

Findings at a glance: Environmental research scientists

A majority of Americans express positive overall views of environmental research scientists, though their opinions are more mixed when it comes to confidence in them to do a good job, show concern for the public's interest and provide fair and accurate information. And most Americans are skeptical that environmental researchers are usually transparent about potential conflicts of interest with industry and their accountability for mistakes or misconduct, according to a new [Pew Research Center report](#).

Overall views

57% of Americans have a mostly positive view of environmental research scientists.

Trust and mistrust

About four-in-ten Americans believe environmental researchers usually do a good job conducting research (40%) or care about the public's interests (38%). And 35% think environmental researchers provide fair and accurate information about their research all or most of the time.

But fewer than two-in-ten say environmental research scientists are transparent about conflicts of interest with industry groups (17%) or admit and take responsibility for their mistakes (16%) all or most of the time.

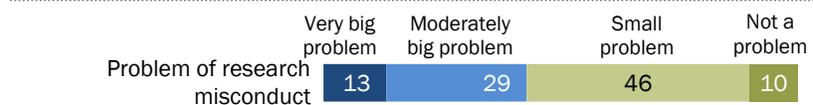
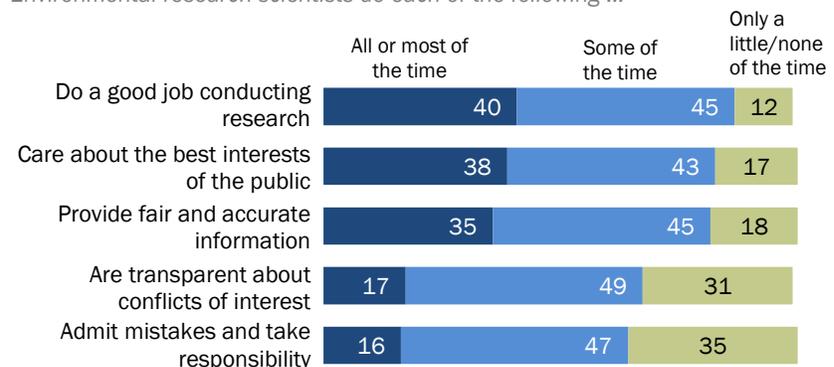
About four-in-ten (43%) say research misconduct is a very or moderately big problem among this group. Only 12% believe misconduct by environmental researchers usually leads to serious consequences.

A majority of Americans have a positive overall view of environmental research scientists

% of U.S. adults who say the following about environmental research scientists



Environmental research scientists do each of the following ...



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown. "Neither" means "neither positive nor negative."

Source: Survey conducted Jan. 7-21, 2019.

"Trust and Mistrust in Americans' Views of Scientific Experts"

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Other notable findings

- Democrats have more favorable and trusting views of environmental research scientists than Republicans. For instance, about half of Democrats (51% including independents who lean Democratic) say environmental researchers do a good job all or most of the time, compared with 26% of Republicans (including independents who lean to the GOP).
- [Public trust in environmental health specialists](#) is also connected with partisanship. But views of medical doctors, medical research scientists and dietitians are not.
- Americans who are most familiar with environmental researchers are more trusting in these researchers. For example, 66% of those who know a lot about the role of environmental scientists think they do a good job conducting research all or most of the time, compared with 27% of those who know nothing about environmental scientists.

About the survey

The nationally representative survey from Pew Research Center was conducted among U.S. adults ages 18 and older. About half of the survey respondents (N=2,226) were asked about environmental research scientists; these responses have a margin of sampling error of +/- 2.7 percentage points. Before answering questions about this group, respondents were given the following brief description: “**Environmental research scientists** conduct research on the environment and how plants, animals and other organisms are affected by it.”