

Community Perspectives on Marine Protection Near Sambro, NS

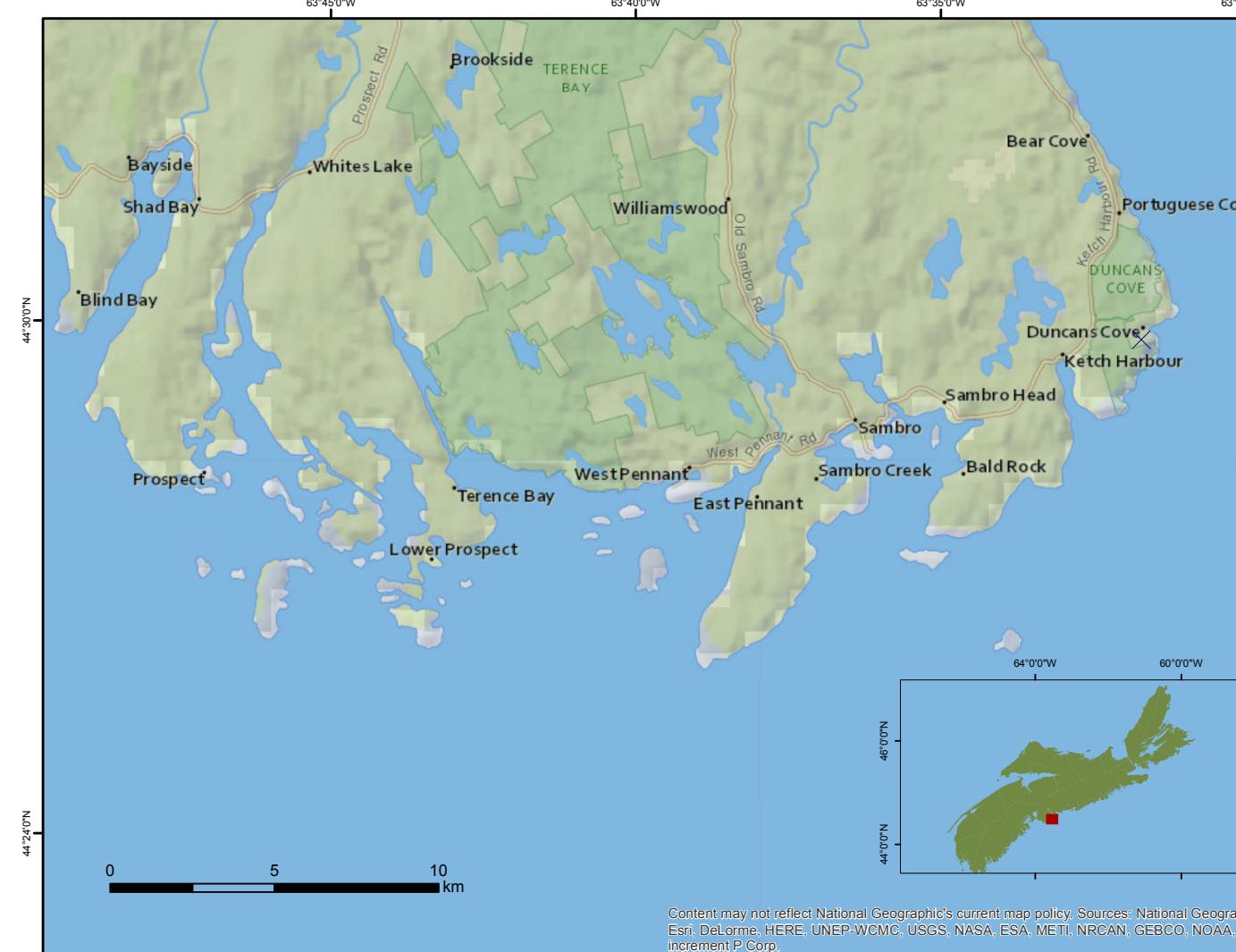
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Introduction & Methodology

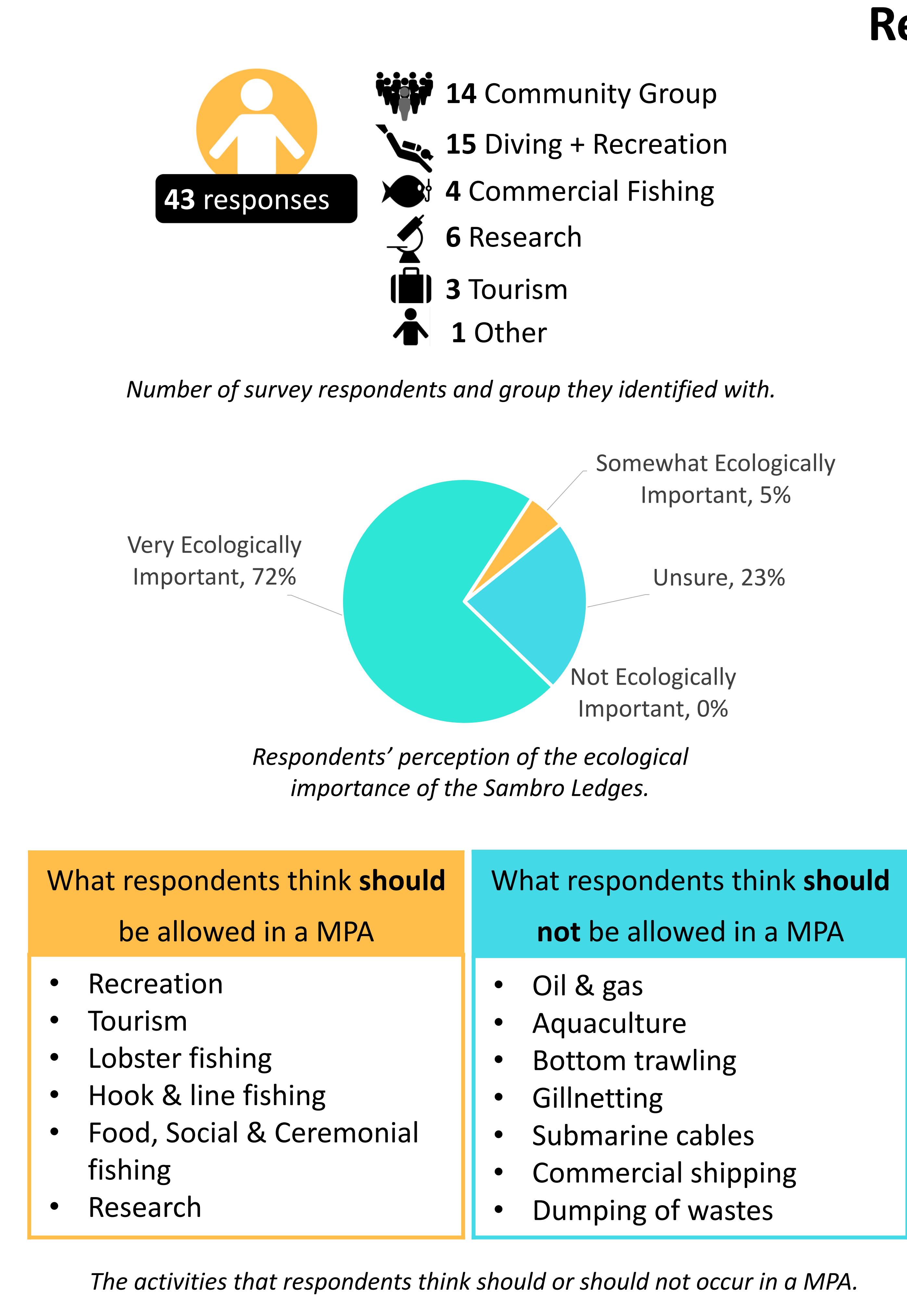
Canada has a goal to protect 10% of its marine and coastal waters by 2020, with Fisheries and Oceans Canada leading the development of a network of marine protected areas (MPAs). There are several ecologically important marine areas off Nova Scotia (NS) that may become MPAs, including the Sambro Ledges. Nearby communities of Sambro, Duncan's Cove, Ketch Harbour, Pennant, Terrence Bay, and Prospect could all be impacted if a MPA were designated in this area.



The marine waters surrounding Sambro, Nova Scotia.

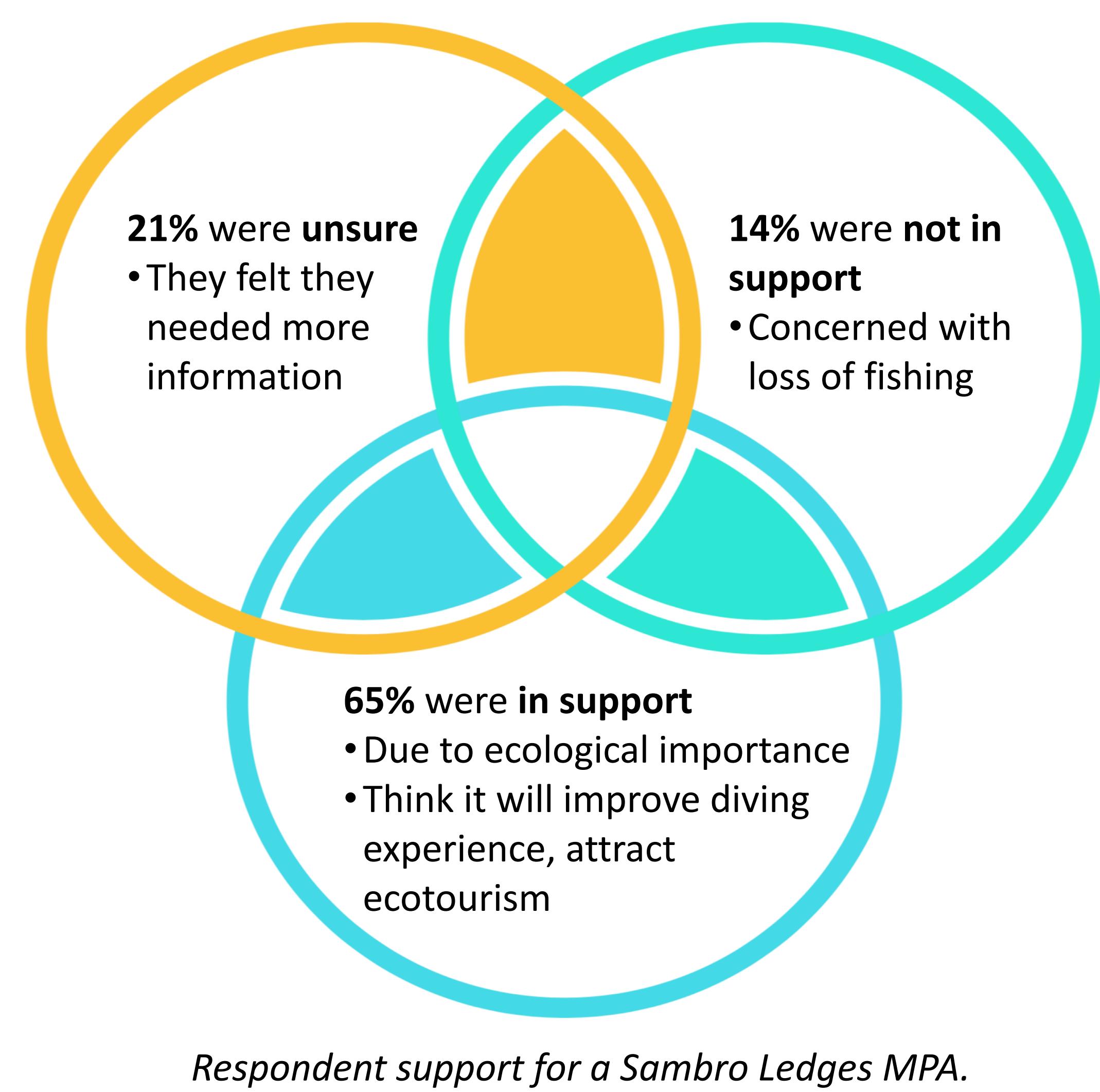
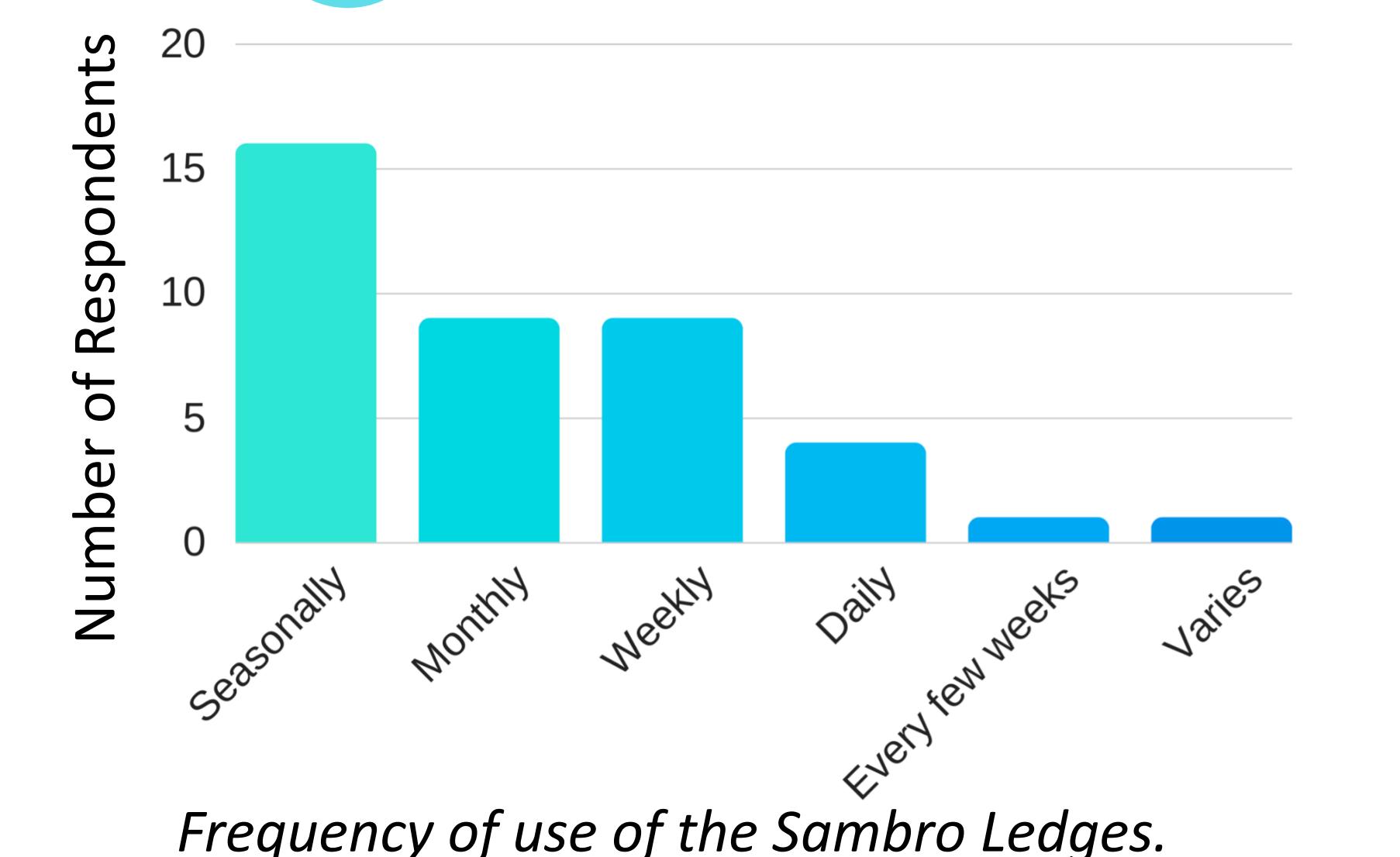
WWF-Canada believes that marine protection efforts should have local support and provide benefits to coastal communities. As such, they are interested in knowing what local groups near Sambro think about MPAs, and how they perceive a MPA in the area could impact them.

An online survey consisting of 9 multiple-choice questions and 4 short-answer questions was created. The survey was distributed via email to stakeholder groups that had previously been identified by Nexus Coastal Resource Management Ltd. These stakeholders included community groups, those involved in tourism and recreation, members of the fishing industry, and others such as researchers, environmental organizations, shipping interests and port authorities. Survey recipients were also asked to distribute the survey to others they felt would be interested in participating.



Results

86% of respondents reported using the area and 24% make a living from use of the area.



Discussion

- Survey respondents identified with a variety of user groups. Many use the area, but not many who responded made a living from the area. Most of the respondents use the area seasonally or monthly.
- Overall, survey respondents thought this was an ecologically important area and had a positive response to the idea of creating a MPA in the waters near Sambro. Those in support thought a MPA could help improve diving and ecotourism. Some were not supportive, mainly due to concerns over the impact that a MPA would have on lobster fishing in this area and how it would impact livelihoods.
- Survey respondents indicated they would like more information on what MPAs can and cannot do, the process by which they are created, and information on the ecological importance of the marine area. Outreach and educational materials could help provide more clarity and support the public in making informed decisions.
- Respondents are in favour of sustainable activities within MPAs, and not supportive of activities that have the potential to negatively impact the environment.
- Knowing what people do and do not want can help shape the MPA so that community values are reflected in its design. This survey highlights concerns that need to be addressed in the creation of a Sambro Ledges MPA and the perceived opportunities that local user group would like to develop.
- Grassroots community engagement is a necessary component of MPA effectiveness to ensure people's values are reflected in the MPA management approach. A bottom-up process more often leads to equitable MPA establishment where those impacted have a say in MPA governance, monitoring and management.