



## Survey of Nebraska Landowner Attitudes on Elk Damage

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## Executive Summary

- A majority of respondents reported owning over 1,000 acres of land within an Elk Management Unit (EMU; 63%).
- Most landowners reported that they frequently saw elk on their property within the last 24 months (48%).
- Most landowners reported that the number elk on their property was about what they preferred (40%) and most frequently reported that elk cause a light amount of damage (40%).
- The most frequent variety of elk damage was to landowner fencing (64%), and the majority of landowners find the damage to be somewhat unacceptable (33%).
- The majority of landowners were aware that the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) offers mitigation assistance (62%), depredation permissions (64%), but were unaware of special elk hunting permits to reduce elk damage (53%).
- Few landowners have ever contacted NGPC for assistance with elk damage (19%), and those who have most frequently contacted NGPC in 2024 (22%) or 2023 (20%).
- A majority of landowners indicated that someone hunted elk on their property (59%). Of those, 42% had personally hunted their property. Of those who reported someone hunted their property, 45% reported family, 50% reported friends, and 48% reported someone they previously knew.
- Most landowners who did allow elk hunting permitted hunters to harvest bulls without restrictions (60%) and/or antlerless elk without restrictions (67%).
- Of those who allowed hunting, only 47% allowed antlerless-elk hunters access prior to the bull-hunting season.

## General Information

This report describes responses to questions from the 2025 “Survey of Nebraska Landowner Attitudes on Elk Damage.” This survey was a tool to analyze Nebraska landowner perspectives on the elk herds residing on their land, the damage caused by elk herds, how landowners might be encouraged to allow elk hunting on their land, and how much elk-hunting landowners are currently allowing on their land. We provide information regarding the design and implementation of the survey as well as summarized responses to questions from the overall respondent pool and responses from individual Elk Management Units. General summaries of responses.

### Nebraska Landowner-Elk Project Objectives

1. Gather information about Nebraska landowners who own property within Elk Management Units
2. Assess landowner perceptions about elk population size
3. Determine severity of damage caused by elk to landowner property
4. Gauge landowner acceptance of property damage caused by elk
5. Gain a better understanding about how landowners respond to prospective elk hunters and evaluate landowner response to techniques aimed at encouraging landowners to allow more access to elk hunters

## Mode Selection

Biologists at the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the University of Nebraska held several meetings to design the survey instrument that would properly meet the objectives. A postal survey was used to determine the views of Nebraska landowners. Using this vehicle to collect information allows researchers to generalize results to a larger population. Surveys were mailed to a sample of landowners who owned property in at least one of the 15 Nebraska Elk Management Units. Invitations were distributed on February 5, 2025. A reminder survey was mailed to all landowners on March 7, 2025. The survey period closed on March 21, 2025.

## Survey Responses

1) In which Elk Management Unit is the majority of your land located?

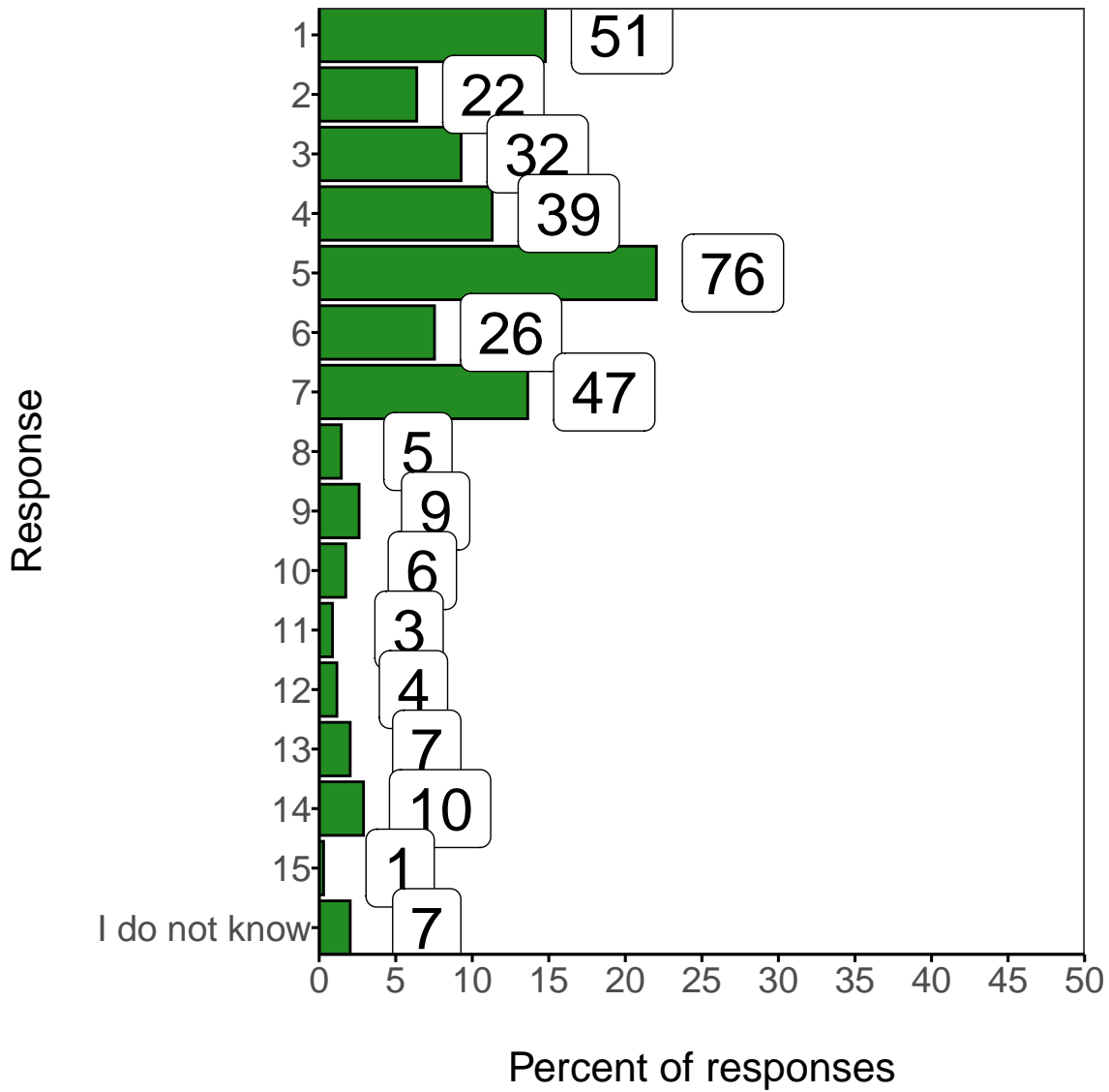


Figure 1: The Nebraska Elk Management Unit in which respondents of the 2025 Landowner Elk Survey hold the majority of their land. The x-axis indicates the percentage of all respondents and the number to the right of the horizontal green bars represents the actual number of respondents (N = 345).

2) About how many acres do you operate (own or lease) for agricultural purposes?

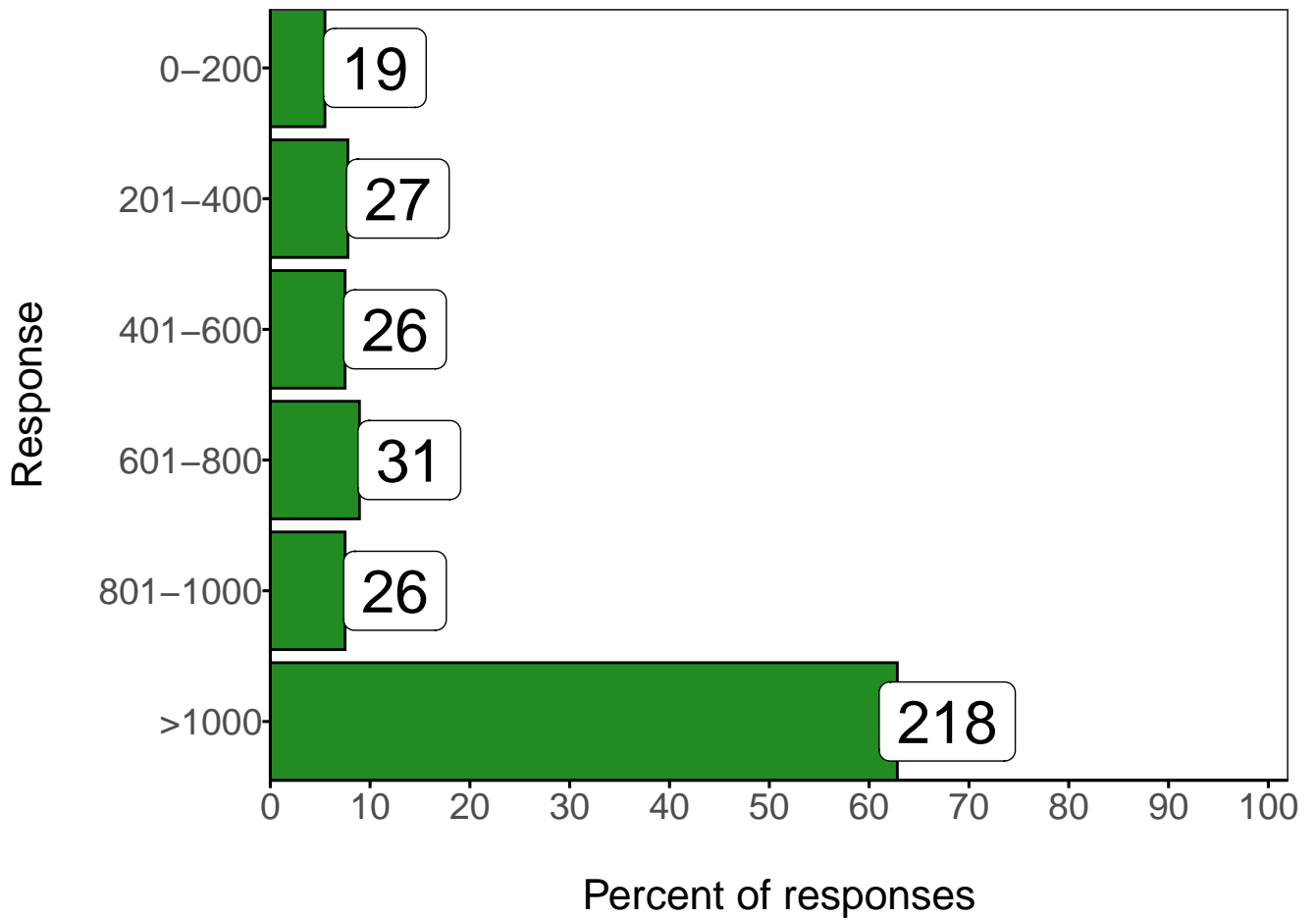


Figure 2: The approximate number of acres owned or leased by landowners as indicated by respondents to the 2025 Landowner Elk Survey. The x-axis indicates the percentage of all respondents and the number to the right of the horizontal green bars represents the actual number of respondents ( $N = 347$ ).

3) To your knowledge, how frequently did you have elk on your land in the past 24 months?

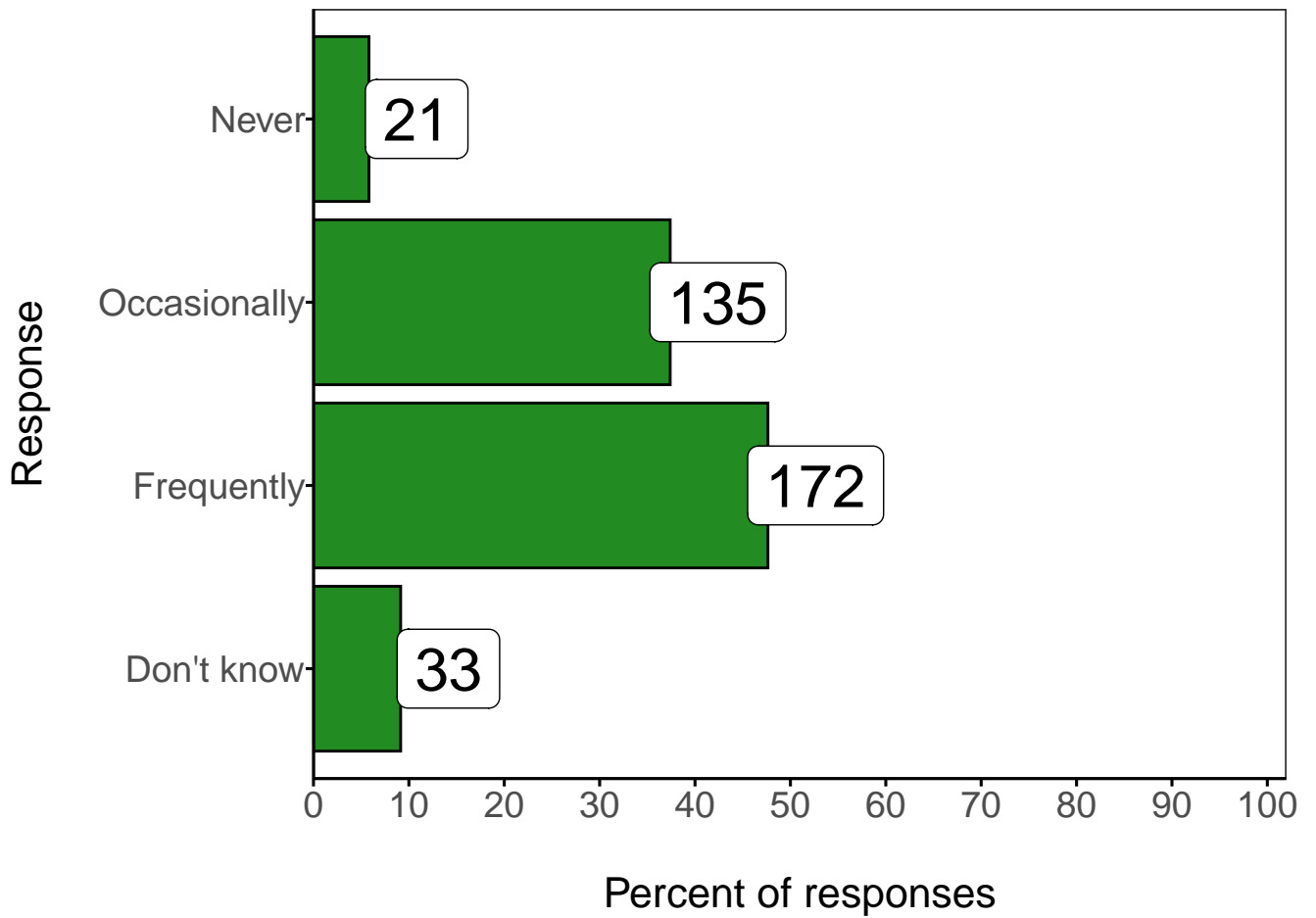


Figure 3: The frequency in which landowners had elk on their land as indicated by respondents to the 2025 Landowner Elk Survey. The x-axis indicates the percentage of all respondents and the number to the right of the green bars represents the actual number of respondents ( $N = 361$ ).

## 4) How do you feel about the number of elk on your land in the past 24 months?

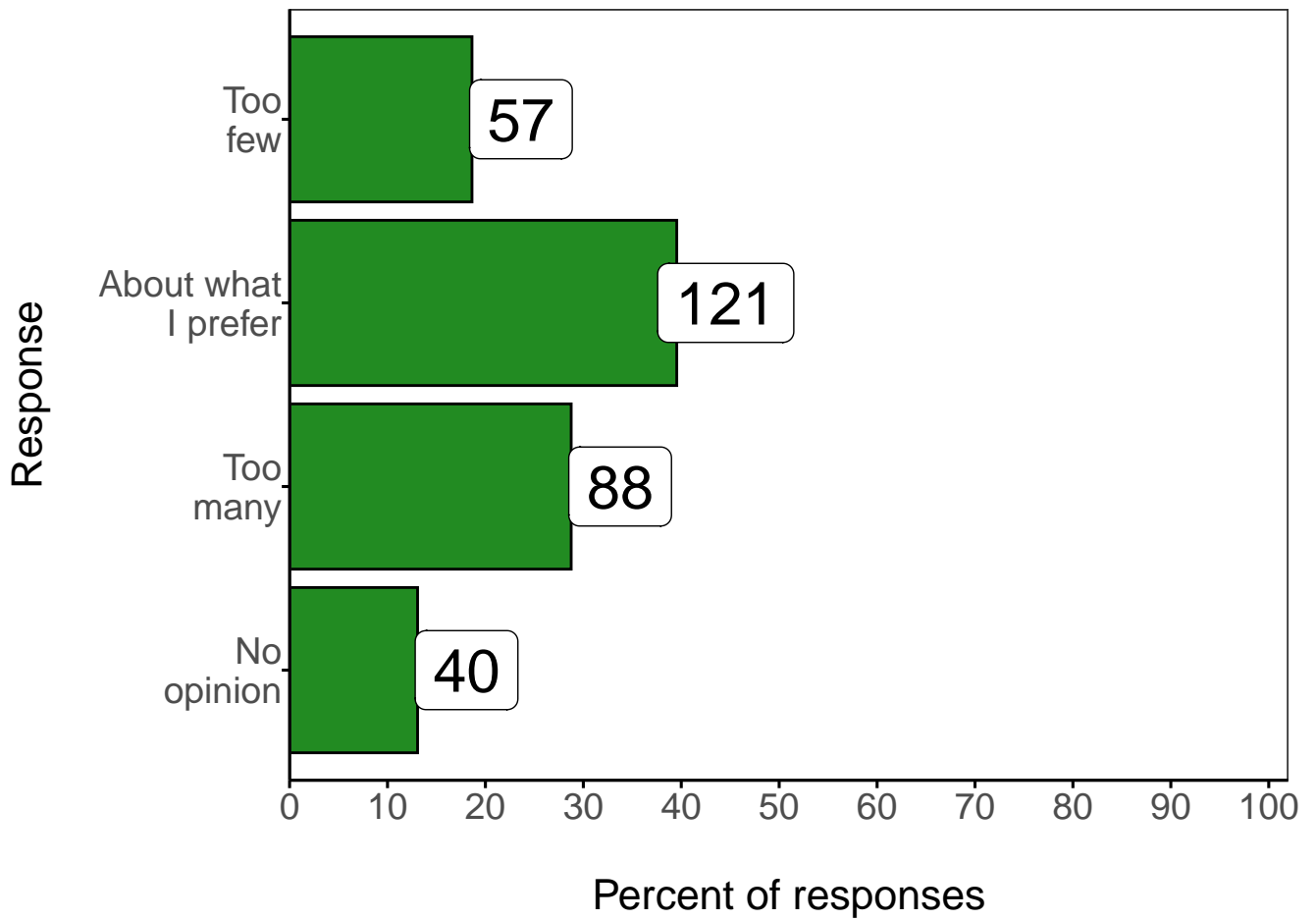


Figure 4: Attitude about the number of elk that were present on the landowners' property in the previous 24 months indicated by respondents to the 2025 Landowner Elk Survey. The x-axis indicates the percentage of all respondents and the number to the right of the green bars represents the actual number of respondents. Responses are limited to those who reported having elk on their land (N = 306).



5) How much, if any, damage from elk occurred on your land during the past 24 months?

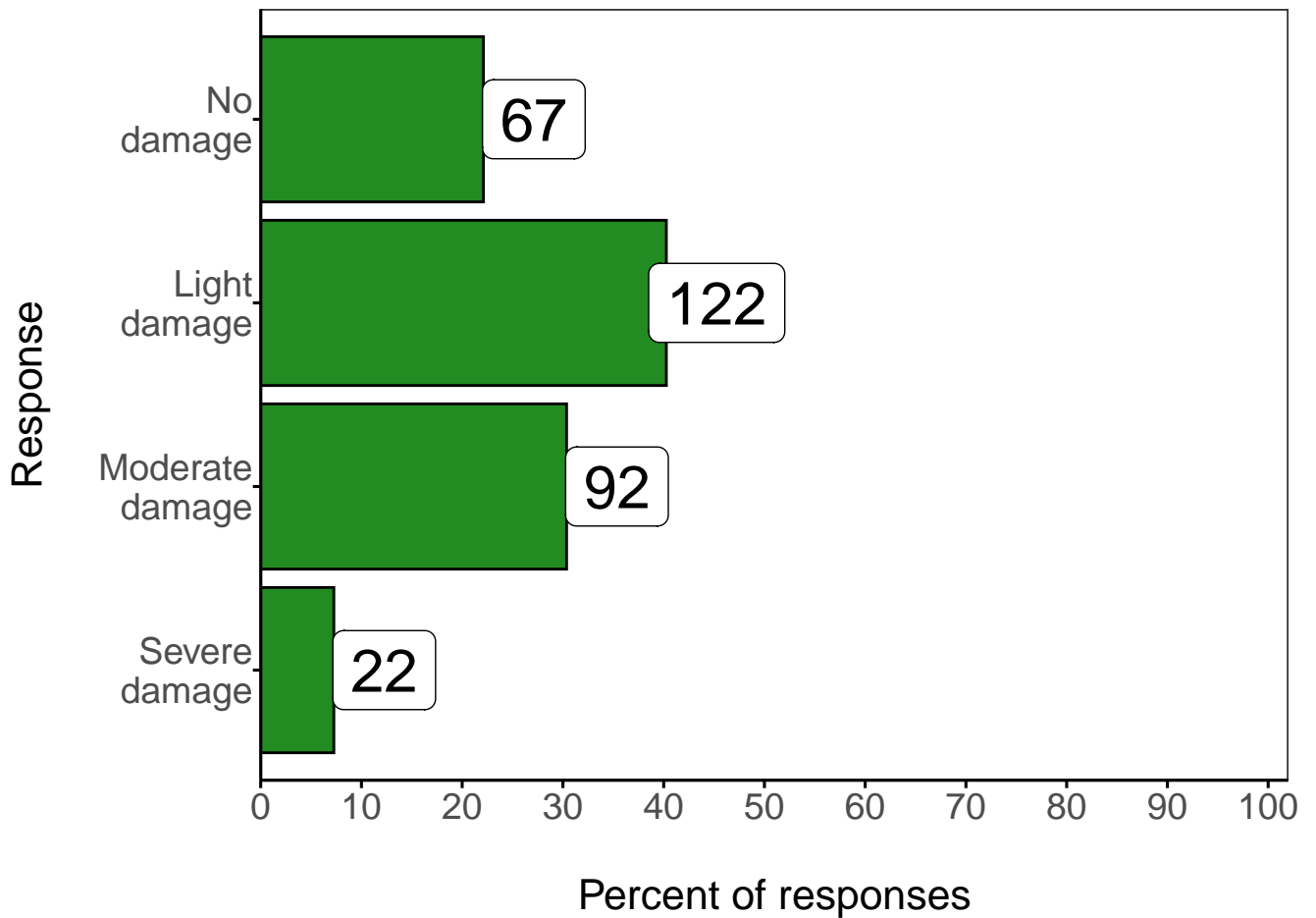


Figure 5: The severity of damage caused by elk to landowner property in the previous 24 months indicated by respondents to the 2025 Landowner Elk Survey. The x-axis indicates the percentage of all respondents and the number to the right of the green bars represents the actual number of respondents. Responses are limited to those who reported having elk on their land ( $N = 303$ ).

5a) How acceptable or unacceptable is the amount of damage from elk in the past 24 months?

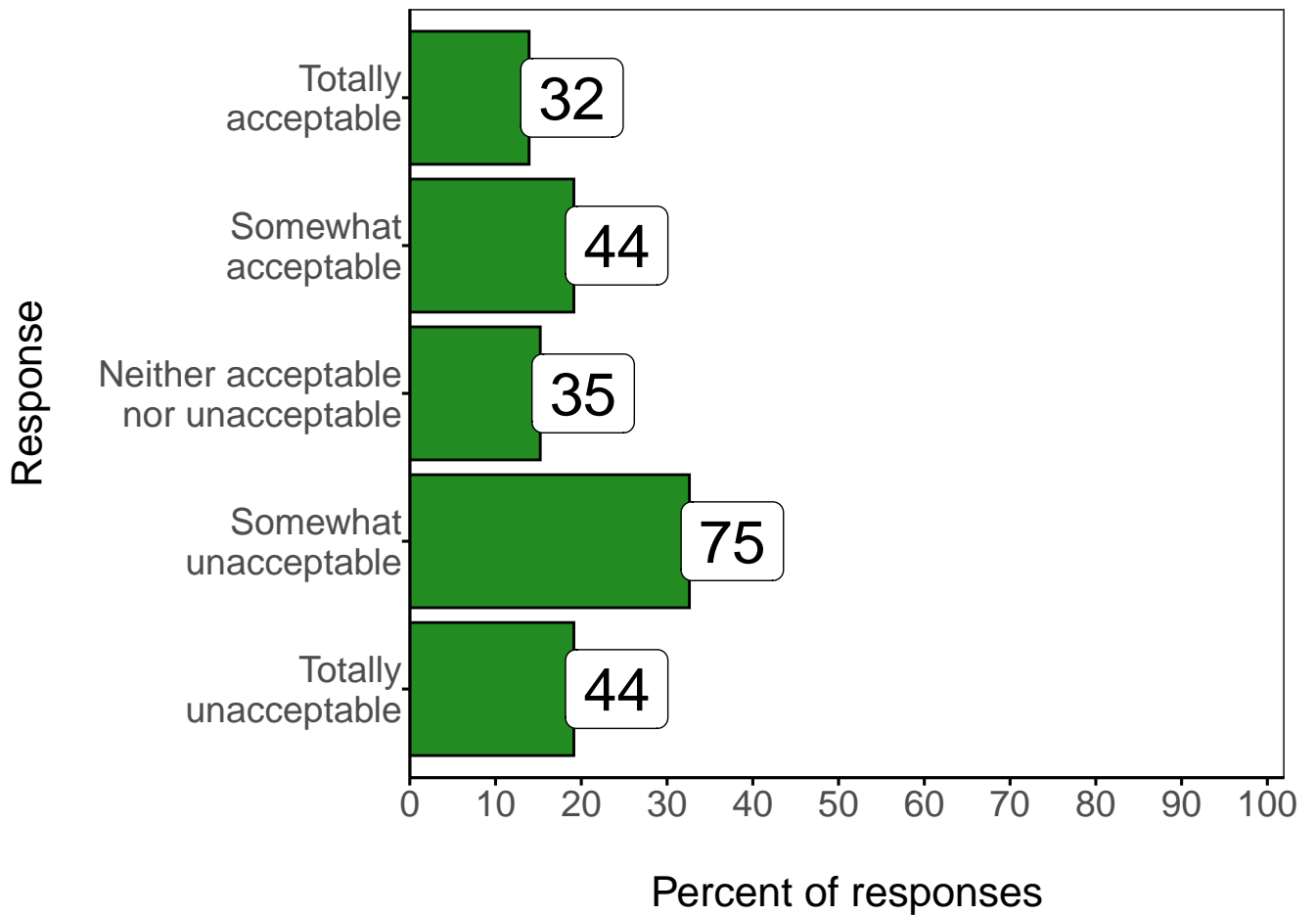


Figure 6: Acceptability of damage caused by elk to landowner property in the previous 24 months indicated by respondents to the 2025 Landowner Elk Survey. The x-axis indicates the percentage of all respondents and the number to the right of the green bars represents the actual number of respondents. Responses are limited to those who reported that damage occurred ( $N = 230$ ).

5b) What kind of damage from elk occurred on your land during the past 24 months?

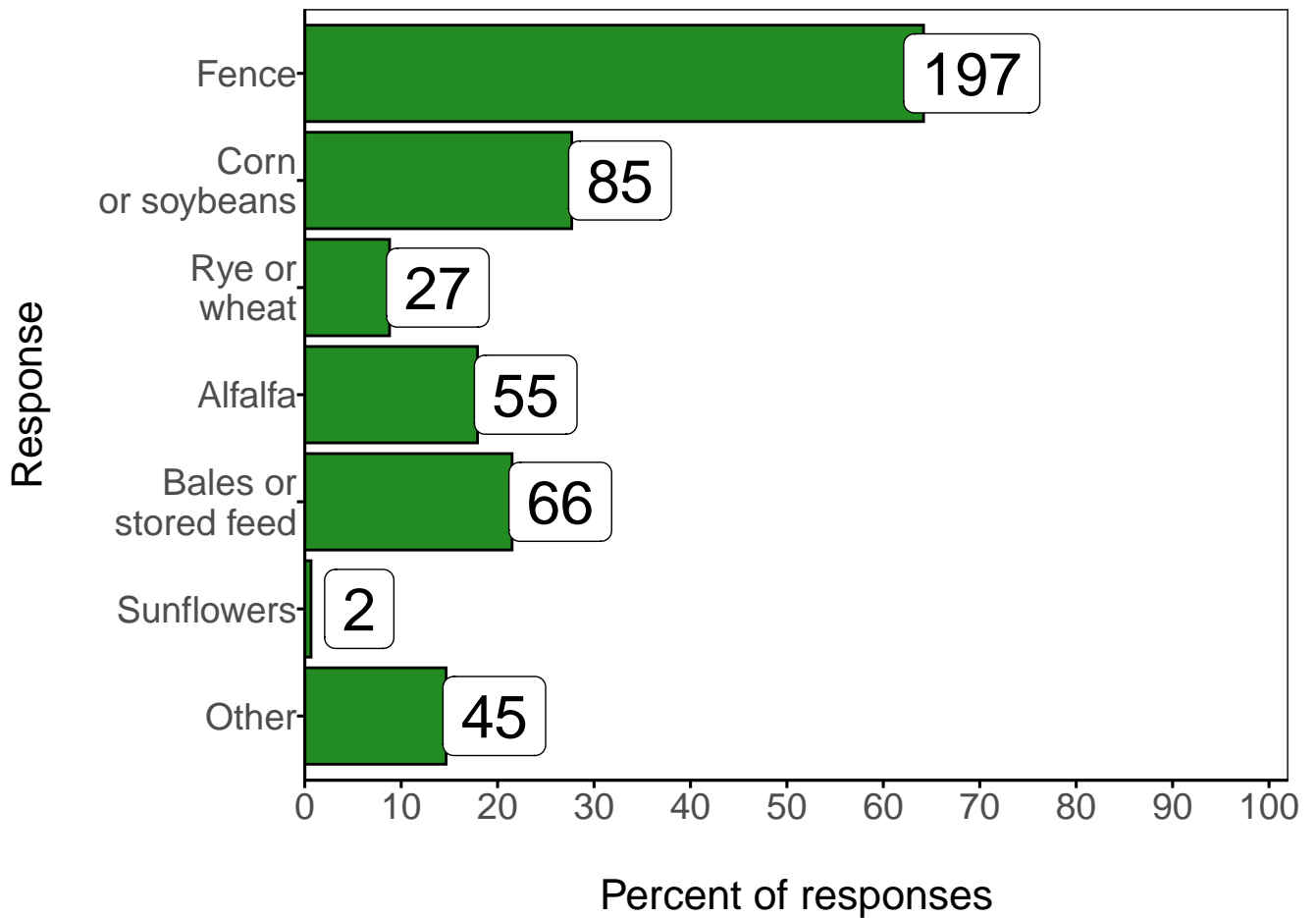


Figure 7: The kind of damage caused by elk to landowner property in the previous 24 months indicated by respondents to the 2025 Landowner Elk Survey. The x-axis indicates the percentage of all respondents and the number to the right of the green bars represents the actual number of respondents. Responses are limited to those who reported that damage occurred (N = 307).

6) Are you aware that the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission has mitigation techniques, supplies, and materials available to help reduce damage?

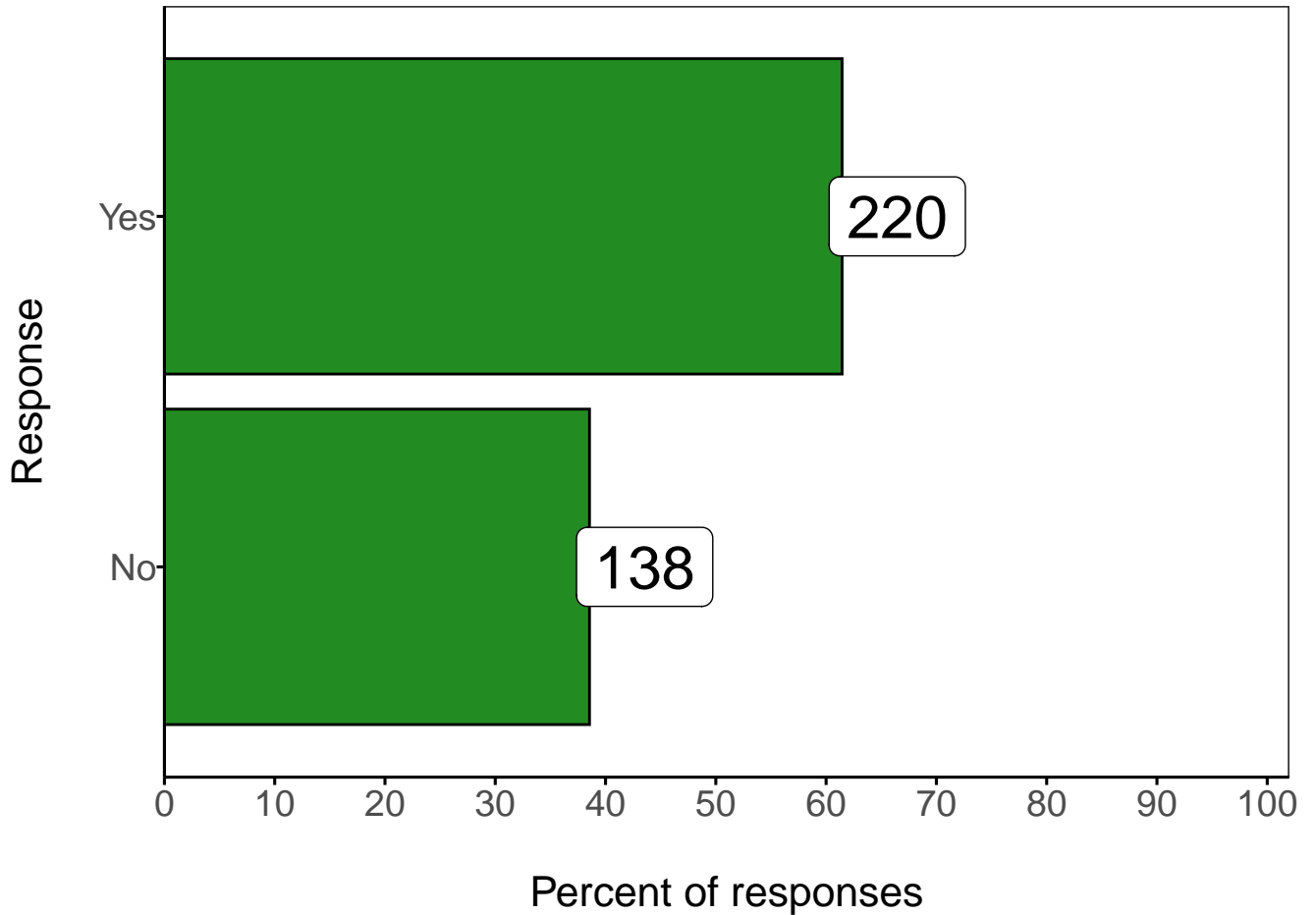


Figure 8: Awareness of NGPC elk-mitigation indicated by respondents to the 2025 Landowner Elk Survey. The x-axis indicates the percentage of all respondents and the number to the right of the green bars represents the actual number of respondents (N = 358).

7) Are you aware that the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission can add landowners to a depredation list that would allow hunters to contact you for permission to hunt elk?

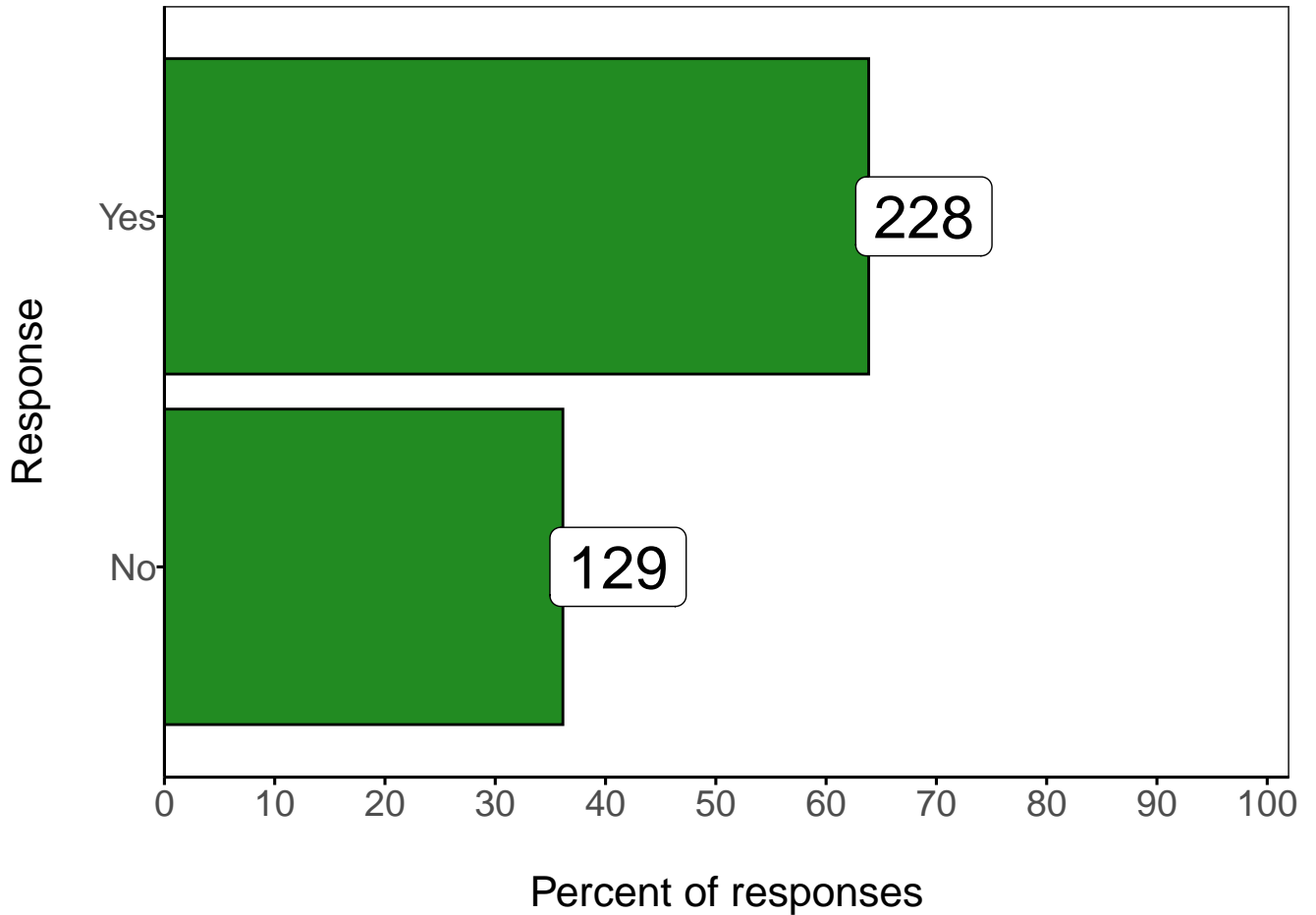


Figure 9: Awareness of NGPC ability to add landowners to depredation list indicated by respondents to the 2025 Landowner Elk Survey. The x-axis indicates the percentage of all respondents and the number to the right of the green bars represents the actual number of respondents ( $N = 357$ ).

8) Are you aware that the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission may issue permits to landowners to kill elk outside the hunting season to help reduce damage to their property?

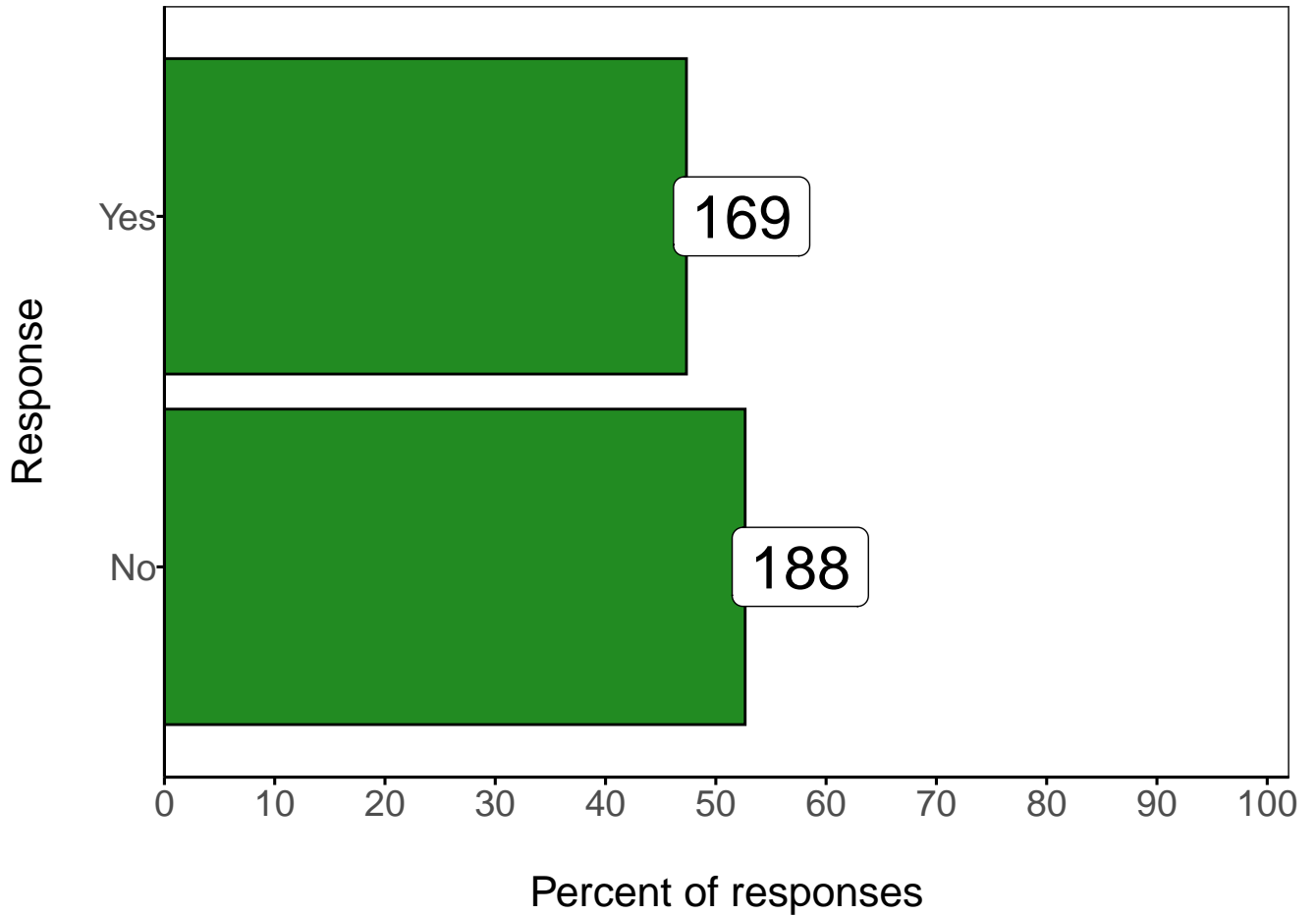


Figure 10: Awareness of NGPC ability to issue special permits indicated by respondents to the 2025 Landowner Elk Survey. The x-axis indicates the percentage of all respondents and the number to the right of the green bars represents the actual number of respondents ( $N = 357$ ).

9) Have you ever contacted the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission for assistance in reducing elk damage on your land?

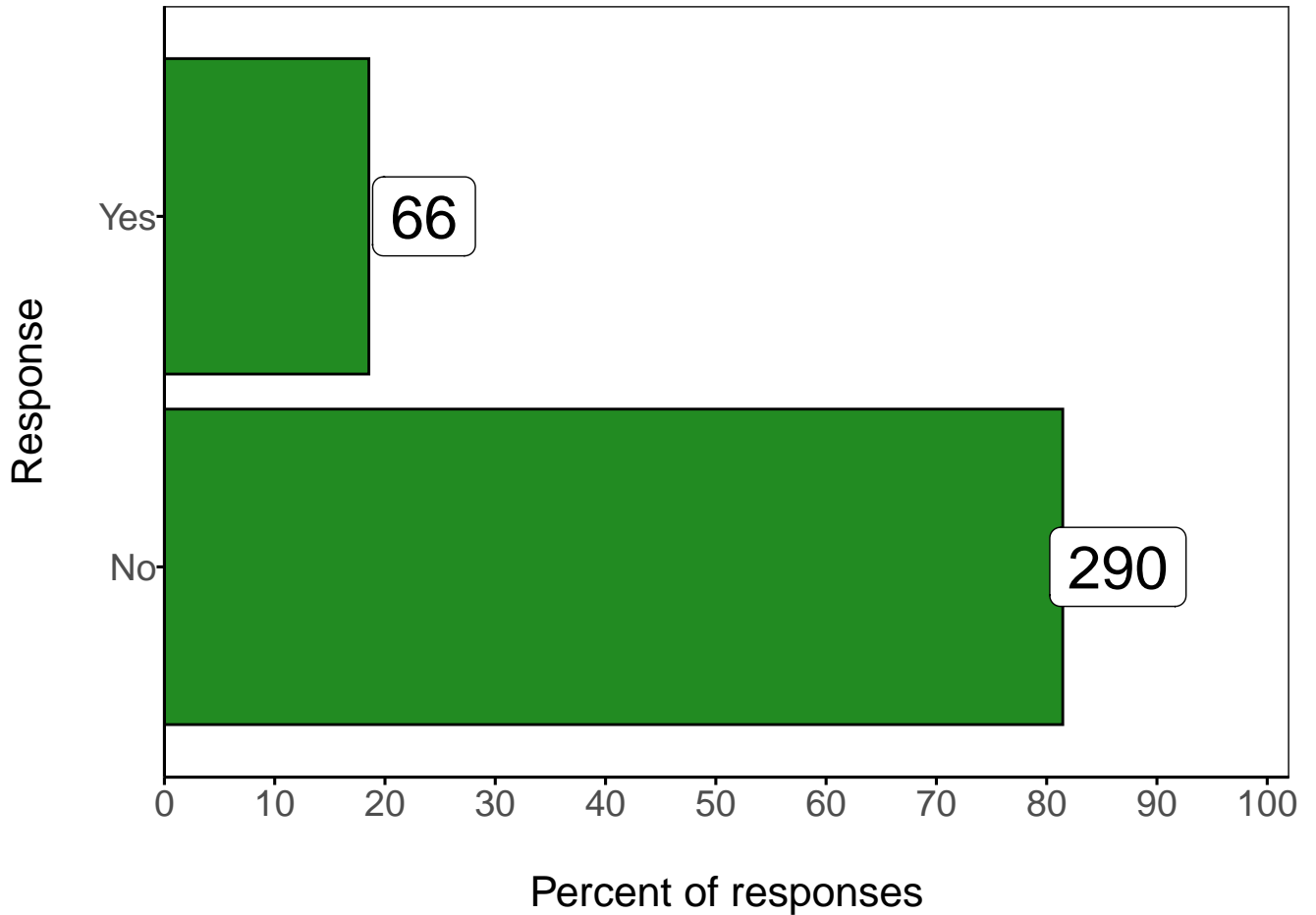


Figure 11: Whether respondent ever contacted NGPC for assistance in reducing elk damage indicated by respondents to the 2025 Landowner Elk Survey. The x-axis indicates the percentage of all respondents and the number to the right of the green bars represents the actual number of respondents (N = 356).

9a) In what year did you last contact the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission concerning damage caused by elk?

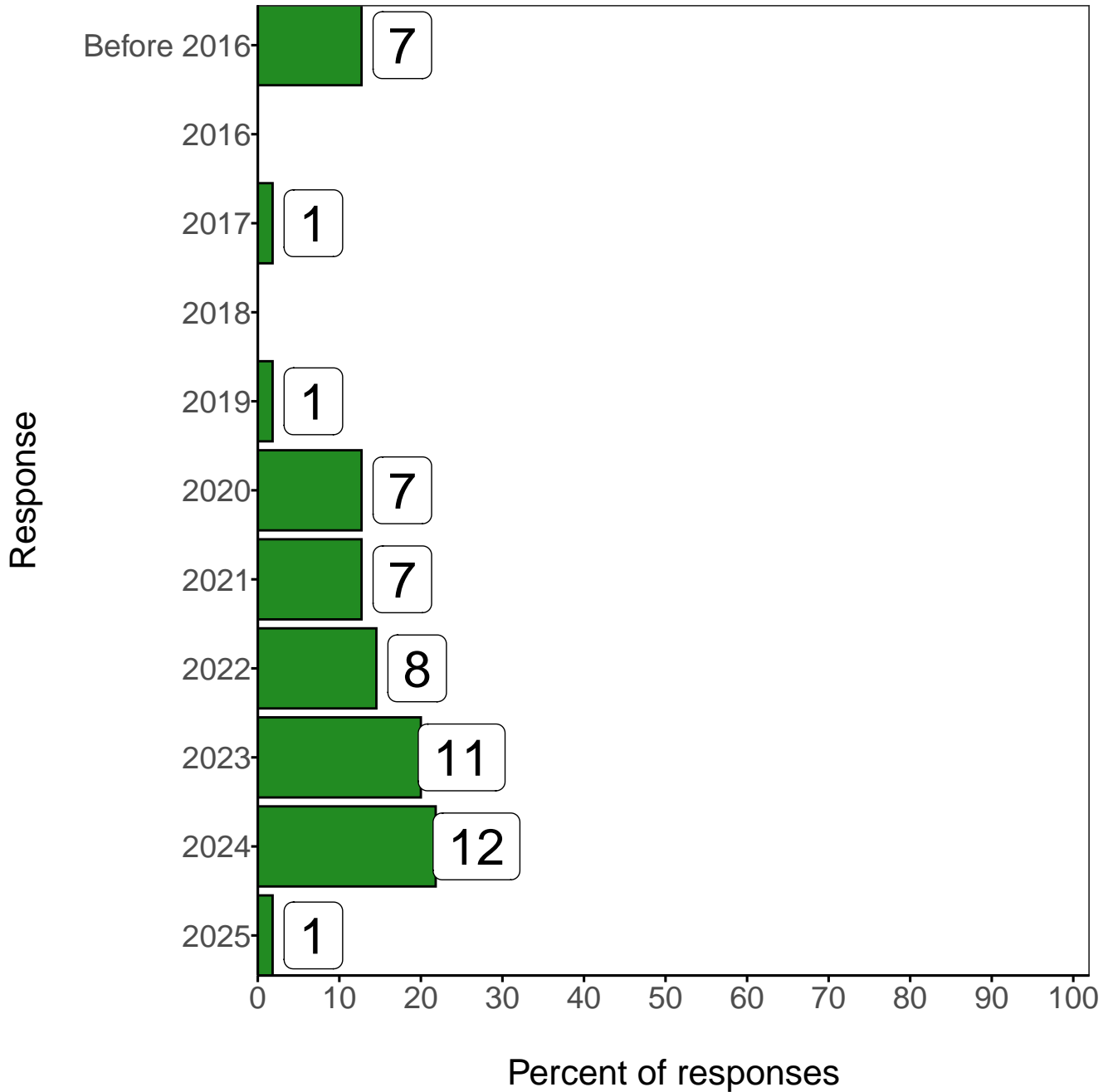


Figure 12: Year in which landowners most recently contacted Nebraska Game and Parks concerning damage caused by elk indicated by respondents to the 2025 Landowner Elk Survey. The x-axis indicates the percentage of all respondents and the number to the right of the horizontal green bars represents the actual number of respondents. Responses are limited to those who reported that they contacted NGPC (N = 55).



9b) How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the assistance you received?

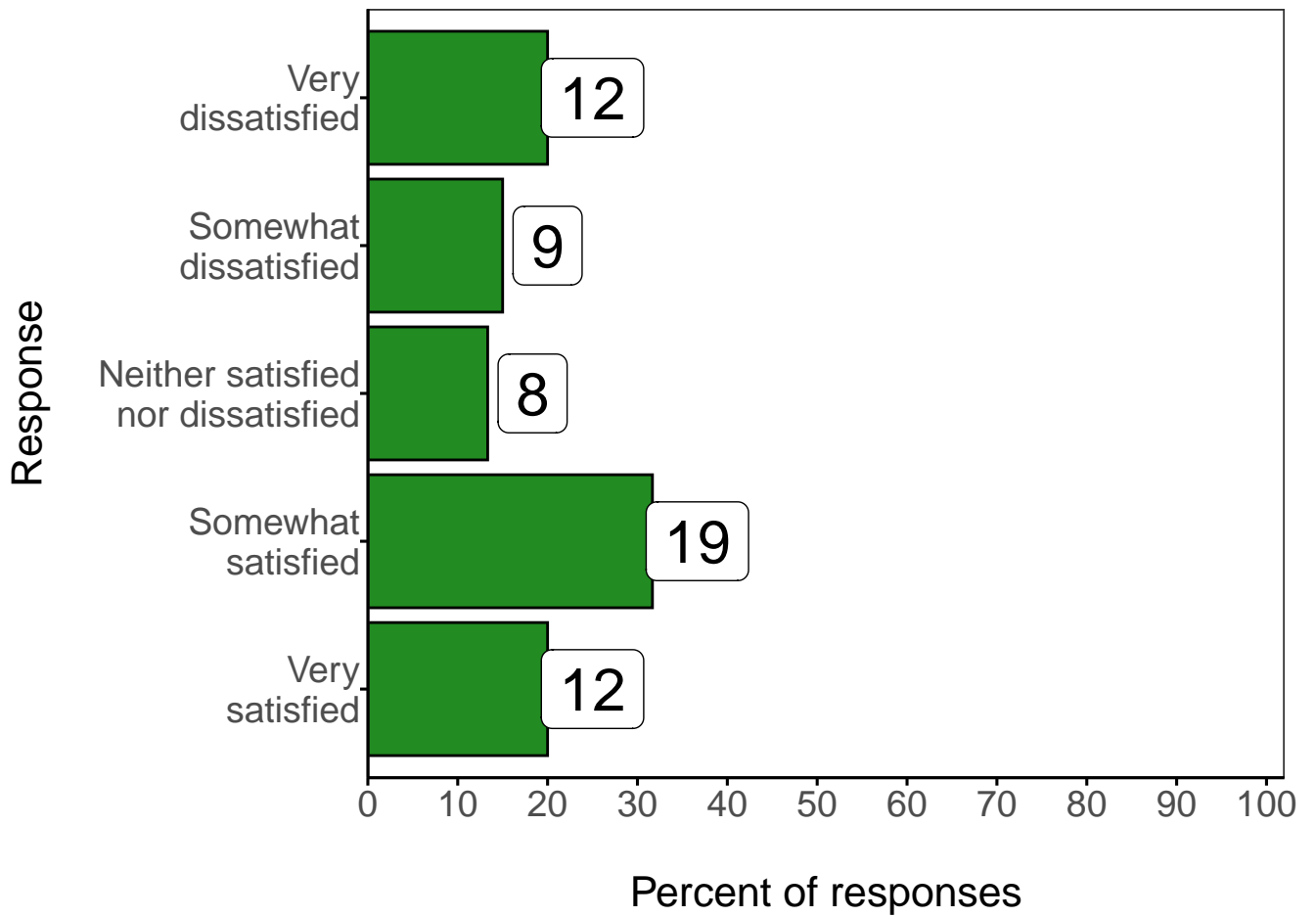


Figure 13: Satisfaction with NGPC indicated by respondents to the 2025 Landowner Elk Survey. The x-axis indicates the percentage of all respondents and the number to the right of the green bars represents the actual number of respondents. Responses are limited to those who reported that they contacted NGPC (N = 60).

10) Did anyone (including yourself) hunt elk on your land in the past 24 months?

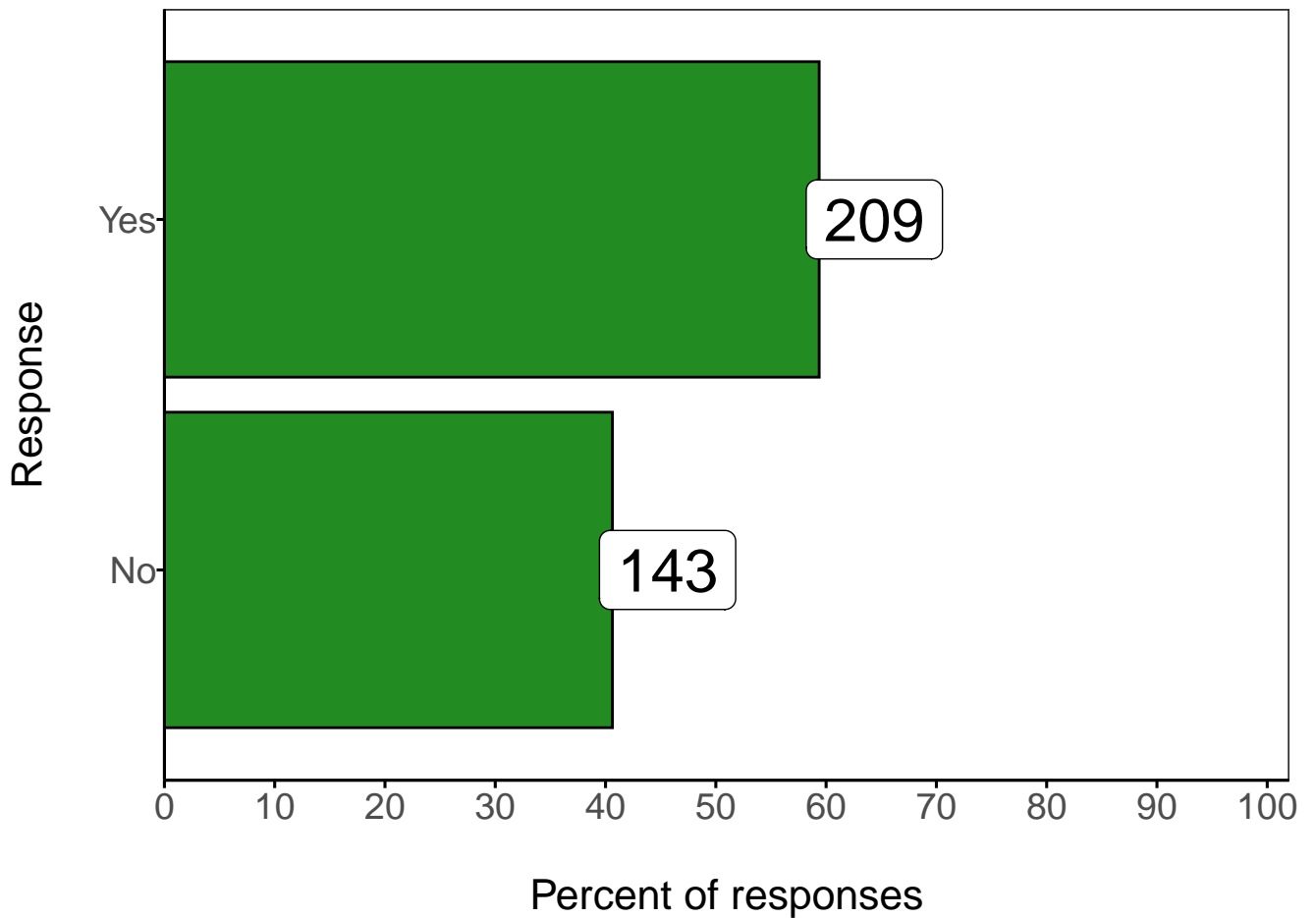


Figure 14: Whether or not anyone hunted elk on land in the previous 24 months indicated by respondents to the 2025 Landowner Elk Survey. The x-axis indicates the percentage of all respondents and the number to the right of the green bars represents the actual number of respondents ( $N = 352$ ).

10a) Did you yourself hunt elk on your land in the past 24 months?

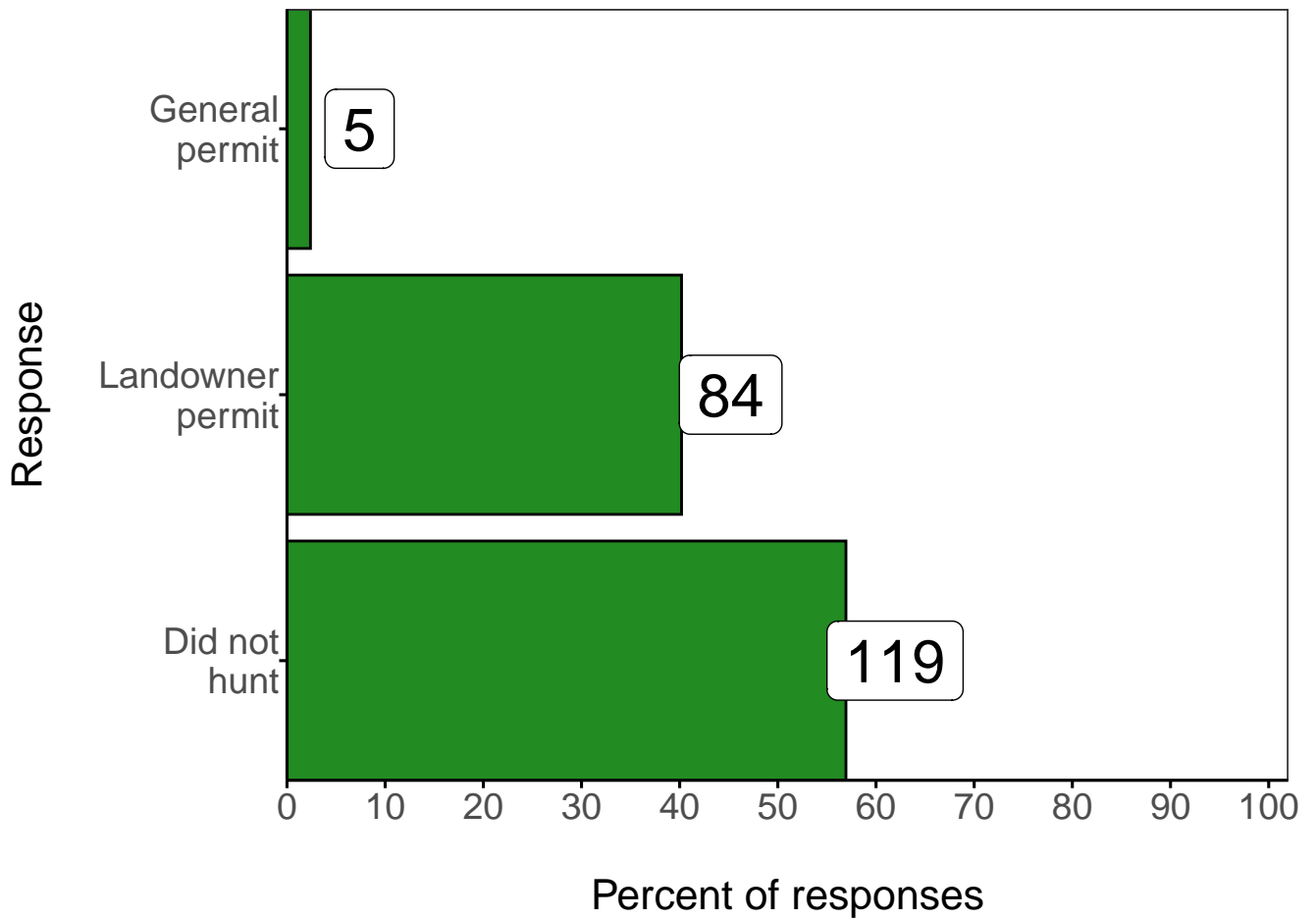


Figure 15: Type of permit landowner used to personally hunt elk on their land in the previous 24 months indicated by respondents to the 2025 Landowner Elk Survey. The x-axis indicates the percentage of all responses and the number to the right of the green bars represents the actual number of responses ( $N = 209$ ). Responses are limited to those who indicated that someone had hunted elk on their in the past 24 months.

10b) Who else did you allow to hunt elk on your land in the past 24 months? (select all that apply)

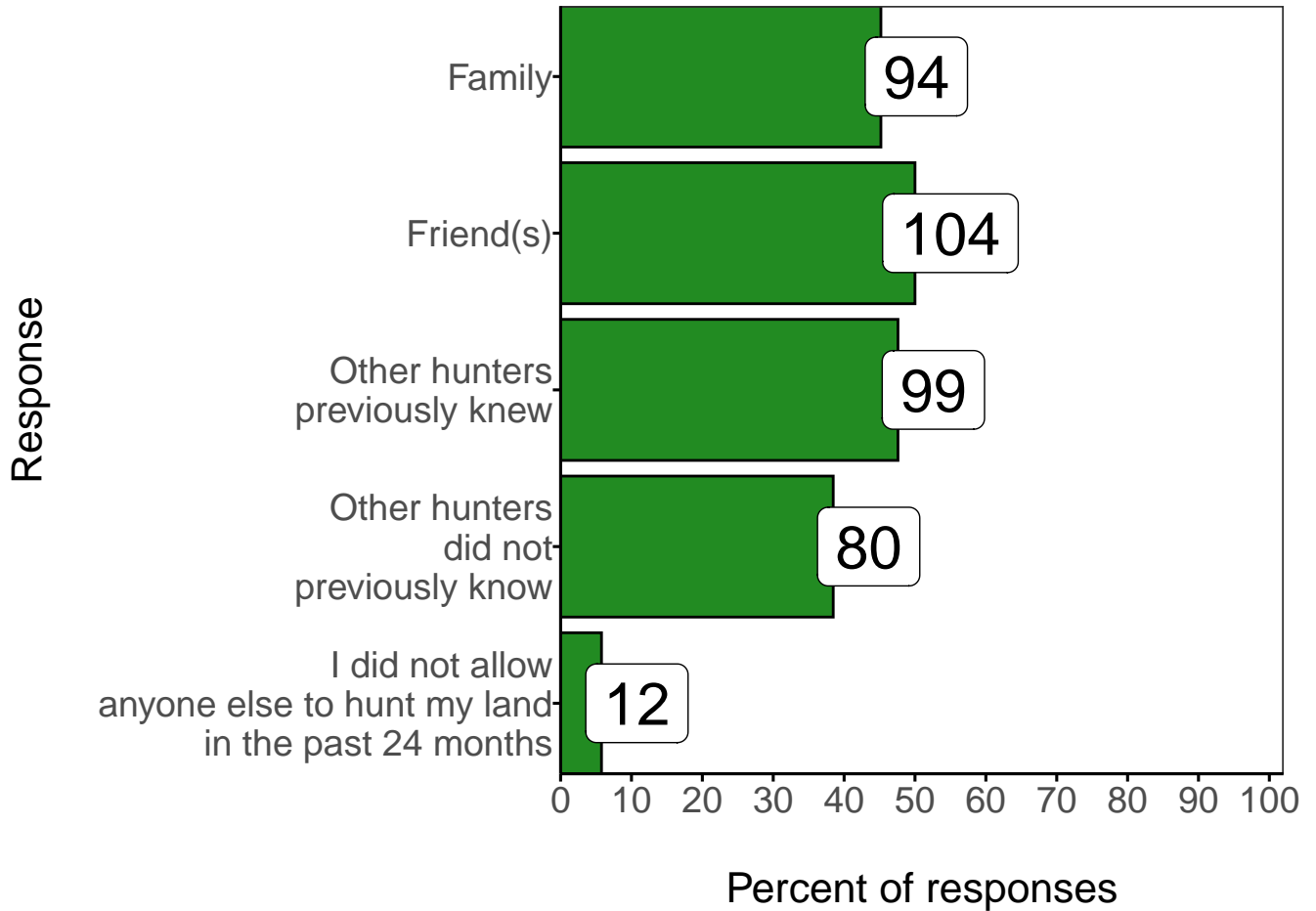


Figure 16: Persons other than the landowner who hunted elk on the landowner's property indicated by respondents to the 2025 Landowner Elk Survey. The x-axis indicates the percentage of all responses and the number to the right of the green bars represents the actual number of responses ( $N = 208$ ). Responses are limited to those who indicated that someone had hunted elk on their in the past 24 months.

10c) Which elk did you allow other hunters to harvest on your land?

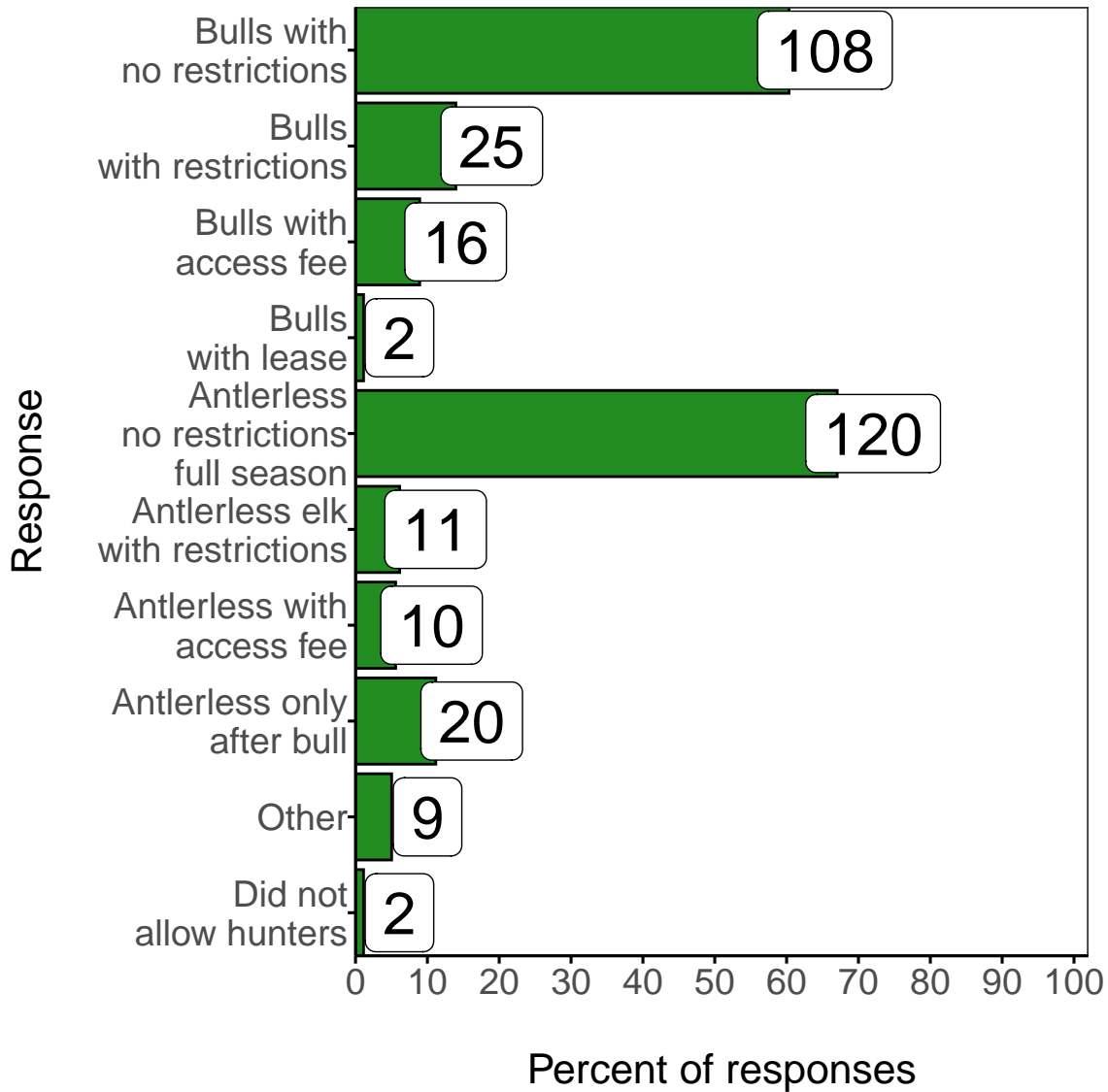


Figure 17: The type of elk landowners allowed others to harvest on their property indicated by respondents to the 2025 Landowner Elk Survey. The x-axis indicates the percentage of all responses and the number to the right of the green bars represents the actual number of responses. Responses are limited to those who did not select that they did not allow any other hunters (N = 179).

10d) Did you allow antlerless hunters access prior to the bull season?

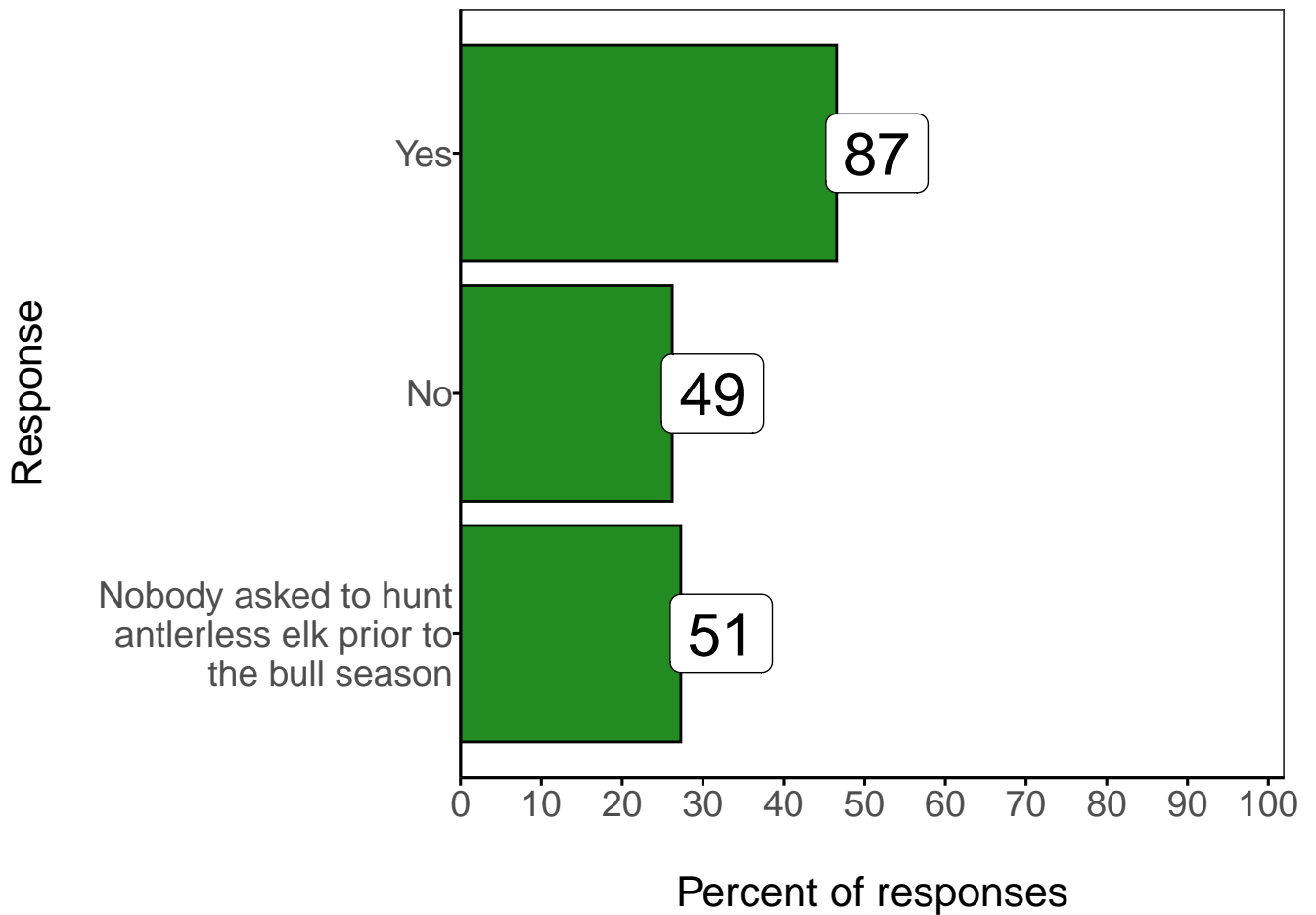


Figure 18: Whether or not landowners allowed antlerless hunter access prior to the bull season indicated by respondents to the 2025 Landowner Elk Survey. The x-axis indicates the percentage of all respondents and the number to the right of the green bars represents the actual number of respondents. Responses are limited to those who did state that hunting occurred on their land, but did not select that they did not allow any other hunters (N = 187).

10e) How many total people (including yourself) hunted elk on your land in the in the 2024 elk hunting season?

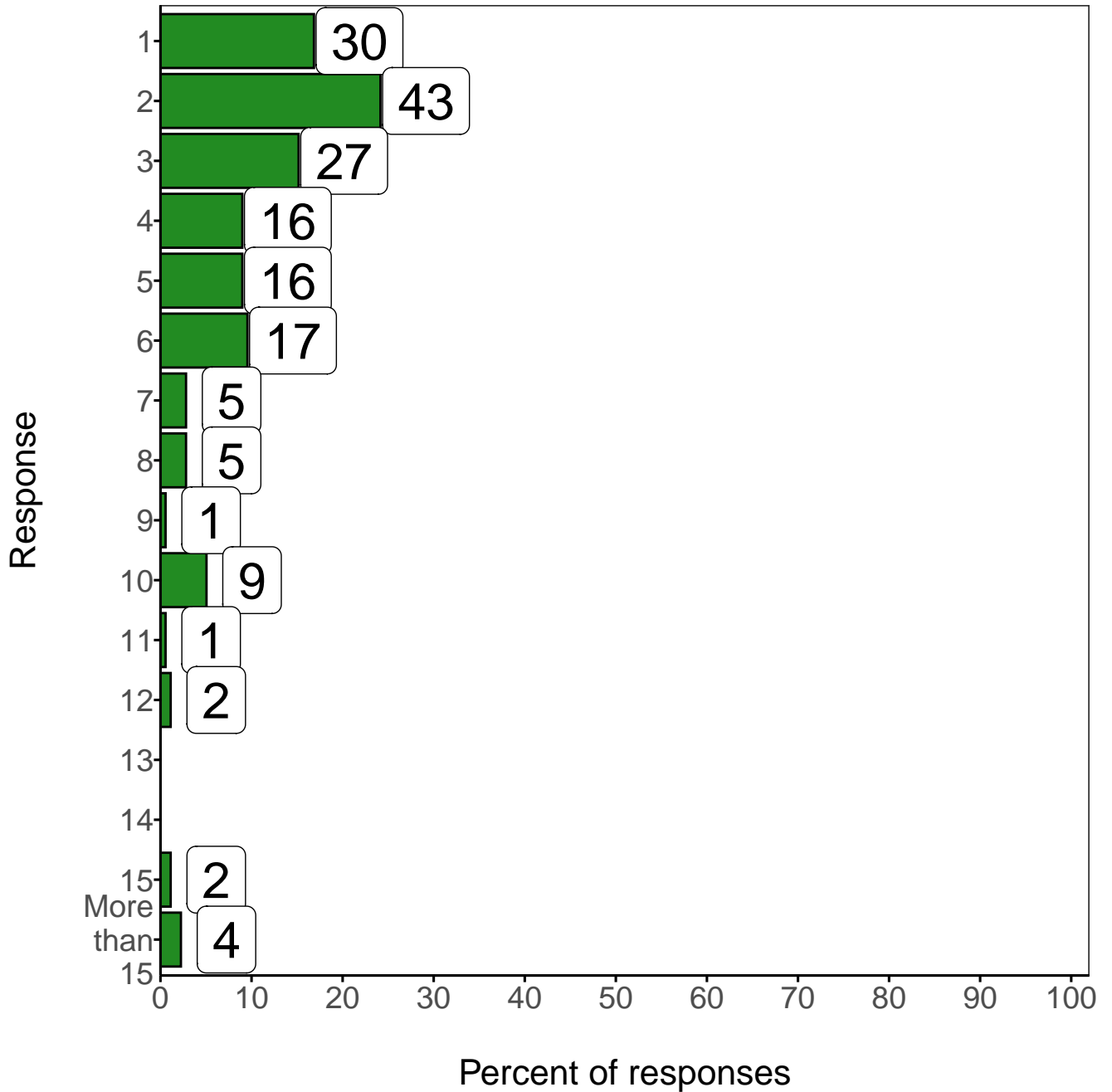


Figure 19: The total number of individuals who hunted elk on the landowners' property in the past 24 months indicated by respondents to the 2025 Landowner Elk Survey. The x-axis indicates the percentage of all respondents and the number to the right of the green bars represents the actual number of respondents (N = 178). Responses are limited to those who reported that someone had hunted elk on their property.

10f) How many bull and antlerless elk were harvested on your land in the past 24 months?

Bull elk

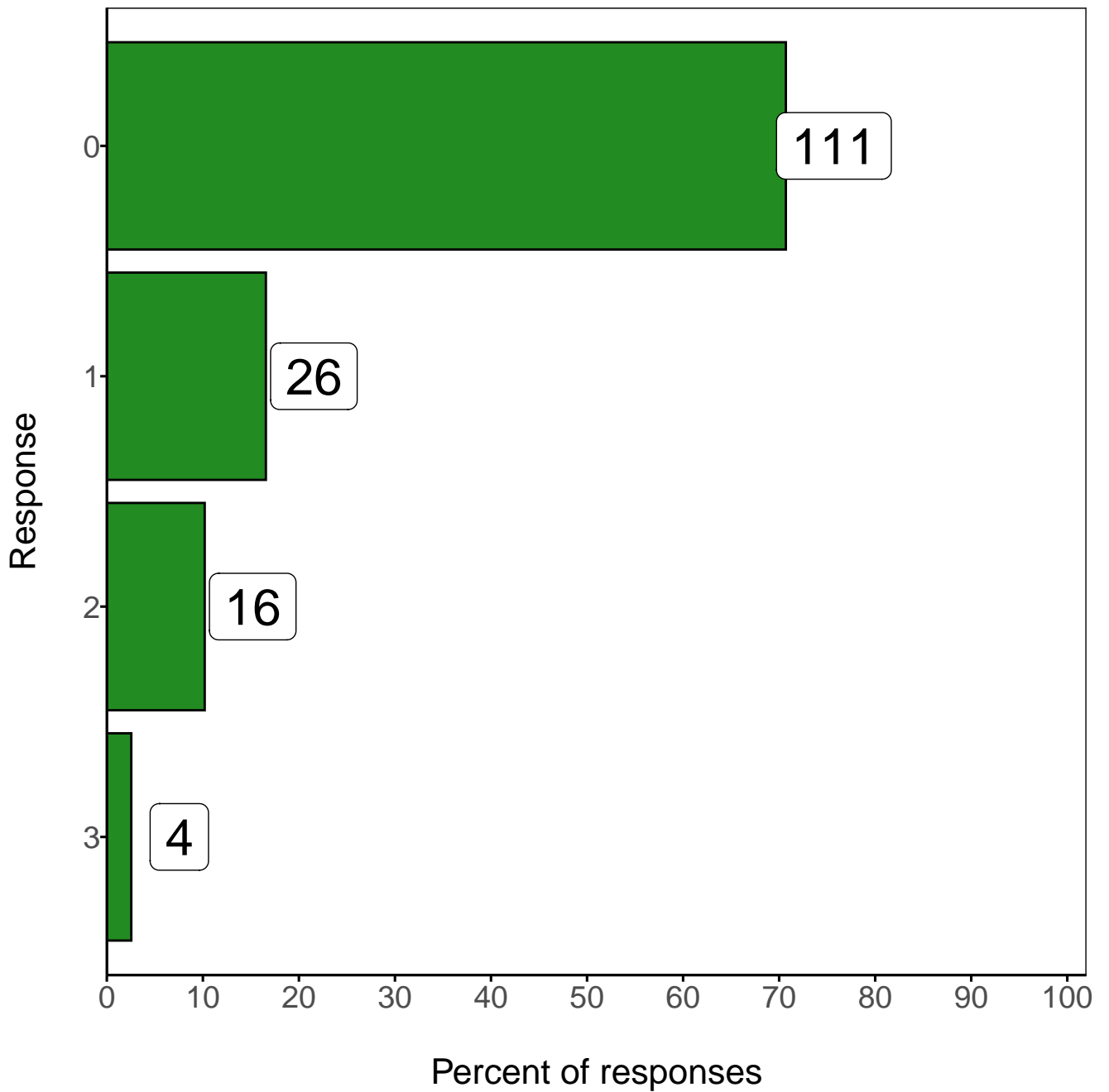


Figure 20: The total number of bulls harvested on landowner property in the past 24 months indicated by respondents to the 2025 Landowner Elk Survey. The x-axis indicates the percentage of all respondents and the number to the right of the green bars represents the actual number of respondents. Responses are limited to those who reported having elk on their land, and due to high item non-response rate, only those respondents who answered the question are represented (N = 157).



## Antlerless elk

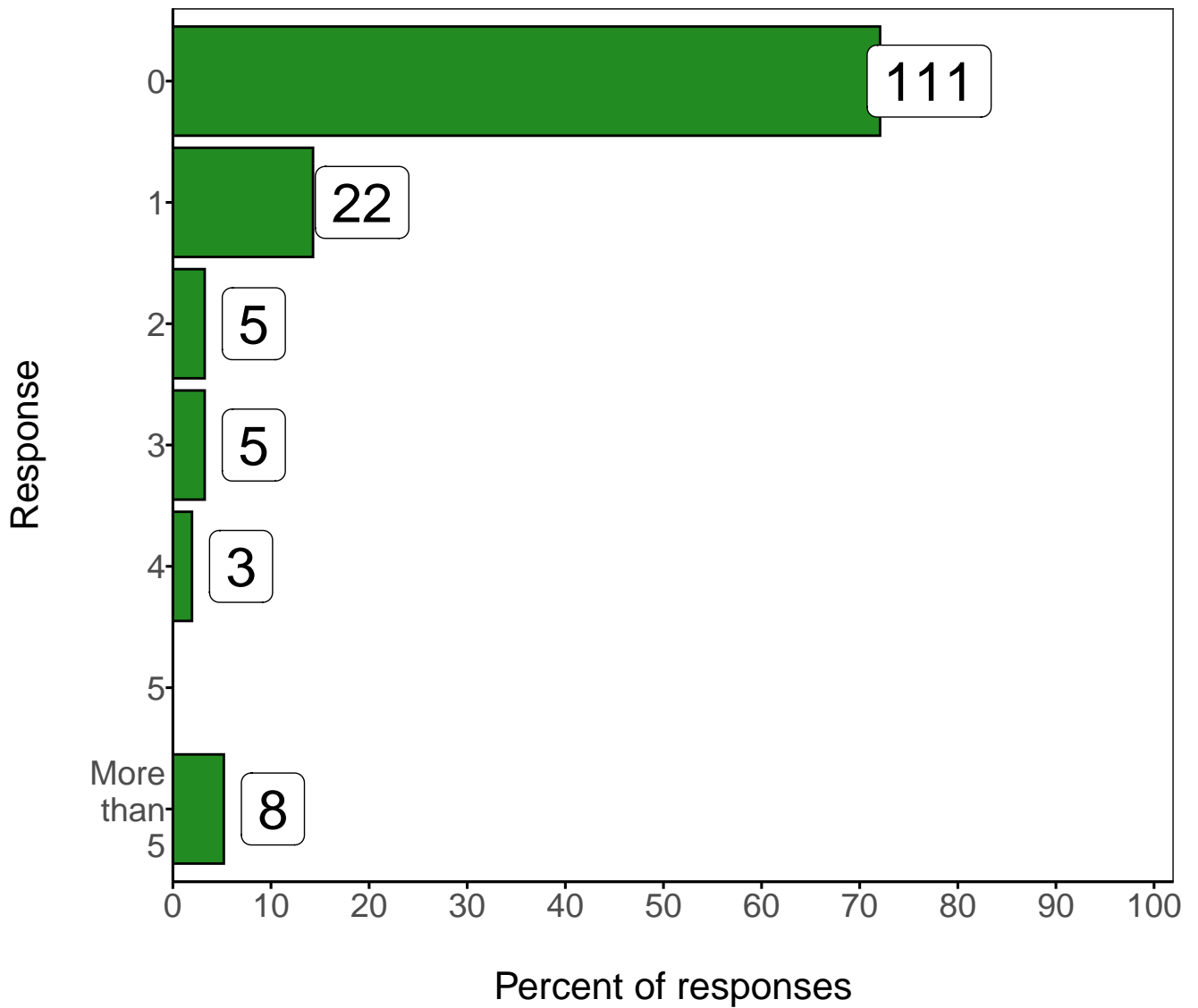


Figure 21: The total number of antlerless elk harvested on landowner property in the past 24 months indicated by respondents to the 2025 Landowner Elk Survey. The x-axis indicates the percentage of all respondents and the number to the right of the green bars represents the actual number of respondents. Responses are limited to those who reported having elk on their land, and due to high item non-response rate, only those respondents who answered the question are represented ( $N = 154$ ).

11) Currently elk landowner permit holders are allowed to hunt the entire elk management unit. Would you be in favor of landowners only hunting their own land within the elk landowner zone?

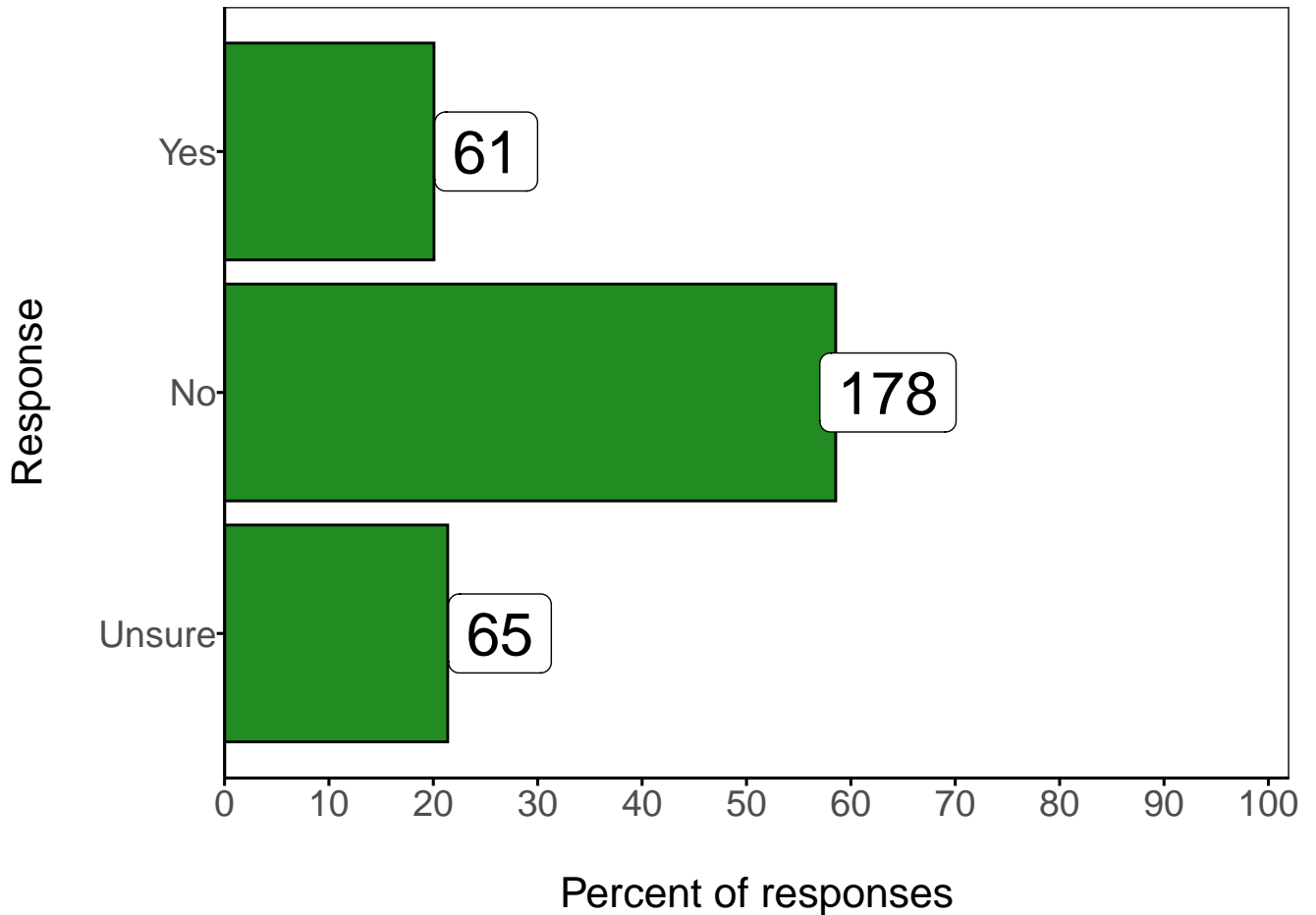


Figure 22: Attitudes about landowners only hunting their own land within the elk landowner zone indicated by respondents to the 2025 Landowner Elk Survey. The x-axis indicates the percentage of all respondents and the number to the right of the green bars represents the actual number of respondents ( $N = 304$ ).

11a) Would you be in favor of landowners only hunting their own land during the bull season?

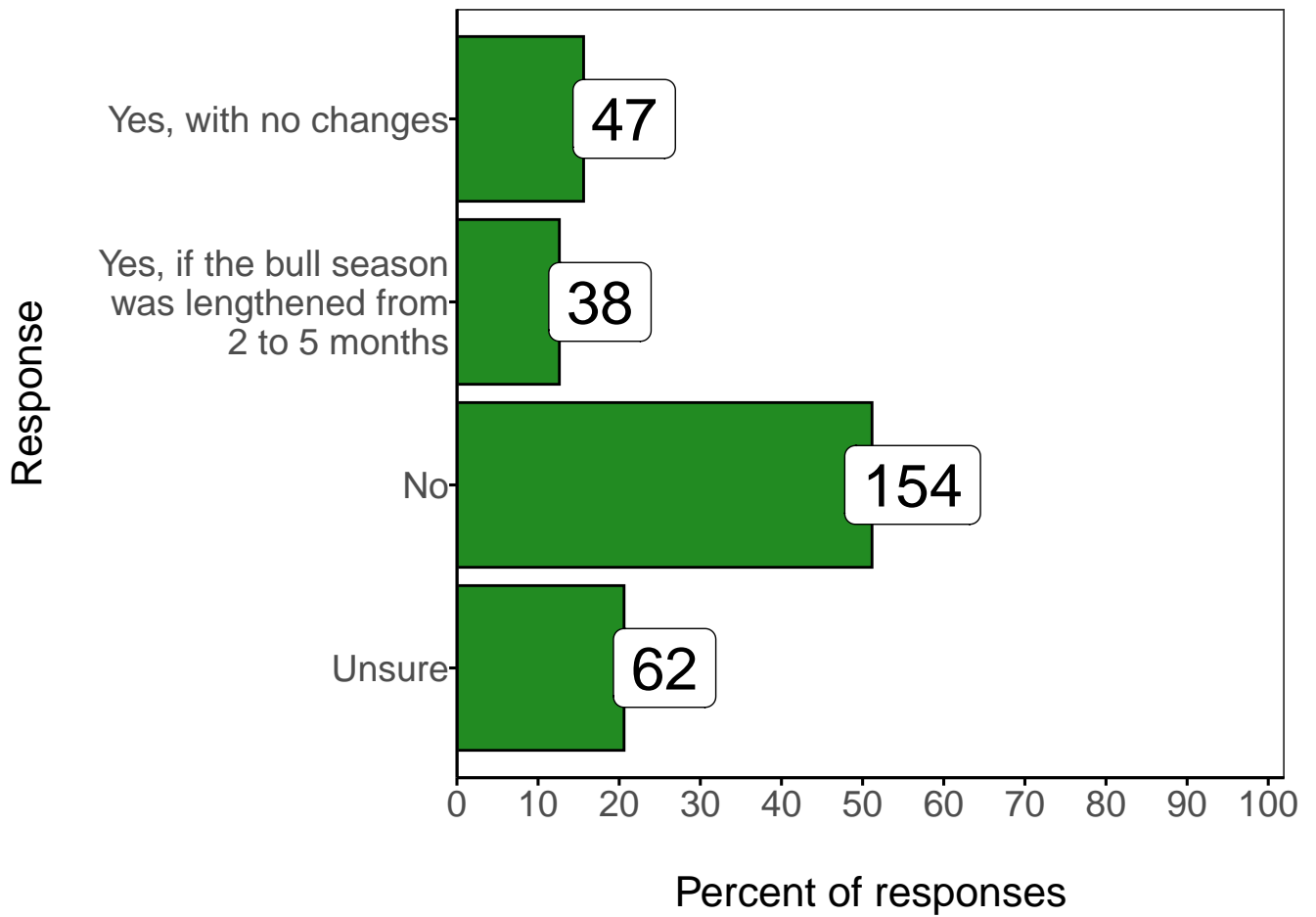


Figure 23: Attitudes about landowners only hunting their own land during the bull season indicated by respondents to the 2025 Landowner Elk Survey. The x-axis indicates the percentage of all respondents and the number to the right of the green bars represents the actual number of respondents (N = 301).

12) The current bull elk archery season runs from Sept. 1 – Oct. 31. How do you feel about the length of the bull archery season?

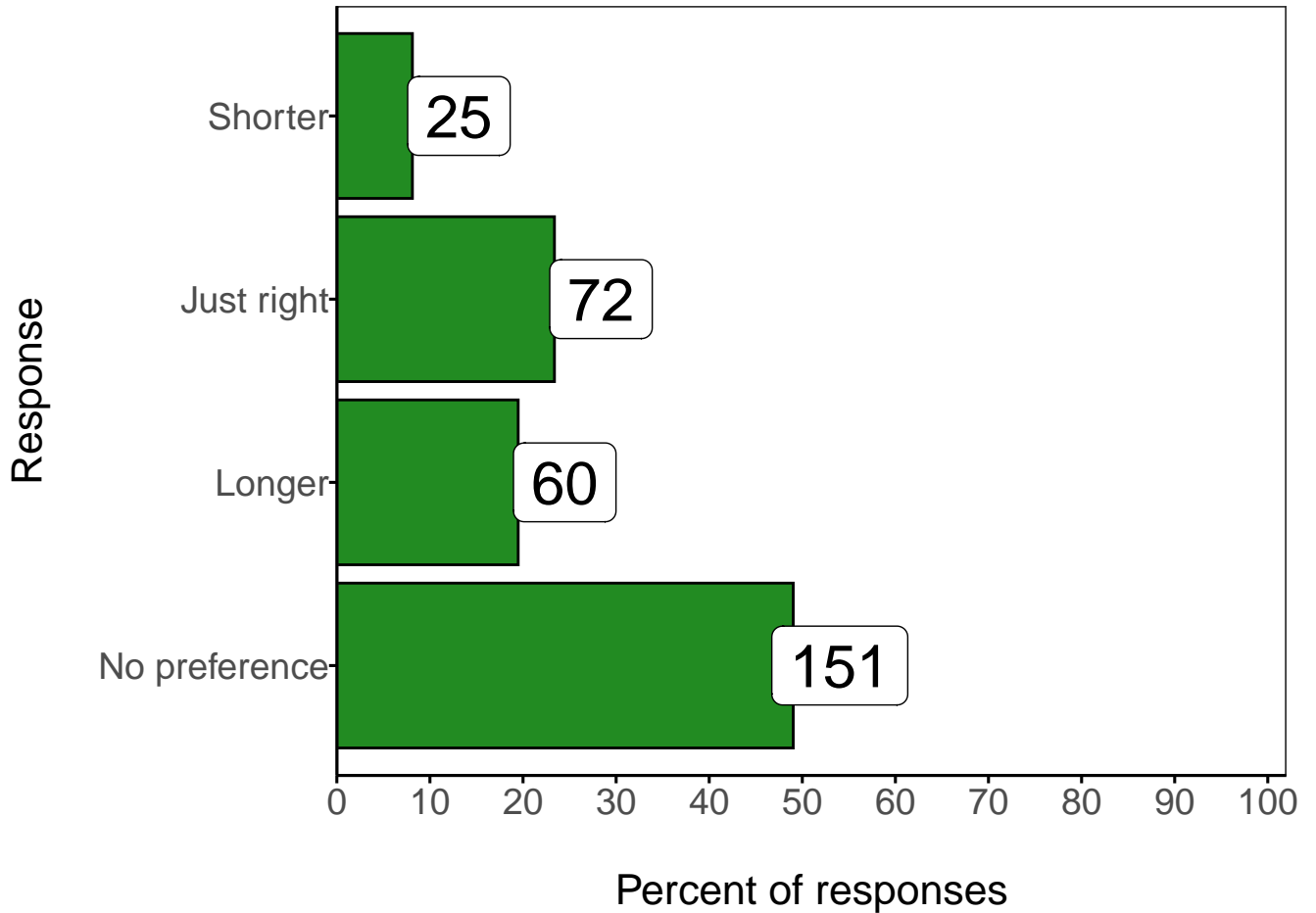


Figure 24: Attitudes about length of the bull archery season indicated by respondents to the 2025 Landowner Elk Survey. The x-axis indicates the percentage of all respondents and the number to the right of the green bars represents the actual number of respondents (N = 308).

12a) The current bull elk firearm season runs from Sept. 21 – Oct. 31. How do you feel about the length of the bull firearm season?

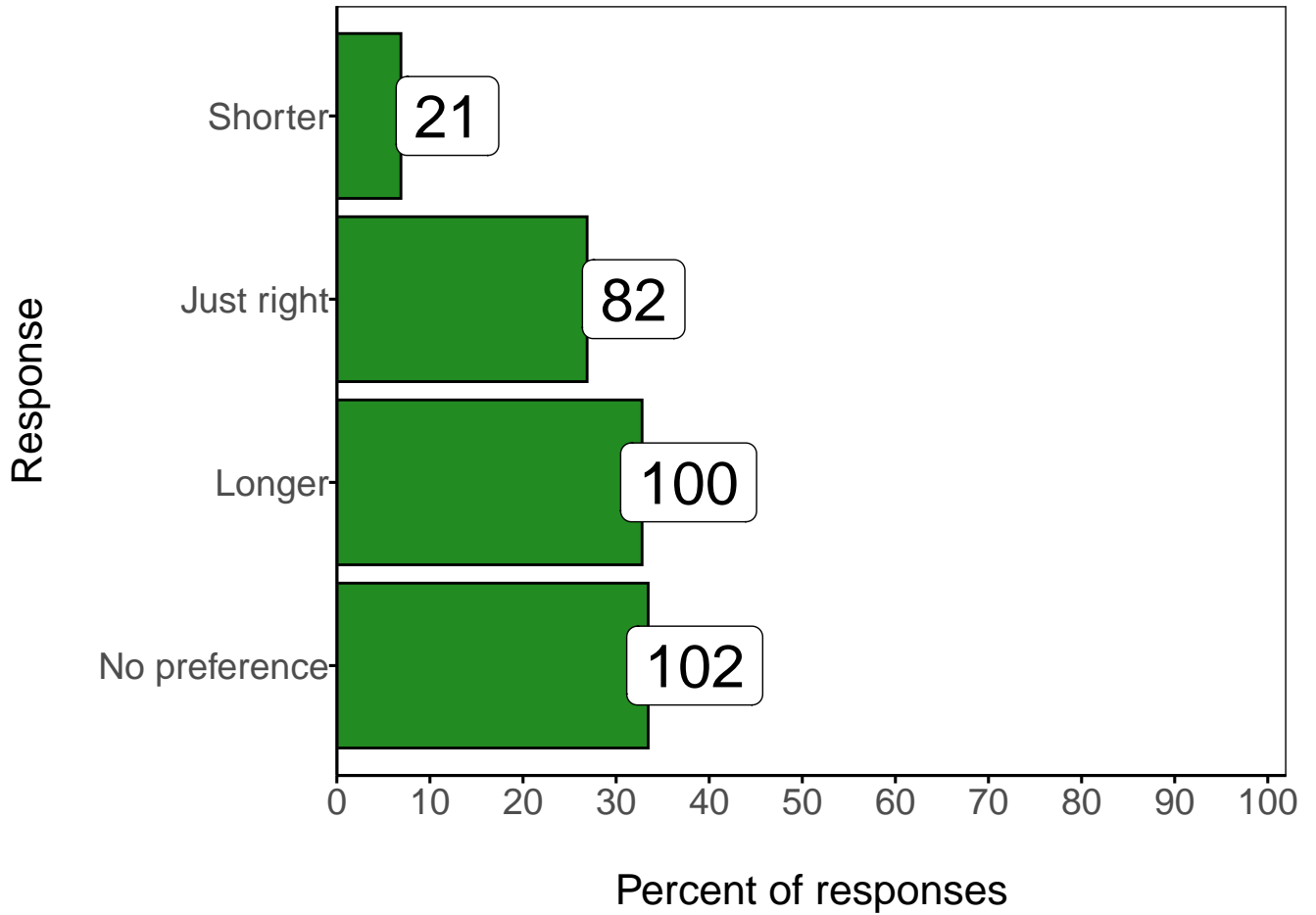


Figure 25: Attitudes about length of the bull firearm season indicated by respondents to the 2025 Landowner Elk Survey. The x-axis indicates the percentage of all respondents and the number to the right of the green bars represents the actual number of respondents (N = 305).

12b) The current antlerless elk season runs Aug. 1 – Jan. 31 with some units having early (Aug. 1 – Oct. 31) and late (Nov. 1 – Jan. 31) season splits. How do you feel about the length of the antlerless elk season?

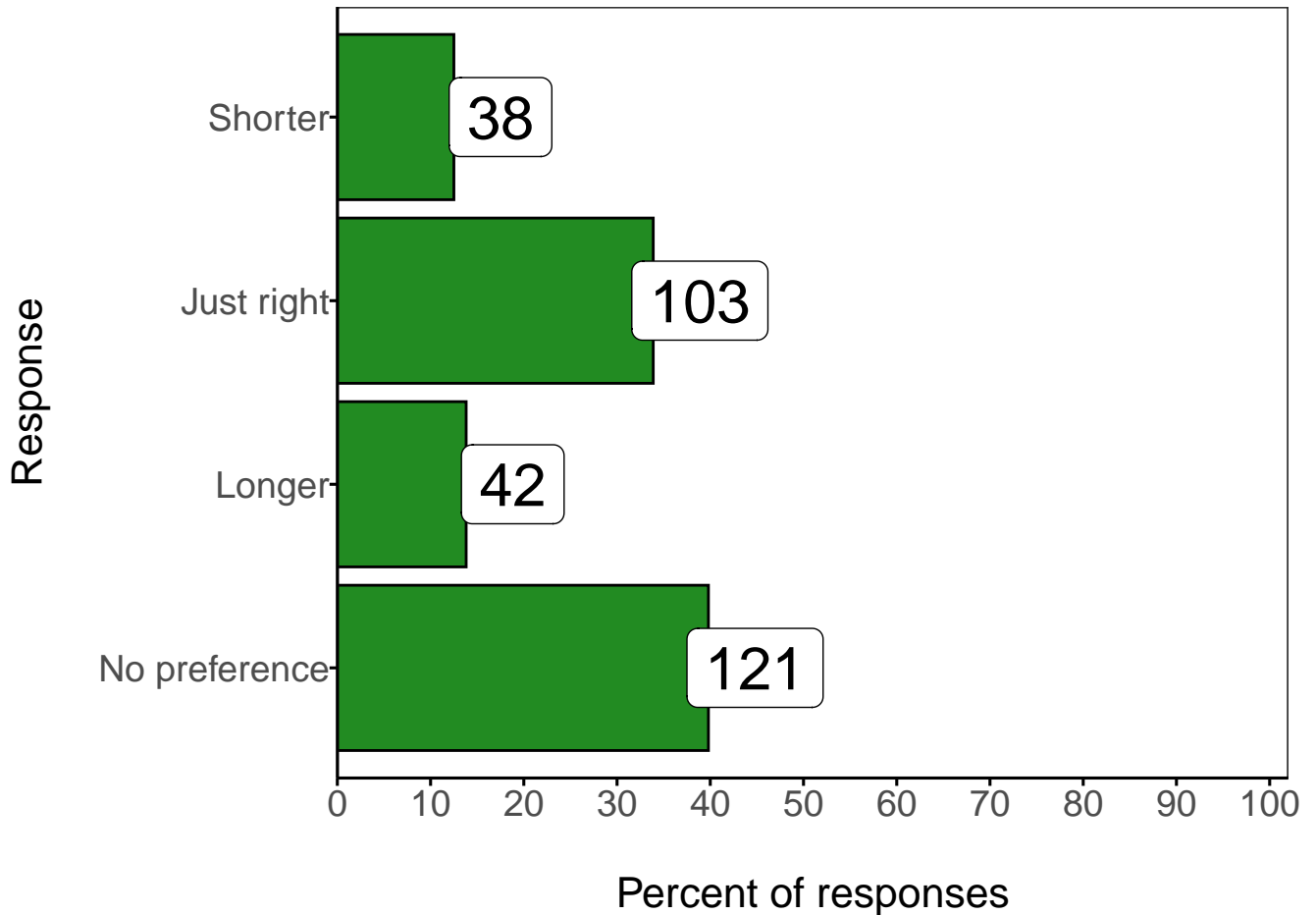


Figure 26: Attitudes about length of the antlerless elk season indicated by respondents to the 2025 Landowner Elk Survey. The x-axis indicates the percentage of all respondents and the number to the right of the green bars represents the actual number of respondents (N = 304).

13) What would influence you to allow more elk hunters access to your property? (select all that apply)

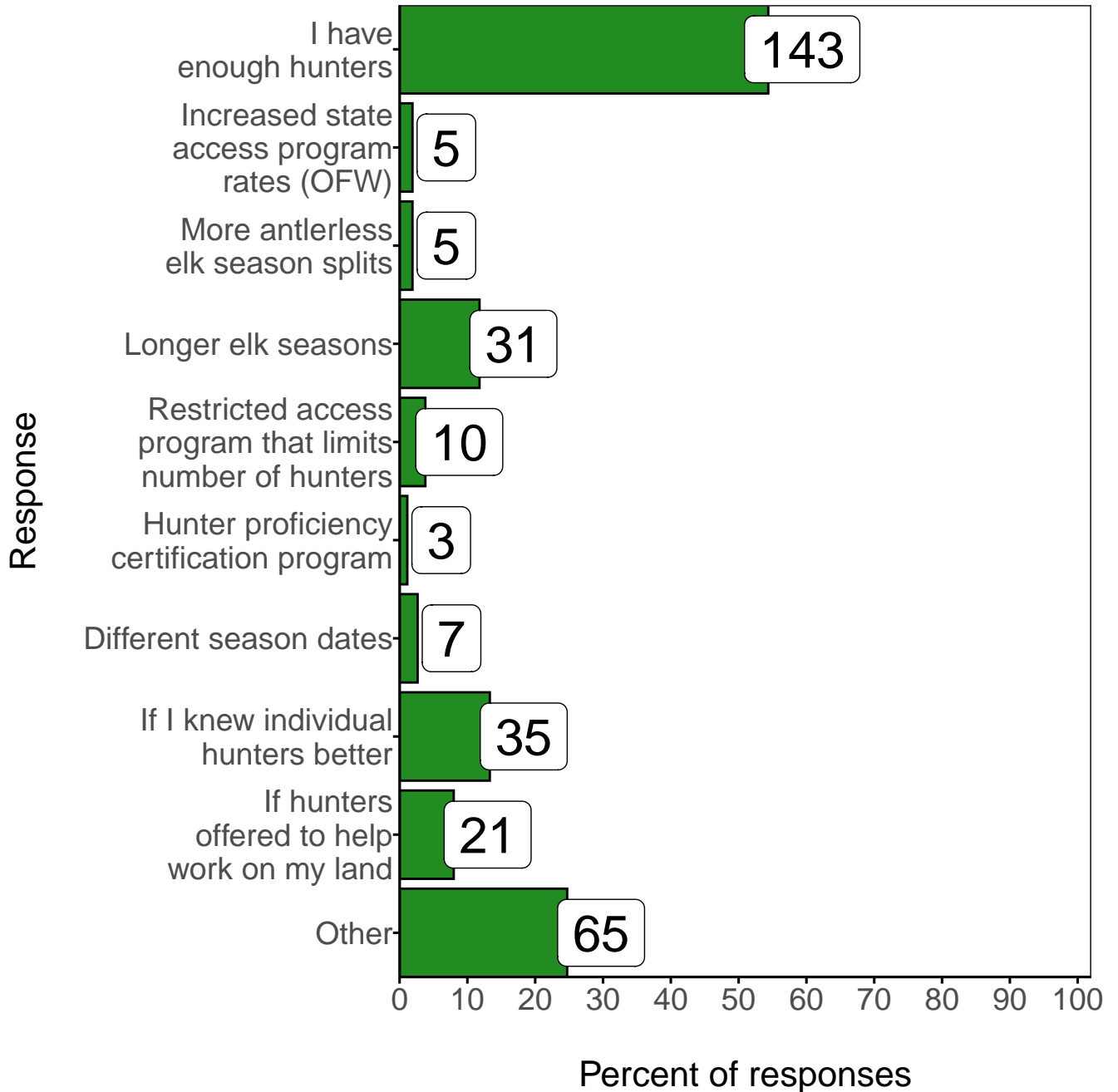


Figure 27: Instances that would influence the allowance of more hunter to access land indicated by respondents to the 2025 Landowner Elk Survey. The x-axis indicates the percentage of all responses and the number to the right of the green bars represents the actual number of responses (N = 263).