Oregon Deer and Elk Hunters’ Attitudes Toward Big Game Management and Hunting Opportunities

Presented to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission
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Focus of Fish and Wildlife Management

Fish and Wildlife Populations

Fish and Wildlife Professionals

Fish and Wildlife Habitats

Human Populations
About Responsive Management

» Research firm specializing in natural resource and outdoor recreation issues
» 30 years of continuous survey research projects
» More than 1,000 human dimensions studies
» Almost $70 million in human dimensions research
» Research in 50 states and 15 countries
» Research conducted for every state fish and wildlife agency and federal resource agency
» Research for all major NGOs, including RBFF, NSSF, NRA, ASA, ATA, Ducks Unlimited, Trout Unlimited, and more
» Research for industry leaders, such as Winchester, Vista Outdoor (Bushnell, Primos, Federal Premium, etc.), Trijicon, Yamaha, and more
» Data collection for the nation’s top universities: Clemson University, Colorado State University, Duke University, Penn State University, Rutgers University, Stanford University, University of Southern California, and many more
Responsive Management Books, Major Reports, Articles, and Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles
Presentation Overview

- Survey Methodology
- The Public Input Process: Things to Keep in Mind
- Equipment Used for Hunting
- Hunting Locations
- Motivations for Hunting
- Satisfaction with Hunting
- Constraints to Hunting Participation
- Opinions on Regulatory Issues
- Youth Hunting
Survey Methodology
Survey Methodology

- Survey conducted to determine the practices and opinions of deer and elk hunters in Oregon
- Scientific, probability-based multi-modal survey (contact by mail, email, and telephone)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Population Size</th>
<th>Sampling Error</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deer Hunters</td>
<td>1,070</td>
<td>276,319</td>
<td>+/- 2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elk Hunters</td>
<td>1,107</td>
<td>246,496</td>
<td>+/- 2.94</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Results reported at 95% confidence interval
- Crosstabulations of survey results by:
  - Equipment used most often to hunt
  - Region of residence
  - Age
  - Avidity
- Survey conducted January - February 2019
• Survey sample was stratified by region

• Goal was to survey at least 500 deer hunters and 500 elk hunters from the Eastern Region and a similar number from the Western Regions combined

• Within each region, the sample was drawn proportional to the type of contact information included in the license database (email, phone, mailing address)
Overview of Probability-Based Scientific Survey

• Because respondents were randomly selected, the results are truly representative of the study populations (Oregon elk hunters and Oregon deer hunters)

• Survey was NOT opt-in or left online for anyone to respond to
  • Non-probability survey sampling is inherently biased

• Every licensed hunter in the database had an opportunity to be selected for the survey, regardless of contact information available

• A random sample was drawn from the license database, and hunters were contacted based on the contact information available

• By pulling the sample proportional to the contact information in the database:
  • No single contact mode biased the survey
  • Every hunter had an equal opportunity to participate in the survey

Probability-based Sample:
Also known as a random sample, because every person in the population of interest has a known, non-zero chance of being selected for the sample.

—Pew Research Center
The Public Input Process:
Things to Keep in Mind
Input at public meetings often does not reflect the actual attitudes and opinions of the public and/or stakeholders.
Online surveys often are not representative.

- Open-ended – placed on web, anyone can respond
- Online panel – respondents sign up in exchange for cash or other incentives
- Online panel – respondents contacted and invited to participate
- Database with partial email addresses (e.g., most current databases of hunting and fishing licenses, boater registrations)
- Database with full coverage (e.g., agency employee databases)
- Web used as part of multi-modal survey
Public forums often are not representative.

Welcome to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department’s Strategic Plan Public Input Forum.

Over the coming year, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department will embark on a major research study to develop a new agency-wide strategic plan. As part of the planning and development process, the Department will be conducting substantial new research to understand Wyoming residents’ attitudes toward agency priorities and management issues of concern in the state.

We want to hear from you! This website has been established as a dedicated forum in which residents may communicate with one another and share feedback with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department—all comments will be read and considered as part of the development of the new strategic plan. Visitors will be able to post comments on this website until June 2018.

Please bookmark this page and remember to check back for updates regarding the study progress and findings from the research.

Click through below to access the discussion forums on specific Wyoming Game and Fish Department topics:
The loudest constituents may not always reflect the majority.

- Comments at public meetings and in online forums tell a different story than probability-based random samples.
Remember that scientific and non-scientific assessments of public opinion often paint a different picture.
It’s important to use the full range of research techniques to assess public opinions and attitudes.

- Scientific surveys and focus groups are critical, but public meetings and online forums (non-scientific methods) allow opportunities for all to provide input.

- However, relying only on non-scientific methods can lead agencies away from majority views and preferences.
Citizens groups and public input should not take the place of scientific data.

- Citizens groups should remain data-driven.
Public support for fish and wildlife agencies is often silent but strong.

- Agencies tend to hear only from the dissatisfied
Q34. Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with Arkansas Wildlife Officers' law enforcement efforts in the past 2 years? (Residents)

- Very satisfied: 54% (n=302)
- Somewhat satisfied: 28% (n=302)
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied: 9% (n=302)
- Somewhat dissatisfied: 1% (n=302)
- Very dissatisfied: 1% (n=302)
- Don't know: 6% (n=302)

Q200. Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife as a governmental agency, or do you not know?

- Very satisfied: 2003 (23%) vs. 2015 (40%)
- Somewhat satisfied: 2003 (32%) vs. 2015 (29%)
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied: 2003 (6%) vs. 2015 (5%)
- Somewhat dissatisfied: 2003 (4%) vs. 2015 (2%)
- Very dissatisfied: 2003 (2%) vs. 2015 (3%)
- Don't know: 2003 (33%) vs. 2015 (21%)
Agencies should recognize their own credibility and use it accordingly.

- Surveys can help clarify the extent to which the public trusts the state agency
Survey Results
Equipment Used for Hunting
• The majority of Oregon’s hunters prefer to hunt with a rifle, followed by a compound bow.

• Very few hunters prefer to hunt with a muzzleloader or traditional recurve or long bow (only 1% use the latter).
Q122. Of all weapons allowed, which one weapon would you most prefer to use to hunt deer in Oregon? (Asked of all, including those who have not yet hunted deer in Oregon.) (Deer survey)

- Rifle: 78%
- Compound bow: 16%
- Muzzleloader: 2%
- Traditional recurve or long bow: 1%
- Shotgun: 1%
- Handgun: 1%

Q122. Of all weapons allowed, which one weapon would you most prefer to use to hunt elk in Oregon? (Asked of all, including those who have not yet hunted elk in Oregon.) (Elk survey)

- Rifle: 75%
- Compound bow: 20%
- Muzzleloader: 3%
- Traditional recurve or long bow: 1%
Q121. Of the weapons you use, which one weapon do you use most often to hunt deer in Oregon? (Asked of those who hunted deer in Oregon at some time.) (Deer survey)

- **Rifle**: 78%
- **Compound bow**: 17%
- **Muzzleloader**: 2%
- **Traditional recurve or long bow**: 1%

Percent (n=1052)

Q121. Of the weapons you use, which one weapon do you use most often to hunt elk in Oregon? (Asked of those who hunted elk in Oregon at some time.) (Elk survey)

- **Rifle**: 73%
- **Compound bow**: 23%
- **Muzzleloader**: 2%
- **Traditional recurve or long bow**: 1%

Percent (n=1073)
Hunting Locations
• While western Oregon residents hunt both eastern and western Oregon, eastern Oregon residents rarely hunt western Oregon and take advantage of general seasons.

• Hunters primarily hunt public land. Among hunters that hunt on private land, most hunt on areas where permission is required.
Q45. In which of these three regions [did you hunt deer in the past 3 years / have you hunted deer / would you like to hunt deer]?

(Deer survey)

Western Oregon Coast Range Area

Western Oregon Cascades Area

Eastern Oregon

Don't know

Q49. In which of these three regions [did you hunt elk in the past 3 years / have you hunted elk / would you like to hunt elk]?

(Elk survey)
Q54. In Oregon, do you hunt deer mostly on public land, mostly on private land, or both about equally? (Asked of those who hunted deer in Oregon at some time.) (Deer survey)
Q54. In Oregon, do you hunt elk mostly on public land, mostly on private land, or both about equally? (Asked of those who hunted elk in Oregon at some time.) (Elk survey)

- Mostly on public land: Western Oregon Coast Range Area (n=298) - 72%, Western Oregon Cascades Area (n=238) - 73%, Eastern Oregon (n=537) - 78%
- Both about equally: Western Oregon Coast Range Area (n=298) - 16%, Western Oregon Cascades Area (n=238) - 17%, Eastern Oregon (n=537) - 9%
- Mostly on private land: Western Oregon Coast Range Area (n=298) - 10%, Western Oregon Cascades Area (n=238) - 12%, Eastern Oregon (n=537) - 9%
- Don't know: Western Oregon Coast Range Area (n=298) - 1%, Western Oregon Cascades Area (n=238) - 0%, Eastern Oregon (n=537) - 1%
Q55. When you hunt elk on private land in Oregon, do you typically hunt on...? (Asked of those who hunted deer in Oregon at some time and did so mostly on private land or both public and private land about equally.) (Elk survey)

Private land open to the public that does not require permission
- Western Oregon Coast Range Area (n=78): 24%
- Western Oregon Cascades Area (n=50): 18%
- Eastern Oregon (n=140): 9%

Private land with permission
- Western Oregon Coast Range Area (n=78): 76%
- Western Oregon Cascades Area (n=50): 62%
- Eastern Oregon (n=140): 59%

Both about equally
- Western Oregon Coast Range Area (n=78): 20%
- Western Oregon Cascades Area (n=50): 15%
- Eastern Oregon (n=140): 14%

Don't know
- Western Oregon Coast Range Area (n=78): 0%
- Western Oregon Cascades Area (n=50): 1%
- Eastern Oregon (n=140): 1%
Motivations for Hunting
• Oregon hunters’ most important reasons for hunting are to be close to nature; to be with friends and family; for the sport, recreation, or challenge; and for the meat.

• Harvesting a trophy animal was very low on the ranking of reasons for hunting.
Q26-Q38. Mean ratings of importance of each of the following as a reason they [hunt / would like to hunt] deer in Oregon, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all important and 10 is extremely important. (Deer survey)

- **Q38. To be close to nature**: Mean ratings for different age groups are shown.
- **Q32. To be with family and friends**: Mean ratings for different age groups are shown.
- **Q35. For the sport, recreation, or challenge**: Mean ratings for different age groups are shown.
- **Q26. For the meat**: Mean ratings for different age groups are shown.
- **Q29. For a trophy**: Mean ratings for different age groups are shown.
Q26-Q38. Mean ratings of importance of each of the following as a reason they [hunt / would like to hunt] elk in Oregon, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all important and 10 is extremely important. (Elk survey)

- **Q26. For the meat**: 8.1 (55 years old or older), 8.8 (35-54 years old), 9.0 (18-34 years old)
- **Q32. To be with family and friends**: 8.2 (55 years old or older), 8.1 (35-54 years old), 8.2 (18-34 years old)
- **Q38. To be close to nature**: 8.2 (55 years old or older), 8.1 (35-54 years old), 8.1 (18-34 years old)
- **Q35. For the sport, recreation, or challenge**: 7.8 (55 years old or older), 7.8 (35-54 years old), 7.5 (18-34 years old)
- **Q29. For a trophy**: 3.1 (55 years old or older), 3.6 (35-54 years old), 3.5 (18-34 years old)
Satisfaction with Hunting
• Although deer and elk hunters are more often satisfied than dissatisfied with their hunting in Oregon, dissatisfaction is substantial.

  o Lack of game is the most common reason for dissatisfaction among both deer and elk hunters, followed by access issues.

• Most important to deer and elk hunter satisfaction is simply being able to hunt every year, followed by having a higher or better chance of harvest success.

• However, deer and elk hunters agree that having the opportunity to hunt is more important than harvesting an animal.
Q56. In general, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your elk hunting experiences in Oregon? (Asked of those who hunted elk in Oregon at some time.) (Elk survey)

- Very satisfied: 24
- Somewhat satisfied: 30
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied: 11
- Somewhat dissatisfied: 19
- Very dissatisfied: 15
- Don’t know: 1

Percent (n=1071)

Q56. In general, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your deer hunting experiences in Oregon? (Asked of those who hunted deer in Oregon at some time.) (Deer survey)

- Very satisfied: 20
- Somewhat satisfied: 28
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied: 10
- Somewhat dissatisfied: 24
- Very dissatisfied: 18
- Don’t know: 0

Percent (n=1052)
Q57. Why aren’t you more satisfied with your deer hunting experiences in Oregon? (Asked of those who hunted deer in Oregon but are not very satisfied with the experiences.)

(Deer survey)

Multiple Responses Allowed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percent (n=821)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of game</td>
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<tr>
<td>Access issues / posted property (e.g., timber)</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Too many predators</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poor management / restrictions</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Too crowded / too many tags</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not enough tags / opportunities</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of harvest</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of bucks / trophies</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poaching / poor behavior of hunters / recreationists</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Length / timing of seasons</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Too expensive</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Age / health</td>
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<td>Weather</td>
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<tr>
<td>Controlled burns reduce habitat</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
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Q57. Why aren’t you more satisfied with your elk hunting experiences in Oregon? (Asked of those who hunted elk in Oregon but are not very satisfied with the experiences.)

(Elk survey)

Multiple Responses Allowed

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<tr>
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<th>Percent (n=798)</th>
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<td>Access issues / posted property (e.g., timber)</td>
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<td>Not enough tags / opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of harvest</td>
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<td>Length / timing of seasons</td>
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<td>Too expensive</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poaching / poor behavior of hunters / recreationists</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of bulls / trophies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age / health</td>
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<td>Weather</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Controlled burns reduce habitat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>4</td>
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</table>
Q178-Q193. Mean ratings of importance of each of the following to their satisfaction as a deer hunter in Oregon, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all important and 10 is extremely important.

(Deer survey)

Q178. Being able to hunt deer every year 8.7
Q181. Having a higher or better chance of harvest success 8.1
Q184. Length or duration of the season you hunt 7.2
Q187. Having fewer other hunters in the field when you hunt deer 7.0
Q193. Having areas with few roads or a Travel Management Area in which some roads are closed seasonally when hunting deer 5.9
Q190. Having good road access for motorized vehicles when hunting deer 5.5

Q178-Q193. Mean ratings of importance of each of the following to their satisfaction as an elk hunter in Oregon, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all important and 10 is extremely important.

(Elk survey)
Q201/Q202. In general, which is more important to you, personally, as an elk hunter in Oregon? [Note: response order switched in each question.] (Elk survey)

- Having the opportunity to hunt: 63%
- Harvesting an animal: 29%
- Don't know / No preference / can't choose: 8%

Q198/Q199. In general, which is more important to you, personally, as a deer hunter in Oregon? [Note: response order switched in each question.] (Deer survey)

- Having the opportunity to hunt: 64%
- Harvesting an animal: 28%
- Don't know / No preference / can't choose: 8%
Constraints to Hunting Participation
The primary reason hunters did not go hunting was a lack of time due to work/family obligations, followed by not drawing a tag.
Q69. What are the main reasons you did not hunt deer in Oregon in the past 3 years? (Asked of those who did not hunt deer in Oregon in the past 3 years.) (Deer survey)

- Not enough time / family obligations / work obligations: 35%
- Did not draw a tag / hunt at all: 32%
- Increasing preference points: 16%
- Health issues / illness / injury: 16%
- Waiting for an opportunity in a preferred controlled area: 12%
- Not enough game: 8%
- Costs / expenses: 6%
- Did not draw first choice tag / hunt: 5%
- Too crowded / too many hunters in the field: 5%
- Distance / travel required to hunt: 5%
- Not enough / poor access to public land: 5%
- Area I prefer to hunt closed to access or requires permit: 3%
- Weather: 1%
- Other: 14%
- Don’t know: 2%

Multiple Responses Allowed

Q69. What are the main reasons you did not hunt elk in Oregon in the past 3 years? (Asked of those who did not hunt elk in Oregon in the past 3 years.) (Elk survey)

- Not enough time / family obligations / work obligations: 40%
- Did not draw a tag / hunt at all: 25%
- Waiting for an opportunity in a preferred controlled area: 17%
- Not enough / poor access to public land: 16%
- Health issues / illness / injury: 13%
- Increasing preference points: 13%
- Too crowded / too many hunters in the field: 11%
- Not enough game: 11%
- Area I prefer to hunt closed to access or requires permit: 11%
- Costs / expenses: 9%
- Did not draw first choice tag / hunt: 8%
- Distance / travel required to hunt: 4%
- Weather: 2%
- Other: 10%
- Don’t know: 2%

Multiple Responses Allowed
Opinions on Regulatory Issues
• Both deer and elk hunters prefer the current system in which drawing tags for a controlled hunt means many hunters are not able to hunt every year unless they hunt a general season.

• Deer and elk hunters are split on the other options of less opportunities / increased chance of harvest, and more opportunities / less chance of harvest.
Q204/Q205. Currently in Oregon, drawing elk tags for a controlled hunt means many hunters are not able to hunt elk every year unless they hunt a general season. Knowing this, which of the following do you most prefer? [Note: response order switched in each question.] (Elk survey)

- Less opportunities / increased chance of harvest: 20%
- More opportunities / less chance of harvest: 15%
- Current system to remain the same: 56%
- Don't know / No preference / can't choose: 8%

Q204/Q205. Currently in Oregon, drawing deer tags for a controlled hunt means many hunters are not able to hunt deer every year unless they hunt a general season. Knowing this, which of the following do you most prefer? [Note: response order switched in each question.] (Deer survey)

- More opportunities / less chance of harvest: 17%
- Less opportunities / increased chance of harvest: 17%
- Current system to remain the same: 58%
- Don't know / No preference / can't choose: 9%
Youth Hunting
Most commonly, hunters think that there are about the right amount of opportunities for youth to hunt in Oregon.

Regarding the importance of various aspects of youth hunting, simply providing more opportunities—to hunt in general but more importantly to hunt with family and friends—tops the list among both deer and elk hunters.
Q207. Currently, do you think there are too many, about the right amount, or too few deer hunting opportunities for youth in Oregon? (Deer survey)

- Too many: 4
- About the right amount: 46
- Too few: 29
- Don't know: 22

Percent (n=1065)

Q207. Currently, do you think there are too many, about the right amount, or too few elk hunting opportunities for youth in Oregon? (Elk survey)

- Too many: 4
- About the right amount: 46
- Too few: 24
- Don't know: 27

Percent (n=1106)
Q210-Q219. Mean ratings of how important each of the following should be for youth hunting opportunities in Oregon, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all important and 10 is extremely important. (Elk survey)

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Rating</th>
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<td>Q216. Providing more opportunities for youth to hunt elk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q210. Providing controlled hunts that only youth can apply for</td>
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<td>Q219. Providing increased likelihood that youth will harvest a elk</td>
<td>7.1</td>
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Q210-Q219. Mean ratings of how important each of the following should be for youth hunting opportunities in Oregon, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all important and 10 is extremely important. (Deer survey)

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<td>Q216. Providing more opportunities for youth to hunt deer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q219. Providing increased likelihood that youth will harvest a deer</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q210. Providing controlled hunts that only youth can apply for</td>
<td>7.3</td>
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</table>
Questions?
mark@responsiveemanagement.com