

Results From a Montana 2023 Resident Elk Hunter Survey

A Survey Conducted By:



Wildlife Division

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
BACKGROUND AND SURVEY METHODS.....	1
SURVEY RESULTS.....	2
Importance of Elk Hunting in Montana	2
Elk Hunting by Region of Montana	2
Reasons Why Hunters Spend Most of Their Time Hunting Elk in this Region of Montana (Aggregate Results for All Seven Regions of Montana Combined)	2
Perceptions Regarding Opportunities to Hunt Elk in the Region of Montana Where Respondents Spent the Most Time Hunting Elk During the Past Five Years (Aggregate Results for All Seven Regions of Montana Combined)	3
Perceptions Regarding Access to Hunt Elk in the Region of Montana Where Respondents Spent the Most Time Hunting Elk During the Past Five Years (Aggregate Results for All Seven Regions of Montana Combined)	3
Perceptions Regarding Numbers of Elk During the Hunting Season in the Region of Montana Where Respondents Spent the Most Time Hunting Elk During the Past Five Years (Aggregate Results for All Seven Regions of Montana Combined).....	3
Perceptions Regarding the Number of Elk Hunters During the Hunting Season in the Region of Montana Where Respondents Spent the Most Time Hunting Elk During the Past Five Years (Aggregate Results for All Seven Regions of Montana Combined)	4
Perceptions Regarding the Number of Roads Opened for Motorized Access to Elk During the Hunting Season in the Region of Montana Where Respondents Spent the Most Time Hunting Elk During the Past Five Years (Aggregate Results for All Seven Regions of Montana Combined).....	4
Perceptions Regarding the Number of Other Hunters Typically Seen While Hunting Elk in the Region of Montana Where Respondents Spent the Most Time Hunting Mule Elk During the Past Five Years (Aggregate Results for All Seven Regions of Montana Combined)	4
Satisfaction With Current Elk Hunting Regulations in the Region of Montana Where Respondents Spent the Most Time Hunting Elk During the Past Five Years (Aggregate Results for All Seven Regions of Montana Combined)	5
Opinions Regarding the Ease of Understanding Current Elk Hunting Regulations in the Region of Montana Where Respondents Spent the Most Time Hunting Elk During the Past Five Years (Aggregate Results for All Seven Regions of Montana Combined)	5
Opinions Regarding How Restrictive Elk Hunting Regulations Should be in Montana	5
Opinions Regarding the Timing of the Elk Hunting Season in Montana	6
Interest in Hunting Elk in Montana During the Archery, General Rifle, Muzzleloader, and Winter/Late Should Seasons in Montana	6
Interest in Harvesting Antlerless Elk and Bull Elk in Montana	7
Motives (or Reasons) for Hunting Elk in Montana.....	7
Satisfaction with Elk Management in Montana.....	8
Trust in FWP to Manage Elk in Montana	8
Where Resident Elk Hunters Typically Get Their Information Regarding Elk & Elk Management in Montana	8
Additional Special Questions Asked in the Survey.....	8
Background Characteristics of Survey Respondents.....	15

FIGURES WITH REGIONAL SURVEY RESULTS 17

Figure 1. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important), how important to you was being able TO HUNT CLOSE TO HOME as a potential reason for why you spent most of your time hunting elk in this region of the state during the past five years?” 18

Figure 2. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important), how important to you was being able TO HUNT IN A FAMILIAR LOCATION as a potential reason for why you spent most of your time hunting elk in this region of the state during the past five years?” 19

Figure 3. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important), how important to you were ELK NUMBERS as a potential reason for why you spent most of your time hunting elk in this region of the state during the past five years?” 20

Figure 4. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important), how important to you were ANTLERLESS ELK NUMBERS as a potential reason for why you spent most of your time hunting elk in this region of the state during the past five years?” 21

Figure 5. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important), how important to you were BULL ELK NUMBERS as a potential reason for why you spent most of your time hunting elk in this region of the state during the past five years?” 22

Figure 6. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important), how important to you was ACCESS TO HUNT ANTLERLESS ELK ON PUBLICLY OWNED LAND as a potential reason for why you spent most of your time hunting elk in this region of the state during the past five years?” 23

Figure 7. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important), how important to you was ACCESS TO HUNT ANTLERLESS ELK ON PRIVATELY OWNED LAND as a potential reason for why you spent most of your time hunting elk in this region of the state during the past five years?” 24

Figure 8. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important), how important to you was ACCESS TO HUNT BULL ELK ON PUBLICLY OWNED LAND as a potential reason for why you spent most of your time hunting elk in this region of the state during the past five years?” 25

Figure 9. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important), how important to you was ACCESS TO HUNT BULL ELK ON PRIVATELY OWNED LAND as a potential reason for why you spent most of your time hunting elk in this region of the state during the past five years?” 26

Figure 10. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important), how important to you was it TO BE ABLE TO HUNT ELK AND OTHER GAME SPECIES AT THE SAME TIME as a potential reason for why you spent most of your time hunting elk in this region of the state during the past five years?” 27

Figure 11. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how would you rate OVERALL OPPORTUNITIES TO HUNT ELK in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?” 28

Figure 12. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how would you rate OPPORTUNITIES TO HUNT ANTLERLESS ELK in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?” 29

Figure 13. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how would you rate OPPORTUNITIES TO HUNT BULL ELK in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?” 30

Figure 14. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how would you rate OPPORTUNITIES TO HUNT MATURE BULL ELK in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting mule elk during the past five years?” 31

Figure 15. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how would you rate ACCESS TO PUBLICLY OWNED LAND TO HUNT ANTLERLESS ELK in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?” 32

Figure 16. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how would you rate ACCESS TO PRIVATELY OWNED LAND TO HUNT ANTLERLESS ELK in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting mule elk during the past five years?” 33

Figure 17. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how would you rate ACCESS TO PUBLICLY OWNED LAND TO HUNT BULL ELK in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?” 34

Figure 18. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how would you rate ACCESS TO PRIVATELY OWNED LAND TO HUNT BULL ELK in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?” 35

Figure 19. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (too few) to 5 (to many), how would you rate OVERALL NUMBERS OF ELK in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?” 36

Figure 20. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (too few) to 5 (to many), how would you rate OVERALL NUMBERS OF ANTLERLESS ELK in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?” 37

Figure 21. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (too few) to 5 (to many), how would you rate OVERALL NUMBERS OF BULL ELK in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?” 38

Figure 22. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (too few) to 5 (to many), how would you rate OVERALL NUMBERS OF MATURE BULL ELK in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?” 39

Figure 23. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (too few) to 5 (to many), how would you rate NUMBERS OF ANTLERLESS ELK ON PUBLICLY OWNED LANDS in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?” 40

Figure 24. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (too few) to 5 (to many), how would you rate NUMBERS OF ANTLERLESS ELK ON PRIVATELY OWNED LANDS in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?” 41

Figure 25. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (too few) to 5 (to many), how would you rate NUMBERS OF BULL ELK ON PUBLICLY OWNED LANDS in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?” 42

Figure 26. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (too few) to 5 (to many), how would you rate NUMBERS OF BULL ELK ON PRIVATELY OWNED LANDS in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?” 43

Figure 27. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (too few) to 5 (to many), how would you rate NUMBERS OF ELK HUNTERS in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?” 44

Figure 28. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (too few) to 5 (to many), how would you rate NUMBERS OF ROADS OPEN FOR MOTORIZED ACCESS TO ELK in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?” 45

Figure 29. Regional response to... “In terms of congestion & crowding, on a scale from 1 (very unacceptable) to 5 (very acceptable), how acceptable was the NUMBER of other hunters you typically observed PER DAY when hunting ELK in this region of Montana?” 46

Figure 30. Regional response to... “In terms of the behavior of other people, on a scale from 1 (very unacceptable) to 5 (very acceptable), how acceptable was the BEHAVIOR of other hunters you typically observed when hunting ELK in this region of Montana?” 47

Figure 31. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied), how satisfied are you with current ELK hunting regulations in this region of Montana?” 48

Figure 32. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (very difficult to understand) to 5 (very easy to understand), how would you rate the ease of understanding the current ELK hunting regulations in this region of Montana?” 49

Figure 33. Regional response to... “Managing for higher numbers of MATURE bull elk (e.g., bull elk 4-5 years of age or older) may require implementing more restrictive elk hunting regulations. For instance, in current limited permit areas the average drawing odds are once every ten years. Given only ONE CHOICE, which of the following would be most favorable to you in the REGION of Montana where you’ve spent the most time hunting elk during the past FIVE years?” 50

BACKGROUND AND SURVEY METHODS

The focus of this report are results from a resident elk hunter survey conducted by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) in Montana. Following the 2022 hunting season, FWP conducted this survey to help evaluate Montana's elk management relative to hunting and harvest opportunities.

Mailback surveys were sent to a randomly selected statewide sample of N=5,000 resident Montana elk license holders pulled from the pool of all resident elk license holders for the 2022 hunting season (as identified from FWP's automated license system database). Survey mailings included an initial mailing of the surveys sent out in late December 2022, followed up by a replacement mailing sent out to non-respondents about four to five weeks after the initial mailing of the survey, followed up by a second replacement mailing sent out to nonrespondents about four to five weeks after the second mailing of the survey. Surveys were successfully mailed out to a total of N=4,849 resident elk license holders (there were a total of 151 surveys that were undeliverable). A total of N=2,022 resident elk license holders responded to the survey, resulting in an overall 42 percent response rate for the resident survey. This response rate is considered to be good for a mailback survey of this kind.

This report provides results from this important survey, including both statewide and regional survey results for questions designed to provide FWP region specific information (see the map below for the seven FWP administrative regions of Montana).



SURVEY RESULTS

Overall, 88 percent of all the survey respondents reported they hunted elk in Montana during the past five years. These respondents are the focus of this report.

Importance of Elk Hunting in Montana

Response to... “How important is ELK hunting to you in Montana? (Check only ONE below)”

- 0.5% It is **my LEAST important** hunting activity
- 1.7% It is **one of my least important** hunting activities
- 16.8% It is **no more or no less important** than my other hunting activities
- 43.6% It is **one of my most important** hunting activities
- 37.4% It is **my MOST important** hunting activity

Elk Hunting by Region of Montana

Response to... “In what **REGION** of the state have you spent the MOST TIME hunting ELK in Montana during the past FIVE years? (Check only ONE below)”

- 11.2% Region 1
- 35.9% Region 3
- 8.3% Region 5
- 5.2% Region 7
- 17.2% Region 2
- 18.4% Region 4
- 4.0% Region 6

Reasons Why Hunters Spend Most of Their Time Hunting Elk in this Region of Montana (Aggregate Results for All Seven Regions of Montana Combined)

Response to... “On a scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important), how important were the following potential reasons for why you spent most of your time hunting elk in this REGION of the state during the past five years? (Circle only ONE number for each item below)”

	1 Very Unimportant	2	3	4	5 Very Important
To hunt close to home	6.3%	8.3%	18.5%	23.9%	42.9%
To hunt in a familiar location	2.7%	4.4%	12.8%	35.9%	44.2%
Elk numbers	4.0%	8.3%	27.6%	29.2%	30.8%
<u>Antlerless</u> elk numbers	12.7%	11.8%	27.3%	25.2%	23.1%
<u>Bull</u> elk numbers	7.8%	10.4%	30.5%	26.7%	24.6%
Access to hunt <u>antlerless</u> elk on PUBLICLY owned land	13.4%	9.5%	14.5%	23.1%	39.4%
Access to hunt <u>antlerless</u> elk on PRIVATELY owned land	30.3%	14.4%	16.6%	17.8%	20.9%
Access to hunt <u>bull</u> elk on PUBLICLY owned land	7.2%	6.3%	13.6%	24.4%	48.5%
Access to hunt <u>bull</u> elk on PRIVATELY owned land	30.4%	13.6%	19.4%	16.7%	19.9%
To be able to hunt <u>elk</u> and <u>other game species</u> at the same time	8.4%	5.6%	14.8%	25.0%	46.1%

Note. **Figures 1-10** at the end of this report provide region specific results for this question.

Perceptions Regarding Opportunities to Hunt Elk in the Region of Montana Where Respondents Spent the Most Time Hunting Elk During the Past Five Years (Aggregate Results for All Seven Regions of Montana Combined)

Response to... “On a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how would you rate the following in this REGION of Montana? (Circle only ONE number for each item below)”

	1	2	3	4	5
	Poor				Excellent
Overall opportunities to hunt elk	4.8%	8.5%	29.7%	34.1%	22.9%
Opportunities to hunt <u>antlerless</u> elk	8.4%	13.0%	29.7%	28.3%	20.6%
Opportunities to hunt <u>bull</u> elk	8.5%	14.2%	27.7%	29.6%	20.0%
Opportunities to hunt <u>mature bull</u> elk	15.8%	21.4%	29.8%	19.3%	13.8%

Note. Figures 11-14 at the end of this report provide region specific results for this question.

Perceptions Regarding Access to Hunt Elk in the Region of Montana Where Respondents Spent the Most Time Hunting Elk During the Past Five Years (Aggregate Results for All Seven Regions of Montana Combined)

Response to... “On a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how would you rate the following in this REGION of Montana? (Circle only ONE number for each item below)”

	1	2	3	4	5
	Poor				Excellent
Access to PUBLICLY owned land to hunt <u>antlerless</u> elk	8.5%	13.6%	25.0%	30.1%	22.8%
Access to PRIVATELY owned land to hunt <u>antlerless</u> elk	31.3%	21.0%	23.5%	14.5%	9.7%
Access to PUBLICLY owned land to hunt <u>bull</u> elk	7.6%	12.2%	24.1%	31.1%	25.0%
Access to PRIVATELY owned land to hunt <u>bull</u> elk	39.7%	20.4%	20.4%	11.0%	8.5%

Note. Figures 15-18 at the end of this report provide region specific results for this question.

Perceptions Regarding Numbers of Elk During the Hunting Season in the Region of Montana Where Respondents Spent the Most Time Hunting Elk During the Past Five Years (Aggregate Results for All Seven Regions of Montana Combined)

Response to... “On a scale from 1 (too few) to 5 (too many), how would you rate the following in this REGION of Montana during the hunting season? (Circle only ONE number for each item below)”

	1	2	3	4	5
	Too Few				Too Many
Overall numbers of elk	12.8%	21.5%	50.5%	11.9%	3.4%
Overall numbers of <u>antlerless</u> elk	10.3%	17.5%	47.4%	19.1%	5.7%
Overall numbers of <u>bull</u> elk	19.2%	32.1%	38.5%	8.1%	2.0%
Overall numbers of <u>mature bull</u> elk	31.2%	31.8%	28.5%	7.1%	1.4%
Numbers of <u>antlerless</u> elk on PUBLICLY owned lands	16.8%	27.7%	40.9%	11.8%	2.9%
Numbers of <u>antlerless</u> elk on PRIVATELY owned lands	7.0%	9.0%	25.1%	24.9%	33.9%
Numbers of <u>bull</u> elk on PUBLICLY owned lands	24.6%	33.1%	34.8%	6.1%	1.4%
Numbers of <u>bull</u> elk on PRIVATELY owned lands	10.4%	11.0%	26.4%	22.1%	30.0%

Note. Figures 19-26 at the end of this report provide region specific results for this question.

Perceptions Regarding the Number of Elk Hunters During the Hunting Season in the Region of Montana Where Respondents Spent the Most Time Hunting Elk During the Past Five Years (Aggregate Results for All Seven Regions of Montana Combined)

Response to... “On a scale from 1 (too few) to 5 (too many), how would you rate the following in this **REGION** of Montana during the hunting season? (Circle only **ONE** number for each item below)”

	1	2	3	4	5
	Too Few				Too Many
Number of elk hunters	1.9%	2.6%	35.1%	30.1%	30.2%

Note. **Figure 27** at the end of this report provides region specific results for this question.

Perceptions Regarding the Number of Roads Open for Motorized Access to Elk During the Hunting Season in the Region of Montana Where Respondents Spent the Most Time Hunting Elk During the Past Five Years (Aggregate Results for All Seven Regions of Montana Combined)

Response to... “On a scale from 1 (too few) to 5 (too many), how would you rate the following in this **REGION** of Montana during the hunting season? (Circle only **ONE** number for each item below)”

	1	2	3	4	5
	Too Few				Too Many
Number of roads open for motorized access to elk	18.9%	15.9%	40.6%	12.6%	12.0%

Note. **Figure 28** at the end of this report provides region specific results for this question.

Perceptions Regarding the Number of Other Hunters Typically Seen While Hunting Elk in the Region of Montana Where Respondents Spent the Most Time Hunting Elk During the Past Five Years (Aggregate Results for All Seven Regions of Montana Combined)

Response to... “In terms of congestion & crowding, on a scale from 1 (very unacceptable) to 5 (very acceptable), how acceptable was the NUMBER of other hunters you typically observed PER DAY when hunting elk in this **REGION** of Montana? (Circle only **ONE** number below)”

(Very unacceptable)	1	2	3	4	5	(Very acceptable)
	10.6%	24.0%	42.1%	16.0%	7.4%	

Note. **Figure 29** at the end of this report provides region specific results for this question.

Response to... “In terms of the behavior of people, on a scale from 1 (very unacceptable) to 5 (very acceptable), how acceptable was the BEHAVIOR of other hunters you typically observed when hunting elk in this **REGION** of Montana? (Circle only **ONE** number below)”

(Very unacceptable)	1	2	3	4	5	(Very acceptable)
	6.2%	13.4%	31.7%	30.3%	18.5%	

Note. **Figure 30** at the end of this report provides region specific results for this question.

Satisfaction With Current Elk Hunting Regulations in the Region of Montana Where Respondents Spent the Most Time Hunting Elk During the Past Five Years (Aggregate Results for All Seven Regions of Montana Combined)

Response to... “On a scale from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied), how satisfied are you with the current elk hunting regulations in this **REGION** of Montana? (Circle only ONE number below)”

(Very dissatisfied)	1	2	3	4	5	(Very satisfied)
	10.3%	17.3%	35.2%	25.6%	11.6%	

Note. **Figure 31** at the end of this report provides region specific results for this question.

Opinions Regarding the Ease of Understanding Current Elk Hunting Regulations in the Region of Montana Where Respondents Spent the Most Time Hunting Elk During the Past Five Years (Aggregate Results for All Seven Regions of Montana Combined)

Response to... “On a scale from 1 (very difficult to understand) to 5 (very easy to understand), how would you rate the ease of understanding the current elk hunting regulations in this **REGION** of Montana? (Circle only ONE number below)”

(Very difficult to understand)	1	2	3	4	5	(Very easy to understand)
	6.5%	14.6%	29.8%	30.5%	18.6%	

Note. **Figure 32** at the end of this report provides region specific results for this question.

Opinions Regarding How Restrictive Elk Hunting Regulations Should be in Montana

Managing for higher numbers of MATURE bull elk (e.g., bull elk 4-5 years of age or older) may require implementing more restrictive elk hunting regulations. For instance, in current limited permit areas in Montana the average drawing odds are once every ten years.

Response to... “Given only ONE CHOICE, which of the following would be most favorable to you in MONTANA as a whole? (Check only ONE below)”

69.3% The opportunity to hunt bull elk every year somewhere in Montana (with a *lower probability* of harvesting a mature bull)

-OR-

30.7% The opportunity to hunt bull elk once every several years somewhere in Montana (with a *higher probability* of harvesting a mature bull)

Response to... “Given only ONE CHOICE, which of the following would be most favorable to you in the REGION of Montana where you’ve spent the most time hunting elk during the past FIVE years? (Check only ONE below)”

69.8% The opportunity to hunt bull elk every year in this REGION of the state (with a *lower probability* of harvesting a mature bull)

-OR-

30.2% The opportunity to hunt bull elk once every several years in this REGION of the state (with a *higher probability* of harvesting a mature bull)

Note. **Figure 33** at the end of this report provides region specific results for this question.

Response to... “On a scale from 1 (very unacceptable) to 5 (very acceptable), how acceptable would it be to you if more restrictive elk season types were implemented to reduce congestion and crowding in places where the number of elk hunters observed in the field per day has become unacceptable to most elk hunters? Under such a scenario, more restrictive elk season types might be considered even if elk population numbers support more liberal elk season types. (Circle only ONE number below)”

(Very unacceptable)	1	2	3	4	5	(Very acceptable)
	22.6%	19.8%	31.1%	15.4%	11.1%	

Response to... “On a scale from 1 (very unacceptable) to 5 (very acceptable), how acceptable would it be to you if more restrictive elk season types were implemented to reduce congestion and crowding in places where the number of elk hunters observed in the field per day has become unacceptable to most private landowners? Under such a scenario, more restrictive elk season types might be considered even if elk population numbers support more liberal elk season types. (Circle only ONE number below)”

(Very unacceptable)	1	2	3	4	5	(Very acceptable)
	26.3%	19.4%	31.3%	14.3%	8.7%	

Response to... “Implementing more restrictive elk hunting regulations in a Hunting District can lead to increased elk hunting pressure on less restrictive Hunting Districts in the state. On a scale from 1 (very unacceptable) to 5 (very acceptable), how acceptable or unacceptable to you is this tradeoff? (Circle only ONE number below)”

(Very unacceptable)	1	2	3	4	5	(Very acceptable)
	23.2%	24.3%	36.4%	11.4%	4.7%	

Response to... “On a scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important), how important is it to you to be able to consistently hunt ELK in the same place in Montana each and every year? (Circle only ONE number below)”

(Very unimportant)	1	2	3	4	5	(Very important)
	3.2%	4.9%	16.4%	25.6%	49.9%	

Opinions Regarding the Timing of the Elk Hunting Season in Montana

Response to... “On a scale from 1 (strongly oppose) to 5 (strongly support), to what extent do you support or oppose the current timing of the five-week general rifle season for ELK hunting in Montana which starts the third weekend in October and ends the Sunday after Thanksgiving? (Circle only ONE number below)”

(Strongly oppose)	1	2	3	4	5	(Strongly Support)
	3.2%	5.6%	16.2%	25.0%	50.1%	

Response to... “On a scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important), how important is it to you that the timing of the general rifle season for ELK hunting matches up with the timing of the general rifle season for mule deer hunting in Montana? (Circle only ONE number below)”

(Very unimportant)	1	2	3	4	5	(Very important)
	10.4%	9.9%	18.4%	20.8%	40.5%	

Interest in Hunting Elk in Montana During the Archery, General Rifle, Muzzleloader, and Winter/Late Shoulder Seasons in Montana

Response to... “On a scale from 1 (very disinterested) to 5 (very interested), how interested are you in hunting ELK during the ARCHERY season in Montana? (Circle only ONE number below)”

(Very disinterested)	1	2	3	4	5	(Very interested)
	21.9%	11.8%	12.7%	12.6%	41.0%	

Response to... “On a scale from 1 (very disinterested) to 5 (very interested), how interested are you in hunting ELK during the GENERAL RIFLE season in Montana? (Circle only ONE number below)”

(Very disinterested)	1	2	3	4	5	(Very interested)
	1.4%	2.3%	6.6%	17.8%	71.9%	

Response to... “On a scale from 1 (very disinterested) to 5 (very interested), how interested are you in hunting ELK during the MUZZLELOADER season in Montana? (Circle only ONE number below)”

(Very disinterested)	1	2	3	4	5	(Very interested)
	44.4%	16.3%	18.5%	8.9%	11.9%	

Response to... “On a scale from 1 (very disinterested) to 5 (very interested), how interested are you in hunting ELK during the winter/late SHOULDER season in Montana? (Circle only ONE number below)”

(Very disinterested)	1	2	3	4	5	(Very interested)
	17.0%	12.7%	21.0%	21.8%	27.5%	

Interest in Harvesting Antlerless Elk and Bull Elk in Montana

Response to... “On a scale from 1 (very disinterested) to 5 (very interested), how interested are you in harvesting antlerless ELK in Montana? (Circle only ONE number below)”

(Very disinterested)	1	2	3	4	5	(Very interested)
	3.5%	4.4%	13.1%	20.9%	58.2%	

Response to... “On a scale from 1 (very disinterested) to 5 (very interested), how interested are you in harvesting bull ELK in Montana? (Circle only ONE number below)”

(Very disinterested)	1	2	3	4	5	(Very interested)
	1.6%	3.6%	13.5%	18.2%	63.1%	

Motives (or Reasons) for Hunting Elk in Montana

Response to... “Below is a list of different reasons why people go elk hunting. On a scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important), please indicate how important each of these reasons are to you for going ELK hunting in Montana. (Circle only ONE number for each reason listed below)”

Reason:	1	2	3	4	5
	Very				Very
	Unimportant				Important
To enjoy nature and the outdoors	1.5%	1.1%	6.1%	21.1%	70.2%
To get venison for eating	3.6%	3.6%	13.3%	21.3%	58.2%
To do something with my family	6.1%	8.1%	15.5%	25.3%	45.0%
To be with friends who have similar interests	4.7%	5.0%	17.0%	30.1%	43.2%
To feel the exhilaration of the hunt	4.4%	6.8%	21.5%	27.4%	39.8%
To develop my skills and abilities	5.4%	8.2%	23.9%	26.9%	35.6%
To test my hunting skills	5.9%	9.8%	23.5%	27.0%	33.8%
To harvest a mature bull	11.7%	15.2%	27.8%	19.4%	26.0%
To feel a sense of accomplishment	6.6%	7.8%	21.2%	28.7%	35.6%
To experience solitude	6.7%	5.9%	18.3%	26.2%	42.9%

Satisfaction with Elk Management in Montana

Response to... “On a scale from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied), how satisfied are you with current ELK management in Montana? (Circle only ONE number below)”

(Very dissatisfied)	1	2	3	4	5	(Very satisfied)
	10.6%	16.3%	38.2%	27.2%	7.6%	

Trust in FWP to Manage Elk in Montana

Response to... “On a scale from 1 (little or no trust) to 5 (very high trust), how much trust do you place in FWP to manage ELK in Montana? (Circle only ONE number below)”

(Little or no trust)	1	2	3	4	5	(Very high trust)
	10.7%	16.9%	29.7%	28.4%	14.4%	

Where Resident Elk Hunters Typically Get Their Information Regarding Elk & Management in Montana

Response to... “From what sources do you typically get MOST of your information regarding elk and elk management in Montana? (Check ALL that apply below)”

68.0% Family and/or friends	6.3% Facebook
43.9% Word of mouth	2.5% Instagram
57.2% Other elk hunters	0.3% Twitter
60.3% FWP	4.3% YouTube
66.6% Montana hunting regulations	14.1% Television, radio, newspaper, or magazine
17.4% Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation	2.0% Local or regional online event calendar(s)
8.9% Sportsperson group(s)	1.0% Community bulletin board(s)
19.9% Private landowners	4.8% Other source (e.g., podcasts, GoHunt, onX, scouting, personal experiences/observations, etc.)
14.2% Website(s)	

Additional Special Questions Asked in the Survey

Response to... “Prior to this hunting season (2022), did you apply for any special elk hunting permits?”

33.3% NO

66.7% YES.....“If yes, please answer the following question. Under a new Montana elk hunting regulation, individuals who successfully draw an either-sex elk permit are limited to hunting bull elk in Montana ONLY in the hunting district for which their permit is valid. Did this new regulation affect how you approached applying for permits?”

67.6% NO

32.4% YES

Verbatim comments for this question:

- Did not apply for permits if not my #1 hunting location preference.
- I hunt for the meat, I prefer cows.
- The 900 Archery tag allowed me to bounce around to different areas where I could obtain permission. Private land had the elk.
- If I draw 380 I'm happy to only hunt there.

- I am very disinterested in limiting to only the special draw region as I enjoy hunting elk as a family.
- Get rid of only HD's.
- I applied for antlerless cow elk permit but wasn't successful in the drawing.
- I only apply for antlerless.
- I want to hunt cow elk every year in all the districts, want my cow without drawing a permit. Just give cow tags all the time (no draw).
- Only apply for trophy area not an area with good bull numbers.
- Somewhat misleading forgot to add the season timing to the question.
- Yes & No, I drew an archery only permit. If this permit had prevented me from hunting general rifle elk season I would not have applied for it.
- Archery hunters have elk disappointed and should be locked (gates) out, they should have to pick archery or gun-Not Both.
- I did know they had changed.
- Family did not all apply in same area. Important to hunt with family.
- Choose one weeklong trip across the state vs more frequent hunts closer to home.
- Will quit hunting in Montana.
- I was cheated out of a permit this year because I picked an area where no permits were issued. I went into the main office to see what could be done and was told that there is nothing that could be done. The onsite had an old list and let you pick it even though no permits were available, the program was set up wrong.
- I feel that you should still be able to archery hunt general units even if you have a special permit.
- I can archery elk hunt within 10 miles of my house, general areas that hold elk are much further away.
- I stopped applying to my favorite spot because then I can't hunt evenings & weekends at home.
- As a senior MT resident (or not) one should be able to hunt bull elk anywhere, if you draw a permit, you're most likely going to hunt the HD you drew the permit in anyway.
- Never had successful drawing in 12 years.
- I hunt for meat not antlers, so it is most important for me to be successful to fill the freezer that means finding elk where I can, not just 1 single unit.
- Need to manage the resource better. This regulation is a step in the right direction.
- I did not apply for a permit because I have general areas that I would rather hunt. I am not sure if I will ever apply again, I do not support the regulations.
- I'm ok with that as long as I can hunt antlerless somewhere else.
- I don't buy points on anything.
- I think residents should be able to shoot a bull every year.
- Have land interest in district applied.
- Hunter access to the Sweet Grass Hills is a real issue!
- Did not realize it until after the fact.
- I really hope that you repeal this regulation.
- Never knew this was a rule but never drew a permit.
- I didn't know this was the case when I applied.
- Archery season should allow for either sex!
- I only apply for the archery bull permit allowing rifle everywhere.
- We have more overabundance of cows and difficulty in getting cow tags.
- I had a close encounter with grizzly in 2019 solo hunting. Been archery hunting solo, but occasionally want to hunt with friends in 300's but now can't. Also, out of state friends who put in and plan a 600-21 could end up with bad weather (breaks mud) and then during week vacation not be able to switch to hunt 300's and just be stuck not hunting.
- There are too many permits in region 6 for bow hunters and rifle hunters. Too much damage to roads, too many hunters disobeying road closures. Used to be you would see a couple other hunters a day, now there are three rigs per coulee. Too many camping in each coulee. Elk are driven way back so that causes the hunters to drive on closed roads.
- Now I have to commit to just that one area.

- It didn't affect me but saw way more people the first week of the season, the regulation forces people to hunt in one area!
- You buy a general license for a reason, if you draw a special tag and want to go somewhere else you should be able to.
- I believe this is reasonable-get a special permit, hunt there. Also, any of the limitations must include a commensurate (or more) reduction in 005 tags to favor residents.
- Trophy bull permits in 380 should be once every 10 years no bonus points.
- I put in for a permit far from home. I can't get, I hope to hunt every weekend, like to hunt by home also.
- I only apply for 380.
- I can't draw a tag our bonus point system is fubar.
- 60 years no either sex.
- I like to bow and rifle hunt.
- Received permit for cow elk.
- Just let me hunt my area of choosing at least every 3rd year, 2 would be better. I might not be around before I get to hunt my area again.
- For sure rig changed for me, most likely won't do again.
- If you don't want the permit don't apply. Other states don't allow you to cross lines & neither should we.
- Too darn confusing.
- If I draw a elk unit I will hunt it.
- I don't like this restriction, it is irrelevant to biology, socially illogical.
- Hunting is very dependent on getting time off work, so being limited to my draw unit made hunting very restrictive, as hunting around my house was made impossible.
- I think in areas like 380, if successful you should have to sit out for period of years. Have applied for 35 years and never drawn, know others who have drawn multiple times!
- When the 411 district gave 1,000 tags there were more people than elk. Under these new rules I couldn't go hunt the Belts with my general elk tag, this needs removed!
- I almost didn't apply for special permit.
- We have a wolf problem in our area, which is impacting elk #'s and behavior. So, have been putting in for special draw permits elsewhere in the state requiring a lot of travel time but haven't been very successful yet.
- I hated it but just went weaponless when hunting w/ friends in another district.
- Not a fan of this because my permit was valid for 410 and I live in Region 1 so I was only able to hunt once this year.
- We hunt archery every year and love being able to harvest either sex elk and being able to hunt every year.
- Wish I could have gone over to Region 3 where friends live and hunt a weekend with them. Like I use to be able to do with the 900 permit.
- Many special permits are far from home. Thus, limiting weekend warrior hunting.
- I like that if you draw either sex tag in the state that you cannot hunt bulls in any other state.
- Make it permit only for 6 pt or larger for bull elk statewide.
- MFWP is over controlling this, look at history under past management without this. We have increased our elk herds and hunting operations, get rid of this.
- I do think we shouldn't be limited where we hunt bulls because of a cow tag!
- I hunt only with a bow on private property.
- I apply for the area close to home so there is no conflict with the new regs.
- No, I have not drawn a special elk permit.
- That rule is not effective-creating too much limitation and not enough benefit.
- As I was unaware of this change at time of application, now that I am aware I will rethink applying in the future.
- Stupid rule.
- Did not apply for a special bull tag in rifle season that has good odds, but not very desirable district.
- I normally hunt general units; I've never been able to draw a special elk tag yet.

- Do not like being limited to one district.
- Herds cross into more than one district or borderline on districts.
- I think this new regulation for Montana was much needed and had a positive outcome on my hunting experience.
- And by the way when you extend elk hunting you should include every tag NOT just certain tags, it is not fair for everybody.
- If you get a special elk tag that is where should hunt only.
- Don't want to be tied down to one area.
- Would help a lot mule and elk hunting for MT Residents if you would put more restrictions on out of state hunters. The past few years haven't been good because of out of state hunters.
- Hunt as a family, its broke up our family hunting for years!
- Applied closer to home.
- Made us apply for units close to home.
- Hunted only the 380 unit this year.
- Basically, it screws us, harvesting an elk is very hard anyways.
- Keep the old regulations-limit the amount of out of state tags!
- I didn't apply this year. I also wasn't planning on applying prior to the new regulations.
- Was not satisfied hated not be able to hunt general areas!
- Manage elk numbers!! Don't cater to hunter's needs.
- I don't believe a person should be restricted to hunt bull elk just in one hunting unit. A person should be able to hunt in any unit but those who didn't draw that unit may not be able to hunt there for bull elk.
- Don't like the restrictions.
- If you draw the tag you should be limited to the area.
- It limits you to take and if no elk are in the area you don't have much of a chance to harvest an elk, this is the bad part about this new regulations.
- Because we are not drawing - and even if we did, we shouldn't be restricted to one unit.
- In area 313 the length of the season and available antlerless are very restricted.
- Applied for an unlikely draw, hunted general instead to have options.
- One of the biggest issues is elk moving to private lands where regular hunters can't get access. Landowners "private". Elk no longer are found in many places I have hunted for decades because they find private land.
- Love the area I hunt, didn't affect my decision.
- I did not apply this year because I didn't want to be stuck in one unit.
- Been applying for 15 years 15 points still no draw and live in the 690 area, see more out of state draw and western MT than locals!
- I thought that was a great idea! I pondered how that would reduce hunting pressure on a statewide level if all units went to draw/special permit.
- However, I lost the opportunity to hunt antlerless elk in the district I've hunted for 30 plus years, when the eastern portion of 360 was combined with 310, very disappointing.
- Certain areas are weather dependent, no snow, no elk. Too much moisture no access.
- I agree hunting what you draw. Don't want it don't put in.
- I usually go on several hunting trips with different friends each time. One is handicapped. So, if each friend has a different area to hunt, I can't go and hunt too.
- I guess I missed this rule. Didn't know it existed.
- Both before I could hunt close to where I live now but also been home on ranch. Now I choose the region where the ranch is.
- Chances of harvesting a cow elk are better than a bull-I'm a meat hunter.
- I won't apply unless regs are changed.
- Didn't apply.
- I got only one permit in 10 years!
- Closer to home.
- Nonresident hunter days int eh field exceed resident hunter days in the field (my observation). There are too many non-resident archery permits issued in the Missouri Breaks areas due hunter days in the field.

- People who want only bull now apply for the permit because the permit is either sex.
- This new regulation was a big mistake and should be removed.
- We oppose the previous regulation changes and you passed them anyway! Your private interest groups decide NOT THE DIY HUNTERS and or weekend warrior, this is a disgrace!!
- It is a terrible idea limits opportunities.
- 0900 archery-was removed 447-21 Highwoods were a zoo of out of staters.
- Definitely kept hunter pressure down in non-draw units. Clarify the regulations, the spreadsheet style is confusing and people hunt areas without proper license and put the 'opportunity specific details' next to 'opportunity' column or write it as either sex elk.
- Hunt in 270 where this did not apply to this regulation.
- If you apply for an either sex permit that is district specific you should plan on hunting that district.
- Hard to hunt with restrictions.
- Great idea.
- I live on 270 and like to hunt 261.
- This regulation is too restrictive.
- Antlerless elk apply too and got.
- That has always been the rule in public.
- Totally fine with this!
- Draw odds and location were more important.
- Hunted for 50 years, it's just where I go. Really hard hunting last couple of years. Too many Bozeman hunters, they've loaded the area.
- I apply for permits in regions with more mature bulls under less pressure. So, if I draw the tag all of my attention will be put on the region where I am observing more bulls.
- I didn't like the restriction because no chance to hunt with buddies in other units
- I feel you need to take pressure off the bulls and put more on cows. Permit bulls and cows, hunt only district you draw permit for. Get rid of multi district antlerless and give each district back the cow tags.
- 270 was not affected.
- I liked it, one should always hunt only in permit area.
- That's how it should stay.
- Limited greatly the number of restrictive districts I could/would apply for.
- Archery permits are dumb and I should be able to hunt elk, number are high.
- Too restrictive.
- Yes, more out of staters and other people from other districts due to losing chances as well.
- Wasn't aware of that restriction!
- I think it's wrong reduces choice & opportunity.
- I like this regulation.
- I am totally mad at the fact you have to give up your 1st choice draw to hunt in HD 270 for an unlimited tag!!!
- Can't hunt with family now due to the new regs & being able to only hunt that district.
- I didn't realize this change since I always have the CMR for 1st two choices this creates a problem or maybe I'm just confused here w/ cow vs either sex permits.
- Don't like that new reg. because a bull elk might walk by when bow hunting in another area.
- Knowing that I was limited to one area, I applied for what I thought would provide myself a good opportunity, but I also had access to private...I probably would have applied in 700.
- But it is fair.
- I did not put in.
- Did not know about this.
- Good idea.
- I prefer to apply for special w/ the intent to hunt w/ a rifle & then also hunt a general archery unit.
- I mainly want to hunt close to home but would be nice to hunt with family in other parts of the state.
- The Breaks are getting pretty busy.

- I wasn't a resident long enough to apply for anything other than general.
- Like specific areas.
- Very unhappy with this!
- Didn't apply for any special permits this year.
- I agree with the regs.
- I like this idea!
- Only had a general tag.
- I used to put in for wall creek, it was 80 permits cow only no bulls.
- No permits were issued I was unsuccessful for many years even with bonus points.
- I support this regulation, if you apply and are successful you shouldn't need or have the ability to hunt elk anywhere else.
- It did, so no longer matters.
- Took too long for this to be implemented!
- I would like to see permit system for minority of Montana.
- This changed our plans for hunting other districts.
- Very unhandy.
- Yes, couldn't hunt in Region 2 this year for elk.
- If cow permit is drawn in area should be able to still hunt bull wherever.
- Should be allowed all through Montana.
- Good idea to restrict people to hunting only where their permit is valid. Restricts pressure on other areas.
- Even though it affected me, it's still a good law.
- If I draw that permit I will only hunt the permit more or less.
- It may cause me to forego less optimal permits in favor of hunting multiple units.
- Makes hunters think about travel and their ability to hunt different areas of the state.
- I primarily hunt this unit regardless.
- I apply on the east side of state but hunt every weekend. If I draw now I only get to hunt one week straight maybe two, I live in the west.
- I will not put in for archery again.
- Good idea.
- I only apply for a special draw for archery which shouldn't limit hunting in other districts IMO!
- I like the new regulations.
- It makes it difficult to plan certain hunt with friends & family that did not have the same tags.
- This is an ok regulation.
- I now only apply for trophy tags! Not willing to risk missing out on hunting elk in other units unless I draw a great tag.
- It would be nice to hunt, it's easier to draw a permit.
- In 270 it is unlimited so what is the reason for it.
- If I were not successful in the draw area, it would still be nice to be able to fill the freezer on known general areas.
- Only hunt near Troy.
- I didn't apply for special permits in 2022 because of this.
- I think this is a good thing, but only for the weapon the tag is good in. If it's a rifle tag, you should be able to hunt in any other general area with a bow.
- The only rule is a handicap person that when hunting for a food source is stuck to one area.
- Live between districts.
- To harvest an animal takes a lot of time, not able to travel every week across the state.
- I think we should have to pick the district we want to hunt bull elk in the entire season.
- I bow hunt in different areas then I rifle hunt.
- I've never drawn a special permit so I wouldn't know...but I'm going to keep trying.
- This new reg will affect how I approach applying in the future.
- We are only permitted 5 bull tags.
- You can't be drawing different districts with special draw tags. Makes it hard to hunt both sections of Montana to scout for mature animals resulting in everyone to shoot the first things

they find. Too much pressure for that short of a season! Should be able to hunt other districts per regulations.

- Most deer permits are the same, no big deal.
- If FWP didn't introduce wolves to our area the elk & moose populations would not have declined.
- Apply for area I would be able to hunt both, but honestly, we need to reduce the additional huts to let public land herds grow. Elk are getting hoarded onto private lands and public lands can't be accessed.
- Doesn't matter, can't draw in 17 years.
- I didn't/do not apply for those permits ever.
- Do not approve of this regulation! Forcing hunters to go to districts they may not be familiar with is costly and inefficient for hunters.
- I may not apply for that permit.
- I did not apply for cow permits in areas I like to bow hunt.
- I support this regulation.
- I like it.
- Won't apply again, couldn't hunt our families land.
- It would be preferable to hunt bull elk in not only that draw unit but other general units as well.
- Please STOP limiting resident hunters and LIMIT OUT OF STATE hunters!
- Caused me to not put in.
- I think that Montana should have some advantage for senior citizens, similar to the youth.
- In 121, I don't believe the land own provide enough elk for a person to take two.
- Did not influence my applications but do not support.
- No, it didn't.
- It means I'll only apply for districts that are very close to me...or possibly not a all.
- This is a stupid thing to do let us hunt the state NOT a district!!
- Haven't drawn any tags in many years! Out of Staters seem to get most.
- Had to cancel hunting plans to hunt in other districts.
- If you get an permit still can hunt antlerless statewide but bull only in area you draw.
- Your computers messed up the drawings.
- Need less non-resident tags for all game species.
- Like the new draw system keeps people out of Regions that you enjoy hunting.
- I considered it when choosing where to apply.
- Decrease the amount of (out of state) tags.
- This is a bad rule. It hurts residents & favors non-residents. Restrict non-residents more.
- Less out of state tags given. Must live in MT for at least given period as primary residency.
- I don't want to be limited to one district.
- I don't apply for high draw odds permits any larger i.e., breaks archery only because it's too far to drive & only hunt there.
- The number of Non Resident hunters in MT now is what's wrecking our Elk hunting these last three years.
- I stopped applying for permits where it would limit hunting with my partners. I hunt 1 week with my dad & knowing I can't hunt elk with him for that week (if successful) makes me consider carefully what to apply for.
- Non residents should have to apply for specific general units /and non residents should be limited to only hunting elk in the general unit they put in for!
- I hunt different mountain ranges so the weather affects the accessibility.
- Keep out of staters out! Make outfitters unable to sell bull hunts.
- I do dislike this reg.
- Only put in for B tags.
- It will affect later on.
- MT Regulations are ridiculous, make it new, make it simple we don't need every specific annotated on every unit list all that are the same and annotate all same with unit numbers, and special draw by unit. Everyone Resident/Non Resident complain about restricting to that unit isn't good.
- I like this regulation.

- Limited choices.
- I'd rather apply closer to home.
- I don't look forward to applying again.
- I liked to have more opportunity.
- It prevented me from applying for a unit with high draw adds that is far from my home.
- Forcing hunters to harvest only in 392 is absurd.
- If you draw breaks tags & don't see anything, then zero meat in freezer from any other general district? Bad plan for Montanans.
- It's b.s to get lucky enough to draw a special permit & then get punished for it with additional restrictions. "General" should always still be General to everyone.
- If you draw a special permit you should only hunt in that district.

Response to... “This past hunting season (2022), did you hunt elk in any special permit elk hunting districts?”

65.2% NO

34.8% YES.....“If yes, please answer the following two questions. Under a new Montana elk hunting regulation, individuals who successfully draw an either-sex elk permit are limited to hunting bull elk in Montana ONLY in the hunting district for which their permit is valid.”

a. “Do you think this new regulation results in any changes to hunting pressure in the special permit area(s) you hunted? (check only ONE below)”

34.9% NO

10.2% YES, it decreased hunting pressure

14.3% YES, it increased hunting pressure

40.6% I don't know

b. “Do you think this new regulation results in any changes to elk harvest in the special permit area(s) you hunted? (check only ONE below)”

34.7% NO

9.4% YES, it decreased elk harvest

5.9% YES, it increased elk harvest

49.9% I don't know

Background Characteristics of Survey Respondents

Response to... “During the past FIVE years, have you hunted MULE DEER in Montana?”

26.0% NO

74.0% YES.....“If yes, on a scale from 1 (never or rarely) to 5 (all the time), how often do you also hunt ELK (or would harvest an ELK) while you are primarily mule deer hunting? (Circle only ONE number below)”

(Never or rarely)	1	2	3	4	5	(All the time)
	12.0%	11.1%	13.7%	15.4%	47.8%	

Response to... “How many of the past FIVE years have you hunted ELK in Montana? (Check only ONE below)”

7.2% 1 year

9.7% 2 years

11.2% 3 years

9.8% 4 years

62.1% All 5 years

Response to... "On average, about how many **DAYS PER YEAR** do you hunt ELK in Montana?"

Mean = 13.3 days per year

Median = 10.0

Age of respondents: Mean 51.5 years of age; Median 54.0

15-19 (5.6%) 20-24 (3.5%) 25-34 (11.1%) 35-44 (15.1%) 45-54 (14.0%) 55-64 (21.9%) 65-74 (20.4%) 75-84 (5.7%) 85+ (2.7%)

FIGURES WITH REGIONAL SURVEY RESULTS
(For Survey Questions with an Intent to Provide Regional Survey Information)

Figure 1. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important), how important to you was being able TO HUNT CLOSE TO HOME as a potential reason for why you spent most of your time hunting elk in this region of the state during the past five years?”

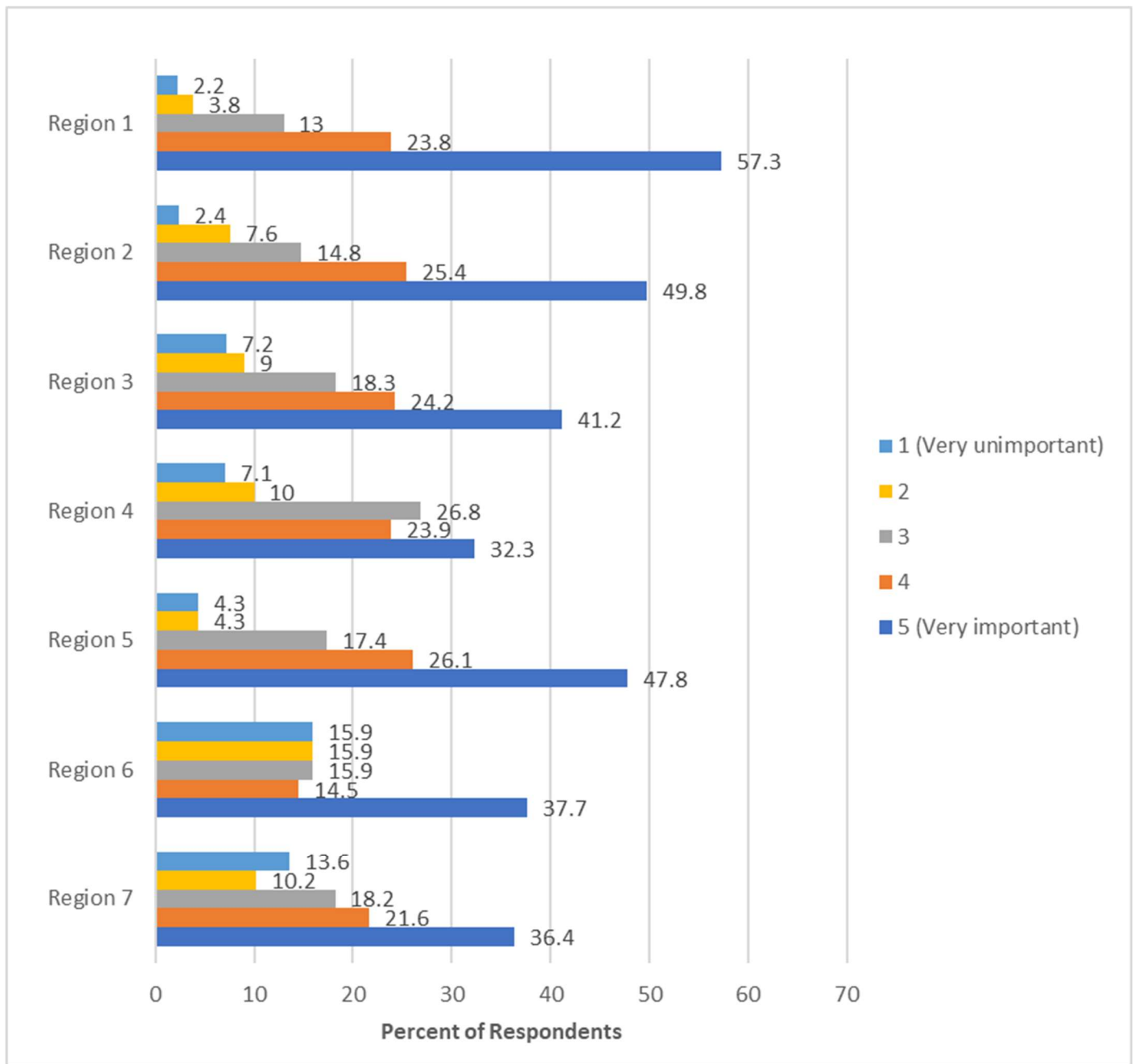


Figure 2. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important), how important to you was being able TO HUNT IN A FAMILIAR LOCATION as a potential reason for why you spent most of your time hunting elk in this region of the state during the past five years?”

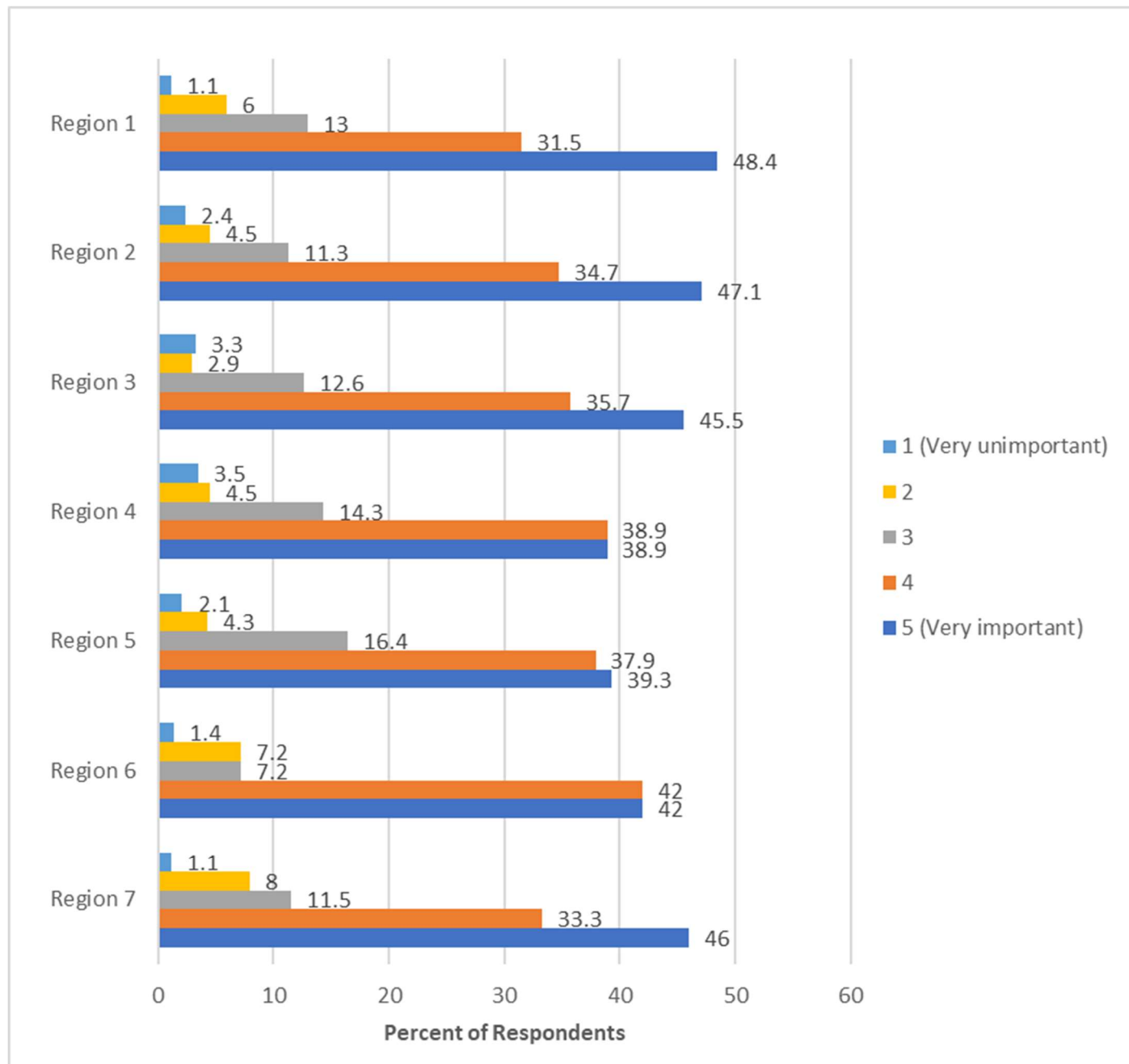


Figure 3. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important), how important to you were ELK NUMBERS as a potential reason for why you spent most of your time hunting elk in this region of the state during the past five years?”

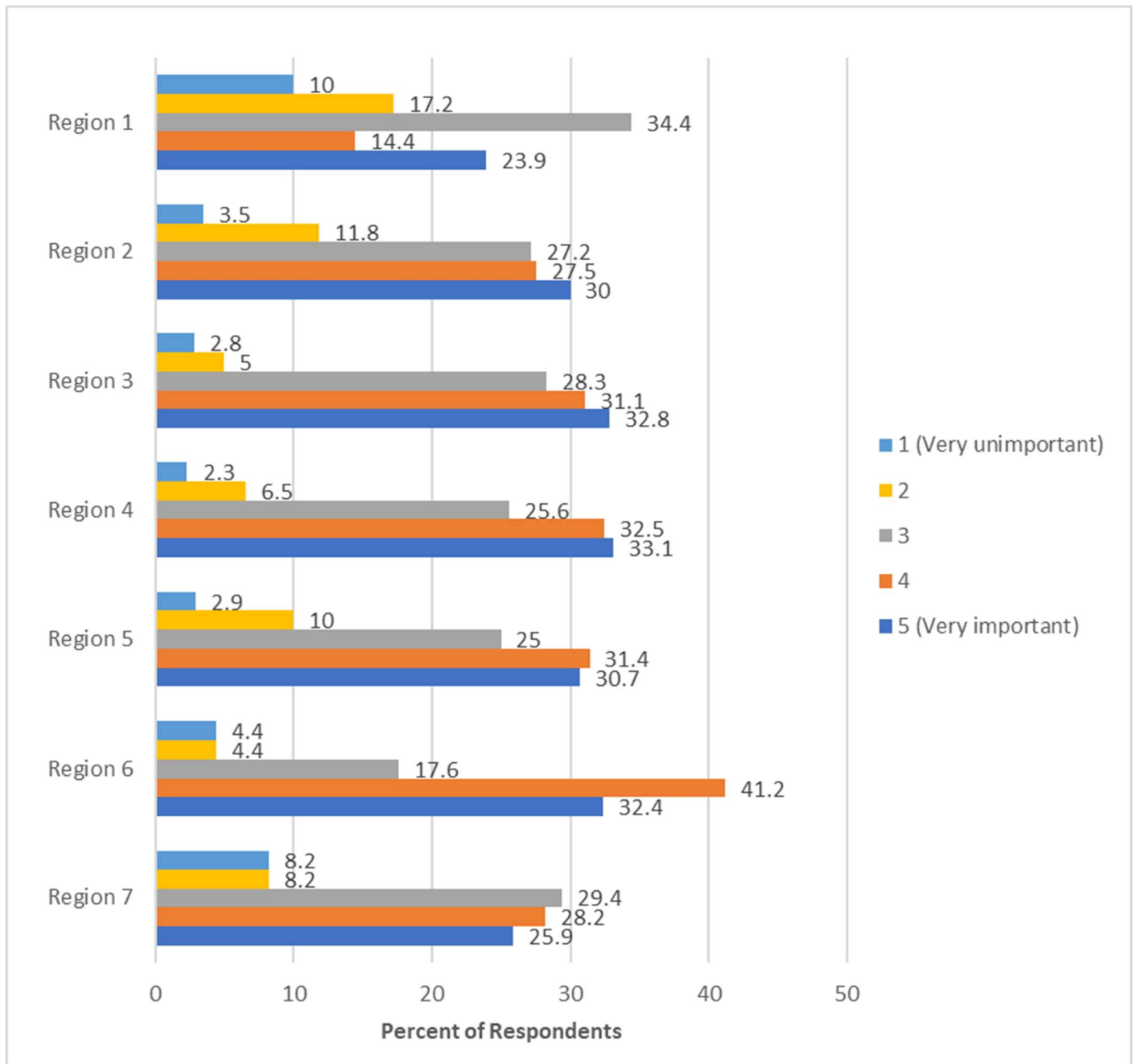


Figure 4. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important), how important to you were ANTLERLESS ELK NUMBERS as a potential reason for why you spent most of your time hunting elk in this region of the state during the past five years?”

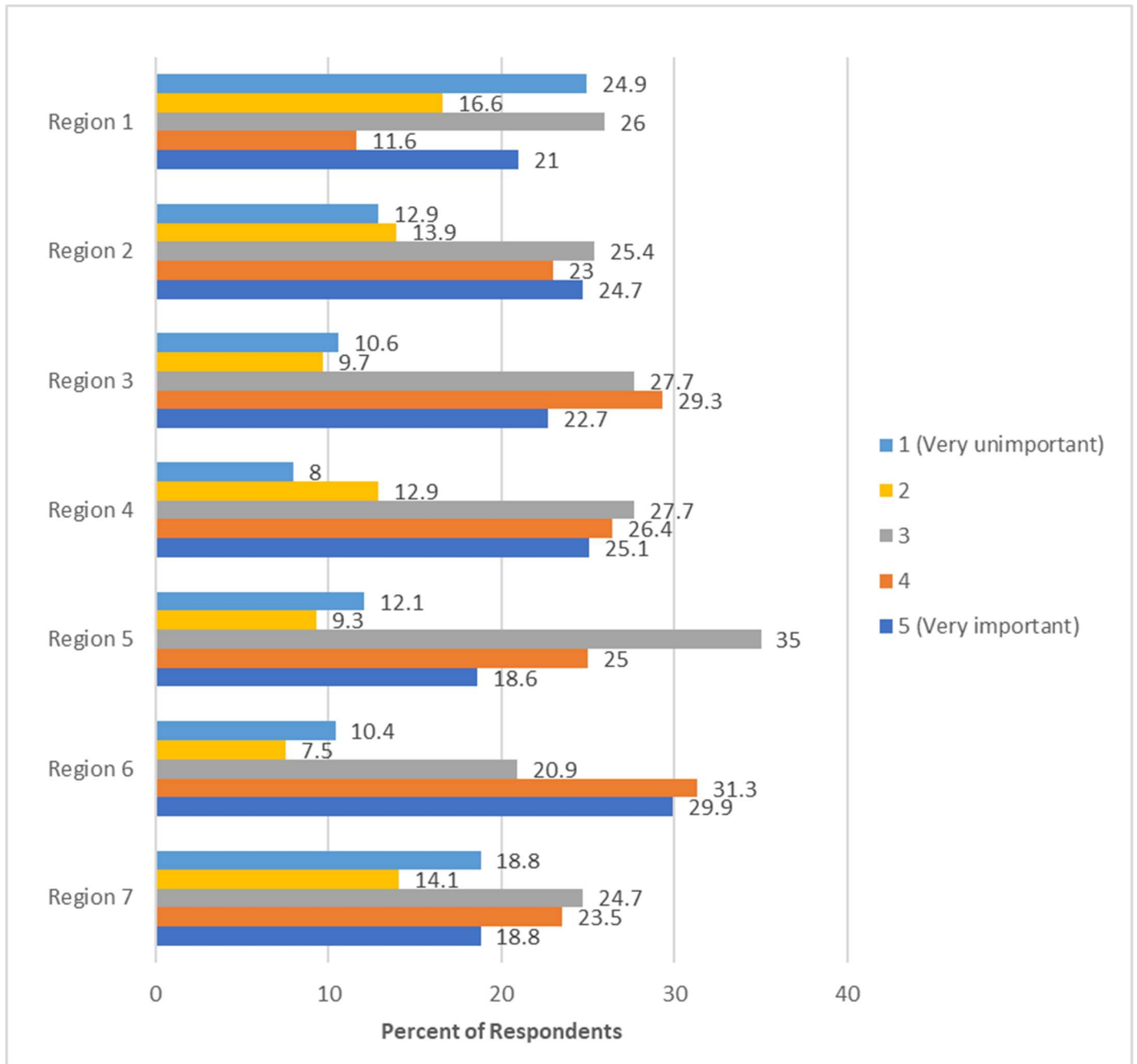


Figure 5. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important), how important to you were BULL ELK NUMBERS as a potential reason for why you spent most of your time hunting elk in this region of the state during the past five years?”

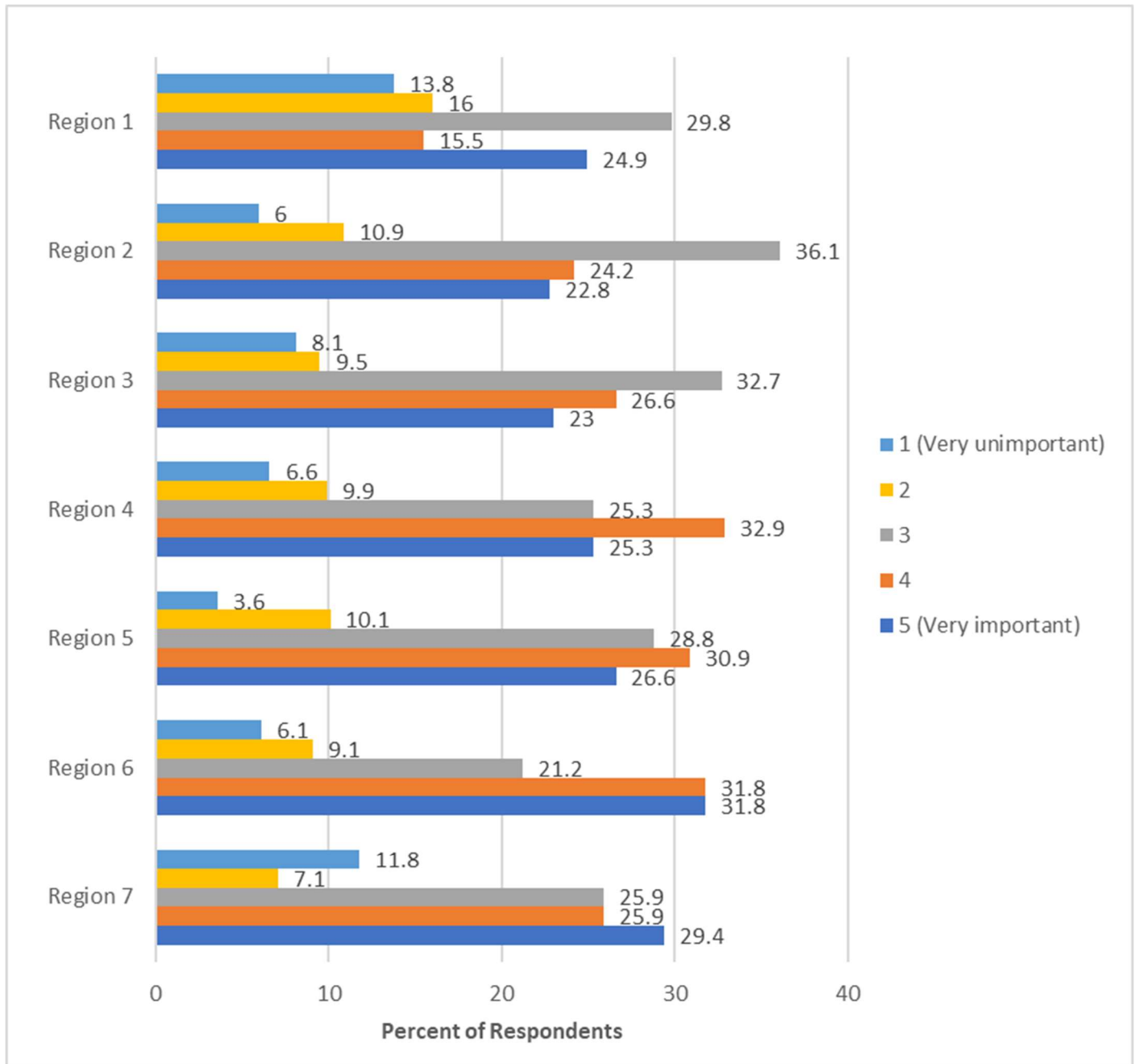


Figure 6. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important), how important to you was ACCESS TO HUNT ANTLERLESS ELK ON PUBLICLY OWNED LAND as a potential reason for why you spent most of your time hunting elk in this region of the state during the past five years?”

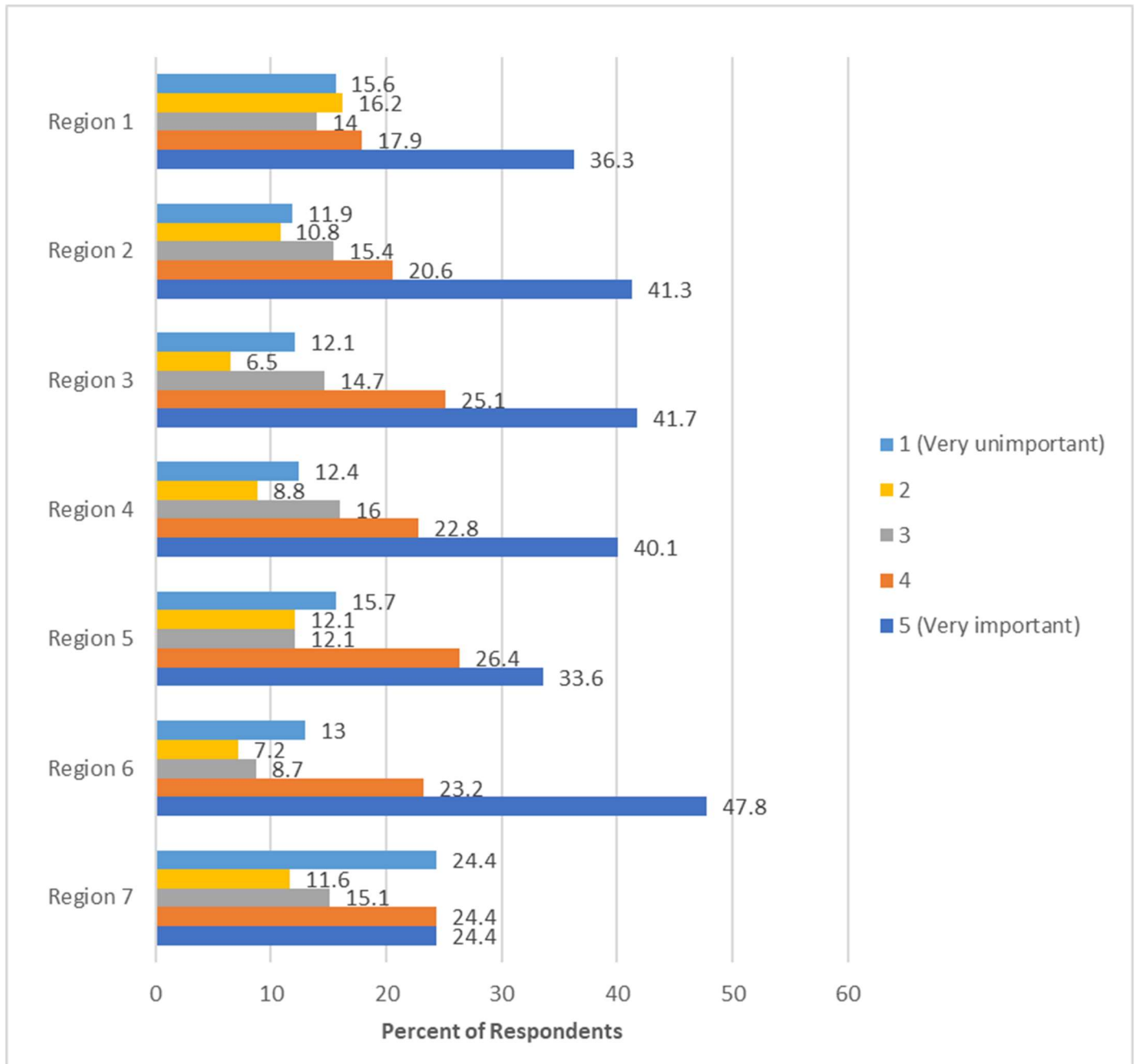


Figure 7. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important), how important to you was ACCESS TO HUNT ANTLERLESS ELK ON PRIVATELY OWNED LAND as a potential reason for why you spent most of your time hunting elk in this region of the state during the past five years?”

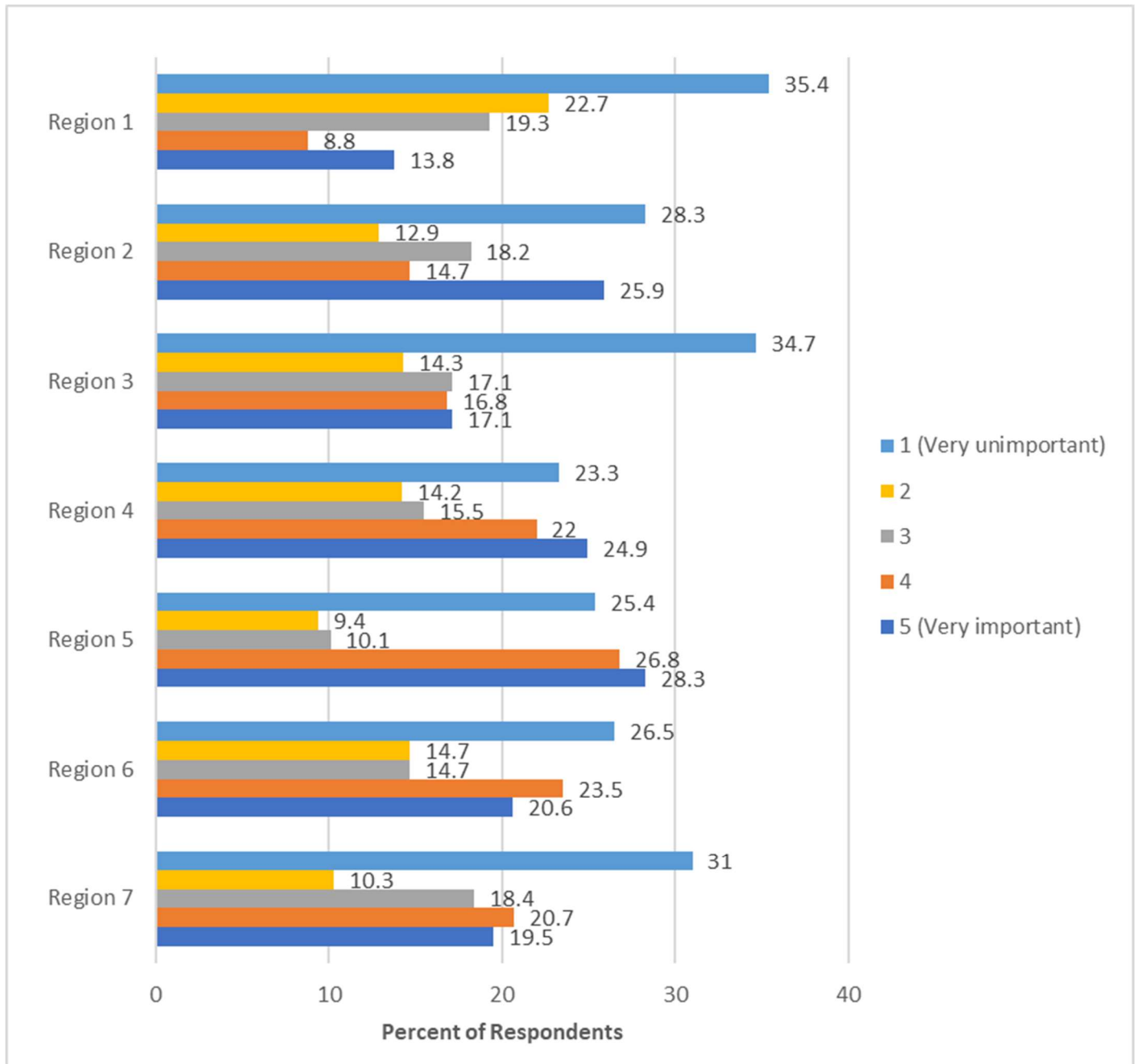


Figure 8. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important), how important to you was ACCESS TO HUNT BULL ELK ON PUBLICLY OWNED LAND as a potential reason for why you spent most of your time hunting elk in this region of the state during the past five years?”

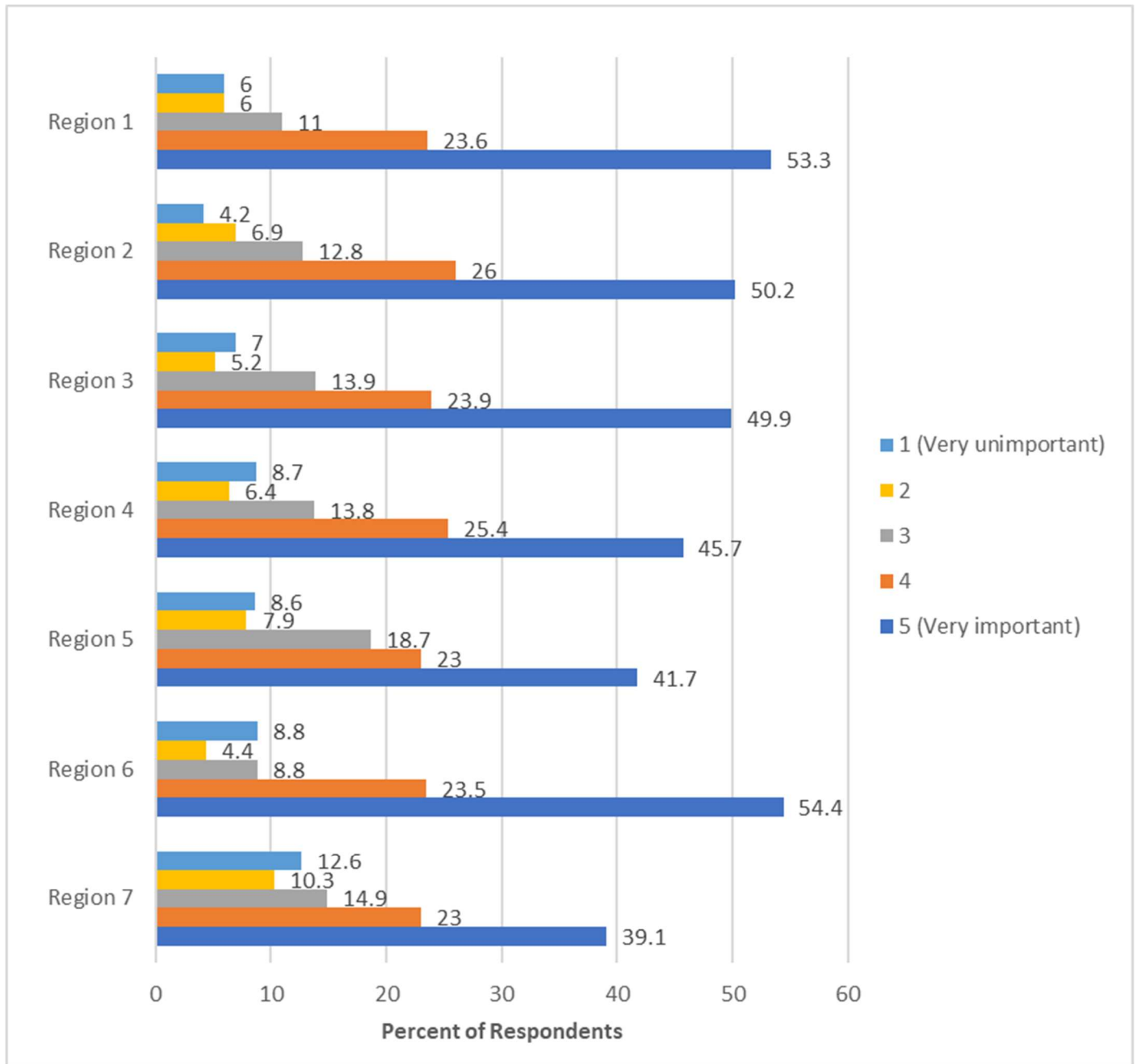


Figure 9. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important), how important to you was ACCESS TO HUNT BULL ELK ON PRIVATELY OWNED LAND as a potential reason for why you spent most of your time hunting elk in this region of the state during the past five years?”

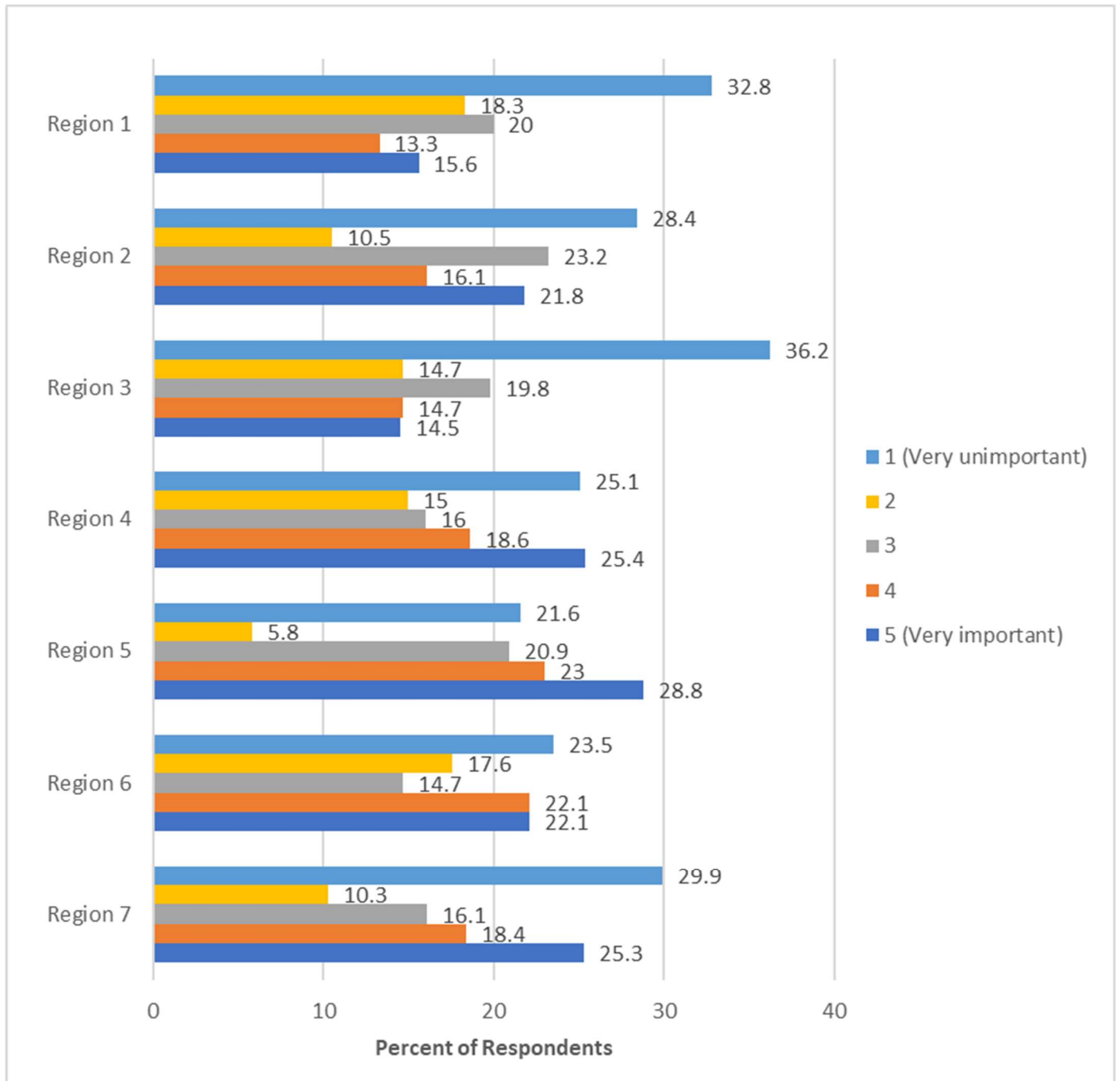


Figure 10. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important), how important to you was it TO BE ABLE TO HUNT ELK AND OTHER GAME SPECIES AT THE SAME TIME as a potential reason for why you spent most of your time hunting elk in this region of the state during the past five years?”

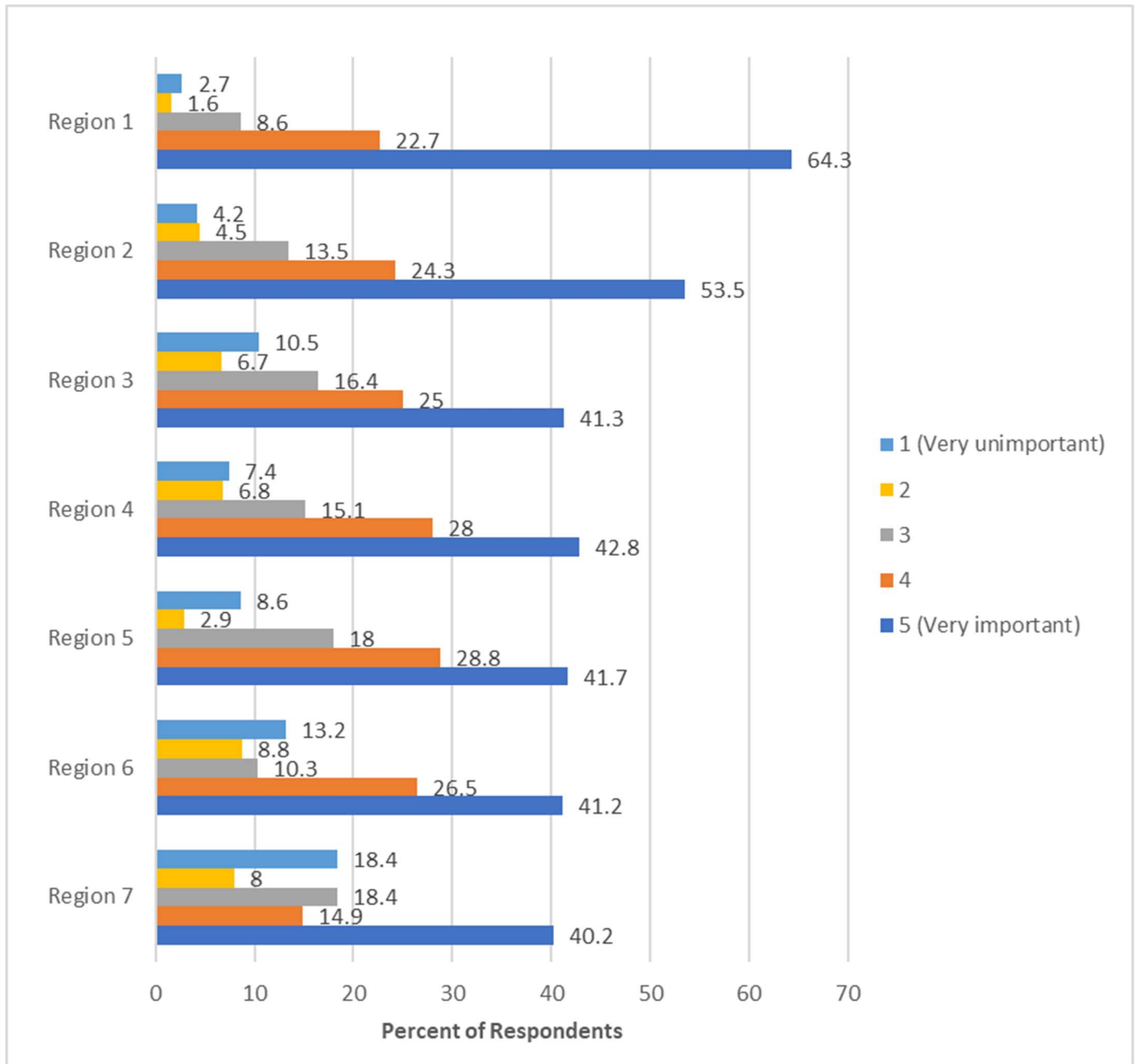


Figure 11. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how would you rate OVERALL OPPORTUNITIES TO HUNT ELK in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?”

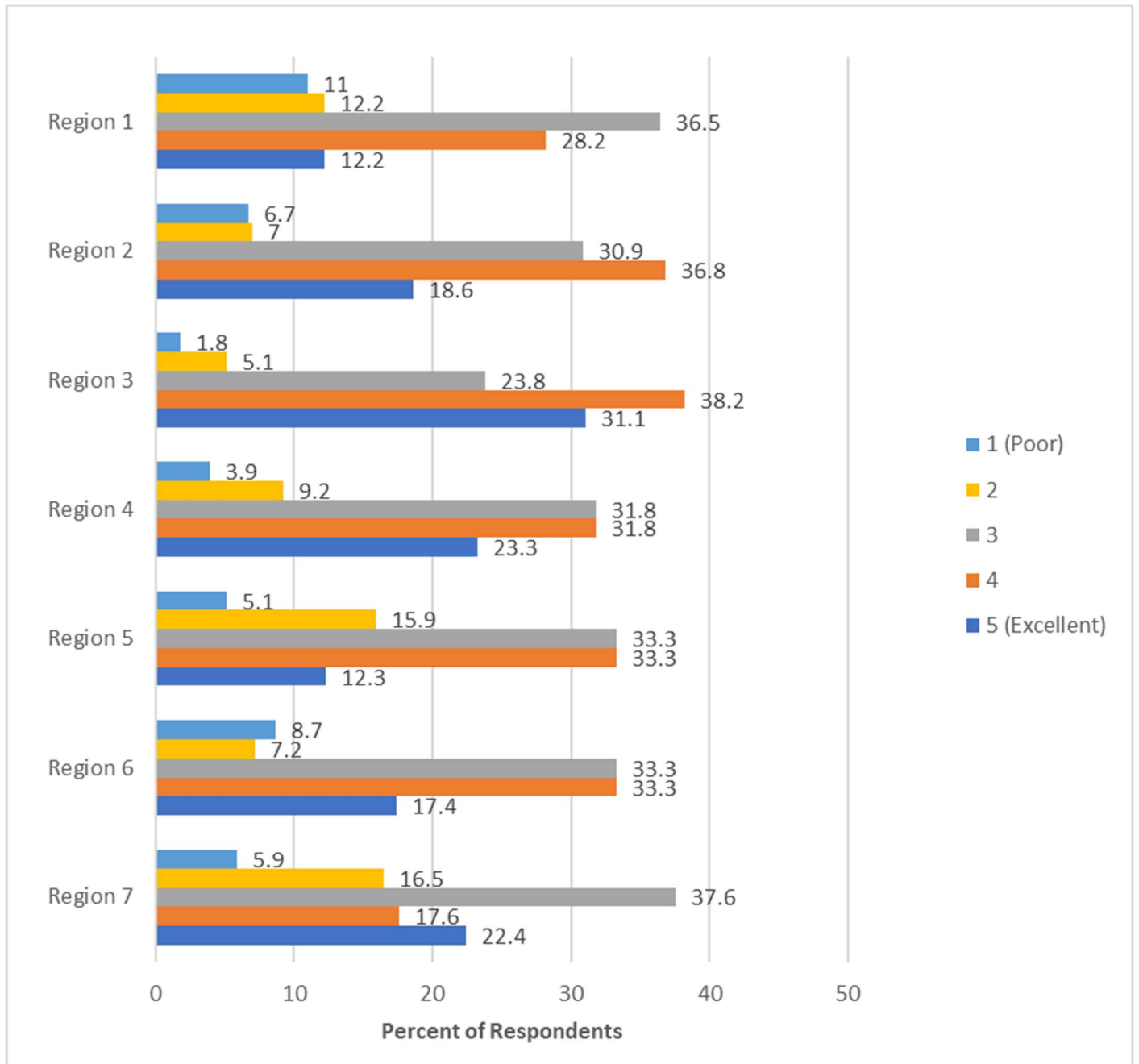


Figure 12. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how would you rate OPPORTUNITIES TO HUNT ANTLERLESS ELK in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?”

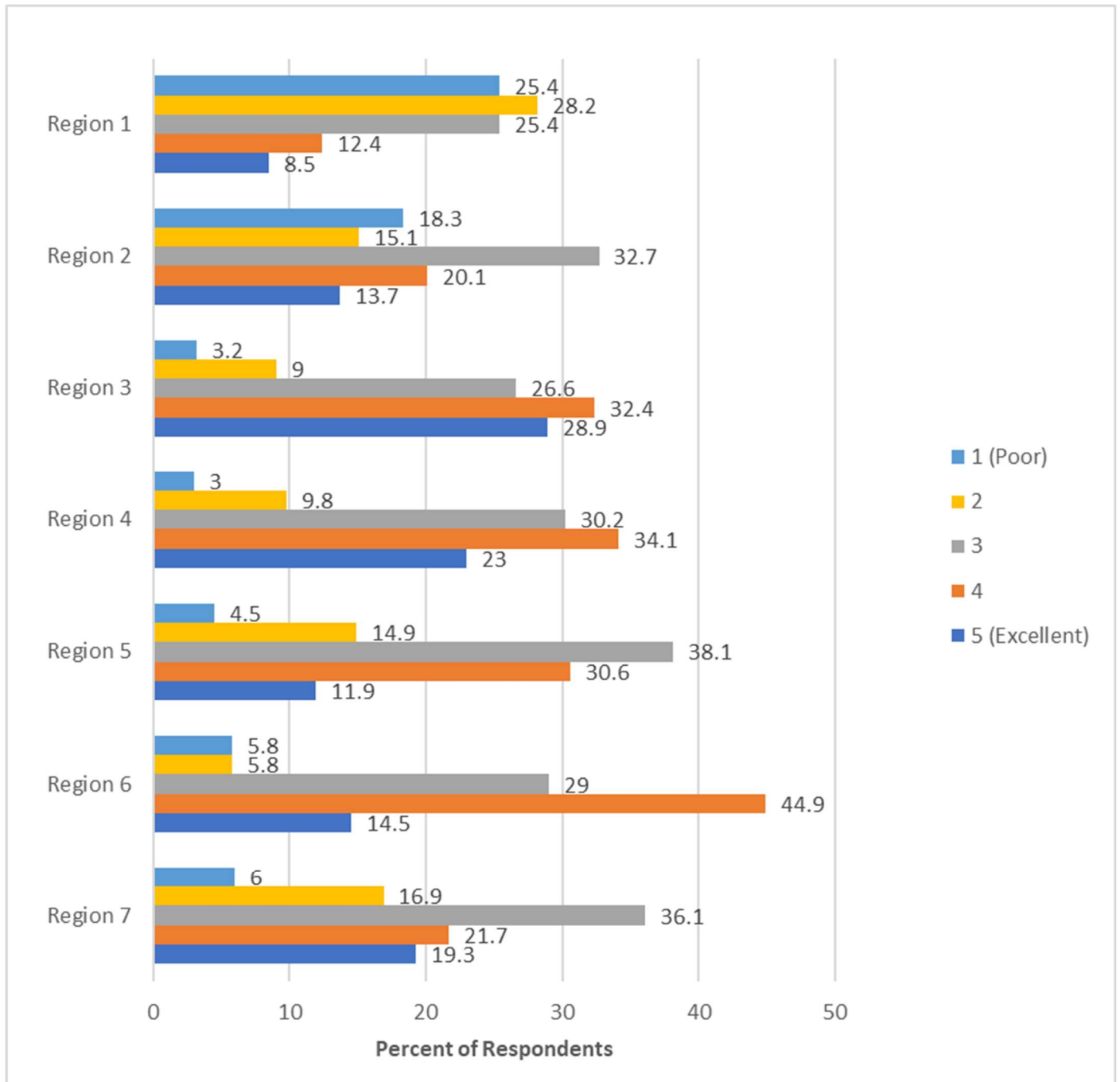


Figure 13. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how would you rate OPPORTUNITIES TO HUNT BULL ELK in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?”

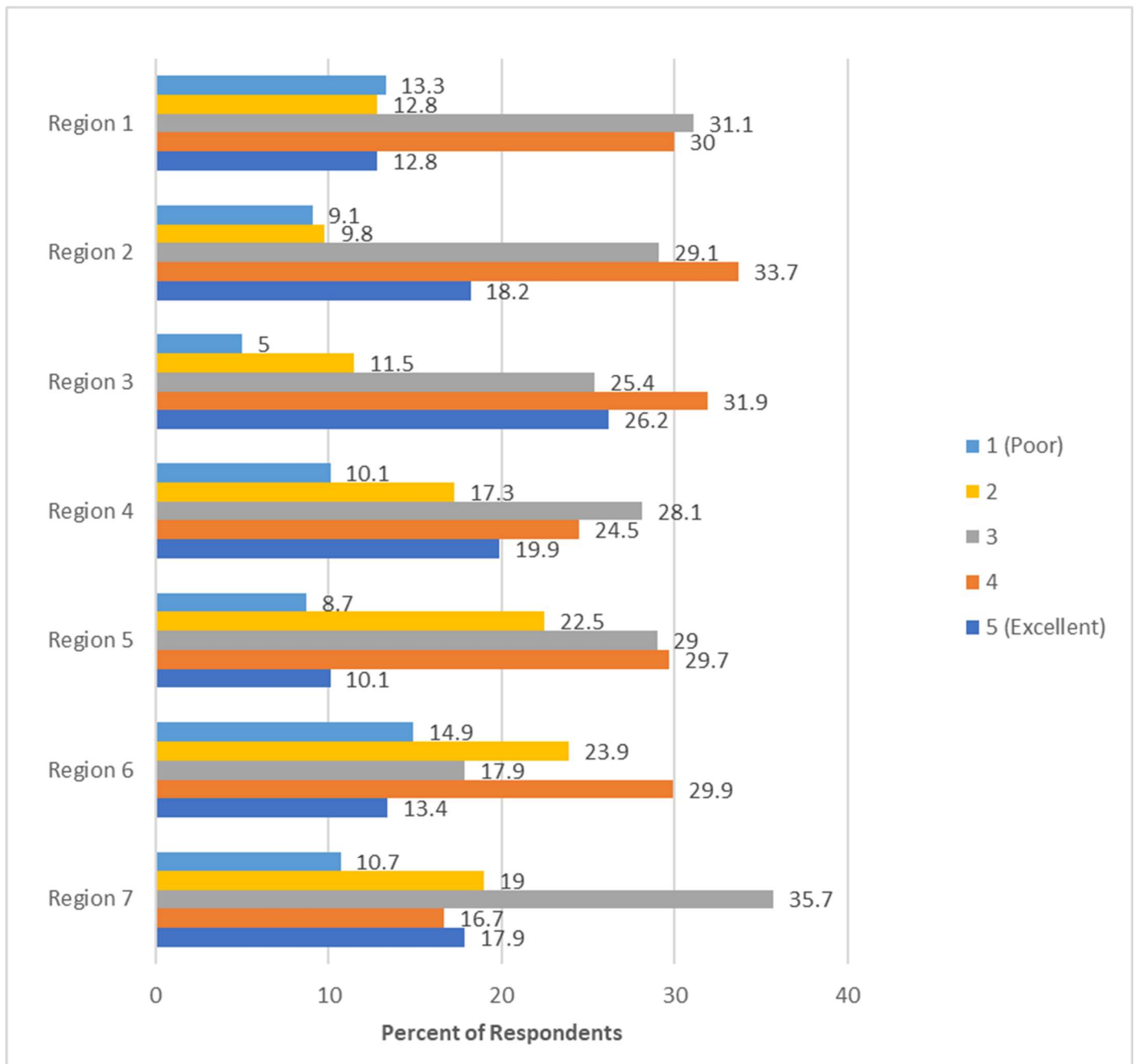


Figure 14. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how would you rate OPPORTUNITIES TO HUNT MATURE BULL ELK in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?”

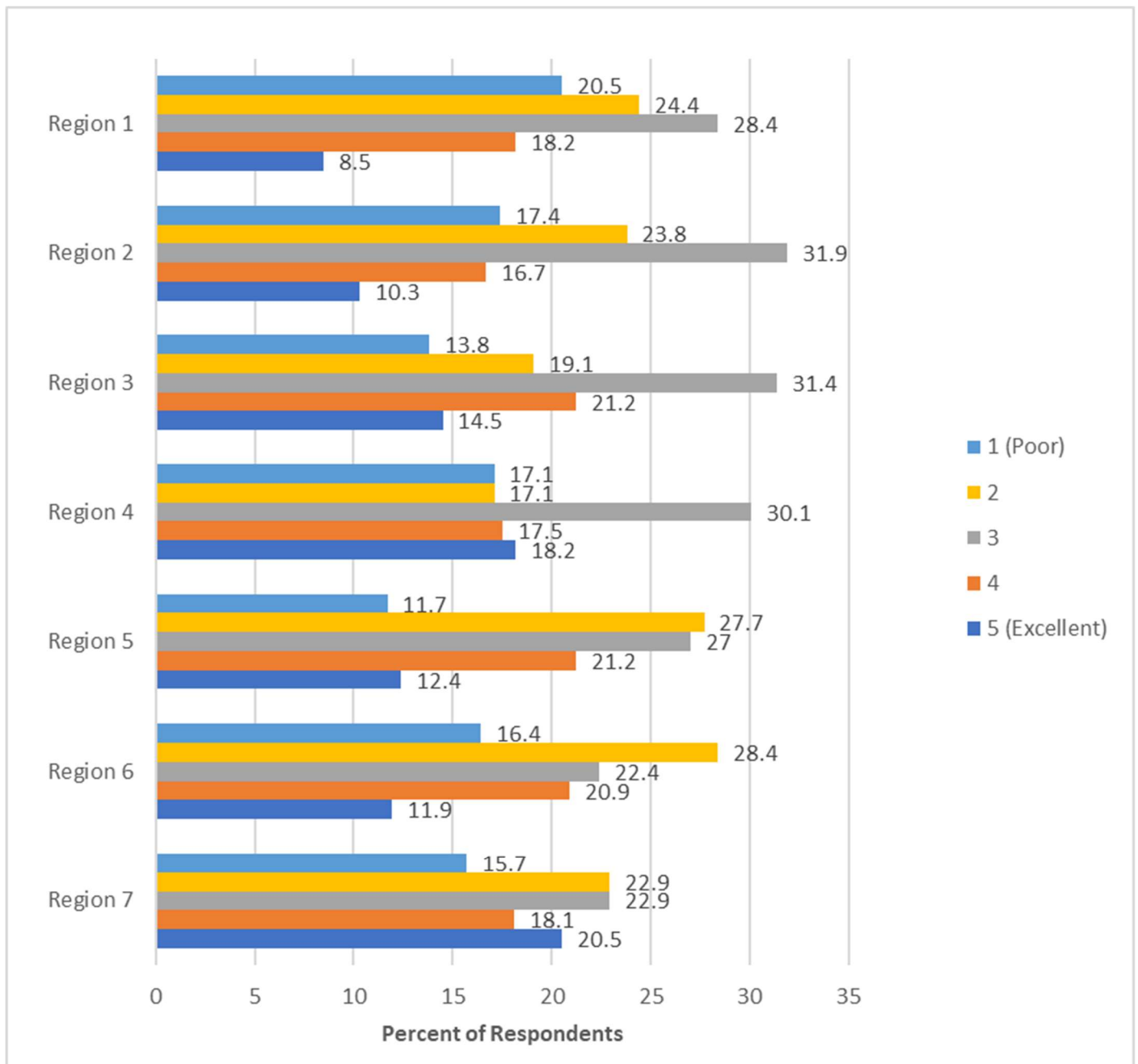


Figure 15. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how would you rate ACCESS TO PUBLICLY OWNED LAND TO HUNT ANTLERLESS ELK in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?”

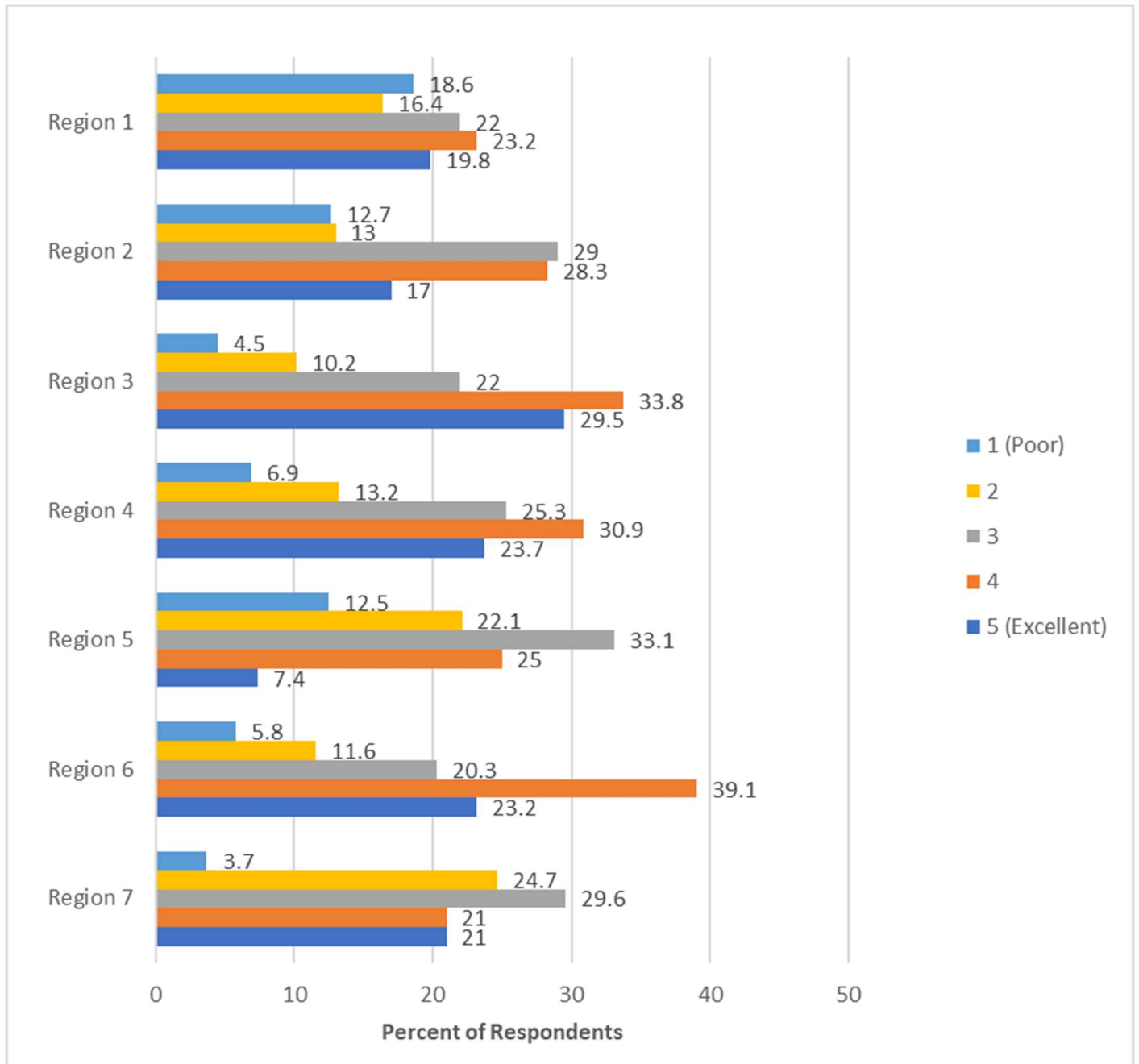


Figure 16. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how would you rate ACCESS TO PRIVATELY OWNED LAND TO HUNT ANTLERLESS ELK in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?”

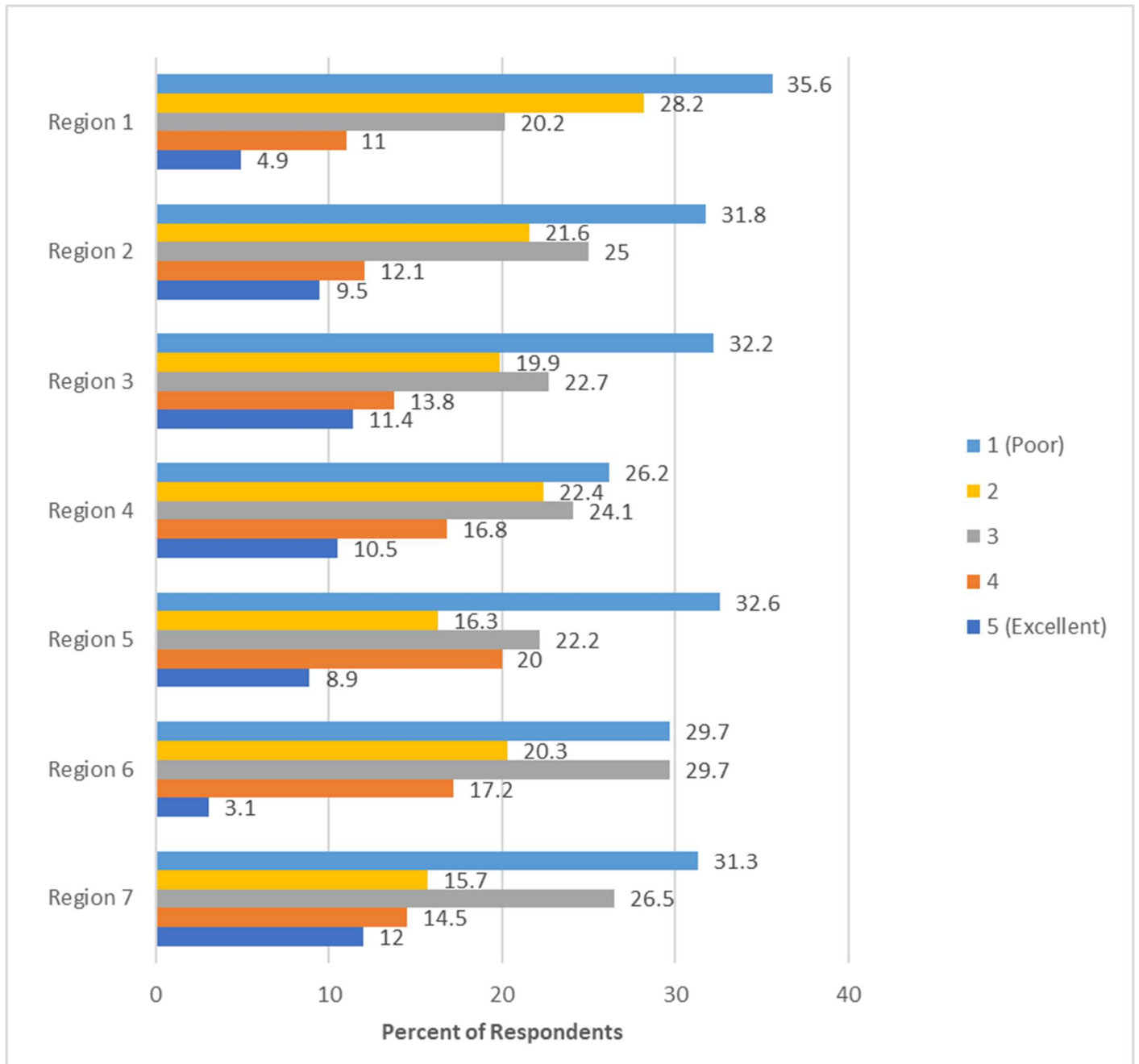


Figure 17. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how would you rate ACCESS TO PUBLICLY OWNED LAND TO HUNT BULL ELK in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?”

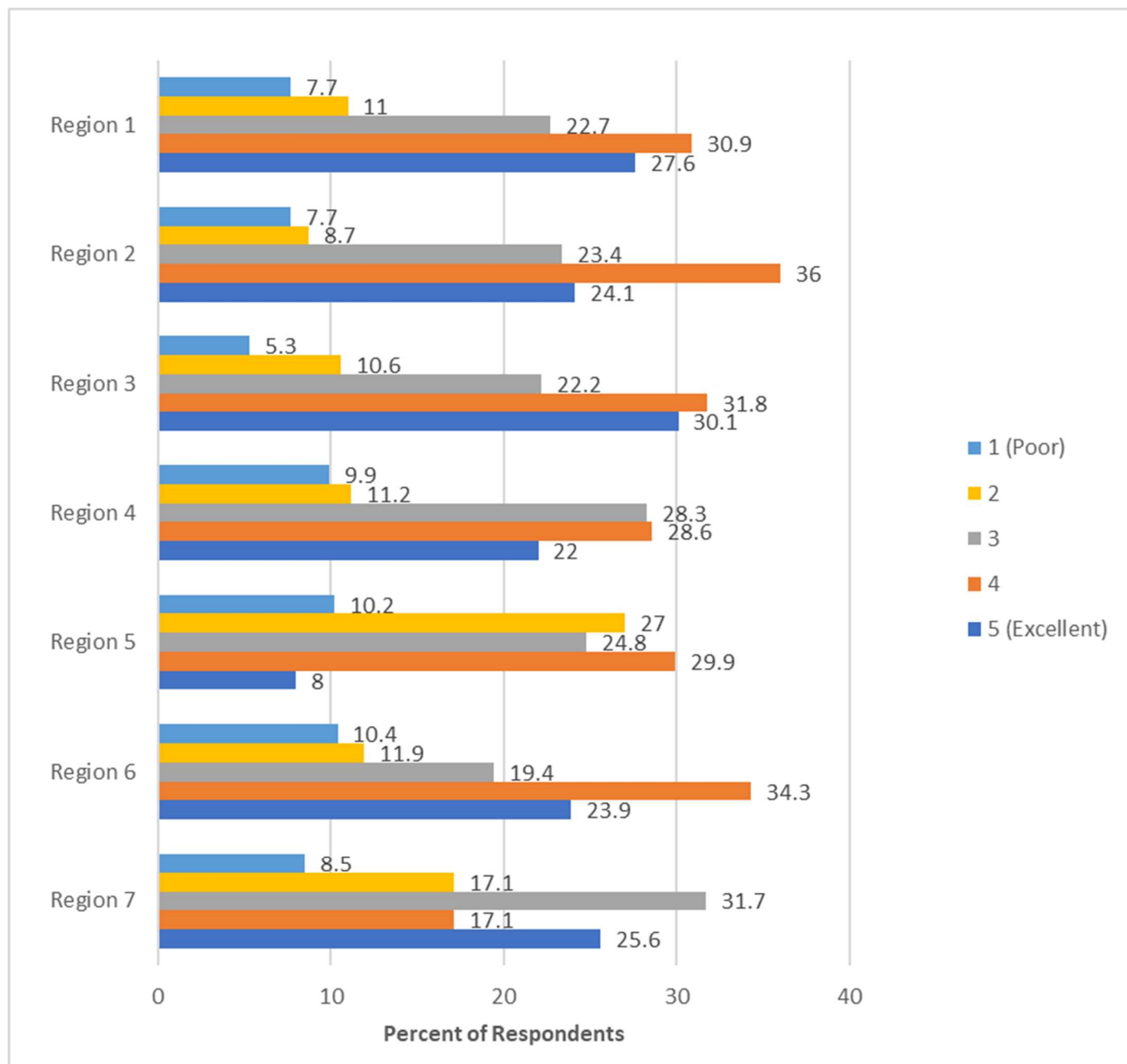


Figure 18. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how would you rate ACCESS TO PRIVATELY OWNED LAND TO HUNT BULL ELK in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?”

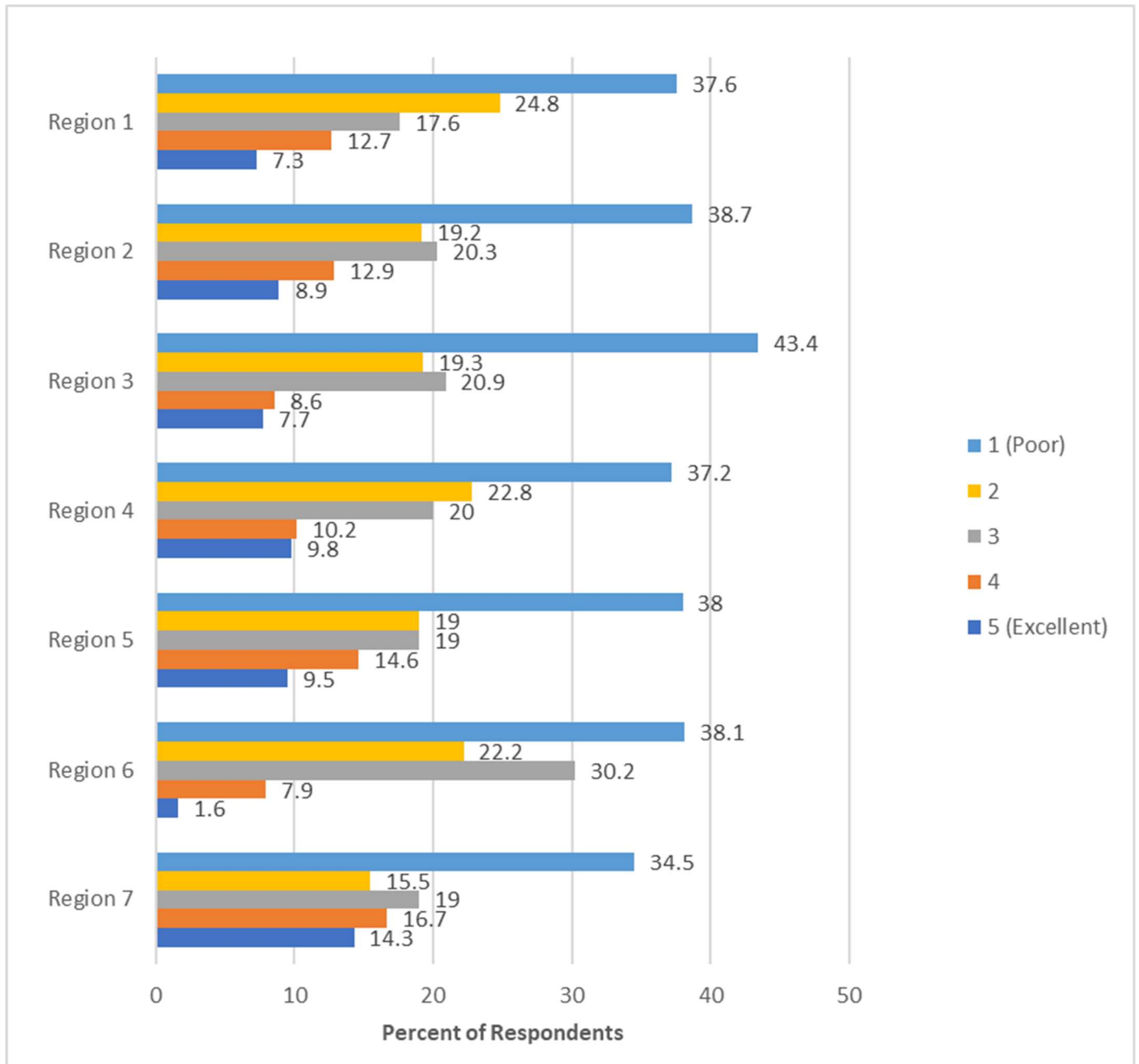


Figure 19. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (too few) to 5 (too many), how would you rate OVERALL NUMBERS OF ELK in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?”

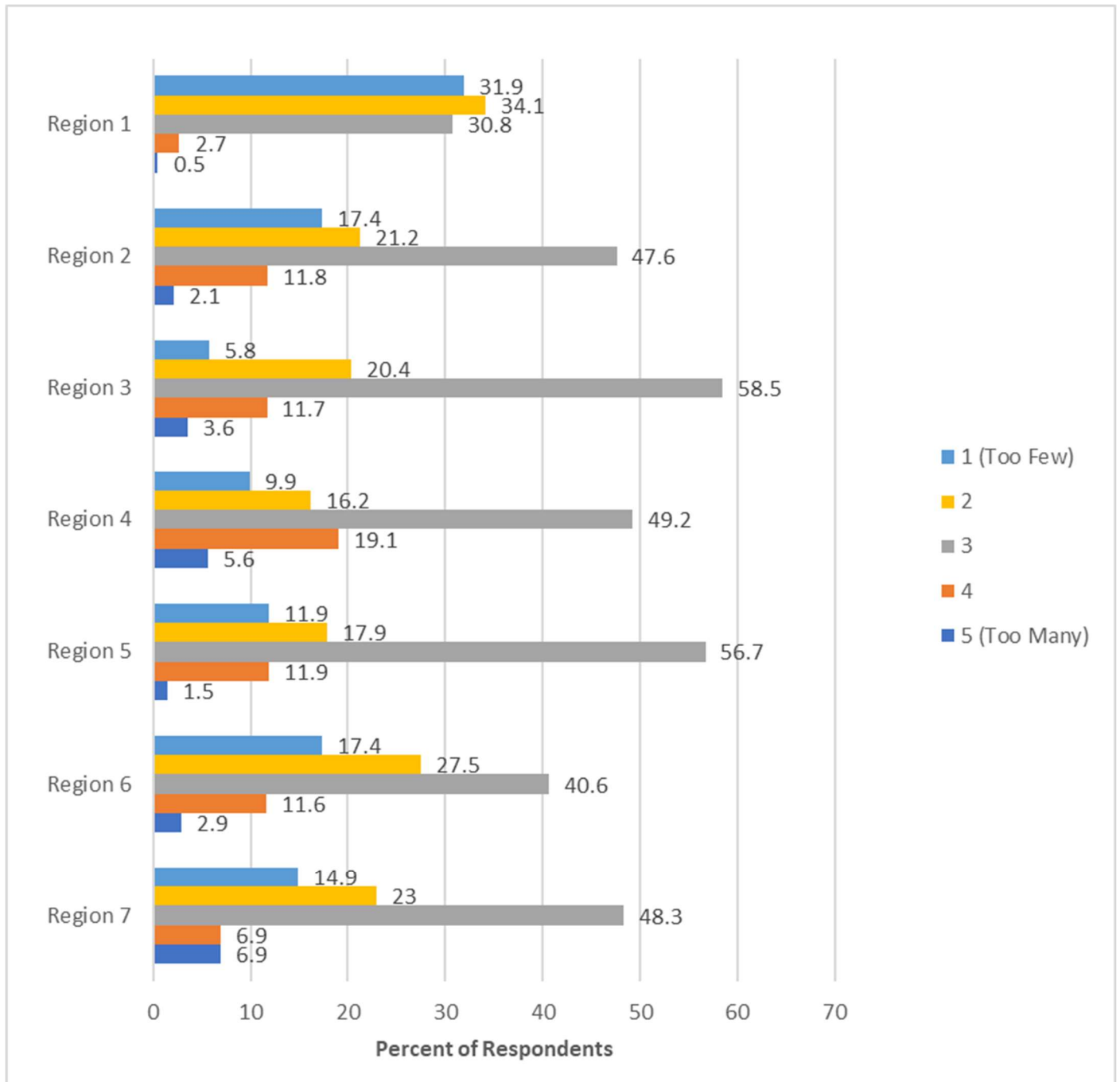


Figure 20. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (too few) to 5 (too many), how would you rate OVERALL NUMBERS OF ANTLERLESS ELK in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?”

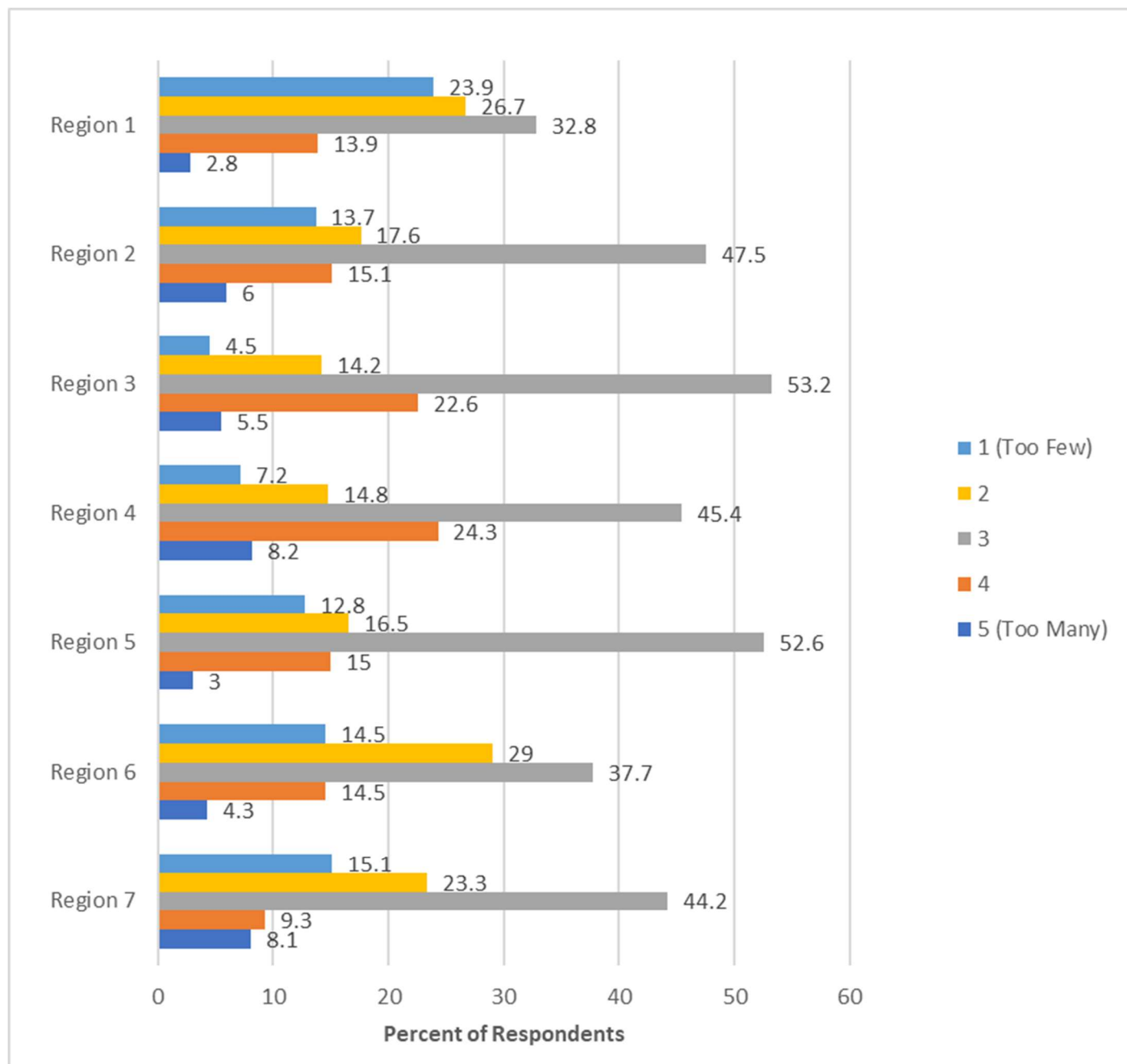


Figure 21. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (too few) to 5 (too many), how would you rate OVERALL NUMBERS OF BULL ELK in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?”

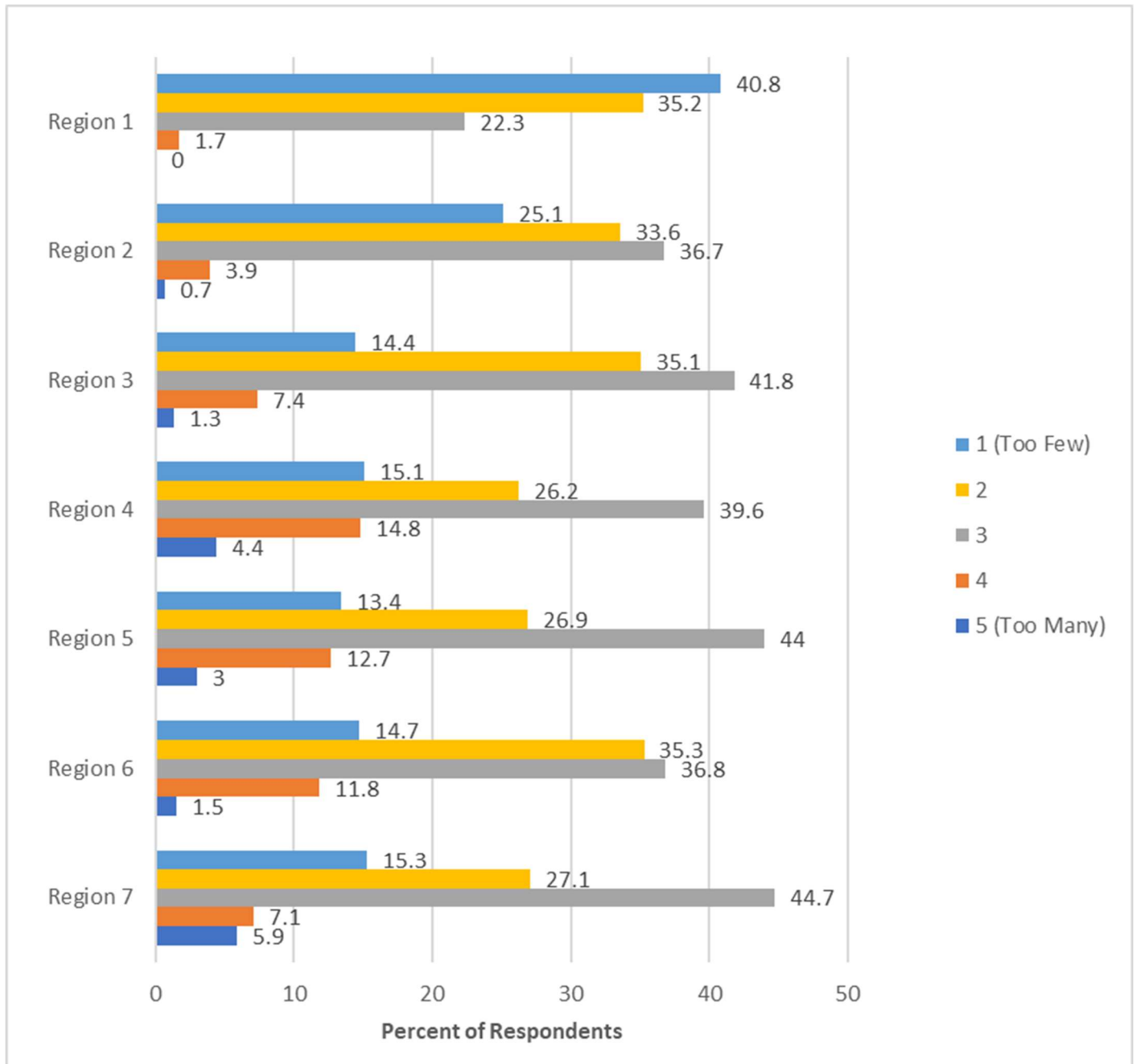


Figure 22. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (too few) to 5 (too many), how would you rate OVERALL NUMBERS OF MATURE BULL ELK in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?”

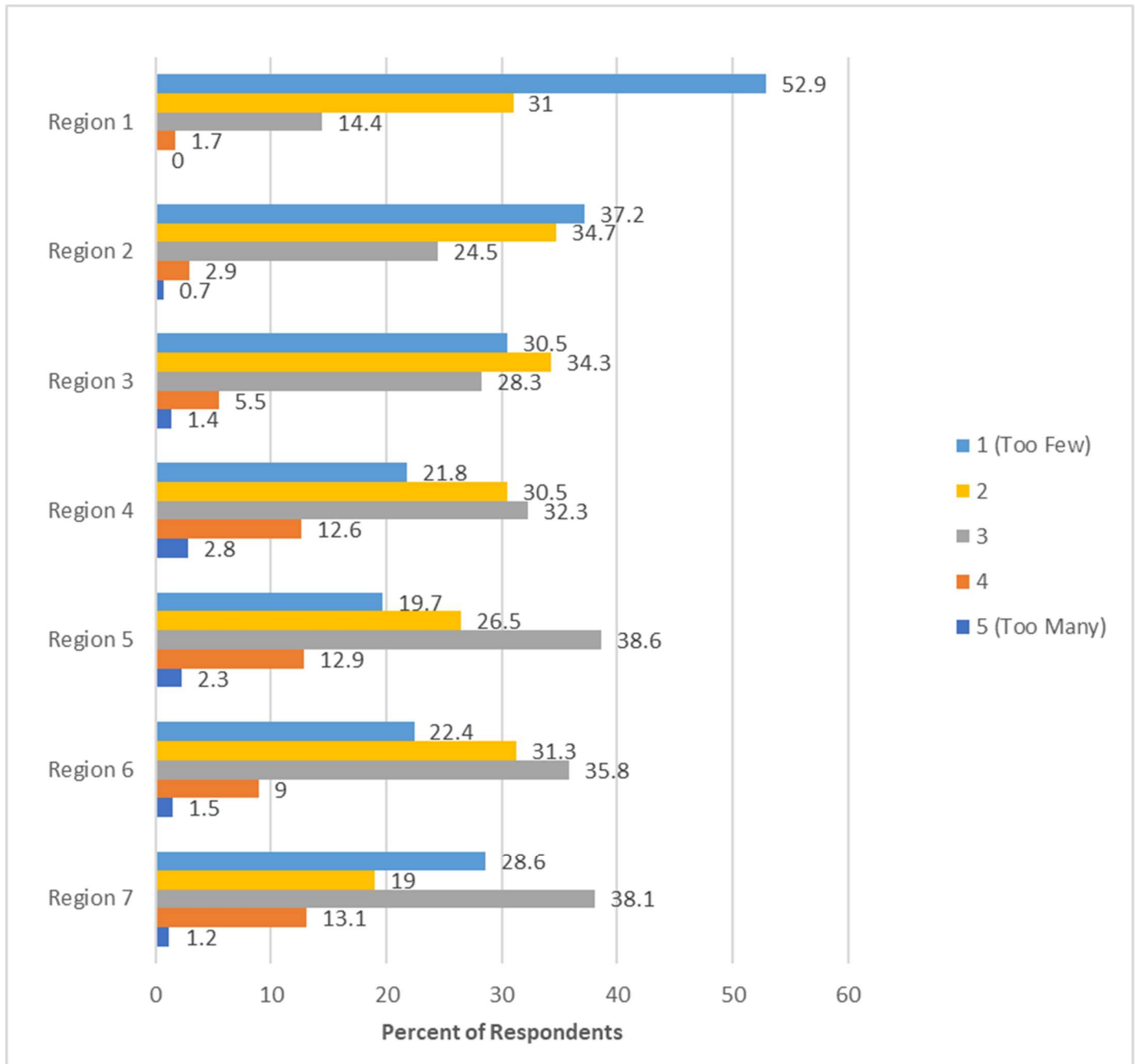


Figure 23. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (too few) to 5 (too many), how would you rate NUMBERS OF ANTLERLESS ELK ON PUBLICLY OWNED LANDS in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?”

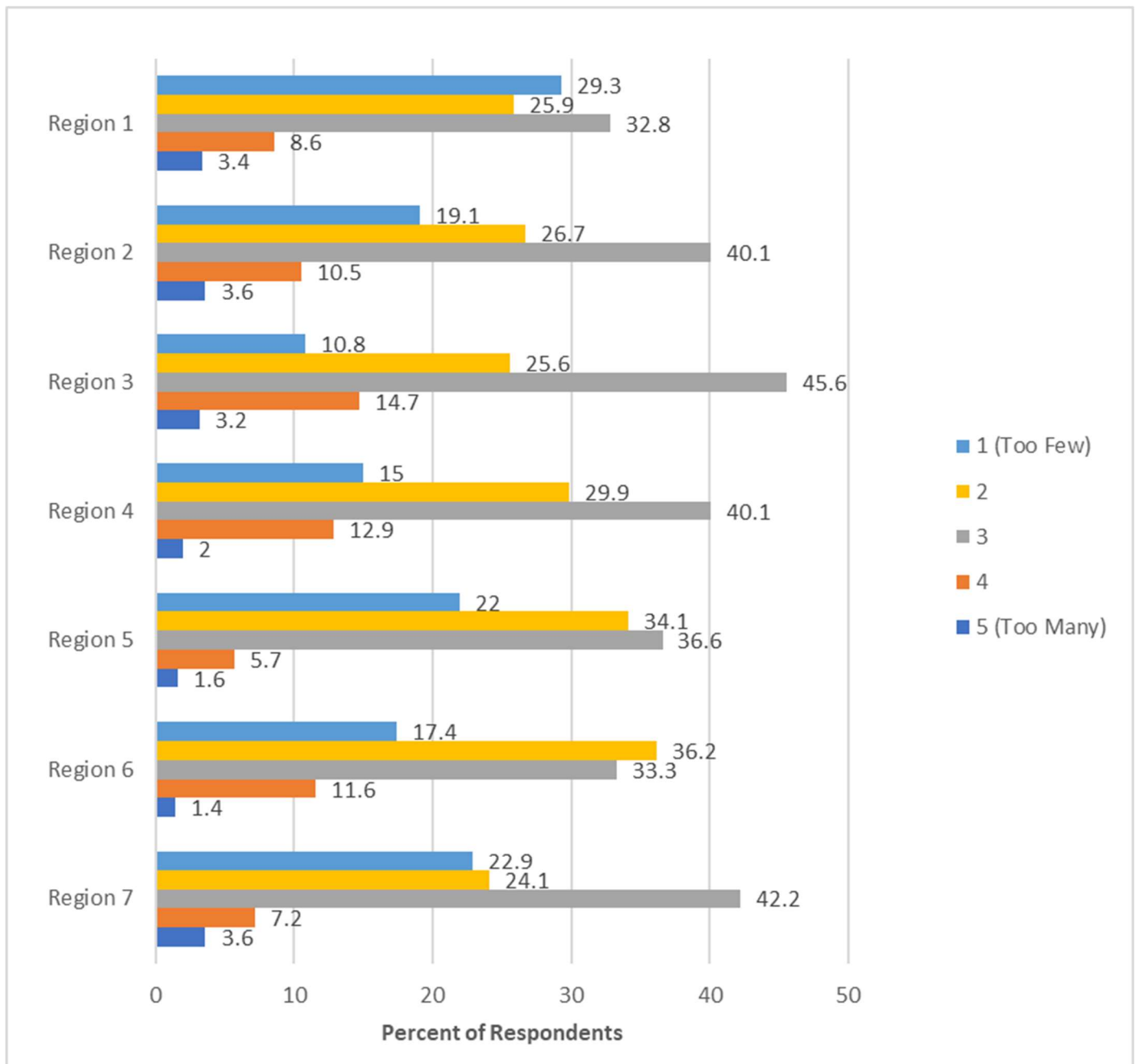


Figure 24. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (too few) to 5 (too many), how would you rate NUMBERS OF ANTLERLESS ELK ON PRIVATELY OWNED LANDS in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?”

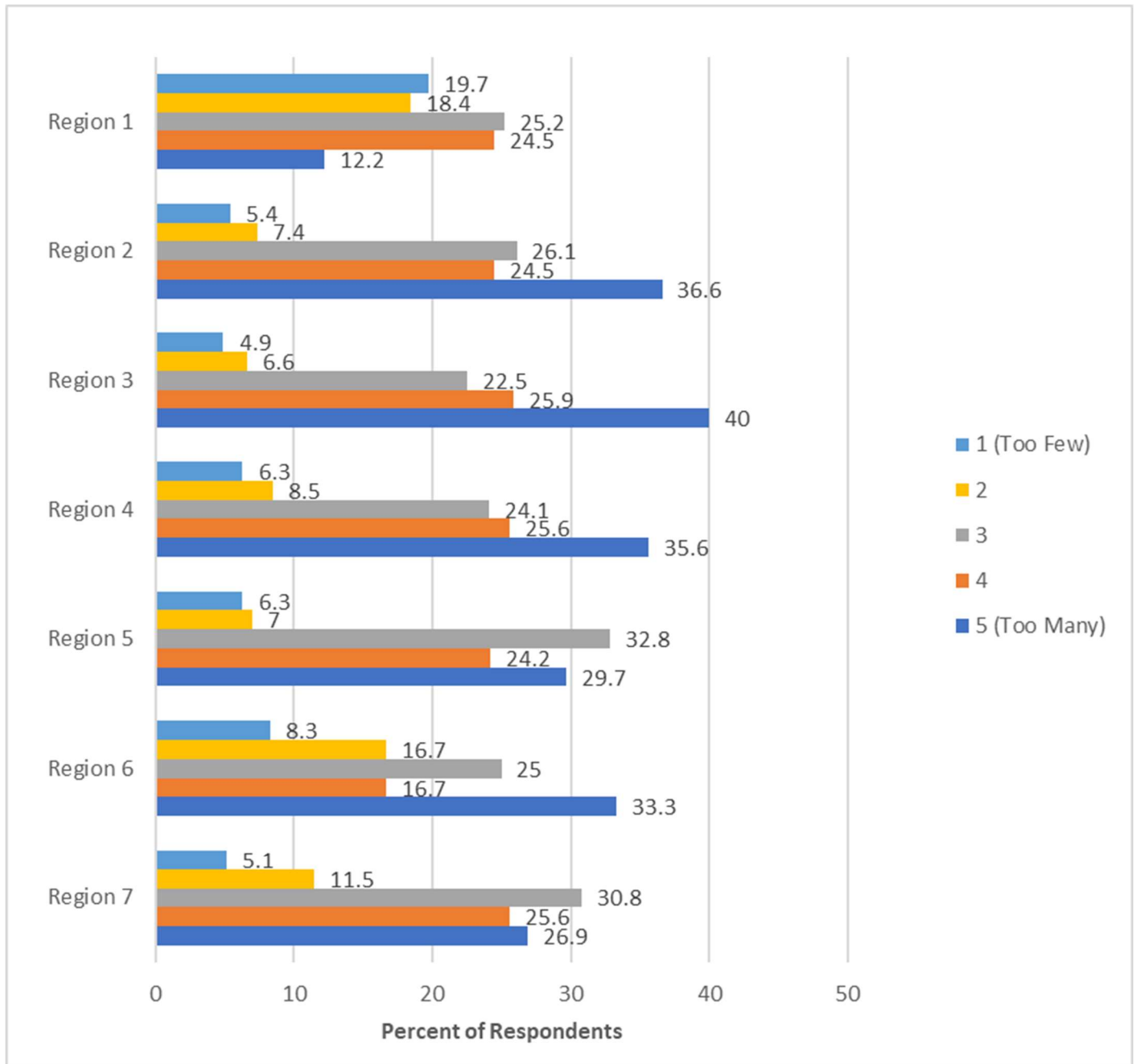


Figure 25. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (too few) to 5 (too many), how would you rate NUMBERS OF BULL ELK ON PUBLICLY OWNED LANDS in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?”

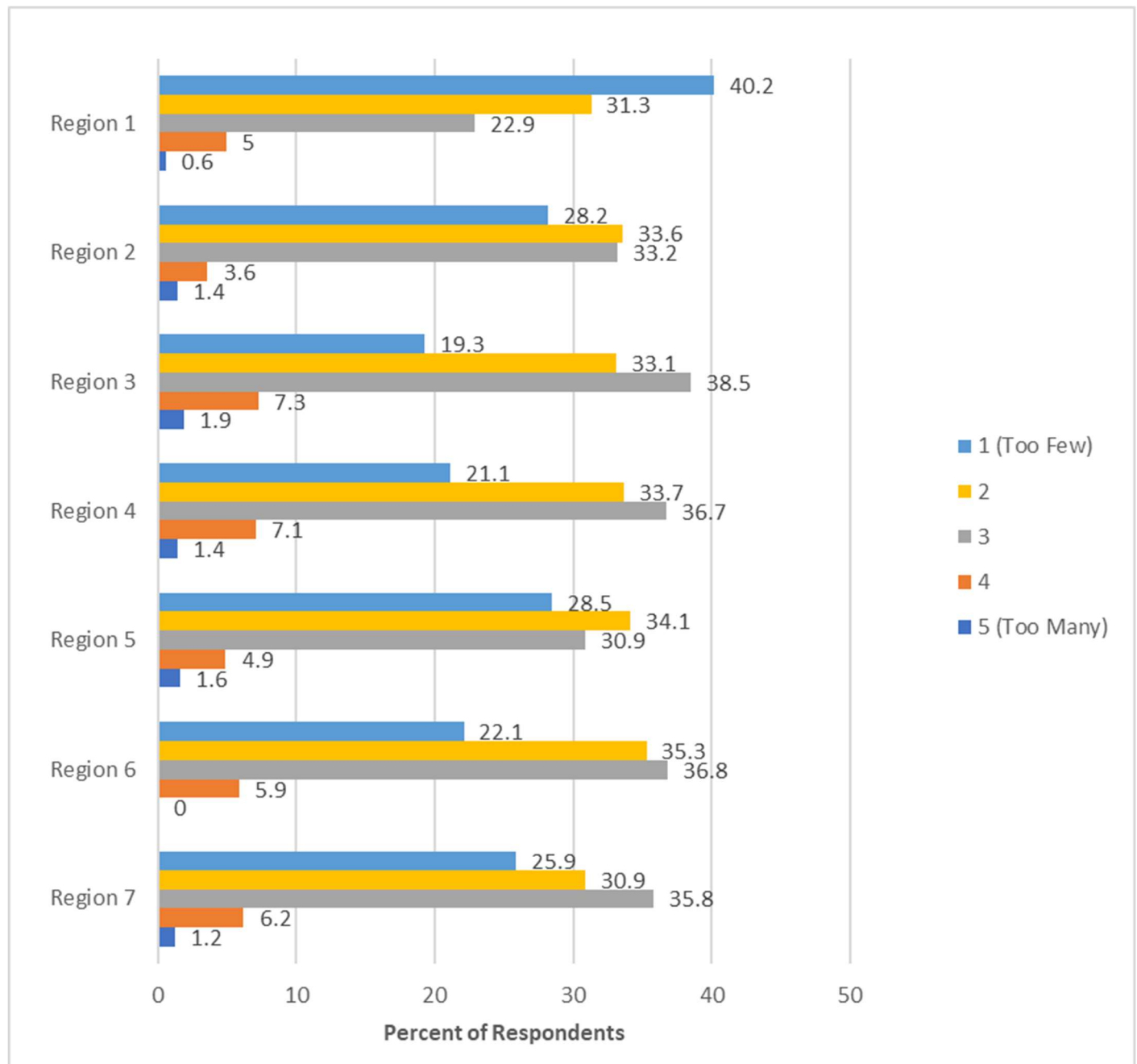


Figure 26. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (too few) to 5 (too many), how would you rate NUMBERS OF BULL ELK ON PRIVATELY OWNED LANDS in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?”

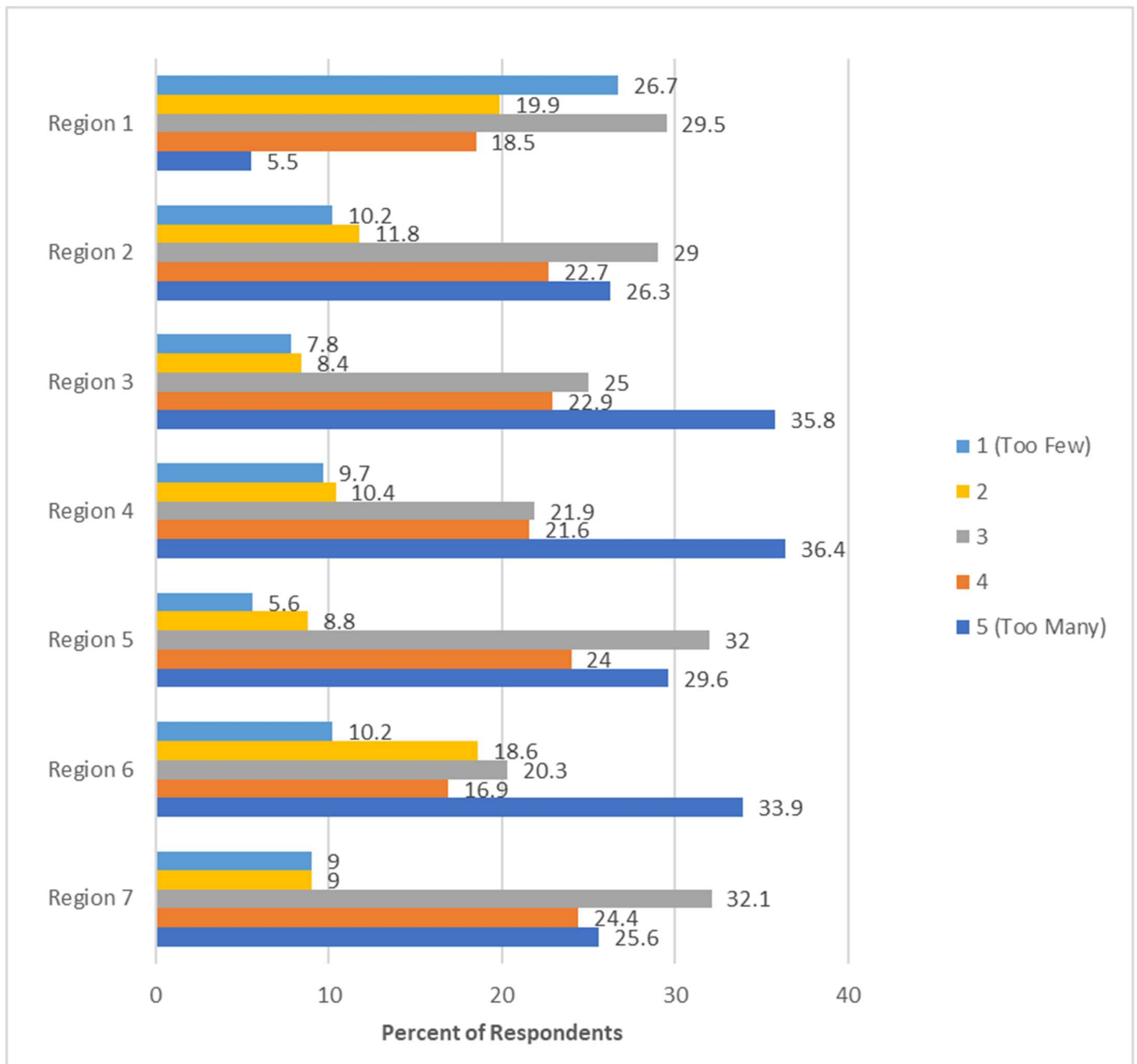


Figure 27. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (too few) to 5 (too many), how would you rate the NUMBER OF ELK HUNTERS in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?”

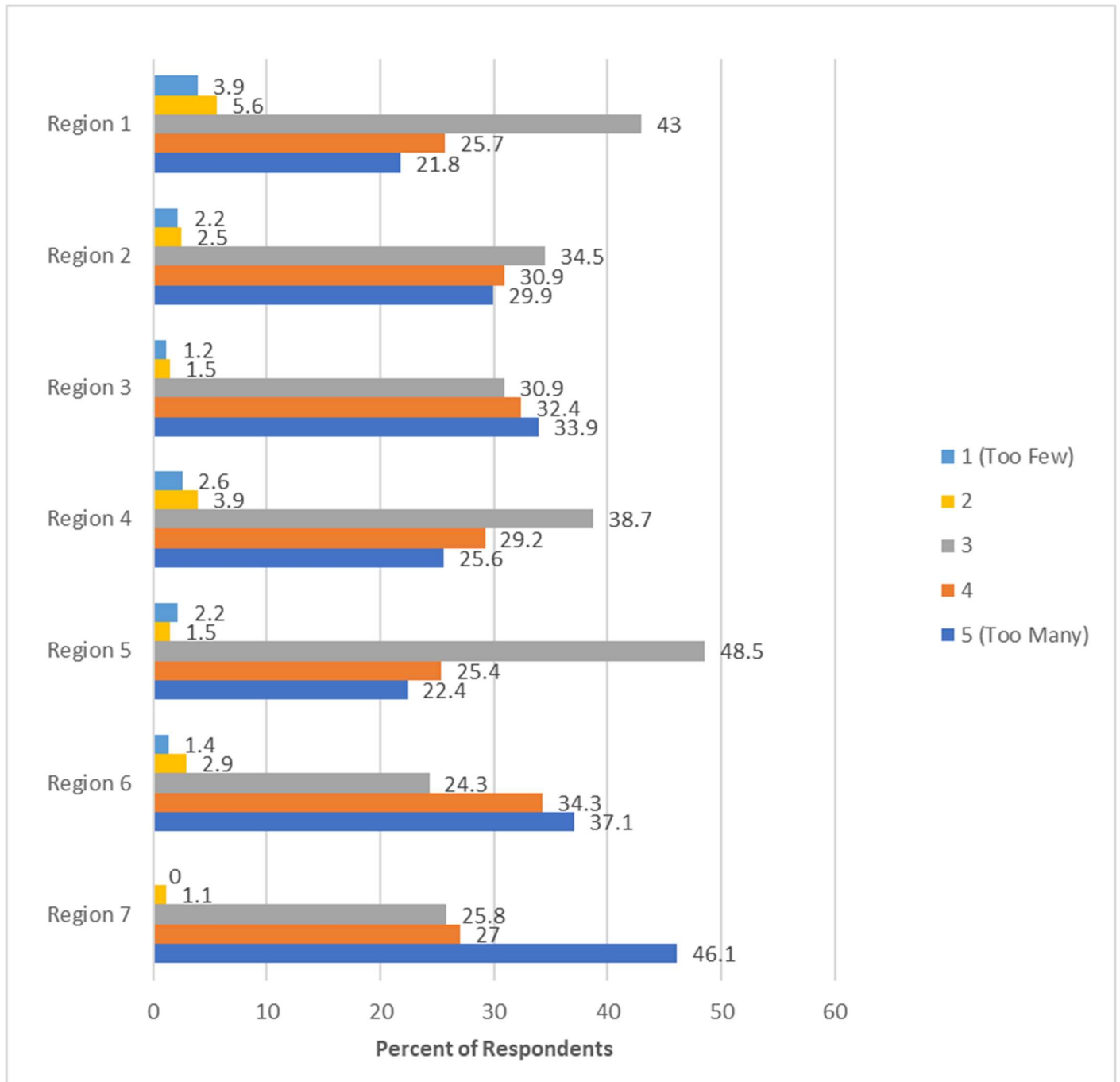


Figure 28. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (too few) to 5 (too many), how would you rate the NUMBER OF ROADS OPEN FOR MOTORIZED ACCESS TO ELK in the region of Montana where you have spent the most time hunting elk during the past five years?”

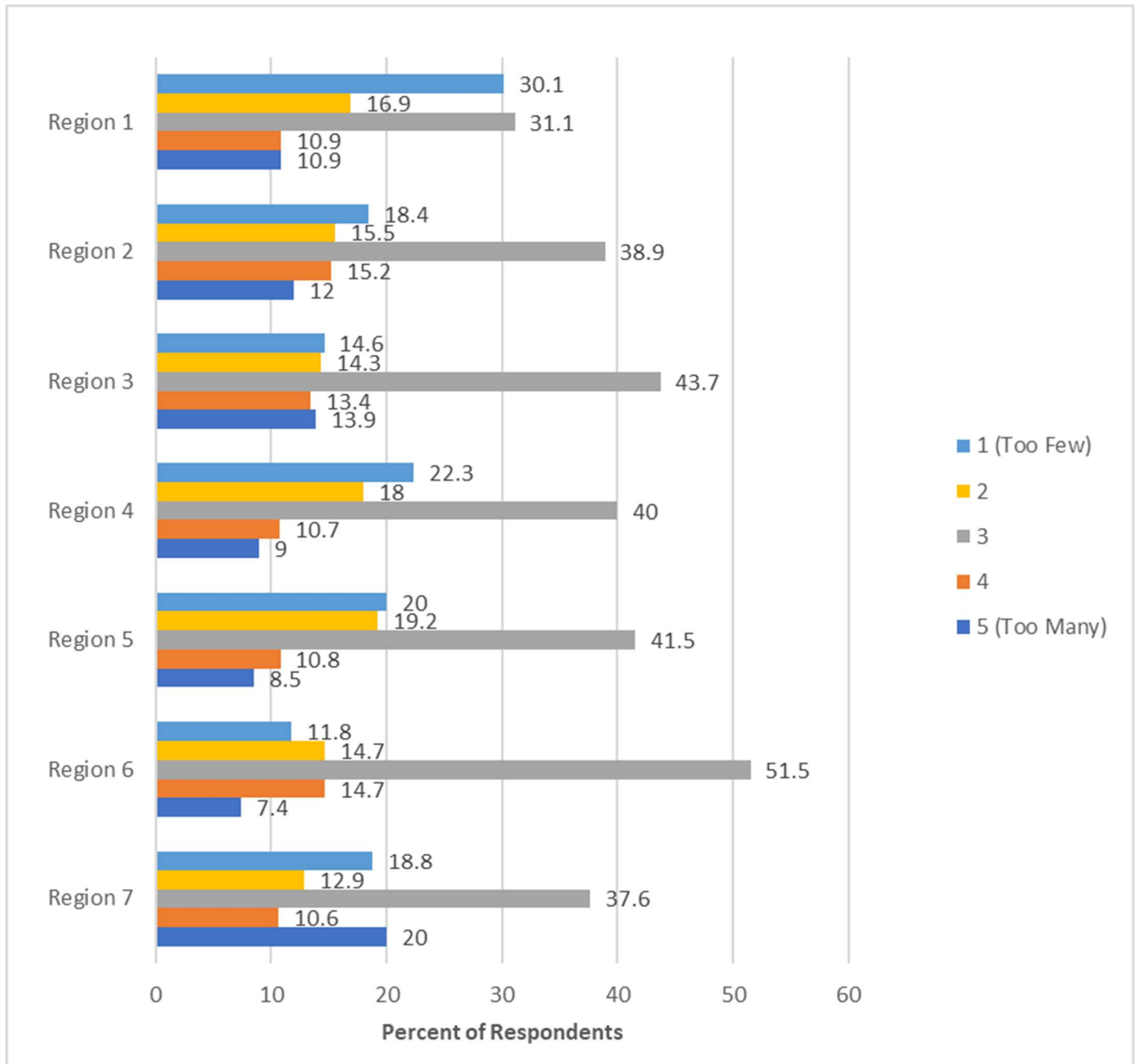


Figure 29. Regional response to... “In terms of congestion & crowding, on a scale from 1 (very unacceptable) to 5 (very acceptable), how acceptable was the NUMBER of other hunters you typically observed PER DAY when hunting ELK in this region of Montana?”

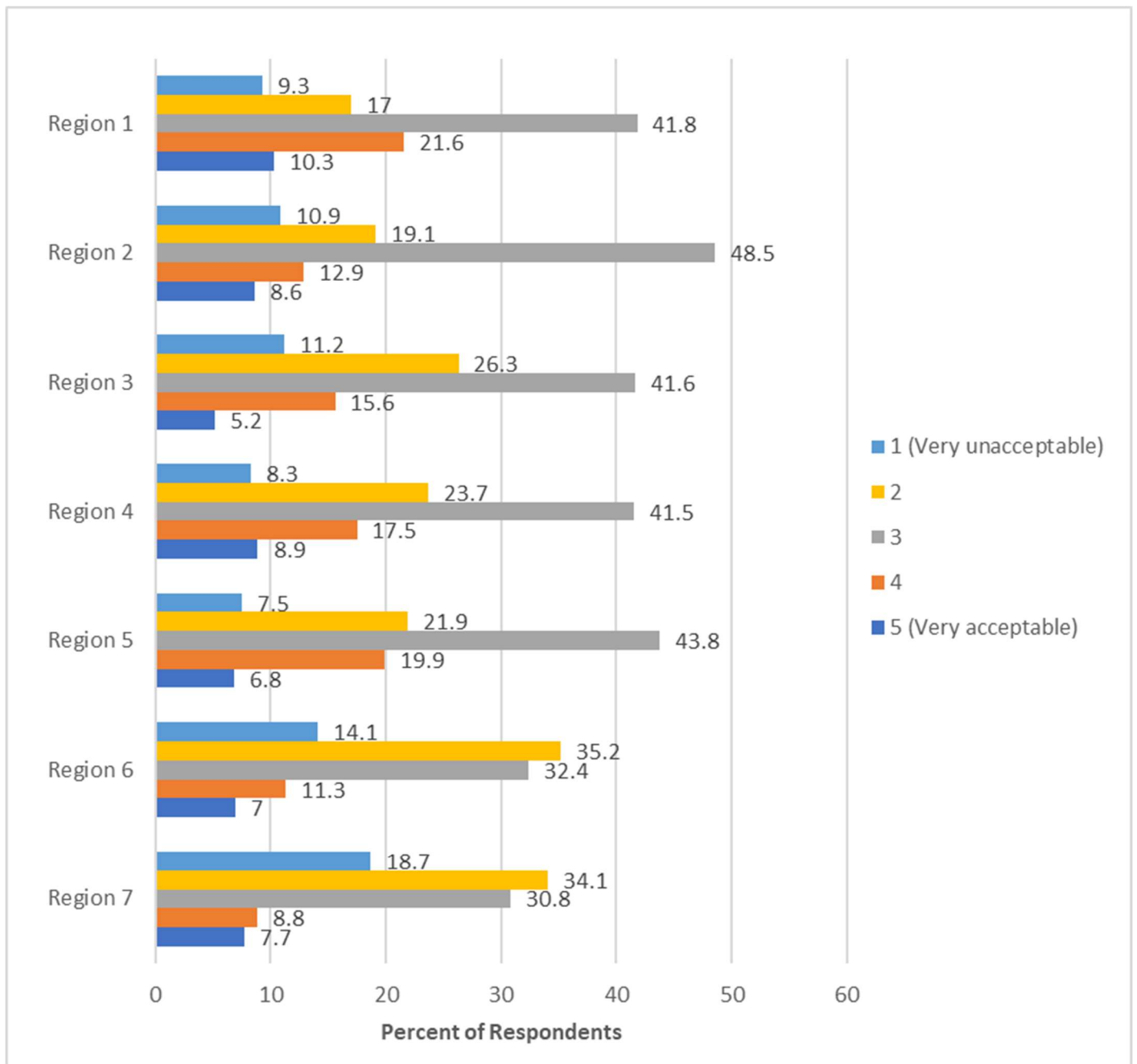


Figure 30. Regional response to... “In terms of the behavior of other people, on a scale from 1 (very unacceptable) to 5 (very acceptable), how acceptable was the BEHAVIOR of other hunters you typically observed when hunting ELK in this region of Montana?”

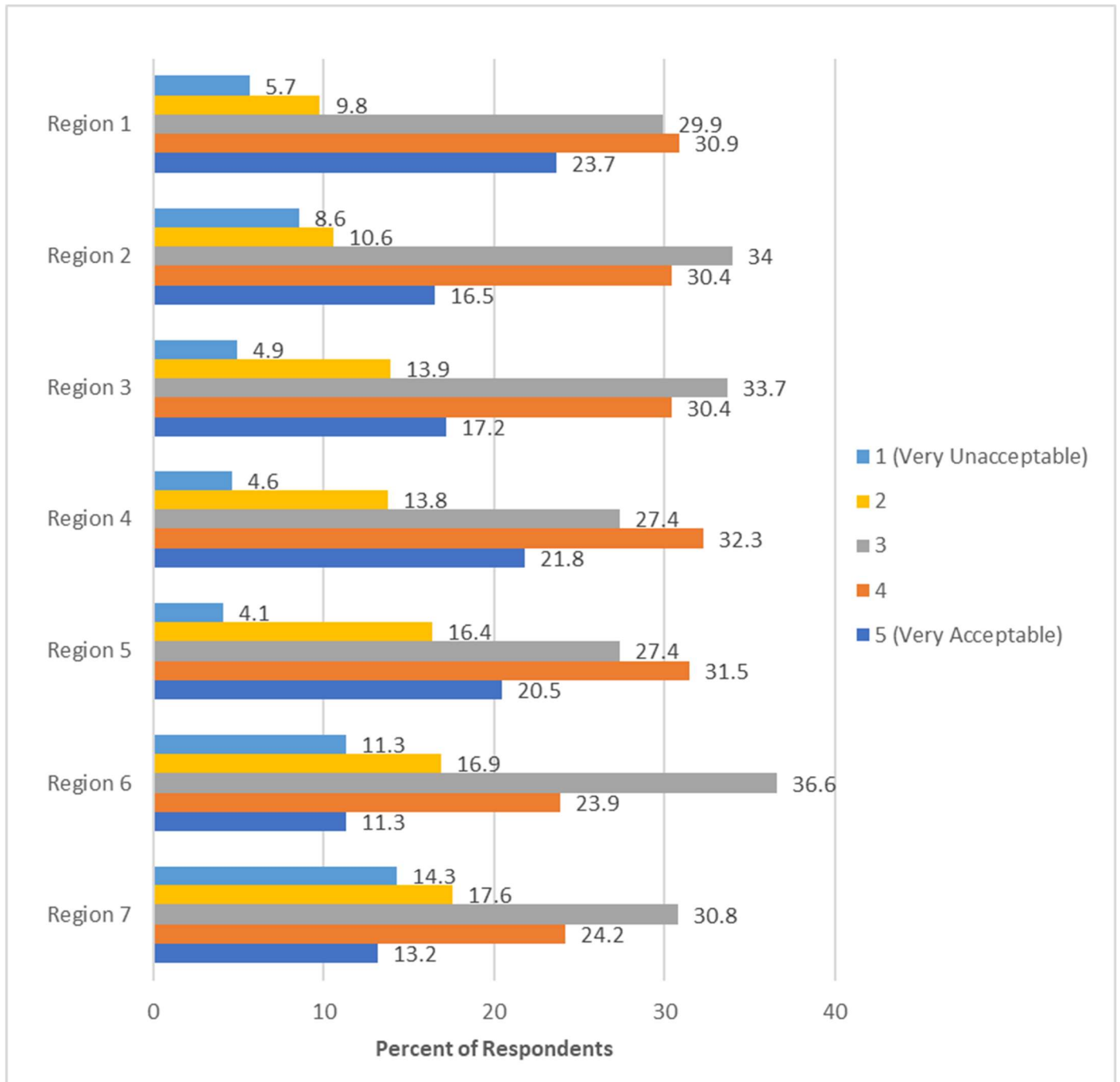


Figure 31. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied), how satisfied are you with current elk hunting regulations in this region of Montana?”

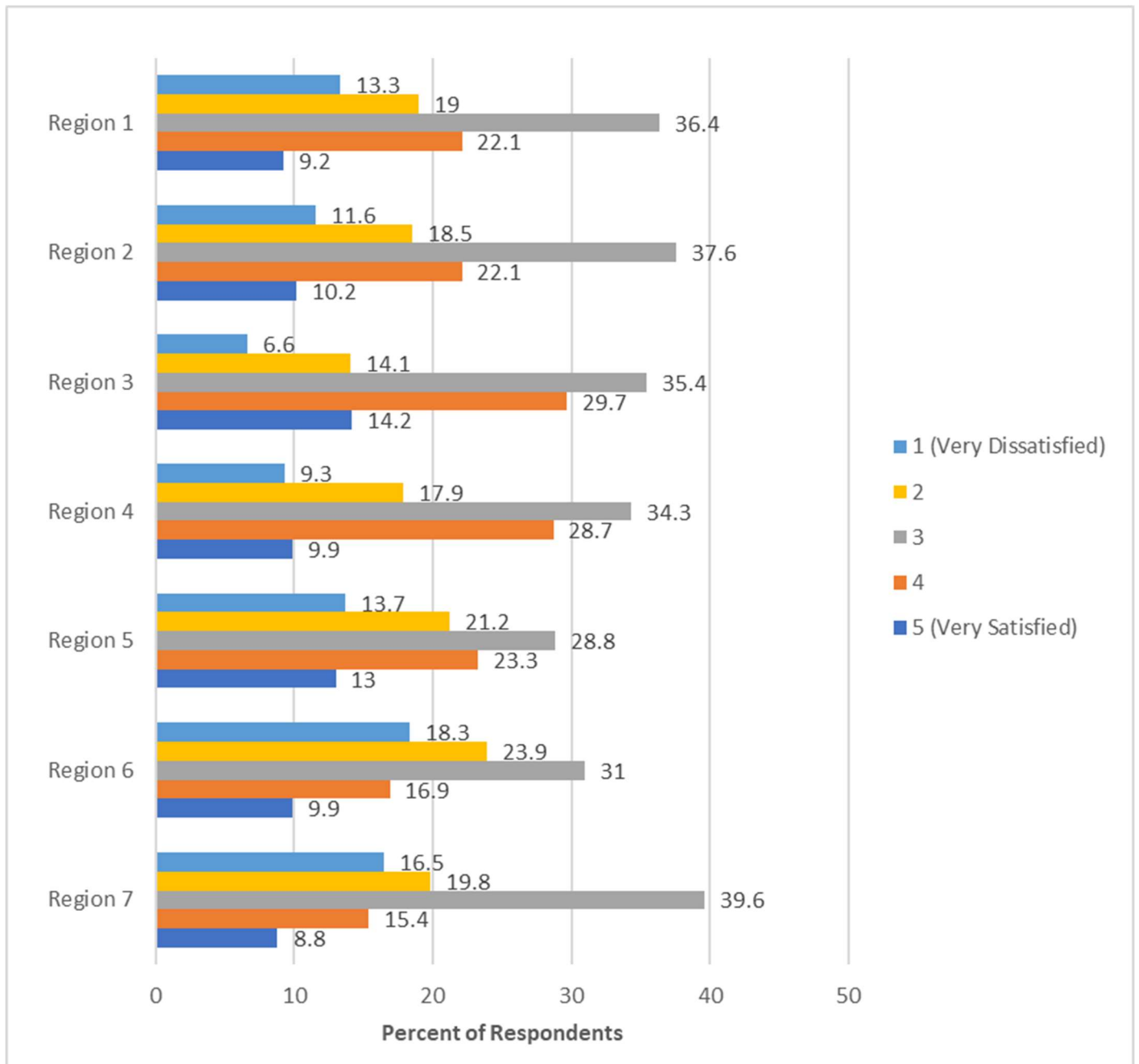


Figure 32. Regional response to... “On a scale from 1 (very difficult to understand) to 5 (very easy to understand), how would you rate the ease of understanding the current elk hunting regulations in this region of Montana?”

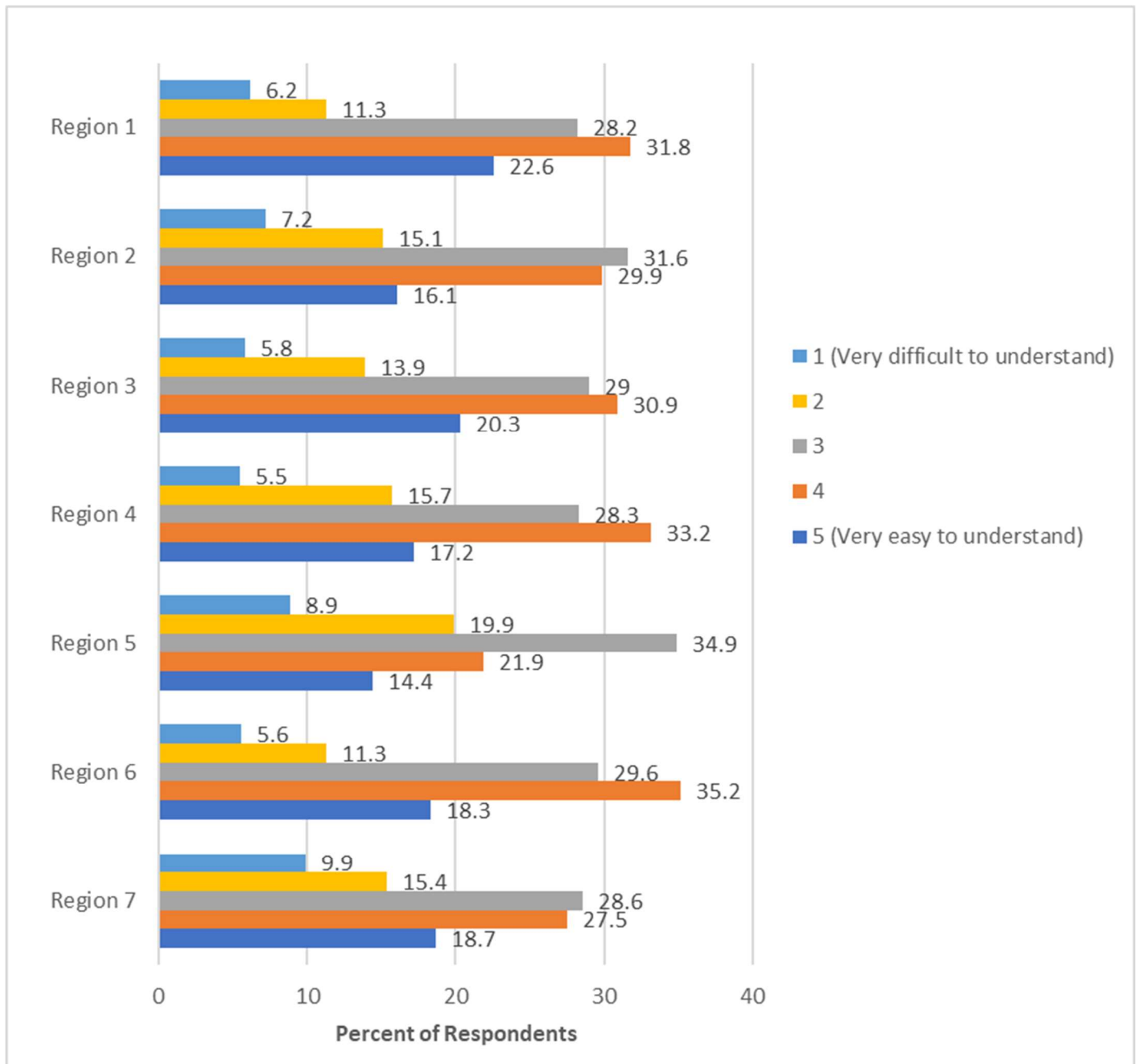


Figure 33. Regional response to... “Managing for higher numbers of MATURE bull elk (e.g., bull elk 4-5 years of age or older) may require implementing more restrictive elk hunting regulations. For instance, in current limited permit areas the average drawing odds are once every ten years. Given only ONE CHOICE, which of the following would be most favorable to you in the REGION of Montana where you’ve spent the most time hunting elk during the past FIVE years?”

A The opportunity to hunt bull elk every year in this REGION of the state (with a lower probability of harvesting a mature bull)

-OR-

B The opportunity to hunt bull elk once every several years in this REGION of the state (with a higher probability of harvesting a mature bull)

