

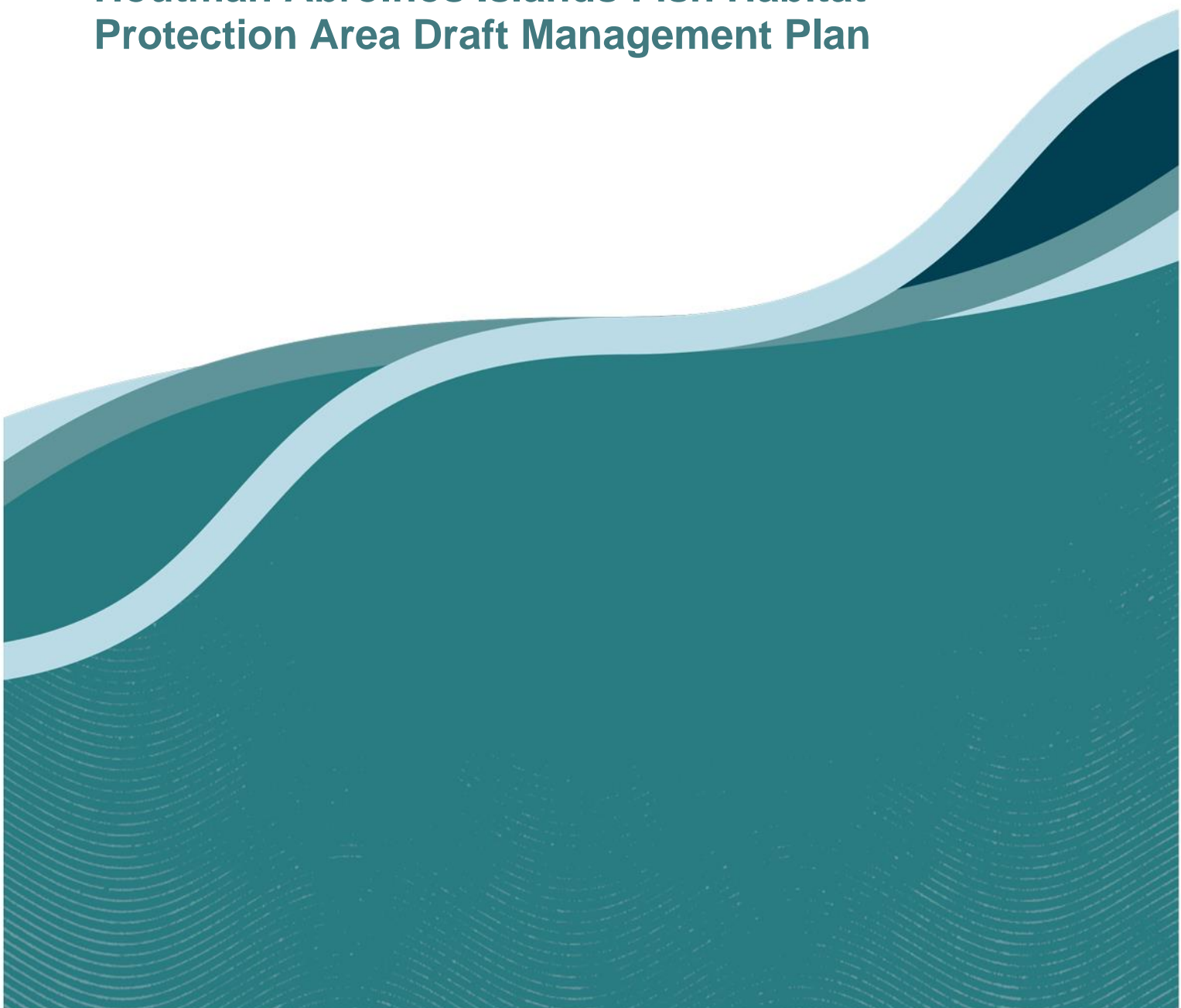


Department of  
Primary Industries and  
Regional Development

Protect  
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# Summary Report of Public Submissions

Houtman Abrolhos Islands Fish Habitat  
Protection Area Draft Management Plan



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# Introduction

On 21 February 2022, the *Houtman Abrolhos Islands Fish Habitat Protection Area Draft Management Plan – Part 1* (draft plan) and the *Houtman Abrolhos Islands Fish Habitat Protection Area Draft Zoning Scheme – Part 2* (draft zoning scheme) were released by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) for a six - week public comment period that closed on 3 April 2022.

DPIRD sought feedback on the proposed management objectives and management actions set out under six strategic priority themes: nature conservation and protection; cultural heritage protection; tourism; sustainable fisheries and aquaculture; Abrolhos community; and governance.

Government agencies, stakeholders and the broader community were given an opportunity to provide feedback on the FHPA draft plan and draft zoning scheme using an online survey and/or via a written submission (Government agencies and non - government organisations were permitted to upload a written submission).

In total, 65 survey responses were received, and a further 14 written submissions. The survey responses and submissions comprised over 1,000 individual comments which have been analysed and considered in the preparation of the final management plan.

This document summarises the key issues raised in survey responses and written submissions and key changes made to the final *Houtman Abrolhos Islands Fish Habitat Protection Area Management Plan 2022-2032* (final plan). Any comments relating to the Abrolhos Islands Reserve have been addressed in the final *Houtman Abrolhos Islands Reserve Management Plan 2022-2032*.

Additional detail on the survey responses is provided at [Appendix 1](#) and referenced throughout this report.

Note that some feedback received related to issues that are outside DPIRD's jurisdiction. For completeness, all of the **key** comments have been captured in this report, but as the matters raised are outside the scope of the plan, the plan has not been amended.

# Submitters

## Online Survey

65 respondents completed the online survey response for the draft plan and draft zoning scheme. The most common respondent category was 'private citizen' (35) followed by company/business (24). Recreational fishers were the highest sector/interest group respondents (41), followed by non-fishing activities (33). It is important to note that not all respondents provided comment in relation to every survey question.

Refer to [Appendix 1](#) pages 2-6 for a more detailed breakdown of respondents and categories.

## Written Submissions

Written submissions that provided comment on the draft plan and draft zoning scheme were received from –

1. Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
2. WA Museum
3. Tourism WA
4. City of Greater Geraldton
5. Department of Health
6. Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage
7. WA Fishing Industry Council
8. Western Rock Lobster Council
9. Recfishwest
10. Marine Tourism WA
11. Abrolhos Islands Bodies Corporate Committee
12. Wallabi Group Body Corporate
13. Southern (Pelsaert) Group Body Corporate
14. Mission Blue

# Key Comments, Issues and Amendments - Abrolhos FHPA Draft Management Plan - Part 1

## Section 1 - General Overview

### Summary of Survey Responses

- **88%** of survey respondents either strongly agreed, somewhat agreed or were neutral with respect to Section 1 of the draft management plan providing an informative and accurate overview of the Abrolhos FHPA planning area, management focus and management context.

### Summary of Key Comments / Issues Raised

No significant comments were provided regarding the information detailed in Section 1 as it relates to the waters of the Abrolhos FHPA. Comments relating to other sections of the draft plan are discussed in those sections of this report. A summary of minor comments raised from both the online survey and written submissions on Section 1 is provided below-

- Some stakeholders required further clarity regarding the role of DPIRD in the management of the FHPA.
- There was a request to include additional historical management information.
- Some stakeholders were doubtful of the accuracy of detailed data in the draft plan arising from the online notification database. This is because a trip could be cancelled, or an itinerary changed, with no further notification to DPIRD required.

### Summary of Key Final Plan Amendments

- Tables displaying online notification form data were removed and replaced with text summarising visitation trend levels.
- Additional text – reference to the *Abrolhos Islands Planning Strategy* (1989) and *A Representative Marine Reserve System for Western Australia* (1992).
- Additional text - informs the reader upfront that the FHPA management plan does not cover the management of the Abrolhos Reserve, and to refer to the *Abrolhos Islands Reserve Management Plan 2022 – 2032* for further information regarding Reserve land management.
- Additional text – provides an overview on DPIRD's role in the management of the Abrolhos FHPA.
- Text updated – clarification of agency management responsibilities and updated Figure 2 (final plan Figure 10).
- Additional text – compliance and education.
- Table 1 – now provides a summary of the management objectives for all six strategic priorities.

## Section 2.1 - Marine Nature Conservation and Protection

### Summary of Survey Responses

- **92%** of survey respondents agreed that the natural values were accurately described in Section 2.1 of the draft plan.
- **86%** of survey respondents agreed that the potential threats and impacts to the natural values of the Abrolhos FHPA were accurately described in Section 2.1 of the draft plan.
- **77%** of survey respondents agreed that achieving both management objectives in Section 2.1 of the draft plan will result in appropriate outcomes for the natural values of the Abrolhos FHPA.
- **84%** of survey respondents either strongly agreed, somewhat agreed or neither agreed nor disagreed with the 12 proposed management actions in Section 2.1 of the draft plan.

Please refer to [Appendix 1](#) (pages 11 – 14) for a more detailed breakdown of responses.

### Summary of Key Comments / Issues Raised

A summary of the key comments and issues raised from both the online survey and written submissions on Section 2.1 Nature Conservation and Protection in the Abrolhos FHPA is provided below. Comments relating to other sections of the draft plan are discussed in those sections of this report.

#### Natural marine values

- No significant comments or issues raised in relation to the description of the natural marine values in the waters of the Abrolhos FHPA.

#### Potential threats and impacts

- Some stakeholders were of the view that the use of rock lobster pots in the ROAs cause minimal damage to habitat which is still in a healthy condition.
- It was noted that wind and weather limit visitation patterns to a significant extent.
- Further clarity was requested around threats to seabirds and shorebirds from marine-based activities in the FHPA.
- It was noted that there are gaps in seabird habitat use and there is no recent inventory of breeding/feeding/roosting habitats in FHPA.
- Potential threat of merchant shipping through the FHPA.
- A stakeholder view that Reserve residents were partly responsible for waste entering the FHPA.

#### Proposed management objectives and actions

- More clarity required regarding DPIRD's management role for natural marine values in the FHPA.
- It was noted that there is a focus on visitor education but will there also be an appropriate level of compliance and enforcement.
- Some stakeholders supported continuing commercial rock lobster potting in the ROAs.

- Some stakeholders were of the view that the existing ROAs were appropriate and no more were required.
- Other stakeholders called for ROAs to become no take zones, more ROAs to be established and an increase to the area that ROAs currently cover.
- Some stakeholders referred to ROAs incorrectly as 'sanctuary zones'.
- Concerns around appropriate joint management of seabirds and shore birds across both the FHPA and islands.
- Concerns that split responsibilities between agencies will create confusion and increased costs.
- Without adequate funding the actions proposed are meaningless.
- The successful fishing industry should not be forsaken for new tourism and recreational development.
- Concerns that anchoring in sand and mud cannot always be done depending on location, weather conditions and mooring and anchorage availability.
- Anchoring of small boats anywhere should be allowed for the purpose of recreational fishing in the shallows.
- Actions to protect benthic habitat require clarification.
- Concerns raised relating to impacts on nesting seabirds on Pelsaert Island around the guano jetty by marine tourism operations and activities, and adjacent moored vessels and marine infrastructure.
- There was support for pre-existing marine infrastructure and access to be well maintained, and that new marine infrastructure built to service visitors is made available to recreational fishers.

### **Additional feedback**

- A further assessment of impacts on natural marine values arising from marine-based activities and infrastructure is required.
- Gaps exist for marine functional groups that provide a food source for larger commercially important taxa.
- Provide further information regarding national recovery plans for marine species.
- Provide some shore area away from wildlife where a recreational angler in a small boat can step ashore and have a swim.
- Stop "fishing for the freezer" in the FHPA.
- Concerns around the lack of information about visitation and activities.
- ROAs should be no take zones.
- Concerns raised around an unmanaged increase in visitation and commercial marine (non - fishing) tourism in FHPA.
- Consider an additional ROA in Southern Group in the area south to southeast of Gun Island or area near Stick or Square Islands.
- As a scuba diver I see the biggest problem to the reefs being damage caused by anchor chains and cray pots.

## Summary of Key Final Plan Amendments

- Text/format amended – increased clarity around DPIRD’s role in assessing and managing risks to marine habitats and ecosystems in the Abrolhos FHPA.
- Text amended – increased clarity regarding DPIRD’s science and monitoring activities.
- Text highlighted - *ROAs were created under fisheries legislation and are not sanctuary zones. Sanctuary zones are areas defined within marine parks and are managed by DBCA.*
- Text amended – further detail regarding the future review of ROAs.
- Text/format amended – clarity around further management of risks to natural values posed by marine-based non-fishing activities, anchoring, and waste and wastewater discharge from vessels in the FHPA.

### **Action 1 amended (2.1(2))–**

*Conduct a review of ROAs in consultation with stakeholders. The review will include (but may not be limited to):*

- 1. determining the objectives of ROAs and principles for management as they relate to natural values*
- 2. reviewing the existing ROA locations and boundaries to determine their effectiveness in protecting and conserving natural values*
- 3. determining the activities in ROAs that will be restricted to protect natural values of the FHPA and adjacent islands*
- 4. considering the need for additional ROAs in identified priority marine areas.*

### **Action 3 amended (2.1(5))–**

*Move new ROA management arrangements to the regulations following the completion of the ROA review.*

### **Action 4 deleted–**

Action 2.1(6) will incorporate a review of the need for any changes to the Statewide Array Surveillance Program (SWASP) for the Abrolhos FHPA and high-risk ports–

*Assess the threat to aquatic biosecurity posed by vessels translocating marine pests to the Abrolhos FHPA to identify a baseline of the current pest biosecurity risk posed to the aquatic environment of the FHPA, and a future projection of that risk.*

### **New action (2.1(3))–**

*In consultation with stakeholders, review existing high visitation locations in the FHPA to determine measures to protect benthic habitat from the impacts of anchoring.*

### **New action (2.1(4)) –**

*In consultation with DBCA and stakeholders, review the potential threats to the natural values of the FHPA, Reserve and National Park posed by marine-based (non - fishing) activities, and determine measures required to manage risks.*



**Action 9 amended (2.1(11))–**

*Continue to ensure that the installation and use of all marine infrastructure for commercial purposes (fishing, aquaculture and marine tourism) includes an appropriate assessment of potential impacts to natural values in the FHPA and adjacent islands in the Reserve and National Park.*

**New action (2.1(12))-**

*Continue to effectively manage the risks posed by fishing activities on listed species, marine habitat, and the broader marine ecosystem of the Abrolhos FHPA in accordance with EBFM principles and third-party accreditation processes.*

**Actions 10-12 amended (2.1(13)) –**

Support DBCA to:

- 1. achieve outcomes associated with state and national recovery plans that apply to marine species and shore/seabirds.*
- 2. improve the collection of data and information for FHPA users accessing the National Park.*
- 3. promote FHPA users' understanding of State and Commonwealth guidelines and requirements for interacting with wildlife in the National Park.*
- 4. increase FHPA users' understanding of conserving the broader environment of the National Park.*

## Section 2.2 - Maritime Cultural Heritage Protection

### Summary of Survey Responses

- **87%** of survey respondents agreed that the cultural heritage values were accurately described in Section 2.2 of the draft plan.
- **88%** of survey respondents agreed that the potential threats and impacts to the cultural heritage values of the Abrolhos FHPA were accurately described in Section 2.2 of the draft plan.
- **78%** of survey respondents agreed that achieving the management objective in Section 2.2 of the draft plan will result in appropriate outcomes for the cultural heritage values of the Abrolhos FHPA.
- **87%** of survey respondents either strongly agreed, somewhat agreed or neither agreed nor disagreed with the six proposed management actions in Section 2.2 of the draft plan.

Please refer to [Appendix 1](#) (pages 15 – 18) for a more detailed breakdown of responses.

### Summary of Key Comments / Issues Raised

A summary of the key comments and issues raised from both the online survey and written submissions on Section 2.2 Cultural Heritage is provided below. Comments relating to other sections of the draft plan are discussed in those sections of this report.

#### Cultural values

- The commercial rock lobster fishery should be included in the cultural heritage values.
- Concerns that cultural heritage values are only aligned with Reserve residents.
- Recreational fishing is of itself a significant cultural interest.

#### Additional places of cultural heritage interest in the Abrolhos FHPA

- Areas adjacent to the guano mining infrastructure across the numbered islands and Pelsaert Island in the Pelsaert Group both on land and at sea should have greater protection.
- Fishing jetties have cultural heritage value.
- Greater acknowledgment and protection for the wreck of *Ben Ledi*.

#### Potential threats and impacts

- With proper management, by people who are trained, accredited and insured, increased visitation to marine-based archaeological sites will not really be an issue.

#### Proposed management objectives and actions

- More clarity required regarding DPIRD's role in the management of cultural heritage values in the FHPA.
- Not enough detail regarding ancient and modern aboriginal cultural heritage associations with the FHPA.
- Concern that the management objective is too broad.
- Continued use of stone jetty on north end of Big Rat Island should be allowed.

- Protection of cultural heritage sites from large visitor numbers is important.
- Consulting WA Museum for approval for public or private infrastructure near key maritime sites should be defined to a certain distance in proximity to the site.
- Stakeholders with local knowledge need to be part of the process.
- It is well intentioned but would note there are few tangible actions planned.

### **Additional feedback**

- Whilst stakeholders are mentioned in the management objectives, they are overlooked in the proposed management actions.
- Encourage tour operators to have their own moorings at high use cultural heritage locations.

### **Summary of Key Final Plan Amendments**

- Text/format amended – clarifies DPIRD’s role in the management risks to cultural heritage values in the FHPA.
- Text amended – further detail regarding ancient and modern aboriginal cultural heritage associations.
- New sections and text – Abrolhos Community.
- Text amended – clarification that all eight new Special Marine Use Area – Cultural Heritage sites will only be located adjacent to National Park land. The stone jetty on Rat Island will not be included.
- New text (highlighted) – clarification that the extent of the buffer zones and the permitted activities within the Special Marine Use Area – Cultural Heritage sites will be finalised in consultation WAM, DBCA and stakeholders.
- New text (highlighted) – clarification that the existing jetties are recognised by DPIRD as structures that contribute to the unique cultural heritage of the resident community and its fishing history and understands that the cultural heritage of the islands’ residents is of interest to the broader community, visitors and tourists.

### **New action (2.2(1))-**

*In consultation with WAM, DBCA and stakeholders:*

1. *determine the appropriate management measures required to manage risks to guano mining jetties in the Special Marine Use Area – Cultural Heritage sites*
2. *consider the need for additional Special Marine Use Area – Cultural Heritage sites over the life of this plan.*

### **New action (2.2(2))-**

*During the review of ROAs detailed in Action 2.1(2), evaluate the need for additional management to manage risks to Hadda’s wreck site and Batavia’s heritage sites in the Beacon Island ROA and on associated islands (Beacon, Traitors and Seal Islands).*

### **Action 1 amended (2.2(6))-**

*Support WAM to progress listing the Houtman Abrolhos Marine Area on the State Heritage Register and identify sites that require further assessment, listing and protection in the FHPA.*

**Action 2 amended (2.2(4))-**

*Implement regulations for eight new Special Marine Use Area – Cultural Heritage sites (refer to **Appendix 1**) following the completion of **Action 2.2(1)** above.*

**Action 3 amended (2.2(5))-**

*Engage WAM when planning for the installation of any new public or private commercial marine-based infrastructure located within an agreed distance from key maritime heritage sites in the Abrolhos FHPA.*

**Action 4 amended (2.2(3))-**

*In consultation with WAM and DBCA, assess and manage the risks posed by FHPA users accessing key land-based heritage sites in the National Park.*

**Actions 5 and 6 amended (2.2(7))-**

*Assist in the development of education programs and interpretation material to increase awareness, understanding and appreciation of the unique cultural heritage values in the FHPA, Reserve and National Park.*

## Section 2.3 - Marine Tourism and Recreation

### Summary of Survey Responses

- **80%** of survey respondents agreed that the marine tourism and recreation values of the Abrolhos FHPA were accurately described in Section 2.3 of the draft plan.
- **67%** of survey respondents agreed that the issues and challenges associated with managing marine tourism and recreation in the Abrolhos FHPA were accurately described in Section 2.3 of the draft plan.
- **78%** of survey respondents either strongly agreed, somewhat agreed or neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposed guiding principles for the development of marine tourism and recreation.
- **67%** of survey respondents agreed with the introduction of a zoning scheme as a tool to manage marine activities and infrastructure.
- **72%** of survey respondents agreed with the proposed tourism assessment and licensing framework for commercial marine tourism activities and infrastructure.
- **56%** of survey respondents agreed that achieving the four management objectives in Section 2.3 of the draft plan will result in appropriate outcomes for the marine tourism and recreation values of the Abrolhos FHPA.
- **76%** of survey respondents either strongly agreed, somewhat agreed or neither agreed nor disagreed with the 24 proposed management actions in Section 2.3 of the draft plan.

Please refer to [Appendix 1](#) (pages 19 – 25) for a more detailed breakdown of responses.

### Summary of Key Comments / Issues Raised

A summary of the key comments and issues raised from both the online survey and written submissions on Section 2.3 Marine Tourism and Recreation is provided below. Comments relating to other sections of the draft plan are discussed in those sections of this report.

#### Marine tourism and recreation values

- Respondents noted the lack of food, water and services to service boat-based visitors.
- Concern that a commercial non-fishing tour operation is hard to define when the crew of the tour can catch fish and rock lobster to feed their guests, putting increased pressure on fish stocks as marine tourism expands.
- More damage on the coral caused by tourism.
- The ecosystem certainly doesn't need to be exploited.
- Bias of values towards marine eco-tourism companies and residents.

#### Issues and challenges

- Safety at sea relies on the visiting boat operators to be experienced and equipped with all safety provisions. How is it possible to determine "experienced"?
- Maintaining access at some high conservation sites will impact upon the natural conservation values of the very location.
- There needs to be a review of the level of visitor access earmarked for high conservation value islands.

- No marine infrastructure should be placed adjacent to major seabird or shorebird roosting or nesting sites, this will impact on their flyways at night or encourage the increase in vessel and personal watercraft use adjacent to these sites.
- Installing new public marine infrastructure for commercial tourism should not impact on any existing fishing commercial operations.
- Marine safety and emergencies are an important issue to consider as there are no medical facilities nearby or within easy reach.

### **Proposed guiding principles for the development of sustainable marine tourism and recreation in the Abrolhos FHPA**

- Nowhere does it say what you are trying to protect. There should be specific statements about what needs to be protected.
- Some stakeholders did not support the principle regarding design, licensing, and use of private commercial marine tourism infrastructure.
- Minimising tourist accommodation was important, as allowing too many people to be at the islands will have a negative impact.
- Whilst the guiding principles are common sense, government seems unwilling to deal with residents who do not support tourism and wish to preserve their members' holiday shacks in the absence of any real working community.
- This unique and remarkable natural environment is owned by all Australians as is the Kimberley and Ningaloo Reef and should not be locked up by an entitled few.
- Coordination needed between DPIRD (FHPA) and DBCA.
- DBCA using some areas of the national park for land-based tourism is a good way to provide appropriate physical segregation of tourism from commercial fishing.
- Using the waters that are adjacent to national park (DBCA land) for tourism, compared to using the waters that are closer to Reserve land for jetties, pontoons, etc. can provide better visitor safety, and appropriate separation of uses.
- Broadly agree with the 'guiding principles' but believe the development of mainstream tourism should progress carefully, which is not the same as 'slowly'.

### **Proposal to introduce a marine zoning scheme as a tool to manage marine activities and infrastructure in the Abrolhos FHPA**

- Focusing people into smaller areas will increase impacts. Spread the load.
- I am in agreeance with some of the zoning to protect marine areas. I believe the re - zoning is being done with a tourism lens and is being made now purely for that purpose.
- Should specifically state that ROA's will be significantly increased in area.
- Current commercial infrastructure not currently used for commercial actives year - round should be removed.
- I agree with bringing in further restrictions to manage high use marine areas, but I think the proposed possession limit of finfish is too low. Lower the limit from 10kg to 5kg or make a max of 5kg demersal fillets and remaining 5kg must be pelagic fillets.

- I feel it is well intentioned and necessary however this document is unclear the consequences of new SMUA – Tourism sites. What impact is there to me as a private person or eco-tourism operator on the Pelsaert Group tourism SMUA. This area is special.
- Mainly agree. Though on Page 60 - the 2nd paragraph mentions marine-based tourism (though only one portion of stakeholders!) will be given the highest priority when determining the process and selection of competing uses. How is priority determined?

### **Proposed tourism assessment and licensing framework for activities and infrastructure (Table 8 of the draft plan)**

- Excessive red tape, cost and too much power given to negligent authorities.
- I do not believe the area can support cruise ship numbers of visitors without significant negative impact to the islands.
- Who is going to build and pay for this pie in the sky plan? There is not any way I agree, the fisherman are not a draw card.
- Do not agree with proposed entry fee for recreational vessels.
- Concerns with non-fishing licence being issued by DPIRD? Further consultancy on this issue needed.

### **Proposed management objectives and actions**

- More public moorings are needed.
- Increasing ROA areas to provide greater protection for the marine environment is paramount.
- You will end up with areas locked off to individuals.
- Current system works fine, not needed.
- Need more information on the management objectives.
- It never works out that way. Look around the world exploitation equals destruction.
- No area of sea up to the high-water mark should be restricted access.
- This is such a broad subject to cover in a yes/no answer. I think it is heading in the right direction but putting this into practice is the difficult part.
- I am firmly of the view that moorings should only be located where anchoring is difficult or unreliable or where anchoring will damage the environment. At present there are multiple moorings located in clean sand (at south Pelseart Island or Turtle Bay) where vessels could anchor.
- One of the most popular areas in busy times is Morley Island. I have seen up to 10 vessels anchored here in addition to those that are moored. Anchoring at this location is unreliable and damages the environment. Given a limited budget moorings would be of more value in areas that are not white sand.
- I agree wholeheartedly with the wilderness fishing concept and reduction of bag/boat limits. This needs to be undertaken in conjunction with increased inspection and enforcement.

- ROAs should have the same arrangements they have now i.e., the continued use of rock lobster potting within ROAs and the FHPA.
- Our family have fished these areas for 60 years and it will cost more to us if we could not fish it.
- As a fisherman with 50+ years, leave this alone. I rely on the fishing the shallow grounds to generate a living.
- There will need to be a high amount of policing for this booking system to work, to stop other boats taking up moorings without bookings and causing disputes. Though overall, I think 'the first in best dressed' system works quite well and is a better long-term option. Possibly with the use of restricted mooring times such as two/three days, etc. during busy periods.
- Agree with all proposed actions except for Action 2.
- It seems that the residents do not want marine tourism, so the process must be driven wholly by DPIRD.
- I disagree with the two fish rule for the recreational anglers, the islands are a considerable distance from Geraldton and a lot of organisation is required to get there. to spend all that money (bait, ice, fuel, food etc.) and only allowed to catch two fish is not the answer.
- Make the entire North Island a fish habitat protection zone.
- Visitation data is not accurate – people can cancel their trips or change their itinerary without DPIRD knowing.
- Strongly disagree with no commercial lobster potting in proposed public and existing mooring and anchorage areas.
- The map on page 30 of the draft zoning scheme shows a massive area proposed for public moorings at North Island that would indicate you are going to cater for up to 50 or more vessels at any given time. So much for low impact!
- While the North Island proposed public mooring area is a sandy area it is also scattered with hundreds of lumps that are commercially fished all year round.
- The North Island existing anchorage area has for ever and a day coexisted with boats using moorings and commercial potting with no incidents or confrontations.
- No-take zones i.e., ROAs and SMUA tourism/heritage sites are also to be designated no commercial pot zones so fishing grounds are getting smaller with every impose on the commercial sector.
- Low take, wilderness fishing and proposed two fish per person will only result in completely decimating the fishing charter tourism industry which is already operating. It is paramount that the current charter operators are recognised that they already operate successful fishing catch and keep tourism businesses regulated by DPIRD.
- Disagree the principles of wilderness fishing they are not the values of my charter fishing business. Wilderness fishing is NOT a due to sustainability issues as stated in this draft plan.
- I disagree with management and licensing for commercial non-fishing marine tourism operators.



- Issues with cross tenure tourism planning - requires transparent and further consultation with already well-established marine tourism industry as to not negatively affect current operator business viability. FTOL holders already have to pay an annual license fee to DPIRD and to DBCA for FTOL and DBCA commercial permits.
- I like the “wilderness fishing” concept-only catch for the table.
- Wilderness fishing, despite limiting fish take, will rely on limited numbers of fishers, but there is no control of this proposed.
- I am concerned that existing commercial fishing moorings are going to be charged a fee when they are serviced and maintained already at the fisherman’s expense. What service will this fee cover?
- If we are paying to access the Abrolhos Islands, I would expect moorings or jetties to access and not to rely on anchoring my vessel.
- Tourism in the Southern (Pelsaert) Group might eventually limit access to some users, the public and transiting boats to the benefit of a small number of private operators.
- Is it sensible to have a tourism SMUA that allows for "permanent floating infrastructure" in the densest bird population of the Southern Group? Has anyone considered bird deaths versus the requirement for an anchor light?
- Unjustified revenue raising.
- I would think that everyone (commercial fishing, charter and private) that uses the FHPA should pay a fee similar the Great Barrier Reef tax to allow for the up keep of the public jetties and moorings.
- Unsure of what controlled visitor access to certain sites may mean. The 20m exclusion zones by the jetties on Pelsaert Island could create difficulty in going ashore.
- Commercial activities need more restrictions.
- Who is going to police the marine tourism?
- Less charter and tourism fishing in the area the better.

#### **Additional feedback**

- More public moorings and the booking system sounds good if it were an online system. It would be great to have reliable mobile coverage to make the bookings while out there - moving from island to island as an example.
- 95% of the visitors are only there to catch fish and as much as possible. I agree with greater catch limits to ensure it is there for the future.
- I am unsure why a Danforth-type anchor has been specified instead of a more general sand anchor designation, or why the anchor type needs defining at all if anchoring only in sandy/mud areas is specified.
- The reduction of fish possession limits along with monitoring and enforcement of recreational fishing activities/rules needs to be a priority.
- I think that the marine tourism and recreation fishing still needs more discussion.

- There are several reasons why fishing should not be permitted in the SMUA -Tourism Sites: a) many divers and snorkellers want to observe or photograph large fishes and other wildlife and b) fishing activity could also attract sharks to the SMUAs.
- Designated activity moorings should be created to allow commercial tour operators free unhindered access to snorkel/dive sites or visitor locations. A tour operator should not be inconvenienced by a recreational boater at a snorkel/dive location (i.e., Morley Island or Beacon Island) using the mooring for extended overnight use.
- Tour operators should have access to commercial moorings or be allowed to install company moorings at each visitor location so other FHPA users do not impede the operation of the tour operator.
- I agree with reducing demersal finfish take if the current take rates are seen as unsustainable, but I think the proposed possession limit of finfish is too low. There might be a better way of allowing people to take more finfish, such as lowering the possession limit from 10kg to 5kg or keep the possession at 10kg but make a maximum of 5kg demersal fillets and remaining 5kg must be pelagic fillets.
- There is a great gap in infrastructure for marine tourism in the area. The potential is enormous if managed properly.
- The proposed "Wilderness Fishing" possession limits seem quite low, is there evidence or studies done to support these limits?
- The Abrolhos was easily the most pristine environment I have dived. Please leave it alone.
- Historic, local operators should be prioritised for tourism licenses without having to go into a competitive EOI with new entities. Restrict access to all un-licensed tourism operators. Provide exclusive access for a select number of operators until infrastructure and demand catch up, then access if the area can withstand more pressure.
- The economic value of the charter tourism fishing industry was omitted from this draft plan whilst other stakeholders' economic contribution was included. In 2021 an economic report of the WA charter fishing industry valued the economic contribution to the WA economy at \$110 million.
- It is essential that marine tour operators are licensed and suitably accredited. The FHPA encompasses some of the most unique and important marine and terrestrial ecosystems, still largely unspoilt and pristine, in Australia. To maintain the integrity of this natural wonderland DPIRD, DBCA and other agencies need to ensure strict conditions and controls are in place and operators are properly regulated.
- If an entry fee were to be introduced on all private recreational vessels, why would you exclude those conducting recreational fish or rock lobster activities? It is reasonable to consider user fees to be introduced.
- The uplift in recreational visitors over the past decade has been extraordinarily hard on the fishing stocks at the Abrolhos Islands. Some areas, particularly those on transit routes for recreational users have been hit much harder than others (southeast end of Pelsaert Island).

- We must stop the mentality that there is a god given right to 10kg of fish or I get to reclaim some of my \$\$\$ that I paid a fishing charter by taking fish home.
- Allowing access to approved and insured existing commercial moorings is a sensible and light touch approach.
- Sacrificing the already established commercial fishing industry at the Abrolhos for the promise of new tourism is unacceptable.

## **Summary of Key Final Plan Amendments (Final Plan Section 2.4)**

- Format amended - the Marine Tourism and Recreation section has been moved to Section 2.4 in the final plan.
- Text amended- further clarification of values - popular marine locations included.
- Text amended- further clarification of values - marine-based tourism and recreation activities, visitors and tourism providers included.
- Text highlighted - clarification that Section 2.3 of the final plan provides information regarding the values and management of fishing tour (charter) operators.
- Text amended - further clarification of values - marine safety, location knowledge and experience requirements.
- Text amended - includes additional values - private commercial marine tourism infrastructure, compliance and enforcement and regional tourism and recreation promotion and planning.
- Text amended - clarifies that land-based tourism and recreation in the National Park is managed by DBCA.
- Text amended - clarifies that the *Houtman Abrolhos Islands Reserve Management Plan 2022 – 2032* provides information on the future management of land-based tourism in the Abrolhos Reserve.
- Significant re-drafting - the current and future management section has been significantly re-drafted to improve readability, format and to incorporate amendments to the section following public consultation.
- Text amended- clarification that the marine tourism management measures in this management plan are primarily targeted at reducing the risks to key values posed by current FHPA users and activities.
- Text amended- reasons for managing different types of popular marine locations as they relate to marine tourism and recreation activities and infrastructure.
- New text - *as part of the review of ROAs described in Section 2.1 of this report (and Section 2.1 of the final plan), a review of all marine-based activities in ROAs will be undertaken to determine the activities that will be restricted in ROAs to protect the marine tourism and recreation values of the FHPA and relevant adjacent islands.*
- Text amended - DPIRD will manage recreational and charter fishing, and other marine tourism and recreation activities in accordance with wilderness fishing concepts, as detailed in the final plan.
- New text - *DPIRD will develop a wilderness fishing code of conduct to educate recreational fishers and charter fishing operators around the benefits of wilderness fishing and its role in preserving fishing and marine tourism values.*

- New text - *Any further management arrangements required to meet wilderness fishing outcomes will be developed in consultation with stakeholders.*
- All draft zoning scheme maps moved to the Appendices in the final plan.
- New text - *DPIRD will work with stakeholders to review the current marine-based activities that occur in the four SMUA – Tourism sites to determine the appropriate arrangements required to manage risks to key values and multi-sector access.*
- New text - *DPIRD will also consider constructing a public jetty in an appropriate area within the SMUA – Tourism site adjacent to southeast Rat Island, dependent on a comprehensive cost benefit analysis and funding.*
- Text amended- clarified management of public/marine tourism and mixed-use mooring and anchorage areas.
- Text amended- marine safety management framework.
- Text amended – data collection and education.
- Text amended- marine-based commercial tourism infrastructure – approvals and licensing.
- Text amended- marine-based commercial tourism activities – approvals and licensing.
- New text- *Initially, the number of aquatic eco - tourism licences will not be capped but this will be reviewed during the life of this management plan.*
- Table 8 amended. Now Table 11 in the final plan.

**Management Objective 3 amended-** *promote awareness of the preparation and knowledge required to visit the Abrolhos FHPA safely.*

**Action 1 amended (Action 2.4(1)) –**

*In consultation with stakeholders, review all marine-based activities in ROAs to determine the activities that will be restricted in ROAs to protect the marine tourism and recreation values of the FHPA and relevant adjacent islands.*

**Action 2 amended (2.4(6))-**

*Create a Special Marine Use Area (SMUA) – Wilderness Fishing across the entire Abrolhos FHPA to the high-water mark and promote wilderness fishing concepts to the Abrolhos community.*

**Action 3 amended (2.4(2))-**

*In consultation with stakeholders, review the current marine-based activities that occur in the four SMUA – Tourism sites to determine the appropriate management arrangements required to manage multi - sector access and risks to key values.*

**New Action 2.4(3) –**

*In consultation with stakeholders, determine the appropriate number of public moorings across the FHPA and review all activities and marine infrastructure within public/marine tourism and mixed-use mooring and anchoring areas.*

**Action 4 amended (2.4(4))-**

*In consultation with stakeholders, review the current usage and need for the existing dive trails.*

**New Action 2.4(17)-**

*Following the review described in **Action 2.4(4)** above and if required-*

- *determine the permitted activities occurring in and around dive trails*
- *review/update the text of the existing dive trail plates*
- *implement a regular maintenance program*
- *consider dive trails in new locations, if required*

**New Action 2.4(7)-**

*Develop a wilderness fishing code of conduct to educate recreational fishers and charter fishing operators around the benefits of wilderness fishing and its role in preserving fishing and marine tourism values.*

**New Action 2.4(8)-**

*Create four new SMUA – Tourism sites (refer to **Appendix 4**) at the following locations-*

1. *Turtle Bay – East Wallabi Island*
2. *White Bank and adjacent anchorage – north Rat Island*
3. *Southeast Rat Island, Easter Group*
4. *Southwest lower embayment Pelsaert Island, Pelsaert Group*

*Implement associated regulations for the SMUA – Tourism sites following the review described in **Action 2.4(2)** above.*

**New action 2.4(19)-**

*Work with DBCA to meet public marine infrastructure requirements to support land - based tourism infrastructure in the National Park.*

**Action 5 amended (2.4(21))-**

*Consider introducing an Abrolhos FHPA entry fee for private recreational (i.e., non-commercial) boats.*

**Action 6 amended (2.4(18))-**

*Consider implementing an online public mooring booking system, with a target implementation date of 1 February 2025.*

**Action 8 amended (2.4(9))-**

*Implement ways to improve data collection through the online notification form and consider other methods such as surveys.*

**Action 9 amended (2.4(10))-**

*In collaboration with DBCA, WAM and DoT, review the existing application and assessment process for the installation and use of commercial marine tourism infrastructure in the Abrolhos FHPA.*

**Action 10 deleted.**

A licensing requirement for all private commercial marine tourism infrastructure in the Abrolhos FHPA (including all marine tourism operator moorings, jetties, landings, and any form of fixed, floating platform) will be implemented as part of final plan actions 2.4(11) and 2.4(16).

**Action 11 deleted.**

This will occur during the reviews of marine tourism and recreation activities and infrastructure in popular marine locations (ROAs, SMUAs, dive trails, public/marine tourism and mixed-use mooring and anchoring areas, and marine aircraft landing areas) as detailed in the final plan.

**Action 12 deleted.**

86% of private commercial mooring owners did not support providing their moorings for public use.

**Actions 14, 15 and 16 amended (2.4(15))-**

1. *In consultation with management agencies, investigate ways to promote understanding of the current management framework for sea SAR operations, emergency evacuations and first aid available to Abrolhos FHPA users.*
2. *Maintain DPIRD's presence and active engagement on the District Emergency Management Committee and Local Emergency Management Committee.*
3. *Consider ways to use the online notification form to increase education and awareness of safety at sea for Abrolhos FHPA users*

**Action 17 amended (2.4(20))-**

*Work with DoT to develop a boating guide following the implementation of marine tourism and recreation management measures.*

**Action 19 amended (2.4(14))-**

*Introduce an approval requirement for persons wishing to undertake the following in the Abrolhos FHPA:*

- *produce film, photography, or any type of audio-visual product for a commercial purpose or gain (where that person does not hold a relevant commercial licence of any type relevant to the Abrolhos Islands)*
- *hold any type of commercial event.*

**Action 20 amended (2.4(5))-**

*Work with tourism stakeholders, management agencies and wildlife experts to identify up to three marine aircraft landing area locations.*

**Action 21 deleted.**

This will be incorporated into the final plan actions 2.4(7), 2.4(13), 2.4(16) and 2.4(22).

**Actions 22 and 23 amended (2.4(11))-**

*Work with DoT to investigate and implement an appropriate licensing framework for commercial tourism moorings and review the licensing requirements for jetties owned by operators in the Abrolhos FHPA.*

**Action 24 amended (2.4(16))-**

*Implement a competitive process for marine - based tourism ventures that require exclusive (permanent or semi-permanent) access to a location in the FHPA, and/or where a restricted commercial development opportunity exists and there is likely to be interest from more than one party.*

## Section 2.4 - Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture

### Summary of Survey Responses

- **80%** of survey respondents agreed that the sustainable fisheries and aquaculture values were accurately described in Section 2.4 of the draft plan.
- **77%** of survey respondents agreed that the potential threats and impacts to the sustainable fisheries and aquaculture values of the Abrolhos FHPA were accurately described in Section 2.4 of the draft plan.
- **67%** of survey respondents agreed that achieving the three management objectives in Section 2.4 of the draft plan will result in appropriate outcomes for the sustainable fisheries and aquaculture values of the Abrolhos FHPA.
- **73%** of survey respondents either strongly agreed, somewhat agreed or neither agreed nor disagreed with the six proposed management actions in Section 2.4 of the draft plan.

Please refer to [Appendix 1](#) (pages 26 – 29) for a more detailed breakdown of responses.

### Summary of Key Comments / Issues Raised

A summary of the key comments and issues raised from both the online survey and written submissions on Section 2.4 Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture is provided below. Comments relating to other sections of the draft plan are discussed in those sections of this report.

#### Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture values

- Several concerns were raised regarding overfishing in the FHPA.
- Others were of the view that recreational anglers catch less fish than the data indicated.
- There were numerous stakeholder concerns raised regarding aquaculture in the FHPA:
  - some questioned its economic viability and product output to date
  - others were of the view that aquaculture licences were only used to gain access to camps on the islands.
  - views that large scale fish farming should not be allowed.
  - the risk of large-scale aquaculture damaging the reef system is too great.
  - the draft plan states it does not seek to address specific management for aquaculture, so it is an unknown factor.

#### Potential threats and impacts

- Recreational fishers have no accountability, and this represents a major concern for the sustainable future of fishing in the area.
- Fish farms do not belong in such an unspoilt environment.
- I accept that the fishing levels need to be dramatically reduced.



### **Proposed management objectives and actions**

- Concerns that maximised fishing time and upsizing catch is leading to overfishing.
- Current tourism operators should not need to reapply to continue to operate at the Abrolhos.
- As there is currently a West Coast Demersal Review, I think the other impacts implied are of moot point until the review and management tools are in place.
- There were numerous stakeholder concerns raised regarding aquaculture and its potential harm to the environment and habitat.
- If an aquaculture lease has not returned a net profit within 5 years, it can't be recognised as sustainable and should be removed.
- I agree with most of the management objectives, but it will kill off the recreational fishing sector.
- Concerns over illegal fishing during the demersal scalefish closure and there was no one around to enforce it.
- Additional charter pressure/marine tourism pressure should not affect the access of recreational fishing based on baseline (historical access levels and take) fishing levels.
- Restrictions (i.e., limits) should apply to both recreational fishers and charter fishers/commercial fishers.
- The driver should be to protect the marine habitat.
- Shark depredation was raised as an issue for recreational fishing.
- Support for not allowing fish to be taken back to the mainland, enjoy the fish during the trip.
- Suggestion for mandatory surveys for all recreational fishers that enter the Abrolhos FHPA, FHPA recreational fishing licences and better use of the online notification form to seek information.
- The FHPA should only have a catch and eat on the day policy

### **Additional feedback**

- Holding all fisheries to the current strict standards is the only way to preserve them for future generations.
- Commercial fisheries and aquaculture should continue to be allowed to operate in the FHPA.
- Healthy fish stocks are needed to keep the balance between the hard corals and the marine plants (seaweed and algae). Where there are healthy fish stocks the reef is in good condition.
- A 50% reduction to the 10kg possession limit would be acceptable.
- I fully support the creation of Abrolhos FHPA Charter Operator Zone. I hope we can move away from catch and kill fishing tours, albeit it is much easier for charter boats to make money doing so.

## **Summary of Key Final Plan Amendments (Final plan Section 2.3)**

- Format amended - the entire Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture section has been moved to Section 2.3 in the final plan.
- New text - includes the economic contribution of the WA fishing tour operator sector.
- Text amended - clarifies the management framework for aquatic resources.
- Text amended - clarifies that DPIRD will limit the number of licenced (existing) West Coast Zone charter operators that will have future access to the Abrolhos FHPA.
- Text amended to clarify that DPIRD will develop minimum performance criteria for continuing eligibility for future access to the Abrolhos FHPA in consultation with stakeholders.

### **Action 6 deleted.**

The intent of this action is incorporated into final plan actions 2.3(2) to 2.3(4) and improvements made to the online notification form.

## Section 2.5 - Abrolhos Community

### Summary of Survey Responses

- **84%** of survey respondents agreed that the Abrolhos Community values were accurately described in Section 2.5 of the draft plan.
- **74%** of survey respondents agreed that the issues and challenges relating to Abrolhos Community values of the Abrolhos FHPA were accurately described in Section 2.5 of the draft plan.
- **62%** of survey respondents agreed that achieving the two management objectives in Section 2.5 of the draft plan will result in appropriate outcomes for the Abrolhos Community values of the Abrolhos FHPA.
- **78%** of survey respondents either strongly agreed, somewhat agreed or neither agreed nor disagreed with the four proposed management actions in Section 2.5 of the draft plan.

Please refer to [Appendix 1](#) (pages 30 – 33) for a more detailed breakdown of responses.

### Summary of Key Comments / Issues Raised

A summary of the key comments and issues raised from both the online survey and written submissions on Section 2.5 Abrolhos Community is provided below. Comments relating to other sections of the draft plan are discussed in those sections of this report.

#### Abrolhos community values

- Concerns over residents' lack of stewardship over the environment e.g., structures are being left to ruin.
- Existing tourism operators are constantly fighting for better access, bases and acknowledgement.
- The community has significantly changed since the introduction of lobster quotas and ongoing management needs to adapt as required.
- The "social values" mentioned in Point 2 are unclear - whose values are referred to here? If "local community and social values" are the island fishers, then the point of their lifestyle is missed by this plan.

#### Issues and challenges

- I do not have a problem with tourism at the Abrolhos, but tourism should be separated from lobster fishing.
- It mentions nothing about environmental impacts from the community.

#### Proposed management objectives and actions

- Fees all add costs to an industry currently financially struggling.
- Jetty and mooring fees will add up to extra costs in an already expensive environment at the Abrolhos.
- DoT charging fees to commercial fishermen at the Abrolhos is an unjust revenue raising attempt which will see the fishermen funding the new public moorings without receiving any service for the fees.
- Efforts should be made to remove unused jetties.

## **Additional feedback**

- Creating new licenses for moorings for commercial fishers who already pay adequately in a recent framework appears to penalise them to afford recreational activities.
- Take into account the use and purpose of what the infrastructure was originally designed for.
- More emphasis on jetty auditing and compliance.
- Marine safety can be strengthened.
- The "Abrolhos Community" is more than just people who own infrastructure or have family connections there. There are many who have visited by private boat for generations.
- The Abrolhos community has shrunk and is not a vibrant family-oriented community like it was in the past.

## **Summary of Key Final Plan Amendments (Section 2.5)**

Text amended to improve the definition of 'Abrolhos community' and social values.

New text recognising that the current moorings, jetties and aquaculture infrastructure owned by commercial fishers and aquaculture operators are in locations that are recognised as an important part of business operations.

### **New action 2.5(1)-**

*Continue working to build relationships with the Abrolhos community and to develop solutions to management and operational issues.*

### **Action 1 amended (2.5(5))-**

*Work with DBCA, WAM and other key agencies to explore opportunities to increase public engagement and to provide cross-tenure management information to the wider community, including the promotion of the unique social values of the Abrolhos community.*

### **Action 3 amended (2.5(2))-**

*In collaboration with DBCA, WAM and DoT, review the existing application and assessment process for new commercial fishing and aquaculture infrastructure.*

### **Action 4 amended (2.5(4))-**

*Work with DoT to-*

- *implement a procedure for ensuring existing moorings and jetties meet required standards*
- *review the current licensing requirements for existing and new jetties*
- *investigate and implement an appropriate licensing framework for moorings.*

## Section 2.6 - Governance

### Summary of Survey Responses

- **86%** of survey respondents agreed that the Governance values were accurately described in Section 2.6 of the draft plan.
- **74%** of survey respondents agreed that the issues and risks to the Governance values of the Abrolhos FHPA were accurately described in Section 2.6 of the draft plan.
- **62%** of survey respondents agreed that achieving the four management objectives in Section 2.6 of the draft plan will result in appropriate outcomes for the Governance values of the Abrolhos FHPA.
- **81%** of survey respondents either strongly agreed, somewhat agreed or neither agreed nor disagreed with the seven proposed management actions in Section 2.6 of the draft plan.

Please refer to [Appendix 1](#) (pages 35 – 37) for a more detailed breakdown of responses.

### Summary of Key Comments / Issues Raised

A summary of the key comments and issues raised from both the online survey and written submissions on Section 2.6 Governance is provided below. Comments relating to other sections of the draft plan are discussed in those sections of this report.

#### Governance values

- Lack of funding is an important issue.
- Stakeholders were concerned around the current level of resources available to ensure good compliance with rules.
- Stakeholders noted that the multijurisdictional nature of management across the Abrolhos Islands is confusing and complex.

#### Potential threats and impacts

- It was noted that if marine tourism increases, a significant increase in policing will be required.
- Who is going to pay for the public moorings and more importantly the ongoing annual inspection and maintenance required?

#### Proposed management objectives and actions

- Decision-making processes - transparent is the key.
- The Reserve residents on the Abrolhos to fish, not to make decision on future uses and governance of the Abrolhos.
- There was support for additional regulation and management of the FHPA, but there were concerns about how the development, implementation, coordination, and resourcing (both personnel and funding) will occur to ensure that current and future users of the FHPA can operate efficiently under increasing regulation.

- The management plan needs to clearly articulate the following for each action:
  - stakeholder responsibilities
  - resources and assets required
  - funding sources and stakeholder contributions.
- The governance could be strengthened to ensure the safety and sustainability of the area and to ensure there is prevention of harm to the marine environment.
- Many stakeholders raised the need to increase the number of fisheries and marine officers to undertake compliance and enforcement activities.
- It is unclear which agency will be the lead agency for responsibility at the Islands, the proposed joint management may need to be legislated to ensure cooperation, funding is unclear, previous research has been focused on fisheries management only and the scope is broader now.
- If done properly good governance can be achieved but it is a very complicated area 40 nautical miles out to sea.
- This combined management approach will create confusion with Abrolhos users and the duplication of effort/approvals, etc.

#### **Additional feedback**

- Better representation across stakeholders is needed where the impact will be felt the most and to seek vital information from them in order to make informed planning and decisions.
- Charge fees to use the FHPA. GBR is \$7 a day.
- Stakeholders noted there was differing concerns and views amongst government agencies and individuals.
- It was noted that the draft plan did not state what is defined as good governance, what is the desired outcome and how it would be measured.
- It was noted that governance at the moment is inconsistent, and at times confrontational.

### **Summary of Key Final Plan Amendments (Section 2.6)**

Text amended – includes a definition of governance and better description of governance linkages to outcomes for values in the FHPA.

Text amended – recognises the importance of compliance, enforcement and education values to the community.

#### **Objective 1 amended-**

*Identify funding and resources required to effectively achieve State Government's strategic direction for the Abrolhos FHPA.*

#### **Objective 4 deleted-**

The intent of this management objective will be addressed across management objectives 1-3 and relevant actions.

**Action 1 amended (2.6(1))-**

*Introduce a long-term sustainable funding, revenue and resource framework for the Abrolhos FHPA to support effective administration, management and compliance.*

**Action 5 amended (2.6(5))-**

*Monitor implementation of this plan through regular monitoring of progress of actions in accordance with priorities.*

**New action 2.6(6)-**

*Consider introducing an approval requirement for persons wishing to conduct research in the Abrolhos FHPA below the high-water mark.*

## **Prioritisation of Proposed Actions**

### **Summary of Key Comments / Issues Raised**

A summary of the key comments from both the online survey and written submissions on the prioritisation of the proposed actions is provided below. Comments relating to other sections of the draft plan are discussed in those sections of this report.

- A priority regarding the Abrolhos community should be an audit of jetties and moorings ascertaining what licence is to attached to what piece of infrastructure.
- Mostly agree, #5 is especially important (RFBL etc).
- I would say to fast-track marine tourism operators' access, licensing, and ability to have operational bases on land.



# Key Comments, Issues and Amendments - Abrolhos FHPA Draft Zoning Scheme - Part 2

## Summary of Survey Responses

- **69%** of survey respondents strongly agreed, somewhat agreed or neither agreed nor disagreed with the measures proposed for managing marine tourism and recreation in the Abrolhos FHPA as described in the draft zoning scheme.
- **57%** of survey respondents agreed with the proposed boundary for the Special Marine Use Area (SMUA) - Wilderness Fishing including the entire Abrolhos FHPA.
- **61%** of survey respondents agreed with the proposed locations and boundaries for the SMUA - Tourism sites as described in the draft zoning scheme.
- **64%** of survey respondents agreed with the proposed locations and 20 metre exclusion zone for the SMUA - Maritime Heritage sites as described in the draft zoning scheme.
- **68%** of survey respondents agreed that the ten (10) high priority existing and proposed public/tourism mooring and anchoring locations in the Abrolhos FHPA identified in Table 1 of the draft zoning scheme would benefit from the installation of new/additional public moorings.
- **86%** of survey respondents who owned an approved private commercial mooring in the Abrolhos FHPA would not consider offering their mooring for public rental.
- **63%** of survey respondents agreed that sand/mud should be the only substrate where anchoring should be permitted in the Abrolhos FHPA.
- **48%** of survey respondents agreed with the permitted and restricted commercial and recreational marine activities (fishing, aquaculture and non-fishing marine tourism and recreation) proposed for the areas described in Matrix 1 of the draft zoning scheme.
- **49%** of survey respondents agreed with the permitted and restricted commercial marine infrastructure (commercial tourism, commercial fishing and aquaculture) proposed for the areas described in Matrix 2 of the draft zoning scheme.
- **57%** of survey respondents agreed with the permitted and restricted activities proposed for the areas described in Matrix 3 (marine environment and safety).
- **68%** of survey respondents agreed with the permitted public (government-owned) marine tourism infrastructure and other approvals proposed for the areas described in Matrix 4.

Please refer to [Appendix 1](#) (pages 38 – 48) for a more detailed breakdown of responses.

Three additional questions at the end of the survey sought the view of respondents as they relate to activities in ROAs. The results are summarised below-

- **54%** of survey respondents agreed, or neither agreed nor disagreed with prohibiting all fishing (including commercial and recreational fishing for rock lobster) in ROAs.

- **41%** of stakeholders completely agreed with prohibiting anchoring in ROAs or had no view. An additional **41%** of stakeholders were supportive of:
  - allowing anchoring in sand/mud only within ROAs (27%), and/or
  - allowing vessels under 10m anchoring anywhere within ROAs (9%), and/or
  - prohibiting anchoring only if more public moorings were provided inside, or adjacent to, ROAs (5%).
- **18%** of stakeholders completely disagreed with prohibiting anchoring in ROAs.
- **79%** of survey respondents agreed, or neither agreed nor disagreed with day visitation only, or supported allowing stays in ROAs of no more than 24 hours.
- **21%** of stakeholders completely disagreed with restricting length of stay in ROAs.

## Summary of Key Comments / Issues Raised

The draft zoning scheme attracted the highest number of comments from the online survey (415). A summary of the key comments and issues raised from both the online survey and written submissions on the draft zoning scheme is provided below-

- There was good support for implementing the SMUAs for wilderness fishing, marine tourism, cultural heritage and public mooring and anchoring areas.
- The main points of difference between stakeholders related to the proposed restrictions around marine-based activities and infrastructure in SMUAs and ROAs.
- The actions which relate to the determination of the draft zoning scheme and uses in the FHPA should not be progressed in the absence of further detailed assessment.
- It was requested that DPIRD complete fundamental assessment work prior to the completion of the management plans including (but not limited to):
  - demand analysis and assessment relating to all existing and potential industries including fishing, aquaculture and tourism
  - land / water use conflict risk assessment which enables a systematic consistent and site-specific conflict assessment approach to land / water use planning and development assessment and
  - cost benefit and economic impact assessments
  - regulation conflict risk assessment
  - cost & funding assessments for establishing and managing tourism uses.

## Summary of Key Plan Amendments

### Draft zoning scheme - areas and locations

- There is no longer a Part 2 zoning scheme document - the draft zoning scheme areas and maps have been incorporated into the final management plan.
- As detailed in the final plan, the SMUA locations for wilderness fishing, marine tourism and maritime heritage, and the mooring and anchoring areas will be implemented.

## **Permitted and restricted marine-based activities and infrastructure in SMUAs, ROAs and mooring and anchorage areas**

- The final plan does not include Matrices 1-4 as provided in the draft zoning scheme.
- Any restrictions on marine-based activities and infrastructure within SMUAs, ROAs and public mooring and anchoring areas will be finalised after a detailed assessment in consultation with stakeholders.
- The current management arrangements will remain in place until the permitted and restricted activities for each area are reviewed and finalised with stakeholders.

## Summary

DPIRD has carefully considered the issues raised through the six-week public consultation period. The need to balance competing requirements of the different sector groups was a fundamental consideration in the review of the public submissions. Consequently, a number of amendments have been made to the final management plan.

In summary, the amendments have provided additional detail and clarity where required, and an overall better balance of information presented. In recognition of the significant divergence in views in respect of managing marine tourism and recreation in the Abrolhos FHPA, the amendments to the final plan will provide for additional time to work through the issues with stakeholders, and work together in a collaborative manner to develop management frameworks to protect key values.

DPIRD thanks all the respondents for their time in providing a submission and contributing to development of the final approved *Houtman Abrolhos Islands Fish Habitat Protection Area Management Plan 2022-2032*.

# Appendix 1 – Online Survey Response Report

# Abrolhos Fish Habitat Protection Area Draft Management Plan and Zoning Scheme - Online Survey

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## SURVEY RESPONSE REPORT

21 February 2022 - 03 April 2022

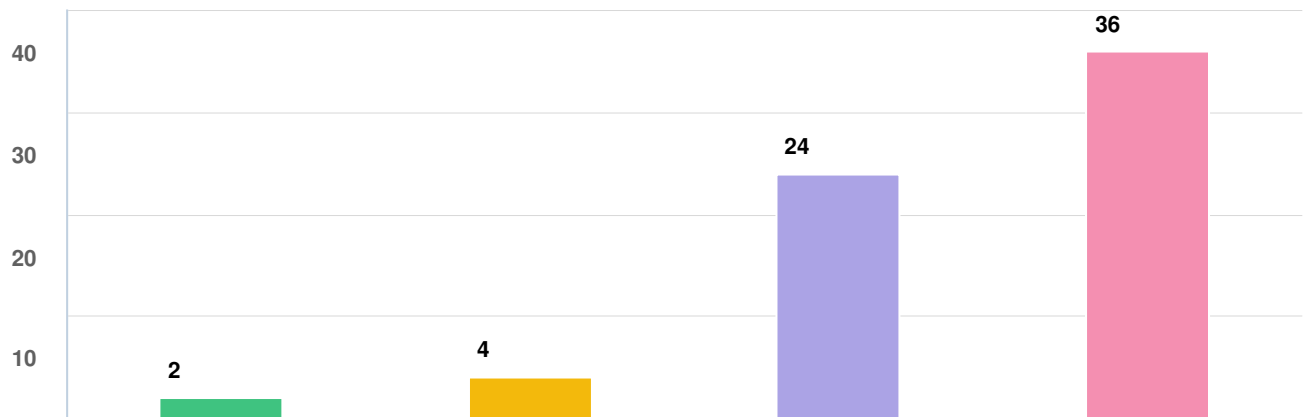
### PROJECT NAME:

Abrolhos management plans



SURVEY QUESTIONS

**Q1** Are you giving feedback on behalf of an organisation or as a private citizen?



**Question options**

- Commonwealth, State or Local Government organisation
- Non-government organisation
- Company/business
- Private citizen

Mandatory Question (65 response(s))  
Question type: Checkbox Question



**Q2 | What is your Commonwealth, State or Local Government organisation's name?**

Screen Name Redacted                      Western Australian Museum  
3/31/2022 03:55 PM

Screen Name Redacted                      City of Greater Geraldton  
4/01/2022 02:53 PM

**Mandatory Question** (2 response(s))

**Question type:** Single Line Question

**Q3 | What is your non-government organisation's name?**

Screen Name Redacted                      BOATING WA  
4/02/2022 04:46 PM

Screen Name Redacted                      Mission Blue  
4/03/2022 10:49 AM

Screen Name Redacted                      Recfishwest  
4/03/2022 12:33 PM

Screen Name Redacted                      Minderoo Foundation  
4/03/2022 01:59 PM

**Mandatory Question** (4 response(s))

**Question type:** Single Line Question

**Q4 | What is your company/business name?**

Screen Name Redacted                      Jetspeed Pty Ltd  
3/21/2022 02:21 PM

Screen Name Redacted                      Austsea Tours  
2/21/2022 04:09 PM

Screen Name Redacted                      Spellbound holding  
2/23/2022 03:57 PM

Screen Name Redacted                      Dhu West Fishing Pty Ltd  
2/22/2022 11:22 PM

Screen Name Redacted                      Possum Fishing Company  
3/07/2022 03:36 PM

Screen Name Redacted                      Image Dive and Charters  
2/21/2022 06:40 PM

Screen Name Redacted                      Ausworld Asset Pty Ltd  
3/22/2022 03:55 PM

Screen Name Redacted                      Galeforce Fisheries Pty Ltd  
3/05/2022 11:02 AM

Screen Name Redacted                      Edgar Enterprise Pty Ltd  
3/06/2022 10:33 PM

Screen Name Redacted                      Halfmoon Biosciences  
3/14/2022 12:00 PM

Screen Name Redacted                      Patience Fishing  
3/17/2022 07:21 PM

Screen Name Redacted                      Umina Beach Pty Ltd  
3/24/2022 08:36 PM

Screen Name Redacted                      Batavia Coral Farm  
3/22/2022 02:21 PM

Screen Name Redacted                      Eco Abrolhos  
3/30/2022 03:56 PM

Screen Name Redacted                      Patesco Pty Ltd  
3/23/2022 05:03 PM

Screen Name Redacted                      Betty Col Fishing Company  
3/28/2022 04:21 PM

Screen Name Redacted                      Keshi Mer Expeditions  
4/02/2022 01:31 PM

Screen Name Redacted                      Daydawn Fisheries Pty Ltd  
3/30/2022 06:21 PM

Screen Name Redacted                      Eco Abrolhos Pty Ltd  
4/03/2022 04:57 PM

Screen Name Redacted                      Apache Charters  
4/03/2022 12:26 PM

Screen Name Redacted                      Lyngmach fishing company  
4/03/2022 01:44 PM

Screen Name Redacted                      Umina Beach  
4/03/2022 01:01 PM

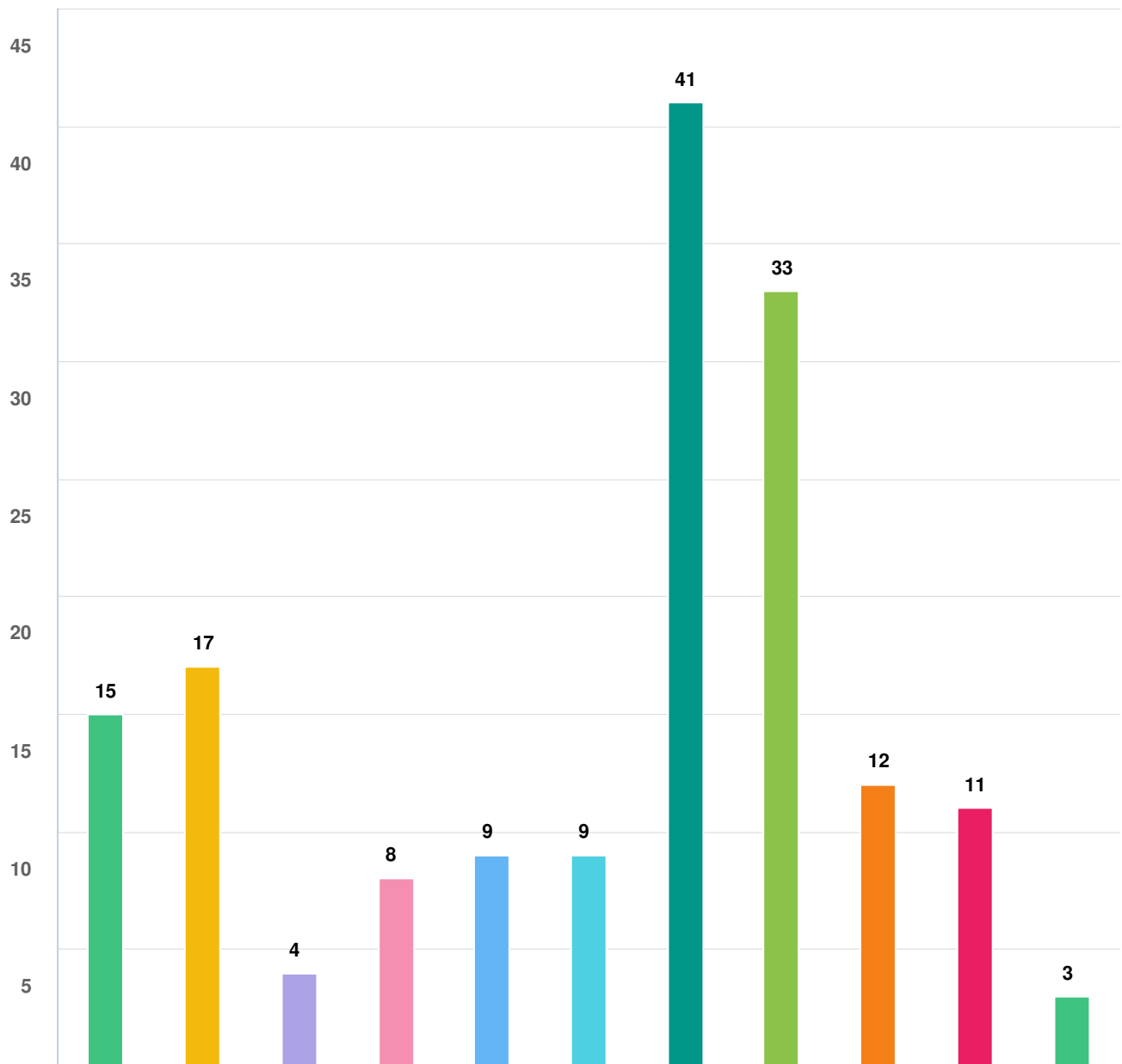
Screen Name Redacted                      Westyle Investments Pty Ltd  
4/03/2022 03:26 PM

Screen Name Redacted                      Jae Erin Fishing Company  
4/03/2022 05:03 PM

**Mandatory Question** (24 response(s))

**Question type:** Single Line Question

**Q5 Which sector/interest group/activity do you identify with the most? Tick all that apply.**

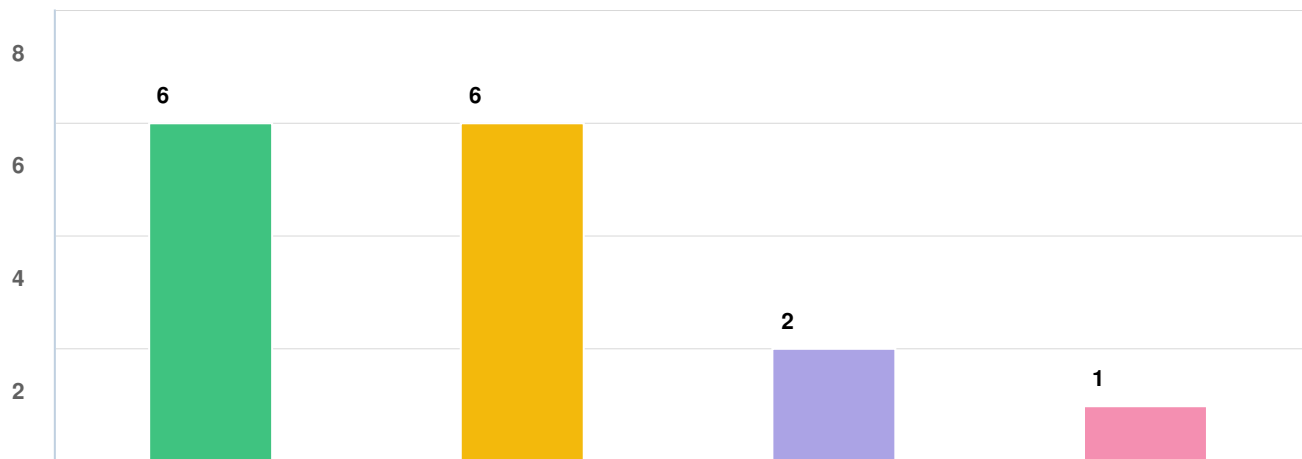


**Question options**

- Abrolhos Islands Body Corporate member     ● Commercial fishing licensee operating in the Abrolhos FHPA
- Aquaculture licensee operating in the Abrolhos FHPA     ● Licensed fishing tour operator operating in the Abrolhos FHPA
- Commercial fishing, fishing tour operator or aquaculture licensee operating outside of the Abrolhos FHPA
- Marine eco-tourism (non-fishing) operator     ● Recreational fishing
- Non-fishing activities (e.g. wildlife appreciation, diving, snorkelling, surfing, boating, kitesurfing, kayaking, etc.)
- Conservation, education and/or research     ● Maritime cultural heritage     ● Other (please specify)

Mandatory Question (65 response(s))  
Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q6 Which Body Corporate are you a member of? Tick all that apply.**

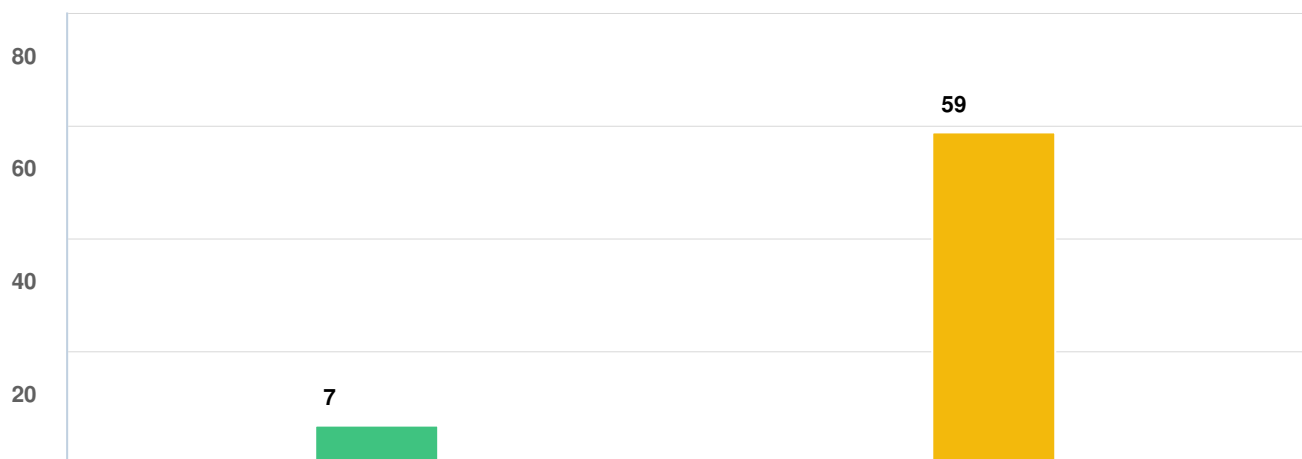


**Question options**

- North Island
- Wallabi Group
- Easter Group
- Pelsaert (Southern) Group

Mandatory Question (15 response(s))  
Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q7 Do you currently conduct commercial eco-tours (non-fishing) at the Abrolhos Islands?**

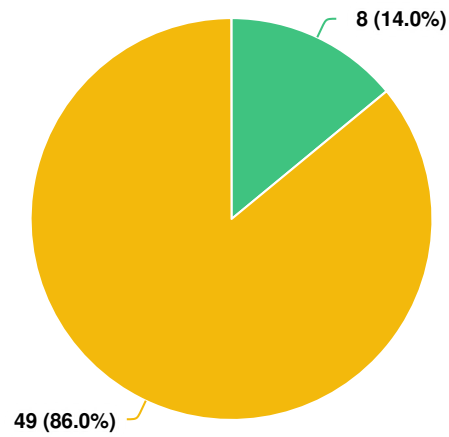


**Question options**

- Yes
- No

Mandatory Question (65 response(s))  
Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q8** Do you plan on doing so in the future?

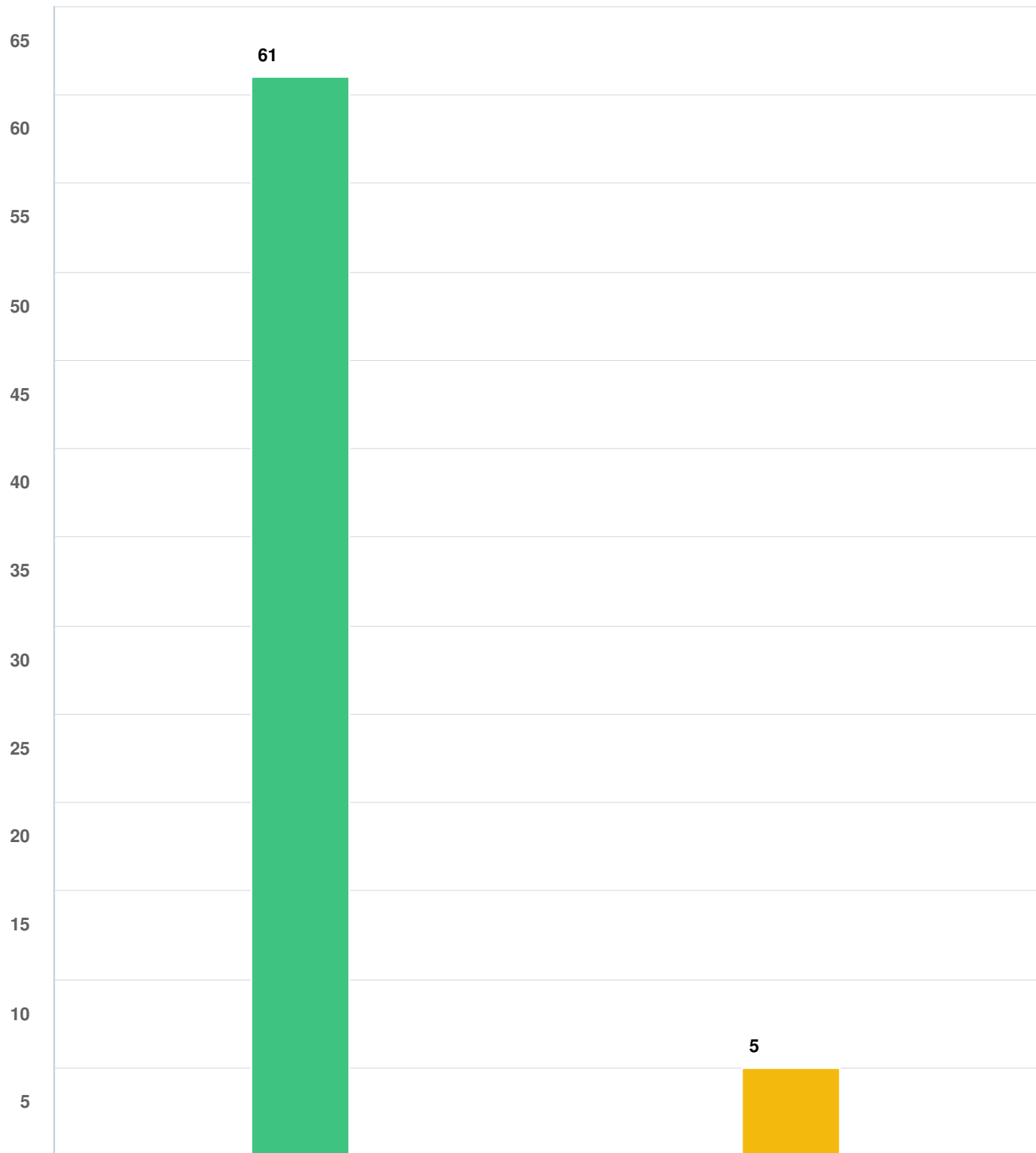


**Question options**

- Yes
- No

*Optional question (56 response(s), 10 skipped)*  
*Question type: Dropdown Question*

**Q9** Have you read the Houtman Abrolhos Islands FHPA Draft Management Plan and Draft Zoning Scheme?

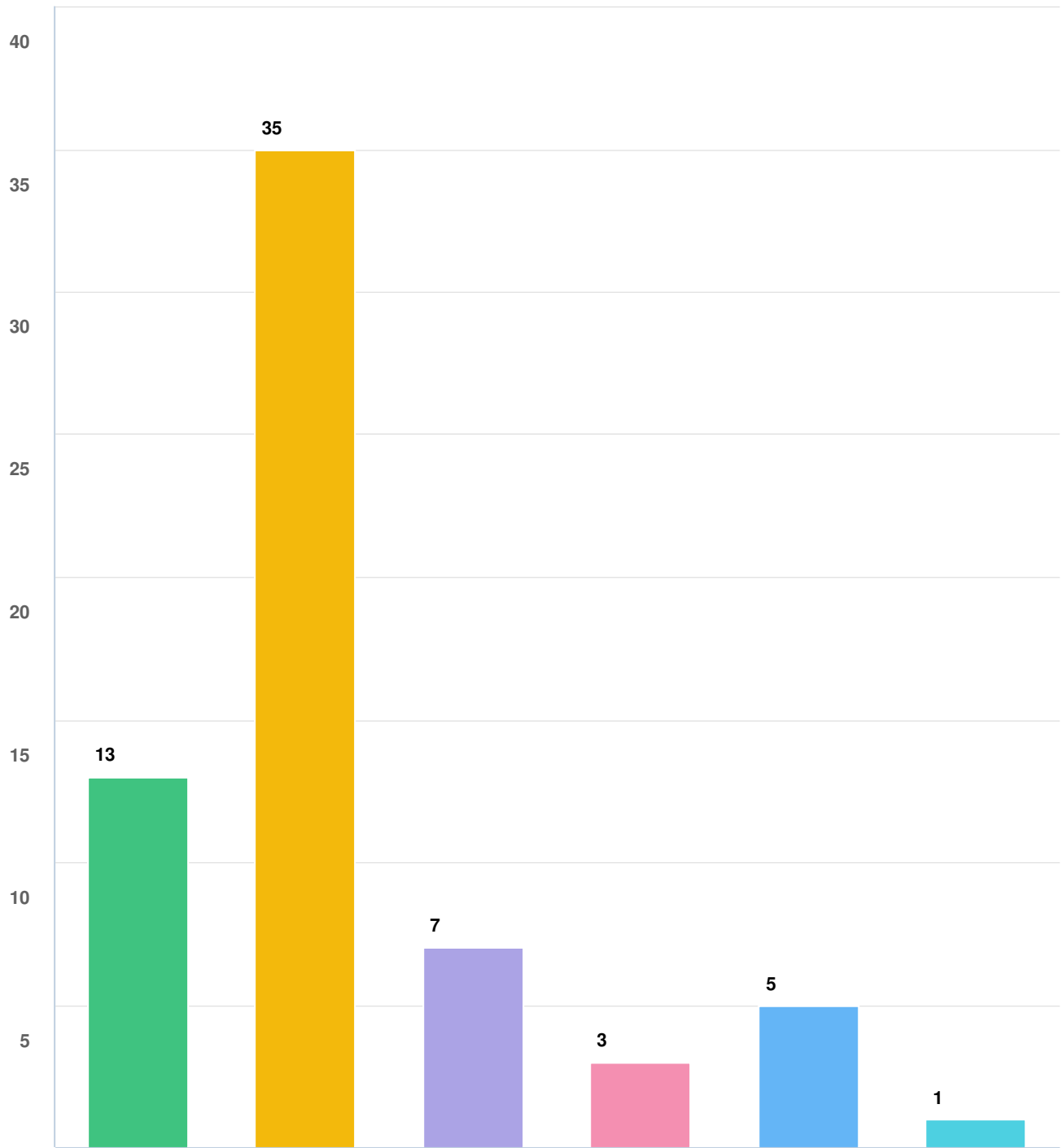


**Question options**

- Yes
- No

*Mandatory Question (65 response(s))  
Question type: Checkbox Question*

**Q10** To what extent do you agree that Section 1 of the Abrolhos FHPA Draft Management Plan pages 8 - 22 has provided you with an informative and accurate overview of the Abrolhos FHPA planning area, management focus and management context?



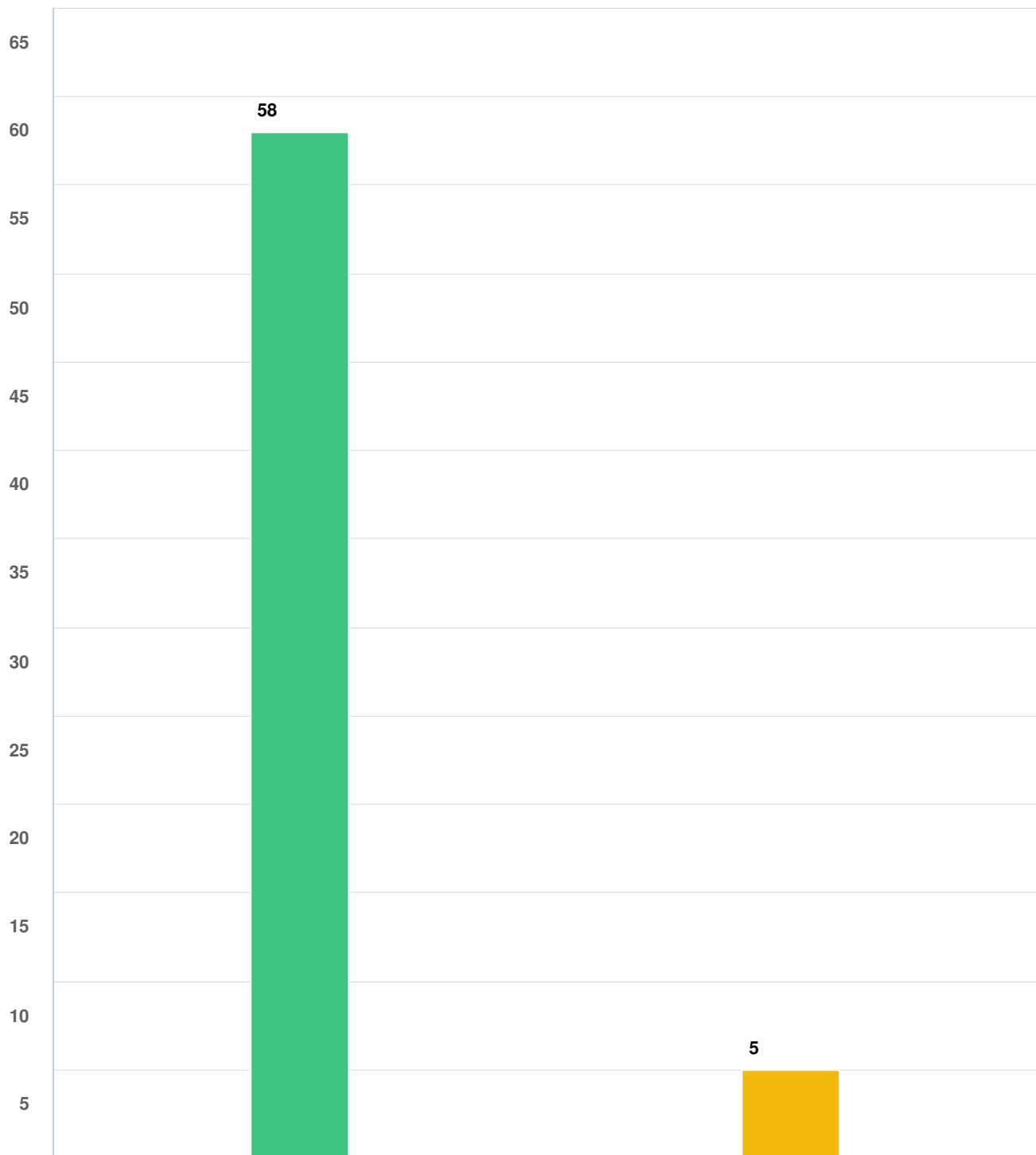
**Question options**

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Unsure/undecided

Optional question (64 response(s), 2 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question



**Q11** Do you agree that the natural values of the Abrolhos FHPA are accurately described in Section 2.1 of the Abrolhos FHPA draft management plan?

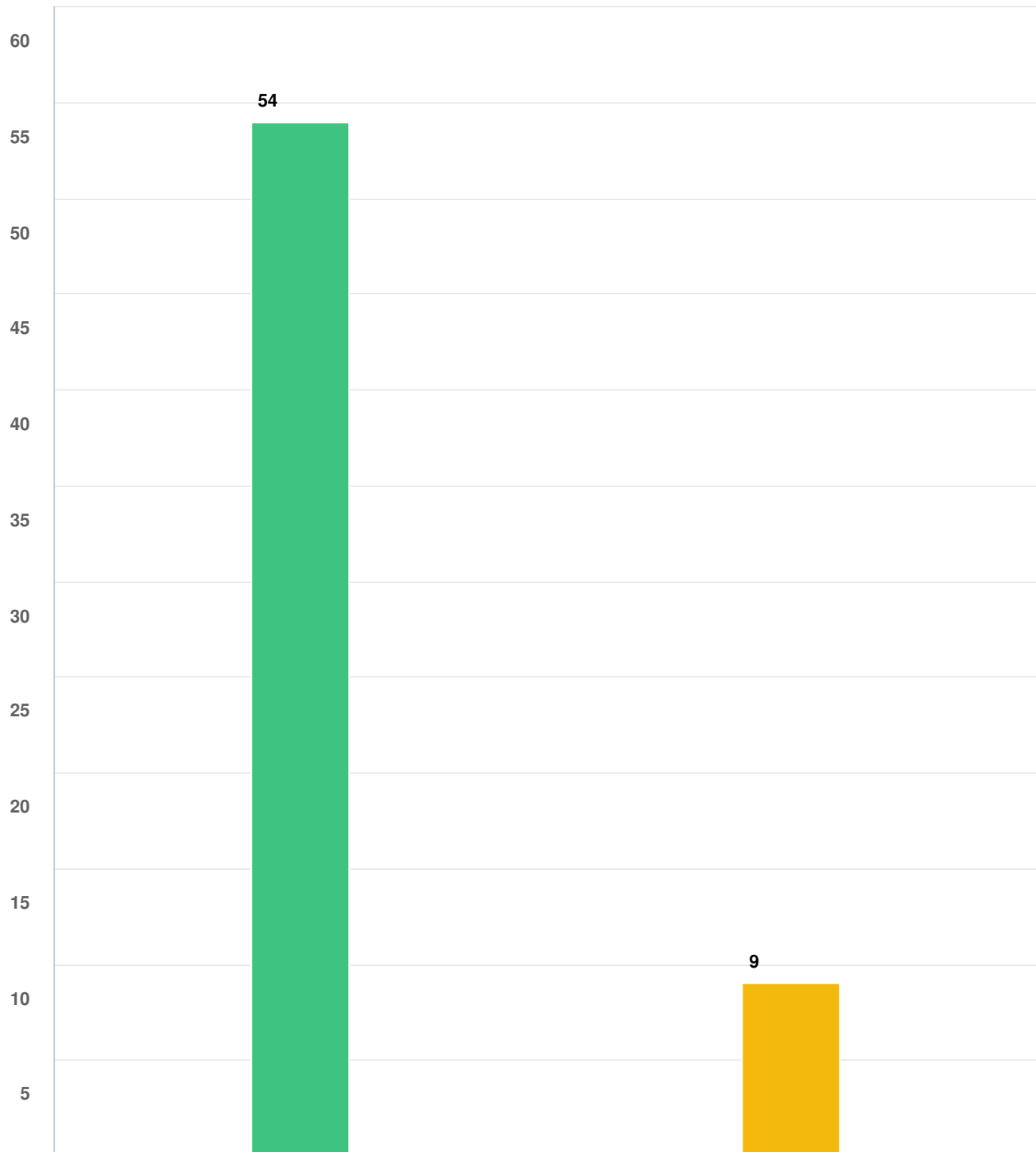


**Question options**

- Yes
- No

*Optional question (63 response(s), 3 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question*

**Q12** Do you agree that the potential threats and impacts to the natural values of the Abrolhos FHPA are accurately described in Table 4 of the Abrolhos FHPA draft management plan?

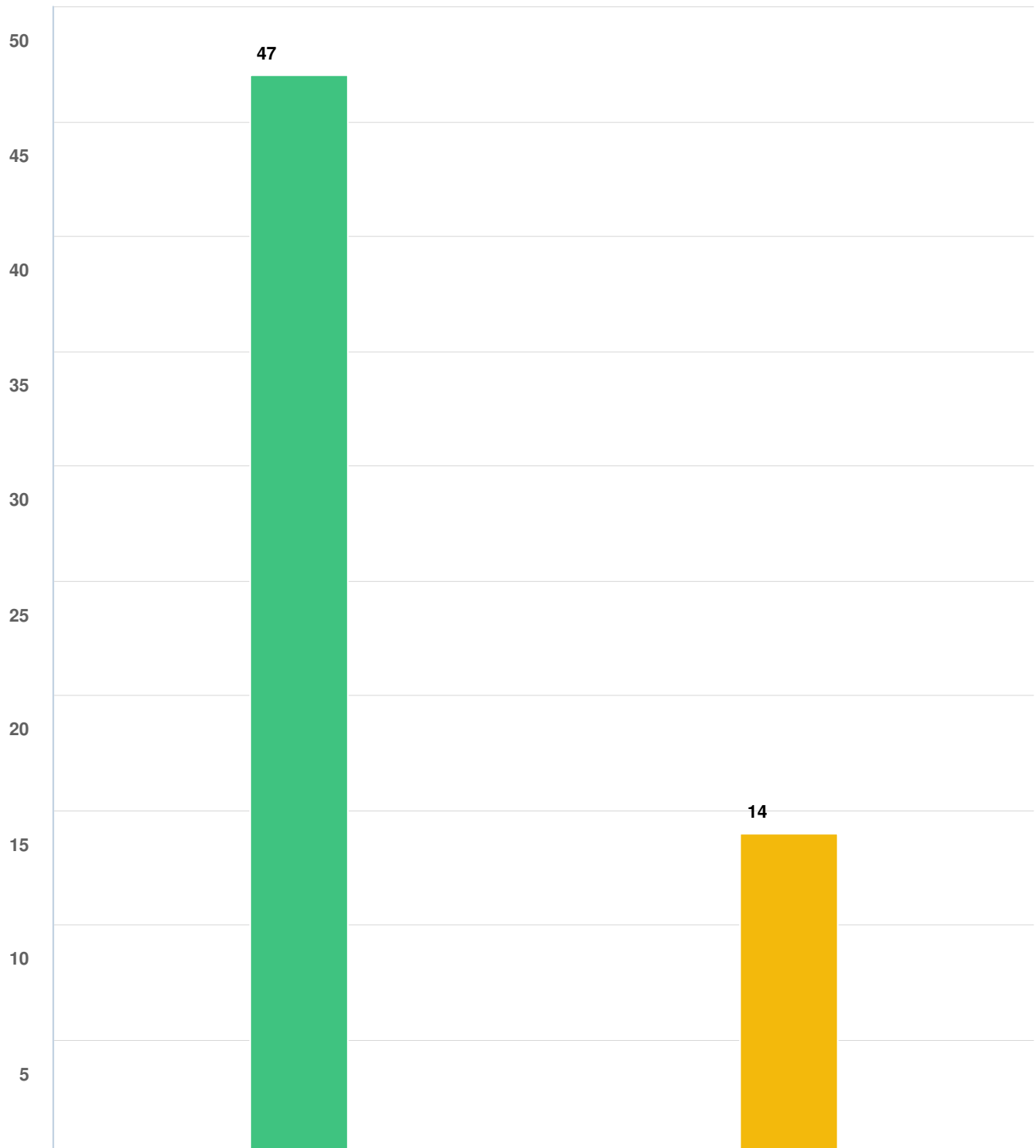


**Question options**

- Yes
- No

Optional question (63 response(s), 3 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q13** Do you agree that achieving both management objectives on pages 38 and 39 of the Abrolhos FHPA draft management plan will result in appropriate outcomes for the natural values of the Abrolhos FHPA?

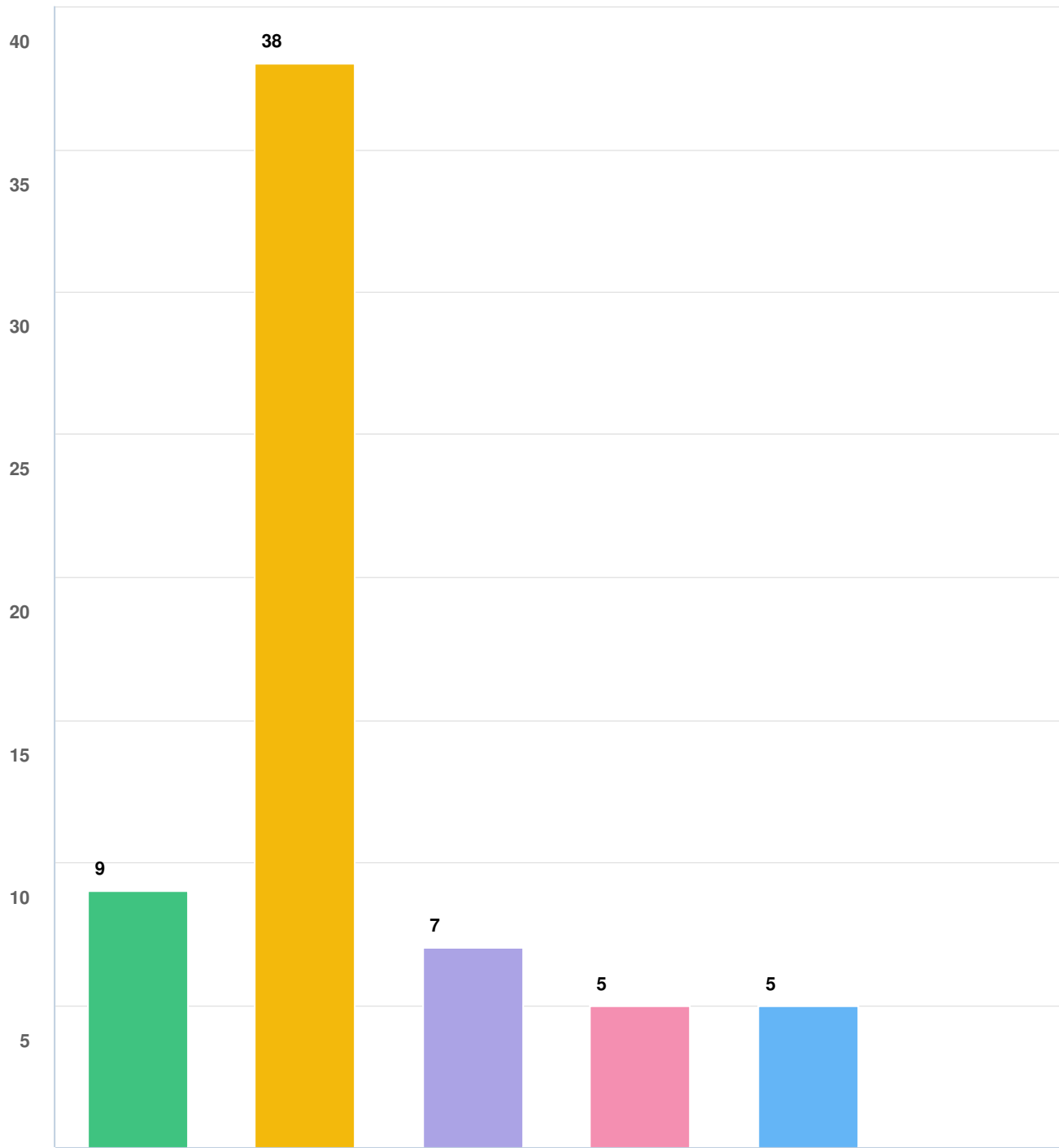


**Question options**

● Yes ● No

Optional question (61 response(s), 5 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q14** There are 12 proposed management actions on pages 38 and 39 aimed at achieving both management objectives for natural values in the Abrolhos FHPA. To what extent do you agree with the proposed actions?

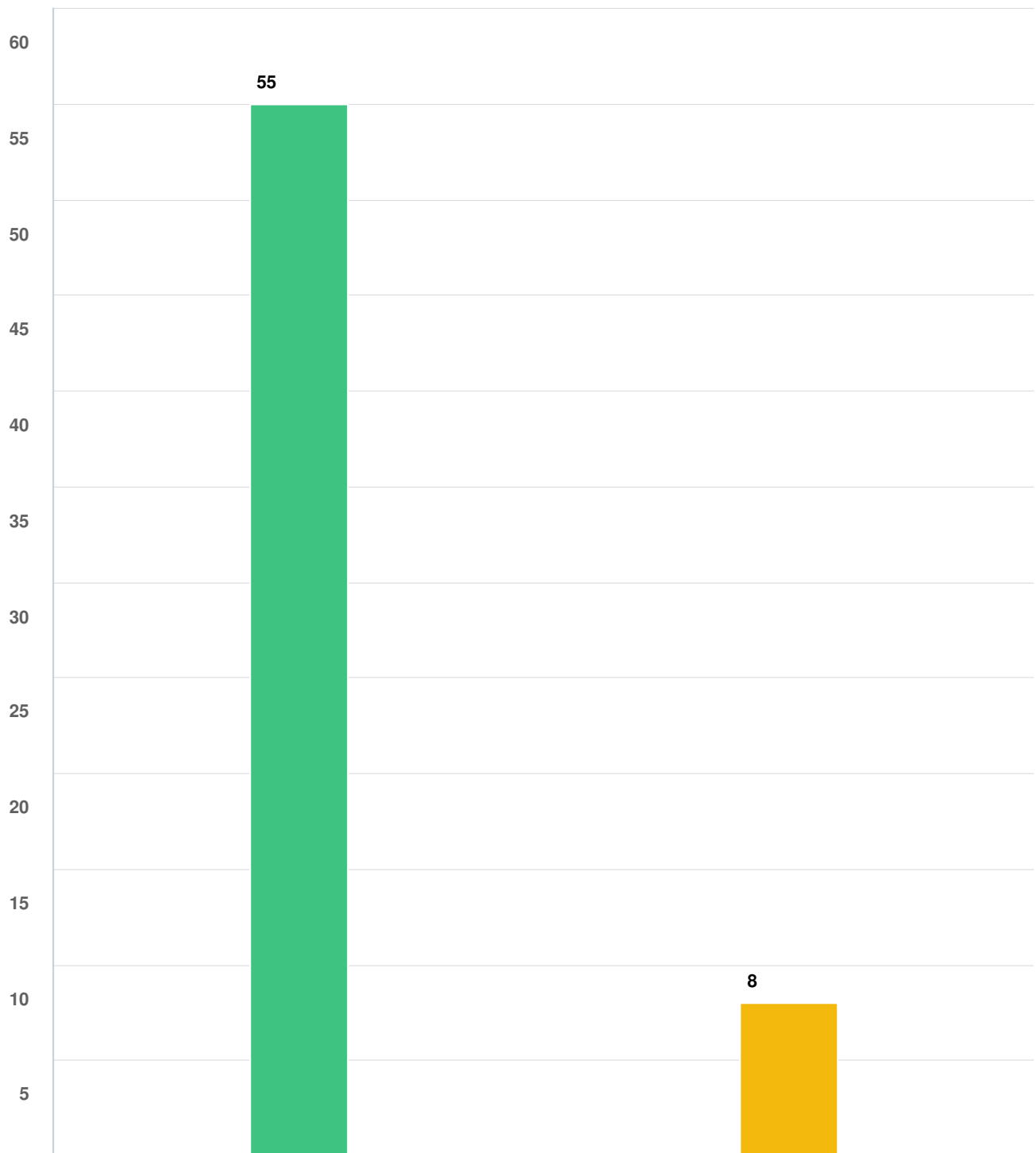


**Question options**

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Unsure/undecided

Optional question (64 response(s), 2 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q15** Do you agree that the cultural heritage values of the Abrolhos FHPA are accurately described in Section 2.2 of the Abrolhos FHPA draft management plan?



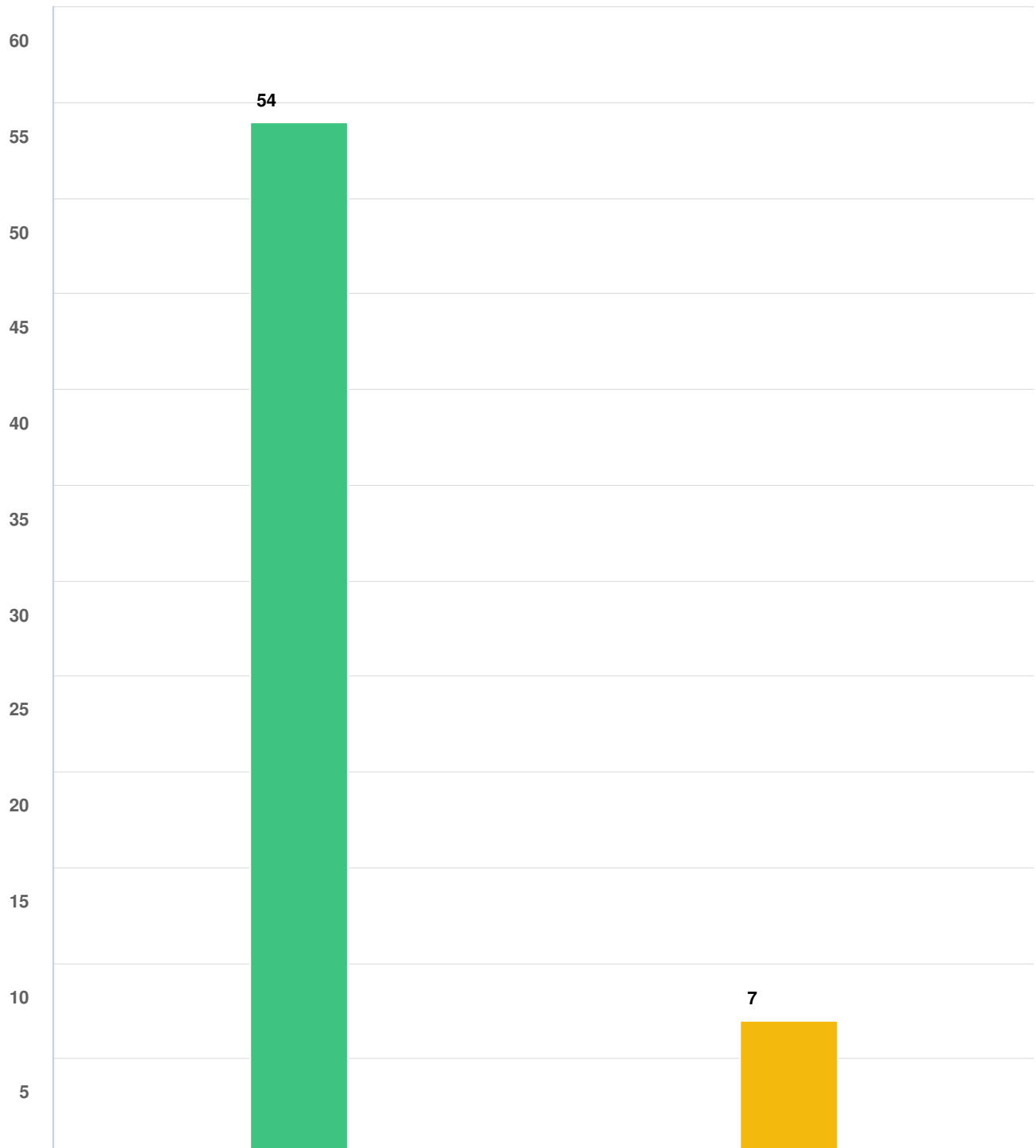
**Question options**

Yes  No

*Optional question (63 response(s), 3 skipped)*

*Question type: Checkbox Question*

**Q16** Do you agree that the potential threats and impacts to the cultural heritage values of the Abrolhos FHPA are accurately described in Table 6 of the Abrolhos FHPA draft management plan?

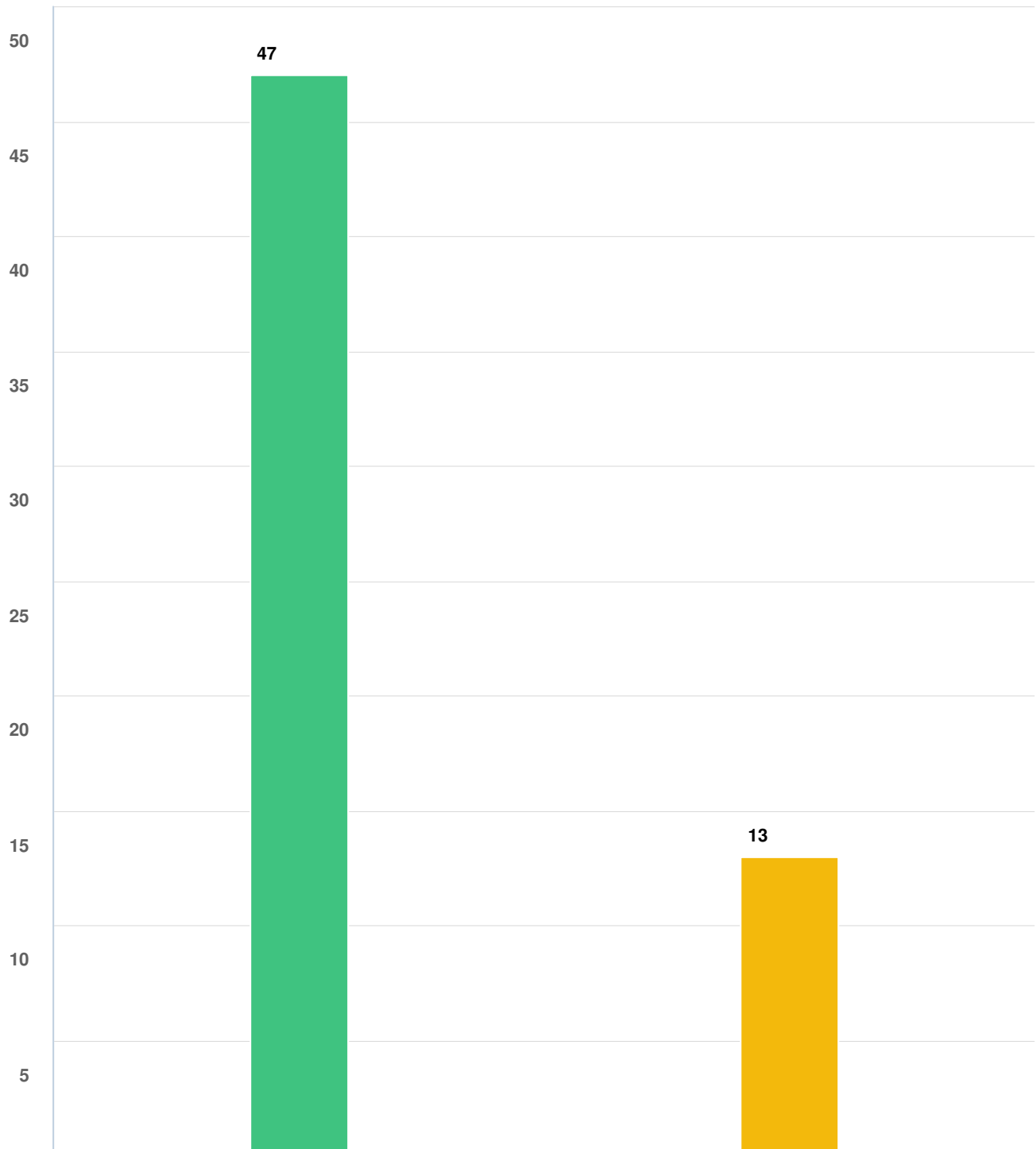


**Question options**

● Yes ● No

Optional question (61 response(s), 5 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q17** Do you agree that achieving the management objective on page 45 of the Abrolhos FHPA draft management plan will result in appropriate outcomes for the cultural heritage values of the Abrolhos FHPA?

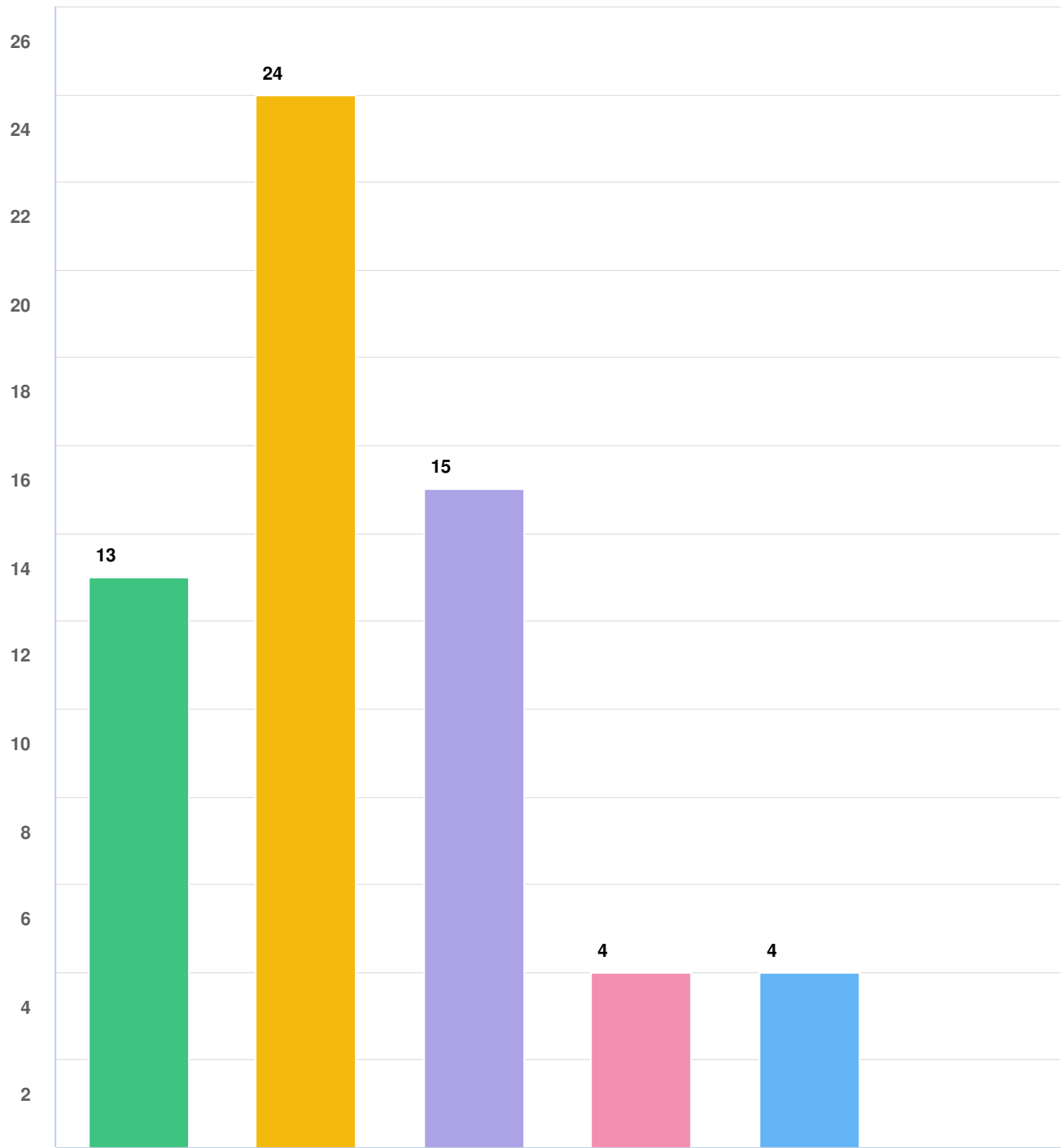


**Question options**

● Yes ● No

*Optional question (60 response(s), 6 skipped)*  
*Question type: Checkbox Question*

**Q18** There are six (6) proposed management actions on page 45 aimed at achieving the management objective for cultural heritage values in the Abrolhos FHPA. To what extent do you agree with the proposed actions?



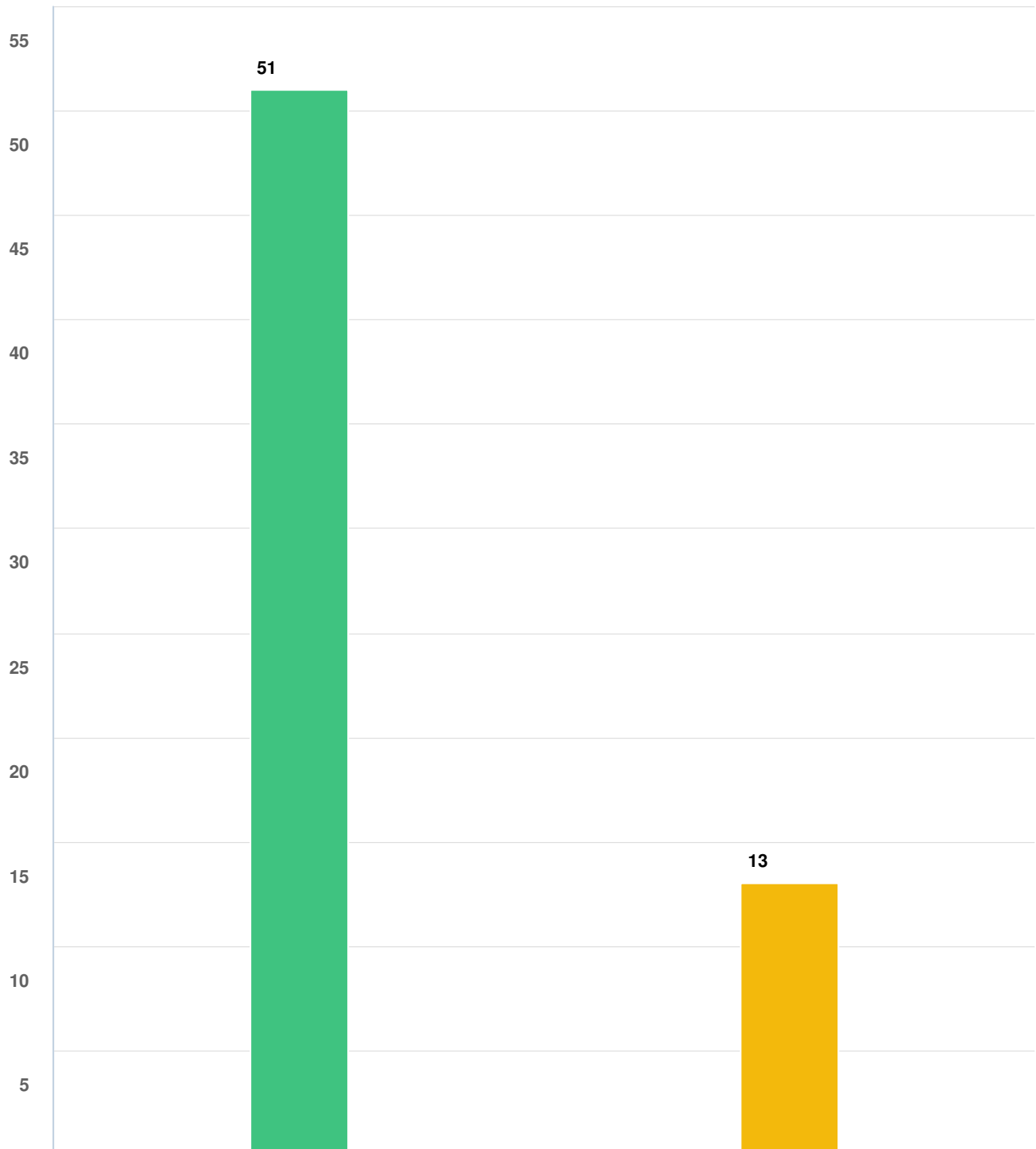
**Question options**

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Unsure/undecided

Optional question (60 response(s), 6 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question



**Q19** Do you agree that marine tourism and recreation values, visitors and activities for the Abrolhos FHPA are accurately described in Section 2.3 of the Abrolhos FHPA draft management plan?

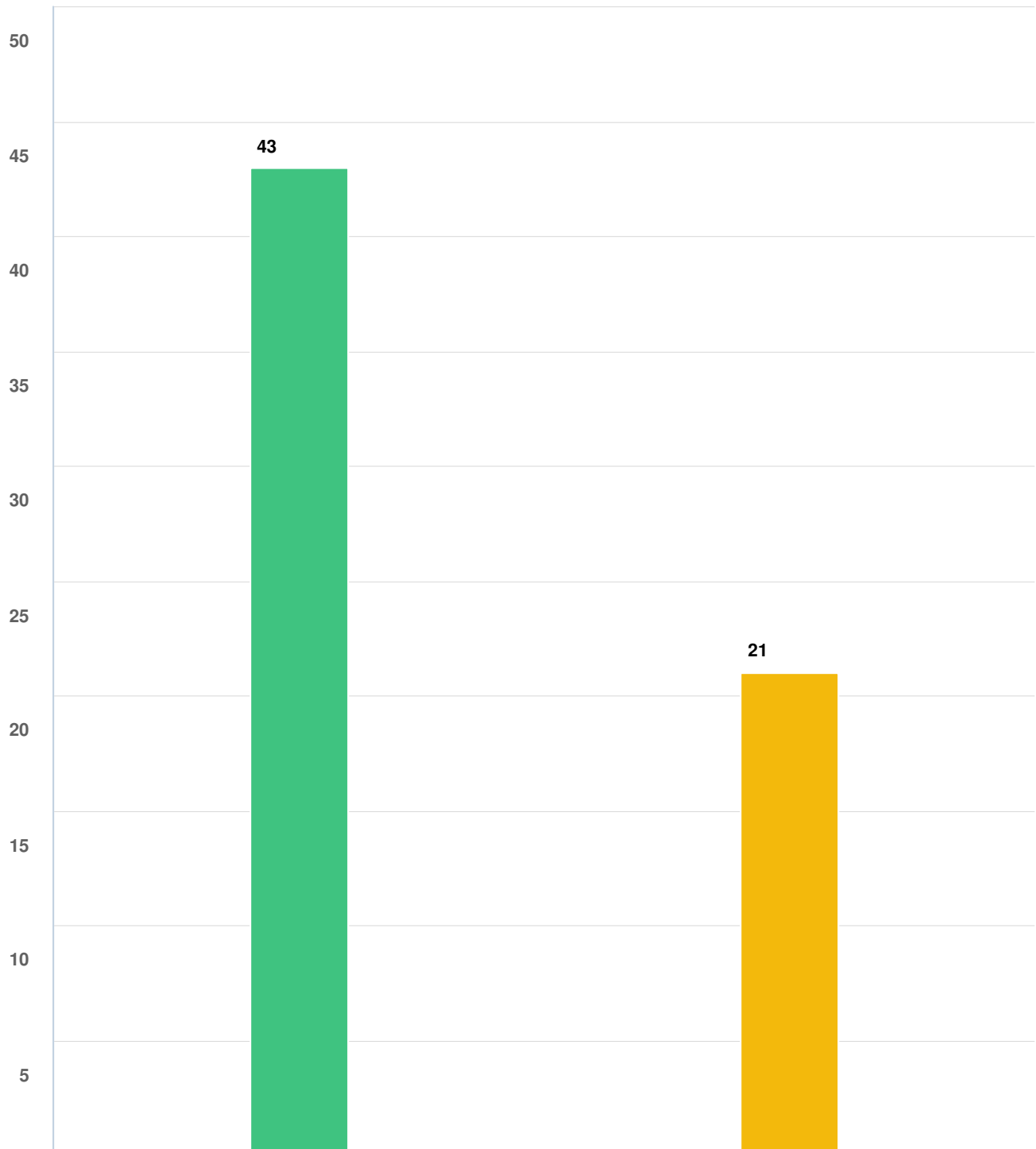


**Question options**

● Yes ● No

Optional question (64 response(s), 2 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q20** Do you agree that the issues and challenges associated with managing marine tourism and recreation are accurately described in Table 7 of the Abrolhos FHPA draft management plan?



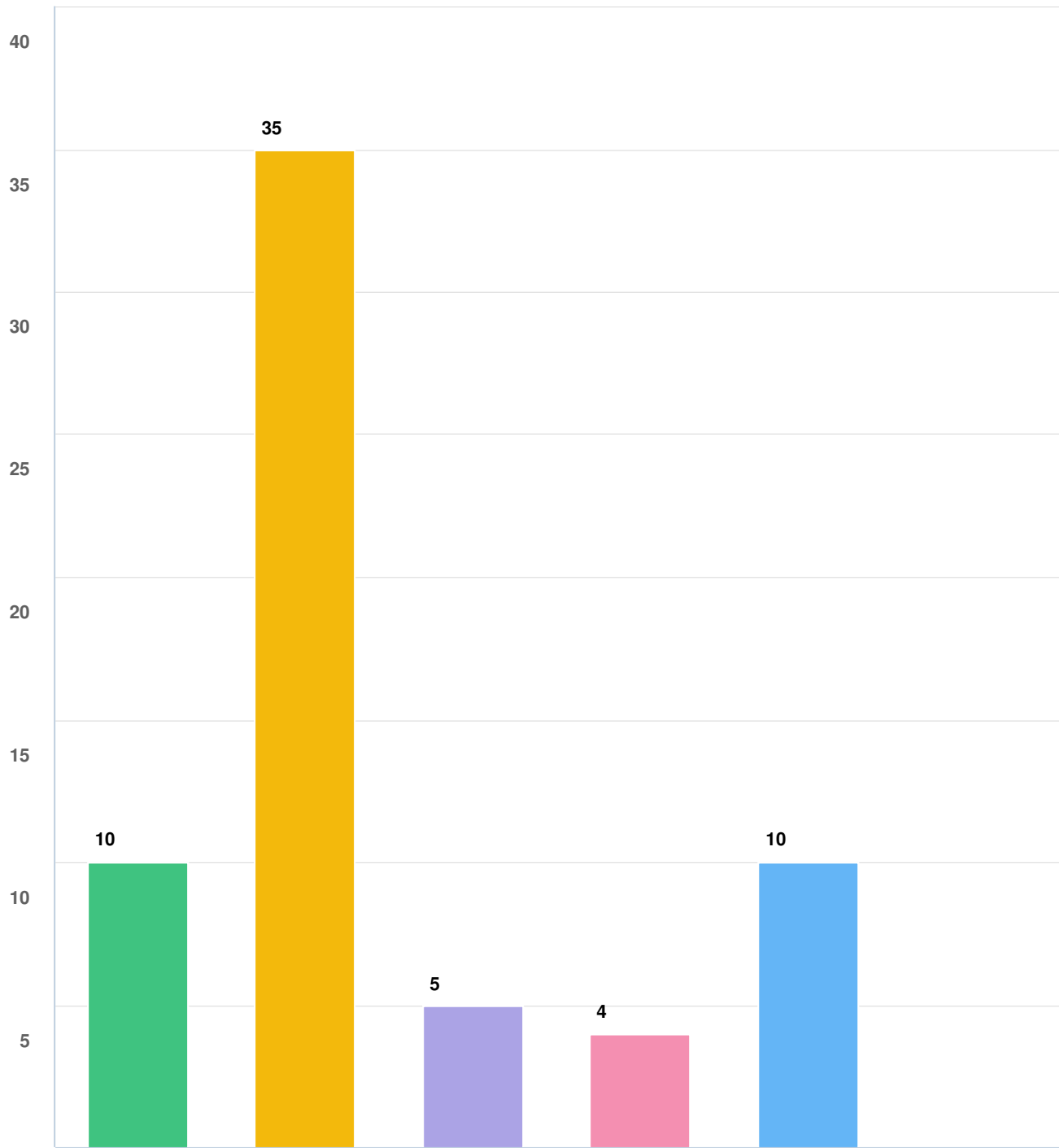
**Question options**

● Yes ● No

Optional question (64 response(s), 2 skipped)

Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q21** To what extent do you agree with the proposed guiding principles for the development of sustainable marine tourism and recreation in the Abrolhos FHPA on page 57 of the Abrolhos FHPA draft management plan?



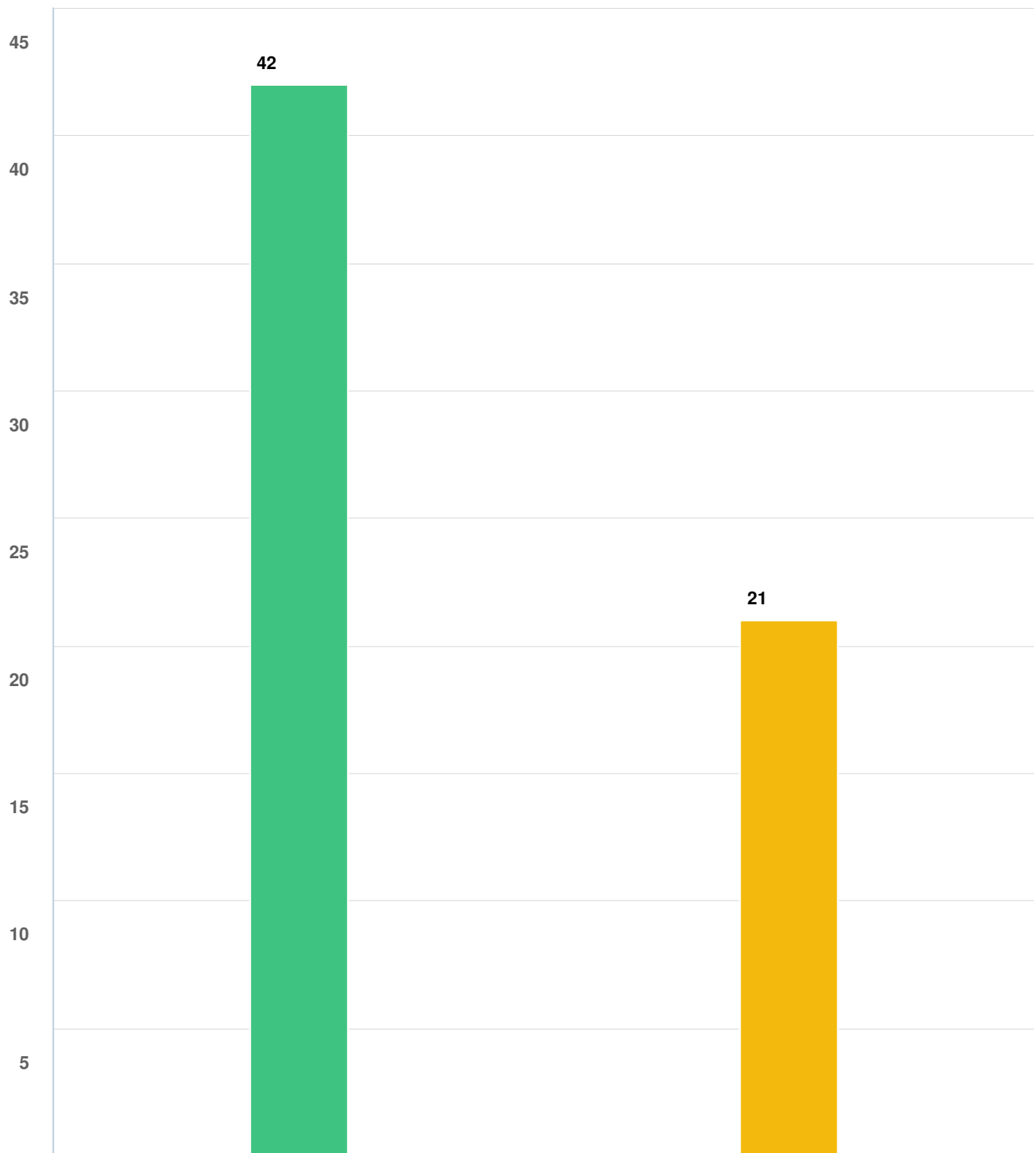
**Question options**

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Unsure/undecided

Optional question (64 response(s), 2 skipped)

Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q22** Do you agree with the introduction of a marine zoning scheme as a tool to manage marine activities and infrastructure in the Abrolhos FHPA?

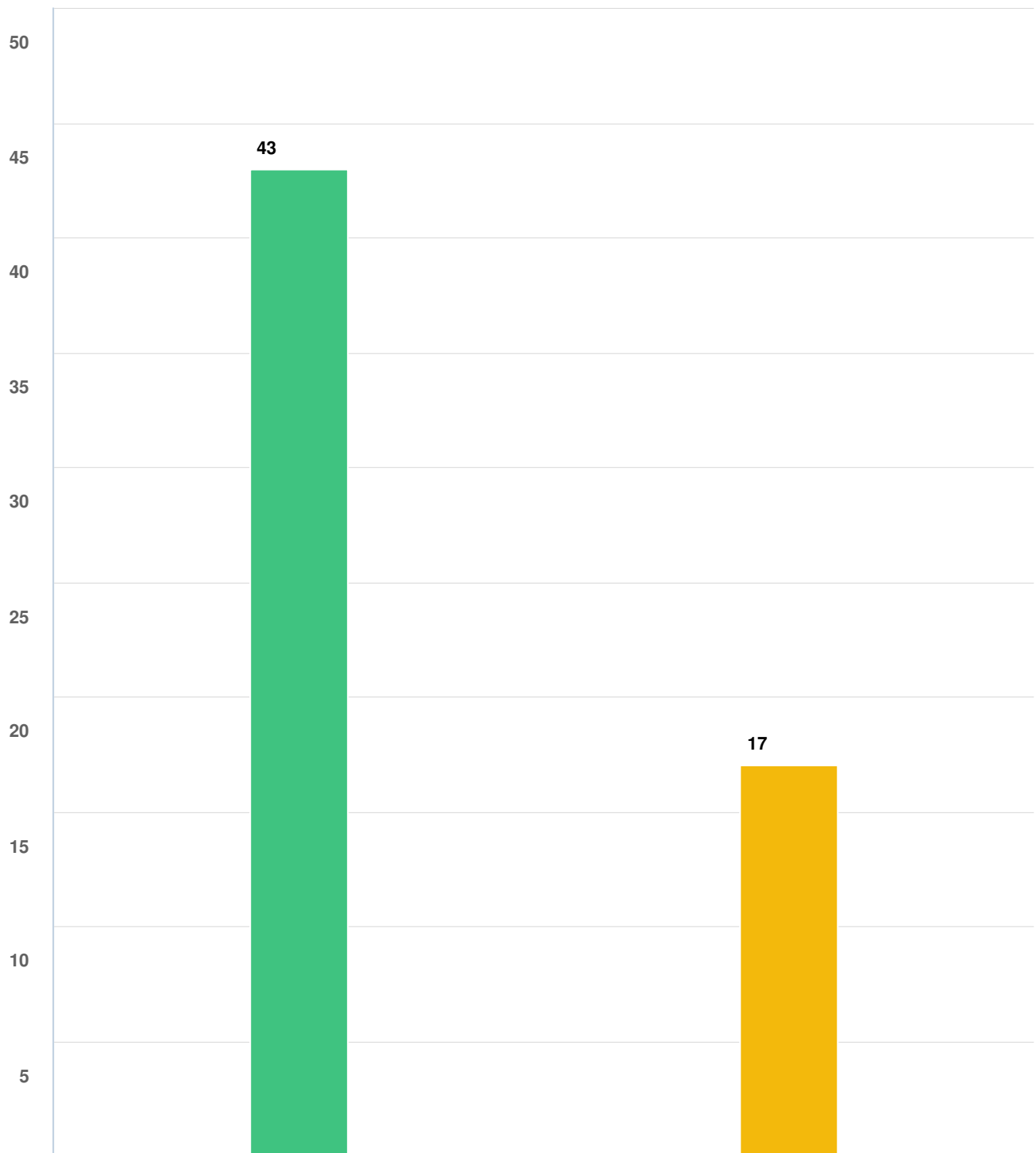


**Question options**

- Yes
- No

*Optional question (63 response(s), 3 skipped)*  
*Question type: Checkbox Question*

**Q23** Do you agree with the proposed tourism assessment and licensing framework for activities and infrastructure in Table 8 of the Abrolhos FHPA draft management plan?

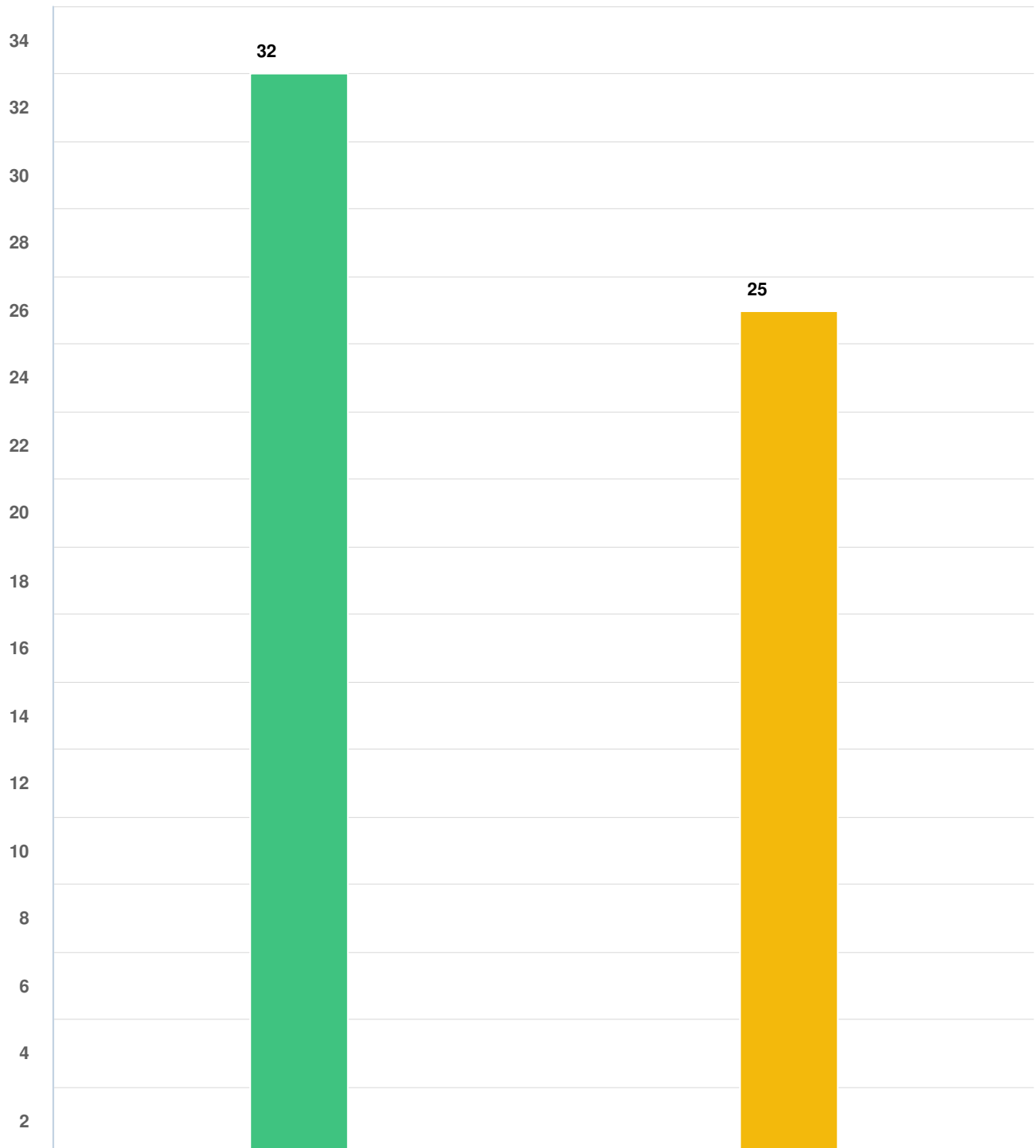


**Question options**

- Yes  No

*Optional question (60 response(s), 6 skipped)*  
*Question type: Checkbox Question*

**Q24** Do you agree that achieving the four (4) management objectives on pages 65 - 67 of the Abrolhos FHPA management plan will result in appropriate outcomes for the marine tourism and recreation values of the Abrolhos FHPA?



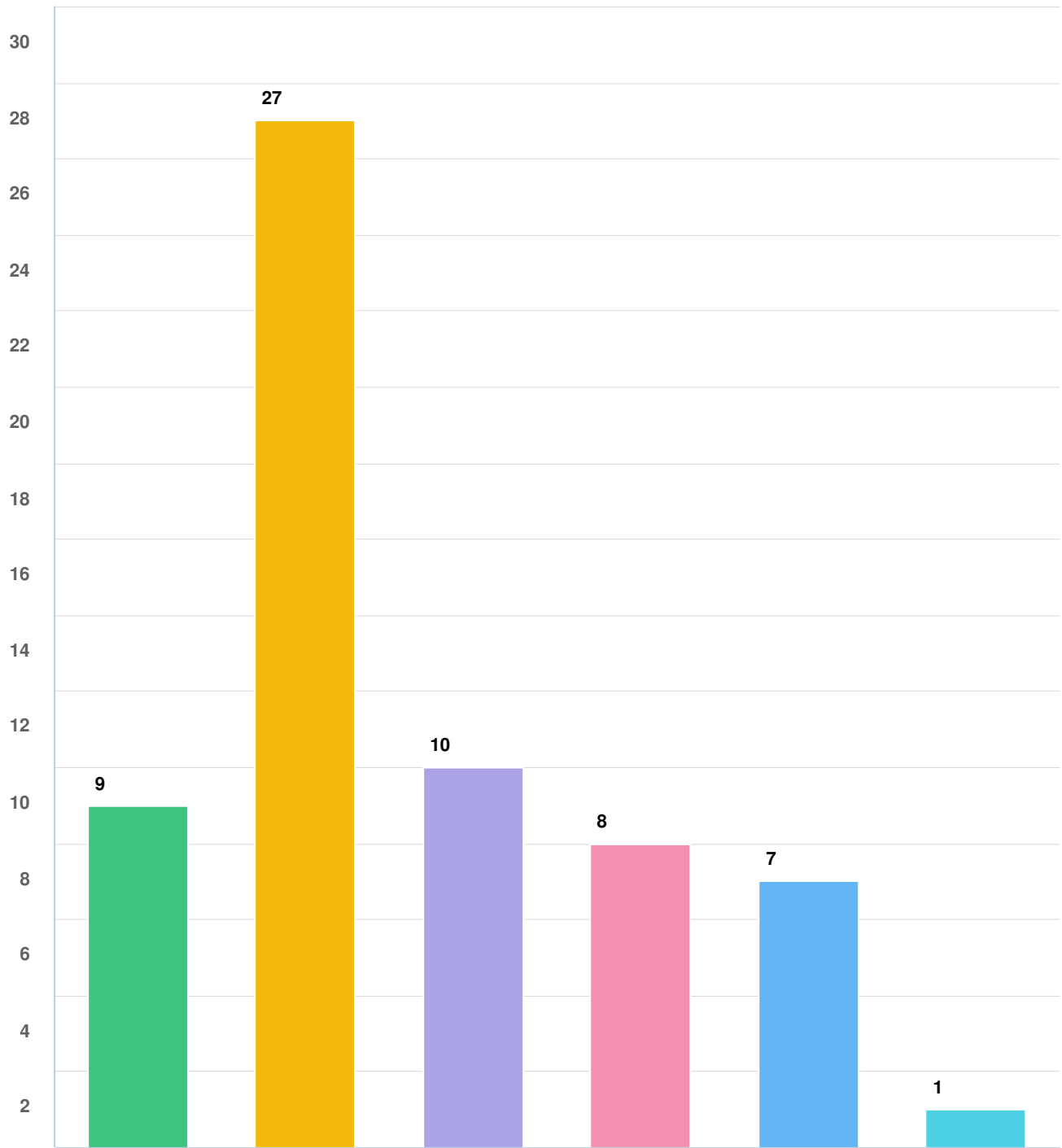
**Question options**

● Yes ● No

*Optional question (57 response(s), 9 skipped)*

*Question type: Checkbox Question*

**Q25** There are 24 proposed management actions on pages 65 - 67 aimed at achieving the four management objectives for marine tourism and recreation in the Abrolhos FHPA. To what extent do you agree with the proposed actions?

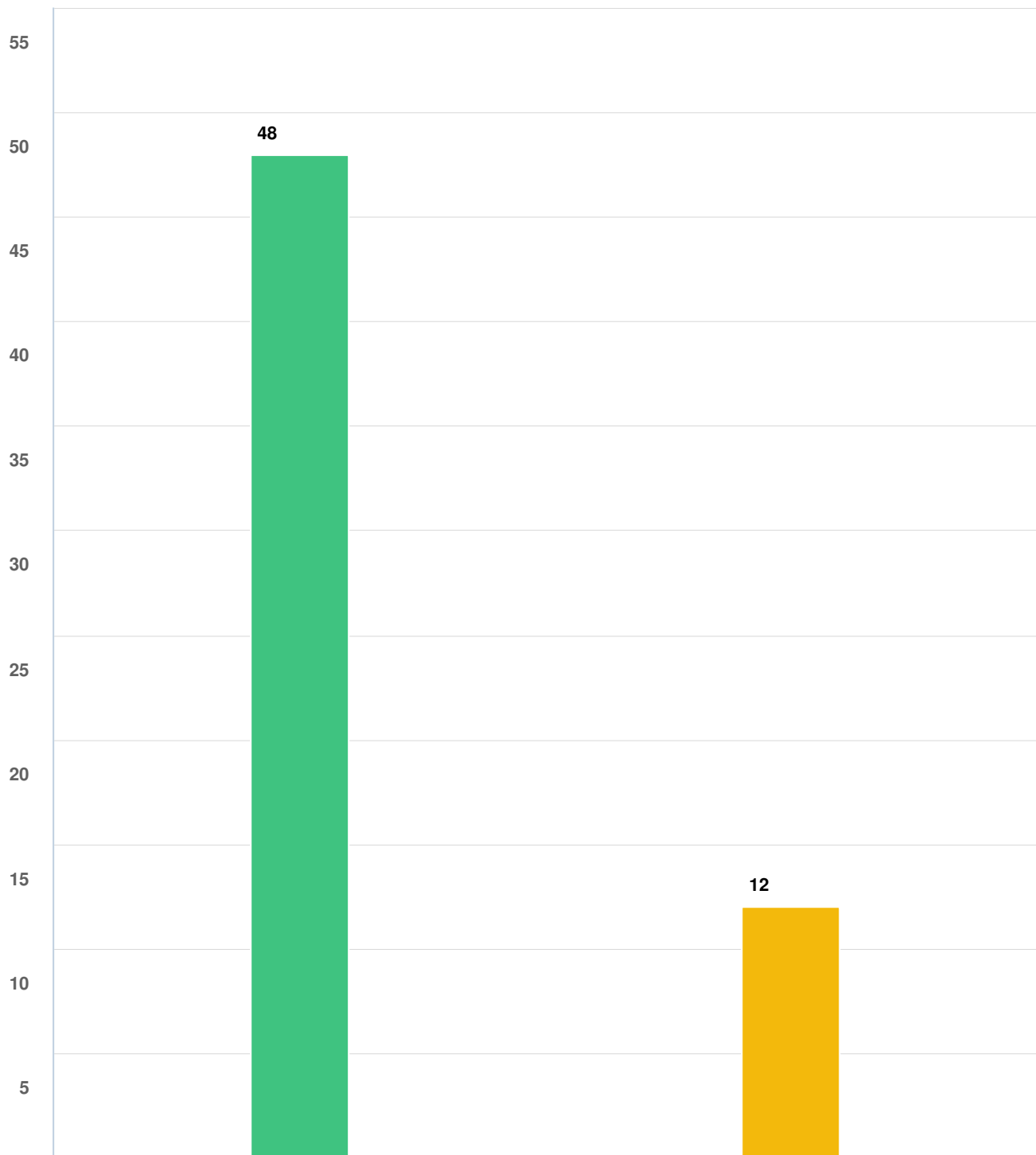


**Question options**

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Unsure/undecided

Optional question (62 response(s), 4 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q26 | Do you agree that sustainable fisheries and aquaculture values for the Abrolhos FHPA are accurately described in Section 2.4 of the Abrolhos FHPA draft management plan?**



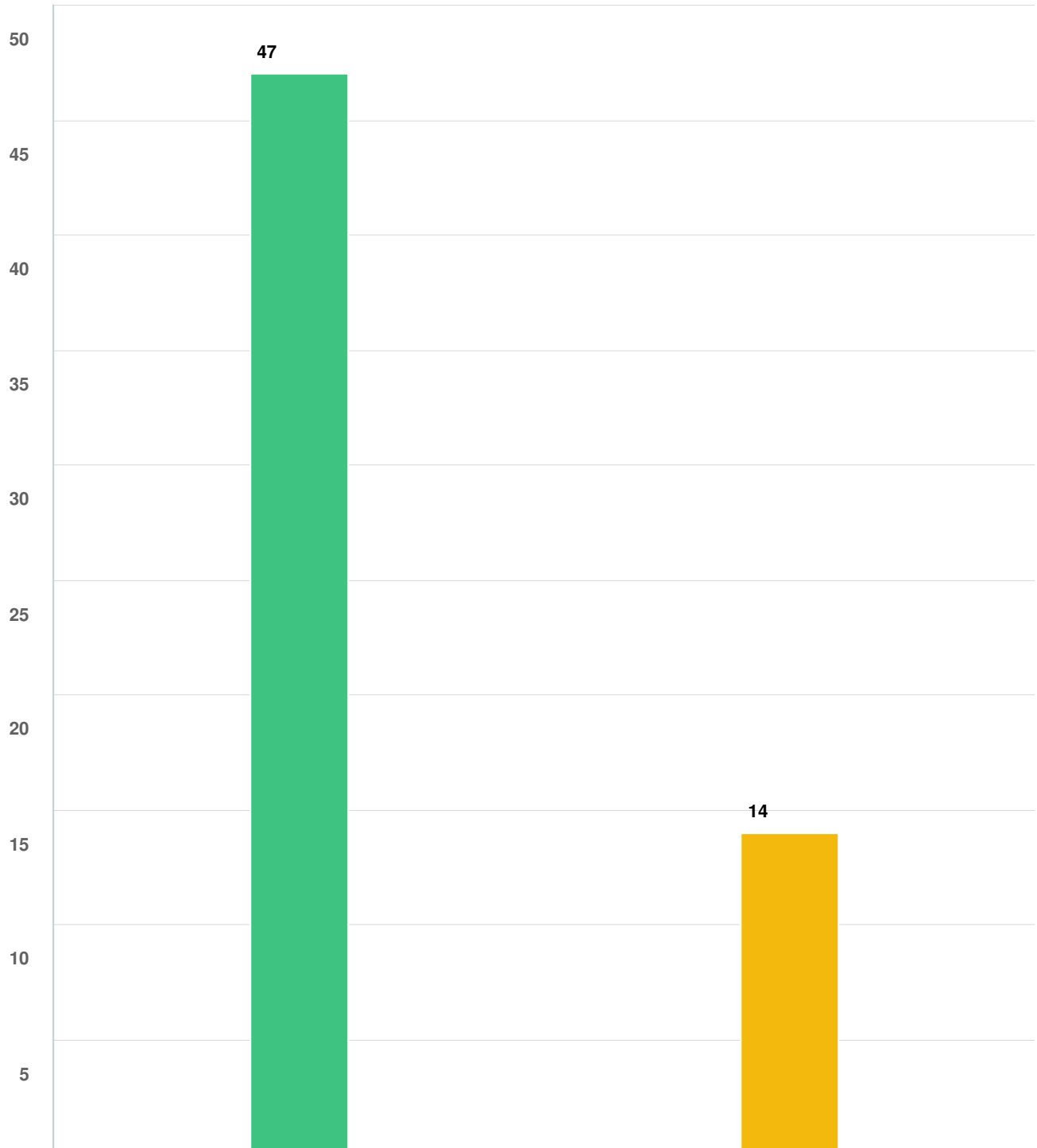
**Question options**

- Yes
- No

*Optional question (60 response(s), 6 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question*



**Q27** Do you agree that the issues and potential impacts on sustainable fishing and aquaculture values are accurately described in Table 9 of the Abrolhos FHPA draft management plan?

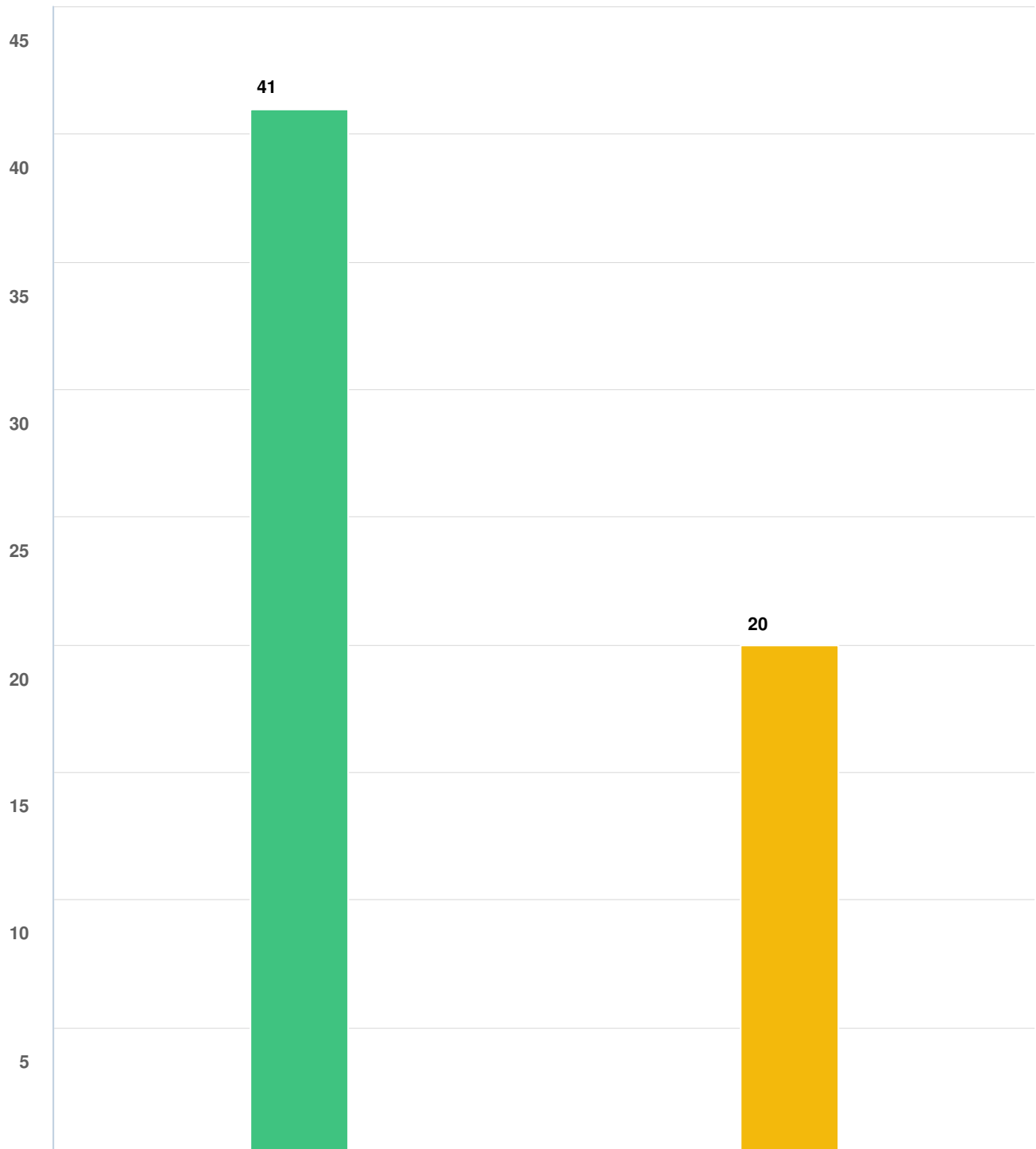


**Question options**

- Yes
- No

*Optional question (61 response(s), 5 skipped)*  
*Question type: Checkbox Question*

**Q28** Do you agree that achieving the three (3) management objectives on page 83 of the Abrolhos FHPA management plan will result in appropriate outcomes for the sustainable fishing and aquaculture values of the Abrolhos FHPA?

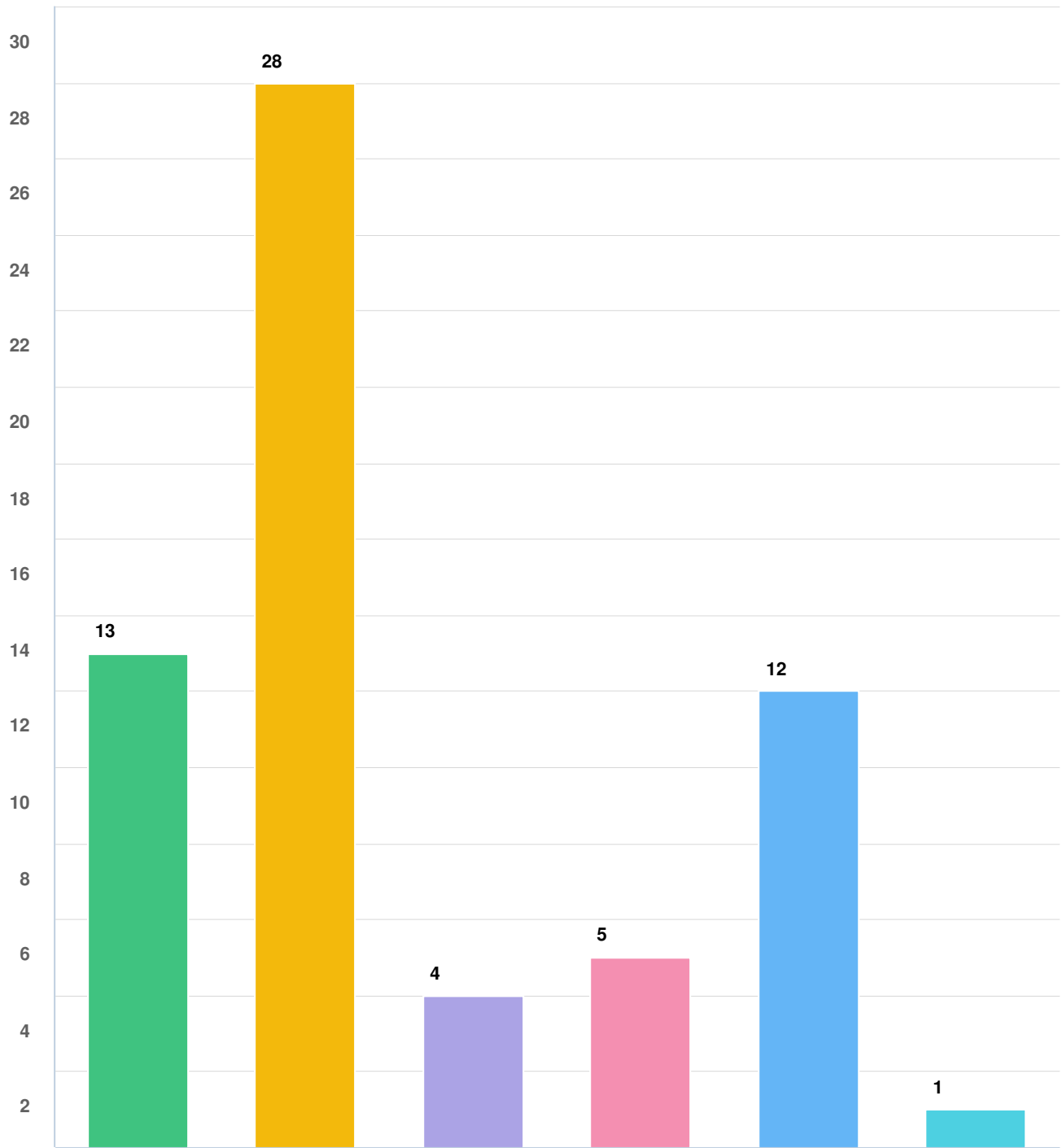


**Question options**

● Yes ● No

Optional question (61 response(s), 5 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q29** There are six (6) proposed management actions on page 83 aimed at achieving the three management objectives for sustainable fishing and aquaculture in the Abrolhos FHPA. To what extent do you agree with the proposed actions?

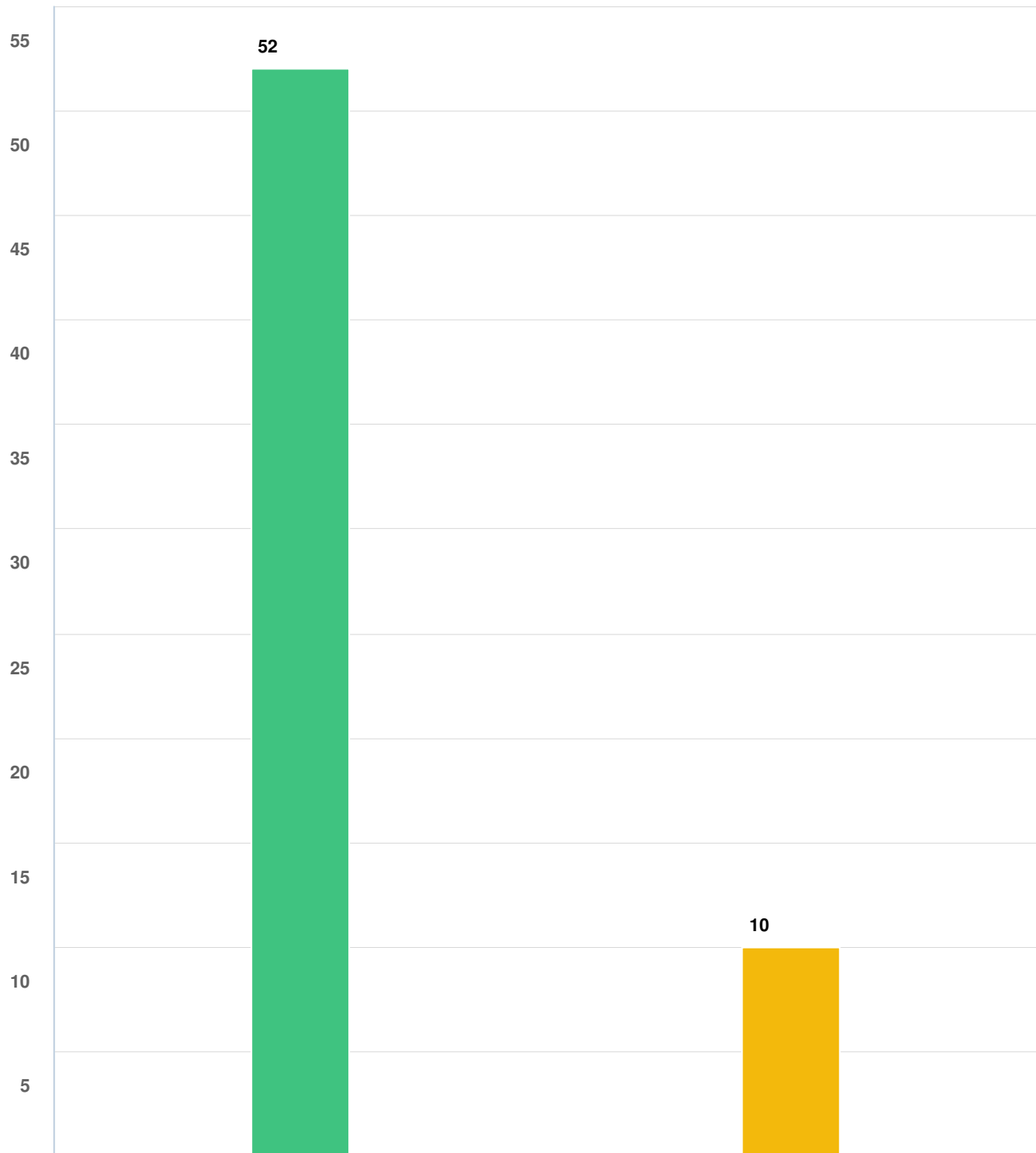


**Question options**

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Unsure/undecided

Optional question (63 response(s), 3 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q30** Do you agree that the Abrolhos Community values for the Abrolhos FHPA are accurately described in Section 2.5 of the Abrolhos FHPA draft management plan?



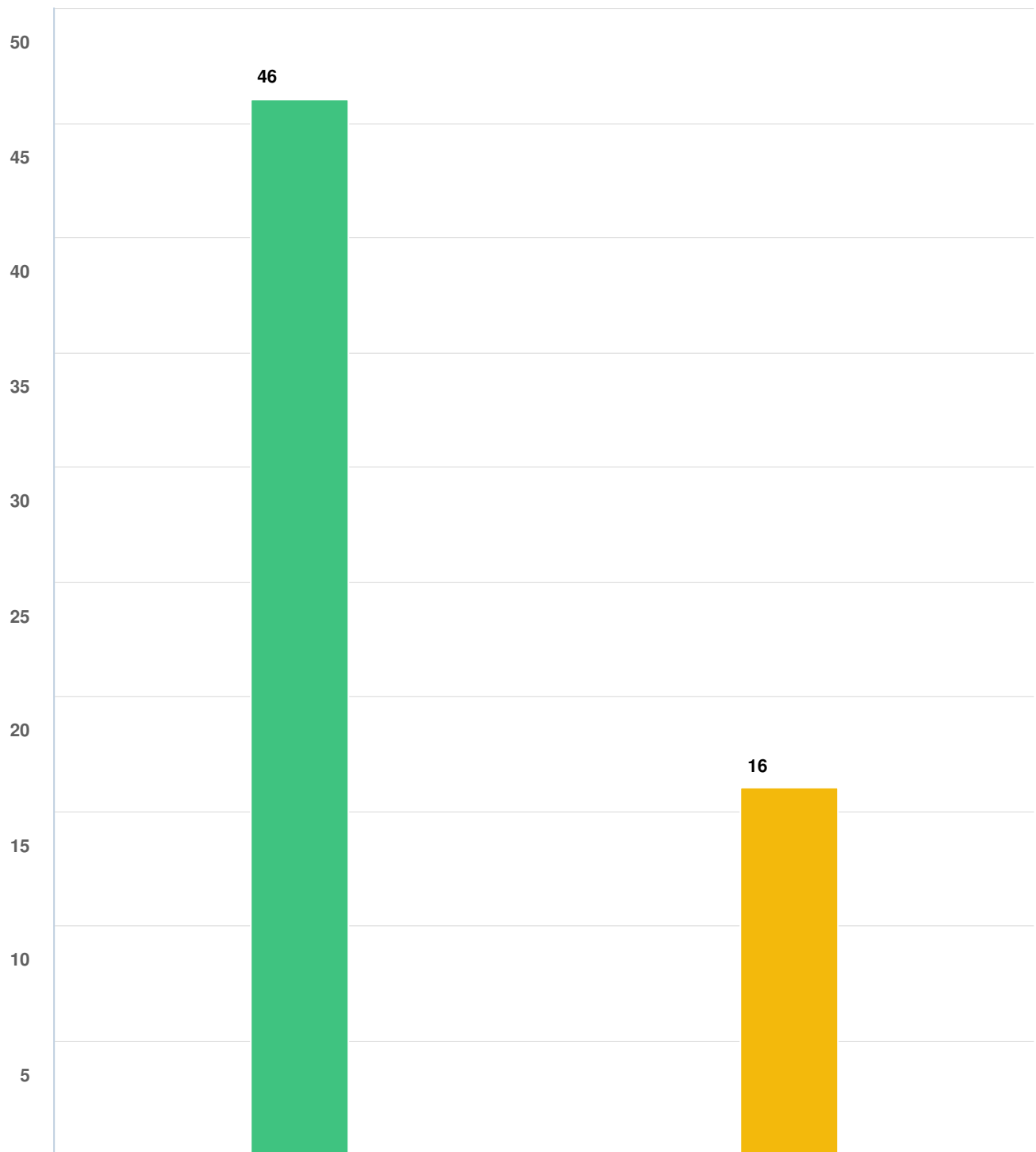
**Question options**

- Yes
- No

*Optional question (62 response(s), 4 skipped)*

*Question type: Checkbox Question*

**Q31** Do you agree that the issues and challenges relating to Abrolhos Community values are accurately described in Table 10 of the Abrolhos FHPA draft management plan?

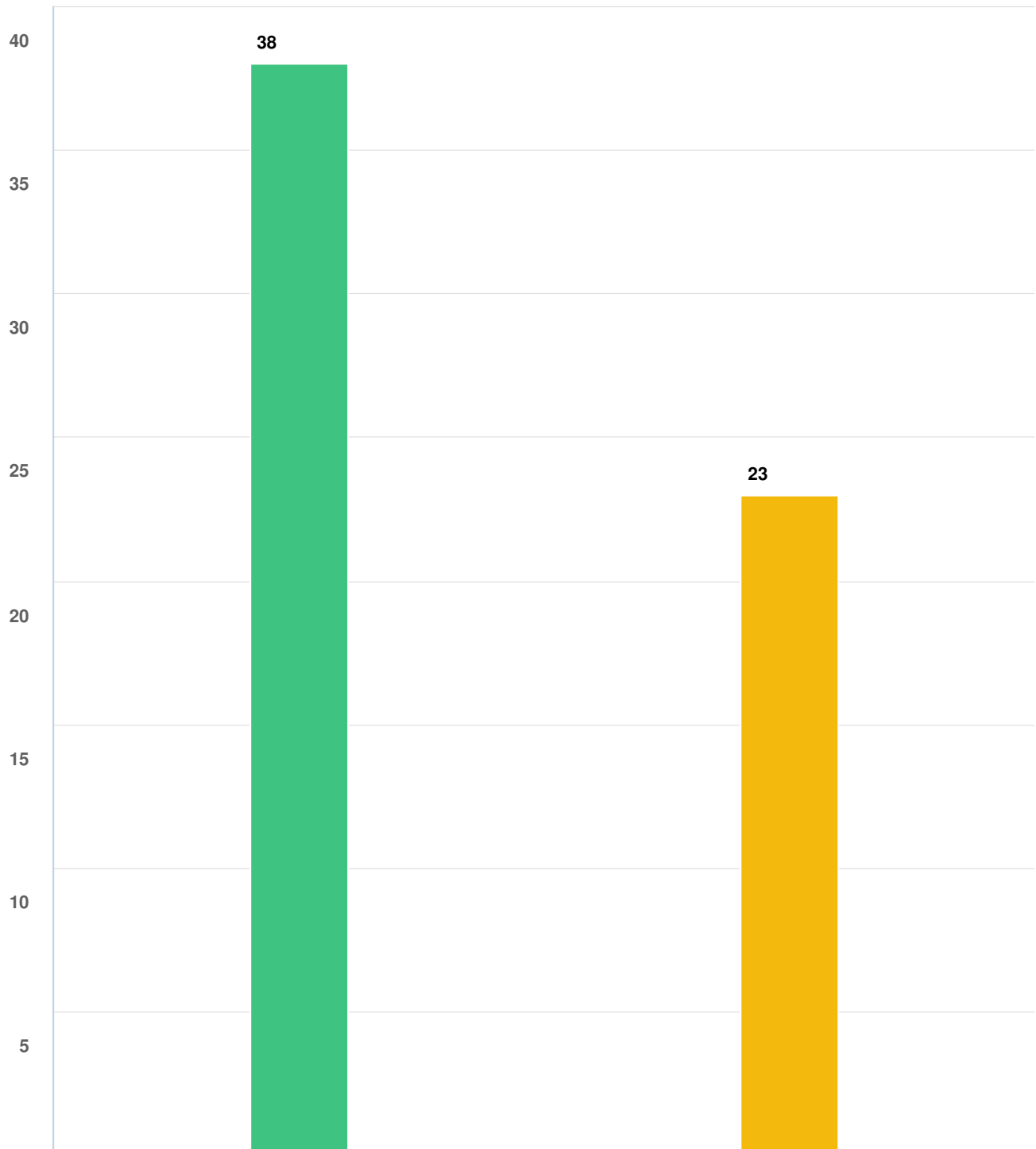


**Question options**

- Yes
- No

*Optional question (61 response(s), 5 skipped)*  
*Question type: Checkbox Question*

**Q32** Do you agree that achieving the two (2) management objectives on page 88 of the Abrolhos FHPA management plan will result in appropriate outcomes for the Abrolhos Community in the Abrolhos FHPA?



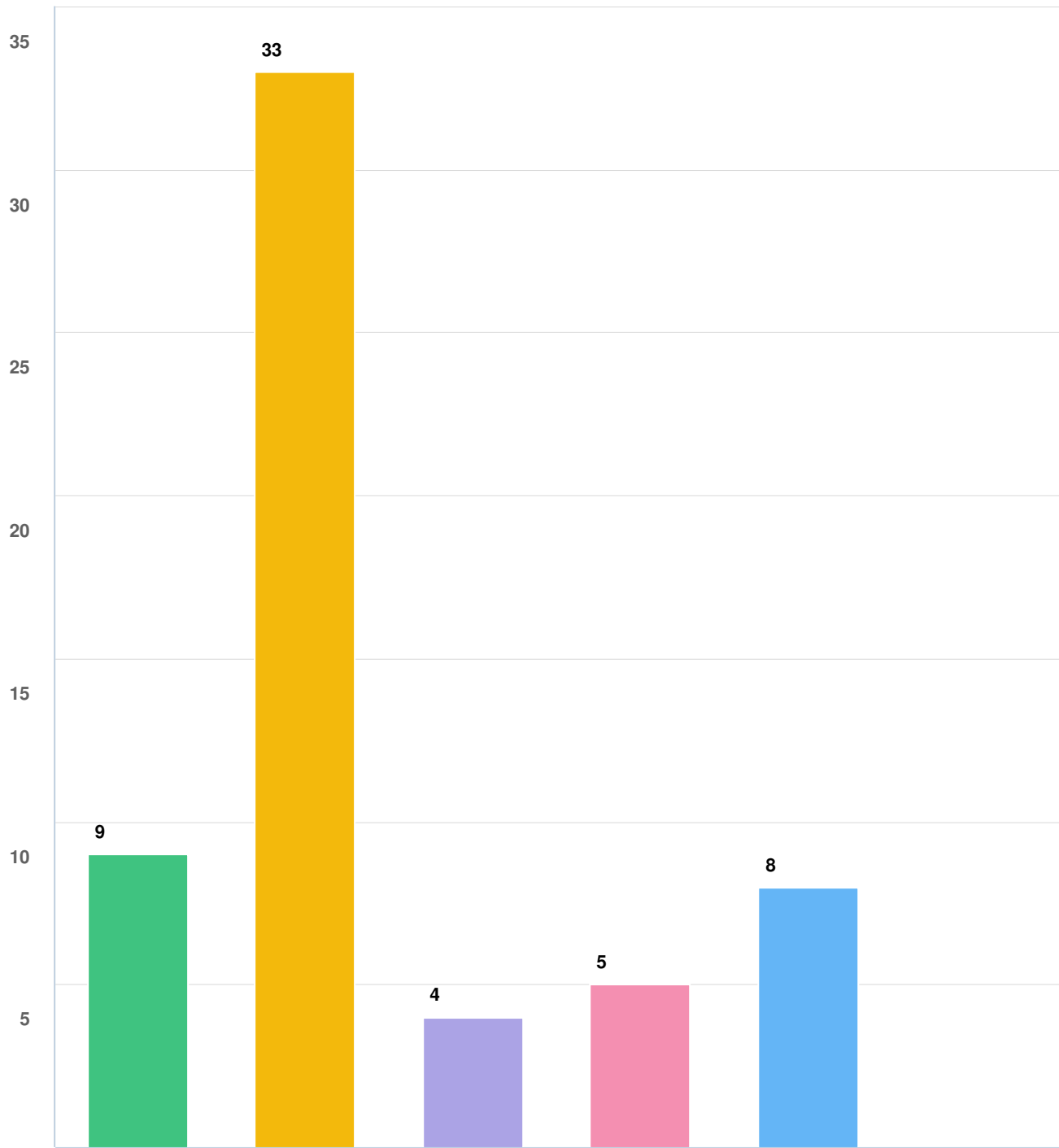
**Question options**

● Yes ● No

Optional question (61 response(s), 5 skipped)

Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q33** There are four (4) proposed management actions on page 88 aimed at achieving the two management objectives for the Abrolhos Community in the Abrolhos FHPA. To what extent do you agree with the proposed actions?

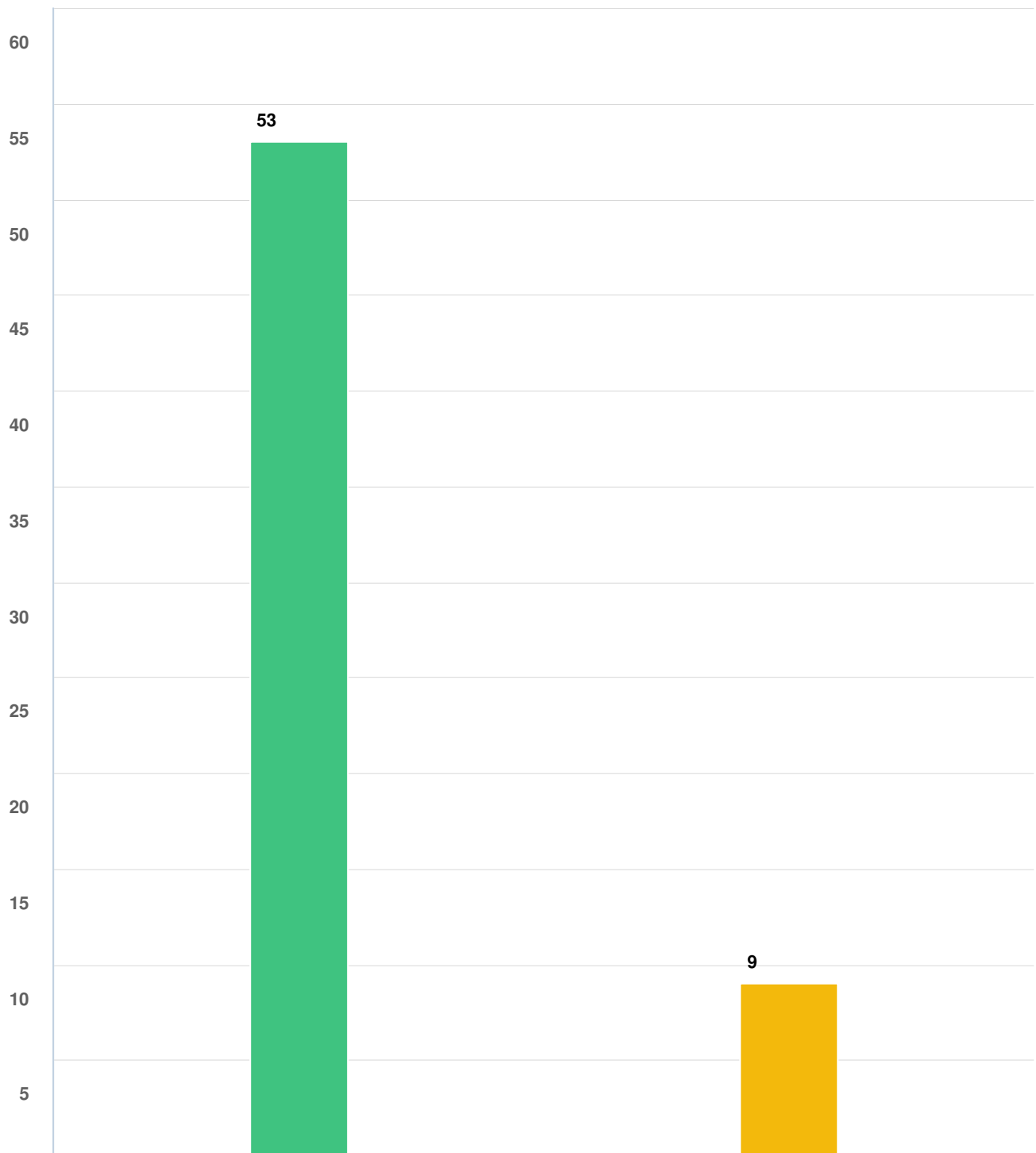


**Question options**

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Unsure/undecided

Optional question (59 response(s), 7 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q34** Do you agree that the Governance values for the Abrolhos FHPA are accurately described in Section 2.6 of the Abrolhos FHPA draft management plan?



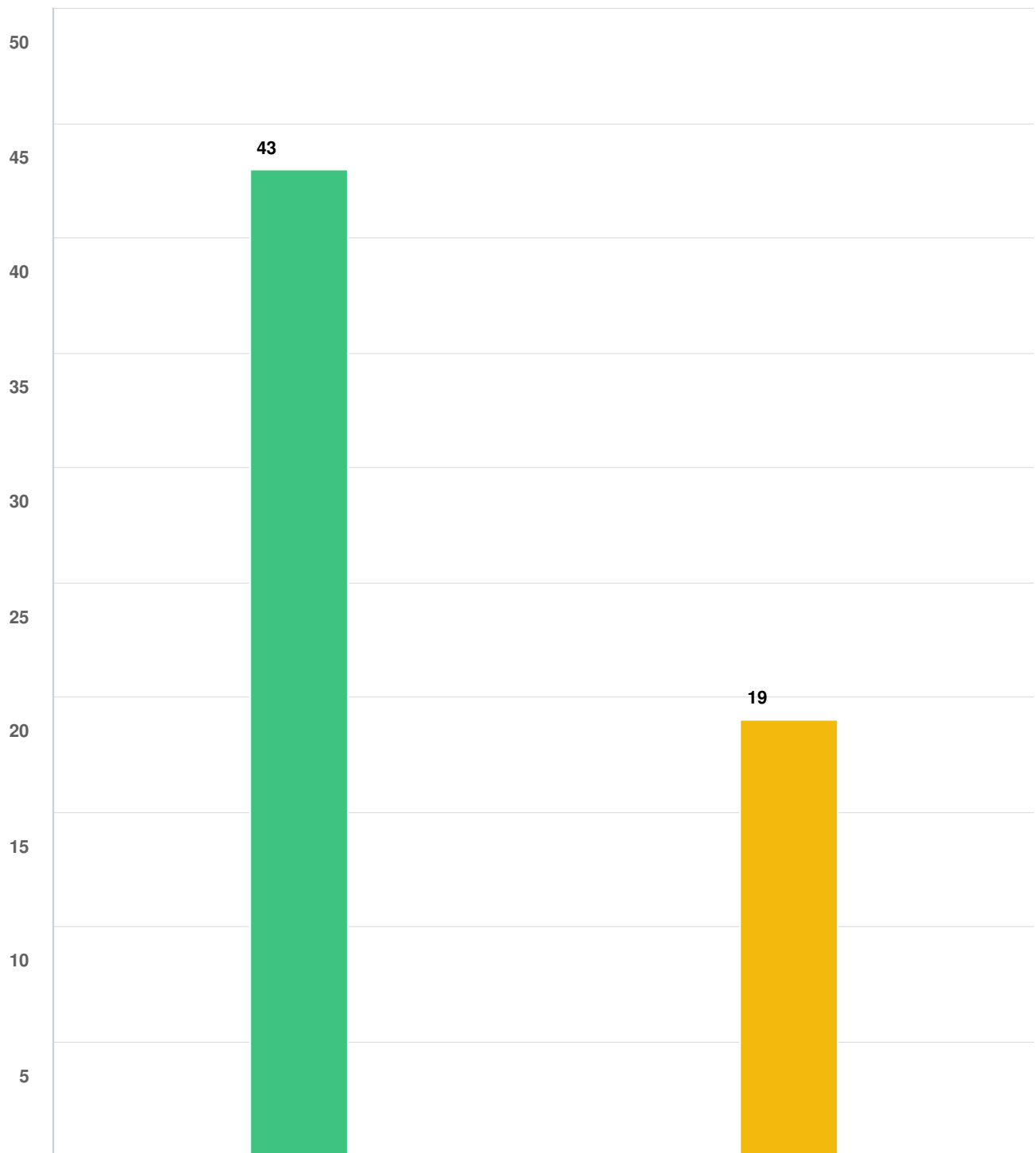
**Question options**

- Yes  No

*Optional question (62 response(s), 4 skipped)*  
*Question type: Checkbox Question*



**Q35** Do you agree that the issues and risks relating to Governance values are accurately described in Table 11 of the Abrolhos FHPA draft management plan?

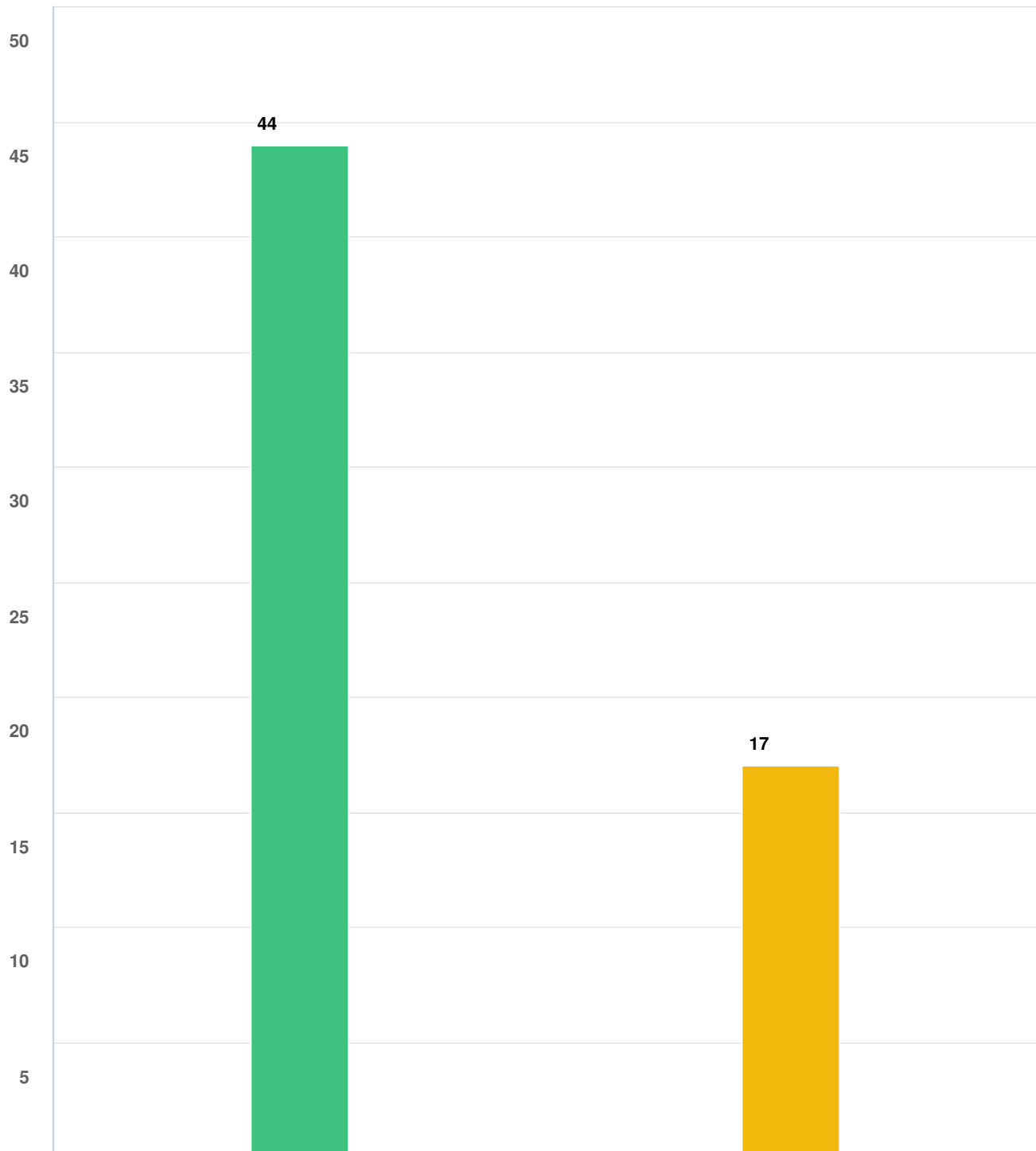


**Question options**

- Yes
- No

*Optional question (62 response(s), 4 skipped)*  
*Question type: Checkbox Question*

**Q36** Do you agree that achieving the four (4) management objectives on page 92 of the Abrinhos FHPA management plan will result in appropriate outcomes for Governance for the Abrinhos FHPA?



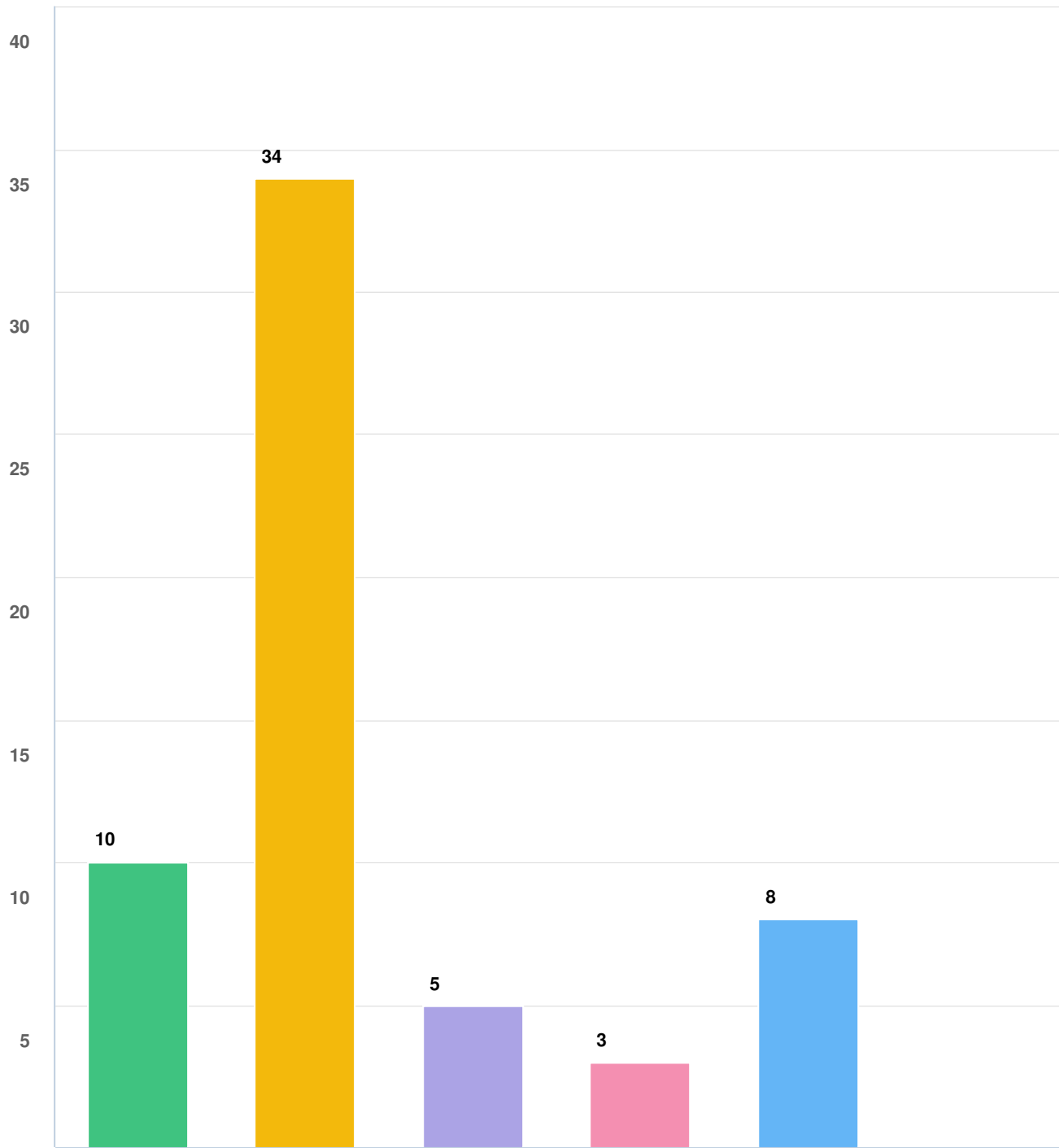
**Question options**

- Yes
- No

Optional question (61 response(s), 5 skipped)

Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q37** There are seven (7) proposed actions on page 92 aimed at achieving the four management objectives for Governance for the Abrolhos FHPA. To what extent do you agree with the proposed actions?

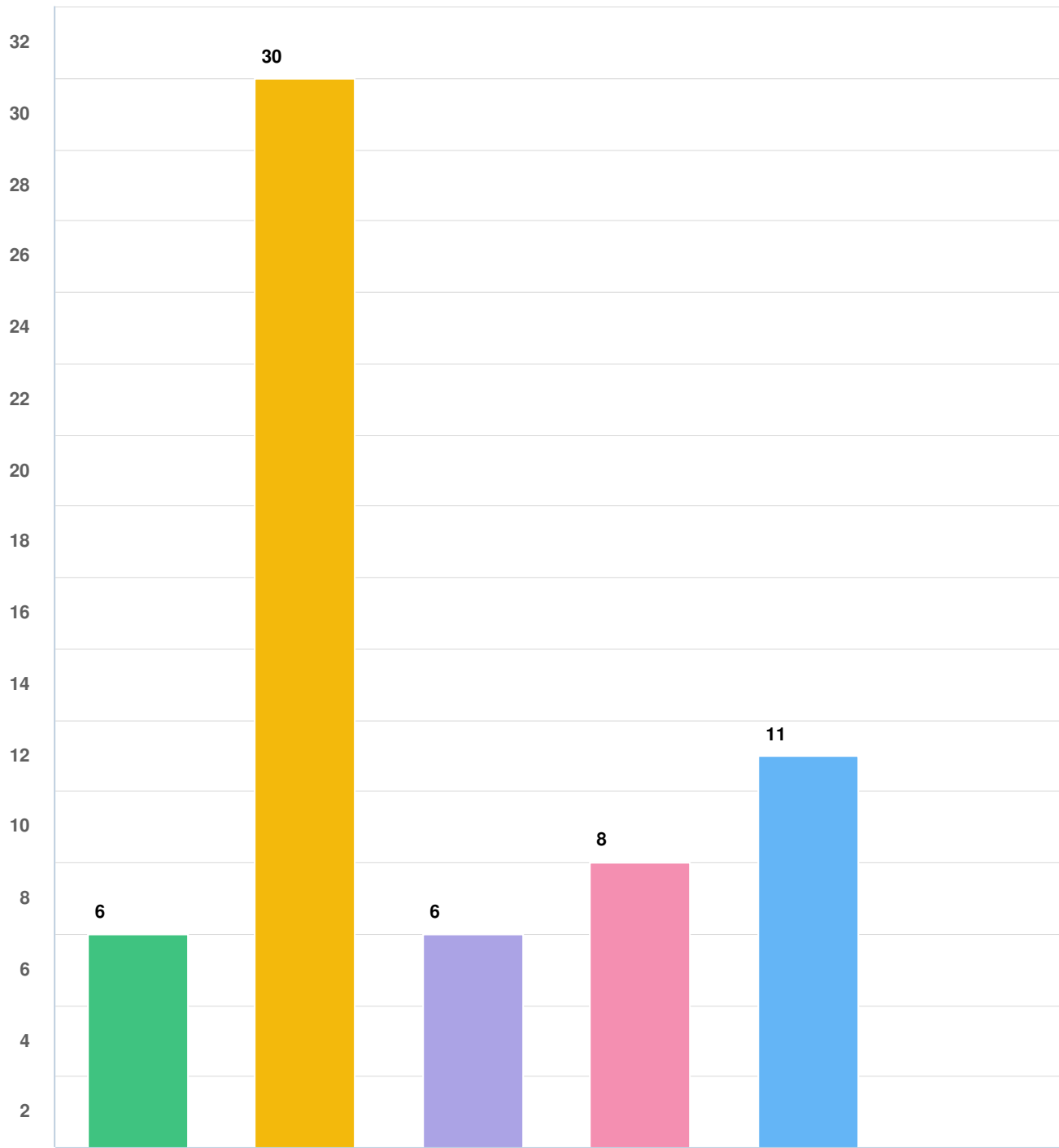


**Question options**

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree not disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Unsure/undecided

Optional question (60 response(s), 6 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q38** To what extent do you agree with the measures proposed for managing marine tourism and recreation in the Abrolhos FHPA as described in the Abrolhos FHPA draft zoning scheme? Please also refer to pages 57 - 61 of the Abrolhos FHPA draft management p...

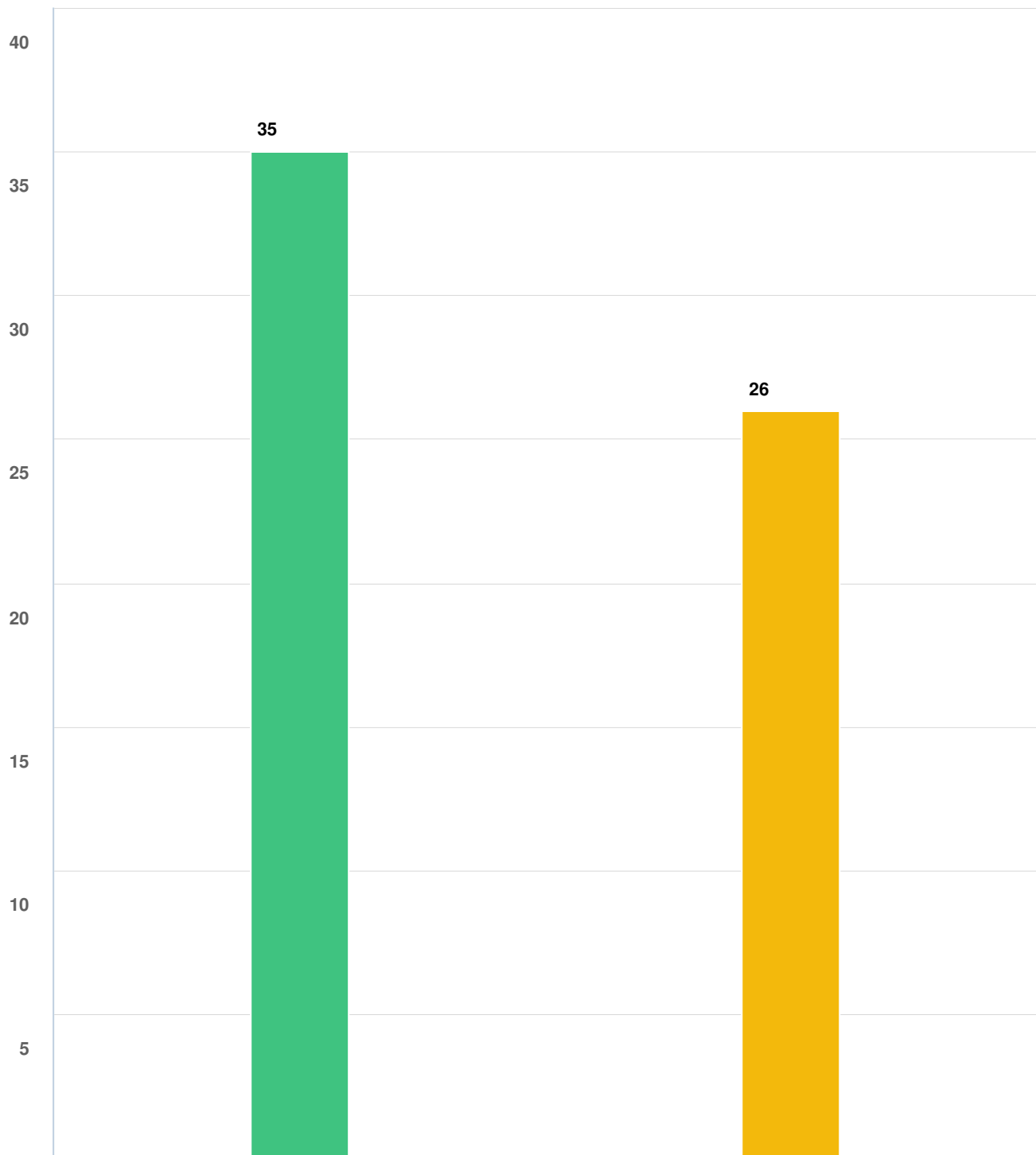


**Question options**

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Unsure/undecided

Optional question (61 response(s), 5 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q39** Do you agree with the proposed boundary for the SMUA - Wilderness Fishing (map 1.1)?

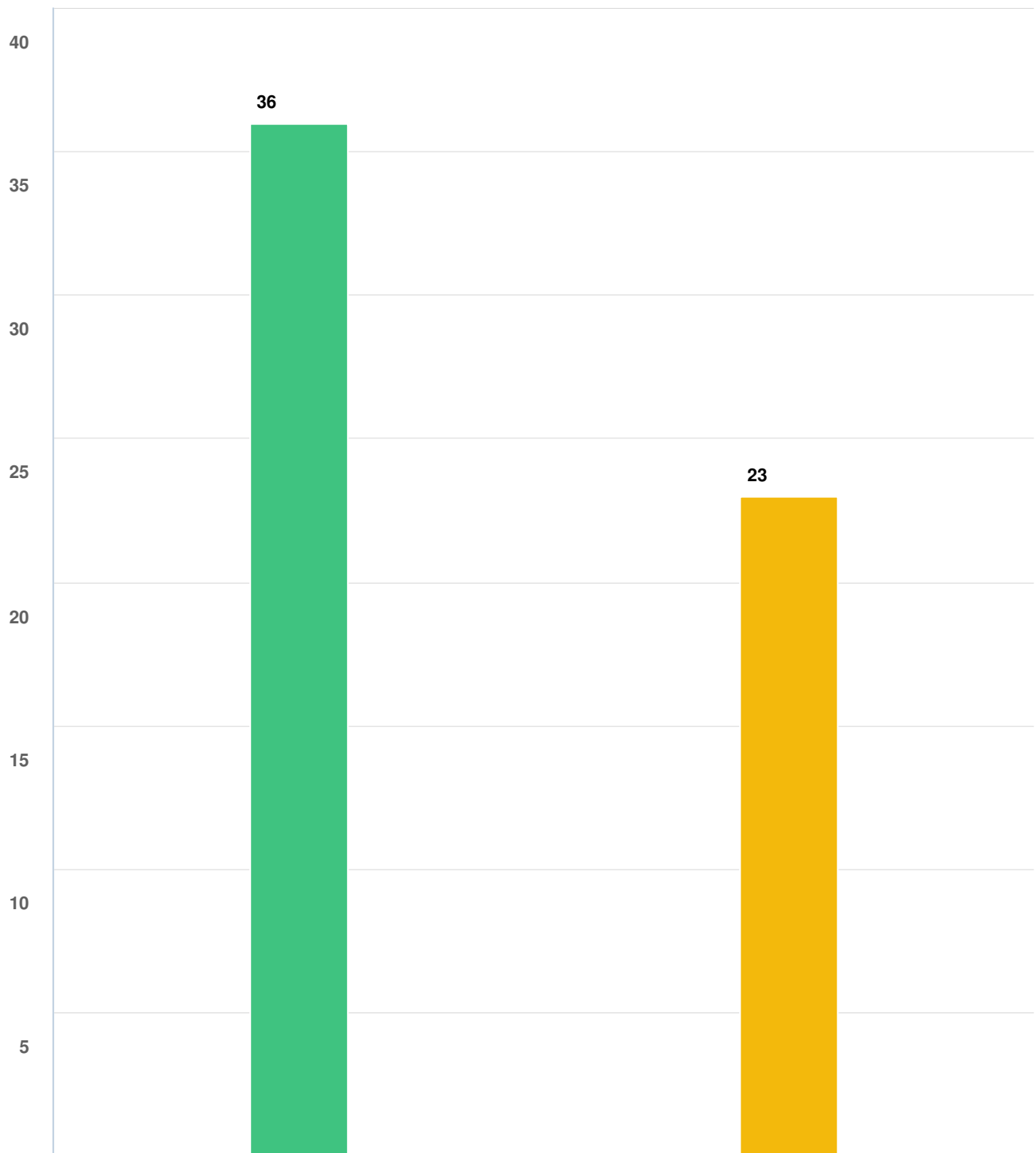


**Question options**

- Yes
- No

*Optional question (61 response(s), 5 skipped)*  
*Question type: Checkbox Question*

**Q40** Do you agree with the proposed locations and boundaries for the SMUA - Tourism sites described in maps 1.2 - 1.5?

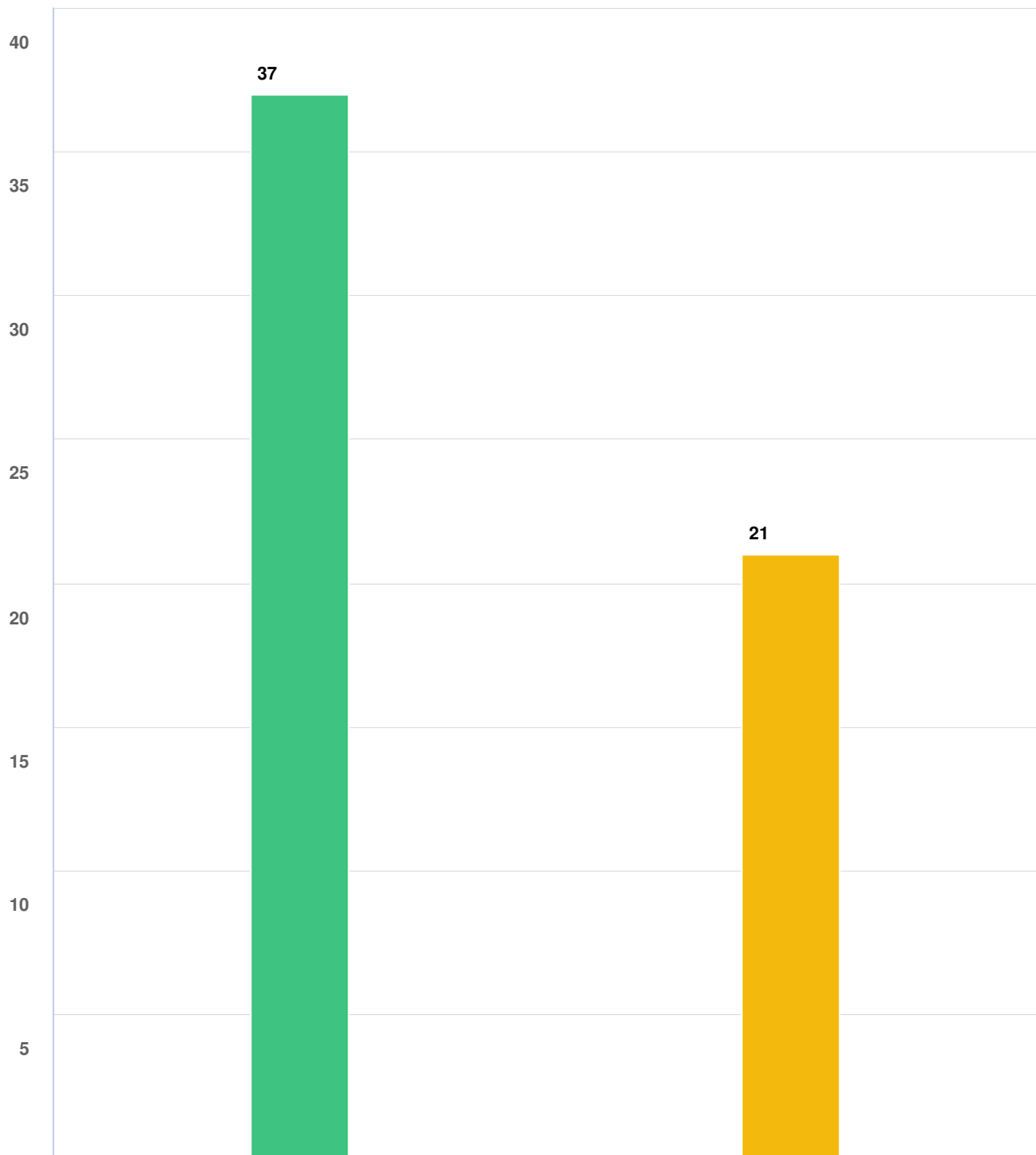


**Question options**

- Yes  No

*Optional question (59 response(s), 7 skipped)*  
*Question type: Checkbox Question*

**Q41** Do you agree with the proposed locations and 20 metre exclusion zone for the SMUA - Maritime Heritage sites described in maps 1.6 - 1.13?

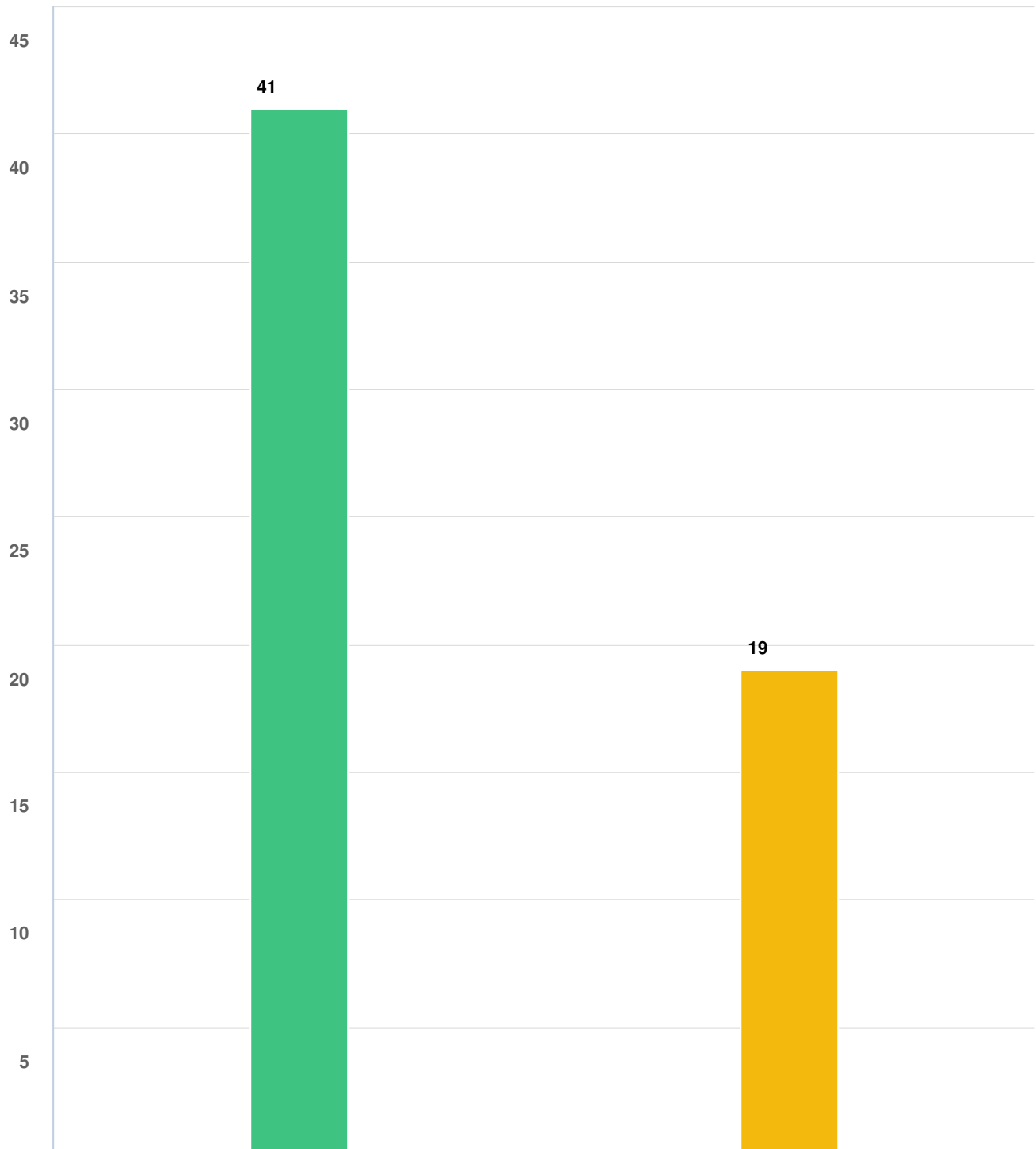


**Question options**

- Yes  No

*Optional question (58 response(s), 8 skipped)*  
*Question type: Checkbox Question*

**Q42** Do you agree that the ten (10) high priority existing and proposed public/tourism mooring and anchoring locations in the Abrolhos FHPA identified in Table 1 would benefit from the installation of new/additional public moorings?



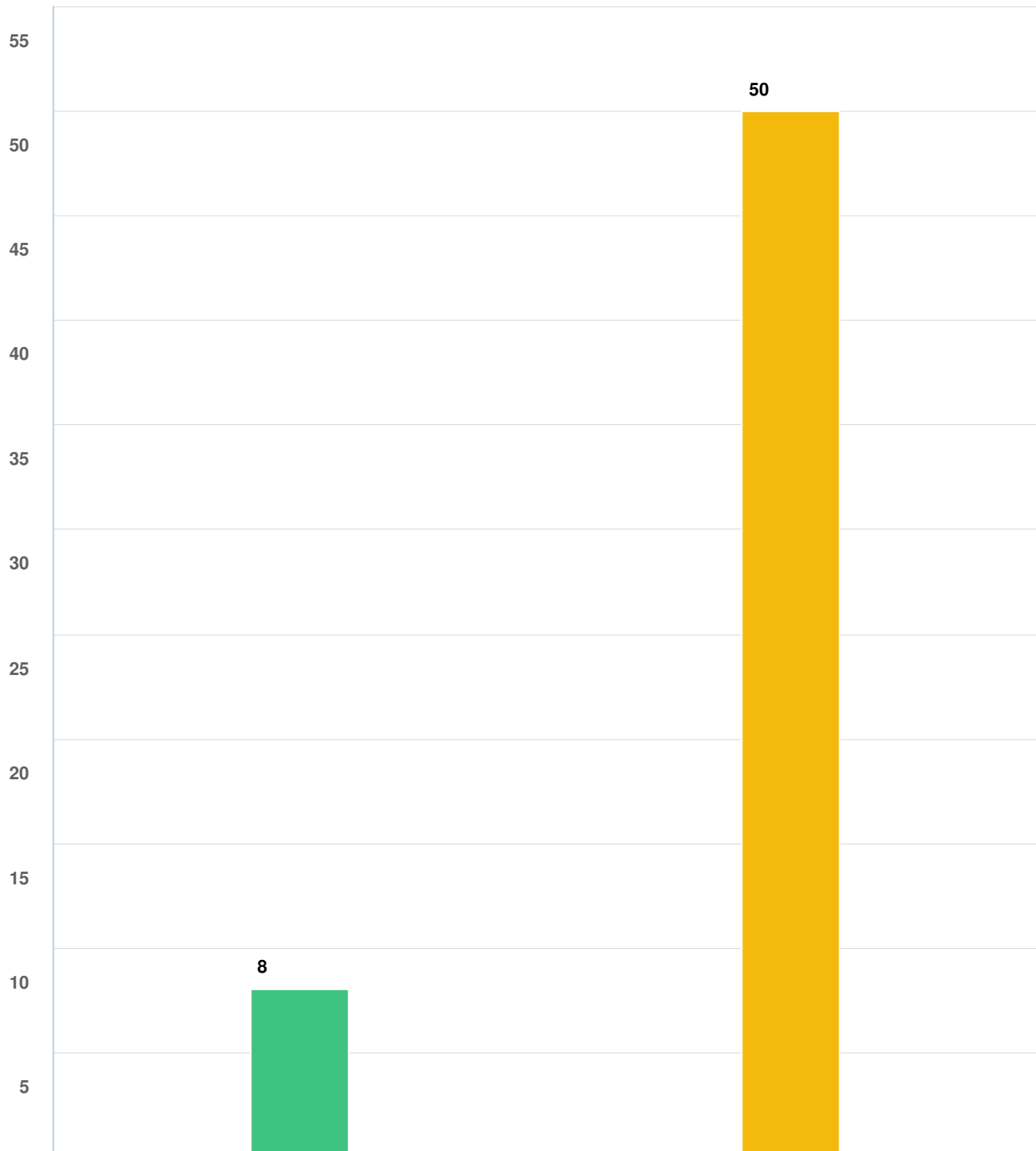
**Question options**

● Yes ● No

Optional question (60 response(s), 6 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question



**Q43** Do you own an approved mooring in the Abrolhos FHPA as part of your licensed commercial fishing, aquaculture or commercial marine tour operations? If so, would you consider offering your mooring for public rental?

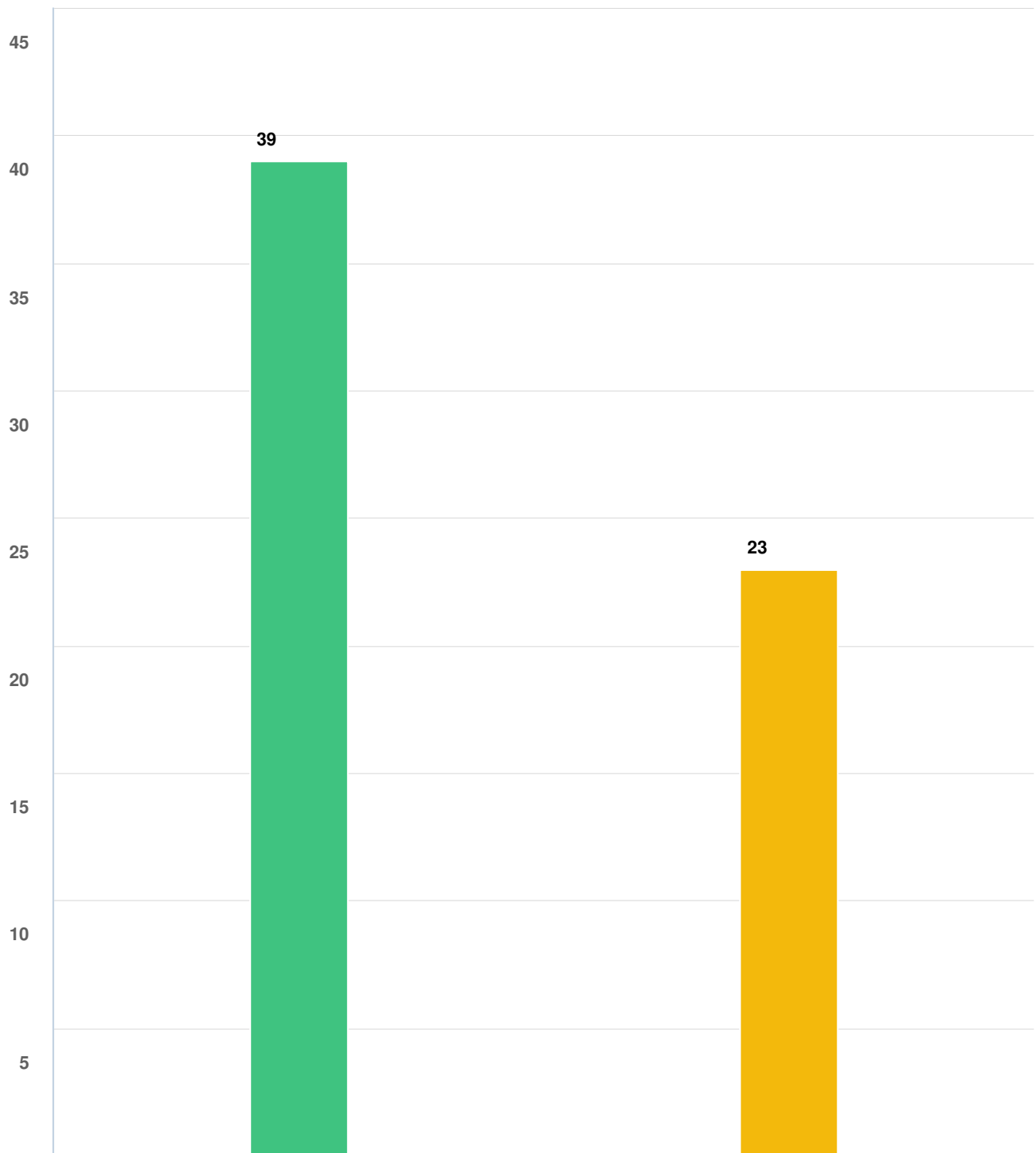


**Question options**

- Yes
- No

Optional question (58 response(s), 8 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q44** Do you agree that sand/mud should be the only substrate where anchoring should be permitted in the Abrolhos FHPA?

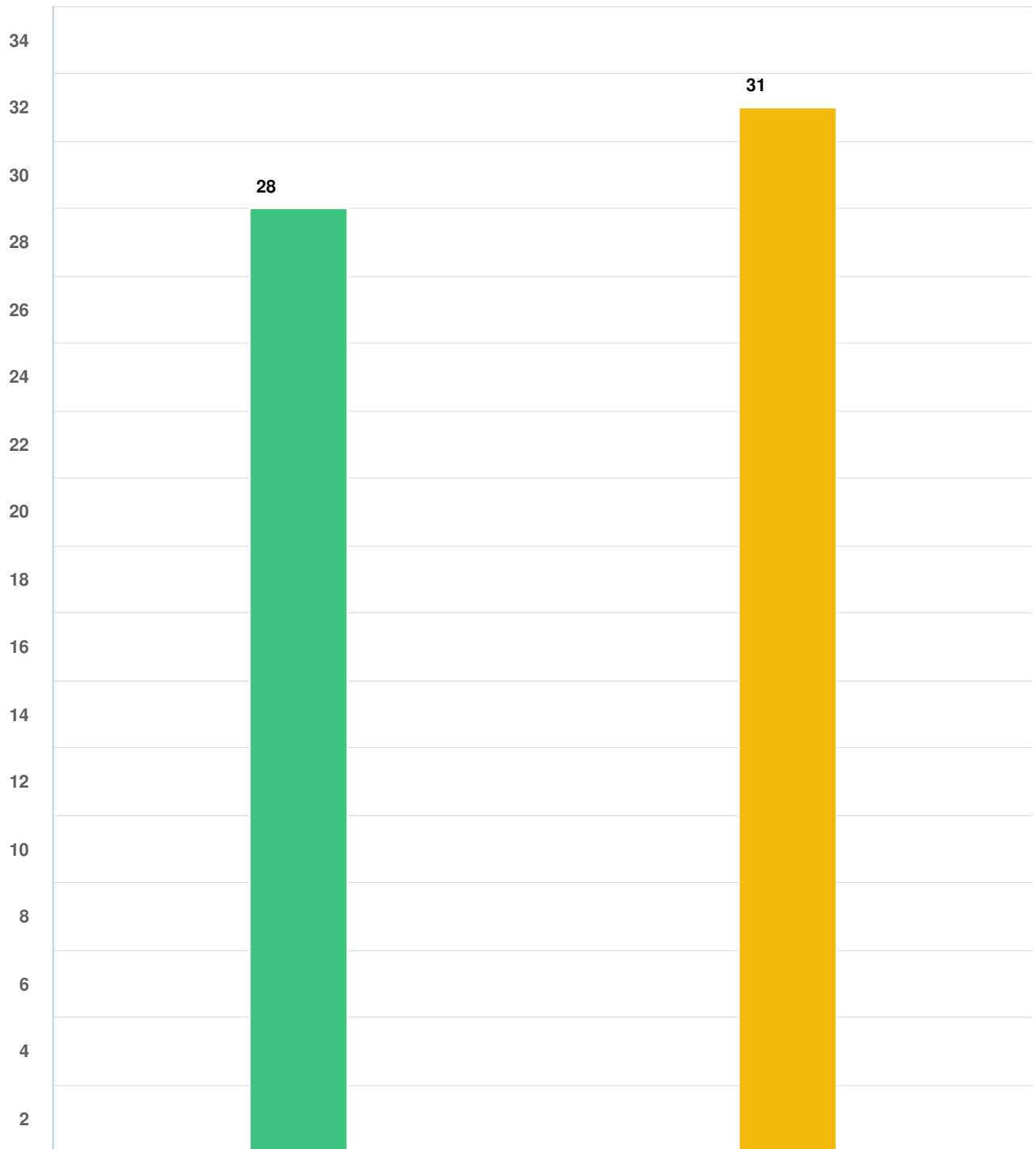


**Question options**

- Yes
- No

*Optional question (62 response(s), 4 skipped)*  
*Question type: Checkbox Question*

**Q45** Do you agree with the permitted and restricted commercial and recreational marine activities for the areas described in Matrix 1?

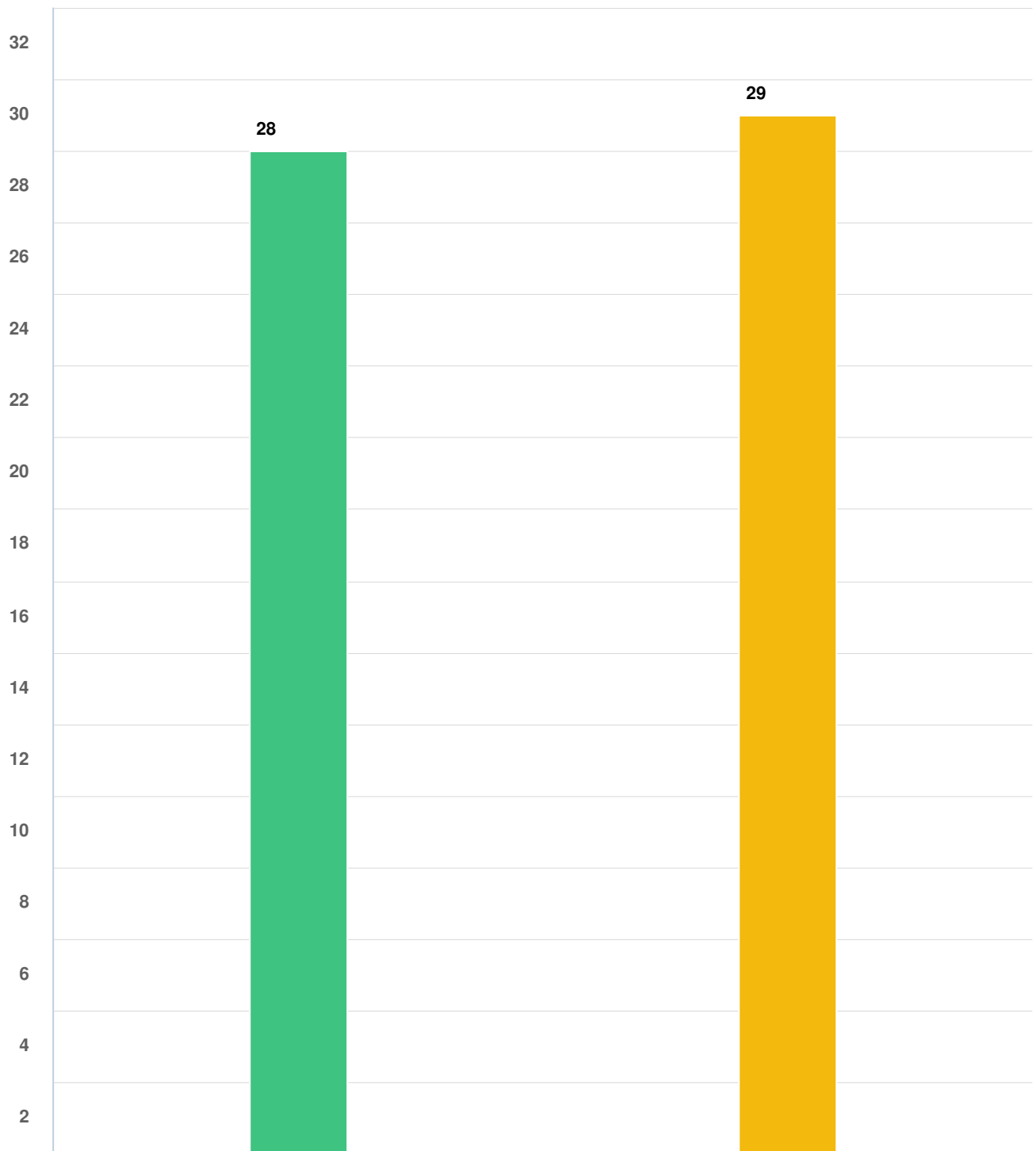


**Question options**

- Yes
- No

*Optional question (59 response(s), 7 skipped)*  
*Question type: Checkbox Question*

**Q46** Do you agree with the permitted and restricted commercial marine infrastructure for the areas described in Matrix 2?



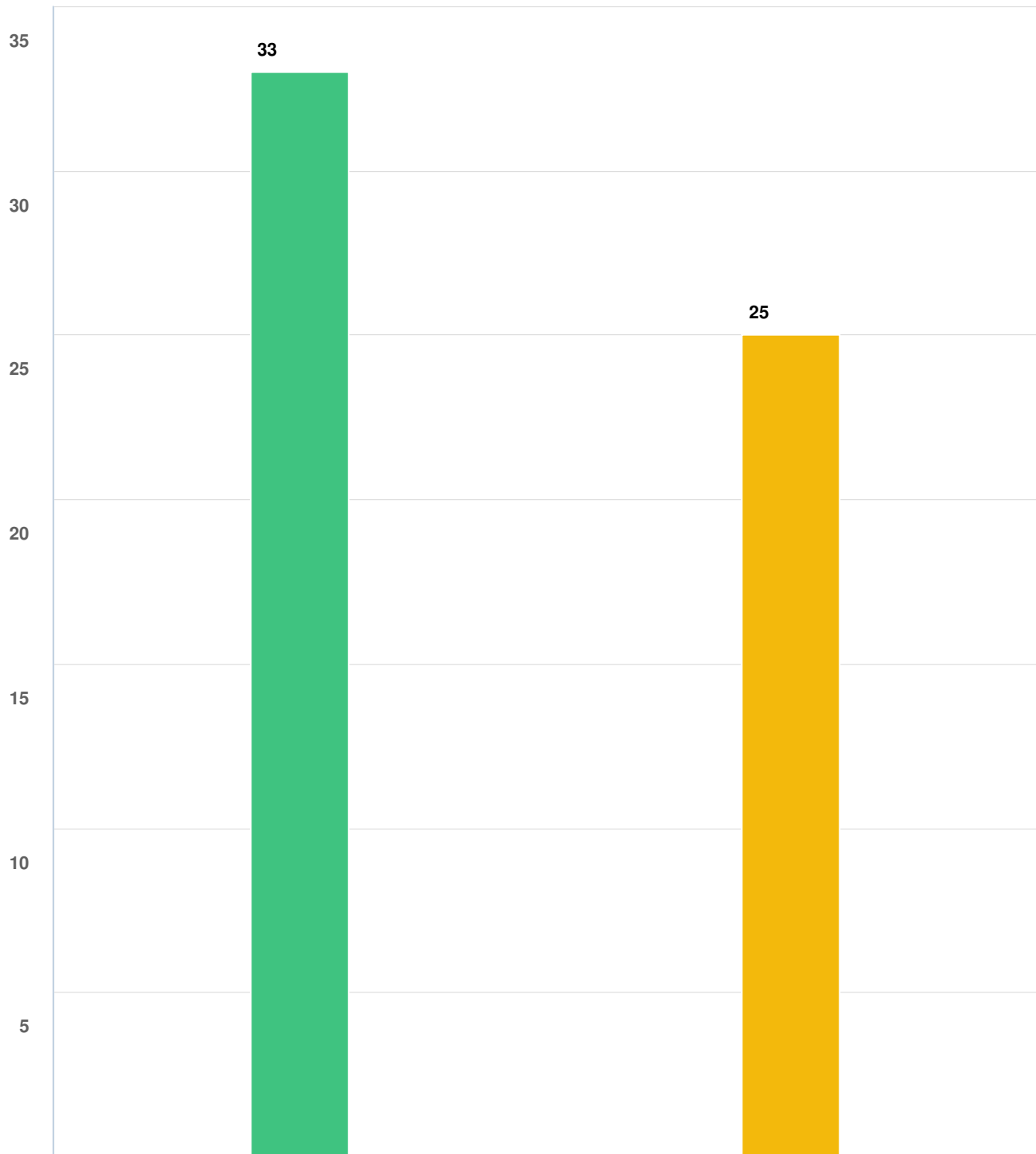
**Question options**

- Yes  No

*Optional question (57 response(s), 9 skipped)*

*Question type: Checkbox Question*

**Q47** Do you agree with the permitted and restricted activities for the areas described in Matrix 3?

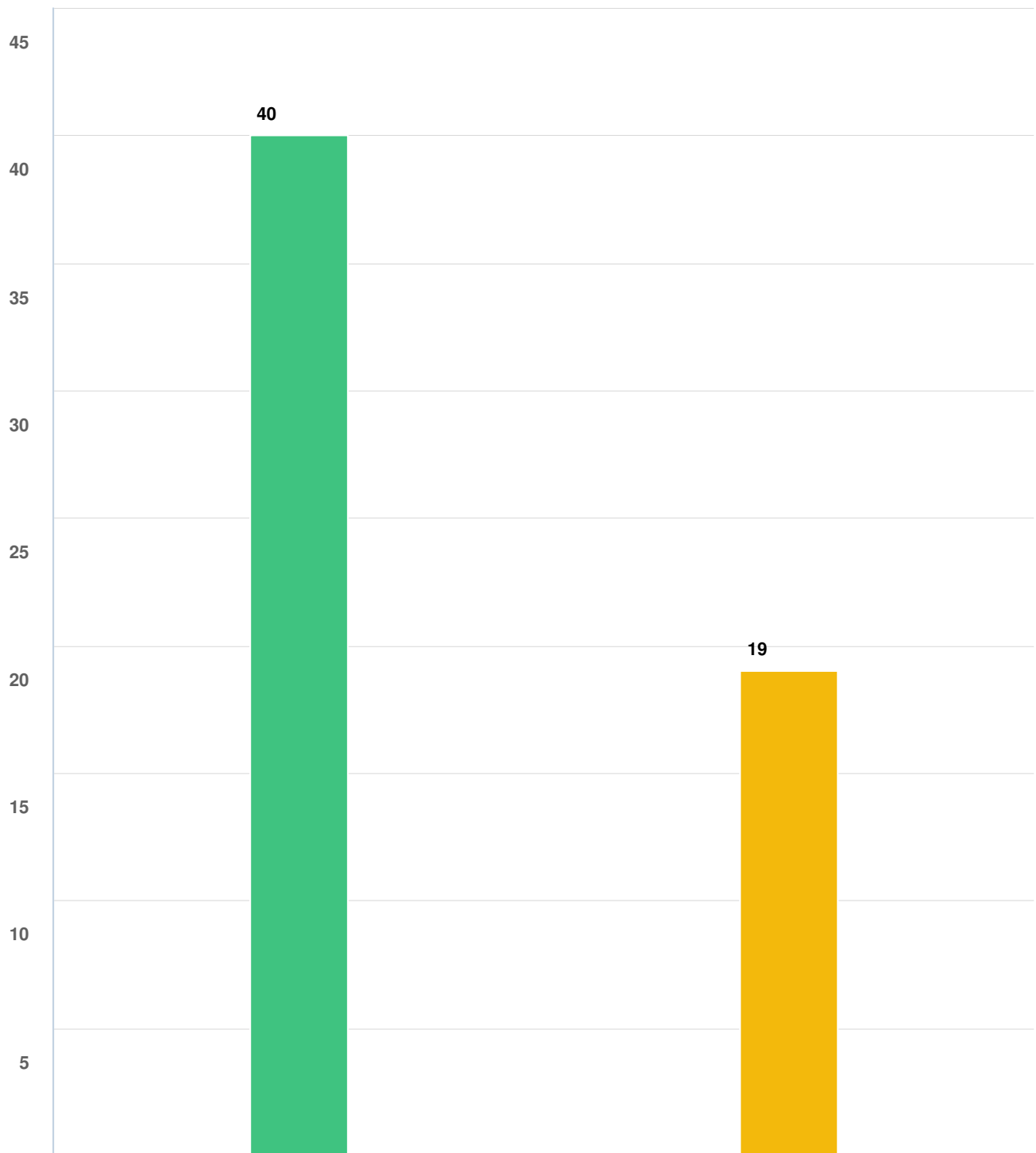


**Question options**

- Yes
- No

*Optional question (58 response(s), 8 skipped)*  
*Question type: Checkbox Question*

**Q48** Do you agree with the permitted public (government-owned) marine tourism infrastructure and other approvals proposed for the areas described in Matrix 4?



**Question options**

- Yes
- No

*Optional question (59 response(s), 7 skipped)*  
*Question type: Checkbox Question*