

Southeast Florida and South Carolina Anglers' Release Practices and Their Attitudes Toward Descending Devices

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The Nature Conservancy

In cooperation with Responsive Management



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Photo credit: Adrian E. Gray



Presentation Overview

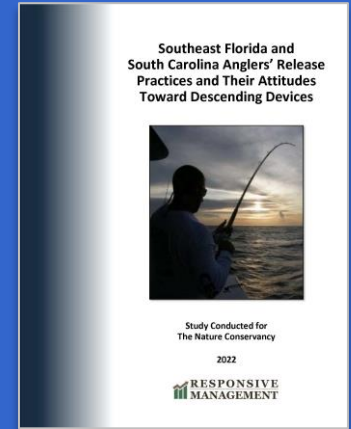


- **Study Methodology**
- **Awareness and Knowledge of Barotrauma**
- **Awareness and Use of Venting and Descending Devices**
- **Factors to Encourage Use of Descending Devices**
- **Information Sources About Fishing in the South Atlantic**
- **Familiarity With The Nature Conservancy**

Study Methodology

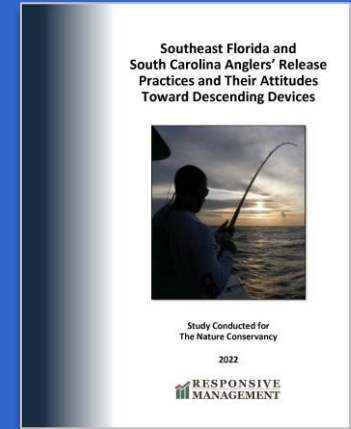
Study Methodology

- **Study conducted to understand Florida and South Carolina marine anglers' attitudes toward release practices and descending devices**
- **Multi-modal survey of anglers who fished in Southeast Florida or South Carolina within the past 2 years in Atlantic coastal waters in 30 feet of water or more and who fished for any of several species of fish:**
 - Black grouper, gag grouper, red grouper, black sea bass, red porgy, gray snapper, mutton snapper, red snapper, vermillion snapper, yellowtail snapper, gray triggerfish
- **Screeners to ensure that anglers in the survey:**
 - Were at least 18 years old
 - Had fished in the given state's Atlantic coastal waters in at least 30 feet of water within the previous 2 years
 - Had fished for one of the listed species in that time in the given state at that depth
- **Survey interviews conducted online and by telephone**
- **Survey conducted November – December 2021**



Study Methodology (continued)

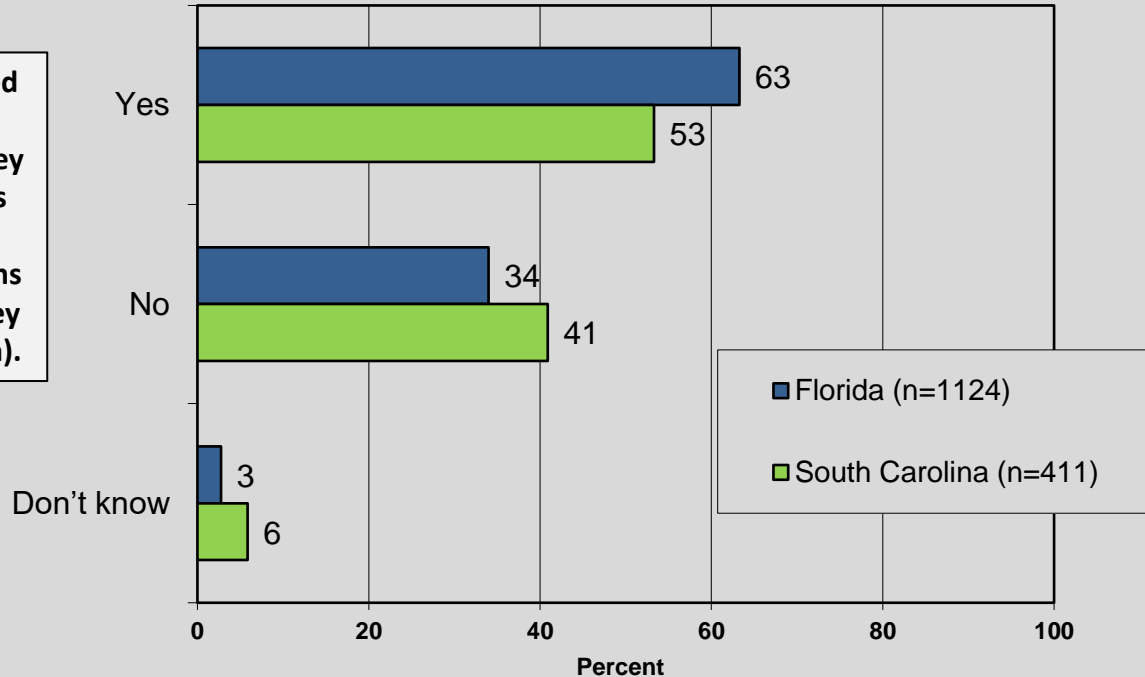
- **Overall sample consisted of three source samples:**
 - Listing of Florida licensed anglers with a reef fishing endorsement provided by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
 - Sample of anglers provided by MSG, a firm that provides statistically valid samples for survey research
 - Internal sample maintained by Responsive Management of anglers derived from general population samples over 32+ years (i.e., non-license database samples)
- **Survey sample sizes:**
 - Southeast Florida anglers: n = 1,188
 - South Carolina anglers: n = 449
- **Overall sample separated into anglers who fished in Florida and anglers who fished in South Carolina (samples never combined; results analyzed and presented separately)**
- **Survey also included head boat and charter boat captains**



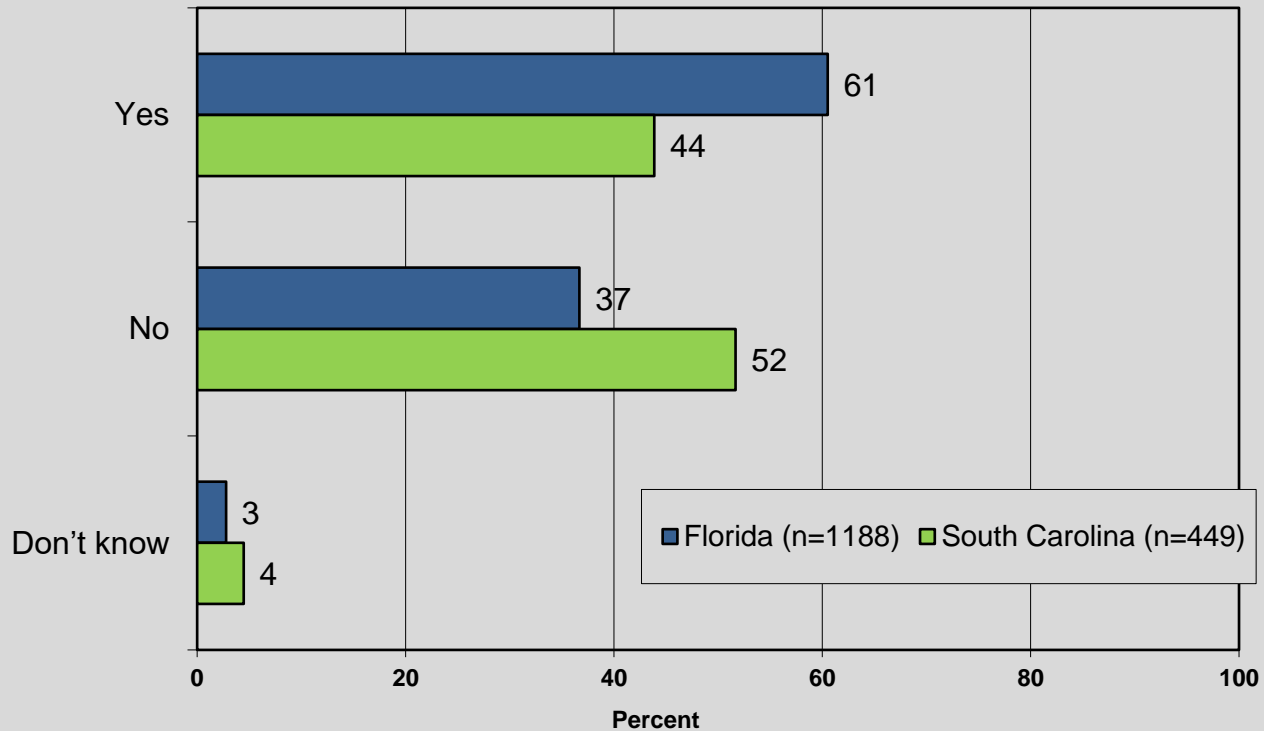
Awareness and Knowledge of Barotrauma

Have you ever noticed that some fish were physically unable to return to the bottom on their own? Such fish are sometimes referred to as “floaters.” (Asked of those who release any fish.)

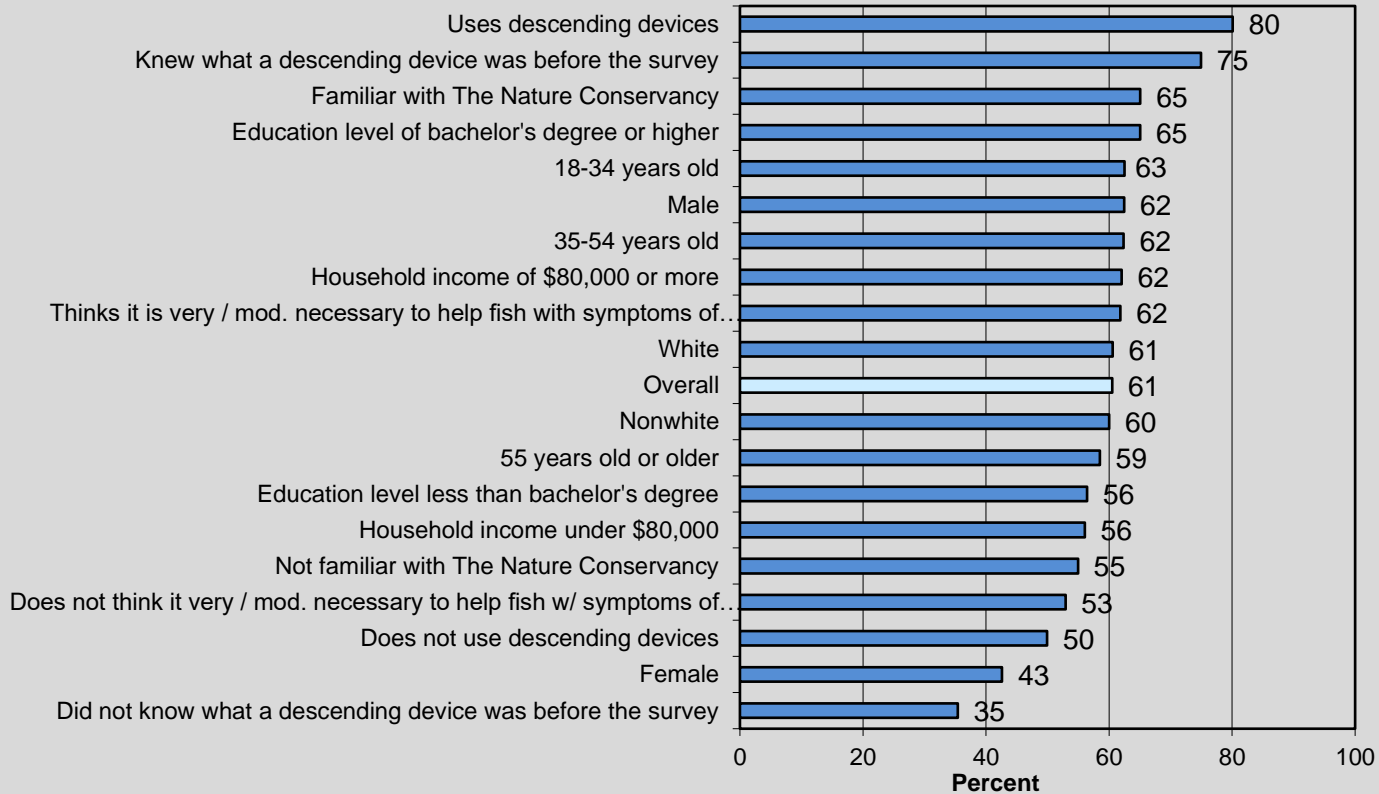
Almost all anglers surveyed indicated that they sometimes release fish they have caught; these anglers were asked the follow-up question about seeing signs of barotrauma (even if they did not yet know the term).



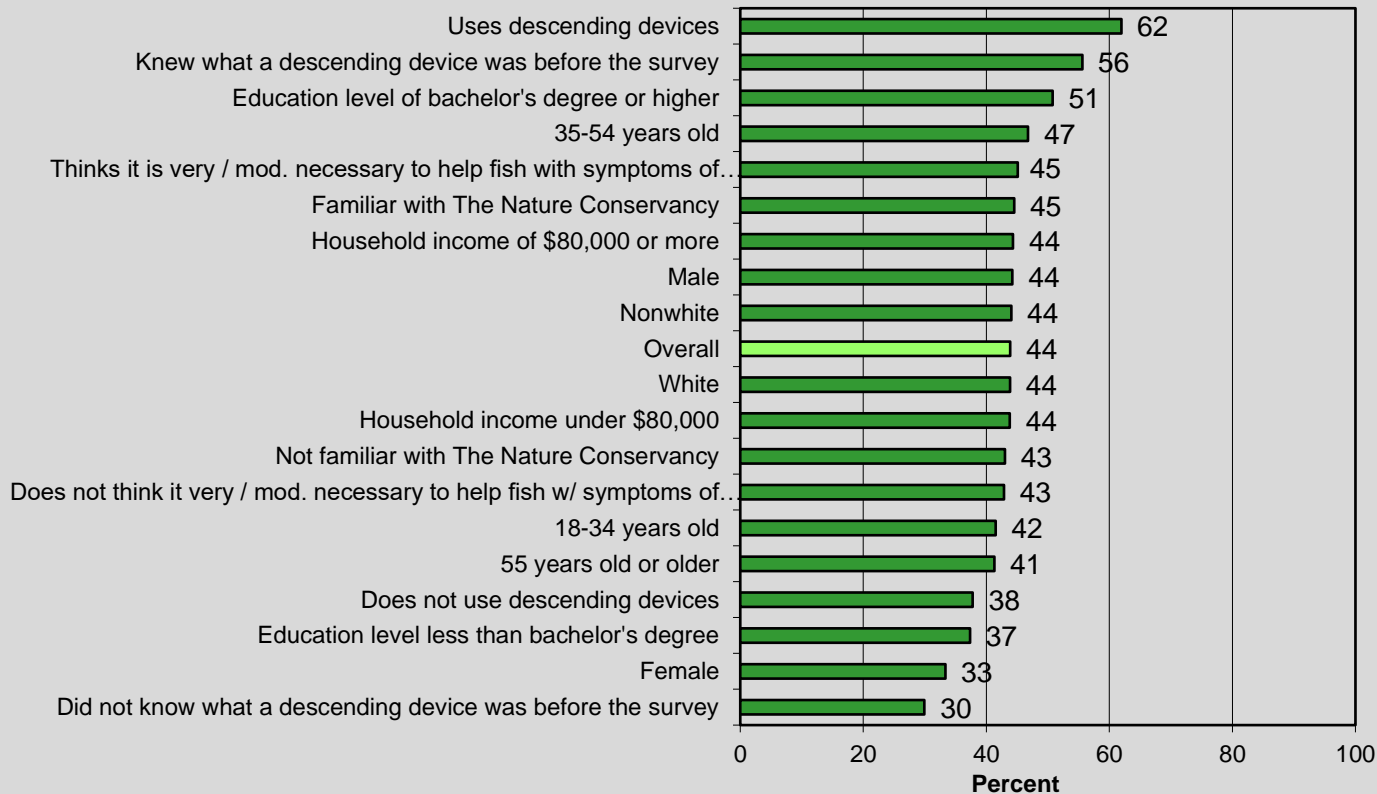
Prior to this survey, had you ever heard the term “barotrauma”?



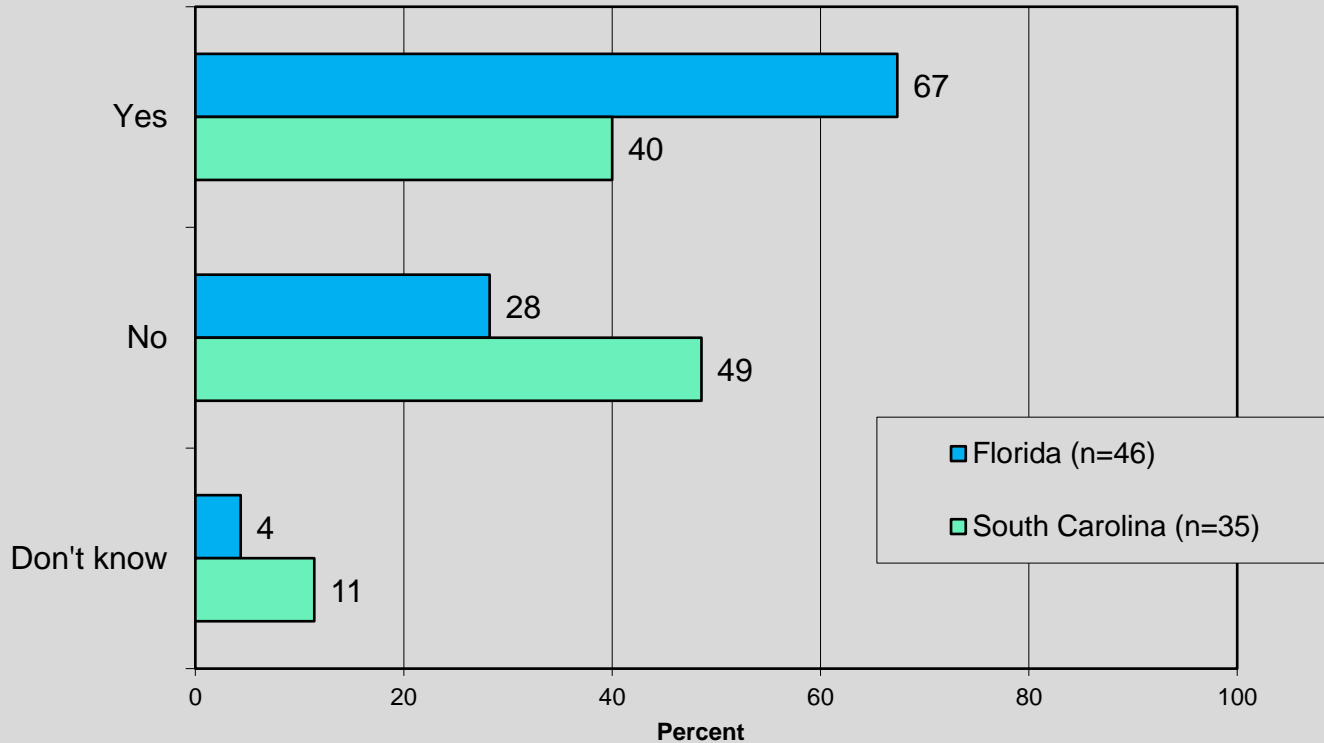
Percent of each of the following groups who have heard of barotrauma: (Florida)



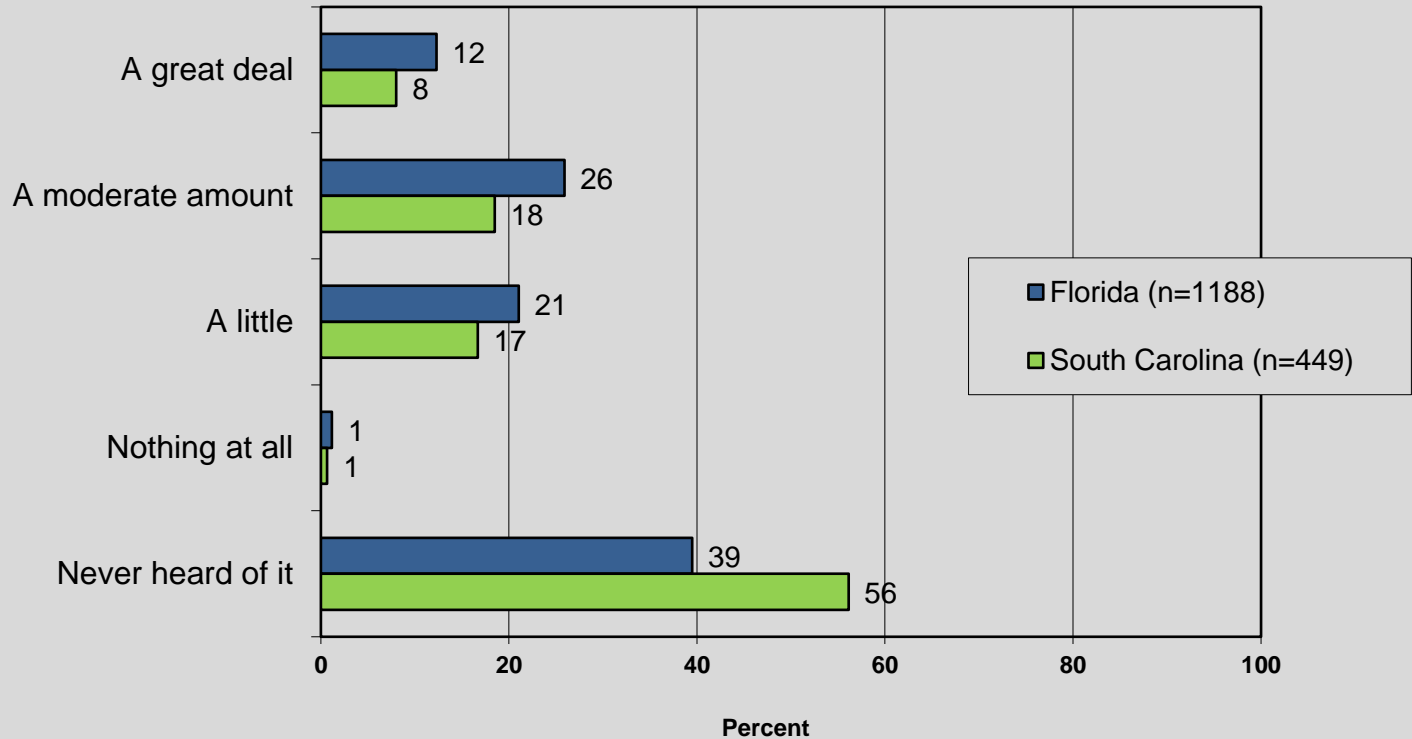
Percent of each of the following groups who have heard of barotrauma: (South Carolina)



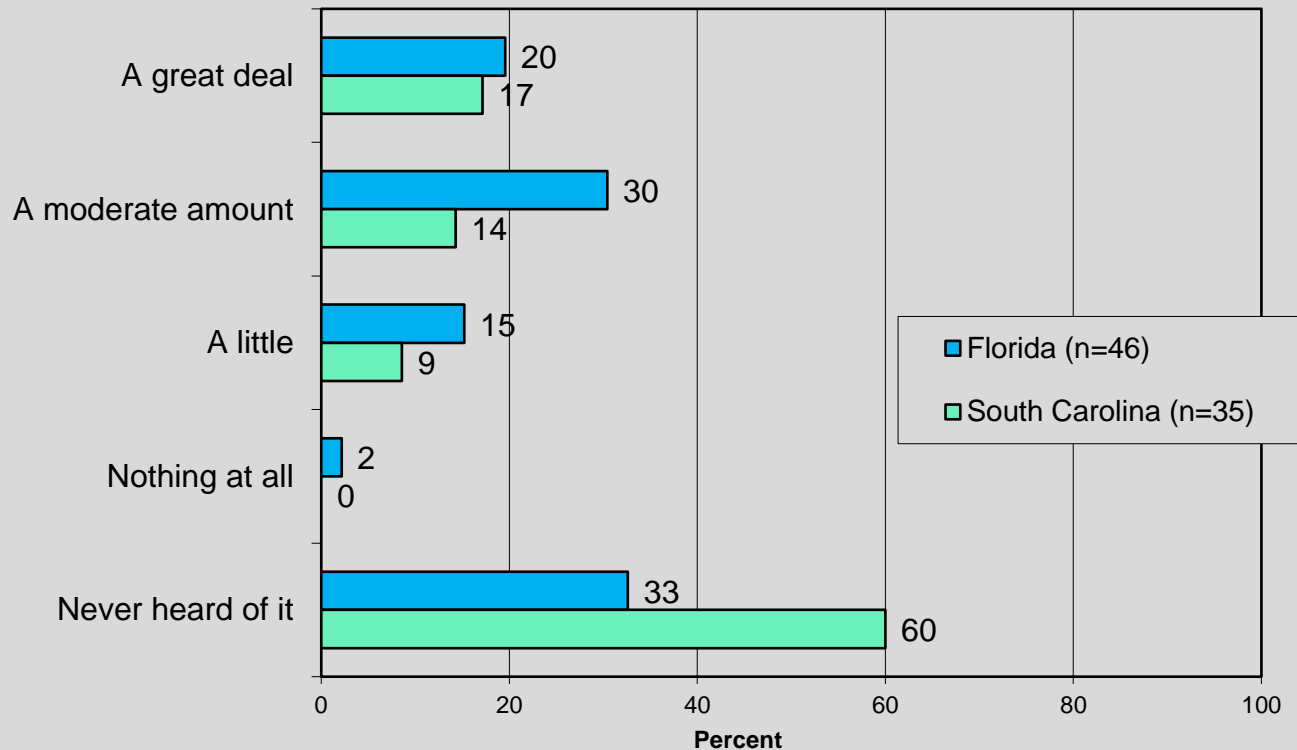
Prior to this survey, had you ever heard the term “barotrauma”? (Captains)



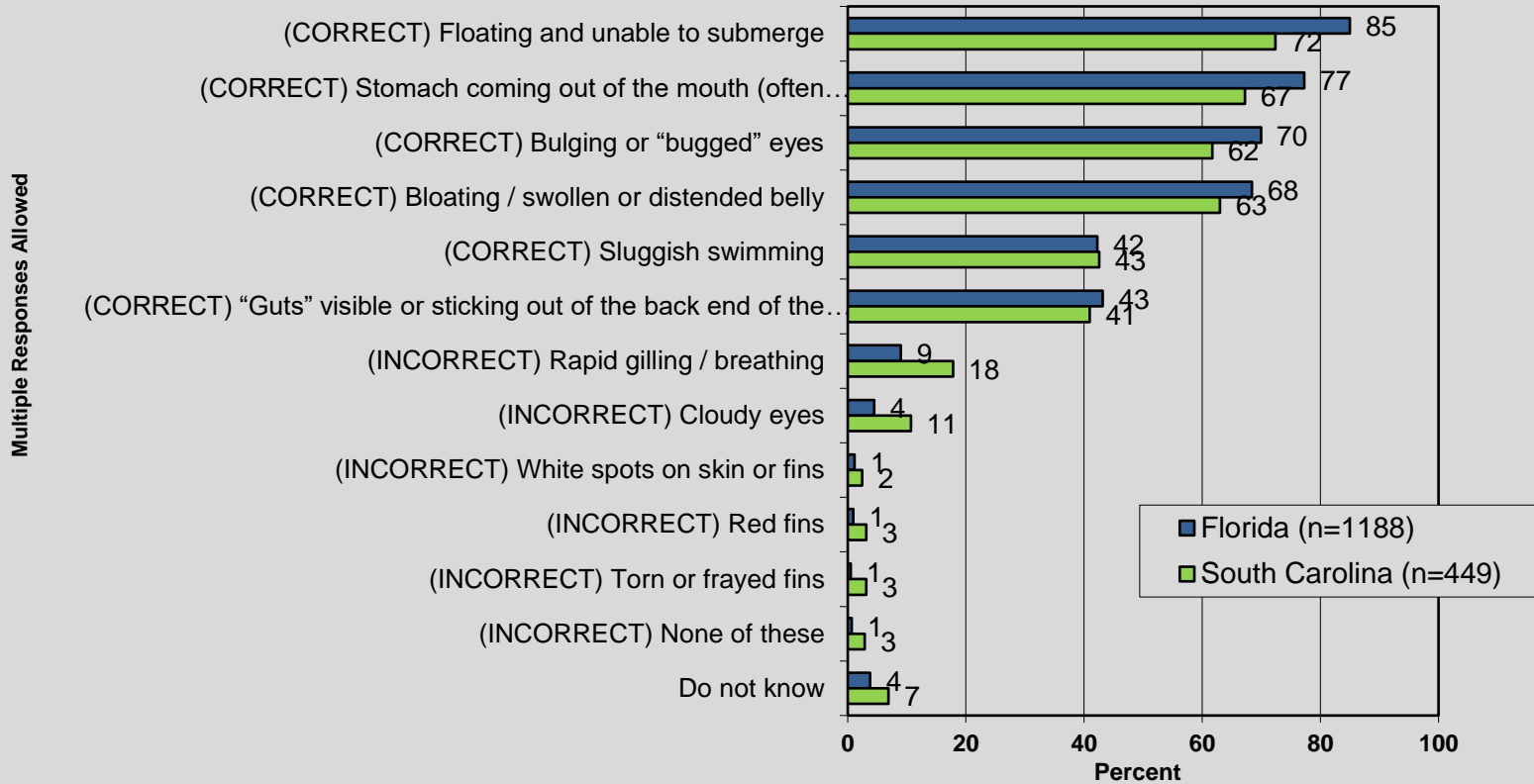
How much do you know about barotrauma in fish?



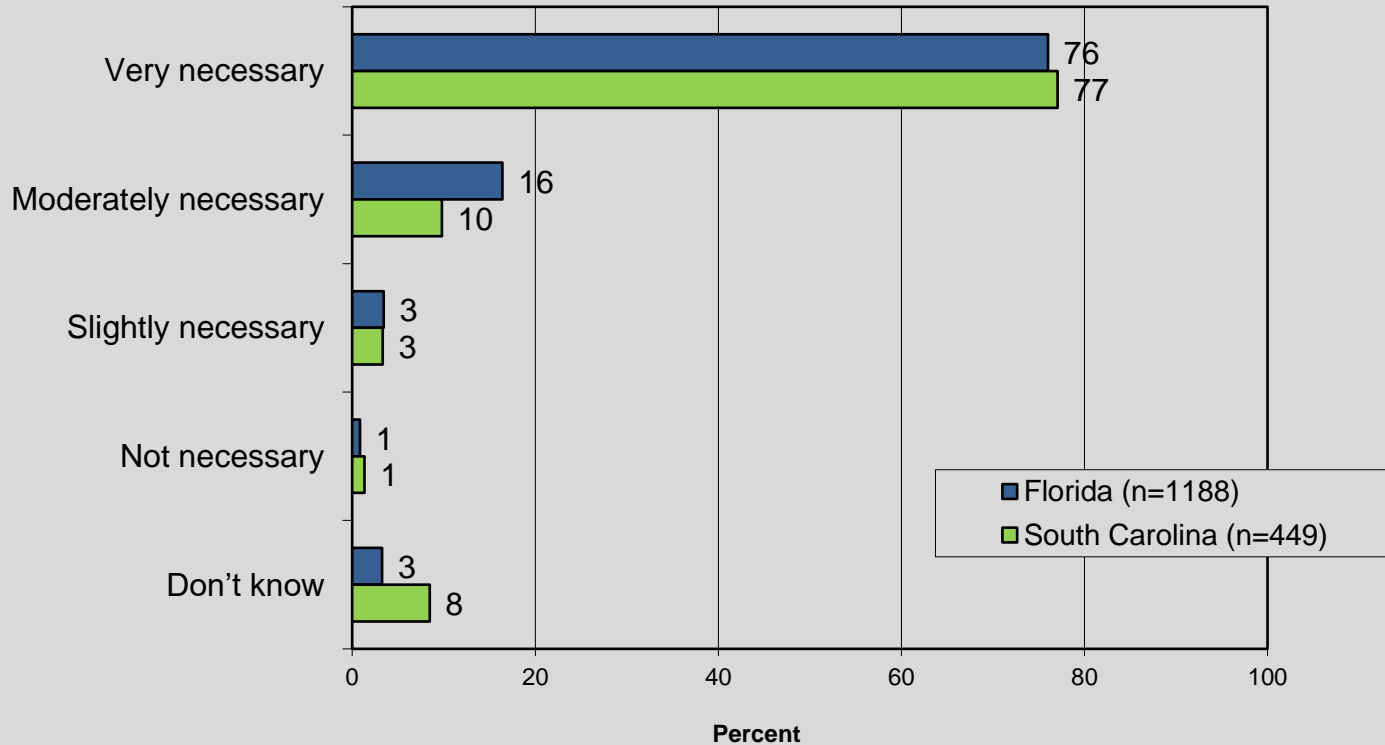
How much do you know about barotrauma in fish? (Captains)



Next, please indicate which of the following you think are signs of barotrauma in saltwater fish:

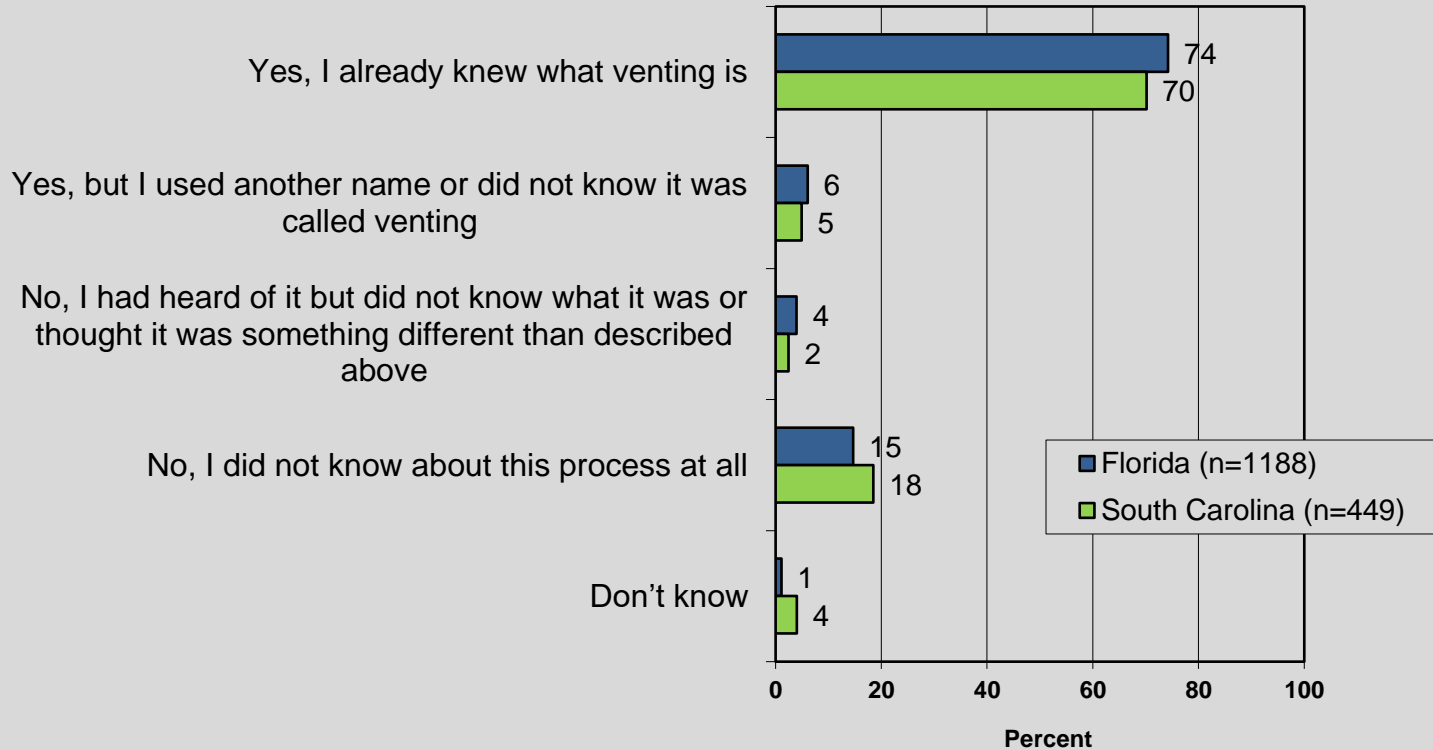


How necessary do you think it is to help a fish that displays symptoms of barotrauma to return to depth of capture?

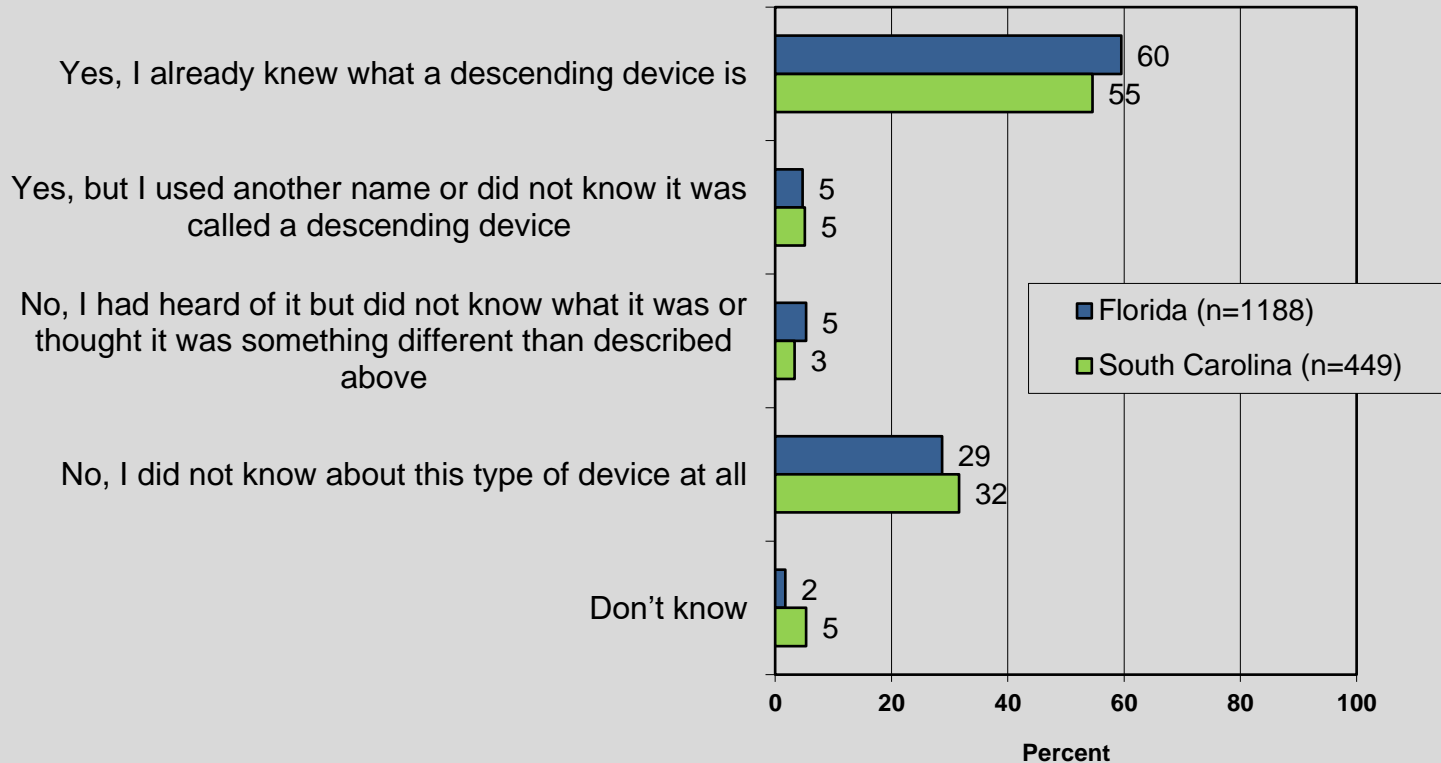


Awareness and Use of Venting and Descending Devices

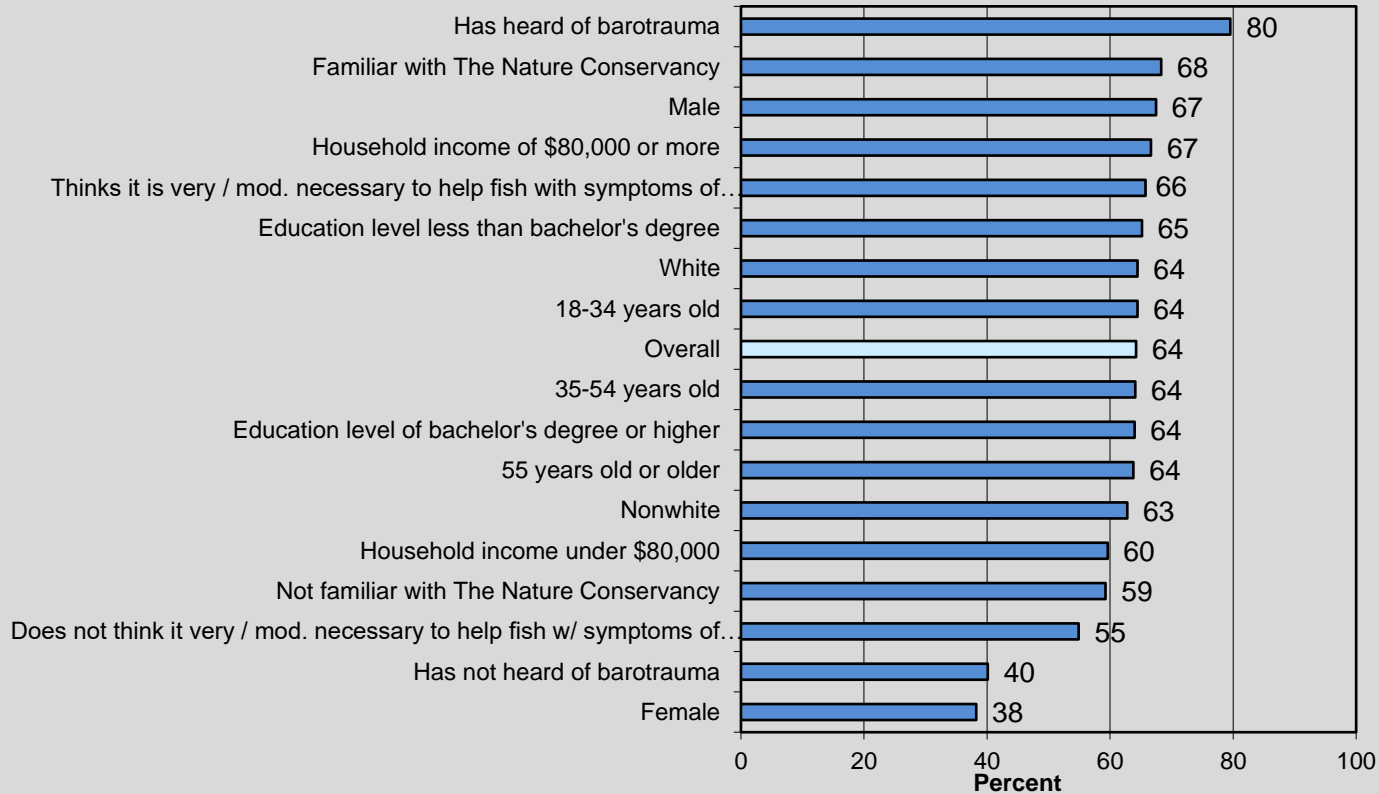
Prior to this survey, did you know what venting is or were you aware of the practice, even if you did not know the name?



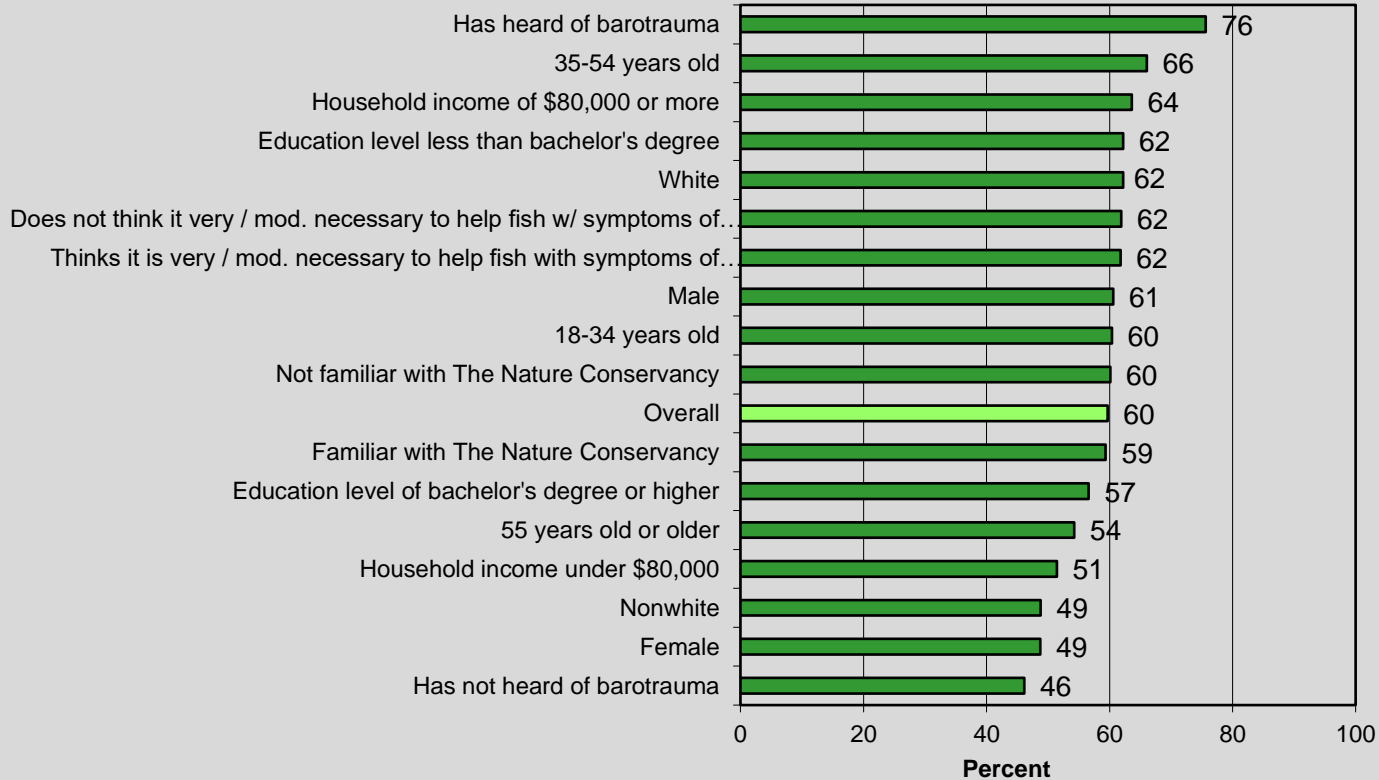
Prior to this survey, did you know what a descending device is or were you aware of this type of device, even if you did not know the name?



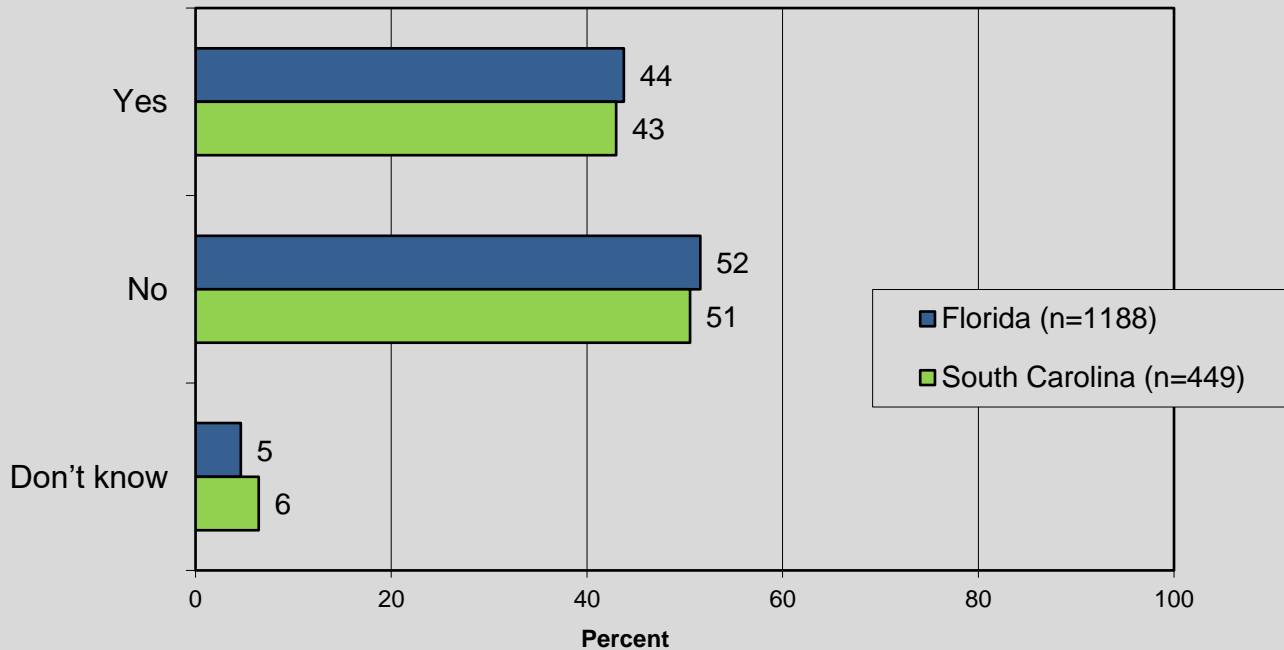
Percent of each of the following groups who knew what a descending device was before the survey: (Florida)



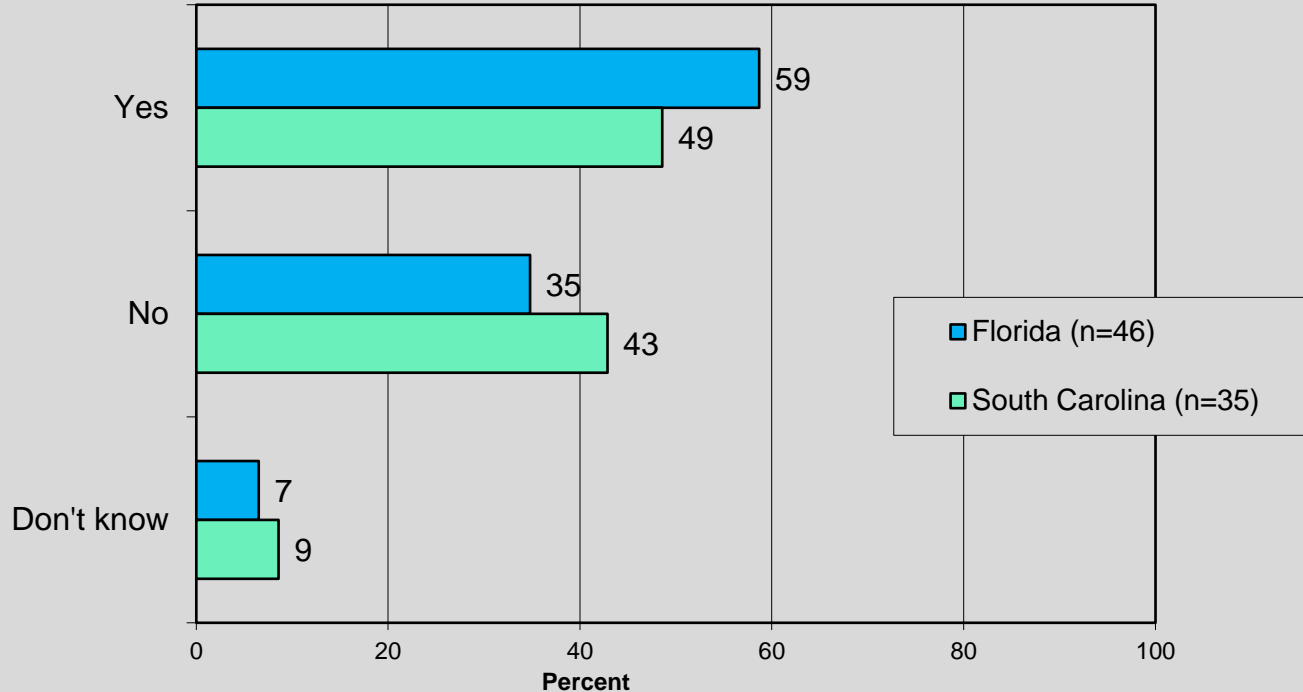
Percent of each of the following groups who knew what a descending device was before the survey: (South Carolina)



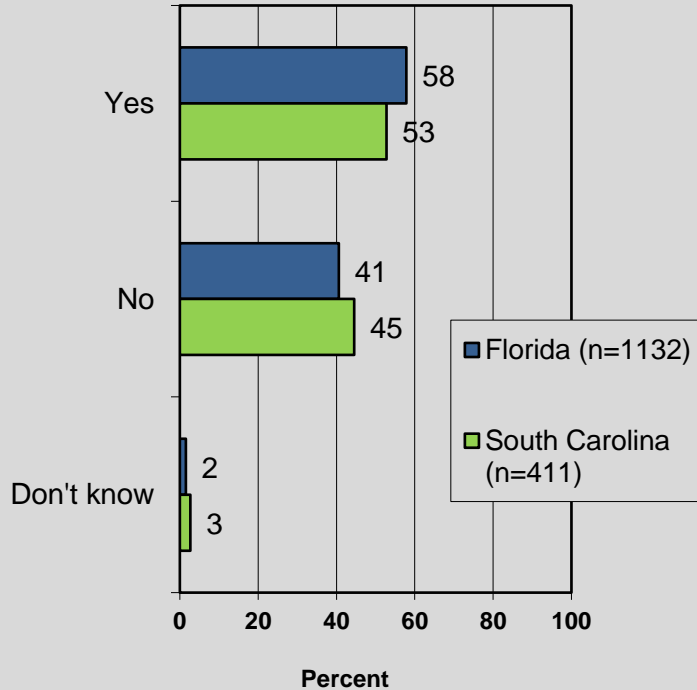
**Prior to this survey, did you know there is a regulation that requires descending devices to be on board vessels in the South Atlantic region?
This regulation is sometimes known as Regulatory Amendment 29.**



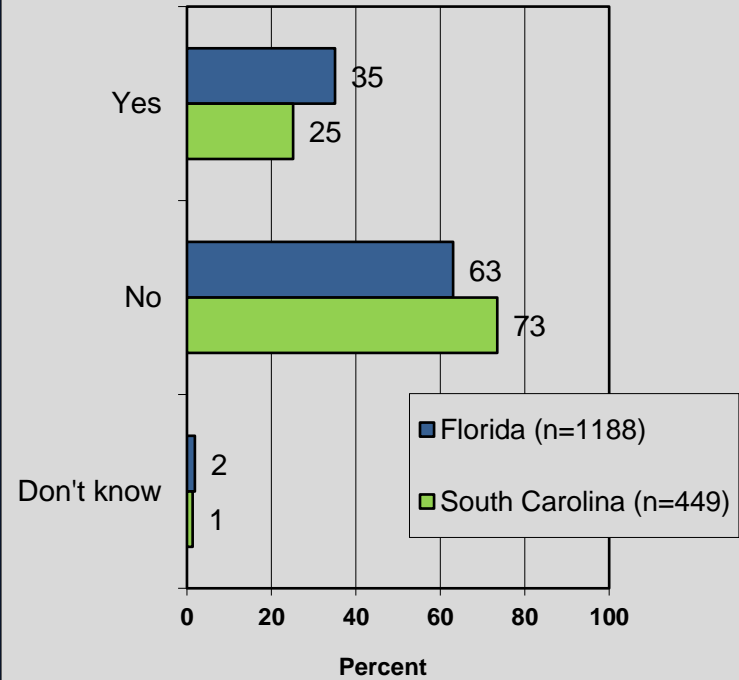
**Prior to this survey, did you know there is a regulation that requires descending devices to be on board vessels in the South Atlantic region?
This regulation is sometimes known as Regulatory Amendment 29.
(Captains)**



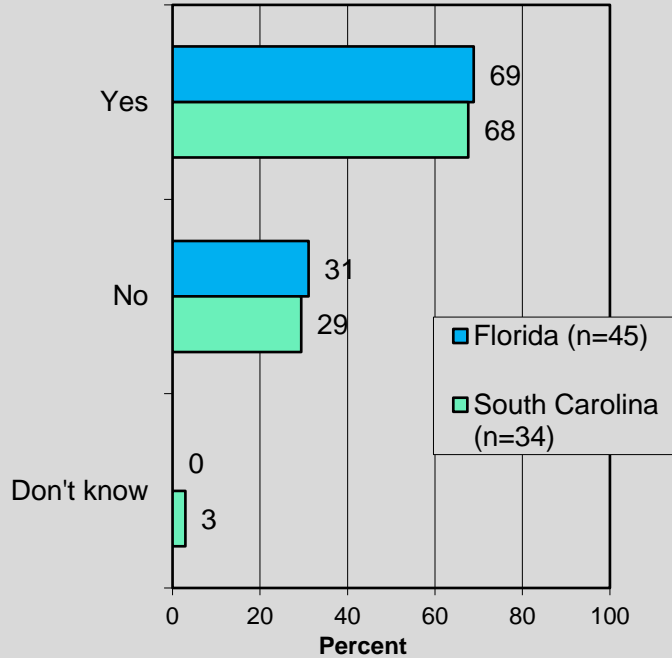
Do you ever use a venting tool when releasing fish caught in the Atlantic off the coast of [Southeast Florida / South Carolina] at a depth of 30 feet or more?
(Among those who release any fish.)



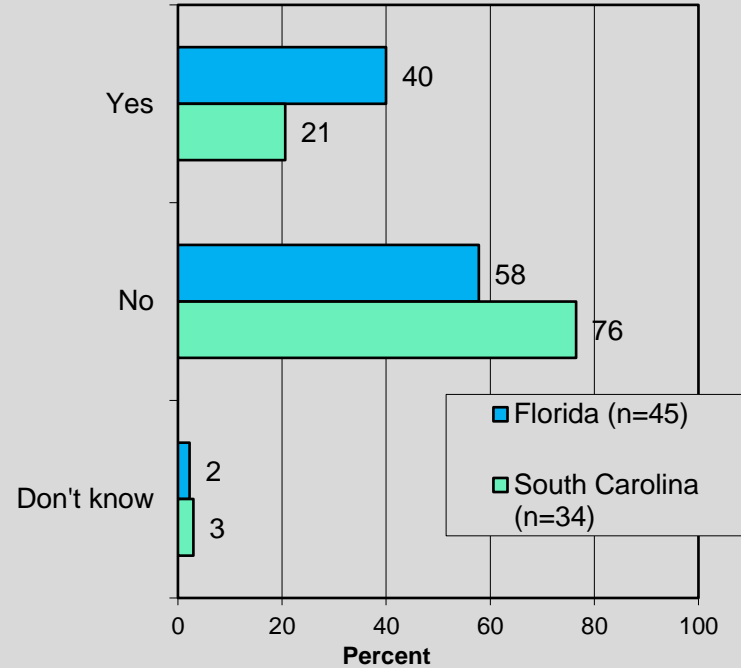
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(Among those who release any fish.)



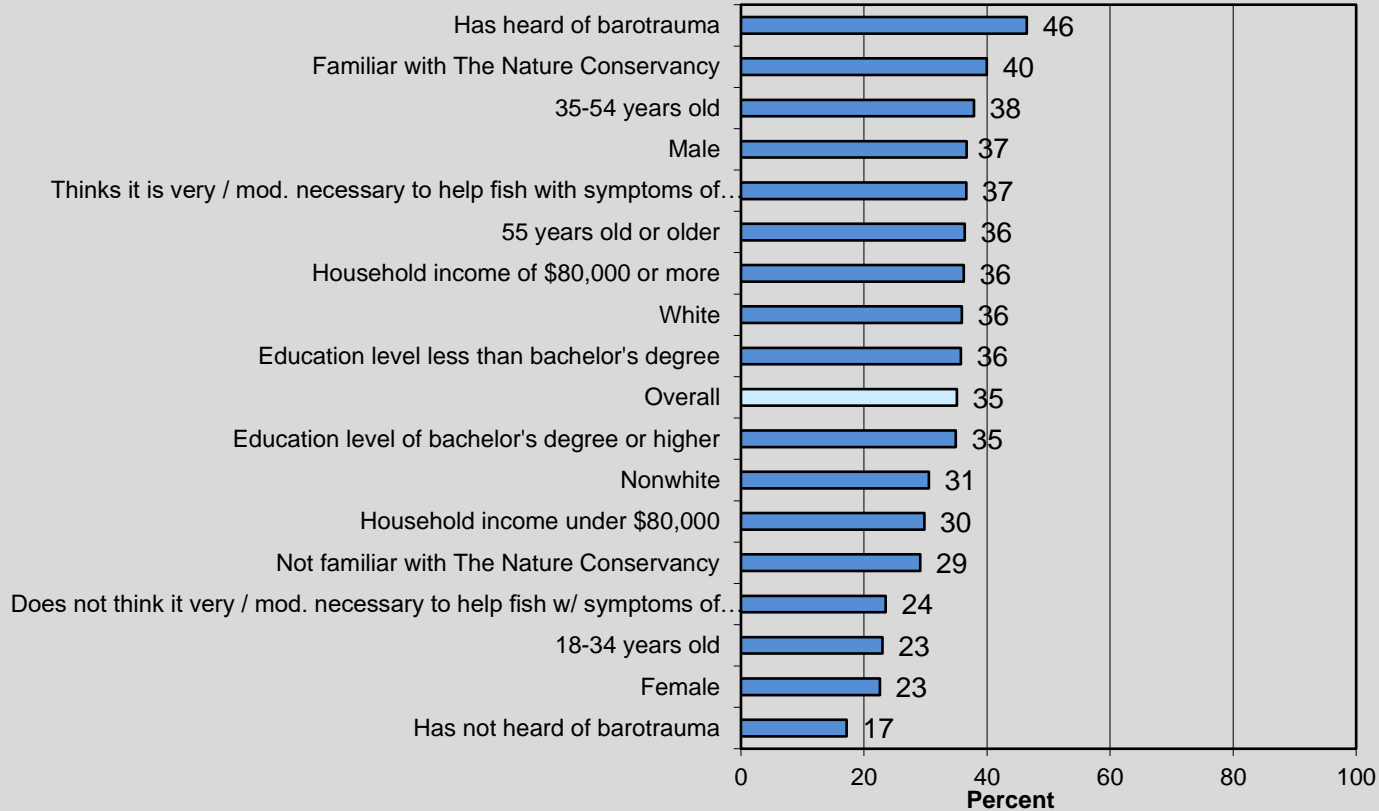
Do you ever use a venting tool when releasing fish caught in the Atlantic off the coast of [South Carolina / Southeast Florida] at a depth of 30 feet or more? (Asked of those who release any fish and who know what venting is.) (Captains)



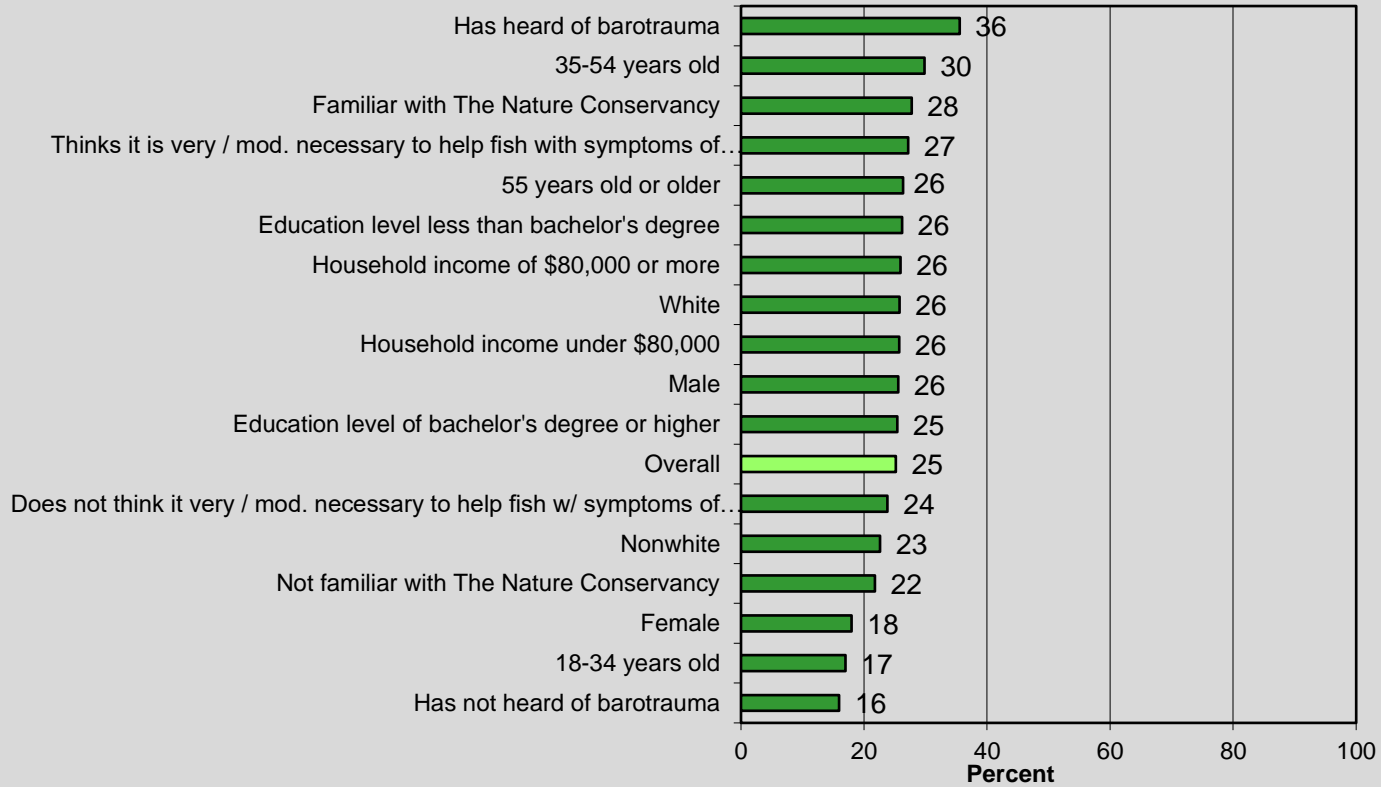
Do you ever use a descending device when releasing fish caught in the Atlantic off the coast of [South Carolina / Southeast Florida] at a depth of 30 feet or more? (Asked of those who release any fish and who know what a descending device is.) (Captains)



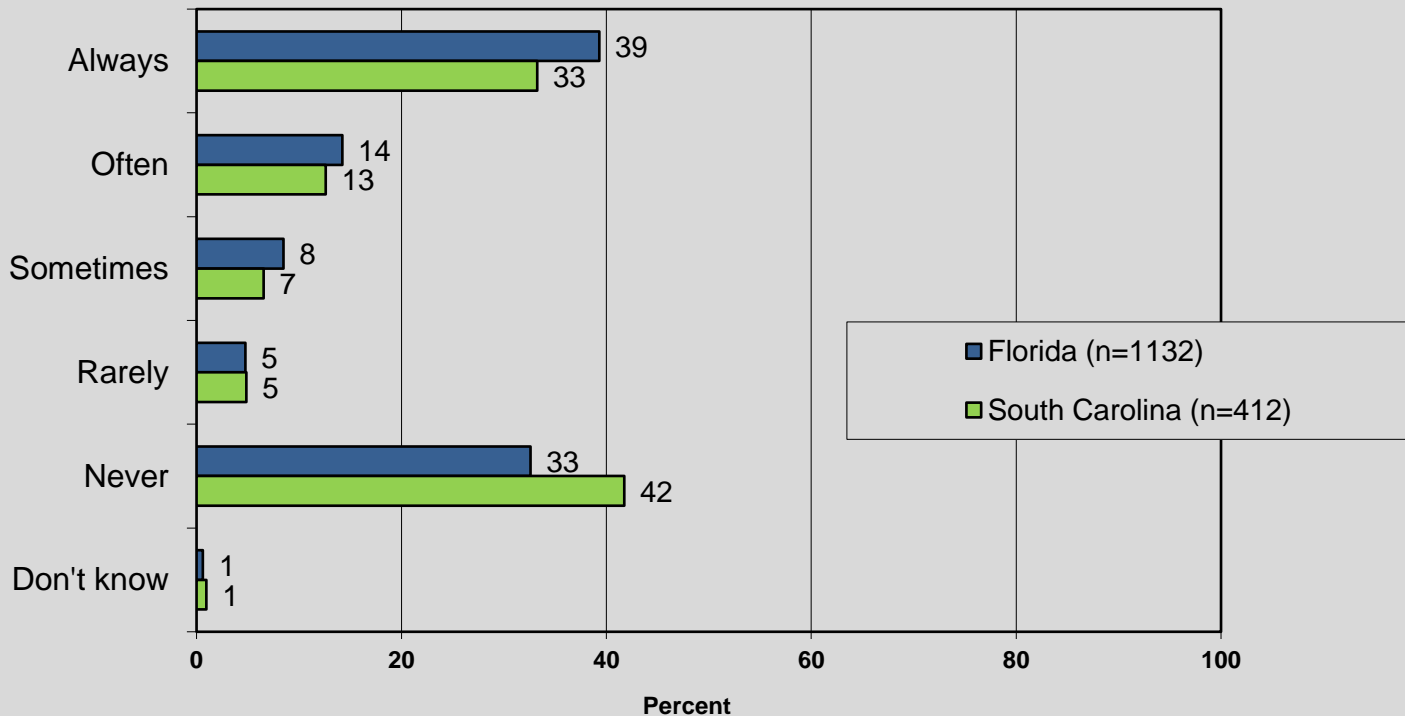
Percent of each of the following groups who use descending devices: (Florida)



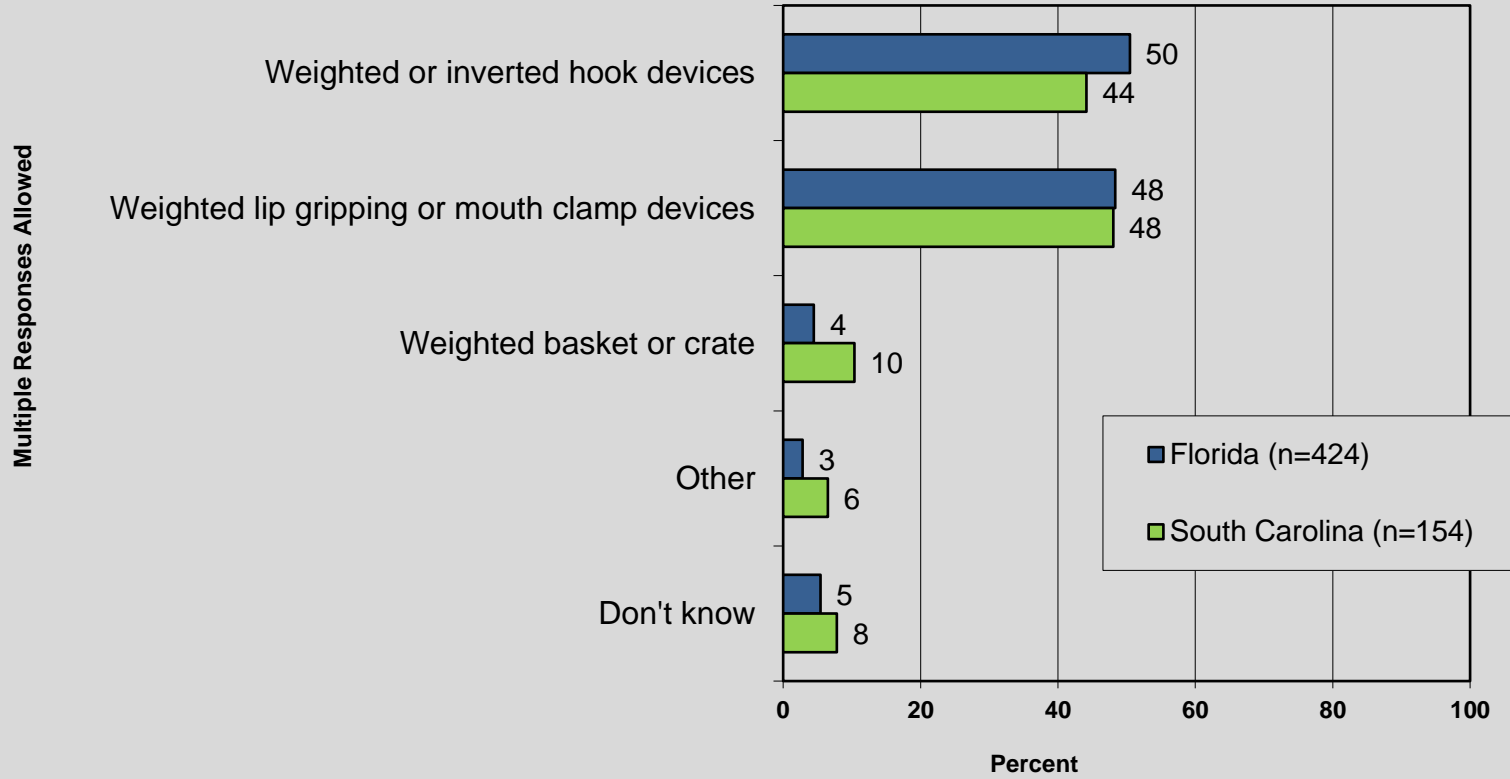
Percent of each of the following groups who use descending devices: (South Carolina)



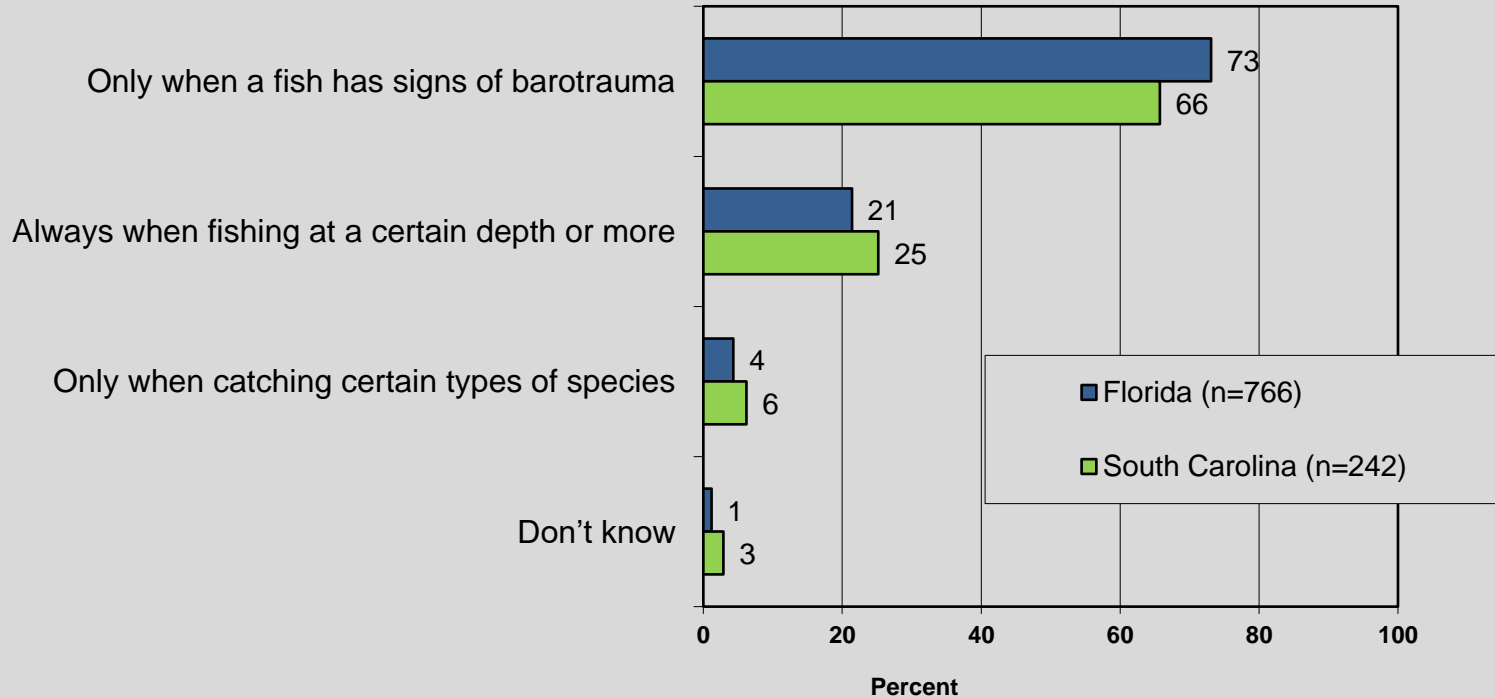
How frequently do you use venting or a descending device to release floaters or a fish that shows signs of barotrauma? (Among those who release any fish.)



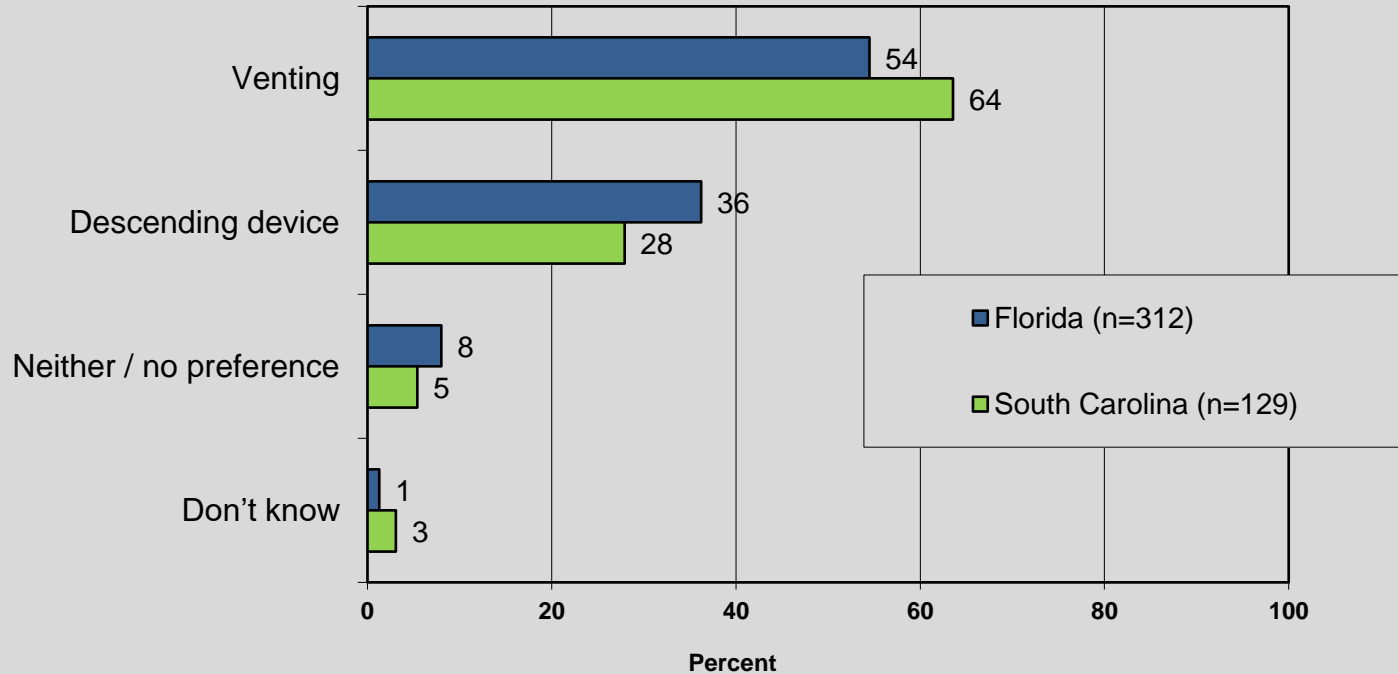
What types of descending devices do you use? (Asked of those who ever use a descending device.)



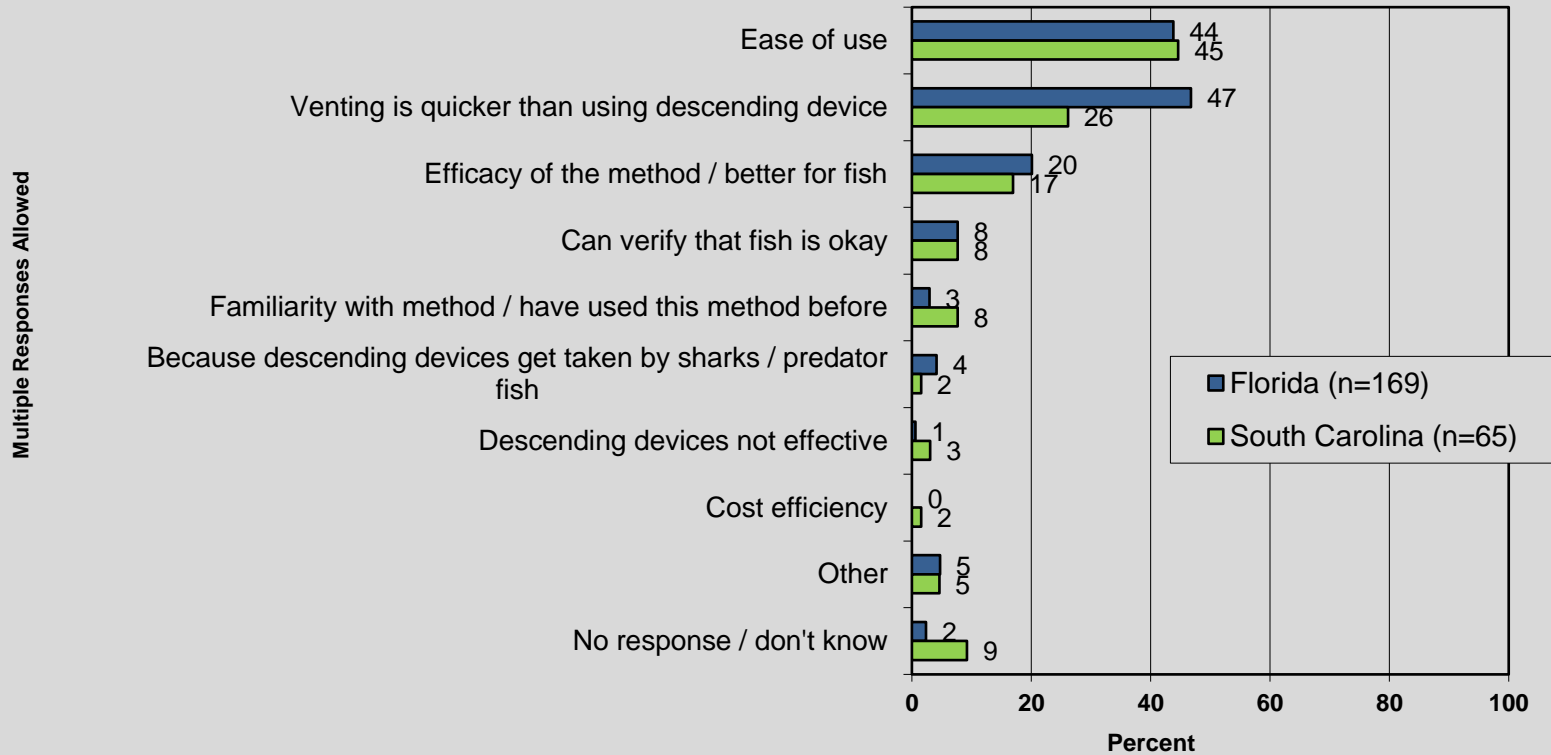
Which of the following best describes when you use venting or a descending device to release a fish? (Asked of those who ever use venting or a descending device.)



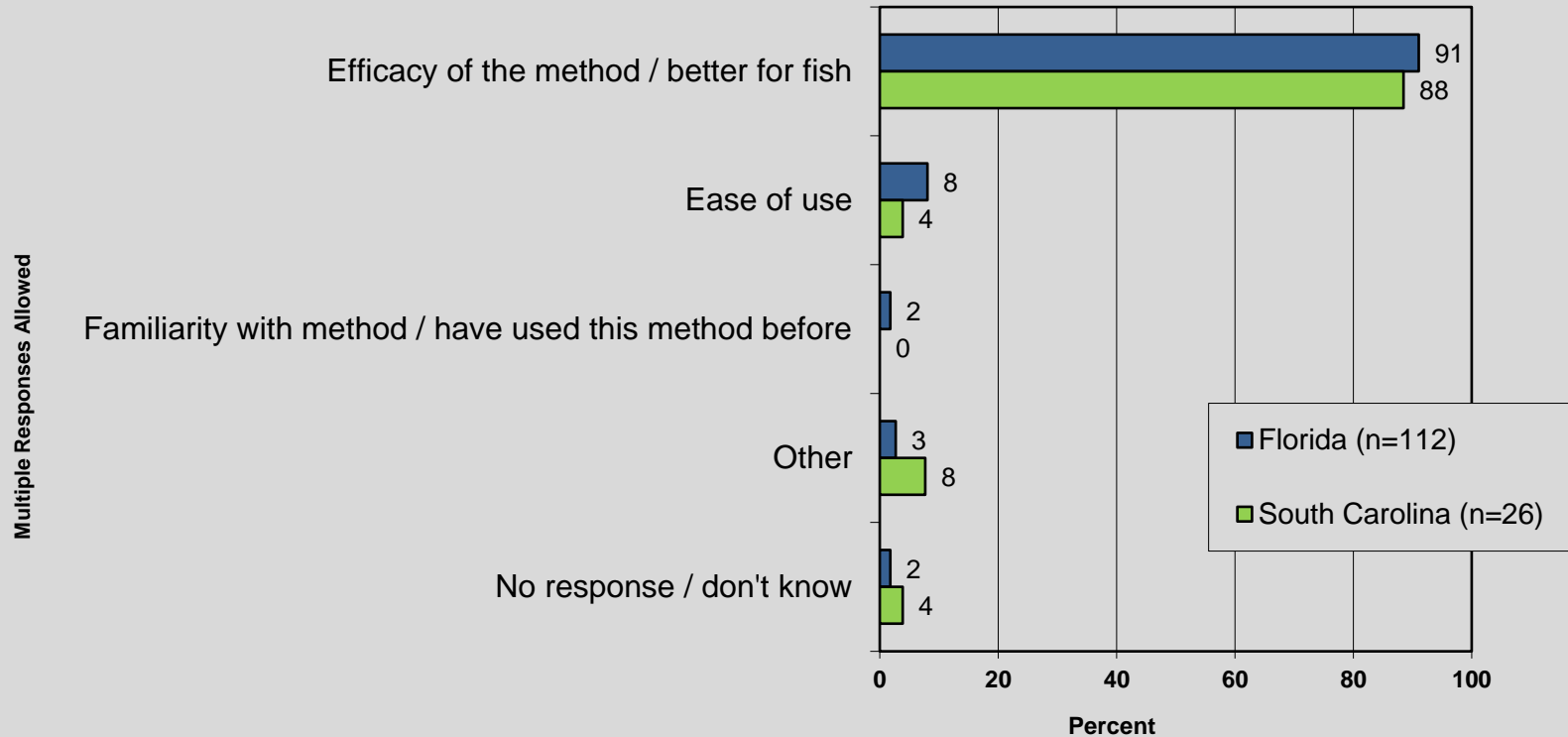
You indicated you have used both venting tools and descending devices to release fish. Which method do you prefer to use when the fish has signs of barotrauma? (Asked of those who use both venting tools and descending devices.)



Why do you prefer using this method when the fish has signs of barotrauma? (Venting)

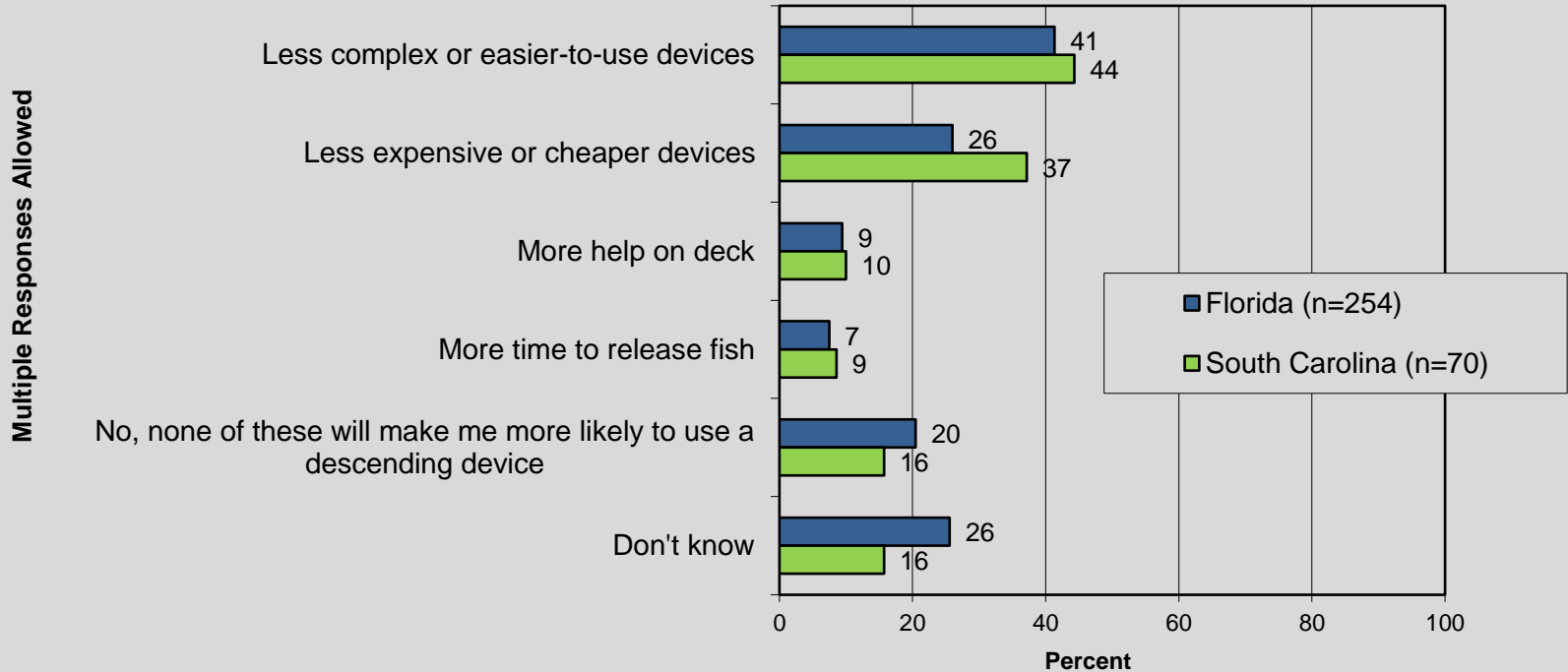


Why do you prefer using this method when the fish has signs of barotrauma? (Descending device)

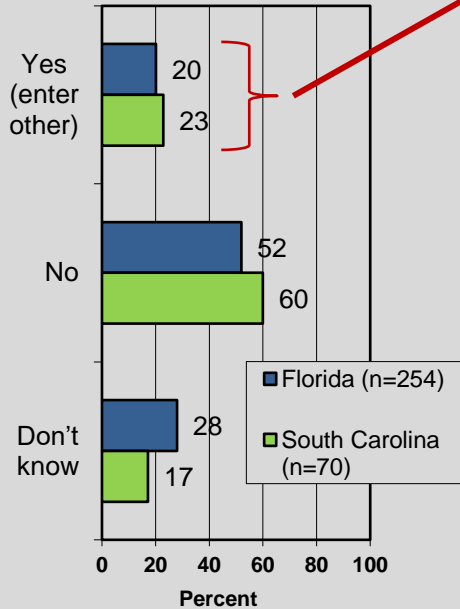


Factors to Encourage Use of Descending Devices

Next, please tell me if any of the following would make you more likely to use a descending device in the future when you release fish caught at a depth of 30 feet or more. (Asked of those who sometimes do not use a descending device.)

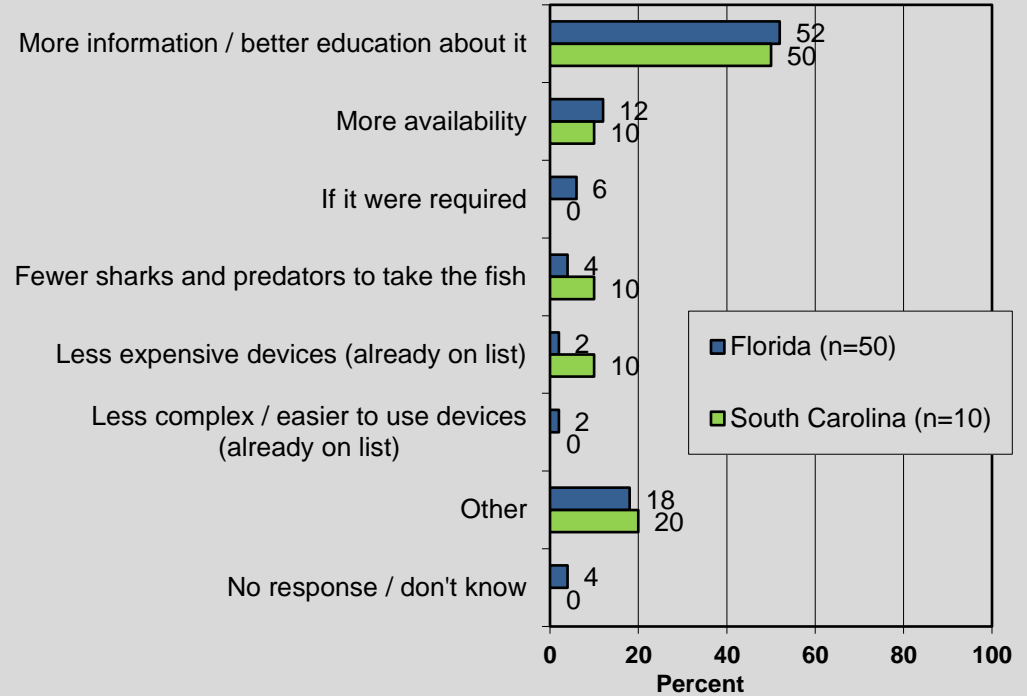


Is there anything else that would make you more likely to use a descending device in the future when you release fish caught at a depth of 30 feet or more? IF YES: What? (Asked of those who sometimes do not use a descending device.)



Things to make respondent more likely to use a descending device in the future when releasing fish caught at a depth of 30 feet or more. (Among those who sometimes do not use a descending device and who responded "Yes" to the lead-in question.)

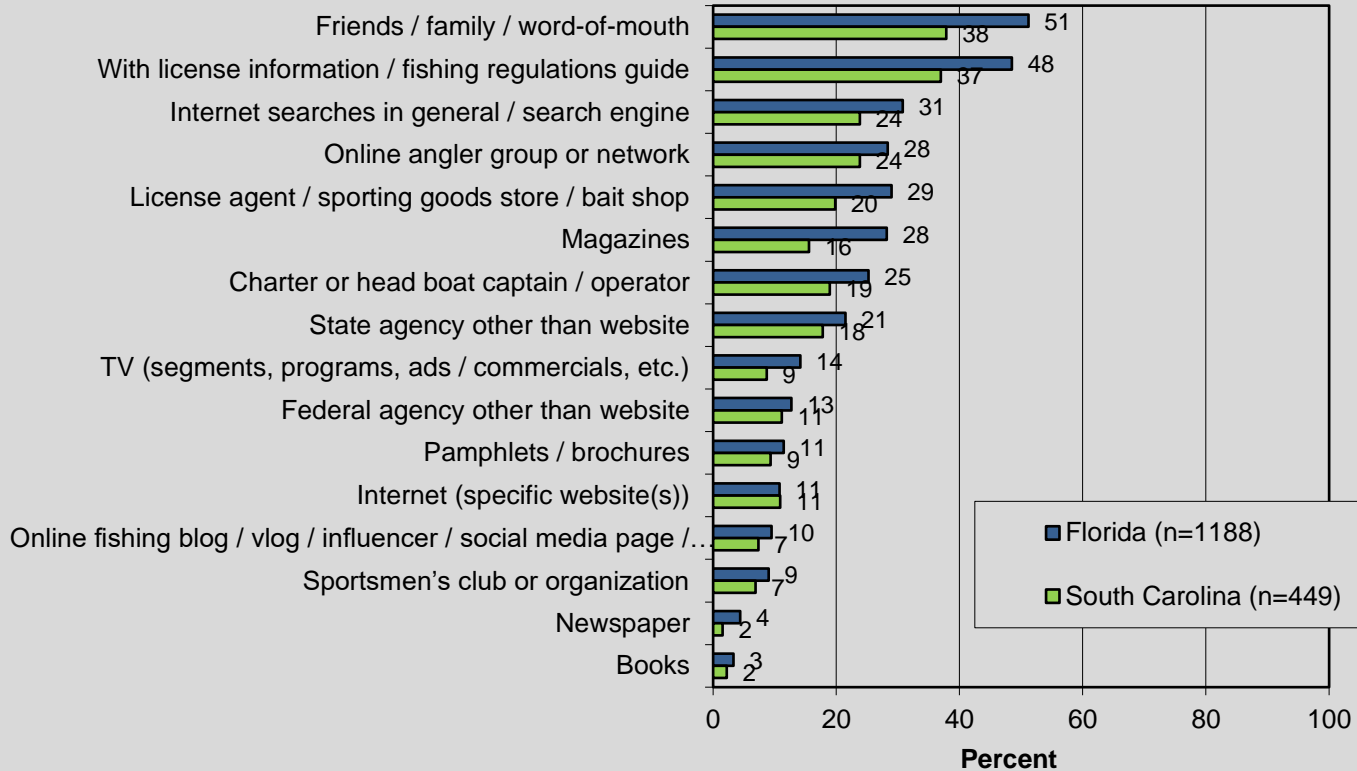
Multiple Responses Allowed



Information Sources About Fishing in the South Atlantic

Where do you get information and updates about fishing in the South Atlantic?

Multiple Responses Allowed



A large school of fish, primarily orange and pink in color, swimming in clear blue water. The fish are densely packed in the center and spread out towards the edges. The lighting is bright, creating a vibrant scene.

Questions?

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