

WILDLIFE WATCHING

U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE 2006 NATIONAL SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS*

During 2006, 71 million U.S. residents, 31 percent of the U.S. population sixteen years old and older, participated in wildlife-watching activities. People who took an interest in wildlife around their homes (within one mile) numbered 68 million, while those who took trips away from their homes to watch wildlife (more than one mile) numbered 23 million people. Wildlife watching is defined as closely observing, feeding, and photographing wildlife, visiting public parks around the home because of wildlife, and maintaining plantings and natural areas around the home for the benefit of wildlife.

Of all the wildlife watching in the United States, bird-watching attracted the largest following. Approximately 47.7 million people observed birds around the home and on trips in 2006. A large majority, 88 percent (41.8 million) observed wild birds around the home, while 42 percent (19.9 million) took trips (an annual average of 14 days) away from home to observe wild birds.

WILDLIFE-WATCHING EXPENDITURES

Wildlife watching generated heavy spending for wildlife-related recreation. In 2006, 79 percent of all wildlife watchers 16 years old and older spent \$45.7 billion, an average of \$816 per spender.

Trip-Related Expenditures

Food and lodging: \$7.5 billion

Transportation: \$4.5 billion

Other trip costs: \$0.9 billion

Equipment Expenditures

Wildlife-watching equipment (e.g., binoculars, cameras, bird food, special clothing): \$9.9 billion

Auxiliary equipment (e.g., tents, backpacking equipment): \$1.0 billion

Special equipment (e.g., off-road vehicles, campers, boats): \$12.3 billion

*U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, *2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation*. A PDF file of this 168-page document can be downloaded at http://library.fws.gov/nat_survey2006_final.pdf.

Other Expenditures

Land leasing and owning: \$6.6 billion

Plantings (to benefit wildlife): \$1.6 billion

Membership dues and contributions: \$1.1 billion

Magazines, books: \$.4 billion

AROUND-THE-HOME WILDLIFE OBSERVERS

The 2006 national survey gives data about the activities of wildlife observers around the home and about some of the demographics of those observers. Of the 67.8 million around-the-home participants in the survey, 78% lived in metropolitan areas with populations of 1 million or more (44%), 250,000 to 999,999 (22%), and 249,999 or less (12%). In 2006, 17% of the total U.S. population lived outside metropolitan areas. Twenty-two percent of the around-the-home participants in the survey lived outside metropolitan areas.

Wildlife Watching Activities

53.4 million fed wild birds.

19.2 million fed other wildlife.

41.8 million observed wild birds.

44.5 million observed wildlife.

18.8 million photographed wildlife.

13.3 visited public areas

10.2 maintained natural areas

9.6 maintained plantings

In 2006, 229 million people 16 years old and older lived in the U.S. Of that number, 30 percent watched wildlife around their homes. The participation rates of around-the-home participants in the survey varied by region:

24%, Pacific

29%, Mountain

42%, West North Central

25%, West South Central

33%, East North Central

34%, East South Central

38%, New England

27%, Middle Atlantic
28%, South Atlantic

Male and Female Data

36.3 million females observed wildlife.
31.5 million males observed wildlife.

Age Data

1.3 million, 16 to 17 years old
3.0 million, 18 to 24 years old
7.1 million, 25 to 34 years old
13.8 million, 35 to 44 years old
16.1 million, 45 to 54 years old
13.0 million, 55 to 64 years old
13.5 million, 65 and older years old

Participation Rate based on National Percent of Household Income Levels

17%, \$100,000 or more
12%, \$75,000 to \$99,999
19%, \$50,000 to \$74,999
9%, \$40,000 to \$49,999
5%, \$35,000 to \$39,999
4%, \$30,000 to \$34,999
5%, \$25,000 to \$29,999
4%, \$20,000 to \$24,999
5%, \$10,000 to \$19,999
3%, less than \$10,000

Number of Years of Education Completed

6.6 million, 11 years or less
20.9 million, 12 years
17.0 million, 1 to 3 years of college
13.2 million, 4 years of college
10.0 million, 5 years or more of college

AWAY-FROM-HOME WILDLIFE-WATCHING

In 2006, 23 million people 16 years old and older took trips away from home to feed, observe, or photograph wildlife. They comprised 32 percent of all wildlife watchers and about 10 percent of the U.S. population.

About 21.5 million participants, 9 percent of the U.S. population, observed wildlife an average of 14 days in 2006. Photographing wildlife was enjoyed by 11.7 million people, 5 percent of the U.S. population. They averaged 9 days per photographer. Approximately 7.1 million people fed wildlife an average of 11 days and comprised 3 percent of the U.S. population.

Seventy-eight percent of away-from-home wildlife-watching participants lived in metropolitan areas with populations of 1 million or more (45%), 250,000 to 999,999 (21%), and 249,999 or less (12%). In 2006, 17% of the total U.S. population lived outside metropolitan areas. Twenty-two percent of the away-from-home participants in the survey lived outside metropolitan areas.

Of the 23 million away-from-home wildlife watching participants, 67% (15.4 million) travelled within their resident states, 16% (3.68 million) travelled within and outside their resident states, and 17% (3.91 million) only travelled outside their resident states.

Wild birds attracted the most interest from wildlife watchers on their trips (20 million people or 87 percent of the all away-from-home participants).

Most Watched Birds

Waterfowl: 15.4 million

Birds of prey: 14.0 million

Songbirds: 13.7 million

Herons, Shorebirds, and other Water birds: 11.5 million

Other birds (e.g., roadrunners, turkeys): 8.8 million

Most Visited Areas

Public land only: 12.2 million

Private land only: 2.5 million

Public and private land: 6.2 million

In 2006, 229 million people 16 years old and older lived in the U.S.—
10 percent of whom took trips to wildlife watch. The participation rates
of away-from-home participants in the survey varied by region:

11%, Pacific
13%, Mountain
14%, West North Central
8%, West South Central
11%, East North Central
13%, East South Central
12%, New England
9%, Middle Atlantic
7%, South Atlantic

Male and Female Data

11.8 million males
11.2 million females

Age Data

0.6 million 16 to 17 years old
1.1 million 18 to 24 years old
3.1 million 25 to 34 years old
6.0 million 35 to 44 years old
5.2 million 45 to 54 years old
4.4 million 55 to 64 years old
2.6 million 65 and older years old

Participation Rate based on National Percent of Household Income Levels

16%, \$100,000 or more
16%, \$75,000 to \$99,999
14%, \$50,000 to \$74,999
12%, \$40,000 to \$49,999
10%, \$35,000 to \$39,999
10%, \$30,000 to \$34,999
8%, \$25,000 to \$29,999
7%, \$20,000 to \$24,999
6%, \$10,000 to \$19,999
6%, less than \$10,000

Number of Years of Education Completed

1.4 million, 11 years or less

6.1 million, 12 years

6.2 million, 1 to 3 years of college

4.9 million, 4 years of college

4.4 million, 5 years or more of college