



# Managing Your Finances

## When It Comes To Investing, Are You A Bull Or A Bear? Or Are You More Of A Narwhal, Or A Mason Bee?

(NAPSA)—Investing experts typically refer to two iconic animal mascots when talking about investor sentiment, the Bull and the Bear. If you're "bullish," you think stocks are going up and you invest aggressively. If you're "bearish," you expect stocks to go down and you look for more conservative investments to wait out the storm. Either way, you know what you want and you invest accordingly.

But there are more than two ways to approach investing—and many Americans aren't actually sure what their investing style really is. A new survey by Ally Invest reveals that only 10 percent of Americans think of themselves as Bulls and only 10 percent identify as Bears. It makes sense. To identify as either a Bull or a Bear, you have to know which types of investments you prefer and how much risk you're comfortable taking. And while more than half of Americans have some kind of savings account, according to the Ally survey, only a third have a retirement savings plan such as a 401(k) or other retirement plan, while less than one-quarter (23 percent) have stocks.

The Ally survey identified several new kinds of investing "spirit animals" that might better describe how real people approach saving and investing for retirement. Ally offers a brief online quiz at [www.ally.com/do-it-right/investing/what-is-your-investing-spirit-animal](http://www.ally.com/do-it-right/investing/what-is-your-investing-spirit-animal) to help you learn about your own investing mascot.

For example: One-third of Americans say they don't invest enough to have a particular style. They're not Bulls or Bears—they're Emus, with their heads in the sand. And they're not alone—8 percent of Americans find investing to be as mysterious as a Narwhal. They don't know enough about investing to know if they're conservative, aggressive, or somewhere in between. And 6 percent of survey respondents pop in and out of investments unpredictably, appearing and disappearing like the elusive Sasquatch.

Some survey respondents did have a defined investing style, but few saw them-



### **Bulls and bears aren't the only creatures into investing these days.**

selves as aggressive Bulls or conservative Bears. One in five survey respondents are like investing Prairie Dogs—they like to be safe and consistent, building a balanced, diversified portfolio—and 16 percent are Mason Bees, carefully planning for the future. The 14 percent of respondents who identify as Mules are very cautious, and the 13 percent who identify as Owls tend to do a lot of research before making any investment decisions.

Once you understand your real investing style, you can look for an approach that will actually work for your personality. For example, Emus, Narwhals and Sasquatches should look for help getting more comfortable with investing, in order to increase their chances of meeting their retirement savings goals. If you don't invest enough to understand your own style, consider an automated approach. A managed portfolio or a target-date fund that automatically rebalances as you age can take you all the way to retirement without requiring you to do a ton of research. If you're an Owl who loves to research all your options, great—set aside time each year to review your portfolio, learn about all your investments, and make any changes you need. But if you're never going to do that research, don't let that hold you back from meeting your goals. There are options out there for every kind of investor.

Bulls and Bears may work for the professionals, but the rest of us in the real world may need a little more guidance to get where we need to go. Understanding how you actually approach investing is a great first step toward doing it more effectively.