

## Colmar Brunton Survey Response

### New Zealand Fish and Game Council Meeting May 2020

Prepared by Martin Taylor CEO

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#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is for the NZC to reconsider the recommendations made on November 23 regarding our approach to fresh water advocacy in light of the Colmar Brunton Survey Response.

#### **Background**

On 23 November the New Zealand Council resolved:

- 1. Agree to a scientific randomised survey using an independent agency, to establish views of licence holders on Fish and Games freshwater advocacy. Note NZC to sign off questions proposed by the polling company.*
- 2. To internally survey all governors using the same questions as in recommendation 1.*
- 3. Agree to come back to the next NZC meeting with a recommendation on the future approach to freshwater advocacy taking into account recommendations 1 and 2.*
- 4. Agree that before the report back to the next NZC meeting, the CEO and staff will not proactively make media statements which contain negative statements about farmers.*
- 5. Agree the CEO and staff can make reactive media statements including responding to reports that are consistent with our last 6 months on freshwater advocacy.*
- 6. Agree to investigate the establishment of national environmental awards to highlight good farming practice that is consistent with our position on the NPS-FW<sup>1</sup>.*

Following the NZC amending and signing of the questions Colmar Brunton undertook the survey and they have analysed the results.

#### **Colmar Brunton's Results**

It is clear from the results that licence holders support and even expect Fish & Game New Zealand to advocate strongly for fresh water and they support the organisation using the word 'farmer' and 'dairy farmer'. The results also show a divergence of views in certain areas between licence holders and some councillors.

Based on the surveys results if the NZC wish to act in accordance with licence holder views then the prohibition on my actions, as CEO, contained in resolution 4 above '*Agree that before the report back to the next NZC meeting, the CEO and staff will not proactively make media statements which contain negative statements about farmers*', needs to be removed. If the NZC wish follow the views of some councillors then the prohibition should remain.

*Recommendations: Agree to rescind the resolution made on 23 November which said that "the CEO and staff will not proactively make media statements which contain negative statements about farmers."*

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<sup>1</sup> Staff are still working on this recommendation which has been delayed by Covid and may need to be reassessed in light of financial challenges.

# Perceptions of freshwater advocacy

## What Fish & Game licence holders think

A Colmar Brunton research report for the New Zealand  
Fish & Game Council  
March 2020



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A person is fishing in a river at sunset. The person is standing in the water, holding a fishing rod. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright reflection on the water. The sky is filled with clouds, and the background shows a line of trees. A large white circle is overlaid on the left side of the image.

# Background and Methodology

## Background

Fish & Game New Zealand manages, maintains and enhances sports fish and game birds and their habitats in the best long-term interests of present and future generations of anglers and hunters. The work Fish & Game undertakes to protect the habitats of sports fish and game birds benefits not only anglers and hunters but all those who value the quality of New Zealand's water and wetlands environments.

This research project surveys licence holders to determine the level of support for Fish & Game's continued freshwater advocacy behaviour. Specifically, Fish & Game would like to understand if licence holders support running a campaign to clean up the impact of dairy farming on New Zealand's fresh water rivers and lakes. In addition Fish & Game undertook to:

- understand licence holder attitudes to Fish & Game's behaviour on fresh water advocacy
- measure the extent to which licence holders consider continued campaigning for freshwater
- gauge views of current water quality and perceptions of the contribution of dairy farming.



## Methodology



We interviewed to a total of 1,016 licence holders and 52 councillors.



Respondents were sourced from Fish & Game's online database of licence holders and councillors.




We used a combination of pre-survey quotas and post survey weighting to ensure results are representative of all licence holders by gender, region and licence type.



Fieldwork was conducted from 2<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020.

$$\text{M.E.} = \sqrt{\frac{0.25}{n}} \times 1.96$$

The maximum margin of error for licence holders n=1,016 is  $\pm 3.1\%$ , and councillors n=52 is  $\pm 13.5\%$  at the 95% confidence interval. We spoke to 44% of councillors, so while the overall number is small the completion rate is high and we can be confident that the overall results for this group are representative.

A person is fishing in a river at sunset. The person is standing in the water, holding a fishing rod. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright reflection on the water. The sky is blue with some clouds. There is a large white circle on the left side of the image.

Do licence holders and councillors support freshwater advocacy actions?



Fish & Game licence holders and councillors strongly support Fish & Game advocating on environmental issues, specifically cleaning up and protecting freshwater habitats. There is less support for doing this by targeting dairy farming practices, instead licence holders suggest including other polluters, supporting community groups and stock management.

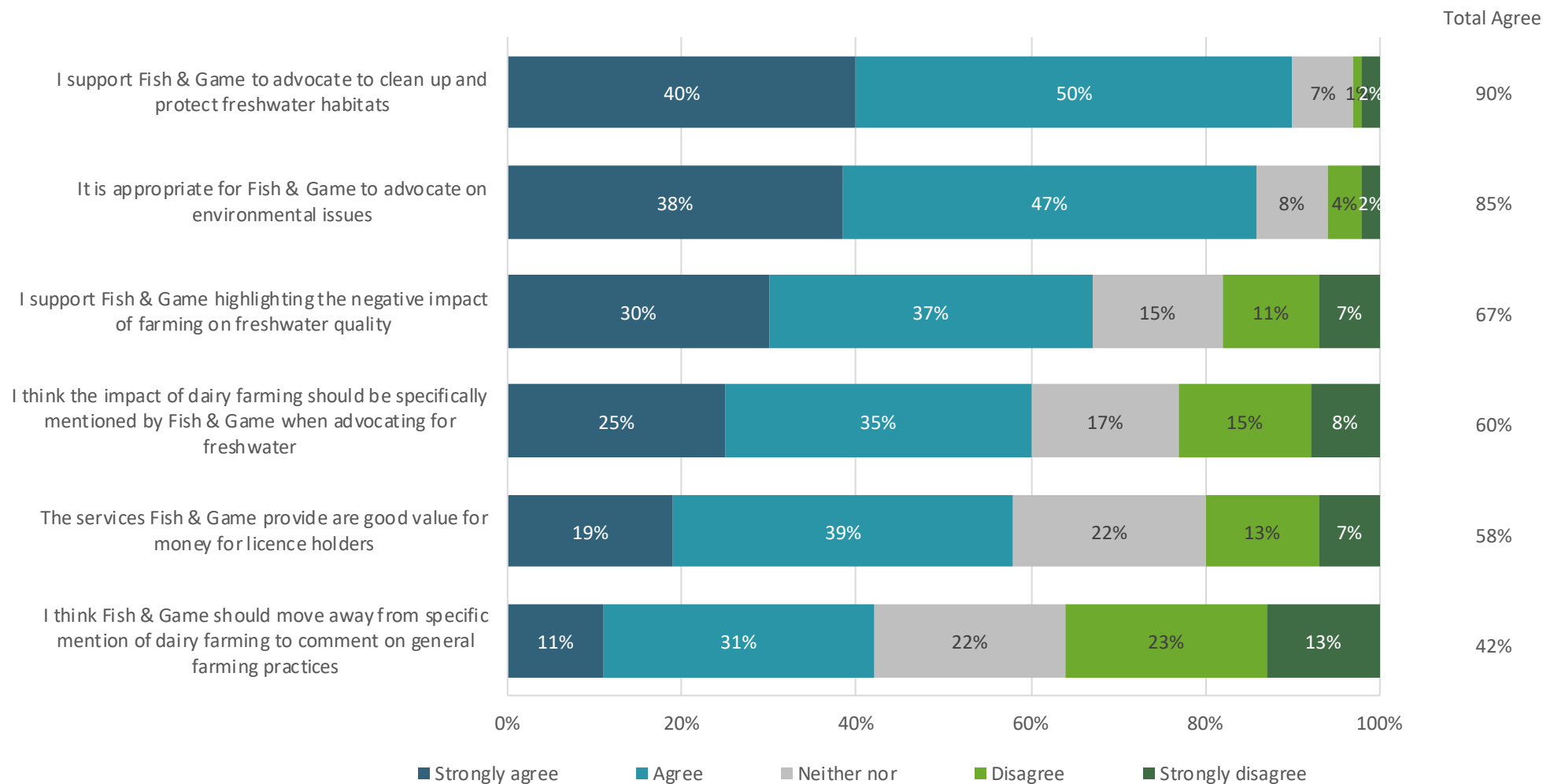
- 1 The overwhelming majority of licence holders and councillors support Fish & Game advocating on environmental issues and to clean up and protect freshwater habitats.
- 2 Both groups agree it is appropriate for Fish & Game to advocate on environmental issues.
- 3 Councillors think Fish & Game should move away from specific mention of dairy farming, however licence holder opinion on this is polarised.
- 4 Licence holders think it is important for Fish & Game to focus on alternative ways of protecting waterways, stock management, and access issues.



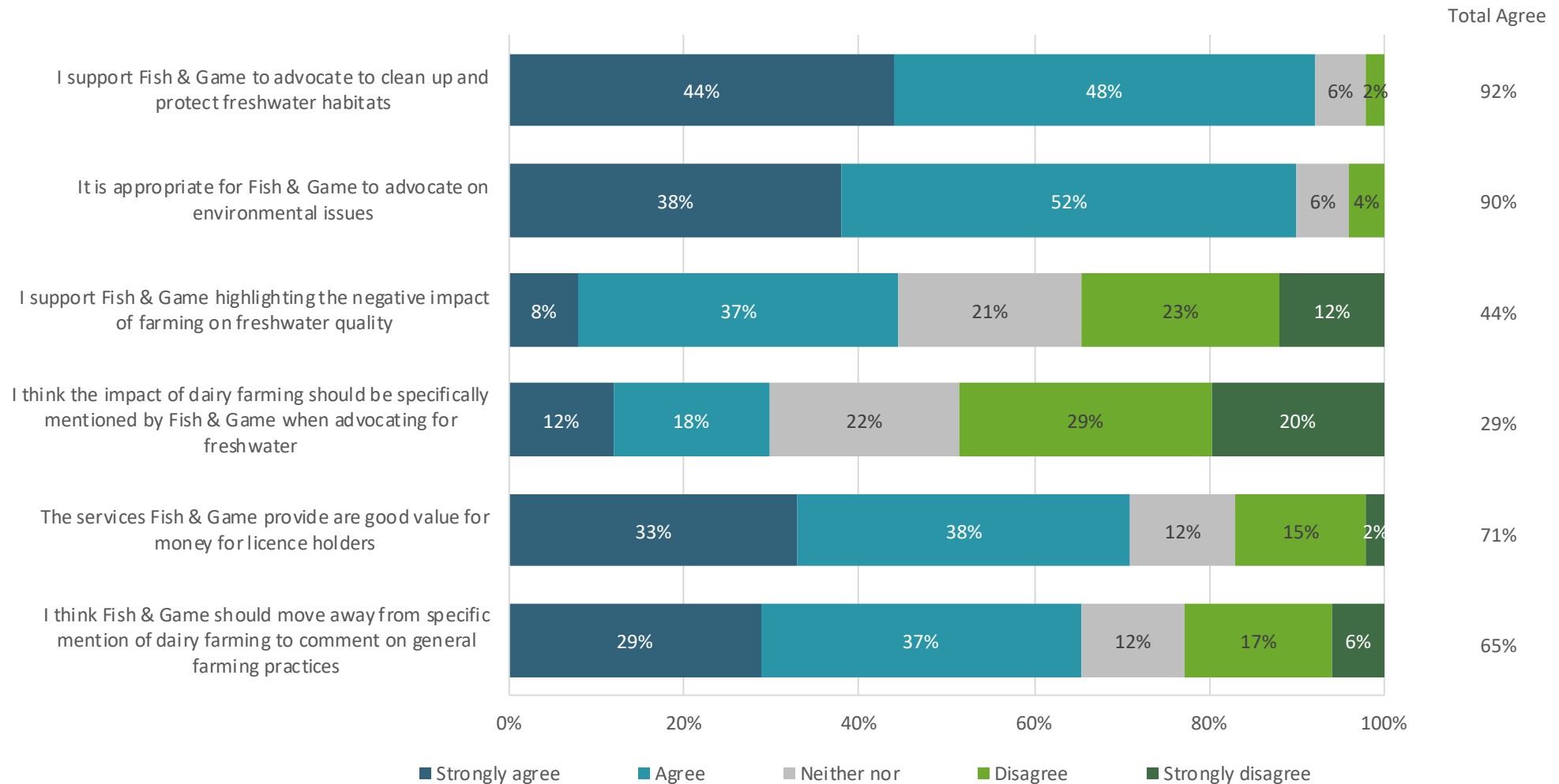


Perceptions of Fish & Game's  
freshwater advocacy activities

The overwhelming majority of licence holders support Fish & Game advocating on environmental issues and to clean up and protect freshwater habitats. Opinion is polarised on whether Fish & Game should move away from specific mention of dairy farming to comment on all farming practices.

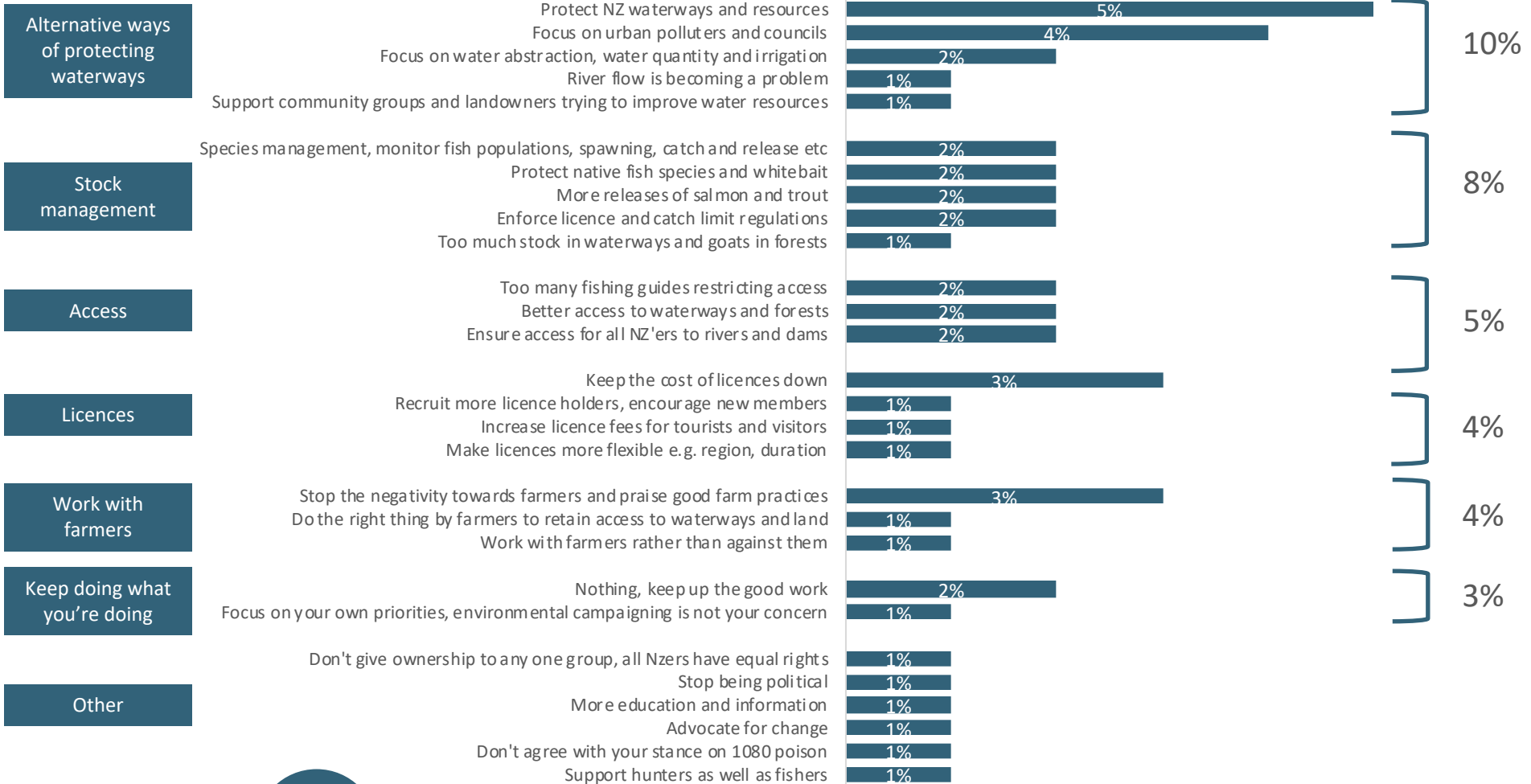


Councillors are less supportive of Fish & Game focusing on the negative impact of farming on freshwater quality, specifically dairy farming, than licence holders. Two-thirds of councillors agree that Fish & Game should move away from specific mention of dairy farming to comment on general practices.





# Licence holders think it is important for Fish & Game to focus on alternative ways of protecting waterways, as well as stock management and access issues

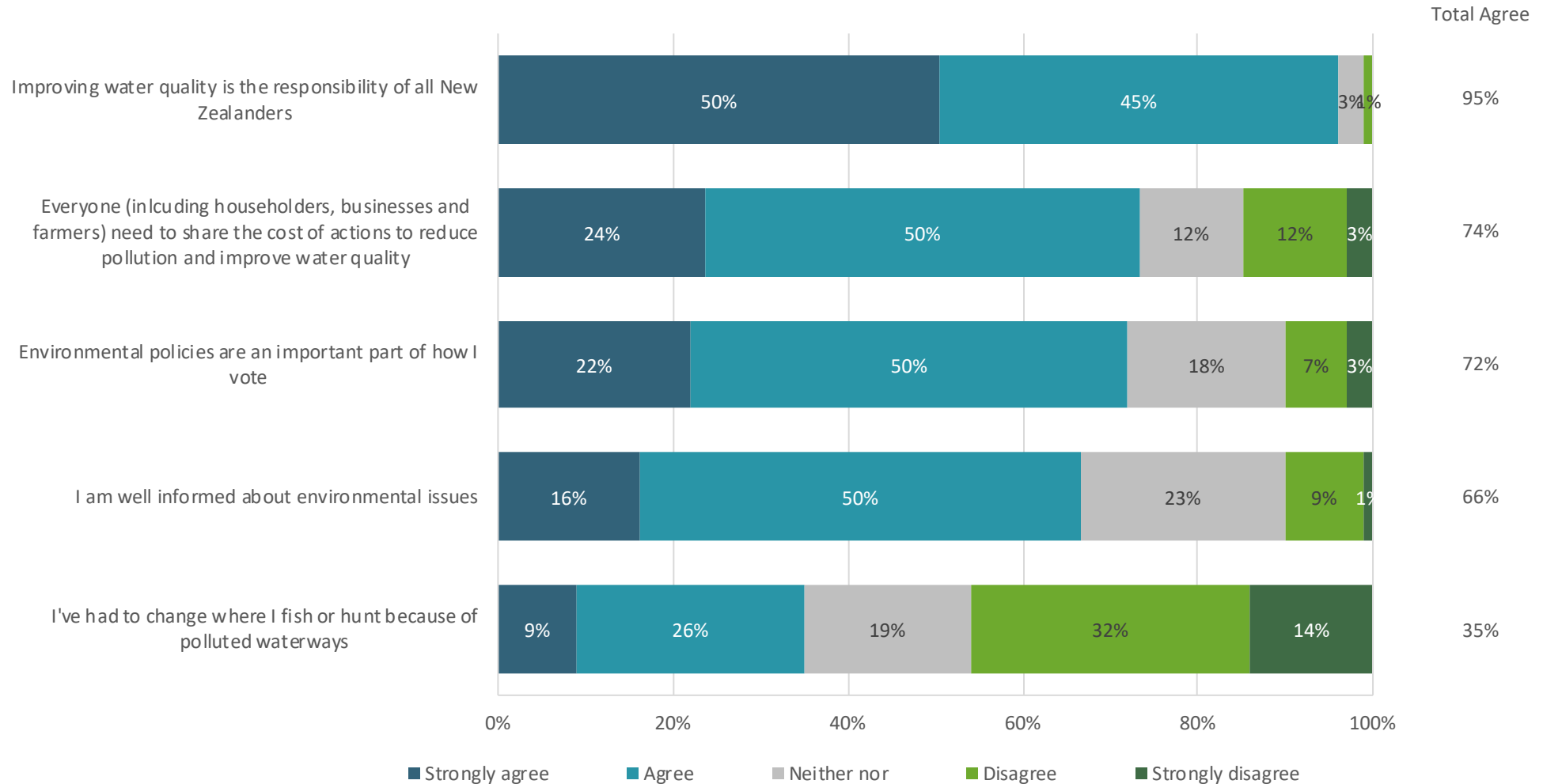




Perceptions of water quality,  
environmental issues,  
and the impact of farming

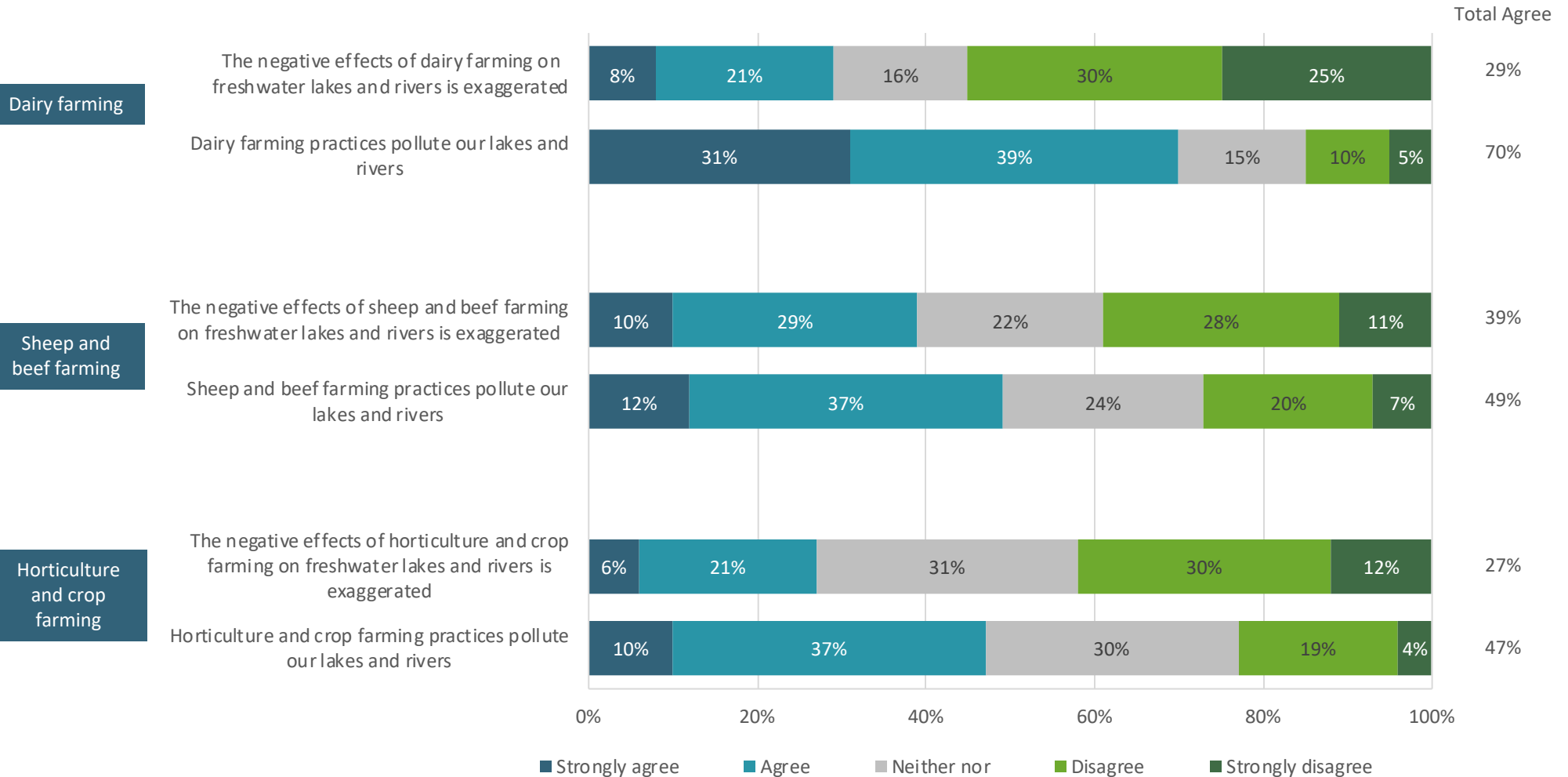


Nearly all licence holders agree that water quality is the responsibility of all New Zealanders. Three-quarters of licence holders think that everyone should share the cost of actions to reduce pollution and improve water quality and over two-thirds say they are well informed about environmental issues and these are an important part of how they vote.

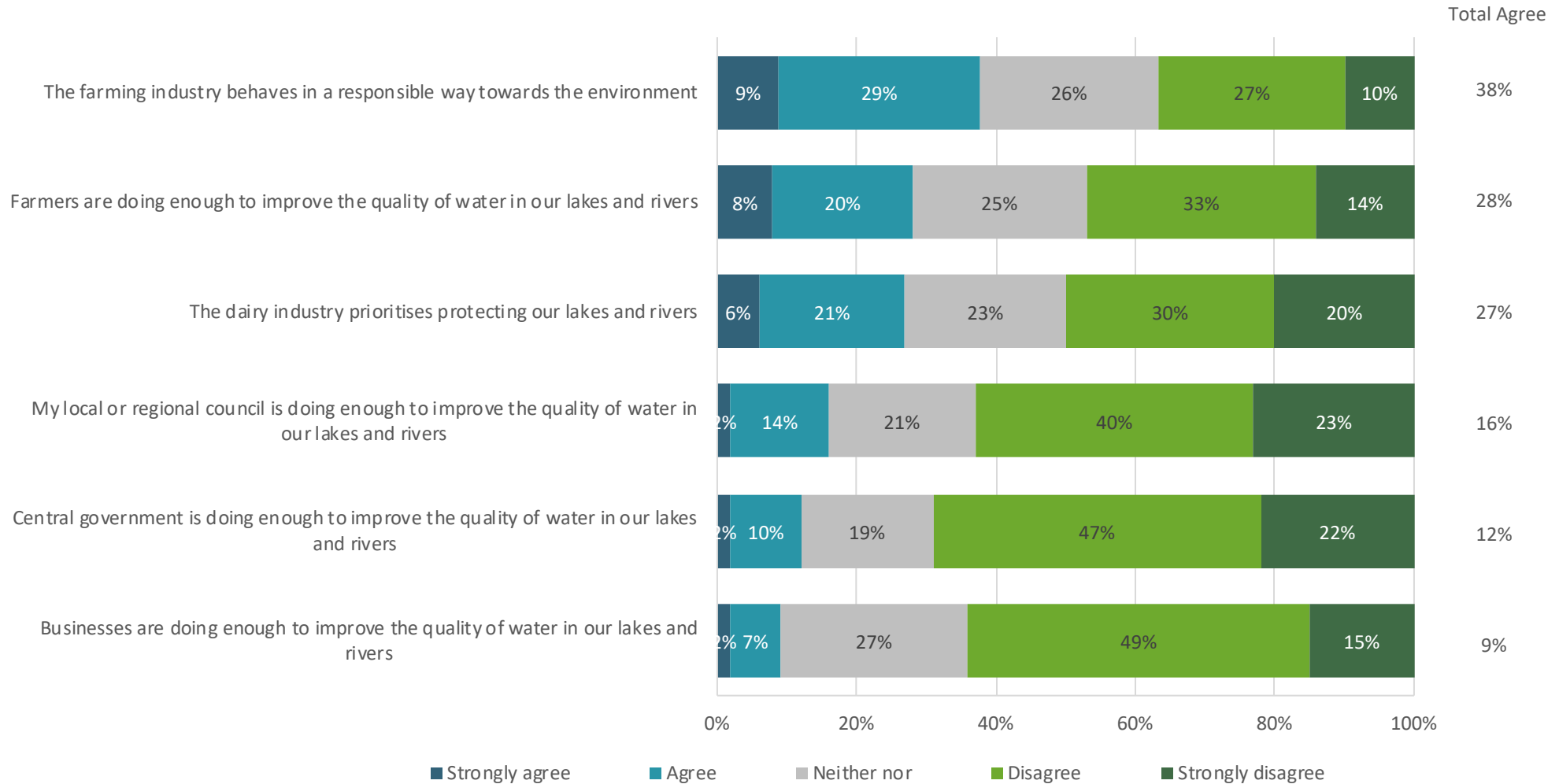




Licence holders are most likely to agree than the negative effects of sheep and beef farming are exaggerated in comparison to other types of farming. They are also most likely to agree that dairy farming pollutes lakes and rivers ahead of other types of farming.



Licence holder opinion is polarised on whether or not the farming industry behaves in a responsible way towards the environment. Two-thirds of licence holders disagree that central government, businesses and local and regional councils are doing enough to improve water quality. Only one quarter of them think farmers are doing enough.



Councillors are more likely to agree with all the environmental perception statements than licence holders, and less likely to agree that the groups are doing enough to improve water quality.

Environmental perceptions	Licence holders	Councillors
Improving water quality is the responsibility of all New Zealanders	95%	98%
Everyone (including householders, businesses and farmers) need to share the cost of actions to reduce pollution and improve water quality	74%	75%
Environmental policies are an important part of how I vote	72%	81%
I am well informed about environmental issues	66%	87%
I have had to change where I fish or hunt because of polluted waterways	35%	44%

Are these groups doing enough?	Licence holders	Councillors
The farming industry behaves in a responsible way towards the environment	38%	23%
Farmers are doing enough to improve the quality of water in our lakes and rivers	28%	19%
The dairy industry prioritises protecting our lakes and rivers	27%	10%
My local or regional council is doing enough to improve the quality of water in our lakes and rivers	16%	10%
Central government is doing enough to improve the quality of water in our lakes and rivers	12%	12%
Business are doing enough to improve the quality of water in our lakes and rivers	9%	4%



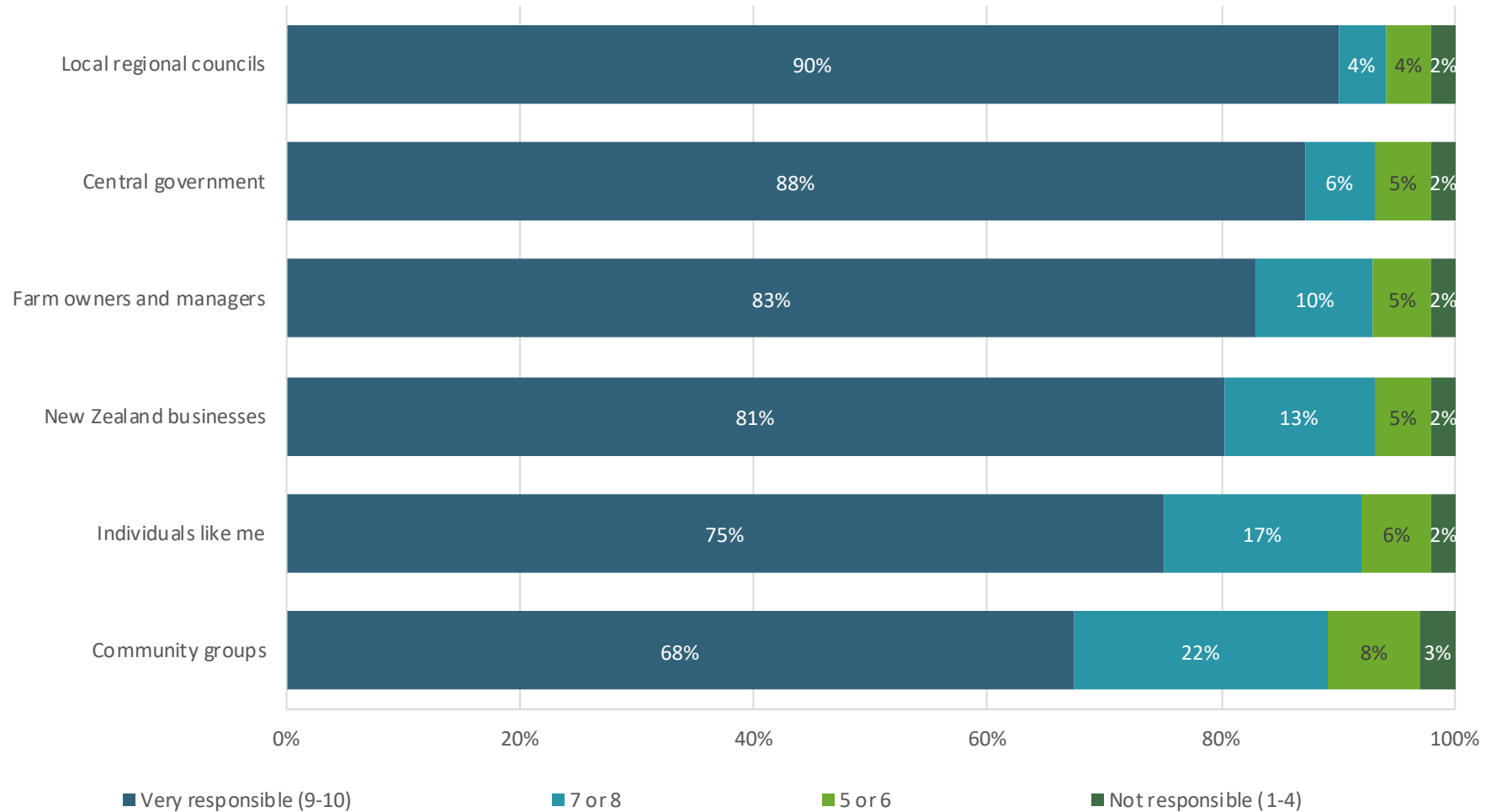
Councillors are less likely than licence holders to agree that the negative effects of all types of farming are exaggerated.

Farming practices	Licence holders	Councillors
The negative effects of dairy farming on freshwater lakes and rivers is exaggerated	29%	19%
Dairy farming practices pollute our lakes and rivers	70%	69%
The negative effects of sheep and beef farming on freshwater lakes and rivers is exaggerated	39%	35%
Sheep and beef farming practices pollute our lakes and rivers	49%	37%
The negative effects of horticulture and crop farming on freshwater lakes and rivers is exaggerated	27%	22%
Horticulture and crop farming practices pollute our lakes and rivers	47%	51%



Responsibility for water quality

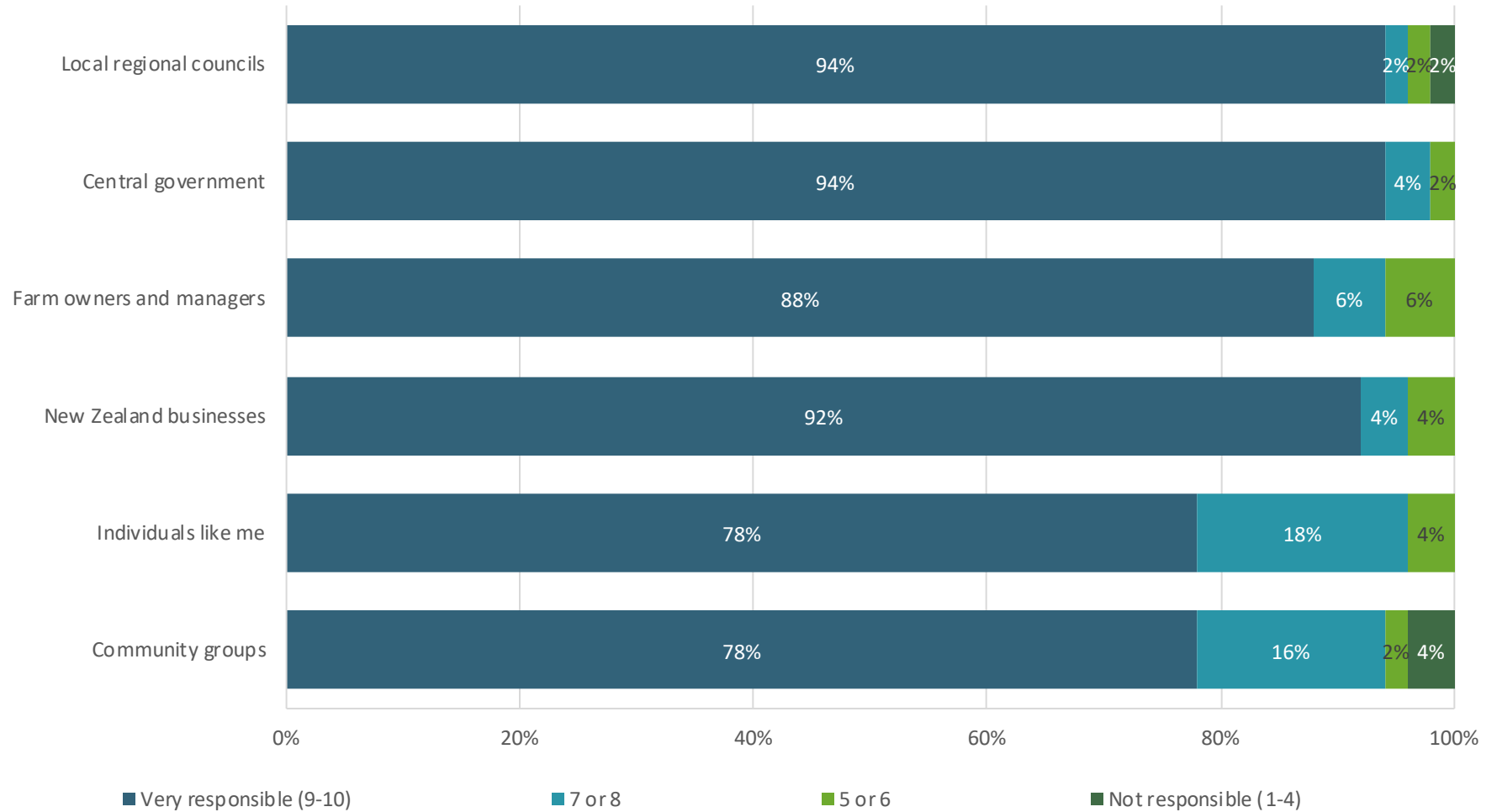
Nine out of 10 licence holders think local regional councils and central government are responsible for improving water quality in New Zealand. Agreement for all groups is high indicating licence holders think the responsibility for improving water quality falls to everyone.



Q6. How much responsibility should each of the following have for improving water quality in New Zealand's lakes and rivers?

Base: All licence holders n≈1,016 (excl don't know)

Overall agreement is even higher among councillors. Local regional councils, central government and NZ businesses are the groups councillors think are the most responsible.



Q6. How much responsibility should each of the following have for improving water quality in New Zealand's lakes and rivers?

Base: All councillors n≈52 (excl don't know)





Differences in perceptions of licence holders and councillors

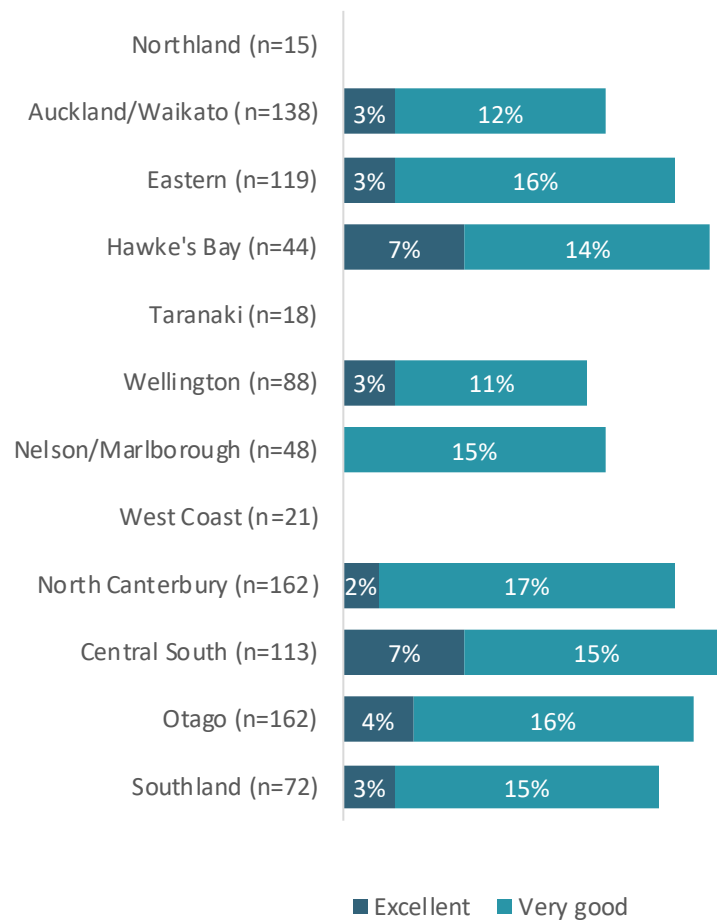
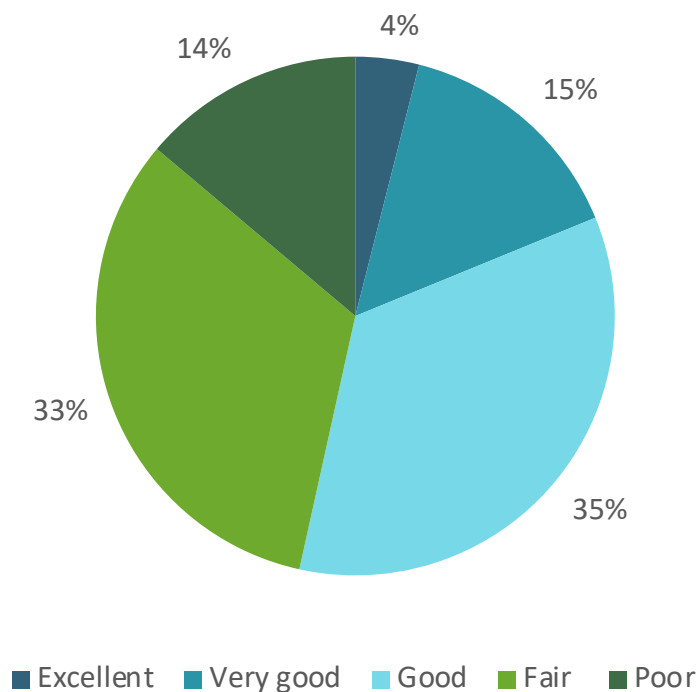
There are a number of key differences in perceptions between licence holders and councillors. Specifically opinions differ on the following...

- 1 Councillors are less supportive of Fish & Game focusing on the negative impact of farming on freshwater quality, specifically dairy farming, than licence holders.
- 2 Councillors are more likely to agree that improving water quality is the responsibility of all New Zealanders than licence holders, and less likely to agree that the groups are doing enough to improve water quality.
- 3 Councillors are more likely to say they are well informed about environmental issues, and that environmental policies are an important part of how they vote.
- 4 Councillors are less likely than licence holders to agree that the negative effects of all types of farming are exaggerated.



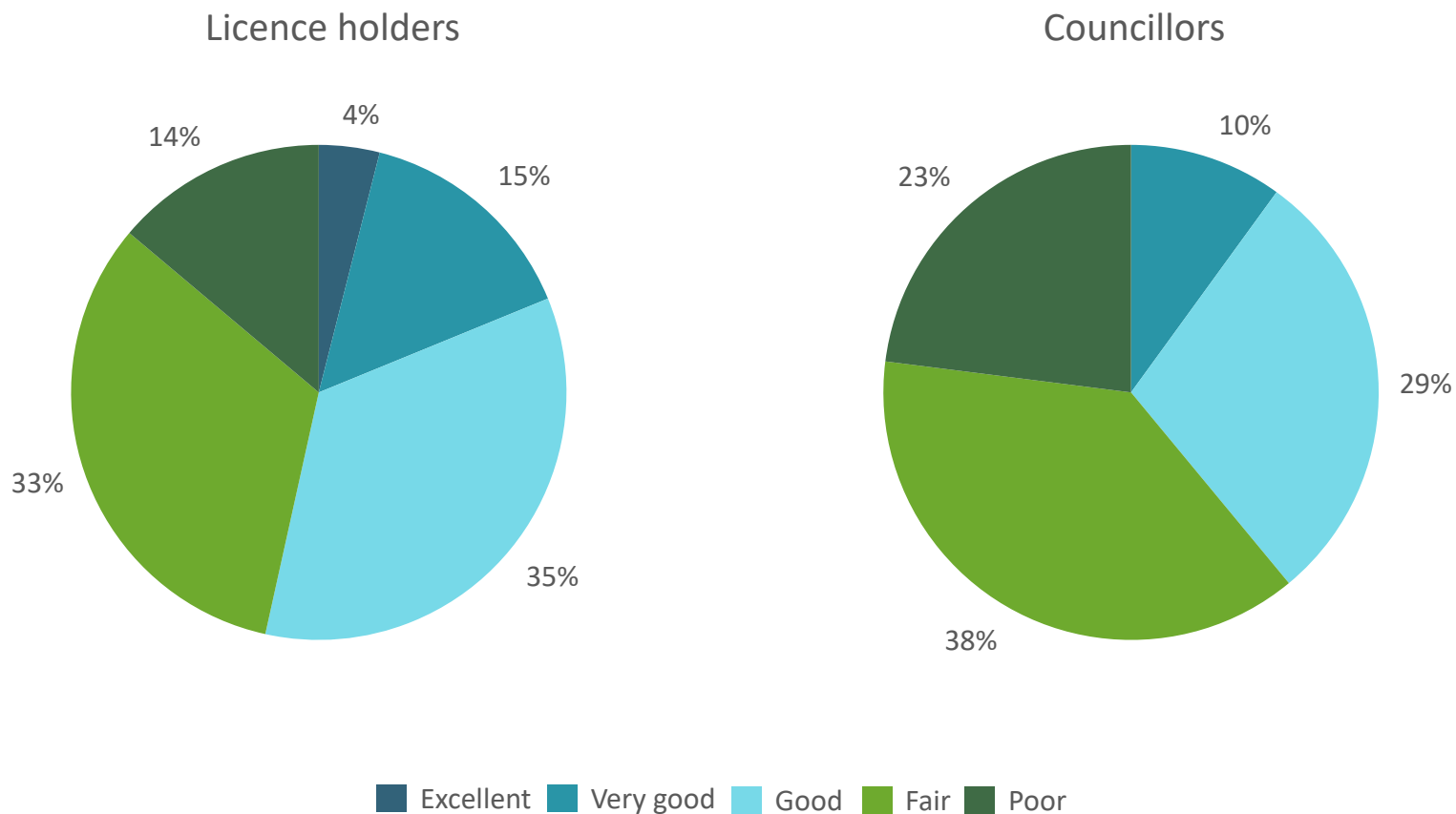
Water quality

One in five licence holders think that water quality in lakes and rivers is excellent or very good. Perceptions of water quality are best in the Hawke’s Bay and Central South Island, and worst in Wellington and Nelson/Marlborough.

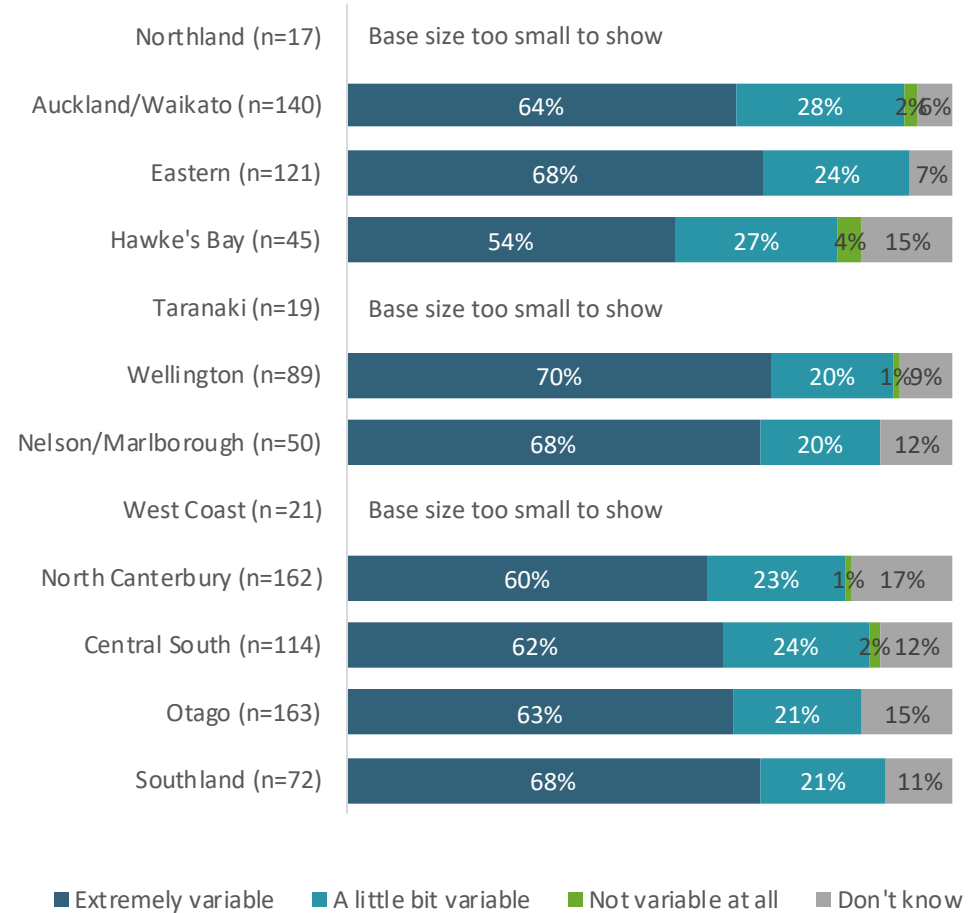
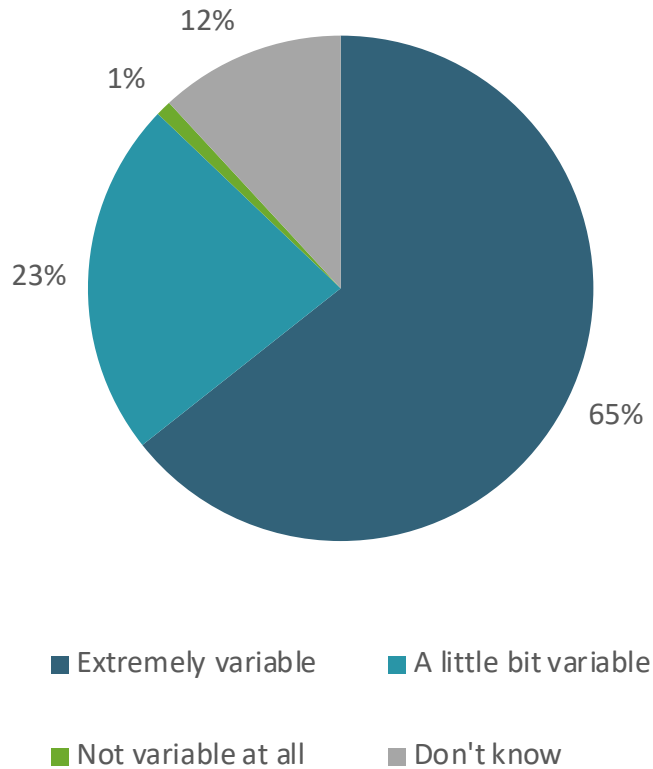




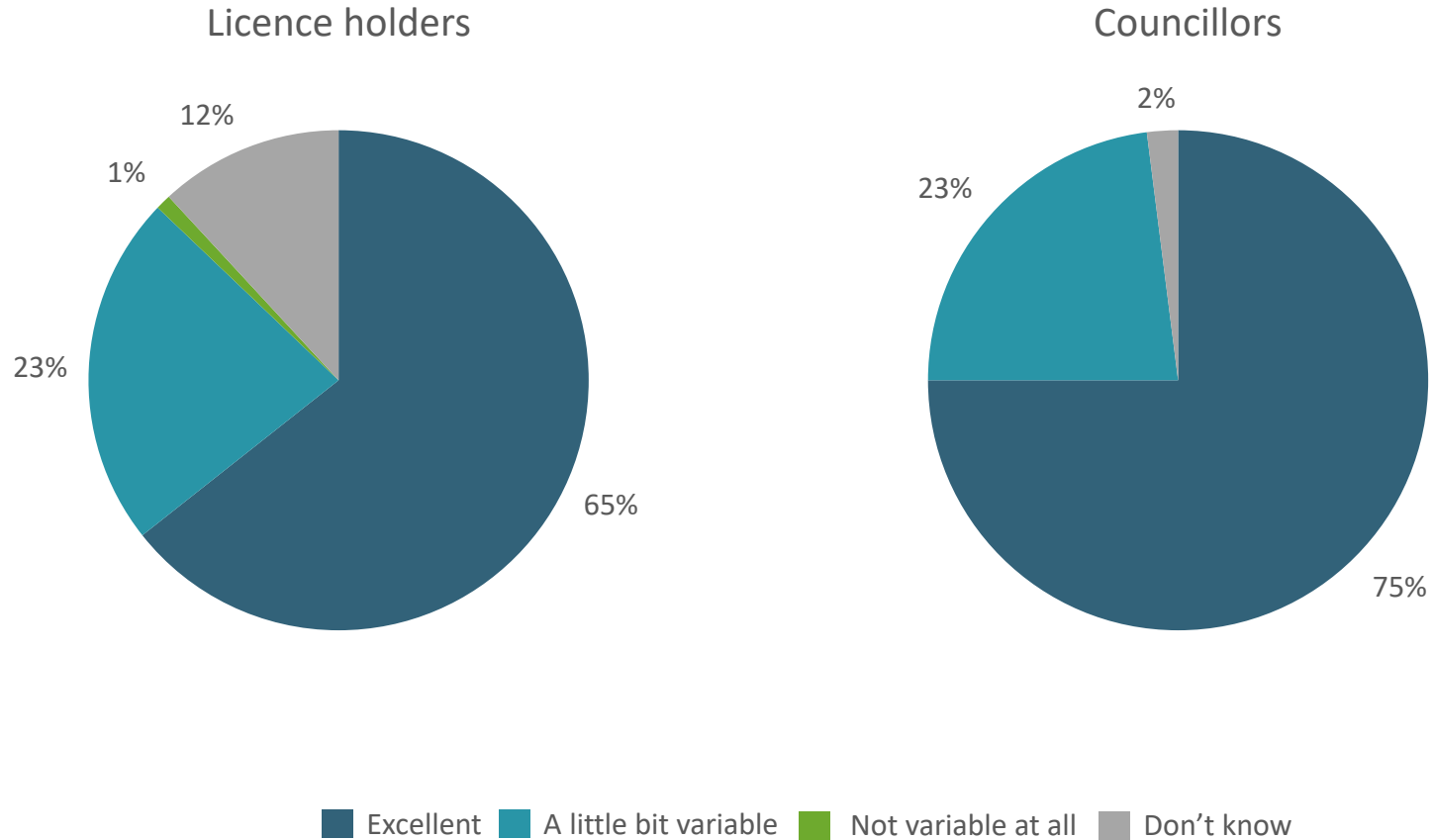
Councillors have a slightly poorer perception of water quality than licence holders, only one in 10 councillors think water quality is very good (none of them think it is excellent). Councillors are more likely to think water quality is poor than licence holders.



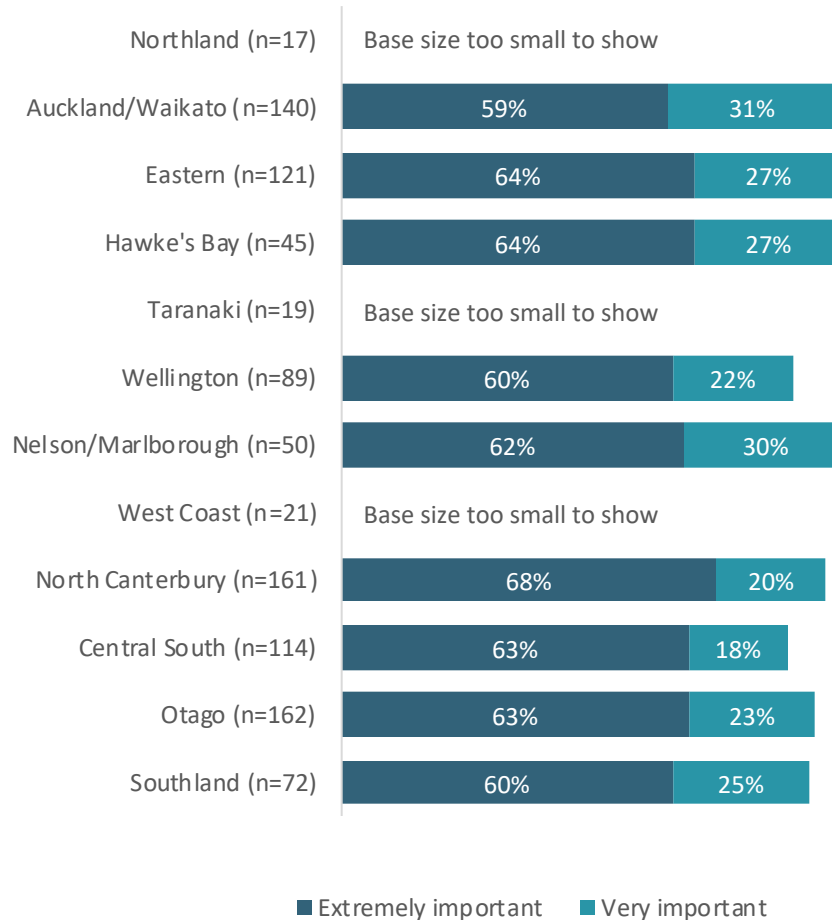
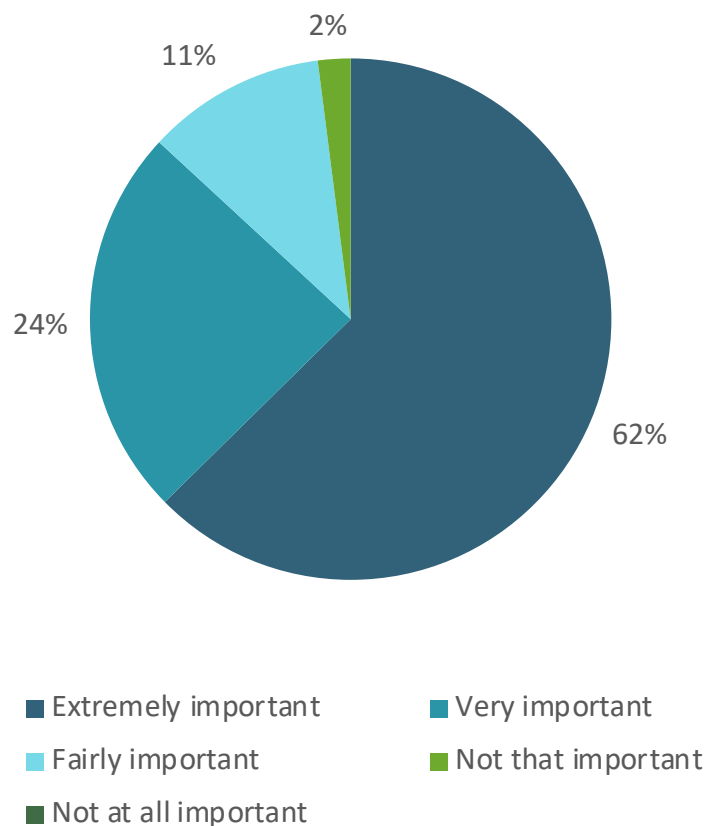
The overwhelming majority of licence holders think the water quality between regions is variable. Licence holders in Hawke's Bay are least likely to think water quality is extremely variable, and Wellingtonians are most likely to.



Councillors are even more likely than licence holders to think water quality is variable. 98% think there is a degree of variability.

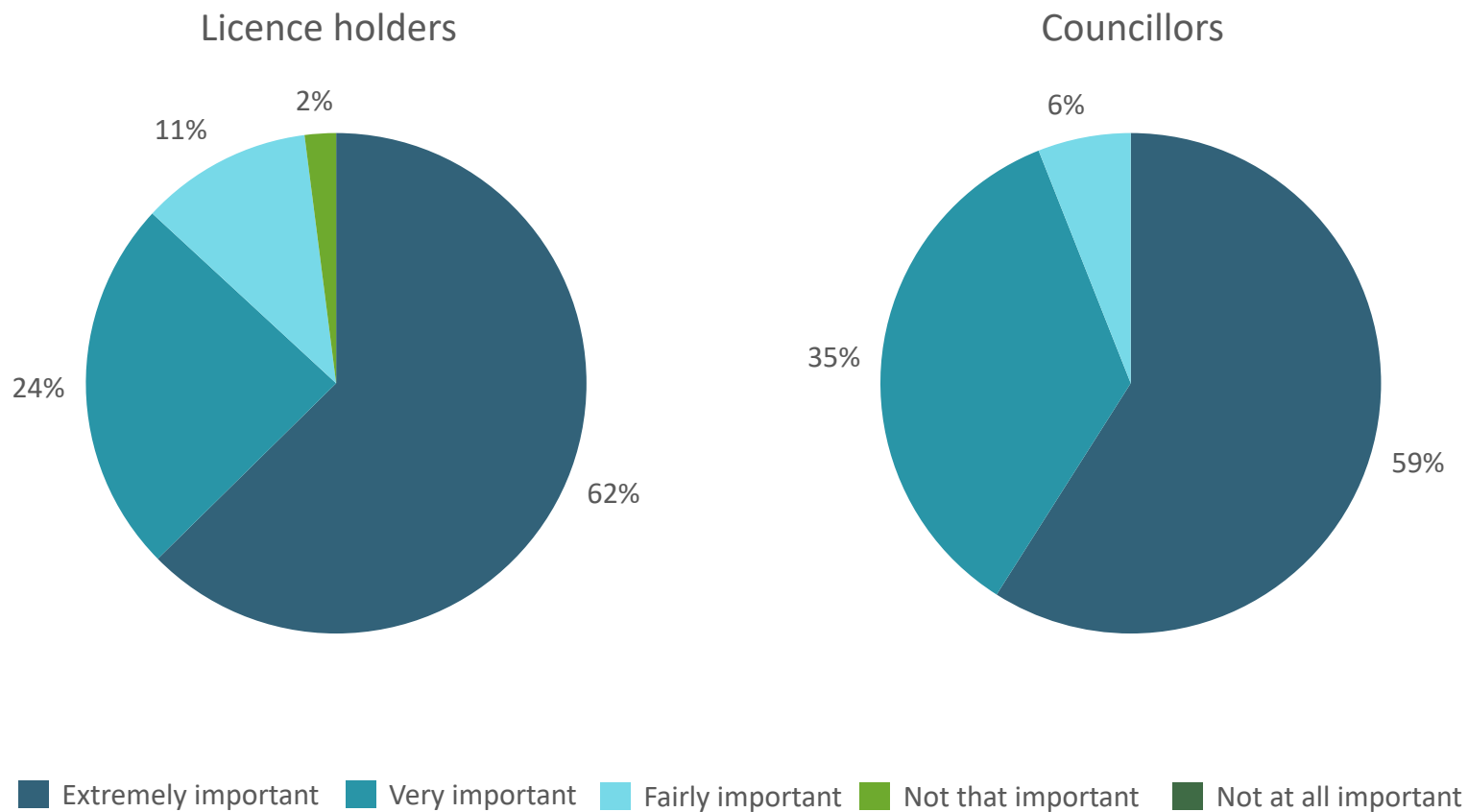


Licence holders think it is important that we improve the water quality in NZ lakes and rivers, this is most evident among North Canterbury licence holders.





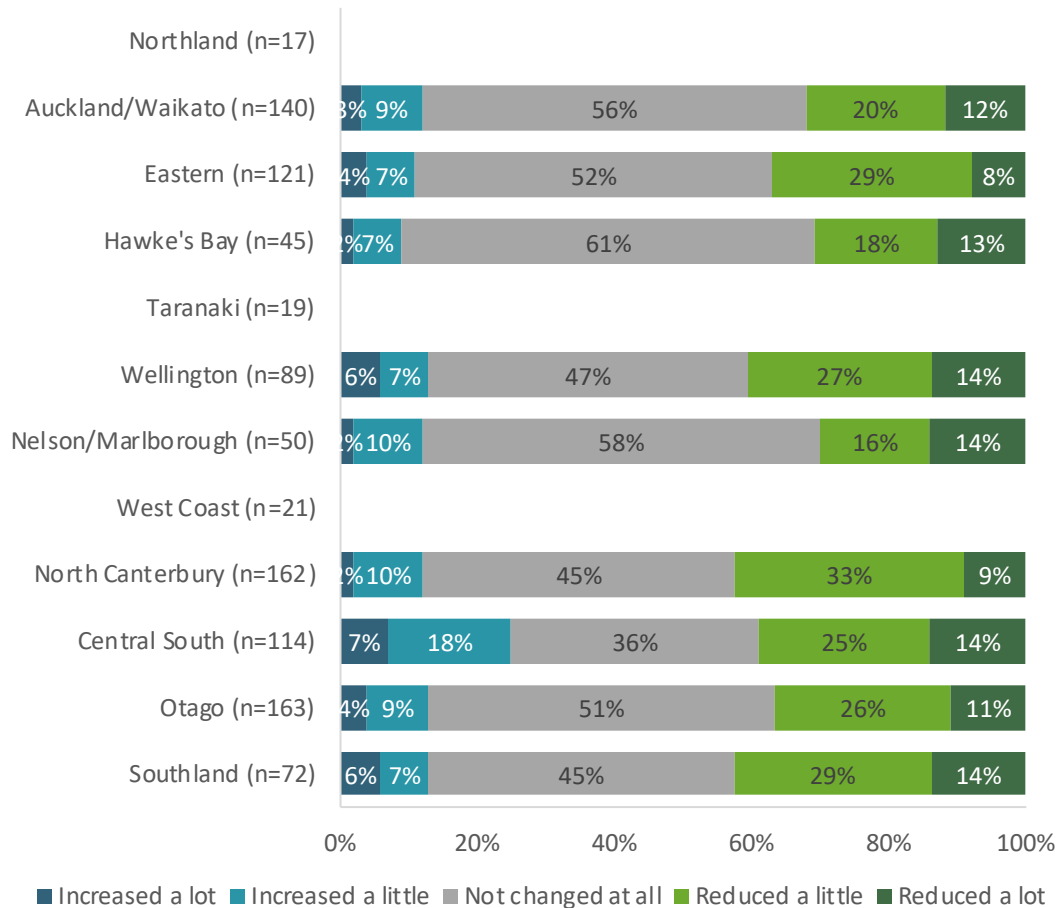
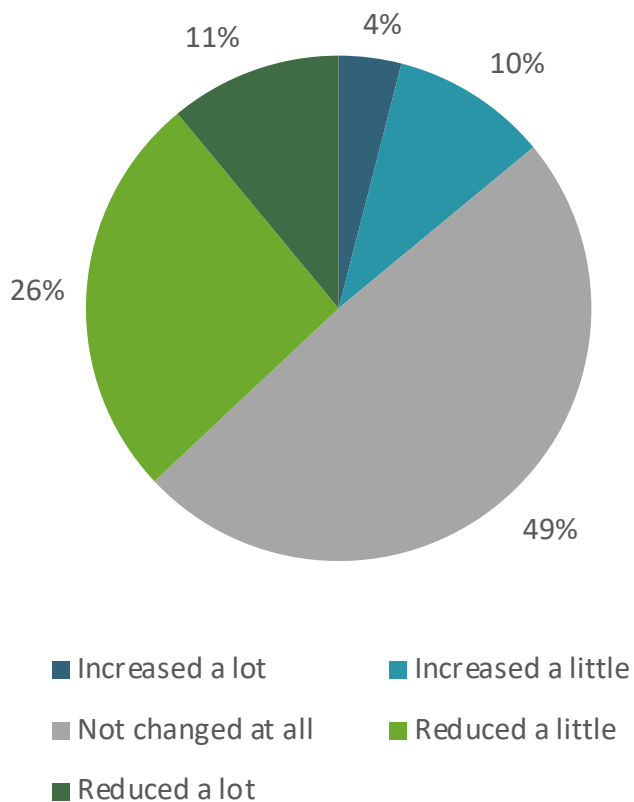
All councillors think it is important to some degree to improve water quality in lakes and rivers.





Access

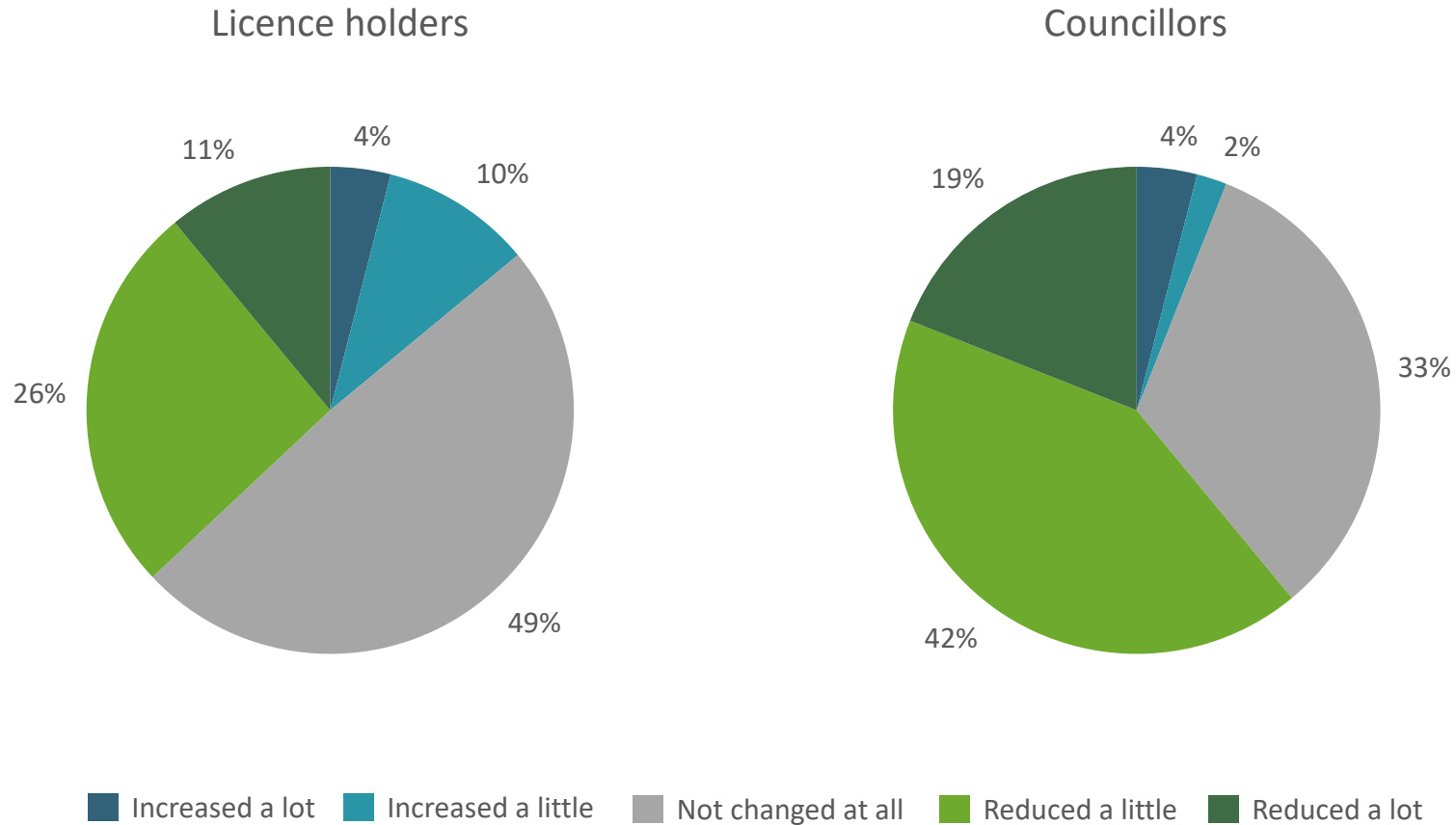
Half of licence holders say their access has not changed in the last five years. Among those who say it has the majority say it has reduced. Access is most likely to have reduced in the Eastern and Wellington regions, and the bottom of the South Island.



Q12. How much, if at all, has your access to areas for fishing and hunting changes in the last five years?

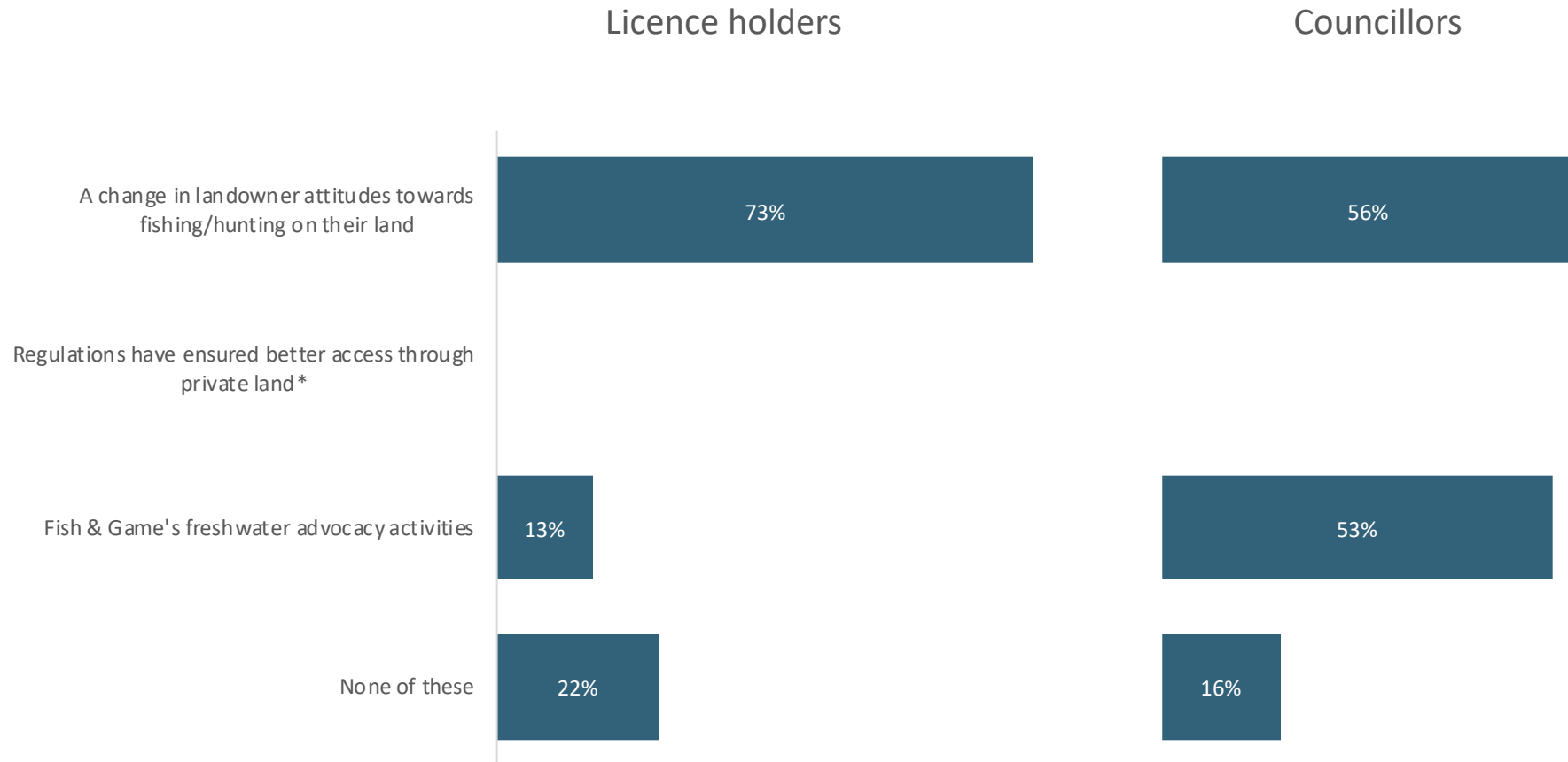
Base: All licence holders n=1,016

Councillors are more likely to say they have seen a reduction in access than licence holders. Nearly two-thirds say access has reduced in the last five years.





Among licence holders who say access has reduced the change is most likely attributed to a change in landowner attitudes, councillors are equally likely to attribute the reduction to a change in landowner attitudes and Fish & Game's advocacy activities.

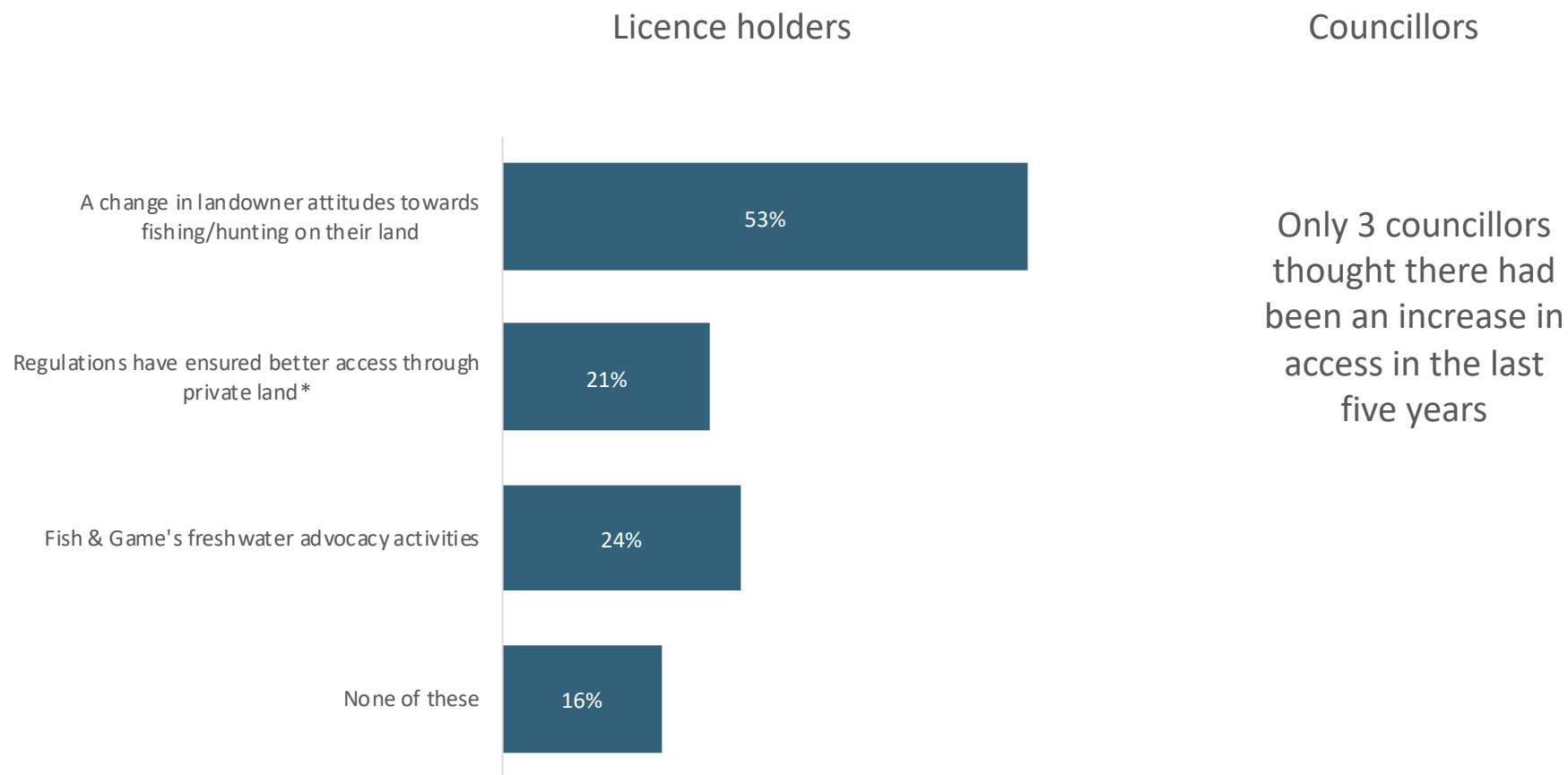


\*Only asked of people who thought access had increased in the last five years

Q13. Which of the following things do you think have impacted in the change in access?

Base: People who think there has been a reduction in access in the last five years. Licence holders n=379; Councillors n=32

Over half of licence holders who say access has increased also cite a change in landowner attitudes.



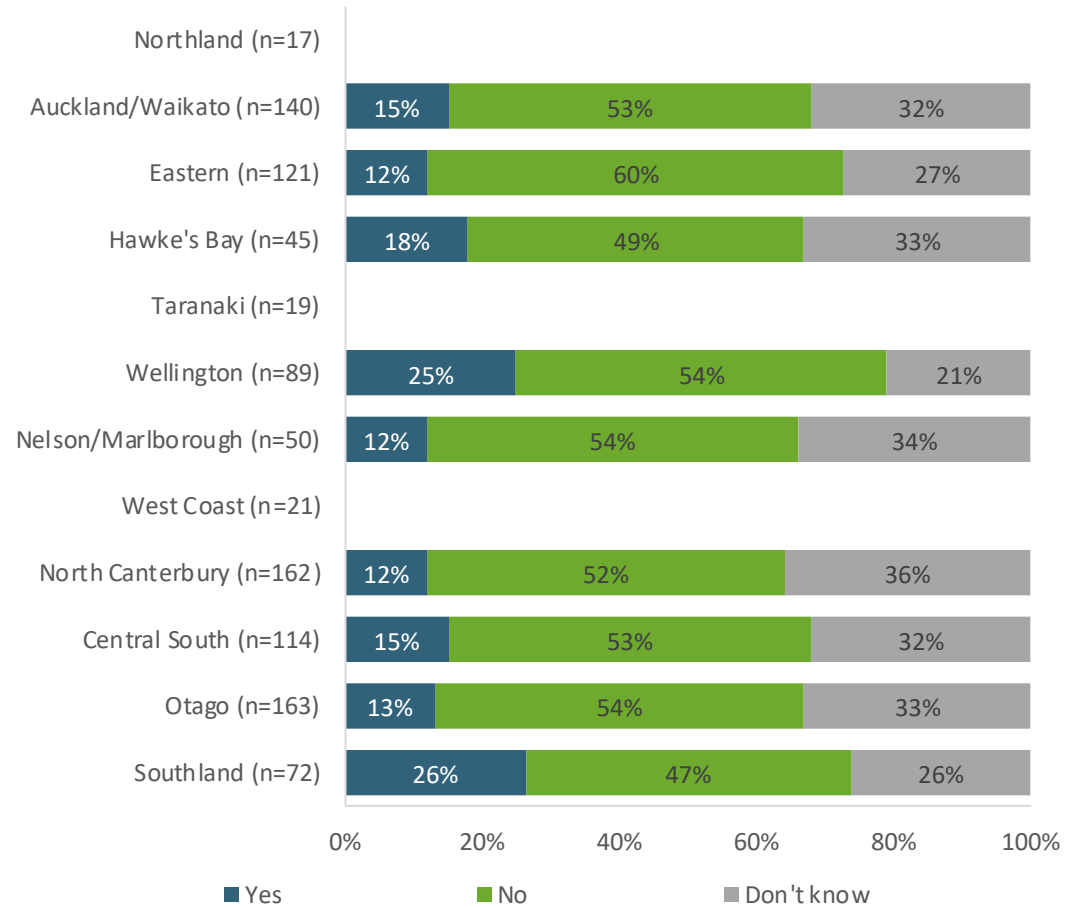
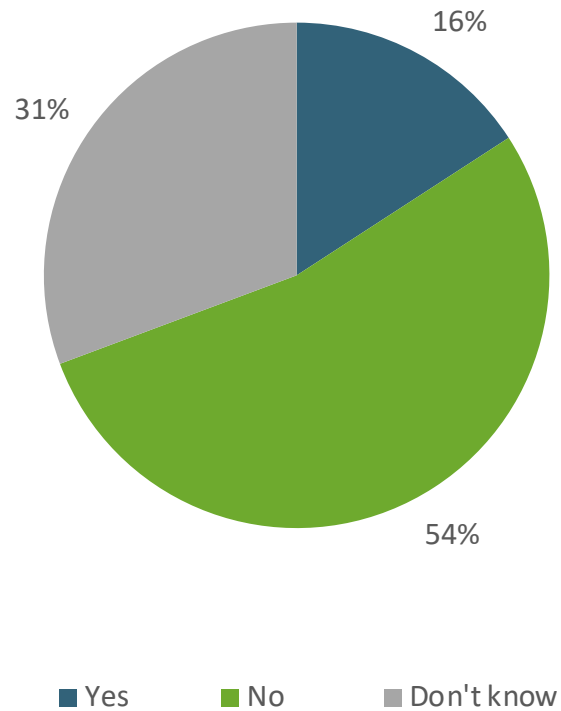
Only 3 councillors thought there had been an increase in access in the last five years

\*Only asked of people who thought access had increased in the last five years

Q13. Which of the following things do you think have impacted in the change in access?

Base: People who think there has been an increase in access in the last five years. Licence holders n=139; Councillors n=32

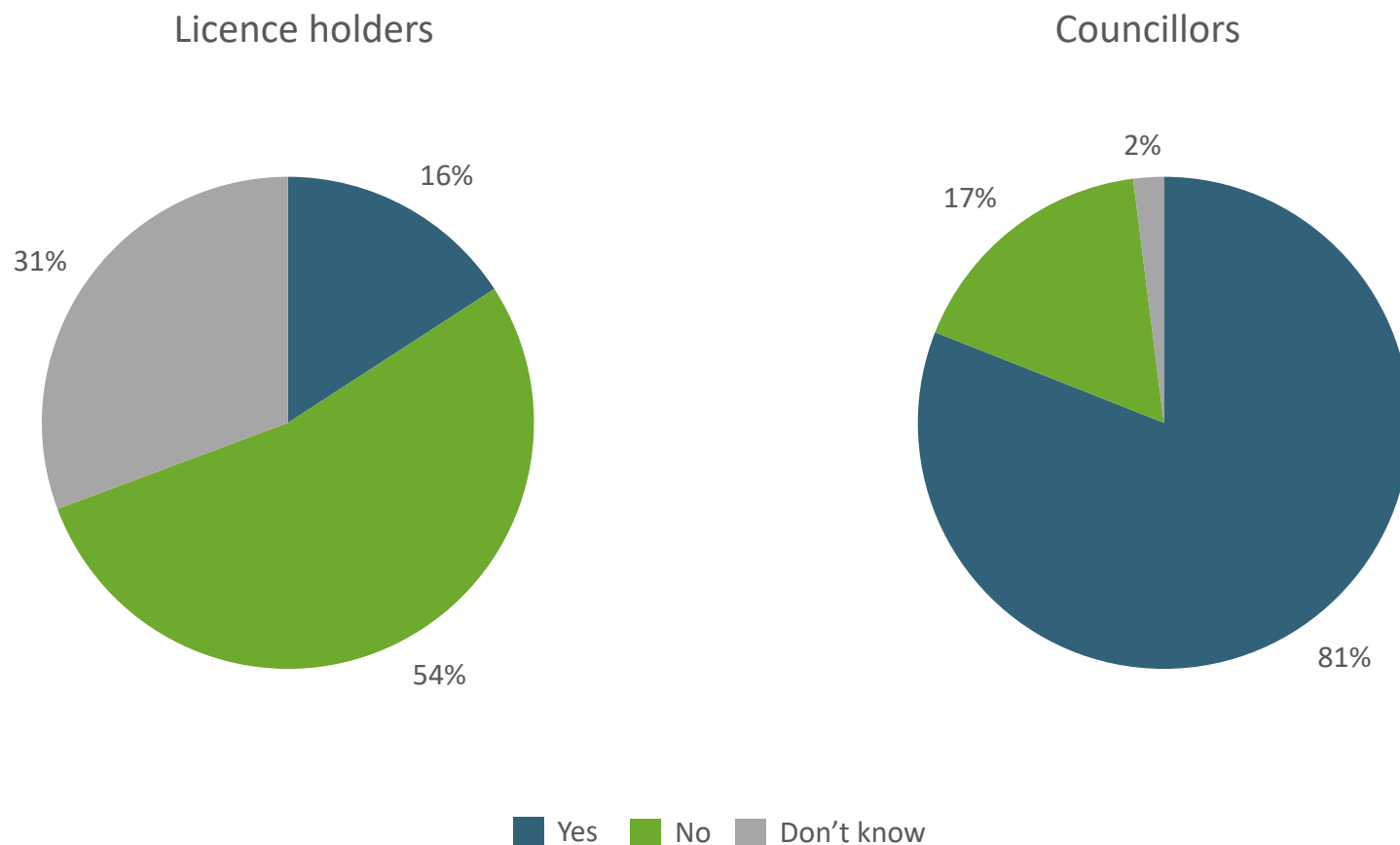
One in eight people say that Fish and Games activities have negatively impacted on their access, this is highest in Wellington where one in four people think they have been impacted.



Q14. Do you think the freshwater advocacy activities undertaken by Fish & Game have negatively impacted on access? For example, has a landowner denied you or someone you know access because of a Fish & Game environmental campaign?

Base: All licence holders n=1,016

Councillors are much more likely than licence holders to think that Fish & Game's freshwater advocacy actions have negatively impacted on access.



Q14. Do you think the freshwater advocacy activities undertaken by Fish & Game have negatively impacted on access? For example, has a landowner denied you or someone you know access because of a Fish & Game environmental campaign?

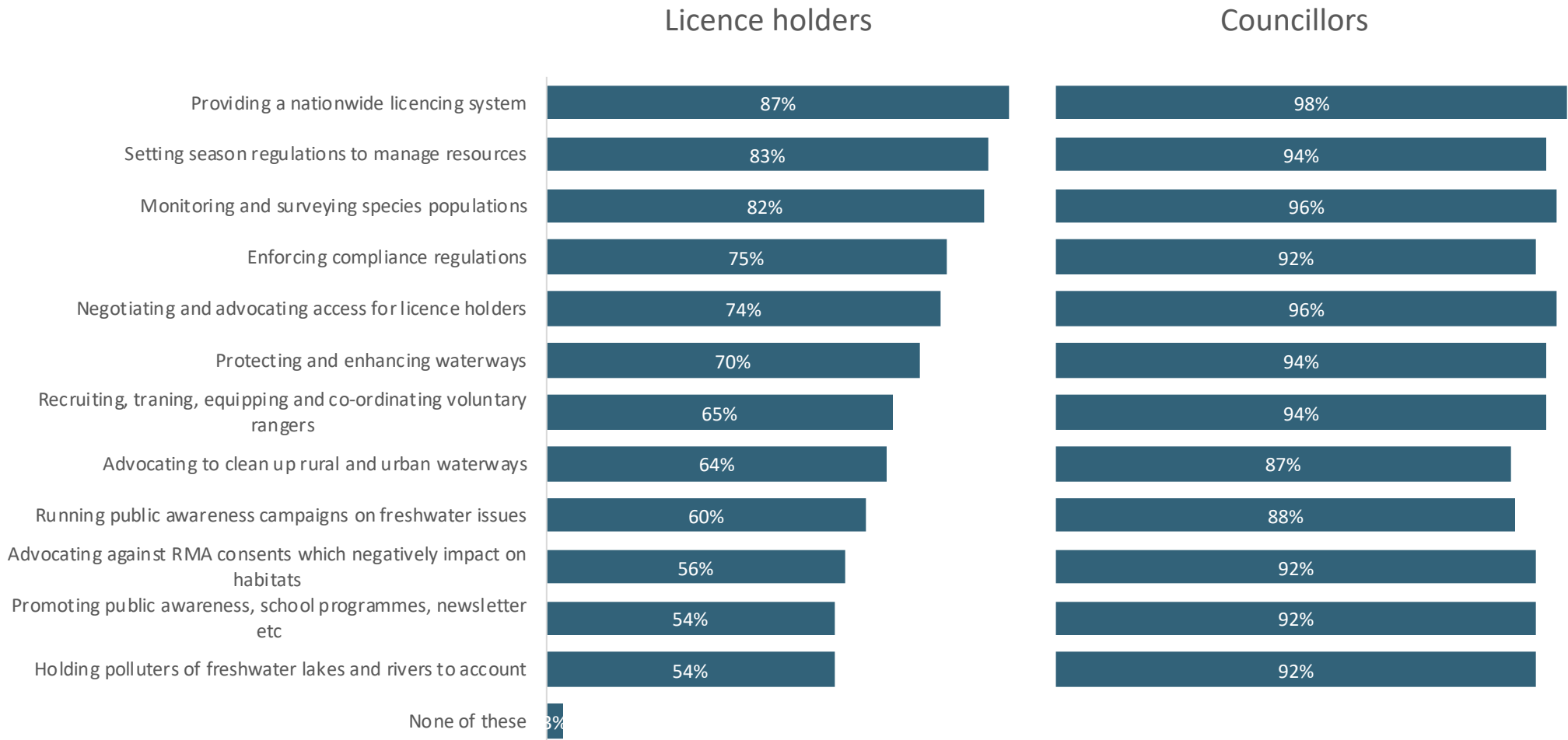
Base: All licence holders n=1,016, All councillors n=52





Fish & Game's current activities

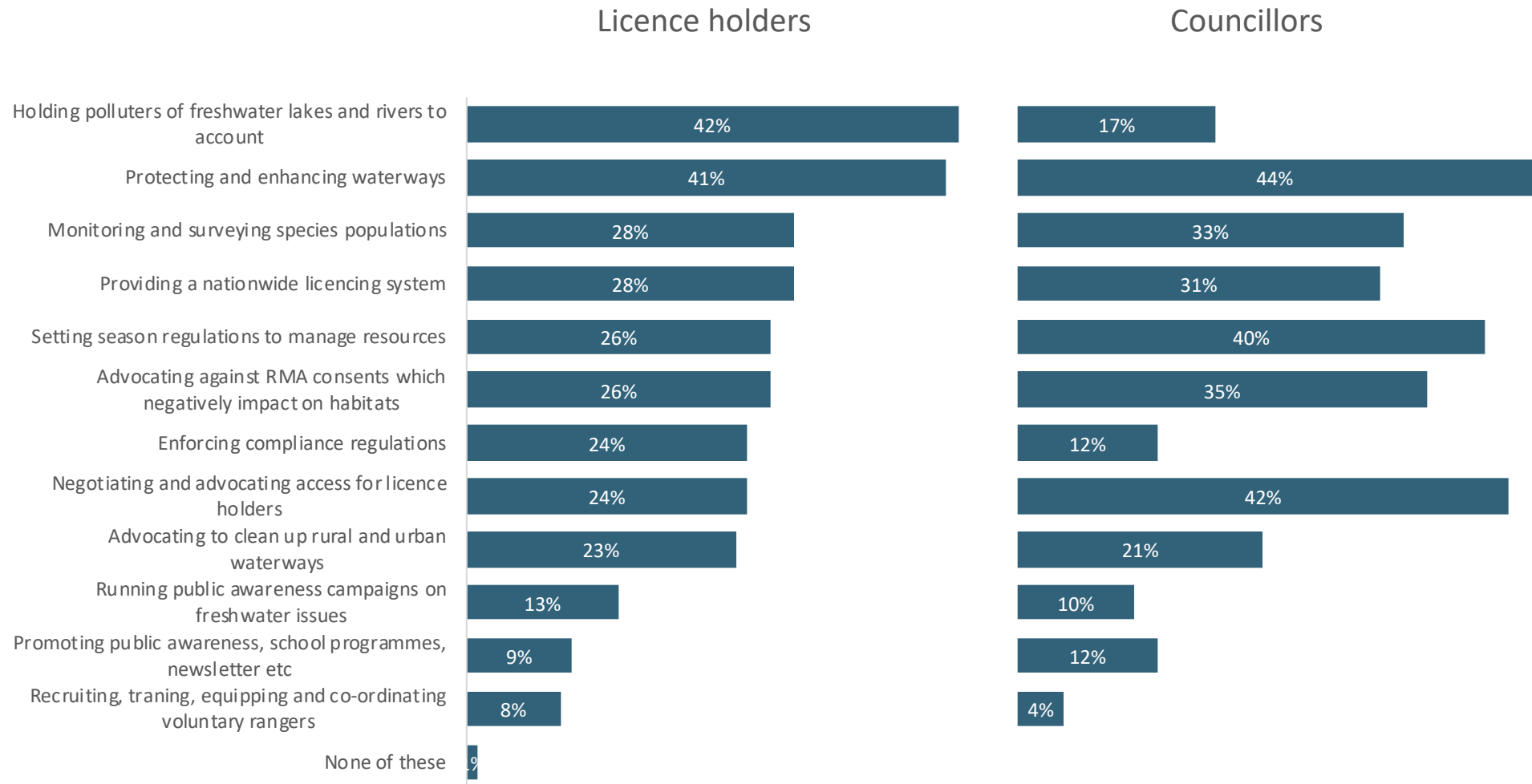
As expected, councillors have a broader awareness of the activities Fish & Game undertake. The licencing system has the highest awareness, followed by setting regulations to manage resources and monitoring species populations.



Q8. Fish & Game advocate for anglers and hunters in New Zealand, which includes a number of activities designed to protect the environments they operate in. Below is a list of the activities that Fish & Game undertake. Before today, which of the following were you aware of?

Base: All licence holders n=1,016, All councillors n=52

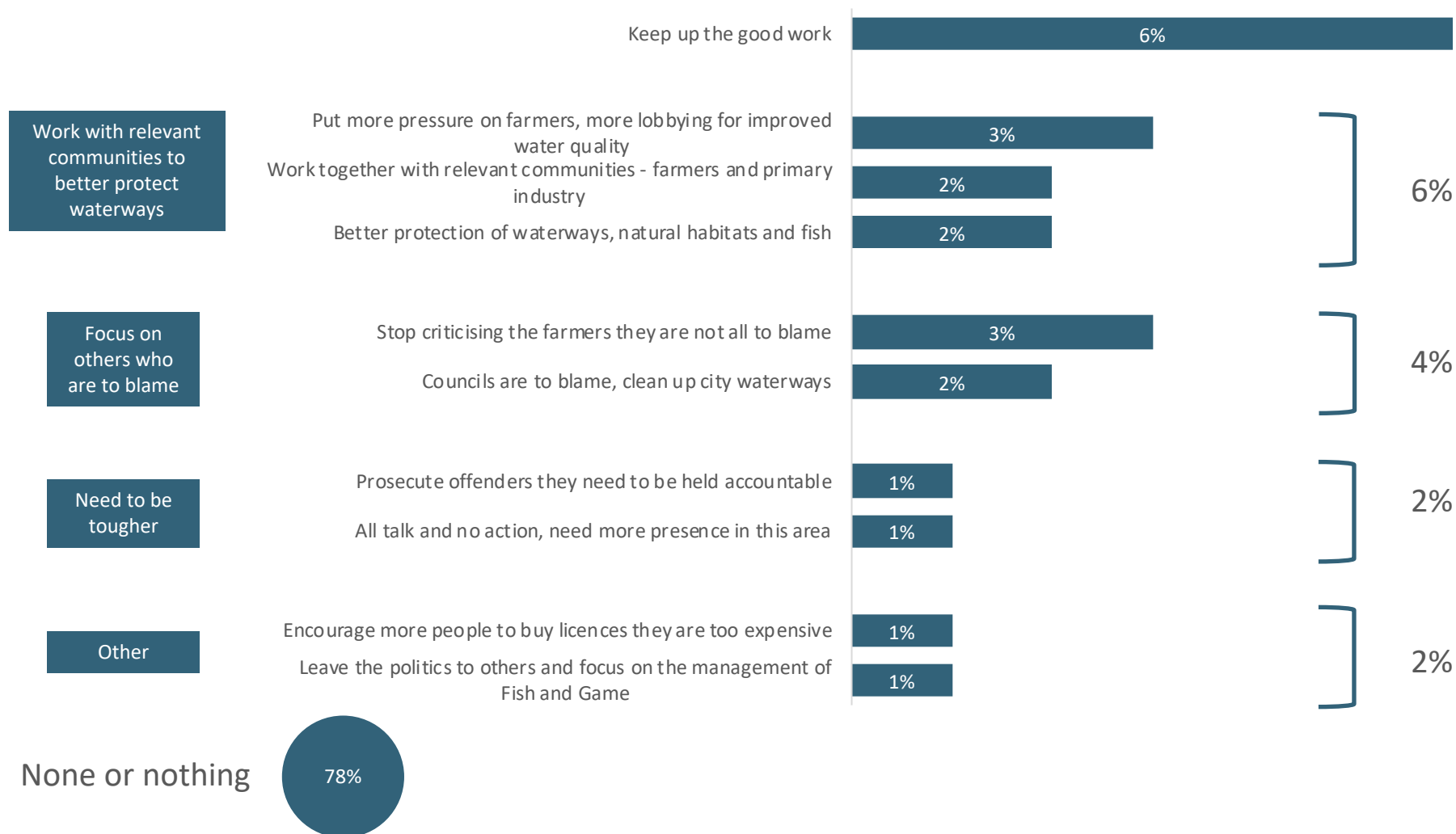
When asked to prioritise activities, licence holders would like Fish & Game to hold polluters to account and to protect and enhance waterways. Councillors would like Fish & Game to prioritise protecting and enhancing waterways, negotiate access for licence holders, and set season regulations to manage resources.



Q10. Please choose the top three activities that you think are the most important for Fish & Game to continue to do. You can choose less than three, but no more than three.

Base: All licence holders n=1,016, All councillors n=52

Four out of five licence holders made no further comment on Fish & Game’s advocacy activities. Those who did were most likely to say keep up the good work, or suggested working with farmers and relevant communities to better protect waterways. Comments also reflected the need to focus on other groups who impact water quality, and the need to be tougher when holding people accountable.



Q16. Is there anything else you would like to say about Fish & Game and their freshwater advocacy activities?

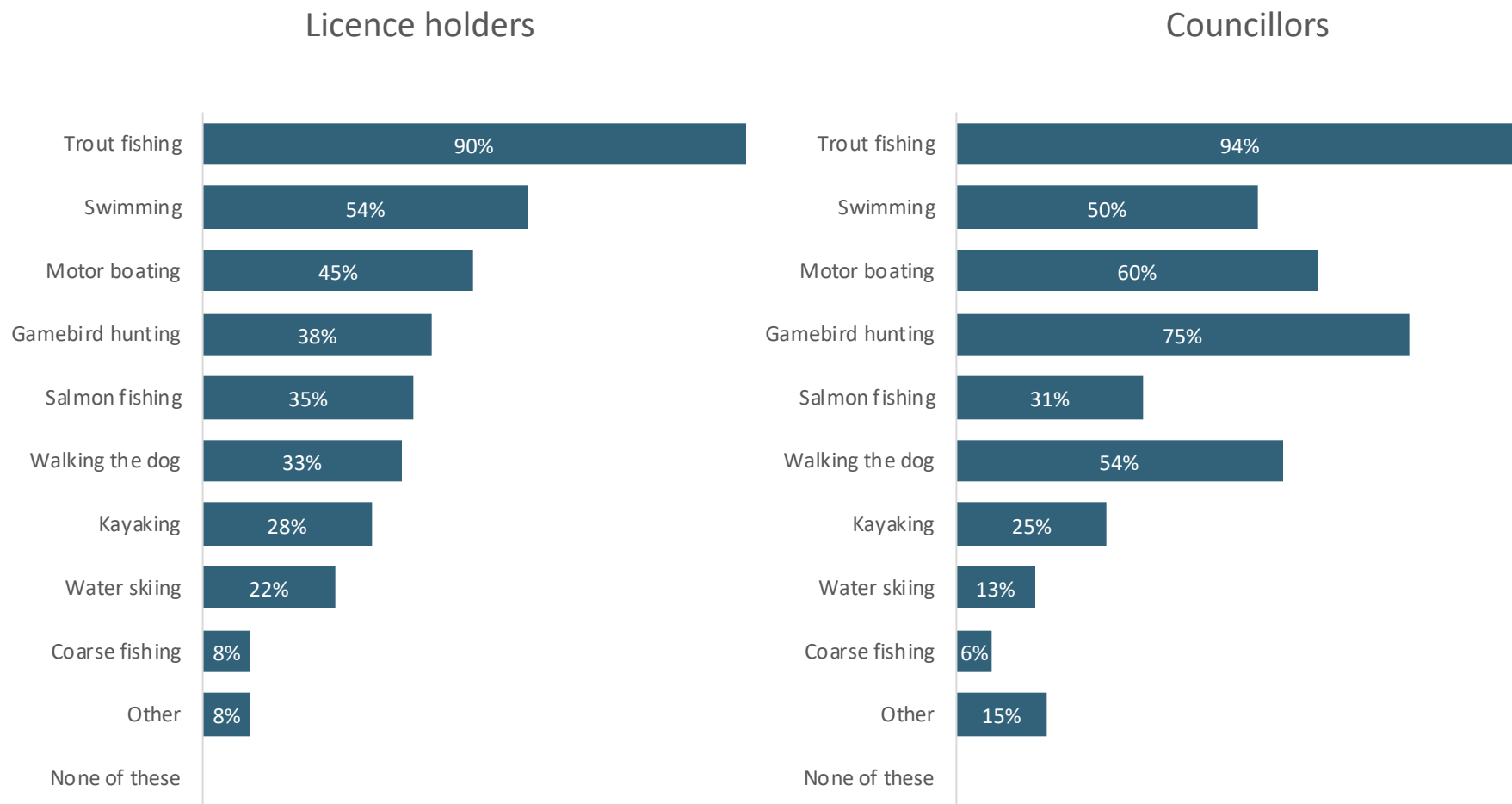
Base: All licence holders n=1,016





Water activities

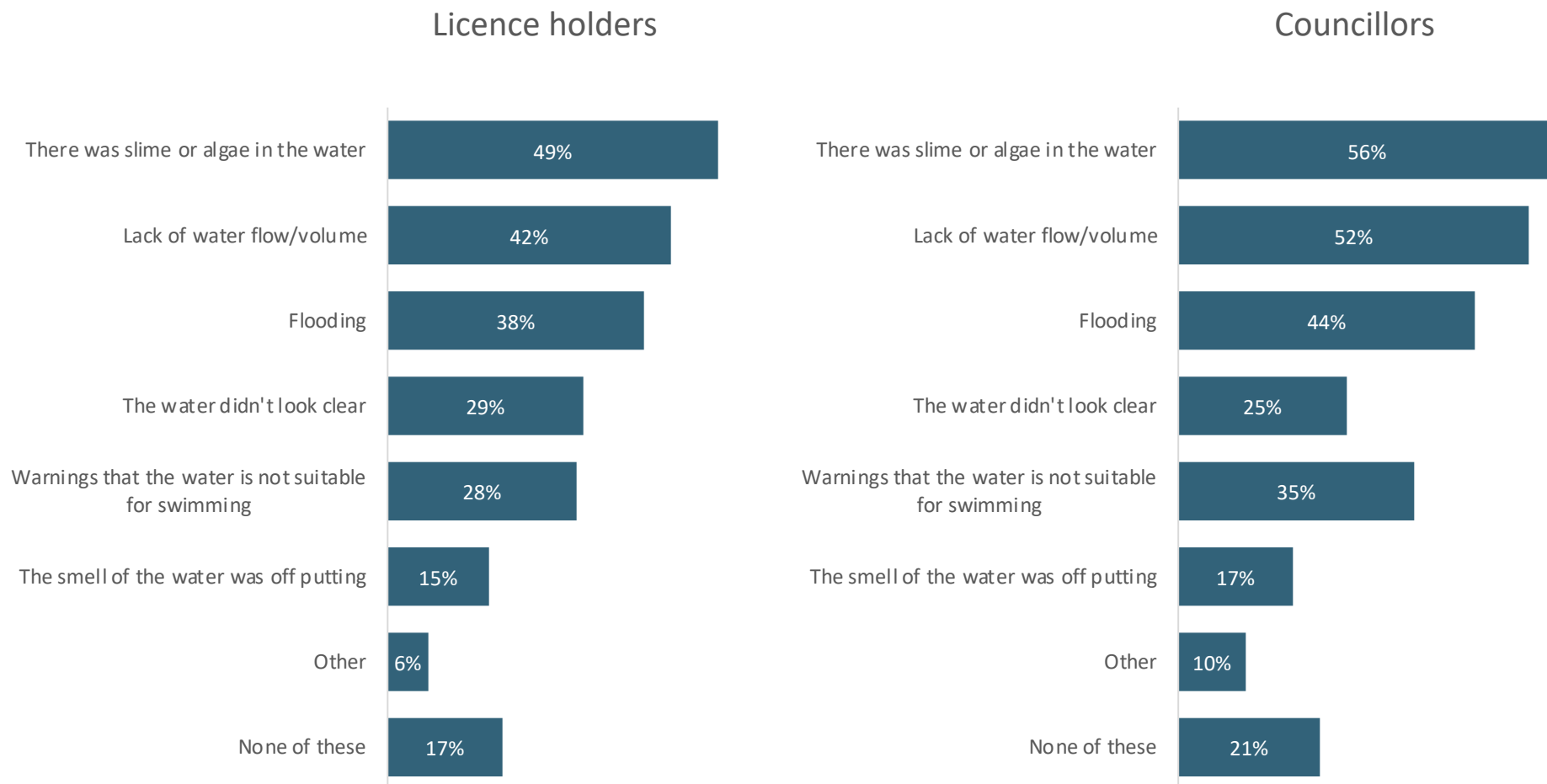
Both licence holders and councillors are most likely to go trout fishing around rivers and lakes. Councillors are more likely to go gamebird hunting and motor boating while licence holders are swimming and motor boating.



Q3. What activities do you do in, on, or around rivers and lakes?

Base: All licence holders n=1,016; All councillors n=52

Councillors are more likely than licence holders to have had their enjoyment of water activities limited by most of the things we asked about. The most common limitation, for both groups, was slime or algae in the water.



Q4. Have any of the following stopped, or limited, your enjoyment of water activities in the last 12 months?

Base: All people who do activities around rivers and lakes: Licence holders n=1,014; Councillors n=52

For further information please contact:

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## Appendix: Licence holder demographics

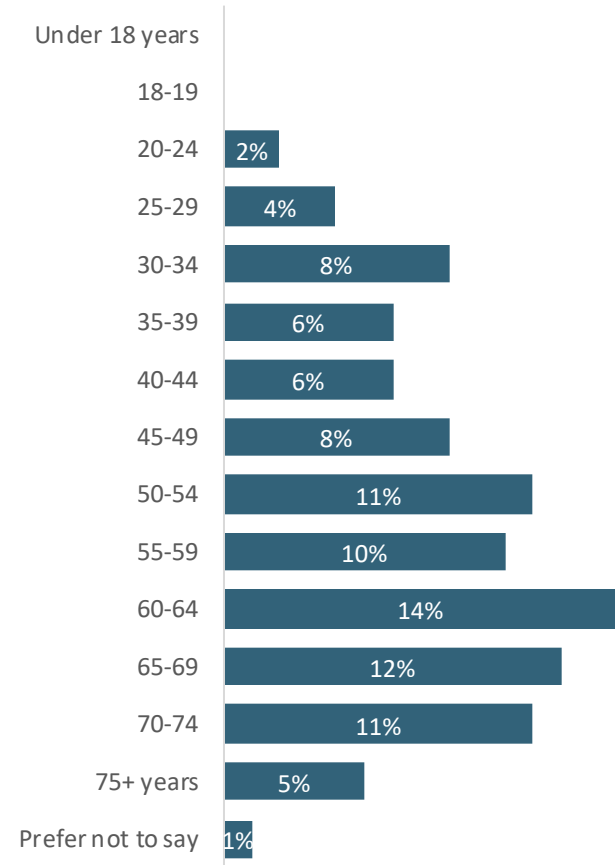
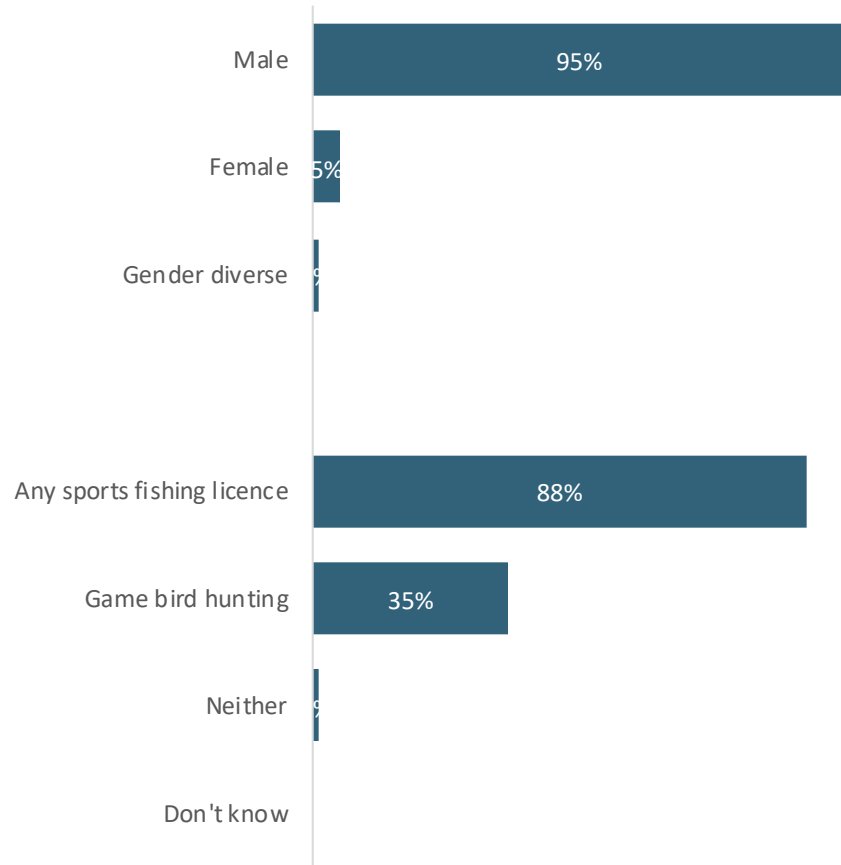


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# Demographics



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