

Improving Yukon's Permit Hunt Authorization system

From 23 November – 23 December 2018, we hosted a public survey regarding the Government of Yukon's Permit Hunt Authorization (PHA) system. Through this public survey, we sought to better understand Yukoners' perspectives on the existing PHA system and potential changes or improvements to that system.

In addition to the public survey, we held discussions with key stakeholder organizations (Yukon Fish and Game Association, Yukon Wild Sheep Foundation, and Yukon Backcountry Hunters and Anglers), and contracted a third-party to complete a technical review of the PHA system. The Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board (YFWMB) also formed a working group to compile and provide recommendations on changes to the PHA system. Here, we summarize responses from the online survey, as well as the recommendations from the YFWMB working group. What we heard from stakeholders mirrors public survey results. Additionally, 45 respondents included written comments—they are not summarized here.

All feedback received from the public and stakeholders, along with YFWMB recommendations and recommendations from the third-party review will inform changes or improvements to the PHA system.

Online survey responses

227 people completed the online survey. Of these, 210 respondents (92%) indicated that they were hunters (Table 1). Throughout this summary we present results for **All responses**, and **Yukon hunters**. In all cases, the inclusion of non-hunters did not meaningfully alter the results.

All but two respondents indicated they were Yukon residents (Table 2). Given the minimal response from non-residents, we have included both resident and non-resident responses in the **All responses** summary. The majority of respondents were from the Whitehorse area, however there was at least one respondent from each community in Yukon.

All age groups were represented (Table 3).

Table 2. Hometown of online survey respondents.

	Frequency	Percent
Whitehorse	158	70%
Communities	65	29%
Outside of Yukon	2	1%
Unknown / Prefer not to say	2	1%
Grand Total	227	100%

Table 1. Hunting history of online survey respondents.

	Frequency	Percent
Identify as hunters	210	92%
Have hunted in Yukon in the last 5 years	202	89%
Have applied for a Yukon PHA in the last 5 years	174	76%
Grand Total	227	100%

Table 3. Age of online survey respondents.

	Frequency	Percent
Less than 18 years old	1	0%
18 to 29 years old	21	9%
30 to 39 years old	73	32%
40 to 49 years old	53	23%
50 to 59 years old	33	14%
60 to 64 years old	25	11%
65 years old or older	17	8%
Prefer not to say	4	2%
Grand Total	227	100%

Lottery methods

Permit Hunt Authorizations (PHAs) can be awarded in a variety of ways, ranging from completely random (where everyone has an equal chance of being drawn) to priority-based (where PHAs are awarded first to those who have been applying and unsuccessful at being drawn the longest).

In Yukon, we currently use a lottery system that provides applicants with a greater chance of being drawn the longer they have been applying and have not received a PHA. For each year an applicant enters the draw and is unsuccessful, their name is entered more times the next year they apply. This system allows applicants who have not been applying for a long time some chance of being awarded a PHA.

We asked online survey respondents their preferences for four differing lottery methods. Respondents showed the most support for awarding PHAs by the system Yukon currently uses (Figure 1). There was strong opposition to a purely random draw.

With respect to lottery methods, the YFWMB working group recommended moving to a priority system. They suggested that separate methods may need to be considered for PHA draws with limited numbers of available permits (e.g., for elk, deer and Kluane National Park sheep). The working group also recommended moving the Special Guide lottery to a priority system.

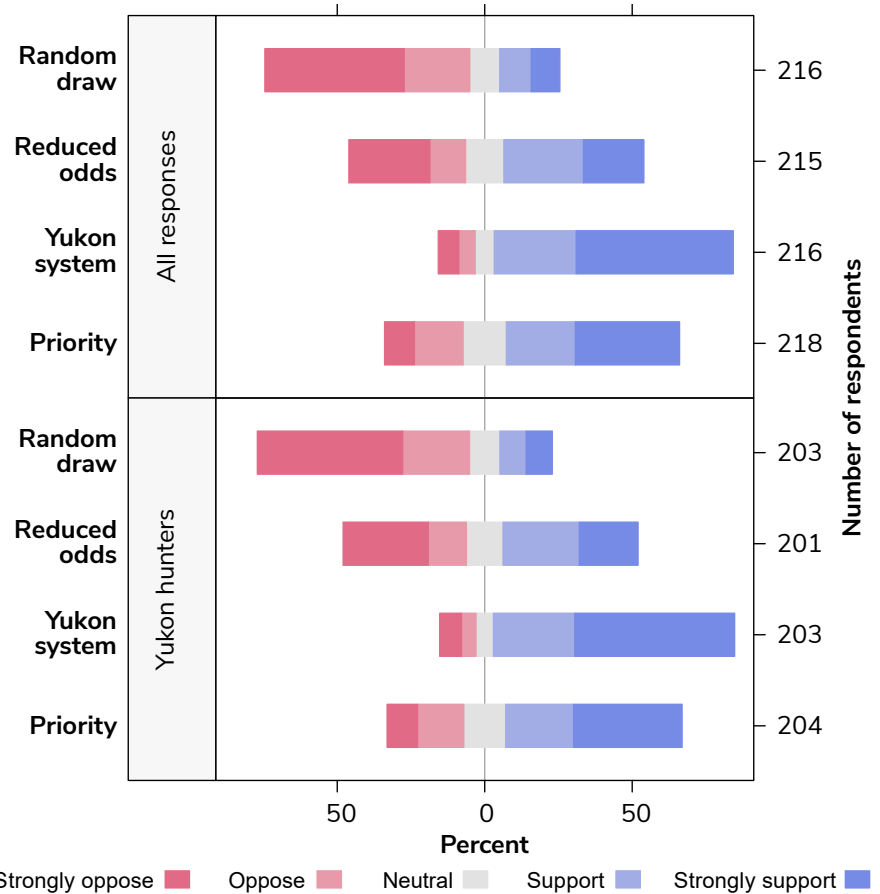


Figure 1. Online survey respondents' (All responses and Yukon hunters) level of support for four differing lottery systems.

Types of lottery draws

Random draw: a random draw that gives everyone an equal chance of being drawn.

Reduced odds: a random draw where you have a reduced chance of being drawn if you received a PHA in the previous year.

Yukon system: A draw that gives you a much better chance of being drawn the longer you have been applying and unsuccessful, while still giving you some chance of being drawn if you haven't been applying as long.

Priority: a draw that prioritizes hunters based on how long they have been applying and unsuccessful, and draws PHAs for the highest priority applicants first. Draws for lower priority applicants will only occur if all higher priority applicants have been drawn.

Permit Hunt Authorization returns

In Yukon, hunters who are awarded Permit Hunt Authorizations have the ability to return their PHAs. We understand that hunters appreciate the opportunity to return PHAs, as sometimes situations and plans change. For example, a hunter may be awarded more PHAs than anticipated, and thus not be able to make use of all PHAs.

Based on current PHA success rates, we currently issue more PHAs than the sustainable harvest number to account for those hunters who choose not to hunt or were unsuccessful. In addition, we make all efforts to reissue returned PHAs before hunting season begins (August 1). This requires considerable effort, is time consuming, and has resulted in hunters being awarded PHAs much later than is desired.

We asked a series of questions to better understand Yukoners' perspectives related to PHA returns.

Online survey respondents had varied perspectives regarding whether there should be a limit on the number of PHAs a hunter can hold in one year (Figure 2). Among **All responses**, there was marginally more support for limiting the number of PHAs to one; however, if only **Yukon hunters** are considered, there was slightly more support for no limit than a limit of one.

It is important to consider these results in the context that hunters may be awarded PHAs for multiple species in a given year. For example, a hunter could be awarded separate PHAs for sheep, moose and deer. If this hunter is only allowed to keep one PHA per year, they would not be able to hunt for all of these species they were interested in.

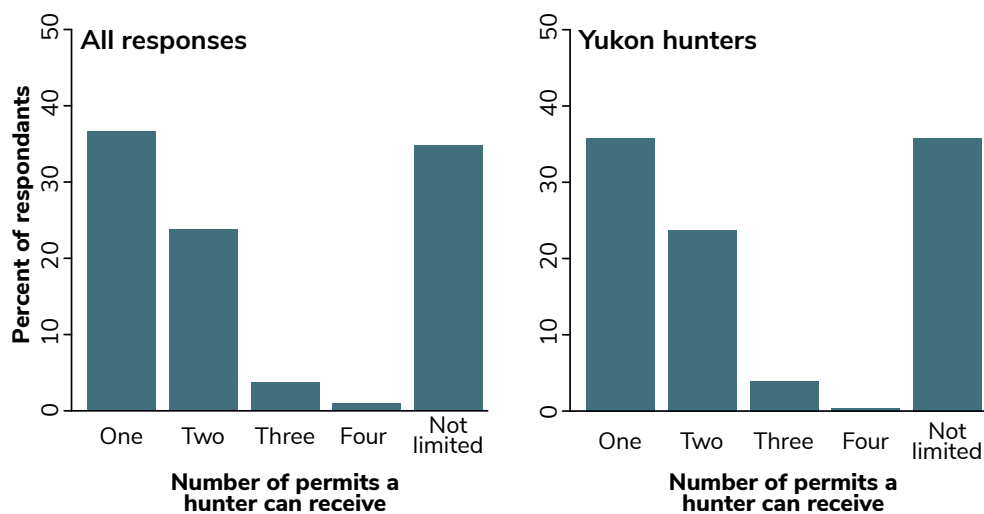


Figure 2. The percent of online survey respondents (**All responses** and **Yukon Hunters**) in support of differing limits on the number of PHAs a hunter could receive in any given year.

We asked online survey respondents to indicate to what extent they opposed or supported different conditions for allowing successful applicants to return PHAs. In general, respondents were supportive of allowing PHA returns (Figure 3). They were most supportive of successful applicants being able to return their PHAs if they have a medical situation that prevents them from being able to hunt or if they received more than 2 PHAs in a year.

The YFWMB working group recommended permit returns only be allowed for medical reasons.

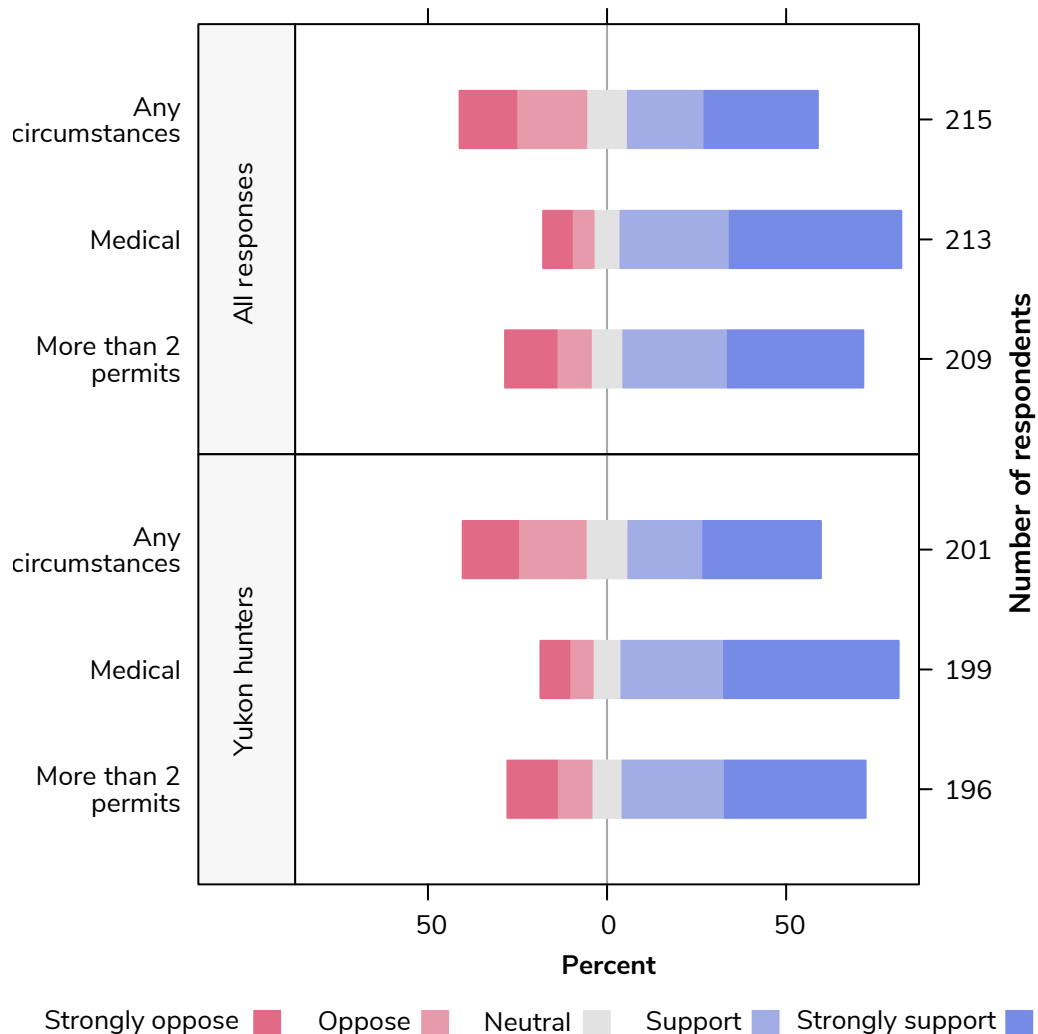


Figure 3. Online survey respondents' (**All responses** and **Yukon hunters**) level of support for successful applicants being able to return their PHAs.

We also asked online survey respondents to indicate their level of support for options for addressing how applicant weighting is affected by returning a PHA. Respondents showed the most support for weighting applicants who returned a PHA as if they had not applied—that is keeping their weighting the same for the next year (Figure 4).

The YFWMB working group recommended an applicant returning a permit for a medical reason should be weighted as if they had not applied in that year.

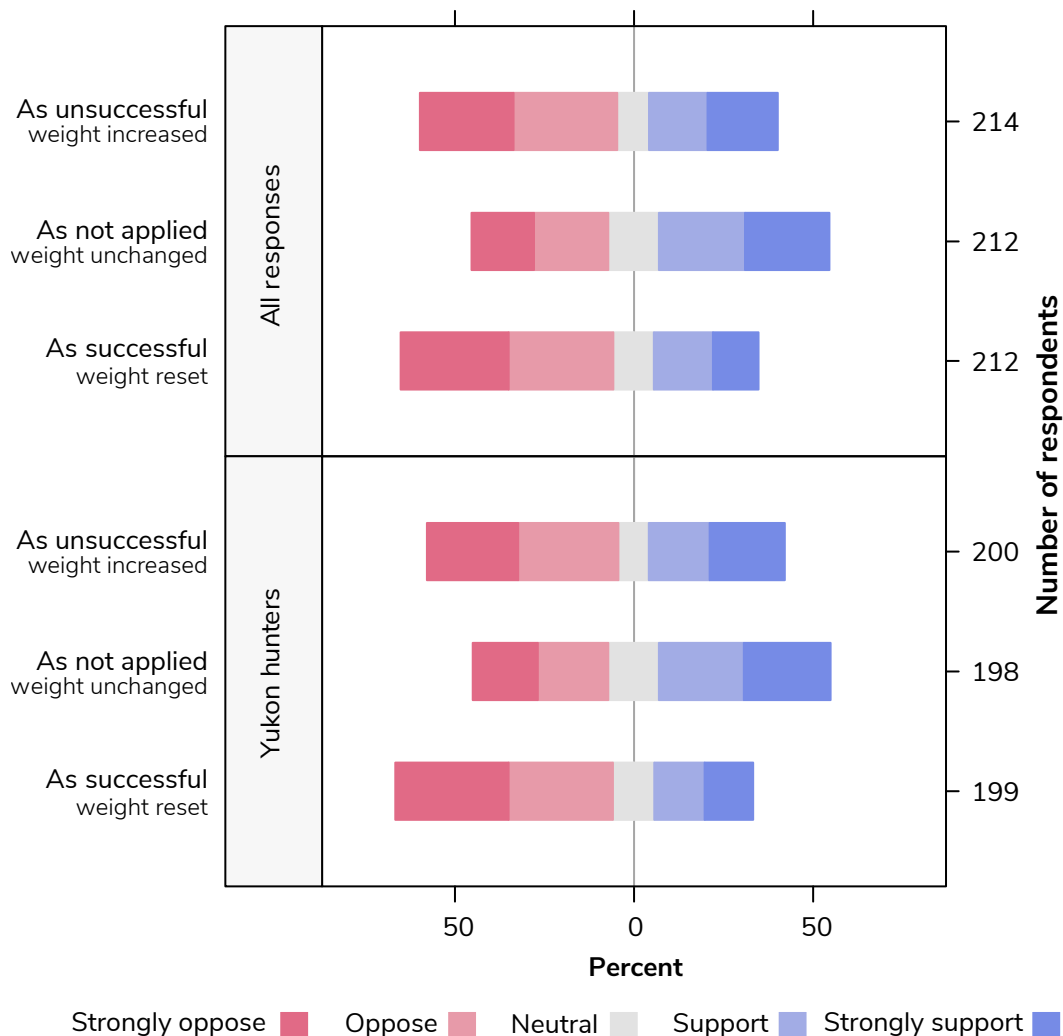


Figure 4. Online survey respondents' (**All responses** and **Yukon hunters**) level of support for differing options to weight applicants who return their PHAs.

Joint hunts

In Yukon, two people who wish to hunt together for caribou, sheep, goat, deer or elk may apply jointly on one application. This is called a joint hunt. If two people who wish to hunt together submit separate applications, the chances of getting PHAs for the same area are very small. Joint hunts exist to provide opportunity for mentorship, hunting with friends and family, and sharing back-country camps. However it is not required that those who apply jointly actually hunt together.

Online survey respondents showed strong support for continuing joint hunt applications in Yukon, but low support for joint applicants being able to keep a PHA if the other joint applicant returns their PHA (Table 4).

In Yukon's current system, if the primary applicant returns their PHA, the joint applicant must also return their PHA. However, if the joint applicant returns their PHA, the primary applicant can keep their PHA. This difference has to do with the fact that joint hunts are currently weighted as that of the primary applicant. Respondents' preference for both applicants returning their PHA remained unchanged when we considered their preferences for how joint PHAs should be weighted.

Online survey respondents were not supportive of considering joint applications for more than 2 hunters (Table 4).

Online survey respondents preferred weighting joint PHA applications as an average of both applicant's weightings (Table 5). This preference reflects a change from the current system, where joint applicants are weighted based on the primary applicant's weighting.

The YFWMB working group recommended removing joint hunt applications from the PHA system.

Table 4. Online survey respondents' preferences for how joint hunt applications should be managed.

	Percent "Yes" responses	Percent "No" responses
Joint hunt applications should be allowed in Yukon.	75%	20%
One joint applicant should be able to keep their PHA when the other joint applicant returns their PHA.	33%	61%
Joint hunts should be allowed for more than 2 hunters.	11%	83%

Table 5. Online survey respondents' preference for how joint PHA applications are weighted.

	Percent of respondents
Based on the highest weighted applicant	22%
As an average of the weights from both applicants	50%
Based on the lowest weighted applicant	18%
Don't know	10%

There were mixed perspectives on whether a joint hunt application should be awarded if there is only one PHA left. Online survey respondents were most supportive of awarding a single PHA to the primary applicant, and most opposed to awarding PHAs to both joint applicants (which would result in a decrease in the number of PHAs available in the next year's draw; Figure 5).

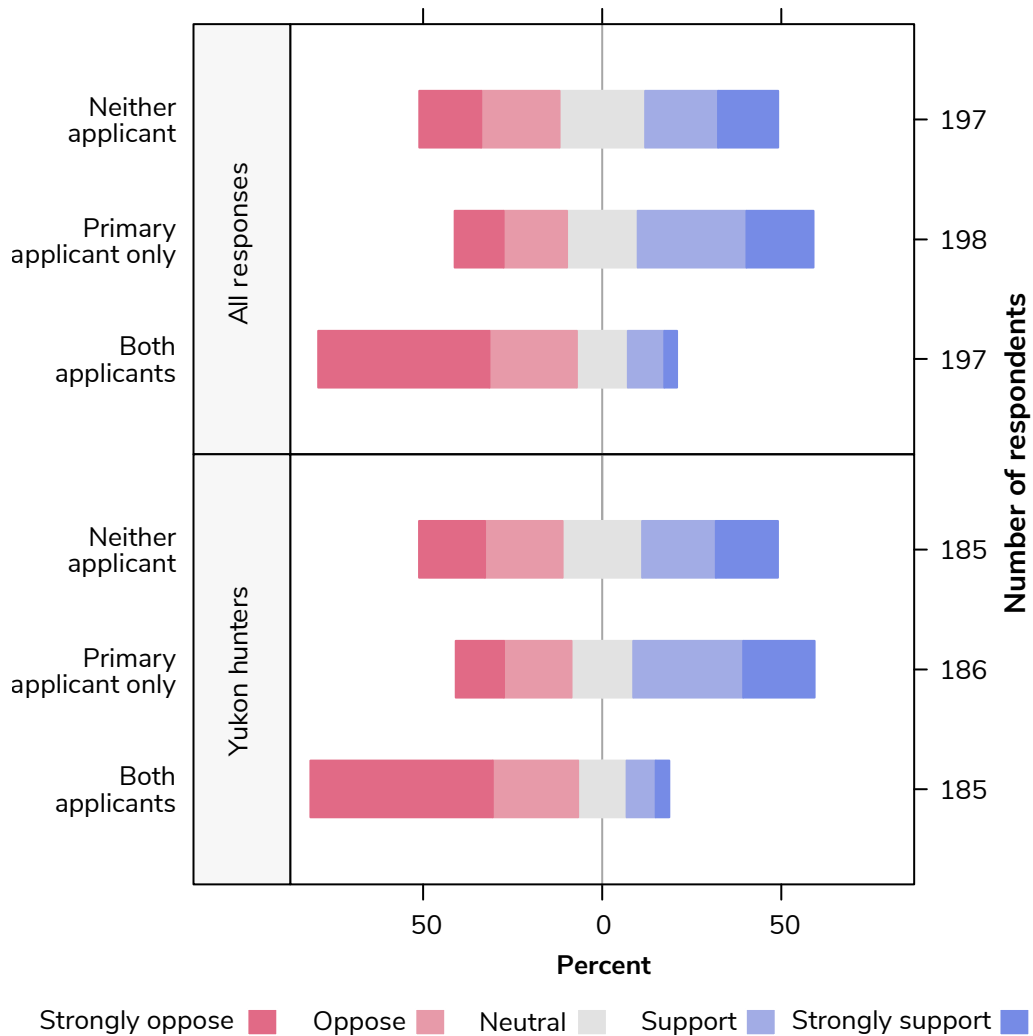


Figure 5. Online survey respondents' (**All responses** and **Yukon hunters**) level of support for who should receive a PHA when there is only 1 PHA remaining and a joint application is drawn.

Increasing satisfaction and confidence in the PHA system

We asked a series of questions to better understand how we can increase satisfaction with, and confidence in, the PHA system.

Currently, hunters who apply for a PHA, may choose up to three hunt areas for each species that they are applying to hunt. When hunts are awarded, the first individual drawn would receive their first choice, and this would continue until an individual's first choice was not available, then the individual's second choice would be allocated. If the second choice was not available, then the individual's third choice would be allocated, and if the third choice was not available, they would not be given a PHA. In consideration of this, it becomes apparent that applicants who indicate more choices have a greater chance of being drawn for a PHA.

Online survey respondents showed the most support for providing up to three hunt options (Table 6). This is consistent with Yukon's current system. The YFWMB working group was also supportive of maintaining three hunting area options, so long as their recommended changes to the lottery system were implemented.

With respect to timing, we asked online survey respondents to indicate what month they would be ready to apply for a PHA, what month they would need to know whether they were successful at receiving a PHA, and how long they thought the application period should be open for (Figure 6, Tables 7).

Currently, applications for PHAs are accepted between 1 April and early June (exact date may vary from year to year). We notify successful applicants on or before 31 July.

When we compared the total number of respondents that would be ready to apply by a given month, the majority (65%) indicated they would be ready by March, and 90% would be ready by April. Fewer than 10% of online survey respondents indicated they would not be ready to apply until May.

Similarly, when we compared the total number of online survey respondents that would need to be informed of their PHA applications status by a given month, the majority (68%) indicated they would need to know by May. Nearly 15% of respondents indicated they would need to be notified by March, and only 8% of respondents indicated July was acceptable.

Table 6. Online survey respondents' preference for how many hunt areas an applicant is allowed to identify.

	Percent of respondents
One choice	7%
Two choices	25%
Three choices	41%
Four choices	3%
Five choices	13%
Don't know	10%

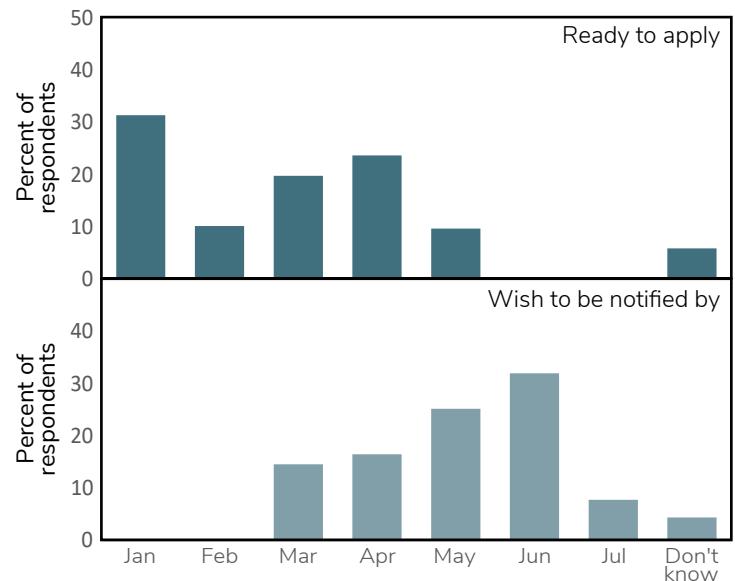


Figure 6. Online survey respondents' preference for when they would be ready to apply for a PHA, and when they wish to be notified about the status of their PHA application.

Online survey respondents showed a preference for the application period to be open for four weeks, which is consistent with the current system (Table 7).

The YFWMB working group recommended the PHA applications be open for the month of January, with successful applicants notified by early March.

Overall, online survey respondents indicated it was important to see information from past draws so they can better understand their odds of being successful in different hunt areas (Table 8). They also indicated it is important to see generalized application information and their application history online (Table 9).

Table 8. Importance of seeing generalized information on past draws for different hunt areas.

	Percent of respondents
Not at all important	4%
Not very important	8%
Somewhat important	27%
Quite important	20%
Very important	39%
Don't know	1%

Table 7. Online survey respondents' preference for how long the PHA application period should remain open.

	Percent of respondents
Shorter (than 4 weeks)	19%
Stay the same (4 weeks)	62%
Longer (than 4 weeks)	12%
Don't know	7%

Table 9. Importance of being able to see their application history online.

	Percent of respondents
Not at all important	2%
Not very important	5%
Somewhat important	20%
Quite important	19%
Very important	54%
Don't know	0%

Your hunting values

In addition to the questions specific to the Permit Hunt Authorization system, for the online survey only, we asked a series of more generalized questions about hunters values. Online survey responses to these questions cannot be interpreted as representing broader Yukoner perspectives, nor those of the Yukon hunting community in general (Figure 7). They reflect the views and values of those that responded to this survey.

While this information is not directly related to considering changes to the PHA system, it does allow us an opportunity to gain information on Yukon hunters' values and perspectives. For instance, but not surprisingly, the opportunity to hunt in Yukon was strongly valued by almost all online survey respondents, and they viewed hunting as an important food source. Most online survey respondents agreed that the hunting opportunities in Yukon are an important part of why they live in Yukon.

We have often heard concerns from hunters about overcrowding in popular hunting areas. The majority of online survey respondents agreed that having an opportunity to hunt in areas that are less crowded is important to them.

The majority of online survey respondents also valued being able to be outdoors at times when, or in areas where, hunting is not occurring. Most also valued the act of going hunting more than the act of harvesting an animal.

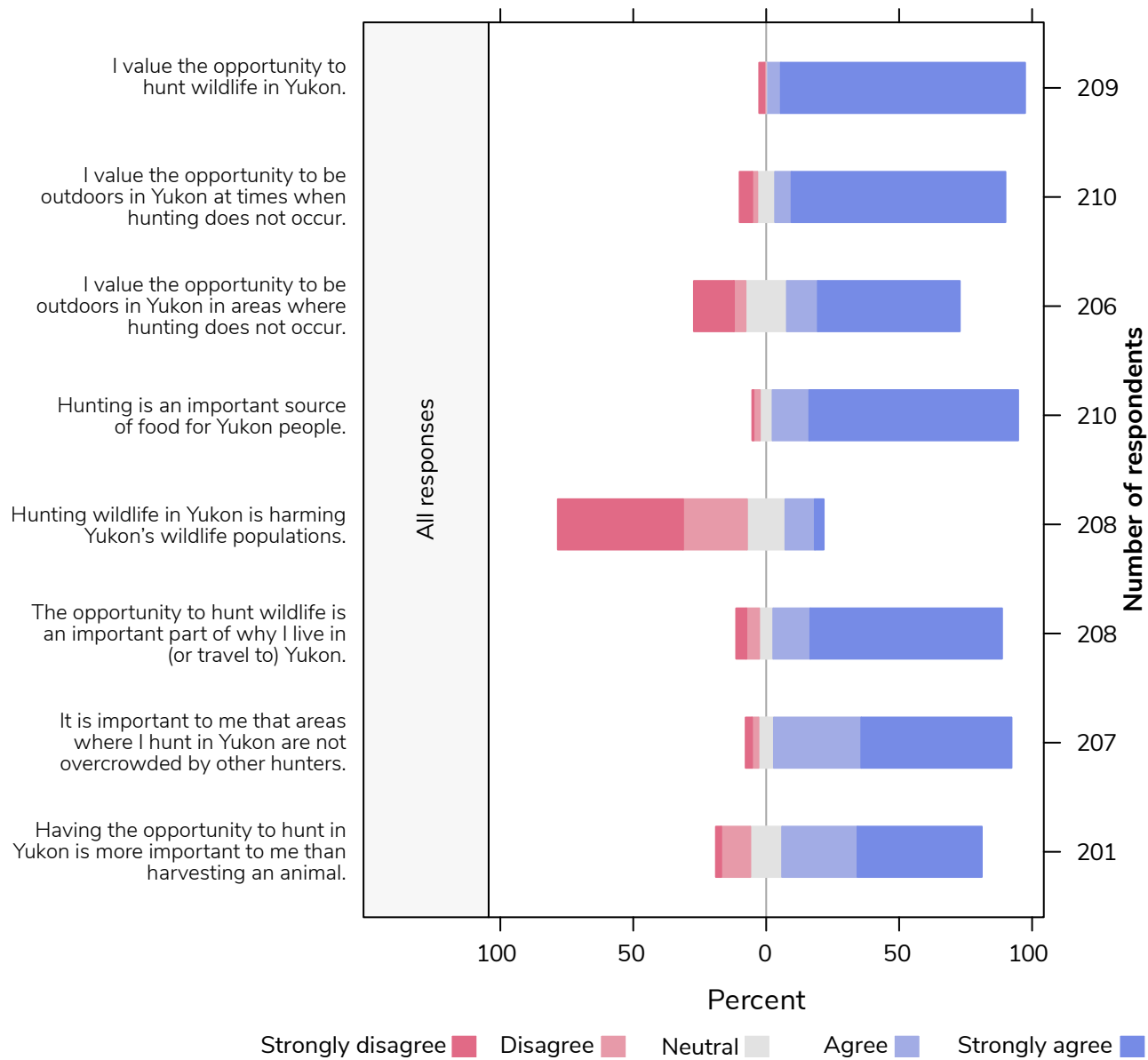


Figure 7. Online survey respondents' (**All responses** and **Yukon hunters**) level of disagreement or agreement with the Hunting Values statements..

