

# PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THE WOLF IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY



## INTRODUCTION

In the last decades wolf population in the Basque Country has increased significantly, which has led to more conflict between wolves and humans. This work reviews the past and present of the canid in the Basque Country and contemplates future challenges for its settlement.

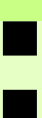
## OBJECTIVES

- Have an idea of the opinion of the wolf local inhabitants have.
- Gather as much information as possible in order to assess key factors for its future in the territory.

## HISTORY

XIX: population started to decrease

due to a growth in human rural population and wolf persecution



XX: population disappeared

although two wolves were taken down in the Gibijo mountain range (1958) and Balmaseda (1967)



1980s: first attacks since disappearance

and regular presence in western Basque Country

Table 1. Wolfpacks detected in the Basque Country (1987-2017) (1)

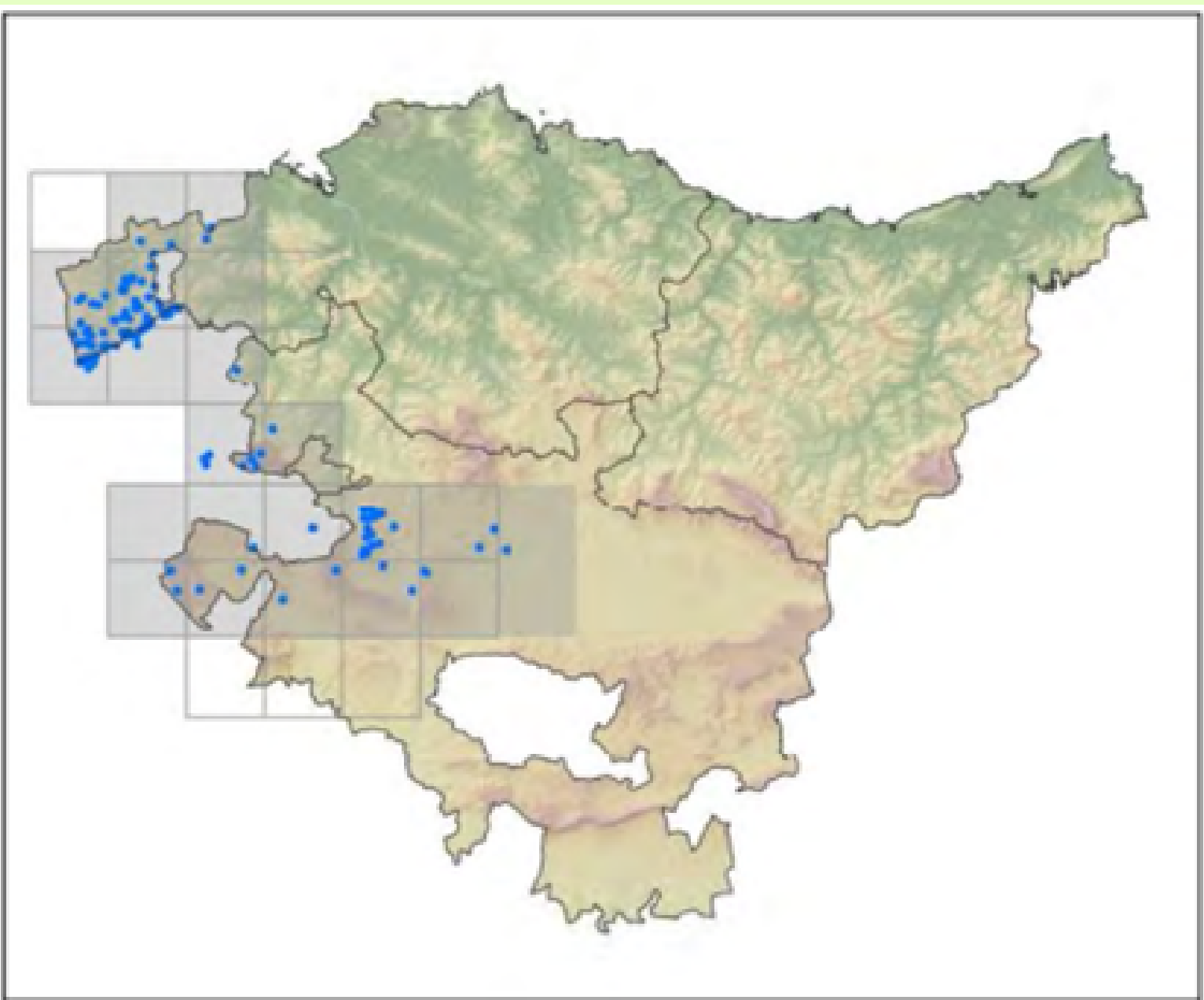
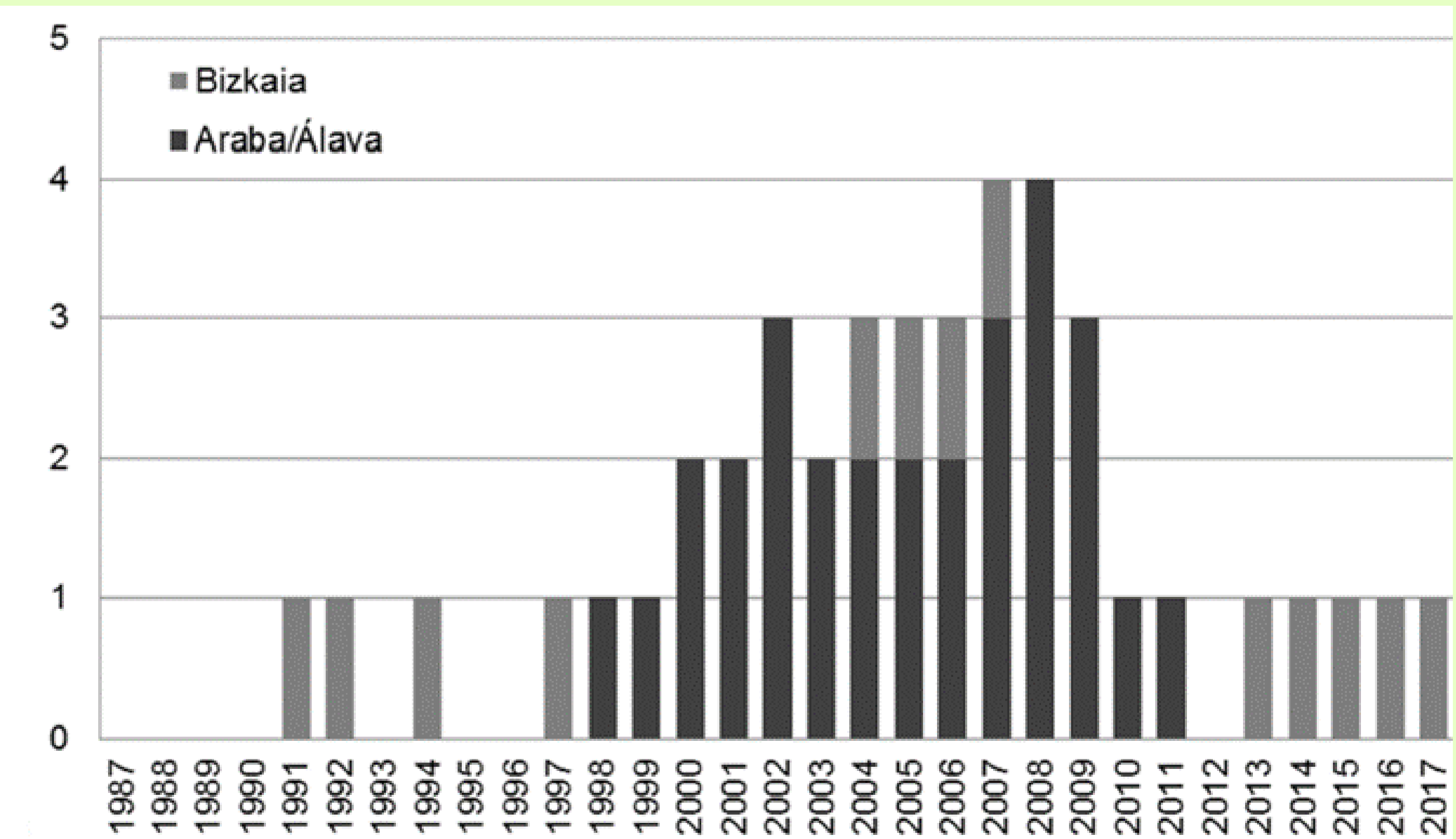


Figure 1. Results of the wolf census carried out in 2014 (2)

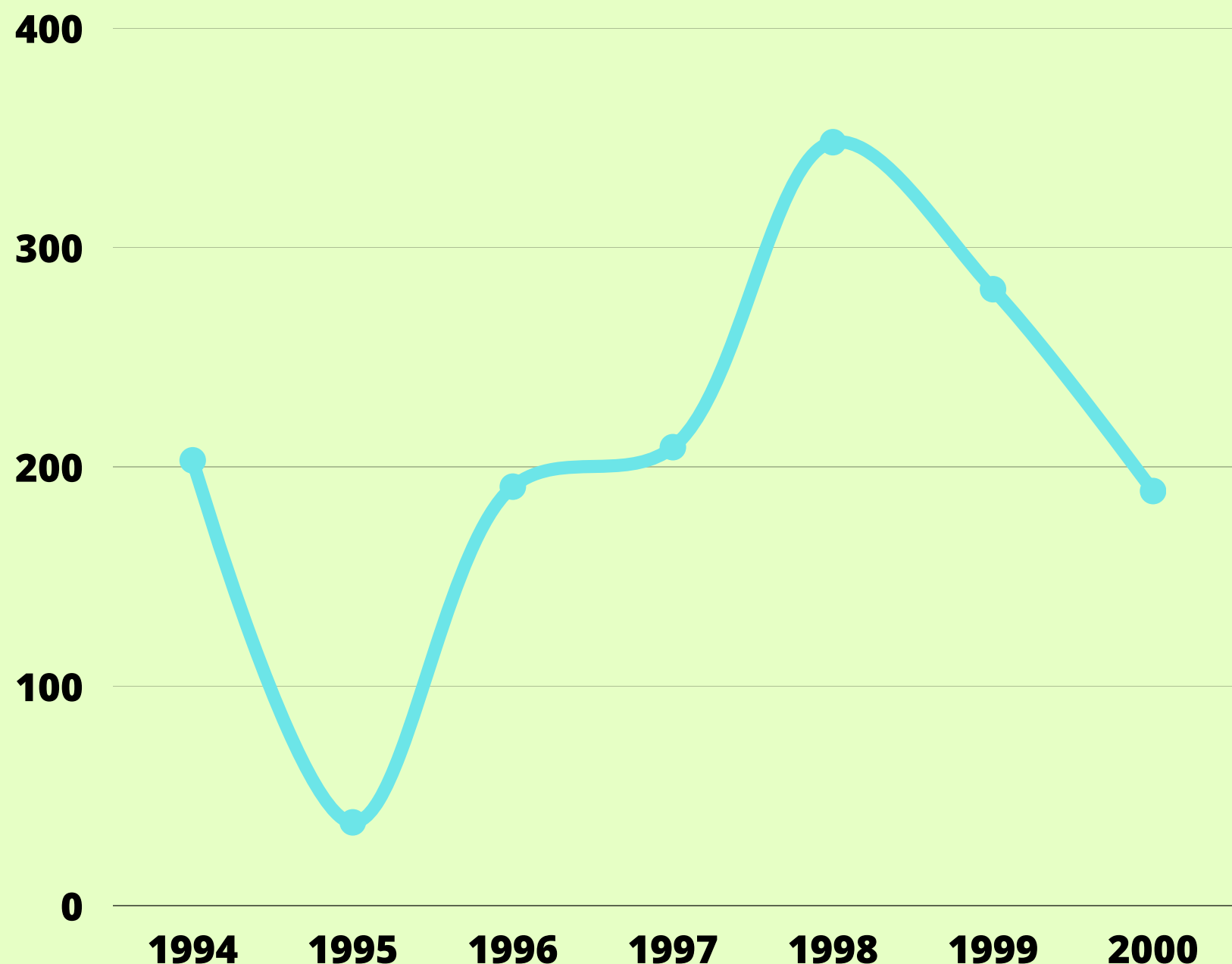


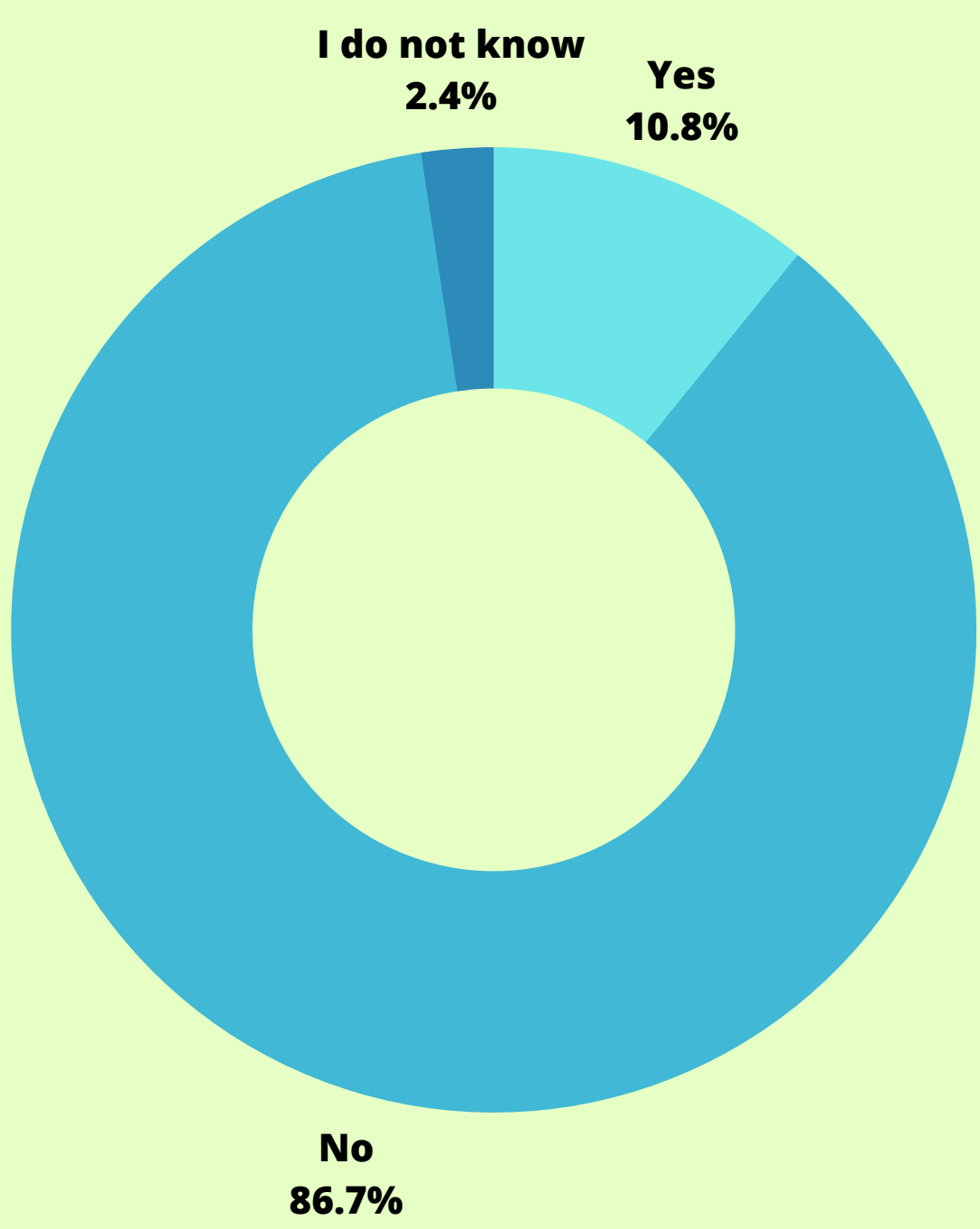
Figure 2. Total livestock losses caused by wolves (1994-2000) (3)

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

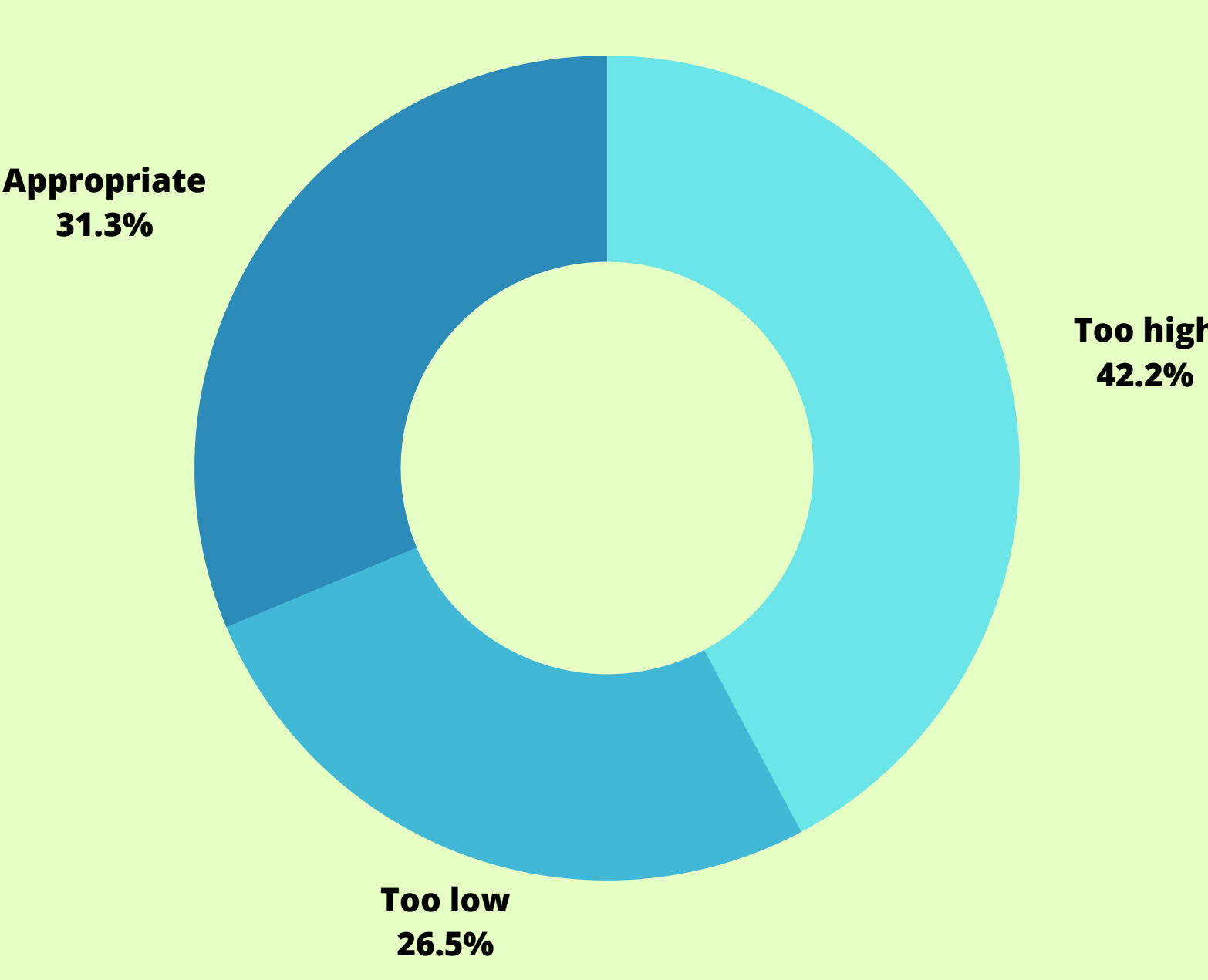
- A 22 question survey was carried out in the westernmost regions of the Basque Country between august 2022 and february 2023.
- Data of the attacks occurred in 2021 and 2022 was requested to the local authorities.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

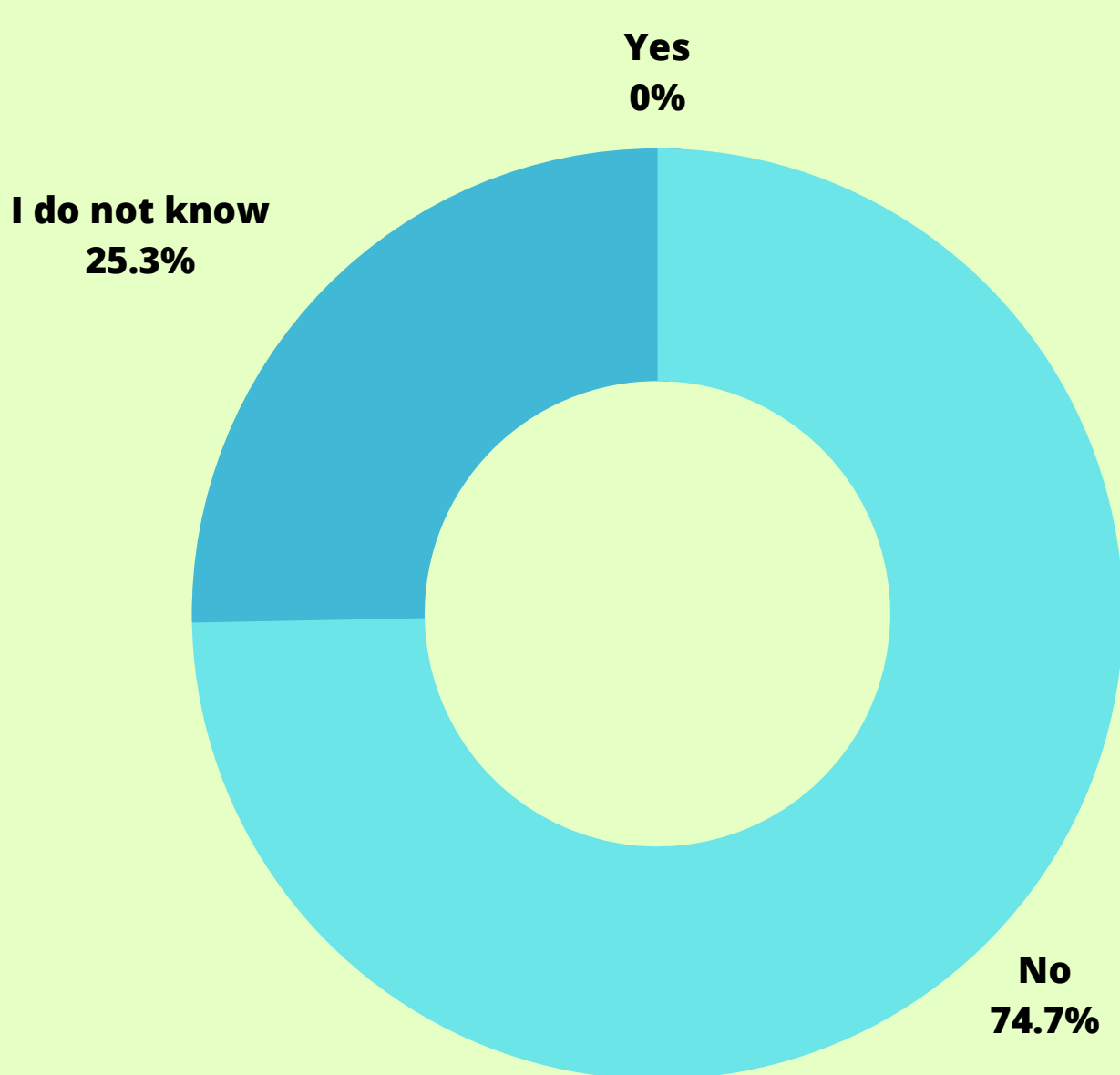
Do you think the urban population is aware of the trouble wolves cause to the farmers?



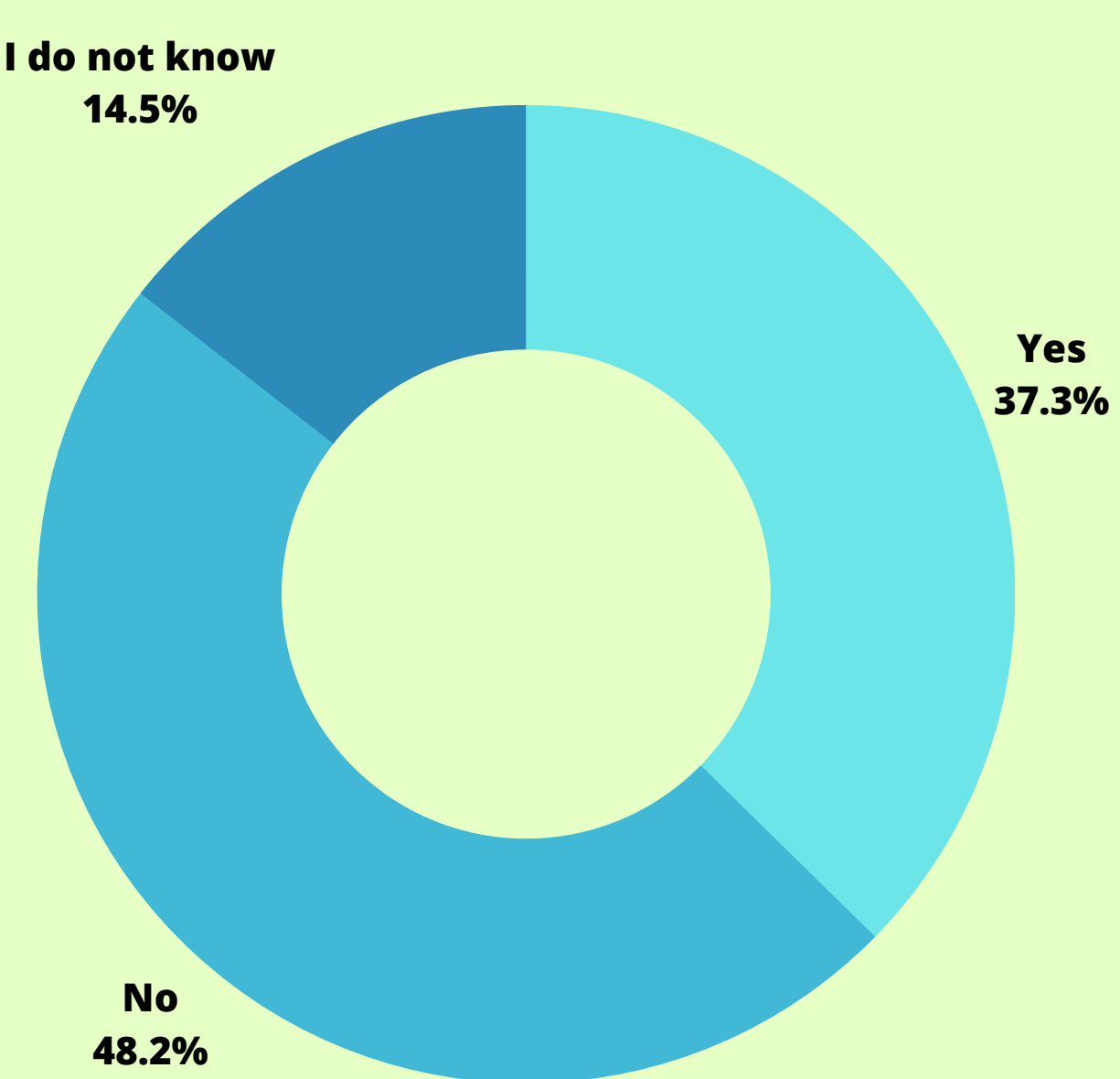
You think the current wolf population in the Basque Country is...



Do you consider the economic compensation given to the farmers to be enough?



Do you agree with the reintroduction of the wolf in the Basque Country?



- Regardless of their opinion on the debate most people agreed that farmers need more assistance to get the compensations.
- Unlike in other autonomous communities, wolves do not attract enough tourism to the area to be an important source of income for the locals.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Most surveyed people was not completely for or against the wolf in the Basque Country. The debate is deeper and more complicated than that and narrowing it to these two points of view is harmful for everyone.
- This issue involves far more elements than it seems at first, and the future of the wolf in the Basque Country will depend on finding a balance that does not specially benefit or hurt any of them.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- (1) Sáenz de Buruaga, M. Informe sobre la posible inclusión del lobo en el catálogo vasco de especies amenazadas.
- (2) Sáenz de Buruaga, M., Campos, M. A., Canales, F., Hidalgo, S. and Calvete, G. (2015). Censo de lobo (Canis lupus) en la Comunidad Autónoma del País Vasco 2014. Consultora de Recursos Naturales, S. L. para Gobierno Vasco, Diputación Foral de Álava y Diputación Foral de Bizkaia. Informe inédito.
- (3) Campos, M. A. (2004). Incidencia del lobo (Canis lupus signatus) en la ganadería del País Vasco. Naturzale. 18: 99-110.