



Department of Conservation National Survey

Report 4: Attitudes to Conservation

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Contents

1.0	Summary	3
2.0	Findings	4
2.1	Main benefits of conservation	4
2.2	Benefits of conservation personally	7
2.3	Importance of conservation personally	9
2.4	Importance of conservation compared to other issues	12
2.5	Conservation is at the heart of what it means to be a New Zealander	13
2.6	Conservation of New Zealand’s natural environment is important to me	14
2.7	I encourage other people to care about and conserve natural resources	15
2.8	Conservation is important in my life.....	16
2.9	Conservation should be considered in all key decisions about New Zealand’s future.....	17
2.10	Spending money on conservation is a good investment	18
2.11	I actively enjoy New Zealand’s healthy environment	19
2.12	Contribution to conservation.....	20
2.13	Donating money to a conservation cause	21
3.0	Conclusions	24
4.0	Methodology.....	26

1.0 Summary

The primary personal benefits of conservation were considered to be: protecting plants and animals (20%), protecting the environment for my children (19%) and ability to enjoy a healthy/safe environment (17%).

A total of 86 percent of New Zealanders said conservation is important to them personally (important or very important). Just three percent said conservation is not important and the remaining 11 percent were neutral or unsure about the importance of conservation.

There has been an increase in the proportion of New Zealanders that think conservation is important to them between the 2011 and 2009 surveys (however a 10 point scale was used in 2009 and a 5 point in 2011 which may be the reason for the change).

New Zealanders were asked how important conservation is compared to other issues (education, health, law and order). The majority of New Zealanders said conservation is of equal importance (62%). Twenty-two percent said conservation is less important and 15 percent said conservation is more important.

New Zealanders were asked the extent to which they agreed with statements about conservation:

- 84 percent of New Zealanders agreed *conservation of New Zealand's natural environment is important to me*
- 79 percent of New Zealanders agreed *spending money on conservation is a good investment in the prosperity and wellbeing of all New Zealanders*
- 75 percent of New Zealanders agreed *conservation should be considered in all key decisions about New Zealand's future*
- 71 percent of New Zealanders agreed *I encourage other people to care about and conserve natural resources*
- 66 percent of New Zealanders agreed *conservation is at the heart of what it means to be a New Zealander*
- 66 percent of New Zealanders agreed *conservation is important in my life.*

The majority of New Zealanders (79%) have not contributed to conservation in the last 12 months. Twenty-one percent said they have contributed to conservation.

Two-thirds of New Zealanders (66%) have not donated money for a conservation cause in the last 12 months. Thirty percent have donated money for a conservation cause in the last 12 months.

One third of New Zealanders (33%) said they were likely to donate money for a conservation cause in the next 12 months. Twenty-seven percent said they were unlikely to donate money for a conservation cause. The remaining 40 percent said they may donate or did not know if they would donate.

2.0 Findings

2.1 Main benefits of conservation

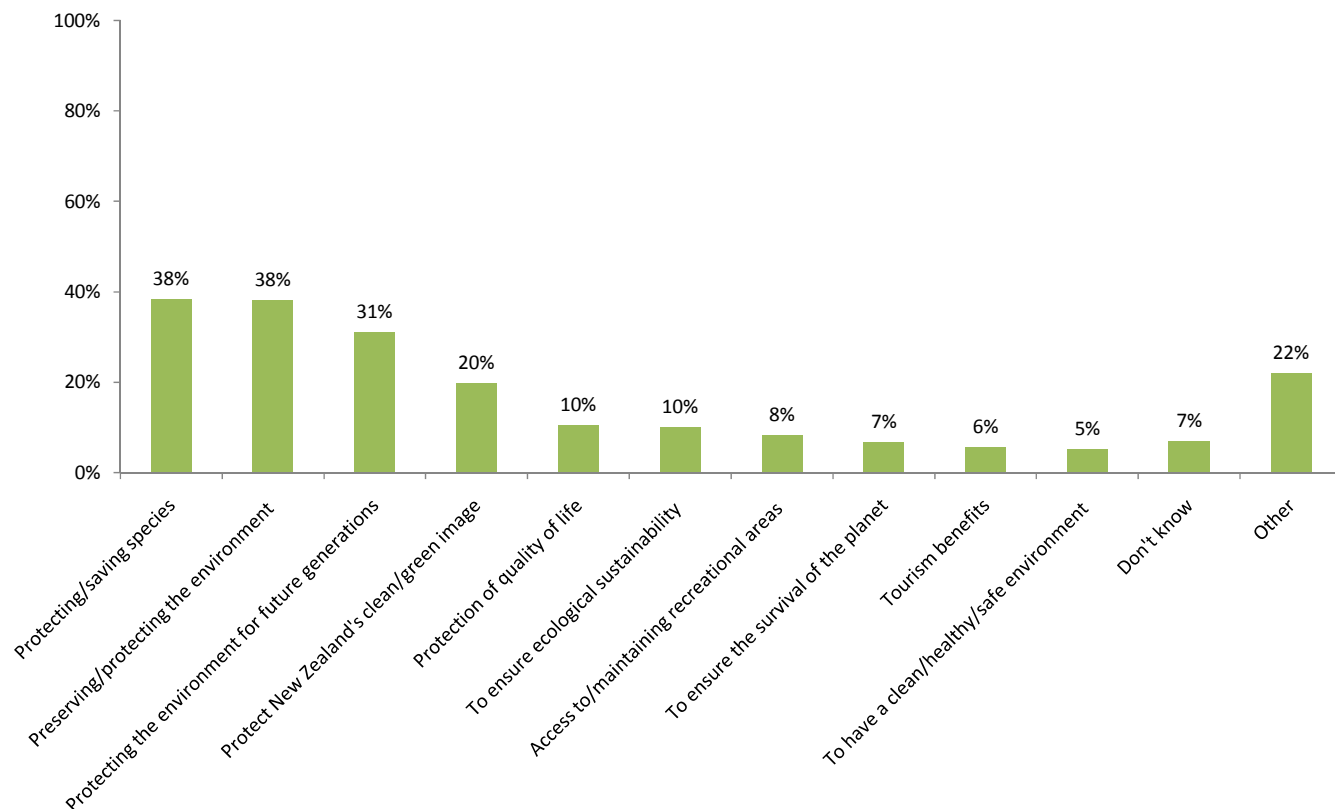
New Zealanders said the main benefits of conservation were: protecting/saving species (38%), preserving/protecting the environment (38%), protecting the environment for future generations (31%) and protecting New Zealand's clean/green image (20%).

The following groups of people were statistically significantly more likely to say:

- Protecting/saving species: female, 40-54 years, rural, favourable view of DOC, visited DOC area in last 12 months
- Preserving/protecting the environment: favourable view of DOC
- Protecting the environment for future generations: 40-54 years, income \$60,001 plus, favourable view of DOC, visited DOC area in last 12 months
- Don't know: 18 -24 years, Maori, Pacific, Asian, income below \$40,000, not visited a DOC area in last 12 months.

Full significant differences follow overleaf.

Benefits of Conservation (mentioned by 5% +)



Base: all respondents 3614

Statistically significantly more likely to mention:	
Protecting/saving species	Female, 40-54 years, rural, favourable view of DOC, visited DOC area in last 12 months
Preserving/protecting the environment	Favourable view of DOC
Protecting the environment for future generations	40-54 years, income \$60,001 +, favourable view of DOC, visited DOC area in last 12 months
Protect New Zealand's clean/green image	-
Protection of quality of life	-
To ensure ecological sustainability	-
Access to/maintaining recreational areas	-
To ensure the survival of the planet	55 years +

Tourism benefits	Male, 40-54 years
To have a clean/healthy/safe environment	-
Don't know	18-24 years, Maori, Pacific, Asian, income below \$40,000, not visited DOC area in last 12 months

2.2 Benefits of conservation personally

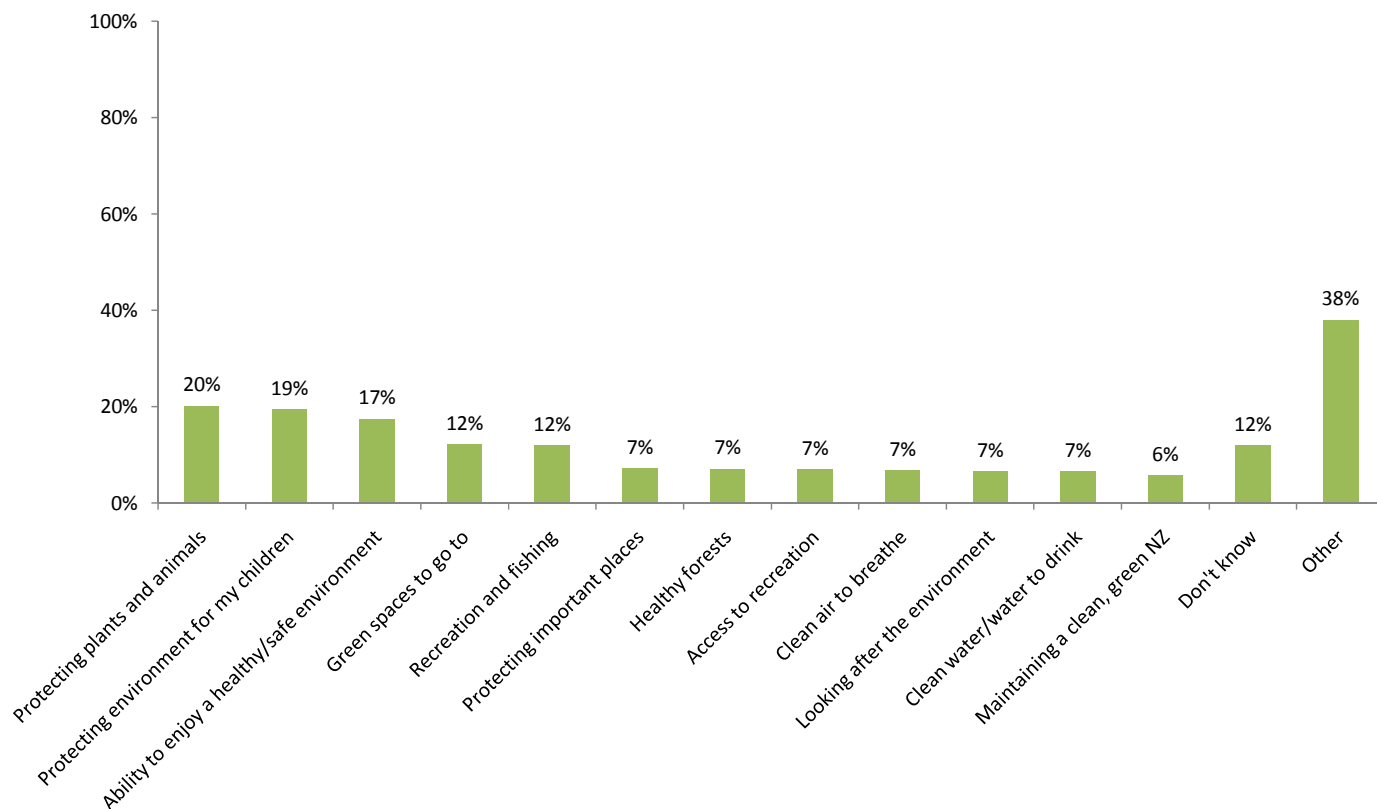
The primary personal benefits of conservation were considered to be: protecting plants and animals (20%), protecting the environment for my children (19%) and ability to enjoy a healthy/safe environment (17%).

The following groups of people were statistically significantly more likely to say:

- Protecting plants and animals: 40-54 years, favourable view of DOC, visited DOC area in last 12 months
- Protecting environment for my children: 20-54 years, income \$60,00 plus, rural, favourable view of DOC
- Ability to enjoy health/safe environment: income \$60,001 plus, favourable view of DOC, visited DOC area in last 12 months
- Don't know: 18-24 years, Asian, income below \$40,000, unfavourable view of DOC, not visited DOC area in last 12 months.

Full significant differences follow overleaf.

Benefits of Conservation personally (mentioned by 5% +)



Base: all respondents 3614

Statistically significantly more likely to mention:	
Protecting/saving species	Female, 40-54 years, rural, favourable view of DOC, visited DOC area in last 12 months
Preserving/protecting the environment	Favourable view of DOC
Protecting the environment for future generations	40-54 years, income \$60,001 +, favourable view of DOC, visited DOC area in last 12 months
Protect New Zealand's clean/green image	-
Protection of quality of life	-
To ensure ecological sustainability	-
Access to/maintaining recreational areas	-
To ensure the survival of the planet	55 years +
Tourism benefits	Male, 40-54 years
To have a clean/healthy/safe environment	-
Don't know	18-24 years, Maori, Pacific, Asian, income below \$40,000, not visited DOC area in last 12 months

2.3 Importance of conservation personally

A total of 86 percent of New Zealanders said conservation is important to them personally (important or very important). Just three percent said conservation is not important and the remaining 11 percent were neutral or unsure about the importance of conservation.

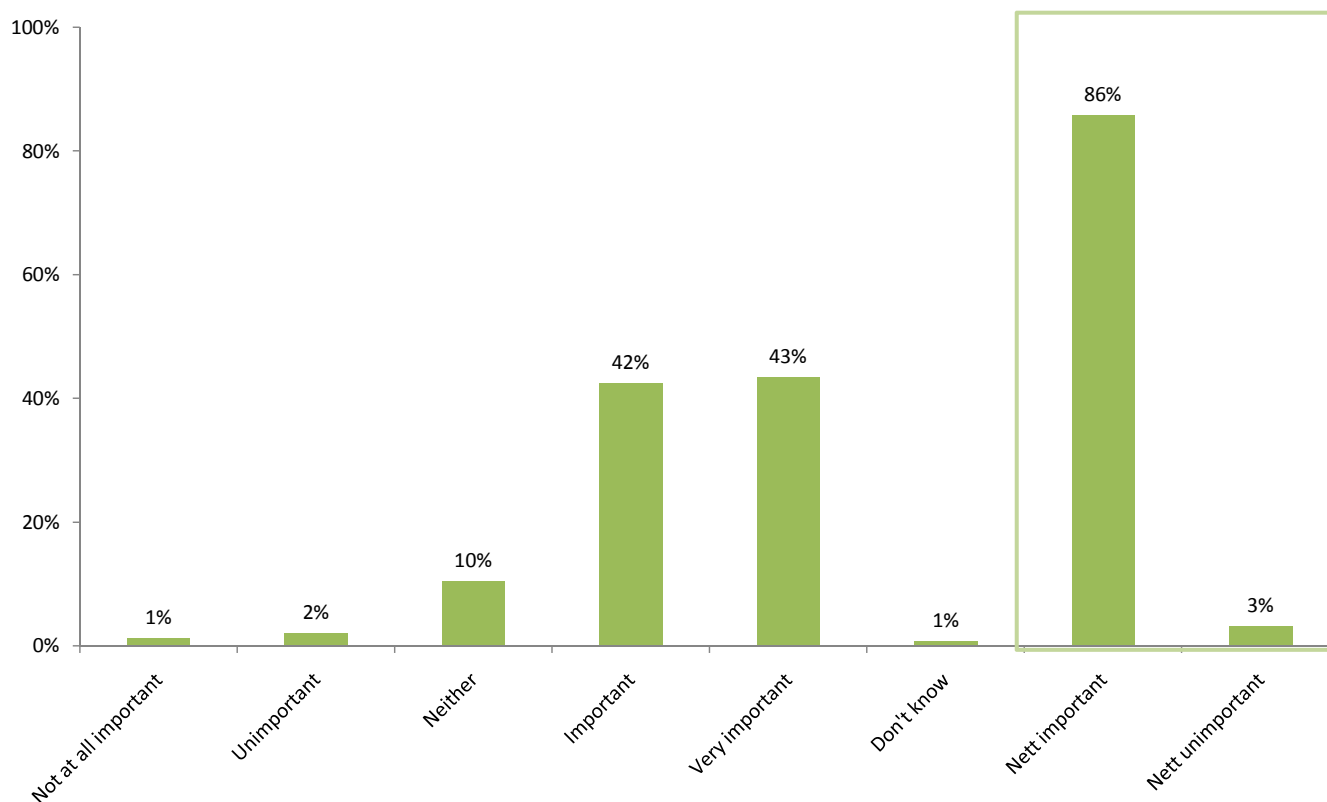
The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to say conservation **is** important.

- 55 years plus
- Income \$60,001 plus
- Favourable view of DOC
- Visited DOC area in last 12 months.

The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to say conservation is **not** important.

- 18-24 years
- Unfavourable view of DOC
- Not visited DOC area in last 12 months.

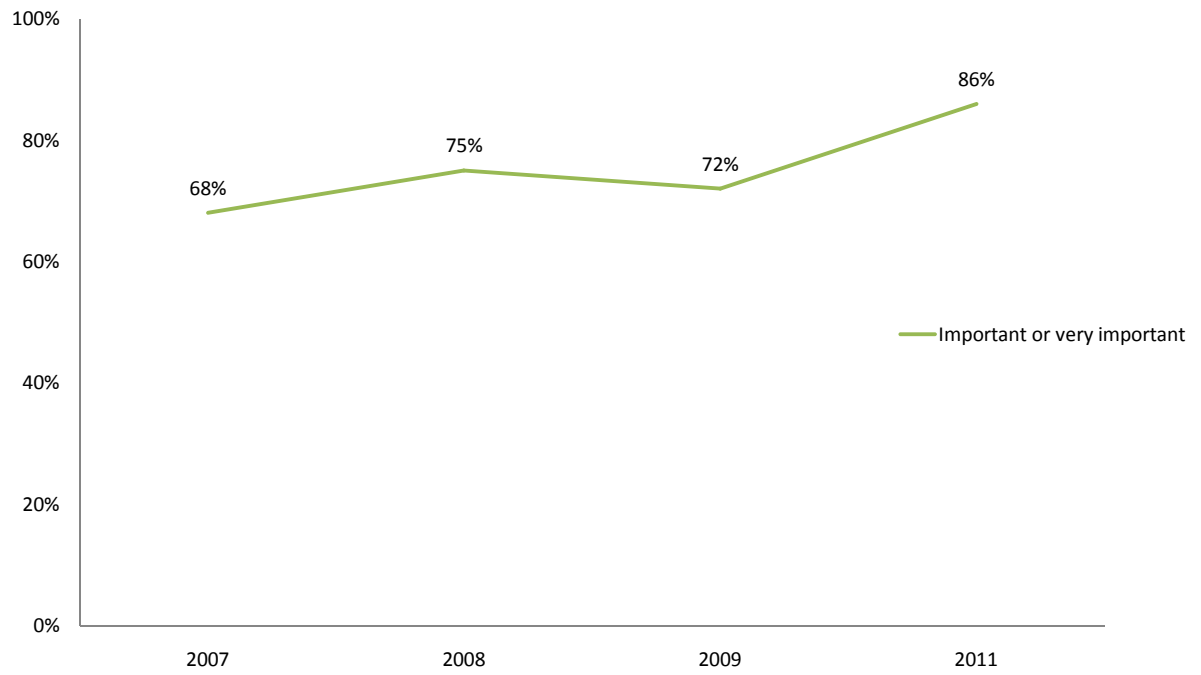
Importance of conservation personally



Base: all respondents 3614

There has been an increase in the proportion of New Zealanders that think conservation is important to them between the 2011 and 2009 surveys (however a 10 point scale was used in 2009 and a 5 point scale in 2011 which may be the reason for the change).

Importance of Conservation Change over time



2.4 Importance of conservation compared to other issues

New Zealanders were asked how important conservation is compared to other issues (education, health, law and order). The majority of New Zealanders said conservation is of equal importance (62%). Twenty-two percent said conservation is less important and 15 percent said conservation is more important.

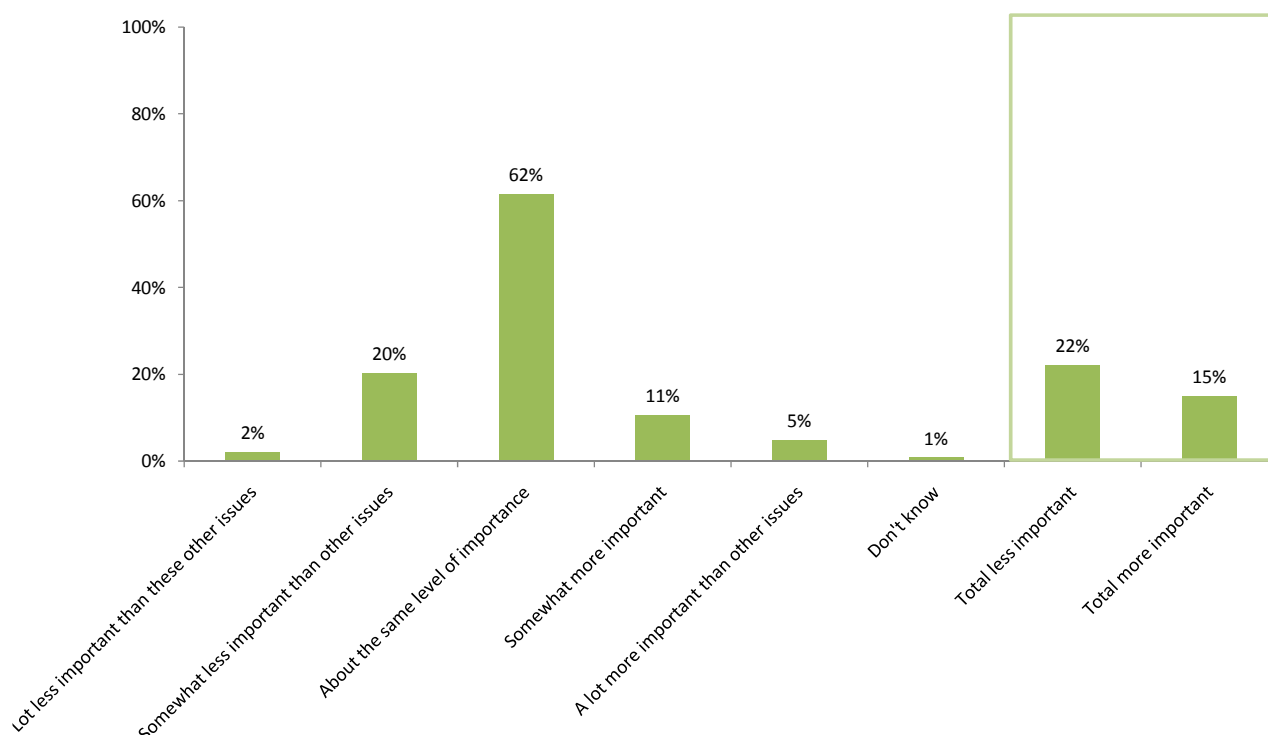
The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to say conservation is **more** important:

- Maori
- Asian
- Income below \$40,000.

The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to say conservation is **less** important:

- Income \$40,001 - \$60,000
- Small city/large town
- Unfavourable view of DOC.

Importance of conservation relative to education, health, law and order

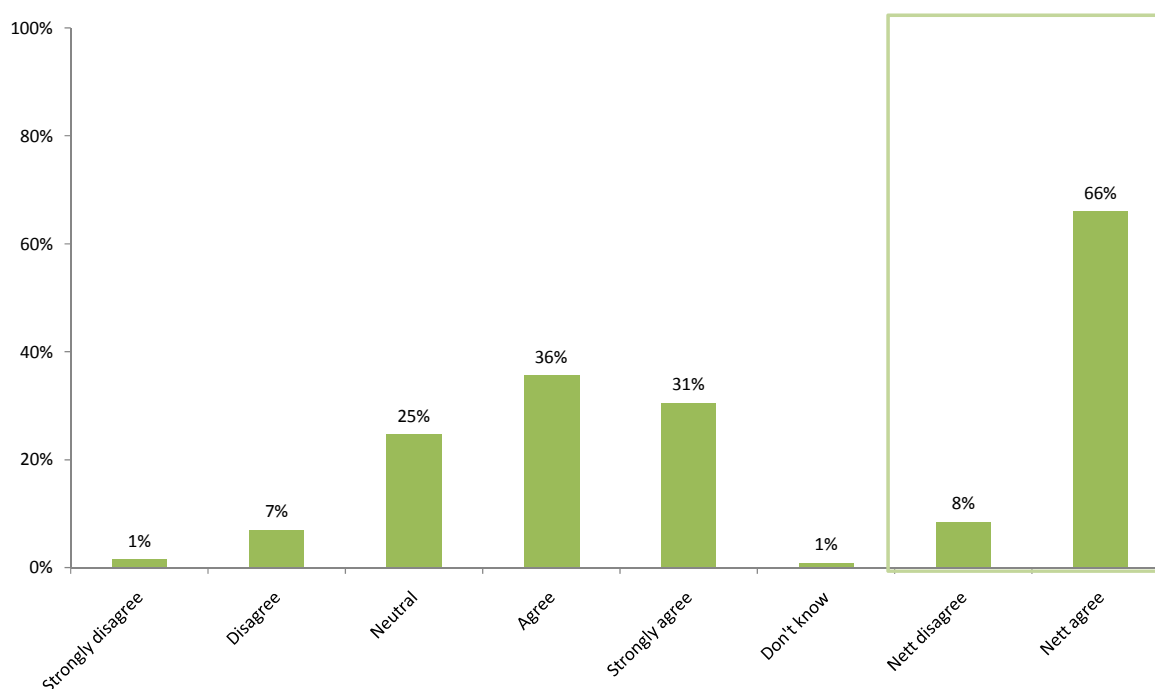


Base: all respondents 3614

2.5 Conservation is at the heart of what it means to be a New Zealander

A total of 66 percent of New Zealanders agreed *conservation is at the heart of what it means to be a New Zealander* (agree or agree strongly). Just eight percent disagreed and the remaining 26 percent were neutral or unsure.

Conservation is at the heart of what it means to be a New Zealander



Base: all respondents 3614

The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to **agree**.

- Female
- 55 years +
- Pacific
- Income below \$40,000
- Favourable view of DOC
- Visited DOC area in last 12 months.

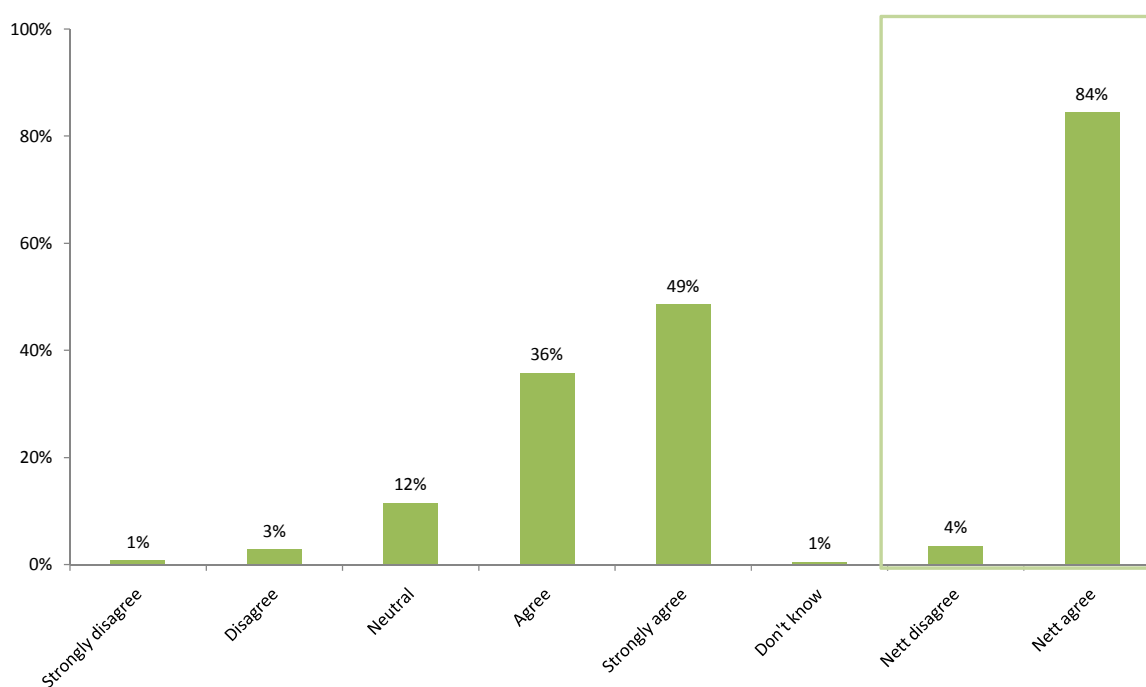
The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to **disagree**.

- Male
- Unfavourable view of DOC
- Not visited DOC area in last 12 months.

2.6 Conservation of New Zealand’s natural environment is important to me

A total of 84 percent of New Zealanders agreed *conservation of New Zealand’s natural environment is important to me* (agree or agree strongly). Just four percent disagreed and the remaining 12 percent were neutral or unsure.

Conservation of New Zealand’s natural environment is important to me



Base: all respondents 3614

The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to **agree**.

- Favourable view of DOC
- Visited DOC area in last 12 months.

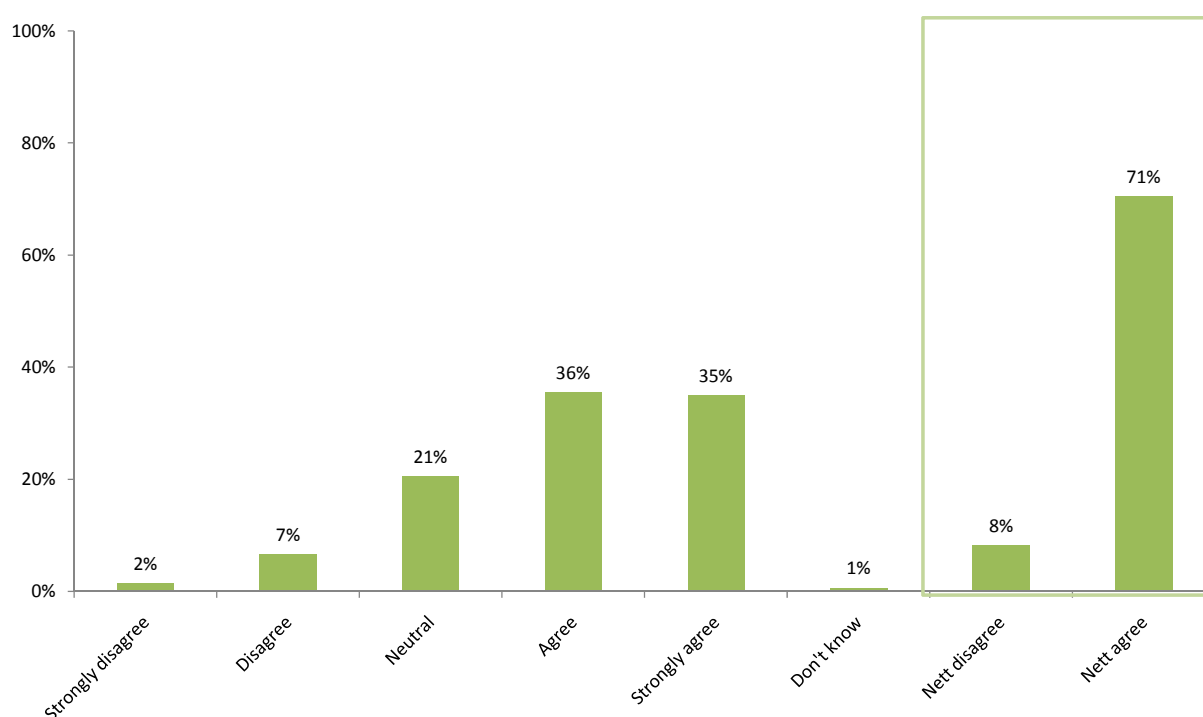
The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to **disagree**.

- Unfavourable view of DOC
- Not visited DOC area in last 12 months.

2.7 I encourage other people to care about and conserve natural resources

A total of 71 percent of New Zealanders agreed with the statement *I encourage other people to care about and conserve natural resources* (agree or agree strongly). Just eight percent disagreed and the remaining 21 percent were neutral or unsure.

I encourage other people to care about and conserve natural resources



Base: all respondents 3614

The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to **agree**.

- Pacific
- Small town
- Rural
- Favourable view of DOC
- Visited DOC area in last 12 months.

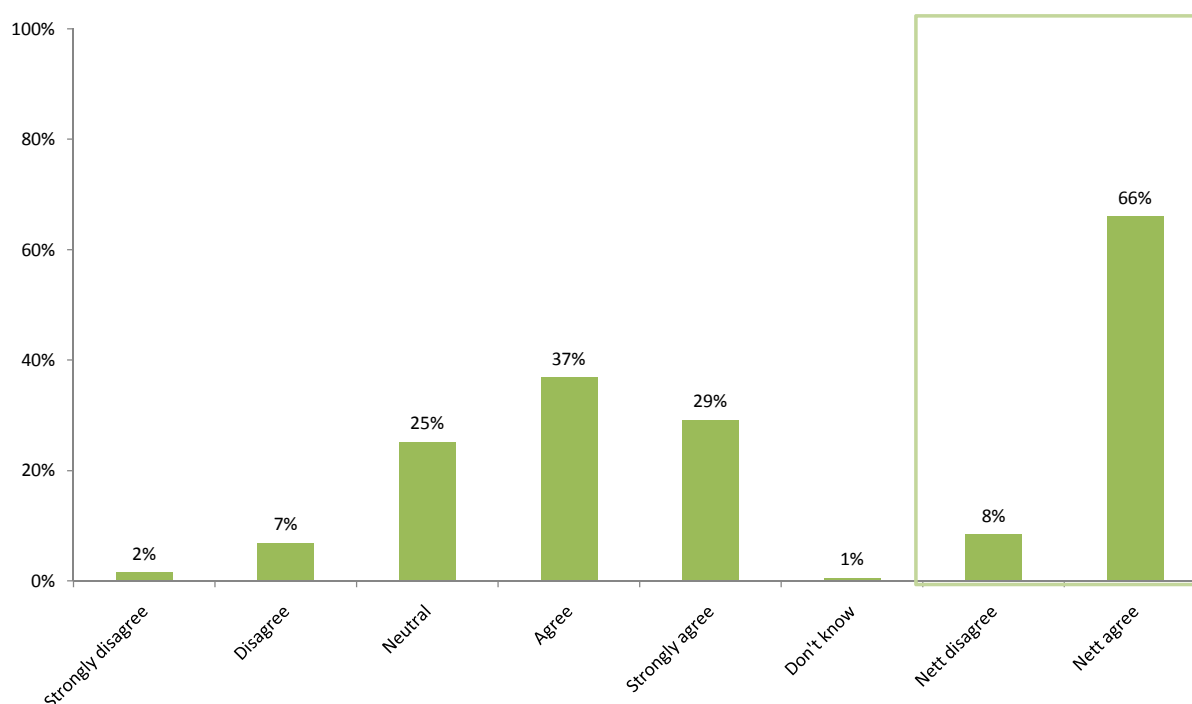
The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to **disagree**.

- Unfavourable view of DOC
- Not visited DOC area in last 12 months.

2.8 Conservation is important in my life

A total of 66 percent of New Zealanders agreed *conservation is important in my life* (agree or agree strongly). Just eight percent disagreed and the remaining 26 percent were neutral or unsure.

Conservation is important in my life



Base: all respondents 3614

The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to **agree**.

- 40 years +
- Favourable view of DOC
- Visited DOC area in last 12 months.

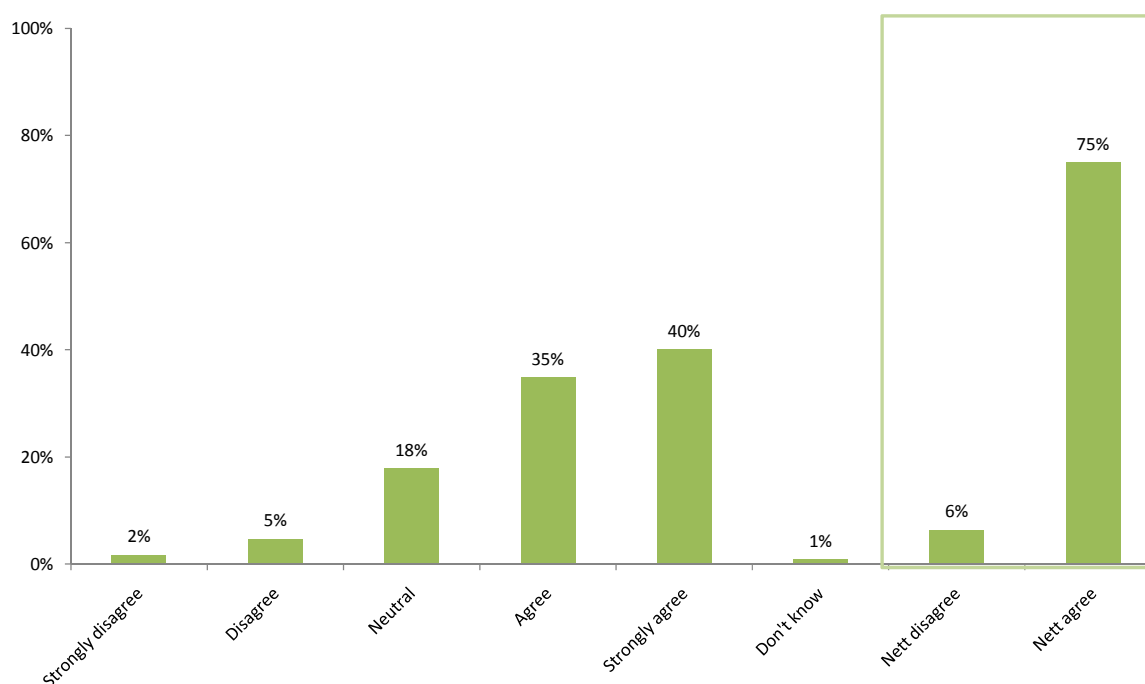
The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to **disagree**.

- 18-24 years
- Unfavourable view of DOC
- Not visited DOC area in last 12 months.

2.9 Conservation should be considered in all key decisions about New Zealand's future

A total of 75 percent of New Zealanders agreed *conservation should be considered in all key decisions about New Zealand's future* (agree or agree strongly). Just six percent disagreed and the remaining 19 percent were neutral or unsure.

Conservation should be considered in all key decisions about New Zealand's future



Base: all respondents 3614

The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to **agree**.

- Female
- Pacific
- Favourable view of DOC
- Visited DOC area in last 12 months.

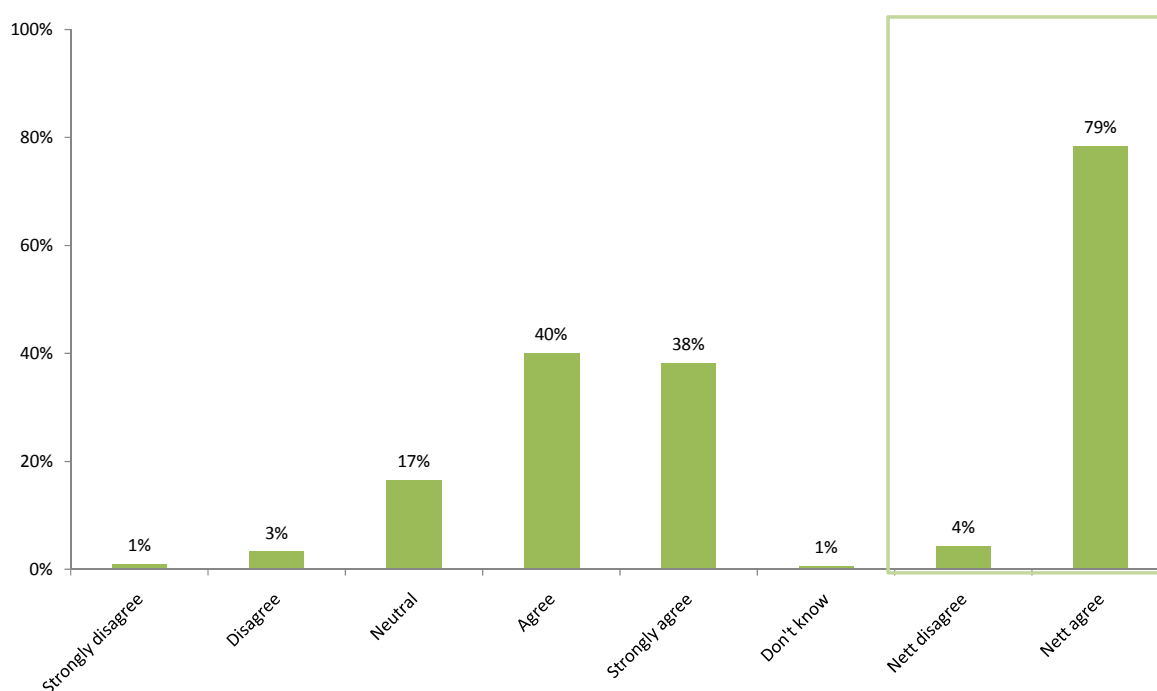
The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to **disagree**.

- Male
- Unfavourable view of DOC.

2.10 Spending money on conservation is a good investment in the prosperity and wellbeing of all New Zealanders

A total of 79 percent of New Zealanders agreed *spending money on conservation is a good investment in the prosperity and wellbeing of all New Zealanders* (agree or agree strongly). Just four percent disagreed and the remaining 17 percent were neutral or unsure.

Spending money on conservation is a good investment in the prosperity and wellbeing of all New Zealanders



Base: all respondents 3614

The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to **agree**.

- Favourable view of DOC
- Visited DOC area in last 12 months.

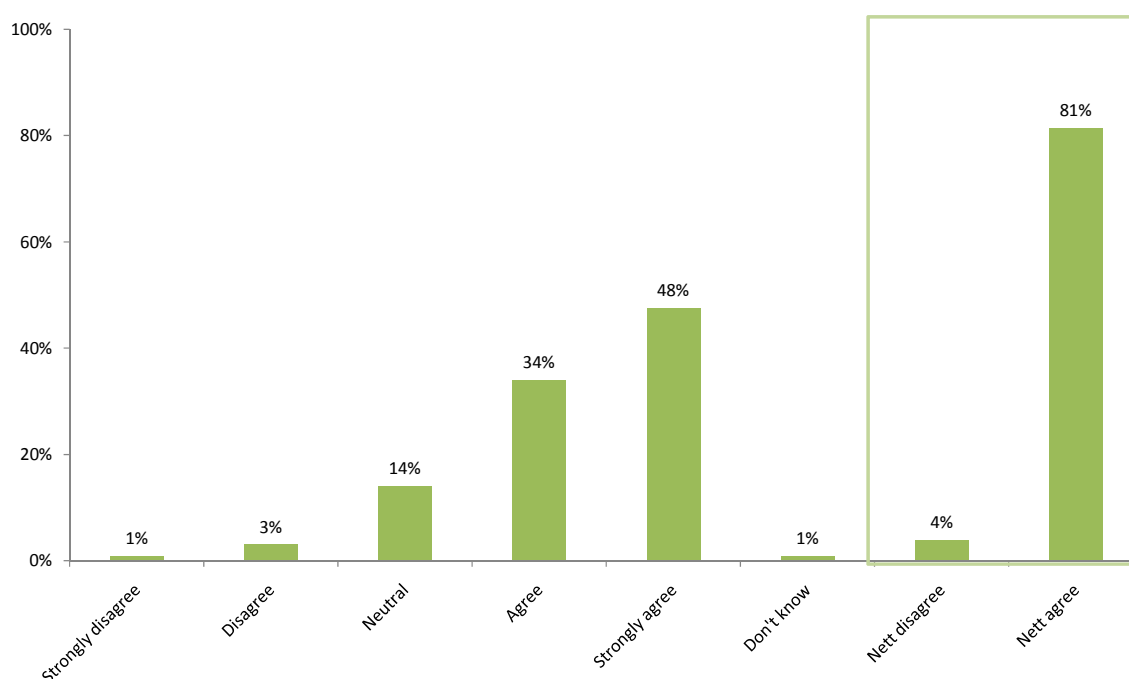
The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to **disagree**.

- Unfavourable view of DOC
- Not visited DOC area in last 12 months.

2.11 I actively enjoy New Zealand’s healthy environment, recreation opportunities and history

A total of 81 percent of New Zealanders agreed *I actively enjoy New Zealand’s healthy environment, recreation opportunities and history* (agree or agree strongly). Just four percent disagreed and the remaining 15 percent were neutral or unsure.

I actively enjoy New Zealand’s healthy environment, recreation opportunities and history



Base: all respondents 3614

The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to **agree**.

- Small town
- Favourable view of DOC
- Visited DOC area in last 12 months.

The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to **disagree**.

- Unfavourable view of DOC
- Not visited DOC area in last 12 months.

2.12 Contribution to conservation

The majority of New Zealanders (79%) have not contributed to conservation¹ in the last 12 months. Twenty-one percent said they have contributed to conservation.

The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to say they **have** contributed to conservation:

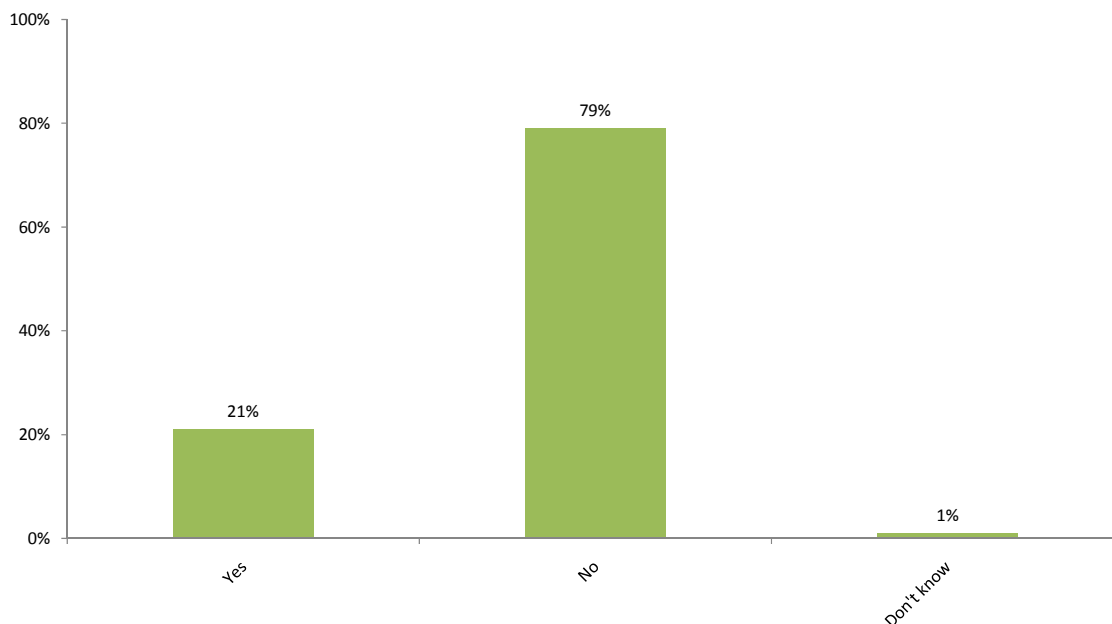
- 40-54 years
- Maori
- Income \$60,001 +
- Small town
- Rural
- Favourable view of DOC
- Visited DOC area in last 12 months.

The following groups were statistically significantly more likely to say they have **not** contributed to conservation:

- 18-24 years
- Small city/large town
- Not visited DOC area in the last 12 months.

¹ For instance have you: taken part in a tree planting project, helped restore a historic building or helped build a track?

Last 12 months actively contributed to conservation in New Zealand



Base: all respondents 3614

2.13 Donating money to a conservation cause

Two-thirds of New Zealanders (66%) have not donated money for a conservation cause in the last 12 months. Thirty percent have donated money for a conservation cause in the last 12 months.

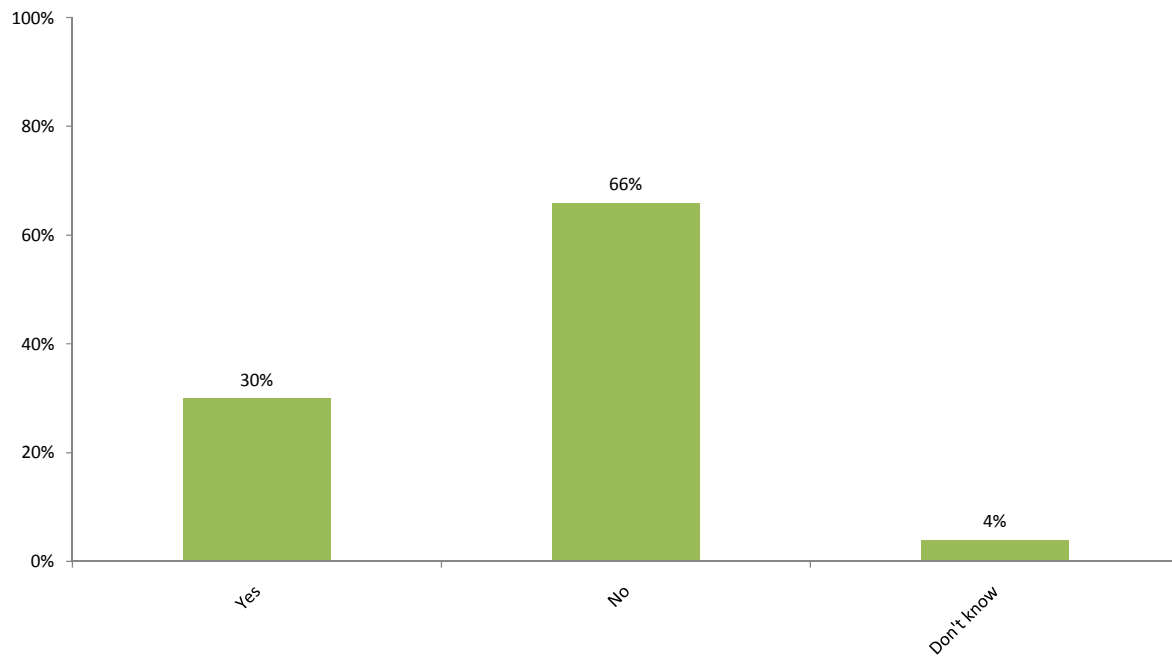
The following groups were statistically significantly **more** likely to donate money for a conservation cause:

- 55 years plus
- Favourable view of DOC
- Visited DOC area in last 12 months.

The following groups were statistically significantly **less** likely to donate money for a conservation cause:

- Male
- Small city/large town
- Not visited a DOC area in the last 12 months.

Last 12 months donated money for a conservation cause



Base: all respondents 3614

One third of New Zealanders (33%) said they were likely to donate money for a conservation cause in the next 12 months. Twenty-seven percent said they were unlikely to donate money for a conservation cause. The remaining 40 percent said they may donate or did not know if they would donate.

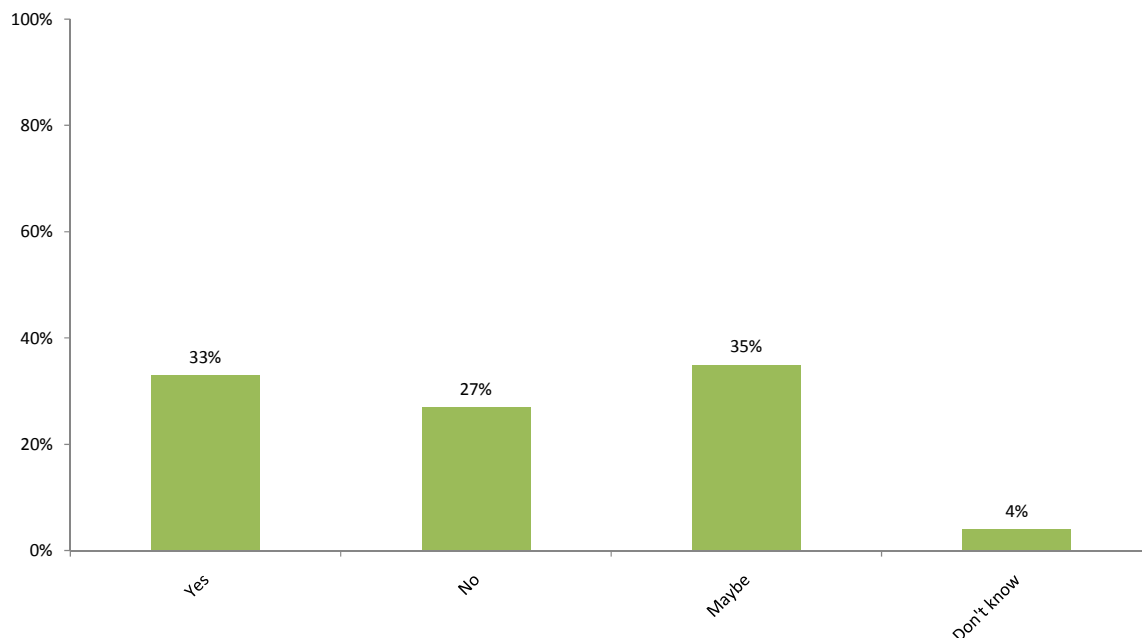
The following groups were statistically significantly **more** likely to donate money for a conservation cause in the next 12 months:

- 40-54 years
- Other ethnicities (not Pakeha, Maori, Pacific or Asian)
- Income \$60,001 +
- Favourable view of DOC
- Visited DOC area in last 12 months.

The following groups were statistically significantly less likely to donate money for a conservation cause in the next 12 months:

- Male
- Small town
- Unfavourable view of DOC
- Not visited DOC area in last 12 months.

Next 12 months likely to donate money for a conservation cause



Base: all respondents 3614

3.0 Conclusions

At a high level the majority of New Zealanders agreed conservation is important. Most New Zealanders (84% - 86%) agreed *conservation is important to them personally* and that *the conservation of New Zealand's natural environment is important to me*. Most New Zealanders had not however taken action, less than a third had contributed to a conservation cause in the last 12 months or donated money for a conservation cause in the last 12 months and similarly only a third were likely to donate to a conservation cause in the next 12 months.

Some insight into the gap between beliefs and action was shown by the lower levels (around two-thirds) of agreement with statements about conservation being as important as other issues (education, health, law and order and the statement *conservation is important in my life*). This research did not determine the relative importance of these, or other, factors on driving propensity to contribute to conservation. This may be a useful area to explore in future research.

There were not always clear patterns in the types of people who were more likely to consider conservation to be important. At a high level (importance of conservation personally) support for conservation appeared to be higher with: older people (55 years +), people with household incomes in the top bands (\$60,000 +). This was quite different for the *relative* importance of conservation. Support for conservation as more important than other issues was higher with Maori, Asian and people with household incomes below \$40,000.

There was some consistency in the types of people who agreed with the detailed statements about conservation, the following people were more likely to agree with at least two of the statements: older people, Pacific, and female.

There was also some consistency in the types of people who had taken action or were willing to take action for conservation. Middle aged people (40-54 years) and people in the higher income bands were more likely to have actively contributed to conservation and to be more likely to donate to conservation.

There was a clear relationship between perceptions of conservation and attitudes towards DOC and propensity to visit DOC areas. Those with positive views of conservation were more likely to have a favourable view of DOC and to have visited a DOC area in the last 12 months.

People from small towns and rural areas stood out as different from the main sample in several areas – they were more likely to: *agree I encourage other people to care about and conserve natural resources, agree I actively enjoy New Zealand's healthy environment, recreation opportunities and history* and say they have actively contributed to conservation in New Zealand in the last 12 months.

4.0 Methodology

The Department of Conservation (DOC) undertook a survey of adult New Zealanders (The National Survey) in June 2011. The National Survey replaced a range of independent general public surveys undertaken by DOC. The intention of the National Survey was to consolidate surveying of the general public for increased efficiency and improved methodological rigour. The launch of the National Survey also provided an opportunity for DOC to survey the general public on topical issues and areas of strategic focus, including the Destination Management Framework, for DOC.

The National Survey was a survey of the adult population (18 years plus) of New Zealand. A total of 3,614 people were interviewed for the survey. The primary methodology was telephone (sample of 2,224) and the secondary methodology was online (sample of 1,390). The telephone sample was sourced via a random sample of people listed on the Electoral Roll. The online sample was sourced from the Colmar Brunton online panel.

The survey sample was stratified and then post weighted to match the actual population distribution (2006 Census) by:

- 1) Ethnicity (at a Conservancy level)
- 2) Interlocking age and gender² (at a Conservancy level).

The sample included a minimum of 270 people in each Conservancy – to allow for Conservancy level analysis. In the total sample the Conservancy data was weighted to match the actual population distribution (2006 Census). The sample profile follows overleaf.

Results shown in this report as statistically significant are significantly higher at the 95 percent confidence interval or higher and where the total is n=30 or greater. The following factors are reported on for statistical significance:

- Gender
- Age
- Ethnicity
- Household income
- Living area (e.g. big city/rural)
- View of DOC (excluded when inter-related)
- Visited DOC area (defined by respondent) in last 12 months (excluded when inter-related).

This report focuses on the questions respondents were asked about their attitude to conservation.

² For each Conservancy the population in each age group of both males and females was calculated as a proportion of the total population. The proportions were then applied to the total sample to determine target quotas for both males and females by age group for each Conservancy.

Sample Profile
(unweighted numbers and weighted %)

Gender	n=	%	Area	n=	%
Male	1,678	48%	Northland	317	4%
Female	1,936	52%	Auckland	332	32%
Age			Waikato	314	9%
24 years or younger	405	12%	Bay of Plenty	337	7%
25-39 years	937	28%	Tongariro/Whanganui/Taranaki	323	8%
40-54 years	1,012	28%	Wellington/Hawke's Bay	351	16%
55 years plus	1,247	31%	Nelson/Marlborough	344	3%
Refused	13	1%	West Coast	270	1%
Ethnicity (multiple response possible)			Canterbury	341	13%
Pakeha	3,278	88%	Otago	347	5%
Maori	438	11%	Southland	325	2%
Pacific	79	3%	Household income before tax		
Asian	107	4%	\$40,000 or less	844	20%
Other	131	5%	\$40,001-\$60,001	637	16%
Refused	-	1%	\$60,001 or more	1,671	51%
Location			Refused/DK	462	12%
Big city	951	47%			
Small city/large town	1,322	27%			
Small town	905	16%			
Rural	425	9%			

