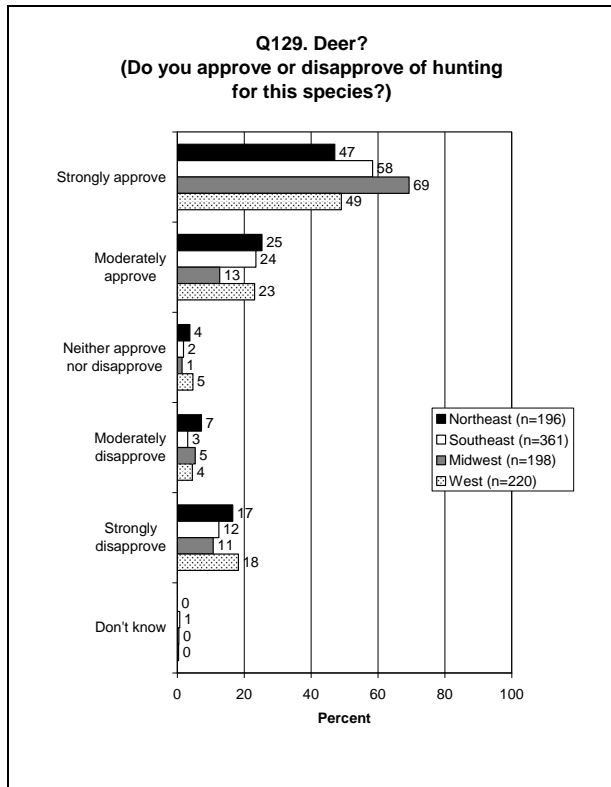


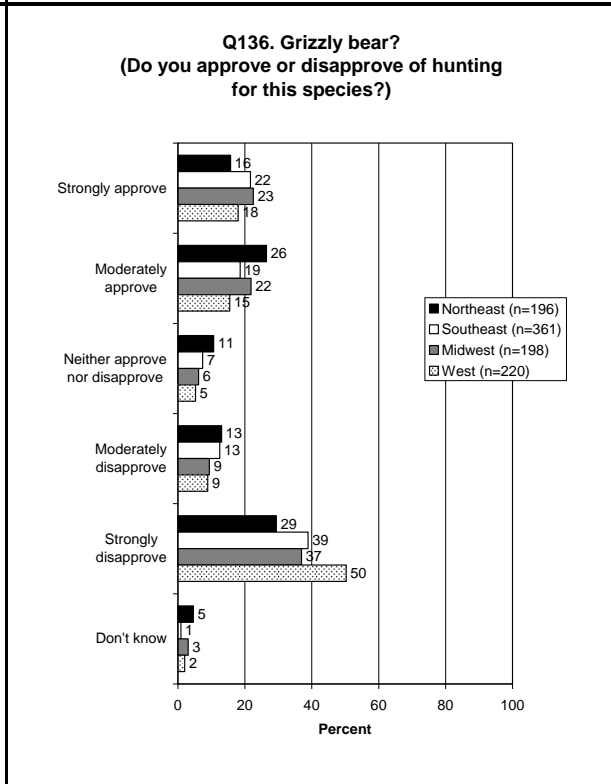
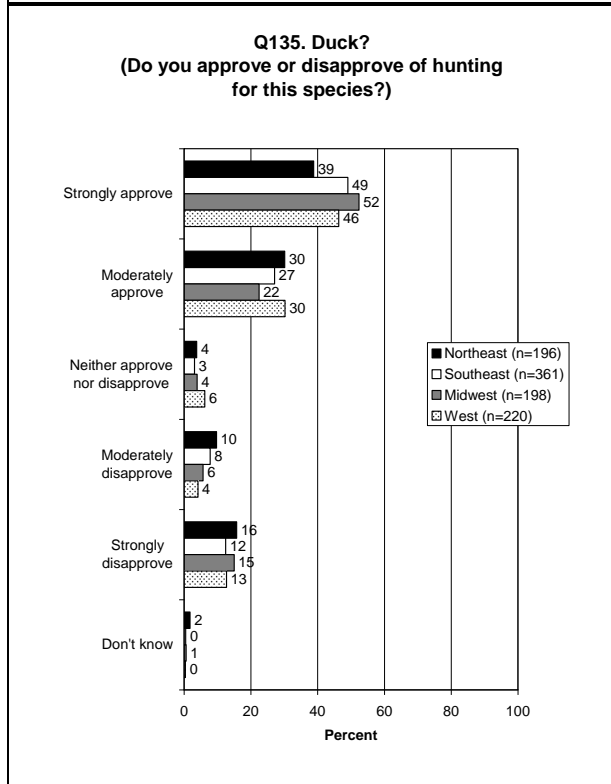
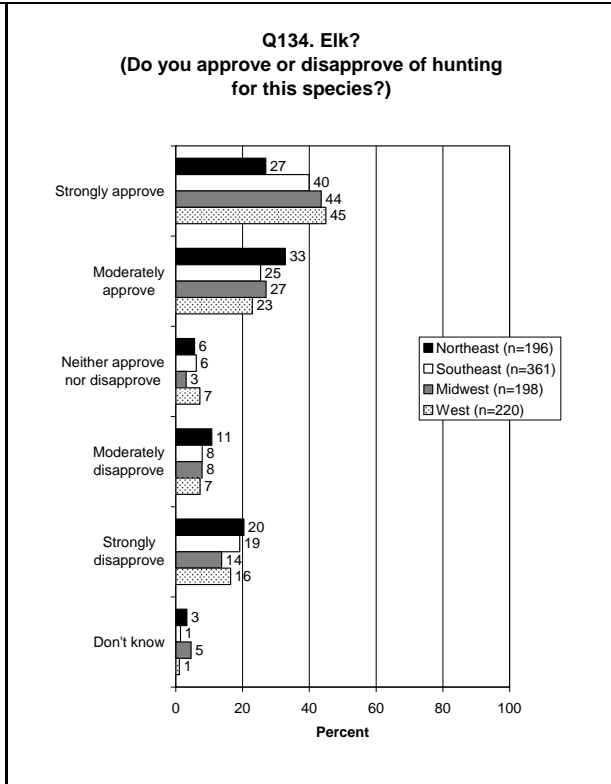
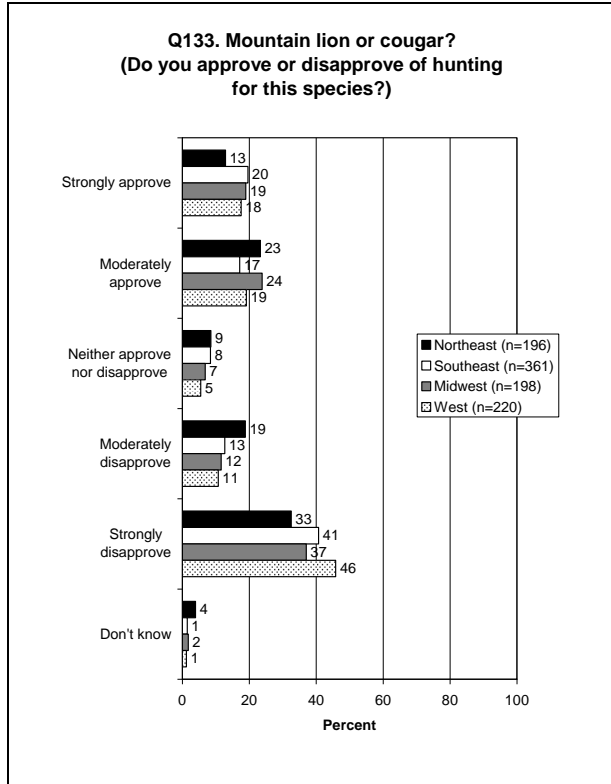
**Percent that strongly or moderately approve of  
hunting each of the following species:  
(Midwest Region)**

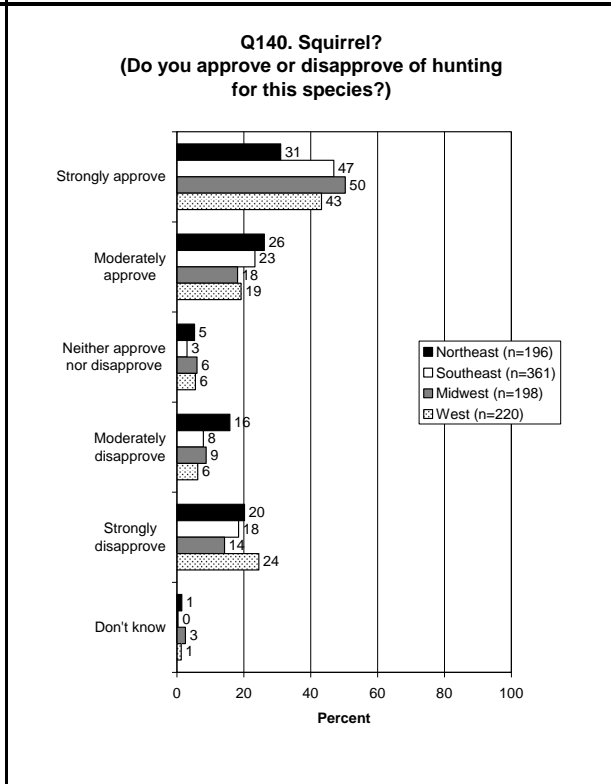
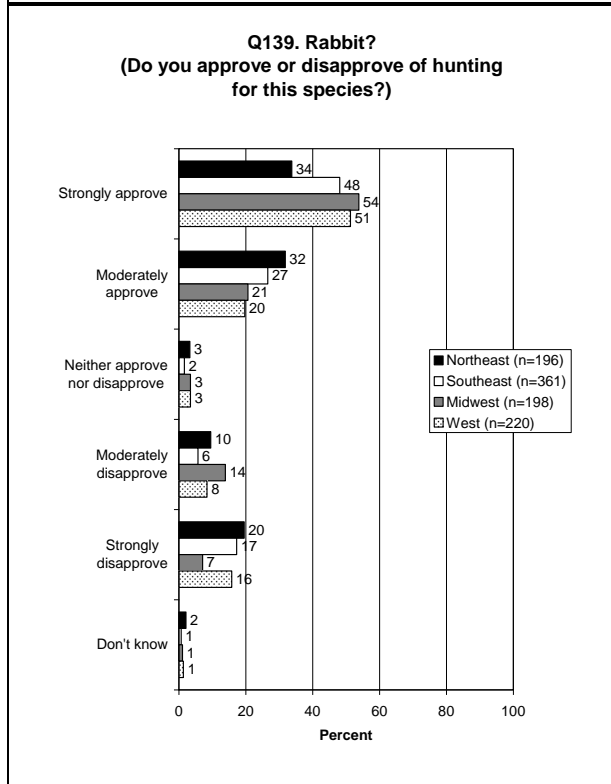
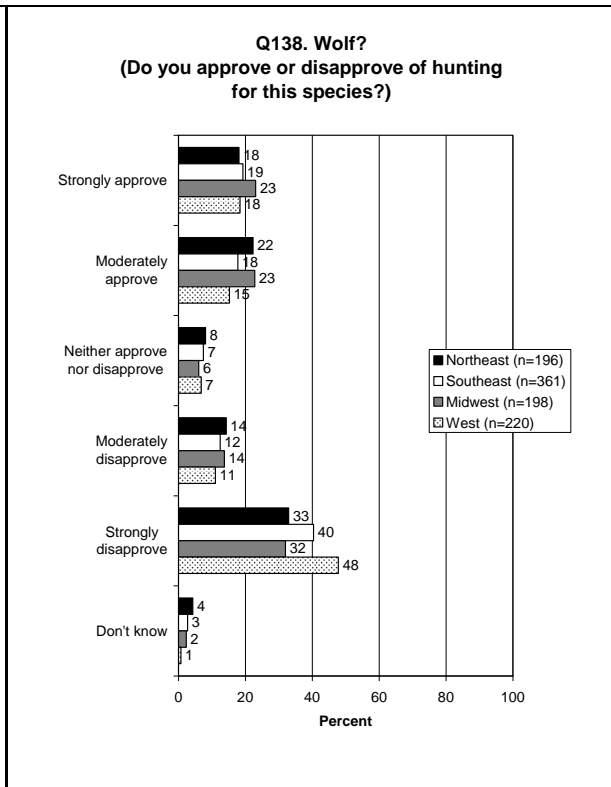
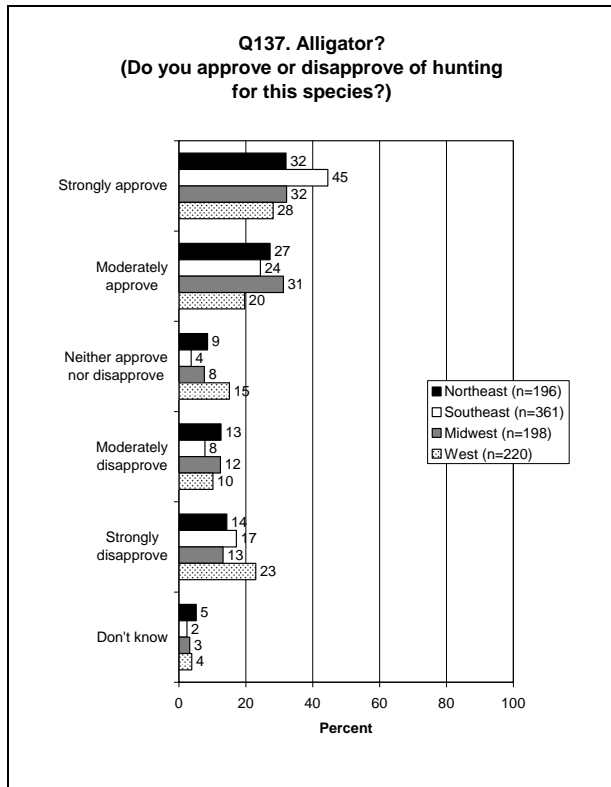


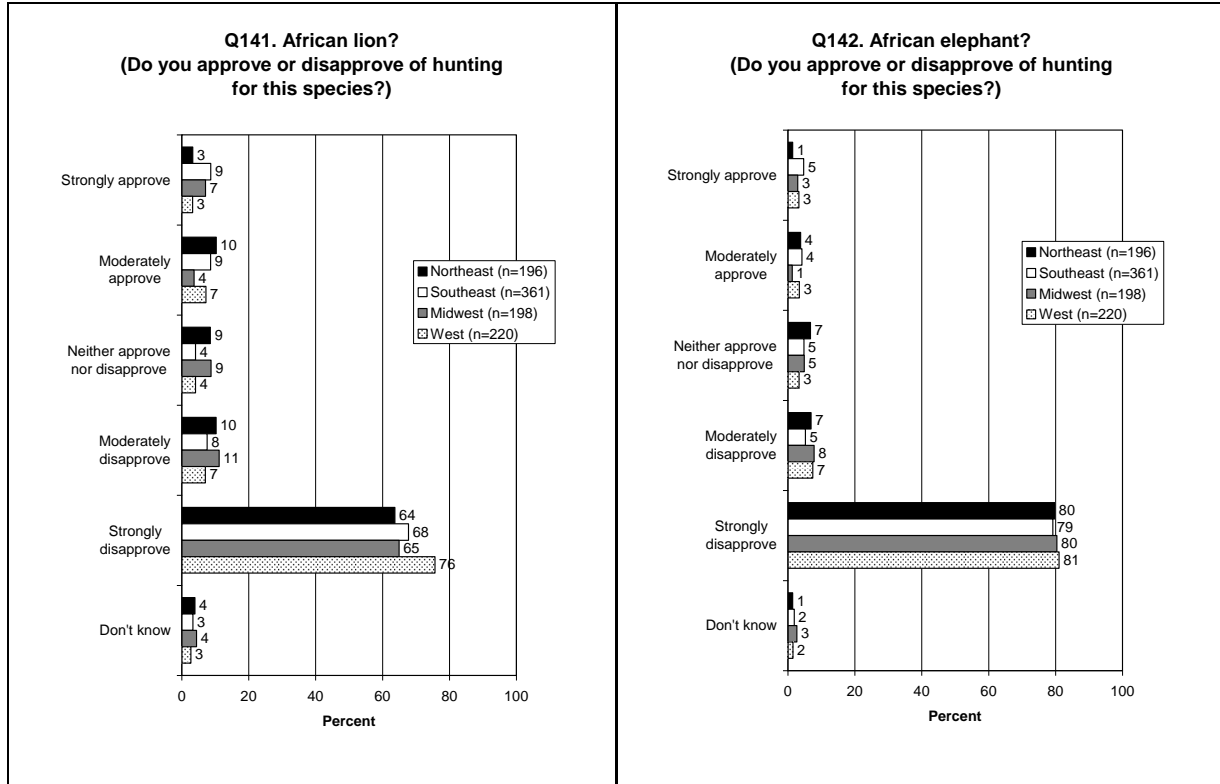
**Percent that strongly or moderately approve of hunting each of the following species:  
(West Region)**



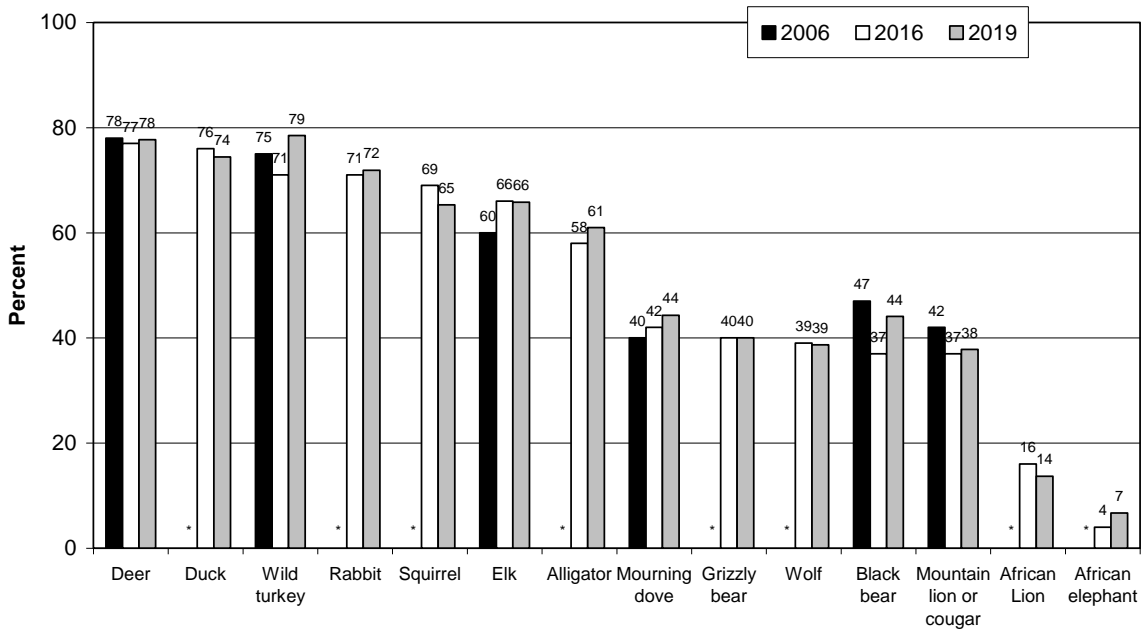








**Q129-142. Percent of respondents who strongly approve or moderately approve of hunting for each of the following species:**



\*Species not asked about in 2006 survey

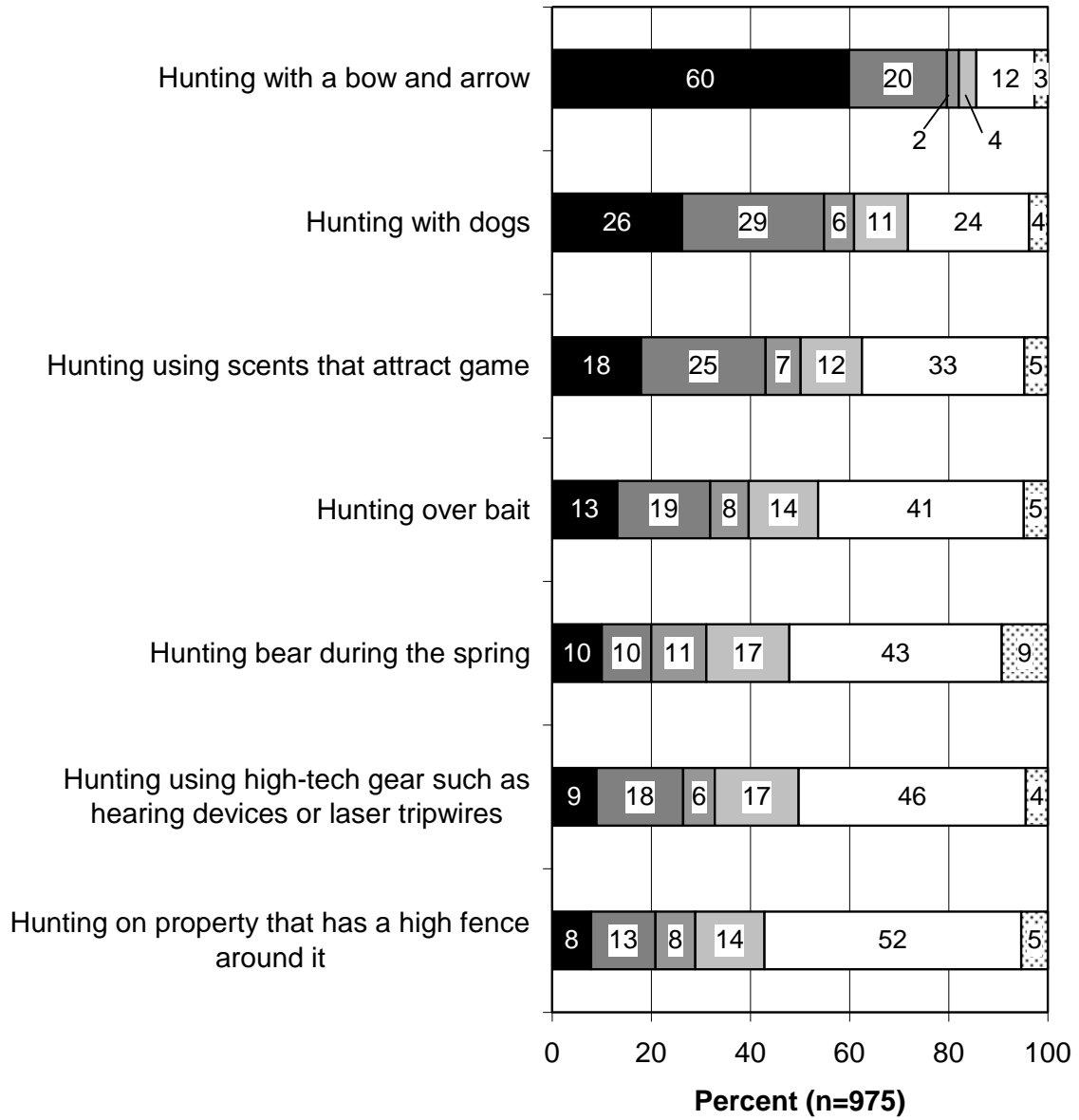
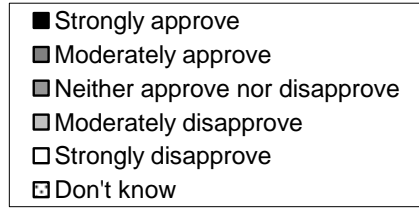
(2019 n=3014)

## METHODS OF HUNTING

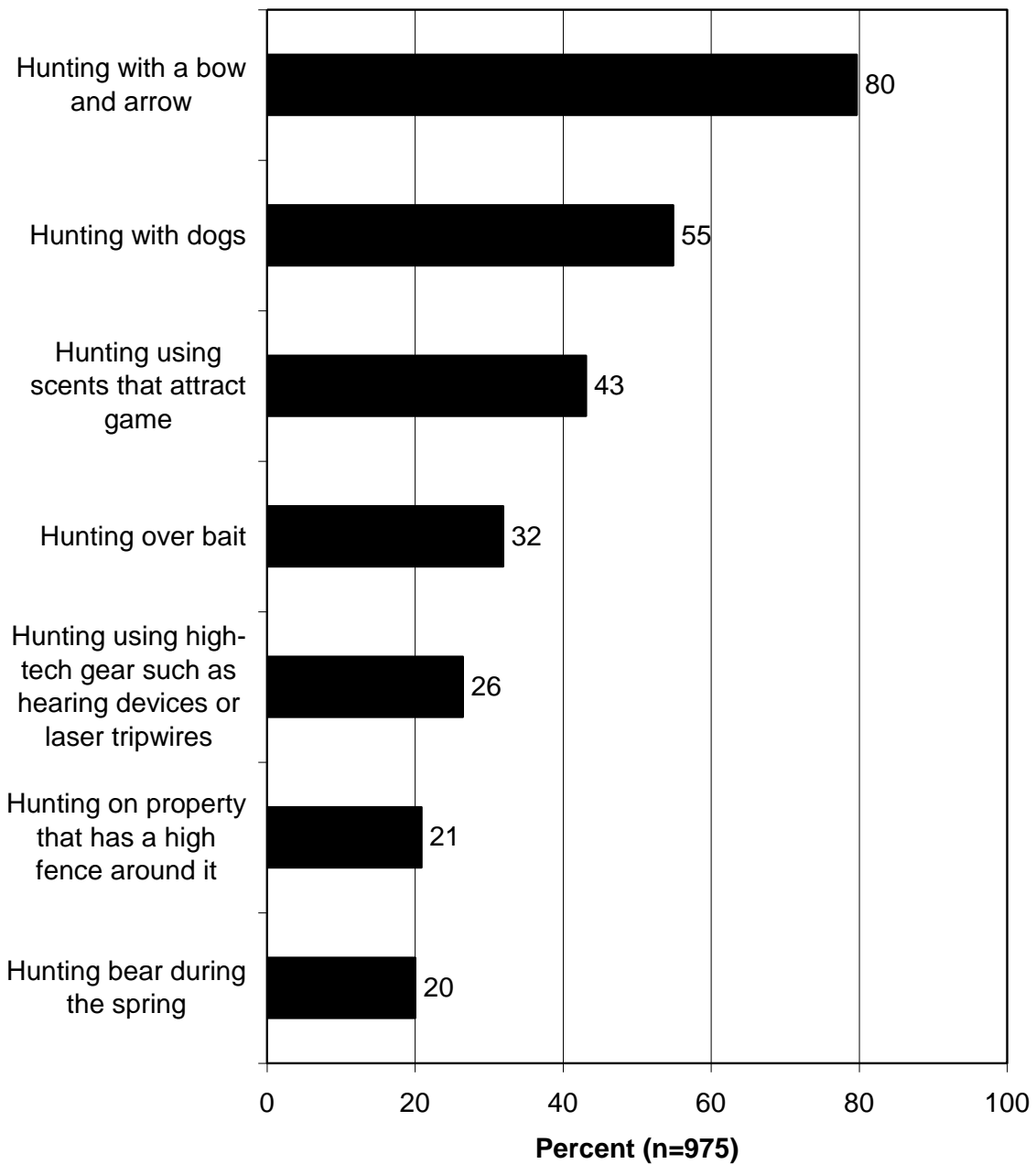
- The methods used to hunt also affect Americans' attitudes toward the sport. The hunting methods asked about in the survey and the percentages who approve of each are listed below, in descending order of *strong* approval:
  - Hunting with a bow and arrow (80% approve; 60% *strongly* approve)
  - Hunting with dogs (55% approve; 26% *strongly* approve)
  - Hunting using scents that attract game (43% approve; 18% *strongly* approve)
  - Hunting over bait (32% approve; 13% *strongly* approve)
  - Hunting bear during the spring (20% approve; 10% *strongly* approve)
  - Hunting using high-tech gear such as hearing devices or laser tripwires (26% approve; 9% *strongly* approve)
  - Hunting on property that has a high fence around it (21% approve; 8% *strongly* approve)
    - The nationwide results for this series of hunting methods are shown together on one graph, followed by graphs showing the series results within each region and the regional crosstabulation for each method individually.
    - Although hunting using high-tech gear and on high-fence property remain unpopular methods of hunting, approval for each has notably increased since 2016.



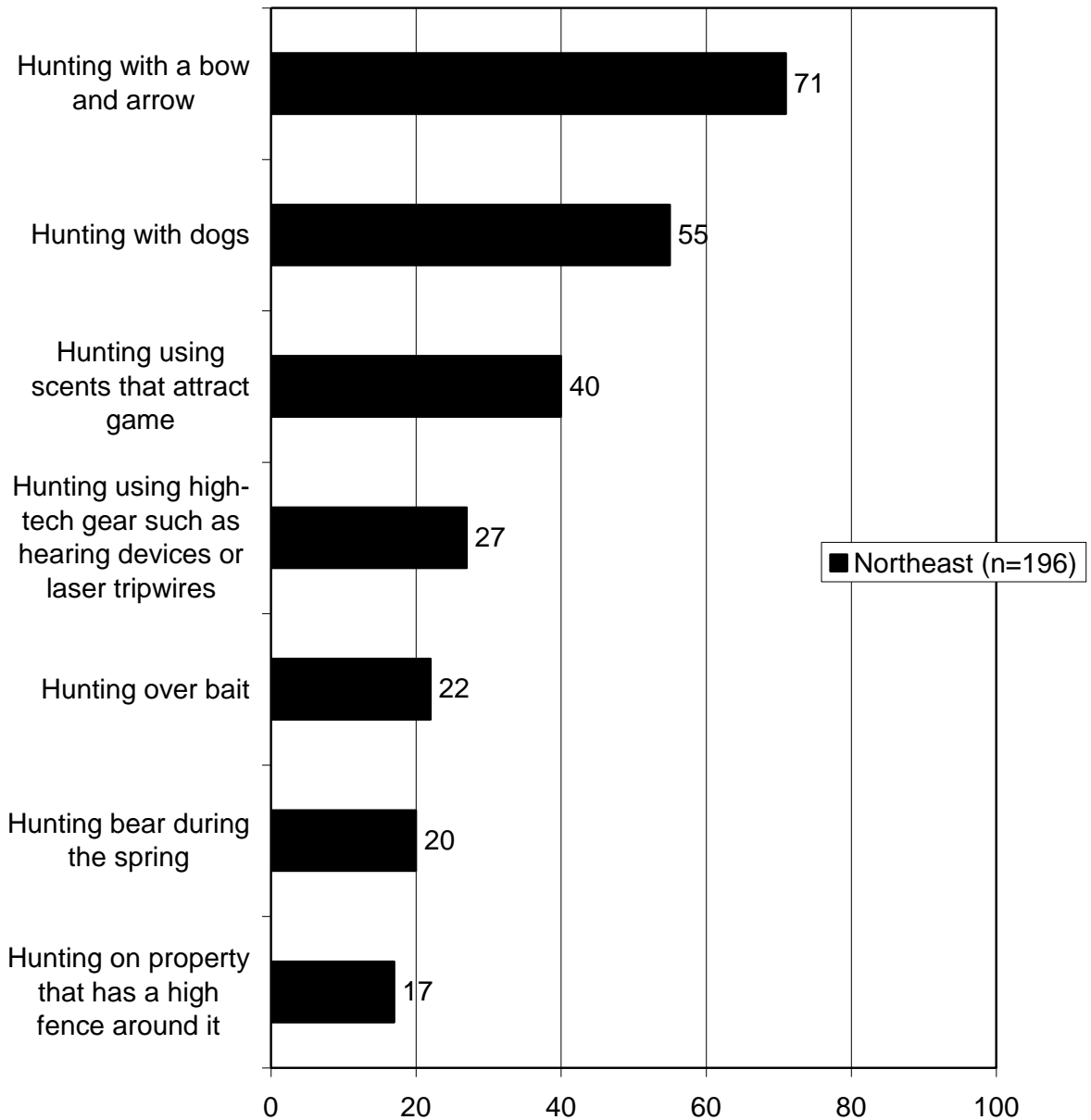
**Percent that [approve / disapprove] of hunting using each of the following methods:**



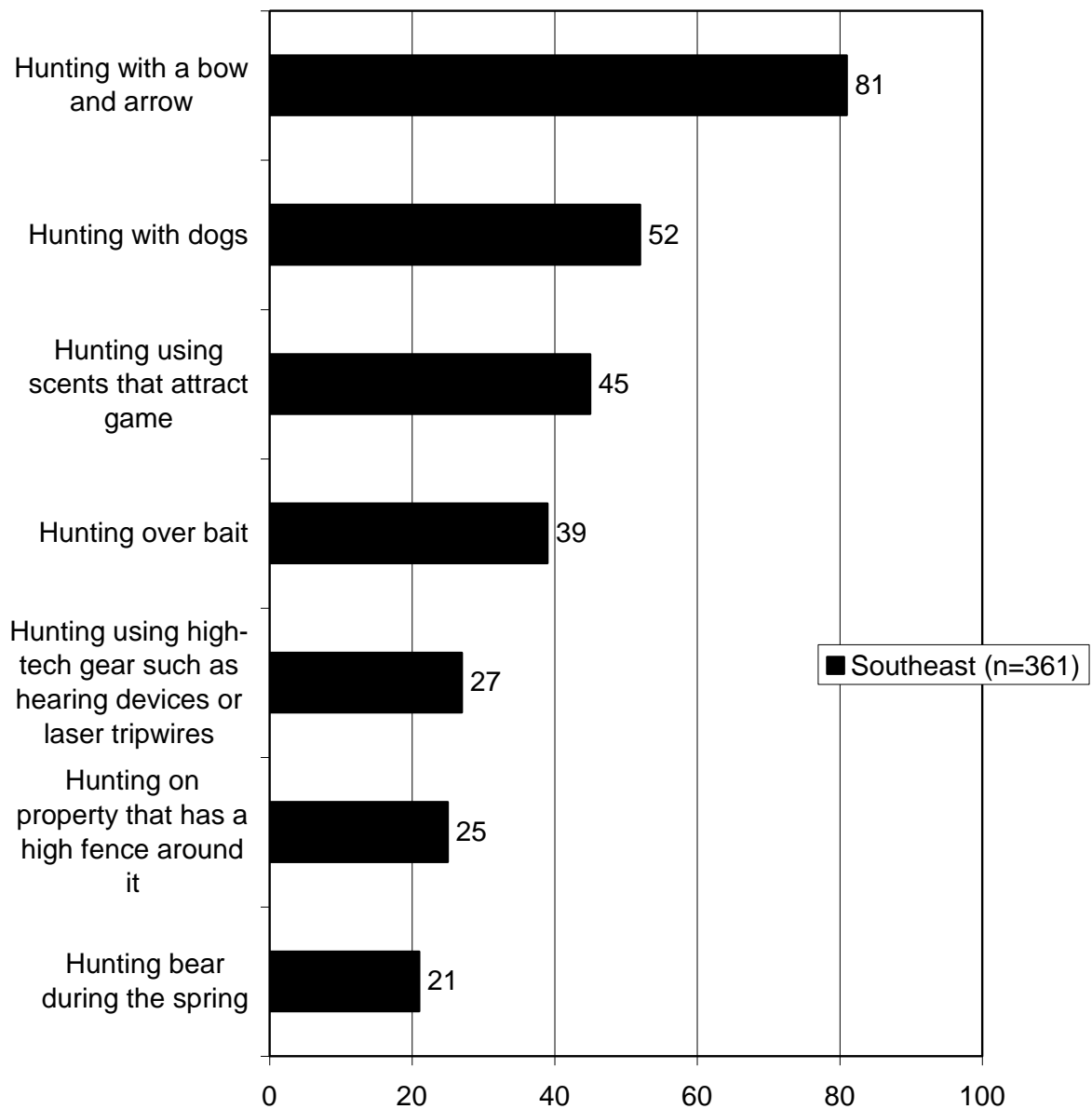
**Percent that strongly approve or moderately approve of hunting using each of the following methods:**



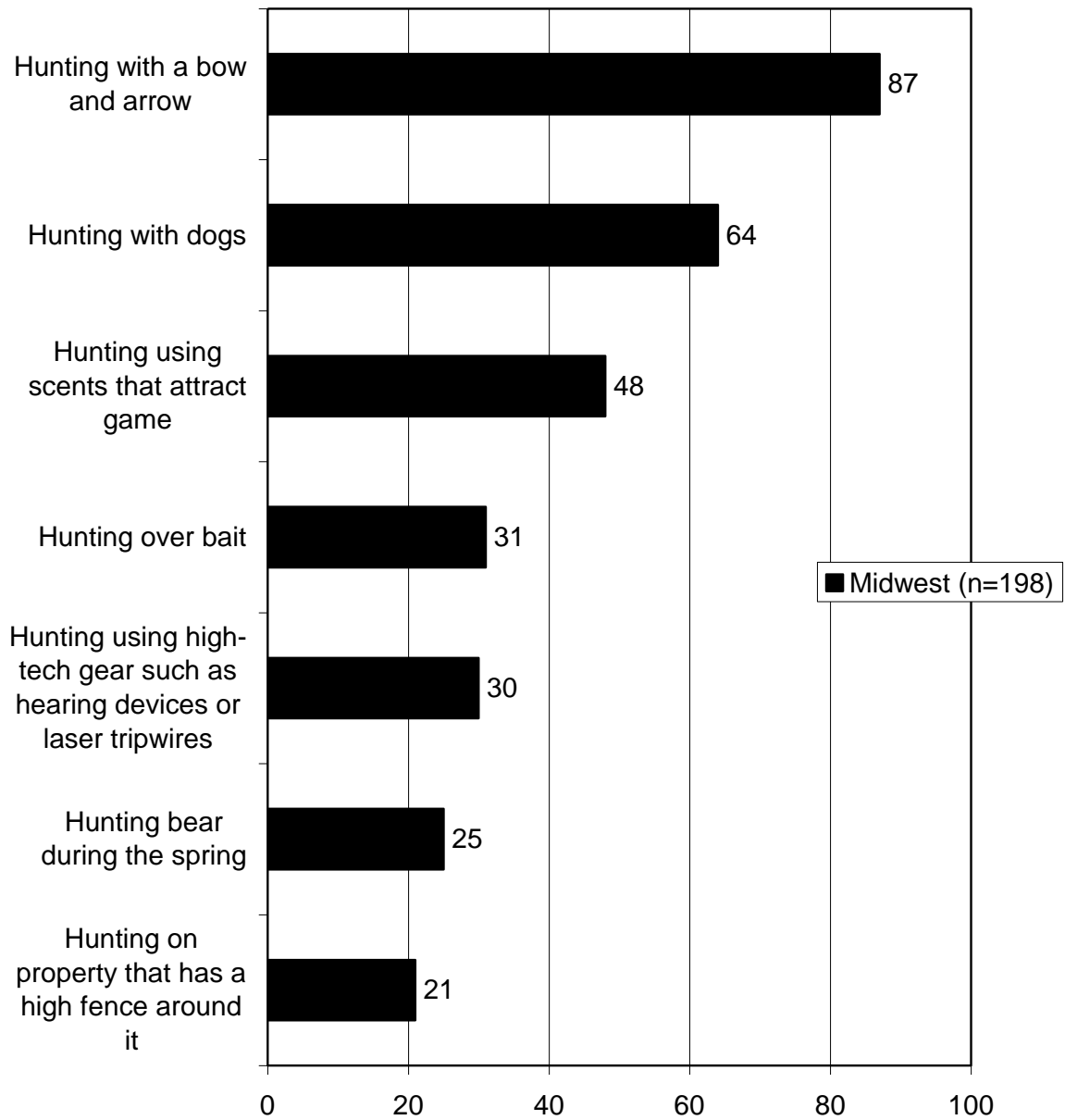
**Percent that strongly or moderately approve of hunting using each of the following methods: (Northeast Region)**



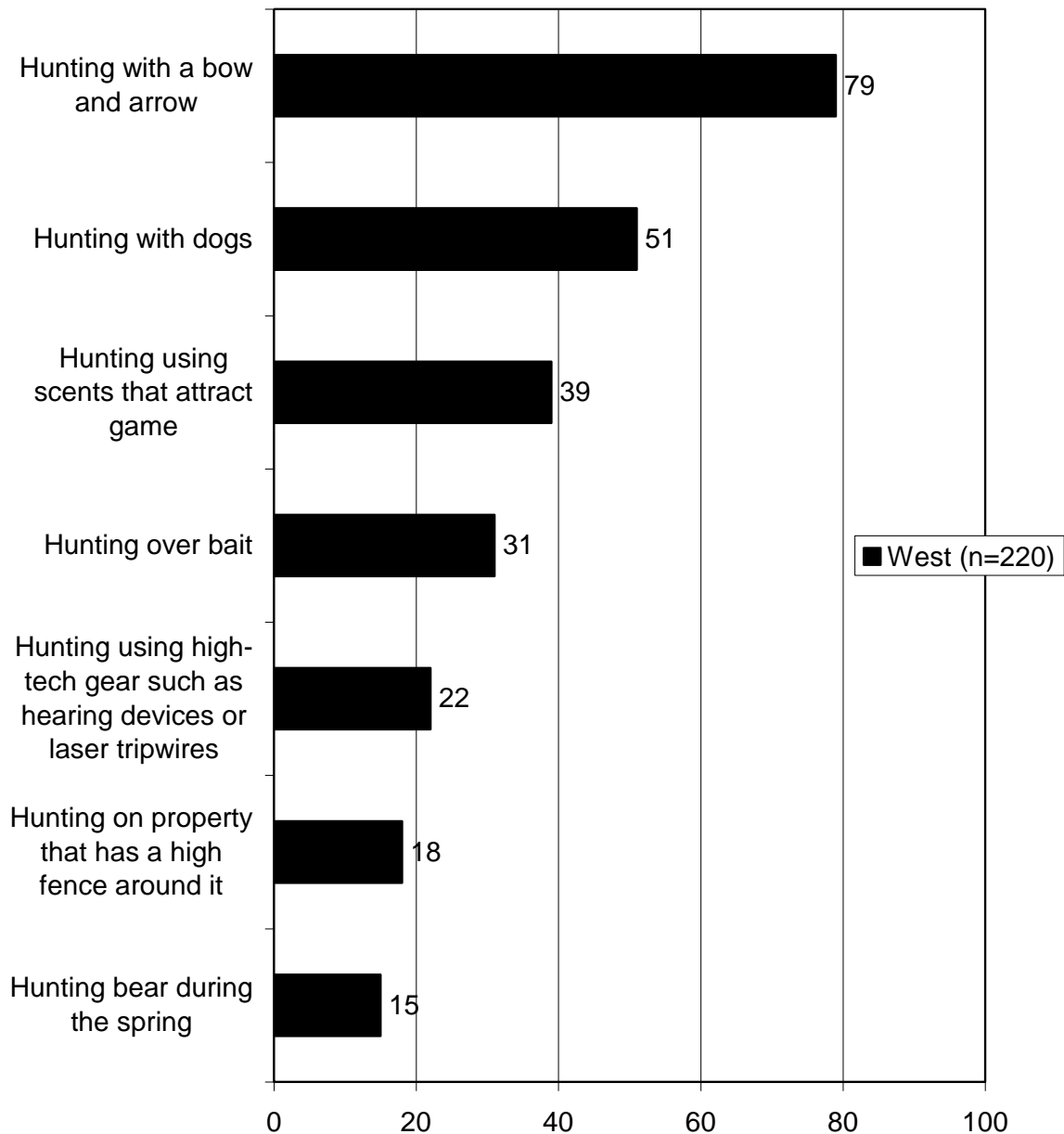
**Percent that strongly or moderately approve of  
hunting using each of the following methods:  
(Southeast Region)**

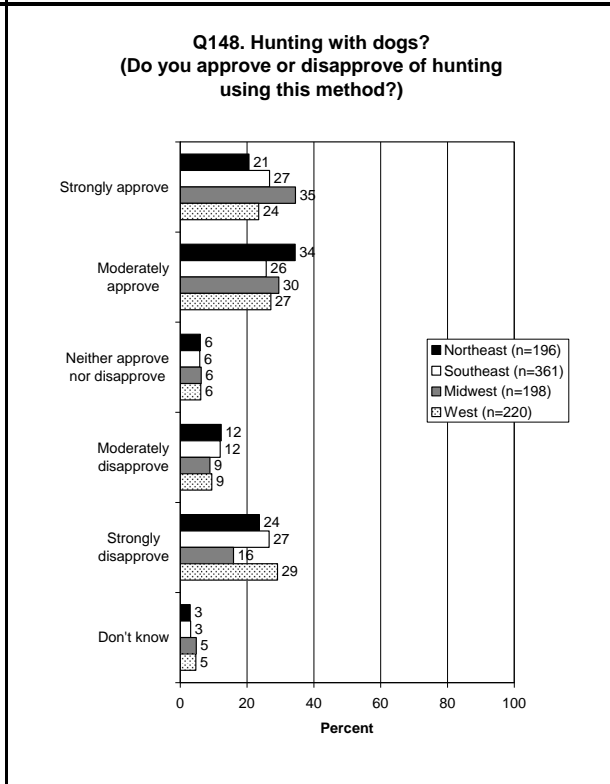
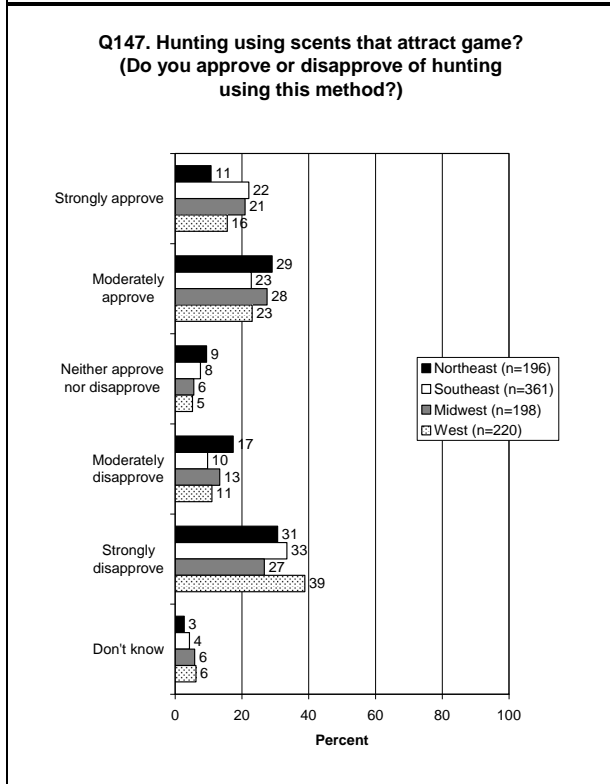
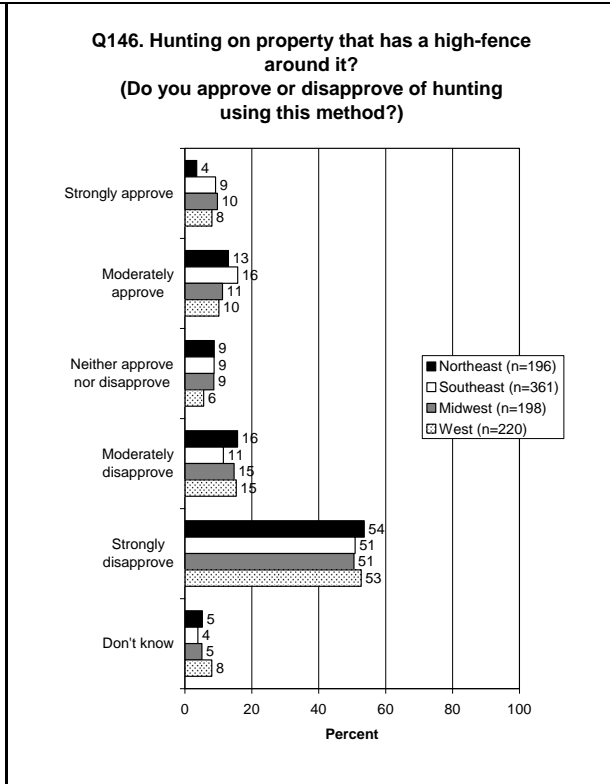
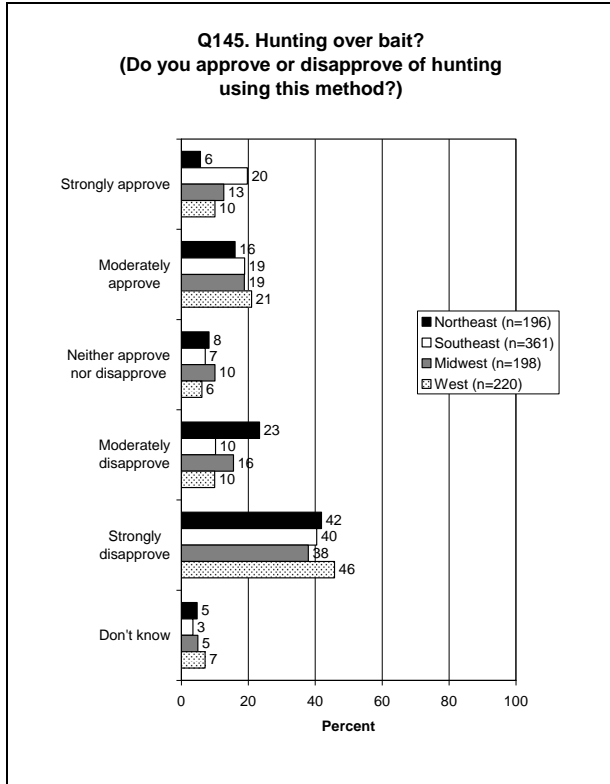


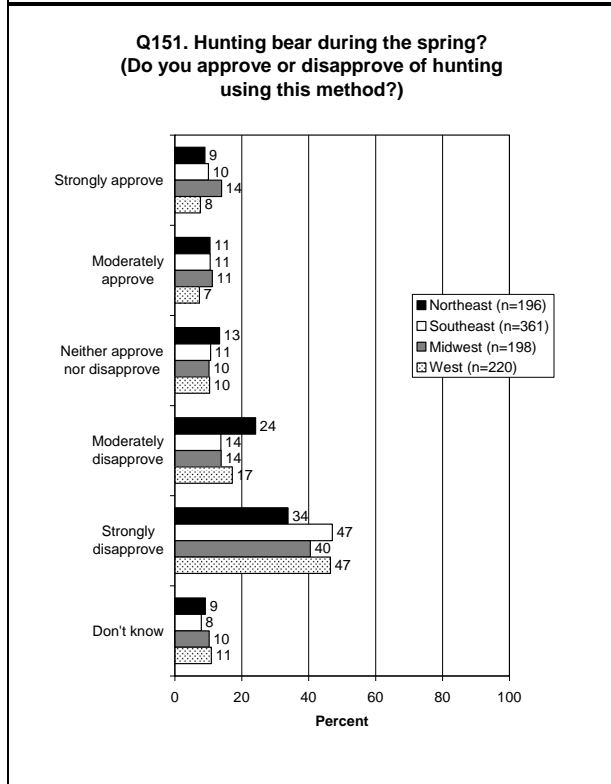
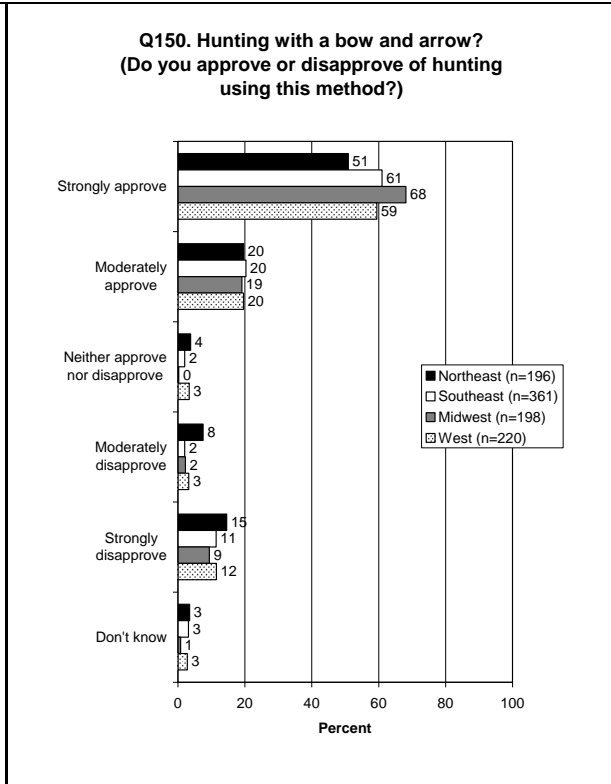
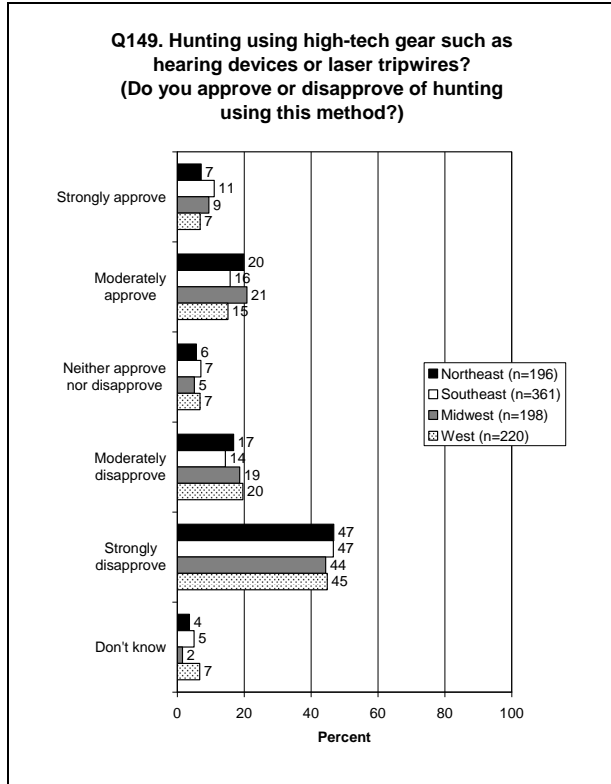
**Percent that strongly or moderately approve of hunting using each of the following methods: (Midwest Region)**



**Percent that strongly or moderately approve of  
hunting using each of the following methods:  
(West Region)**

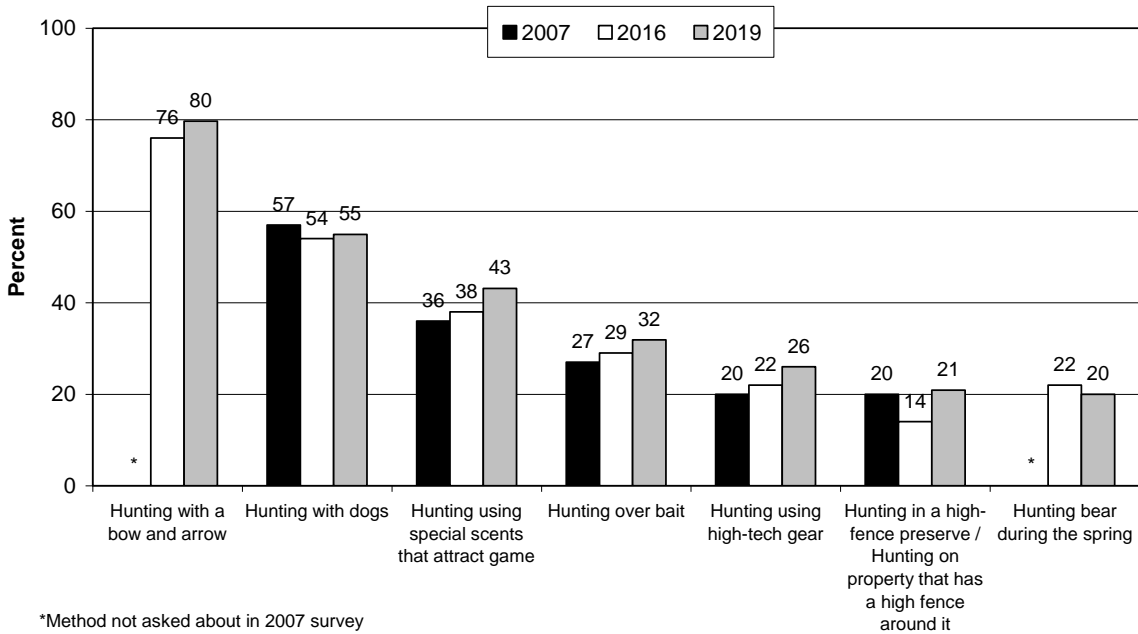








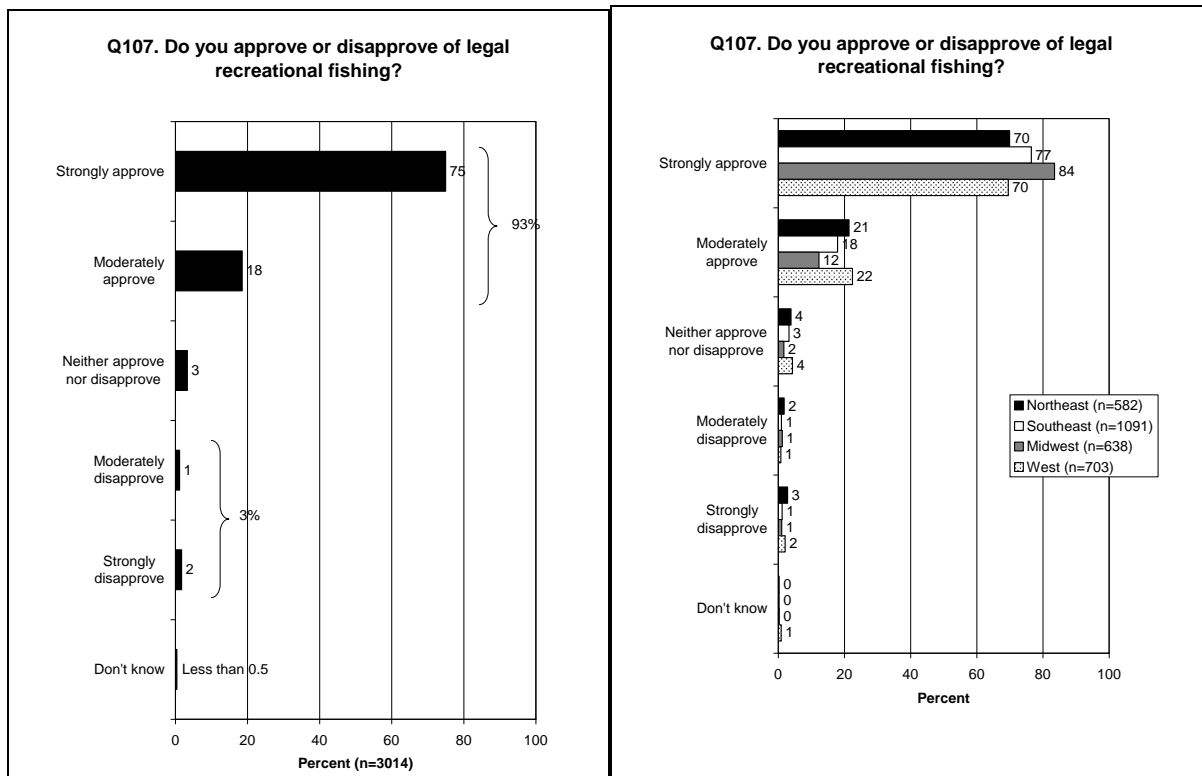
**Q145-151. Percent who strongly approve or moderately approve of hunting for each of the following methods:**



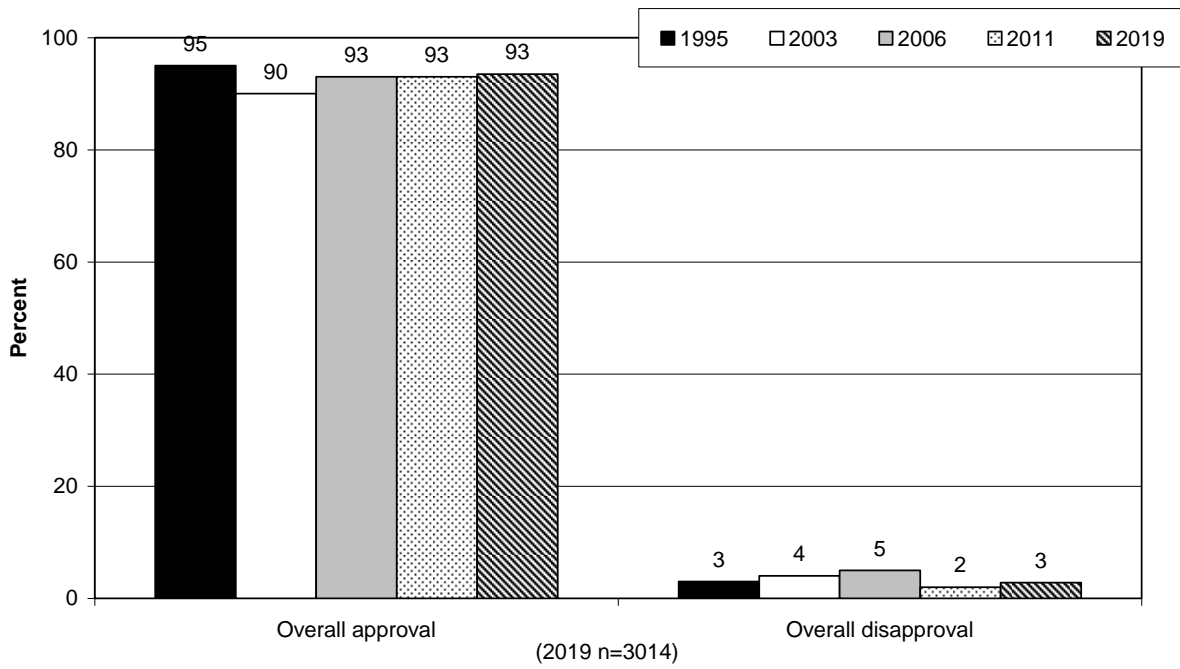
## ATTITUDES TOWARD FISHING IN THE UNITED STATES

### ATTITUDES TOWARD FISHING IN GENERAL

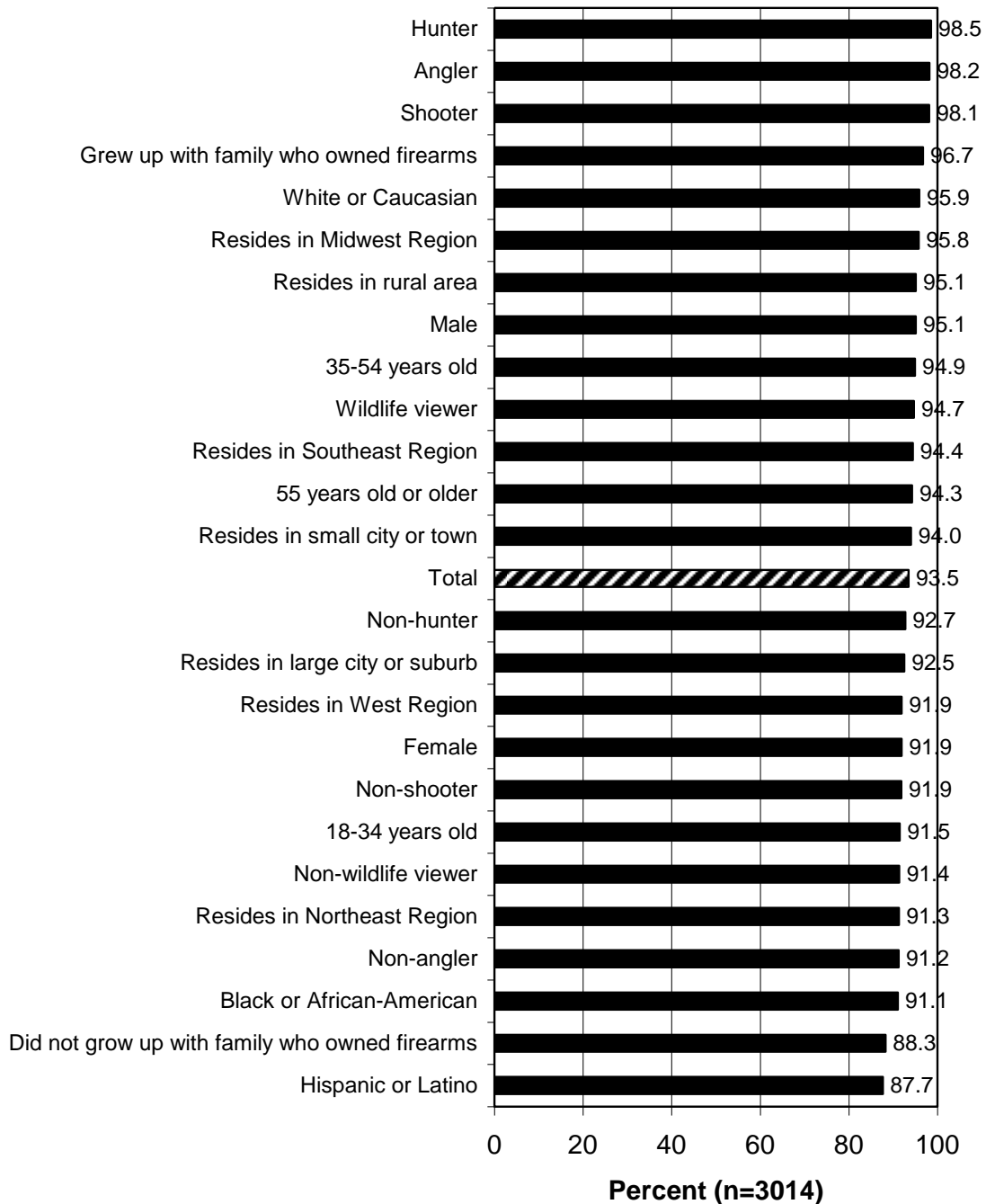
- There is less controversy surrounding fishing, relative to hunting, with the vast majority of Americans approving of fishing. Nationally, 93% of Americans approve of legal recreational fishing, while only 3% disapprove.
  - There is little variation between the regions regarding overall approval, although *strong* approval is highest in the Midwest. The nationwide percentage of approval has remained consistent over the years.
  - The demographic correlations graphs show little variation between the groups regarding approval of fishing. Compared to the overall percentage of Americans who approve of fishing, there is slightly less approval among Hispanic residents and those who did not grow up with firearms in the family.



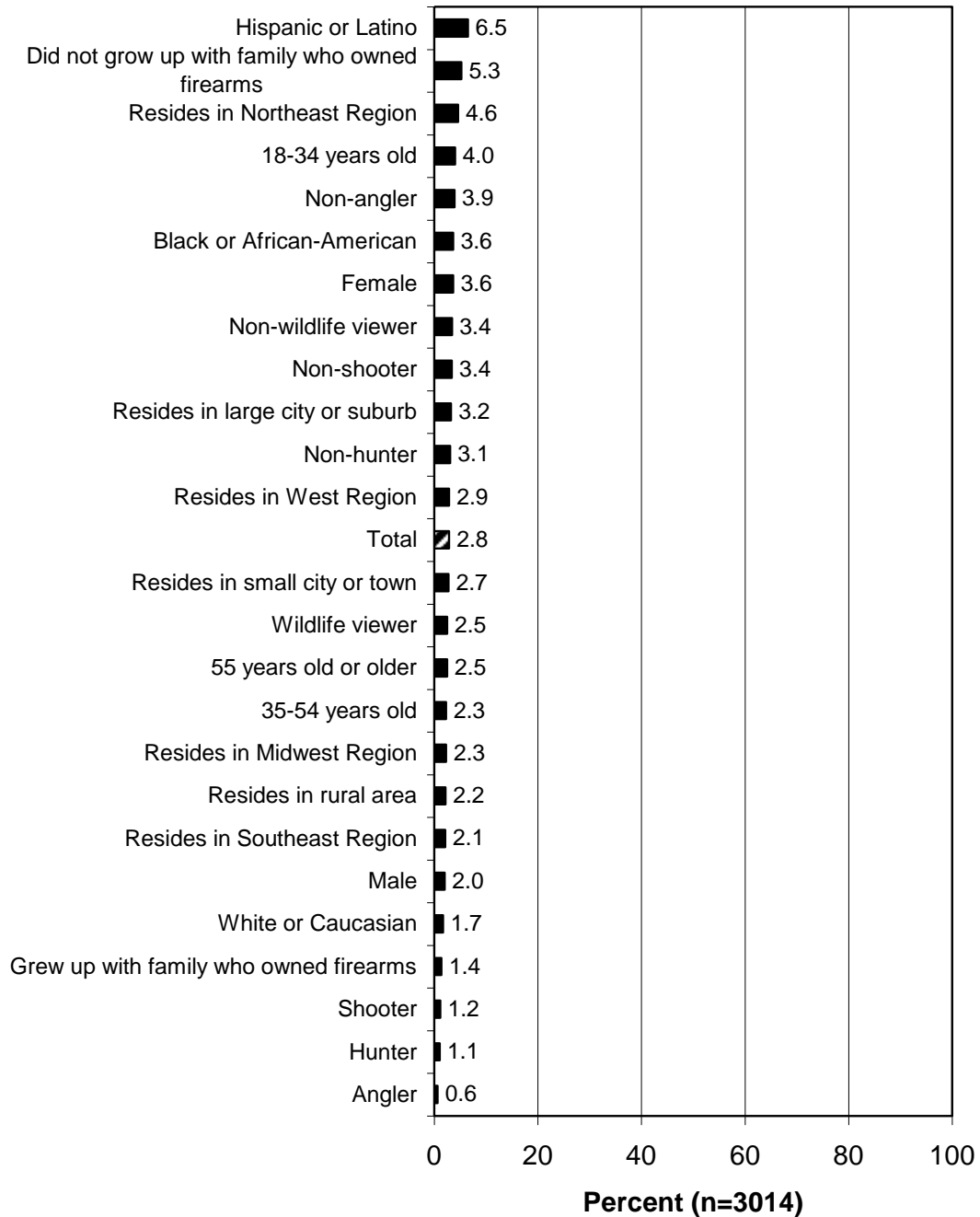
**Q107. Do you approve or disapprove of legal recreational fishing?**



**Percent of each of the following groups who approve of legal recreational fishing:**



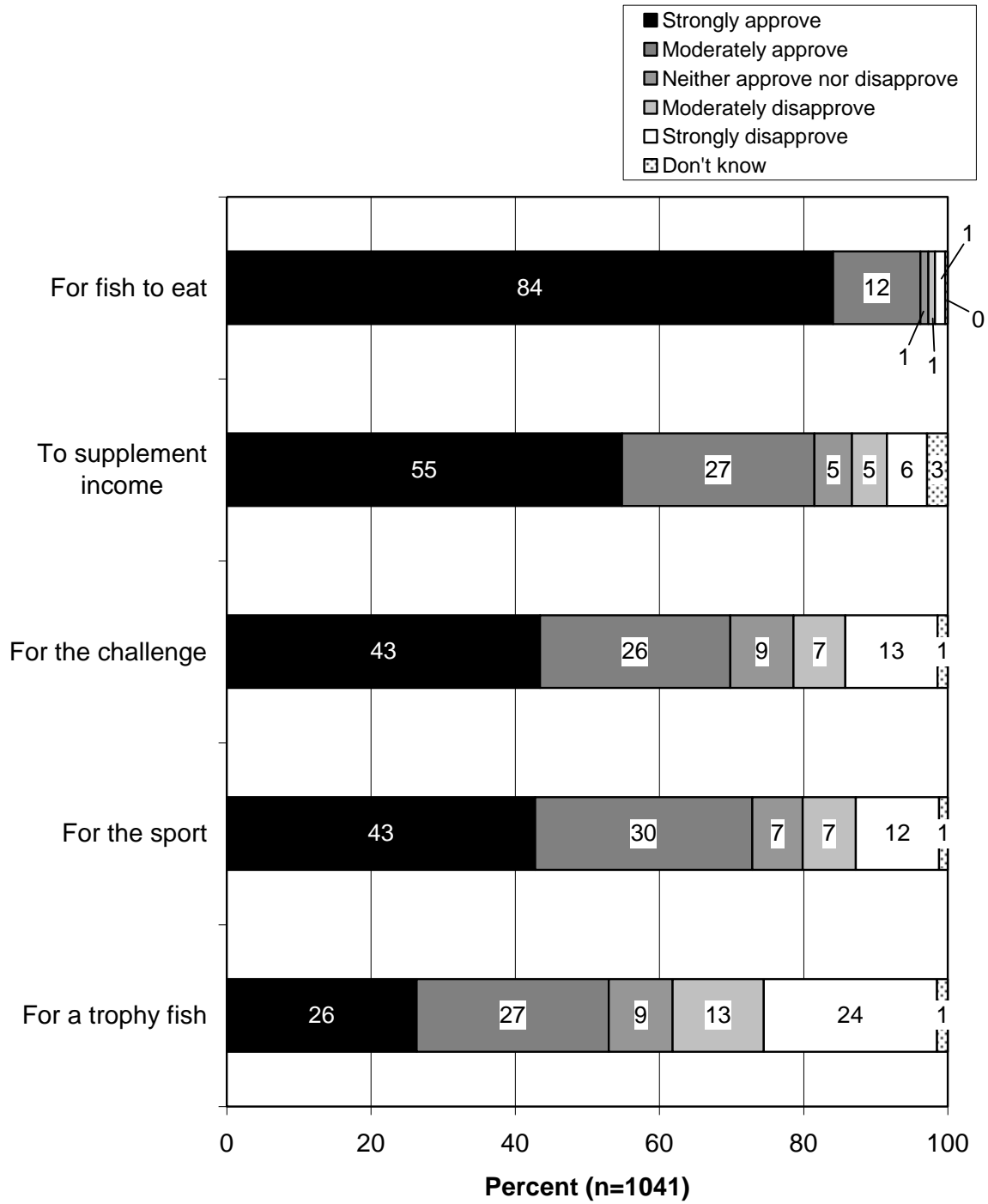
**Percent of each of the following groups who disapprove of legal recreational fishing:**



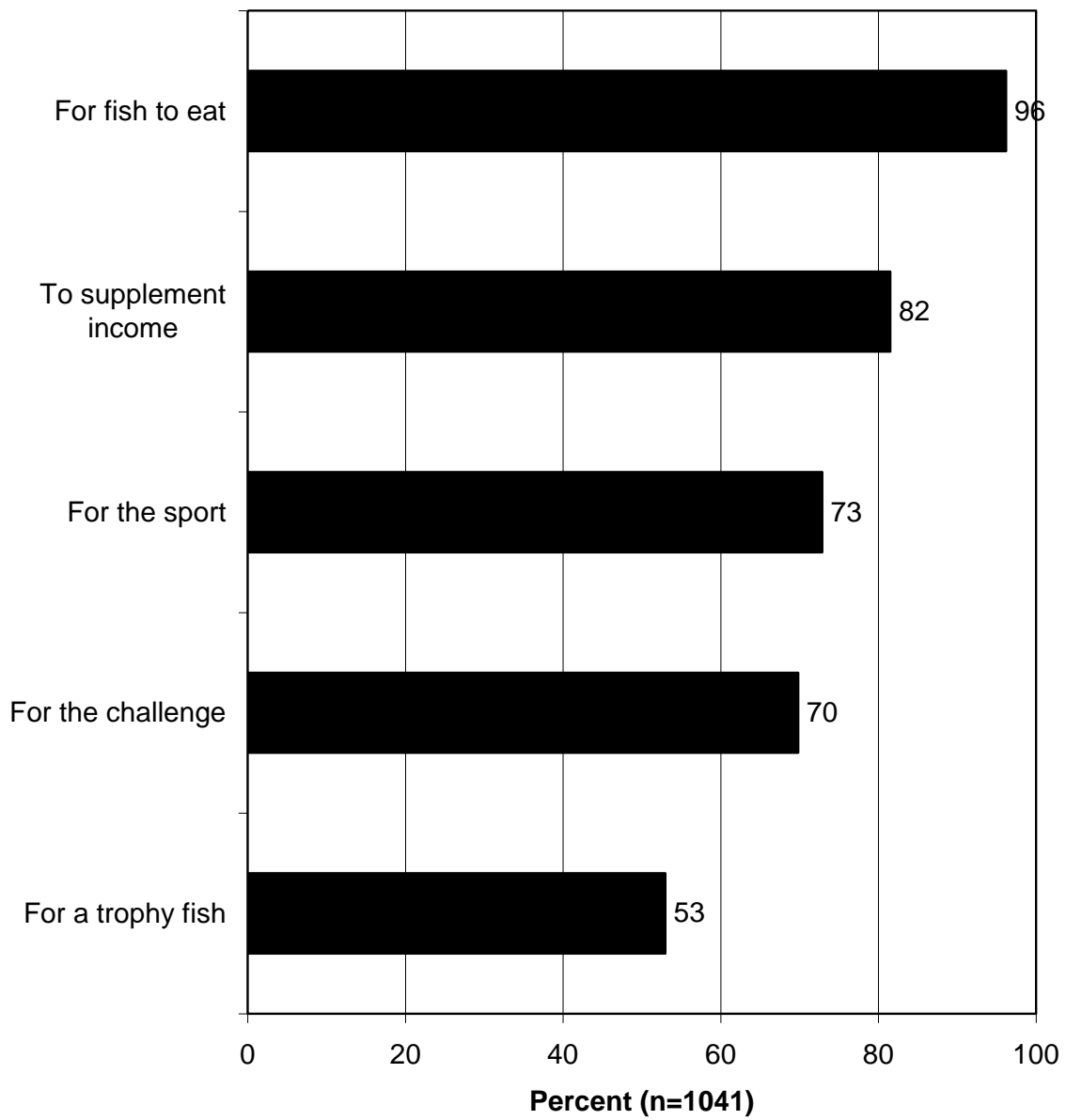
## MOTIVATIONS FOR FISHING

- Approval of fishing can vary depending on the motivations for fishing. Fishing for food is considered much more acceptable than fishing for the sport, for the challenge, or for a trophy fish. These results largely mirror those of the hunting portion of the survey, indicating that Americans approve of fishing for utilitarian purposes much more than they approve of fishing for sport. The motivations for fishing asked about in the survey and the percentages who approve of each are listed below, in descending order of *strong* approval:
  - For fish to eat (96% approve; 84% *strongly* approve)
  - To supplement income (82% approve; 55% *strongly* approve)
  - For the challenge (70% approve; 43% *strongly* approve)
  - For the sport (73% approve; 43% *strongly* approve)
  - For a trophy fish (53% approve; 26% *strongly* approve)
    - The nationwide results for this series of motivations are shown together on one graph, followed by graphs showing the series results within each region and the regional crosstabulation for each motivation individually.
    - For most motivations, *strong* approval is highest in the Midwest and *strong* disapproval is highest in the Northeast.
    - Approval of fishing to supplement income has increased substantially, going from 65% in 2006 to 82% in 2019. The percentages of Americans who approve of fishing for the challenge and for a trophy fish have also notably increased.

**Percent that [approve / disapprove] of fishing for each of the following reasons:**

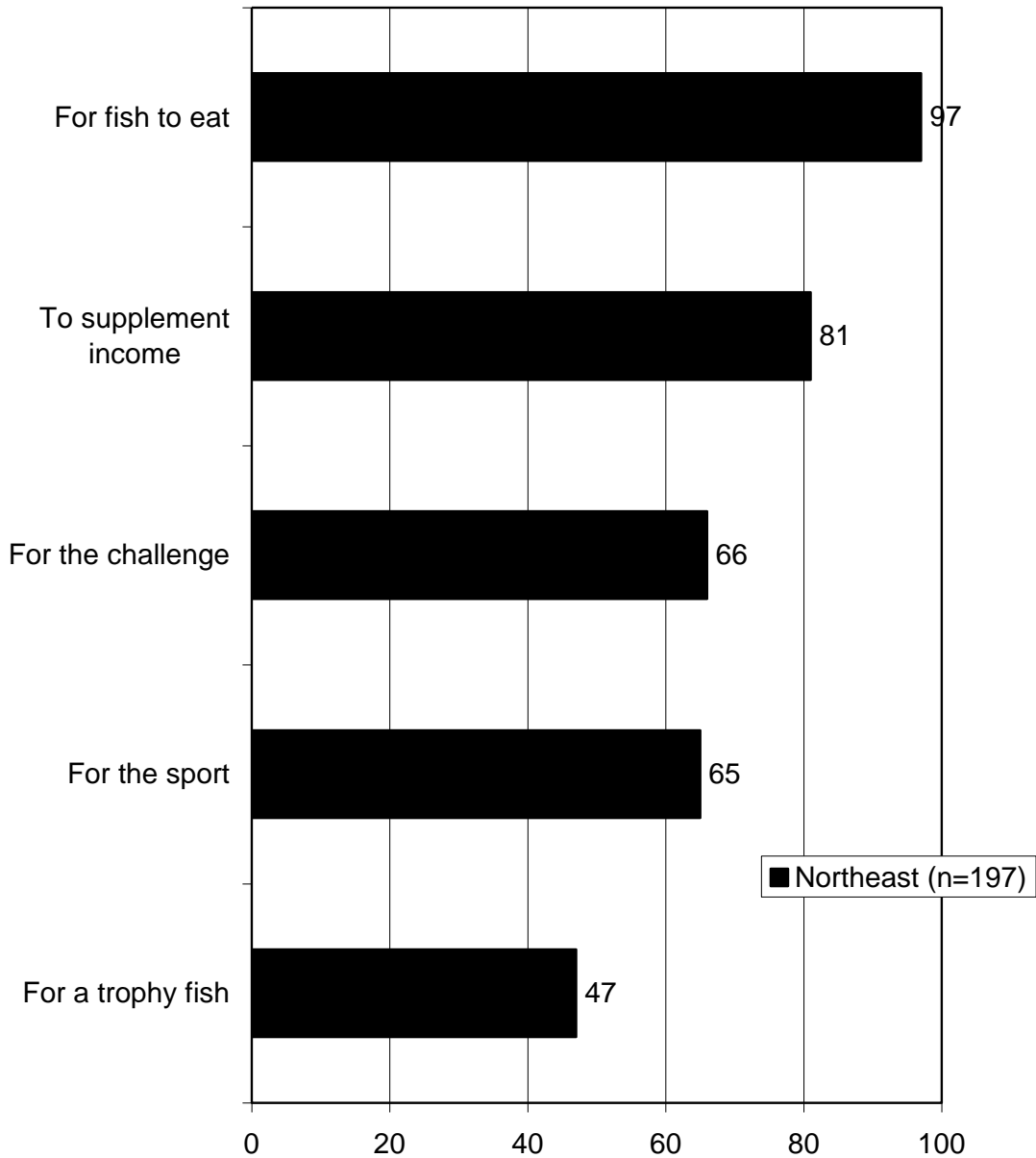


**Percent that strongly approve or moderately approve of fishing for each of the following reasons:**

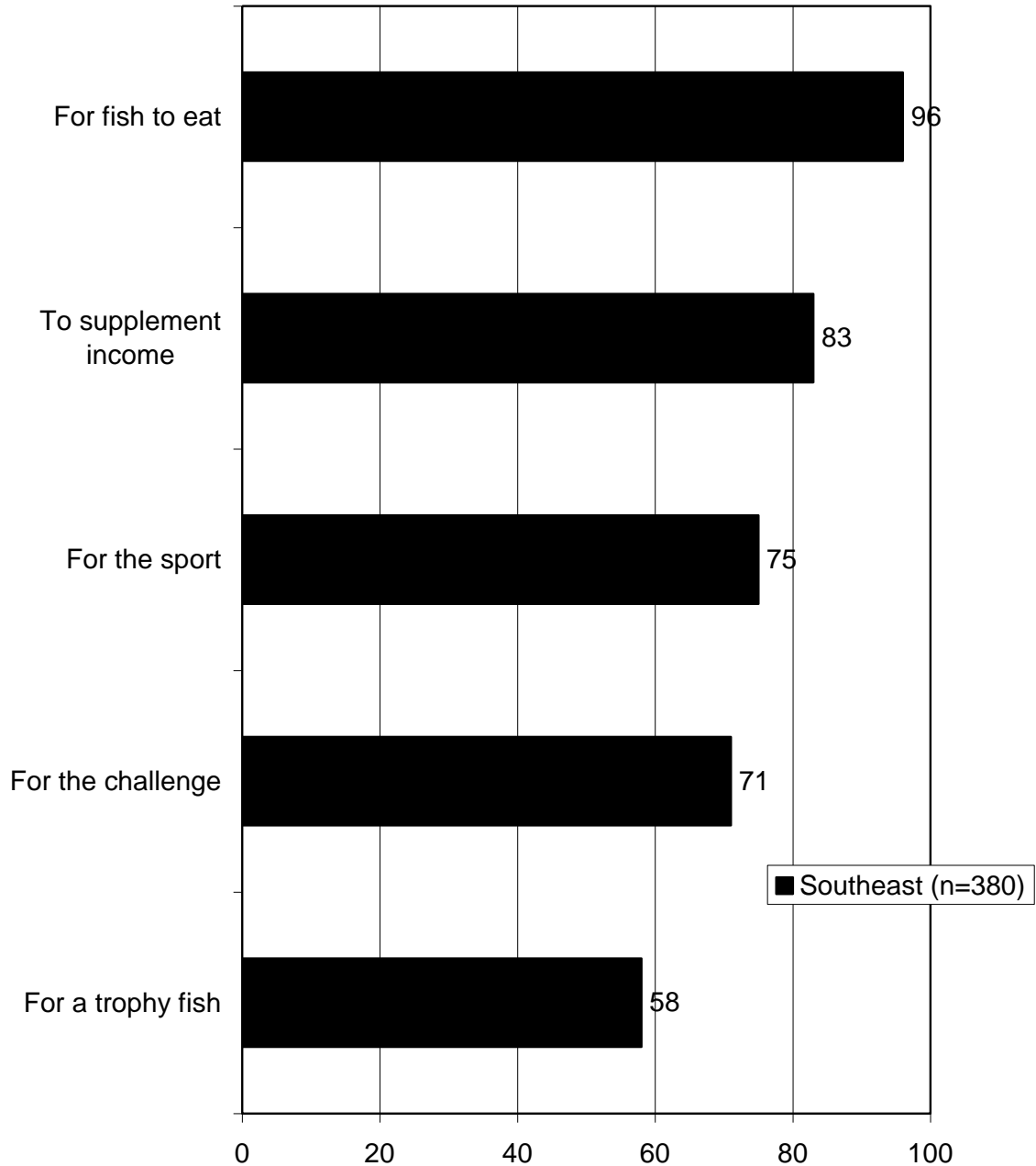




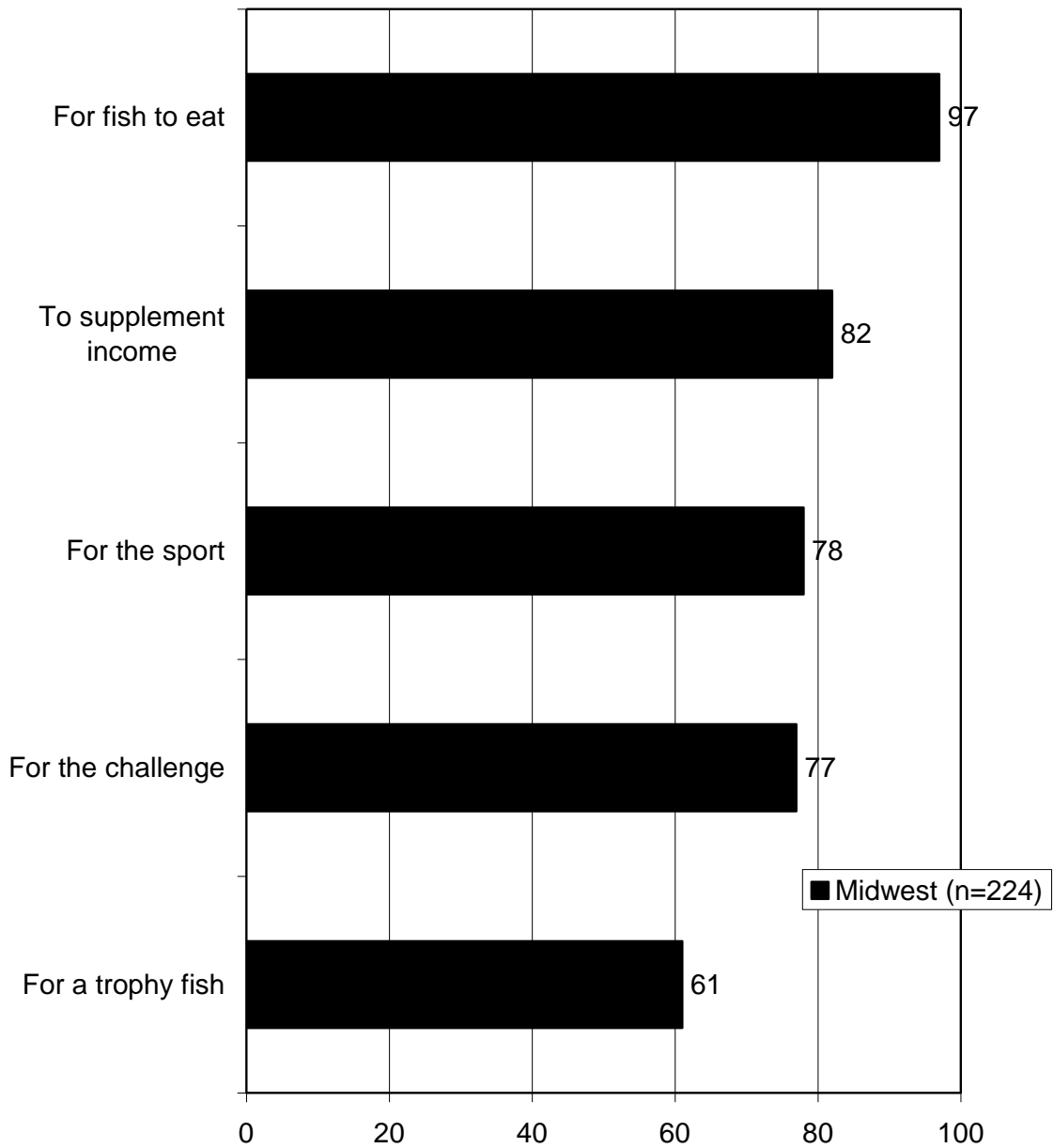
**Percent that strongly or moderately approve of fishing for each of the following reasons:  
(Northeast Region)**



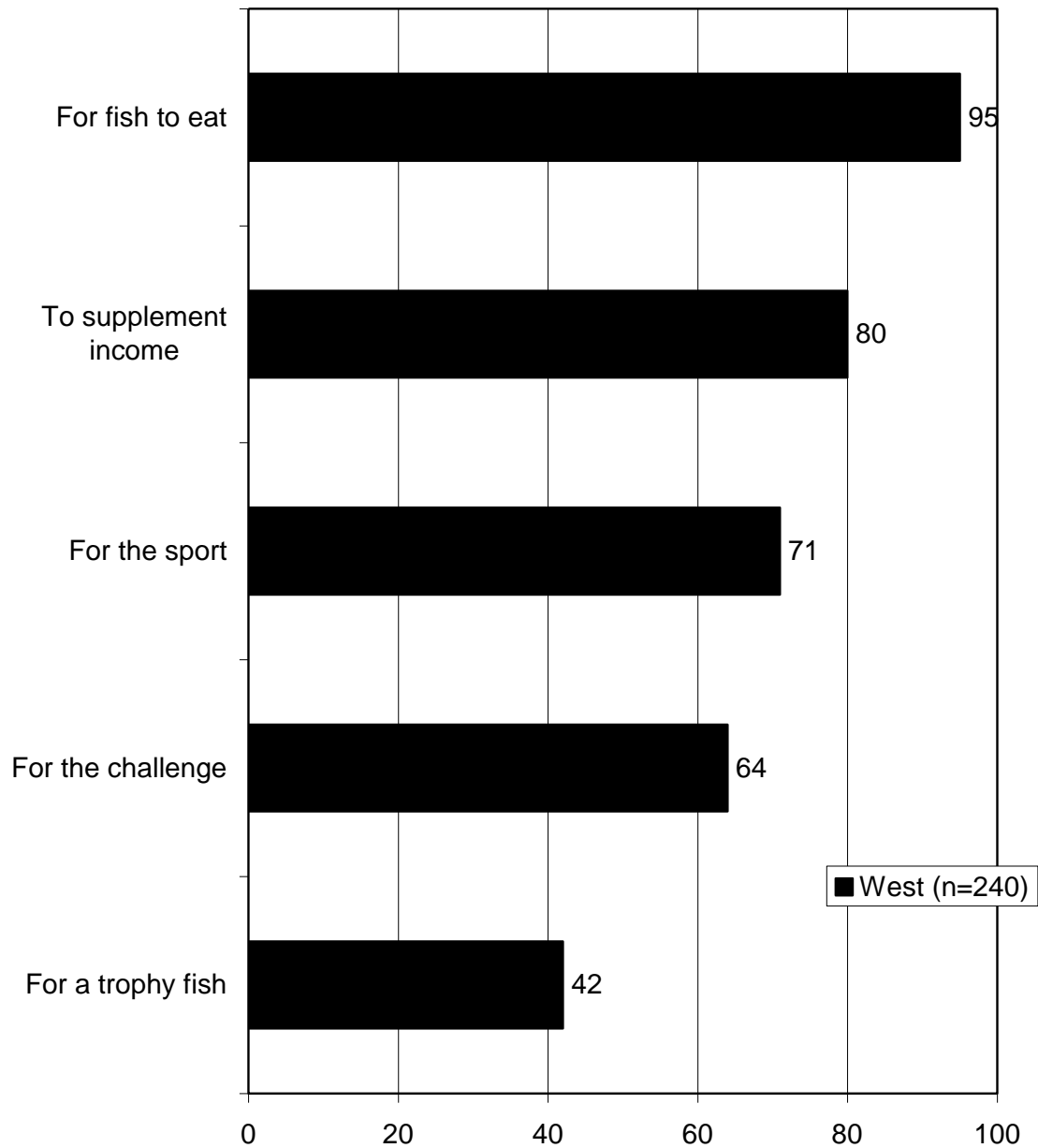
**Percent that strongly or moderately approve of fishing for each of the following reasons:  
(Southeast Region)**

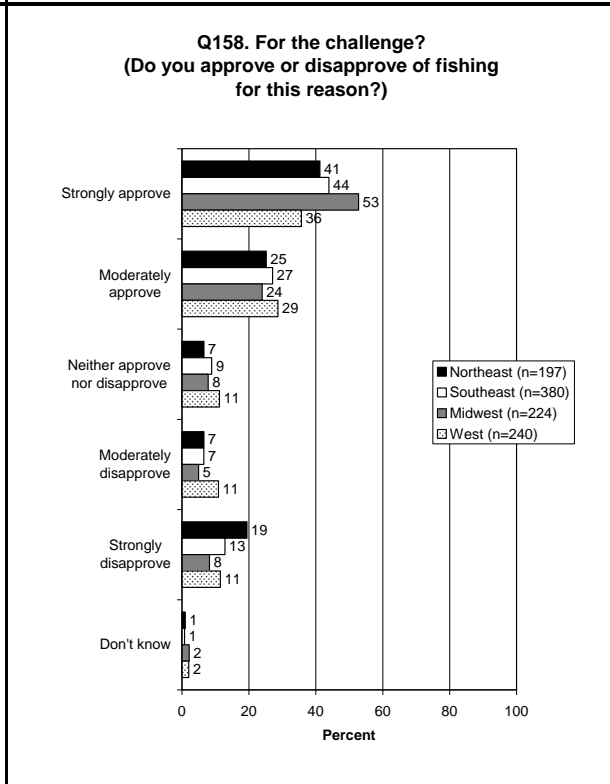
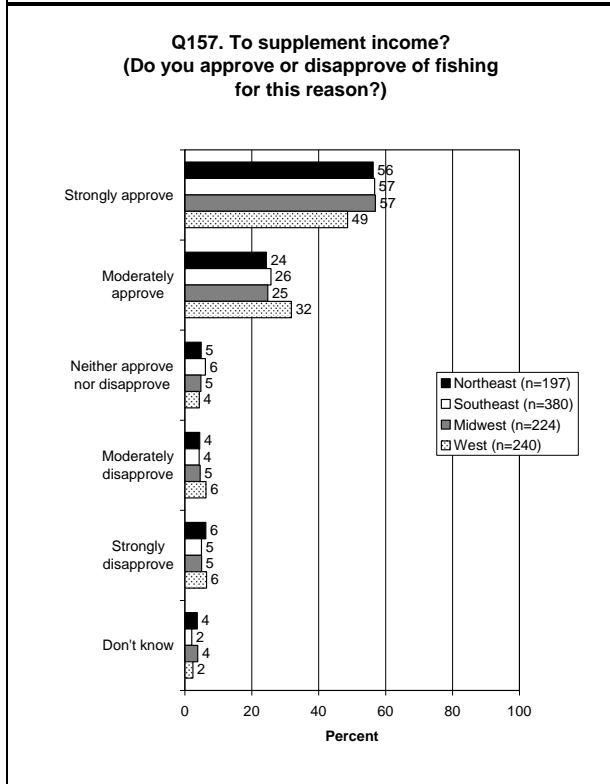
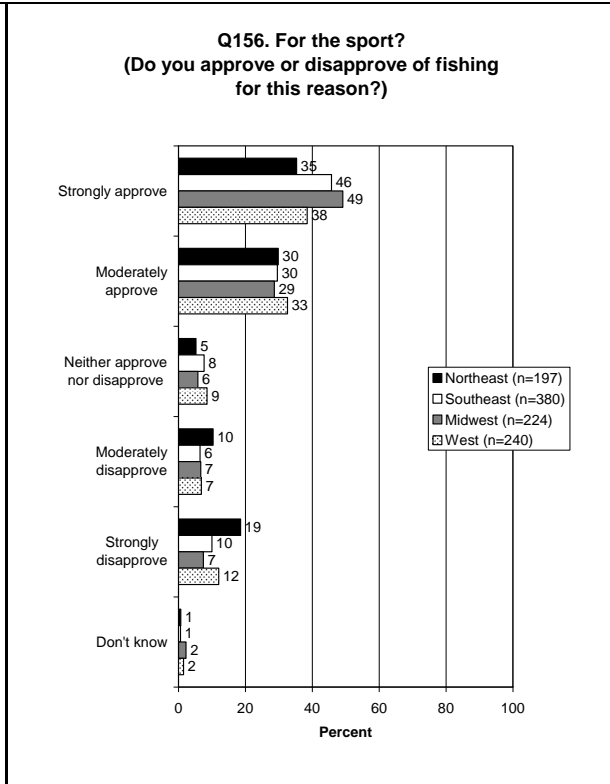
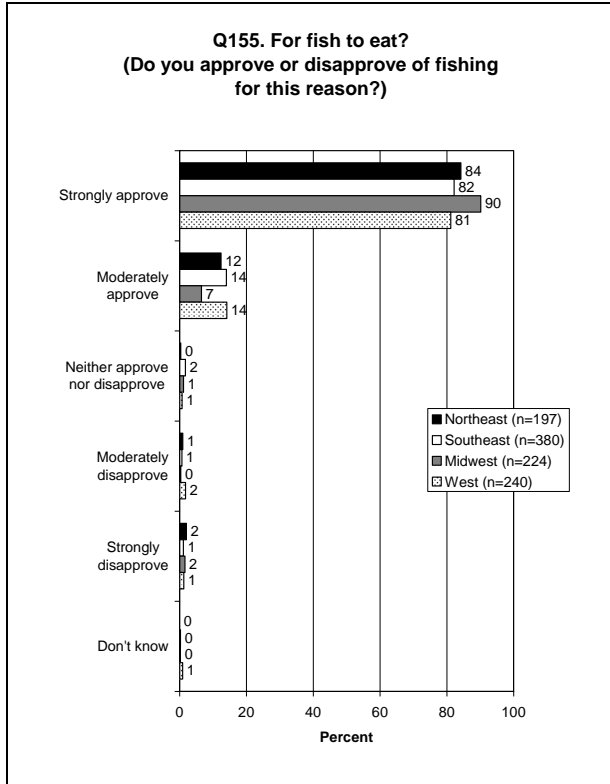


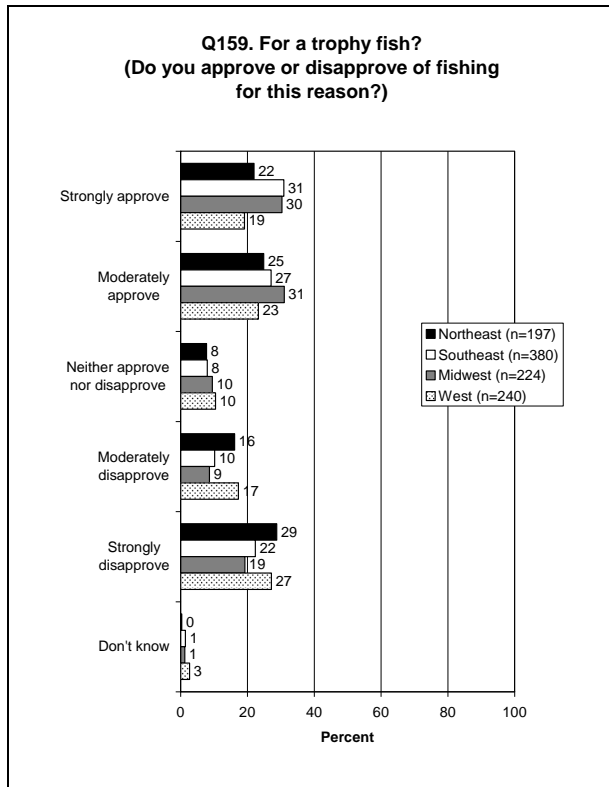
**Percent that strongly or moderately approve of fishing for each of the following reasons:  
(Midwest Region)**



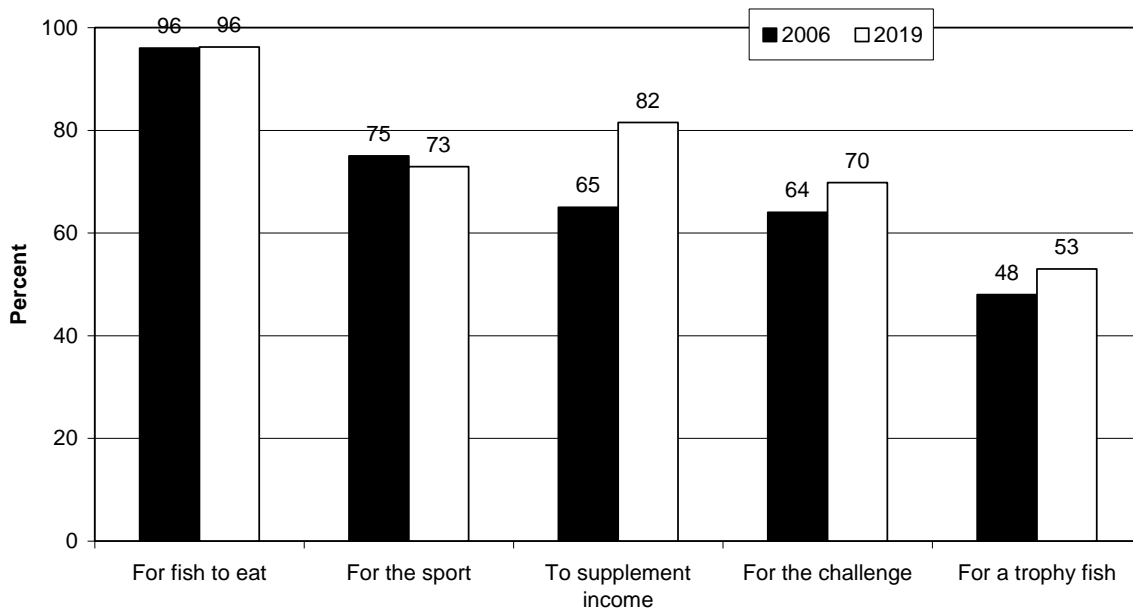
**Percent that strongly or moderately approve of fishing for each of the following reasons:  
(West Region)**







**Q155-159. Percent who strongly or moderately approve of fishing for the following motivations:**

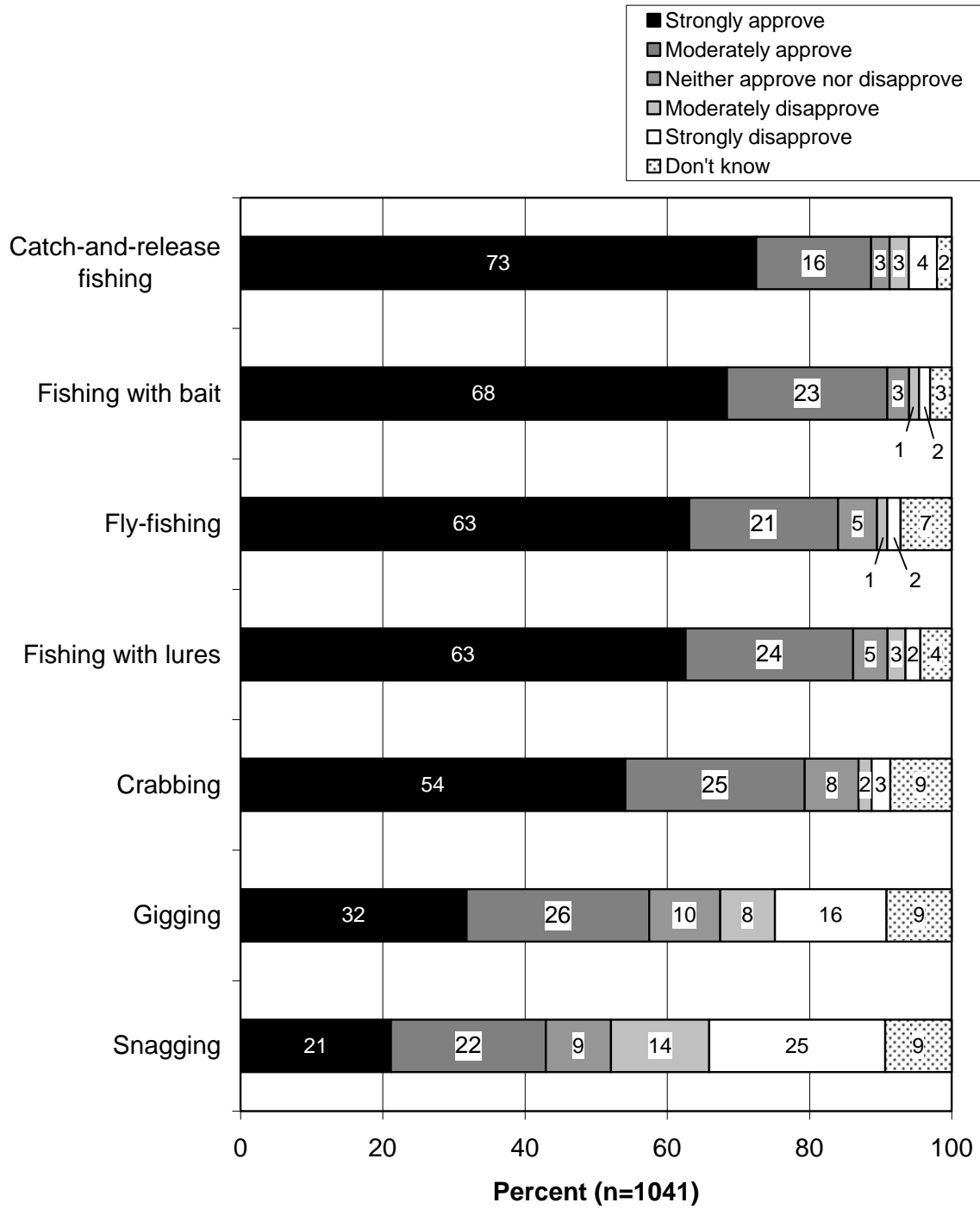


(2019 n=3014)

## METHODS OF FISHING

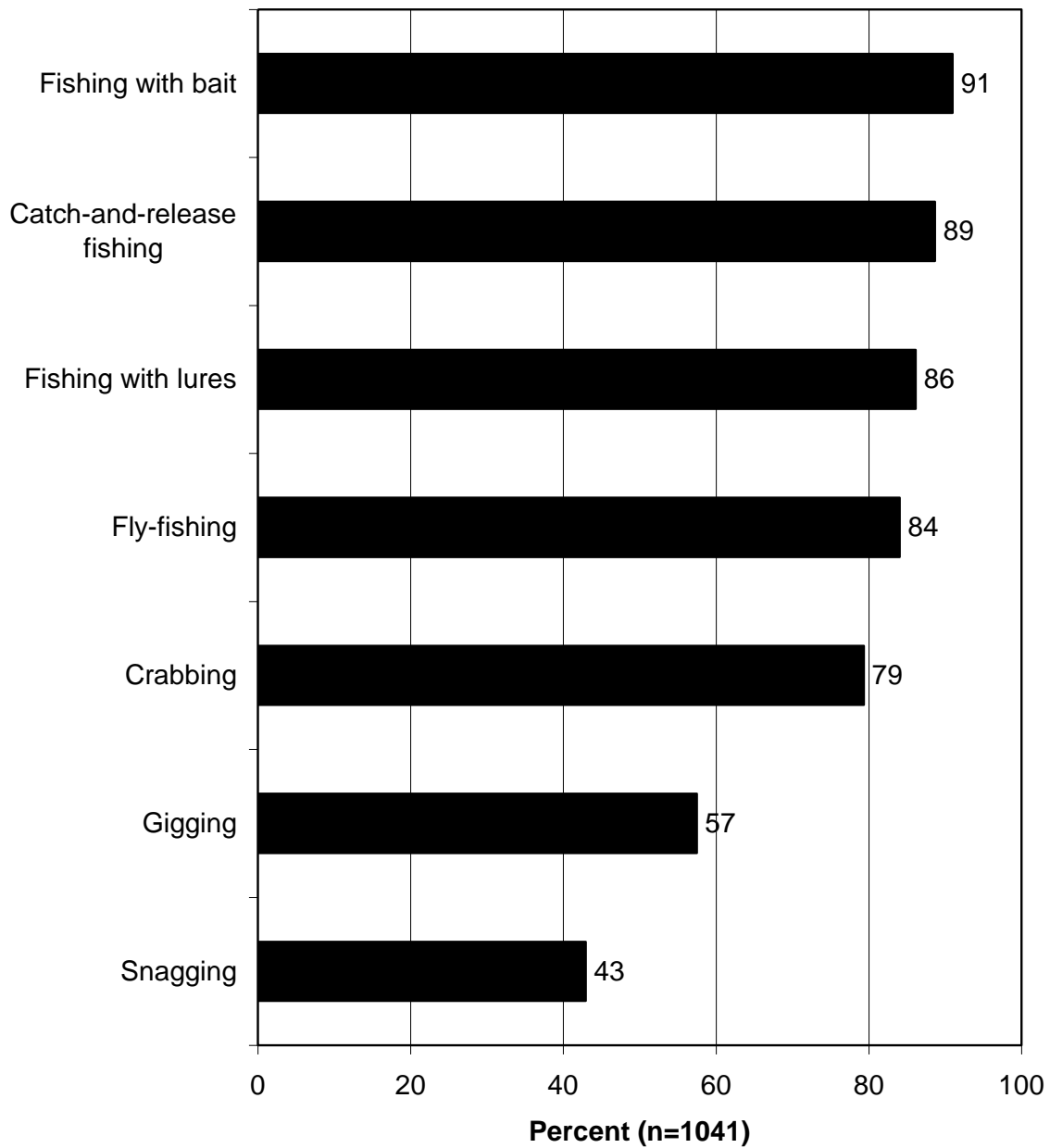
- As with hunting, the methods used to fish can influence Americans' attitudes toward the sport. Approval is high for the most common fishing methods (catch-and-release fishing, fishing with bait, fly-fishing, and fishing with lures). Crabbing has slightly lower approval, and then there is a sharp decline in approval for gigging and snagging. The fishing methods asked about in the survey and the percentages who approve of each are listed below, in descending order of *strong* approval:
- Catch-and-release fishing (89% approve; 73% *strongly* approve)
  - Fishing with bait (91% approve; 68% *strongly* approve)
  - Fly-fishing (84% approve; 63% *strongly* approve)
  - Fishing with lures (86% approve; 63% *strongly* approve)
  - Crabbing (79% approve; 54% *strongly* approve)
  - Gigging (57% approve; 32% *strongly* approve)
  - Snagging (43% approve; 21% *strongly* approve)
    - The nationwide results for this series of fishing methods are shown together on one graph, followed by graphs showing the series results within each region and the regional crosstabulation for each method individually.
    - *Strong* approval is highest in the Midwest for all methods except crabbing, which has higher approval in the Northeast and Southeast.
    - Although the least popular methods of fishing are gigging and snagging, approval of each has increased substantially since 2006.

### Percent who [approve / disapprove] of fishing using each of the following methods:

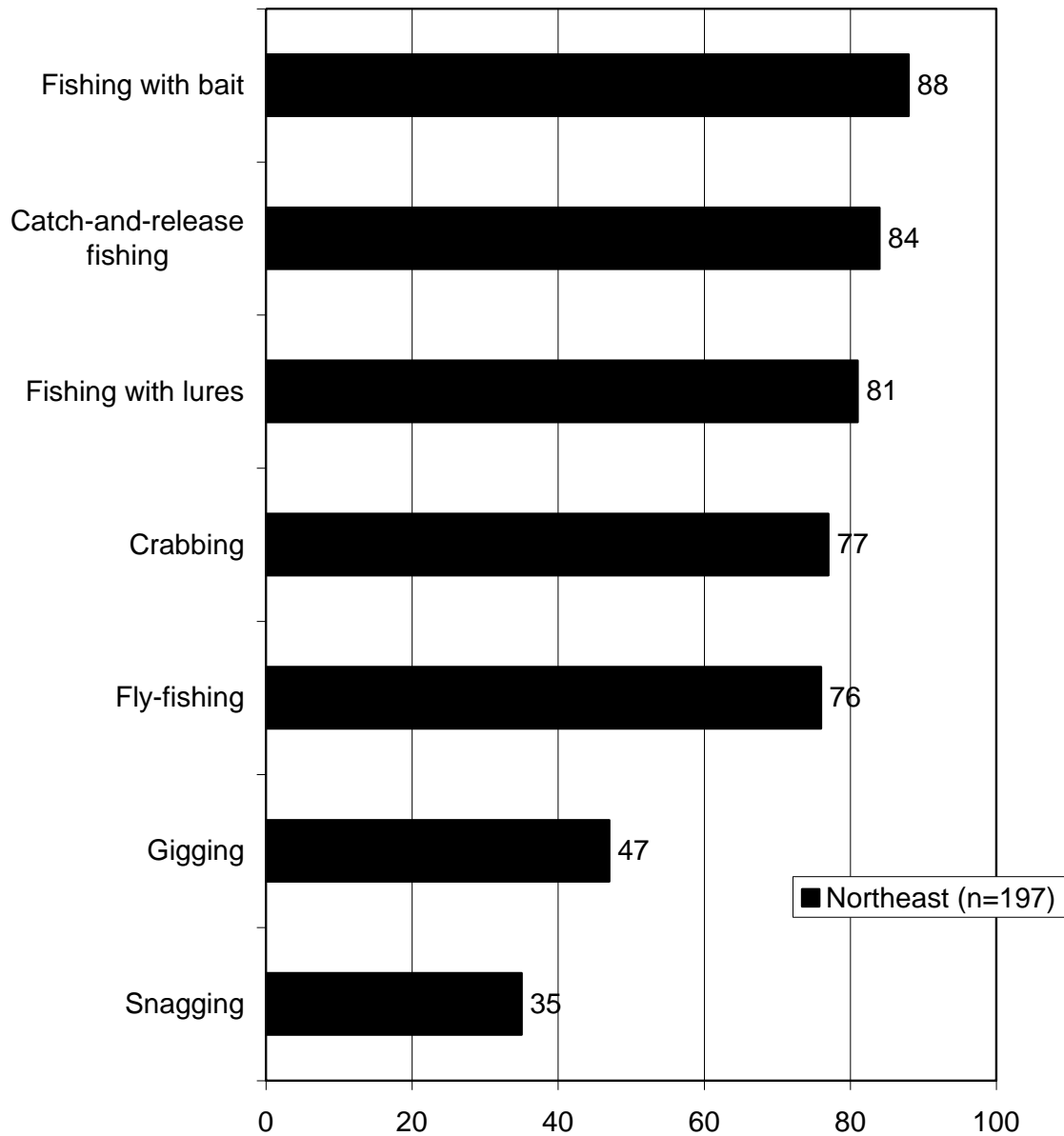




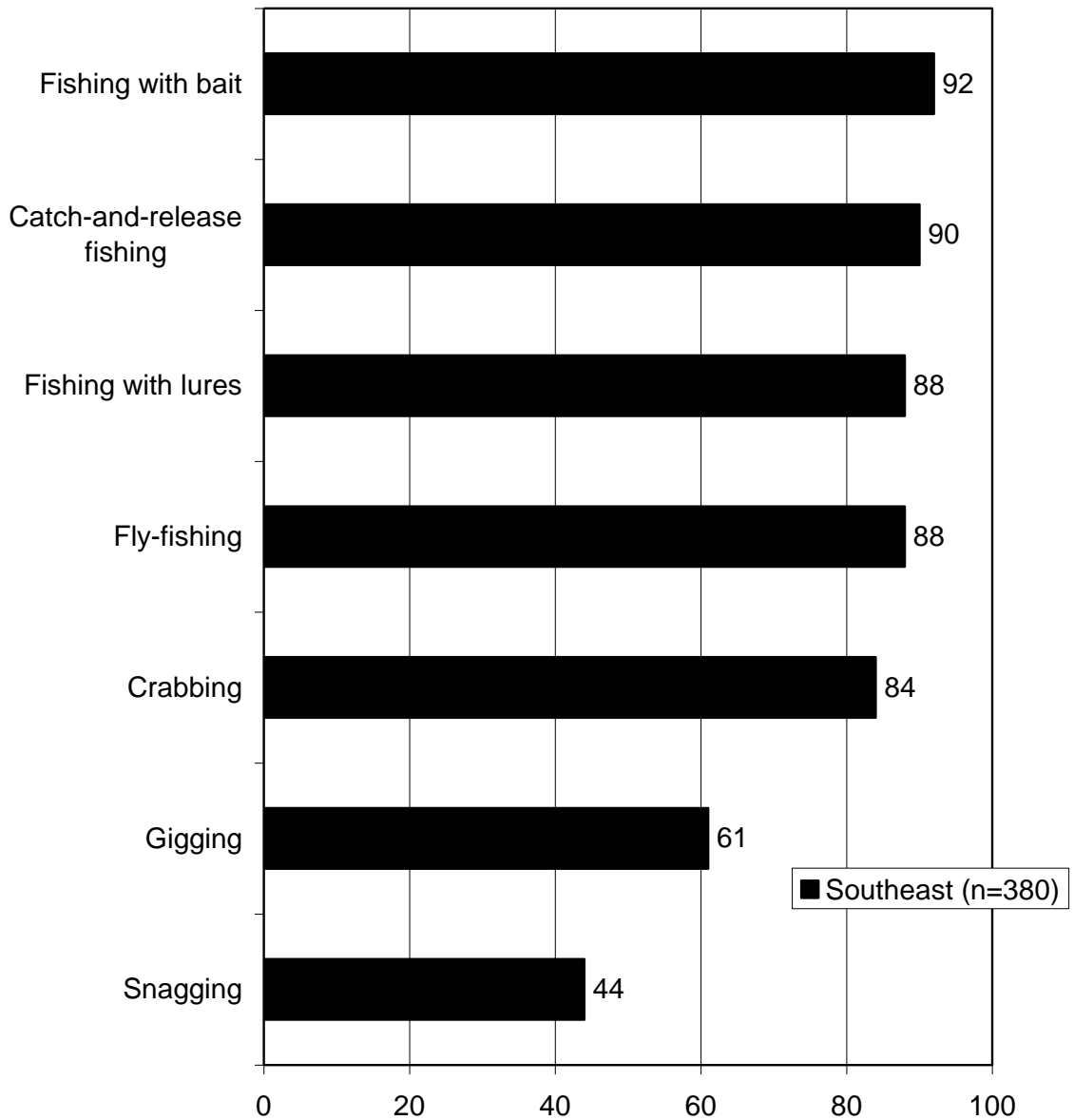
**Percent who strongly approve or moderately approve of fishing using each of the following methods:**



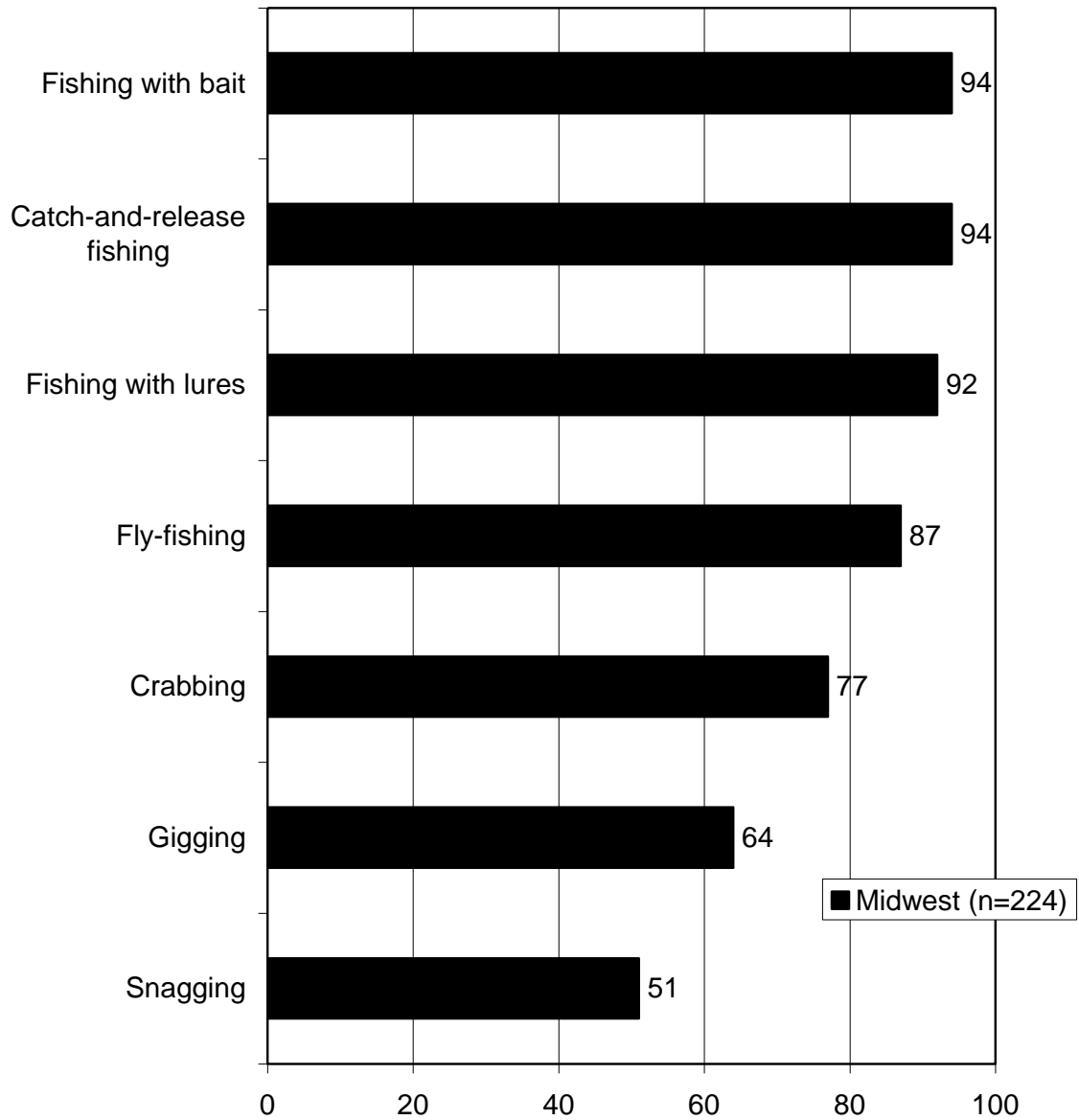
**Percent who strongly or moderately approve of fishing using each of the following methods:  
(Northeast Region)**



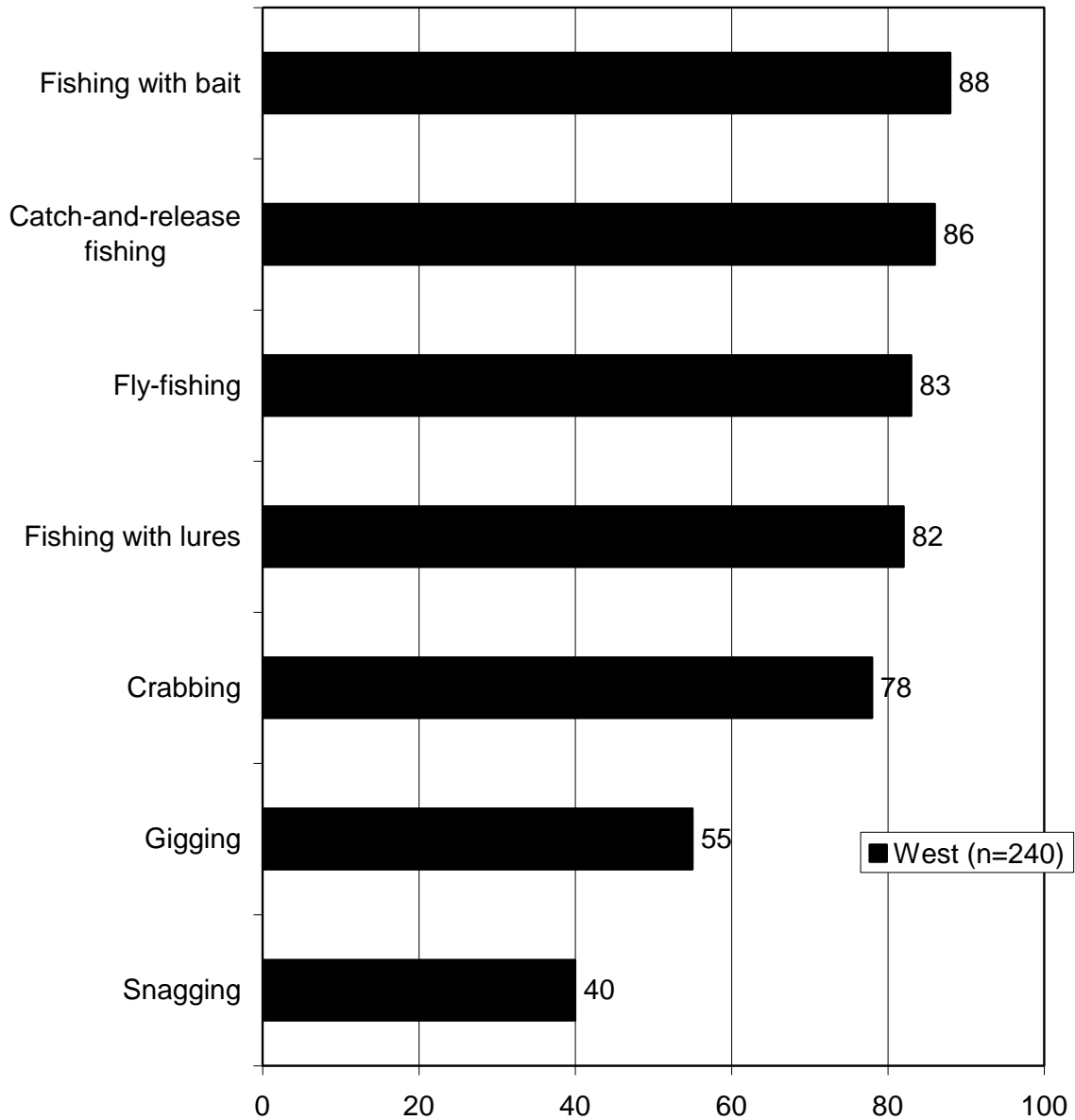
**Percent who strongly or moderately approve of fishing using each of the following methods: (Southeast Region)**

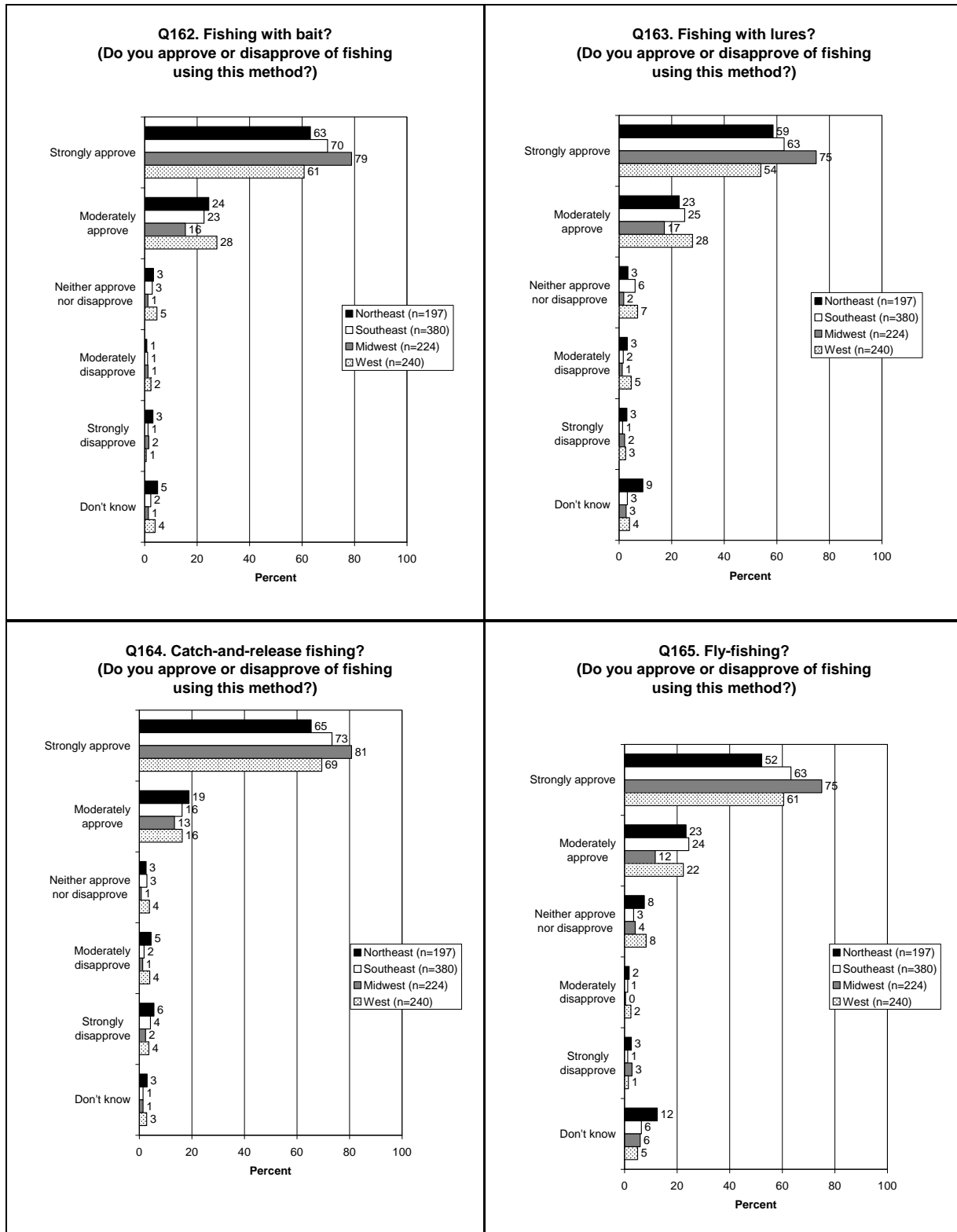


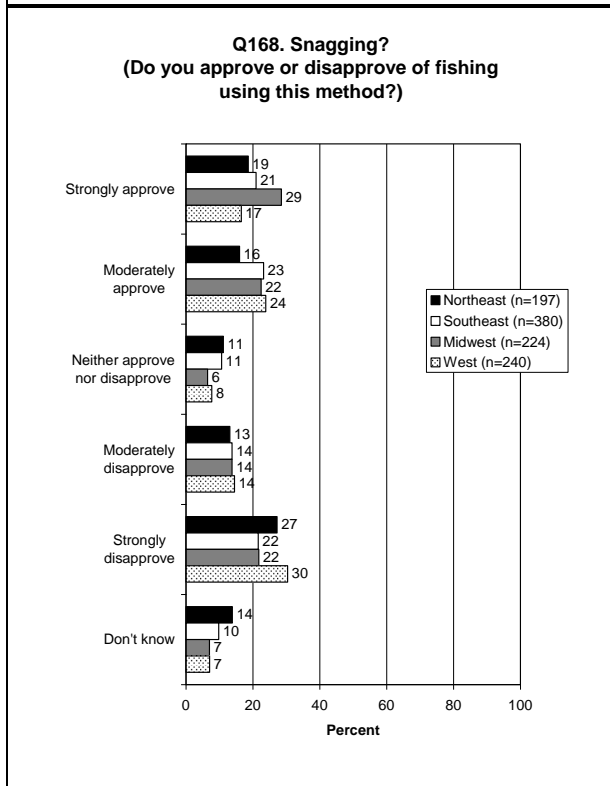
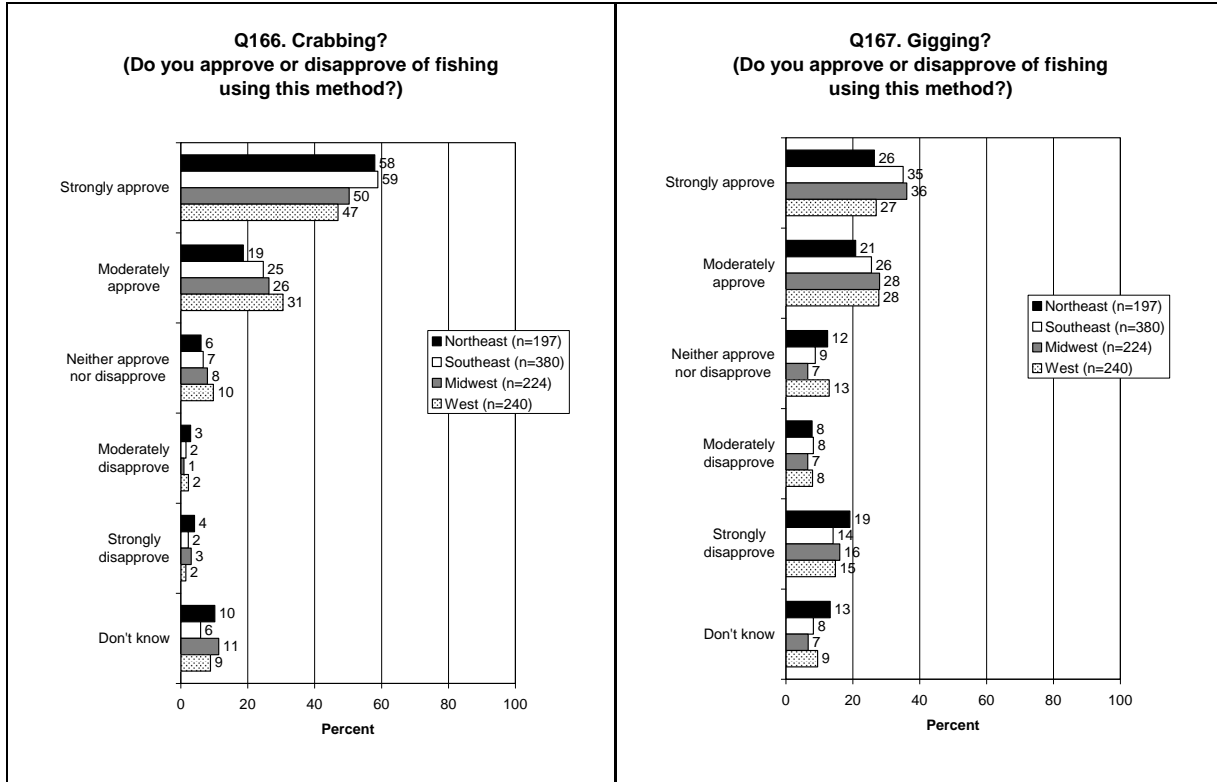
**Percent who strongly or moderately approve of fishing using each of the following methods:  
(Midwest Region)**



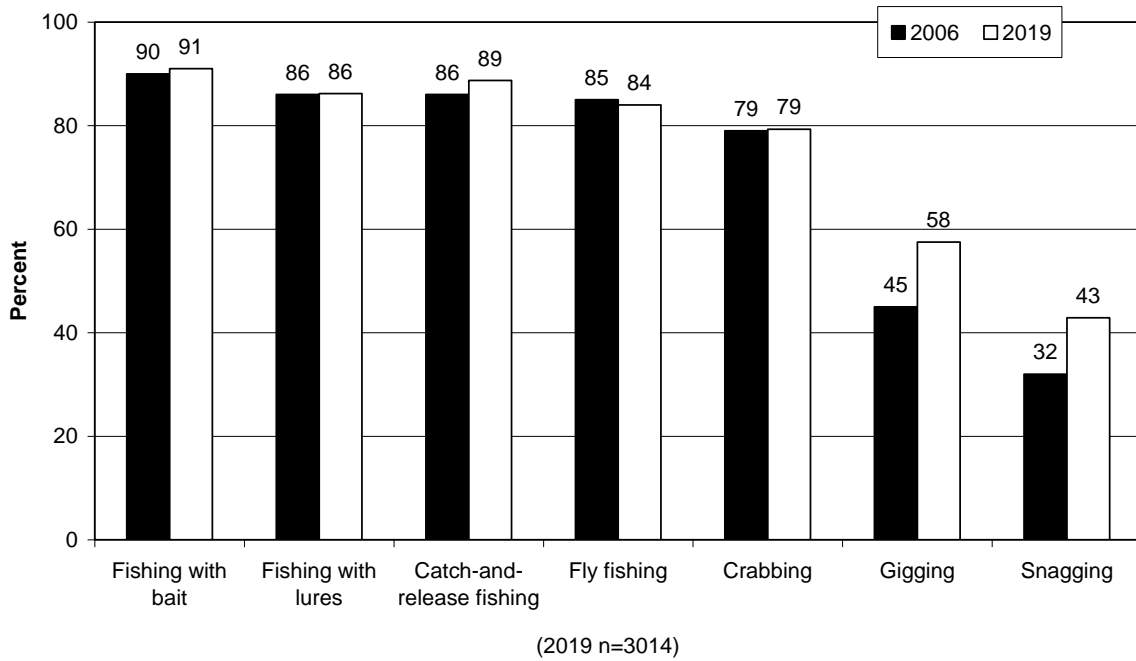
**Percent who strongly or moderately approve of fishing using each of the following methods:  
(West Region)**







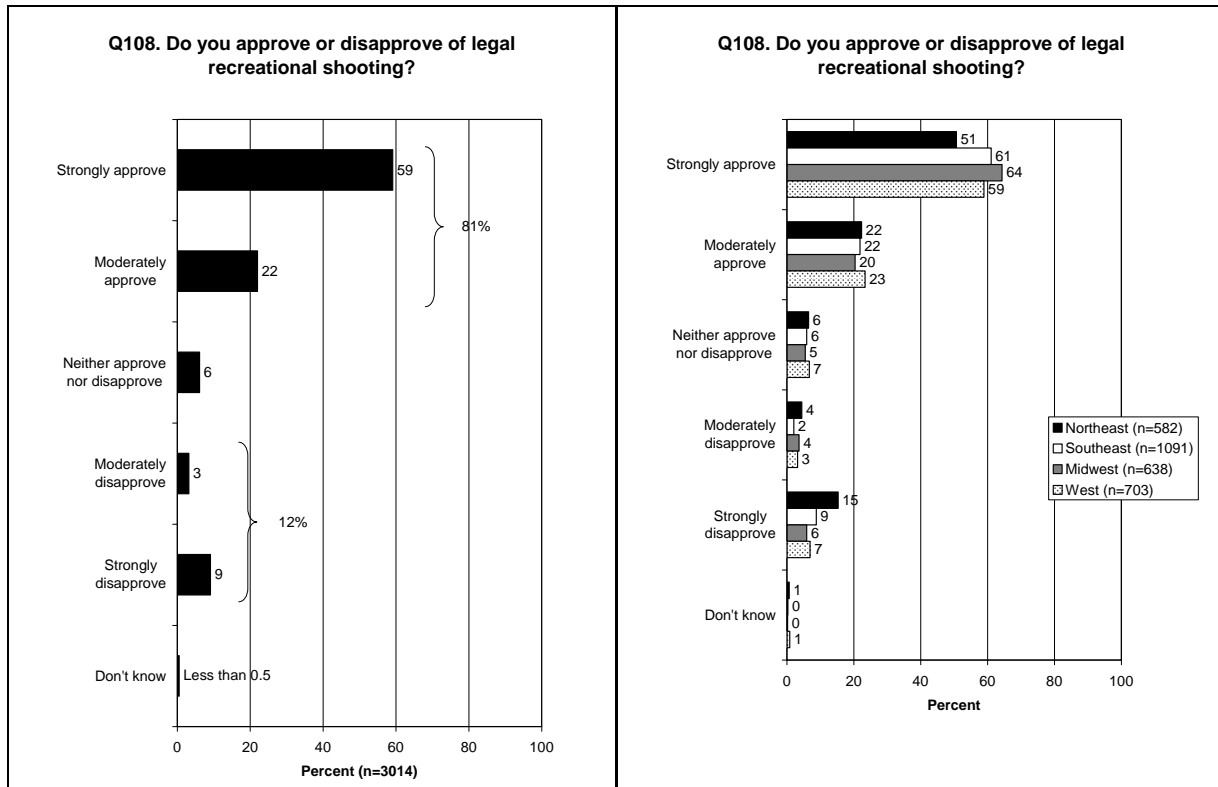
**Q162-168. Percent who strongly or moderately approve of fishing for each of the following methods:**



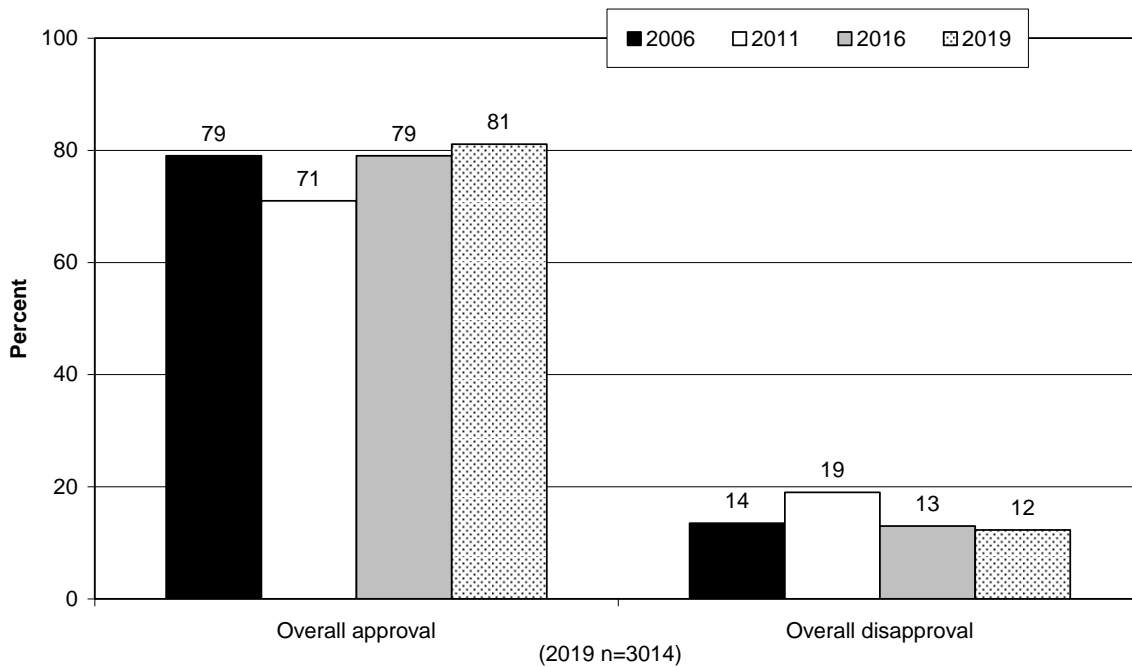


## ATTITUDES TOWARD SPORT SHOOTING IN THE UNITED STATES

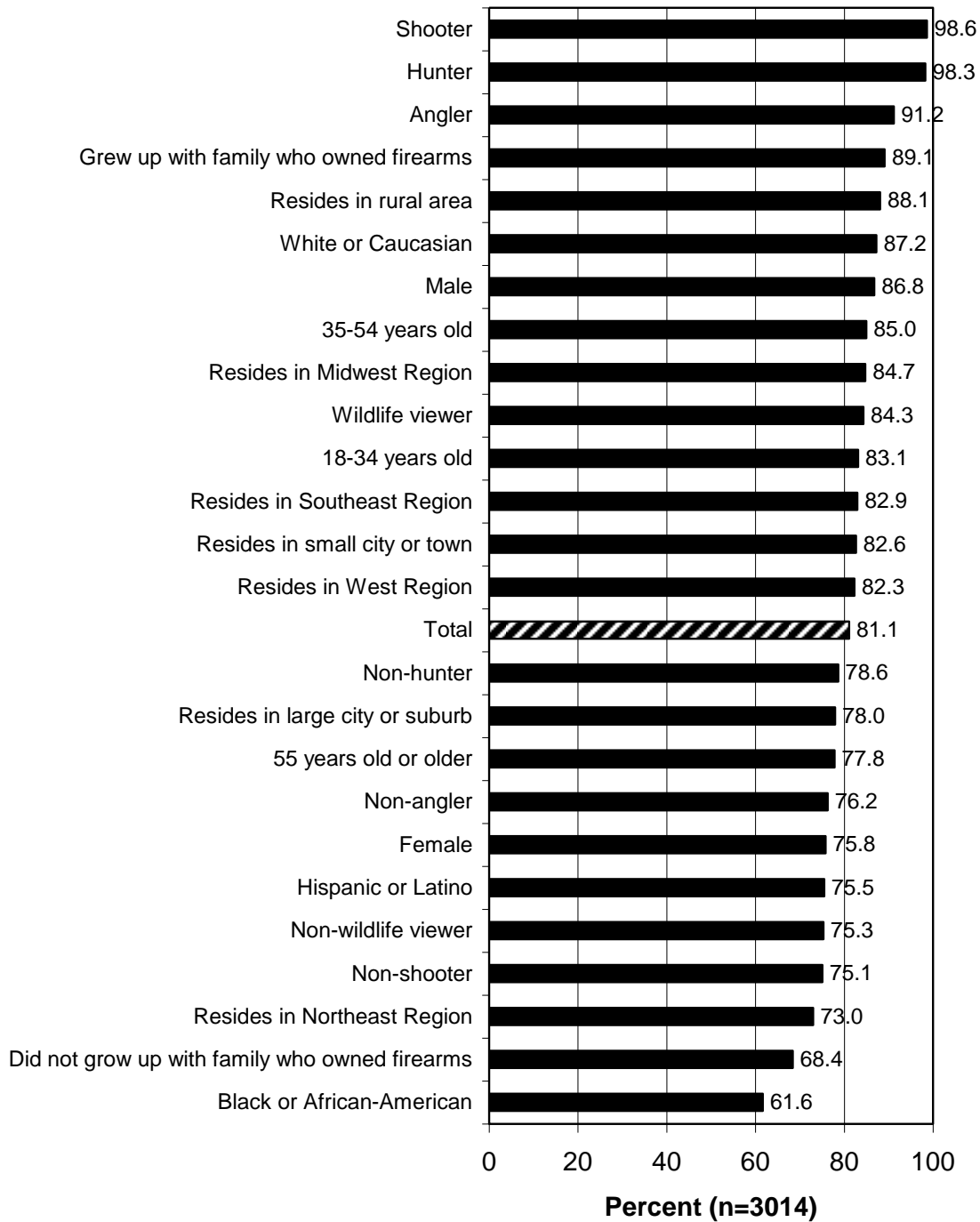
- Overall, 81% of Americans approve of legal recreational shooting, compared to 12% who disapprove.
  - As with hunting and fishing, approval is highest in the Midwest and lowest in the Northeast.
  - This approval rate is consistent with the 2016 survey.
    - Groups most commonly associated with approval of sport shooting are hunters and anglers, those who grew up with a family that owned firearms, those who live in rural areas, white residents, and male residents. At the opposite end, the groups most commonly associated with disapproval of shooting are black residents, those who did *not* grow up with a family that owned firearms, Northeast region residents, Hispanic residents, and female residents.
  
- The survey also asked respondents to select a statement that best reflects their opinion of recreational shooting sports. The three statements and the percentages who selected each are as follows:
  - Shooting sports are perfectly acceptable. (65%)
  - Shooting sports are OK, but maybe a little inappropriate now. (23%)
  - Shooting sports are inappropriate nowadays. (9%)
    - Residents of the Midwest and Southeast regions are the most likely to say shooting sports are perfectly acceptable, whereas those in the Northeast are the least likely to say this.
    - These results are consistent with the findings from 2011.



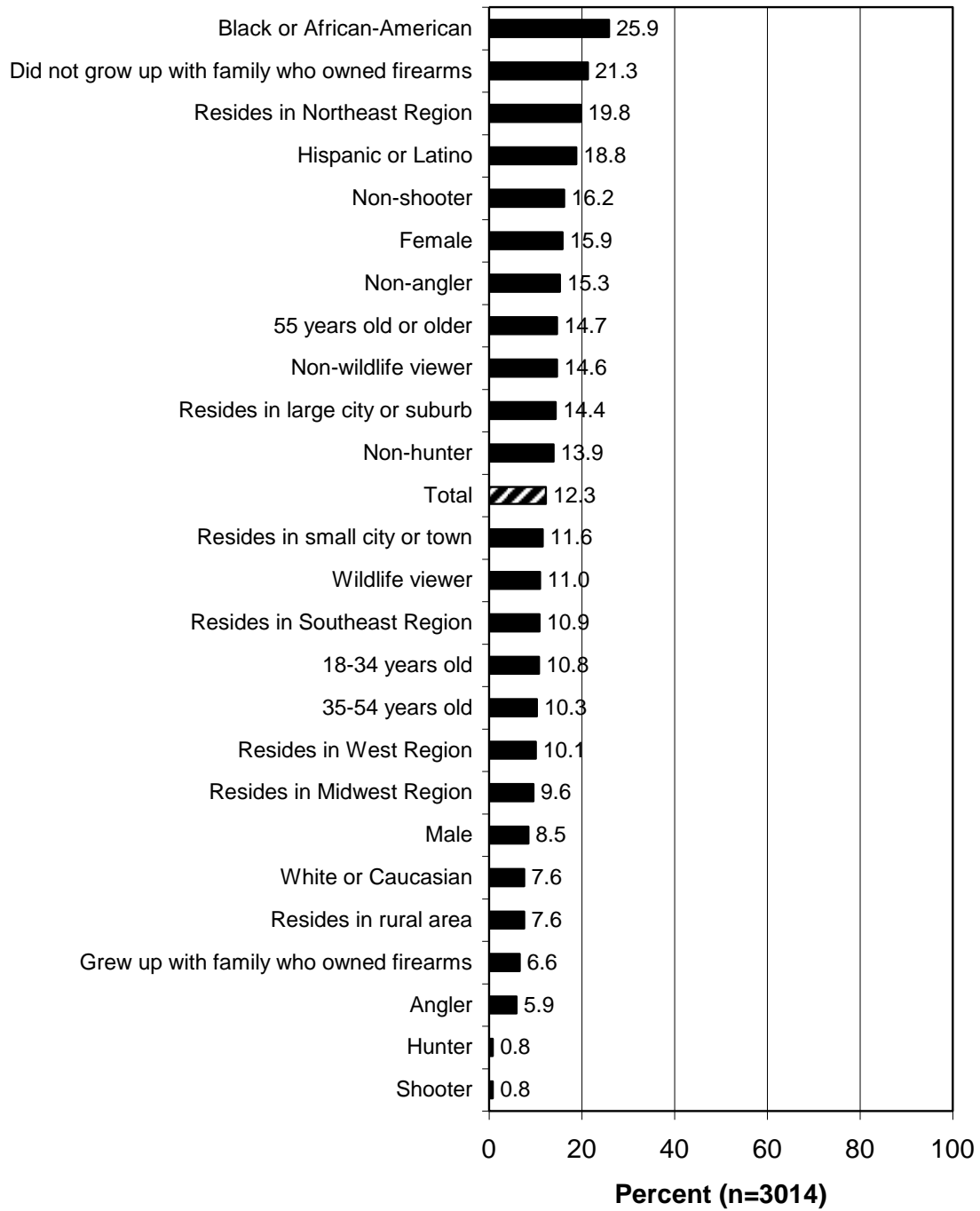
**Q108. Do you approve or disapprove of legal recreational shooting?**

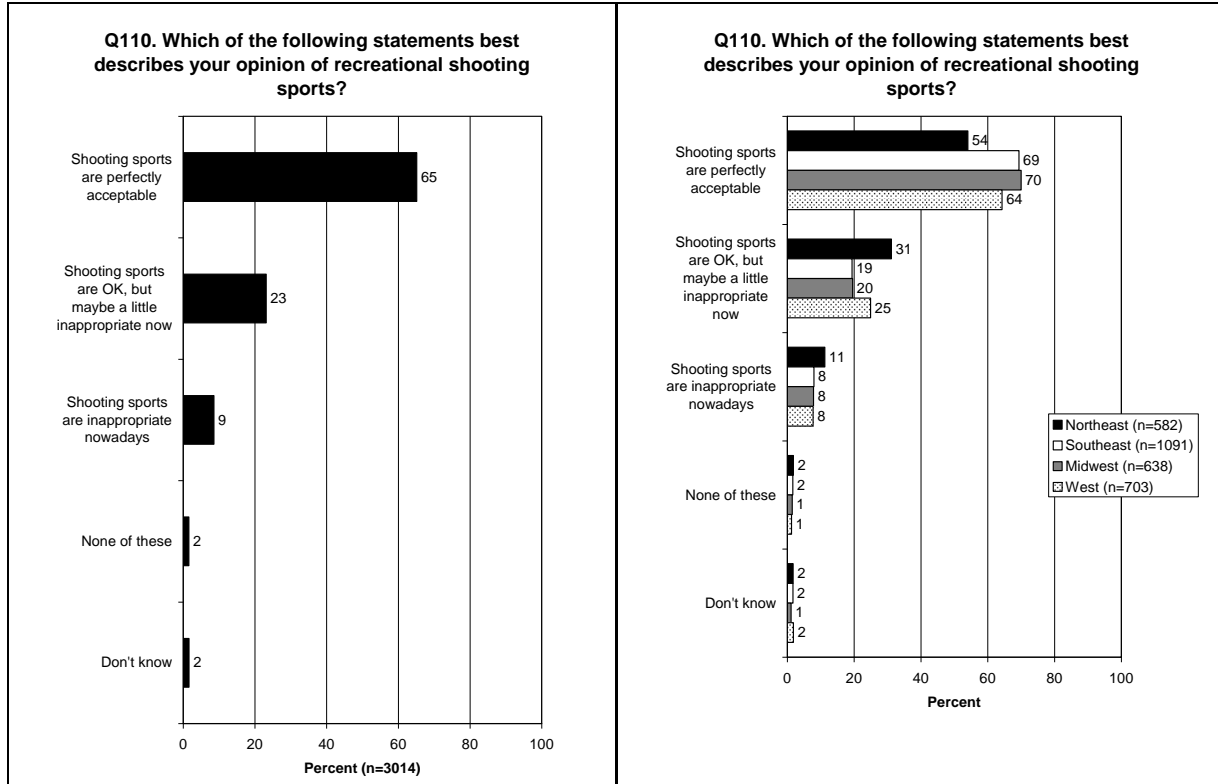


**Percent of each of the following groups who approve of legal recreational shooting:**

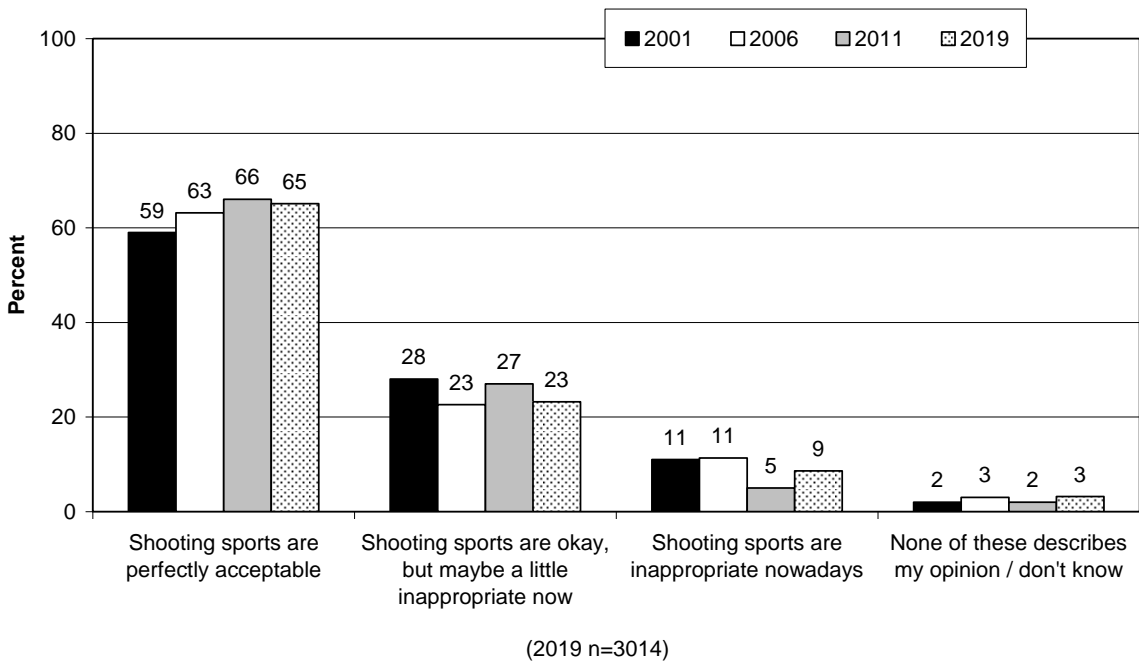


**Percent of each of the following groups who disapprove of legal recreational shooting:**



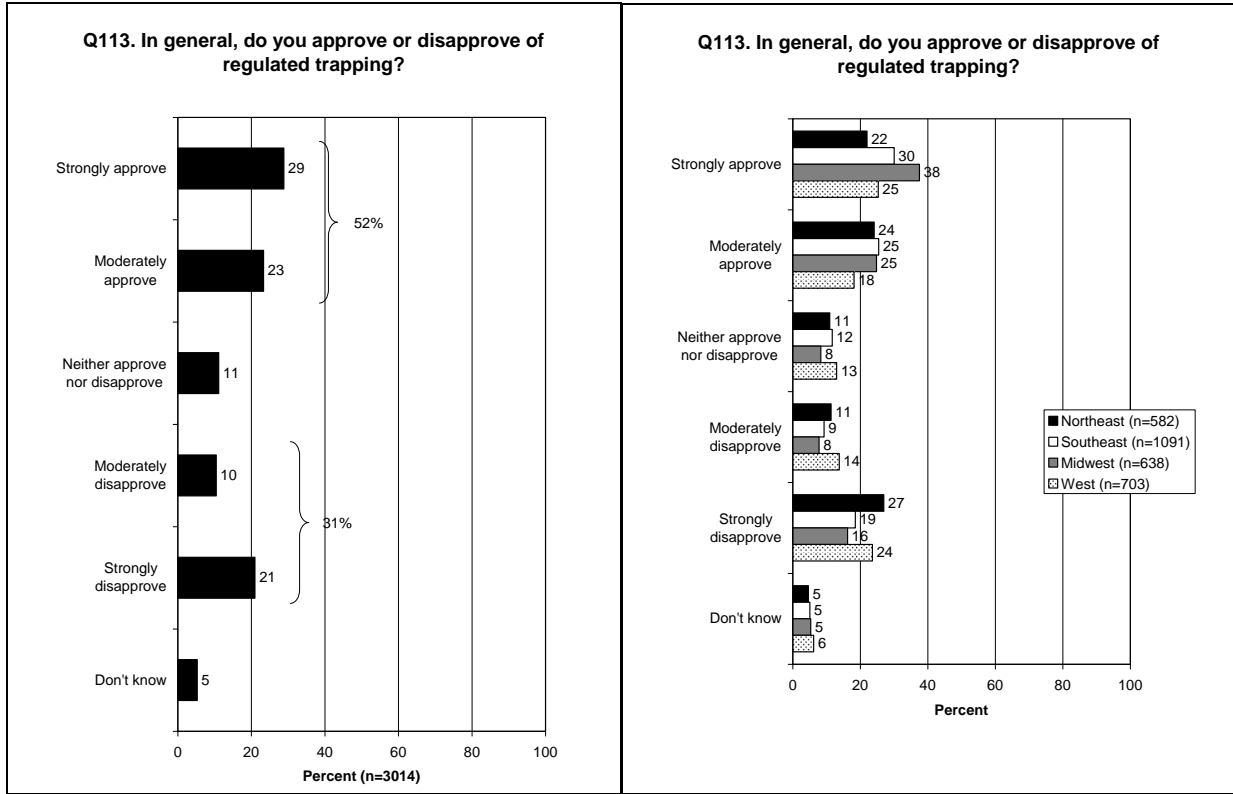


**Q110. Which of the following statements best describes your opinion of recreational shooting sports?**

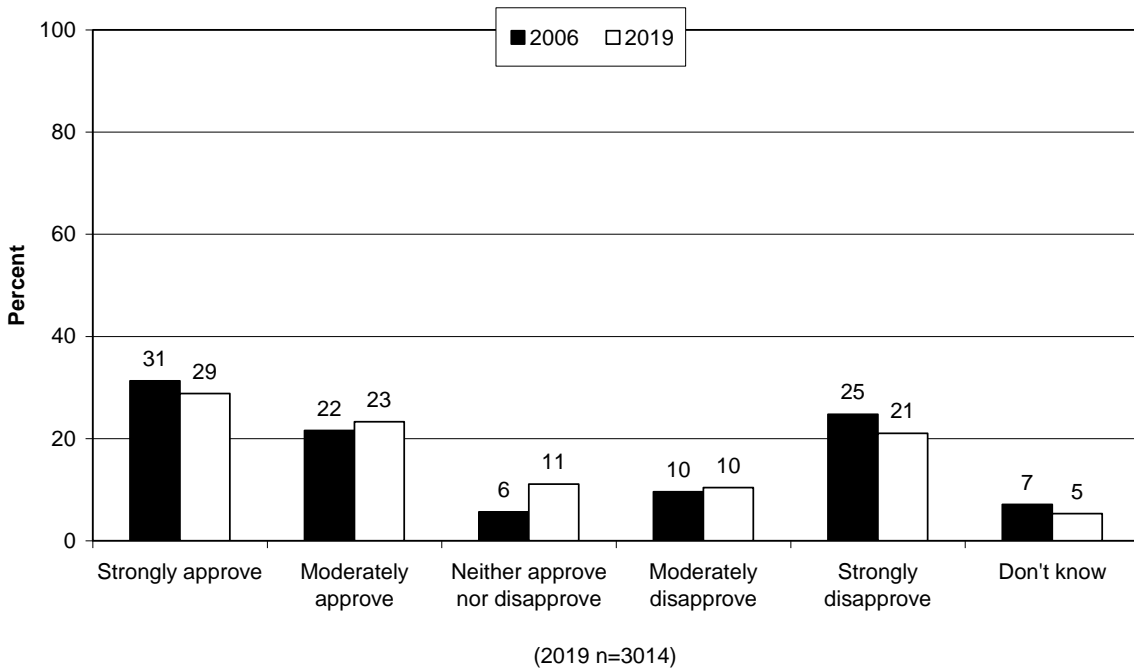


## ATTITUDES TOWARD TRAPPING IN THE UNITED STATES

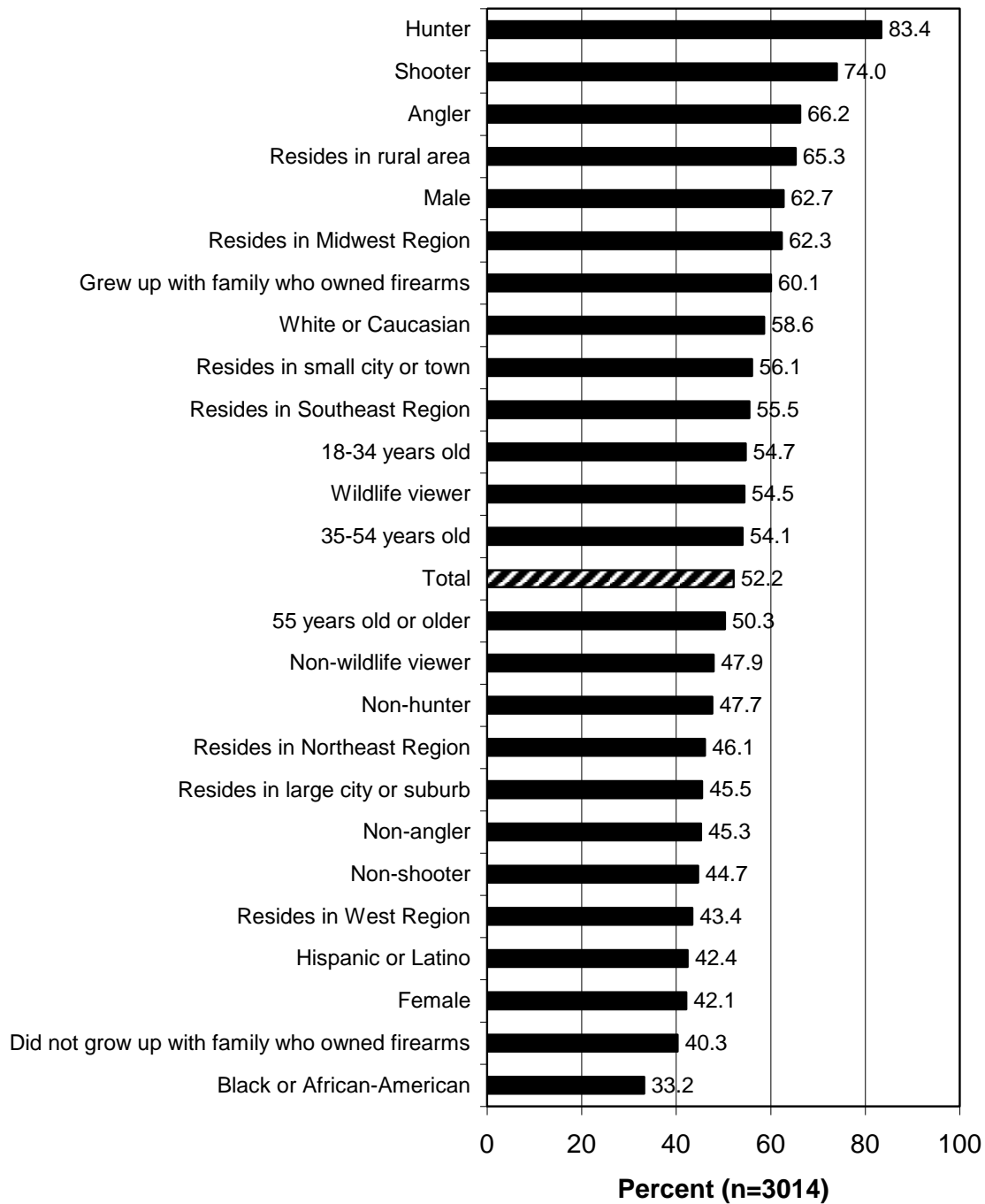
- Trapping is more controversial than the other outdoor recreation activities discussed in this study. A slight majority of Americans (52%) approve of regulated trapping, while 31% disapprove.
  - Approval is higher in the Midwest and Southeast regions, and disapproval is higher in the Northeast and West regions.
  - Since 2006, overall approval has remained consistent but *strong* disapproval has decreased slightly.
    - Those who participate in hunting, sport shooting, and fishing are considerably more likely to approve of trapping than is the average American. Other groups more likely to approve of trapping are those in rural areas, male residents, Midwest region residents, those who grew up with a family that owned firearms, and white residents. Conversely, groups who are more likely to *disapprove* of trapping are black residents, those who did *not* grow up with a family that owned firearms, Hispanic residents, female residents, and those who live in the Northeast and West regions.
  
- Opinion is highly influenced by the stated reason for the trapping of wildlife. Approval is highest for trapping if it is for wildlife restoration and population control. Similarly, trapping to provide food or protect property has more approval than trapping for money, fur clothing, or recreation. The motivations asked about in the survey and the percentages who approve of each are listed below, in descending order of *strong* approval:
  - As part of a restoration program (84% approve; 59% *strongly* approve)
  - For subsistence (73% approve; 47% *strongly* approve)
  - To help control wildlife populations (73% approve; 47% *strongly* approve)
  - For food (72% approve; 44% *strongly* approve)
  - To reduce damages to crops and gardens (69% approve; 39% *strongly* approve)
  - To reduce damage to human property (65% approve; 35% *strongly* approve)
  - As part of a biological study (64% approve; 33% *strongly* approve)
  - To make money (35% approve; 16% *strongly* approve)
  - For fur clothing (30% approve; 13% *strongly* approve)
  - For recreation (28% approve; 10% *strongly* approve)
    - The nationwide results for this series of motivations are shown together on one graph, followed by graphs showing the series results within each region and the regional crosstabulation for each motivation individually.
    - For most of these motivations, approval of trapping is highest in the Midwest region, although trapping to protect crops or gardens and human property has the most approval in the Southeast. Disapproval is highest in the Northeast region for nearly all trapping motivations.



**Q113. In general, do you approve or disapprove of regulated trapping?**

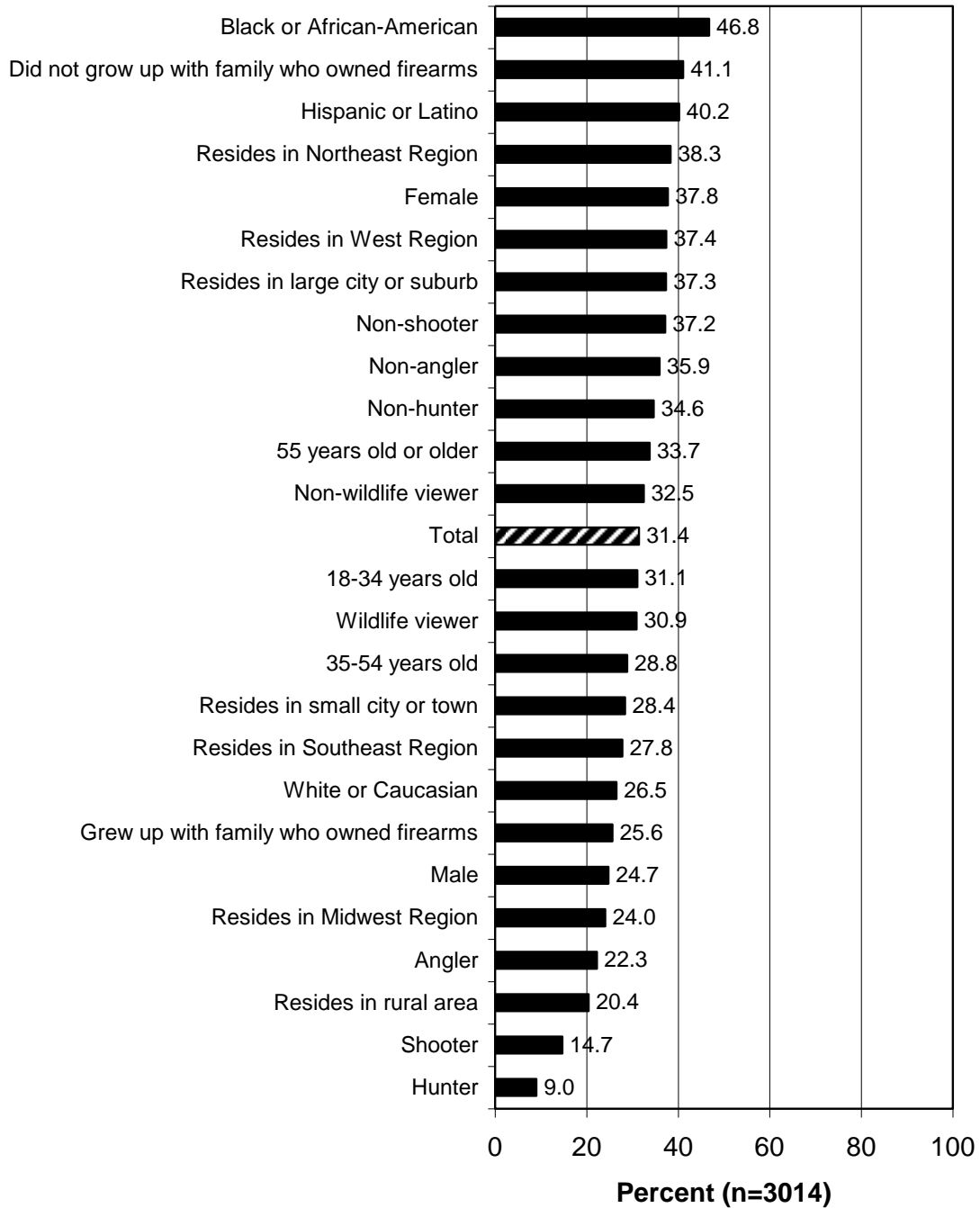


**Percent of each of the following groups who approve of regulated trapping:**

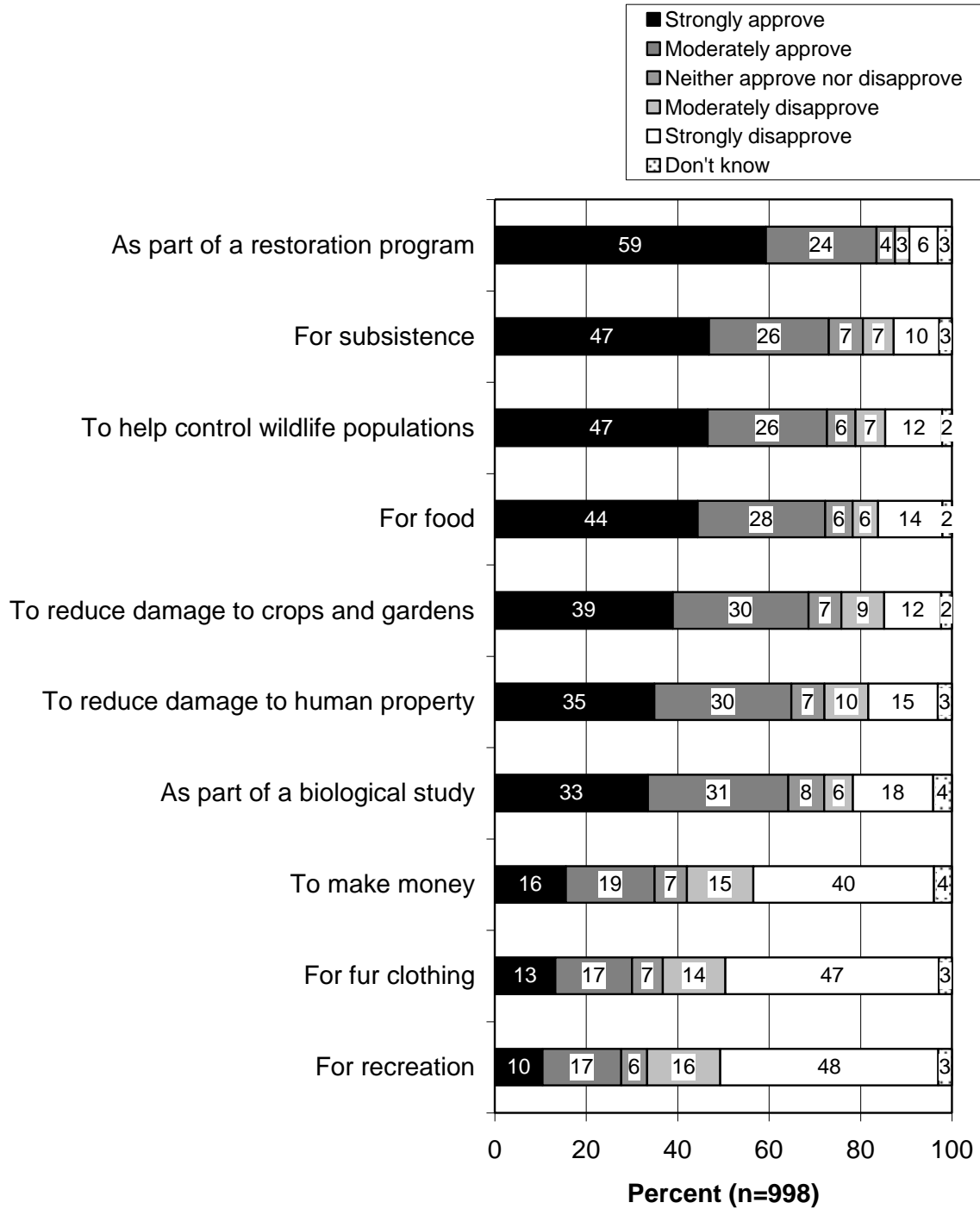




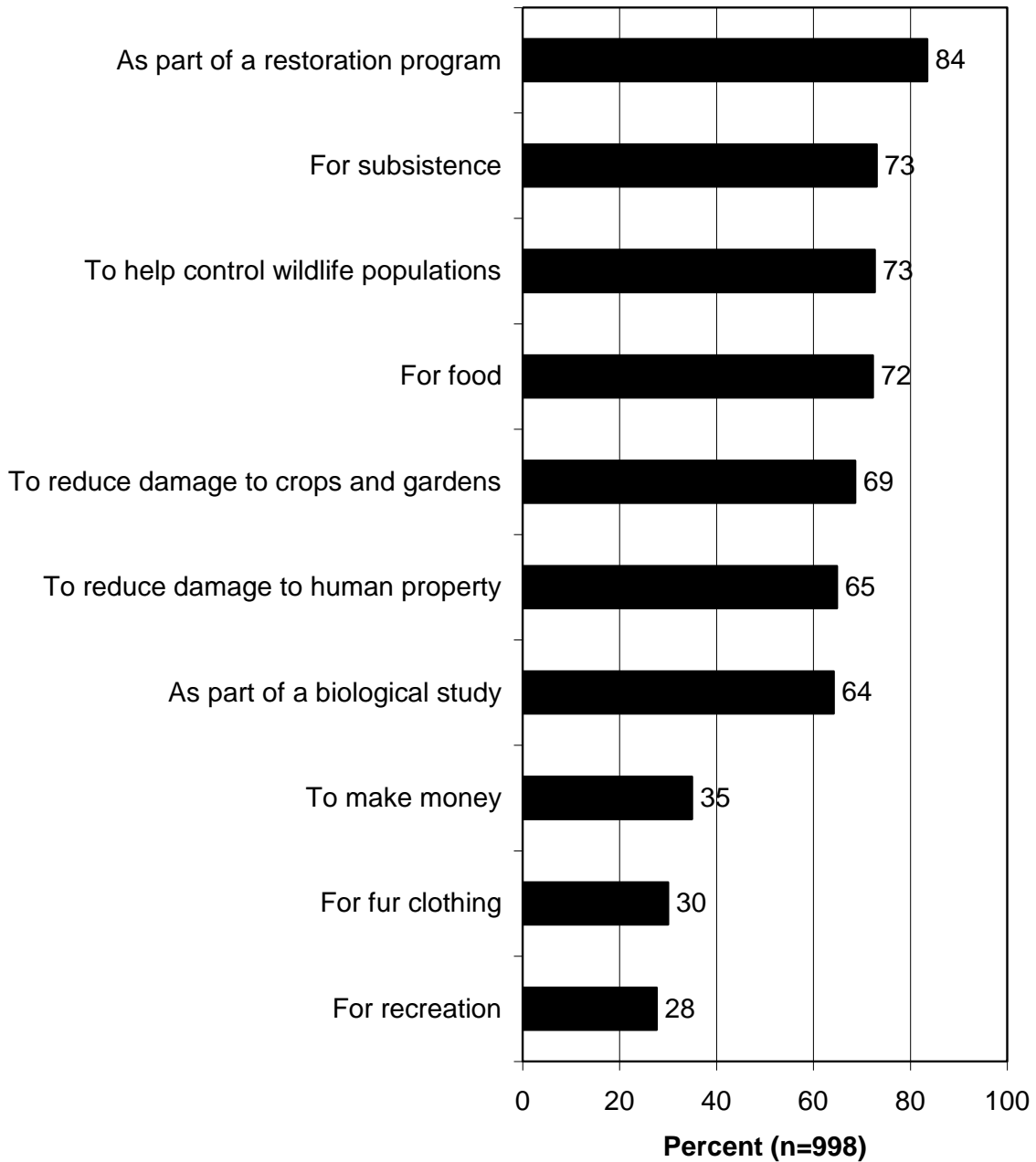
**Percent of each of the following groups who disapprove of regulated trapping:**



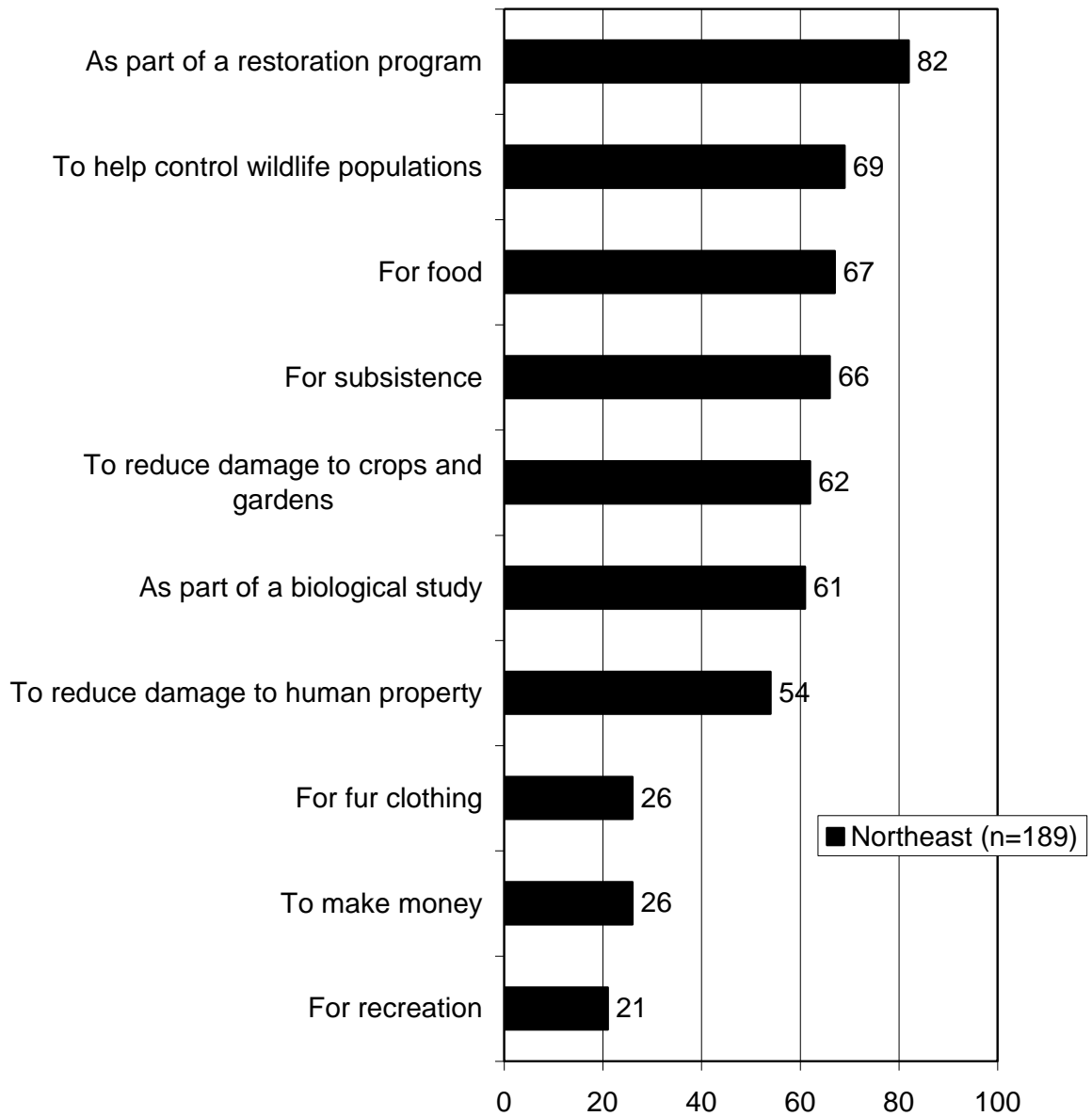
**Percent who [approve / disapprove] of trapping for each of the following reasons:**



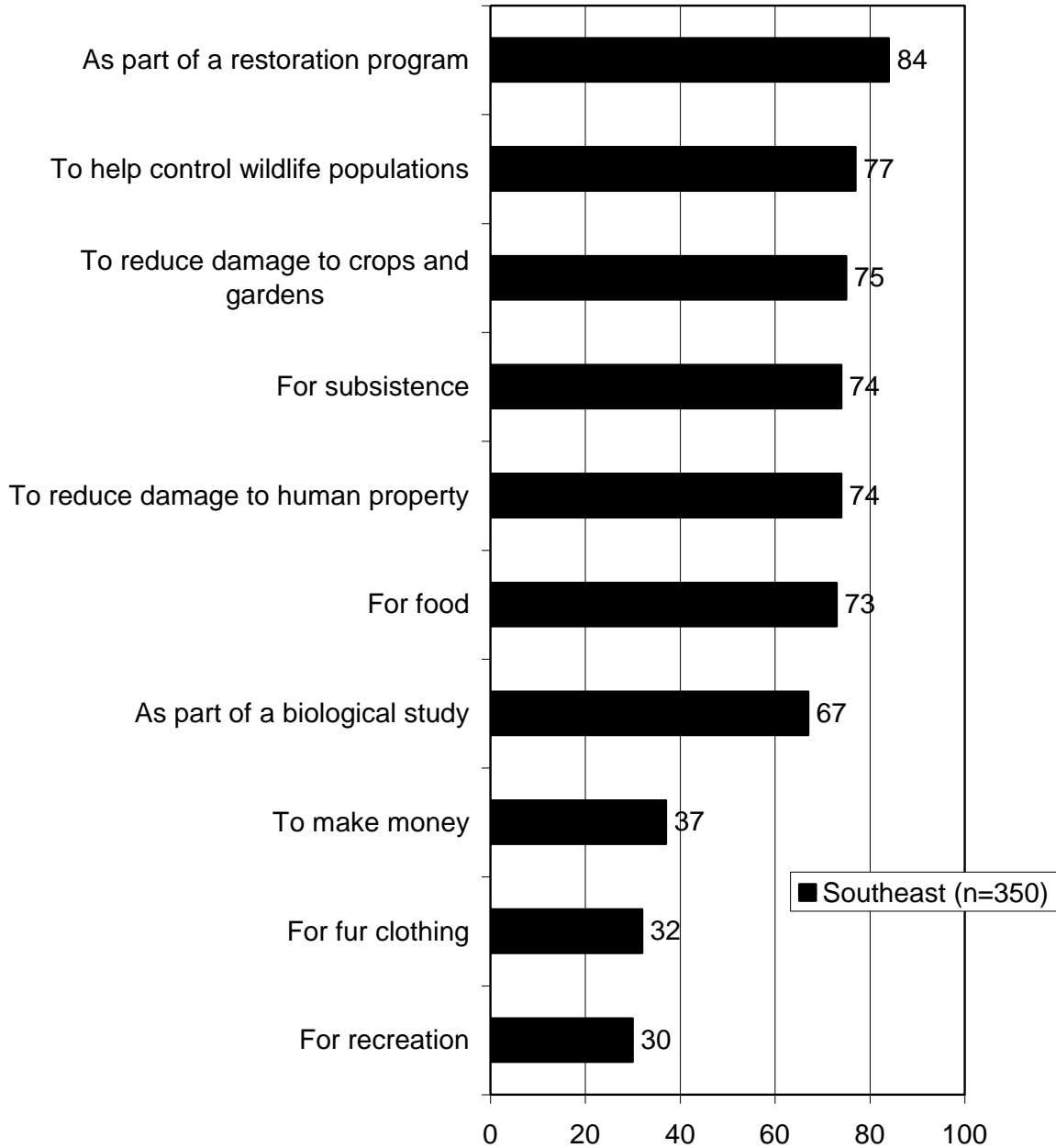
**Percent who strongly approve or moderately approve of trapping for each of the following reasons:**



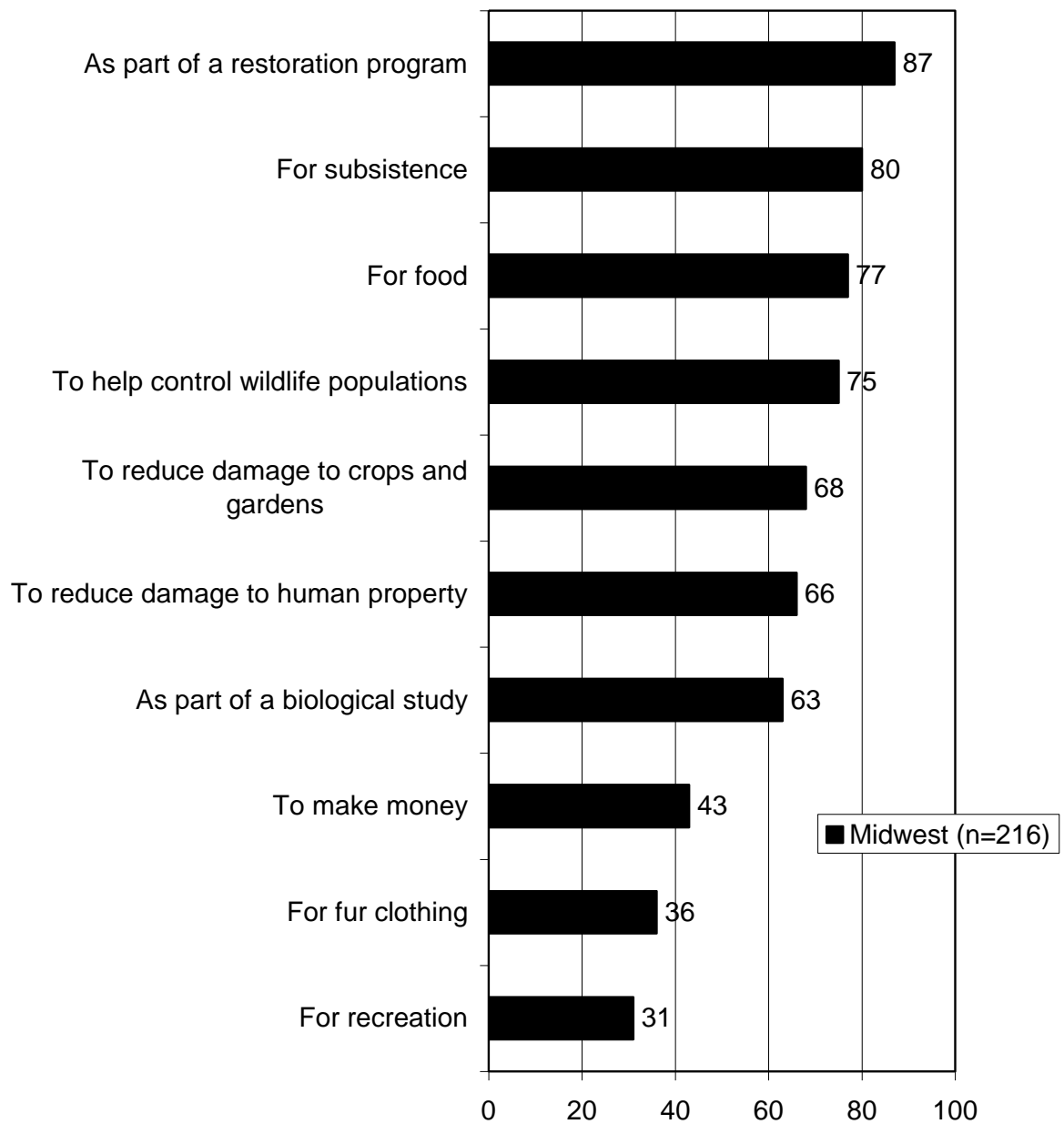
**Percent who strongly or moderately approve of trapping for each of the following reasons:  
(Northeast Region)**



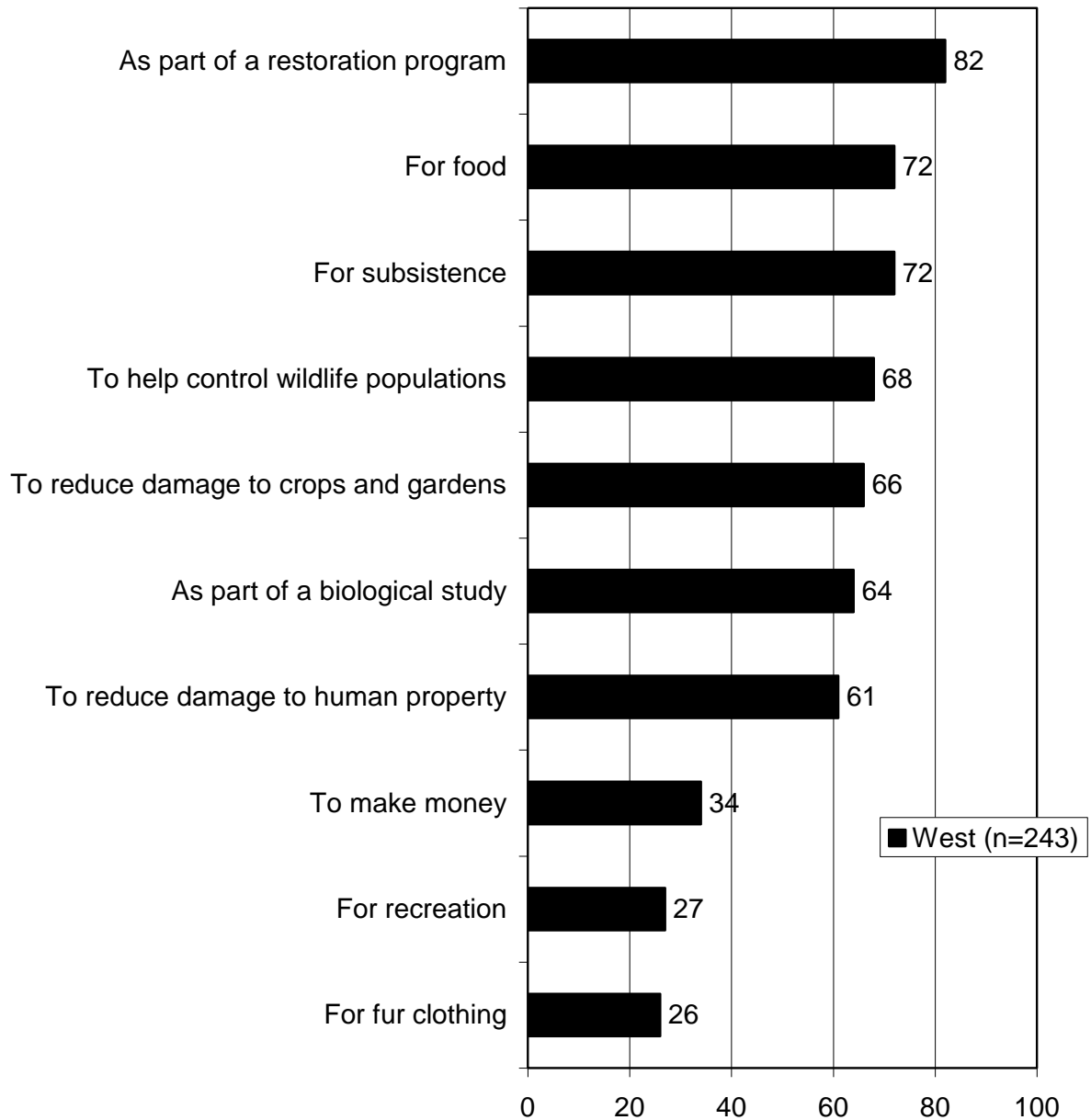
**Percent who strongly or moderately approve of trapping for each of the following reasons:  
(Southeast Region)**

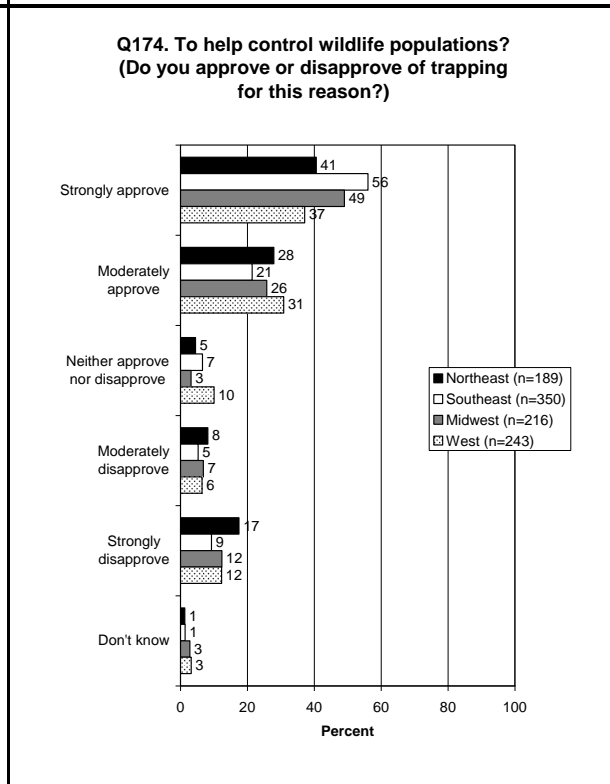
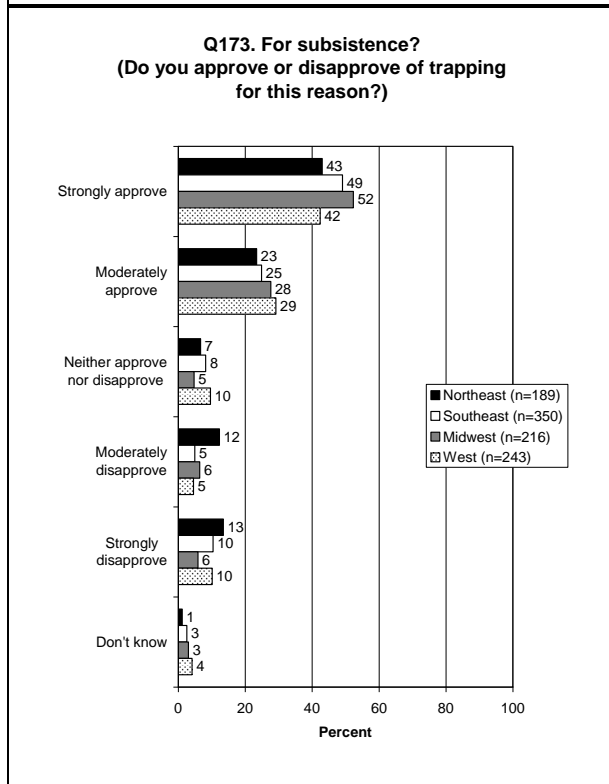
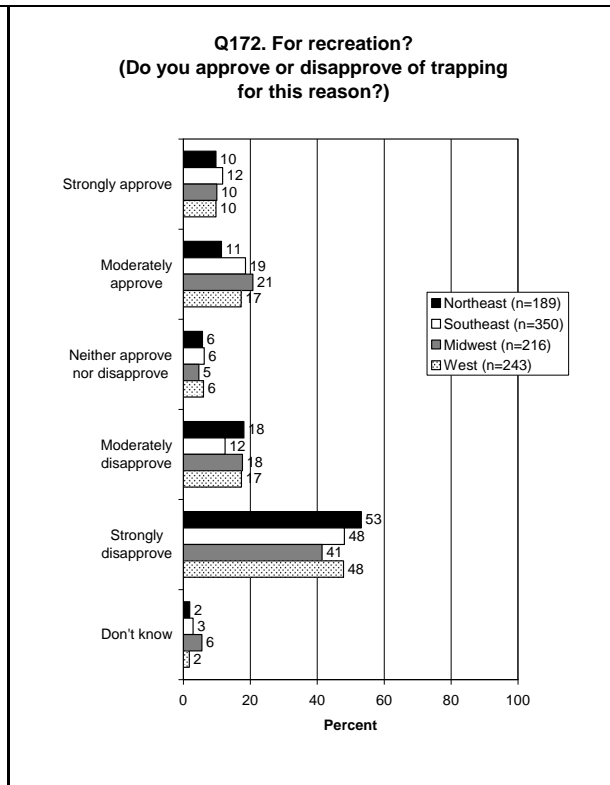
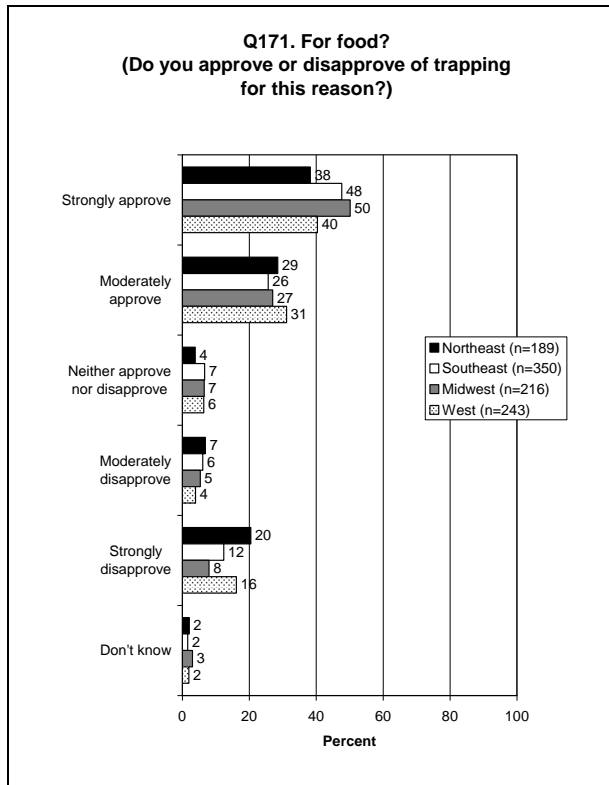


**Percent who strongly or moderately approve of trapping for each of the following reasons:  
(Midwest Region)**

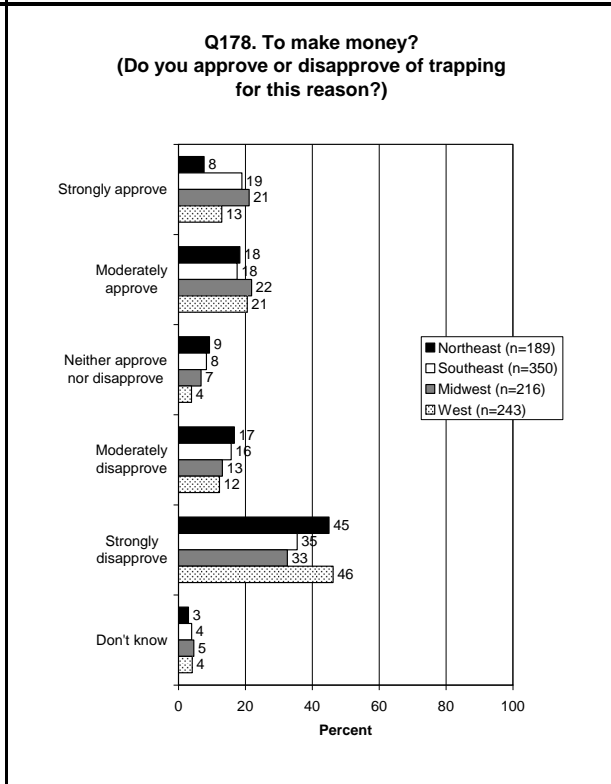
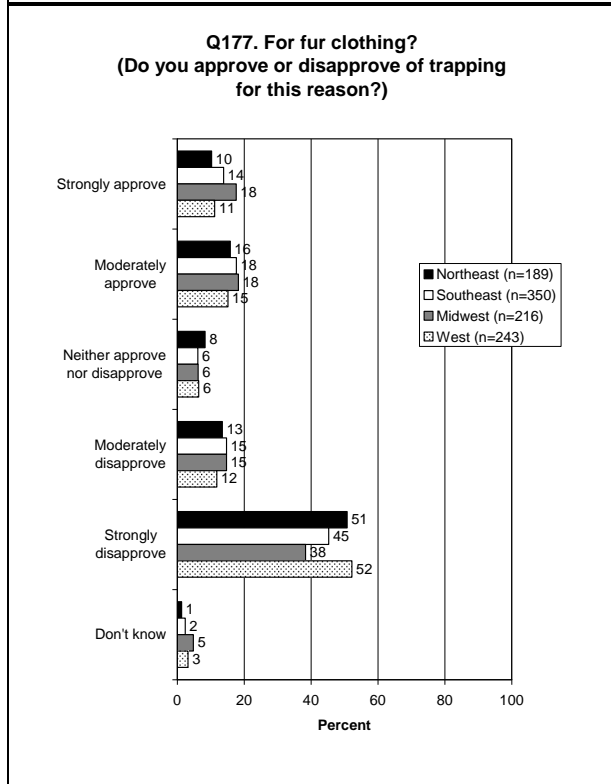
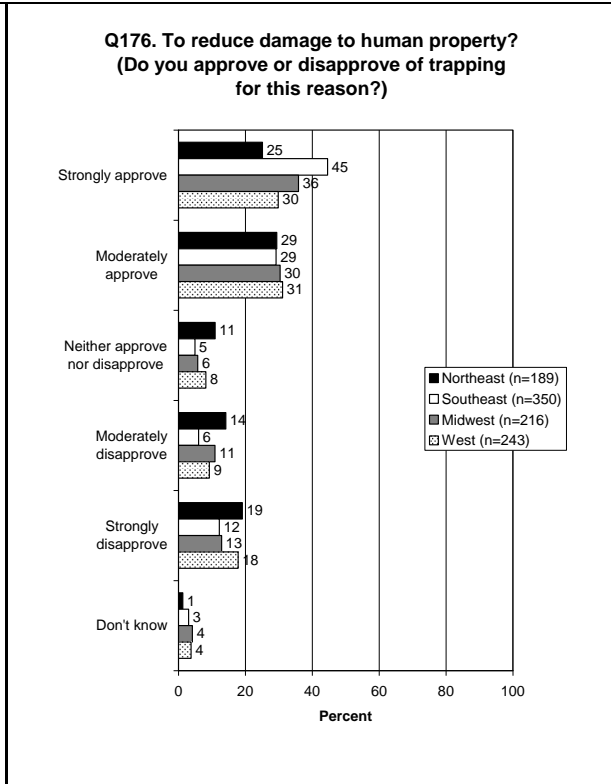
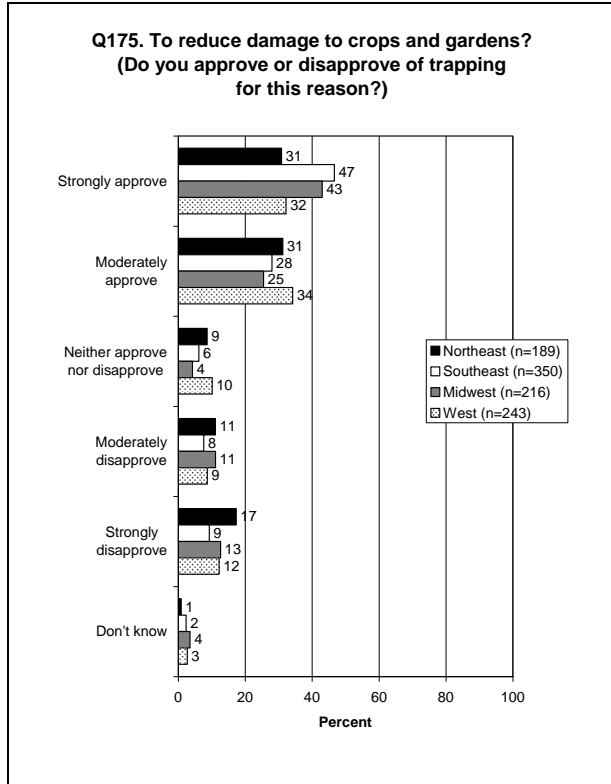


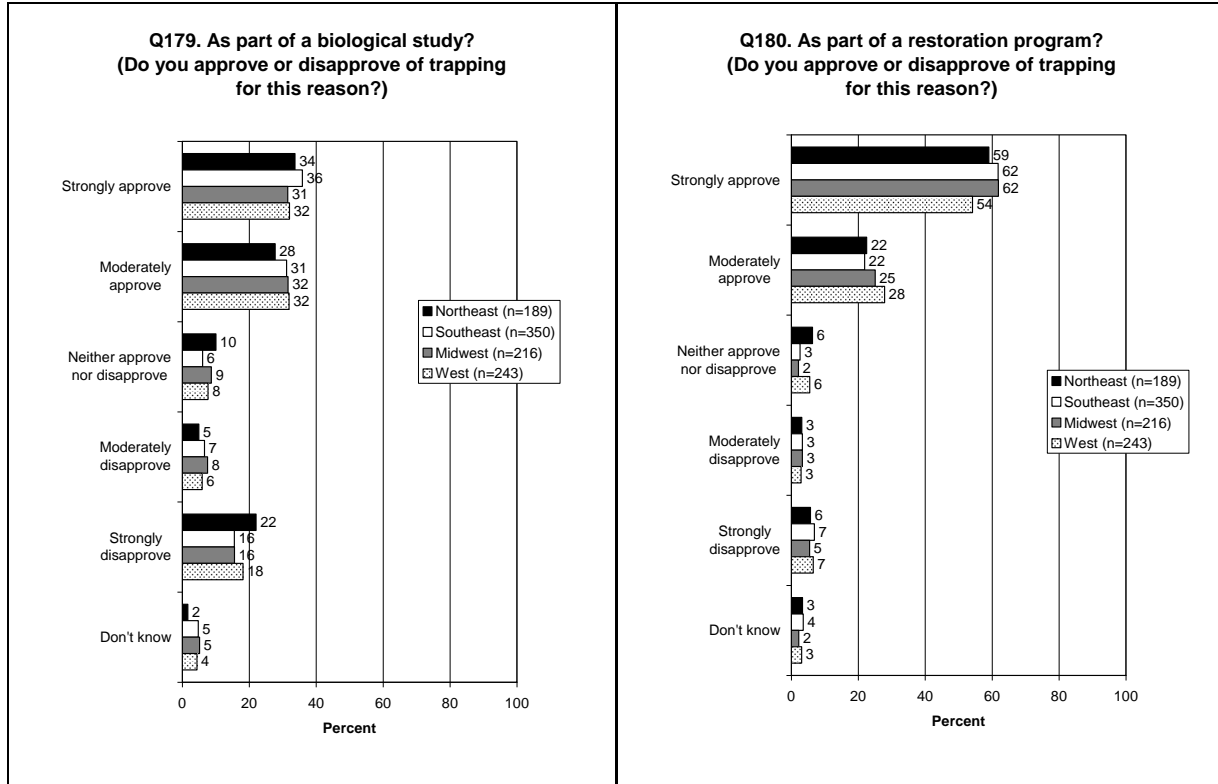
**Percent who strongly or moderately approve of trapping for each of the following reasons:  
(West Region)**







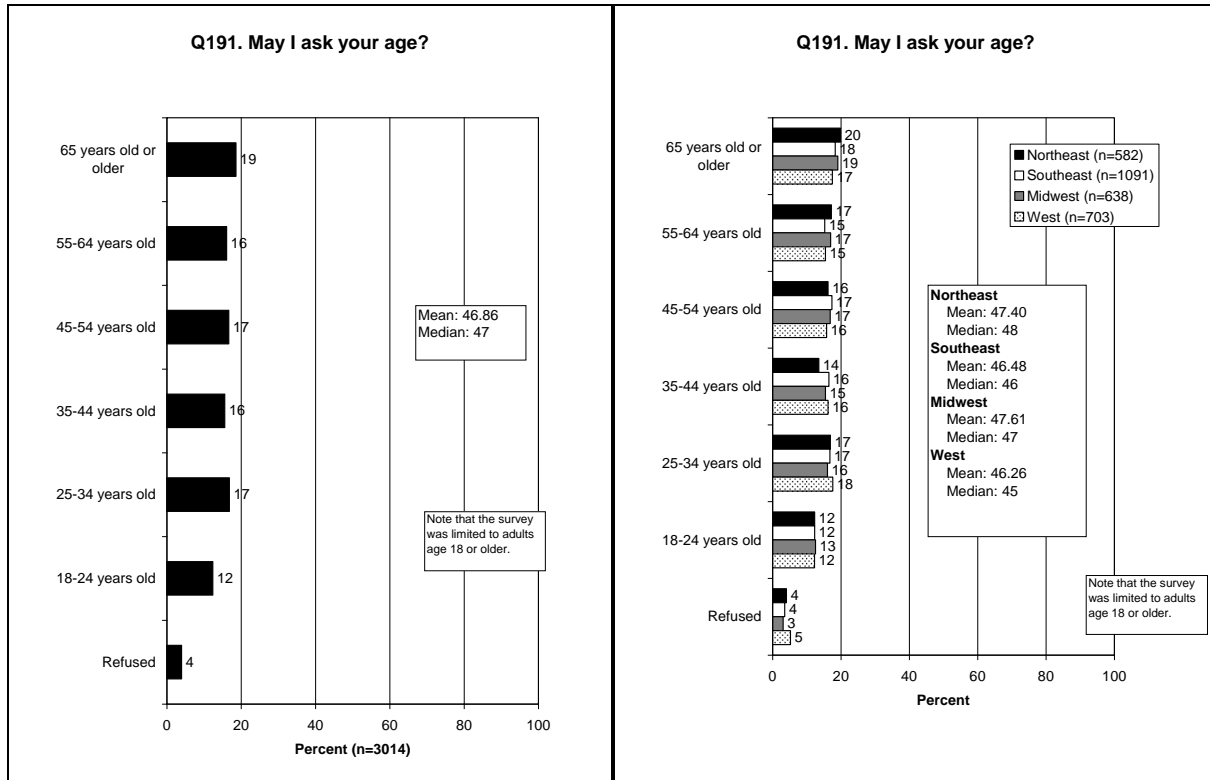


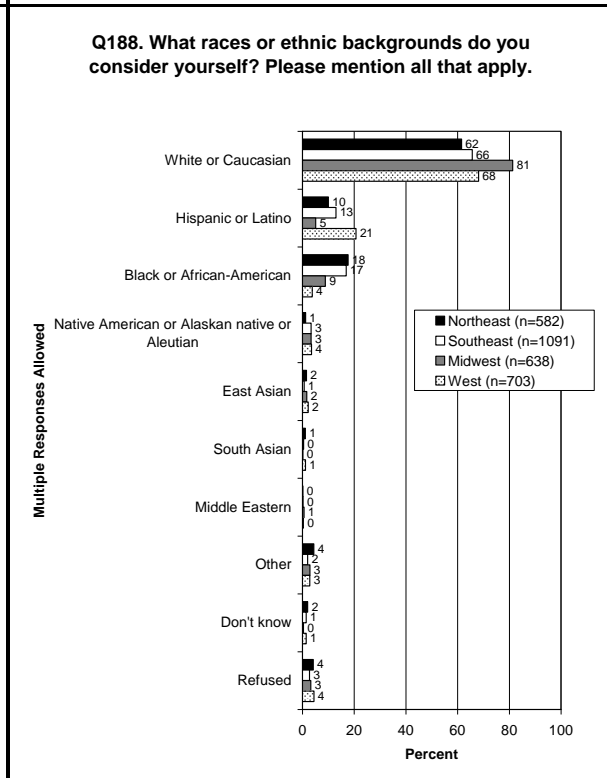
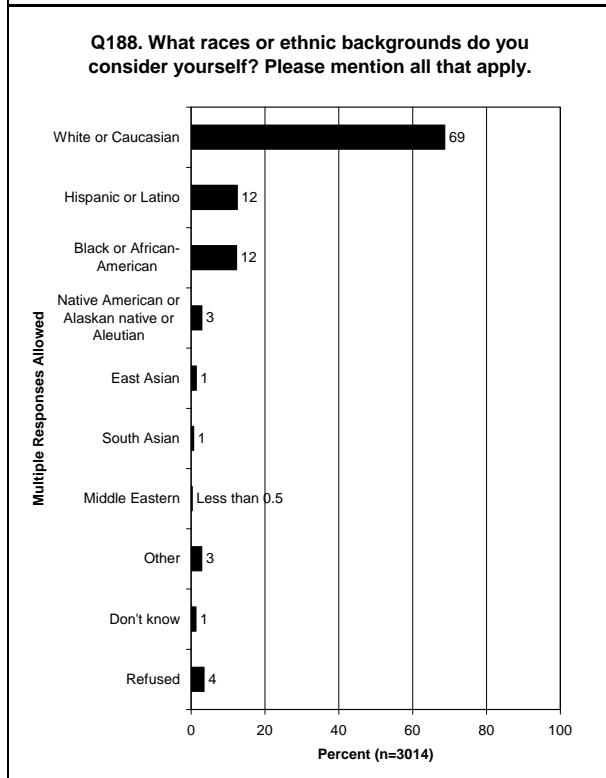
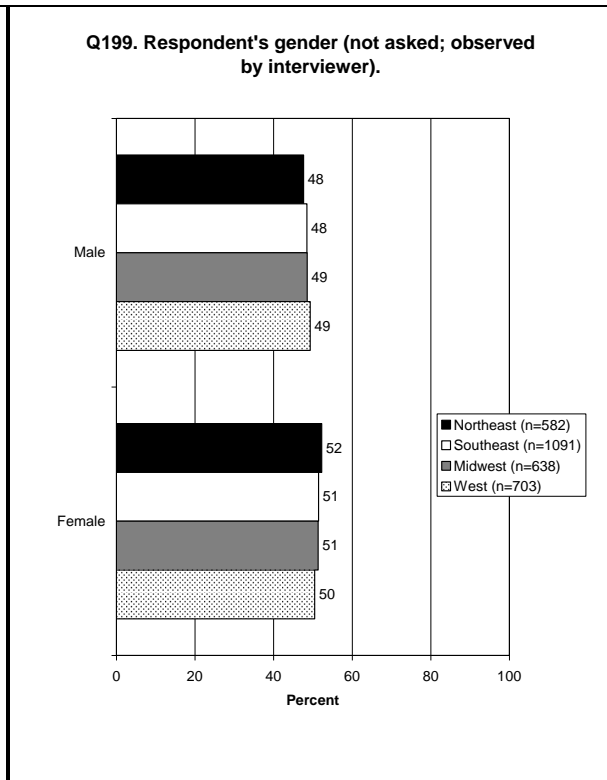
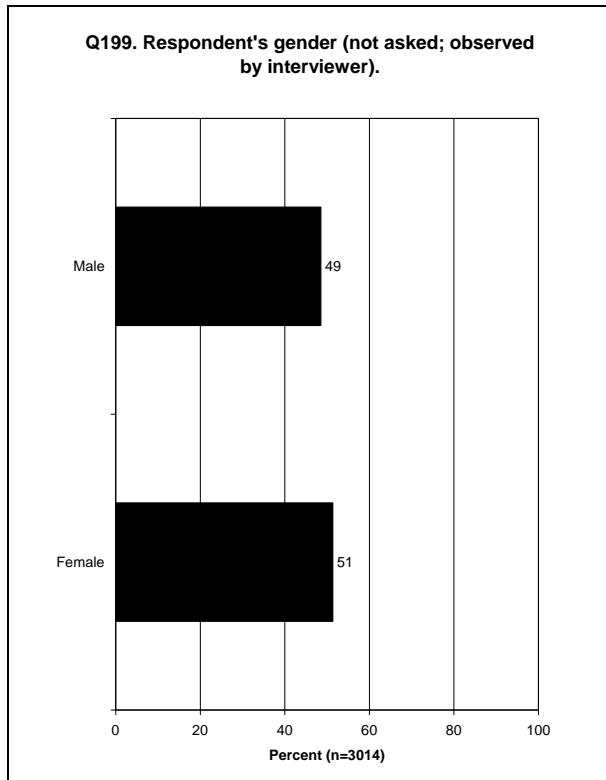


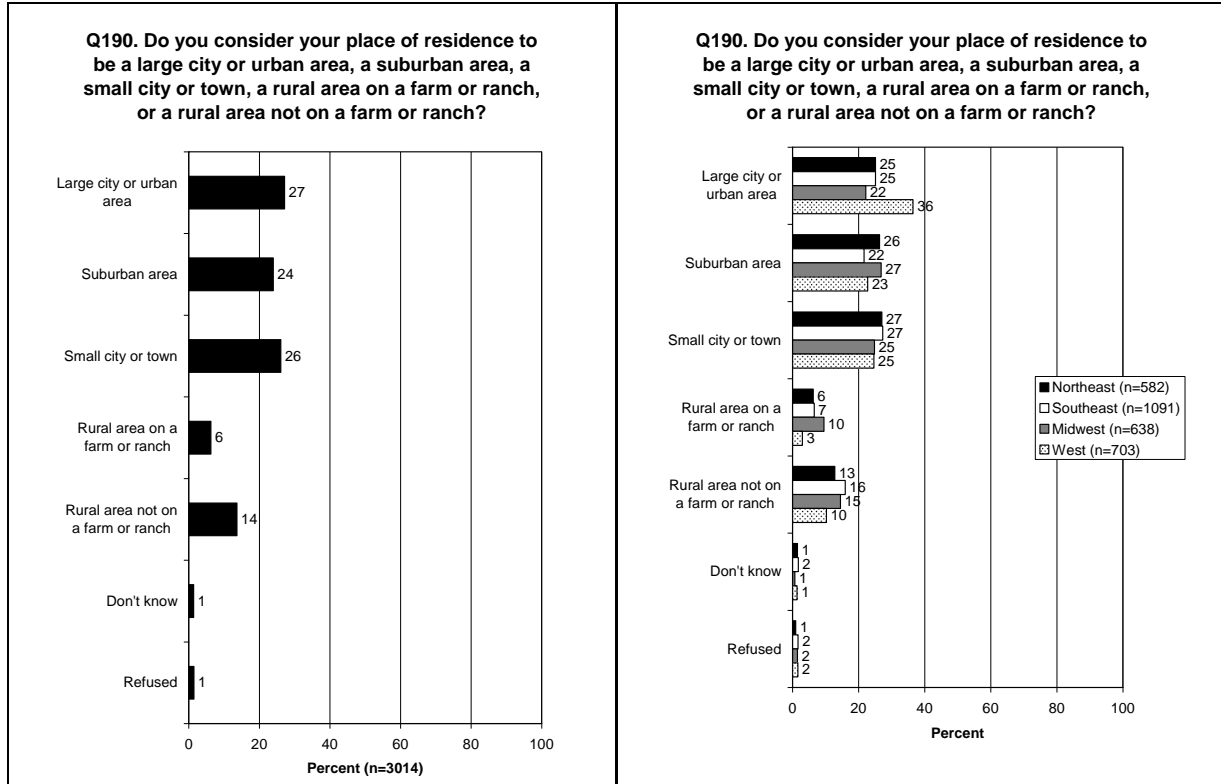
## DEMOGRAPHICS

➤ The following demographic data were collected for crosstabulations and data analysis:

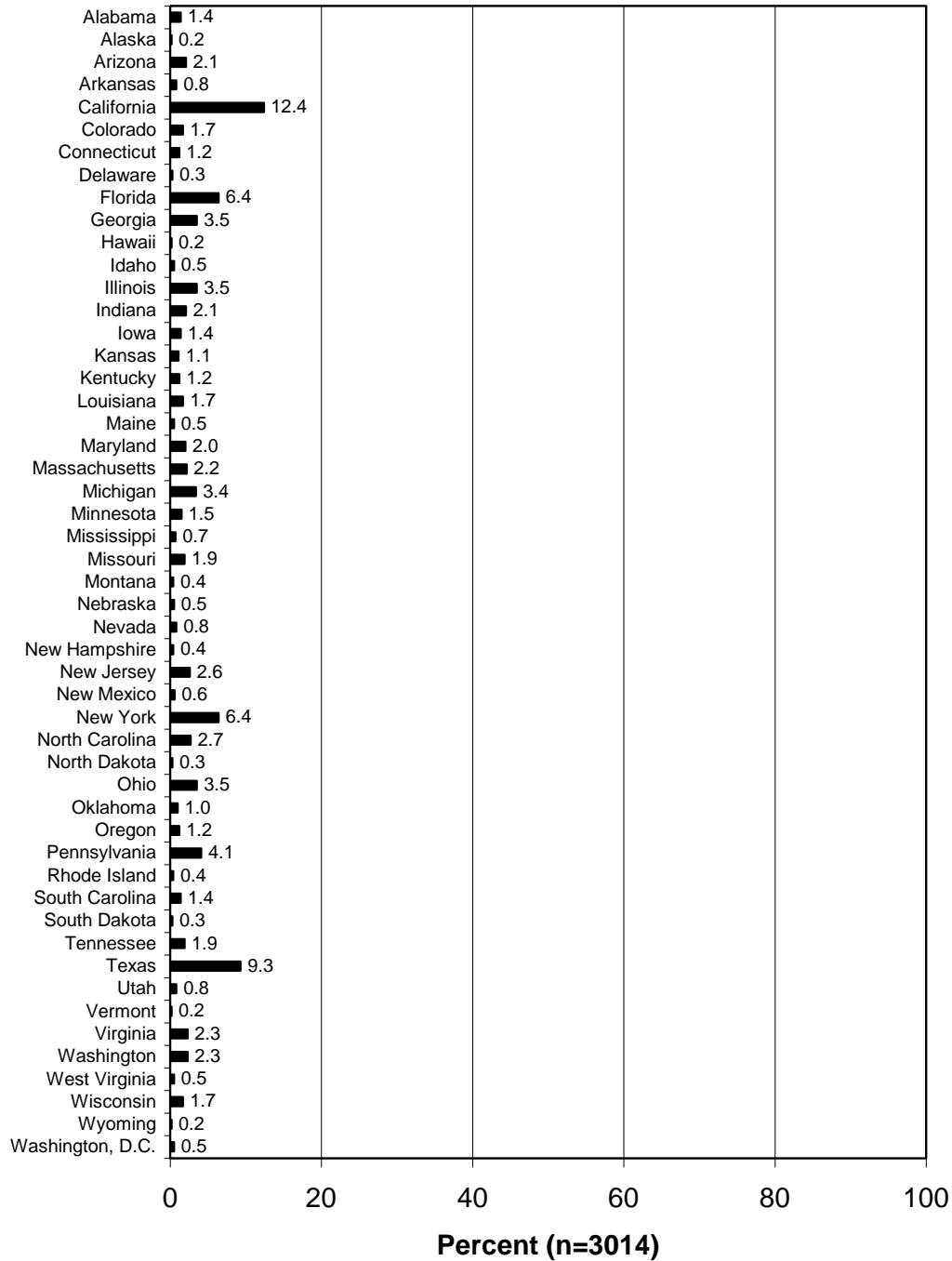
- Age.
- Gender.
- Race or ethnicity.
- Type of residential area.
- State of residence.







### Q194. What is your state of residence?



## **ABOUT NATIONAL SHOOTING SPORTS FOUNDATION**

The National Shooting Sports Foundation is the trade association for the firearms, ammunition, hunting and recreational shooting sports industry. Our mission is to promote, protect and preserve hunting and the shooting sports. Formed in 1961, NSSF's membership consists of manufacturers, distributors, firearms retailers, shooting ranges, sportsmen's organizations and publishers. For more information visit **[www.nssf.org](http://www.nssf.org)**

## **ABOUT RESPONSIVE MANAGEMENT**

Responsive Management is an internationally recognized survey research firm specializing in attitudes toward 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. **[responsivemanagement.com](http://responsivemanagement.com)**

