2025 National Participation Tracker Findings



New insights to complement the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Watching

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Executive Summary

Findings from the 2025 National Participation Tracker, conducted between June 16 and July 13, 2026, with more than 30,000 adults nationwide, provide estimates for participation in fishing, hunting, wildlife-watching, target shooting, and other activities in 2025. The National Participation Tracker was designed with a methodology similar to the 2022 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation with the goal of providing trend data for overall participation in these activities in the years between rounds of the National Survey. This report details those trends in participation, as well as new detailed measures collected for the first time using this methodology, to provide a rich look at participation in fishing, hunting, wildlife-watching, target shooting, and other activities in the United States.

The survey finds that, in comparison to 2022, participation among individuals age 16 and older increased for fishing, hunting, and wildlife-watching. Archery participation also increased among individuals age 6 and older. In contrast, participation declined for target shooting with a firearm and motorized boating among individuals age 6 and older.

Beyond participation trends, the National Participation Tracker examined motivations for participation among individuals age 16 and older who ever participated in these activities. Having fun, engaging in recreation, or exercising were among the most often cited motivations for fishing, hunting, wildlife-watching, or target shooting. Spending time

outdoors or connecting with nature were also common motivations for fishing, hunting, and wildlife-watching participants.

Additional motivations emerged for specific activities. Spending time with family and friends was a common motivation among fishing, target shooting, and archery participants, and enjoying solitude was commonly cited by hunters and wildlife-watchers. Among target shooting and archery participants, the challenge was a common motivation.

Sharing food with others was a common motivation for both fishers and hunters, many reported sharing fish or game meat with others. More than half shared fish or game meat with family members, and about one-quarter shared with friends, coworkers, neighbors, or other people they know. Additionally, 11% of hunters reported sharing meat with people who do not hunt.

Among individuals age 16 and older who ever participated in fishing, hunting, wildlife-watching, target shooting, or archery, lack of time and activity-related costs, such as equipment, travel expenses, or fees, were the most frequently cited barriers to participation. Lack of interest was a frequently cited barriers for fishing, hunting, target shooting, and archery participants, and the distance to preferred locations was a common barrier for wildlife-watchers.

Though distance to a preferred shooting range was not a commonly mentioned as a barrier for target shooting, proximity to home was the most frequently cited characteristic influencing range choice in 2025. Participants traveled an average of 20 miles one way to the range they used most often. Forty-four percent reported using the range closest to their home and 21% reported traveling farther.

Across activities, few participated through organized associations such as clubs or membership groups during 2025. Among individuals age 16 and older who participated in fishing, hunting, wildlife-watching, target shooting, or archery in 2025, at least three-quarters said they did not participate in any organized activities related to those pursuits.

Among individuals age 16 and older who have ever participated in fishing, hunting, wildlife-watching, target shooting, or archery, some expressed interest in volunteering for structured programs that teach youth or adults. About 12,000 fishers reported interest in volunteering for youth or adult fishing programs; 5,000 hunters said they were interested in volunteering for youth or adult hunting programs; 22,000 wildlife-watchers said they were interested in volunteering for youth or adult wildlife-watching programs; and 8,000 target

shooting and archery participants reported interest in volunteering for youth or adult target shooting programs. These findings point to a potential pool of prospective volunteers.

The findings also identify potential interest among those who did not participate in a particular activity during 2025. Among individuals age 16 and older who did not participate in these activities in 2025 but had before, some expressed interest in continuing them in the future. This report outlines rates of interest by key demographic groups in later sections.

Participation trends differ across activities, but common themes emerge, including the importance of spending time outdoors, engaging in recreation, making social connections, time constraints, and cost-related barriers. State agencies, industry organizations, and other stakeholders may find these results useful when developing recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3) strategies. The findings suggest potential opportunities to engage interested nonparticipants and future program volunteers among existing participants. The findings may also help stakeholders consider approaches for reaching participants who are not currently engaged in organized groups or activities.

This report highlights the findings from each question on the survey, including demographic breakdowns when relevant. Please reference the Appendix of this report for detailed breakdowns of total numbers of participants, days participating, and trips taken to participate in fishing, hunting, wildlife-watching, as well as the number of participants in archery, target shooting with a firearm, and motorized boating.

This survey was funded by a Multistate Conservation Grant No. F26AP00222-00 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and jointly administered with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

The survey was conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago. Data were collected between June 16 and July 13, 2026, with adults age 18 and over representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Data for those ages 6-17 were provided through the interview with an adult member of the household age 18 and older. Panel members were randomly drawn from AmeriSpeak, and 13,175 completed the survey—12,938 via the web and 237 via telephone. Dynata and Prodege provided 25,851 non-probability interviews with adults age 18 and over. The overall margin of sampling error for the combined sample is +/- 0.8 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect. The margin of sampling error may be higher for subgroups. See the margin of sampling error for subgroups listed in the Study Methodology section for each activity.

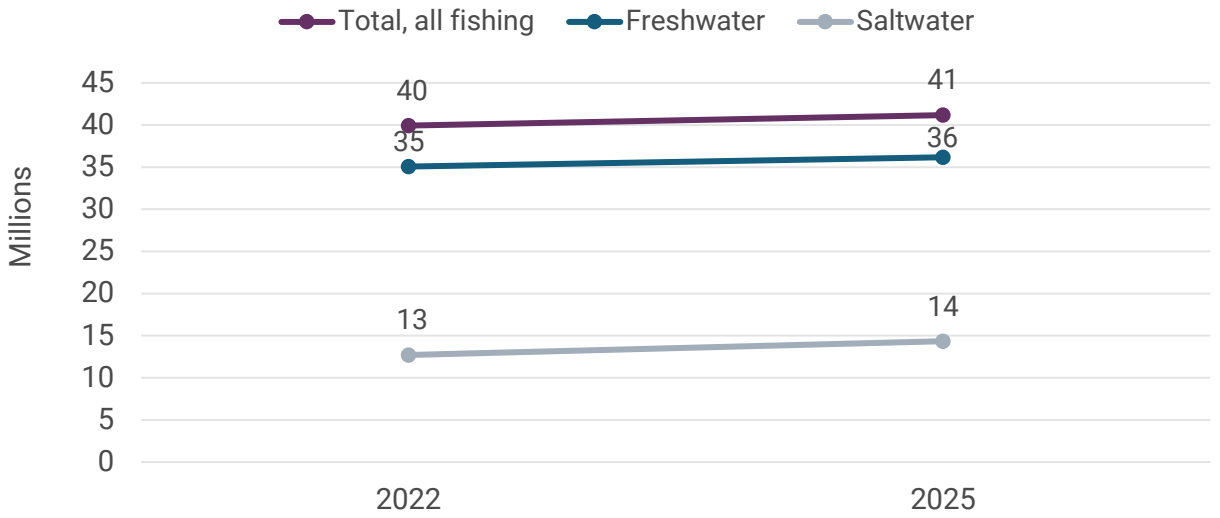
Fishing

Overall Participation

- In 2025, 50,392,000 Americans age 6 and older participated in fishing, including 8,359,000 who fished for the first time.
    - Age breakdowns for those who fished for the first time in 2025 are available in Table R-1 of the Appendix.
- Among those age 6 and older, 11,014,000 fished in 2024 but not 2025.
    - Age breakdowns for those who fished in 2024 but not 2025 are available in Table R-2 of the Appendix.
- Focusing on those age 16 and older, 15%, or 41,175,000 Americans went fishing in 2025. This represents a 3.1% increase in participation compared with the 39,935,000 who fished in 2022.

Fishing participation from 2022 to 2025

Number of individuals age 16 and older



Question: Last year, did you do any recreational fishing?
Source: NORC polls conducted May 2022 through March 2023 with 105,698 adults age 16 and older nationwide and June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults age 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

- Detailed demographic breakdowns of participants in fishing in 2025 are available in Table 2 of the Appendix.

- When it comes to freshwater fishing, 36,173,000 Americans age 16 and older participated in 2025, a 3.1% increase from the 35,069,000 who participated in 2022.
- Looking at saltwater fishing, 14,342,000 Americans age 16 and older participated in 2025, a 12.9% increase compared with the 12,705,000 who participated in 2022.

2025 Participation Details

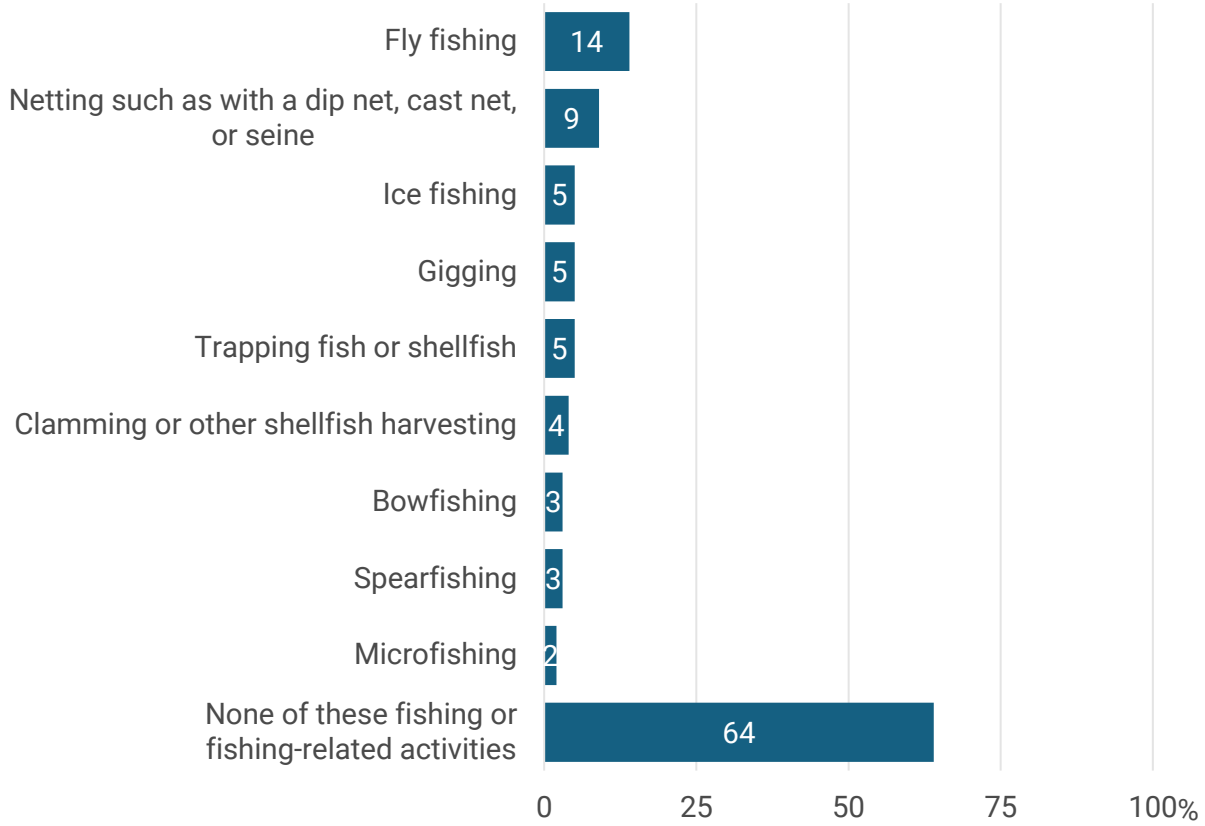
Key Things You Should Know:

Among individuals age 16 and older who fished last year:

- A freshwater lake, reservoir, river, stream, or pond was the most popular location for freshwater fishing.
- The Atlantic Ocean was the most popular location for saltwater fishing.
- Most of those who went fishing did so in the summer.
- Few participated in any kind of formal fishing clubs or organized activities.

Fly fishing (14%), netting (9%), and ice fishing, gigging, and trapping fish or shellfish (5%) were the most common fishing-related activities they participated in last year.

About 1 in 10 fishers in 2025 went fly fishing or netting.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who fished in 2025



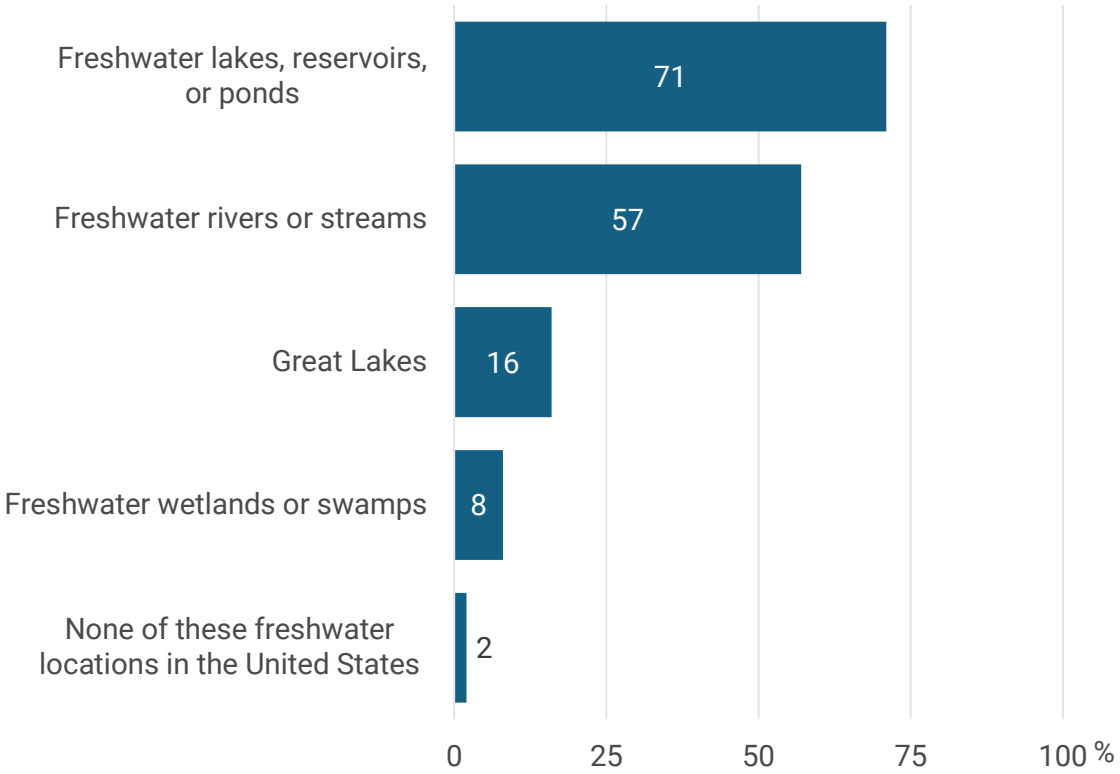
Question: Did you participate in any of the following fishing or fishing-related activities last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025)? *Please select all that apply.*
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Among those who went fishing in freshwater in 2025, reservoirs, ponds, or lakes other than the Great Lakes (71%), and rivers or streams (57%) were the most common locations.

Lakes, reservoirs, and ponds were the most common freshwater fishing locations in 2025.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who went freshwater fishing in 2025



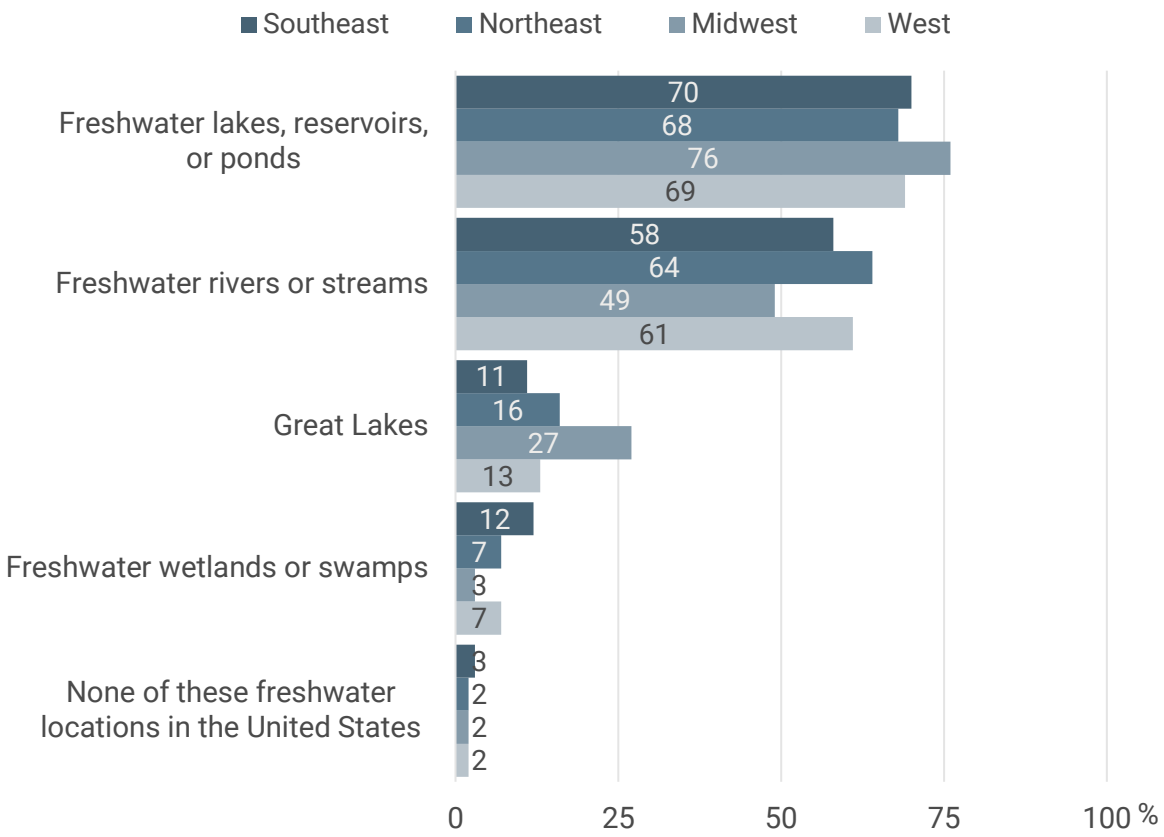
Question: Last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025), in which of the following freshwater locations in the United States did you fish? *Please select all that apply.*
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

When it comes to freshwater fishing locations, there was relatively little variation by AFWA region[1].

[1] AFWA REGIONS BY STATE: WEST REGION- AK, HI, WA, OR, CA, ID, NV, AZ, NM, UT, MT, WY, CO
MIDWEST REGION – MN, IA, WI, IL, IN, MI, OH, MO, NE, KS, ND, SD
NORTHEAST REGION – ME, NH, VT, MA, CT, RI, NY, NJ, PA, DE, MD
SOUTHEAST REGION – AR, LA, MS, AL, GA, TN, NC, SC, FL, VA, OK, KY, TX, WV

Freshwater fishing locations by region of the country.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who freshwater fished in 2025



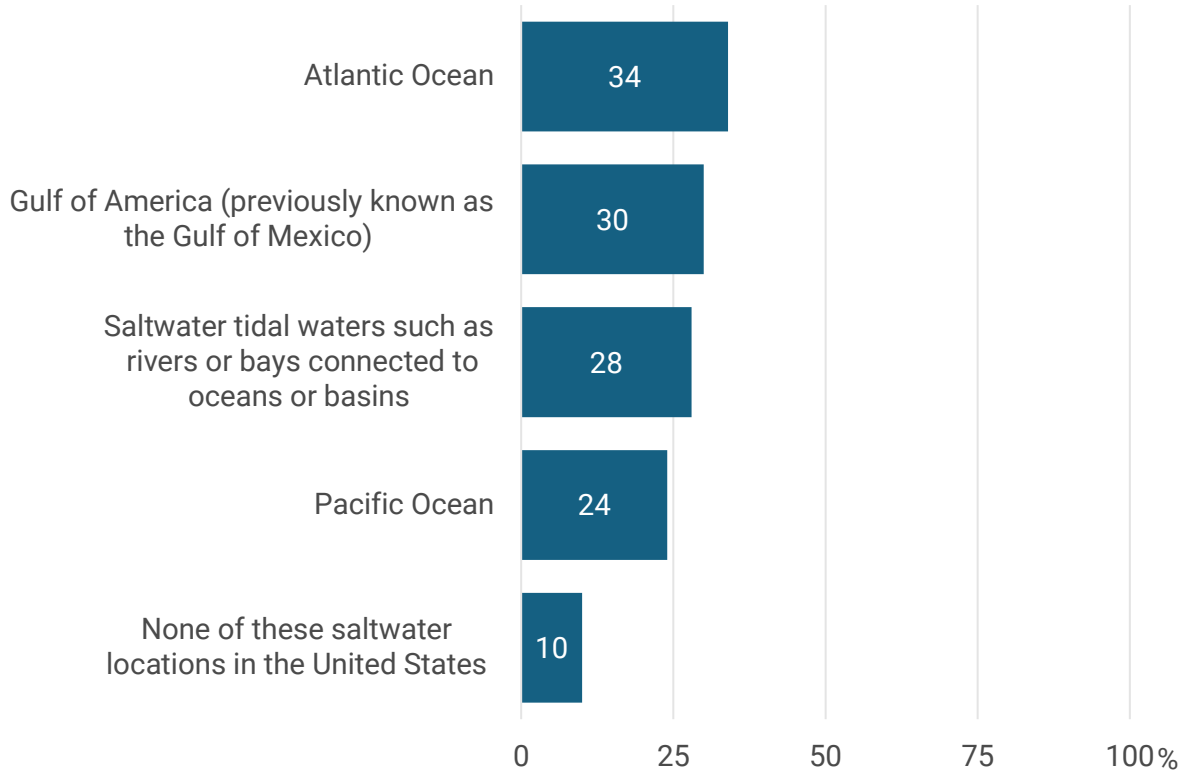
Question: Last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025), in which of the following freshwater locations in the United States did you fish? *Please select all that apply.*
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Among those who went fishing in saltwater in 2025, the Atlantic Ocean (34%), Gulf of America (30%), and tidal waters such as rivers or bays connected to oceans or basins (28%) were the most common saltwater places they fished last year.

About 3 in 10 fished in the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of America, or saltwater tidal waters.

Percent of individuals who went saltwater fishing in 2025

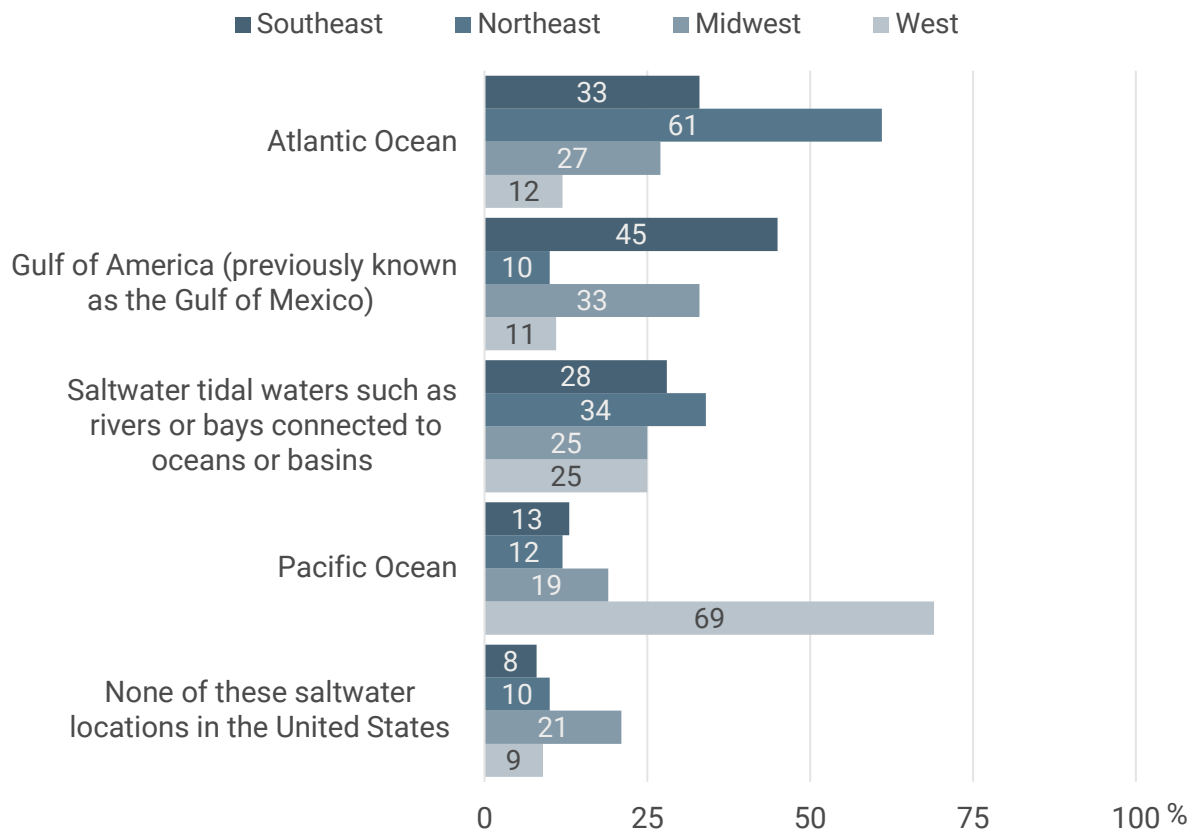


Question: Last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025), in which of the following saltwater locations in the United States did you fish? *Please select all that apply.*
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

The locations of saltwater fishing varied more than freshwater fishing locations by AFWA region. Fishing in the Atlantic Ocean was more common among those living in the Northeast (61%) while fishing in the Pacific Ocean was more common among those living in the West (69%). Fishing in the Gulf of America was more common among those living in the Southeast (45%) or the Midwest (33%).

Saltwater fishing locations by region of the country.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who saltwater fished in 2025

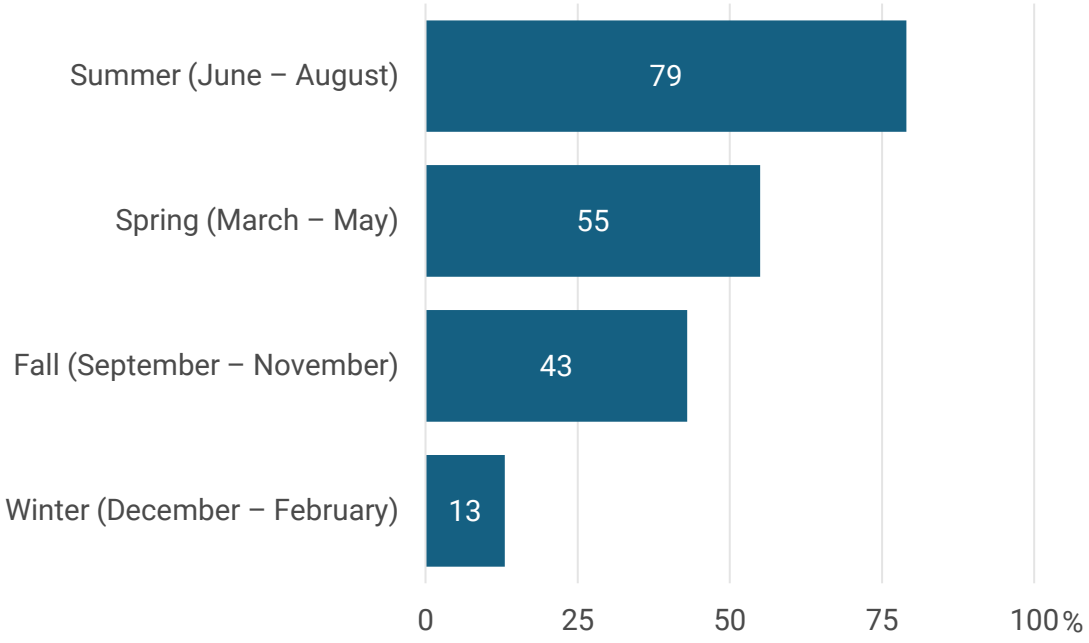


Question: Last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025), in which of the following saltwater locations in the United States did you fish? *Please select all that apply.*
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

For those who went fishing in 2025, summer was the most popular time (79%). Around half fished in the spring (55%) and slightly fewer in the fall (43%). Far fewer went fishing during the winter months (13%).

Summer and Spring were the most popular seasons to fish in 2025.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who fished in 2025



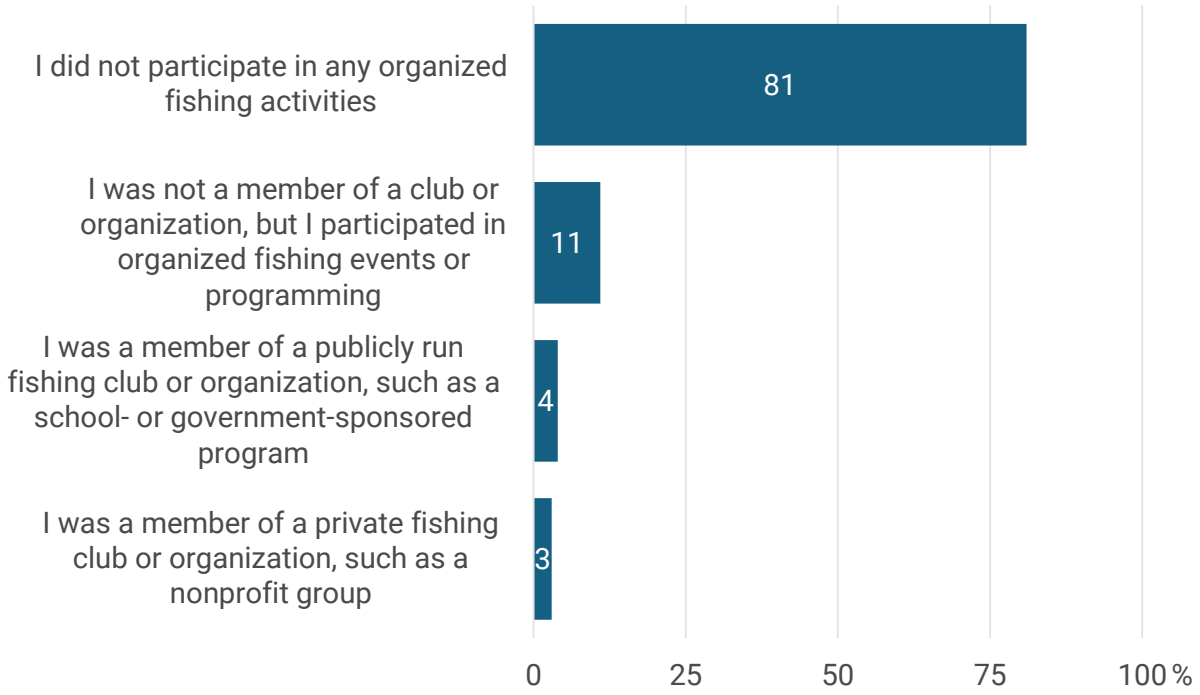
Question: Last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025), during which times of year did you fish? *Please select all that apply.*
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

In 2025, most did not participate in any organized fishing activities.

Few participated in organized fishing activities like clubs or events in 2025.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who fished in 2025



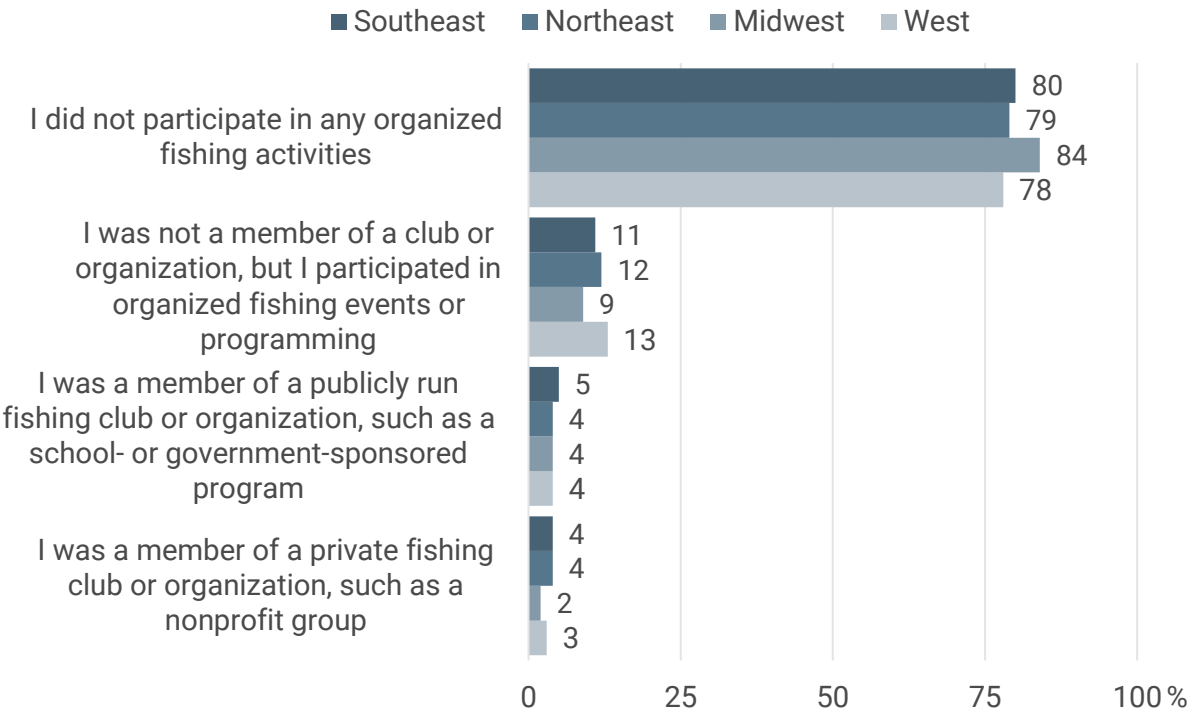
Question: Last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025), did you participate in any of the following organized fishing activities? *Please select all that apply.*
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Participation in organized fishing clubs or activities did not vary widely across different AFWA regions of the country.

Participation in organized fishing activities like clubs or events by region.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who fished in 2025



Question: Last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025), did you participate in any of the following organized fishing activities? *Please select all that apply.*
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Fishing from the shore such as a beach, pier, or riverbank were the most common locations for fishing (69%). Thirty-nine percent fished from a motorized boat while 21% fished from a nonmotorized boat such as a canoe, kayak, or paddleboard. Few, only 9%, fished while wading.

Thirteen percent used some type of sonar while fishing. Of them, 71% used a Live Imaging Sonar.

2025 Species Results

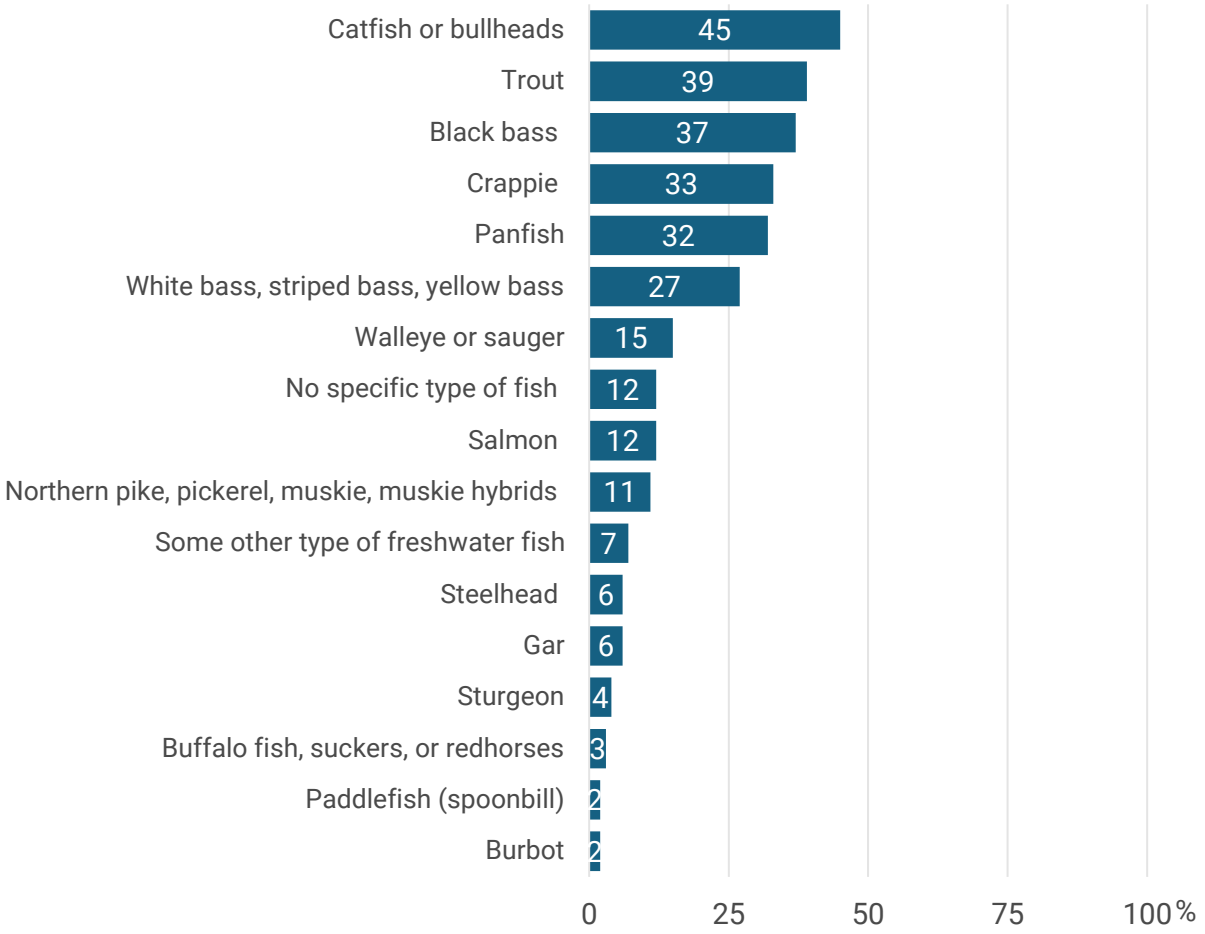
Key Things You Should Know:

Among individuals age 16 and older who fished last year:

- Catfish or bullheads were the most popular freshwater species fished.
- Red snapper was most common among saltwater species.
- Just over half shared fish caught last year with family members, and a quarter shared with other people they know, such as friends, coworkers, or neighbors.

Of those who went freshwater fishing in 2025, most often targeted catfish or bullheads (45%), trout (39%), or black bass such as largemouth, smallmouth, or spotted bass (37%).

Catfish and trout were the most popular freshwater species in 2025.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who went freshwater fishing in 2025



Question: On any of your freshwater fishing trips last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025), did you fish for any of the following? *Please select all that apply.*
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older

NORC

Trout was the most common freshwater species fished for by those living in the West (63%) and the Northeast (54%). Panfish was most common for freshwater fishers in the Midwest (51%) while catfish were most common in the Southeast (57%).

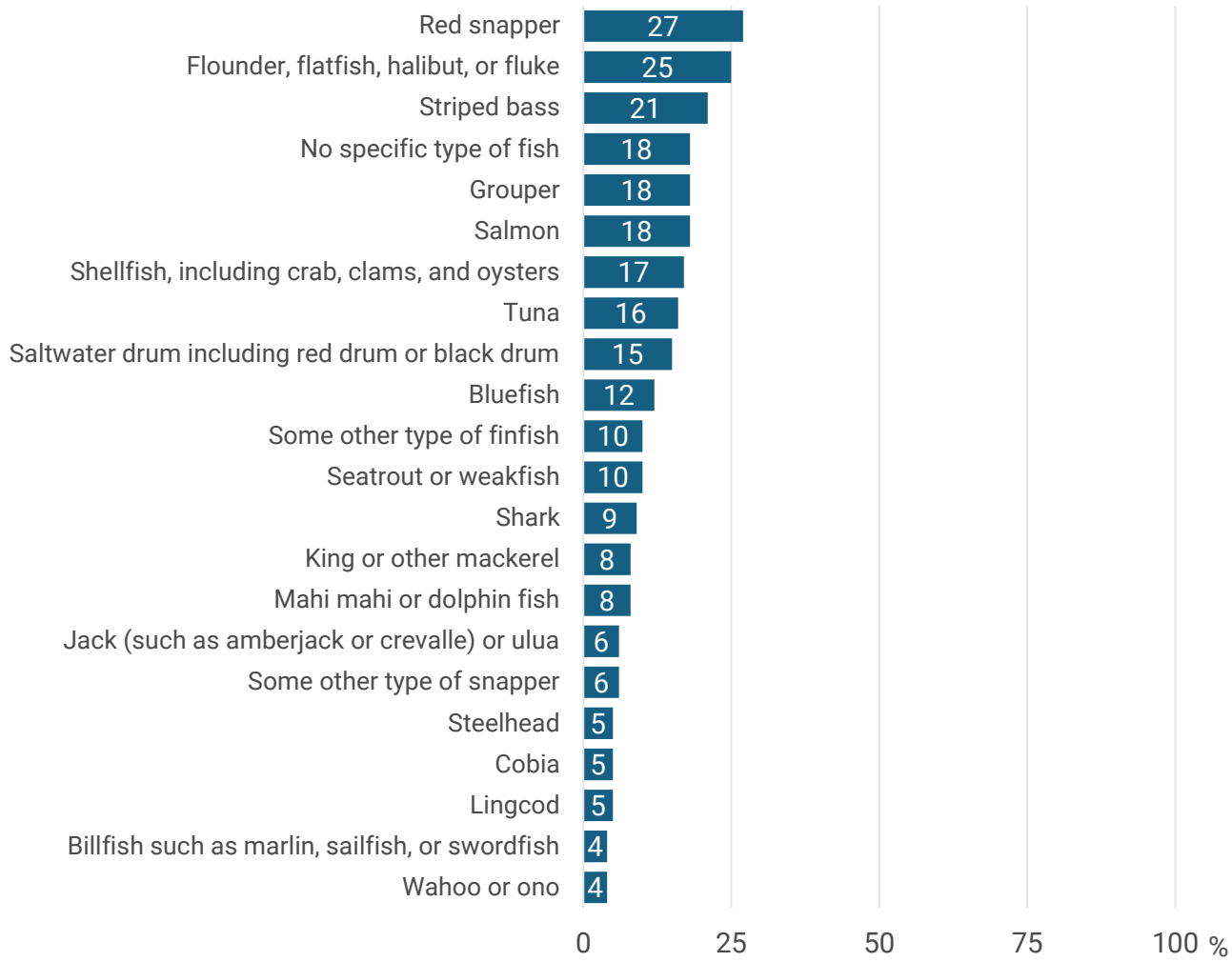
Percent of the top five freshwater species fished by region:

West	Midwest	Northeast	Southeast
Trout (63%)	Panfish (51%)	Trout (54%)	Catfish or bullheads (57%)
Catfish or bullheads (30%)	Crappie (47%)	Black bass (37%)	Black bass (40%)
Black bass (24%)	Catfish or bullheads (42%)	Catfish or bullheads (35%)	Crappie (38%)
Salmon (23%)	Black bass (41%)	Panfish (26%)	White bass, striped bass, yellow bass, or striped bass hybrids (31%)
White bass, striped bass, yellow bass, or striped bass hybrids (19%)	Walleye or sauger (32%)	White bass, striped bass, yellow bass, or striped bass hybrids (25%)	Panfish (30%)

Red snapper (27%), flounder, flatfish, halibut, or fluke (25%), and striped bass (21%) were the most common saltwater species fished last year.

Red snapper and flounder, flatfish, halibut, or fluke were the most popular saltwater species in 2025.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who went saltwater fishing in 2025



Question: On any of your saltwater fishing trips last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025), did you fish for any of the following? *Please select all that apply.*
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

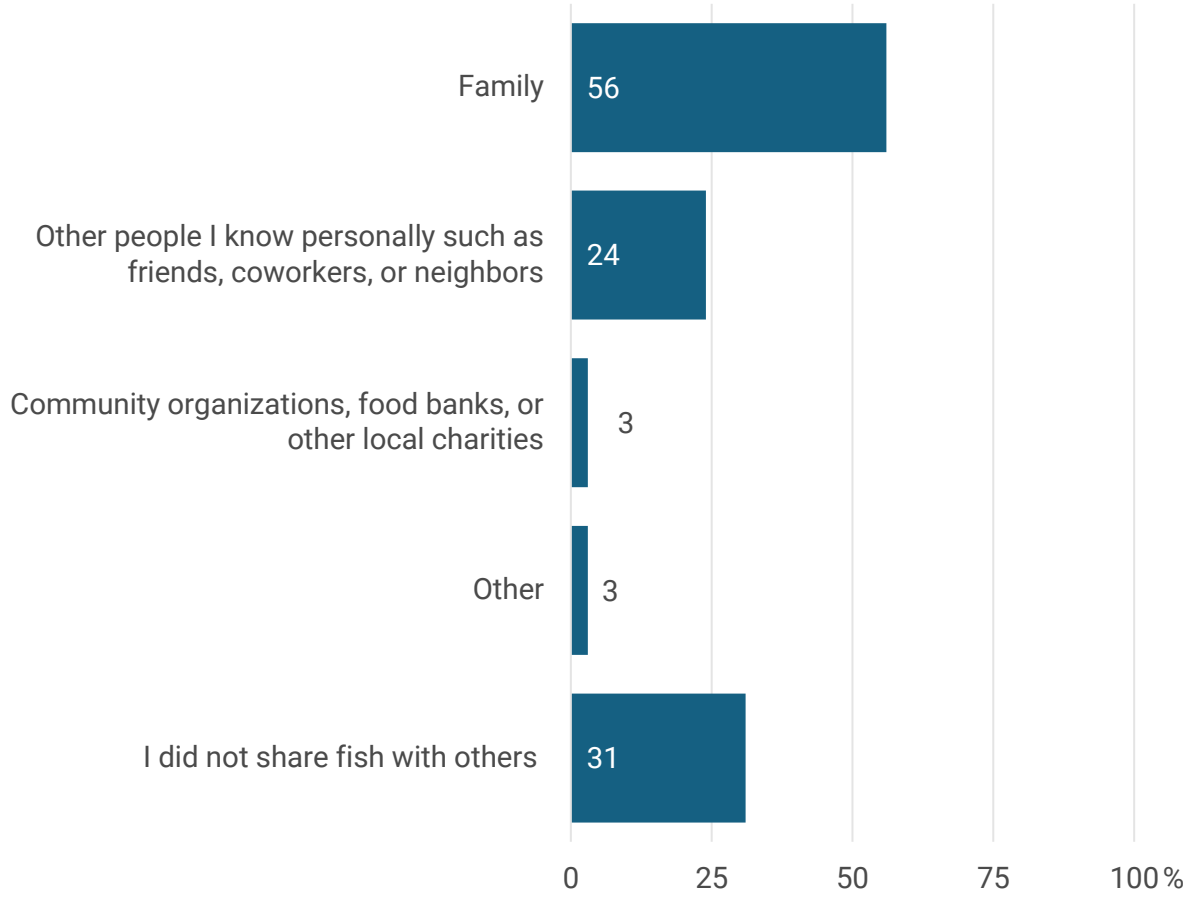
Red snapper was most commonly fished in the Midwest (26%) and Southeast (34%). Salmon was most common for saltwater fishers in the West (32%), and striped bass was most common for those living in the Northeast (33%).

Percent of top five saltwater species fished by region:

West	Midwest	Northeast	Southeast
Salmon (32%)	Red snapper (26%)	Striped bass (33%)	Red snapper (34%)
Flounder, flatfish, halibut, or fluke (21%)	Tuna (21%)	Flounder, flatfish, halibut, or fluke (31%)	Flounder, flatfish, halibut, or fluke (27%)
Tuna (21%)	Salmon (20%)	Bluefish (25%)	Saltwater drum (23%)
Red snapper (20%)	Grouper (19%)	Shellfish, including crab, clams, and oysters (17%)	Grouper (23%)
Shellfish, including crab, clams, and oysters (19%)	Striped bass (17%)	Salmon (15%)	Striped bass (19%)

Those who went fishing in 2025 tended to share their catch with family (56%) or other people they know such as friends, coworkers, or neighbors (24%).

More than half shared fish that they caught with family.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who fished in 2025



Question: Last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025), did you share any fish that you personally caught with any of the following? *Please select all that apply.*
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Results to Inform Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation Efforts

Key Things You Should Know:

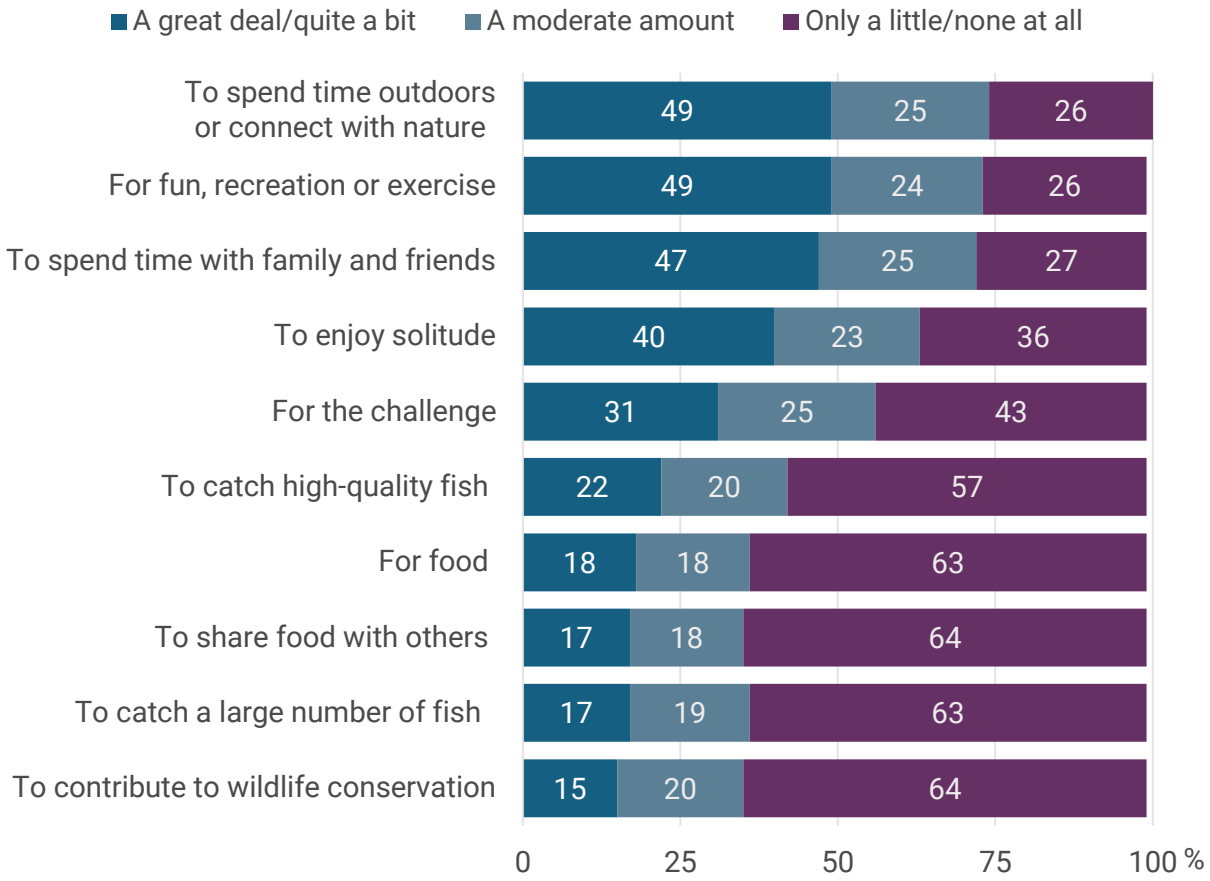
Among people who have ever fished before:

- Half view spending time outdoors, having fun or engaging in recreation, or spending time with family and friends as reasons for fishing.
- A third felt that a lack of time was an obstacle to going fishing.
- About half started fishing between the ages of 6 and 12 years old and half were introduced to it by their parents.
- 12,000 people said they are interested in volunteering for a structured program to instruct adults or young people about fishing.
- Thirteen percent of people who have fished before but did not in 2025 interested in resuming fishing.

Among those who have gone fishing the most common reasons were having fun, engaging in recreation, or exercising (49%), spending time outdoors or connecting with nature (49%), or spending time with family or friends (47%).

Half view spending time outdoors, fun or recreation, or spending time with family and friends as a motivation for fishing.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who have ever fished

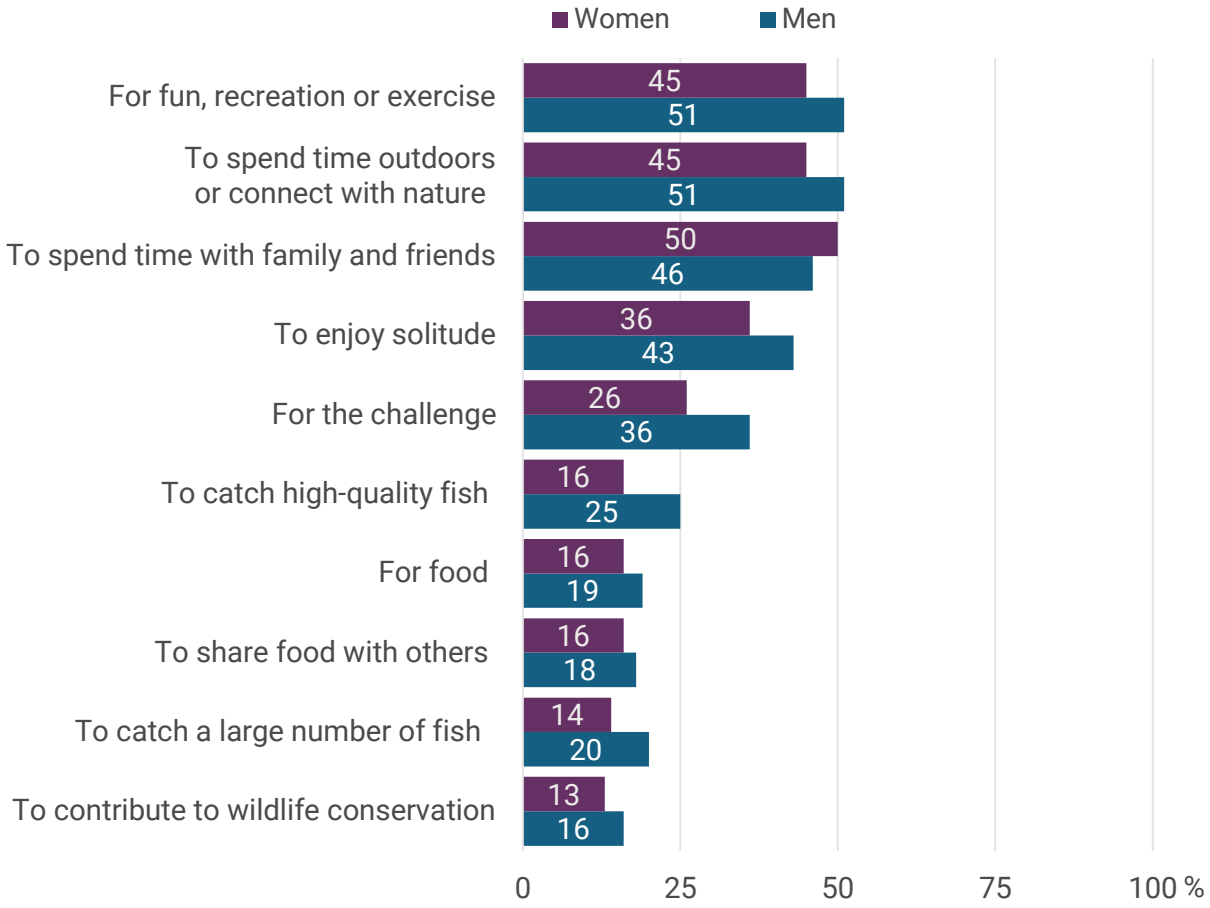


Question: How much, if at all, do each of the following motivate you to fish?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 16 and older nationwide.

NORC

Half of men viewed fun and recreation (51%) or spending time outdoors (51%) as motivations for fishing. Half of women felt spending time with family or friends (50%) was a reason to go fishing.

Motivations for fishing by gender.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who have ever fished who say the following

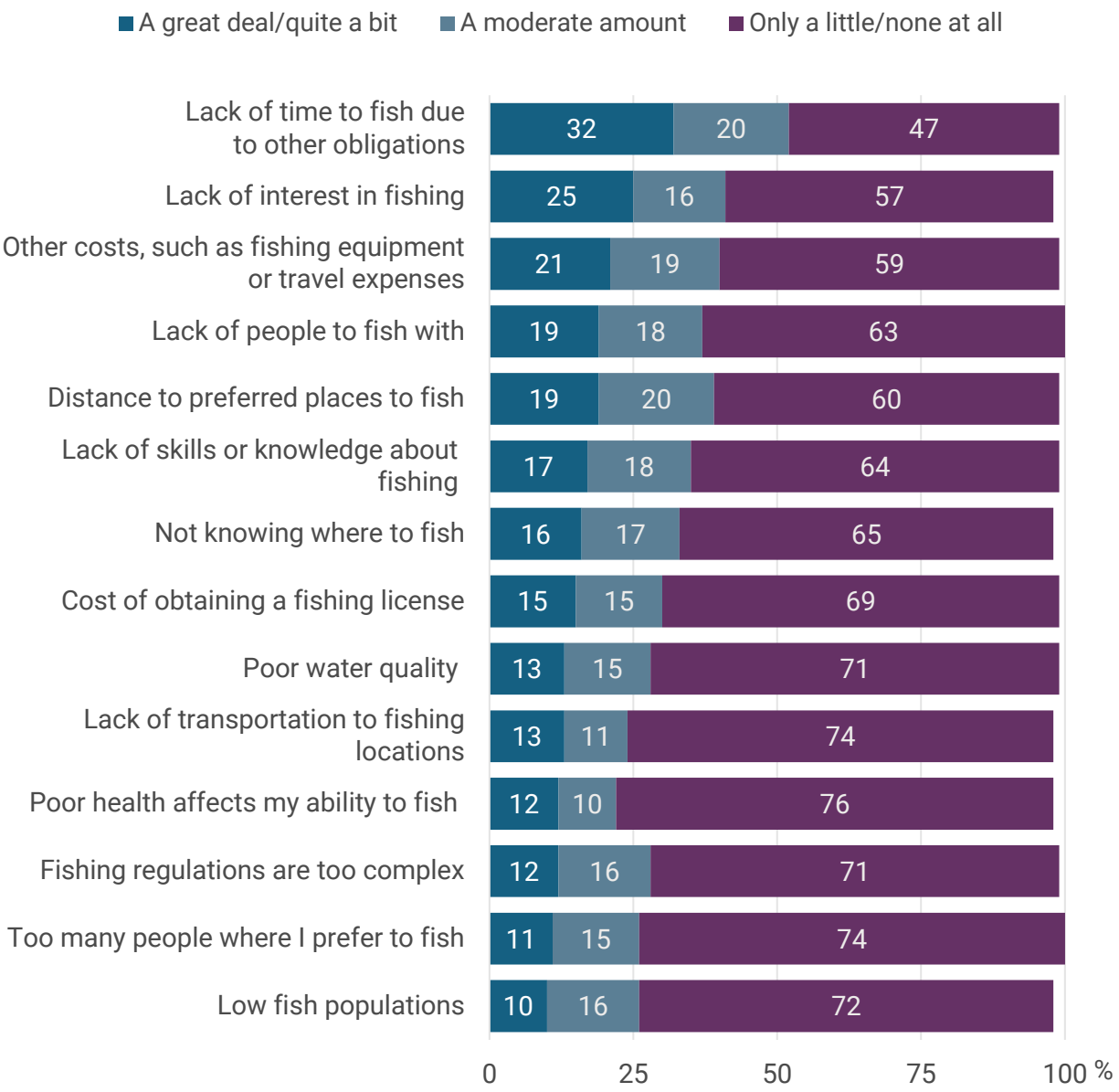


Question: How much, if at all, do each of the following motivate you to fish?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Among those who have ever fished, lack of time (32%), lack of interest (25%), or the costs for fishing equipment or travel (21%) were the most common barriers that prevented them from going fishing.

One third view lack of time as a barrier to fishing.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who have ever fished

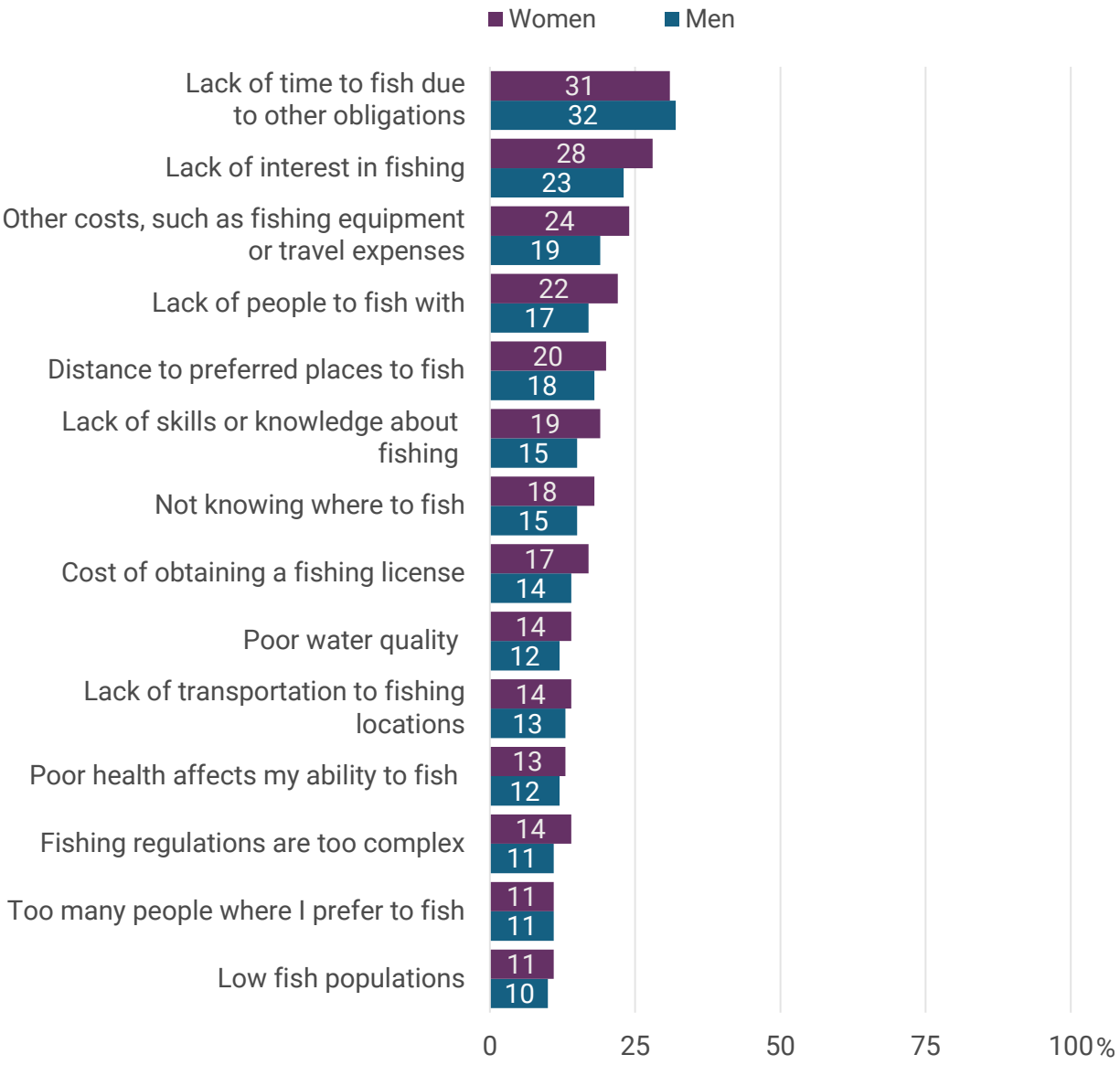


Question: How much, if at all, do each of the following prevent you from fishing?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

A lack of time was the most frequently reported barrier for fishing among both men (32%) and women (31%).

Barriers to fishing by gender.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who have ever fished who say the following prevent them a great deal or quite a bit



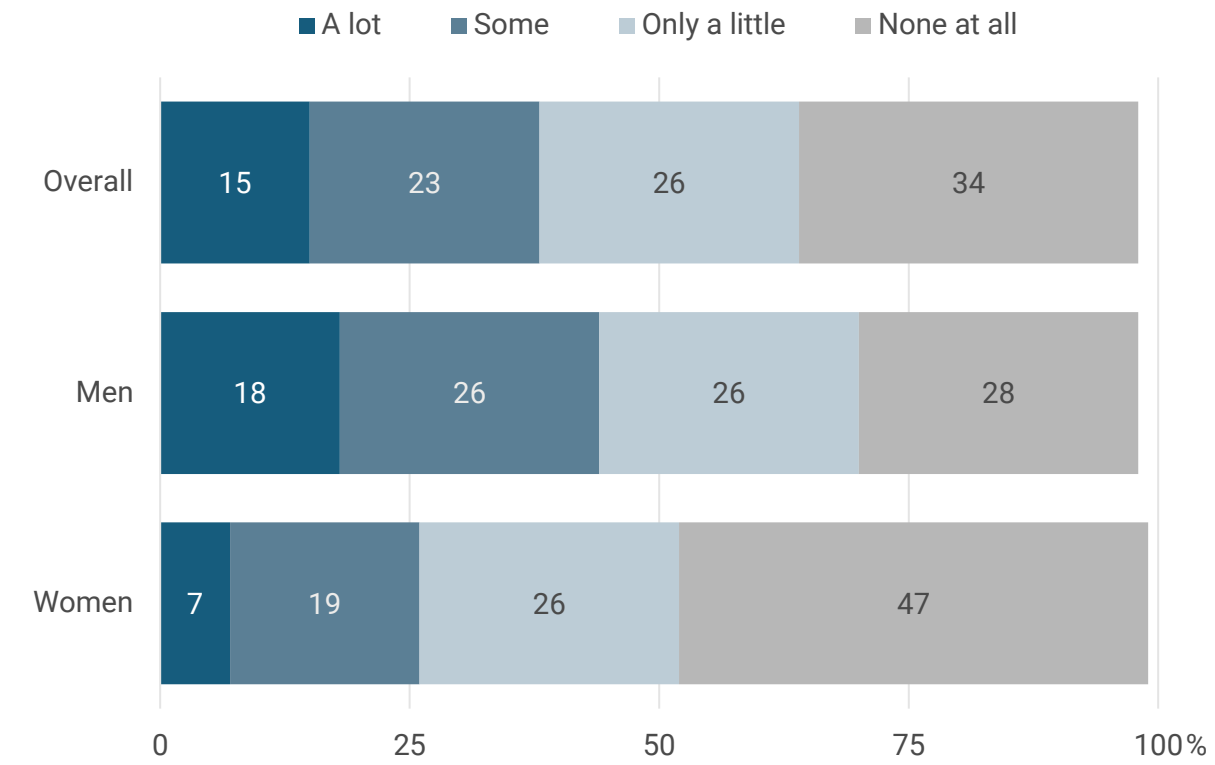
Question: How much, if at all, do each of the following prevent you from fishing?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Fifteen percent of those who fished in 2025 identified themselves as an angler a lot, 23% said some, 26% said only a little, and 34% said they did not identify as an angler at all.

More than twice as many men (18%) than women (7%) viewed themselves as an angler a lot. Half of women (47%) did not view themselves as an angler at all, compared with 3 in 10 (28%) men.

Adults who identify as an angler by gender.
Percent of adults age 16 and older who fished in 2025



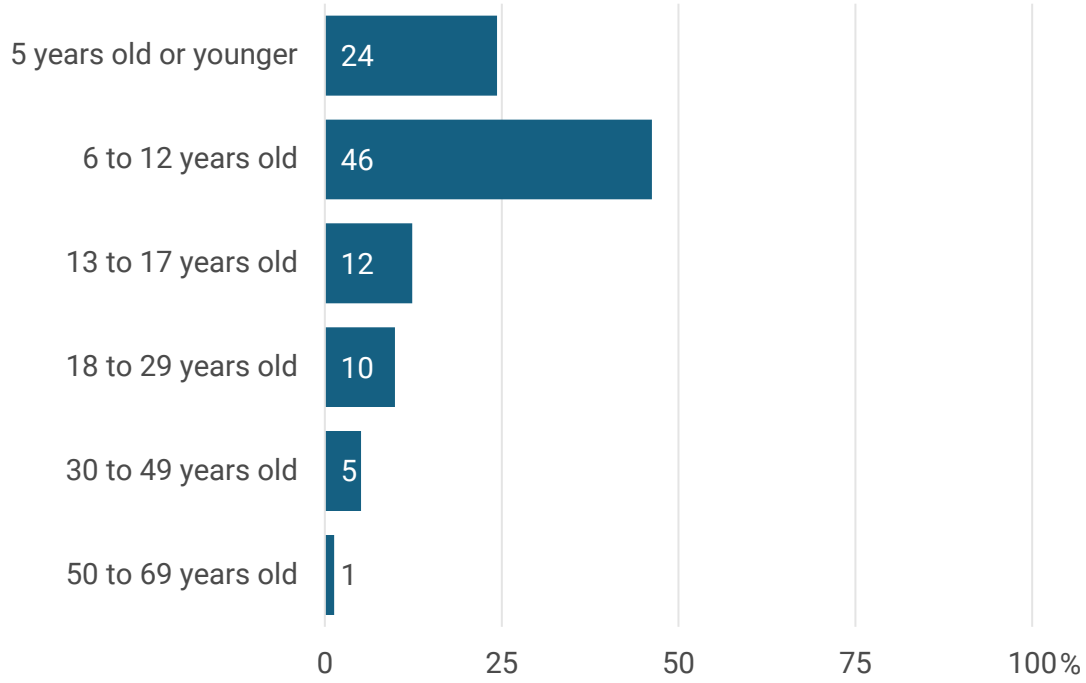
Question: Now that we have asked about your participation in a variety of activities, to what extent do you identify as each of the following?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Nearly half (46%) of all people ages 16 and older who have ever fished started fishing between the ages of 6 and 12. Another quarter (24%) began when they were five years old or younger. About 1 in 10 began fishing for the first time between age 13 and 17 or between age 18 and 29.

Among those who ever have fished, about half started between 6 and 12 years old.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older whostarted fishing at the following ages



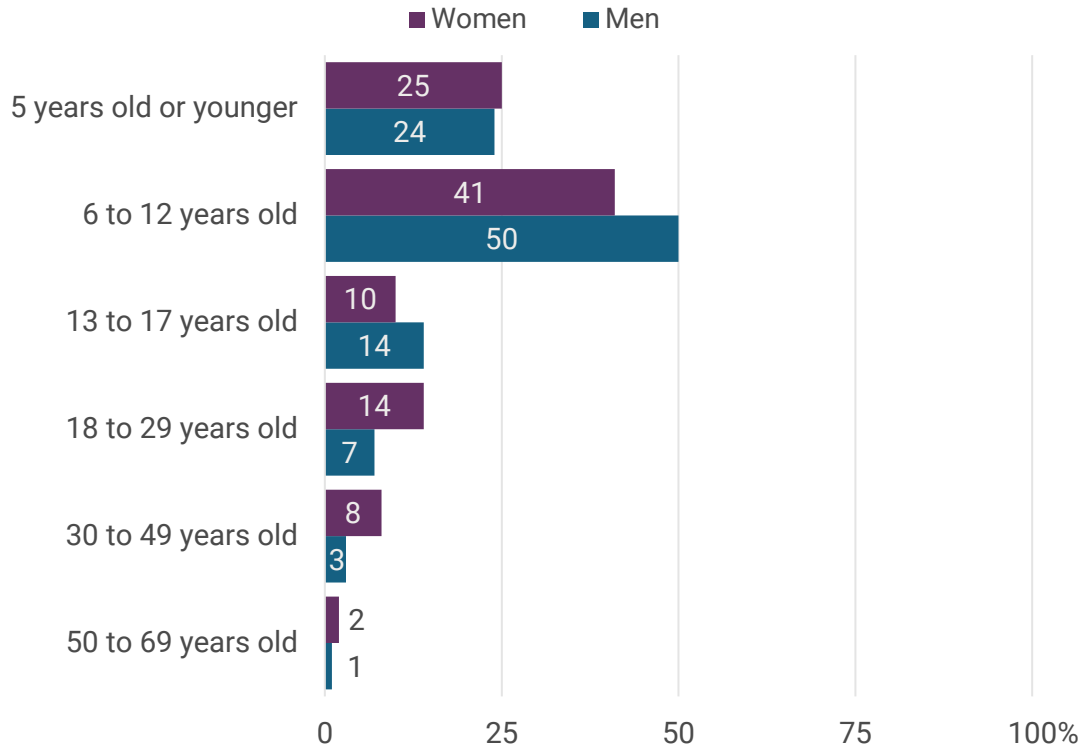
Question: About how old were you when you first started fishing?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

More of both men and women first began fishing between age 6 and 12 compared with any other age group. Half (50%) of men began fishing at this time, as did 4 in 10 (41%) women.

When men and women first started fishing.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who started fishing at the following ages

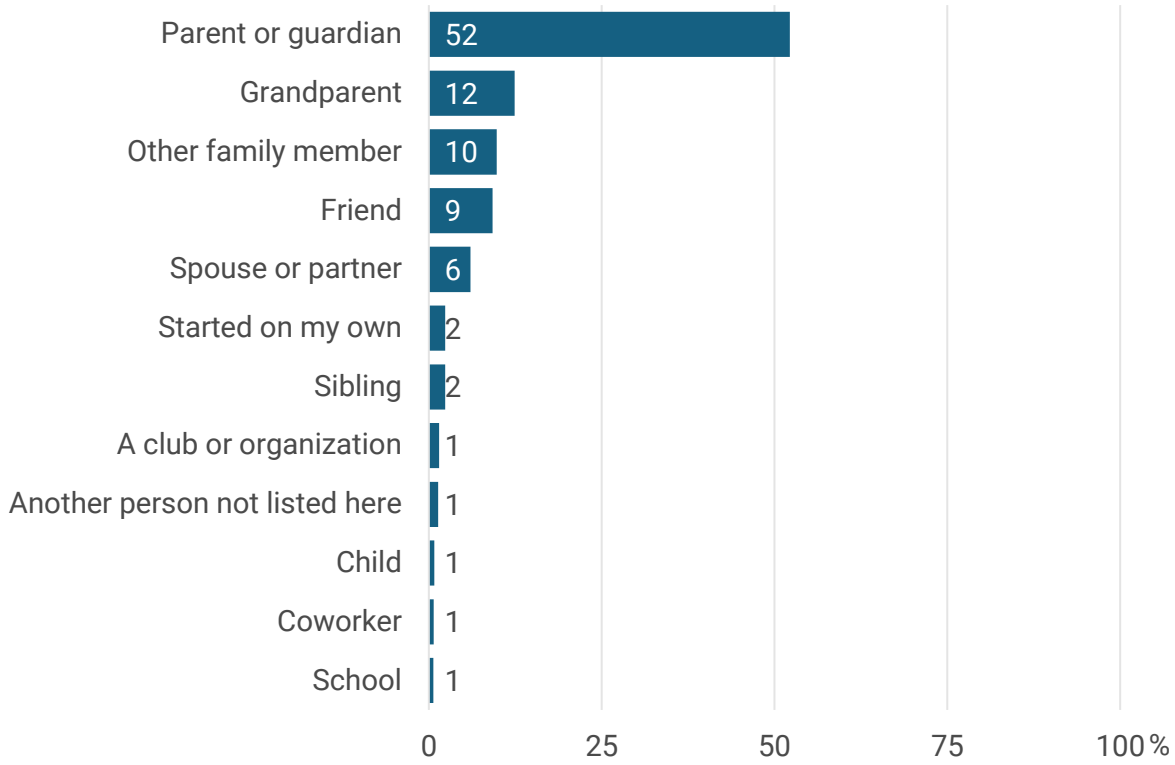


Question: About how old were you when you first started fishing?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

About half (52%) of people age 16 and older who have ever fished were introduced to fishing by a parent or guardian. One in 10 were introduced by a grandparent (12%), another family member (10%), friend (9%), or spouse or partner (6%). Very few were introduced by any other group or resource.

About half were introduced to fishing by a parent or guardian.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who have ever fished

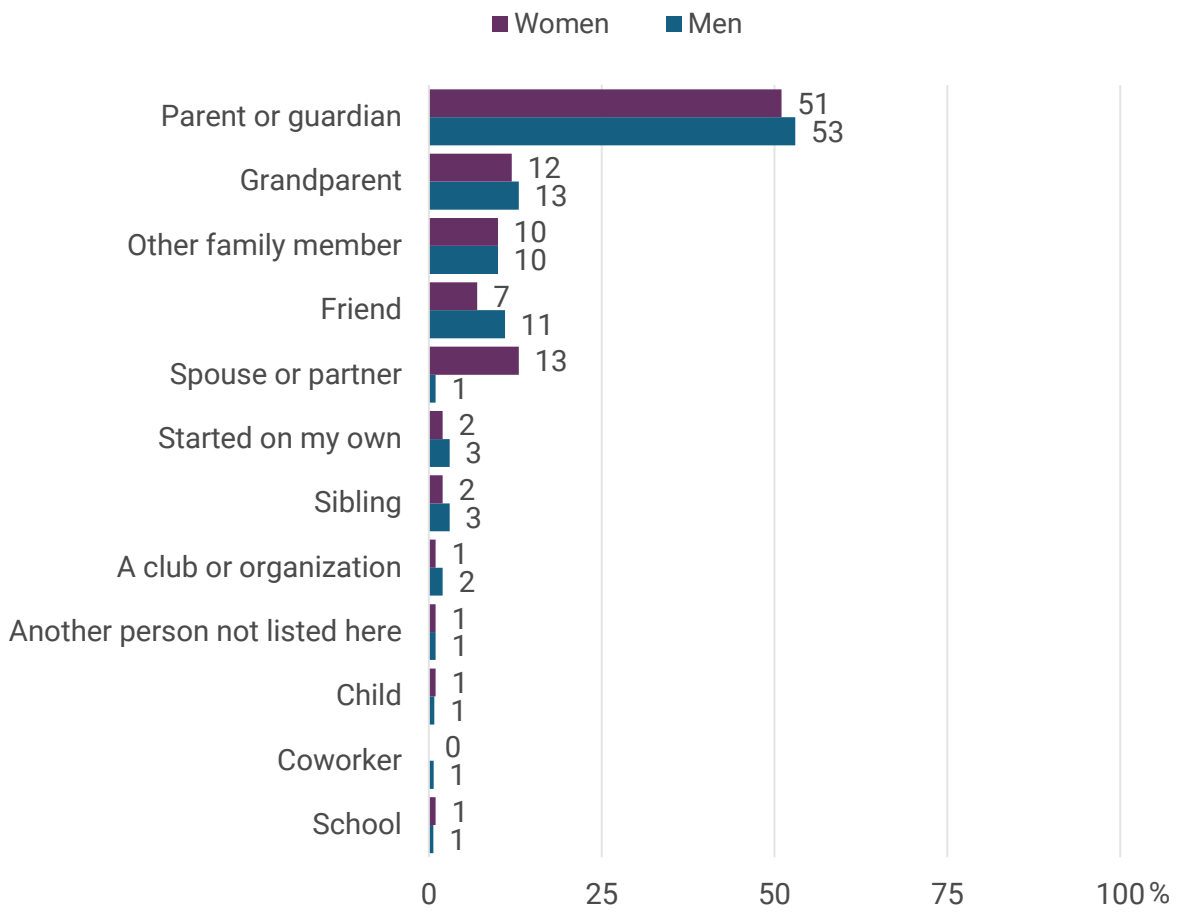


Question: Who first introduced you to fishing?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Half of men (53%) and women (51%) were introduced to fishing by a parent or guardian.

Who introduced men and women to fishing.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who have ever fished



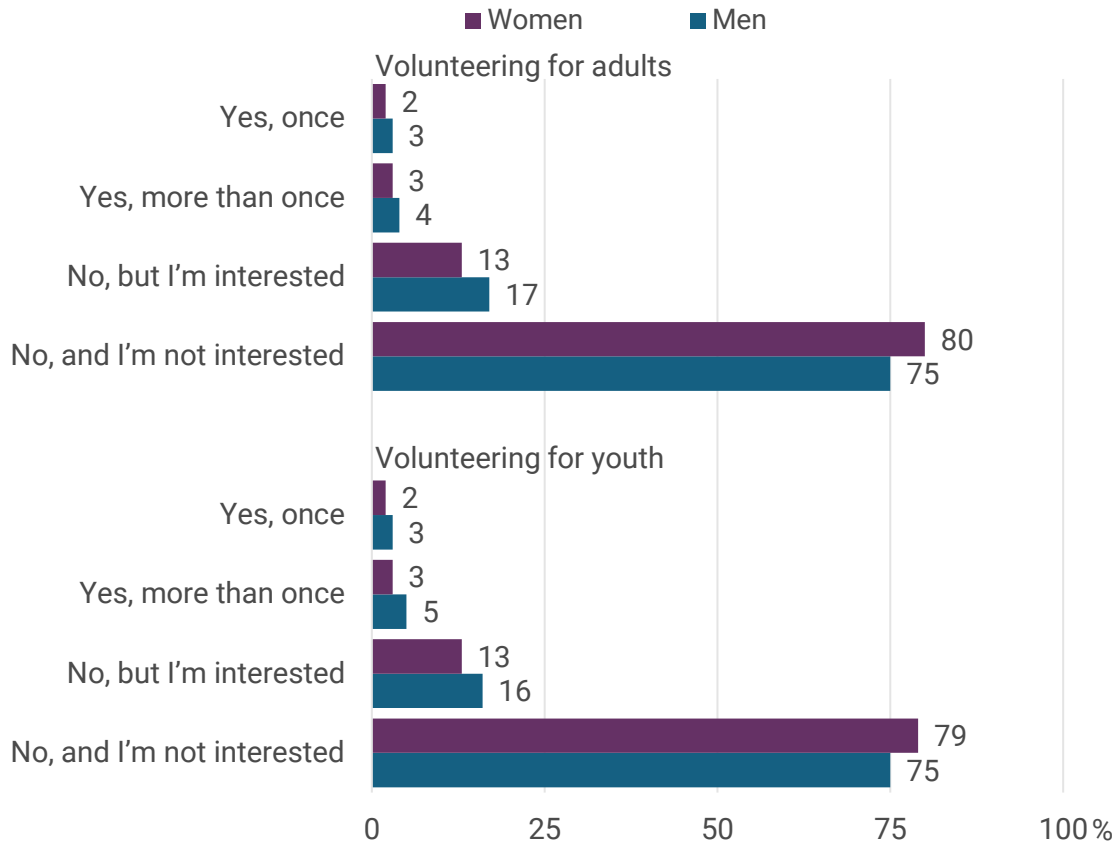
Question: Who first introduced you to fishing?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Four percent of people who have ever fished volunteered multiple times for a program that instructs young people about fishing through classes, workshops, or other guided activities. Another 3% have done this once. Fourteen percent have not volunteered yet but said they are interested in volunteering in the future. The numbers were similar for programs to instruct adults: 4% volunteered multiple times, and 2% volunteered once. Fifteen percent said they have not volunteered yet but expressed interest in doing so in the future.

Men and women have volunteered at similar rates for clubs or programs that instruct young people or adults about fishing.

Participation in volunteer programs about fishing by gender.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who have ever fished



Question: Have you ever volunteered for a structured program that teaches the following groups about fishing? A structured program could include organized classes, workshops, or guided activities.
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Thirty-eight percent of people ages 16 and older who have fished before but did not fish last year are interested in continuing fishing, even if they have not done so recently.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who have fished before but did not fish last year and are interested in starting again, by demographics:

Characteristic	% interested
Total percent	**38**
Population Density of Residence	
Urban	38
Rural	38
Population Size of Residence	
Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)	
1,000,000 or more	38
250,000 to 999,999	38
50,000 to 249,999	36
Micropolitan (10,000 to 50,000)	38
Outside MSA	37
AFWA Regions	
West	35
Midwest	34
Northeast	37
Southeast	42
Age	
16 to 17 years	28
18 to 24 years	42
25 to 34 years	43

Characteristic	% interested
35 to 44 years	41
45 to 54 years	38
55 to 64 years	39
65 to 74 years	35
75 and older	28
Sex	
Male	40
Female	35
Ethnicity	
Hispanic	45
Non-Hispanic	37
Race	
White	36
African American	49
Asian American	42
All others	44
Annual Household Income	
Less than $10,000	49
$10,000 to $14,999	43
$15,000 to $24,999	41
$25,000 to $34,999	37
$35,000 to $49,999	39
$50,000 to $74,999	38

Characteristic	% interested
$75,000 to $99,999	36
$100,000 to $149,999	35
$150,000 to $199,999	33
$200,000 or more	35
Education	
Less than HS	37
High school degree	39
Some college	41
Bachelor's Degree	35
Graduate School	34

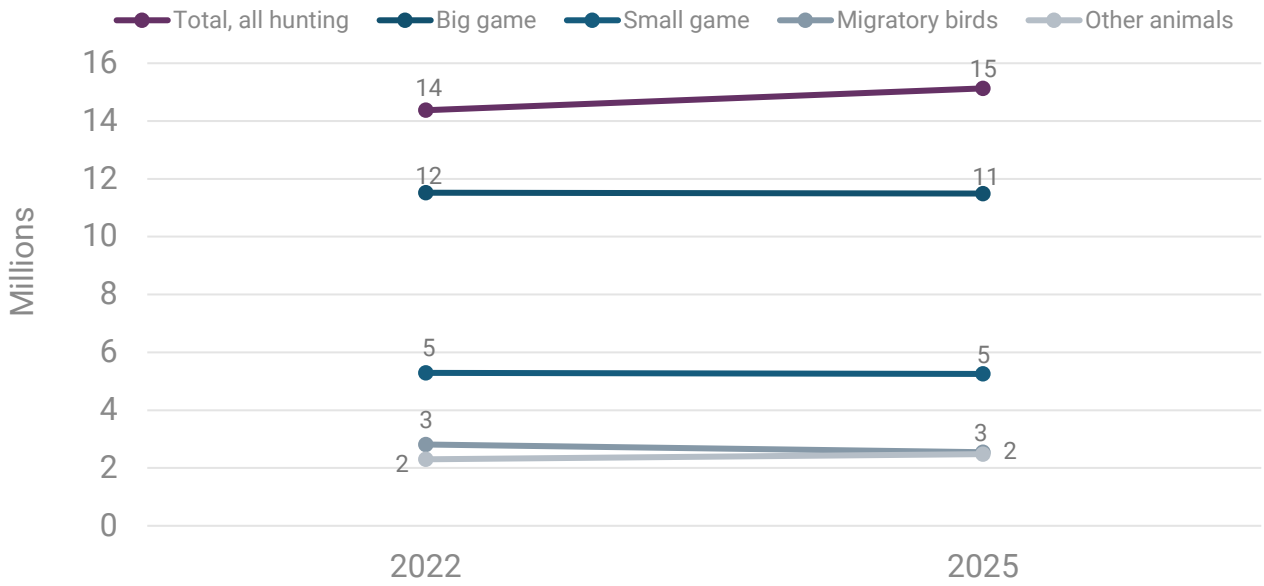
Hunting

Overall Participation

- In 2025, 17,145,000 Americans age 6 and older participated in hunting, including 2,549,000 who hunted for the first time.
    - Age breakdowns for those who hunted for the first time in 2025 are available in Table R-1 of the Appendix.
- Among those age 6 and older, 2,908,000 hunted in 2024 but not 2025.
    - Age breakdowns for those who hunted in 2024 but not 2025 are available in Table R-2 of the Appendix.
- Focusing on those age 16 and older, 6%, or 15,130,000 Americans, participated in hunting in 2025. This represents a 5.3% increase in participation compared with the 14,375,000 who hunted in 2022.

Hunting participation from 2022 to 2025

Number of individuals age 16 and older



Question: Last year, did you do any hunting in the United States?
Source: NORC polls conducted May 2022 through March 2023 with 105,698 adults age 16 and older nationwide and June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults age 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

    - Detailed demographic breakdowns of participants in hunting in 2025 are available in Table 2 of the Appendix.

- When it comes to hunting big game, 11,493,000 Americans age 16 and older participated in 2025, representing a 0.3% decrease from the 11,522,000 who participated in 2022.
- Looking at hunting small game, 5,253,000 Americans age 16 and older participated in 2025, representing a 0.7% decrease compared with the 5,290,000 who participated in 2022.
- For hunting migratory birds, 2,545,000 Americans age 16 and older participated in 2025, a decrease of 9.5% compared with the 2,812,000 who did so in 2022.
- For hunting other animals, 2,479,000 Americans age 16 and older participated in 2025, an increase of 7.8% compared with the 2,300,000 who did so in 2022.

2025 Participation Details

Key Things You Should Know:

Among individuals age 16 and older who hunted last year:

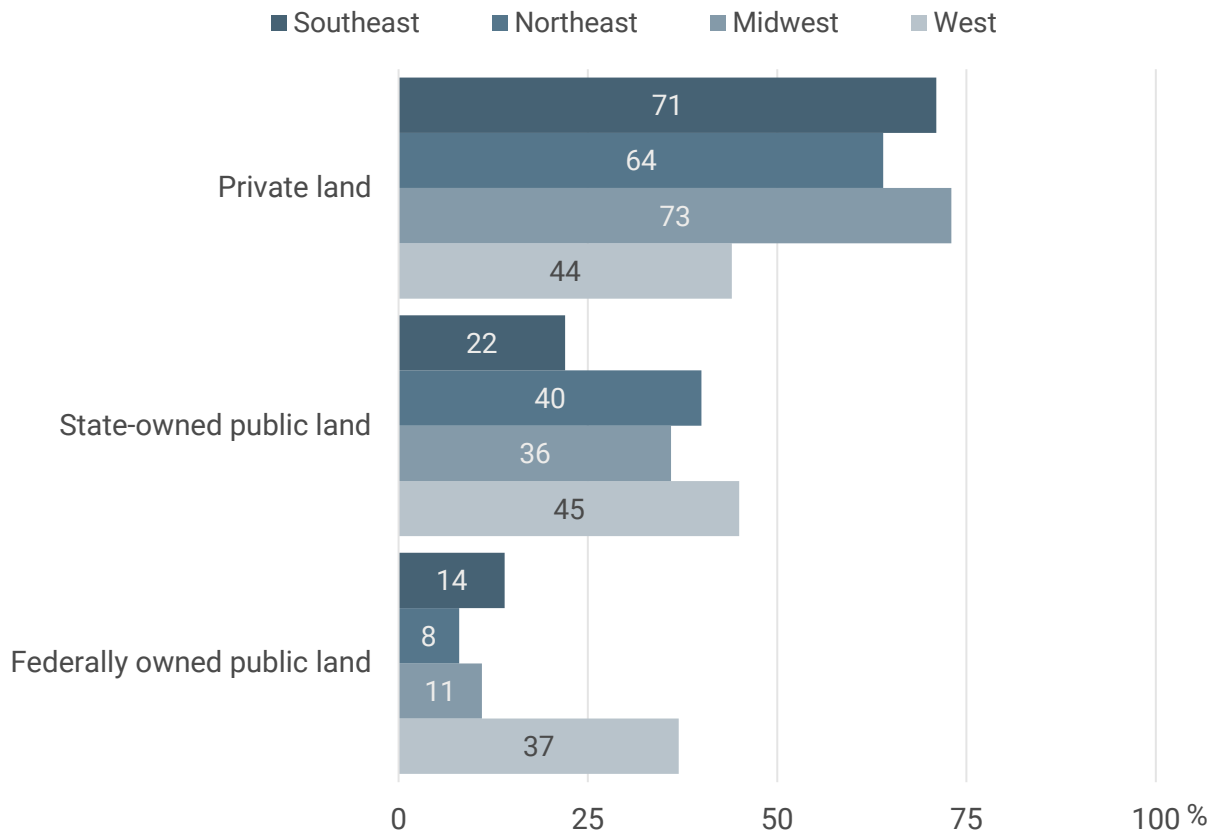
- Most did so on private land and only used a firearm.
- A centerfire rifle was the most common type of firearm, used by a third of hunters.
- Three-quarters said they did not participate in any organized hunting activities.

Thirty-seven percent spent 1-5 days practicing, planning, or scouting for trips to hunt last year, 19% spent 6-10 days, 8% spent 11-15 days, 10% spent over 15 days, and 25% did not spend time practicing, planning, or scouting.

Private land (65%) and state-owned public land (32%) were the most common places for hunting last year.

Hunting locations varied by region of the country. Hunting on private land was common among those living in the Southeast (71%) and Midwest (73%), but just 44% did so in the West (44%).

Hunting location by region of the country.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who hunted in 2025



Question: Last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025), did you hunt on public or private land? *Please select all that apply.*
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

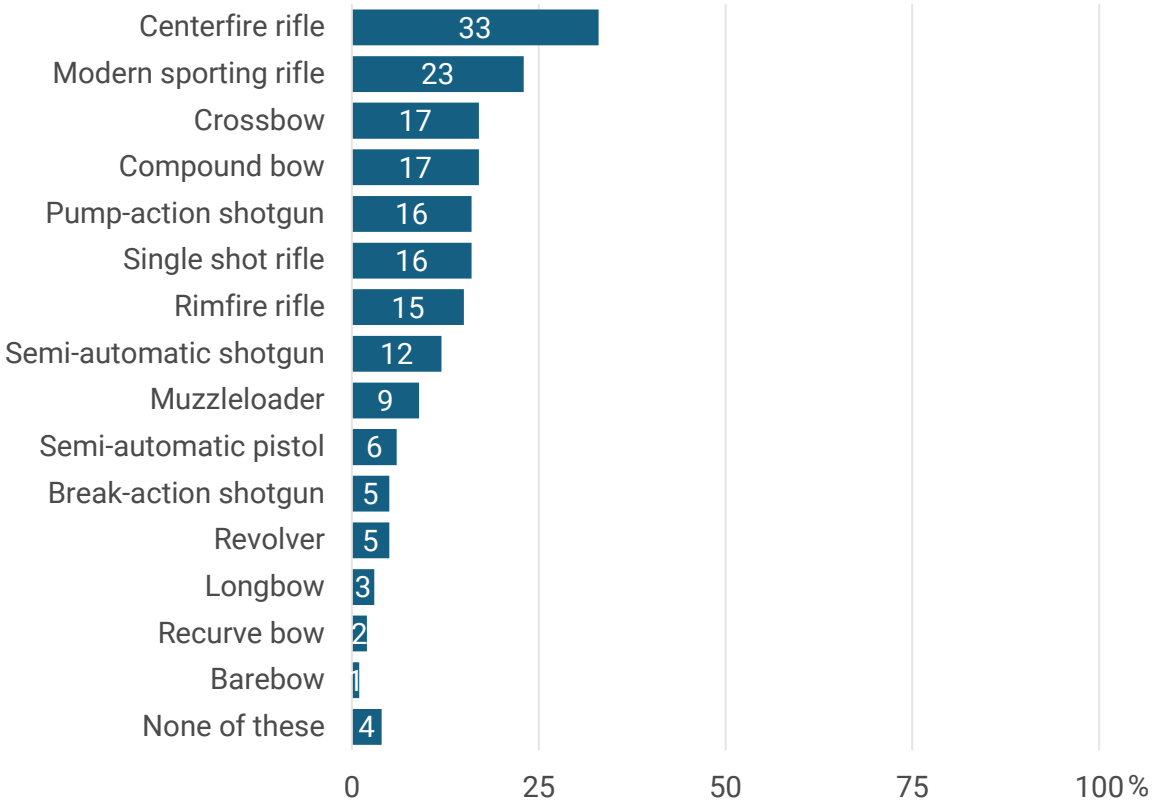
Twelve percent hunted with only a bow, 63% with only a firearm, and 24% used both.

Characteristic	% of hunters age 16 and older who hunted in 2025 with a bow only or both a bow and a firearm
Total percent	**36**
Population Density of Residence	
Urban	36
Rural	36
Age	
16 to 17 years	33
18 to 24 years	47
25 to 34 years	39
35 to 44 years	39
45 to 54 years	38
55 to 64 years	31
65 to 74 years	30
75 and older	21
Sex	
Male	36
Female	35

Centerfire rifles (33%), modern sporting rifles (23%), and compound bows (17%) were the most common types of equipment used to hunt last year.

A third of hunters used a centerfire rifle in 2025.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who hunted using the following in 2025



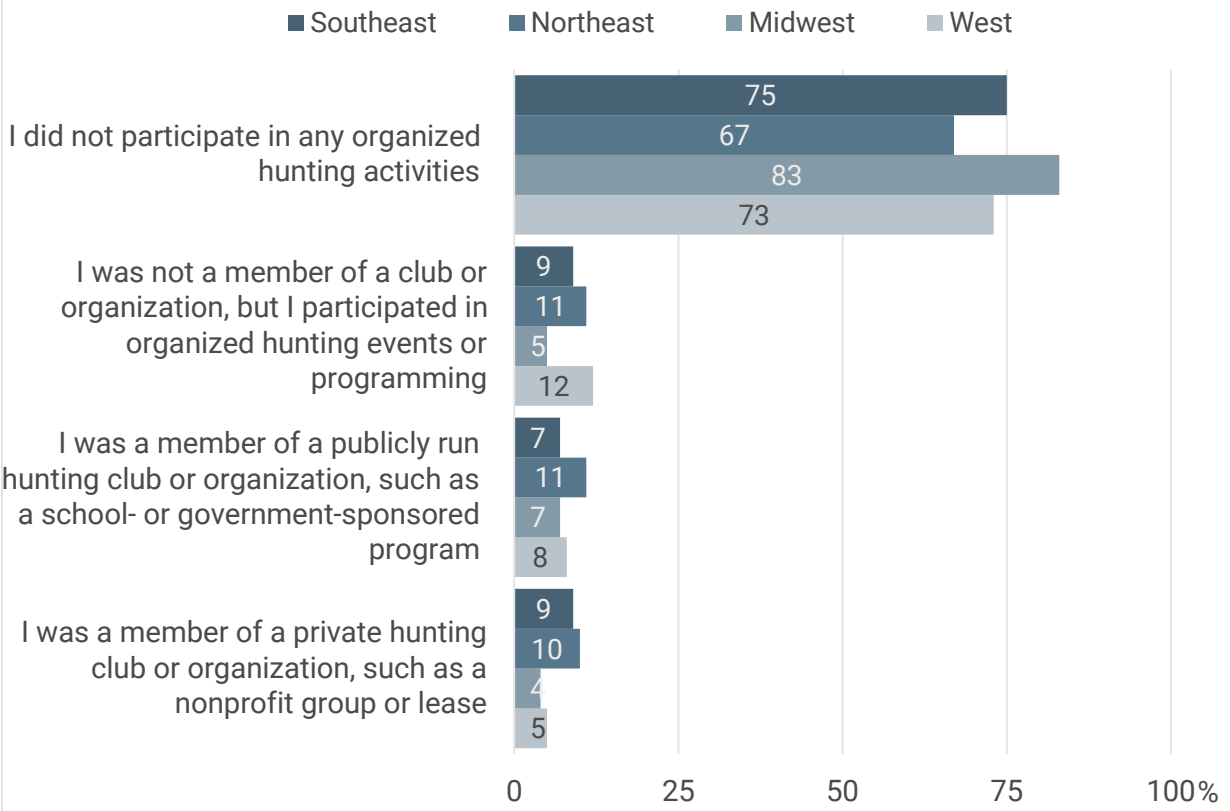
Question: Last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025), what types of equipment did you use when hunting? *Please select all that apply.*
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Eight percent participated in organized hunting activities as a member of a private club last year, 8% as a member as a publicly run club, and 75% did not participate in any organized hunting activities.

Participation in organized hunting activities like clubs or events by region.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who hunted in 2025



Question: Last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025), did you participate in any of the following organized hunting activities? *Please select all that apply.*
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

2025 Species Results

Key Things You Should Know:

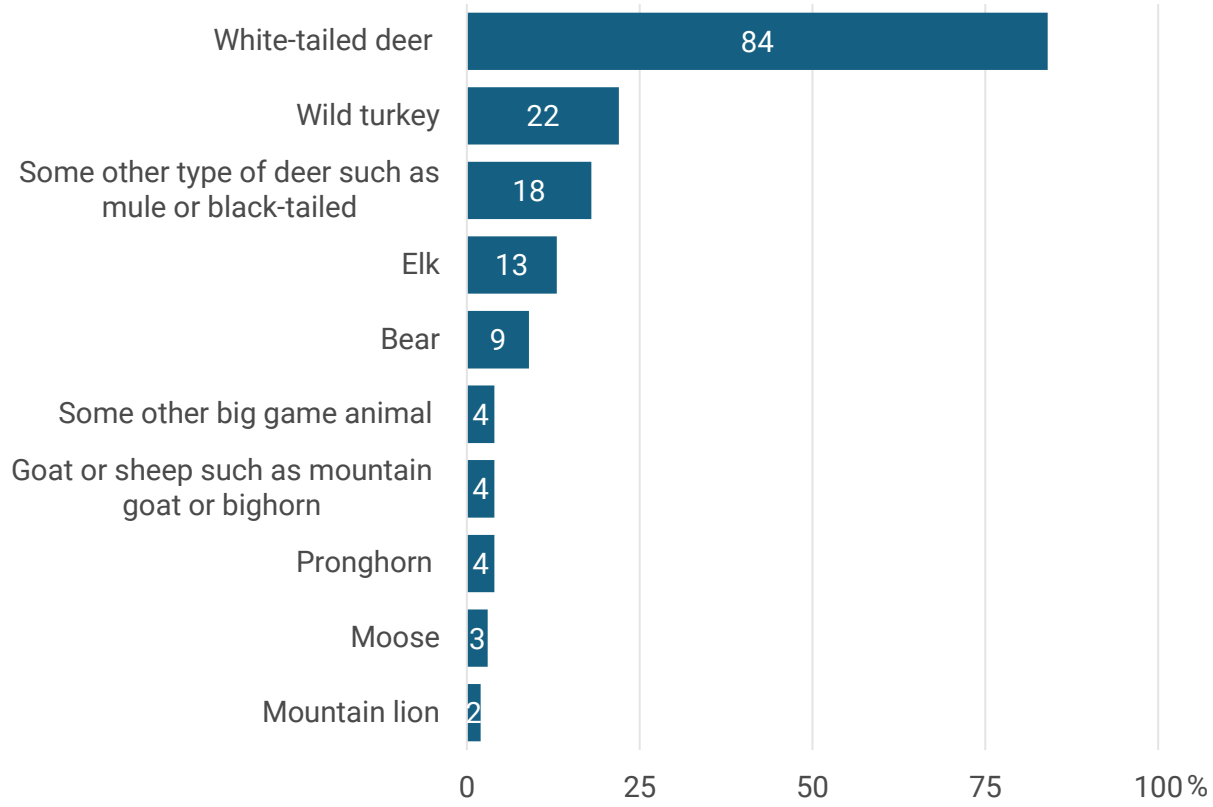
Among individuals age 16 and older who hunted last year:

- White-tailed deer was the most common type of big game hunted while rabbits or hare were the most common small game.
- Like those who fished, just over half of the hunters shared meat with their family. A quarter shared with other people such as friends, coworkers, or neighbors, and eleven percent also shared with people who do not hunt.

White-tailed deer (84%), wild turkey (22%), and other types of deer such as mule or black-tailed (18%) were the most common animals hunted last year.

A vast majority of those who hunted for big game hunted for white-tailed deer.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who hunted big game in 2025



Question: On any of your trips last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025), did you hunt any of the following animals? *Please select all that apply.*
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

White-tailed deer was the most common big game hunted in 2025, regardless of region.

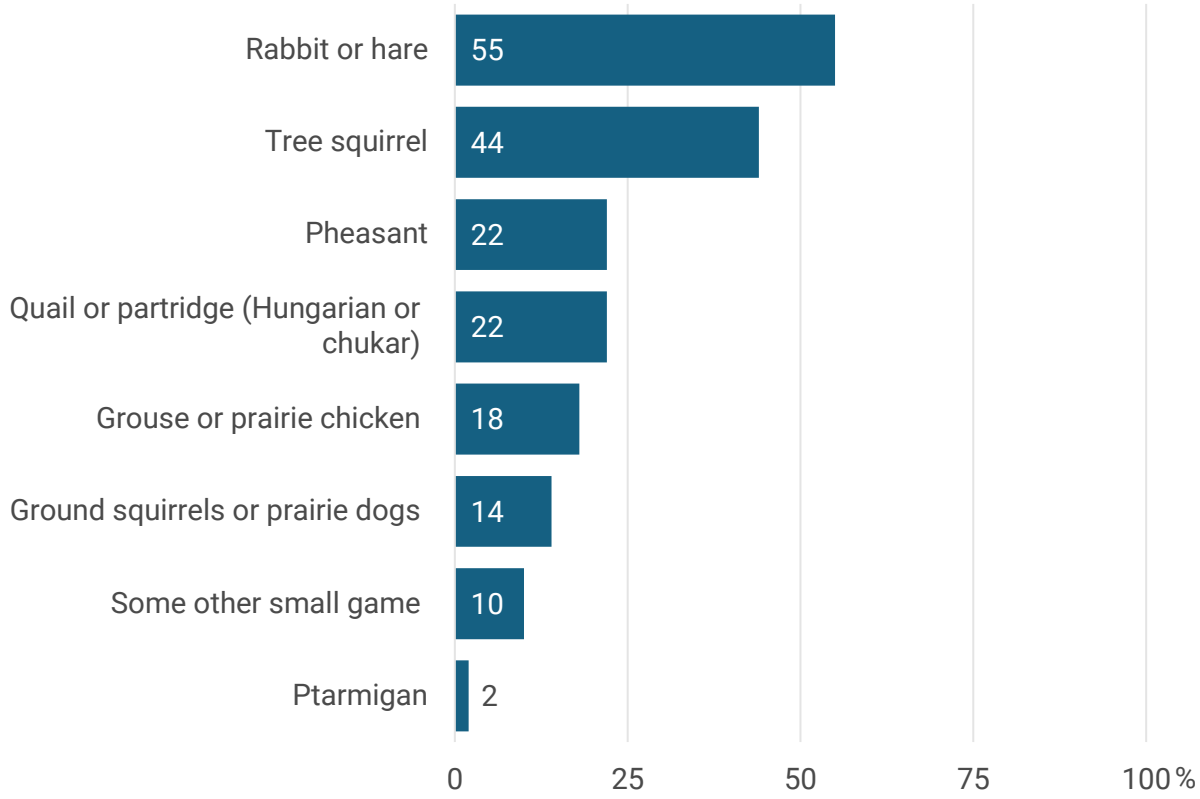
Percent of top five big game species hunted by region:

West	Midwest	Northeast	Southeast
White-tailed deer (54%)	White-tailed deer (93%)	White-tailed deer (86%)	White-tailed deer (89%)
Some other type of deer (44%)	Wild turkey (24%)	Wild turkey (19%)	Wild turkey (25%)
Elk (44%)	Some other type of deer (8%)	Some other type of deer (15%)	Some other type of deer (15%)
Bear (18%)	Elk (6%)	Bear (13%)	Elk (8%)
Wild turkey (16%)	Bear (4%)	Elk (7%)	Bear (8%)

For small game that were hunted in 2025, rabbits or hare (55%), tree squirrels (44%), and pheasants (22%) were most common.

Rabbit or hare and tree squirrel were the most popular small game animals hunted.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who hunted small game in 2025



Question: On any of your trips last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025), did you hunt any of the following animals? *Please select all that apply.*
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

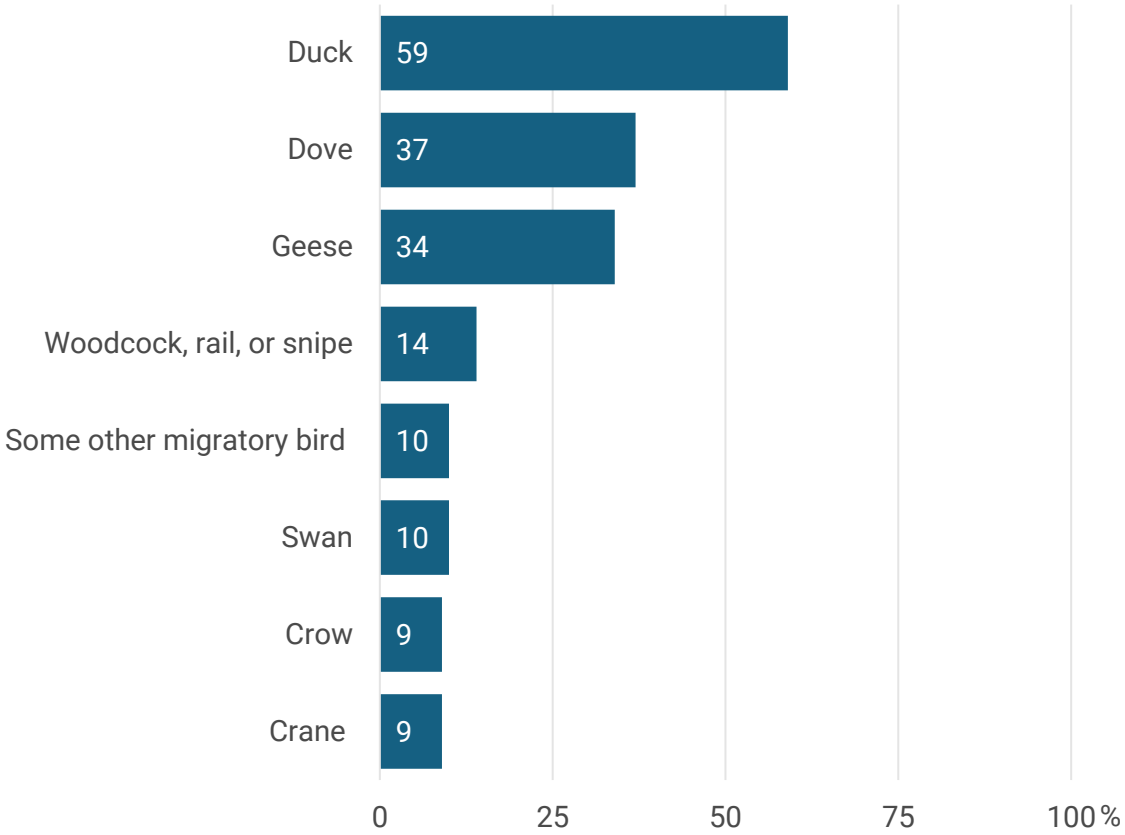
Rabbit or hare was the most common small game hunted in 2025, regardless of region.

Percent of top five small game species hunted by region:

West	Midwest	Northeast	Southeast
Rabbit or hare (51%)	Rabbit or hare (49%)	Rabbit or hare (57%)	Rabbit or hare (60%)
Tree squirrel (32%)	Tree squirrel (40%)	Tree squirrel (40%)	Tree squirrel (54%)
Quail or partridge (28%)	Pheasant (30%)	Pheasant (28%)	Quail or partridge (24%)
Pheasant (23%)	Grouse or prairie chicken (23%)	Grouse or prairie chicken (20%)	Pheasant (16%)
Grouse or prairie chicken (22%)	Quail or partridge (17%)	Quail or partridge (20%)	Ground squirrels or prairie dogs (13%)

Ducks (59%), doves (37%), and geese (34%) were the most often hunted migratory birds in 2025.

Six in 10 of those who hunted migratory birds hunted duck.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who hunted migratory birds in 2025



Question: On any of your trips last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025), did you hunt any of the following animals? *Please select all that apply.*
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

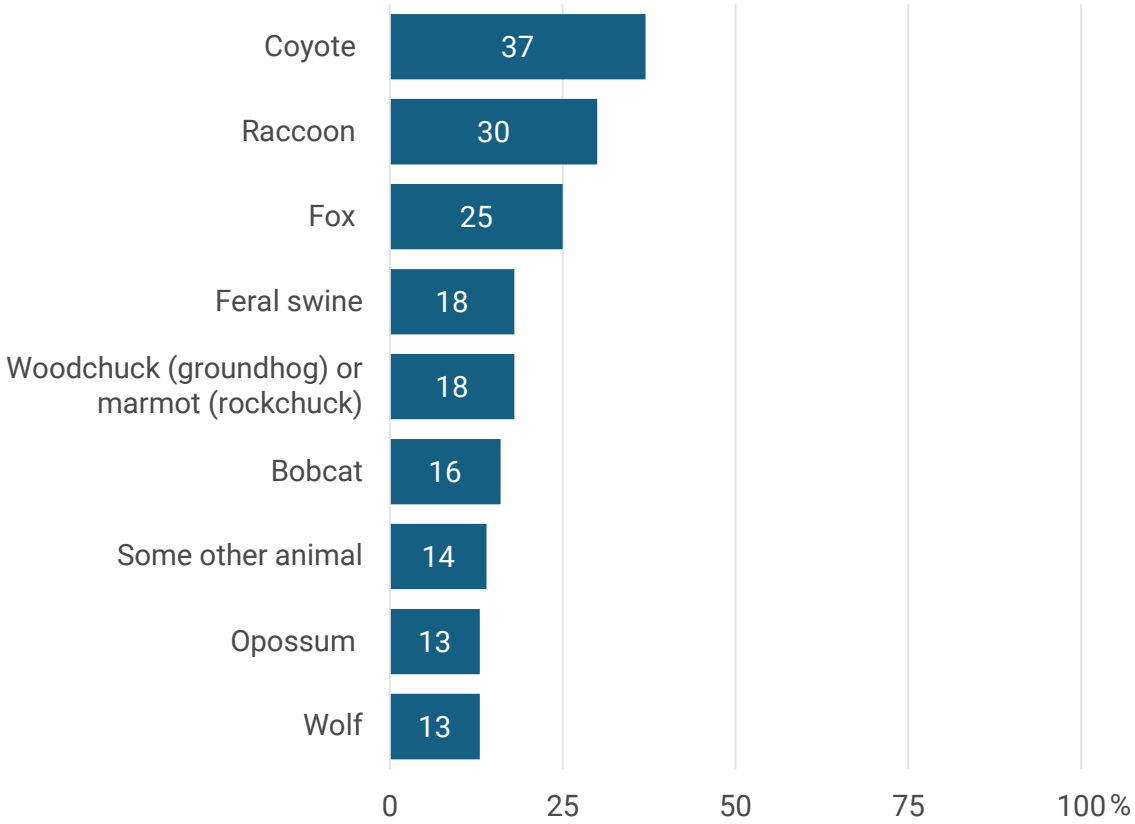
Ducks were the most common migratory bird hunted in 2025, regardless of region.

Percent of top five migratory bird species hunted by region:

West	Midwest	Northeast	Southeast
Duck (56%)	Duck (66%)	Duck (52%)	Duck (59%)
Dove (44%)	Geese (43%)	Geese (34%)	Dove (42%)
Geese (39%)	Dove (30%)	Dove (19%)	Geese (28%)
Some other migratory bird (17%)	Woodcock (21%)	Woodcock (18%)	Woodcock (13%)
Crane (11%)	Swan (12%)	Swan (15%)	Crow (11%)

The most common other animals hunted in 2025 were coyotes (37%), raccoons (30%), and foxes (25%).

Coyote and racoon were among the most popular other animals hunted.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who hunted other animals in 2025



Question: On any of your trips last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025), did you hunt any of the following animals? *Please select all that apply.*
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Coyote ranks near the top of the other animals hunted in 2025, regardless of region.

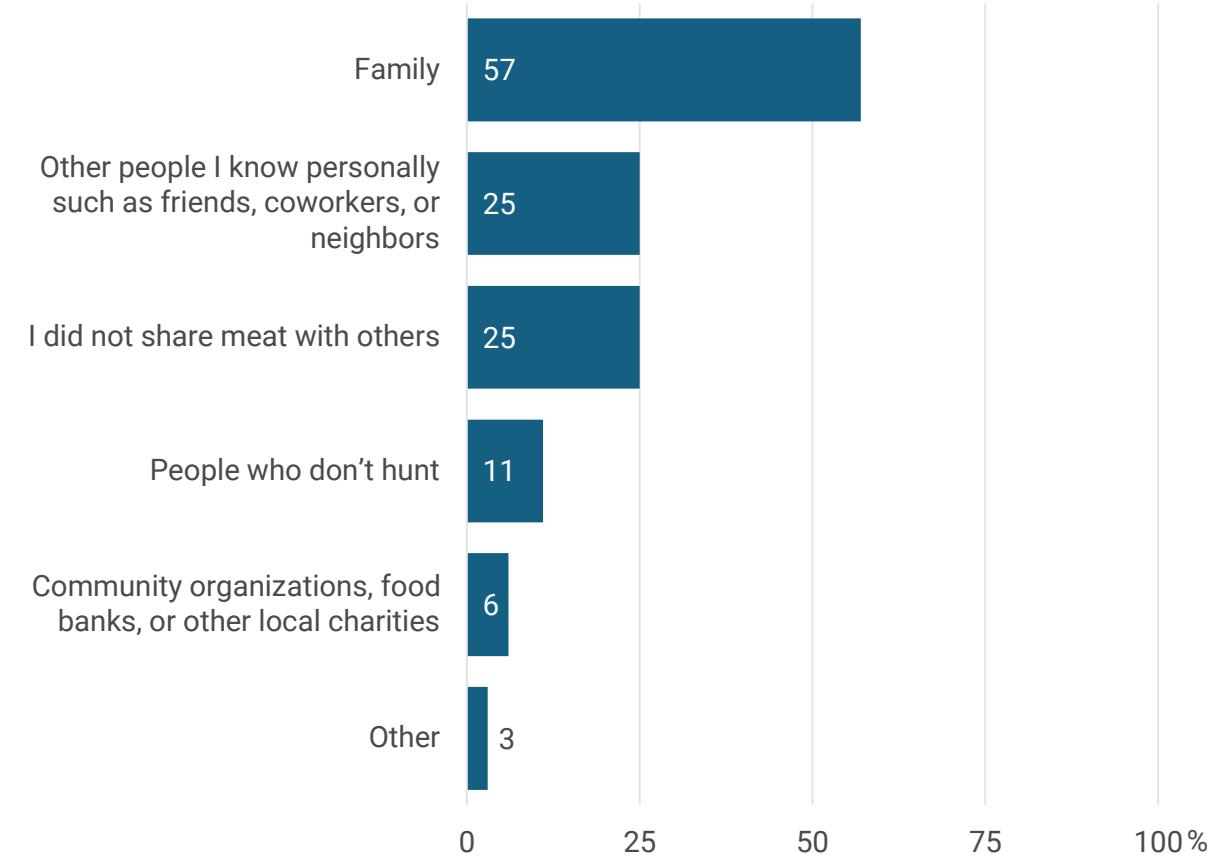
Percent of top five other animals hunted, by region:

West	Midwest	Northeast	Southeast
Coyote (39%)	Coyote (39%)	Woodchuck (groundhog) or marmot (rockchuck) (37%)	Coyote (37%)
Fox (30%)	Racoon (31%)	Coyote (29%)	Racoon (34%)
Racoon (23%)	Fox (25%)	Fox (27%)	Feral swine (26%)
Bobcat (17%)	Woodchuck (groundhog) or marmot (rockchuck) (18%)	Racoon (22%)	Fox (23%)
Some other animal (17%)	Bobcat (18%)	Some other animal (12%)	Opossum (19%)

In 2025, hunters shared meat with family (57%), other people such as friends, coworkers, or neighbors (25%), and people who don't hunt (11%).

More than half of those who hunted shared meat with family.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who shared meat in 2025



Question: Last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025), did you share any meat that you personally harvested with any of the following? *Please select all that apply.*
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Results to Inform Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation Efforts

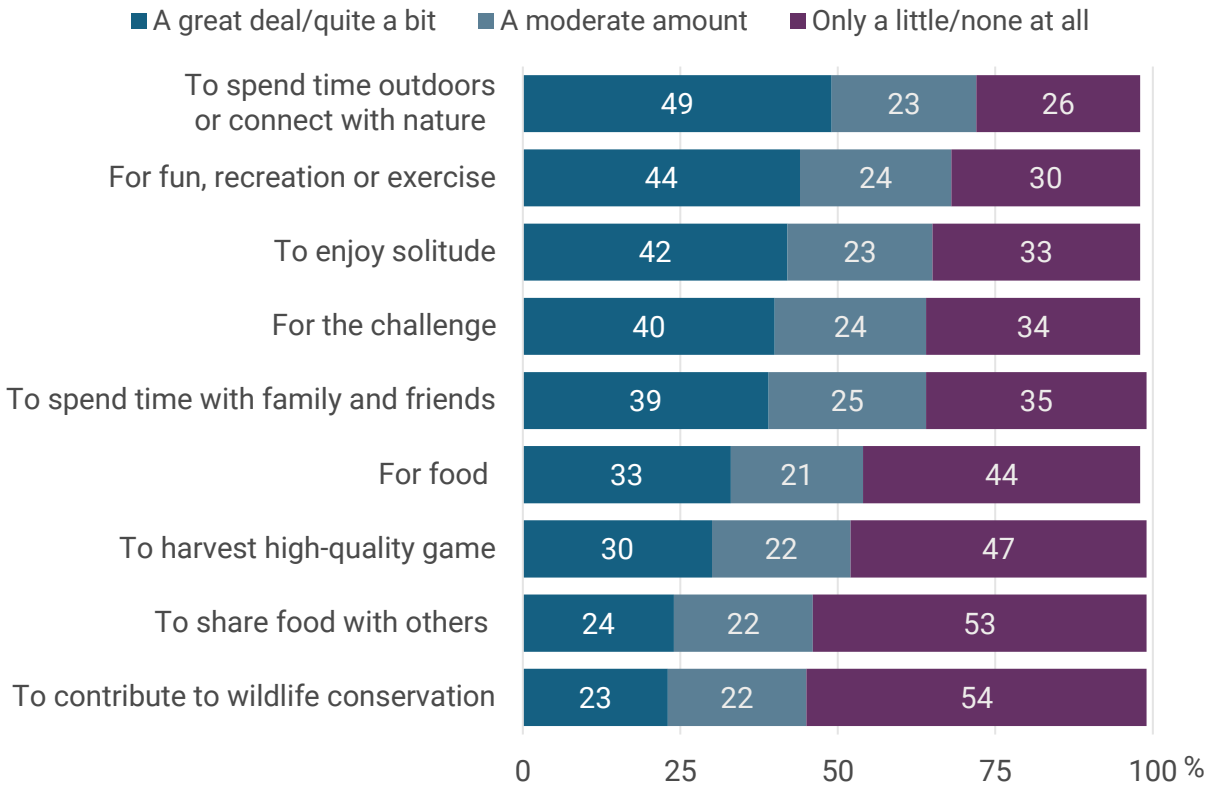
Key Things You Should Know:

Among individuals age 16 and older who have ever hunted:

- Half viewed spending time outside or connecting with nature as motivation for hunting and a third felt that lack of time to hunt was a barrier.
- Most started before the age of 18, and 44% were introduced to hunting by a parent or guardian.
- Among individuals age 16 or older who have hunted before but did not hunt last year, 4% expressed interest in continuing to hunt in the future.

Among people who have ever hunted, the leading motivations were spending time outdoors or connecting with nature (49%), having fun, engaging in recreation, or exercising (44%), or enjoying solitude (42%).

Half view spending time outdoors or connecting with nature as a motivation for hunting.



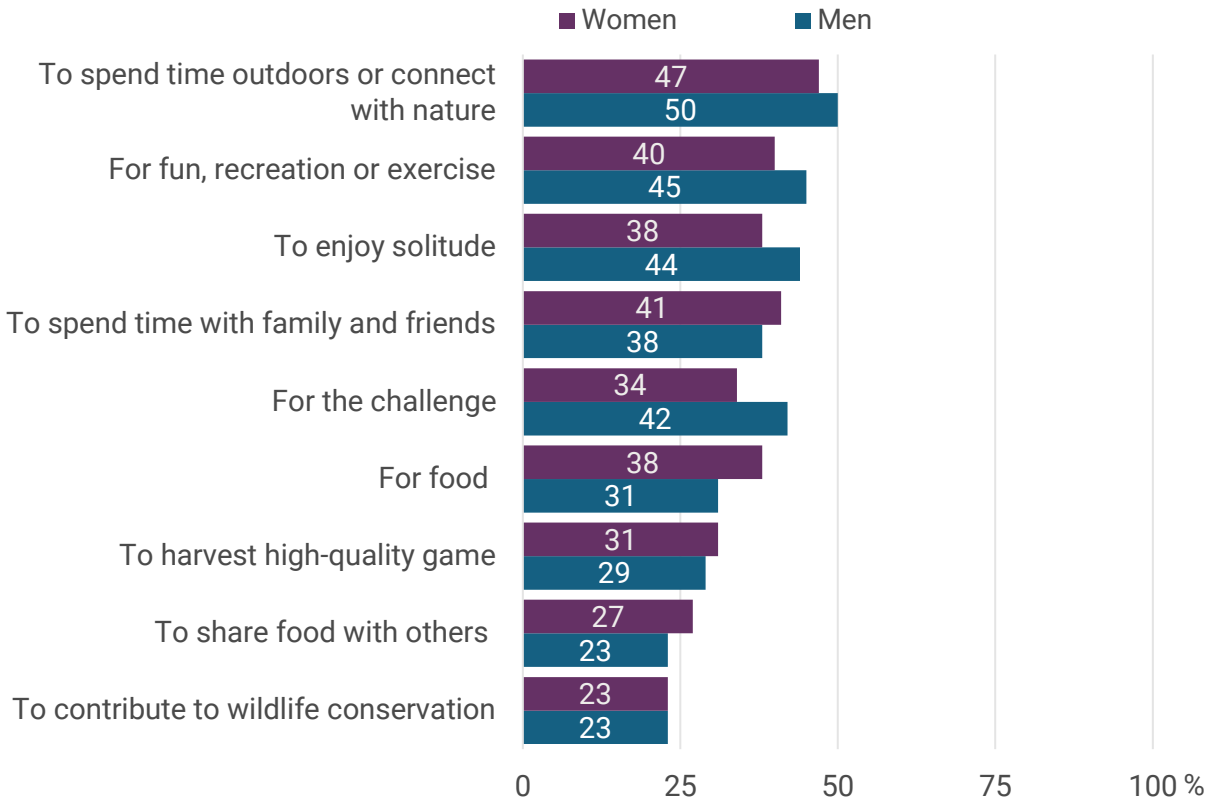
Question: How much, if at all, do each of the following motivate you to hunt?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Wanting to spend time outdoors or connecting with nature were common reasons for hunting for both men (50%) and women (47%).

Motivations for hunting by gender

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who have ever hunted who say the following

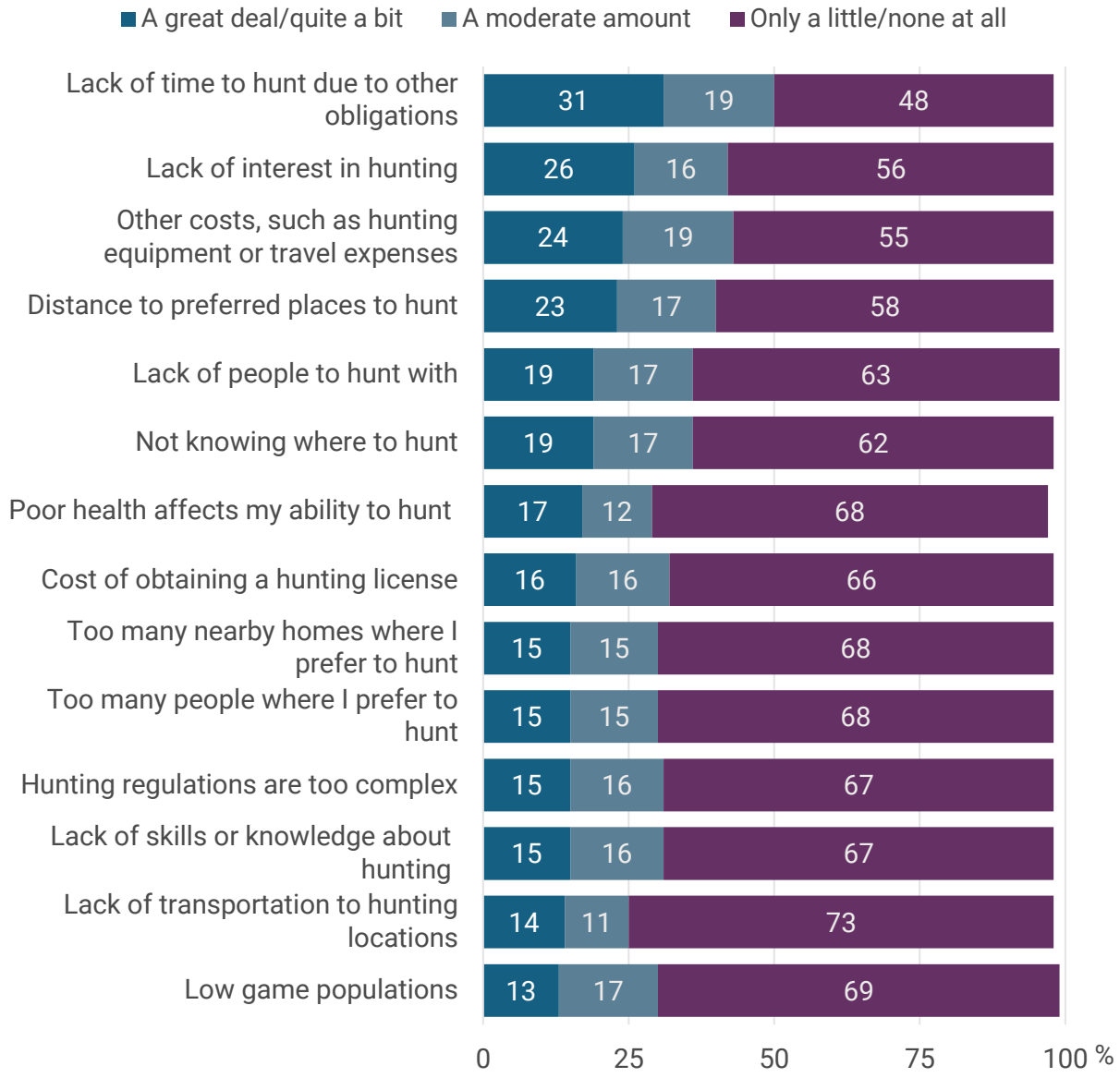


Question: How much, if at all, do each of the following motivate you to hunt?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Among those who have ever hunted, common barriers were lack of time (31%), lack of interest (26%), or hunting-related costs, such as equipment or travel expenses (24%).

One third view lack of time as a barrier to hunting.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who have ever hunted

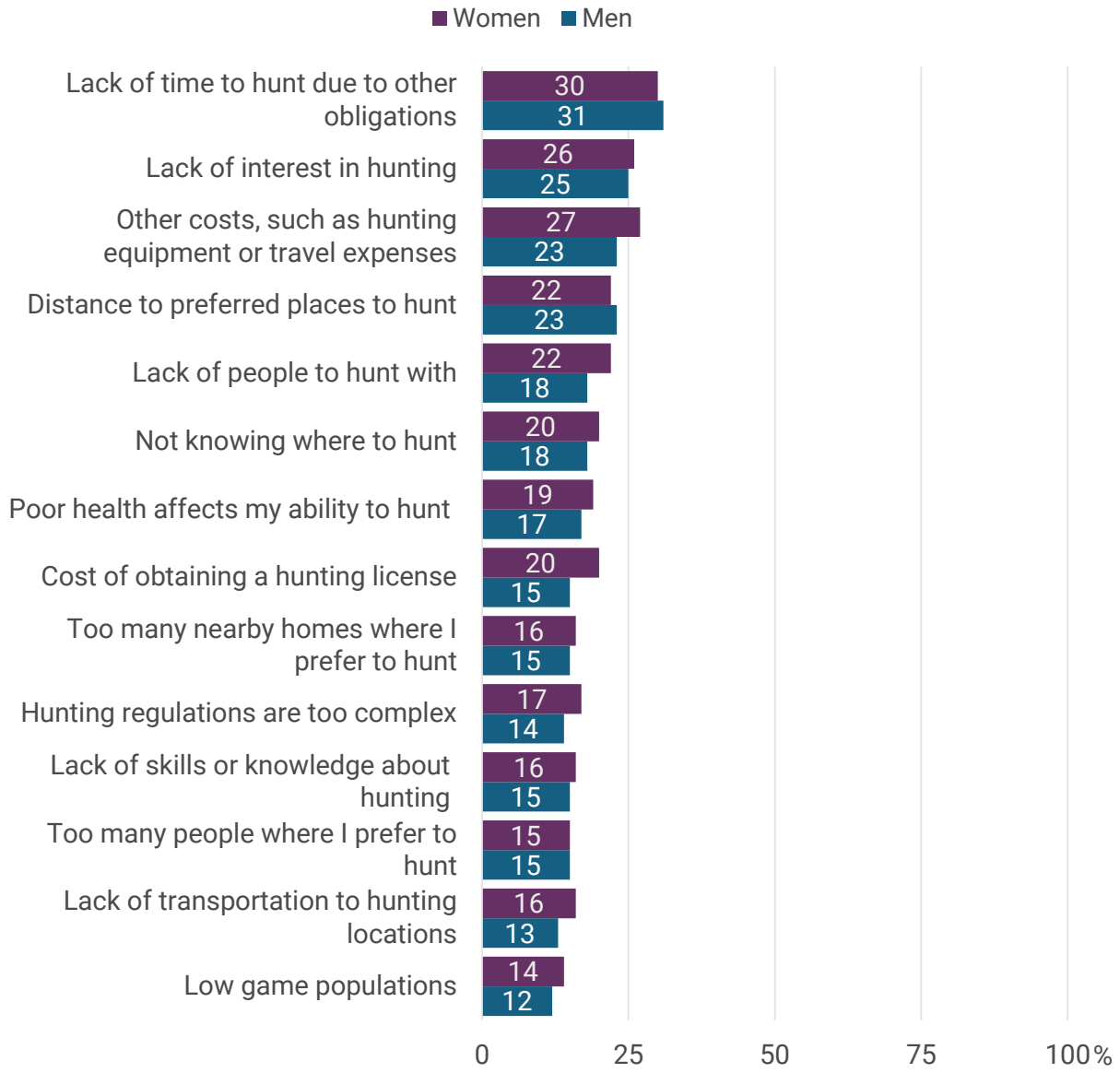


Question: How much, if at all, do each of the following prevent you from hunting?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

About one third of men (31%) and women (30%) saw lack of time as a barrier to their ability to hunt.

Barriers to hunting by gender.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who have ever hunted who say the following prevent them a great deal or quite a bit



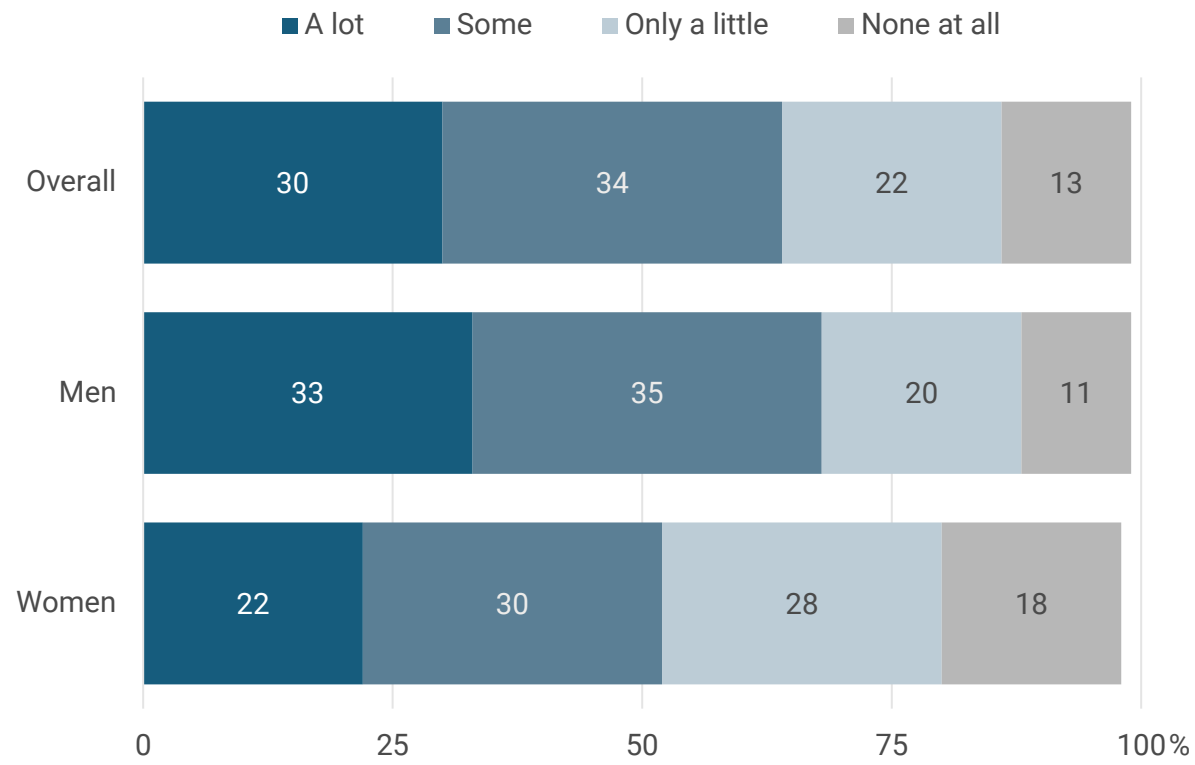
Question: How much, if at all, do each of the following prevent you from hunting?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Thirty percent of those who hunted in 2025 identified as a hunter a lot, 34% identified some, 22% identified only a little, and 13% said they did not identify as a hunter at all.

One third of men (33%) identified as a hunter a lot compared with 2 in 10 (22%) women.

Those who identify as hunters by gender.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who hunted in 2025

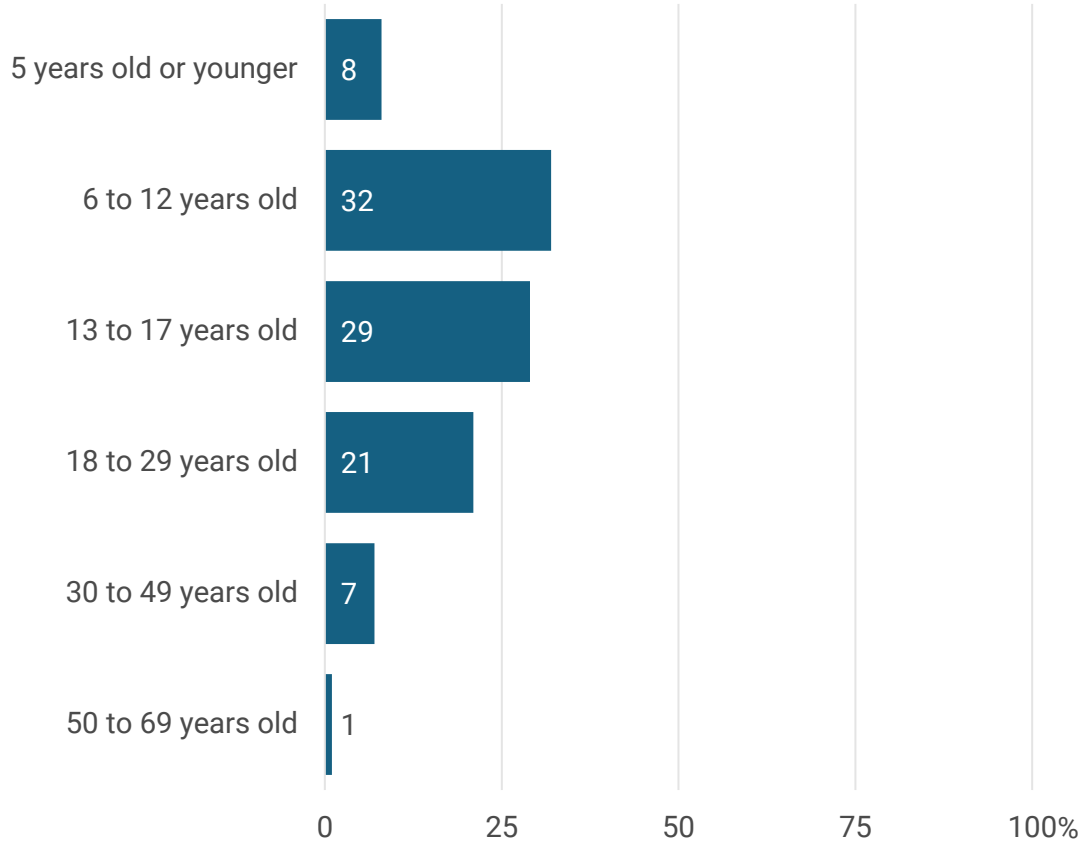


Question: Now that we have asked about your participation in a variety of activities, to what extent do you identify as each of the following?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

About 3 in 10 of those who have ever hunted began hunting between age 6 and 12 and another 3 in 10 between age 13 and 17. Twenty-one percent began between age18 and 29.

Most of those who ever have hunted started under the age of 18.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who have ever hunted



Question: About how old were you when you first started hunting?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

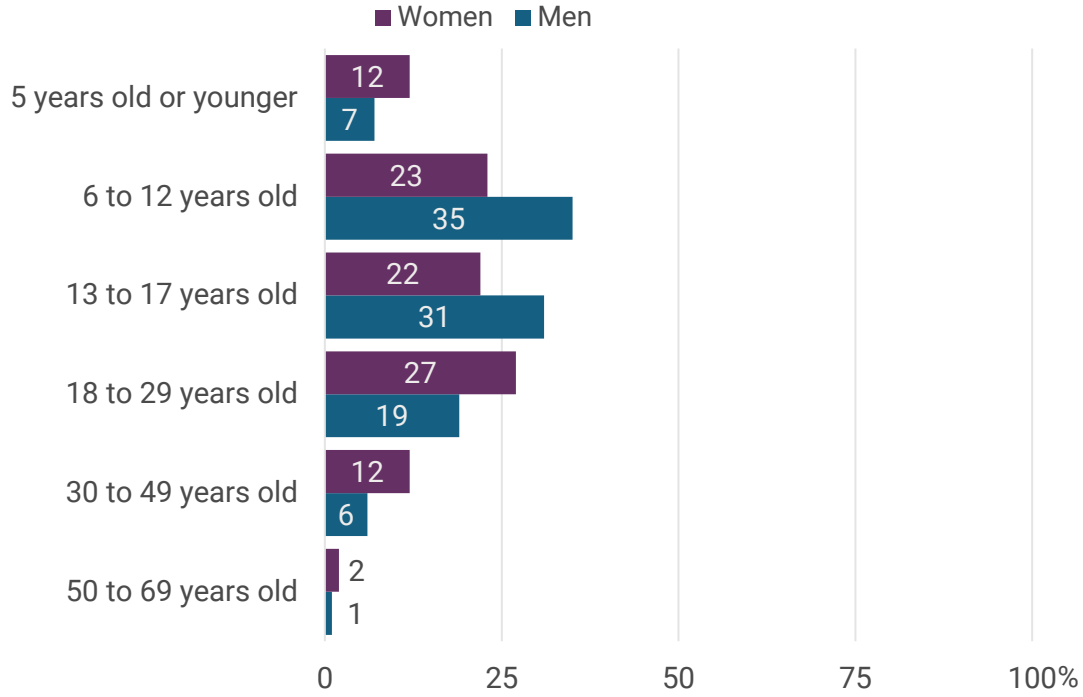
NORC

About a third (35%) of men began hunting between age 6 and 12 and 3 in 10 (31%) began between age of 13 and 17. About 2 in 10 women began hunting between age 6 and 12 (23%) and between age of 13 and 17 (22%).

Nineteen percent of men and 27% of women began hunting when they were between age 18 and 29.

When hunters first started by gender.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who have ever hunted

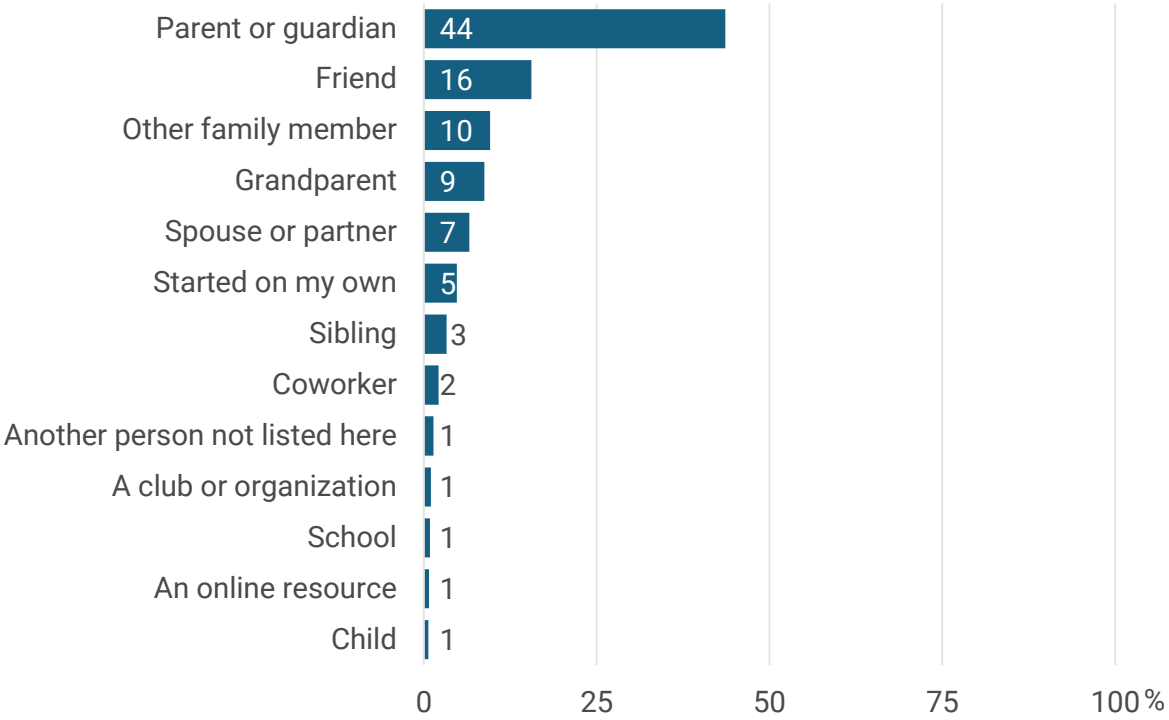


Question: About how old were you when you first started hunting?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Forty-four percent of those who have ever hunted were introduced to hunting by a parent or guardian. Sixteen percent were introduced by a friend, and 10% were introduced by a different family member.

Four in 10 were introduced to hunting by a parent or guardian.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who ever hunted

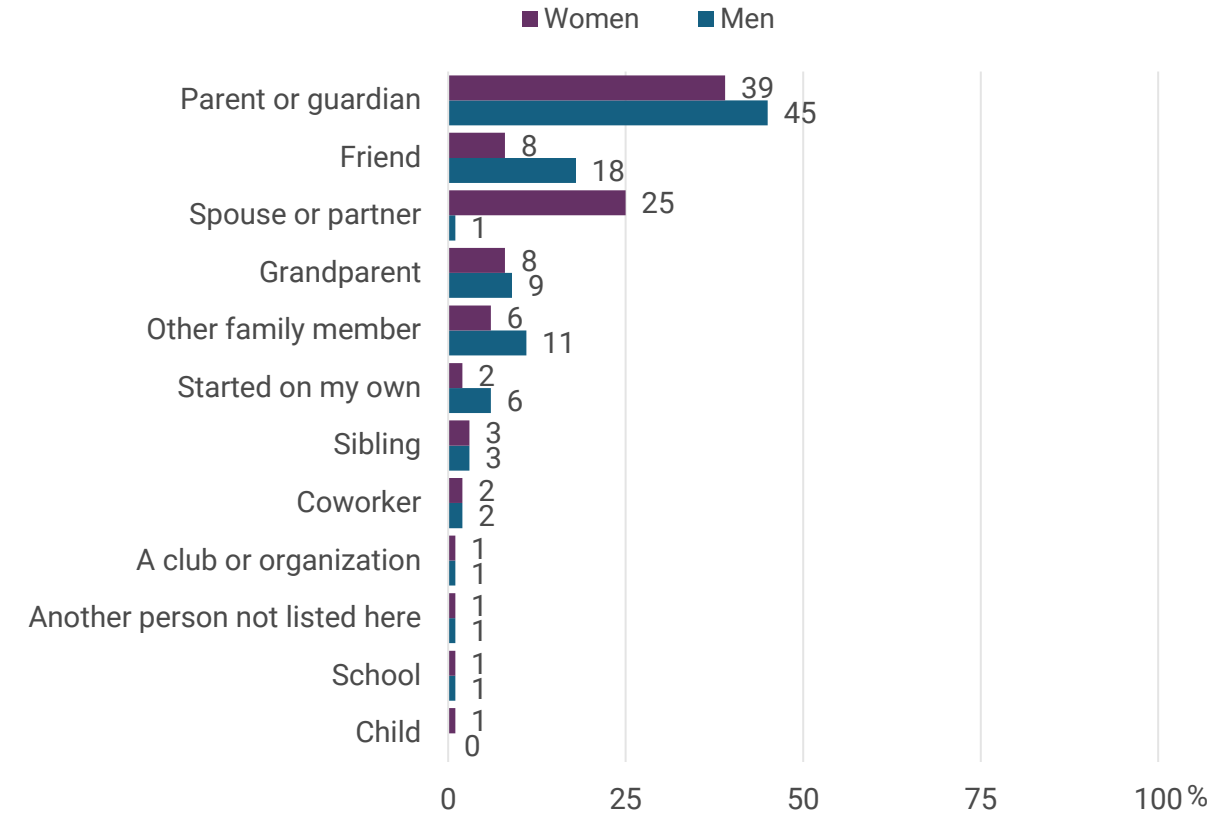


Question: Who first introduced you to hunting?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

A parent or guardian was the most common way for both men (45%) and women (39%) to be introduced to hunting.

Who introduced men and women to hunting by gender.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who have ever hunted



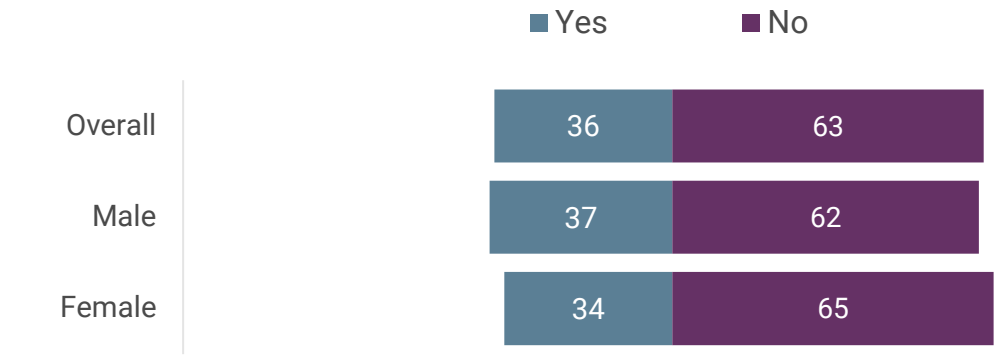
Question: Who first introduced you to fishing?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

About one third (36%) of those who have ever hunted have received formal instruction or training in hunting.

Most have not received formal instruction or training in hunting.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who have ever hunted



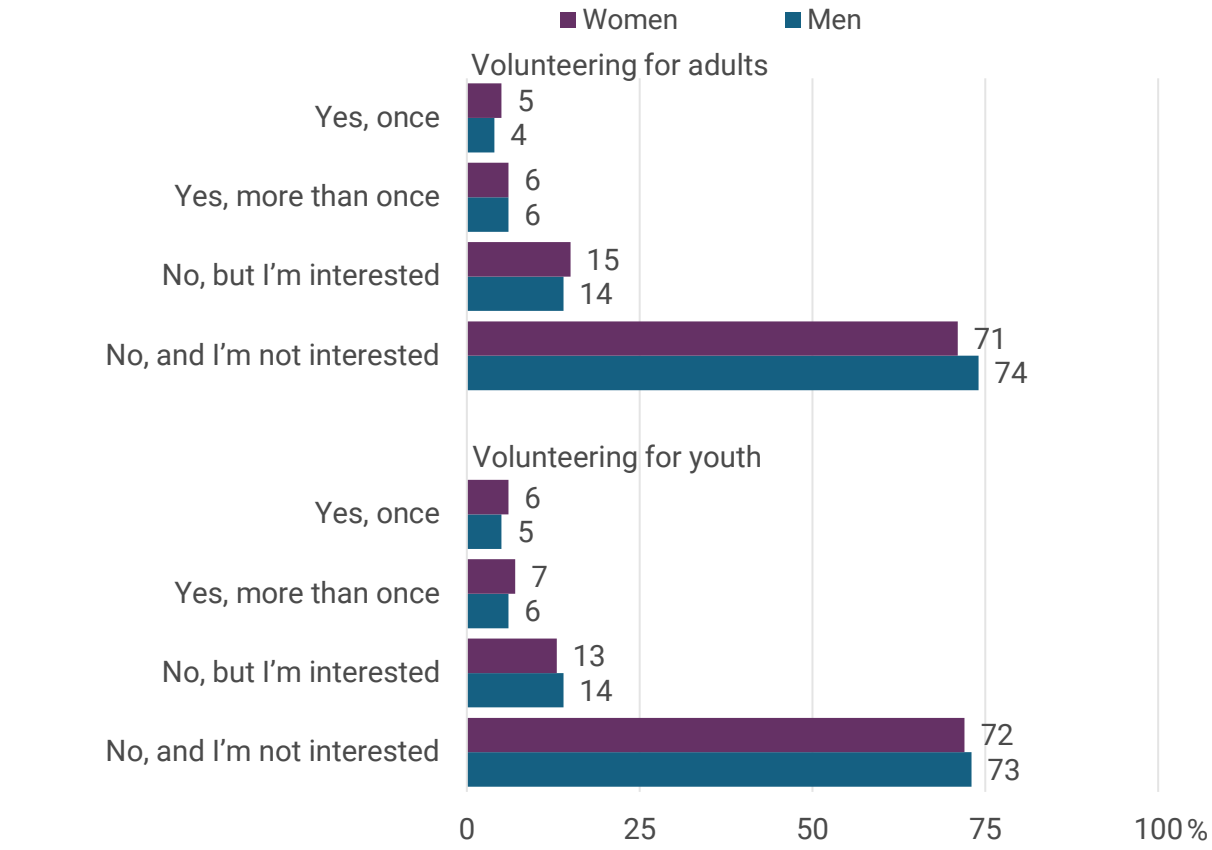
Question: Have you ever received formal instruction or training in hunting, such as taking a class?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Six percent of those who have hunted before have volunteered for a structured program that instructs young people about hunting more than once, and another 5% volunteered once. Fourteen percent said they have not volunteered for this kind of program yet but were interested in doing so in the future. Six percent also said they volunteered for programs that instruct adults about hunting multiple times, and another 4% have done so once. Again, 14% have not done so yet but said they were interested in it.

Men and women said they volunteered at similar rates for programs that instruct young people and adults about hunting.

Participation in volunteer programs about hunting by gender.
Percent of individuals who have ever hunted



Question: Have you ever volunteered for a structured program that teaches the following groups about hunting? A structured program could include organized classes, workshops, or guided activities.
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Thirty-one percent of those who have hunted before but did not hunt last year expressed interest in continuing to hunt, even if they have not done so recently.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who have hunted before but did not hunt last year who expressed interest in continuing hunting, by demographics:

Characteristic	% interested
Total percent	**31**
Population Density of Residence	
Urban	31
Rural	31
Population Size of Residence	
Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)	
1,000,000 or more	30
250,000 to 999,999	30
50,000 to 249,999	36
Micropolitan (10,000 to 50,000)	33
Outside MSA	29
AFWA Regions	
West	27
Midwest	29
Northeast	33
Southeast	33
Age	
16 to 17 years	33
18 to 24 years	43
25 to 34 years	44

Characteristic	% interested
35 to 44 years	42
45 to 54 years	37
55 to 64 years	30
65 to 74 years	18
75 and older	15
Sex	
Male	32
Female	26
Ethnicity	
Hispanic	42
Non-Hispanic	30
Race	
White	30
African American	34
Asian American	36
All others	3
Annual Household Income	
Less than $10,000	34
$10,000 to $14,999	32
$15,000 to $24,999	31
$25,000 to $34,999	31
$35,000 to $49,999	32
$50,000 to $74,999	28

Characteristic	% interested
$75,000 to $99,999	35
$100,000 to $149,999	31
$150,000 to $199,999	27
$200,000 or more	26
Education	
Less than HS	34
High school degree	37
Some college	28
Bachelor's Degree	28
Graduate School	28

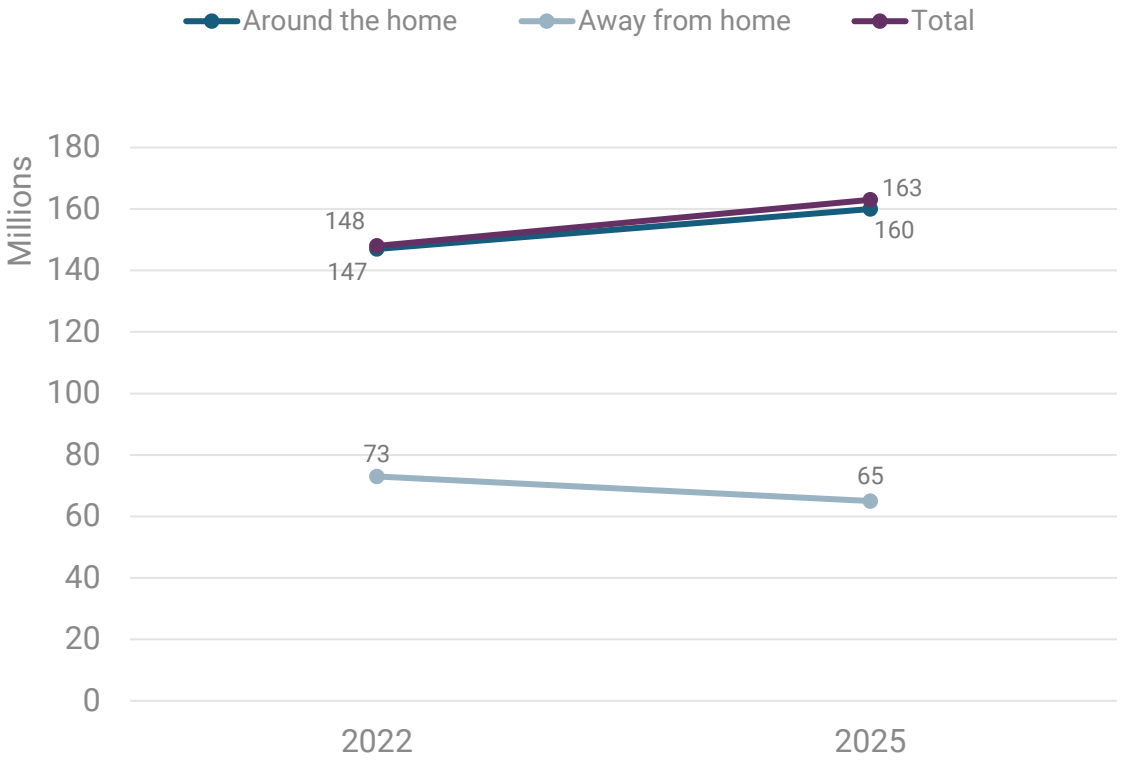
Wildlife-Watching

Overall Participation

- In 2025, 182,276,000 Americans age 6 and older participated in wildlife-watching either around the home or away from home.
- Focusing on those age 16 and older, 59%, or 162,785,000 Americans, participated in wildlife-watching around the home or away from home in 2025. This represents a 9% increase in participation compared with the 148,280,000 who watched wildlife in 2022.
    - Detailed demographic breakdowns of participants in wildlife-watching in 2025 are available in Table 2 of the Appendix.
- When it comes to watching wildlife around the home, 160,361,000 Americans age 16 and older participated in 2025, representing a 9% increase from the 146,503,000 who participated in 2022.
- Looking at wildlife-watching that occurs more than a mile away from home, 65,309,000 Americans age 16 and older participated in 2025, representing an 11% decrease compared with the 73,334,000 who participated in 2022.
    - Detailed demographic breakdowns of participants in wildlife-watching around the home and away from home are available in Table 6 of the Appendix.

Participation in wildlife-watching from 2022 to 2025.

Number of individuals age 16 and older who watched wildlife in 2022 and 2025



Question: Last year, did you or your child take a special interest in wildlife around your home..., or not?; Last year, did you or your child take any trips or outings to any location more than one mile away from home within the United States for the primary purpose of observing, photographing, or feeding wildlife?

Source: NORC polls conducted May 2022 through March 2023 with 105,698 adults age 16 and older nationwide and June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults age 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

- Among those age 16 and older, 92,970,000 observed birds around their home in 2025.
- 44,426,000 Americans age 16 and older reported observing birds more than a mile away from home in 2025.

2025 Participation Details

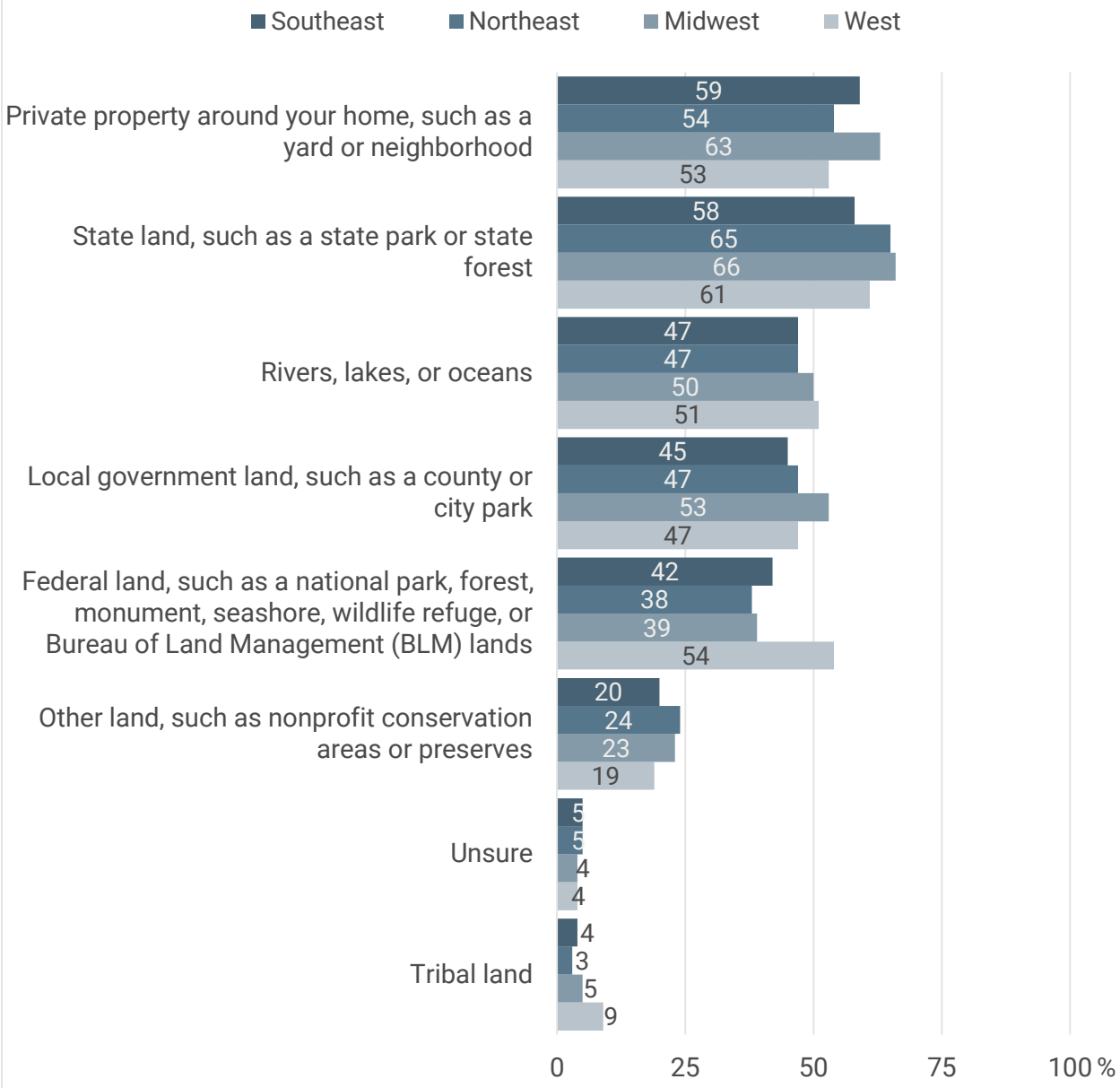
Key Things You Should Know:

Among individuals age 16 and older who watched wildlife in 2025:

- Most watched wildlife on state land (62%), private property around their home (57%), or by rivers, lakes, or oceans (49%).
- Few participated in any kind of organized wildlife watching clubs or activities.

Among those who watched wildlife on trips or outings in 2025, state land, such as a state park or forest (62%), private property around their home, such as a yard or neighborhood (57%), and rivers, lakes, or oceans (49%) were the most common places.

Wildlife-watching location by region of the country.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who watched wildlife in 2025



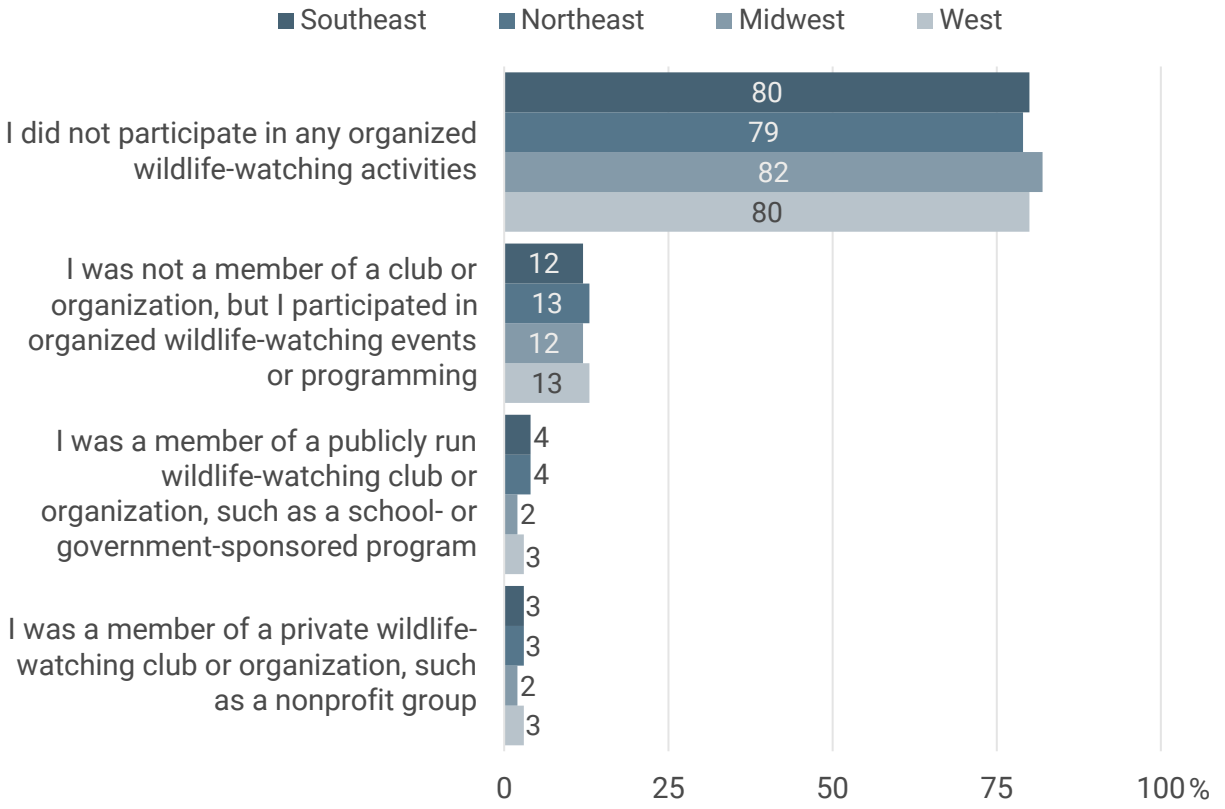
Question: Last year (from January 1 to December 31, 2025), where within the United States did you watch wildlife? *Please select all that apply.*
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Eighty percent did not participate in any organized wildlife-watching activities, while 3% participated in activities as a member of a private club last year, and 3% as a member as a publicly run club.

Participation in organized wildlife-watching activities like clubs or events by region.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who watched wildlife in 2025



Question: Last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025), did you participate in any of the following organized wildlife-watching activities? *Please select all that apply.*
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

2025 Species Results

Key Things You Should Know:

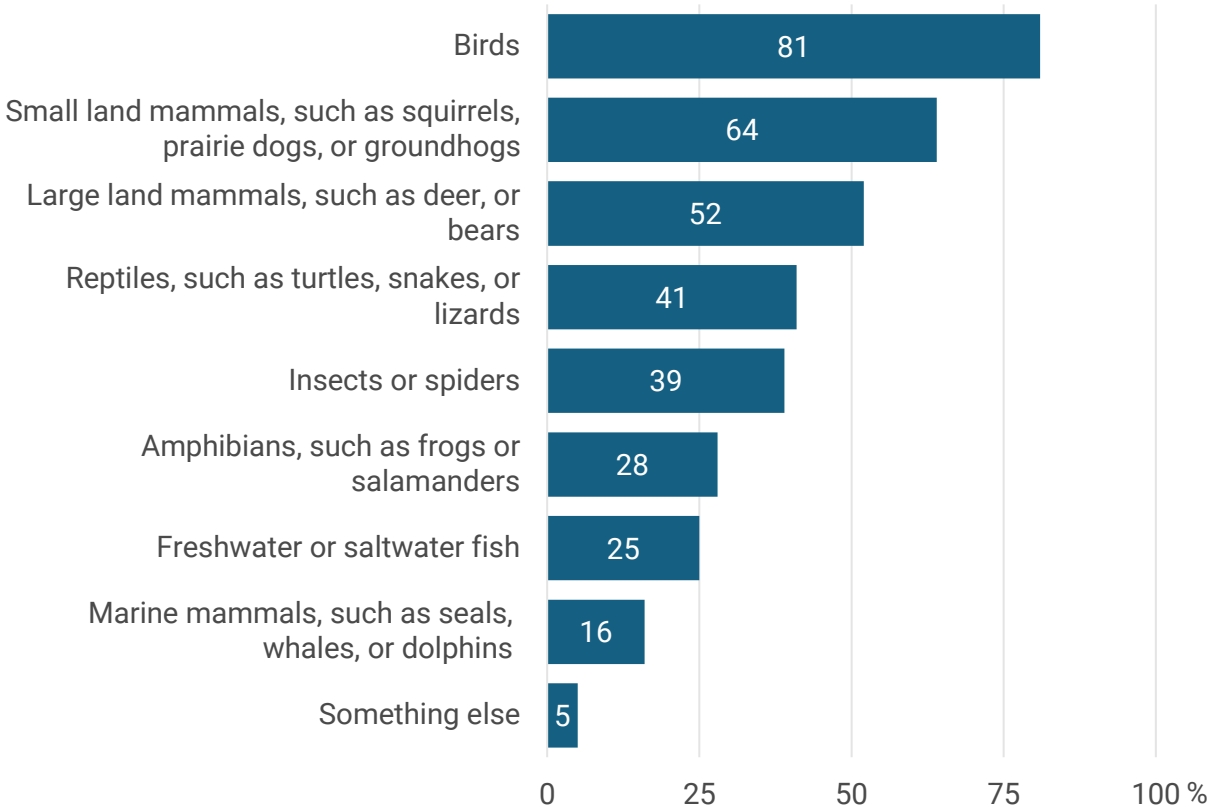
- Among individuals age 16 and older who watched wildlife in 2025, the most common wildlife observed in 2025 was birds (81%), and small (64%) and large land mammals (52%).

- Among those who observed birds around their home, songbirds (83%) and birds of prey (75%) were the most commonly observed. They were also the most common types observed away from home (71% and 76%, respectively).

Birds (81%), small land mammals, such as squirrels, prairie dogs, or groundhogs (64%), and large land mammals, such as deer or bears (52%) were the most common wildlife observed.

Birds and small and large land mammals were the most common wildlife species observed in 2025.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who observed wildlife in 2025



Question: While observing wildlife around your home or on trips last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025), did you observe any of the following types of animals? *Please select all that apply.*

Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Among individuals age 16 and older who watched wildlife in 2025, birds were most commonly observed in all regions. Small land mammals were also commonly observed in all regions.

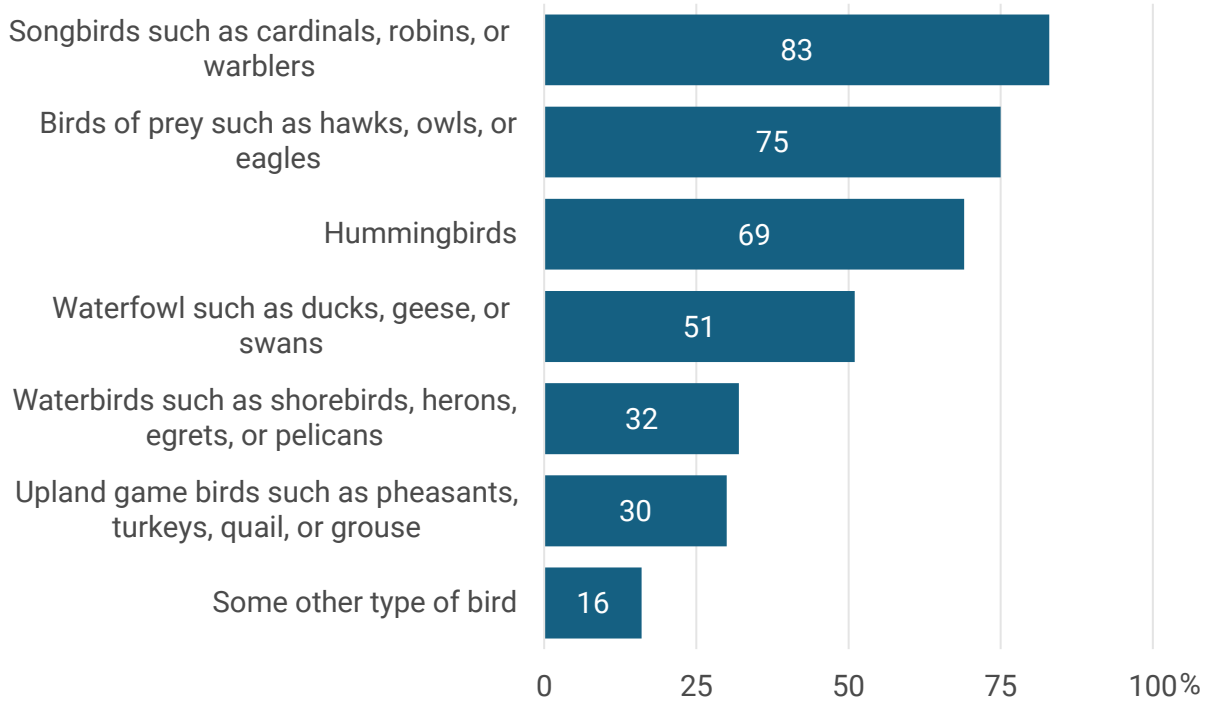
Percent of top five species observed by region:

West	Midwest	Northeast	Southeast
Birds (81%)	Birds (83%)	Birds (83%)	Birds (81%)
Small land mammals (61%)	Small land mammals (70%)	Small land mammals (65%)	Small land mammals (63%)
Large land mammals (44%)	Large land mammals (61%)	Large land mammals (57%)	Reptiles, such as turtles (50%)
Reptiles (40%)	Insects or spiders (40%)	Insects or spiders (35%)	Large land mammals (49%)
Insects or spiders (39%)	Reptiles (34%)	Reptiles (33%)	Insects or spiders (40%)

Among those who watched birds around their home in 2025, songbirds such as cardinals, robins, or warblers (83%), birds of prey such as hawks, owls, or eagles (75%), and hummingbirds (69%) were common bird species observed.

Songbirds, birds of prey, and hummingbirds were most commonly observed around the home in 2025.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who observed birds at home in 2025



Question: While observing birds around your home last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025), did you observe any of the following types of birds? *Please select all that apply.*
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

The most common bird species observed near people's homes in the Midwest, Northeast, and Southeast were songbirds. In the West, it was hummingbirds.

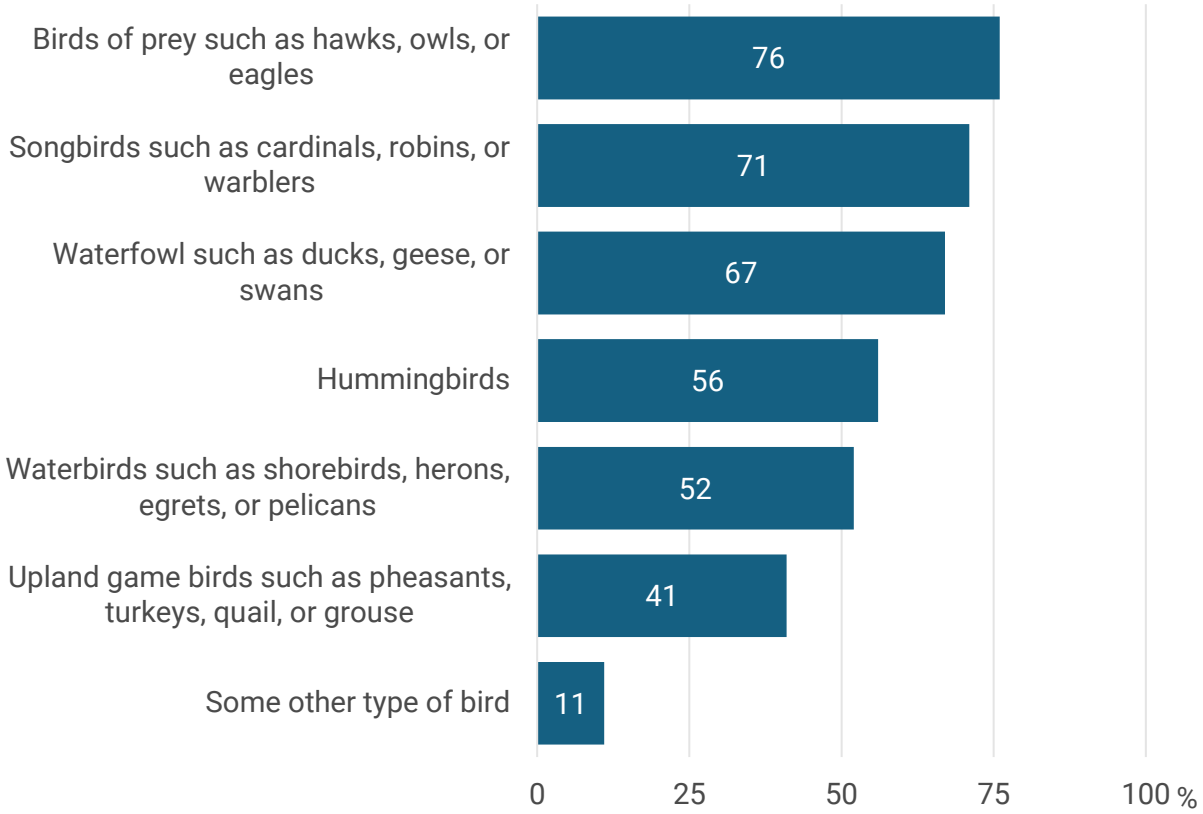
Percent of top five bird species observed near home by region:

West	Midwest	Northeast	Southeast
Hummingbirds (79%)	Songbirds (90%)	Songbirds (85%)	Songbirds (84%)
Birds of prey (75%)	Birds of prey (76%)	Birds of prey (73%)	Birds of prey (75%)
Songbirds (71%)	Hummingbirds (69%)	Hummingbirds (61%)	Hummingbirds (67%)
Waterfowl (46%)	Waterfowl (58%)	Waterfowl (51%)	Waterfowl (49%)
Upland game birds (31%)	Upland game birds (38%)	Upland game birds (35%)	Water birds (34%)

On trips or outings in 2025, birds of prey such as hawks, owls, or eagles (76%), songbirds such as cardinals, robins, or warblers (71%), and waterfowl such as ducks, geese, or swans (67%) were most commonly observed.

Birds of prey, songbirds, and waterfowls were most commonly observed away from home in 2025.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who observed birds away from home in 2025



Question: On any of your trips last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025), did you observe any of the following types of birds? *Please select all that apply.*
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

The most common birds observed away from home in all regions were birds of prey. Songbirds were also commonly observed by residents of the Midwest, the Northeast, and the Southeast.

Percent of top five bird species observed away from home by region:

West	Midwest	Northeast	Southeast
Birds of prey (77%)	Birds of prey (80%)	Birds of prey (73%)	Birds of prey (75%)
Hummingbirds (66%)	Songbirds (78%)	Songbirds (72%)	Songbirds (72%)
Songbirds (64%)	Waterfowl (70%)	Waterfowl (67%)	Waterfowl (66%)
Waterfowl (64%)	Hummingbirds (56%)	Water birds (51%)	Water birds (54%)
Water birds (49%)	Water birds (54%)	Hummingbirds (51%)	Hummingbirds (53%)

Results to Inform Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation Efforts

Key Things You Should Know:

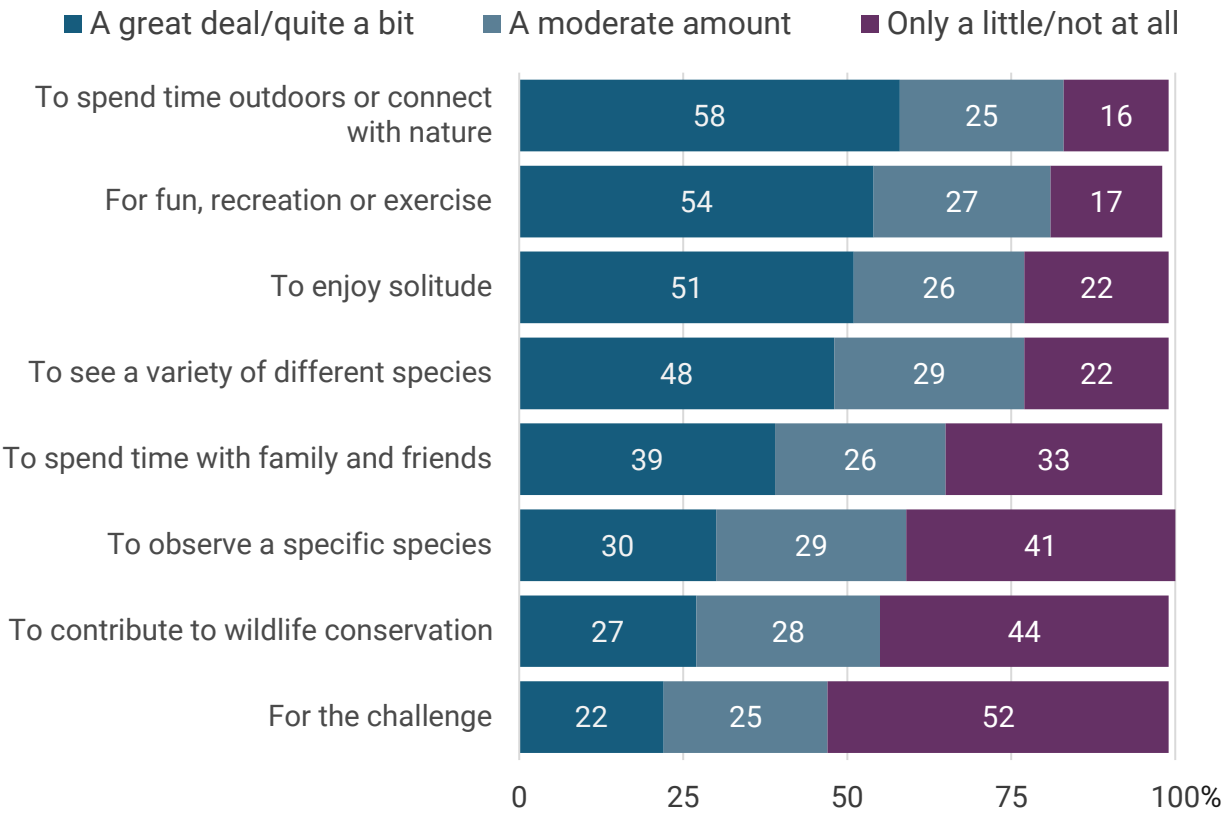
Among individuals 16 and older who have ever watched wildlife:

- The most common motivators were the ability to spend time outdoors, having fun, recreation, or exercise, or enjoying the solitude. Another popular motivator was to see a variety of distinct species.
- Lack of time, distance to preferred places to watch wildlife, and the cost of equipment and travel were barriers most often cited.
- Roughly half of those who watched wildlife or birds in 2025 identified themselves as wildlife-watchers or birdwatchers some or a lot.
- Most started wildlife-watching before turning 18 and were introduced by a parent or guardian or started by themselves.

Among those who have ever watched wildlife, spending time outdoors or connecting with nature (58%), having fun, recreation, or exercise (54%), or enjoying solitude (51%) were the most common motivations.

Many were motivated to watch wildlife to spend time outdoors, for fun, and to enjoy the solitude.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who ever watched wildlife

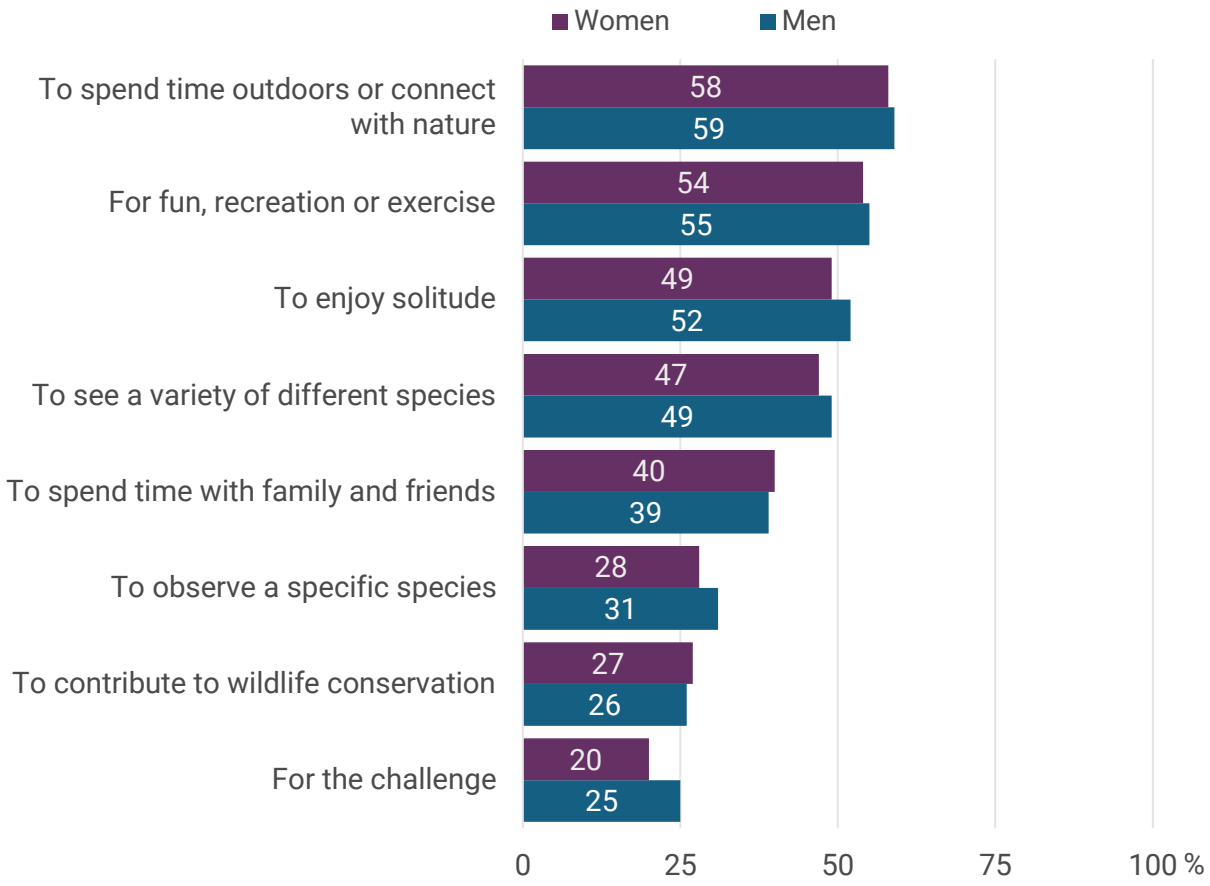


Question: How much, if at all, do each of the following motivate you to watch wildlife?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults age 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Six in 10 of both men (59%) and women (58%) said reasons to watch wildlife were to spend time outdoors or connect with nature. They were also motivated for fun, recreation, or exercise (55% of men and 54% of women).

Motivations for wildlife-watching by gender.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who have ever watched wildlife who say the



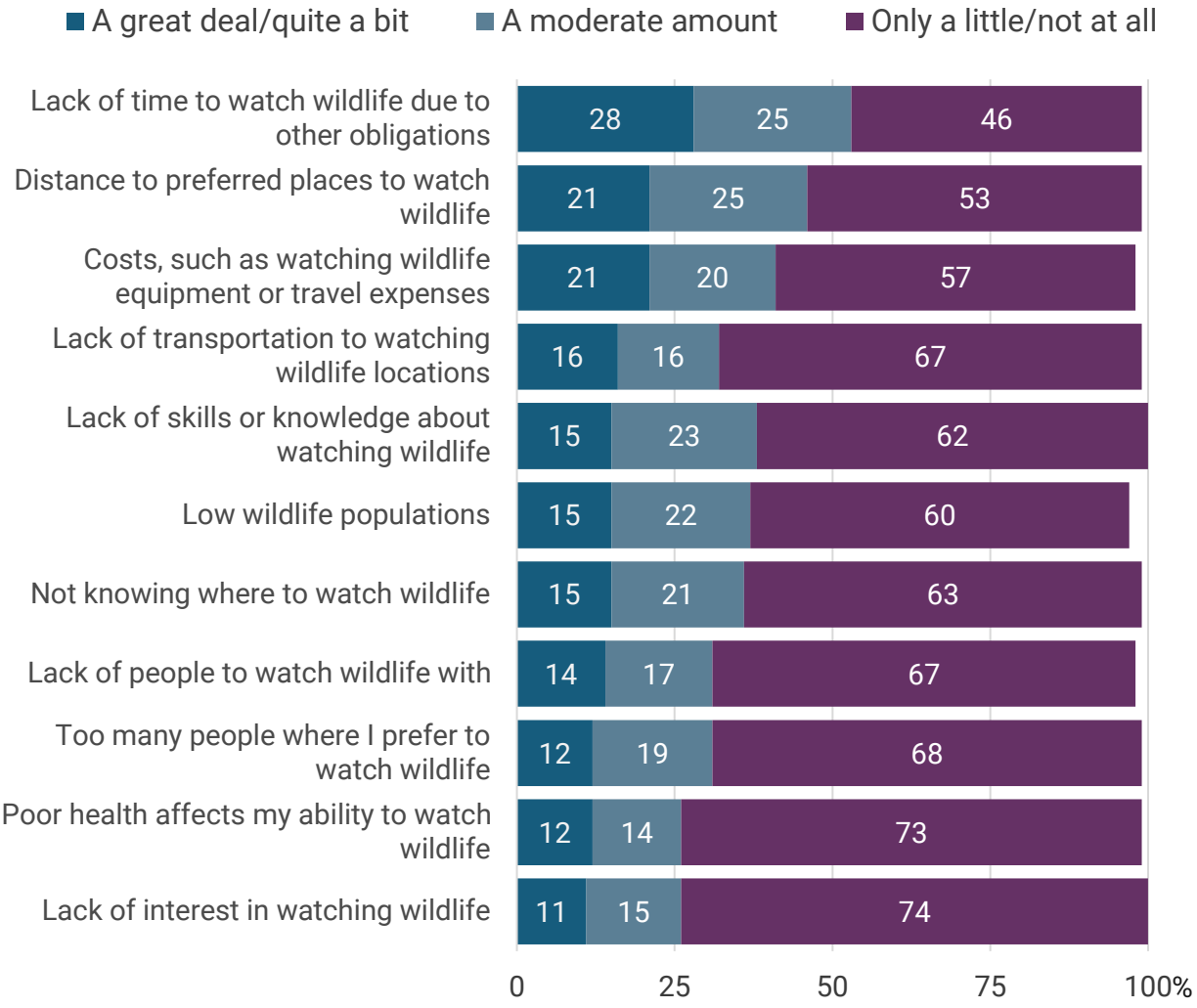
Question: How much, if at all, do each of the following motivate you to watch wildlife?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Lack of time to watch wildlife (28%), distance to preferred places to watch wildlife (21%), and wildlife-watching related costs, such as equipment or travel expenses (21%) were the most common barriers for wildlife-watching.

Lack of time, distance, and cost were the most cited barriers to wildlife-watching.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who ever watched wildlife

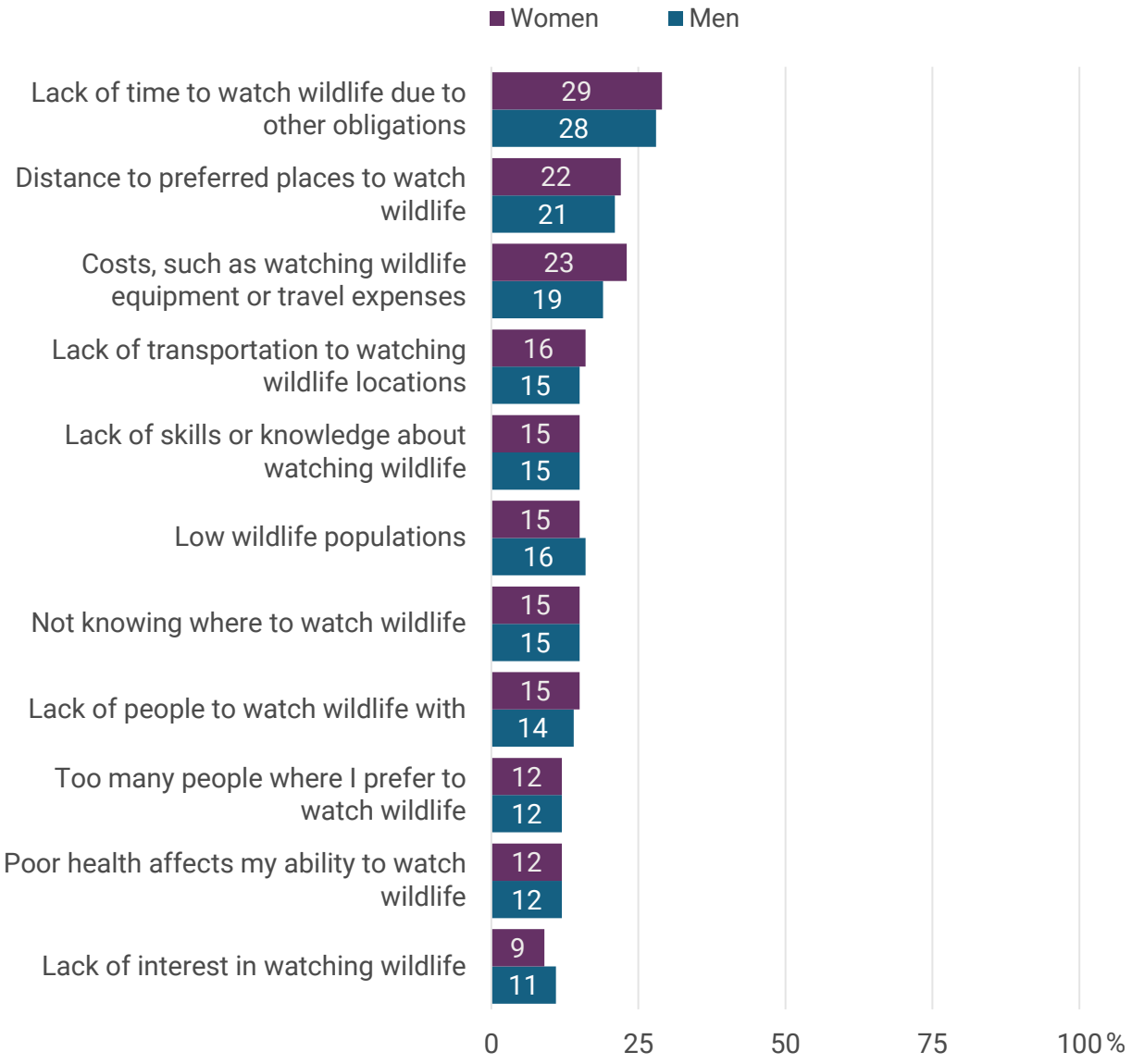


Question: How much, if at all, do each of the following prevent you from watching wildlife?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults aged 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Both men and women cited lack of time (28% and 29%) and distance (21% and 22%) most often as barriers to watching wildlife.

Barriers to wildlife-watching by gender.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who have ever watched wildlife who say the following prevented them a great deal or quite a bit



Question: How much, if at all, do each of the following prevent you from watching wildlife?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

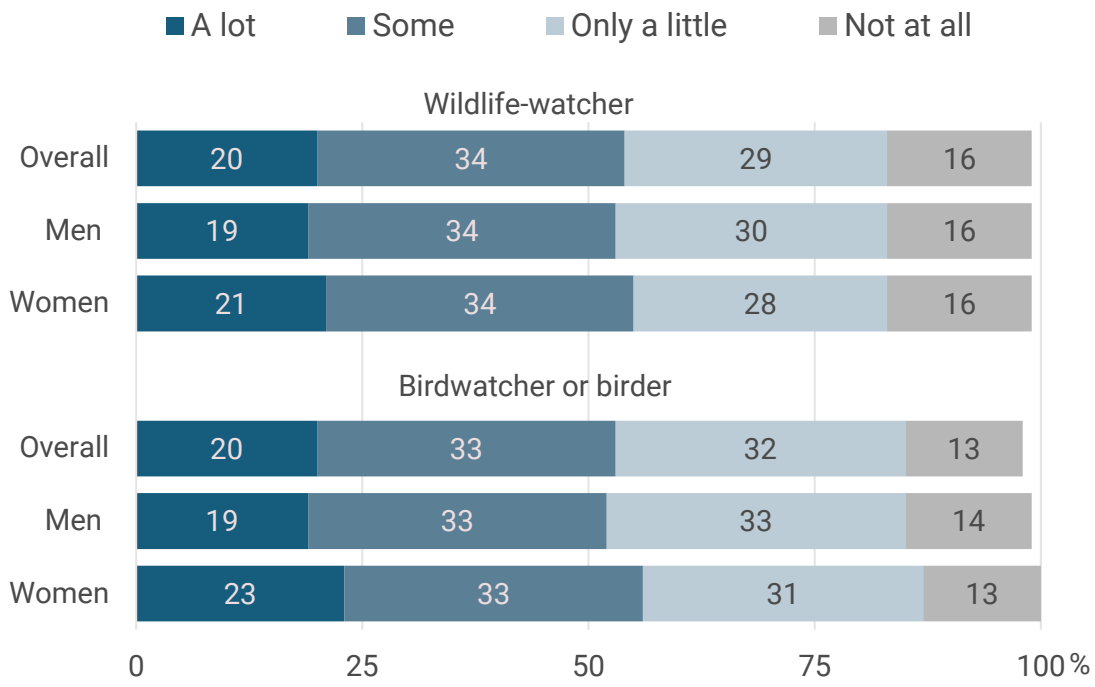
NORC

Twenty percent of those who watched wildlife in 2025 identified as wildlife-watcher a lot, 34% identified some, 29% identified only a little, and 16% did not identify as a wildlife-watcher at all.

Twenty percent identified as a birdwatcher or birder a lot, 33% identified some, 32% identified only a little, and 13% did not identify as a birdwatcher at all.

About 2 in 10 men and women identified themselves a lot as a wildlife watcher or a birdwatcher or birder.

Individuals who identify as a wildlife-watcher or birdwatcher or birder by gender.



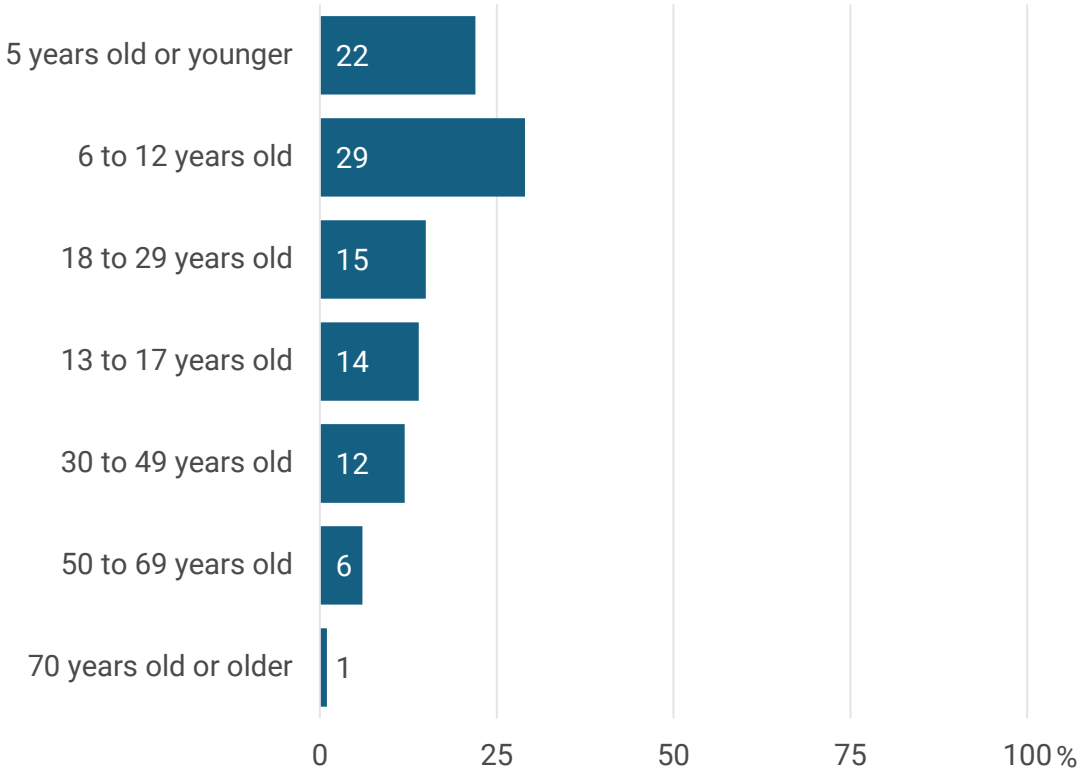
Question: Now that we have asked about your participation in a variety of activities, to what extent do you identify as each of the following?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Twenty-nine percent who have ever watched wildlife first started from age 6 to 12, and 22% were 5 years old or younger. Fifteen percent started watching wildlife from age 18 to 29, and another 14% started from age 13 to 17. Twelve percent said they started when they were age 30 to 49. Few started at age 50 or older.

Among those who ever have watched wildlife, half started at 12 years old or younger.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who ever went wildlife-watching

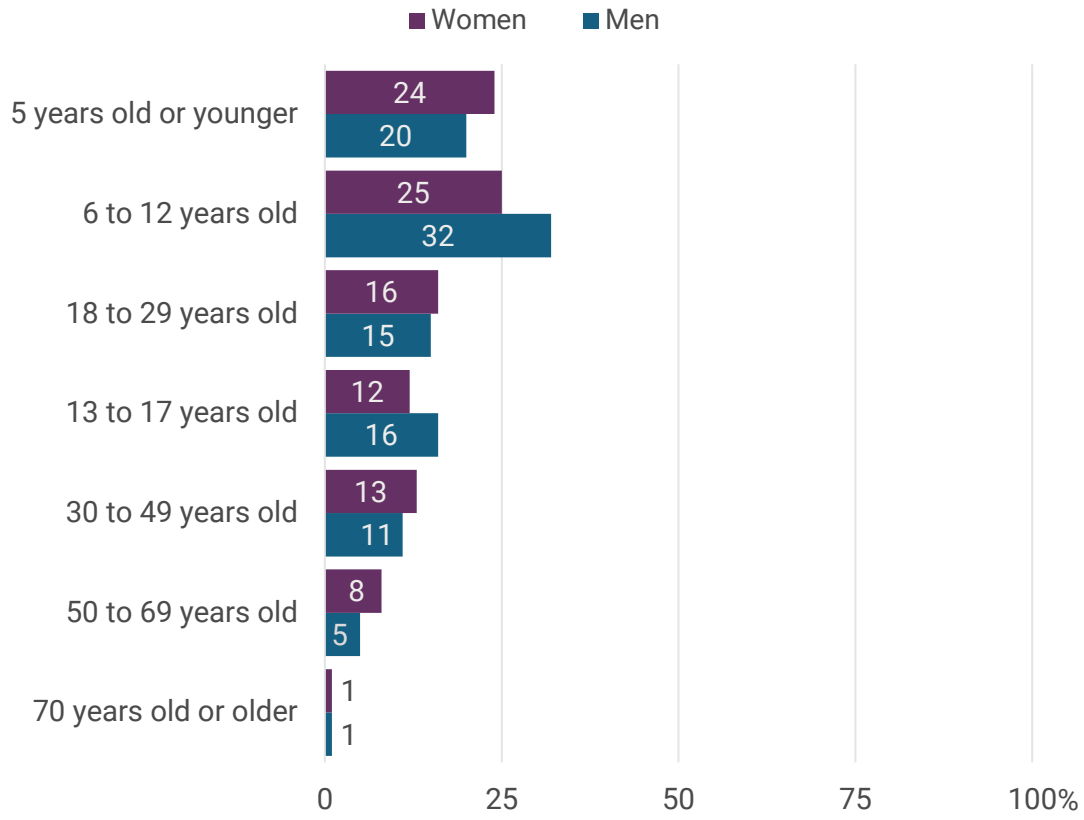


Question: About how old were you when you first started watching wildlife?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

A quarter (25%) of women started watching wildlife at age 6 to 12, and another 24% at 5 years old or younger. A third of men (32%) started watching wildlife at age 6 to 12.

Age men and women first started watching wildlife.
Percent of adults age 16 and older who started watching wildlife at the following ages

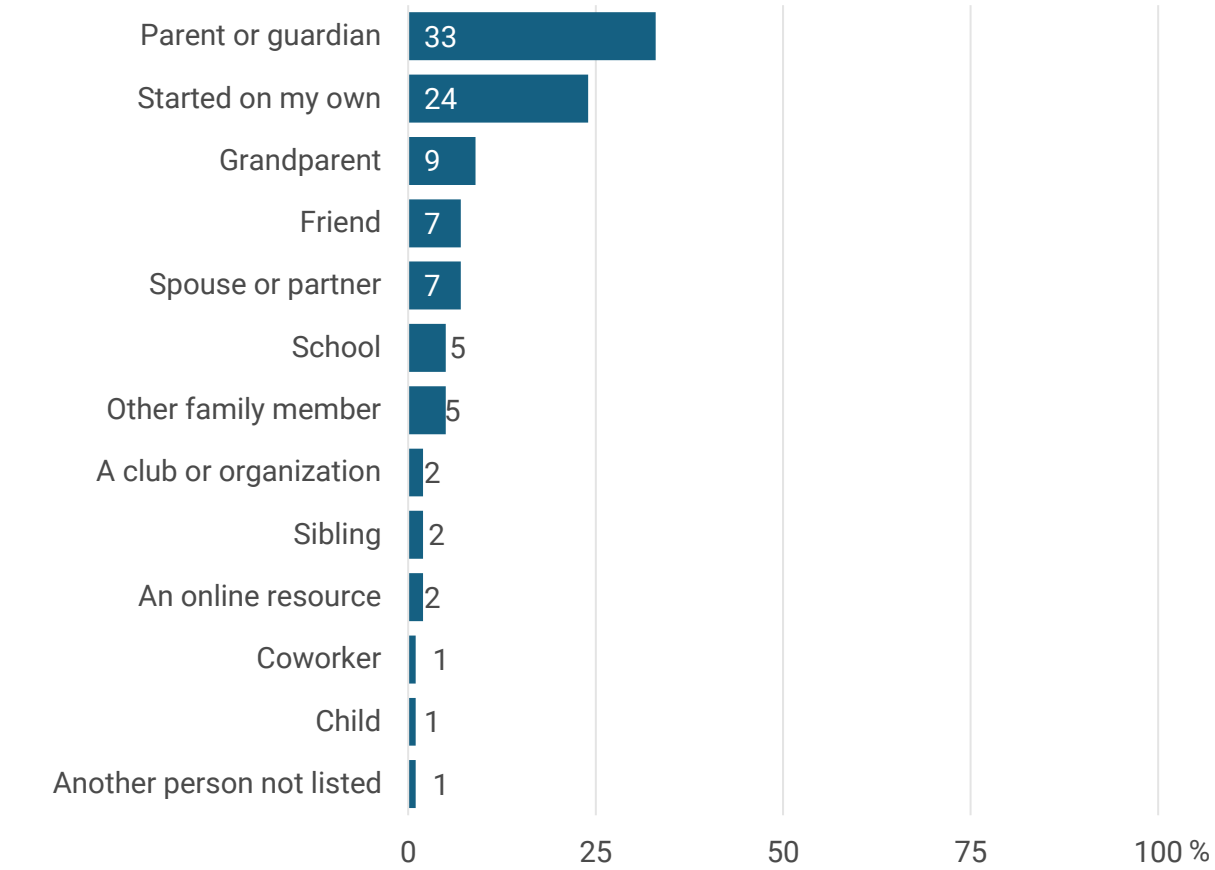


Question: About how old were you when you first started wildlife-watching?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

A third (33%) were first introduced to wildlife watching by a parent or guardian, and 24% started on their own. Nine percent were first introduced by a grandparent, and 7% by a spouse or partner or a friend. Few were introduced by any other group or resource.

A third were introduced to wildlife-watching by a parent or guardian.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who ever participated in wildlife-watching

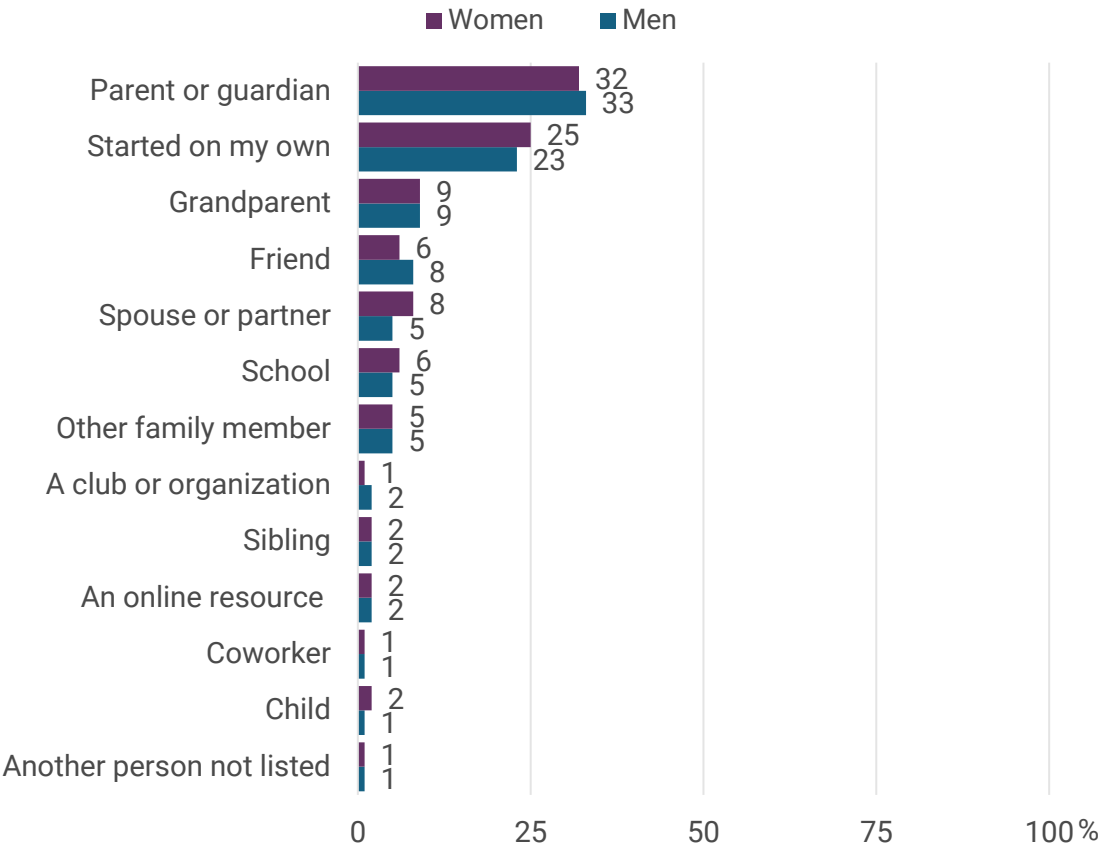


Question: Who first introduced you to wildlife-watching?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

A third of both men (33%) and women (32%) were introduced to wildlife watching by a parent or guardian. A quarter of men (23%) and women (25%) started on their own.

Who introduced wildlife-watchers to the activity by gender.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who have ever watched wildlife



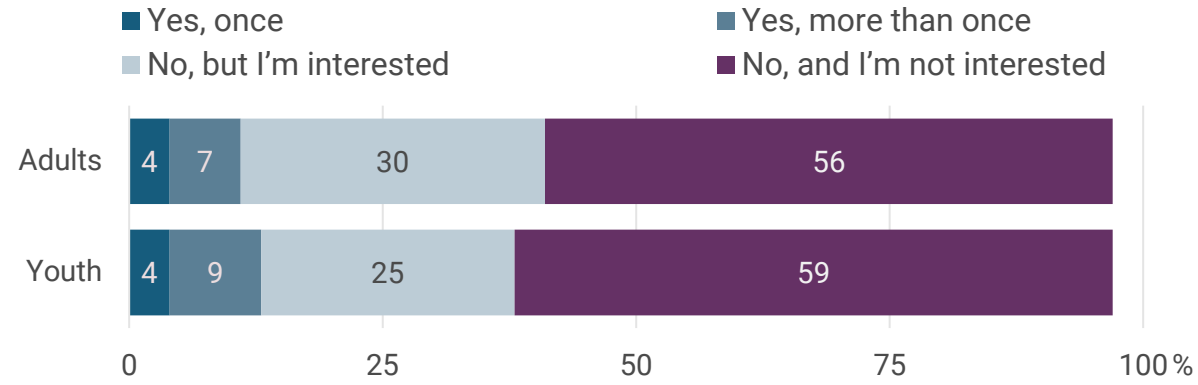
Question: Who first introduced you to wildlife-watching?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Most have not volunteered for a structured program that instructs adults (56%) or youth (59%) about wildlife watching. Twenty-five percent said they have not volunteered for a structured program for young people, but would be interested in doing so, and 30% said the same about a program for adults. Few said they have volunteered for either adult or youth programs at any time.

Many have not volunteered for a structure program about wildlife-watching but some have interest.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who have ever participated in wildlife-watching

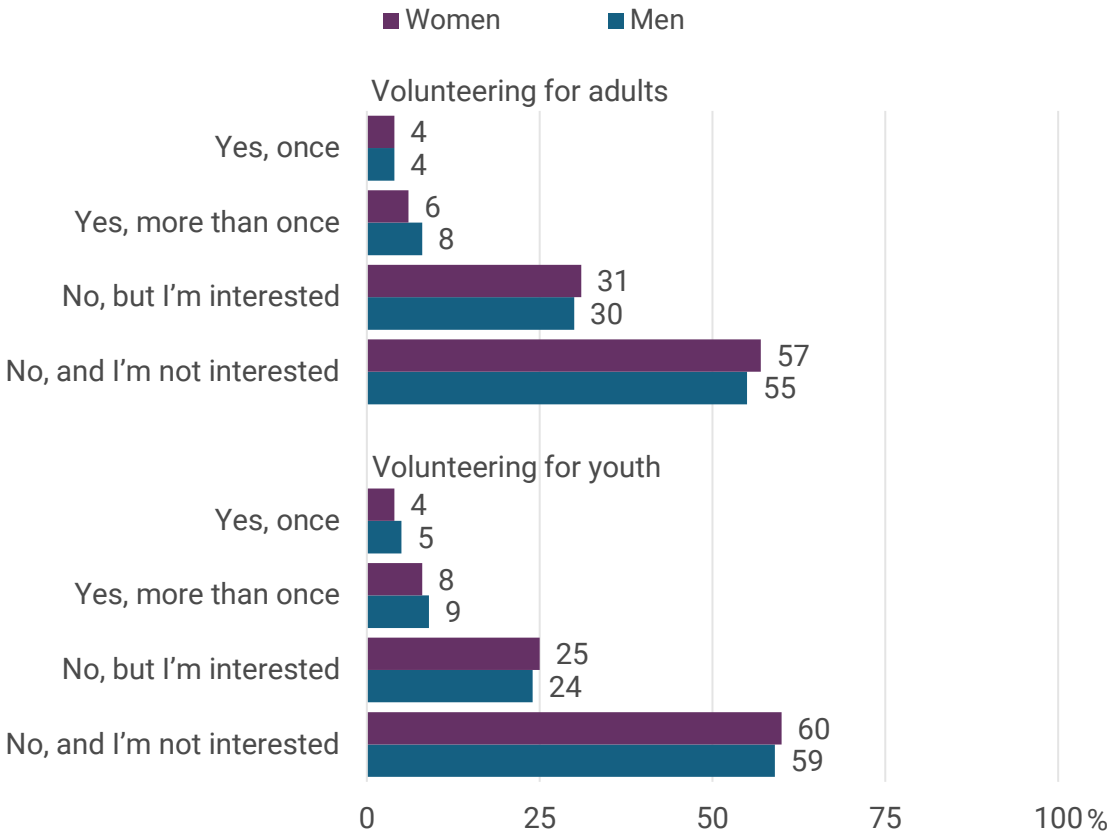


Question: Have you ever volunteered for a structured program that teaches the following groups about wildlife-watching? A structured program could include organized classes, workshops, or guided activities.
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Roughly 6 in 10 of both men and women have never volunteered for a wildlife-watching program nor do they have interest in doing so for youth (55% and 57%) or adults (59% and 60%).

Participation in volunteer programs about wildlife-watching by gender.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who have ever watched wildlife



Question: Have you ever volunteered for a structured program that teaches the following groups about wildlife-watching? A structured program could include organized classes, workshops, or guided activities.
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Of those who have watched wildlife but did not participate in 2025, 48% said they would be interested in continuing, even if they had not done so recently. Of those who did not participate in birdwatching in 2025, 35% said they would be interested in continuing birdwatching, even if they had not done so recently.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who are interested in continuing wildlife-watching, even if they have not done so in the last year, by demographics:

Characteristic	% interested
Total percent	48
Population Density of Residence	
Urban	49
Rural	48
Population Size of Residence	
Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)	
1,000,000 or more	48
250,000 to 999,999	48
50,000 to 249,999	48
Micropolitan (10,000 to 50,000)	50
Outside MSA	47
AFWA Regions	
West	51
Midwest	48
Northeast	48
Southeast	46
Age	
16 to 17 years	30
18 to 24 years	40
25 to 34 years	45
35 to 44 years	45

Characteristic	% interested
45 to 54 years	51
55 to 64 years	56
65 to 74 years	63
75 and older	52
Sex	
Male	47
Female	49
Ethnicity	
Hispanic	44
Non-Hispanic	49
Race	
White	52
African American	33
Asian American	44
All others	42
Annual Household Income	
Less than $10,000	37
$10,000 to $14,999	47
$15,000 to $24,999	48
$25,000 to $34,999	42
$35,000 to $49,999	51
$50,000 to $74,999	48
$75,000 to $99,999	53

Characteristic	% interested
$100,000 to $149,999	49
$150,000 to $199,999	51
$200,000 or more	58
Education	
Less than HS	33
High school degree	42
Some college	52
Bachelor's Degree	54
Graduate School	63

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who are interested in continuing birdwatching or birding, even if they have not done so in the last year, by demographics:

Characteristic	% interested
Total percent	35
Population Density of Residence	
Urban	39
Rural	34
Population Size of Residence	
Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)	
1,000,000 or more	36
250,000 to 999,999	33
50,000 to 249,999	31
Micropolitan (10,000 to 50,000)	33
Outside MSA	36
AFWA Regions	
West	34
Midwest	36
Northeast	36
Southeast	34
Age	
16 to 17 years	21
18 to 24 years	34
25 to 34 years	37

Characteristic	% interested
35 to 44 years	33
45 to 54 years	36
55 to 64 years	38
65 to 74 years	36
75 and older	32
Sex	
Male	33
Female	38
Ethnicity	
Hispanic	37
Non-Hispanic	34
Race	
White	35
African American	34
Asian American	35
All others	28
Annual Household Income	
Less than $10,000	34
$10,000 to $14,999	33
$15,000 to $24,999	37
$25,000 to $34,999	37
$35,000 to $49,999	38
$50,000 to $74,999	35

Characteristic	% interested
$75,000 to $99,999	35
$100,000 to $149,999	33
$150,000 to $199,999	30
$200,000 or more	33
Education	
Less than HS	33
High school degree	32
Some college	37
Bachelor's Degree	35
Graduate School	37

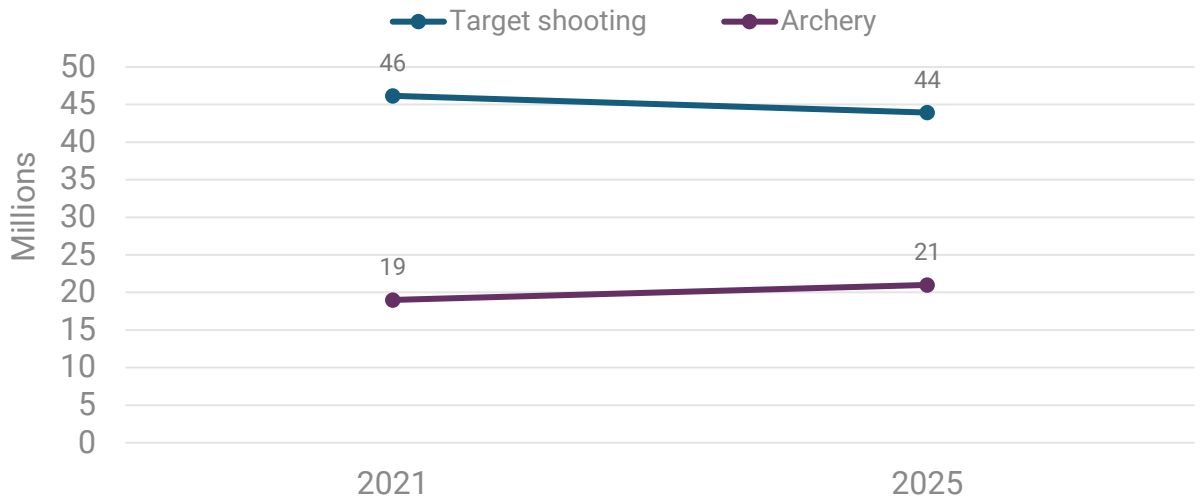
Target Shooting and Archery

Overall Participation

- In 2025, 43,932,000 Americans age 6 and older participated in target shooting with a firearm. This represents a 5% decrease in participation compared with the 46,167,000 who participated in target shooting with a firearm in 2021.
    - Detailed age breakdowns of participants in target shooting in 2025 are available in Table I-1 of the Appendix.
- In 2025, 20,744,000 Americans age 6 and older participated in archery. This represents a 10% increase in participation compared with the 18,850,000 who participated in archery in 2021.
    - Detailed age breakdowns of participants in archery in 2025 are available in Table I-1 of the Appendix.

Participation in target or sport shooting from 2021 to 2025.

Number of individuals age 16 and older who participated in target or sport shooting in 2021 and 2025



Question: Did you or your child do any target shooting or sport shooting with a firearm..., not including hunting? Please include any informal target shooting or sport shooting.; Did you or your child participate in archery activities... not including hunting? Please include any informal archery activities.

Source: NORC polls conducted January 7-April 25, 2022 with 42,340 adults age 18 and older nationwide and June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults age 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

2025 Participation Details

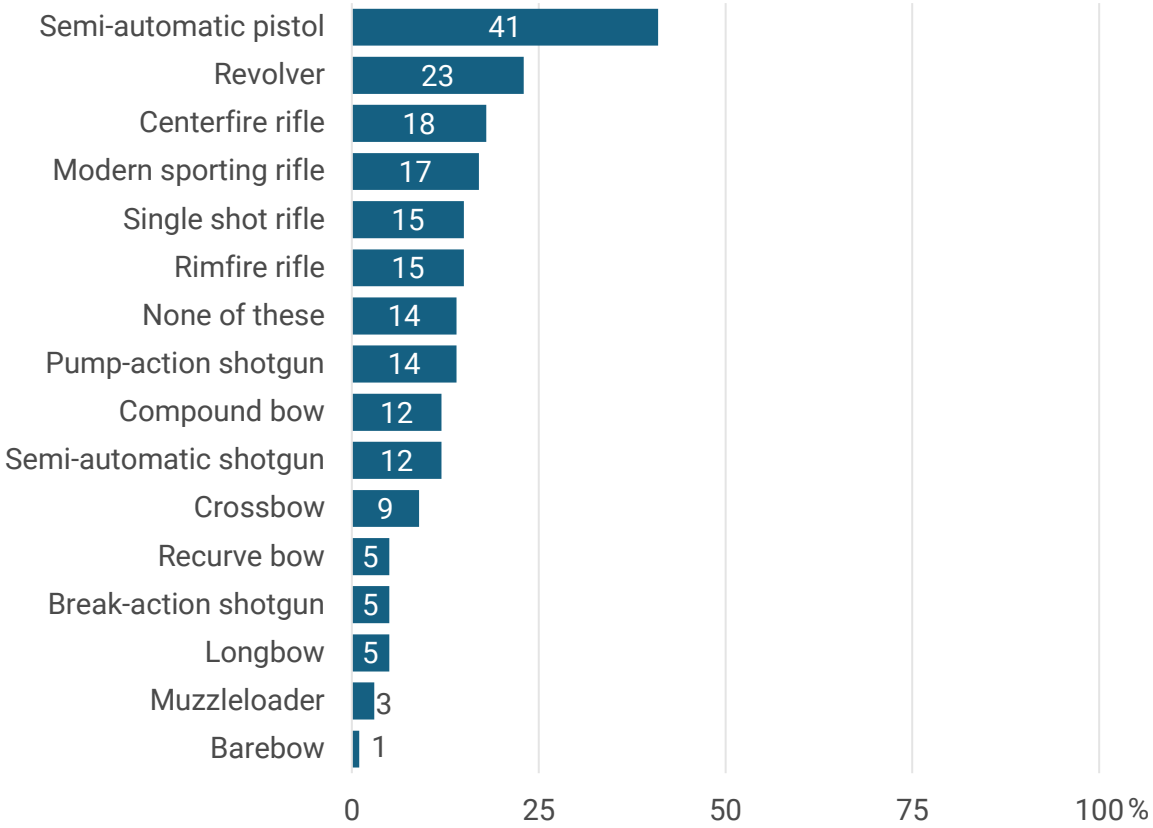
Key Things You Should Know:

Among individuals age 16 and older who participated in target shooting or archery last year:

- Sixty-three percent of those who participated in target shooting in 2025 also participated in hunting in 2025.
- Eighty-three percent of big game hunters and 37% of small game hunters also participated in target shooting in 2025. And 17% of migratory bird hunters and 17% of other animal hunters participated in target shooting in 2025.
- A semi-automatic pistol was the most common form of equipment used in target shooting last year.
- Few who participated in target shooting did so through an organized club.
- The average one-way travel distance, in miles, to the shooting range visited most often was 20 miles.
- Four in 10 reported using the shooting range closest to their home, while 2 in 10 said they preferred to travel further away to a different range.
- However, proximity to home was the most common characteristic mentioned when determining which target range to use.
- Participants spent an average of 3 hours at the shooting range per visit.
- About half participated in target shooting year-round, not just during hunting season.
- Most participated for fun or enjoyment.

Among individuals age 16 and older who participated in target shooting or archery in 2025, semi-automatic pistols (41%), revolvers (23%), and centerfire rifles (18%) were the most common types of equipment used.

Four in 10 target shooters used a semi-automatic pistol in 2025.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who participated in target shooting or archery



Question: Last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025), what types of equipment did you use when target shooting? *Please select all that apply.*
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

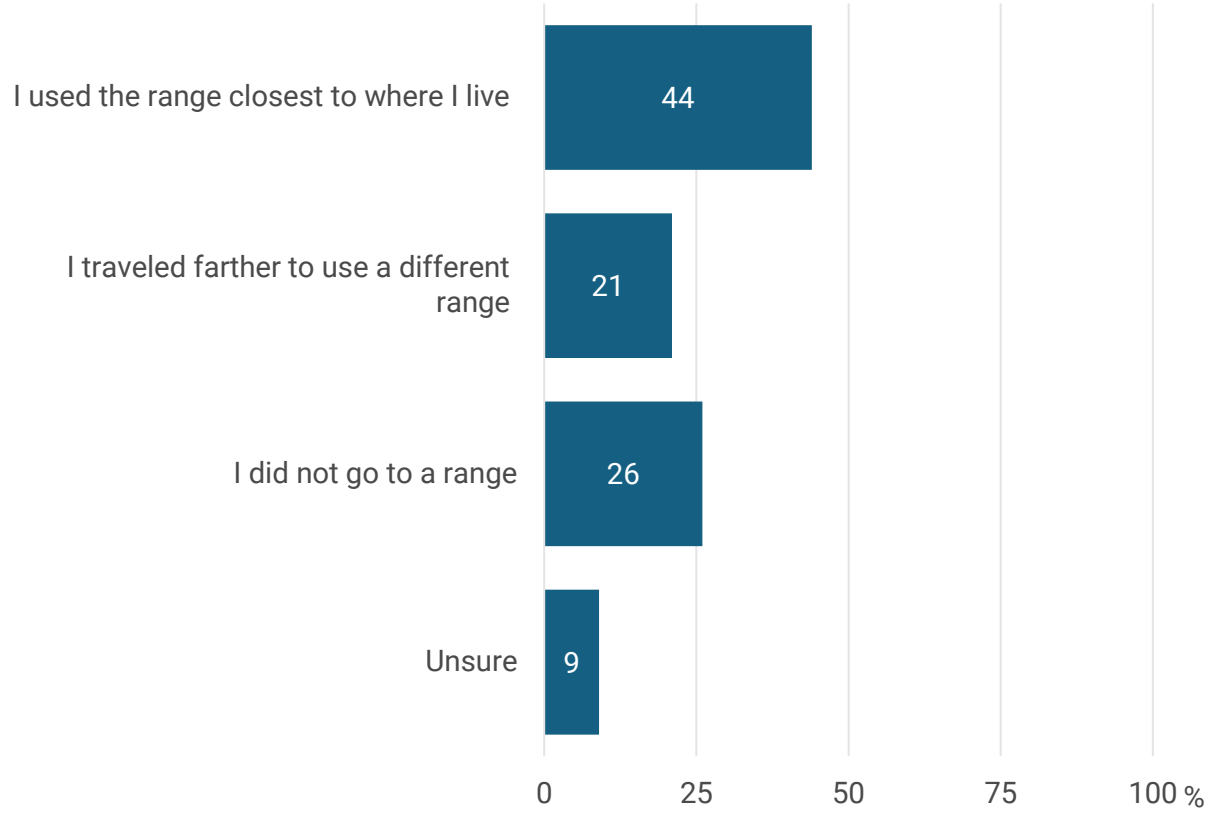
Among those who participated in target shooting or archery in 2025, public outdoor ranges (26%), and public indoor ranges (20%) rank behind another type of shooting range such as private land as the most common places to target shoot.

Seventy-seven percent did not participate in any organized target shooting activities, while 5% participated in organized target shooting activities as a member of a private club last year and 6% as a member of a publicly run club.

The average one-way travel distance, in miles, to the shooting range used most often was 20 miles. Three in 10 traveled less than 5 miles to the shooting range they typically used, and 12% traveled more than 30 miles.

Forty-four percent used the range closest to where they lived in 2025, while 21% traveled farther away, and 26% did not go to a range.

Many used the target shooting range closest to where they lived.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who participated in target shooting or archery in 2025



Question: Thinking about the target shooting range you used most often last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025), did you use the range closest to where you live, or did you travel farther to use a different range?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

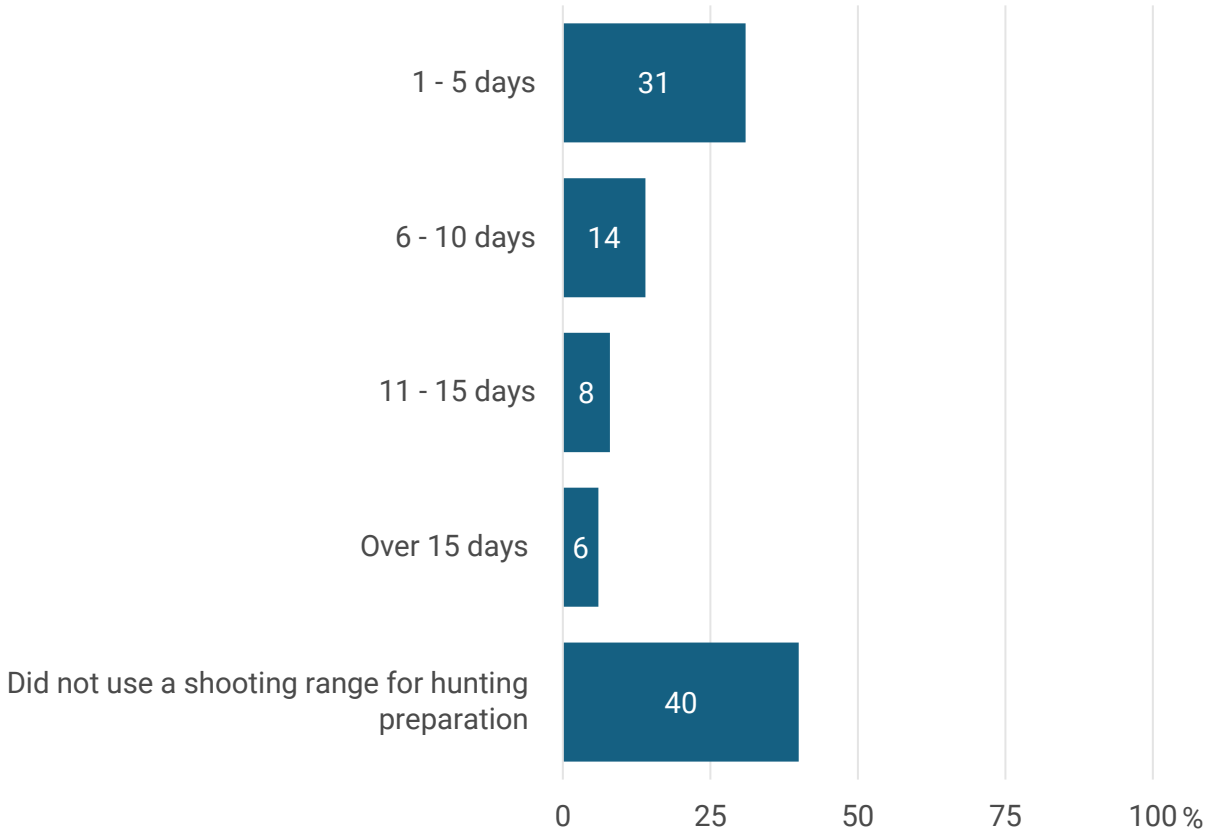
Participants typically spent an average of approximately 3 hours at the shooting range per visit.

Among hunters, 40% said they did not use a shooting range for hunting preparation and 31% said they spent 1 to 5 days at a shooting range specifically to prepare for hunting.

Fourteen percent said they spent 6 to 10 days preparing, and 8% said they prepared for 11 to 15 days. Six percent reported preparing for over 15 days.

Many either did not use a shooting range for hunting preparation, or only spent a few days preparing by using a shooting range.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who participated in hunting in 2025



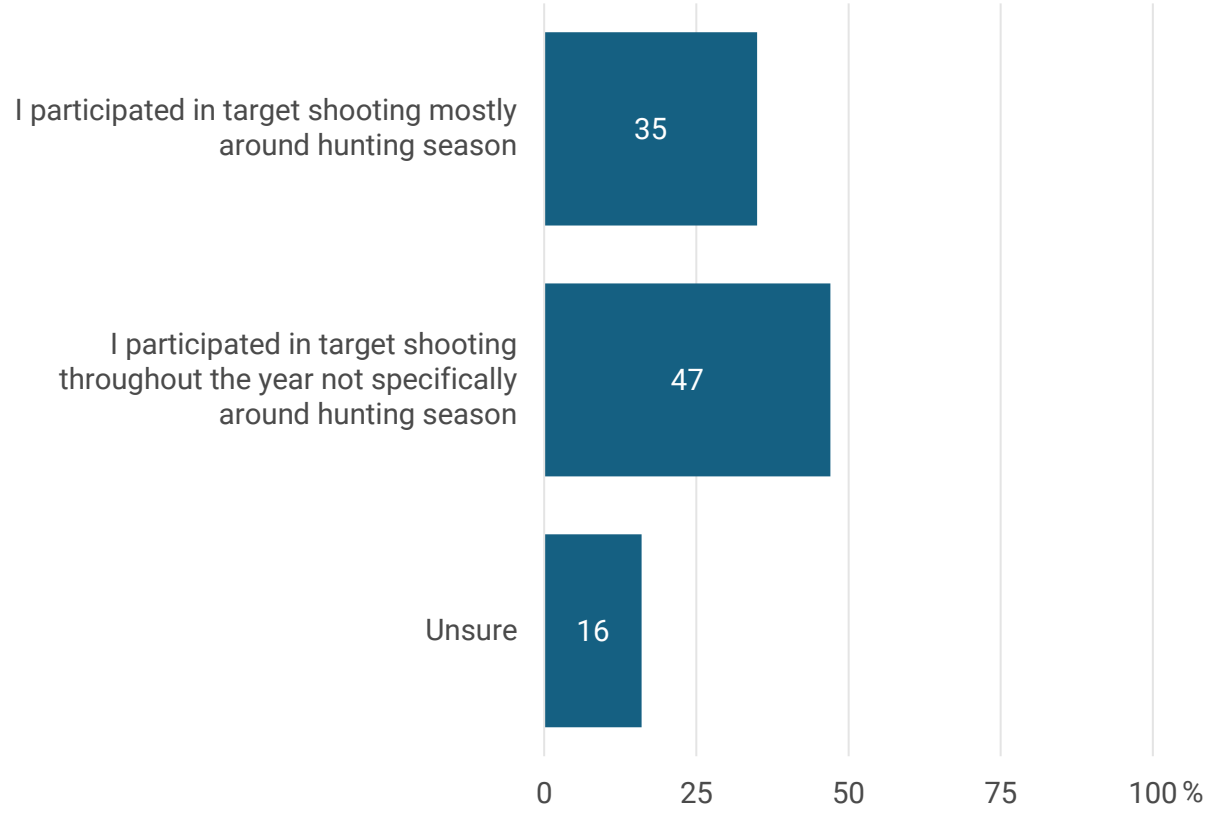
Question: Last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025), approximately how many days did you spend at a shooting range specifically to prepare for hunting?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Forty-seven percent participated in target shooting throughout the year, not just around hunting season, while 35% did so mostly around hunting season.

Many participated in target shooting throughout the year not specifically around hunting season.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who participated in target shooting or archery and hunting in 2025



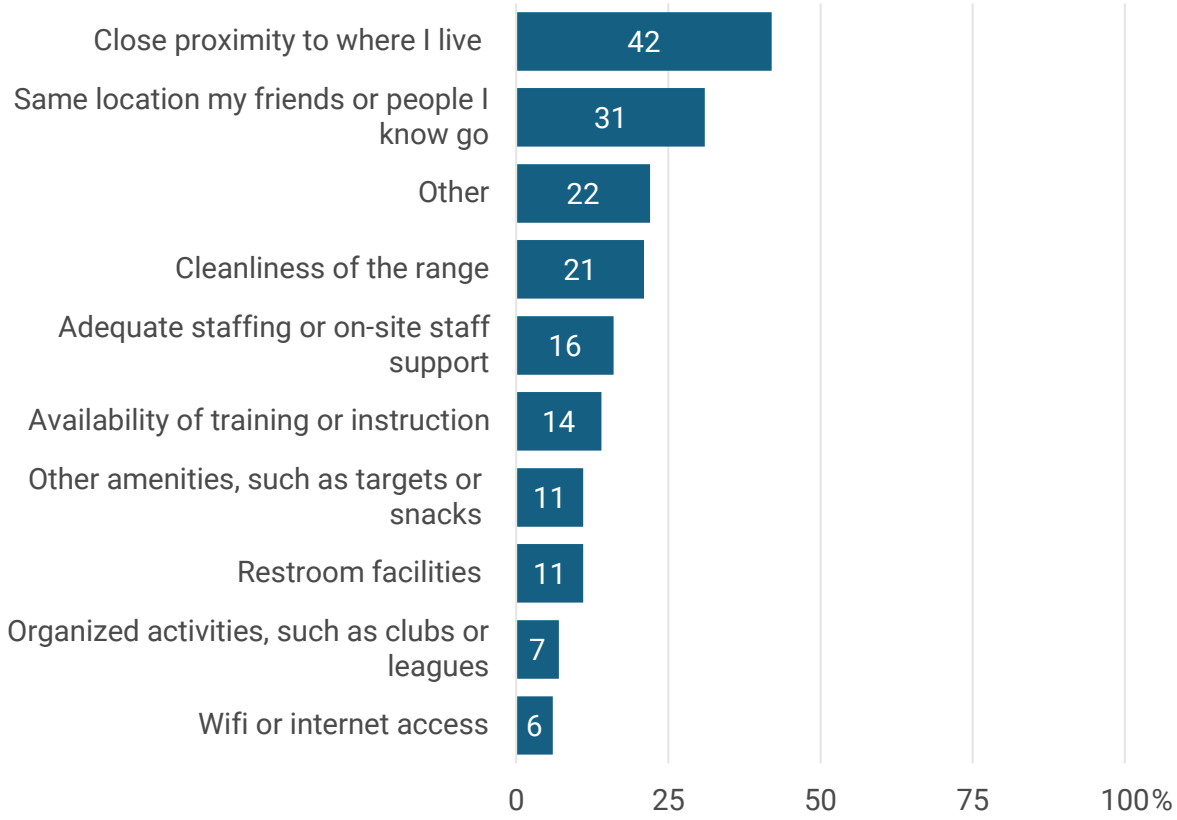
Question: Last year (fram January 1 through December 31, 2025), was your participation in target shooting mostly around hunting season, or spread more evenly throughout the year?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Proximity to where they live (42%) and the location where their friends or people they know go (31%) were the most common reasons for why participants went to a particular range.

Close proximity to home and going to the same location as friends and people they know are the most cited characteristics for how people chose their range.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who participated in target shooting or archery



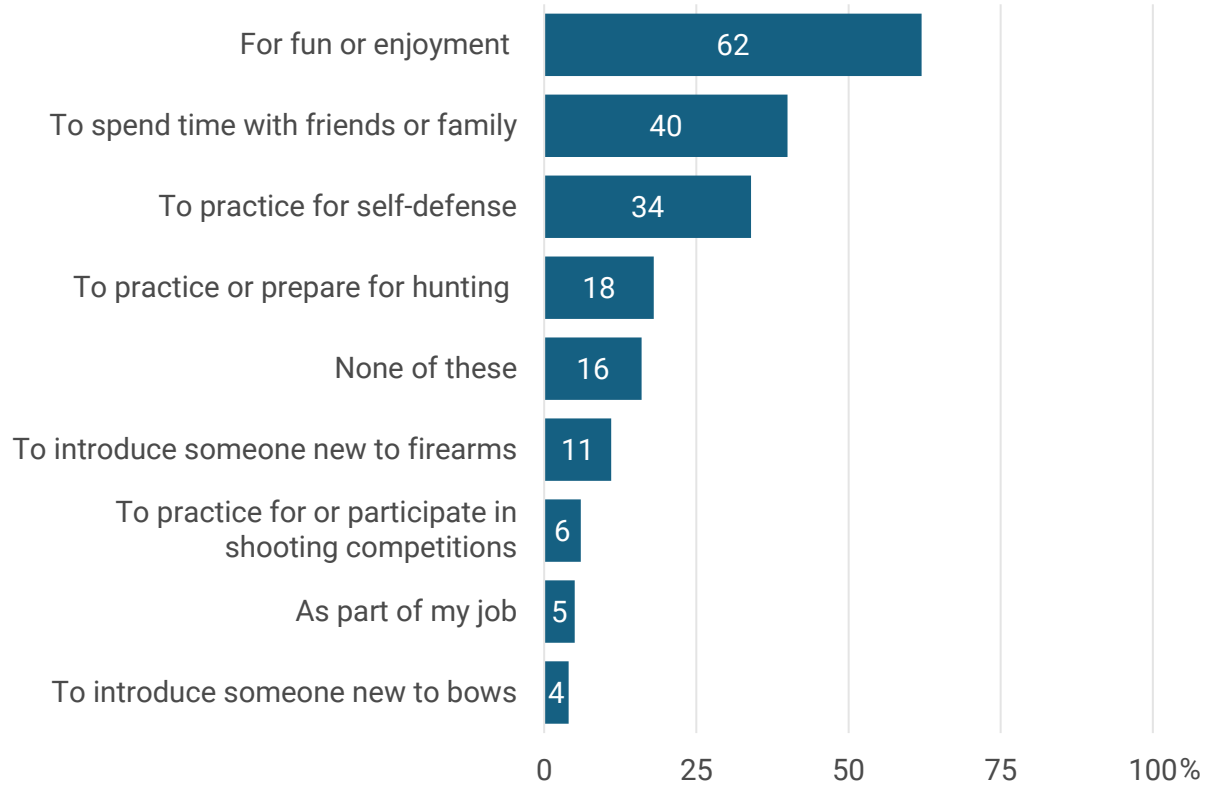
Question: Thinking about the target shooting range you used most often last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025), which of the following characteristics influenced your choice to use that range? *Please select all that apply.*

Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

The most common reasons for participating in target shooting were for fun or enjoyment (62%), to spend time with friends or family (40%), or to practice self-defense (34%).

Most participated in target shooting for fun or enjoyment last year.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who participated in target shooting or archery in 2025



Question: Last year (from January 1 through December 31, 2025), for what reasons did you participate in target shooting? *Please select all that apply.*
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Results to Inform Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation Efforts

Key Things You Should Know:

Among individuals age 16 and older who ever participated in target shooting or archery:

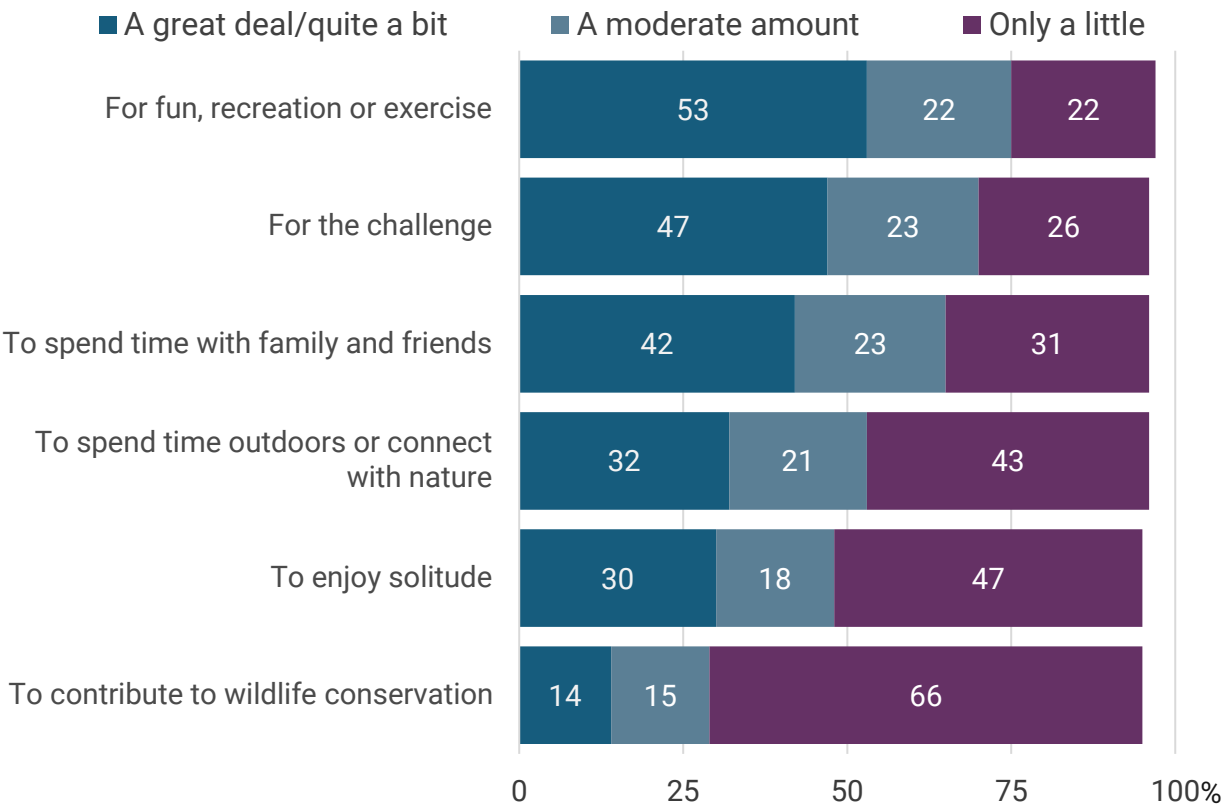
- About half viewed fun and recreation, or the challenge of the sport, as motivators for their participation.

- About a third felt that lack of time to target shoot was a barrier to their participation in the sport.
- About a quarter of those started between the ages of 18 and 29.
- Three in 10 were introduced to the sport by a parent or guardian.
- Very few, only 2%, of those who did not participate in target shooting in 2025 but have before said they would be interested in continuing target shooting. A similar amount, 4%, of those who did not participate in archery last year but have before would be interested in trying or continuing the sport in the future.

Among those who ever participated in target shooting or archery, fun, recreation or exercise (53%), the challenge (47%), or to spend time with family and friends (42%) were their most common motivations.

About half were motivated to target shoot for fun, recreation or exercise or for the challenge.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who ever participated in target shooting or archery

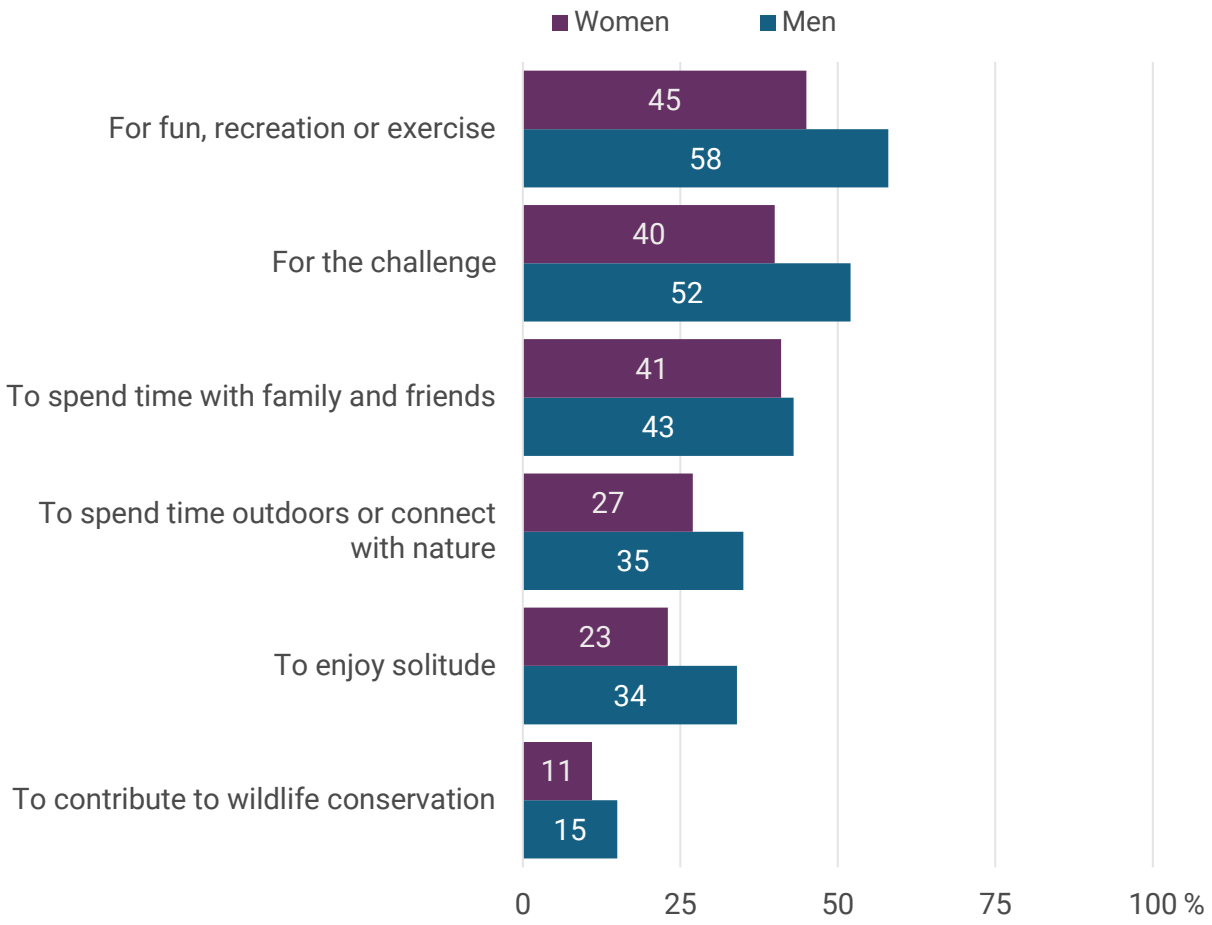


Question: How much, if at all, do each of the following motivate you to target shoot?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults age 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Among those who ever participated in target shooting or archery, 58% of men participated for fun, to engage in recreation or to exercise and 52% for the challenge. Forty-five percent of women did it for fun, to engage in recreation or exercise, and 4 in 10 (40%) for the challenge. Four in 10 of both men (43%) and women (41%) participated to spend time with family or friends.

Motivations for target shooting by gender.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who ever participated in target shooting or



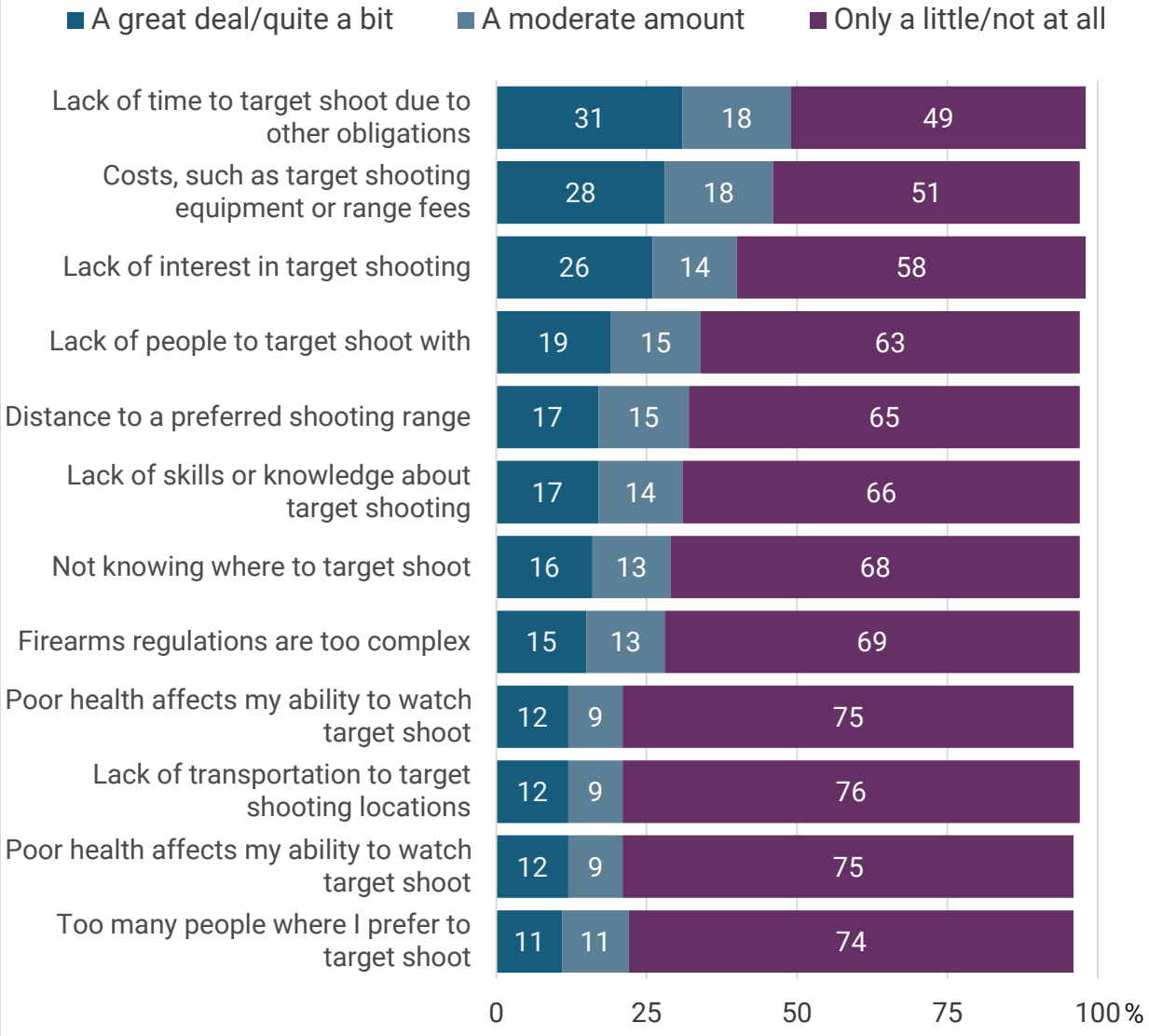
Question: How much, if at all, do each of the following motivate you to target shoot?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Among those who ever participated in target shooting or archery, lack of time (31%), the cost of equipment or range fees (28%), or lack of interest (26%) were the most common barriers for them.

Lack of time, interest, and cost were the most common barriers preventing target shooting.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who ever participated in target shooting or archery



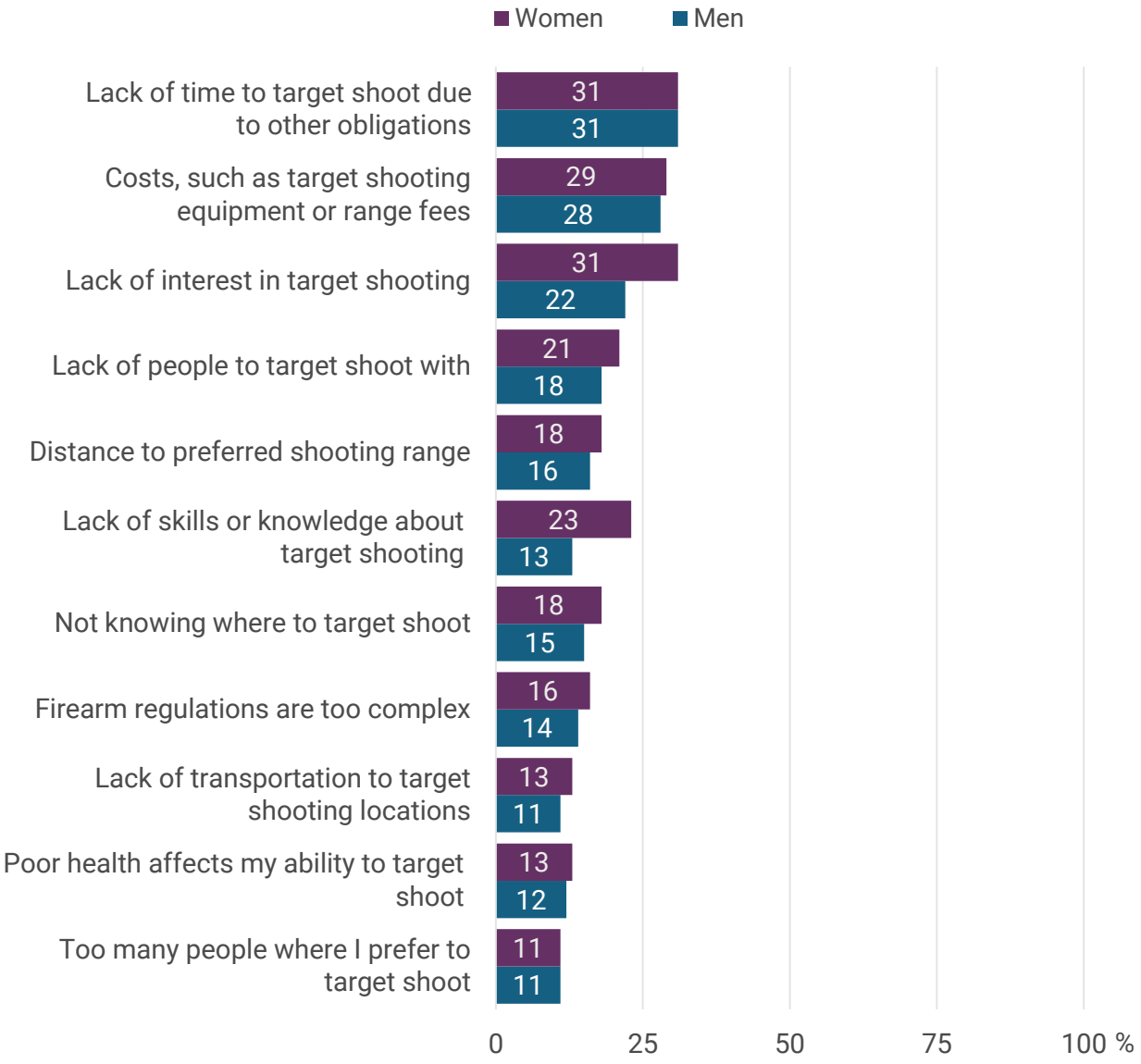
Question: How much, if at all, do each of the following prevent you from target shooting?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults aged 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Among those who ever participated in target shooting or archery, about 3 in 10 of both men and women cited lack of time (31%) or costs (28% and 29%) as barriers.

Barriers to target shooting by gender.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who have ever participated in target shooting or archery who say the following prevent them a great deal or quite a bit



Question: How much, if at all, do each of the following prevent you from target shooting?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

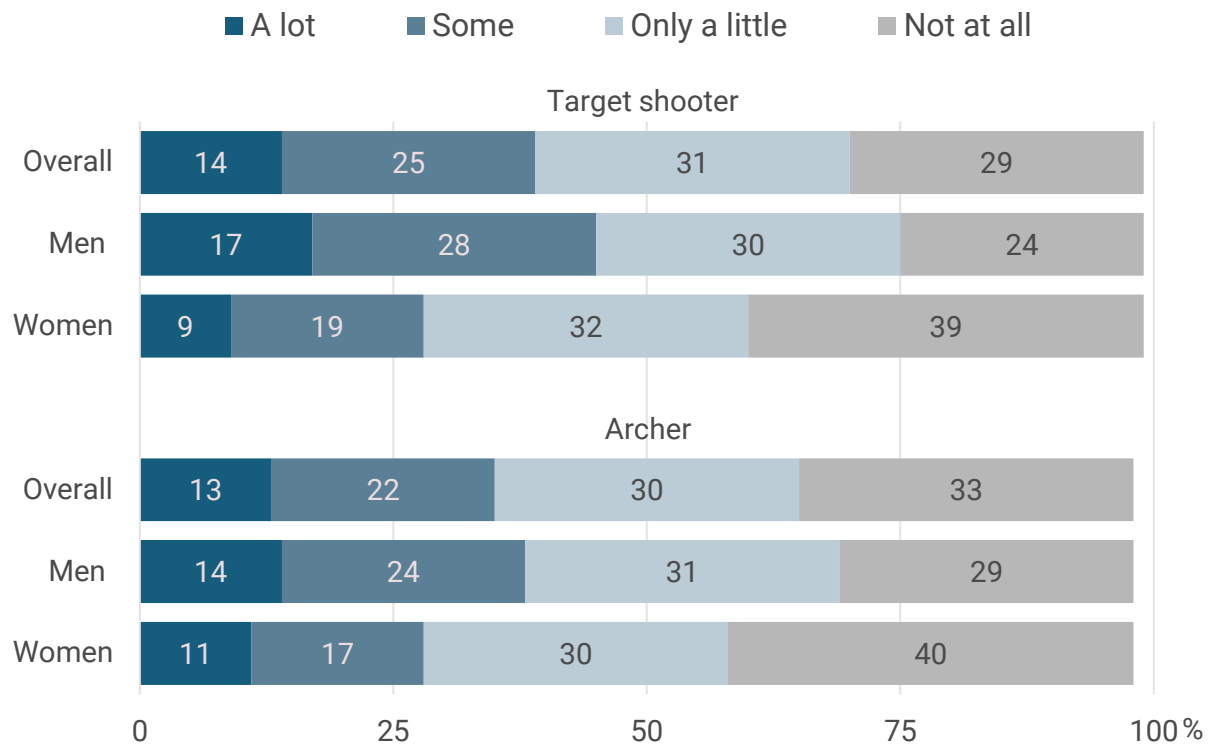
NORC

Fourteen percent of those who participated in target shooting or archery in 2025 identified as a target shooter a lot, 25% identified some, 31% identified only a little, and 29% did not identify as a target shooter at all.

Thirteen percent identified as an archer a lot, 22% identified some, 30% identified only a little, and 33% did not identify as an archer at all.

Seventeen percent of men identified as a target shooter a lot and 14% identified as an archer a lot. For women, 9% identified a lot as a target shooter, and 11% identified as an archer a lot.

Who identified as a target shooter or archer by gender.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older



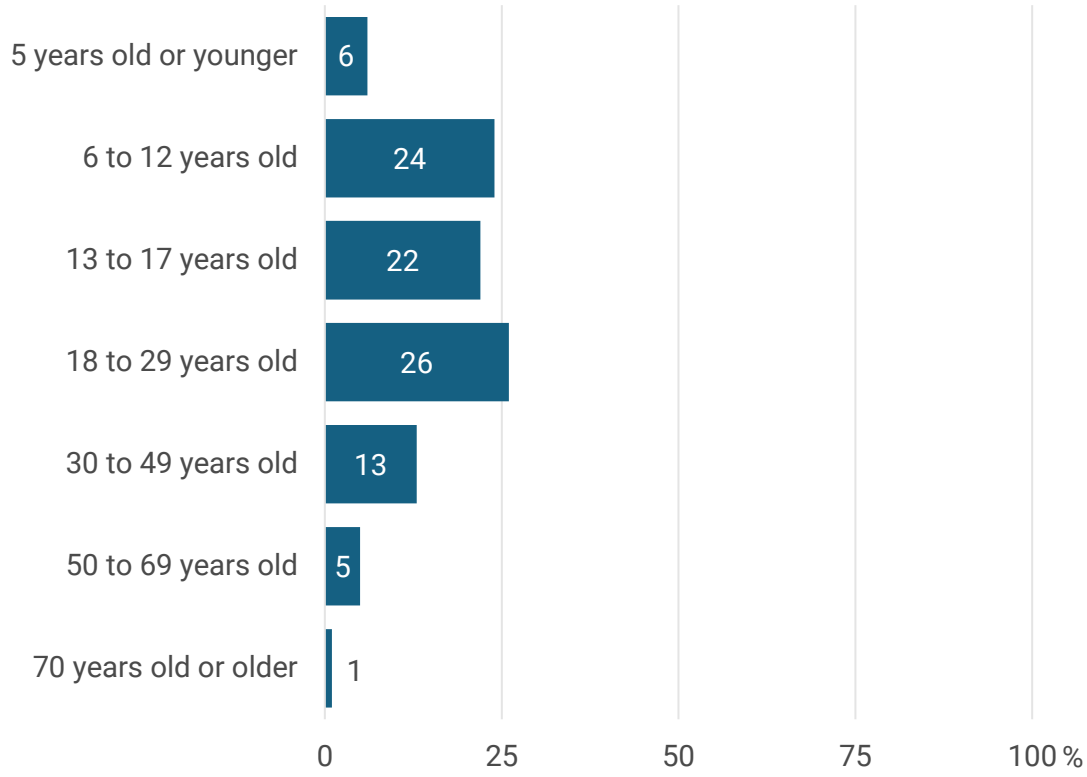
Question: Now that we have asked about your participation in a variety of activities, to what extent do you identify as each of the following?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

About a quarter of those who ever participated in target shooting or archery, started when they were 18 to 29 years old (26%), or when they were 6 to 12 years old (24%). Twenty-two percent started at age 13 to 17.

Among those who have participated in target shooting or archery, about a quarter started between age 6 to 12 or between age 18 to 29.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who started target shooting or archery at the following age

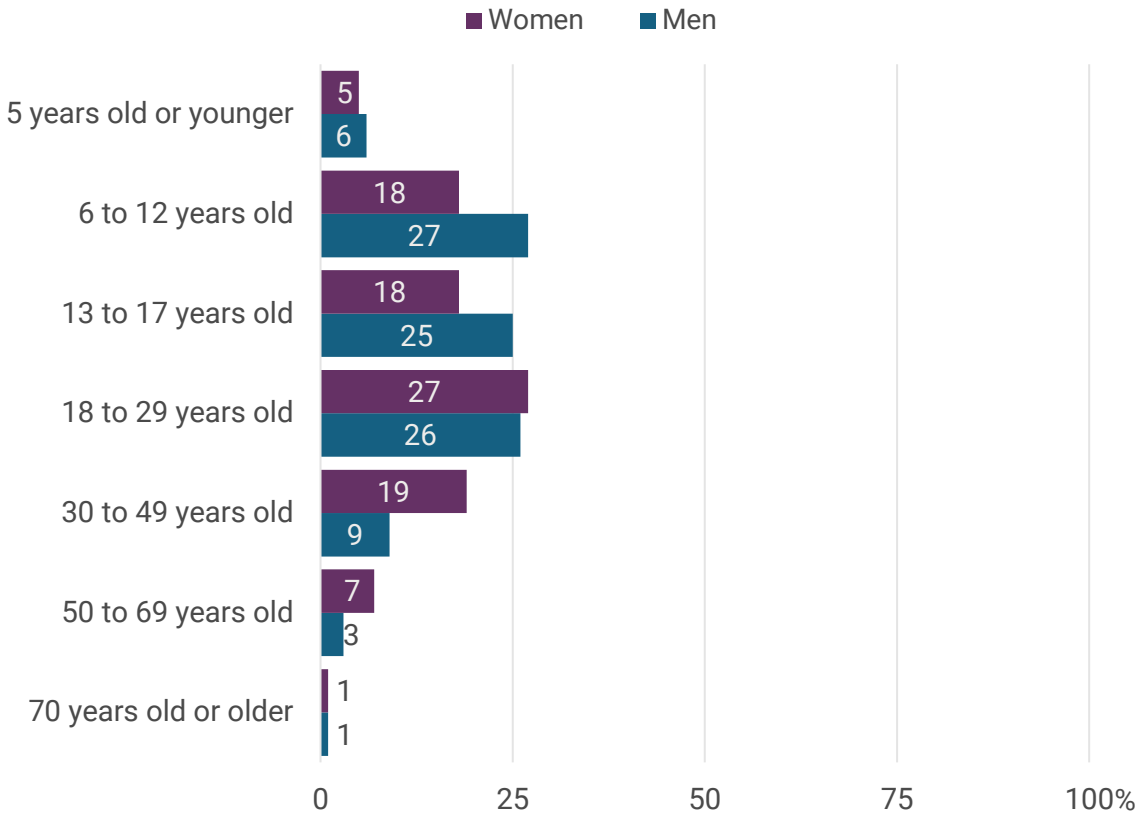


Question: About how old were you when you first started target shooting?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

About a quarter of both men (26%) and women (27%) started when they were 18 to 29 years old. Another quarter of men started from age 6 to 12 (27%) or age 13 to 17 (25%).

Age when started target shooting or archery by gender.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who ever went target shooting or archery

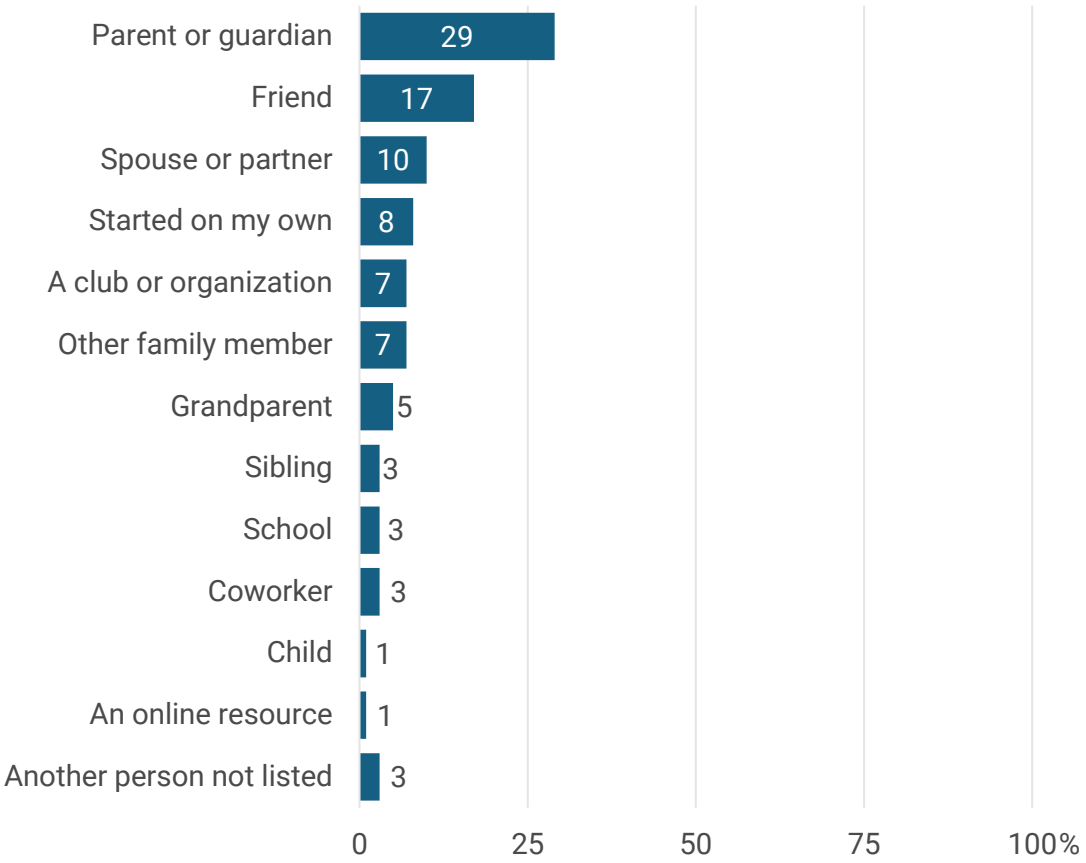


Question: About how old were you when you first started target shooting?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Three in 10 (29%) of those who ever participated in target shooting or archery were introduced to it by their parent or guardian, and 17% said they were introduced by a friend. A spouse or partner introduced 10%, 8% started on their own, and 7% were introduced by either another family member or a club or organization. Few were introduced by any other groups or resources.

Three in 10 were introduced to target shooting by a parent or guardian.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who have ever participated in target shooting or archery

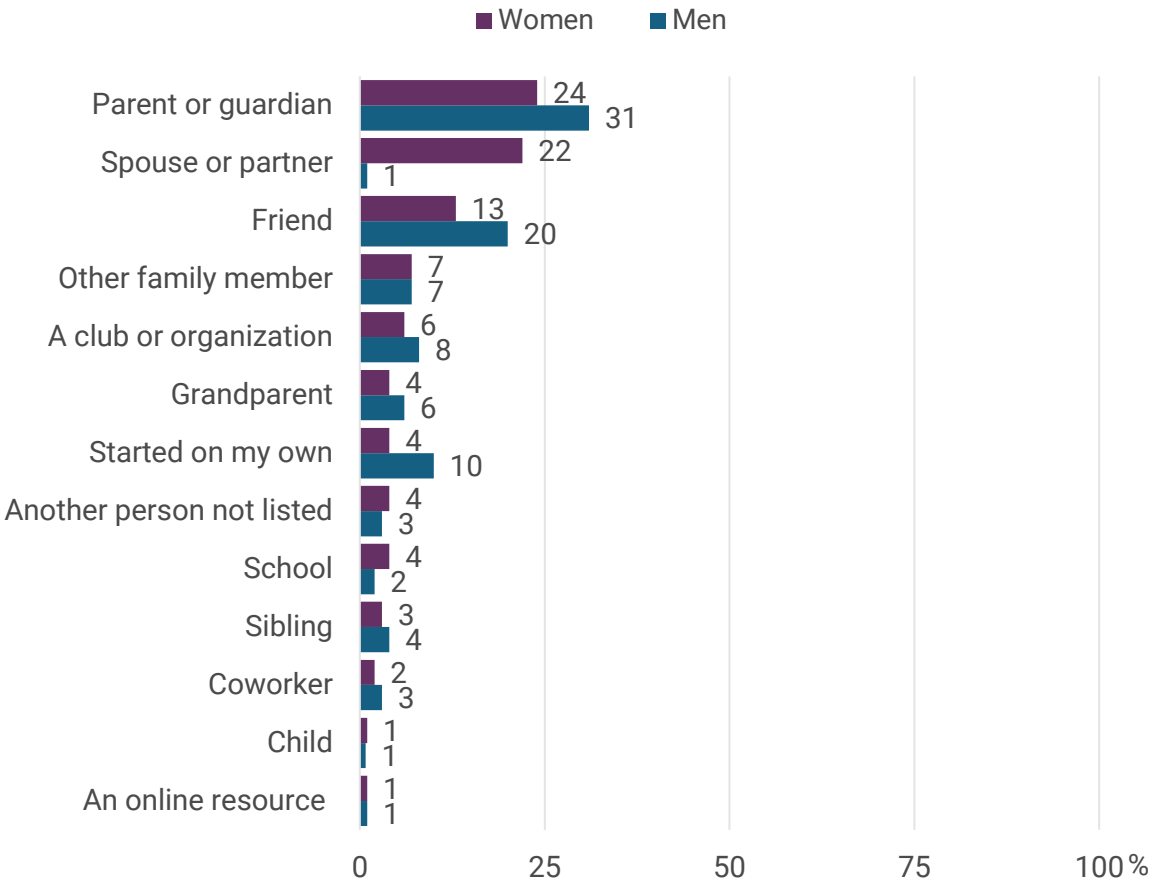


Question: Who first introduced you to target shooting?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

About a quarter of women (24%) were introduced by a parent or guardian and 31% of men were introduced the same way. A spouse or partner introduced 22% of women.

Introductions to target shooting or archery by gender.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older who ever participated in target shooting or archery



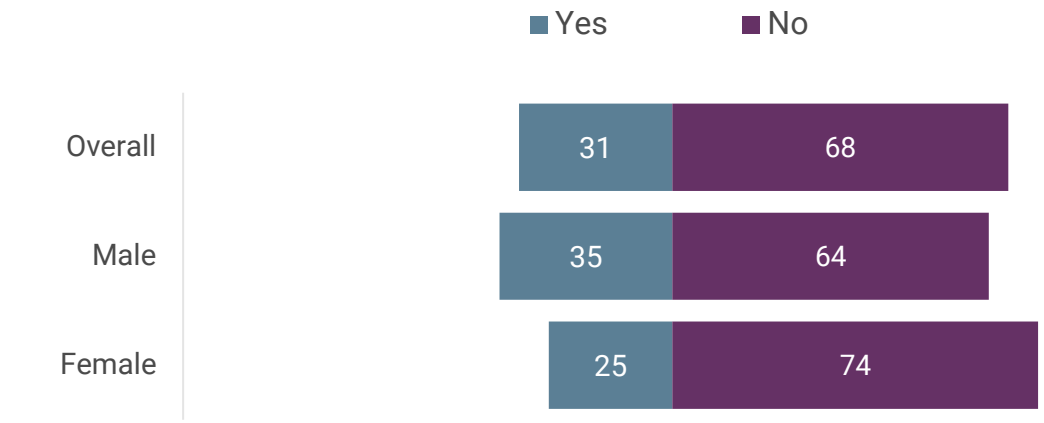
Question: Who first introduced you to target shooting?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Thirty-one percent of those who ever participated in target shooting or archery received formal instruction or training in target shooting. Majorities of both men (64%) and women (74%) have not received formal instruction or training in target shooting.

Most have not received formal instruction or training in target shooting.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who have ever participated in target shooting or archery



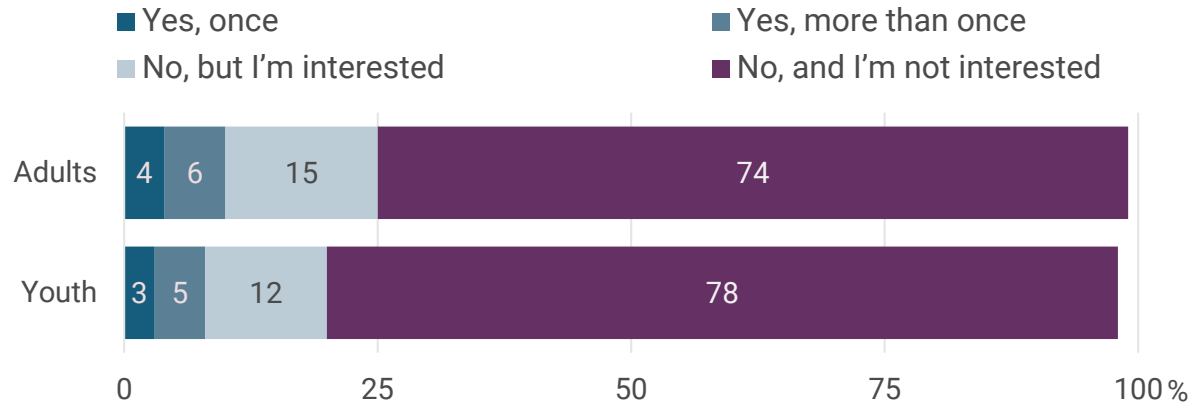
Question: Have you ever received formal instruction or training in target shooting, such as taking a class?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Among those who ever participated in target shooting or archery, most had not volunteered and were not interested in volunteering for a structured program that teaches youth (77%) or adults (74%) about target shooting. Fifteen percent said they have not volunteered for adults but would be interested, and 12% said the same about volunteering for young people. Few have volunteered at all in programs for youth or adults.

Most have not volunteered for a structured program about target shooting nor do they have interest.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who have ever participated in target shooting or archery



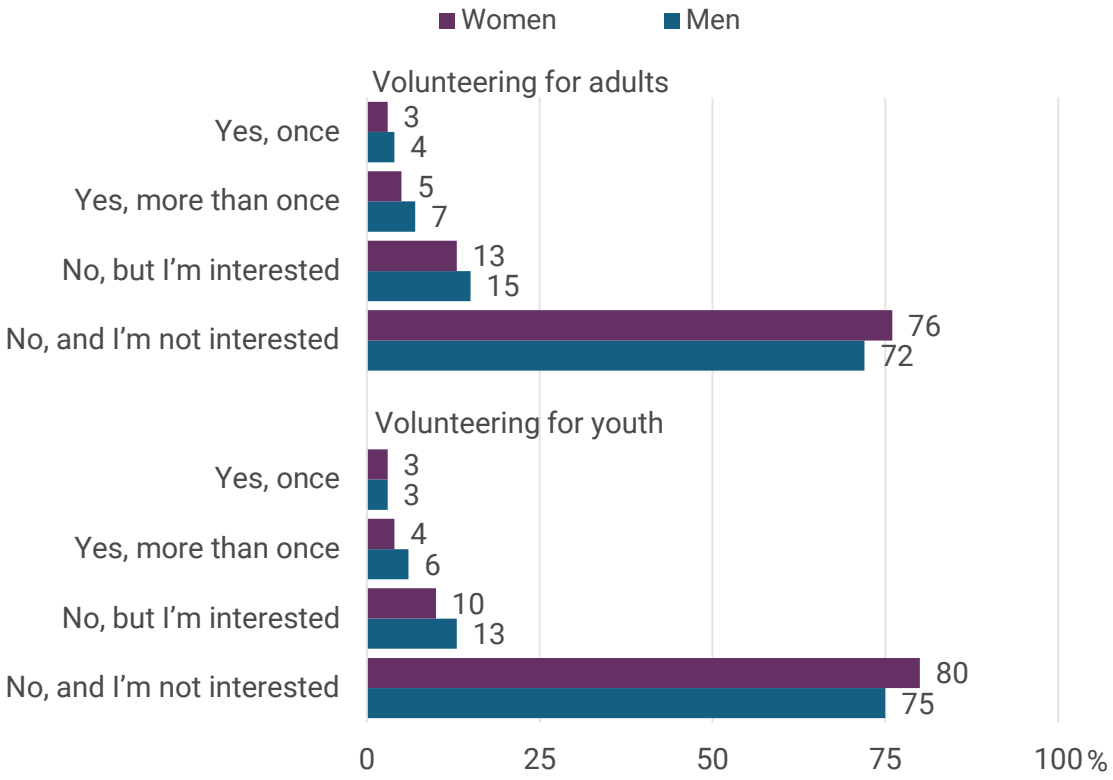
Question: Have you ever volunteered for a structured program that teaches the following groups about target shooting? A structured program could include organized classes, workshops, or guided activities.
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Seventy-six percent of men and 80% of women had not participated in a youth volunteer program about target shooting nor did they have interest in doing so. Similarly, 72% of men and 76% of women said the same about programs for adults.

Participation in volunteer programs about target shooting or archery by gender.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who ever participated in target shooting or archery



Question: Have you ever volunteered for a structured program that teaches the following groups about target shooting? A structured program could include organized classes, workshops, or guided activities.
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Of those who did not participate in target shooting or archery in 2025 but have done so before, 23% said they would be interested in continuing target shooting, even if they had not done so recently.

And of those who did not participate in archery in 2025 but have done so before, 36% said they would be interested in continuing archery, even if they had not done so recently.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who are interested in continuing target shooting, even if they have not done so in the last year, by demographics:

Characteristic	% interested
Total percent	23
Population Density of Residence	
Urban	22
Rural	23
Population Size of Residence	
Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)	
1,000,000 or more	23
250,000 to 999,999	24
50,000 to 249,999	22
Micropolitan (10,000 to 50,000)	20
Outside MSA	21
AFWA Regions	
West	22
Midwest	22
Northeast	25
Southeast	23
Age	
16 to 17 years	10
18 to 24 years	29
25 to 34 years	33

Characteristic	% interested
35 to 44 years	26
45 to 54 years	24
55 to 64 years	19
65 to 74 years	16
75 and older	9
Sex	
Male	25
Female	19
Ethnicity	
Hispanic	24
Non-Hispanic	22
Race	
White	21
African American	27
Asian American	30
All others	27
Annual Household Income	
Less than $10,000	27
$10,000 to $14,999	22
$15,000 to $24,999	24
$25,000 to $34,999	23
$35,000 to $49,999	21
$50,000 to $74,999	23

Characteristic	% interested
$75,000 to $99,999	24
$100,000 to $149,999	23
$150,000 to $199,999	22
$200,000 or more	18
Education	
Less than HS	25
High school degree	22
Some college	22
Bachelor's Degree	23
Graduate School	21

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who are interested in continuing archery, even if they have not done so in the last year, by demographics:

Characteristic	% interested
Total percent	36
Population Density of Residence	
Urban	36
Rural	36
Population Size of Residence	
Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)	
1,000,000 or more	35
250,000 to 999,999	40
50,000 to 249,999	37

Characteristic	% interested
Micropolitan (10,000 to 50,000)	36
Outside MSA	33
AFWA Regions	
West	36
Midwest	34
Northeast	36
Southeast	37
Age	
16 to 17 years	14
18 to 24 years	40
25 to 34 years	48
35 to 44 years	43
45 to 54 years	39
55 to 64 years	33
65 to 74 years	24
75 and older	15
Sex	
Male	37
Female	35
Ethnicity	
Hispanic	4
Non-Hispanic	35
Race	
White	33

Characteristic	% interested
African American	48
Asian American	46
All others	45
Annual Household Income	
Less than $10,000	45
$10,000 to $14,999	38
$15,000 to $24,999	40
$25,000 to $34,999	40
$35,000 to $49,999	37
$50,000 to $74,999	35
$75,000 to $99,999	38
$100,000 to $149,999	36
$150,000 to $199,999	31
$200,000 or more	27
Education	
Less than HS	34
High school degree	42
Some college	37
Bachelor's Degree	35
Graduate School	31

Boating

Overall Participation

- In 2025, 45,754,000 Americans age 6 and older participated in motorized boating. This represents a 3% decrease in participation compared with the 47,273,000 who participated in 2021.
    - Detailed age breakdowns of participants in motorized boating in 2025 are available in Table I-2 of the Appendix.
- In 2025, 47,257,000 Americans age 6 and older participated in nonmotorized boating.[2]

Results to Inform Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation Efforts

Of those age 16 and older who did not participate in any recreational boating in 2025 but have before, 18% said they would be interested in continuing boating, even if they had not done so recently.

Percent of individuals age 16 and older who are interested in continuing boating, even if they have not done so in the last year, by demographics:

Characteristic	% interested
Total percent	18
Population Density of Residence	
Urban	18
Rural	18
Population Size of Residence	
Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)	
1,000,000 or more	18
250,000 to 999,999	19

[2] This question was not asked in 2022.

Characteristic	% interested
50,000 to 249,999	14
Micropolitan (10,000 to 50,000)	20
Outside MSA	16
AFWA Regions	
West	18
Midwest	19
Northeast	16
Southeast	18
Age	
16 to 17 years	13
18 to 24 years	18
25 to 34 years	21
35 to 44 years	21
45 to 54 years	19
55 to 64 years	19
65 to 74 years	16
75 and older	12
Sex	
Male	19
Female	17
Ethnicity	
Hispanic	17
Non-Hispanic	18
Race	
White	18

Characteristic	% interested
African American	17
Asian American	15
All others	20
Annual Household Income	
Less than $10,000	14
$10,000 to $14,999	18
$15,000 to $24,999	16
$25,000 to $34,999	18
$35,000 to $49,999	18
$50,000 to $74,999	19
$75,000 to $99,999	18
$100,000 to $149,999	20
$150,000 to $199,999	22
$200,000 or more	17
Education	
Less than HS	17
High school degree	16
Some college	20
Bachelor's Degree	19
Graduate School	19

General Recreation and Conservation

Results to Inform Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation Efforts

Key Things You Should Know:

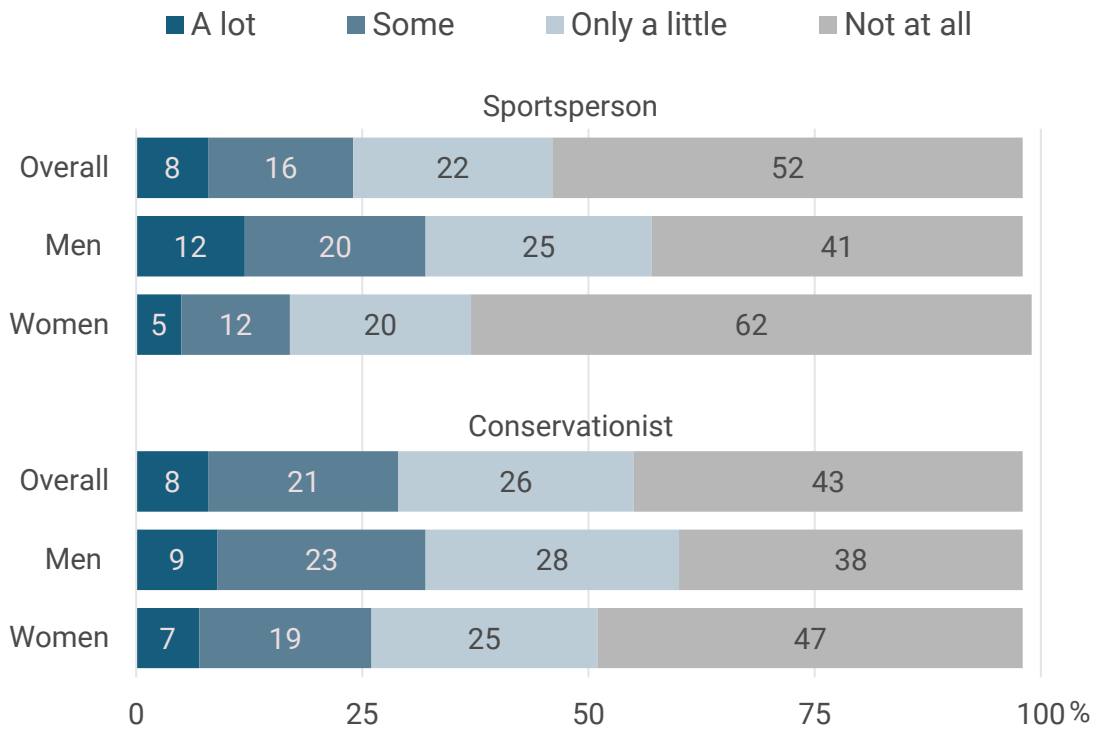
- Few individuals age 16 or older (8%) identified as a sportsperson or as a conservationist a lot.
- 12% of men identified as a sportsperson and 9% identified as a conservationist a lot. On the other hand, 5% of women identified as a sportsperson and 7% as a conservationist a lot.

Eight percent of individuals age 16 and older identified as a sportsperson a lot, 16% identified some, 22% identified only a little, and 52% did not identify as a sportsperson at all.

Eight percent of individuals age 16 and older also identified as a conservationist a lot, 21% identified some, 26% identified only a little, and 43% did not identify as a sportsperson at all.

A majority of women (62%) did not consider themselves to be a sportsperson, and 41% of men said the same. About half (47%) of women also did not consider themselves to be a conservationist, and 38% of men said the same.

Those who identified as a sportsperson or conservationist by gender.
Percent of individuals age 16 and older



Question: Now that we have asked about your participation in a variety of activities, to what extent do you identify as each of the following?
Source: NORC poll conducted June 16-July 13, 2026 with 31,930 adults ages 18 and older nationwide.

NORC

Study Methodology

This project was funded by a Multistate Conservation Grant No. F26AP00222-00 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and jointly administered with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

This study was conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago. Staff from NORC at the University of Chicago, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies collaborated on all aspects of the study.

Data were collected using both probability and non-probability sample sources. Interviews for this survey were conducted between June 16 and July 13, 2026, with adults age 18 and over representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The probability sample source is AmeriSpeak®, NORC's probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. During the initial recruitment phase of the panel, randomly selected U.S. households were sampled with a known, non-zero probability of selection from the NORC National Sample Frame and then contacted by U.S. mail, email, telephone, and field interviewers (face to face). The National Sample Frame provides coverage of approximately 97% of the U.S. household population. The U.S. Postal Service delivery-sequence file (DSF) and National Consumer Address File have been used in a subset of years as a supplemental sample during AmeriSpeak panel recruitment for low coverage states. Those excluded from the sample include people with P.O. Box only addresses, some addresses not listed in the USPS Delivery Sequence File, and some newly constructed dwellings.

Panel members were randomly drawn from AmeriSpeak, and 13,064 completed the survey—12,829 via the web and 235 via telephone. Panel members were invited by email or by phone from a NORC telephone interviewer. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish, depending on respondent preference. Respondents were offered a small monetary incentive ($6) for completing the survey. The weighted household panel recruitment rate is 24.8 percent, and the survey completion rate is 41.6 percent, for a weighted cumulative response rate of 10.3 percent.

Dynata and Prodege provided 25,698 non-probability interviews with adults age 18 and over. The non-probability sample was derived based on quotas related to age, race and ethnicity, gender, and education. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish, and via the web only. For panel recruitment, Dynata and Prodege use invitations of all types including email invitations, phone alerts, banners, and messaging on panel community sites to include people with a diversity of motivations to take part in research. Because non-probability panels do not start with a frame where there is known probability

of selection, standard measures of sampling error and response rates cannot be calculated.

Quality assurance checks were conducted to ensure data quality. In total, 1,654 interviews were removed for nonresponse to at least 50% of the questions asked of them, completing the survey in less than one-third the median interview time based on their mode of completion and number of activities asked about, or for straight-lining all grid questions asked of them. These interviews were excluded from the data file prior to weighting.

In order to incorporate the nonprobability sample, NORC used TrueNorth calibration, an innovative hybrid calibration approach developed at NORC in order to explicitly account for potential bias associated with the nonprobability sample. TrueNorth uses a tree-based non-parametric supervised learning algorithm to classify respondents based on their survey responses and apply a ratio adjustment to adjust the weights for the nonprobability sample to bring weighted distributions of the nonprobability sample in line with the population distribution for characteristics correlated with the survey variables. Such calibration adjustments help to reduce potential bias, yielding more accurate population estimates.

A raking procedure was applied to adjust for survey nonresponse, noncoverage, and any under- or oversampling resulting from the study-specific sampling design. To incorporate the nonprobability sample, NORC used TrueNorth calibration, an innovative hybrid weighting approach developed to explicitly address potential biases associated with nonprobability data sources. TrueNorth employs a tree-based, nonparametric supervised learning algorithm to classify respondents into groups based on their survey responses and demographic characteristics. Information from the probability sample is then used to calibrate the nonprobability sample, producing adjusted weights that align the weighted distributions of the nonprobability sample with those of the probability sample. These adjustments help reduce potential bias and improve the accuracy of population estimates.

Final weights were calibrated using raking variables that included age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, urbanicity, and Census region. Population control totals for these variables were obtained from the 2026 Current Population Survey. Modeled estimates included ever fished, fished in the past year, first-time fishing participation, ever hunted, hunted in the past year, first-time hunting participation, ever participated in wildlife watching, wildlife watching in the past year, ever participated in archery, archery participation in the past year, ever participated in target shooting, target shooting participation in the past year, motorized boating participation in the past year, and nonmotorized boating participation in the past year. Participation days and trips were also modeled based on the ratios of 2022 FHWAR overall estimates vs. estimates by sample

sources. The weighted data represent the U.S. population aged 6 years and older. Data for those ages 6-17 were provided through the interview with an adult member of the household age 18 and older.

The overall margin of sampling error for the combined sample is +/- 0.8 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect. The margin of sampling error may be higher for subgroups. See the margin of sampling error for subgroups listed below for each activity.

Sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error and there may be other unmeasured error in this or any other survey.

Complete questions and results are available at go.norc.org/outdoor-tracker.

Additional information on the TrueNorth approach can be found here: https://amerispeak.norc.org/our-capabilities/Pages/TrueNorth.aspx.

For more information, email info@norc.org.

Margin of Sampling Error (MOE) for each activity:

Fishing:

- MOEs for percentages reported in the fishing section are +/- 0.9 percentage points.
- For 2025 anglers overall, the MOE is +/- 1,303,000
    - Freshwater anglers MOE: +/- 991,000
    - Saltwater anglers MOE: +/- 579,000

Hunting:

- MOEs for percentages reported in the hunting section are +/- 1.8 percentage points.
- For 2025 hunters overall, the MOE is +/- 1,003,000
    - Big game hunters MOE: +/- 813,000
    - Small game hunters MOE: +/- 407,000
    - Migratory bird hunters MOE: +/- 230,000
    - Other animal hunters MOE: +/- 237,000

Wildlife Watching:

- MOEs for percentages reported in the wildlife watching section are +/- 0.8 percentage points.
- For 2025 wildlife watching overall, the MOE is +/- 2,542,000

Target Shooting and Archery:

- MOEs for percentages reported in the target shooting section are +/- 1.3 percentage points.
- MOEs for percentages reported in the archery section are +/- 1.6 percentage points.
- For 2025 target shooters overall, the MOE is +/- 1,393,000
- For 2025 archery participants overall, the MOE is +/- 1,012,000

Boating:

- MOEs for percentages reported in the boating section are +/- 0.5 percentage points.
- For 2025 motorized boat participants overall, the MOE is +/- 1,543,000

The margins of sampling error for days and trips participating in fishing, hunting, and wildlife watching in 2025 can be found in the table below.

Type of activity	Margin of Sampling Error
Fishing days, total	47,885,000
Freshwater days	35,199,000
Saltwater days	10,899,000
Fishing trips, total	29,186,000
Freshwater trips	27,427,000
Saltwater trips	8,192,000
Hunting days, total	29,609,000
Big game hunting days	18,177,000
Small game hunting days	7,046,000
Migratory birds hunting days	6,278,000
Other animals hunting days	8,881,000
Hunting trips, total	20,210,000
Big game hunting trips	15,557,000
Small game hunting trips	3,573,000
Migratory birds hunting trips	4,845,000
Other animals hunting trips	7,803,000
Wildlife watching days, total	368,120,000
Away from home days	121,227,000
Around the home days	290,101,000
Wildlife watching trips, total	66,029,000

Appendix

Table 1. Total Participation in Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Watching in 2025

Type of activity	# of Participants	% of participants	# of Days of participation	% of Days of participation	# of Trips	% of Trips
Fishing, total	**41,175,000**	**100**	**854,395,000**	**100***	**472,503,000**	**100**
Freshwater	36,173,000	88	550,359,000	64	386,067,000	82
Saltwater	14,342,000	35	106,027,000	12	86,436,000	18
Hunting, total	**15,130,000**	**100**	**251,135,000**	**100***	**148,769,000**	**100**
Big game	11,493,000	76	127,511,000	51	94,326,000	63
Small game	5,253,000	35	33,526,000	13	25,256,000	17
Migratory birds	2,545,000	17	14,920,000	6	14,033,000	9
Other animals	2,479,000	16	19,706,000	8	15,153,000	10
Wildlife watching, total	**162,785,000**	**100**	**11,844,810,000**	**100**	**819,997,000**	**100**
Away from home	65,309,000	40	2,183,020,000	18	819,997,000	100
Around the home	160,361,000	99	9,661,790,000	82	NA	NA

*Note: Total fishing days and total hunting days were asked separately from days participating in specific types of fishing and hunting, respectively. Percentages for specific types of fishing and hunting may not add up to 100%.

Characteristic	# of U.S. population 16 and older	% of U.S. population 16 and older	# of anglers	% of anglers	% of anglers of the U.S. population 16 and older	# of hunters	% of hunters	% of hunters of the U.S. population 16 and older
Total persons	**274,766,000**	**100**	**41,175,000**	**15**	**100**	**15,130,000**	**6**	**100**
Population Density of Residence								
Urban	57,273,213	21	8,427,000	15	20	2,553,000	4	17
Rural	216,596,987	79	32,594,000	15	79	12,525,000	6	83
Population Size of Residence								
Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)								
1,000,000 or more	152,363,000	55	18,772,000	12	46	5,803,000	4	38
250,000 to 999,999	56,234,000	20	8,757,000	16	21	3,063,000	5	20
50,000 to 249,999	24,258,000	9	4,527,000	19	11	1,835,000	8	12
Micropolitan (10,000 to 50,000)	22,718,000	8	4,858,000	21	12	2,149,000	9	14
Outside MSA	18,297,000	7	4,106,000	22	10	2,227,000	12	15
AFWA Regions								
West	64,618,000	24	8,039,000	12	20	2,665,000	4	18
Midwest	55,901,000	20	9,960,000	18	24	3,747,000	7	25
Northeast	53,982,000	20	6,683,000	12	16	2,343,000	4	15
Southeast	100,264,000	36	16,493,000	16	40	6,376,000	6	42
Age								
16 to 17 years	9,199,000	3	2,266,000	25	6	598,000	6	4
18 to 24 years	30,617,000	11	4,899,000	16	12	1,743,000	6	12

Characteristic	# of U.S. population 16 and older	% of U.S. population 16 and older	# of anglers	% of anglers	% of anglers of the U.S. population 16 and older	# of hunters	% of hunters	% of hunters of the U.S. population 16 and older
25 to 34 years	45,610,000	17	7,731,000	17	19	3,287,000	7	22
35 to 44 years	44,731,000	16	7,524,000	17	18	2,763,000	6	18
45 to 54 years	39,665,000	14	5,918,000	15	14	2,078,000	5	14
55 to 64 years	40,618,000	15	6,195,000	15	15	2,345,000	6	15
65 and older	64,325,000	23	6,641,000	10	16	2,318,000	4	15
65 to 74 years	36,718,000	13	4,107,000	11	10	1,463,000	4	10
75 and older	27,607,000	10	2,534,000	9	6	856,000	3	6
Sex								
Male	132,556,000	48	28,453,000	21	69	10,985,000	8	73
Female	142,117,000	52	12,715,000	9	31	4,145,000	3	27
Ethnicity								
Hispanic	52,602,000	19	6,866,000	13	17	1,814,000	3	12
Non-Hispanic	222,107,000	81	34,296,000	15	83	13,302,000	6	88
Race								
White	207,480,000	76	33,860,000	16	82	12,666,000	6	84
African American	37,860,000	14	4,434,000	12	11	1,404,000	4	9
Asian American	23,260,000	8	2,085,000	9	5	867,000	4	6
All others	13,151,000	5	1,755,000	13	4	603,000	5	4
Annual Household Income								
Less than $10,000	20,634,000	8	1,894,000	9	5	797,000	4	5
$10,000 to $14,999	10,325,000	4	1,342,000	13	3	649,000	6	4

Characteristic	# of U.S. population 16 and older	% of U.S. population 16 and older	# of anglers	% of anglers	% of anglers of the U.S. population 16 and older	# of hunters	% of hunters	% of hunters of the U.S. population 16 and older
$15,000 to $24,999	23,677,000	9	3,152,000	13	8	967,000	4	6
$25,000 to $34,999	27,834,000	10	3,932,000	14	10	1,316,000	5	9
$35,000 to $49,999	30,795,000	11	5,045,000	16	12	1,717,000	6	11
$50,000 to $74,999	47,907,000	17	7,533,000	16	18	2,927,000	6	19
$75,000 to $99,999	36,173,000	13	5,821,000	16	14	2,181,000	6	14
$100,000 to $149,999	41,515,000	15	7,247,000	17	18	2,780,000	7	18
$150,000 to $199,999	18,898,000	7	3,018,000	16	7	1,206,000	6	8
$200,000 or more	17,010,000	6	2,191,000	13	5	590,000	3	4
Education								
Less than HS	26,088,000	9	4,370,000	17	11	1,484,000	6	10
High school degree	80,056,000	29	13,111,000	16	32	4,849,000	6	32
Some college	70,113,000	26	11,333,000	16	28	4,182,000	6	28
Bachelor's Degree	61,314,000	22	8,517,000	14	21	3,355,000	5	22
Graduate School	37,128,000	14	3,830,000	10	9	1,253,000	3	8

Table 6. Wildlife Watching – Around the Home and Away from Home by Demographics

Characteristic	# of U.S. population	% of U.S. population	# of wildlife watchers away from home	% of wildlife watchers away from home	% of wildlife watchers away from home of the U.S. population	# of wildlife watchers around the home	% of wildlife watchers around the home	% of wildlife watchers around the home of the U.S. population
Total persons	**274,766,000**	**100**	**65,309,000**	**24**	**100**	**160,361,000**	**58**	**100**
Population Density of Residence								
Urban	57,273,000	21	13,349,000	23	20	33,192,000	58	21
Rural	216,597,000	79	51,680,000	24	79	126,592,000	58	79
Population Size of Residence								
Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)								
1,000,000 or more	152,363,000	55	34,761,000	23	53	85,945,000	56	54
250,000 to 999,999	56,234,000	20	13,311,000	24	20	33,481,000	60	21
50,000 to 249,999	24,258,000	9	6,249,000	26	10	14,724,000	61	9
Micropolitan (10,000 to 50,000)	22,718,000	8	6,102,000	27	9	14,290,000	63	9
Outside MSA	18,297,000	7	4,606,000	25	7	11,344,000	62	7
AFWA Regions								
West	64,618,000	24	16,673,000	26	26	37,017,000	57	23
Midwest	55,901,000	20	12,679,000	23	19	32,566,000	58	20

Characteristic	# of U.S. population	% of U.S. population	# of wildlife watchers away from home	% of wildlife watchers away from home	% of wildlife watchers away from home of the U.S. population	# of wildlife watchers around the home	% of wildlife watchers around the home	% of wildlife watchers around the home of the U.S. population
Northeast	53,982,000	20	11,808,000	22	18	30,227,000	56	19
Southeast	100,264,000	36	24,149,000	24	37	60,551,000	60	38
Age								
16 to 17 years	9,199,000	3	2,156,000	23	3	4,438,000	48	3
18 to 24 years	30,617,000	11	7,298,000	24	11	18,933,000	62	12
25 to 34 years	45,610,000	17	11,989,000	26	18	27,292,000	60	17
35 to 44 years	44,731,000	16	12,178,000	27	19	26,066,000	58	16
45 to 54 years	39,665,000	14	9,334,000	24	14	21,626,000	55	13
55 to 64 years	40,618,000	15	10,009,000	25	15	24,339,000	60	15
65 years and older	64,325,000	23	12,345,000	19	19	37,667,000	59	23
65 to 74 years	36,718,000	13	7,889,000	21	12	21,957,000	60	14
75 and older	27,607,000	10	4,457,000	16	7	15,710,000	57	10
Sex								
Male	132,556,000	48	37,423,000	28	57	86,461,000	65	54
Female	142,117,000	52	27,882,000	20	43	73,858,000	52	46
Ethnicity								
Hispanic	52,602,000	19	13,476,000	26	21	30,392,000	58	19
Non-Hispanic	222,107,000	81	51,827,000	23	79	129,924,000	58	81
Race								
White	207,480,000	76	51,125,000	25	78	126,200,000	61	79
African American	37,860,000	14	7,557,000	20	12	17,908,000	47	11

Characteristic	# of U.S. population	% of U.S. population	# of wildlife watchers away from home	% of wildlife watchers away from home	% of wildlife watchers away from home of the U.S. population	# of wildlife watchers around the home	% of wildlife watchers around the home	% of wildlife watchers around the home of the U.S. population
Asian American	23,260,000	8	4,951,000	21	8	12,587,000	54	8
All others	13,151,000	5	3,566,000	27	5	7,931,000	60	5
Annual Household Income								
Less than $10,000	20,634,000	8	3,467,000	17	5	8,412,000	41	5
$10,000 to $14,999	10,325,000	4	2,461,000	24	4	5,632,000	55	4
$15,000 to $24,999	23,677,000	9	4,809,000	20	7	12,378,000	52	8
$25,000 to $34,999	27,834,000	10	6,585,000	24	10	15,762,000	57	10
$35,000 to $49,999	30,795,000	11	7,376,000	24	11	18,167,000	59	11
$50,000 to $74,999	47,907,000	17	11,943,000	25	18	29,015,000	61	18
$75,000 to $99,999	36,173,000	13	9,121,000	25	14	22,627,000	63	14
$100,000 to $149,999	41,515,000	15	11,127,000	27	17	26,774,000	64	17
$150,000 to $199,999	18,898,000	7	4,641,000	25	7	11,686,000	62	7
$200,000 or more	17,010,000	6	3,777,000	22	6	9,907,000	58	6
Education								
Less than HS	26,088,000	9	5,613,000	22	9	13,138,000	50	8
High school degree	80,056,000	29	16,606,000	21	25	42,963,000	54	27

Characteristic	# of U.S. population	% of U.S. population	# of wildlife watchers away from home	% of wildlife watchers away from home	% of wildlife watchers away from home of the U.S. population	# of wildlife watchers around the home	% of wildlife watchers around the home	% of wildlife watchers around the home of the U.S. population
Some college	70,113,000	26	18,170,000	26	28	43,799,000	62	27
Bachelor's Degree	61,314,000	22	15,484,000	25	24	37,606,000	61	23
Graduate School	37,128,000	14	9,424,000	25	14	22,802,000	61	14

Table R-1. First Time Anglers and Hunters in 2025

Age Group	Total hunters in 2025	# of those who hunted for first time in 2025	% of hunters in age group
Total, all ages	**17,145,000**	**2,549,000**	**100**
6 to 15 years	1,910,000	570,000	11
16 to 17 years	598,000	120,000	3
18 to 24 years	1,743,000	372,000	10
25 to 34 years	3,287,000	478,000	19
35 to 44 years	2,763,000	534,000	16
45 to 54 years	2,078,000	265,000	12
55 to 64 years	2,345,000	132,000	14
65 years or older	2,318,000	42,000	14

Table R-2. Lapsed Anglers and Hunters in 2025

Age Group	# of hunters in 2024 but not 2025	% of hunters in 2024 but not 2025
Total, all ages	**2,908,000**	**100**
6 to 15 years	296,000	10
16 to 17 years	124,000	4
18 to 24 years	520,000	18
25 to 34 years	532,000	18
35 to 44 years	546,000	19
45 to 54 years	296,000	10
55 to 64 years	212,000	7
65 years or older	378,000	13

Table I-1. Recreational Shooters in 2025

Age Group	# of recreational target shooters	% of recreational target shooters	# of recreational archers	% of recreational archers
Total, all ages	**43,932,000**	**100**	**20,744,000**	**100**
6 to 15 years	3,337,000	8	3,464,000	17
16 to 17 years	1,217,000	3	903,000	4
18 to 24 years	4,191,000	10	2,943,000	14
25 to 34 years	7,504,000	17	3,644,000	18
35 to 44 years	7,333,000	17	3,304,000	16
45 to 54 years	6,052,000	14	2,299,000	11
55 to 64 years	6,360,000	14	1,895,000	9
65 years or older	7,847,000	18	2,246,000	11

Table I-2. Motorized Boating Participants in 2025

Age Group	# of motorized boating participants	% of motorized boating participants
Total, all ages	**45,754,000**	**100**
6 to 15 years	5,827,000	13
16 to 17 years	1,609,000	4
18 to 24 years	4,401,000	10
25 to 34 years	6,654,000	15
35 to 44 years	6,585,000	14
45 to 54 years	5,731,000	13
55 to 64 years	6,508,000	14
65 years or older	8,245,000	18