



# Arkansas Residents' Opinions on Law Enforcement Activities of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

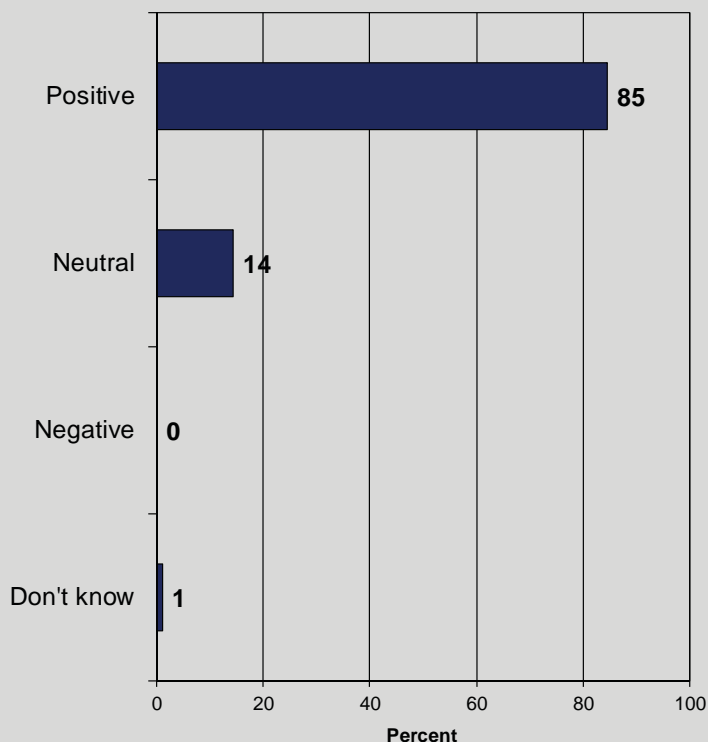
A recent scientific survey conducted by Responsive Management for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (the Commission or AGFC) shows that state residents view Wildlife Officers (also sometimes referred to as Game Wardens) very positively. This study was conducted for the Commission to determine Arkansas residents' and recreationists' knowledge of, opinions on, and satisfaction with the Commission's law enforcement activities and officers. For this study, the term *residents* refers to a sample of the general population of Arkansas and *recreationists* includes licensed hunters, licensed anglers, and registered boaters in Arkansas.



## Summary of Results

- A large majority of general population residents and of recreationists rates Wildlife Officers' overall law enforcement efforts as *excellent* or *good*. Specifically, 74% of residents, 86% of hunters, 85% of anglers, and 78% of recreational boaters rated efforts *excellent* or *good* (see graphs on reverse side).
- Satisfaction with Commission law enforcement efforts far exceeds dissatisfaction: 82% of residents and 87% to 92% of recreationist groups are satisfied (with most of those being *very* satisfied), compared to only 2% to 5% dissatisfaction among each group.
- A strong majority (85%) of those who have had contact with a Wildlife Officer in the past 2 years stated that it was a *positive* experience, while 14% described the contact as neutral and 1% did not know (see graph right). No residents at all stated that the contact was negative. Results among recreationists were very similar with the majority rating the experience as positive and very few (only 2% to 5%) stating that it was negative.
- Opinions on the conduct of Wildlife Officers are also overwhelmingly positive. Large majorities of residents and recreationists who have had any contact with Wildlife Officers in the past 2 years *strongly* agree that the officers are knowledgeable, professional, fair, and courteous (see graph on reverse side).
- In general, 60% of residents and about three quarters (70% to 77%) of recreationists think that Wildlife Officers have the right amount of authority, while 17% of residents and 9% of recreationists think that they do not have enough authority. Only 14% of residents and 10% to 16% of recreationists think that they have too much authority.

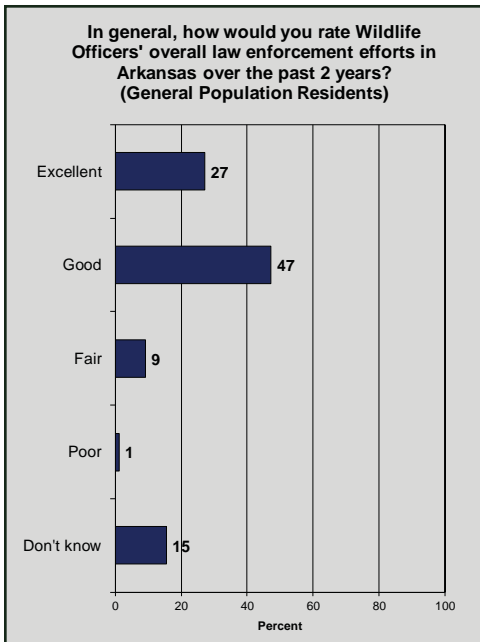
**Would you say the most recent contact you had with an Arkansas Wildlife Officer was a positive, neutral, or negative experience? (Asked of those who had contact with a Wildlife Officer in the past 2 years among General Population Residents.)**



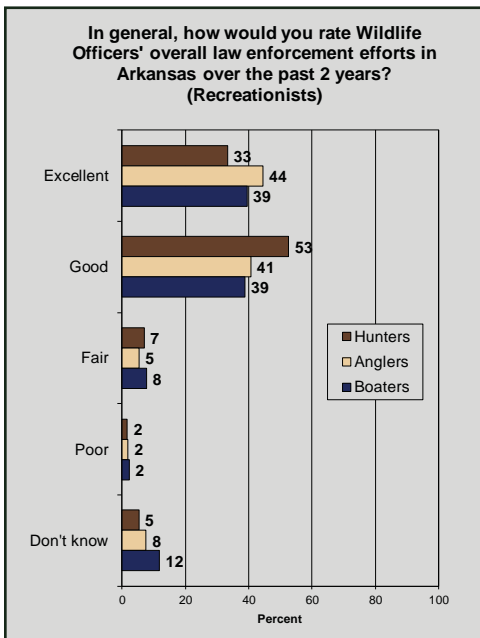
Please see reverse side for additional information and graphs.

A full report of the research findings for this study is available from the Commission or Responsive Management.

# Opinions on Law Enforcement Activities of the AGFC *(continued)*



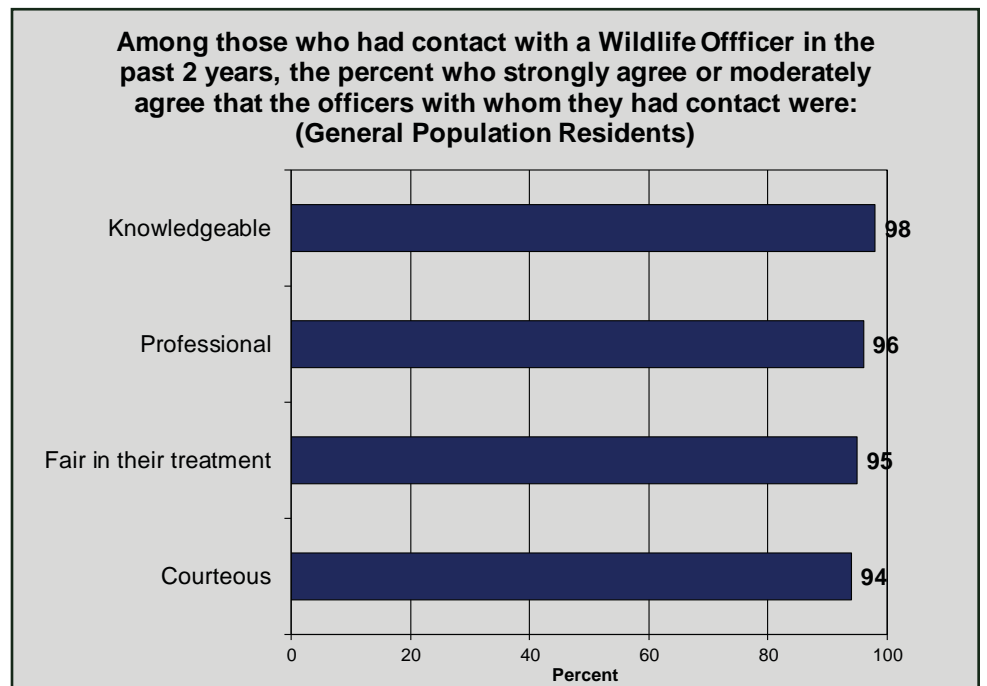
*As a general guideline for performance ratings, 20% is a good benchmark for evaluating results: excellent ratings among 20% or more of respondents typically indicate successful performance, and poor ratings of less than 20% often mean an agency is doing something right. AGFC law enforcement surpasses both these benchmarks in the desired directions for ratings, as can be seen in the graphs above and below. (\*Note that rounding causes apparent discrepancy in total sum of graph above.)*



## Challenges

One challenge for the Commission to consider moving forward is to increase interaction between Wildlife Officers and Arkansas residents and recreationists. While the majority of those who have had contact with an officer in the past 2 years indicate the experiences were positive, only 22% of residents and 35% to 42% of recreationists had contact with an officer. Moreover, the average number of contacts per person during that 2-year period was approximately three—meaning those who had contact averaged three separate contacts each within the 2-year period while many others did not have any contact. The Commission may want to consider efforts to reach out to more residents rather than having repeated contact with fewer people.

The biggest challenge, however, will be for the Commission to maintain these very positive opinions and high ratings among the public for their law enforcement efforts and Wildlife Officers. There is a strong foundation of positivity and trust, and the Commission will want work hard to continue that tradition.



## Methodology

The study entailed a scientific, probability-based telephone survey of 302 general population residents (age 18 or older), 300 licensed hunters (age 16 or older), 315 licensed anglers (age 16 or older), and 312 recreational boaters (age 18 or older) in Arkansas. Respondents were randomly selected using scientific survey methodology within their respective population group. Both landline and cell phone numbers were called in their proper proportions. The findings of the survey are reported at a 95% confidence interval with a sampling error of approximately plus or minus 5.5 percentage points per group. The survey was conducted in April 2017.

**About Responsive Management** Responsive Management is an internationally recognized public opinion and attitude survey research firm specializing in natural resource and outdoor recreation issues. Our mission is to help natural resource and outdoor recreation agencies and organizations better understand and work with their constituents, customers, and the public. Utilizing our in-house, full-service, computer-assisted telephone, mail, and internet survey center staffed with 50 professional interviewers, we have conducted more than 1,000 research studies over the past 27 years. Responsive Management has conducted research in all 50 states and 15 countries worldwide for every state fish and wildlife agency, most federal resource agencies, many NGOs, the nation's top universities, and numerous outdoor recreation industry leaders. [www.responsivemangement.com](http://www.responsivemangement.com)