

Visitor Services Project
Dry Tortugas National Park
Report Summary

- This report describes part of the results of a visitor study at Dry Tortugas during the periods of May 27 - June 5 and August 30 - September 4, 1995. A total of 289 questionnaires were distributed to visitors at the bridge to Fort Jefferson on Garden Key. The results apply to park visitors that stopped at Garden Key. Visitors returned 223 questionnaires, a 77% response rate.
- This report profiles Dry Tortugas visitors. A separate appendix has visitors' comments about their visit; this report and the appendix contain the comment summary.
- Thirty-six percent of the visitors were in family groups, 25% were with friends and 17% were with family and friends. Twenty-five percent of the visitor groups arrived with a guided tour. Thirty-four percent of Dry Tortugas visitors were in groups of two people.
- Thirty-one percent of the visitors were 36-45 years old. Twenty-one percent were 46-55 years old and 20% were 26-35 years old.
- There were not enough international visitors to provide reliable information. United States visitors represented 35 states. Most visitors came from Florida (63%), while the next largest groups of visitors came from California and Texas (4% each).
- For most visitors (90%) this was their first visit to the park in the past year. Seventy-one percent mentioned this was their first visit in the past 5 years. The most often cited reasons for visiting were to pursue outdoor recreation (41%) and to learn about the history at Fort Jefferson (31%).
- The most common activities were visiting Fort Jefferson (98%), taking photographs (87%) and snorkeling (83%). The most commonly used services and facilities by visitors were self-guided tours (81%), beach/swim areas (80%), visitor center exhibits (79%) and restrooms (79%).
- Visitors' most often used sources of park information were 'other' sources (58%) such as other people, previous visits and general information. Forty-four percent of visitors arrived to Dry Tortugas by commercial vessel, 30% by air charter and 29% by private means.
- Visitors gave high quality ratings to the campground (89%), beach/swim areas (85%), ranger-led interpretive programs (84%), picnic area (83%) and the dock (80%). During this visit to Dry Tortugas most visitors (86%) rated the overall quality of park services as "very good" or "good."
- The majority of visitors (78%) did not fish on this visit to Dry Tortugas. For the visitors who did fish, 46% rated their fishing experience as "very important" or "extremely important" to their visit to the park.
- The most fished park zones by visitors were Zone 1 (64%) and Zone 4 (57%).
- Thirty-two percent of the visitor groups visited Loggerhead Key. The activities most of these groups participated in at Loggerhead Key were snorkeling/diving (77%) and walking on the beach (71%).
- Visitors made many additional comments.

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