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Factors contributing to ocean recreation participation in the United States

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Study objective & geographic scope

- To collect information related to all ocean activities, not just recreational finfishing
- To collect this information from residents of all 50 states and the District of Columbia

Ocean recreation categories of interest

- Recreational finfishing
- Recreational shellfishing
- Hunting waterfowl or other animals
- Viewing or photographing ocean features and wildlife
- Beachcombing, tidepooling, or collecting items
- Water contact sports – e.g., swimming, surfing, diving, jet skiing, etc.
- Boating and associated activities – e.g., sailing, kayaking, wake boarding, tubing, etc.
- Outdoor activities not involving water contact – e.g., camping, jogging, horseback riding, etc.
- [Other activity – re-categorized into one of the above]

How we collected this information

- Online survey
- Survey was administered to a web-enabled panel
- Survey available in English and Spanish
- Data collected over a 12 month period

When did we collect this data

- 2010 – 11: Designed and tested the survey
- 2012 – 13: Pre-test and main data collection period
- Also in 2012: Follow-up survey sent to individuals who did not respond to the main survey request

Data collected

- Participation - number of participants
- Effort – number of days (trips)
- Expenditures – durable items (e.g., boat, fishing gear) and recent trip expenses (e.g., lodging)
- Site characteristics related to location choice
- Weather conditions related to activity choice
- How hypothetical changes in air temperature might influence ocean recreation preferences

Other data we had access to

- Demographic information about each person who received the survey, whether or not they responded.
 - Age, gender, education, annual income, race/ethnicity, county/zip code of residence, primary language spoken at home (e.g., English, Spanish), etc.

2012 U.S. estimates of participation, effort

Activity category	# of participants	# of days recreating	Avg days per year
Recreational finfishing	11 million	192 million	17
Recreational shellfishing	2 million	29 million	13
Hunting waterfowl, etc.	781,000	7 million	9
Viewing, photographing	26 million	381 million	15
Beachcombing, etc.	19 million	209 million	11
Water contact activities	10 million	97 million	10
Boating activities	10 million	99 million	10
Activities, no water contact	16 million	214 million	13
All activities combined	49 million	1.2 billion	25

Where do these participants recreate?

Region	% of U.S. ocean recreation participants
Pacific	28%
Mid-Atlantic	22%
South Atlantic	20%
Gulf or Mexico	18%
Northeast	11%
U.S. Territories	1%
U.S.	100%

Why choose a location for ocean recreation?

Factor contributing to location choice	% who indicated "Important" or "Very important"
Weather conditions	73%
Quality of the view	67%
Water quality – temperature, clarity, etc.	59%
Parking availability	59%
Cost – entrance or access fee, parking, etc.	59%
Feeling safe – availability of lifeguards, etc.	55%
Proximity to residence	54%
Familiarity or history visiting the location	53%
Number of people at location	51%

Are these factors activity-dependent?

Activity category	Factor contributing most to location choice, % of respondents
Recreational finfishing	Weather conditions, 80%
Recreational shellfishing	Access to the water from shore, 75%
Hunting waterfowl & other animals	Proximity to my residence, 63%
Viewing, photographing the ocean, wildlife	Quality of view from location, 76%
Beachcombing, tidepooling, collecting items	Weather conditions, 75%
Water activities - surfing, swimming, etc.	Weather conditions, 77%
Boating & associated activities	Weather conditions, 72%
Activities not involving water contact – volleyball, walking, etc.	Weather conditions, 71%

Weather conditions and activity choice

Factor contributing to activity choice	% who indicated "Important" or "Very important"	% who indicated "Not important"
Presence of sunshine	79%	6%
Lack of rain	74%	10%
Presence of warm air temperatures	68%	11%
Presence of storms, hurricanes, typhoons	67%	20%
Presence of wind	52%	19%
Lack of humidity	40%	32%

Coming later this year

- A website where the data will be publicly available
- A report (NOAA Tech Memo) summarizing results by region and activity

In the future

- A closer look at respondent demographics
- Relationship between air temperature and choice of recreation activity
- Whether panel conditioning occurred during the survey period

Thanks!

