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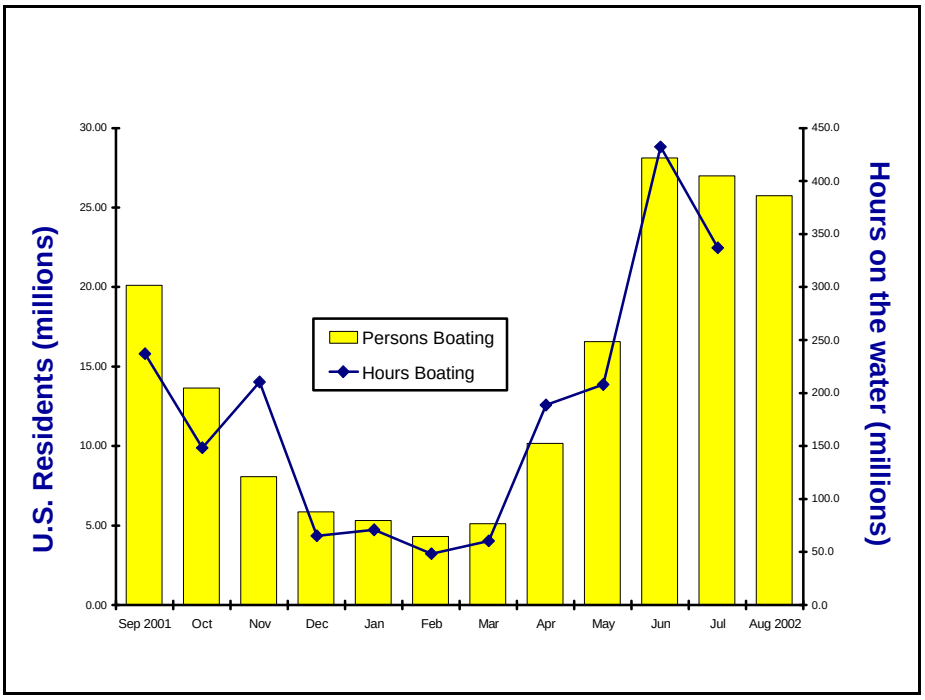
New Information on Recreational Boating

Results from the *National Survey on Recreation and the Environment 2000*, indicate that over 75 million US residents a year engage in some form of recreational boating.* The Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) monthly Omnibus Survey found that recreational boaters spent in excess of 2 billion hours on the nation's waterways in the last twelve months.

National recreational boating rates fluctuate greatly between the winter and summer months. BTS found that while a monthly average of 14.2 million adult US residents use a recreational boat, the number actually varies greatly depending on the season. As expected, many more people use recreational boats in the summer months than in the winter. During December through March, an average of 5.1 million U.S. residents engaged in recreational boating. In April, that number doubled to over 10 million and by June, over 28 million adults reported spending time on a recreational boat.

About two out of three recreational boaters (65 percent) spent somewhere between 20 minutes to 10 hours per month in boating activities. About 23 percent of boaters reported being on the water for 11 to 25 hours and about 12 percent reported boating for 26 or more hours a month.

Recreational Boating by Month



Source: US Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Omnibus Household Surveys, October 2001 through September 2002. Note: Data for boating hours for August, 2002 are not available. The item was changed to ask respondents how much time they spent boating on a "typical day." Future reports will be based on the new item.

*Summary Report #1, "Outdoor Recreation Participation in the United States," Question 256: During the past 12 months did you go sailing, motor boating, water skiing, jet skiing, canoeing, kayaking, rafting, tubing, surfing, sailboarding, or any other form of boating? From the *National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE): 2000-20*01. The Interagency National Survey Consortium, Coordinated by the USDA Forest Service, Recreation, Wilderness, and Demographics Trends Research Group, Athens, GA and the Human Dimensions Research Laboratory, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN.

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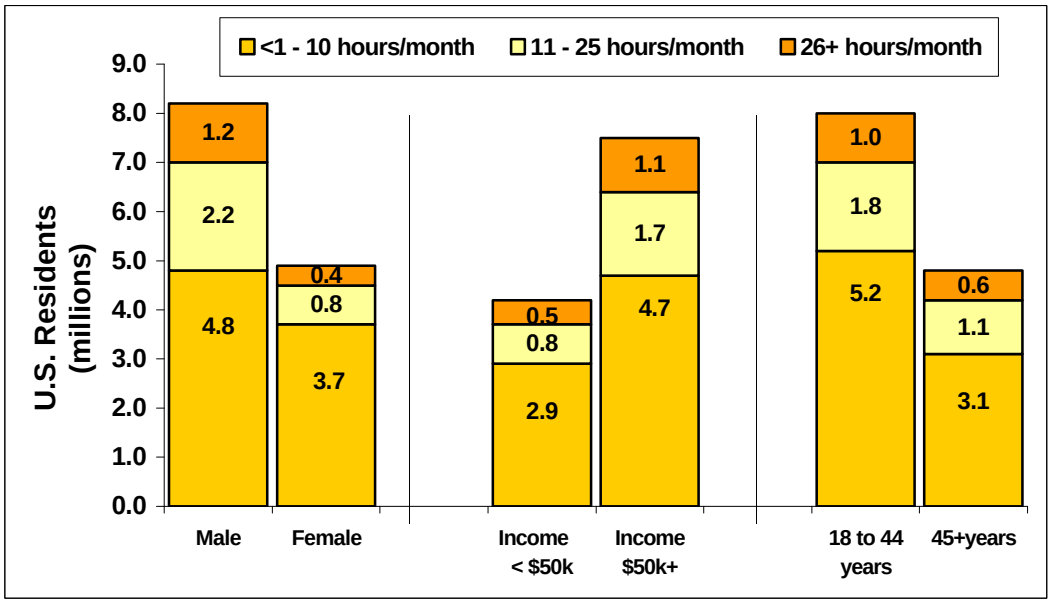
Hours of Recreational Boat Use by Gender, Income, and Age



Source: US Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Omnibus Household Surveys, October 2001 through September 2002.

U.S. residents who report that they are recreational boaters are significantly more likely to be males (p=.001), to report an annual income of $50,000 or more (p=.001), and to be under the age of 45 (p=.001).

In analyzing the amount of time spent boating in a month, differences between boaters in the lower and higher income categories and in the younger and older age categories were not statistically significant.

However, differences in the amount of reported time spent boating by males and females were significantly different (p=.002). While approximately 42 percent of male boaters indicated that they boated 11 or more hours in a month, only 25 percent of female boaters reported spending that amount of time on the water.

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Data presented in this issue of OmniStats are from several issues of the BTS Omnibus Survey. Data are preliminary and are subject to change.

The target population for the survey is the US non-institutionalized adult population (18 years of age or older). Results are based on a completed sample of 1000+ households that are randomly selected using a list-assisted random digit dialing (RDD) methodology. The findings summarized in this report are estimates derived from a sample survey. Sample surveys contain two major components of error —sampling and nonsampling error.

Sampling Error. Sampling error occurs because findings are based on a sample, rather than on the entire population. The total respondent pool for the Omnibus Survey is 1,000+ for an estimated sampling error of about ±3% at the 95% confidence level. Sampling error will be larger for sample subgroups (such as males or disabled persons) and for survey items that do not apply to all members of the sample (e.g. sample members who flew on a commercial airline during the 30 days prior to the survey).

Standard error estimates for each Omnibus survey item are available on the BTS website for the Omnibus Survey at http://www.bts.gov/omnibus/household/index.html. *After selecting the month of interest, choose "Marginal Frequency Distributions."*

Nonsampling Error. Estimates are subject to various errors during the survey process, such as data collection, response coding, transcription, and data editing errors. These errors would also occur if a complete census was conducted under the same conditions. Explicit measures of the effects of these errors are not available. However, stringent quality control procedures were followed to minimize nonsampling errors associated with data entry and questionnaire design. Nonresponse error is a function of both the nonresponse rate and the differences, if any, between respondents and nonrespondents

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Numbers to Move People

An initial draft of this report was written by Joanna Deitch, a Summer Fellow with the Joint Program on Survey Methodology at the University of Maryland who completed her summer assignment in the Office of Survey Programs at BTS.