

**Title:**

Are people aware that animals are becoming extinct?

**Category:**

11-14 years

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## Are people aware that animals are becoming extinct?

By: Sasha Camilleri, Daria Cassar, Rebecca Laferla, Maya Micallef  
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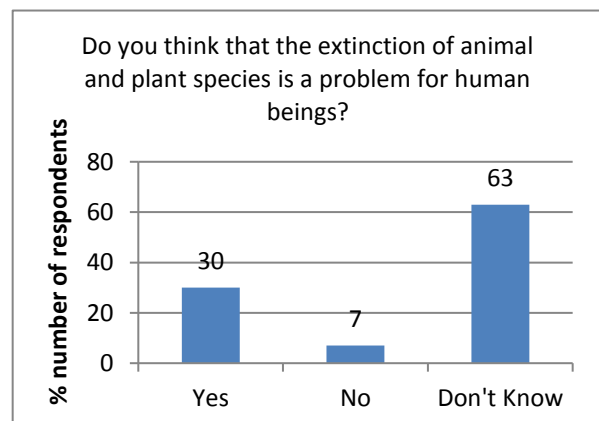
"Every day, an estimated 100 plant and animal species are lost to deforestation. ... A conservative estimate of the current extinction rate indicates that about 27,000 species a year are being lost."

-National Wildlife Federation

More than 99 percent of all species, amounting to over five billion species that ever lived on Earth, are estimated to be extinct. Estimates on the number of Earth's current species range from 10 million to 14 million, of which about 1.2 million have been documented and over 86 percent have not yet been described.

Our research attempts to investigate if people are aware that certain animals are becoming extinct and why and how we can help these particular animals. The study we carried out was based on 100 questionnaires we gave out to males and females from different age groups. We also interviewed Mr. Vince Attard, the Executive President of Nature Trust Malta.

We found out that, sadly, many people don't know whether animal and plant species becoming extinct is a serious problem or not for the human race.



68% of our respondents are thankfully aware that pollution is one of the main causes of animal extinction, and 62% identified over-fishing as another cause of extinction. They also identified habitat fragmentation (48%), agriculture (50%), over-harvesting (42%) and human over-population (45%) as causes of extinction. However, only a measly 32% think deforestation and 59% think that poaching and hunting are problems that cause animal extinction. Thankfully, 73% of our respondents are aware of the rapidly decreasing amount of Maltese animals. 92% are aware that the Logger-head turtle (Fekruna Komuni) is becoming extinct, though less are aware that the Maltese freshwater Crab (Qabru) (51%), the Mediterranean Chameleon (Kamaleonte) (65%), the Barn Owl



Figure 1 Logger-Head Turtle

(Barbagann) (61%) and the Blue Rock Thrush (57%) are also going extinct in Malta. Mr. Vince Attard also thinks that the main reasons for animal extinction are habitat fragmentation, deforestation, and poaching and hunting.

The most disappointing result was the fact that only 27% of respondents think that animal extinction is a serious problem and 70% don't know what to think about it.

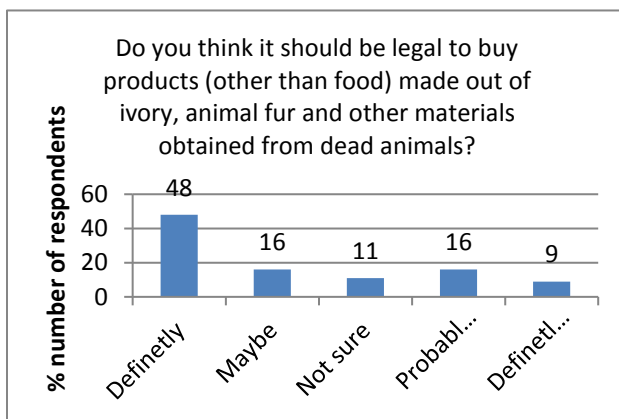
One of the questions in the questionnaire asked whether the government should have laws against poaching and hunting, and the highest ranking at 57% was "Definitely". Another question we asked was whether the law should deal severely with people who hunt and once again the highest response was "Definitely" (48%). The final question revolving around law and government was whether prison should be a possible consequence for people who break hunting laws, and the lowest

response was "Definitely Not" (10%), and the highest response was "Definitely" (35%) which shows that many people think that hunting and poaching are wrong and that people should be sent to prison if they break the hunting laws, though we still think this is a very low percentage. Mr Attard is also against poaching or hunting wild animals because

"This is causing a decline in the population of birds and animals that are already facing other environmental problems such as pollution, degradation of their habitat, climate change etc."

Mr. Attard thinks we should respect wildlife and animals. Hunting today is not used for our livelihood but simply as a pleasure, which should not be the case. He thinks it makes more sense to shoot animals with cameras. 77% of respondents are also against hunting or trapping wild animals.

On the other hand, most of our respondents said it should definitely be legal to buy



products, other than food, made out of animal fur, ivory and other materials obtained from dead animals and only a measly 9% said that it should definitely be illegal.

Before people only used to hunt for food and clothing, but nowadays, people hunt and poach for a hobby or sport, or to make money. We were curious to see how many people check whether animals are harmed, killed, or kept in inadequate and cramped conditions during their life to make

a product for human beings. The majority of respondents (53%) answered that when they buy meat they check whether the animals were grown in a suitable environment and, thankfully, many respondents said that if they know that the animals are kept in unsuitable conditions they do not buy meat. Another question to determine whether when respondents buy clothing and accessories they check if animals are killed or harmed in the making of that particular product was very disappointing because the majority said that they do not check; 55% would not buy a product if they knew animals were harmed to make it, but 29% said they would buy it anyway. We also asked whether people check if the cosmetics and beauty products they use were tested on animals. 48% of respondents said that they don't check whether their products have been tested on animals and 43% said that they don't know if they would buy products that have been tested on animals. Mr Attard is also against animal testing because "There are other ways to test out products which do not involve animals and their suffering."



Ironically, 78% of our respondents are animal lovers. This is a very positive number, but contrasts sharply with some of the disappointing data we gathered. We have a responsibility to protect our nation's wildlife, birds, fish and plants on the brink of extinction, for their sake and ours. Therefore, we encourage schools to teach students about the importance of protecting animal and plant species, and to do their best to teach students how to adopt a sustainable lifestyle which will help them become animal lovers in deed as well as in words.



## References and Acknowledgements:

### References:

National Wildlife Federation

<http://www.nwf.org/>

Information about Mr. Vince Attard:

<http://www.naturetrustmalta.org/who-we-are/president/>

Information about animal extinction:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extinction>

[http://wwf.panda.org/about\\_our\\_earth/species/problems/](http://wwf.panda.org/about_our_earth/species/problems/)

### Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank Mr. Vince Attard for taking the time to answer our questions and all our respondents for helping us complete our research by filling in our questionnaires.

## Proof of Dissemination

As required, our project is exhibited on the school premises and it is also accessible on the school website ([www.saintfrancisecondary.com](http://www.saintfrancisecondary.com)).

We have also sent our report to *The Sunday Times* and *The Malta Independent on Sunday*, though we have no guarantee that it will be published.

**Appendix 1: Sample of respondents**

100 respondents									
50 Males					50 Females				
10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
16-25	26-35	36-45	46-60	60+	16-25	26-35	36-45	46-60	60+
years	years	years	years	years	years	years	years	years	years

## Appendix 2: Template for questionnaires






Sex:	
Male	
Female	

Are you an animal lover?	
Yes	
No	

Age			
11-15		36-45	
16-25		46-60	
26-35		61+	

<b>How important do you think animals are?</b>	
Very Important	
Important	
Not That Important	
Not Important	

<b>Are you aware certain animals in Malta are becoming extinct?</b>	
Yes	
No	

Which of these animals do you think is going extinct in Malta?		
The Maltese freshwater Crab ( <i>Qabru</i> )		
The Mediterranean Chameleon ( <i>Kamaleonte</i> )		
The Barn Owl ( <i>Barbagann</i> )		
The Loggerhead Turtle ( <i>Fekruna Komuni</i> )		
The Blue Rock Thrush ( <i>Monticola solitarius</i> )		

Which of these do you think is the main reason for animal extinction?	
Habitat Fragmentation (The process by which habitat loss results in the division of large, continuous habitats into smaller, more isolated parts)	
Agriculture	
Over fishing	
Pollution	
Over harvesting	
Human Over-population	

Deforestation	
Poaching and Hunting	

<b>Are you against animal testing?</b>	
Yes	
No	
If yes, why?	
If no, why?	

<b>Are you against hunting or trapping wild animals?</b>	
Yes	
No	
If yes, why?	
If no, why?	

<b>Do you think that the extinction of animal and plant species is a problem for human beings?</b>	
Yes	
No	
Don't Know	
If yes, why?	
If no, why?	

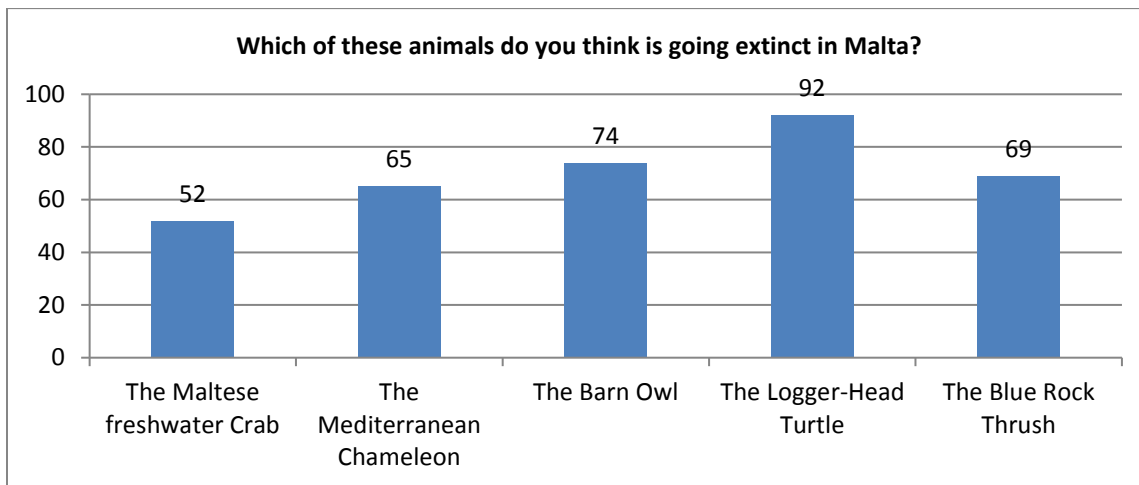
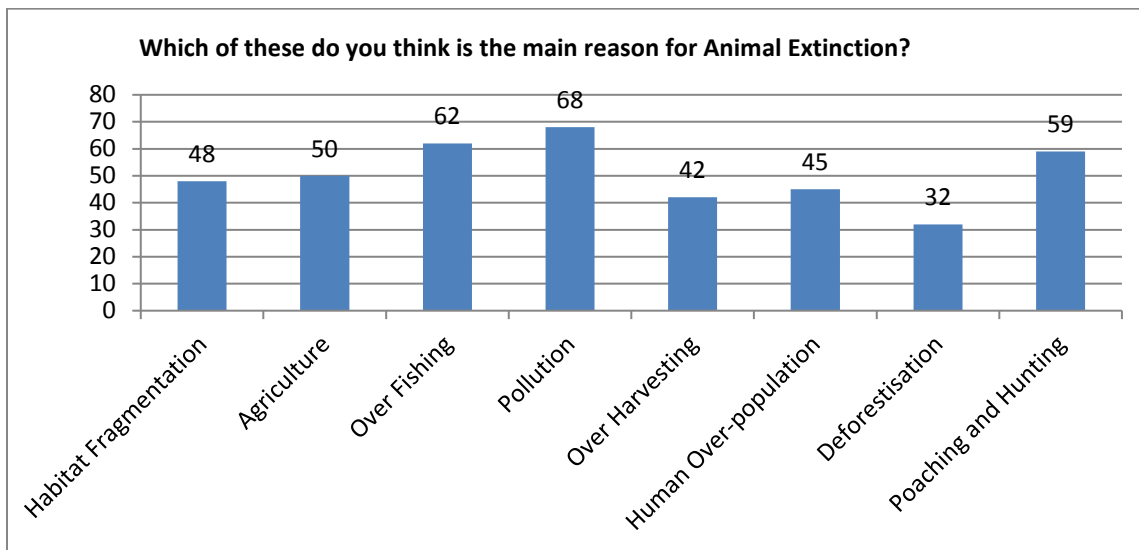
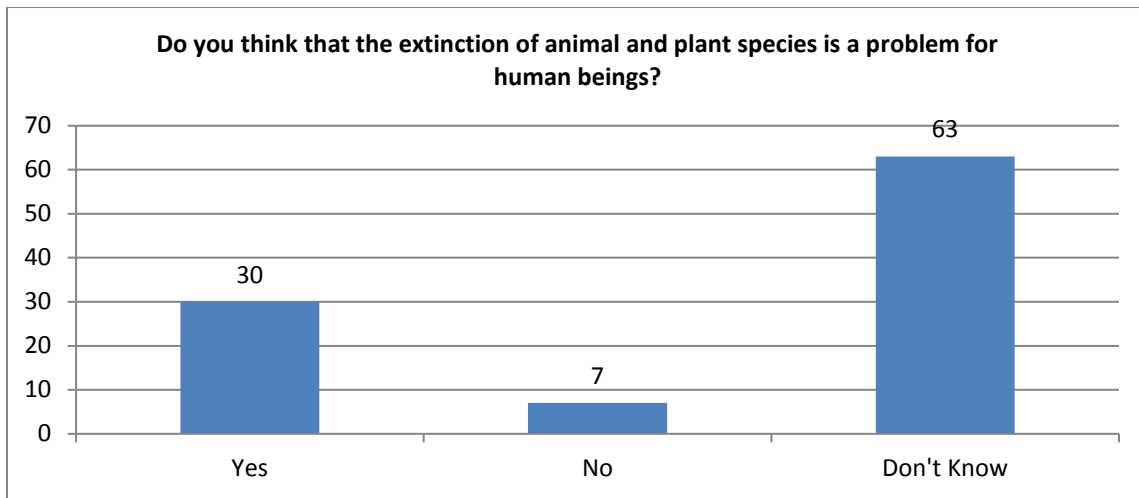
<b>Tick the option you think most applicable</b>					
	Definitely	Maybe	Not Sure	Probably Not	Definitely Not
Do you think the government should have laws against poaching and hunting?					
Do you think the law should deal severely with people who hunt or kill animals?					
Do you think prison should be a possible consequence for people who break hunting laws?					

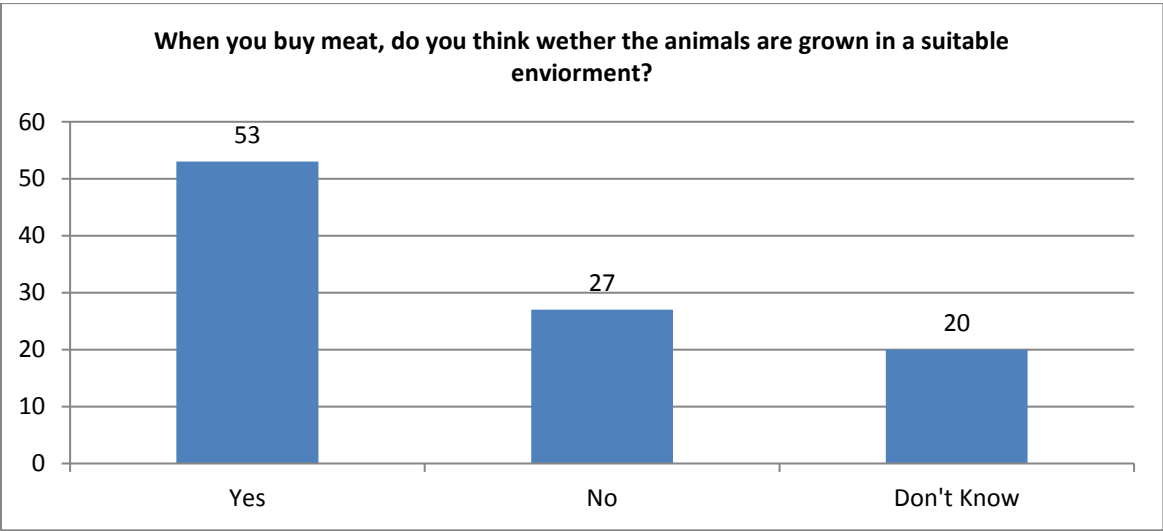
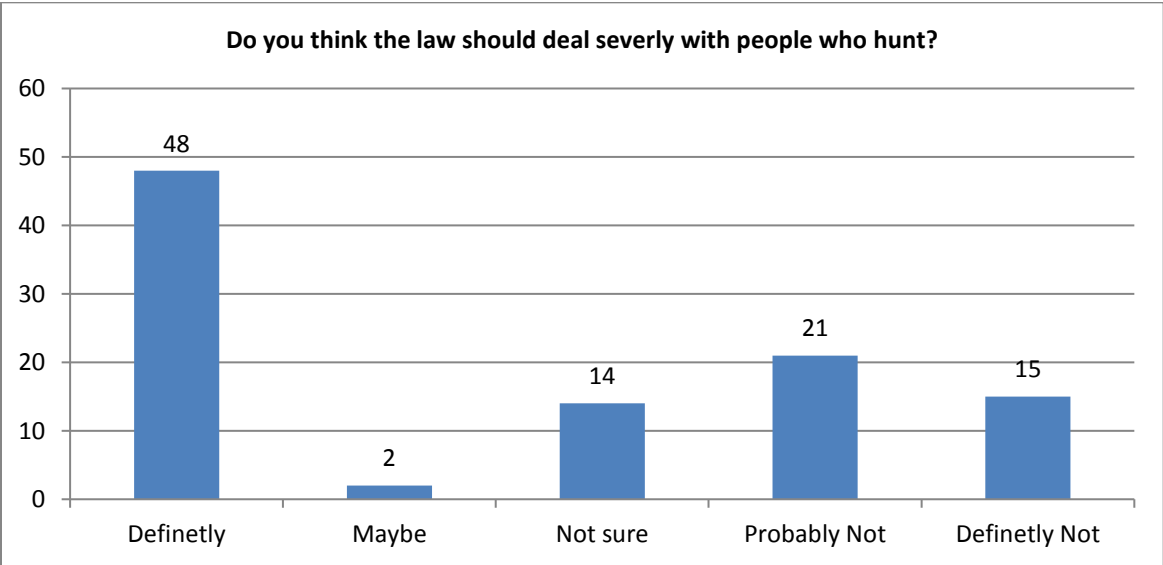
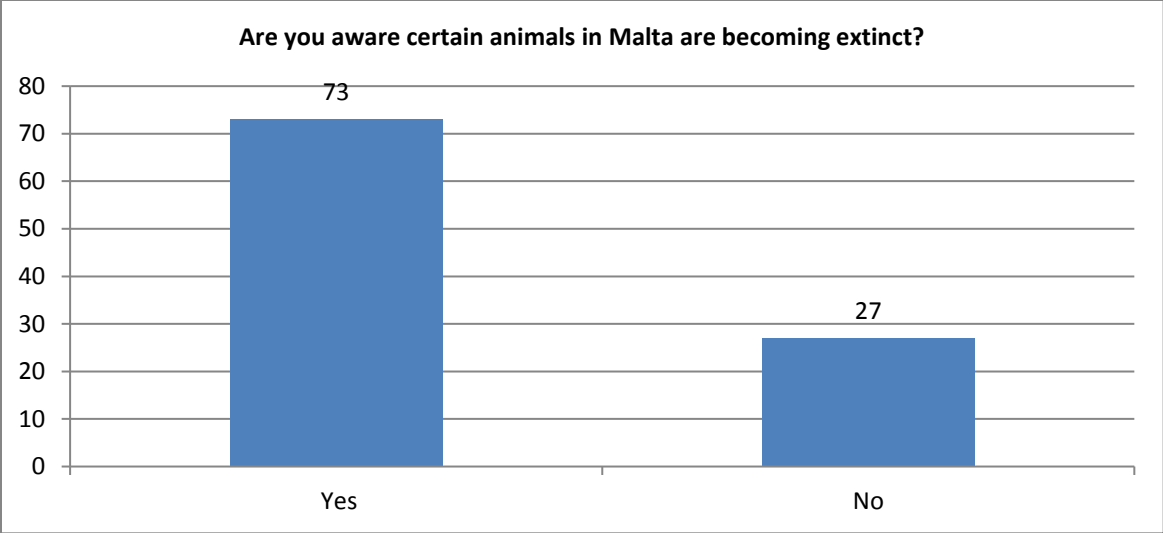
Do you think it should be legal to buy products (other than food) made out of ivory, animal fur and other materials obtained from dead animals?					
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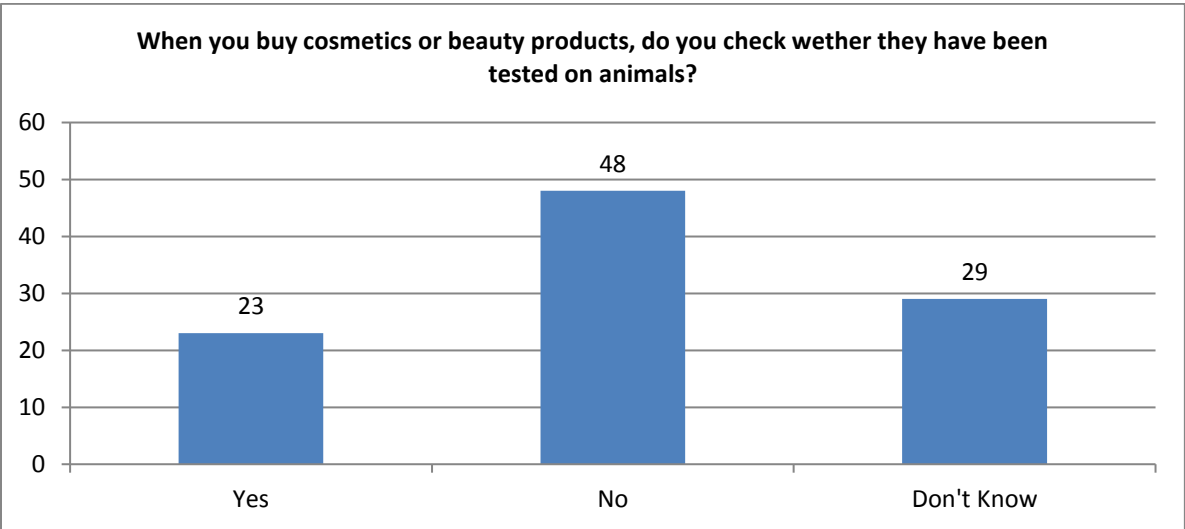
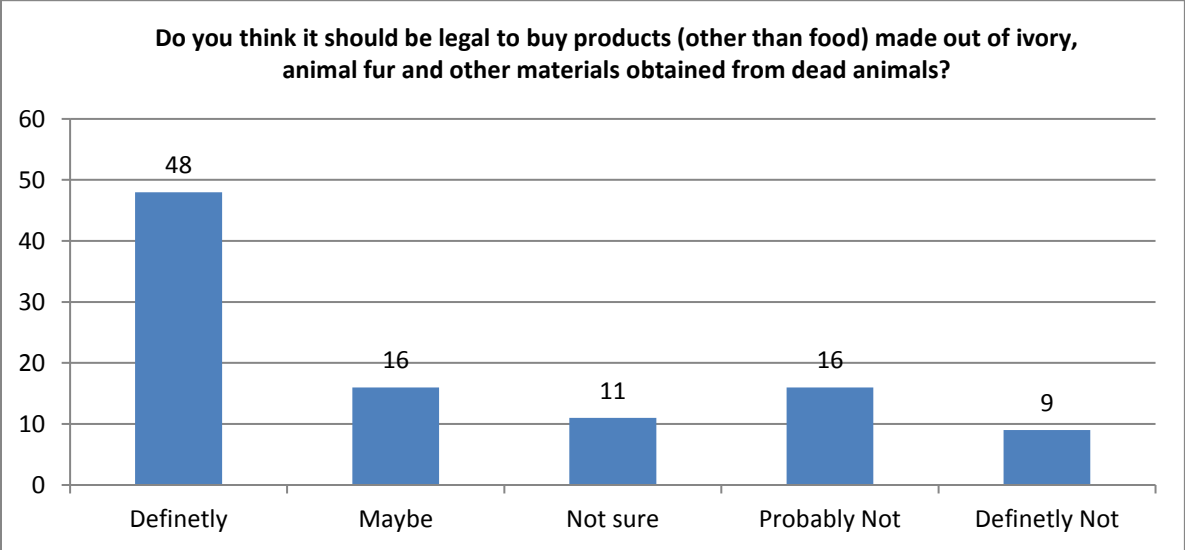
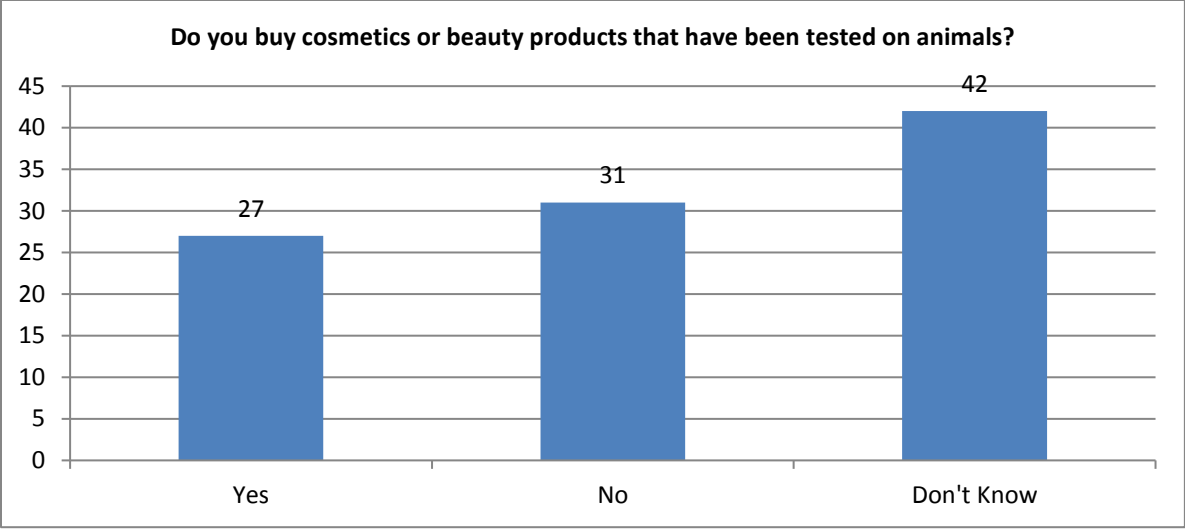
Tick the option you think most applicable.			
	Yes	No	Don't Know
When you buy meat, do you think whether the animals are grown in a suitable environment?			
Do you buy meat if you know that the animals have been grown in cramped and inadequate environments?			
When you buy clothes and accessories, do you check whether any animals were killed or harmed in the making of the product?			
Do you buy clothes or accessories if an animal has been killed to produce it (example: fur, ivory, leather, et cetera)?			
When you buy cosmetics or beauty products, do you check whether they have been tested on animals?			
Do you buy cosmetics or beauty products that have been tested on animals?			

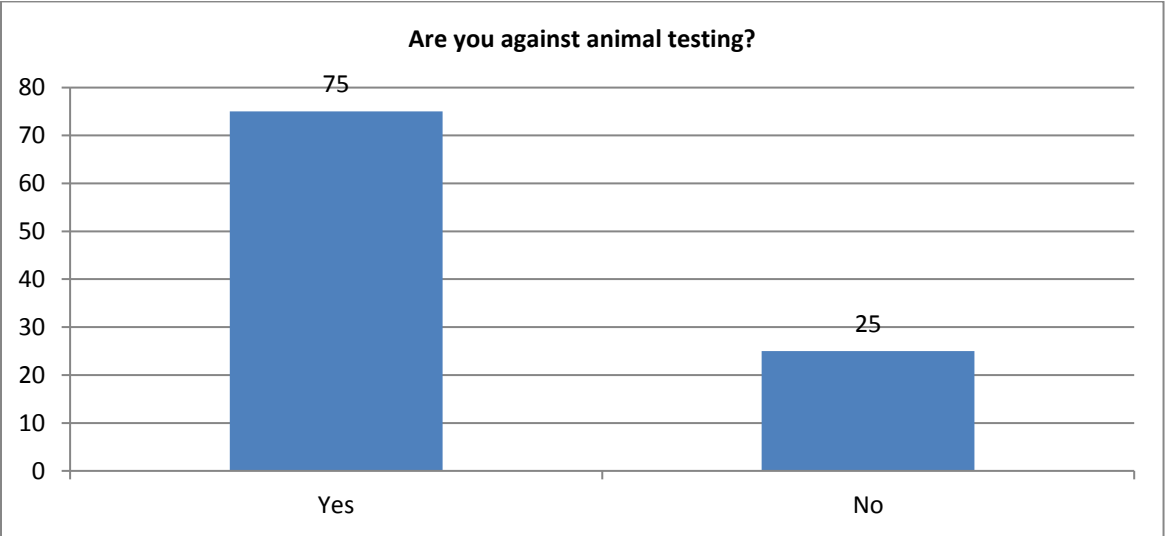
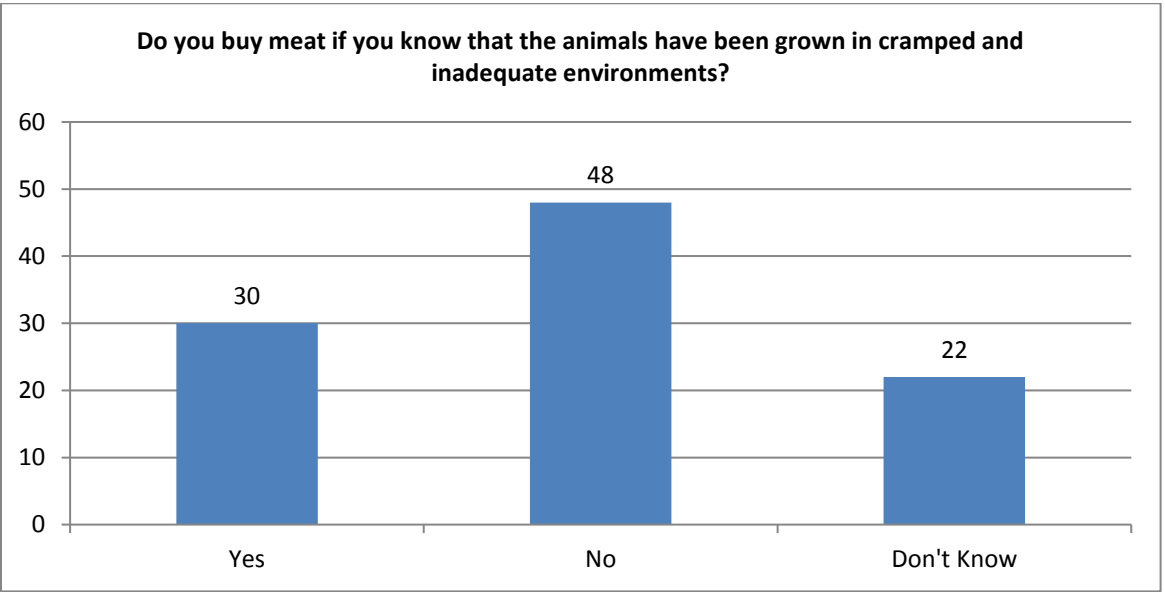
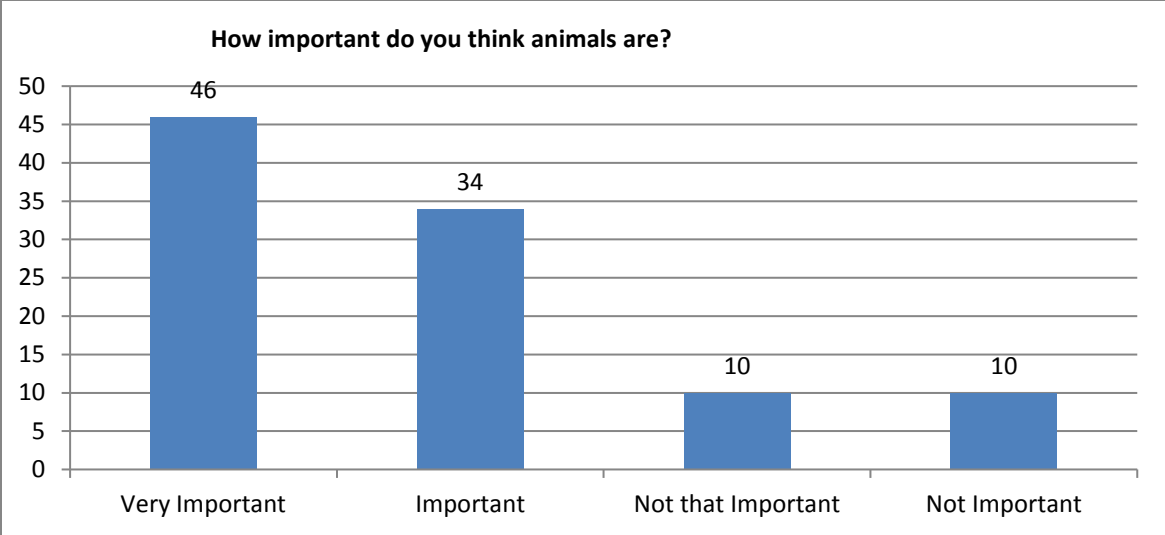
<b>Do you think animal extinction is a serious problem?</b>	
Yes	
No	
Don't Know	
If yes, why?	
If no, why?	

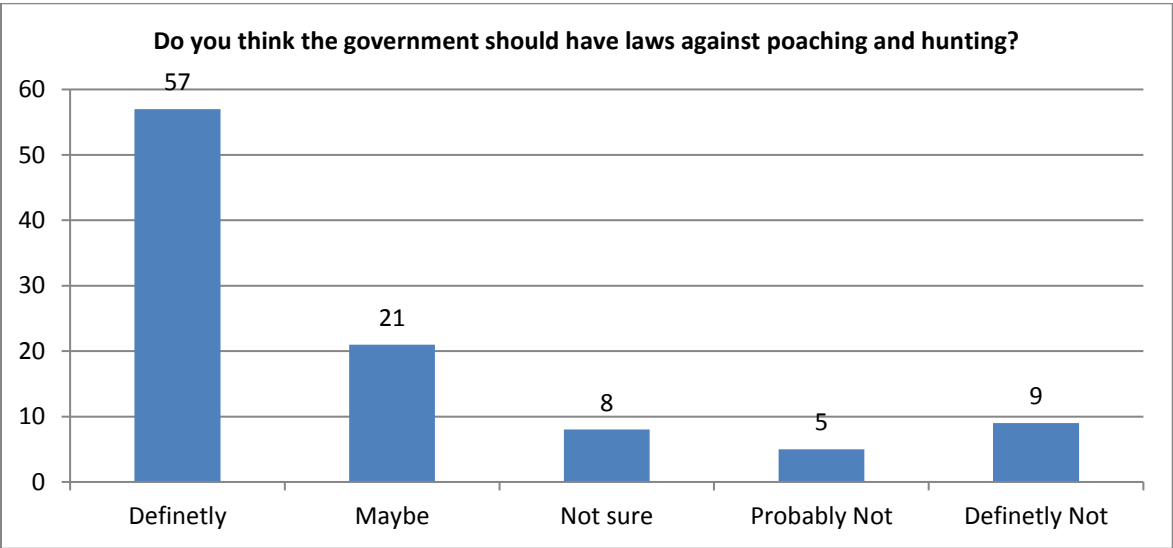
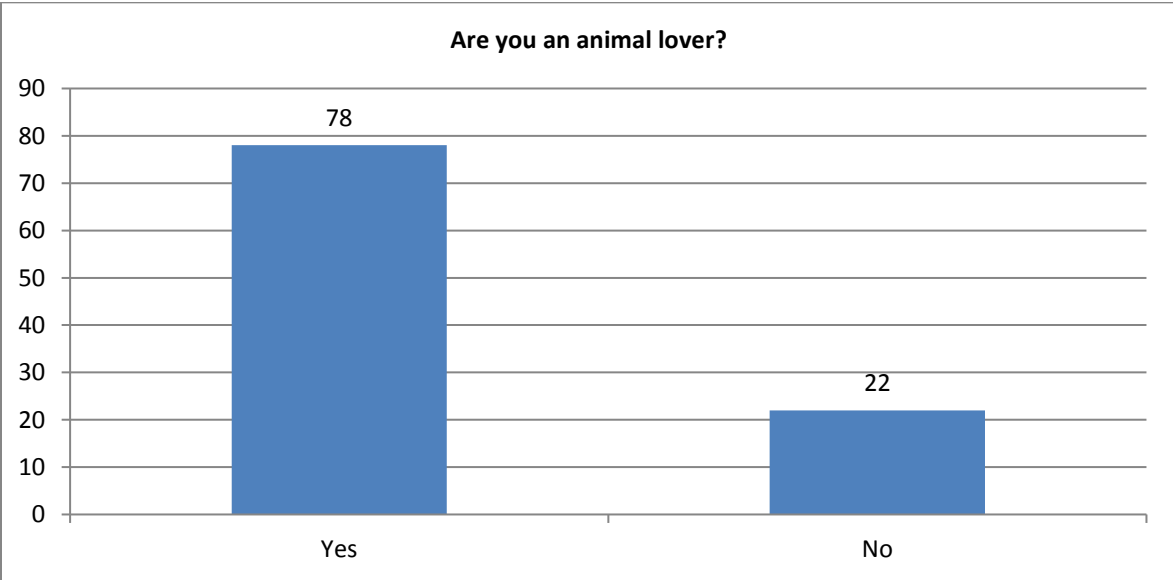
### Appendix 3: Data gathered from our research

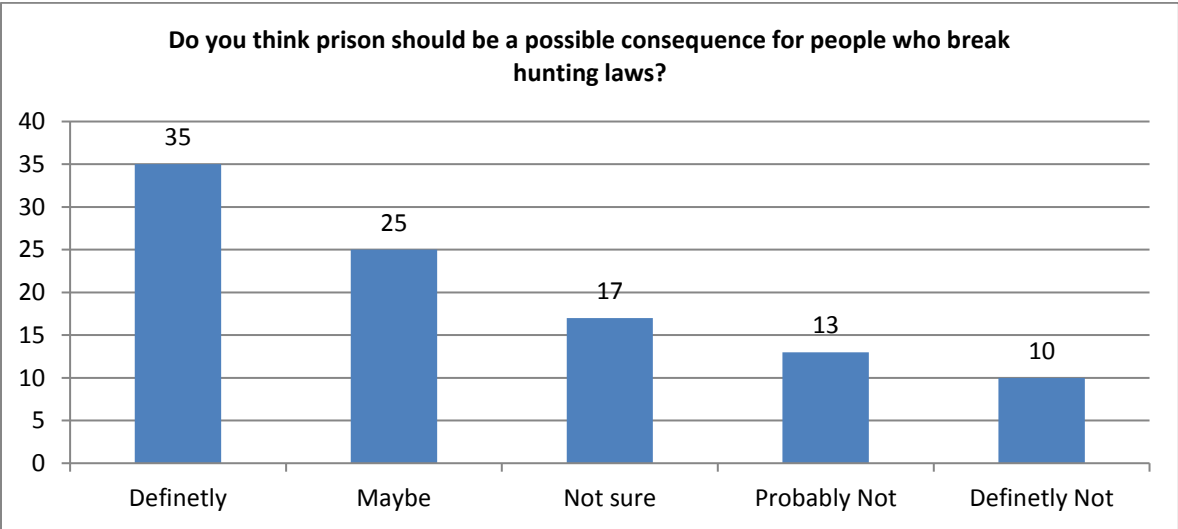
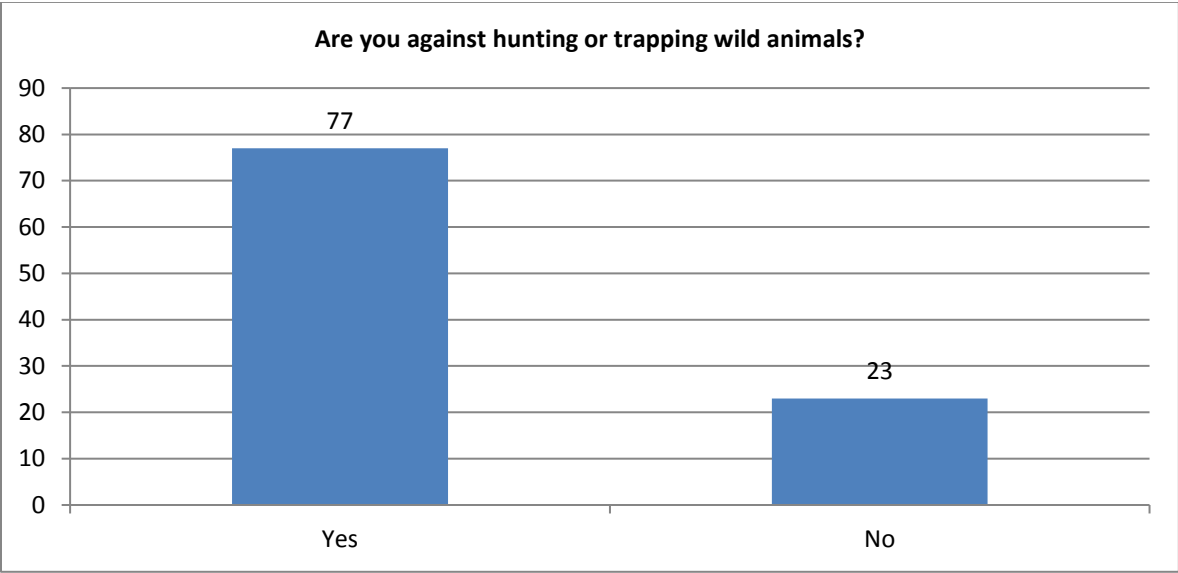
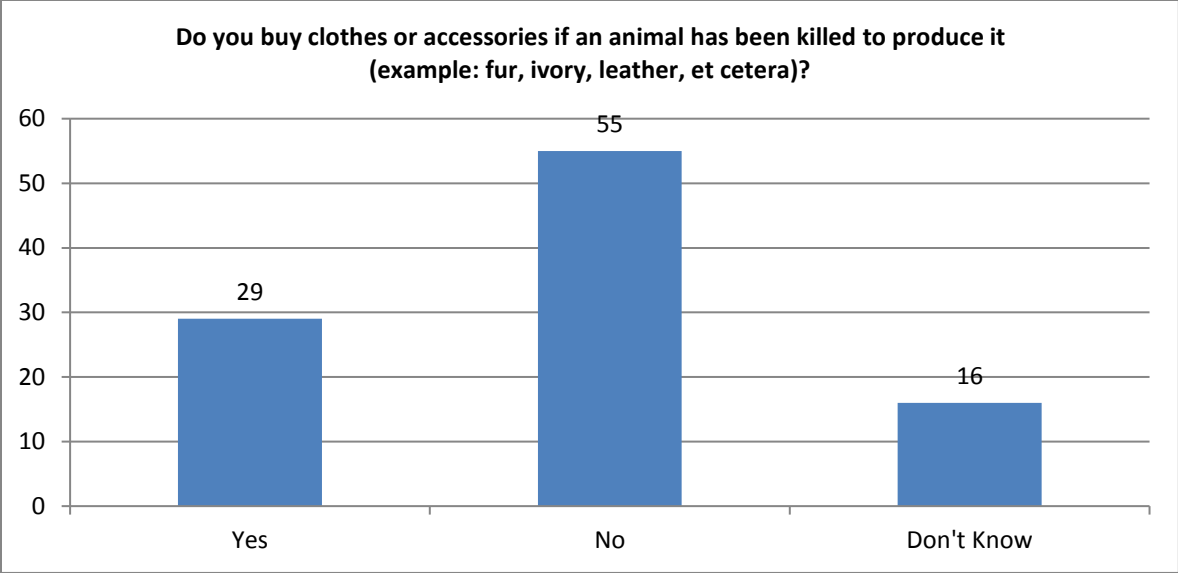


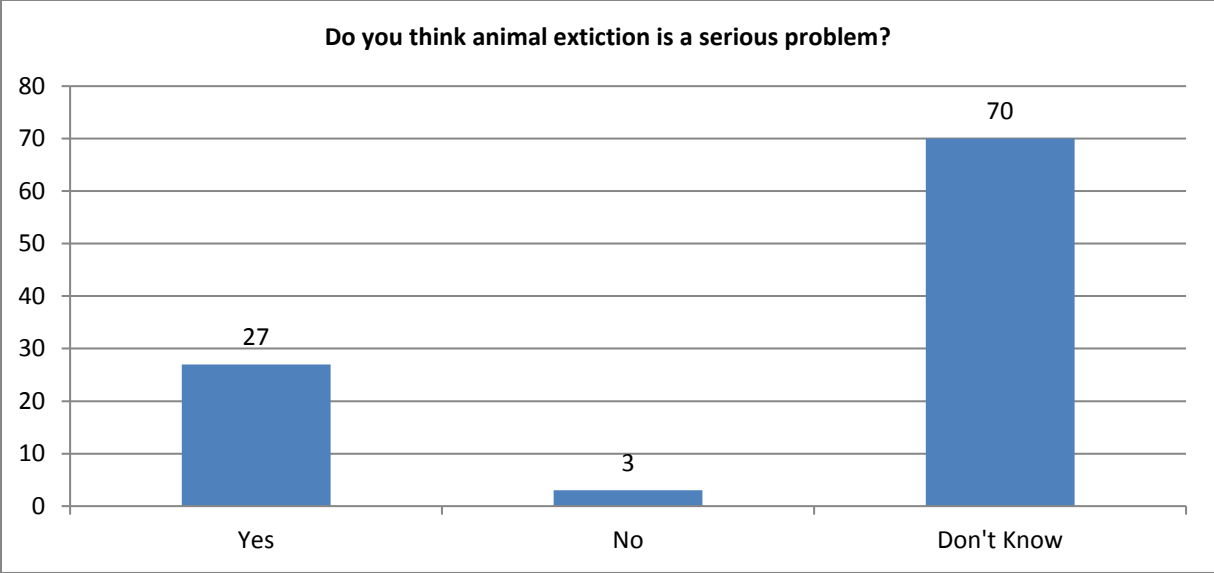












## Appendix 4: Transcript of Mr Attard's Answers


<b>Sex:</b>	
Male	x
Female	





<b>Age:</b>	
11-15	
16-25	
26-35	
36-45	
46-60	x
61+	

<b>Are you an animal lover?</b>	
Yes	x
No	

<b>How important do you think animals are?</b>	
Very Important	x
Important	
Not That Important	
Not Important	

<b>Are you aware certain becoming extinct?</b>	
Yes	x
No	

<b>Which of these animals do you think is going extinct in Malta?</b>		
The Maltese freshwater Crab ( <i>Qabru</i> )		x

The Mediterranean Chameleon ( <i>Kamaleonte</i> )		
The Barn Owl ( <i>Barbagann</i> )		x
The Loggerhead Turtle ( <i>Fekruna Komuni</i> )		x
The Blue Rock Thrush ( <i>Monticola solitarius</i> )		

<b>Which of these do you think is the main reason for animal extinction?</b>	
Habitat Fragmentation	x
Agriculture Human	
Over-population	
Deforestation	x
Poaching and Hunting	x

<b>Are you against animal testing?</b>	
Yes	x
No	
If yes, why? There are other ways to test out products which do not involve animals and their suffering	
If no, why?	

<b>Are you against hunting or trapping wild animals?</b>	
Yes	x
No	
If yes, why? Because this is causing a decline in the population of birds and animals that are already facing other environmental problems such as pollution, degradation of their habitat, climate change etc	
If no, why?	

<b>Are you related to someone who hunts?</b>	
Yes	
No	x
If yes, how does this affect you?	
If no, how does this affect you? I am still of the opinion that we should respect wildlife and animals. Hunting today is not used for our livelihood but simply as a pleasure which should not be. We can shoot them with Cameras	