



Cycling beside the Solent

The growth of tourism

Tourism and recreation are a growing part of the local economy. In fact the New Forest has more visitors per square kilometre than any other national park (7.5 visits/km²).

Leisure and tourism is the world's second largest industry in terms of income generated. In recent years there has been an explosion of tourism in the UK. This is due to:

- Increase in personal incomes
- Increase in leisure time
- Paid holidays as part of employment contracts
- Shorter working week
- Earlier retirement
- Increased mobility
- Improved availability of information (especially through the internet)

Introduction

This fact sheet looks at the number of people who visit the New Forest and how they spend their time when they get here. For further information on how the New Forest National Park Authority aims to identify and manage both the positive and negative effects of the number of visitors and the level of recreation within the Park see the **Tourism and Recreation: Managing the Impacts** fact sheet.

The following facts and figures come from a result of a number of surveys carried out by Tourism South East Research Services, September 2005.



Walking at Manor Wood

Volume and Value estimates

The total visitor volumes using the New Forest Park is estimated at **13,555,400** visitor days (excluding business tourists and personal and social visits to friends and relatives).

Total spending associated with leisure visits to the New Forest National Park is estimated at around £107.6 million. Taking into account 'leakage', it is estimated that spending within the New Forest on leisure trips amounts to **£72** million.

The total number of actual jobs sustained directly and indirectly in the New Forest by visitor activity is estimated to be **2,451**.

Facts and figures

- **15** million people live within a **90** minute drive of the Forest.
- **90%** of visitors spend at least part of their time walking or cycling in the Forest.
- There are **23,000** moorings for boats in the Solent.
- There is an estimated **£12.5** million income generated by camping and caravanning alone.
- There are around **20,500** bed spaces in self-catering accommodation and a further **4,500** bed spaces in hotels and guest houses across the National Park.
- Around **30%** of jobs in the New Forest are provided by tourism.



Visitor profile

Local day visitors from home made an average of **257** recreational visits to the New Forest during the previous **12** months. Other day visitors from home made an average of **45** recreational visits to the New Forest in the last year. Visitors staying overnight in the National Park made an average of **3** visits to the New Forest in the last year. Overall, local day visitors are the largest group of frequent users of the New Forest, supporting the findings of earlier studies.

Overall, **60%** of visitors had come from, and were returning to their homes that day; **35%** were local residents and the remaining **25%** were day visitors from a variety of locations outside the New Forest.

Excluding residents of the New Forest, the majority of people on day trips came from areas within easy reach of the New Forest. **52%** of day visitors came from home locations elsewhere in Hampshire, including **28%** who were residents of Southampton, Eastleigh and Chandlers Ford. Other day visitors had travelled from various locations in the South West.

Of the **107** Hampshire, Dorset or Wiltshire schools surveyed **81%** had visited or were planning to visit a countryside site in the academic year. Of these schools/colleges, **58%** had visited or were planning to visit the New Forest in the academic year. The top **4** places to visit were: Calshot Activity Centre, Lyndhurst village, Bolton's Bench, and the Countryside Education Trust in Beaulieu.

8% of all visitor groups included one or more person with a disability. Of these the most frequently encountered were visitors with physical disabilities.

On average, visitors spent **£8.34** during the day on their visit on items such as food & drink, shopping, entertainment and travel costs.

The average amount spent on accommodation by those staying overnight within the National Park area varied from **£5** per night for camping accommodation to **£40.28** per night for hotel accommodation.

Age of visitors

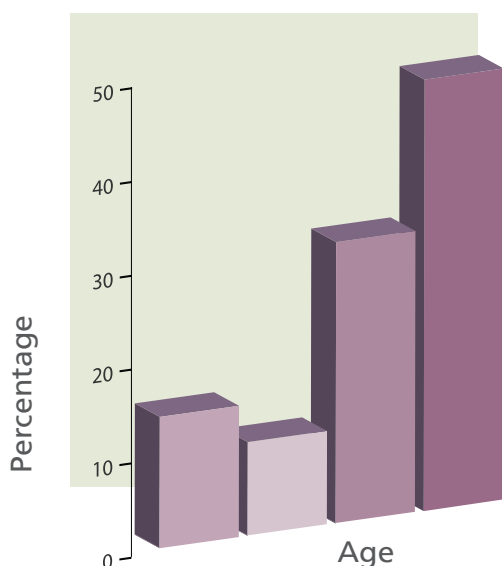
<16	14%
17 - 34	10%
35 - 54	30%
>55	46%



Gaffers race in the Solent



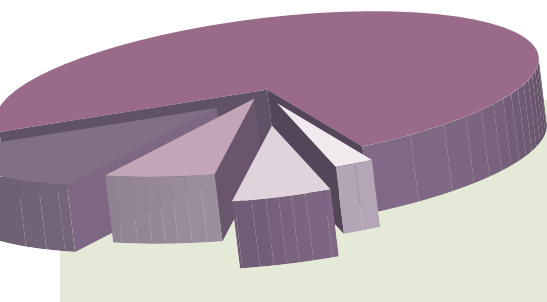
Visitors admiring the Knightwood Oak





Where people stay

Self catering	72%
Hotels	13%
B&Bs	7%
Relatives/Friends	6%
Pubs/Inns	2%



Methods of transport

96% of visitors staying within the National Park used a car or private vehicle as the main mode of transport to travel to their accommodation base.

Staying visitors were more likely than day visitors to have walked or used public transport (train/bus services) from their holiday accommodation to reach the site they were visiting. 88% of local residents and 94% of non-local day visitors used a car or private vehicle to travel to the site where they were interviewed, compared to 67% of staying visitors.

Overall, 9% of car users indicated that they had considered using other modes of transport. The reasons given for using a car rather than walking or cycling most frequently related to the weather, lack of time and the practicality of transporting dogs.

Reasons for visiting and types of recreation

Primary Reasons

Walking the dog (24%), relaxing, enjoying views and picnicking (13%) and short walks (less than 1 hour) were most frequently mentioned as the main purpose of the visit. Dog walking was found to be a common main reason for visiting throughout the year, with an increase in dog walking as a main reason for visiting in the off-peak period.



Dog walkers

Secondary Reasons

The most popular secondary reasons for visiting were; relaxing/enjoying the view/picnicking (35%); watching wildlife/nature (29%), visiting a pub or tea-room (18%) and, going for a short walk (14%).

Other recreational activities that can be found in the forest include cycling, horse-riding, kayaking, sailing, and fishing.



Public house in Lyndhurst

Visitor Opinions

The scenery/landscape/views was the most frequently mentioned aspect which visitors particularly liked about the New Forest, followed by peace & quiet/ not too crowded, good for walking, wildlife, birds and animals. Local day visitors particularly valued the ease of access from home and good locations for dog walking. Satisfaction levels were generally very high with 79% reporting that nothing had spoiled the enjoyment of their visit. Aspects detracting from visitors' enjoyment were most likely to include bad weather, litter, traffic congestion and dog mess.



Recreation facilities and information

Local facilities and services including car parks, toilets, paths and information boards were widely used by visitors. Car parks (**83%**), toilets (**31%**) and local shops (**31%**) were the facilities most frequently used by visitors. **16%** used local pubs or inns and **15%** used local cafes or tea-rooms during their visits. Waymarked footpaths were used by **34%** of all visitors, while smaller proportions used waymarked cycle paths (**11%**) or bridleways (**9%**). **10%** used information boards and **6%** used picnic sites.



Canoeists at Calshot Activities Centre

Of those who felt able to comment, around half (**46%**) felt that the provision of information for disabled visitors at that site was 'good' or 'very good'. **29%** described this as 'average' and **25%** as 'poor' or 'very poor'. The provision of facilities for disabled visitors was rated more highly. **59%** considered this to be 'good' or 'very good', **22%** 'average' and **19%** 'poor' or 'very poor'.

34% of all onsite visitor survey respondents indicated that they used maps or information sources to plan their visit to the New Forest. Ordnance Survey maps, tourist maps and other maps were most frequently used to plan visits. Smaller proportions of visitors used walking guides, touring guide books, visitor leaflets or websites. Only **12%** of local day visitors from home used printed information to plan their visit, relying on local knowledge instead.



Family with map

Further reading and useful information

Other New Forest National Park Authority fact files
 A Survey of Recreational Visits to the New Forest National Park: The Countryside Agency, 2005
www.newforestnpa.gov.uk Factsheet available on CD, in large-print, or Braille on request
 © New Forest National Park Authority, 2007