

# NWACA Wildlife Management

## **Impact of Deer for NWACA**

**March, 2010 Survey**

# Topics to Discuss

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- **Recent NWACA Wildlife Management Committee Efforts**
- **March 2010 Survey of Deer Impact**
  - Key Messages from Survey
  - Selection of Detailed Survey Results
- **Next Steps**

# Wildlife Management Committee Effort

- **Overall Approach of Committee**

- Determine how people and deer can best live together in NWACA
- Identify ways to attain a healthy balance

- **Reasons for Many Deer in Neighborhoods**

- Lack of rain in greenbelts (3-year drought)
- Feeding of deer by residents
- Growth of herds, in response to feeding

- **Committee Education Activities**

- Materials gathered and distributed at recent annual meetings
- Materials helped support City of Austin *No Feeding Ordinance for Deer*, adopted February, 2009
- Growing collection of articles available on NWACA web site

# Wildlife Management Survey – 3/2010

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- **Purposes of the survey**
  - Check on effect of the No Feeding Ordinance
  - Gather current concerns about deer from residents.
  - Establish baseline data on the impact of deer in NWACA
- **Survey Dates 3/17/10 – 3/31/10**
- **1224 Surveys distributed**
  - 91 sent via U.S. Mail to members: 32 responded by 4/3
  - 1133 sent via Email survey links; 343 responded
- **Total of 375 responses = 30.6%**
- **Most responses from Northwest Hills, Highland Hills, North Cat Mountain, Cat Mountain, Vista West**

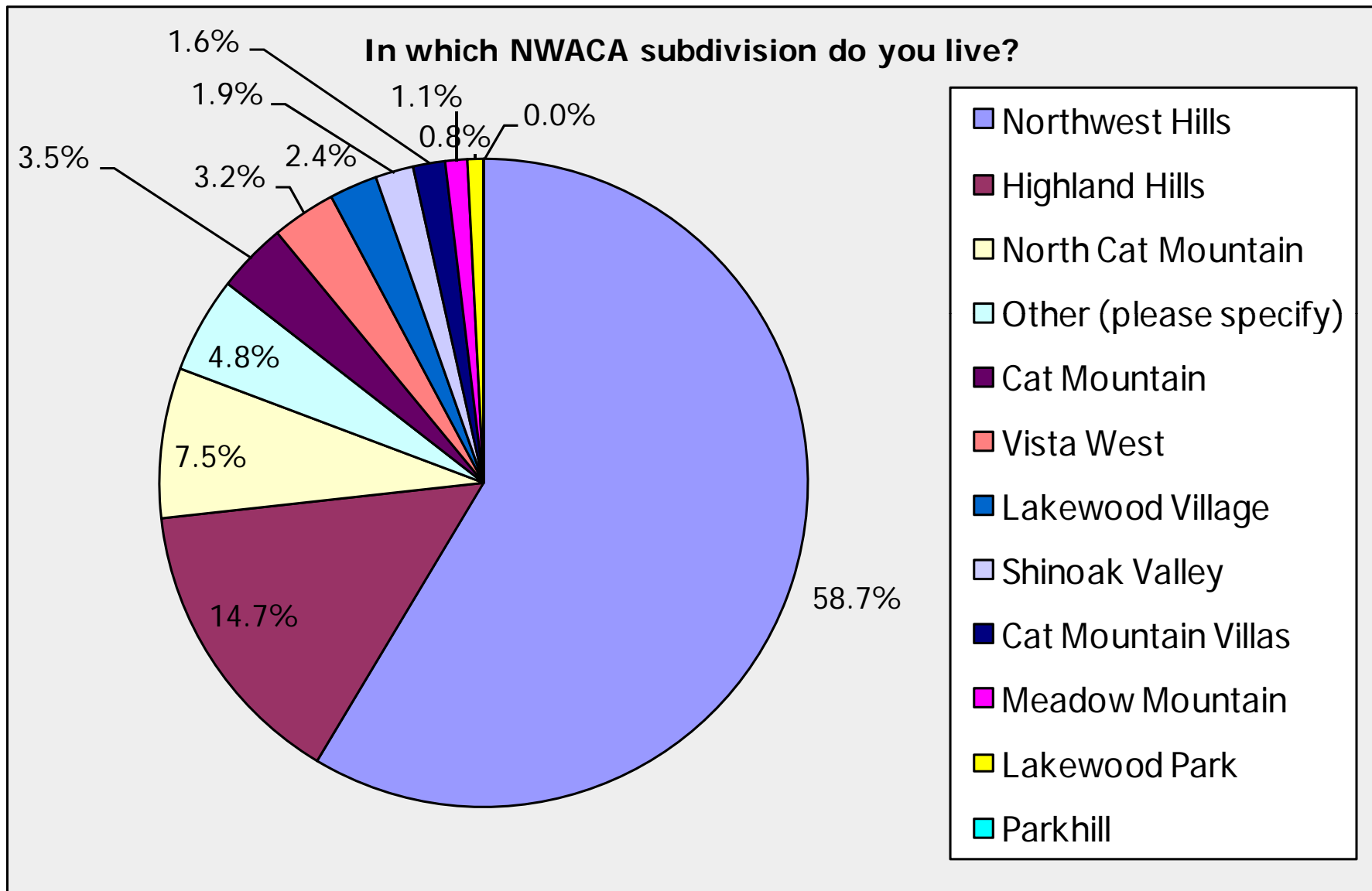
# Intended Use of Survey Results

- **Enable NWACA residents to understand impact of current imbalance of deer**
  - Safety impact to residents
    - Travel by foot, bicycle, cars
    - Ability to freely navigate own yards
  - Health impact to residents
    - Prevalence of deer droppings
    - Concern about ticks conveying Lyme Disease
  - Impact to landscape and wilderness areas
  - Financial impact to residents
- **Provide to City Council or others we need to inform**
- **Encourage other neighborhoods to also gather data**
- **Build consensus with the community for next steps**

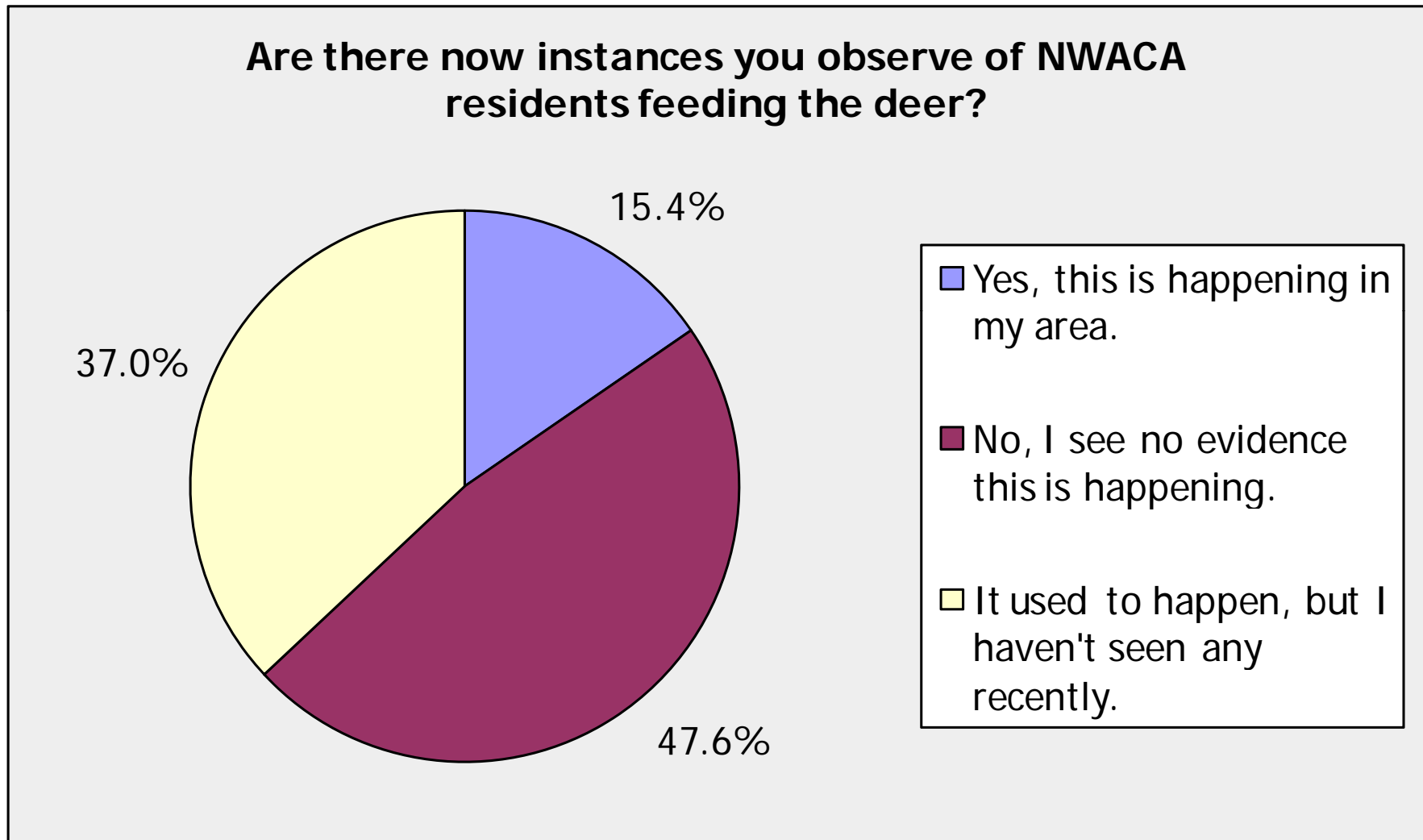
# Key Messages from Survey Responses

- **NWACA has many deer in the neighborhood**
  - 2/3 of the respondents see more than 10 deer per week
  - Where there is (or was) feeding, there are more deer
- **More than 90% of respondents know about the no-feeding ordinance**
  - Feeding has been significantly reduced
  - Few official complaints are filed; only 2 citations issued to date
- **Health and safety impacts are high**
  - Close encounters with cars are often reported
  - Dead deer are very common
- **Financial impact to NWACA residents is high**
  - Conservative estimate is \$500,000/year or \$100/household/year

# Subdivision Response (375 total)

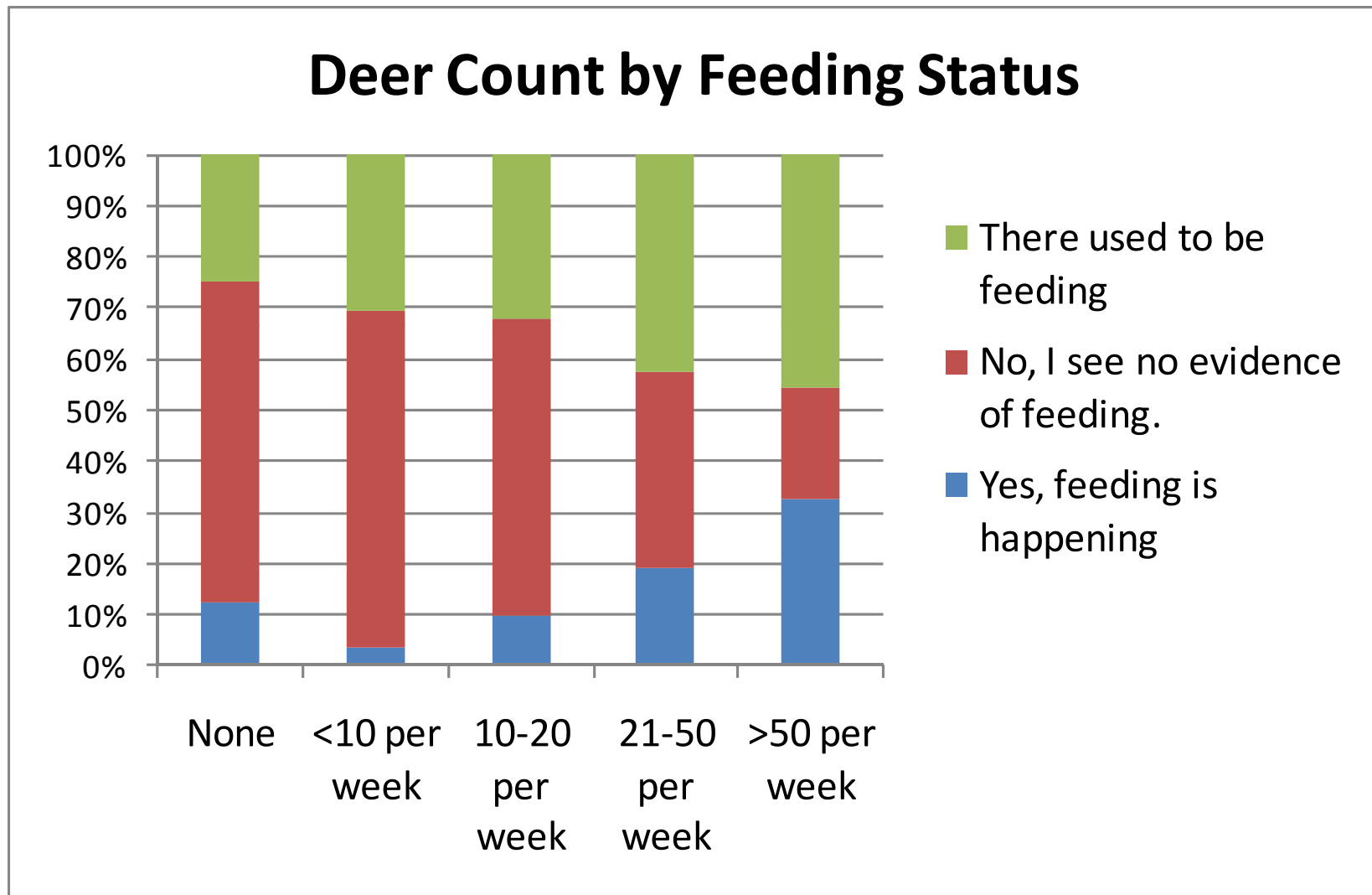


# Deer Feeding is Down, but Persists





# Feeding Draws Deer

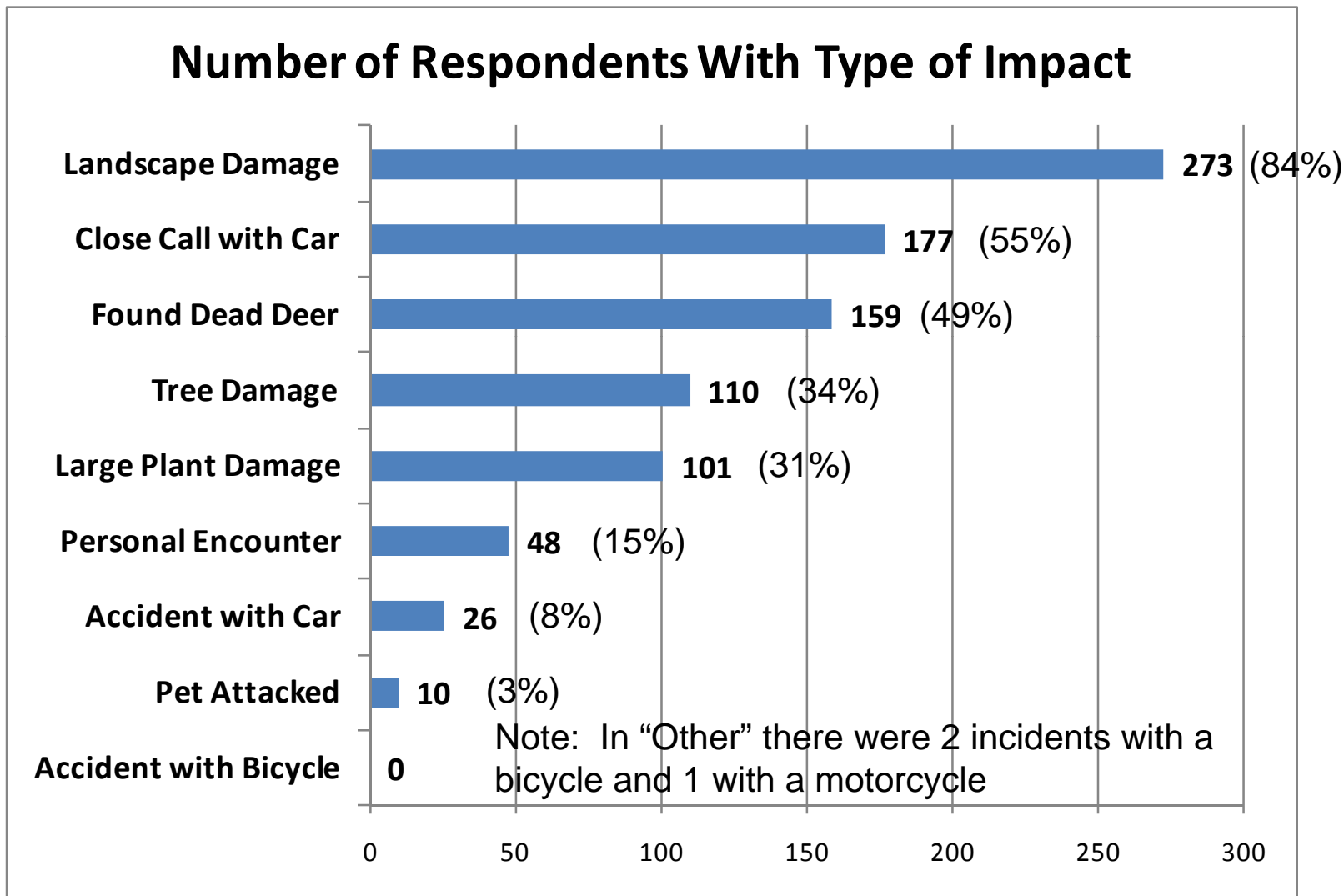


# Complaints and Citations are Rare

If you saw deer being fed, did you call 972-5692 and file a complaint?		
Answer Options	Percent	Count
Yes, I have.	2.2%	8
No, but I know someone who has.	3.3%	12
No, I have not.	28.5%	105
Not Applicable; I haven't observed feeding.	66.0%	243

If you filed a complaint, do you know if a citation has been issued?		
Answer Options	Percent	Count
Yes, it was issued.	0.6%	2
No, it was not issued, to my knowledge.	3.1%	11
Not Applicable.	96.3%	338

# Types of Impact from Deer

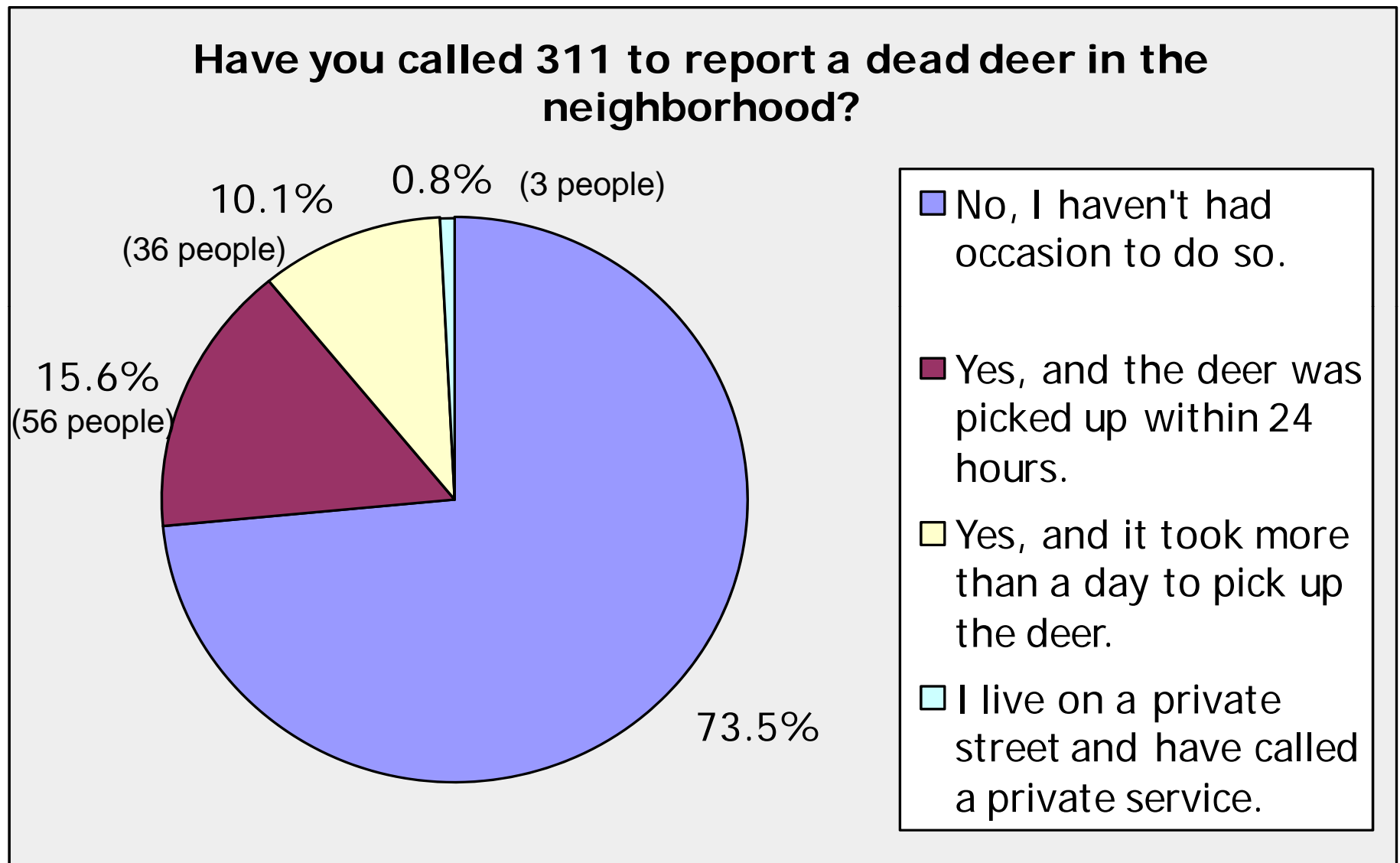


% cited here is % of those who answered this question

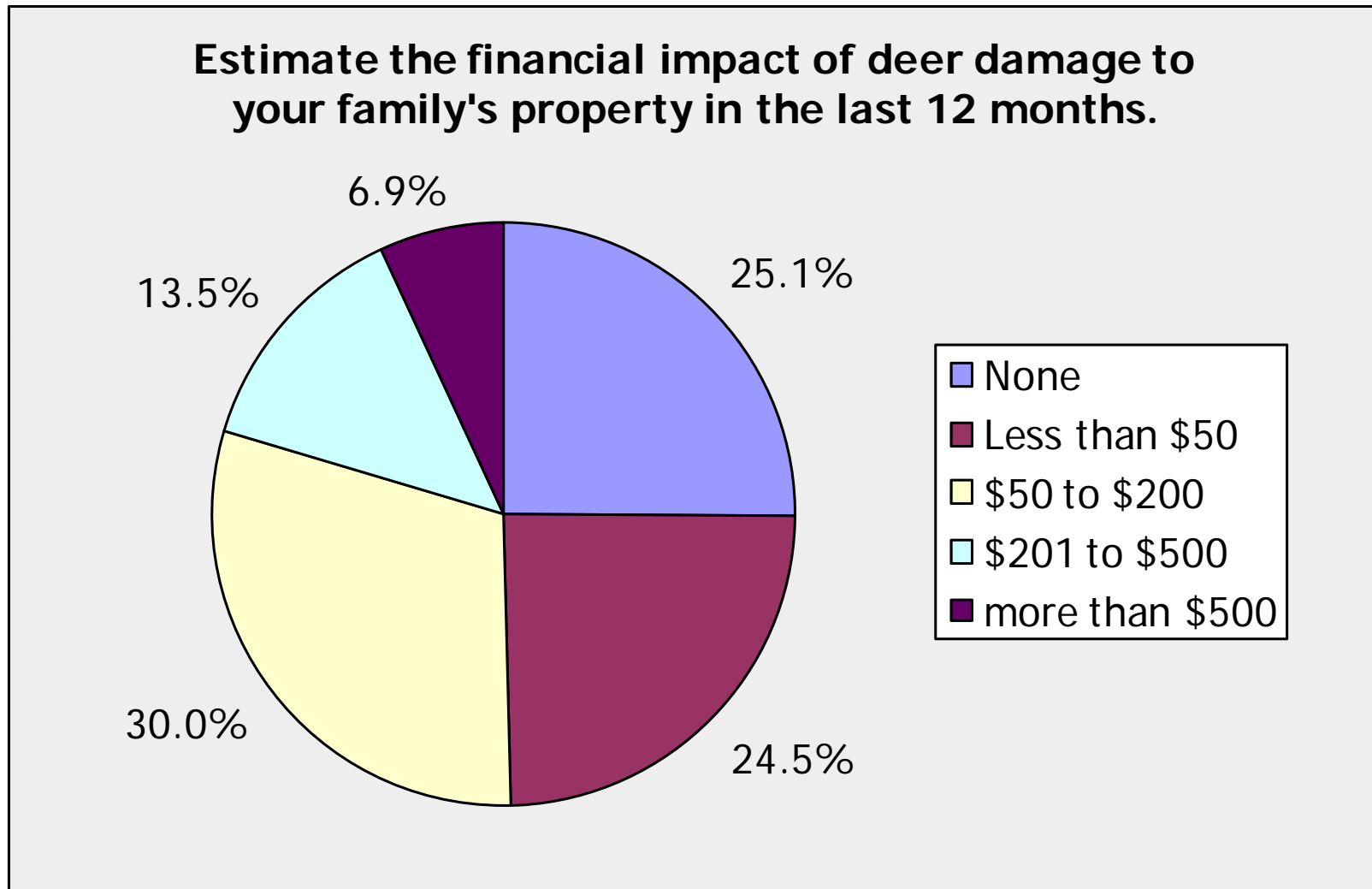
# Types of Impact Listed in “Other”

From comments to Other response	count
Deer poop (and other terms for feces)	17
No impact	14
Various expressions about liking the deer	6
Deer trapped (several in fences, one in soccer net at Murchison)	4
People trapped in houses by deer in yard (or by fawn under car)	3
Destruction in Barrow Preserve and Bull Creek watershed	3
Bucks fighting	2
Dogs chasing deer	2
Deer - bicycle encounters	2
Deer lying in the road (just relaxed)	2
Path across the lawn from deer walking through	2
\$2000 to car in 2006	1
Deer - motorcycle close call	1
Deer drowned in the pool; many phone calls to get help to get it out	1
Some augmented items from the categories that were choices	38

# 95 Respondents Reported Dead Deer



# Financial Impact Varies Widely



**Note: some citing no financial impact did report damage in comments they added**

# Extrapolated Annual Cost of Deer

Estimated Financial Impact - if respondents are representative of 5000 households in NWACA				
Answer Options	Percent in Survey	# of NWACA households	Low Impact	High Impact
None	25.1%	1255	\$0	\$0
Less than \$50	24.5%	1225	\$0	\$60,025
\$50 to \$200	30.0%	1500	\$75,000	\$300,000
\$201 to \$500	13.5%	675	\$135,675	\$337,500
more than \$500 (used \$2000 as high)	6.9%	345	\$172,500	\$690,000
		<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$383,175</b>	<b>\$1,387,525</b>

## Examples provided in the survey explaining >\$500 impact

- \$ 1,000 – yard damage
- \$ 3,000 – car damage
- \$ 9,000 – landscape damage
- \$ 255,000 – property no longer saleable

*Note; Some financial expenses are discretionary; some like cars, are not.*

# Educational Materials Sought

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Summary data on the impact of deer in NWACA	70.8%	233
How other cities minimize the impact to their neighborhoods	59.6%	196
Lakeway experience lowering the size of its deer herd	59.3%	195
Methods of deer herd management in Texas	55.6%	183
Hazards <b>(to deer)</b> of feeding the deer	39.5%	130
Other (please specify)	46	46



# Next Steps

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- **Discuss the results of the survey with interested neighbors at the Annual Meeting (breakout table)**
- **Distribute information about the selected education topics at the breakout table**
- **Address areas of interest with additional material on our web site**
- **Meet with City of Austin representatives to share our data and discuss ways to achieve a healthy balance with the deer**

# Good Fences make Good Neighbors?

- “I have a picket fence at one side of my yard and they can jump over like on springs. They love my back yard when I have flowers blooming. . . . Hence, no flowers and a dreary patio area.”
- Many in our neighborhood build high fences – to protect children more often than landscape



# ☺ Deer-Resistant Landscapes



# Backup Material

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- **We will refer to the following details as needed during our presentation**
- **They are provided here for the convenience of the reader in understanding results of our survey**

# Background Cited in Our Survey Intro

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**In a NWACA member survey in August, 2008, 86% of those responding wanted education on the hazards of feeding deer in the neighborhood. Thus, the Wildlife Management Committee provided educational materials at the Annual Meeting, through a Yahoo discussion group, and now on the new NWACA web site. Included at the site is information about how feeding the deer is hazardous to the deer as well as to the people in our neighborhoods. At the upcoming Annual Meeting, the committee will share the variety of information already collected, and we will also respond to your requests based on this survey.**

# Questions Asked in the Survey - 1

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- 1. In which NWACA subdivision do you live?**
- 2. Thinking over the last 3 months, when the deer were most plentiful in your area of NWACA, about how many deer were you seeing regularly?**
- 3. Are you aware of the Deer Feeding Ordinance of the City of Austin, which prohibits feeding of deer?**
- 4. Are there now instances you observe of NWACA residents feeding the deer?**
- 5. If you have seen deer being fed, have you called 972-5692 and filed a complaint?**
- 6. If you filed a complaint, do you know if a citation has been issued?**

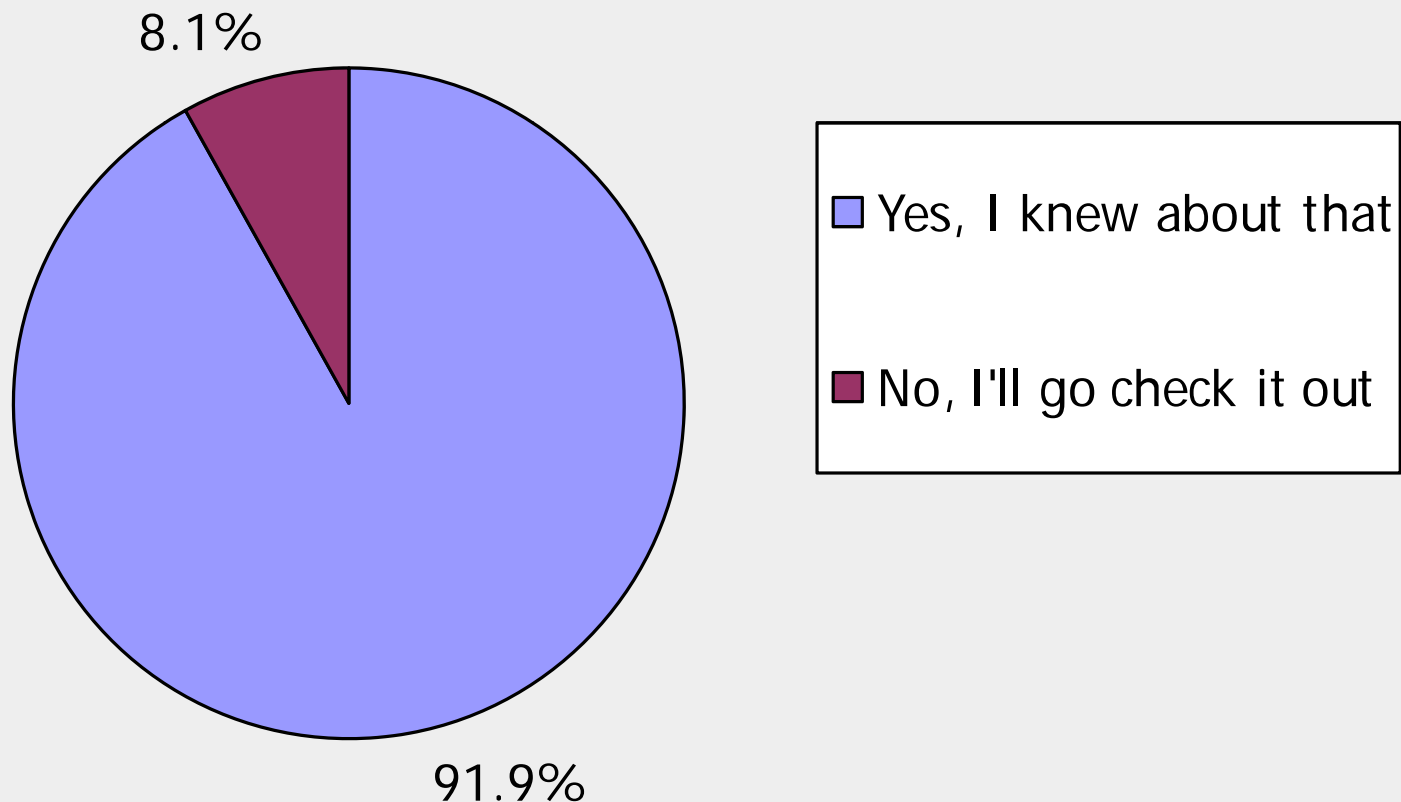
# Questions Asked in the Survey - 2

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- 7. What type of impact have you personally experienced in the last 12 months from deer in the neighborhood?**
- 8. Have you called 311 to report a dead deer?**
- 9. Please estimate the financial impact of deer damage to your family's property in the last 12 months.**
- 10. As the Wildlife Mgt Committee gathers further information for educating our community, what would you like to see included?**
- 11. So that we can use the data for analysis, please provide your street name.**
- 12. If interested in being on the committee, let us know.**
- 13. Are you experiencing problems with feral hogs?**

# Aware of No-Feeding Ordinance

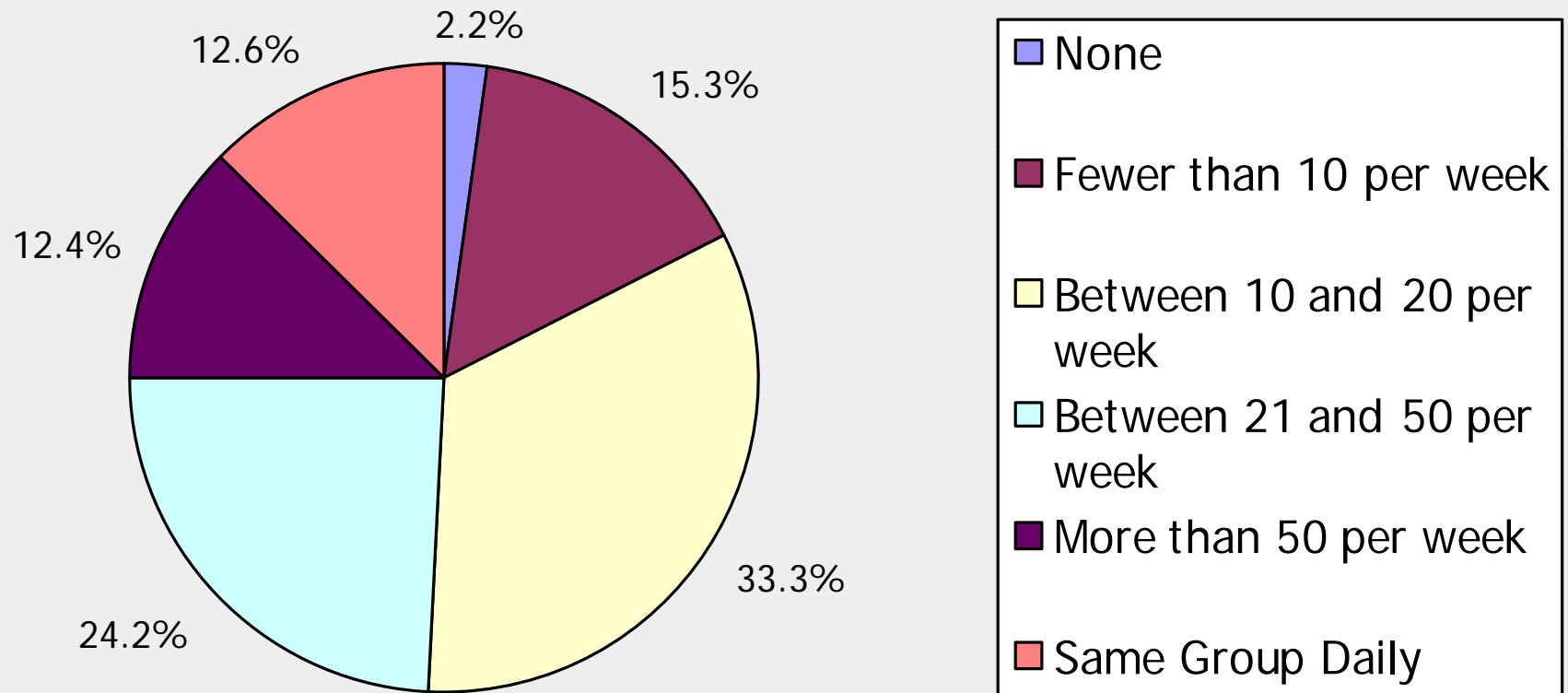
Are you aware of the Deer Feeding Ordinance of the City of Austin, which prohibits the feeding of deer?



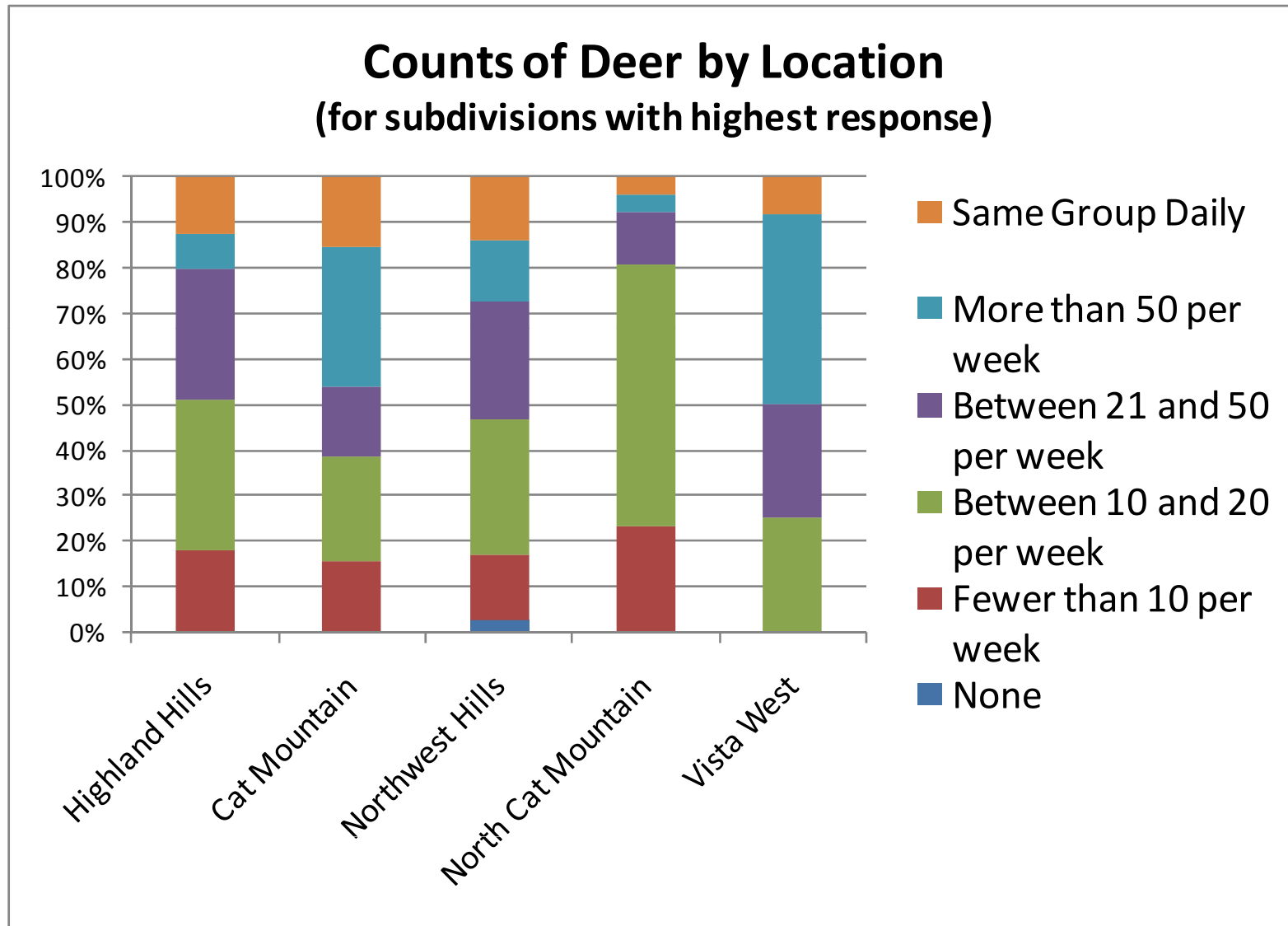


# About 2/3 See 10 Deer or More Per Day

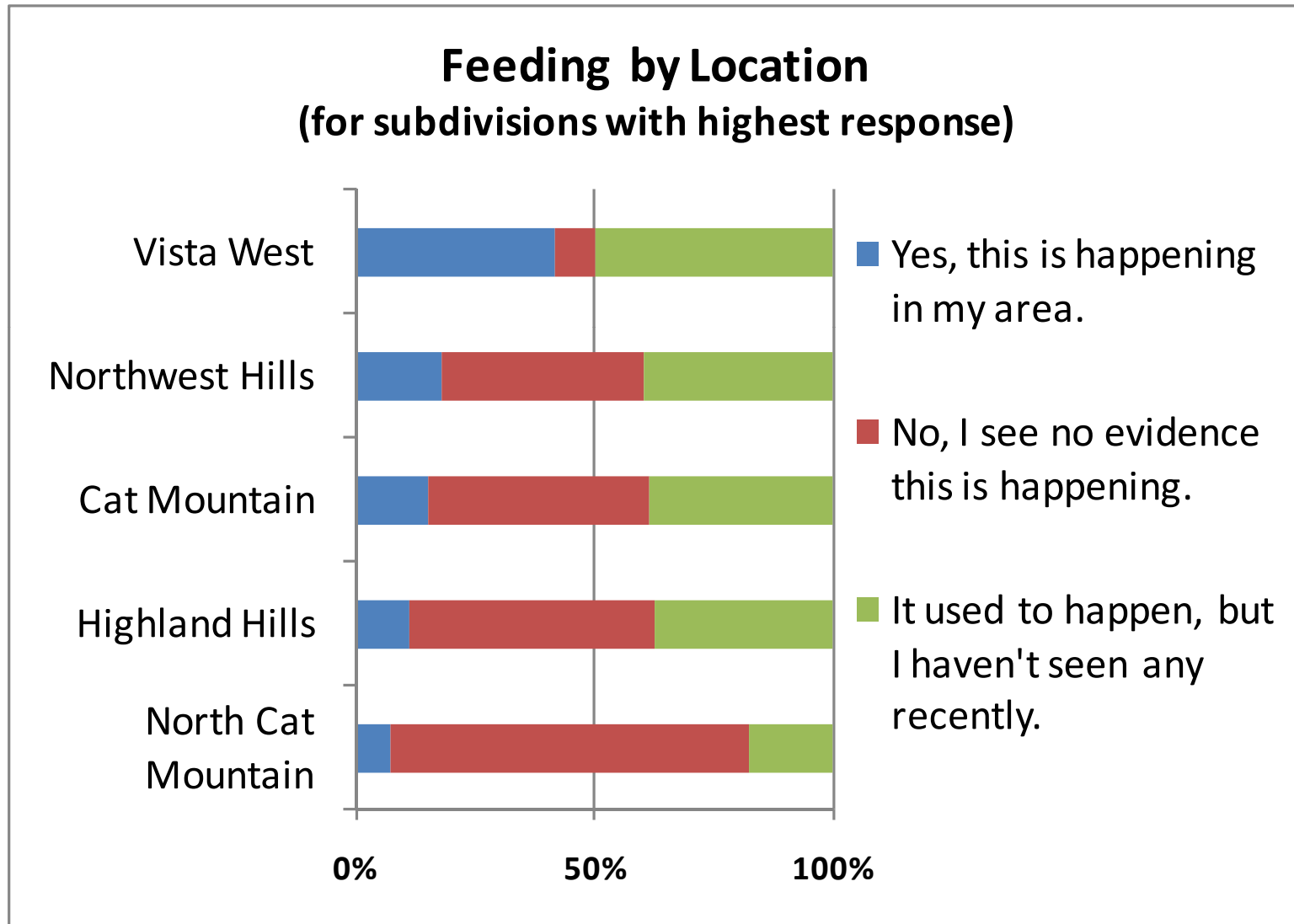
Thinking back over the last 3 months, when the deer were most plentiful in your area of the NWACA neighborhood about how many deer were you seeing regularly?



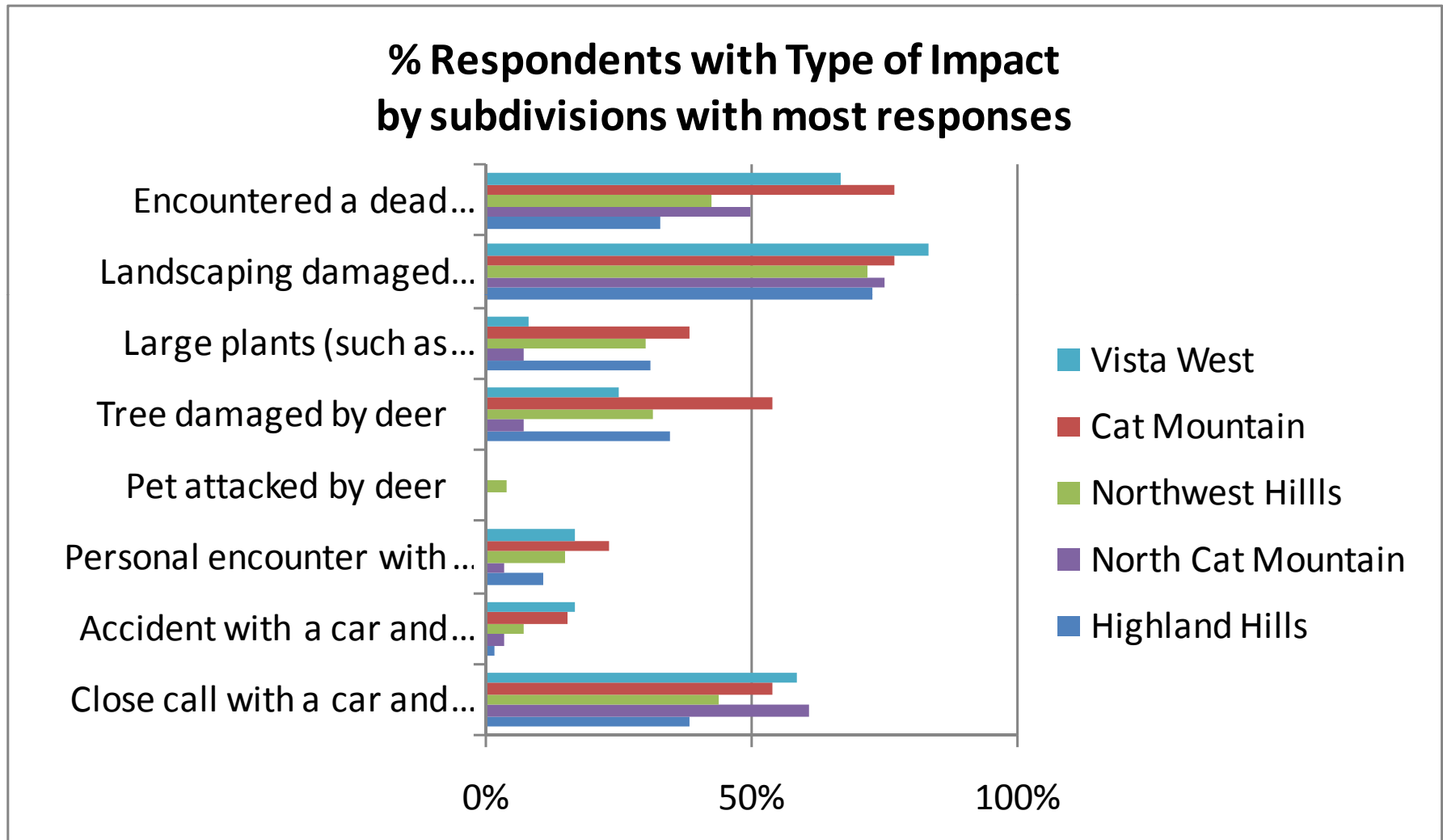
# Deer Seen by Location



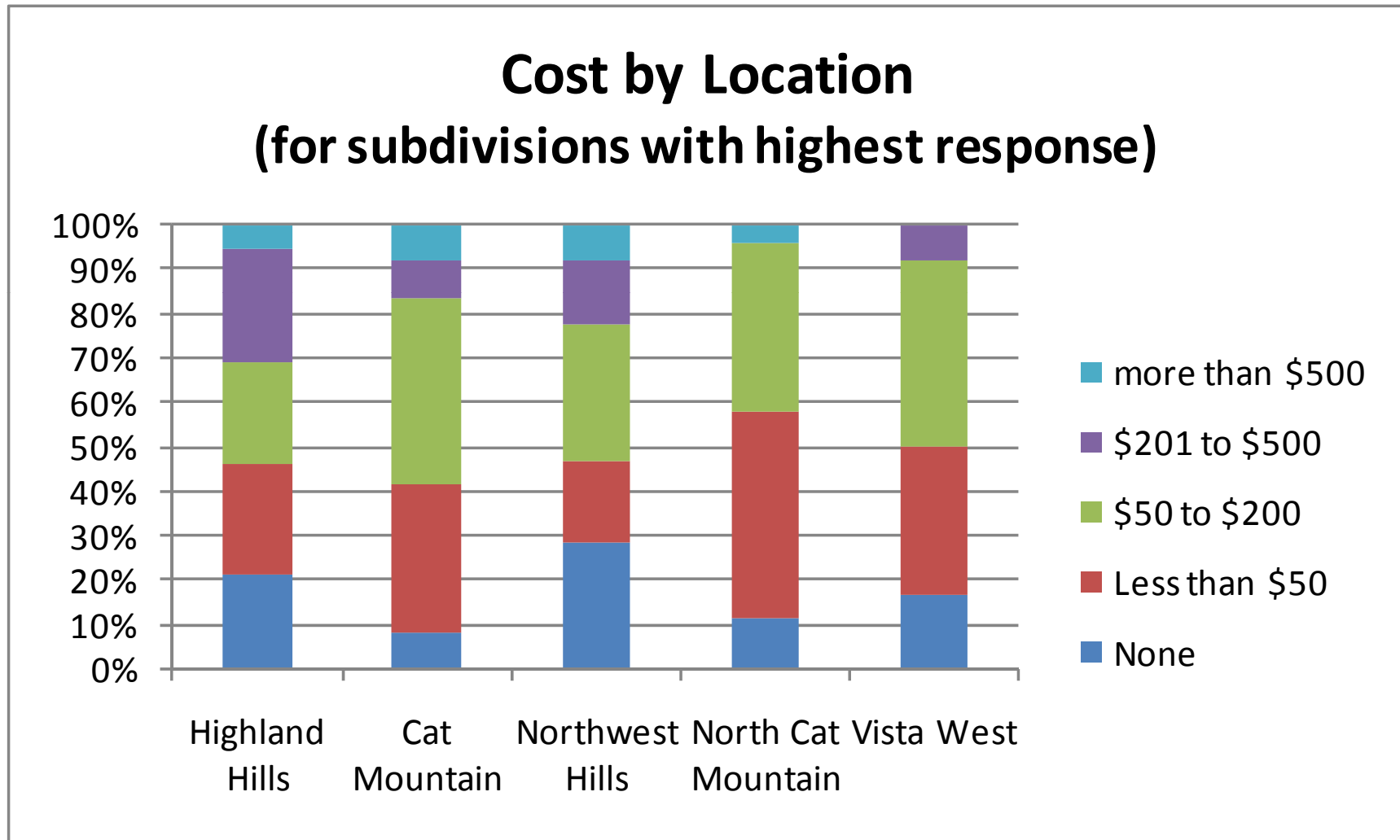
# Feeding of Deer by Location



# Types of Impact by Location



# Cost by Location

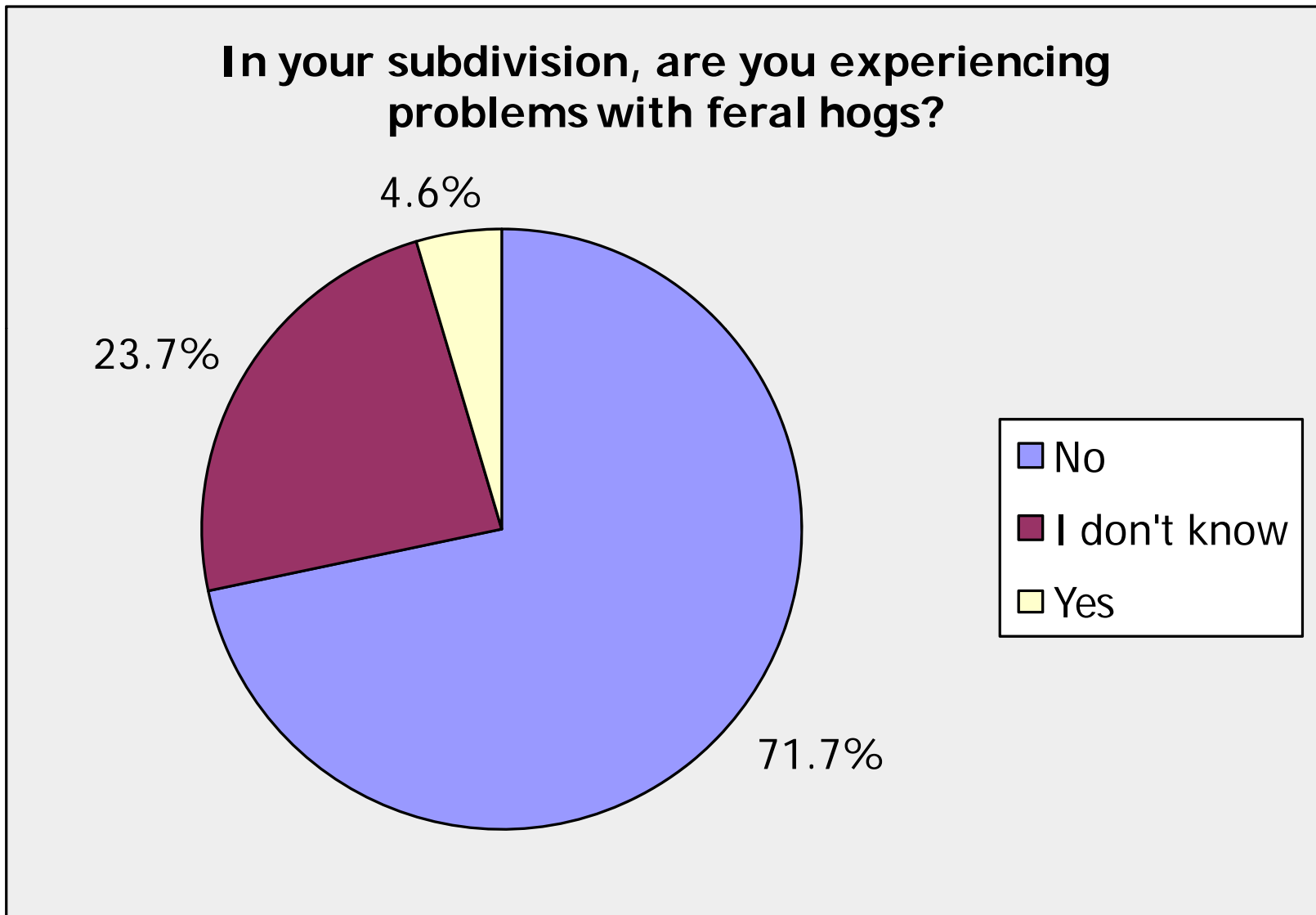


# Other Suggested Education Topics

Many respondents used this “Other” to vent their frustrations, as well as ask for material to learn more about an area.

Topic Area	Count
How to remove the deer	15
How to live together with the deer	5
Coyote control is more important (1 asked to bring them back)	5
Deer-resistant plants (for real!)	4
Doing a deer census of the whole area	2
Birth control methods for deer	2
Summary data on impact of no-feeding ordinance	1
Deer as carriers of disease	1
Miscellaneous comments	11

# Future NWACA Problem? Feral Hogs



# Selection from Comments on Cost

- I would say about \$255,000.00 They have eaten all our plants and no one is going to buy a place that they could not walk to the swimming pool without stepping in deer poop. It also is unhealthy to have water washing through the poop into our yards and elsewhere on our property.
- Impossible to accurately estimate the high cost of the destruction of previously undisturbed or previously restored natural habitat on our property or in Barrow and other preserve areas that is due to the excessive browsing and traffic from a rapidly growing deer population.
- We back up to the Barrow Preserve and they have eaten the understory there to such an extent that there are NO NEW seedlings growing there at all (no oaks, no cedars) - the paths they wear are visible everywhere. If their population grown is not curtailed, we will have no replenishment of the native habitats in the preserve, severely affecting other birds and wildlife that would be living there ...



# Health and Safety Selections

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- **Their droppings in the yard prevent my grandchildren from playing safely there.**
- **I think they are bringing a fungus to our yard. They sleep in our yard, and it is creating dead patches of grass.**
- **Last Monday I walked out my gate and found in a small area of grass 43+ piles of deer poop.. All sizes from pebbles to the size of a large dog. There is no way you could let children or pets play in the area.**
- **A buck had its antlers caught in a soccer net at Murchison's track in the early morning, and we called various agencies to find help including 311, 911, Wildlife Rescue, and AISD police.**

# Selections Favorable to the Deer

- **It was a positive until all the new people moved in and ruined it! They used to be a plus to my property values!!!**
- **This year the freeze caused more damage to my landscape than the deer!**
- **I enjoy having the deer around, I think it adds class to the neighborhood and I have not experienced many negative effects**
- **DELIGHTED by the Deer!!!!**
- **I have no problem with the rights of wildlife appearing and interacting with the environment in the neighborhood. It is we humans who are encroaching on their natural habitat. Live and let live.**