

NZ Mountain Safety Council

ADVENTURE VOICE

UNDERSTANDING TRAMPERS' SKILLS

March 2025





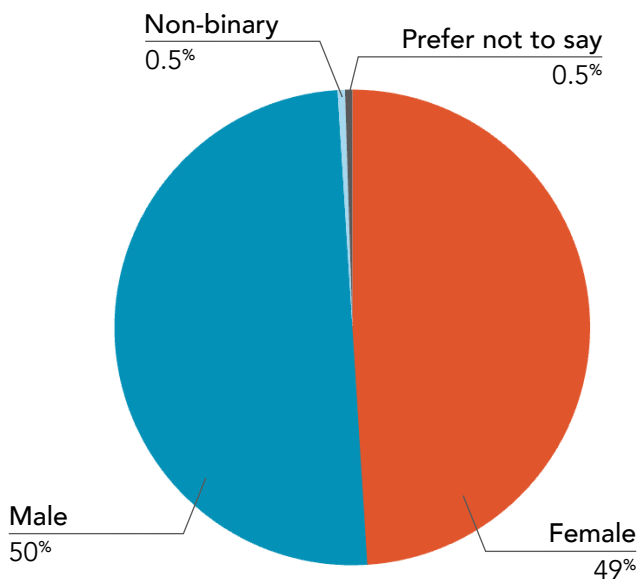
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Adventure Voice: Understanding Trampers' Skills	04
Who Answered the Survey?	4-12
Current vs Aspirational Confidence Levels	13
All Respondents	13-15
By Current Experience Level	16-17
By Age	18
Gap Analysis	19
Navigation	19-22
Crossing Unbridged Rivers	23-24
Trip Planning and Preparation	25-26
Emergency Preparedness	27-28
Preferred Learning Methods (and Barriers)	29-31
Summary	32
Conclusion	34

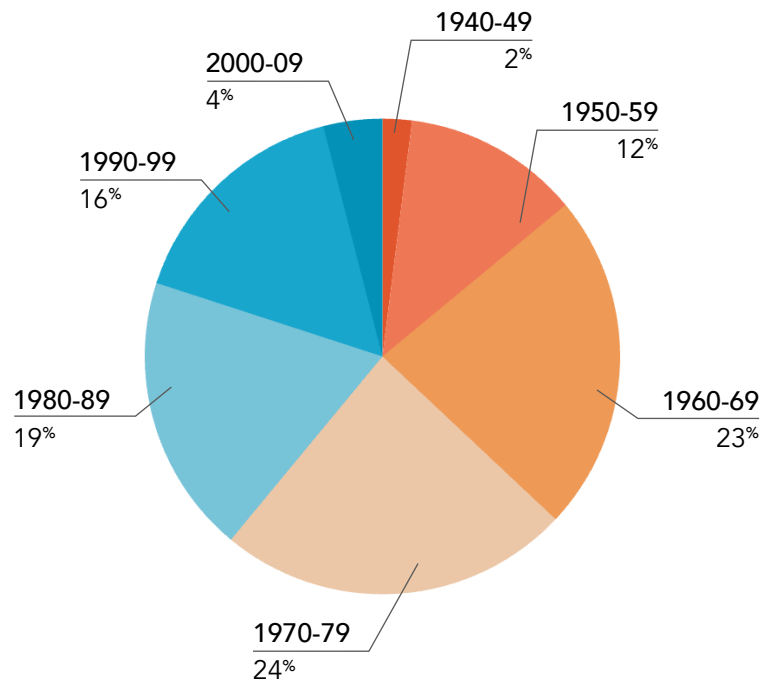
WHO ARE THE RESPONDENTS

The survey was conducted in October 2024 and sent to all Adventure Voice members who had registered as Day Walkers and/or Trampers. The survey was completed by 1,962 members, which was a 60% response rate.

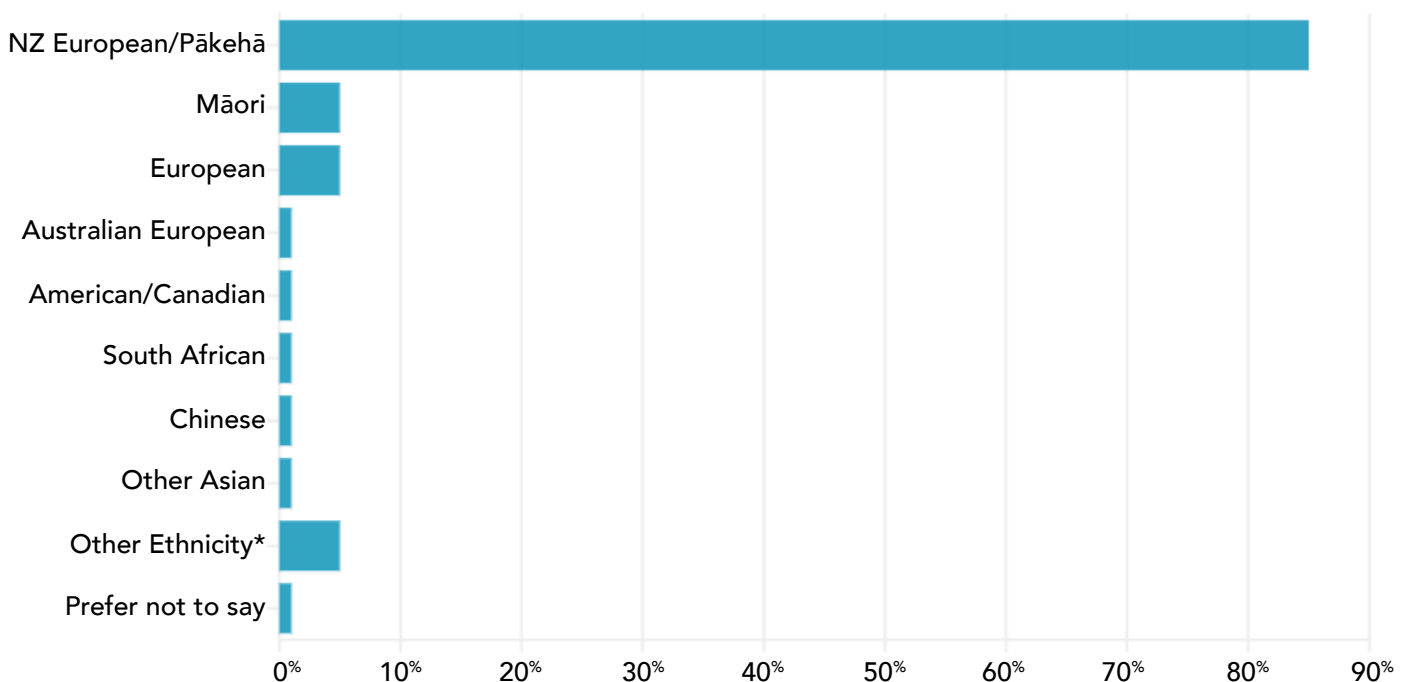
GENDER



DECADE OF BIRTH

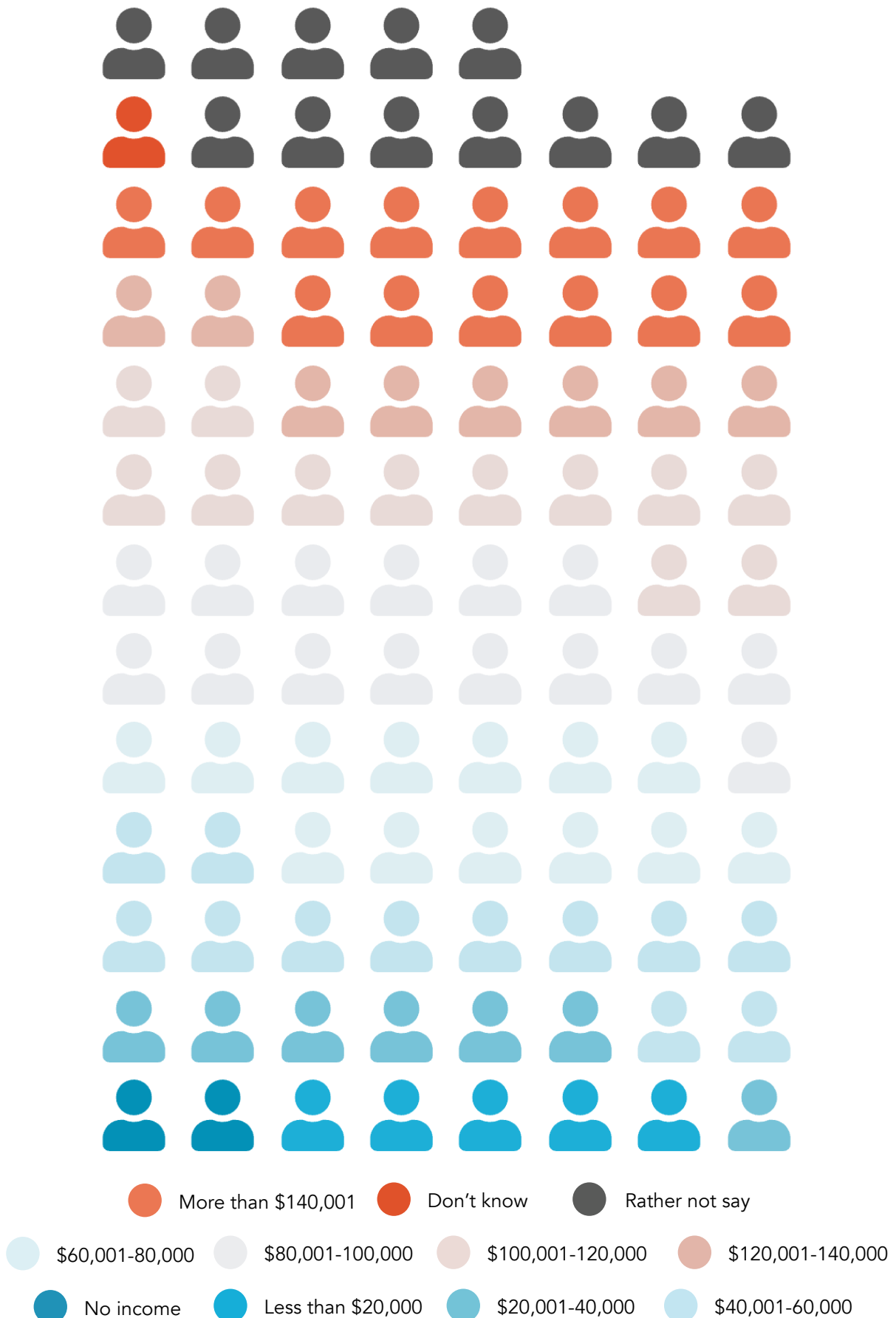


ETHNICITY



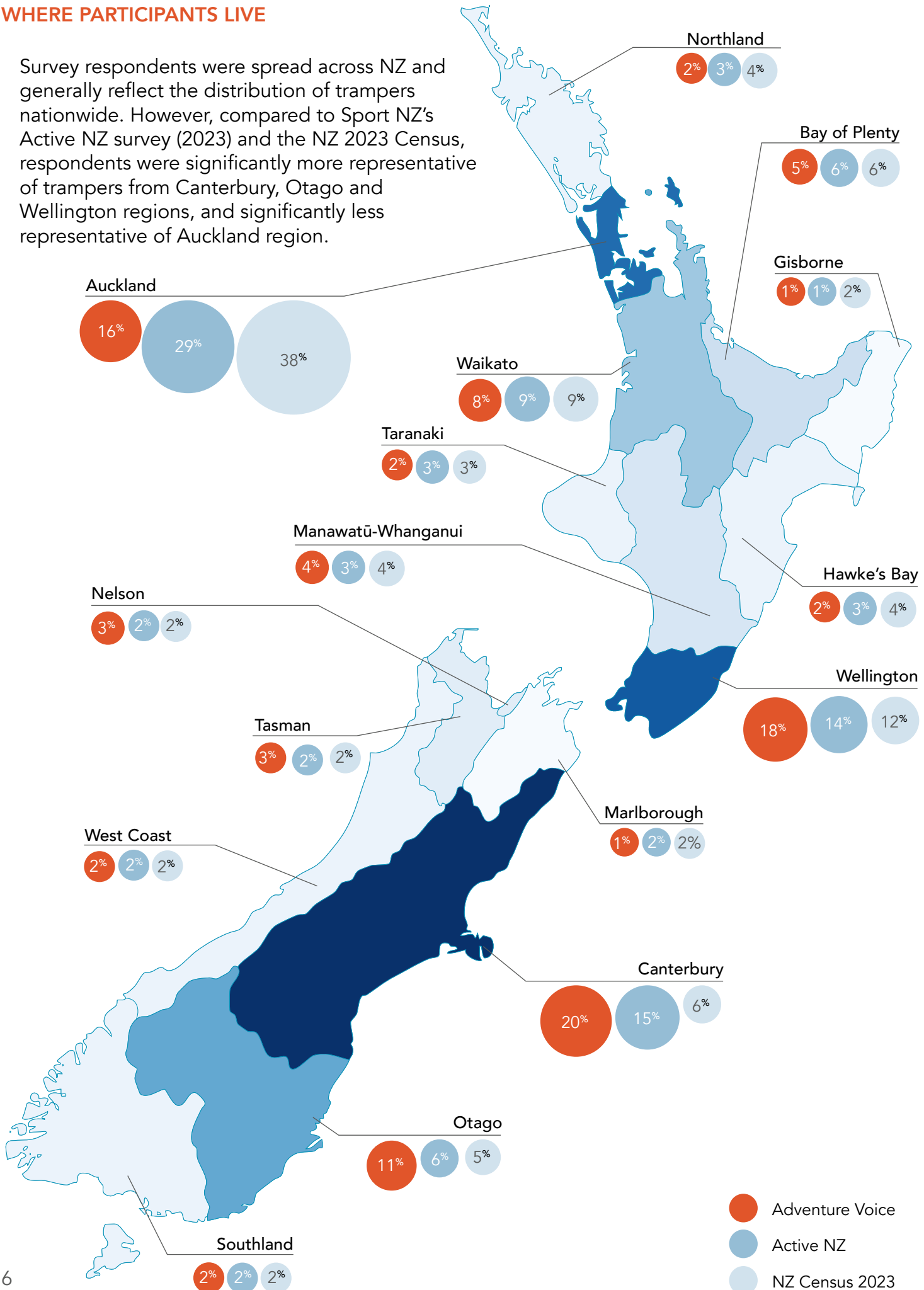
INCOME

At least 50% of trampers earn above the average NZ salary bracket (which in 2024 was \$60-80,000), while 26% earn below the average salary bracket. 12% preferred not to specify their income.



WHERE PARTICIPANTS LIVE

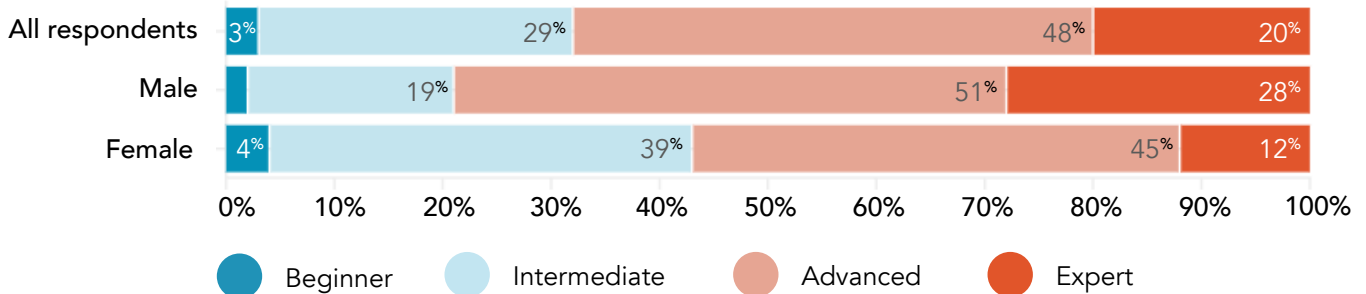
Survey respondents were spread across NZ and generally reflect the distribution of trampers nationwide. However, compared to Sport NZ's Active NZ survey (2023) and the NZ 2023 Census, respondents were significantly more representative of trampers from Canterbury, Otago and Wellington regions, and significantly less representative of Auckland region.



SELF-ASSESSED TRAMPING LEVEL

Very few respondents (3%) consider themselves to be a tramping beginner. Nearly half of the respondents consider themselves to be at an advanced level. Men are more likely to consider themselves to be an expert, with 69% of experts identifying as male, while 68% of intermediate trampers identify as female.

BY GENDER



*other genders or those who prefer not to specify their gender are excluded from this chart due to the low number of respondents in this category.

NUMBER OF YEARS TRAMPING

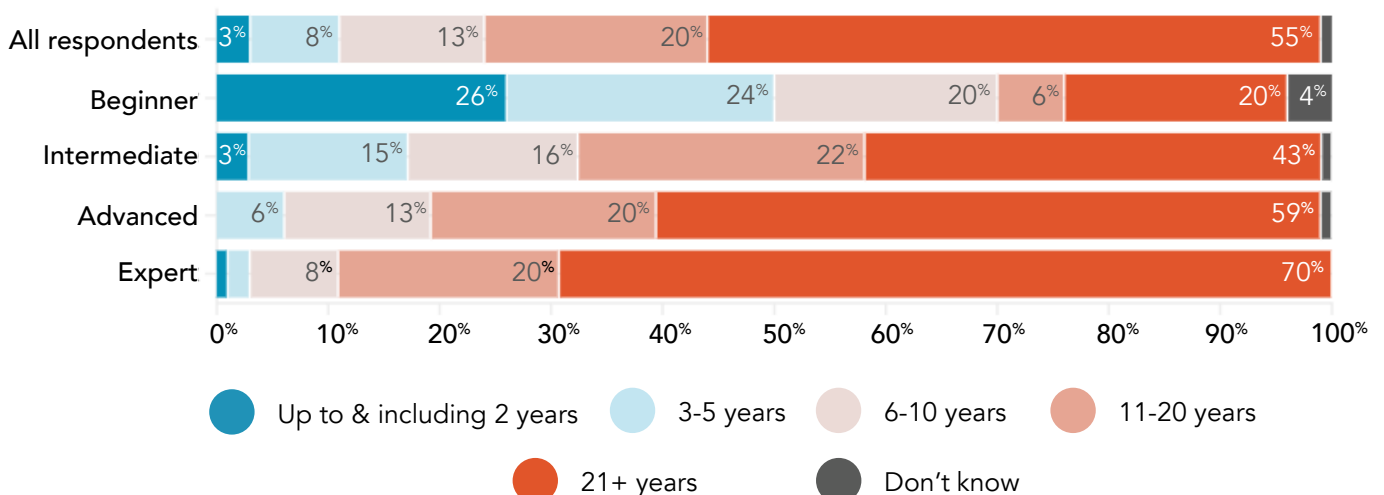
Most people who completed the survey have been tramping for more than 21 years.

As expected, there is a close relationship between the length of time someone has been tramping, with the experience they consider themselves to have. 26% of those who consider themselves to be a beginner have been tramping for up to 2 years, and another 24% have been tramping for 3 to 5 years.

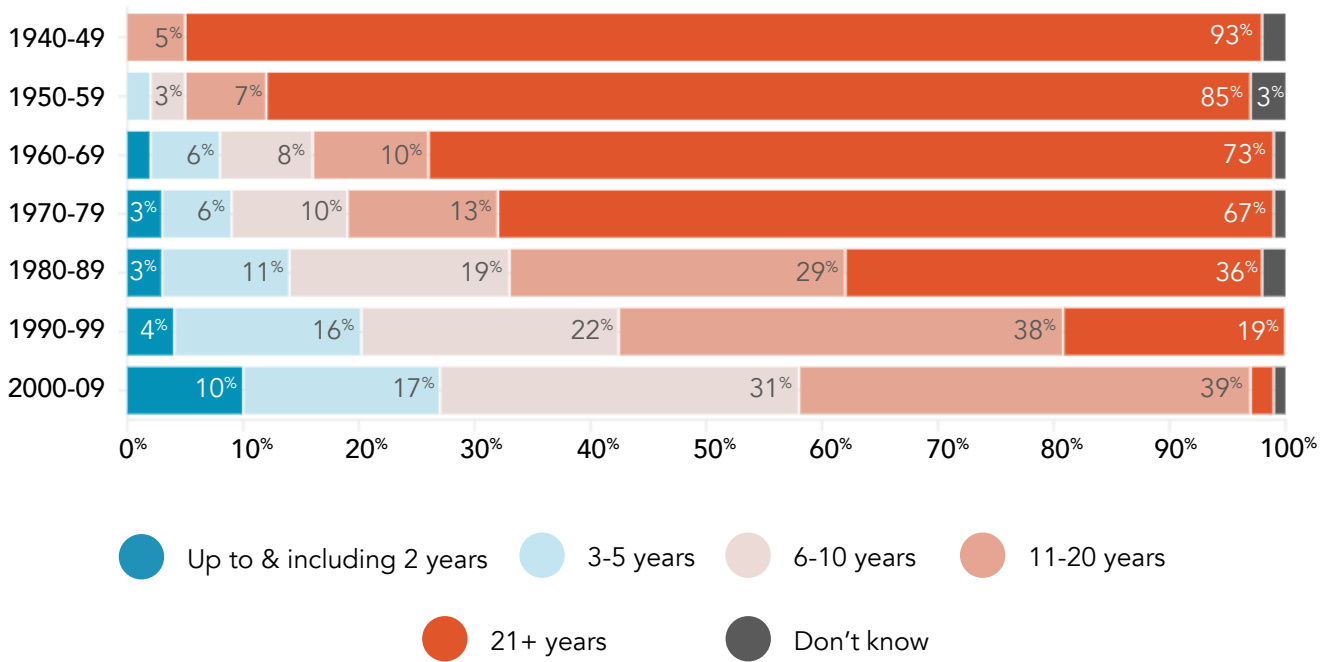
However, those who have been tramping for 3-5 years are most likely to consider themselves to be an intermediate trampler. From 6 years' experience, the majority of trampers are likely to consider themselves to be at advanced or expert level.

We did not ask any questions about what made respondents decide what experience level they were at. However, there is a clear increase in self-perceived ability and confidence as the number of years they've been tramping increases.

YEARS TRAMPING BY EXPERIENCE LEVEL



BY DECADE OF BIRTH

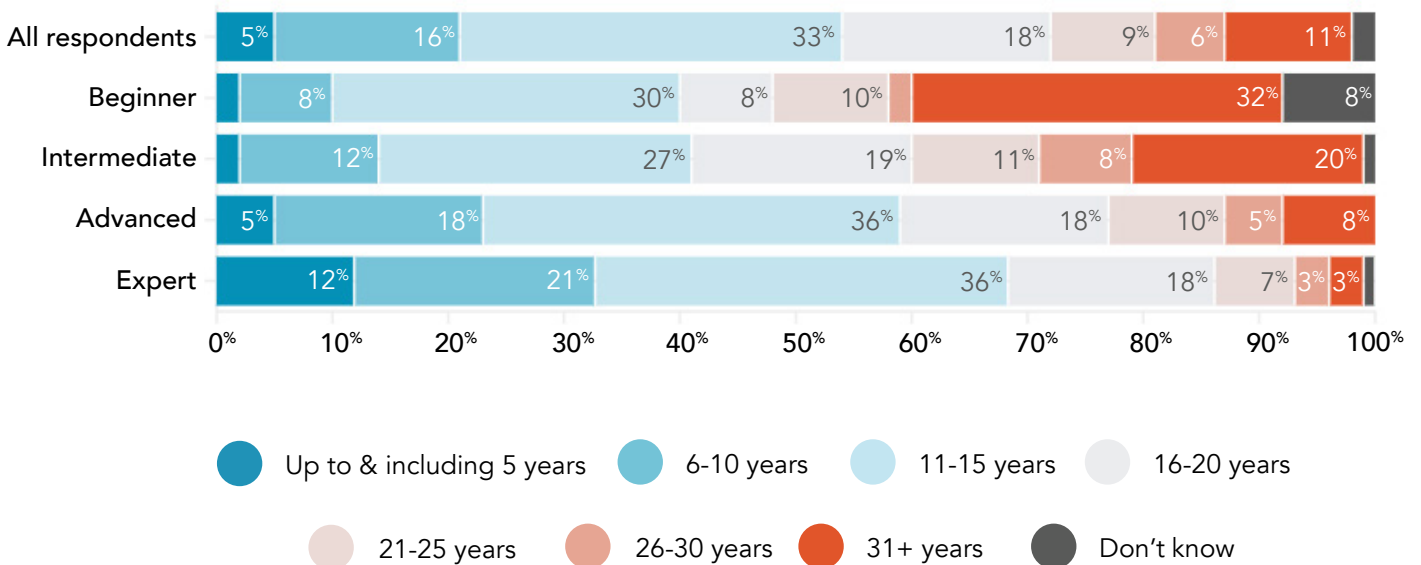


AGE OF FIRST OVERNIGHT TRAMP

Just over half the respondents went for their first overnight tramp between the ages of 11 and 20, with another 21% going for the first time aged 10 or under.

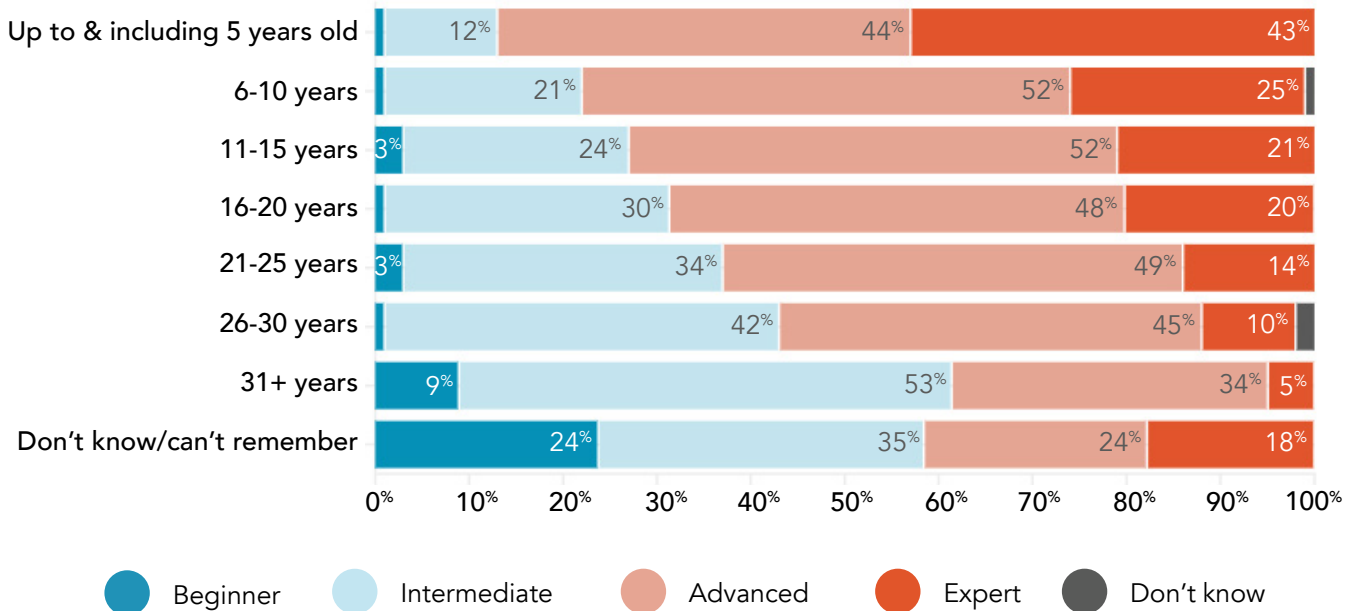
Of those who went for their first tramp aged 5 or under, 43% consider themselves to now be an expert trumper, while 44% of beginners went for their first tramp in adulthood.

AGE OF FIRST TRAMP BY EXPERIENCE LEVEL



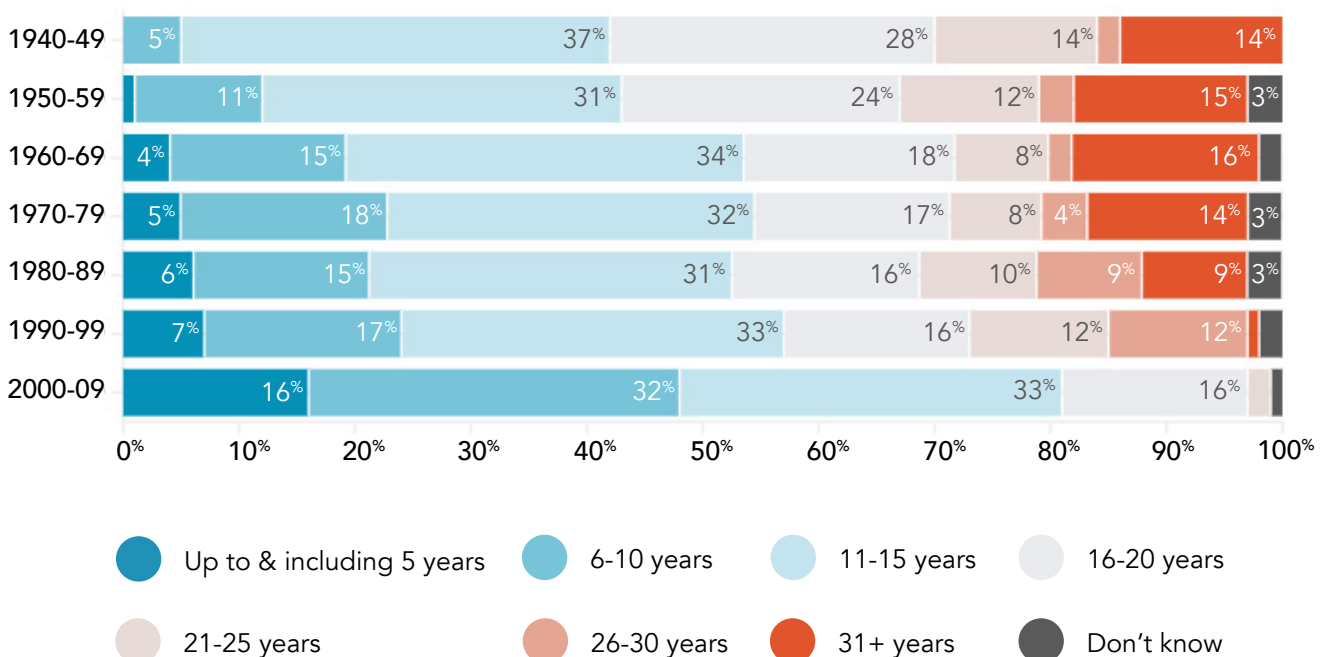
Of those who went for their first tramp aged 5 or under, 43% consider themselves to now be an expert trumper. Self-perceived experience decreases as age of first overnight tramp increases.

EXPERIENCE LEVEL BY AGE OF FIRST TRAMP



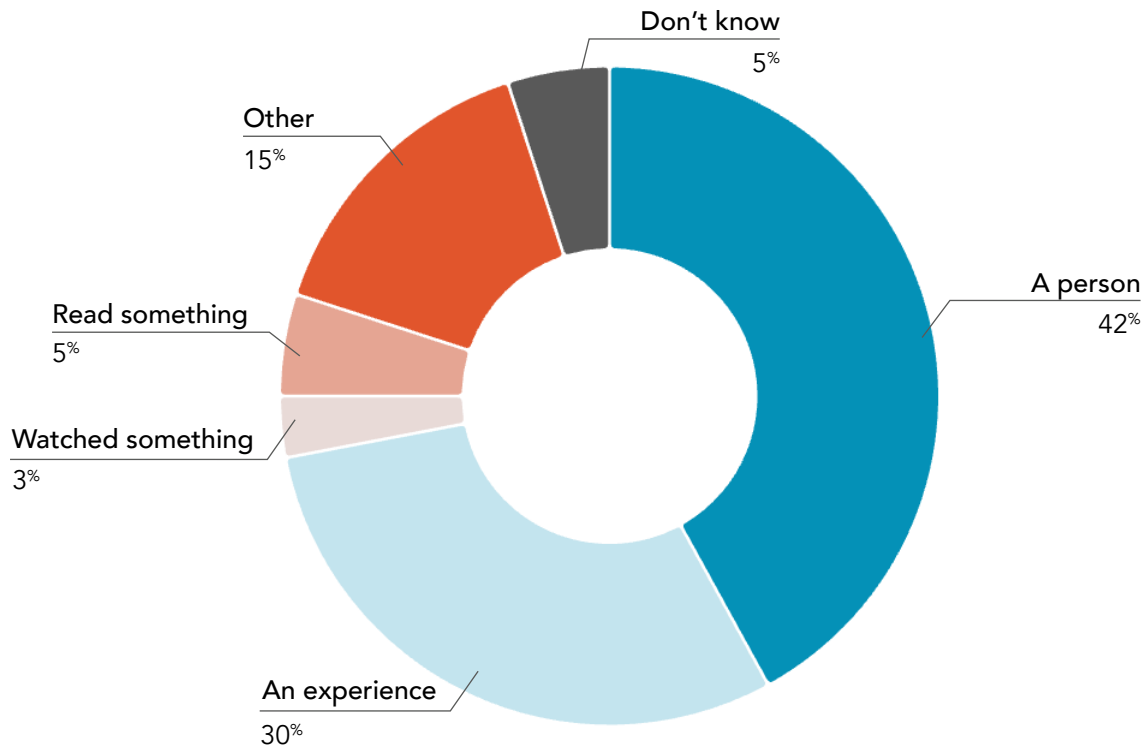
Another interesting finding is that younger generations are more likely to have been for their first tramp as a child than older generations. However, overall around a third of trampers said they went for their first overnight tramp aged 11-15.

AGE OF FIRST TRAMP BY DECADE OF BIRTH



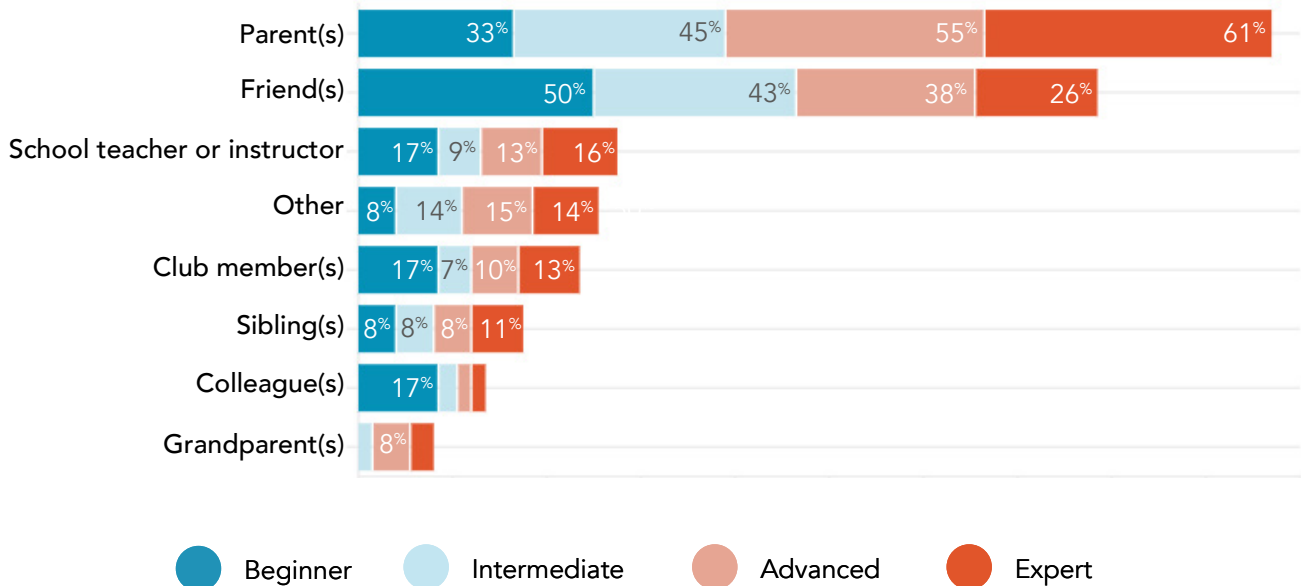
GREATEST INFLUENCE TO START TRAMPING

Most people said that their love of tramping was influenced by family or friends (including a partner or spouse), or through an experience they had at school or with a group such as Scouts, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award or a tramping club. Having read or watched something was the greatest influence for 8% of people.



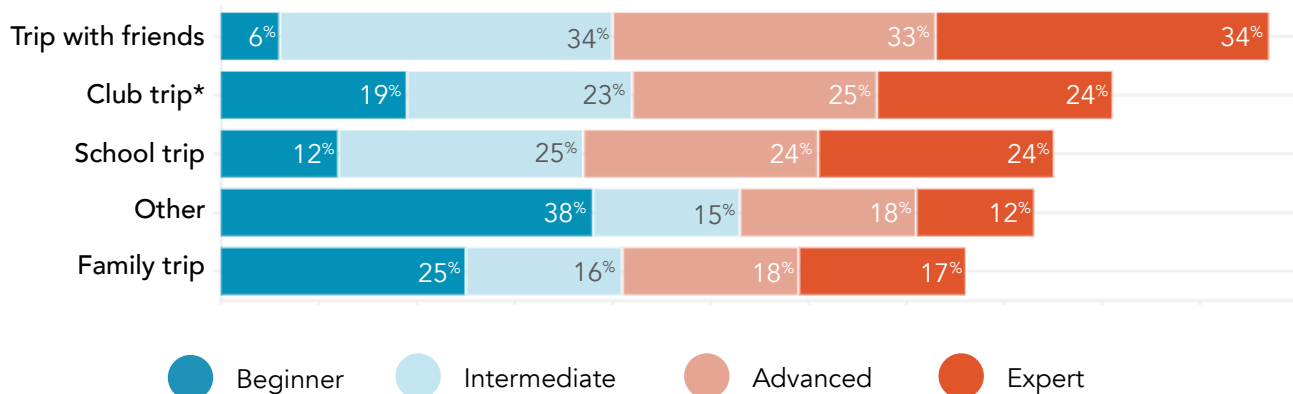
A PERSON

Beginners were more likely to have been influenced by their friends, colleagues or partner, given that many started tramping as adults, whereas most expert and advanced trampers said their greatest influence was their parents.



AN EXPERIENCE

Overall, most trampers who started tramping because of an experience said that this was a trip with friends. For beginners, this was more likely to be a family trip or a trip with their spouse or partner. For those who selected Other, this was most commonly a spouse or partner.



* such as Scouts, Guides or tramping club.

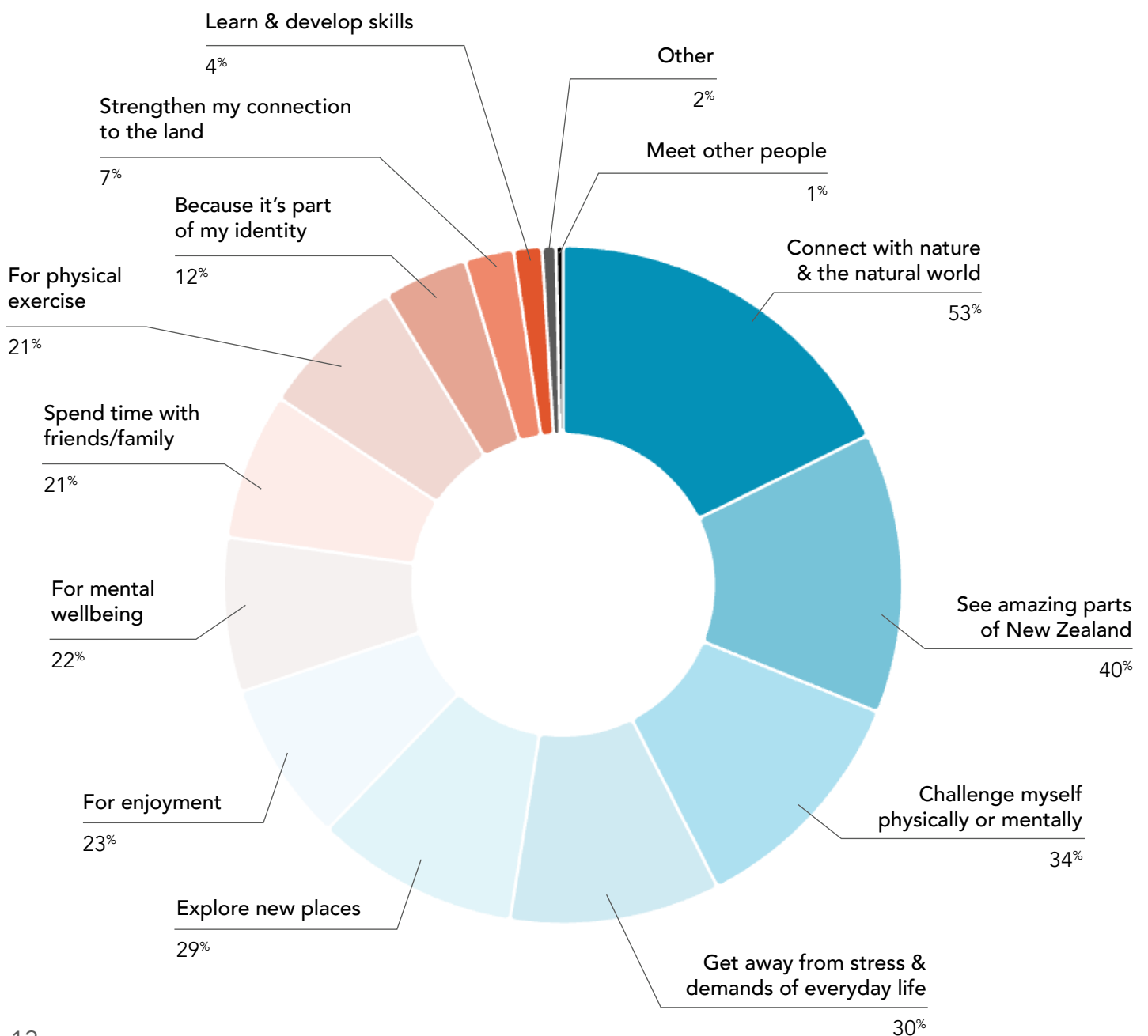
REASONS FOR TRAMPING

Most respondents said they go tramping to connect with nature and the natural world.

Following this, other reasons were seeing amazing parts of NZ, the physical or mental challenge that tramping brings and getting away from the stress and demands of everyday life.

For beginners, the benefits of physical exercise and mental wellbeing were more popular than for more experienced trampers. On the other end of the experience scale, expert trampers were more likely than others to go tramping to explore new places, and because it is part of their identity.

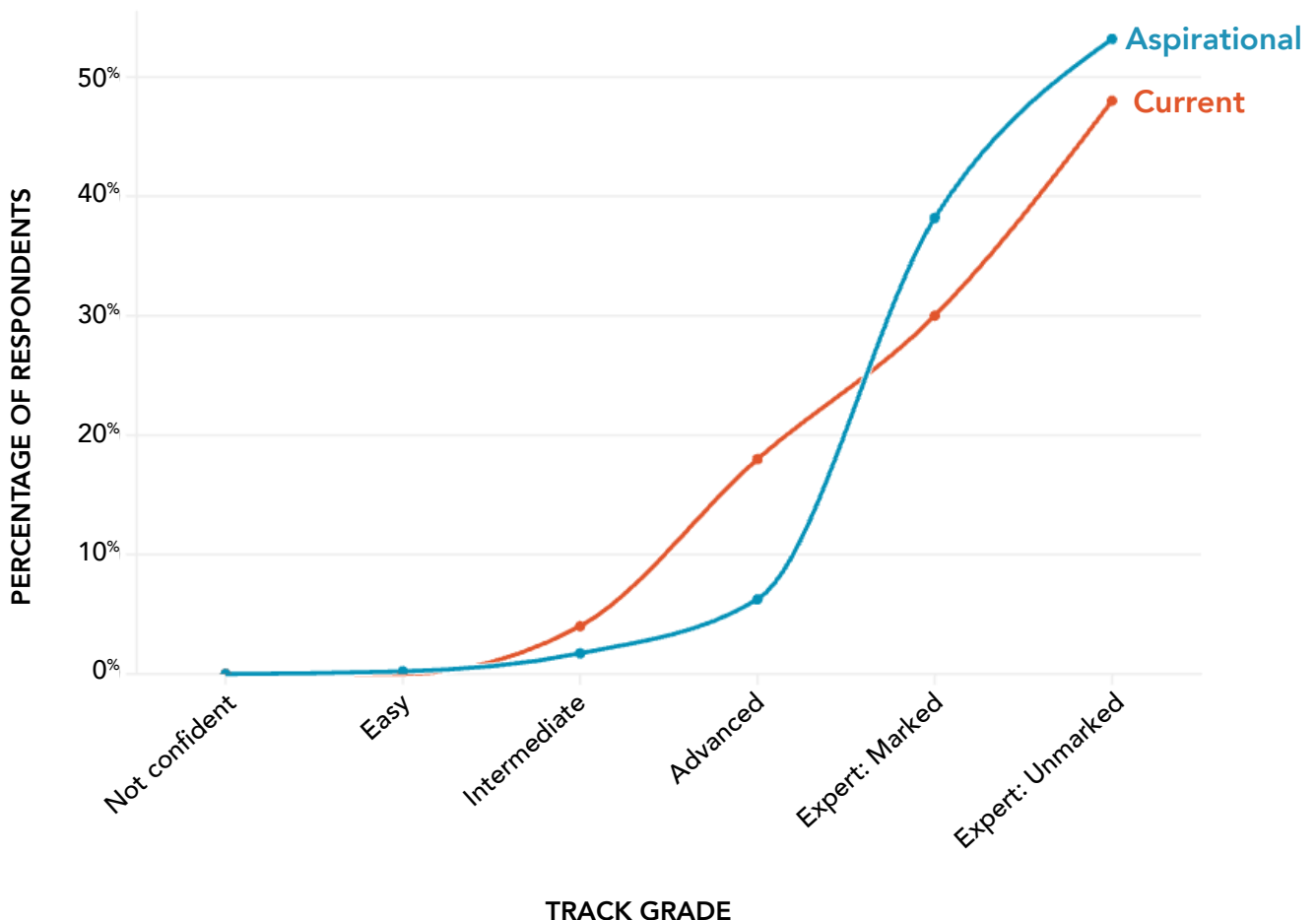
It is interesting to note that as experience levels increase, more people choose to go tramping because it is part of their identity and to explore new places, rather than for physical exercise.



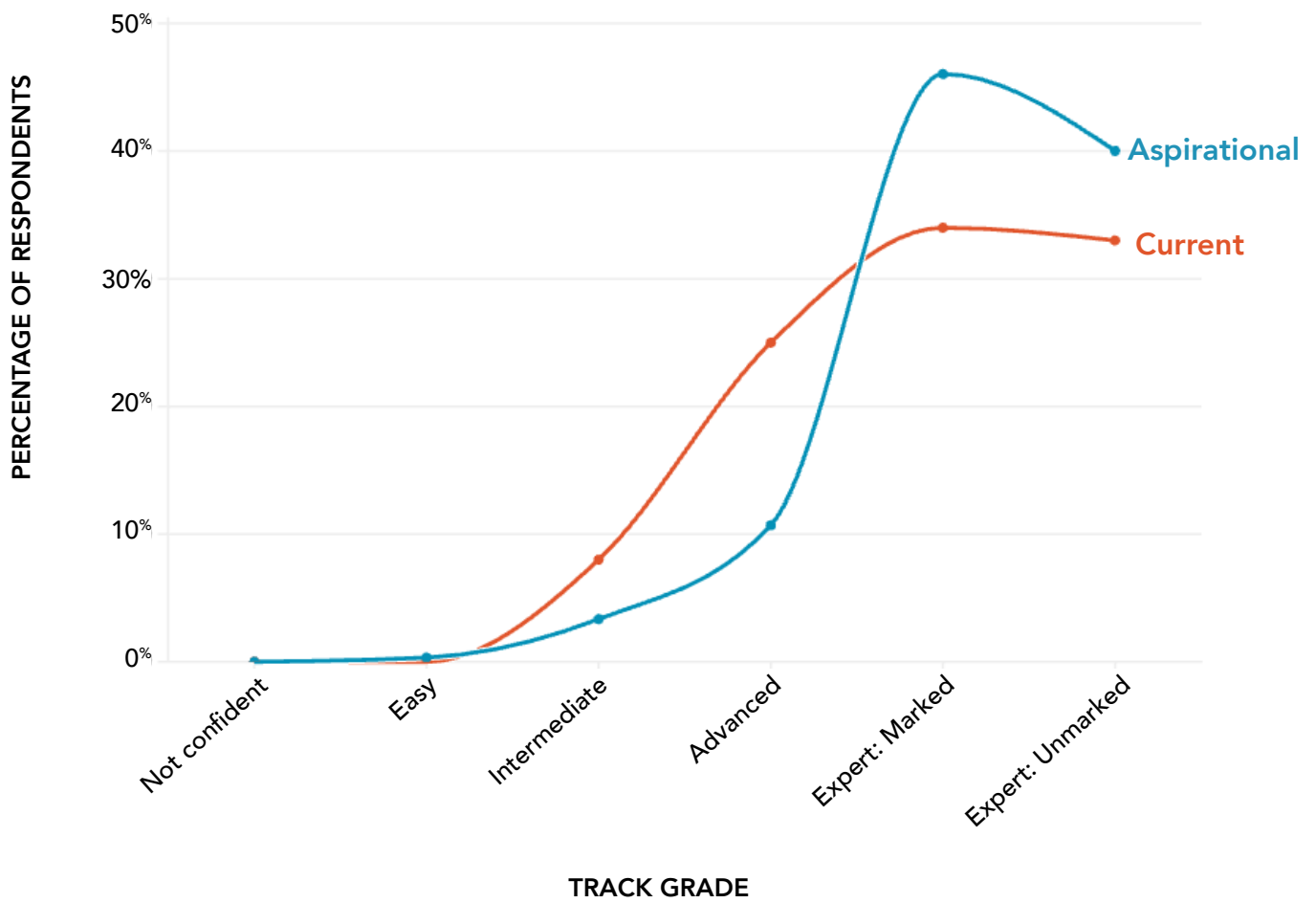
CURRENT VS ASPIRATIONAL CONFIDENCE LEVELS

To get a sense of trampers' overall confidence levels depending on the grade of track, they were asked what their current confidence levels are when presented with a range of different weather conditions. As expected, confidence is certainly affected by the weather conditions and also changes depending on experience.

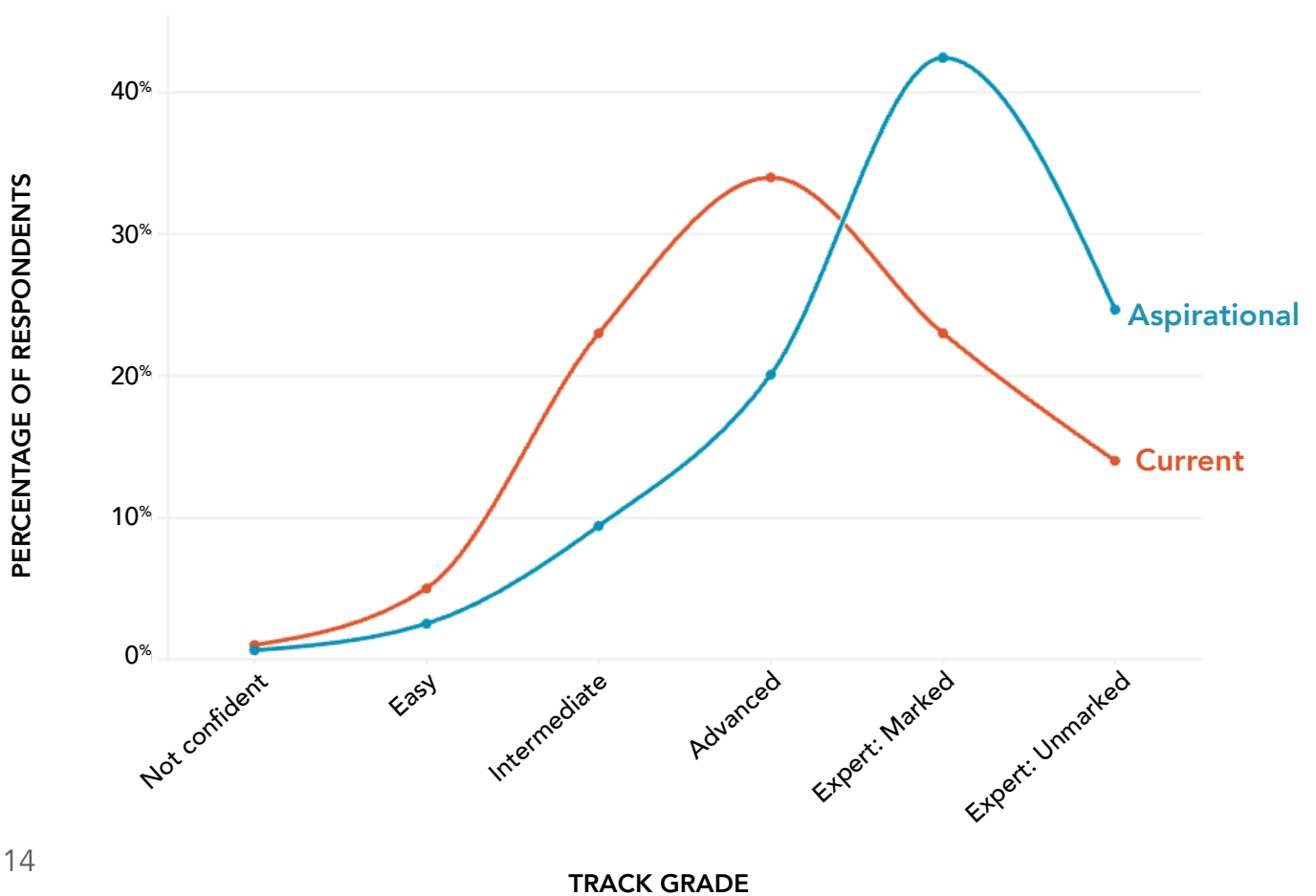
FINE & SUNNY WEATHER



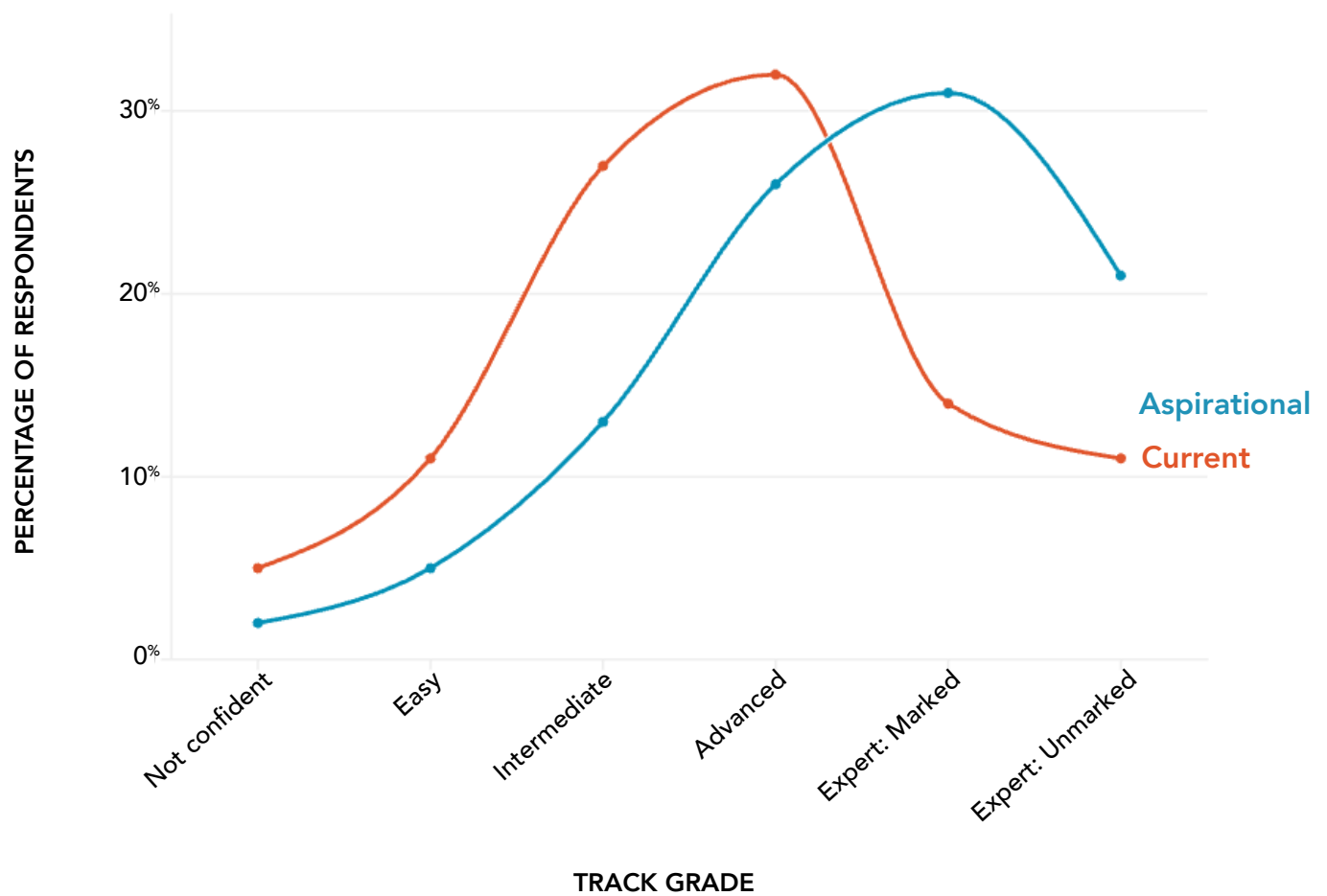
LIGHT RAIN AND/OR WIND



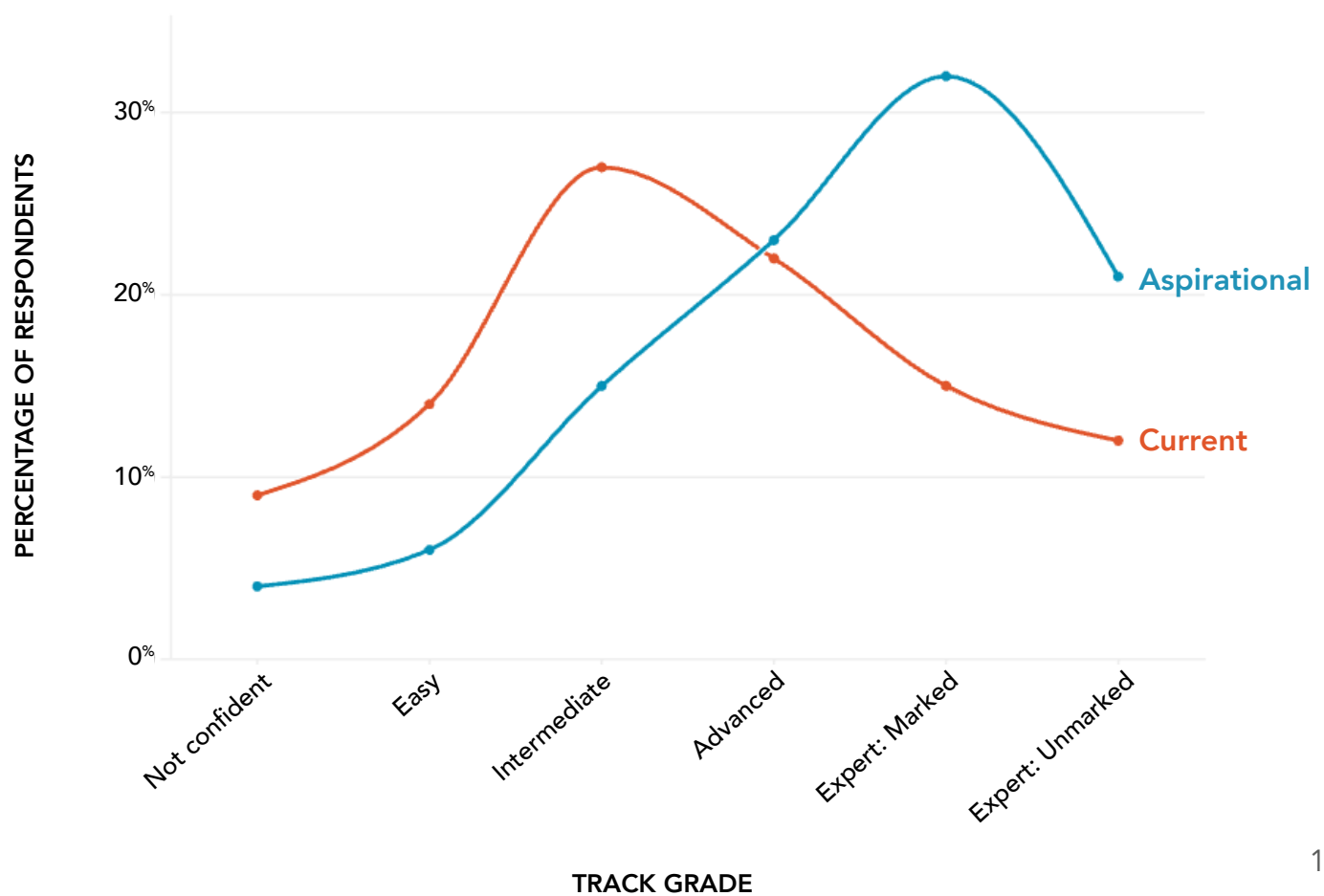
LOW VISIBILITY/HEAVY FOG



HEAVY RAIN AND/OR STRONG WIND



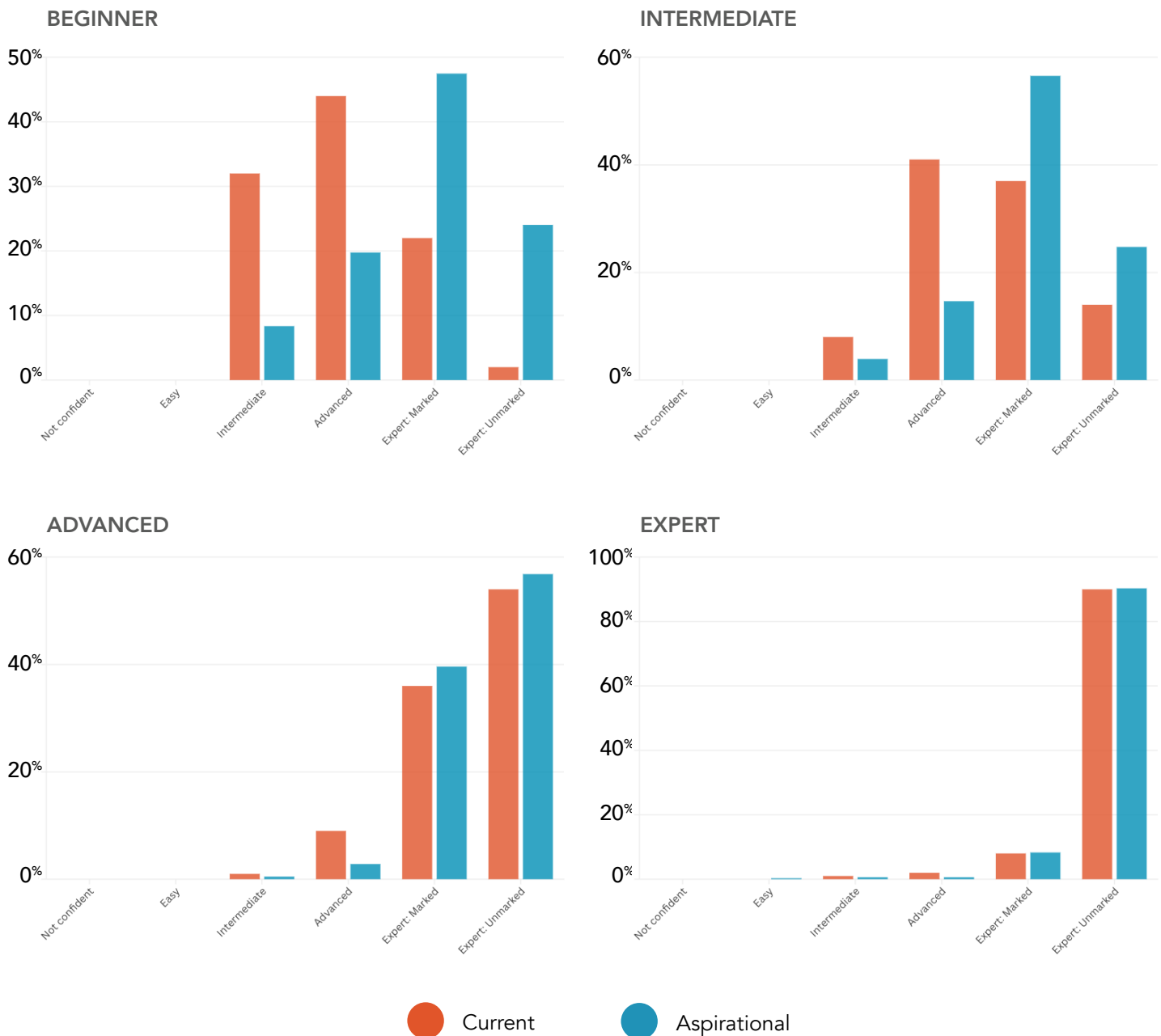
SNOWING



CURRENT CONFIDENCE BY EXPERIENCE LEVEL

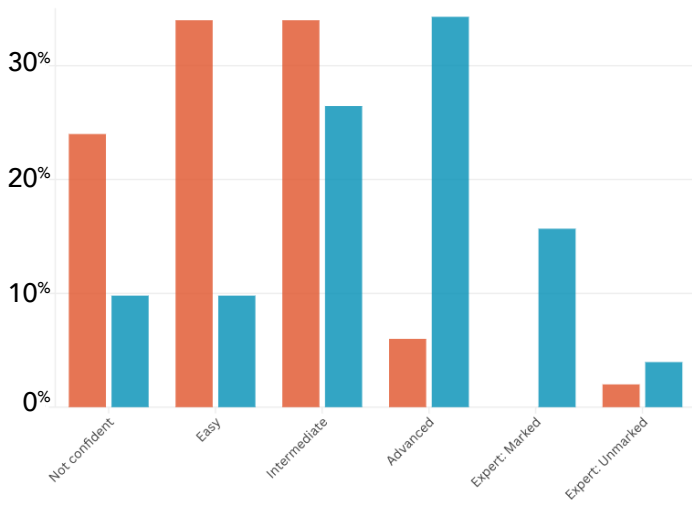
When looking more closely at the difference between experience levels and weather conditions, most trampers expressed confidence to take on tramping tracks at, or higher than, their experience level when the weather was fine and sunny. When other weather conditions are present, however, most trampers expressed that they would be more confident taking on easier tracks. However, just about all trampers expressed a desire to be confident at more challenging tracks regardless of the weather conditions. The response for heavy rain and/or strong wind are a good indicator of the desire by the majority of trampers to want to increase their confidence on more advanced terrain in all weather conditions, whatever their current perceived experience level.

FINE WEATHER

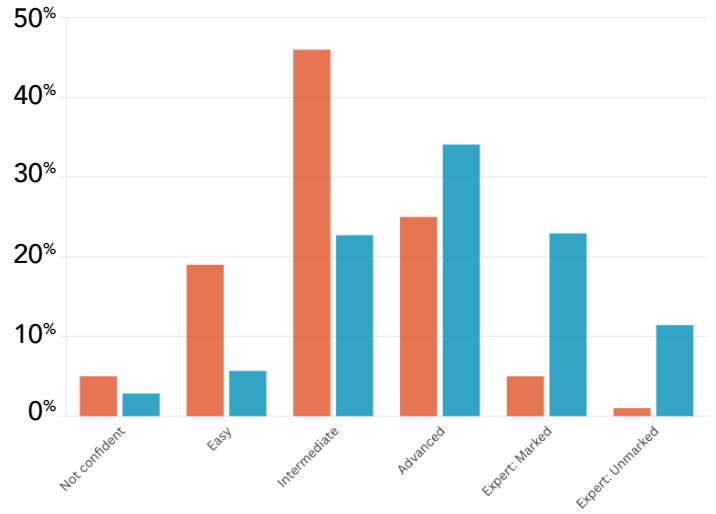


HEAVY RAIN AND/OR STRONG WIND

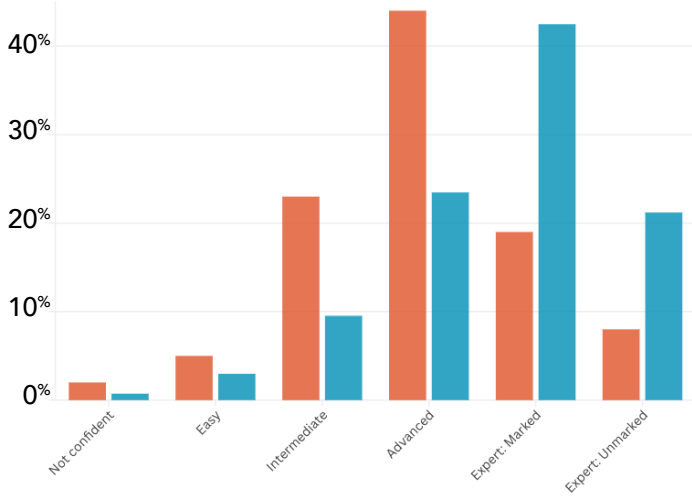
BEGINNER



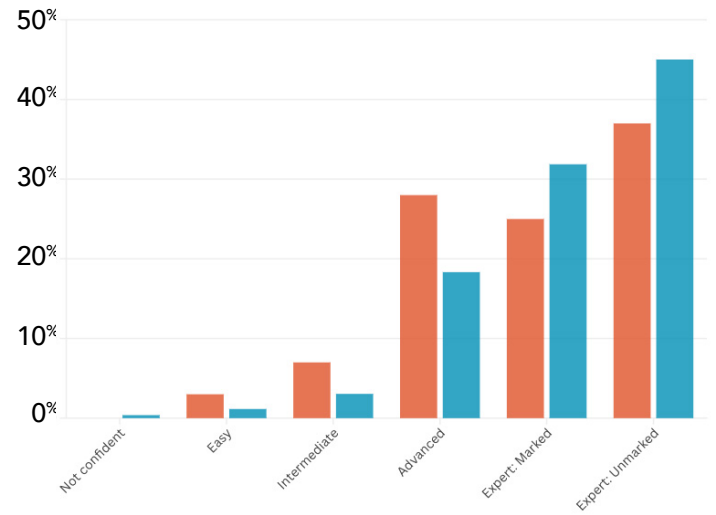
INTERMEDIATE



ADVANCED



EXPERT

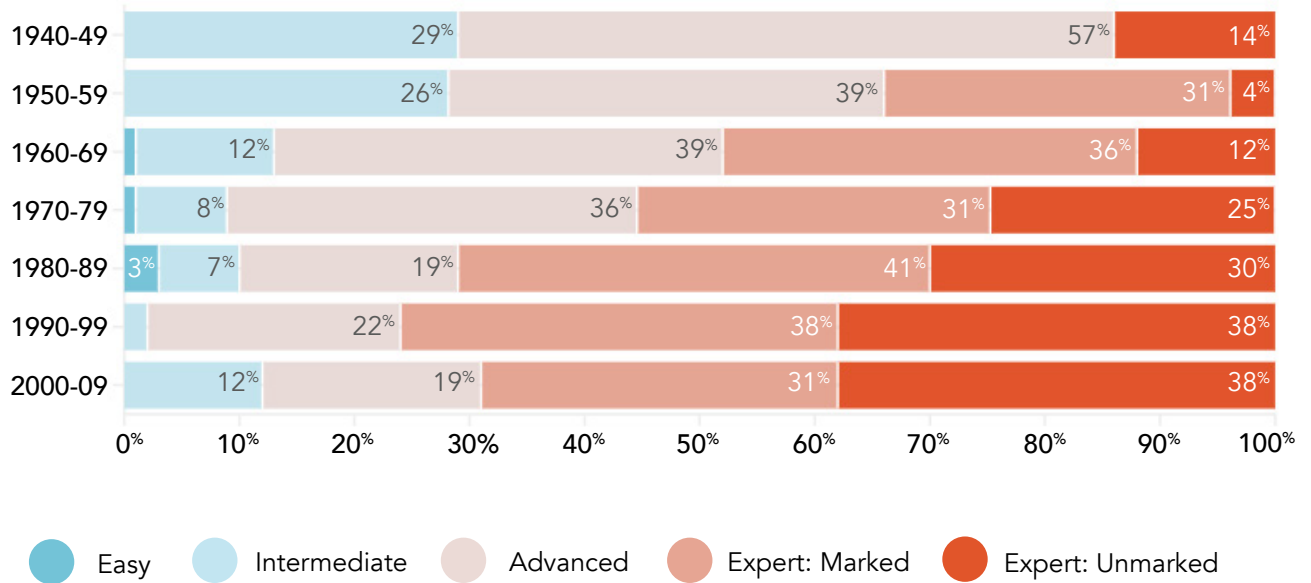


● Current ● Aspirational

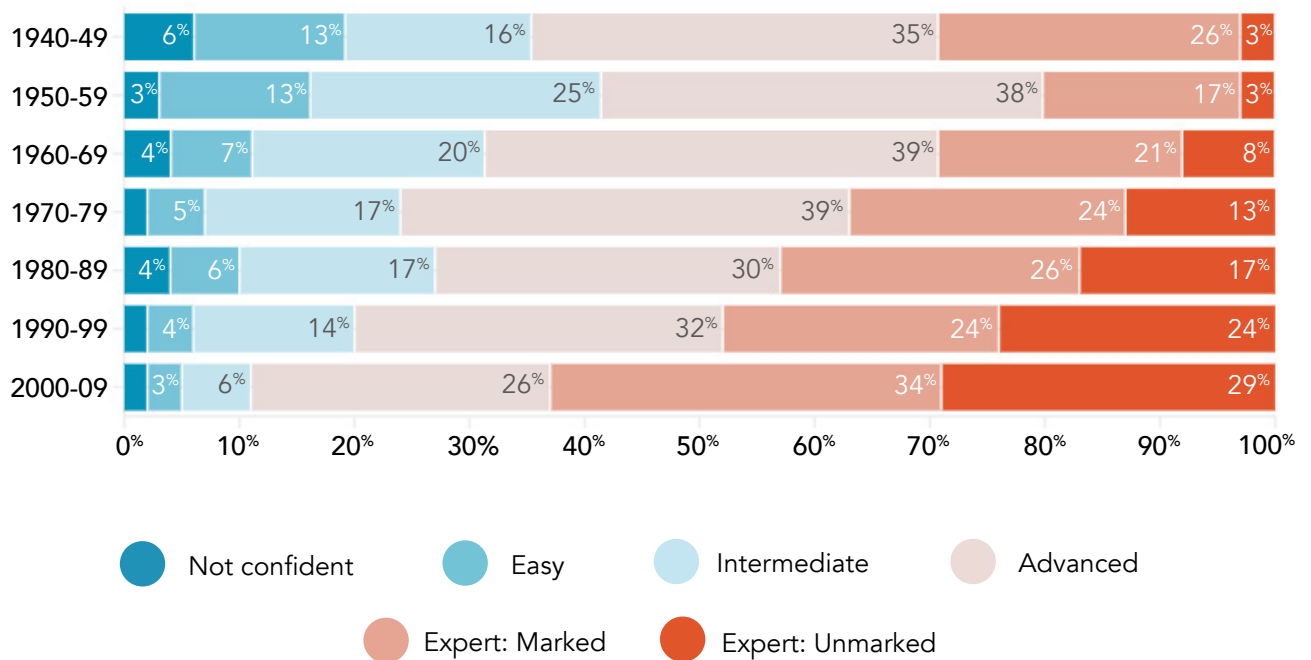
ASPIRATIONAL CONFIDENCE BY AGE

Younger people have greater aspirations to be confident on advanced and expert tracks in both fine and poor conditions.

FINE WEATHER



HEAVY RAIN AND/OR STRONG WINDS

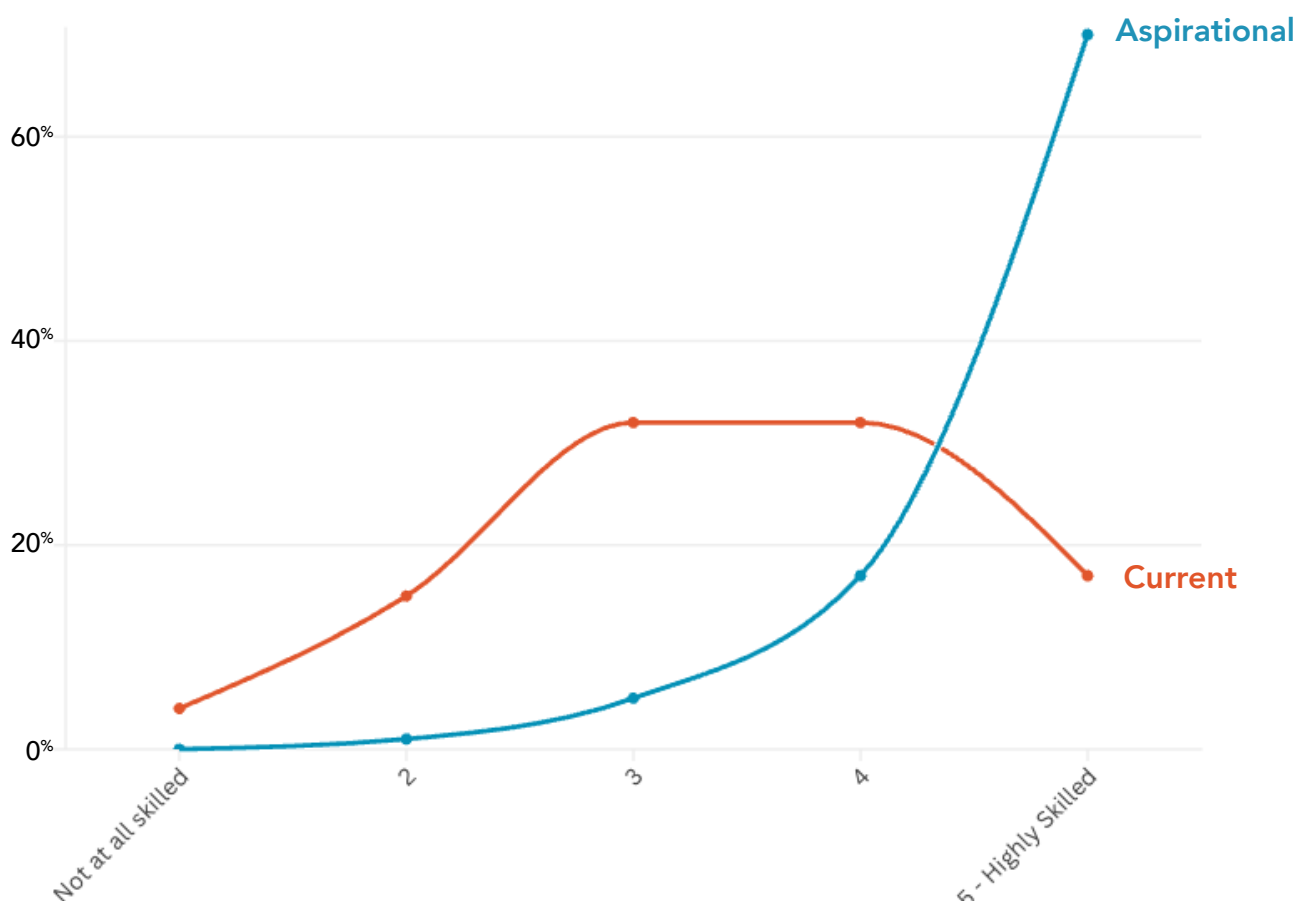


GAP ANALYSIS

The survey shows that the vast majority of trampers want to improve both their confidence and competence in tramping skills. The greatest gap in current confidence/competence and aspirational confidence/competence, perhaps unsurprisingly, was for beginner trampers. However, gaps were also evident for intermediate and, to a lesser extent, advanced trampers. Additionally, the younger the trumper, the more competent they would like to be.

NAVIGATION

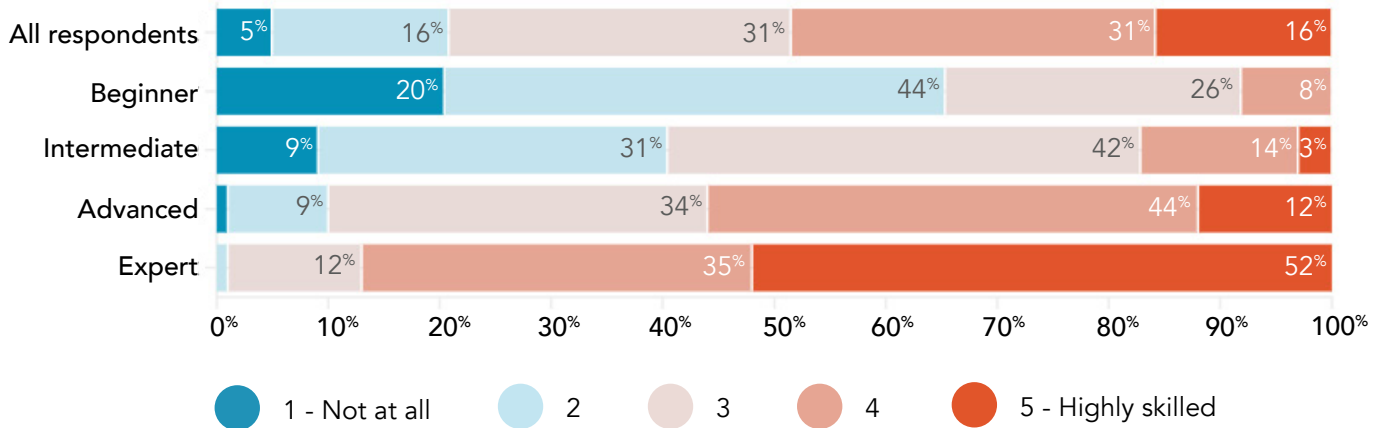
CURRENT VS ASPIRATIONAL NAVIGATION SKILLS



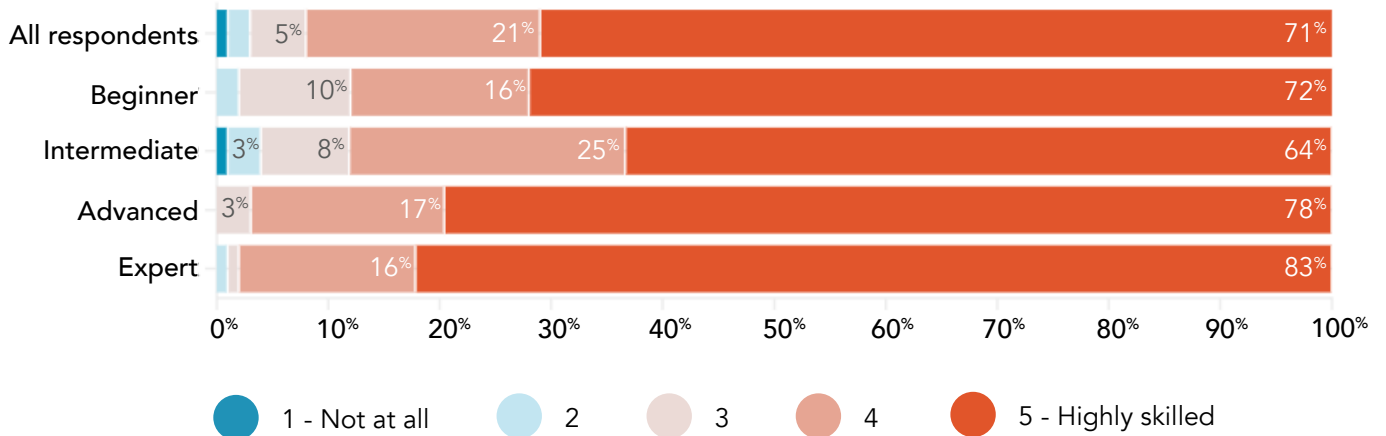
Regardless of experience level, there is a desire across the tramping community to become better navigators.

Currently 17% believe they are highly skilled at navigation, while 79% would like to be.

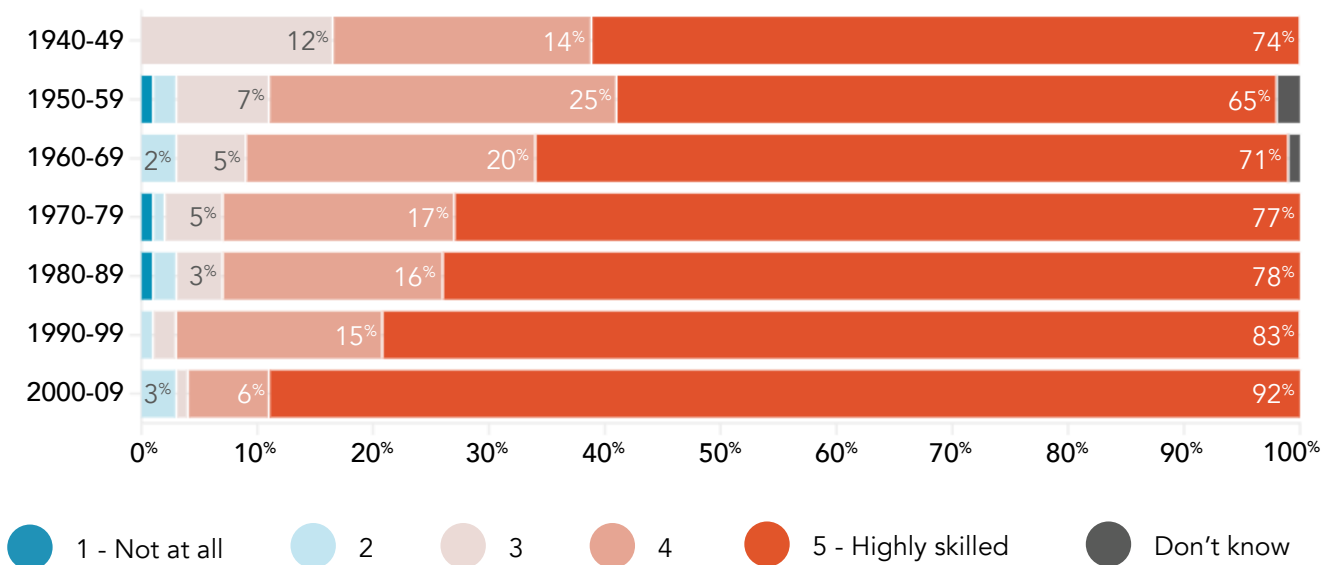
CURRENT NAVIGATION SKILLS BY EXPERIENCE LEVEL



ASPIRATIONAL NAVIGATION SKILLS BY EXPERIENCE LEVEL



ASPIRATIONAL NAVIGATION SKILLS BY AGE

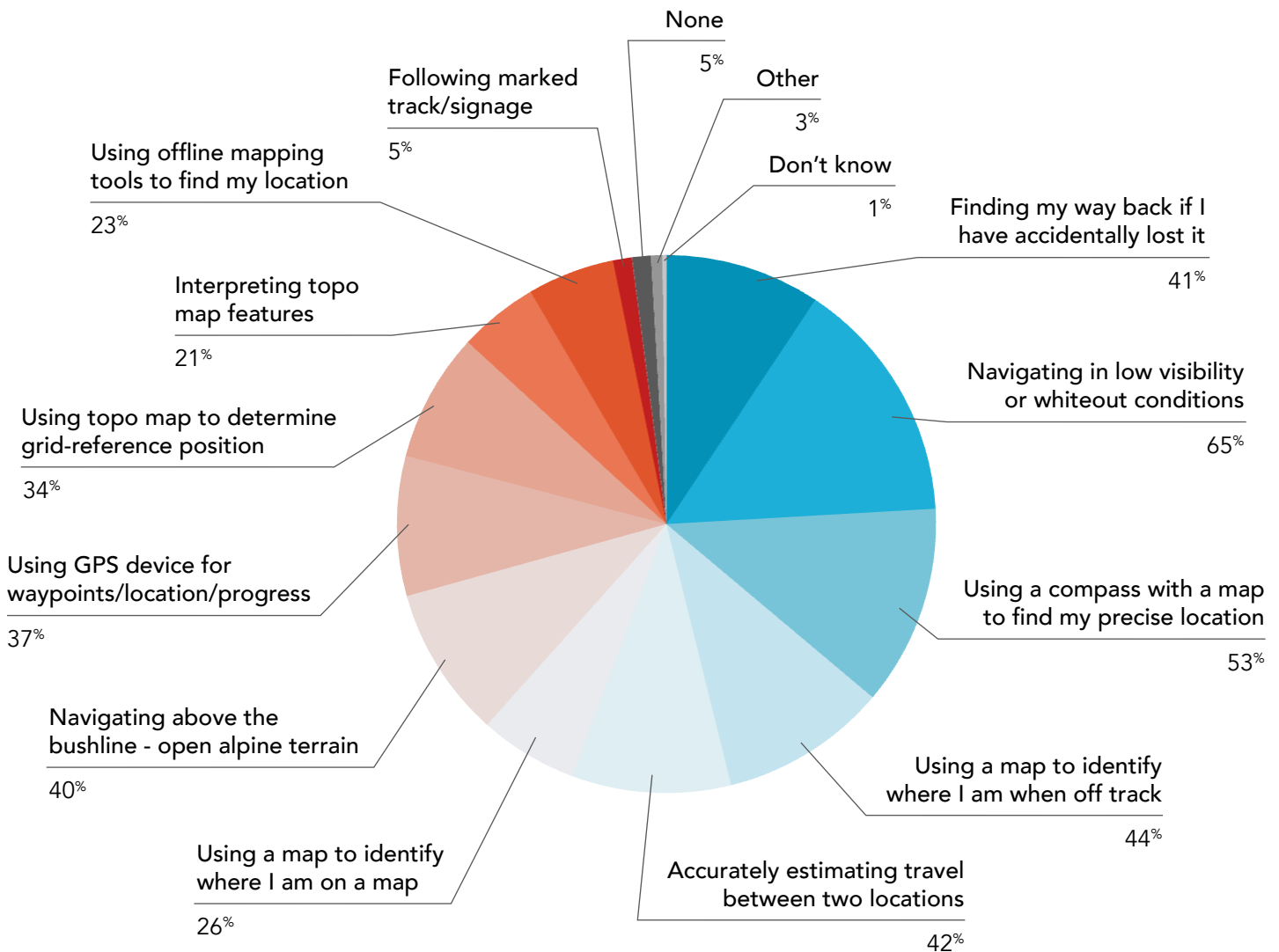


NAVIGATION SKILLS

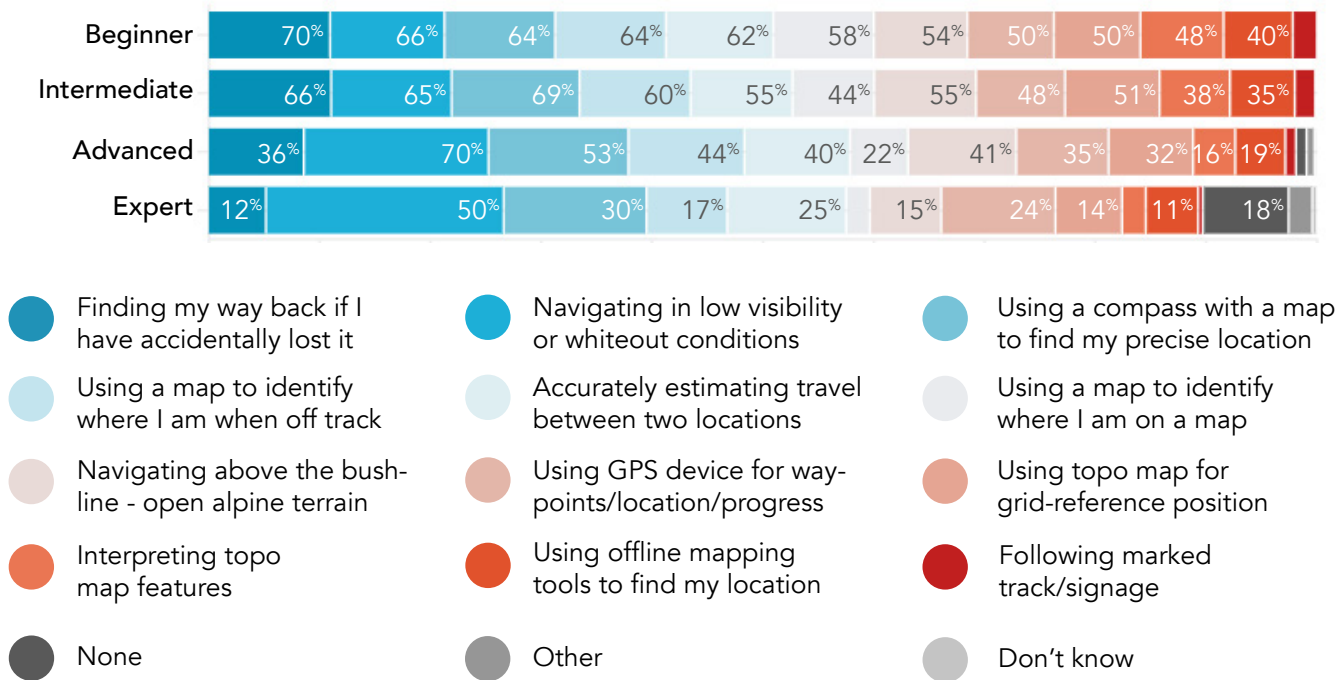
For beginners, when asked to select the navigation skills they would like to improve, most selected "Finding my way back to the track if I have accidentally lost it", with 70% choosing this.

For advanced and expert trampers, most would like to be better at navigating in low visibility or whiteout conditions.

NAVIGATION SKILLS TO IMPROVE

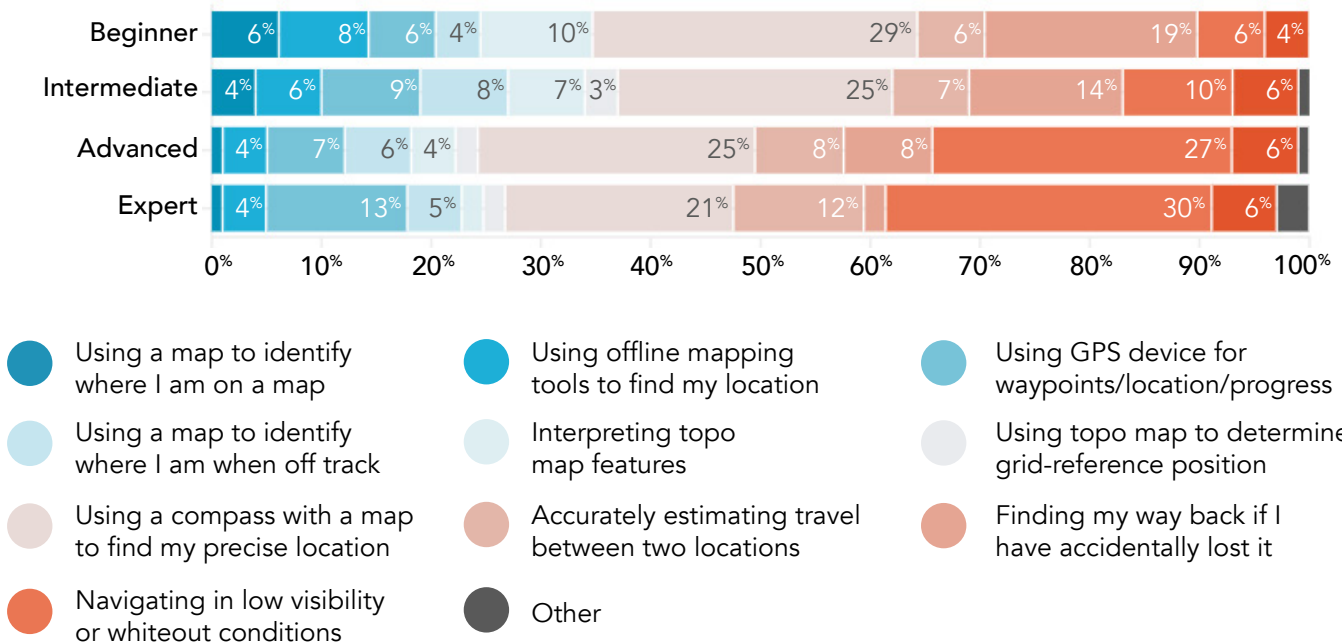


NAVIGATION SKILLS TO IMPROVE BY EXPERIENCE LEVEL



NAVIGATION SKILLS YOU WOULD MOST LIKE TO IMPROVE

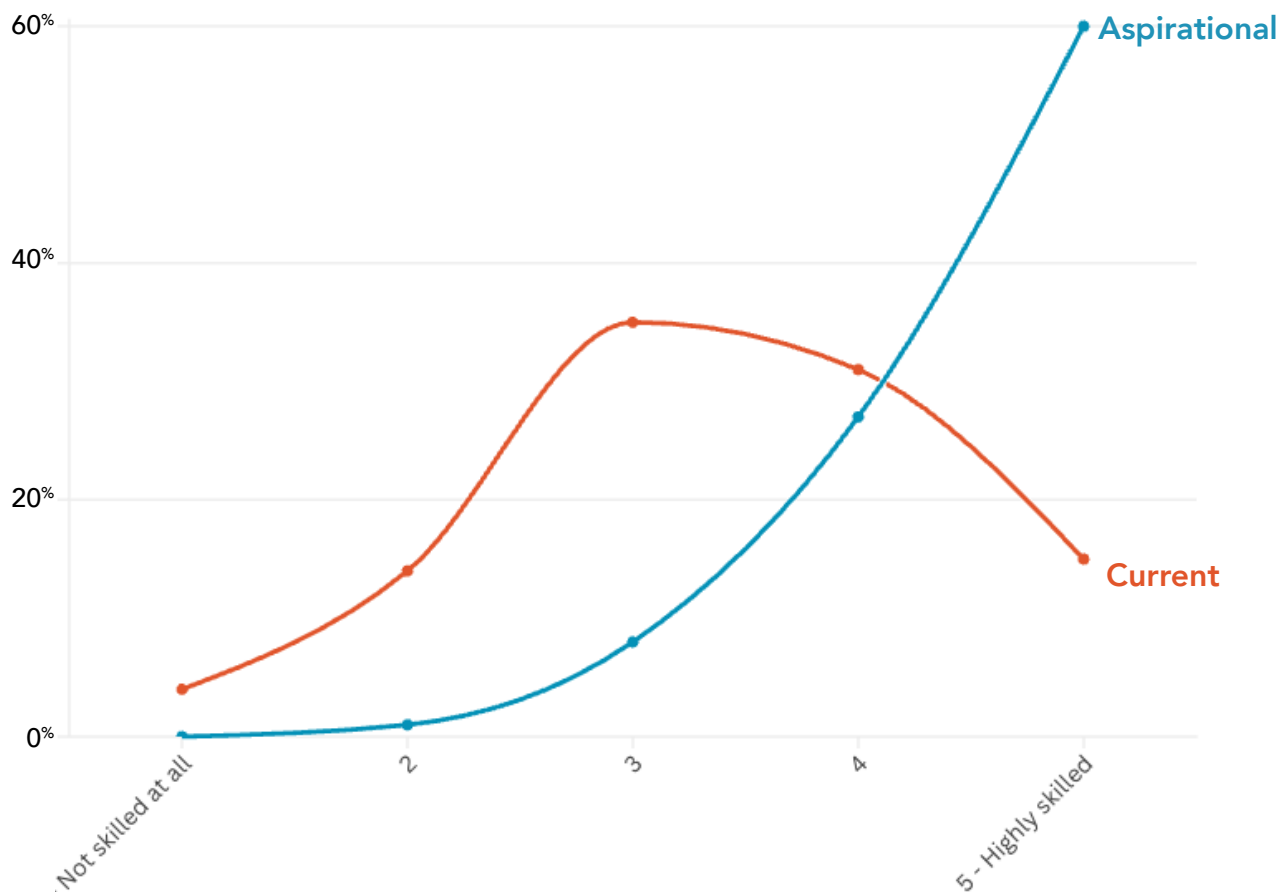
When asked to select the one skill they would most like to improve, 29% of beginners chose using a compass with a map to find my precise location, while advanced and expert trampers more commonly selected navigating in low visibility and whiteout conditions.



CROSSING UNBRIDGED RIVERS

Crossing rivers safely is a challenging skill according to the majority of respondents who gave themselves a competency score of 1-3 out of 5. Generally, only expert trampers believe that they are currently highly skilled at this but nearly all trampers (87%) wish to have the skills to do this safely.

CURRENT VS ASPIRATIONAL RIVER CROSSING SKILLS

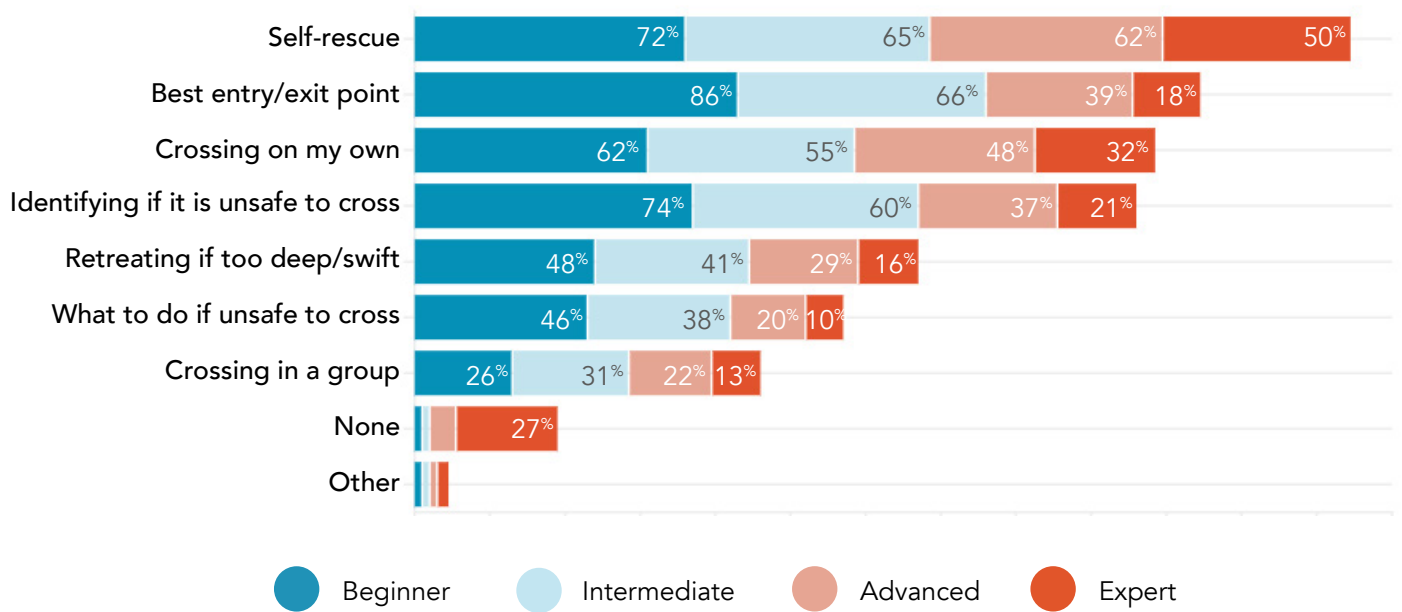


The river-crossing skill that most respondents want to develop is how to self-rescue if they were to get swept downstream.

For beginners, the skill they would most like to improve is choosing the best entry and exit point.

The skill selected by Intermediate trampers as the one they most wanted to improve was identifying unsafe features of a river.

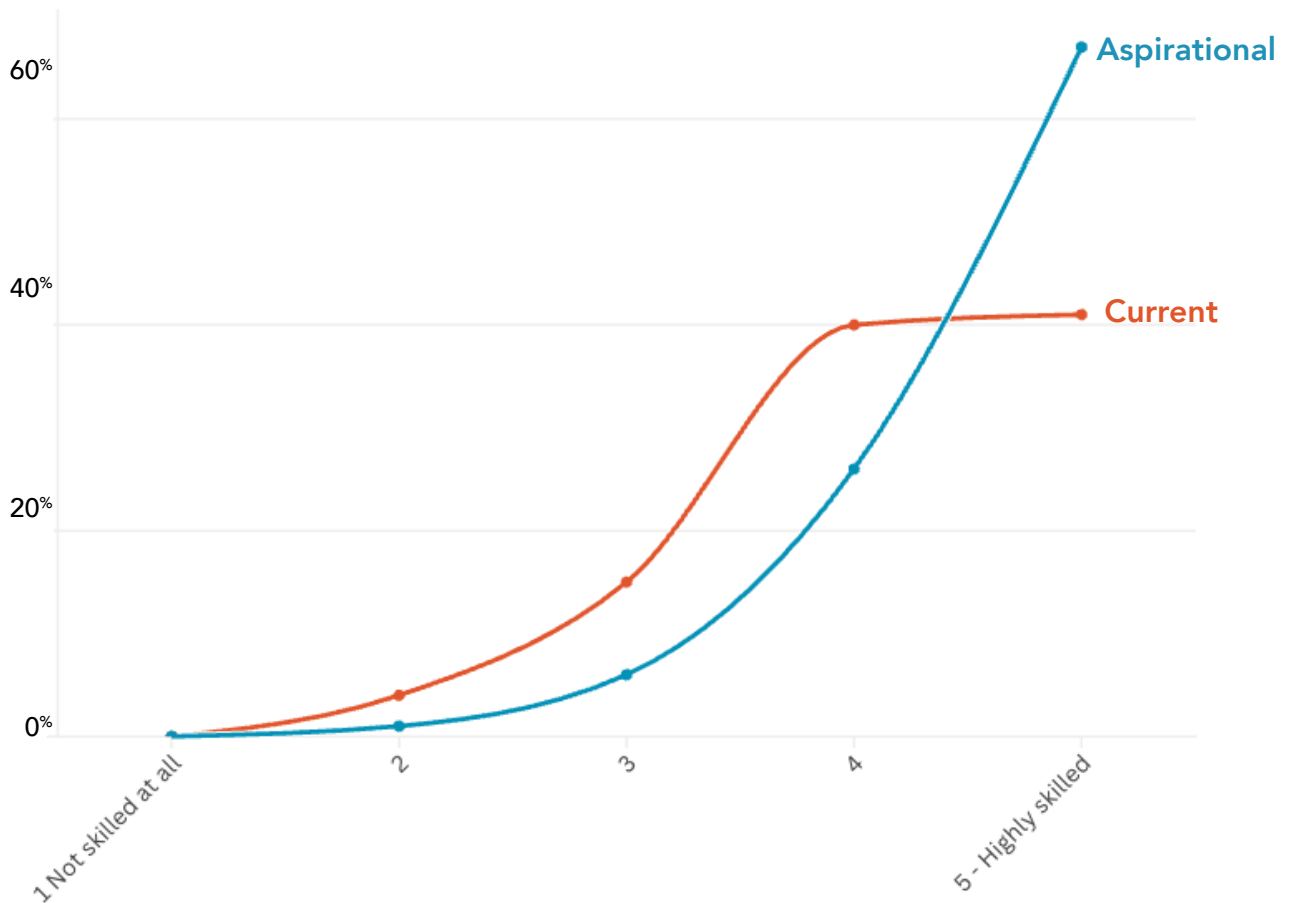
RIVER CROSSING SKILLS TO IMPROVE



TRIP PLANNING AND PREPARATION

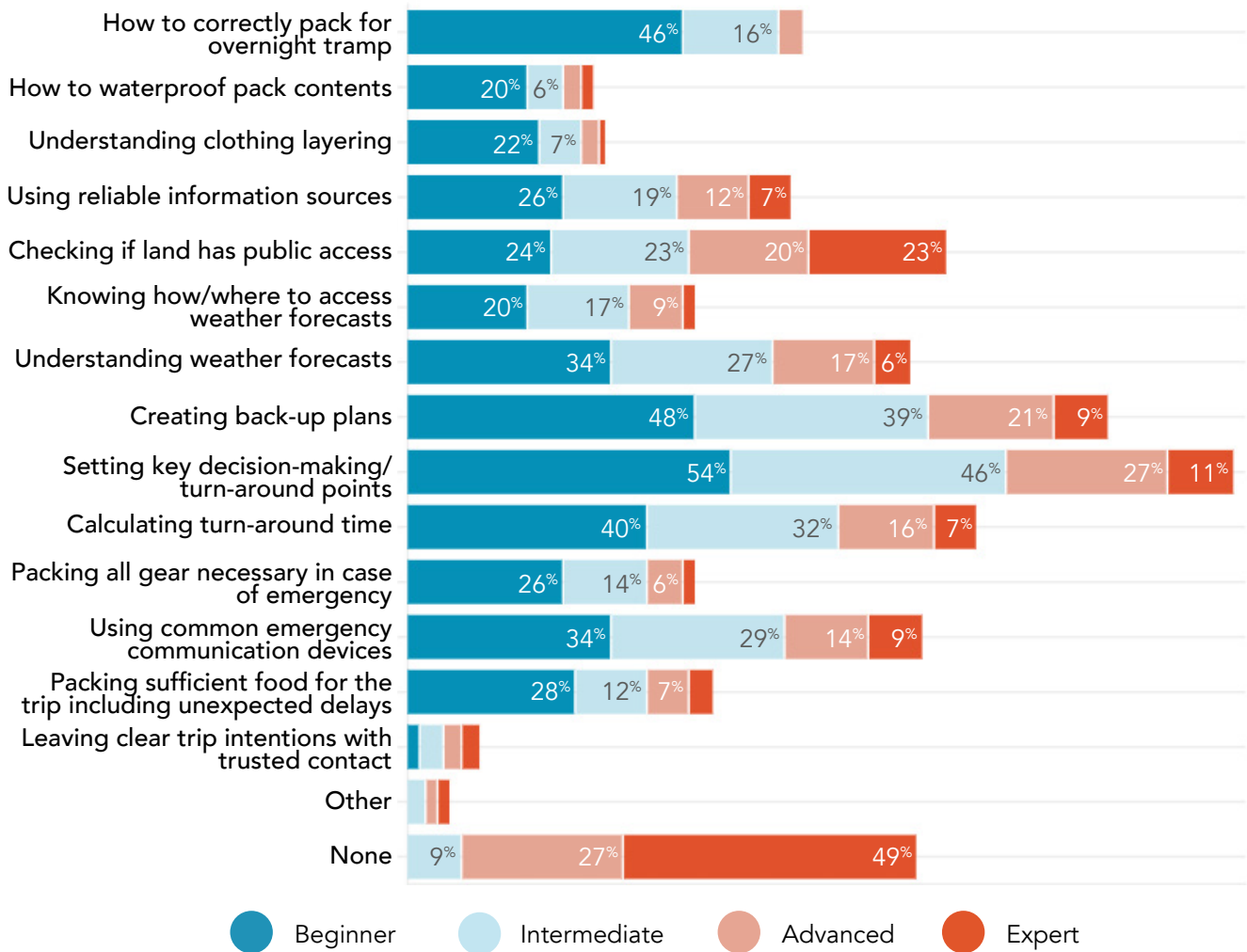
Most trampers believe that they are skilled at trip planning and preparation, with 81% rating themselves at a 4 or 5 out of 5. While beginners are less likely to consider themselves to be skilled at this, this area of skill development has the smallest skills gap of the four areas we explored in the survey.

CURRENT VS ASPIRATIONAL TRIP PLANNING SKILLS

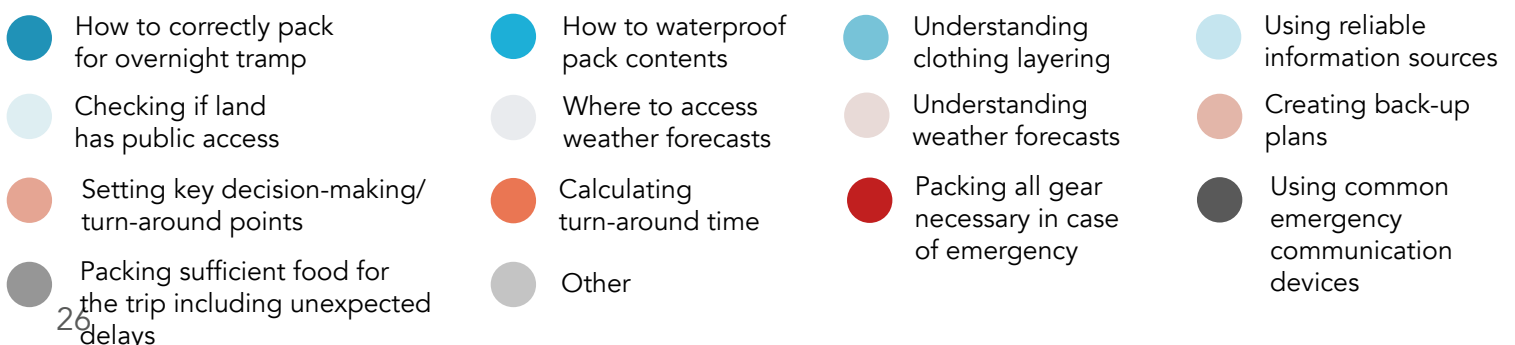
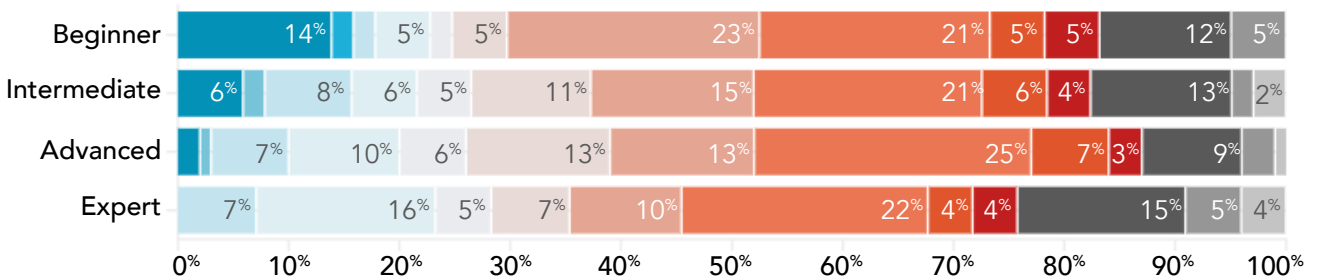


TRIP PLANNING SKILLS TO IMPROVE

Overall, 31% expressed that they would like to improve their ability to set key decision-making or turn-around points and 25% would like to improve creating backup plans. 46% of beginners want to learn how to correctly pack an overnight tramping pack.



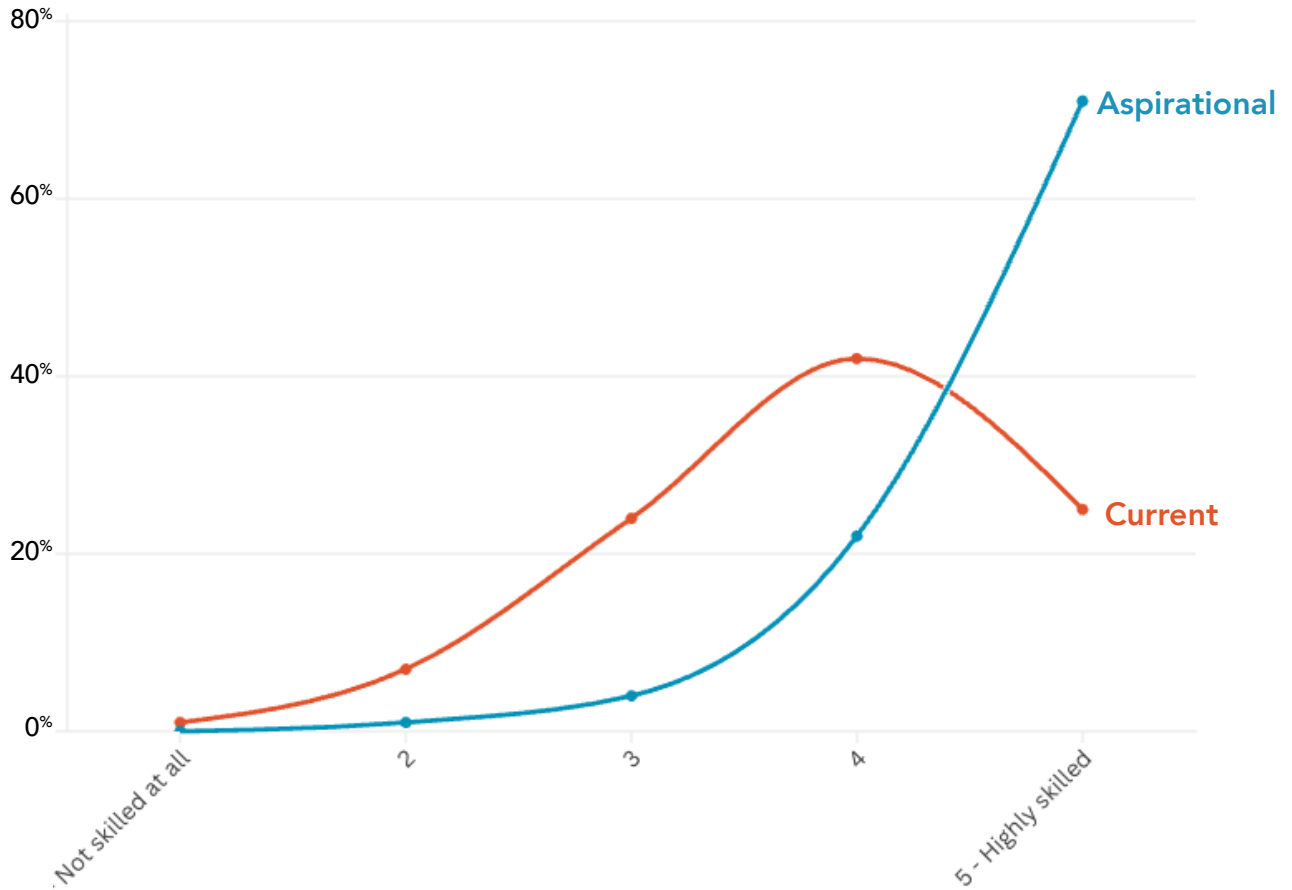
TRIP PLANNING SKILLS YOU WOULD MOST LIKE TO IMPROVE



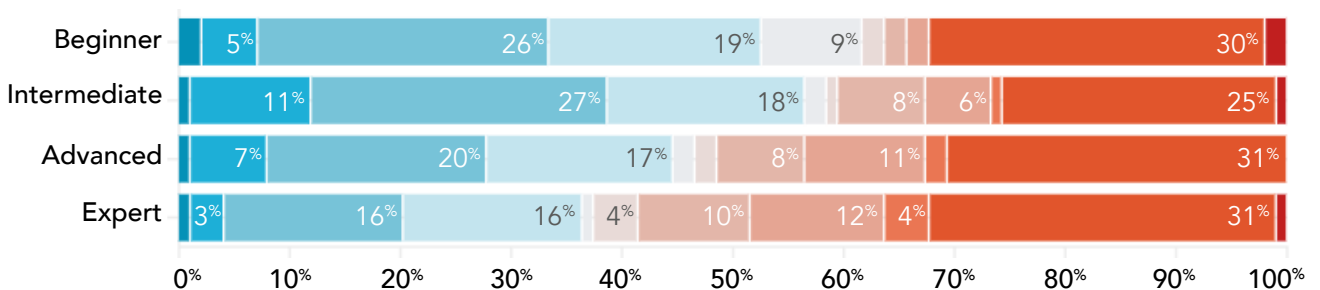
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Similar to trip planning, most trampers consider themselves skilled at emergency preparedness, but when asked about specific skills, three stood out as clear favourites: managing a person with hypothermia (50%), lighting a fire in a survival situation (45%), and setting up/building an emergency shelter (42%).

CURRENT VS ASPIRATIONAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS SKILLS

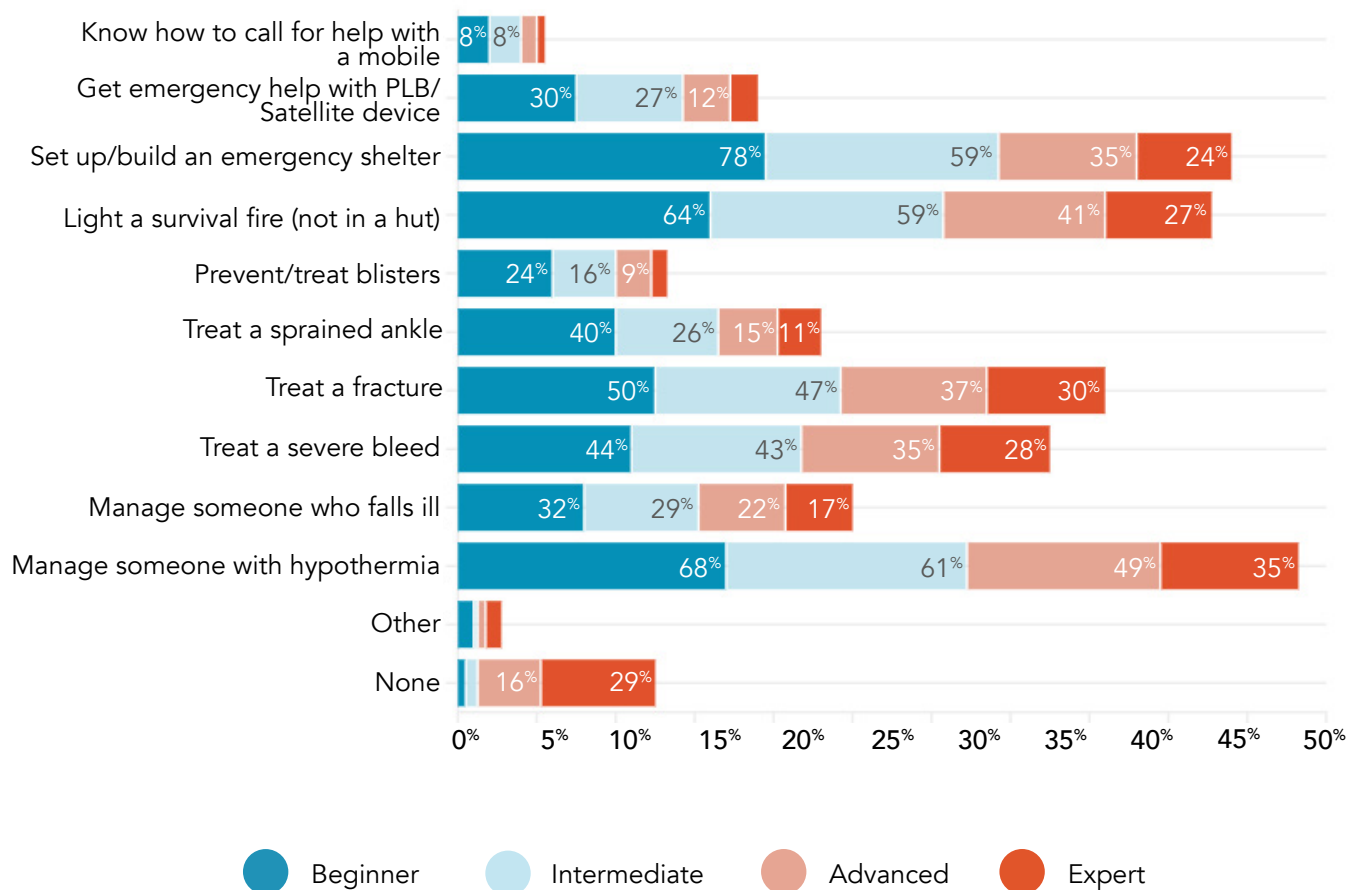


EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS SKILLS YOU WOULD MOST LIKE TO IMPROVE



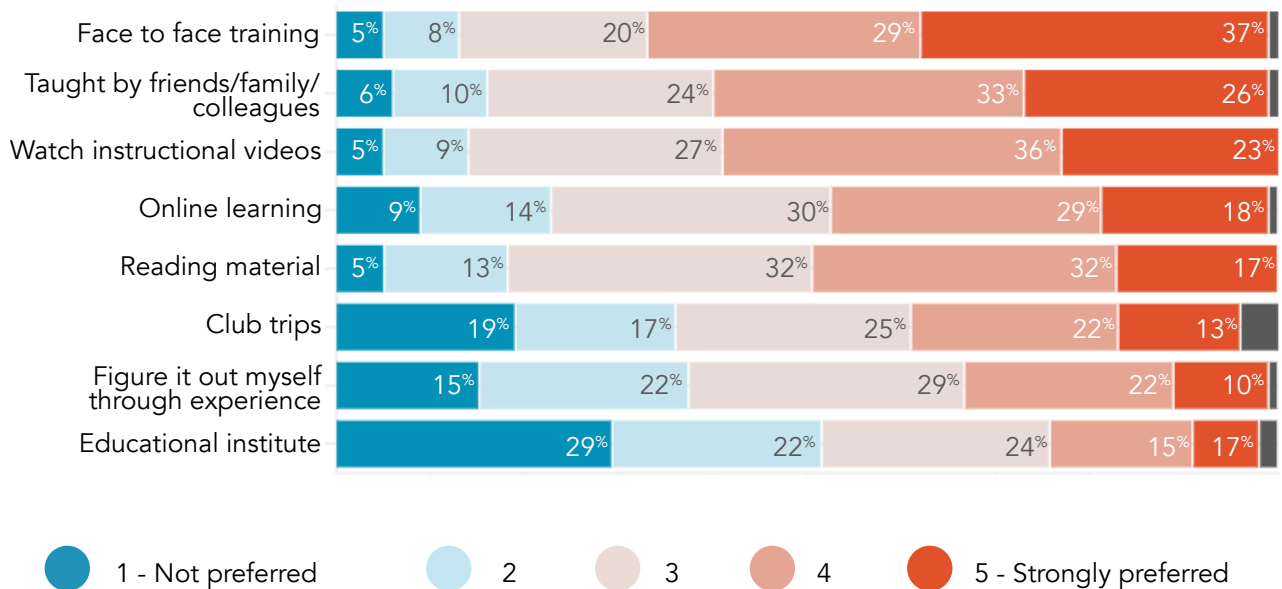
- Know how to call for help with a mobile
- Get emergency help with PLB/Satellite device
- Light a survival fire (not in a hut)
- Prevent/treat blisters
- Treat a sprained ankle
- Treat a fracture
- Treat a severe bleed
- Manage someone who falls ill
- Manage someone with hypothermia
- Other

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS SKILLS TO IMPROVE



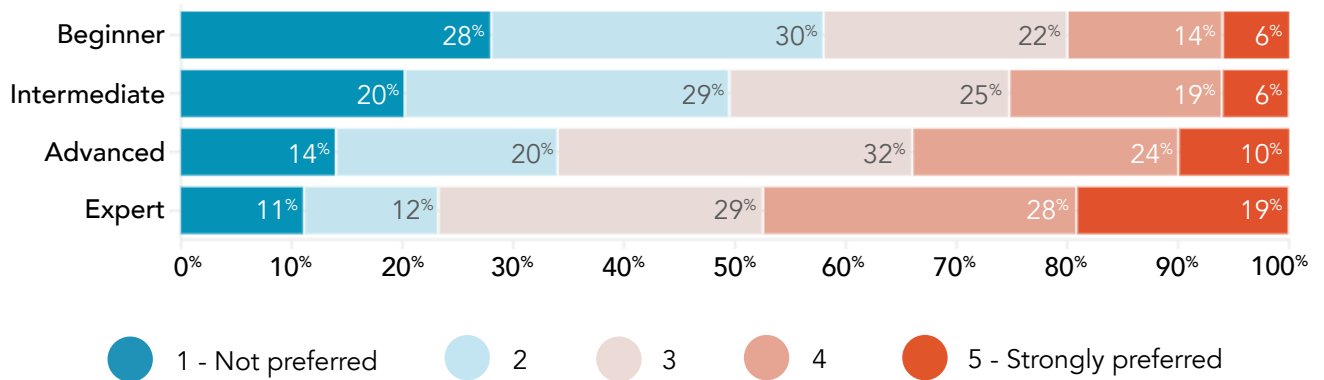
PREFERRED LEARNING METHODS (AND BARRIERS)

Most trampers indicated that they preferred to learn skills through a multitude of ways. The strongest preference was for face-to-face training courses, followed closely by learning from people they know and watching instructional videos. The least preferred method is through an educational institute, with 51.5% listing this as a 1 or 2 out of 5.



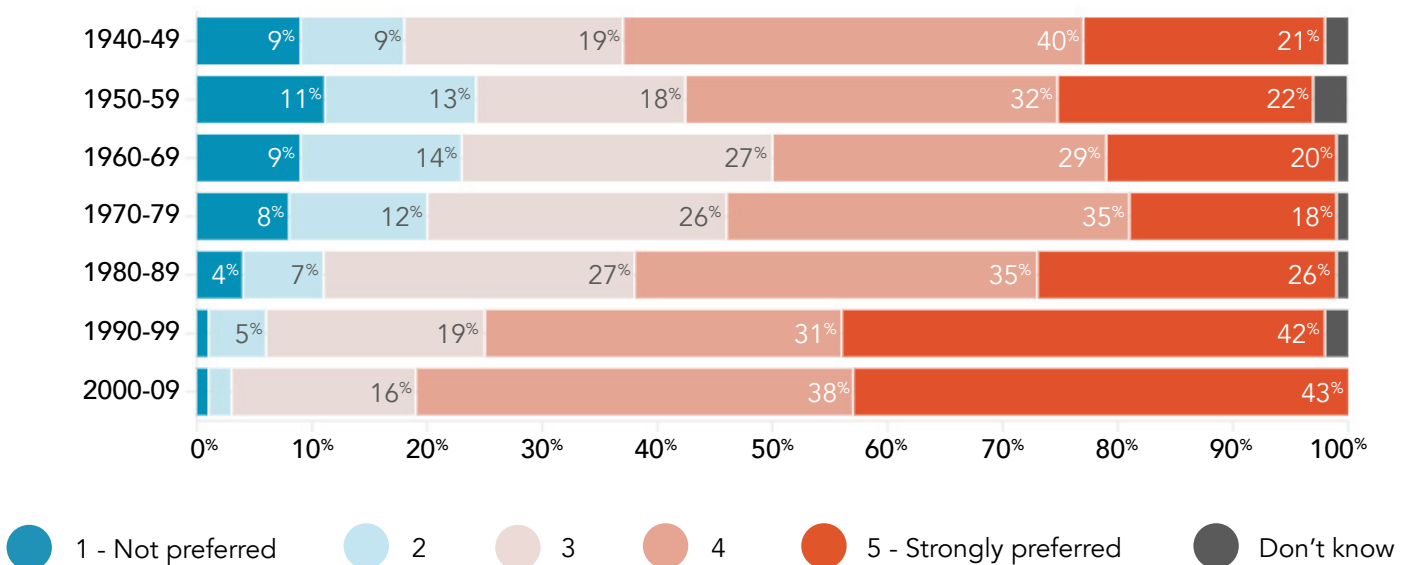
Looking further into this, some interesting responses were received depending on experience level and age. For instance, 'figuring it out for myself' was more commonly preferred by those with greater experience and by those who are younger, than by those with less experience or who are older.

FIGURING IT OUT MYSELF



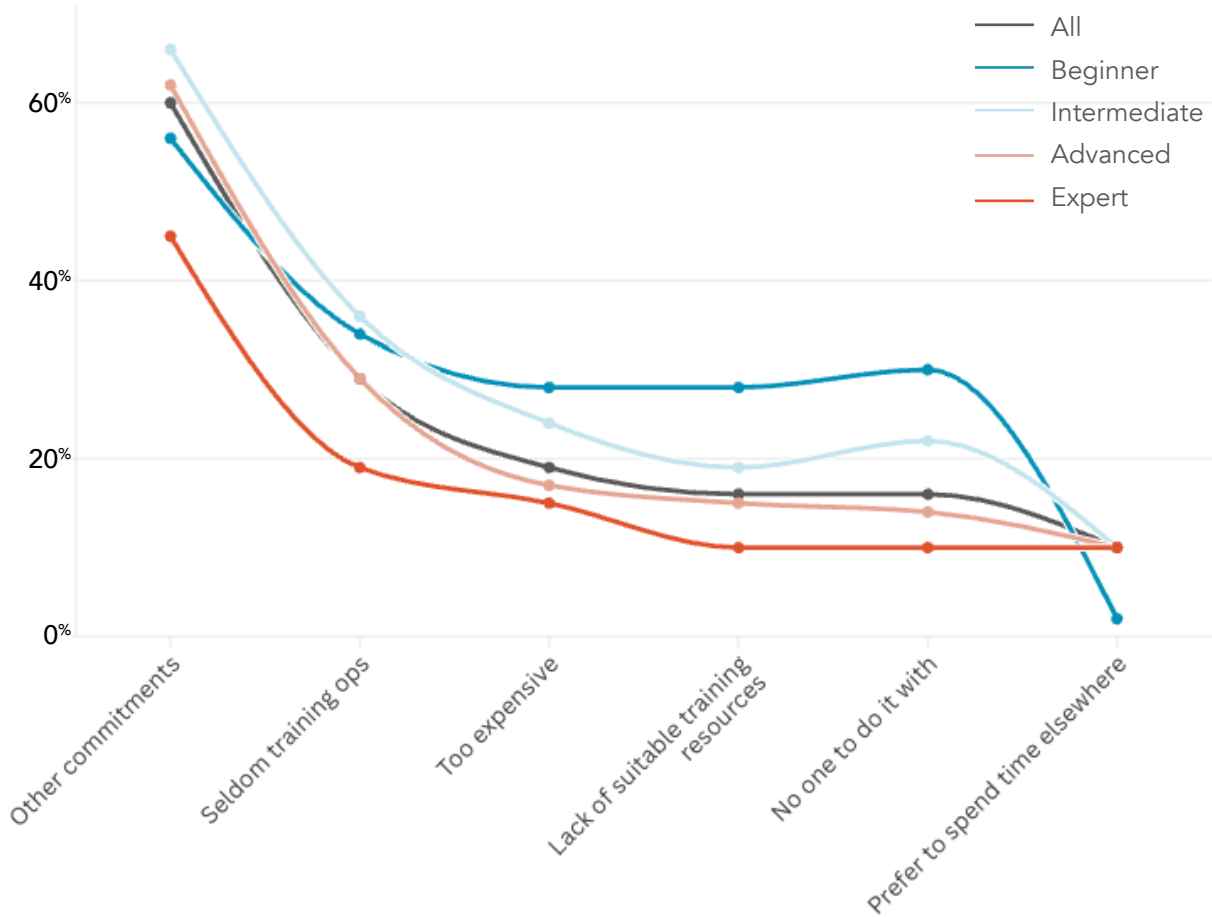
Learning through educational institutes is similar in that younger people are more likely to prefer this, possibly because they have learned (or wished they had learned) through school or tertiary study. However, younger people more strongly prefer to be taught by family, friends or colleagues with 81% giving this a 4 or 5.

BEING TAUGHT BY FAMILY FRIENDS OR COLLEAGUES



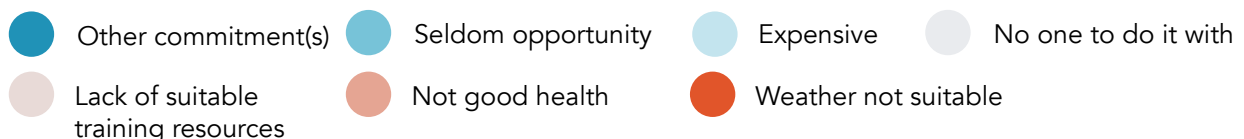
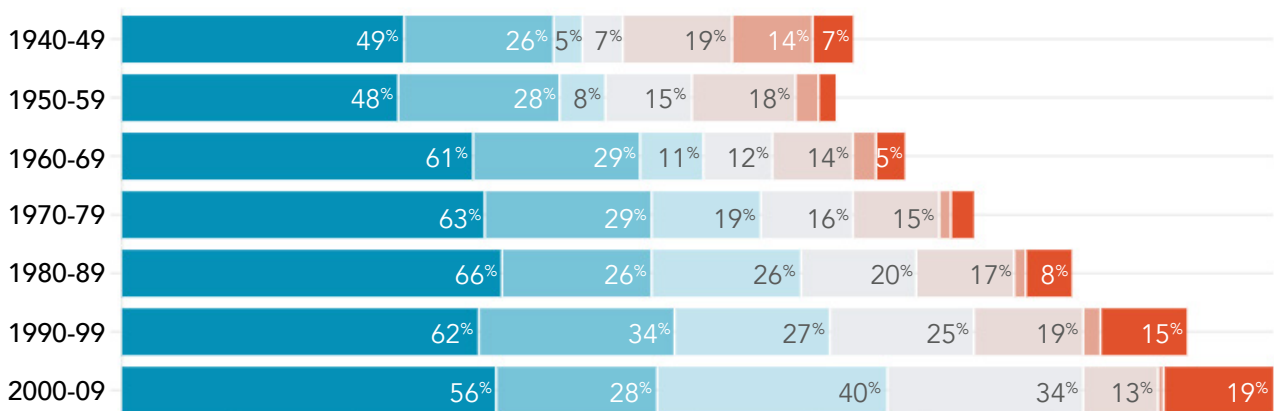
BARRIERS TO LEARNING

Other commitments are the greatest barrier to learning new skills at 60%, followed by availability of training courses at 29%. Cost is the third highest barrier at 19% overall, but 28% for beginners. Beginners are also looking for suitable training resources and people to learn alongside.



BARRIERS TO LEARNING BY AGE

For those born between 2000 and 2009, cost is the second highest barrier, after other commitments. This was selected by 40% of respondents in this age group. Additionally, having no one to do it with is a barrier for 34% of these younger trampers.



SUMMARY

MOTIVATION

The primary reason that Adventure Voice survey respondents go tramping is to connect with nature and the natural world.

Following this, seeing amazing parts of NZ and getting away from the stress and demands of everyday life are common reasons.

Tramping because it is part of one's identity and the desire to explore new places becomes more of a reason to tramp as experience levels increase, while tramping for physical exercise diminishes as one becomes more experienced.

CONFIDENCE

When looking more closely at the difference between experience levels and weather conditions, most trampers expressed confidence to take on more advanced tramping tracks and routes when the weather was fine and sunny.

When it's wet and windy, or in low visibility, most trampers expressed that they would be more confident taking on easier tracks.

Just about all trampers expressed a desire to be confident at more challenging tracks regardless of the weather conditions.

GAP ANALYSIS

The greatest gap, perhaps unsurprisingly, between current confidence and competence and aspirational confidence and competence is found in those that consider themselves as being a tramping beginner.

However, gaps also appear for intermediate, and to a slightly lesser extent, advanced trampers, showing that there is a desire to improve both confidence and competence in tramping skills by the vast majority of trampers.

Additionally, the younger the trumper, the more competent they would like to be.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

The survey identified the specific skills that trampers want to develop. These are:

Navigation

- Navigating in low visibility or whiteout conditions
- Using a compass with a map

River crossing

- Choosing the best entry and exit point
- Identifying unsafe features of a river
- Self rescue after getting swept downstream

Trip planning and preparation

- Setting key decision-making or turn-around points
- Making backup plans for use if things don't go as intended
- How to check if land is available for public access
- Specifically for beginners, packing an overnight tramping pack

Emergency preparedness

- Managing a person with hypothermia
- Lighting a fire in a survival situation
- Setting up or building an emergency shelter

CONCLUSION

This survey has given us great insight into the motivations, abilities and aspirations of the tramping community in Aotearoa NZ as represented by the Adventure Voice survey respondents.

These insights will provide invaluable knowledge for the provision of educational resources and training.

MSC will work with industry partners who wish to explore the findings further so that provision of resources and training opportunities match the needs and aspirations of the tramping community.

To learn more about other Adventure Voice research and join the community, please visit www.adventurevoice.nz.