



Wild Bird Feeding Institute

State of Bird Feeding and Watching

2025



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Study Background



Objectives

The Wild Bird Feeding Institute (WBFI) is interested in refreshing industry understanding of the state of the wild bird feeding market. WBFI seeks to conduct new research in order to assess attitudes and behaviors specific to wild bird feeding and the incidence of wild bird hobbies. New to the research this year is to assess and recognize the impacts of the hobby on participants' mental health and overall wellbeing.

Audience

N|1,600

- Consumers who are the sole decision maker or shared decision maker of household wild bird food purchases and have actively fed wild birds within the past twenty-four months.
- N|800 US consumers
- N|800 CA consumers
 - N|500 English, N|300 French

Data Collection & Reporting

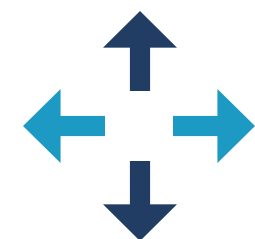
- 10-minute online survey
- Fielded March 31- April 7, 2025
- Results within are shown in total (US + CA) and by market. Significant differences (@ 95% CI) were analyzed by age, gender, place of residence, and level of hobby enthusiasm, and noted within if meaningful difference detected.
- When applicable, results were compared to 2023 findings.



Key Findings



Consumer behaviors have shown consistency, echoing the insights from the 2023 research study. Enthusiasts of the hobby discover numerous benefits, with the most profound being an enhanced sense of mental health and overall wellbeing.



THE MARKET REMAINS
RELATIVELY UNCHANGED
FROM 2023

Basic seed mix remains the top choice for wild bird food, with **most** consumers **shopping at mass retailers**. However, specialty stores are gaining popularity. **One-third plan to spend more on wild bird food this year**, consistent with 2023 trends. **Brand loyalty is strong, but availability is key**, prompting many to switch brands if necessary. **Price, durability, the ability to attract various birds, and ease of cleaning feeders** are important factors in purchasing decisions.



CONSUMERS ENGAGE IN THE
HOBBY YEAR-ROUND MOST
OFTEN WITH OTHERS

More than half are feeding and watching wild birds **at least weekly, during each season**. Engagement **peaks during spring and summer**. Most are **participating with their spouse/significant other and/or child(ren)**. Which lends to the reason consumers first take part in the hobby – to carry on a family tradition or to connect with nature.

Position the hobby as a year-round activity that fosters connection with nature and loved ones.



WILD BIRD FEEDING AND
WATCHING IS VIEWED AS
RELAXING AND CALMING

Consumers feel the **hobby reduces stress**, has a **positive impact on their mental health**, and **brings harmony and beauty to their life** – all attributes desired most from a hobby. Roughly **nine in ten** consumers **agree** that watching their bird feeders **makes them feel good** and that **seeing birds at their feeders improves their day**.

Highlight these benefits to attract those who may not have considered wild bird watching and feeding.



HOBBY PARTICIPATION BRINGS
OVERWHELMINGLY POSITIVE
IMPACTS TO MENTAL HEALTH

Compared to other hobbies consumers participate in, **wild bird watching and feeding has a more positive impact on one's mental health**. **More than eight in ten** state that compared to before they began participating, the **hobby has improved their mental health and overall wellbeing**.

Showcase the positive impacts of the hobby on one's mental health and wellbeing to attract a broader audience.

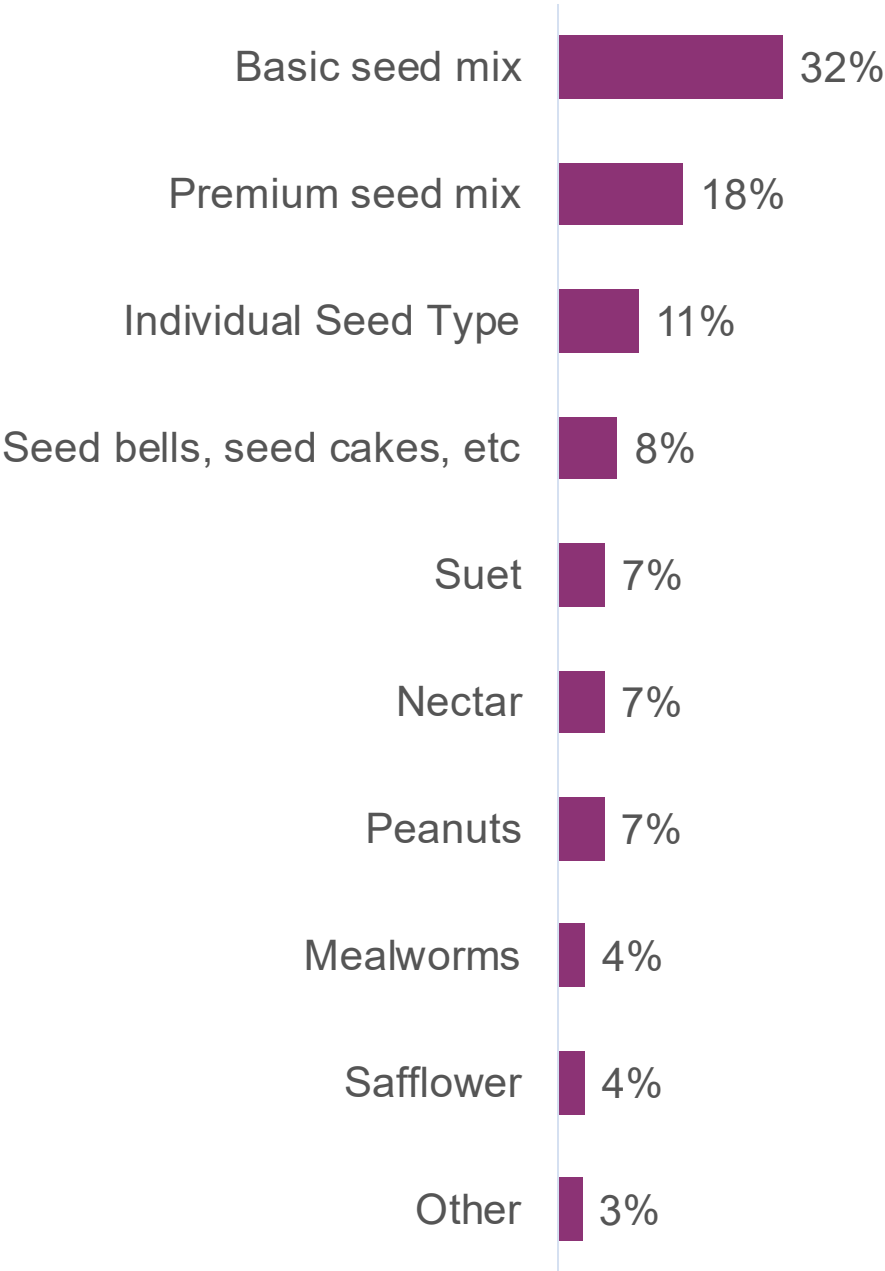
North America Snapshot



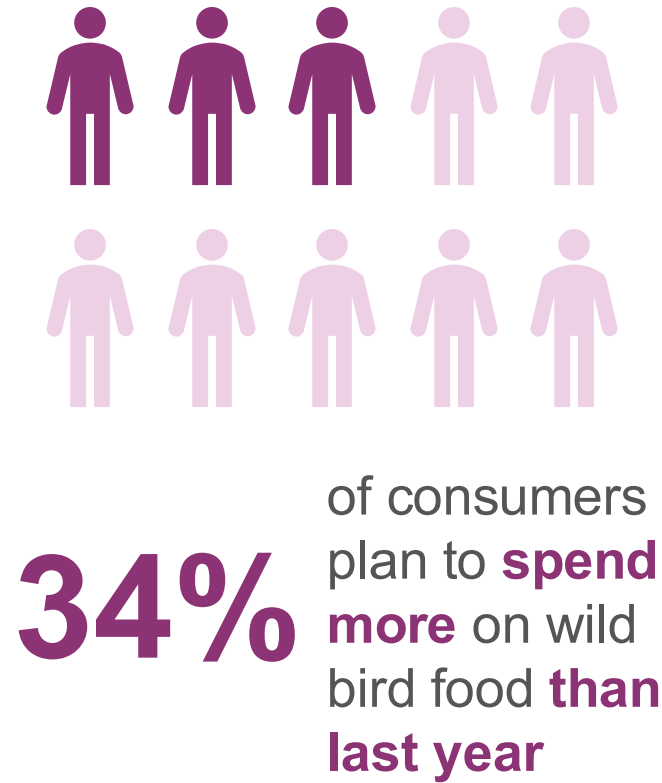
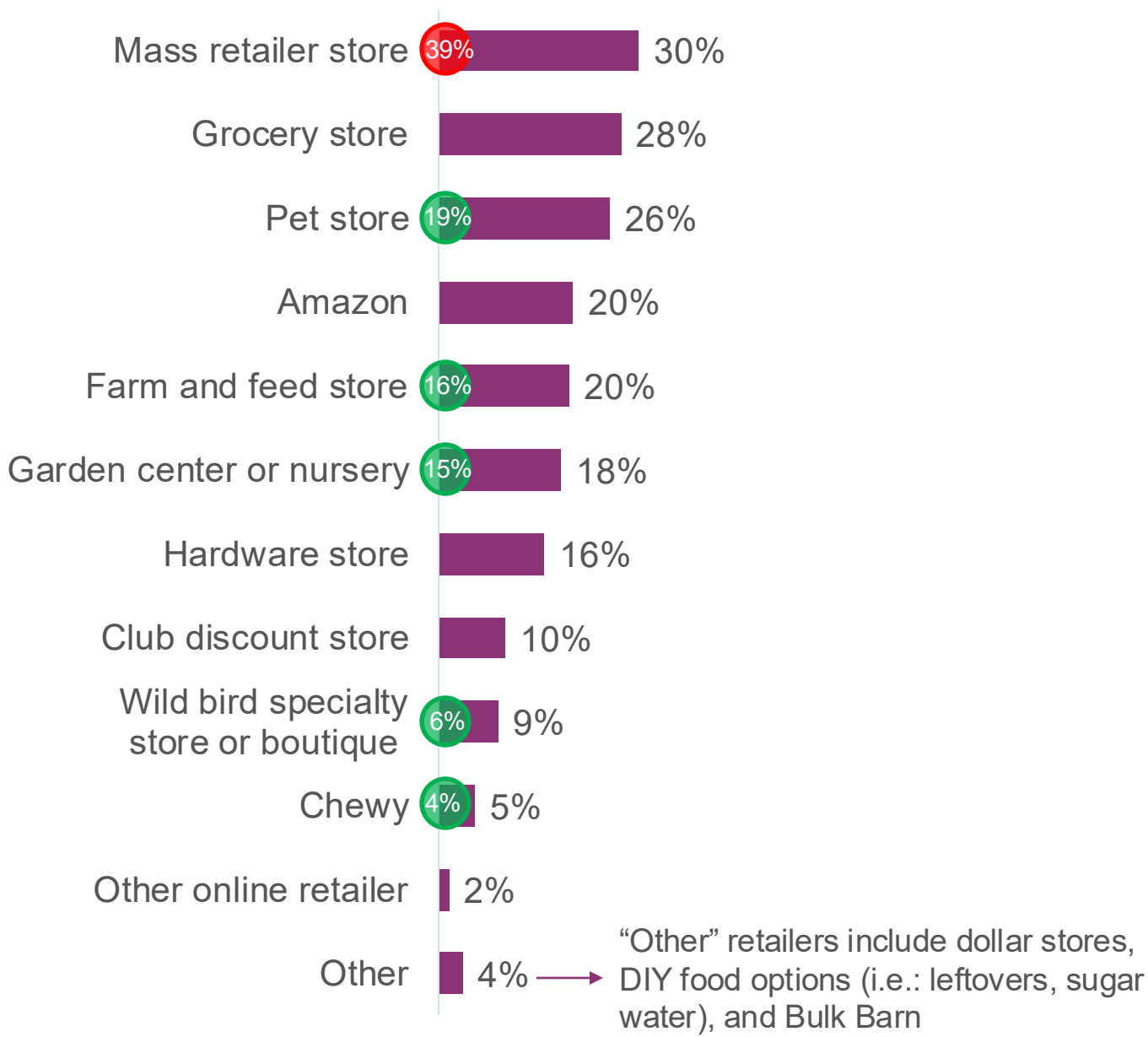
Consumers primarily purchase basic seed mix. They buy wild bird food from various retailers, most often mass retailers, grocery stores, and pet shops. One-third anticipate spending more on wild bird food this year.



Wild Bird Food Purchases



Top Retailers for Wild Bird Food Purchases



Base: Respondent Base (n=1600)
Q23 – Compared to last year, how much do you think you will spend on wild bird food?
Q25 – Thinking about how much you spend on wild bird FOOD in a typical year, what percent is spent on each of the following types of bird food?
Q26 – Where do you purchase wild bird FOOD?

Indicates statistically significant increase/decrease (@95% CI) vs. 2023 study. Percentage shown represents 2023 metric.



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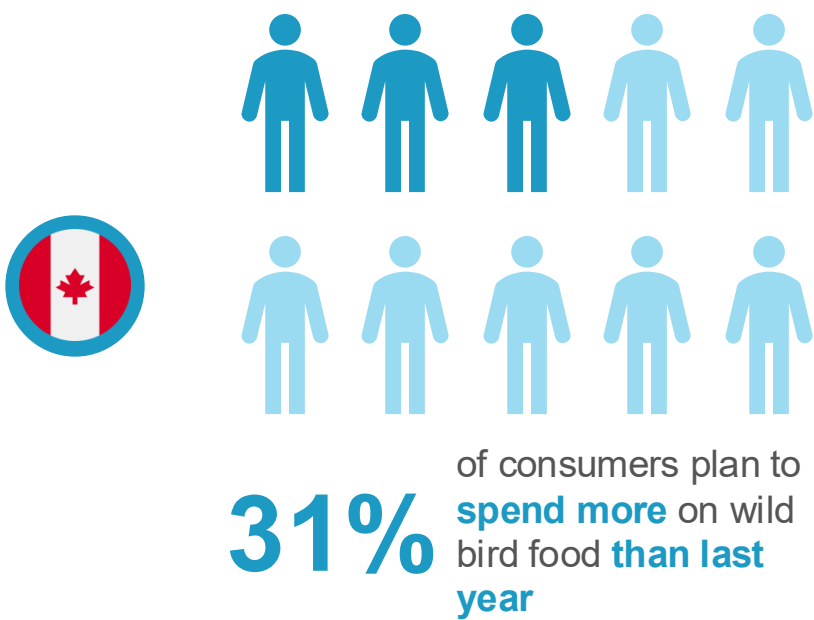
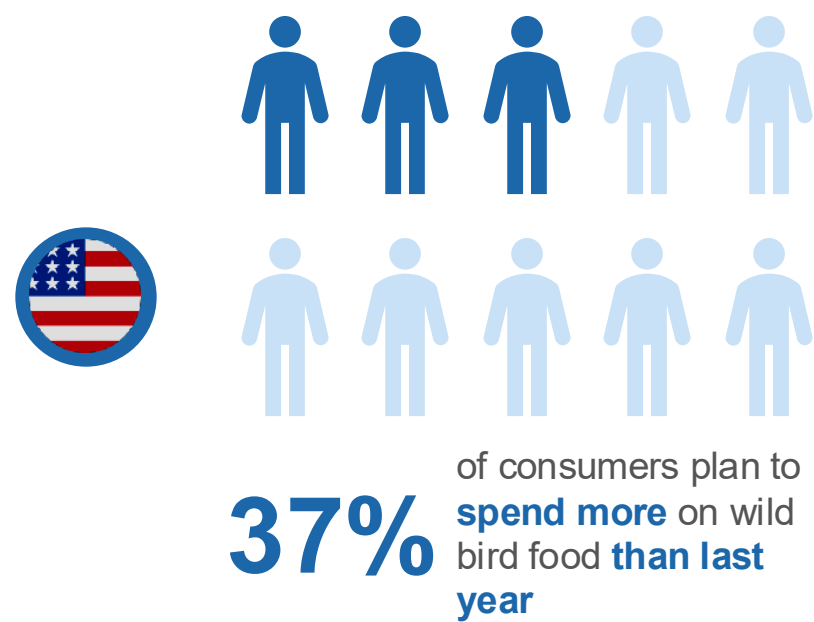




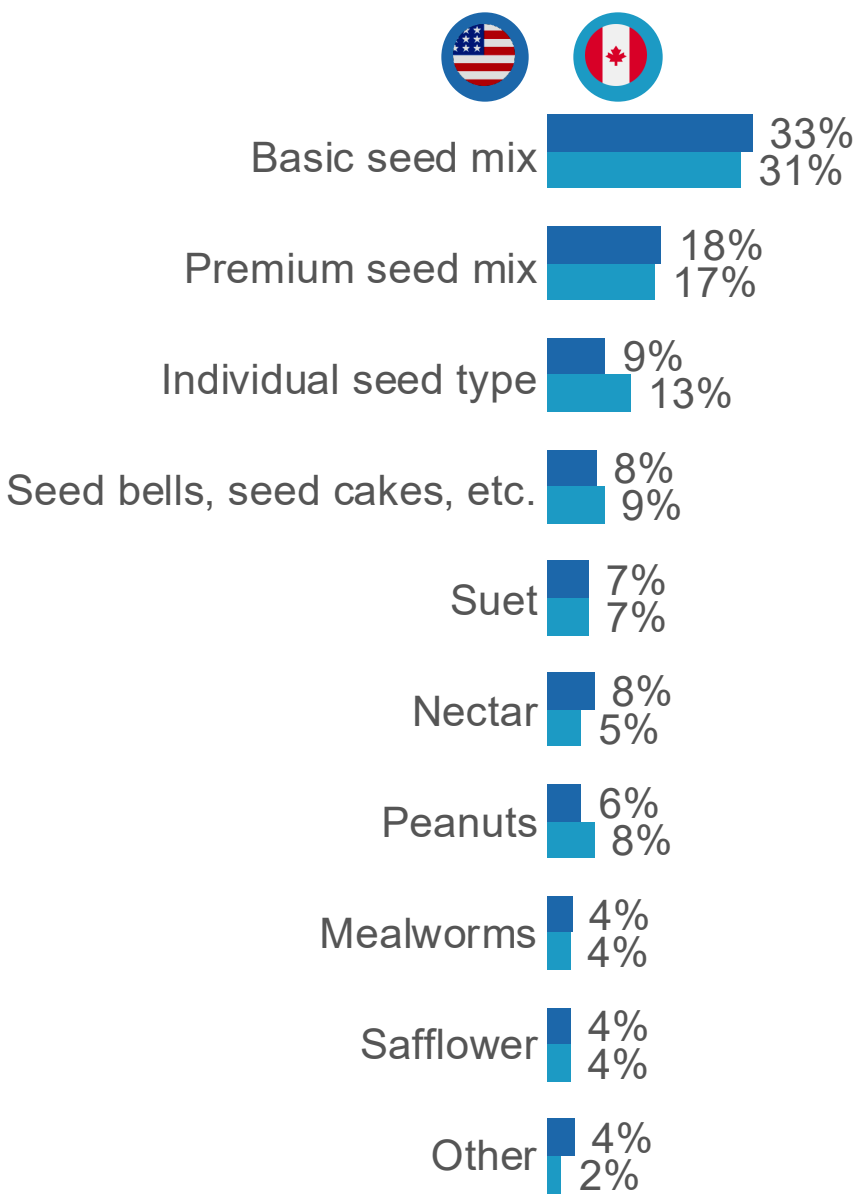
Wild Bird Food Purchasing by Market



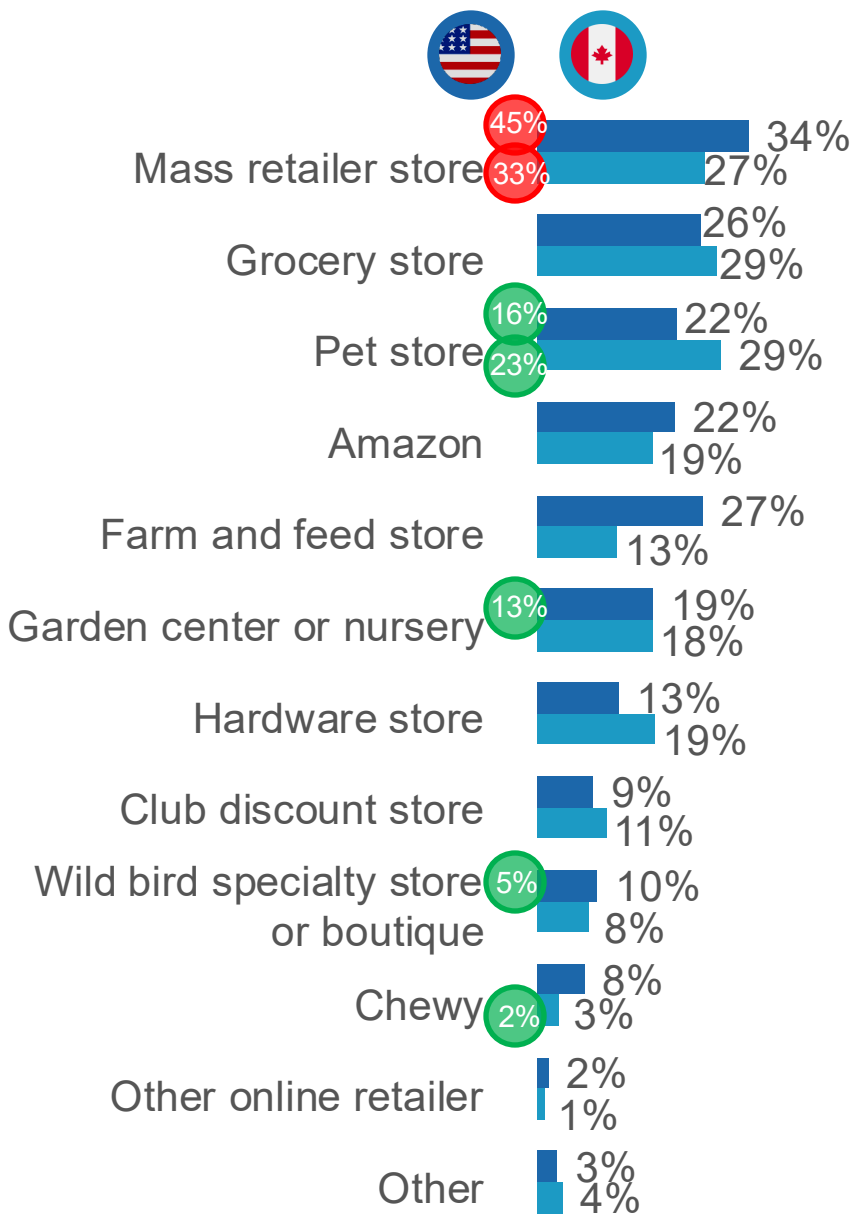
Consumers most frequently purchase basic seed mix, relying on a variety of retailers for their wild bird food purchases, but most commonly mass retailer, grocery, and pet stores. One-third anticipate spending more on wild bird food this year.



Wild Bird Food Purchases



Top Retailers for Wild Bird Food Purchases



Base: Respondent Base US (n=800); CA (n=800)
Q23 – Compared to last year, how much do you think you will spend on wild bird food?
Q25 – Thinking about how much you spend on wild bird FOOD in a typical year, what percent is spent on each of the following types of bird food?
Q26 – Where do you purchase wild bird FOOD?

Indicates statistically significant increase/decrease (@95% CI) vs. 2023 study. Percentage shown represents 2023 metric.



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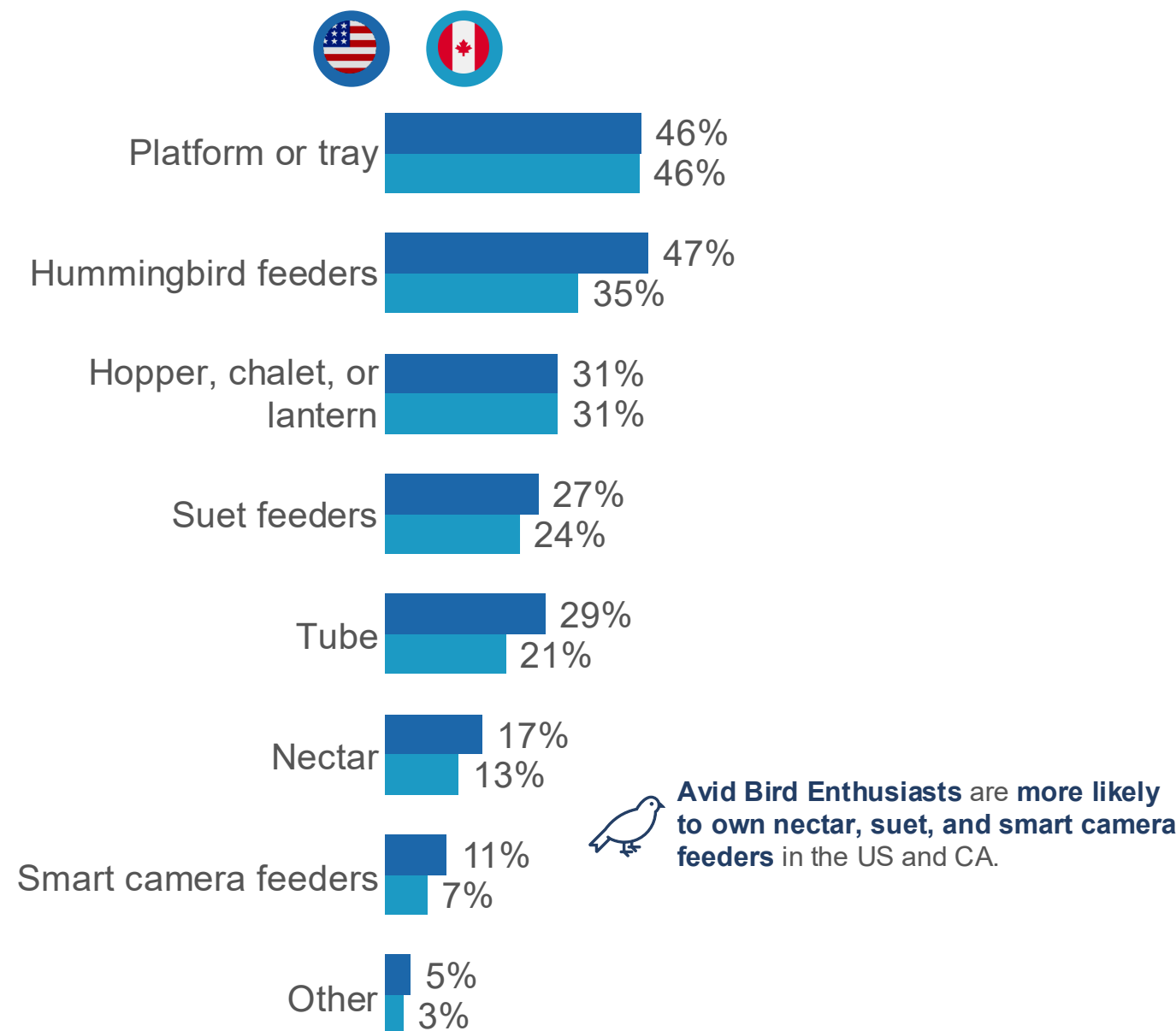


Wild Bird Feeder Purchasing by Market

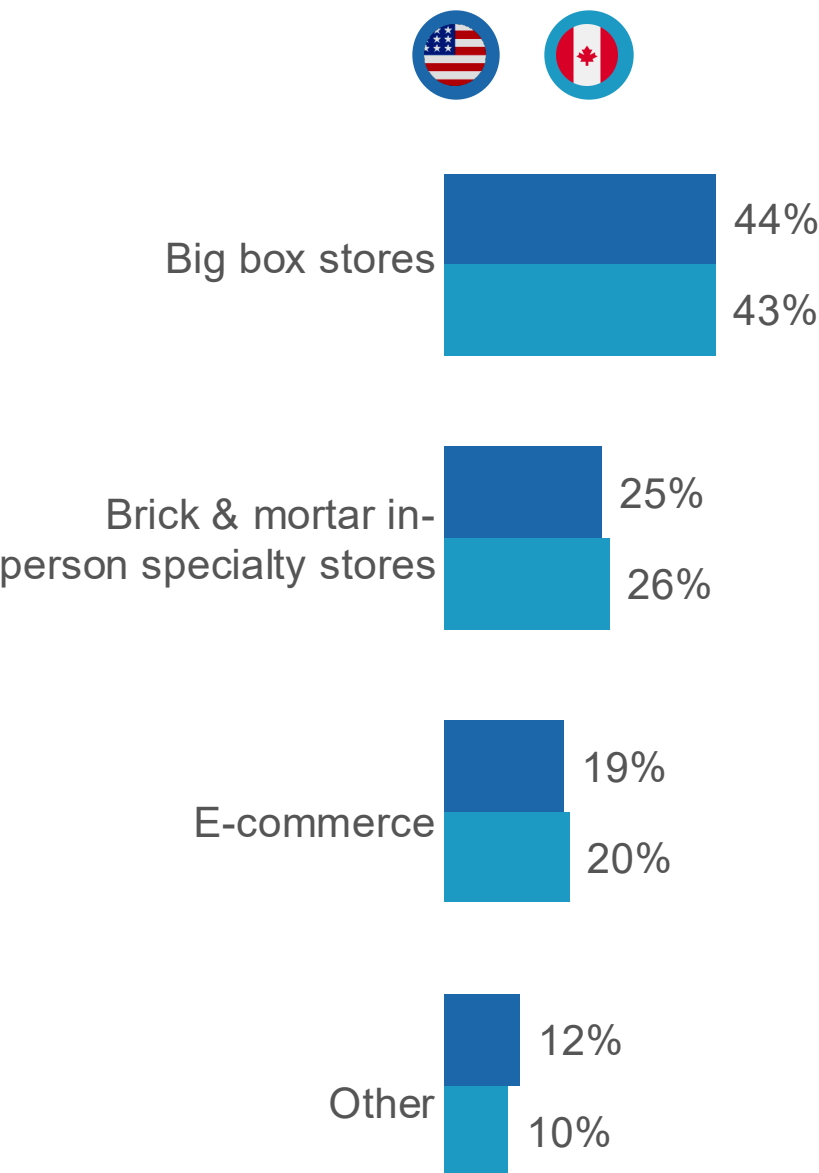


Consumers have a range of wild bird feeders, with platform or tray feeders and hummingbird feeders being the most popular. Most buy their feeders in-person, typically at big box or specialty stores.

Types of Wild Bird Feeders Owned



Retailers Shopped for Wild Bird Feeders

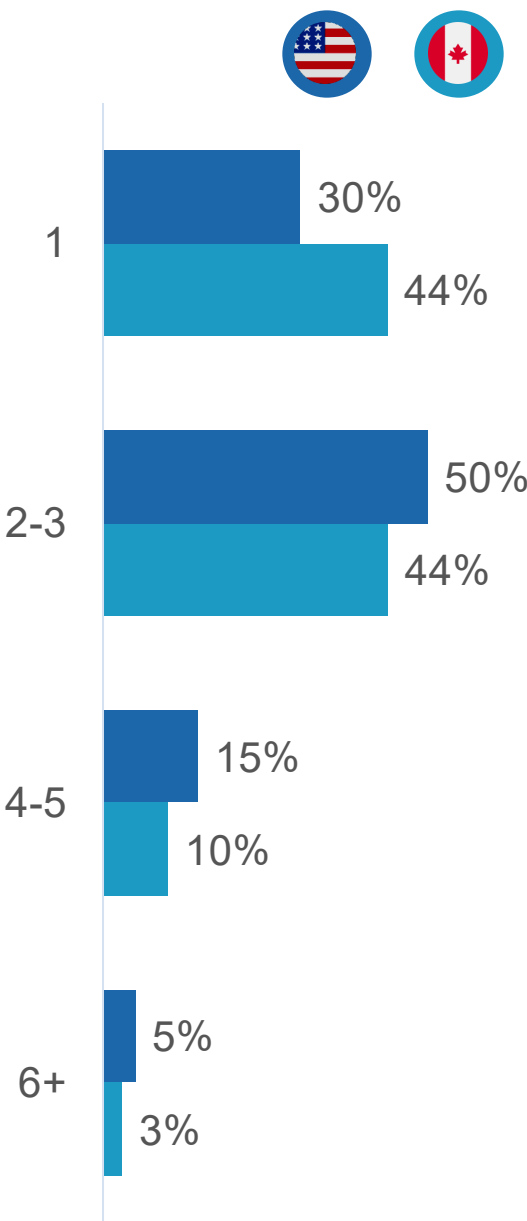


New content for 2025, thus WoW comparison not available.
Base: Respondent Base US (n=760); CA (n=749)
Q32 – Which of the following wild bird FEEDERS do you currently own?
Q33 – Thinking of your purchasing of wild bird FEEDERS, how often do you purchase from the following types of stores?

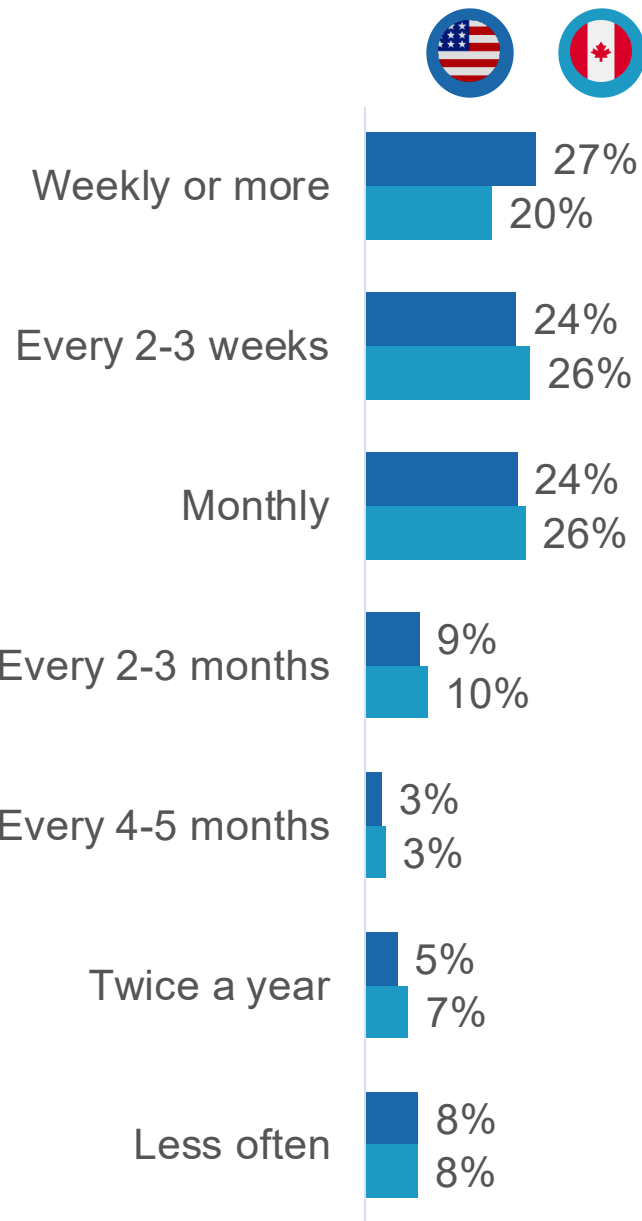


The majority of consumers have three wild bird stations or less at their home. Consumers frequently clean their wild bird feeders, most doing so at least monthly.

Number of Wild Bird Feeder Stations



Frequency of Cleaning Wild Bird Feeders

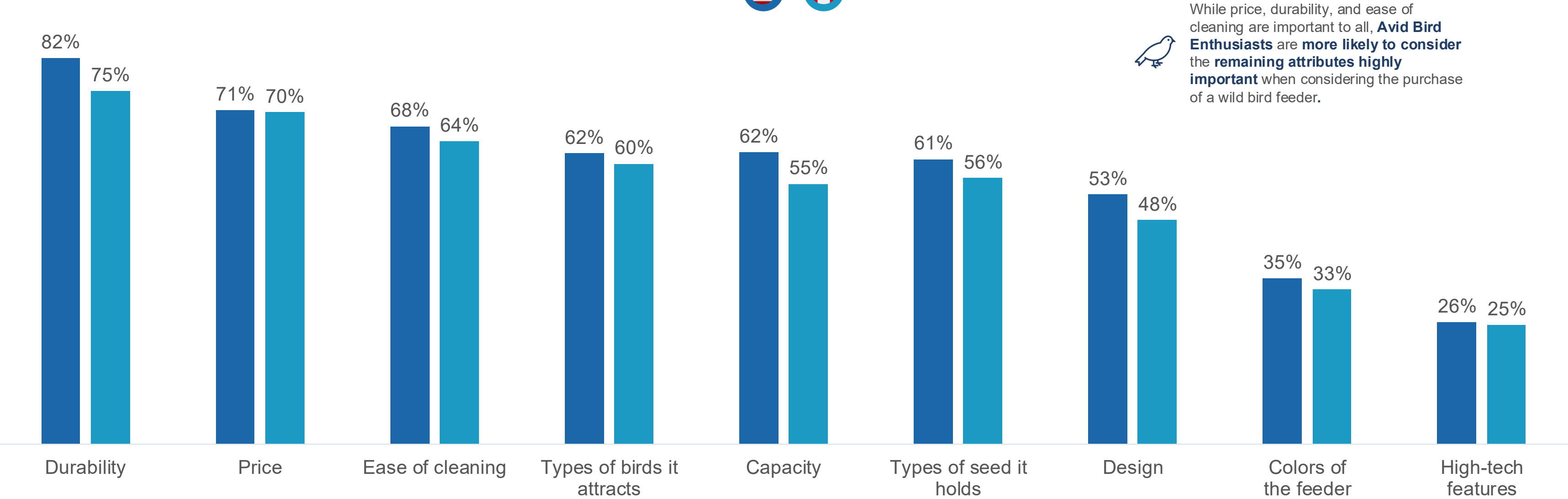


New content for 2025, thus WoW comparison not available.
Base: Respondent Base US (n=760); CA (n=749)
Q31 – Approximately how many wild bird feeding “stations” do you have set up at your home?
Q35 – How often do you typically clean your wild bird FEEDERS?



Consumers prioritize many attributes when purchasing wild bird feeders, primarily durability and price.

Importance of Wild Bird Feeder Attributes When Purchasing
% T2B - Five + Six Star Rating



While price, durability, and ease of cleaning are important to all, **Avid Bird Enthusiasts** are **more likely to consider the remaining attributes highly important** when considering the purchase of a wild bird feeder.

New content for 2025, thus WoW comparison not available.
Base: Respondent Base US (n=760); CA (n=749)
Q34 – When choosing a particular wild bird FEEDER, how important are the following factors?



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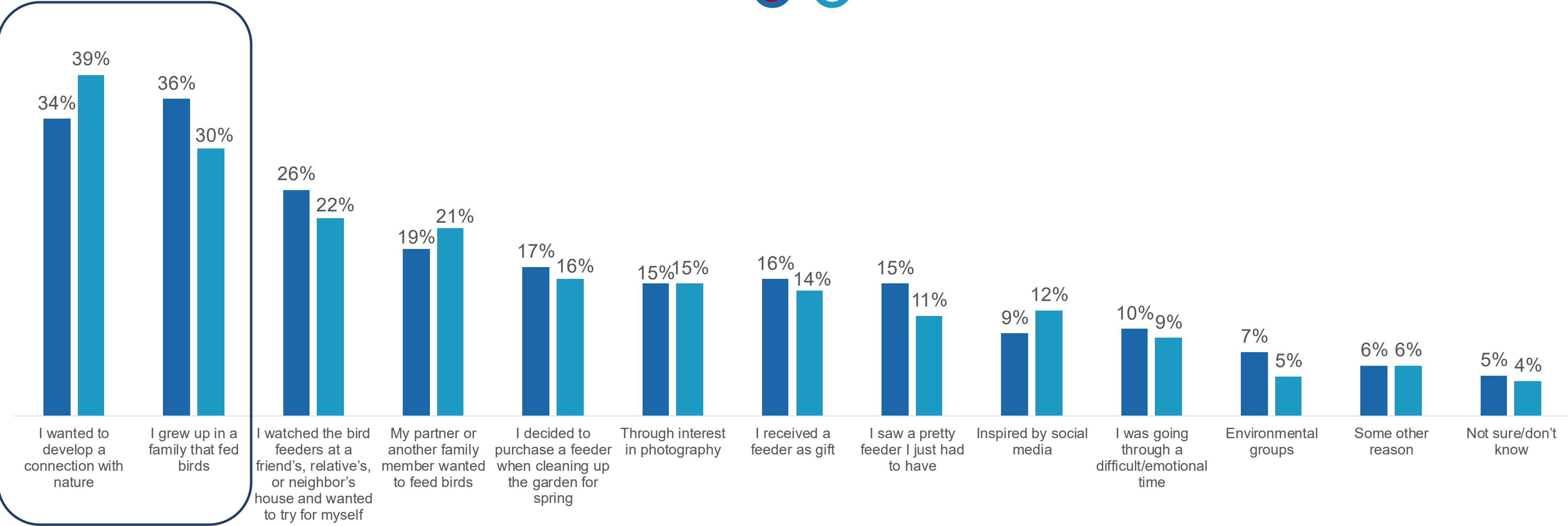
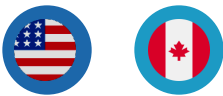


Impacts of the Hobby on Mental Health



Consumers begin wild bird feeding to connect with nature or to carry on a tradition.

Reasons for First Participating in Wild Bird Feeding



New content for 2025, thus WoW comparison not available.
Base: Respondent Base US (n=800); CA (n=800)
Q2 – Why did you first start to feed wild birds?



Consumers enjoy wild bird feeding and watching because of the sense of peace, connection to nature, and satisfaction in aiding wildlife that it brings.



"I'm always **amazed at the variety of birds** that come to our feeders as we are always having new types and species appear, which I would not have thought."

"Getting to see a **variety of birds**, especially ones that don't normally hang around very long if there isn't bird seed out."

"I love watching the birds interacting with each other, and **it is very relaxing sitting and watching them.**"

"I love the fact that **I get to see simple nature displays** from just as simple as seeing how they interact with the food and then feeding on it. The passive stillness combined with soft music is always a **welcome atmosphere.**"

"I love birdwatching and helping migratory birds after their long journey in spring. There's nothing like seeing their vibrant colors and hearing their unique calls—**it's an amazing experience!**"

"I feel happy the birds won't have to struggle nearly as much as they would normally, if they had no help at all. **I like the thought of giving the birds a chance to not worry as much about finding food.** Maybe they have other things they need to do in a day, and they will have the opportunity to do what they have to do.
Especially in winter!"



"I enjoy **watching them eat and knowing I helped them out**, I love the pretty songbirds, chickadees are my favourite, they made me happy during covid lockdowns but my neighbour complained so I had to stop."

"I like **watching all the different kinds of birds that are attracted to my backyard that I wouldn't have noticed otherwise.** It helps me discover or take notice of the variety of birdlife in our local environment. I like looking at their coloured feathers and interaction with each other."

"I am a **big fan of nature and enjoy watching wildlife** and learning about the different types of birds and animals that live in our area."

"Watching a feeding wild birds is a **relaxing hobby.** I enjoy the different types of birds, their unique colors and behaviors. Interacting with them **brings me closer to nature.**"

"I love watching all the different kind of birds that eat out of the feeder. **It's a beautiful and peaceful.**"

"I enjoy the **calmness** of sitting in my back yard, watching the birds come to eat. **It is very relaxing.**"

"We have encroached upon nature for so long and the birds have less places to feed and go so **I enjoy giving back to the wildlife when I am able.**"



Base: Respondent Base US (n=800); CA (n=800)
Q3 – Using just a few words, please tell us what you enjoy most about participating in feeding and watching wild birds.

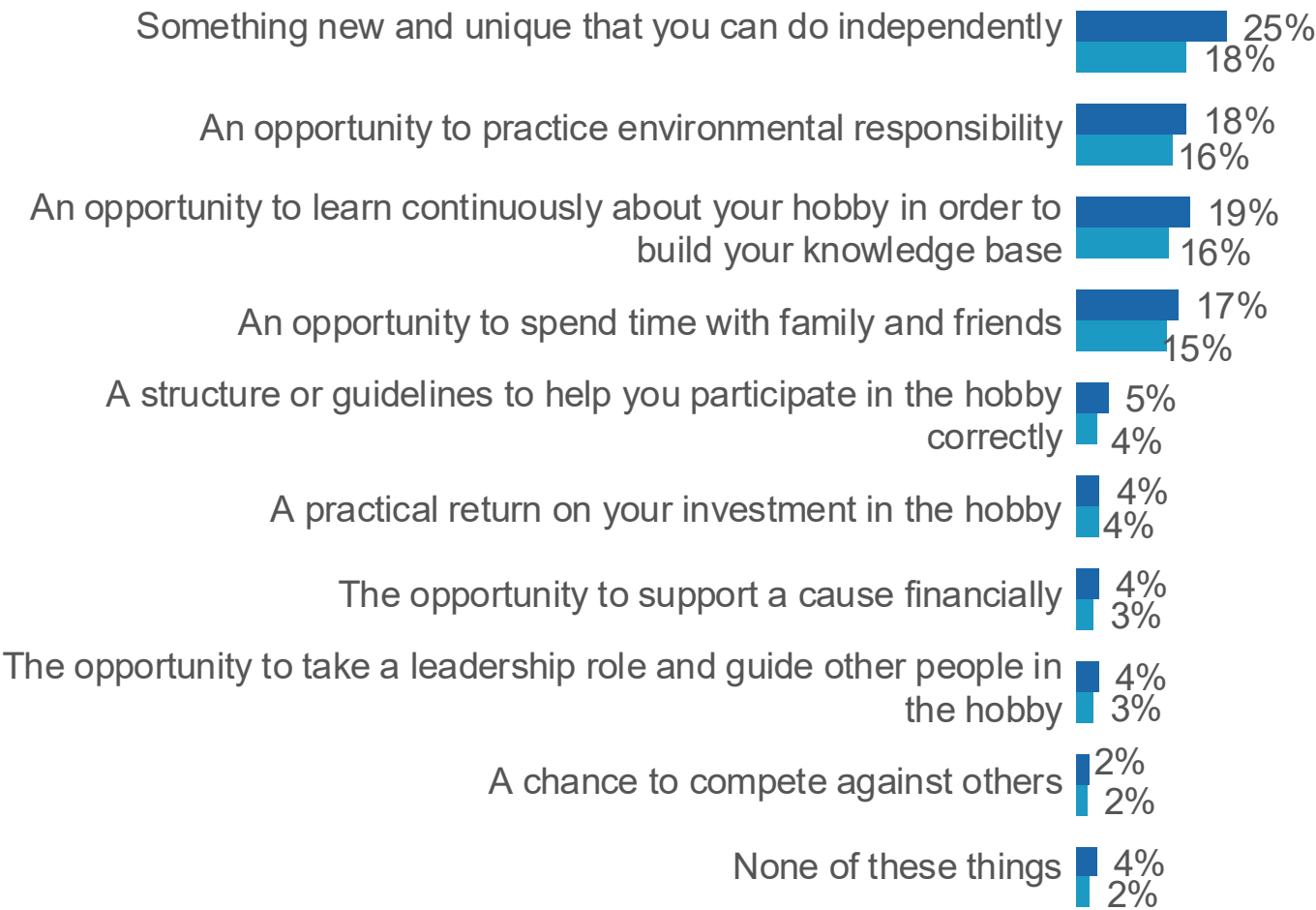
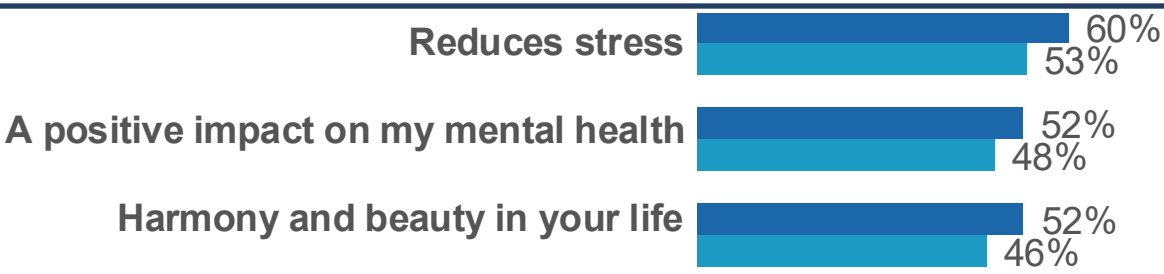


Consumers seek a hobby that reduces stress, has a positive impact on mental health, and provides harmony and beauty – all of which are most associated with wild bird feeding and watching.

Characteristics of an Enjoyable Hobby



Characteristics of Wild Bird Feeding and Watching

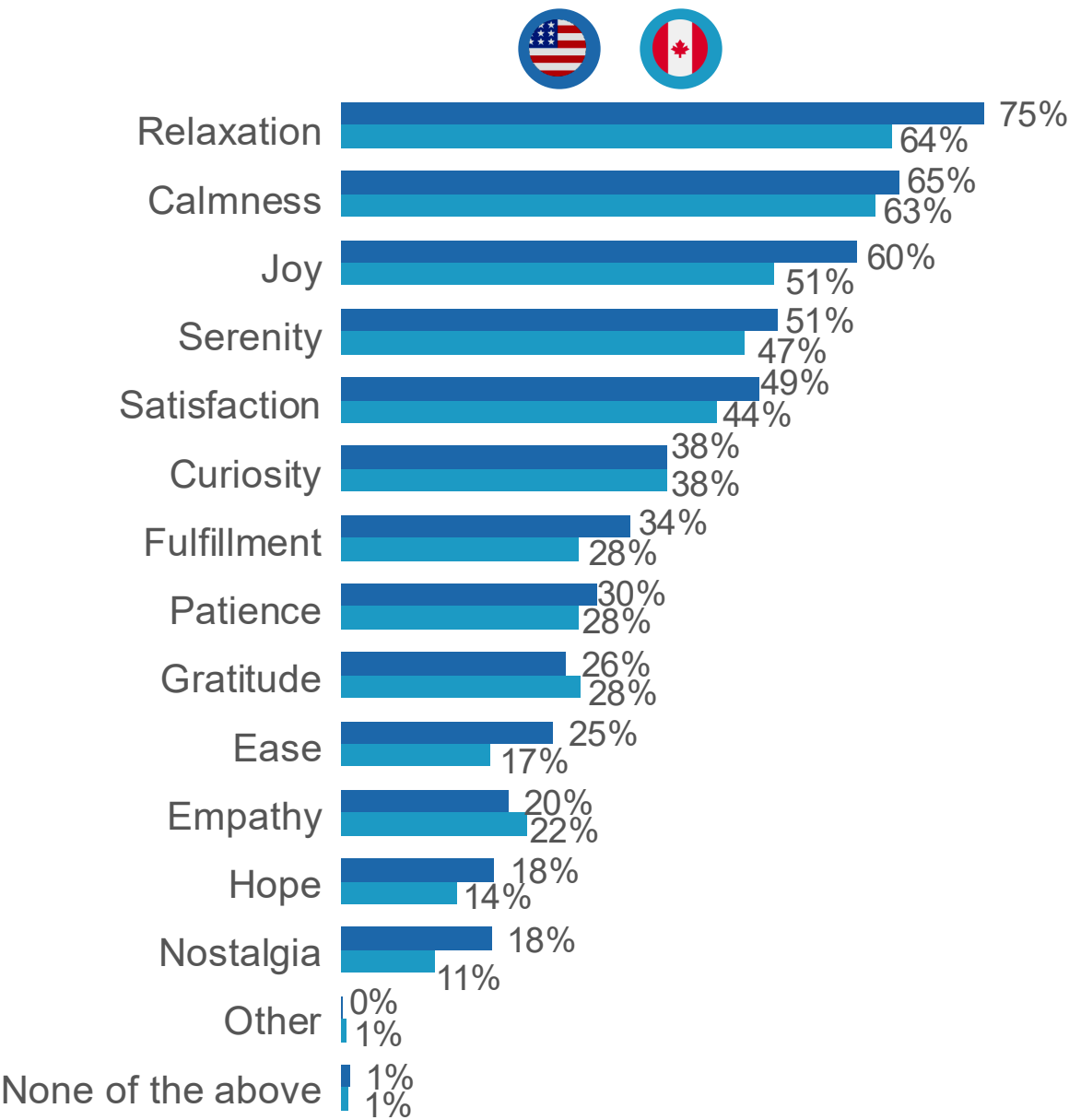


New content for 2025, thus WoW comparison not available.
Base: Respondent Base US (n=800); CA (n=800)
Q4 – In your opinion, an engaging and enjoyable hobby should provide which of the following?
Q5 – And, which of these do you feel wild bird feeding and watching provides?

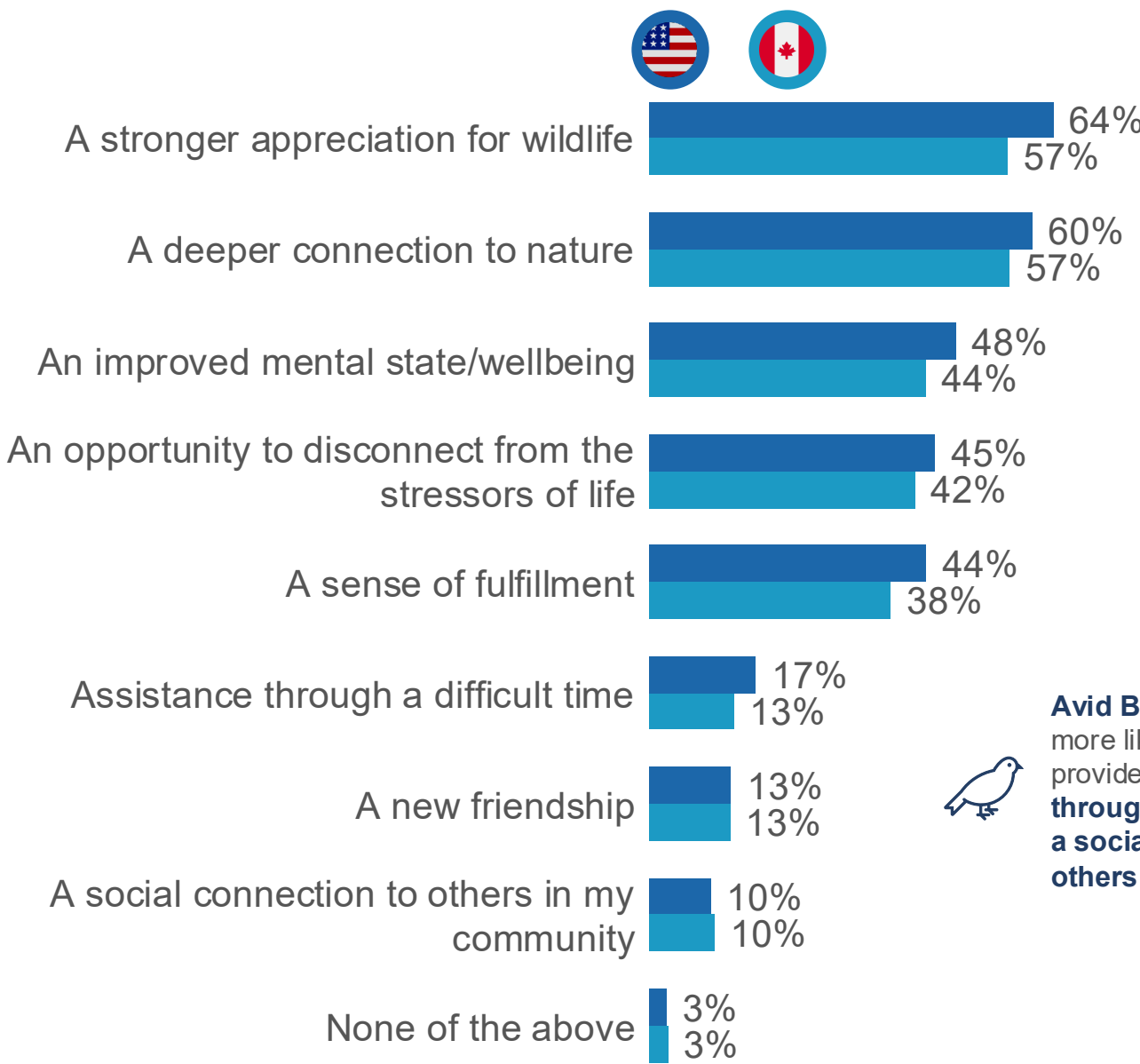


More than six in ten consumers associate wild bird feeding and watching with the adjectives relaxation and calmness. Most commonly, the hobby provides consumers with a stronger appreciation for wildlife and a deeper connection to nature.

Adjectives Associated with Wild Bird Feeding and Watching



Benefits of Wild Bird Feeding and Watching



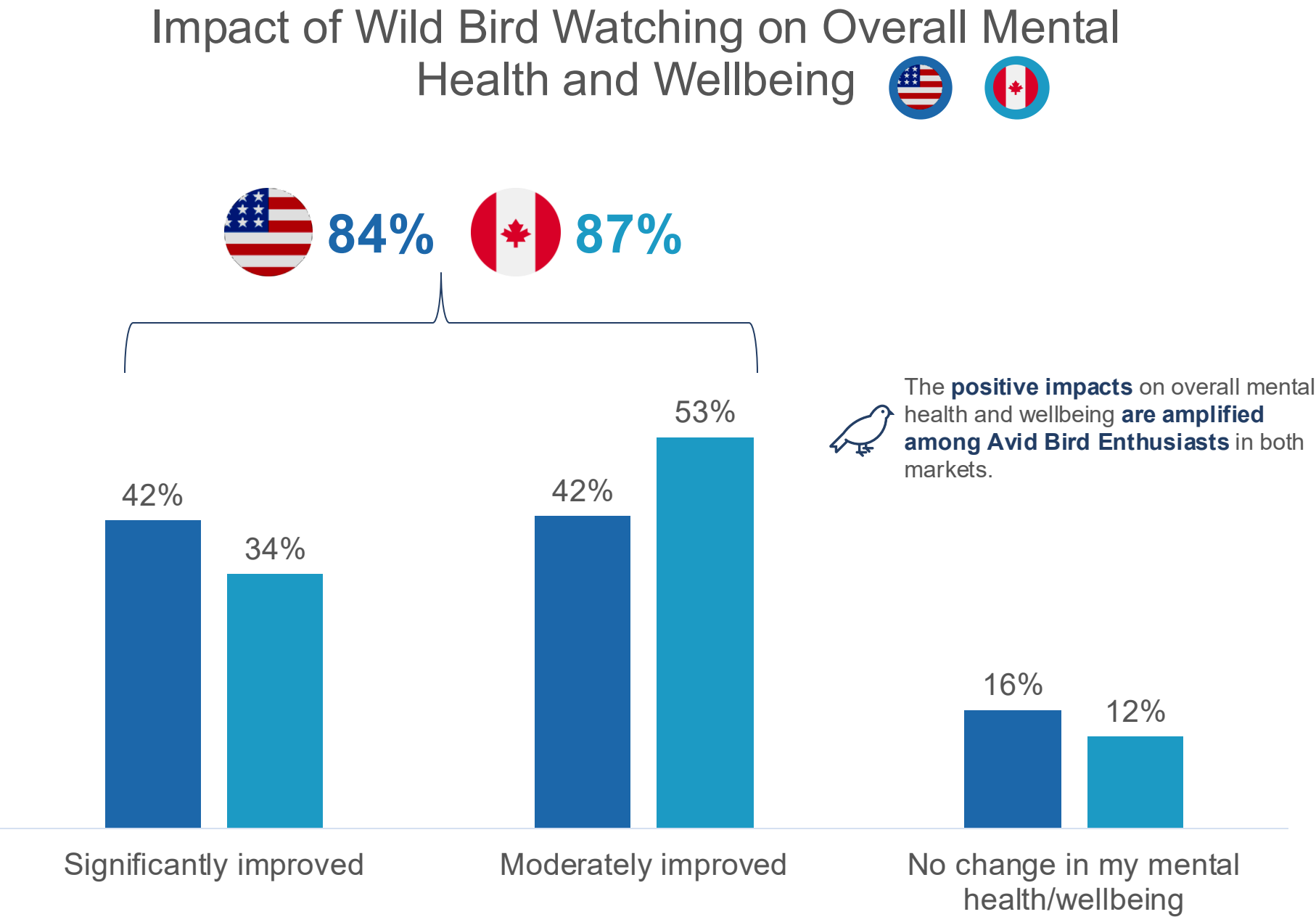
Older consumers are more likely to feel the hobby **brings them a stronger appreciation for wildlife.**

Avid Bird Enthusiasts are more likely to feel the hobby provides **assistance through a difficult time** and **a social connection to others in my community.**

New content for 2025, thus WoW comparison not available.
Base: Respondent Base US (n=800); CA (n=800)
Q6 – Which of the following adjectives, if any, would you associate with wild bird feeding and watching?
Q7 – Which of the following have you experienced as a result of feeding and wild bird watching?



Nearly nine in ten consumers in both markets feel their mental health and wellbeing have improved since beginning to feed and watch wild birds.



“There was a time when I was feeling really stressed, and I happened to sit outside with a cup of coffee, just watching the birds come and go. Seeing them flutter around, completely carefree, **was oddly calming**. I found myself getting lost in the moment, **focusing on their movements instead of my worries**. It was a small but powerful reminder to slow down and appreciate the little things. **Since then, bird watching has become one of my ways to reset when life feels overwhelming.**”

“I was feeling down and looked through my kitchen window and saw a red Cardinal sitting on my deck . Then another came to join it. **I watched very quietly as they hopped around and forget about my issues**. When they flew away, I came back to the present but could see things in perspective and **felt better and in control of the situation and could think through it.**”

“After my husband’s cancer diagnosis and treatment protocols began, I was so stressed and overwhelmed. **By feeding birds, I was able to distress and enjoy the simple pleasures of watching birds come each day to my feeder and chirp happily.**”

“I was feeling sad because our beloved dog had passed away and watching the birds, **enjoying their beauty and knowing that we are helping them during a challenging season made me feel better.**”

New content for 2025, thus WoW comparison not available.
Base: Respondent Base US (n=365); CA (n=333)
Q9 – Can you describe a time when wild bird watching or attracting and feeding backyard birds had a positive impact on your mental health?
Base: Respondent Base US (n=800); CA (n=800)
Q11– Thinking of your overall mental health and wellbeing before you started feeding and watching wild birds, how do you feel it has changed?

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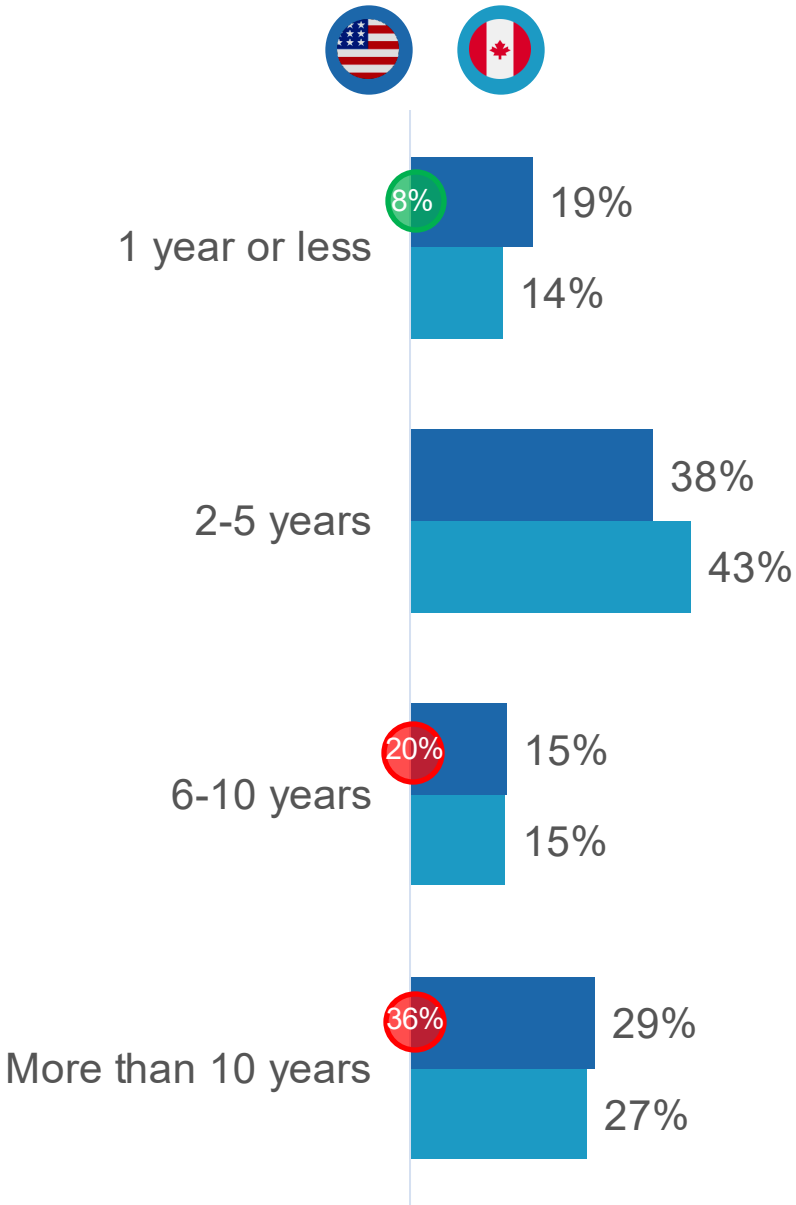


Wild Bird Feeding and Watching Habits

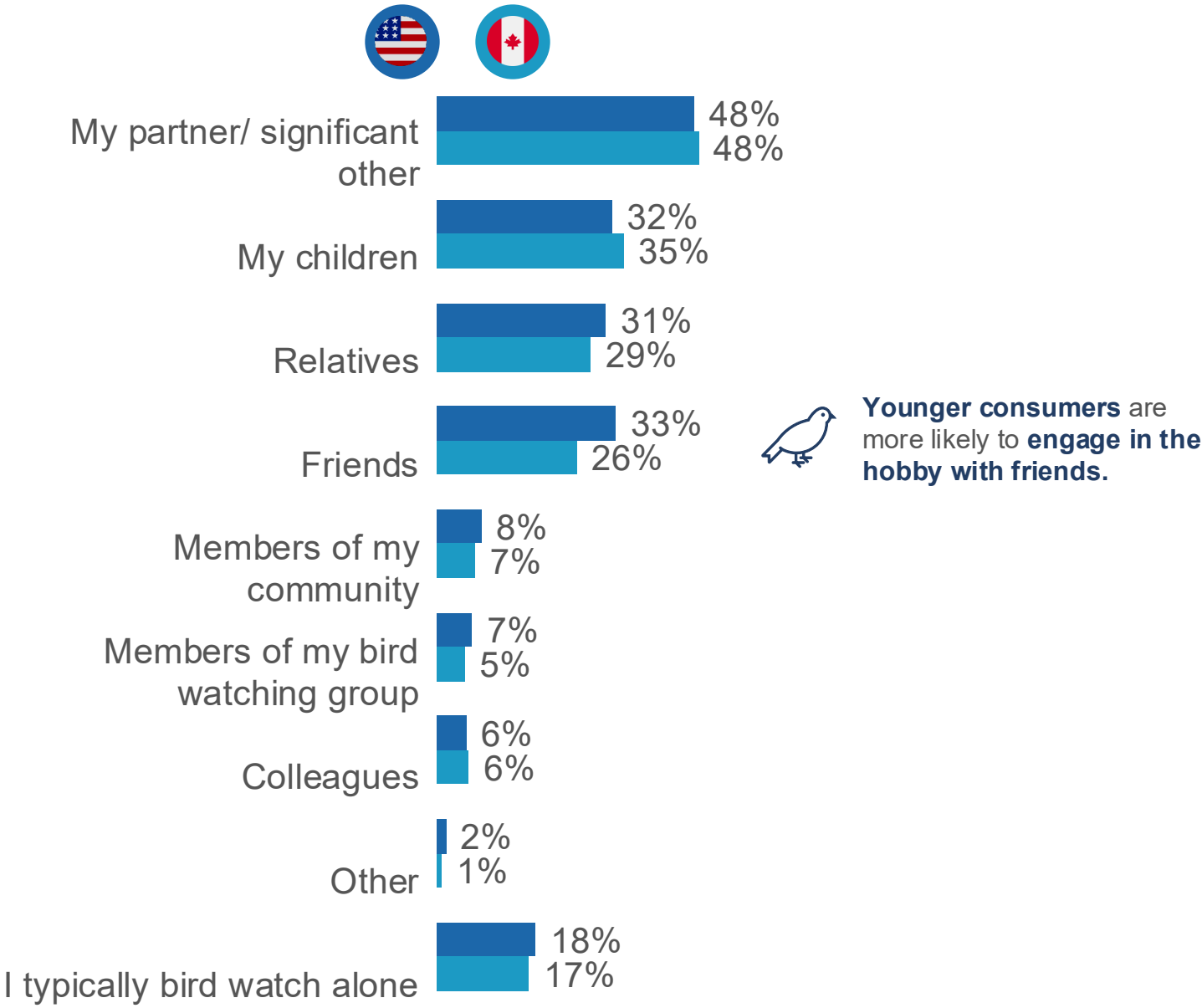


Roughly one-half of consumers in both markets have been feeding wild birds for five years or less. Bird watching is a shared experience, primarily with family, a significant other/spouse or children.

Household Wild Bird Feeding Tenure



Sharing of Wild Bird Watching Experiences



Base: Respondent Base US (n=800); CA (n=800)
Q13 – How long have you or your household engaged in bird feeding?
Q18 – Who do you typically share your wild bird watching experiences with, if anyone?

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