
Recreation Statistics Update¹



Update Report No. 5
December, 2004



Hispanic Participation in Viewing-Learning Outdoor Recreation Activities²

In 1900, 87.9 percent of the U. S. population was White, mostly non-Hispanic White. Blacks (also mostly non-Hispanic) were 11.6 percent of the population. In 1990 a much smaller 75.6 percent of the population was non-Hispanic White, Hispanics were 9 percent. Recent (August 2004) population projections based on the 2000 Census show the proportion of Hispanics in the United States continuing to grow to 14.1 percent, with Whites dipping to 67.3 percent. Currently about one half of all net immigration to the United States is by people of Hispanic origin. Obviously, it is increasingly important to understand this growing segment of the population. Described briefly below are comparisons of viewing/learning activity participation percentages for 3 segments of our population—White non-Hispanic, Hispanic of Mexican origin, and Hispanic not of Mexican origin.

Shown in Table 1 are U.S. participation rates (percentages of each of the three populations) for 13 outdoor recreation activities which emphasize viewing, learning, photographing and sometimes gathering as the mode for participation. In *Recreation Statistics Update No. 4*, participation rate comparisons were made for land-based outdoor activities. Three things about the participation rate comparisons in the table below stand out. First, overall, White participation rates are substantially higher across the listed activities, but for one, visiting prehistoric and other archeological sites. For many activities, the difference is large. For example, the participation rate in viewing and photographing natural scenery is 20 to 25 percent greater for non-Hispanic Whites than for Hispanics, visiting historic sites for non-Hispanic Whites is around double the rate for Hispanics, and gathering natural products (such as berries or mushrooms) is also nearly twice the Hispanic rate. Second, Hispanics not of Mexican origin participate

¹This update is based on research information generated for the Forest Service's 2005 Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Assessment Update Report.

²Authors: K. Cordell, Project Leader, USDA Forest Service, G. Green, Research Scientist, University of Georgia, and C. Betz, Outdoor Recreation Planner, USDA Forest Service, all at Athens, GA; and M. Fly and B. Stephens, Associate Professor and Senior Research Associate, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN; Collaborators: Gregory Super and Floyd Thompson, USDA Forest Service, Washington, DC.

in all activities but caving (visiting and exploring caves) at higher rates than Mexican Hispanics. For most activities, the difference in participation rates is not large. Third, activities with especially low participation rates by Mexican Hispanics relative to Whites include sightseeing, viewing and photographing wildlife (not including birds), visiting historic sites, and going on boat tours or excursions to see whales or other natural water attractions. The statistics in Table 1 hint that as the composition of U. S. population changes even more in the future, it is highly likely that the composition of outdoor activities may also change. With surveys like the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment, we will be better able to monitor and be responsive to these changes.

Table 1.—Comparison of percentages of 3 segments of the U. S. population participating in viewing/learning outdoor activities, 2000-2004.

Activity	White/ non-Hispanic Percent participating	Hispanic/ Mexican Origin Percent participating	Hispanic/ not Mexican Percent participating
View/Photograph Natural Scenery	67.3	42.1	47.3
Visit Nature Centers, etc.	60.6	49.8	53.1
Sightseeing	57.7	27.9	35.0
View/Photograph Other Wildlife	52.4	24.3	28.3
Visit Historic Sites	50.8	25.0	37.3
View/Photograph Wildflowers, Trees, etc.	50.1	30.9	37.0
Visit a wilderness or primitive area	37.6	21.2	22.3
View/Photograph Birds	37.1	18.3	23.1
Gather Mushrooms, Berries, etc.	33.3	18.1	18.6
View/Photograph Fish	27.4	15.0	19.9
Boat tours or excursions	22.1	8.2	13.4
Visit Prehistoric/Archeological Sites	21.5	15.9	21.6
Caving	5.2	3.2	1.4

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