

# Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee

## Protecting Welsh Seas

### Survey summary – Management of marine protected areas in Wales

#### Background

This document provides a summary of responses received to the management of marine protected areas in Wales survey conducted by the Outreach team.

This survey was open for consultation and responses between 02 January 2017 and 22 February 2017.

#### Methodology

To help the Committee **understand the public's views and understanding of the management of marine protected areas in Wales** the Outreach Team conducted an online and paper-based survey.

The survey targeted the public generally: those who regularly visit their local coastline and those who don't. In this instance, respondents were asked a range of questions relating to the protection of Welsh seas, including the reasons they felt caused pressure in boosting the health of the marine environment from things like sea-based activities and climate change.

#### Awareness Raising

In order to promote awareness of the survey and invite respondents the Outreach Team contacted a broad-range of representative organisations, community organisations, local authorities and national park authorities. Those contacted were able to raise awareness using a range of methods including – placing articles on their websites; signposting on social media including Facebook and Twitter and emailing members directly. The Outreach Team utilised the National Assembly for Wales's corporate Twitter and Facebook accounts to share the survey, in addition to the Committee's corporate account.

The survey were also promoted by Assembly staff with relevant individuals during school visits and tours of the Senedd.



# Survey Analysis

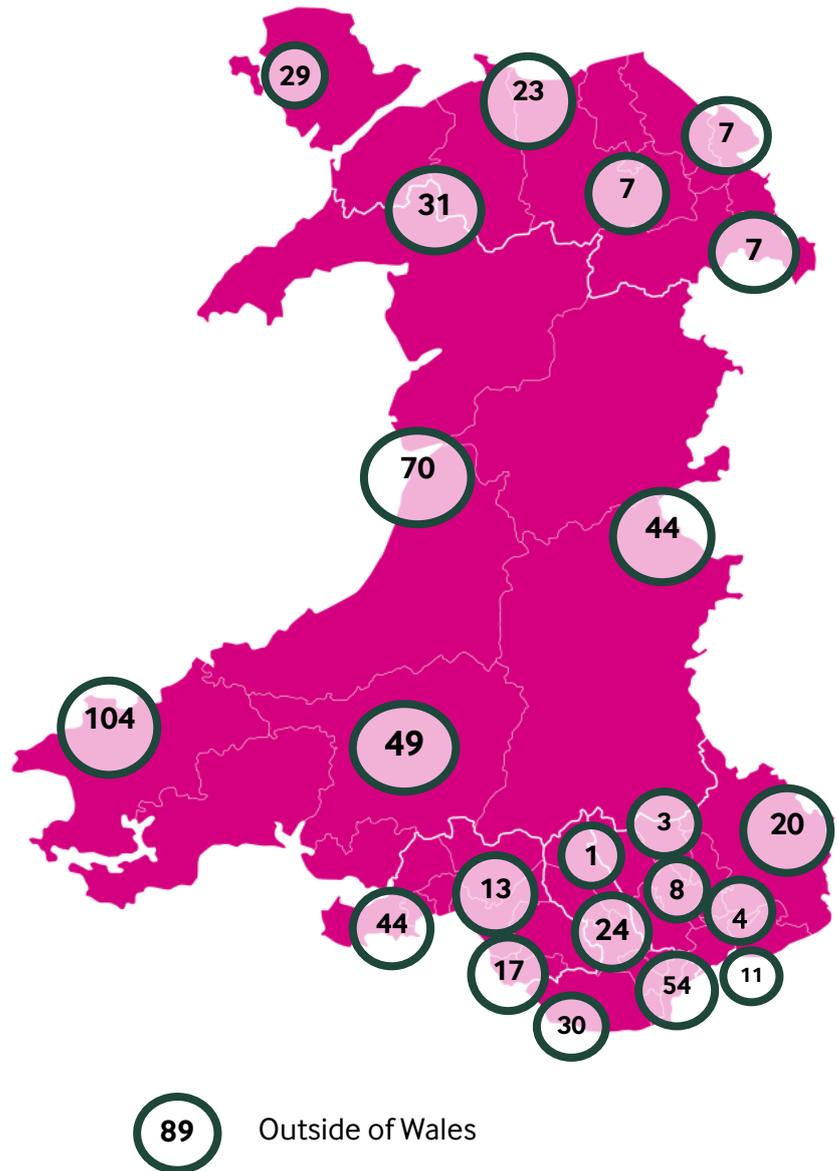
## Key Statistics

**859** Total number of survey responses received

## Geographical Summary of Responses

### Number of survey responses broken down by local authority area

- Blaenau Gwent: 3
- Bridgend: 17
- Caerphilly: 8
- Cardiff: 54
- Carmarthenshire: 49
- Ceredigion: 70
- Conwy: 23
- Denbighshire: 7
- Flintshire: 7
- Gwynedd: 31
- Isle of Anglesey: 29
- Merthyr Tydfil: 1
- Monmouthshire: 20
- Neath Port Talbot: 13
- Newport: 4
- Pembrokeshire: 104
- Powys: 44
- Rhondda Cynon Taf: 24
- Swansea: 8
- Torfaen: 3
- Vale of Glamorgan: 54
- Wrexham: 11
- Outside of Wales: 89



## Summary of responses

### Marine protected areas

In the same way that National Parks in Wales protect precious landscapes, villages and heritage sites, marine protected areas are parts of our seas which protect marine habitats and wildlife.

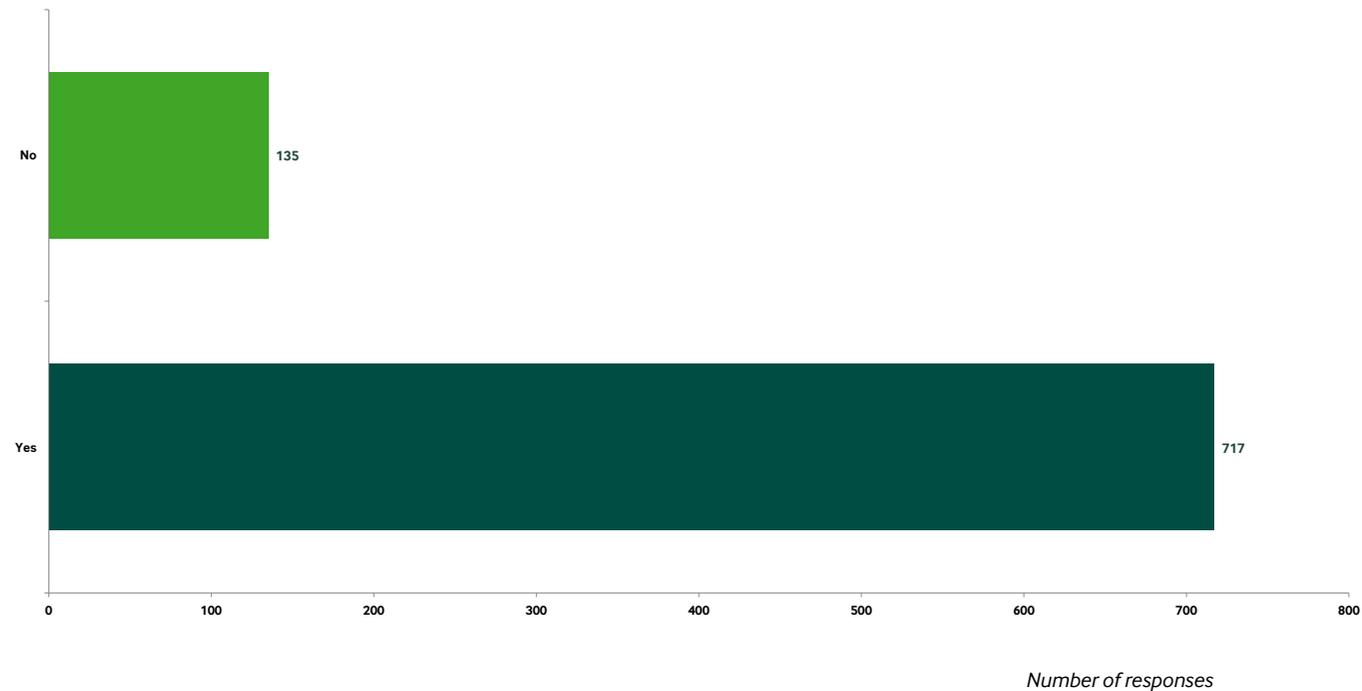
There are a total of 128 marine protected areas in Wales covering over 5500 square miles, or over 35% of Welsh seas.

01. Before taking part in this survey, were you aware that there are marine protected areas in Wales?

Total number of responses: 852

- Yes: **717 (84.15%)**
- No: **135 (15.85%)**

NB: Across all age groups, the majority of respondents were aware of marine protected areas in Wales.

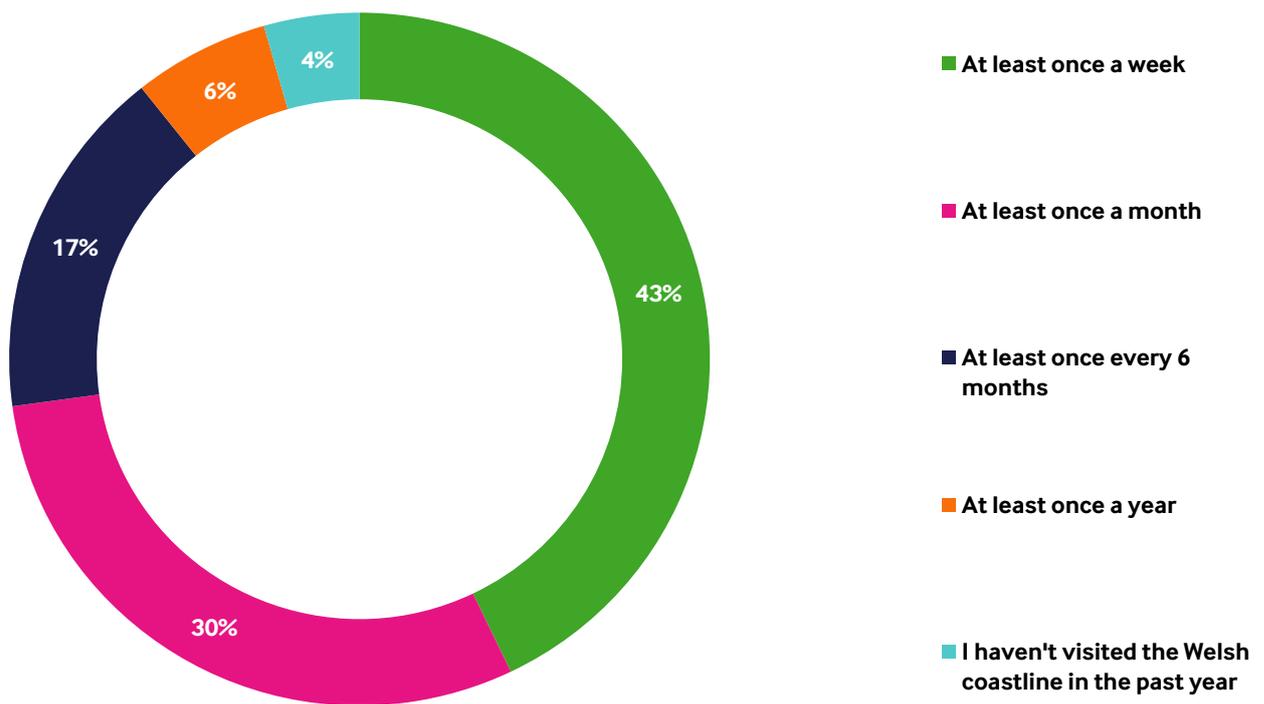


## Visiting Welsh Seas

02. How often do you visit your local coastline, or take part in a sea-based activity? For example fishing, surfing, sailing, diving, wildlife spotting, swimming etc.

Total number of responses: 795

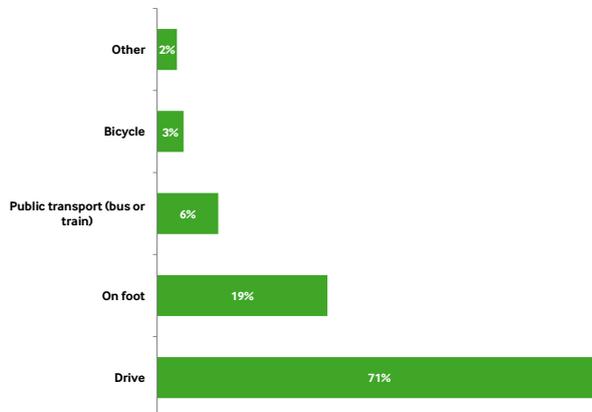
- **At least once a week: 341 (42.89%)**
- At least once a month: **238 (29.94%)**
- At least once every 6 months: **131 (16.48%)**
- At least once a year: **50 (6.29%)**
- I haven't visited the Welsh coastline in the past year: **35 (4.40%)**



### 03. How do you travel to visit your local coastline, or to take part in a sea-based activity?

Total number of responses: 795

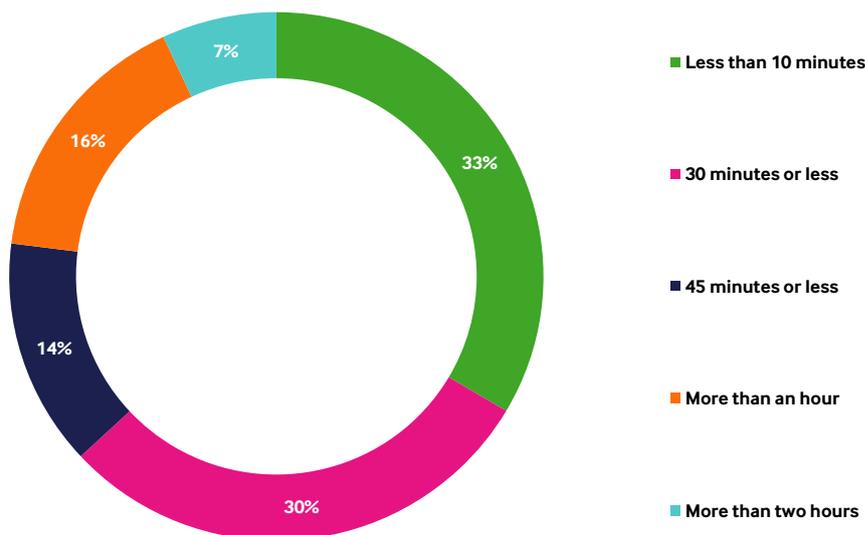
- On foot: **150 (18.87%)**
- Public transport (bus or train): **48 (6.04%)**
- Other: **15 (1.89%)**
- Bicycle: **20 (2.52%)**
- Drive: **562 (70.62%)**



### 04. If you were to drive or use public transport to visit your local beach from your home, how long would it take for you to reach your destination?

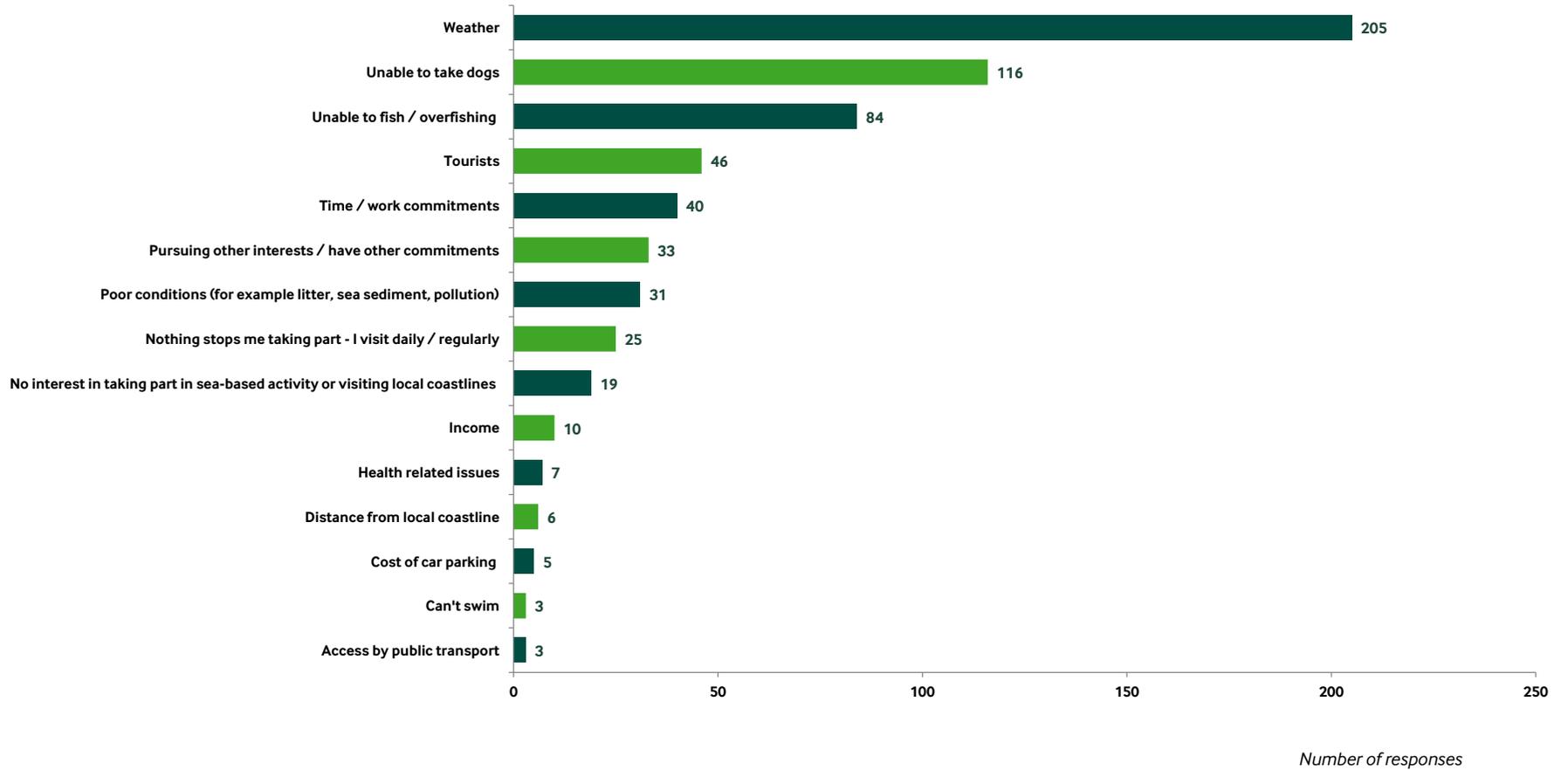
Total number of responses: 791

- Less than 10 minutes: **265 (33.50%)**
- 30 minutes or less: **234 (29.58%)**
- 45 minutes or less: **110 (13.91%)**
- More than an hour: **127 (16.06%)**
- More than two hours: **55 (6.95%)**



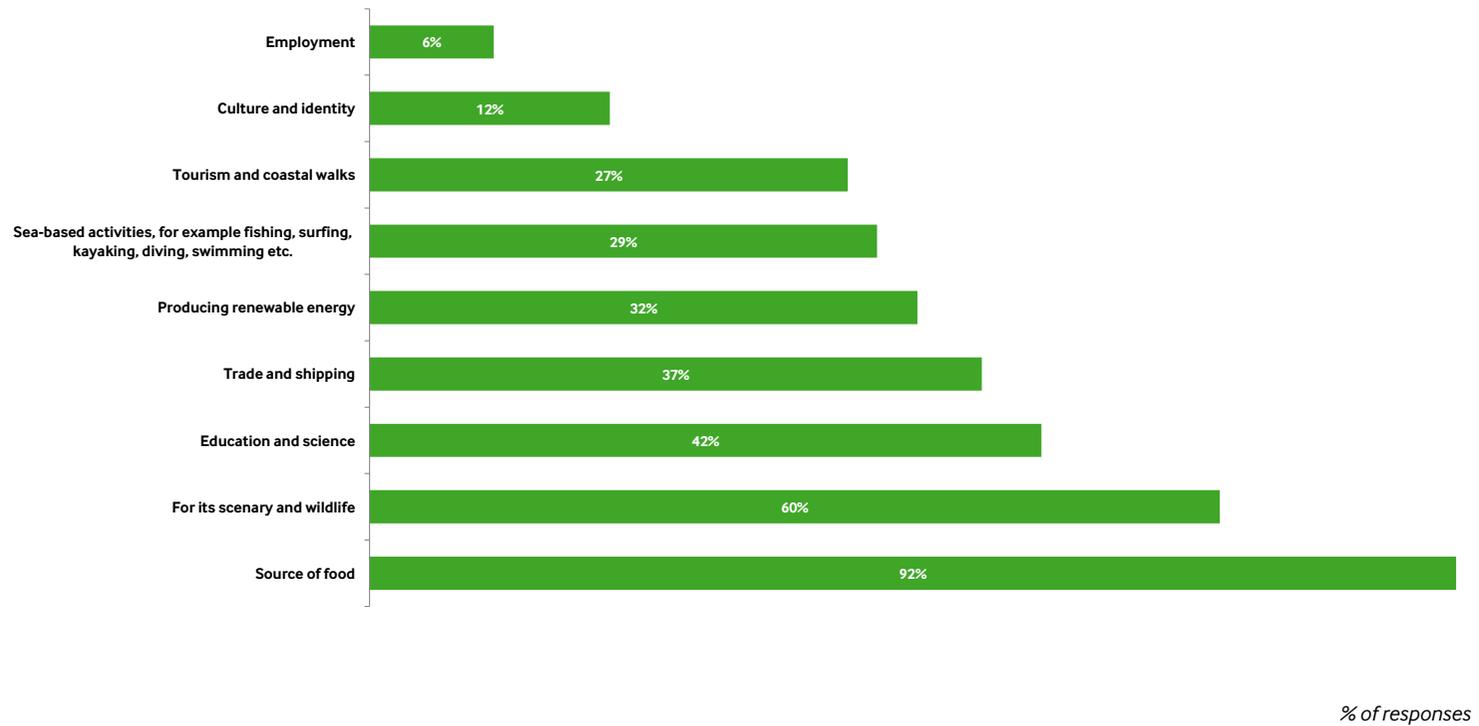
05. What stops you from taking part in a sea-based activity or from visiting your local coastline more?

Total number of responses: 633



06. Why is the sea important to you? Please choose your top three from the list outlined below.

Total number of responses: 757

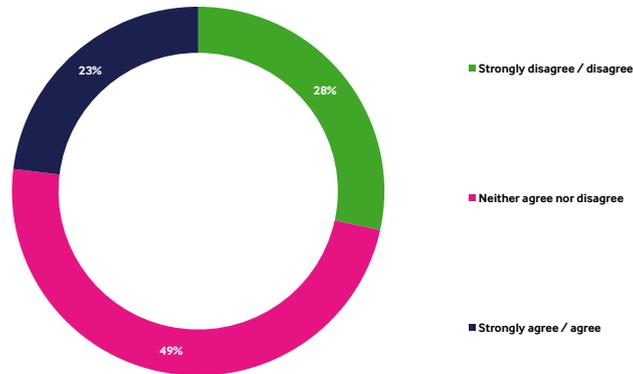


07. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

**Statement A:** *"I think that marine protected areas in Wales are well managed".*

Total number of responses: 756

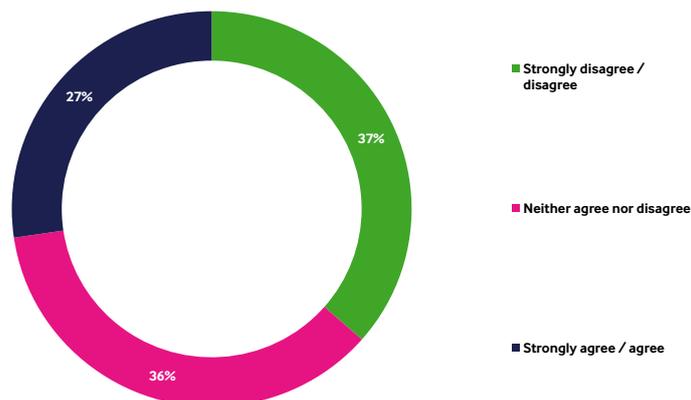
- Strongly disagree / disagree: 214 (28.31%)
- **Neither agree nor disagree: 366 (48.41%)**
- Strongly agree / agree: 174 (23.02%)



**Statement B:** *"It is easy to find out about marine protected areas in Wales".*

Total number of responses: 756

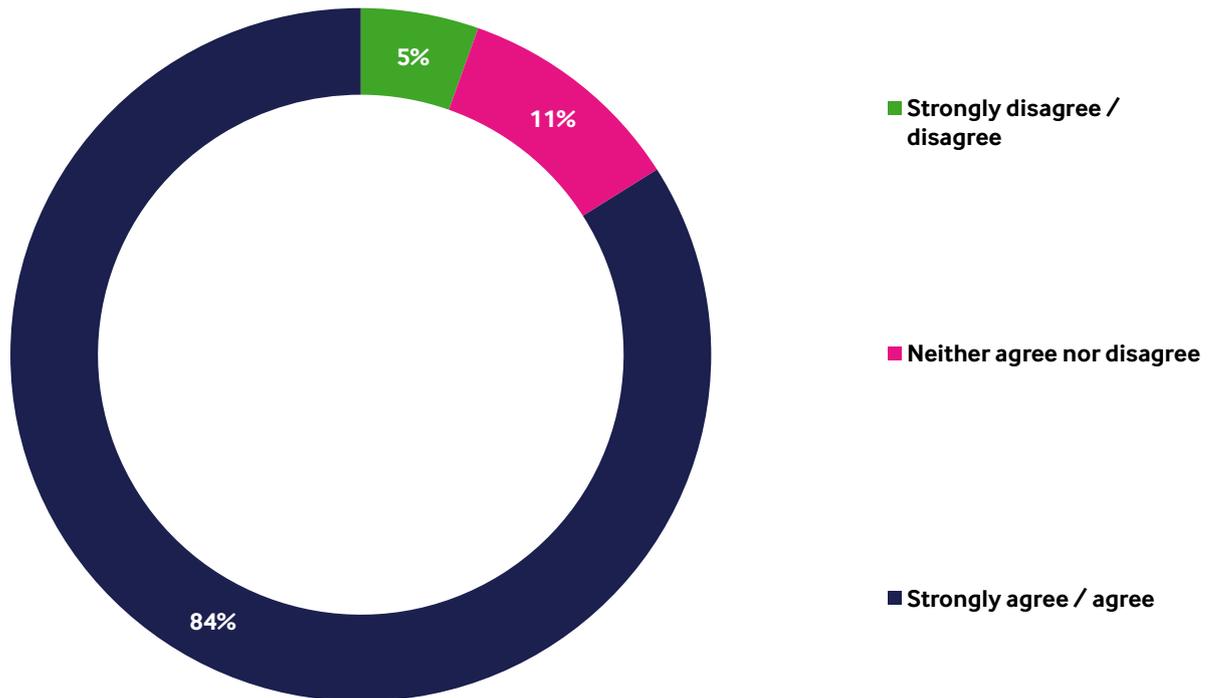
- **Strongly disagree / disagree: 275 (36.37%)**
- Neither agree nor disagree: 273 (36.11%)
- Strongly agree / agree: 206 (27.25%)



**Statement C:** *“There should be more marine protected areas in Wales”.*

Total number of responses: 756

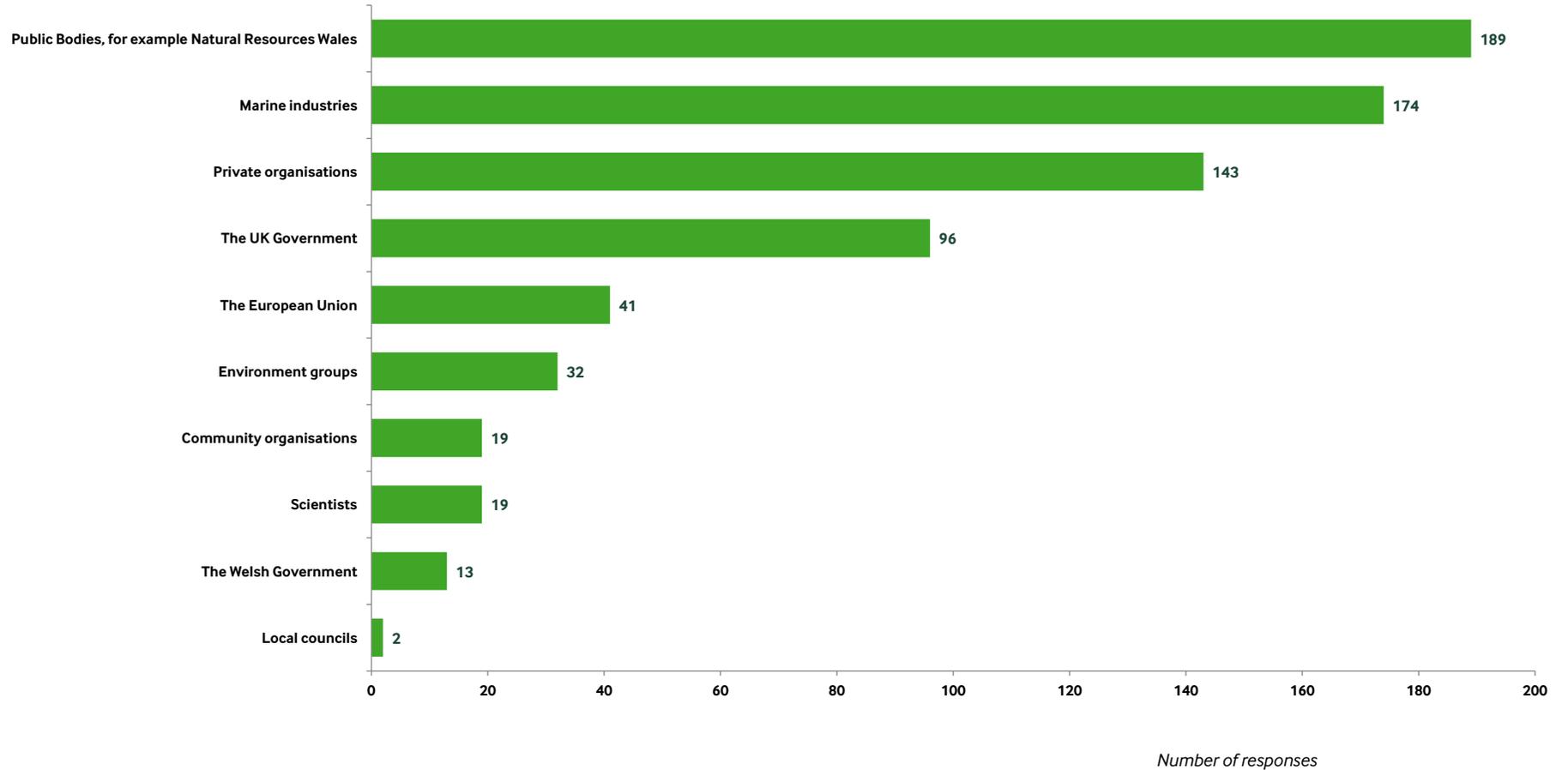
- Strongly disagree / disagree: 41 (5.43%)
- Neither agree nor disagree: 80 (10.58%)
- **Strongly agree / agree: 634 (83.86%)**



## Managing Welsh Seas

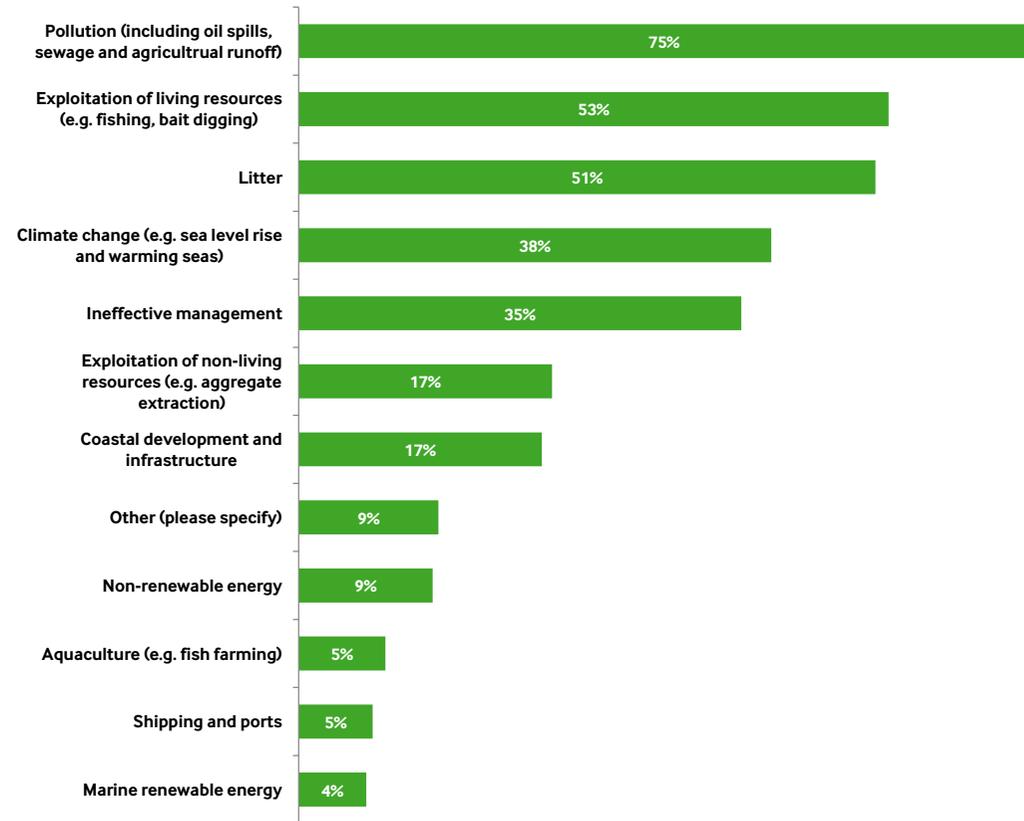
08. When it comes to managing and protecting our seas, who is best placed to do it?

*Total number of responses: 728*



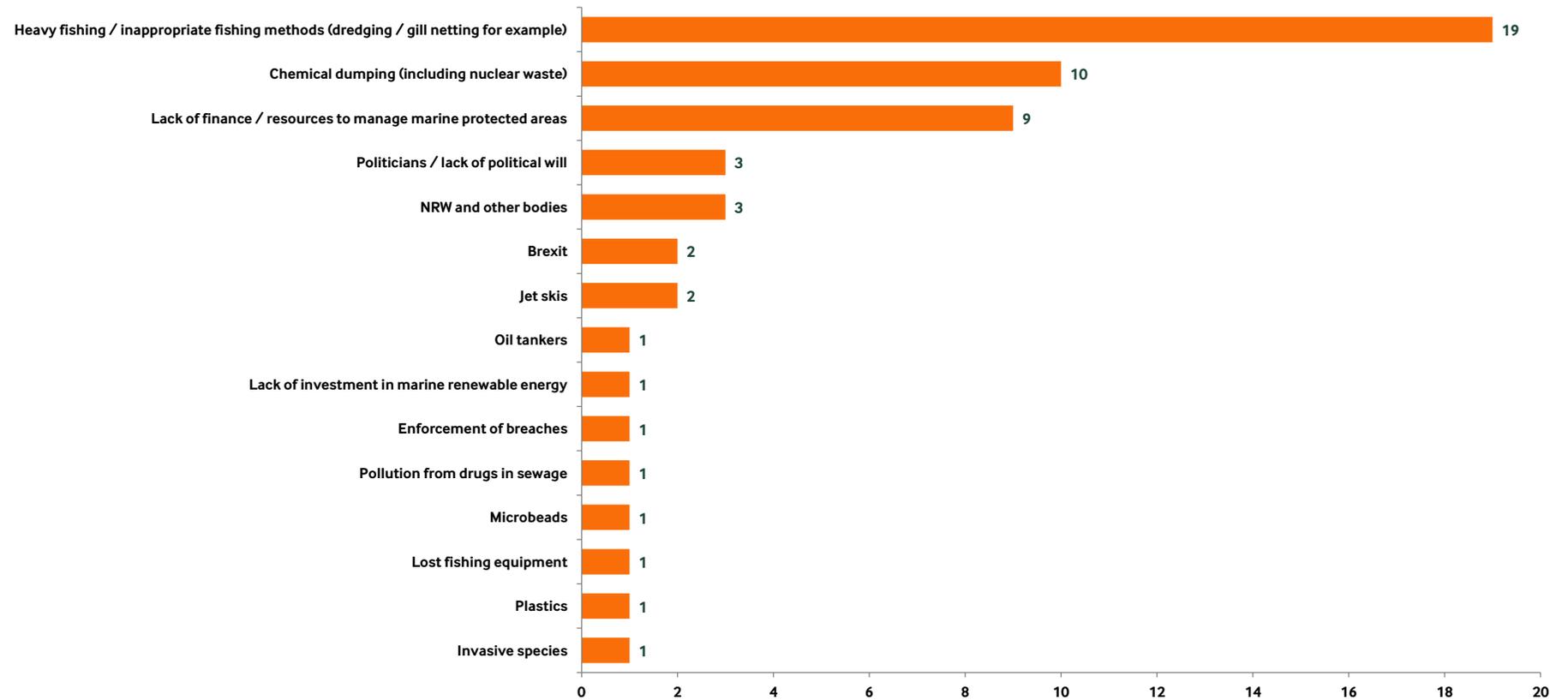
09. What are the biggest threats facing Welsh seas today? Please choose your top three from the list outlined below.

Total number of responses: 727



% of responses

## Question Nine – Other Comments

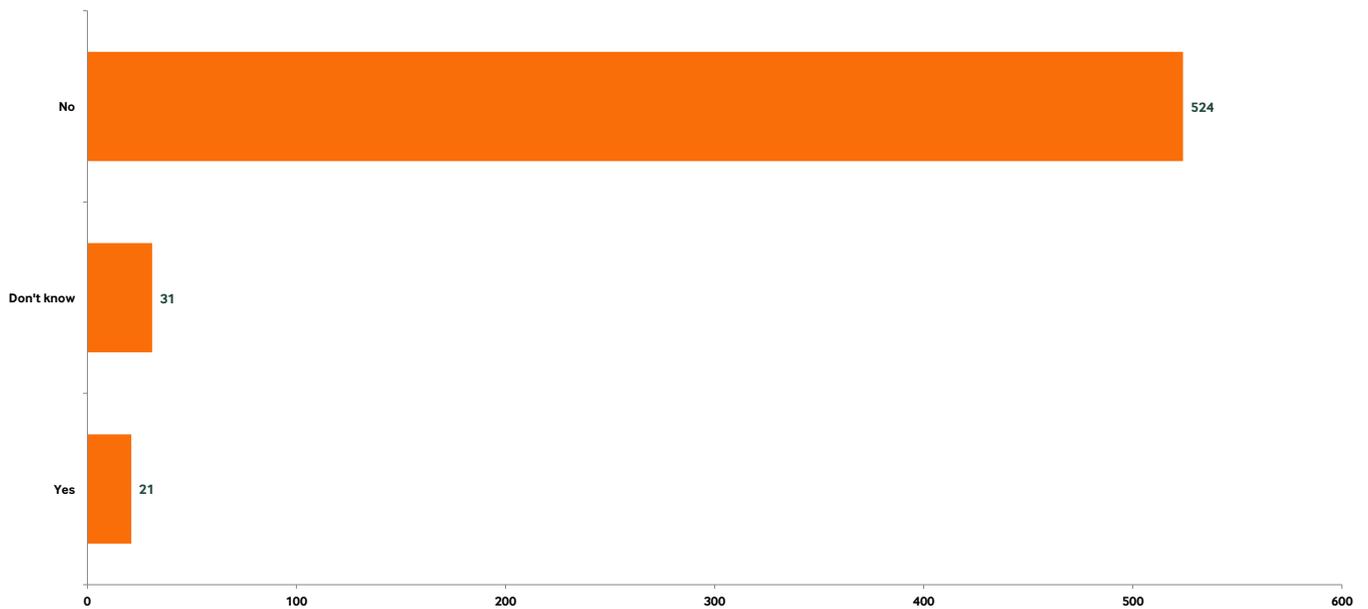


*Number of responses*

**10.** Do you think enough is being done to manage Welsh seas for the benefit of the people of Wales and future generations?

*Total number of comments: 576*

- Yes: **21**
- **No: 524**
- Don't know: **31**



## Key quotes

An overwhelming majority of respondents didn't think enough is being done to manage Welsh seas for the benefit of the people of Wales and future generations. However, some respondents felt a good start had been made:

---

**“Yes, it is a good start, however the whole coast needs and should have protection, so it's well protected for the future generations. I want the future generations to have the same experience on the Welsh coastline that I have had”.**

---

Some credited the success of some projects, whilst others with a keen interest in Welsh seas were unaware of the existence of marine protected areas. Here are a selection of some of the quotes received from respondents:

---

**“In general no, but [Welsh Government] must be credited for some success: e.g. the development of the coastal path has been an outstanding success, economically and for well-being, though strictly that's not the sea. Faecal pollution from agriculture, entering the sea from polluted rivers, especially in West Wales, is a key reason for failure of bathing water standards.”**

---

---

**“Natural Resources Wales struggles to differentiate between its statutory conservation consultee role and expectations that it should be an 'enabling' organisation. The result is that expert ecological inputs and a proper precautionary approach are sometimes invisible in its decisions”.**

---

---

**“There isn't sufficient presence of Marine Protection - neither is there a plain and simple source of information about marine protection. Ideally there would be beach wardens and a marine policing service as there is in other countries”.**

---

---

**“Management is often done on a short term basis, with little regard to future impact. Protected areas can be changed to a fished area at the whim of a new government or lobby group. Sea life does not get chance to regenerate and recover in a five year period. As a nation we are very good at saying we want to see an improvement in the marine environment, but are unwilling to put money and resources into researching the impact of human infrastructure, poor fishery management, industrial runoff/ sewage outflow on the natural environment of the sea. Yet in Wales we depend on tourism for part of our economy, yet are willing to take risks with the wildlife that draws tourists to the area, as in Cardigan Bay... We have a wealth of clean safe beaches with good water quality but without good protection, future generations may not have the same benefits”.**

---



---

**“I don't think that Wales has a clear view of the marine environment it wants in the future. The current draft marine plan is simply a framework for further exploitation without setting a clear view of what sort of condition we want our seas to be in (specifically rather than general statements about productive and healthy which are meaningless without qualification and specificity)...There is a major problem of shifting baselines - the current generation judging the state of the environment from their individual perspective rather than thinking about what it should actually look like in order to benefit current and future generations. To do so requires some involved discussion and I don't see much of this happening as everyone is always grandstanding and trying to argue the case for themselves or their interest group. If we aspire to something better than this for Welsh seas I think that Welsh Government and the National Assembly need to show real leadership for an informed discussion and real decision making to support action to achieve protection and management for Welsh seas so that there is something for future generations...”**

---

---

**“The very highest quality of MPAs (suggest Skomer, Menai Strait, Ynys Enlli) should be given an additional status of Marine Conservation Zone, and this would enable higher level of education and sustainable tourism whilst still supporting community-based traditional and sustainable extraction of resources. Each MPA should have at least one community engagement / education person to help raise awareness and understanding of our seas”.**

---

---

**“Whilst I applaud the many successful efforts to clean up Welsh beaches, the conflict of interests between often short-term gain for certain local enterprises and the long-term detrimental effects to the environment seems to be weighted in favor of industry by local councils and/or the Welsh Government”.**

---

---

**“The current management seems to be doing a good job, but more should be done to permanently protect the SACs, as these provide the infrastructure for large marine mammals to live in these waters, which subsequently brings in the visitors which we many of us rely on for livelihood. To threaten the SACs and alter the management of them would be very short sighted in my opinion, to the benefit of few (scallop dredgers) over the benefit of many”.**

---

---

**“I'm a surfer, and I have no idea about my local protected marine areas or any in Wales for that matter. More needs to be done to bring them to people's attention. I live on Anglesey and the Island 100% depends on the sea for a number of reasons. Business and leisure”.**

---

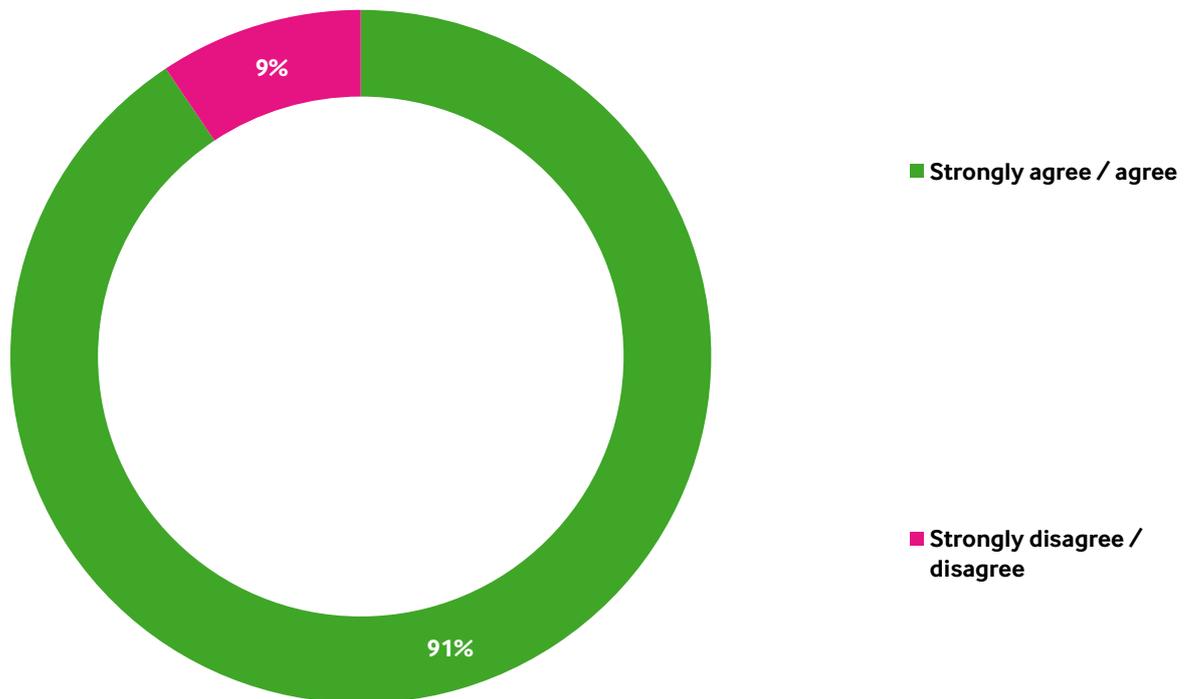


It has been suggested that governments should identify the different activities that can happen and where they can happen in the sea to help look after the marine environment today and for the future.

11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this idea?

Total number of responses: 706

- Strongly agree / agree: 639 (91.51%)
- Strongly disagree / disagree: 67 (9.49%)



## Demographics

### 12. What is your age?

Total number of responses: 705

- 16 or under: **0 (0%)**
- 17 – 24: **72 (10.21%)**
- 25 – 44: **213 (30.21%)**
- **45 – 59: 234 (33.19%)**
- 60 – 64: **96 (13.62%)**
- 65 or over: **79 (11.21%)**
- Prefer not to say: **11 (1.56%)**

