

Evolution or Intelligent Design? Zoo Stances Around the U.S.

Comparing Public Zoos to Private Zoos in the Sense of How Do They Portray Evolution

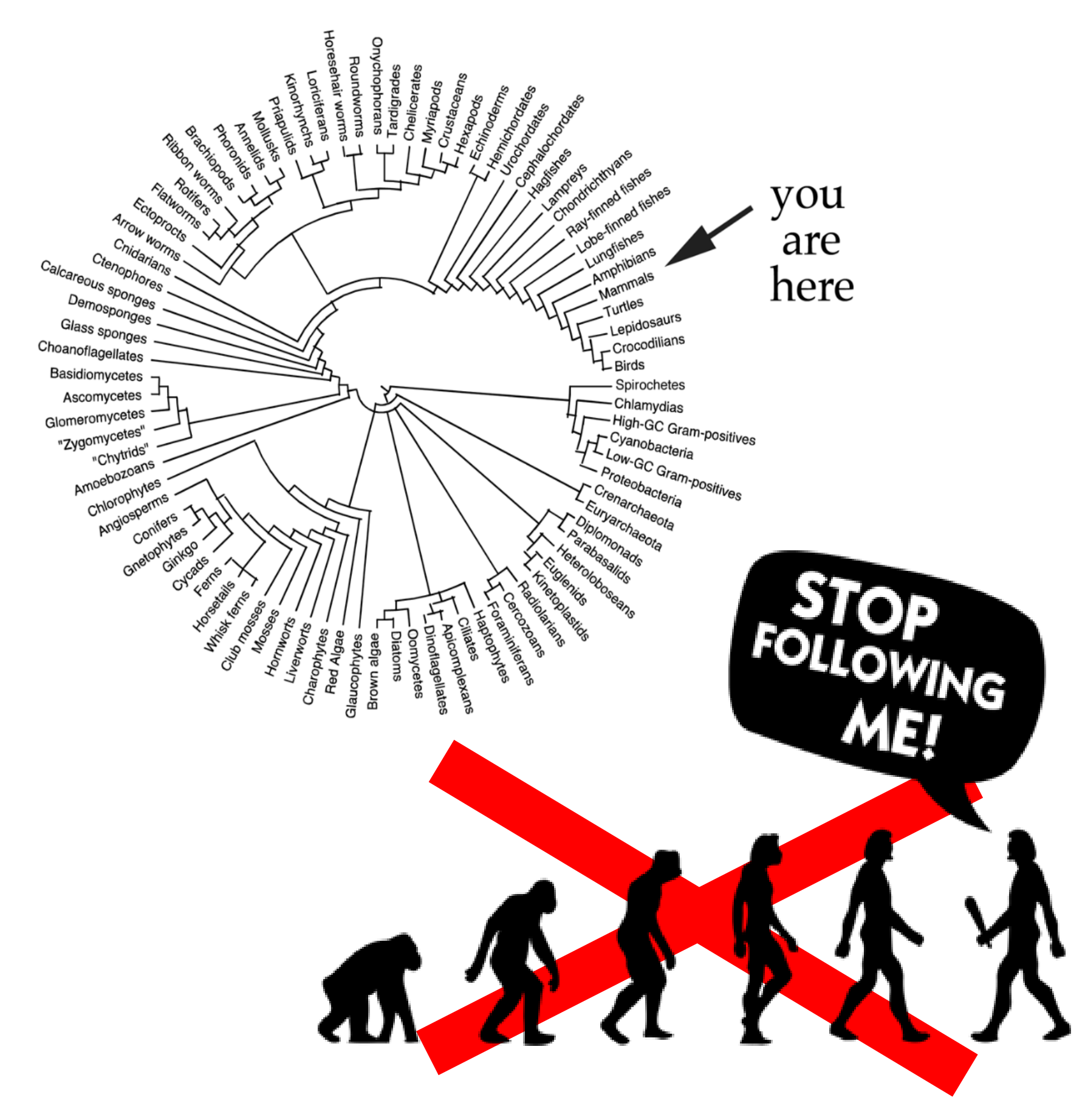
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Introduction

What is the difference between a publicly-funded and a privately funded zoo?¹

What is evolution?²



Research Question
Is there a difference in the way evolution is portrayed to the public between publicly-funded and privately-funded zoos?

Hypothesis
Publicly-funded zoos will place more of an emphasis on evolution than privately-funded zoos.

Methods

1. Observe portrayal of evolution at the Richmond Metro Zoo and Smithsonian National Zoo
2. Survey websites of Richmond Metro Zoo, Smithsonian National Zoo, San Francisco Zoo, North Carolina Zoo, and Nashville Zoo at Grassmere
3. Send questionnaire to all of the zoos
4. Analyze answers and results

Questionnaire

1. Are you a publicly funded or privately-funded zoo?
2. What is this zoo most well-known for?
3. How do you attract zoo visitors/business?
4. Who is your main clientele?
5. What is this zoo's mission statement? Focus on education? Entertainment? Animal conservation?
6. Does your zoo educate on the theory of evolution? If so, How?

Results

Table 1. Results from all examined areas of this experiment.

Zoo	Public or Private?	Political demographic	Website	Educate on evolution?
San Francisco Zoo	Public	Democratic	Supported	N/A
Smithsonian National Zoological Park	Public	Democratic	Supported	Yes
North Carolina Zoo	Public	Republican	Supported	Yes and no
Metro Richmond Zoo	Private	Democratic	Not mentioned	No
Nashville Zoo at Grassmere	Private	Republican	Not mentioned	No
Southwick's Zoo	Private	Democratic	Not mentioned	Yes and no

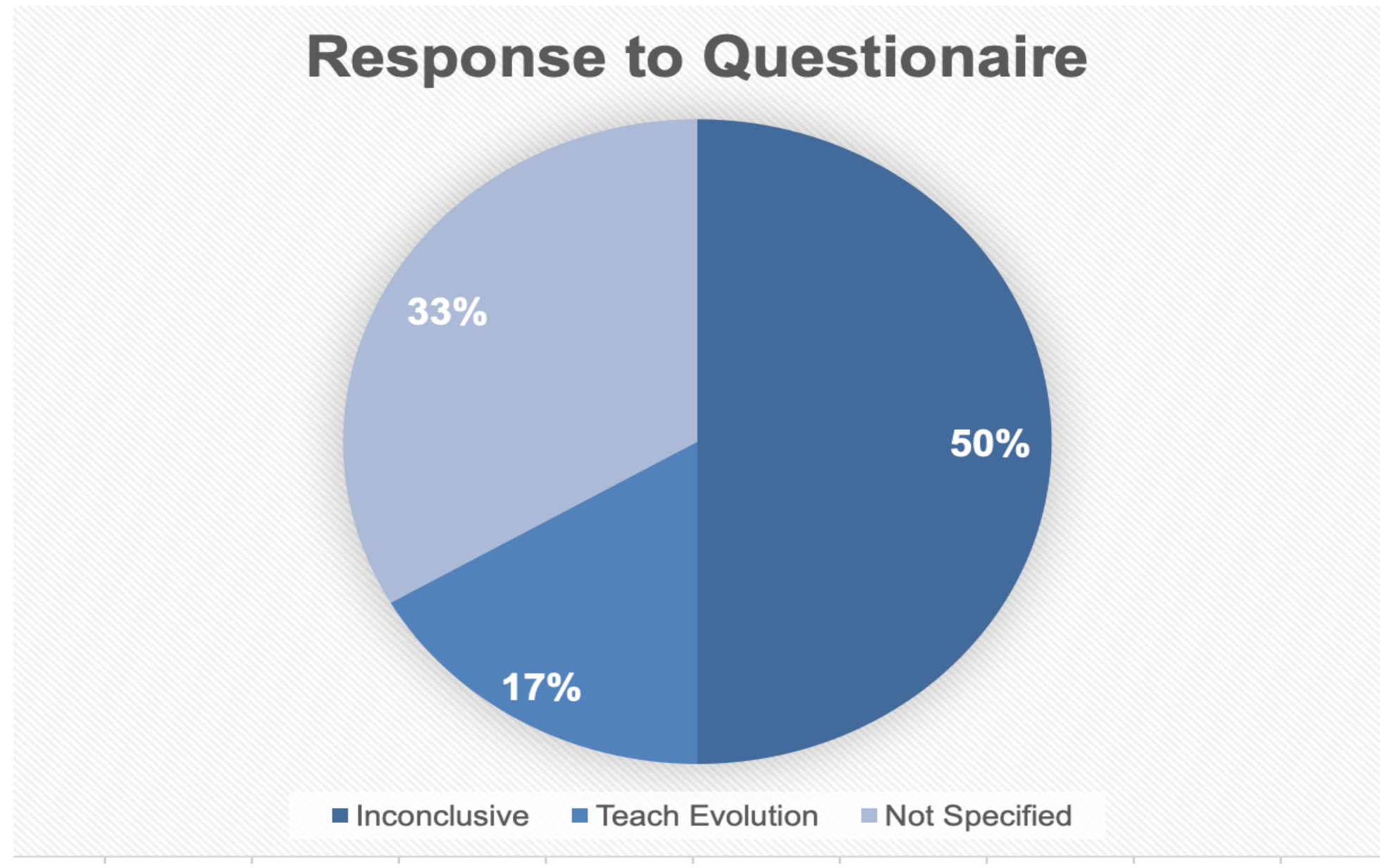


Figure 1. Out of the 6 zoos that were studied, 50% of them were inconclusive about whether they portrayed evolution to the public. One zoo clearly educated on evolution and two did not.

Public vs. Private

Figure 2. This figure shows the difference in evolution portrayal at the Richmond Metro Zoo versus the National Zoo. The top image is a sign from National Zoo using the phrase, "evolution." The bottom image shows specific education on a specific species, but no mention of evolution.

Discussion/Conclusion

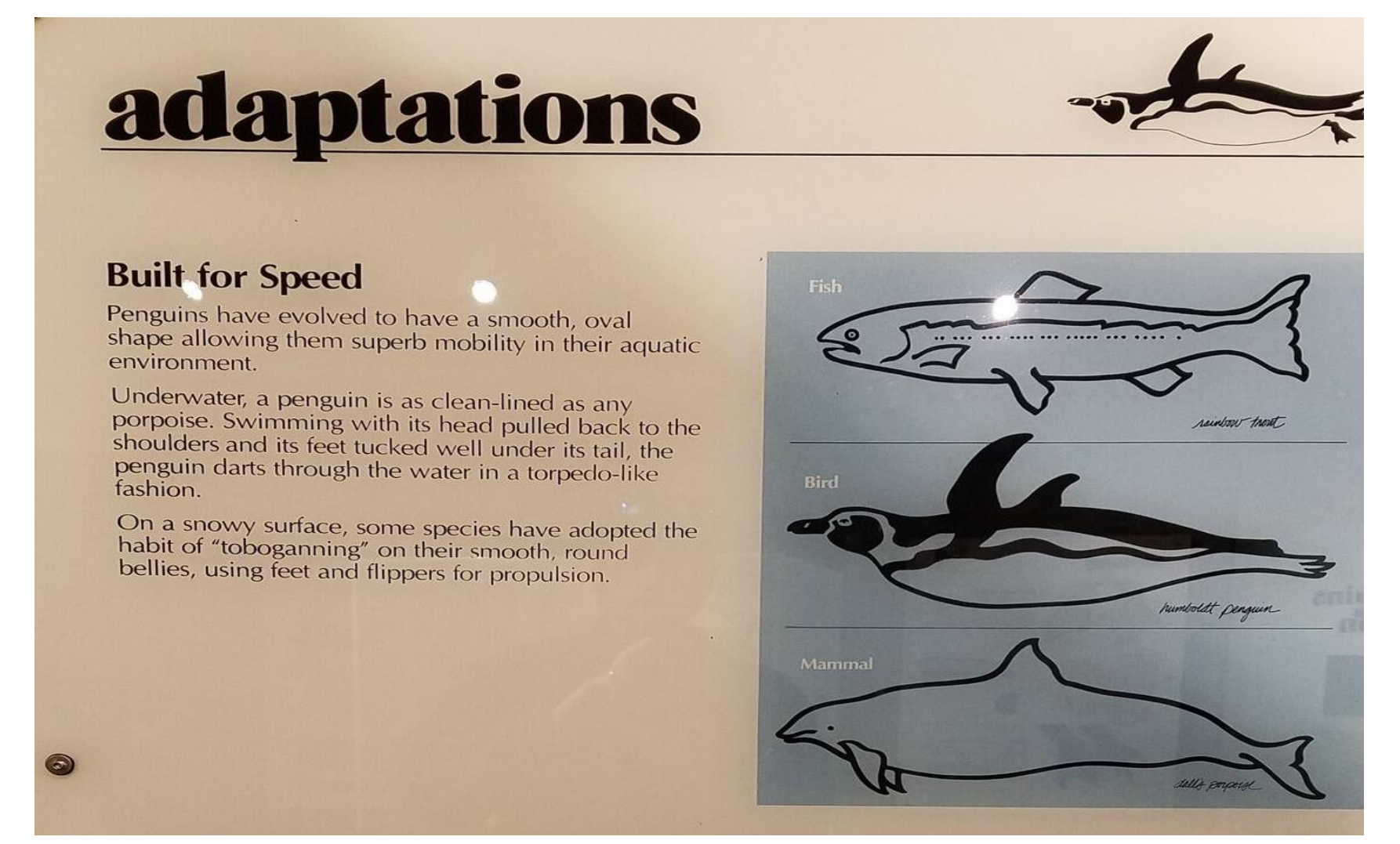


Figure 3. A penguin demonstration at the Portland Zoo describing how penguins evolved their shape from adapting to their environment.

Attitude shift when evolution was mentioned

Websites were more explicitly supportive than the survey answers

Political demographics of the zoo was predictive of the zoo's stance

Hypothesis was not strongly supported – low sample size?

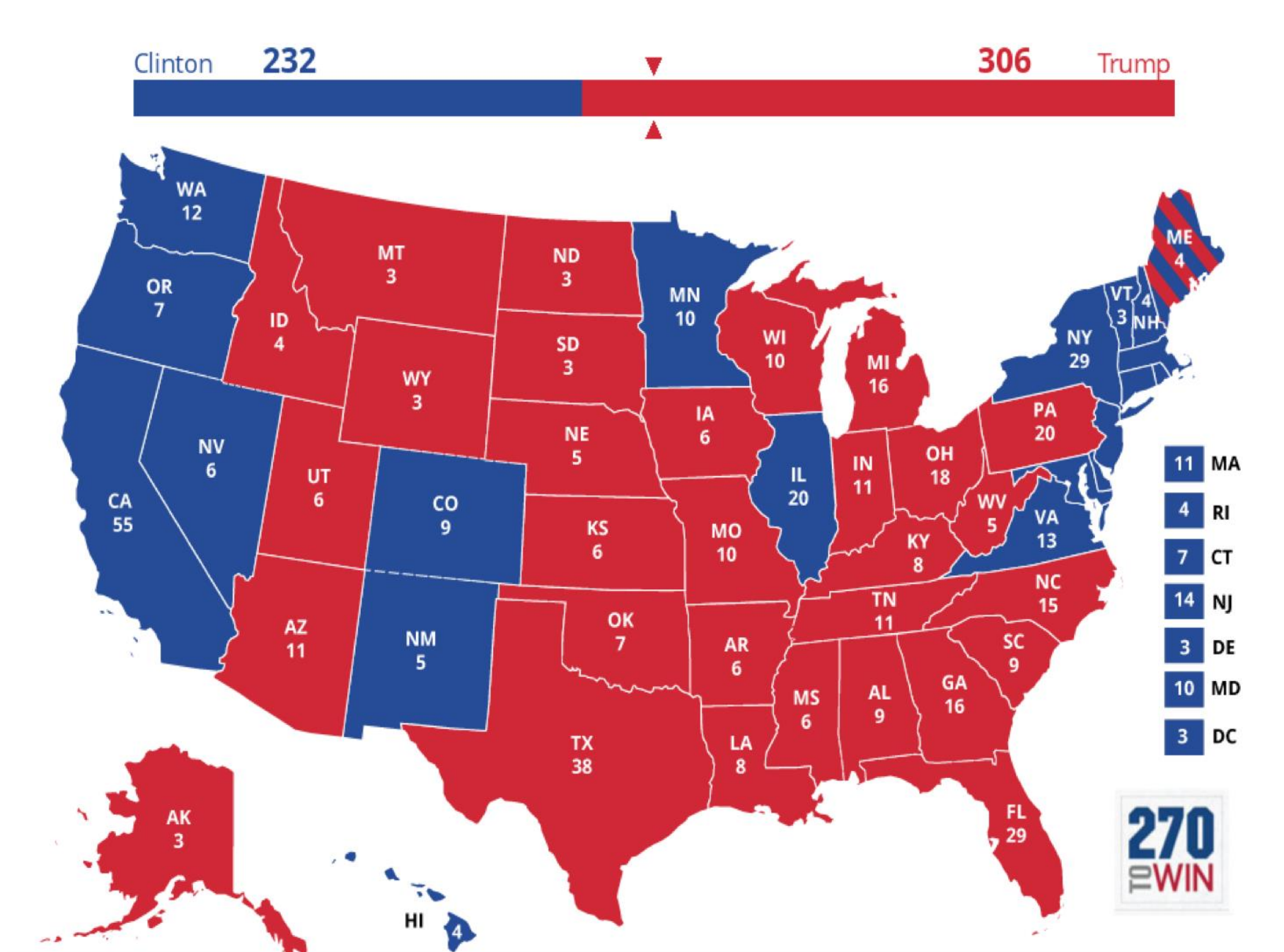


Figure 4. Political outcome from the Presidential election in 2016.⁴

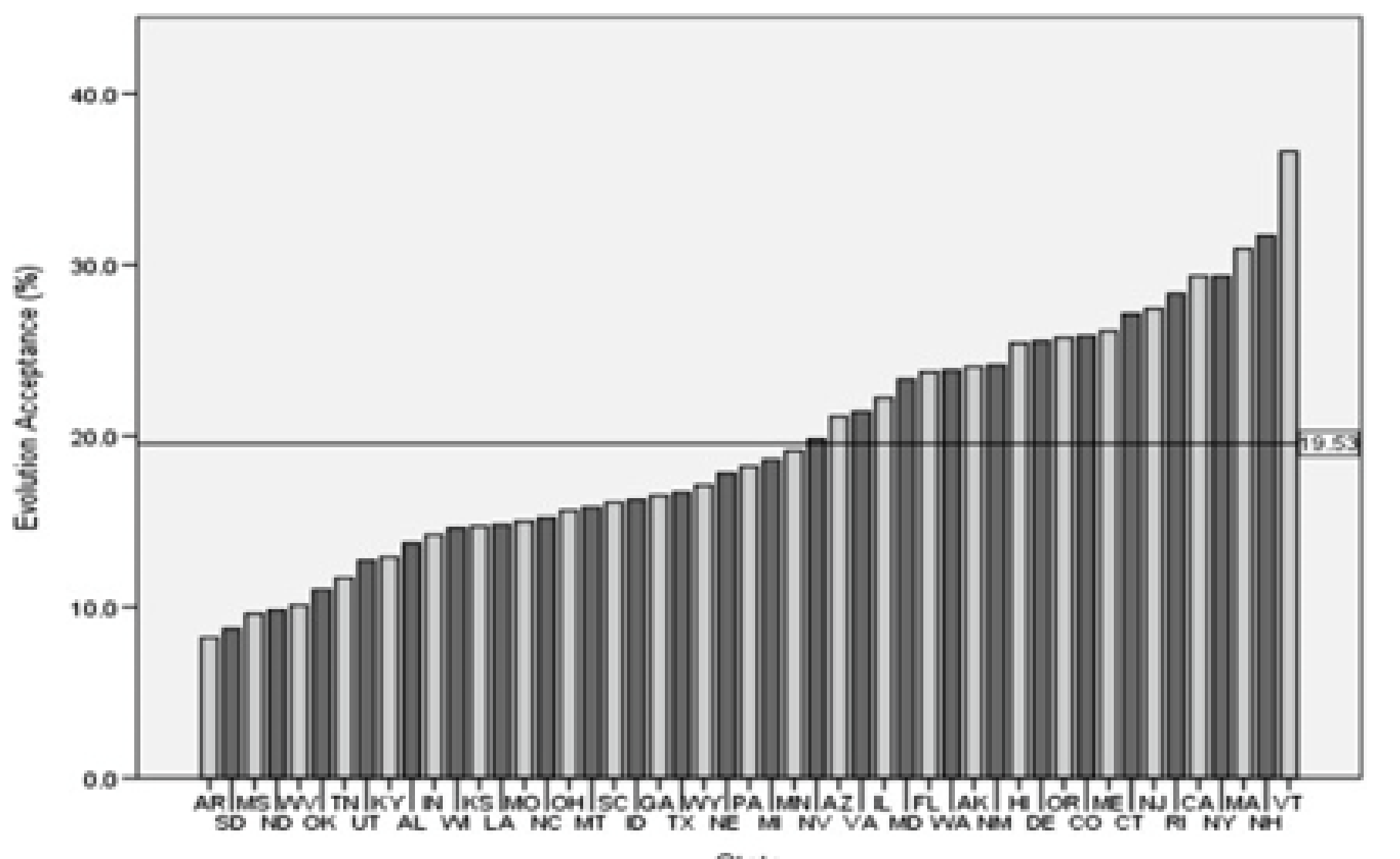


Figure 5. Evolutionary acceptance by state.³

Future Directions

This observational study could be used to educate people with backgrounds in science on which populations/environments would be more open to hearing about evolution.

- Bigger sample size
- Longer time period

References & Acknowledgments

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 4. Historical Presidential Elections. 2018. 270 to win. Retrieved from: <https://www.270towin.com/historical-presidential-elections/>.
 5. We would like to thank all the zoos that participated in this study.