

# ACE for Wildlife Network™ Member & Affiliate Survey

2024 Summary of Results



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# Survey Overview

This year's ACE for Wildlife Network Member and Affiliate Survey was sent to approximately 535 email addresses during October and November 2024. One hundred forty-four completed responses were received (27% response rate).

The survey was co-designed by the Advancing Empathy and Evaluation & Impact teams to better understand the ACE for Wildlife Network from the perspective of two general evaluation questions:

## 1 What is the overall state of the Network with regards to the following areas...

- Partner and Affiliate organization representation
- Member role within organizations
- Communication about empathy practices and projects internally and externally
- Perceived organizational investment in empathy
- Use of empathy related practices within organizations

## 2 To what extent are Network members aware of (and using) collaboratively developed resources?

- Network Website
- Network Directory
- Network Welcome Guide
- Empathy Training Toolkit
- Conservation Action Toolkit
- Pollinator Action Toolkit
- Inclusive Conservation Resource List
- Starting a DEAI Committee Resource Tool
- Committee Updates in monthly Newsletters

Throughout this report, “Members” are those who work or volunteer at a Network Partner organizations and “Affiliates” are individuals who are not associated with a current Network Partner, but are involved or interested in the Network. Survey results detailed on the following pages include comparative results for certain variables of interest, such as differences between Affiliates and Members. Differences that were statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) are noted alongside results where observed, typically by an asterisk.

Questions about this report may be directed to Woodland Park Zoo's [Evaluation & Impact team](#).



# Results Highlights

## NETWORK AFFILIATION AND ROLES

About three-quarters of survey respondents were from Network Partner Organizations (71%) and nearly all worked at a zoo or aquarium (92%). A few were consultants (1%), academic partners (1%), or volunteers at zoos/aquariums (1%). Four percent said “other” and wrote in “nature center”, “science museum”, “conservation org/NGO”, and “professional association (Visitor Studies Association)”. We received at least one response from 24 of 27 Partner organizations and representatives of 39 additional organizations, primarily zoos or aquariums.

About three-quarters (74%) worked in education roles within their organizations. About 1 in 5 served in Animal Care (22%), A variety of other roles were represented by 17% or fewer.

## OVERALL EXPERIENCE IN THE NETWORK

Overall Network experience was strong (67% gave an Excellent or Outstanding rating of experience quality). Members (those from Partner orgs) were more likely give higher experience ratings than Affiliates (those from Non-Partner orgs). The majority felt the Network was valuable to them professionally (56% Very/Extremely valuable) and most (72%) felt Very or Extremely welcome to share their learning with the Network.

Respondents participated in the Network in a variety of ways. The majority read the Empathy Matters Newsletter (84%), attended learning groups or events (60%), read posts on the discussion board (60%), and accessed resources on the website (57%). Fewer presented at events (12%) or participated in discussion board posts (10%).

Members were more likely than Affiliates to have participated in a learning group or other Network event (66% and 45%, respectively).

Nearly half (44%) said they’d like to *increase* their level of participation in the new year. Affiliates were more likely to say they’d like to increase their participation (63%) compared to Members (37%). Participating in committees and attending meetings/events were the two ways in which respondents said they’d like to increase their participation.

## COMMUNICATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL INVESTMENT

Most Members said they knew their ACE for Wildlife Network contact within their organizations (84%). Internal communication about empathy practices and projects was frequent and showed improvement from last year’s survey. Two-thirds (66%) said that communications about empathy was Frequent of Very frequent, an improvement from last year’s result (56%). Over half (56%) said they participated in empathy-related trainings at their org in 2024, a decrease from last year’s results (80%).

Nearly all respondents felt that their leadership was at least Moderately supportive of their Network involvement (90%). Members were more likely than Affiliates to have enthusiastic support from their leaders for Network involvement. Those in Animal Care roles felt their leadership was *less* supportive of their involvement than those not in Animal Care roles.

Perceived investment in empathy-related practices and projects among leadership improved from last year’s result. 55% of respondents felt their leadership was either Very or Extremely invested this year, up



# Results Highlights

10 percentage points from last year's 45%. Members and those who had empathy training in the past year were significantly more likely to believe their leadership had high investment in empathy practices and projects.

## USE OF EMPATHY PRACTICES

Just over three-quarters (78%) said they used empathy practices in their work either Frequently or Very frequently, a slight increase from last year's 74%. Members and those who had training in the past year were more likely to have used practices than Affiliates and those who did not have training in the past year. Practice use among work role was similar however those in Conservation (25%), Evaluation (30%), and Development (38%) roles were less likely to use practices Frequently or Very frequently.

All but one of the listed empathy practices were used intentionally by more than half of respondents within the past year. "Providing opportunities to practice caring actions toward animals" was selected by 44% of respondents. "Sharing how orgs care for animals", "using individual animal names", "informing about animal needs in the wild", and "sharing actions people can take to help animals in the wild" were each selected by more than 90% of respondents.

Practice use between Members and Affiliates was similar. Members were slightly more likely to "use critical anthropomorphism" and to "provide opportunities for guest to practice caring actions toward animals". Whether or not a respondent had training in the past year was more significantly associated with empathy-related practice use. For those with

training, all practices were selected by more than half with significant differences in four of the practices between those with and without training including; "Using individual animal names", "drawing attention to how animals have agency", "using critical anthropomorphism", and "providing opportunities for guests to directly interact with animals". Not surprisingly, those in education roles were more likely to use a variety of practices than those in other roles.

Most felt that empathy-related practices were relevant to their roles (81% Very/Extremely relevant). Those in Development were less likely to believe that practices had high relevance for their job role (38% Very/Extremely relevant).

## NETWORK RESOURCES AWARENESS & ENGAGEMENT

The Newsletter and Resource library were 'go-to' sources for respondents when they seek Network resources (58% and 55%, respectively). Word-of-mouth recommendations from colleagues at other orgs and committee members were less selected sources (17% and 9%, respectively). Members and Affiliates used sources similarly though Members were more likely to ask a colleague at their organization than Affiliates (45% and 14%, respectively).

Awareness of resources improved from last year's survey result across all listed resources. Largest increases in awareness were seen for the Network Welcome Guide (30 percentage point increase), Conservation Action Toolkit (17 pp increase), and the Empathy Training Toolkit (14 pp increase). Most respondents (80%) said they had used at least one of the resources listed on the survey.



# Results Highlights

The ACE for Wildlife Network website was most used (70%). The empathy training toolkit was used by 41% and Committee updates in newsletter were used by 33%. Other resources were used by a quarter or fewer. Resources with lower awareness included the Inclusive Conservation Resource List (69% not aware) and Starting a DEAI Committee Resource Tool (61%).

Respondents who used each of the resources generally believed they were useful. For all but two, over half gave Very/Extremely useful ratings. Those who used the Pollinator Action Toolkit and Committee updates in newsletters were more moderate in their ratings of usefulness. Of the resources asked about on last year's survey and this year's survey, we saw notable improvements in Very/Extremely useful ratings for the Network Welcome Guide (31 pp increase), Empathy Training Toolkit (26 pp increase), and Conservation Action Toolkit (19 pp increase). From website analytics, the Empathy Training Toolkit had the most downloads this year (78) and the 'Starting a DEAI Committee' resource tool had the fewest downloads (1).

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCE SUGGESTIONS

Respondents were asked generally if they had suggestions for resource updates or additions. A few noted they'd like to have more training in how to navigate and access resources from the website (including an overview of what's available). Others felt adding examples or case studies to the Toolkits and resources of how other orgs have used them could be beneficial. Some offered suggestions for increasing resource awareness through highlighting what's available in monthly newsletters. A couple mentioned looking for new evaluation-related materials for

specific contexts (e.g., Ambassador Animals). Another comment generally was hoping there would be more efforts toward documenting the evidence-base for empathy-related practices in our field.

## APPRECIATION AND FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Many respondents left warm words of appreciation and gratitude for the Network, many highlighting how their involvement has enhanced their career and provided a like-minded professional community. A few offered additional feedback. Consider possible experience-related differences (actual or perceived) between those who have more and less experience within the Network. A respondent noted, "I think with every group it can be clicky...". Another respondent wanted the team to continue to be mindful of all of the "asks" on their time noting, "it doesn't seem like the impact of the things you ask us to do is really understood...". Finally, one respondent felt they'd like to see more evidence for empathy-related practices in general and more articulation of the ways in which this work may be novel, or how it builds on previous work and practices professionals in the zoo and aquarium field have long been engaged in.

## ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS OF INTEREST

This year's survey included two additional questions of interest. The DEAI Committee sought ideas and feedback for what Network participants hoped to see in the new year. High-level themes included providing more resources for those in geographic areas less amenable to DEAI efforts, more examples/case studies of DEAI in action, more professional development and resources for specific communities (neurodiversity, etc.), and resources that not only provide theoretical

support but tactical support through actionable templates, strategies, and frameworks that have worked for other organizations.

Finally, respondents provided comments about unique or interesting ways they've used empathy-practices in their work this year. Comments were varied and mentioned how empathy practices were infused in new programs, exhibit elements, guest interactions and staff/volunteer training materials. Others talked about how empathy practices have allowed them to connect with audiences and gain strategic buy-in for empathy across their organizations with donors and leadership.



Zoological Society of Milwaukee

# Progress Toward Key Outcomes

The Member & Affiliate Survey is an annual monitoring tool used, in part, to assess progress toward select Network outcomes (see [Outcome Map](#)). Outcomes addressed in this survey are listed below alongside evidence of progress as noted in survey results for 2024.



Progress Made



More information needed



Opportunity or Challenge

Outcome	Progress	Survey-Based Evidence
<b>Members and Affiliates are aware of resources to implement empathy-based practices in their own work.</b>		Resources increased among Network participants from 2023 to 2024. Most notable increase for the Network Welcome Guide (30-pp increase) and Conservation Action Toolkit.
<b>Members and Affiliates increasingly use ACE for Wildlife Network resources in their work.</b>		Resource usage improved for most of those listed consistently on the 2023 and 2024 survey. Most for the Network Website (24-pp increase). Empathy Training Toolkit also improved notably (14-pp increase).
<b>Members and Affiliates feel empowered to make change with their own organization.</b>		Not specifically measured. Opportunity for discussion or outcome refinement.
<b>Members and Affiliates express increased buy-in to using empathy practices in their work at their institutions.</b>		Higher perceived investment by leaders from 2023 to 2024 (10-pp increase).
<b>Members and Affiliates view the Network as relevant to their role.</b>		81% said empathy-practices were relevant to their daily role. First time asked on survey. Noting that we asked about empathy-practices, not the “Network” specifically which may be different. On perceived <i>value</i> of Network – Affiliates were less likely to provide higher ratings than Members (29% vs.66% respectively).
<b>Members, Affiliates, and volunteers implement empathy practices in their roles at their institutions.</b>		Empathy practices were used widely among all respondents. More-so by Members than Affiliates. Volunteer roles (not necessarily volunteers) were most likely to report using practices in their daily roles.
<b>Institutional decision-makers provide platforms for staff working on empathy to share out to other staff members through updates, lunch and learns, etc.</b>		Internal communications about empathy practices/projects was high (10-pp increase from last year). Perceived investment in empathy was high among leaders Participation in empathy-related training in the past 12-months decreased in 2024 - this isn't necessarily indicative of leaders not providing platforms for staff to share though.
<b>Institutional decision-makers allow staff time and space to participate in the Network in a next-level manner (e.g. serve on a committee).</b>		Generally, high support among leaders for staff involvement in the Network.(60% Very/Extremely supportive). More support for Members than Affiliates. Lowest support reported by those in animal care roles.
<b>Non-Partner AZA organizations feel they can contribute their organizations’ perspective and learning about empathy with the Network after joining.</b>		Participants generally felt welcome to share opinions and perspectives with the Network at-large (72% Very/Extremely), though Affiliates were less likely than Members.

# Recommendations

## **Continue to discuss and refine our collective understanding of what constitutes an “empathy-practice” vs. “strategy or tactic”.**

Where are there opportunities for helping participants understand how to implement strategies that are aligned to empathy best practices. When asked in an open-ended way, participants talked about strategies or practices with regard empathy practices in a variety of ways – none were incorrect, but is there value in more standardization or a more concrete shared understanding among Network participants?

**Encourage ways for Network Members to participate in or lead empathy-related trainings consistently throughout the year.** We saw more frequent empathy practice use among respondents who said they had participated in training within the past year (although fewer respondents said they had participated in trainings on the 2024 survey compared to 2023).

**Ensure resources developed by committees are done having articulated the purpose, intended audience, and inputs needed** to inform and produce documents like toolkits, lit. reviews, learning sessions, etc. Consider development of a decision matrix for new resource development.

**To the extent possible, continue thinking about ways to bridge actual or perceived “divides” between Affiliates and Members.** As funding requirements necessitate there will always likely be distinctions between Members and Affiliates, but are there ways to mitigate any perceived “importance” or “value” placed on one or the other? Affiliates were less likely to give higher rating for Network value and for feeling

around being welcomed to share opinions with the Network at-large but were notably more likely to say they want to increase their involvement in the Network. To what extent might there be additional opportunities for specifically highlighting exemplary work done by Affiliates or considering Member/Affiliate opportunities within committees, working groups, learning groups, discussions, Affiliate features, or a regular “New Here?” section in the Newsletter.

**In lieu of monthly committee updates in the Newsletter, share these updates following the three all-chair meetings.** This will reduce resource load as well allow the most important information to be shared verbally and in writing by/from the committees directly.

**Clarify and specify the role of the DEAI Committee’s work and the connections between organizational DEAI work and Empathy.** Some respondents said they were unsure of the role of DEAI within the Network. Specific understanding of how DEAI connects to empathy broadly will be beneficial as well as clarifying the roles of the Committee within the network, i.e., what their purpose is and is not.

**Consider ways to promote resources frequently and consistently throughout the year and in a variety of formats** (emails, committee mtgs, discussion posts, etc.). We see increase in resource awareness and use among those that are heavily promoted or incentivized (e.g., Inclusive Conservation Resource List in 2023’s survey). Consider adding resource features to the Newsletter, regularly reminding participants about the Welcome Guide, and front-loading event scheduling so most of the year’s events are scheduled at the start of the year and can be

promoted regularly and consistently. **When improvements/updates are made to resources or when reminding the network of existing resources, consider referencing Member/Affiliate survey results in communications**, .e.g., “We received your feedback about wanting more orientation resources, here is a resource that will help you navigate Network resources”. This can reinforce the value of their feedback and gives an opportunity to re-introduce participants of resources that already exist.

## **We identified a few opportunities for 2025 survey updates...**

- Add a question about how long they’ve been a part of the Network. In lieu of an additional question, if we have email address and join date, we can likely add this variable into analysis on the back end with a lookup table.
- Potential for specifying what level of leadership respondents are thinking of when completing survey? (Should we?)
- Include “onboarding” and the new “primer” as a resource next year in the awareness/usage question.
- Consider incentivizing site response to maximize opportunities for response from at least every Partner organization.

# Member & Affiliate Breakdown, Committee Participation, and Organizational Roles

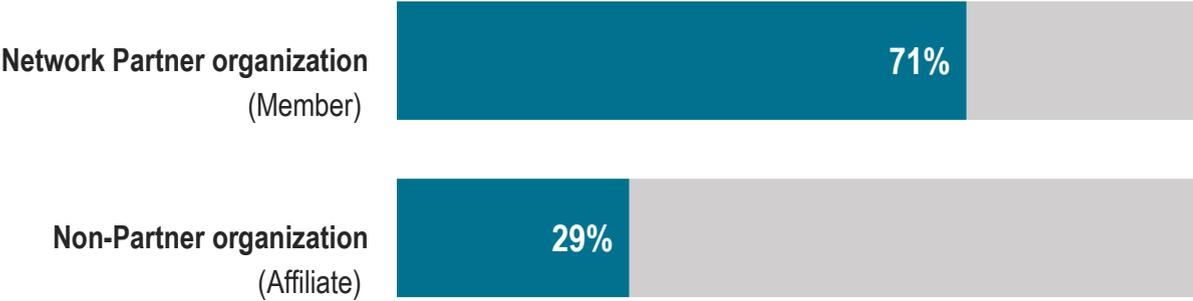
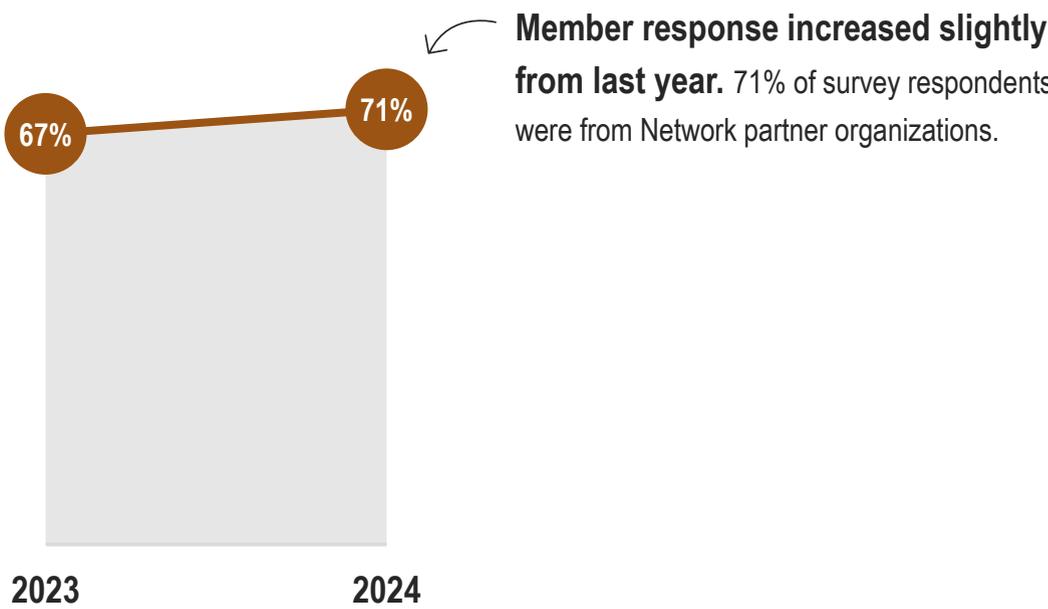


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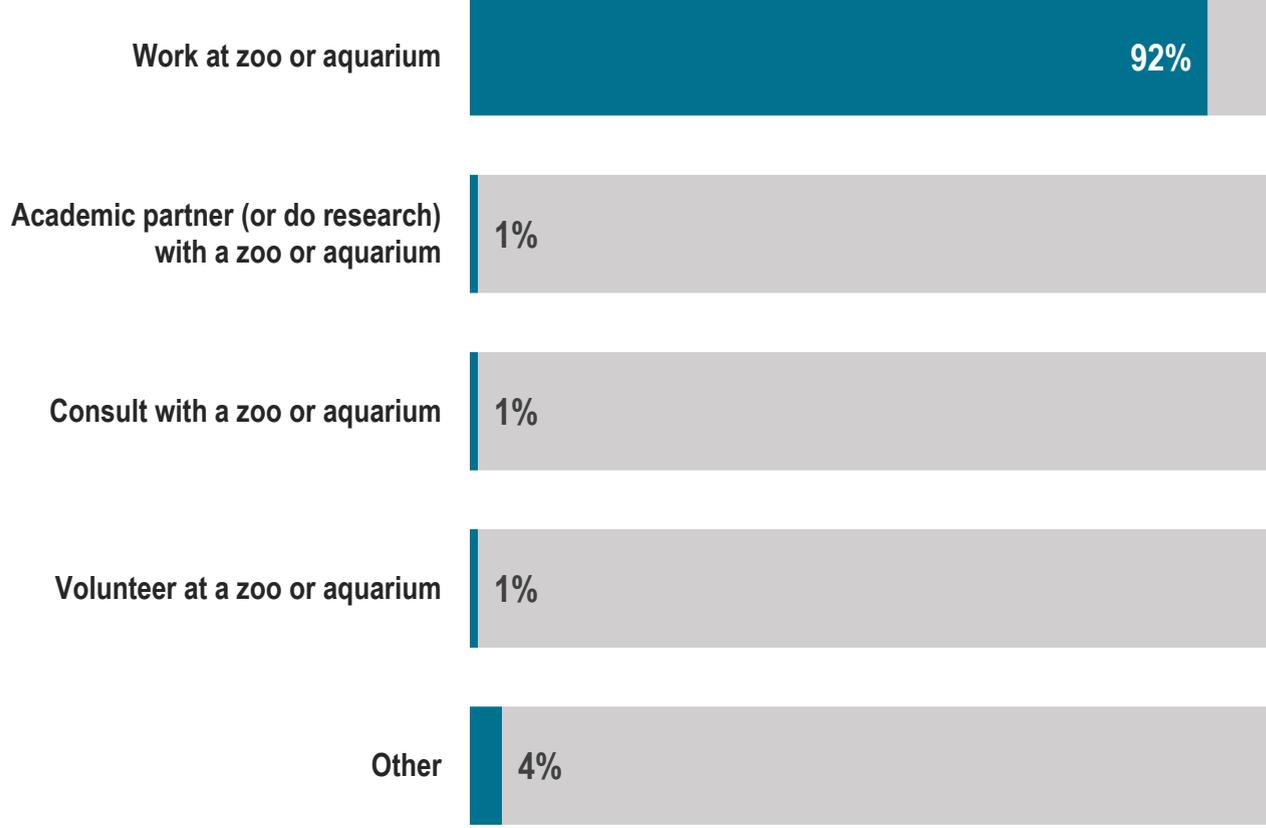
# Most survey respondents were from ACE for Wildlife Network Partner Organizations.

Just under three-quarters (71%) of respondents said they were from a Network Partner. One respondent indicated they were *not* from a Partner organization but listed Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium as their home organization. Ten others said they were “unsure” – two were from Partner organizations (Racine Zoo and San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance). Each of these responses were included in the final Partner total. One additional respondent did not provide details about their organization. **Nearly all respondents (92%) said they worked at a zoo or aquarium.** A small number of respondents were academic partners, consultants, or volunteers at zoos or aquariums. Six respondents (4%) selected “Other” and wrote in; “Nature center (2)”, “Science Museum”, “Conservation Org/NGO”, “Professional association that zoo/aquarium professionals belong to (Visitor Studies Association)”, “Former zoo/non-partner academic”.

**Note:** Throughout this report, “Member” refers to respondents who said they worked for a Network Partner Organization. “Affiliate” refers to respondents who work outside of these organizations.



Q: Is your organization an ACE for Wildlife Network Partner? (n=143)



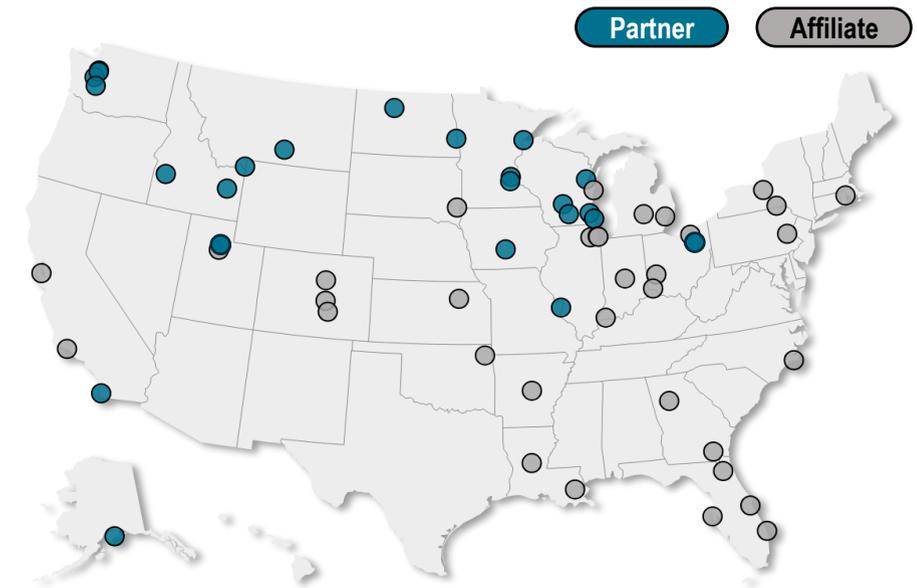
Q: Which of the following best describes your current role in the zoo and aquarium field? (n=144)

# Responses were received from 24 Network Partner organizations and 39 additional organizations.

Q: What is the name of your organization? (n=143)

Partner Organizations	#	%
Zoological Society of Milwaukee / Milwaukee County Zoo	13	13%
Woodland Park Zoo	9	9%
Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium	8	8%
Como Park Zoo & Conservatory	6	6%
Seattle Aquarium	6	6%
Utah's Hogle Zoo	6	6%
Minnesota Zoo	5	5%
Zoo Boise	5	5%
Akron Zoo	4	4%
International Crane Foundation	4	4%
Racine Zoo	4	4%
ZooMontana	4	4%
Alaska SeaLife Center	3	3%
Grizzly & Wolf Discovery Center	3	3%
Henry Vilas Zoo	3	3%
Lake Superior Zoo	3	3%
Northwest Trek Wildlife Park	3	3%
San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance	3	3%
Red River Zoo	2	2%
Saint Louis Zoo	2	2%
Blank Park Zoo	1	1%
Idaho Falls Zoo	1	1%
NEW Zoo & Adventure Park	1	1%
Roosevelt Park Zoo	1	1%

Non-Partner Organizations	#	%
Boonshoft Museum of Discovery	2	1%
Santa Barbara Zoo	2	1%
Wilder Institute / Calgary Zoo	2	1%
Alexandria Zoo	1	1%
Audubon Nature Institute	1	1%
Brevard Zoo	1	1%
Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden	1	1%
Clearwater Marine Aquarium	1	1%
Cleveland Metroparks Zoo	1	1%
CSU & Cheyenne Mountain Zoo	1	1%
Cosley Zoo	1	1%
CuriOdyssey	1	1%
Denver Zoo Conservation Alliance	1	1%
Detroit Zoological Society	1	1%
Disney	1	1%
Forest Preserves of Cook County	1	1%
Gorilla Rehabilitation and Conservation Education Center (GRACE Gorillas)	1	1%
Great Plains Zoo	1	1%
Indianapolis Zoo	1	1%
Lehigh Valley Zoo	1	1%
Lincoln Park Zoo	1	1%
Loggerhead Marinelife Center	1	1%
Loveland Living Planet Aquarium	1	1%
Mesker Park Zoo & Botanic Garden	1	1%
Museum of Discovery, Little Rock	1	1%
NC Aquarium Pine Knoll Shores	1	1%

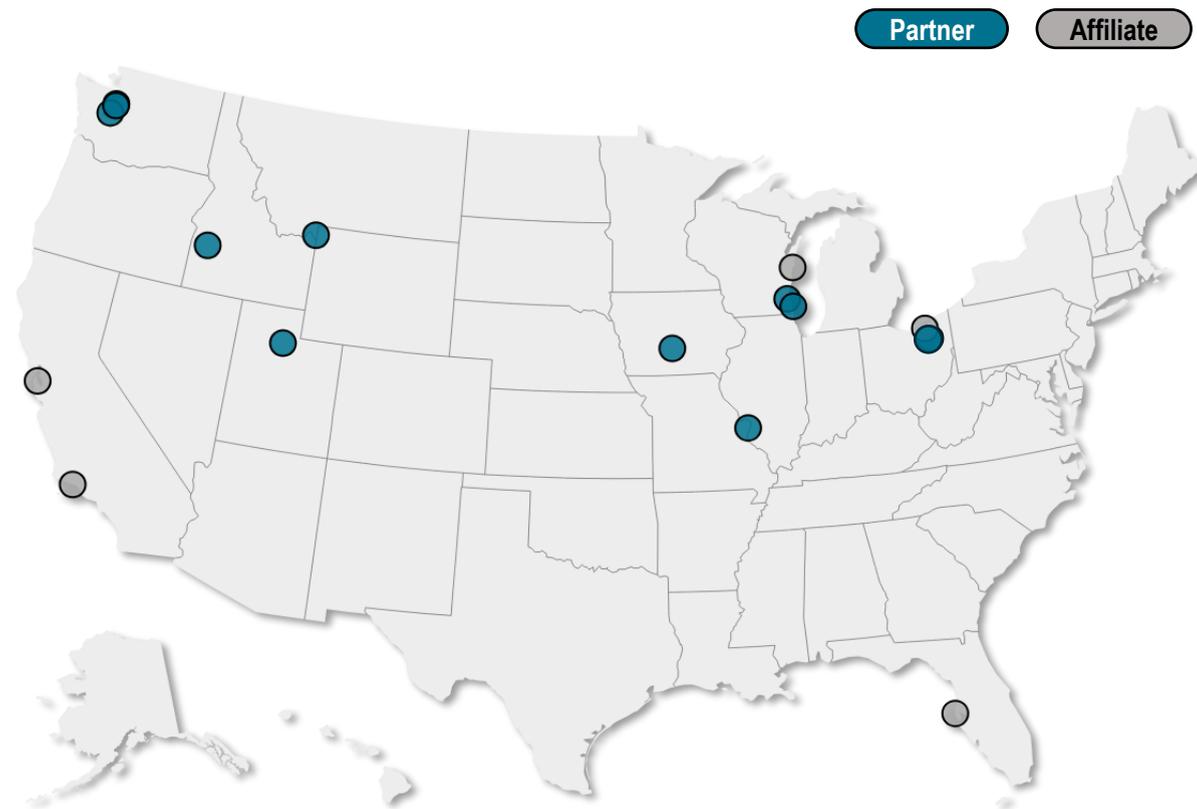


Non-Partner Organizations	#	%
Okefenokee Swamp Park	1	1%
Potter Park Zoo	1	1%
Pueblo Zoo	1	1%
Roger Williams Park Zoo	1	1%
Ross Park Zoo	1	1%
Shedd Aquarium	1	1%
Sunset Zoo	1	1%
SUNY Cayuga Community College	1	1%
TESSERE (formerly GLMV Zoos)	1	1%
The Dolphin Company (Gulf World)	1	1%
Visitor Studies Association	1	1%
Wilder Institute/ Calgary Zoo	1	1%
Zoo Atlanta	1	1%

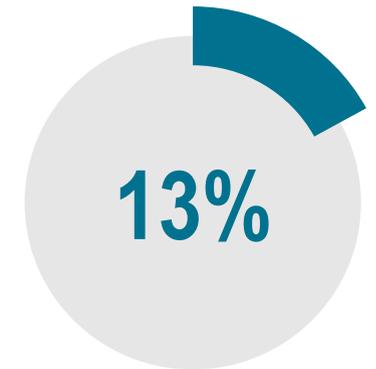
We received at least one response from 24 of the 27 current ACE for Wildlife Network Partner organizations. An additional 39 zoos, aquariums, and related organizations were represented. Not shown on the map below include Wilder Institute/Calgary Zoo (Canada), Gorilla Rehabilitation and Conservation Education Center (Democratic Republic of Congo), TESSERE (consultancy with four US locations), and the Visitor Studies Association. No responses were received from Oakland Zoo, Jacksonville Zoo, or Dakota Zoo.

# Nearly one in seven respondents (13%) said they were a part of at least one Network committee. Committee member responses were received from 15 unique organizations.

Those who said they participated in at least one Network committee represented 15 unique organizations across the country.



A smaller group of respondents (13%) said they were part of at least one Network committee. We received at least one response from a representative of each committee except for the Empathy Photo Contest Working Group (18 respondents said they were part of a Network committee).



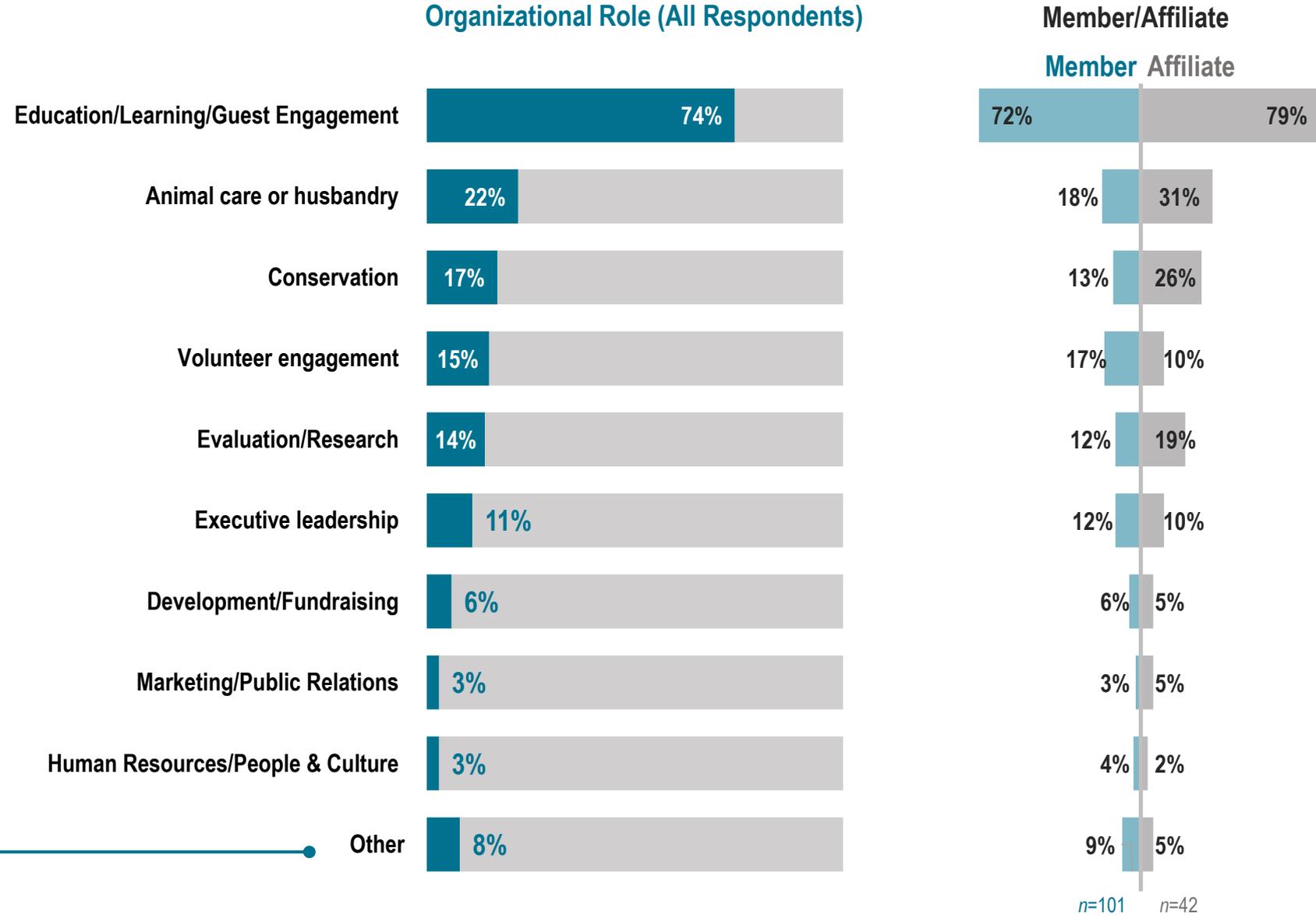
# Most survey respondents held roles in education.

About three-quarters (74%) of respondents said they worked in education roles within their organizations. Other roles were less represented, but included Animal Care or Husbandry (22%), Conservation (17%), Volunteer Engagement (15%), Evaluation/Research (14%), and Executive Leadership (11%). Other roles were mentioned by fewer than 10% of survey respondents.

Within Members and Affiliates there was an even distribution within role (none of the differences were statistically significant). Affiliates were slightly more likely to hold Animal Care and Conservation roles than Members.

Exhibits/Interpretation	3
Administrative	2
Community Engagement	1
IT	1
Records	1
Strategy	1
Grants/Development	1
Guest Services	1

Most respondents held education roles within their organizations (74%). Animal Care was represented by 22%. A variety of other roles were represented by 17% or fewer. Roles were evenly distributed within Member and Affiliate groups.



Q: Which of the following best describes the role you play at your organization? (n=144)

# Overall Experience and Participation in ACE for Wildlife Network

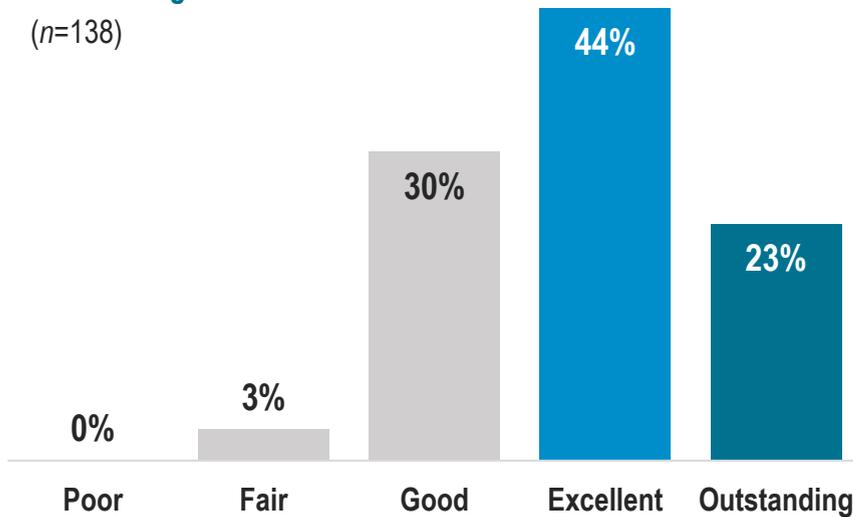


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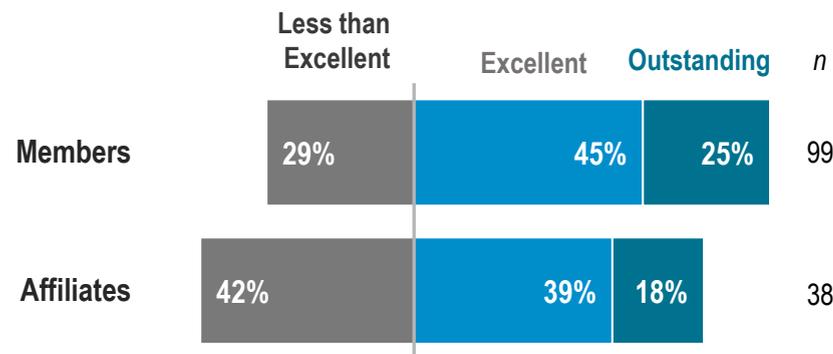
# Overall Experience was high for Network Members and Affiliates.

Just over two-thirds (67%) of respondents said their overall experience in the Network this past year was **Excellent** or **Outstanding**.

(n=138)



Members were more likely to report a more positive overall experience in the Network, though the difference was not statistically significant.



Q: Please rate your overall experience in the ACE for Wildlife Network.

Nobody provided an Overall Experience Rating (OER) of Poor. **Those who gave a rating of Fair or Good (n=45) were asked to list one thing that they felt could have improved their experience.** Twenty-nine respondents (64% of those who were asked) made a comment. Seven were either “N/A” or mentioning that they were new to the Network and haven’t had a chance to dig into any resources yet but were looking forward to it. Several comments mentioned wanting more training materials, or more materials for different roles like marketing or development. Improved user-experience of resources, more networking opportunities, and finding it difficult to keep track of programs, events, and requests were also noted.

**Nine commented on wanting more training, improved training resources, or more training resources for a more diverse set of roles like marketing and development.**

“ I have really appreciated the training tools that were created to help get all our staff on board. More items like this would be great!

I haven't had a negative experience at all, it's just that a lot of the events or presentations don't necessarily intersect easily with development.

Sharing resources more widely - for example animal handling/ presenting best practices.

**Six commented on wanting the website and accessing resources to be more user-friendly or more support for those who are newer to the Network.**

“ A more user-friendly discussion board with easier navigation to find exactly what you are looking for.

I don't know how to access the tools provided as a partner organization. I feel like we joined and never really received a tutorial on what is all available to us...

**Three commented on wanting more networking opportunities including regional meet ups or chats.**

“ I'd love to have more opportunities to video call with other folks in the network...it would be cool to have some more regional check-ins too (like a Midwest coffee chat or something).

**Three mentioned that it can be tough to keep up with program offerings or find it difficult to keep up with Network requests for evaluation and involvement.**

“ I find that it is tricky for me to prioritize participating among the many activities competing for my attention. I find that I miss or don't read the emails or go to the network website to see the updates and therefore miss what is happening.

Working at a small zoo, we are already overworked and don't have time for the projects at our own zoo. Constantly being asked to do surveys, evaluations, and serve on committees takes a lot of time away from our core work.

**One mentioned perceiving that there is a divide between Partner and Non-Partner orgs.**

“ It feels a bit exclusionary for facilities not in the initial region. There are a lot of facilities who would like to be fully involved but feel like we are not as needed.

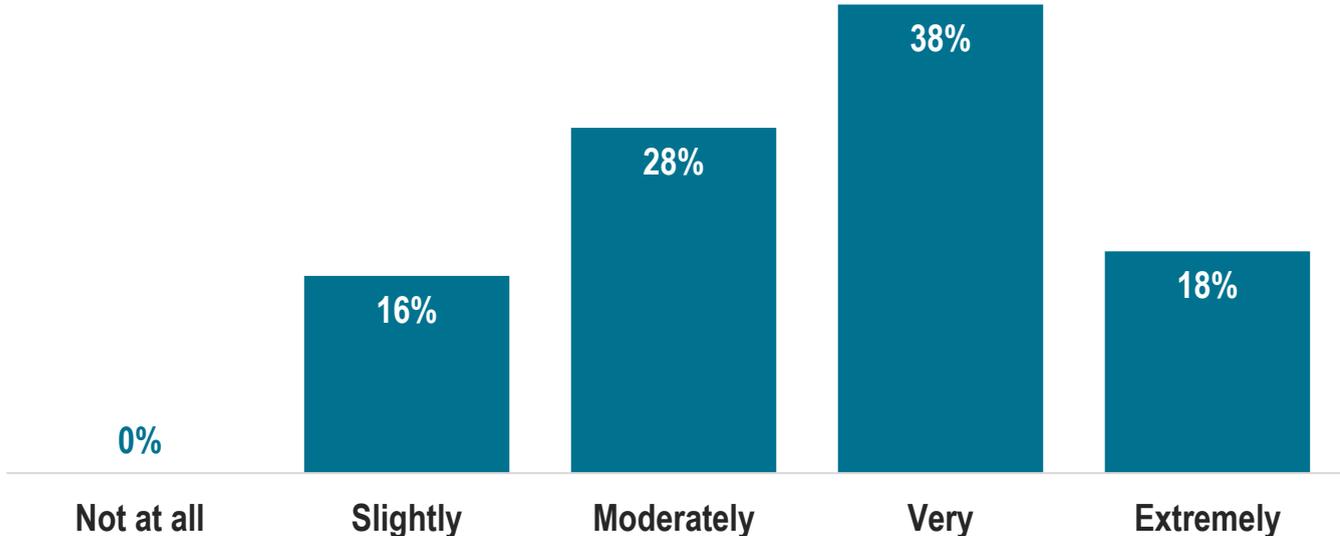
Q: What's one thing we could do to improve your experience in the Network? ( n=29)

# Just over half of respondents felt the Network had been Very or Extremely valuable to their work this year.

Respondents generally reported high ratings for how valuable the Network was to them and their work in the past year. Over half (56%) said it was either Very or Extremely valuable. There was a significant difference in response between Members and Affiliates. Members provided high ratings overall (66% Very/Extremely) and by comparison, Affiliates were more moderate (29% Very/Extremely). The difference we saw may have some relationship to the extent to which a respondent was already involved in the Network. For example, as noted later in this report, 63% of Affiliates said they'd like to *increase* their participation in the Network from their current level of involvement. It makes sense that more frequent involvement could lead to greater perceived professional value.

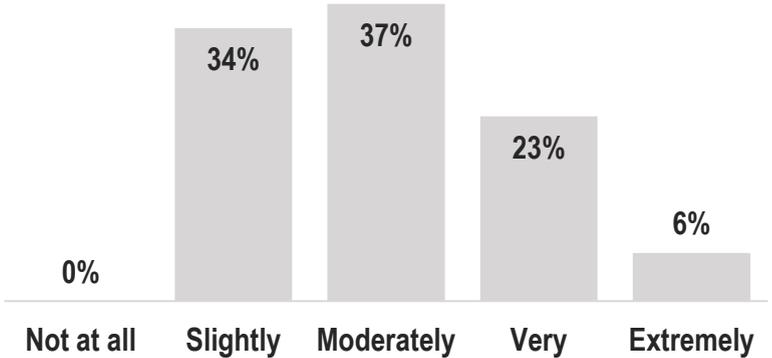
Just over half (56%) of respondents said the Network had been Very or Extremely valuable to them and their work this past year. Others felt it was Moderately (28%) or Slightly (16%) valuable.

n=127



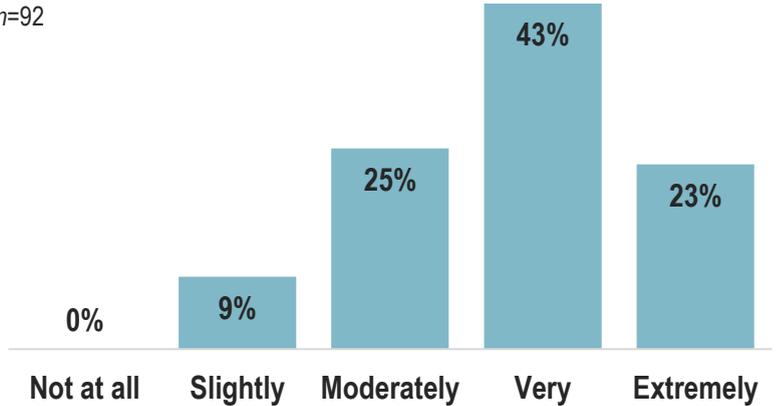
Affiliates were more moderate in their response. Just over a quarter (29%) said they felt the Network had been Very or Extremely valuable to them this year.

n=35



Members were more positive in their rating with 66% feeling like the Network had been Very or Extremely valuable to them and their work this past year.

n=92

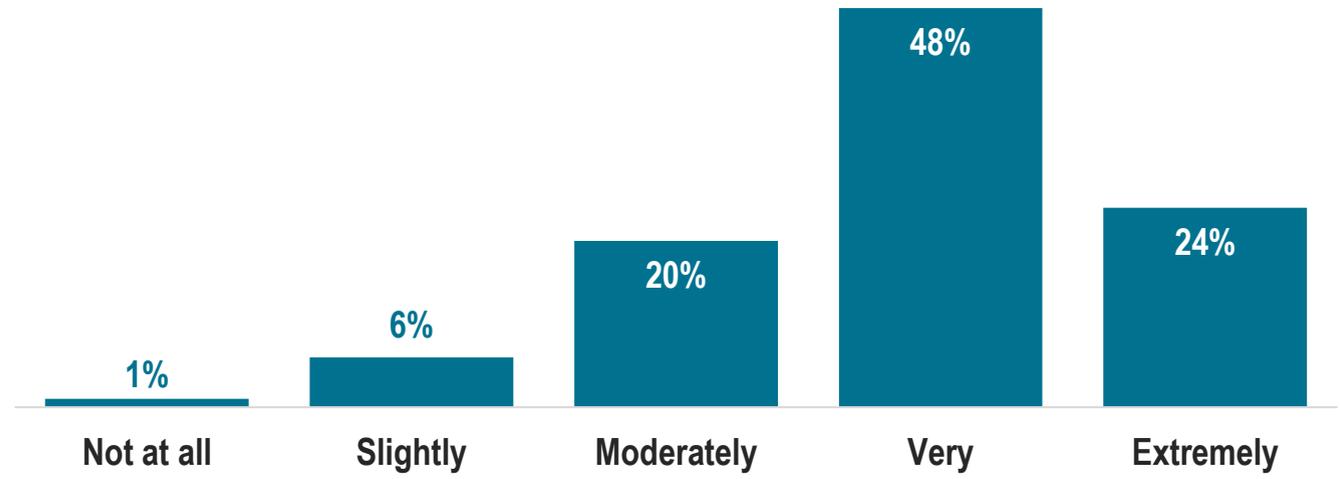


# Respondents felt welcome to share their learning with the Network at-large, Members more than Affiliates.

Overall respondents felt welcome to share their own learning about empathy with the Network. Just under three-quarters (72% reported feeling either Very or Extremely welcome to share. Another 20% reported feeling Moderately welcome to share. Affiliates were more moderate in their response than Members. Just over half (57%) of Affiliates felt Very or Extremely welcome to share compared to just over three-quarters of Members (78%) who felt the same.

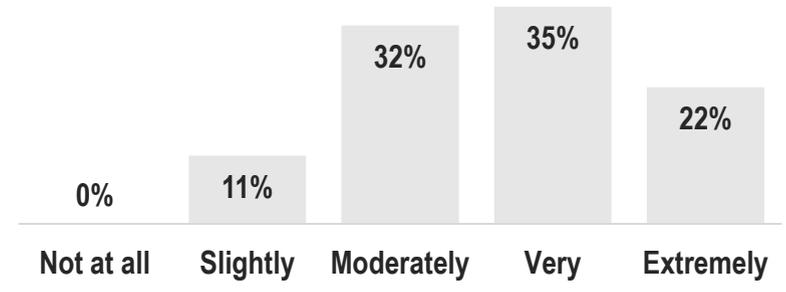
Most respondents (72%) said they felt Very or Extremely welcome to share their own opinions, perspectives, and learning about empathy with the Network at-large. Ninety-three percent felt at least Moderately welcome to share.

n=137



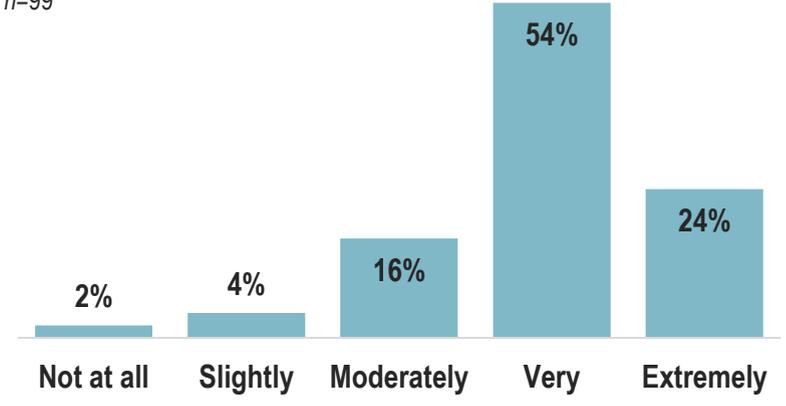
Just under half (43%) said they felt Moderately or Slightly welcome to share opinions about their own empathy learning with the Network at-large.

n=37



Members were most likely to feel Very or Extremely welcome to share their opinions about their own empathy learning with the Network at-large (78% Very/Extremely welcome)

n=99

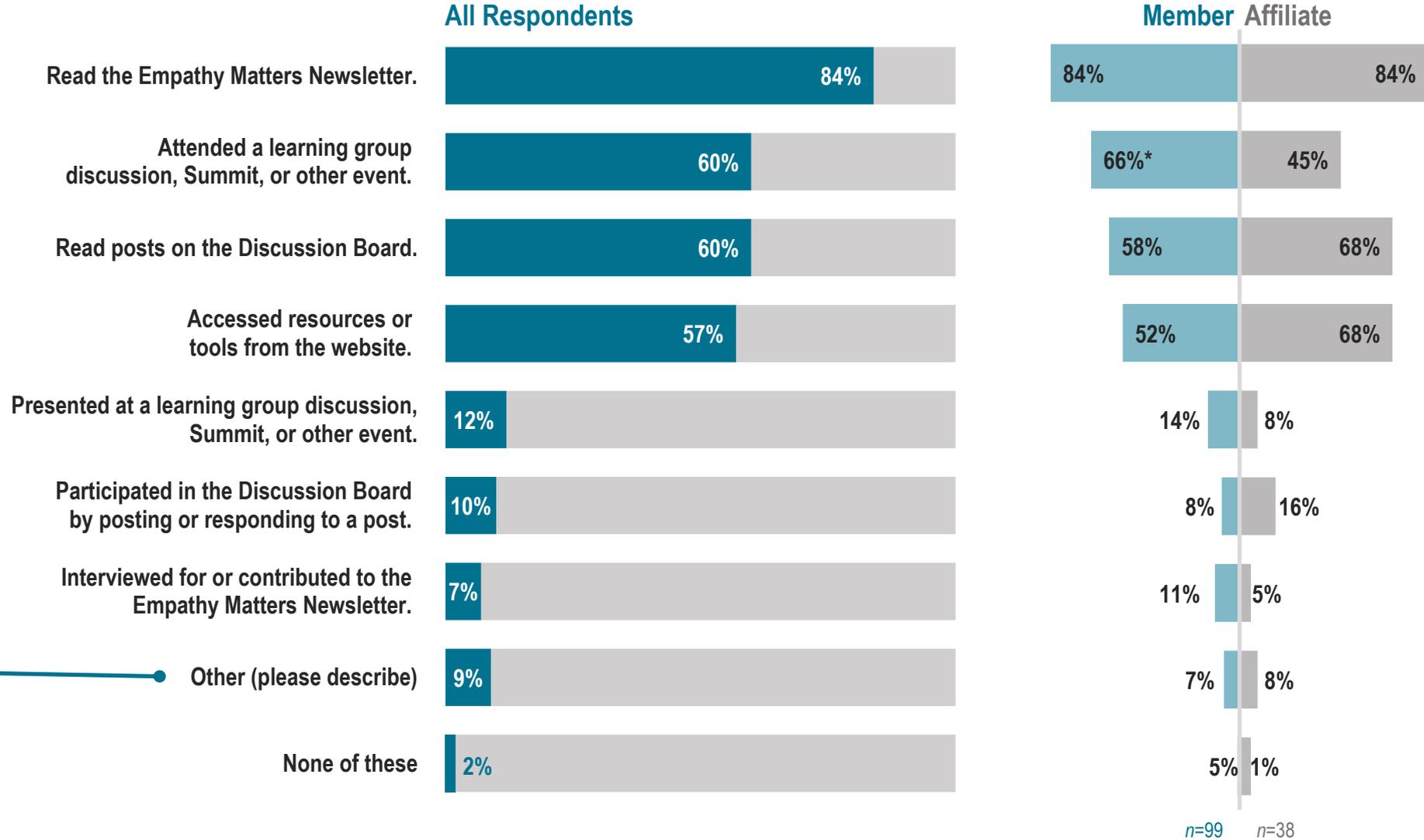


# Respondents participated in the Network in a variety of ways mostly through reading the Newsletter, Discussion Board posts, and attending Network events.



- Served on committee
- Attended committee meetings
- Created and designed empathy materials
- Held a group session in house
- I haven't been able to engage as consistently but hope to again.
- I supervise staff involved in 2 grants funded by ACE.
- Supported staff participation
- Travel grant
- Visited another ACE partner thru the Empathy Exchange.
- Watched the recorded Summit sessions.
- Empathy exchange w/ Zoo Boise
- Internal staff training
- signed up at AZA!

Respondents were asked the ways in which they've participated in the Network within the past 12 months through a pre-defined, 'select all that apply' list of potential participation methods along with an, "other" write-in option. **On average, respondents selected three of the options listed. Most (84%) said they read the Empathy Matters Newsletter. Just over half attended learning groups or other events, read Discussion Board posts, and/or accessed resources from the Website.** A smaller number reported more active participation through things like presenting at events, participating in Discussion Board posts, or being interviewed for the Newsletter. Members were slightly *less* likely to say they read posts on the Discussion Board and access resources through the website than Affiliates. Members were significantly *more* likely to say they attended events like learning group discussions and the Summit.



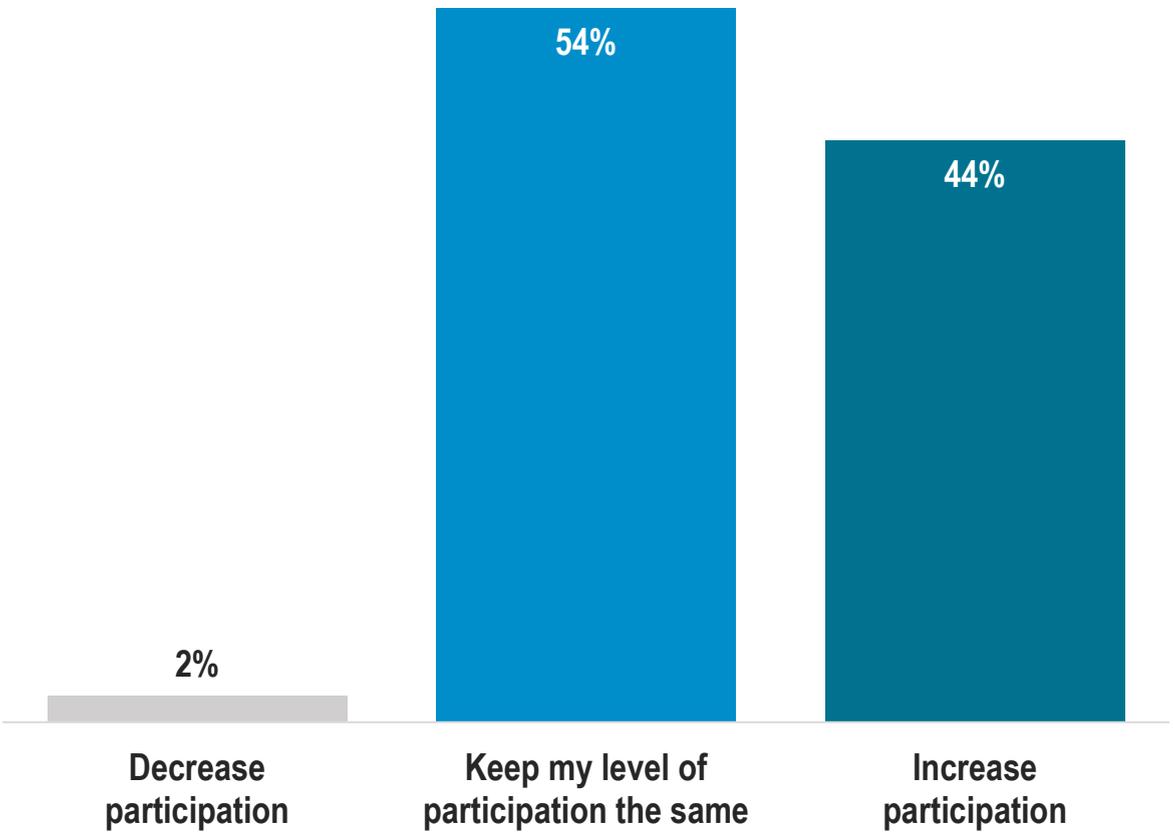
Q: Which of the following ways did you participate in the ACE for Wildlife Network in the past 12 months? (n=138)

# Affiliates were more likely to say they'd like to increase their Network participation in 2025.

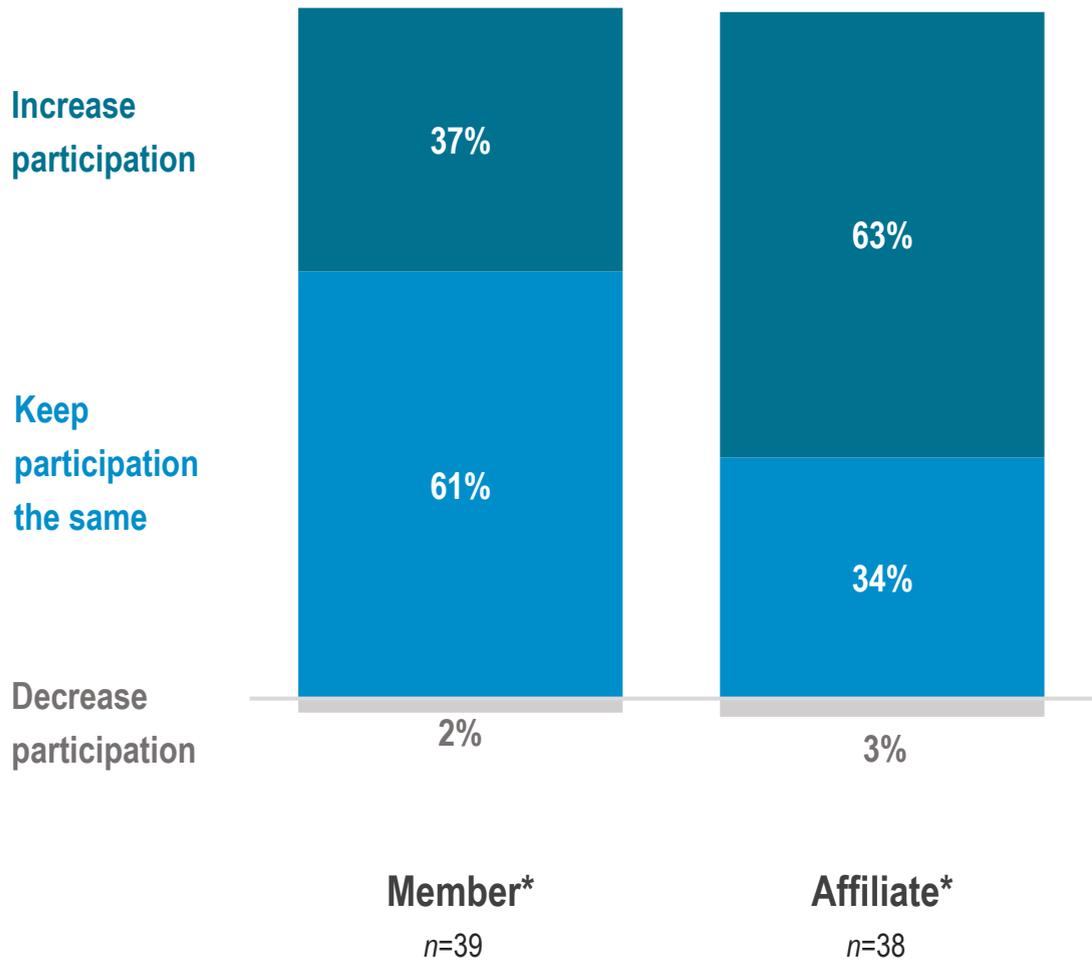
Respondents were asked the extent to which they would like to increase their level of participation in the Network during the coming year (2025). **Just over half of respondents (54%) said they were happy with their current level of participation and would like to keep it the same. Just under half (44%) said they would like to increase their level of participation.** Affiliates were more likely than Members to say they'd like to increase their level of Network participation (63% compared to 37%, respectively).

Just over half (54%) of respondents said they'd like to keep their level of Network participation the same in the coming year.

n=138



Affiliates were significantly more likely to say they'd like to increase their level of Network participation in the coming year.

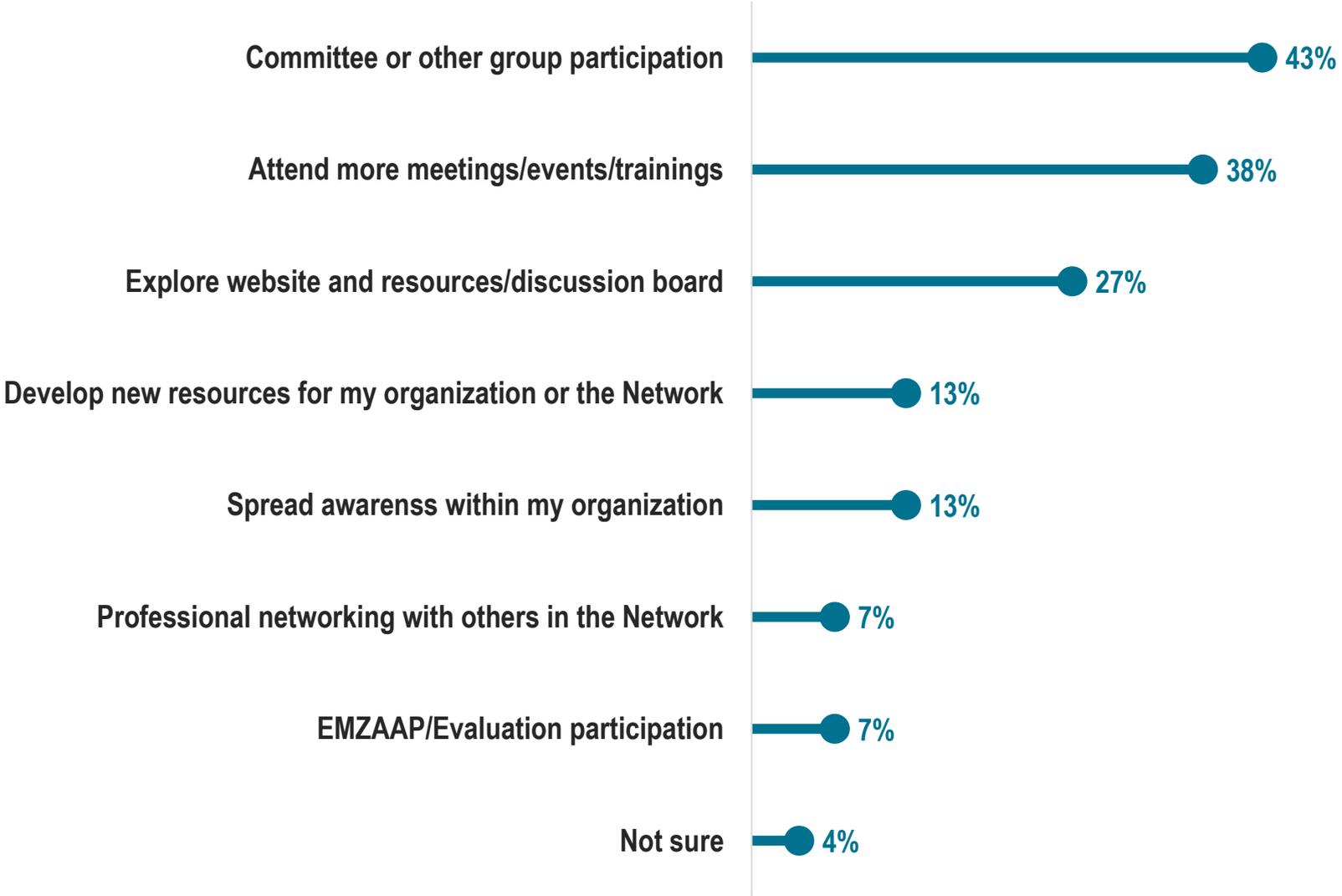


Q: Based on your current level of participation, how would you like to participate in the Network in the next 12 months? (n=138)

# Respondents hope to increase their participation in committees and attend more learning events in the coming year.

For those who wanted to increase their level of Network participation interests included committee participation, attending events and trainings, contributing to discussion boards, and accessing available resources. Several individuals highlighted a desire for improved communication and awareness of existing opportunities within the Network and their own organizations. Others focused on sharing best practices, developing new resources, and expanding the Network's reach to colleagues and their respective institutions.

## Comment Theme



## Example comments

I would love to attend more events and read more discussions. I'd also like to see if there are any openings on any committees or if new committees are being formed."

Being able to attend and participate in more learning groups, further grant involvement, forming more connections with other members/affiliates, integrated more empathy work in my daily work.

I would like to make a better effort to attend workshops and seminars; I would also be interested in co-leading or leading a seminar and/or publishing in the newsletter; I would like to make better use of the resources and tools in trainings with my team.

Engaging more frequently with partners - hosting a group from another ACE partner facility has inspired this.

Q: In what ways would you be interested in increasing your level of participation this year? (n=56)

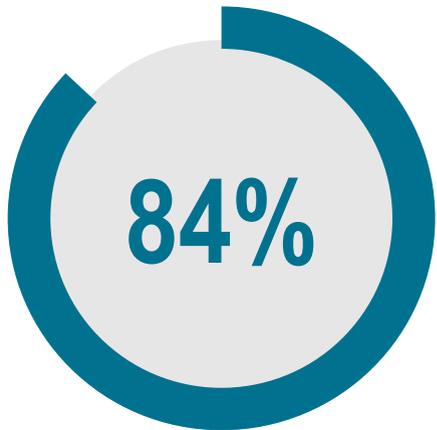
# Organizational Investment in Empathy Practices and Projects



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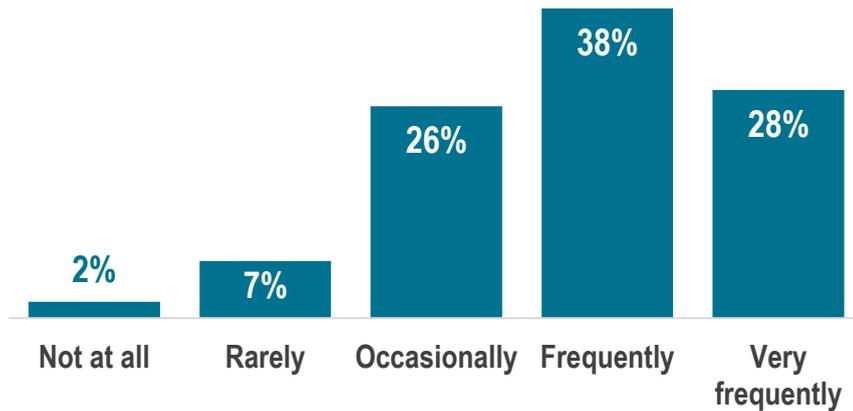
# Respondents generally knew their organization's Network contact and communicated about empathy practices and projects frequently. About half said that they participated in training at their organizations, a decrease from last year's survey.

Most respondents said that they knew their organization's primary point of contact (84%). Those who said they did not know (9%) or were unsure (7%) were from 12 different Partner Organizations.



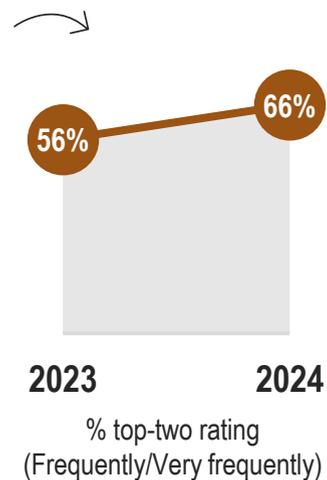
Q: Do you know who your organization's primary point of contact with the ACE for Wildlife Network is? (n=97)

Two-thirds (66%) of respondents said that staff communicated internally about empathy-related practices or projects Frequently or Very frequently.



Q: In the past 12 months, how often have staff at your organization communicated internally about empathy-related practices and projects? (n=136)

Compared to last year, more respondents said that staff in their organizations communicated internally about empathy-related practices or projects (66% Frequently/Very frequently).

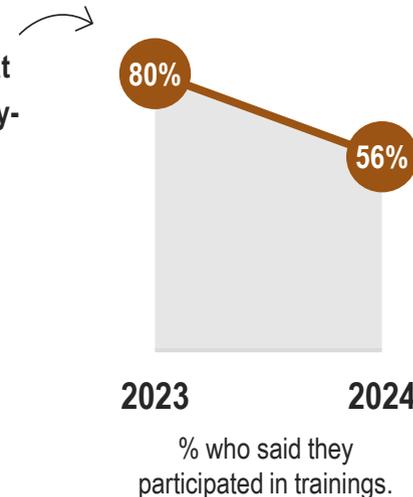


Just over half of respondents (56%) said they've participated in empathy-related trainings at their organizations in the past 12-months.



Q: In the past 12 months, have you participated in any empathy-related trainings at your organization? (n=135)

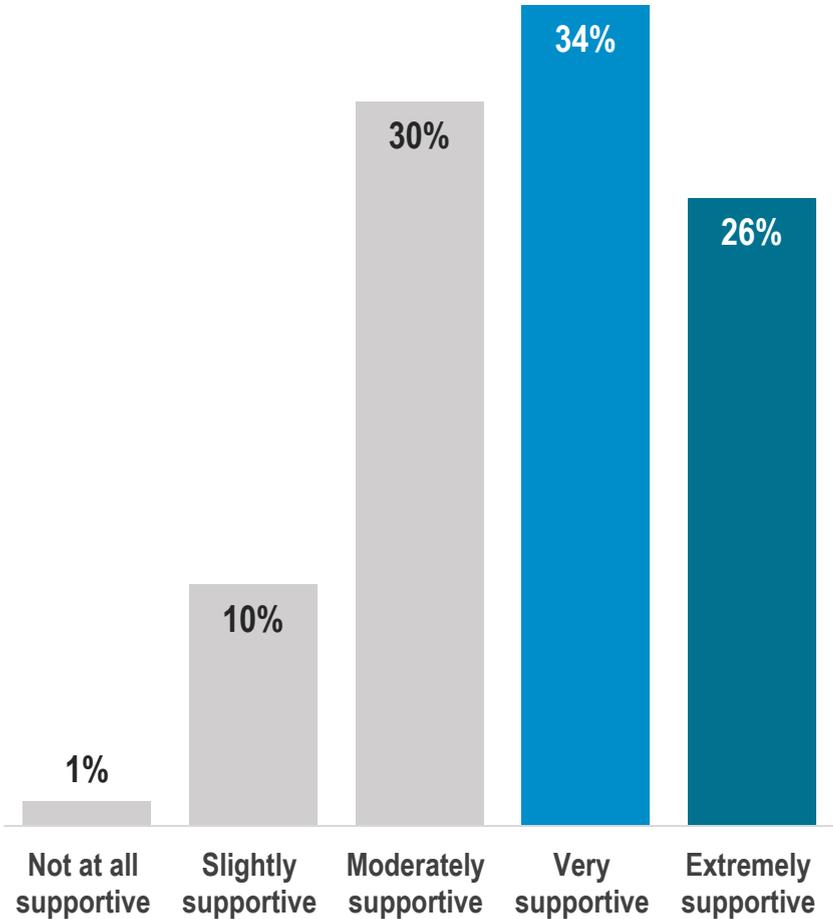
Fewer respondents said that they participated in empathy-related trainings at their organizations this year.



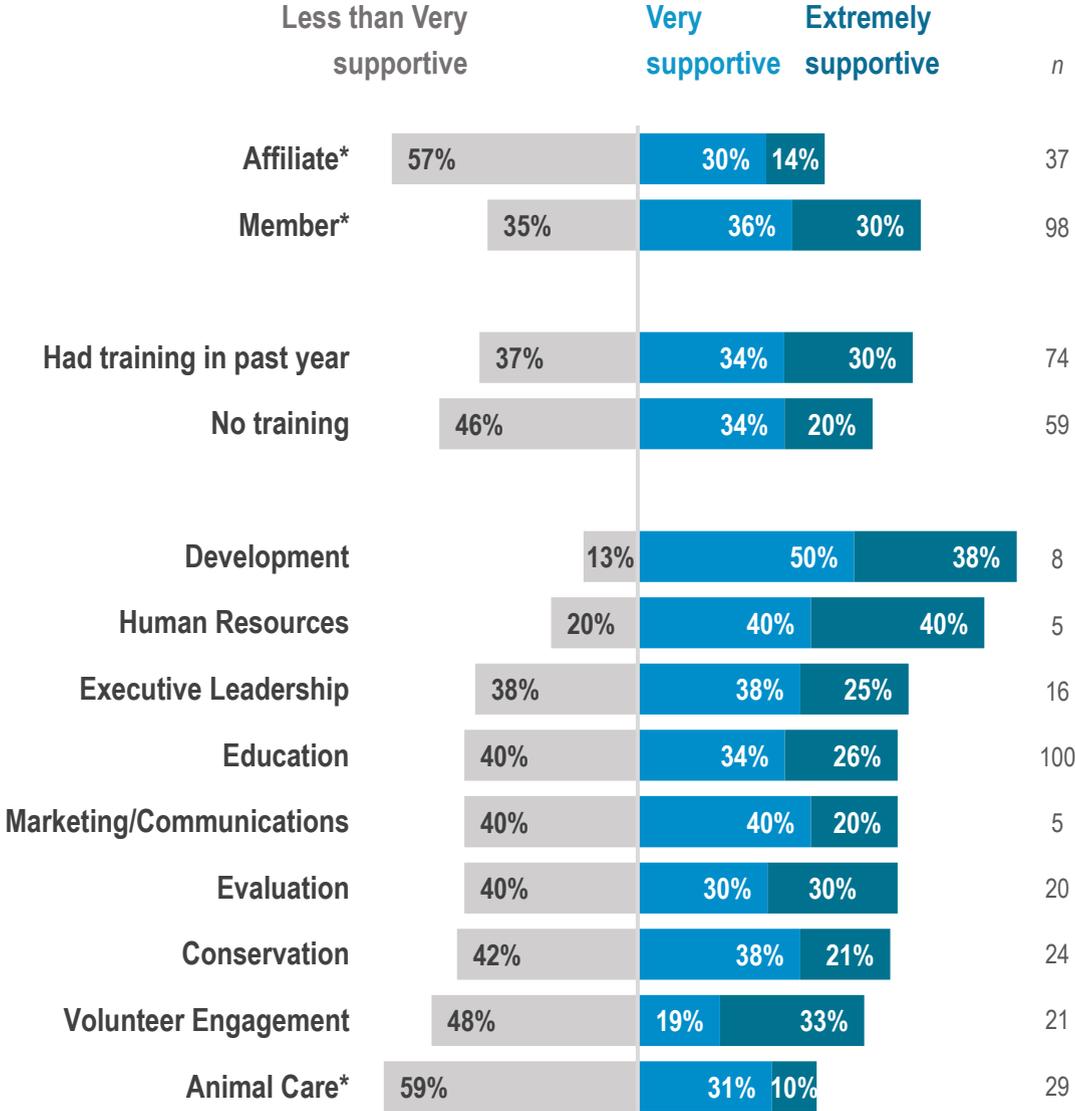
# Leaders were generally supportive of Network involvement especially for Members. Animal Care roles were less likely to feel leadership support.

Just under two-thirds (60%) of respondents felt that their organization's leadership was Very or Extremely supportive of empathy-related practices and projects.

n=136



Generally, respondents felt that their organization's leadership was supportive of allowing them time and resources to participate in the ACE for Wildlife Network. **About 90% of respondents felt their leadership was at least Moderately supportive.** Members were more likely to feel their leadership was highly supportive of their Network participation. Animal Care staff were less enthusiastic that their leadership was supportive of their Network participation. Although not statistically significant, those who reported having empathy-related training in the past year were more likely to say their leadership was supportive of their Network participation.



Members were more likely to feel strongly their leadership was supportive of their Network involvement.

No statistical differences between those who had training in the past year, though descriptively those with training felt their leadership was more supportive.

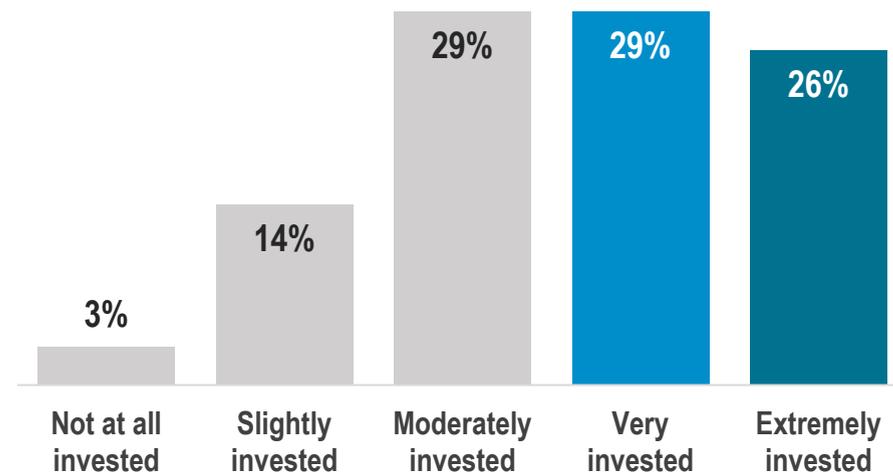
Those in Animal Care roles were statistically less likely to feel their leadership was supportive of their Network involvement than those who were not in Animal Care roles. No other statistical differences were observed by role within organization.

Q: From your perspective, how *supportive* is your organization's leadership in allowing you time and resources to participate in the ACE for Wildlife Network?

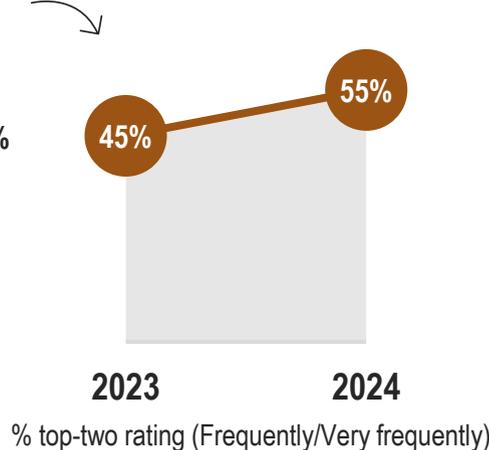
# Perceived investment in empathy-related practices and projects improved this year.

Just over half (55%) of respondents said they believed their leaders are Very/Extremely invested in empathy-related practices.

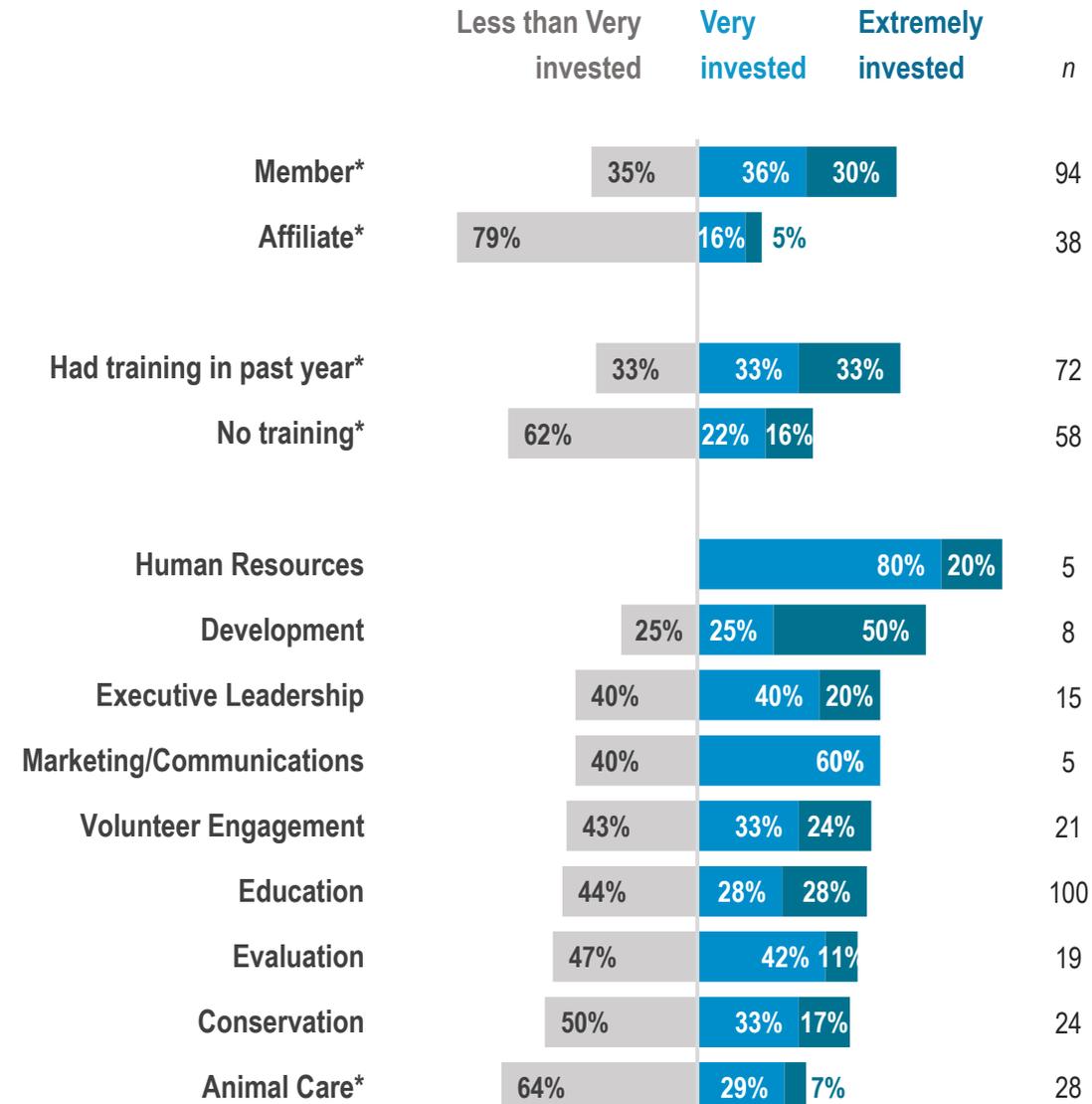
n=133



There was a notable increase in perceived investment by organizational leaders from last year's survey result (45% to 55% Very/Extremely invested).



Just over half of respondents (55%) felt that their organization's leaders were Very or Extremely supportive of empathy-related practices and projects, a notable 10 pp increase from last year's results. Twenty-nine percent felt their leaders were Moderately invested and 17% felt their leaders were Slightly or Not at all invested in empathy work. Members and those who had training in the past year were more likely to feel their leaders demonstrated high investment. Those in Animal Care roles were less likely to feel their leaders demonstrated strong investment in empathy work.



Members were more likely to feel strongly their leadership was invested in empathy work.

Those who had training in the past year were more likely to feel their leadership was highly invested in empathy work.

Those in Animal Care roles were statistically less likely to feel their leadership was highly invested in empathy-related practices and projects. No other statistical associations were observed by role.

Q: From your perspective, how invested is your organization's leadership in empathy-related practices and projects?

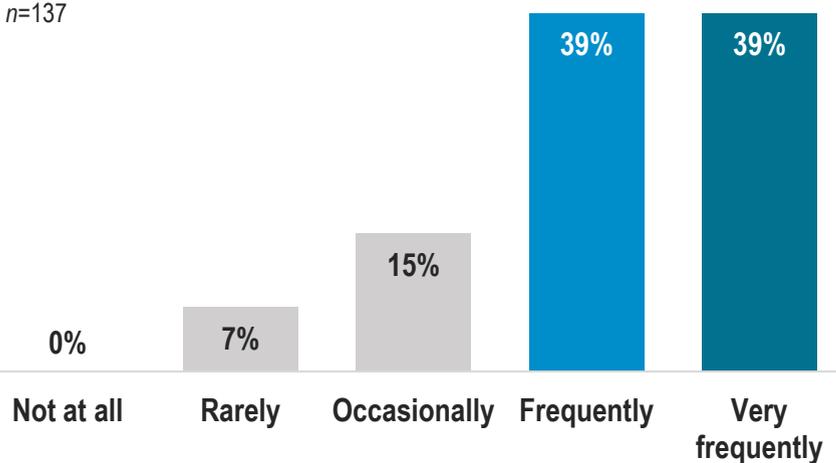
# Use of Empathy Practices Within Organizations



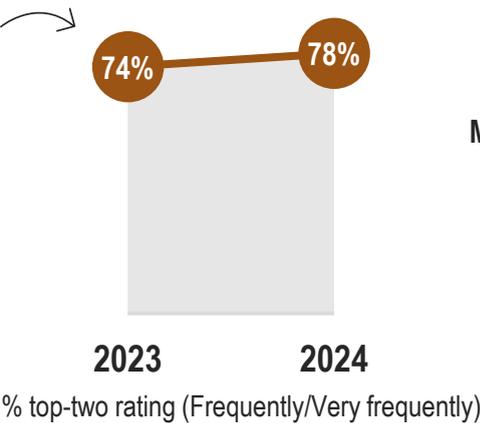
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# Over three-quarters of respondents said they've used empathy practices in their work Frequently or Very frequently, an increase from last year.

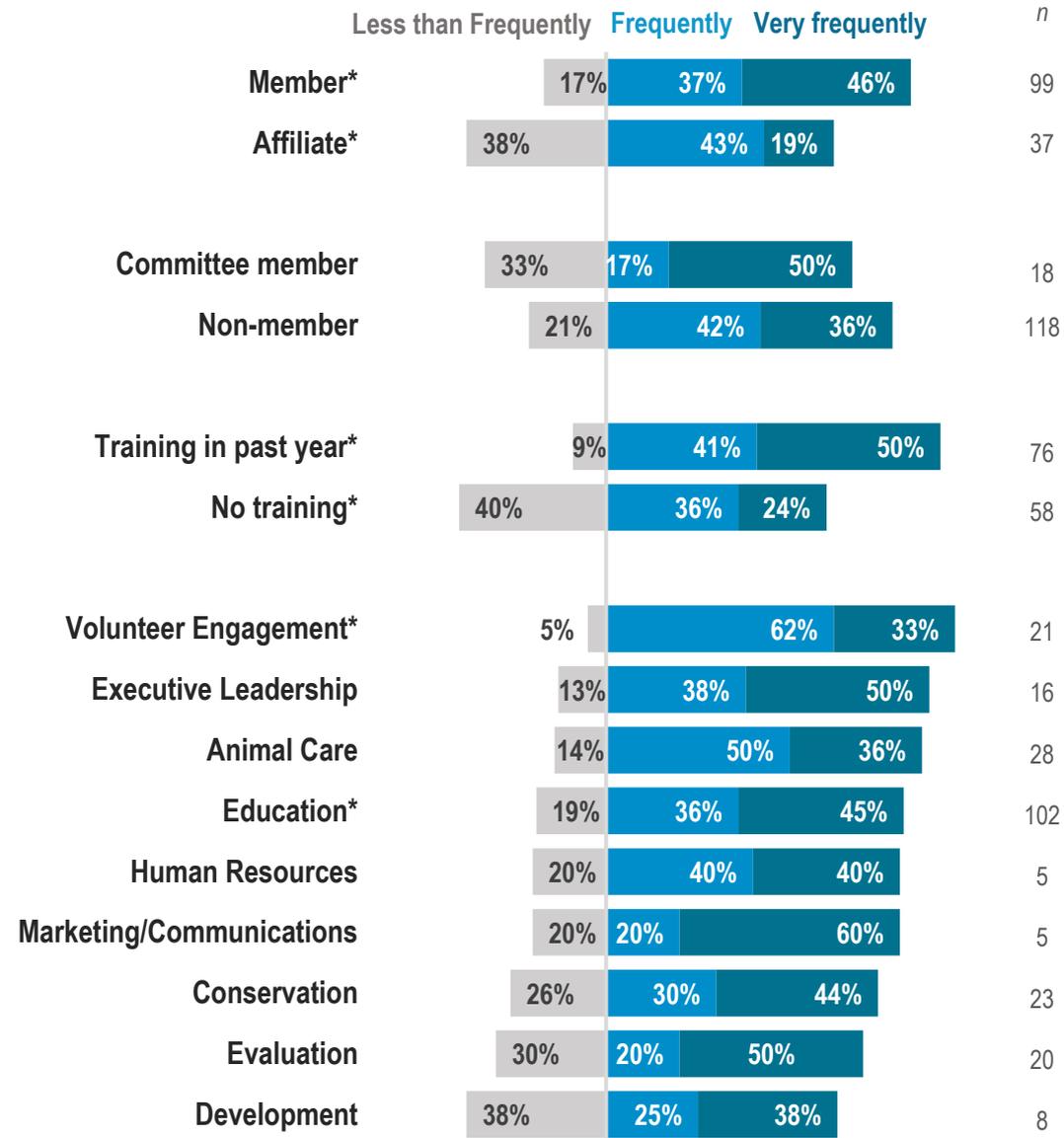
Just over three-quarters (78%) of respondents who said they used empathy practices in their work this year said they did so Frequently or Very frequently.



Compared to last year, there was a slight increase in respondent reports of having used empathy-related practices in their work Frequently or Very Frequently.



Most respondents said they've used empathy practices in their work with high frequency this year (78% Frequently/Very frequently), representing a slight increase from last year's results (74%). **Members were more likely to use practices with greater frequency than Affiliates. Those who had training at their organizations within the past year were more likely to use practices, and those in Volunteer Engagement or Education roles were more likely to use practices often compared to respondents who were not in those roles.**



Members were more likely to use practices Very frequently.

No statistical difference in practice use by Committee members, though they were descriptively more likely to use practices Very Frequently and interestingly, Less than Frequently (33%).

Those who had training in the past 12 months were more likely to use practices Very frequently.

All roles reported using practices with high frequency, but Volunteer Engagement and Education roles were statistically more likely to use practices more often compared to those who did not select these roles.

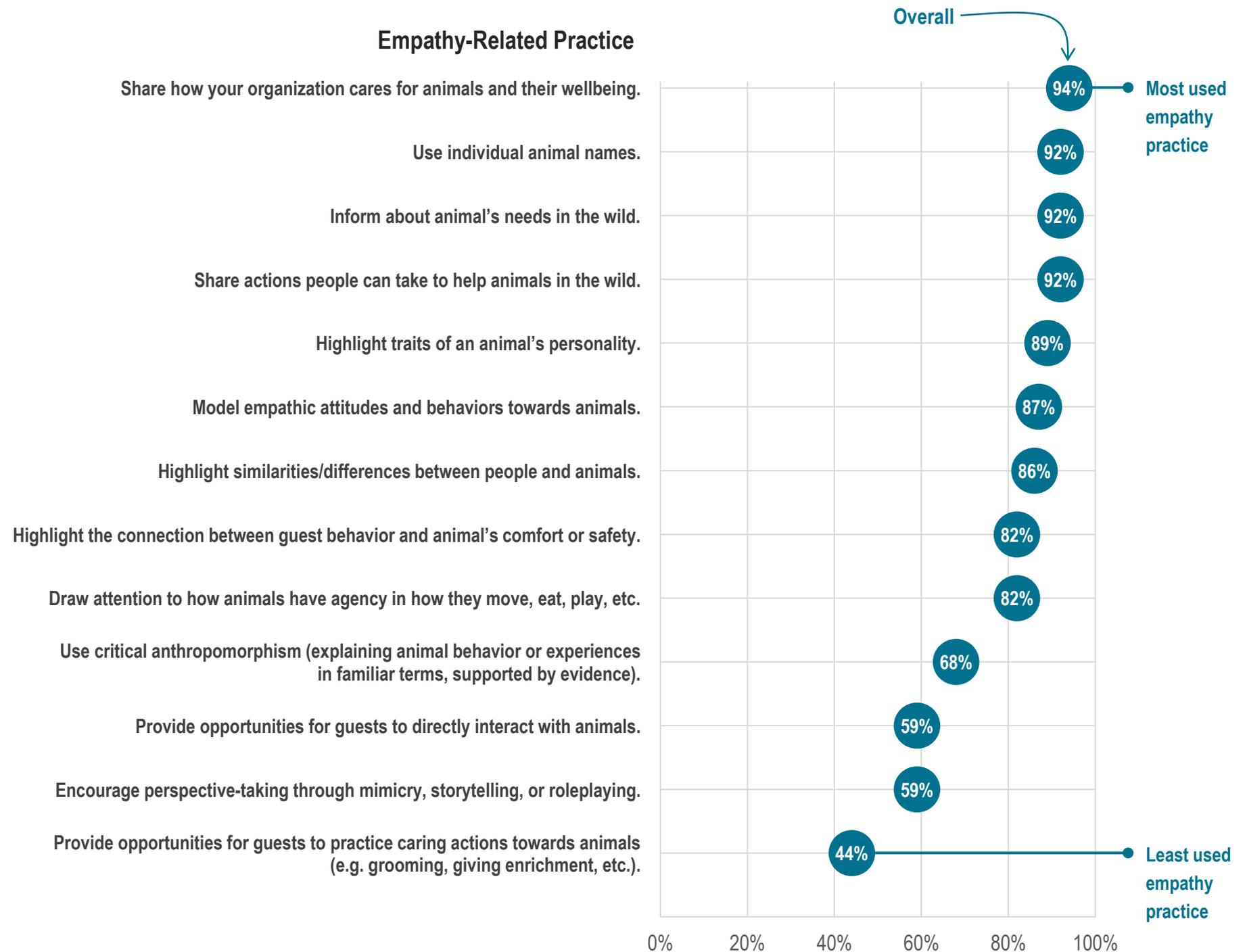
Q: In the past 12 months, how often did you utilize empathy practices in your work?

## Most of the empathy-related practices were intentionally used by at least half of survey respondents in the past year.

Respondents who used empathy-related practices noted which practices they've used intentionally in the past 12 months. Each practice was selected by more than half of respondents except for, "Providing opportunities for guests to practice caring actions towards animals" (44%). **Practices used by nearly all guests (>90%) included "sharing messages about animal care and well-being", "using individual animal names", "informing about animal's needs in the wild", and "sharing actions people can take to help animals in the wild".**

Practices less selected included "using critical anthropomorphism", "providing opportunities for guests to interact with animals", "encouraging perspective taking through mimicry or storytelling", and "providing opportunities for guests to practice caring actions (e.g., grooming, giving enrichment, etc.)."

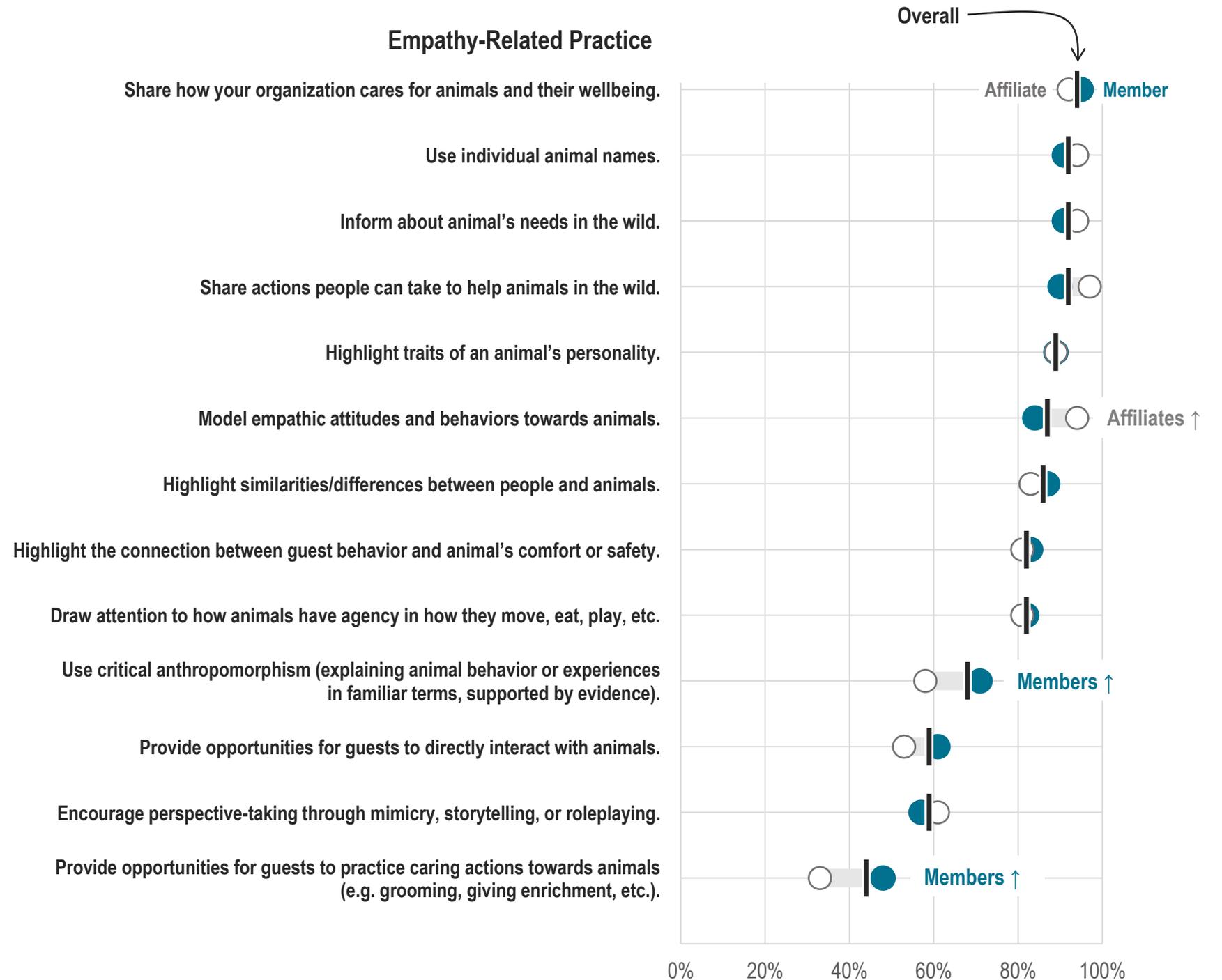
Two respondents selected "other" and opted to write something in. One noted that all of the practices were part of their org's culture, "All of these are institutional practices infused throughout the entire zoo culture – from animal care & education to all of the front gate, gift shop, café, etc." The other respondent commented that they were in a development role and that although they often write about these practices, they only rarely use them, "I work in fundraising, so I write about these practices in proposals and reports for funders, but only rarely engage in using the practices myself (occasionally with donors who visit the zoo, but that isn't a large part of my work)."



Q: In the past 12 months, which of the following empathy practices have you intentionally used or applied to your work? (n=131)

## Members and Affiliates were similar in the types of empathy-related practices used with a few notable differences.

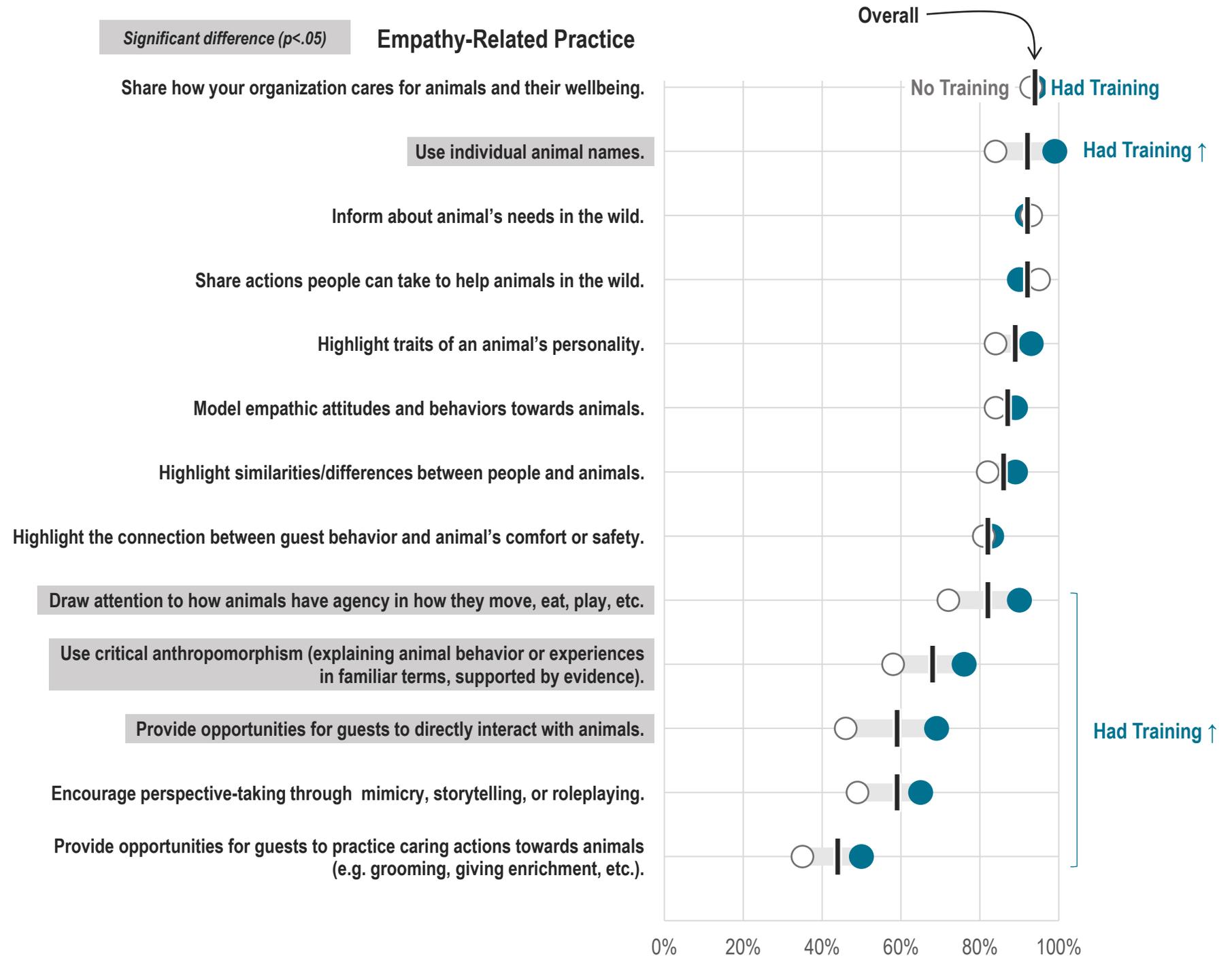
Members and Affiliates were generally similar in the extent to which they said they used empathy-related practices in the past 12 months. Most notably (differences greater than 10%), Affiliates were more likely to use “modeling empathic attitudes and behaviors toward animals” and **Members were more likely to “use critical anthropomorphism” and to “provide opportunities for guests to practice caring actions toward animals.”** None of the differences between Members and Affiliates were statistically significant, but those mentioned above may have practical significance in understanding empathy-related practice use within these groups.



Q: In the past 12 months, which of the following empathy practices have you intentionally used or applied to your work? (n= 94 Member, 36 Affiliate)

## Those who had empathy-related training in the past year were more likely to have used each of the practices intentionally, particularly those less often selected overall.

All but two of the practices were selected more often by those who said they had empathy-related training at their organizations within the past 12 months. **Those with training were significantly more likely to “use animal names”, “draw attention to how animals have agency”, “use critical anthropomorphism”, and “provide opportunities for guests to interact with animals”** (all statistically significant differences). Those who had training were also more likely to “encourage perspective-taking through mimicry, storytelling, etc.”, and “provide opportunities for guests to practice caring actions”.



Q: In the past 12 months, which of the following empathy practices have you intentionally used or applied to your work? (n =72 Training, 57 No Training)

# Use of empathy practices was similar across roles. Though those in education roles were significantly more likely to use most of the practices than those who were not in education.

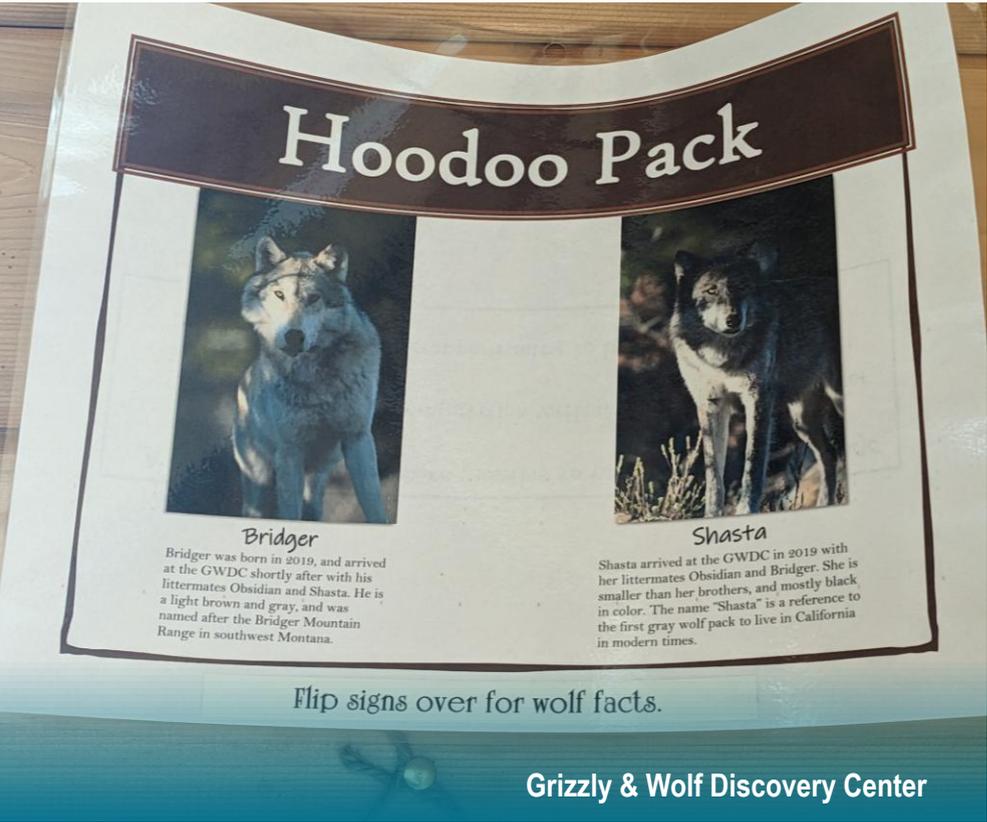
Each empathy-related practice was compared by role (practice use by those who selected a role vs. those who did not select the role on the survey). Significant differences are highlighted in the chart below – **blue indicates a role which selected practices more often than those who were not in the role** and **orange indicates a role that selected practices less often than those who were not in the role**. Most roles selected practices at statistically similar rates. Animal care roles were more likely to “highlight connections between guest behavior and animal comfort” and less likely to “highlight similarities/differences between people and animals.” Conservation roles were less likely to “use individual animal names”, Evaluation roles were less likely to “share how orgs care for animals and their well-being”, HR roles were less likely to “use individual names and highlight traits of animal personalities”, and Education roles were more likely to use eight of the 13 practices than those who were not in Education roles.

	Overall n=131	Animal Care n=27	Conservation n=21	Development n=8	Education n=96	Evaluation n=18	Executive n=15	Human Res. n=5	Marketing/PR n=5	Volunteer Eng. n=21
Share how org cares for animals/well-being.	94%	100%	100%	88%	96%	83%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Share actions people can take to help animals in the wild.	92%	100%	100%	88%	95%	89%	93%	100%	100%	90%
Inform about animal's needs in the wild.	92%	96%	95%	88%	96%	89%	87%	80%	100%	86%
Use individual animal names.	92%	93%	81%	75%	93%	83%	93%	40%	80%	90%
Highlight traits of an animal's personality.	89%	89%	95%	75%	92%	94%	93%	60%	80%	100%
Model empathic attitudes and behaviors towards animals.	87%	93%	90%	88%	89%	89%	93%	80%	100%	90%
Highlight similarities/differences between people and animals.	86%	74%	86%	75%	91%	89%	93%	80%	100%	90%
Highlight the connection between guest behavior and animal's comfort.	82%	96%	86%	63%	88%	83%	80%	80%	60%	95%
Draw attention to how animals have agency.	82%	89%	86%	50%	86%	78%	67%	60%	60%	86%
Use critical anthropomorphism.	68%	70%	76%	50%	73%	61%	67%	60%	80%	76%
Encourage perspective-taking through mimicry, etc.	59%	48%	71%	38%	68%	50%	67%	40%	80%	57%
Provide opportunities for guests to interact with animals	59%	74%	57%	25%	65%	50%	60%	40%	40%	62%
Provide opportunities for guests to practice caring actions.	44%	37%	38%	25%	50%	33%	33%	40%	40%	48%

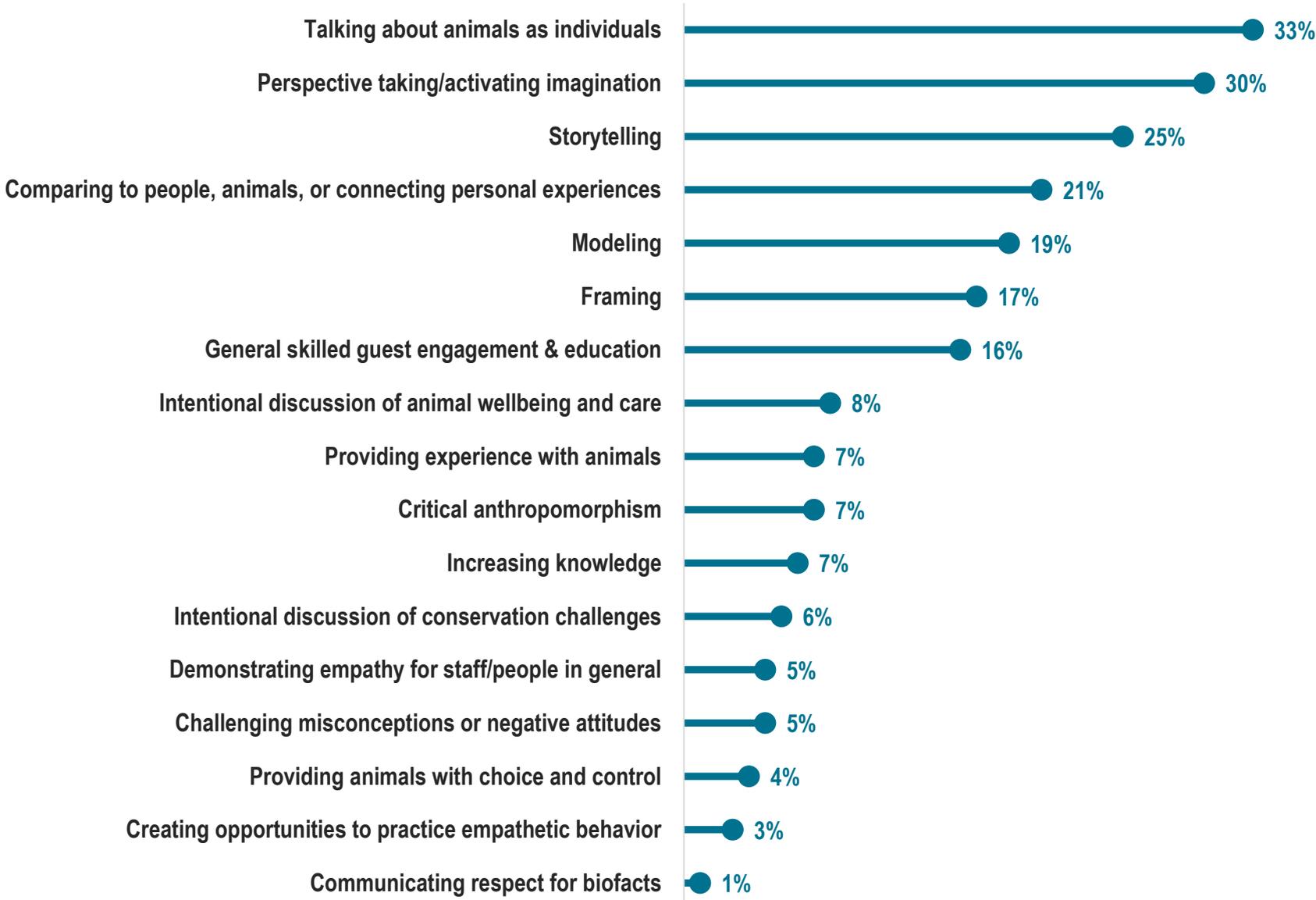
Note: Some of the item-labels in the chart have been abbreviated from their full wording on the survey.

Q: In the past 12 months, which of the following empathy practices have you intentionally used or applied to your work?

# Respondents associate a variety of strategies and practices with empathy.



When asked to describe specific strategies they associate with empathy effective practices, survey respondents most frequently referenced talking about animals as individuals (e.g., using names and pronouns, sharing animals' unique personalities and stories) and inviting guests to take animals' perspectives. Other frequently mentioned practices included storytelling, drawing connections between animals and people or other animals, modeling empathetic behavior and language, and framing. Roughly a quarter of respondents used language directly from Seattle Aquarium's Best Practices guide.

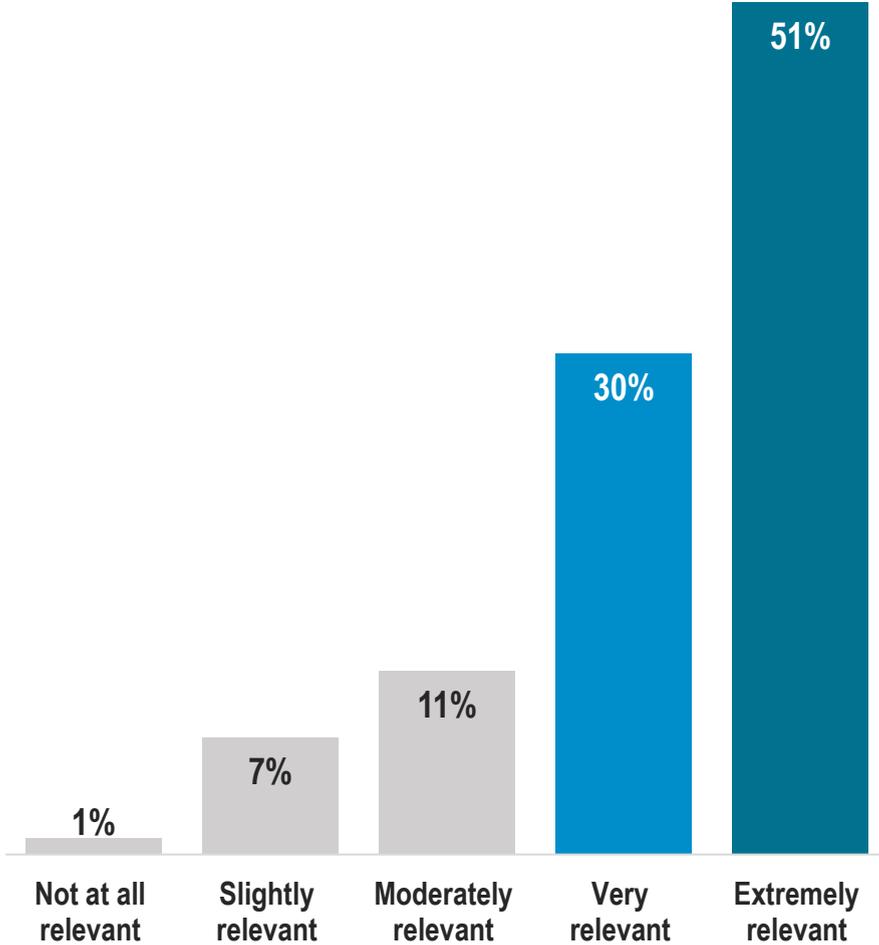


Q: What specific strategies or practices come to mind when you think of effective empathy practices? (n=107)

# Most respondents felt empathy practices were relevant to their roles.

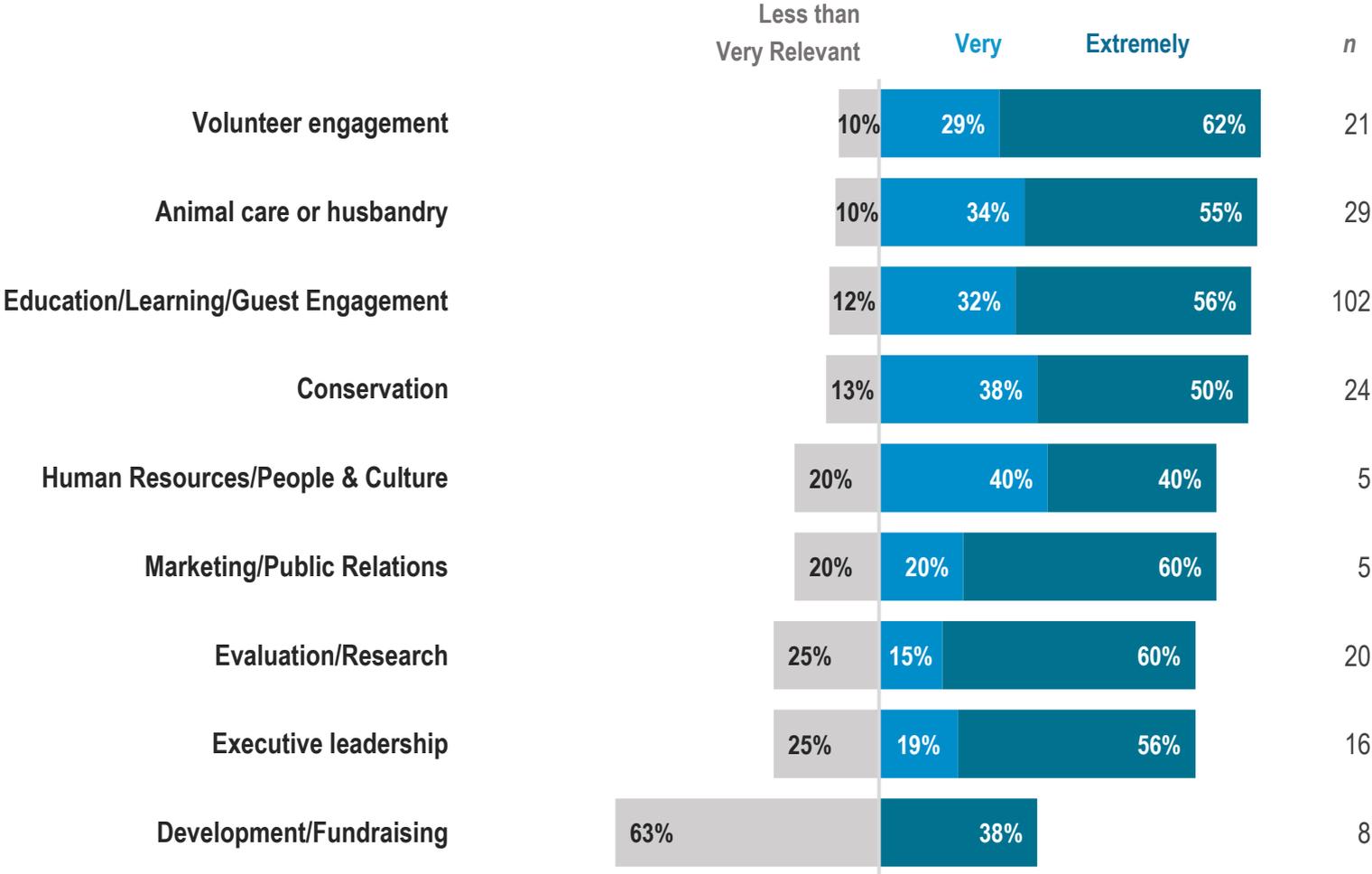
Most respondents (81%) felt that empathy-related practices were either Very or Extremely relevant to their daily roles.

n=138



Most respondents (81%) said that they felt empathy-related practices were either Very or Extremely relevant to their daily roles. Respondents that felt empathy-related practices were most relevant to their roles included those in Volunteer Engagement, Animal Care, Education, and Conservation. Among the eight respondents in Development roles, five of them felt that the practices were either Slightly or Moderately relevant to their daily roles.

Over 50% of respondents represented in each role gave a top-box Extremely relevant rating except for those in Human Resource roles and Development roles (40% and 38%, respectively). Respondents across most roles generally felt that empathy-related practices were relevant to their daily roles.



Q: How relevant are empathy practices to your daily role?

# Awareness and Use of Network Resources



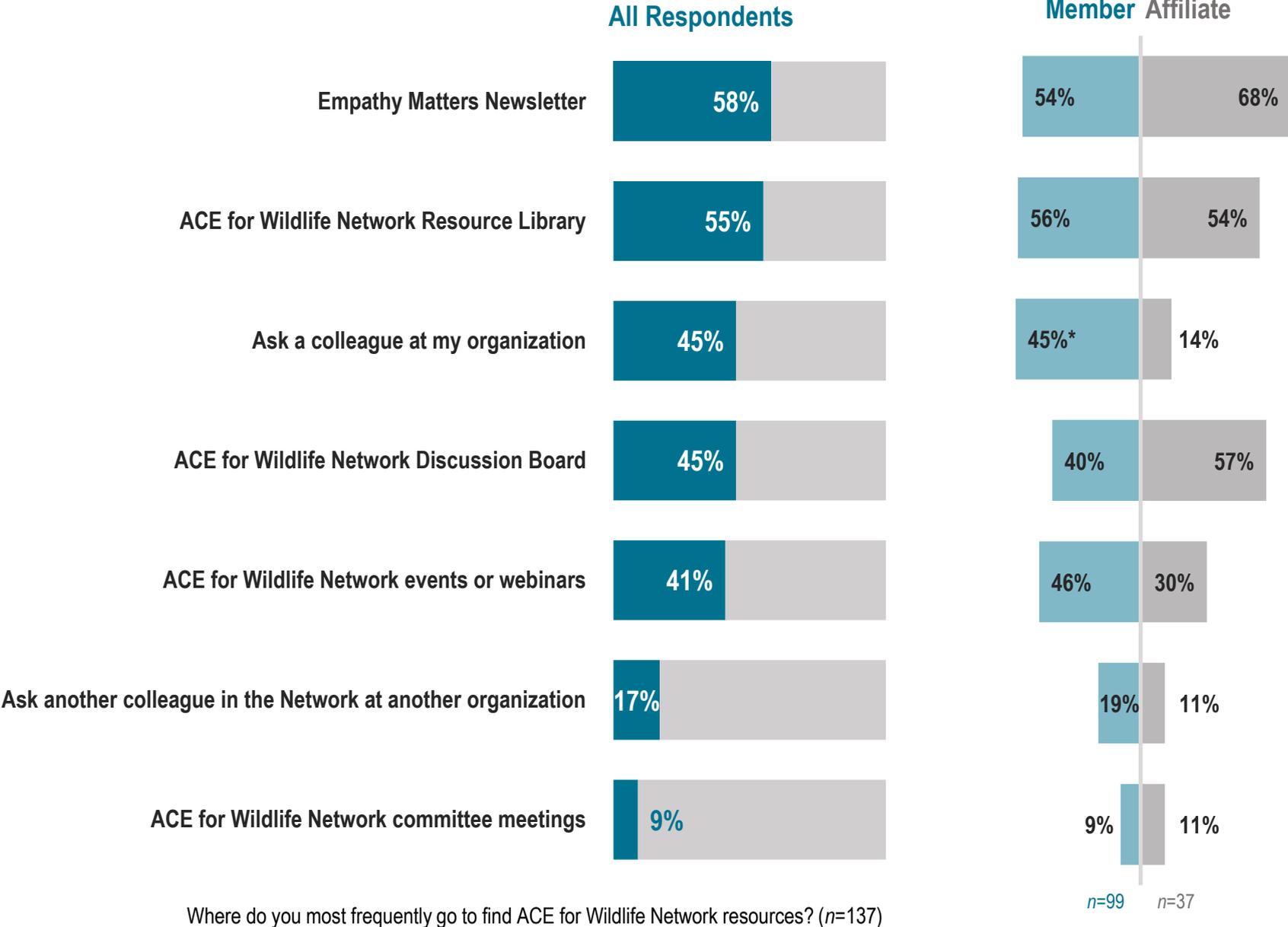
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# The Newsletter and Resource Library were 'go-to' sources for finding Network resources.

Over half of respondents said that they seek information about Network resources through the Empathy Matters Newsletter (58%) and the ACE for Wildlife Network Resource Library (55%). Just under half said a colleague at their organization (45%), Discussion Board (45%), and Network events or webinars (41%). A small number of respondents said they ask colleagues at other organizations (17%) or through ACE for Wildlife Network committee meetings (9%).

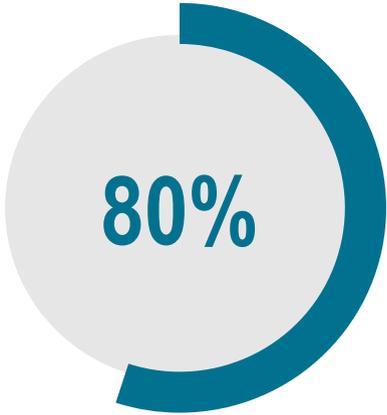
**Members and Affiliates generally sought these resources with similar frequency though Members were significantly more likely to ask colleagues within their own organization than Affiliates.**

When seeking Network resources, the Empathy Matters Newsletter and Network Resource library were used most often. Members were significantly more likely to learn about resources through asking internal colleagues.

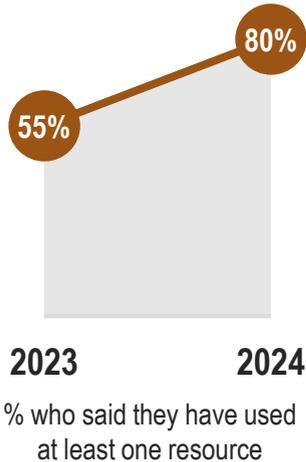


# The ACE for Wildlife Website, Empathy Training Toolkit, and Committee Updates were the most used resources.

Over three-quarters (80%) said that they had used at least one of the listed resources.

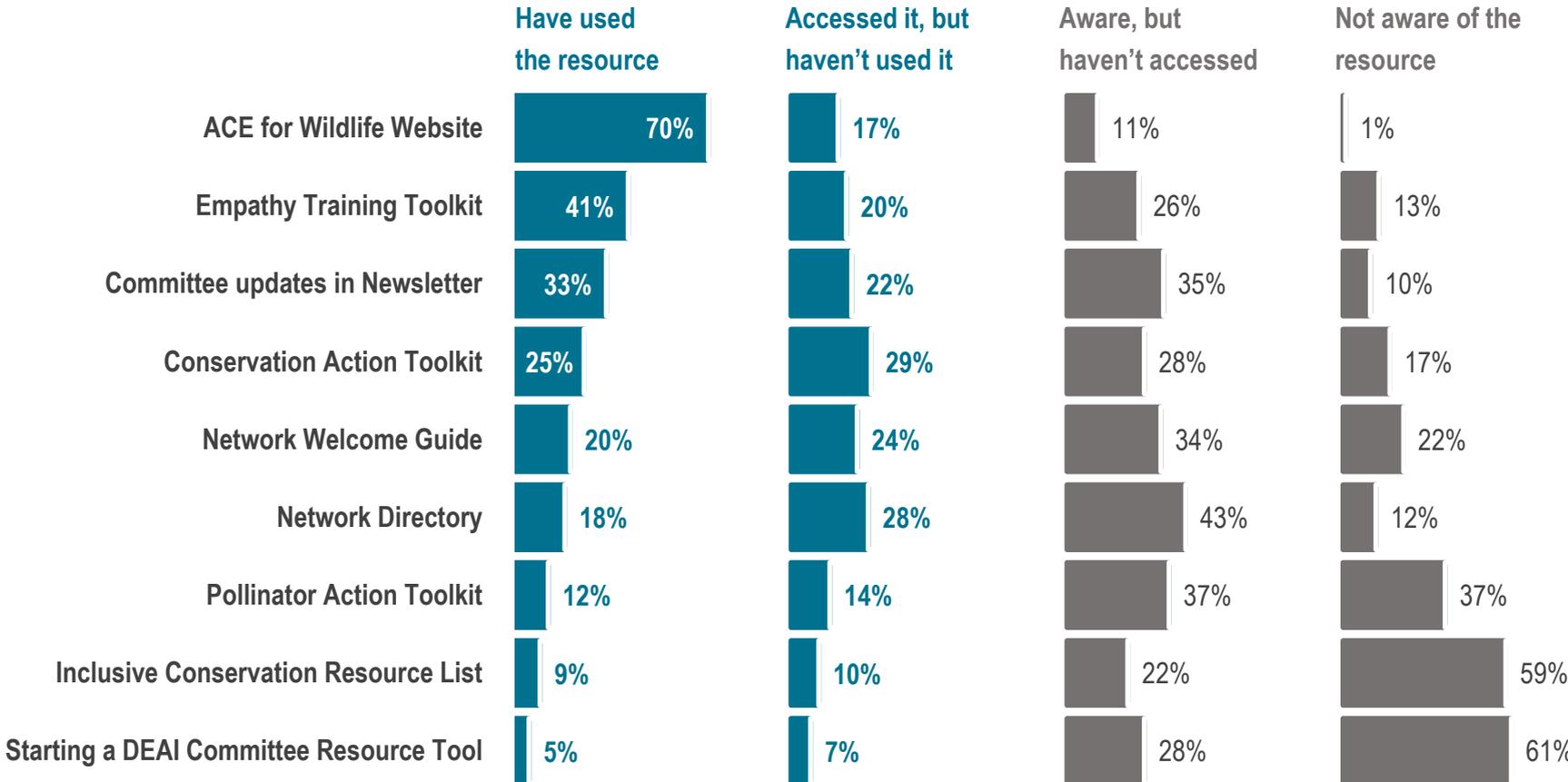


Compared to last year, more respondents said that they had used at least one of the listed resources (In 2024, the DEAI resource, Committee updates, and Network Directory were added to the list on the survey).



Overall, 80% of respondents reported using at least one of the listed resources on the survey, a significant improvement from last year's result where 55% indicated they had used at least one of the resources. The resource that the most respondents said they were not aware of included the Inclusive Conservation Resource List and the 'Starting a DEAI Committee Resource Tool'. In 2024 we added three resources to the list; Committee Updates in the Newsletter, Network Directory, and Starting a DEAI Committee Resource Tool.

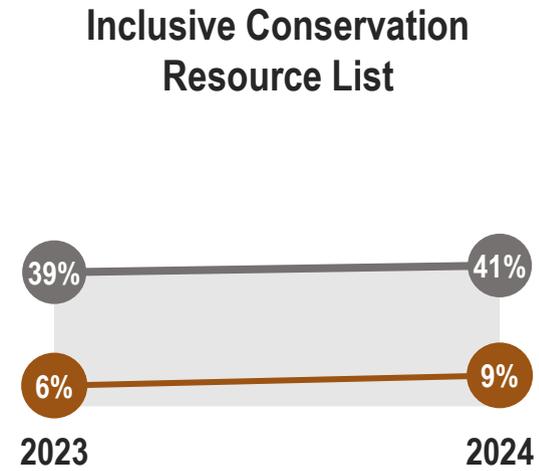
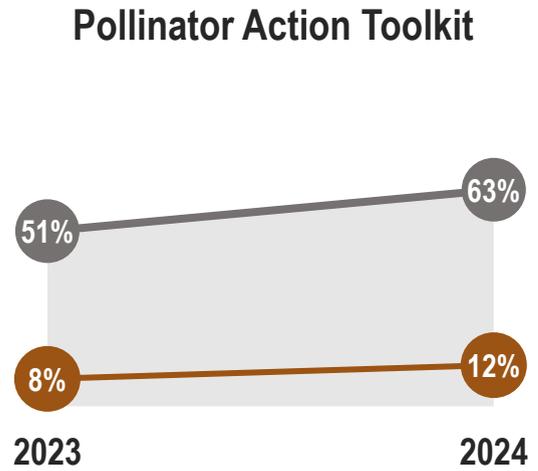
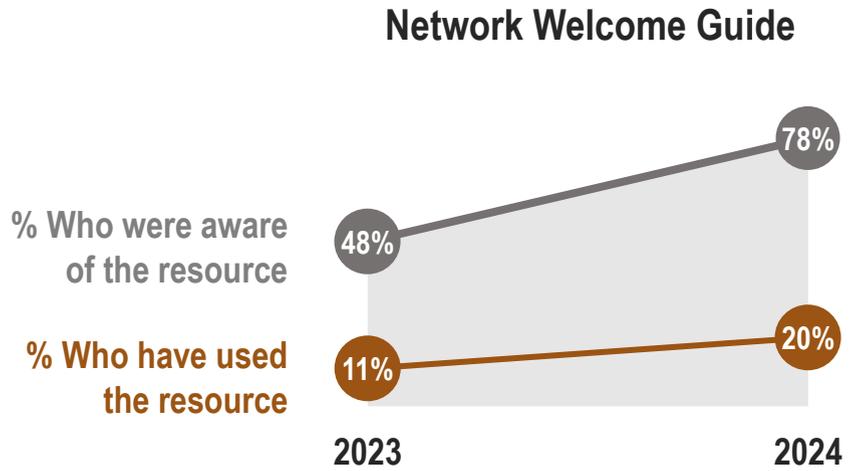
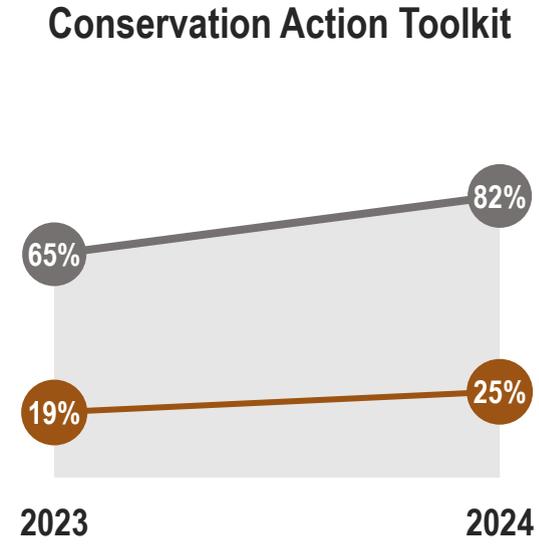
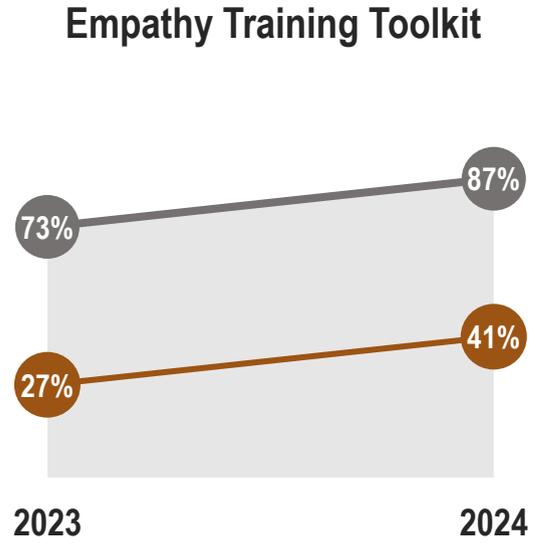
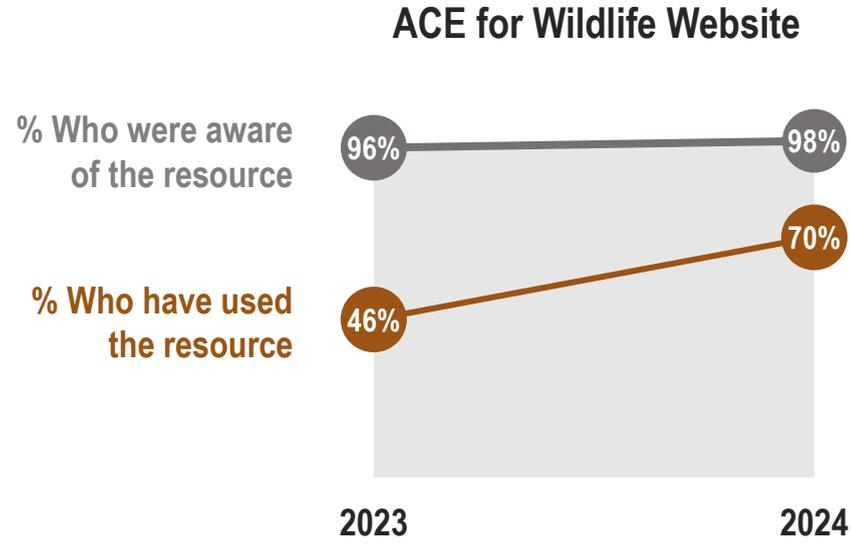
The most used resource was the ACE for Wildlife website (70%). Over half of respondents said they were not yet aware of the Inclusive Conservation Resource list and the 'Starting a DEAI Committee' Resource Tool.



Q: For each of the following resources select the option that best describes your awareness and use of the resource? (n=138)

# Respondents were more aware of resources and used them more this year.

Respondents reported higher levels of overall awareness and usage of the Network resources listed on the survey (six resources were listed on both 2023 and 2024 surveys). **Awareness increased the most for the Network Welcome Guide (30-pp increase) and Usage increased most for the ACE for Wildlife website (24-pp increase).** Awareness and usage were lowest for the Inclusive Conservation Resource list though each increased by a few points from the previous year's result.

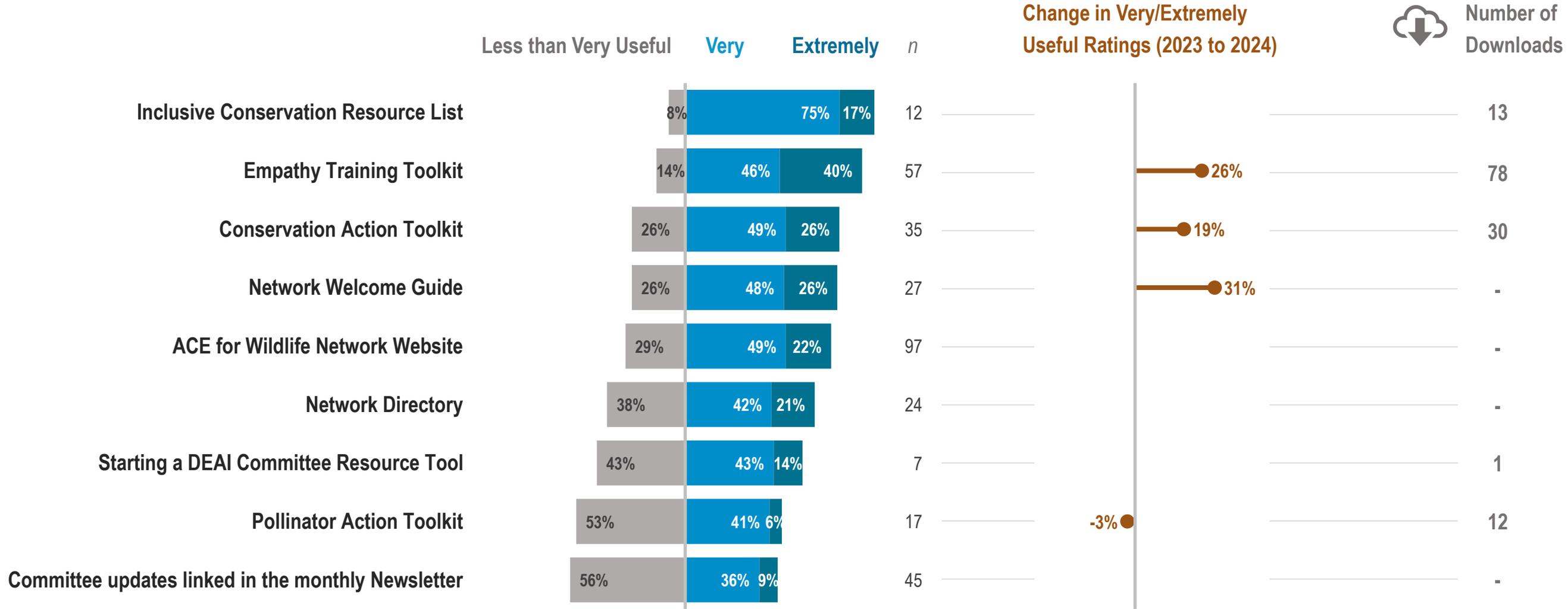


Q: For each of the following resources select the option that best describes your awareness and use of the resource?

# Respondents generally gave high ratings for resource usefulness.

Respondents who reported using each of the listed resources were asked how useful they felt the resource was to them. **The visual below shares an at-a-glance view for reported utility of each resource including the change in top-two box response from last year's survey (those who reported a resource to be Very/Extremely useful) and the number of website downloads recorded this year per actual website analytics.**

Overall, the Inclusive Conservation Resource List and Empathy Training Toolkit were rated most useful (over 80% Very/Extremely useful) by respondents. We saw substantial improvements in utility ratings for the Empathy Training Toolkit, Conservation Action Toolkit, and Network Welcome Guide. Ratings for the Pollinator Action Toolkit remained statistically the same (3% less than last year). **Changes between 2023 and 2024 are reported for the resources that were asked about on last year's survey.** The following pages provide more detail on awareness and usefulness for each of the individual resources.



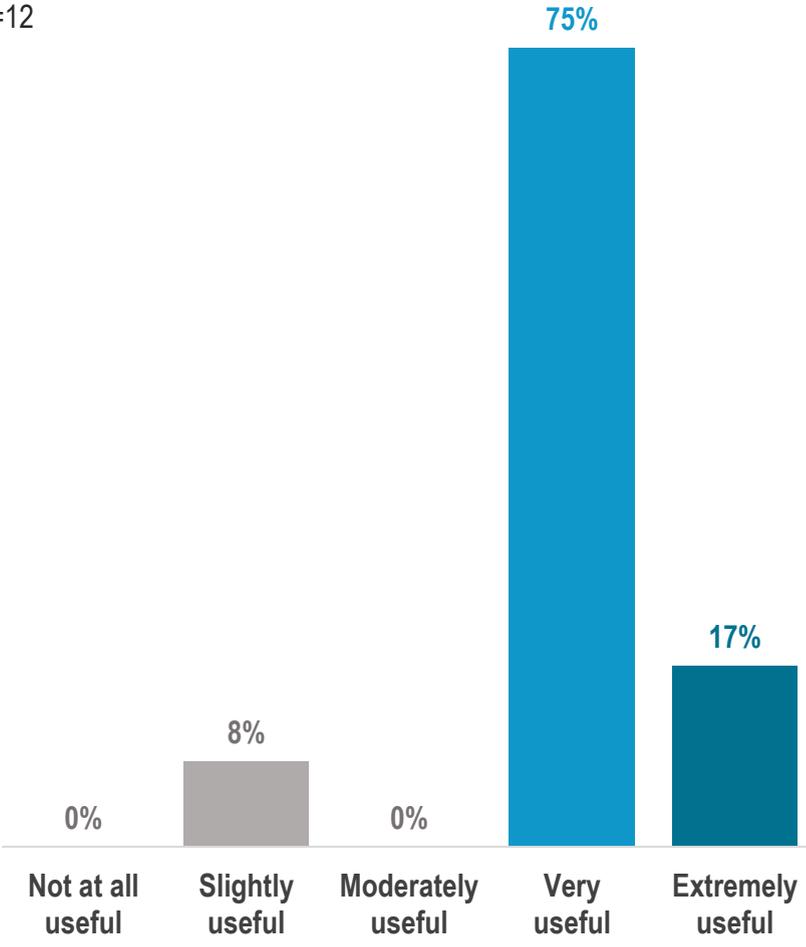
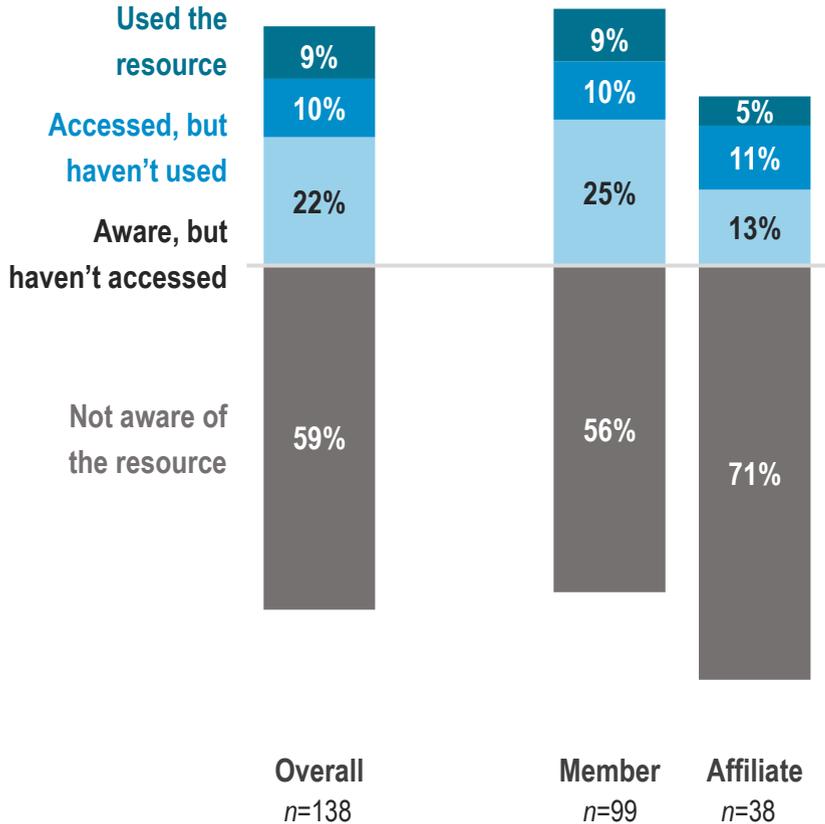
# Inclusive Conservation Resource List Awareness and Usefulness.

Most respondents were not familiar with the Inclusive Conservation Resource List. Over half (59%) overall were not aware. Fifty-six percent of Members and nearly three-quarters (71%) of Affiliates said they were not aware of the resource. Of the 12 respondents that did use the Resource List all but one of them said they felt it was Very or Extremely useful to them. Last year’s survey did not include a rating for perceived usefulness, because the Resource List was new to the Network at the time of survey (i.e., no longitudinal tracking of usefulness ratings for this resource in this year’s report).

Affiliates were less likely to have awareness of the Inclusive Conservation Resource List, though the difference was not statistically significant.

All but one of the respondents who used the Inclusive Conservation Resource List said it was either Very or Extremely useful to them.

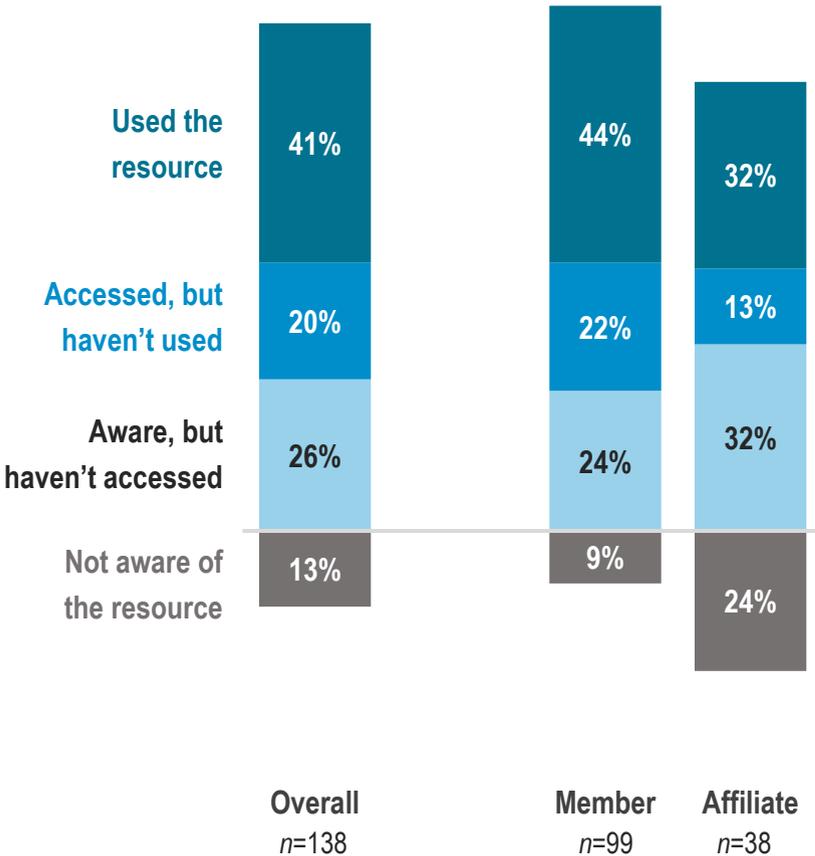
n=12



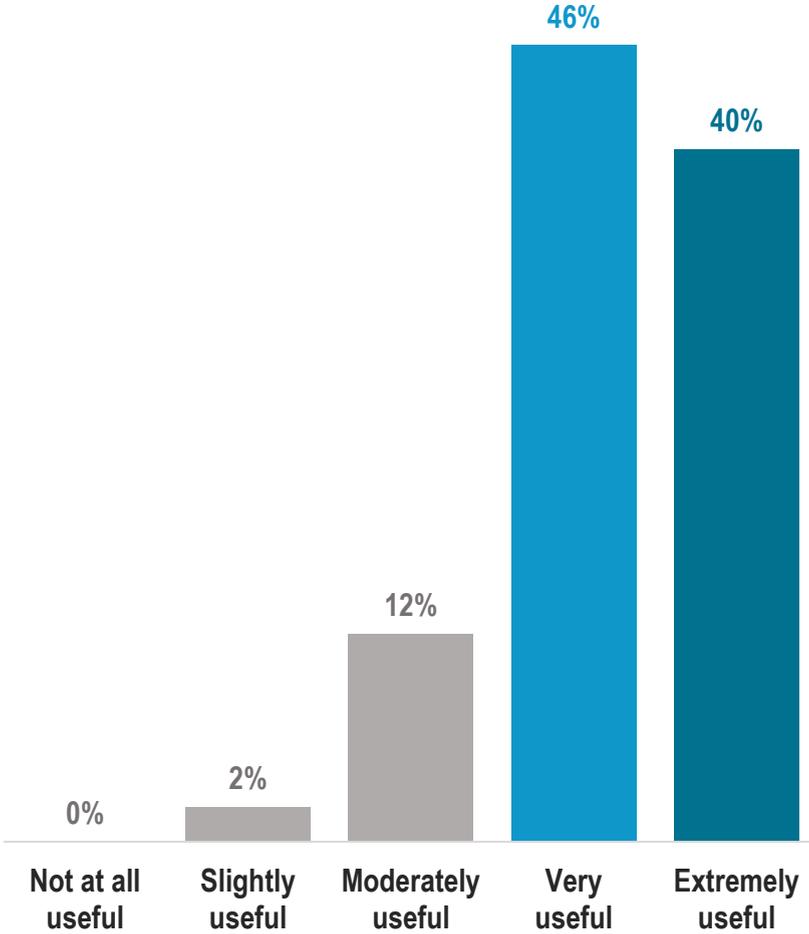
# Empathy Training Toolkit Awareness and Usefulness.

Just under 90% of respondents had some awareness of the Empathy Training Toolkit. Affiliates were less likely to be aware of, and to have used the Toolkit in their work (though the difference was not statistically significant). Among those who used the Toolkit, nearly all of them (86%) said it was either Very or Extremely useful. Ratings for perceived usefulness of the Toolkit improved from last year's result (60% to 86% Very/Extremely useful).

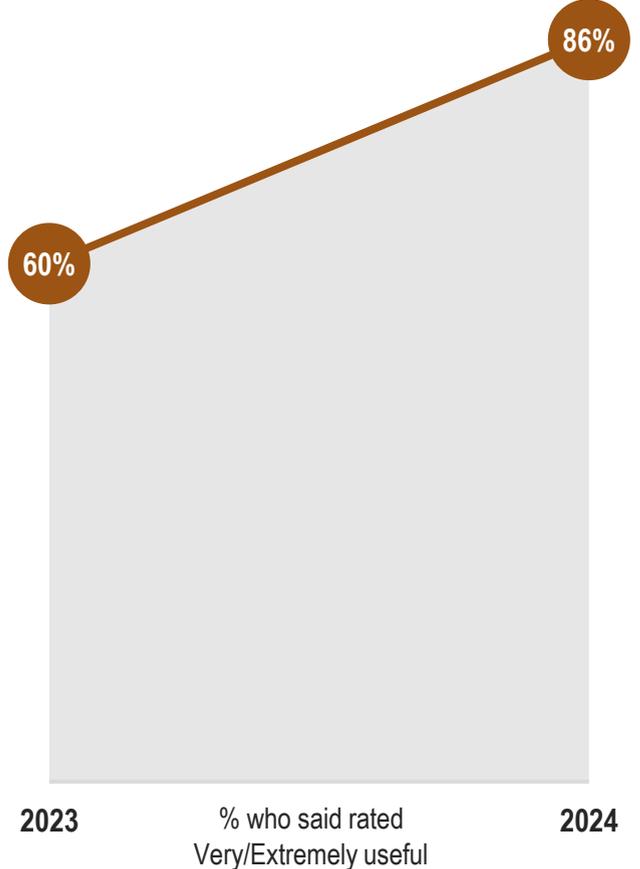
Members were slightly more likely to be aware of the Empathy Training Toolkit than Affiliates, though the difference was not statistically significant.



Nearly all who used the Empathy Training Toolkit (86%) said it was Very/Extremely useful to them.  
n=57



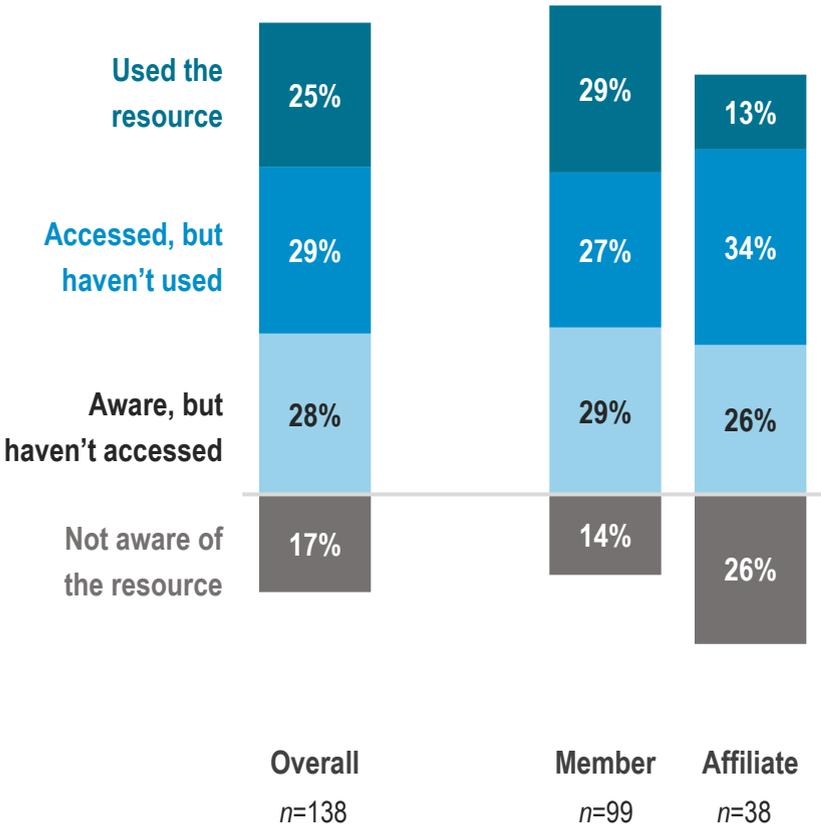
For those who used the Empathy Training Toolkit, ratings of usefulness improved from last year.



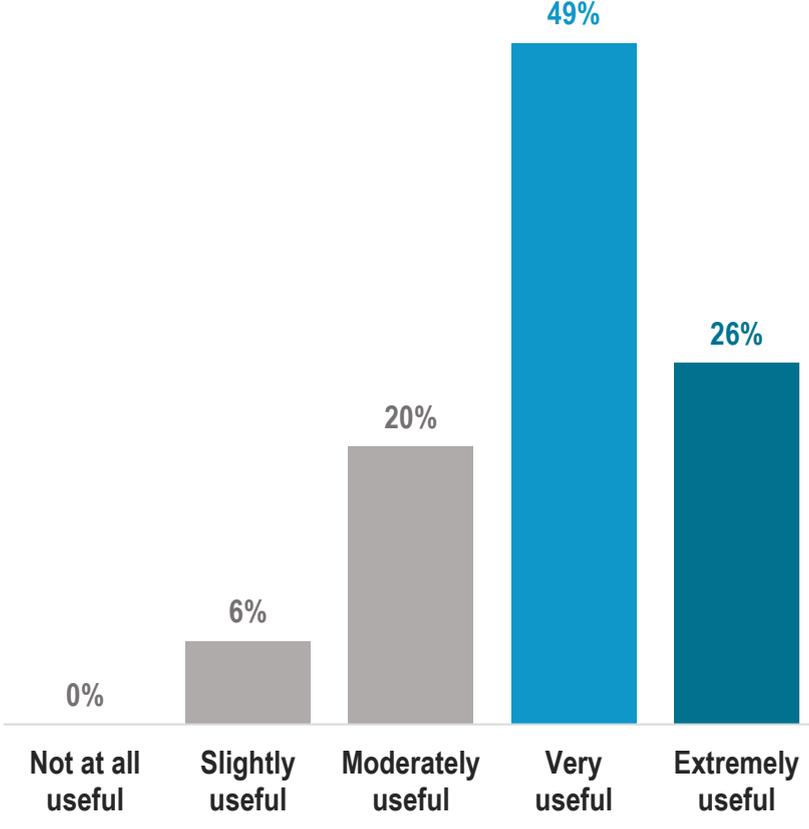
# Conservation Action Toolkit Awareness and Usefulness.

Most respondents (83%) had some awareness of the Conservation Action Toolkit. Affiliates were less likely to be aware of, and to have used the Toolkit in their work (though the difference was not statistically significant). Among those who used the Toolkit, three-quarters (75%) said it was either Very or Extremely useful. Ratings for perceived usefulness of the Toolkit improved from last year's result (55% to 75% Very/Extremely useful).

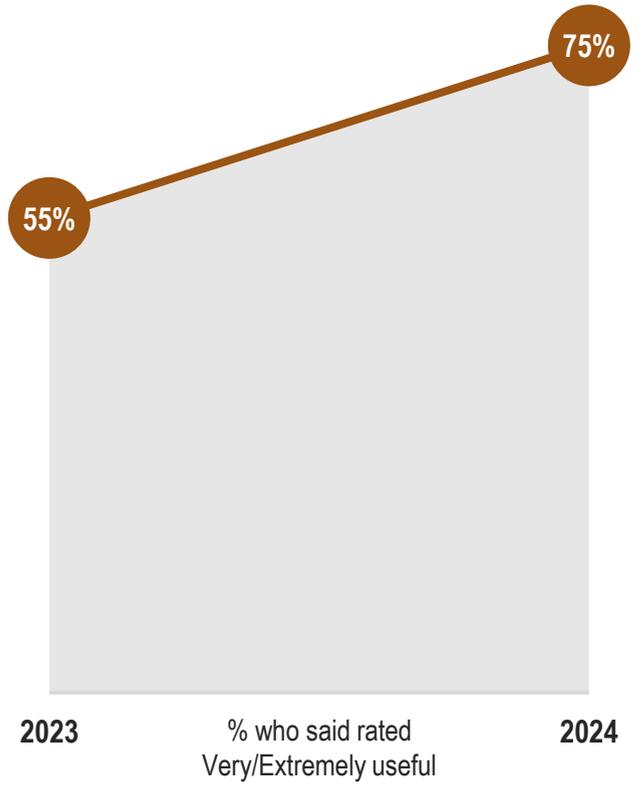
Members were slightly more likely to be aware of the Conservation Action Toolkit than Affiliates, though the difference was not statistically significant.



Three-quarters of those who used the Conservation Action Toolkit felt it was Very or Extremely useful.  
n=35



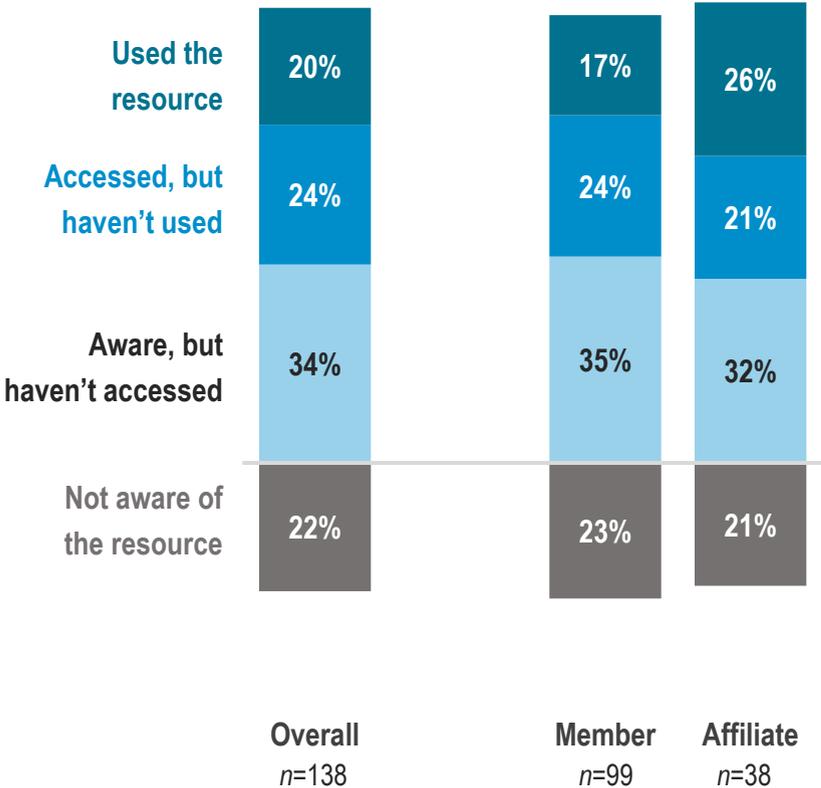
For those who used the Conservation Action Toolkit, ratings of usefulness improved from last year.



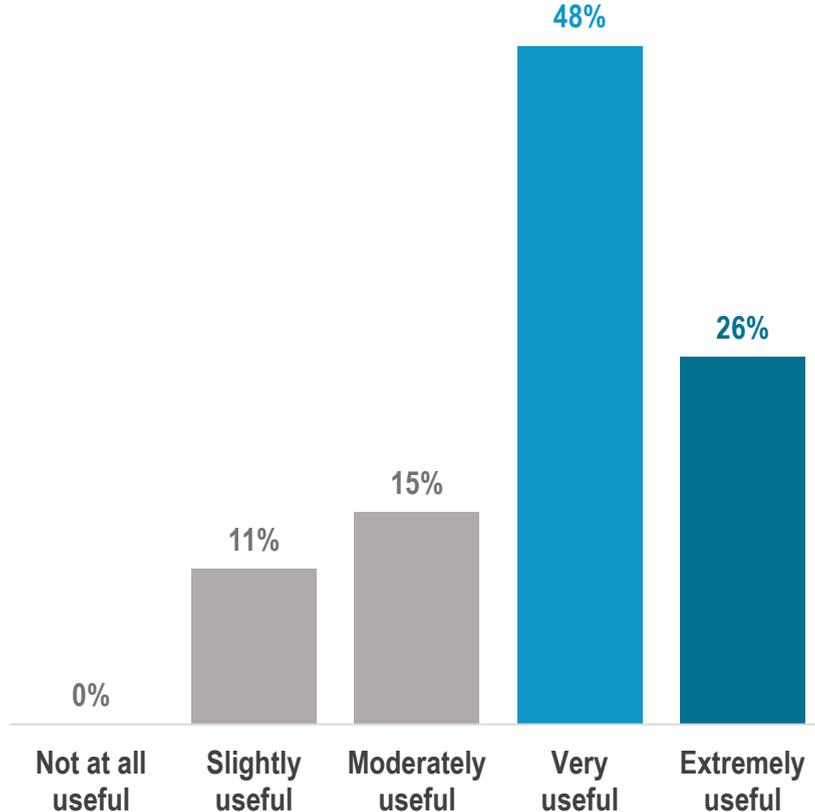
# Network Welcome Guide Awareness and Usefulness.

Just under 80% of all respondents had some awareness of the Network Welcome Guide. Affiliates were slightly more likely to have used the Welcome Guide (though the difference was not statistically significant). Among those who used the Guide, three-quarters (74%) said it was either Very or Extremely useful. Ratings for perceived usefulness of the Guide improved from last year's result (43% to 74% Very/Extremely useful).

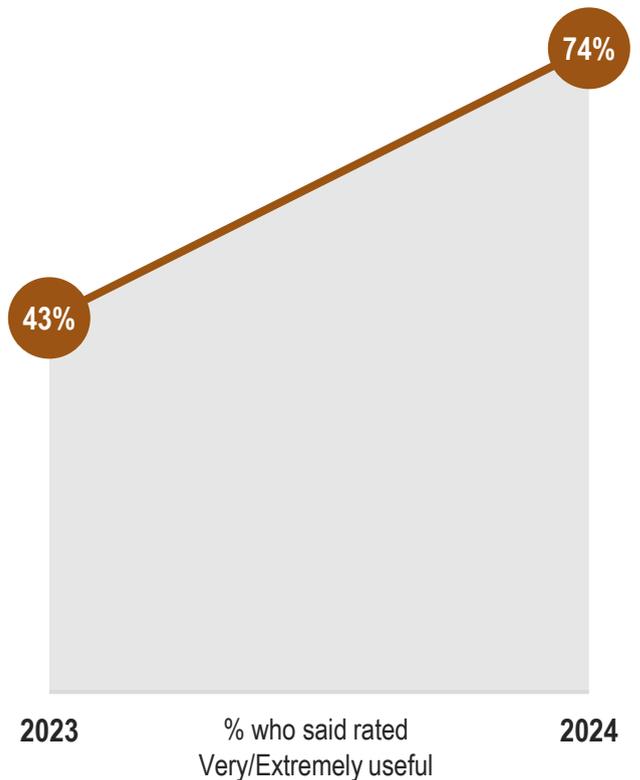
Members and Affiliates had similar awareness of the Network Welcome Guide. Affiliates were slightly more likely to have used it, though the difference was not statistically significant.



Three-quarters (74%) of those who used the Network Welcome Guide felt it was Very or Extremely useful.  
n=27

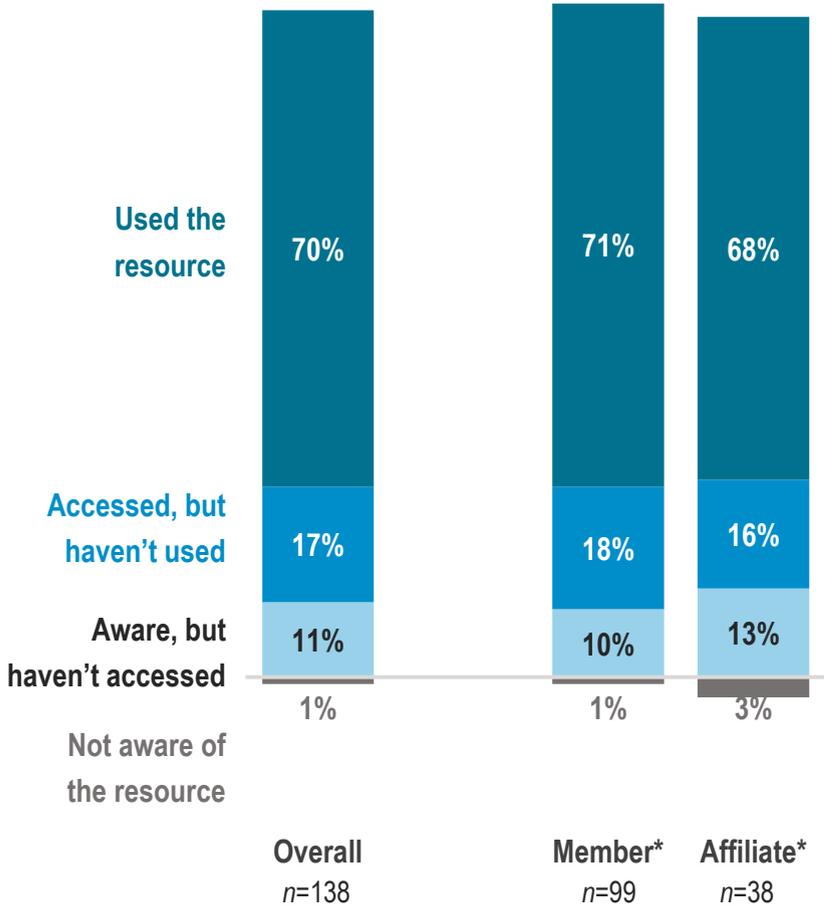


For those who used the Network Welcome Guide, ratings of usefulness improved from last year.



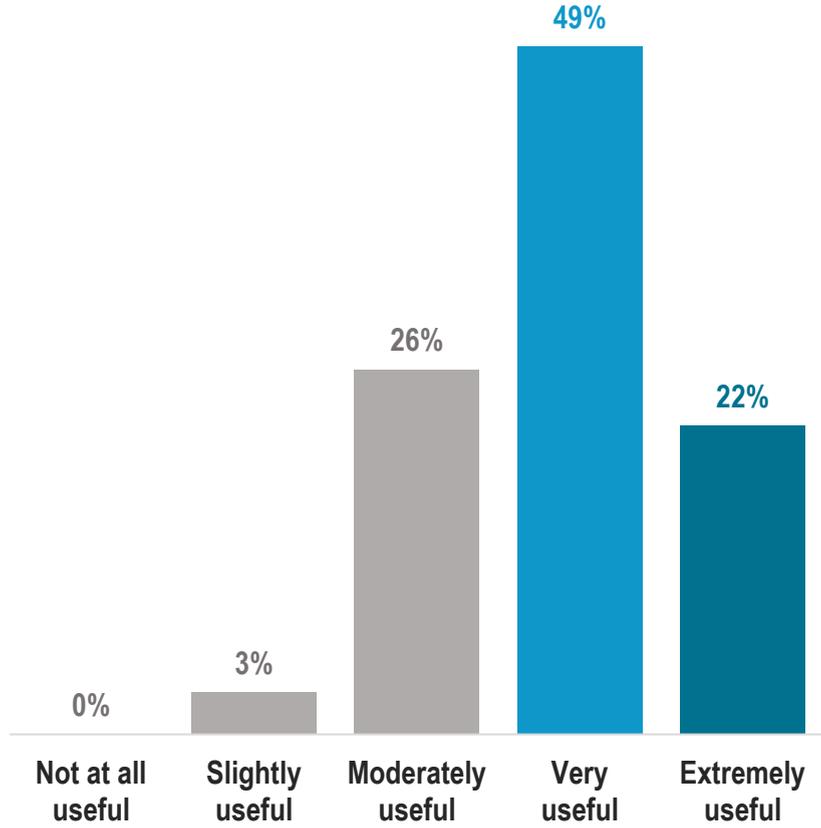
# ACE for Wildlife Network Website Awareness and Usefulness.

Network Website awareness and use were similar for Members and Affiliates.



The ACE for Wildlife Network team launched a new website at the start of this year in response to previous feedback. Nearly all respondents (99%) had some level of awareness of the Website. Members and Affiliates had similar levels of familiarity with the Website (no statistically significant differences). Among respondents who said they had used the Website, 71% said they felt the website was either Very or Extremely useful. Last year's survey did not include a rating for perceived usefulness of the Website (i.e., no longitudinal tracking of usefulness ratings for this resource in this year's report). When asked if there was anything they'd like to see added or changed about Network resources, a couple mentioned difficulties navigating the Website or accessing resources specifically.

About three-quarters of respondents (71%) felt the Network website was Very or Extremely useful.  
n=97



A couple respondents left comments about difficulties navigating the Website and accessing resources. The previous website has been noted to be problematic for many users – very few users seemed to list the new website among their top concerns or ideas for improved Network communications.

- “ Adding something to help better navigate the website, especially for new members.
- “ An easier how-to on how to access the resources. I am a little confused on how to log-in.

Q: What, if anything, would you like to see added or changed about any of the Network resources?

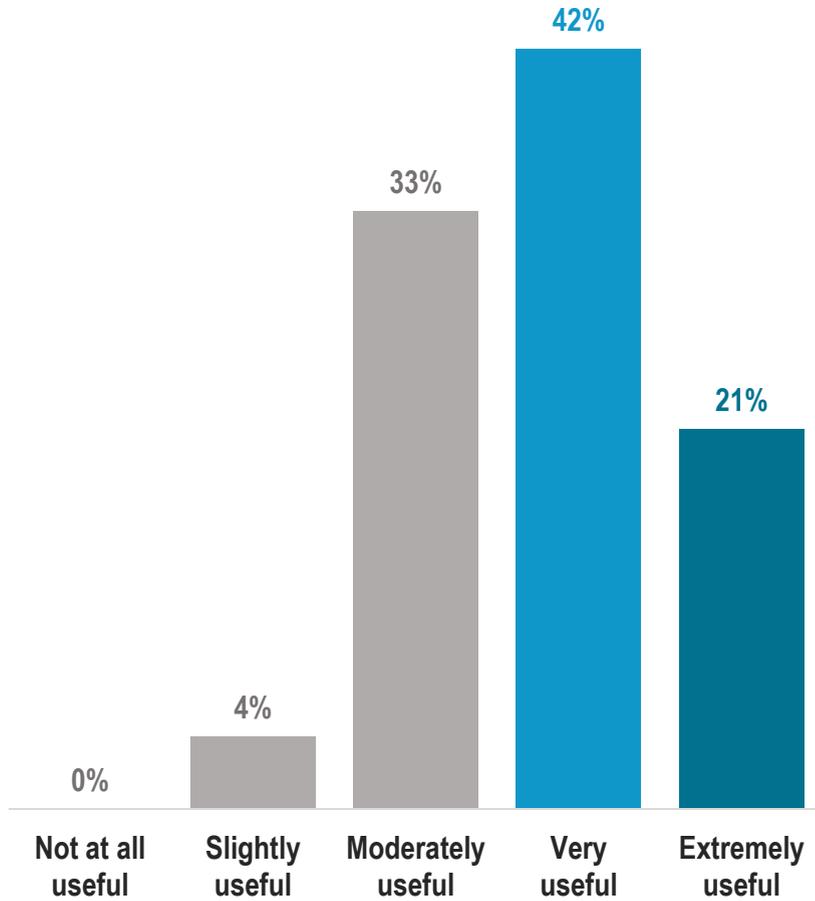
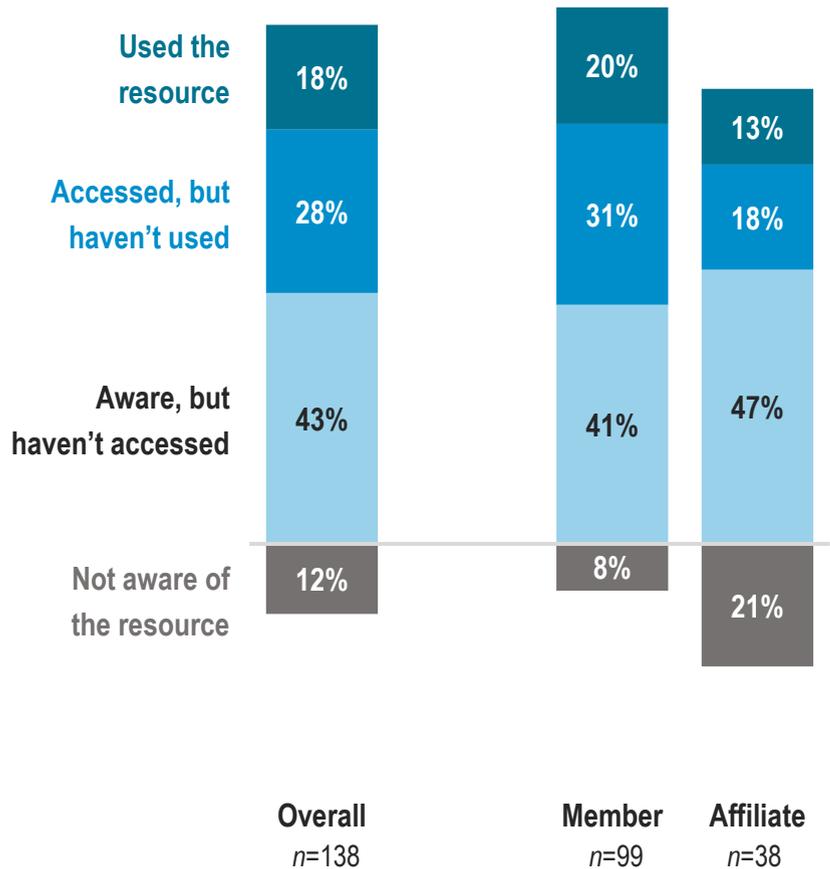
# Network Directory Awareness and Usefulness.

Most respondents (88%) had some awareness of the Network Directory. Affiliates were less likely to be aware of, and to have used the Directory in their work (though the difference was not statistically significant). Among those who used the Network Directory, about two-thirds (63%) said it was either Very or Extremely useful. Last year's survey did not include a rating for perceived usefulness of the Network Directory (i.e., no longitudinal tracking of usefulness ratings for this resource in this year's report) as this was a new feature.

**Members were more likely to be aware of the Network Directory than Affiliates, though the difference was not statistically significant.**

**About two-thirds (63%) of those who used the Network Directory felt it was Very or Extremely useful.**

*n=24*

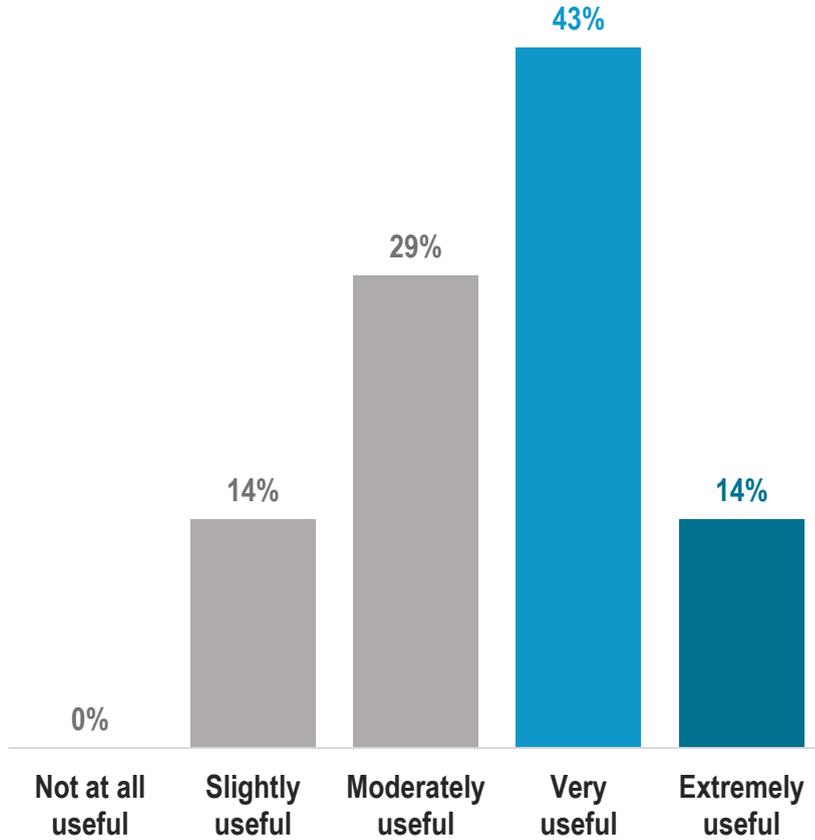
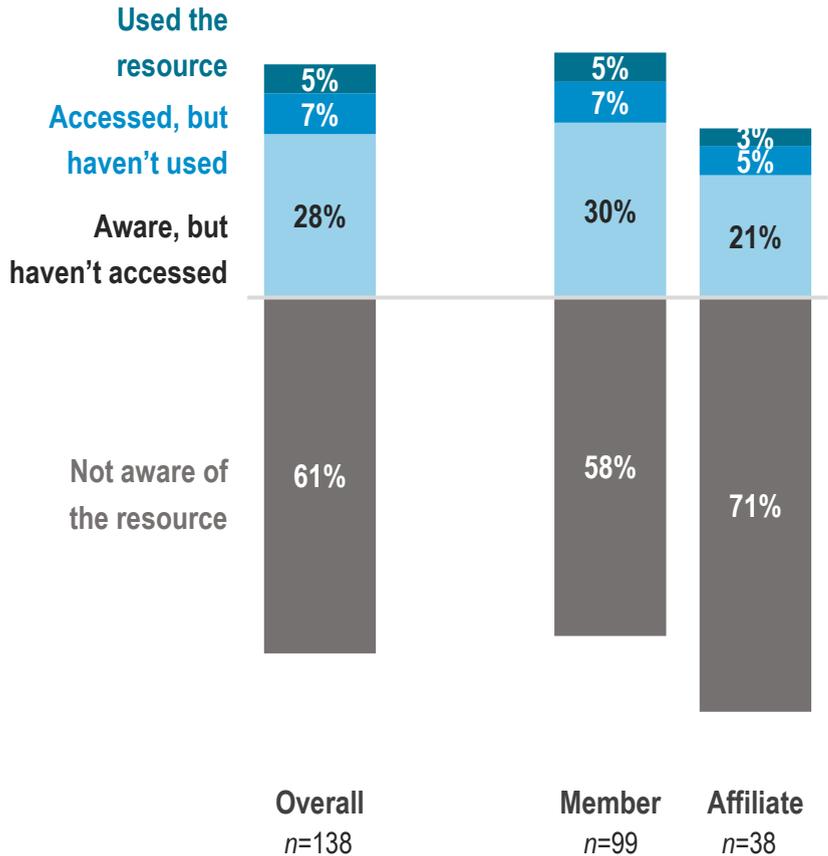


# Starting a DEAI Committee Resource Tool Awareness and Usefulness.

The majority of respondents (61%) overall were not yet aware of the Starting a DEAI Committee Resource Tool. Members were more likely to be aware of this resource than Affiliates, though use was low among both groups. Among the seven respondents who used the resource, about half (57%) said it was either Very or Extremely useful.

The majority of respondents were not yet aware of the Starting a DEAI Committee Resource Tool. Members were more likely to be aware than Affiliate (difference not statistically significant).

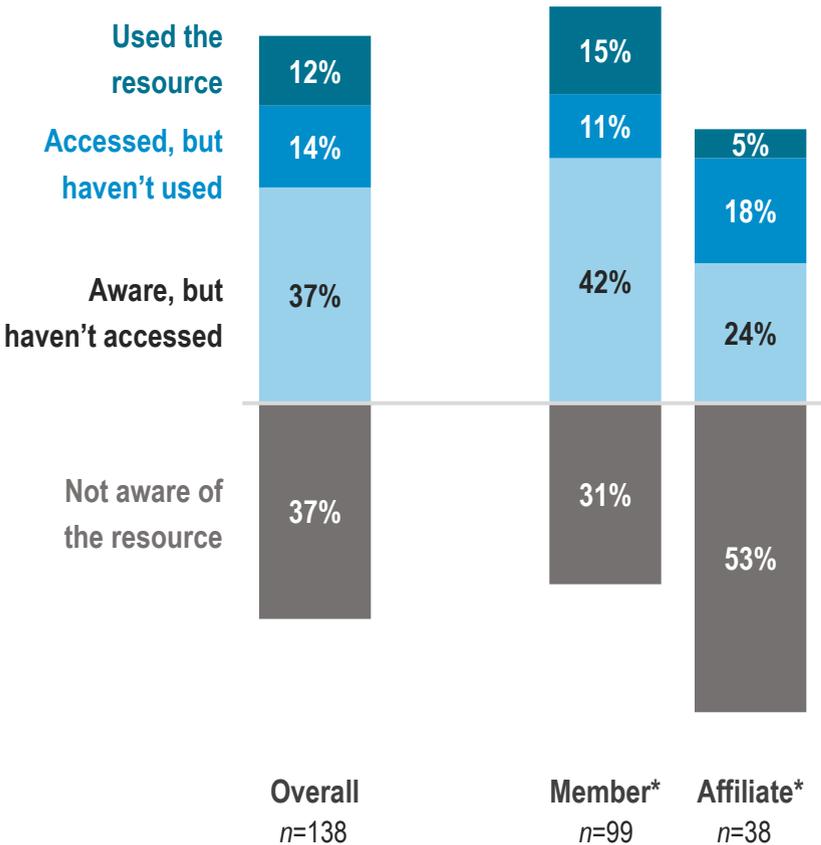
Among the seven respondents who used this resource, 4 of them said it was Very/Extremely useful to them.  
*n=7*



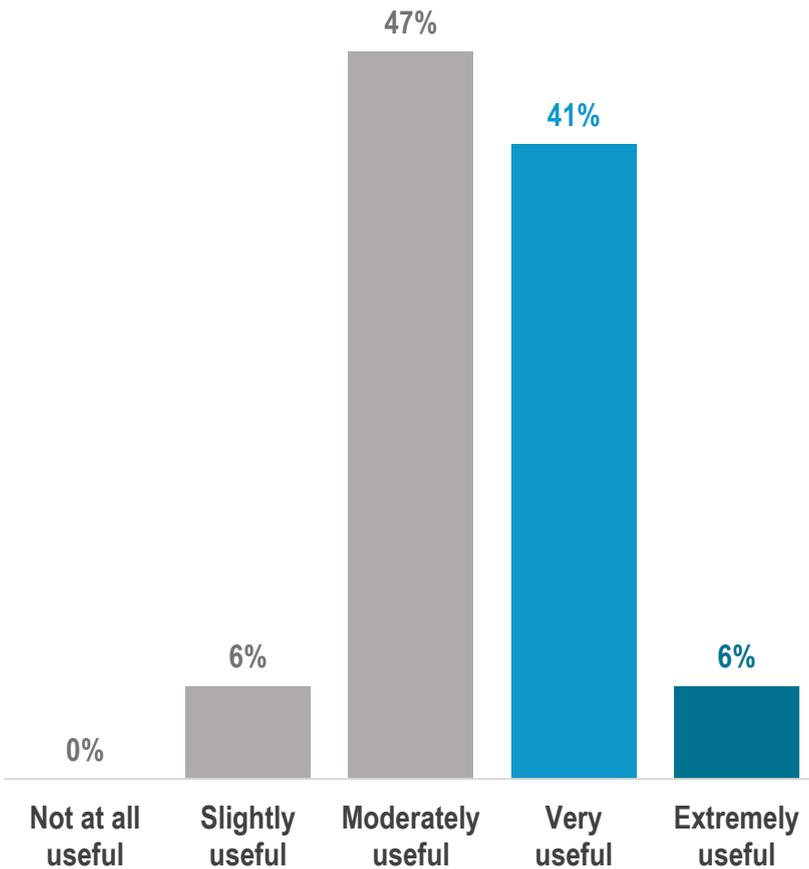
# Pollinator Action Toolkit Awareness and Usefulness.

Just about two-thirds (62%) of all respondents had some awareness of the Pollinator Action Toolkit. Members were significantly more likely to be aware of, and to have accessed, the Toolkit. Use of the Toolkit among both groups was low. Among those who used the Toolkit, just under half (47%) said it was either Very or Extremely useful. Another 47% believed the Toolkit has been Moderately useful to them. Ratings for perceived usefulness of the Toolkit declined slightly from last year's result (50% to 47% Very/Extremely useful). Statistically, no real change.

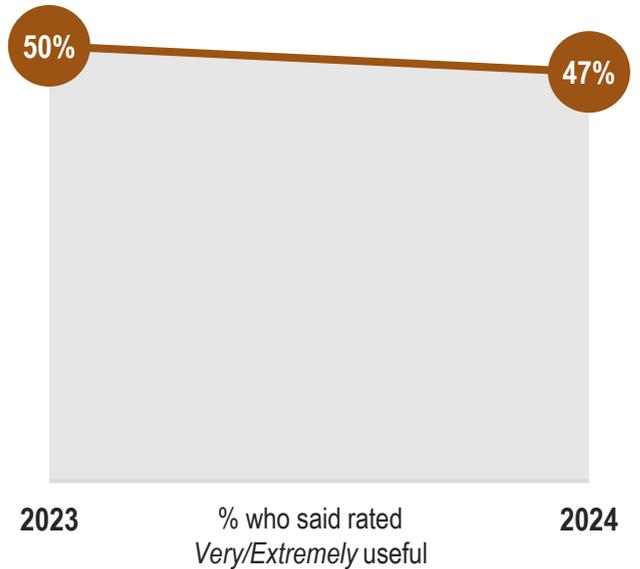
Members were statistically more likely to be aware of, and to have accessed, the Pollinator Action Toolkit than Affiliates.



Just under half (47%) of those who used the Toolkit felt it was Very or Extremely useful to them. For this resource, ratings of usefulness were more moderate.  
n=17



For those who used the Pollinator Action Toolkit, ratings of usefulness essentially remained the same as last year (3-pp decrease).



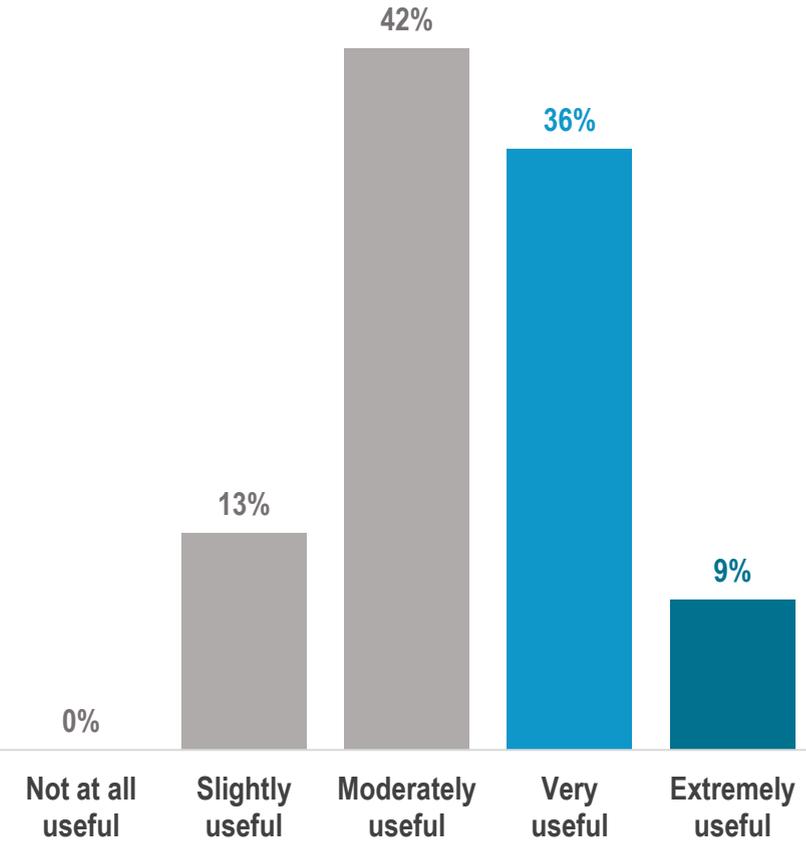
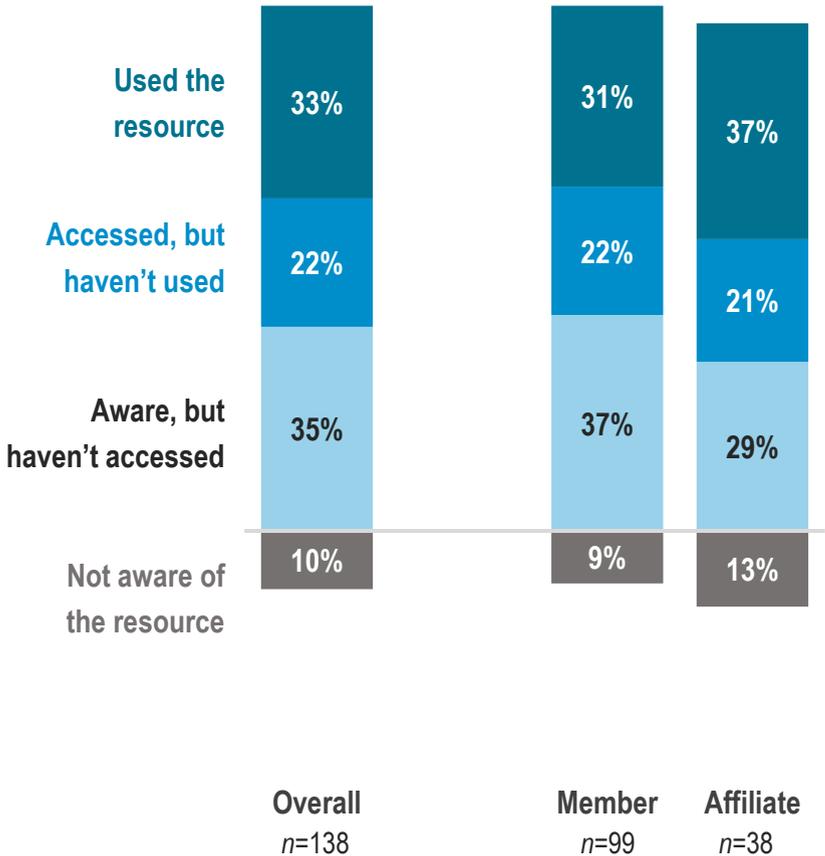
# Committee Updates in Monthly Newsletters Awareness and Usefulness.

Most respondents (90%) were aware of the committee updates linked in monthly newsletters. Members were slightly more likely to be aware of this resource than Affiliates, though the difference was not statistically significant. Among the respondents who used these updates, about half (42%) said they were *Moderately* useful. Another 45% felt they were *Very* or *Extremely* useful.

Members and Affiliates were similar in their awareness and use of committee updates in monthly newsletters.

Among those who said they used the Updates, about half (42%) said they were *Moderately* useful. Another 45% said they were *Very* or *Extremely* useful.

n=45



# Suggestions for Network Resources.

51 respondents provided general comments about resources. Most of them (37) said they were happy with the current state of the resources, wanting more resources (broadly), or simply said, "Nothing, everything is great!". Additionally, some of these comments noted that they had yet to explore many of the resources and hoped to be able to carve out more time to access and review them.



**Some mentioned wanting more training on how to access resources, how to find resources, or wanting more reminders of what resources are available.**

"Adding something to help better navigate the website, especially for new members."

"An easier how-to on how to access the resources. I am a little confused on how to log-in."

"I always have a hard time finding the toolkits and what I need access to."

"I think we need more awareness of the resources provided to us as being part of the [Network]..."



**Ideas for additional resources included things like more case studies on how other orgs have used resources.**

"I am a proponent of adding even more examples of how other facilities train and use empathy. Sharing what already works is always useful."

"Maybe add a section to the toolkits about what facilities have implemented things from it, if they don't mind being contacted about it from other places that are just getting started."

"...would be helpful to have more examples of verbiage that is effective for communicating empathy for wildlife native to rural areas that tend to have a bad reputations (for example, I work with rattlesnakes and alligators in rural South Georgia)."



**A few mentioned more tactical or specific ideas for promoting or updating the current resources that are available.**

"Highlighting resources in the newsletter would help remind readers they are available, and give them greater accessibility."

"...Maybe when organizations become partners there is some kind of presentation about the resources available and where to find them. This could be led by someone in our zoo that is heavily involved in the network or perhaps someone who's well aware of it all from ACE network."

"Maybe use different icons or colors for different types of resources? For example, a pencil for an evaluation resource, a computer for a video resource, etc."



**A few mentioned more evaluation-related resource, or desire for more evidence-based information around practices.**

"Evaluation tools revolving around animal ambassadors."

"I would like to start seeing more evidence listed towards claims around empathy practices. Do these things really work and why are you supporting certain practices? I don't find the evidence terribly overwhelming or convincing around some of your recommended practices or evidence that suggest these are best practices."

## Respondents provided warm words of appreciation and excitement for future Network participation in addition to a few parting notes.

When asked if there was anything else they'd like to share, respondents provided warm words of appreciation and gratitude. Participation in the Network has been beneficial to members, to their organizations, and has influenced the field. A few respondents left constructive food for thought. One noted they felt like it was a little "hard to get into the game" for those newer to the Network. Another noted that they felt their leadership was supportive but that those in the Network might better consider the "impact of the things you ask..." of staff who have limited time and resources. Finally, one respondent expressed thoughts on wanting more evidence for the use of Network-recommended empathy practices.

*"One of the best experiences of my career, seeing it from the beginning to what it has become. A real honor to be a part of this!"*

## APPRECIATION AND THANKS

“ I have been able to advance my career thanks to the ACE for wildlife network. The opportunities and network connections that have been forged because my organization is a network partner has been extremely valuable to me and has really allowed me to set a path forward in my career in zoos and aquariums. I am very grateful for all the opportunities that the ACE network provides not just for me but for many others who are similar to me in being at small organizations with limited funding to provide opportunities for front line/mid level staff.

Being a part of this network has transformed our education department's work: how we present our animals, how we train our animals, our audience messaging, our signage, our keeper chats/tours, our evaluation. Empathy is at the core of it all.

The accessibility of MANY resources is great! We have used some to adapt our internal resources, while some resources I have on the back-burner to influence large projects in the future.

I thoroughly enjoy being part of the Network and have made many new professional contacts at other organizations I would not have otherwise.

Kudos to our staff here ... who makes empathy training a top priority for all new hires, volunteers, annually for everyone, refreshers, ideas, discussions, etc. I think this helped build a stronger sense of community throughout the zoo/across departments. Admittedly and helpfully, taking this survey helps me know what I am missing out on.

## ADDITIONAL FOOD FOR THOUGHT

“ I think with every group it can be clicky, if you are newer and do not know anything it's hard to get into the game.

Our leadership is supportive, but it doesn't seem like the impact of all the things you ask us to do is really understood by your team.

While I think the work is important, I haven't seen much to me that this network does that seems terribly different from past practices that many zoos have done for many years... Perhaps again this comes back to the evidence piece and wishing that there was more work that would highlight certain practices as more effective than other practices....it seems like much of it is just "reinventing the wheel" and calling it best practices in empathy..."

# Additional Interest Items

Upon survey completion respondents were asked if they were willing to complete two additional questions of interest. Most (80%) opted to continue and provided their feedback to two additional questions:

1. **What resources would you like to see from the DEAI Committee in the future?**
2. **Are there any unique ways you've used empathy practices in your work this past year?**



# This Year for the DEAI Committee

Sixty respondents left a comment about something they thought the DEAI Committee could do in the future. Several respondents said something about wanting more resources for organizations in geographic areas or for those with leadership that may be more resistant to DEAI efforts. Many generally asked for more professional development opportunities, resources, and discussion groups – or for the current offerings to continue. Some mentioned resources for working with specific communities, like neurodiversity, or disability communities. Many respondents felt that including more examples or case studies of how organizations have implemented DEAI initiatives would be beneficial. A few noted that they felt many of the DEAI discussions were more theoretical and would like more specific “...strategies or frameworks...DEAI plans or evaluation tools/metrics...” One individual noted that they appreciated the Network’s DEAI focus, but wondered about the charge of the Committee - is its purpose to help other organizations implement DEAI practices with their staff and/or audiences? Is it to “advance equity within the Network”?

Q: The DEAI Committee is considering what Network Members/Affiliates most want or need with respect to DEAI at their organizations. How best can the DEAI Committee help support you or other Members/Affiliates? What Network resources, events, or discussions would you like to see provided by the DEAI Committee in the future? (n=60)

## MITIGATING RESISTANCE TO DEAI

“How to support DEAI initiatives in potentially hostile cultures.” Is one that I have not seen much on. Otherwise, there is a plethora of resources you all have.

[We’re a city zoo].. it can be hard to navigate DEAI practices. Often simple efforts (changing our logo for Pride) can cause quite the stir. Additionally, the City itself doesn’t even have a DEAI plan. If there are resources on how to navigate this on a political level similar to what we experience, that would be great!

Our problem is that we have a lot of staff invested in DEAI who are not in leadership roles. We have trouble implementing staffing changes, etc. and would greatly benefit from having leadership buy-in. Tools to help with that would be amazing

## MORE EXAMPLES AND CASE STUDIES

[More] examples of successful DEAI in other facilities along with the companies they developed resources with, as well as the level of ongoing staff resources and time commitment they require to build or make resources available to guests.

## MORE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

I think trainings and workshops are always helpful...to revisit and refresh and rethink where you are on your DEAI journey and how all of us can continue to take steps forward toward creating a more equitable and just world.

## RESOURCE FOR SPECIFIC COMMUNITIES

Neurodiversity training and friendly work environments-- I recently found ZaneZoo.org as a resource.

...Cameron Whitley did a great study on language for animals with disabilities- maybe a toolkit or something around that related to empathy and best practices?

## RESOURCES THAT ARE SPECIFIC, DIRECT, USEFUL

Most resources are theoretical in nature with limited practical strategies or frameworks. DEAI plans or evaluation tools/metrics would be very helpful.

We have results oriented leaders; any information that shows "X" Zoo(s) did "Y" DEAI practice that resulted in "Z" change in delivering on our conservation mission would be amazing.

“I think the DEAI committee might be better served by focusing on what the rank and file individuals can do - especially those who are not in leadership or decision making roles.”

## ACE FOR WILDLIFE NETWORK COMMITTEE FOCUS

...I have always felt confused about the role of the ACE Network in supporting DEAI efforts at partner organizations. Why is the ACE Network the right people to do that work? I would love to see more of an internal focus for the DEAI committee to advance equity within the network and help us learn about/define the relationship that empathy and empathy for wildlife plays in DEAI.

# Unique or Interesting Uses of Empathy?

Forty-four respondents left a comment about a unique or interesting way in which they've used empathy in their work this year. Some commented on ways that their involvement in the Network has helped them better articulate the purpose of empathy-based work with audiences like donors. One mentioned being able to discuss empathy practices in a presentation of their interpretive master plan with a donor group who "got really excited and on board" with "...empathy as a tool for conservation action...". Some mentioned ways they've used empathy practices to update internal interpretive resources or volunteer trainings. One noted that their use of empathy practices in volunteer training made for more "motivated/excited volunteers who engage more with guests and stay volunteers longer". Others discussed new activities they developed for programs or audiences. One said they were developing a new empathy-focused interactive screen in their gift shop to encourage animal adoptions. Respondents also mentioned ways they've used empathy to enhance the ways in which they interact with guests and restructure interpretive conversations to focus on guest knowledge, feelings, and actions.

Q: Are there any unique, interesting, or exciting ways you've used empathy practices in your work this past year? If yes, we'd love to know more...? (n=44)

## INCREASING BUY-IN AND MAKING THE CASE FOR EMPATHY-FOCUSED STRATEGIES

“Because of the interpretive master plan that we developed as part of the grant program just last week we were able to have a very successful meeting with some donors. They were very enthusiastic and had a lot of ideas that were probably not going to work well for our zoo and we were able to talk them through our interpretive master plan and really talk through the empathy piece. They got really excited and on board with what we were telling them. They really connected to empathy as a tool for conservation action and now are really more open to our ideas in what we think will best fit our zoo and our mission. They also now are wanting to slow down their timeline so that we can incorporate evaluation and get feedback from diverse stakeholders.”

## NEW STAFF/VOLUNTEER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

“In this past year, I have updated our staff "empathy binder" to include conservation connections. Each animal in our collection has a page that describes their background, how their name was chosen, their personality, and an example of how to use their story to connect with guests and further our park's conservation goals.”

I used empathy practices to match mentors/mentees which is a part of our new volunteer training. Good matches result in more motivated/excited volunteers who engage more guests and stay volunteers longer since they feel welcome in the community.

## NEW EMPATHY-FOCUSED ACTIVITIES / INTERACTIVES

“During our one-day spring break camp, "Creature Connections," we focused on the quirks and details of some of our ambassador favorites. We had a mini lesson involving our Madagascar hissing cockroaches. After meeting some and learning about them, each child was tasked with creating a 'vacation' home for the cockroach in a small critter keeper container. The kids chose the substrate, the food, and any other furniture to put in the habitat. Then they observed their cockroach in that habitat. We only had a short time with the cockroaches, but we encouraged the children to name them and determine their personality (did they like to hide or explore).”

We are working on creating an interactive screen in our gift shop to encourage more symbolic animal adoptions. The screen will allow them to scroll through the individual animals and learn more about them- featuring their stories, unique characteristics, and how we care for them.

## UPDATES TO GUEST INTERACTIONS

“When passing by an animal, I pause near guests and greet the animal by name. This helps guests feel comfortable asking for more information. If an animal responds to singing, I sing their favorite song to show guests how the animal displays contentment or interest.”

We have restructured how we facilitate interpretive conversations to focus on what we want Guests to know, feel, and do.

# Additional Network Progress Markers



ADVANCING  
CONSERVATION  
THROUGH  
**EMPATHY FOR  
WILDLIFE®**

# Network Event Attendance and Participation

205

Members and Affiliates attended Network events in 2024.

32

Members and Affiliates presented at Network events in 2024.

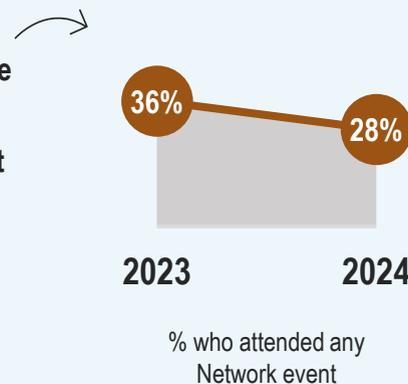
96

Members and Affiliates attended the virtual Empathy Summit.

35

event attendees were institutional decision makers at their organizations.

Compared to last year, more individuals attended Network events in 2024, but they represent a lower proportion of Network membership.



First-time presenters



Organizations represented by event presenters

Network Affiliates



Network Partner Organizations represented by event presenters

22

16

20

Non-Partner organizations had staff members that attended the Summit.

19

Summit attendees were institutional decision makers at their organizations.



Partner Organizations represented at the Summit

# Network Membership & Engagement

398

Network Members

249

Network Affiliates

173

Non-Partner organizations represented

## Committee Membership

38

Members & Affiliates serve on committees

28

Organizations represented on committees

9

Network Affiliates serve on committees

## Discussion Board Engagement

49

Members & Affiliates have posted on the Discussion Board to date.

311

Members & Affiliates have read posts on the Discussion Board to date.

# Report Appendix



### Statistical Analysis & Data Links

In this survey's analysis of results, nonparametric analysis, Chi-Square tests for independence, were used to examine significant differences between variable groups. This test was chosen because all variables compared were categorical; either ordinal or nominal in scale and in most cases sample sizes within groups were small.

When analyzing the data, a significance threshold of  $p < 0.05$  was used. This means that a result was considered statistically significant if the probability of observing that result due to chance alone was less than 5%. Significant differences at this level are noted within the report alongside visualized data where appropriate.

It is important to note that statistical significance does not necessarily indicate the practical significance or importance of a result. A result may be statistically significant, but the strength of the association (i.e., the magnitude of the effect or effect size) may be small or unsubstantial. It is also possible for a result to be non-significant but still have important implications in practice. When interpreting the statistical results, it is important to consider both statistical and practical significance as well as any limitations or assumptions of the statistical methods used.

The open-ended comments from respondents in this survey were analyzed using a general inductive approach. This involved reviewing the responses and identifying patterns and themes that emerged from the data, rather than imposing a pre-determined coding scheme unless otherwise noted within the report.

Results in this report are rounded to the nearest whole number percent. Decimals that are equal or greater to 0.5 are rounded up, and those that are less than 0.5 are rounded down. This can contribute to slight discrepancies, with totals falling just above or below 100%. These differences are small and don't significantly impact the results of the survey. In other questions, a respondent could have selected more than one response (select-all-that-apply). In these cases, totals will often exceed 100%.

### Reference Links

The following links are provided for additional reference and are hosted within Woodland Park Zoo's internal SharePoint environment. Files may be accessed by WPZ staff. Questions or requests for additional resources may be sent to WPZ's [Evaluation & Impact team](#).



[Survey Questions PDF](#) (Network staff access)



[Disaggregated anonymized verbatim comments from open-ended questions](#)  
(Network Staff Access)