



2025 Socioeconomic Research of Death Valley National Park

Report on 2025 Data Collection



Visitors with the Furnace Creek Visitor Center display thermometer, wearing coats out of humor. This thermometer reads 131 degrees Fahrenheit; the official temperature was 129 degrees Fahrenheit that day.

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Report on 2025 Data Collection

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Contents

Abstract.....	viii
Introduction.....	1
Methods.....	2
Study Area	2
Sampling Period and Procedure.....	4
Intercept Survey	4
Post-trip Survey	5
Non-Response Bias Analysis	5
Results.....	7
Intercept Survey Results	7
Question 1: Previous Visits to Death Valley	7
Question 2: Previous Visits to Other NPS Units.....	8
Questions 3-4: Visitor Residency	8
Question 5: Trip Purpose	9
Question 6-8: Length of Stay	10
Question 9: Overnight Visitors	11
Questions 12-14: Party Characteristics	15
Questions 16-17: Local Communities	17
Questions 18-22: Park Use Characteristics.....	18
Question 23-24: Transportation	21
Question 26: Entrance Fee	24
Post-trip Survey Results.....	25
Questions 1–2: Information about Death Valley	25
Questions 7-9: Trip Characteristics.....	26
Questions 10-11: Reasons to Visit.....	28
Questions 12-13: Programs, Services, and Learning	30
Questions 14-15: Use of Devices.....	31
Question 16: Physical Difficulties	33
Questions 19-21: Visitor Experience	33
Questions 22-28: Background/Demographics	36

Literature Cited	39
Appendix A: Accessible Tables.....	40

Figures

Figure 1. Death Valley local area map.....	3
Figure 2. Previous visits to Death Valley. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 8.....	7
Figure 3. Visits made to other NPS sites within the past year. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 9.	8
Figure 4. Respondent residency status and geographic origin of domestic visitors surveyed at Death Valley.....	9
Figure 5. Role of Death Valley in overall trip purpose.....	10
Figure 6. Time spent in the local area around Death Valley.....	11
Figure 7. Accommodation types used by overnight visitors within Death Valley and in the local area surrounding it.	12
Figure 8. Campground and lodging use within Death Valley.....	13
Figure 9. Number of nights spent within Death Valley and in the local area surrounding it, by accommodation type. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 10.	14
Figure 10. Number of adults and children in respondent’s personal group, and total group size, while visiting Death Valley. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 11.	16
Figure 11. Age distribution of all members of respondent’s personal group while visiting Death Valley.....	17
Figure 12. Communities visited outside Death Valley while in the local area.	18
Figure 13. Length of time spent within Death Valley on this trip.	19
Figure 14. Most recent entrance used to enter Death Valley.	20
Figure 15. Park locations visited during the most recent trip to Death Valley.	21
Figure 16. Forms of transportation used to travel from home to Death Valley on the recent trip.....	22
Figure 17. Form of transportation used to enter Death Valley on the day of the survey.....	23
Figure 18. Number of people in or on respondent’s vehicle when entering Death Valley. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 12.....	24
Figure 19. Entrance fee paid to enter Death Valley on the most recent trip.	25
Figure 20. Sources used to obtain information about Death Valley prior to the trip.....	26
Figure 21. NPS sites visited on trip away from home.	27
Figure 22. Participation in activities at Death Valley.	28
Figure 23. Reasons or motivations to visit Death Valley. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 13.	29
Figure 24. Participation in programs at Death Valley.	30
Figure 25. Learning outcomes while visiting Death Valley.	31
Figure 26. Use of personal electronic devices while visiting Death Valley. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 14.	31
Figure 27. The importance of the use of personal electronic devices while visiting Death Valley. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 15.....	32
Figure 28. Quality of service for personal electronic devices while visiting Death Valley. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 16.	32

Figure 29. Physical difficulties while visiting Death Valley.	33
Figure 30. Rating Death Valley experience. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 17.....	34
Figure 31. Rating the quality of specific Death Valley facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 18.....	35
Figure 32. Rating overall quality of Death Valley facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities.	36
Figure 33. Respondent demographics: age and level of education.....	36
Figure 34. Respondent demographics: race and/or ethnicity.....	37
Figure 35. Household demographics: annual household income and household size. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 19.....	38

Tables

Table 1. Intercept surveys conducted within Death Valley.	3
Table 2. Response outcomes — Death Valley intercept survey.	4
Table 3. Response outcomes — Death Valley post-trip survey.	5
Table 4. Post-trip survey non-response bias question: “Are you a permanent or seasonal/second home resident of the local area around Death Valley?”. Note: p-value = 0.873.	6
Table 5. Post-trip survey non-response bias question: “Do you currently live in the United States?”. Note: p-value = <0.001.	6
Table 6. Post-trip survey non-response bias question: “On this trip away from home, will you [and your personal group] stay overnight away from your permanent residence either in Death Valley and/or within the local area?”. Note: p-value = 0.003.	6
Table 7. Length of time spent within Death Valley on this trip.	19
Table 8. Data from Figure 2. Previous visits to Death Valley.	40
Table 9. Data from Figure 3. Visits made to other NPS sites within the past year.	40
Table 10. Data from Figure 9. Number of nights spent in the local area around Death Valley, by accommodation type.	40
Table 11. Data from Figure 10. Number of adults and children in respondent’s personal group, and total group size, while visiting Death Valley.	40
Table 12. Data from Figure 18. Number of people in respondent’s vehicle when entering Death Valley.	40
Table 13. Data from Figure 23. Reasons or motivations to visit Death Valley.	41
Table 14. Data from Figure 26. Use of personal electronic devices while visiting Death Valley.	41
Table 15. Data from Figure 27. The importance of the use of personal electronic devices while visiting Death Valley.	41
Table 16. Data from Figure 28. Quality of service for personal electronic devices while visiting Death Valley.	41
Table 17. Data from Figure 30. Rating Death Valley experience.	42
Table 18. Data from Figure 31. Rating the quality of Death Valley facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities.	42
Table 19. Data from Figure 35. Household demographics: annual household income and household size.	42

Abstract

A strong mandate and need for socioeconomic monitoring have been expressed in the National Park Service (NPS) strategic goals for science, in statements by NPS leadership, and in various official reports. Since such monitoring began in 2022, the NPS has typically conducted visitor surveys at 24 parks per year across the United States and associated territories. However, the 2025/2026 SEM Visitor Survey study period was impacted by unexpected timing constraints that reduced the total sample from 24 to 21 parks. Death Valley National Park (Death Valley) was selected as one of these units for 2025 implementation. This socioeconomic monitoring at Death Valley uses a two-step survey methodology to capture a representative sample of park visitors during the peak season of each respective park unit. This process includes (1) an on-site intercept survey conducted via tablet, and (2) a post-trip survey (completed either by mail-back or online) for more in-depth trip details. The types of data collected include visitor demographics, trip characteristics/planning, and experience evaluations. Results are organized by these two survey instruments and are aimed at assisting park managers in understanding current utilization and perception of park resources, assessing operations and potential issues, and facilitating communication and decision-making processes within the park and between the park and its local partners and stakeholders.

Introduction

Social science research has become increasingly recognized as a crucial component of park planning, amplifying its significance for the National Park Service (NPS). With the ever-changing landscape of visitation and a desire to provide transformative visitor experiences, understanding the needs and expectations of the visiting public has become more important than ever. The agency seeks to provide the highest quality visitor experience while also protecting the important natural and cultural resources that make these sites special.

A pilot visitor study was conducted in 2015/2016 across selected park units throughout the United States. Building upon the insights gleaned from the pilot study, the Socioeconomic Monitoring Program (SEM) Visitor Survey has been carried out each year starting in 2022 at 24 NPS units across the country per year. The total sample of parks surveyed in the 2025/2026 sampling period was reduced from 24 to 21 to accommodate unexpected time constraints. Death Valley National Park (Death Valley) was selected as one of the 21 units studied in the 2025 sampling period. The study aims to deepen understanding of visitor demographics and characteristics at Death Valley.

This report contains the data and findings collected from the Death Valley SEM Visitor Survey in spring 2025. The study gathers data at a comprehensive agency level, addressing the informational needs of park managers throughout the National Park System. The data collected during the 2025 SEM Visitor Survey sampling period are intended to provide park managers with data-supported insights into their visitors while enabling data analysis at the agency level and beyond for future applications.

This study collects information about visitor use, aids in finding effective management solutions, and offers insights into the visitors who experience NPS sites. The findings empower NPS managers to better comprehend visitor behaviors, inform park operations, and identify areas for enhancing the visitor experience. Moreover, these results are intended to facilitate communication and foster informed decision-making processes, both within the NPS unit and in collaboration with local partners and stakeholders. Unique to the 2025/2026 SEM Visitor Survey study period, 11 of NPS units were surveyed during their peak season, with another 10 NPS units surveyed during their off-peak season. Death Valley was surveyed during its peak season, with results representing the visitors that were surveyed at that time.

This report does not include spending data, despite it being collected as part of the study. For detailed information regarding visitor spending at Death Valley, please refer to the 2025 Visitor Spending Effects report.

The research was carried out by a team including Otak, Inc., RRC Associates, Inc., the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research at the University of Montana, and GAIA Environmental Consulting.

Methods

The SEM Visitor Survey methodology is designed to capture a representative sample of visitor information, characteristics, and behavior at each sampled park unit through:

- An onsite intercept survey conducted via tablet, and

- A post-trip follow-up survey (mail-back or online) for full trip details.

This comprehensive approach provides the necessary information to make on-the-ground decisions in park units using the intercept survey to capture visitor responses on higher priority information, while also capturing key in-depth information on visitor spending and trip characteristics for long-term planning from the post-trip survey. Additionally, the intercept survey is designed to be brief so as not to fundamentally affect visitors' experiences. The methods also permit a larger sample to be collected on key questions of interest by asking these high priority questions during the intercept survey.

Study Area

The Death Valley local area map is shown in Figure 1. The local area around Death Valley consists of Nye County and Clark County in the state of Nevada, Inyo County and the City of Ridgecrest in the state of California. Within Death Valley, the study area was comprised of eight locations. Table 1 lists those sites and the number of onsite intercept surveys completed at each. The distribution of surveyor effort across sites was determined based on historical visitor volumes and spatial distribution across the park's key areas. Where available, Visitor Use Statistics estimates for monthly visitation at each site were used to assign surveyors proportionally to reflect visitor use patterns. Park staff were consulted prior to the study launch to confirm that these metrics accurately captured visitor flows, ensuring that sampling efforts were focused on the most popular and representative locations.

Death Valley National Park Local Area

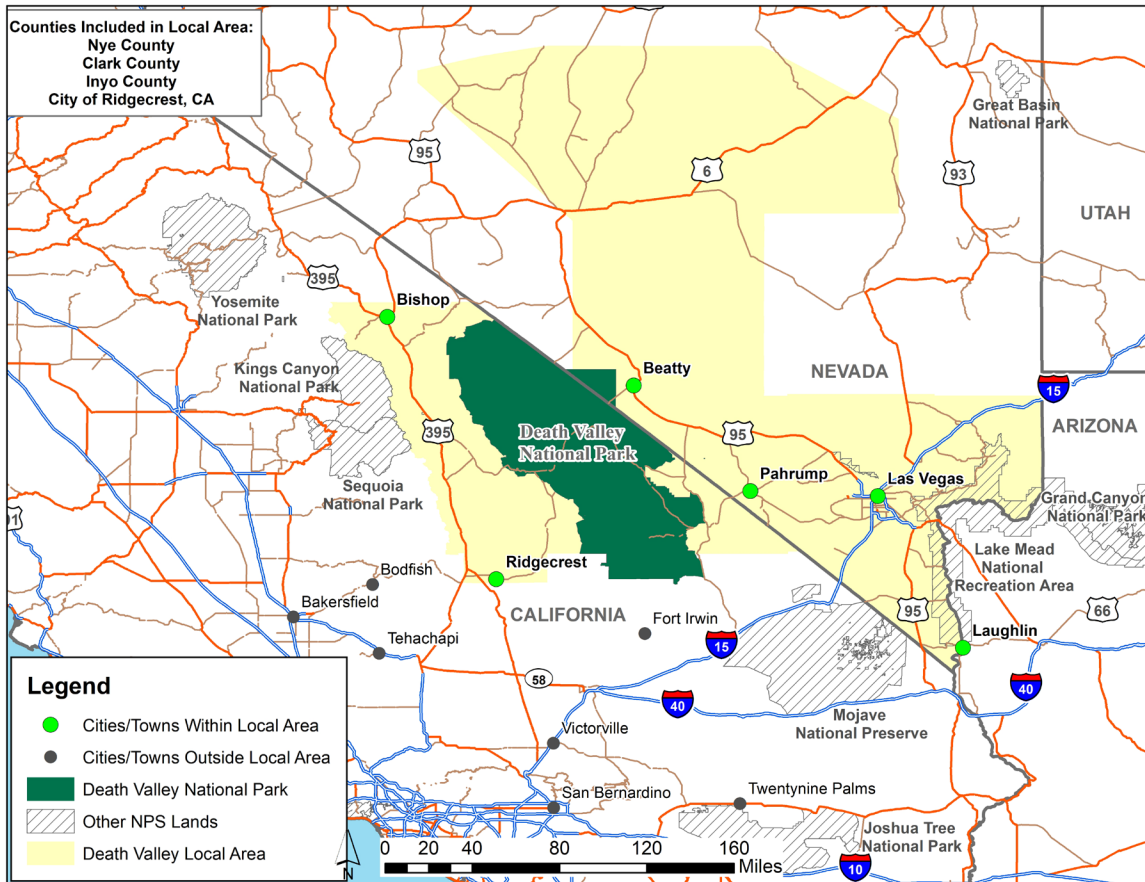


Figure 1. Death Valley local area map.

Table 1. Intercept surveys conducted within Death Valley.

Intercept Site	Number of Completed Intercept Surveys	Percent of Completed Intercept Surveys
Furnace Creek Visitor Center	255	23.1%
Mesquite Flat Sand Dunes	187	16.9%
Dante's View	168	15.2%
Zabriskie Point	167	15.1%
Badwater Basin	119	10.8%
Ubehebe Crater	94	8.5%
Stovepipe Wells Ranger Station	58	5.2%
Father Crowley Overlook	57	5.2%

Sampling Period and Procedure

Intercept Survey

The on-site intercept survey is designed to rapidly collect visitor information as tablet-based responses, reaching the largest possible sample for the highest priority visitor information. The intercept sampling was conducted during the period of March 14 through 24, 2025. A sample of visitors were intercepted while visiting Death Valley across the designated locations listed in Table 1, above. The majority of respondents were visitors on foot at these locations.

Surveyors approached potential respondent groups at the site to introduce the purpose of the study and ask them to participate in a short 5–7-minute survey about their experience in Death Valley (NPS 2025). Within the group, the adult with the next upcoming birthday was asked to participate. If the visitor was eligible (at least 18 years of age, not a Death Valley employee, and had not previously taken the survey) and agreed to participate in the study, the surveyor verbally administered the survey questions and recorded the responses on a handheld tablet device. If the visitor did not agree, surveyors asked if they would be willing to answer three non-response bias questions (see the Non-response Bias Analysis section, below). Upon complete or partial refusal, the surveyor would thank the visitor for their time, log the non-response, and approach the next visitor group.

At the end of the intercept survey, respondents were invited to participate in a post-trip survey by mail-back or online response. Those who agreed to participate were given an envelope containing a printed copy of the post-trip survey with a postage paid envelope for mailing it back, as well as a hyperlink and instructions for accessing it online. As part of the intercept protocol, surveyors logged a unique identifier (four-digit code) from the envelope into the tablet for future connection to the post-trip survey.

Therefore, four potential outcomes were possible when intercepting visitors (see Table 2):

1. Complete refusal, refused to answer any questions, including non-response bias questions;
2. Partial refusal, answered non-response bias questions but nothing further;
3. Completed intercept, but refused to take post-trip survey; or
4. Completed intercept and took post-trip survey.

During the sampling period, four surveyors were stationed simultaneously at different sampling sites. Start times varied day-to-day and by location to capture a diverse sample of visitors across Death Valley. Each surveyor worked 10 seven-hour days (approximately six hours of data collection and a one-hour lunch break) and rotated among several sites. Each surveyor had one day off during the 11-day sampling window.

Table 2. Response outcomes — Death Valley intercept survey.

Outcome	Total
Eligible visitors contacted	1,314
Complete refusals	187

Partial refusals (non-response bias questions completed)	22
Intercept surveys completed	1,105
Post-trip surveys distributed	1,069
Intercept response rate	84.1%
Post-trip acceptance rate	96.7%

Post-trip Survey

The post-trip survey was distributed to participating respondents who completed the intercept survey and then agreed to take a follow-up survey after completing their trip to the NPS unit. This method extended data collection and asked participants to complete the survey after their visit, either through a provided postage-paid envelope, or online via a provided survey link. The post-trip survey covers visitor trip spending details, travel patterns, and perceptions of their recent visit (NPS 2025). Both the intercept survey and the post-trip survey were tagged with a unique identifier (four-digit code) for each respondent so their onsite intercept responses could be paired with their post-trip responses. Numbers were assigned at random to the individual. The use of this code allows the data to be joined, while keeping all surveys confidential and removing respondents' identifying information. Joining the two datasets provides a more complete picture of in-park experiences and post-visit perceptions.

At the end of the intercept survey, respondents were asked for their physical mailing address or email address. This allowed for a reminder postcard or email to be sent to all respondents who provided contact information about a week following the end of each onsite data collection period. This postcard or email thanked respondents for their original participation and encouraged them to complete the post-trip survey if they had not already done so.

Two weeks after postcard mailing, a second contact (with the same unique IDs) was delivered to all outstanding addresses/emails, noting that the individual's completed questionnaire had yet to be received. The mailed survey packets included replacement surveys and postage-paid, self-addressed return envelopes. A final contact was intended to be mailed/emailed to all remaining non-respondents three weeks after sending the second contact (i.e., first full replacement survey) but was never sent due to unexpected time constraints. Table 3 shows response rates for the post-trip survey.

Table 3. Response outcomes — Death Valley post-trip survey.

Outcome	Total
Post-trip surveys distributed	1,069
Valid post-trip surveys completed	461
Response rate	43.1%

Non-Response Bias Analysis

To account for potential biases between respondents and non-respondents, three questions were asked of eligible visitors contacted who did not wish to participate in the survey. The responses to these three questions can then be compared to both the larger group of respondents who completed the intercept survey, and the smaller group who completed both the intercept and post-trip surveys.

The Office of Management and Budget recommends testing for non-response bias when a response rate is less than 80%. With an intercept survey response rate of 84.1%, concern over intercept non-response is muted. However, because the post-trip survey response rate (43.1%) did not meet the minimum threshold, bias testing was conducted to evaluate differences between those respondents who completed the full survey (both intercept and post-trip), and those who only completed the intercept portion.

A chi-square test for homogeneity was performed for each of the three questions to evaluate differences between the groups. The chi-square test for homogeneity is a statistical test used to determine whether there is a significant association between categorical variables. It compares observed data with expected frequencies to assess if any deviations are due to chance. A p-value of 0.05 is used as the indicated threshold of this significance; p-values of 0.05 or lower indicate significant difference between groups.

The distribution of responses among full survey respondents and intercept-only respondents differed significantly for two questions: 1) country of residence, and 2) overnight visitation. Therefore, international visitors (5.2%) and day trip visitors (5.4%) are not as well represented in the full survey sample as desired, when compared to their proportion among respondents that only completed the intercept survey (13.5% and 10.4%, respectively).

Results of the bias testing for the post-trip survey are shown in Table 4 through Table 6.

Table 4. Post-trip survey non-response bias question: "Are you a permanent or seasonal/second home resident of the local area around Death Valley?". Note: p-value = 0.873.

Response	Full Survey Respondent Frequency	Full Survey Respondent Percent	Intercept-Only Respondent Frequency	Intercept-Only Respondent Percent
Yes	29	6.3%	39	6.1%
No	432	93.7%	605	93.9%

Table 5. Post-trip survey non-response bias question: "Do you currently live in the United States?". Note: p-value = <0.001.

Response	Full Survey Respondent Frequency	Full Survey Respondent Percent	Intercept-Only Respondent Frequency	Intercept-Only Respondent Percent
Yes	437	94.8%	557	86.5%
No	24	5.2%	87	13.5%

Table 6. Post-trip survey non-response bias question: "On this trip away from home, will you [and your personal group] stay overnight away from your permanent residence either in Death Valley and/or within the local area?". Note: p-value = 0.003.

Response	Full Survey Respondent Frequency	Full Survey Respondent Percent	Intercept-Only Respondent Frequency	Intercept-Only Respondent Percent
Yes	436	94.6%	577	89.6%
No	25	5.4%	67	10.4%

Results

Results are presented separately for both the intercept and post-trip surveys throughout the following section. To preserve the data for additional analyses, outliers for open-ended numeric questions (e.g., nights spent, days in local area, etc.) have not been removed. Given these outliers, medians are shown instead of means throughout the report, in order to better represent the central tendency. Some questions were omitted because they were not applicable to this report.

Intercept Survey Results

The following section provides results of the 1,105 visitor intercept surveys conducted in Death Valley from March 14 through 24, 2025. All results are presented in this report, regardless of sample size, which varies by question. Caution is recommended in the interpretation of figures with sample size lower than n=30. Categories on some questions may not sum to 100% due to rounding differences and/or the opportunity to select more than one response option.

Question 1: Previous Visits to Death Valley

First, respondents were asked if they were first time visitors to Death Valley. Repeat visitors were then asked how many visits they have made to Death Valley in the last 12 months and the last five years (Figure 2).

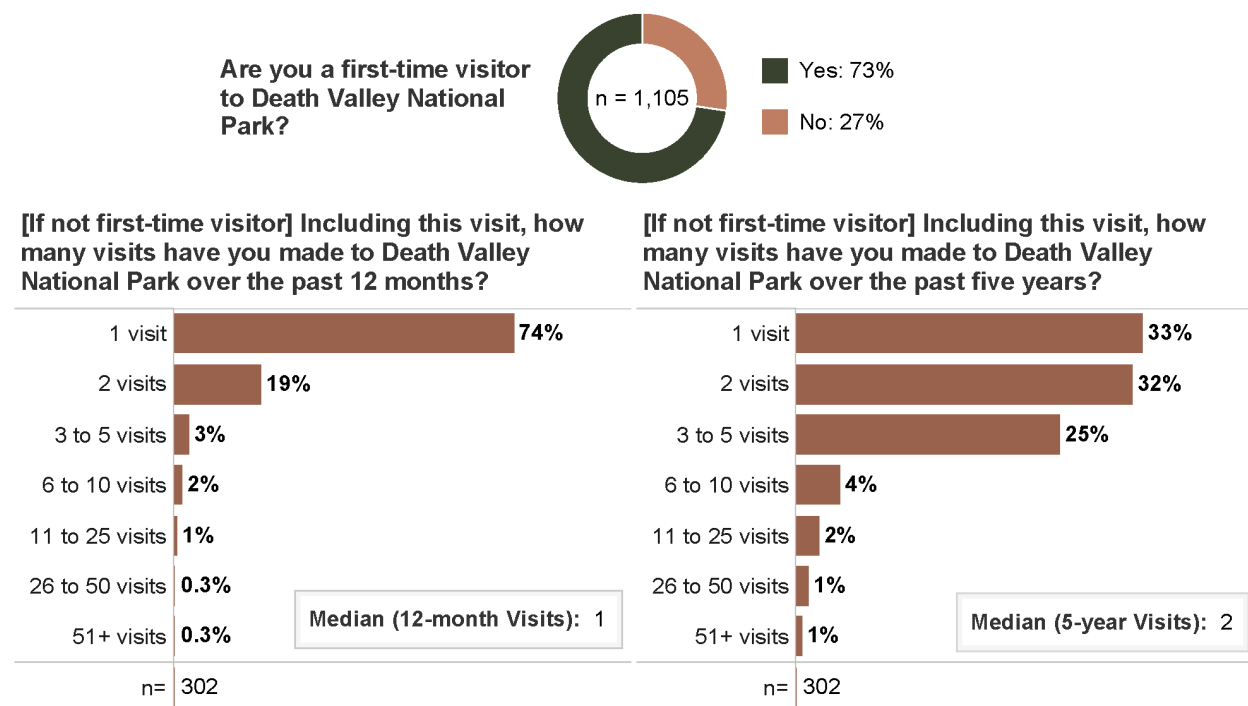


Figure 2. Previous visits to Death Valley. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 8.

- Most respondents (73%) were on their first ever trip to Death Valley.

- Among the 27% of respondents who were repeat visitors, the majority (74%) were on their first visit in the past 12 months (i.e., had last visited more than a year ago).
- However, roughly two-thirds of repeat visitors (67%) made two or more visits to Death Valley in the past five years.
- The median number of visits made in the past five years was two, including the current trip; 4% of repeat visitors had made more than 10 visits in the past five years.

Question 2: Previous Visits to Other NPS Units

Respondents were then asked how many visits they made to other NPS sites over the past 12 months (Figure 3).

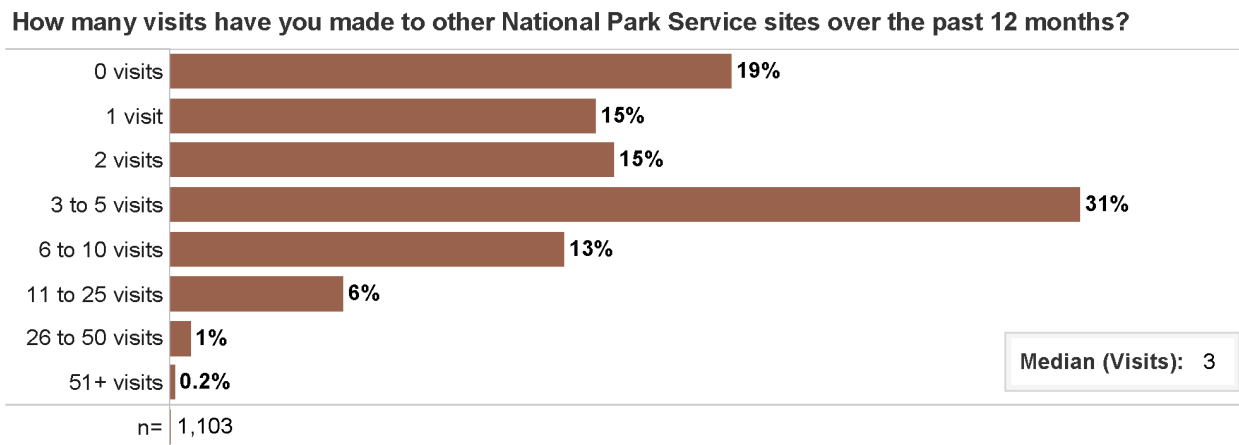


Figure 3. Visits made to other NPS sites within the past year. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 9.

- Over three-quarters of respondents (81%) had made at least one visit to other NPS site(s) in the past year.
- The median number of visits made to other NPS site(s) in the past 12 months was three, with a combined 51% having made three or more visits in the past year.

Questions 3-4: Visitor Residency

Respondents were asked to indicate if they were permanent or seasonal residents of the local area around Death Valley. Permanent and seasonal residents were then asked for their ZIP code within the local area. Respondents who do not reside permanently or seasonally in the local area were asked if they currently live in the U.S., and if so, for their ZIP code. Figure 4 depicts responses to this group of questions.

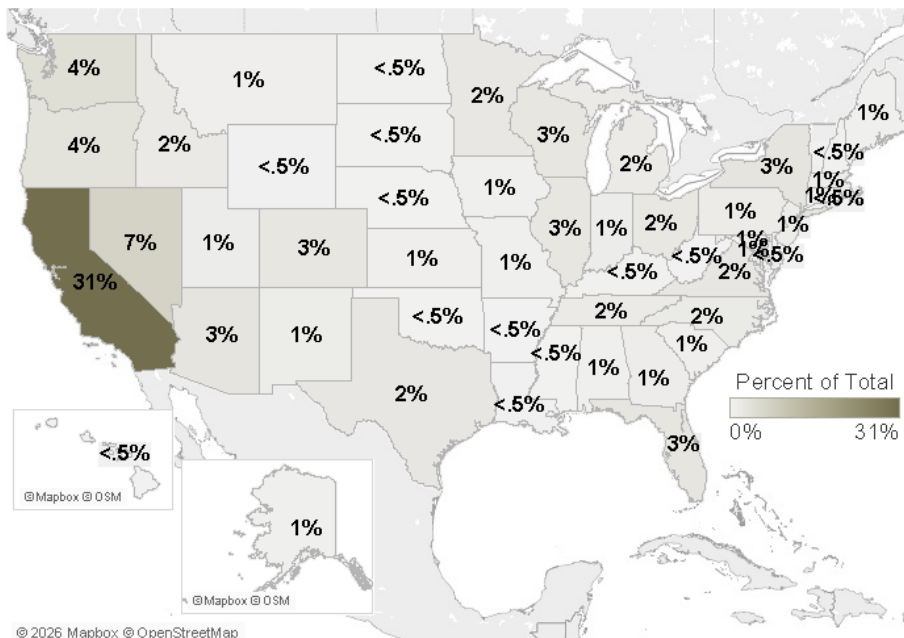
Are you a permanent or seasonal/second home resident of the local area around Death Valley National Park?



Do you currently live in the United States?



Respondent States (Percentage of U.S. respondents only)



Top 10 States

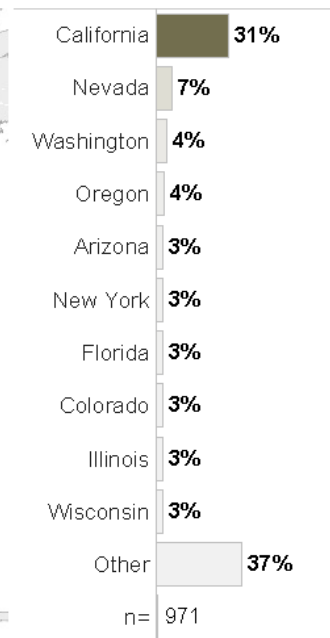


Figure 4. Respondent residency status and geographic origin of domestic visitors surveyed at Death Valley.

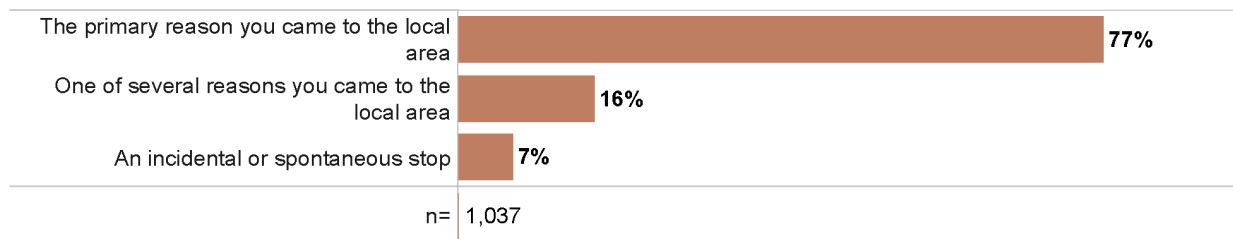
- Less than 10% of respondents (a combined 7%) stated that they were either permanent or seasonal residents of the local area around Death Valley.
- There was a large geographic concentration of respondents from California (where the majority of Death Valley is located).
- Among the 90% of respondents who resided in the U.S., 31% resided in California, followed by Nevada (7%), Washington (4%), and Oregon (4%).

Question 5: Trip Purpose

Respondents who are not permanent or seasonal residents of the local area were asked about the purpose for their overall trip away from home, while permanent or seasonal residents of the local

area were asked about the purpose of their trip away from home “today,” the day they were intercepted in the park. Figure 5 depicts responses to this group of questions.

[If not local/seasonal resident] Was visiting Death Valley National Park...?



[If local/seasonal resident] Was visiting Death Valley National Park...?

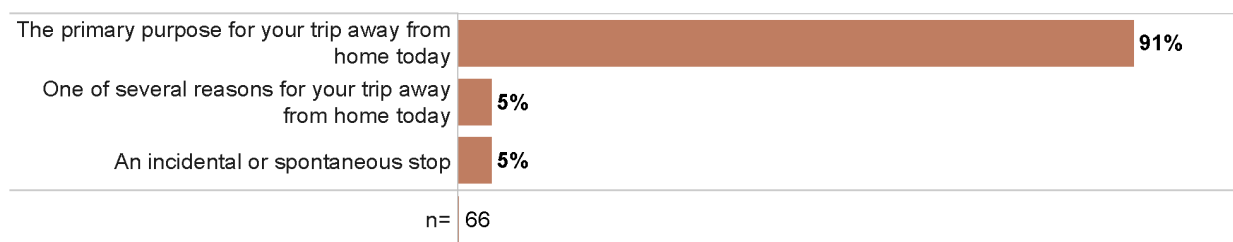


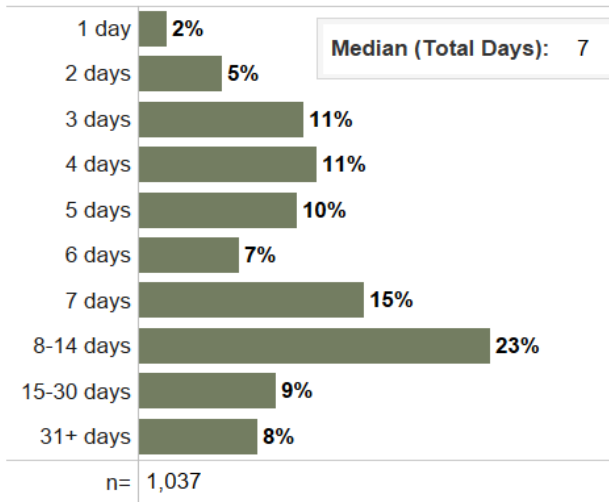
Figure 5. Role of Death Valley in overall trip purpose.

- The majority (77%) of respondents who resided outside the local area (i.e., Death Valley local area map, as depicted in Figure 1) stated that their visit to Death Valley was the primary reason for their trip to the local area.
- For 16% of non-local respondents, visiting Death Valley was one of several reasons they came to the local area.
- The remaining 7% of non-local respondents indicated their visit to Death Valley was an incidental or spontaneous stop while they were already in the area.
- Among permanent or seasonal local resident respondents, nearly all (91%) reported that visiting Death Valley was the primary purpose for their trip away from home on the day they were surveyed.

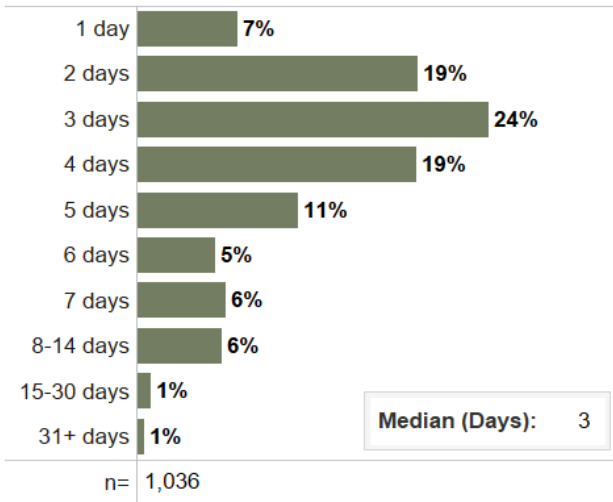
Question 6-8: Length of Stay

Respondents who are not permanent or seasonal residents of the local area around Death Valley were also asked how many total days they would be spending away from their home on this trip, and then how many days they planned to spend within that local area, including days spent in the park. All respondents, regardless of residency, were asked whether they would be staying overnight away from their permanent residence within the local area. Responses to both of these questions are depicted in Figure 6.

[If not local/seasonal resident] How many total days will you spend away from home on your overall trip that includes your visit to Death Valley National Park?



[If not local/seasonal resident] How many days will you spend in the local area (including the days you spend in Death Valley National Park) on this trip away from home?



On your trip, will you stay overnight away from your permanent residence in Death Valley National Park and/or within the local area?

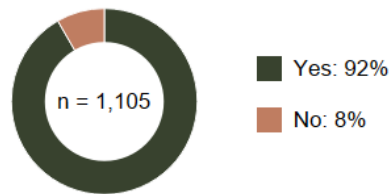


Figure 6. Time spent in the local area around Death Valley.

- A small percentage of non-local respondents (2%) spent one day overall on their trip away from home, while 5% spent two days. The majority of respondents (55%) spent seven or more days from home. The median days spent away from home was seven days.
- Less than one-in-ten non-local respondents (7%) spent one day in the local area, while 19% spent two days, and 24% spent three days. The median length of stay in the local area was three days.
- Additionally, nearly all respondents (92%; including permanent/seasonal residents) had stayed or planned to stay overnight away from their permanent residence in the park and/or in the local area.

Question 9: Overnight Visitors

If respondents indicated that they stayed overnight in the local area, they were asked about the type(s) of accommodation they used or planned to use while there (Figure 7).

[If staying overnight in local area] On this trip, what type of accommodations will you use while in the local area? Please mark all that apply

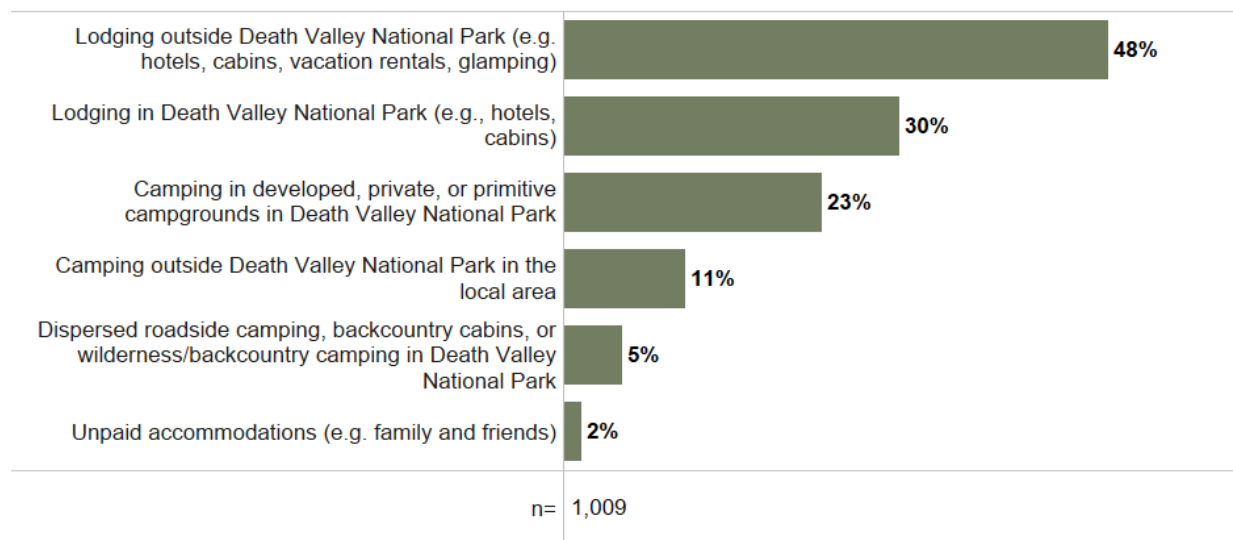
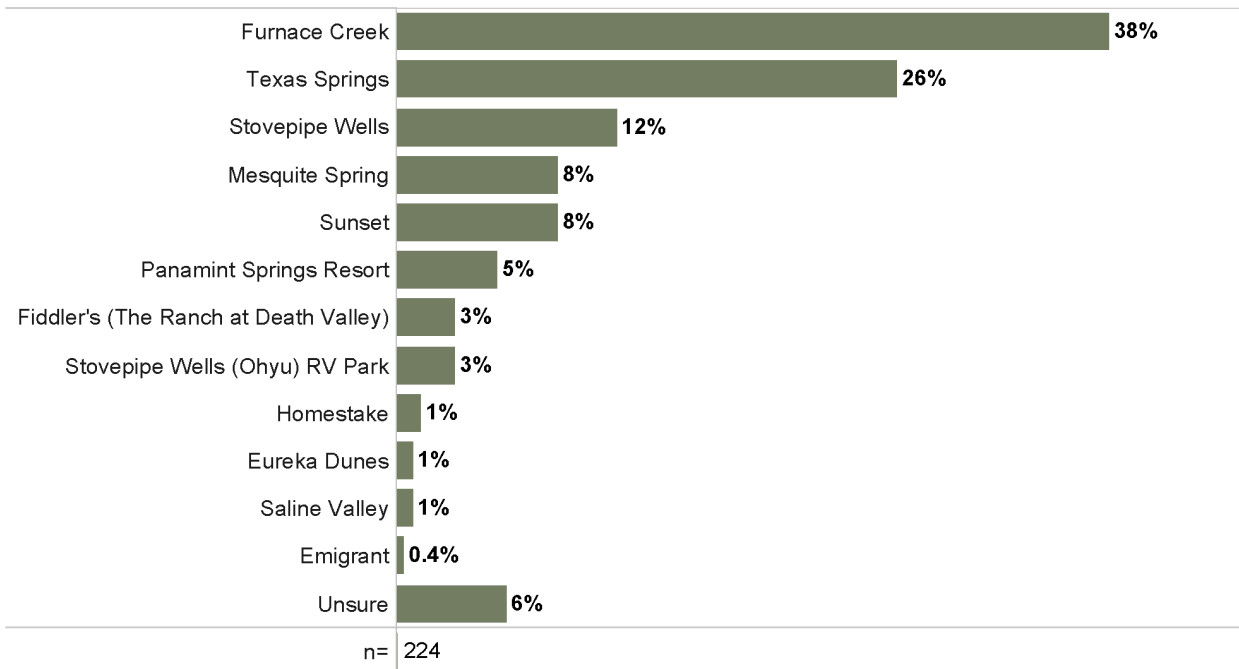


Figure 7. Accommodation types used by overnight visitors within Death Valley and in the local area surrounding it.

- Nearly half of overnight respondents (48%) reported using lodging outside Death Valley National Park (e.g., hotels, cabins, vacation rentals, glamping).
- This was followed in prevalence by those who used lodging in Death Valley National Park (e.g., hotels, cabins) (30%), and those who camped in developed, private, or primitive campgrounds in Death Valley National Park (23%).

Respondents who camped in Death Valley were asked in which campground(s) they had stayed or planned to stay (Figure 8).

[If camping in Death Valley National Park] In which campground(s) did you or will you stay? Please mark all that apply



[If lodging in Death Valley National Park] In which lodge(s) did you or will you stay? Please mark all that apply

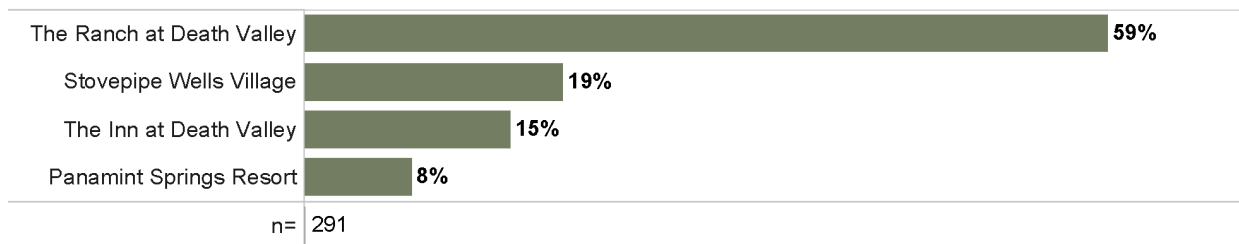


Figure 8. Campground and lodging use within Death Valley.

- Amongst those who camped in Death Valley, Furnace Creek was the most commonly used campsite, with 38% of respondents reporting they stay or planned to stay there during their visit. The second most common campground was Texas Springs (26%), followed by Stovepipe Wells (12%).
- For those who stayed in one of the lodges in Death Valley, over half (59%) said they stayed or planned to stay at The Ranch at Death Valley. Stovepipe Wells was the second most commonly used lodge (19%), followed by The Inn at Death Valley (15%), and Panamint Springs Resort (8%).

Respondents were then asked to indicate the number of nights they spent or would spend in each accommodation type (Figure 9).

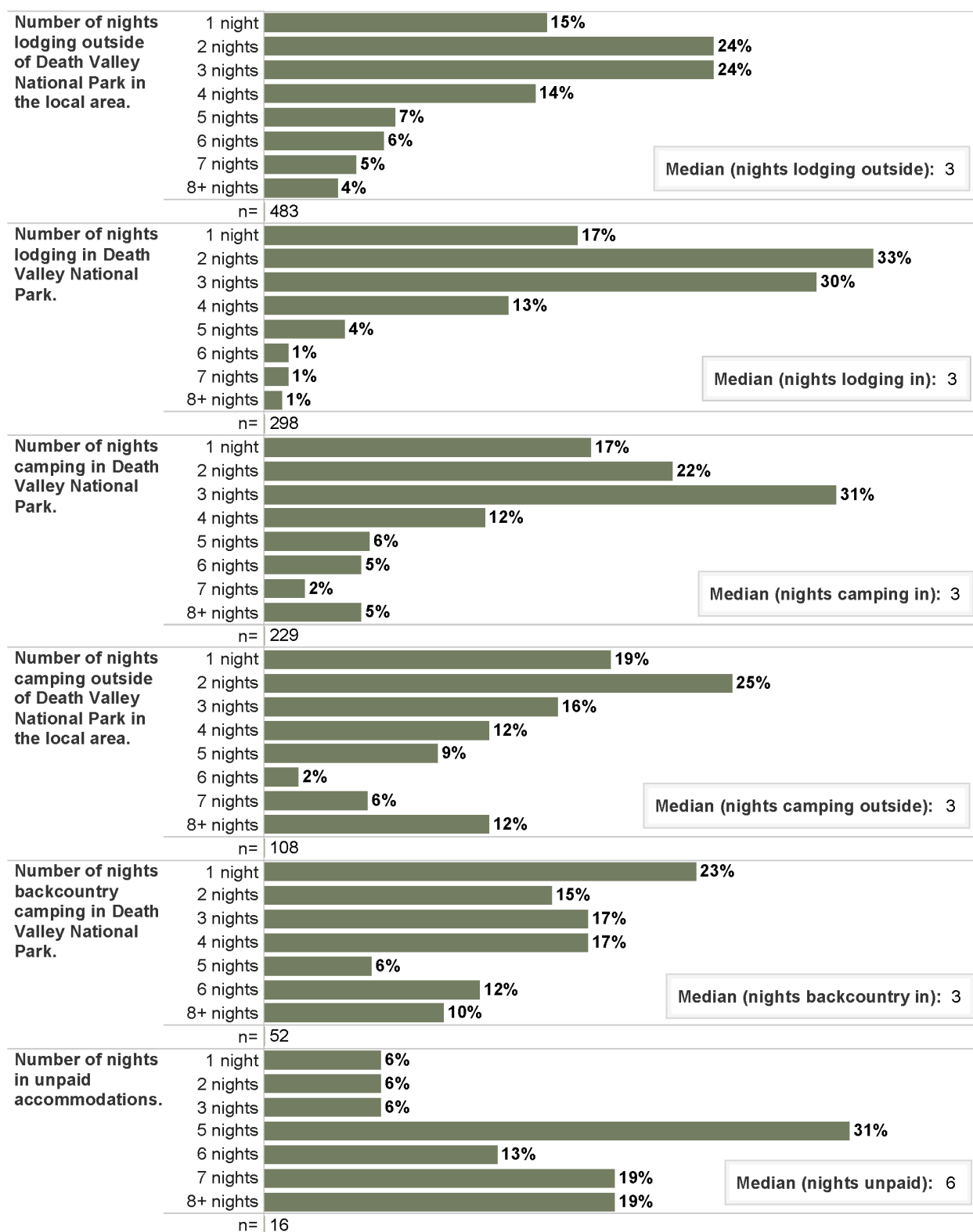


Figure 9. Number of nights spent within Death Valley and in the local area surrounding it, by accommodation type. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 10.

- Among the 48% of overnight respondents who lodged outside of Death Valley in the local area (per Figure 7), median length of stay was three nights. Over one-third (39%) lodged two nights or fewer in the local area this trip; 63% spent three nights or fewer.
- Among the 30% of overnight respondents who lodged in Death Valley National Park (per Figure 7), median length of stay was three nights. Exactly half (50%) lodged two nights or fewer in the Death Valley on this trip; 80% spent three nights or fewer.
- Among the 23% of overnight respondents who camped in Death Valley (per Figure 7), median length of stay was three nights. Over one-third (39%) of campers were spending two nights or fewer camping in the park this trip; 70% spent three nights or fewer.
- Among the 11% of overnight respondents who camped outside of Death Valley (per Figure 7), median length of stay was three nights. Close to half (44%) of those who camped outside Death Valley camped two nights or fewer; 60% camped three nights or fewer.
- Among the 5% of overnight respondents who used dispersed roadside camping, backcountry cabins, or camped in the wilderness/backcountry in Death Valley (per Figure 7), median length of stay was three nights, though the plurality (23%) camped in the backcountry just one night.
- Among the 2% of overnight respondents who stayed in unpaid accommodations in the local area (per Figure 7), median length of stay was six nights. There was much broader spread in length of overnight stay among those staying in unpaid accommodations than those in paid options, with 38% staying seven or more nights in unpaid accommodations.

Questions 12-14: Party Characteristics

Respondents were asked to indicate how many adults (18 or older) and children (under 18) were in their personal group during their visit to Death Valley (Figure 10). A personal group was defined as the visitor and companions with whom they visited the park, such as a spouse, family, and/or friends, but respondents were informed not to account for the larger group with whom they may have traveled, such as a school, church, scout, or tour group.

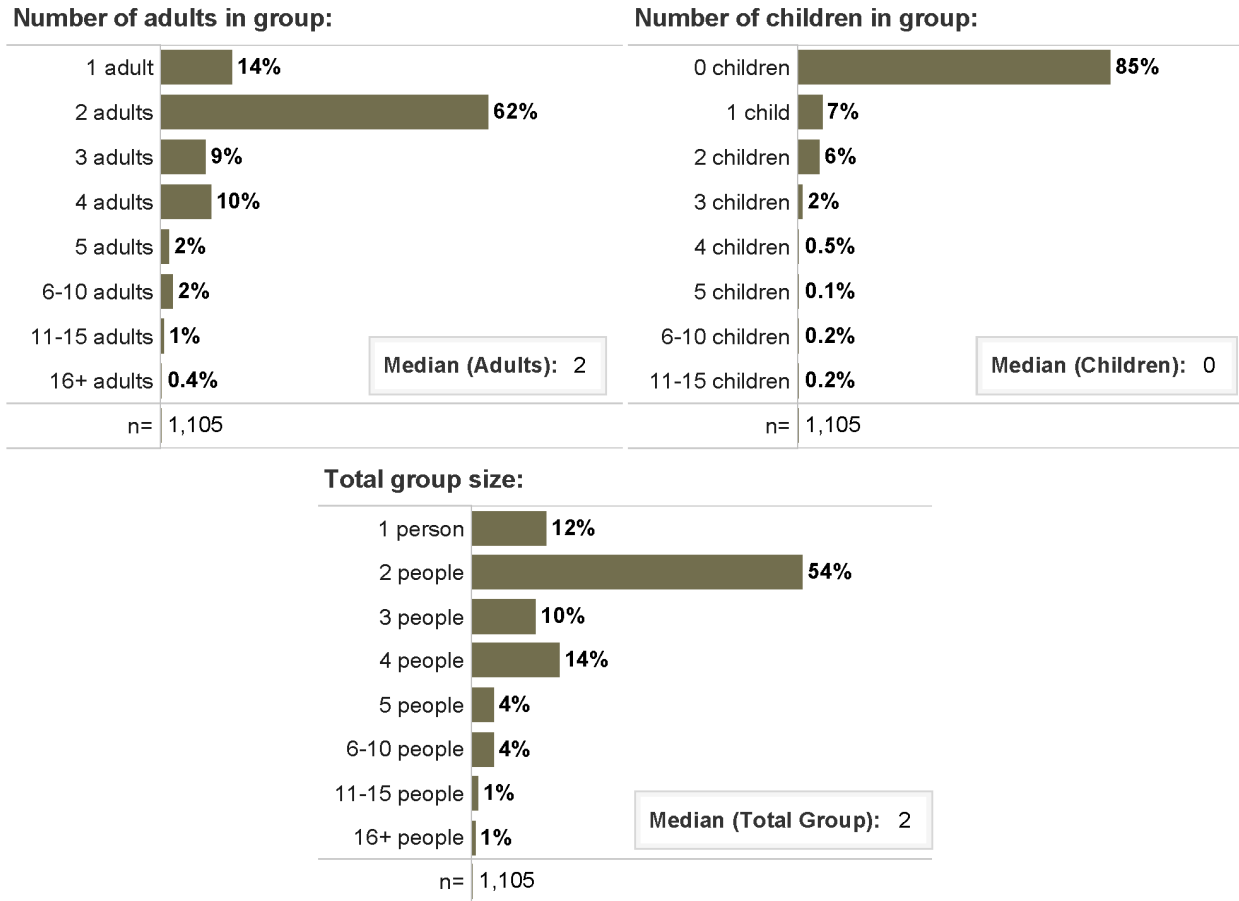


Figure 10. Number of adults and children in respondent's personal group, and total group size, while visiting Death Valley. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 11.

- The median number of adults per group was two. Most groups (62%) included exactly two adults.
- Most groups (85%) did not include any children.
- The median total number of people (adults and children) per group was two.

Respondents were then asked to provide the age of each member of their group (Figure 11). These data show the true age distribution of respondent groups sampled at Death Valley.

What are the ages of each of the adults and children in your group?

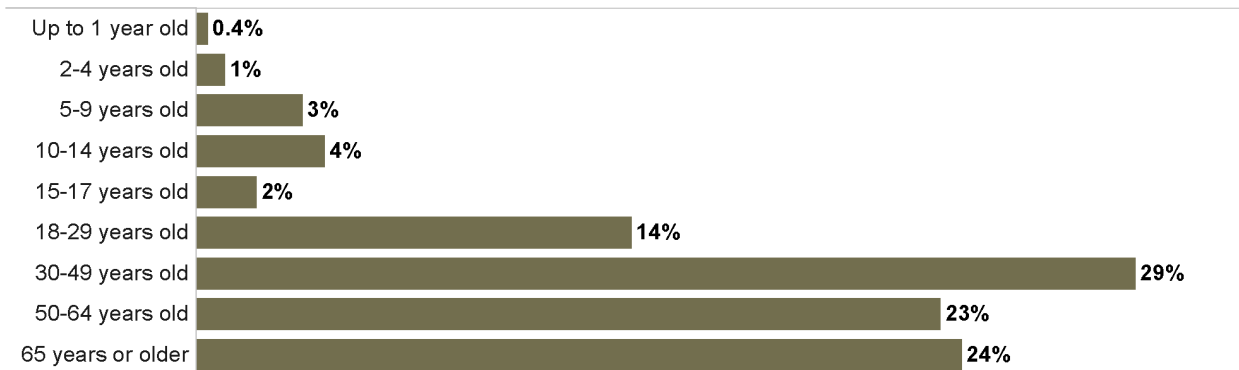


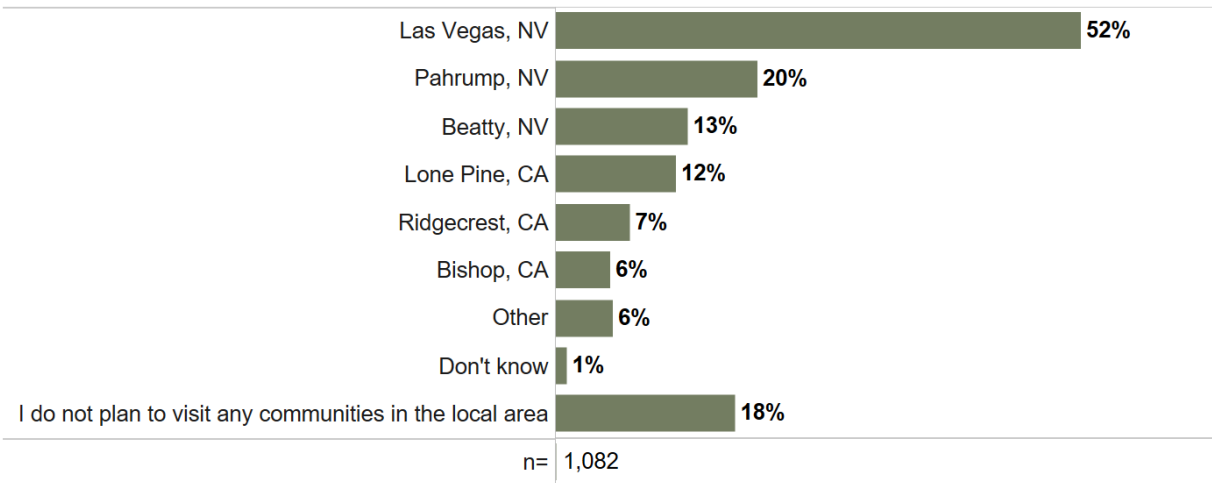
Figure 11. Age distribution of all members of respondent's personal group while visiting Death Valley.

- The most common age of the adults and children in a personal group was 30-49 years old (29%), followed by those 65 years or older (24%), and those 50-64 years old (23%).
- Children (i.e., visitors under 18 years old) accounted for a combined total of just 10% of group members.

Questions 16-17: Local Communities

To build a more detailed understanding of the impact of Death Valley on the surrounding local area, respondents were given a list of nearby communities and asked which one(s), if any, they had already visited or planned to visit during their trip. Visiting a community was defined as stopping to do or buy anything, such as purchasing gas or groceries or dining. Those respondents who had previously indicated that they were staying overnight in the local area outside Death Valley (i.e., paid lodging outside the park, camping outside the park, or staying in unpaid accommodation outside the park) were then asked which local community (or communities) from that list was (or were) closest to their accommodations. Responses to both questions are shown in Figure 12, below.

Which communities will you visit outside Death Valley National Park while in the local area on this trip away from home? Please mark all that apply.



[If will visit] What communities are closest to your accommodation(s) outside Death Valley National Park in the local area? Please mark all that apply.

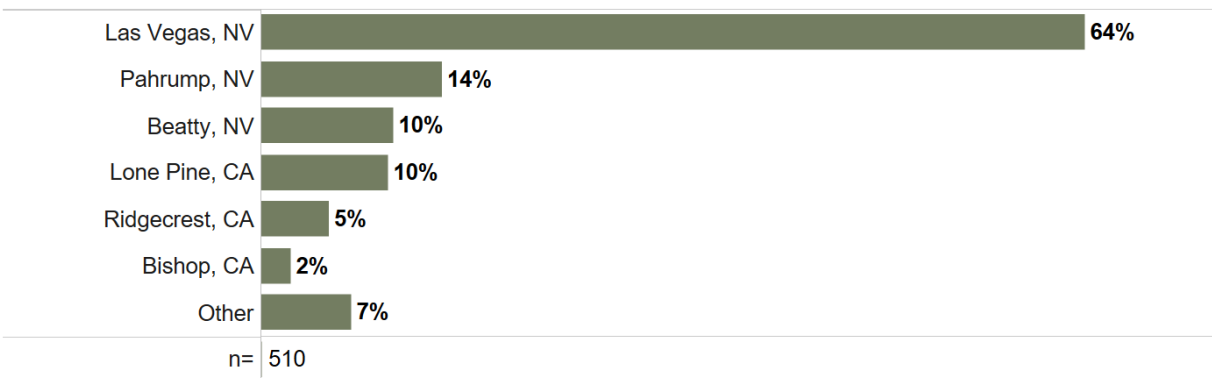


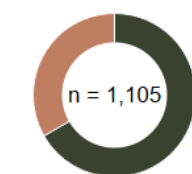
Figure 12. Communities visited outside Death Valley while in the local area.

- Over half of respondents (52%) reported they had visited or planned to visit Las Vegas, NV, while visiting the Death Valley Local Area on their trip away from home.
- The next most visited community was Pahrump, NV, visited by 20% of respondents, followed in prevalence by Beatty, NV, which was visited by 13% of respondents.
- The rank order of the top three communities was the same when considering which community was closest to where respondents stayed during their visit: the majority of respondents reported staying in Las Vegas, NV (64%), followed by Pahrump, NV (14%), and Beatty, NV (10%). Another 10% of respondents also reported that Lone Pine, CA was the closest community to their accommodations outside Death Valley.

Questions 18-22: Park Use Characteristics

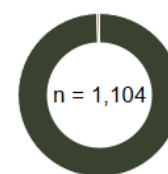
Then, respondents were asked to indicate if they planned to visit Death Valley for more than one day, and then a series of follow-up questions about the length of time they might spend in the park (Figure 13 and Table 7).

On this trip, will you visit Death Valley National Park for more than one day?



■ Yes: 67%
■ No: 33%

Will you spend one hour or more within Death Valley National Park today?



■ Yes: 100%
■ No: 0.5%

Figure 13. Length of time spent within Death Valley on this trip.

Table 7. Length of time spent within Death Valley on this trip.

Question	Sample Size (n)	Median
[If planning to visit more than one day] How many days do you plan to spend within Death Valley on this trip?	737	3
[If planning to visit more than one day] On how many different days do you expect to enter the park?	737	2
[If not planning to spend one hour or more] How many minutes do you plan to spend within Death Valley today?	5	15
[If planning to spend one hour or more] How many hours do you plan to spend within Death Valley today?	1089	10

- Most respondents were planning to spend more than one day in Death Valley on their trip. Among the 70% of respondents who planned to visit for more than one day, the median length of visit was three days.
- Those respondents who spent more than one day in the park were also asked on how many different days they expected to enter the park; the median answer was two days.
- Nearly all respondents (99.5%) planned to spend one hour or more within Death Valley on the day they were surveyed. Among these visitors, median length of time spent in the park “today” was 10 hours.
- Among the 0.5% of respondents who planned to spend less than an hour within the park on the day they were surveyed, the median length of anticipated visit was 15 minutes.

Next, respondents were asked to indicate the most recent entrance they used to enter Death Valley (Figure 14).

Which was the most recent entrance you used to enter Death Valley National Park?

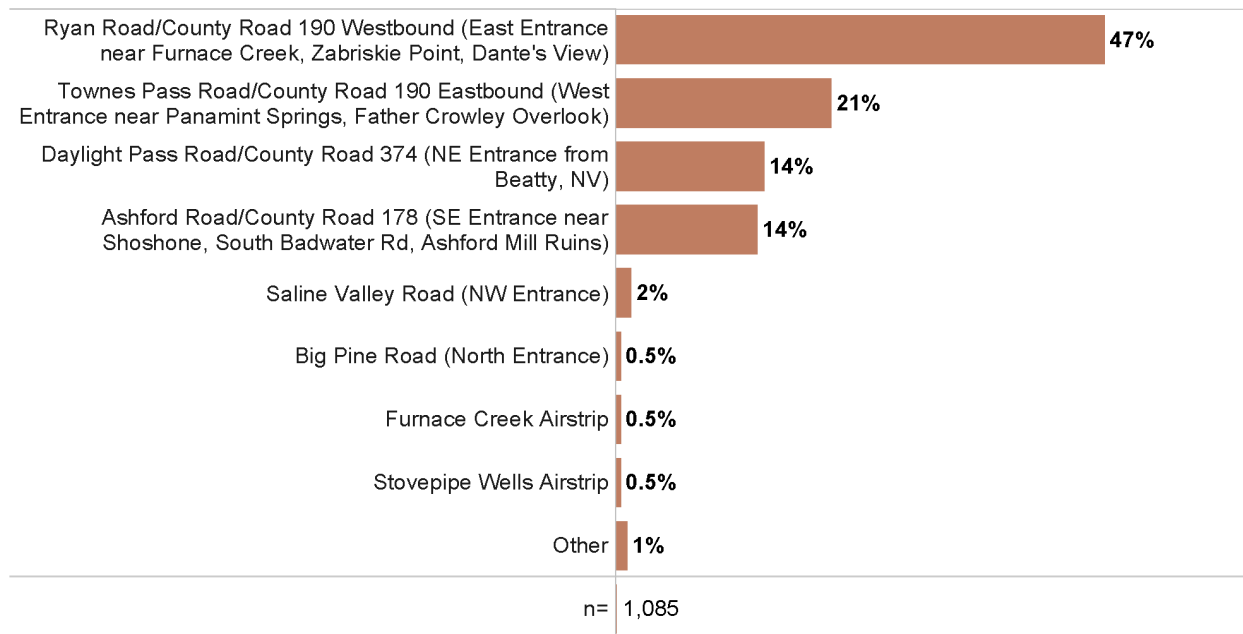


Figure 14. Most recent entrance used to enter Death Valley.

- Among respondents, Ryan Road/County Road 190 Westbound (i.e., East Entrance near Furnace Creek) was the most commonly used entrance to Death Valley (47%).
- The Townes Pass Road/County Road 190 Eastbound (i.e., West Entrance near Panamint Springs) was the second most commonly used entrance, with 21% of respondents reportedly using it for their most recent entrance.
- Due to park geography and proximity of intercept sites to entrances, the results for most recent entrance used were impacted by the volume of visitors intercepted at various sites.

Respondents were also presented with a list of locations within Death Valley and asked to indicate if they had been to, or planned to visit them, that day (Figure 15).

Considering your visit today, will you visit any of the following locations within Death Valley National Park? Please mark all that apply

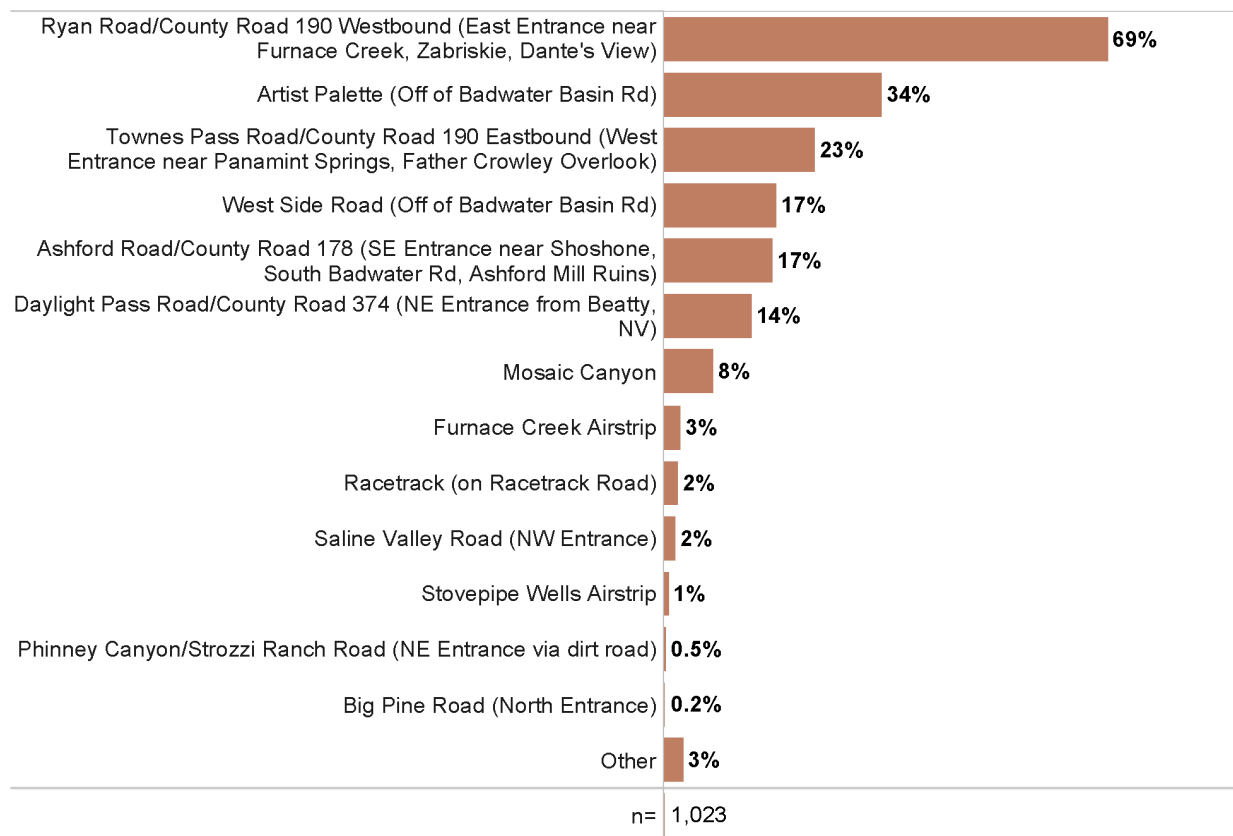


Figure 15. Park locations visited during the most recent trip to Death Valley.

- The most commonly visited location in Death Valley was the Ryan Road/County Road 190 Westbound (i.e., East Entrance near Furnace Creek, Zabriskie Point, and Dante's View) (69% of respondents had either been there or planned to visit it on their trip), followed by Artist Palette (off of Badwater Basin Rd) (34%) and Townes Pass Road/County Road 190 Eastbound (i.e., West Entrance near Panamint Springs, Father Crowley Overlook) (23%).
- The Big Pine Road (i.e. North Entrance) was the least-visited location from the list provided, with only .2% of respondents reported having visited or planning to visit.

Question 23-24: Transportation

Respondents were first asked to indicate all the forms of transportation they personally used to travel from their home to Death Valley on their trip (Figure 16).

From the list below, select all forms of transportation you personally used to travel from your home to Death Valley National Park on this trip. Please mark all that apply.

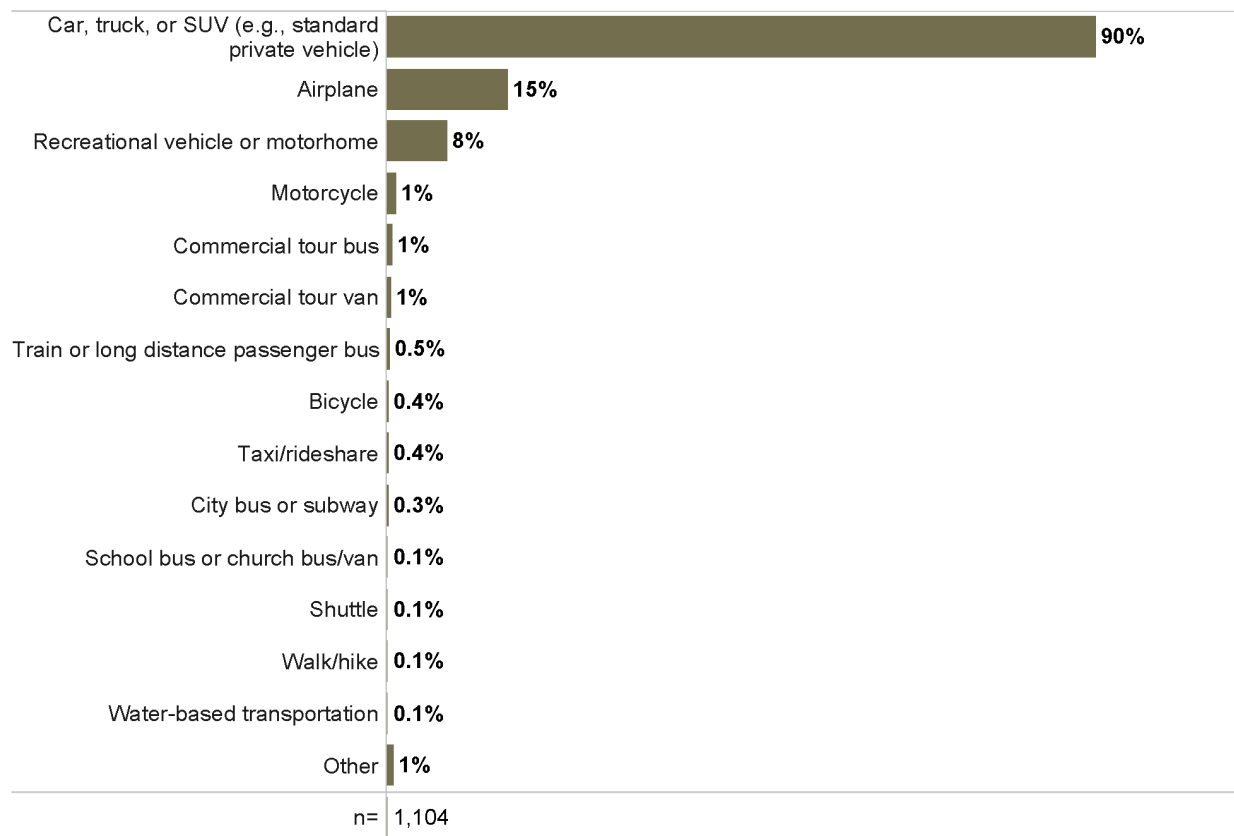


Figure 16. Forms of transportation used to travel from home to Death Valley on the recent trip.

- Nearly all respondents (90%) used a personal vehicle, such as a car, truck, or SUV, at some point during their trip from home to Death Valley.
- The second most common mode of travel was an airplane (15%), followed by recreational vehicles or motorhomes (8%).

Respondents were then asked a follow-up question about the single form of transportation they used to enter Death Valley on the day they were surveyed (Figure 17).

[If used at all during trip] Which form of transportation did you personally use to enter Death Valley National Park today?

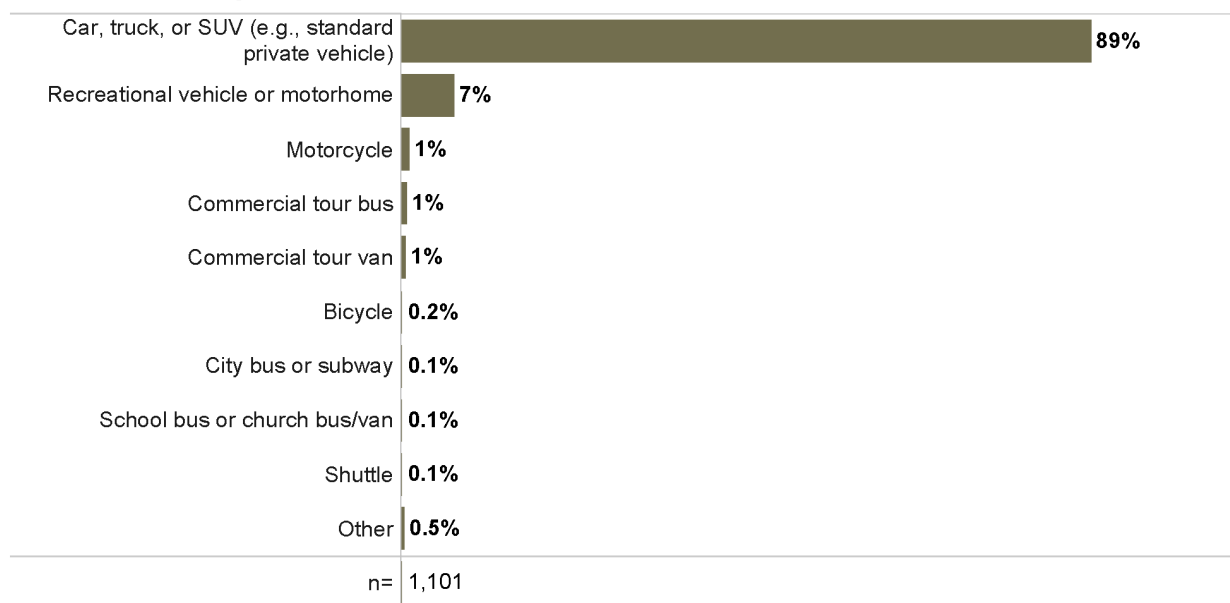
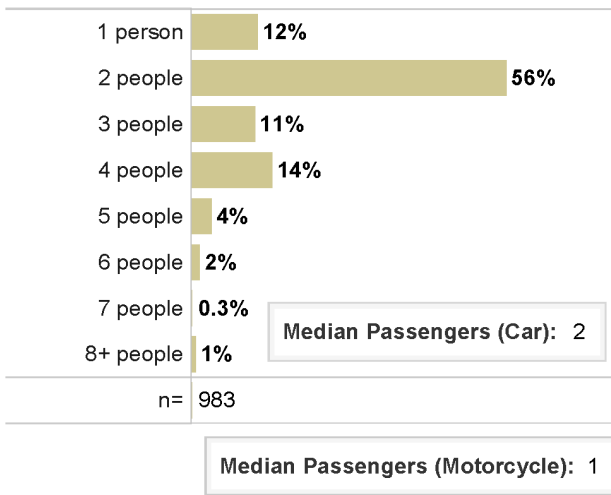


Figure 17. Form of transportation used to enter Death Valley on the day of the survey.

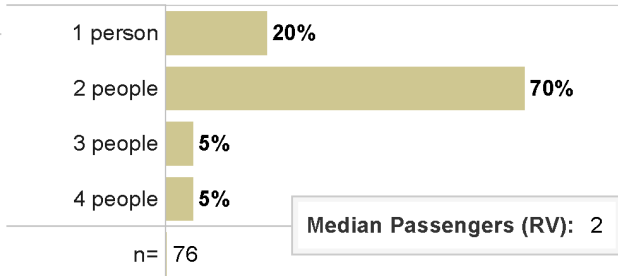
- The majority of respondents (89%) reported that they used their car, truck, or SUV to enter Death Valley on the day of the survey.
- This was followed distantly by use of a recreational vehicle or motorhome (7%), motorcycles (1%), commercial tour buses (1%), and commercial tour vans (1%).

If respondents entered the park using a multi-passenger private vehicle (i.e., car, truck or SUV, recreational vehicle or motorhome, or motorcycle), they were asked to indicate how many people were traveling in or on that vehicle (Figure 18).

[If entered by car, truck, or SUV] Including yourself, how many people were traveling in your vehicle when you entered Death Valley National Park?



[If entered by RV/motorhome] Including yourself, how many people were traveling in your RV when you entered Death Valley National Park?



[If entered by motorcycle] Including yourself, how many people were traveling on your motorcycle when you entered Death Valley National Park?

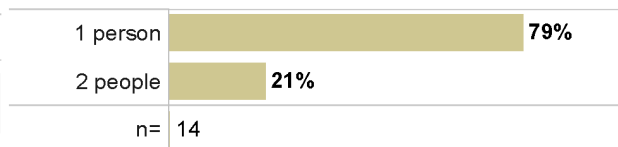


Figure 18. Number of people in or on respondent's vehicle when entering Death Valley. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 12.

- Over half of respondents (56%) traveling by car reported two people. The next common group size was four people (14%), followed by those by themselves (12%).
- Over two-thirds of respondents entering Death Valley by RV/motorhome reported traveling in a group of two people (70%), followed by solo travelers (20%).
- Most motorcyclists (79%) were traveling on their own.

Question 26: Entrance Fee

Respondents were asked to indicate which type of entrance fee applied to them personally on their most recent trip to Death Valley (Figure 19).

On this trip to Death Valley National Park, which one of the following entrance fees applied to you personally?

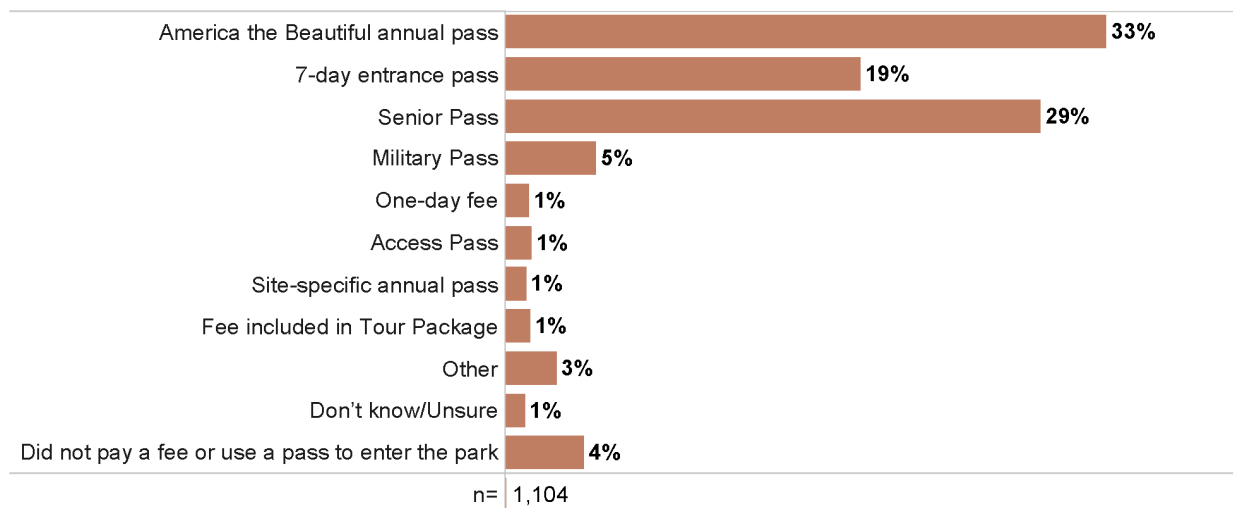


Figure 19. Entrance fee paid to enter Death Valley on the most recent trip.

- One-third of respondents (33%) reported using an America the Beautiful annual pass, and another 35% entered using a Senior Pass, Access Pass, or Military Pass.
- In contrast, 21% of respondents entered using a Death Valley-specific pass or fee (i.e., annual pass, 7-day, or single-day entrance fee).

Post-trip Survey Results

The following section provides results of the 461 post-trip visitor surveys received by mail-back or online following fieldwork conducted in Death Valley in spring 2025. Again, caution is recommended in the interpretation of figures with sample size lower than $n=30$, and categories on some questions may not sum to 100% due to rounding differences and/or the opportunity to select more than one response option.

Questions 1–2: Information about Death Valley

First, respondents were asked what sources they used to obtain information about Death Valley prior to their trip, and whether they had the information they needed on their trip (Figure 20).

Prior to this trip, how did you obtain information about Death Valley National Park? Please mark all that apply

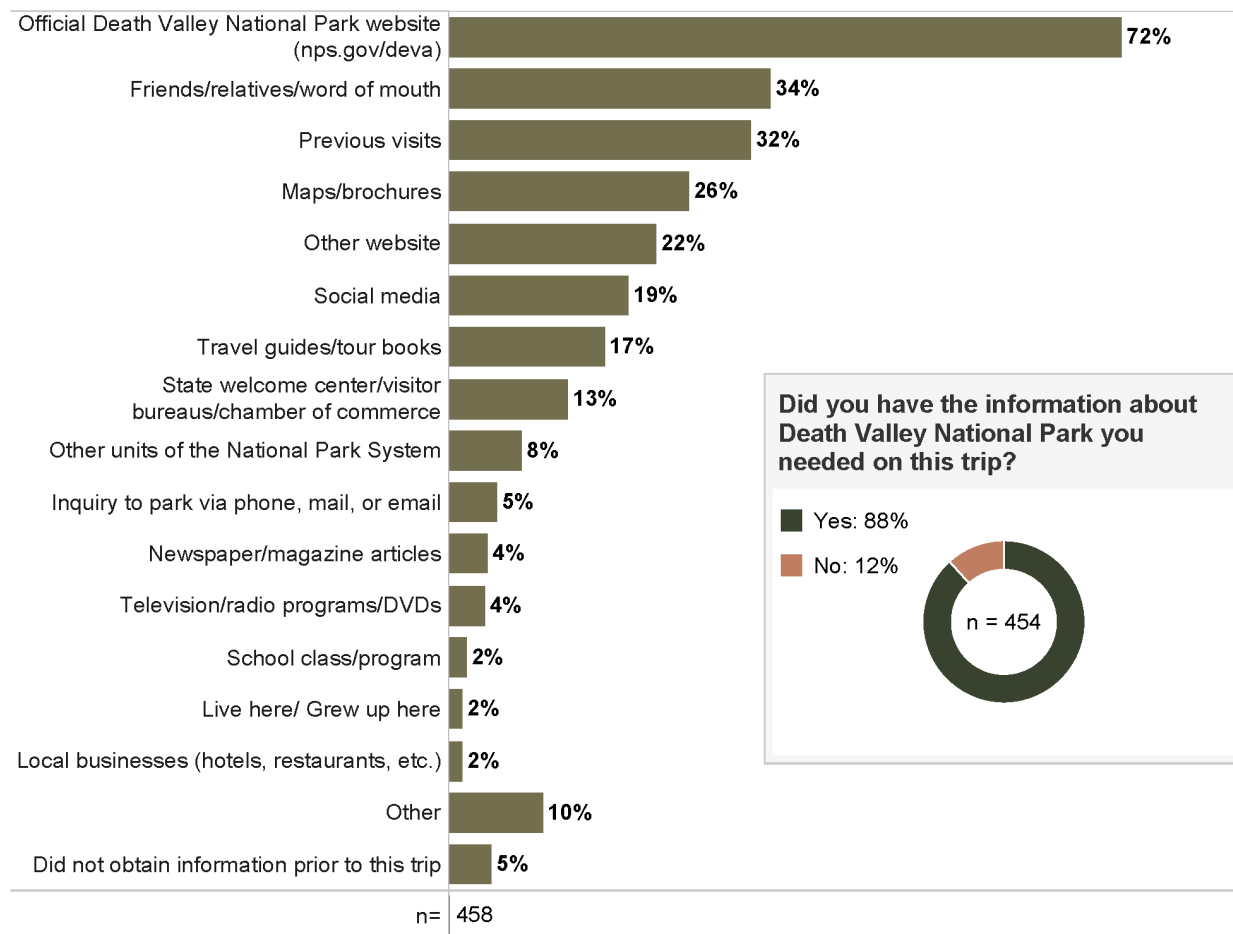


Figure 20. Sources used to obtain information about Death Valley prior to the trip.

- The most used resource was the official Death Valley National Park website (nps.gov/deva), with 72% of respondents reportedly using it. The second most common source was friends/relatives/word of mouth (34%), followed by previous visits (32%), map/brochures (26%), and other websites (22%).
- In a follow-up question, 88% of respondents said that they had the information about Death Valley that they needed on their trip, while 12% indicated that there was information that they needed but did not have.
- In an open-ended follow-up question, those who did not have the information they needed on this trip were asked to elaborate.

Questions 7-9: Trip Characteristics

Respondents were asked if they visited other National Park Service sites on their trip away from home (Figure 21).

Did you visit any other National Park Service sites on your trip away from home?

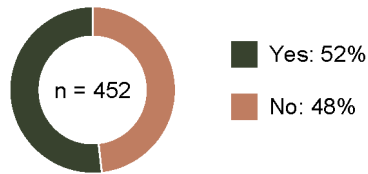


Figure 21. NPS sites visited on trip away from home.

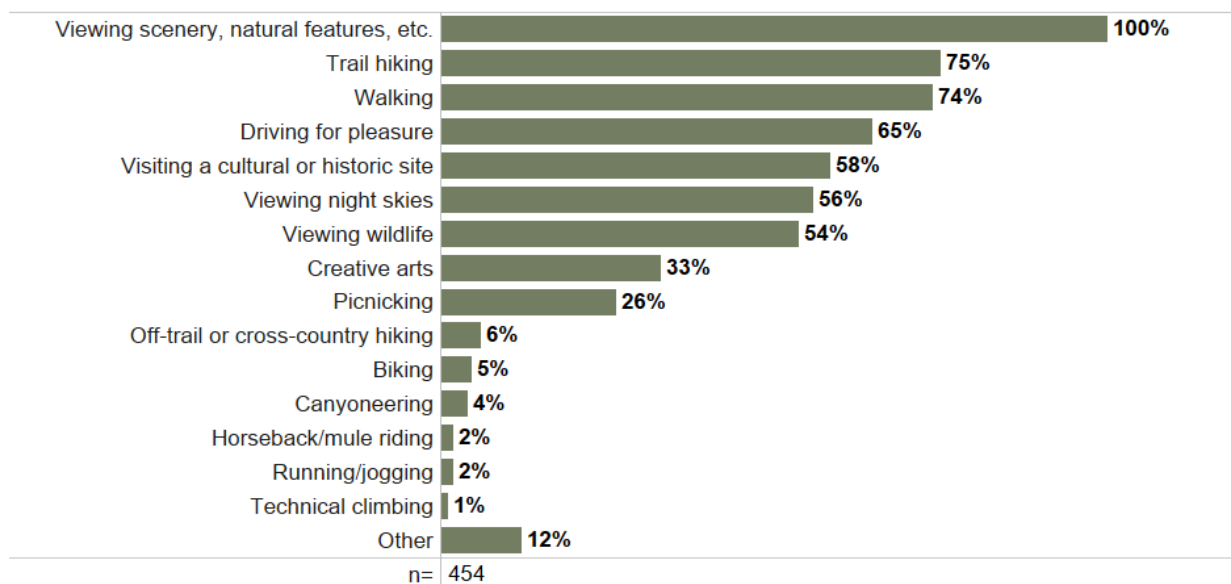
- Just over half (52%) of all respondents had visited other NPS sites on their trip, while 48% identified Death Valley as the only NPS site they visited while away from home.
- In an open-ended follow-up question, those who had visited other NPS sites on their trip were asked to list which one(s).

Survey respondents were then asked to identify all activities that they participated in while visiting Death Valley, and which of those was their primary activity (Figure 22).



Mesquite Sand Dunes

On this trip, in which of the following activities did you personally participate within Death Valley National Park? Please mark all that apply



And which was your primary activity within Death Valley National Park during your visit (on the day you were contacted for this survey)?

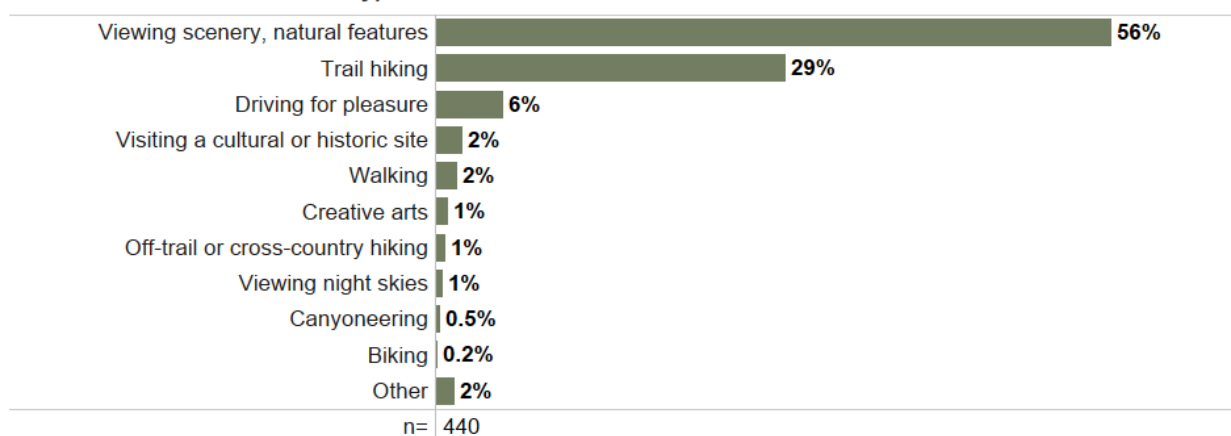


Figure 22. Participation in activities at Death Valley.

- All respondents reported viewing scenery, natural features, etc. (100%), followed by roughly three-quarters who participated in trail hiking (75%), and walking (74%).
- Horseback/mule riding, running/jogging, and technical climbing were all uncommon activities (reported by 2% or fewer of respondents).
- The majority of respondents (56%) reported viewing scenery, natural features, etc. as their primary activity, followed by trail hiking (29%).

Questions 10-11: Reasons to Visit

Survey respondents were asked to rate the importance of various reasons to visit Death Valley on their trip and were then asked which of those was the most important reason for them to visit Death Valley (Figure 23).

How important to you were each of the following reasons or motivations for visiting Death Valley National Park on this trip?

Rating Category	n=	Percent Responding				
		1 - Not at all important	2 - Slightly important	3 - Moderately important	4 - Very important	5 - Extremely important
To view wildlife or natural scenery	450	1%	2%	4%	25%	68%
To spend time with family/friends	444	11%	5%	10%	26%	48%
To visit a National Park Service site	446	7%	6%	14%	28%	46%
To relax	438	3%	9%	14%	38%	36%
To hear the sounds of nature/quiet	448	8%	10%	25%	31%	26%
To learn more about nature	447	3%	9%	26%	37%	26%
To learn more about American history and culture	447	4%	12%	26%	36%	22%
To get physical exercise	446	5%	11%	30%	34%	20%
To experience solitude	440	14%	16%	28%	25%	18%
Other (if specified)	52	12%		4%	15%	69%

And which was the most important reason for you to visit Death Valley National Park on this trip?

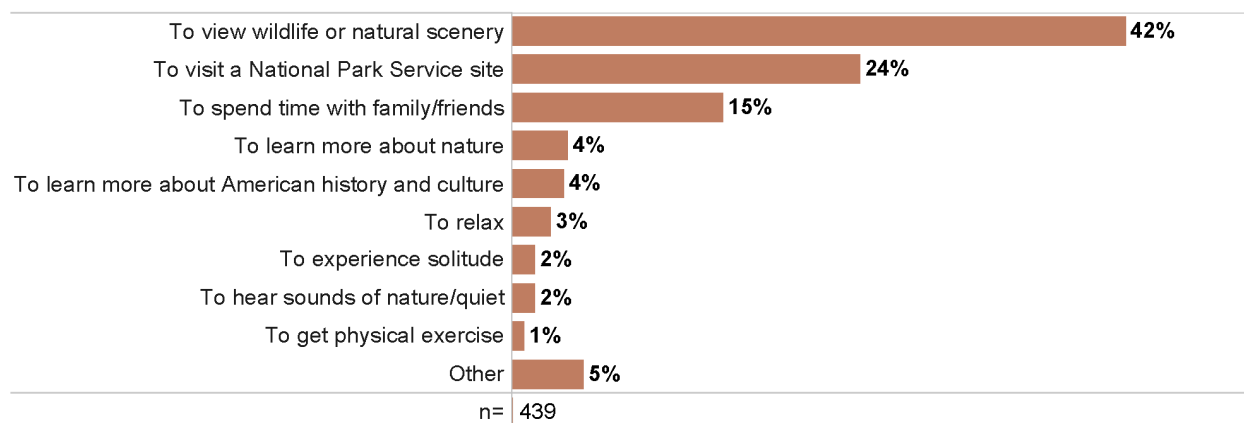


Figure 23. Reasons or motivations to visit Death Valley. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 13.

- Most respondents chose viewing wildlife or natural scenery (68%) as an extremely important reason for their trip to Death Valley.
- Other important reasons for visiting were to spend time with family/friends and to visit a National Park Service site (48% and 46% of respondents, respectively, rated them as extremely important).
- The least important reasons for visiting were to get physical exercise and to experience solitude (only 20% and 18% of respondents, respectively, reported them as extremely important, and 5% and 14% of respondents, respectively, rated them as not at all important).

- The most common response about the most important reason for visiting Death Valley was to view wildlife or scenery (42%), followed by visiting a National Park Service site (24%), and spending time with family/friends (15%).

Questions 12-13: Programs, Services, and Learning

Respondents were asked to identify all programs and services in which they personally participated in Death Valley during their trip (Figure 24).

On this trip, in which of the following programs and services did you personally participate within Death Valley National Park? Please mark all that apply

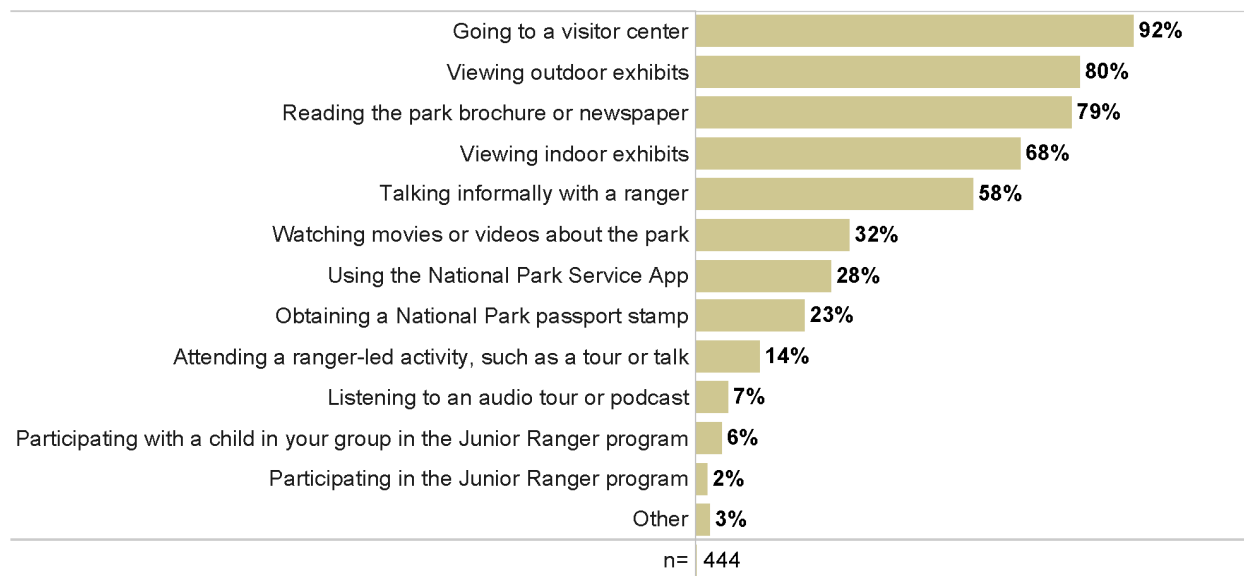


Figure 24. Participation in programs at Death Valley.

- The two most-used programs or services were going to the Visitor Center and viewing outdoor exhibits, with at least four out of five respondents (80%) reporting participating in each of them.
- Several other programs and services were engaged in by over half of respondents: reading the park brochure or newspaper (79%), viewing indoor exhibits (68%) and talking informally with a ranger (58%).

Two follow-up questions asked if respondents learned anything from park staff, programs, and/or exhibits about American history, nature, and/or culture, and what specific subjects they would like to learn about in the future (Figure 25).

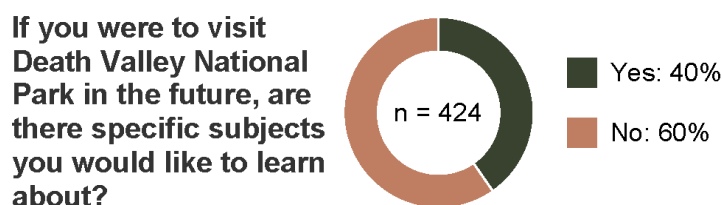


Figure 25. Learning outcomes while visiting Death Valley.

- Less than half of respondents (40%) reported that if they were to visit Death Valley in the future, there are specific subjects they would like to learn about.
- Respondents who said yes to this question were asked to elaborate.

Questions 14-15: Use of Devices

Two survey questions were focused on the use of electronic devices, their importance, and the quality of service provided. First, respondents were asked which personal electronic devices they used while in Death Valley (Figure 26).

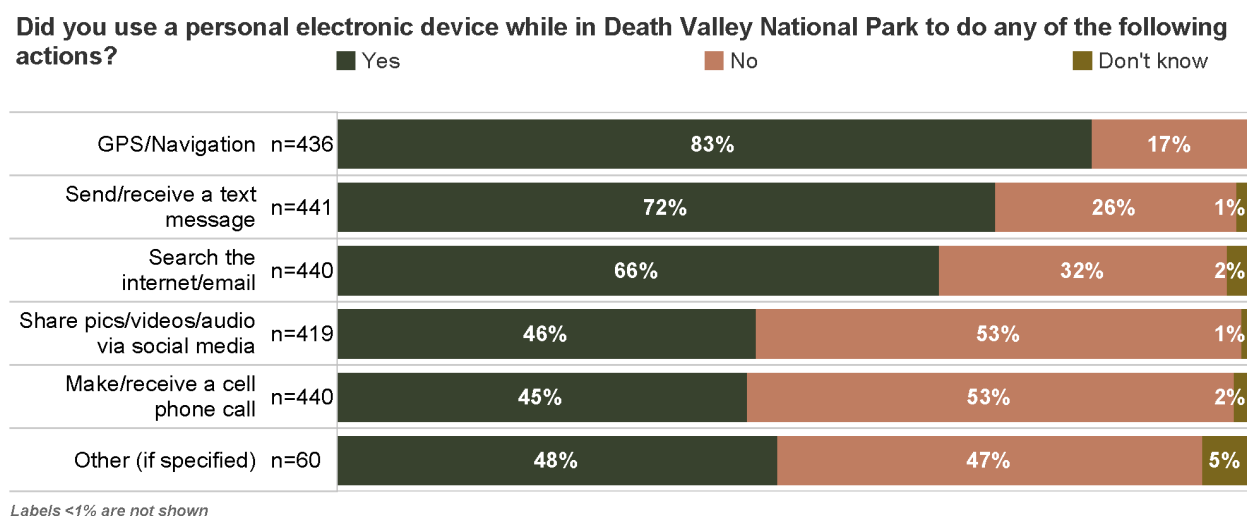
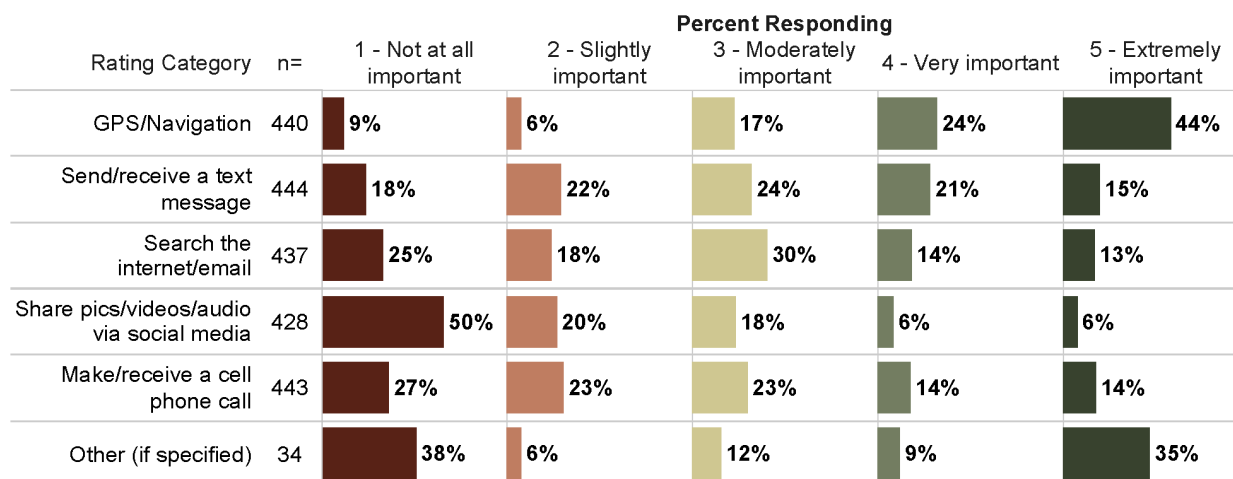


Figure 26. Use of personal electronic devices while visiting Death Valley. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 14.

- Over 80% of respondents (83%) reported using GPS/Navigation, and nearly three-quarters of respondents (72%) reported sending/receiving a text message.
- Conversely, 45% of respondents stated they made/received a cell phone call.

Then, respondents were asked to rate both the importance of each of these electronic device uses (Figure 27), and the quality of their service (Figure 28).

How important to you was it during your visit to Death Valley National Park to use personal electronic devices to do each of the following?

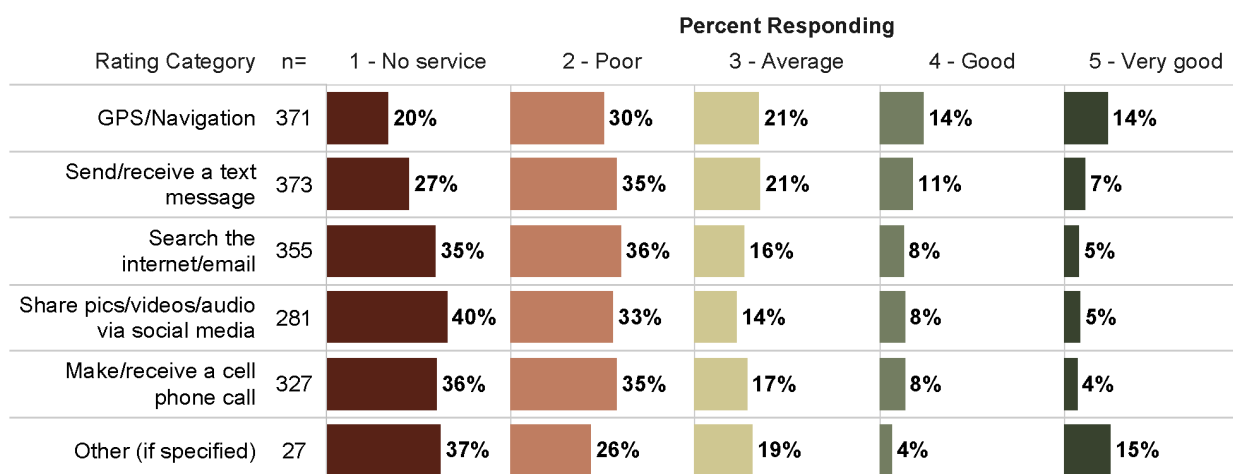


Categories sorted in descending order by percent answering "Yes" to "Did you use a personal electronic device while in the park to do any of the following actions?" (With "Other" anchored at bottom)

Figure 27. The importance of the use of personal electronic devices while visiting Death Valley. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 15.

- The most important device uses were GPS/Navigation and sending/receiving a text message (44% and 15% of respondents, respectively, rated them as extremely important).
- Sharing pics/videos/audio via social media was rated as extremely important by only 6% of respondents, and not at all important by 50% of respondents.

How would you rate the quality of service to do each of the following?



Categories sorted in descending order by percent answering "Yes" to "Did you use a personal electronic device while in the park to do any of the following actions?" (With "Other" anchored at bottom)

Figure 28. Quality of service for personal electronic devices while visiting Death Valley. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 16.

- GPS/Navigation was rated as very good or good by 28% of respondents. However, 20% of respondents reported that they had no service for this.
- At least one quarter of respondents (ranged from 27% to 40%, depending on the service) reported that they also had no service to send/receive text messages, search the internet/email, share pics/videos/audio via social media, or make/receive a cell phone call.
- A small percentage of respondents (ranging from 4% to 7%, depending on the service) rated these services as very good.

Question 16: Physical Difficulties

Respondents were asked if anyone in their personal group had a physical condition that made it difficult to access or participate in park activities or services during their visit to Death Valley. If such a condition was identified, respondents were asked to specify the type of difficulty (Figure 29).

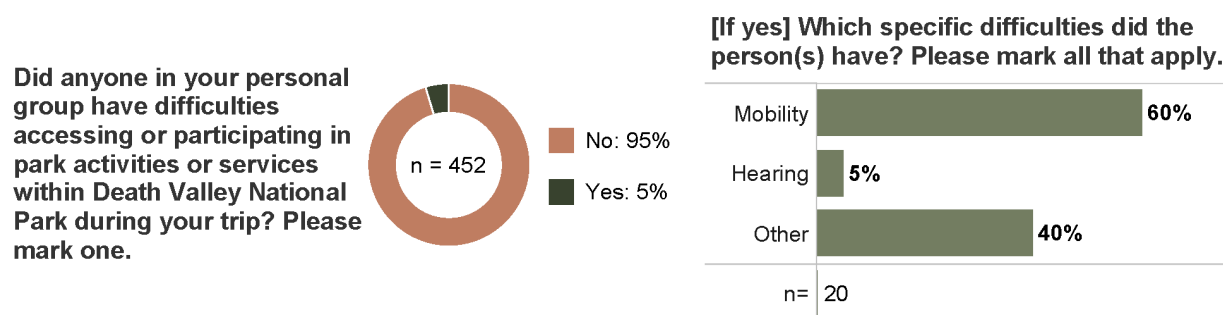


Figure 29. Physical difficulties while visiting Death Valley.

- The majority of respondents (95%) reported that nobody in their personal group had a physical condition that made it difficult to access or participate in park activities or services during their visit to Death Valley.
- Among the 5% of respondents who identified at least one difficulty, 60% reported mobility issues in their group, while 40% reported some other specific difficulty. A small portion also reporting hearing difficulties.

Questions 19-21: Visitor Experience

Respondents were then given several statements about Death Valley and asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each given statement (Figure 30).

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

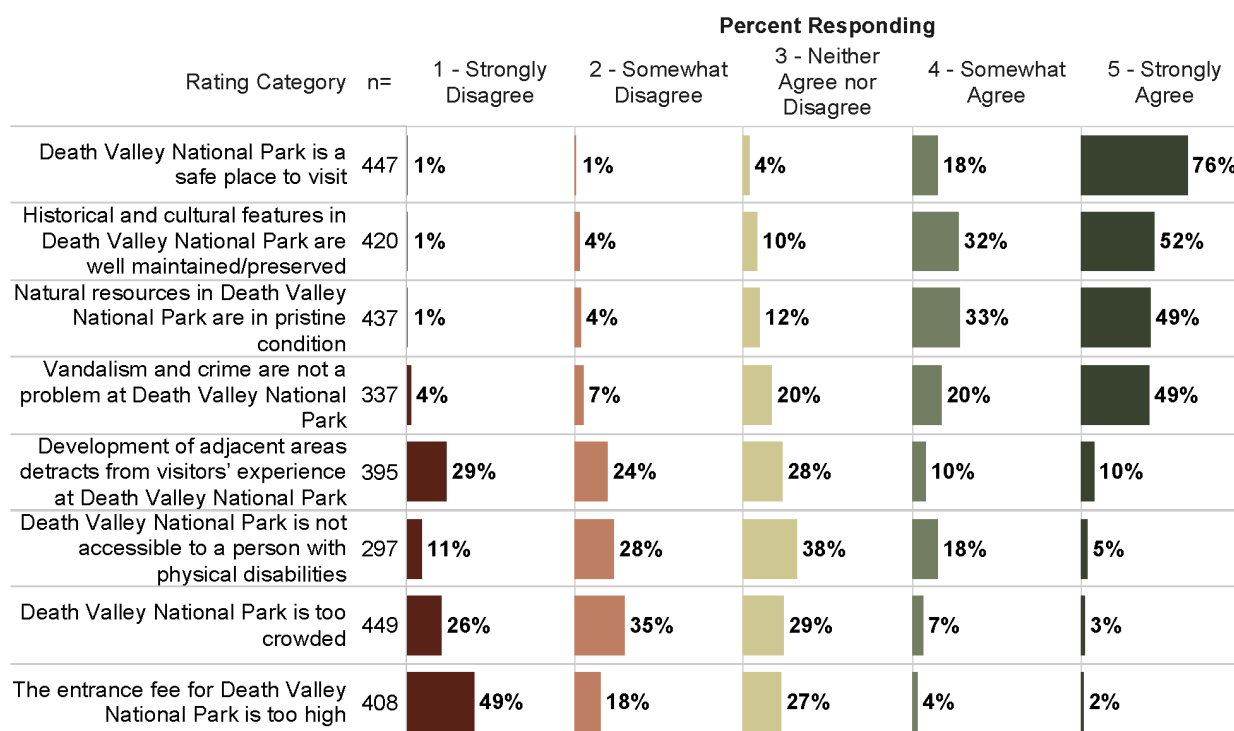


Figure 30. Rating Death Valley experience. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 17.

- From all the statements listed, “Death Valley National Park is a safe place to visit” received the most consensus with a combined 94% of respondents saying they either strongly or somewhat agree with it. That was followed by “Historical and cultural features in Death Valley National Park are well maintained/preserved” and “Natural resources in Death Valley National Park are in pristine condition” (84% and 82% of respondents, respectively, strongly or somewhat agreed with these statements).
- Conversely, “Death Valley National Park is too crowded” and “The entrance fee for Death Valley National Park is too high” received the least support, with 10% and 6% of respondents, respectively, either somewhat or strongly agreeing with these statements, and at least one-quarter of respondents strongly disagreeing with each of them.

Next, respondents were asked to rate the quality of park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities in Death Valley (Figure 31).

How would you rate the quality of the park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities in Death Valley National Park?

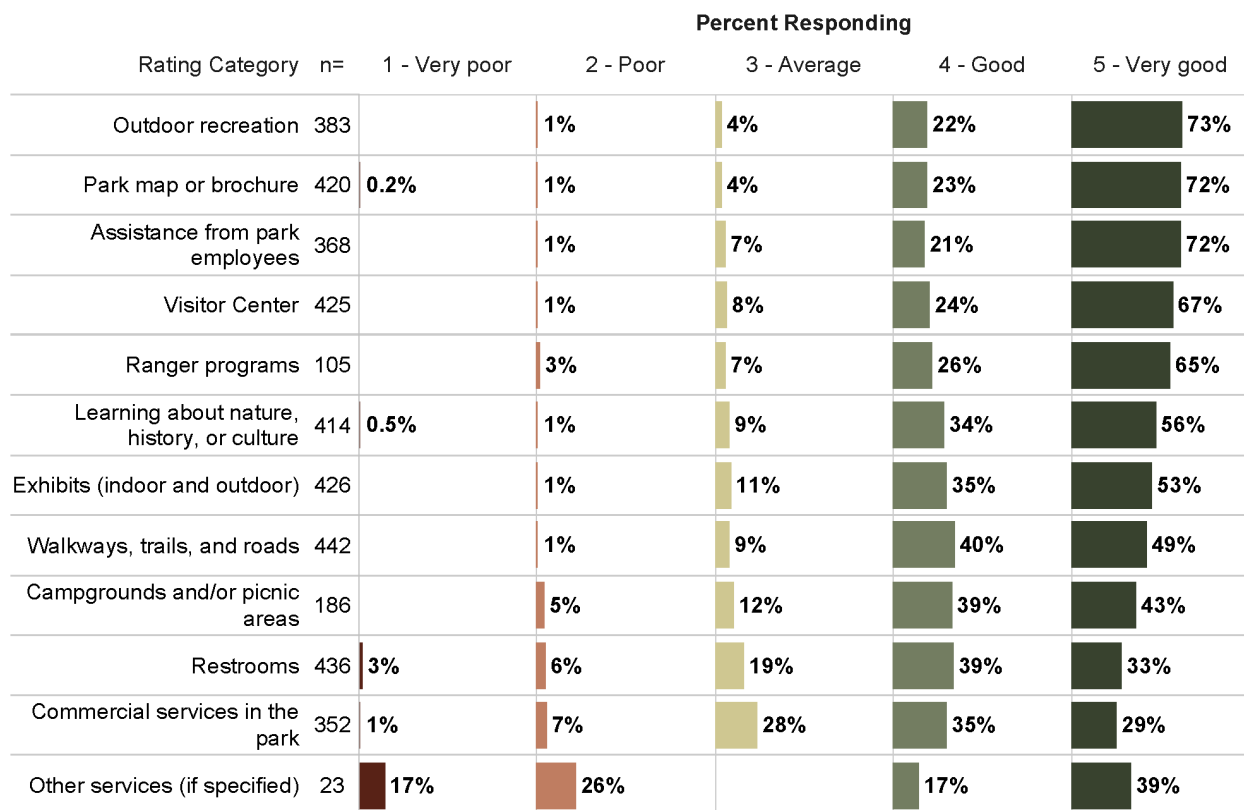


Figure 31. Rating the quality of specific Death Valley facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 18.

- Over half of respondents (ranging from 73% to 53%) rated outdoor recreation opportunities, the park map/brochure, assistance from park employees, the Visitor Center, ranger programs, opportunities to learn about nature, history, or culture, and exhibits (both indoor and outdoor) as very good.
- Conversely, fewer than half of respondents rated the walkways, trails, and roads, the campgrounds and/or picnic areas, restrooms, and the commercial services in the park as very good. For these ratings categories, respondents were most likely to say that they were either good or average.

Finally, respondents were asked to rate overall quality of the park facilities, visitor services, and recreation opportunities (Figure 32).

Overall, how would you rate the quality of the park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities in Death Valley National Park?

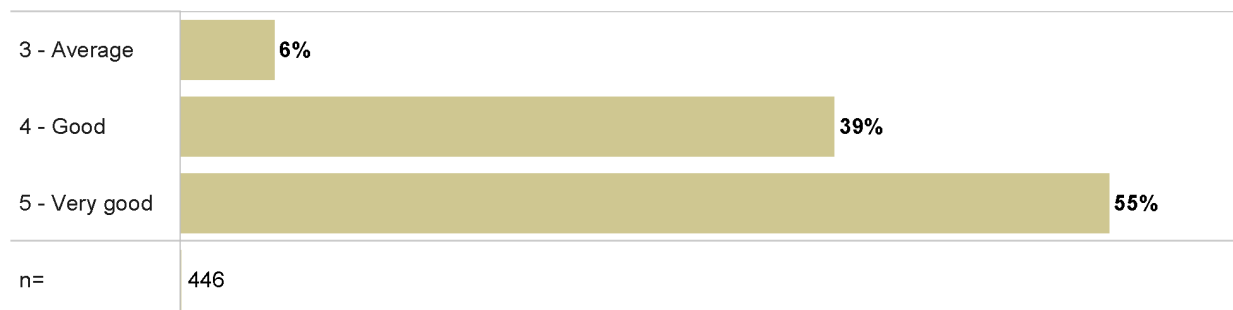


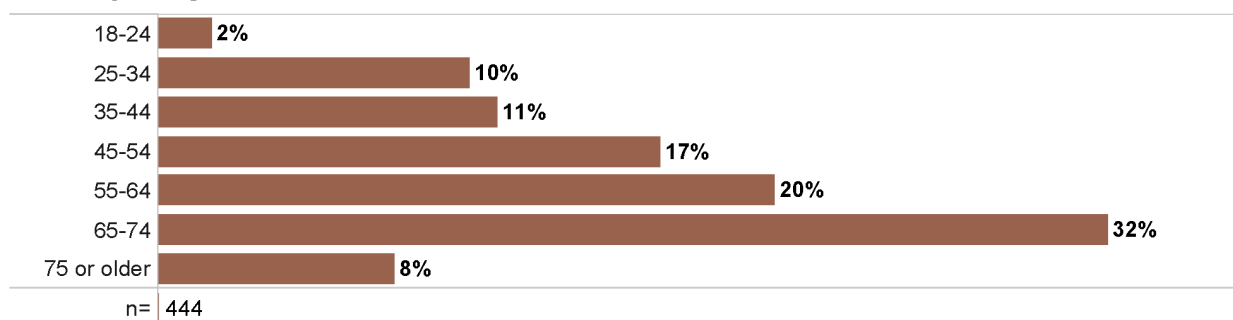
Figure 32. Rating overall quality of Death Valley facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities.

- In general, about the majority of respondents (55%) rated the quality of the park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities in Death Valley as very good, and another 39% rated them as good. The remaining 6% of respondents rated the overall quality as average.

Questions 22-28: Background/Demographics

In the final section of the post-trip survey, respondents were asked various questions about their personal and household demographics. Figure 33 depicts descriptive statistics for respondent age and education.

What is your age?



What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

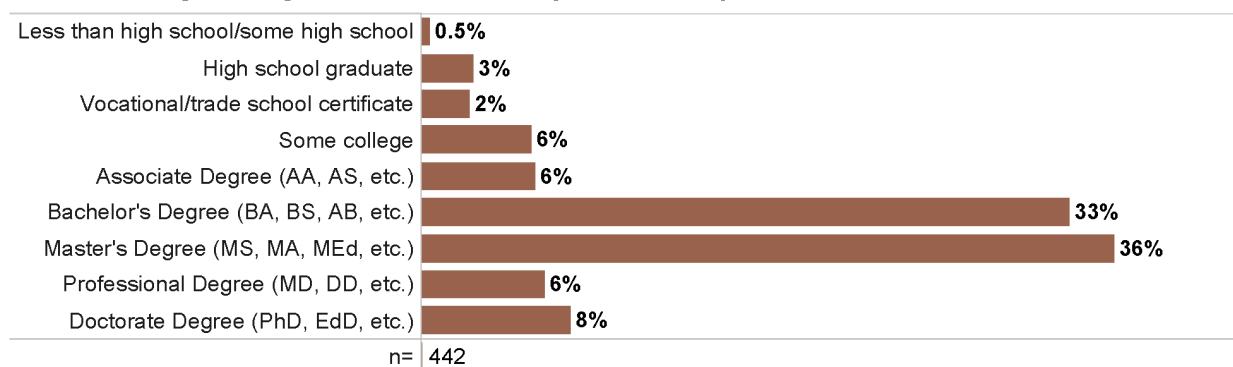


Figure 33. Respondent demographics: age and level of education.

- The most common age categories were 65-74 years old (32%), 55-64 years old (20%), and 45-54 years old (17%). The least represented age group were 18-24 years old (only 2% of the participants surveyed).
- Most survey respondents reported obtaining higher education, with a combined 89% having some college degree, and a plurality (36%) holding a master's degree.

Respondents were also asked to identify their race(s) and if they were of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin (Figure 34).

What is your race and/or ethnicity? Mark all that apply.

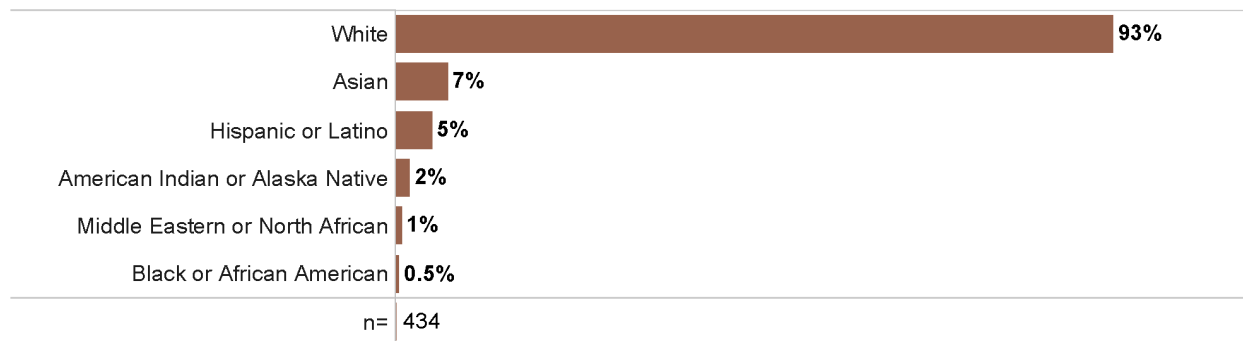


Figure 34. Respondent demographics: race and/or ethnicity.

- The majority of respondents (93%) were White, while 7% were Asian.

Finally, at a household level, respondents were asked to report annual income and number of contributors, as well as how many people (adults and children) live in their household (Figure 35).

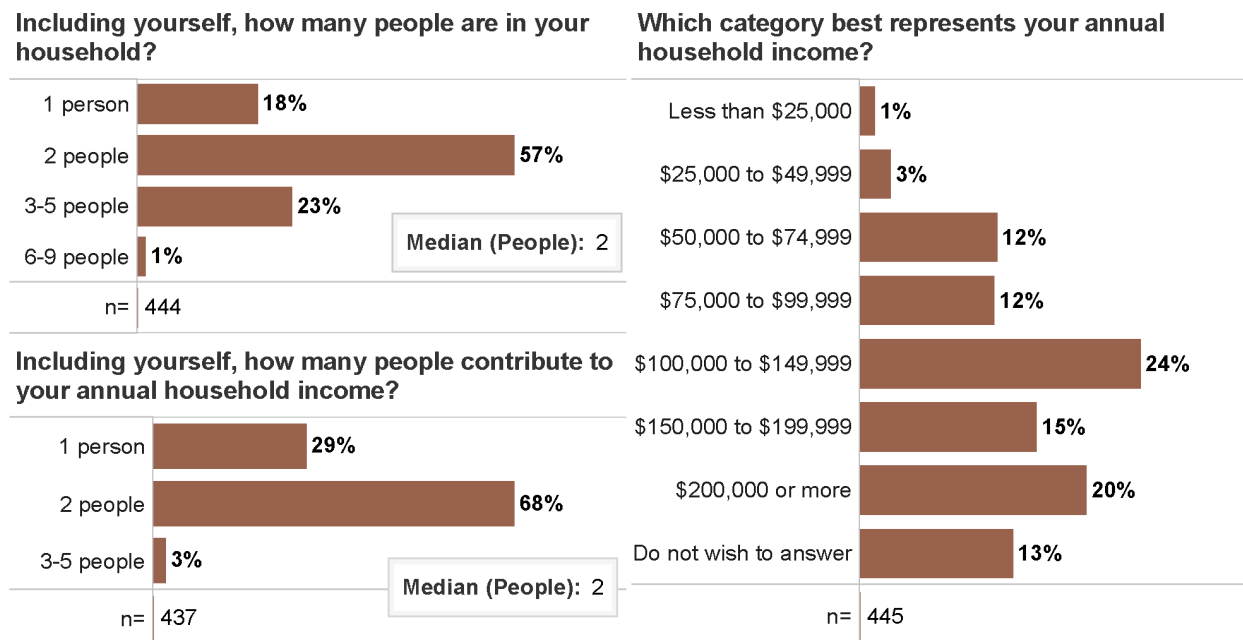


Figure 35. Household demographics: annual household income and household size. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 19.

- The majority of respondents (57%) had two people in their household, followed by households with three to five people (another 23%).
- In addition to obtaining higher education, visitors surveyed at Death Valley also reported relatively high-income levels. Just under one-quarter of respondents (24%) reported that their annual household income was between \$100,000 and \$149,999, and another 20% earned \$200,000 or more.
- Most respondents (68%) came from a dual-income household.

Literature Cited

National Park Service (NPS). 2025. 2025 Socioeconomic Monitoring of Death Valley National Park: Visitor intercept and post-trip surveys. <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2317763>

Appendix A: Accessible Tables

Table 8 through Table 19 contain tabular data from figures found in the body of the report.

Table 8. Data from Figure 2. Previous visits to Death Valley.

Question	Sample Size (n)	Median
[If not first-time visitor] Including this visit, how many visits have you made to Death Valley over the past 12 months?	302	1
[If not first-time visitor] Including this visit, how many visits have you made to Death Valley over the past five years?	302	2

Table 9. Data from Figure 3. Visits made to other NPS sites within the past year.

Question	Sample Size (n)	Median
How many visits have you made to other NPS sites over the past 12 months?	1103	3

Table 10. Data from Figure 9. Number of nights spent in the local area around Death Valley, by accommodation type.

Accommodation Type	Sample Size (n)	Median
[If backcountry camping in Death Valley] Number of nights	52	3
[If camping in Death Valley] Number of nights	229	3
[If camping outside of Death Valley in the local area] Number of nights	108	3
[If lodging in Death Valley] Number of nights	298	3
[If lodging outside Death Valley in local area] Number of nights	483	3
[If staying in unpaid accommodations] Number of nights	16	6

Table 11. Data from Figure 10. Number of adults and children in respondent's personal group, and total group size, while visiting Death Valley.

Group Composition	Sample Size (n)	Median
Adults	1105	2
Children	1105	0
Total group size	1105	2

Table 12. Data from Figure 18. Number of people in respondent's vehicle when entering Death Valley.

Question	Sample Size (n)	Median
[If entered by car, truck, or SUV] Including yourself, how many people were traveling in your vehicle when you entered Death Valley?	983	2
[If entered by RV/motorhome] Including yourself, how many people were traveling in your RV when you entered Death Valley?	76	2
[If entered by motorcycle] Including yourself, how many people were traveling on your motorcycle when you entered Death Valley?	14	1

Table 13. Data from Figure 23. Reasons or motivations to visit Death Valley.

Rating Category	Sample Size (n)
To visit a National Park Service site	446
To experience solitude	440
To hear the sounds of nature/quiet	448
To learn more about nature	447
To learn more about American history and culture	447
To spend time with family/friends	444
To get physical exercise	446
To view wildlife or natural scenery	450
To relax	438
Other (if specified)	52

Table 14. Data from Figure 26. Use of personal electronic devices while visiting Death Valley.

Device Use	Sample Size (n)
Make/receive a cell phone call	440
Send/receive a text message	441
Search the internet/email	440
GPS/Navigation	436
Share pics/videos/audio via social media	419
Other (if specified)	60

Table 15. Data from Figure 27. The importance of the use of personal electronic devices while visiting Death Valley.

Device Use	Sample Size (n)
Make/receive a cell phone call	443
Send/receive a text message	444
Search the internet/email	437
GPS/Navigation	440
Share pics/videos/audio via social media	428
Other (if specified)	34

Table 16. Data from Figure 28. Quality of service for personal electronic devices while visiting Death Valley.

Device Use	Sample Size (n)
Make/receive a cell phone call	327
Send/receive a text message	373
Search the internet/email	355
GPS/Navigation	371
Share pics/videos/audio via social media	281
Other (if specified)	27

Table 17. Data from Figure 30. Rating Death Valley experience.

Rating Category	Sample Size (n)
Death Valley is a safe place to visit	447
Death Valley is too crowded	449
Natural resources in Death Valley are in pristine condition	437
The entrance fee for Death Valley is too high	408
Vandalism and crime are not a problem at Death Valley	337
Death Valley is not accessible to a person with physical disabilities	297
Historical and cultural features in Death Valley are well maintained/preserved	420
Development of adjacent areas detracts from visitors' experience at Death Valley	395

Table 18. Data from Figure 31. Rating the quality of Death Valley facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities.

Rating Category	Sample Size (n)
Visitor Center	425
Exhibits (indoor and outdoor)	426
Restrooms	436
Walkways, trails, and roads	442
Campgrounds and/or picnic areas	186
Assistance from park employees	368
Park map or brochure	420
Ranger programs	105
Commercial services in the park (food, lodging, gifts, rental, etc.)	352
Other services (if specified)	23
Learning about nature, history, or culture	414
Outdoor recreation (sightseeing, camping, bicycling, boating, hiking, etc.)	383

Table 19. Data from Figure 35. Household demographics: annual household income and household size.

Question	Sample Size (n)	Median
Including yourself, how many people are in your household?	444	2
Including yourself, how many people contribute to your annual household income?	437	2