
AVSP VI - Summer 2011

**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 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 2001 study were conducted 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 estimated visitor volume.

Visitor Survey

The visitor survey is administered to a random 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 is undertaken in two stages: Summer 2011 (May 1-September 30) and Fall/Winter 2011-2012 (October 1-April 30). This report addresses the summer 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 results alongside 2011. To compare data for specific markets, readers are referred to the previous report, available at:

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

There were a few improvements and changes in AVSP VI from the previous generation:

- Larger overall sample, allowing for decreased margins of error (improved data accuracy)
- Expanded and improved questions
- Larger international air sample
- Online survey option available in German, Japanese, and Spanish
- Separate report on the international market, available at the website above.

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: Summary Profiles provides additional analysis for 48 subgroups, organized into the following chapters:

Trip Purpose	Southeast Communities
Highway, Ferry, and Campground Users	Interior Communities
US Regions and Canada	Southwest and Far North
Alaska Regions	Sportfishing
Southcentral Communities	Selected Visitor Markets

Section VI: 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 first table

shows Trip Purpose rates. Under the heading "Air 2011," in the row "Vacation/pleasure," the number 77 means that 77 percent of summer 2011 air visitors were traveling for the purposes of vacation/pleasure.

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