



Public perceptions of weirs

Barriers to barrier removal.

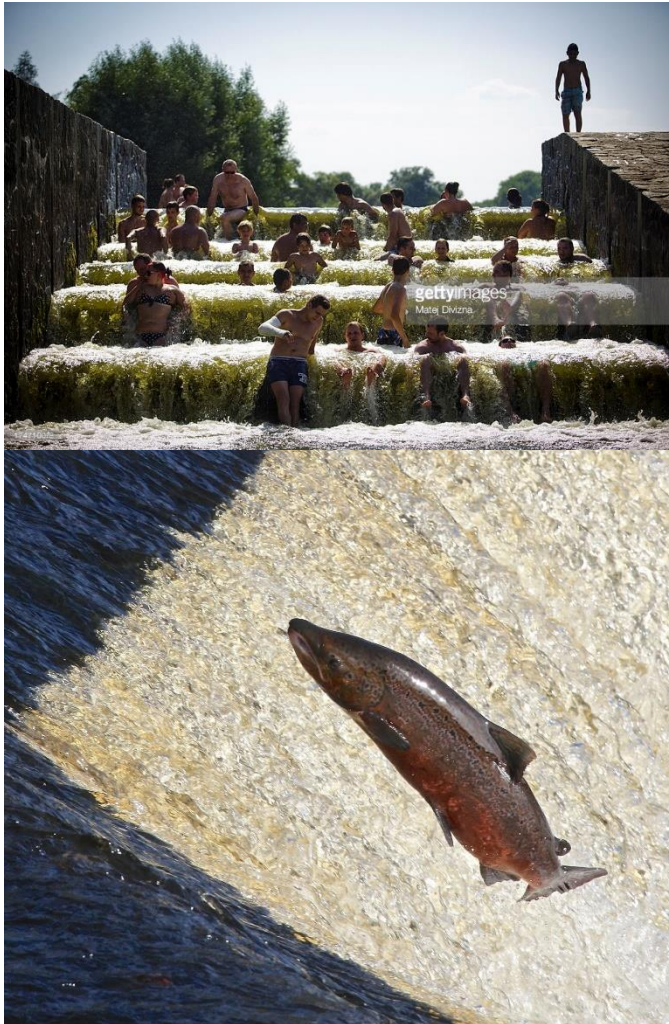
Harriet Alvis, Bristol Avon Rivers Trust



Challenges of weir removals



Aims of the study

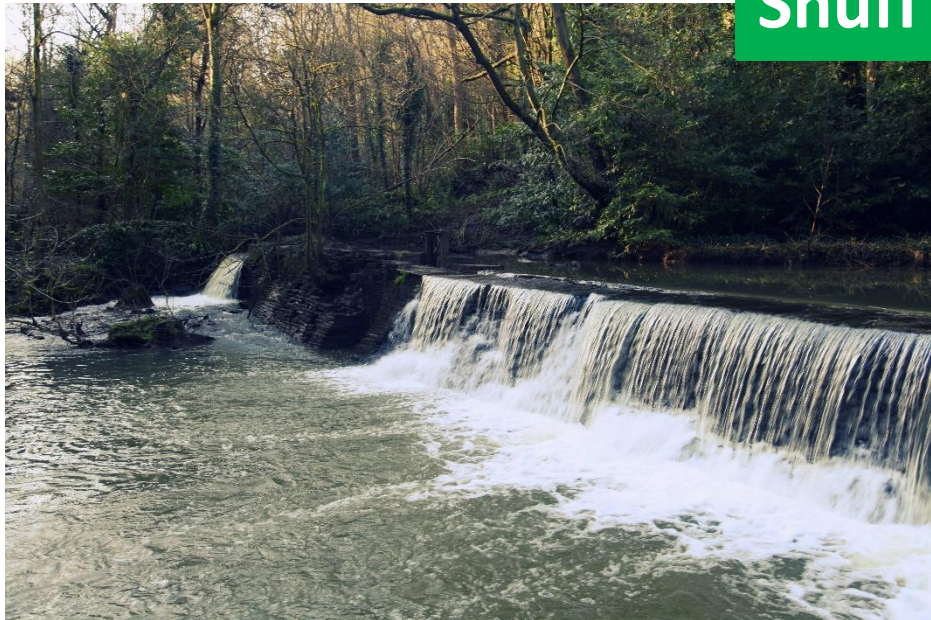


- To understand the importance of both rivers and weirs in choosing a walk location
- To understand the features of weirs that are most attractive to the general public for incorporation into weir removal designs
- To gain a snapshot of peoples understanding of the impacts of weirs
- To assess whether improved knowledge of the impacts of weirs may increase favourability of removal

Study site



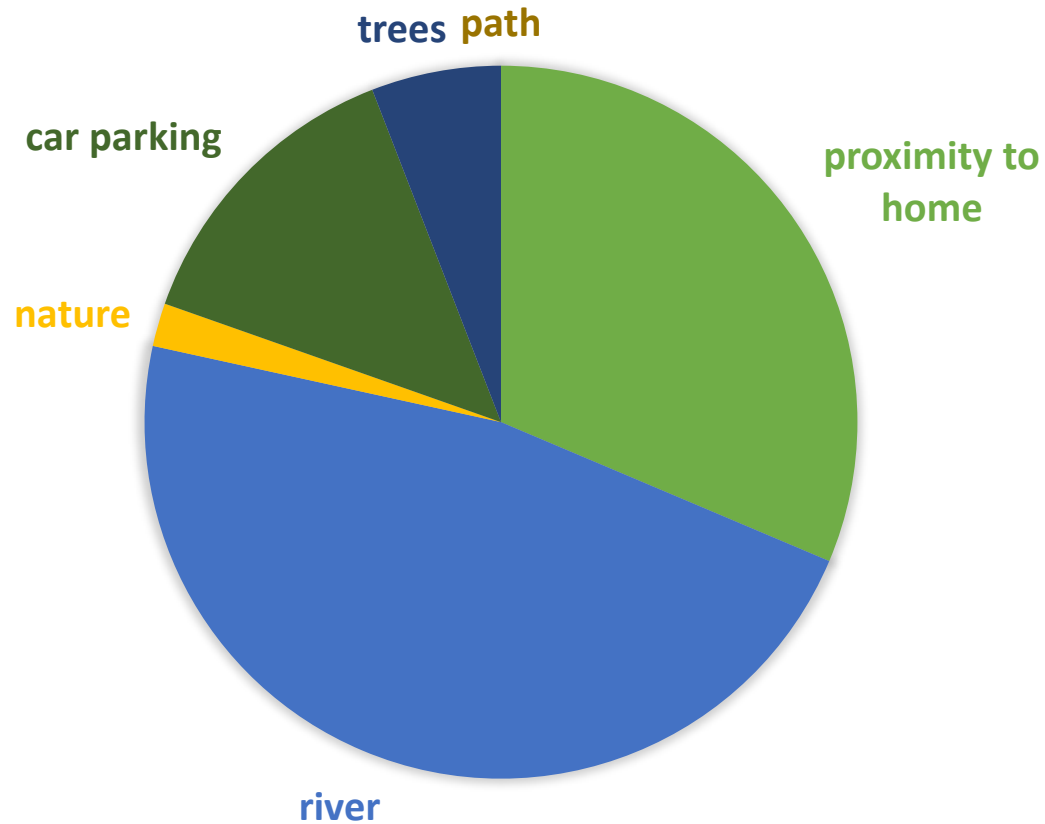
Snuff Mills, Bristol



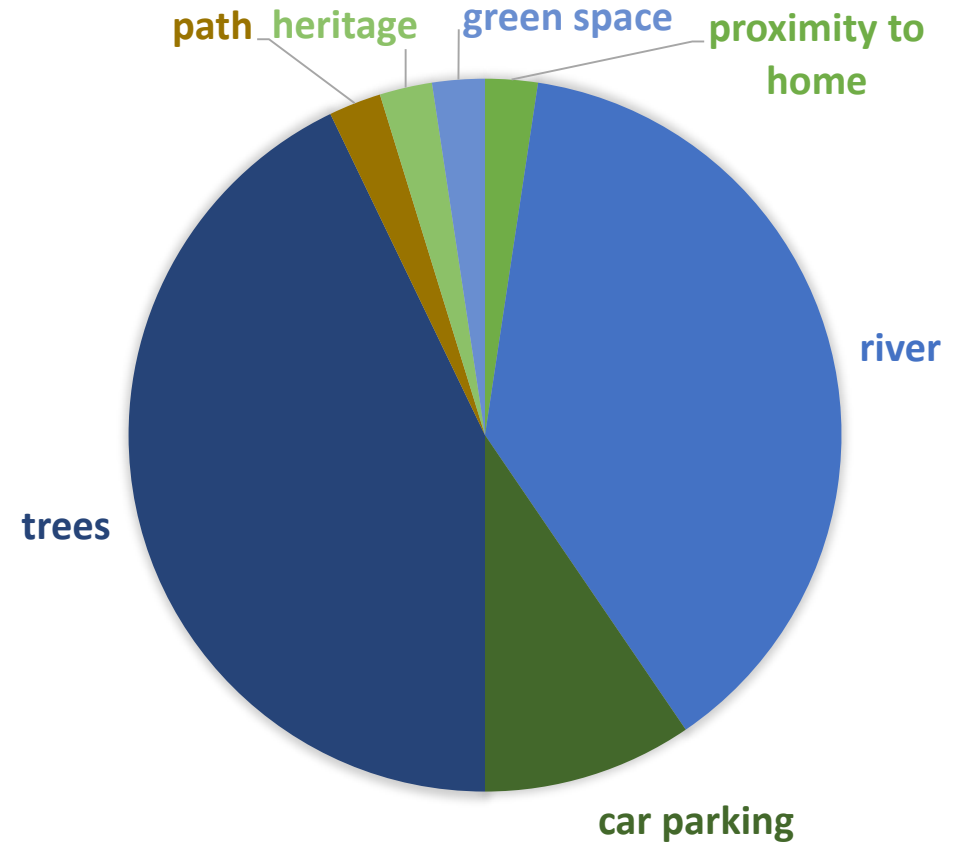
Reasons for choosing the walk



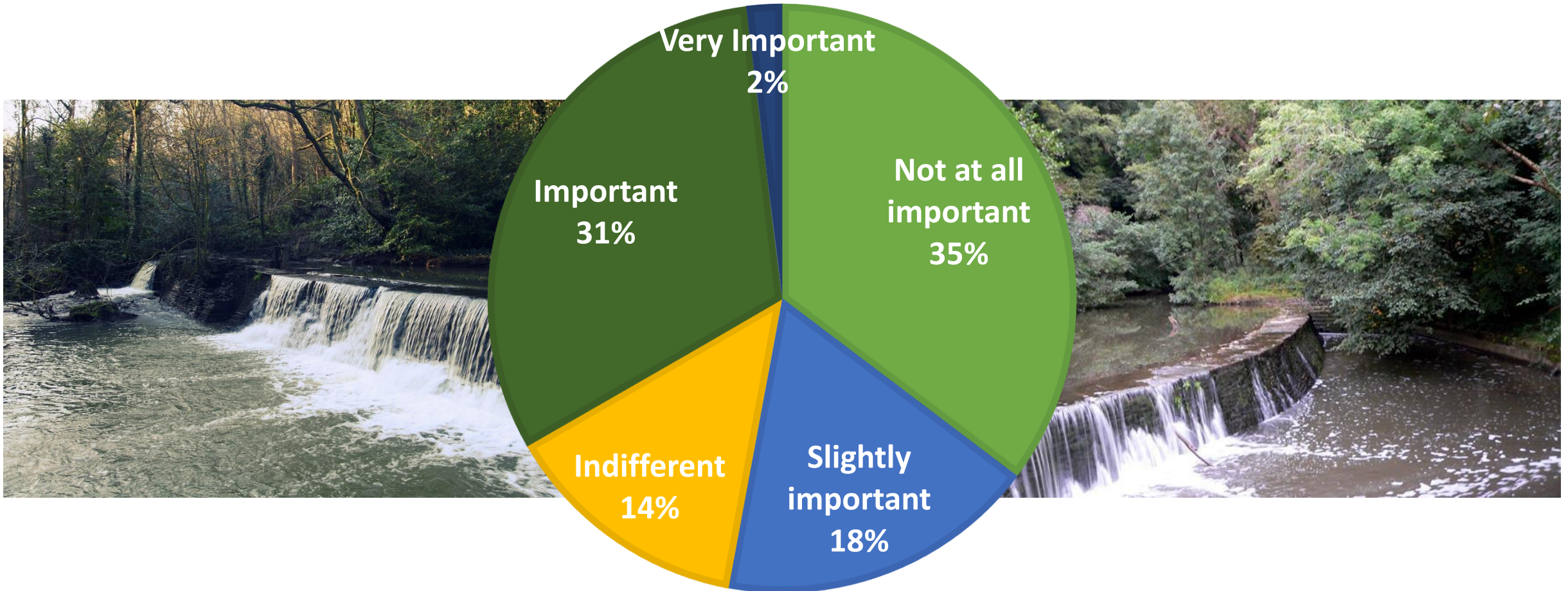
1ST REASON



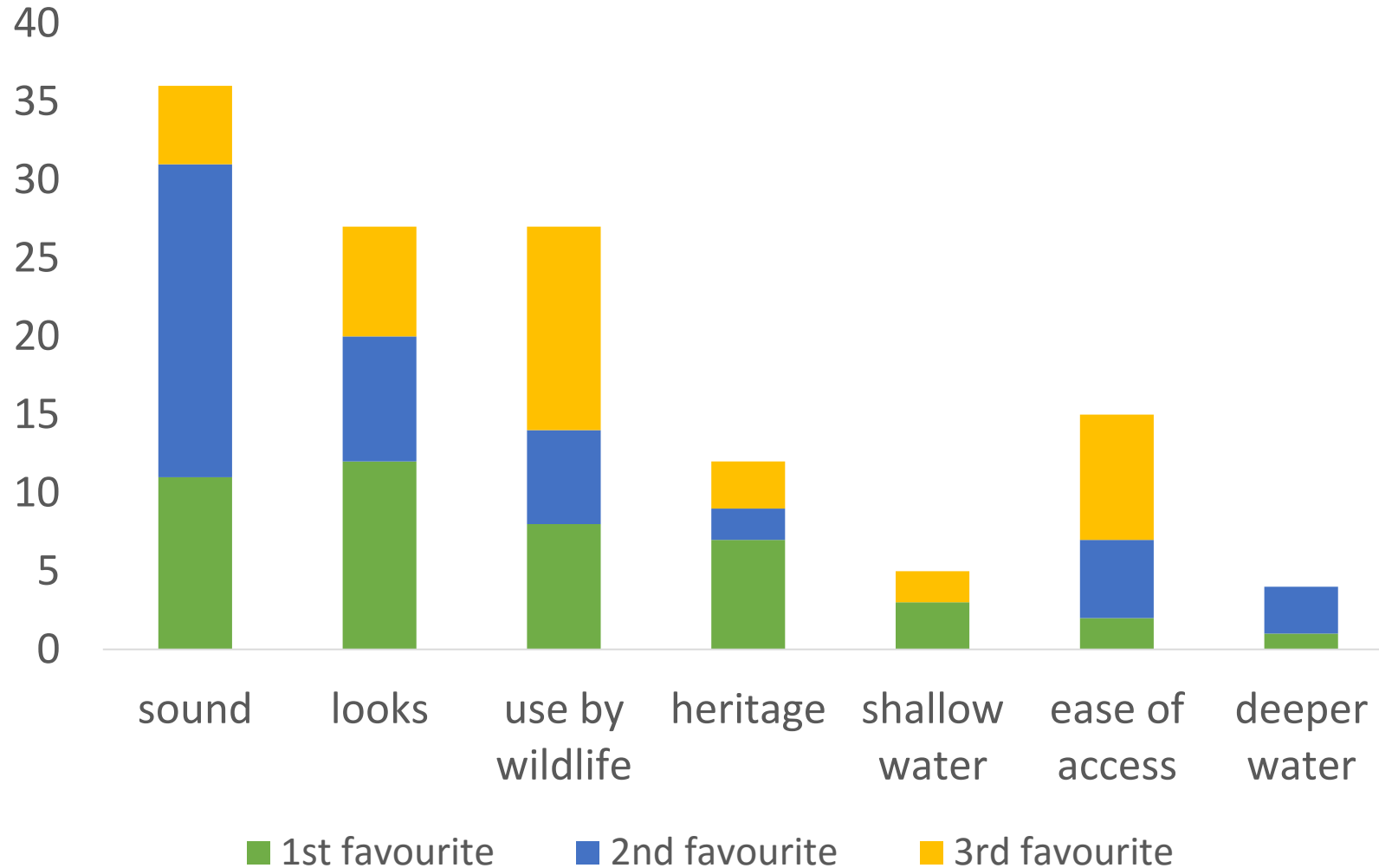
2ND REASON



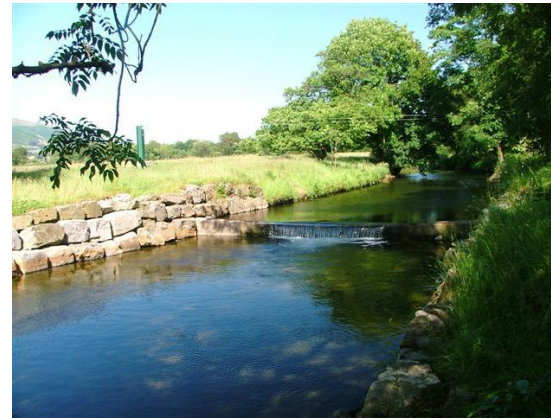
Importance of weirs in choosing the walk



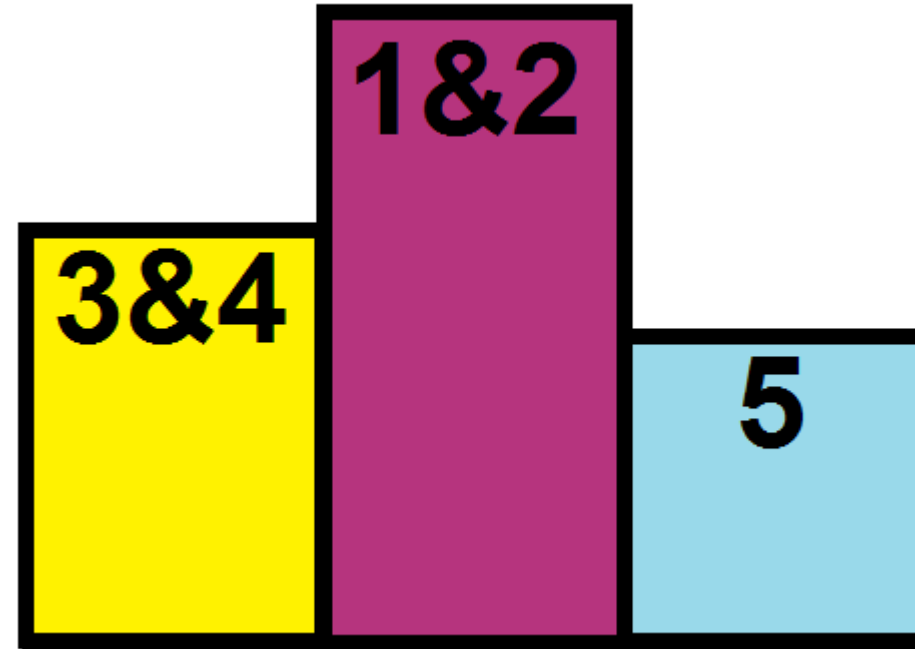
Top 3 features of weirs



Scene selection



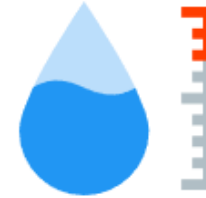
Preferred river scenes



Public knowledge of weirs

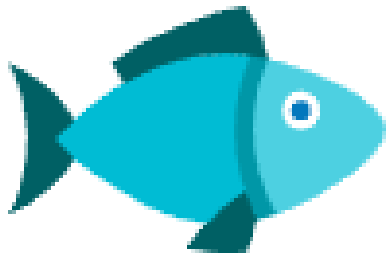


44% people thought that weirs reduced flood risk



62% people thought that weirs improved water quality

64% people thought that weirs improve the riverbed

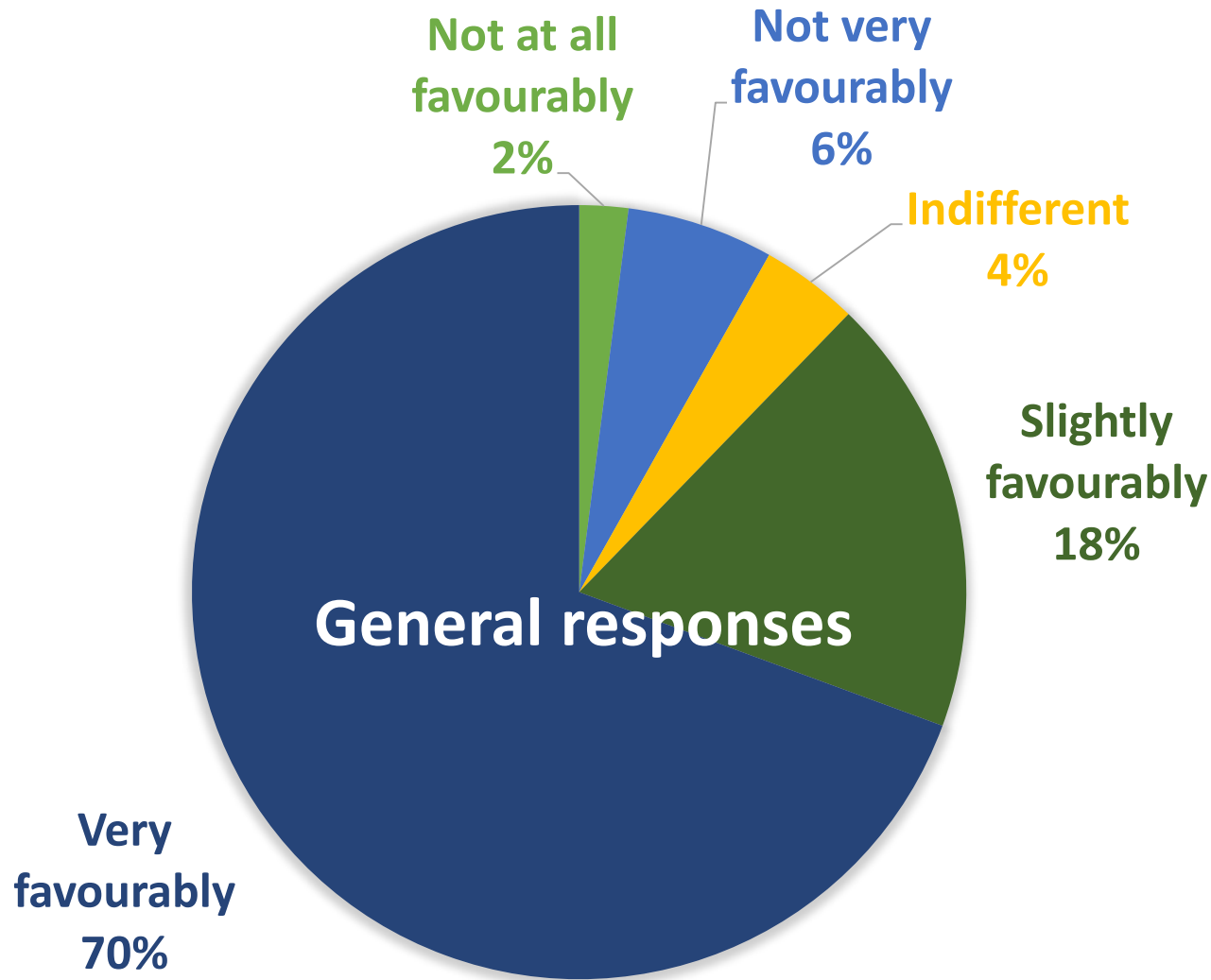


35% people didn't think that weirs are fish barriers

68% people thought that weirs improved fish numbers



Response to weir removal



Of the people who valued weirs in choosing their walk, 85% responded positively to their removal once they were made aware of their impacts.

Age in weir removal opinion

	Not at all favourably	Not very favourably	Indifferent	Slightly favourably	Very favourably
Under 18				1	2
18-24				1	5
25-34	1			5	7
35-44			1	2	7
45-54			1		5
55-64	2	1		2	4
65+		2			1



Improvements... multi-win?



“improve paths”

“maintenance of fallen trees”

“less litter”

“more bins”

“more wildlife”

“more benches”



Results



- Rivers and weirs are important features in choosing walk locations
- Sound, looks & wildlife most important features of weirs for public
- Surrounding land **may** be more important than weirs
- Public knowledge on the impact of weirs is limited
- Attitudes can be changed with education

Future recommendations

- It is worth increasing the scope of this research
- Education on the impacts of weirs is important
- Don't forget the general public when planning weir removal projects & engage them early
- Education may lead to community-led removal projects
- Weir removal designs should incorporate favourable weir features
- It is also worth incorporating additional community wins into weir removal projects





Thanks for listening!

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