

Evaluation of the risks of recreational angling on invasive alien species spread: results of a survey in Belgium

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OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Support the development of a **biosecurity communication campaign** by:

- Evaluating the **risk of introduction and spread of IAS** by anglers
- Assessing anglers' **awareness** on biological invasions
- Providing **baseline for evaluation** of campaign effectiveness

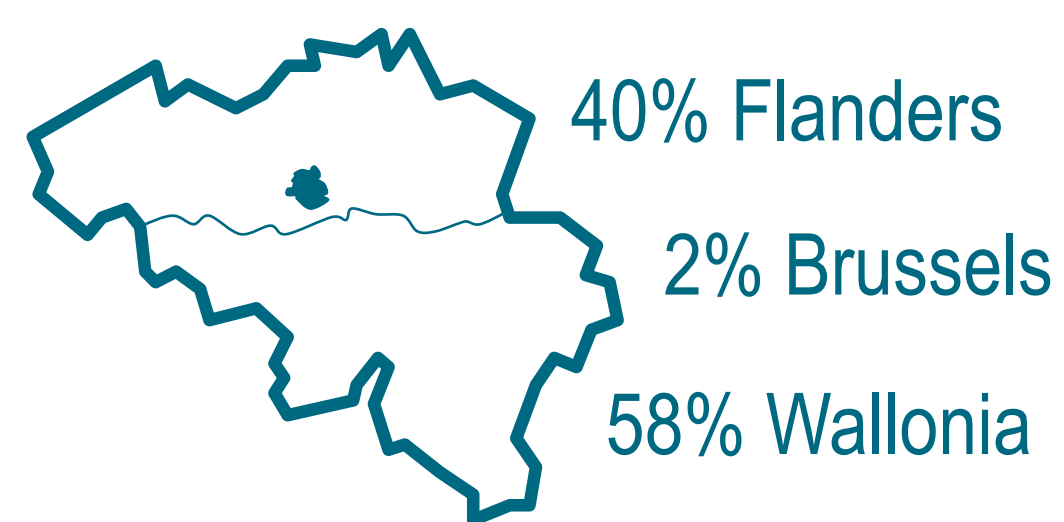
METHODOLOGY

- Online survey in Spring 2023
- 30 questions, in 5 thematic sections
- Dissemination via angling federations and administration



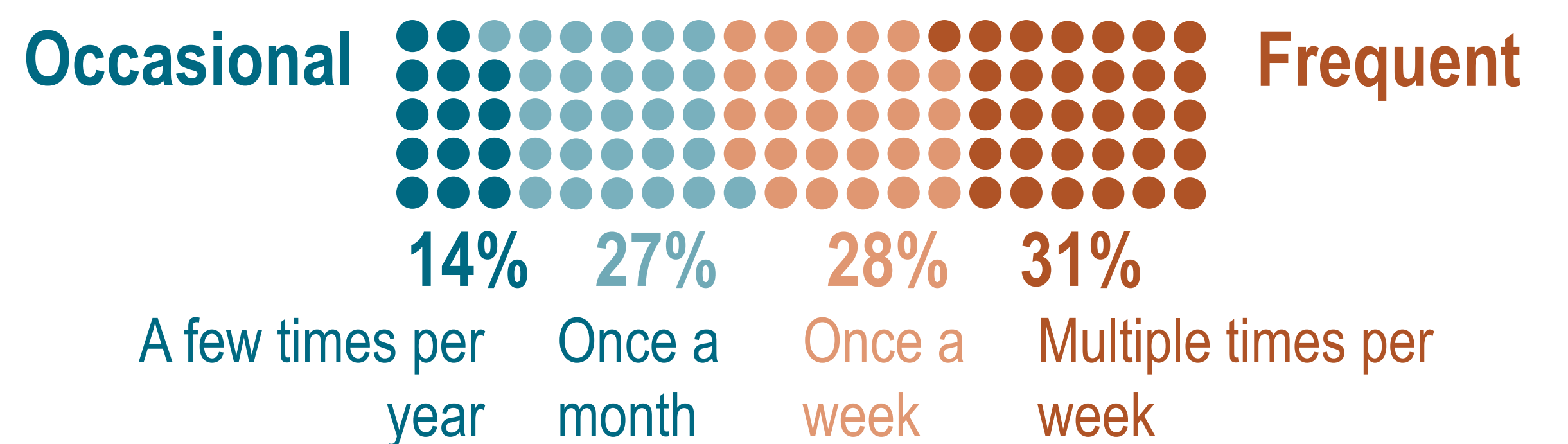
WHO ANSWERED?

3738 Respondents → 3,3% of anglers on public waters



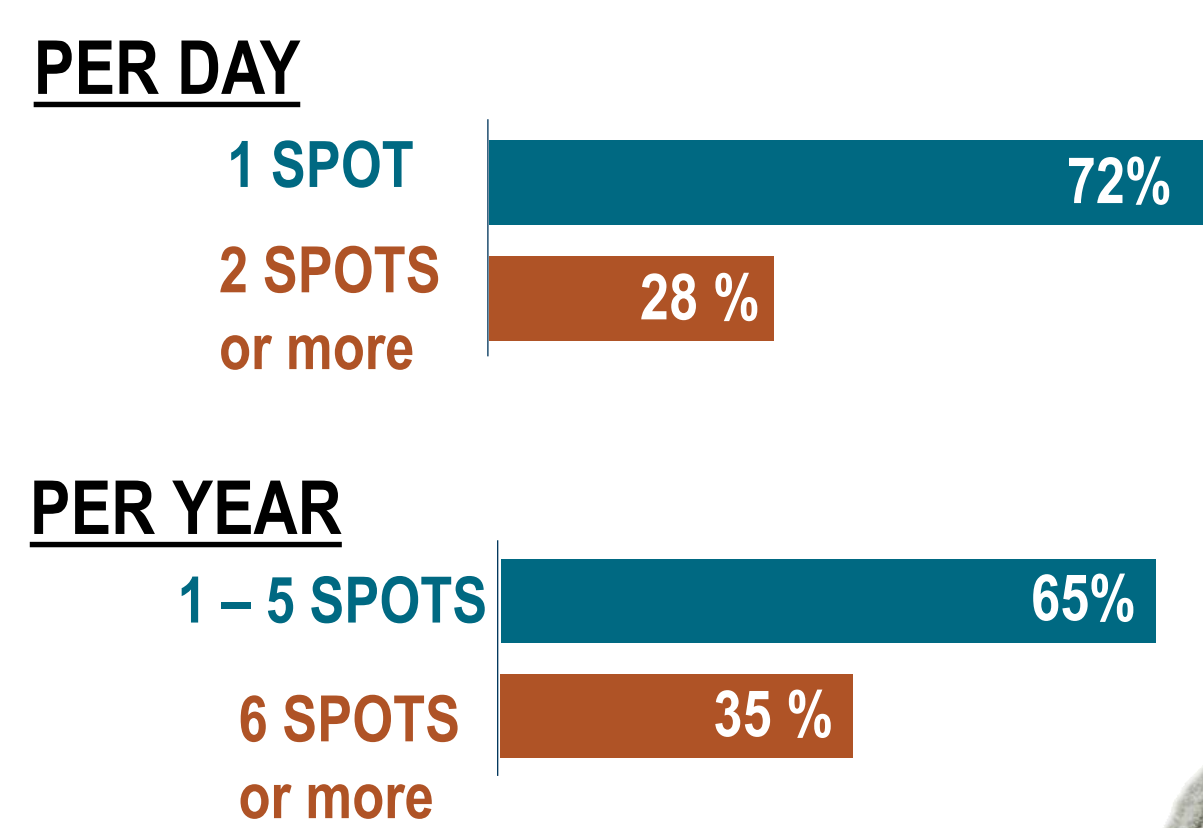
1 out of 2 respondents are members of a club or association

HOW OFTEN?



DO THEY MOVE?

Number of Fishing spots in Belgium



All riverbasins are connected through angler movement



1 out of 2 anglers go abroad on fishing trips with their own gear

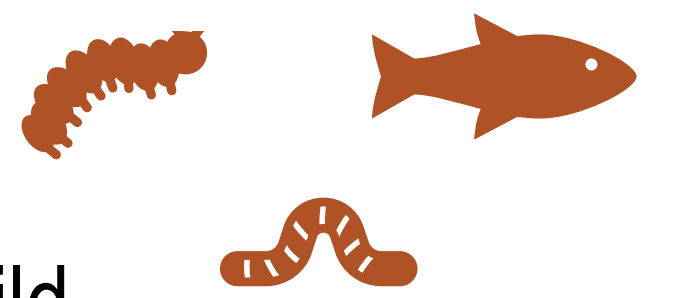
~ 120 000 rods and 90 000 nets cross the border each year



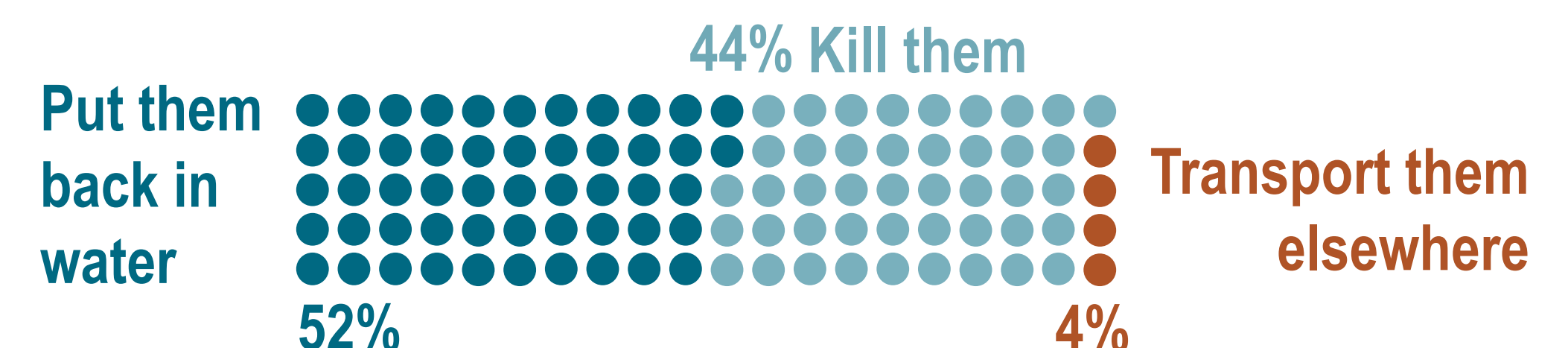
INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES



8% of anglers release their **live bait** in the wild

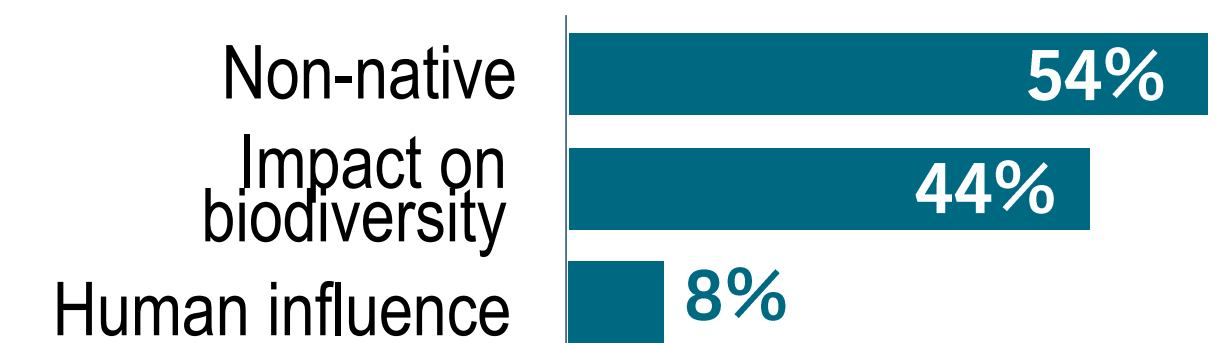


What do anglers do when they catch problematic species?



Awareness of the concept of IAS

Criteria defining IAS cited by respondents



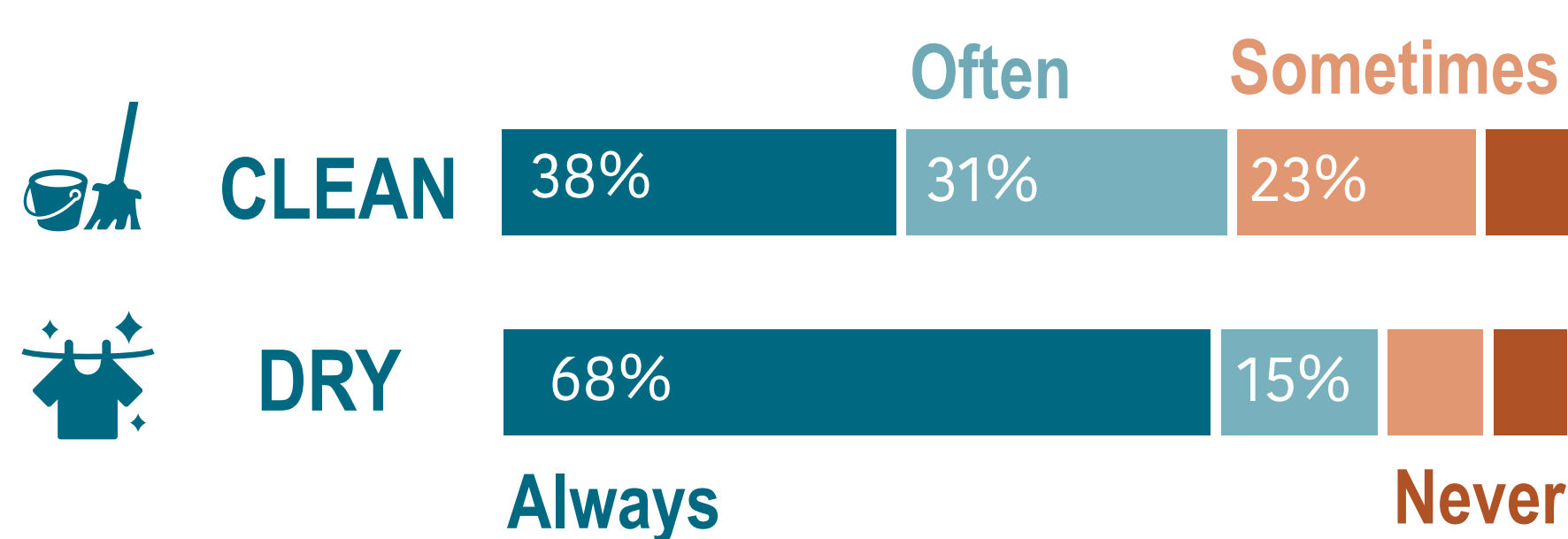
More aware anglers are more likely to think that their current cleaning routine **needs to be improved** to stop the spread of IAS



IAS are **1 of the 3** most commonly cited **threats to angling**

BIOSECURITY

How frequently are hygiene measures applied?



8% of anglers **CHECK CLEAN and DRY** after each trip

For which reasons?

- 1 To keep the equipment in good condition **93%**
- 2 Because they angle at different places **35%**

The **main incentives** for respondents to **clean more** would be:

1. RISKS

40% Information on IAS

40% Presence of a disease

2. BEST PRACTICES

33% Information on hygiene measures

IN SUMMARY

- Belgian anglers are **very mobile** within Belgium and in neighboring countries
- **Insights for communication campaign:**
 - Focus on risks for the sport and nature
 - Positive message on effectiveness of measures
 - Targeting anglers best done through social media, websites, federations and bait shops

Credits: Drawing: Pascale Golinvaux, RBINS - Pictogram: Eva Ratkus(The Noun Project)

