

EVOLUTION OF THE EUROPEAN RABBIT POPULATION IN LA SEGARRA



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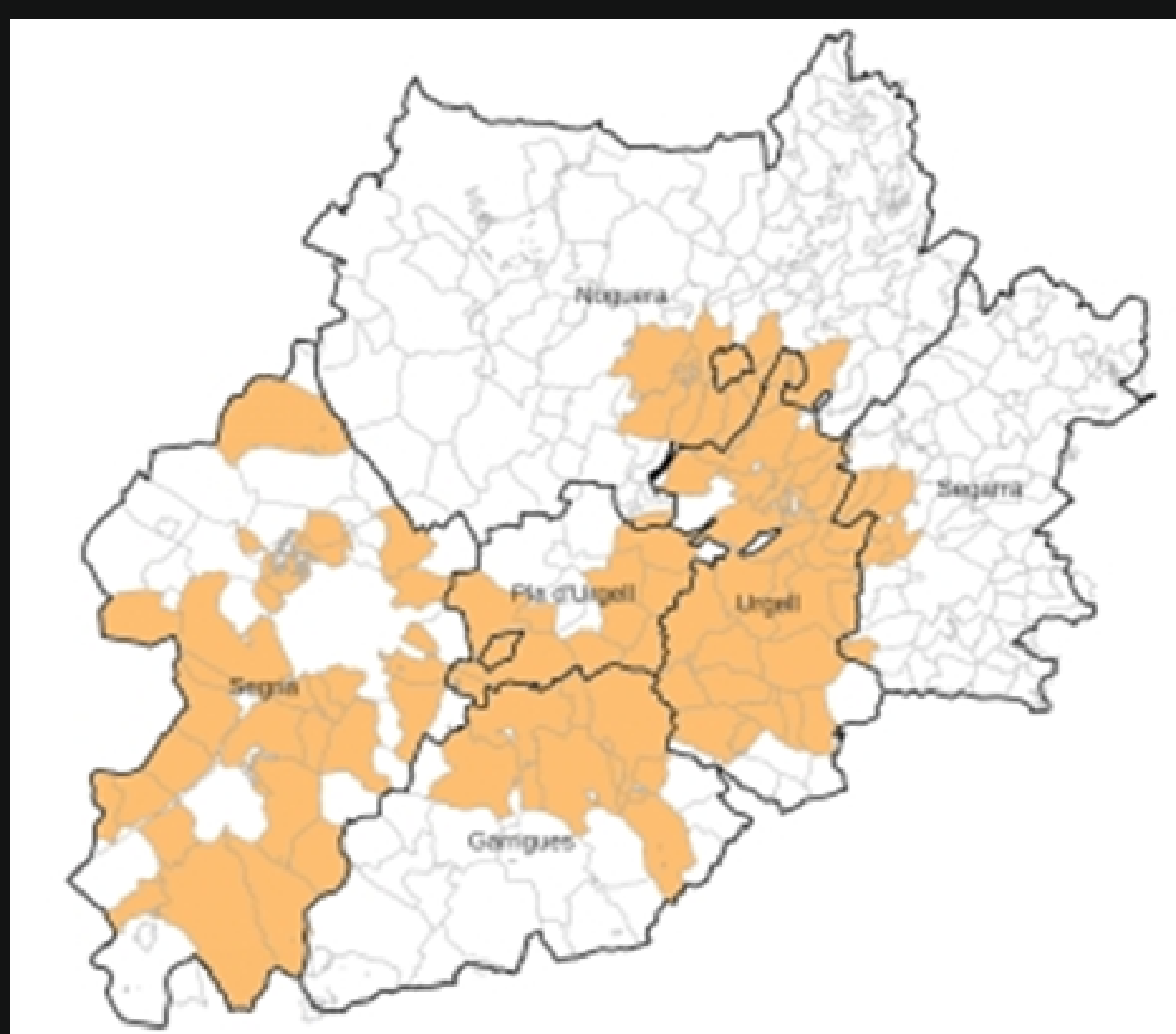


INTRODUCTION

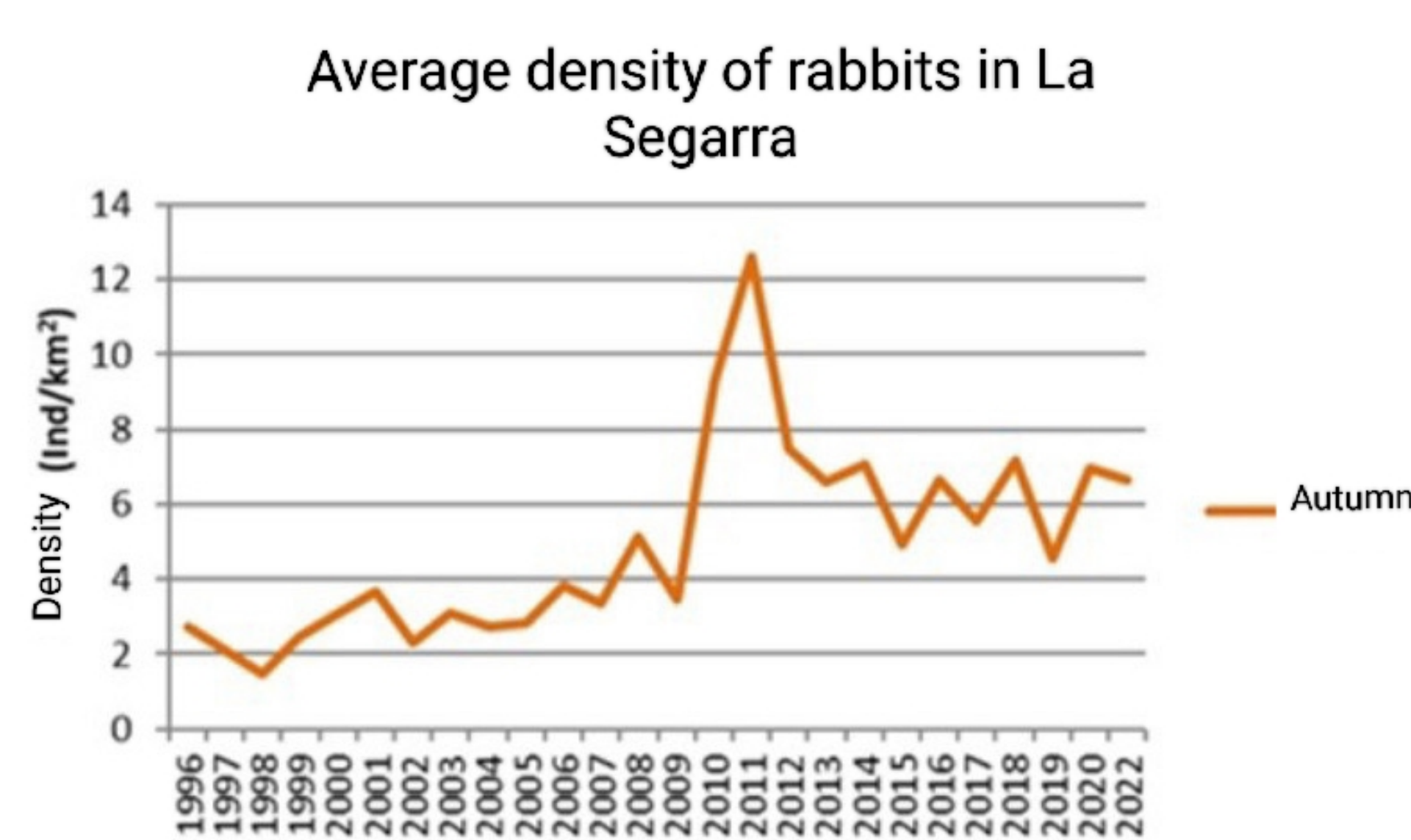
The European rabbit is an endemic species in our country with great ecological and economic relevance. During the last century, rabbit populations have suffered a sharp decline due to habitat fragmentation and the arrival of myxomatosis and viral hemorrhagic disease. Now it seems that, after the first impact of the diseases, the populations are recovering.

The territory of La Segarra has always been a territory where small game hunting has been of great importance. During the last few years in the area of Lleida, there has been a feeling that rabbit populations have increased, causing problems for farmers. Finally, the species has been declared a hunting emergency in many areas of Lleida.

CURRENT SITUATION

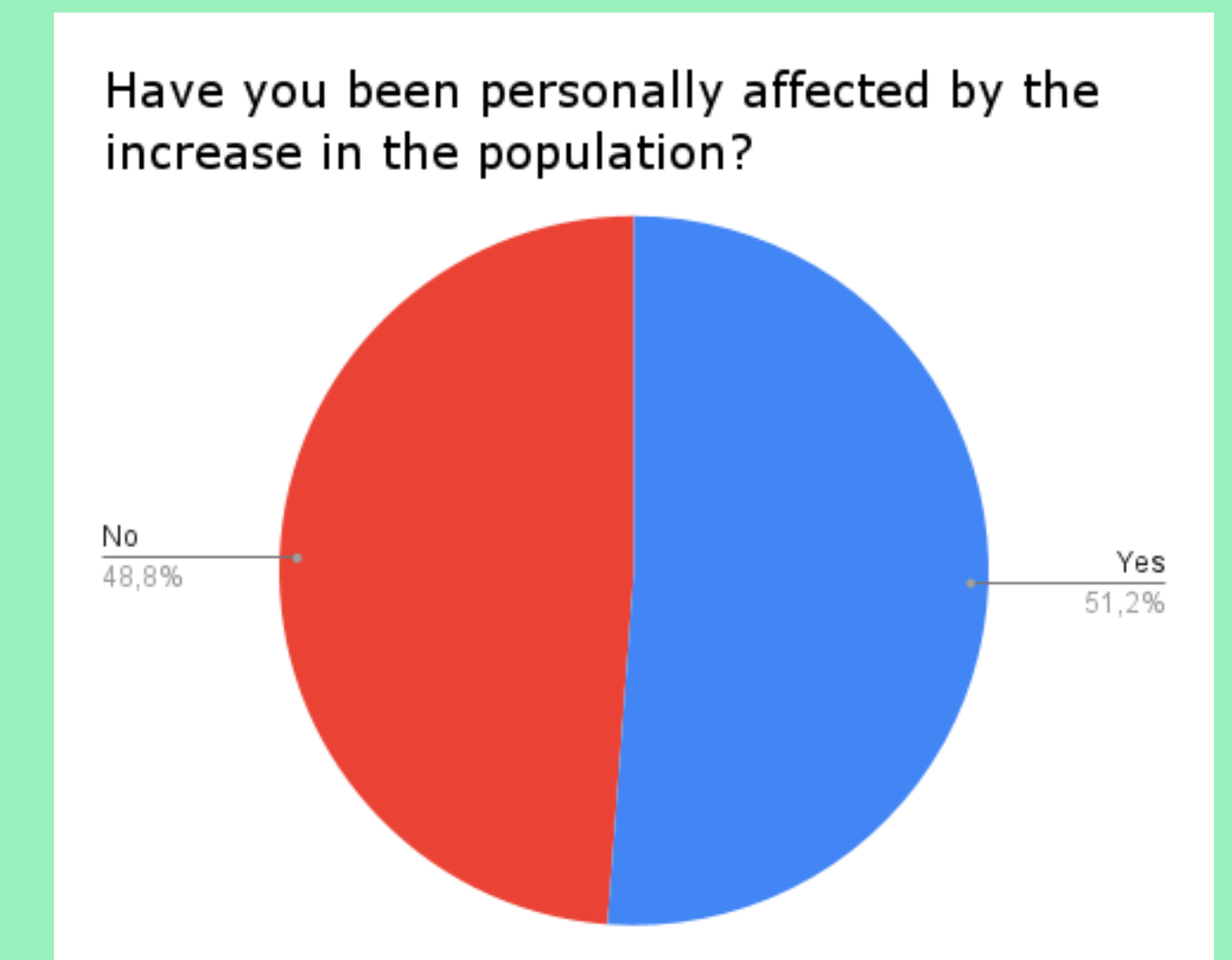
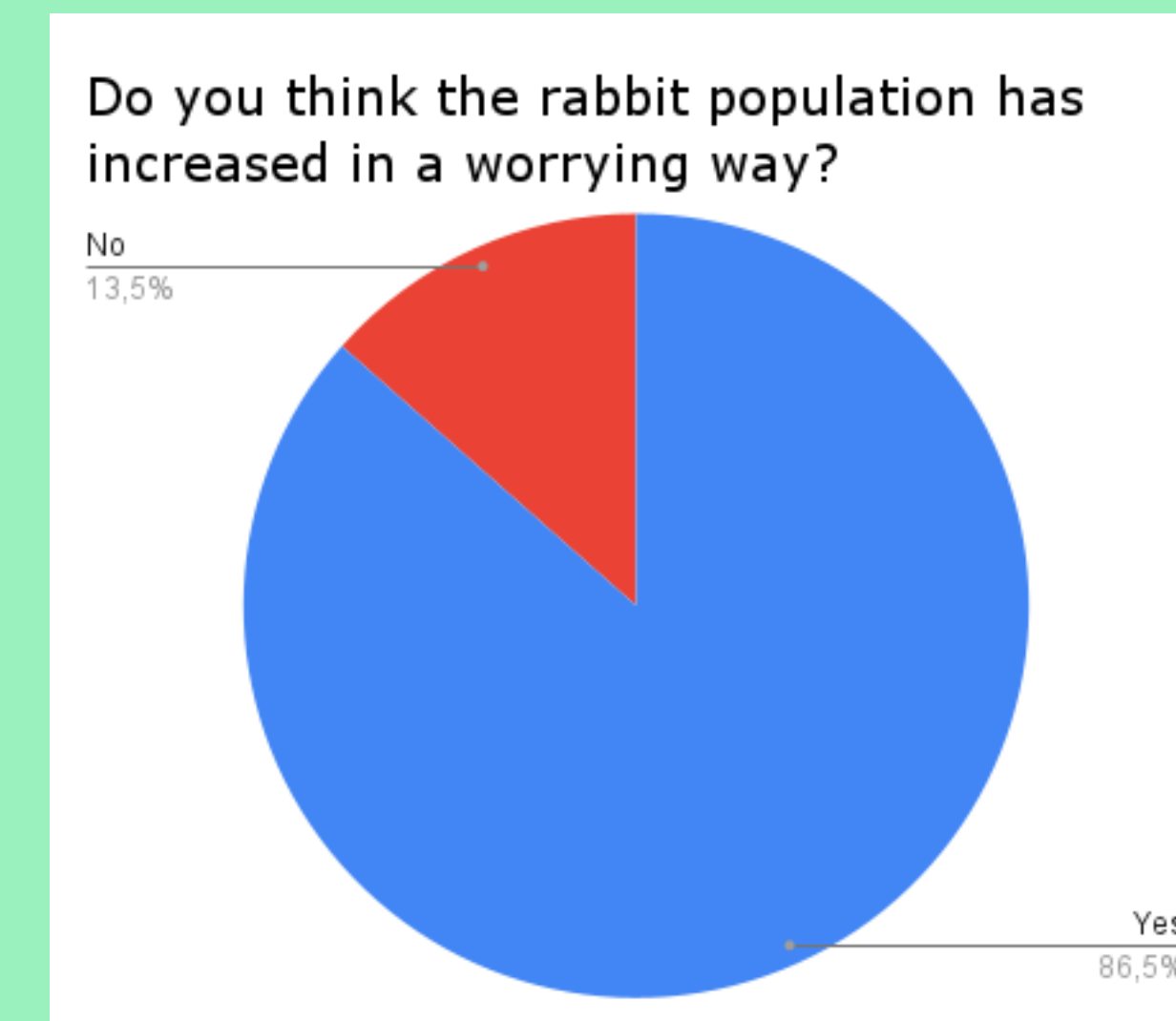
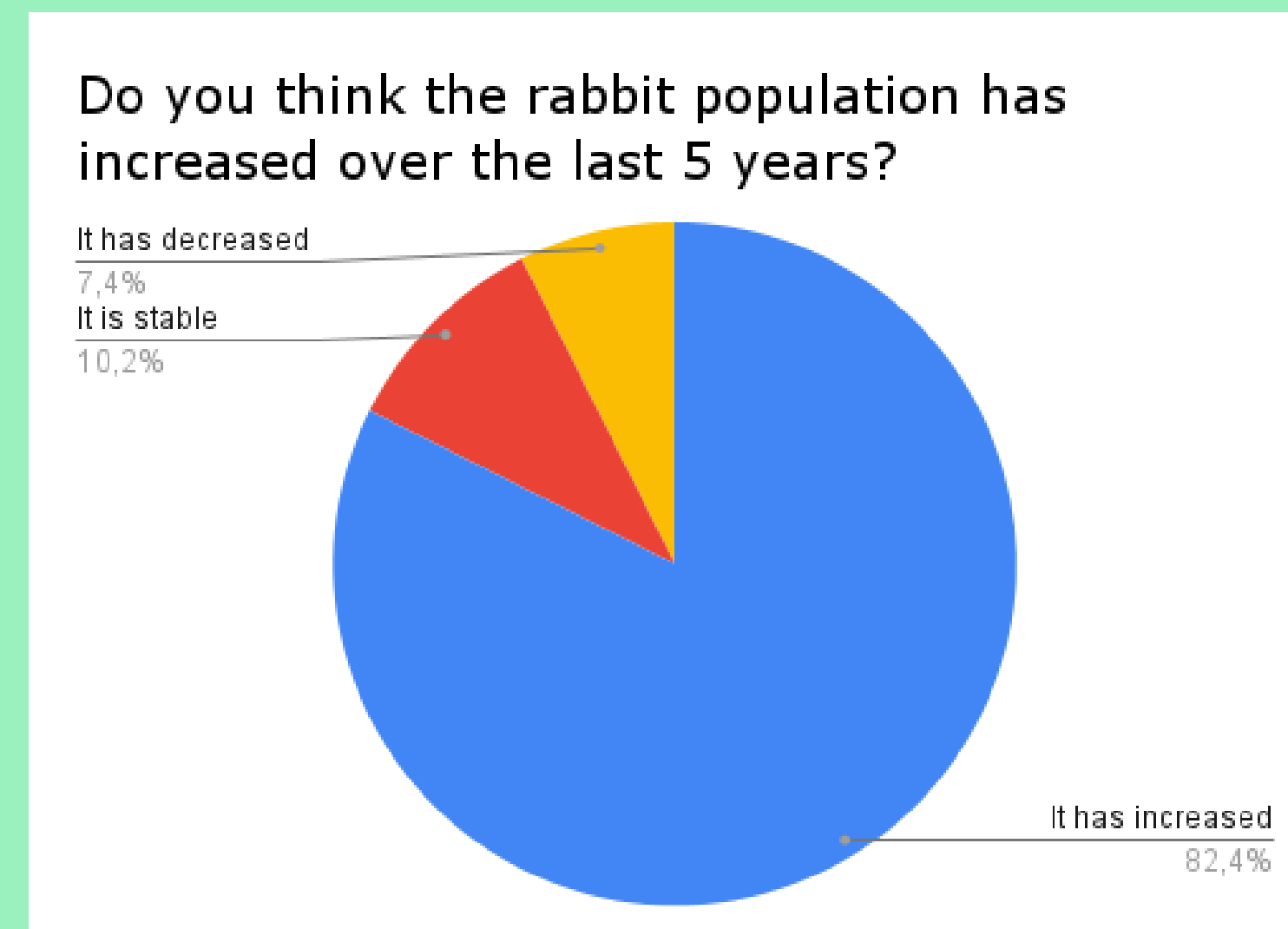


Declared hunting emergency areas (DACC, 2023)

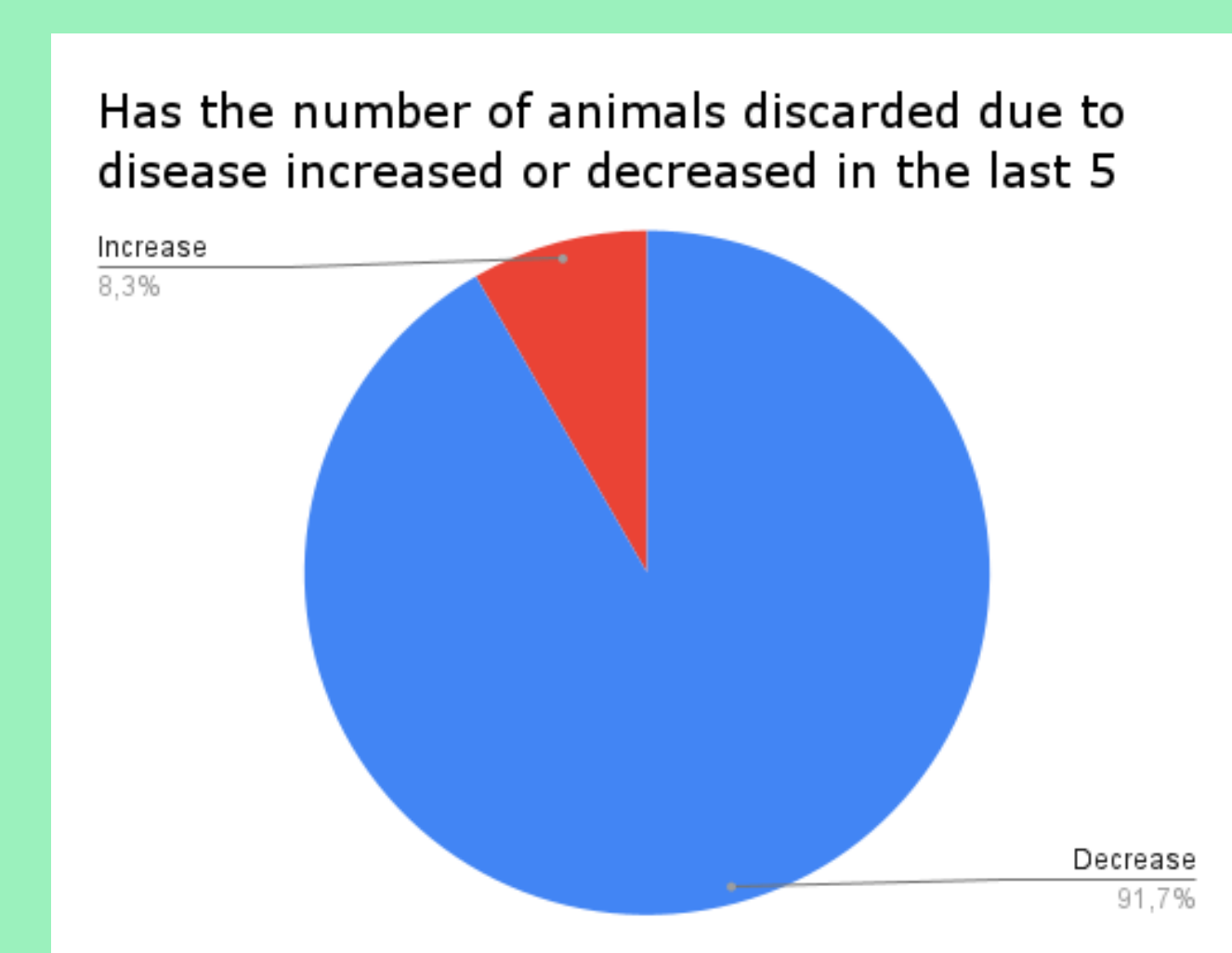
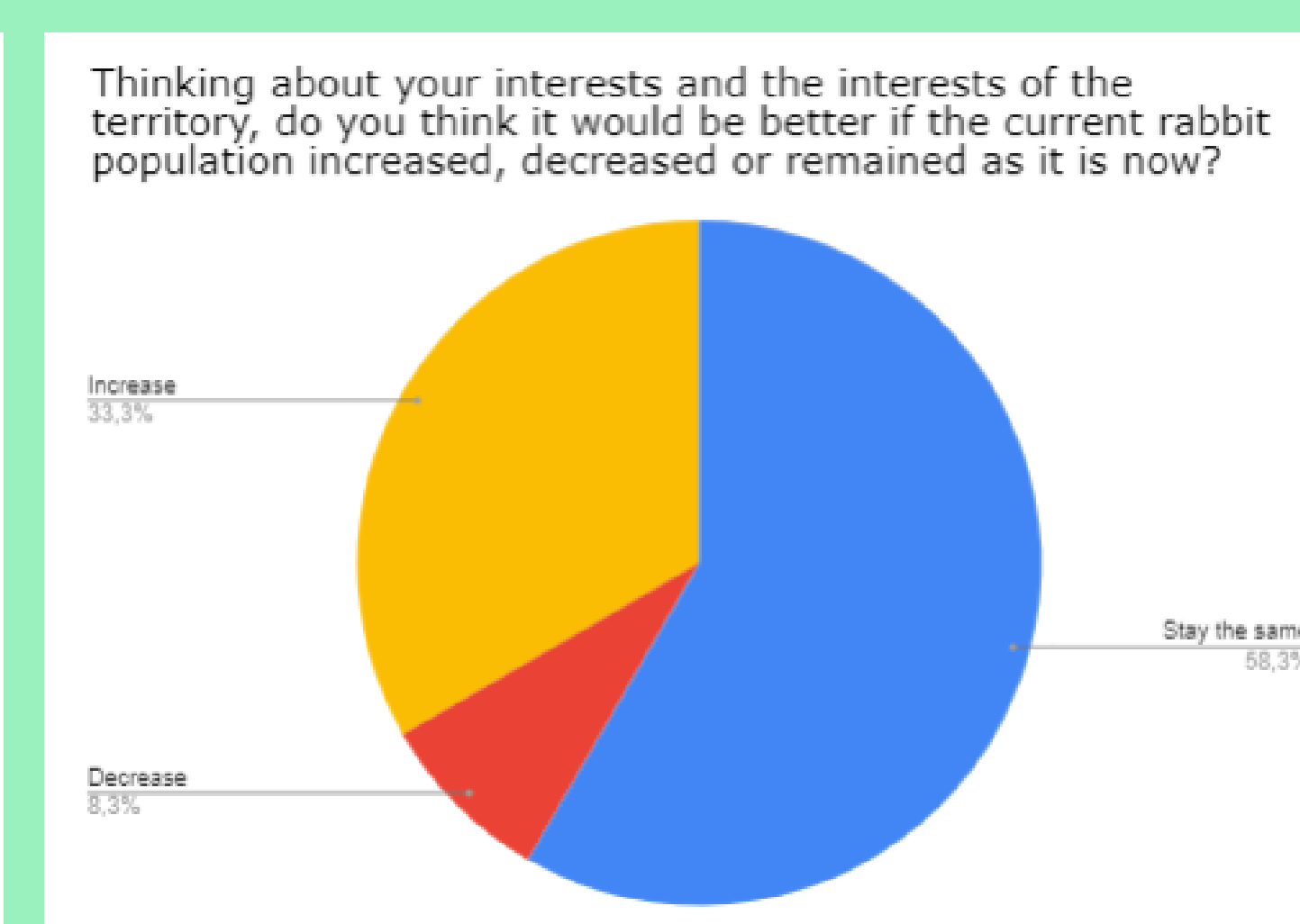
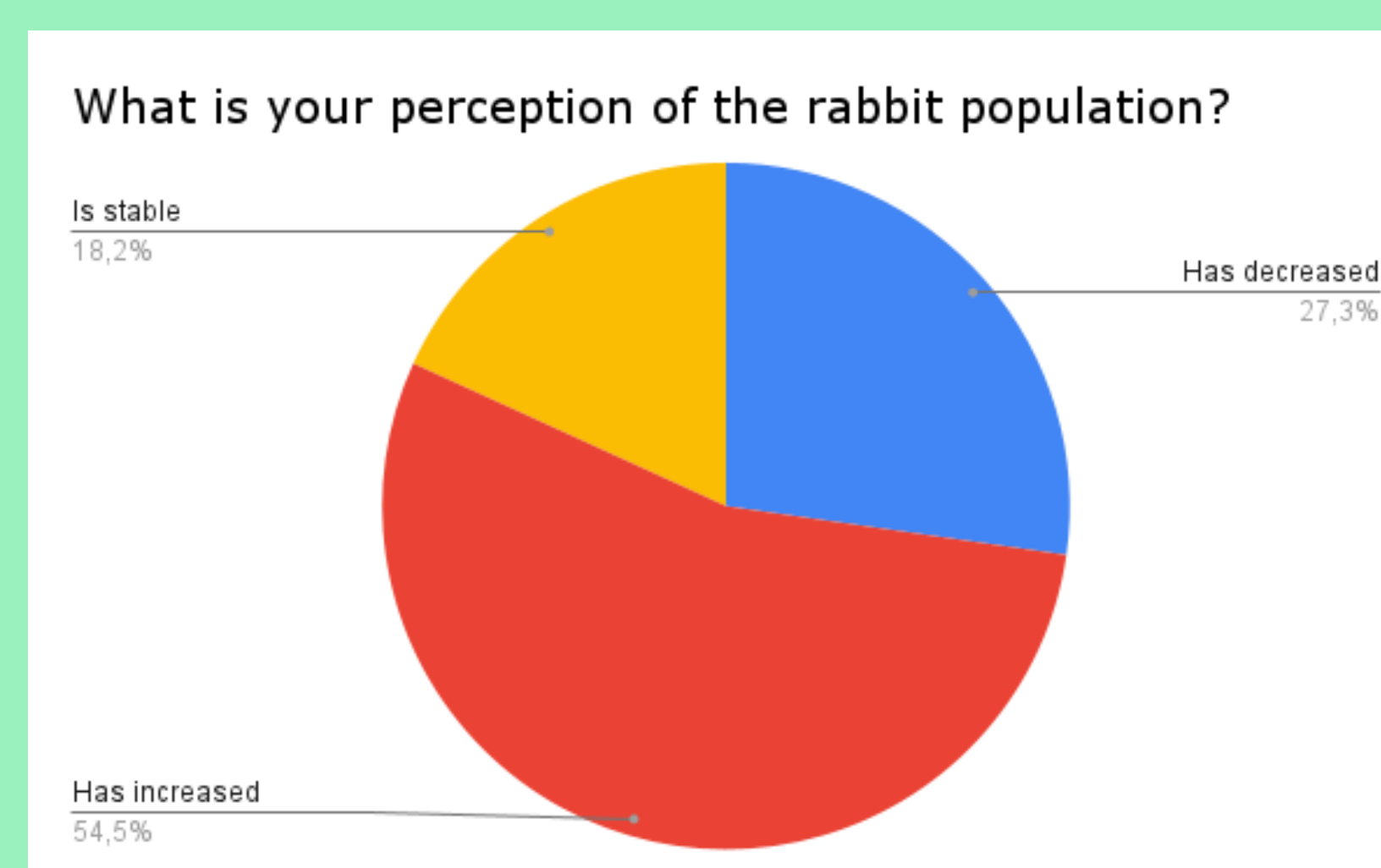


Forest rabbit census in La Segarra in recent years (Hunting activities territorial services of Lleida 2022)

Results of the survey addressed to the inhabitants of Segarra



Results of the survey addressed to hunters



OBJECTIVES

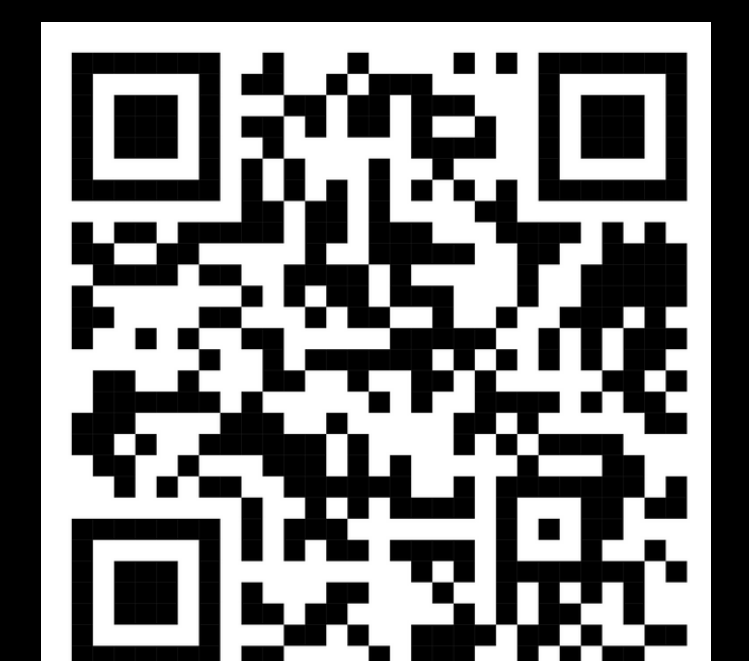
- Investigate the fluctuations of the European rabbit in La Segarra.
- Consider the opinion of the inhabitants of La Segarra and find out what aspects most worry them about this species. Listen to hunters and farmers.
- Knowing the past and present populations could allow us to know where the species is going and act accordingly.

DISCUSSION

- Low collaboration in surveys.
- Damages: harvest reduction and economic losses.
- Assess the effectiveness of the Generalitat's measures in September.
- They are fragile populations essential for the ecosystem that can decline enormously in a short time.
- The rabbit has socio-economic importance: La Segarra is an area with a large number of hunters and a great tradition of small game.



Bibliography



CONCLUSIONS

- The European rabbit is important in the territory as a fundamental prey and an endemic species of great socio-economic interest.
- The perception of the inhabitants of La Segarra is that it is increasing and causing damage. The hunters' perception is that the population is adequate and that diseases have declined or stabilized.
- We must guarantee the survival of the species and, at the same time, listen to the people of the territory to act with measures that allow a good coexistence between humans and wild rabbits.
- La Segarra does not yet suffer the general consequences of an overpopulation of rabbits. Comprehensive and periodic measures and counts must be implemented to determine the rabbit census. Additionally, draw up a census of predators. Also, more rigorously collect data on sick individuals to have control over the diseases that circulating and their effects.