

Participation in Outdoor Recreation Activities by North Dakota Residents

By Rex W. Cox and Jerome E. Johnson

Nearly a fourth of North Dakota's residents hunted at some time in 1968. These hunters spent a total of 33,208 days in the field, or an average of 10.5 days per person. It is projected that the proportion of persons who hunt will increase to almost 29 per cent in a few years, resulting in an increase of 25 per cent in the number of days spent in the field, or an expected total of 41,381 days.

These and other data relating to outdoor recreation activities of North Dakota households (presented in Table 1) are based on the results of a mail questionnaire sent to 9,600 heads of households in 1969 by the Department of Agricultural Economics, North Dakota State University. The number of households who returned usable questionnaires totaled 4,112 and included 13,311 persons.

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The great wealth of information in Table 1 presents many interesting pictures of past and expected future patterns of outdoor recreation. It shows the degree and rate of participation in various recreation activities for those households reporting. For example, a larger proportion of persons (63 per cent) participated in picnicking than in any other activity. Picnicking may be so popular because it involves no extensive preparations, little physical exertion, relatively low expense, and can be enjoyed by all members of the household.

About five times as many persons summer fished as winter fished. But we expect the proportion of persons who engage in winter fishing to increase at a more rapid rate than for summer fishing.

Bicycling is becoming more and more of a recreation activity rather than merely a means of

TABLE 1. PRESENT AND PROJECTED PROPORTIONS OF PERSONS PARTICIPATING AND DAYS' PARTICIPATION IN SPECIFIED OUTDOOR RECREATION ACTIVITIES, NORTH DAKOTA.

Recreation Activity	Proportion of Persons Participating			Days' Participation						
				Present		Total			Projected	
				Per cent	Per cent	Number	Per cent of Total	Number	Per cent of Total	Increase Per cent
Hunting	23.7	28.6	20.8	33,208	4.3	41,281	4.5	24.3	10.5	10.8
Fishing										
Summer	45.0	51.9	15.2	57,833	7.5	68,852	7.6	19.0	9.6	9.9
Winter	8.2	11.3	39.0	7,269	0.9	10,196	1.1	40.3	6.7	6.7
Boating	32.3	37.1	14.9	36,951	4.8	43,670	4.8	18.2	8.5	8.8
Water skiing	10.0	14.3	42.7	10,911	1.4	15,816	1.7	44.9	8.1	8.3
Swimming										
In pools	32.2	37.1	15.2	79,215	10.3	92,855	10.2	17.2	18.4	18.7
In other places	28.2	30.7	8.9	33,054	4.4	36,786	4.0	11.3	8.7	8.9
Camping	28.9	37.2	28.4	34,288	4.5	45,136	5.0	31.6	8.8	9.1
Picnicking	63.3	65.6	3.7	52,018	6.9	55,391	6.2	6.5	6.1	6.3
Walking, hiking, nature study	27.8	30.4	9.3	77,358	10.0	86,668	9.5	12.0	20.8	21.3
Bicycling	28.5	32.6	14.2	155,451	20.2	180,924	19.9	16.4	40.8	41.5
Ice skating	19.2	22.3	15.9	29,604	3.8	35,013	3.9	18.3	11.5	11.7
Snow skiing	6.7	8.7	30.0	7,304	0.9	9,631	1.1	31.9	8.2	8.3
Snowmobiling	24.2	27.7	14.2	52,784	6.8	61,937	6.8	17.3	16.3	16.7
Golf	11.0	14.2	28.6	28,170	3.7	37,081	4.1	31.6	19.1	19.6
Tennis	5.8	7.4	28.6	7,896	1.0	10,710	1.2	35.6	10.3	10.8
Baseball, softball	19.7	22.3	13.3	46,192	6.0	53,438	5.9	15.7	17.6	17.9
Horseback riding	3.1	3.3	5.6	12,664	1.6	13,586	1.5	7.3	30.4	30.8
Football	0.9	1.0	10.4	3,392	0.4	3,777	0.4	11.4	29.5	29.7
Badminton	0.9	1.0	3.2	2,305	0.3	2,326	0.3	0.9	18.6	18.2
Archery	0.2	0.3	21.4	658	0.1	703	0.1	6.8	23.5	20.7
Horseshoe	0.8	0.8	2.9	1,439	0.2	1,505	0.2	4.6	13.8	14.1
Total				769,964	100.0	907,282	100.0	17.8		

transportation from one local place to another. Not only are more bicycle tours being organized, bicycle paths and routes developed, but also bicycle races are being organized between groups within cities, between cities and towns, and between different schools. Nearly 30 per cent of the persons sampled had participated in bicycling in 1968, and total time spent amounted to 155,451, or 20 per cent of the total days spent by household members on all reported activities.

Estimates of the present and projected proportion of persons participating in snowmobiling are likely to be too low, particularly the projected proportion in view of the very recent marked increase in their sales. Our survey showed that in 1968 about 78 per cent of the predominant use of snowmobiles was recreation; livestock care, 15 per cent; transportation, 5 per cent; and rescue work, 2 per cent.

Golfing as a recreation activity is attractive to practically all age groups except the very young.

The projected increase in proportion of persons participating from 11.0 per cent to 14.2 per cent is moderate considering the rapid expansion in the accessibility of golf courses to so many communities.

Many reasons were given for nonparticipation in outdoor recreation activities. Almost 50 per cent of the nonparticipants said lack of time was the most important reason, and 11 per cent said lack of funds kept them from participation. The expression "lack of time" is an ambiguous phrase. The time that members of households have free usually is limited. Consequently, the utilization of this limited time depends on the choice of competing alternatives. This expression in many cases simply means some activity other than recreation seems more important.

Other reasons mentioned for nonparticipation included old age, distance and lack of facilities, more interest in other things, health conditions, and general indifference.

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