

2016 SUMMARY OF Northwest Territories Road Visitor Survey Findings

An annual road survey is implemented through the Tourism and Parks Division of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI) to understand trip characteristics and demographics of visitors who travel to the Northwest Territories (NWT) by road. This report is based on visitors who arrived in the NWT between June and September 2016, with surveys administered from June 24 to December 23, 2016. Respondents were recruited via visitor centres across the NWT. The survey provides insight into visitor vacation interests and activities to better target tourism services, and to measure the impact of tourism strategies. The survey has been conducted annually since 2008.

Trip Planning

Visitors planned their trip eight months in advance on average, and made a firm decision to travel to the NWT four months in advance. The most common reasons travelers identified for visiting the NWT were:

- general touring;
- unguided outdoor adventure; and
- visiting friends and family.

When planning their trip, almost two-thirds (65%) of visitors did not consider other destinations. In 2016, just over half (55%) of visitors used the internet to plan their trip. This is a decrease of 29% from 2015.

Figure 1: Sources Used for Trip Planning

Source	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Internet (general)	55%	62%	76%	70%	77%	84%	55%
Word of Mouth	31%	32%	38%	17%	39%	31%	25%
Brochures, Posters or Maps	36%	39%	41%	43%	32%	32%	32%
The Milepost	29%	26%	22%	29%	22%	21%	12%
Travel Guidebooks	29%	23%	26%	30%	30%	23%	14%
NWT Explorers Guide	22%	22%	22%	16%	21%	16%	18%
SpectacularNWT.com	20%	16%	27%	27%	21%	19%	30%
NWTParks.com	n/a	n/a	n/a	12%	18%	29%	35%
Auto Clubs	15%	13%	19%	4%	18%	9%	6%



Who is Coming to the NWT?

Road travellers to the NWT have been organized into six visitor groups to understand visitor characteristics and the nature of their visit to the NWT, including length of stay, reasons for visiting and plans to return (see Figure 5).

Figure 4: 2016 Visitor Groups



In total, six visitor groups were found in 2016. Each of the six visitor groups in 2016 were found in previous years of the Road Visitor Survey (formerly the Trip Diary Survey). Compared to 2015, only two visitor groups remained the same in 2016. The 2015 visitor groups, Comfort Seekers and Global Voyageurs, became Fair Weather Voyagers and Vocation Voyageurs. Moreover, Outdoor Adventurers and Wilderness Wanderers replaced the Social Sightseers and Young Sightseer visitor groups. According to the survey, business travellers made up 1% of road visitors in 2016. The majority of business travellers added extra days to their business trip for leisure tourism. Because business travellers represented a small portion of visitors in 2016, further analysis was not conducted.



Trip Characteristics

Visitors spent on average 7.5 days in the NWT, and Yellowknife and Hay River were the most common primary destinations. Most visitors travelled in a car or truck. One in three visitors travelled in an RV. The majority of visitors were from Canada, particularly Alberta and British Columbia. Over half (51%) of visitors travelled in groups of two, while only 14% travelled in groups of five or more.

The most popular activities in 2016 were camping, sightseeing, wildlife viewing, photography, hiking and visiting historic sites. With the exception of hunting, visitors preferred unguided activities over guided activities.



Figure 5: Comparison of Visitor Group Trip Characteristics

Characteristic	Outdoor Adventurers	Fair Weather Voyagers	Vocation Voyageurs	Roaming Retirees	Cultural Connoisseurs	Wilderness Wanderers
Number of nights	7.4	6.2	6.4	5.8	8.4	9.0
Travel party size	2.8	3.1	2.8	3.4	2.8	2.9
Trip planning (firm decision to visit NWT)	4.2 months	2.5 months	3.0 months	3.0 months	4.8 months	4.3 months
Main purpose of travel	General touring; visiting friends and family; unguided outdoor adventure	General touring; visiting friends and family; unguided fishing	General touring; unguided fishing; unguided outdoor adventure	General touring; unguided fishing; other	General touring; unguided outdoor adventure; visiting friends and family	General touring; unguided outdoor adventure; visiting friends and family
Return visitor	48%	54%	52%	60%	42%	43%
Plan to return	83%	65%	68%	52%	89%	72%
Important vacation considerations	Physical adventure Outstanding scenery Viewing wildlife	Relaxing break from work Warm, reliable weather Viewing wildlife	Viewing wildlife Outstanding scenery Personal safety	Parks and wilderness areas Viewing wildlife Outstanding scenery	Viewing wildlife Outstanding scenery Learning opportunities	Viewing wildlife Outstanding scenery Parks and wilderness areas
Least important vacation considerations	Luxury accommodations Exciting nightlife Package tours to destination	Personal challenges Experiencing nature with a guide Shopping	Shopping Luxury accommodations Number of transfers or layovers	Shopping Physical adventure Personal challenges	Exciting nightlife Luxury accommodations Package tours to a destination	Exciting nightlife Luxury accommodations Package tours to a destination



Spending

In 2016, visitors spent an average of \$783 per person, per trip (see Figure 2). It should be noted that the cost of travelling to the NWT was calculated differently in 2016 compared to previous years. Average amount spent by visitors in 2016 is within historical ranges.



Figure 2: Travel Expenditures Per Person, Per Trip

Mean Expenditures (per person, per trip)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Pre-paid Packages	\$109	\$115	\$130	\$189	\$38
Hotels and Motels	\$74	\$65	\$89	\$72	\$24
Apartment or House Rental	\$2	\$3	>\$0.04	\$3	\$2
Bed and Breakfasts	\$10	\$13	n/a	n/a	n/a
Camping	\$43	\$36	\$38	\$66	\$98
Festivals and Events	\$6	\$2	\$3	\$5	\$9
Activities and Entertainment	\$10	\$4	n/a	n/a	n/a
Arts and Crafts	\$51	\$38	\$37	\$33	\$31
Souvenirs	\$32	\$32	\$43	\$32	\$29
Tours	\$49	\$72	\$10	\$52	\$69
Taxis and Shuttles	\$0.58	\$2.70	\$0.14	\$1.86	\$1.24
Buying Groceries	\$48	\$32	\$46	\$58	\$70
Alcohol	\$11	\$5	\$12	\$19	\$19
Fuel	\$132	\$108	\$101	\$139	\$165
Dining	\$63	\$42	\$84	\$67	\$50
Boat and Vehicle Rental	\$4	\$18	\$3	\$7	\$9
Airfare within NWT	\$40	\$27	\$27	\$37	\$59
Taxidermy	n/a	n/a	\$0.47	\$0.35	n/a
Other Expenditures	\$19	\$35	\$13	\$28	\$11
TOTAL	\$704	\$650	\$637	\$809	\$783*

*Denotes different calculation method compared to previous years.

Aboriginal Tourism

18%

Of visitors participated in Aboriginal Tourism activities. Those who participated were typically:

1st
time
visitors

55
years and
older

76%
had a college
or university
degree

Activities they mostly participated in:

61% viewing an
Aboriginal cultural display

55% attended an aboriginal
cultural event or celebration

43% experienced
traditional Aboriginal foods

