

# Responsive Management™



## **ATTITUDES TOWARD MULE DEER MANAGEMENT IN THE PLATTE VALLEY**

**Conducted for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department**

**by Responsive Management**

**2011**

# **ATTITUDES TOWARD MULE DEER MANAGEMENT IN THE PLATTE VALLEY**

**2011**

## **Responsive Management National Office**

Mark Damian Duda, Executive Director  
Martin Jones, Senior Research Associate  
Tom Beppler, Research Associate  
Steven J. Bissell, Ph.D., Qualitative Research Associate  
Andrea Criscione, Research Associate  
Amanda Ritchie, Research Associate  
Carol L. Schilli, Research Associate  
Tim Winegord, Survey Center Manager  
Alison Lanier, Business Manager

130 Franklin Street  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801  
Phone: 540/432-1888 Fax: 540/432-1892  
E-mail: [mark@responsivemanagement.com](mailto:mark@responsivemanagement.com)  
[www.responsivemanagement.com](http://www.responsivemanagement.com)

## **Acknowledgments**

Responsive Management would like to thank Susan Boston, Human Dimensions Coordinator, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, for her input, support, and guidance on this project.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY**

This study was conducted for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (hereinafter referred to as “the Department”) to determine mule deer hunters’ opinions on mule deer hunting and mule deer management in the Platte Valley. The study entailed a telephone survey of licensed Wyoming hunters who had hunted in the Platte Valley in the past 5 years. Specific aspects of the research methodology are discussed below.

For the survey, telephones were selected as the preferred sampling medium because of the almost universal ownership of telephones among the sample (both landlines and cell phones were called). 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 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.

The telephone survey questionnaire was developed cooperatively by Responsive Management and the Department, based on the research team’s familiarity with hunting, outdoor recreation, and natural resources. Responsive Management conducted pre-tests of the questionnaire to ensure proper wording, flow, and logic in the survey. The sample of Wyoming licensed hunters was obtained from the Department. The sample included three distinct groups: Platte Valley residents, Wyoming residents not in the Platte Valley (hereinafter referred to as “non-Platte Valley residents”), and residents of other states who hunt in the Platte Valley (hereinafter referred to as “Wyoming non-residents”).

A central polling site at the Responsive Management office allowed for rigorous quality control over the interviews and data collection. Telephone surveying times are Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. 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. The survey was conducted in July and August 2011. The software used for data collection was Questionnaire Programming Language. Responsive Management

obtained a total of 599 completed interviews: 85 with Platte Valley residents, 331 with non-Platte Valley residents, 183 with Wyoming non-residents.

The analysis of data was performed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences as well as proprietary software developed by Responsive Management.

### **PARTICIPATION IN MULE DEER HUNTING IN THE PLATTE VALLEY**

- Two-thirds (66%) of both Platte Valley residents and non-Platte Valley residents had hunted mule deer in Wyoming in all 5 of the previous 5 years; the means were 4.13 years and 4.21 years, respectively. Among Wyoming non-residents, not surprisingly, a lower percent (21%) had hunted for mule deer in Wyoming all 5 of the past 5 years, and their mean was 2.56 years.
  - Another question asked about hunting mule deer specifically *in the Platte Valley*. A majority of Platte Valley residents (60%) did so 5 of the past 5 years, and their mean was 4.00 years. For Wyoming non-Platte Valley residents, 44% had hunted mule deer in the Platte Valley for 5 of the past 5 years, and their mean was 3.53. Finally, only 16% of Wyoming non-residents had done so for 5 of the past 5 years, and their mean was 2.27 years.
  - Hunters were also asked about the total number of years that they had hunted mule deer in the Platte Valley. As expected, Platte Valley residents had the highest mean (18.69 years), followed by non-Platte Valley residents (14.03), and distantly followed by Wyoming non-residents (5.14 years).
- The survey asked hunters to indicate their typical annual days of hunting mule deer in the Platte Valley in the past 5 years: the means were 8.34 days among Platte Valley residents, 6.98 among non-Platte Valley residents, and 7.04 among Wyoming non-residents.
- Hunt areas 78, 79, and 80 are the most popular Platte Valley hunt areas among respondents.
  - Another question pertaining to location asked respondents how far they typically travel, one-way, from home to hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley. As to be expected, the lowest mean was among Platte Valley residents (they typically travel 18.80 miles), the

middle mean was among Wyoming non-Platte Valley residents (98.41 miles), and the highest mean was among Wyoming non-residents (a mean of 1,093.63 miles).

- One question asked about hunting mule deer *outside* of the Platte Valley in the past season. A majority of Platte Valley residents (78%) and a majority of Wyoming non-residents (80%) did *not* hunt mule deer outside of the Platte Valley, while about half of Wyoming non-Platte Valley residents (48%) did not hunt mule deer outside of the Platte Valley.
- A final participatory question asked about the use of an outfitter or guide: 16% of Wyoming non-residents had used an outfitter or guide in the Platte Valley at some time. Among Wyoming residents (in or outside of the Platte Valley), only 2% had ever used an outfitter or guide in the Platte Valley.

#### **MOTIVATIONS FOR HUNTING IN THE PLATTE VALLEY**

- The survey asked respondents which one of five given reasons was the most important reason for hunting mule deer. Among Wyoming residents (both Platte Valley residents and non-Platte Valley residents), the utilitarian reason of “for the meat” was the top reason (42% of Platte Valley residents and 38% of non-Platte Valley residents gave this response). For Wyoming non-residents, the top motivation was not utilitarian: “for the sport or recreation” (33% gave this response).
- Proximity and familiarity are two top reasons that hunters choose to hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley. Nonetheless, other motivations of note include that the hunter likes the area, that the Platte Valley has plenty of game, that the area has good quality game, that tags were available for the area, and that the area has good access.

#### **FACTORS IN A QUALITY DEER HUNT**

- Respondents were read a list of six factors and were asked to indicate which of them they look for in a *quality* hunt (they could choose more than one). Of the six factors, two are utilitarian, and four are aesthetic. For Platte Valley residents, the utilitarian factor of

“presence of large-antlered bucks” was the top factor, while for non-Platte Valley residents and Wyoming non-residents the top factor was “for the outdoor experience.”

- The survey asked respondents to indicate the minimum number of points on one side that a buck should have to be considered a trophy buck. The most common response among all three groups was four points—a majority of each group gave this answer (from 61% to 65%).
  - A similar question asked about the minimum antler spread for a buck to be considered a trophy buck. Most of the answers ranged from 24 inches to 28 inches, with the means being 24.35 inches (Platte Valley residents), 24.12 inches (non-Platte Valley residents), and 23.48 inches (Wyoming non-residents).

### **SATISFACTIONS AND DISSATISFACTIONS WITH HUNTING IN THE PLATTE VALLEY**

- Platte Valley residents and those not from the Platte Valley differ markedly in their satisfaction with hunting mule deer in the Platte Valley. While a majority of Platte Valley residents are *dissatisfied* (61%), a majority of each of the other two groups are *satisfied* (59% of non-Platte Valley residents and 70% of Wyoming non-residents).
  - In follow-up, respondents were asked to indicate the reasons that they were satisfied or dissatisfied. Among those who were *very* satisfied, the top reasons for being very satisfied are that there is plenty of game, that the Platte Valley area is beautiful, that they had a good hunting experience, that the area is not crowded, and that they had good access.
  - The top reasons for being dissatisfied are a perceived lack of game, lack of quality deer, not seeing the right kind of deer (e.g., only see does), crowding, poor habitat (including because of the beetle kill), and weather (including not only harsh winters but also that the hunting season was too hot recently).
- The survey asked respondents if there were any things that caused them *not* to hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley as much as they would have liked. A majority of Platte Valley residents (59%), half of non-Platte Valley residents (50%), and less than half of Wyoming

non-residents (43%) responded that there were such things. They were then asked in an open-ended question to name those things.

- The top factors that prompted less mule deer hunting than the respondent would have liked to engage in are a perceived lack of game, time constraints, crowding, access problems, poor health/age, and (particularly for Wyoming non-residents) the cost of licenses and the amount/cost of travel.
- The issue of crowding was directly addressed in the survey, which asked respondents to indicate if the number of hunters in the Platte Valley was acceptable or unacceptable. Wyoming residents differ markedly from Wyoming non-residents. While 40% of both Platte Valley residents and non-Platte Valley residents think the number of hunters in the field in the Platte Valley is unacceptable, only 17% of Wyoming non-residents think this. On the other end, acceptability increases with distance from the Platte Valley: 42% of Platte Valley residents say the number of hunters is acceptable, 53% of non-Platte Valley residents think so, and 63% of Wyoming non-residents think the number of hunters is acceptable.
- The issue of crowding was also asked about in two other questions. The first question asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed with this statement: There were too many other hunters in the area where you hunted most often in the Platte Valley in the past 5 years. Again, there was a marked difference between Wyoming non-residents and residents from Wyoming (both in and outside of the Platte Valley): a majority of Platte Valley residents (60%) and non-Platte Valley residents (56%) agree with this statement (i.e., they think the Platte Valley is crowded), while only 30% of Wyoming non-residents agree.
- The second question discussed herein that concerned crowding asked respondents whether the number of hunters in the Platte Valley has increased, stayed the same, or decreased over the past 5 years. A majority of Platte Valley residents (53%) and non-Platte Valley residents (56%) think that the number of hunters has increased, while only 16% of Wyoming non-residents think that the number has increased.

## OPINIONS ON CURRENT MANAGEMENT OF THE DEER HERD IN THE PLATTE VALLEY

- A basic question about mule deer management asked respondents if they think the Wyoming Game and Fish Department is doing an excellent, good, fair, or poor job of managing the mule deer population in the Platte Valley. Platte Valley residents differ markedly from the other two groups: 31% of Platte Valley residents give a rating of excellent or good, compared to 54% of non-Platte Valley residents and 68% of Wyoming non-residents. The difference is more extreme in “poor” responses: 42% of Platte Valley residents give a rating of poor, compared to only 13% of non-Platte Valley residents and 8% of Wyoming non-residents.
  - A follow-up question asked respondents to indicate their reasoning for giving the rating that they gave. For those who responded with “excellent”: top reasons are that there is plenty of game, that interactions with agency personnel have been favorable (including having enough check stations), that the Department does a good job, and the good quality of deer and habitat.
  - The top reasons for giving a negative rating (either “fair” or “poor,” which is in the bottom half of the scale) are the perceived lack of game, perceived mismanagement of the herd, regulatory issues, the perceived lack of quality deer, crowding, and too many out-of-state hunters.
- The survey asked whether the way the Department manages mule deer has improved, remained the same, or gotten worse in the past 5 years. Again, Platte Valley residents are more negative than the other two groups. Nonetheless, none of the groups were generally favorable in their opinions regarding trends in the past 5 years.
- A basic question asked respondents about the acceptability of the current number of mule deer in the Platte Valley. About half of non-Platte Valley residents (50%) and Wyoming non-residents (51%) find the current number of mule deer acceptable; meanwhile, Platte Valley residents are more negative, as only 27% find the current number acceptable.
  - Another question asked about the acceptability of the number of mule deer *harvested*. Platte Valley residents are about evenly split (31% say the harvest number is acceptable,

while 35% say it is unacceptable). The other groups are a little more favorable: among non-Platte Valley residents, 43% say acceptable and 23% say unacceptable; among Wyoming non-residents, those percentages are 40% acceptable and 19% unacceptable.

- Two “agree-disagree” questions were asked regarding the quantity of bucks and the quality of bucks.
  - Regarding the quantity, half of Wyoming non-residents (50%) agree that the number of bucks in the area was adequate in the past 5 years. Otherwise, for the other groups, less favorable ratings are given, as majorities of Platte Valley (73%) and non-Platte Valley residents (61%) *disagree* that the number of bucks in the past 5 years was adequate.
  - Regarding quality, majorities of all three groups indicated that they had heard about or had seen big antlered bucks in the Platte Valley area within the past 5 years (from 60% to 67% among the three groups).
  
- Three questions asked about recent trends: the trend in numbers of mule deer, the numbers harvested, and the numbers of bucks. Each asked if those numbers had increased, stayed the same, or decreased over the past 5 years.
  - Regarding total numbers of mule deer: the most common answer of all three groups is “decreased.”
  - Regarding numbers harvested: “decreased” is the most common answer of all three groups (excluding don’t know, the most common response of Wyoming non-residents).
  - Regarding the number of bucks, “decreased” is again the most common answer.
  
- Part of management of deer herds involves the *management of habitat*, to the extent that it can be influenced by agency action. Respondents were asked to rate the current quality of deer habitat in the Platte Valley, and they are more positive than negative: from 58% to 66% gave a rating of *excellent* or *good*, compared to a range of 25% to 39% giving a rating of *fair* or *poor*.
  - Respondents were asked for their opinion regarding whether the quality of mule deer habitat in the Platte Valley had improved, remained the same, or gotten worse in the past 5 years. “Remained the same” is the most common answer among all three groups (from

41% to 46%). Otherwise, a greater percentage of each group thinks the quality has *gotten worse* than thinks it has *improved*: among Platte Valley residents, 31% to 15%, among non-Platte Valley residents, 30% to 20%, and among Wyoming non-residents, 21% to 6%.

### **OPINIONS ON FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE DEER POPULATION IN THE PLATTE VALLEY, INCLUDING HABITAT**

- Hunters who had previously indicated the total number of mule deer in the Platte Valley has increased or decreased in the past 5 years were asked about their opinion regarding the reasons for the increase or decrease.
  - Among those who thought the number had increased, common reasons given for the perceived increase include the large number of does in the herd, favorable weather, and good management.
  - Regarding a perceived decrease, overhunting was a prominent reason—the top reason among Platte Valley residents and non-Platte Valley residents, and the third-ranked reason among Wyoming non-residents. Nonetheless, nature-based reasons of the weather and predators were also commonly cited reasons.
  
- The most commonly named factors named, when respondents were asked in an open-ended question to say what factors they think control the ability of the herd to increase or decrease, include the weather, hunting management, habitat/food supply, and predators.
  
- A series of seven questions asked hunters' opinions on factors that may or may not have had a major impact, minor impact, or no impact at all on the mule deer population in the Platte Valley in the past 5 years.
  - Among all groups, the top two factors, when ranked by those saying the factor had a *major* impact, were winterkill and mountain lions. In general, Platte Valley residents had higher percentages than did the other groups saying that predators (mountain lions in one question and coyotes in another) have major impacts on mule deer populations.

- One question asked directly about the effect that habitat conditions have had on the trend in the number of mule deer in the Platte Valley. In general, habitat conditions are more often thought to have influenced the deer herd to decrease (23% to 29%) or remain the same (24% to 31%) rather than to increase (9% to 13%).
  - A majority of each group agrees that there is enough winter habitat in the Platte Valley to sustain the current size of the mule deer population (75% of Platte Valley residents, 73% of non-Platte Valley residents, and 56% of Wyoming non-residents). Disagreement ranged from 10% to 18%; many of the Wyoming non-residents responded that they did not know.
    - A follow-up question asked who respondents thought had the most influence over habitat on winter ranges: private landowners was the most common answer (55% of Platte Valley residents, 50% of non-Platte Valley residents, and 39% of Wyoming non-residents), followed by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (18% of Platte Valley residents, 22% of non-Platte Valley residents, and 23% of Wyoming non-residents).
  
- A series of questions asked about the perceived importance of the quantity and quality of habitat on the summer and winter ranges for the Platte Valley mule deer herd. Overwhelming majorities of all three groups say that the quality and quantity of habitat on both summer and winter ranges is *very* important in determining the survival of mule deer in the Platte Valley herd. The winter ranges are thought to be slightly more important than the summer ranges: from 85% to 91% of the three groups think that either the quality or quantity of habitat on winter ranges is very important, compared to from 66% to 76% regarding summer ranges.
  
- Tangentially pertaining to habitat is the issue of collecting shed antlers in the winter, which may cause some disturbance to the herd in the winter. While a majority of Platte Valley residents and non-Platte Valley residents (56% and 58%, respectively) think that the collecting of shed antlers where mule deer are concentrated has an impact on the deer, only 31% of Wyoming non-residents think this.

## OPINIONS ON MANAGEMENT OPTIONS FOR THE DEER HERD IN THE PLATTE VALLEY

- Respondents are split in a choice between having general seasons or limited quota seasons, with slightly more support for general seasons. Among Platte Valley residents, 47% wanted general seasons and 42% wanted limited quota. Among non-Platte Valley residents, it was 56% to 34%, and among Wyoming non-residents, it was 49% to 35% in favor of general seasons.
- A majority of each group was in support (62% to 67%) of managing for trophy bucks in the Platte Valley, even if it means more restrictions and reduced chances of hunting every year. Most of the support was *strong* support.
- A large majority of each group was in support (65% to 73%) of limiting the number of hunters in the field in the Platte Valley, even if that would make it less likely that a hunter would get a license.
- Antlerless harvest as a mule deer management tool is acceptable to a large majority of two groups and a near majority of the third group (49% of Platte Valley residents, 69% of non-Platte Valley residents, and 74% of Wyoming non-residents). The most opposition comes from Platte Valley residents (36%), compared to non-Platte Valley residents (22%) and Wyoming non-residents (14%).
  - In follow-up, reasons for it being acceptable were solicited. There was recognition that it is an effective tool and for the need to balance the herd. Some indicated that, as they hunt for meat, they find it acceptable to harvest antlerless deer.
  - The follow-up question among those who said it is unacceptable to use antlerless harvest as a management tool found the top reason to be the perceived lack of deer. Some also indicated being against the killing of does.
- Of three factors used in determining how many mule deer should be in the Platte Valley herd, habitat is regarded as the most important: a majority of each group (from 59% to 64%) chose “habitat” over “a high chance of harvest success even if it means limited hunting

opportunities” (from 21% to 27%) or “the opportunity for hunters to hunt every year regardless of success” (5% to 6%).

- Two questions asked about the importance of managing the *quality* and managing the *quantity* (or amount) of habitat. Both are felt to be of overwhelming importance (no more than 2% of any group responded with “not at all important”), with *quality* just slightly ahead of *amount*. From 78% to 82% said managing the quality is *very* important, while from 73% to 80% said managing the amount is *very* important. Nearly all the remaining respondents chose *moderately* important.
- Related to the management of habitat is the management of the collection of shed antlers. One question asked respondents if they would support or oppose efforts by the Department to regulate collecting of shed antlers where mule deer are concentrated during the winter. Majorities of both groups of Wyoming residents support doing so (62% among Platte Valley residents and 65% among non-Platte Valley residents). Additionally, more Wyoming non-residents were in support (46%) than in opposition (34%).

## OPINIONS ON USE OF ATVS AND ATV MANAGEMENT

- Two questions asked about the amount of ATV use: one pertaining to ATV use where the hunter most often hunts, and the second question pertaining to ATV use in the winter ranges of the Platte Valley.
  - The groups differ markedly from one another regarding the acceptability of the amount of ATV use *where they most often hunt*. While both groups of Wyoming residents are split on the question (among Platte Valley residents, 42% say the amount of ATV use is acceptable and 48% say unacceptable; among non-Platte Valley residents, it is 46% to 43%), Wyoming non-residents find the amount acceptable (59% say acceptable to 29% who say unacceptable).
  - There appears to be more concern overall about the amount of ATV use *in the winter ranges*. There is also the same difference of opinion among groups, with Wyoming non-residents differing from the other two groups. Lower percents say acceptable than unacceptable among Platte Valley residents (32% say the amount of ATV use in the

winter ranges is acceptable compared to 53% who say unacceptable) and among non-Platte Valley residents (32% to 46%). However, among Wyoming non-residents, a higher percent say acceptable than say unacceptable (36% to 28%). A relatively high percentage of the latter group responded with don't know (24%).

- Regardless of their opinion on the acceptability of ATV use where they hunt and in the winter ranges, a majority of all groups support efforts to regulate the use of ATVs:
  - During the winter in the Platte Valley where mule deer are concentrated (from 73% to 81% support),
  - During the hunting season in the Platte Valley (65% to 69%), and
  - During the summer in the Platte Valley where mule deer are concentrated (56% to 60%).
    - As the data above indicate, regulation of the winter ranges is considered more important relative to regulation during the hunting season or regulation of the summer ranges.

### **LIKELY ALTERNATIVE BEHAVIORS TO HUNTING IN THE PLATTE VALLEY**

- Four questions asked about likely participatory behaviors if the respondent cannot hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley every year. The four behaviors are to hunt mule deer in other general hunt areas outside the Platte Valley, to hunt mule deer in other general hunt areas near the Platte Valley, to hunt mule deer in limited quota areas, or to stop hunting mule deer until they can hunt in the Platte Valley again.
  - Among Platte Valley residents, the most common choice would be to hunt mule deer in other general hunt areas that are near the Platte Valley (38% would be very likely and 45% would be somewhat likely to do that, a sum of 82%), followed by hunt in limited quota areas (41% very, 34% somewhat, 75% total) and hunt in general hunt areas outside of the Platte Valley (33% very, 38% somewhat, 71% total). A relatively low percentage would stop hunting mule deer until they could hunt in the Platte Valley again (22% very, 21% somewhat, 44% total).
  - Among non-Platte Valley residents, the most common choice would be to hunt mule deer in other general hunt areas outside the Platte Valley (71% would be very likely and 20% would be somewhat likely to do that, a sum of 91%), followed by hunt in general hunt

areas near of the Platte Valley (57% very, 29% somewhat, 86% total) and hunt in limited quota areas (52% very, 27% somewhat, 79% total). Again, a quite low percentage would stop hunting mule deer until they could hunt in the Platte Valley again (6% very, 8% somewhat, 14% total).

- Finally, among Wyoming non-residents, the most common choice would be to hunt mule deer in other general hunt areas outside the Platte Valley (51% very, 28% somewhat, 79% total), followed by hunt in limited quota areas (44% very, 32% somewhat, 76% total) and hunt in general hunt areas near of the Platte Valley (37% very, 37% somewhat, 74% total). Again, a quite low percentage would stop hunting mule deer until they could hunt in the Platte Valley again (11% very, 8% somewhat, 19% total).

## **LAND OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

- Respondents were asked if they owned land or managed land in the Platte Valley: 38% of Platte Valley residents, 12% of non-Platte Valley residents, and only 2% of Wyoming non-residents owned or managed land in the Platte Valley.
- The survey asked about the amounts of land owned/managed in the Platte Valley. The mean amount owned by Platte Valley residents is 645.19 acres, their median is 12 acres. Among non-Platte Valley residents, the mean is 1,003.16 acres, and the median is 8 acres.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction and Methodology .....	1
Participation in Mule Deer Hunting in the Platte Valley .....	6
Motivations for Hunting in the Platte Valley .....	17
Factors in a Quality Deer Hunt .....	21
Satisfactions and Dissatisfactions With Hunting in the Platte Valley .....	28
Opinions on Mule Deer Management in the Platte Valley .....	40
Opinions on Current Management of the Deer Herd in the Platte Valley .....	40
Opinions on Factors That Affect the Deer Population in the Platte Valley, Including Habitat .....	61
Opinions on Management Options for the Deer Herd in the Platte Valley .....	77
Opinions on Use of ATVs and ATV Management .....	88
Likely Alternative Behaviors to Hunting in the Platte Valley .....	95
Land Ownership and Management .....	100
Demographic Data and Membership in Organizations .....	102
Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire .....	108
About Responsive Management .....	117

## **INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY**

This study was conducted for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (hereinafter referred to as “the Department”) to determine mule deer hunters’ opinions on mule deer hunting and mule deer management in the Platte Valley. The study entailed a telephone survey of licensed Wyoming hunters who had hunted in the Platte Valley in the past 5 years. 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 the sample (both landlines and cell phones were called). 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 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 the Department, based on the research team’s familiarity with hunting, outdoor recreation, and natural resources. Responsive Management conducted pre-tests of the questionnaire to ensure proper wording, flow, and logic in the survey. The questionnaire is included as Appendix A.

### **SURVEY SAMPLE**

The sample of Wyoming licensed hunters was obtained from the Department. The sample included three distinct groups: Platte Valley residents, Wyoming residents not in the Platte Valley (hereinafter referred to as “non-Platte Valley residents”), and residents of other states who hunt in the Platte Valley (hereinafter referred to as “Wyoming non-residents”). The sample was stratified to obtain a sufficient number of completed interviews from each group. Note that the sample of Platte Valley residents was small to start with; therefore, despite a robust response rate (tabulated below), the sample size for this group is 85 respondents. Note that the samples are of

licensed hunters, and are referred to as “Platte Valley residents,” “non-Platte Valley residents,” and “Wyoming non-residents” throughout the report because the groups were categorized according to residency.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Total Sample</b>	<b>Eligible Numbers from Total Sample*</b>	<b>Completed Interviews</b>	<b>Response Rate</b>
Platte Valley residents	370	213	85	40%
Wyoming non-Platte Valley residents	2,541	765	331	43%
Wyoming non-residents	1,338	431	183	42%

\*This is the sample after the removal of ineligible numbers, which include hunters who did *not* hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley, as well as such things like disconnected numbers, respondent no longer at number, and incorrect telephone numbers.

## **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 9:00 a.m. 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 July and August 2011.

## **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.

Responsive Management obtained a total of 599 completed interviews: 85 with Platte Valley residents, 331 with non-Platte Valley residents, 183 with Wyoming non-residents.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

The analysis of data was performed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences as well as proprietary software developed by Responsive Management. As discussed previously, the survey sample included three distinct groups of licensed hunters (Platte Valley residents,

Wyoming non-Platte Valley residents, Wyoming non-residents). Data are broken out separately for each of the licensed hunter groups.

On questions that asked respondents to provide a number (e.g., number of days hunting), the graph shows ranges of numbers rather than the precise numbers. Nonetheless, in the survey each respondent provided a precise number, and the dataset includes this precise number, even if the graph only shows ranges of numbers. Note that the calculation of means and medians used the precise numbers that the respondents provided.

### SAMPLING ERROR

Throughout this report, findings of the telephone survey are reported at a 95% confidence interval (or higher). The sample sizes and sampling errors for each of the three groups surveyed are shown in the tabulation below. Sampling error was calculated using the formula that is described following the tabulation.

Group	Population	Completed Interviews	Sampling error
Platte Valley residents	370	85	9.34
Wyoming non-Platte Valley residents	2,541	331	5.02
Wyoming non-residents	1,338	183	6.73
Total	4,249	599	3.71

### Sampling Error Equation

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

Where: B = maximum sampling error (as decimal)  
 N<sub>p</sub> = population size (i.e., total number who could be surveyed)  
 N<sub>s</sub> = 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).

## **NOTES ON READING THE REPORT**

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

- Open-ended questions are those in which no answer set is read to the respondents; rather, they can respond with anything that comes to mind from the question.
- Closed-ended questions have an answer set from which to choose.
- 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.”
- Many closed-ended questions (but not all) are in a scale, such as excellent-good-fair-poor.
- 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 questions in a series are shown on a single graph.

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, if the median is 15 days, half the sample gave an answer of more than 15 days and the other half gave an answer of less than 15 days.

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 support” and “moderately support” are summed to determine the total percentage in support).

Finally, some graphs pertain to more than one section of the report, so these graphs are discussed in more than one section of the report. In these instances when the graph is discussed in more than one section, the graph is only shown in one section with a call-out in the other section indicating where the graph is located.

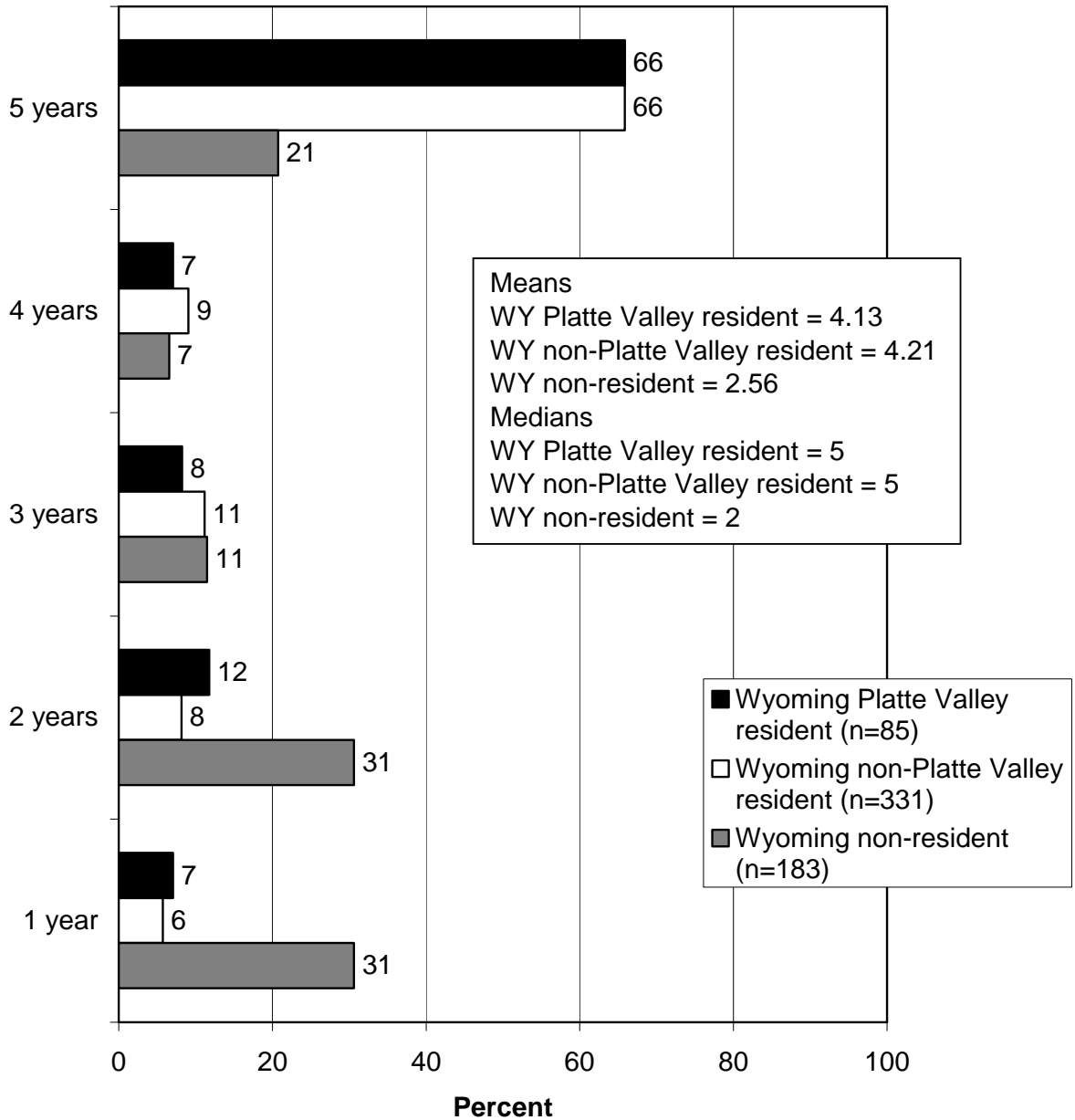
## PARTICIPATION IN MULE DEER HUNTING IN THE PLATTE VALLEY

- Two-thirds (66%) of both Platte Valley residents and non-Platte Valley residents had hunted mule deer in Wyoming in all 5 of the previous 5 years; the means were 4.13 years and 4.21 years, respectively. Among Wyoming non-residents, not surprisingly, a lower percent (21%) had hunted for mule deer in Wyoming all 5 of the past 5 years, and their mean was 2.56 years.
  - Another question asked about hunting mule deer specifically *in the Platte Valley*. A majority of Platte Valley residents (60%) did so 5 of the past 5 years, and their mean was 4.00 years. For Wyoming non-Platte Valley residents, 44% had hunted mule deer in the Platte Valley for 5 of the past 5 years, and their mean was 3.53. Finally, only 16% of Wyoming non-residents had done so for 5 of the past 5 years, and their mean was 2.27 years.
  - Hunters were also asked about the total number of years that they had hunted mule deer in the Platte Valley, as shown in the graph. As expected, Platte Valley residents had the highest mean (18.69 years), followed by non-Platte Valley residents (14.03), and distantly followed by Wyoming non-residents (5.14 years).
- The survey asked hunters to indicate their typical annual days of hunting mule deer in the Platte Valley in the past 5 years: the means were 8.34 days among Platte Valley residents, 6.98 among non-Platte Valley residents, and 7.04 among Wyoming non-residents.
- Hunt areas 78, 79, and 80 are the most popular Platte Valley hunt areas among respondents. Meanwhile, low percentages of respondents indicate that hunt areas 83 or 161 are their most-used areas. Substantial percentages did not know their most popular hunt area.
  - Another question pertaining to location asked respondents how far they typically travel, one-way, from home to hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley. As to be expected, the lowest mean was among Platte Valley residents (they typically travel 18.80 miles), the middle mean was among Wyoming non-Platte Valley residents (98.41 miles), and the highest mean was among Wyoming non-residents (a mean of 1,093.63 miles). This latter result is so large because states of residence among Wyoming non-residents include

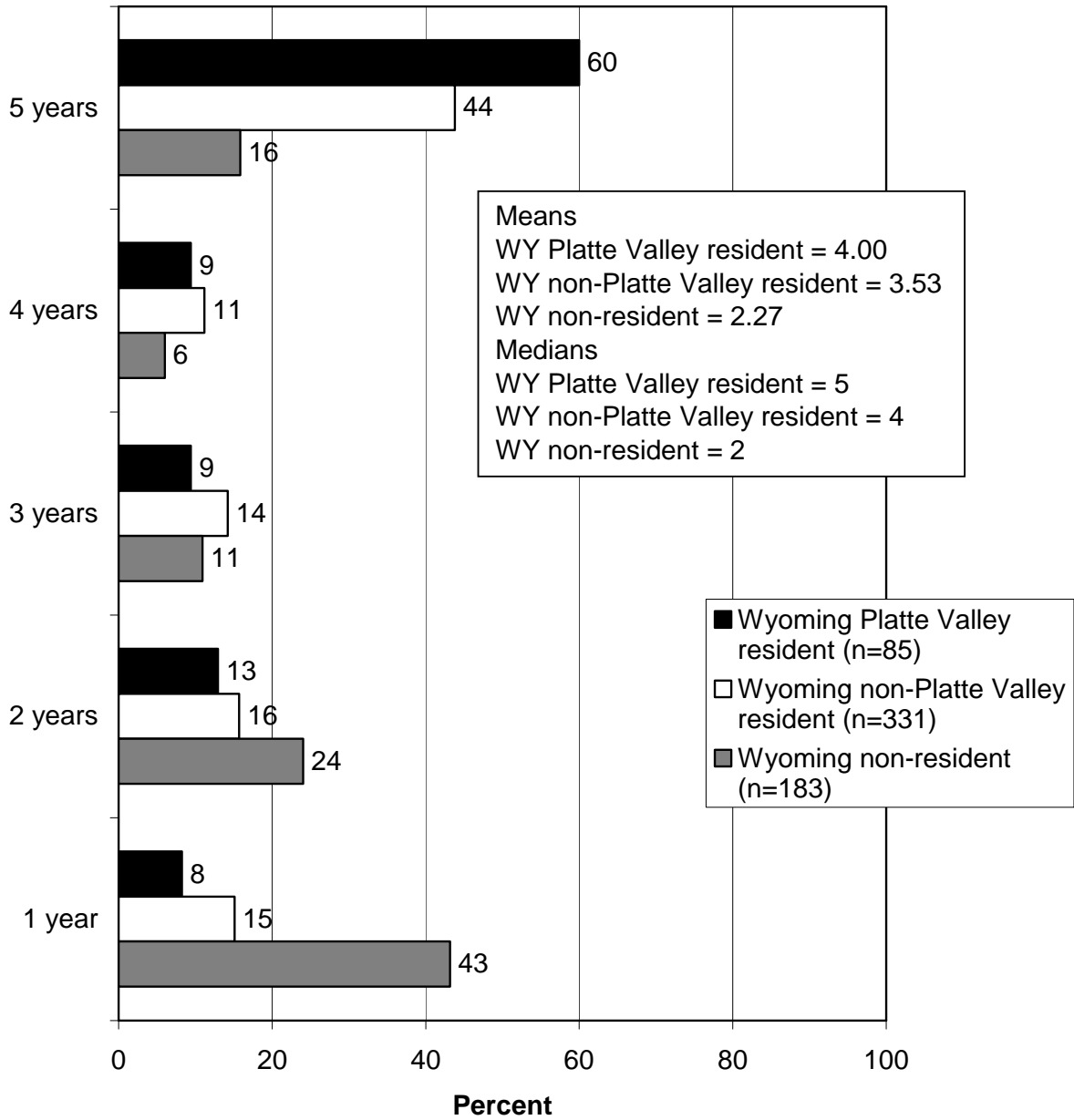
states quite distant from Wyoming, such as California, North Carolina, Georgia, New Hampshire, Virginia, Florida, Maryland, and New Jersey.

- One question asked about hunting mule deer *outside* of the Platte Valley in the past season. A majority of Platte Valley residents (78%) and a majority of Wyoming non-residents (80%) did *not* hunt mule deer outside of the Platte Valley, while about half of Wyoming non-Platte Valley residents (48%) did not hunt mule deer outside of the Platte Valley.
  
- A final participatory question asked about the use of an outfitter or guide: 16% of Wyoming non-residents had used an outfitter or guide in the Platte Valley at some time. Among Wyoming residents (in or outside of the Platte Valley), only 2% had ever used an outfitter or guide in the Platte Valley.

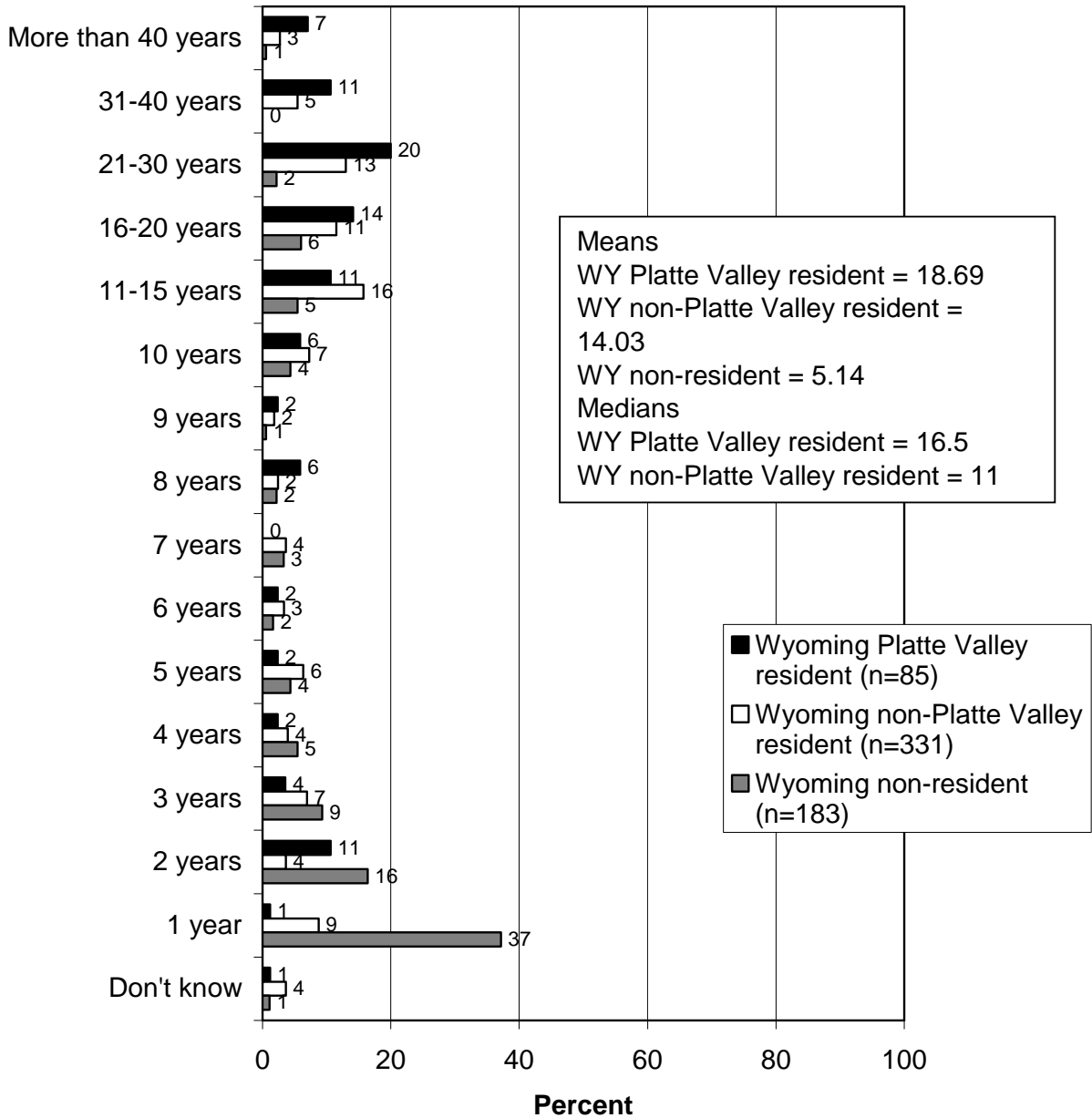
**Q11. How many years, out of the last 5 years, did you hunt mule deer in Wyoming?**



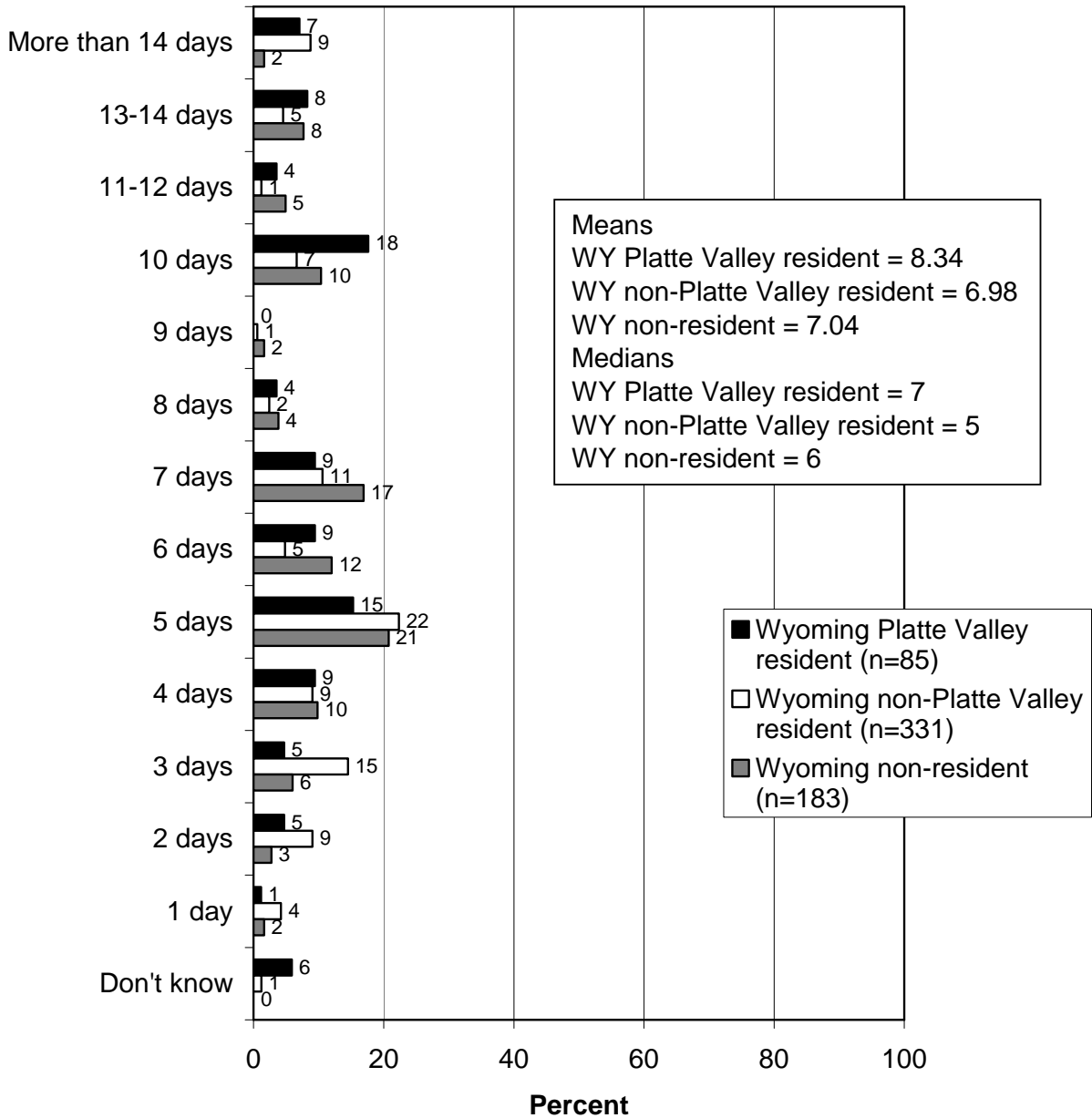
**Q15. How many years, out of the last 5 years, did you hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley?**



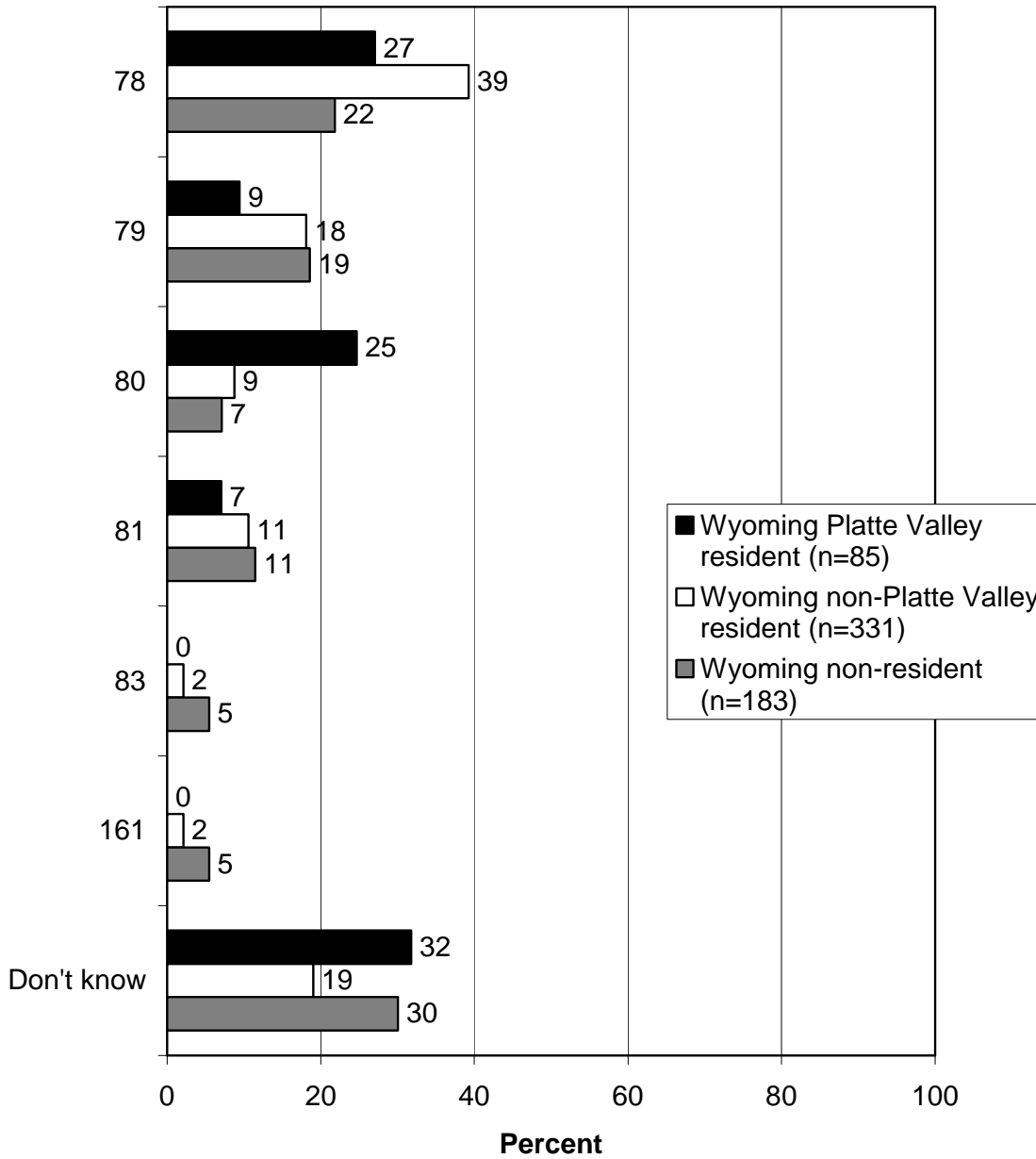
### Q19. How many years total have you been hunting mule deer in the Platte Valley?



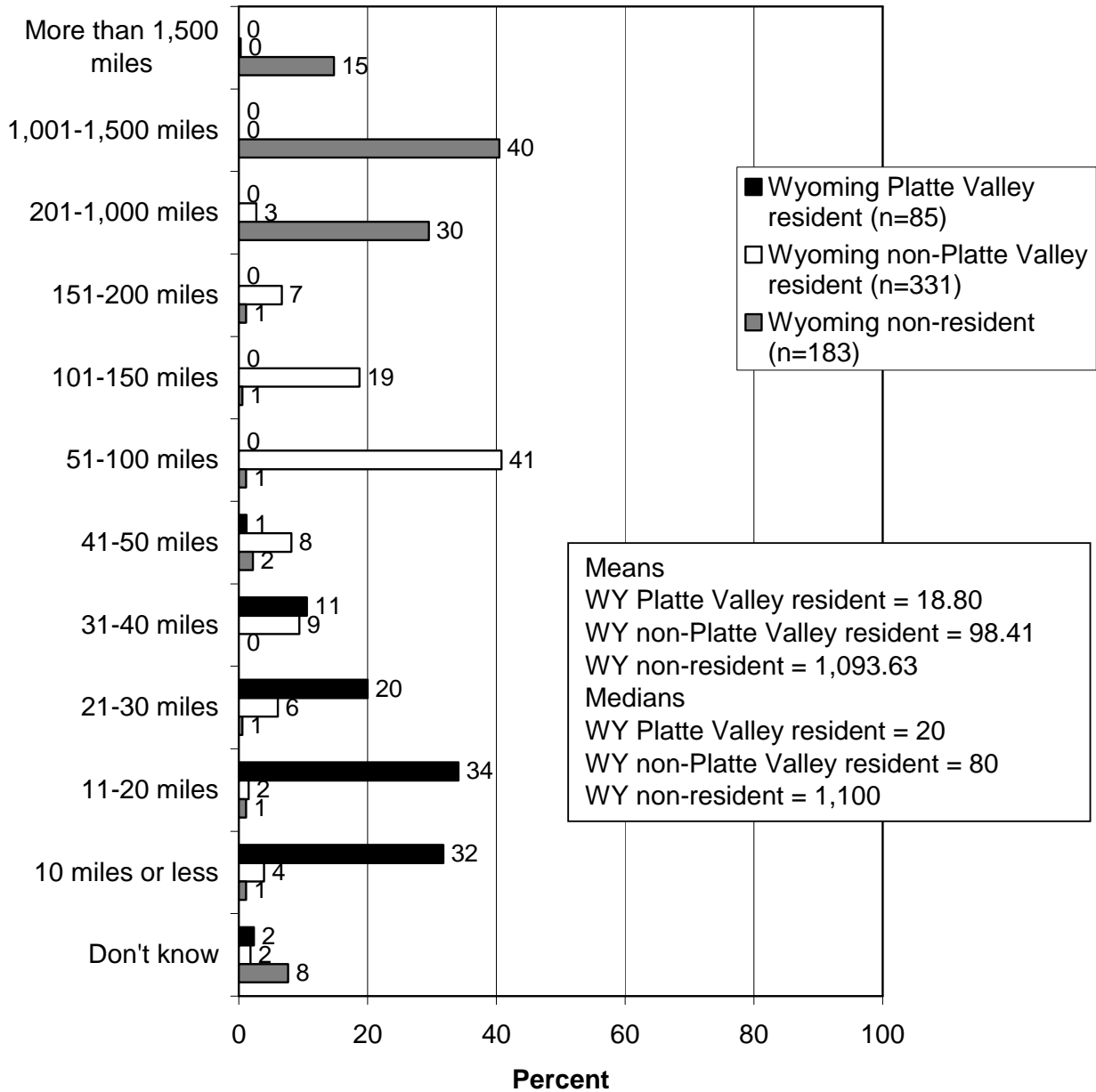
**Q22. In the past 5 years, about how many days per year did you typically hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley?**

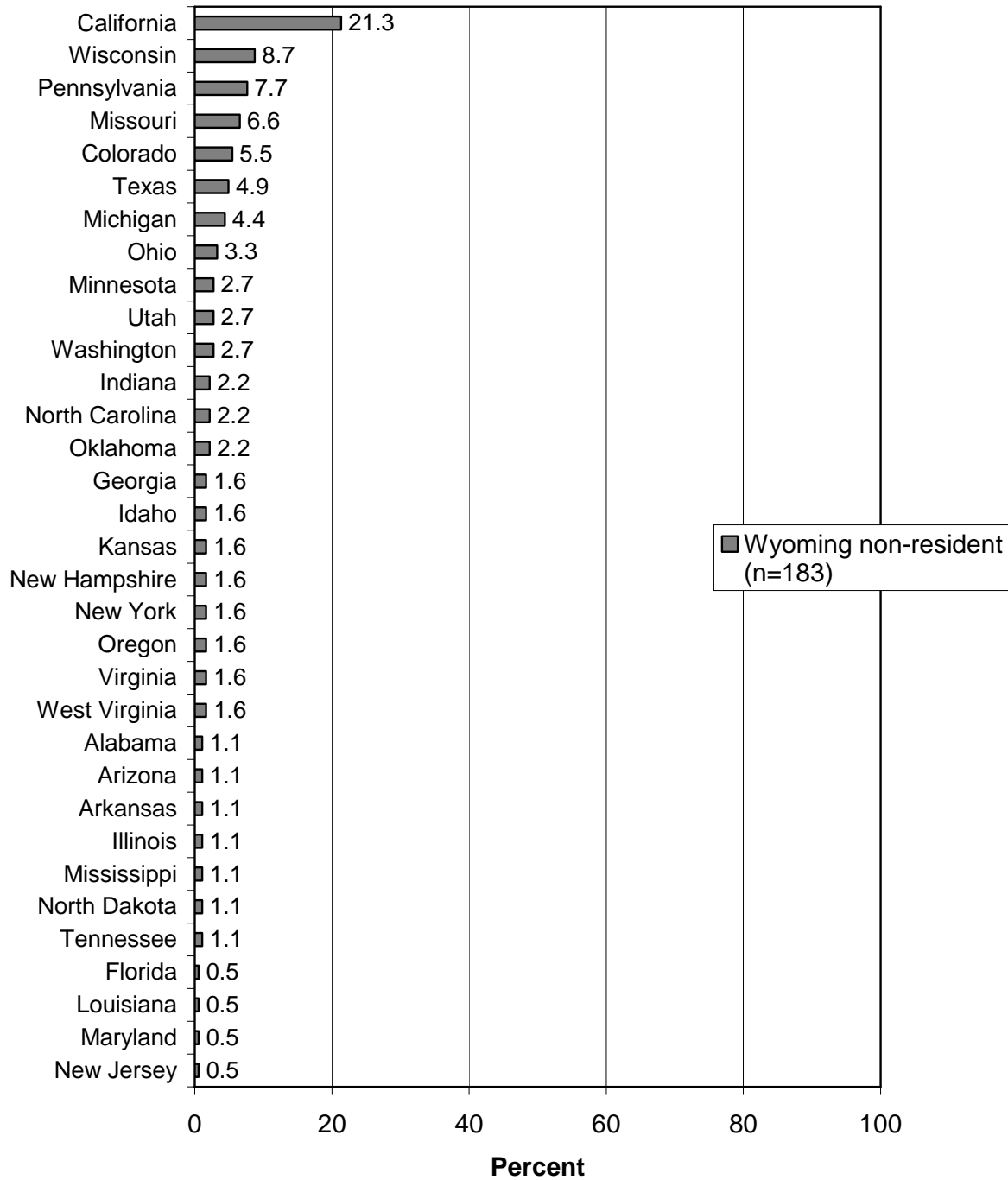


**Q25. In what hunt area in the Platte Valley have you hunted mule deer the most often in the past 5 years?**

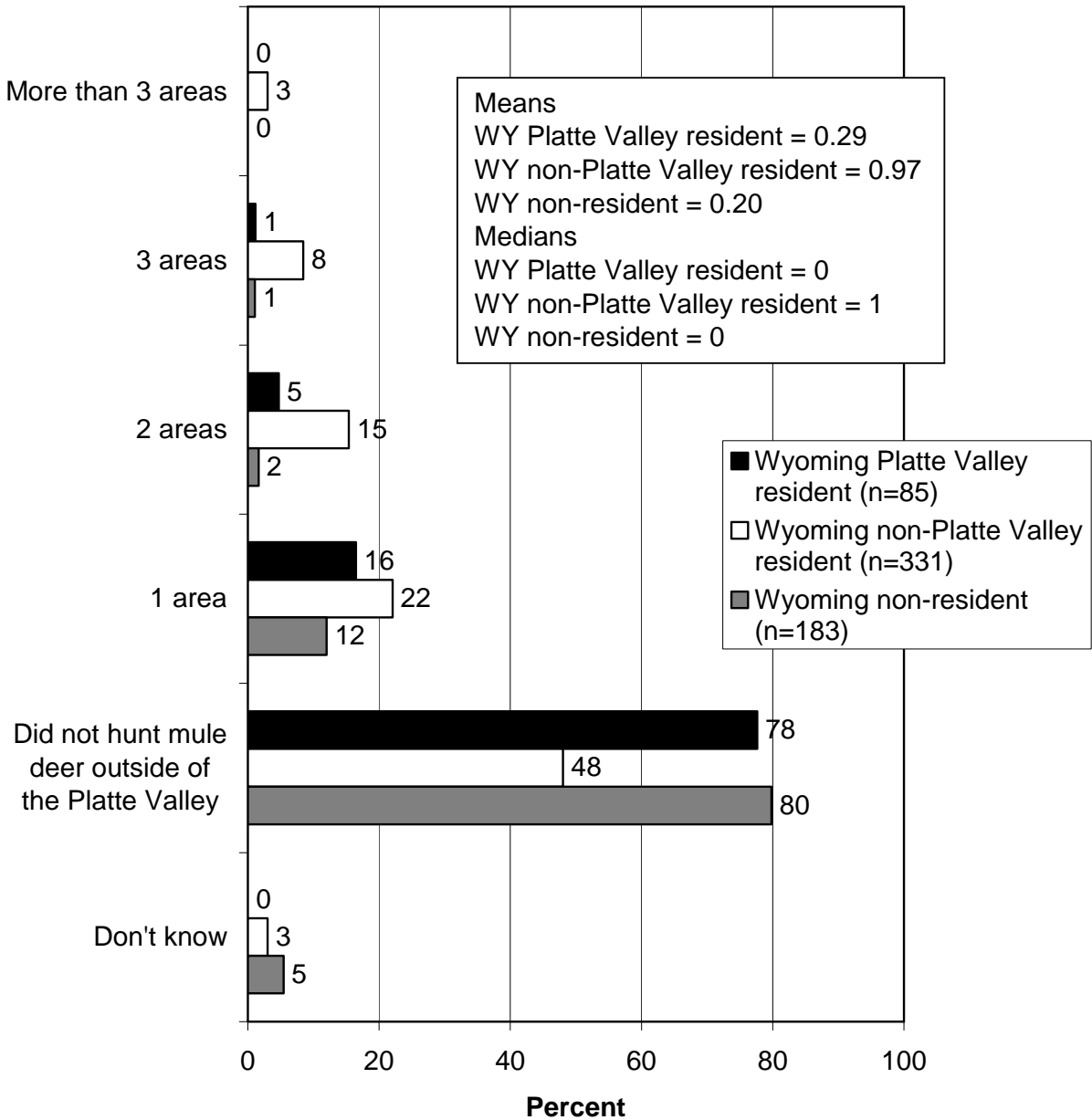


**Q28. How far, in miles, do you typically travel, one-way, from home to hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley?**

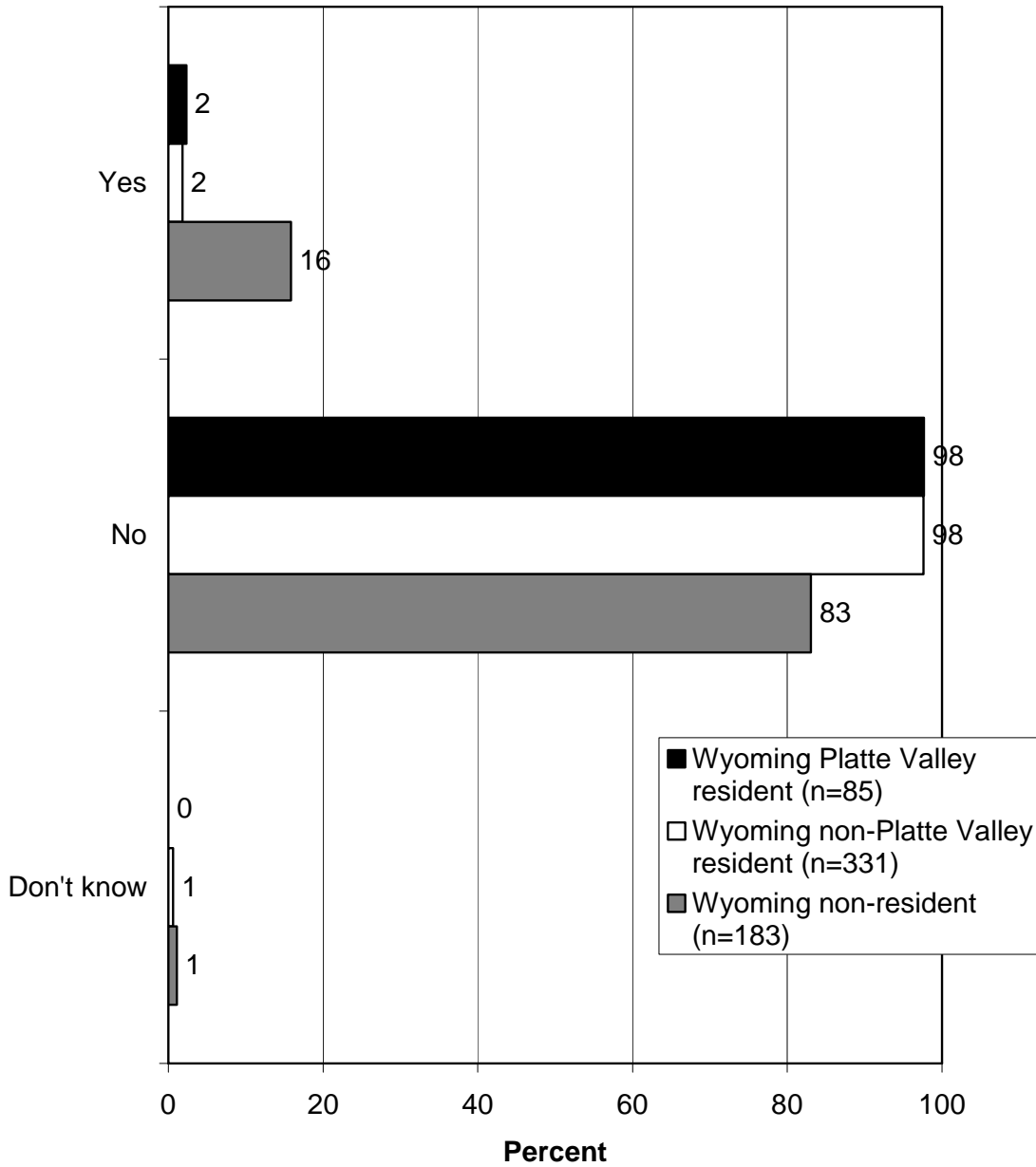


**Q152. State respondent lives in.**

**Q31. How many general hunt areas did you hunt mule deer outside of the Platte Valley this past hunting season?**



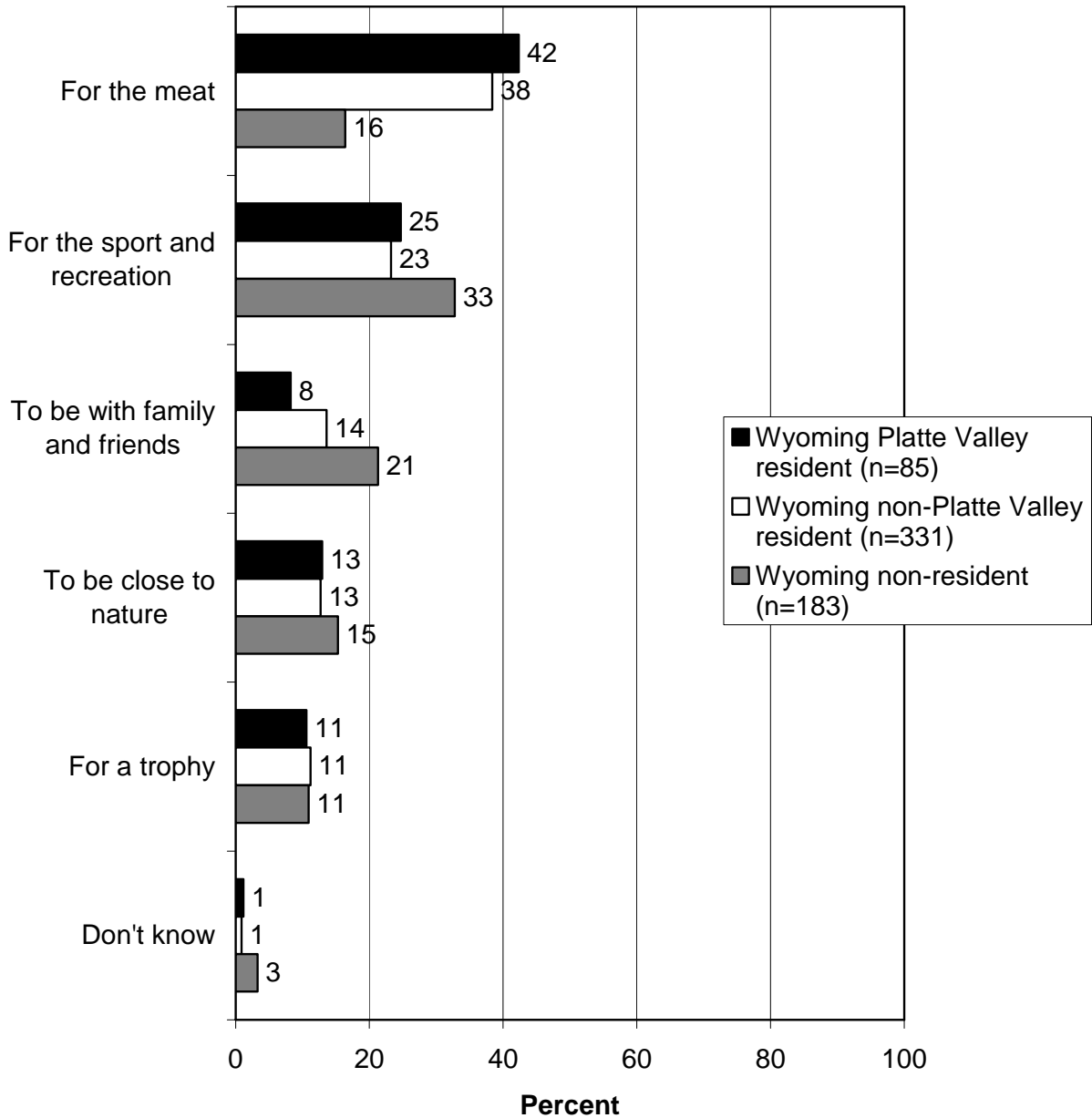
**Q136. Have you ever used outfitter or guide services to hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley?**



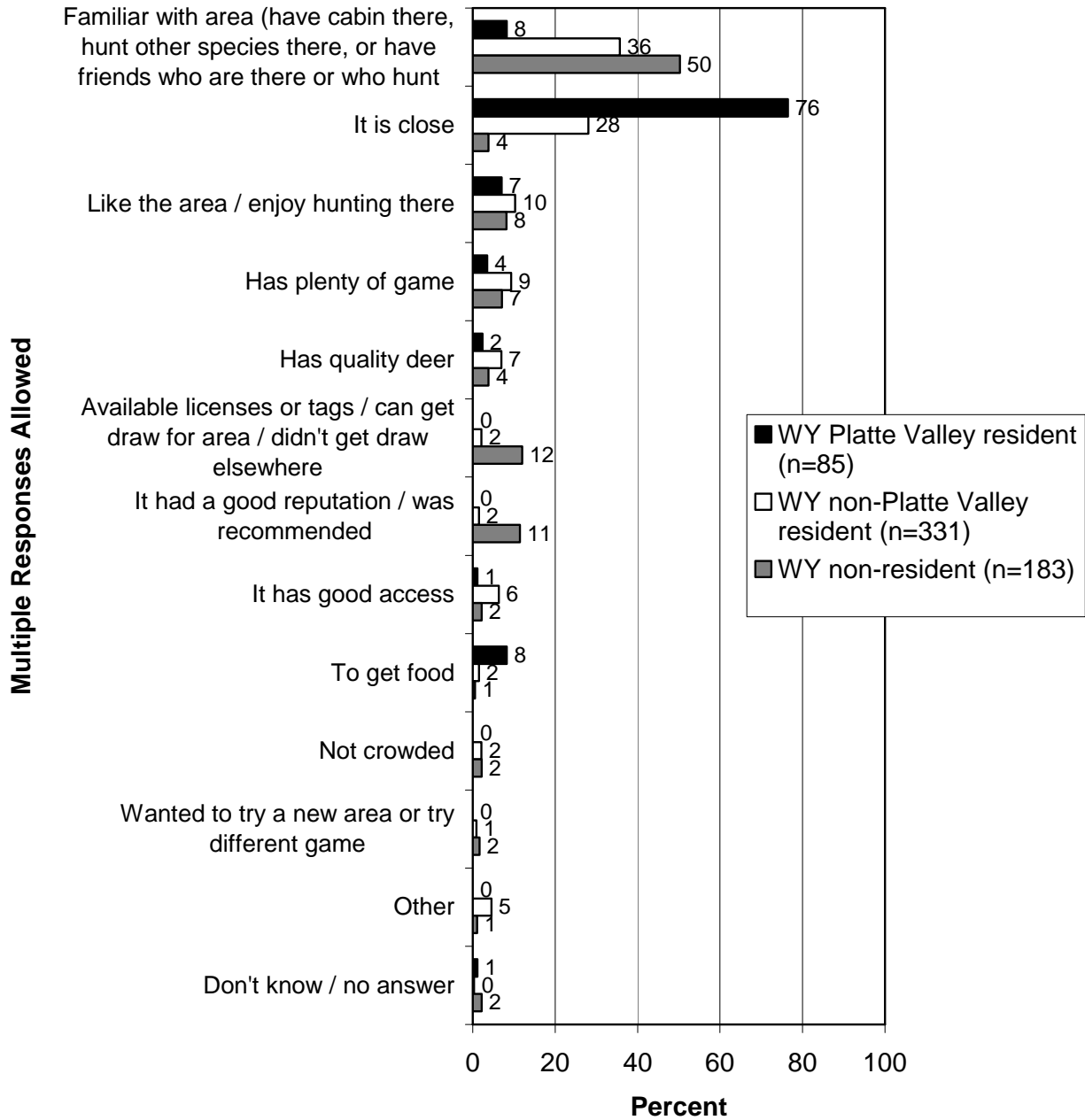
## **MOTIVATIONS FOR HUNTING IN THE PLATTE VALLEY**

- The survey asked respondents which one of five given reasons was the most important reason for hunting mule deer. Among Wyoming residents (both Platte Valley residents and non-Platte Valley residents), the utilitarian reason of “for the meat” was the top reason (42% of Platte Valley residents and 38% of non-Platte Valley residents gave this response). For Wyoming non-residents, the top motivation was not utilitarian: “for the sport or recreation” (33% gave this response).
  
- Proximity and familiarity are two top reasons that hunters choose to hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley. Nonetheless, other motivations of note include that the hunter likes the area, that the Platte Valley has plenty of game, that the area has good quality game, that tags were available for the area, and that the area has good access. The full results are shown in the graph. Also shown are the reasons that hunters chose the particular hunt area in which they most often hunted.

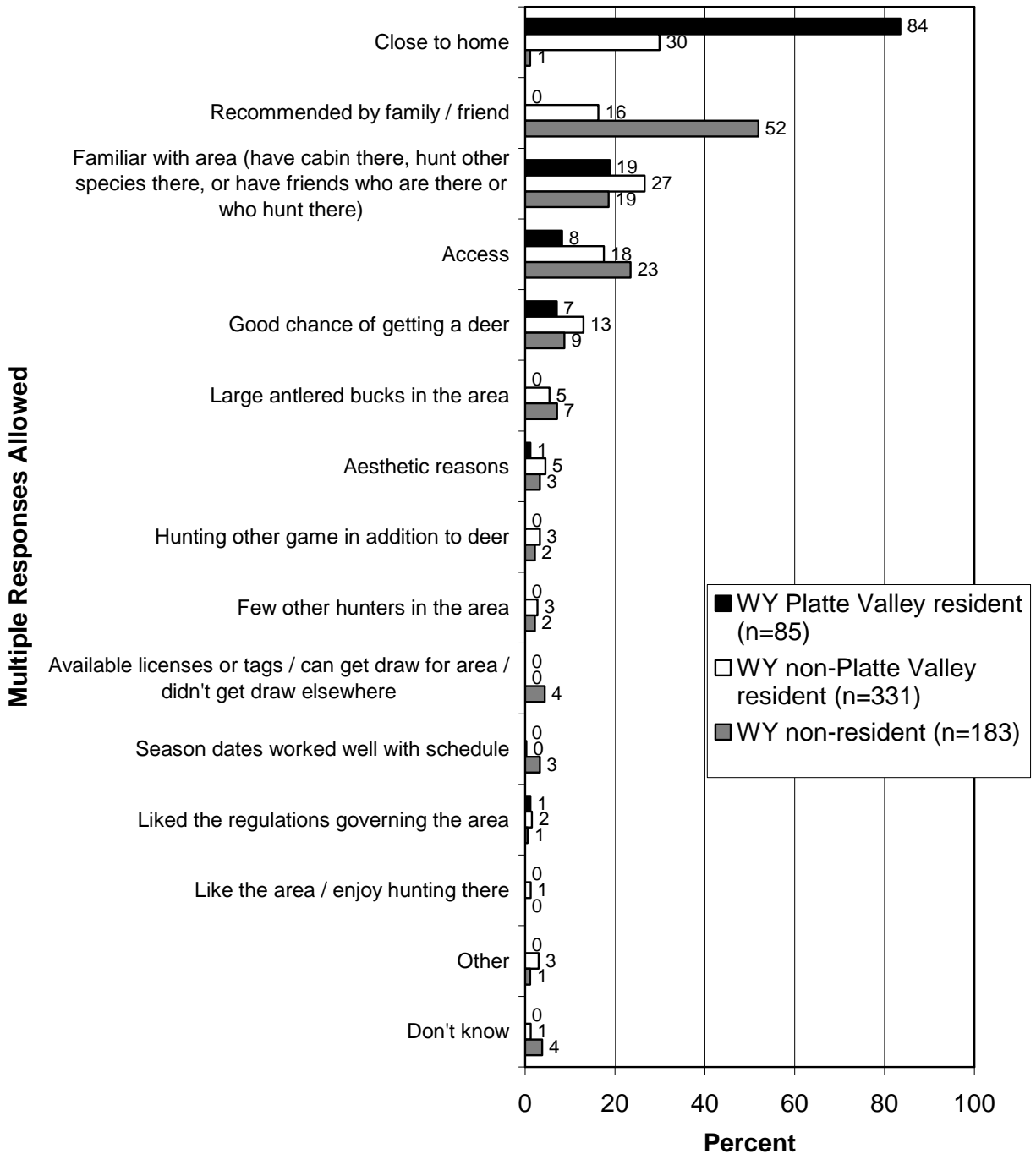
**Q35. Thinking about when you've hunted mule deer, what is your most important reason for hunting?**



### Q47. What is the primary reason you choose to hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley?



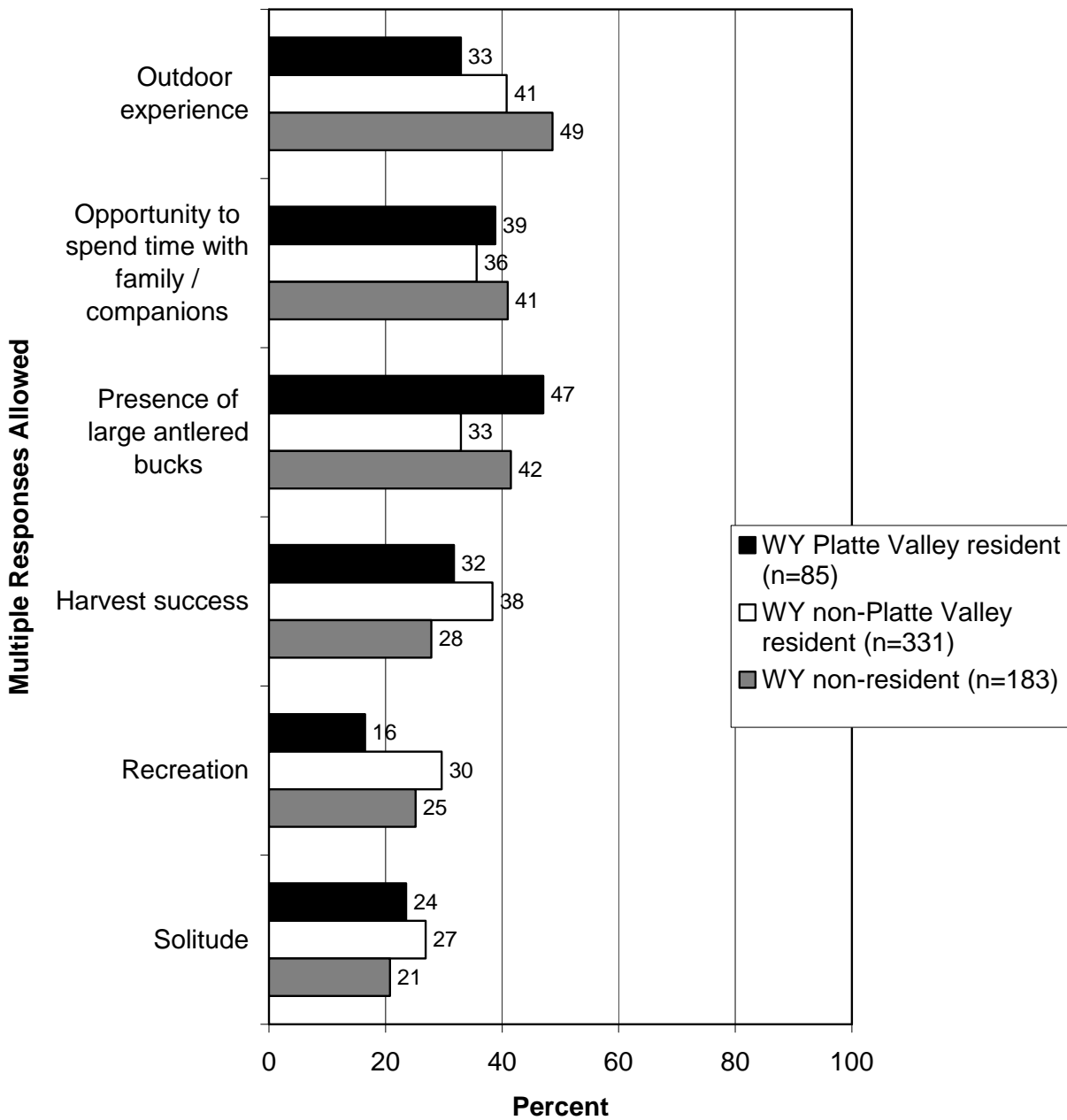
### Q50. What were the reasons you chose the Platte Valley hunt area where you most often hunted mule deer in the past 5 years?



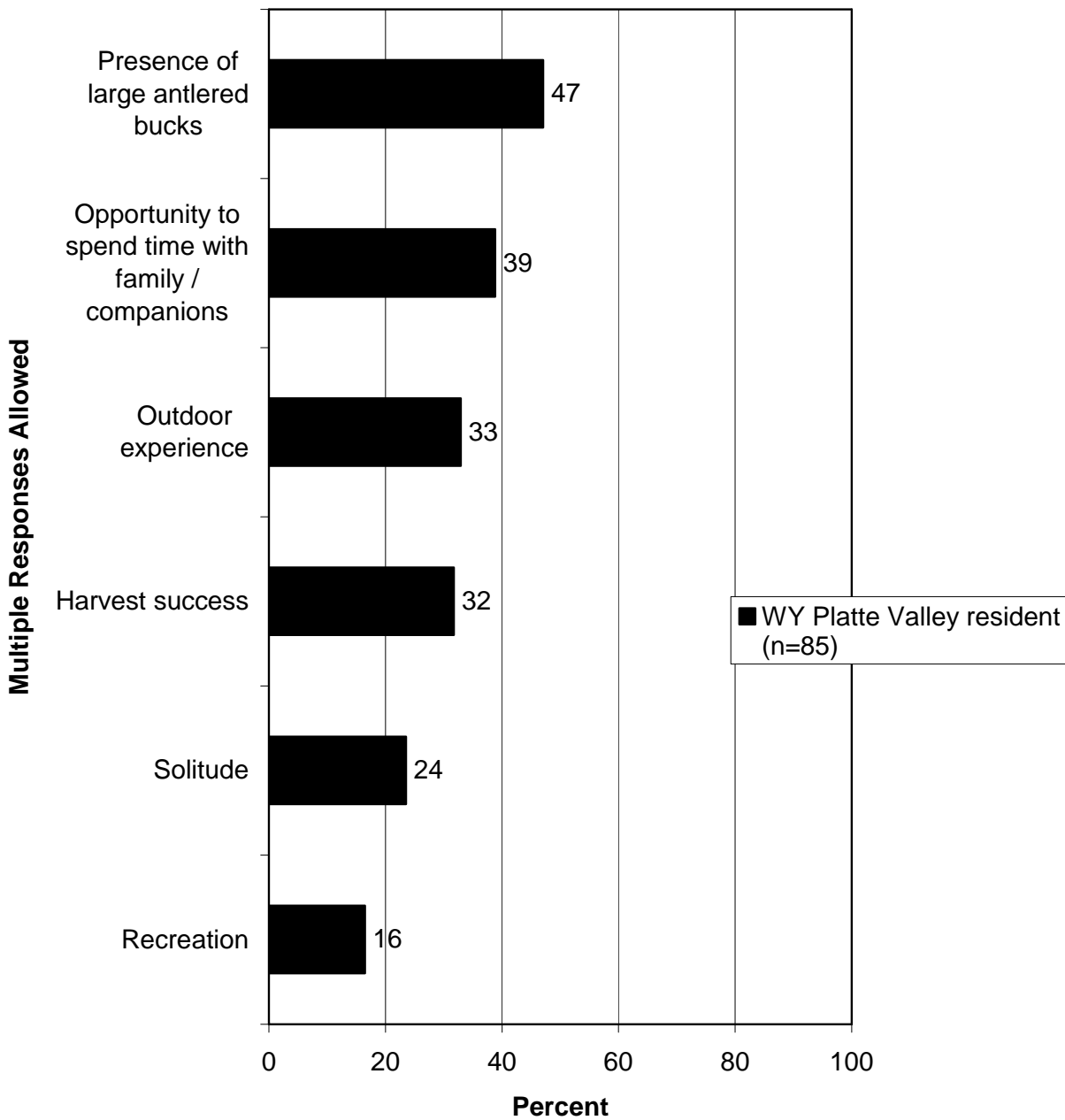
## **FACTORS IN A QUALITY DEER HUNT**

- Respondents were read a list of six factors and were asked to indicate which of them they look for in a *quality* hunt (they could choose more than one). Of the six factors, two are utilitarian, and four are aesthetic. For Platte Valley residents, the utilitarian factor of “presence of large-antlered bucks” was the top factor, while for non-Platte Valley residents and Wyoming non-residents the top factor was “for the outdoor experience.” Four graphs are shown: one with all three groups on a single graph for comparison, then each of the groups separately so that the ranking of factors for each group is easy to see.
  
- The survey asked respondents to indicate the minimum number of points on one side that a buck should have to be considered a trophy buck. The most common response among all three groups was four points—a majority of each group gave this answer (from 61% to 65%).
  - A similar question asked about the minimum antler spread for a buck to be considered a trophy buck. Most of the answers ranged from 24 inches to 28 inches, with the means being 24.35 inches (Platte Valley residents), 24.12 inches (non-Platte Valley residents), and 23.48 inches (Wyoming non-residents).

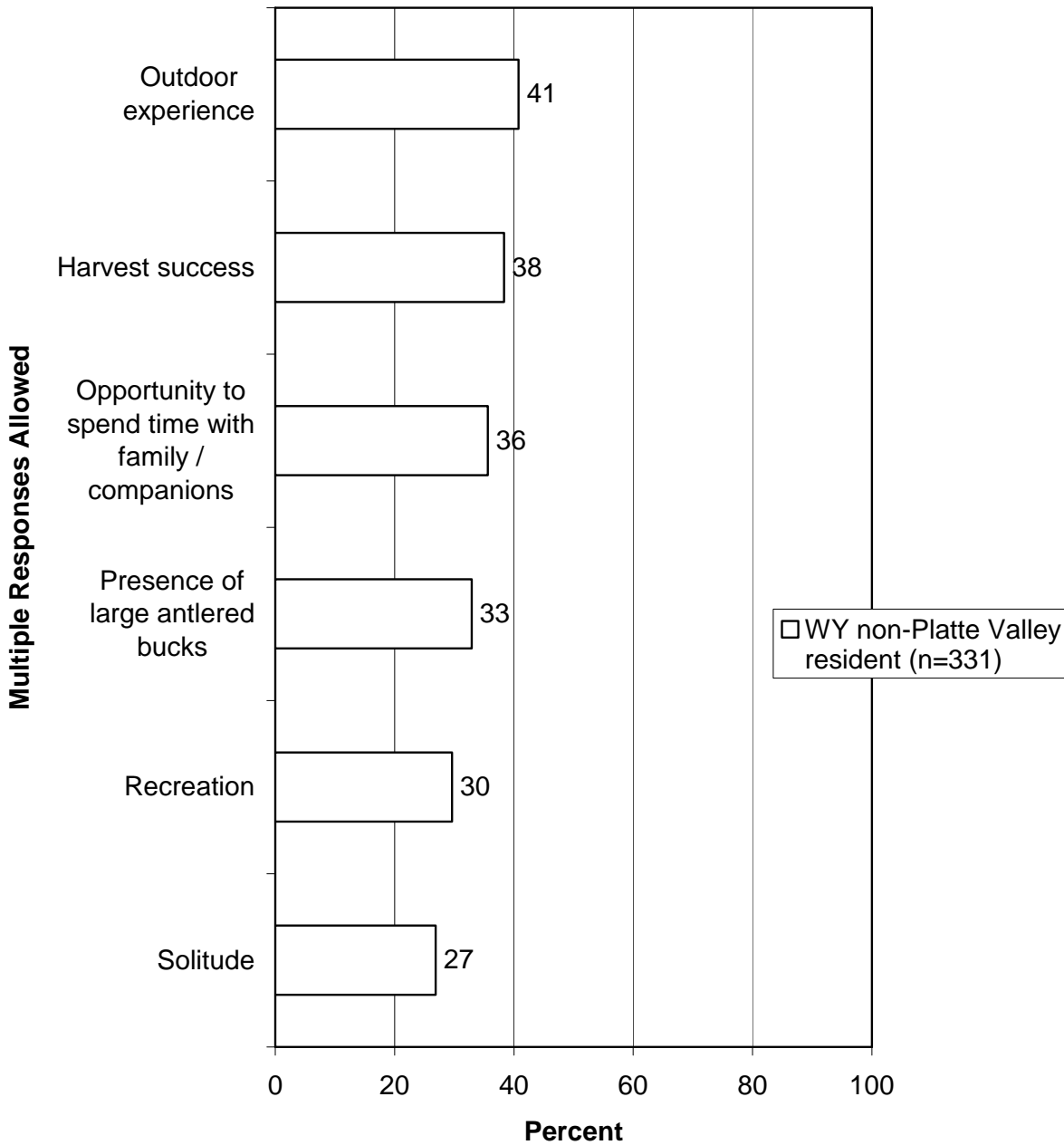
### Q38. What do you look for in a quality mule deer hunt?



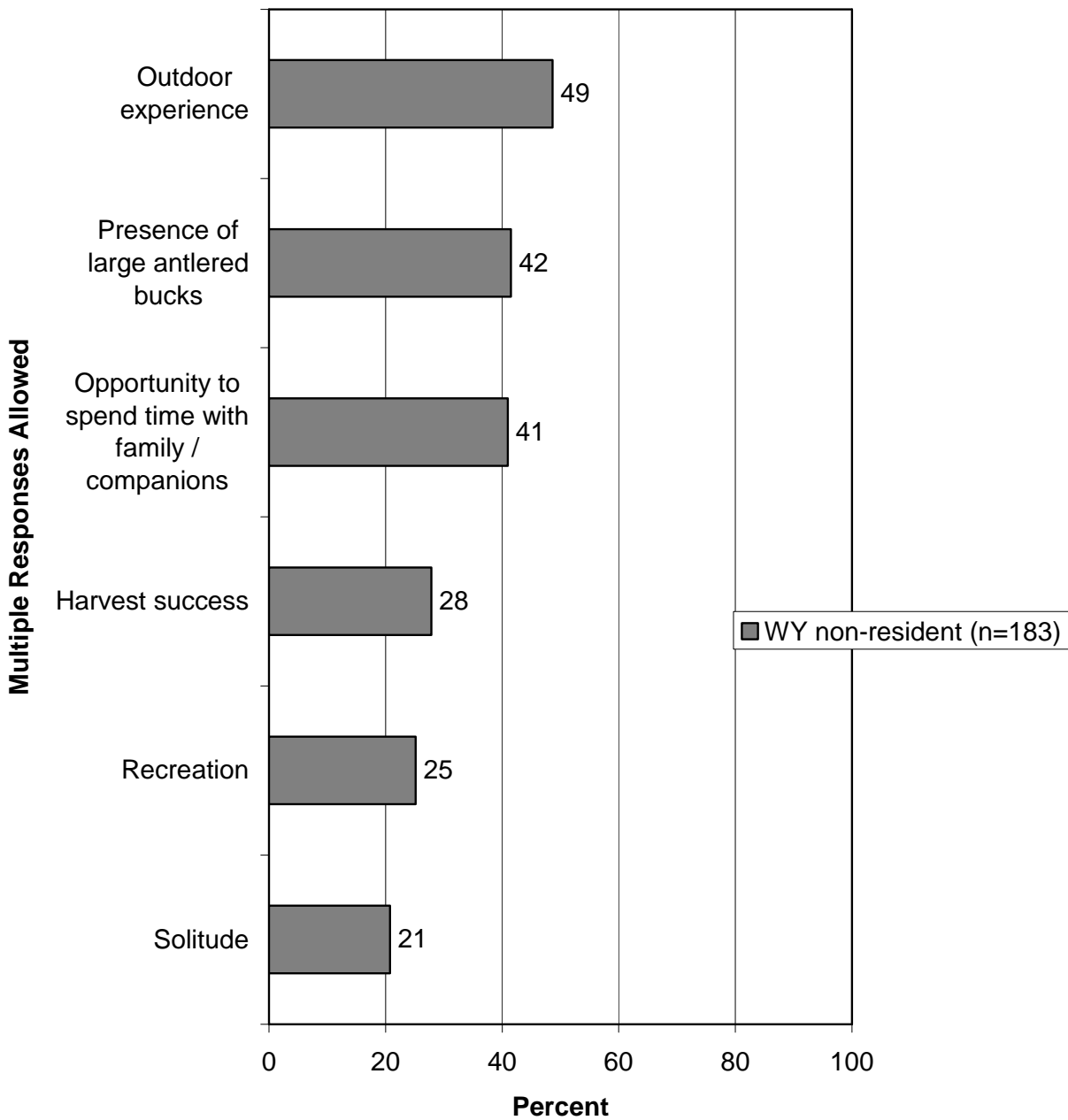
### Q38. What do you look for in a quality mule deer hunt?



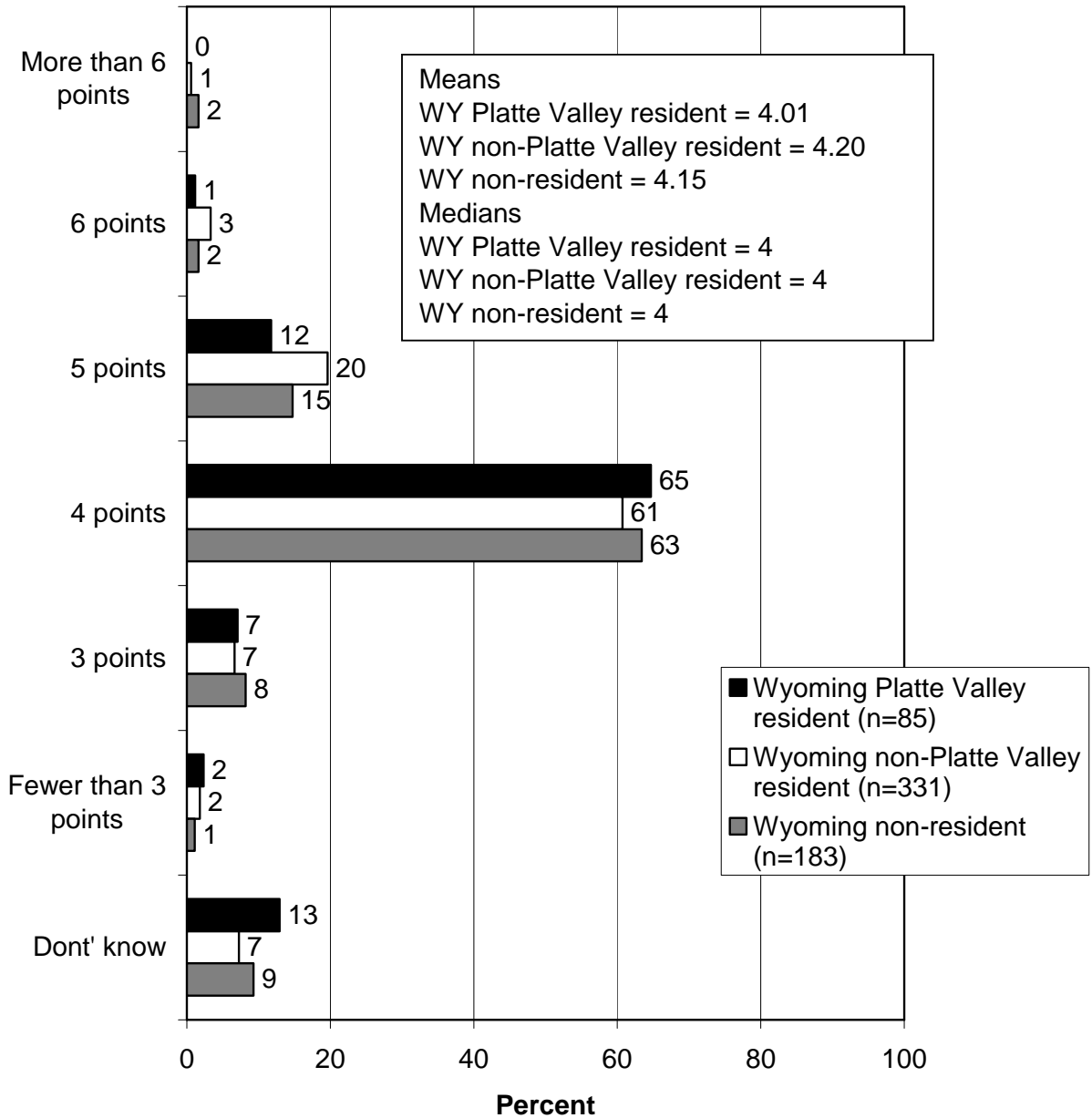
### Q38. What do you look for in a quality mule deer hunt?



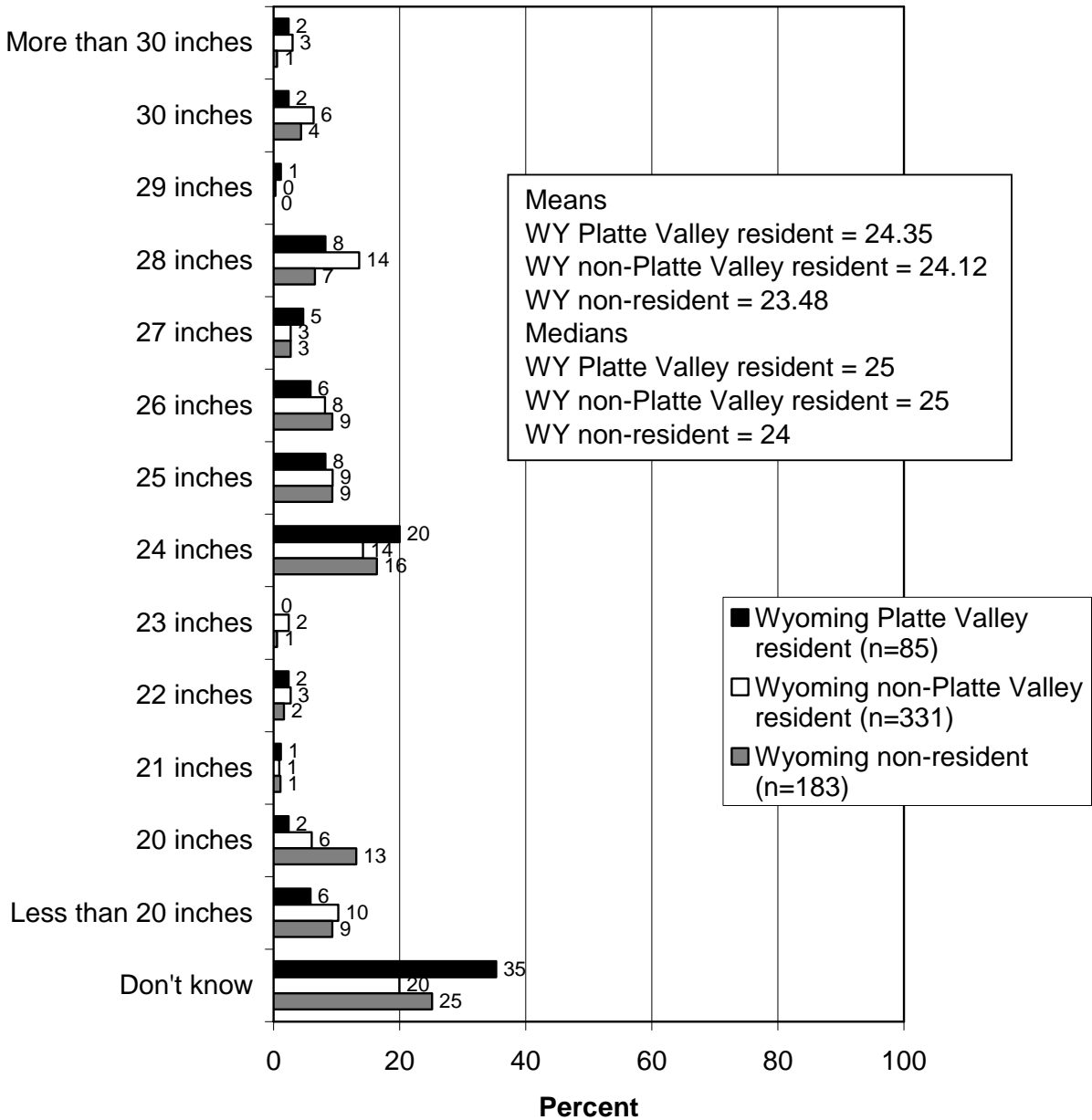
### Q38. What do you look for in a quality mule deer hunt?



**Q40. What is the minimum number of points on one side that a buck should have for you to consider a deer a trophy buck?**



**Q43. What is the minimum antler spread, in inches, that a buck should have for you to consider a deer a trophy buck?**

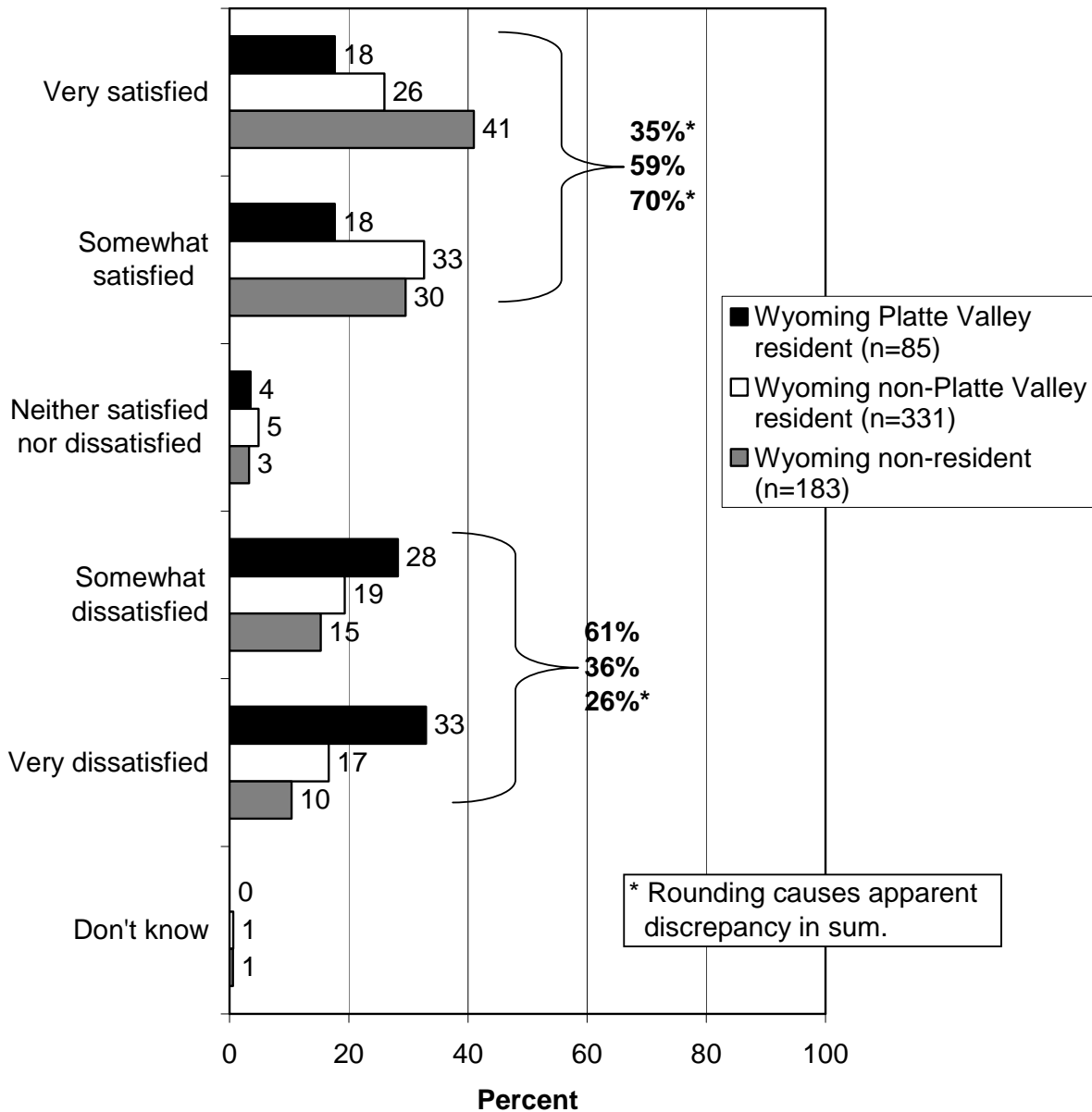


## SATISFACTIONS AND DISSATISFACTIONS WITH HUNTING IN THE PLATTE VALLEY

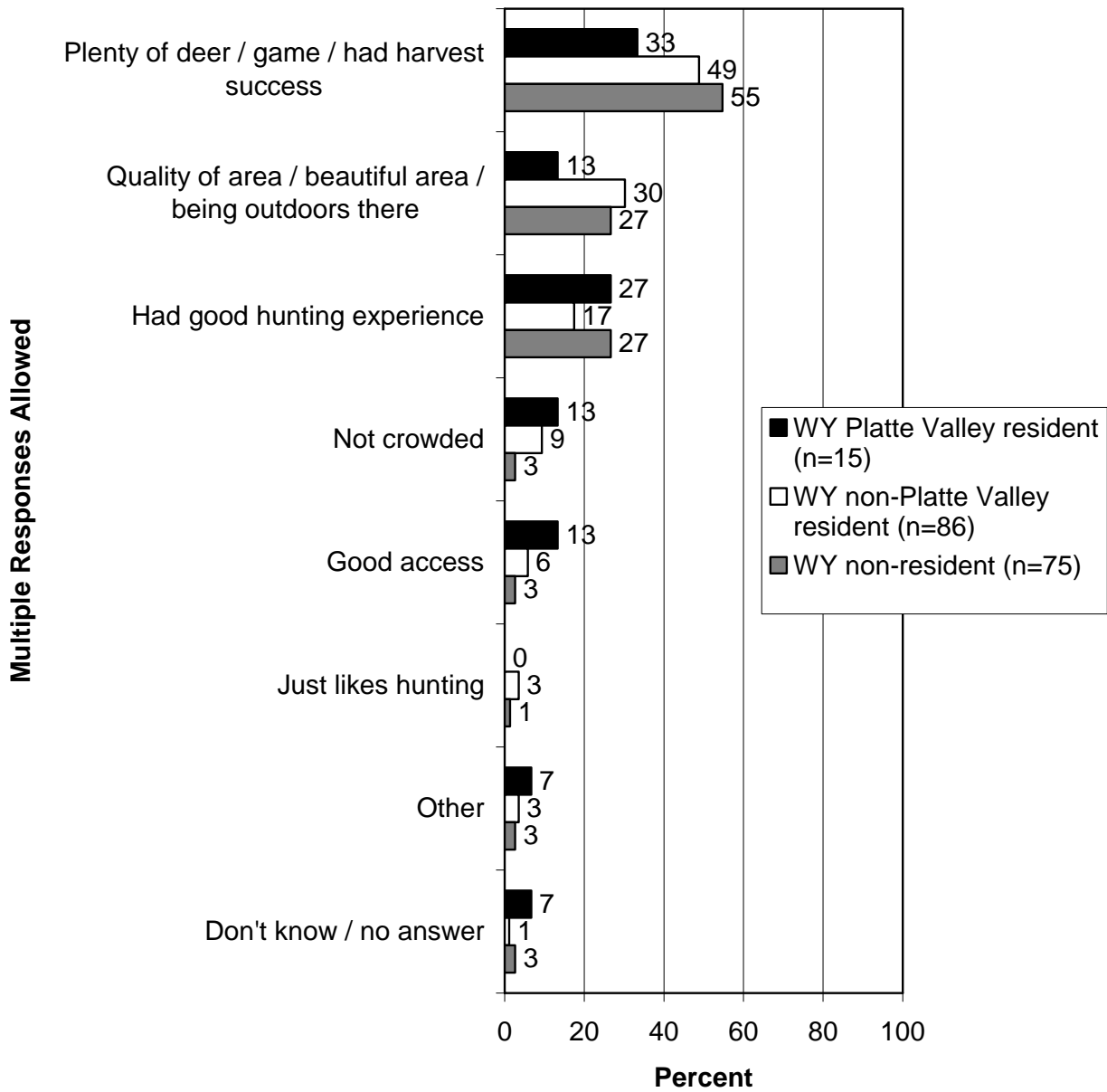
- Platte Valley residents and those not from the Platte Valley differ markedly in their satisfaction with hunting mule deer in the Platte Valley. While a majority of Platte Valley residents are *dissatisfied* (61%), a majority of each of the other two groups are *satisfied* (59% of non-Platte Valley residents and 70% of Wyoming non-residents). In fact, for this latter group, 41% are *very* satisfied.
  - In follow-up, respondents were asked to indicate the reasons that they were satisfied or dissatisfied. Among those who were *very* satisfied, the top reasons for being very satisfied are that there is plenty of game, that the Platte Valley area is beautiful, that they had a good hunting experience, that the area is not crowded, and that they had good access. The full results are shown on the graph.
  - The top reasons for being dissatisfied are a perceived lack of game, lack of quality deer, not seeing the right kind of deer (e.g., only see does), crowding, poor habitat (including because of the beetle kill), and weather (including not only harsh winters but also that the hunting season was too hot recently). The full results are shown on the graph.
    - Note that no analysis was conducted of those who said *somewhat* satisfied, as the follow-up question elicited both positive responses (i.e., why they were satisfied) and negative responses (i.e., why they were *somewhat* satisfied rather than *very* satisfied). With both positive and negative responses, the analysis was of little utility for these respondents.
- The survey asked respondents if there were any things that caused them *not* to hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley as much as they would have liked. A majority of Platte Valley residents (59%), half of non-Platte Valley residents (50%), and less than half of Wyoming non-residents (43%) responded that there were such things. They were then asked in an open-ended question to name those things.
  - The top factors that prompted less mule deer hunting than the respondent would have liked to engage in are a perceived lack of game, time constraints, crowding, access problems, poor health/age, and (particularly for Wyoming non-residents) the cost of licenses and the amount/cost of travel.

- The issue of crowding was directly addressed in the survey, which asked respondents to indicate if the number of hunters in the Platte Valley was acceptable or unacceptable. Wyoming residents differ markedly from Wyoming non-residents. While 40% of both Platte Valley residents and non-Platte Valley residents think the number of hunters in the field in the Platte Valley is unacceptable, only 17% of Wyoming non-residents think this. On the other end, acceptability increases with distance from the Platte Valley: 42% of Platte Valley residents say the number of hunters is acceptable, 53% of non-Platte Valley residents think so, and 63% of Wyoming non-residents think the number of hunters is acceptable.
- Follow-up questions asked respondents to indicate why the number of hunters was acceptable or unacceptable. For those who say the number is acceptable, lack of crowding was the top response—particularly true of Wyoming non-residents.
  - Conversely, reasons given for the number of hunters being unacceptable include crowding and low deer populations.
- The issue of crowding was also asked about in two other questions. The first question asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed with this statement: There were too many other hunters in the area where you hunted most often in the Platte Valley in the past 5 years. Again, there was a marked difference between Wyoming non-residents and residents from Wyoming (both in and outside of the Platte Valley): a majority of Platte Valley residents (60%) and non-Platte Valley residents (56%) agree with this statement (i.e., they think the Platte Valley is crowded), while only 30% of Wyoming non-residents agree. Note that most of the agreement among Wyoming residents is *strong* agreement.
- The second question discussed herein that concerned crowding asked respondents whether the number of hunters in the Platte Valley has increased, stayed the same, or decreased over the past 5 years. A majority of Platte Valley residents (53%) and non-Platte Valley residents (56%) think that the number of hunters has increased, while only 16% of Wyoming non-residents think that the number has increased. Note that about a third of Wyoming non-residents responded that they did not know.

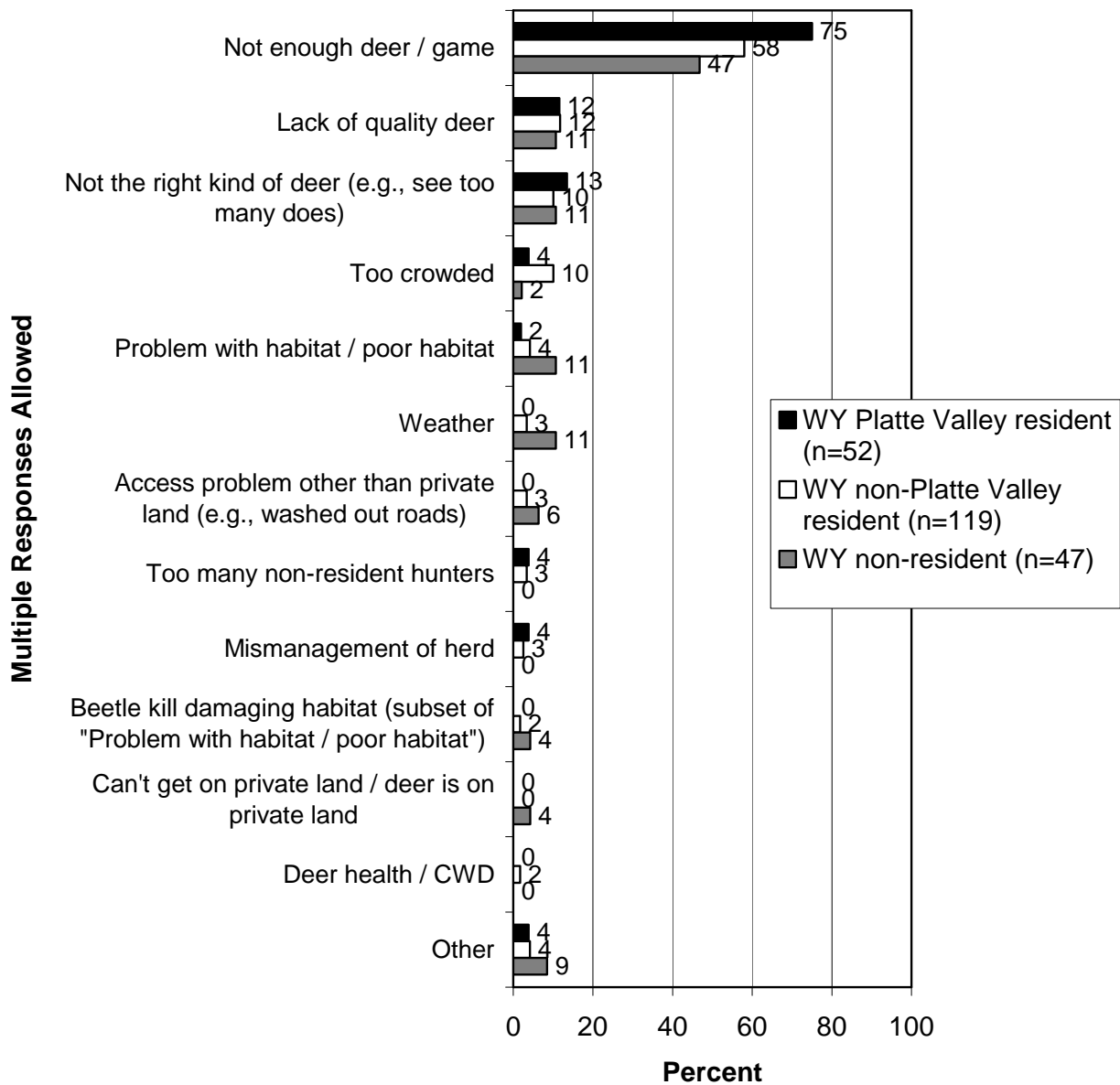
**Q52. How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the overall quality of your mule deer hunting experience in the Platte Valley during the last season you hunted in the Platte Valley?**



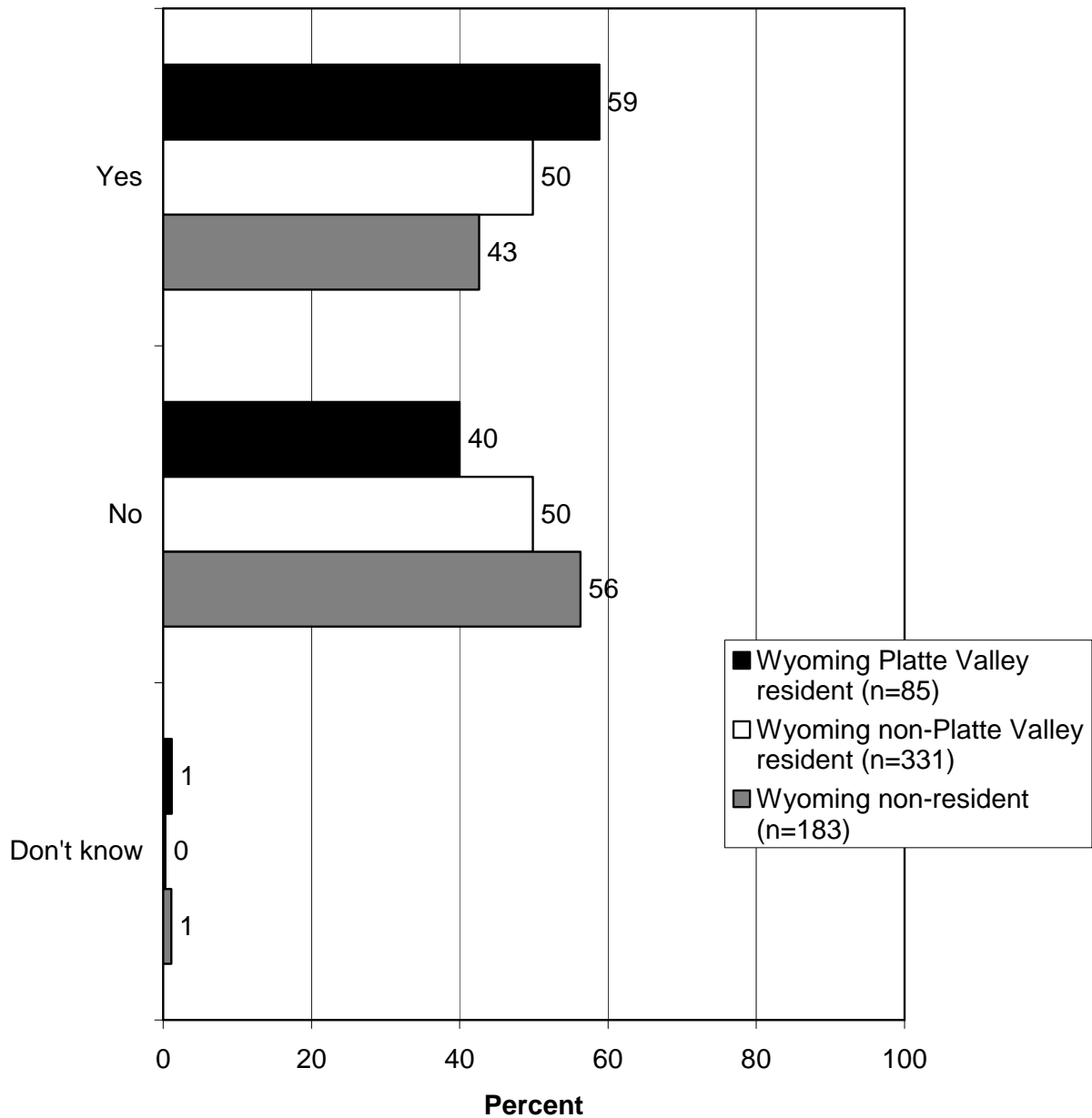
**Q53. What led to your level of satisfaction with the quality of your mule deer hunting experience in the Platte Valley? (Of those who were very satisfied with the overall quality of their mule deer hunting experience in the Platte Valley during the last season they hunted in the Platte Valley.)**



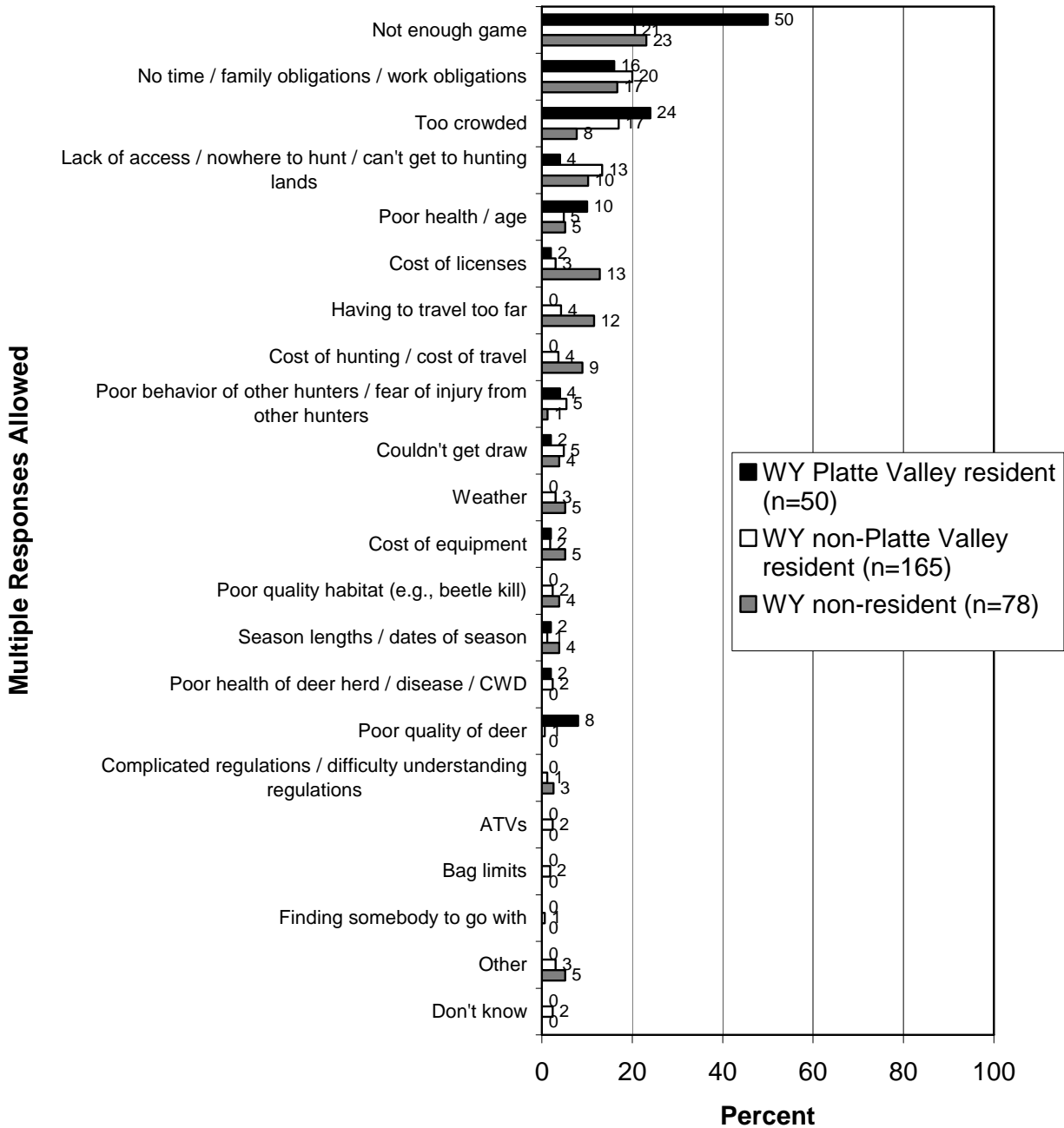
**Q53. What led to your level of satisfaction with the quality of your mule deer hunting experience in the Platte Valley? (Of those who were dissatisfied with the overall quality of their mule deer hunting experience in the Platte Valley during the last season they hunted in the Platte Valley.)**



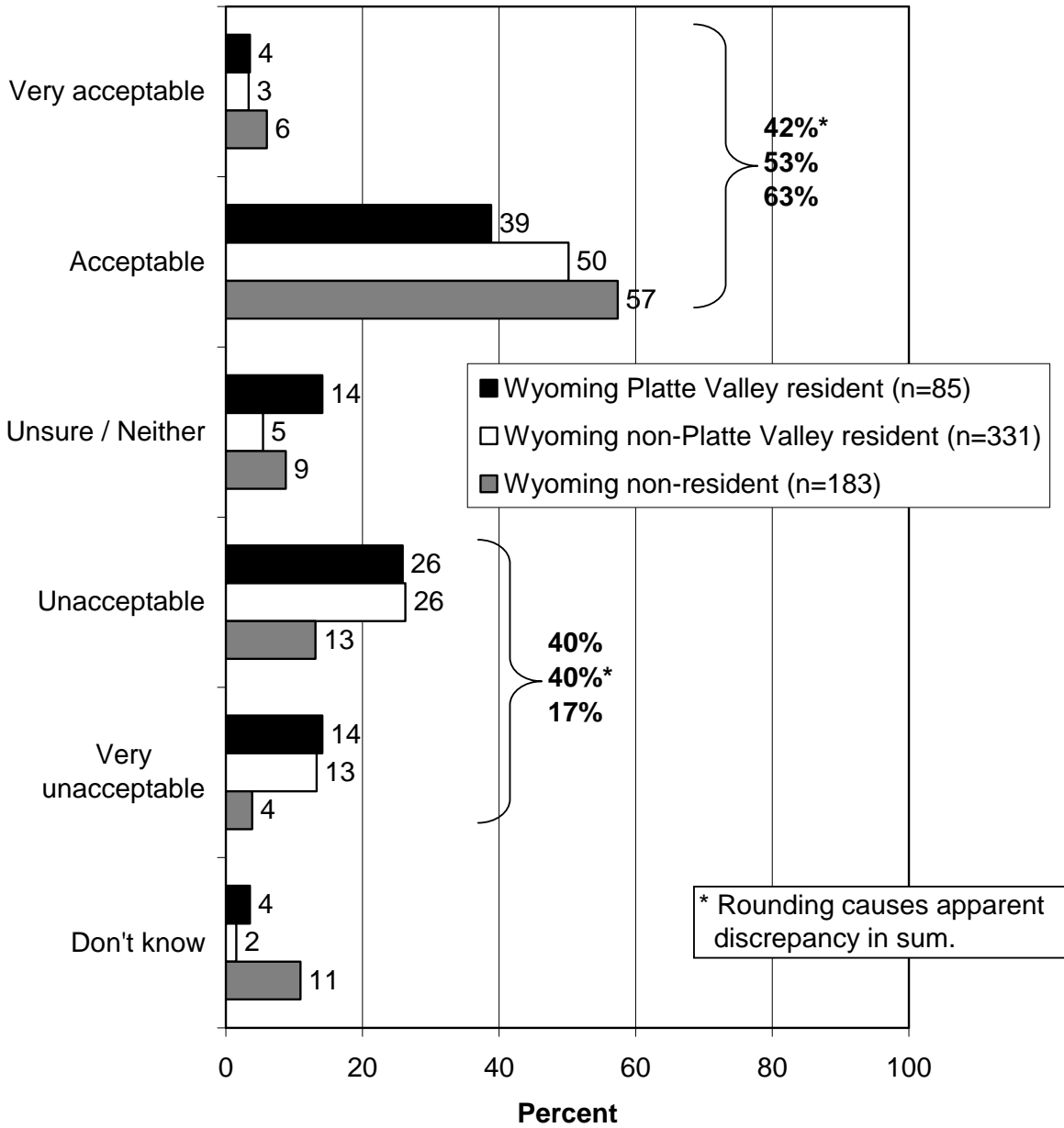
**Q54. Are there any things that have caused you not to hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley as much as you would like in the past 5 years?**



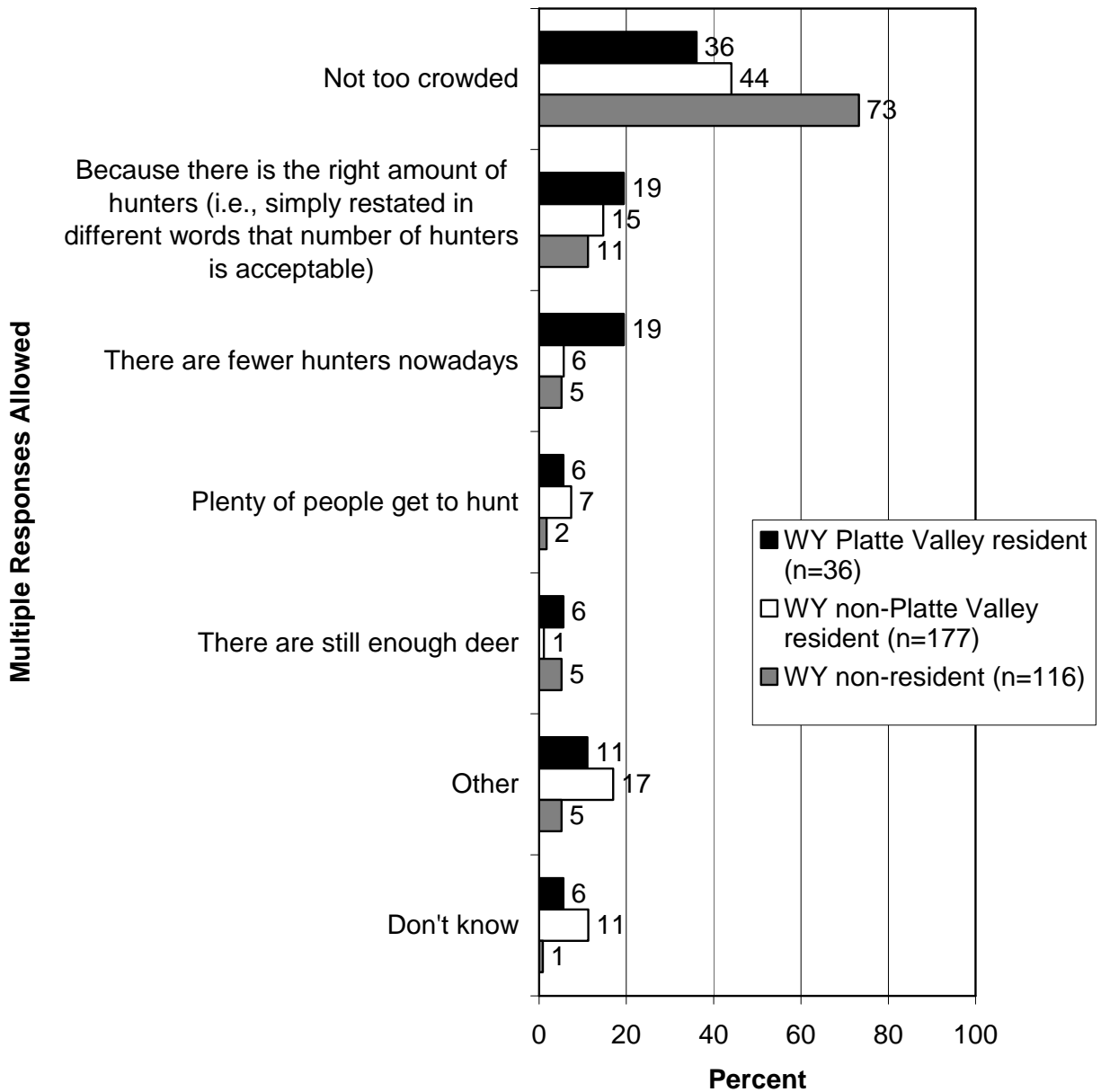
**Q57. What caused you not to hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley as much as you would have liked in the past 5 years? (Asked of those who have something that caused them not to hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley as much as they would have liked in the past 5 years.)**



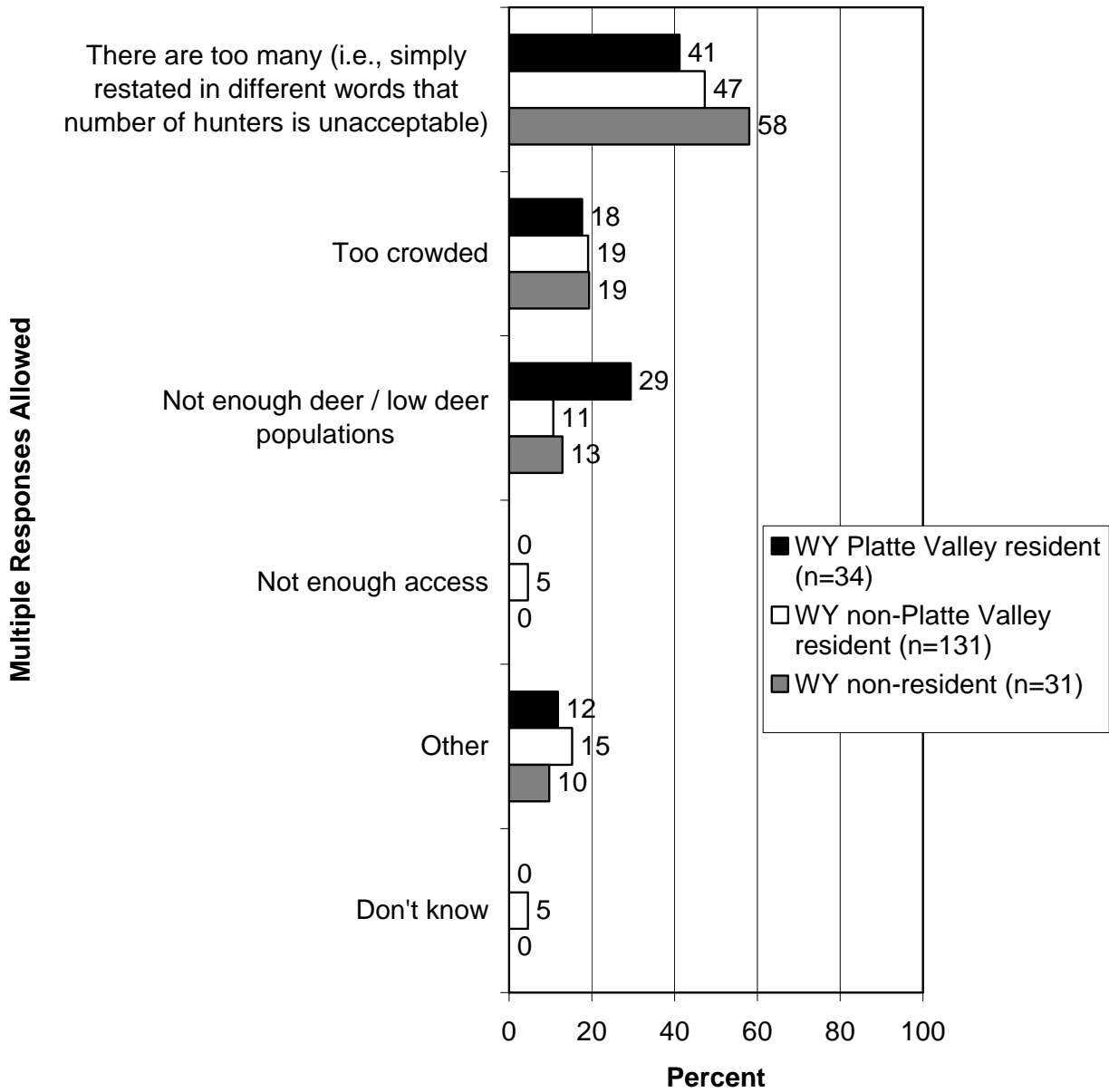
**Q86. How acceptable or unacceptable is the number of hunters in the field in the Platte Valley?**



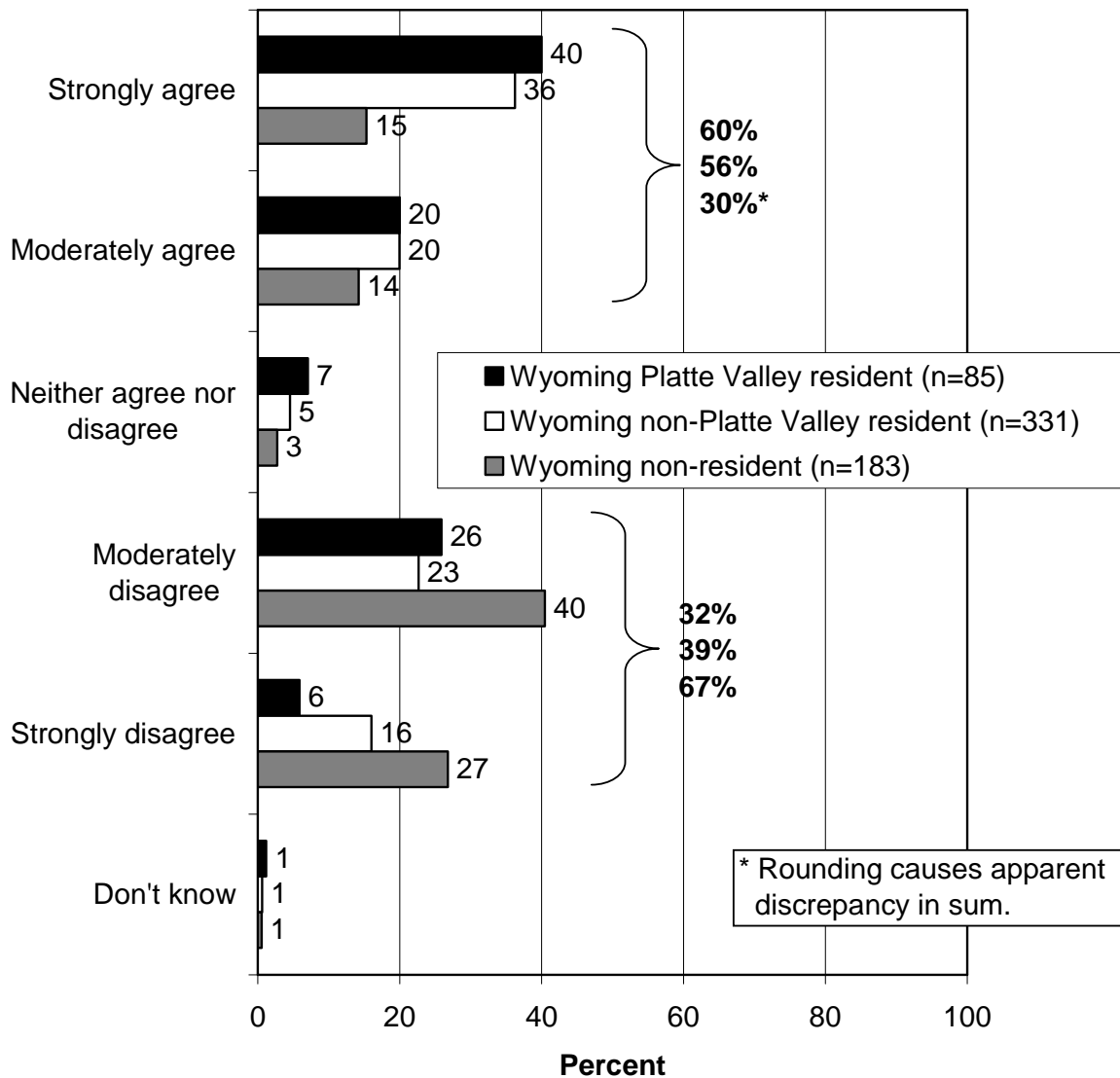
**Q87. What are the reasons you think the number of hunters in the field in the Platte Valley is acceptable? (Asked of those who indicated that the number of hunters in the field in the Platte Valley is acceptable.)**



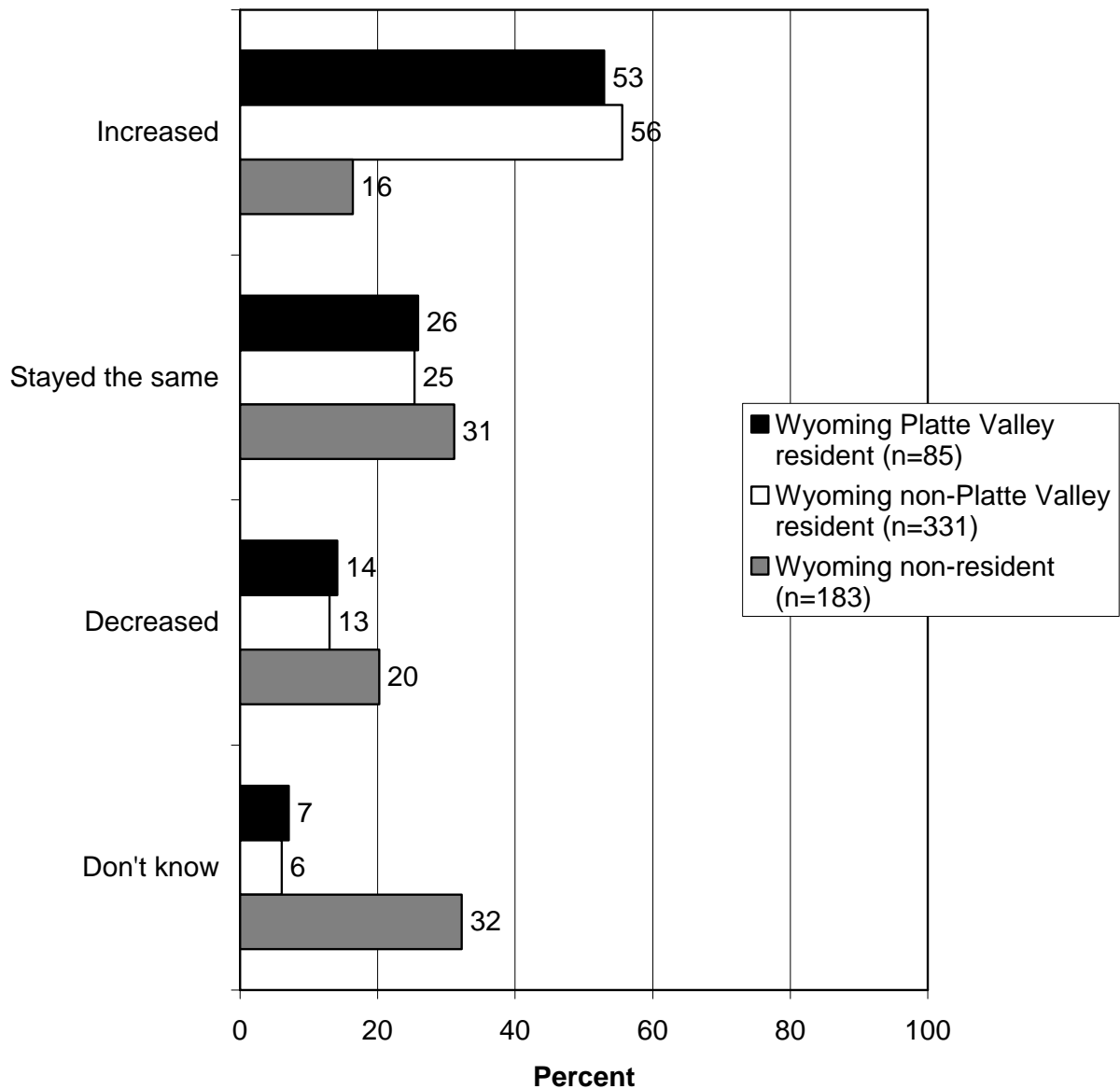
**Q88. What are the reasons you think the number of hunters in the field in the Platte Valley is unacceptable? (Asked of those who indicated that the number of hunters in the field in the Platte Valley is unacceptable.)**



**Q69. There were too many other hunters in the area where you hunted most often in the Platte Valley in the past 5 years. (Do you agree or disagree with this statement about the Platte Valley hunt area where you most often hunted in the past 5 years?)**



**Q74. What about the number of hunters in the field? (Has this increased, stayed the same, or decreased in the past 5 years in the Platte Valley hunt area where you most often hunted mule deer?)**



## **OPINIONS ON MULE DEER MANAGEMENT IN THE PLATTE VALLEY**

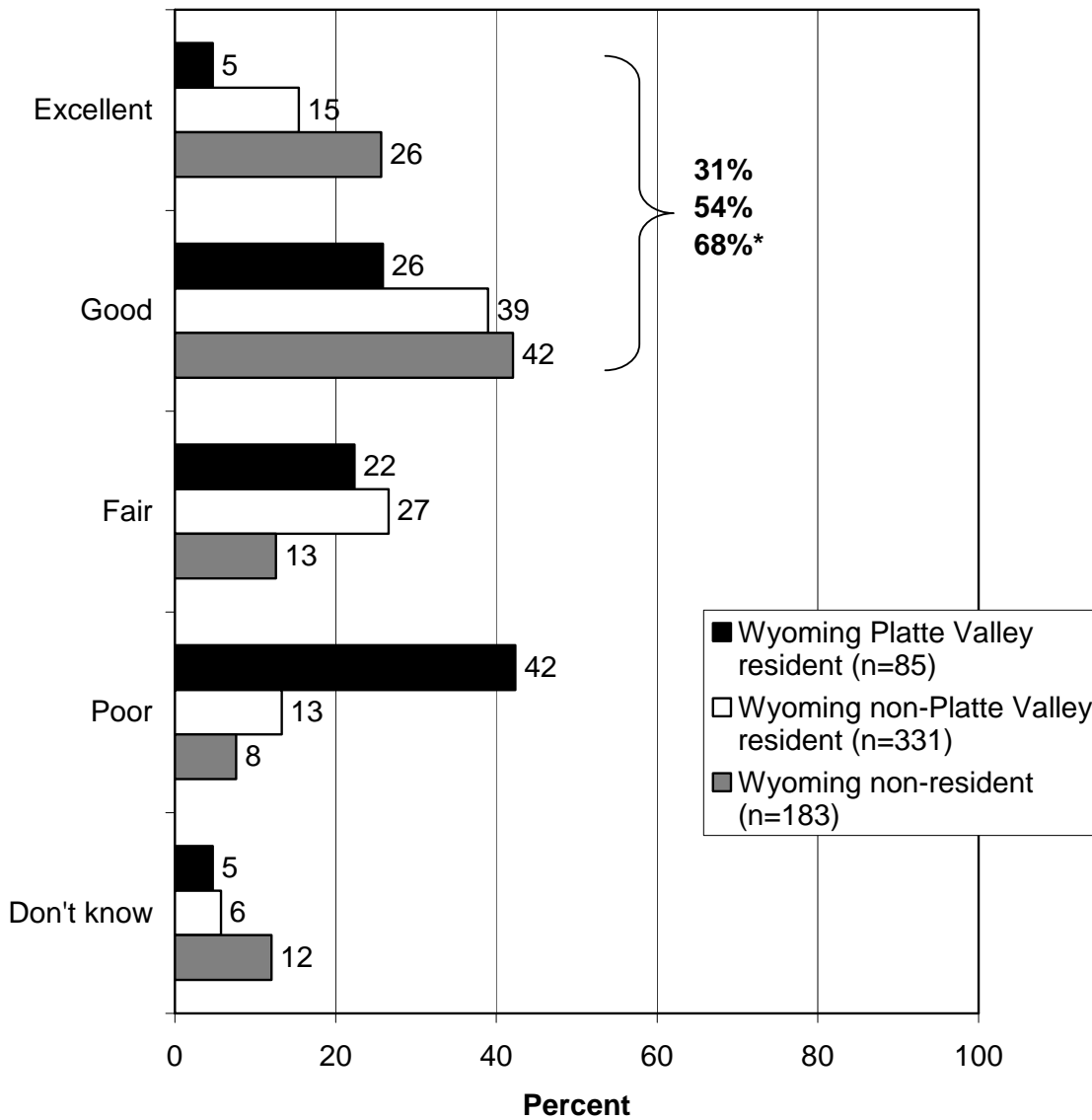
### **OPINIONS ON CURRENT MANAGEMENT OF THE DEER HERD IN THE PLATTE VALLEY**

- A basic question about mule deer management asked respondents if they think the Wyoming Game and Fish Department is doing an excellent, good, fair, or poor job of managing the mule deer population in the Platte Valley. Platte Valley residents differ markedly from the other two groups: 31% of Platte Valley residents give a rating of excellent or good, compared to 54% of non-Platte Valley residents and 68% of Wyoming non-residents. The difference is more extreme in “poor” responses: 42% of Platte Valley residents give a rating of poor, compared to only 13% of non-Platte Valley residents and 8% of Wyoming non-residents.
  - A follow-up question asked respondents to indicate their reasoning for giving the rating that they gave. For those who responded with “excellent”: top reasons are that there is plenty of game, that interactions with agency personnel have been favorable (including having enough check stations), that the Department does a good job, and the good quality of deer and habitat. The results are shown among non-Platte Valley residents and Wyoming non-residents who gave a rating of excellent (not enough Platte Valley residents gave a rating of excellent for their follow-up results to have statistical meaning).
  - The top reasons for giving a negative rating (either “fair” or “poor,” which is in the bottom half of the scale) are the perceived lack of game, perceived mismanagement of the herd, regulatory issues (typically that a different kind of hunt season should be held, such as limited quota), the perceived lack of quality deer, crowding, and too many out-of-state hunters.
  
- The survey asked whether the way the Department manages mule deer has improved, remained the same, or gotten worse in the past 5 years. Again, Platte Valley residents are more negative than the other two groups. Nonetheless, none of the groups were generally favorable in their opinions regarding trends in the past 5 years. Another question, with similar results, asked the question with a 10-year time frame.

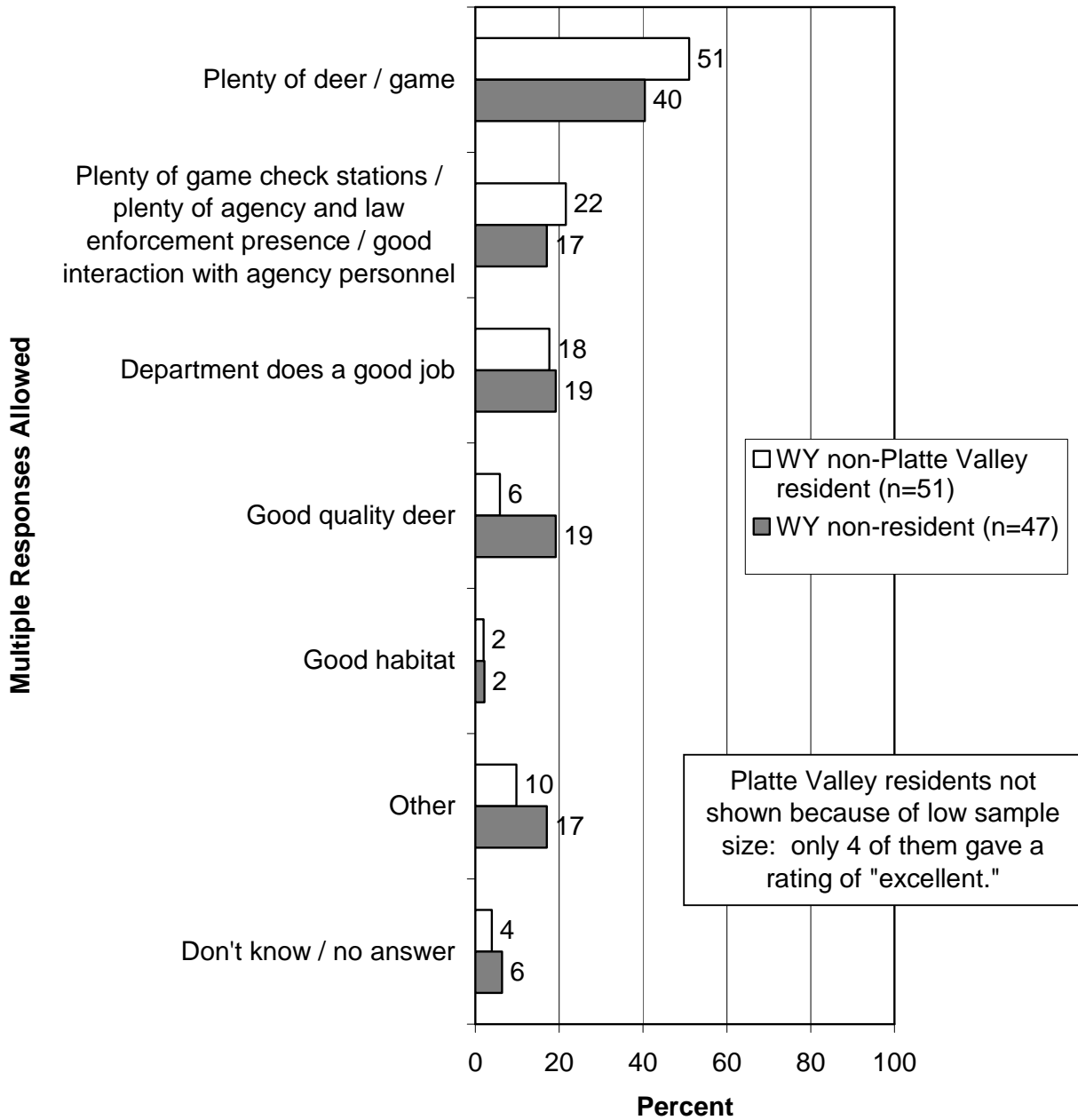
- A basic question asked respondents about the acceptability of the current number of mule deer in the Platte Valley. About half of non-Platte Valley residents (50%) and Wyoming non-residents (51%) find the current number of mule deer acceptable; meanwhile, Platte Valley residents are more negative, as only 27% find the current number acceptable. (Because of the “neither acceptable or unacceptable” and “don’t know” responses, accounting for up to 17%, well less than half of non-Platte Valley residents and Wyoming non-residents say the number is unacceptable; unfortunately, a majority of Platte Valley residents say the number is unacceptable.)
- Graphs are included showing reasons why respondents said the number of mule deer is acceptable or unacceptable (among those who gave those responses). Primary reasons are that they either saw deer (acceptable) or they did not see deer (unacceptable). Among those saying unacceptable, a little of the low population was attributed to winter kills and/or predators.
  - Another question asked about the acceptability of the number of mule deer *harvested*. Platte Valley residents are about evenly split (31% say the harvest number is acceptable, while 35% say it is unacceptable). The other groups are a little more favorable: among non-Platte Valley residents, 43% say acceptable and 23% say unacceptable; among Wyoming non-residents, those percentages are 40% acceptable and 19% unacceptable.
    - As was done before, open-ended follow-up questions were asked regarding the reasons the number was acceptable or unacceptable. Among “acceptable” respondents, the good chance of harvest success and the perception that the herd is stable are the top reasons for thinking the harvest number is acceptable. Among “unacceptable” respondents, the lack of deer and lack of harvest success are prominent reasons the harvest number is unacceptable.

- Two “agree-disagree” questions were asked regarding the quantity of bucks and the quality of bucks.
  - Regarding the quantity, half of Wyoming non-residents (50%) agree that the number of bucks in the area was adequate in the past 5 years. Otherwise, for the other groups, less favorable ratings are given, as majorities of Platte Valley (73%) and non-Platte Valley residents (61%) *disagree* that the number of bucks in the past 5 years was adequate.
  - Regarding quality, majorities of all three groups indicated that they had heard about or had seen big antlered bucks in the Platte Valley area within the past 5 years (from 60% to 67% among the three groups).
  
- Three questions asked about recent trends: the trend in numbers of mule deer, the numbers harvested, and the numbers of bucks. Each asked if those numbers had increased, stayed the same, or decreased over the past 5 years.
  - Regarding total numbers of mule deer: the most common answer of all three groups is “decreased.”
  - Regarding numbers harvested: “decreased” is the most common answer of all three groups (excluding don’t know, the most common response of Wyoming non-residents).
  - Regarding the number of bucks, “decreased” is again the most common answer.
  
- Part of management of deer herds involves the *management of habitat*, to the extent that it can be influenced by agency action. Respondents were asked to rate the current quality of deer habitat in the Platte Valley, and they are more positive than negative: from 58% to 66% gave a rating of *excellent* or *good*, compared to a range of 25% to 39% giving a rating of *fair* or *poor*.
  - Respondents were asked for their opinion regarding whether the quality of mule deer habitat in the Platte Valley had improved, remained the same, or gotten worse in the past 5 years. “Remained the same” is the most common answer among all three groups (from 41% to 46%). Otherwise, a greater percentage of each group thinks the quality has *gotten worse* than thinks it has *improved*: among Platte Valley residents, 31% to 15%, among non-Platte Valley residents, 30% to 20%, and among Wyoming non-residents, 21% to 6%.

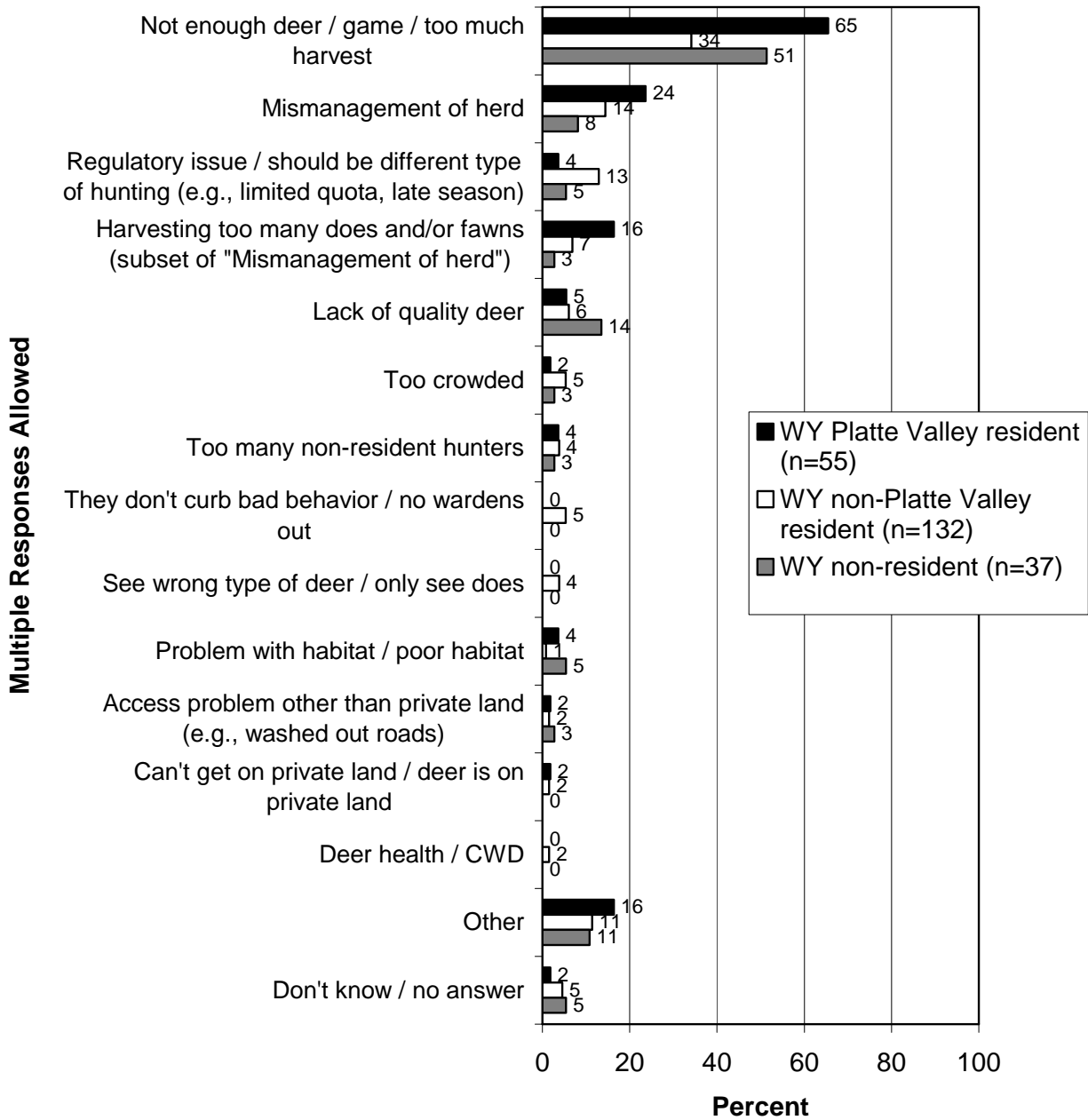
**Q60. Do you think the Wyoming Game and Fish Department is doing an excellent, good, fair, or poor job of managing the mule deer population in the Platte Valley hunt area where you most often hunted mule deer in the past 5 years?**



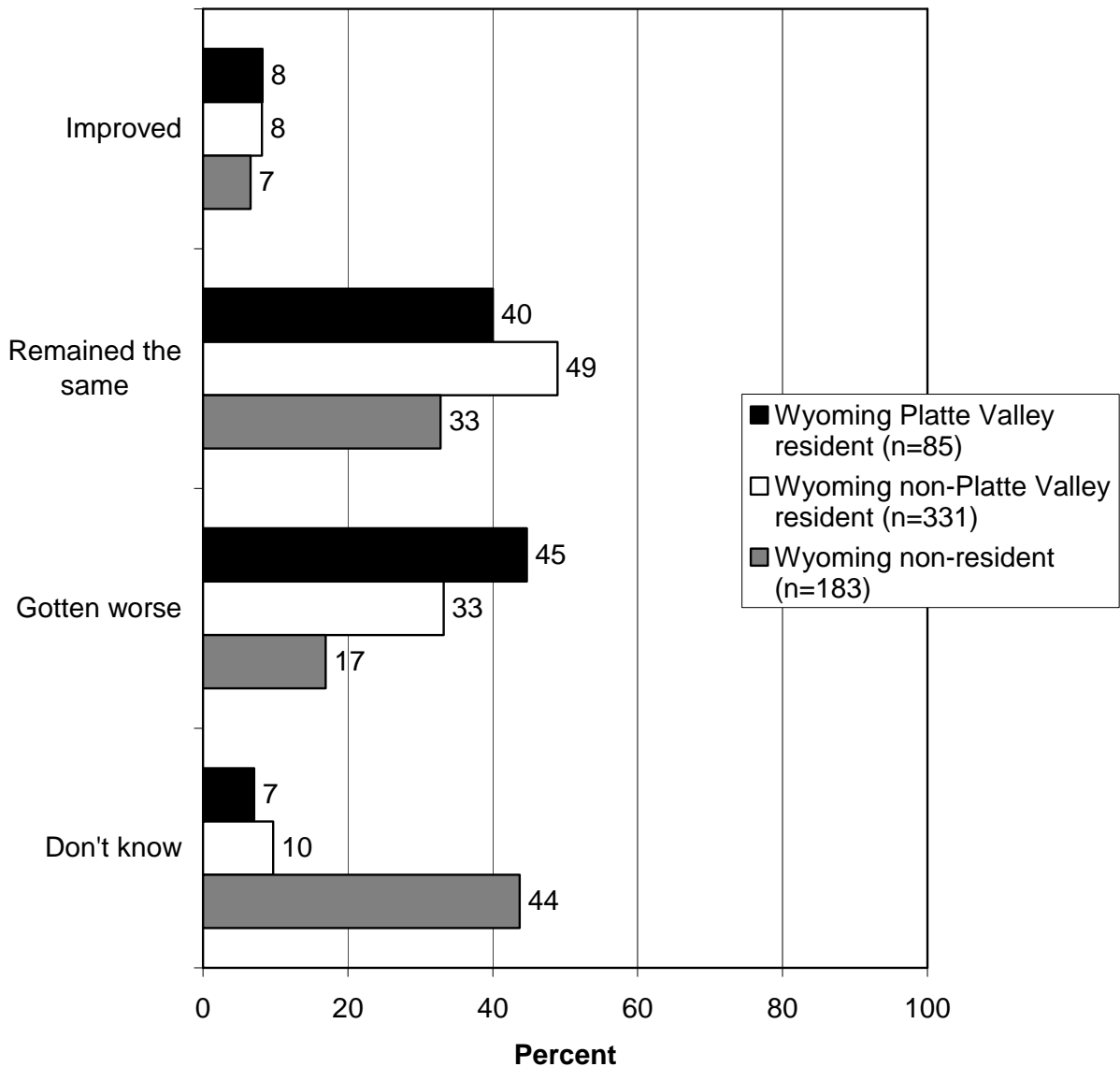
**Q62. Why do you rate the Department's management of the mule deer population in the Platte Valley hunt area where you most often hunted mule deer as excellent?**



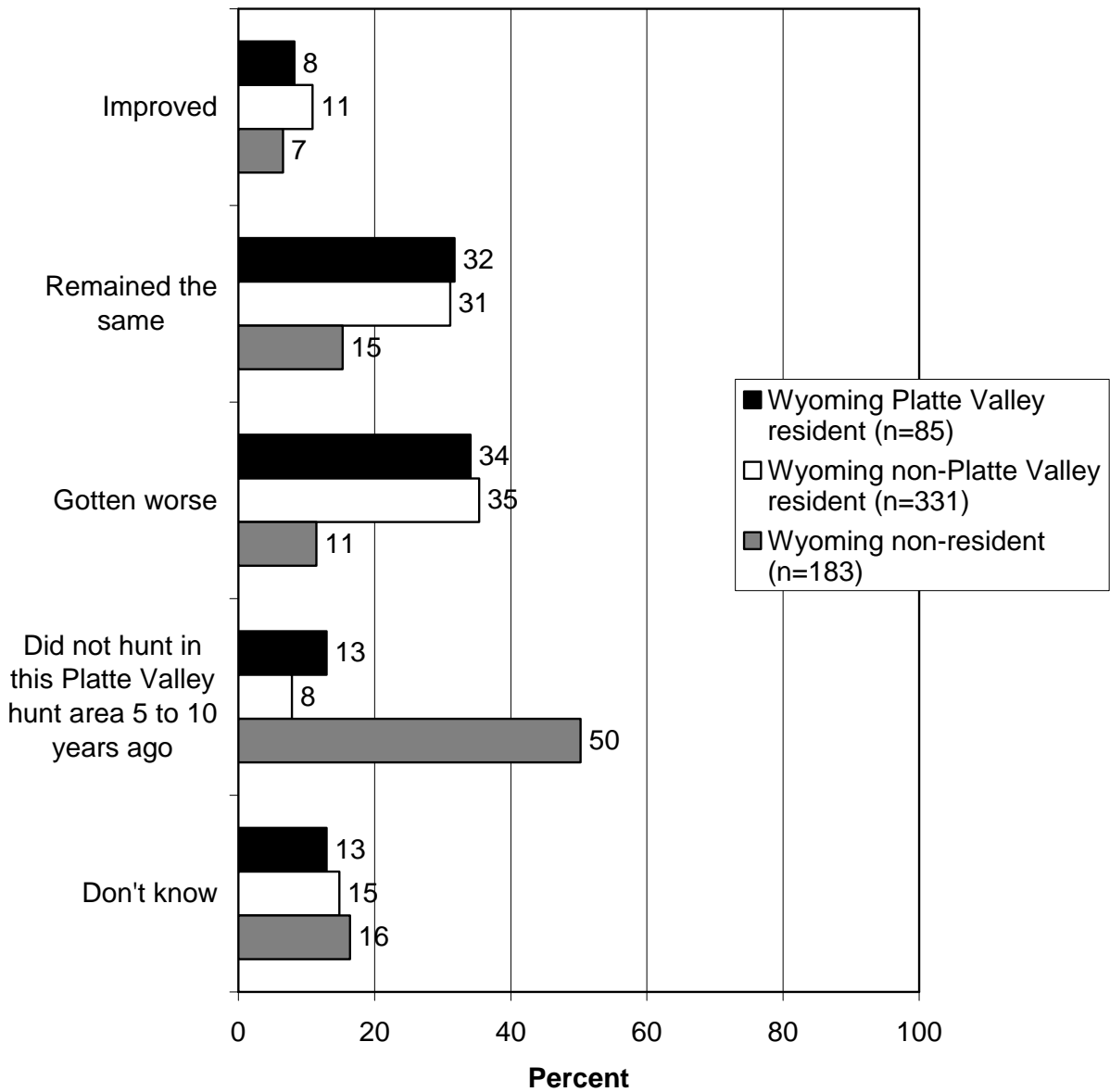
**Q62. Why do you rate the Department's management of the mule deer population in the Platte Valley hunt area where you most often hunted mule deer as fair or poor?**



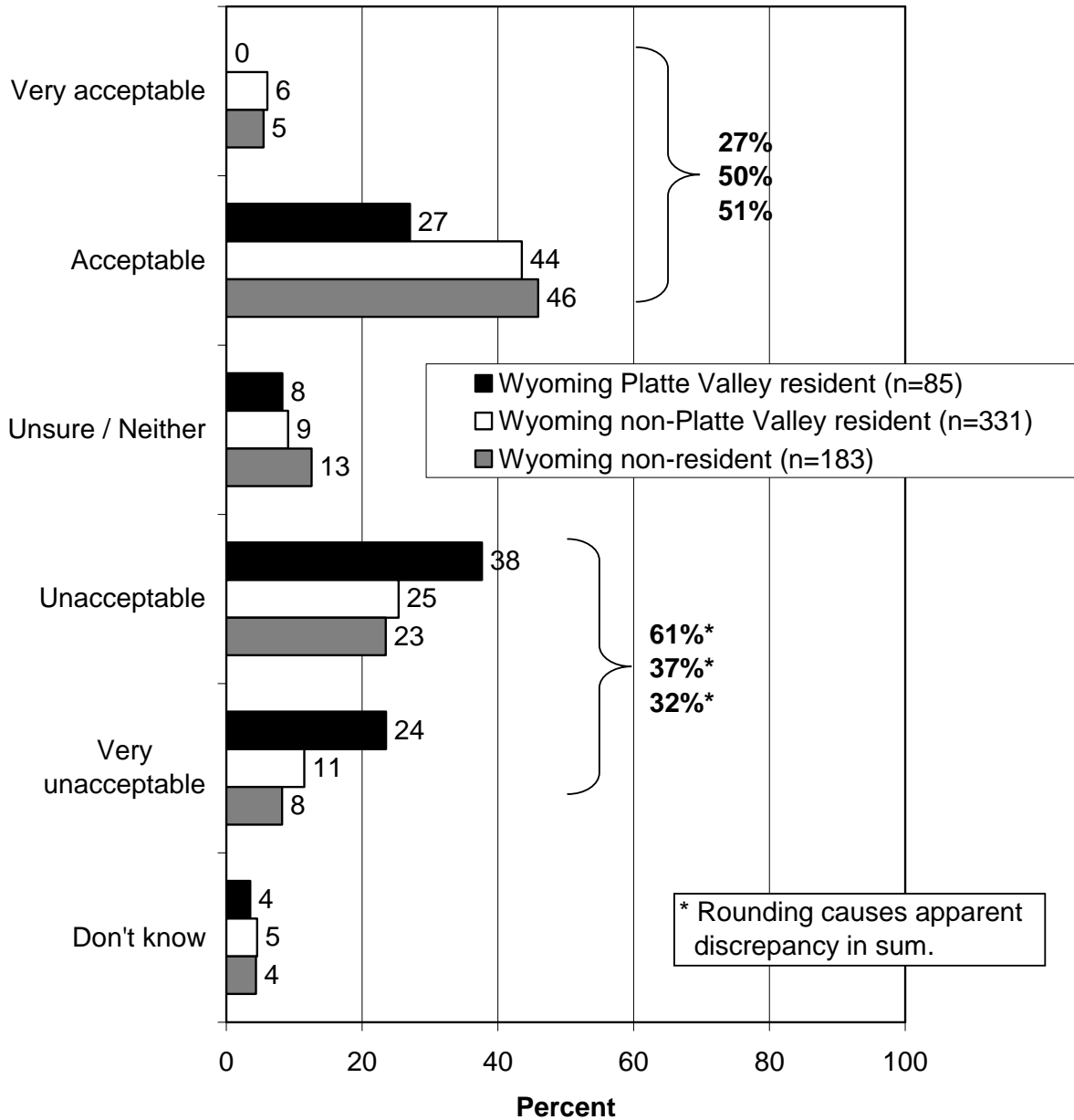
**Q63. In your opinion, has the way the Department manages mule deer in the Platte Valley hunt area where you most often hunted mule deer improved, remained the same, or gotten worse in the past 5 years?**



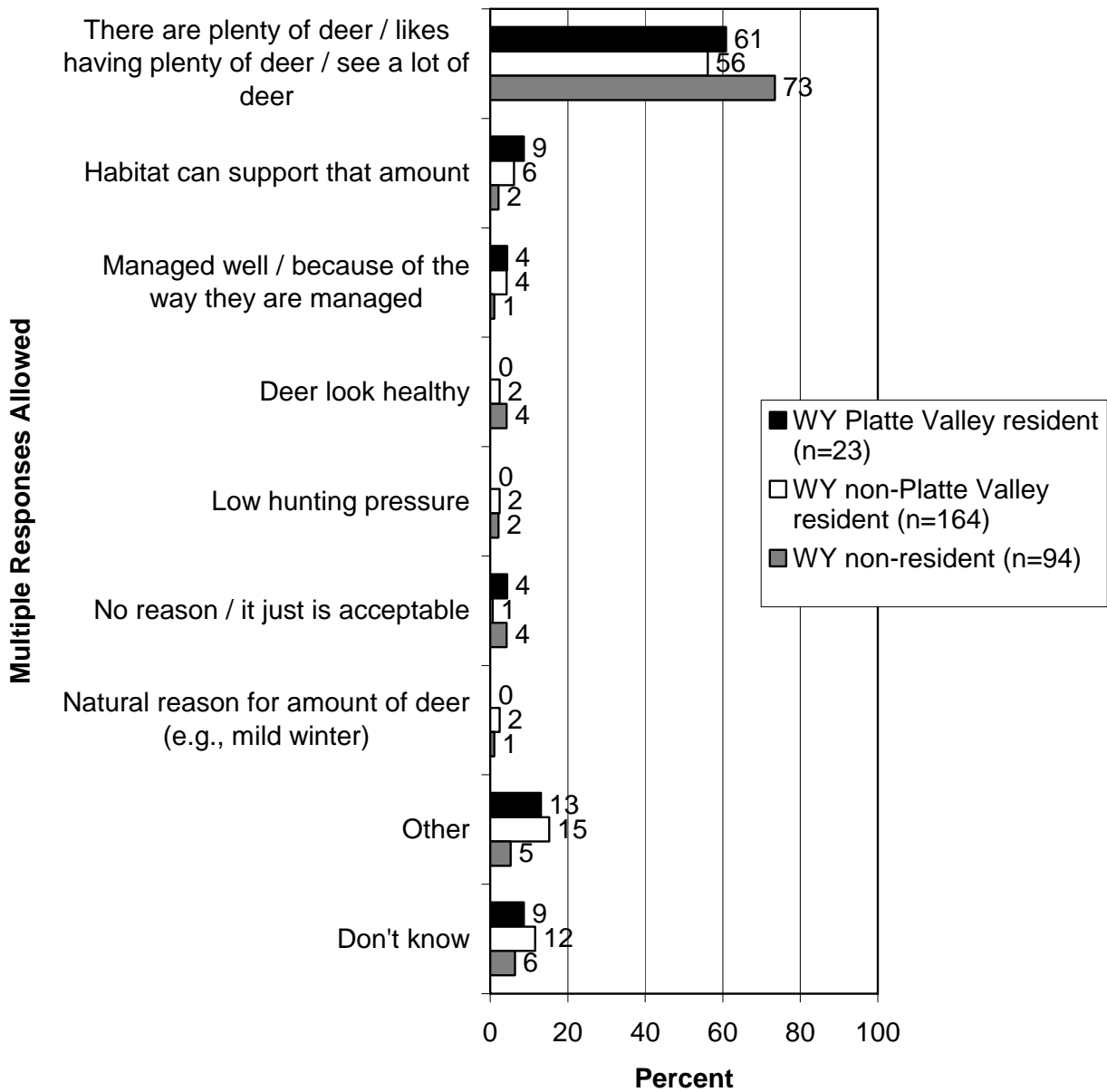
**Q64. Has the way the Department manages mule deer in the Platte Valley hunt area where you most often hunted mule deer improved, remained the same, or gotten worse in the past 10 years?**



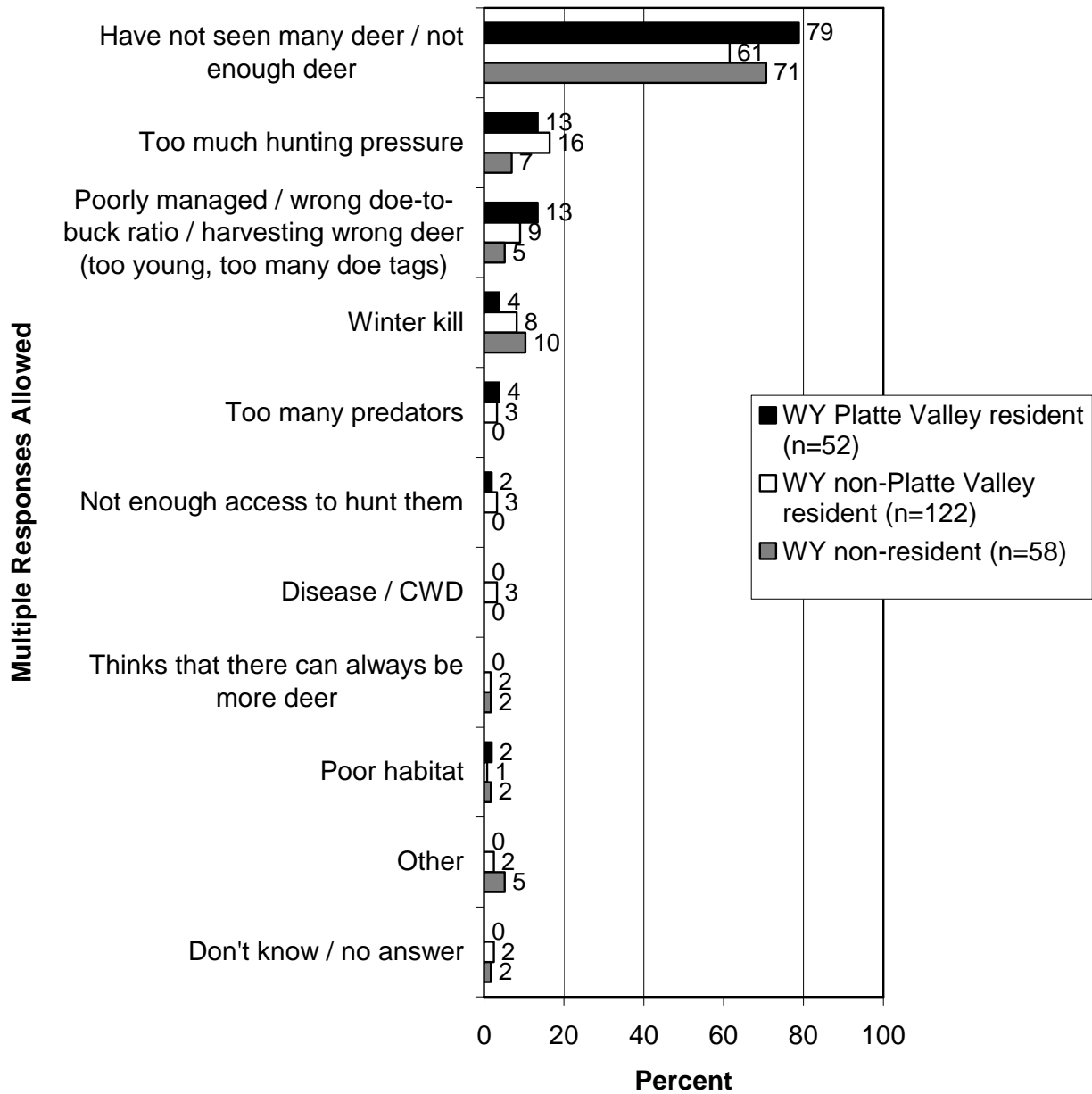
### Q79. How acceptable or unacceptable is the number of mule deer in the Platte Valley currently?



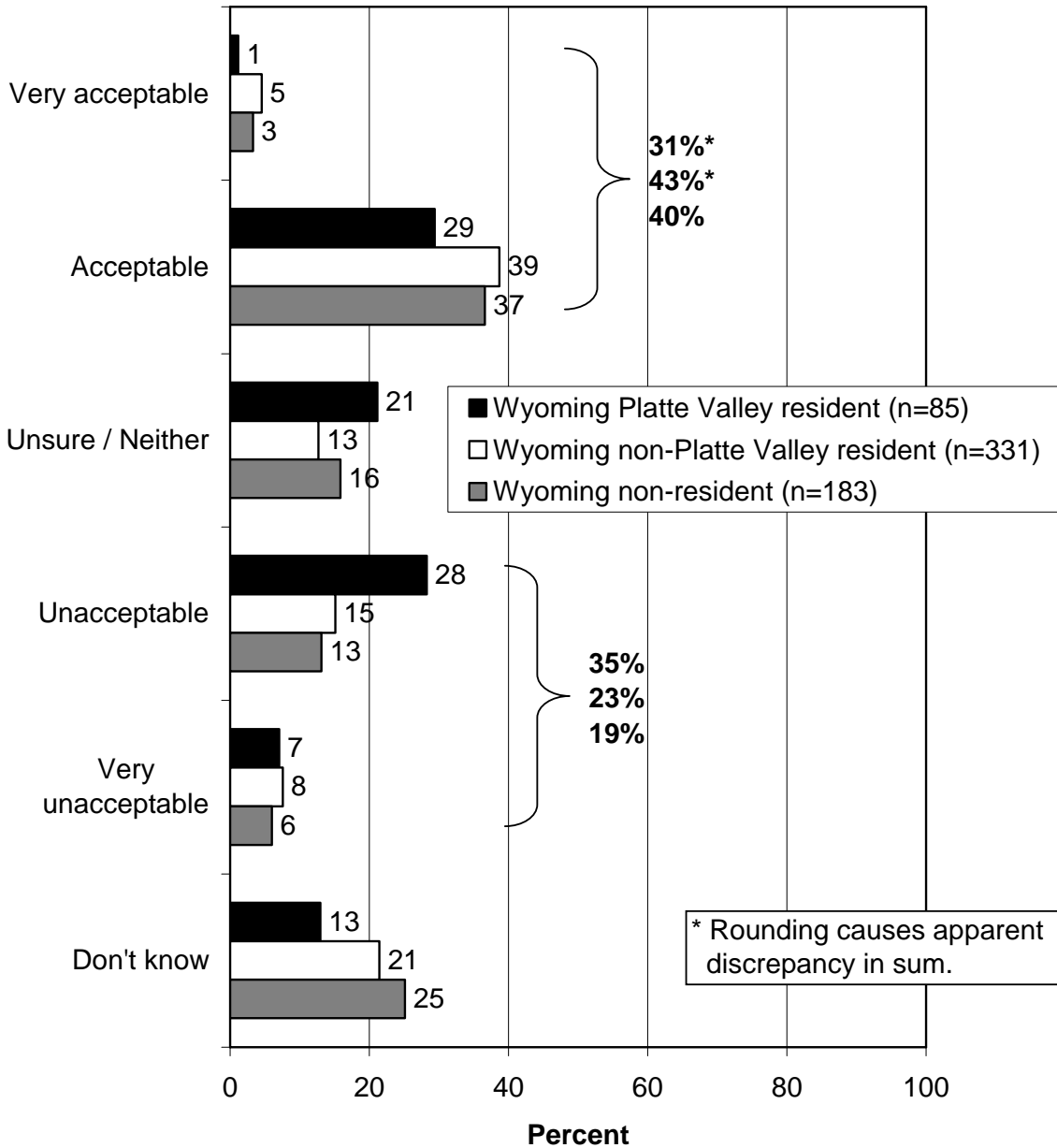
**Q80. What are the reasons you think the number of mule deer in the Platte Valley is acceptable?  
(Asked of those who indicated that currently the number of mule deer in the Platte Valley is acceptable.)**



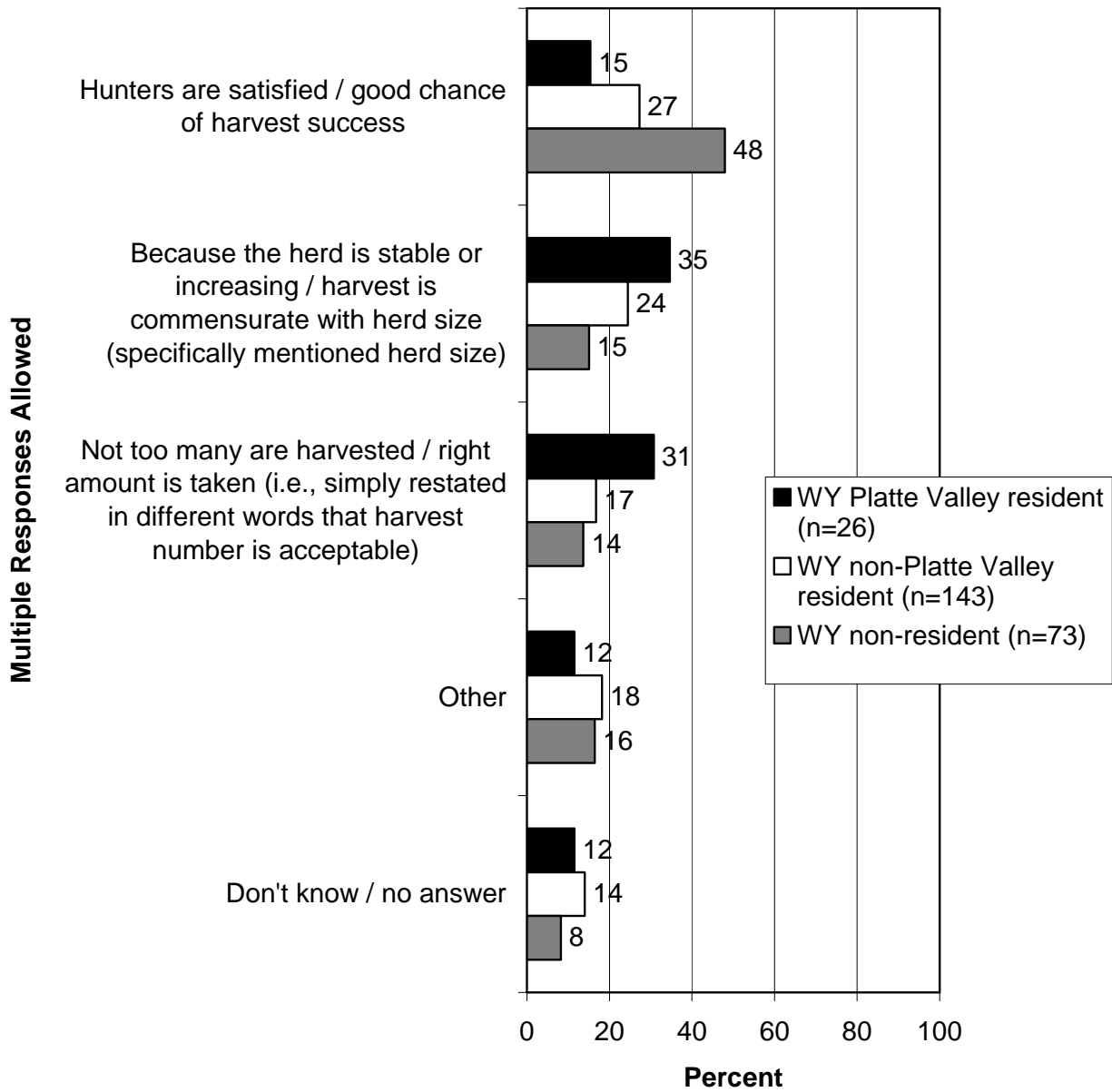
**Q81. What are the reasons you think the number of mule deer in the Platte Valley is unacceptable?  
(Asked of those who indicated that currently the number of mule deer in the Platte Valley is unacceptable.)**



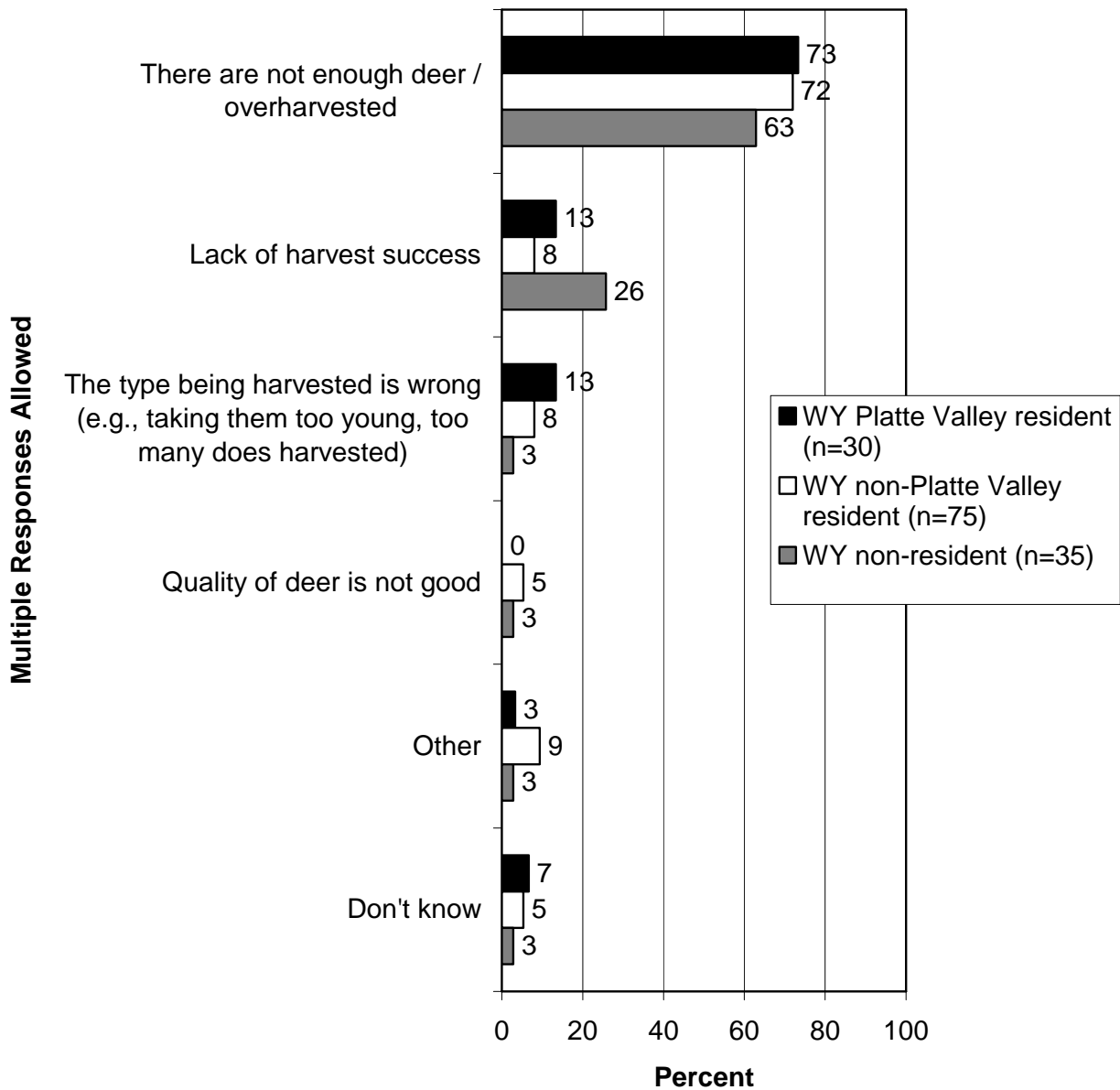
**Q83. How acceptable or unacceptable is the number of mule deer harvested in the Platte Valley each year?**



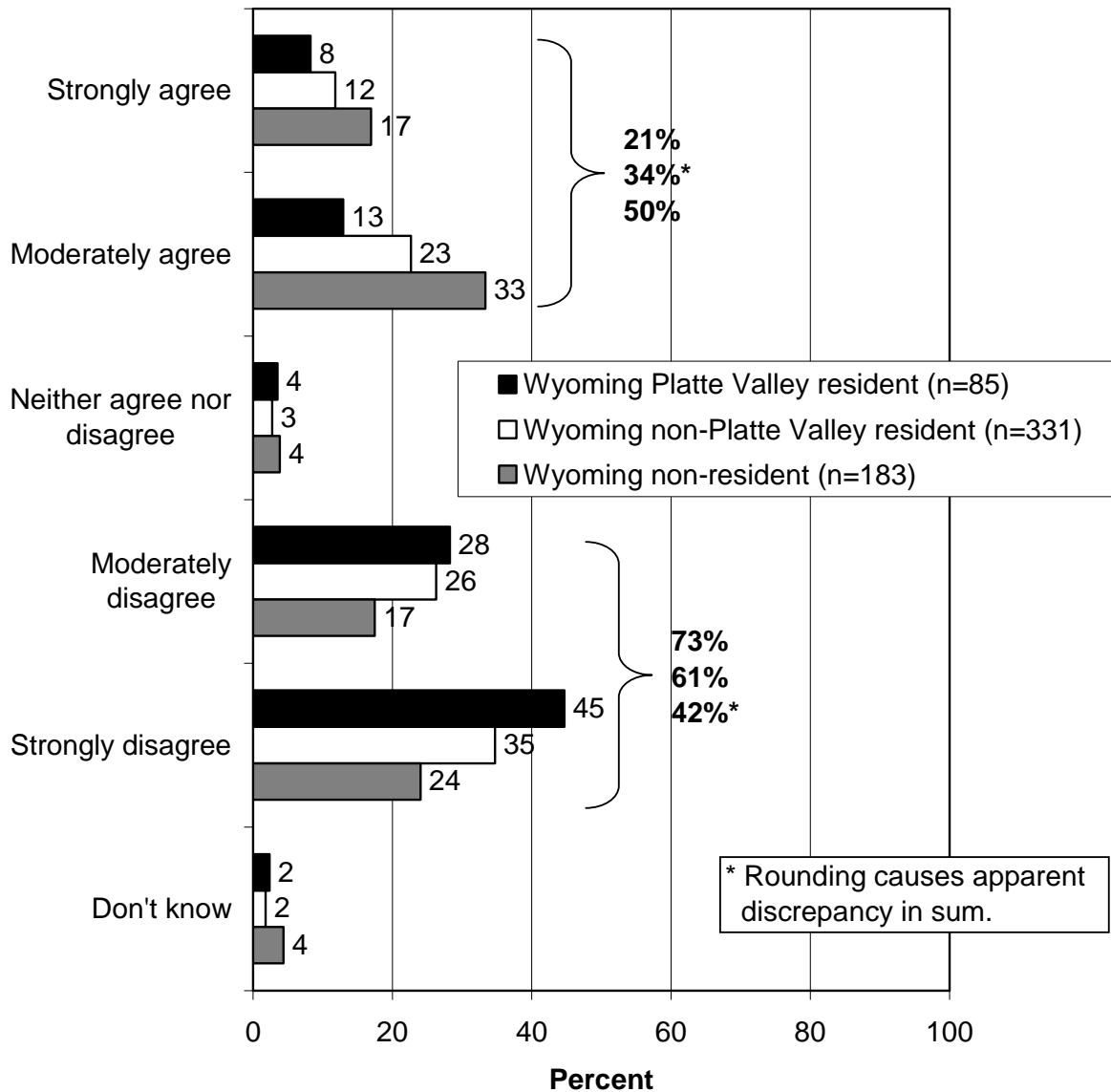
**Q84. What are the reasons you think the number of mule deer harvested in the Platte Valley is acceptable? (Asked of those who indicated that the number of mule deer harvested in the Platte Valley each year is acceptable.)**



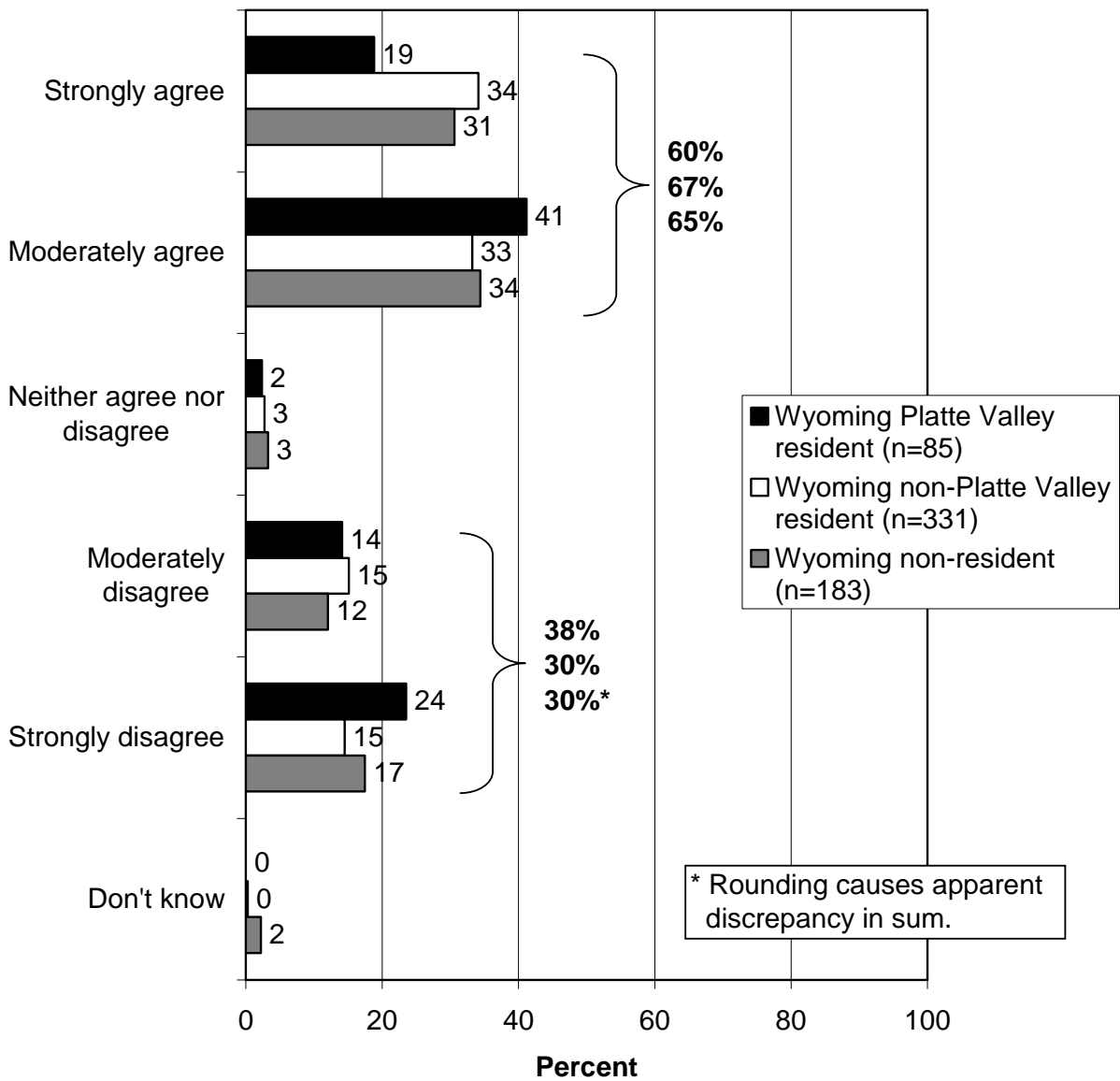
**Q85. What are the reasons you think the number of mule deer harvested in the Platte Valley is unacceptable? (Asked of those who indicated that the number of mule deer harvested in the Platte Valley each year is unacceptable.)**



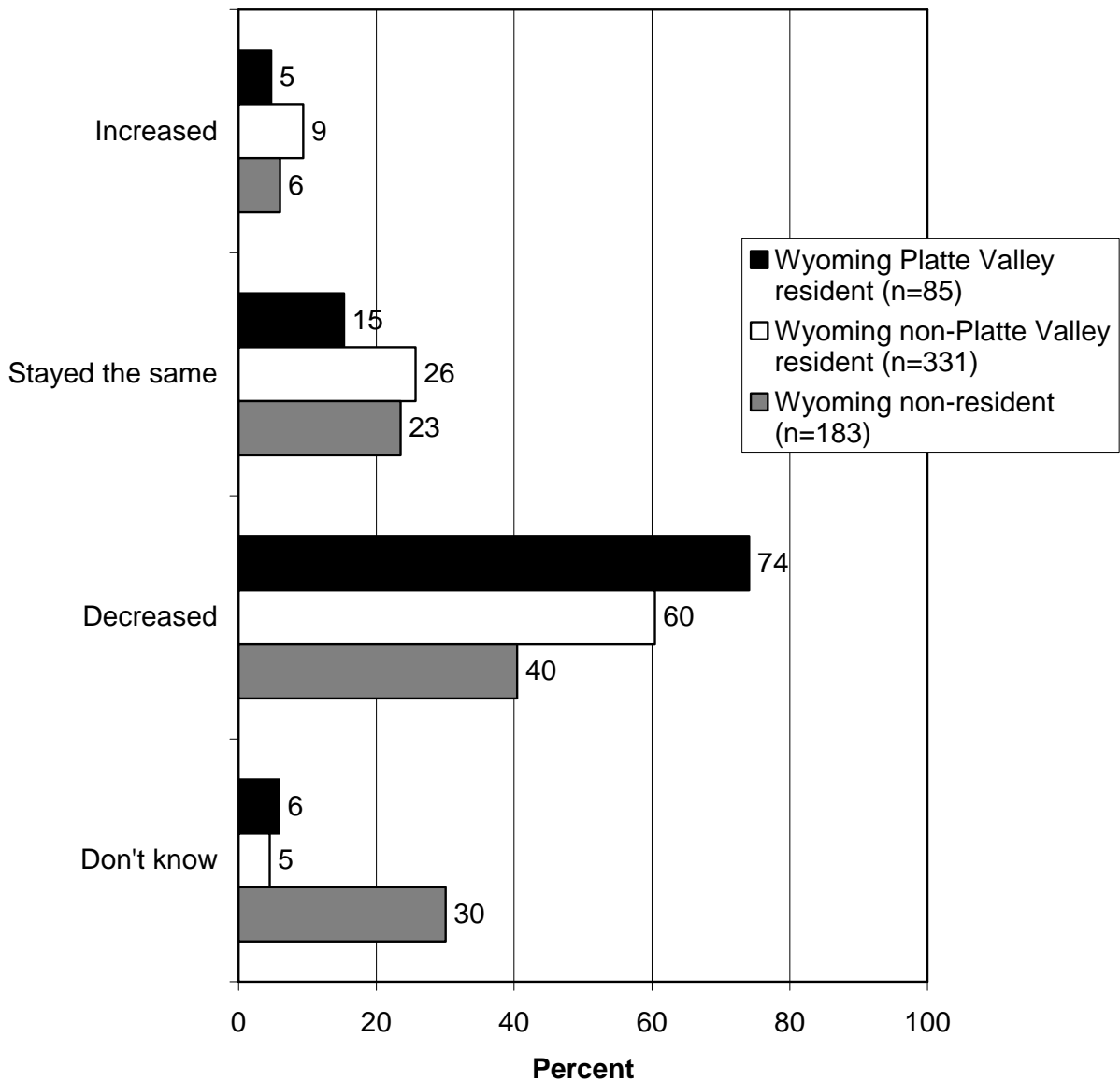
**Q67. The number of bucks in the area was adequate in the past 5 years. (Do you agree or disagree with this statement about the Platte Valley hunt area where you most often hunted in the past 5 years?)**



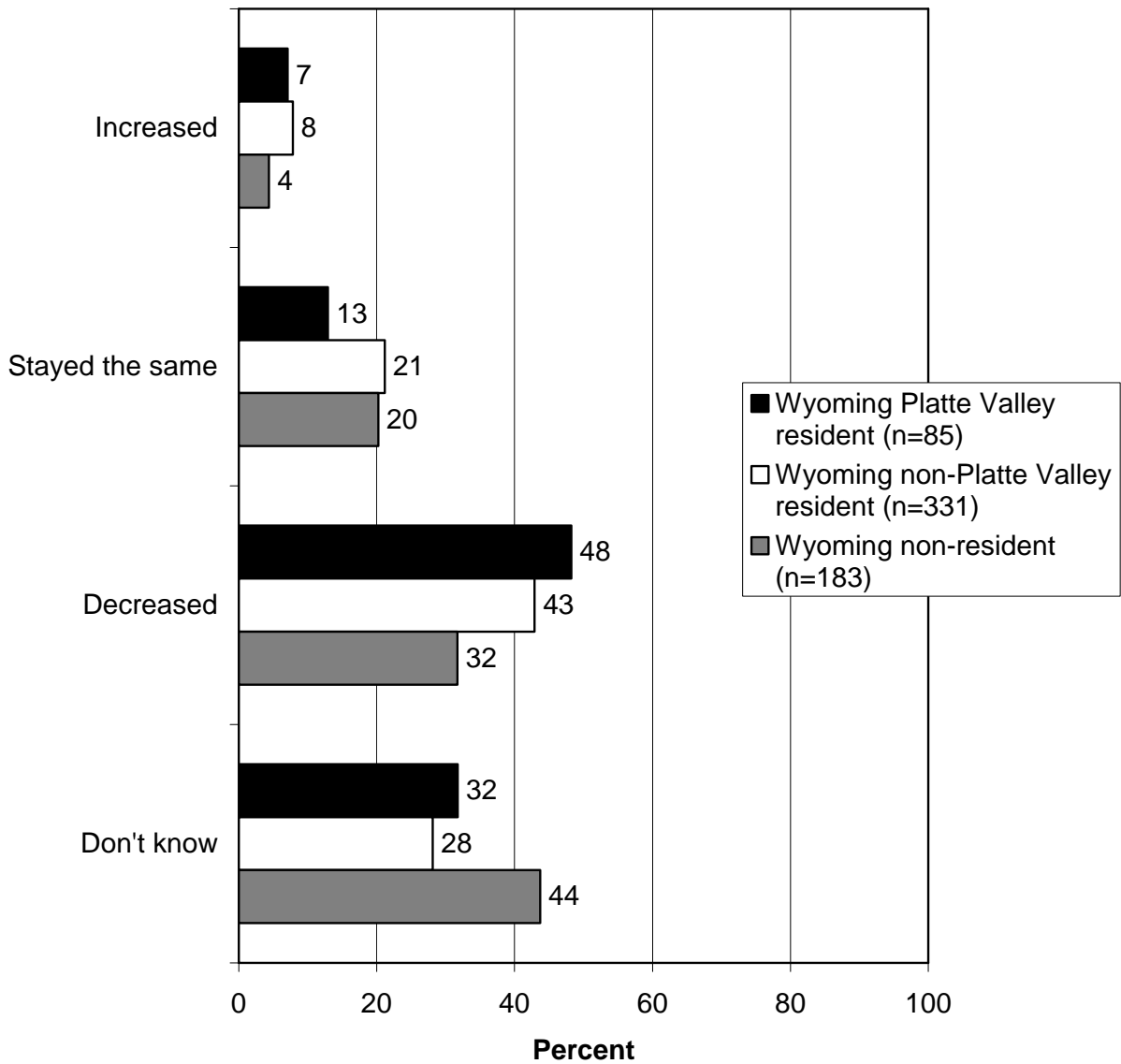
**Q68. You heard about or saw big antlered bucks in the area in the past 5 years. (Do you agree or disagree with this statement about the Platte Valley hunt area where you most often hunted in the past 5 years?)**



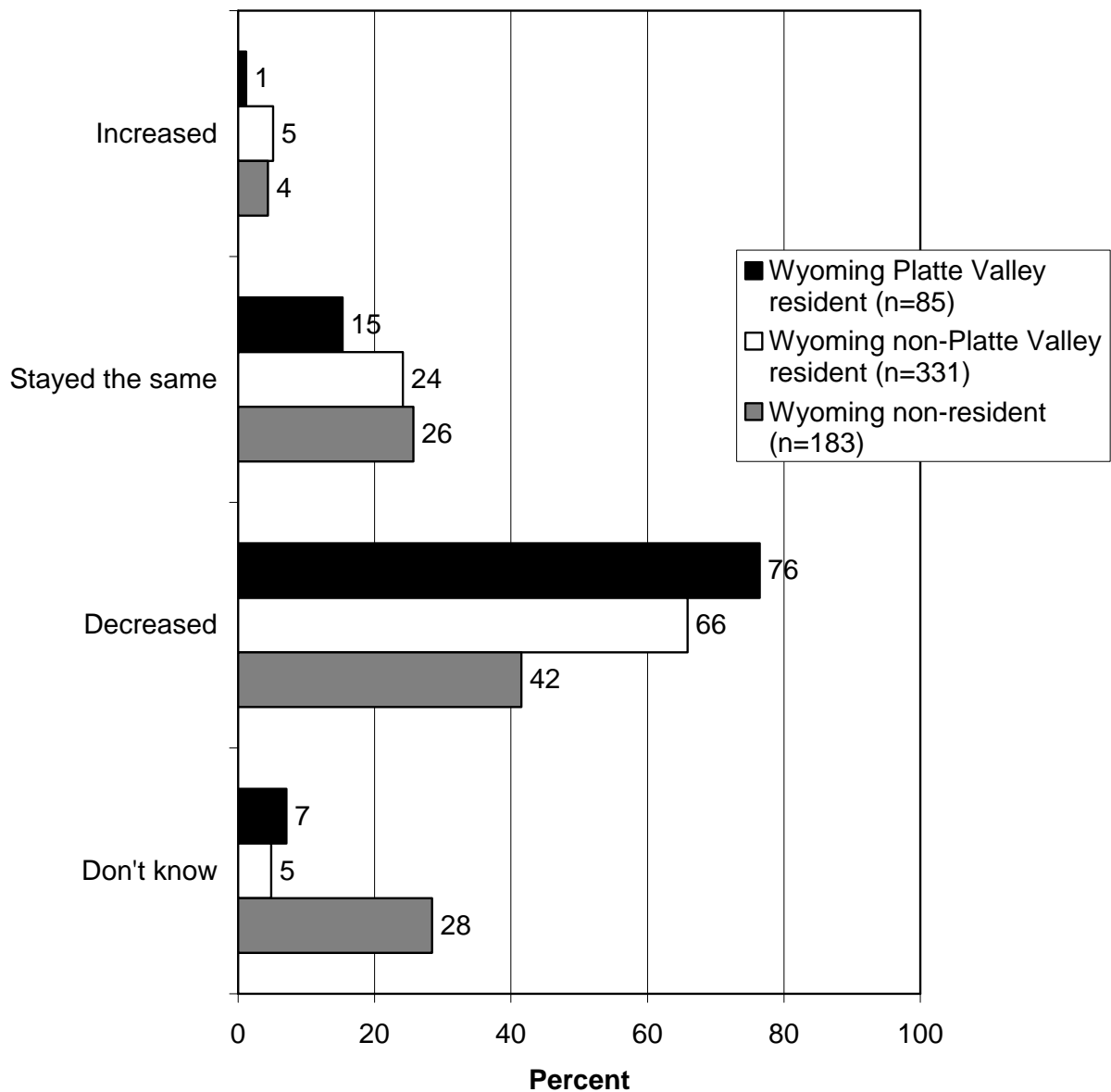
**Q72. What about the total number of mule deer?  
(Has this increased, stayed the same, or decreased  
in the past 5 years in the Platte Valley hunt area  
where you most often hunted mule deer?)**



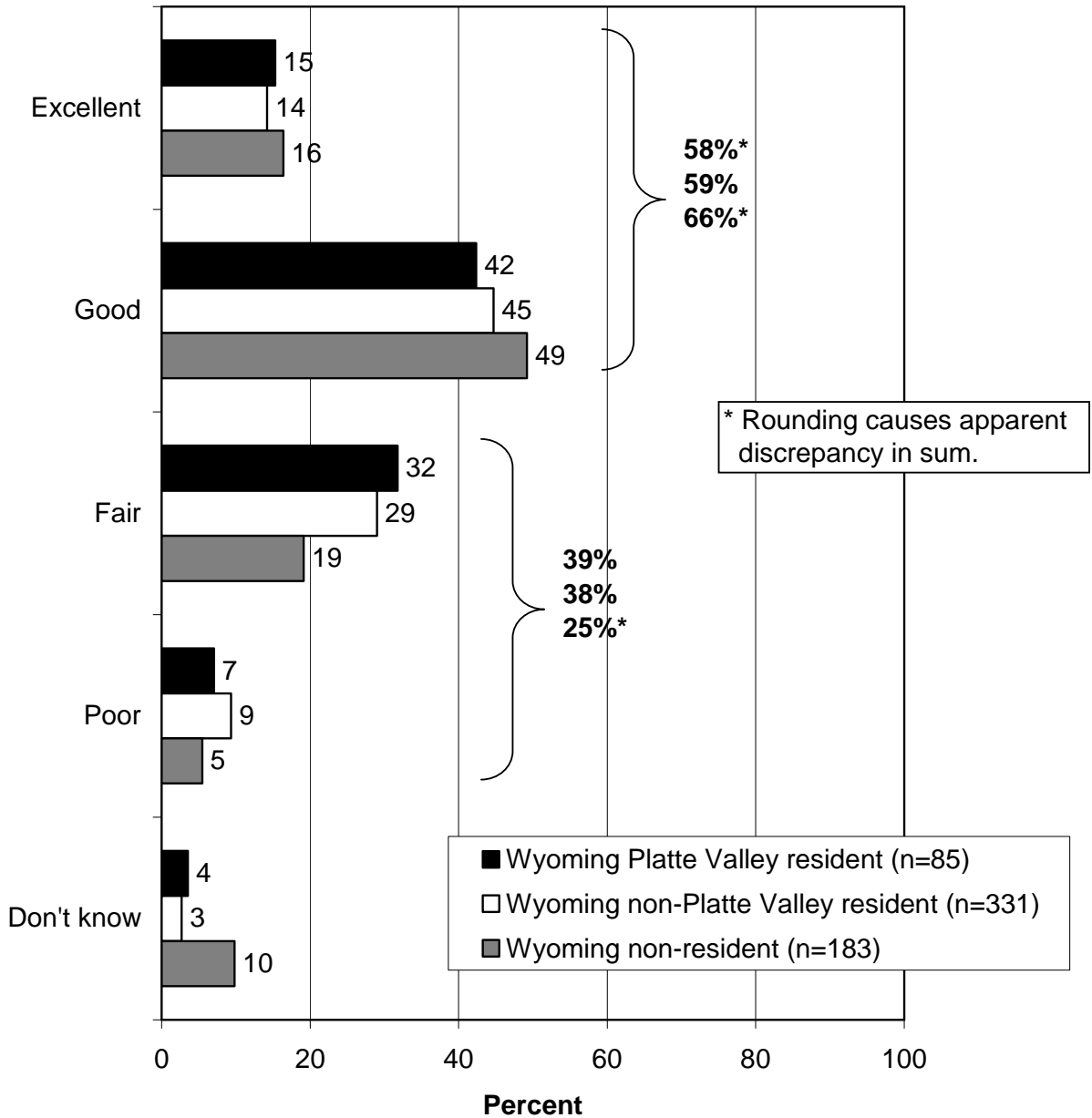
**Q73. What about the number of mule deer harvested by hunters each year? (Has this increased, stayed the same, or decreased in the past 5 years in the Platte Valley hunt area where you most often hunted mule deer?)**



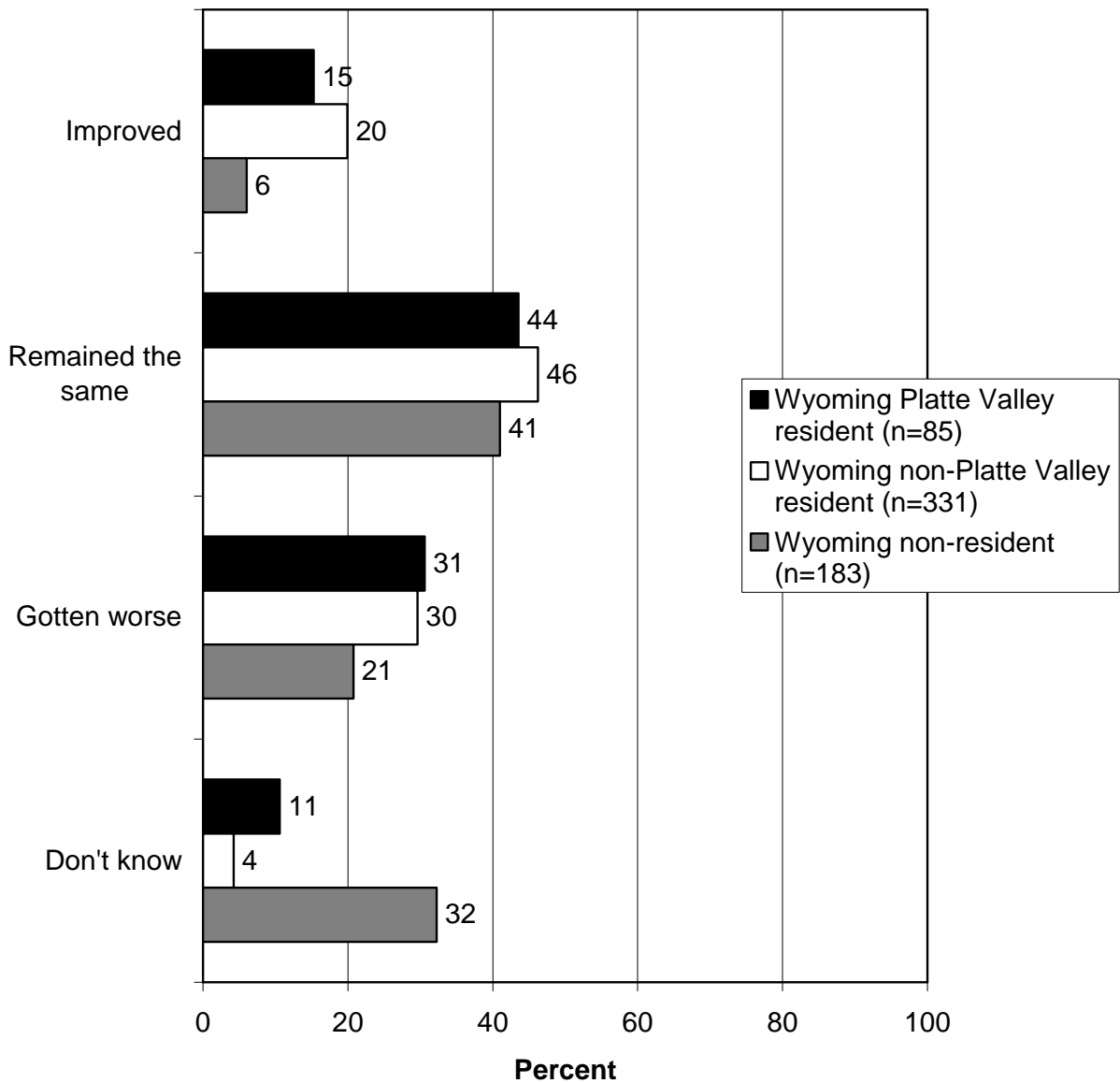
**Q75. What about the number of bucks? (Has this increased, stayed the same, or decreased in the past 5 years in the Platte Valley hunt area where you most often hunted mule deer?)**



**Q116. How would you rate the current quality of deer habitat in the Platte Valley in the past 5 years?**



**Q111. Do you think the quality of mule deer habitat in the Platte Valley has improved, remained the same, or gotten worse in the past 5 years?**



## OPINIONS ON FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE DEER POPULATION IN THE PLATTE VALLEY, INCLUDING HABITAT

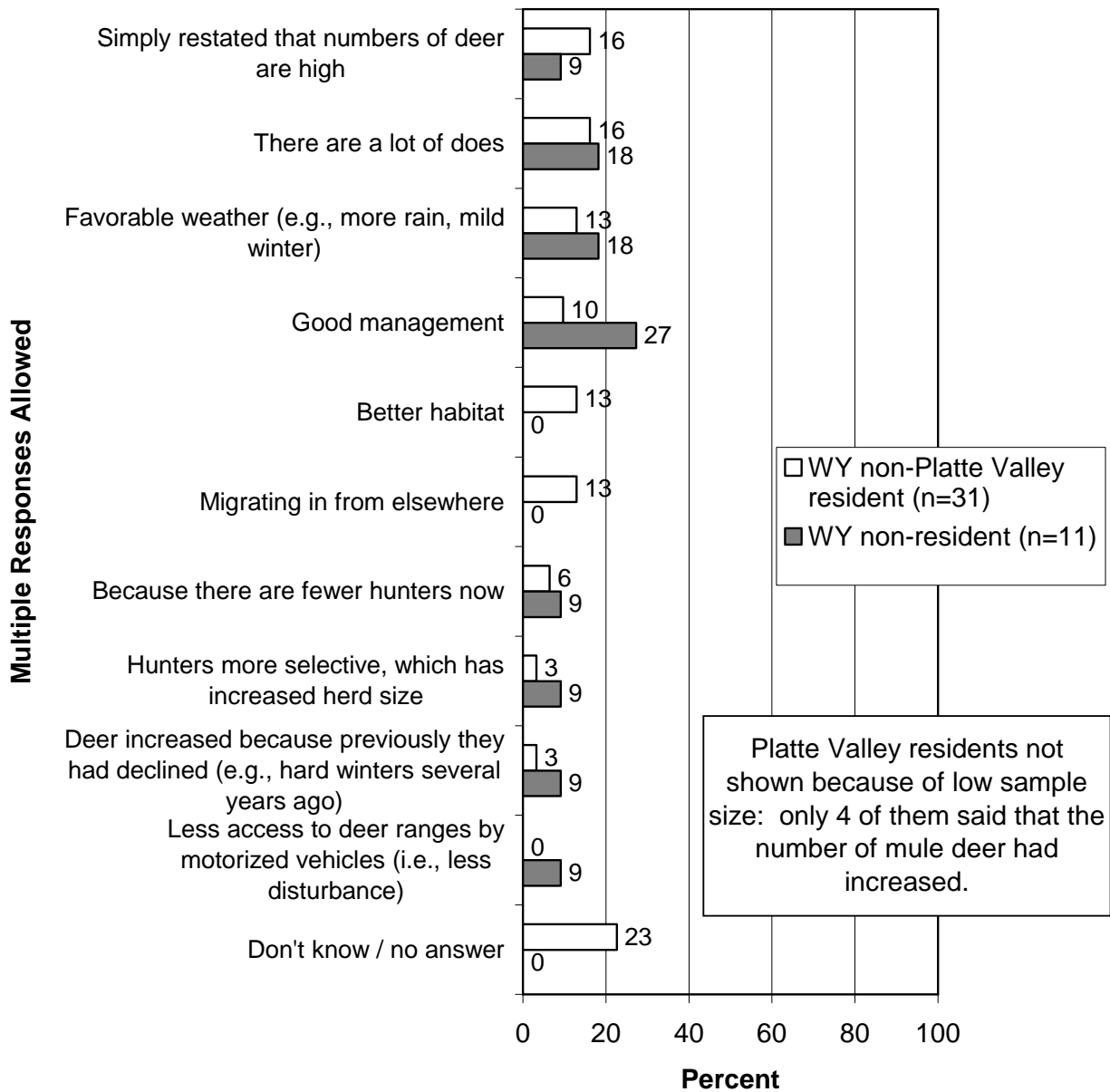
- Hunters who had previously indicated the total number of mule deer in the Platte Valley has increased or decreased in the past 5 years were asked about their opinion regarding the reasons for the increase or decrease.
  - Among those who thought the number had increased, common reasons given for the perceived increase include the large number of does in the herd, favorable weather, and good management. The question was open-ended, and respondents could say anything that came to mind (analysts coded the answers into meaningful categories), and the full results are shown on the graph.
  - Regarding a perceived decrease, overhunting was a prominent reason—the top reason among Platte Valley residents and non-Platte Valley residents, and the third-ranked reason among Wyoming non-residents. Nonetheless, nature-based reasons of the weather and predators were also commonly cited reasons. Again, the graph shows the full results of this open-ended question.
  
- The most commonly named factors named, when respondents were asked in an open-ended question to say what factors they think control the ability of the herd to increase or decrease, include the weather, hunting management, habitat/food supply, and predators. The full results are shown.
  
- A series of seven questions asked hunters' opinions on factors that may or may not have had a major impact, minor impact, or no impact at all on the mule deer population in the Platte Valley in the past 5 years.
  - Among all groups, the top two factors, when ranked by those saying the factor had a *major* impact, were winterkill and mountain lions. In general, Platte Valley residents had higher percentages than did the other groups saying that predators (mountain lions in one question and coyotes in another) have major impacts on mule deer populations.
    - Three graphs are shown: the percentages saying each factor has a *major* impact, the percentages saying *major* or *minor* impact, and the percentages saying *no impact at all*.

- One question asked directly about the effect that habitat conditions have had on the trend in the number of mule deer in the Platte Valley. In general, habitat conditions are more often thought to have influenced the deer herd to decrease (23% to 29%) or remain the same (24% to 31%) rather than to increase (9% to 13%).
  - A majority of each group agrees that there is enough winter habitat in the Platte Valley to sustain the current size of the mule deer population (75% of Platte Valley residents, 73% of non-Platte Valley residents, and 56% of Wyoming non-residents). Disagreement ranged from 10% to 18%; many of the Wyoming non-residents responded that they did not know.
    - A follow-up question asked who respondents thought had the most influence over habitat on winter ranges: private landowners was the most common answer (55% of Platte Valley residents, 50% of non-Platte Valley residents, and 39% of Wyoming non-residents), followed by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (18% of Platte Valley residents, 22% of non-Platte Valley residents, and 23% of Wyoming non-residents). Only one answer was allowed on this question.
  
- A series of questions asked about the perceived importance of the quantity and quality of habitat on the summer and winter ranges for the Platte Valley mule deer herd. Overwhelming majorities of all three groups say that the quality and quantity of habitat on both summer and winter ranges is *very* important in determining the survival of mule deer in the Platte Valley herd. Because there is wide agreement with this, the analysis examined the differences between perceptions of summer versus winter ranges and then quality versus quantity of habitat.
  - The winter ranges are thought to be slightly more important than the summer ranges: from 85% to 91% of the three groups think that either the quality or quantity of habitat on winter ranges is very important, compared to from 66% to 76% regarding summer ranges.
  - There is not this marked difference when examining *quality* versus *quantity* of habitat.
  
- Tangentially pertaining to habitat is the issue of collecting shed antlers in the winter, which may cause some disturbance to the herd in the winter. While a majority of Platte Valley

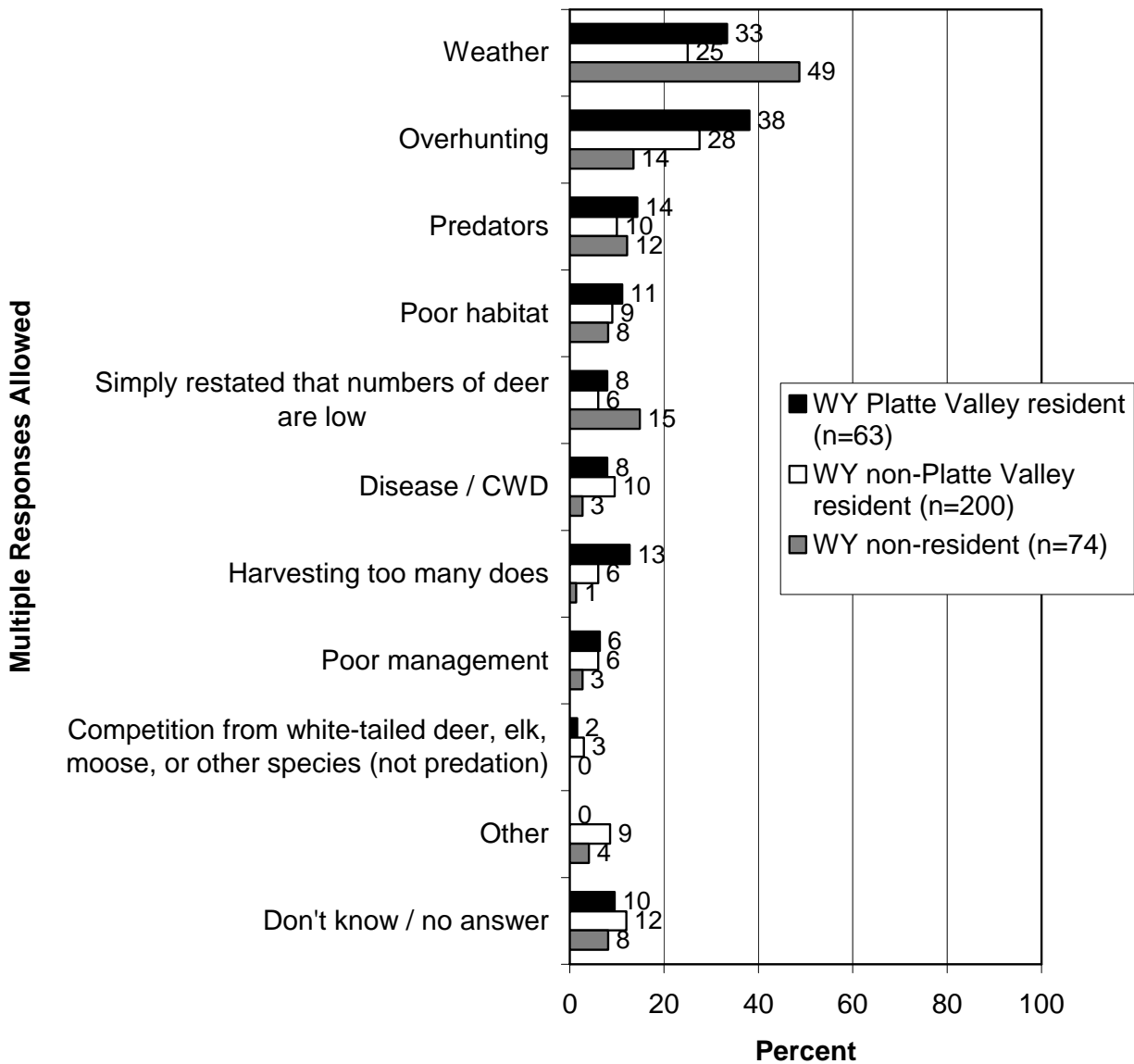
residents and non-Platte Valley residents (56% and 58%, respectively) think that the collecting of shed antlers where mule deer are concentrated has an impact on the deer, only 31% of Wyoming non-residents think this.

- In follow-up, respondents were asked if they would support or oppose efforts by the Department to regulate this activity during the winter. Majorities of both groups of Wyoming residents were in support (62% among Platte Valley residents, 65% among non-Platte Valley residents). Among Wyoming non-residents, more were in support (46%) than in opposition (34%)—it does not total to 100% because 20% gave a neutral answer.

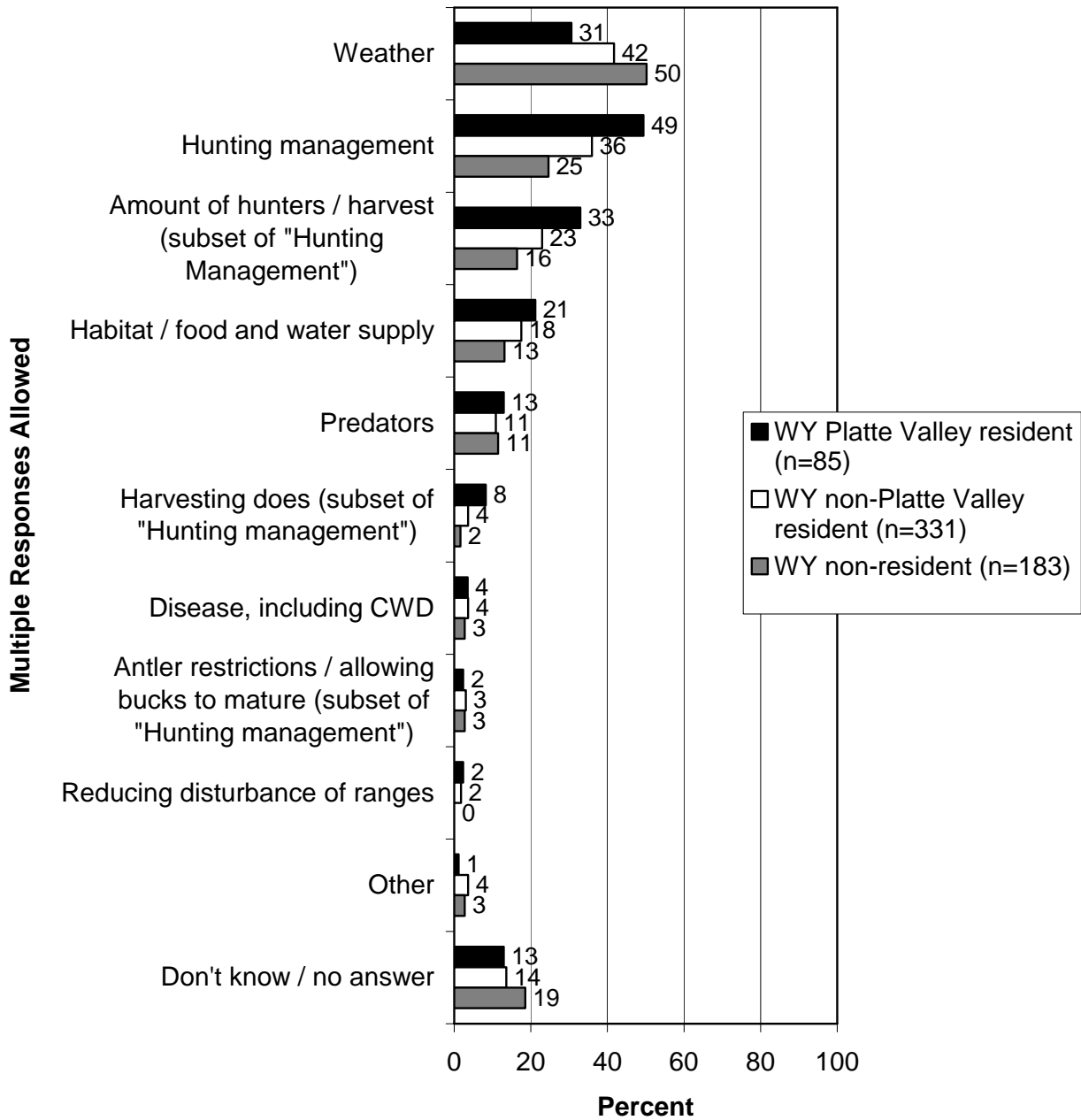
**Q77. You indicated that you think the total number of mule deer in the Platte Valley hunt area where you most often hunted mule deer has increased. In your opinion, why has the total number of mule deer increased in the past 5 years?**



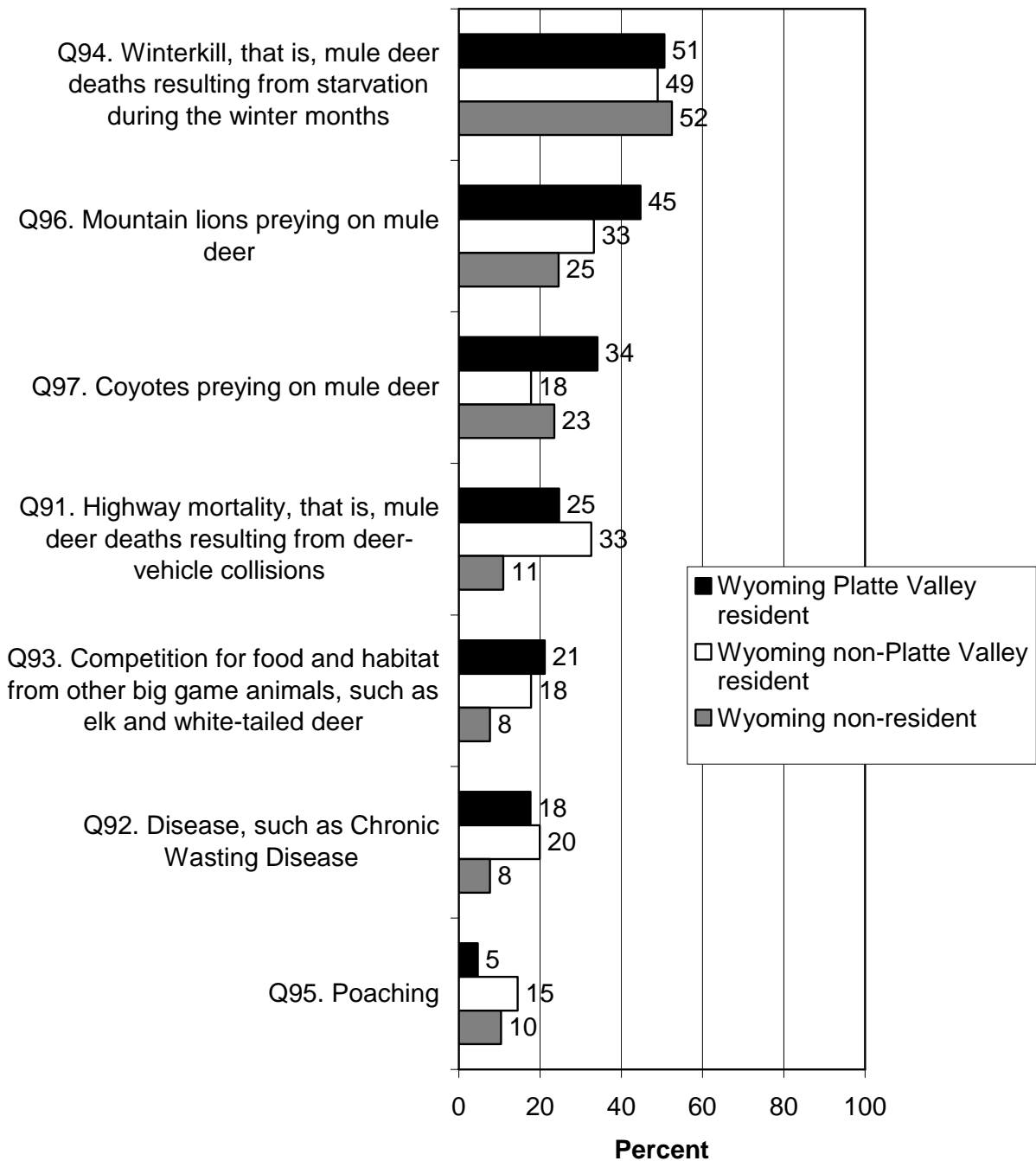
**Q77. You indicated that you think the total number of mule deer in the Platte Valley hunt area where you most often hunted mule deer has decreased. In your opinion, why has the total number of mule deer decreased in the past 5 years?**



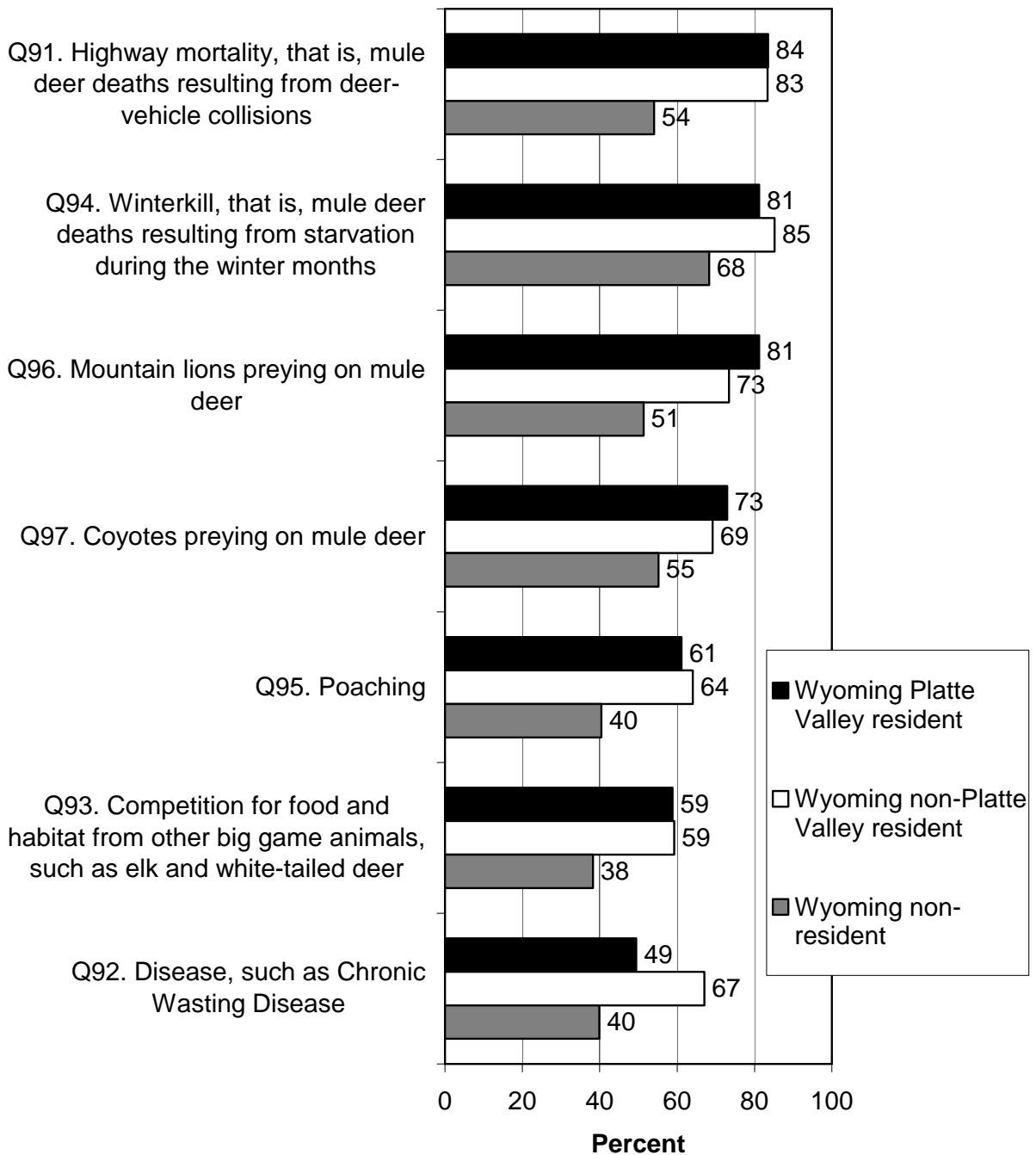
**Q82. In general, what factors do you think control the ability of the Platte Valley deer herd to increase or decrease annually?**



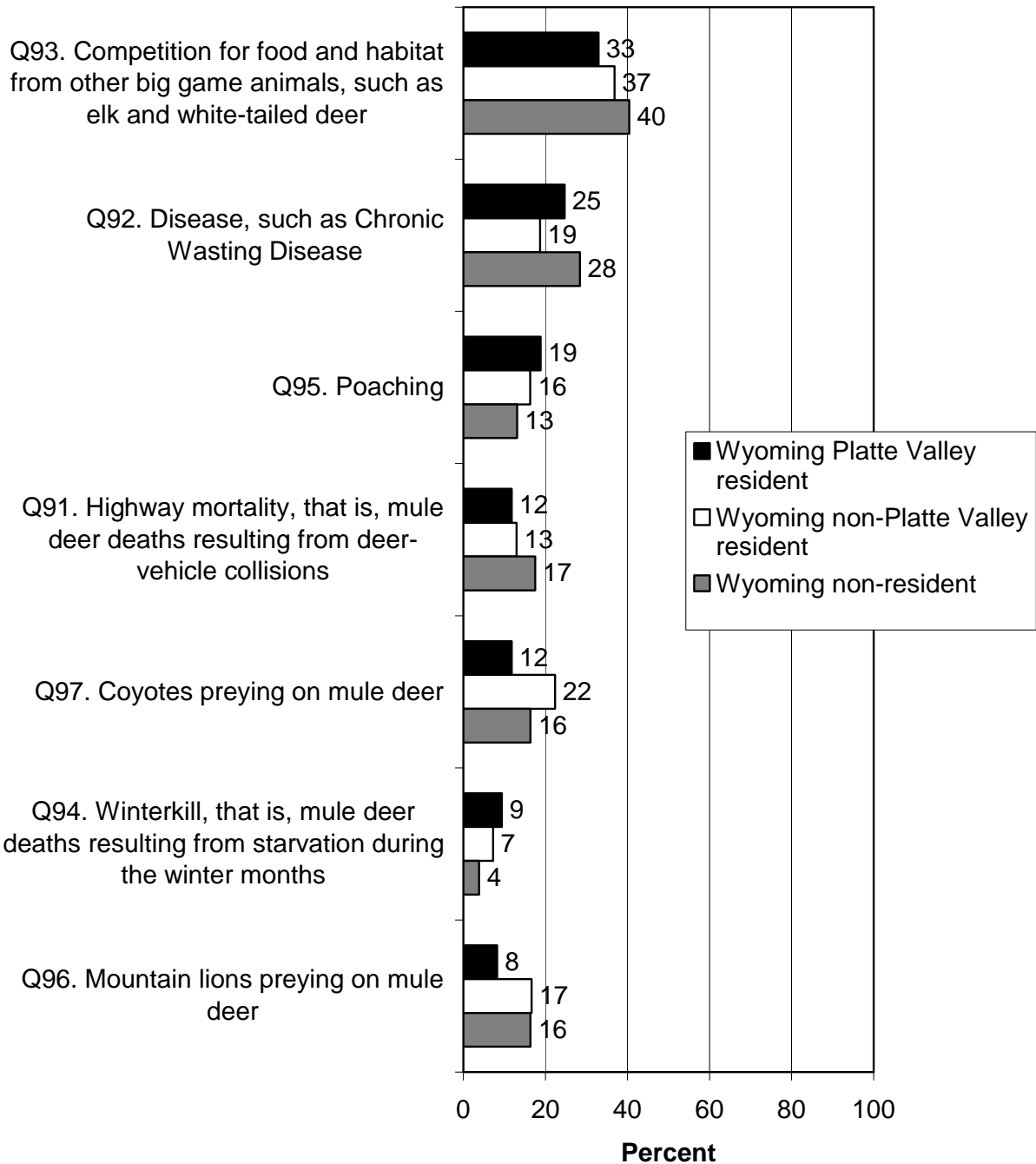
**Percent who indicated that the following had a major impact on the mule deer population in the Platte Valley in the past 5 years.**



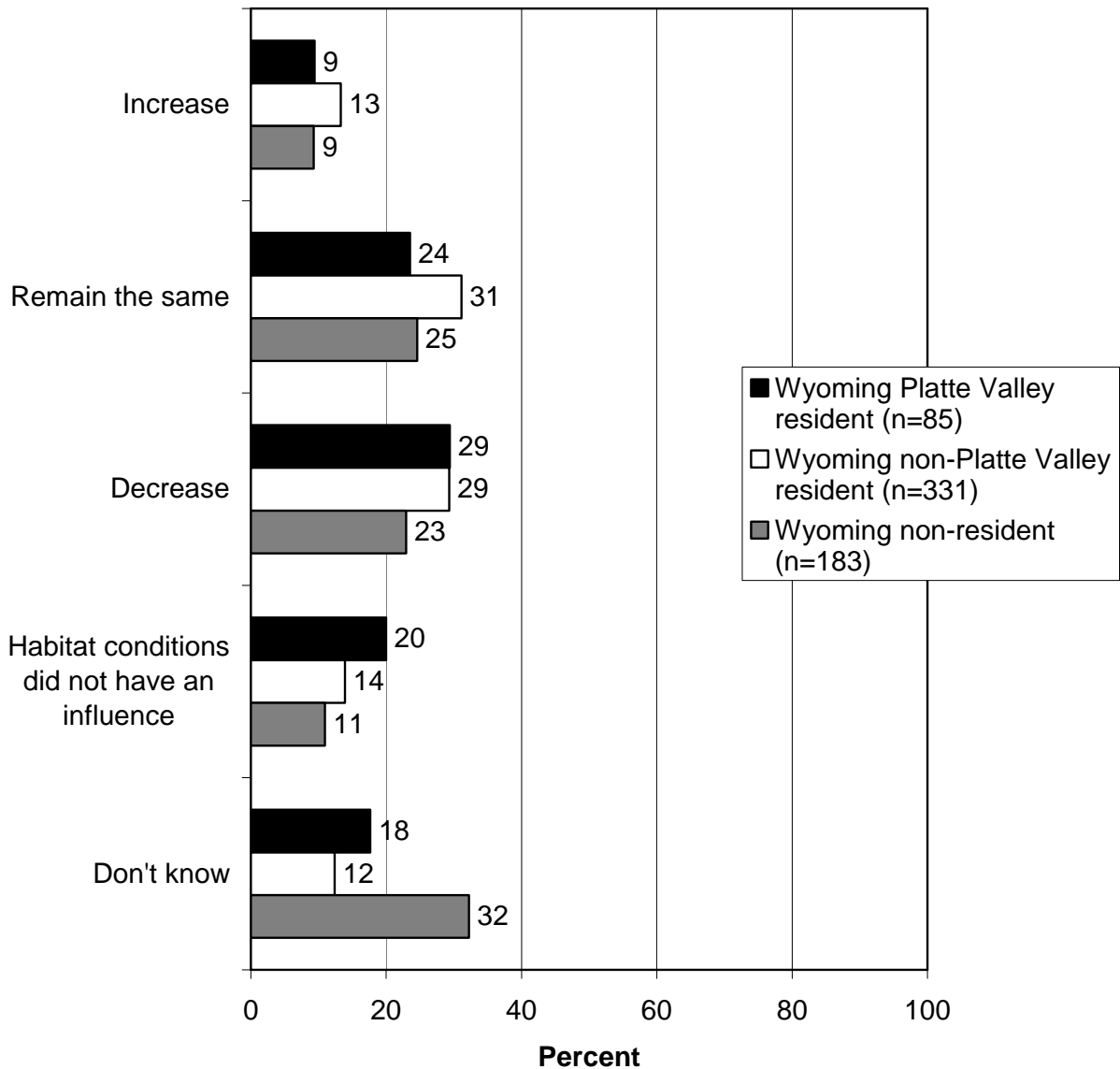
**Percent who indicated that the following had a major or minor impact on the mule deer population in the Platte Valley in the past 5 years.**



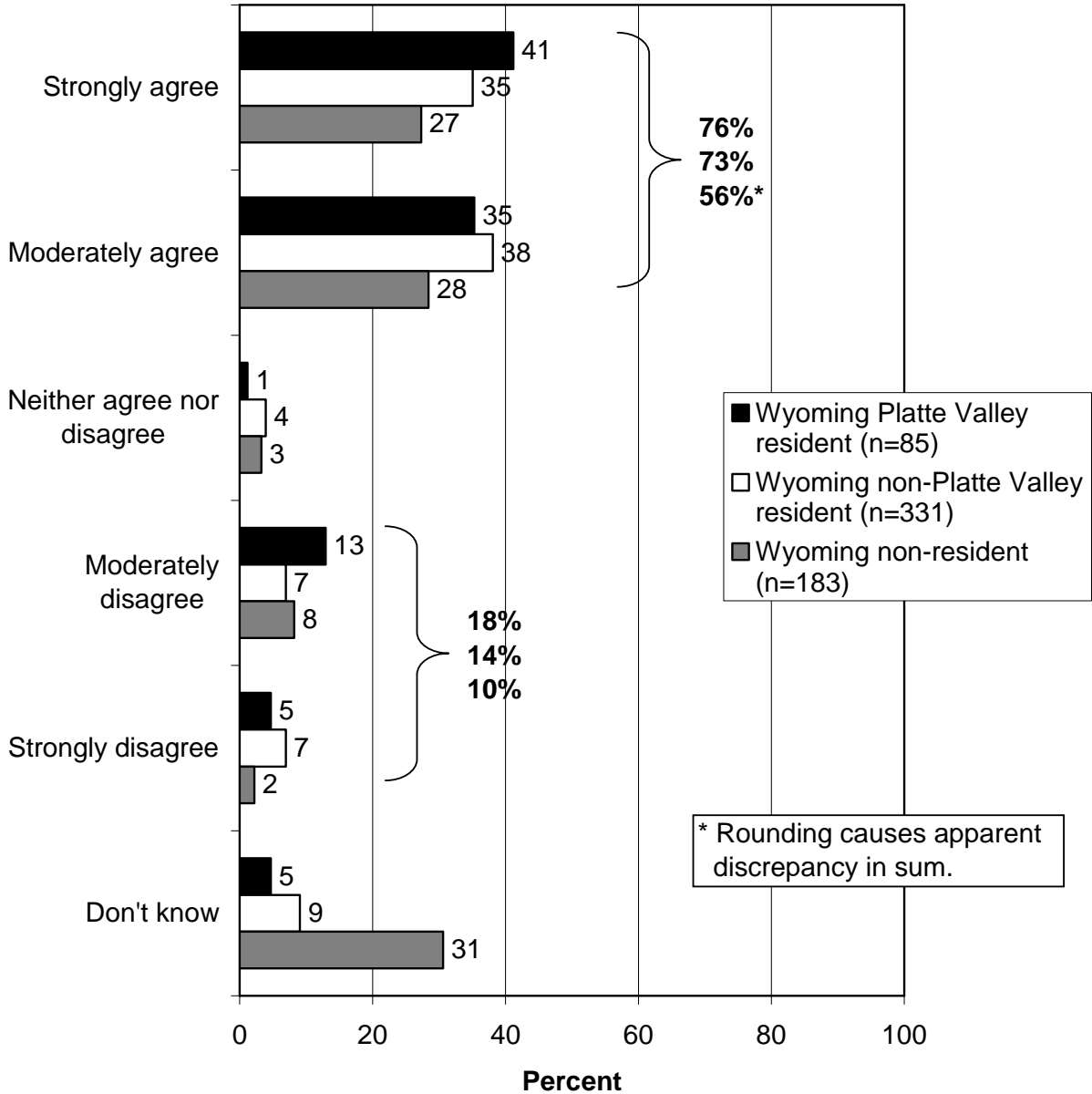
**Percent who indicated that the following had no impact at all on the mule deer population in the Platte Valley in the past 5 years.**



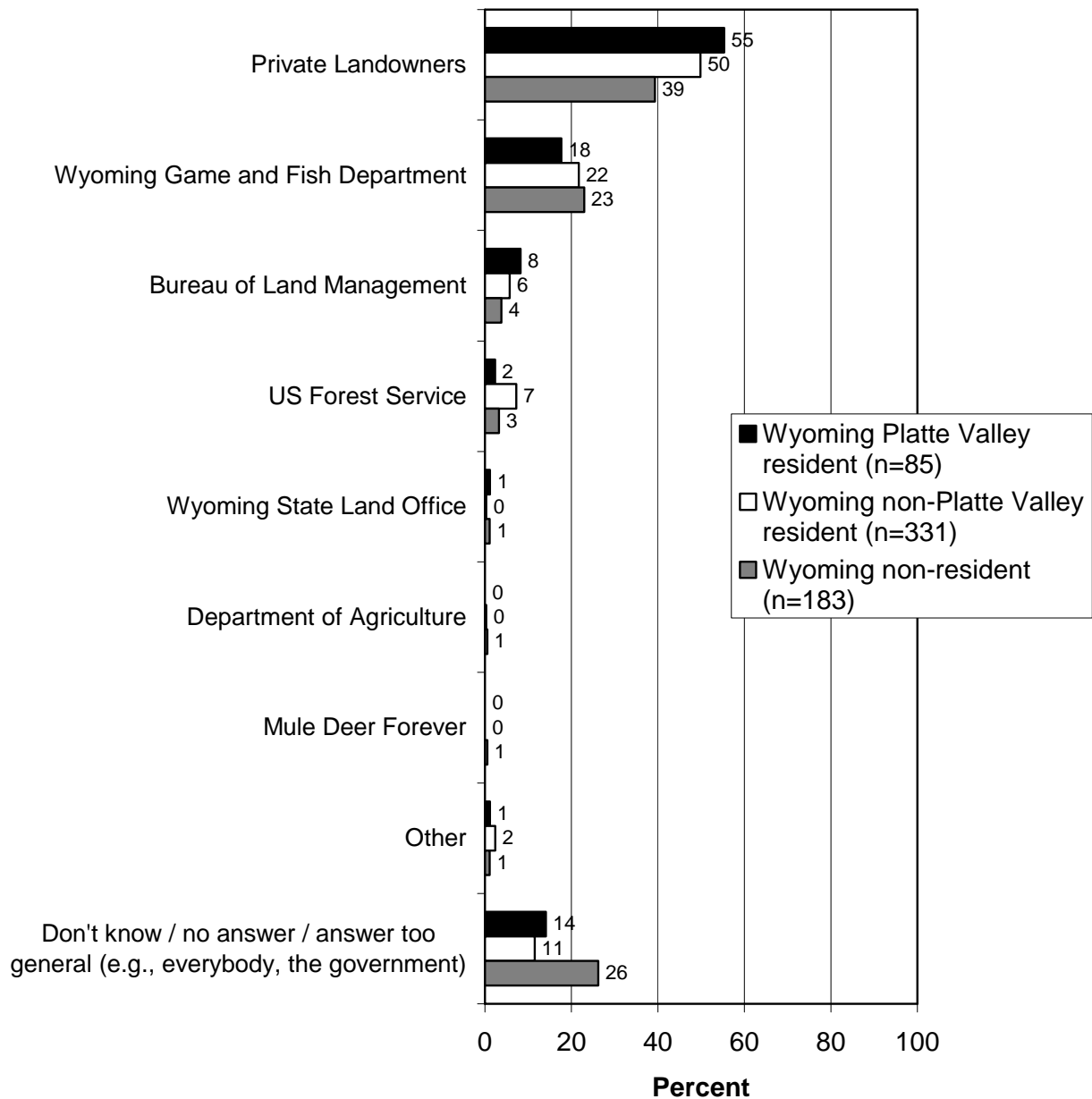
**Q119. In the last 5 years, have habitat conditions influenced the number of mule deer in the Platte Valley to increase, remain the same, decrease, or did the habitat conditions not influence the number of mule deer in the Platte Valley at all?**



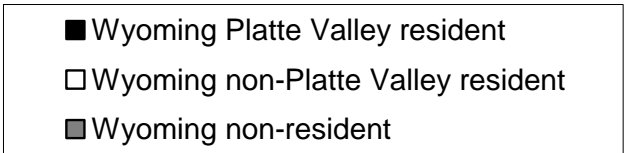
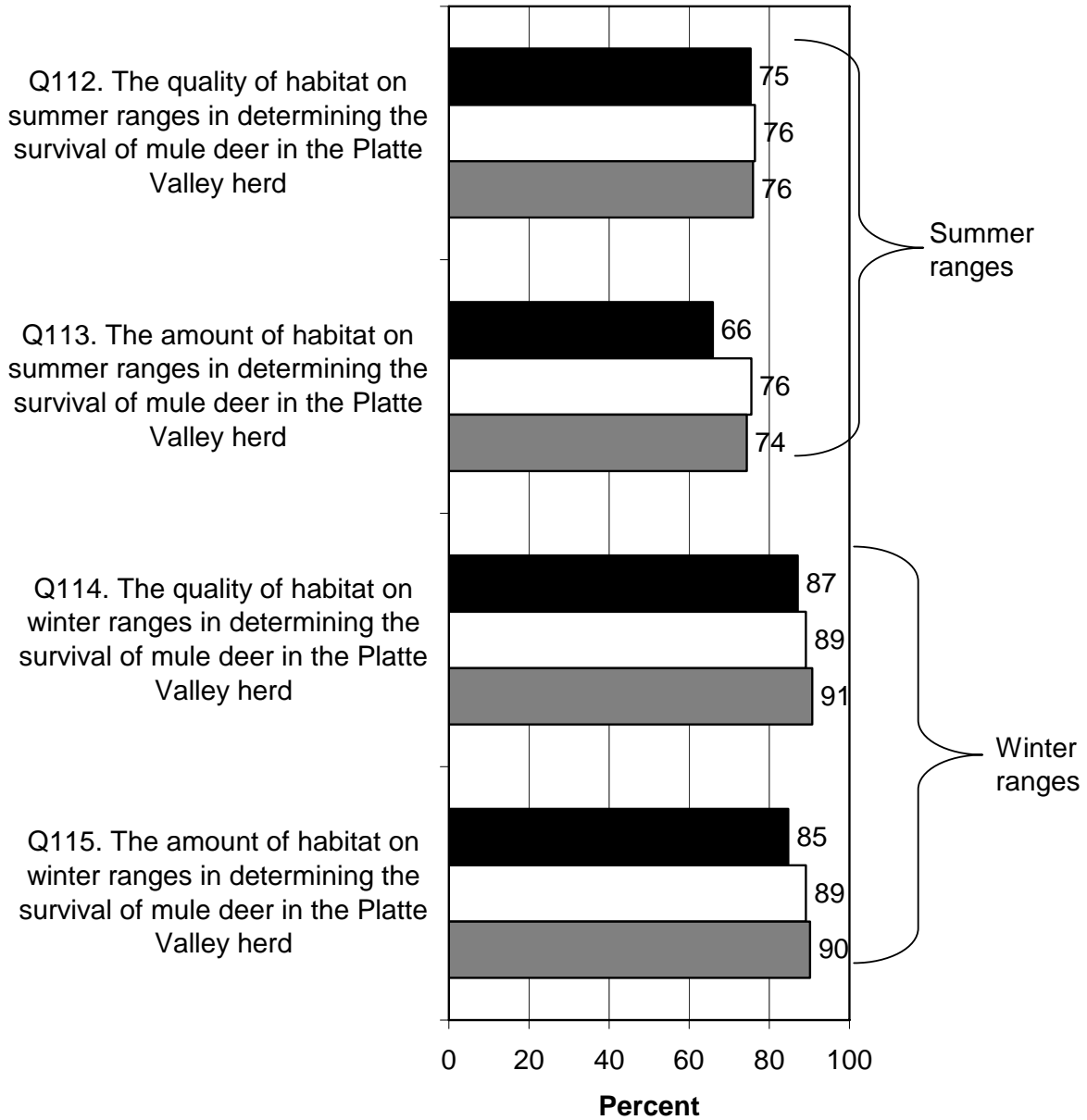
**Q120. Do you agree or disagree that there is enough winter habitat in the Platte Valley to sustain the current size of the mule deer population?**



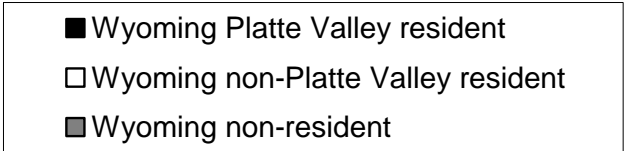
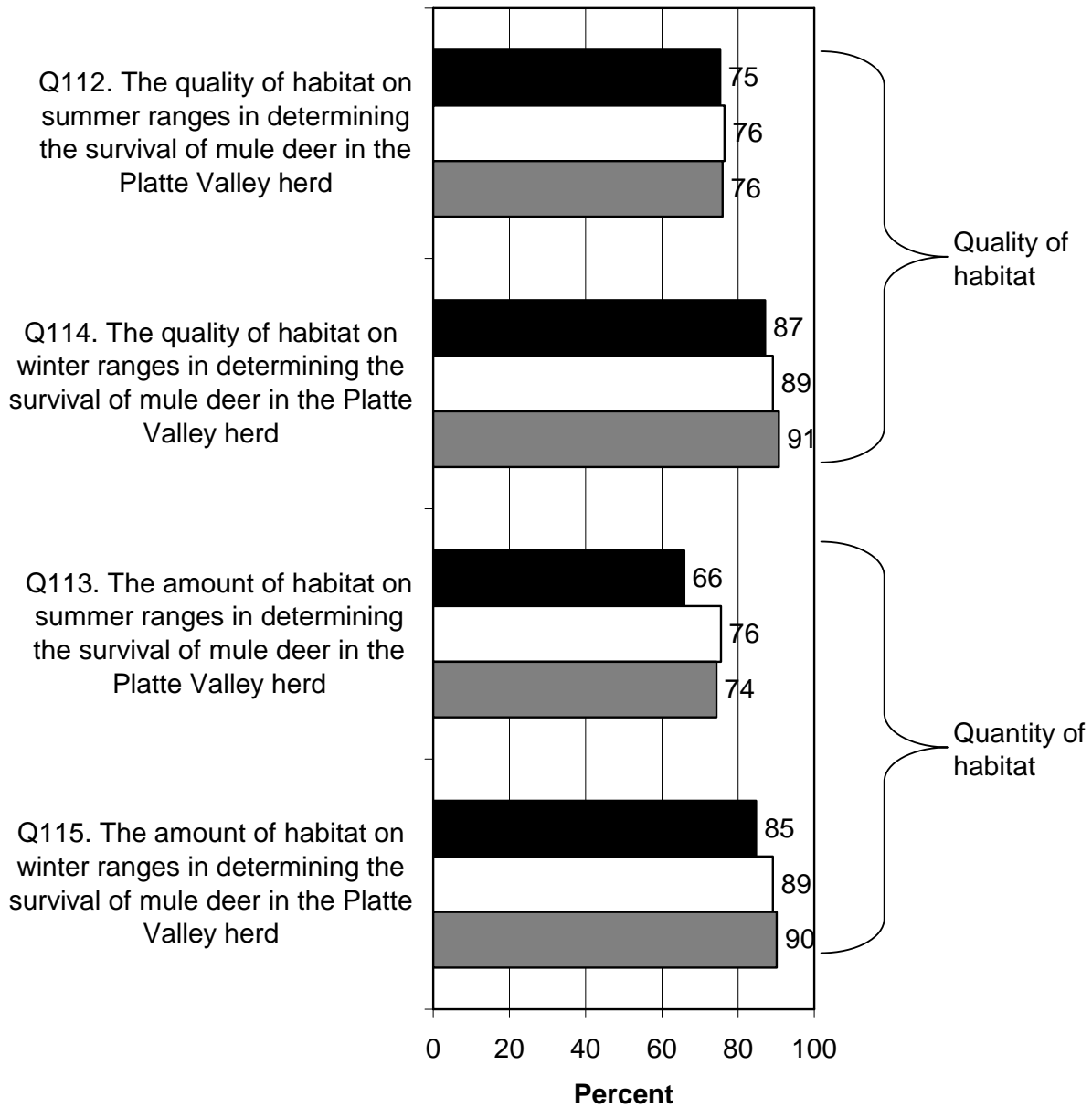
**Q121. Who do you think has the most influence and control of habitat on deer winter ranges for the Platte Valley deer herd?**



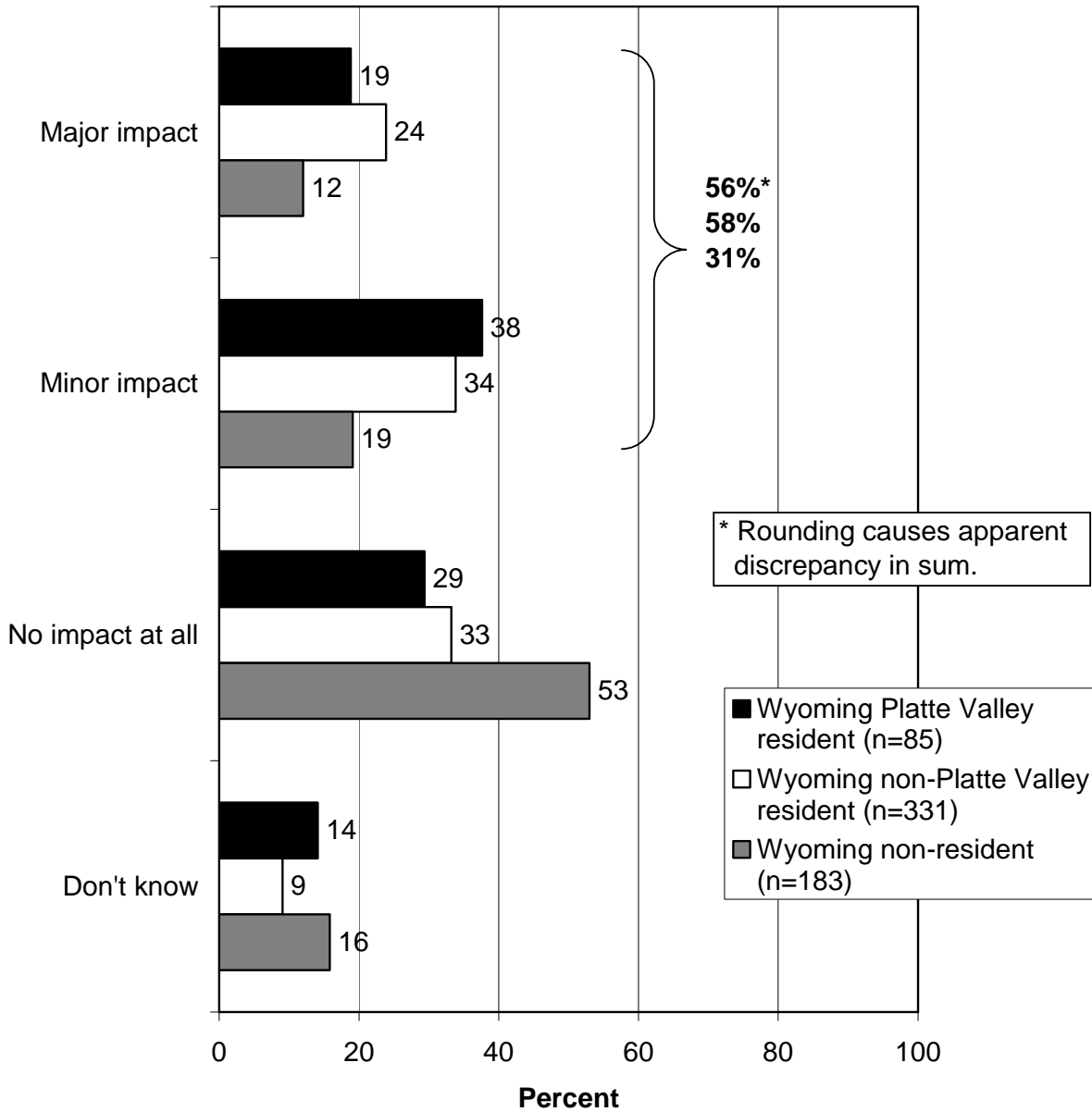
**Percent who indicated that the following are very important in determining the survival of mule deer in the Platte Valley herd.**



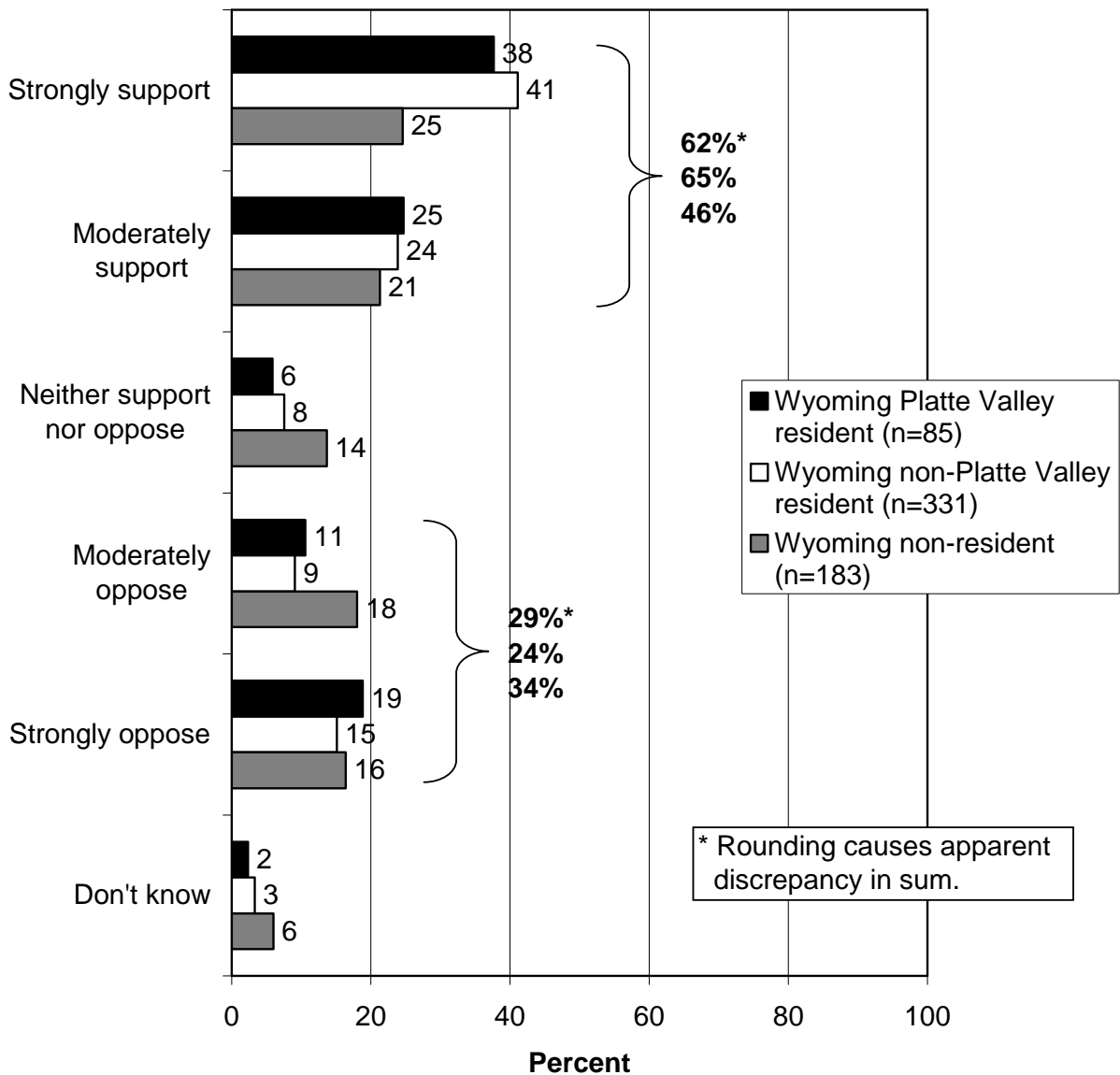
**Percent who indicated that the following are very important in determining the survival of mule deer in the Platte Valley herd.**



**Q123. Does collecting shed antlers in the winter from areas where mule deer are concentrated have a major impact, a minor impact, or no impact at all on the deer?**



**Q124. Would you support or oppose efforts by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to regulate the hunting or collecting of shed antlers during the winter in areas where mule deer are concentrated in the Platte Valley?**

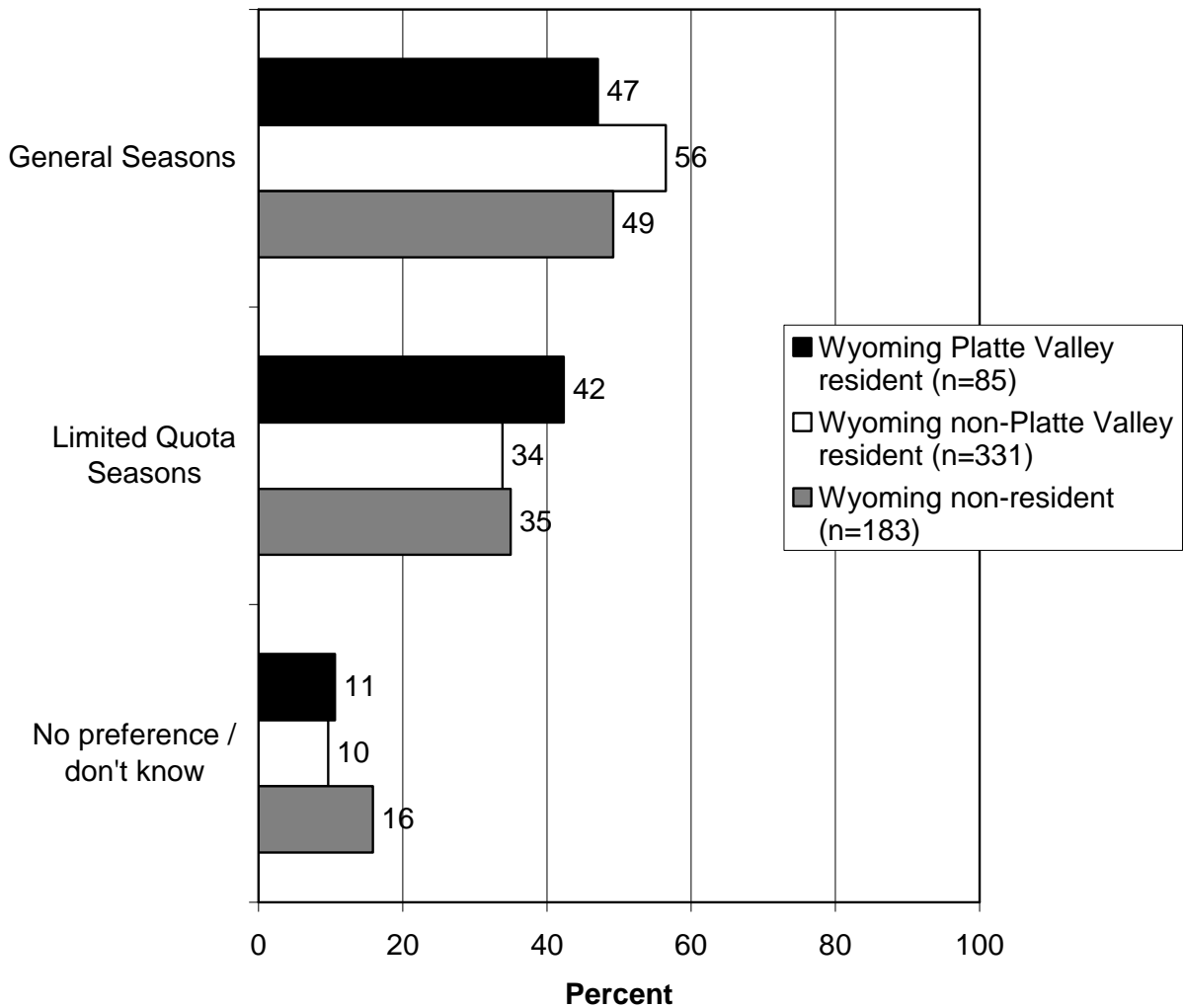


## OPINIONS ON MANAGEMENT OPTIONS FOR THE DEER HERD IN THE PLATTE VALLEY

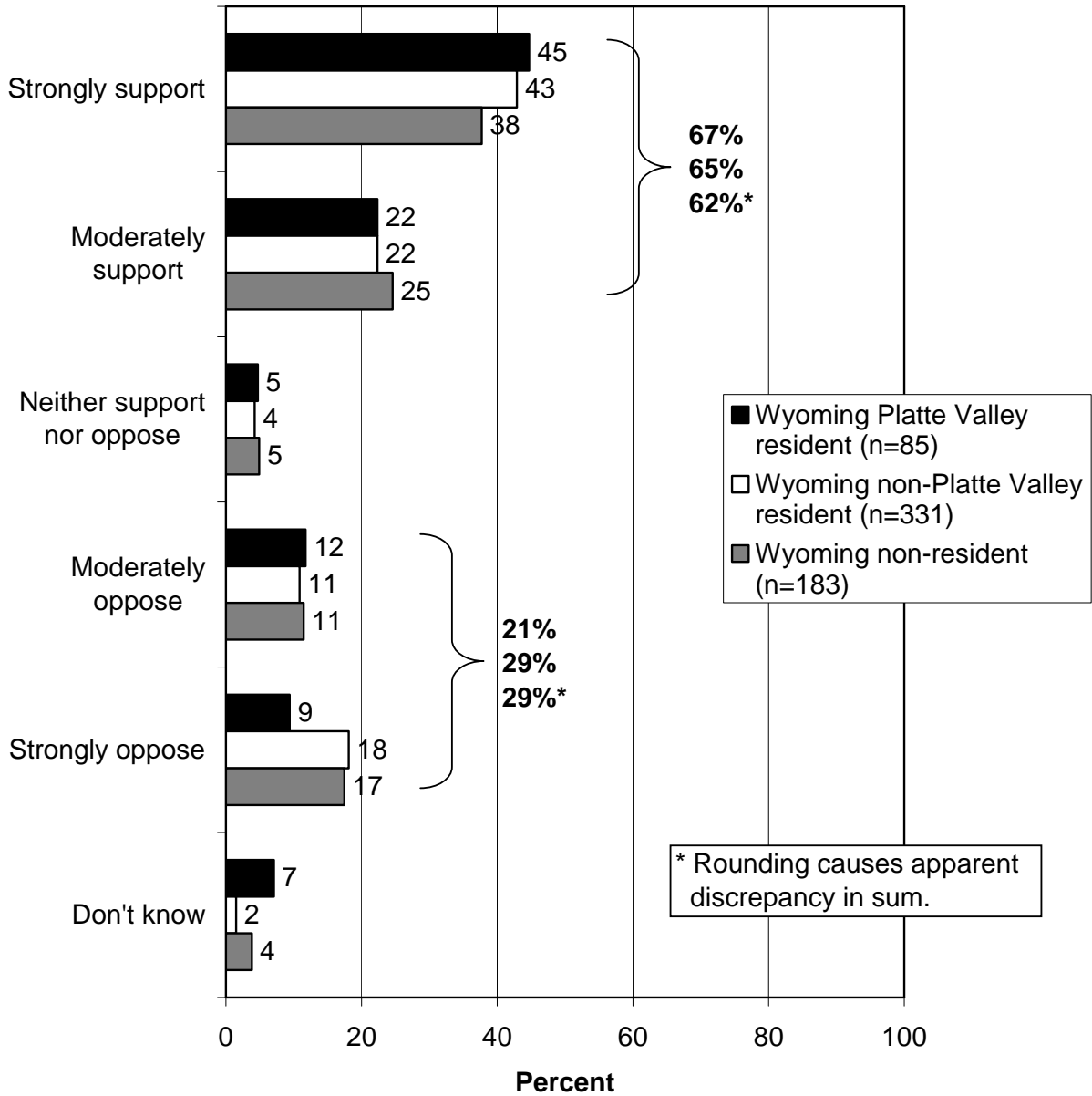
- Respondents are split in a choice between having general seasons or limited quota seasons (definitions of which, below, were read to the respondents), with slightly more support for general seasons. Among Platte Valley residents, 47% wanted general seasons and 42% wanted limited quota. Among non-Platte Valley residents, it was 56% to 34%, and among Wyoming non-residents, it was 49% to 35% in favor of general seasons.
  - General seasons: a hunter can hunt every year and have the ability to hunt multiple hunt areas but possibly a reduced chance of harvest.
  - Limited quota seasons: a hunter may not hunt every year in the limited quota hunt areas and may lose the opportunity to hunt multiple hunt areas, but he/she would probably have a higher chance of harvest when he/she did hunt.
  
- A majority of each group was in support (62% to 67%) of managing for trophy bucks in the Platte Valley, even if it means more restrictions and reduced chances of hunting every year. Most of the support was *strong* support.
  
- A large majority of each group was in support (65% to 73%) of limiting the number of hunters in the field in the Platte Valley, even if that would make it less likely that a hunter would get a license.
  
- Antlerless harvest as a mule deer management tool is acceptable to a large majority of two groups and a near majority of the third group (49% of Platte Valley residents, 69% of non-Platte Valley residents, and 74% of Wyoming non-residents). The most opposition comes from Platte Valley residents (36%), compared to non-Platte Valley residents (22%) and Wyoming non-residents (14%).
  - In follow-up, reasons for it being acceptable were solicited, as shown in the graph. There was recognition that it is an effective tool and for the need to balance the herd. Some indicated that, as they hunt for meat, they find it acceptable to harvest antlerless deer.
  - The follow-up question among those who said it is unacceptable to use antlerless harvest as a management tool found the top reason to be the perceived lack of deer. Some also indicated being against the killing of does.

- Of three factors used in determining how many mule deer should be in the Platte Valley herd, habitat is regarded as the most important: a majority of each group (from 59% to 64%) chose “habitat” over “a high chance of harvest success even if it means limited hunting opportunities” (from 21% to 27%) or “the opportunity for hunters to hunt every year regardless of success” (5% to 6%).
  
- Two questions asked about the importance of managing the *quality* and managing the *quantity* (or amount) of habitat. Both are felt to be of overwhelming importance (no more than 2% of any group responded with “not at all important”), with *quality* just slightly ahead of *amount*. From 78% to 82% said managing the quality is *very* important, while from 73% to 80% said managing the amount is *very* important. Nearly all the remaining respondents chose *moderately* important.
  
- Related to the management of habitat is the management of the collection of shed antlers. As previously discussed, one question asked respondents if they would support or oppose efforts by the Department to regulate collecting of shed antlers where mule deer are concentrated during the winter. Majorities of both groups of Wyoming residents support doing so (62% among Platte Valley residents and 65% among non-Platte Valley residents). Additionally, more Wyoming non-residents were in support (46%) than in opposition (34%). (This graph was shown in the previous section, “Opinions on Factors That Affect the Deer Population in the Platte Valley, Including Habitat.”)

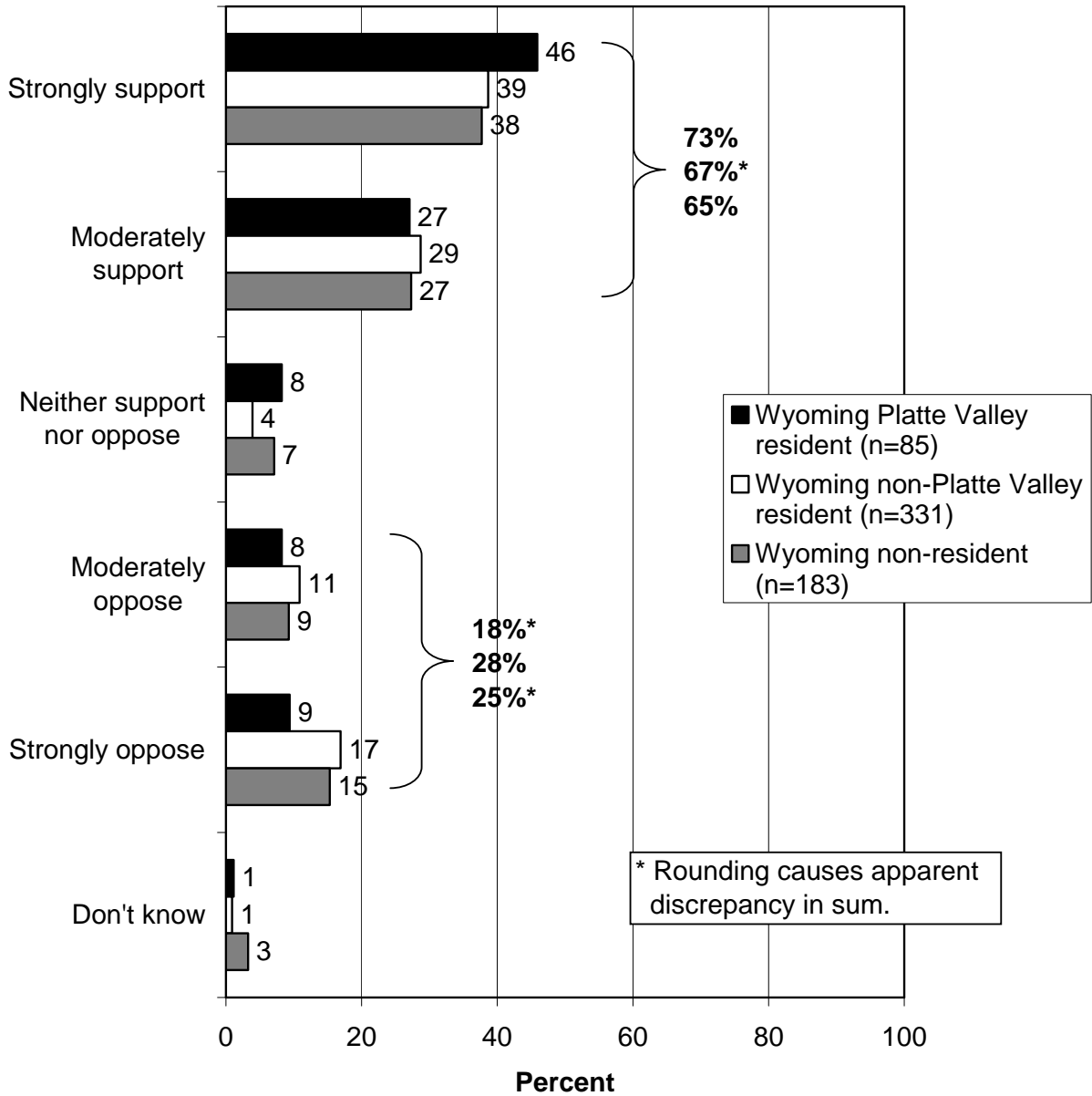
**Q102. In the Platte Valley do you prefer general seasons which means you could hunt every year and have the ability to hunt multiple hunt areas but possibly a reduced chance of harvest, or limited quota seasons? Limited quota seasons mean you may not hunt every year in the limited quota hunt areas and may lose the opportunity to hunt multiple hunt areas, but you would probably have a higher chance of harvest when you do hunt. Which do you prefer?**



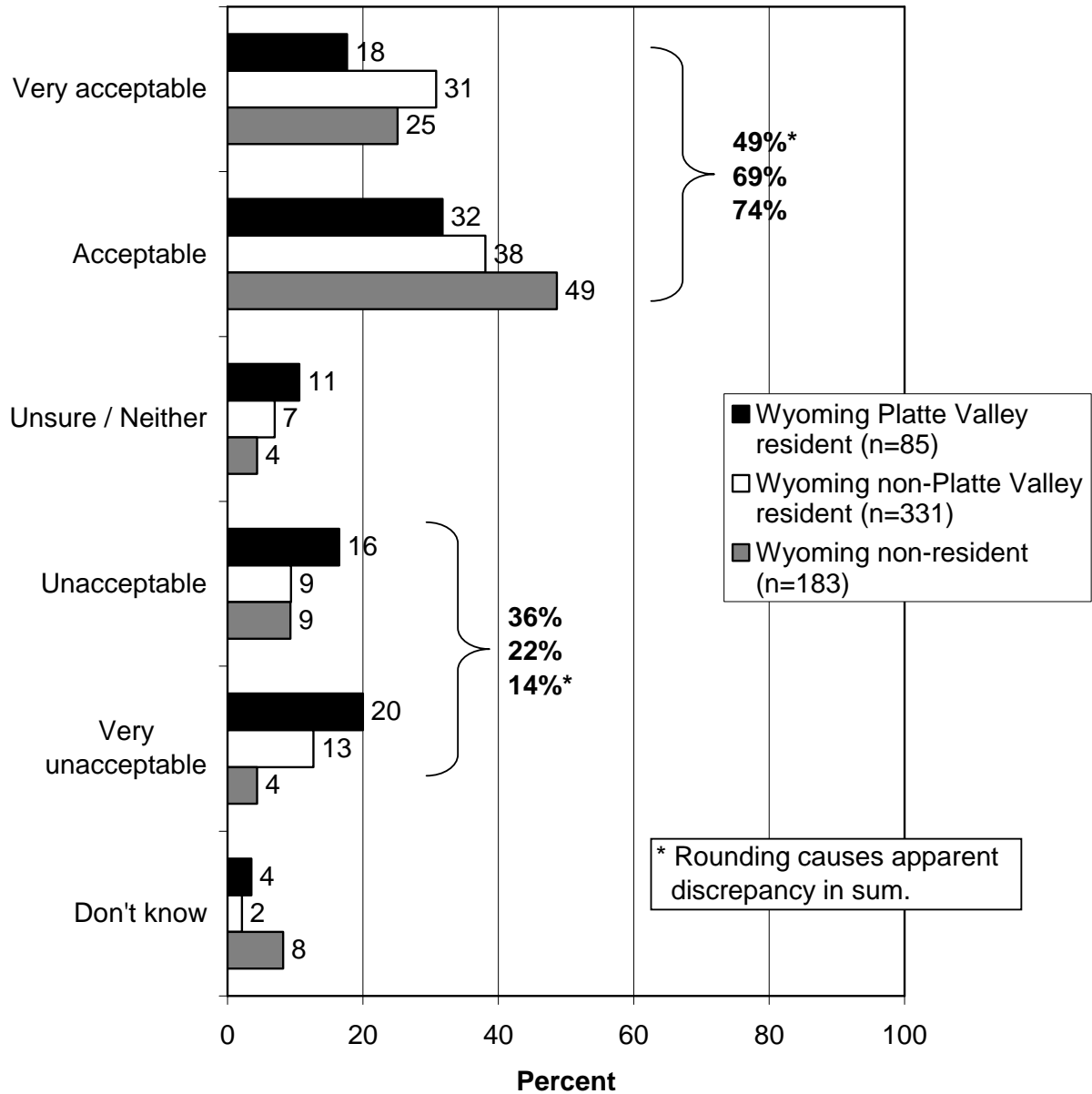
**Q100. Would you support or oppose managing for trophy bucks in the Platte Valley if it meant more restrictions and reduced chances of hunting every year?**



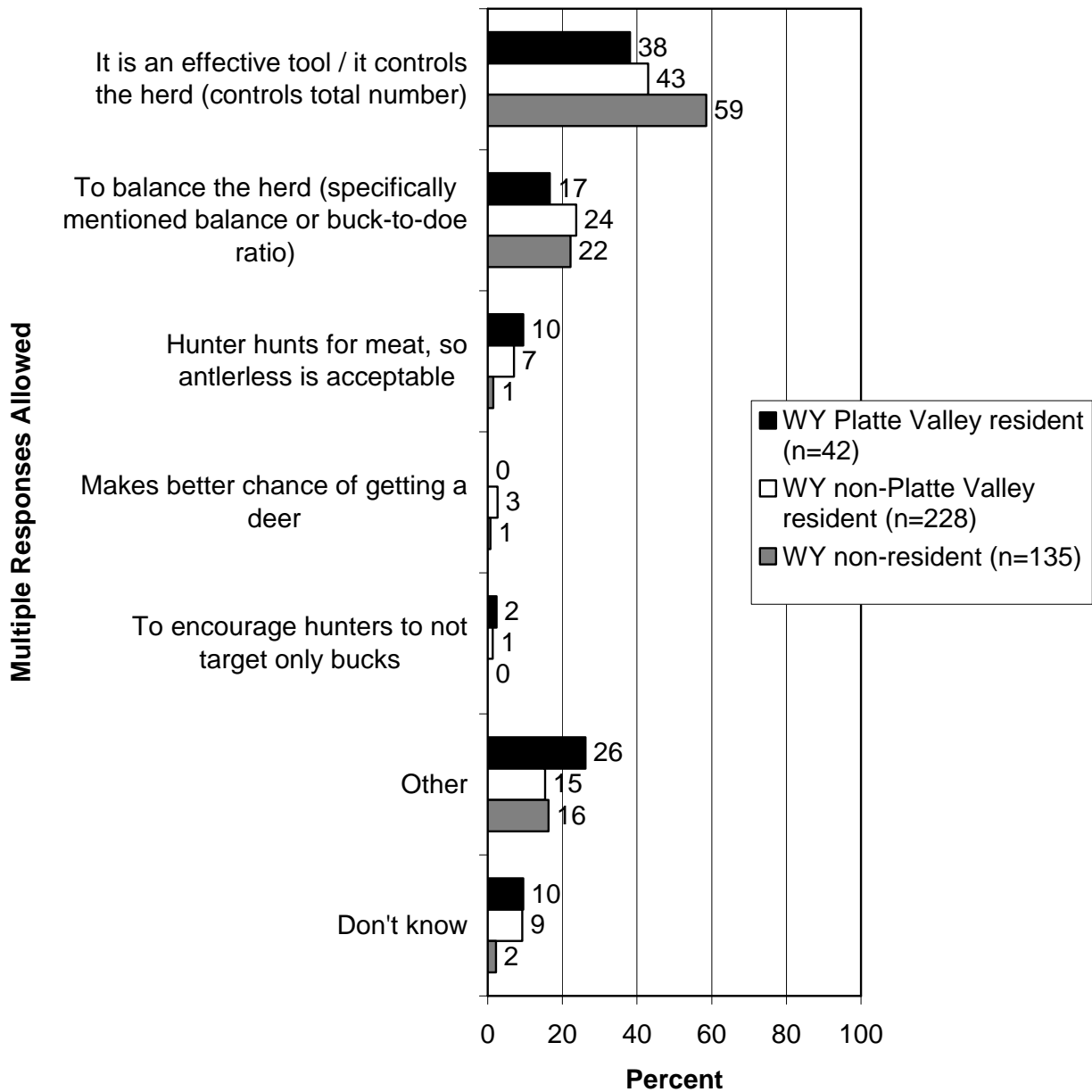
**Q101. Would you support or oppose limiting the number of hunters in the field in the Platte Valley, considering that it might make it less likely that you would get a license?**



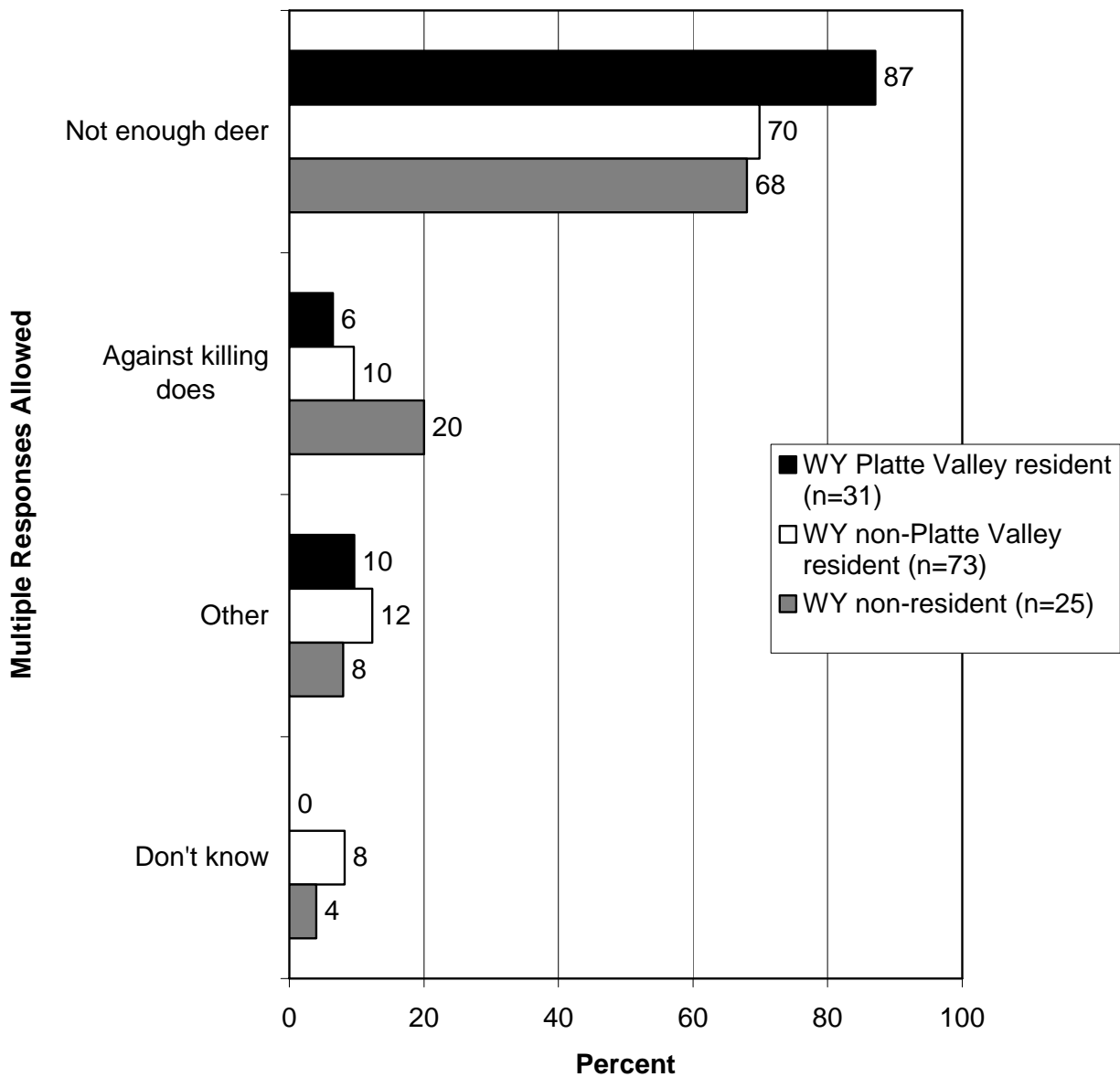
**Q108. How acceptable or unacceptable is antlerless deer harvest as a mule deer management tool in the Platte Valley?**



**Q109. Why do you think antlerless harvest is an acceptable management tool in the Platte Valley?  
(Asked of those who indicated that antlerless deer harvest as a mule deer management tool in the Platte Valley is acceptable.)**



**Q110. Why do you think antlerless harvest is an unacceptable management tool in the Platte Valley? (Asked of those who indicated that antlerless deer harvest as a mule deer management tool in the Platte Valley is unacceptable.)**

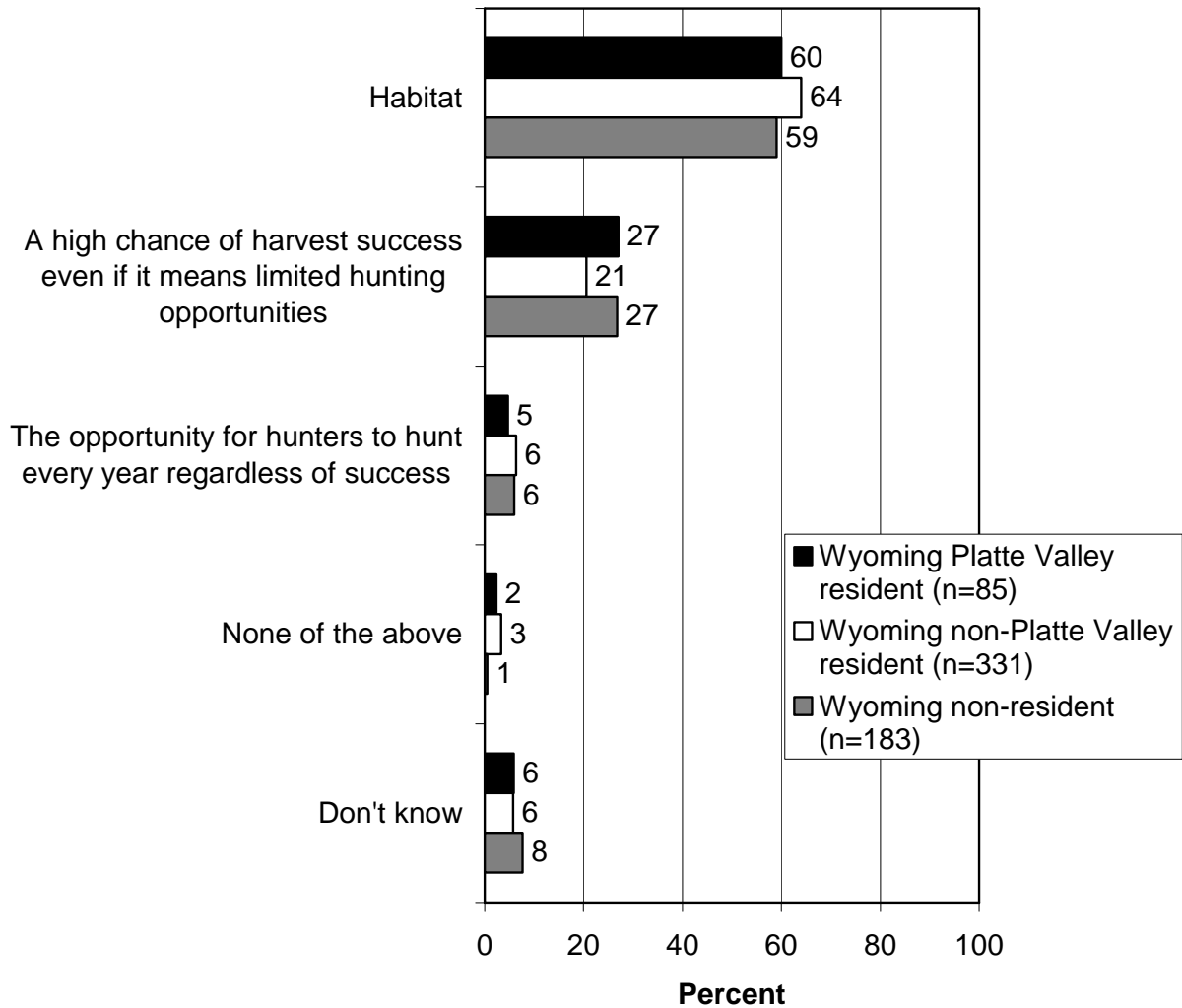


**Q98. In your opinion, what is the single most important factor that should be used to determine how many mule deer should be in the herd in the Platte Valley? Is it:**

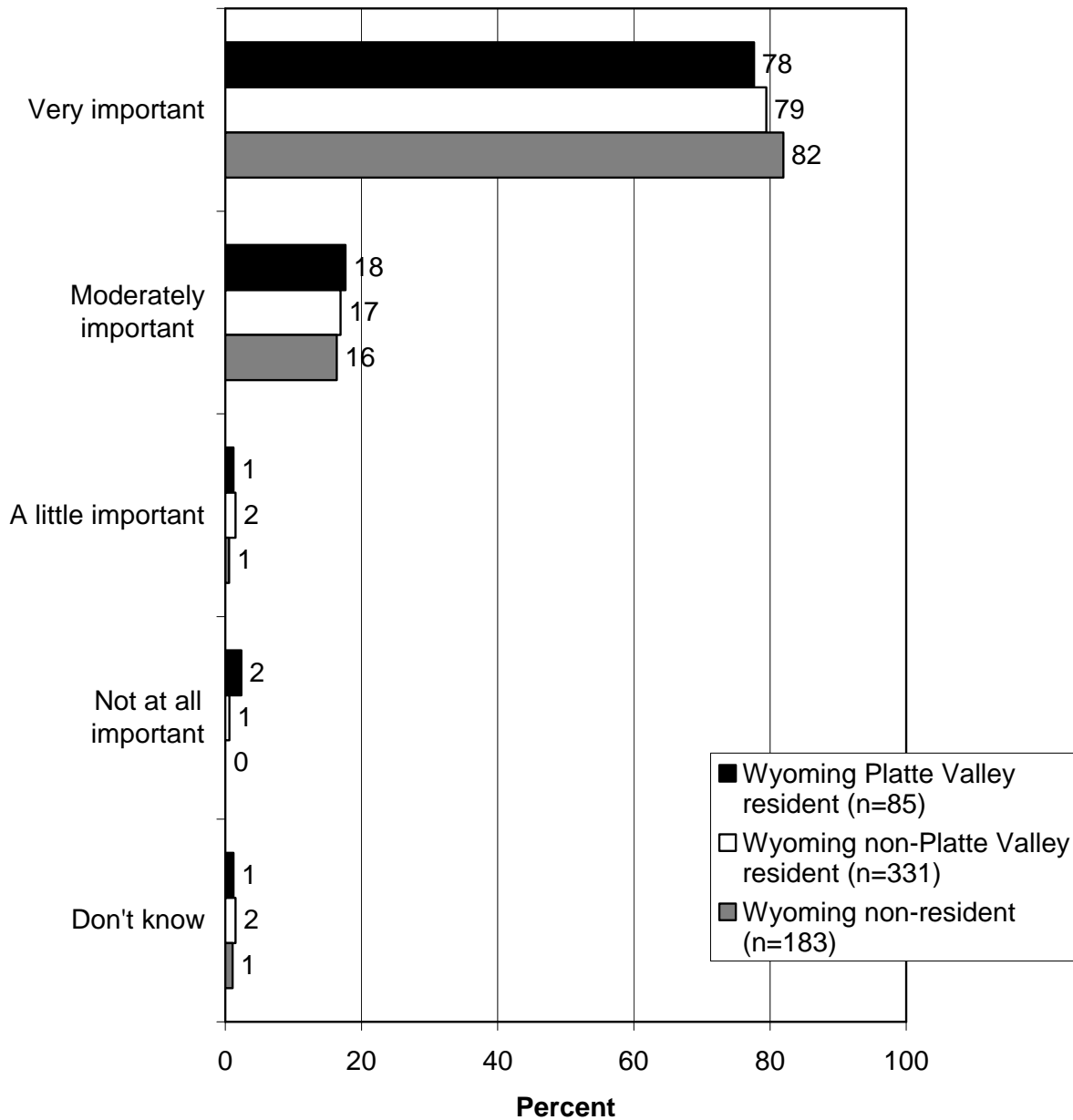
**Habitat?**

**The opportunity for hunters to hunt every year regardless of success?**

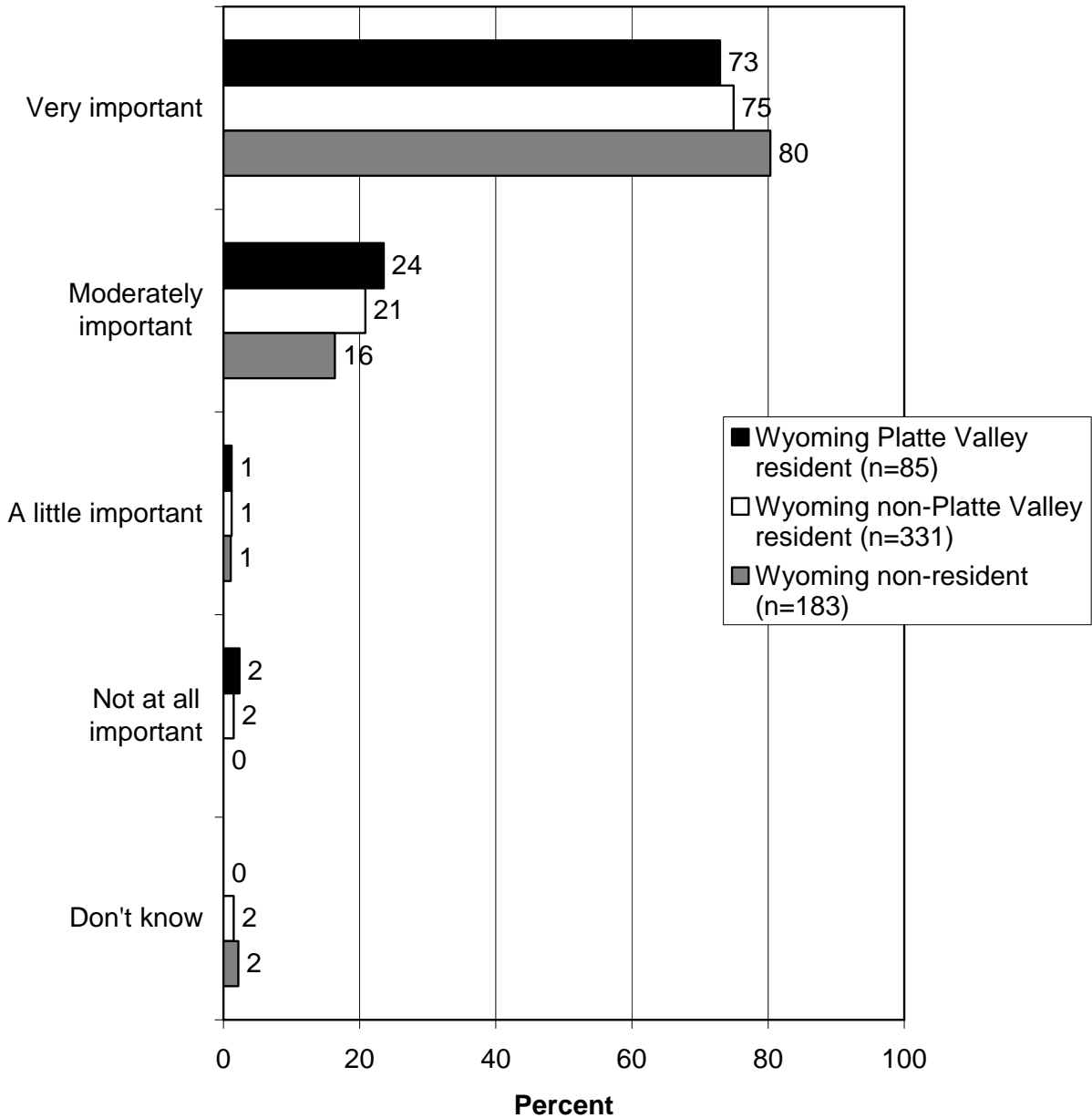
**Or a high chance of harvest success even if it means limited hunting opportunities?**



**Q117. How important do you think managing the quality of deer habitat in the Platte Valley should be to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department?**



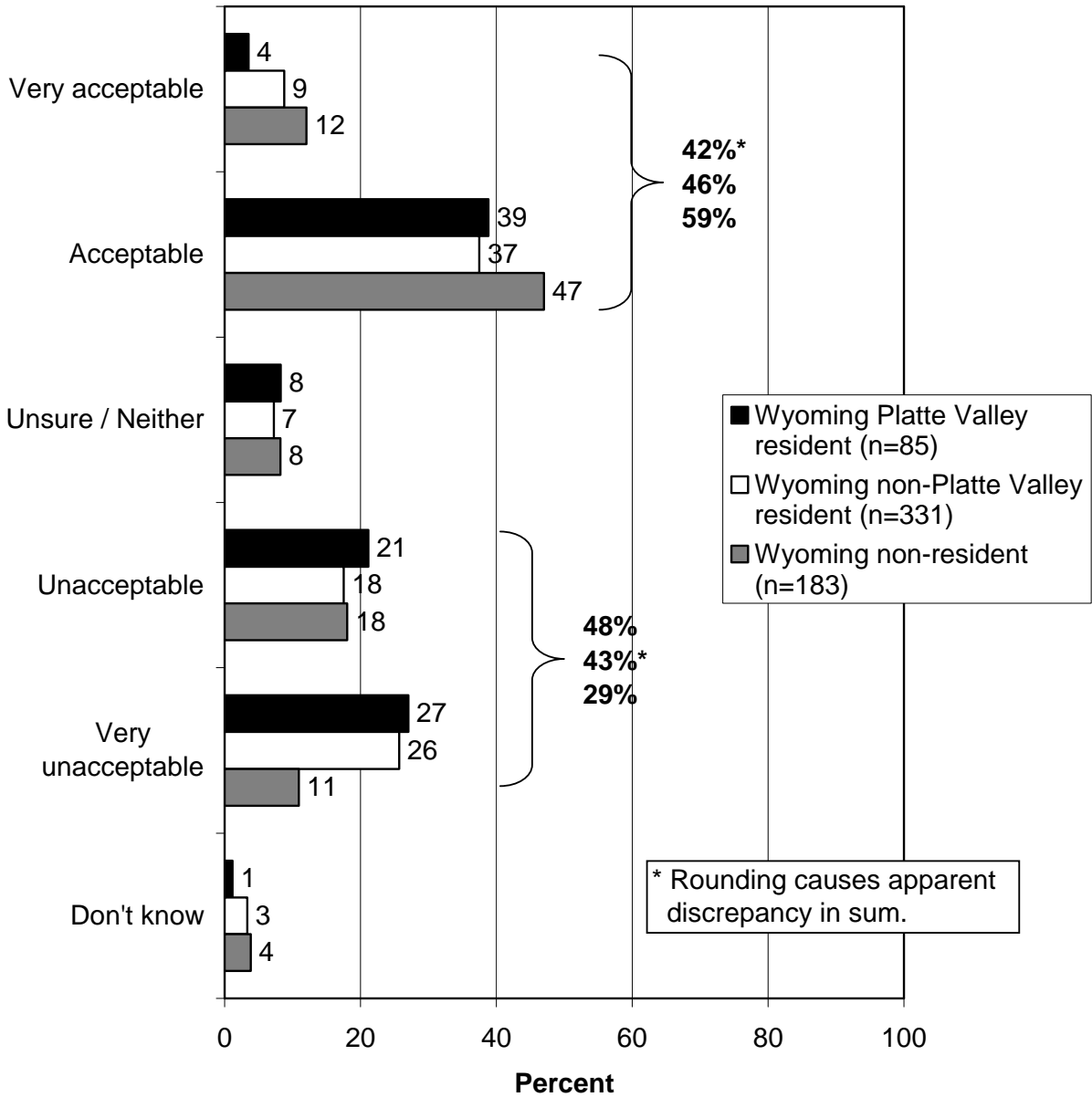
**Q118. How important do you think managing the amount of deer habitat in the Platte Valley should be to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department?**



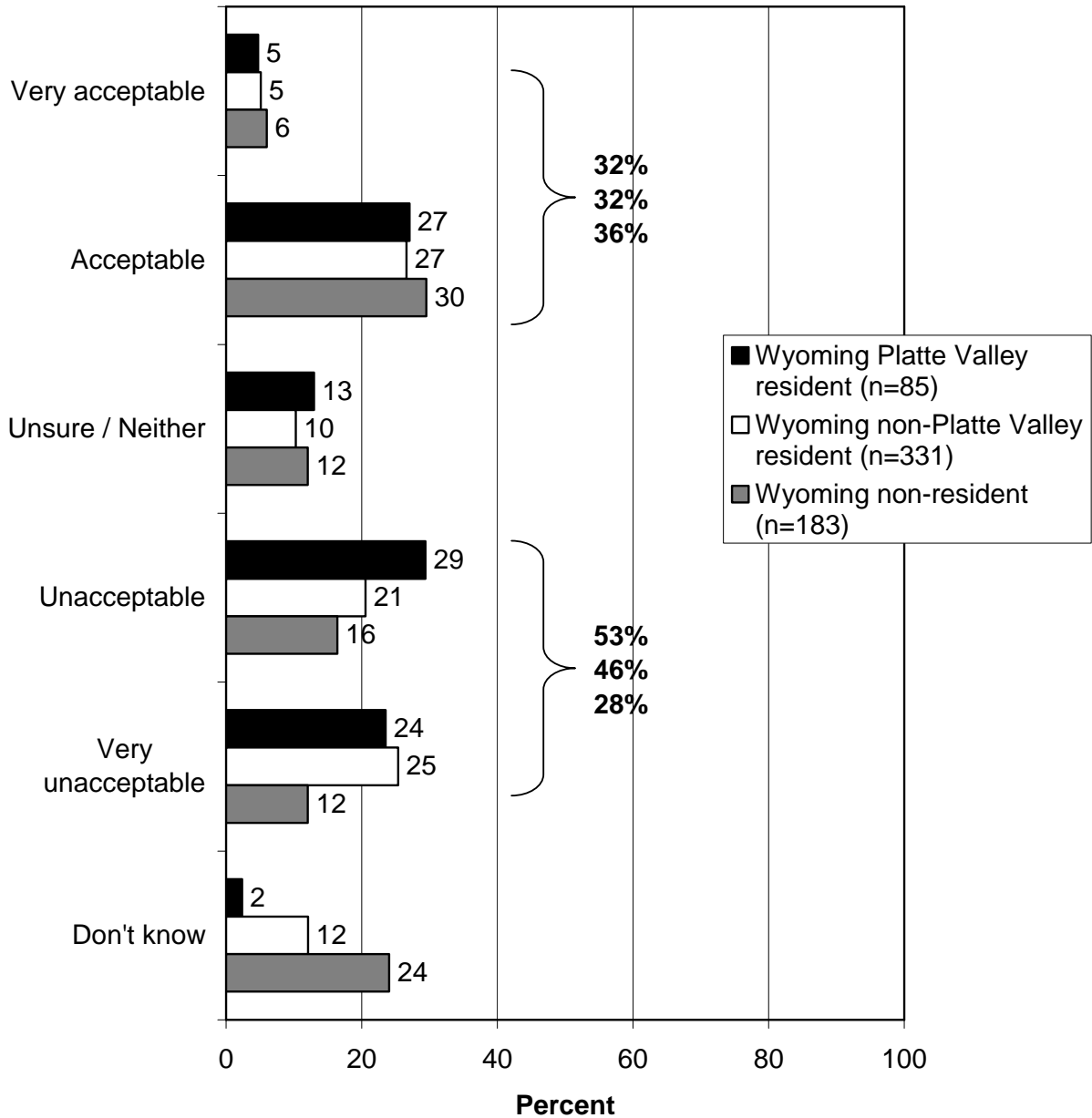
## OPINIONS ON USE OF ATVS AND ATV MANAGEMENT

- Two questions asked about the amount of ATV use: one pertaining to ATV use where the hunter most often hunts, and the second question pertaining to ATV use in the winter ranges of the Platte Valley.
  - The groups differ markedly from one another regarding the acceptability of the amount of ATV use *where they most often hunt*. While both groups of Wyoming residents are split on the question (among Platte Valley residents, 42% say the amount of ATV use is acceptable and 48% say unacceptable; among non-Platte Valley residents, it is 46% to 43%), Wyoming non-residents find the amount acceptable (59% say acceptable to 29% who say unacceptable). Note that most of the “acceptable” responses are *acceptable* rather than *very acceptable*, while the “unacceptable” responses are more evenly split between *unacceptable* and *very unacceptable*.
  - There appears to be more concern overall about the amount of ATV use *in the winter ranges*. There is also the same difference of opinion among groups, with Wyoming non-residents differing from the other two groups. Lower percents say acceptable than unacceptable among Platte Valley residents (32% say the amount of ATV use in the winter ranges is acceptable compared to 53% who say unacceptable) and among non-Platte Valley residents (32% to 46%). However, among Wyoming non-residents, a higher percent say acceptable than say unacceptable (36% to 28%). A relatively high percentage of the latter group responded with don’t know (24%).
  
- Regardless of their opinion on the acceptability of ATV use where they hunt and in the winter ranges, a majority of all groups support efforts to regulate the use of ATVs:
  - During the winter in the Platte Valley where mule deer are concentrated (from 73% to 81% support),
  - During the hunting season in the Platte Valley (65% to 69%), and
  - During the summer in the Platte Valley where mule deer are concentrated (56% to 60%).
    - As the data above indicate, regulation of the winter ranges is considered more important relative to regulation during the hunting season or regulation of the summer ranges.
    - Four graphs are shown: strong support by itself, strong and moderate support combined, strong and moderate opposition combined, and then strong opposition.

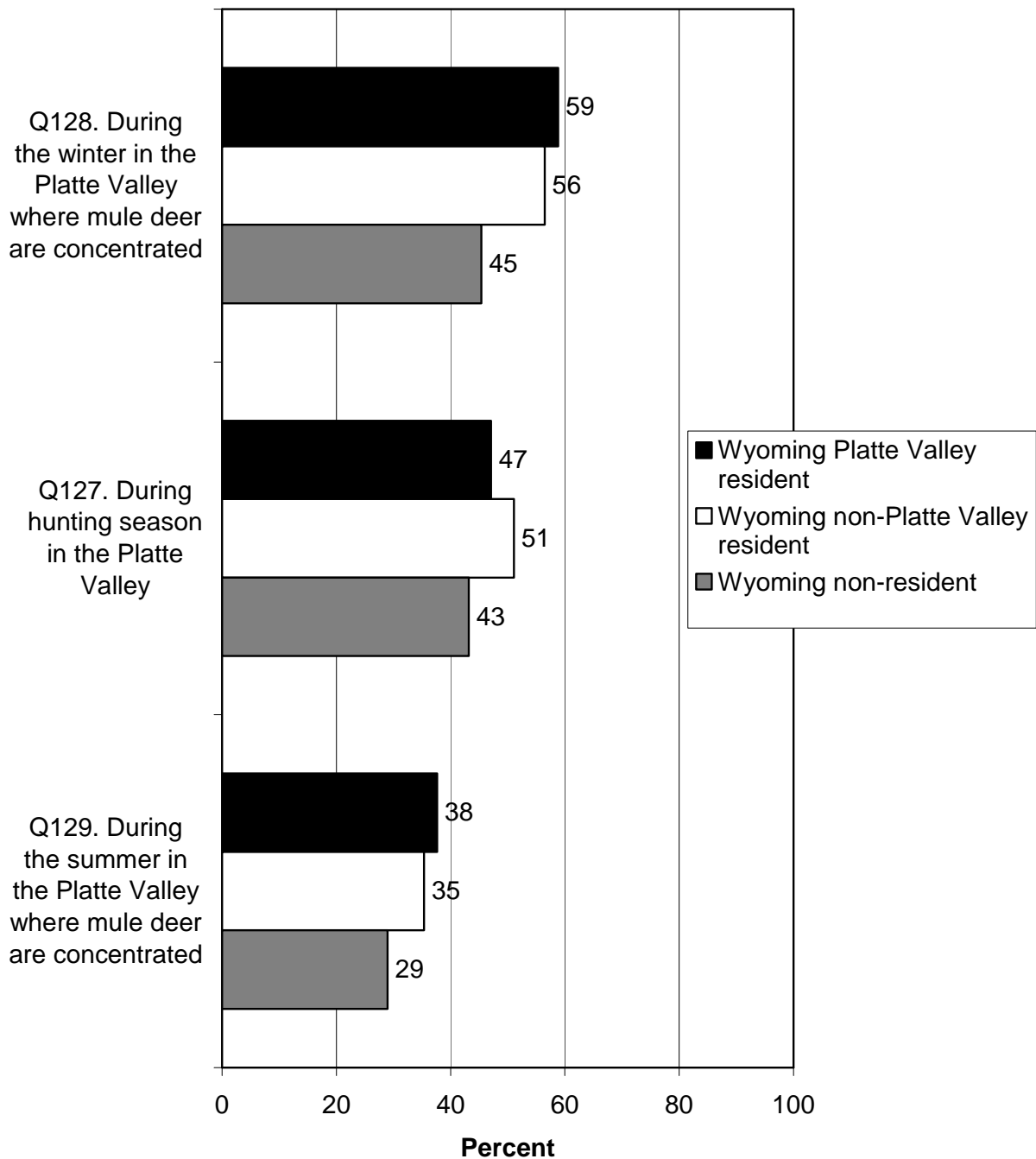
**Q125. How acceptable or unacceptable is the amount of ATV use in the Platte Valley hunt area where you most often hunted mule deer in the past 5 years?**



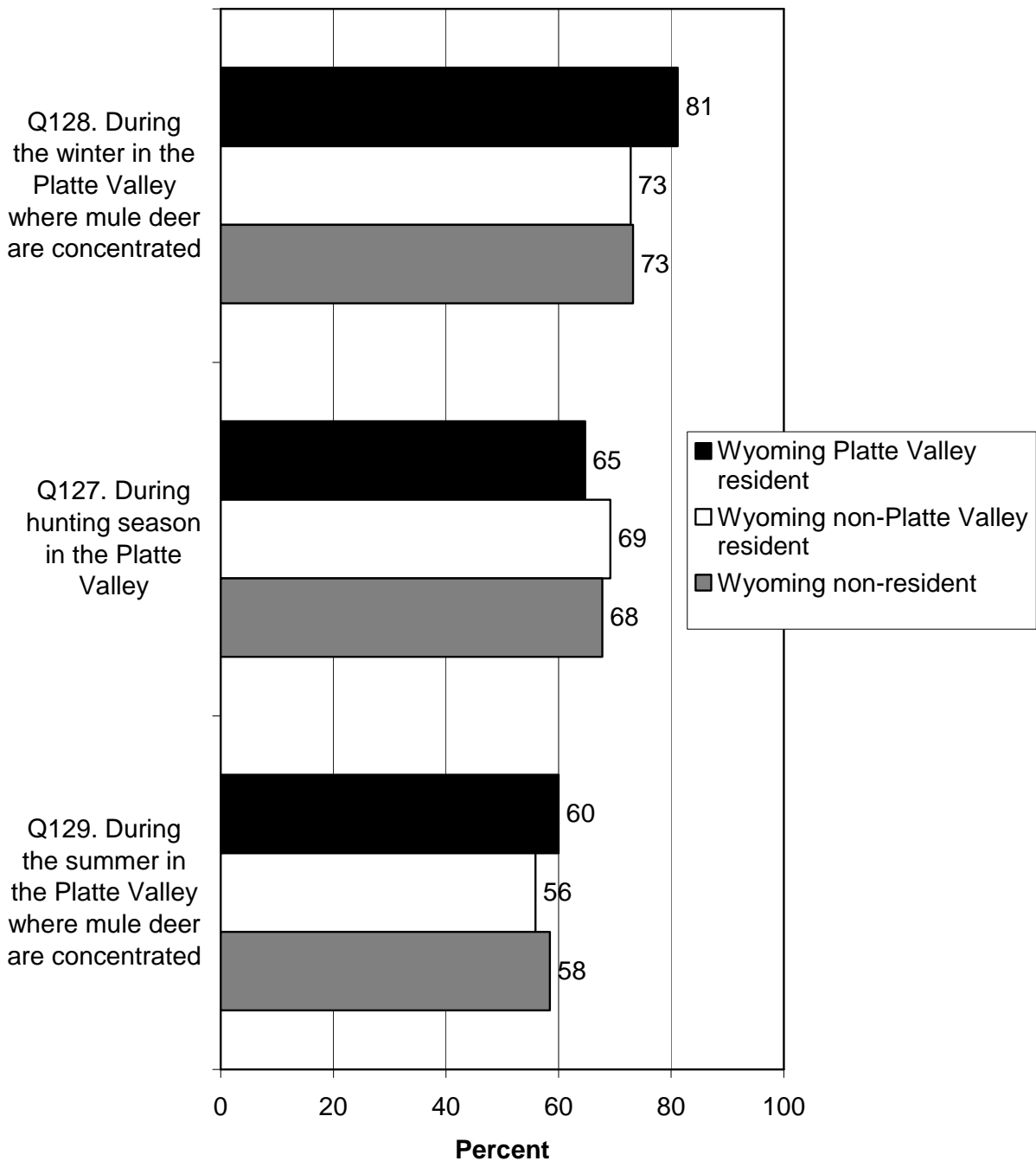
**Q126. How acceptable or unacceptable is the amount of ATV use on mule deer winter ranges in the Platte Valley?**



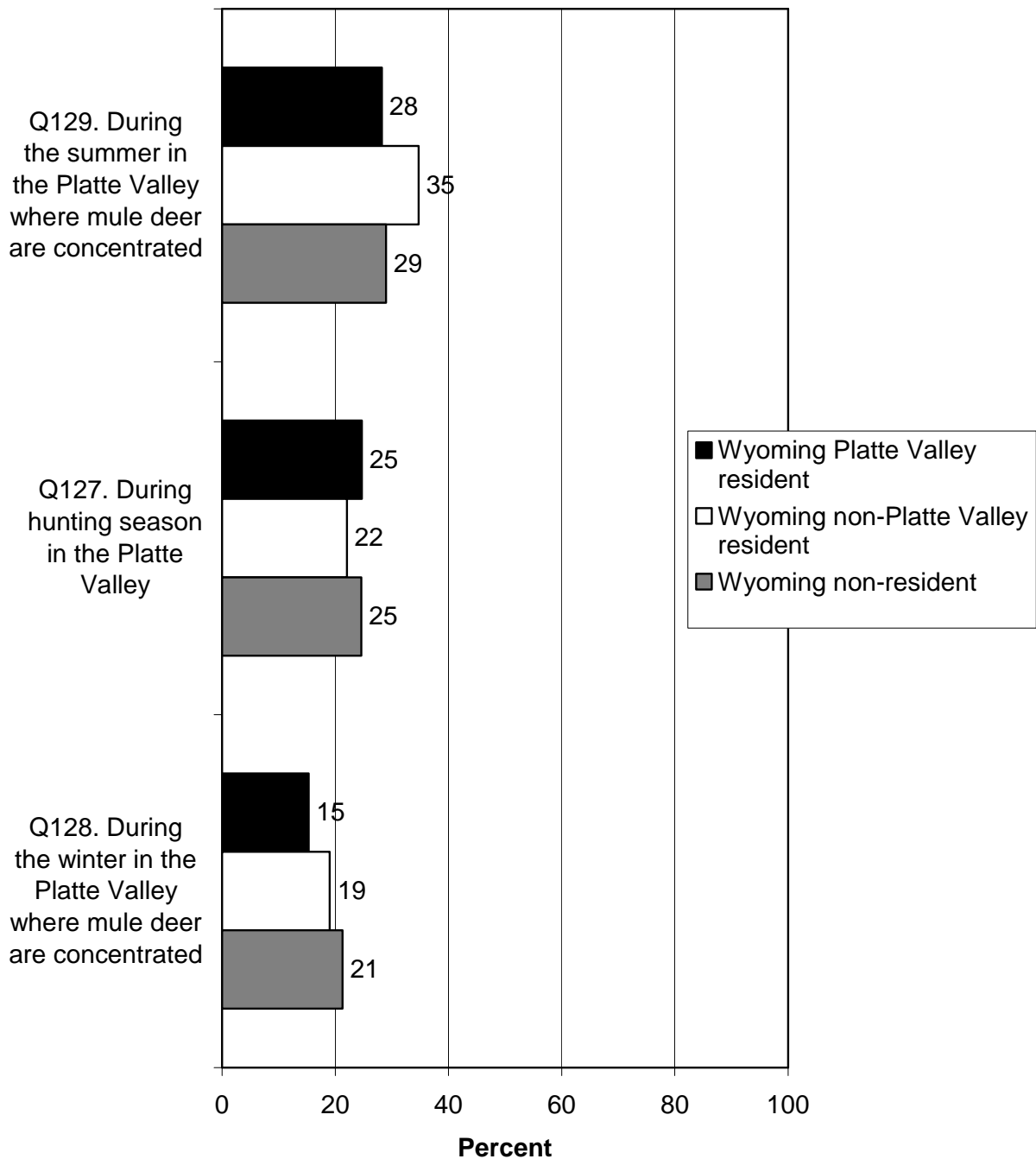
**Percent who strongly support efforts to regulate the use of ATVs during the following times.**



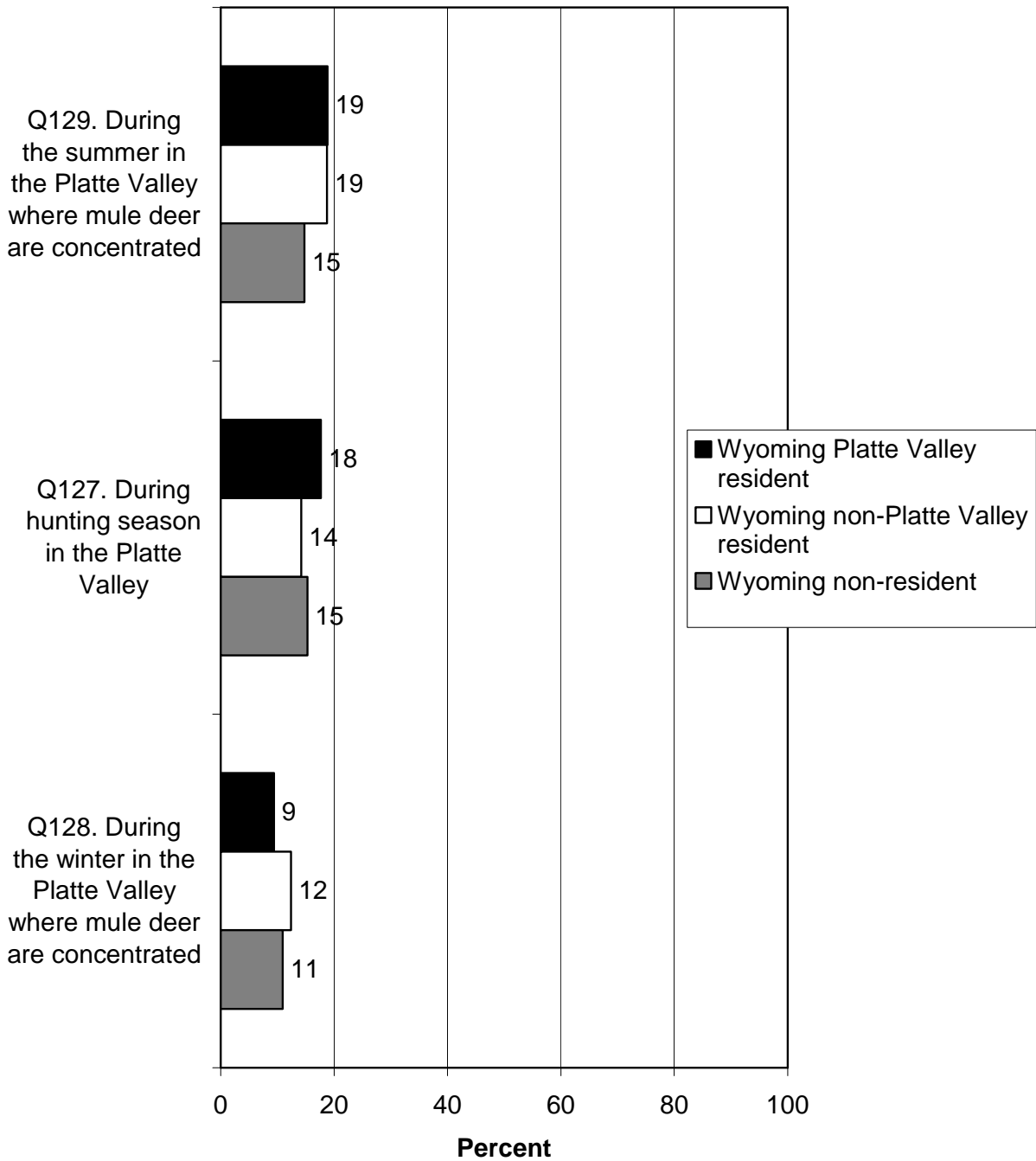
**Percent who strongly or moderately support efforts to regulate the use of ATVs during the following times.**



**Percent who moderately or strongly oppose efforts to regulate the use of ATVs during the following times.**



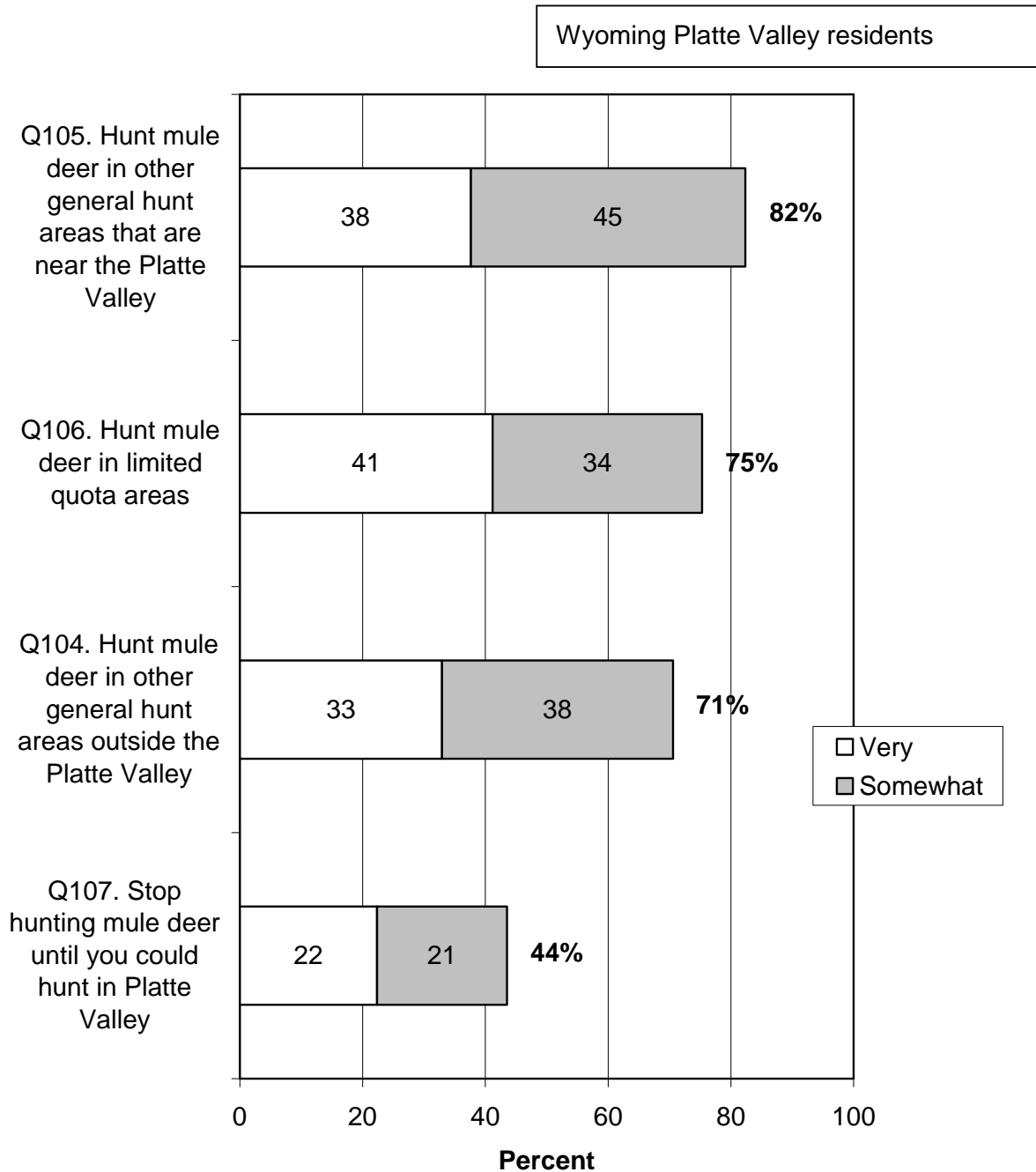
**Percent who strongly oppose efforts to regulate the use of ATVs during the following times.**



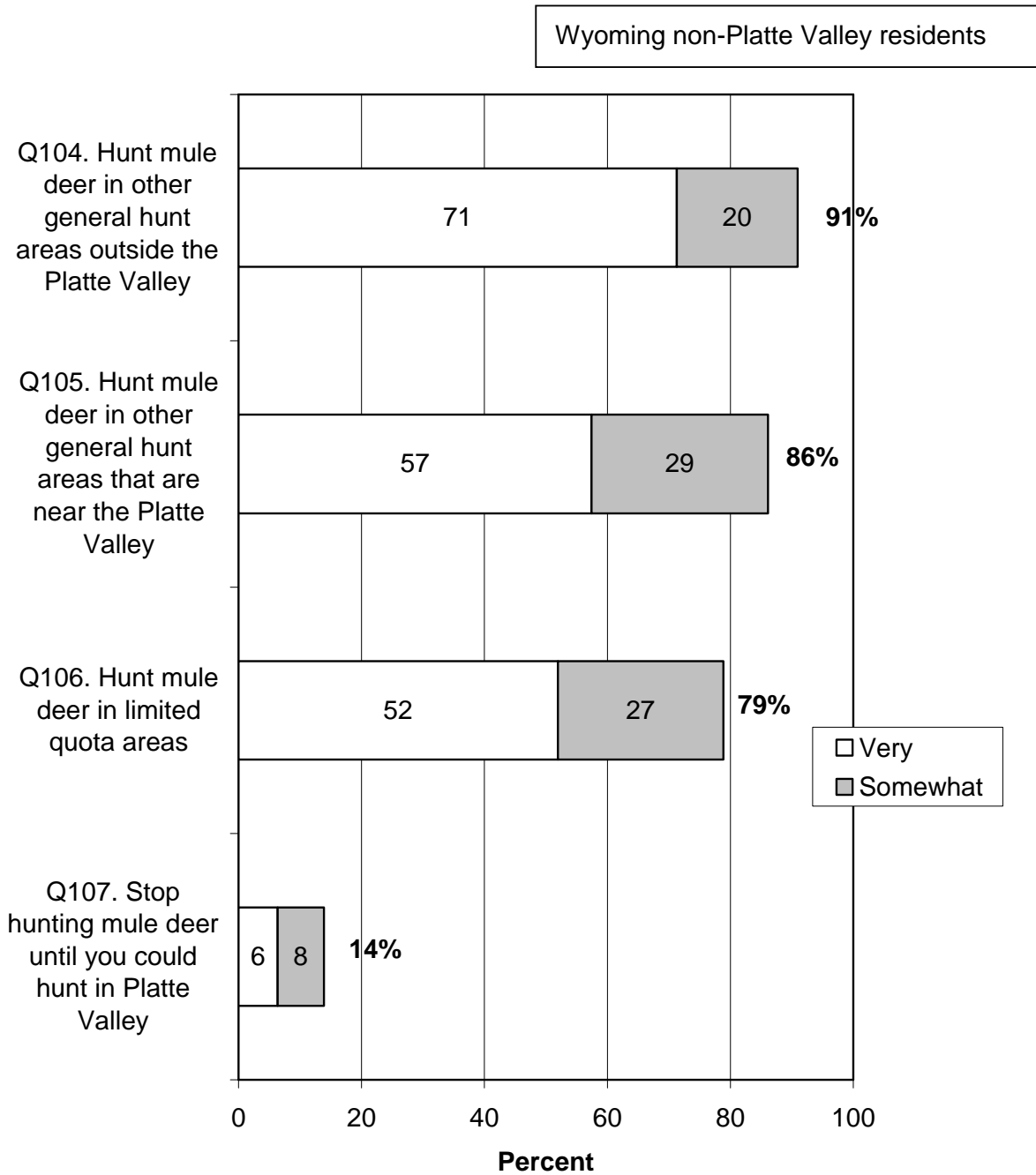
## LIKELY ALTERNATIVE BEHAVIORS TO HUNTING IN THE PLATTE VALLEY

- Four questions asked about likely participatory behaviors if the respondent cannot hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley every year. The four behaviors are to hunt mule deer in other general hunt areas outside the Platte Valley, to hunt mule deer in other general hunt areas near the Platte Valley, to hunt mule deer in limited quota areas, or to stop hunting mule deer until they can hunt in the Platte Valley again.
- Among Platte Valley residents, the most common choice would be to hunt mule deer in other general hunt areas that are near the Platte Valley (38% would be very likely and 45% would be somewhat likely to do that, a sum of 82%), followed by hunt in limited quota areas (41% very, 34% somewhat, 75% total) and hunt in general hunt areas outside of the Platte Valley (33% very, 38% somewhat, 71% total). A relatively low percentage would stop hunting mule deer until they could hunt in the Platte Valley again (22% very, 21% somewhat, 44% total).
  - Among non-Platte Valley residents, the most common choice would be to hunt mule deer in other general hunt areas outside the Platte Valley (71% would be very likely and 20% would be somewhat likely to do that, a sum of 91%), followed by hunt in general hunt areas near of the Platte Valley (57% very, 29% somewhat, 86% total) and hunt in limited quota areas (52% very, 27% somewhat, 79% total). Again, a quite low percentage would stop hunting mule deer until they could hunt in the Platte Valley again (6% very, 8% somewhat, 14% total).
  - Finally, among Wyoming non-residents, the most common choice would be to hunt mule deer in other general hunt areas outside the Platte Valley (51% very, 28% somewhat, 79% total), followed by hunt in limited quota areas (44% very, 32% somewhat, 76% total) and hunt in general hunt areas near of the Platte Valley (37% very, 37% somewhat, 74% total). Again, a quite low percentage would stop hunting mule deer until they could hunt in the Platte Valley again (11% very, 8% somewhat, 19% total).
  - Along with the three graphs that pertain to the above bullets, a fourth graph shows the results among all groups for the “not at all likely” responses, which demonstrates that a majority of each group would *not* stop hunting mule deer.

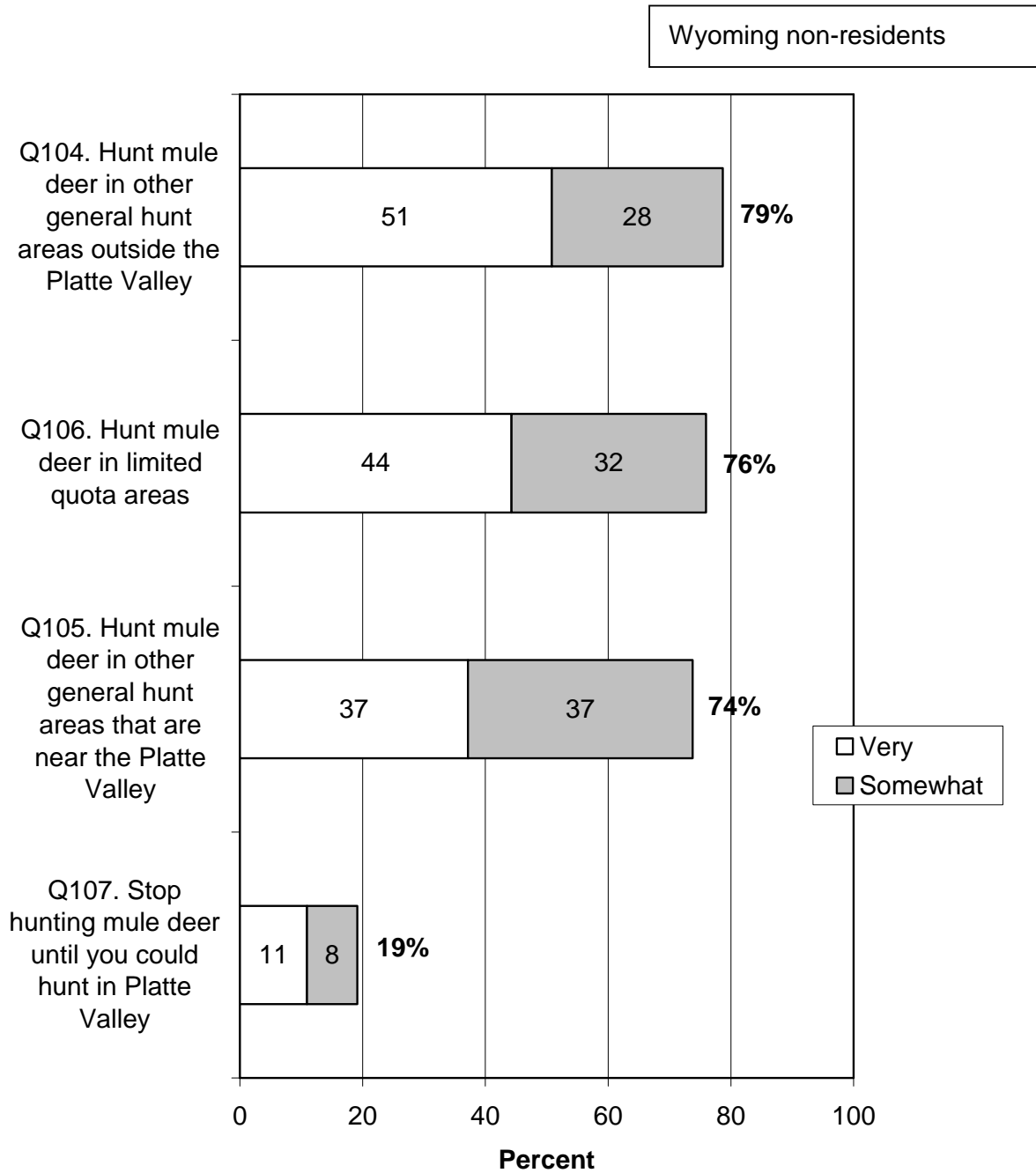
**Percent who would be very or somewhat likely to do the following if they couldn't hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley every year.**



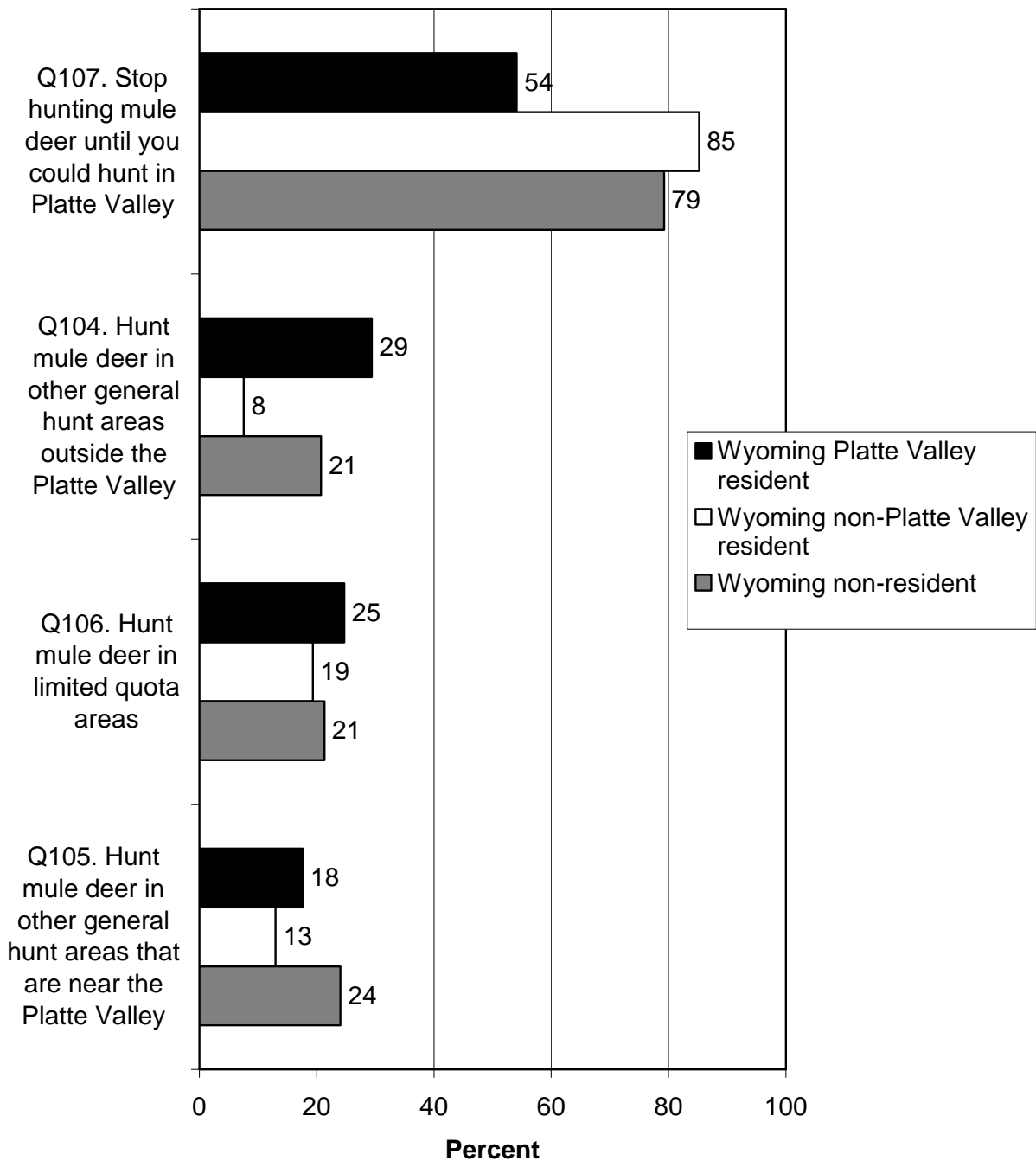
**Percent who would be very or somewhat likely to do the following if they couldn't hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley every year.**



**Percent who would be very or somewhat likely to do the following if they couldn't hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley every year.**



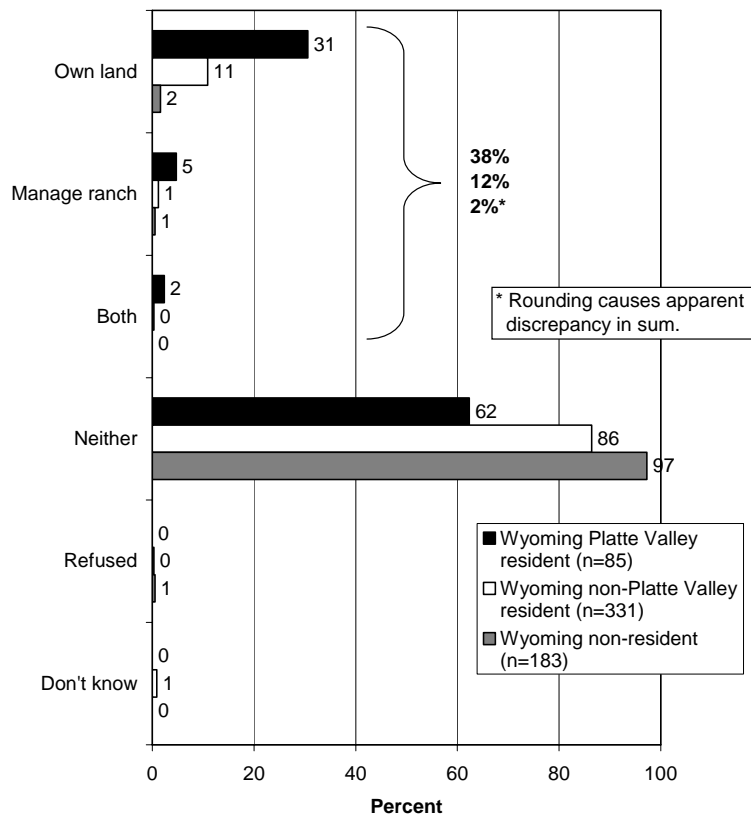
**Percent who would be not at all likely to do the following if they couldn't hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley every year.**



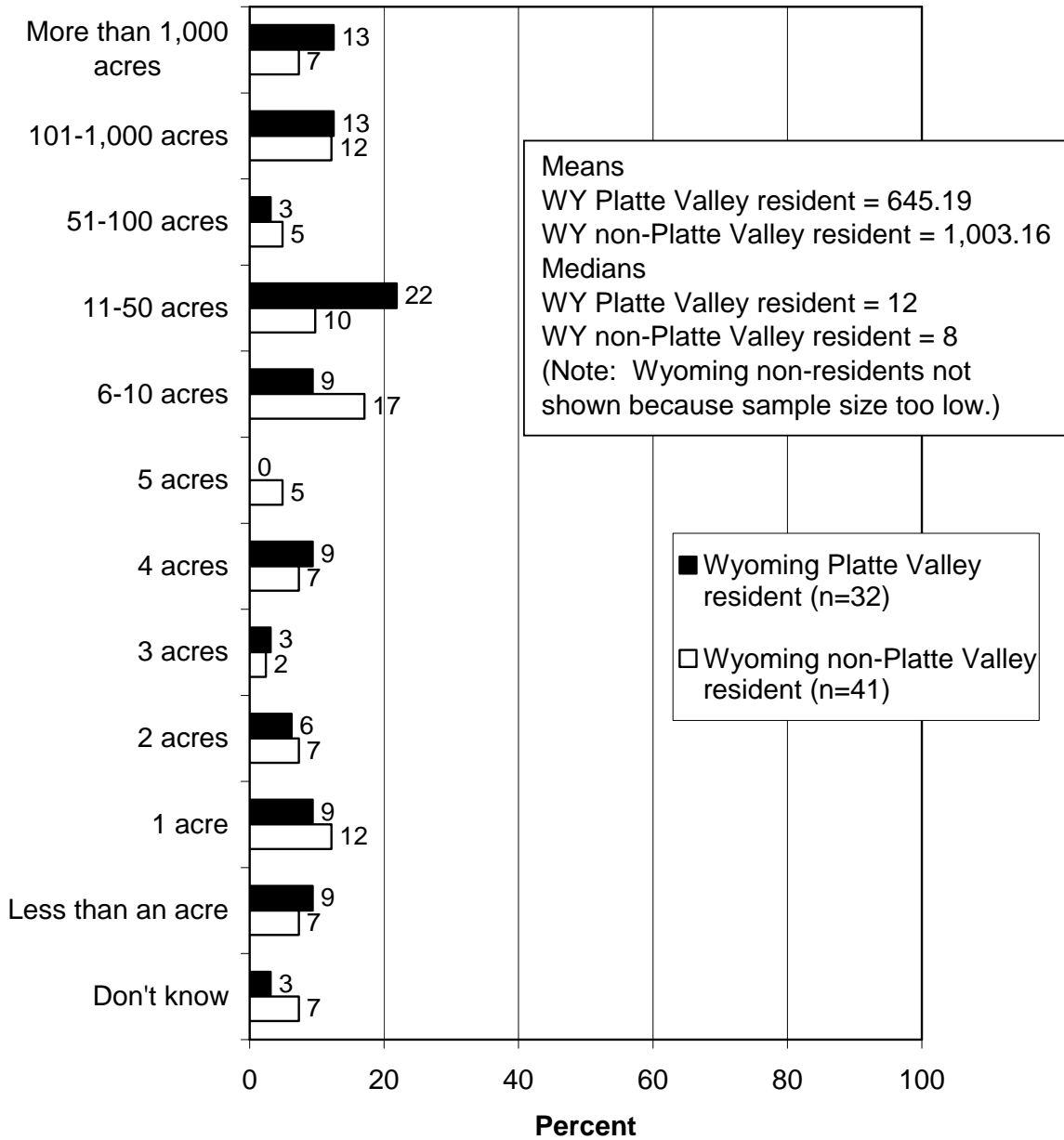
## LAND OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- Respondents were asked if they owned land or managed land in the Platte Valley: 38% of Platte Valley residents, 12% of non-Platte Valley residents, and only 2% of Wyoming non-residents owned or managed land in the Platte Valley.
- A graph shows the amounts of land owned/managed in the Platte Valley. The mean amount owned by Platte Valley residents is 645.19 acres, their median is 12 acres. Among non-Platte Valley residents, the mean is 1,003.16 acres, and the median is 8 acres (some quite large landowners in both groups, particularly non-Platte Valley residents, pulled the means up high). (Note that not enough Wyoming non-residents got the question for the results to have statistical validity.)

**Q139. Do you own land or manage a ranch in the Platte Valley?**



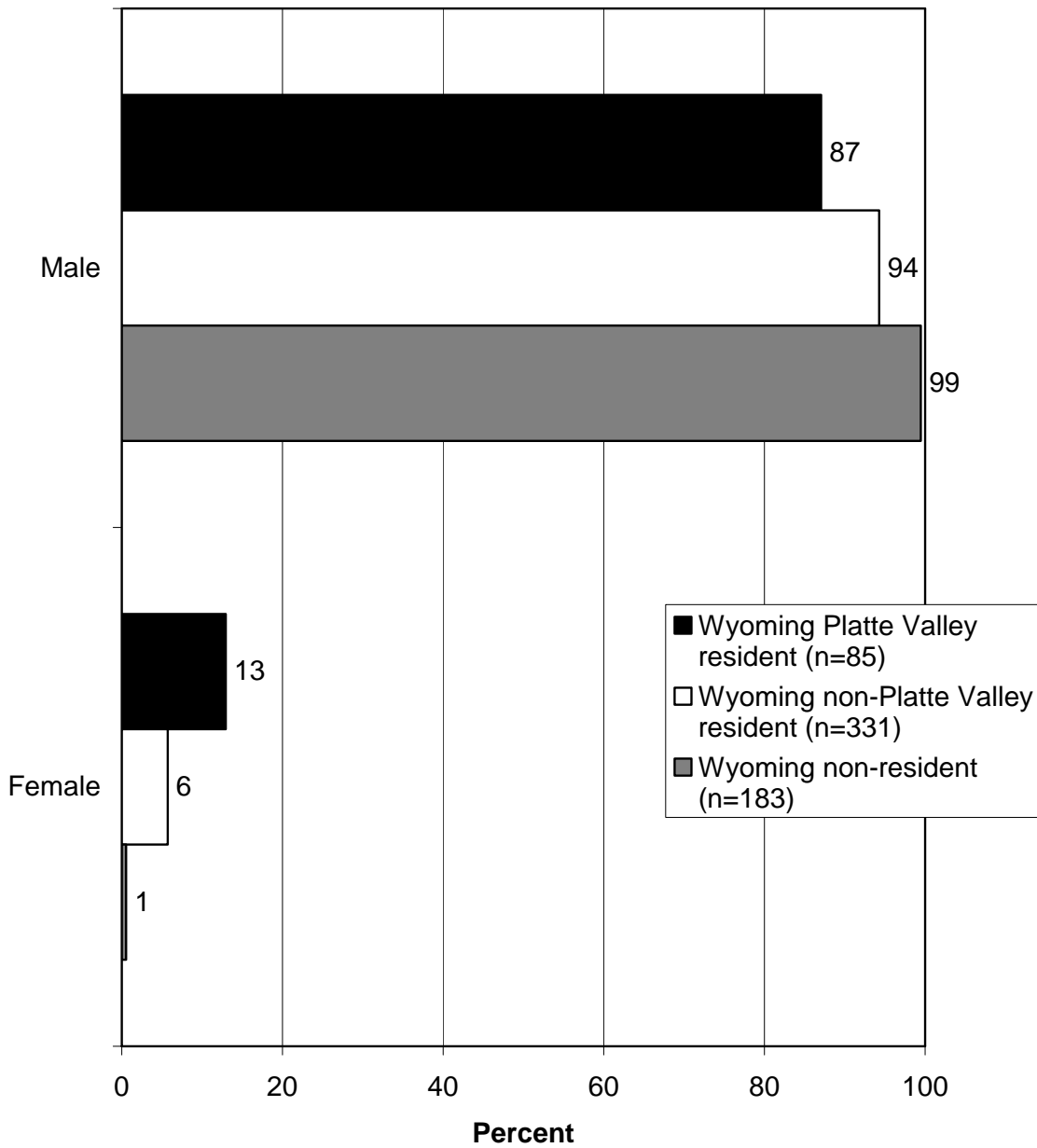
**Q140. Approximately how many acres do you own or manage in the Platte Valley? (Asked of those who own land or manage a ranch in the Platte Valley.)**



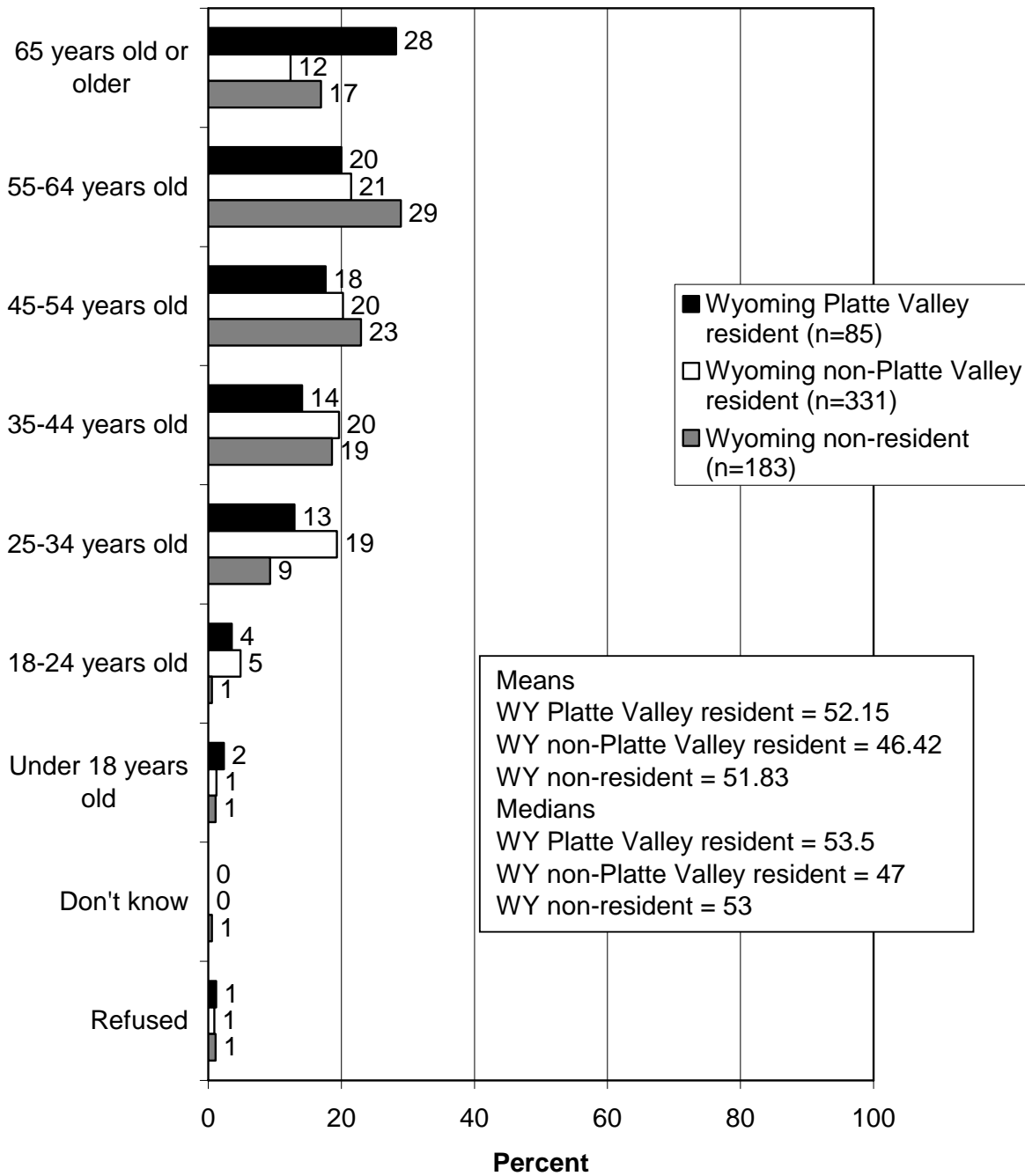
## DEMOGRAPHIC DATA AND MEMBERSHIP IN ORGANIZATIONS

- Respondents' gender is shown: all three groups are overwhelmingly male (87% of Platte Valley residents, 94% of non-Platte Valley residents, and 99% of Wyoming non-residents).
- A graph shows the respondents' ages. The mean ages are 52.15 years among Platte Valley residents, 46.42 years among non-Platte Valley residents, and 51.83 years among Wyoming non-residents.
- Counties of residence are shown, among Wyoming residents.
- The top states of residence among Wyoming non-residents are California (21%), Wisconsin (9%), Pennsylvania (8%), Missouri (7%), Colorado (5%), Texas (5%), and Michigan (4%). At the lower end are some quite distant states, including many on the eastern seaboard such as North Carolina, Georgia, Virginia, New Hampshire, New York, and New Jersey. (This graph is shown in the section of the report titled, "Participation in Mule Deer Hunting in the Platte Valley.")
- A graph shows memberships in or donations to conservation or sportsmen's organizations. Two questions were used to generate these data. Respondents were first asked specifically about each of 11 organizations, and then they were asked about *any other* organizations.
- Note that the survey also obtained e-mail addresses from those respondents who indicated that they would be willing to be contacted through e-mail in the future about Platte Valley mule deer issues. These e-mail addresses were provided to the Department (separate from the responses to the survey so as to preserve respondent anonymity on all opinion questions) and are not presented in the report.

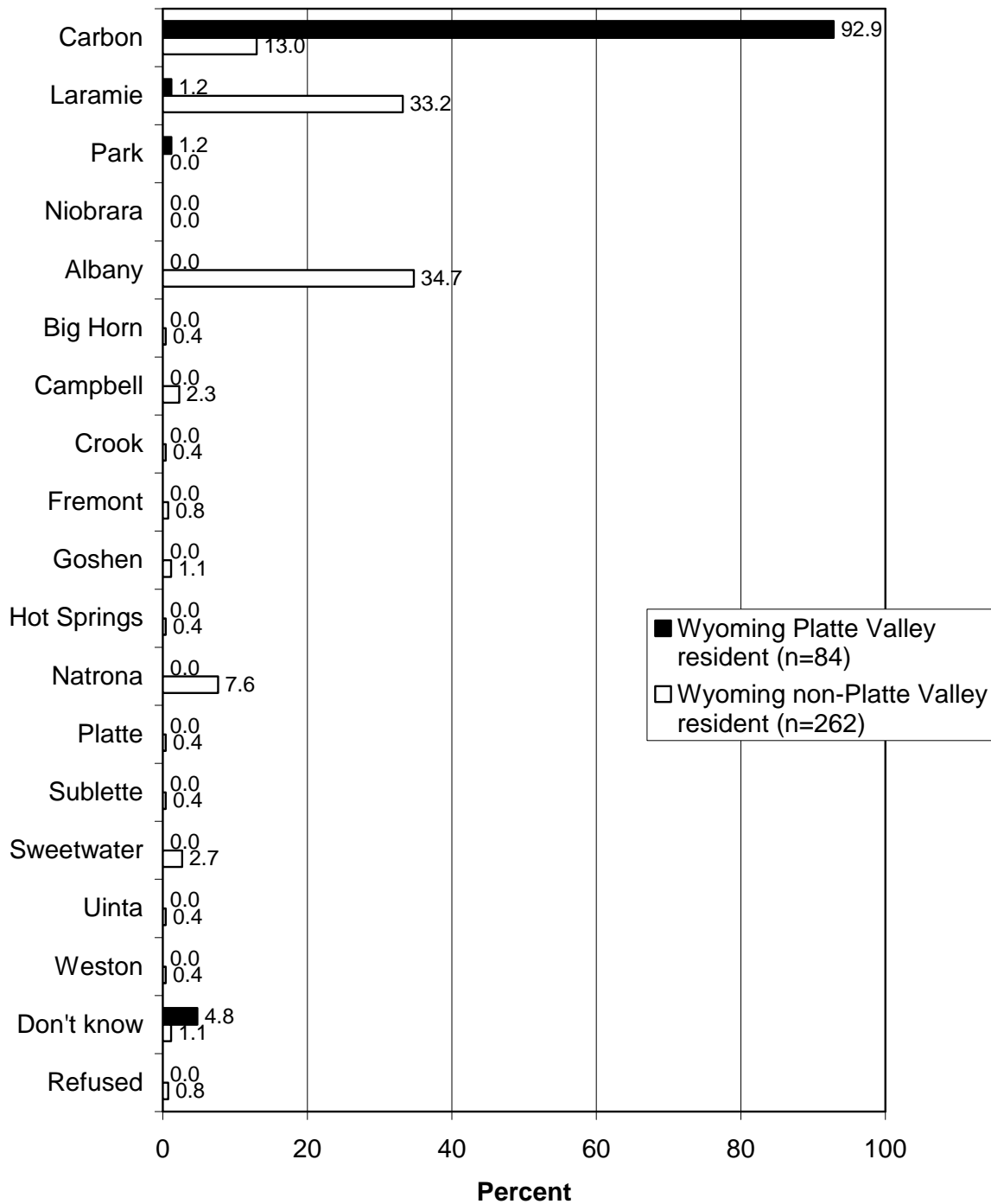
**Q151. Respondent's gender (observed, not asked, by interviewer).**



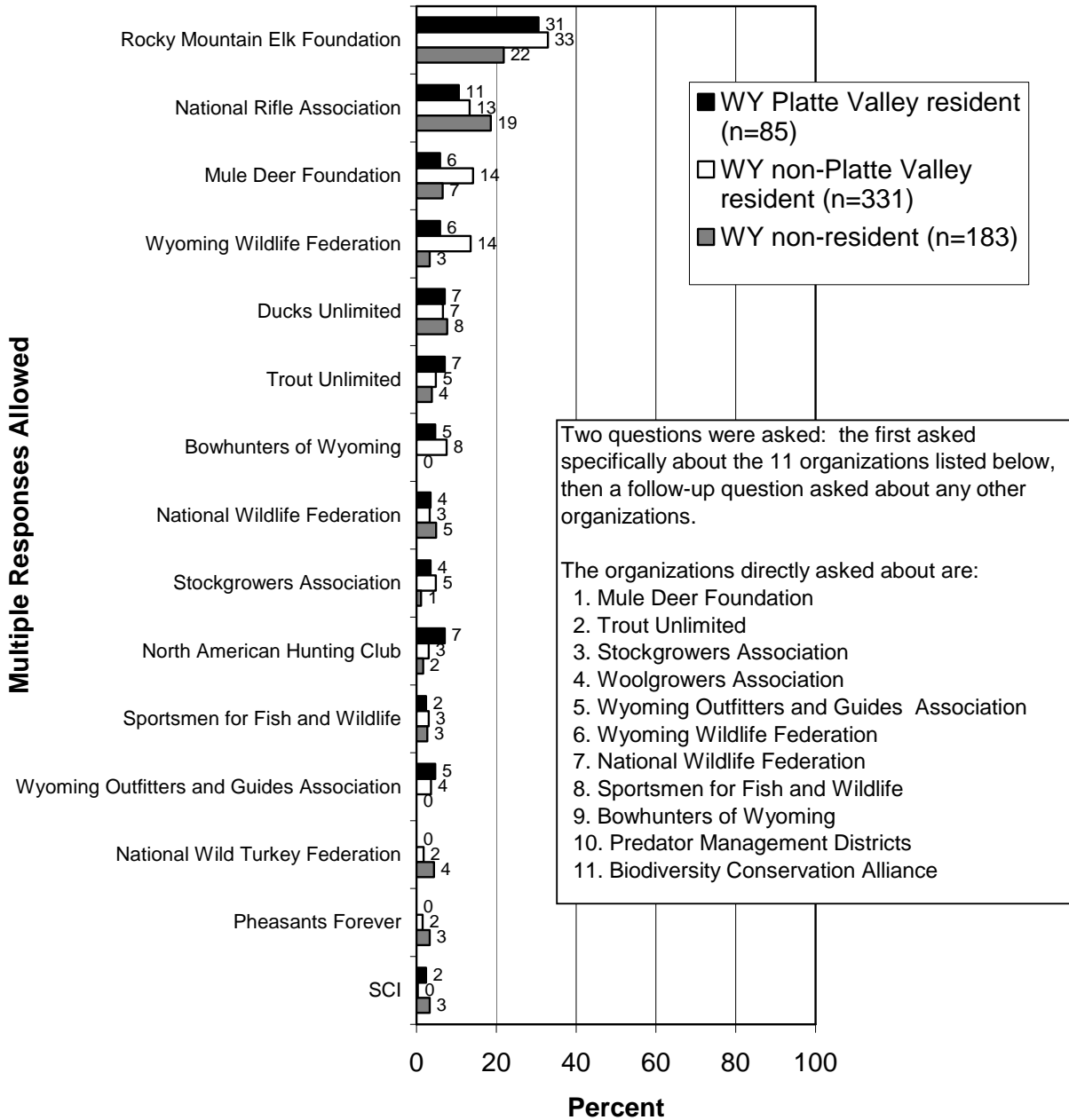
### Q143. Respondent's age.



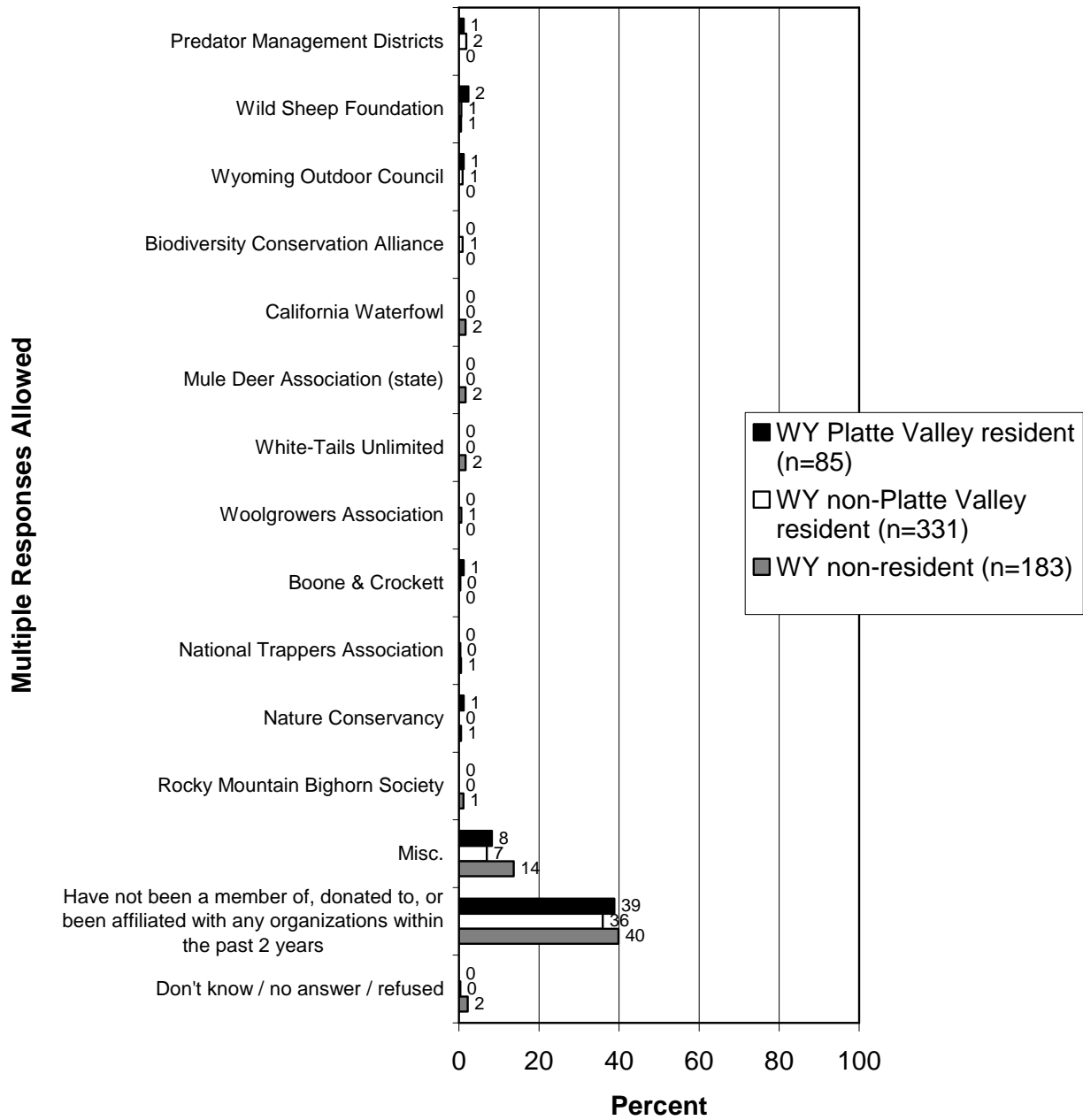
**Q137. What county do you live in? (Asked of those who reside in Wyoming.)**



**Q133/Q135. Within in the past 2 years have you been a member of, donated to, or been affiliated with any of the following organizations?  
(Part 1)**



**Q133/Q135. Within in the past 2 years have you been a member of, donated to, or been affiliated with any of the following organizations? (Part 2)**



## APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

### Wyoming Platte Valley

4. ENTER RESPONDENT STATUS FROM CALL SHEET

2. Platte Valley resident hunter  
 3. Wyoming state resident hunter  
 4. Wyoming non-resident hunter

5. Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, may I speak with \_\_\_\_\_? I'm calling on behalf of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to ask you about mule deer hunting and mule deer management in Wyoming. As a part of the Wyoming Mule Deer Initiative, Game and Fish is developing a management plan for the Platte Valley herd. Your opinions are valuable to better managing mule deer populations in this herd. Do you have a few minutes to answer some questions? (IF ASKED: The Platte Valley includes hunt areas 78, 79, 80, 81, 83, and 161.) (IF ASKED: The Platte Valley is located primarily in Carbon County in southern Wyoming, south of Rawlins and west of Laramie.)

8. Our records indicate that you purchased a Wyoming hunting license within the past 5 years.

Did you hunt mule deer in Wyoming in the past 5 years?

2. Yes (GO TO QUESTION 11)  
 3. No [OUT OF SURVEY]  
 4. (DNR) Don't know [OUT OF SURVEY]

11. How many years, out of the last 5 years, did you hunt mule deer in Wyoming?

14. Next, I have some questions about your mule deer hunting in the Platte Valley specifically. The Platte Valley is made up of hunt areas 78, 79, 80, 81, 83, and 161. When I refer to the Platte Valley, I am referring specifically to these hunt areas only. (IF ASKED: The Platte Valley includes hunt areas 78, 79, 80, 81, 83, and 161.) (IF ASKED: The Platte Valley is located primarily in Carbon County in southern Wyoming, south of Rawlins and west of Laramie.)

15. How many years, out of the last 5 years, did you hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley?

IF (#15 = 0) OR (#15 = "Don't know") [OUT OF SURVEY]

19. How many years total have you been hunting mule deer in the Platte Valley?

22. In the past 5 years, about how many days per year did you typically hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley?

25. In what hunt area in the Platte Valley have you hunted mule deer the most often in the past 5 years?

28. How far, in miles, do you typically travel, one-way, from home to hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley?

31. How many general hunt areas did you hunt mule deer outside of the Platte Valley this past hunting season?

34. Now I have some questions about your mule deer hunting in general, not just in the Platte Valley.

35. Thinking about when you've hunted mule deer, what is your most important reason for hunting? Would you say it is...?

- 2. For the meat
- 3. For a trophy
- 4. To be with family and friends
- 5. For the sport and recreation
- 6. To be close to nature
- 7. (Do Not Read) Don't know

38. What do you look for in a quality mule deer hunt? (Would you say...?)

- 1. Harvest success
- 2. Solitude
- 3. Recreation
- 4. Opportunity to spend time with family / companions
- 5. Presence of large antlered bucks
- 6. Outdoor experience
- 7. (Do Not Read) Other
- 8. (Do Not Read) Don't know

40. What is the minimum number of points on one side that a buck should have for you to consider a deer a trophy buck?

43. What is the minimum antler spread, in inches, that a buck should have for you to consider a deer a trophy buck?

46. Next, I have some more questions about your mule deer hunting in the Platte Valley.

47. What is the primary reason you choose to hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley? (IF ASKED: This includes all hunt areas in the Platte Valley.)

50. What were the reasons you chose the Platte Valley hunt area where you most often hunted mule deer in the past 5 years?

52. How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the overall quality of your mule deer hunting experience in the Platte Valley during the last season you hunted in the Platte Valley?

53. What led to your level of satisfaction with the quality of your mule deer hunting experience in the Platte Valley?

54. Are there any things that have caused you not to hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley as much as you would like in the past 5 years?

- 2. Yes (GO TO QUESTION 57)
- 3. No
- 4. (Do Not Read) Don't know  
SKIP TO QUESTION 59

57. What are they? (What has caused you not to hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley as much as you would have liked in the past 5 years.)

59. Now I have some questions about mule deer management specifically in the Platte Valley hunt area where you most often hunted mule deer in the past 5 years.

60. Do you think the Wyoming Game and Fish Department is doing an excellent, good, fair, or poor job of managing the mule deer population in the Platte Valley hunt area where you most often hunted mule deer in the past 5 years?

- 2. Excellent
- 3. Good
- 4. Fair
- 5. Poor
- 6. (Do Not Read) Don't know (GO TO QUESTION 63)

62. Why do you rate the Department's management of the mule deer population in the Platte Valley hunt area where you most often hunted mule deer as [excellent / good / fair / poor]?

63. In your opinion, has the way the Department manages mule deer in the Platte Valley hunt area where you most often hunted mule deer improved, remained the same, or gotten worse in the past 5 years?

64. Has the way the Department manages mule deer in the Platte Valley hunt area where you most often hunted mule deer improved, remained the same, or gotten worse in the past 10 years?

=====

65. Now I have several statements relating to your impressions of the Platte Valley hunt area where you most often hunted mule deer in the past 5 years. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each statement.

(Do you agree or disagree with this statement about the Platte Valley hunt area where you most often hunted in the past 5 years?)

66. Choose a random starting question
- 1. impr1 (GO TO QUESTION 67)
  - 2. impr2 (GO TO QUESTION 68)
  - 3. impr3 (GO TO QUESTION 69)

67. The number of bucks in the area was adequate in the past 5 years.

68. You heard about or saw big antlered bucks in the area in the past 5 years.

69. There were too many other hunters in the area where you hunted most often in the Platte Valley in the past 5 years.

=====

=====  
 =====  
 70. Please tell me if, in your opinion, each of the following has increased, stayed the same, or decreased in the past 5 years in the Platte Valley hunt area where you most often hunted mule deer.

(Has this increased, stayed the same, or decreased in the past 5 years in the Platte Valley hunt area where you most often hunted mule deer?)

71. Choose a random starting question  
 1. change1 (GO TO QUESTION 72)  
 2. change2 (GO TO QUESTION 73)  
 3. change3 (GO TO QUESTION 74)  
 4. change4 (GO TO QUESTION 75)

72. What about the total number of mule deer?  
 73. What about the number of mule deer harvested by hunters each year?  
 74. What about the number of hunters in the field?  
 75. What about the number of bucks?

- =====  
 =====  
 76. Determines which group the respondent is a part of.  
 1. increased  
 2. stayed the same  
 3. decreased  
 4.  
 COMPUTE IF (#72 = 2) 1  
 COMPUTE IF (#72 = 3) 2  
 COMPUTE IF (#72 = 4) 3  
 COMPUTE 4  
 IF (#72 = 5) GO TO #78

77. You indicated that you think the total number of mule deer in the Platte Valley hunt area where you most often hunted mule deer has [increased / stayed the same / decreased]. In your opinion, why has the total number of mule deer [increased / stayed the same / decreased] in the past 5 years?

78. For the remainder of this survey, I will be asking about mule deer in the Platte Valley in general, which includes all hunt areas in the Platte Valley, not just the hunt area where you hunted most often.

79. How acceptable or unacceptable is the number of mule deer in the Platte Valley currently?  
 2. Very acceptable (GO TO QUESTION 80)  
 3. Acceptable (GO TO QUESTION 80)  
 4. Unsure / Neither  
 5. Unacceptable (GO TO QUESTION 81)  
 6. Very unacceptable (GO TO QUESTION 81)  
 7. (Do Not Read) Don't know  
 SKIP TO QUESTION 82

80. What are the reasons you think the number of mule deer in the Platte Valley is acceptable?  
 SKIP TO QUESTION 82

81. What are the reasons you think the number of mule deer in the Platte Valley is unacceptable?

82. In general, what factors do you think control the ability of the Platte Valley deer herd to increase or decrease annually?

83. How acceptable or unacceptable is the number of mule deer harvested in the Platte Valley each year?

- 2. Very acceptable (GO TO QUESTION 84)
- 3. Acceptable (GO TO QUESTION 84)
- 4. Unsure / Neither
- 5. Unacceptable (GO TO QUESTION 85)
- 6. Very unacceptable (GO TO QUESTION 85)
- 7. (Do Not Read) Don't know  
SKIP TO QUESTION 86

84. What are the reasons you think the number of mule deer harvested in the Platte Valley is acceptable?

SKIP TO QUESTION 86

85. What are the reasons you think the number of mule deer harvested in the Platte Valley is unacceptable?

86. How acceptable or unacceptable is the number of hunters in the field in the Platte Valley?

- 2. Very acceptable (GO TO QUESTION 87)
- 3. Acceptable (GO TO QUESTION 87)
- 4. Unsure / Neither
- 5. Unacceptable (GO TO QUESTION 88)
- 6. Very unacceptable (GO TO QUESTION 88)
- 7. (Do Not Read) Don't know  
SKIP TO QUESTION 89

87. What are the reasons you think the number of hunters in the field in the Platte Valley is acceptable?

SKIP TO QUESTION 89

88. What are the reasons you think the number of hunters in the field in the Platte Valley is unacceptable?

=====

89. Please tell me if you think each of the following has had a major impact, a minor impact, or no impact at all on the mule deer population in the Platte Valley in the past 5 years.

(Has this had a major impact, a minor impact, or no impact at all on the mule deer population in the Platte Valley in the past 5 years?)

- 90. Choose a random starting question
- 1. impact1 (GO TO QUESTION 91)
- 2. impact2 (GO TO QUESTION 92)
- 3. impact3 (GO TO QUESTION 93)
- 4. impact4 (GO TO QUESTION 94)
- 5. impact5 (GO TO QUESTION 95)
- 6. impact6 (GO TO QUESTION 96)
- 7. impact7 (GO TO QUESTION 97)

91. How about highway mortality, that is, mule deer deaths resulting from deer-vehicle collisions?

92. How about disease, such as Chronic Wasting Disease?

93. How about competition for food and habitat from other big game animals, such as elk and white-tailed deer?

94. How about winterkill, that is, mule deer deaths resulting from starvation during the winter months?

95. How about poaching?

96. How about mountain lions preying on mule deer?

97. How about coyotes preying on mule deer?

=====

98. Now I'd like to ask you some questions about mule deer management in all Platte Valley hunt areas in general. In your opinion, what is the single most important factor that should be used to determine how many mule deer should be in the herd in the Platte Valley? Is it...?

100. Would you support or oppose managing for trophy bucks in the Platte Valley if it meant more restrictions and reduced chances of hunting every year?

101. Would you support or oppose limiting the number of hunters in the field in the Platte Valley, considering that it might make it less likely that you would get a license?

102. In the Platte Valley do you prefer general seasons which means you could hunt every year and have the ability to hunt multiple hunt areas but possibly a reduced chance of harvest, or limited quota seasons? Limited quota seasons mean you may not hunt every year in the limited quota hunt areas and may lose the opportunity to hunt multiple hunt areas, but you would probably have a higher chance of harvest when you do hunt. Which do you prefer?

=====  
 103. Please tell me how likely you would be to do each of the following if you couldn't hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley every year.

104. Would you hunt mule deer in other general hunt areas outside the Platte Valley?

105. Would you hunt mule deer in other general hunt areas that are near the Platte Valley?

106. Would you hunt mule deer in limited quota areas?

107. Would you stop hunting mule deer until you could hunt in Platte Valley?

=====  
 =====

108. How acceptable or unacceptable is antlerless deer harvest as a mule deer management tool in the Platte Valley?

- 2. Very acceptable (GO TO QUESTION 109)
- 3. Acceptable (GO TO QUESTION 109)
- 4. Unsure / Neither
- 5. Unacceptable (GO TO QUESTION 110)
- 6. Very unacceptable (GO TO QUESTION 110)
- 7. (Do Not Read) Don't know  
 SKIP TO QUESTION 111

109. Why do you think antlerless harvest is an acceptable management tool in the Platte Valley?  
 SKIP TO QUESTION 111

110. Why do you think antlerless harvest is an unacceptable management tool in the Platte Valley?

111. Now I'd like to ask you about the habitat specifically in the Platte Valley. Do you think the quality of mule deer habitat in the Platte Valley has improved, remained the same, or gotten worse in the past 5 years?

112. In your opinion, how important is the QUALITY of habitat on SUMMER ranges in determining the survival of mule deer in the Platte Valley herd?

113. How important is the AMOUNT of habitat on SUMMER ranges in determining the survival of mule deer in the Platte Valley herd?

114. In your opinion, how important is the QUALITY of habitat on WINTER ranges in determining the survival of mule deer in the Platte Valley herd?

115. How important is the AMOUNT of habitat on WINTER ranges in determining the survival of mule deer in the Platte Valley herd?

116. How would you rate the QUALITY of deer habitat in the Platte Valley in the past 5 years?

117. How important do you think managing the QUALITY of deer habitat in the Platte Valley should be to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department?

118. How important do you think managing the AMOUNT of deer habitat in the Platte Valley should be to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department?

119. In the last 5 years, have habitat conditions influenced the number of mule deer in the Platte Valley to increase, remain the same, decrease, or did the habitat conditions not influence the number of mule deer in the Platte Valley at all?

120. Do you agree or disagree that there is enough WINTER habitat in the Platte Valley to sustain the current size of the mule deer population?

121. Who do you think has the most influence and control of habitat on deer WINTER ranges for the Platte Valley deer herd?

123. Does collecting shed antlers in the winter from areas where mule deer are concentrated have a major impact, a minor impact, or no impact at all on the deer?

124. Would you support or oppose efforts by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to regulate the hunting or collecting of shed antlers during the winter in areas where mule deer are concentrated in the Platte Valley?

125. How acceptable or unacceptable is the amount of ATV use in the Platte Valley hunt area where you most often hunted mule deer in the past 5 years?

126. How acceptable or unacceptable is the amount of ATV use on mule deer winter ranges in the Platte Valley?

127. Would you support or oppose efforts to regulate the use of ATVs during hunting season in the Platte Valley? (IF ASKED: Deer hunting season typically closes by December 21 in Wyoming. Winter starts on approximately December 21.)

128. Would you support or oppose efforts to regulate the use of ATVs during the WINTER in the Platte Valley where mule deer are concentrated? (IF ASKED: Deer hunting season typically closes by December 21 in Wyoming. Winter starts on approximately December 21.)

129. Would you support or oppose efforts to regulate the use of ATVs during the SUMMER in the Platte Valley where mule deer are concentrated?

130. Great, we're just about through. The final questions are for background information and help us analyze the results.

133. Within in the past 2 years have you been a member of, donated to, or been affiliated with any of the following organizations?

134. Have you been a member of, donated to, or been affiliated with any other conservation or sportsmen's organizations in the past 2 years?

- 2. Yes (GO TO QUESTION 135)
  - 3. No
  - 4. (Do Not Read) Don't know
- SKIP TO QUESTION 136

135. Which ones? (Which conservation or sportsmen's organizations?)

136. Have you ever used outfitter or guide services to hunt mule deer in the Platte Valley?

IF (#4 = 4) GO TO #139

137. What county do you live in?

138. (COMPUTATION FOR DON'T KNOW VARIABLE)

139. Do you own land or manage a ranch in the Platte Valley?

- 2. Own land (GO TO QUESTION 140)
  - 3. Manage ranch (GO TO QUESTION 140)
  - 4. Both (GO TO QUESTION 140)
  - 5. Neither
  - 6. (Do Not Read) Refused
  - 7. (Do Not Read) Don't know
- SKIP TO QUESTION 143

140. Approximately how many acres do you own or manage?

142. (COMPUTATION FOR DON'T KNOW VARIABLE)

143. May I ask your age?

146. Would you be willing to be contacted through e-mail in the future about Platte Valley mule deer issues?

- 2. Yes (GO TO QUESTION 147)
  - 3. No
  - 4. (Do Not Read) Don't know
- SKIP TO QUESTION 148

147. Could I please have your e-mail address? It will only be used for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to provide you with information about Platte Valley mule deer issues.

149. That's the end of the survey. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

151. OBSERVE AND RECORD RESPONDENT'S GENDER.

152. ENTER RESPONDENT'S STATE FROM CALL SHEET

## **ABOUT RESPONSIVE MANAGEMENT**

Responsive Management is a nationally recognized public opinion and attitude survey research firm specializing in natural resource and outdoor recreation issues. Its mission is to help natural resource and outdoor recreation agencies and organizations better understand and work with their constituents, customers, and the public.

Utilizing its in-house, full-service, computer-assisted telephone and mail survey center with 45 professional interviewers, Responsive Management has conducted more than 1,000 telephone surveys, mail surveys, personal interviews, and focus groups, as well as numerous marketing and communications plans, need assessments, and program evaluations on natural resource and outdoor recreation issues.

Clients include most of the federal and state natural resource, outdoor recreation, and environmental agencies, and most of the top conservation organizations. Responsive Management also collects attitude and opinion data for many of the nation's top universities, including the University of Southern California, Virginia Tech, Colorado State University, Auburn, Texas Tech, the University of California—Davis, Michigan State University, the University of Florida, North Carolina State University, Penn State, West Virginia University, and others.

Among the wide range of work Responsive Management has completed during the past 20 years are studies on how the general population values natural resources and outdoor recreation, and their opinions on and attitudes toward an array of natural resource-related issues. Responsive Management has conducted dozens of studies of selected groups of outdoor recreationists, including anglers, boaters, hunters, wildlife watchers, birdwatchers, park visitors, historic site visitors, hikers, and campers, as well as selected groups within the general population, such as landowners, farmers, urban and rural residents, women, senior citizens, children, Hispanics, Asians, and African-Americans. Responsive Management has conducted studies on environmental education, endangered species, waterfowl, wetlands, water quality, and the reintroduction of numerous species such as wolves, grizzly bears, the California condor, and the Florida panther.

Responsive Management has conducted research on numerous natural resource ballot initiatives and referenda and helped agencies and organizations find alternative funding and increase their memberships and donations. Responsive Management has conducted major agency and organizational program needs assessments and helped develop more effective programs based upon a solid foundation of fact. Responsive Management has developed websites for natural resource organizations, conducted training workshops on the human dimensions of natural resources, and presented numerous studies each year in presentations and as keynote speakers at major natural resource, outdoor recreation, conservation, and environmental conferences and meetings.

Responsive Management has conducted research on public attitudes toward natural resources and outdoor recreation in almost every state in the United States, as well as in Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Japan. Responsive Management routinely conducts surveys in Spanish and has also conducted surveys and focus groups in Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese.

Responsive Management's research has been featured in most of the nation's major media, including CNN, ESPN, *The Washington Times*, *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and on the front pages of *The Washington Post* and *USA Today*.

Visit the Responsive Management website at:

**[www.responsivemanagement.com](http://www.responsivemanagement.com)**