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**AVSP VI – Fall/Winter 2011-12**

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**Section VII:  
Methodology**

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# Introduction

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This chapter contains methodological information that is specific to the fall/winter period. A full description of AVSP methodology (survey locations, surveyor training, traffic data sources, sampling procedure, etc.) can be found in the summer report at the following link:

<http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/ded/dev/toubus/research.htm>

# Visitor Volume

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Fall/winter visitor volume was determined in exactly the same manner as summer visitor volume: by applying visitor/resident ratios determined by tally contacts to traffic data.

## Time Period

Visitor volume in this report refers to the fall/winter period: October 1, 2011 through April 30, 2012.

## Tally Contacts

Tally contacts are made when travelers are asked prior to exiting Alaska whether they are a resident or visitor. McDowell Group surveyors tallied a total of over 38,000 people as they were exiting Alaska during the fall/winter period. Tallies were only conducted for Domestic and International Air. Tallies were not necessary for the ferry exit mode because the Alaska Marine Highway System provides exact counts of non-residents disembarking at Bellingham and Prince Rupert. Tallies were not conducted on the highway because it was not a sampled mode in fall/winter 2011-12. Highway visitor/resident ratios from 2006-07 were used to determine visitor volumes.

### Visitor/Resident Tally Contacts, Fall/Winter 2011-12

Exit Mode	Passengers Tallied
Domestic Air	34,381
International Air	3,634
<b>Total</b>	<b>38,015</b>

## Survey Population

The AVSP Fall/Winter 2011-12 survey was conducted with out-of-state visitors who were exiting Alaska between October 1, 2011 and April 30, 2012. Sampled exit modes were the same as in the summer, with two exceptions. The cruise ship mode was not sampled in fall/winter because over 99 percent of cruise ship passengers exit Alaska during the summer period. The highway mode was not sampled in fall/winter because of surveyor safety concerns, and the statistical and logistical inefficiency of surveying such a small population. (Visitors exiting by highway represent an estimated 3.7 percent of all fall/winter visitors. Roughly half of these visitors exit via commercial vehicle and therefore would not have been eligible to be surveyed.)

## Survey Design

The fall/winter survey was based on the summer survey, with several small variations. The wintertime activities of snow skiing/snowboarding, snowmobiling, and Chena Hot Springs were added to the list of activities, and Northern Lights packages and hunting packages were added to the list of packages.

Unlike the summer survey, an online survey methodology was not used for fall/winter. The comparatively low response rate in online surveying coupled with the small number of visitors traveling in the fall/winter, make the online methodology an ineffective survey research tool for the fall/winter season.

## Sample Sizes

A total of 1,364 surveys were conducted during the fall/winter period, including 1,170 with visitors exiting via domestic air, 131 with visitors exiting via international air, and 63 with visitors exiting via Alaska Marine Highway.

**Sample Sizes, Fall/Winter 2011-12**

Exit Mode	Sample Size
Domestic Air	1,170
International Air	131
Ferry	63
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,364</b>

## Data Weighting

Fall/winter data was weighted using the same methodology as the summer data: by exit mode. Unlike summer data, no weighting of online data was necessary.

## Response Rates

Response rates show the percentage of people who completed a survey out of the total number of people targeted. The lower response rate for international air is likely attributable to the fact that nearly all sampled international flights for fall/winter 2011-12 occurred on Japan Air, where there is a higher likelihood of refusals due to cultural and language barriers. Although McDowell Group employed an interpreter to conduct a majority of the Japan Air surveys, non-Japanese speaking surveyors did conduct some of the surveys.

### Response Rates, Fall/Winter 2011-12

Exit Mode	Response Rate
Domestic Air	88.2%
International Air	51.6%
Ferry	81.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>82.4%</b>