



ASSOCIATION of  
FISH & WILDLIFE  
AGENCIES



**COLORADO STATE  
UNIVERSITY**



## **Canadian Wildlife Values Study Frequently Asked Questions and Communication Options**

November 8, 2022

### **1. What is the Canadian Wildlife Values Study and how does it relate to America's Wildlife Values and to the Global Wildlife Values projects?**

*Societal changes are at the root of many of today's wildlife management challenges, including declining stakeholder support for traditional management strategies (e.g., lethal control of predator species), declines in hunting, and increased polarization over wildlife issues. The Wildlife Values Study was undertaken to help agencies adapt and remain relevant, in the face of societal change, to an increasingly diverse constituency. It will help identify ways for them to engage new audiences more effectively while still being responsive to the needs of traditional stakeholders and to garner broad-based support to ensure sustainable funding exists in the future. Lastly, the study results will allow agencies to compare wildlife values in their province to US states and to 32 other countries around the world.*

### **2. In which provinces were the data collected and how and when were the data collected?**

*The data for this study were collected by Colorado State University in the fall of 2021 using samples from Qualtrics, a commercial research firm with an online survey platform. Data were collected in the provinces of: Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Ontario, Quebec, and Saskatchewan. Qualtrics targeted for half of all participants to be above, and half below, Canada's median age for residents 18 years and older. They also targeted half of all participants to be from urban areas and half from rural areas.*

### **3. Why was the Canadian Wildlife Values Study undertaken in only nine provinces?**

*The Canadian Wildlife Values Study is part of the Global Wildlife Values Study involving a total of 34 countries and a standard data collection instrument and protocol was administered by Qualtrics in 2021 using online panels. A minimum sample size of 400 was required for statistical purposes (allowed for population estimates within 5% at the 95% confidence level), and only nine provinces could meet this sample size using the Qualtrics panels. Quota sampling was used to ensure representativeness of age and urban-rural residence.*

### **4. Is the report "Canada's Wildlife Values: The Social Context of Wildlife Management in Canada" available online?**

*Yes. The report summarizing Canada's Wildlife Values is available on the Wildlife Habitat Canada (WHC) website. (<https://whc.org/what-we-do/>). The Wildlife Values Study was conducted by Colorado State University and participants were able to participate in the survey using the language of their choice (French or English), however the final report is currently only available in English.*

**5. Are the data from the Wildlife Values Study available for use by other researchers at either the provincial or national level?**

*Canada is one of the countries participating in the Global Wildlife Values effort that is being led by Colorado State University. The long-term goals of the study are to collect values data for nations around the world and offer a framework and an approach for capturing values to define the social context of wildlife management at multiple levels (e.g., state/province, nation, region). This, in turn, will provide a basis for understanding the composition of values within and across nations. It will also facilitate comparative analysis that can inform understanding of the processes of value formation and shift. Further, it will provide information useful in monitoring trends, guiding efforts of policy formation, and facilitating collaborative conservation efforts within and across nations.*

**6. How will the Canadian Wildlife Values data be used by provincial and federal wildlife agencies?**

*As an extension of the America's Wildlife Values project in the United States, researchers at Colorado State University, in partnership with investigators and organizations in multiple countries around the world, began leading a global assessment of values toward wildlife. The long-term goals of the assessment are to collect values data for nations around the world to define the social context of wildlife management and further our understanding of the processes of value formation and shift. Information provided by this effort is intended to help address the growing social conflict over wildlife-related issues, inform policy solutions, facilitate collaborative conservation efforts, and aid in the overall planning for the future of wildlife conservation and management within and across nations.*

**7. What are "wildlife values" and what do they tell us about peoples' views about wildlife and biodiversity and their behaviors?**

*Wildlife value orientations are an expression of fundamental values revealed through a pattern of basic beliefs. From two predominant orientations, four typologies of wildlife values are classified. People are classified by scoring responses to survey item scales representing utilitarian and mutualist wildlife value orientations. Understanding wildlife values enhances our understanding of the complex social factors which will characterize the future of wildlife management in North America.*

**8. What are the four wildlife value orientations identified from long-term research?**

*There are two primary dimensions of wildlife value orientations that Colorado State University researchers have identified in their long-term research—Domination and Mutualism.*

**Domination:**

*- Sometimes referred as Utilitarian and is reflective of domination. Also called Traditionalist and is the most extreme in beliefs that wildlife should be used and managed for the benefit of people.*

**Mutualism:**

*- Represents an egalitarian ideology that focuses on equality. Mutualism is tied to anthropomorphism, and social affiliation and belongingness needs that our society is moving more toward with modernization. Mutualists are the most extreme in seeing wildlife as part of their extended social network and are less likely to support actions resulting in death or harm to wildlife.*

**Pluralist:**

- Score high on both Domination and Mutualism scales and have a mix of beliefs—different contexts result in this group emphasizing one orientation over the other.

**Distanced:**

- Score Low on both Domination and Mutualism scales and exhibit low levels of thought about and interest in wildlife.

**9. Do wildlife values predict outdoor recreation behaviours of Canadians, such as hunting?**

Provinces with higher percentages of hunters have higher percentages of Traditionalists and lower percentages of Mutualists which shows how shifting wildlife values can be tied to trends in hunting. Compared to the U.S., Canada has higher percentages of Mutualists and Pluralists, and lower percentages of Traditionalists:

- 50% Mutualist
- 11% Traditionalist
- 26% Pluralist
- 14% Distanced

**10. How many Canadians have been engaging in wildlife-related activities in the past five years?**

Overall passive engagement (i.e., indirect) activities such as watching television shows or videos about wildlife are the most common activities across all wildlife value orientation types, with over 60% of Canadians reporting participation. The most common form of active engagement (i.e., direct) is spending time outdoors with the expectation of viewing wildlife and is most common among Mutualists and Pluralists.

Hunting (5%) and fishing (26%) are less common among Canadians as a whole, though participation in these activities is highest among Traditionalists and Pluralists. New Brunswick, Alberta, and Saskatchewan have the largest proportions of hunters (10-11%) while Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia have the lowest percentages of hunters (3-4%). The most popular reason for hunting is for food (79%), regardless of value orientation type.

**11. Are there geographic differences of wildlife values across Canada for Traditionalists, Mutualists, Pluralists, and Distanced?**

In most cases, there is little variation in the distribution of wildlife value types across the provinces (less than 15%). However, there are some notable differences. Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba have the greatest representation of **Traditionalists** (more than 15%). Nova Scotia, Quebec, and British Columbia have the greatest representation of **Mutualists** (more than 50%). **Pluralists** are most common in Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, and Ontario (29-31%). Manitoba and British Columbia had the highest percentages of **Distanced** individuals.

While most provinces are defined by the representation of just one or two wildlife value types, Saskatchewan is a particular standout, as it hosts the largest representation of Traditionalists and Pluralists and the smallest representation of Mutualists and Distanced residents of all provinces included in this study.

**12. How do wildlife values in Canada compare to wildlife values in the United States?**

*Although Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia are more like their neighbouring states of the Northeast, there is a clear discrepancy in the percentages of Traditionalists and Mutualists between most provinces and their neighboring states in the American Midwest and Northern Rocky Mountains, where there is a greater concentration of Traditionalists.*

*There are higher percentages of Mutualists in Canada. Overall, the patterns of Mutualists and Traditionalists observed in most Canadian provinces appear to be more reflective of the southwestern (particularly the west coast) and northeastern U.S. states.*

**13. How do wildlife values relate to Canadians' environmental attitudes?**

*Values are important because they affect attitudes and behaviours. For example, Mutualists are more likely (87%), and Traditionalists are less likely (40%) to prioritize environmental protection over economic growth in Canada. The study found relatively high percentages of people with pro-environmental attitudes, in general, across the provinces. Overall, 75% of Canadians believe that protecting the environment should be given priority, even if it causes slower economic growth and some loss of jobs—range was from 65% in Alberta to 80% in Manitoba.*

**14. Can wildlife values predict public support for wildlife policy and management decisions related to issues such as human-wildlife conflict?**

*The research focused on wildlife present across Canada—wild boar, deer, geese, and wolves—where participants rated the acceptability of lethal removal of each species under scenarios that included a range of potential human-wildlife conflicts, such as attacks on people or livestock, destruction of crops, and more general nuisance behaviors. Across all scenarios, lethal removal was considered most acceptable for wild boar and least acceptable for geese.*

*Traditionalists and Mutualists differ the most in their acceptability of lethal removal, regardless of species or context. For example, 82% of Traditionalists view lethal removal of wolves to be generally acceptable across all scenarios, compared to just 48% of Mutualists. As another example, 66% of Traditionalists view lethal removal of geese as acceptable, compared to just 25% of Mutualists.*

**15. Are there differences in the attitudes toward lethal removal of wildlife across the provinces?**

*Beyond overall levels of support, it's important to recognize that attitudes are context-specific, thus, we see a high level of variation in how acceptable lethal removal is depending on the scenario of human-wildlife conflict. In every context, however, Traditionalists always have the highest proportion who are accepting of lethal removal, and Mutualists always have the lowest. Here are a couple examples:*

***First, for wolves:***

*- Approximately two-thirds of residents in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and New Brunswick view lethal removal of wolves as generally acceptable (64-66%). The public appears a bit more divided in other provinces, with the lowest percentage in Quebec (51%).*

***Second, for wild boar:***

*- Support for lethal control was higher overall, with the range from 62% in Quebec to 81% in Saskatchewan (nearly 20% difference).*

**16. Do wildlife values relate to how people trust government authorities to care for fish and wildlife and are there differences in the level of trust across the provinces?**

*An interesting finding that is somewhat consistent with the U.S. is that wildlife values also relate to levels of trust in government. Overall, 48% of Canadians trust government authorities to care for the wellbeing of fish and wildlife in Canada. This is consistent with data for the U.S., although the contrast is less striking—Traditionalists (49%) are more likely to trust government authorities compared to Mutualists (41%). Interestingly, in Canada, Pluralists have the highest proportion of individuals trusting government authorities (68%), and Distanced individuals have the lowest (38%).*