

Travel Takes Off in the '80s

APR 26 1990

A glimpse of the '90s

America Faces Middle Age

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK FOR THE 1990s

Travelers Increasingly Favor Weekend Trips, Survey Finds

As the Baby Boom looks toward the Retirement Century, some Cassandra predict a crisis

PREVIEW: 1989
STATISTICAL
ABSTRACT

Americans pummel parks with conflicting goals

Workers of the '90s: Promise or Problems?
Experts Cite Mismatch of Skills, Needs

Fiftysomething — and in Charge

Foreigners Increasing Travel to U.S.

'The Visitor Experience' What Do We Really Mean?



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

P.O. BOX 37127

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20013-7127

IN REPLY REFER TO:

April 20, 1990

Memorandum

To: Park Superintendents

From: Assistant to the Director, Science and Technology

Subject: A Preview: Statistical Abstract

The Denver Statistical Office, now a part of the WASO Social Science Program, shortly will be sending each of you a copy of the 1989 Statistical Abstract. This annual report provides information about visitation levels and visitor use patterns, both for individual parks and for the System as a whole. As a preview of some of the data that are included in this year's report, I have enclosed seven charts from the Statistical Office showing the following:

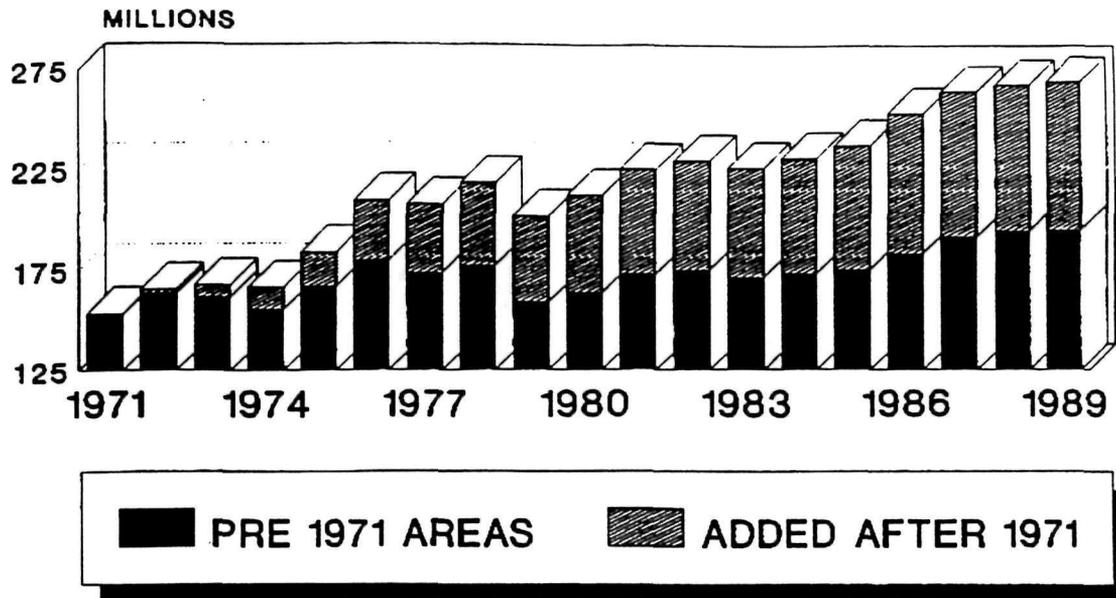
- Figure 1: Recreational visits for the period 1971-89.
- Figure 2: Seasonality Shifts in recreation visits, 1977-79 versus 1987-89.
- Figure 3: Seasonality shifts in overnight stays, 1977-79 versus 1987-89.
- Figure 4: Variations in recreational visits by Region for the period 1985-89.
- Figure 5: Variations in recreational visits according to type of park, 1985-89.
- Figure 6: Overnight stays according to type of accommodations, 1983-89.
- Figure 7: Overnight stays, 1979 versus 1989.

Richard H. Briceland

Attachments

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

RECREATION VISITS FOR AREAS REPORTING BEFORE 1971 AND ADDED AFTER 1971 *



* ADJUSTED FOR CHANGES IN
COUNTING PROCEDURES

US DOI, NPS, STATISTICAL OFFICE

Fig. 1: Recreational Visits for the 19-Year Period 1971-1989.

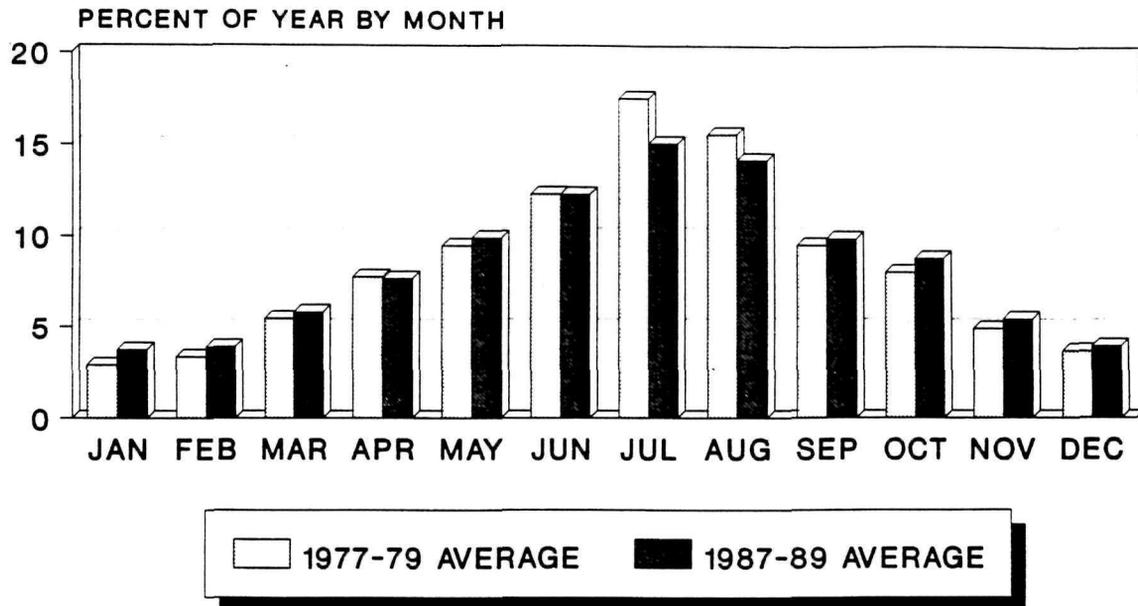
This chart shows a number of trends:

- Strong overall growth in recreational visits over both the decade of the 1970's (+30%) and the decade of the 1980's (+35%).
- The very important contribution to visitation associated with the new parks that entered the system after 1971.
- The impacts on visitation caused by events such as the 1973-74 oil embargo; the 1976 Bicentennial; the 1978-79 gasoline shortage; and the sluggish economy of the 81-83 period.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

SEASONALITY CHANGES

RECREATION VISITS



US DOI, NPS, STATISTICAL OFFICE

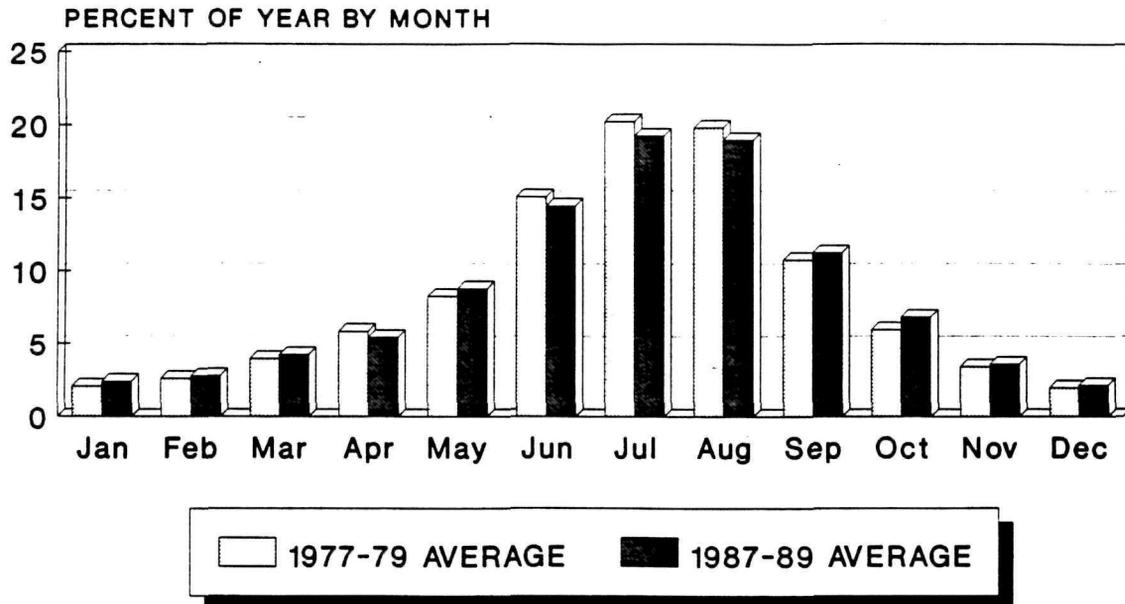
Fig. 2: Seasonality Shifts in Recreation Visits, 1977-79 Versus 1987-89.

This chart shows a change in visitor use patterns, with a drift of visitation off the peak and onto the shoulder and low seasons over the last decade. This shift suggests a growing need for visitor services during non-peak seasons, and also likely implies a shift in family (peak season) versus non-family (other seasons) visitor mix.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

SEASONALITY CHANGES

OVERNIGHT STAYS



US DOI, NPS, STATISTICAL OFFICE

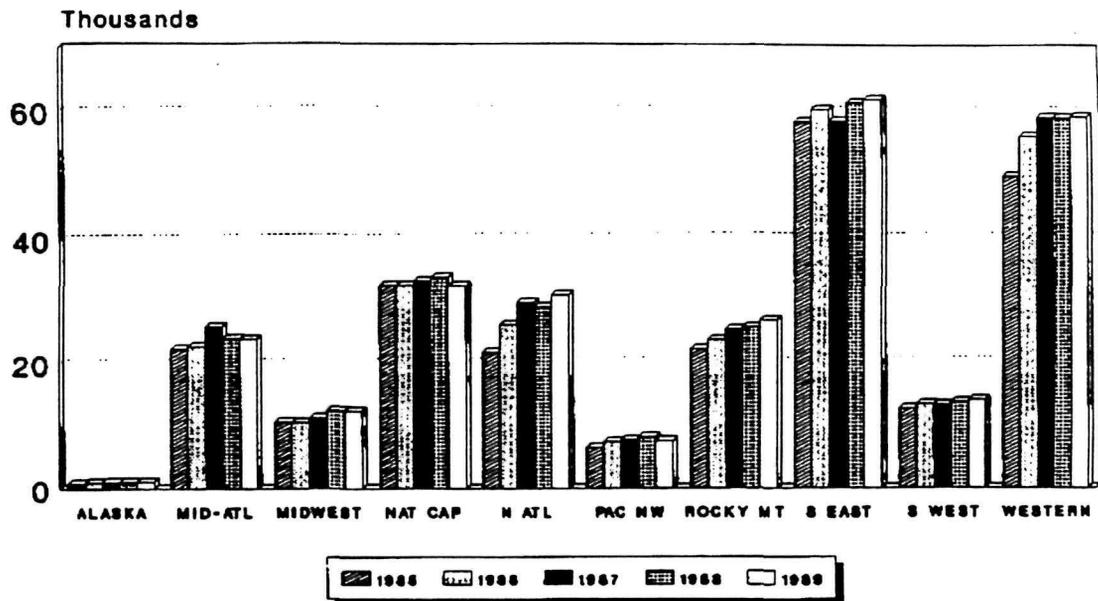
Fig. 3: Seasonality Shifts in Overnight Stays, 1977-79 Versus 1987-89.

This chart shows the same general trends as did the data for recreation visits (Figure 2), again with a shift in number of overnight stays off the peak season and onto the shoulder and low seasons.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

RECREATION VISITS

BY NPS REGION *



* ADJUSTED FOR CHANGES IN
COUNTING PROCEDURES

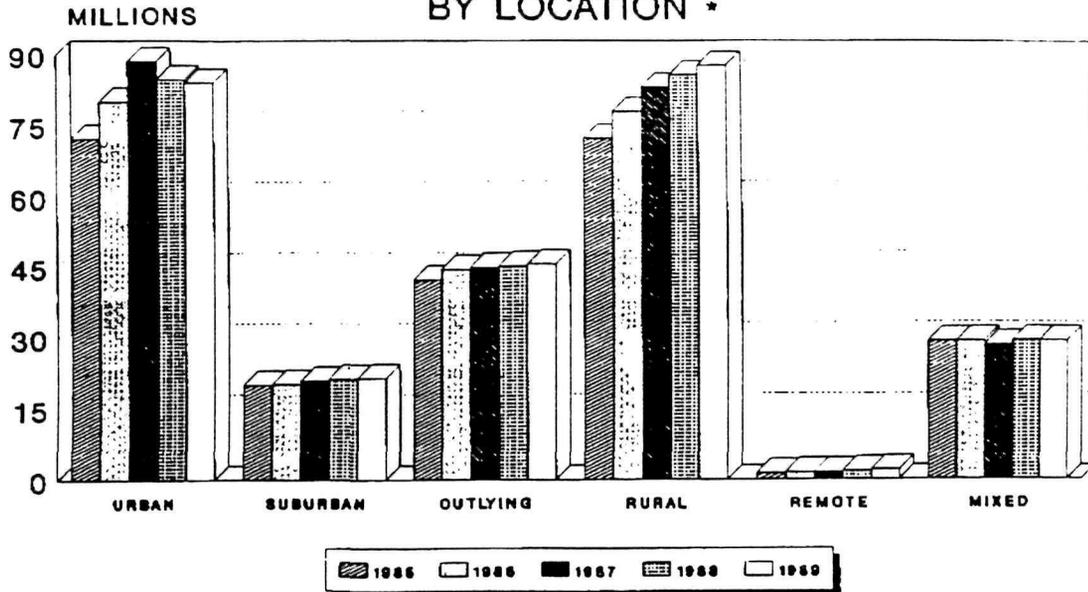
US DOI, NPS, STATISTICAL OFFICE

Fig. 4: Variations in Recreation Visits by Region.

This chart shows levels of recreational visits, by Region, for the 5-year period 1985-89. The North Atlantic Region experienced the largest 5-year percentage growth in visitation, approximately +42%, the Rocky Mountain Region, +21%, and the Western and the Alaskan Regions, +19%. All other Regions experienced only modest changes in visitation over the period. The Southeast Region remained the most heavily visited area, although only slightly ahead of the Western Region, which had a very significant increase of nearly 10 million recreation visits during the 1985-89 period.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE RECREATION VISITS

BY LOCATION *



* ADJUSTED FOR CHANGES IN
COUNTING PROCEDURES

US DOI, NPS, STATISTICAL OFFICE

Fig. 5: Variations in Recreational Visits According to Type of Park.

This chart shows recreation visit levels for six categories of parks for the 5-year period 1985-89:

Urban Parks (56) - - located within the central city of a metropolitan statistical area (MSA).

Suburban Parks (31) - - located outside a central city but still within a MSA of greater than one million population.

Outlying Parks (48) - - located in a MSA of less than one million population.

Rural Parks (158) - - located outside of any MSA and accessible by paved highway, scheduled air or marine transportation service.

Remote Parks (27) - - located outside of any MSA and requiring special travel arrangements to reach.

Mixed Parks (4) - - located in both an urban center and a rural center.

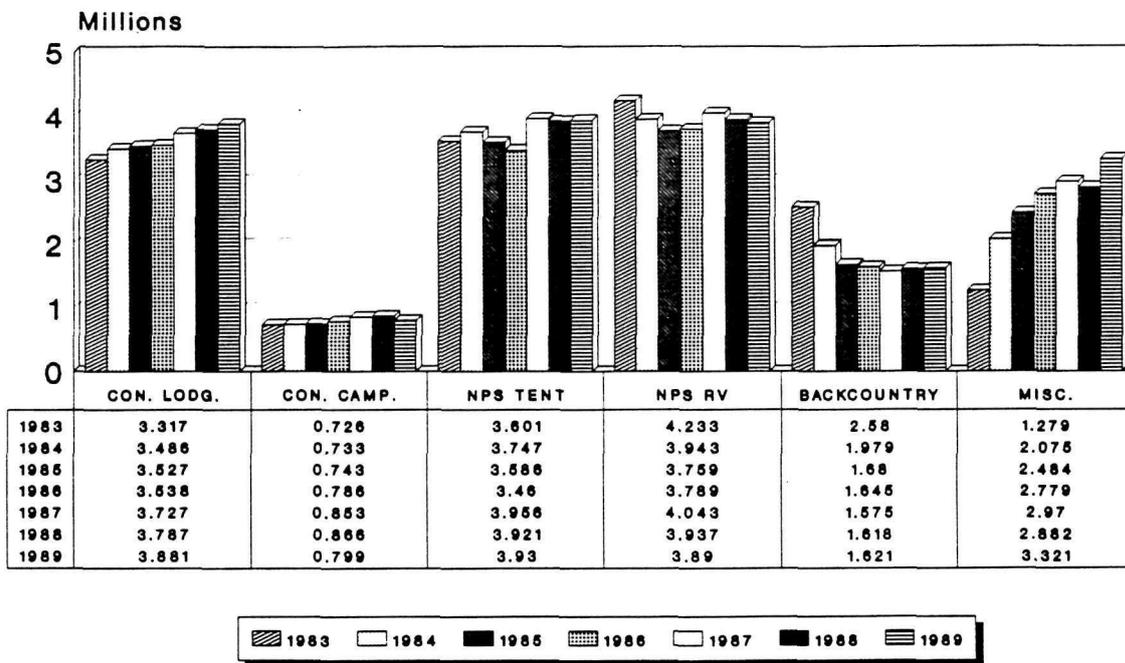
A number of "trends" are suggested by the data shown in Figure 5:

- Relatively flat recreational visit levels for all categories except the urban and the remote parks.
- Urban parks' recreation visits peaked in the 1987 period and decreased slightly thereafter.
- Steady and significant growth in recreation visits at rural parks, with total levels exceeding those of the urban parks starting in 1988.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

OVERNIGHT STAYS

BY TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION



US DOI, NPS, STATISTICAL OFFICE

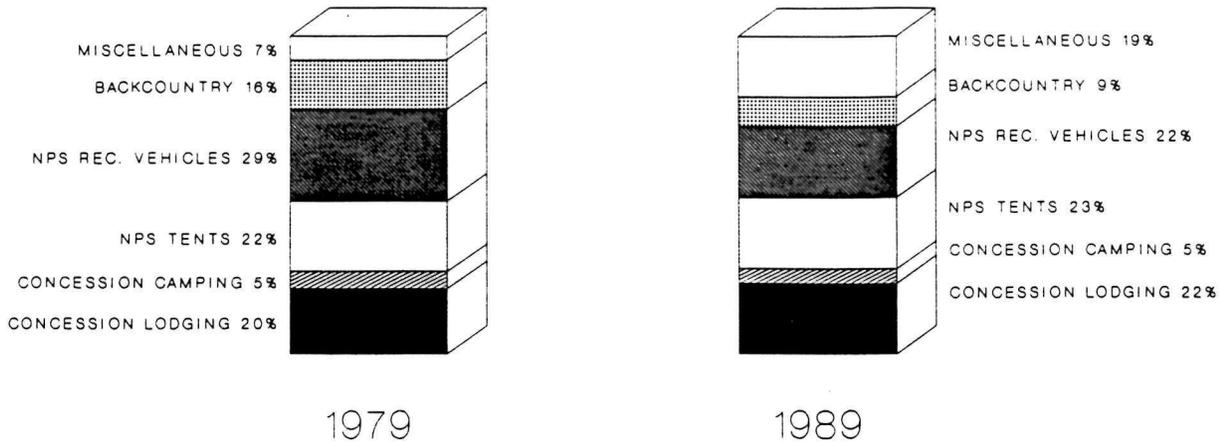
Fig. 6: Overnight Stays According to Type of Accommodations.

This chart shows total numbers of overnight stays for the seven-year period 1983-89 for six different types of visitor accommodations, concessioner lodging; concessioner campgrounds; NPS tent; NPS recreational vehicles; backcountry; and miscellaneous.

Overnight stay data have special importance because they represent groups of visitors with distinct vacation and recreation styles as well as a use of parks which may involve resource impacts and demand for services and facilities.

While backcountry use did decline significantly during the 1983-85 period, it has remained steady since then. NPS tent and RV use have been fluctuating only slightly even though rural area park volume has been rising steadily over the last four years. The increase in miscellaneous overnights includes a variety of activities including nights aboard craft at undesignated areas as well as organized group camping.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE OVERNIGHT STAYS



US DOI, NPS, STATISTICAL OFFICE

Fig 7: Overnight Stays, 1979 Versus 1989.

This chart again shows the distribution of overnight stays for six different types of visitor accommodations, but on a percentage basis, and comparing data for two specific years, 1979 versus 1989. Significant percentage use shifts were recorded for three categories: miscellaneous +12%; backcountry -7%; and recreation vehicles -7%. Percentage of overnight use associated with NPS tents, concessioner campgrounds, and concessioner lodging were basically unchanged for the two years being compared, 1979 and 1989.