

UNDERSTANDING THE HEALTH OF Predator Free 2050

FINAL DEBRIEF | MAY 2022



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Background and Context



Context

Predator Free New Zealand is charged with connecting and energising all New Zealanders towards a predator free Aotearoa New Zealand to enable our native species to thrive.

The vision guiding Predator Free NZ is to make Aotearoa Predator Free by 2050. This entails the complete removal of damaging predators who have an impact on New Zealand's native flora and fauna.

- Predator Free NZ cannot achieve this vision on their own; in addition to collaborating with organisations and community groups they require engagement and commitment from ALL New Zealanders
- The emergence of other social issues, such as the covid-19 pandemic and climate change, have dominated the hearts and minds of kiwis; potentially leaving less bandwidth to engage with Predator Free NZ

Predator Free NZ is therefore seeking to understand the current 'health' of the predator free movement with New Zealanders and establish a benchmark that can be tracked over time.



Our Objectives

In response to this context, the overall objective of this work is to benchmark the 'health' of the Predator Free New Zealand movement amongst the general NZ population.

More specifically this includes:

- > Understanding awareness and engagement of New Zealanders with the target of Predator Free by 2050
- > Determining the incidence of participation (and willingness) to participate in Predator Free by 2050
- > Gauge the relative importance of Predator Free by 2050 against competing societal issues/concerns
- > Understand expectations kiwis have about the level of profile and support required to achieve Predator Free by 2050
- > Explore sentiment towards a current topical issue (cat control)



Our Approach

- > A 10-minute online survey New Zealanders aged 18 years and over

- > 1005 responses received
- > Representative of the national population based on age, gender and region
- > NZ Māori representation in line with population incidence
- > Respondents sourced via the Dynata consumer research panel - the world's largest first-party data platform

- > Lines of questioning covered:

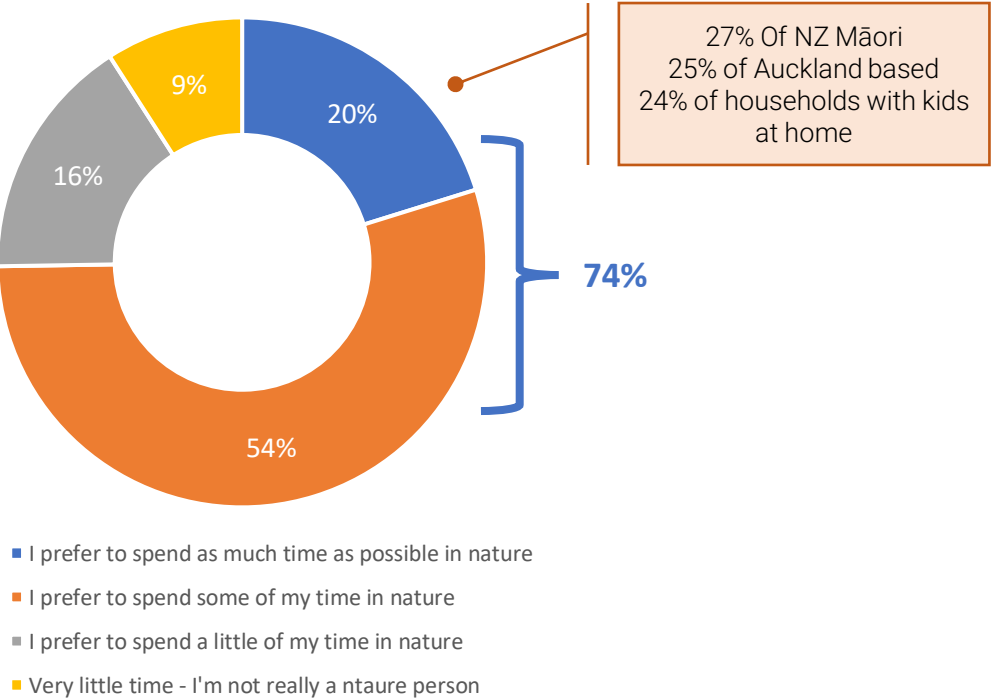
- > Conservation/Biodiversity importance and attitudes
- > Attitudes and preferences held by kiwis about nature
- > Awareness, understanding and perceived leadership of Predator Free 2050
- > Level of optimism for achieving Predator Free by 2050
- > Current and future intent for participating in conservation related behaviours
- > Attitudes towards cat control measures
- > Demographics eg age, region, household income, cat ownership

Conservation in Context

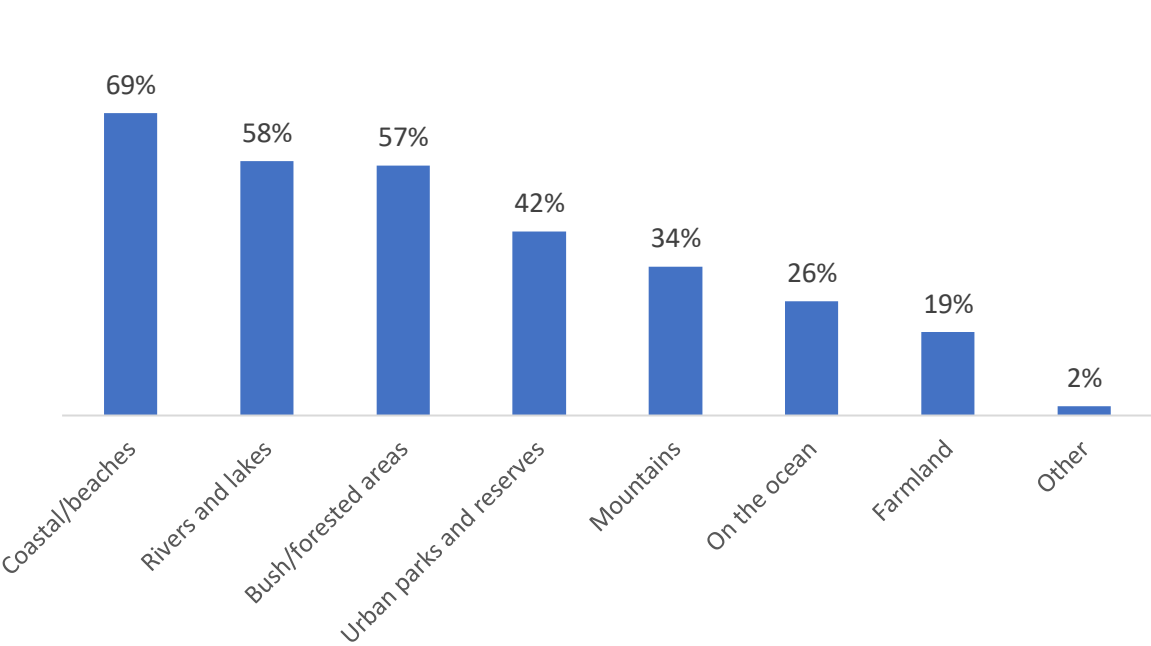


Three quarters of all Kiwis want to spend some or as much time as possible in nature, and there is a preference towards coastal areas, rivers, lakes and forests

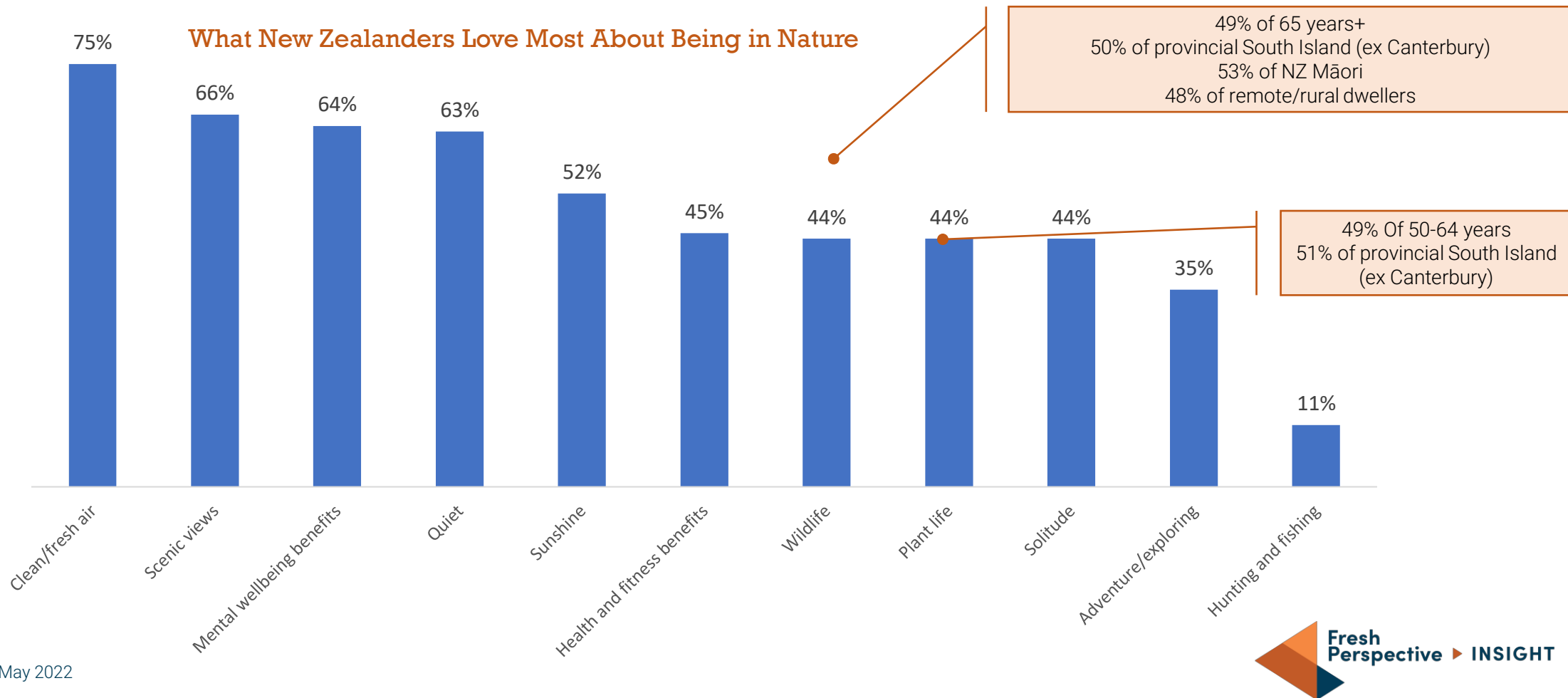
Amount of Time Ideally Like to Spend in Nature



Type of Nature that New Zealanders Enjoy Being in the Most



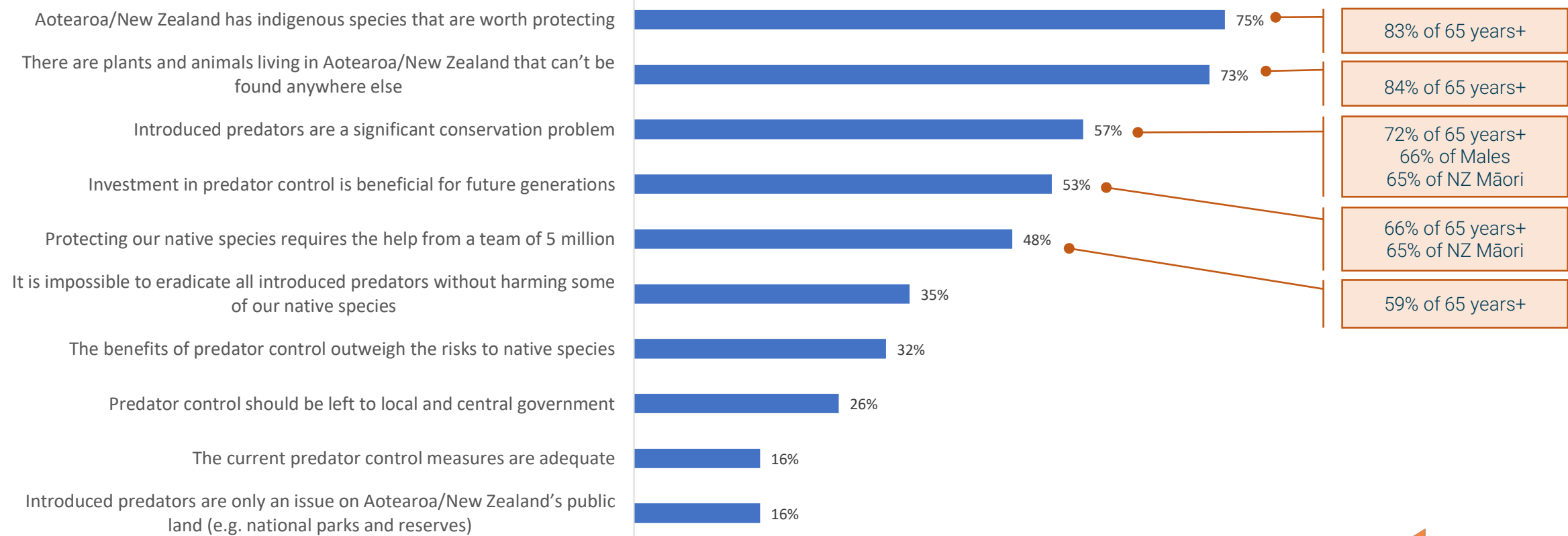
Clean air and tranquility are the favoured aspects of nature. When looking more closely at plant and wildlife there is greater appreciation amongst older New Zealanders, NZ Māori and those living provincially



Three out of every four New Zealanders appreciate the value and uniqueness of our native flora and fauna; most notably those over 65 years or NZ Māori

Sentiment Towards Aspects of Conservation in Aotearoa/ New Zealand

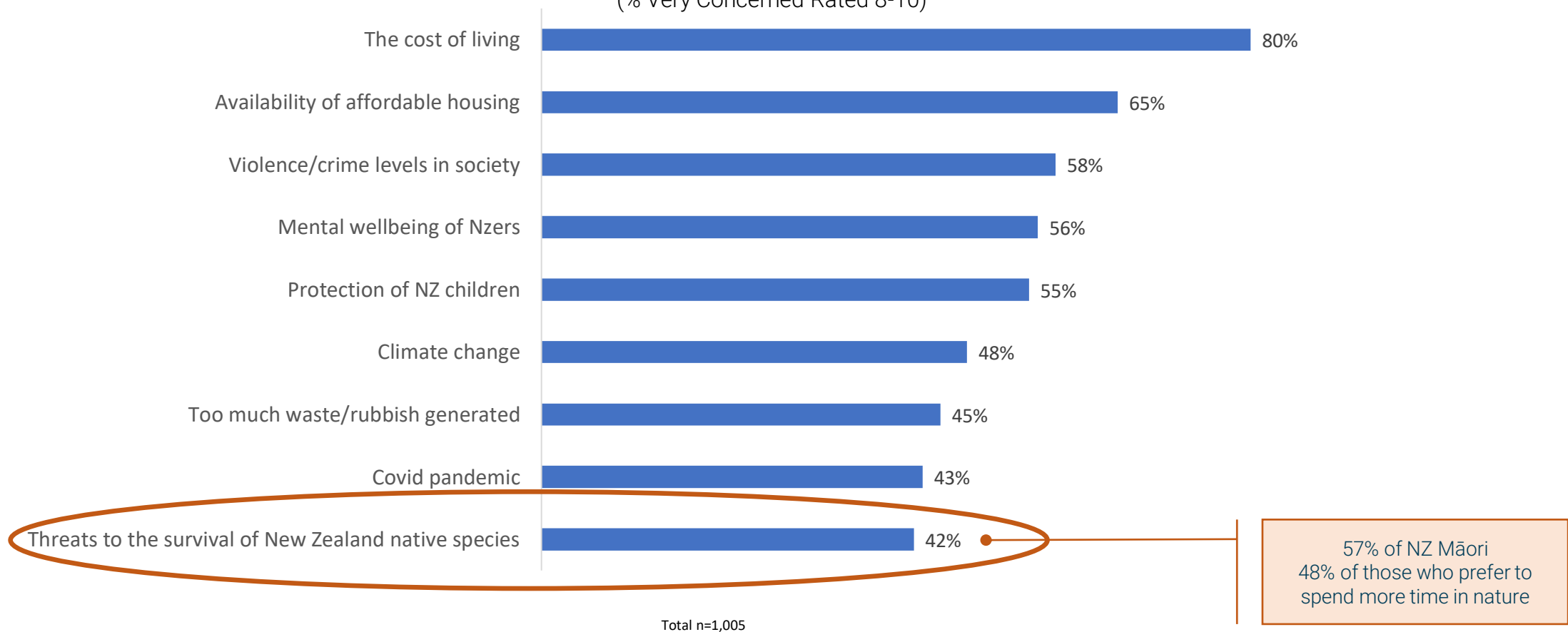
(% Strongly Agree, Rated 8-10)



Despite this, concerns around the survival of NZ native species are significantly less than other societal issues

Concern About Societal Issues Relevant to Aotearoa/ New Zealand

(% Very Concerned Rated 8-10)



Total n=1,005

And those that *aren't* concerned about threats to the survival of NZ native species mostly believe we should be prioritising people issues first, or that it's not too serious yet

People and people problems take priority

—

"I see people problems as a higher priority"

"We look after native species better than we look after our children sometimes."

"It's a sad state of affairs all around but on a scale of evils I worry about people in the current economic climate"

It's not that serious, and DOC plus others have it under control

—

"I'm not too concerned as I know we are getting better at keeping an eye on the threats to things."

"I think the native species are doing ok?"

"I think that DOC and related organisations are doing all they can to avert real threats to New Zealand native species"

Lack of interest or apathetic

—

"I don't really care about birds and animals being instinct, it doesn't affect me"

"I don't really care at the moment, and day by day. It is not something that ever passes my radar. But I like animals and wildlife nevertheless but am just not passionate about solving this issue."

"Not really that interested, but would be saddened if something unique to NZ were to become extinct"

The extinction of some species is inevitable for some

—

"Mother nature determines what species survive."

"It's evolutionary"

"While it may seem important, in the long run it will not be. Millions of species have died off over the millennia."

What this means:

- > New Zealanders enjoy spending time in nature; particularly those that are NZ Māori, based in Auckland or have children living at home
- > Our coastal areas are appreciated the most, followed by rivers, lakes and forests
- > Clean air and tranquility are the most broadly appealing aspects of nature. Plant and wildlife are less widely appreciated; but older New Zealanders, NZ Māori and those living provincially are more inclined to value them
- > The majority of New Zealanders appreciate the value and uniqueness of our native flora and fauna; most notably those over 65 years or NZ Māori
- > Despite this affiliation for nature; kiwis concern for the survival of NZ native species is significantly less when compared with other societal issues.
- > In the minds of kiwis, conservation isn't a concern in the context of some big issues directly affecting people or don't feel that urgent intervention is needed just yet.

IMPLICATION:

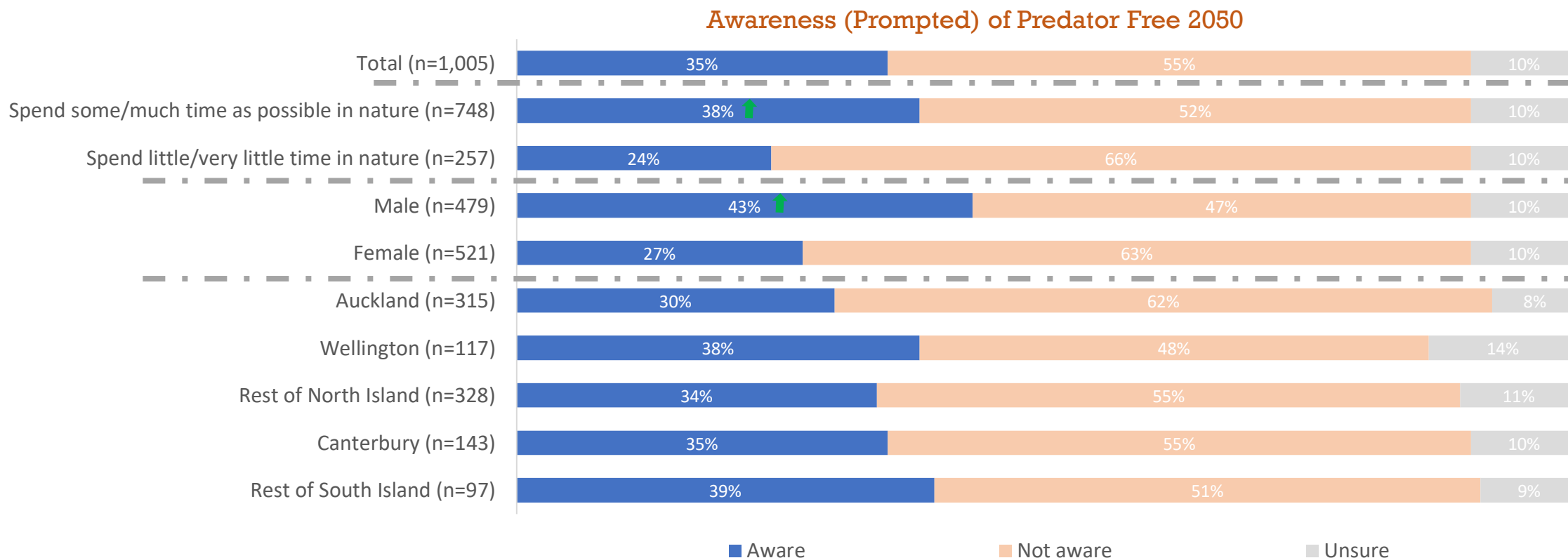
Kiwis love and appreciate the many benefits of being in nature; however many are taking this for granted or do not see it as under threat. There is a sense that conservation of our native species, in relation to everything else, is something we can afford to worry less about.

Measuring the Health of the Predator Free Movement



As far as Predator Free 2050 is concerned – overall awareness is moderate (35%), but there are pockets of our population that are more aware

Awareness of Predator Free 2050 tends to be higher amongst Males and those with a greater affiliation for being outdoors. As expected, awareness is slightly higher amongst Wellingtonians, but also amongst South Islanders living outside of the Canterbury region.



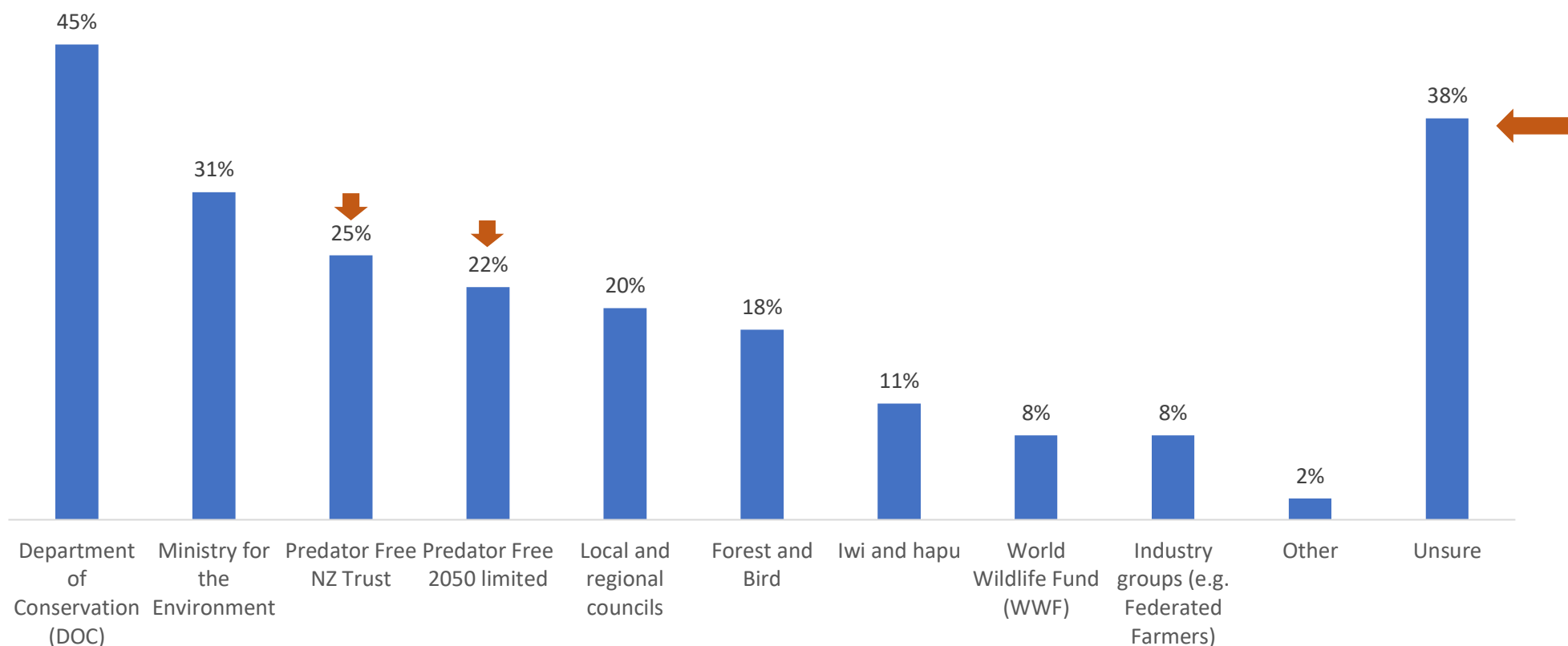
Almost half of the general public can correctly identify the goal of Predator Free 2050 when prompted

Correct goal attribution is even stronger amongst those aware of the Predator Free movement, those 65 years plus or Male.



And as a movement, it is most closely associated with being led by DOC

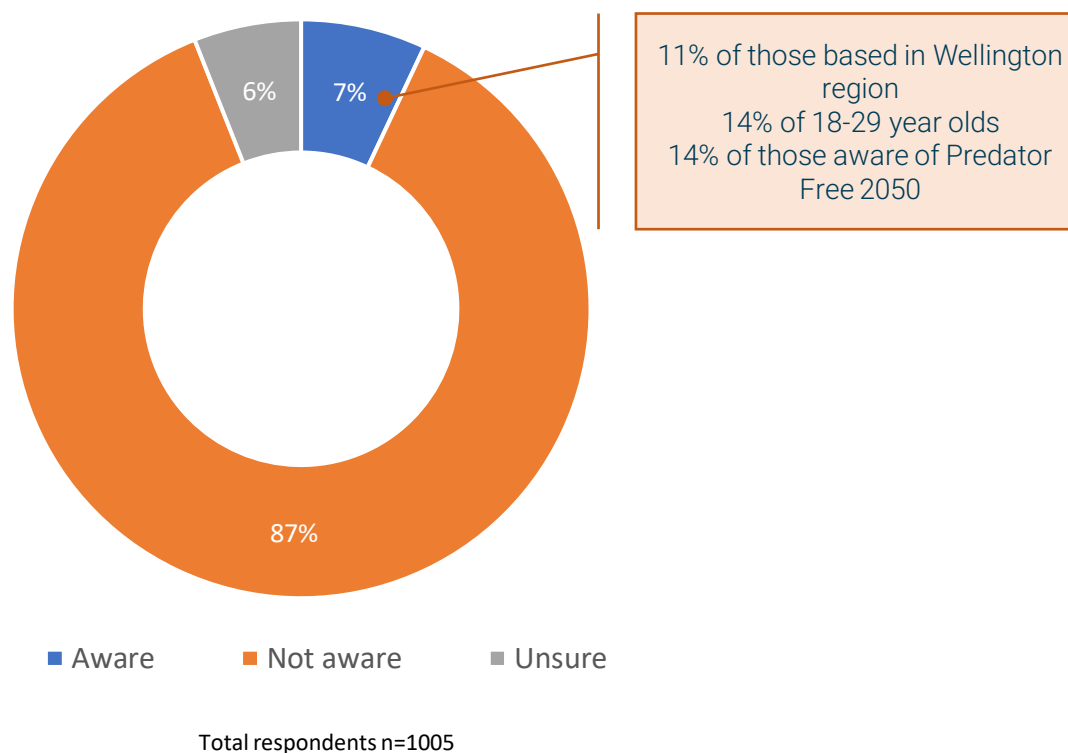
One in four can correctly link the movement to some degree with the Predator Free NZ Trust, however a large portion of the general public struggle to associate the movement with any of the organisations provided.



Total respondents n=1005

Despite awareness of the movement sitting at 35%, the vast majority of the general public are not aware of a local predator free group in their region; and the level of active participation is low

Awareness of Local Predator Free Group in Own Region



Level of Involvement with Local Predator Free Group

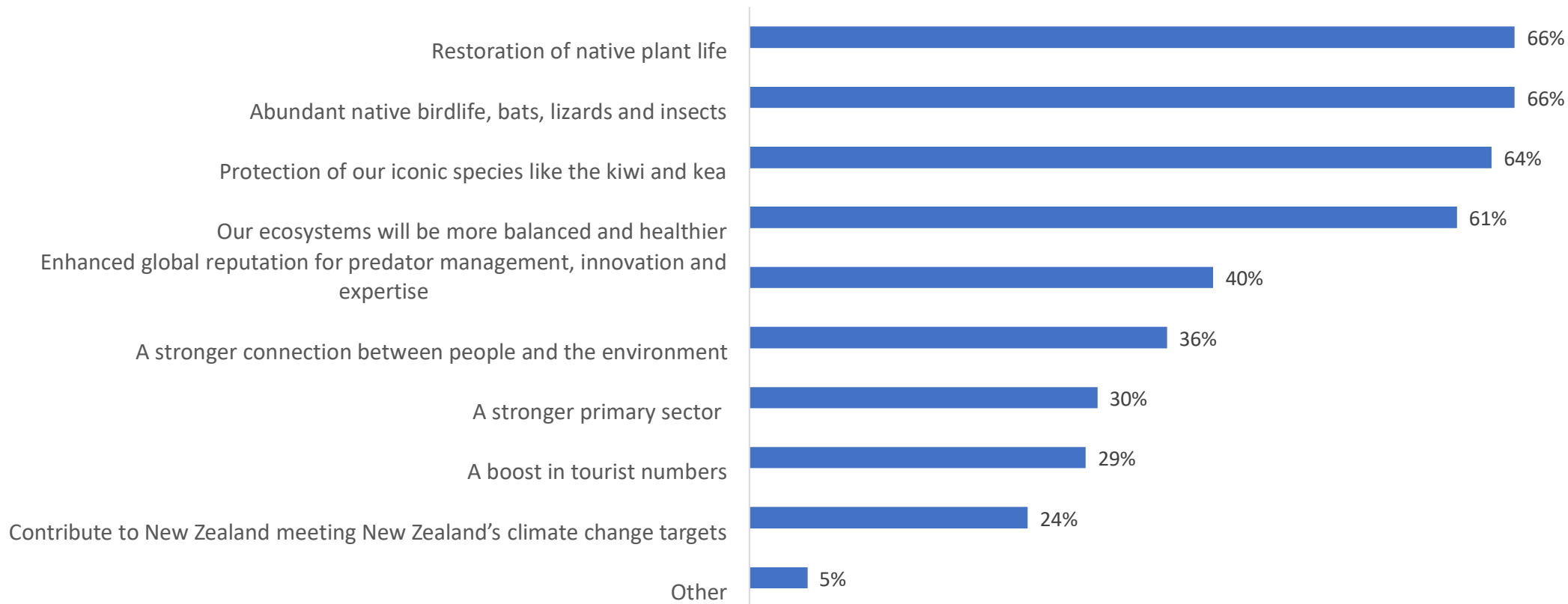
- 39% Have read about them online
- 22% Have participated in their arranged activities
- 18% Have contacted them for information
- 15% Have given them a donation
- 20% Have done none of the above

Based on those aware of a local predator free group in their region n=74

The benefits of becoming Predator Free are listed as being plentiful, but primarily centre around a healthy, abundant ecosystem of bird and plant life



How NZ would be if we meet our Predator Free 2050 goal

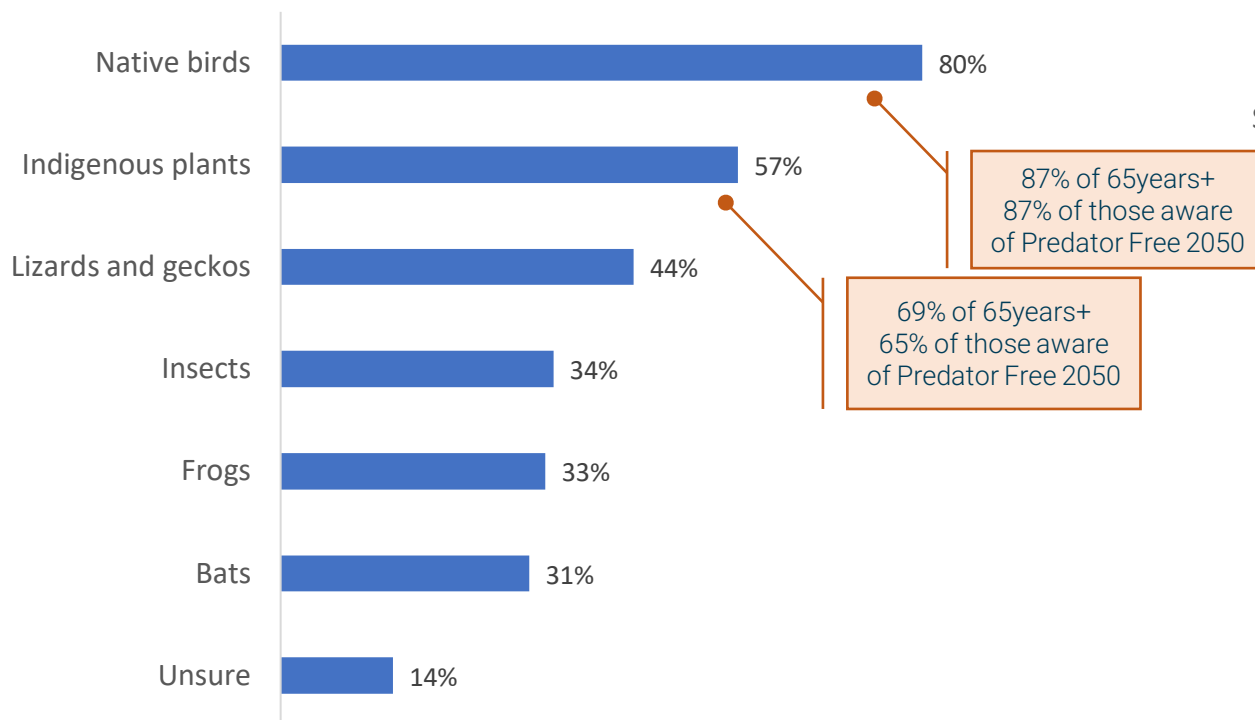


On average respondents selected 4.2 options from this list

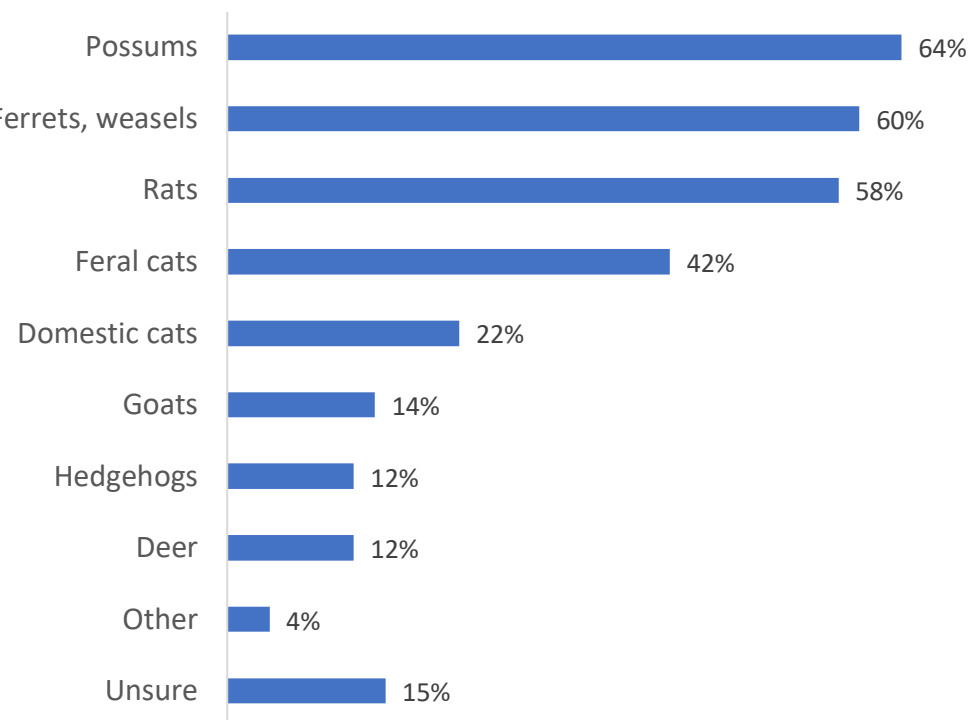
Total respondents n=1005

Native birds are viewed as being the most worthy of protection, and possums, mustelids and rats are deemed the most harmful predators

NZ Native Species Most in Need of Protection



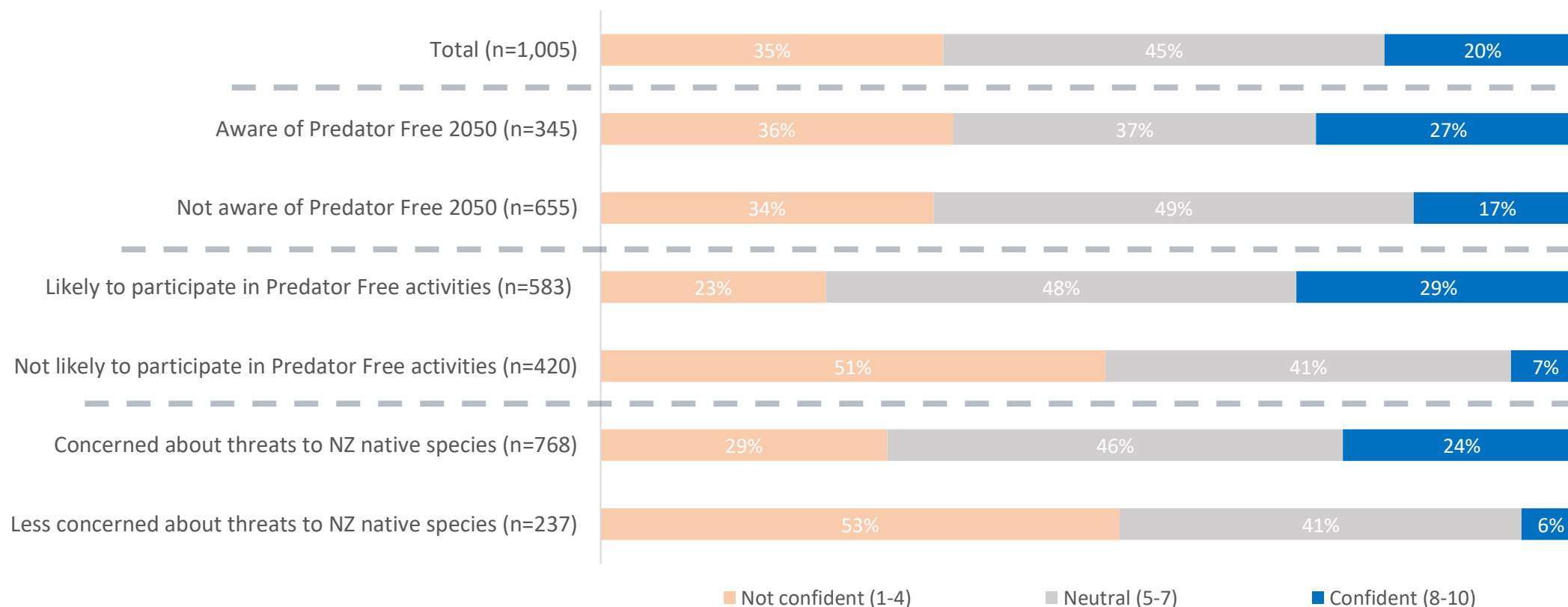
Perceived Most Damaging Predators for NZ Native Species



Total respondents n=1005

Along with moderate awareness levels, there is not a great degree of confidence amongst the general public that NZ can be predator free by 2050 (20%). However, there is more optimism amongst those who are aware of and engaged in the movement

Level of Confidence in New Zealand Being Predator Free by 2050



Reasons behind low confidence in being predator free by 2050 are underpinned by sense of overwhelm and scale...

Predators are breeding too fast for us get ahead of the problem

—

"They multiply faster than we eradicate them."

"It's a tough task. The reproduce so rapidly and they're only just managed to keep the current predator populations at bay."

The predators being targeted are already too established here to remove them all

—

"Rats are such a numerous and hidden problem you will never be able to get rid of them all"

"It seems unlikely that pervasive species can be eliminated completely"

"I think it is a huge undertaking and there are too many predators now"

Lack of money and resources

—

"Not enough resources will be afforded the project by subsequent gov'ts/councils"

"Because there are not enough people and traps to deal to the predators."

It is too difficult to find and eradicate predators given NZ's size and many remote areas

—

"Too much hard country to control"

"Too much private land to cover"

"NZ is a very large area when it comes to any organisation reaching all areas where the problems are"

Concerns about use of 1080, but scepticism about achieving the goal without it

—

"Unless they get a replacement for the dreadful poison that is 1080 then I hold no hope"

"It's too hard to achieve with the resources we have - without completely poisoning the environment beyond repair"

There is a belief that to achieve our goal many actions need to be taken; and primarily more investment is needed by DOC and Councils (rather than efforts of the general population)

Perceived Actions Required to Ensure NZ Can become Predator Free by 2050



On average respondents selected 4.4 options from this list

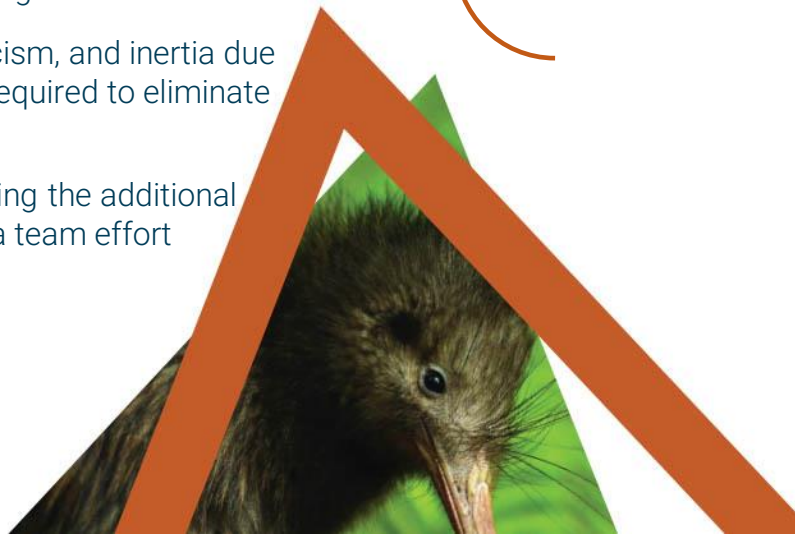
Total respondents n=1005

What this means:

- > While prompted awareness of Predator Free 2050 is moderate - ie one in three New Zealanders – understanding of the movement's objective is better, especially amongst those aged 65 years or more
- > In terms of attributing the movement to a “leader” up to one in four can correctly link the movement with the Predator Free NZ Trust, however a large portion of the general public struggle to associate the movement with any of the organisations provided.
- > The vast majority of the general public are not aware of a local predator free group in their region; and the level of active participation is low
- > The benefits of becoming Predator Free primarily centre around a healthy, abundant ecosystem of bird and plant life
- > Confidence is lacking that NZ can be predator free by 2050; however, there is more optimism amongst those who are aware of and engaged in the movement
- > The path to becoming predator free is viewed with skepticism, and inertia due to feeling overwhelmed at the prospect of the resources required to eliminate rapidly breeding and well-established predators
- > They see DOC and Councils as being responsible for utilising the additional investment that is required, rather than using it to enable a team effort from 5 million

IMPLICATION:

The key to improving engagement and confidence in achieving Predator Free by 2050 is to raise awareness of the Predator Free movement, and re-educate kiwis about our target predators and share what can be accomplished (ie Wellington). New Zealanders would also benefit from more convincing about the importance of their contribution as individuals.

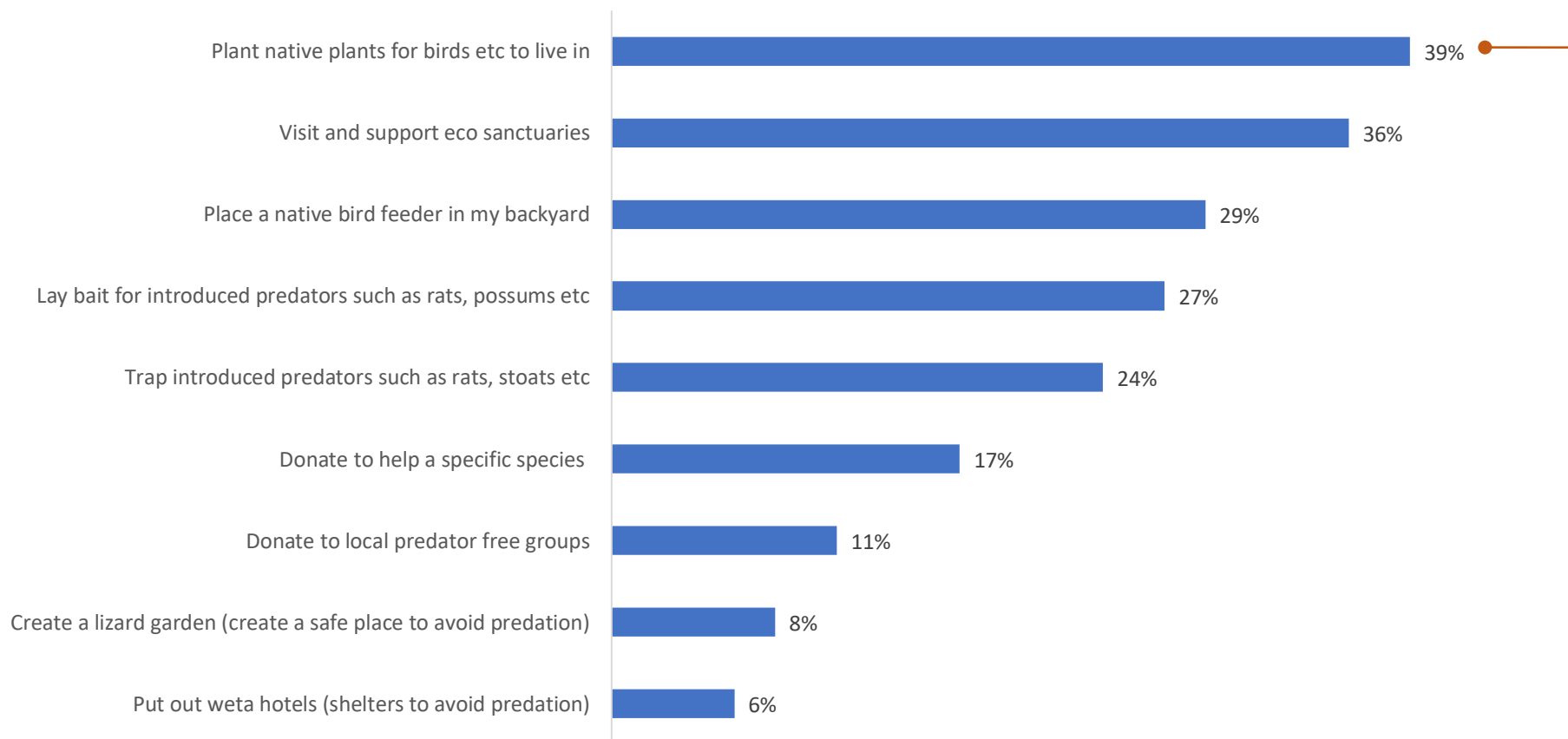


Behaviours that Support Predator Free 2050



Planting natives and supporting eco sanctuaries are the most common conservation activities undertaken by kiwis, particularly amongst those with the mindset and resources to do so

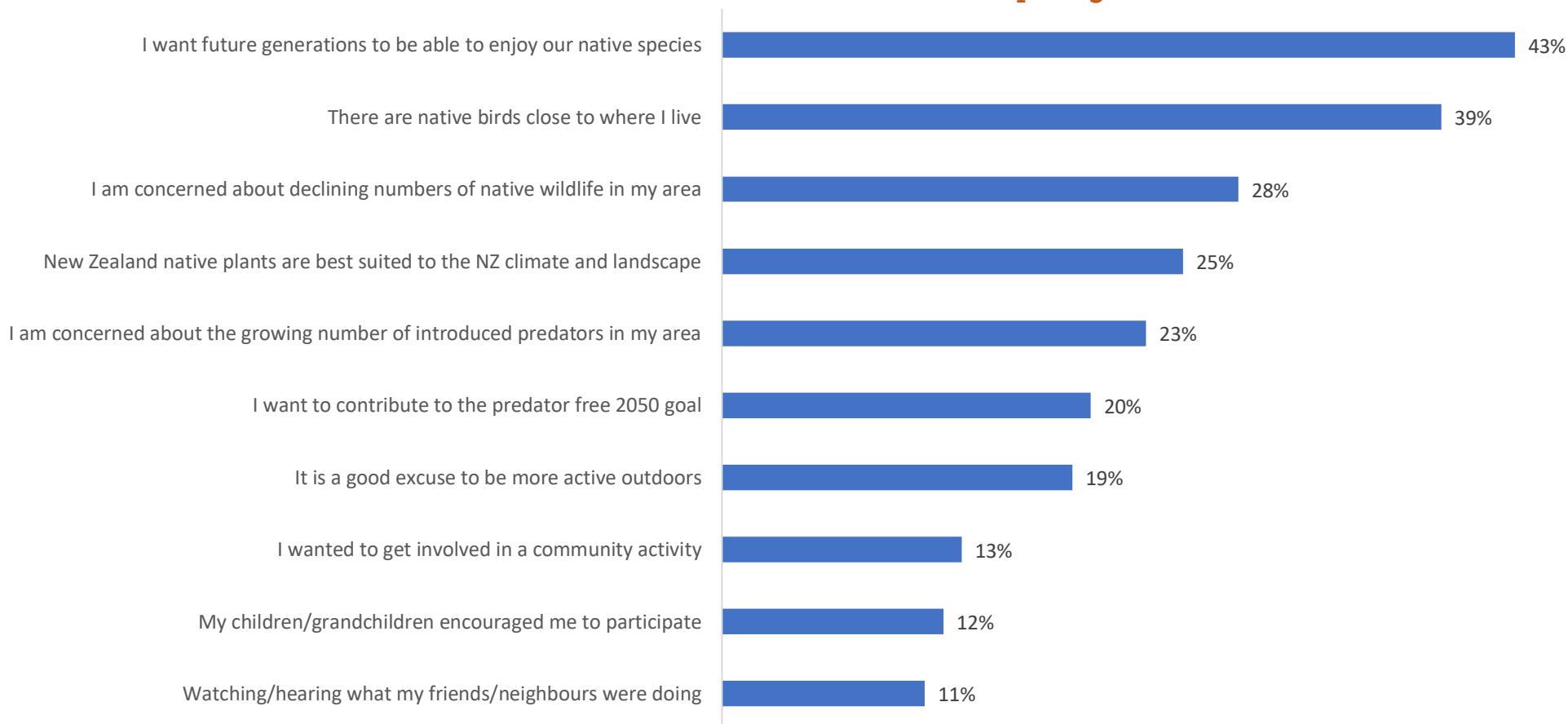
Incidence of Participation (Past or Present) in Conservation Activities



54% of 65 years+
 51% of remote/rurally based
 50% of regional South Islanders
 49% HH income >\$150k
 47% of home owners
 50% of those "very concerned"
 about threats to survival of native
 species
 54% of those aware of Predator
 Free 2050

Motivators for helping to preserve our native species centre around safeguarding for enjoyment – including generations to come; in particular our native birds

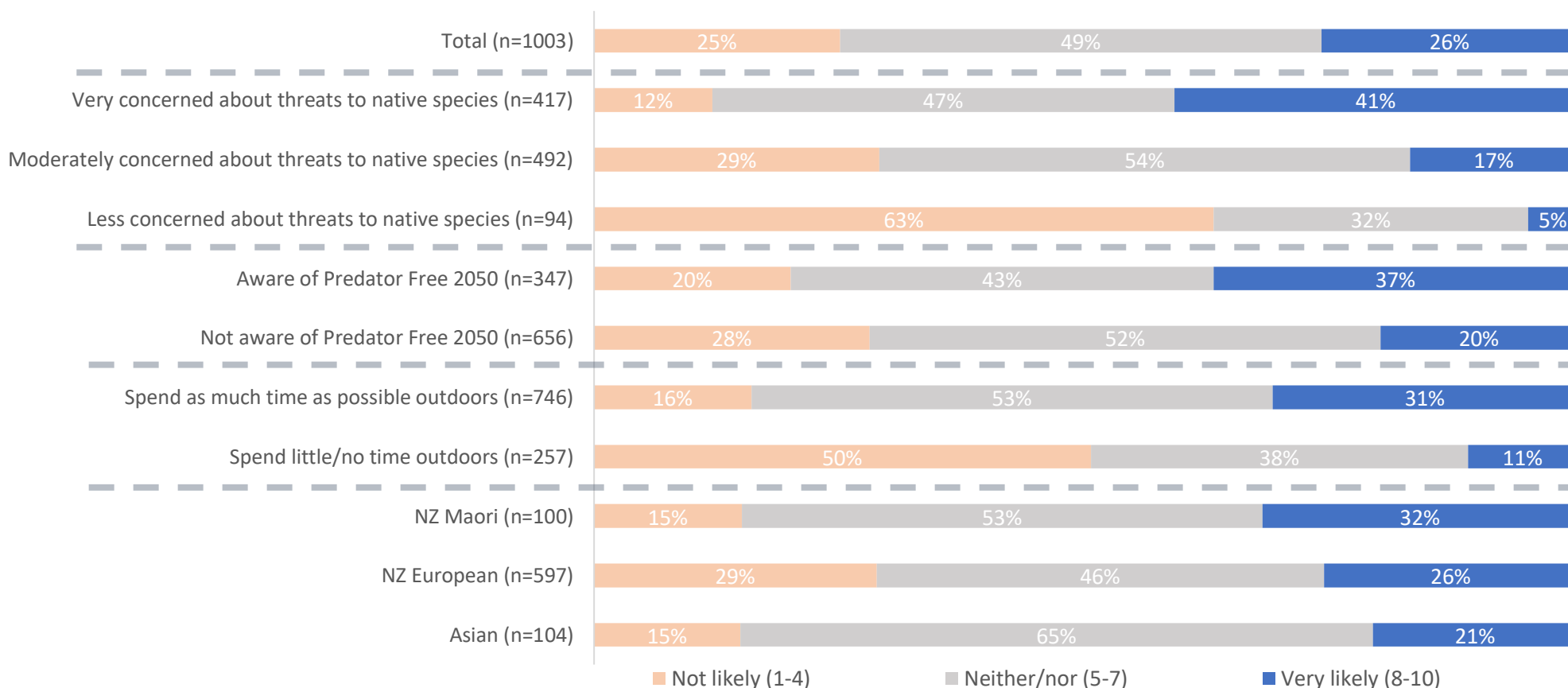
Drivers for Participating in Conservation Activities



Based on those who have participated in at least one conservation activity n=680

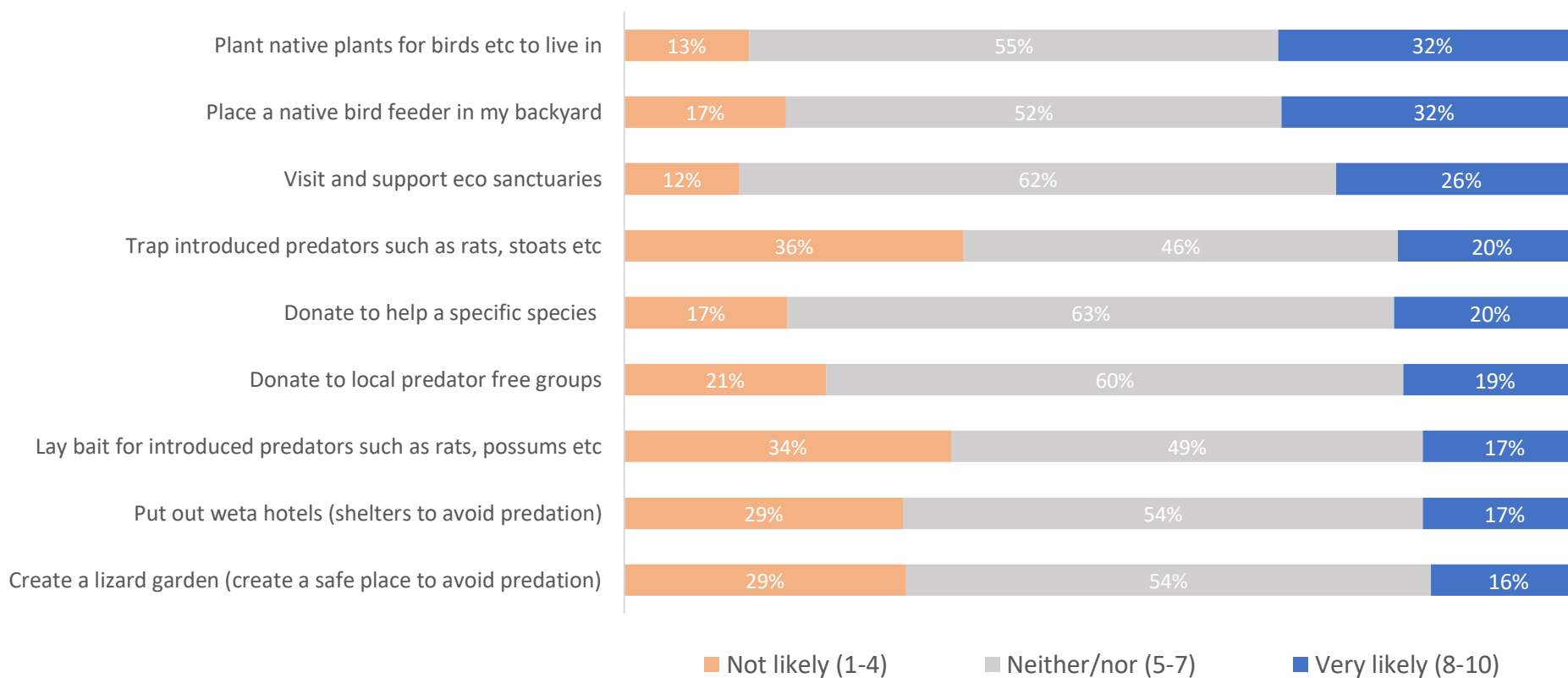
Those most likely to act in future have a high degree of concern for our native species, an awareness of Predator Free and a strong connection with nature

Future Intent to Participate in Conservation Activities



The conservation activities that attract the most mobilisation have strong ties with supporting native birds and plants, and are less focused on predator control

Future Intent to Participate in Specific Conservation Activities
(Amongst those Expressing an Intent to Participate in Conservation Activities Generally)



Based on those with some degree of intent (rated 5-10) to participate in activities to improve the survival of native species.
Excludes those who are already doing/have done this activity

The barriers to getting more involved in predator control are primarily driven by a range of personal circumstances

Lack of time or money

—

"So busy with day-to-day life it doesn't leave much spare time"

I have children under that age of 10 and I just don't have the time to."

"I am too busy doing other things and although I care about this issue, it's not a priority for me."

"More important use of my time and money"

"My finances do not allow me to purchase traps or donate."

Lack of knowledge/skills

—

"I don't know where to start. What is needed and wanted."

"I live in the middle of a city and would not have the first idea of what I could do in this regard."

"I hadn't heard of things like Weta hotel or lizard garden until this survey. I'll follow up and do these things now"

Don't want to kill/hurt animals

—

"I know it's for a good cause, but I can not do killing myself"

"Whilst I do care, I just wouldn't be keen to participate in trapping/killing of predators. Even though I know they're causing harm, I'd still find it difficult to kill any living creature."

Live in an urban area so doesn't feel as relevant

—

"I don't know much about it and I live in an apartment so hard to help wildlife from there"

"I live in a suburb, not much wildlife around here"

"I am not keen on trapping or baiting as I live in town"

"I am renting in an apartment, so not really surrounded by nature"

Constrained by health issues or age

—

"My physical disability, I have problem walking for long distances"

"My balance isn't great so might be more of a liability than an asset"

"I am not as young as I used to be - not so mobile"

What this means:

- > The conservation activities that generate the most involvement are those which contribute to preserving life (native species), rather than ending it (predator control). This links closely to what we know Kiwis enjoy and value from our outdoor spaces
- > Kiwis are most motivated to contribute by a desire to safeguard these valued species, particularly native birds, for the enjoyment of generations to come
- > The barriers to personally getting involved in predator control relate to financial constraints, being too busy or an aversion to harming animals. Some also feel ill-equipped, knowledge wise, to offer a meaningful contribution
- > Those with the strongest intent to act in future have a high degree of concern for our native species, an existing awareness of Predator Free and a strong connection with nature

IMPLICATION:

Preservation of life, in particular our treasured native birds, should continue to be the key message for Predator Free 2050.

We could make clearer linkages to the benefits of an abundance of native birds, both now and for future generations, while also simplifying the actions each of us can personally undertake to contribute

Two Opportunities to Improve Engagement and Action

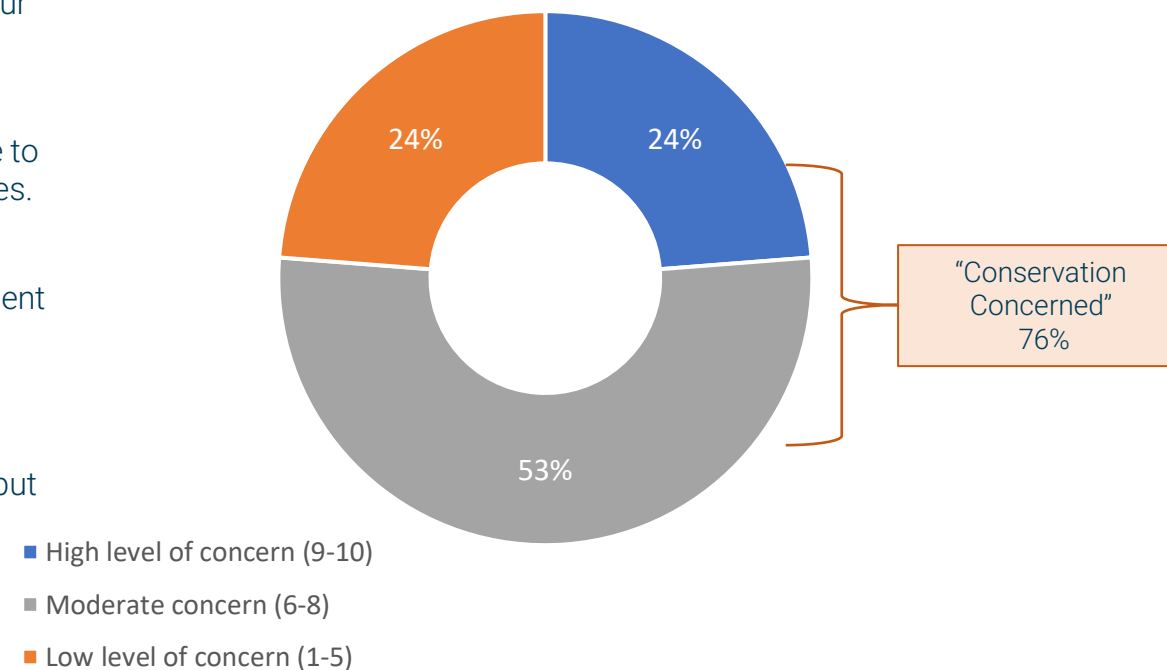


‘Conservation
Concerned’



‘Conservation Concerned’ are an audience that present a strong opportunity for conversion to engagement and then action

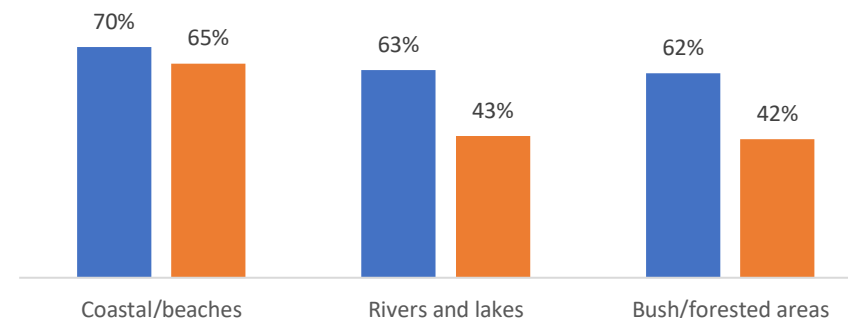
- There is a subset of New Zealanders who feel concerned about the survival of our native species.
- These kiwis make up 76% of the population and are defined as having moderate to high levels of concern about threats to the survival of New Zealand native species.
- This group offers a logical starting point for improving awareness and engagement of the Predator Free 2050 movement
- Compared with their opposites – the low concern group – ‘Conservation Concerned’ kiwis do not look different when it comes to demographic profiling, but in terms of psychographics they do....



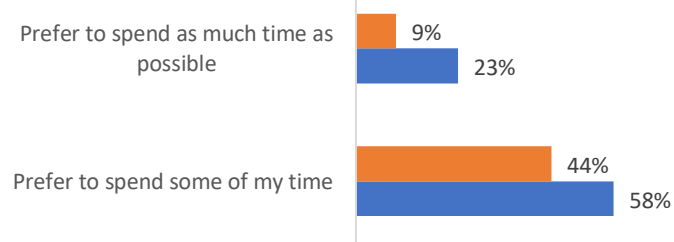
The ‘*Conservation Concerned*’ have a stronger affiliation with nature; with 81% wanting to spend some or as much time as possible in nature

They prefer to be in coastal areas, rivers/lakes and bush, and have a greater appreciation for all the benefits nature has to offer; in particular the restorative aspects such as clean air and tranquillity. This group can best be reached through Facebook, Youtube and free to air TV.

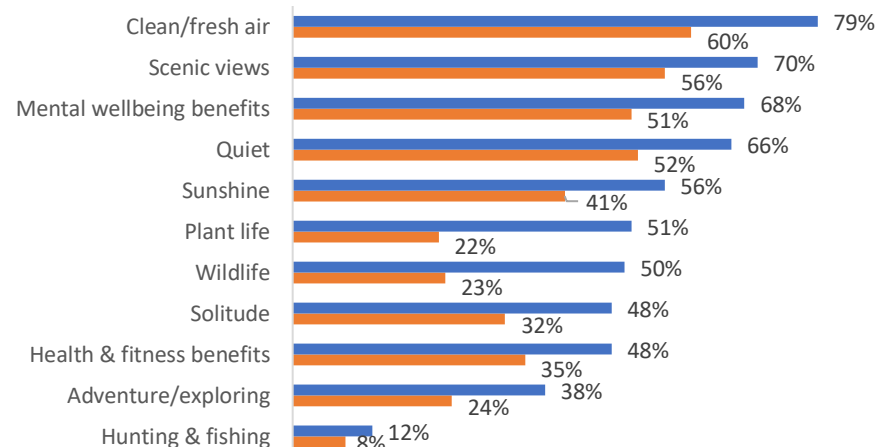
Type of Nature Enjoy Being in the Most



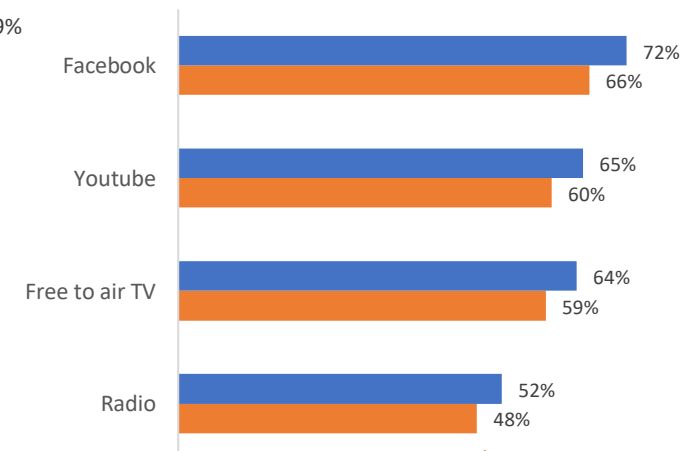
Amount of Time Ideally like to Spend in Nature



What Love Most about Being in Nature



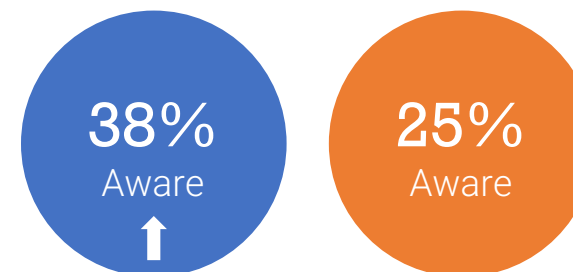
Media Consumption in Last Month



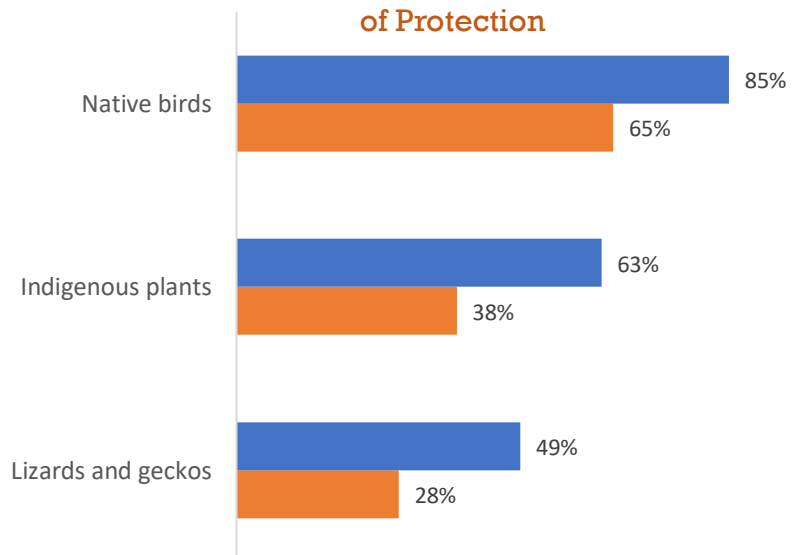
‘Conservation Concerned’ are already considerably more active when it comes to conservation, especially those activities that support native birds

They are also more committed to helping out in future too. Despite their conservation focus, still only slightly more than one in three are aware of Predator Free 2050.

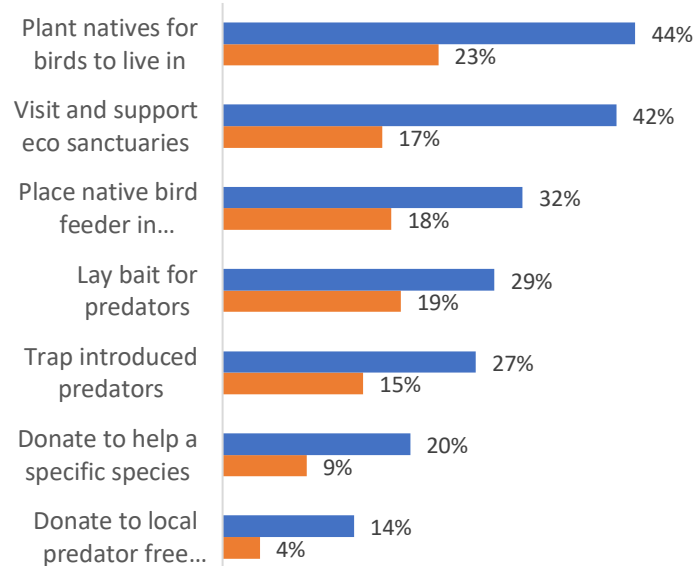
Predator Free 2050 Awareness



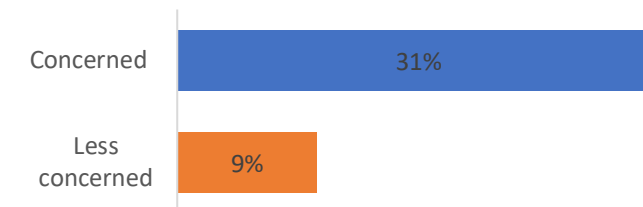
Perceived NZ Native Species Most in Need of Protection



Past or Present Participation in Conservation Activities (% currently doing or have previously done)



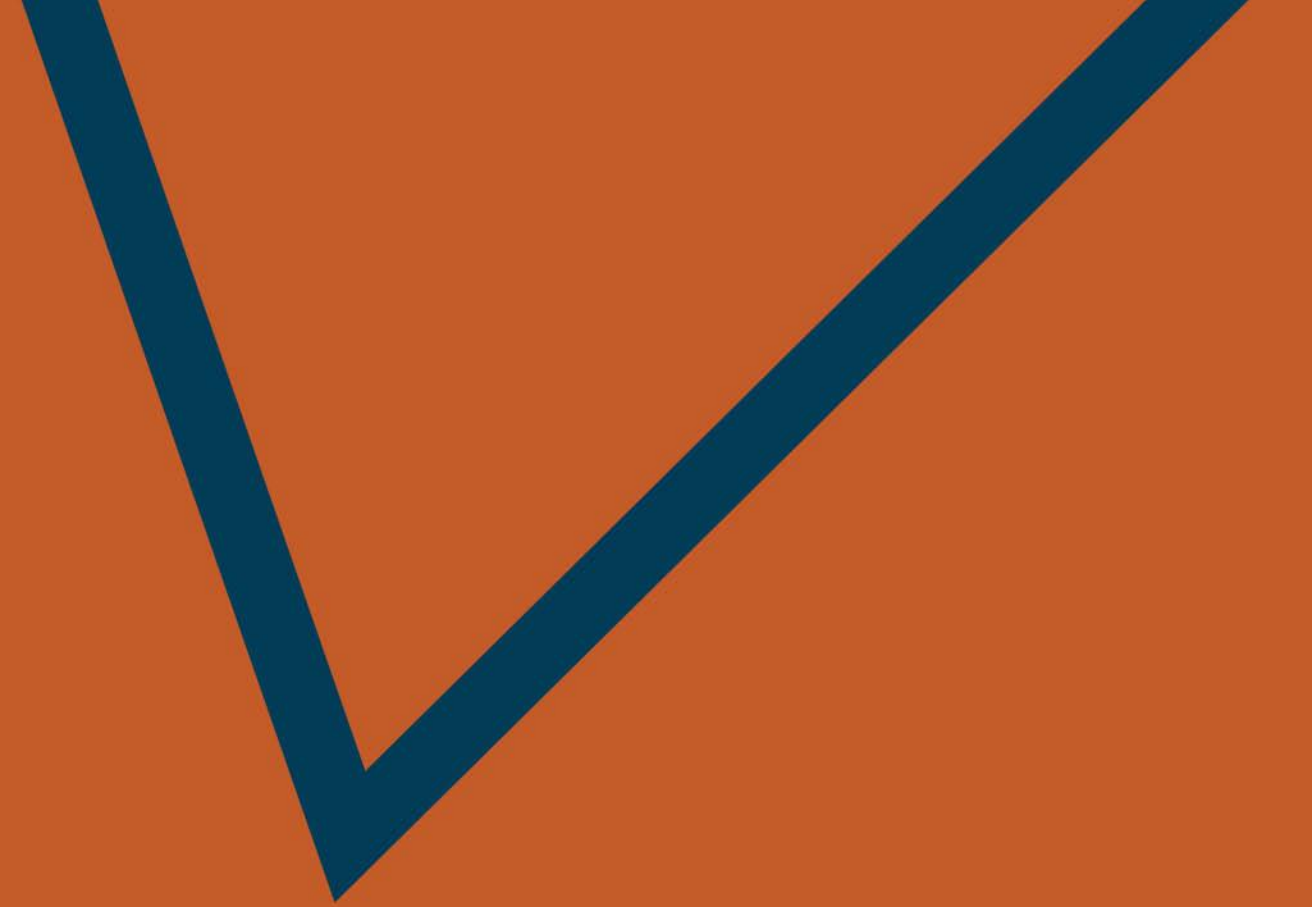
% Intend to Participate in Conservation Activities



Concerned (6-10) about threat to survival of NZ native species n=768

Less concerned (1-5) about threat to survival of NZ native species n=237

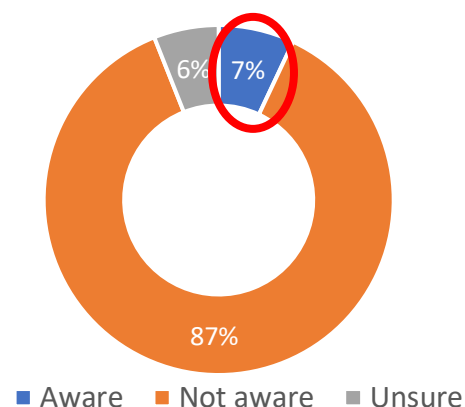
‘Local Predator
Free Minded’



We saw earlier that a small group of Kiwis are already conscious of a local Predator Free group in their region – but aren't necessarily active.

They may be key in terms of active participation and advocacy (particularly in the years ahead)

Awareness of Local Predator Free Group in Own Region



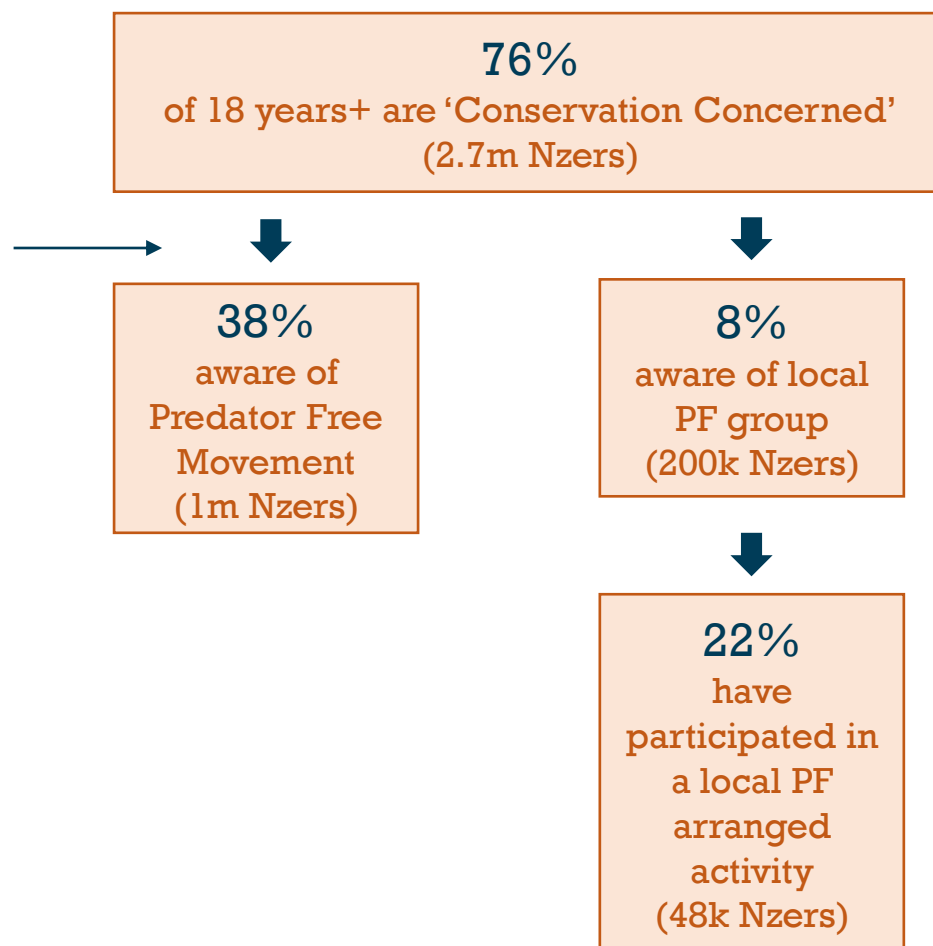
Total respondents n=1005

They are:

- ✓ More likely to be younger (< 30years)
- ✓ More likely to live in Wellington or Taranaki
- ✓ More likely to appreciate nature for its wildlife and plant life, but also as a place to get fit and healthy
- ✓ Display a higher level of concern for the survival of our native species
- ✓ More engaged in the 2050 goal
- ✓ More likely to already be participating in conservation based activities eg trapping, tree planting etc
- ✓ More confident we can become predator free than the average NZer
- ✓ More likely to consume both traditional media (newspapers) and digital sources (Facebook/YouTube)

How we can look to enhance the 'health' of Predator Free 2050 further

- > Look to drive awareness of PFNZ with conservation concerned (currently at 38%).
- > Key levers remain protecting (and possibly enhancing) outdoor spaces and native bird population
- > Can be targeted via social platforms; Facebook and YouTube and also or in key locations (recreation areas)

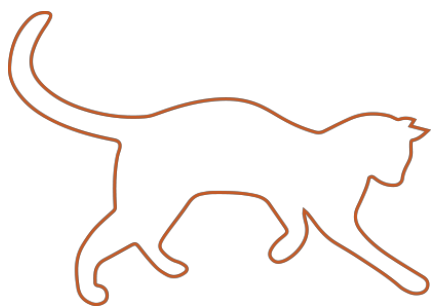


- > Stimulate action via illustrating potential impacts (outcomes) and making involvement accessible.
- > Consider talking directly in some instances to younger audiences

Hot Topic: Attitudes Towards Cat Control



Overall, there is support for a range of actions to be taken by responsible cat owners – especially in relation to de-sexing and microchipping.



40% of New Zealanders own at least one cat

(and they are just as concerned about the survival of NZ native species as non-cat owners)

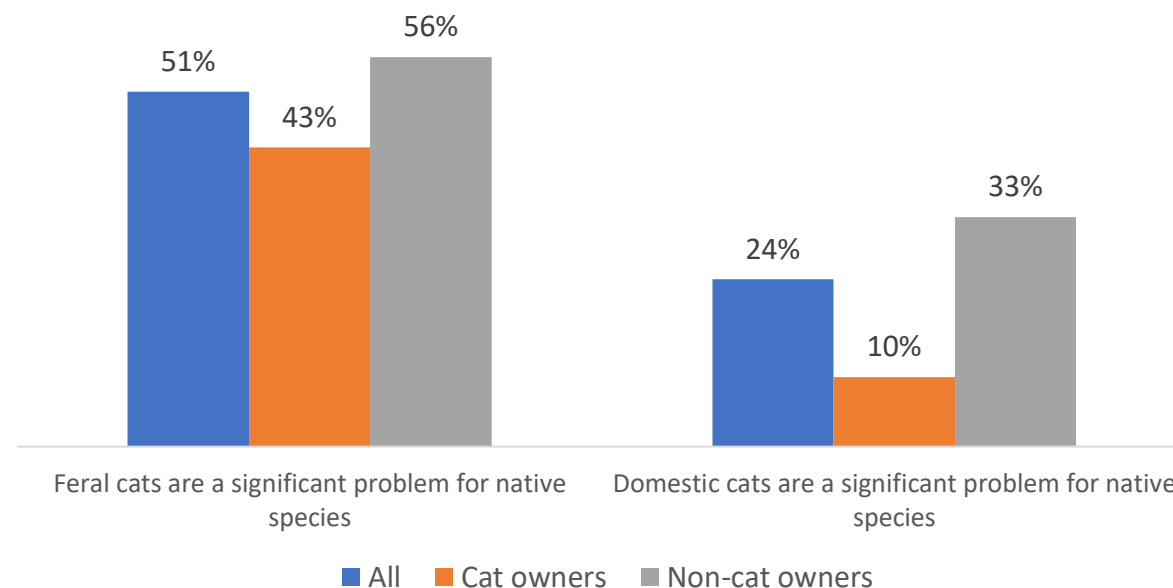
% Agree	Total sample (n=1,005)	Own at least one cat (n=395)	Don't own a cat (n=605)
Responsible cat owners should....			
Microchip all of their cats	66%	66%	66%
De-sex all of their cats	75%	82%	71%
Limit the number of cats they own (except for breeders)	61%	59%	63%
Keep their cats indoors or on their own property	43%	33%	49%

There are slightly lower levels of support for national legislation initiatives around cat control – especially amongst cat owners themselves

And when looking specifically at the threat from cats, feral cats are deemed a much greater threat than domestic cats

% Agree	Total sample (n=1005)	Own at least one cat (n=395)	Don't own a cat (n=605)
We should actively reduce feral cat populations on public conservation land	60%	52%	66%
There should be national legislation requiring microchipping of cats	52%	46%	56%
There should be national legislation requiring de-sexing of cats	50%	50%	50%
National legislation should require cat owners to keep their cats indoors.	21%	13%	27%

Perceived Threat of Cats to Native Species



Bringing it all
Together



The current state and health

- Kiwis love and appreciate the many benefits of being in nature; however many are taking this for granted...
- There is a sense that conservation of our native species, in relation to everything else, is something we can afford to worry less about.
- Conservation of NZ native species struggles to get prioritised ahead of other issues that have a greater impact on people's day to day lives eg increasing cost of living
- The key to improving engagement and confidence in achieving Predator Free by 2050 is to raise awareness of the Predator Free movement, and re-educate kiwis about our target predators and share what can be accomplished (ie Wellington).
- New Zealanders also need more convincing about the importance of their contribution as individuals.
- New Zealanders recognise that becoming predator free by 2050 will require extra investment in new technology and provision of trapping equipment (for example).
- However there is an expectation that this funding be directed into conservation focussed organisations such as DOC and Councils, rather than enabling a team effort from individuals.



What we do from here

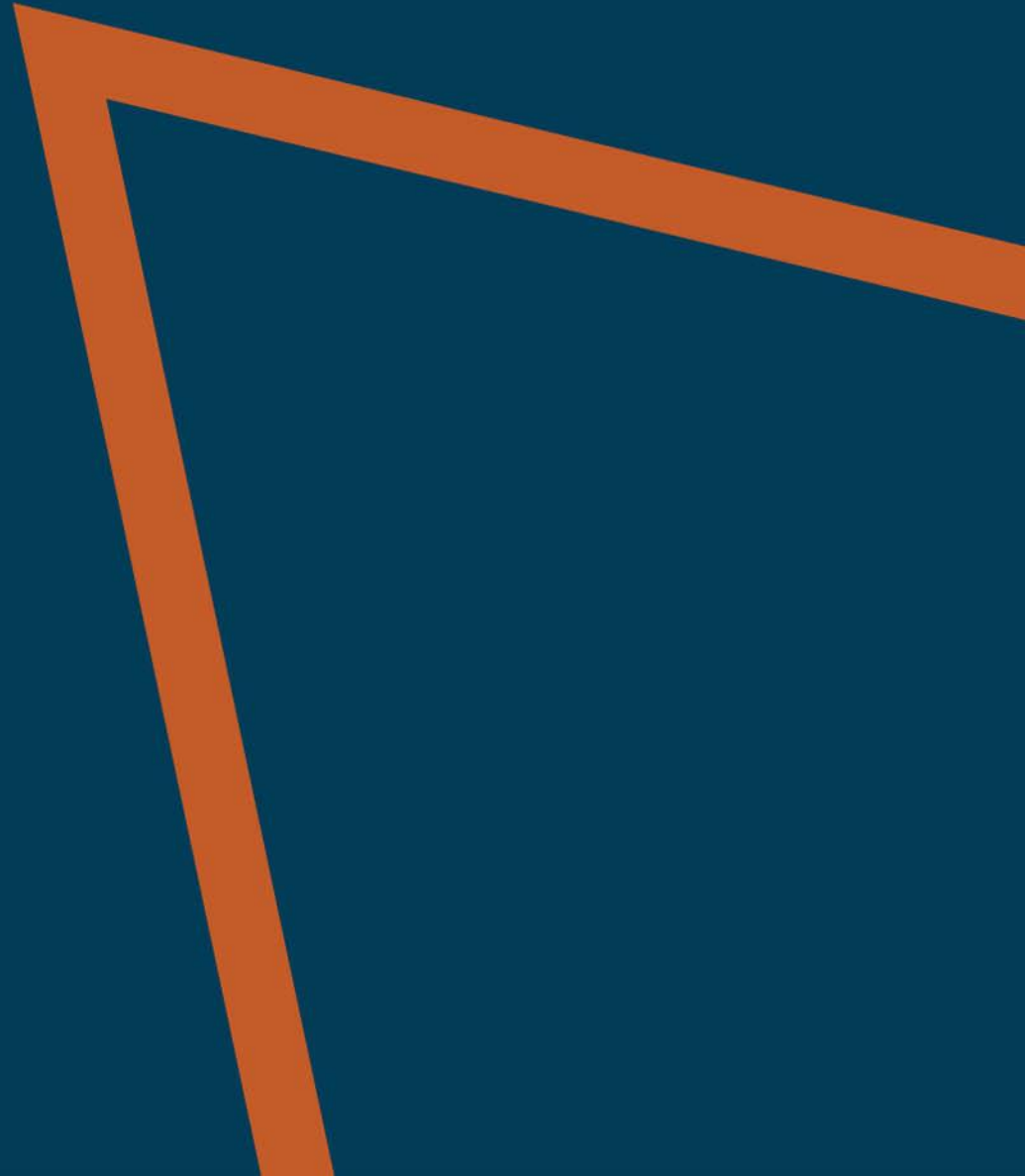
- Preservation of life, in particular our treasured native birds, should continue to be the key message for Predator Free 2050. We could make clearer linkages to the benefits of an abundance of native birds, both now and for future generations, while also simplifying the actions each of us can personally undertake to contribute
- Communications would ideally forge greater connections between individuals and native areas, while also creating some urgency to take action
- To enhance the overall health of Predator Free 2050 there is an opportunity to build engagement and action amongst two target groups of kiwis;
 - Those who show some degree of concern about the survival of our native species already
 - Those aware of a local predator free presence in their region but who have not yet acted upon this
- When it comes to the issue of cat control there is universal acceptance (ie including cat owners) that feral cats are a threat to native species, albeit a lesser one when compared with mustelids, rats and possums.
- Domestic cats are perceived to be less of an issue, however half of all New Zealanders support legislation to ensure cat owners are doing all they can to control the impact.



Thanks!

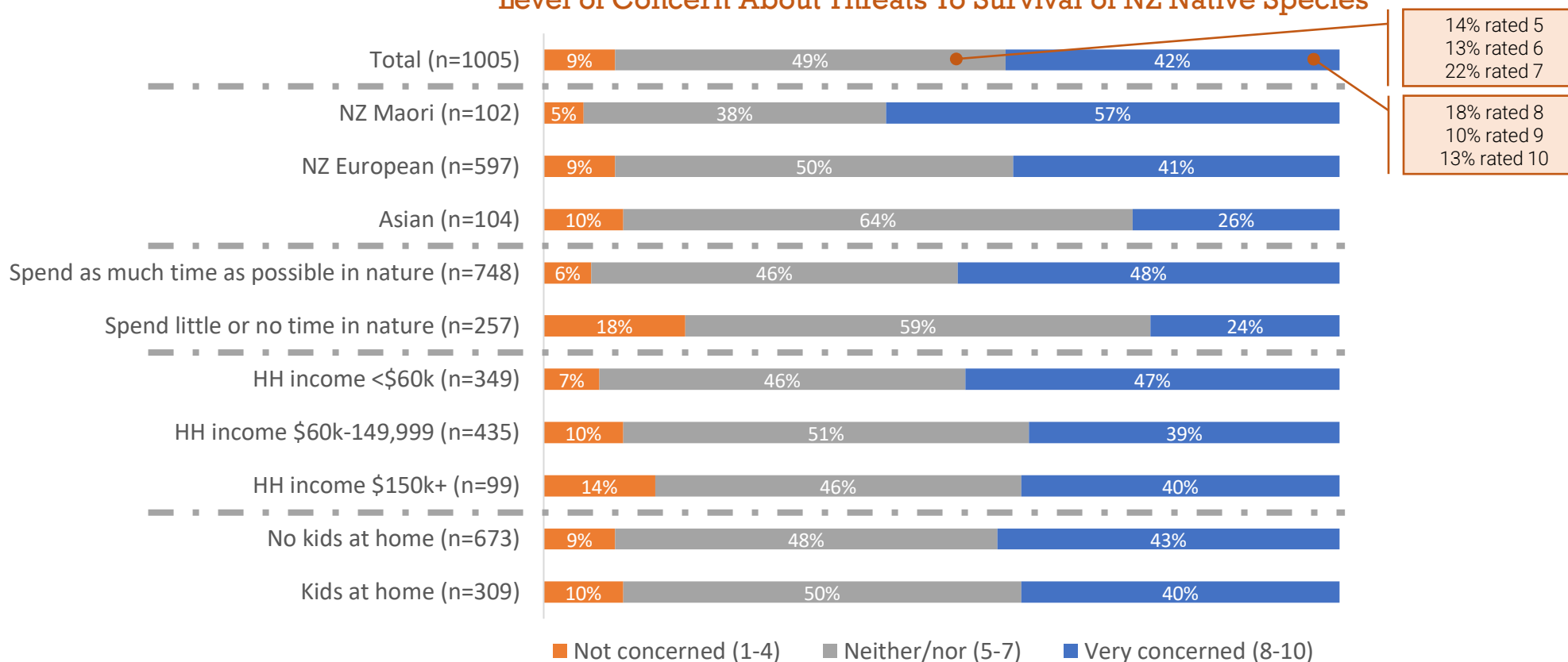


Appendix



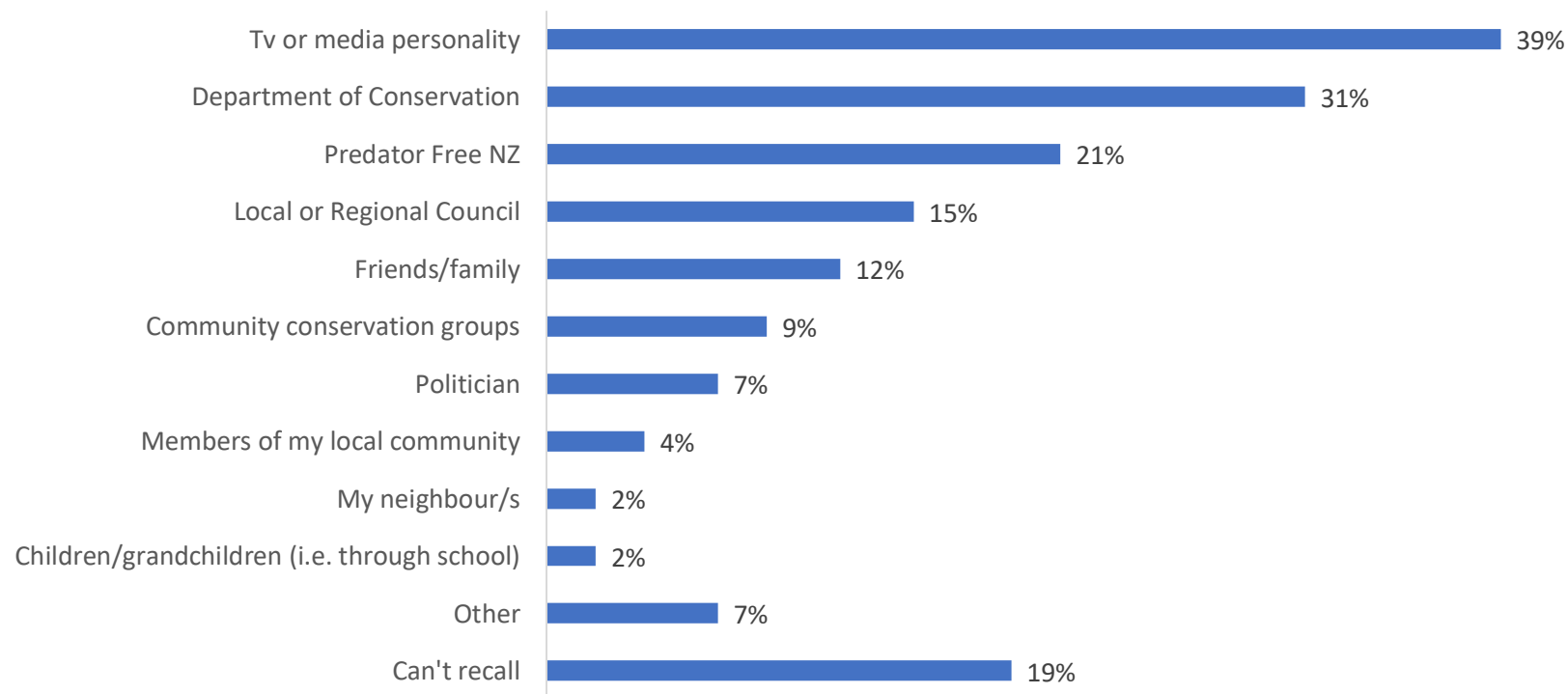
NZ Māori and those with a strong connection to nature are more likely to feel very concerned about the survival of our native species

Level of Concern About Threats To Survival of NZ Native Species



Those aware of Predator Free 2050 are most likely to have heard about it via a high profile New Zealander or through DOC

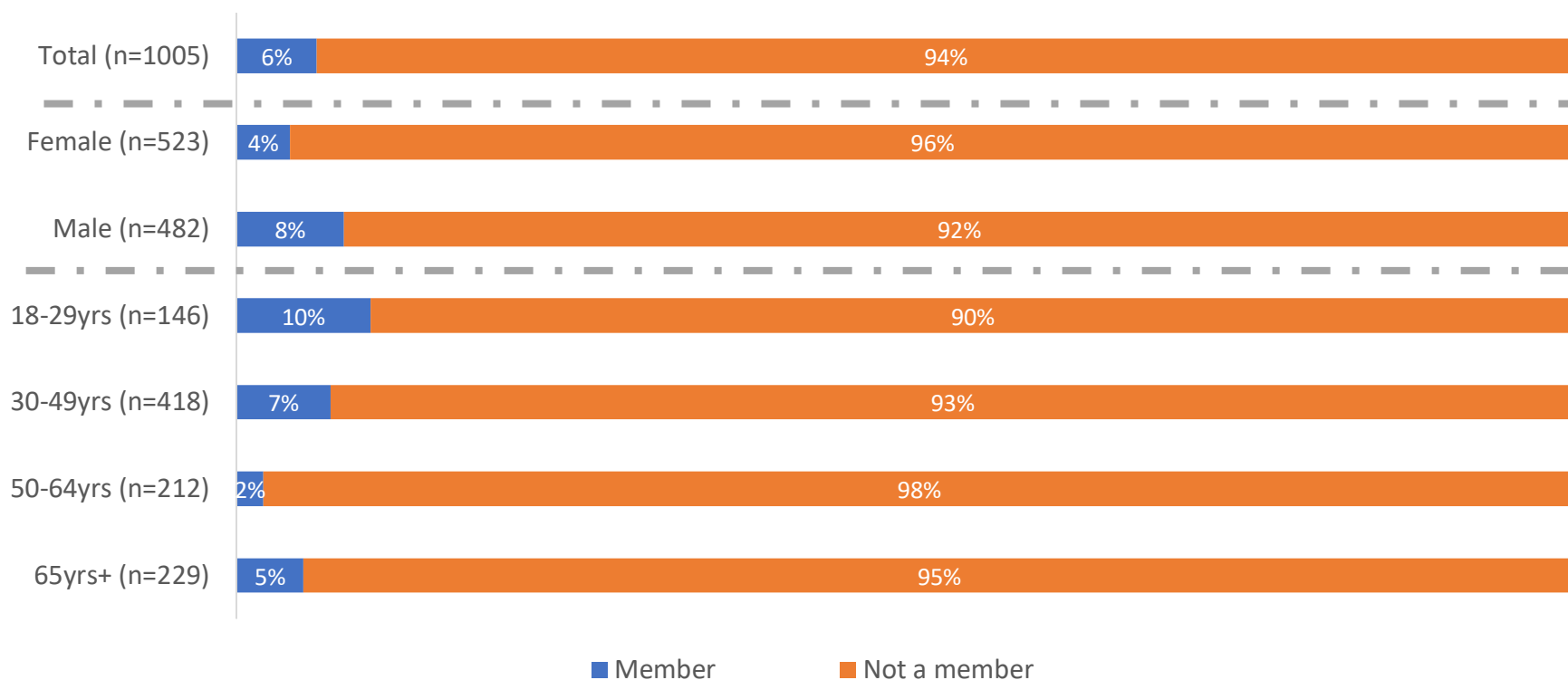
Source of Predator Free 2050 Awareness



Those aware of Predator Free 2050 n=349

A small proportion of New Zealanders belong to a conservation based organisation; and this tends to reduce with increasing age

Membership of Environmental/Conservation Organisation



Profiling those aware of a local predator free group in their region...

55% Love most the wildlife aspect of being in nature (v 44% Avg)

53% Love most the plant life aspect of being in nature (v 44% Avg)

53% Love most the health and fitness benefits of being in nature (v 45% Avg)

More likely than the average Nzer to already be engaging in most conservation based activities tested eg trapping, tree planting etc

63% Very likely to in future participate in activities that support Predator Free NZ (v 26% Avg)

27% Aged 18-29 years (v 15% Avg)

17% Live in Wellington region (v 11% Avg)

50% Own at least one cat (v 40% Avg)

11% Live in Taranaki region (v 3% Avg)

69% Very concerned about threats to survival of NZ native species (v 42% Avg)

71% Agree that protecting our native species requires the help from a team of 5 million (v 48% Avg)

55% Confident NZ can achieve Predator Free by 2050 (v 20% Avg)

61% Believe traps, bait and equipment should be more accessible (v 53% Avg)

55% Believe we should establish more volunteer groups to help (v 44% Avg)

Profiling the 'Conservation Concerned'

