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# Recreation Statistics Update



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## Eastern Metropolitan Residents' Participation in Nature-based Outdoor Tourism Activities<sup>1</sup>

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***Eastern Metropolitan Areas and Their Residents.***—Just over 80 percent of the Nation's population lives in one of this country's 276 metropolitan areas. This percentage is up from 77 percent in 1990. The percentage of the U. S. population living in one of these metropolitan areas is projected to grow to 81.3 percent by 2020. While the change in this percentage seems relatively minor, in terms of growth of numbers of people living in metro areas it is large, nearly 48 million! Over 60 percent of metropolitan residents live east of the Mississippi River. The largest of the eastern metros and the largest city in the country is New York. Including New York, 8 of the top 12 U.S. metropolitan areas are in the East. This Recreation Statistics Update covers participation in 20 nature-based outdoor tourism activities by residents of 8 major metro areas in the eastern United States. Included are Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Memphis, Miami, New York, and Washington-Baltimore.<sup>2</sup> We refer to the activities listed in the accompanying table as tourism activities because participation in them usually requires travel out of the city to public and private areas with developed recreation sites, wildlife, trails, lakes, streams or snow cover. The source of outdoor tourism activity participation rates is the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE).

Of the Eastern metro areas, Atlanta has had by far the largest rate of population growth since 1990 (39%), followed by Miami (21%). The growth rate for the Washington-Baltimore, Memphis, and Chicago metros ranged from 11 to 13 %. Growing more modestly were New York (8%), Boston (7%), and Detroit (5%). With the exception of

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<sup>2</sup>The official names of these eastern metropolitan areas as designated by U. S. Office of Management and Budget are: Atlanta, GA; Boston--Worcester--Lawrence, MA--NH--ME--CT; Chicago--Gary--Kenosha, IL--IN--WI; Detroit--Ann Arbor--Flint, MI; Memphis, TN--AR--MS; Miami--Fort Lauderdale, FL; New York--Northern New Jersey--Long Island, NY--NJ--CT--PA; and Washington--Baltimore, DC--MD--VA--WV.

Boston and Detroit, eastern metros are more racially and ethnically diverse than the Nation's population as a whole. Boston is mostly non-Hispanic White (82%), as is Detroit (72%). The National non-Hispanic White proportion is 69%. Miami (at 40%) and Houston (at 48%) are each less than one-half White. The remaining metros range from 52% non-Hispanic White in Memphis to 60 % in Washington-Baltimore. More than two of every five Miami metropolitan residents are Hispanic (40.3%). Memphis (at 43%) has the largest proportion of African Americans, followed by Atlanta (29%) and Washington-Baltimore (26%). None of the eastern metros has an Asian American population larger than 7%. New York leads with 6.8%. Atlanta has the lowest median age (33 years), and Boston and Miami have the highest (each at 36 years).

***Eastern Metro Residents' Participation in Outdoor Tourism Activities.***--The table below features 20 nature-based outdoor tourism activities. They are listed in order by percentage of the U. S. population 16 or older who participated in recent years (last column of numbers based in the table). In the next-to-last column, percentage of the combined populations of the 8 Eastern metro areas participating in each outdoor activity is shown. The numbers in the column under each metro area named is the ratio of the percentage of people in that metro area who participate in an individual activity divided by the overall percentage participating across the 8 metro areas combined. Converting the data to ratios more readily shows the readers which activities and metro areas have larger or smaller percentages of people participating. Especially noteworthy are ratios larger than 1.5 (indicating much higher percentages of a particular metro area population participating) or a ratio less than 0.7 (indicating a much lower participation rate). The actual metro participation percentage for each activity is shown in parentheses below each respective ratio.

Except for swimming, mountain biking, canoeing, and snow skiing, Eastern metropolitan residents participate at lower rates than the U. S. population as a whole in the 20 activities listed. Of the 8 Eastern metro areas in the table that follows, Boston residents participate at higher rates, the exception being horseback riding on trails. Boston ranks first in participation rate among Eastern metro areas for 11 of the 20 activities (as judged by size of the ratios) and second in 2 other activities. Boston residents' participation was especially high in activities based on cold water or snow/ice resources, especially cross-country skiing (a ration of 2.58). Detroit was also higher than other Eastern metro areas for most activities, especially hunting. For Detroit, participation in the two pedestrian trail activities--backpacking and day hiking--were lower than other Eastern metros. Like Boston and Detroit, Atlanta residents included in our NSRE sample generally had relatively high participation rates with ratios greater than 1.0 in 14 of the 20 activities listed. But for Atlanta residents, many of the ratios were close to 1.0 indicating more similarity than difference from other Eastern metro areas.

Participation by Chicago and Washington-Baltimore residents were somewhat close to the overall Eastern metro participation rates for most activities, except for low participation in big-game hunting in Chicago and cross-country skiing in Washington-Baltimore. Neither city's participation rate ranked especially high for any single activity. The largest ratio for Chicago was 1.39 for warm water fishing. New York and Miami

residents participated generally at lower rates than residents of other Eastern metro areas. New York's largest ratios were for day hiking (0.98) and swimming (0.95), and its lowest was for warm water fishing (0.57). Miami's largest ratios (each with 1.29) were for horseback riding and swimming outdoors. Not a single Miami resident in our NSRE sample reported having gone hunting or cross country skiing in the past year. Similar to Miami, Memphis ranked very low in those activities requiring snow or cold water resources. But it ranked especially high for warm water fishing, hunting and horseback riding. Interestingly, Memphis residents had by far the lowest participation rate in swimming outdoors, even though it lays by the largest river in the U. S. An interesting research question would be to examine whether the differences in participation rates between metro areas can be explained by differences in population makeup, availability of outdoor recreation opportunities, and factors such as climate. In the next edition of this Recreation Statistics Update series, we will report participation by Western metropolitan area residents. This too will be based on the NSRE.

**Participation ratios for nature-based outdoor tourism activities by major Eastern metropolitan area and U.S. population overall, 2000-2004.**

Outdoor Tourism Activity	Atlanta	Boston	Chicago	Detroit	Memphis	Miami	New York	Washington-Baltimore	% of 8 Eastern Metro Areas	% of U.S. Population
Picnicking	0.95 (50)	1.02 (54)	1.05 (56)	1.11 (59)	0.90 (48)	1.00 (53)	0.92 (49)	1.08 (57)	53.3	54.2
View/photograph other wildlife	1.05 (43)	1.15 (46)	1.00 (41)	1.16 (47)	0.90 (37)	0.92 (37)	0.89 (36)	1.03 (42)	40.5	45.2
Swimming in lakes, streams, etc.	1.10 (49)	1.39 (62)	0.86 (39)	1.01 (46)	0.56 (25)	1.29 (58)	0.95 (43)	0.88 (40)	44.9	42.3
Day hiking	1.05 (31)	1.31 (39)	1.04 (31)	0.73 (21)	0.64 (19)	0.66 (20)	0.98 (29)	0.97 (29)	29.5	32.6
Visit a wilderness or primitive area	1.09 (31)	1.32 (37)	1.10 (31)	1.04 (29)	0.68 (19)	0.97 (27)	0.84 (24)	0.97 (27)	28.1	32.6
View/photograph birds	0.96 (31)	1.18 (38)	1.00 (32)	1.07 (34)	0.98 (31)	0.87 (28)	0.94 (30)	0.97 (31)	31.9	32.5
Developed camping	1.11 (23)	1.27 (27)	1.17 (25)	1.33 (28)	0.88 (18)	0.89 (19)	0.82 (17)	0.82 (17)	20.9	26.7
Warmwater fishing	1.44 (23)	1.08 (17)	1.39 (22)	1.68 (26)	1.53 (24)	1.07 (17)	0.57 (9)	0.96 (15)	15.7	22.4
Mountain biking	0.78 (17)	1.26 (27)	1.17 (25)	1.10 (24)	0.57 (12)	0.73 (16)	0.87 (19)	1.03 (22)	21.6	20.9
Drive off-road	1.10 (14)	1.04 (14)	0.94 (12)	1.41 (19)	1.25 (16)	1.02 (13)	0.87 (11)	0.99 (13)	13.1	18.6

Outdoor Tourism Activity	Atlanta	Boston	Chicago	Detroit	Memphis	Miami	New York	Washington-Baltimore	% of 8 Eastern Metro Areas	% of U.S. Population
Primitive camping	1.22 (12)	1.56 (16)	1.01 (10)	1.15 (12)	1.03 (10)	0.84 (9)	0.72 (7)	0.97 (10)	10.1	16.1
Coldwater fishing	1.39 (13)	1.54 (15)	0.86 (8)	1.05 (10)	0.67 (6)	0.29 (3)	0.80 (8)	1.03 (10)	9.5	13.4
Backpacking	1.13 (11)	1.72 (17)	0.97 (9)	0.74 (7)	0.67 (7)	0.47 (5)	0.91 (9)	0.84 (8)	9.7	10.5
Rafting	1.52 (14)	1.18 (11)	1.21 (11)	1.42 (13)	0.54 (5)	0.59 (5)	0.80 (7)	0.81 (7)	9.0	10.0
Canoeing	0.81 (9)	1.77 (19)	1.00 (11)	1.39 (15)	0.68 (7)	1.02 (11)	0.75 (8)	0.80 (9)	10.9	9.7
Big game hunting	1.59 (5)	1.47 (5)	0.41 (1)	2.38 (8)	1.78 (6)	0.00 (0)	0.59 (2)	1.09 (4)	3.2	8.4
Downhill skiing	0.62 (7)	1.64 (18)	1.00 (11)	1.08 (12)	0.26 (3)	0.18 (2)	0.91 (10)	0.93 (10)	10.7	8.4
Horseback riding on trails	1.26 (8)	0.85 (5)	1.08 (7)	1.02 (6)	1.52 (9)	1.29 (8)	0.92 (6)	0.98 (6)	6.2	7.7
Small game hunting	1.46 (4)	1.18 (3)	0.86 (2)	1.82 (5)	2.54 (7)	0.14 (0)	0.75 (2)	0.82 (2)	2.8	7.1
Cross country skiing	0.30 (1)	2.58 (10)	1.00 (4)	1.40 (6)	0.10 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.65 (3)	0.70 (3)	4.0	3.7

Source: NSRE 2000-2004, Versions 1-16 (except 12).

Note: Top numbers show ratio of metropolitan area participation rate to combined participation rate of all 8 metropolitan areas, with percent of people age 16 and older participating (in parentheses). Percent participating for each metro area was rounded to the nearest whole number.

This Recreation Statistics Update Report is based on recent data that updates the estimated participation statistics reported in ***Outdoor Recreation for 21<sup>st</sup> Century America***, published by Venture Publishing, College Station, PA. Copies of ***Outdoor Recreation for 21<sup>st</sup> Century America*** may be obtained from Venture Publishing at their website (<http://www.venturepublish.com>) or telephone at 1-814-234-4561. This update is based on research information generated for the Forest Service's 2005 Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Assessment Update Report. To see more of our research, please visit our website (<http://www.srs.fs.fed.us/trends>).