
Visitor Services Project Everglades National Park Report Summary

- This report describes part of the results of a visitor study at Everglades National Park during March 26 - April 1, 1996. A total of 788 questionnaires were distributed. Visitors returned 635 questionnaires for an 81% response rate.
- This report profiles Everglades visitors. A separate appendix has visitors' comments about their visit; this report and the appendix contain a comment summary.
- Sixty-one percent of the visitors were in family groups. Forty-five percent of Everglades visitors were in groups of two; 35% were in groups of three or four. Twelve percent were in guided tour groups. Many visitors (38%) were aged 31-50 and 17% were aged 15 years or younger.
- Among Everglades visitors, 21% were international visitors. Over half (52%) of those visitors were from Germany, 13% from the United Kingdom and 10% from Canada. United States visitors were from Florida (36%), Illinois (6%), Michigan (6%), and 36 other states.
- In the past year, most visitors (81%) had visited once. When asked how often they had visited during the past five years, over half of the visitors (60%) were visiting for the first time.
- Three-fourths of the visitors (75%) stayed for less than one day. Over half of those visitors stayed two to four hours. Common activities at Everglades were birdwatching (73%), hiking or walking (59%) and attending ranger-led programs (33%).
- Less than one-third of the visitors (29%) used a boat during their visit. Motorboats (42%) were the most commonly used type of boat, followed by canoes (19%).
- Prior to their visit, visitors used travel guides/tour books (38%), previous visits (35%), friends/relatives (35%) and maps/brochures (29%) to learn about the park.
- The travel route visitors most often used to reach Everglades was the northwest side of Florida (47%), on either Highway 41 or Interstate 75. Thirty percent used northeast Florida to access the park. The most visited places in the park were the main visitor center (46%), Shark Valley (42%), and the Gulf Coast/Everglades City (42%). The least visited place was Chekika (9%).
- The most used information services were the park brochure/map (83%), visitor center exhibits (56%), visitor center staff and self-guided trails (each 50%). According to visitors, the most important services were the tram tour interpreter (96%), ranger-led walks/talks (93%) and self-guided trails (84%). The best quality services were the tram tour interpreter (97%), ranger-led walks/talks (93%), and visitor center staff (91%).
- The most used visitor services in the park were the restrooms (79%). According to visitors, the most important services were the campgrounds (98%), tram tours (94%), restrooms (94%) and marina facilities (91%). The best quality services were the tram tours (97%), boat tours (79%), and marina facilities (79%).
- Outside the park, the average visitor group expenditure in the park area was \$112. The average per capita expenditure was \$45. Inside the park, the average visitor group expenditure in the park area was \$45. The average per capita expenditure was \$19.
- Most visitors (88%) rated the overall quality of services in the park as "good" or "very good." Visitors made many additional comments.

<p>For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact: Dr. Gary E. Machlis, Sociology Project Leader, University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit, College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences, Moscow, Idaho 83844-1133 or call (208) 885-7129.</p>
--
