

Understanding the attitudes of Scotland residents to marine protected areas

Conducted by Survation on behalf of
Scottish Environment LINK

Fieldwork conducted: 2nd - 7th September 2020
Population sampled: All residents aged 16+ living in Scotland
Sample size: 1,018 respondents



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Research Objective and Methodology

- The objective of this research is to understand the attitudes of Scotland residents to marine protected areas
- **Methodology**
 - Data collection: Online interviews
 - Targe Audience: All residents 16+ years living in Scotland
 - Sample size achieved: 1018
 - Data weighting: The data were weighted to the profile of all Scottish adults aged 18+. Data were weighted by age, sex, region, 2019 General Election vote, 2016 Holyrood Election vote, 2016 EU referendum vote and 2014 independence referendum vote.

In order to match the profile of the overall population of Scotland, targets for the weighted data were derived from Office for National Statistics data and the results of the aforementioned elections
 - Fieldwork dates: 2nd - 7th September 2020

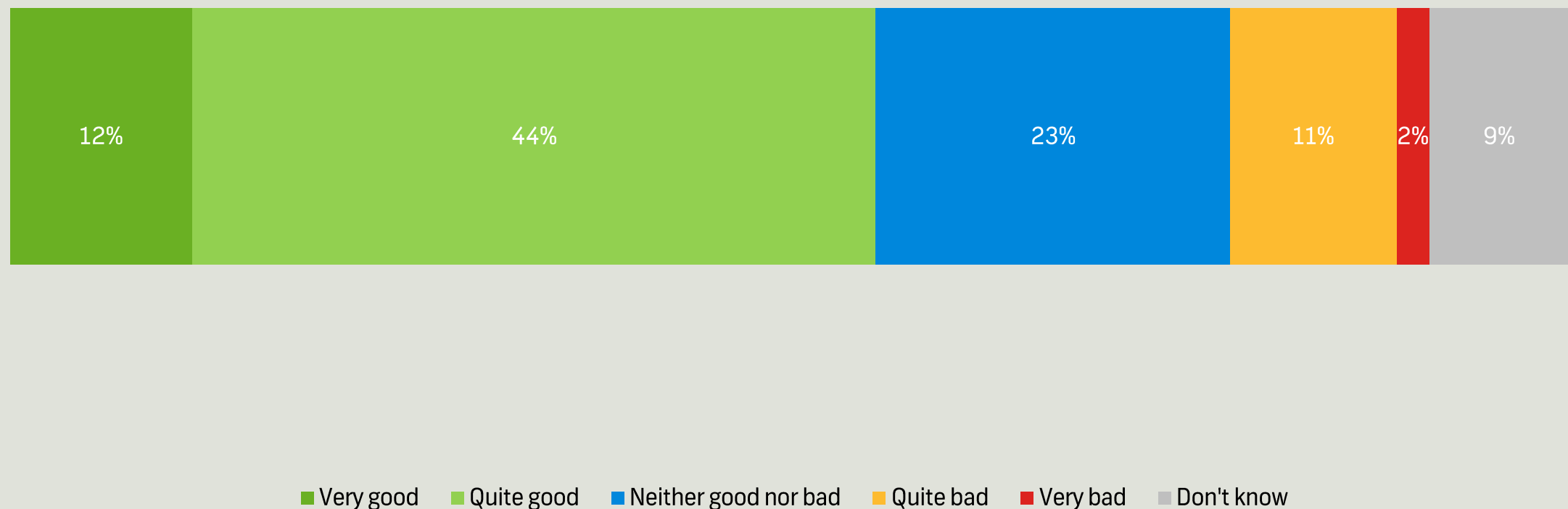
Executive Summary

- Majority rate Scotland's seas as good, with residents of the Highlands and Islands and North East Scotland, as well as SNP Holyrood voters having a relatively more favourable perception
 - However, about 40% perceive that Scotland's seas have worsened in the past ten years
 - Litter pollution, chemical or sewage pollution and impacts of climate change are the greatest threats to the health of Scotland's seas
- Although, 3 in 5 have heard of MPAs, a vast majority do not know much about them
 - Of those who have heard of MPAs, their main purpose is often thought of as "conserving marine species and habitat to a current state" or "recovering marine species and habitats to an improved state"
- There is a significant support (79%) for MPAs in Scotland. Further, three in four also think Scotland should commit to the target of 30% or more of the sea to be protected from extractive activities
 - A vast majority (80%) thinks that Scotland's MPAs should be "fully/highly protected"
 - About 60% of participants think that scientific research should be allowed in MPAs, followed by renewable energy installations coming in as a distant second, and marine tourism in third position

Executive Summary

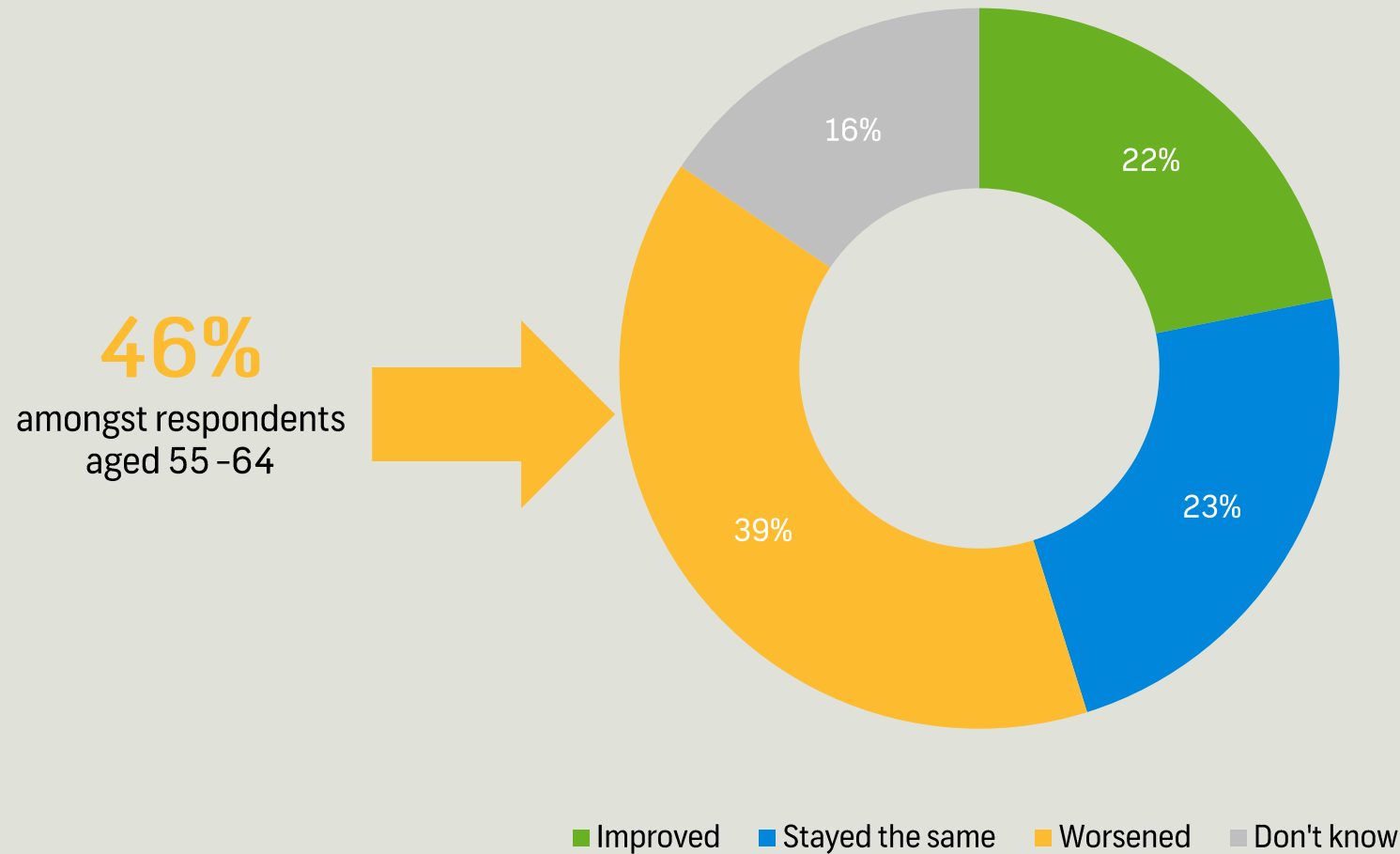
- Majority think creation of a new MPA that is also well managed is likely to be positive for the marine life, and that impact on local jobs will be at the same level as it is today. However, one in four think that local fishing jobs are likely to decrease
 - Half of participants think that well-managed MPAs would have a positive effect on the regional economy, while 27% think that the impact will be the same as it is currently
- A vast majority (84%) think that marine species and habitats should be adequately protected across the range, not only in MPAs
- Three in four participants think that marine industries should be obliged to contribute financially to marine conservation efforts

A majority (56%) of participants rate Scotland's seas as good. Residents of the Highlands and North East Scotland (61%) and SNP Holyrood voter have a relatively more favourable perception (69%)



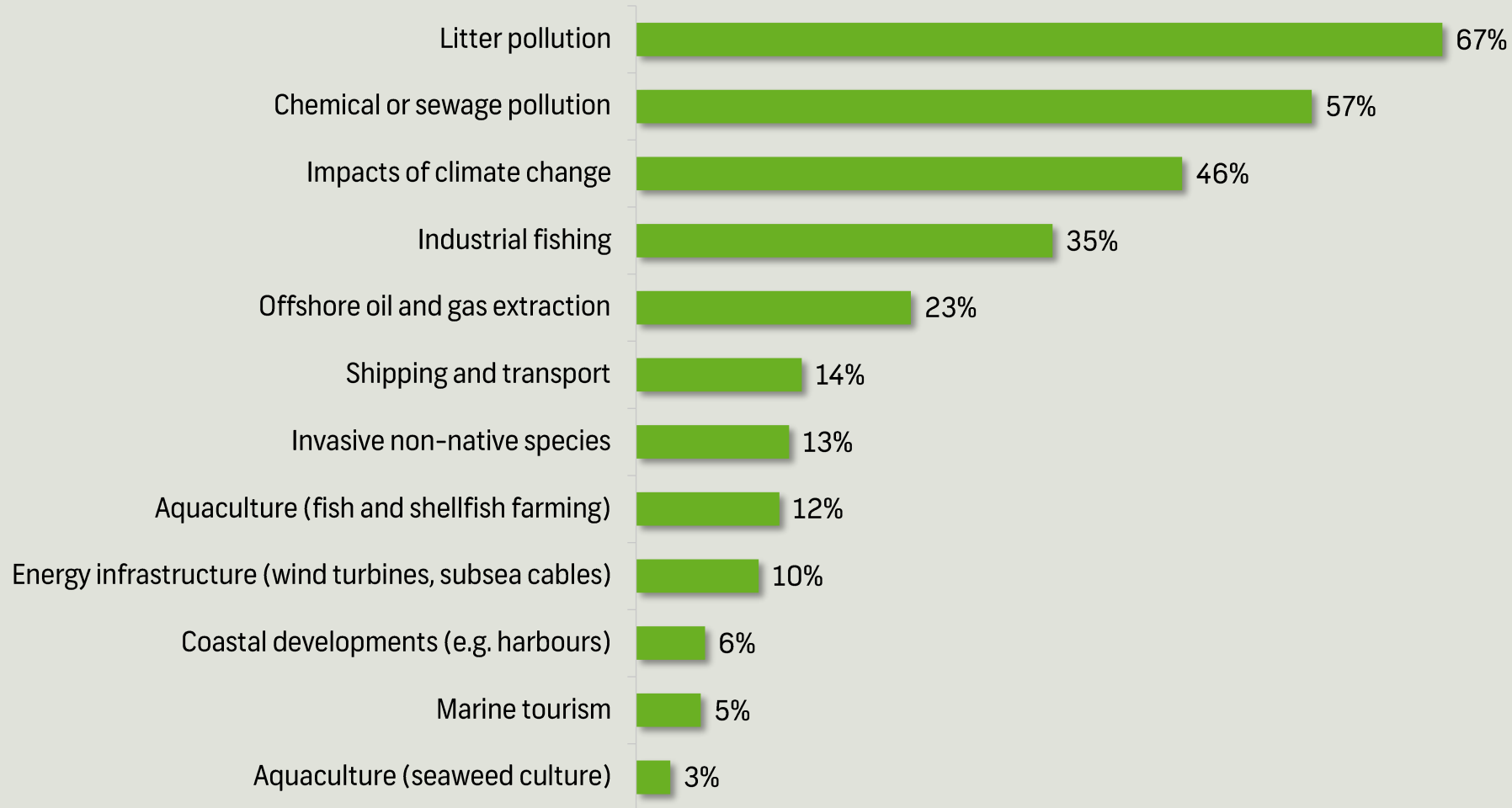
Q1. From what you know or have heard, how would you rate the health of Scotland's seas (i.e. abundance of wildlife and water quality)?

However, two in five think Scotland's seas have worsened in the past ten years; more so among those aged 55 to 64 years



Q2. Compared to ten years ago, how do you think the health of Scotland's seas has changed?

Litter pollution, chemical or sewage pollution, and impacts of climate change are the greatest threats to the health of Scotland's seas



Q3. Which of the following do you think represent the greatest threat to the health of Scotland's seas? (Please rank your top three.)

Base: All Respondents Unweighted Total: Total=1018

Although 3 in 5 have heard of MPAs, a vast majority do not know much about them

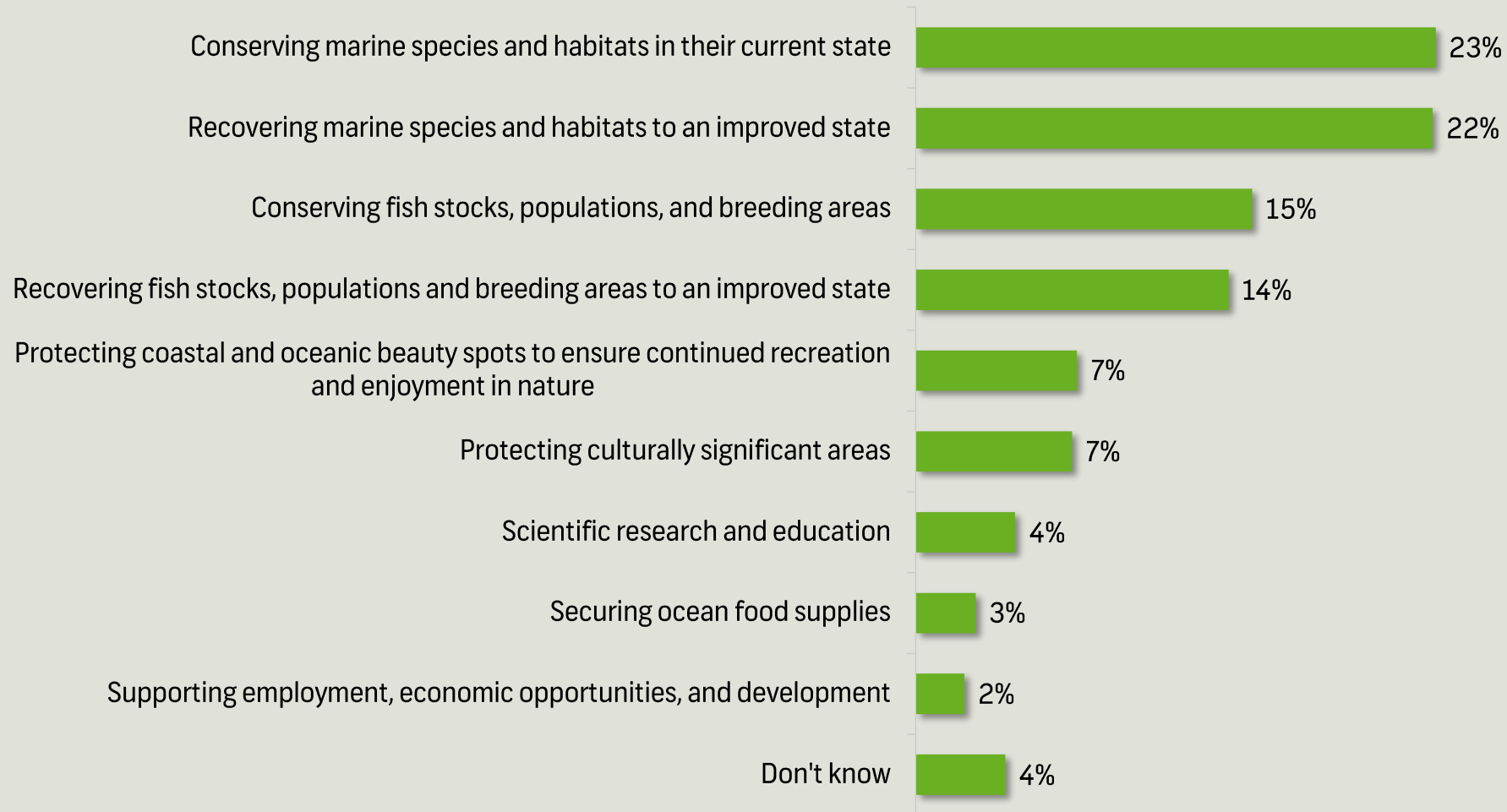


MPAs were least known in North East Scotland where almost half of respondents (48%) had not heard of them.

- I have heard of 'marine protected areas' (MPAs) and I know a lot about them
- I have heard of 'marine protected areas' (MPAs) and I know a little about them
- I have not heard of 'marine protected areas' (MPAs)

Q4. Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

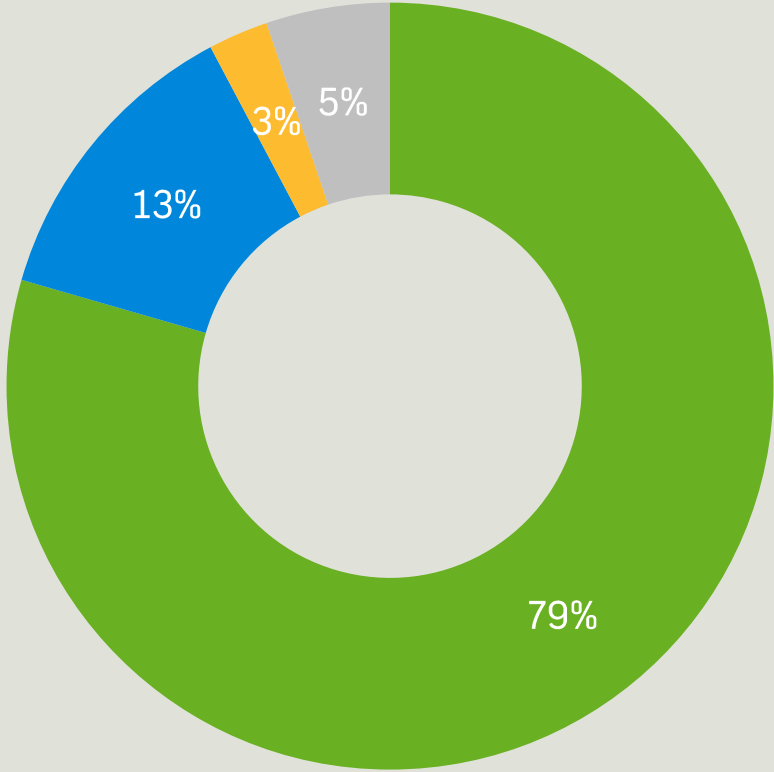
Of those who have heard of MPAs, participants are evenly split across thinking their main purpose was “conserving marine species and habitat to a current state” or “recovering marine species and habitats to an improved state”



Q5. To the best of your knowledge, what do you think is the main purpose of an MPA?

Base: Respondents heard of marine protected areas Unweighted Total: Total=582

About 4 in 5 people in Scotland support MPAs



Strongest support for MPAs was found among:

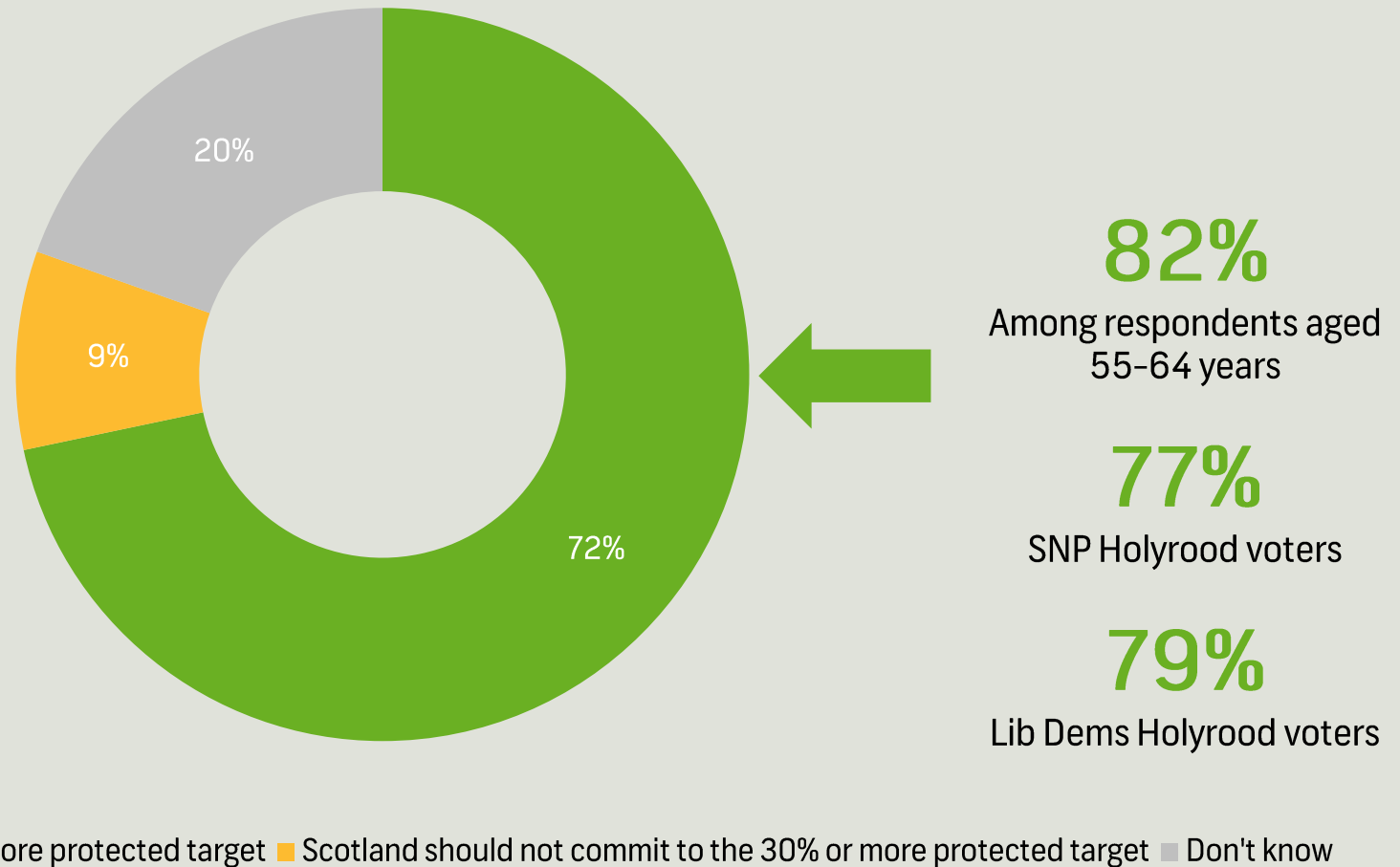
- 55+ years (85%)

However, there is slightly less support for MPAs from people in Central Scotland (73%)

■ Support (Net) ■ Neither support nor oppose ■ Oppose (Net) ■ Don't know

Q6. To what extent do you support or oppose MPAs in Scotland?

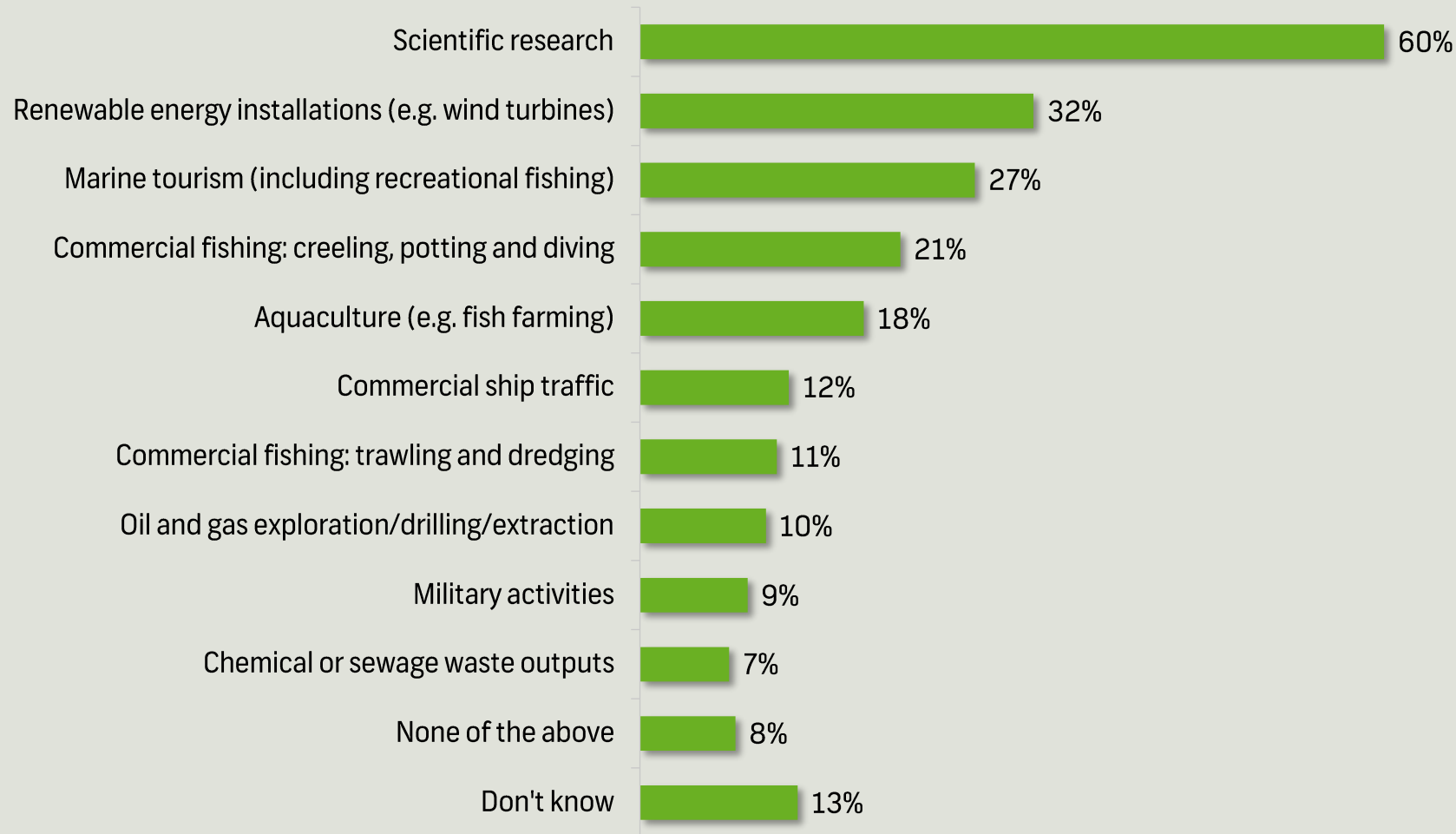
Further, three in four also think Scotland should commit to the target of 30% or more of the sea to be protected from extractive activities



Q7. Which of the following statements comes closest to your view,

Base: All Respondents Unweighted Total: Total=1018

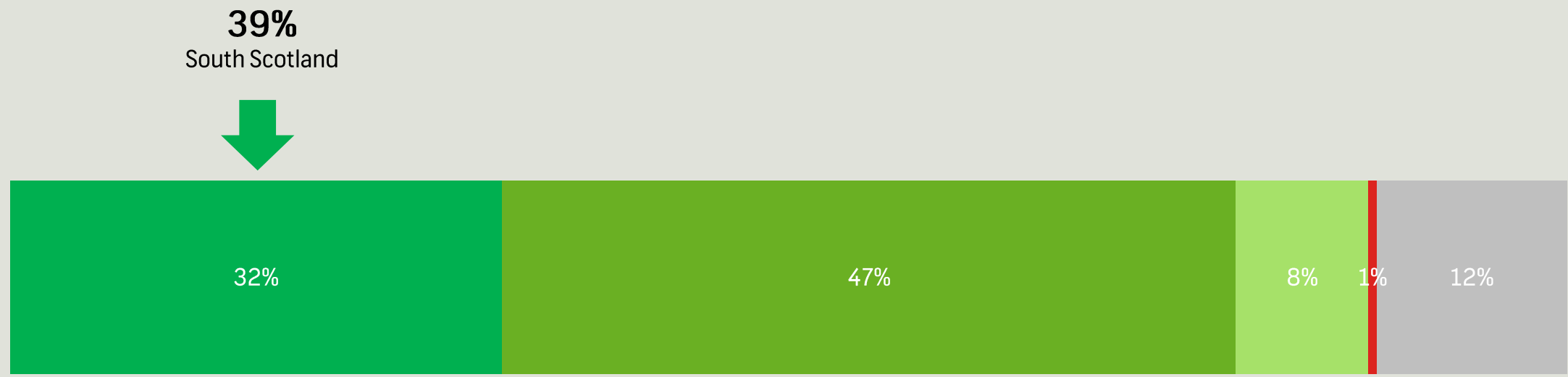
About 60% of participants think that scientific research should be allowed in MPAs, followed by renewable energy installations coming in as a distant second and marine tourism at third position



Q8. Please indicate which of the following activities you think should be allowed in MPAs. (Please select all that apply.)

Base: All Respondents Unweighted Total: Total=1018

About 80% think that Scotland's MPAs should be "fully/ highly protected"



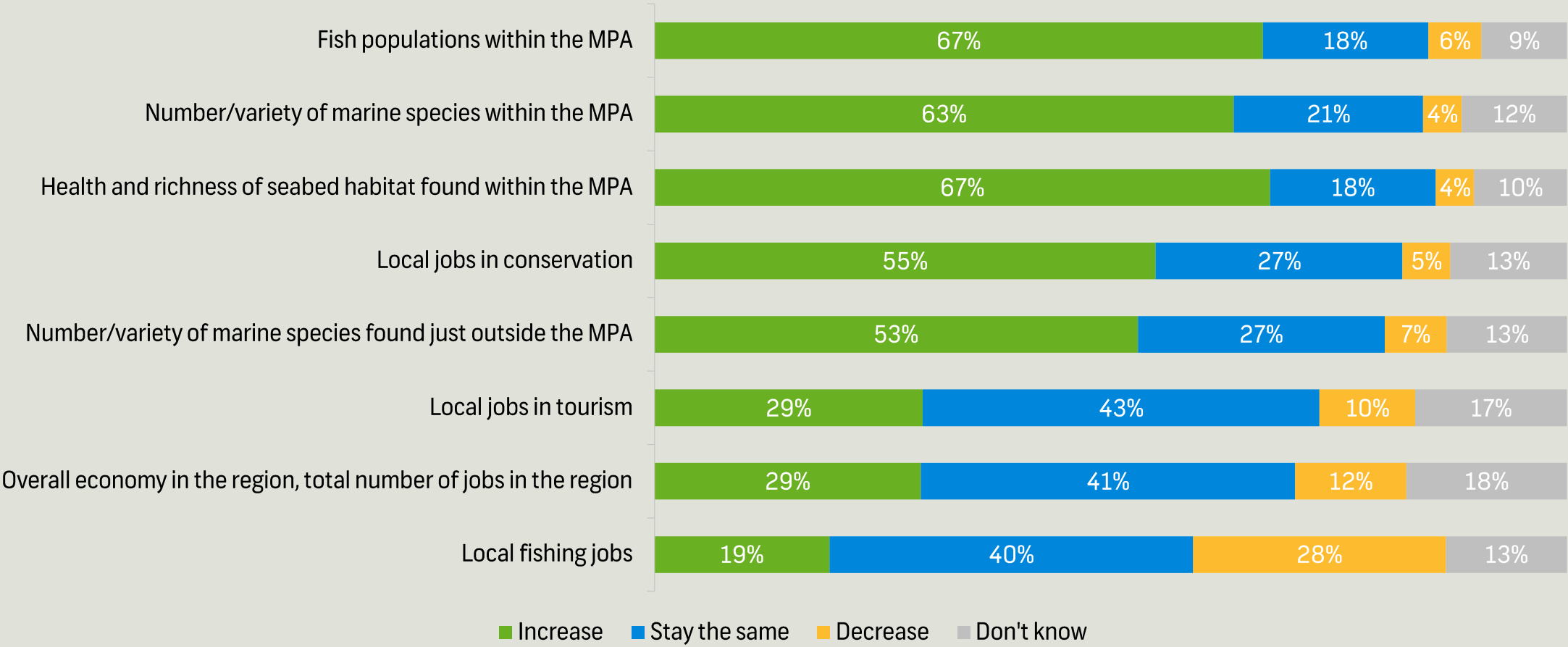
- FULLY PROTECTED: no extractive or destructive activities are allowed, and all impacts are minimized
- HIGHLY PROTECTED: only light extractive activities are allowed, and other impacts are minimized to the extent possible
- LIGHTLY PROTECTED: some protection exists but moderate to significant extraction and impacts are allowed
- MINIMALLY PROTECTED: extensive extraction and other impacts are allowed while still providing some conservation benefit to the area
- Don't know

Q9. In general, which of the following categories do you think Scotland's MPAs should fall under?

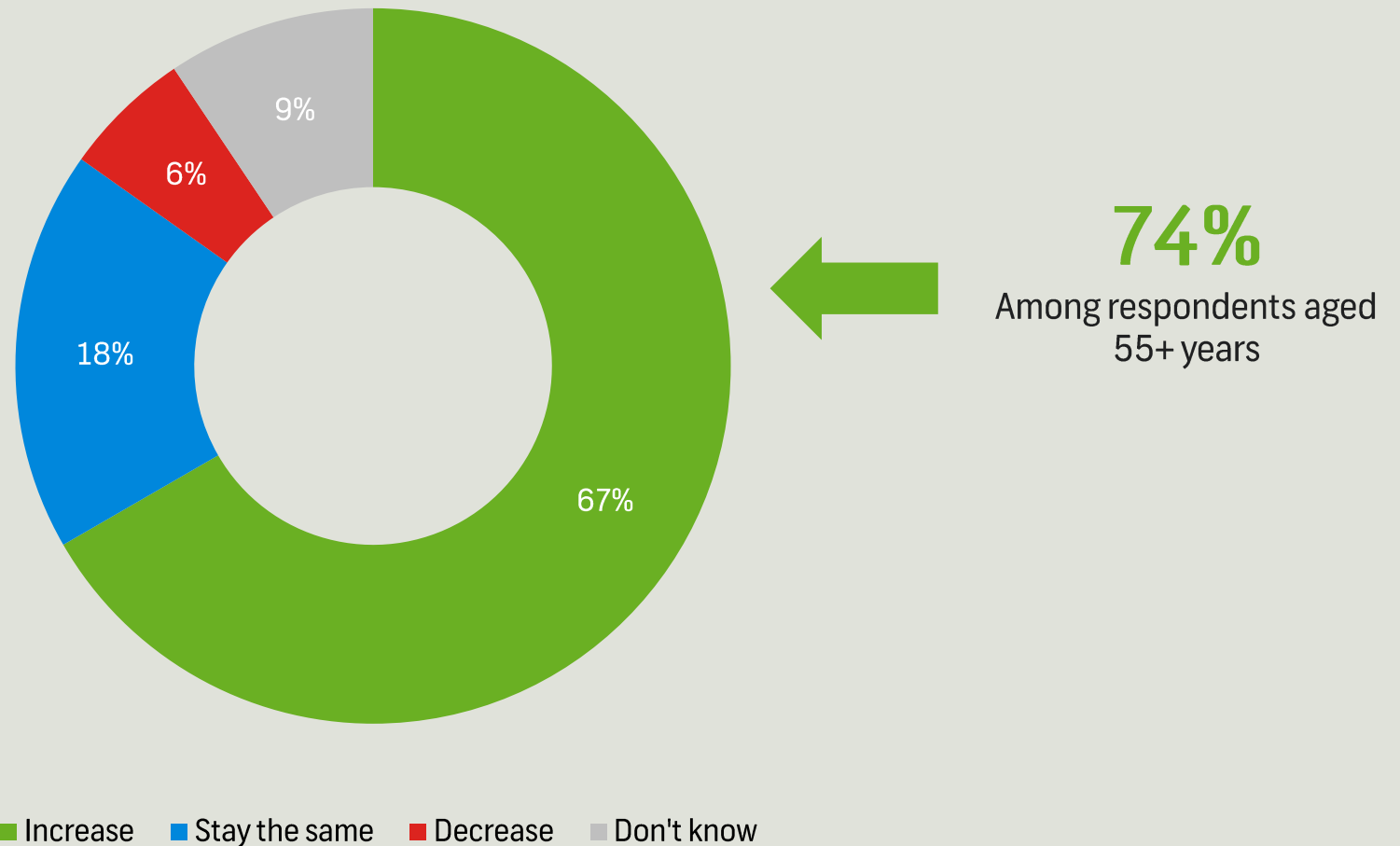
Base: All Respondents Unweighted Total: Total=1018

Majority think creation of a new MPA that is also well managed is likely to be positive for the marine life, and its impact on local jobs is likely to be at the same level as it is today. One in four think local fishing jobs are likely to decrease

Impact of newly created and well managed MPA: Summary



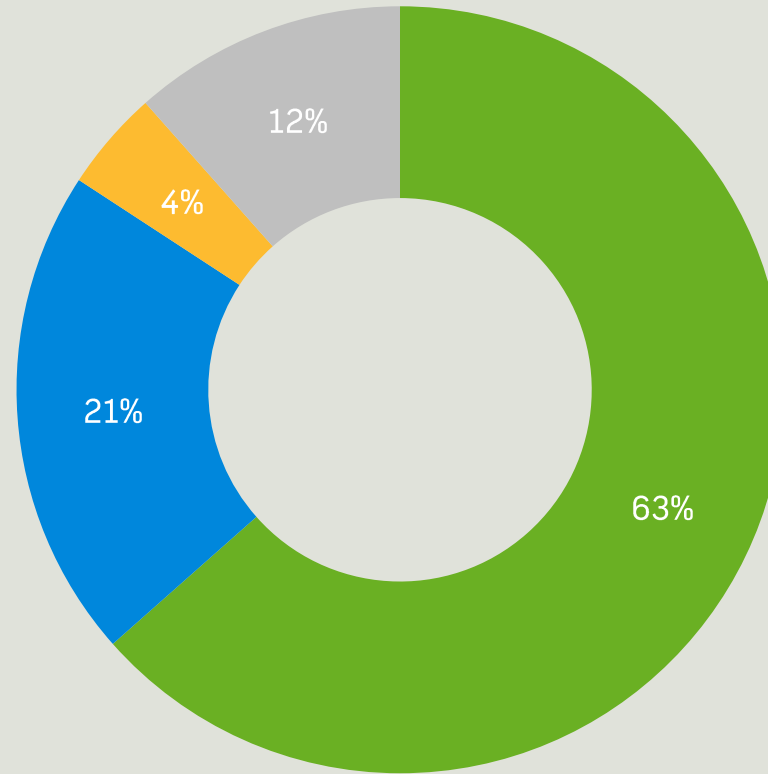
Two in three perceive that the fish populations within the MPA would increase when a new MPA is created and managed well



Q10. Do you think each of the following is likely to increase, decrease, or the stay the same when a new MPA is created and managed well? fish populations within the MPA

Base: All Respondents Unweighted Total: Total=1018

Further, 63% think that the number and variety of marine species within the MPA would increase when a new MPA is created and managed well

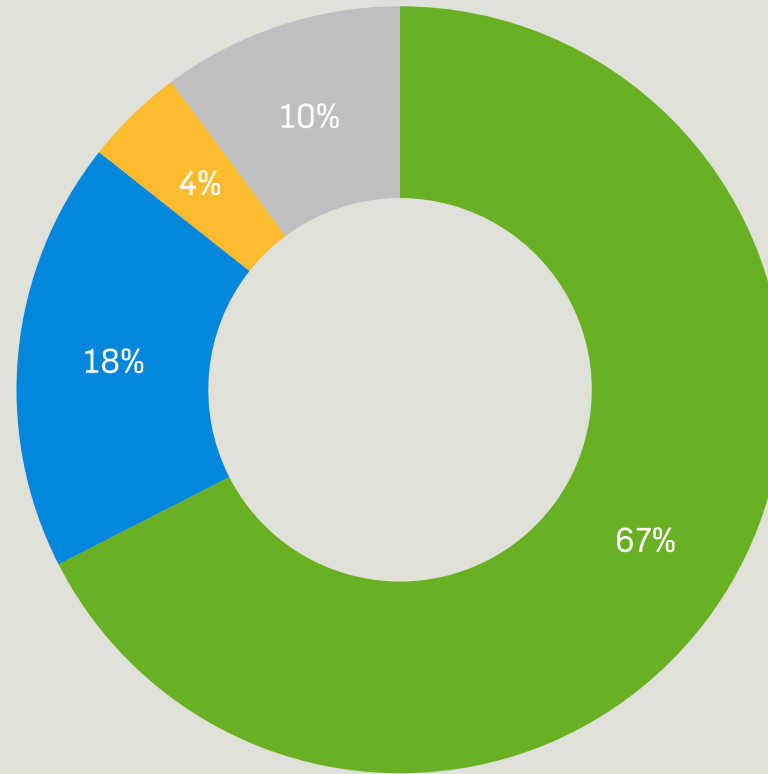


■ Increase ■ Stay the same ■ Decrease ■ Don't know

Q11. Do you think each of the following is likely to increase, decrease, or the stay the same when a new MPA is created and managed well? number/variety of marine species within the MPA

Base: All Respondents Unweighted Total: Total=1018

Two in three think that the health and richness of the seabed habitat found within the MPA would increase when a new MPA is created and managed well

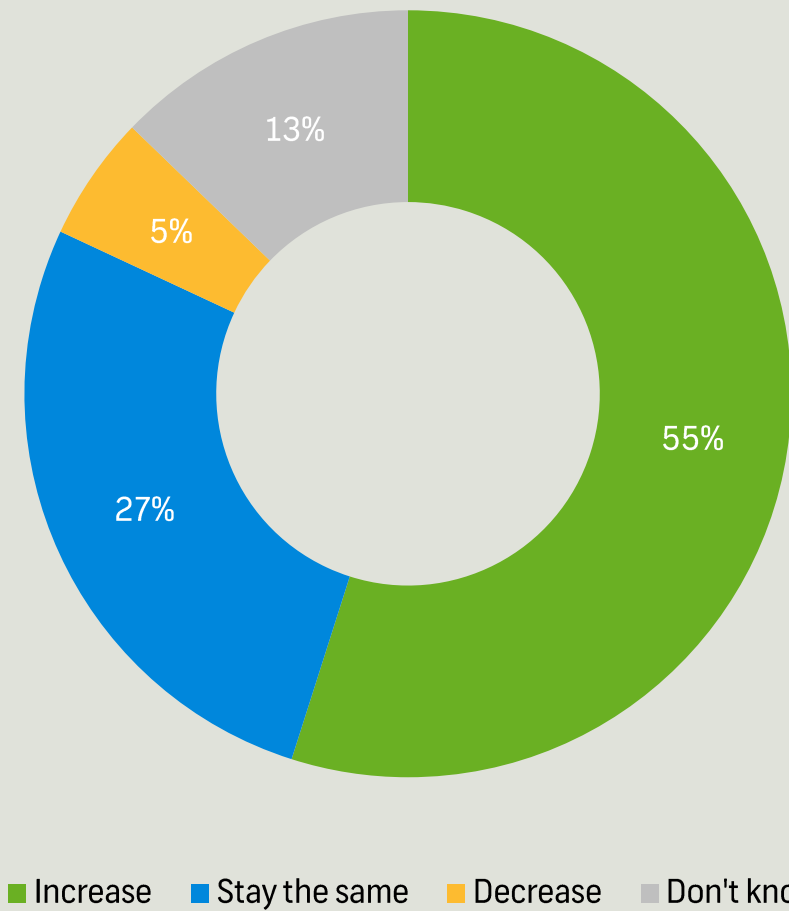


■ Increase ■ Stay the same ■ Decrease ■ Don't know

Q12. Do you think each of the following is likely to increase, decrease, or the stay the same when a new MPA is created and managed well? the health and richness of seabed habitat found within the MPA

Base: All Respondents Unweighted Total: Total=1018

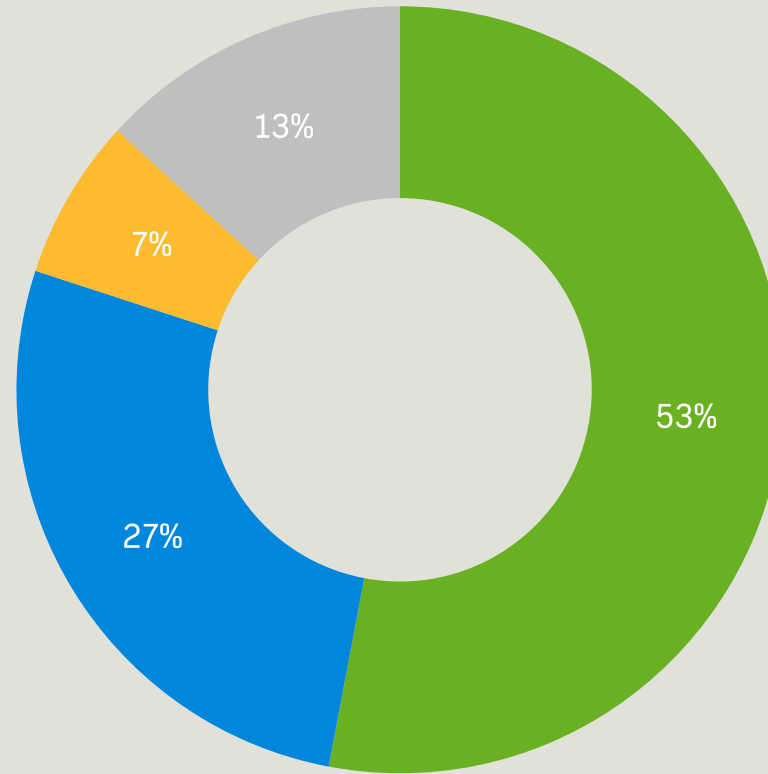
A majority (55%) of participants think that local jobs in conservation would increase when a new MPA is created and managed well; while another quarter think the local jobs in conservation would remain the same



Q13. Do you think each of the following is likely to increase, decrease, or the stay the same when a new MPA is created and managed well? local jobs in conservation

Base: All Respondents Unweighted Total: Total=1018

One in two think that the number/variety of marine species found just outside the MPA would increase when a new MPA is created and managed well

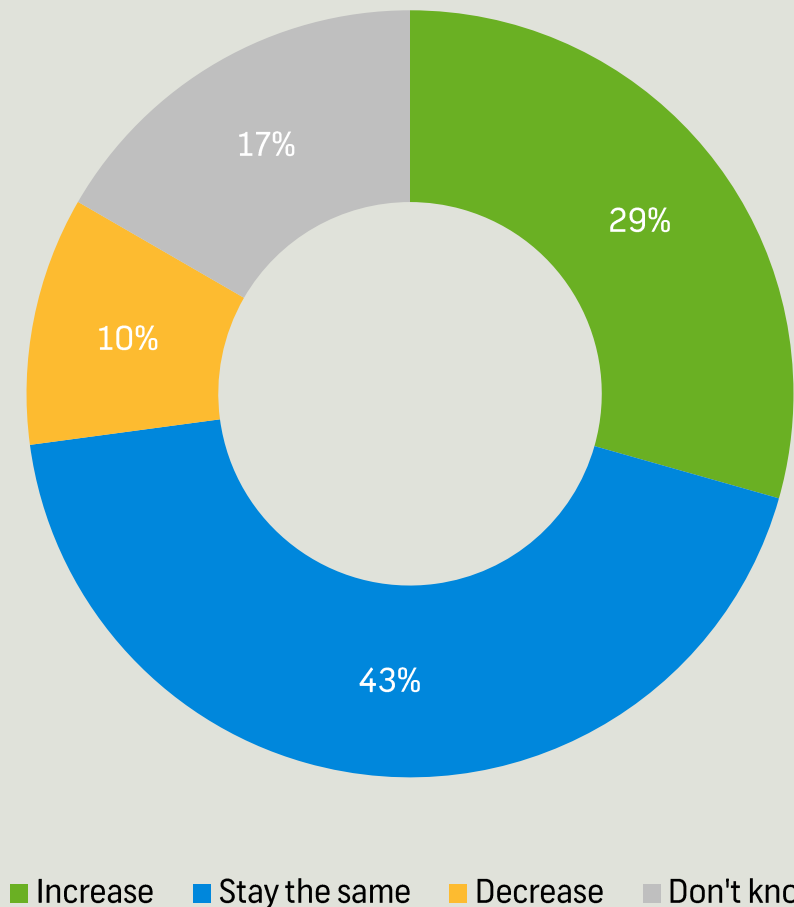


■ Increase ■ Stay the same ■ Decrease ■ Don't know

Q14. Do you think each of the following is likely to increase, decrease, or the stay the same when a new MPA is created and managed well? number/variety of marine species found just outside the MPA

Base: All Respondents Unweighted Total: Total=1018

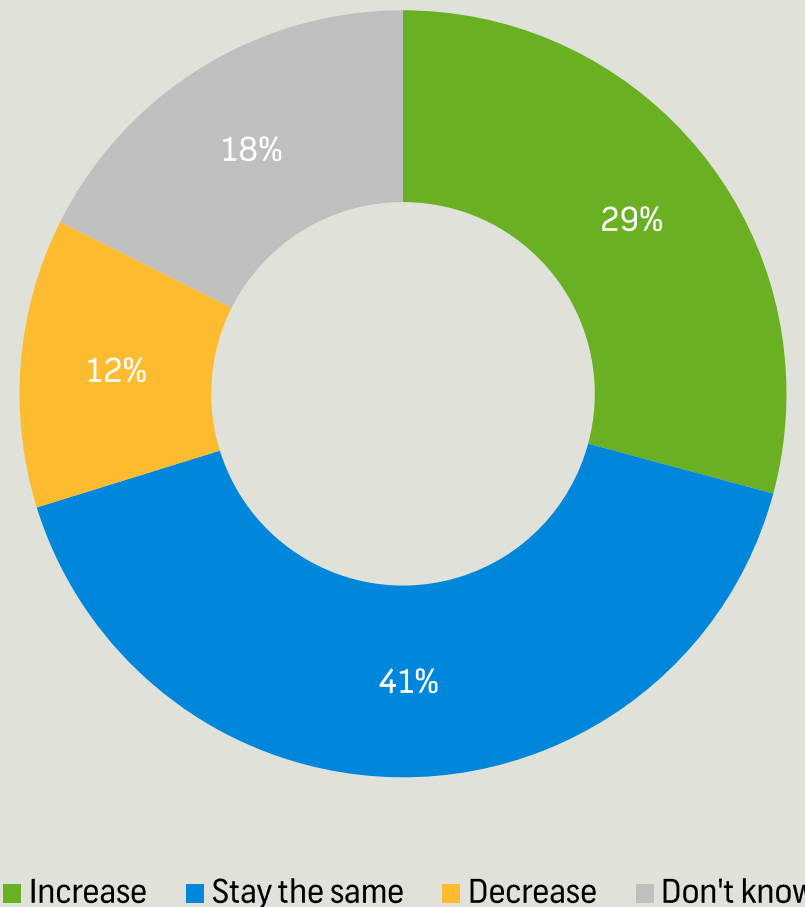
Three in ten perceive that local jobs in tourism would increase when a new MPA is created and managed well, whereas 43% thought that they would remain the same



Q15. Do you think each of the following is likely to increase, decrease, or the stay the same when a new MPA is created and managed well? local jobs in tourism

Base: All Respondents Unweighted Total: Total=1018

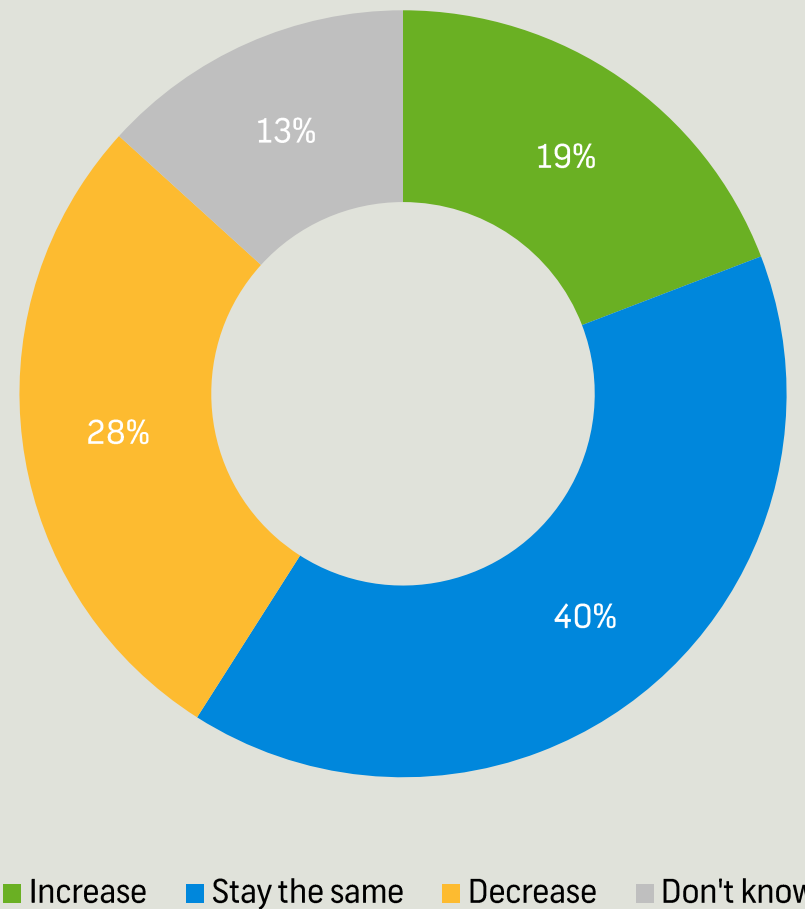
There are similar trends for the impact of well managed MPA on the overall economy in the region



Q16. Do you think each of the following is likely to increase, decrease, or the stay the same when a new MPA is created and managed well? overall economy in the region, total number of jobs in the region

Base: All Respondents Unweighted Total: Total=1018

While three in five feel that local fishing jobs will either increase or remain the same as a result of creating and well managing a new MPA, about 28% think that local fishing jobs might actually decrease



Q17. Do you think each of the following is likely to increase, decrease, or the stay the same when a new MPA is created and managed well? local fishing jobs

Base: All Respondents Unweighted Total: Total=1018

Half of participants think that well-managed MPAs would have a positive effect on the regional economy, while 27% think that the impact will be the same as it is currently



■ It will have a positive impact ■ It will have neither a positive nor a negative impact ■ It will have a negative impact ■ Don't know

Q18. How do you think the regional economy will be impacted by well-managed MPAs?

A vast majority (84%) think that marine species and habitats should be adequately protected across the range, not only in MPAs



- All marine species and habitats should be adequately protected across their range, not only in MPAs
- Rare or vulnerable marine species and habitats should be adequately protected across their range, not only in MPAs
- Marine species and habitats only need to be protected within MPAs
- Marine species and habitats do not need to be protected
- Don't know

Q19. Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

Base: All Respondents Unweighted Total: Total=1018

Three in four participants think that marine industries should be obliged to contribute financially to marine conservation efforts

This opinion was highest amongst older age groups (81% of 55–64 years olds and 85% of 65+) and participants from Highlands and Islands (78%) and South Scotland (79%).



- Marine industries should be obliged to contribute financially to marine conservation efforts
- Marine industries should not be obliged to contribute financially to marine conservation efforts
- Don't know

Q20. Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

Base: All Respondents Unweighted Total: Total=1018

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