
AVSP VI – Fall/Winter 2011-12

**Section II:
Introduction**

The Alaska Visitor Statistics Program is a statewide visitor study periodically commissioned by the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development. The study provides the state government and the tourism industry essential information on one of Alaska's major economic engines: out-of-state visitors. Previous AVSP studies were undertaken in 1985/86, 1989/90, 1993/94, 2000/01, and 2006/07. All but the 2000/01 study were completed by McDowell Group. The project consists of two main components: an estimate of visitor volume and a survey of visitors.

Visitor Volume

The Visitor Volume estimate is a count of the number of out-of-state visitors exiting Alaska, by transportation mode, during the study period. The estimate is based on traffic data (for example, highway border crossings, ferry disembarkations, and airport enplanements) and visitor/resident ratios obtained at each exit point. Ratios are applied to the traffic data to arrive at the total visitor volume.

Visitor Survey

The Visitor Survey is administered to a sample of out-of-state visitors departing Alaska at all major exit points. The survey includes questions on trip purpose, transportation modes used, length of stay, destinations, lodging, activities, expenditures, satisfaction, trip planning, and demographics.

The study was undertaken in two stages: Summer 2011 (May 1-September 30) and Fall/Winter 2011-2012 (October 1-April 30). This report addresses the fall/winter period.

Project Team

The AVSP VI project team was led by the McDowell Group, Inc., a research and consulting firm with offices in Juneau and Anchorage. McDowell Group was responsible for a majority of the study tasks: survey design, sample design, surveyor training, survey implementation, traffic data collection, data analysis, and reporting, among others.

McDowell Group contracted web development and data processing functions with two long-term partners:

- Fusion MR is a market research firm based in Portland, Oregon. Fusion MR was responsible for set-up and maintenance of all online versions of the survey, as well as maintenance of the database for completed online and intercept surveys.
- MR Data specializes in data processing of market research and public opinion survey information. MR Data processed all survey data collected for this project and created all cross tabulations using Computer for Marketing Corporation's Mentor package.

Comparison with AVSP V

The AVSP VI methodology followed AVSP V methodology very closely, allowing for a high degree of comparability between the two studies. Trend data can be found in *Section II: Visitor Volume* and *Section IV: Visitor Profile*. Because of the large volume of data presented in *Section V: Summary Profiles*, it was not practical to include 2006-2007 results alongside 2011-2012. To compare data for specific markets, readers are referred to the previous report, available at:

www.commerce.alaska.gov/ded/dev/toubus/research.htm

One important difference for the AVSP VI fall/winter period is the exclusion of surveying of visitors exiting Alaska via highway. Although highway surveys were conducted in 2006-2007, it was determined to be unsafe and statistically inefficient due to the very small number of out-of-state visitors using this mode to exit Alaska during the October to April period. For this reason a limited number of survey results for 2011-2012 are not comparable to those for 2006-2007.

Report Organization

The following section in this report (*Section III: Visitor Volume*) presents the visitor volume estimates. *Section IV: Visitor Profile* presents the results of the visitor survey. Survey results are organized into the following categories:

| | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Trip Purpose and Packages | Previous Alaska Travel |
| Transportation Modes | Trip Planning |
| Length of Stay, Destinations, and Lodging | Demographics |
| Activities | Expenditures |
| Satisfaction Ratings | |

Section V: International Visitors provides survey results based to all international visitors as well as Japanese visitors specifically.

Section VI: Summary Profiles provides additional analysis for 17 subgroups, organized into the following chapters:

| |
|--------------------------|
| Destinations |
| US Regions |
| Ferry and Package |

Section VII: Methodology presents the methodology used in both the visitor volume estimate and visitor survey.

How to Read the Tables in this Report

Unless otherwise noted, all numerals in the tables displaying survey results are percentages of the sample population noted in the table heading (top row). For example, in the Visitor Profile chapter, the second table shows package purchase rates. Under the heading "Vacation/Pleasure 11-12," in the row "purchased

package,” the number 29 means that 29 percent of fall/winter 2011-12 vacation/pleasure visitors purchased a package.

Readers are advised that survey responses do not always add up to 100 percent. In some cases this is due to rounding (with responses adding up to either 99 or 101 percent). In other cases respondents were allowed multiple answers, resulting in responses well over 100 percent.

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- Ketchikan International Airport
- Sitka Airport
- Alaska Airlines
- Alaska Marine Highway System
- Alaska Marine Highway Ketchikan Terminal
- Yukon Department of Tourism and Culture

