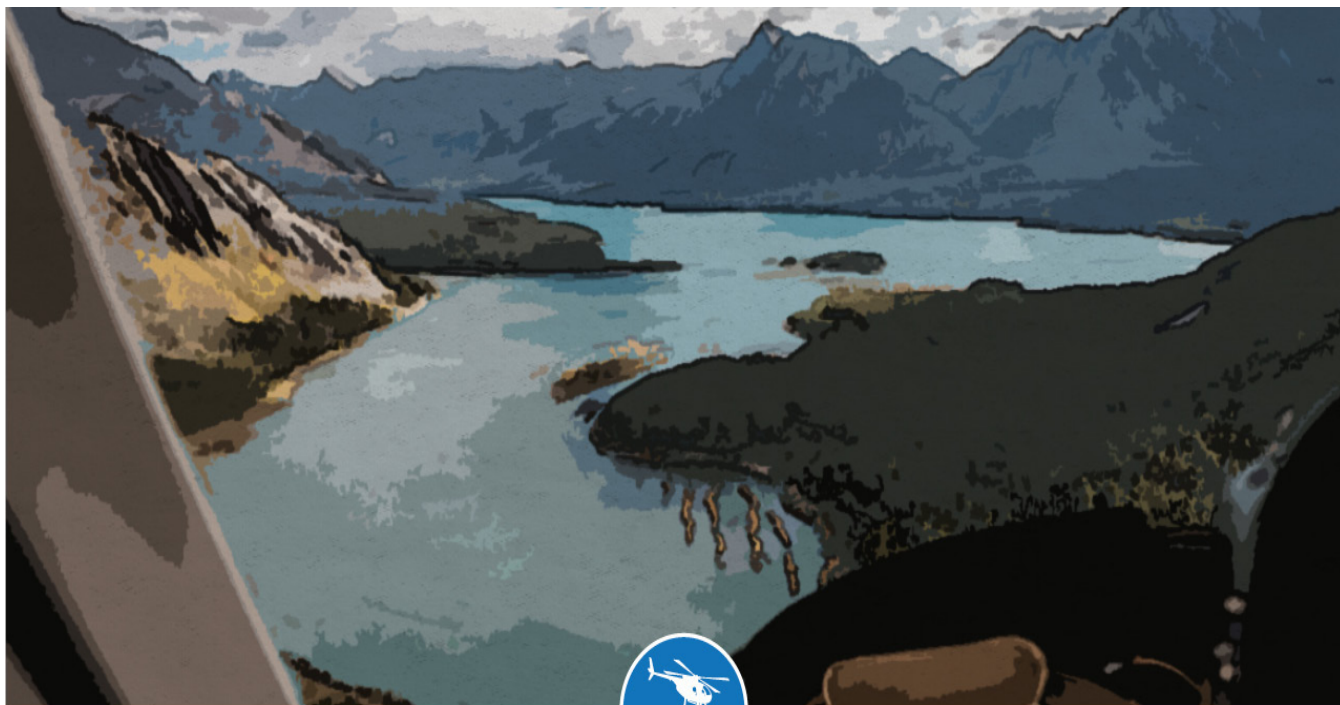




# Reporting Information for Commercial Air Tour Operations over Units of the National Park System

*2020 Annual Report*

Natural Resource Report NPS/NRSS/NSNSD/NRR—2023/2548



## AIR TOUR MANAGEMENT PLAN



**ON THE COVER**

Air Tour Management Plan artwork by Federal Aviation Administration

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# **Reporting Information for Commercial Air Tour Operations over Units of the National Park System**

*2020 Annual Report*

Natural Resource Report NPS/NRSS/NSNSD/NRR—2023/2548

Vicki L. Ward<sup>1</sup> and Claire E. Shields<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>National Park Service  
NRSS / Natural Sounds & Night Skies Division / Overflights Program  
Fort Collins, Colorado

<sup>2</sup>National Park Service  
National Capital Region

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## Executive Summary

Beginning in 2013, commercial air tour operators who conduct tours over units of the national park system have been required to report their air tour activity to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the National Park Service (NPS). The purpose of this report is to provide a high-level quantitative summary of the data provided by air tour operators for flights conducted in 2020. The NPS and FAA use these data to implement requirements of the *National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000*, as amended, including the identification of parks where an air tour management plan or voluntary agreement is required.

Table E1 displays the number of reported tours at the 78 units of the national park system where one or more air tour operators hold authority to conduct tours. Operators may hold authority for conducting tours through interim operating authority (IOA)<sup>1</sup>, air tour management plans or voluntary agreements. According to reports submitted by operators, a total of 15,624 air tours were conducted in 2020<sup>2</sup>.

The *National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000*, as amended, requires that park units with more than 50 annual tours establish an air tour management plan or voluntary agreement. While units with 50 or fewer tours are exempt from the requirement to establish a plan or agreement, NPS may withdraw an exemption if NPS determines that a plan or agreement is necessary to protect park resource and values, or visitor use and enjoyment.

On February 14, 2019, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility and Hawai'i Coalition Malama Pono filed a petition in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit requesting that the Court order the agencies to complete ATMPs for Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, Haleakalā National Park, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Muir Woods National Monument, Glacier National Park, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and Bryce Canyon National Park. On May 1, 2020, the Court granted the petition and ordered the agencies to submit a schedule for bringing 23 eligible parks based on reported air tour data from 2018 (Lignell 2019) into compliance with the National Parks Air Tour Management Act within two years or to show specific, concrete reasons why doing so will take longer. Muir Woods National Monument was not included in the 23 parks subject to the court's order because no tours had been reported over the park at the time of the lawsuit; therefore, it was exempt from the ATMP requirements. However, because there are over 5,000 Interim Operating Authority allocations for Muir Woods, which is managed jointly with Golden Gate National Recreation Area, the NPS withdrew the exemption, and an ATMP for

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<sup>1</sup> IOA is the annual maximum number of flights an operator may fly over a single park. The Federal Aviation Administration granted IOA to existing operators who applied for operating authority following the enactment of the National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000.

<sup>2</sup> This number does not include tours over Grand Canyon, Alaska, and those over Lake Mead determined to be “for transportation only”. Grand Canyon had over 100,000 reported tours and related flights in 2019. More information about air tours at Grand Canyon is available at [Soundscapes: Overhead Flights - Grand Canyon National Park \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/sonor/grandcanyon/overhead-flights).

Muir Woods will be completed in conjunction with the ATMP for Golden Gate National Recreation Area, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, and Point Reyes National Seashore in January 2023. The agencies are working towards finalizing ATMPs for all 24 parks.

There are 49 park units listed in Table E1 that qualify for the exemption based on 2020 data because the number of tours has not exceeded 50. The FAA and NPS will publish a list of exempt parks in a forthcoming Federal Register notice after consulting with managers at these park units to determine if a plan or agreement is necessary to protect park resources or visitor enjoyment.

**Table E1.** Reported Commercial Air Tours in 2020 (sorted by Total Reported Air Tours).

<b>National Park System Unit</b>	<b>Total Reported Air Tours</b>	<b>Authorized Air Tours <sup>(A)</sup></b>
Mount Rushmore National Memorial (MORU)	4,860	5,608
Badlands National Park (BADL)	2,264	4,117
Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GRSM)	1,404	1,920
Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park (HAVO)	1,252	26,664
National Parks of New York Harbor Management Unit (NPNH)	850	35,532
Lake Mead National Recreation Area (LAKE)	771	36,819
Haleakalā National Park (HALE)	647	25,827
Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (GLCA) <sup>(B)</sup>	614	8,159
Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GOGA)	577	5,090
San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park (SAFR)	577	5,090
Canyonlands National Park (CANY)	302	988
Bryce Canyon National Park (BRCA)	266	3,131
Arches National Park (ARCH)	164	623
Glacier National Park (GLAC)	163	1,653
Rainbow Bridge National Monument (RABR) <sup>(B)</sup>	149	3,992
Bandelier National Monument (BAND)	91	126
Zion National Park (ZION)	71	684
Navajo National Monument (NAVA)	60	267
Olympic National Park (OLYM)	55	76
Point Reyes National Seashore (PORE)	55	5,090
Biscayne National Park (BISC) <sup>(B)</sup>	54	200

<sup>A</sup> Total number of air tours authorized through IOA and/or agreements.

<sup>B</sup> Park with Voluntary Agreements.

**Table E1 (continued).** Reported Commercial Air Tours in 2020 (sorted by Total Reported Air Tours).

<b>National Park System Unit</b>	<b>Total Reported Air Tours</b>	<b>Authorized Air Tours <sup>(A)</sup></b>
Big Bend National Park (BIBE)	50	55
Natural Bridges National Monument (NABR)	48	145
Chaco Culture National Historical Park (CHCU)	41	147
Canyon de Chelly National Monument (CACH)	34	175
Aztec Ruins National Monument (AZRU)	32	83
Mesa Verde National Park (MEVE)	29	63
Hovenweep National Monument (HOVE)	20	92
Petroglyph National Monument (PETR)	18	45
El Malpais National Monument (ELMA)	16	43
Petrified Forest National Park (PEFO)	9	60
Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site (HUTR)	8	27
Wupatki National Monument (WUPA)	8	60
Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park (BLCA)	7	7
Colorado National Monument (COLM)	7	57
El Morro National Monument (ELMO)	6	43
Fort Union National Monument (FOUN)	6	32
Pecos National Historical Park (PECO)	6	32
Big Cypress National Preserve (BICY) <sup>(B)</sup>	5	972
Capitol Reef National Park (CARE)	5	284
Capulin Volcano National Monument (CAVO)	5	13
Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument (SUCR)	4	94
Mount Rainier National Park (MORA)	3	34
Acadia National Park (ACAD)	2	60
Carlsbad Caverns National Park (CAVE)	2	18
Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve (GRSA)	2	16
Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument (SAPU)	2	17
Dinosaur National Monument (DINO)	1	9
Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River (RIGR)	1	5

<sup>A</sup> Total number of air tours authorized through IOA and/or agreements.

<sup>B</sup> Park with Voluntary Agreements.

**Table E1 (continued).** Reported Commercial Air Tours in 2020 (sorted by Total Reported Air Tours).

<b>National Park System Unit</b>	<b>Total Reported Air Tours</b>	<b>Authorized Air Tours <sup>(A)</sup></b>
Yosemite National Park (YOSE)	1	115
Casa Grande Ruins National Monument (CAGR)	0	6
Cedar Breaks National Monument (CEBR)	0	66
Coronado National Memorial (CORO)	0	5
Death Valley National Park (DEVA)	0	37
Devils Tower National Monument (DETO)	0	22
Dry Tortugas National Park (DRTO)	0	100
Everglades National Park (EVER)	0	674
Fort Bowie National Historic Site (FOBO)	0	5
Fort Davis National Historic Site (FODA)	0	5
Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument (GICL)	0	26
Golden Spike National Historic Site (GOSP)	0	11
Grand Teton National Park (GRTE)	0	29
Guadalupe Mountains National Park (GUMO)	0	18
Hohokam Pima National Monument (PIMA)	0	5
Mojave National Preserve (MOJA)	0	15
Montezuma Castle National Monument (MOCA)	0	180
Muir Woods National Monument (MUWO)	0	5,090
North Cascades National Park (NOCA)	0	2
Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument (ORPI)	0	5
Pipe Spring National Monument (PISP)	0	26
Saguaro National Park (SAGU)	0	18
Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks (SEKI)	0	10
Timpanogos Cave National Monument (TICA)	0	254
Tumacacori National Historical Park (TUMA)	0	5
Tuzigoot National Monument (TUZI)	0	57
Walnut Canyon National Monument (WACA)	0	48
Yellowstone National Park (YELL)	0	103

<sup>A</sup> Total number of air tours authorized through IOA and/or agreements.

<sup>B</sup> Park with Voluntary Agreements.

**Table E1 (continued).** Reported Commercial Air Tours in 2020 (sorted by Total Reported Air Tours).

<b>National Park System Unit</b>	<b>Total Reported Air Tours</b>	<b>Authorized Air Tours <sup>(A)</sup></b>
Yucca House National Monument (YUHO)	0	63
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,624</b>	<b>181,344 <sup>(A)</sup></b>

<sup>A</sup> Total number of air tours authorized through IOA and/or agreements.

<sup>B</sup> Park with Voluntary Agreements.

Of the 78 park units where operators hold IOA, operators reported conducting tours over 50 units. Most of the air tour activity, however, occurred at ten park units. As shown in Table E2, these park units accounted for 13,816 tours (88% of all tours nationwide). The remaining park units had a combined total of 1,808 tours.

**Table E2.** Reported Commercial Air Tours at High-Activity Units of the National Park System, 2020.

<b>National Park System Unit</b>	<b>Total Reported Air Tours</b>	<b>Percent of All Air Tours</b>	<b>Number of Active Operators <sup>(A)</sup></b>
Mount Rushmore National Memorial (MORU)	4,860	31%	2
Badlands National Park (BADL)	2,264	14%	1
Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GRSM)	1,404	9%	1
Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park (HAVO)	1,252	8%	5
National Parks of New York Harbor Management Unit (NPNH)	850	5%	1
Lake Mead National Recreation Area (LAKE)	771	5%	3
Haleakalā National Park (HALE)	647	4%	5
Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (GLCA)	614	4%	5
Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GOGA)	577	4%	2
San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park (SAFR)	577	4%	2
All Others	1,808	12%	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>48,760</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>n/a</b>

<sup>A</sup> Number of operators who reported at least one air tour.

# 1. Introduction

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) *Modernization and Reform Act of 2012* amended the *National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000* to include a provision that requires commercial air tour operators conducting air tours over units of the national park system to report their activity to the FAA and the National Park Service (NPS).

The FAA and NPS developed reporting requirements, including the data that would be required to be submitted as well as the frequency of reports and the mechanism by which operators would report. These new reporting requirements went into effect beginning in calendar year 2013.

The purpose of this *2020 Annual Report* is to provide a high-level, quantitative summary of the reporting data that the agencies received from calendar year 2020 submitted by commercial air tour operators. With the submission of the 2020 reports, the FAA and NPS continue to compile data about the extent of commercial air tour operations over units of the national park system. The agencies use this information to implement requirements of the *National Parks Air Tour Management Act*, including the identification of parks where an air tour management plan or voluntary agreement is required.

## 2. Background

### **The National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000**

The *Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century* (AIR-21) was signed into public law (P.L. 106-181, codified at 49 U.S.C. 40128) on April 5, 2000. Title VIII of this law, called the *National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000* (the Act) regulates commercial air tour operations over units of the national park system. The Act requires the FAA and NPS to develop air tour management plans for units of the national park system where an operator has applied for authority to conduct commercial air tours. The objective for any plan as stated in the Act is to develop acceptable and effective measures to mitigate or prevent significant adverse impacts, if any, of commercial air tour operations upon the natural and cultural resources, visitor experiences, and tribal lands.

On February 14, 2019, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility and Hawai'i Coalition Malama Pono filed a petition in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit requesting that the Court order the agencies to complete ATMPs for Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, Haleakalā National Park, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Muir Woods National Monument, Glacier National Park, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and Bryce Canyon National Park. On May 1, 2020, the Court granted the petition and ordered the agencies to submit a schedule for bringing 23 eligible parks based on reported air tour data from 2018 (Lignell 2018) into compliance with the National Parks Air Tour Management Act within two years or to show specific, concrete reasons why doing so will take longer. Muir Woods National Monument was not included in the 23 parks subject to the court's order because no tours had been reported over the park at the time of the lawsuit; therefore, it was exempt from the ATMP requirements. However, because there are over 5,000 Interim Operating Authority allocations for Muir Woods, which is managed jointly with Golden Gate National Recreation Area, the NPS withdrew the exemption, and an ATMP for Muir Woods will be combined with the ATMP for Golden Gate National Recreation Area, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, and Point Reyes National Seashore. The agencies are currently working towards completion of ATMPs for 24 parks.

### **Interim Operating Authority**

Section 49 U.S.C §40128(c) of the codified Act has a grandfathering provision that applies to existing operators (those operators who had operated over a national park system unit prior to enactment of the Act). FAA granted interim operating authority (IOA) to existing operators who applied for operating authority. The intent was to allow the operators to continue to conduct operations until such time as an air tour management plan was developed for the park system unit. IOA was the maximum number of flights an operator could conduct over a national park system unit. The provision allowed FAA to provide an operator with an annual authorization for the greater of:

- 1) the number of flights used by the operator to provide the commercial air tour operations over a national park system unit within the 12-month period prior to the date of the enactment of this section; or

- 2) the average number of flights per 12-month period used by the operator to provide such operations within the 36-month period prior to such date of enactment, and, for seasonal operations, the number of flights so used during the season or seasons covered by that 12-month period.

The Act also required that the IOA granted under the Act be published in the Federal Register for notice and the opportunity for comment. On June 23, 2005 (70 FR 36456-36463) the FAA published a *Notice of Interim Operating Authority Granted to Commercial Air Tour Operators Over National Parks and Tribal Lands Within or Abutting National Parks*. The list provided the IOA granted to each operator for each national park system unit / abutting tribal lands. On October 7, 2005 (70 FR 58778-58784) the FAA published a supplemental notice. The supplemental notice republished the IOA alphabetically by park system unit rather than operator.

Since 2005, the number of operators with IOA and the total amount of IOA has changed as some operators have gone out of business, operators have purchased other companies, and four parks have developed voluntary agreements that may authorize a different number of tours than may occur under IOA. The system-wide authorized number of air tours in 2020 is 181,344 tours annually.

### **Reporting Requirements**

The *FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012* amended various provisions of the Act. Amendments codified in 49 U.S.C §40128(d) require that each commercial air tour operator submit a report to both the FAA and NPS on the number of commercial air tour operations over each park system unit where they operate at and “such other information” as the agencies request. This section also indicates that the reports shall be submitted “with a frequency and in a format” prescribed by the agencies. The full text of the codified Act, including paragraph 49 USC 40128(d) on reporting requirements, is available at <http://uscode.house.gov/browse.xhtml>.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) assigned control number 2120-0750 for this data collection effort. In January of 2013, the FAA and NPS distributed a guidance memo to air tour operators that provided information on the new reporting requirements, the data that were being requested, how they were to submit the data and the frequency with which they were to submit reports. The FAA and NPS also provided a reporting template in the form of an Excel spreadsheet. A copy of the reporting template used in 2020 is provided in Appendix A of this report.

In July of 2015, FAA updated the template for operating specifications (OpSpecs) issued to commercial air tour operators who conduct tours over units of the national park system (FAA Notice, N 8900.312, 7/27/15). Specifically, OpSpec B057, National Park Air Tour Management Operations under 14 CFR 136, was amended to include the reporting requirement and instructions for reporting air tour data on a quarterly basis for all operators conducting air tours over national park system units, except for exempt park units. For exempt park units, operators are required to report only on an annual basis.



## **Voluntary Agreements**

The *FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012* included another amendment to the Act that allows the FAA and NPS to enter into voluntary agreements with operators as an alternative to air tour management plans. Agreements must address the management issues necessary to protect park resources and visitor use without compromising aviation safety or the air traffic control system, and may contain many of the conditions that would be found in plans. Development of agreements requires public review and consultation with tribes, after which an agreement may be implemented without further administrative or environmental process. As of 2021 voluntary agreements are currently fully implemented in two parks: Big Cypress National Preserve, Biscayne National Park and partially implemented at Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and Rainbow Bridge National Monument.

## **Exempt Parks**

Other amendments to the Act exempt units of the national park system with 50 or fewer air tours each year from the requirement to prepare an air tour management plan or voluntary agreement. However, the NPS may withdraw an exemption “If the Director determines that an air tour management plan or voluntary agreement is necessary to protect park resources and values or park visitor use and enjoyment” (49 USC 40128(a)(5)(B)). While operators are required to submit quarterly reports for non-exempt park units, the amendments require only an annual report for any exempt park unit.

### **3. Compliance with Reporting Requirements**

Pursuant to FAA Notice N 8900.312, quarterly reports are due within 30 days after each calendar quarter, and annual reports are due within 30 days after the calendar year end. When the reporting deadlines have passed, NPS and FAA contact operators or local FAA offices (e.g., Flight Standards District Offices) to follow up on missing reports or any other issues with reporting. FAA has the sole authority to enforce compliance with the reporting requirements.

There are currently 49 unique operating certificates associated with operators who are authorized to conduct commercial air tours over units of the national park system. There were 24 missing quarterly reports in 2020.

## 4. Summary of Reporting Data

This section provides information on data collected from the 2020 calendar year reporting. This includes all data submitted by air tour operators through quarterly or annual (for exempt parks) reports.

Table 1 lists all units of the national park system where operators have authorization to conduct commercial tours, with park units sorted by the count of air tours, highest to lowest. Table 2 provides the same information but with park units sorted alphabetically.

Of the 78 park units listed, there were a total of 50 national park system units where at least one air tour is reported to have occurred. Overall, 15,624 air tours were reported over these units, approximately 30% of the typical average from the years 2017 through 2019, attesting to the atypical conditions during 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Appendix B shows a map representing the geographic distribution of park system units for which operators reported tours.

**Table 1.** Reported Commercial Air Tours in 2020 (sorted by Total Reported Air Tours). <sup>(A)</sup>

National Park System Unit	Department of Interior Region	State	January-March	April-June	July-September	October-December	Total Reported Air Tours <sup>(D)</sup>	Authorized Air Tours <sup>(B)</sup>	Number of Authorized Operators
Mount Rushmore National Memorial (MORU)	5	South Dakota	0	1,313	3,190	357	4,860	5,608	3
Badlands National Park (BADL)	5	South Dakota	0	684	1,580	0	2,264	4,117	2
Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GRSM)	2	Tennessee, North Carolina	78	251	508	567	1,404	1,920	2
Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park (HAVO)	12	Hawaii	1,101	0	1	150	1,252	26,664	10
National Parks of New York Harbor Management Unit (NPNH)	1	New York, New Jersey	748	0	102	0	850	35,532	3
Lake Mead National Recreation Area (LAKE)	8	Arizona, Nevada	663	0	58	50	771	36,819	7
Haleakalā National Park (HALE)	12	Hawaii	533	0	0	114	647	25,827	6
Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (GLCA) <sup>(C)</sup>	7, 8	Arizona, Utah	298	36	156	124	614	8,159	9
Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GOGA)	10	California	292	36	89	160	577	5,090	2
San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park (SAFR)	10	California	292	36	89	160	577	5,090	2
Canyonlands National Park (CANY)	7	Utah	12	48	135	107	302	988	8
Bryce Canyon National Park (BRCA)	7	Utah	12	21	138	95	266	3,131	10
Arches National Park (ARCH)	7	Utah	10	32	55	67	164	623	8
Glacier National Park (GLAC)	5, 9	Montana	8	20	109	26	163	1,653	5
Rainbow Bridge National Monument (RABR) <sup>(C)</sup>	7	Utah	27	20	60	42	149	3,992	8
Bandelier National Monument (BAND)	7	New Mexico	28	0	30	33	91	126	1
Zion National Park (ZION)	7	Utah	2	4	33	32	71	684	9
Navajo National Monument (NAVA)	8	Arizona	0	7	16	15	60	267	5
Point Reyes National Seashore (PORE)	10	California	28	5	3	19	55	5,090	2
Olympic National Park (OLYM)	9	Washington	4	15	29	7	55	76	1
Biscayne National Park (BISC) <sup>(C)</sup>	2	Florida	13	2	19	20	54	200	2
Big Bend National Park (BIBE)	6	Texas	–	–	–	–	50	55	2
Natural Bridges National Monument (NABR)	7	Utah	4	7	18	19	48	145	5
Chaco Culture National Historical Park (CHCU)	7	New Mexico	10	0	12	19	41	147	1
Canyon de Chelly National Monument (CACH)	8	Arizona	7	0	10	17	34	175	4

<sup>A</sup> Dashes in table indicate the park is exempt from the requirement for operators to submit a quarterly report; therefore, only an annual report is required.

<sup>B</sup> Total number of air tours authorized through IOA and/or agreements.

<sup>C</sup> Park with Voluntary Agreements.

<sup>D</sup> Grand total exceeds sum of quarterly totals due to exempt parks where only the annual report is required.

<sup>E</sup> This is not a sum of all values in this column since some operators have certificates for multiple parks. It reflects the number of unique certificates across all operators.

**Table 1 (continued).** Reported Commercial Air Tours in 2020 (sorted by Total Reported Air Tours). <sup>(A)</sup>

National Park System Unit	Department of Interior		January-March	April-June	July-September	October-December	Total Reported Air Tours <sup>(D)</sup>	Authorized Air Tours <sup>(B)</sup>	Number of Authorized Operators
	Region	State							
Aztec Ruins National Monument (AZRU)	7	New Mexico	-	-	-	-	32	83	1
Mesa Verde National Park (MEVE)	7	Colorado	-	-	-	-	29	63	1
Hovenweep National Monument (HOVE)	7	Utah	-	-	-	-	20	92	3
Petroglyph National Monument (PETR)	7	New Mexico	-	-	-	-	18	45	1
El Malpais National Monument (ELMA)	7	New Mexico	-	-	-	-	16	43	1
Petrified Forest National Park (PEFO)	8	Arizona	-	-	-	-	9	60	3
Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site (HUTR)	8	Arizona	-	-	-	-	8	27	1
Wupatki National Monument (WUPA)	8	Arizona	-	-	-	-	8	60	3
Colorado National Monument (COLM)	7	Colorado	-	-	-	-	7	57	1
Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park (BLCA)	7	Colorado	-	-	-	-	7	7	1
Pecos National Historical Park (PECO)	7	New Mexico	-	-	-	-	6	32	1
Fort Union National Monument (FOUN)	7	New Mexico	-	-	-	-	6	32	1
El Morro National Monument (ELMO)	7	New Mexico	-	-	-	-	6	43	1
Big Cypress National Preserve (BICY) <sup>(C)</sup>	2	Florida	2	0	2	1	5	972	2
Capulin Volcano National Monument (CAVO)	7	New Mexico	-	-	-	-	5	13	1
Capitol Reef National Park (CARE)	7	Utah	0	0	1	2	5	284	7
Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument (SUCR)	8	Arizona	-	-	-	-	4	94	4
Mount Rainier National Park (MORA)	9	Washington	0	1	1	1	3	34	2
Acadia National Park (ACAD)	1	Maine	0	2	0	0	2	60	1
Carlsbad Caverns National Park (CAVE)	7	New Mexico	-	-	-	-	2	18	1
Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument (SAPU)	7	New Mexico	-	-	-	-	2	17	1
Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve (GRSA)	7	Colorado	-	-	-	-	2	16	1
Yosemite National Park (YOSE)	10	California	1	0	0	0	1	115	2
Dinosaur National Monument (DINO)	7	Colorado, Utah	-	-	-	-	1	9	1

<sup>A</sup> Dashes in table indicate the park is exempt from the requirement for operators to submit a quarterly report; therefore, only an annual report is required.

<sup>B</sup> Total number of air tours authorized through IOA and/or agreements.

<sup>C</sup> Park with Voluntary Agreements.

<sup>D</sup> Grand total exceeds sum of quarterly totals due to exempt parks where only the annual report is required.

<sup>E</sup> This is not a sum of all values in this column since some operators have certificates for multiple parks. It reflects the number of unique certificates across all operators.

**Table 1 (continued).** Reported Commercial Air Tours in 2020 (sorted by Total Reported Air Tours). <sup>(A)</sup>

National Park System Unit	Department of Interior		January-March	April-June	July-September	October-December	Total Reported Air Tours <sup>(D)</sup>	Authorized Air Tours <sup>(B)</sup>	Number of Authorized Operators
	Region	State							
Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River (RIGR)	6	Texas	–	–	–	–	1	5	1
Everglades National Park (EVER)	2	Florida	0	0	0	0	0	674	1
Yellowstone National Park (YELL)	5, 7, 9	Idaho, Montana, Wyoming	–	–	–	–	0	103	4
Death Valley National Park (DEVA)	8, 10	California	0	0	0	0	0	37	4
Devils Tower National Monument (DETO)	7	Wyoming	–	–	–	–	0	22	1
Muir Woods National Monument (MUWO)	10	California	0	0	0	0	0	5,090	2
Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks (SEKI)	10	California	–	–	–	–	0	10	1
Casa Grande Ruins National Monument (CAGR)	8	Arizona	–	–	–	–	0	6	1
Cedar Breaks National Monument (CEBR)	7	Utah	–	–	–	–	0	66	4
Coronado National Memorial (CORO)	8	Arizona	–	–	–	–	0	5	1
Dry Tortugas National Park (DRTO)	2	Florida	–	–	–	–	0	100	1
Fort Bowie National Historic Site (FOBO)	8	Arizona	–	–	–	–	0	5	1
Fort Davis National Historic Site (FODA)	6	Texas	–	–	–	–	0	5	1
Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument (GICL)	7	New Mexico	–	–	–	–	0	26	1
Golden Spike National Historic Site (GOSP)	7	Utah	–	–	–	–	0	11	1
Grand Teton National Park (GRTE)	7	Wyoming	–	–	–	–	0	29	3
Guadalupe Mountains National Park (GUMO)	6	Texas	–	–	–	–	0	18	1
Hohokam Pima National Monument (PIMA)	8	Arizona	–	–	–	–	0	5	1
Mojave National Preserve (MOJA)	8	California	–	–	–	–	0	15	1
Montezuma Castle National Monument (MOCA)	8	Arizona	–	–	–	–	0	180	3
North Cascades National Park (NOCA)	9	Washington	–	–	–	–	0	2	1
Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument (ORPI)	8	Arizona	–	–	–	–	0	5	1
Pipe Spring National Monument (PISP)	8	Arizona	–	–	–	–	0	26	2
Saguaro National Park (SAGU)	8	Arizona	–	–	–	–	0	18	2
Timpanogos Cave National Monument (TICA)	7	Utah	–	–	–	–	0	254	1

<sup>A</sup> Dashes in table indicate the park is exempt from the requirement for operators to submit a quarterly report; therefore, only an annual report is required.

<sup>B</sup> Total number of air tours authorized through IOA and/or agreements.

<sup>C</sup> Park with Voluntary Agreements.

<sup>D</sup> Grand total exceeds sum of quarterly totals due to exempt parks where only the annual report is required.

<sup>E</sup> This is not a sum of all values in this column since some operators have certificates for multiple parks. It reflects the number of unique certificates across all operators.

**Table 1 (continued).** Reported Commercial Air Tours in 2020 (sorted by Total Reported Air Tours). <sup>(A)</sup>

National Park System Unit	Department of Interior		January-March	April-June	July-September	October-December	Total Reported Air Tours <sup>(D)</sup>	Authorized Air Tours <sup>(B)</sup>	Number of Authorized Operators
	Region	State							
Tumacacori National Historical Park (TUMA)	8	Arizona	–	–	–	–	0	5	1
Tuzigoot National Monument (TUZI)	8	Arizona	–	–	–	–	0	57	2
Walnut Canyon National Monument (WACA)	8	Arizona	–	–	–	–	0	48	2
Yucca House National Monument (YUHO)	7	Colorado	–	–	–	–	0	63	1
<b>Total <sup>(D)</sup></b>	–	–	<b>4,173 <sup>(D)</sup></b>	<b>2,540 <sup>(D)</sup></b>	<b>6,444 <sup>(D)</sup></b>	<b>2,204 <sup>(D)</sup></b>	<b>15,624 <sup>(D)</sup></b>	<b>181,344 <sup>(B)</sup></b>	<b>43 <sup>(E)</sup></b>

<sup>A</sup> Dashes in table indicate the park is exempt from the requirement for operators to submit a quarterly report; therefore, only an annual report is required.

<sup>B</sup> Total number of air tours authorized through IOA and/or agreements.

<sup>C</sup> Park with Voluntary Agreements.

<sup>D</sup> Grand total exceeds sum of quarterly totals due to exempt parks where only the annual report is required.

<sup>E</sup> This is not a sum of all values in this column since some operators have certificates for multiple parks. It reflects the number of unique certificates across all operators.

**Table 2.** Reported Commercial Air Tours in 2020 (sorted alphabetically by National Park System Unit). <sup>(A)</sup>

National Park System Unit	DOI Region	State	January-March	April-June	July-September	October-December	Total Reported Air Tours	Authorized Air Tours <sup>(B)</sup>	Number of Authorized Operators
Arches National Park (ARCH)	7	Utah	10	32	55	67	164	623	8
Aztec Ruins National Monument (AZRU)	7	New Mexico	–	–	–	–	32	83	1
Badlands National Park (BADL)	5	South Dakota	0	684	1580	0	2,264	4,117	2
Bandelier National Monument (BAND)	7	New Mexico	28	0	30	33	91	126	1
Big Bend National Park (BIBE)	6	Texas	–	–	–	–	50	55	2
Big Cypress National Preserve (BICY)	2	Florida	2	0	2	1	5	972 <sup>(C)</sup>	2
Biscayne National Park (BISC)	2	Florida	13	2	19	20	54	200 <sup>(C)</sup>	2
Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park (BLCA)	7	Colorado	–	–	–	–	7	7	1
Bryce Canyon National Park (BRCA)	7	Utah	12	21	138	95	266	3,131	10
Canyon de Chelly National Monument (CACH)	8	Arizona	7	0	10	17	34	175	4
Canyonlands National Park (CANY)	7	Utah	12	48	135	107	302	988	8

<sup>A</sup> Dashes in table indicate the park is exempt from the requirement for operators to submit a quarterly report; therefore, only an annual report is required.

<sup>B</sup> Total number of air tours authorized through IOA and/or agreements.

<sup>C</sup> Park with Voluntary agreements.

<sup>D</sup> Grand total exceeds sum of quarterly totals due to exempt parks where only the annual report is required.

<sup>E</sup> This is not a sum of all values in this column since some operators have certificates for multiple parks. It reflects the number of unique certificates across all operators.

**Table 2 (continued).** Reported Commercial Air Tours in 2020 (sorted alphabetically by National Park System Unit). <sup>(A)</sup>

National Park System Unit	DOI Region	State	January-March	April-June	July-September	October-December	Total Reported Air Tours	Authorized Air Tours <sup>(B)</sup>	Number of Authorized Operators
Capitol Reef National Park (CARE)	7	Utah	0	0	1	2	5	284	7
Capulin Volcano National Monument (CAVO)	7	New Mexico	–	–	–	–	5	13	1
Carlsbad Caverns National Park (CAVE)	7	New Mexico	–	–	–	–	2	18	1
Casa Grande Ruins National Monument (CAGR)	8	Arizona	–	–	–	–	0	6	1
Cedar Breaks National Monument (CEBR)	7	Utah	–	–	–	–	0	66	4
Chaco Culture National Historical Park (CHCU)	7	New Mexico	10	0	12	19	41	147	1
Colorado National Monument (COLM)	7	Colorado	–	–	–	–	7	57	1
Coronado National Memorial (CORO)	8	Arizona	–	–	–	–	0	5	1
Death Valley National Park (DEVA)	8, 10	California	0	0	0	0	0	37	4
Devils Tower National Monument (DETO)	7	Wyoming	–	–	–	–	0	22	1
Dinosaur National Monument (DINO)	7	Colorado, Utah	–	–	–	–	1	9	1
Dry Tortugas National Park (DRTO)	2	Florida	–	–	–	–	0	100	1
El Malpais National Monument (ELMA)	7	New Mexico	–	–	–	–	16	43	1
El Morro National Monument (ELMO)	7	New Mexico	–	–	–	–	6	43	1
Everglades National Park (EVER)	2	Florida	0	0	0	0	0	674	1
Fort Bowie National Historic Site (FOBO)	8	Arizona	–	–	–	–	0	5	1
Fort Davis National Historic Site (FODA)	6	Texas	–	–	–	–	0	5	1
Fort Union National Monument (FOUN)	7	New Mexico	–	–	–	–	6	32	1
Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument (GICL)	7	New Mexico	–	–	–	–	0	26	1
Glacier National Park (GLAC)	5, 9	Montana	8	20	109	26	163	1,653	5
Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (GLCA)	7, 8	Arizona, Utah	298	36	156	124	614	8,159 <sup>(C)</sup>	9
Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GOGA)	10	California	292	36	89	160	577	5,090	2
Golden Spike National Historic Site (GOSP)	7	Utah	–	–	–	–	0	11	1
Grand Teton National Park (GRTE)	7	Wyoming	–	–	–	–	0	29	3
Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve (GRSA)	7	Colorado	–	–	–	–	2	16	1

<sup>A</sup> Dashes in table indicate the park is exempt from the requirement for operators to submit a quarterly report; therefore, only an annual report is required.

<sup>B</sup> Total number of air tours authorized through IOA and/or agreements.

<sup>C</sup> Park with Voluntary agreements.

<sup>D</sup> Grand total exceeds sum of quarterly totals due to exempt parks where only the annual report is required.

<sup>E</sup> This is not a sum of all values in this column since some operators have certificates for multiple parks. It reflects the number of unique certificates across all operators.



**Table 2 (continued).** Reported Commercial Air Tours in 2020 (sorted alphabetically by National Park System Unit). <sup>(A)</sup>

National Park System Unit	DOI Region	State	January-March	April-June	July-September	October-December	Total Reported Air Tours	Authorized Air Tours <sup>(B)</sup>	Number of Authorized Operators
Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GRSM)	2	Tennessee, North Carolina	78	251	508	567	1,404	1,920	2
Guadalupe Mountains National Park (GUMO)	6	Texas	–	–	–	–	0	18	1
Haleakalā National Park (HALE)	12	Hawaii	533	0	0	114	647	25,827	6
Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park (HAVO)	12	Hawaii	1,101	0	1	150	1,252	26,664	10
Hohokam Pima National Monument (PIMA)	8	Arizona	–	–	–	–	0	5	1
Hovenweep National Monument (HOVE)	7	Utah	–	–	–	–	20	92	3
Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site (HUTR)	8	Arizona	–	–	–	–	8	27	1
Lake Mead National Recreation Area (LAKE)	8	Arizona, Nevada	663	0	58	50	771	36,819	7
Mesa Verde National Park (MEVE)	7	Colorado	–	–	–	–	29	63	1
Mojave National Preserve (MOJA)	8	California	–	–	–	–	0	15	1
Montezuma Castle National Monument (MOCA)	8	Arizona	–	–	–	–	0	180	3
Mount Rainier National Park (MORA)	9	Washington	0	1	1	1	3	34	2
Mount Rushmore National Memorial (MORU)	5	South Dakota	0	1,313	3,190	357	4,860	5,608	3
Muir Woods National Monument (MUWO)	10	California	0	0	0	0	0	5,090	2
National Parks of New York Harbor Management Unit (NPNH)	1	New York, New Jersey	748	0	102	0	850	35,532	3
Natural Bridges National Monument (NABR)	7	Utah	4	7	18	19	48	145	5
Navajo National Monument (NAVA)	8	Arizona	0	7	16	15	60	267	4
North Cascades National Park (NOCA)	9	Washington	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
Olympic National Park (OLYM)	9	Washington	4	15	29	7	55	76	1
Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument (ORPI)	8	Arizona	–	–	–	–	0	5	1
Pecos National Historical Park (PECO)	7	New Mexico	–	–	–	–	6	32	1
Petrified Forest National Park (PEFO)	8	Arizona	–	–	–	–	9	60	3
Petroglyph National Monument (PETR)	7	New Mexico	–	–	–	–	18	45	1
Pipe Spring National Monument (PISP)	8	Arizona	–	–	–	–	0	26	2
Point Reyes National Seashore (PORE)	10	California	28	5	3	19	55	5,090	2

<sup>A</sup> Dashes in table indicate the park is exempt from the requirement for operators to submit a quarterly report; therefore, only an annual report is required.

<sup>B</sup> Total number of air tours authorized through IOA and/or agreements.

<sup>C</sup> Park with Voluntary agreements.

<sup>D</sup> Grand total exceeds sum of quarterly totals due to exempt parks where only the annual report is required.

<sup>E</sup> This is not a sum of all values in this column since some operators have certificates for multiple parks. It reflects the number of unique certificates across all operators.

**Table 2 (continued).** Reported Commercial Air Tours in 2020 (sorted alphabetically by National Park System Unit). <sup>(A)</sup>

National Park System Unit	DOI Region	State	January-March	April-June	July-September	October-December	Total Reported Air Tours	Authorized Air Tours <sup>(B)</sup>	Number of Authorized Operators
Rainbow Bridge National Monument (RABR)	7	Utah	27	20	60	42	149	3,992 <sup>(C)</sup>	8
Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River (RIGR)	6	Texas	–	–	–	–	1	5	1
Saguaro National Park (SAGU)	8	Arizona	–	–	–	–	0	18	2
Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument (SAPU)	7	New Mexico	–	–	–	–	2	17	1
San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park (SAFR)	10	California	292	36	89	160	577	5,090	2
Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks (SEKI)	10	California	–	–	–	–	0	10	1
Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument (SUCR)	8	Arizona	–	–	–	–	4	94	4
Timpanogos Cave National Monument (TICA)	7	Utah	–	–	–	–	0	254	1
Tumacacori National Historical Park (TUMA)	8	Arizona	–	–	–	–	0	5	1
Tuzigoot National Monument (TUZI)	8	Arizona	–	–	–	–	0	57	2
Walnut Canyon National Monument (WACA)	8	Arizona	–	–	–	–	0	48	2
Wupatki National Monument (WUPA)	8	Arizona	–	–	–	–	8	60	3
Yellowstone National Park (YELL)	5, 7, 9	Idaho, Montana, Wyoming	–	–	–	–	0	103	4
Yosemite National Park (YOSE)	10	California	–	–	–	–	1	115	2
Yucca House National Monument (YUHO)	7	Colorado	–	–	–	–	0	63	1
Zion National Park (ZION)	7	Utah	2	4	33	32	71	684	8
<b>Total <sup>(D)</sup></b>			<b>4,173</b>	<b>2,540</b>	<b>6,444</b>	<b>2,204</b>	<b>15,624</b>	<b>181,344 <sup>(B)</sup></b>	<b>43 <sup>(E)</sup></b>

<sup>A</sup> Dashes in table indicate the park is exempt from the requirement for operators to submit a quarterly report; therefore, only an annual report is required.

<sup>B</sup> Total number of air tours authorized through IOA and/or agreements.

<sup>C</sup> Park with Voluntary agreements.

<sup>D</sup> Grand total exceeds sum of quarterly totals due to exempt parks where only the annual report is required.

<sup>E</sup> This is not a sum of all values in this column since some operators have certificates for multiple parks. It reflects the number of unique certificates across all operators.

### **High-Activity Park Units**

Table 3 and Figure 1 display the reported air tours for the ten park units with the most activity (greater than 500 operations) in 2020. These ten park units have 88% of all air tours activity. The remaining 40 park units had a combined total of 1,808 annual operations. Notably for 2020, 45% of total operations were at the South Dakota parks Mount Rushmore National Memorial and Badlands National Park; during a typical year these parks report approximately 10% of the total operations throughout the system. In addition, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, which has not historically been a top-10 high-activity park unit, had the third-highest level of activity in 2020, representing 9% of all air tours; an increase of approximately 60% over previous years. Park units which have historically exhibited the highest levels of activity, Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, and National Parks of New York Harbor, were not as active in 2020, likely due to COVID-related restrictions. Rainbow Bridge National Monument also saw a significant decrease in activity and is not a high activity park in 2020.

**Table 3.** Reported Commercial Air Tours at High-Activity Units of the National Park System, 2020.

National Park System Unit	January-March	April-June	July-September	October-December	Total Reported Air Tours	Percent of All Tours	Authorized Air Tours <sup>(A)</sup>	Number of Active Operators <sup>(B)</sup>
Mount Rushmore National Memorial (MORU)	0	1,313	3,190	357	4,860	31%	5,608	2
Badlands National Park (BADL)	0	684	1,580	0	2,264	14%	4,117	1
Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GRSM)	78	251	508	567	1,404	9%	1,920	1
Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park (HAVO)	1,101	0	1	150	1,252	8%	26,664	5
National Parks of New York Harbor Management Unit (NPNH)	748	0	102	0	850	5%	35,532	1
Lake Mead National Recreation Area (LAKE)	663	0	58	50	771	5%	36,819	3
Haleakalā National Park (HALE)	533	0	0	114	647	4%	25,827	5
Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (GLCA)	298	36	156	124	614	4%	8,159 <sup>(C)</sup>	5
Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GOGA)	292	36	89	160	577	4%	4,117	2
San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park (SAFR)	292	36	89	160	577	4%	3,992	2
All Others	168	184	671	522	1,808	12%	28,438	–
<b>Total <sup>(D)</sup></b>	<b>4,173</b>	<b>2,540</b>	<b>6,444</b>	<b>2,204</b>	<b>15,624</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>181,344 <sup>(A)</sup></b>	<b>43 <sup>(E)</sup></b>

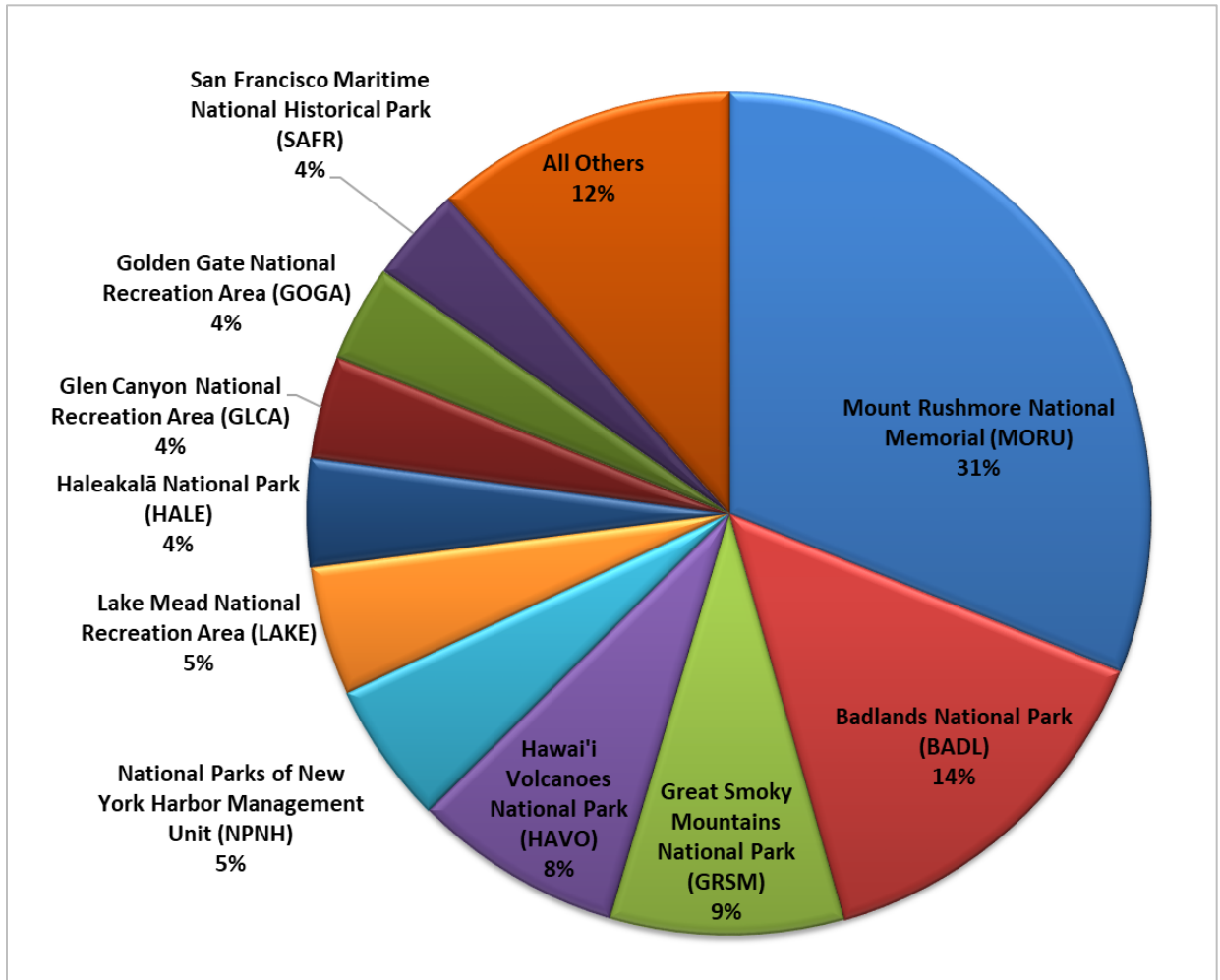
<sup>A</sup> Total number of air tours authorized through IOA and/or agreements.

<sup>B</sup> Number of operators who reported at least one air tour.

<sup>C</sup> Park with Voluntary Agreements.

<sup>D</sup> Grand total exceeds sum of quarterly totals due to exempt parks where only the annual total is required.

<sup>E</sup> This is not a sum of all values in this column since some operators have certificates for multiple parks. It reflects the number of unique certificates across all operators.



**Figure 1.** Reported Commercial Air Tours at High-Activity Units of the National Park System, 2020.

Table 4 and Figure 2 display annual data for these same high-activity parks, showing trends from 2013 through 2020. Figure 3 displays annual data for the most recent 5 years (2016-2020), allowing for better visualization of recent trends. Most notably, 2020 was the peak year of activity at Mount Rushmore National Memorial, Badlands National Park, and Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Air tours at these parks did not decline in number due to the COVID pandemic, but rather increased over previous years. Additional trends, as noted in previous years include:

- At the National Parks of New York Harbor, the sharp decline in tours between 2015 and 2018 was due to an agreement between New York City and air tour operators unrelated to NPATMA. The agreement banned air tours on Sundays and mandated a phased reduction of air tours to 50% of 2015 levels by 2017.
- At Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, the nearly 50% drop in tours from 2017 to 2018 was a result of the Kīlauea Volcano eruptive activity that began in the spring of 2018.

**Table 4.** Reported Commercial Air Tours at High-Activity Units of the National Park System, 2013-2020.

<b>National Park System Unit</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
Mount Rushmore National Memorial (MORU)	9	3,648	4,363	4,011	3,749	3,788	4,204	4,860
Badlands National Park (BADL)	962	1,317	1,205	1,330	1,194	1,729	1,349	2,264
Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GRSM)	305	328	848	810	838	771	983	1,404
Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park (HAVO)	15,410	14,427	14,645	15,489	16,520	8,333	9,276	1,252
National Parks of New York Harbor Management Unit (NPNH)	34,682	39,797	26,812	18,638	11,006	8,141	7,859	850
Lake Mead National Recreation Area (LAKE)	13,218	12,160	10,548	7,530	8,735	7,401	5,218	771
Haleakalā National Park (HALE)	4,631	4,932	4,543	4,589	4,839	4,757	4,875	647
Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (GLCA)	4,437	4,861	4,167	3,820	4,243	4,715	5,919	614
Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GOGA)	1,920	2,003	2,272	2,250	2,588	2,550	2,506	577
San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park (SAFR)	_(A)	_(A)	_(A)	_(A)	_(A)	1,119	2,506	577

<sup>A</sup> Tours likely occurred 2013-2017 in connection with tours over Golden Gate. FAA and NPS have clarified reporting with operator.

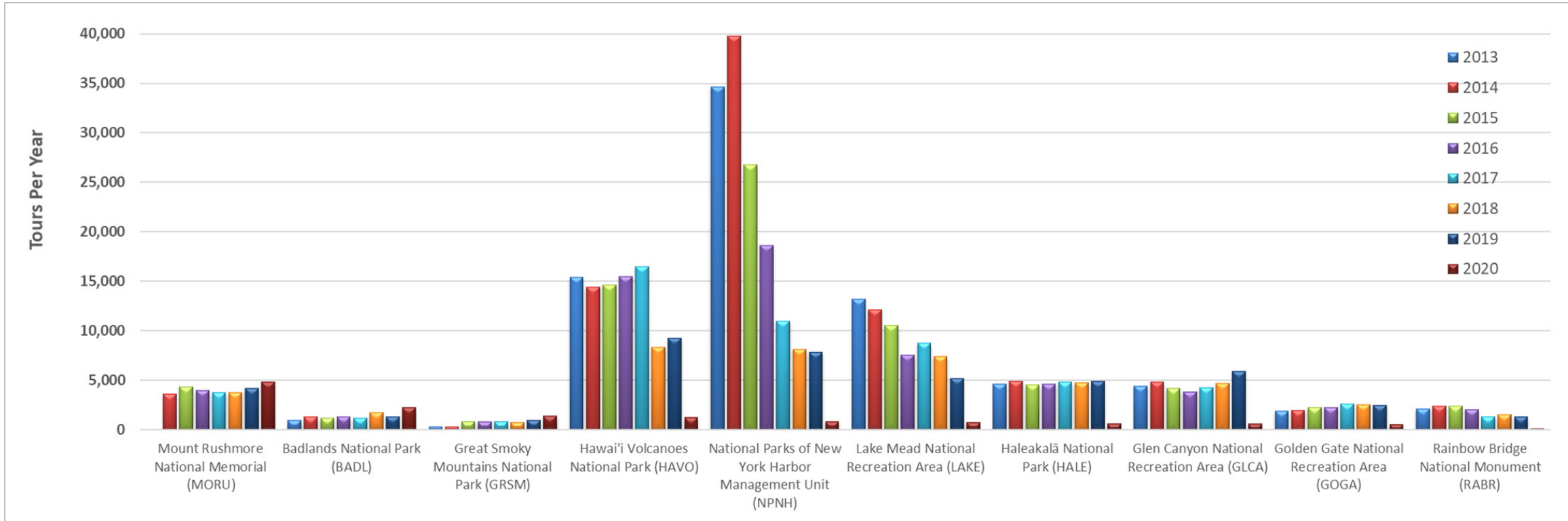
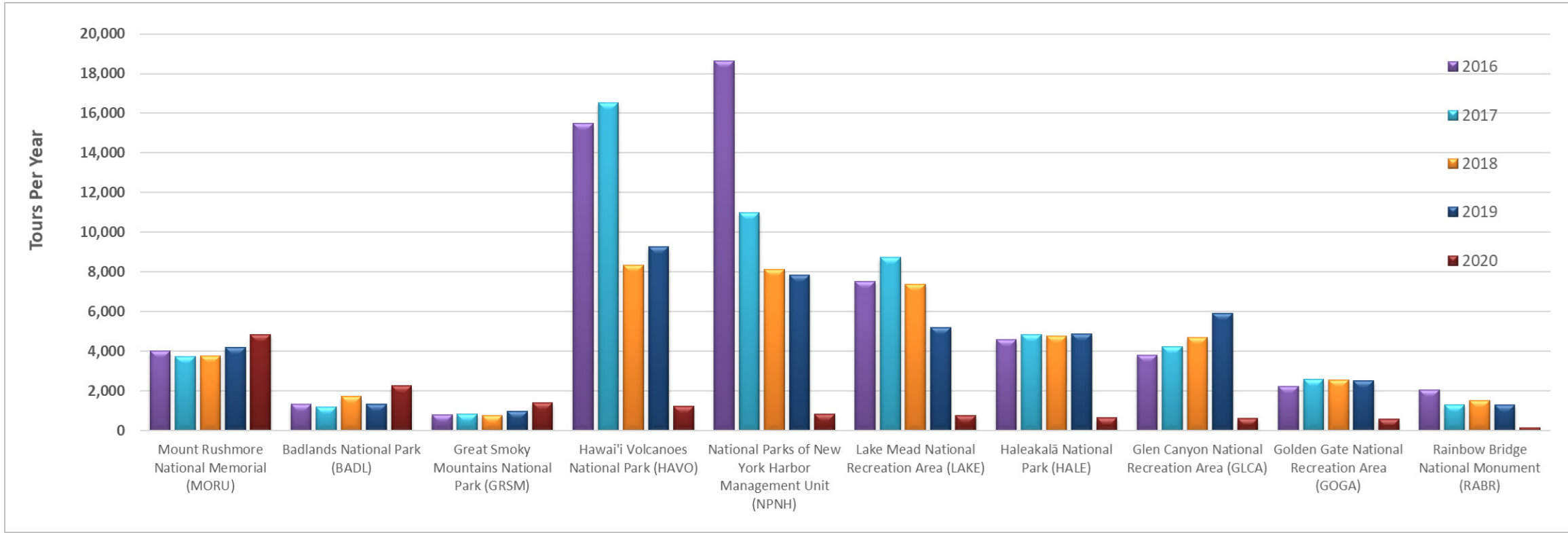


Figure 2. Reported Commercial Air Tours at High-Activity Units of the National Park System, 2013-2020.



**Figure 3.** Reported Commercial Air Tours at High-Activity Units of the National Park System, 5 most recent years, 2016-2020.



## **Air Tours by Region**

Table 5 and Figure 4 display the amount of air tour activity by the Department of Interior (DOI) unified region<sup>3</sup>. Region 5 contains the greatest number of air tours, although these operations were concentrated over only two park units. In contrast, there is less activity in region 7, but there are significantly more park units where tours occur. Appendix C provides a map of DOI regions.

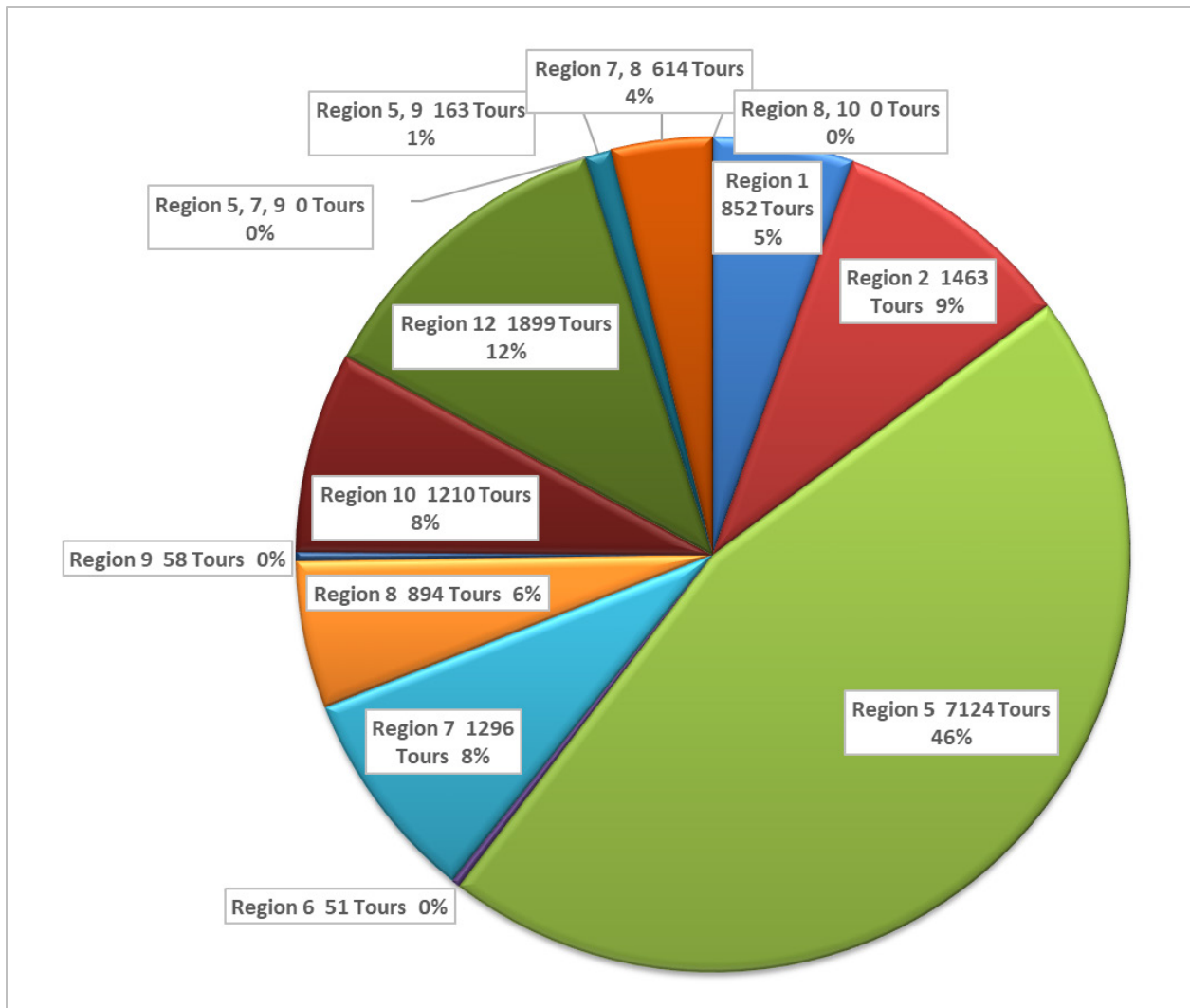
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<sup>3</sup> The reorganization of DOI from 49 regions across 8 bureaus to 12 unified interior Regions was completed in 2018. The Unified Interior Region boundaries are based on watersheds but generally drawn along state lines to simplify coordination with external partners. (<https://www.doi.gov/employees/reorg/unified-regional-boundaries>)

**Table 5.** Reported Commercial Air Tours by DOI Unified Region, 2020.

DOI Unified Region <sup>(A)</sup>	Coverage	Total Reported Air Tours	Percent of All Air Tours	Number of Park Units with At Least One Tour
1 – North Atlantic–Appalachian	Connecticut, Delaware, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, Vermont, Washington DC, West Virginia	852	5%	2
2 – South Atlantic-Gulf	Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, US Virgin Islands	1,463	9%	3
5 – Missouri Basin	Kansas, Most of Montana, North Dakota, Nebraska, South Dakota	7,124	46%	2
6 – Arkansas-Rio Grande-Texas Gulf	Oklahoma, Texas	51	0%	2
7 – Upper Colorado Basin	Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, New Mexico	1,296	8%	24
8 – Lower Colorado Basin	Arizona, Southern California, Southern Nevada	894	6%	7
9 – Columbia-Pacific Northwest	Idaho, Most of Oregon, Washington, NW Montana	58	0%	2
10 – California-Great Basin	Most of California, Most of Nevada, Klamath County Oregon	1,210	8%	4
12 – Pacific Islands	American Samoa, Guam, Hawaii, Northern Marianas	1,899	12%	2
Regions 5, 7, 9	Yellowstone National Park (DOI Regions 5, 7 and 9)	–	0%	0
Regions 5, 9	Glacier National Park (DOI Regions 5 and 9)	163	1%	1
Regions 7, 8	Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (DOI Regions 7 and 8)	614	4%	1
Regions 8, 10	Death Valley National Park (DOI regions 8 and 10)	–	0%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>15,624</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>50</b>

<sup>A</sup> Where indicated, some parks may span more than one region.



**Figure 4.** Reported Commercial Air Tours by DOI Unified Region, 2020.

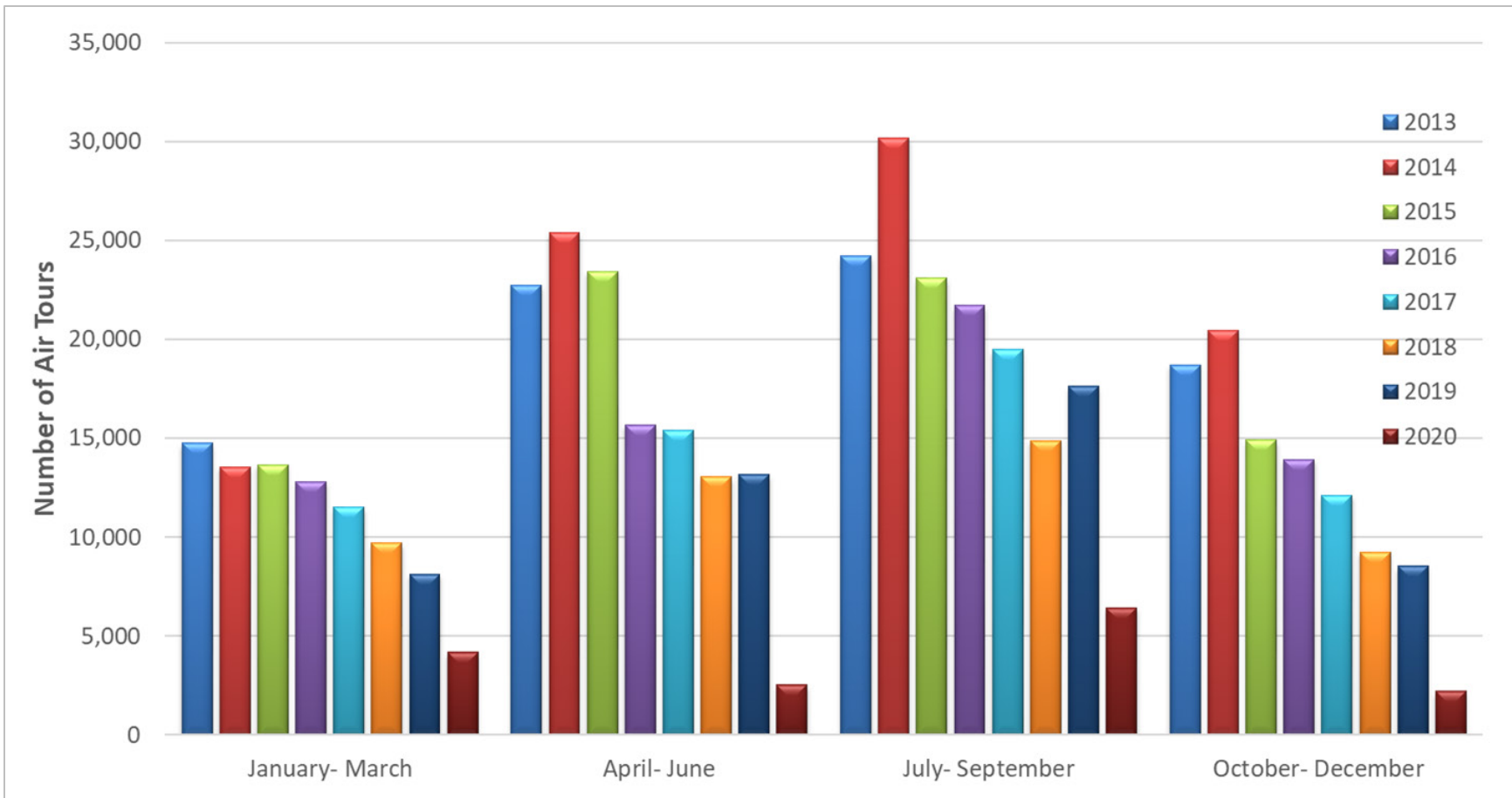
### Annual and Quarterly Trends

Table 6 and Figure 5 display air tour activity by quarter for 2013-2020. Most park units experienced seasonal fluctuations in operations associated with weather and customer demand. Figure 6 displays the total annual tours for 2013-2020. The COVID pandemic caused a sharp decline in air tour operations in 2020, declining to 30% of the typical average from the most recent years 2017 through 2019. The declining trend in tours between 2015 and 2017 was due in part to a reduction in activity at the National Parks of New York Harbor, where an agreement between New York City and air tour operators bans air tours on Sundays and mandated a phased reduction of air tours to 50% of 2015 levels by 2017. The decline between 2017 and 2018 was due in part to a nearly 50% drop in tours at Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, a result of the Kīlauea Volcano eruptive activity. Air tours shifted to pursue views of lava flows outside of the park and the FAA implemented multiple temporary flight restrictions (TFR) over areas of volcanic activity.

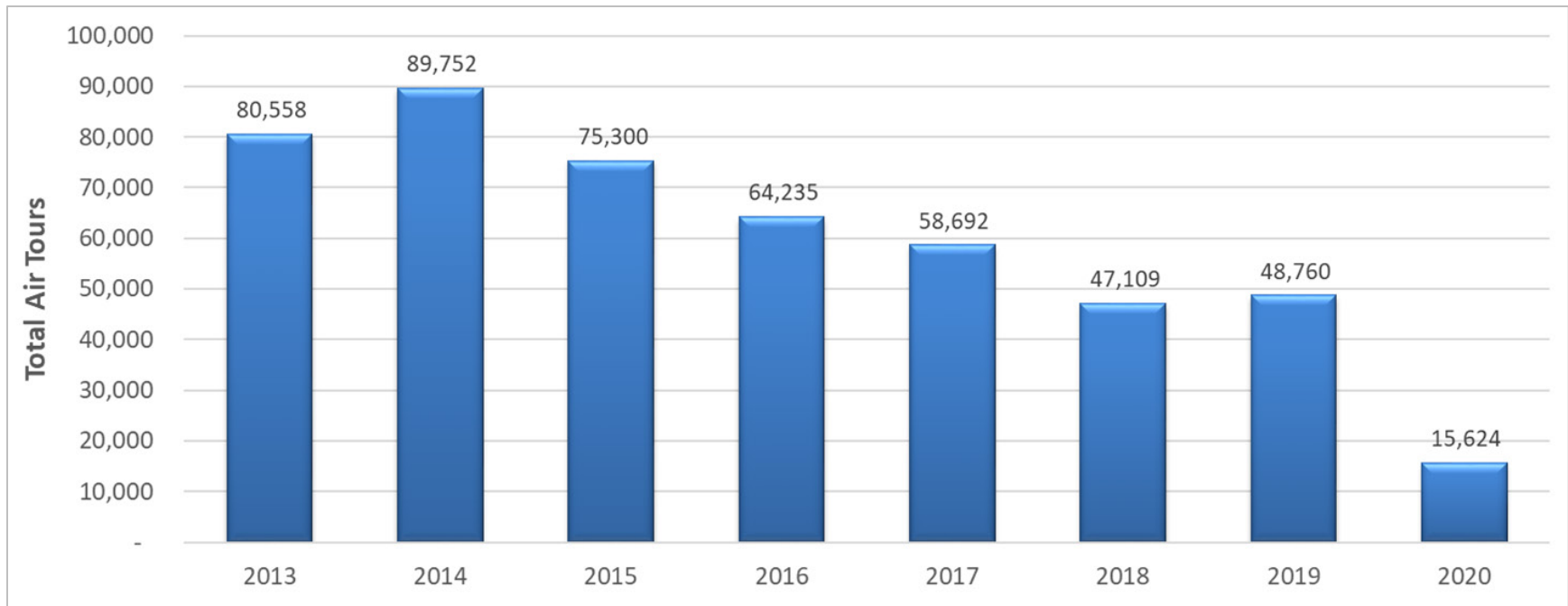
**Table 6.** Reported Commercial Air Tours, 2013-2020

<b>Year</b>	<b>January- March</b>	<b>April- June</b>	<b>July- September</b>	<b>October- December</b>	<b>Total Reported Air Tours <sup>(A)</sup></b>
2013	14,755	22,748	24,200	18,718	80,558
2014	13,548	25,402	30,176	20,450	89,752
2015	13,664	23,441	23,077	14,913	75,300
2016	12,815	15,676	21,715	13,913	64,235
2017	11,520	15,386	19,467	12,126	58,692
2018	9,714	13,041	14,914	9,252	47,145
2019	8,129	13,158	17,620	9,542	48,760
2020	4,173	2,540	6,444	2,204	15,624

<sup>A</sup>. Annual totals exceed sum of quarterly totals due to exempt parks where only the annual total is required.



**Figure 5.** Reported Commercial Air Tours 2013-2020 by Quarter.



**Figure 6.** Reported Commercial Air Tours 2013-2020 by Year.

## **5. Parks that Require an Air Tour Management Plan or Voluntary Agreement**

The Act requires that park units with more than 50 annual tours enter into an air tour management plan or voluntary agreement to protect park resources and values, or visitor use and enjoyment. While the Act exempted park units with 50 or fewer tours from the requirement to establish a plan or agreement, Congress anticipated that there might be instances where even 50 or fewer annual air tours could affect park resources or the visitor experience. Therefore, if the NPS determines that a plan or agreement is necessary to protect park resources or the visitor experience, NPS can withdraw an exemption.

Table 7 lists the 23 park units per the 2020 court order and one park unit NPS withdrew from the exemption (Muir Woods National Monument) for which the agencies are working to complete ATMPs. Of these 24 parks, 6 had fewer than 50 tours reported in 2020: Canyon de Chelly National Monument, Death Valley National Park, Everglades National Park, Mount Rainier National Park, Muir Woods National Monument, and Natural Bridges National Monument. Table 8 lists 3 parks that had more than 50 tours reported in 2020 that are not covered by the court order, Big Bend National Park, Navajo National Monument, and Zion National Park. These parks have previously been exempt and could change based on 2021 reporting of number of annual operations. Table 9 lists the parks where NPS and FAA have completed agreements with operators, Big Cypress National Preserve and Biscayne National Park. Table 8 lists the 49 park units that qualify for the exemption based on 2020 data because the number of tours does not exceed 50.

**Table 7.** Park Units per 2020 Court Order that are Developing an Air Tour Management Plan or Voluntary Agreement.

<b>Park Units developing ATMPs or Agreements per 2020 court order</b>	<b>DOI Unified Region</b>	<b>NPS Legacy Region</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>2020 Total Reported Air Tours</b>
Mount Rushmore National Memorial (MORU)	5	Midwest	South Dakota	4,860
Badlands National Park (BADL)	5	Midwest	South Dakota	2,264
Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GRSM)	2	Southeast	Tennessee, North Carolina	1,404
Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park (HAVO)	12	Pacific West	Hawaii	1,252
National Parks of New York Harbor Management Unit (NPNH)	1	Northeast	New York, New Jersey	850
Lake Mead National Recreation Area (LAKE)	8	Pacific West	Arizona, Nevada	771
Haleakalā National Park (HALE)	12	Pacific West	Hawaii	647
Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (GLCA) <sup>A</sup>	7, 8	Intermountain	Arizona, Utah	614
Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GOGA)	10	Pacific West	California	577
San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park (SAFR)	10	Pacific West	California	577
Canyonlands National Park (CANY)	7	Intermountain	Utah	302
Bryce Canyon National Park (BRCA)	7	Intermountain	Utah	266
Arches National Park (ARCH)	7	Intermountain	Utah	164
Glacier National Park (GLAC)	5, 9	Intermountain	Montana	163
Rainbow Bridge National Monument (RABR) <sup>B</sup>	7	Intermountain	Utah	149
Bandelier National Monument (BAND)	7	Intermountain	New Mexico	91
Olympic National Park (OLYM) <sup>A</sup>	9	Pacific West	Washington	55
Point Reyes National Seashore (PORE)	10	Pacific West	California	55
Natural Bridges National Monument (NABR)	7	Intermountain	Utah	48

<sup>A</sup>. Park with Voluntary Agreements but still requires ATMP since some operators with IOA did not sign a Voluntary Agreement.



**Table 7 (continued).** Park Units per 2020 Court Order that are Developing an Air Tour Management Plan or Voluntary Agreement.

<b>Park Units developing ATMPs or Agreements per 2020 court order</b>	<b>DOI Unified Region</b>	<b>NPS Legacy Region</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>2020 Total Reported Air Tours</b>
Canyon de Chelly National Monument (CACH)	7	Intermountain	Arizona	34
Mount Rainier National Park (MORA) <sup>A</sup>	9	Pacific West	Washington	3
Death Valley National Park (DEVA) <sup>A</sup>	8, 10	Pacific West	California	0
Everglades National Park (EVER)	2	Southeast	Florida	0
Muir Woods National Monument (MUWO)	10	Pacific West	California	0

<sup>A</sup>. Park with Voluntary Agreements but still requires ATMP since some operators with IOA did not sign a Voluntary Agreement.

**Table 8.** Park Units with Completed Agreements

<b>National Park System Unit</b>	<b>DOI Unified Region</b>	<b>NPS Legacy Region</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Total Reported Air Tours</b>
Big Cypress National Preserve (BICY)	2	Southeast	Florida	5
Biscayne National Park (BISC)	2	Southeast	Florida	54

**Table 9.** Park Units Previously Exempt but with more than 50 tours in 2020

<b>National Park System Unit</b>	<b>DOI Unified Region</b>	<b>NPS Legacy Region</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Total Reported Air Tours</b>
Zion National Park (ZION)	7	Intermountain	Utah	71
Navajo National Monument (NAVA)	10	Intermountain	Arizona	60
Big Bend National Park (BIBE)	6	Intermountain	Texas	50

**Table 10.** Park Units that Qualify for the Exemption Based on 2020 Data (sorted by Total Reported Air Tours).

<b>National Park System Unit</b>	<b>DOI Unified Region</b>	<b>NPS Legacy Region</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Total Reported</b>
Chaco Culture National Historical Park (CHCU)	7	Intermountain	New Mexico	41
Aztec Ruins National Monument (AZRU)	7	Intermountain	New Mexico	32
Mesa Verde National Park (MEVE)	7	Intermountain	Colorado	29
Hovenweep National Monument (HOVE)	7	Intermountain	Utah	20
Petroglyph National Monument (PETR)	7	Intermountain	New Mexico	18
El Malpais National Monument (ELMA)	7	Intermountain	New Mexico	16
Petrified Forest National Park (PEFO)	8	Intermountain	Arizona	9
Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site (HUTR)	8	Intermountain	Arizona	8
Wupatki National Monument (WUPA)	8	Intermountain	Arizona	8
Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park (BLCA)	7	Intermountain	Colorado	7
Colorado National Monument (COLM)	7	Intermountain	Colorado	7
El Morro National Monument (ELMO)	7	Intermountain	New Mexico	6
Fort Union National Monument (FOUN)	7	Intermountain	New Mexico	6
Pecos National Historical Park (PECO)	7	Intermountain	New Mexico	6
Capitol Reef National Park (CARE)	7	Intermountain	Utah	5
Capulin Volcano National Monument (CAVO)	8	Intermountain	New Mexico	5
Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument (SUCR)	10	Intermountain	Arizona	4
Acadia National Park (ACAD)	1	Northeast	Maine	2
Carlsbad Caverns National Park (CAVE)	7	Intermountain	New Mexico	2
Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve (GRSA)	7	Intermountain	Colorado	2

**Table 10 (continued).** Park Units that Qualify for the Exemption Based on 2020 Data (sorted by Total Reported Air Tours).

<b>National Park System Unit</b>	<b>DOI Unified Region</b>	<b>NPS Legacy Region</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Total Reported</b>
Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument (SAPU)	7	Intermountain	New Mexico	2
Dinosaur National Monument (DINO)	7	Intermountain	Colorado, Utah	1
Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River (RIGR)	6	Intermountain	Texas	1
Yosemite National Park (YOSE)	10	Pacific West	California	1
Casa Grande Ruins National Monument (CAGR)	8	Intermountain	Arizona	0
Cedar Breaks National Monument (CEBR)	7	Intermountain	Utah	0
Coronado National Memorial (CORO)	8	Intermountain	Arizona	0
Devils Tower National Monument (DETO)	7	Intermountain	Wyoming	0
Dry Tortugas National Park (DRTO)	2	Southeast	Florida	0
Fort Bowie National Historic Site (FOBO)	2	Intermountain	Arizona	0
Fort Davis National Historic Site (FODA)	2	Intermountain	Texas	0
Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument (GICL)	7	Intermountain	New Mexico	0
Golden Spike National Historic Site (GOSP)	7	Intermountain	Utah	0
Grand Teton National Park (GRTE)	7	Intermountain	Wyoming	0
Guadalupe Mountains National Park (GUMO)	7	Intermountain	Texas	0
Hohokam Pima National Monument (PIMA)	7	Intermountain	Arizona	0
Mojave National Preserve (MOJA)	7	Pacific West	California	0
Montezuma Castle National Monument (MOCA)	7	Intermountain	Arizona	0
North Cascades National Park (NOCA)	8	Pacific West	Washington	0
Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument (ORPI)	10	Intermountain	Arizona	0



**Table 10 (continued).** Park Units that Qualify for the Exemption Based on 2020 Data (sorted by Total Reported Air Tours).

<b>National Park System Unit</b>	<b>DOI Unified Region</b>	<b>NPS Legacy Region</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Total Reported</b>
Pipe Spring National Monument (PISP)	1	Intermountain	Arizona	0
Saguaro National Park (SAGU)	7	Intermountain	Arizona	0
Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks (SEKI)	7	Pacific West	California	0
Timpanogos Cave National Monument (TICA)	7	Intermountain	Utah	0
Tumacacori National Historical Park (TUMA)	7	Intermountain	Arizona	0
Tuzigoot National Monument (TUZI)	6	Intermountain	Arizona	0
Walnut Canyon National Monument (WACA)	10	Intermountain	Arizona	0
Yellowstone National Park (YELL)	8	Intermountain	Idaho, Montana, Wyoming	0
Yucca House National Monument (YUHO)	7	Intermountain	Colorado	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>419</b>

## Literature Cited

Lignell, B. W. 2019. Reporting information for commercial air tour operations over units of the national park system: 2018 annual report. Natural Resource Report NPS/NRSS/NSNSD/NRR—2019/1952. National Park Service, Fort Collins, Colorado. Available at: [National Park Service, Reporting Information for Commercial Air Tour Operations over Units of the National Park System, 2018 Annual Report \(nps.gov\)](#) (accessed 17 August 2022).

# Appendix A. Air Tour Reporting Template

 <b>Commercial Air Tour Reporting Data</b> 				
As Mandated by the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012, Title V, Section 501 Please Fill In Shaded Areas Below Where and As Appropriate Note: Guidance is included in each cell and the first cell of each section.				
Paperwork Reduction Act Burden Statement: A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB Control Number. The OMB Control Number for this information collection is 2120-0750. Public reporting for this collection of information is estimated to be approximately 4-16 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, completing and reviewing the collection of information. All responses to this collection of information are mandatory per The FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to the FAA at: 800 Independence Ave SW, Washington, DC 20531, Attn: Information Collection Clearance Officer, AES-200.			OMB CONTROL NUMBER 2120-0750	Revised 12/15/2017
Operator/Company Name:				<b>FAA Information:</b> Go to <a href="http://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/field_offices/fdsdo/">http://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/field_offices/fdsdo/</a> for more information.
dba (doing business as):				Name of Assigned POI:
Certificate Designator:				Name of Assigned FSDO:
Reporting Quarter:	Click on cell; select from dropdown	Reporting Year:	Click on cell; select from dropdown	FSDO Phone No.:
Notes:				
Location Information			Route Information	
National Park Service Unit Name(s):	Alpha-Code(s):	Departure Airports/Helipads:	Route Code:	Route Name:
Park Name (pick from list)				
Park Name (pick from list)				
Park Name (pick from list)				
Park Name (pick from list)				
Park Name (pick from list)				
Park Name (pick from list)				
Park Name (pick from list)				
Park Name (pick from list)				
Park Name (pick from list)				
Park Name (pick from list)				
Air Tour Data Submission				
Date of Tour	Hour of Tour	Aircraft Make/Model	Park-Route Code	

**Figure A1.** Screenshot of the Air Tour Reporting Template that is filled out by hand for each air tour above lands managed by the National Park Service.

## Appendix B. Map of 2020 Commercial Air Tour Activity

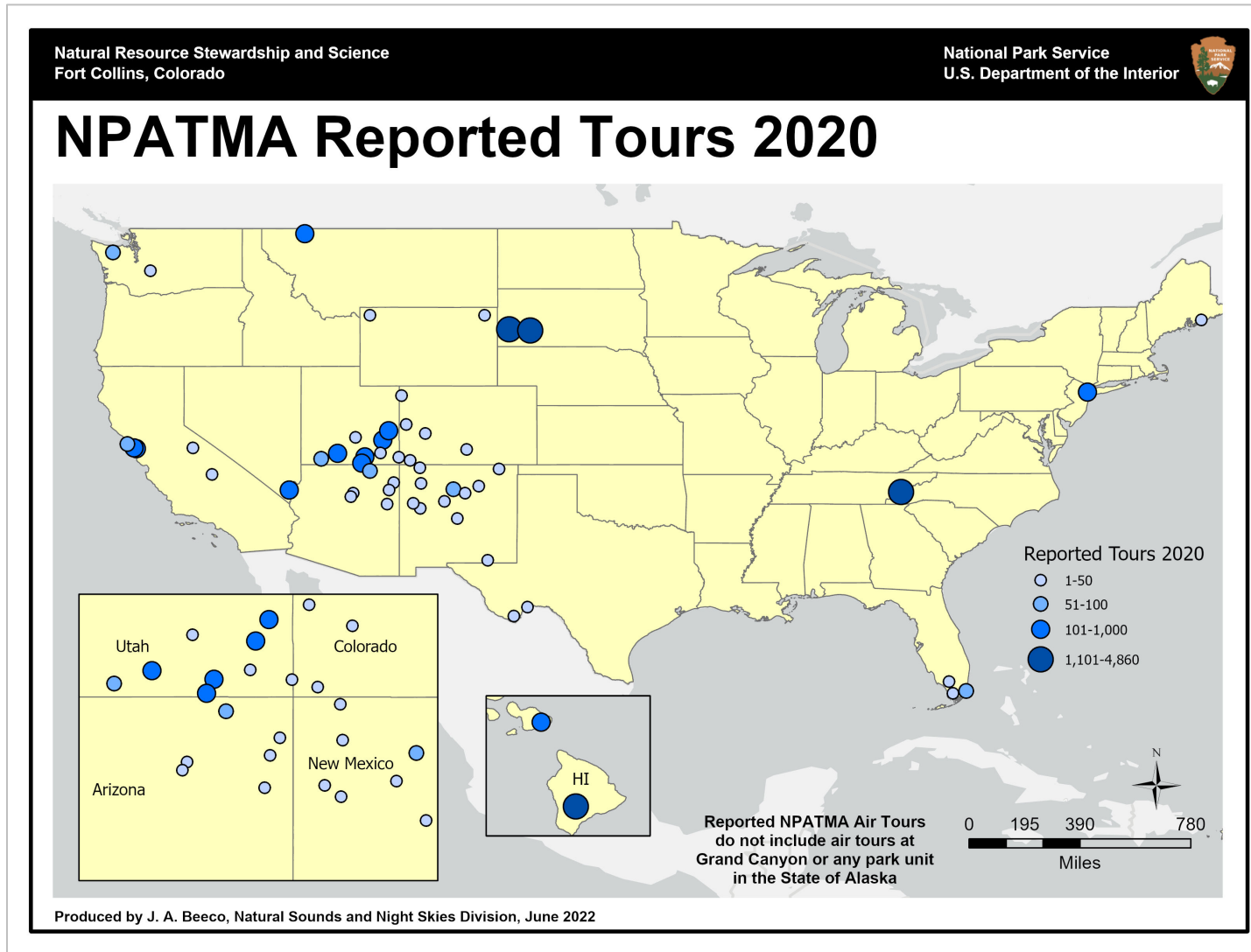


Figure B1. Map showing the year 2020 reported tours over National Park Service lands.

## Appendix C. Department of Interior Unified Regions

### 12 Interior Region Names Based on Watersheds



Figure C1. Map showing Department of the Interior region names that were named based on watershed.



The Department of the Interior protects and manages the nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provides scientific and other information about those resources; and honors its special responsibilities to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated Island Communities.

NPS 999/189905, August 2023

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



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1201 Oakridge Drive, Suite 150  
Fort Collins, CO 80525