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Final Report

Public Opinions of Endangered and Invasive Species in Florida

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Executive Summary

Public Opinion of Endangered and Invasive Species in Florida
July 2015

Introduction

Managing invasive species and endangered species populations in a way that maintains biodiversity and ecological health are key issues for a tourism-heavy and natural-resource rich state like Florida. This survey captured responses from 502 Florida residents to explore the Florida public's opinions, attitudes, and knowledge about (1) general endangered species and invasive species topics, (2) how to prioritize efforts related to conservation, and (3) management practices for endangered and invasive species populations.

Findings

- Sixty-nine percent of respondents considered environmental conservation to be highly or extremely important. Compared to nine other Florida issues, environmental conservation ranked sixth out of 10.
- Eighty-two percent of respondents were likely or very likely to vote to support land conservation programs and seventy-five percent of respondents were likely or very likely to vote for candidates who support environmental conservation.

Endangered Species

- Few participants (14% or less) considered themselves either highly or extremely knowledgeable about threats to endangered species, how to prevent endangerment, and what species are currently endangered.
- Sixty-six percent of respondents believe the Endangered Species Act should be strengthened.
- Ninety percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed it is important to conserve mammals, compared to 50% who agreed or strongly agreed it is important to conserve microorganisms.
- When asked whether they thought Florida state leaders and agencies had the right amount of influence to impact policies affecting endangered species, respondents indicated they thought Florida citizens had too little influence (61%) and 38% indicated they thought political leaders in Florida had too much influence.
- Eighty-nine percent of respondents would support or strongly support imposing fines on those who harm endangered species in Florida and 88% would support or strongly support imposing fines on those who harm endangered species' habitats in Florida.
- Eighty-three percent of respondents would support or strongly support restricting residential development of areas that are habitat for endangered species, and 83% would support or strongly support restricting commercial development of the same areas.
- Seventy-eight percent of respondents would support or strongly support the state of Florida purchasing endangered species' habitat so it can be protected.
- Sixty percent of respondents would like to learn more about the types of species that are endangered.

Invasive Species

- Sixty-five percent of respondents reported they felt they were either not knowledgeable or only slightly knowledgeable about the topic of invasive species.
- Sixty-six percent of respondents considered themselves not knowledgeable or only slightly knowledgeable about the types of invasive species living in Florida and 68% were not knowledgeable or only slightly knowledgeable about how they could prevent invasive species from entering Florida.

- Half of the respondents believed “we should use management strategies to control invasive species only in areas that are most affected” while 46% believed “we should do all we can to completely eradicate invasive species.”
- Fifty-five percent of respondents would support a 1% sales tax increase to prevent and eradicate invasive species in Florida, but only 21% would support a 5% sales tax increase for the same purpose.
- Seventy-three percent of respondents indicated they thought the penalties for owning and selling Burmese pythons as pets should be strengthened.
- Fifty-five percent of respondents would like to learn about the types of species that are invasive.

Background

Biodiversity and ecological health are key issues for a tourism-heavy and natural-resource rich state like Florida. Maintaining and improving endangered species populations, along with preventing endangerment, are important public issues facing Florida residents. Additionally, heavy international travel, tourism, and the exotic pet industry have made invasive species a common topic in the news and an important environmental issue in Florida. This survey was designed to capture Florida residents' opinions, attitudes, and knowledge about these two key issues, endangered and invasive species, and covers topics including:

- General knowledge about endangered and invasive species
- Attitudes towards prioritizing efforts to conserve species
- Attitudes towards prioritizing minimization of the impacts of invasive species
- Management practices relevant to endangered and invasive species overall
- Management practices relevant to specific endangered or invasive species

Methods

In June 2015, an online survey was distributed to Florida residents using non-probability sampling. Qualtrics, a survey software company, distributed the online survey link to Florida residents, age 18 or older, resulting in 502 completed responses. To ensure the respondents were representative of the Florida population according to the 2010 U.S. Census (seen in Table 1), the data were weighted to balance their geographic location in the state, age, gender, and race/ethnicity (Kalton & Flores-Cervantes, 2003). Weighting procedures are commonly used in non-probability samples to compensate for selection, exclusion and non-participation biases (Baker et al., 2013), and as a result can yield results comparable, or in some cases better than standard probability-based samples (Abate, 1998; Twyman, 2008; Vavreck & Rivers, 2008). Public opinion research commonly utilizes non-probability samples to make population estimates (Baker et al., 2013).

The survey includes the Government Style Questionnaire developed by Green-Demers, Blanchard, Pelletier, & Béland (1994). For more detailed methods related to the PIE Center's public opinion surveys, please refer to our website: www.piecenter.com.

Table 1: Weighted demographics of survey respondents

Demographic Category	%
Gender	
Male	48.9
Female	51.1
Ethnicity	
Hispanic	22.5
Race	
Native American	0.2
Asian	3.0
African American	17.0
White	77.1
Age	
19 and younger	1.3
20-29 years	12.8
30-39 years	12.2
40-49 years	14.2
50-59 years	13.5
60-69 years	11.1
70-79 years	7.4
80 and older	4.9
Rural Urban Continuum	
Metro- Counties in metro areas of 1 million population or more	63.1
Metro- Counties in metro areas of 250,000 to 1 million population	25.7
Metro- Counties in metro areas of fewer than 250,000 population	4.8
Nonmetro- Urban population of 20,000 or more, adjacent to a metro area	3.5
Nonmetro- Urban population of 2,500 to 19,999, adjacent to a metro area	2.6
Nonmetro- Completely rural or less than 2,500 urban population, adjacent to a metro area	0.3

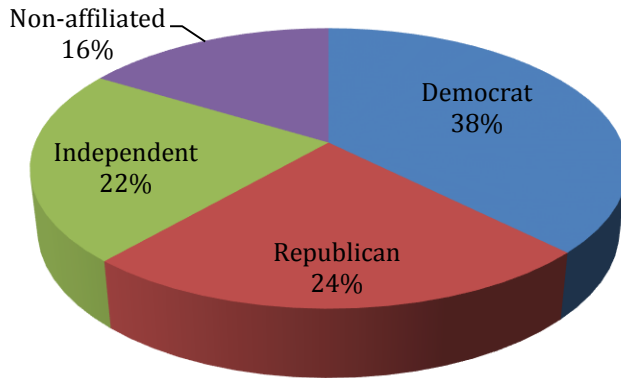
Results

Description of Respondents

Political Values and Affiliation

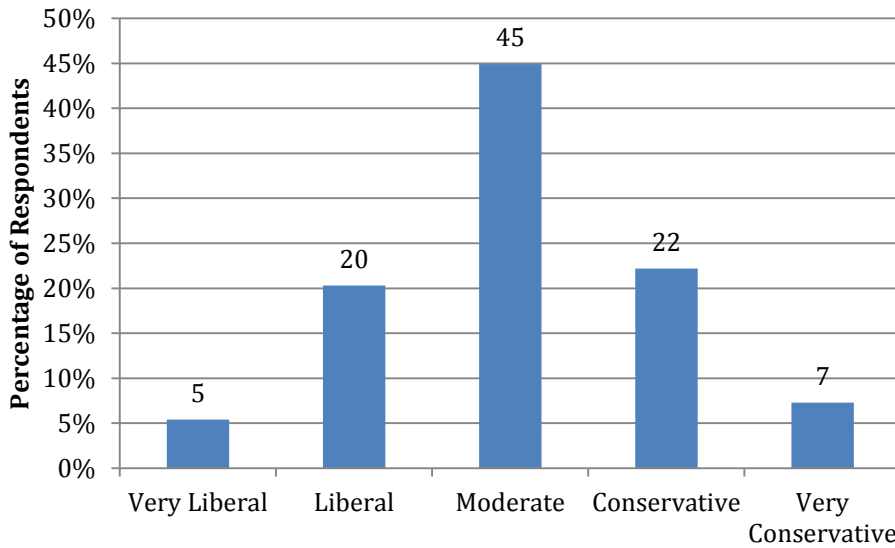
Thirty-eight percent of respondents reported they were registered Democrats, followed by 24% Republican and 22% Independents (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Political affiliation



Forty-five percent of respondents considered themselves politically moderate (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Political ideology



Importance of Key Florida Issues

Respondents were asked to indicate how important they considered 10 different Florida issues. They were asked whether they considered the issue to be a) not at all important, b) slightly important, c) fairly important, d) highly important, e) extremely important, or f) unsure. Table 2 displays the percentage of respondents who rated each issue as extremely or

highly important. The economy and healthcare ranked the highest (88% and 86%, respectively). Environmental conservation ranked 6th; 69% of respondents considered this to be a highly or extremely important issue.

Table 2: Importance level of Florida issues

Florida Issue	% of respondents rating the issue as highly or extremely important
The economy	87
Health care	86
Water	80
Taxes	78
Public education	76
Environmental conservation	69
Food production	63
Housing and Foreclosures	61
Immigration	60
Climate change	54

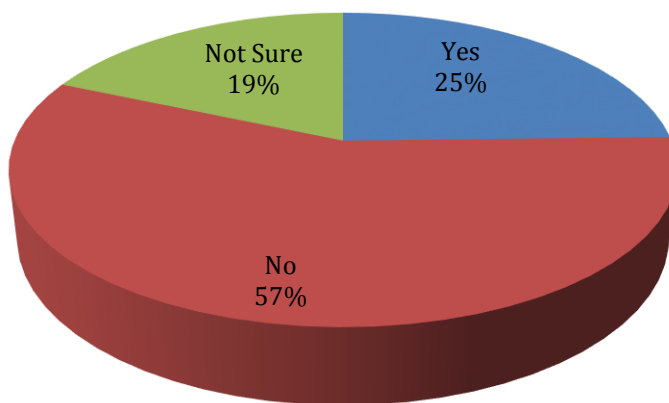
Knowledge of Endangered Species

Respondents were asked a series of questions related to their knowledge regarding endangered species. This included questions regarding news consumption, general knowledge of what causes endangered species, and knowledge about policies which impact endangered species.

Endangered Species News Coverage and Interest

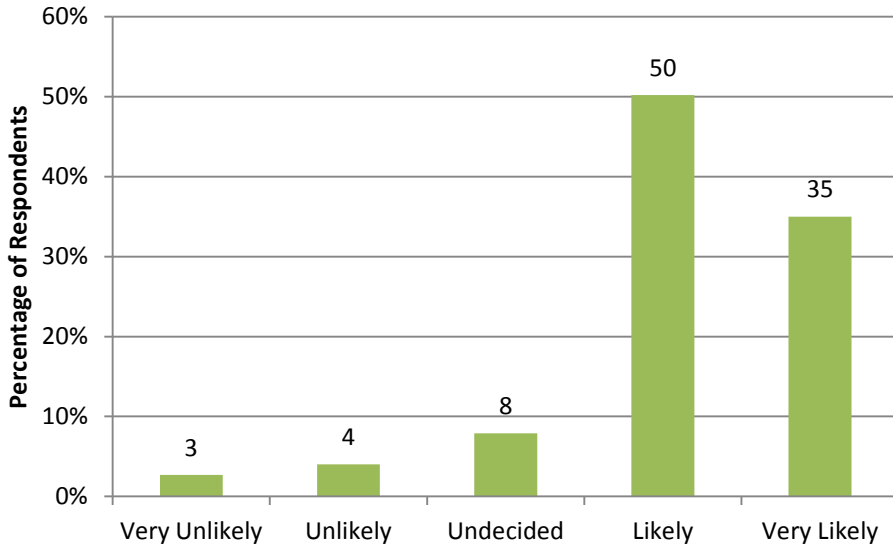
Respondents were asked whether they had seen anything related to endangered species in the news during in the last month. Fifty-seven percent responded no, 24% responded yes, and 19% were unsure (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Endangered species news coverage



Respondents were then asked how likely they would be to pay attention to a news story about endangered species. Eighty-five percent indicated they were likely or very likely to pay attention to an endangered species news article (Figure 4).

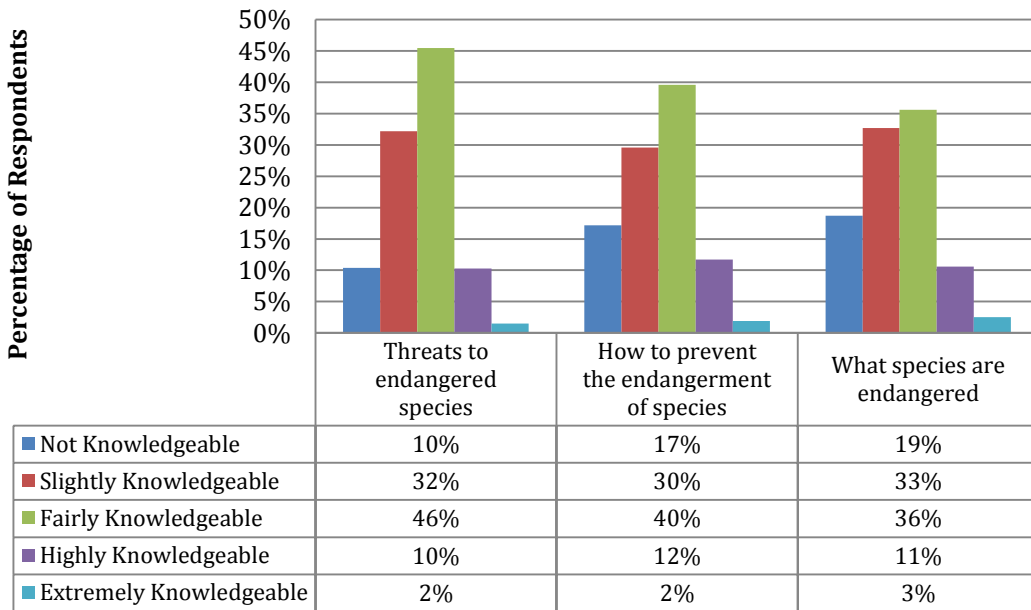
Figure 4: Interest in news related to endangered species



Overall Knowledge of Endangered Species Topics

Next, respondents were asked to rate how knowledgeable they felt they were about endangered species topics (Figure 5). More respondents considered themselves fairly knowledgeable about threats to endangered species (46%) than how to prevent endangerment (40%) or what species are endangered (36%). Few participants (14% or less) considered themselves either highly or extremely knowledgeable about these three topics.

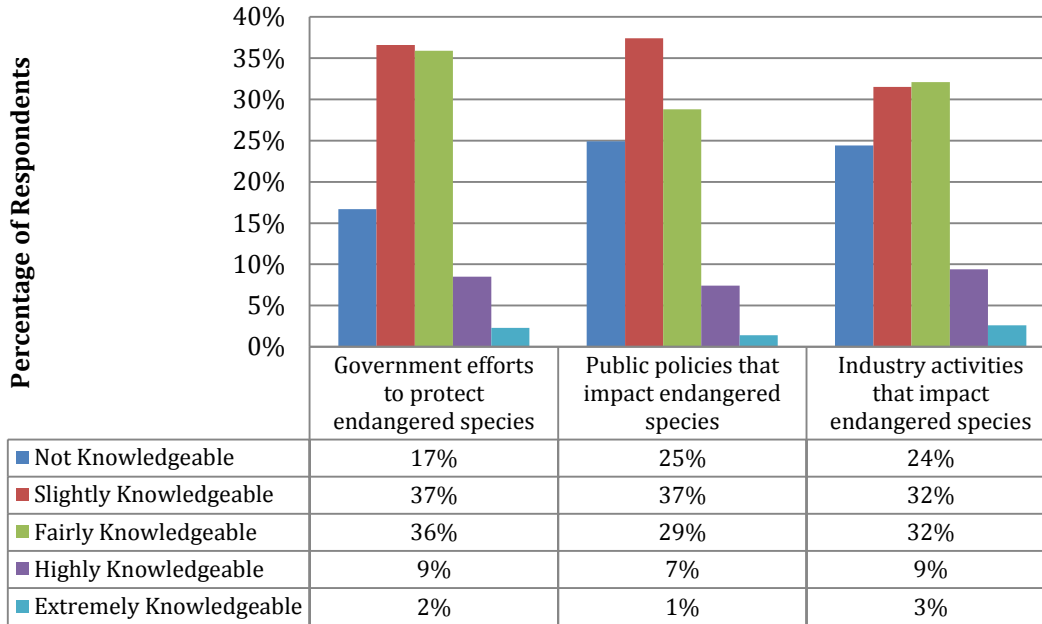
Figure 5: Overall knowledge about endangered species



Knowledge of Policies Impacting Endangered Species

The majority of respondents considered themselves either “not knowledgeable” or only “slightly knowledgeable” about policies and activities which impact endangered species, including government efforts, public policies and industry activities (Figure 6). Few respondents (12% or less) considered themselves either highly or extremely knowledgeable on any of these topics.

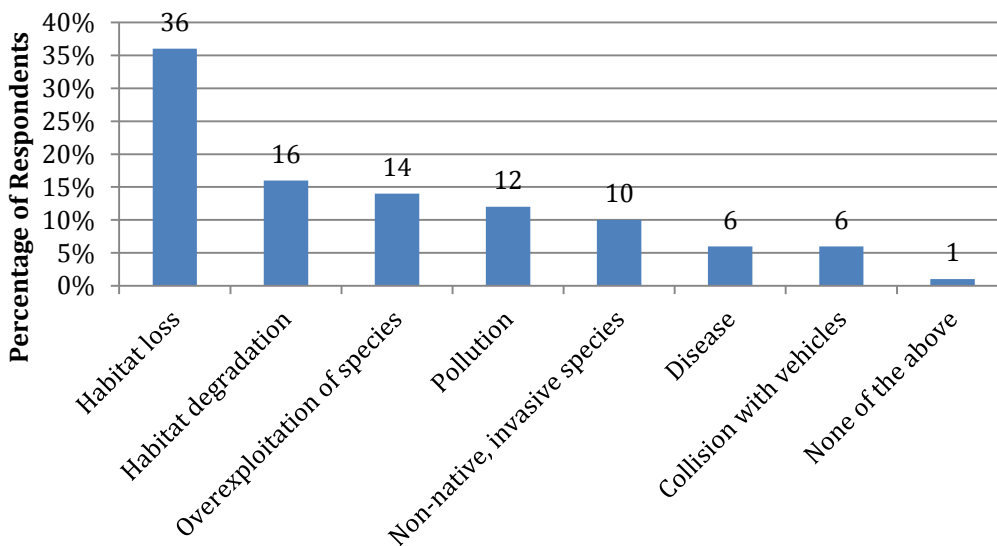
Figure 6: Knowledge of policies and activities impacting endangered species



Key Contributor to the Endangerment of Species

Respondents were asked to indicate the one main contributor they believed was the most important to species endangerment. Thirty-six percent chose habitat loss and 16% chose habitat degradation (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Main contributor to species endangerment



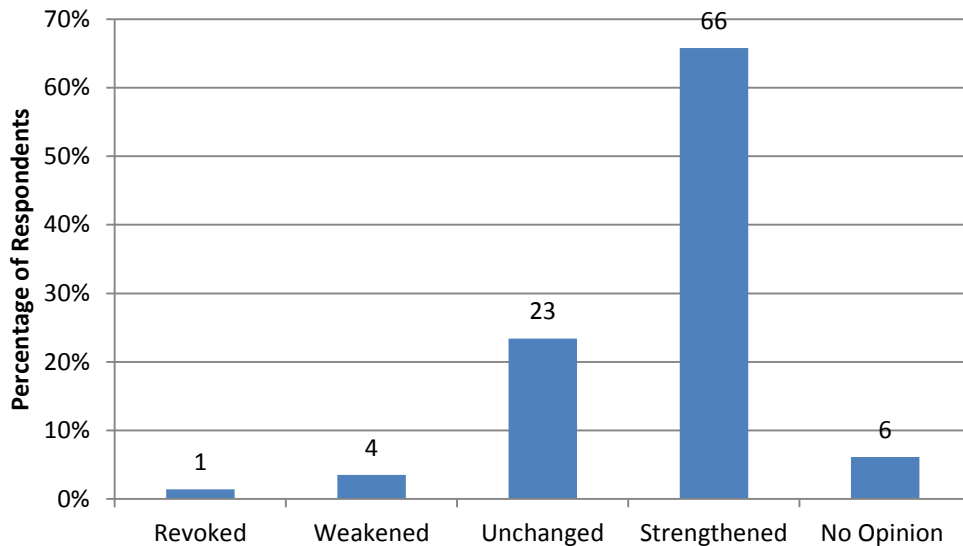
Opinions Regarding Endangered Species

The next section of the survey asked participants a variety of questions regarding their opinions about endangered species, including the types of species which should be prioritized.

Changes to the Endangered Species Act

Respondents were told “The Endangered Species Act was enacted in 1973 to provide conservation for species that are endangered or threatened, as well as the conservation of their ecosystems. The U.S. Endangered Species Act should be a) revoked, b) weakened, c) unchanged, d) strengthened, or e) no opinion.” Sixty-six percent of respondents believed the Endangered Species Act should be strengthened (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Opinions about the Endangered Species Act



Conservation Attitudes towards Endangered Species

The next section of the survey included questions about the attitudes respondents had about conserving species and prioritizing species conservation efforts.

Conserving Types of Species

Respondents were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed that certain types of native species (not just endangered species) should be conserved. The levels of agreement ranged from 1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3 = *Neither Agree nor Disagree*, 4 = *Agree*, and 5 = *Strongly Agree*. Ninety percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed mammals should be conserved, followed by 85% who agreed or strongly agreed birds should be conserved (Table 3). The type of species with the lowest agreement was microorganisms, with 50% of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed this species should be conserved.

Table 3: Conservation of species by type

Type of species	% respondents who agreed or strongly agreed the species should be conserved
Mammals	90
Birds	85
Fish	84
Plants	84
Reptiles	76
Amphibians	72
Invertebrates	62
Microorganisms	50

Prioritizing Conservation of Endangered Species

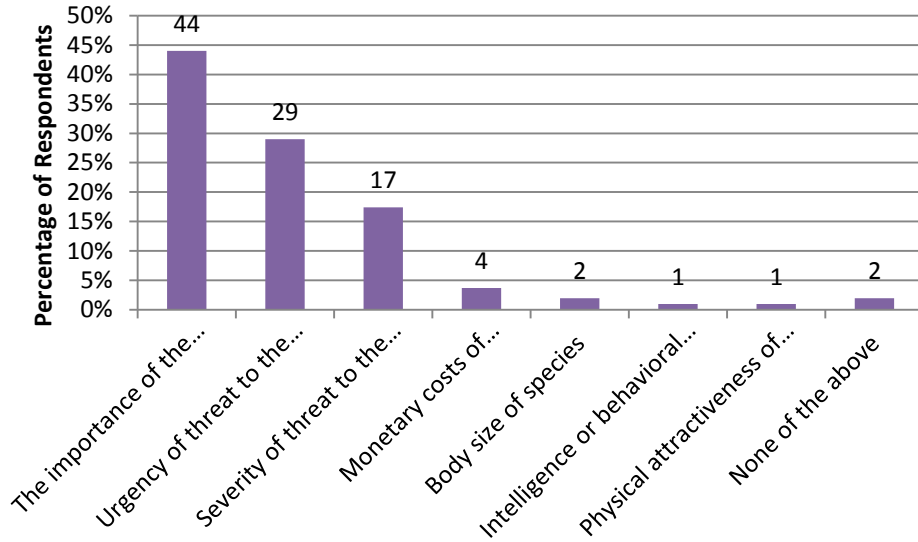
Next, respondents were given a list of criteria that could be considered when prioritizing conservation efforts for endangered species. Respondents were asked to select any of the criteria on the list they would support when making decisions about conservation (Table 4). The majority of respondents indicated they would prioritize the importance of the species for maintaining the ecosystem (79%), the severity of the threat facing the species (74%), and the current urgency of the threat to the species (72%).

Table 4: Criteria to consider when prioritizing species

Criteria	%
The importance of the species for maintaining the ecosystem	79
Severity of threat to the species	74
Urgency of threat to the species	72
Monetary costs of preserving the species	27
Intelligence or behavioral complexity of the species	23
Body size of the species	11
Physical attractiveness of the species	9
None of the above	2

Out of the previous list, respondents were then asked to choose which of the seven criteria they thought was most important for government agencies to consider when prioritizing conservation efforts for endangered species. Forty-four percent of respondents chose “the importance of the species for maintaining the ecosystem,” followed by 29% who chose “urgency of the threat to the species” (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Most important criteria to consider when prioritizing species



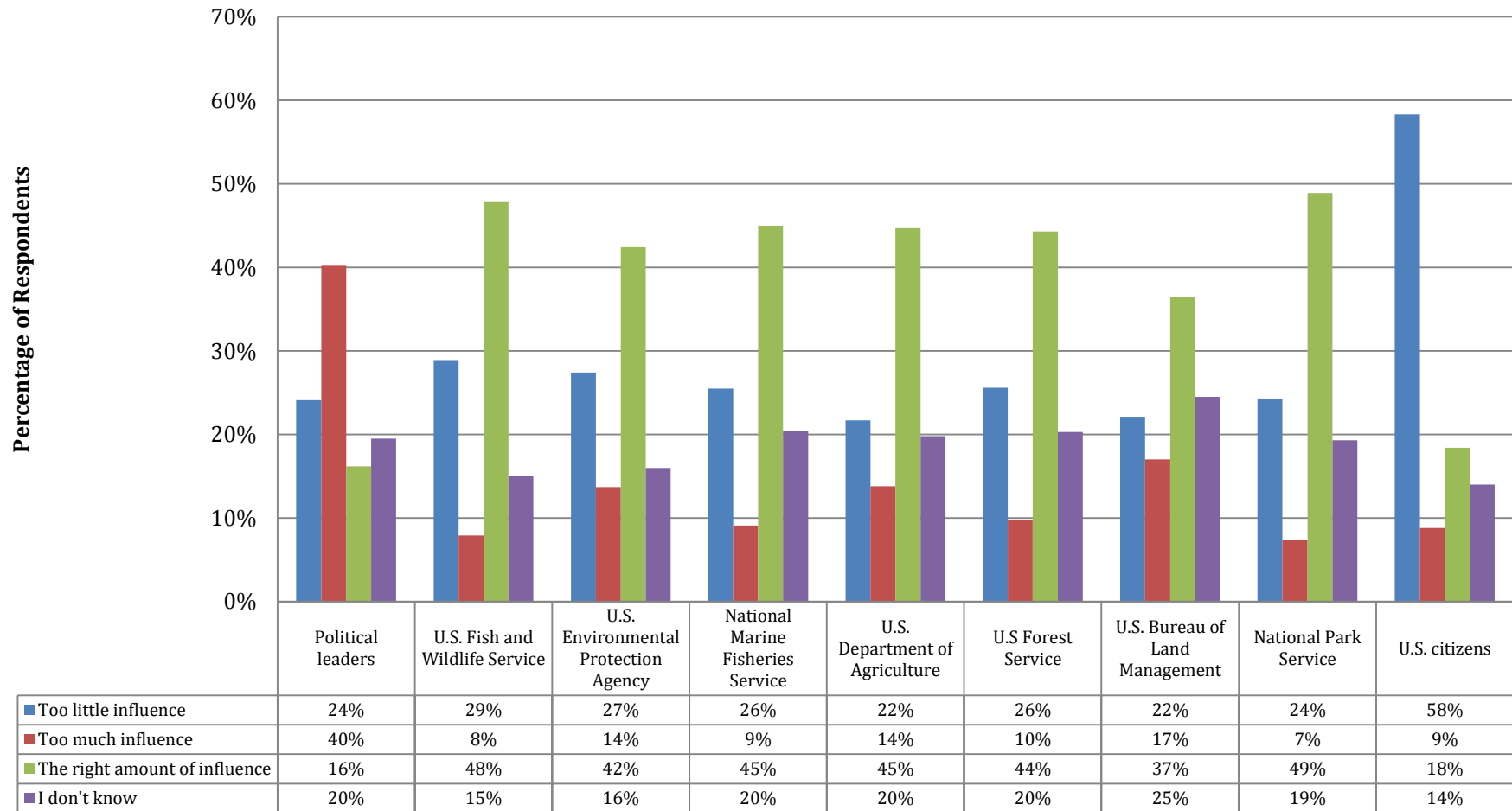
Endangered Species and Government Management

The survey asked respondents a series of questions about their attitudes towards national and state actors managing endangered species as well as support for regulatory action to protect endangered species.

Attitudes towards the Influence of National Actors

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they felt a variety of national actors had too little influence, the right amount of influence, or too much influence on public policy impacting species diversity at the national level. They were also given an “I don’t know” option (Figure 10). Respondents thought U.S. citizens have too little influence (58%).

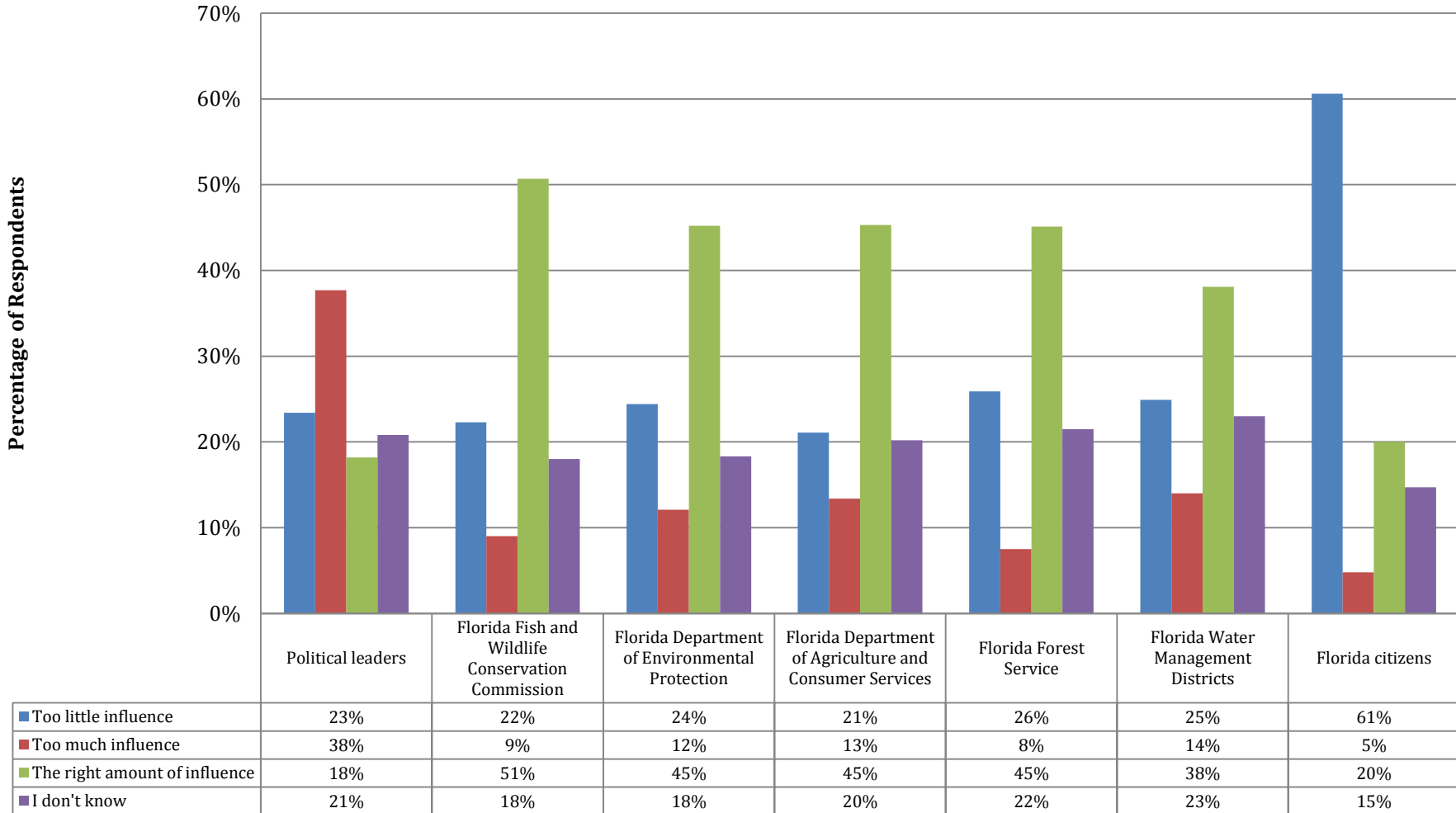
Figure 10: Influence of national actors on endangered species management



Attitudes towards the Influence of State Actors

The same question was asked about state actors in Florida (Figure 11). Responses followed a similar pattern to the national question, with respondents indicating they thought Florida citizens had too little influence (61%).

Figure 11: Influence of state actors on endangered species management



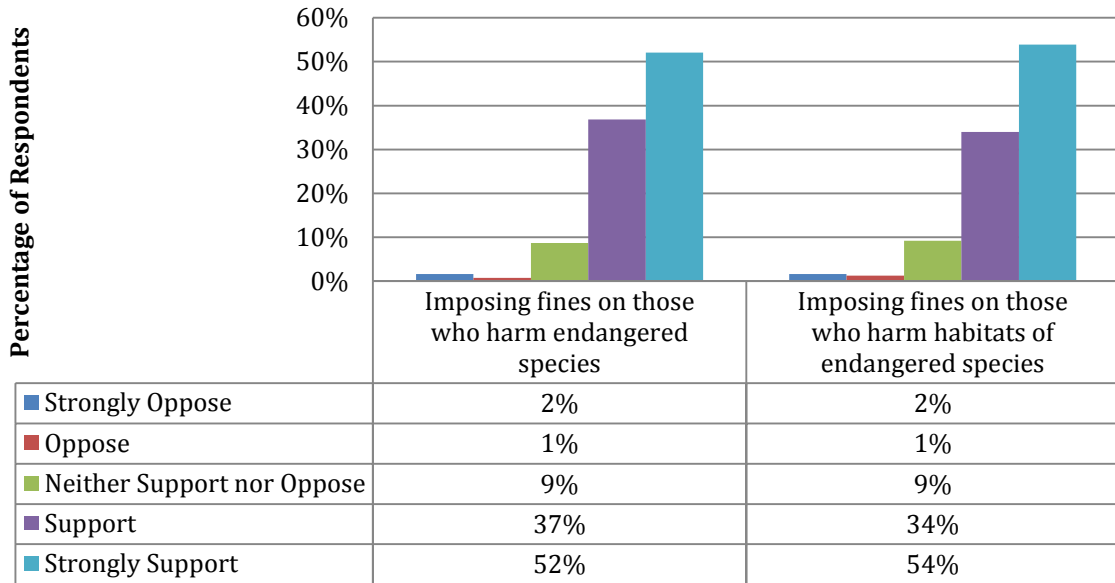
Support for Florida Regulatory Actions Affecting Endangered Species

Next, a series of questions were given to assess respondents’ support for regulatory actions in Florida designed to protect endangered species.

Support for Imposing Fines for Harming Endangered Species

Eighty-nine percent of respondents would support or strongly support imposing fines on those who harm endangered species in Florida and 88% would support or strongly support imposing fines on those who harm endangered species’ habitats in Florida (Figure 12).

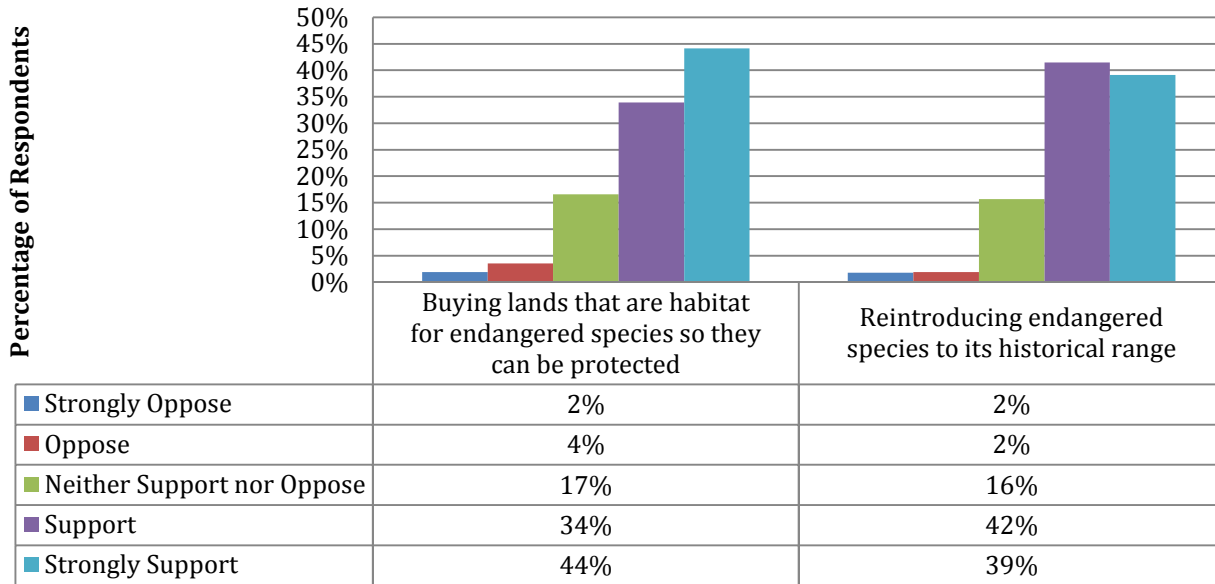
Figure 12: Support for fines impacting endangered species



Support for Land Changes Impacting Endangered Species

Seventy-eight percent of respondents would support or strongly support the state of Florida purchasing endangered species’ habitat so it can be protected (Figure 13). Eighty-one percent would support or strongly support the state of Florida reintroducing endangered species to their historical ranges.

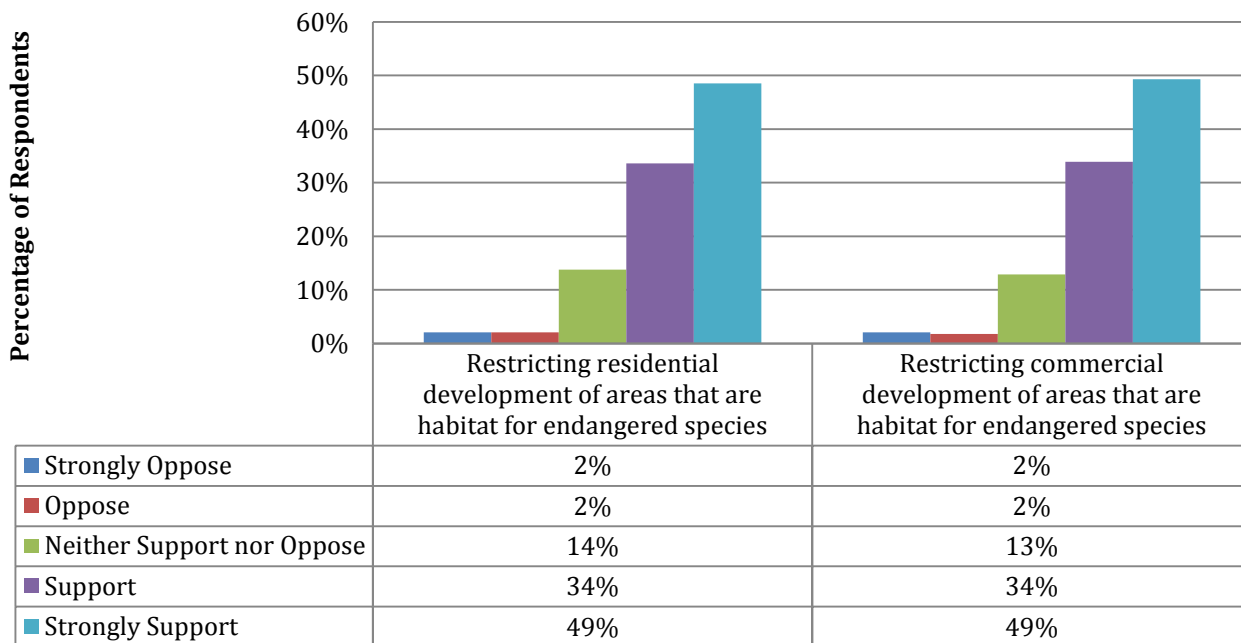
Figure 13: Support for land changes impacting endangered species



Support for Restricting Land Development to Protect Endangered Species

An equal percentage of respondents (83%) supported or strongly supported restricting residential development of areas that are habitat for endangered species, and restricting commercial development of the same areas (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Support for restricting land development to protect endangered species



Support for Actions Relevant to Specific Endangered Species

Respondents were asked about support for management actions that affect three specific endangered species in Florida, sea turtles, manatees and gopher tortoises.

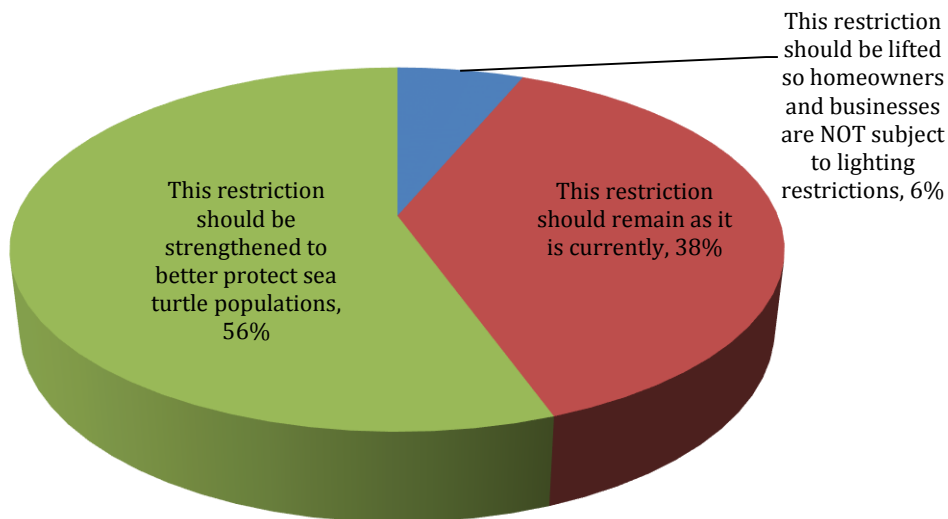
Sea Turtles

Respondents were given the following description of policies affecting sea turtles:

In coastal areas, sea turtles hatch and depend on moonlight to lead them toward the ocean. Coastal lights (e.g., from buildings and parking lots) can lead the turtles inland instead, resulting in hatchling deaths. Sea turtles also prefer to nest in darker areas. Restrictions are often put in place to limit light near beaches, including requiring homes and businesses to shield, redirect, or turn off lights. In some areas, conservation groups are seeking to increase the restrictions because there are still some newly hatched sea turtles that move away from the water. There are also residents and businesses seeking to ease restrictions on lighting near beaches. Based on this information, please select the statement that most closely aligns with your beliefs. 1) This restriction should be lifted so homeowners and businesses are NOT subject to lighting restrictions; 2) This restriction should remain as it is currently; or 3) This restriction should be strengthened to better protect the sea turtle population.

Fifty-six percent of respondents indicated they thought this restriction should be strengthened, while 38% indicated they thought this restriction should remain as it is currently (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Lighting restrictions for sea turtles



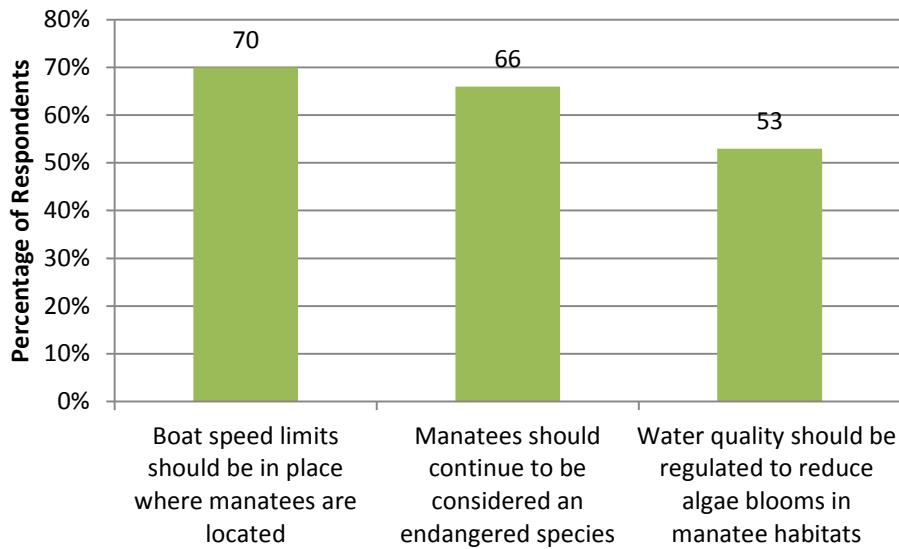
Manatees

Respondents were given the following description of policies affecting manatees:

Manatees have been listed as endangered since 1967. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is considering reclassifying manatees as threatened because a report in 2007 by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service showed that the population has increased and threats to the manatees have abated. Efforts to protect manatees have included speed limits for boats in certain areas and implementing conservation plans. Despite this report, many believe threats are still present including boat collisions as well as water quality (e.g., algae blooms, red tide) and water flow problems (affects their winter refuge). Based on this information, please select the statements that most closely align with your beliefs. Please check all that apply. 1) Manatees should continue to be considered an endangered species (Yes/No); 2) Boat speed limits should be in place where manatees are located (Yes/No); and 3) Water quality should be regulated to reduce algae blooms in manatee habitats (Yes/No).

Seventy percent of respondents indicated they thought boat speed limits should be in place in locations where manatees are, 66% indicated they thought manatees should continue to be considered an endangered species and 53% indicated they thought water quality should be regulated to reduce algae blooms in manatee habitats (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Policies protecting manatees



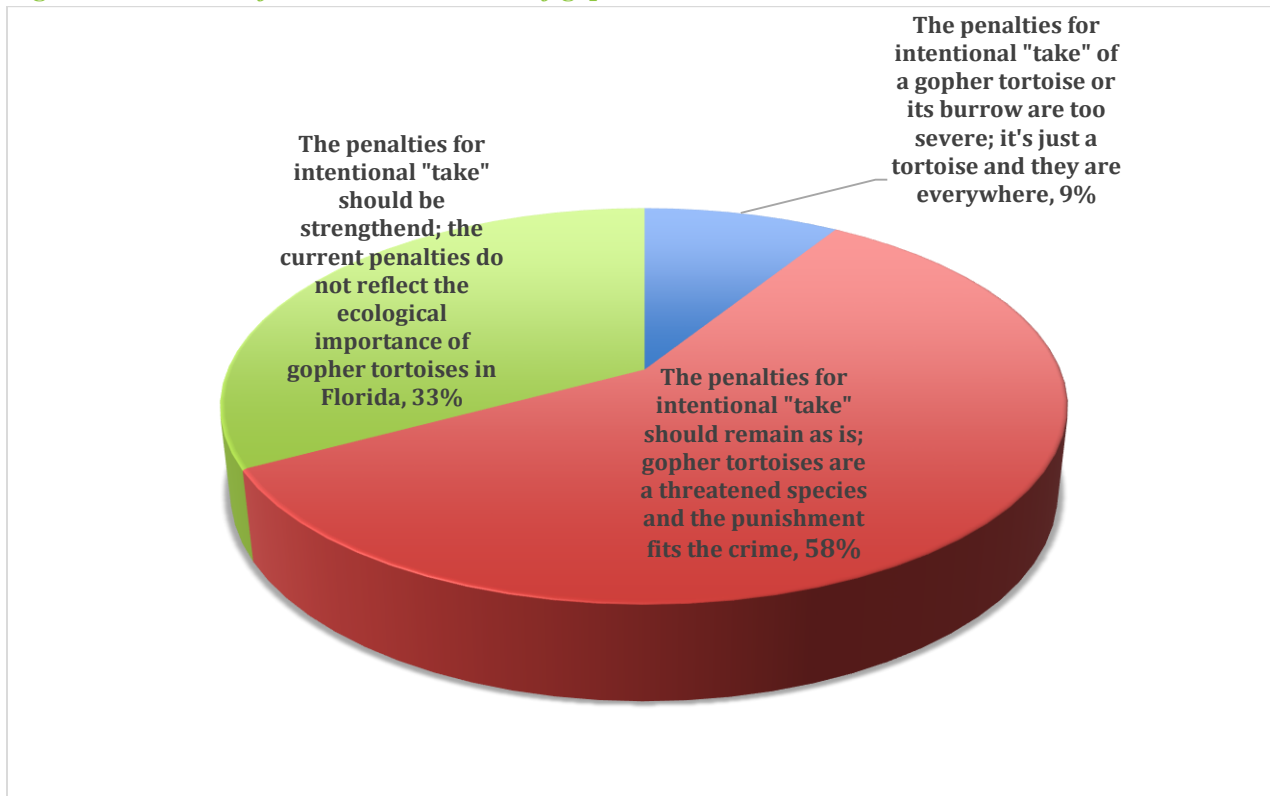
Gopher Tortoises

Respondents were given the following description of policies affecting gopher tortoises:

The gopher tortoise is considered a “keystone species” because it excavates underground burrows that over 350 species depend on for refuge, including several state and federally protected species. Declines in gopher tortoise populations have been shown to result in a decline of the commensal species that rely on its burrows. In Florida, the gopher tortoise was classified as Threatened in 2007, and both the tortoise and its burrows are protected under state law. The charge for intentional “take” of threatened and endangered wildlife, such as harassing or harming a tortoise, its eggs or burrow is a 3rd degree felony. For example, a landowner or developer has intentionally destroyed several gopher tortoise burrows to build a house, potentially entombing the tortoises in the burrows. If convicted of a 3rd degree felony, penalties include up to 5 years in prison and a \$5,000 fine. Based on this information, please select the statement that most closely aligns with your beliefs. 1) The penalties for intentional “take” of a gopher tortoise or its burrow are too severe; it’s just a tortoise and they are everywhere; 2) The penalties for intentional “take” should remain as is; gopher tortoises are a threatened species and the punishment fits the crime; 3) The penalties for intentional “take” should be strengthened; the current penalties do not reflect the ecological importance of gopher tortoises in Florida.

Fifty-eight percent of respondents indicated they thought the penalties for intentional “take” should remain as is, while 33% indicated the penalties should be strengthened (Figure 17).

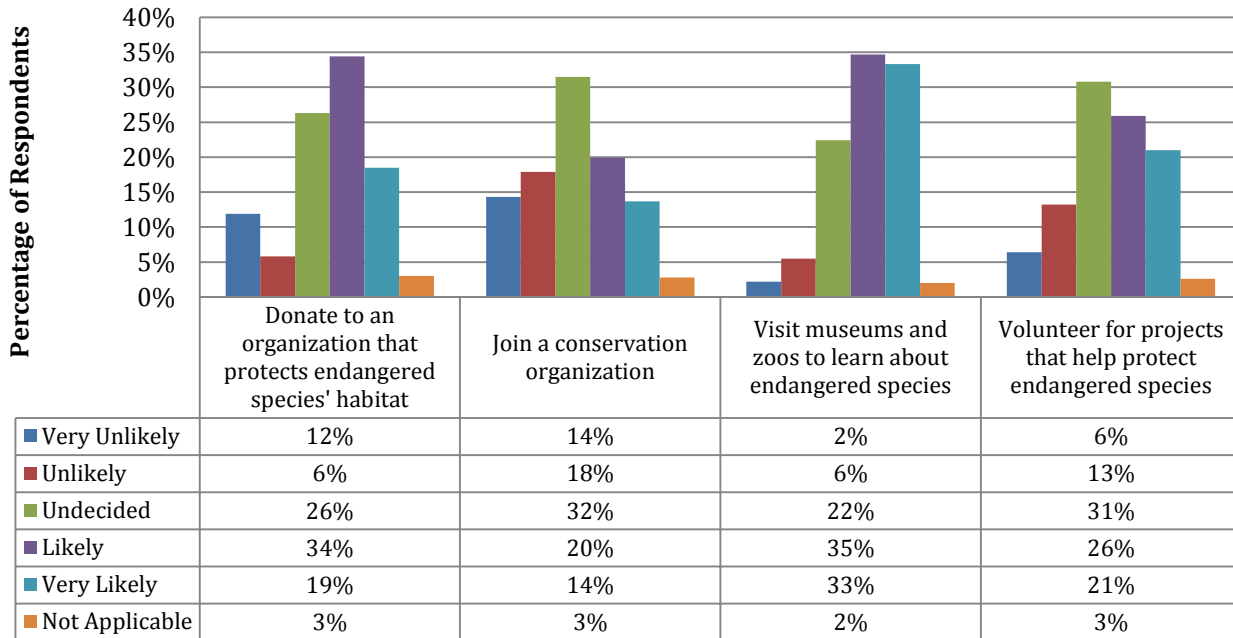
Figure 17: Penalties for intentional “take” of gopher tortoises



Willingness to Engage in Civic Behavior Related to Endangered Species

Sixty-eight percent of respondents were likely or very likely to visit museums and zoos to learn about endangered species, while only 34% were likely or very likely to join a conservation organization (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Willingness to engage in civic behaviors



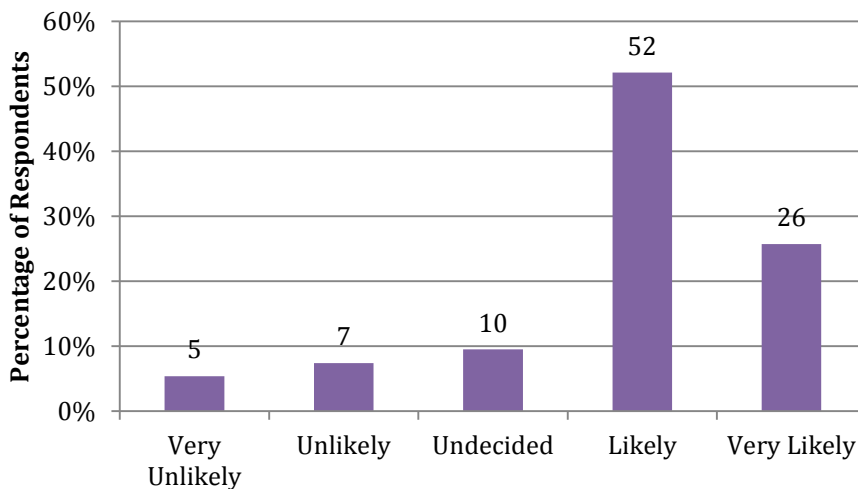
Knowledge of Invasive Species

The survey then asked respondents questions about their knowledge of invasive species. Invasive species were defined as “organisms which cause ecological or economic harm in a new environment where they are not native.”

News Interest about Invasive Species

Respondents were asked to indicate how likely they would be to pay attention to a news story dealing with issues related to invasive species. Seventy-eight percent of respondents reported they were either likely or very likely to do so (Figure 19).

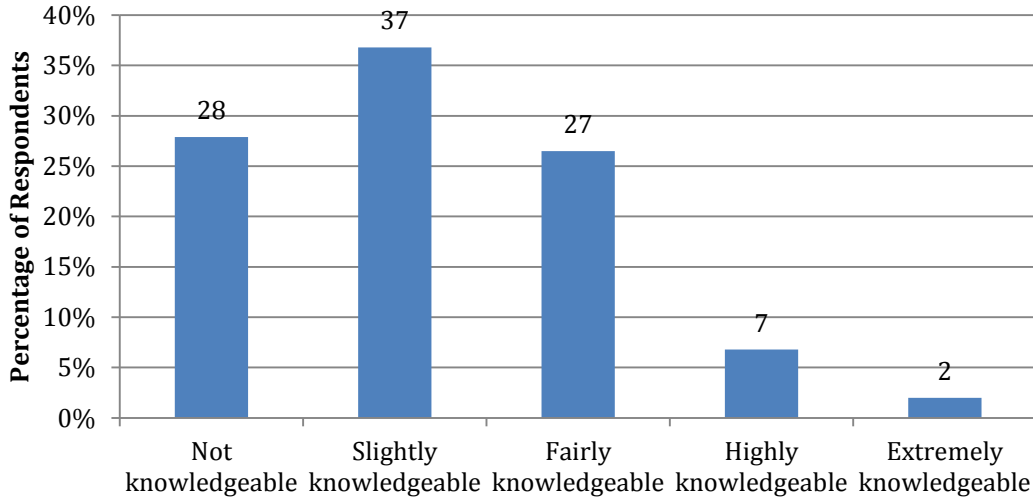
Figure 19: Interest in news related to invasive species



Overall Knowledge of Invasive Species

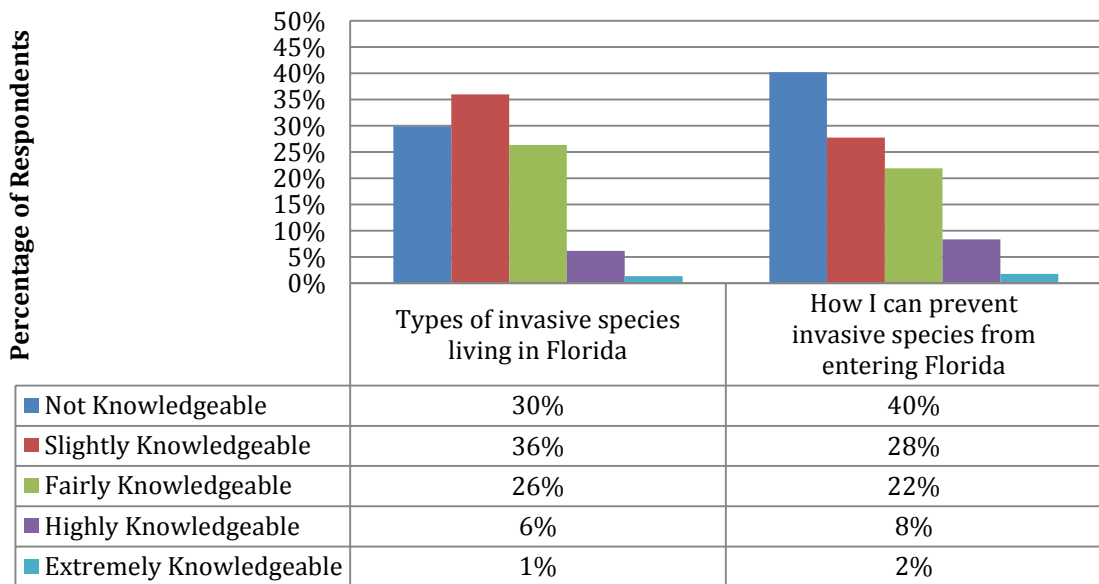
Respondents were asked to rate how knowledgeable they felt about the topic of invasive species. Sixty-five percent of respondents reported they felt they were either not knowledgeable or only slightly knowledgeable about the topic of invasive species (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Knowledge on invasive species topic



Sixty-six percent of respondents considered themselves not knowledgeable or only slightly knowledgeable about the types of invasive species living in Florida (Figure 21). Sixty-eight percent were not knowledgeable or only slightly knowledgeable about how they could prevent invasive species from entering Florida.

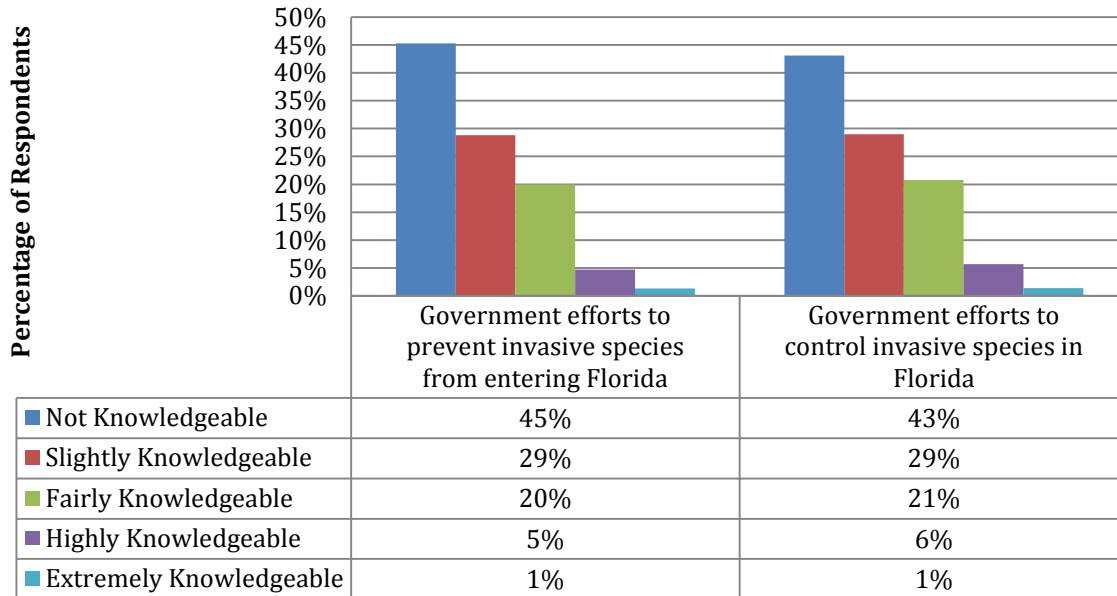
Figure 21: Overall knowledge about invasive species



Knowledge of Government Efforts towards Invasive Species

Seventy-four percent of respondents admitted they were not knowledgeable or only slightly knowledgeable about government efforts to prevent invasive species from entering Florida and 72% were not knowledgeable or slightly knowledgeable about government efforts to control invasive species in Florida (Figure 22).

Figure 22: Knowledge of government efforts towards invasive species



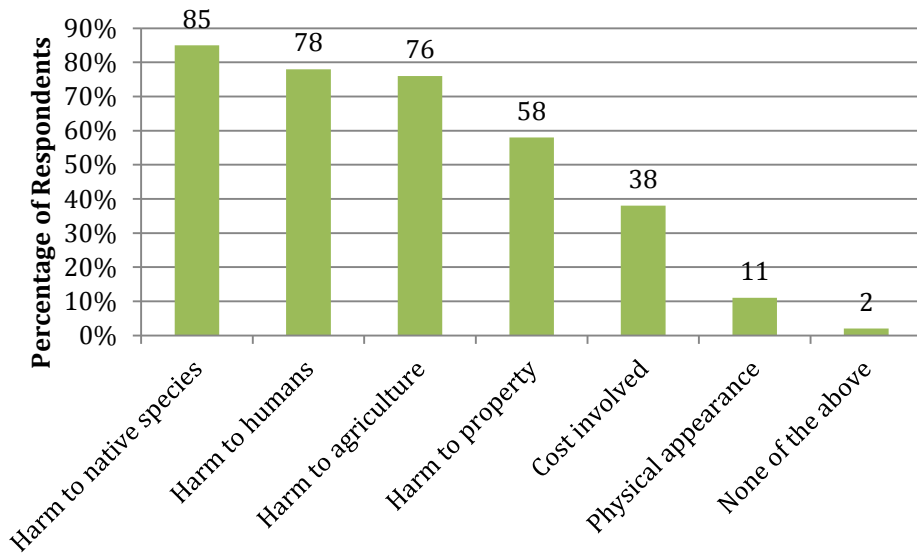
Opinions Regarding Invasive Species

The next set of questions in the survey asked respondents to indicate their opinions about prioritization efforts and management practices for invasive species.

Prioritizing Invasive Species Efforts

Respondents were asked to indicate factors they felt should be considered by government agencies when prioritizing efforts to control invasive species. They were allowed to choose all that applied. Eighty-five percent of respondents selected “harm to native species” and 78% selected “harm to humans” as factors that should be considered in prioritization efforts (Figure 23).

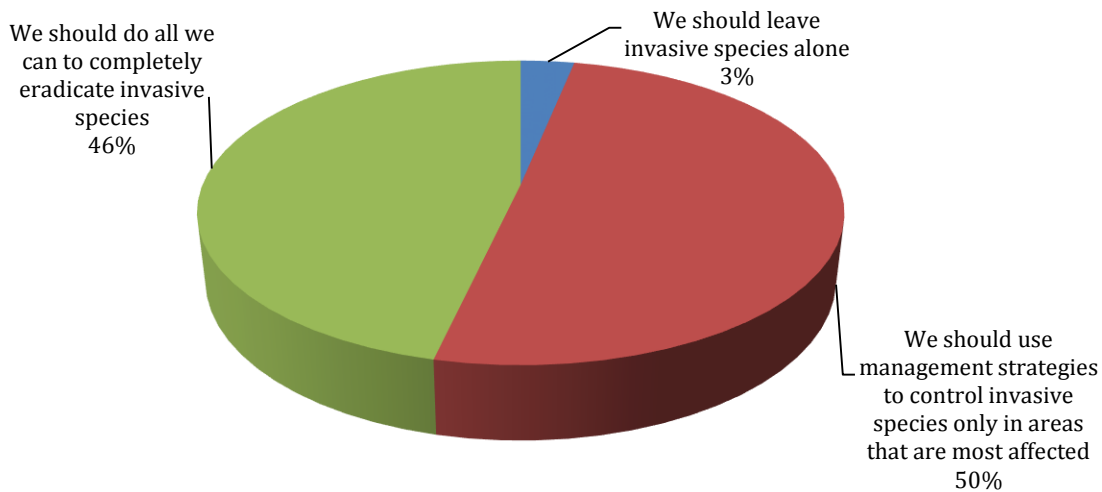
Figure 23: Factors to prioritize when controlling invasive species



Management of Invasive Species

Next, respondents were given three choices regarding management practices for invasive species and told to select the one that came closest to their personal views, even if none of the options was quite right. Fifty percent of respondents chose “we should use management strategies to control invasive species only in areas that are most affected” and 46% chose “we should do all we can to completely eradicate invasive species” (Figure 24).

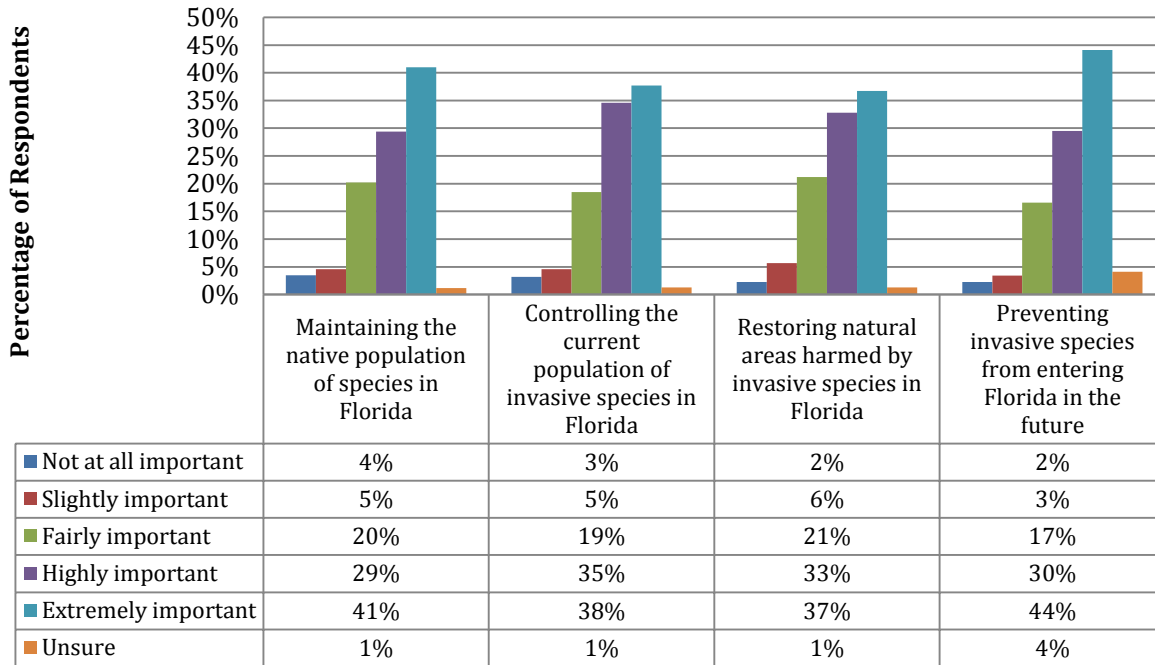
Figure 24: Management of invasive species



Invasive Species Management Priorities

Respondents were asked to indicate how important they considered various invasive species management priorities. Seventy-two percent of respondents considered it highly or extremely important to maintain the native populations of species in Florida and to control the current population of invasive species in Florida (Figure 25). Seventy-one percent considered it highly or extremely important to restore natural areas harmed by invasive species in Florida and seventy-nine percent considered it highly or extremely important to prevent invasive species from entering Florida in the future.

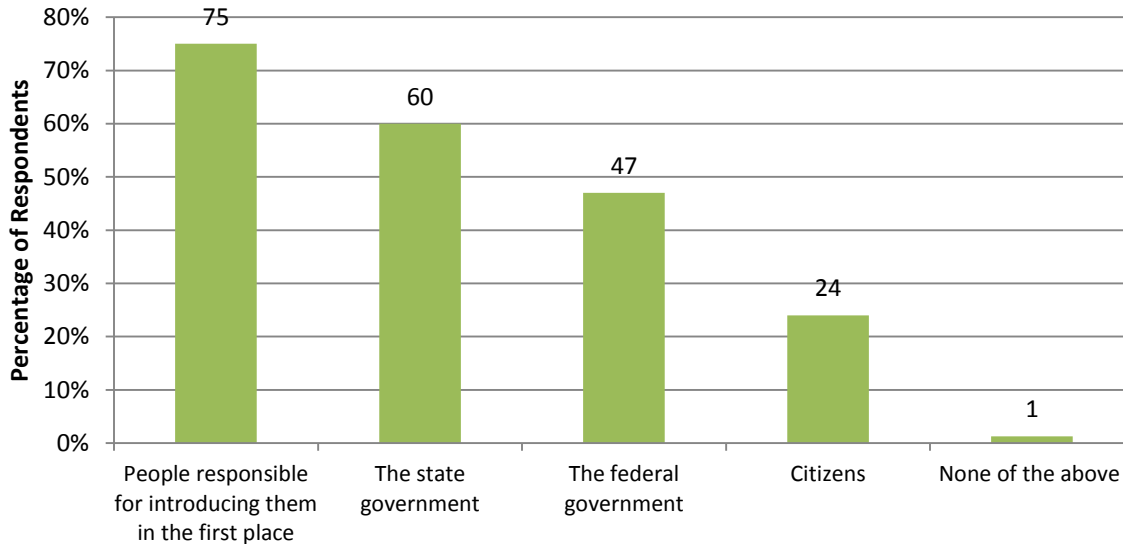
Figure 25: Importance of management practices for invasive species



Financial Cost for Managing Invasive Species

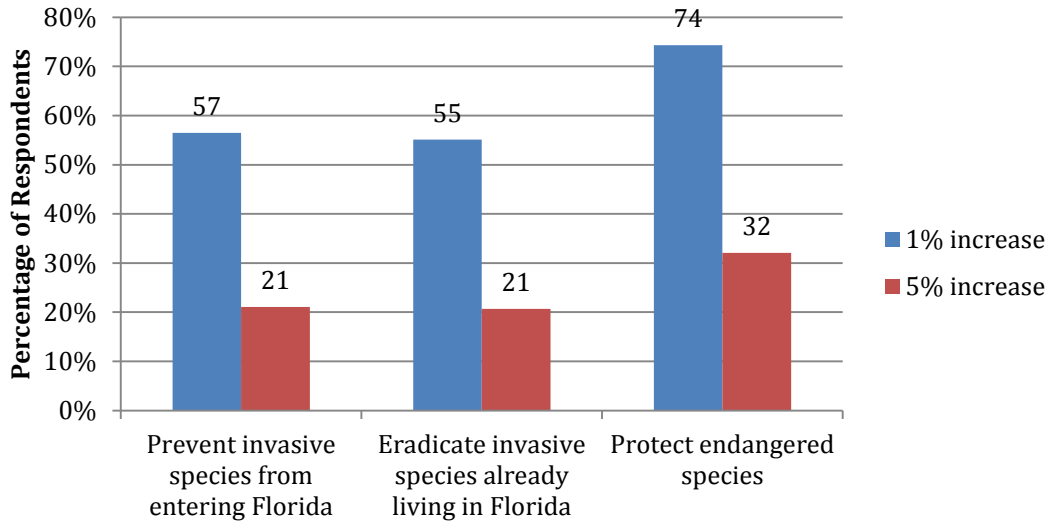
Respondents were provided with a list of potential groups that could be forced to pay the financial costs associated with managing invasive species and asked which group they felt should pay. They were allowed to choose all that applied. Seventy-five percent of respondents believed the people who introduced invasive species should be responsible for the financial cost, and 60% felt the state government should be responsible (Figure 26).

Figure 26: Group responsible for the financial cost of managing invasive species



Willingness to Pay for Invasive and Endangered Species Efforts

Next, respondents were asked about their personal willingness to pay for the management of invasive species and the protection of endangered species through tax increases. Overall, respondents were more willing to support tax increases for the protection of endangered species than invasive species management and were more willing to support a 1% sales tax increase than a 5% sales tax increase. Seventy-four percent of respondents supported a 1% increase in sales tax to protect endangered species, but only 21% supported a 5% sales increase. Regarding invasive species, fifty-five percent would support a 1% sales tax increase to prevent and eradicate invasive species in Florida, but only 21% supported a 5% sales tax increase for this same purpose (Figure 27).

Figure 27: Willingness to pay through tax increases

Support for Actions Relevant to a Specific Invasive Species

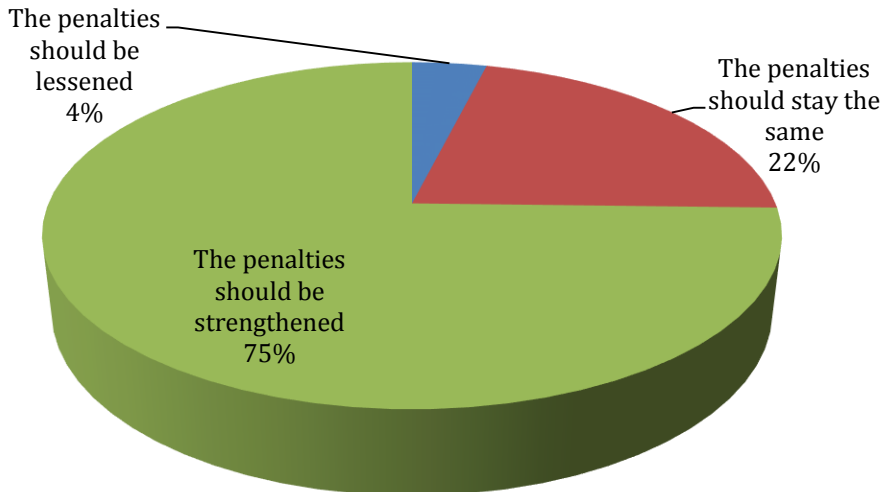
Respondents were also asked a series of questions about a key invasive species - Burmese pythons.

Penalties for Owning or Selling Burmese Pythons as pets

Respondents were given the following scenario about Burmese pythons:

Burmese pythons have become invasive in Florida, particularly the wetlands of southern Florida, including the Everglades. Current efforts to control the python population include a ban on owning or selling pythons as pets as well as capturing and removing existing pythons in the wild. Penalties for violations of the ban mostly fall into the second degree misdemeanor category and include a minimum mandatory fine of \$100 and also requires the surrender of the python. Based on this information, please indicate which of the following statements most closely aligns with what you believe. 1) The penalties for selling and owning Burmese pythons as pets should be lessened because they are too severe; 2) The penalties should remain as it is currently; 3) The penalties for owning and selling Burmese pythons as pets should be strengthened to better protect the natural habitat existing in the wetlands of southern Florida, including the Everglades.

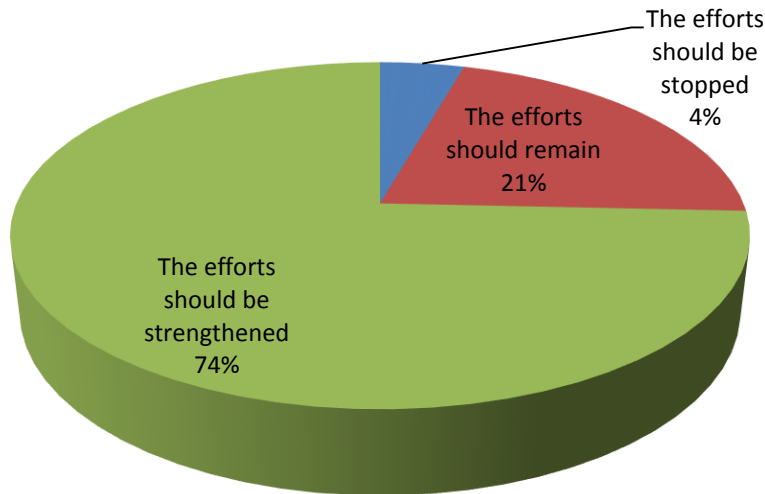
Seventy-three percent of respondents indicated they believed the penalties for owning and selling Burmese pythons as pets should be strengthened, while 22% believed the penalties should remain the same (Figure 28). Only 4% believed the penalties should be lessened.

Figure 28: Penalties for Owning and Selling Burmese pythons**Controlling Burmese Pythons**

Respondents were given a second scenario about Burmese pythons which read:

Again, Burmese pythons have recently become invasive in Florida, particularly the wetlands of southern Florida, including the Everglades. Current efforts to control the python population include a ban on owning or selling pythons as pets as well as capturing and removing existing pythons in the wild. Please indicate which of the following statements most closely aligns with what you believe: 1) the efforts to capture and remove existing pythons in the wild should be stopped; 2) the efforts should remain as they are currently; or 3) the efforts to capture and remove existing pythons in the wild should be strengthened to better protect the natural habitat existing in the wetlands of southern Florida, including the Everglades.

Seventy-four percent of respondents indicated they thought the efforts to control the python population in the wild should be strengthened and 21% thought the efforts should remain the same (Figure 29). Only 5% of respondents thought the efforts should be stopped.

Figure 29: Efforts to control Burmese pythons

Importance of Floridian Natural Habitats and Wildlife

Respondents were asked to indicate the level of importance they associated with five items associated with wildlife on a 5-point Likert-type scale with 1 = *Not at all important*, 2 = *Slightly important*, 3 = *Fairly important*, 4 = *Highly important*, and 5 = *Extremely important*. Seventy-nine percent of respondents considered it highly or extremely important that native species are protected from non-native, invasive species. Equal percentages of respondents (77%) considered it highly or extremely important that wildlife exists in Florida and that wildlife populations are being properly managed in Florida (Table 5).

Table 5: Importance of Floridian natural habitats and wildlife

	% respondents who indicated item as highly or extremely important
Native species are protected from non-native, invasive species	79
Wildlife exists in Florida	77
Wildlife populations are being properly managed in Florida	77
Fish populations are being properly managed in Florida	74
People have the opportunity to view wildlife in Florida	69

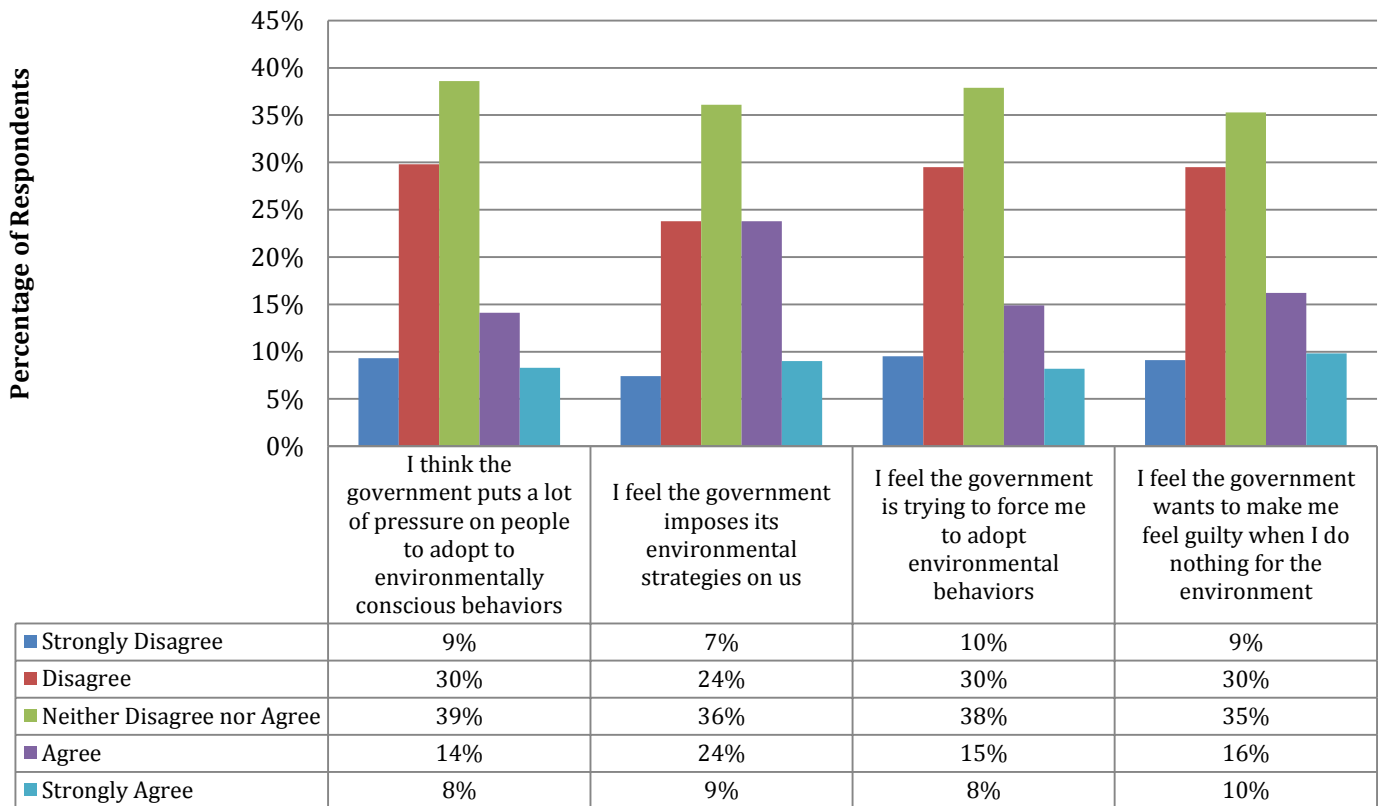
Attitudes towards Government Involvement in Environmental Issues

Respondents were asked to respond to questions aimed at understanding their opinions regarding government control and government support for personal engagement in environmental behaviors.

Governmental Control

The first set of questions asked about respondents’ feelings that the government controls or forces them to engage in environmental behavior (Figure 30). The highest percent of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed to an item of government control was for the statement “I feel the government imposes its environmental strategies on us” (33%). The highest level of disagreement or strong disagreement was for the item “I feel the government is trying to force me to adopt environmental behaviors” (40%).

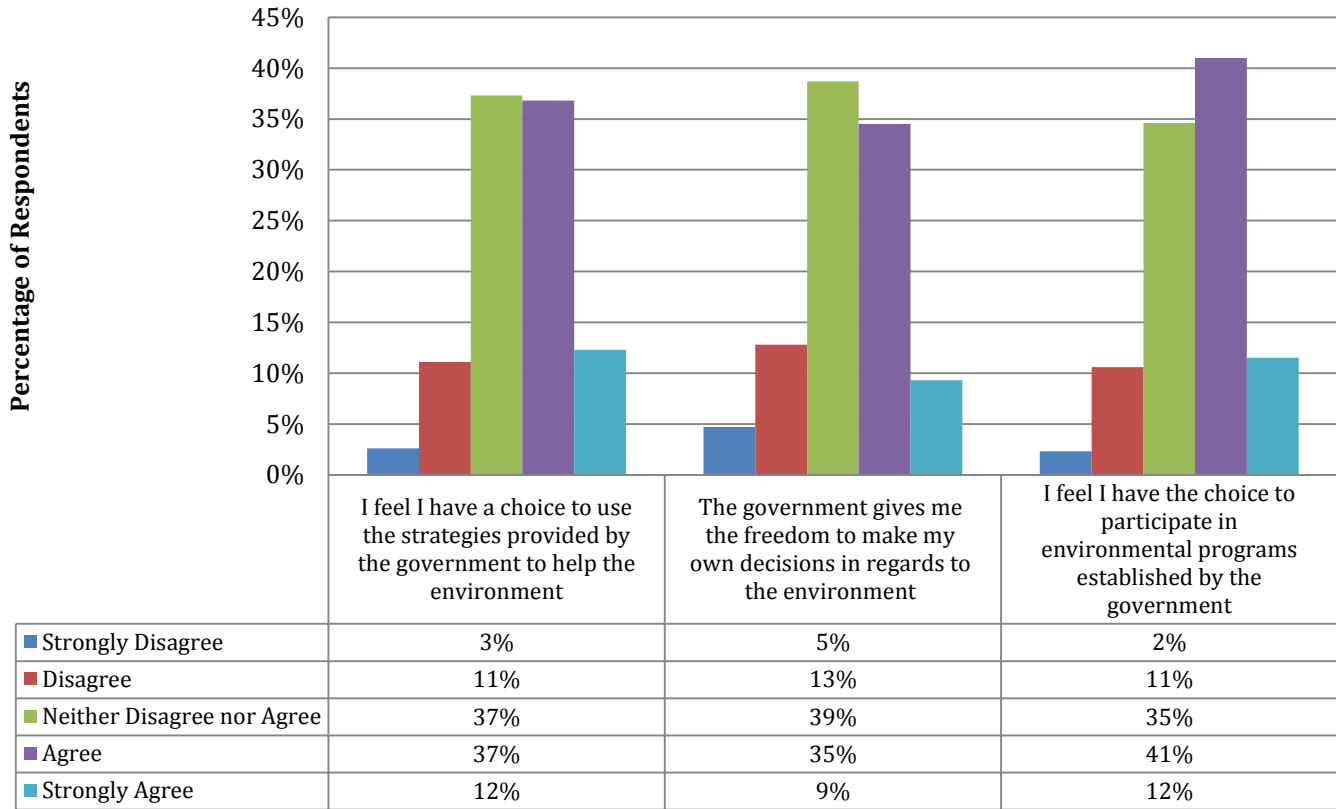
Figure 30: Attitudes toward government control of environmental behaviors



Governmental Support

The next set of questions asked about respondents’ feelings that the government allows them to participate in environmental behaviors in a supportive way (Figure 31). Fifty-three percent of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed they felt they had the choice to participate in environmental programs established by the government, followed by 49% who agreed or strongly agreed “I feel I have a choice to use the strategies provided by the government to help the environment.” Eighteen percent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed “the government gives me the freedom to make my own decisions in regards to the environment.”

Figure 31: Attitudes toward government support for environmental behaviors



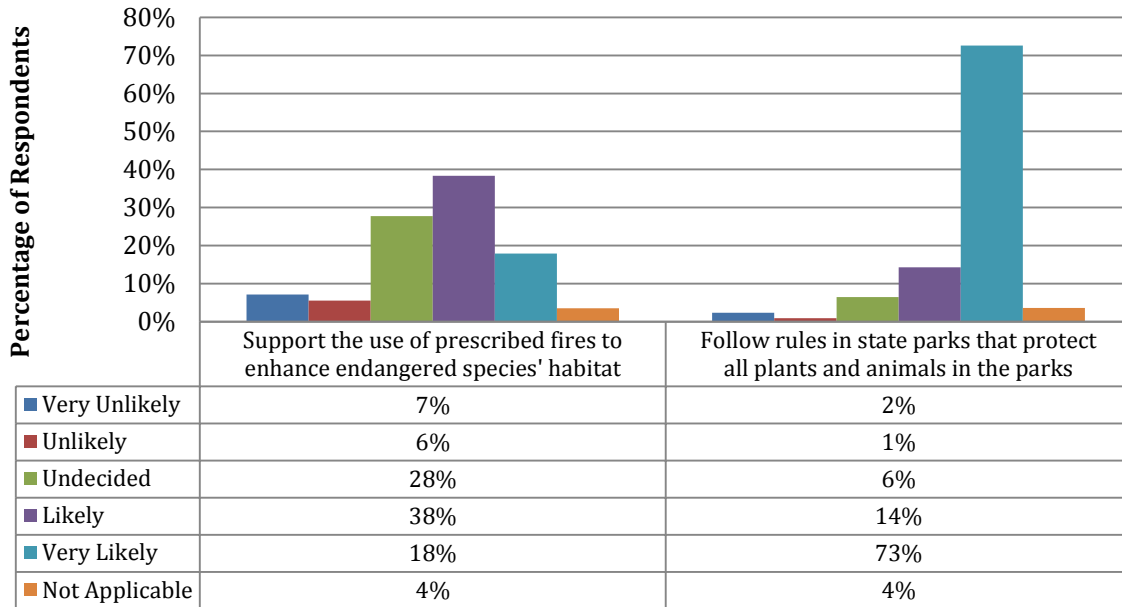
Willingness to Engage in Specific Environmental Behaviors

Respondents were asked a series of questions asking their willingness to engage in different behaviors related to the environment. The behaviors included (1) supporting specific policies, (2) engaging in specific purchasing behavior, (3) avoiding environmentally harmful activities, (4) reducing material waste, (5) voting for environmental causes, and (5) engaging in environmental civic behavior.

Willingness to Support Specific Policies

Respondents reported they were very likely to follow rules in state parks (73%) while only 18% were very likely to support the use of prescribed fires to enhance endangered species' habitats (Figure 32).

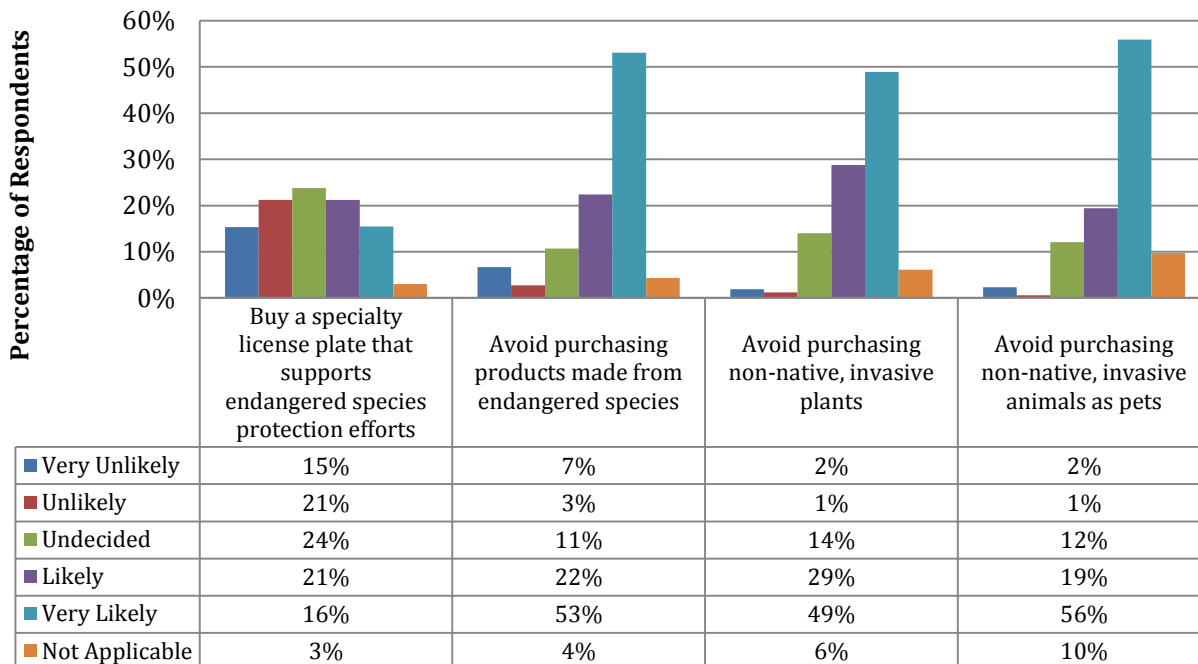
Figure 32: Willingness to support specific policies



Willingness to Engage in Specific Purchasing Behavior

While the majority of respondents were very likely to avoid purchasing products made from endangered species (53%), and non-native animals as pets (56%), only 15% were very likely to purchase a specialty license plate that supports endangered species protection effort (Figure 33).

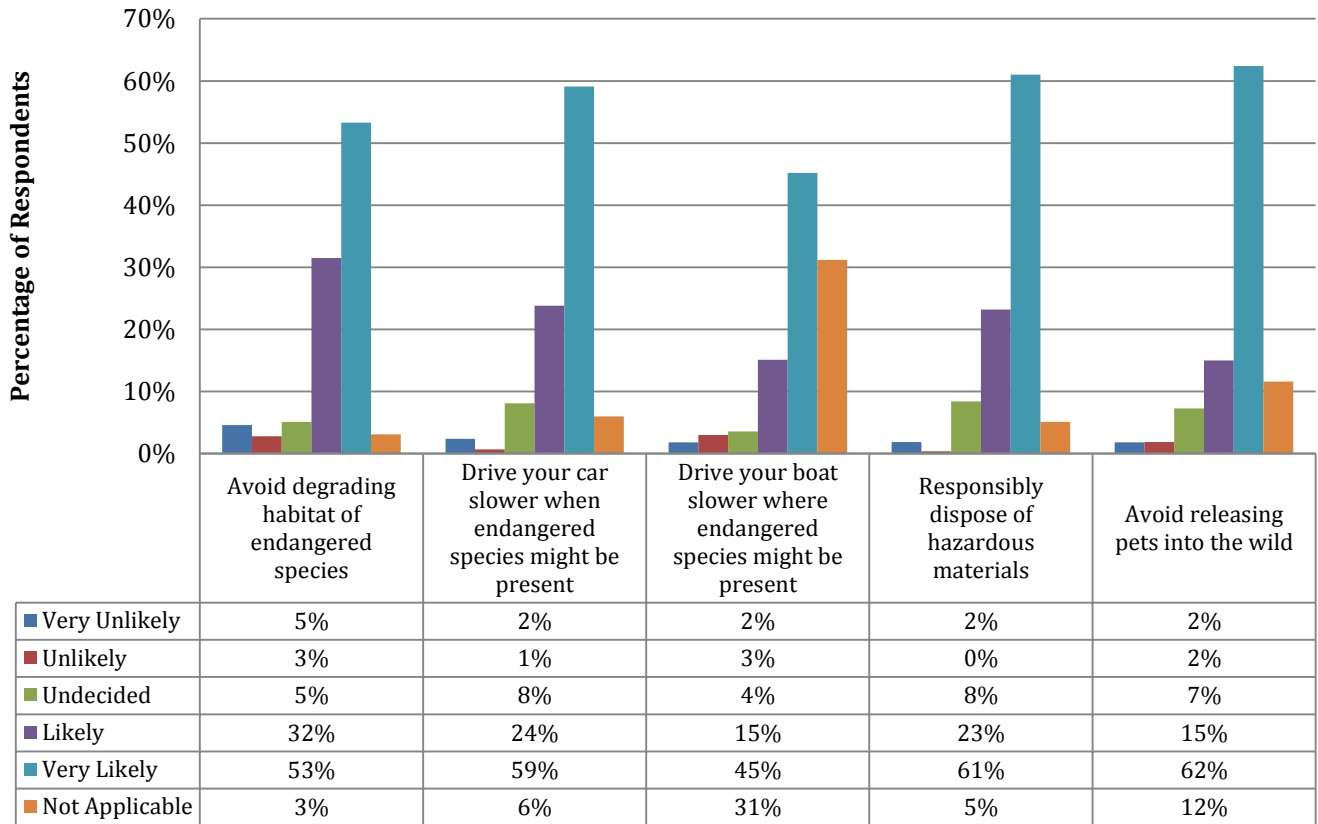
Figure 33: Willingness to engage in specific purchasing behavior



Willingness to Avoid Harmful Activities

Sixty-two percent of respondents were very likely to avoid releasing pets into the wild and 61% were very likely to responsibly dispose of hazardous materials (Figure 34).

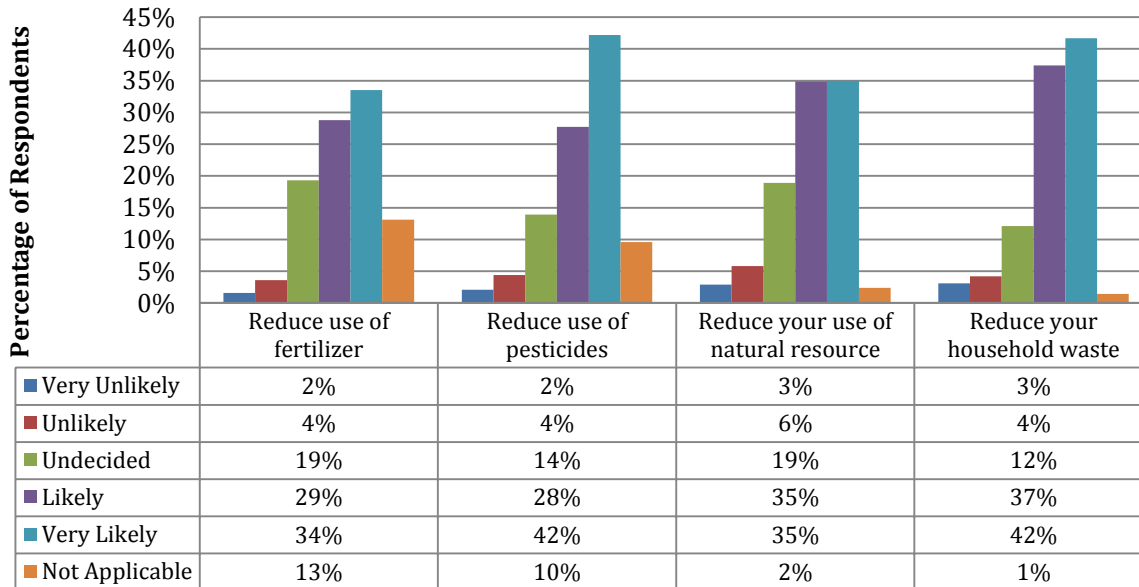
Figure 34: Willingness to avoid harmful activities



Willingness to Reduce Material Waste

Seventy-nine percent of respondents stated they were likely or very likely to reduce their household waste and an equal percentage of respondents (70%) were likely or very likely to reduce their use of natural resources and reduce their use of pesticides (Figure 35).

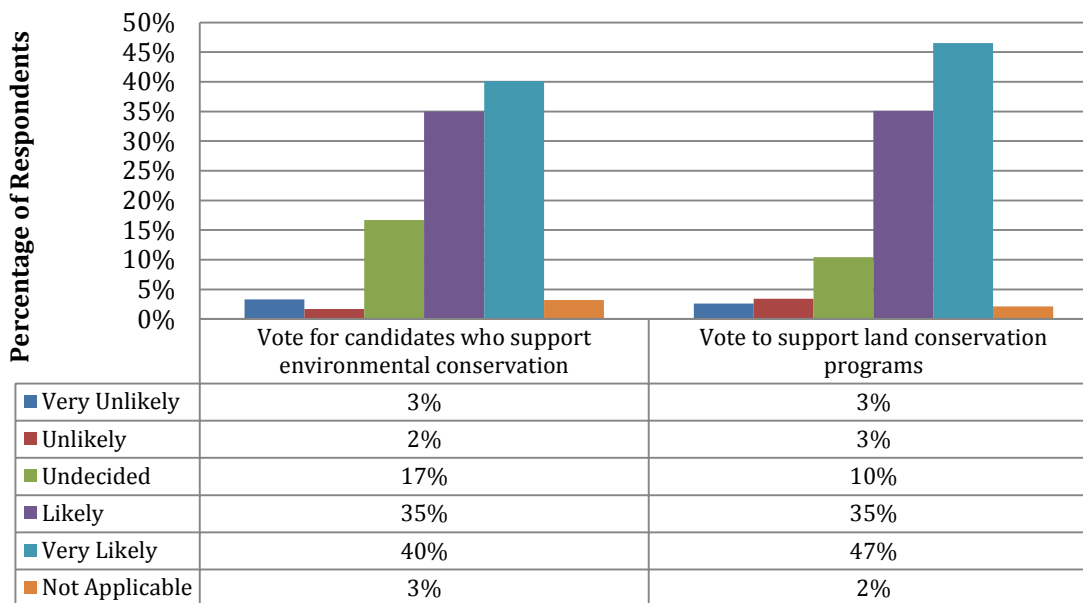
Figure 35: Willingness to reduce material use



Willingness to Vote for Environmental Causes

Eighty-two percent of respondents were likely or very likely to vote to support land conservation programs and seventy-five percent of respondents were likely or very likely to vote for candidates who support environmental conservation (Figure 36).

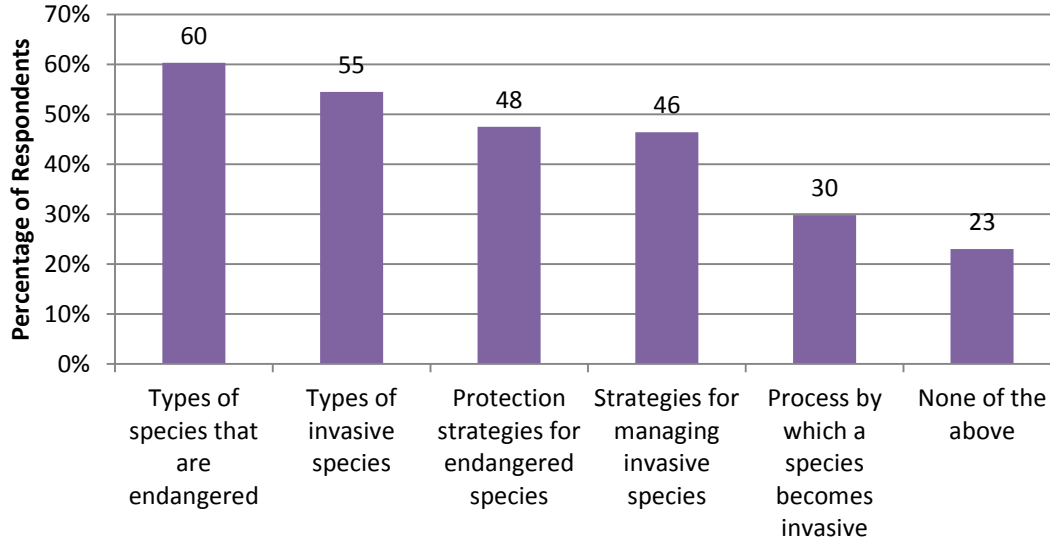
Figure 36: Willingness to vote for environmental causes



Educational Topics and Learning Mode

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they would like to learn more about topics related to endangered and invasive species. They were allowed to select all that applied. Seventy percent of respondents would like to learn more about types of species that are endangered and 64% would like to learn about the types of species that are invasive (Figure 37).

Figure 37: Topics of interest regarding endangered and invasive species



Respondents (n=324) were asked what type of learning opportunities they would be most likely to take advantage of when learning about endangered species and invasive species topics. They were allowed to select all that applied and the results can be seen in Figure 38 and Figure 39. The most popular preferred mode of learning for endangered species topics was visiting a website (66%), followed by watching TV coverage (44%). The most popular preferred mode of learning for invasive species topics was also through watching TV coverage (76%) and visiting a website (75%).

Figure 38: Preferred mode of learning- endangered species (n=324)

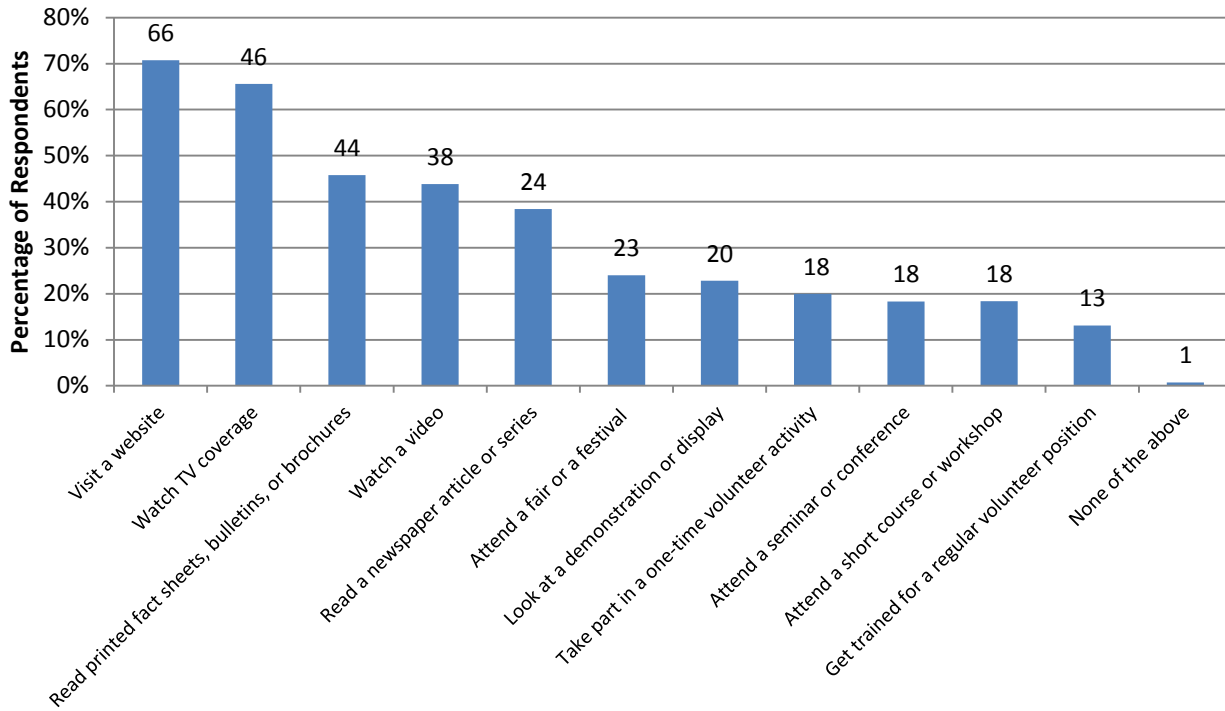
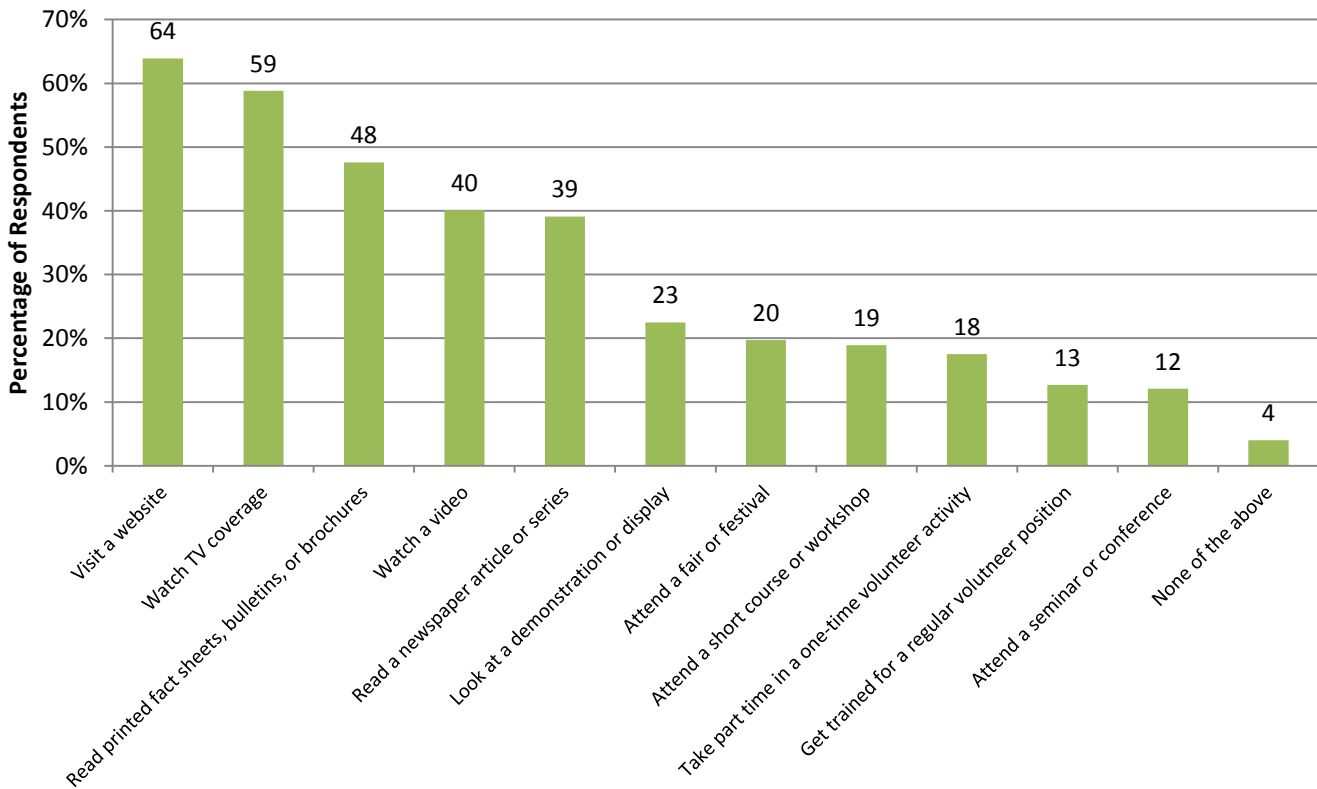


Figure 39: Preferred mode of learning- invasive species (n=324)



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