

Visitor Services Project
Dry Tortugas National Park
Report Summary

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at Dry Tortugas National Park during March 20-26, 2002. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed to visitors. Visitors returned 311 questionnaires for a 77.8% response rate.
- This report profiles Dry Tortugas National Park visitors. A separate appendix contains visitors' comments about their visit. This report and the appendix include summaries of those comments.
- Forty-eight percent of visitor groups were in groups of two; thirty percent were in groups of three or four. Fifty-nine percent of the visitor groups were family groups. Forty-eight percent of visitors were aged 31-55 years and 15% were aged 15 or younger.
- United States visitors were from Florida (22%), New York (10%), Pennsylvania (5%), 36 other states and Washington, D.C. Four percent of all visitors were international, with 44% of those from Canada, 16% from Holland, and 9% from Japan.
- Most visitors (94%) had visited the park once in the last 12 months. In the last 2 to 5 years, 16% of visitors visited the park once and 8% visited the park 2 times or more. Eighty percent of visitors spent less than one day at Dry Tortugas NP.
- On this visit, the most common activities were snorkeling (74%), self-guided tour of fort (62%) and swimming at beach (60%). The most important activities to visitors were camping, ranger-guided tour of fort, and snorkeling. Most visitors arrived by ferry (69%), 11% by seaplane and 10% by commercial charter boat.
- The most common reasons for visiting Dry Tortugas on this visit were learning about history (78%) and snorkeling/diving (77%). When asked the primary reason for visiting South Florida, 56% came to visit the Florida Keys, while 16% came to visit Dry Tortugas NP.
- The most used sources of information about the park prior to visiting were friends or relatives (40%), and internet—website other than the park home page (32%).
- The most commonly visited locations in the park were Garden Key and fort (98%), Loggerhead Key (7%), and natural/cultural zone area (7%). The most common fishing location was Garden Key and fort (95%).
- When asked which resources/qualities were most important to protect at Dry Tortugas NP, visitors gave coral reefs, water quality and flow, endangered species and healthy fish populations the highest importance ratings.
- With regard to use, importance and quality of services and facilities, it is important to note the number of visitor groups that responded to each question. The most used visitor services and facilities were restrooms (89%) and beach/swim areas (83%). The most important services/facilities were the campground (95%), restrooms (89%) and beach/swim area (85%). The best quality service/facilities were ranger-guided interpretive programs (93%), beach/swim area (86%) and park brochure/map (85%).
- The average visitor group expenditure in and outside the park (Florida Keys, Miami area and Naples area) was \$1,626. The average per capita expenditure was \$554. The median visitor group expenditure (50% of group spent more, 50% spent less) was \$1,010. Twenty-one percent of groups spent between \$1 and \$400 in total expenditures in Dry Tortugas NP. Of the total expenditures by groups, 34% was for lodging, and 20% was for other transportation expenses.
- Most visitor groups (93%) rated the overall quality of visitor services at Dry Tortugas NP as "very good" or "good." No visitor groups rated the overall quality of visitor services as "very poor."

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact the University of Idaho
Park Studies Unit, phone: 208-885-7863 or visit website:
<http://www.nps.gov/socialscience/waso/products.htm>