

SHIP TAGS AND RATINGS OF

Our **Flag**
means
Death

FANFICTION ON ARCHIVE OF OUR OWN



2023
RERUN!

by Tikli on 8 December 2023

What Are the Most Popular Ships in OFMD?

AO3 ship tags as indicators

- The popularity of different relationship tags on Archive of Our Own (AO3) is not a perfect method to gauge the overall popularity of a ship, because fanfiction is not the only way for fans to show which ships they like.
- Tagging can also be misleading, because tags can include relationships that aren't the actual focus of the story.
- It's important to be aware of these limitations when interpreting the tagging data.
- This being said, AO3 tags can give us some idea of the popularity of different ships.



Now, where are the graphs?!
Where's the fuckin' pie!

[Click here to skip the data collection methods and see the pretty graphs immediately!](#)

If you want to know where the numbers came from, keep going.

Collected Data

Using AO3's "Sort and Filter" tool

- The data was collected from [Archive of Our Own](#) on 25 Nov 2022, 30 Aug 2023 and 29 Nov 2023. The data was saved as screenshots of filtered search results.
- Steps for collecting data of the most tagged ships:
 1. Go to [Our Flag Means Death \(TV\)](#) fandom tag: total number of fics for fandom
 2. Sort and Filter → Include → Open "Relationships" menu: 10 most used ship tags and the number of fics using them
 3. At the bottom of Sort and Filter is "Search within results" → Write **OTP: true** → Click *Sort and Filter*: the same sort of data as before, but now it only includes fics that use a single ship tag
- Steps for collecting ratings data:
 1. Sort and Filter → Include → Open "Ratings" menu: the number of fics with each rating
 2. Choose a relationship to include → Click *Sort and Filter*: the number of fics with each rating for chosen ship
- Steps for collecting ship tag overlap data:
 1. Make sure **OTP: true** search isn't active.
 2. Choose to include the relationship tags that overlap → Click *Sort and Filter*: the number of fics tagged with all included ship tags

Collected Data

Fandom tag with and without "OTP: true"

Please note that the number of fics is always the cumulative number on the data collection date. Some fics might have been deleted between the data collection dates. The change in numbers between dates is always the net gain.

- On 29 Nov 2023 there were 27,583 fanfics tagged with "Our Flag Means Death (TV)" fandom tag.
 - 30 Aug 2023: 22,528 fanfics
 - 25 Nov 2022: 15,079 fanfics
- After filtering the fandom tag with "OTP: True", there were 17,934 fanfics left.
 - 30 Aug 2023: 14,592 fanfics
 - 25 Nov 2022: 9,738 fanfics
- 8 of the 10 most used ship tags were the same ships in both search results.
 - In the full fandom tag search, "Blackbeard | Edward Teach & Israel Hands" made it to the top-10 results, but it was excluded from the data set, because the focus was on romantic relationships.
 - NOTE: "&" between the names indicates a platonic relationship and "/" indicates a romantic or non-platonic one.
 - The other top-10 ship that was excluded from the full fandom tag data set was "Minor or Background Relationship(s)".
 - "Israel Hands/Roach (Our Flag Means Death)" and "Frenchie (Our Flag Means Death) / Israel Hands" were in top-10 only in "OTP: True" results. These ships were added to the fandom tag top ships, to make it possible to compare the numbers between different data sets and also to have equal number of ships (10) in both data sets.
 - Quizzy was only included in the last data set that was collected on 29 Nov 2023.

Collected Data

The most used ship tags & the ship names this study uses

- Blackbeard | Edward Teach/Stede Bonnet **[GentleBeard]** *
- Blackbeard | Edward Teach/Israel Hands **[EdIzzy]**
- Blackbeard | Edward Teach/Stede Bonnet/Israel Hands **[SteddyHands]**
- Black Pete/Lucius Spriggs **[LuPete]** *
- Oluwande Boodhari/Jim Jimenez **[TealOranges]** *
- Stede Bonnet/Israel Hands **[Stizzy]**
- Israel Hands/Lucius Spriggs **[Sprizzy]**
- Israel Hands/"Calico" Jack Rackham **[CJizzy]**
- Israel Hands/Roach (Our Flag Means Death) **[Rizzy]**
- Frenchie (Our Flag Means Death)/Israel Hands **[Ouzizzy]**

Ouzizzy and Rizzy were included to the fandom tag data set despite not making it to the top-10, because with "OTP: True" filter Ouzizzy and Rizzy were among the 10 most tagged ships.

Collected Data

Ratings for fandom tag and the most used ship tags

- There are five different ratings for fanfics on AO3:
 - General Audiences (G)
 - Teen And Up Audiences (T)
 - Mature (M)
 - Explicit (E)
 - Not Rated
- Ratings don't directly tell us anything about the popularity of a ship. They might still help us understand the possible differences between the fics that include popular ships.
- The ratings data for the whole fandom tag was collected with and without "OTP: True" filter.
- The ratings data for each of the most used ship tags was collected by filtering for one ship tag at a time. This was done with and without "OTP: True" filter.

Collected Data

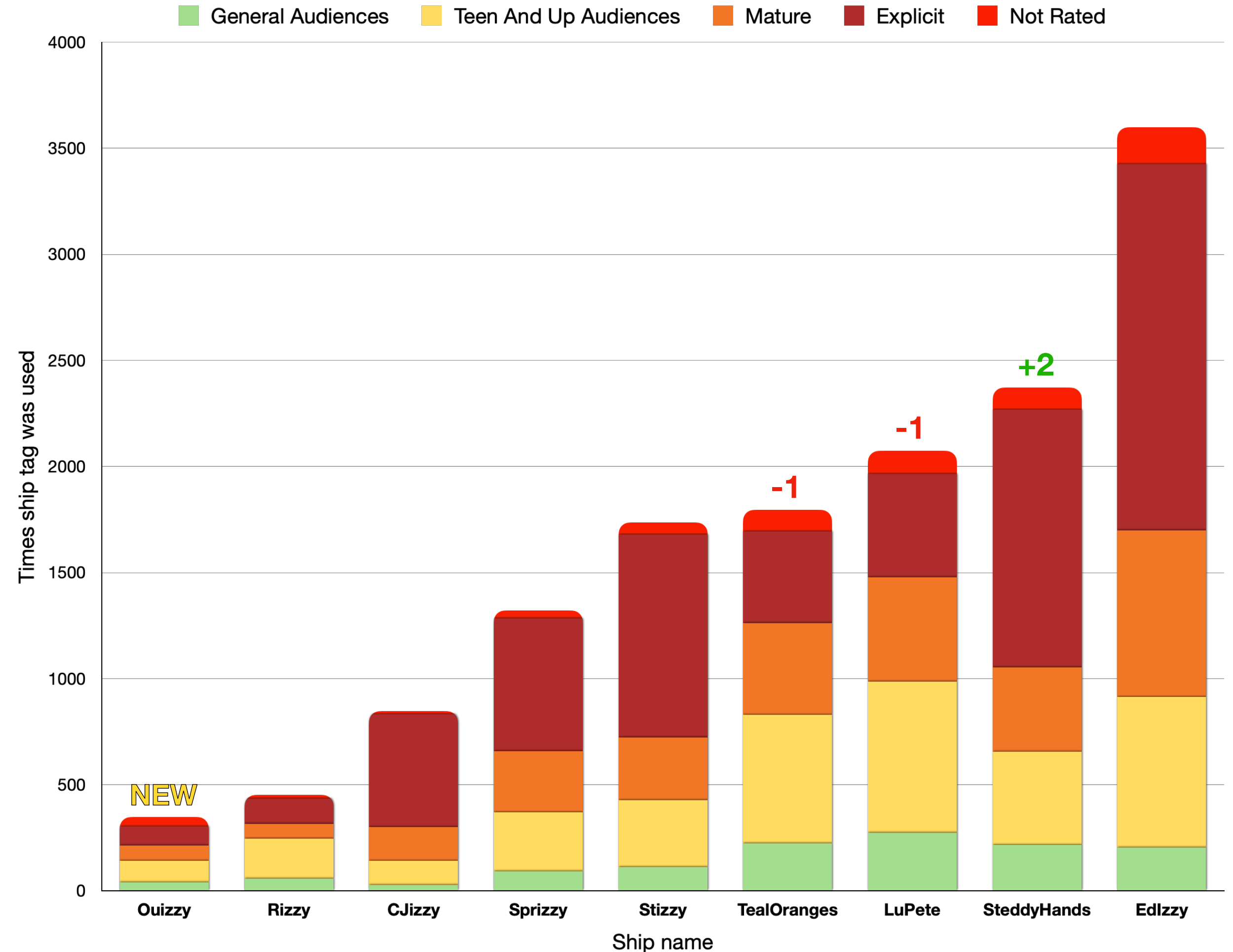
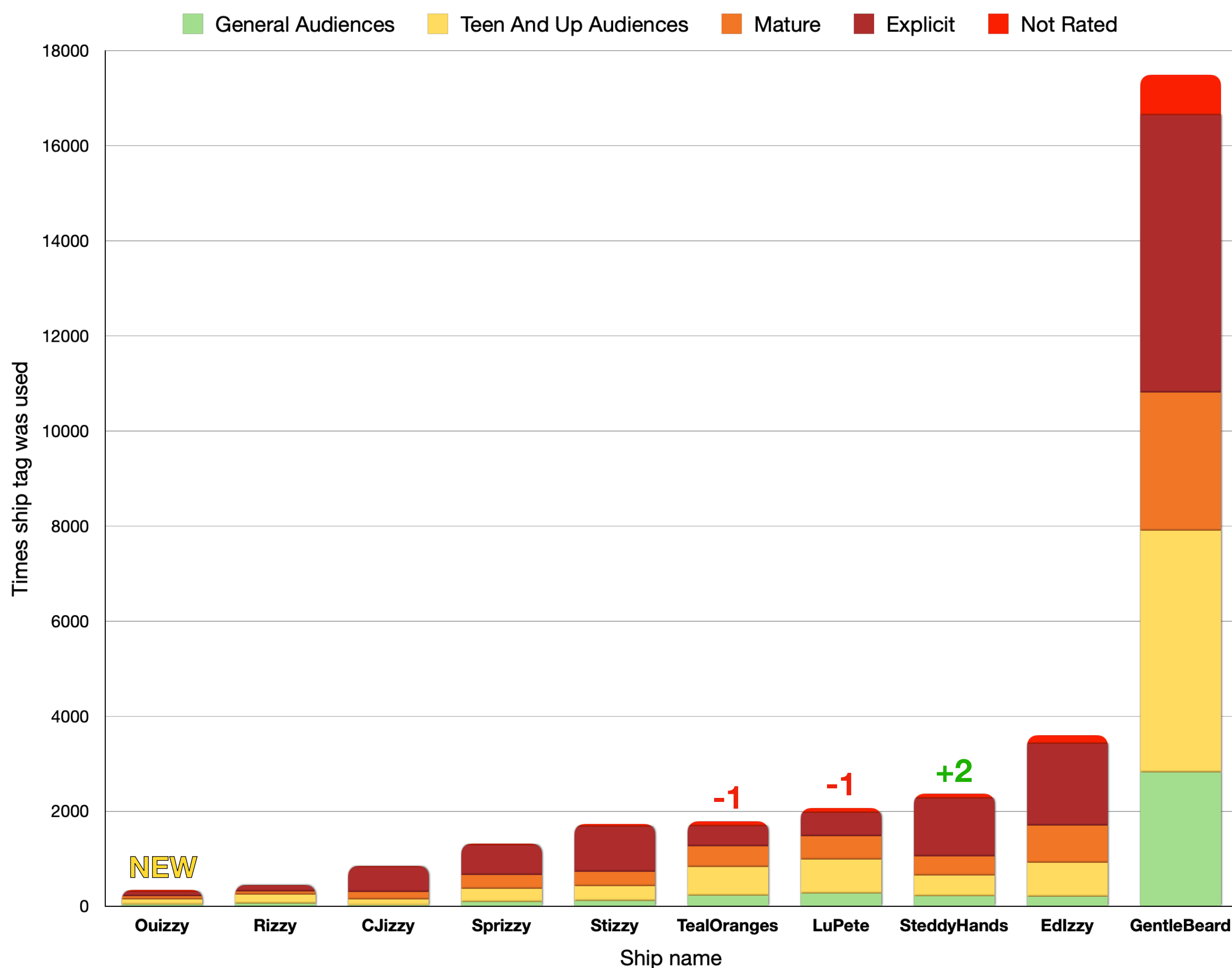
Ship tag overlap: Case SteddyHands

- SteddyHands = Ed/Stede/Izzy
- Fanfics that tag SteddyHands often also tag one or more of the pairings it includes (GentleBeard, EdIzzy, Stizzy).
- The fandom tag was filtered with the following settings to get the necessary data of overlapping tags.
 - SteddyHands overlapping with at least one of the three pairings it includes was calculated from two different search results.

Included		Excluded	OTP: True	Result
GentleBeard + SteddyHands		-	no	GentleBeard overlapping with SteddyHands
EdIzzy + SteddyHands		-	no	EdIzzy overlapping with SteddyHands
Stizzy + SteddyHands		-	no	Stizzy overlapping with SteddyHands
A	SteadyHands	GentleBeard + EdIzzy + Stizzy	no	All fics with SteddyHands that do not overlap with any of the three pairings it includes
B	SteadyHands	-	no	All fics with SteddyHands
			B - A =	SteadyHands overlapping with at least one of the three pairings it includes

Fanfic Ratings Distribution

The Most Frequently Tagged Ships



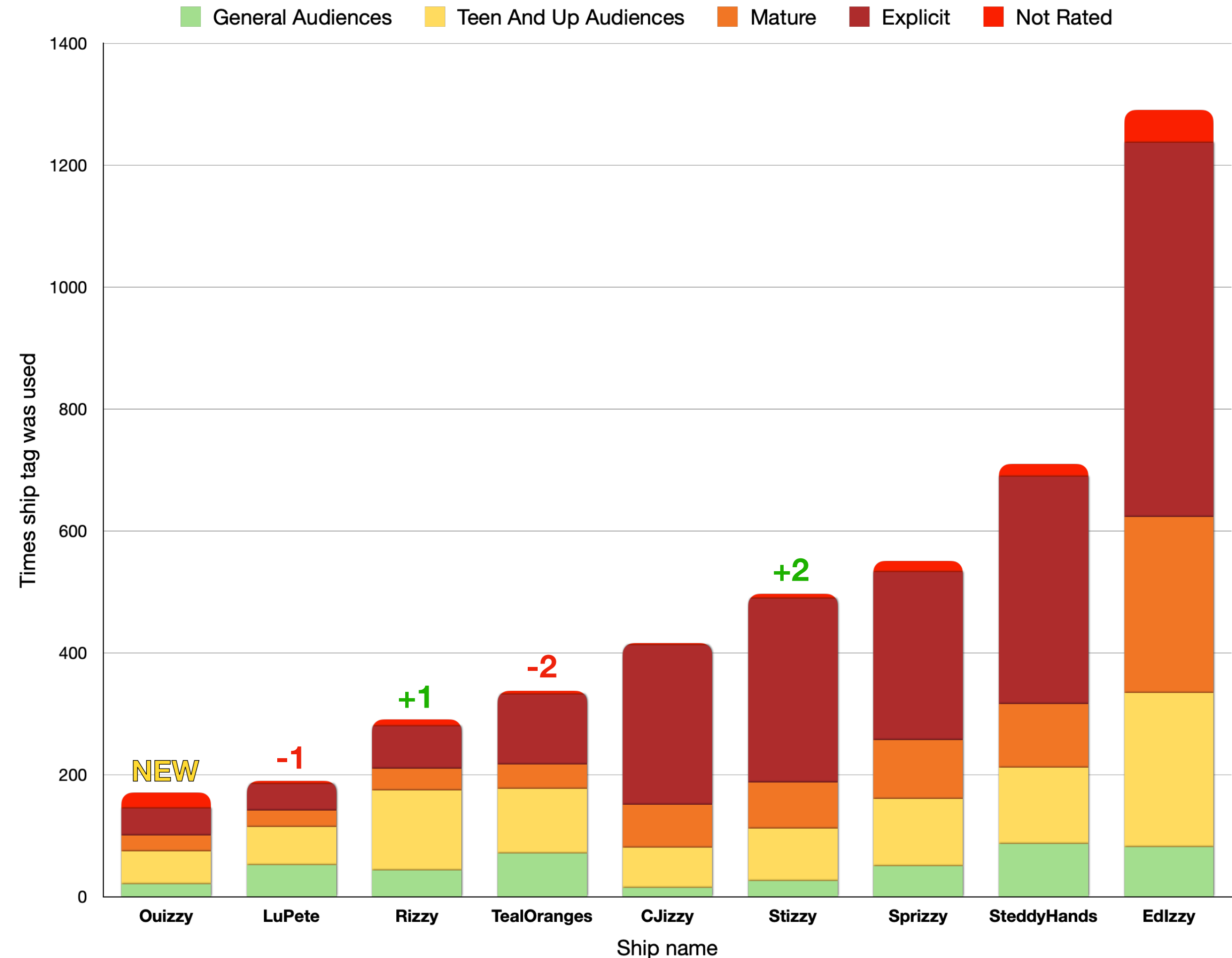
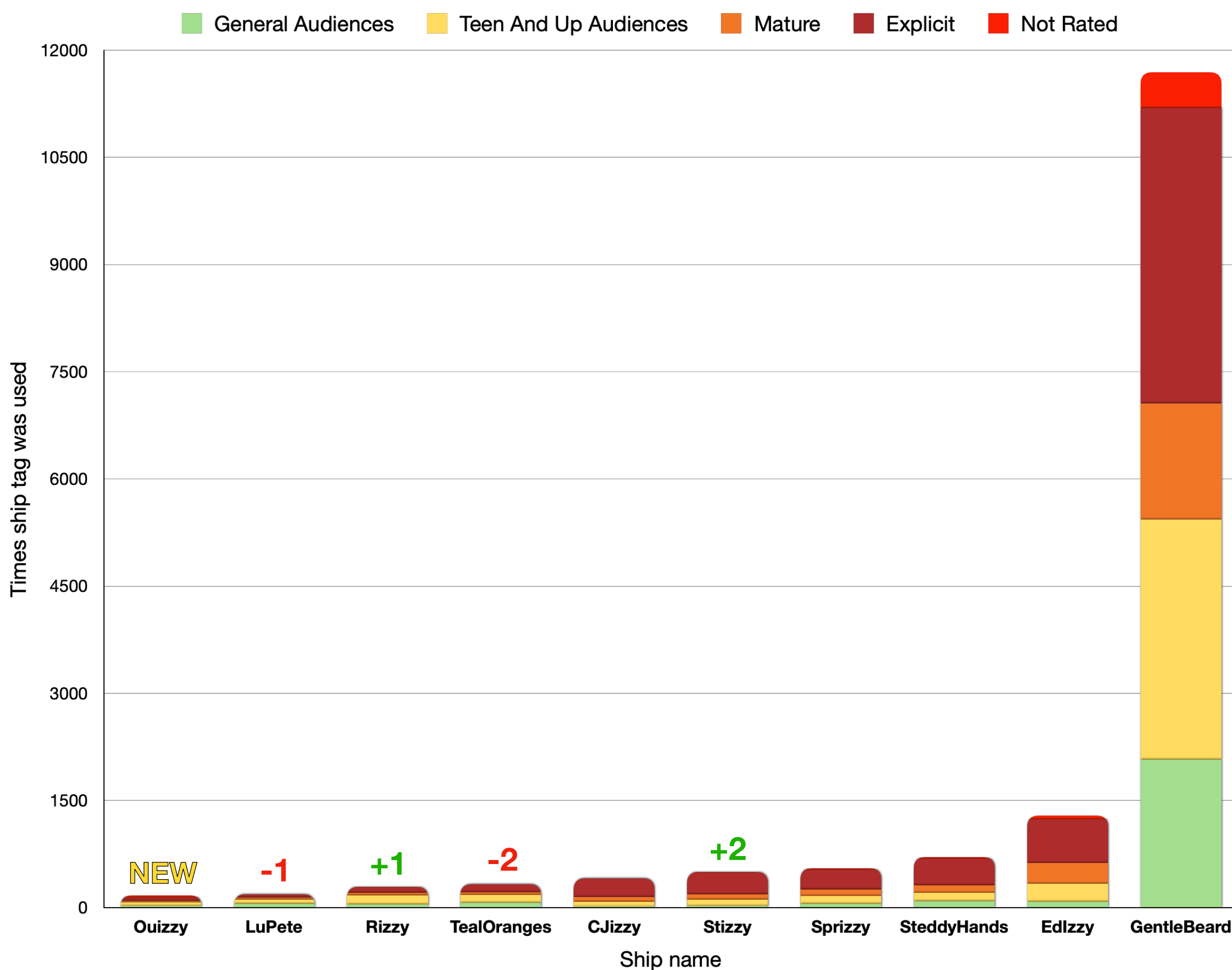
The most frequently tagged OFMD ships and their ratings distribution on AO3 on 29 Nov 2023. To get a more detailed look of the other ships besides the main canon pair, the graph on the right shows the data without GentleBeard, changing the scale of the times ship tag was used. The change in placement since 25 Nov 2022 is indicated for SteddyHands, LuPete and TealOranges. Ouizzy was not in the dataset of 25 Nov 2022.

This data does not reveal if the ship in question is the focus of the fic or if it's a minor / background relationship.

[Click here to see the definitions of each ship name.](#)

Fanfic Ratings Distribution

The Most Frequently Tagged Ships of Fanfics That Focus on Only One Ship



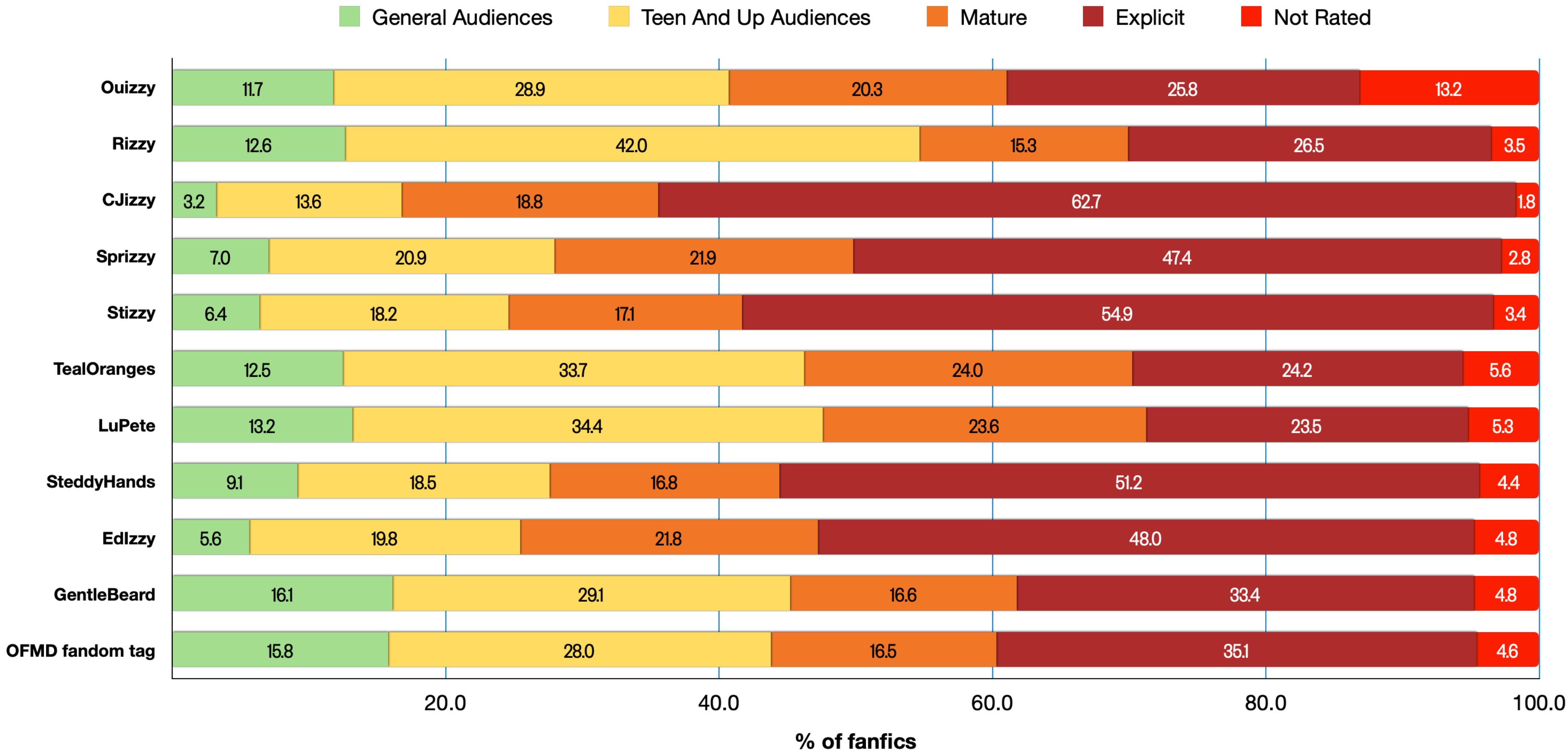
The most frequently tagged OFMD ships and their ratings distribution on AO3 on 29 Nov 2023, based on the number of fanfics that focus only on one ship. To get a more detailed look of the other ships besides the main canon pair, the graph on the right shows the data without GentleBeard, changing the scale of the times ship tag was used. The change in placement since 25 Nov 2022 is indicated for Stizzy, TealOranges, Rizzy and LuPete. Ouizzy was not in the dataset of 25 Nov 2022.

This data does not reveal if the ship in question is also the main ship of fics that tag several ships.

[Click here to see the definitions of each ship name.](#)

The Relative Ratings Distribution

The Most Frequently Tagged Ships



Number of fanfics

Ouizzy: 349
 Rizzy: 452
 CJizzy: 847
 Sprizzy: 1,321
 Stizzy: 1,737
 TealOranges: 1,795
 LuPete: 2,074
 SteddyHands: 2,372
 EdIzzy: 3,598
 GentleBeard: 17,489
 OFMD fandom tag: 27,583

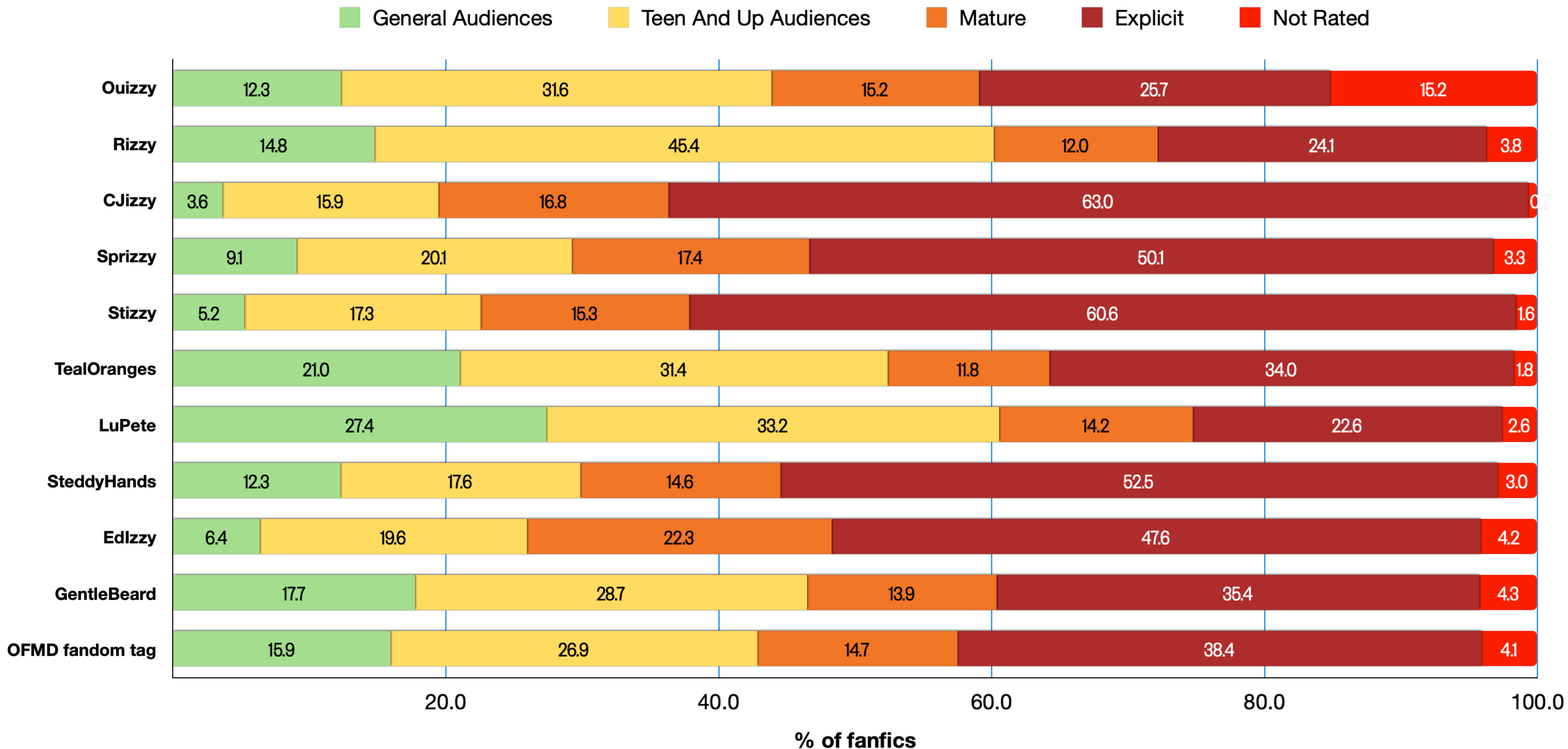
The relative ratings distribution of the most frequently tagged OFMD ships on AO3 on 29 Nov 2023. The ratings distribution of the whole fandom tag is shown for comparison.

This data does not reveal if the ship in question is the focus of the fic or if it's a minor / background relationship.

[Click here to see the definitions of each ship name.](#)

The Relative Ratings Distribution

The Most Frequently Tagged Ships of Fanfics That Focus on Only One Ship



Number of fanfics

- Ouizzy: 171
- Rizzy: 291
- CJizzy: 416
- Sprizzy: 551
- Stizzy: 497
- TealOranges: 338
- LuPete: 190
- SteddyHands: 710
- Edlizzy: 1,291
- GentleBeard: 11,690
- OFMD fandom tag: 17,934

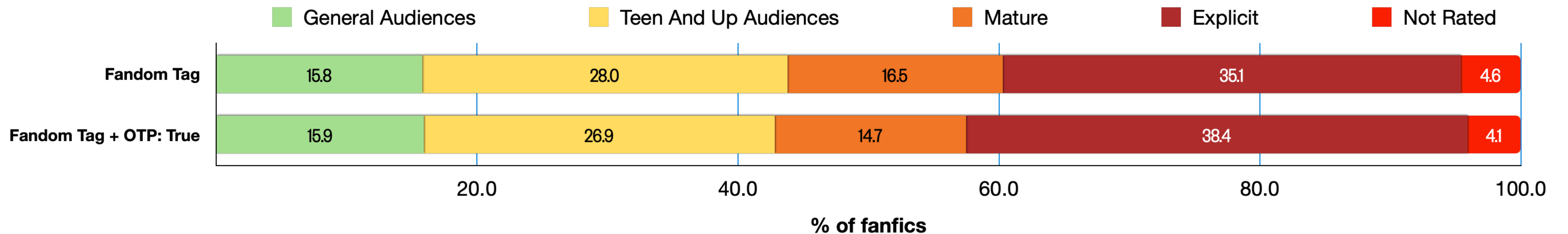
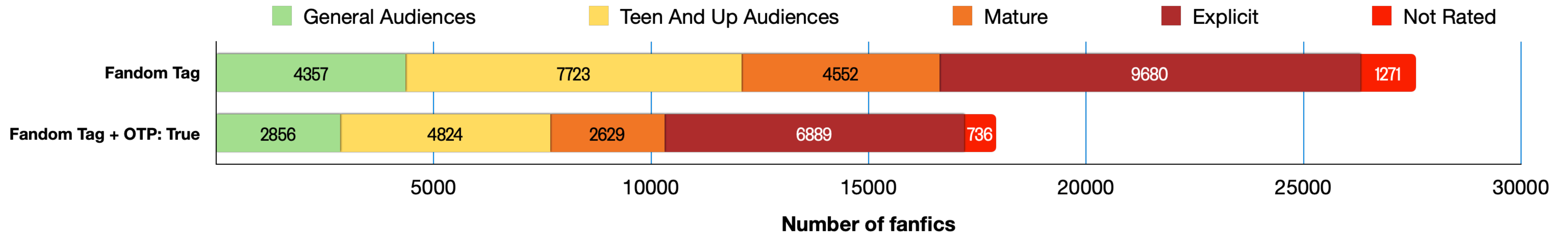
The relative ratings distribution of the most often tagged OFMD ships on AO3 on 29 Nov 2023, based on the number of fanfics that focus only on one ship. The ratings distribution of the whole fandom tag (filtered for fics that focus on only one ship) is shown for comparison.

This data does not reveal if the ship in question is also the main ship of fics that tag several ships.

[Click here to see the definitions of each ship name.](#)

Comparing the Number of Fanfics and Their Ratings Distribution

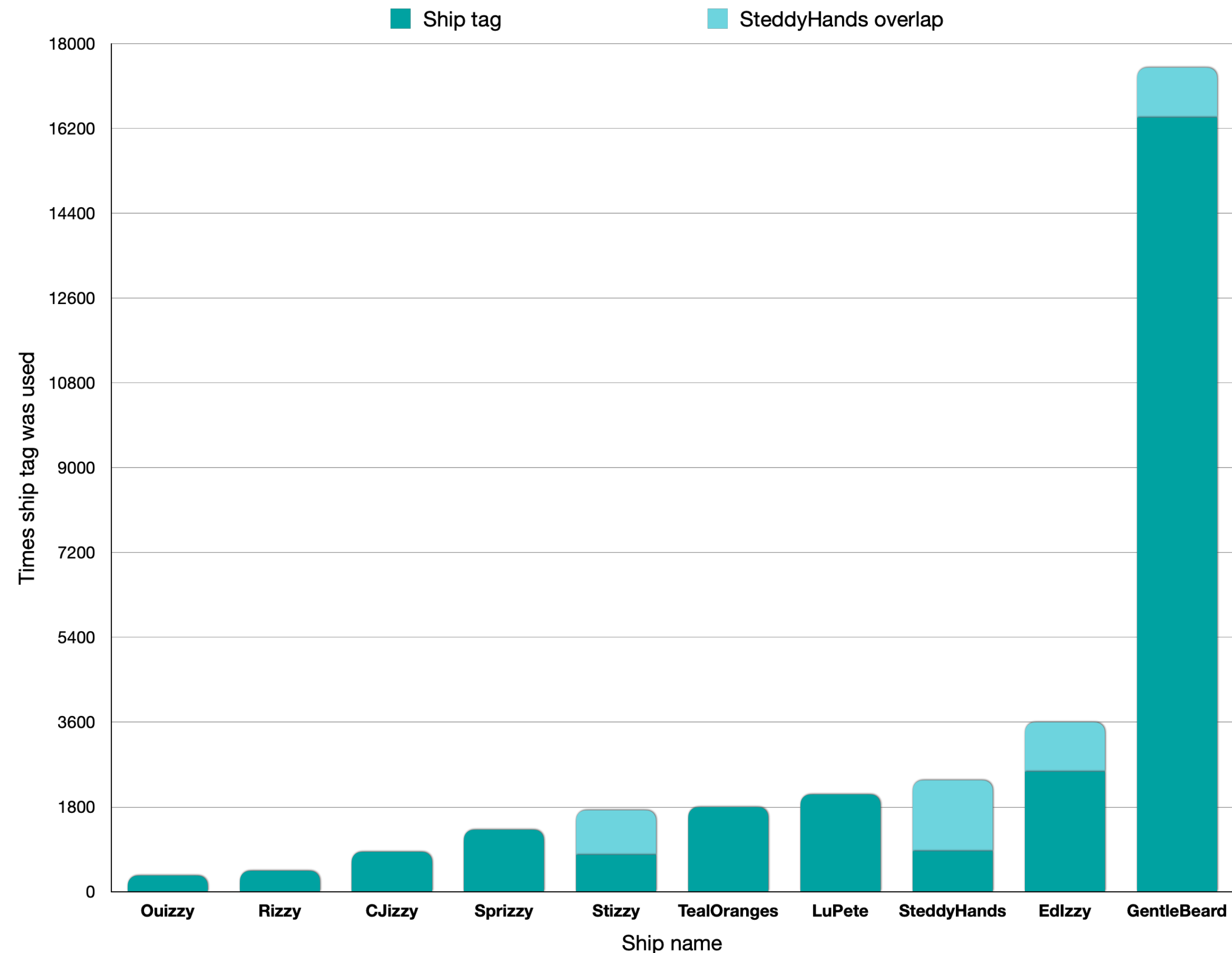
Whole Fandom Tag vs. Fanfics That Focus on Only One Ship



All fanfics under the OFMD fandom tag on AO3 and their ratings distribution on 29 Nov 2023, compared to the fanfics that focus on only one ship (fics filtered with OTP: True).

The SteddyHands Overlap

Correcting the Numbers for SteddyHands, GentleBeard, EdIzzy and Stizzy



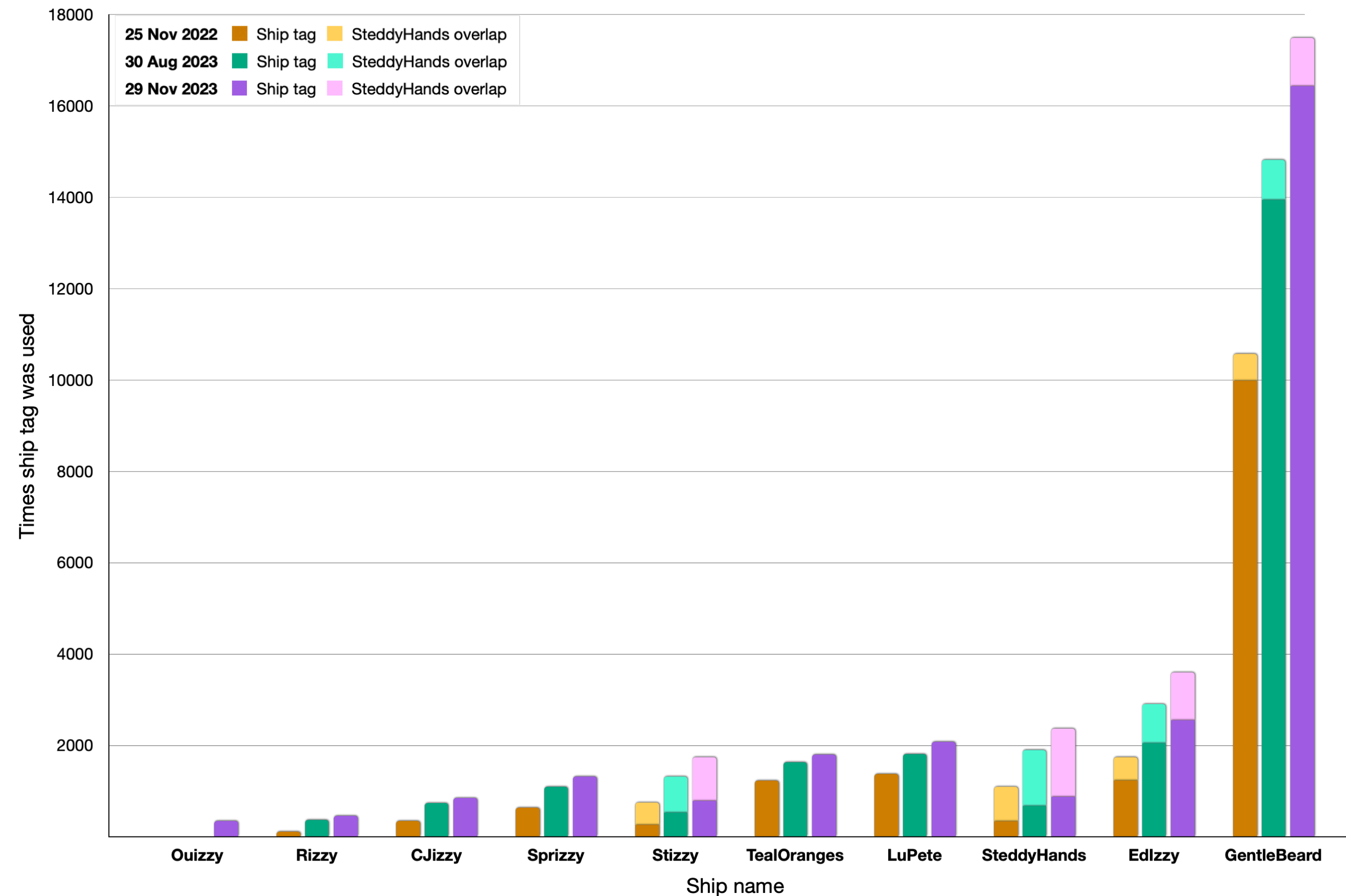
The most frequently tagged OFMD ships on AO3 on 29 Nov 2023. The total number of times Stizzy, EdIzzy and GentleBeard tags are used includes the fics that are also tagged with SteddyHands. Respectively, the total number of fics tagged with SteddyHands includes the fics that are also tagged with at least one of the aforementioned ship tags.

This data does not reveal if the ship in question is the focus of the fic or if it's a minor / background relationship.

[Click here to see the definitions of each ship name.](#)

The Most Frequently Tagged Ships

Increase in Number of Fanfics Over Time



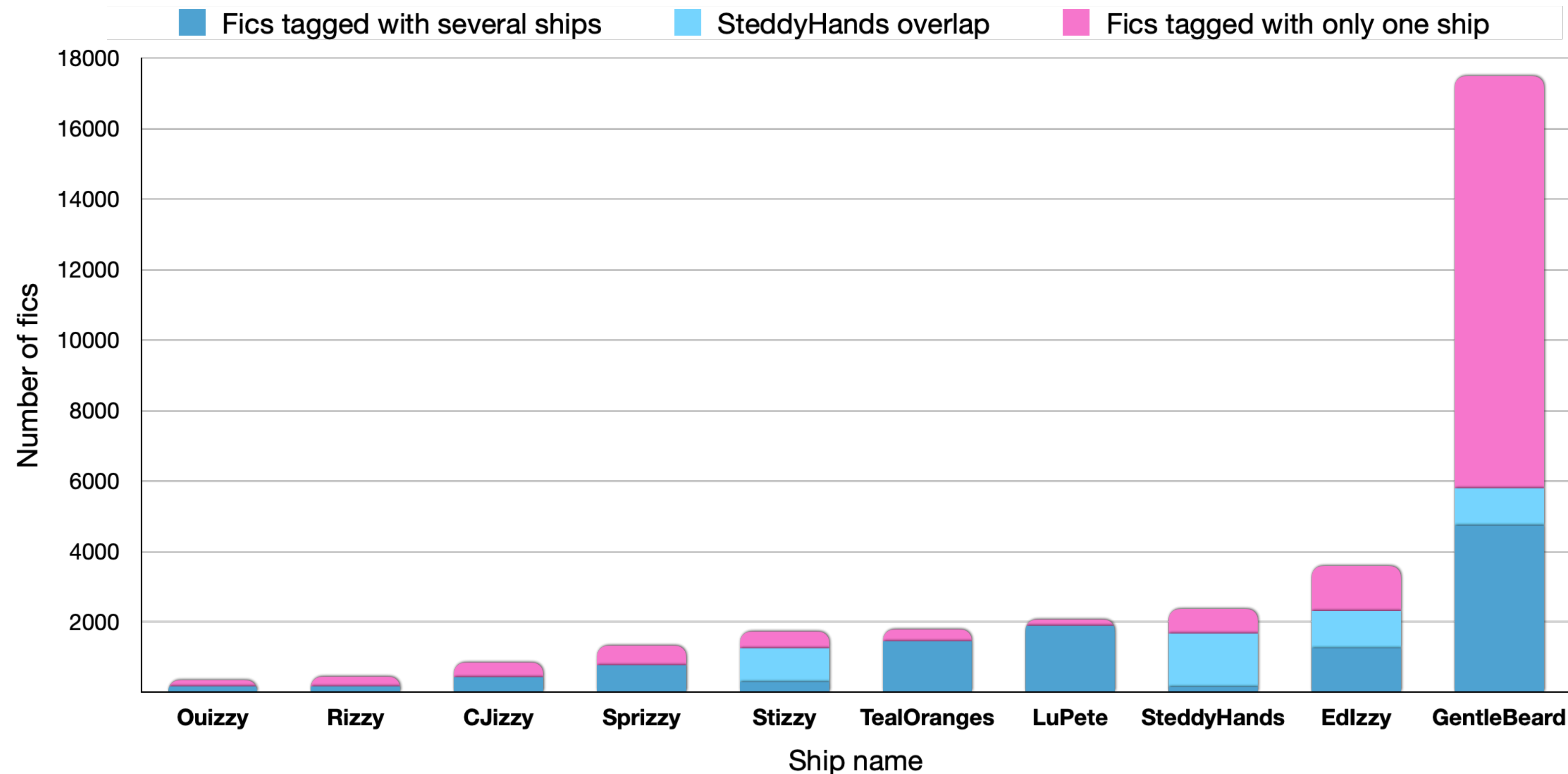
The most frequently tagged OFMD ships and how the number of fics using the tags has increased over time. The graph shows the cumulative number of fics on 25 Nov 2022 (~8 months after season 1 finale), on 30 Aug 2023 (~17 months after season 1 finale) and on 29 Nov 2023 (~1 month after season 2 finale). For Stizzy, SteddyHands, Edlizzy and GentleBeard, the number of overlapping fics is also shown. For Quizzy there's no comparison to earlier data because 29 Nov 2023 was the first time this ship tag was included in the data set.

This data does not reveal if the ship in question is the focus of the fic or if it's a minor / background relationship.

[Click here to see the definitions of each ship name.](#)

The Most Frequently Tagged Ships

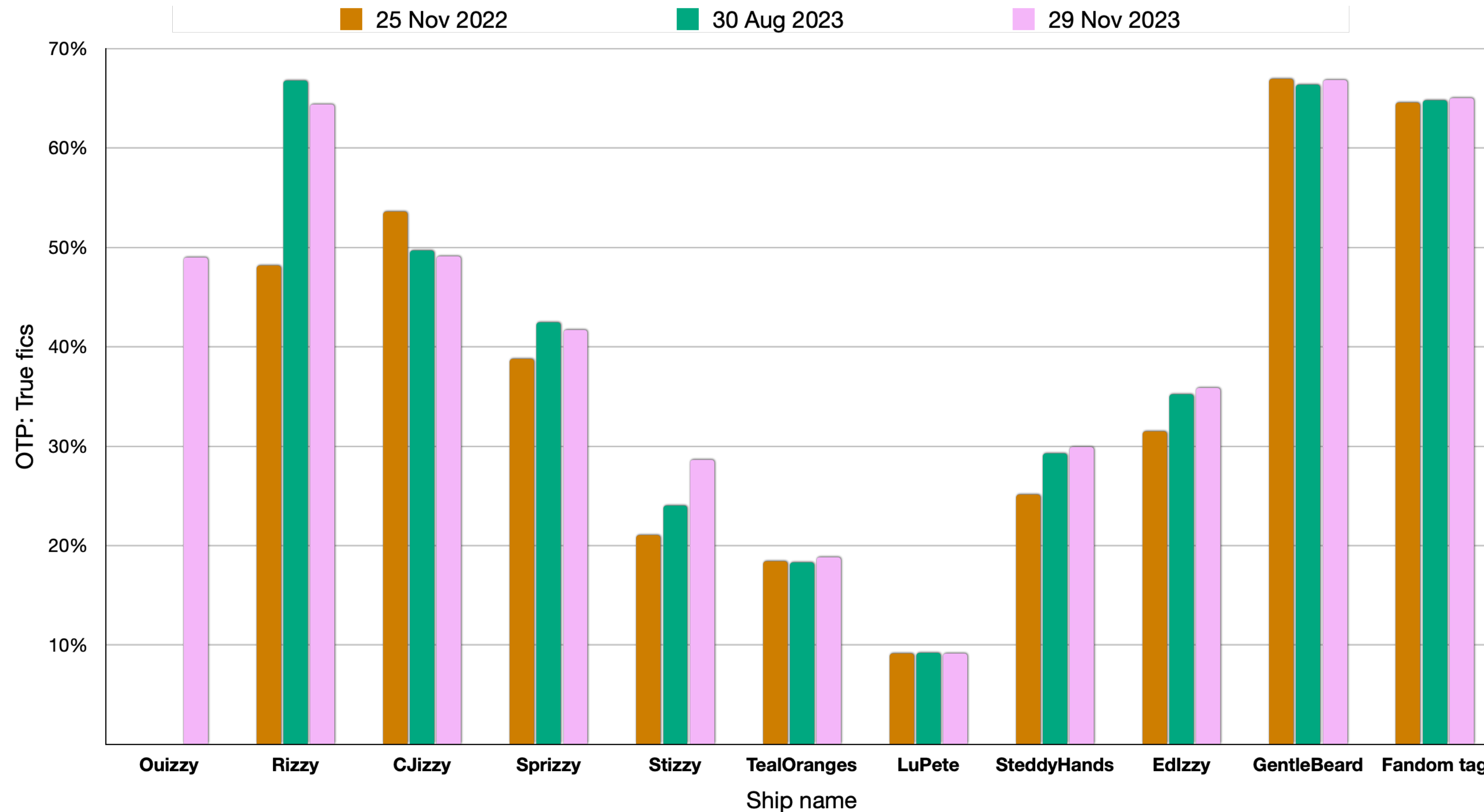
Fanfiction That Tag Several Ships vs. Fanfiction That Focus on Only One Ship



The number of fanfics featuring the most frequently tagged OFMD ships on AO3 on 29 Nov 2023. Fics with only one ship tag are separated from the fics with several ship tags. For Stizzy, SteddyHands, Edlizzy and GentleBeard, the number of overlapping fics is also shown.

[Click here to see the definitions of each ship name.](#)

The Popularity of "OTP: True" Fics Under Frequently Used Ship Tags



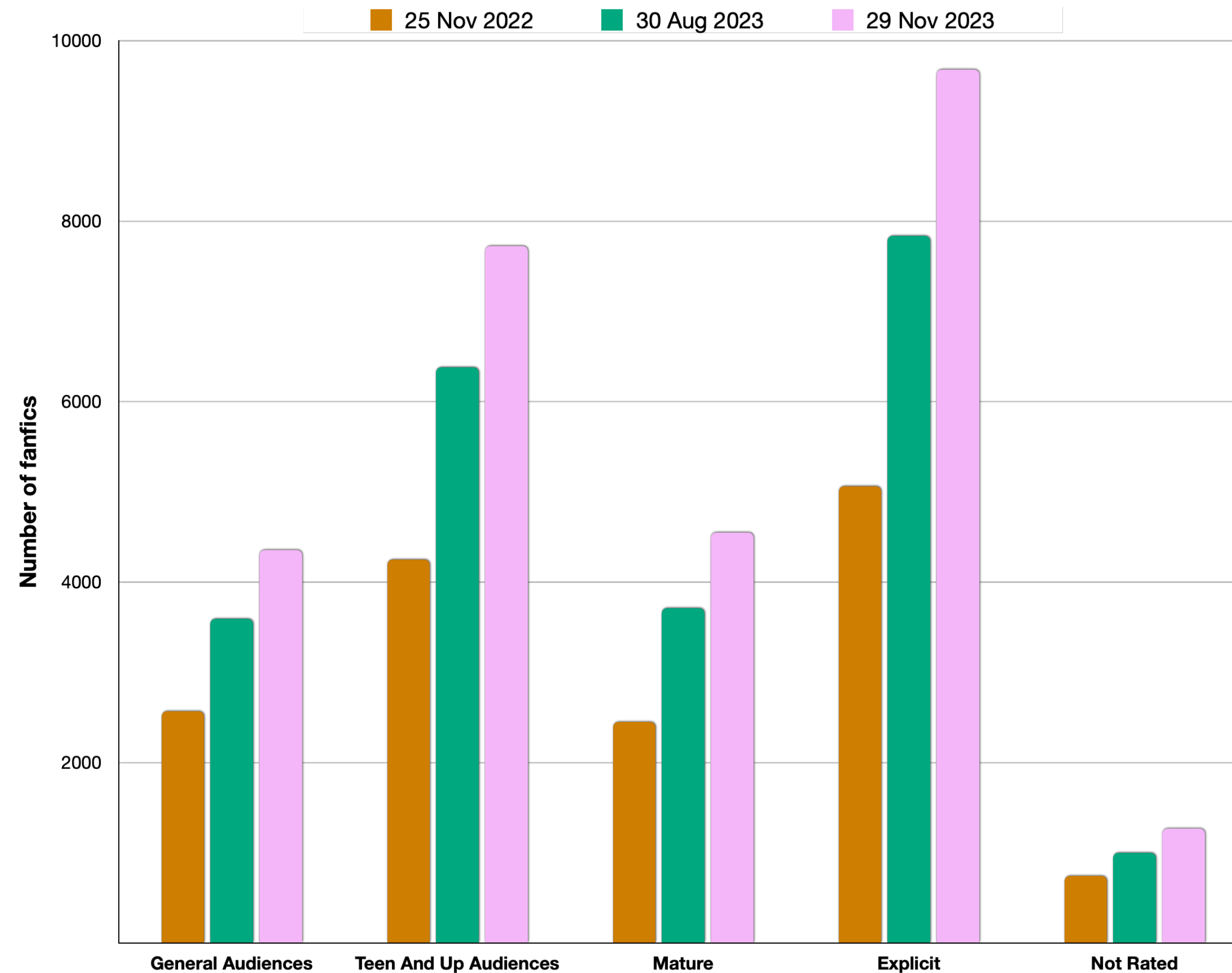
The most frequently tagged OFMD ships on AO3 and the percentage of fics that tag them without tagging any other ships. The percentage of "OTP: True" fics is based on the cumulative data on 25 Nov 2022, 30 Aug 2023 and 29 Nov 2023. For Ouizzy there's no comparison to earlier data because 29 Nov 2023 was the first time this ship tag was included in the data set. The whole fandom tag is shown for comparison.

This data does not reveal if the ship in question is also the main ship of fics that tag several ships.

[Click here to see the definitions of each ship name.](#)

Fanfic Ratings

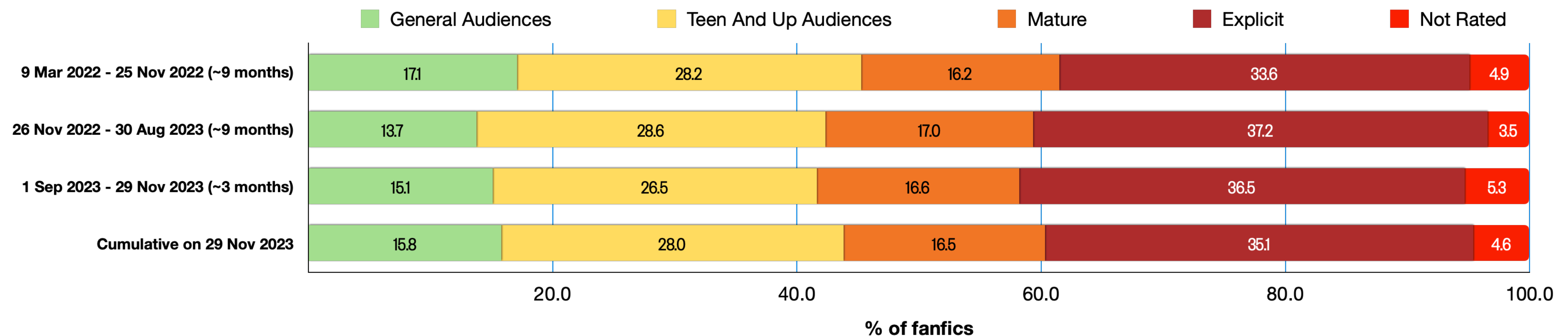
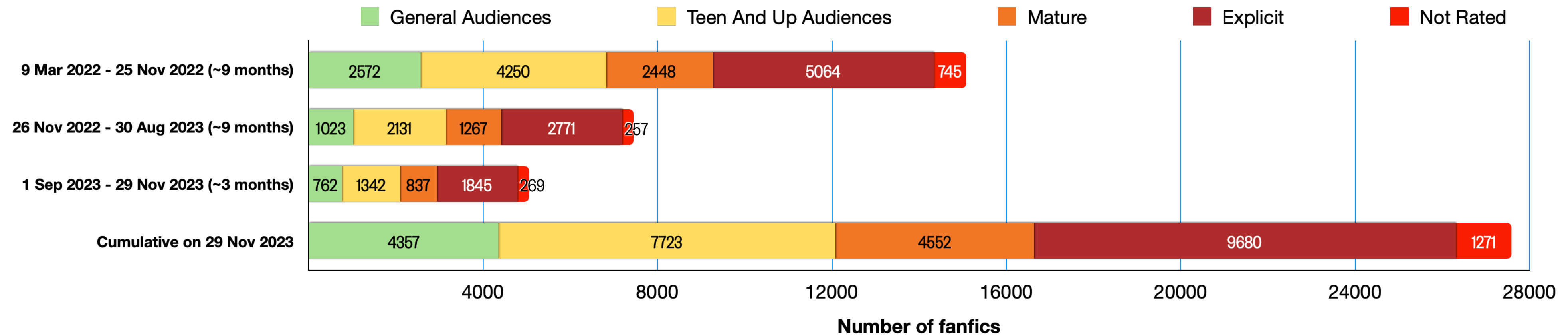
Increase in Number of Fanfics Over Time



The ratings of all fanfics under the OFMD fandom tag on AO3. The graph shows the cumulative number of fics on 25 Nov 2022 (~8 months after season 1 finale), on 30 Aug 2023 (~17 months after season 1 finale) and on 29 Nov 2023 (~1 month after season 2 finale).

Number of Fanfics and Their Ratings Distribution

Change Over Time

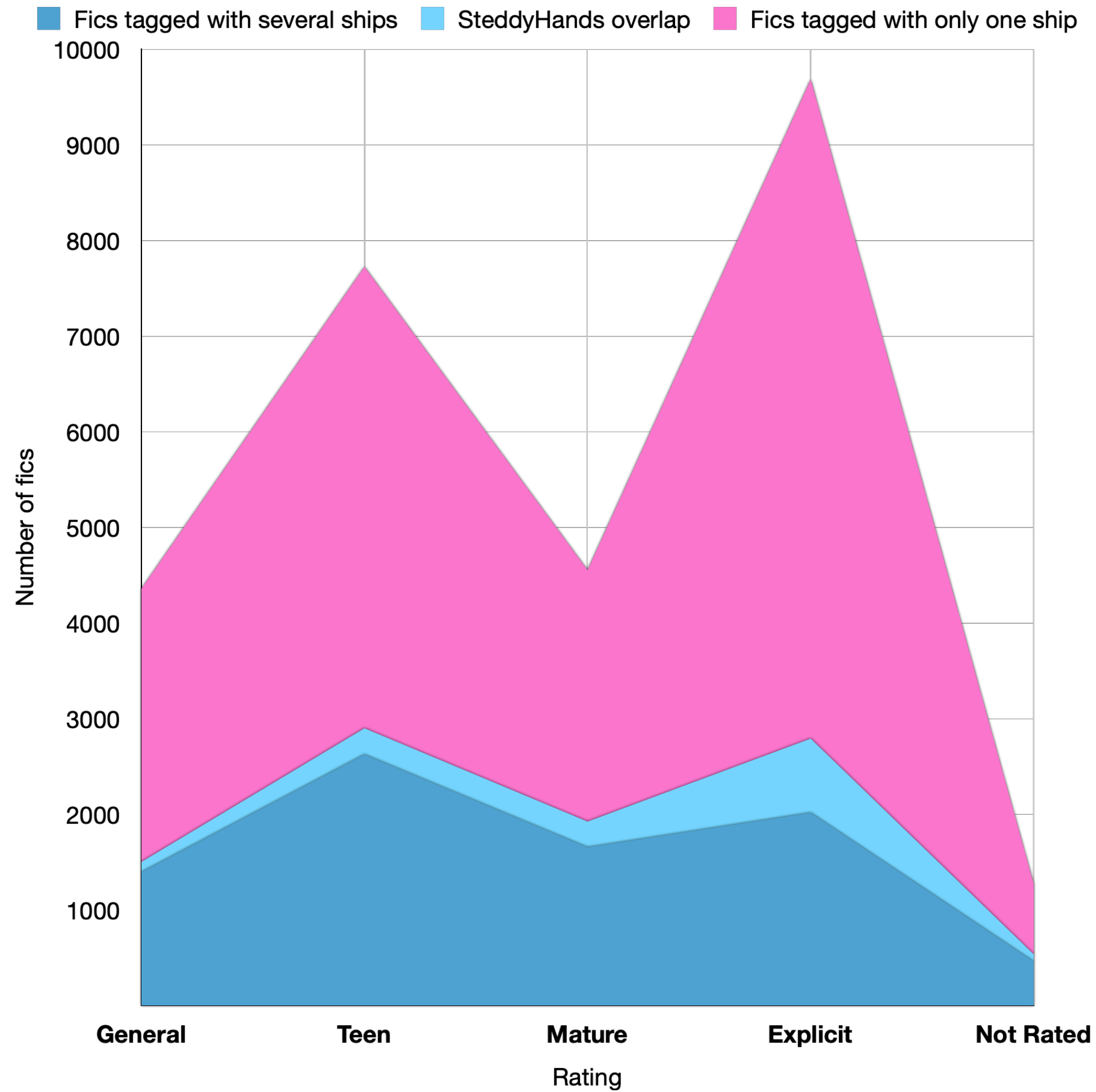


All fanfics under the OFMD fandom tag on AO3 and their ratings distribution, grouped into fics that were posted on AO3 during the ~9 months after season 1 premiered, during the following ~9 months and during the 3 months (Sep-Nov) around the airing of season 2. The cumulative ratings distribution of the fandom tag is shown for comparison.

Please note that the number of fics that were posted during a time period is calculated as the net gain. It's the difference in the cumulative number of fics on the data collection date and on the previous data collection date. If any fics were deleted between the data collection dates, those are subtracted from the number of fics that were posted between the data collection dates.

Fanfic Ratings Distribution

Several Ships vs. Only One Ship

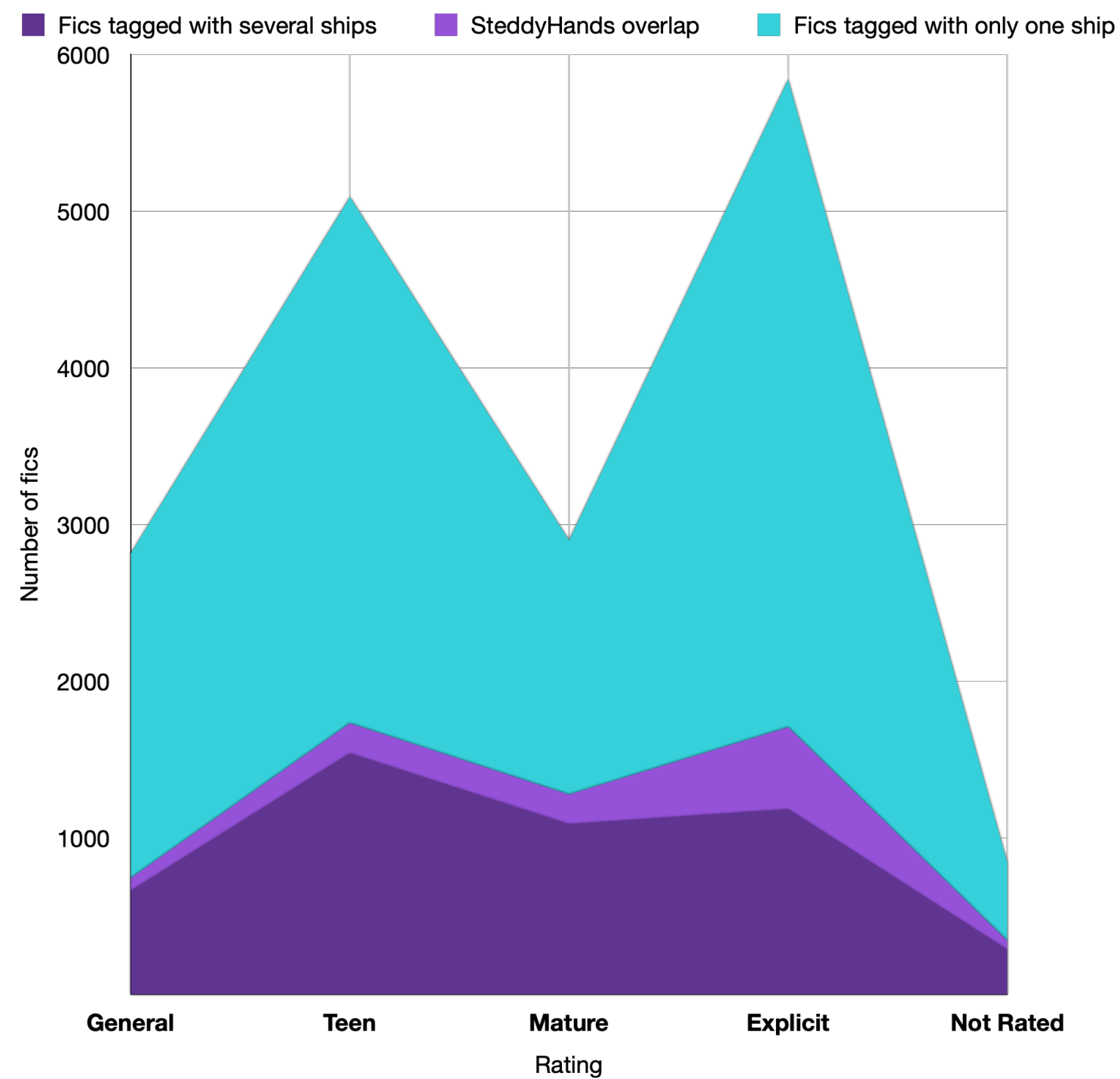


All fanfics under the OFMD fandom tag on AO3 and their ratings distribution on 29 Nov 2023. Fics with only one ship tag are separated from the fics with several ship tags. Fics that are tagged with SteddyHands and at least one of the pairing ships it includes are also shown separately.

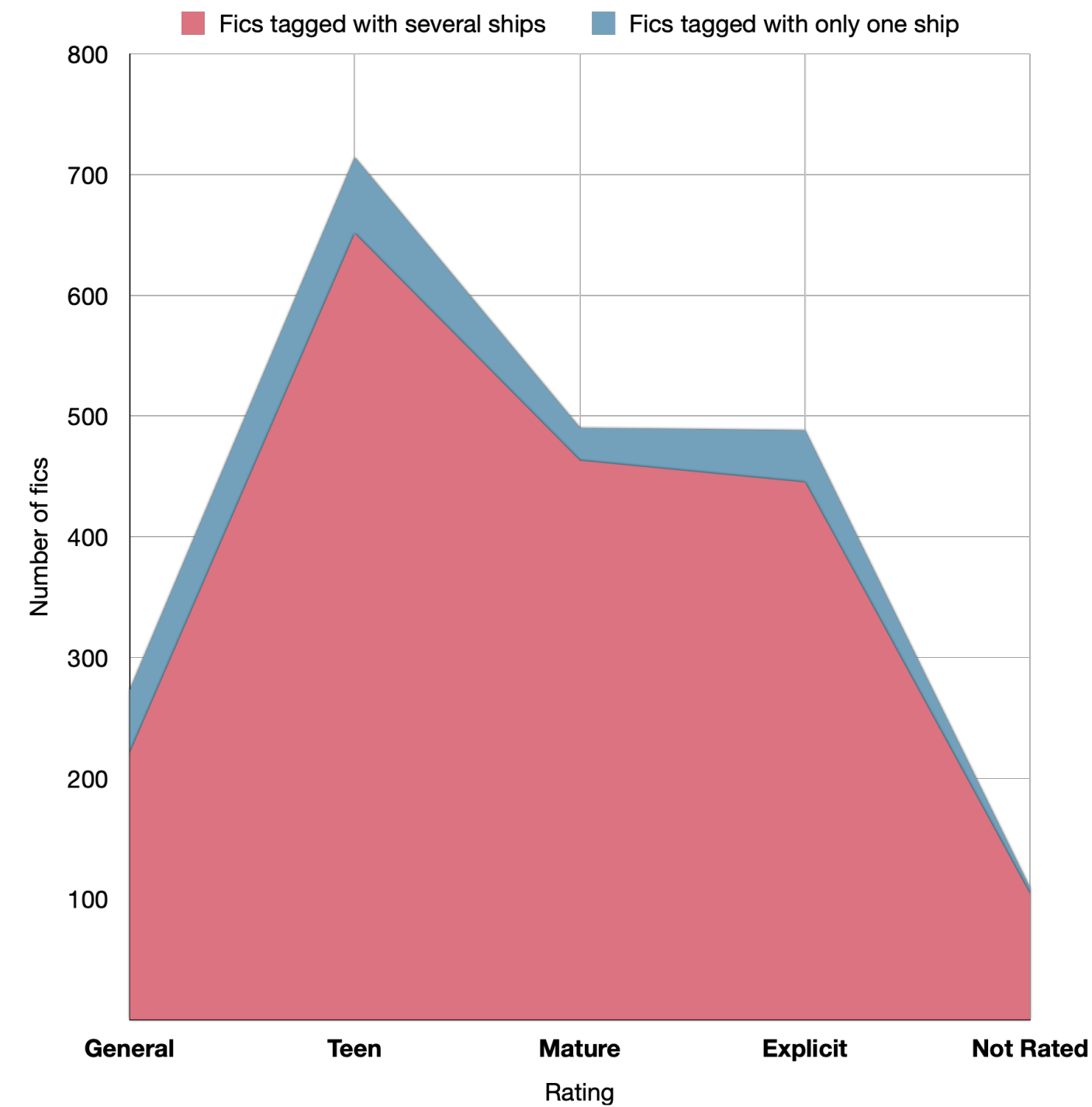
Fanfic Ratings Distribution: Canon Ships

Several Ships vs. Only One Ship

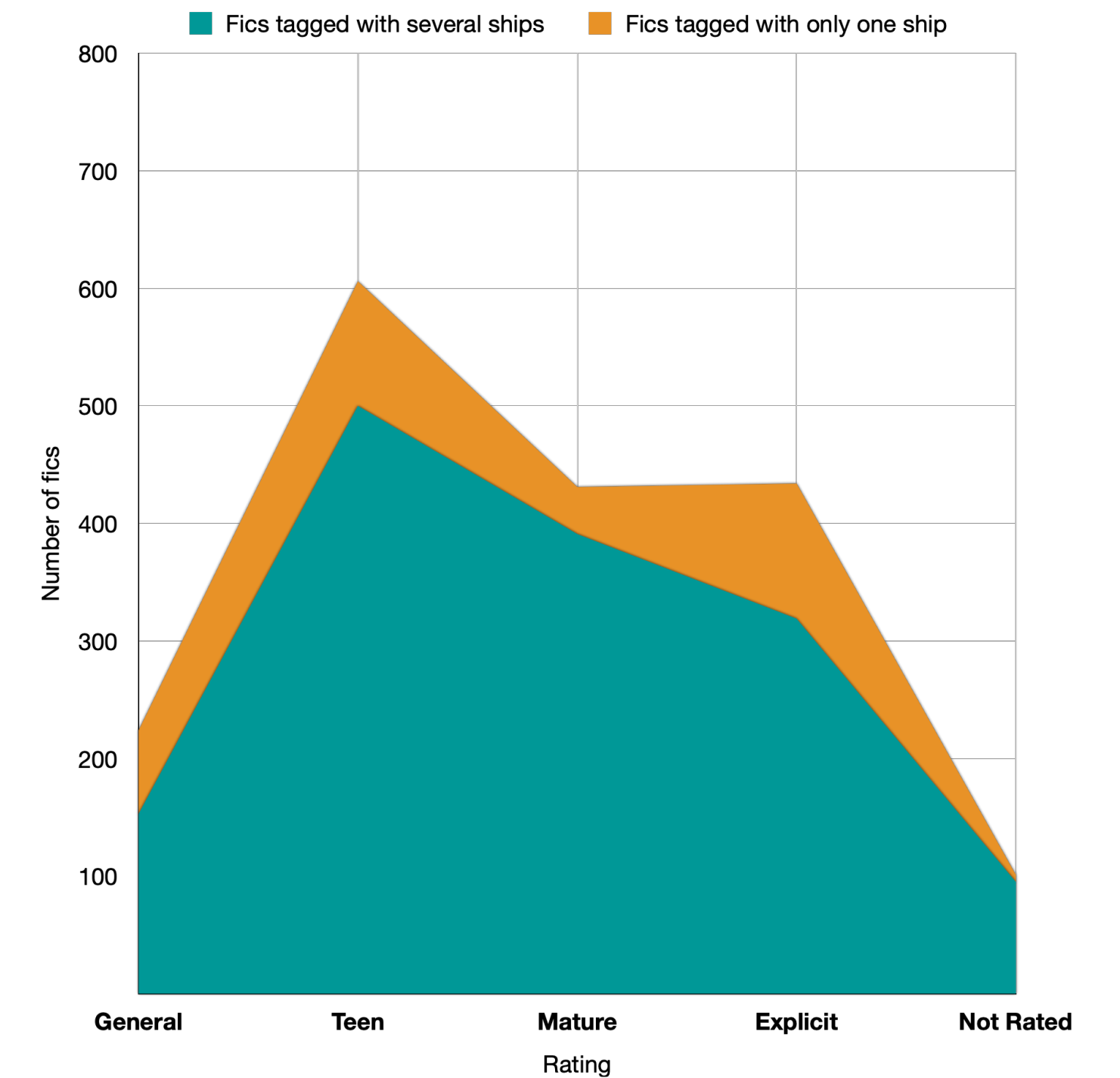
GentleBeard



LuPete



TealOranges



All fanfics under the ship tag on AO3 and their ratings distribution on 29 Nov 2023. Fics with only one ship tag are separated from the fics with several ship tags. With GentleBeard, fics that are also tagged with SteddyHands are shown separately.

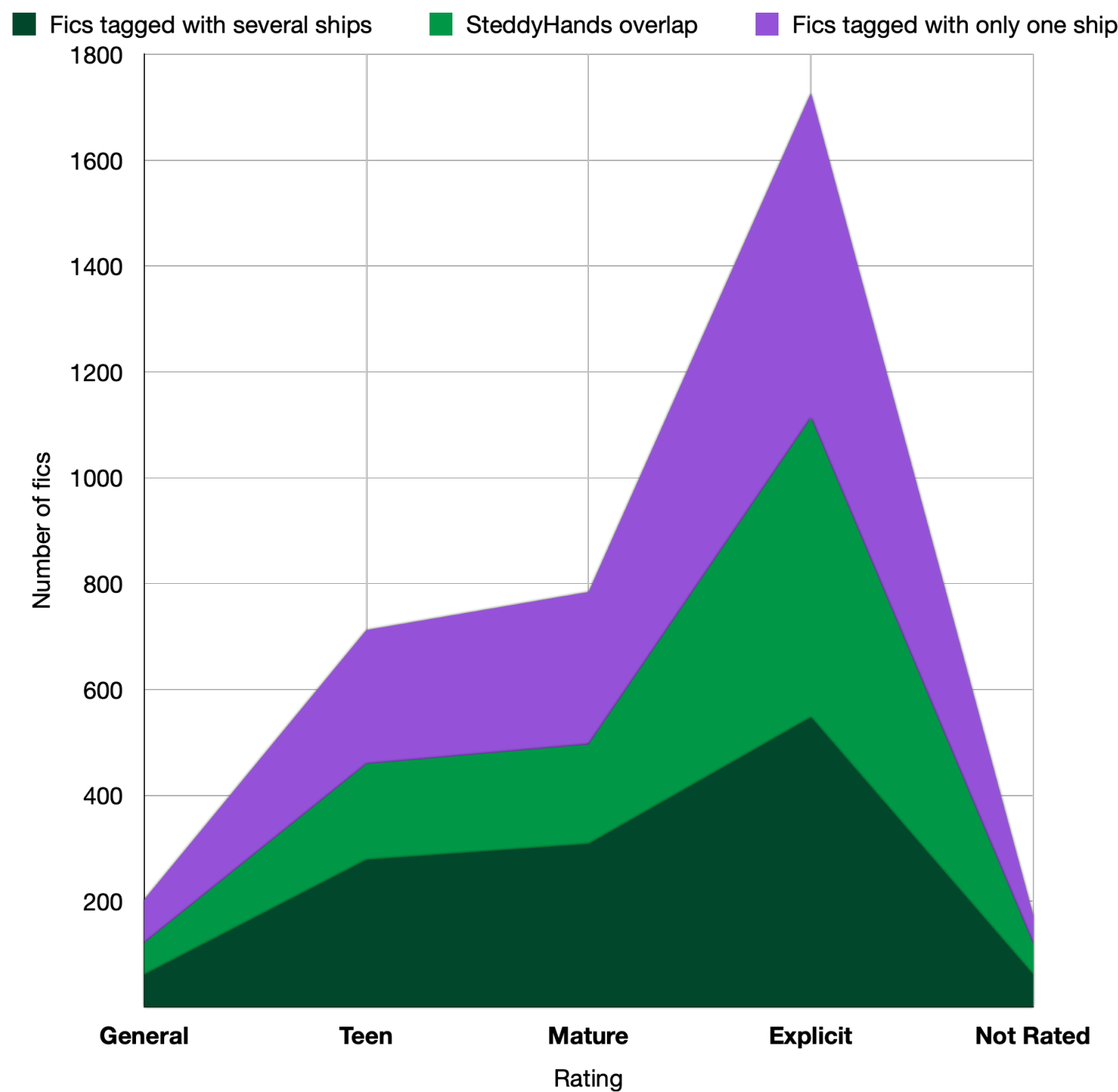
Please note that the scale on GentleBeard is different from LuPete and TealOranges.

[Click here to see the definitions of each ship name.](#)

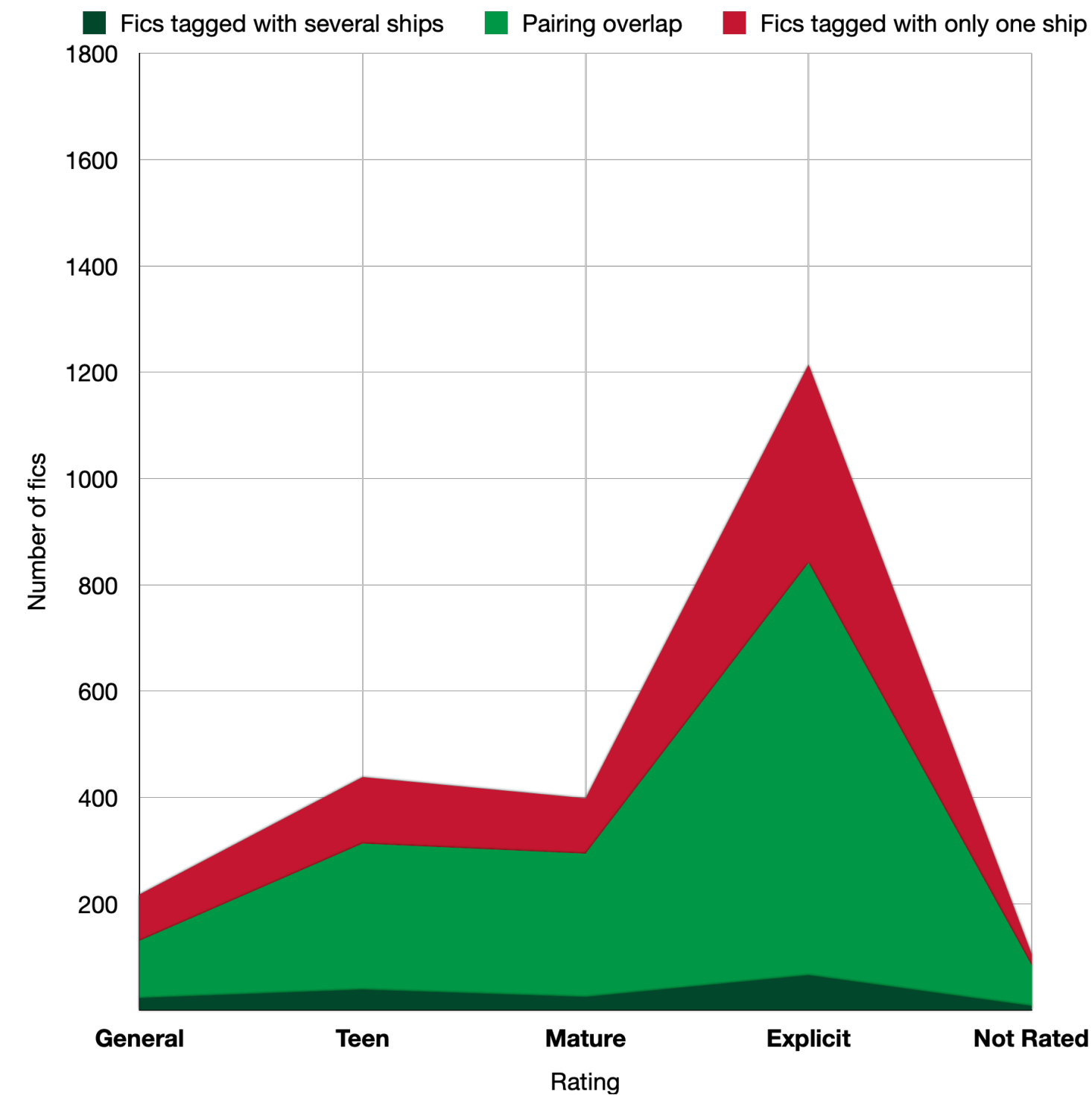
Fanfic Ratings Distribution: SteddyHands & Associated Ships

Several Ships vs. Only One Ship

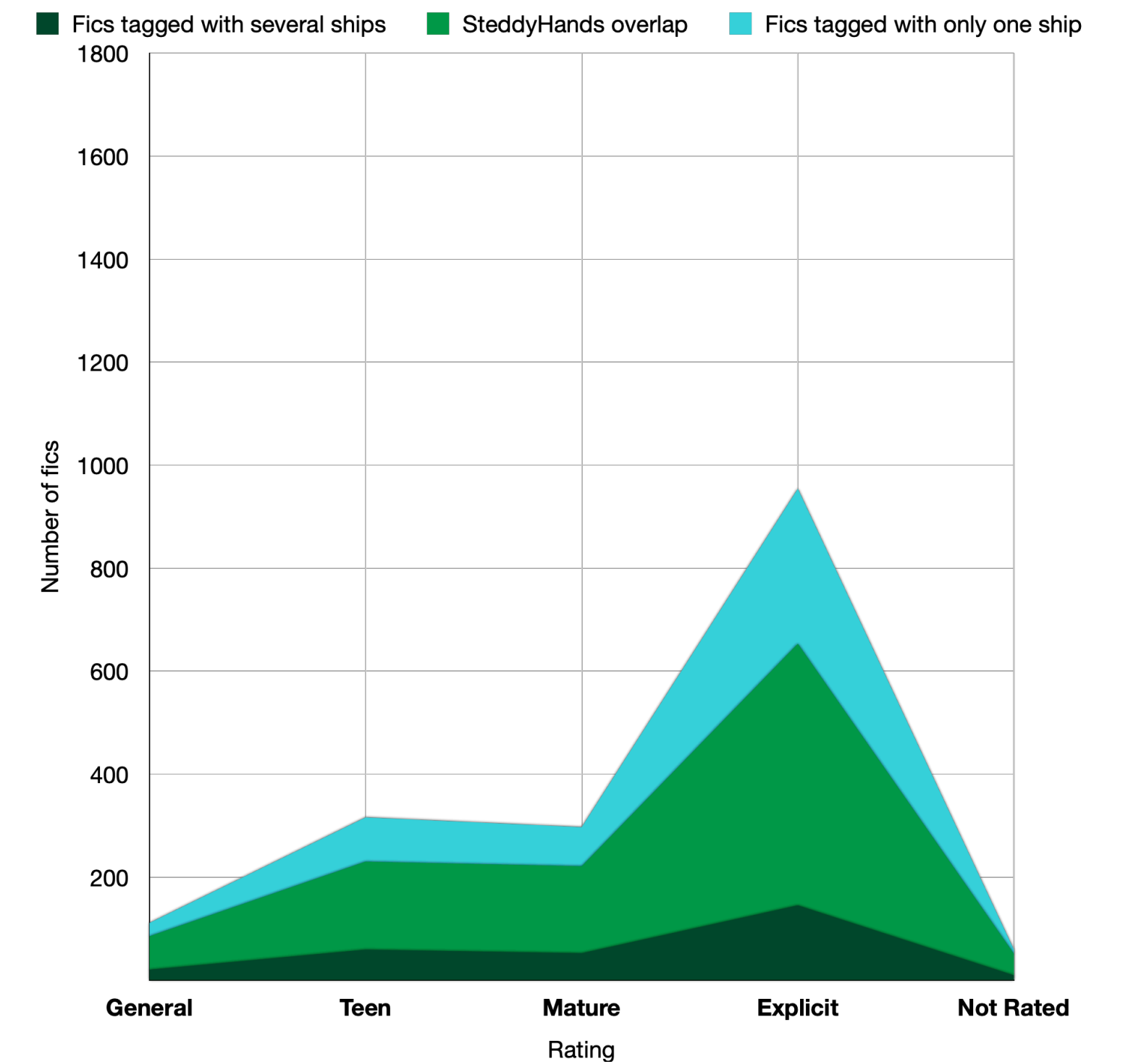
EdIzzy



SteddyHands



Stizzy



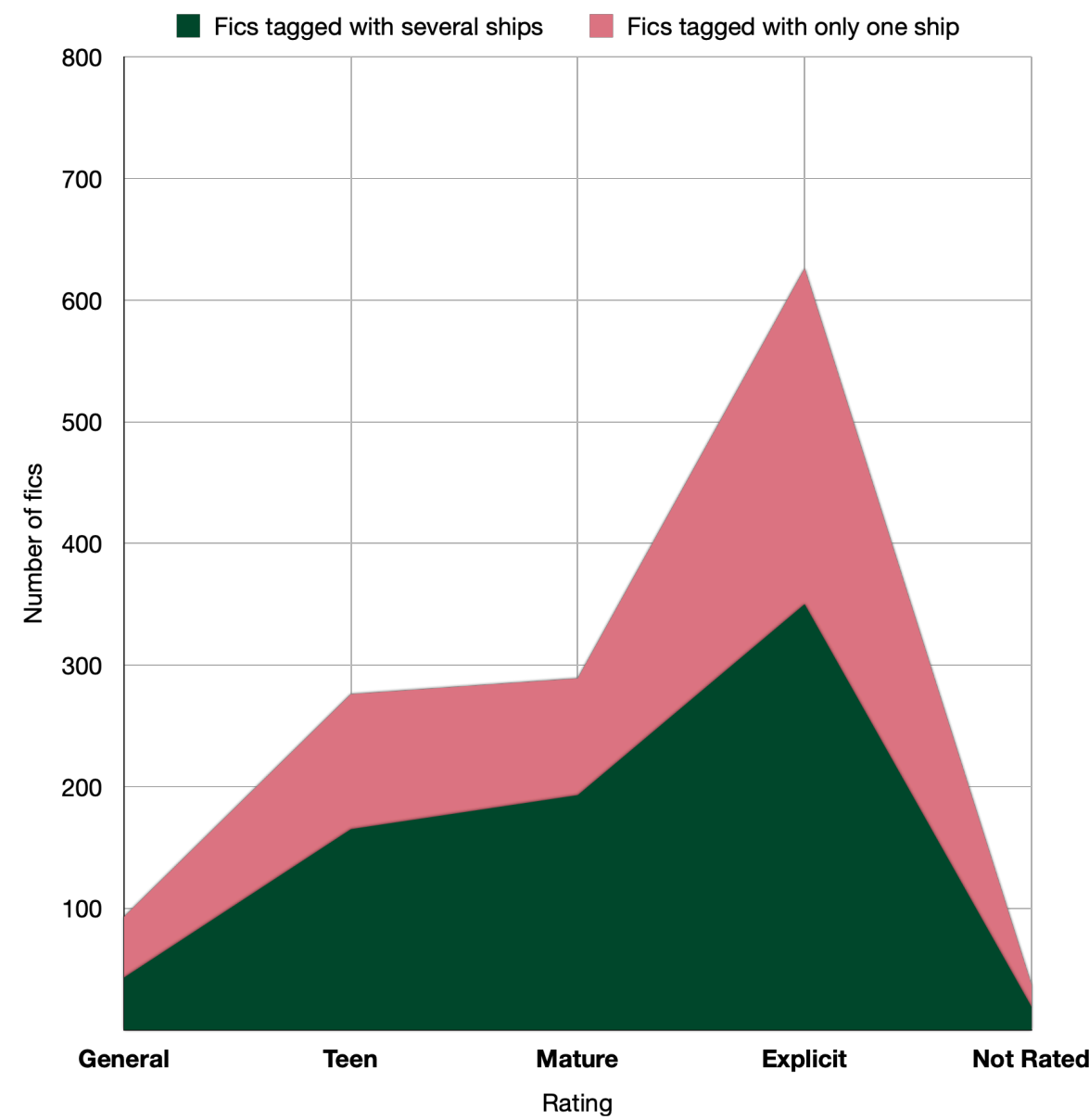
All fanfics under the ship tag on AO3 and their ratings distribution on 29 Nov 2023. Fics with only one ship tag are separated from the fics with several ship tags. With EdIzzy and Stizzy, fics that are also tagged with SteddyHands are shown separately. With SteddyHands, fics that are also tagged with at least one of the pairing ships it includes are shown separately.

[Click here to see the definitions of each ship name.](#)

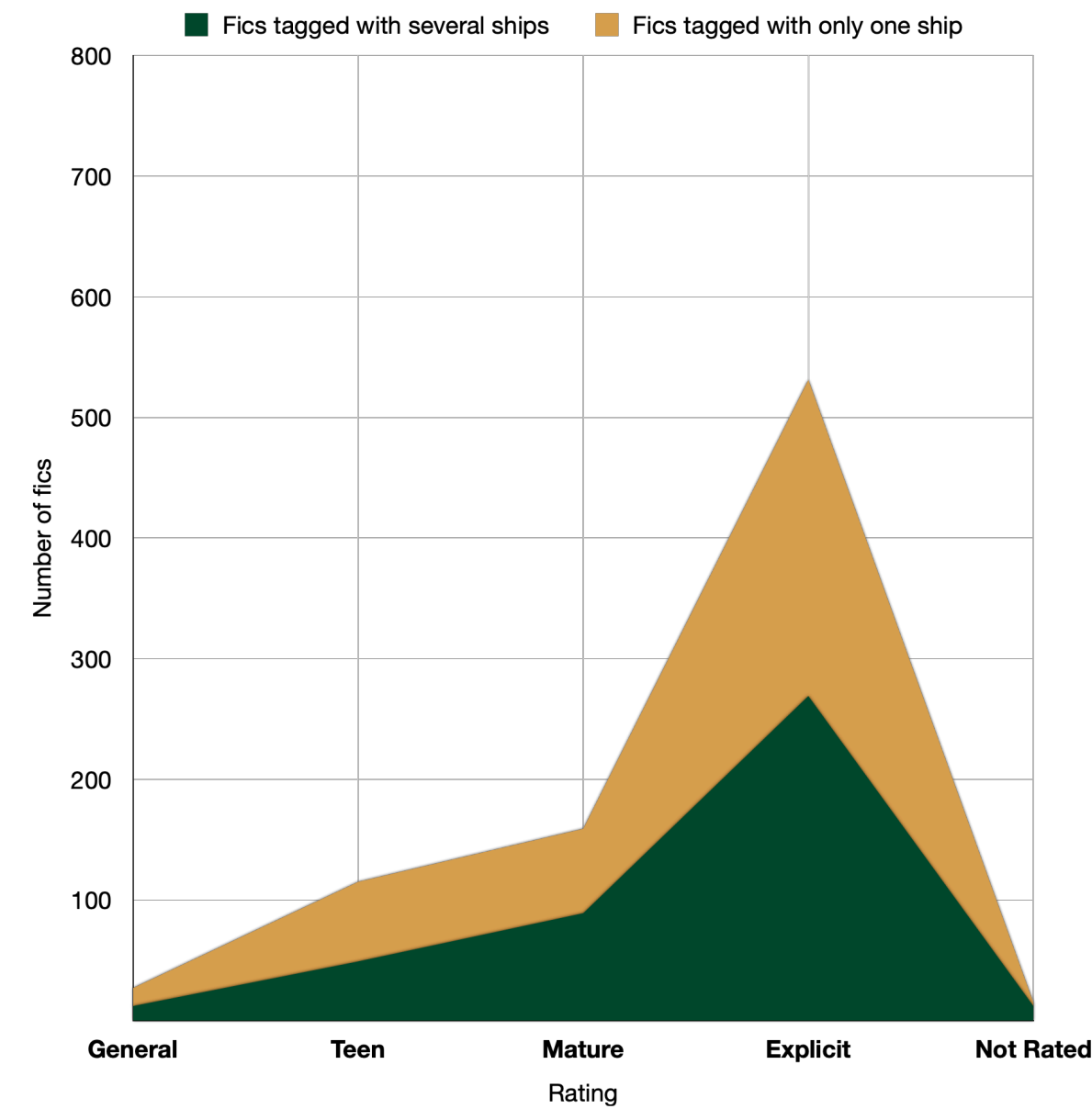
Fanfic Ratings Distribution: Other Frequently Tagged Ships

Several Ships vs. Only One Ship

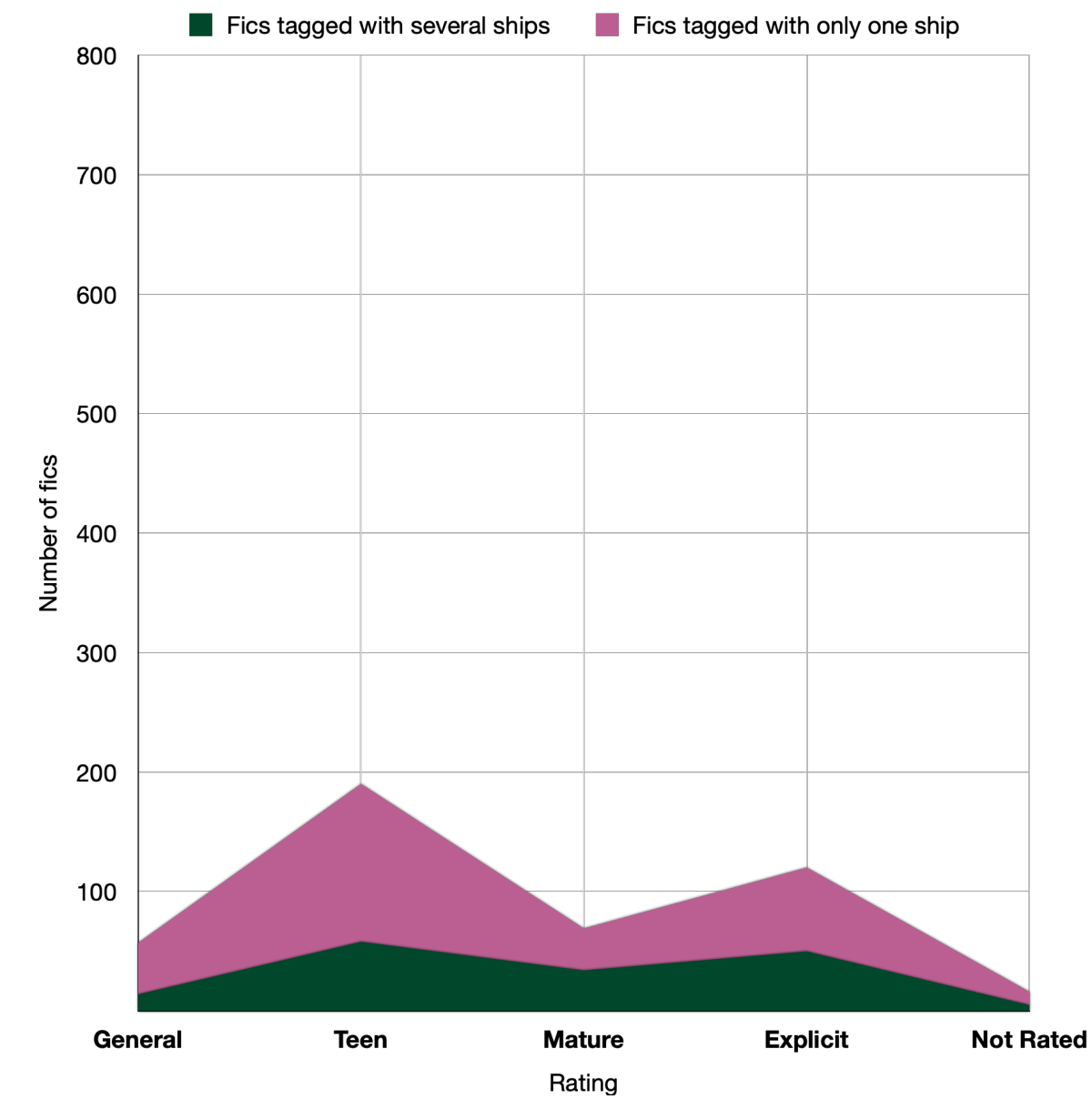
Sprizzy



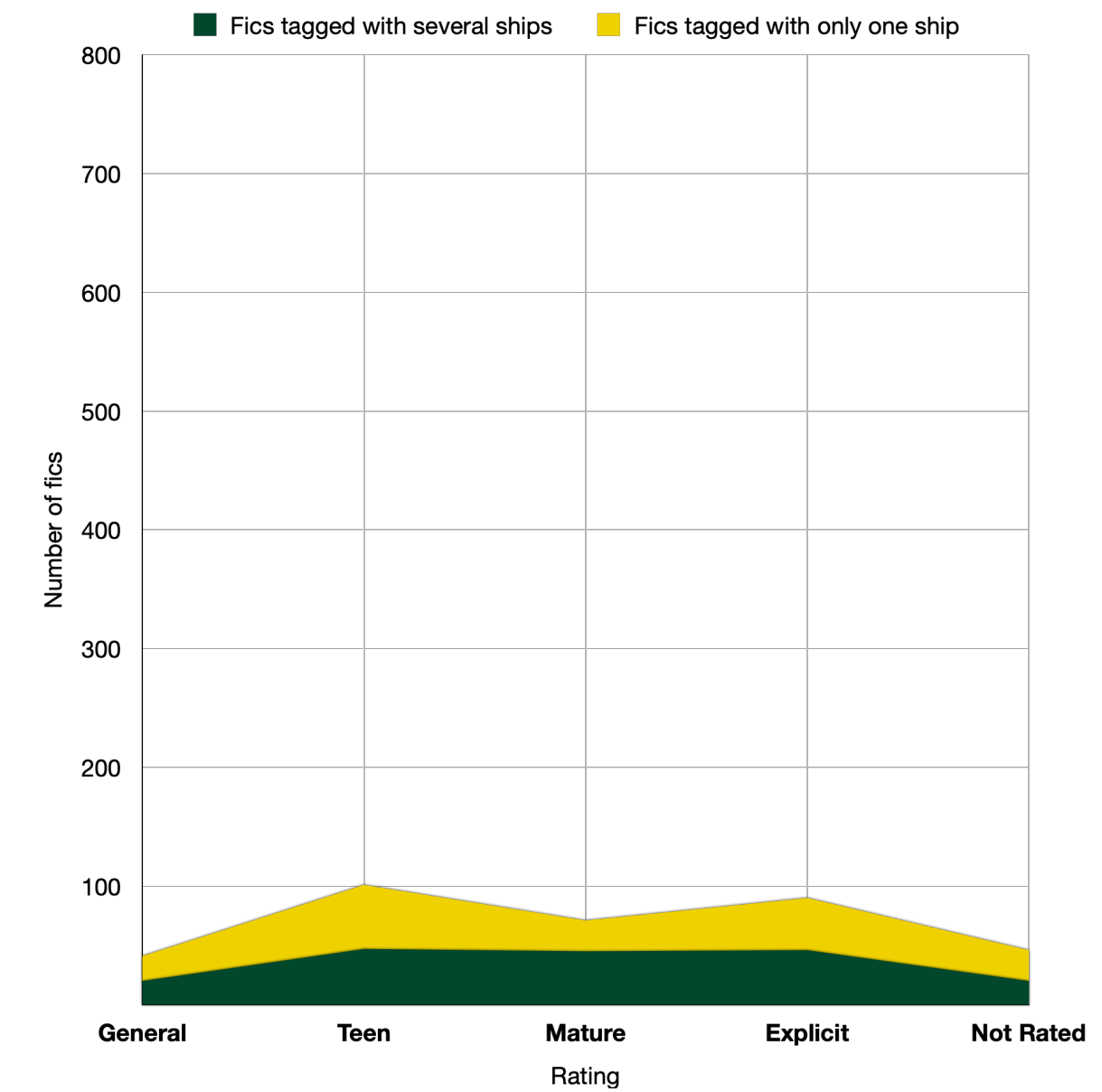
CJizzy



Rizzy



Ouizzy



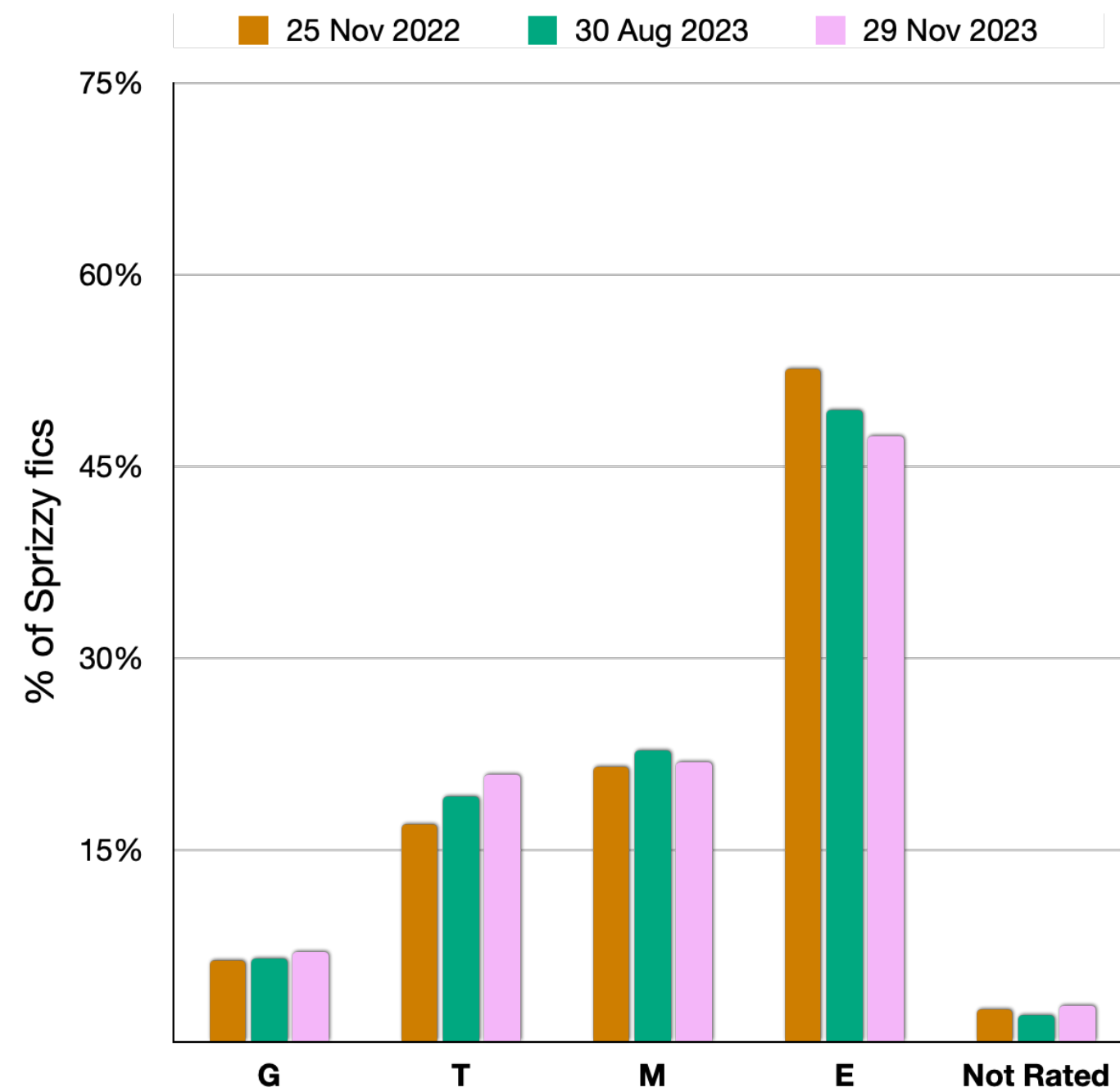
All fanfics under the ship tag on AO3 and their ratings distribution on 29 Nov 2023. Fics with only one ship tag are separated from the fics with several ship tags.

[Click here to see the definitions of each ship name.](#)

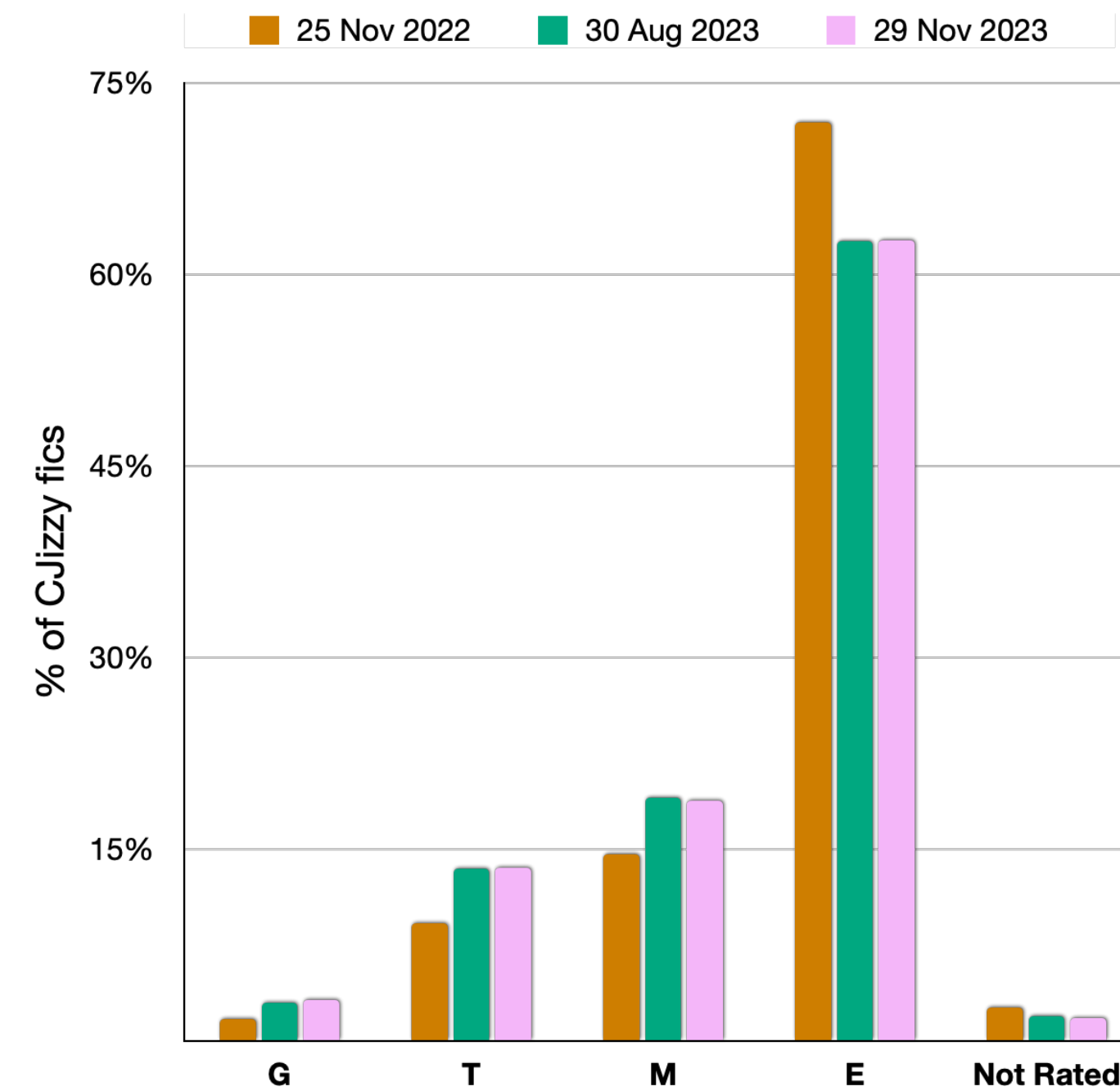
Fanfic Ratings Distribution: Change Over Time

Sprizzy, CJizzy and Rizzy

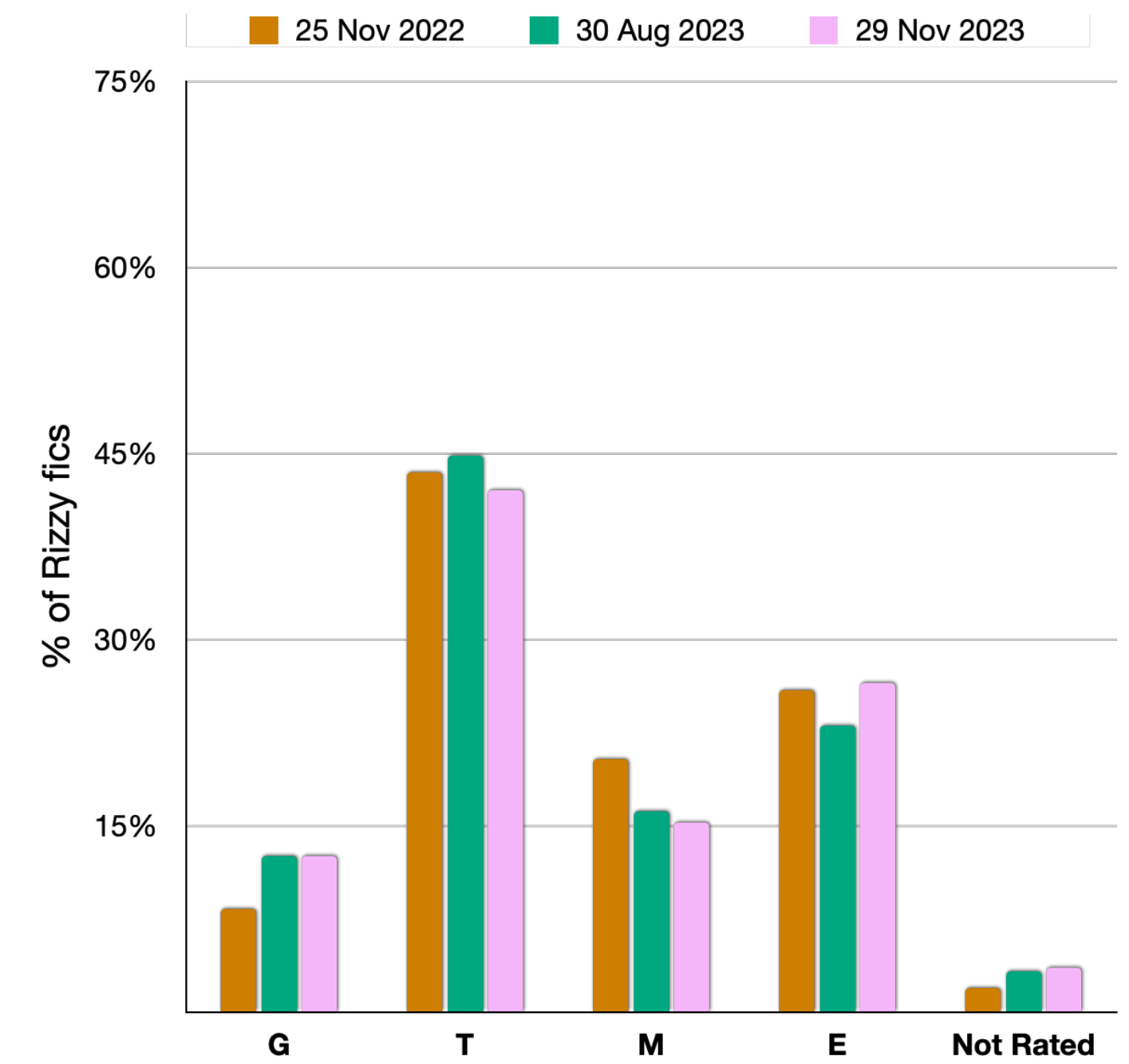
Sprizzy



CJizzy



Rizzy



The ratings distribution of all fanfics under the ship tag on AO3. The graphs show the cumulative percentage of fics with each rating on 25 Nov 2022 (~8 months after season 1 finale), on 30 Aug 2023 (~17 months after season 1 finale) and on 29 Nov 2023 (~1 month after season 2 finale).

Sprizzy, CJizzy and Rizzy were the only frequently used ship tags that had clear fluctuation in the ratings distribution over time.

[Click here to see the definitions of each ship name.](#)

Findings

Canon ships

- GentleBeard was the most popular ship, with 63% of all OFMD fics and 67% of "OTP: True" fics tagging it.
 - Last year, 70% of all OFMD fics and 73% of "OTP: True" fics tagged GentleBeard.
 - More than half of fics that tag GentleBeard were "OTP: True" fics.
 - The most common rating for fics that tag GentleBeard was Explicit, both overall and in "OTP: True" fics.
- LuPete and TealOranges were the 4th and 5th most frequently tagged ships. Last year, they were 3rd and 4th, but SteddyHands has since surpassed both of them.
 - In "OTP: True" fics TealOranges drops to 7th place and LuPete drops to 9th place. Last year, they were 5th and 8th, respectively. They also had the smallest share of fics that tag only them (less than 20% for TealOranges and less than 10% for LuPete).
 - The most common rating for fics that tag LuPete was Teen And Up Audiences, both overall and in "OTP: True" fics.
 - The most common rating for all fics that tag TealOranges was Teen And Up Audiences. In "OTP: True" fics, Explicit was now the most common rating, but last year it was Teen And Up Audiences.

Findings

SteddyHands & associated ships

- Fics that tag SteddyHands also frequently tag at least one of the pairing ships (GentleBeard, Edlizzy, Stizzy). When this overlap is taken into account, the ranking of SteddyHands drops from 3rd to 6th and Stizzy drops from 6th to 8th.
 - The ranking of Edlizzy doesn't change, it's still on the 2nd place. Last year, removing the overlap dropped Edlizzy from 2nd to 3rd place.
- In "OTP: True" fics Edlizzy and SteddyHands were the 2nd and 3rd most frequently tagged ships. Stizzy was the 5th, which implies that Stede and Izzy are more often shipped as a part of the throuple than as a pair.
 - Last year, Stizzy was on the 7th place.
- The ratings distribution of SteddyHands, Edlizzy and Stizzy leaned towards Explicit, especially in "OTP: True" fics.
 - More than half of the fics tagging SteddyHands and/or Stizzy were E rated. With Edlizzy, ~48% of the fics were E rated.

Findings

Other frequently tagged ships

- The rest of the frequently tagged ships featured Izzy—just like the other non-canonical ships.
- For Sprizzy and CJizzy, the ratings distribution looked similar to SteddyHands, EdIzzy and Stizzy: it leaned towards Explicit, especially in “OTP: True” fics.
 - Out of all the ships in this study, CJizzy had the biggest portion (~63%) of E rated fics. Last year, ~72-77% of CJizzy fics were E rated.
- For Rizzy and Ouizy, the ratings distribution leaned towards Teen And Up Audiences.
 - Out of all the ships in this study, Rizzy had the biggest portion of T rated fics (~42-45%), just like the year before.
- Sprizzy, CJizzy and Rizzy fics had the most fluctuation in their ratings distribution when compared to the last year’s ratings distribution.
- Rizzy was the only ship besides GentleBeard that had over 50% of “OTP: True” fics.
 - Last year, this was also true for CJizzy, but since then its “OTP: True” fic portion has dropped below 50%.

Findings

All fanfics in the OFMD fandom tag

- The overall most popular rating was Explicit, but Teen And Up Audiences was not far behind.
 - The difference between E and T was ~7 percentage points; last year it was ~5 percentage points.
 - With the fics that tag several ships, T was a more popular rating than E, with a difference of ~7 percentage points; last year it was ~11 percentage points.
- 53% of the fics were tagged with only one ship. Last year it was 65%.
 - 38% of "OTP: True" fics were E rated. Last year it was 37%.
- The portion of fics that were rated General Audiences was almost equal to the portion of fics that were rated Mature.

Findings

The increase in OFMD fanfics between 25 Nov 2022 and 29 Nov 2023

- The number of all OFMD fanfics increased 83% during the last year.
 - The biggest increase was in the number of E rated fics (+91%) and the smallest increase was in the number of G rated fics (+69%).
- The increase in non-canon ship tags was bigger than the increase in canon ship tags.
 - The biggest increase was in the number of fics that tag Rizzy (+319%).
 - The number of fics tagging other non-canon ships increased 106-143%.
 - The number of fics tagging canon ships increased 46-65%.
- Please note that the increase is calculated as the net gain between 25 Nov 2022 and 29 Nov 2023. If any fanfics were deleted between these dates, those are subtracted from the number of "new" fanfics.

Ship	25 Nov 2022	29 Nov 2023	Net gain ("new fics")	Increase
Rizzy	108	452	344	319 %
CJizzy	349	847	498	143 %
Stizzy	755	1737	982	130 %
SteddyHands	1094	2372	1278	117 %
Edlizzy	1746	3598	1852	106 %
Sprizzy	642	1321	679	106 %
GentleBeard	10572	17489	6917	65 %
LuPete	1370	2074	704	51 %
TealOranges	1226	1796	570	46 %

Main Conclusions

What did we learn?

- GentleBeard is still crushing it and leaving all other ships in its wake.
- Other canon ships haven't gotten any more popular since last year. They get tagged frequently, but they have a relatively small share of fics that tag only them. This might indicate that similar to the show, they also feature as background relationships in fanfiction.
- Izzy Hands is still the fandom bicycle.
- The fandom has gotten even hornier since last year.

About This Study

Who, why, when?

- This study was conducted by [Tikli](#). They did [a similar study](#) a year ago, after seeing some tweets making claims about certain OFMD ships. They got curious and wanted to find out which ships were the most popular ones.
- When season 2 of OFMD was approaching, Tikli started to gather comparable ship tag data for a follow-up study.
- Tikli collected the new data sets on 30 August and 29 November 2023. They processed the data and made the graphs at the beginning of December and then wrote this study report, publishing it on 8 December 2023.
- This is an officially unofficial fandom study. It's done for fun, because numbers are interesting and graphs are pretty.