
Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve

Visitor Study Spring 1998

Chris Hoffman

**Visitor Services Project
Report 101**

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Chris Hoffman is a VSP Research Associate based at the Cooperative Park Studies Unit, University of Idaho. I thank Mark Patterson and the staff and volunteers of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve for their assistance with this study. The VSP acknowledges the Public Opinion Lab of the Social and Economic Sciences Research Center, Washington State University, for its technical assistance.

Visitor Services Project
Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve
Report Summary

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve during March 29-April 4, 1998. A total of 766 questionnaires were distributed to visitors. Visitors returned 554 questionnaires for a 72% response rate.
- This report profiles Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve visitors. A separate appendix contains visitors' comments about their visit. This report and the appendix include summaries of those comments.
- Fifty-two percent of the visitor groups were family groups. Forty-eight percent of visitor groups were groups of two. Fifty percent of visitors were aged 41-65.
- Sixty-nine percent of visitors were making their first visits to Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. Thirteen percent of the visitor groups spent less than a day in southern Louisiana. Sixty-three percent of visitors spent one to three hours at Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. Of those groups that spent more than a day in southern Louisiana, 45% spent 3 to five days in the area.
- United States visitors were from Louisiana (43%), California (7%), Illinois (6%), Michigan (4%) and 29 other states, plus Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico. International visitor accounted for 10% of total visitation. Of international visitors, 37% were from Canada and 21% were from Germany.
- Visitors were most likely to use a private vehicle to arrive in southern Louisiana (52%) and arrive at Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve (62%). On this visit, the most common activities were viewing wildflowers (42%), visiting historic sites (38%) and viewing wildlife (36%).
- Friends or relatives (25%), previous visit(s) (22%), maps (23%), and travel guides/tour books (17%) were the most used sources of information by visitor groups.
- Almost one-half (49%) of visitor groups indicated they had a special interest in southern Louisiana history and culture. Visitor groups noted many reasons for visiting Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. Forty-six percent of visitor groups indicated they wanted to learn about southern Louisiana history. Another 39% were interested in learning about southern Louisiana culture.
- The most commonly visited sites in the park and preserve were the French Quarter Visitor Center (29%), the Chalmette Battlefield (26%), and the Barataria Preserve visitor center (24%). The least visited site was the Prairie Acadian Cultural Center (4%).
- In regard to the use, importance and quality of services, it is important to note the number of visitor groups that responded to each question. The services that were most used by 413 respondents were visitor center exhibits (75%) and information or assistance from park staff (60%). According to visitors, the most important services were information or assistance from park staff (91% of 226 respondents) and ranger-led tours/programs (89% of 89 respondents). The highest quality services were information or assistance from park staff (91% of 221 respondents) and ranger-led tours/programs (88% of 86 respondents).
- The facilities that were most used by 494 respondents were visitor centers (82%) and restrooms (75%). According to visitors, the most important facilities were trails (95% of 175 respondents) and highway signs (94% of 111 respondents). The highest quality facilities were trails (94% of 167 respondents) and roads (94% of 123 respondents).
- Ninety-five percent of visitor groups rated the overall quality of visitor services Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve as "very good" or "good." Less than one percent of groups rated services as "very poor." Visitors made many additional comments.

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact the
University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit; phone (208) 885-7129 or 885-7863.

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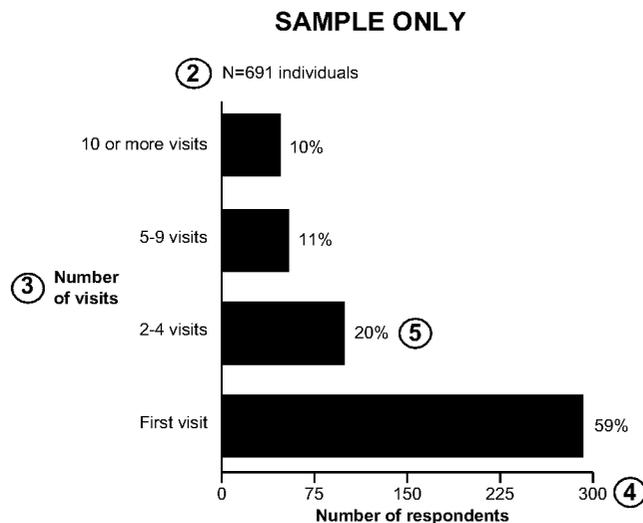
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INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of a study of visitors at Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. This visitor study was conducted March 29-April 4, 1998 by the National Park Service (NPS) Visitor Services Project (VSP), part of the Cooperative Park Studies Unit at the University of Idaho.

A **Methods** section discusses the procedures and limitations of the study. A **Results** section follows, including a summary of visitor comments. Next, an **Additional Analysis** page helps managers request additional analyses. The final section has a copy of the **Questionnaire**. The separate appendix includes comment summaries and visitors' unedited comments.

Most of this report's graphs resemble the example below. The large numbers refer to explanations following the graph.



① **Figure 4: Number of visits**

- 1: The figure title describes the graph's information.
- 2: Listed above the graph, the 'N' shows the number of visitors responding and a description of the chart's information. Interpret data with an 'N' of less than 30 with **CAUTION!** as the results may be unreliable.
- 3: Vertical information describes categories.
- 4: Horizontal information shows the number or proportions in each category.
- 5: In most graphs, percentages provide additional information.

METHODS

Questionnaire design and administration

The questionnaire for this visitor study was designed using a standard format that has been developed in previous Visitor Services Project studies. A copy of the questionnaire is included at the end of this report.

Interviews were conducted with, and questionnaires were distributed to, a sample of visitors who arrived at Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve during the period from March 29-April 4, 1998. Visitors were sampled at six different locations (see Table 1).

Table 1: Questionnaire distribution locations

percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Location:	Questionnaires distributed	
	Number	%
Barataria Preserve	194	25
Chalmette Battlefield	173	23
French Quarter Visitor Center	136	18
Prairie Acadian Cultural Center	18	2
Acadian Cultural Center	133	18
Wetlands Acadian Cultural Center	111	15
TOTAL	765	101

Visitor groups were greeted, briefly introduced to the purpose of the study, and asked to participate. If visitors agreed, an interview, lasting approximately two minutes, was used to determine group size, group type, and the age of the adult who would complete the questionnaire. This individual was given a questionnaire and was asked his or her name, address and telephone number for the later mailing of a reminder-thank you postcard. Visitor groups were asked to complete the questionnaire during or after their visit and then return it by mail.

Two weeks following the survey, a reminder-thank you postcard was mailed to all participants. Replacement questionnaires were mailed to participants who had not returned their questionnaires four weeks after the survey. Eight weeks after the survey, second replacement questionnaires were mailed to visitors who still had not returned their questionnaires.

Data analysis

Returned questionnaires were coded and the information was entered into a computer using a standard statistical software package. Frequency distributions and cross-tabulations were calculated for the coded data, and responses to open-ended questions were categorized and summarized.

This study collected information on both visitor groups and individual group members. Thus, the sample size ("N"), varies from figure to figure. For example, while Figure 1 shows information for 523 visitor groups, Figure 5 presents data for 1,285 individuals. A note above each graph specifies the information illustrated.

Sample size, missing data and reporting errors

Occasionally, a respondent may not have answered all of the questions, or may have answered some incorrectly. Unanswered questions result in missing data and cause the number in the sample to vary from figure to figure. For example, although 554 questionnaires were returned by Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve visitors, Figure 1 shows data for only 523 respondents.

Questions answered incorrectly due to carelessness, misunderstanding directions, and so forth turn up in the data as reporting errors. These create small data inconsistencies.

Like all surveys, this study has limitations which should be considered when interpreting the results.

Limitations

1. It is not possible to know whether visitor responses reflect actual behavior. This disadvantage applies to all such studies and is reduced by having visitors fill out the questionnaire soon after they visit the park.

2. The data reflect visitor use patterns of visitors to the selected sites during the study period of March 29-April 4, 1998. The results do not necessarily apply to visitors during other times of the year.

3. Caution is advised when interpreting any data with a sample size of less than 30, as the results may be unreliable. Whenever the sample size is less than 30, the word "**CAUTION!**" is included in the graph, figure or table.

Many of those who refused to participate did so because of language barriers. Therefore, foreign visitors, or those who did not speak English may be underrepresented in the study's results.

Special conditions

RESULTS

Visitors contacted

At Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve, 854 visitor groups were contacted, and 766 of these groups (90%) accepted questionnaires. Questionnaires were completed and returned by 554 visitor groups, resulting in a 72% response rate for this study.

Table 2 compares age and group size information collected from the total sample of visitors contacted with that from those who actually returned questionnaires. Based on the variables of respondent age and visitor group size, non-response bias was judged to be insignificant.

Table 2: Comparison of total sample and actual respondents

Variable	Total sample		Actual respondents	
	N	Avg.	N	Avg.
Age of respondents	695	47.7	518	50.5
Group size	761	3.6	523	4.3

Demographics

Figure 1 shows visitor group sizes, which ranged from one person to 105 people. Forty-eight percent of visitor groups consisted of two people, while another 14% were people visiting alone. Fifty-two percent of visitor groups were made up of family members, while 9% of the groups consisted of family and friends (see Figure 2). Groups listing themselves as "other" for group type included bus tour and boat tour groups. Twelve percent of the visitor groups Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve were guided tour or educational groups (see Figure 3).

Of those visitors who said they were with a guided tour or educational group 36% were with a group of 31 or more (see Figure 4). Fifty percent of the visitors were in the 41-65 age group and 11% were 15 or younger (see Figure 5). Seventy percent of visitors were making their first visit to the park in the last 12 months (see Figure 6).

Ten percent of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve visitors were international, representing 14 countries. Of these visitors, 37% were from Canada and 21% were from Germany (see Table 3). The largest proportion of United States visitors were from Louisiana (43%), California (7%), and Illinois (6%). Smaller proportions of U.S. visitors came from another thirty-nine states, Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico (see Map 1 and Table 4).

As is shown by Figure 7, 91% of visitors indicated that English was their primary language. Of those who said English was not the primary language spoken by their group 93% indicated that at least one member of their group was able to understand the English language (see Figure 8). Table four shows the languages that visitors who did not have a group member who could understand English would like to have information presented.

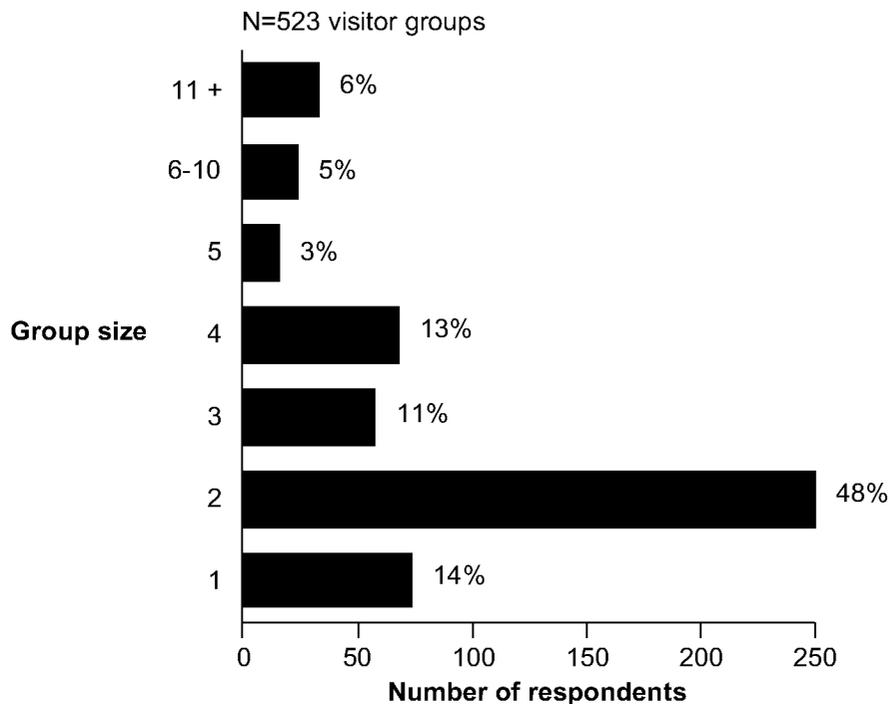


Figure 1: Visitor group sizes

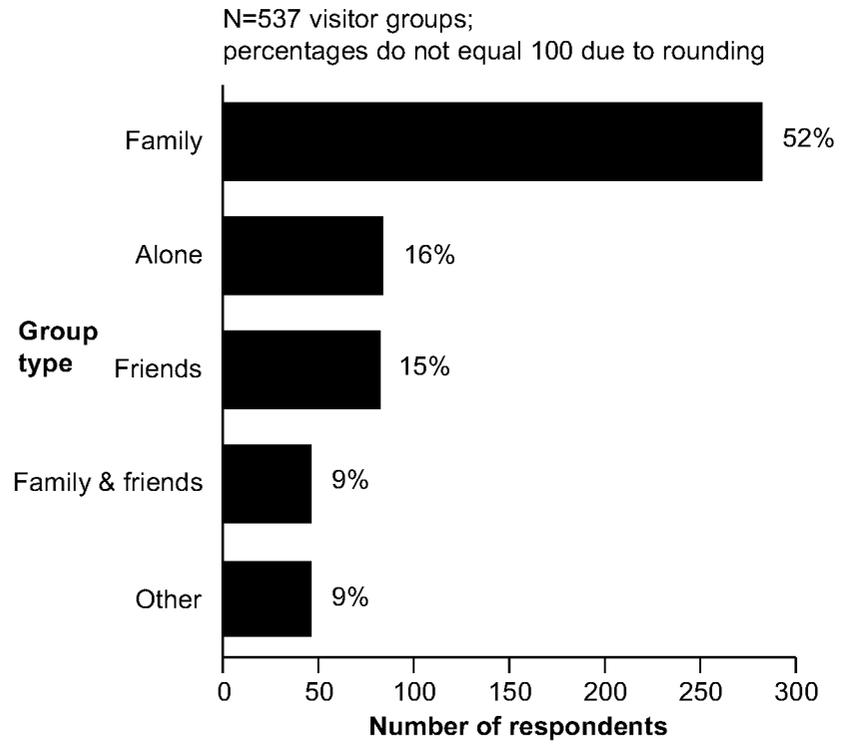


Figure 2: Visitor group types

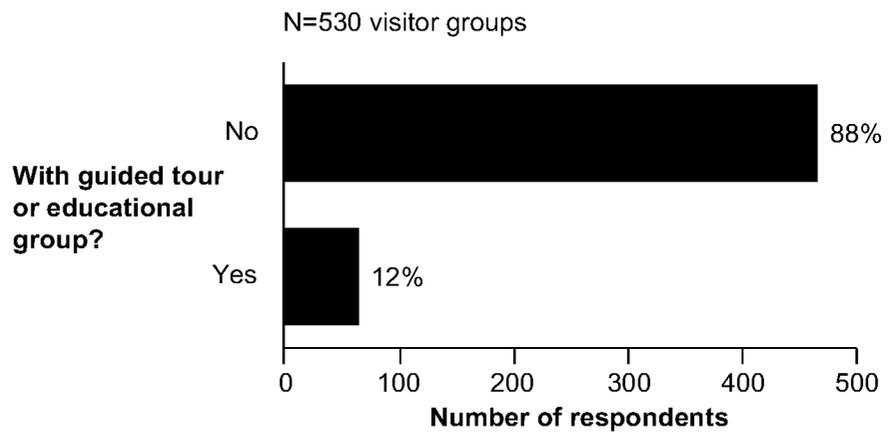


Figure 3: With guided tour or school group?

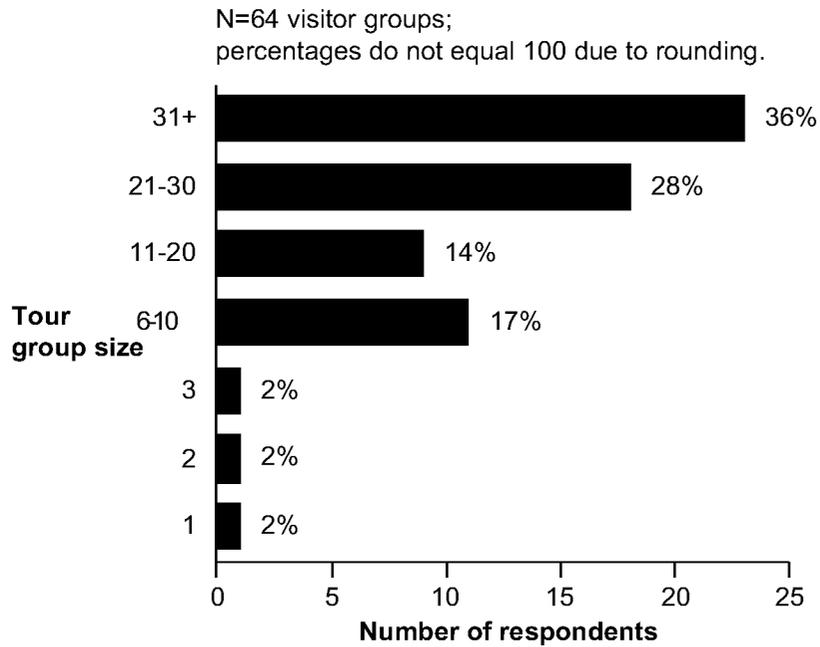


Figure 4: Number of people in guided tour or educational group

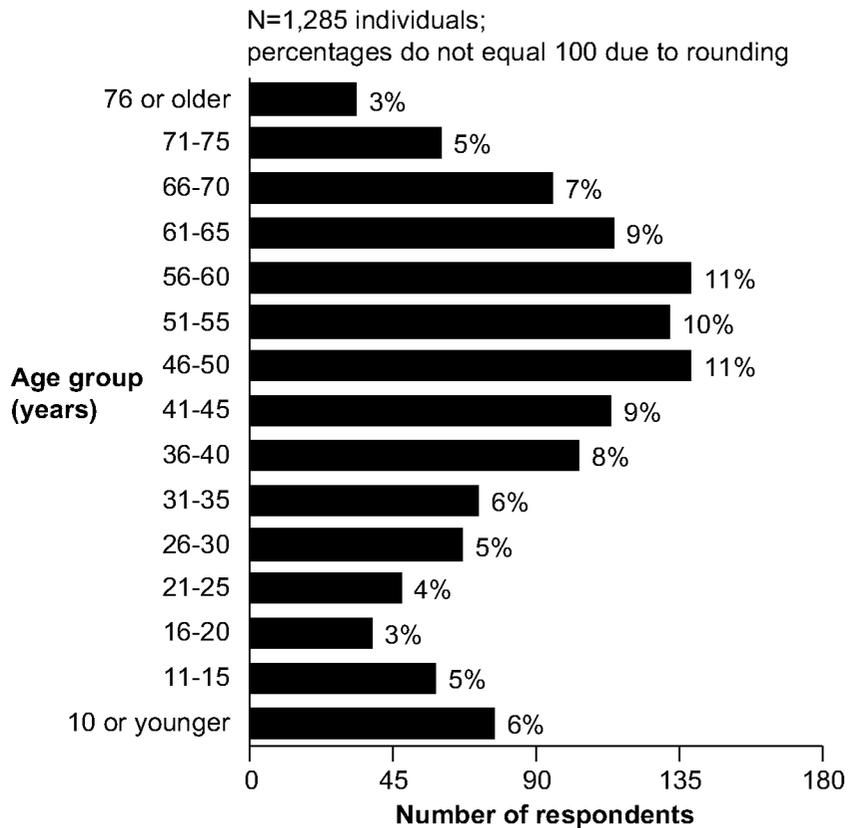


Figure 5: Visitor ages

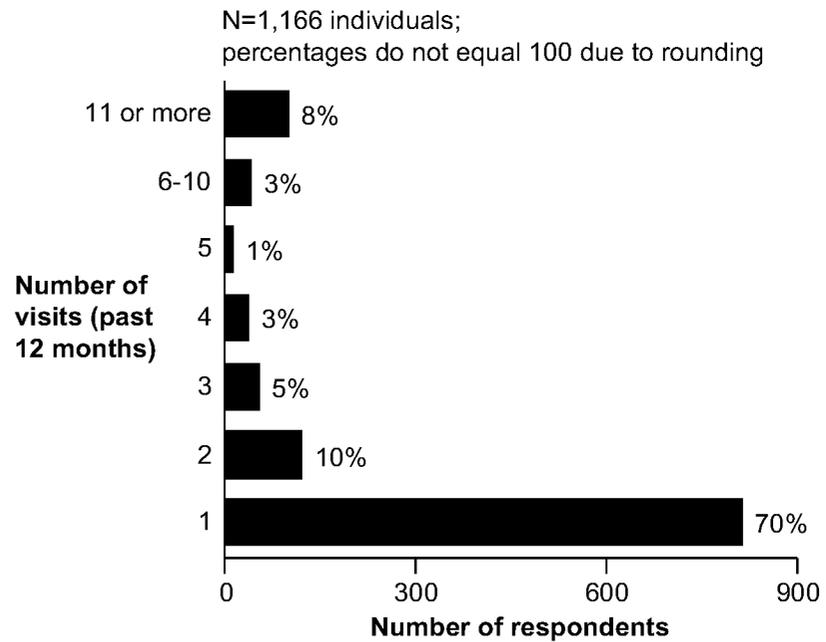
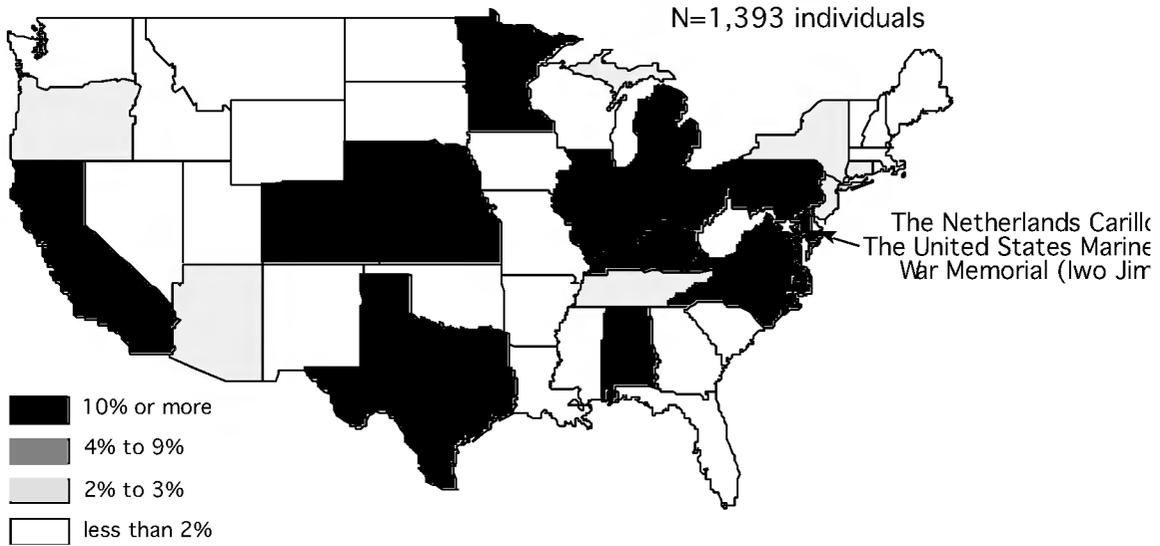


Figure 6: Number of visits to Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve

Table 3: International visitors by country of residence

N=119 individuals;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Country	Number of individuals	Percent of int'l visitors	Percent of total visitors
Canada	44	37	4%
Germany	25	21	2%
France	12	10	1%
England	11	9	less than 1%
Switzerland	6	5	
Japan	5	4	
Argentina	3	3	
Brazil	3	3	
Australia	2	2	
Chile	2	2	
Holland	2	2	
Mexico	2	2	
India	1	1	
Ireland	1	1	



Map 1: Proportion of United States visitors by state of residence

Table 4: United States visitors by state of residence

N=1,053 individuals;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

State	Number of individuals	Percent of U.S. visitors	Percent of total visitors
Louisiana	454	43	39
California	72	7	6
Illinois	59	6	5
Michigan	37	4	3
Alabama	32	3	3
New York	30	3	3
Indiana	27	3	2
Missouri	27	3	2
Texas	26	3	2
Colorado	24	2	2
Washington	21	2	2
Virginia	19	2	2
Massachusetts	16	2	1
30 other states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico	200	19	17

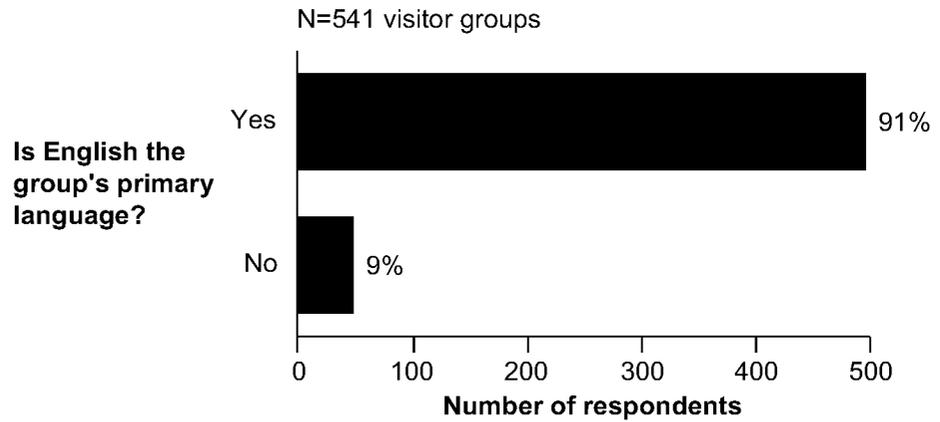


Figure 7: Is English the group's primary language?

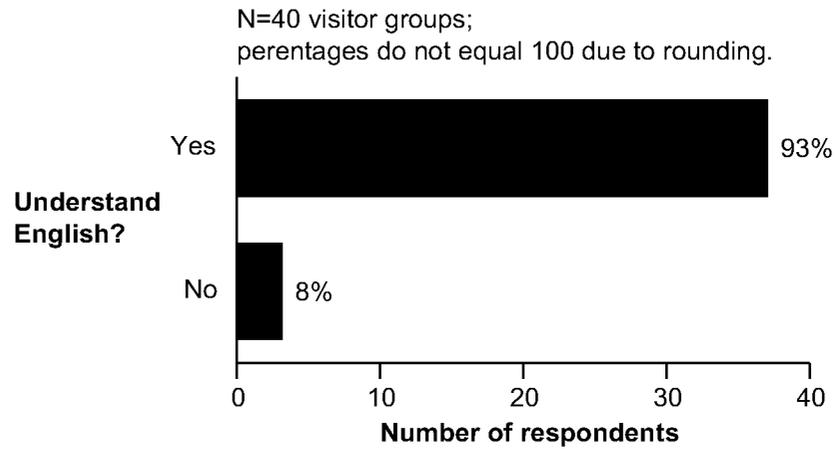


Figure 8: At least one member able to understand exhibits, brochures, and signs?

Table 5: Other language in which visitors would like to have information presented

N=10 comments

CAUTION!

Comment	Number of times mentioned
French	7
German	2
Cajun French	1

Visitor groups were asked to indicate which sites within the park they visited. As is shown by Figure 9, 29% of visitor groups visited the French Quarter Visitor Center and 26% visited Chalmette Battlefield. In addition they were asked questions about when they arrived at those sites (Figures 10 through 16). Visitors were also asked to indicate whether they used or attempted to use each of the six visitor centers (see Figure 17) and their preferred hours for future visits at those visitor centers (Figures 18 through 29). In addition, they were asked to indicate the programs they attended or attempted to attend (see Figure 30), and their preferred start time and length of program for each program (see Tables 6-11).

Finally, visitors were asked how much time they spent in southern Louisiana and the total time they spent at all Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve sites. As is shown by Figure 31, visitors who spent more than one day in southern Louisiana (45%) spent 3 to 5 days in the area, and 13% of all visitors spent less than one day in southern Louisiana. Of those visitors, 33% spent two hours in southern Louisiana (see Figure 32). As is shown by Figure 33, many visitors (68%) spent 1 to 3 hours at all Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve sites.

Area visited / length of stay

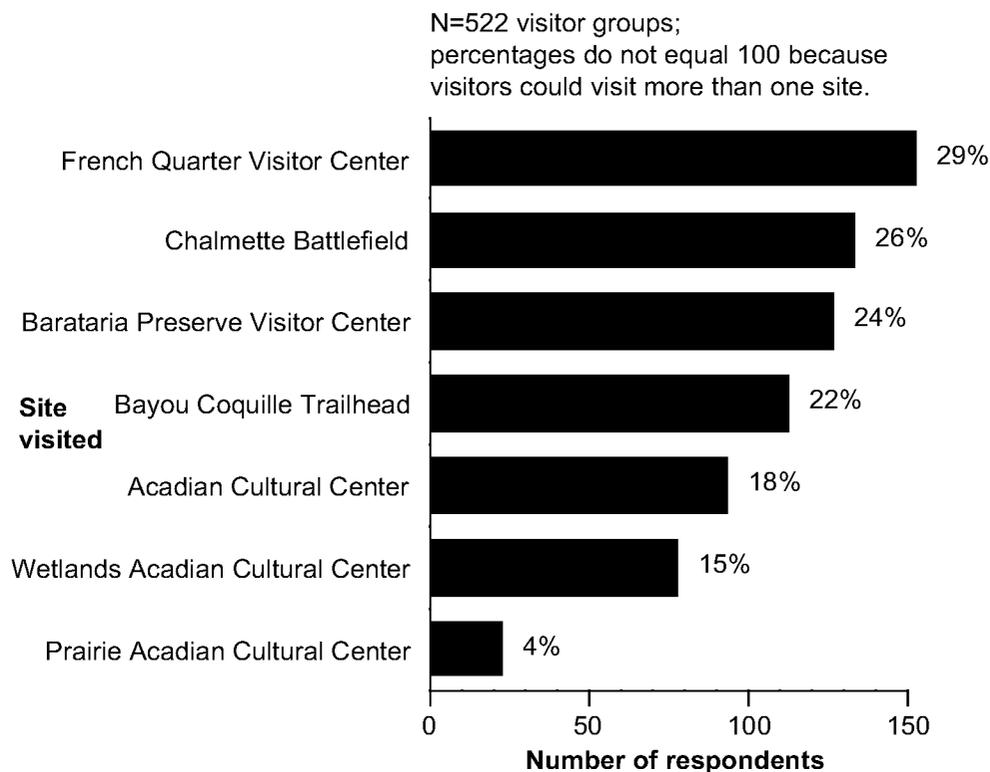


Figure 9: Sites visited

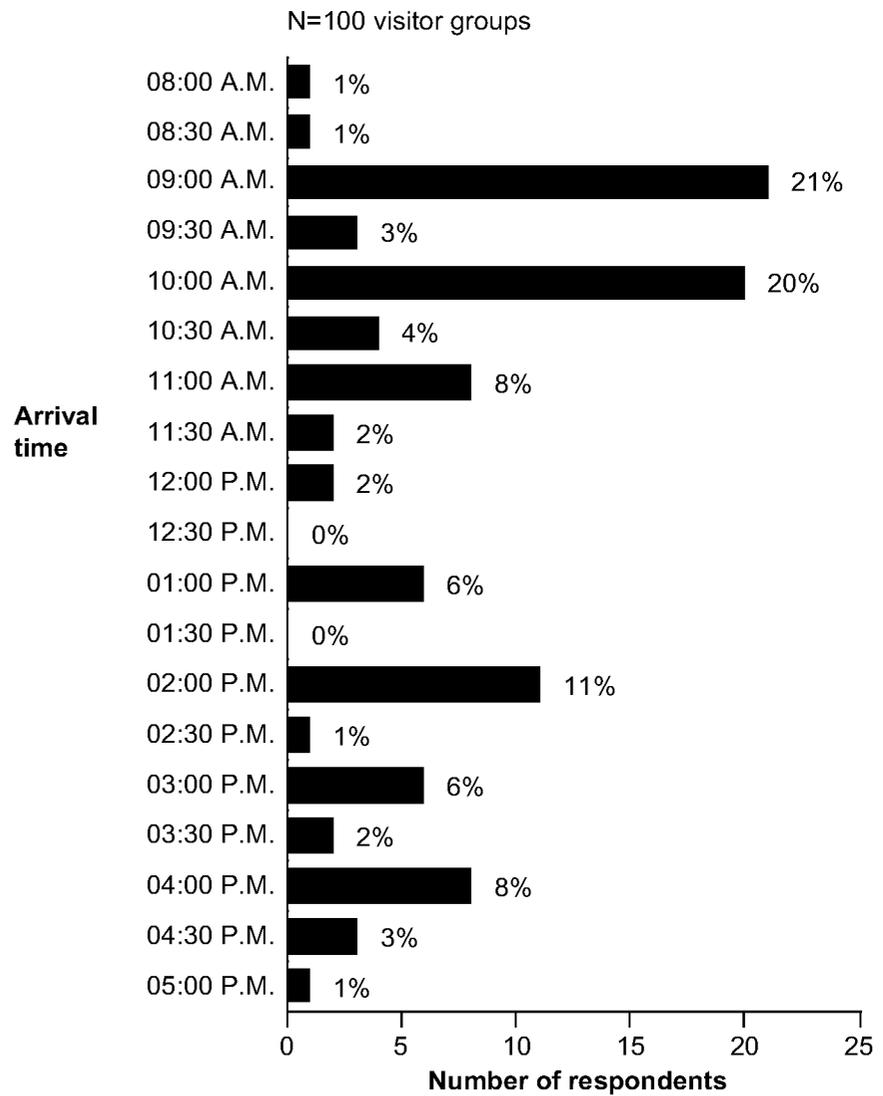


Figure 10: Arrival time at French Quarter Visitor Center

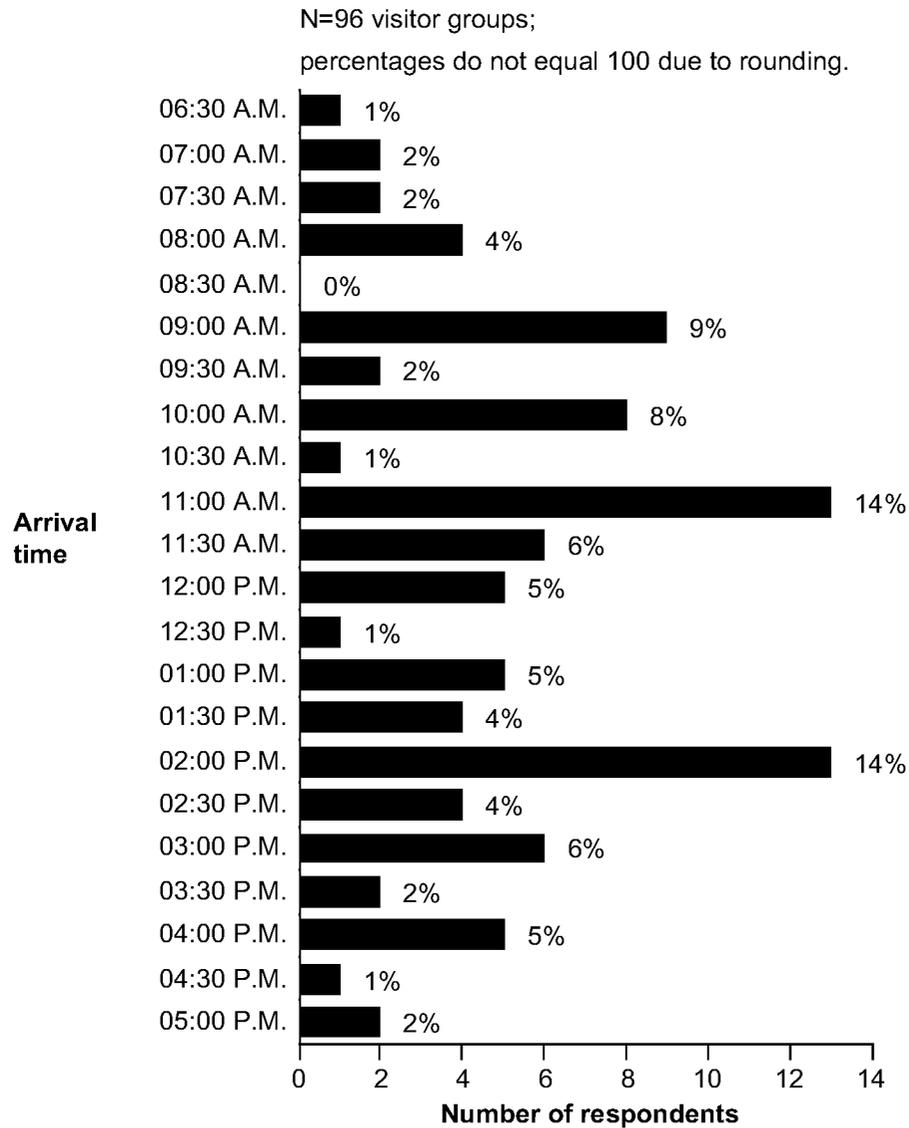


Figure 11: Arrival time at Chalmette Battlefield

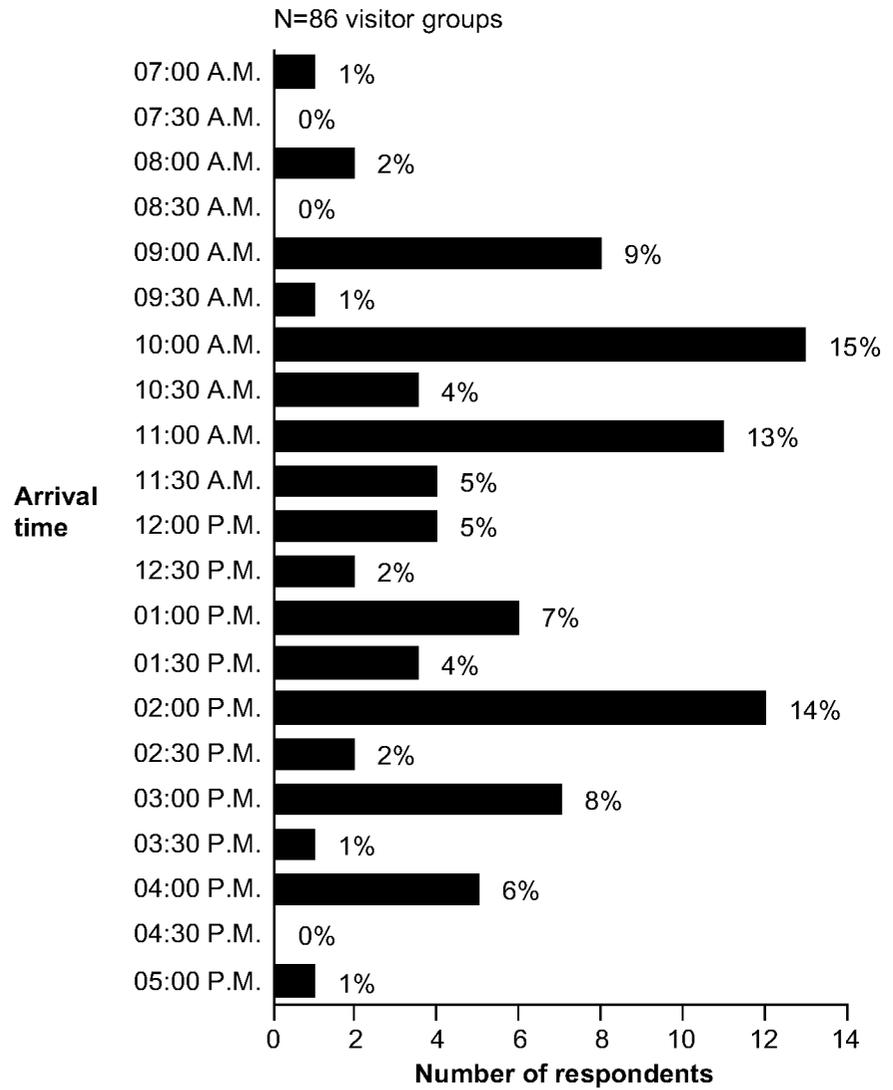


Figure 12: Arrival time at Barataria Preserve

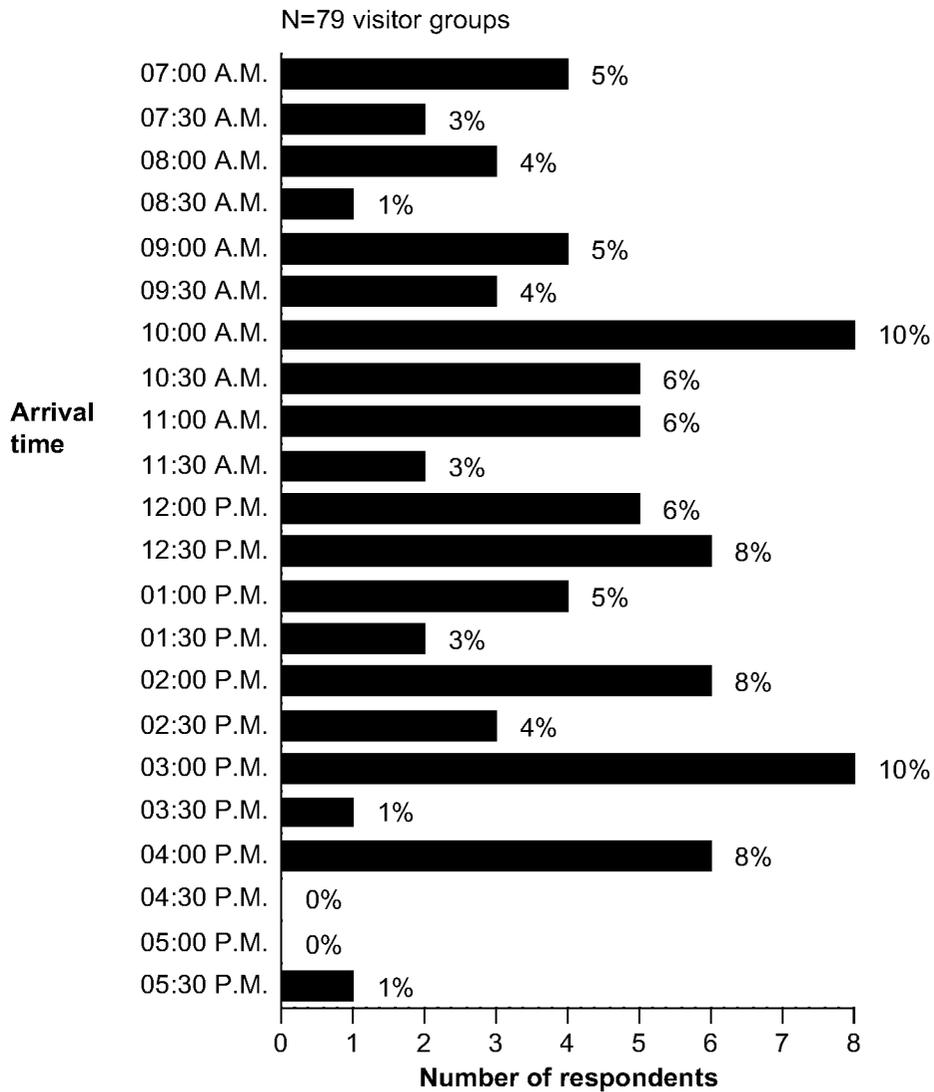


Figure 13: Arrival time at Bayou Coquille Trailhead

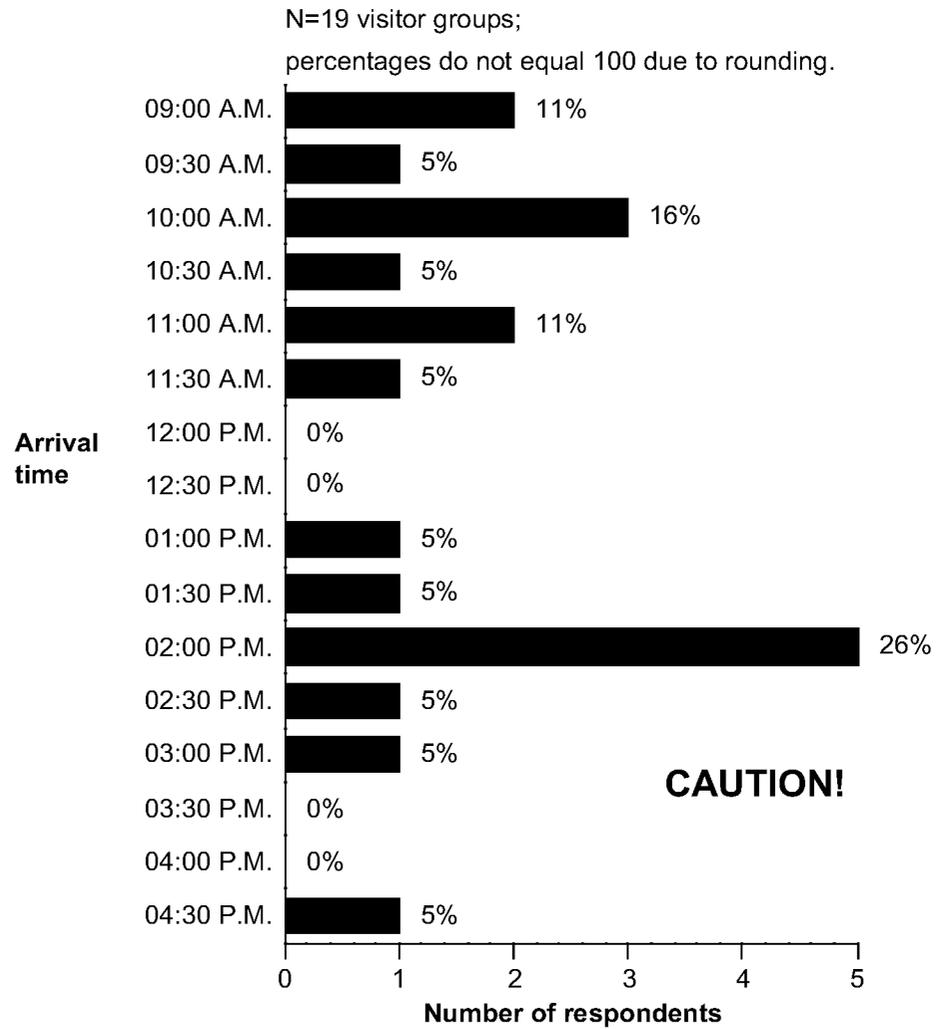


Figure 14: Arrival time at Prairie Acadian Cultural Center

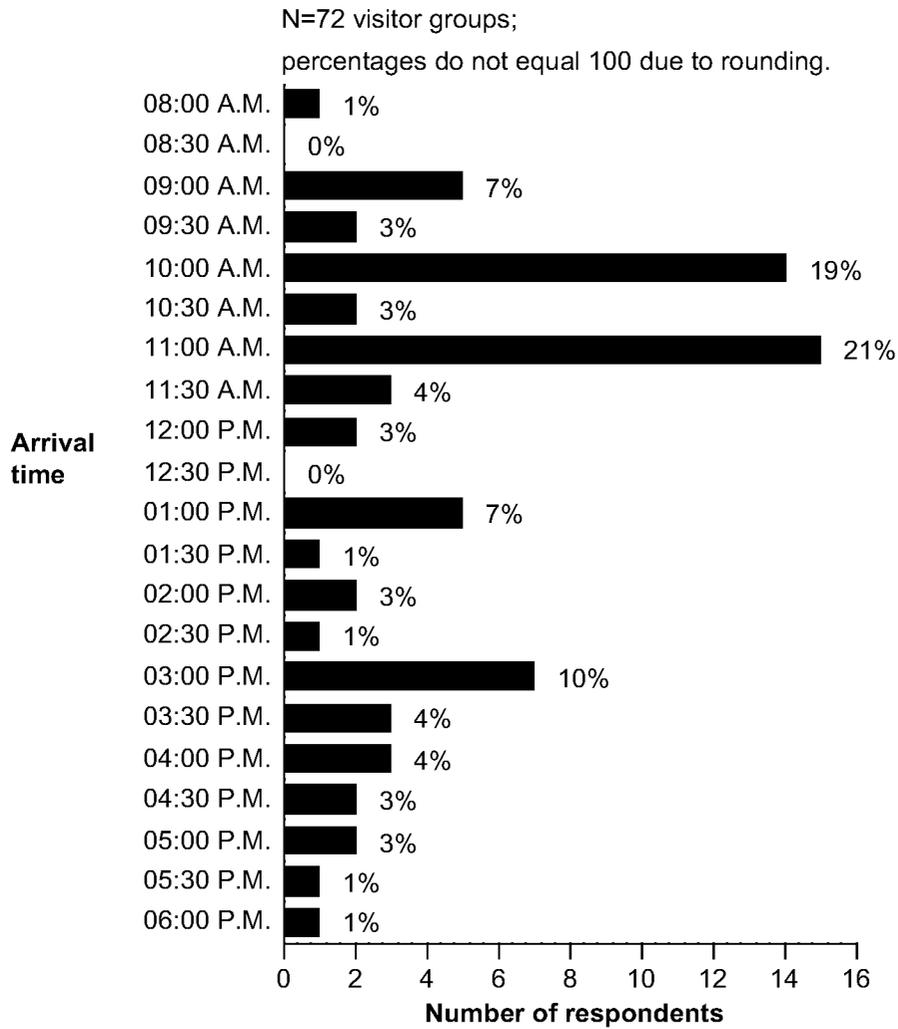


Figure 15: Arrival time at Acadian Cultural Center

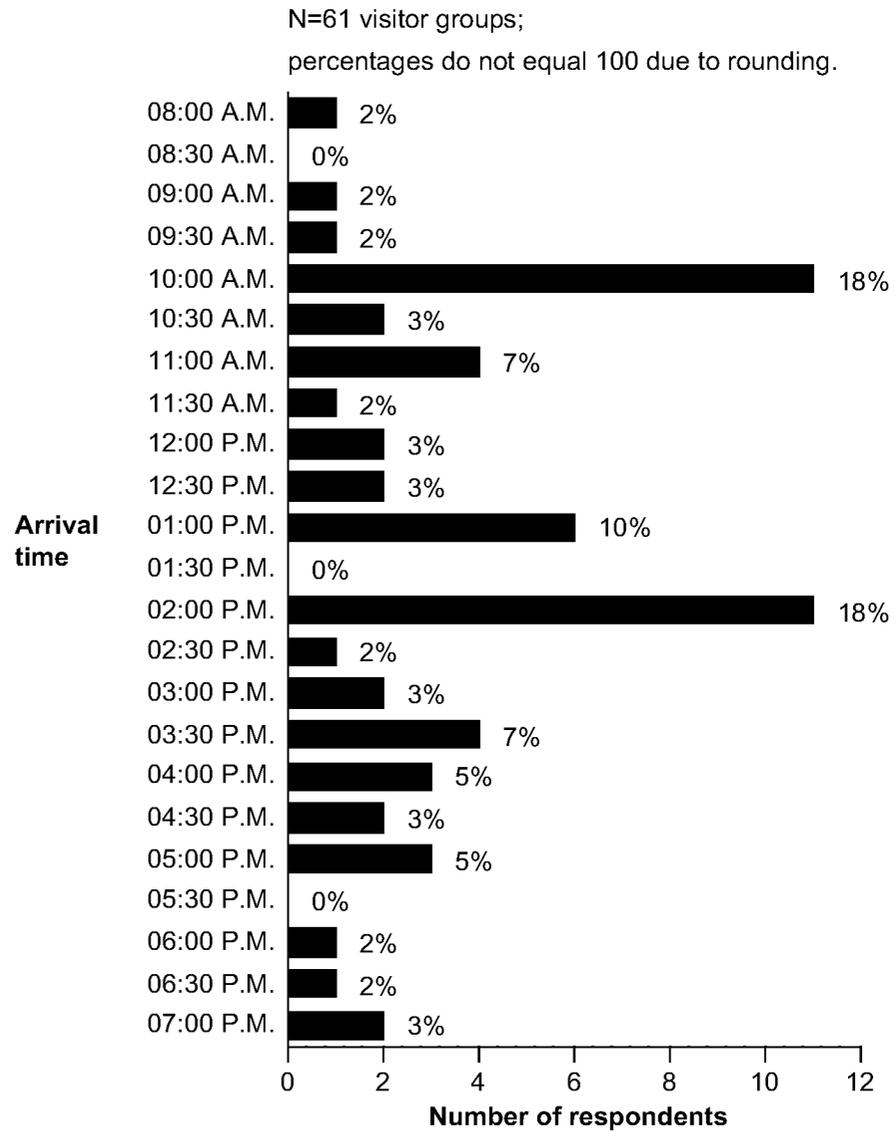


Figure 16: Arrival at Wetlands Acadian Cultural Center

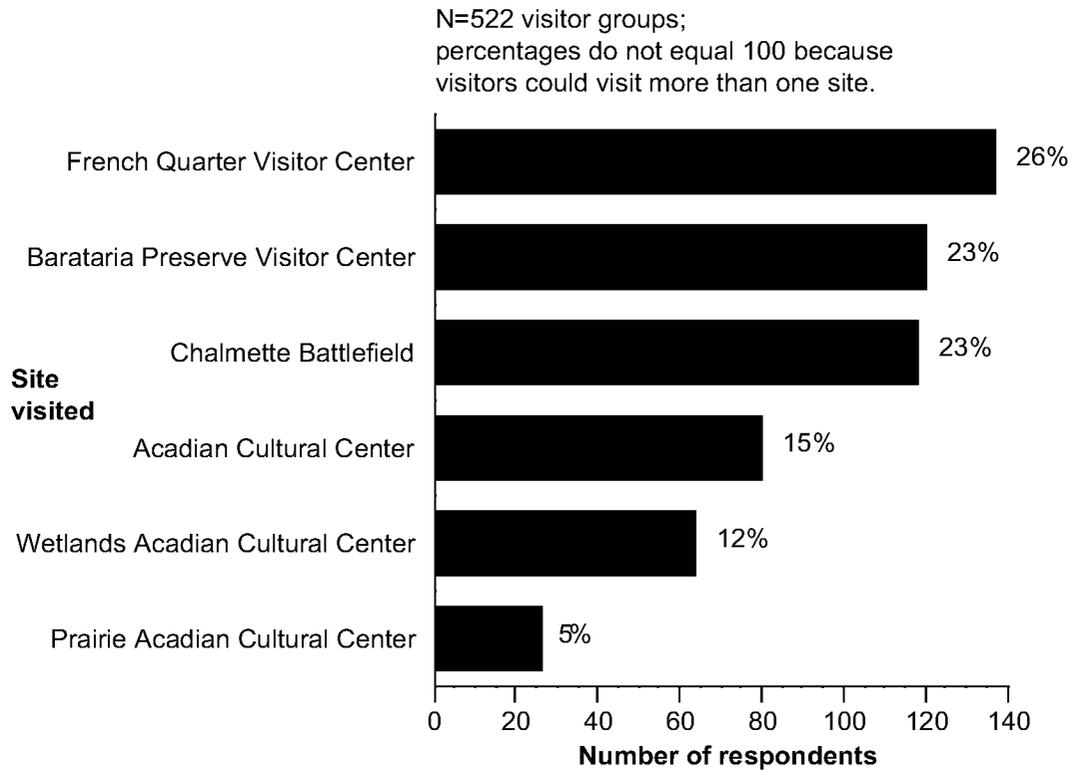


Figure 17: Used or attempted to use visitor centers

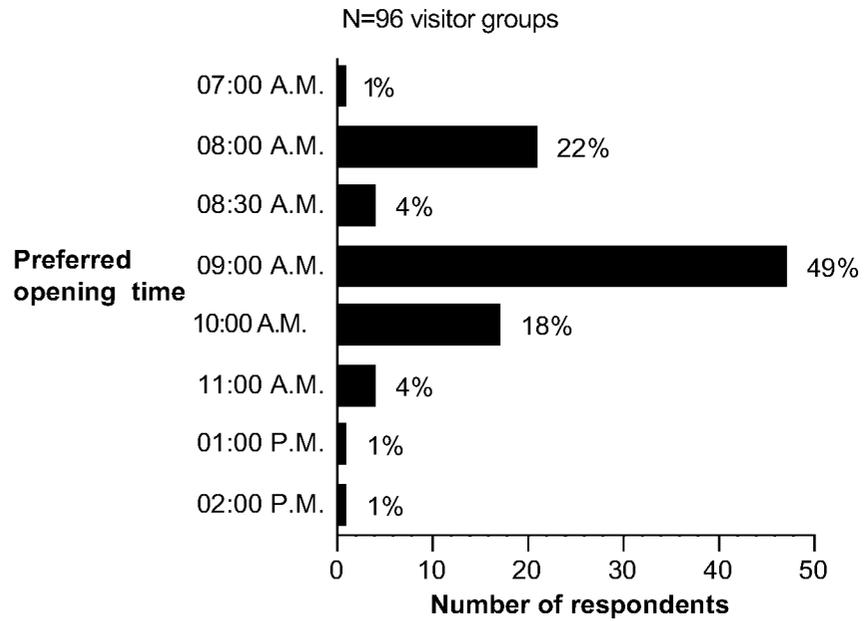


Figure 18: Preferred opening time for French Quarter Visitor Center

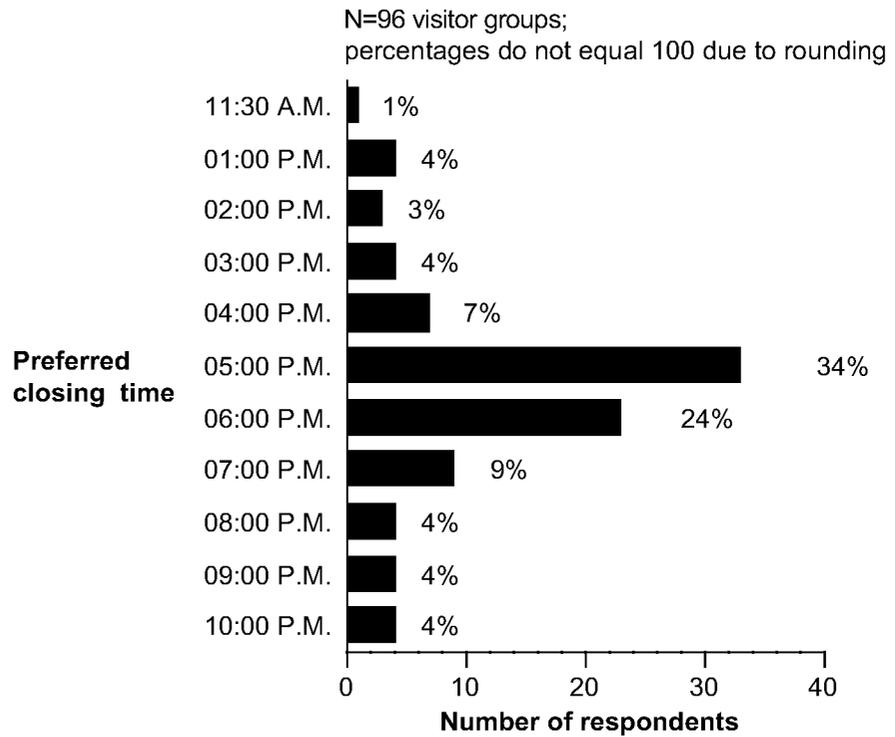


Figure 19: Preferred closing time for French Quarter visitor center

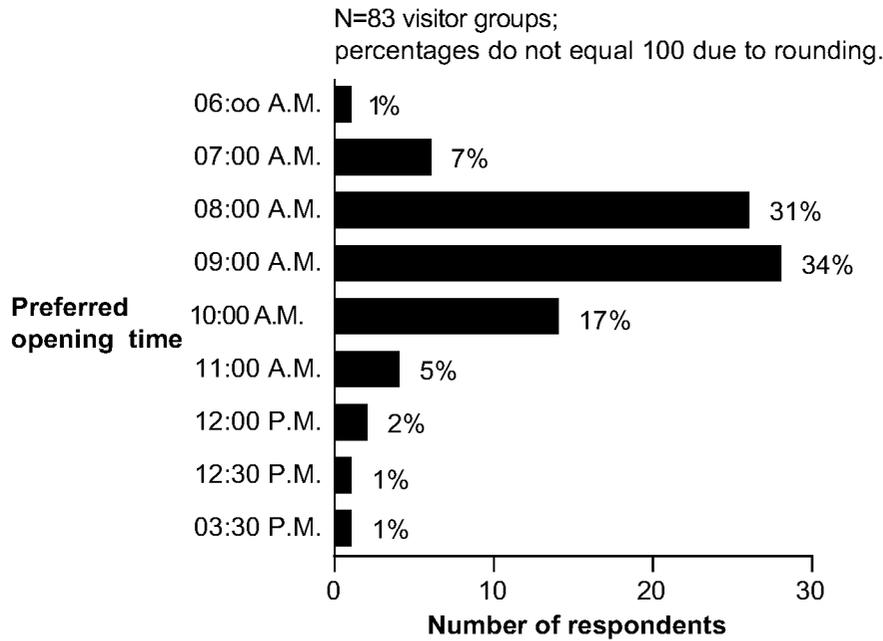


Figure 20: Preferred opening time for Chalmette Battlefield

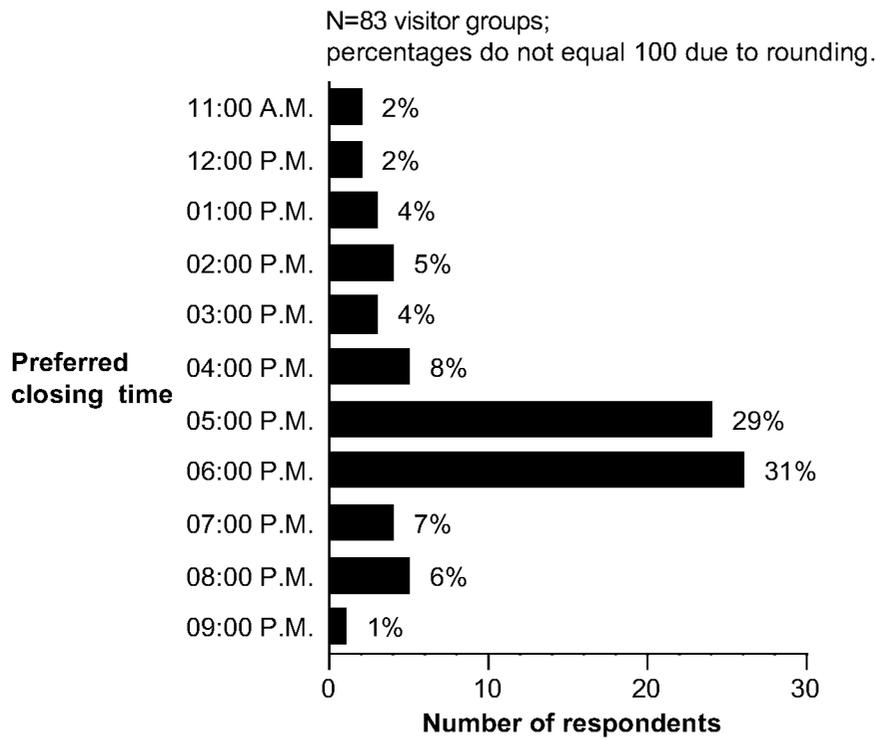


Figure 21: Preferred closing time for Chalmette Battlefield

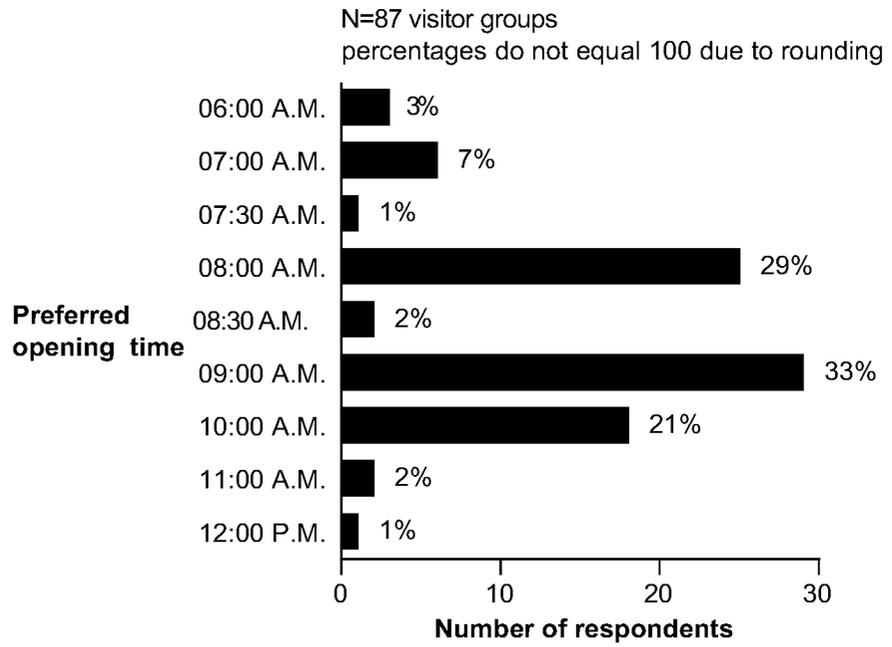


Figure 22: Preferred opening time for Barataria Preserve

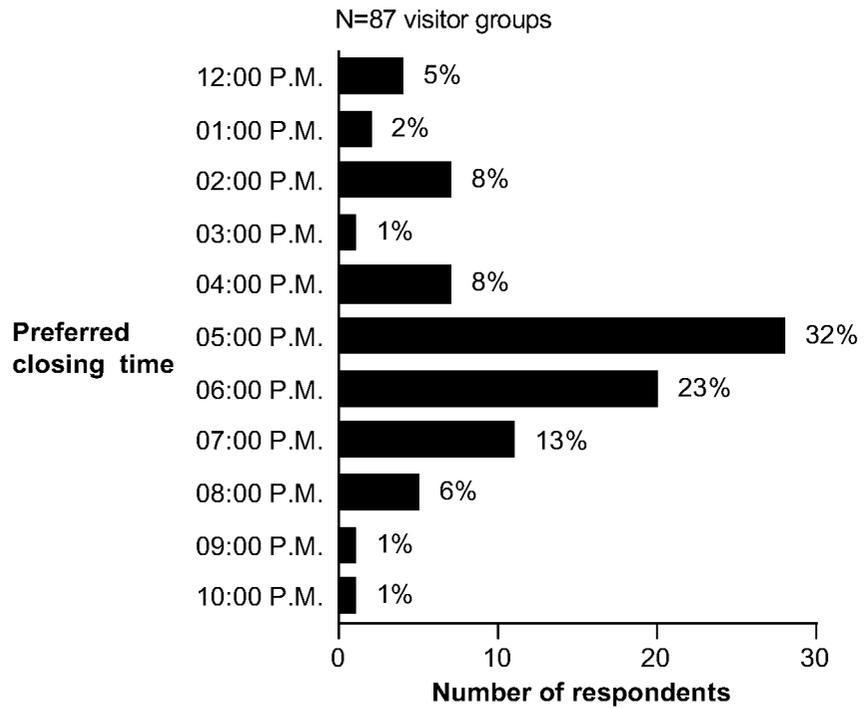


Figure 23: Preferred closing time for Barataria Preserve

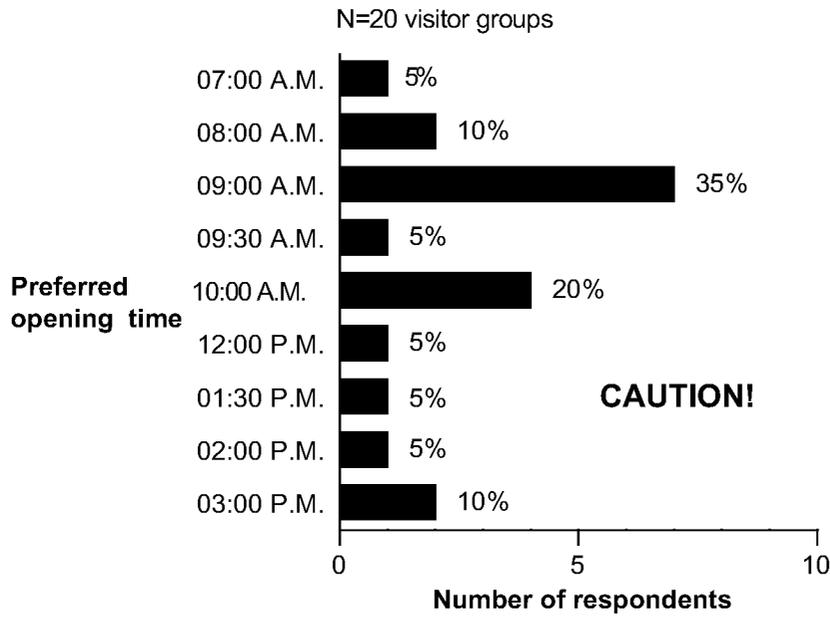


Figure 24: Preferred opening time for Prairie Acadian Cultural Center

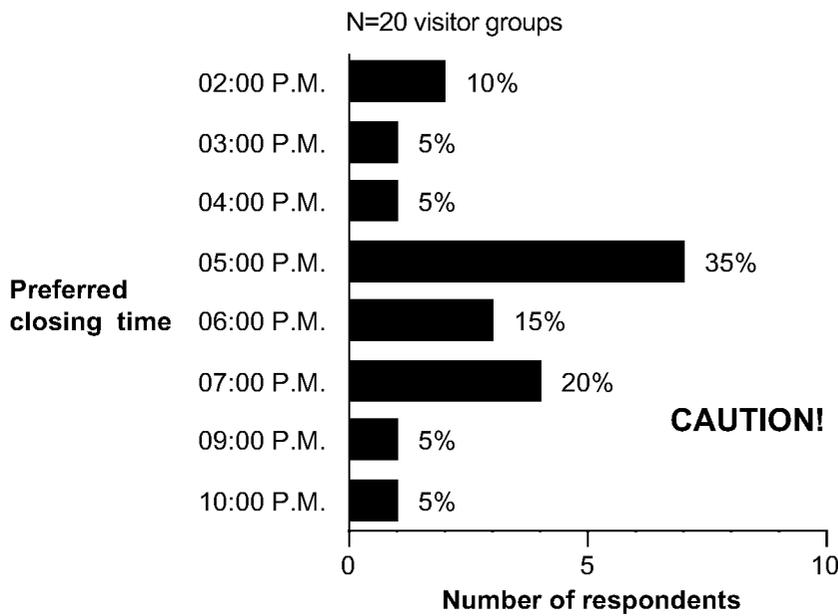


Figure 25: Preferred closing time for Prairie Acadian Cultural Center

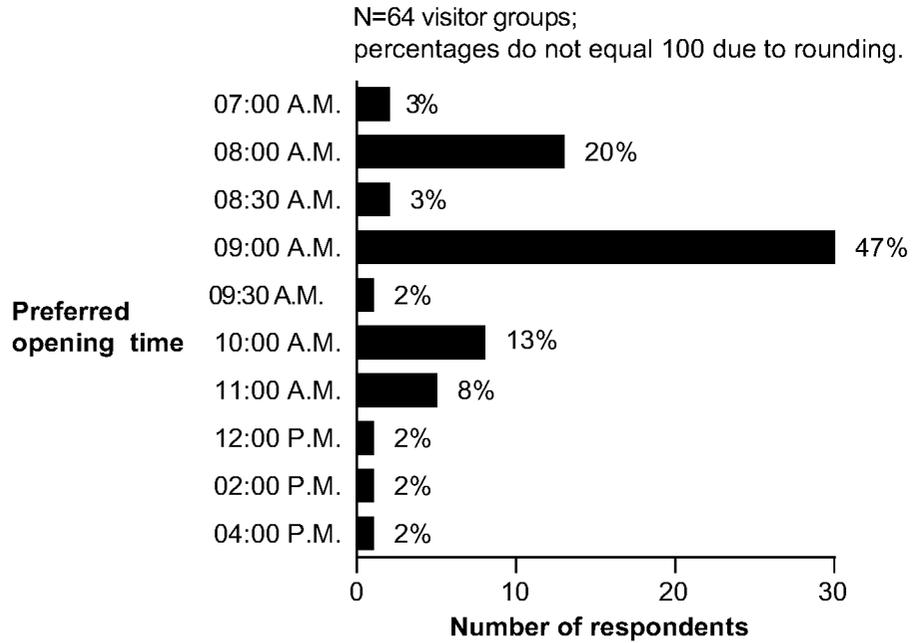


Figure 26: Preferred opening time for Acadian Cultural Center

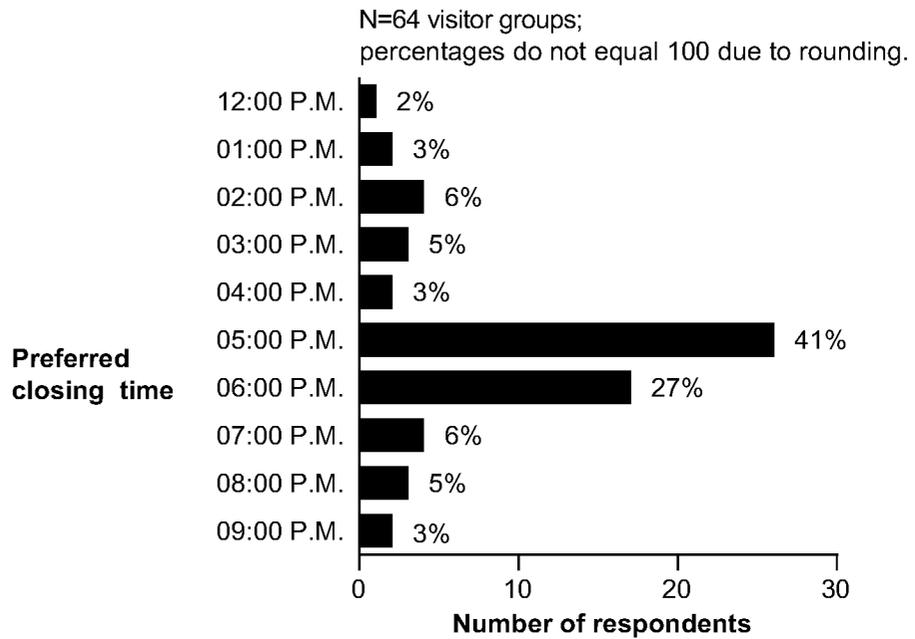


Figure 27: Preferred closing time for Acadian Cultural Center

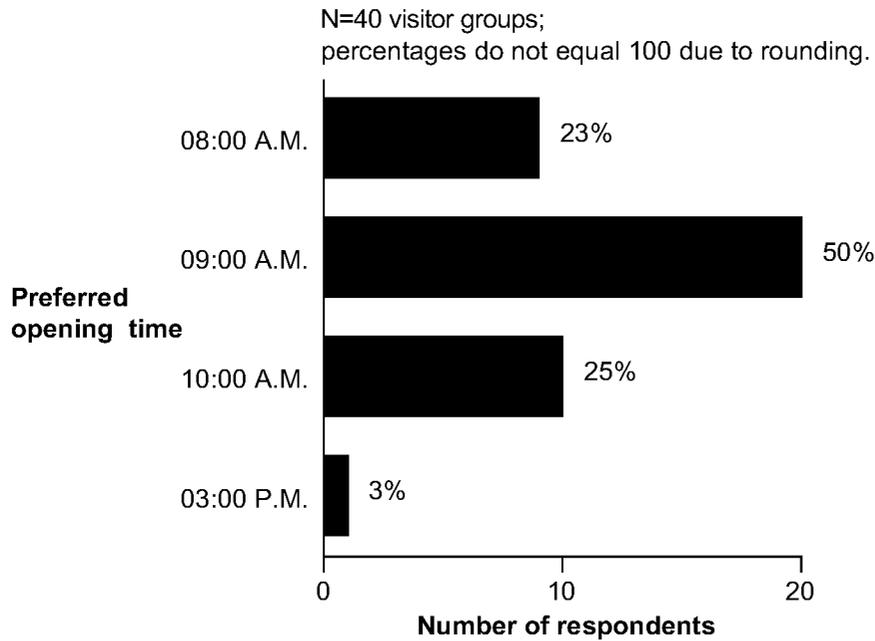


Figure 28: Preferred opening time for Wetlands Acadian Cultural Center

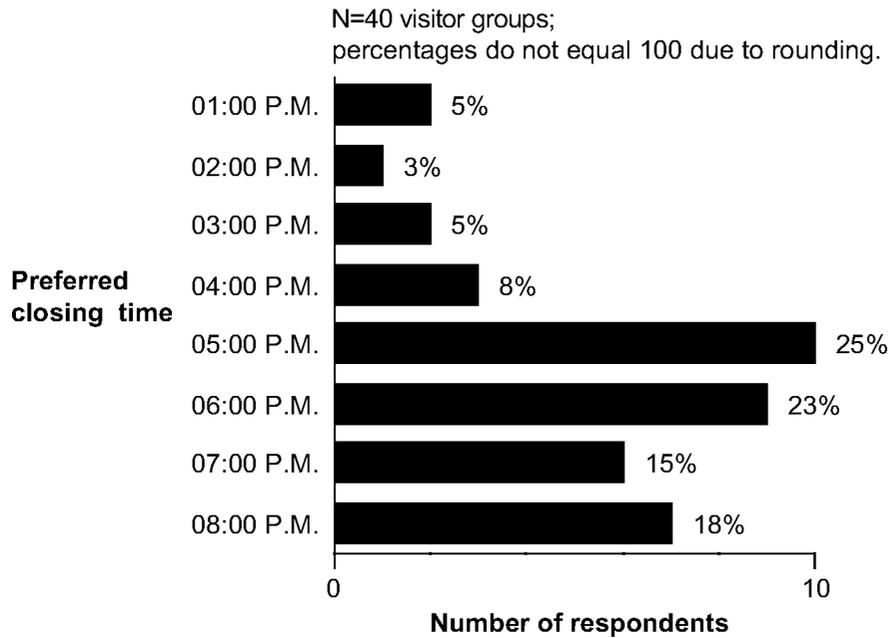


Figure 29: Preferred closing time for Wetlands Acadian Cultural Center

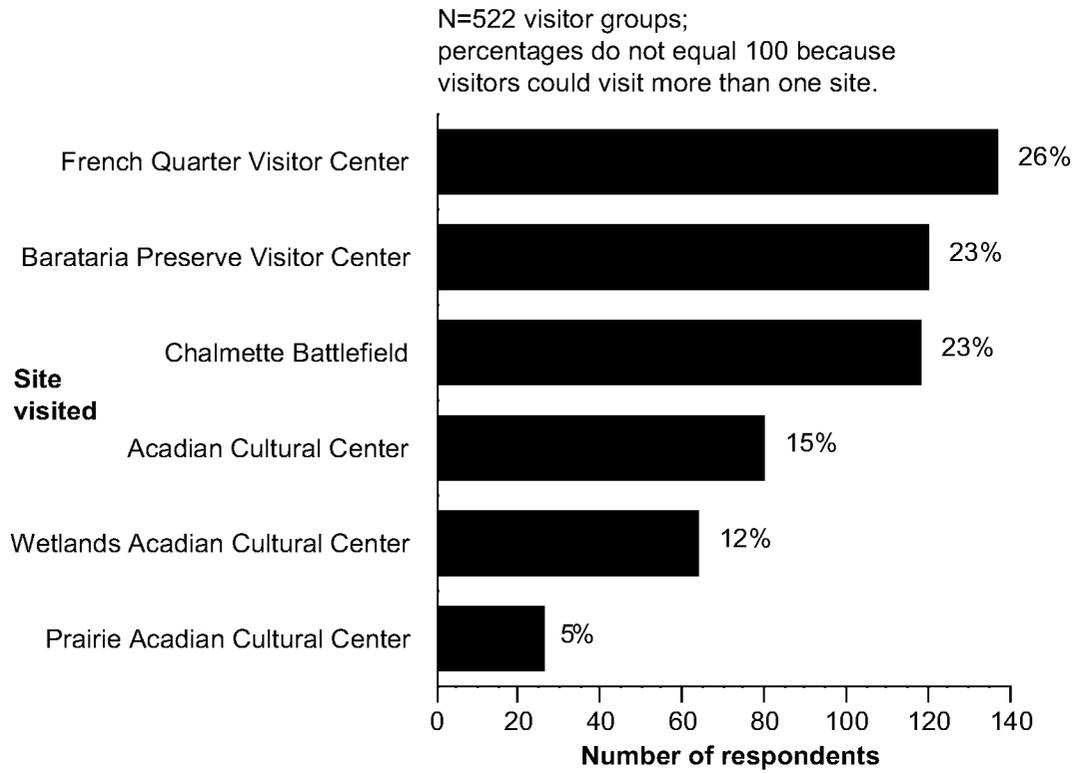


Figure 30: Sites where visitors attended or attempted to attend ranger programs

Table 6: Preferred start times and lengths for ranger-led programs**French Quarter Visitor Center**

N=60 responses

Activity start time	Length of activity								Totals
	1/4 hour	1/2 hour	3/4 hour	1 hour	1 1/4 hours	1 1/2 hours	2 hours	3 hours	
8:00 A.M.		1	1	1			1		4
8:30 A.M.				1					1
9:00 A.M.	1	1		8	1	4	4	1	20
10:00 A.M.		4	5	2		4	3		18
11:00 A.M.	1			2	1		1		5
12:00 P.M.				1		1			2
1:00 P.M.						1			1
2:00 P.M.	2				1	1			4
2:30 P.M.						1			1
3:00 P.M.			1	2					3
9:00 P.M.								1	1
Totals	4	6	7	17	3	12	9	2	

Table 7: Preferred start times and lengths for ranger-led programs

Chalmette Battlefield

N=45 responses

Activity start time	Length of activity								Totals
	1/4 hour	1/2 hour	3/4 hour	1 hour	1 1/4 hours	1 1/2 hours	2 hours	3 hours	
7:00 A.M.			1						1
8:00 A.M.	1		3	1		1	2		8
9:00 A.M.	1		1	3					5
9:30 A.M.				1					1
10:00 A.M.	5	3	3	1			1	1	9
11:00 A.M.	1		2				1		4
11:30 A.M.	1								1
12:00 P.M.		1		1					2
1:00 P.M.	1	2		1					4
2:00 P.M.	2		1						3
2:30 P.M.	1	1							2
4:00 P.M.		1							1
Totals	13	8	8	10	0	1	4	1	

Table 8: Preferred start times and lengths for ranger-led programs**Barataria Preserve**

N=30 responses

Activity start time	Length of activity								Totals
	1/4 hour	1/2 hour	3/4 hour	1 hour	1 1/4 hours	1 1/2 hours	2 hours	3 hours	
8:00 A.M.	1			1			1	1	4
8:30 A.M.				1					1
9:00 A.M.				5					5
10:00 A.M.		2		4					6
11:00 A.M.				2			1		3
1:00 P.M.		1							1
2:00 P.M.	1		1	2		2			6
3:00 P.M.				2					1
6:00 P.M.		1							1
6:30 P.M.				1					1
Totals	2	4	1	18	0	2	2	1	

Table 9: Preferred start times and lengths for ranger-led programs

Prairie Acadian Cultural Center

N=13 responses

CAUTION!

Activity start time	Length of activity								Totals
	1/4 hour	1/2 hour	3/4 hour	1 hour	1 1/4 hours	1 1/2 hours	2 hours	3 hours	
8:00 A.M.							1		1
9:00 A.M.				1		1			2
9:30 A.M.				1					1
11:00 A.M.				1		1			2
1:00 P.M.							1		1
2:00 P.M.			2	1					3
3:00 P.M.			1	1					2
6:00 P.M.							1		1
Totals	0	0	3	5	0	2	3	0	

Table 10: Preferred start times and lengths for ranger-led programs
Acadian Cultural Center
 N=20 responses
CAUTION!

Activity start time	Length of activity								Totals
	1/4 hour	1/2 hour	3/4 hour	1 hour	1 1/4 hours	1 1/2 hours	2 hours	3 hours	
8:00 A.M.							1		1
9:00 A.M.		1	1	2					4
9:30 A.M.				1		1			2
10:00 A.M.				2					2
11:00 A.M.				1			2		3
1:00 P.M.			1						1
2:00 P.M.	1			1		1			3
3:00 P.M.							2		2
6:00 P.M.		1		1					2
Totals	1	2	2	8	0	2	5	0	

Table 11: Preferred start times and lengths for ranger-led programs

Wetlands Acadian Cultural Center

N=16 responses

CAUTION!

Activity start time	Length of activity								Totals
	1/4 hour	1/2 hour	3/4 hour	1 hour	1 1/4 hours	1 1/2 hours	2 hours	3 hours	
8:00 A.M.							1		1
9:00 A.M.	1	1							2
9:30 A.M.				1					1
10:00 A.M.		2	1	1		1			5
11:00 A.M.							1		1
2:00 P.M.	1								1
4:00 P.M.		1							1
6:00 P.M.				1					1
7:00 P.M.				2		1			3
Totals	2	4	1	5	0	2	2	0	

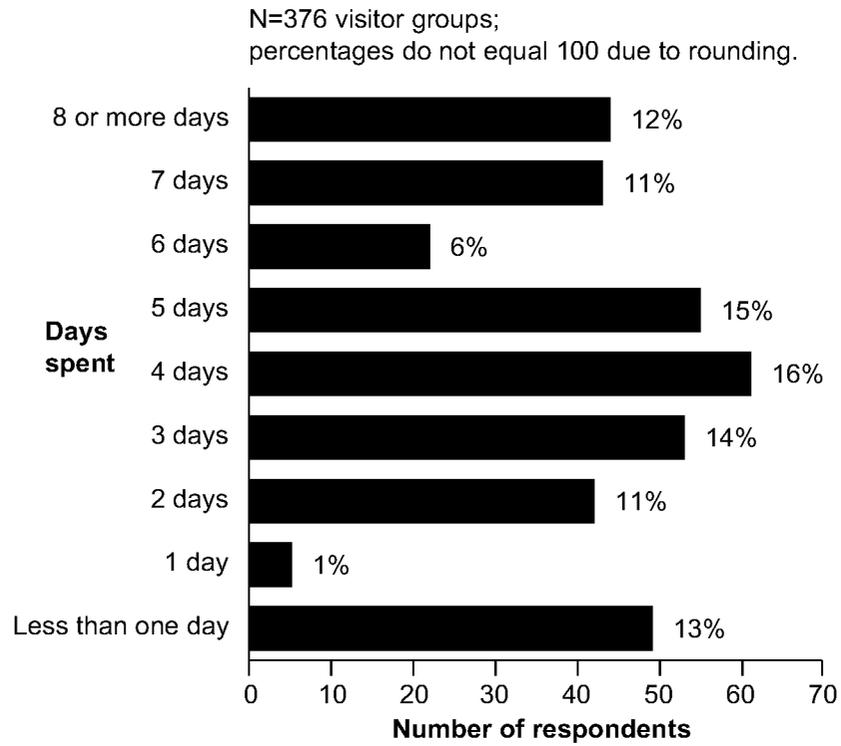


Figure 31: Days spent in southern Louisiana

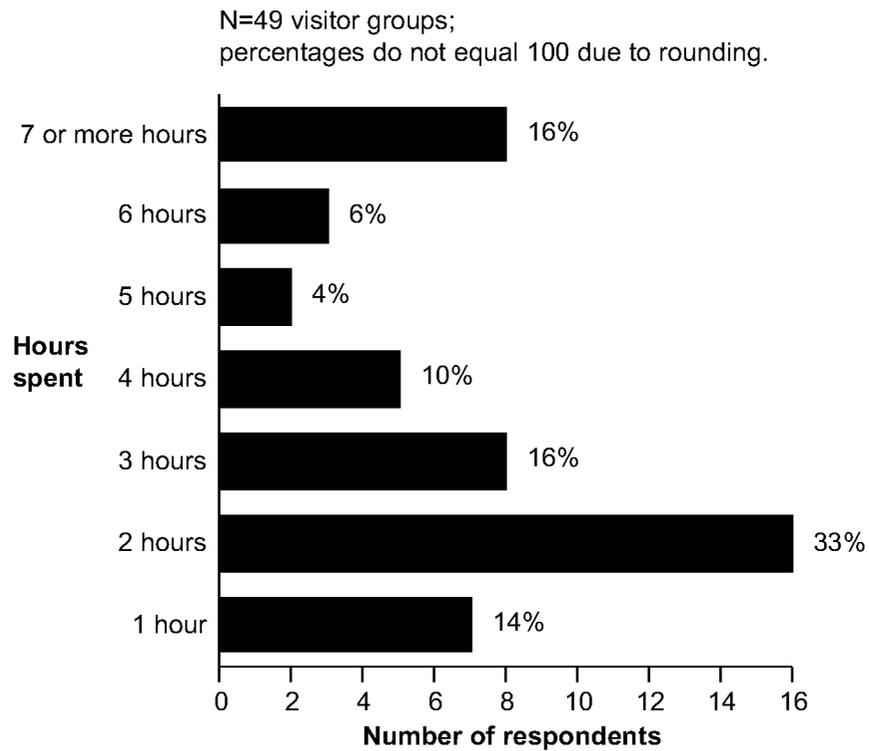


Figure 32: Hours spent in southern Louisiana

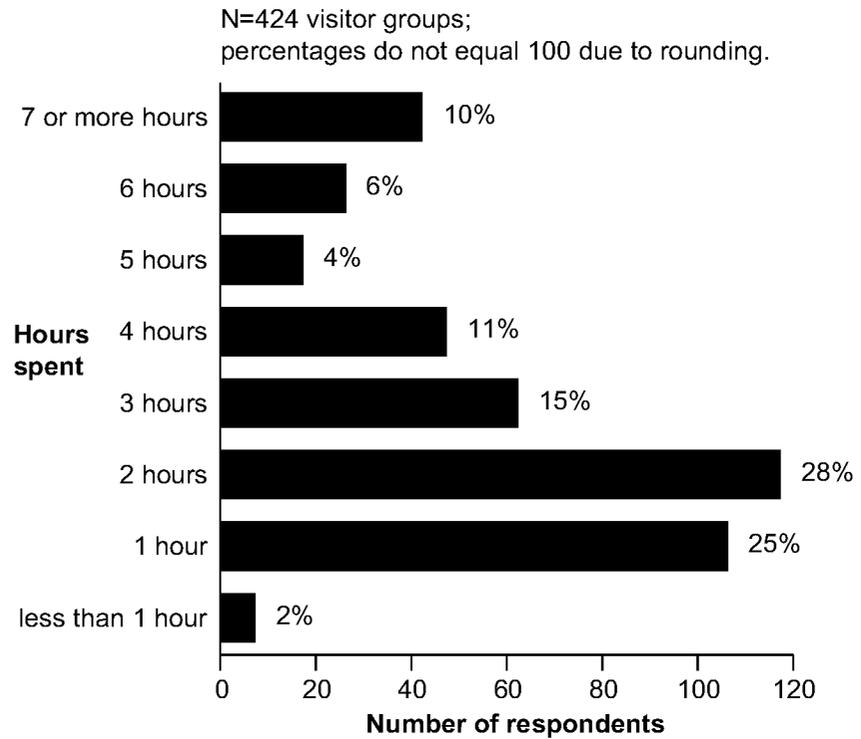


Figure 33: Total time spent at all park and preserve sites

Visitor groups were asked to indicate the forms of transportation they used to arrive in southern Louisiana and the forms of transportation used to arrive at Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve.

Forms of transportation

As is shown by Figure 34, 52% percent of all visitors used a private vehicle to arrive in southern Louisiana. Twenty-six percent of all visitors indicated that they live in southern Louisiana. "Other" forms of transportation used to arrive in southern Louisiana include RV's and school buses.

Additionally, a majority of visitors (62%) used private vehicles to arrive at Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve (see Figure 35). Other forms of transportation used to arrive at Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve also included RV's and school busses.

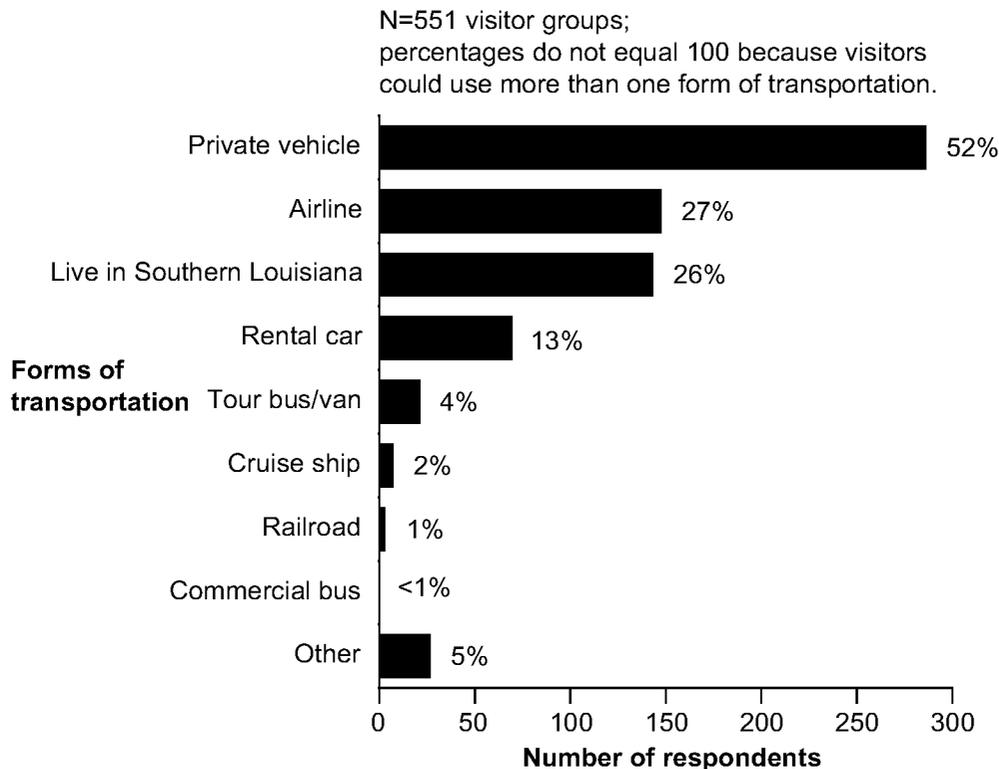


Figure 34: Forms of transportation to arrive in southern Louisiana

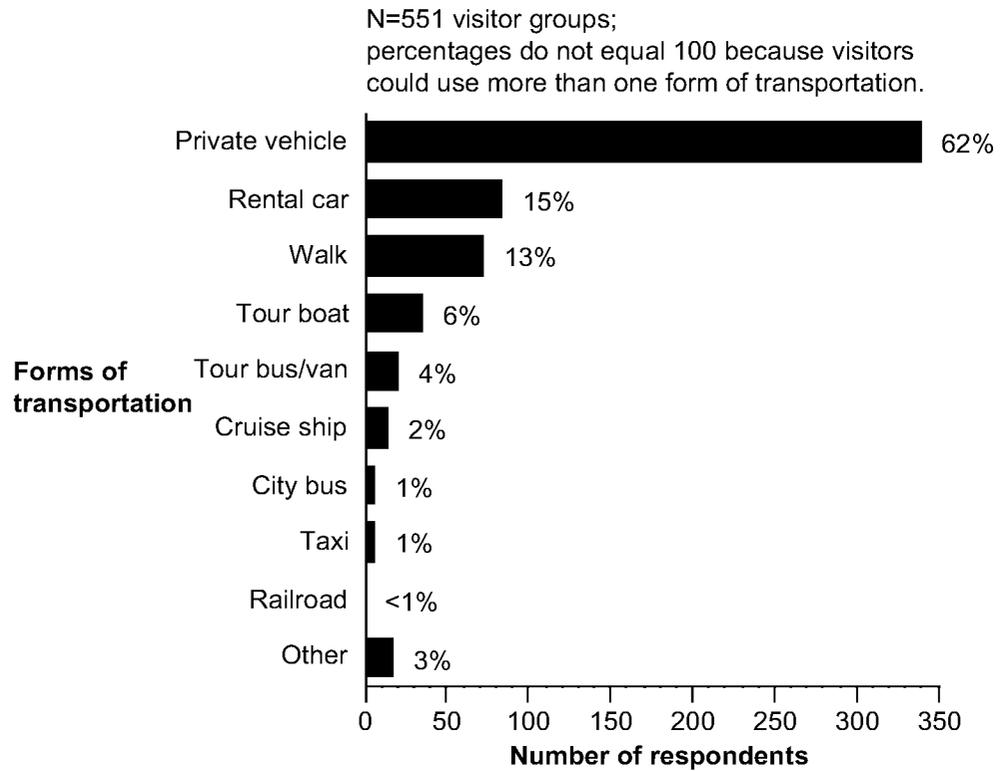


Figure 35: Forms of transportation to arrive at Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve

Figure 36 shows the proportion of visitor groups who participated in a variety of activities at Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. The most common activities were viewing wildflowers (42%), visiting historic sites (38%), viewing wildlife (36%) and viewing birds (34%). Visitor groups participated in a number of "other" activities including viewing exhibits, strolling grounds, and visiting museums.

Activities

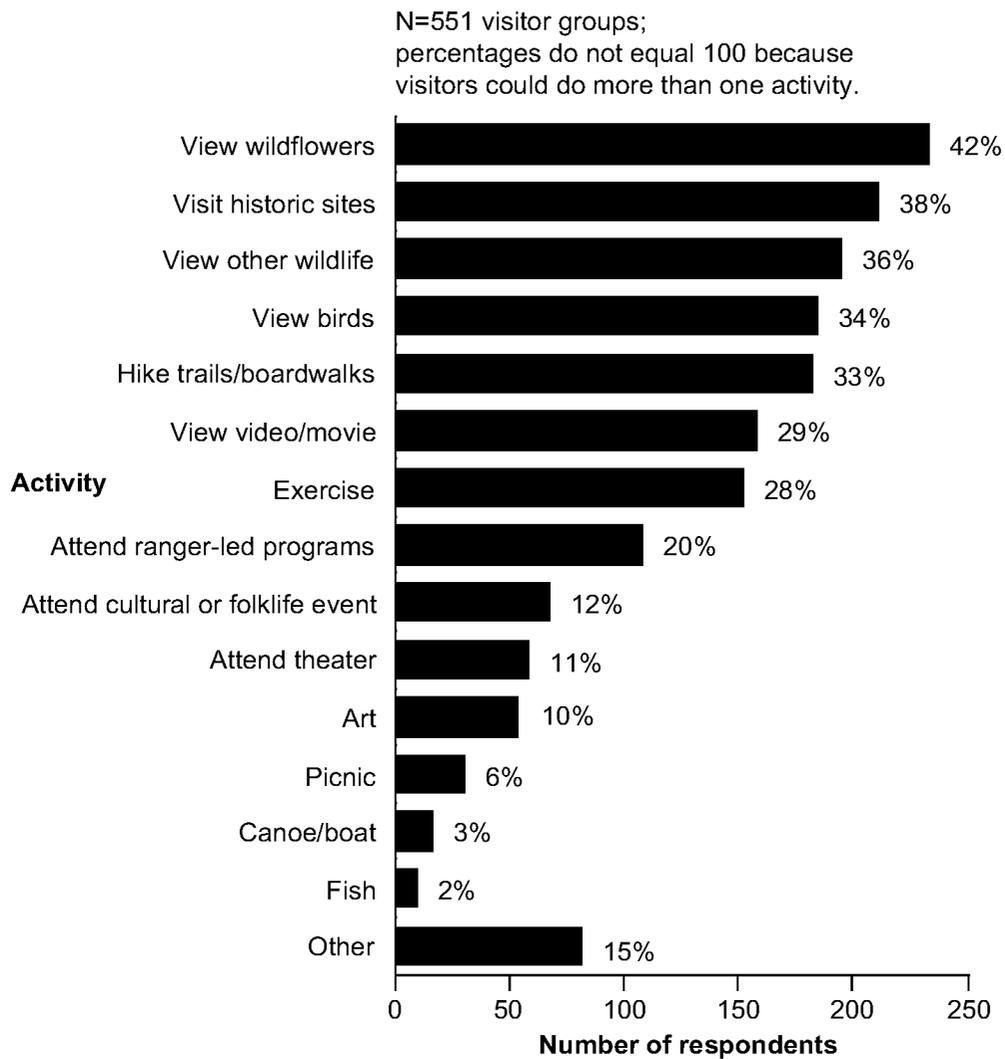


Figure 36: Visitor activities

Sources of information

Visitor groups were asked to indicate the sources from which they had received information about Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve prior to their visit. Eighteen percent of visitor groups received no information prior to their visit, 25% received information from friends or relatives, and 22% received information as a result of a prior visit (see Figure 37). "Other" sources of information used by visitor groups included living nearby, highway signs, a local newspaper, and the Louisiana department of tourism.

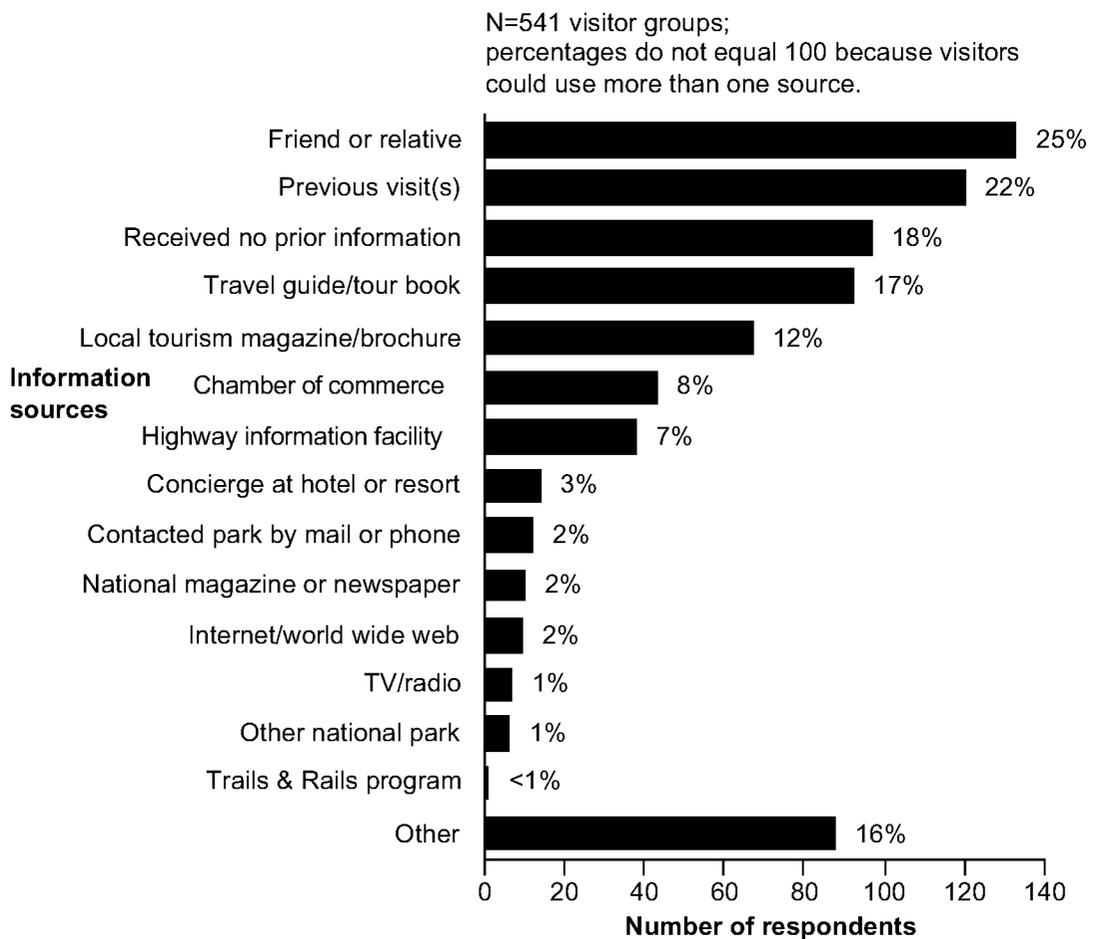


Figure 37: Sources of information used by visitors

Visitor groups were asked to list their reasons for visiting Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. As is shown by Figure 38, 46% of the groups wanted to learn about southern Louisiana history, while 40% wanted to learn about southern Louisiana culture. Groups listed a number of “other” reasons for visiting, including viewing irises, alligators, and using the library (in Thibodaux). Visitor groups were asked if they had a special interest in the history and culture of southern Louisiana. Almost half (49%) indicated that they had a special interest (see Figure 39). Table 12 lists the subjects that visitor groups said they were most interested in.

Reasons for visiting

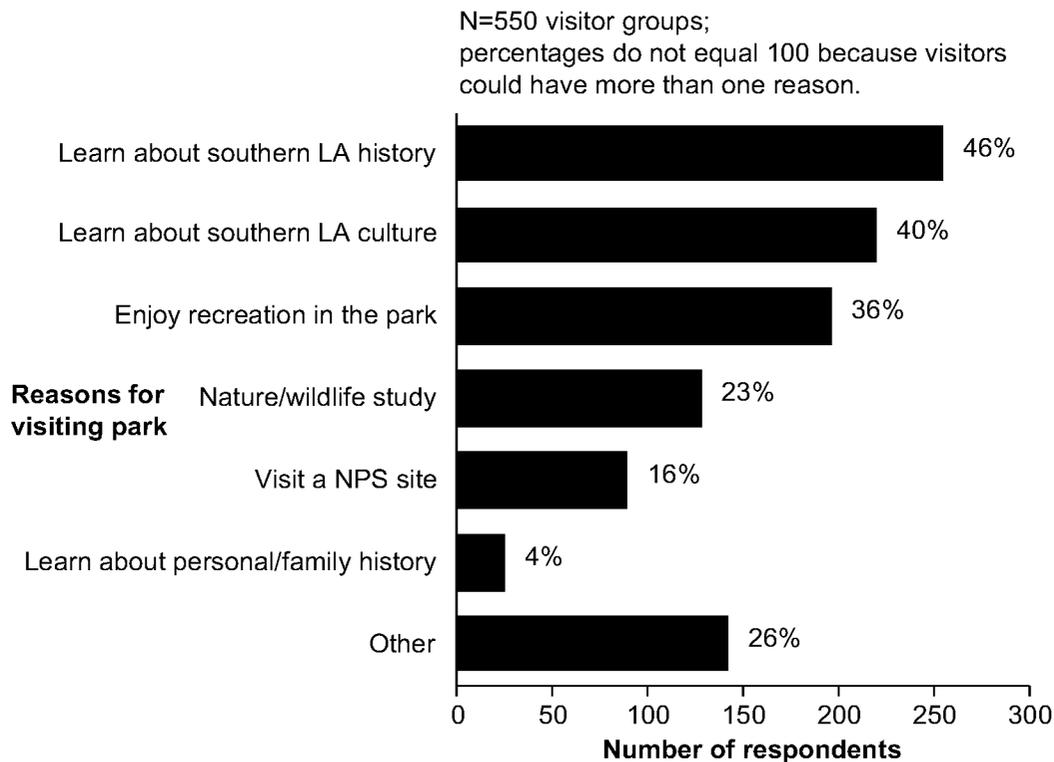


Figure 38: Reasons for visiting Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve

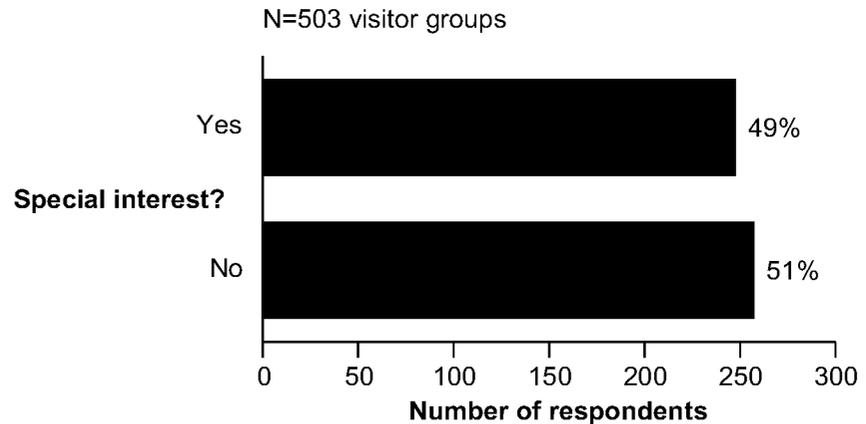


Figure 39: Special interest in history and culture?

Table 12: Subjects most interested in

N=229 comments;
several visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
Cajun culture	29
Food/cooking	17
History	11
Architecture	10
History and culture of all types	10
Acadian history	10
Art	10
Music	9
Acadians	9
History of southern Louisiana	8
Creole culture	8
Genealogy	8
New Orleans history	5
Cultural background	4
Clothes/customs of people in 1800's	4
Military history	4
Music/dance of Acadians	4
Antebellum plantations	3
Jazz	3
Folklore	3
Louisiana wildlife	3
Louisiana irises	3
Native Americans	3
Civil War	3
Life of Jean Lafitte	3
Shrimp drying in Manila village	2
Cajuns French origin	2
History of early settlers	2
Cemeteries	2
Primitive hand made folk art	2
Other comments	35

Visitor groups were asked whether they had a better understanding of the national significance of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve as a result of their visit. As is shown by Figure 40, a majority of visitor groups (84%) felt they had a better understanding of the park's significance. Prior to completing the questionnaire 66% of visitor groups were not aware that the park was comprised of six sites (see Figure 41). Visitor groups were also asked to list the most important information they learned about the park. Most comments were about battles/battlefields, Acadian history and Cajun culture (see Table 13).

Understand national significance

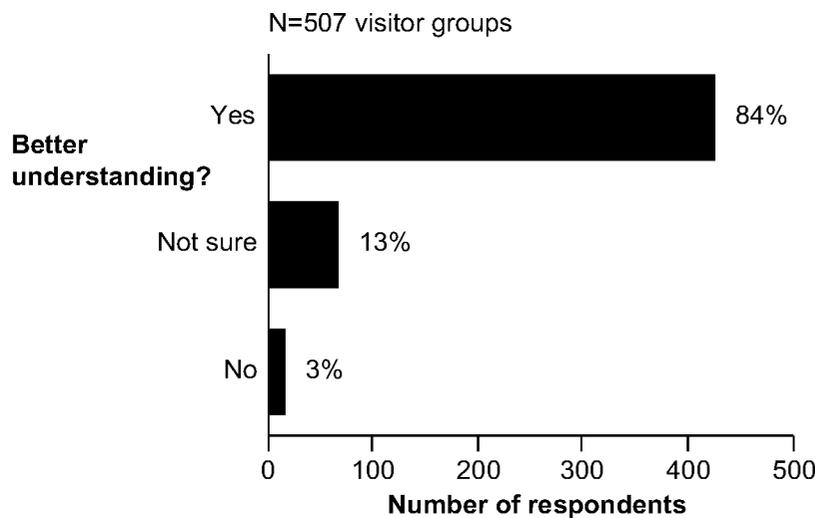


Figure 40: Better understanding of national significance

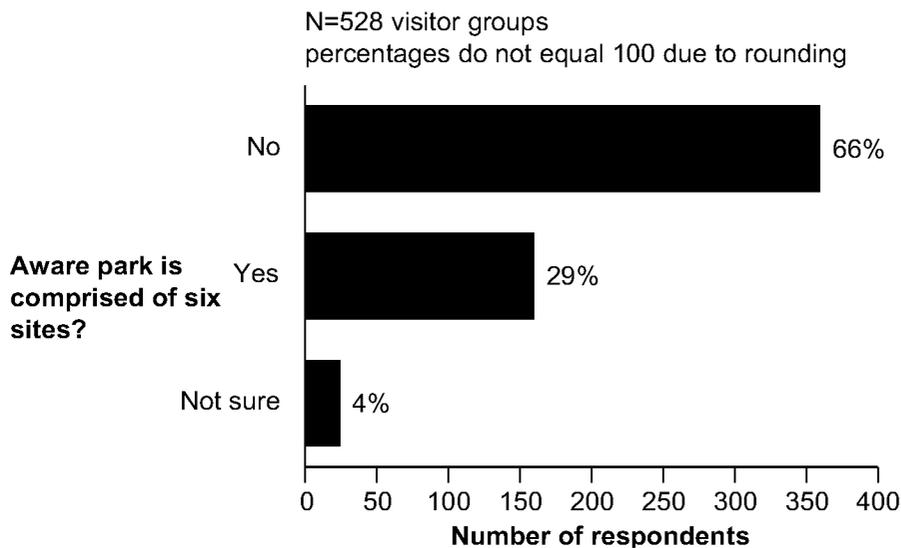


Figure 41: Aware park is comprised of six sites

Table 13: Most important thing visitors learned about the park

N=326 comments;
several visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
History/significance of battles/battlefields	48
Acadian history	35
Cajun culture	26
History of Cajun people	22
Flora and fauna	20
Park composed of multiple sites	20
Characteristics/value of the swamp	18
Southern Louisiana culture	17
Parks preserve culture and history as well as nature	14
Importance of wetlands	13
That it exists	8
History of French Quarter	7
Biodiversity of area	7
How beautiful it is	7
Natural history	6
History of Jean Lafitte	5
Family history	4
Park is impressive	3
Nova Scotia/Acadia relationship	3
Indian history and culture	2
Importance of preserving different areas	2
Role of blacks	2
Need to see area to appreciate it	2
Use of canals	2
Reasons for creating the park	2
Challenges confronting settlers	2
Historical significance of the state	2
Other comments	27

Visitor groups were asked to note the visitor services and facilities they used during their visit to Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. As is shown by Figure 43, the services that were most commonly used by visitor groups were visitor center exhibits (75%), assistance by park staff (60%), and the park brochure/map (47%). The least used service was the ranger-led canoe tour (1%).

**Visitor services:
use, importance
and quality**

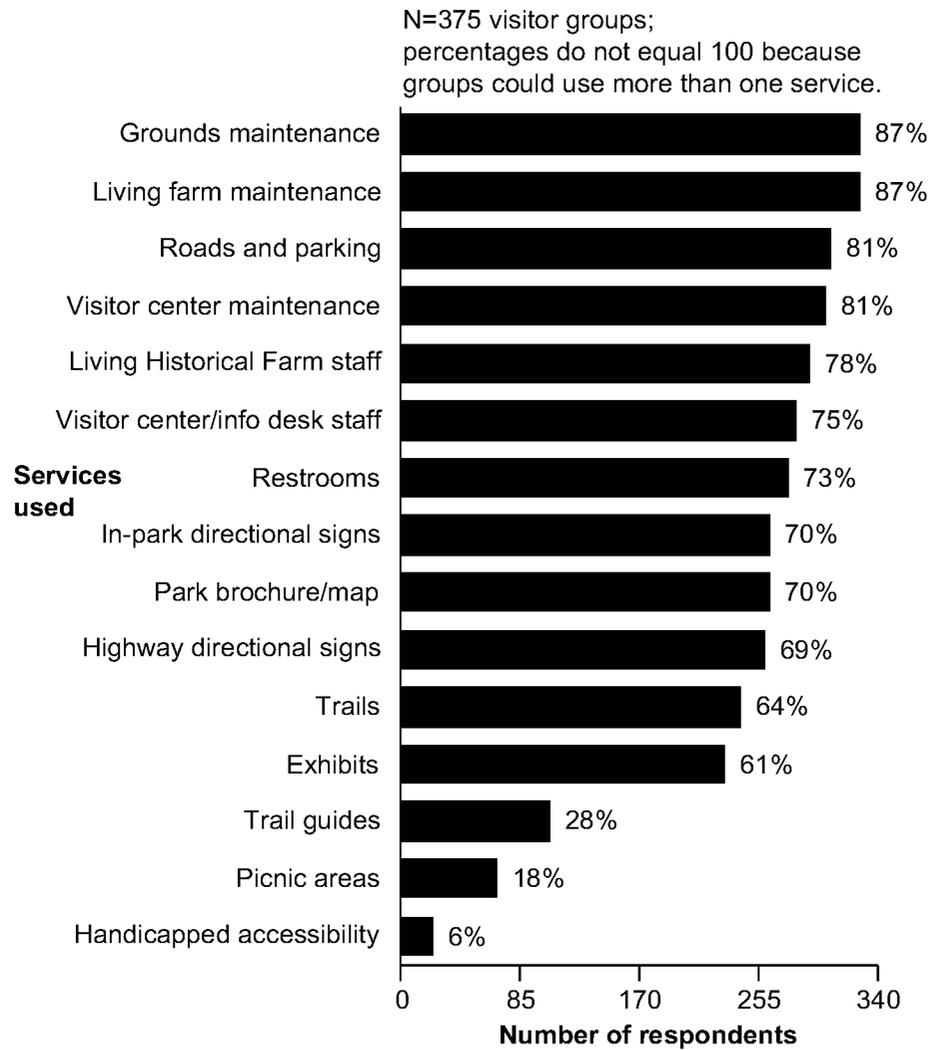


Figure 43: Services used

Visitor groups rated the importance and quality of each of the services they used. The following five point scales were used in the questionnaire:

<p>IMPORTANCE 5=extremely important 4=very important 3=moderately important</p>
--

<p>QUALITY 5=very good 4=good 3=average</p>
--

2=somewhat important 1=not important

2=poor 1=very poor

Figure 44 shows the average importance and quality ratings for visitor services. An average score was determined for each service based on ratings provided by visitors who used that service. This was done for both importance and quality, and the results are plotted on the grid shown in Figure 44. All services were rated as above "average" both in importance and quality. It should be noted that the park newsletter, junior ranger program, children's education programs, and the ranger-led canoe tour were not rated by enough groups to provide reliable information.

Figures 45-54 show the importance ratings that were provided by visitor groups for each of the individual services. Those services receiving the highest proportion of "extremely important" or "very important" ratings included information or assistance from park staff (91%), ranger-led tours/programs (89%), and the park brochure/map (86%).

Figures 55-64 show the quality ratings that were provided by visitor groups for each of the individual services. Those services receiving the highest proportion of "very good" or "good" ratings included information or assistance from park staff (91%), ranger-led tours/programs (88%) and visitor center exhibits (79%).

Figure 65 combines the "very good" and "good" quality ratings and compares those ratings for all of the services.

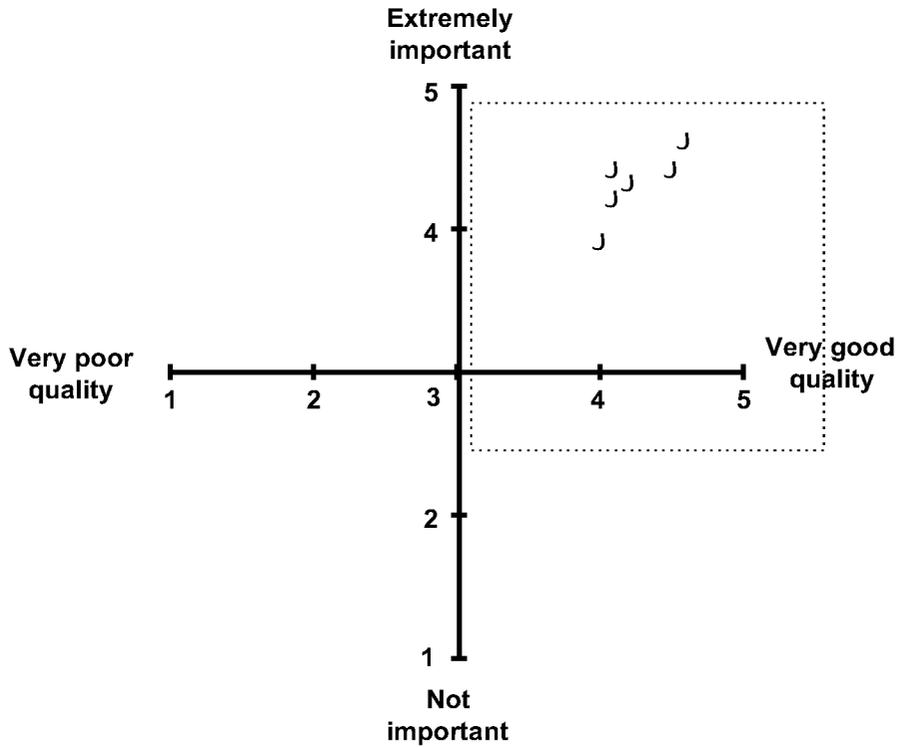


Figure 44: Average ratings of service importance and quality

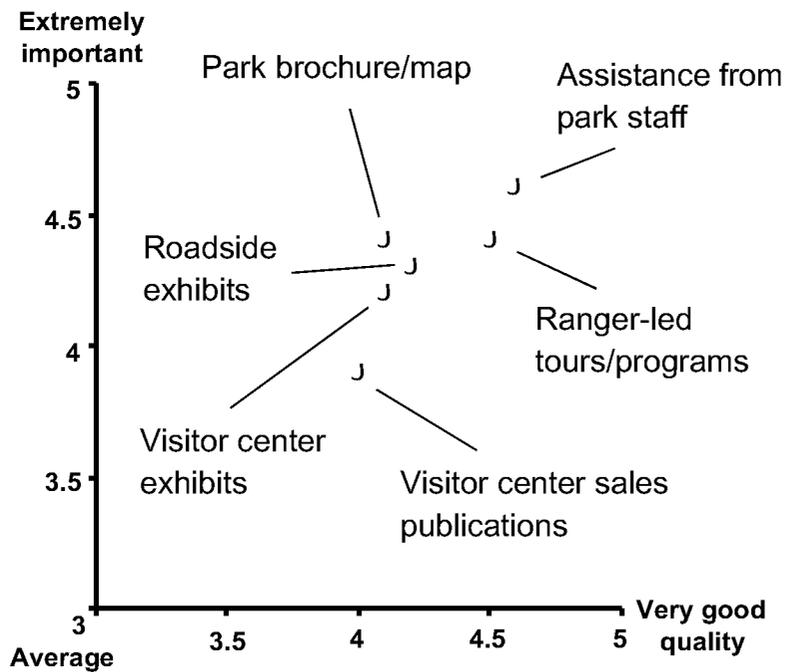


Figure 44: Detail

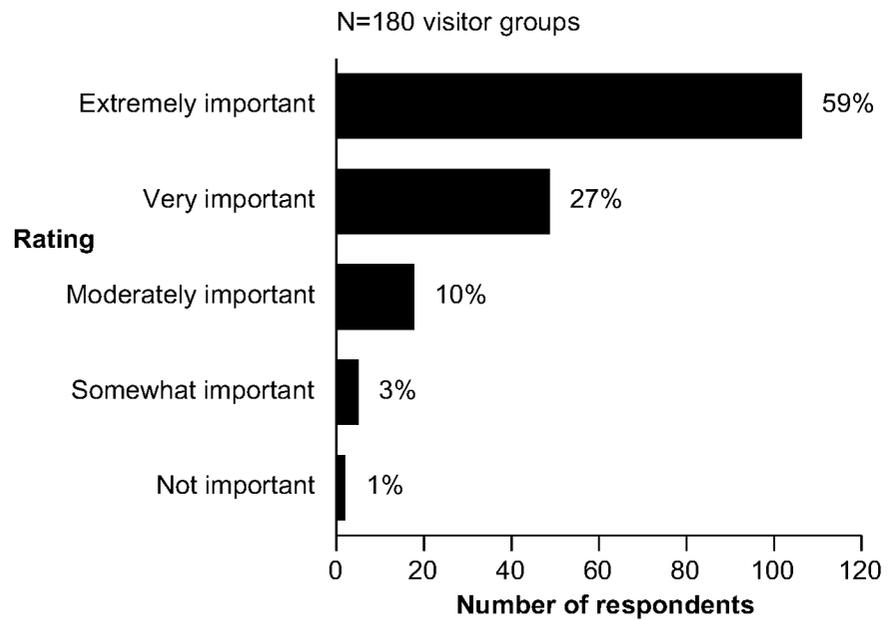


Figure 45: Importance of park brochure/map

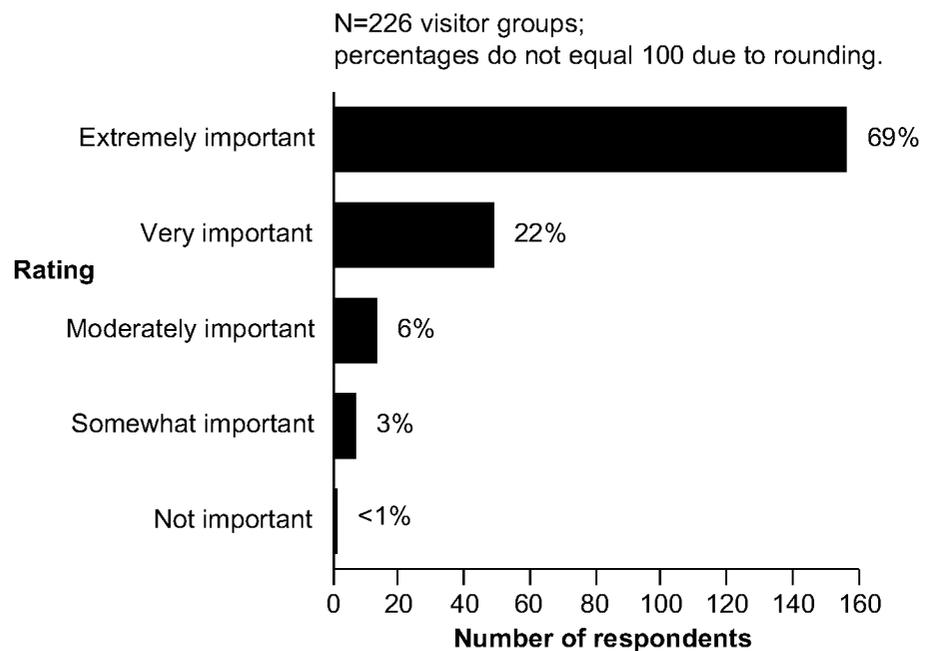


Figure 46: Importance of information or assistance from park staff

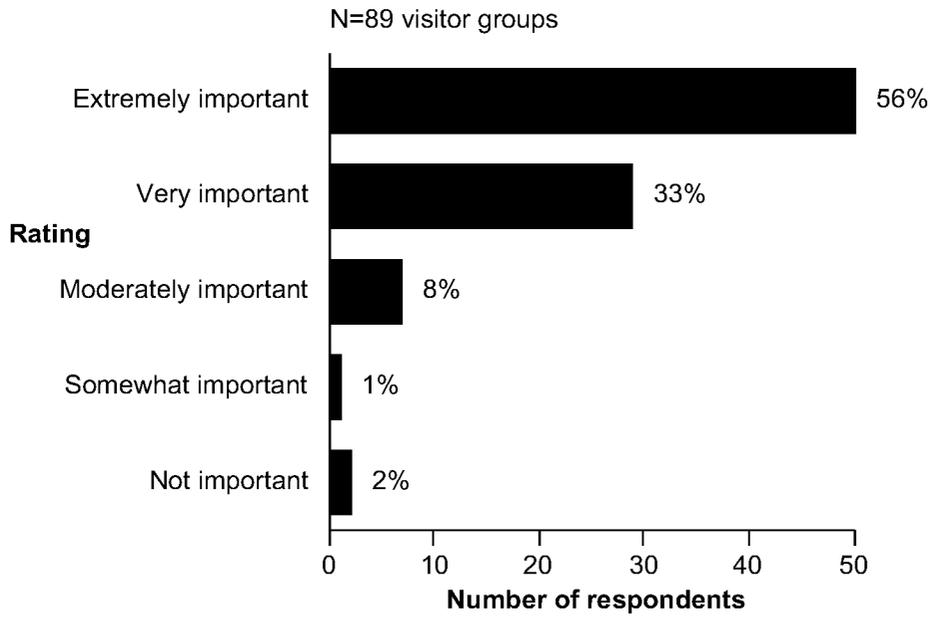


Figure 47: Importance of ranger-led tours or programs

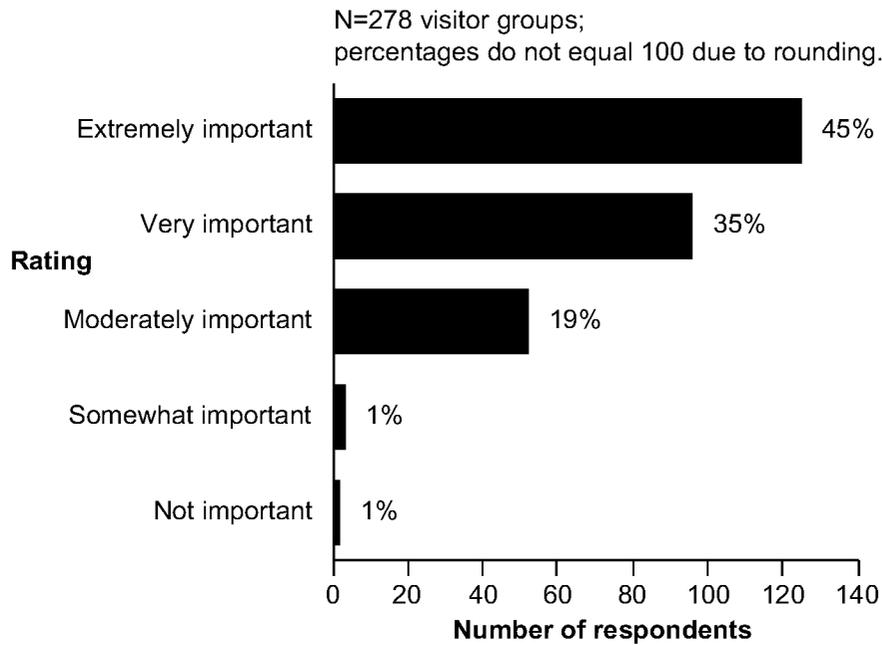


Figure 48: Importance of visitor center exhibits

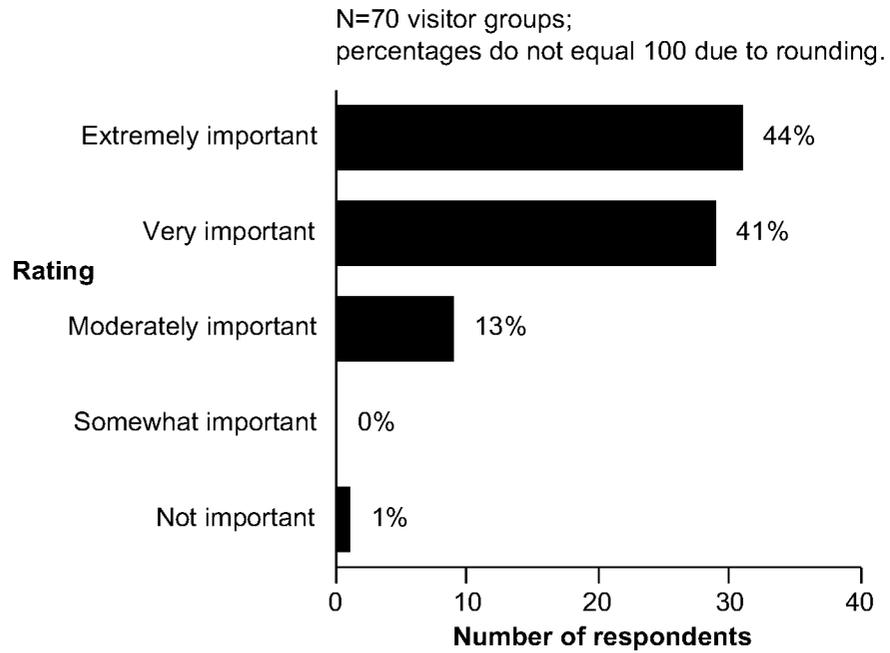


Figure 49: Importance of roadside/wayside exhibits

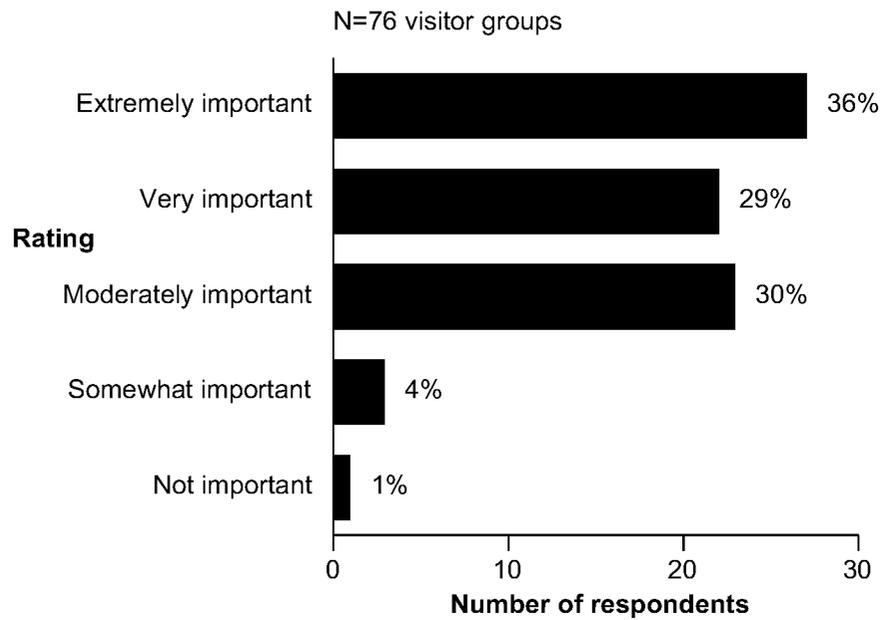


Figure 50: Importance of visitor center sales publications

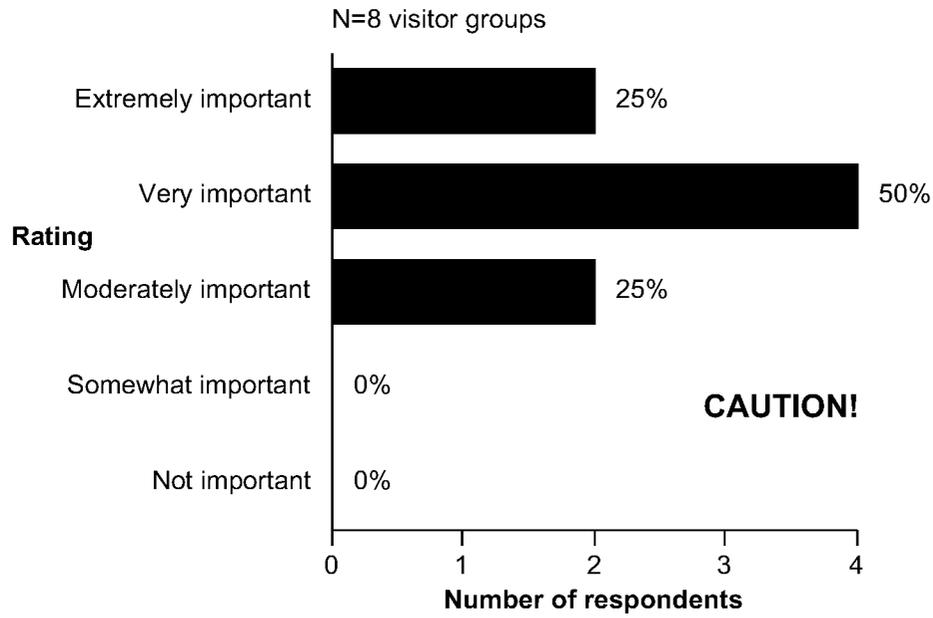


Figure 51: Importance of park newsletter (*Quoi ca dit*)

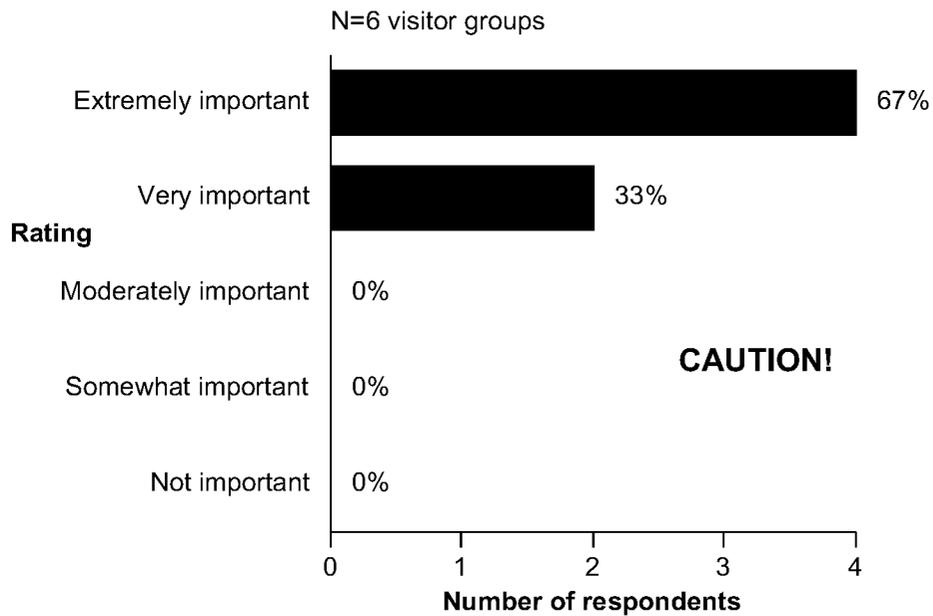


Figure 52: Importance of junior ranger program

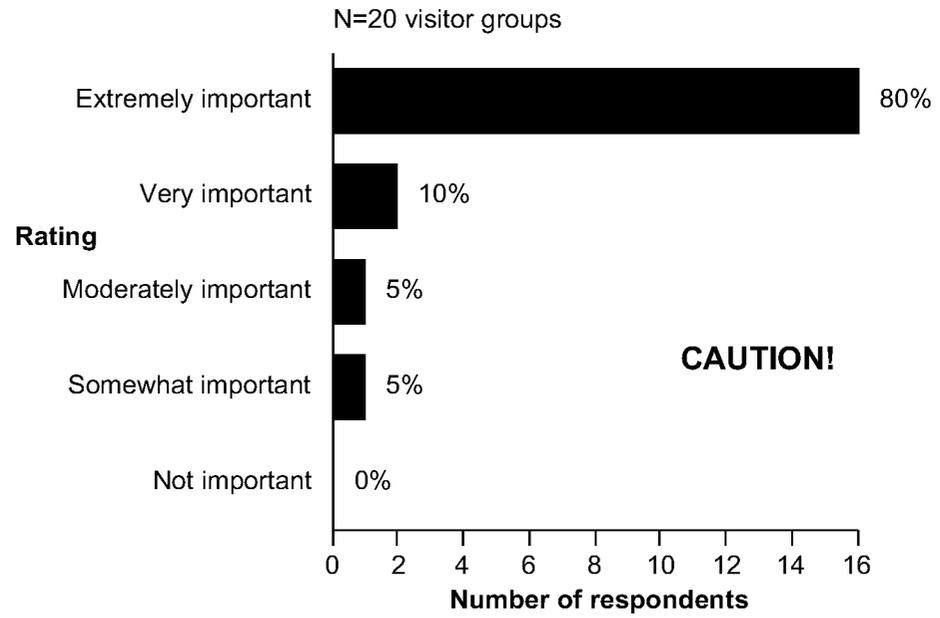


Figure 53: Importance of children’s education programs

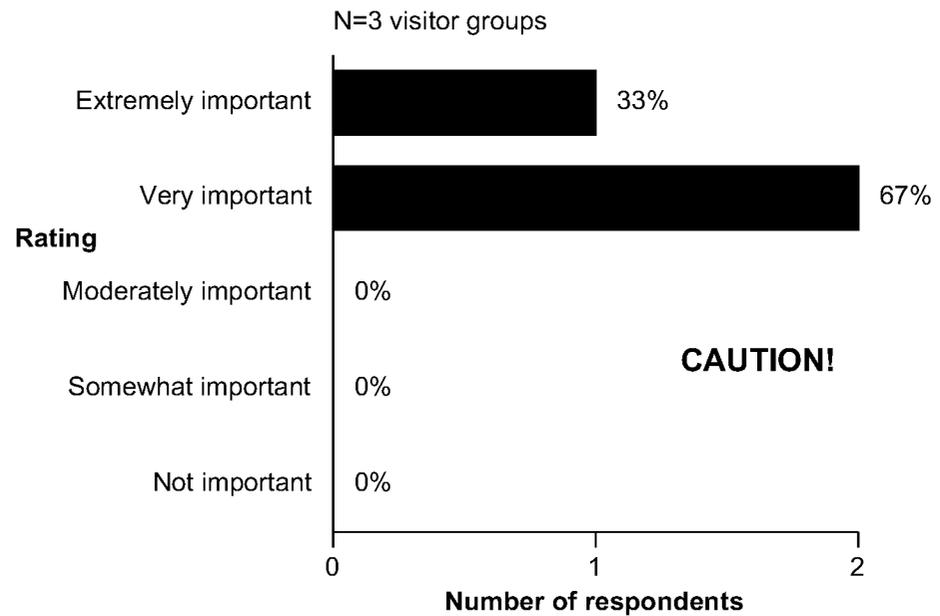


Figure 54: Importance of ranger-led canoe tour

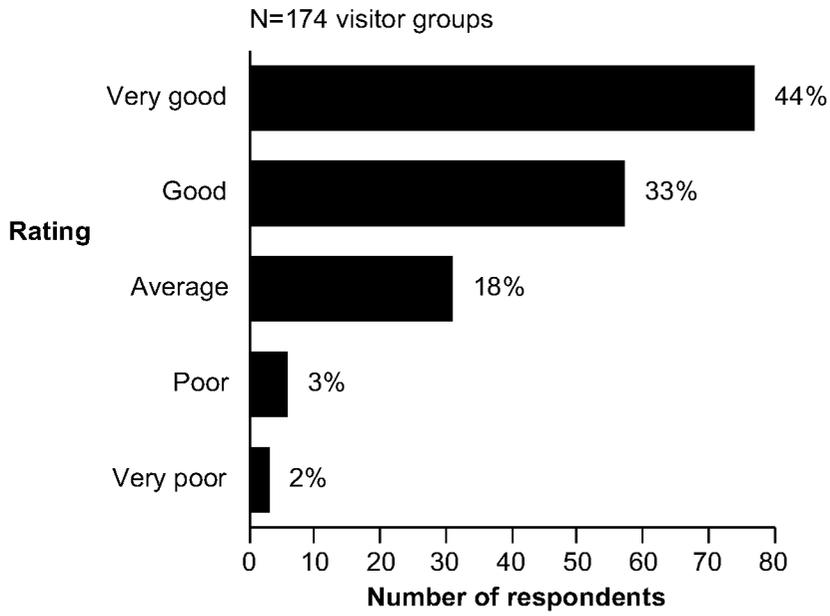


Figure 55: Quality of park brochure/map

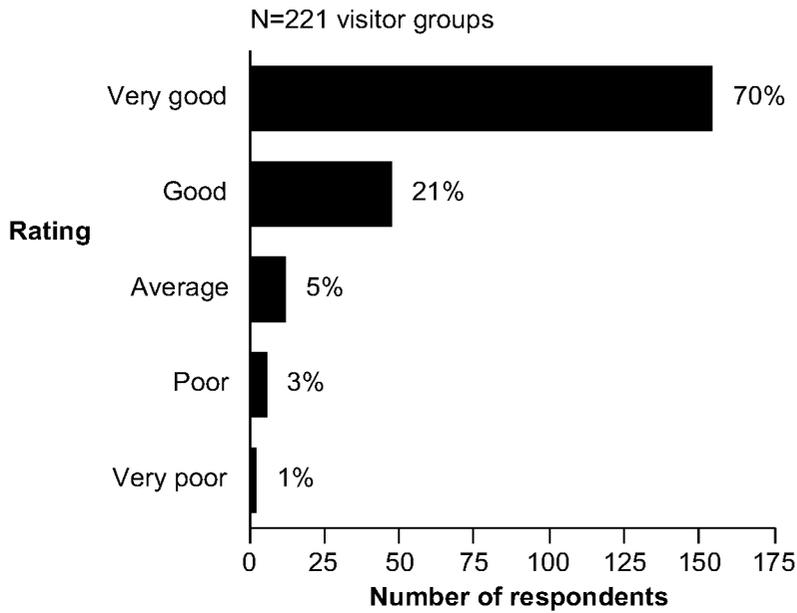


Figure 56: Quality of information or assistance from park staff

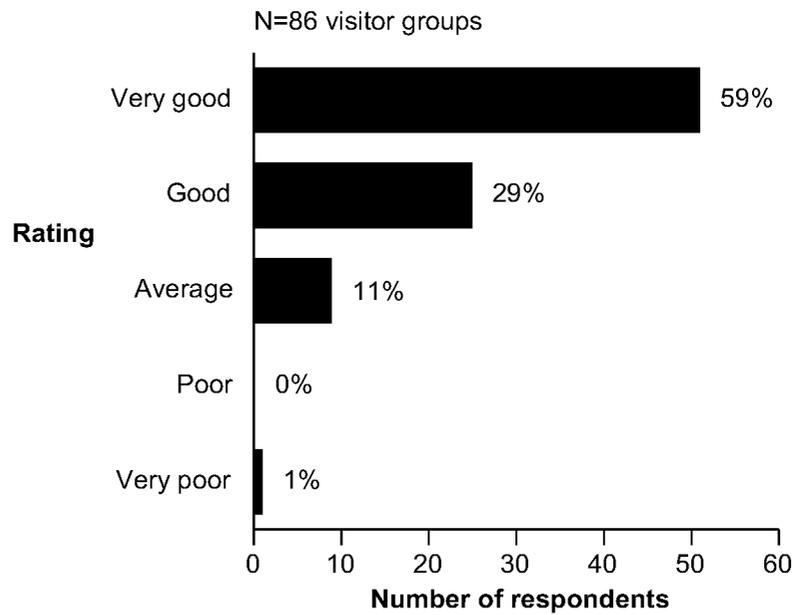


Figure 57: Quality of ranger-led tours or programs

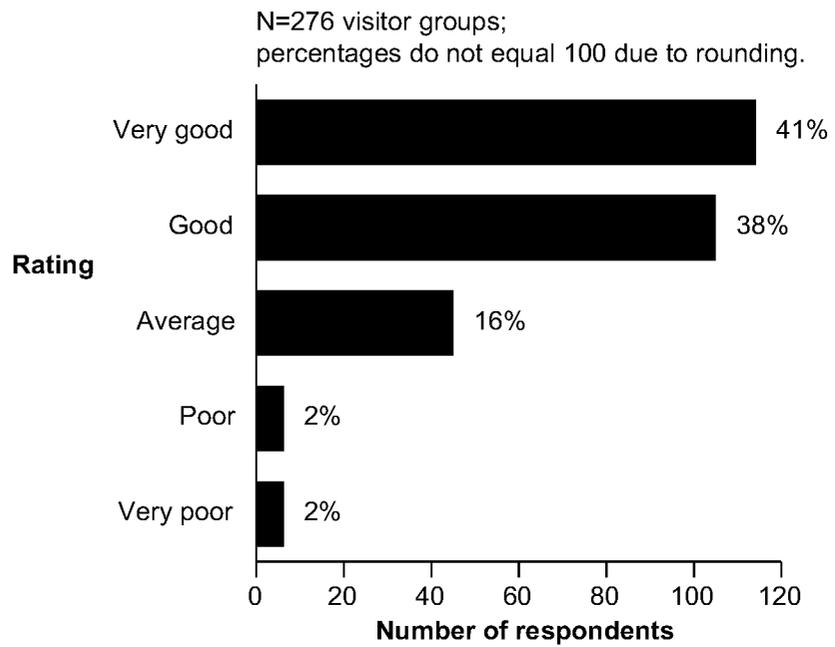


Figure 58: Quality of visitor center exhibits

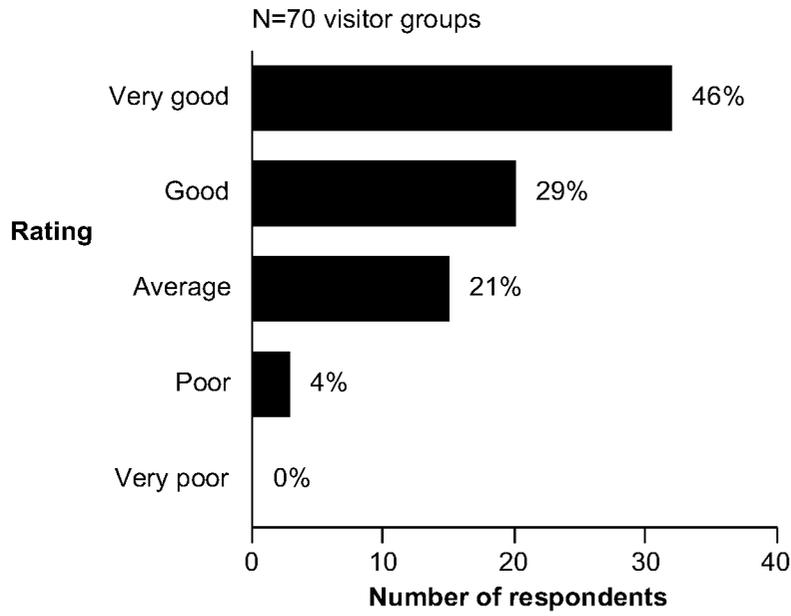


Figure 59: Quality of roadside/wayside exhibits

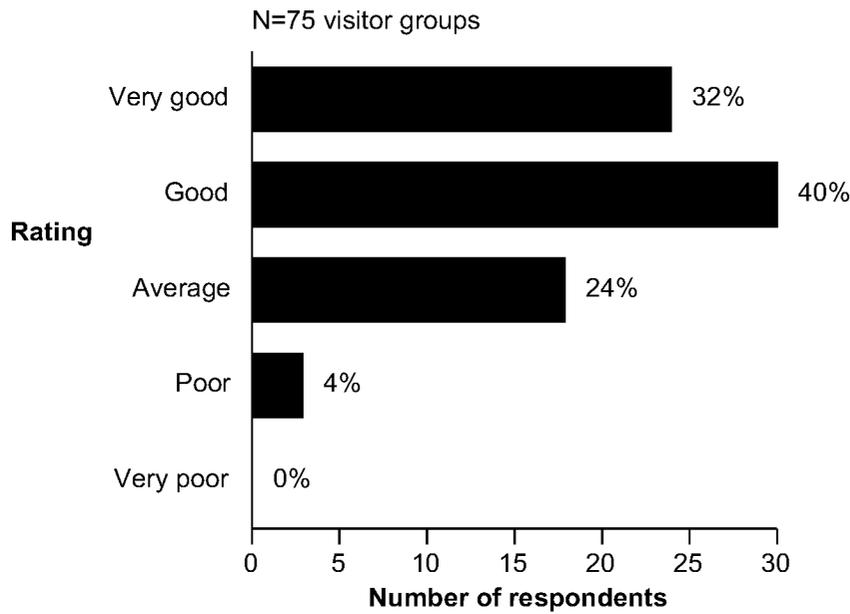


Figure 60: Quality of visitor center sales publications

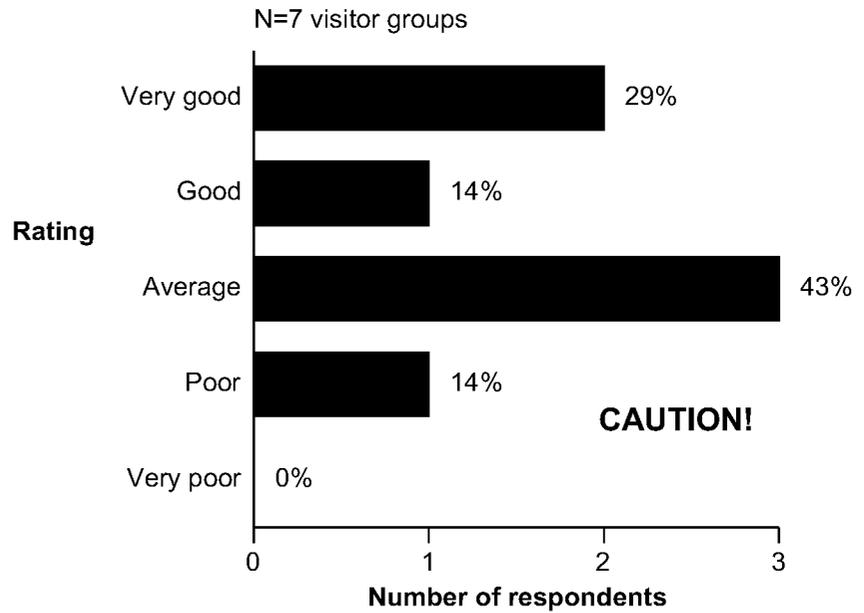


Figure 61: Quality of park newsletter (*Quoi ca dit*)

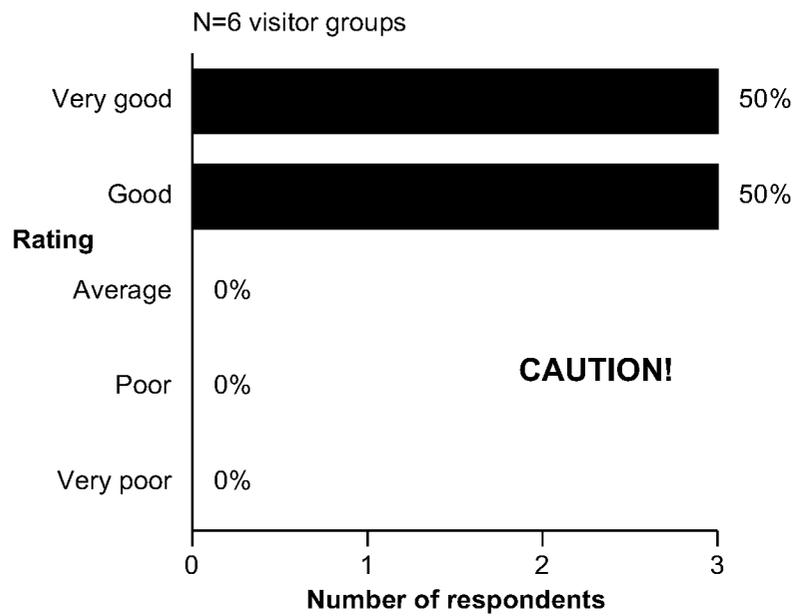


Figure 62: Quality of junior ranger program

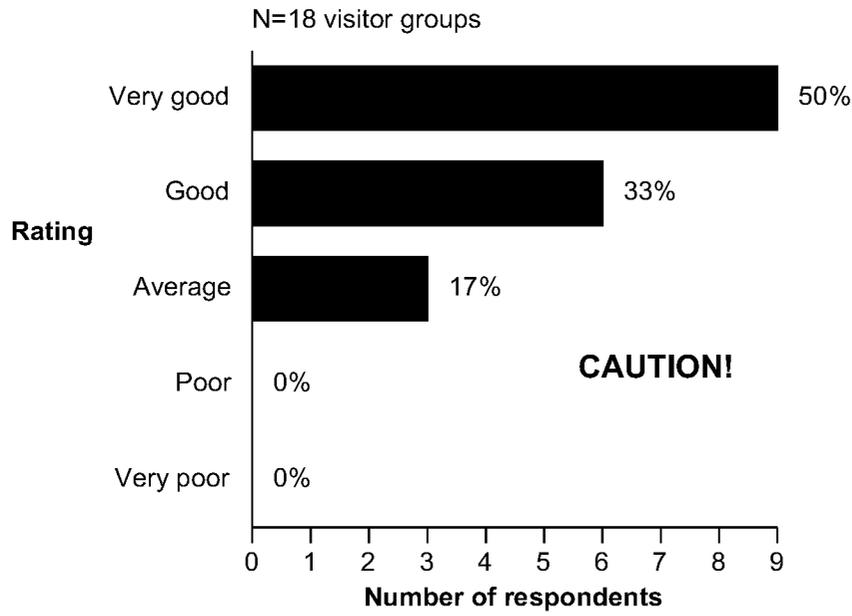


Figure 63: Quality of children's education programs

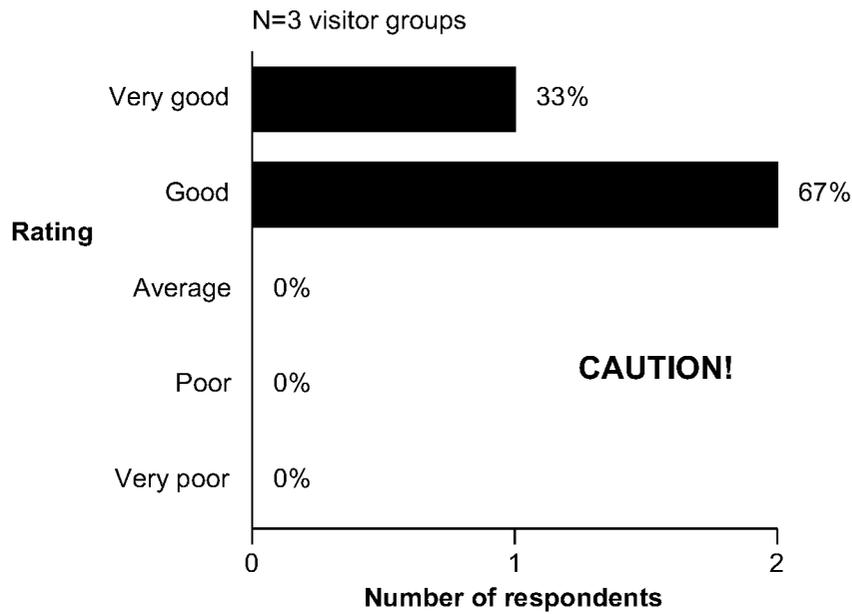


Figure 64: Quality of ranger-led canoe tour

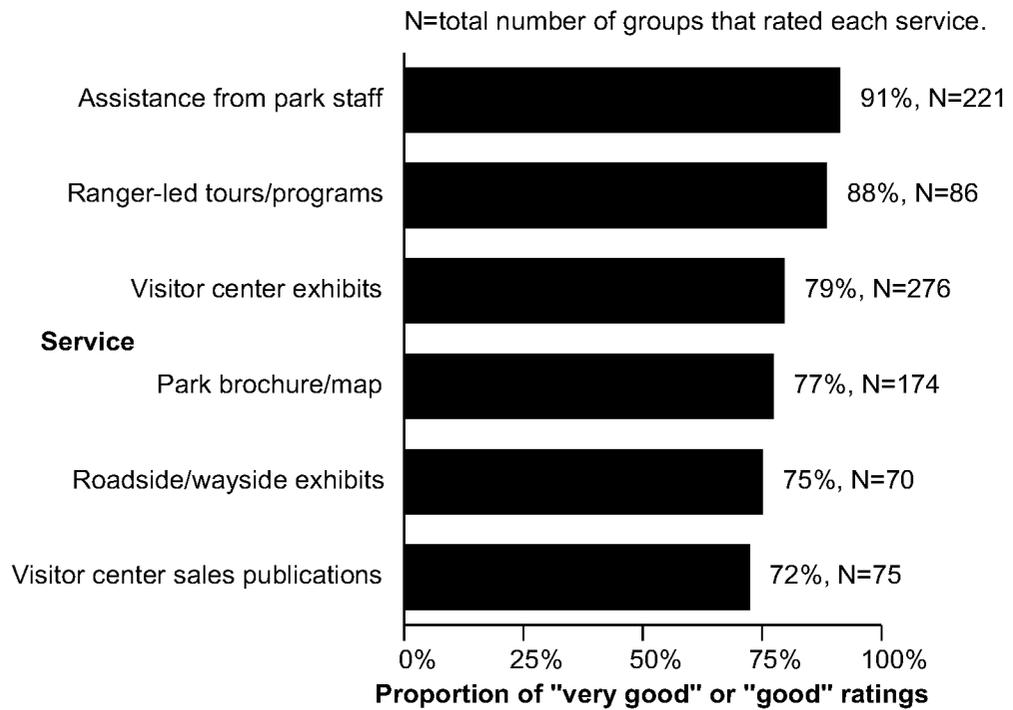


Figure 65: Combined proportions of "very good" or "good" quality ratings for services

Visitor groups were asked to note the visitor facilities they used during their visit to Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. As is shown by Figure 66, the facilities that were most commonly used by visitor groups were the visitor center (82%), restrooms (75%), and parking (56%). The least used service was the canoe launch (3%).

**Visitor facilities:
use, importance
and quality**

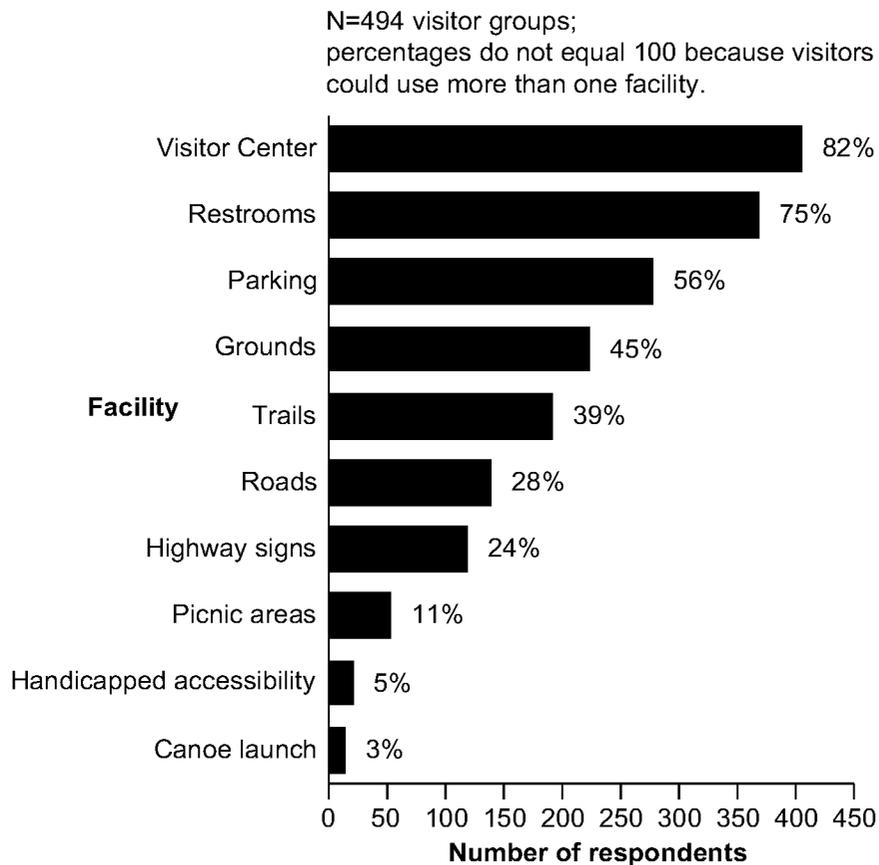


Figure 66: Facilities used

Visitor groups rated the importance and quality of each of the facilities they used. The following five point scales were used in the questionnaire:

IMPORTANCE	QUALITY
5=extremely important	5=very good
4=very important	4=good
3=moderately important	3=average
2=somewhat important	2=poor
1=not important	1=very poor

Figure 67 shows the average importance and quality ratings for visitor facilities. An average score was determined for each facility based on ratings provided by visitors who used that facility. This was done for both importance and quality, and the results are plotted on the grid shown in Figure 67. All facilities were rated as above "average" both in importance and quality. It should be noted that the canoe launch and handicapped accessibility were not rated by enough groups to provide reliable information.

Figures 68-77 show the importance ratings that were provided by visitor groups for each of the individual facilities. Those facilities receiving the highest proportion of "extremely important" or "very important" ratings included trails (95%), highway signs (94%), and restrooms (92%).

Figures 78-87 show the quality ratings that were provided by visitor groups for each of the individual services. Those facilities receiving the highest proportion of "very good" or "good" ratings included trails (94%), roads (94%), and grounds (91%).

Figure 88 combines the "very good" and "good" quality ratings and compares those ratings for all of the facilities.

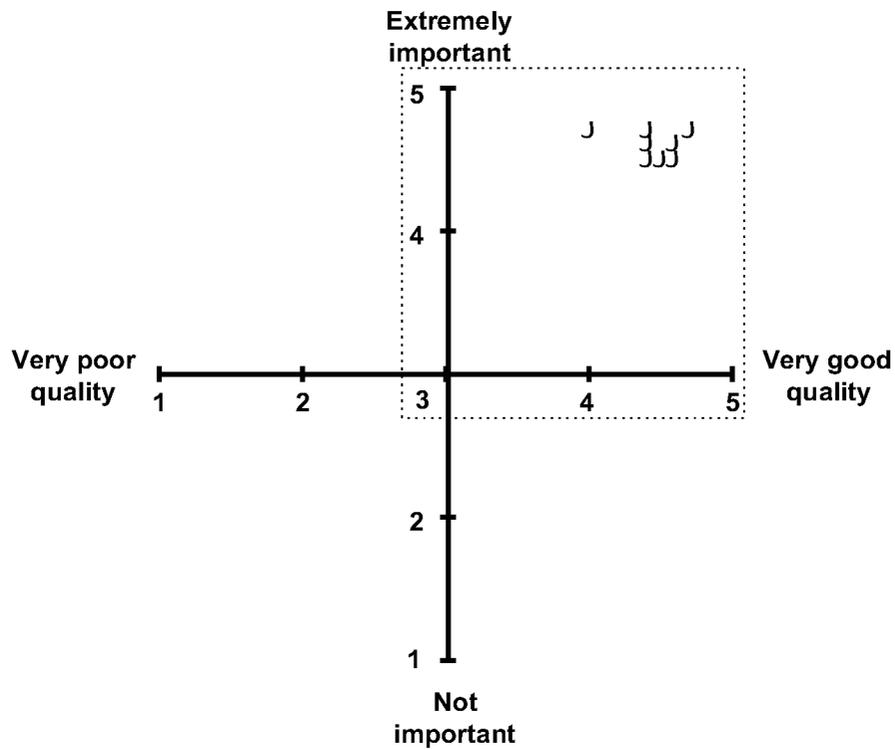


Figure 67: Average ratings of facilities importance and quality

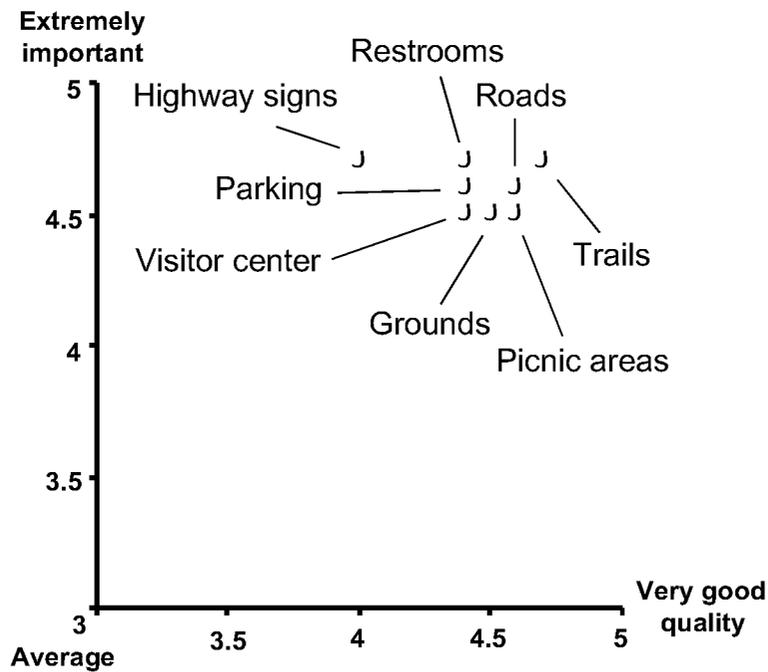


Figure 67: Detail

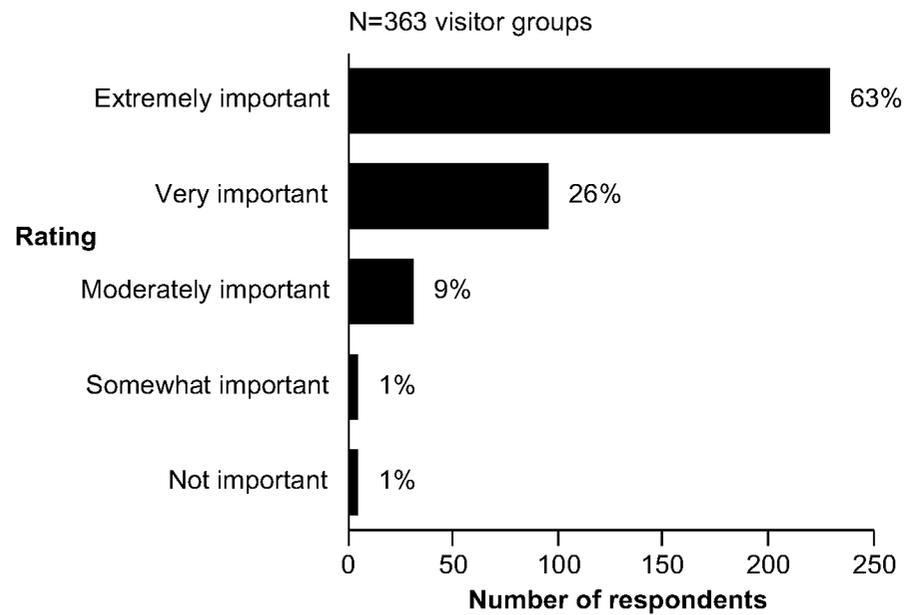


Figure 68: Importance of visitor center

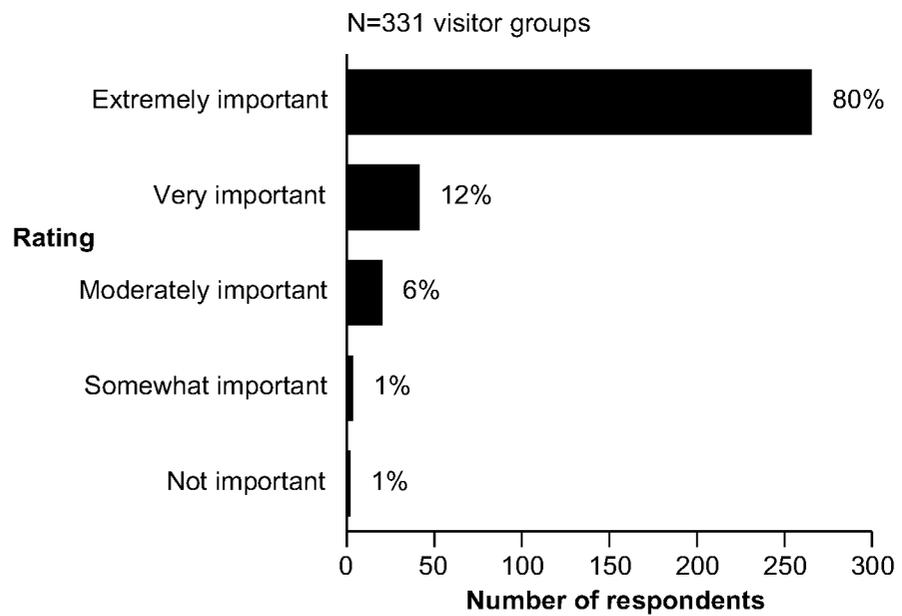


Figure 69: Importance of restrooms

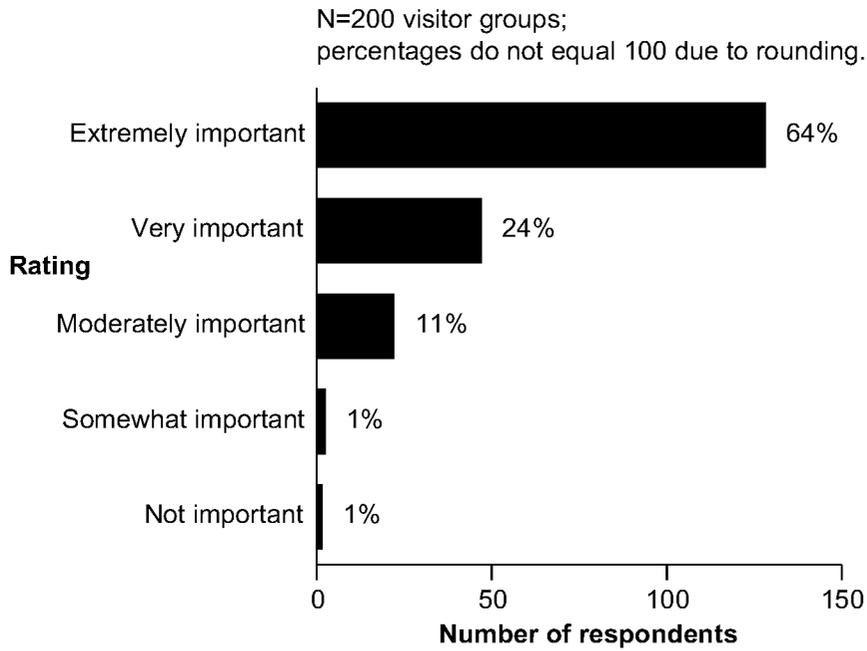


Figure 70: Importance of grounds

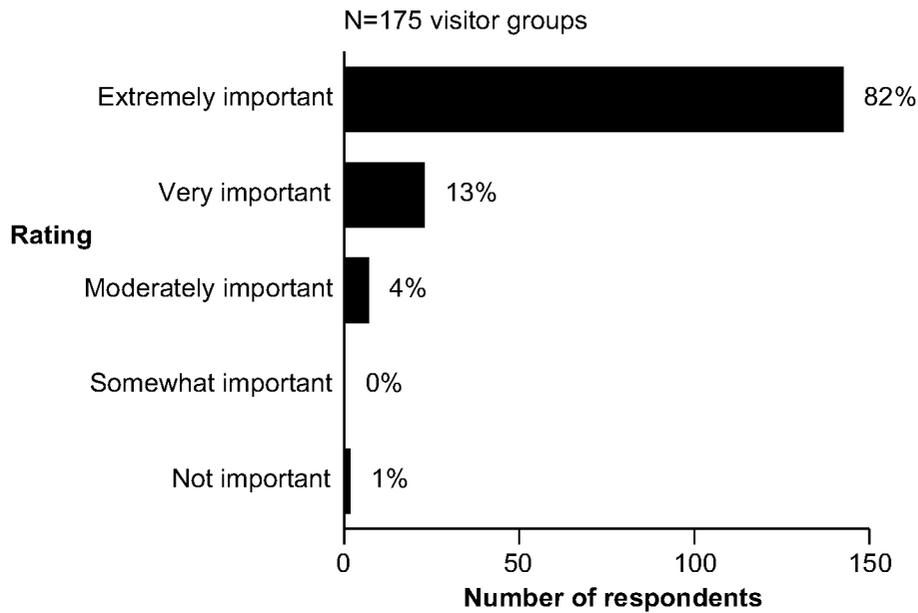


Figure 71: Importance of trails

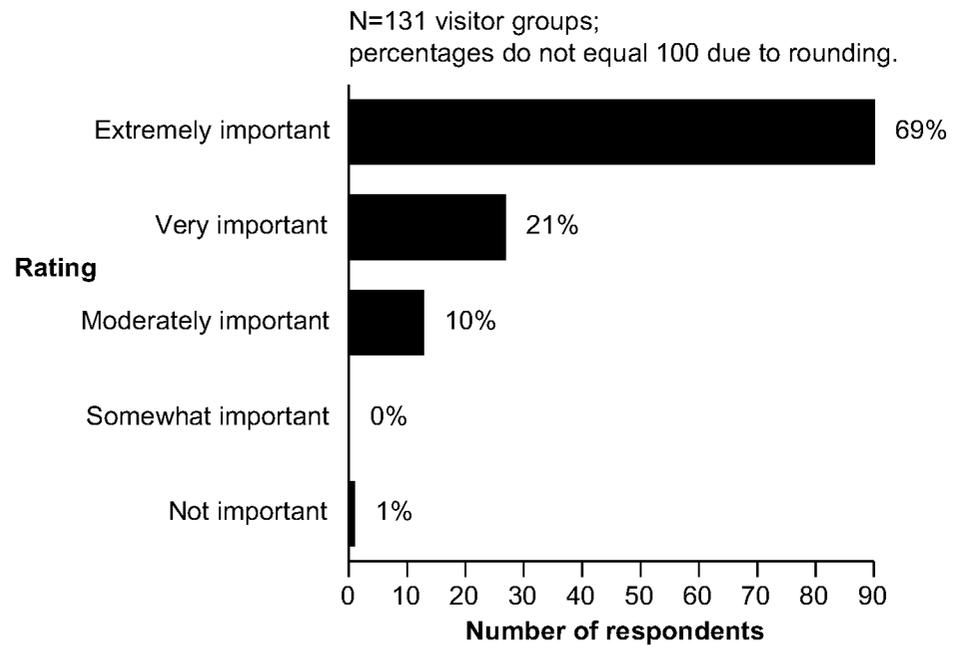


Figure 72: Importance of roads

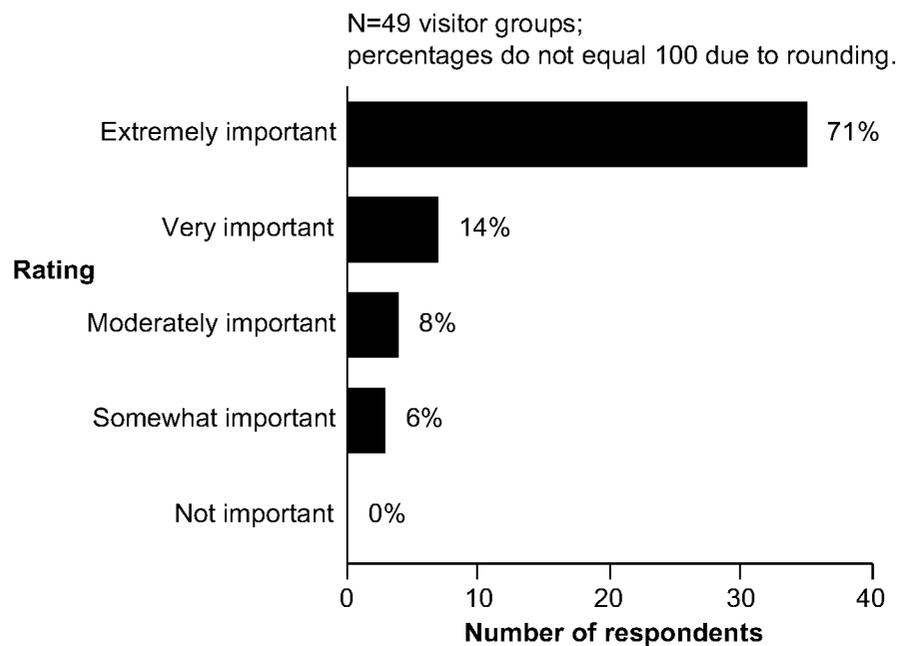


Figure 73: Importance of picnic areas

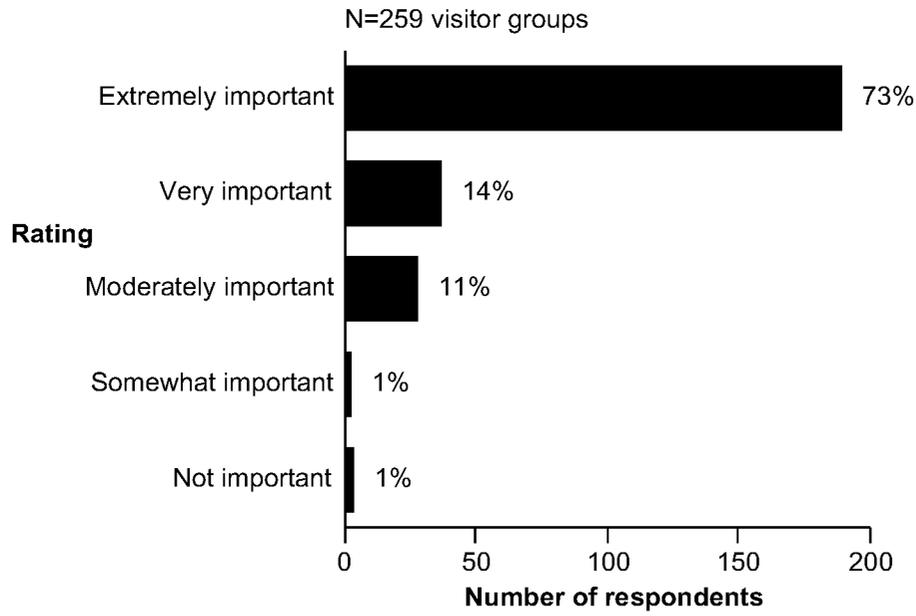


Figure 74: Importance of parking

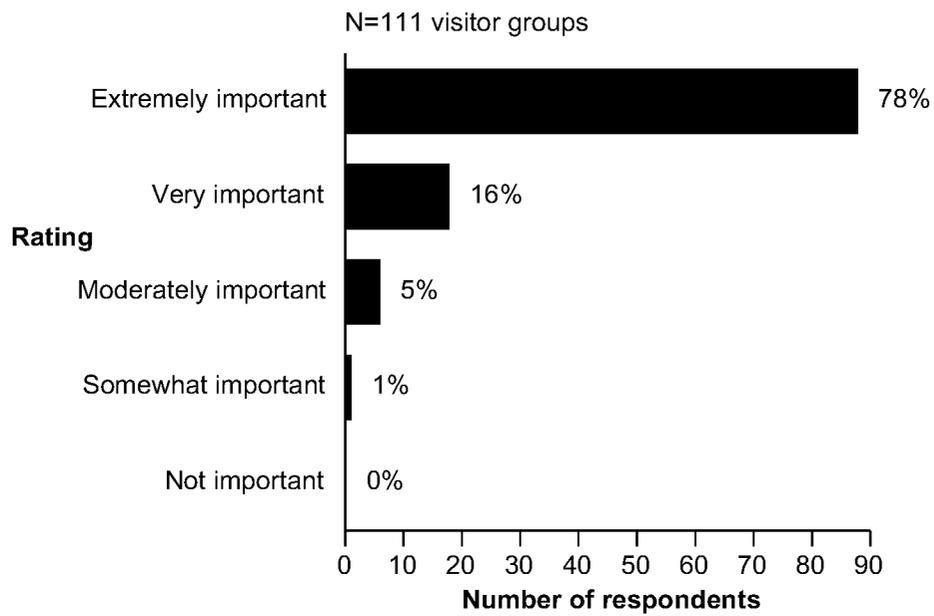


Figure 75: Importance of highway signs

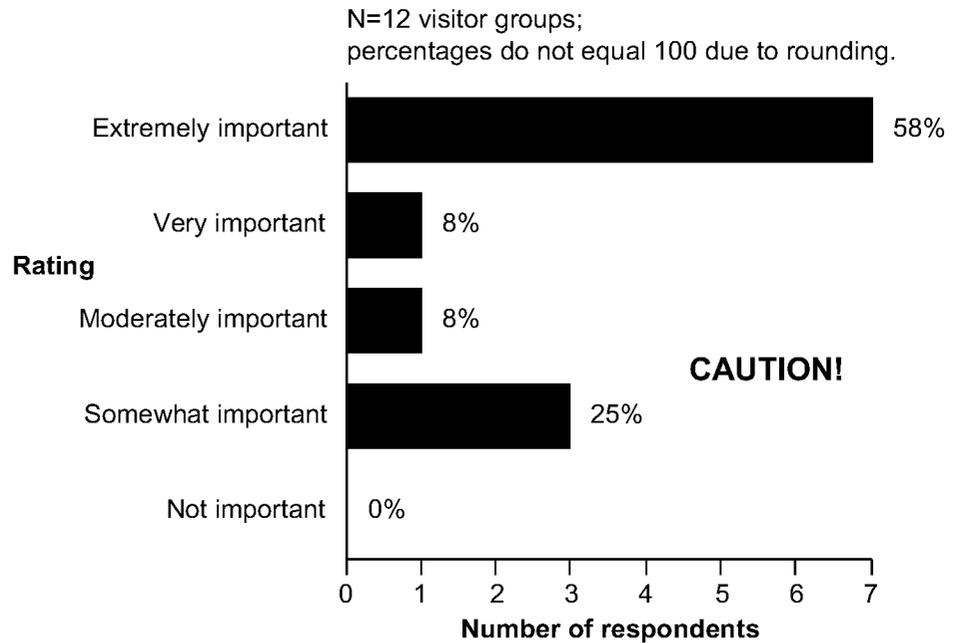


Figure 76: Importance of canoe launch

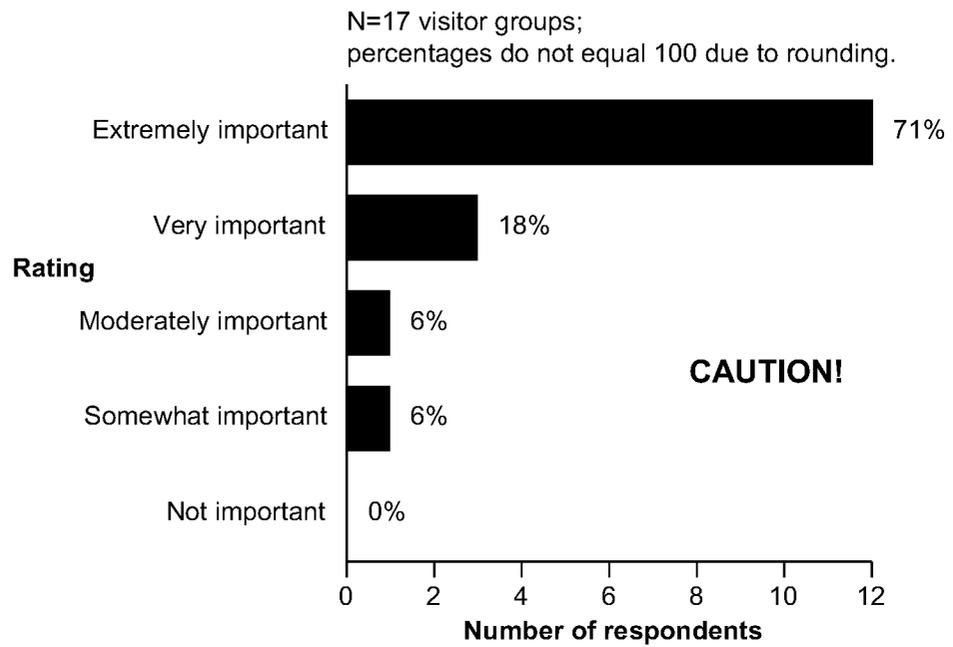


Figure 77: Importance of handicapped accessibility

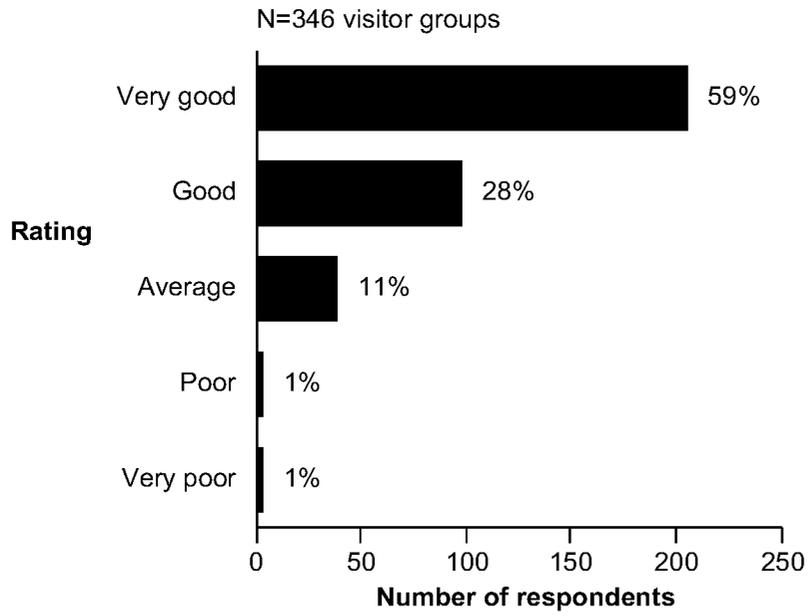


Figure 78: Quality of visitor center

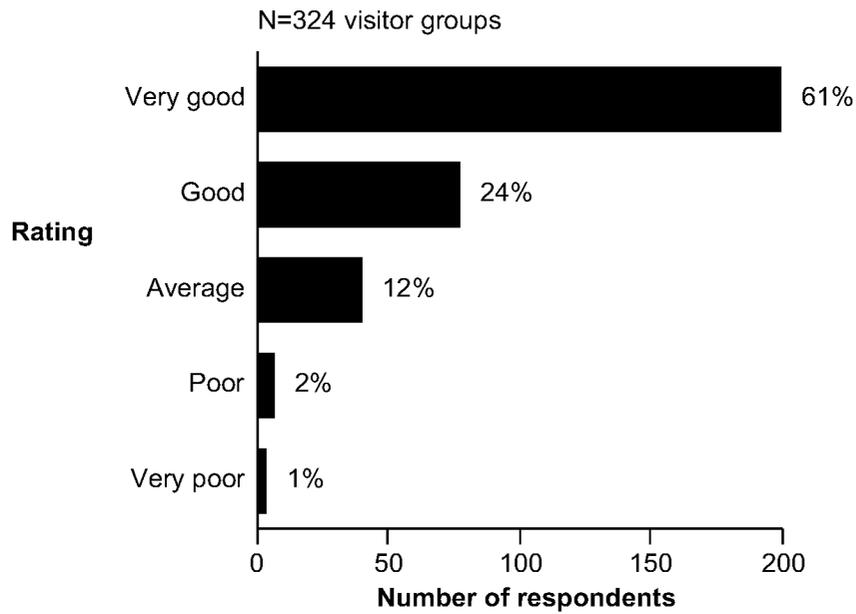


Figure 79: Quality of restrooms

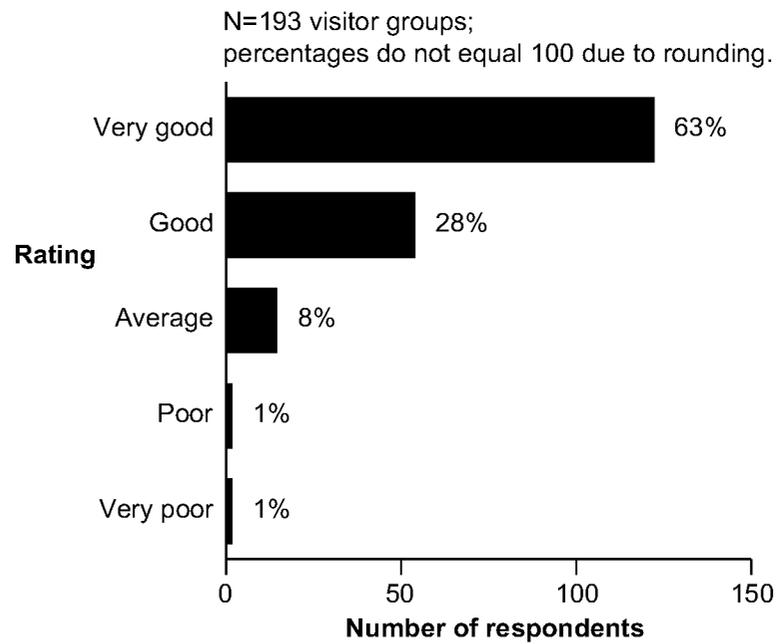


Figure 80: Quality of grounds

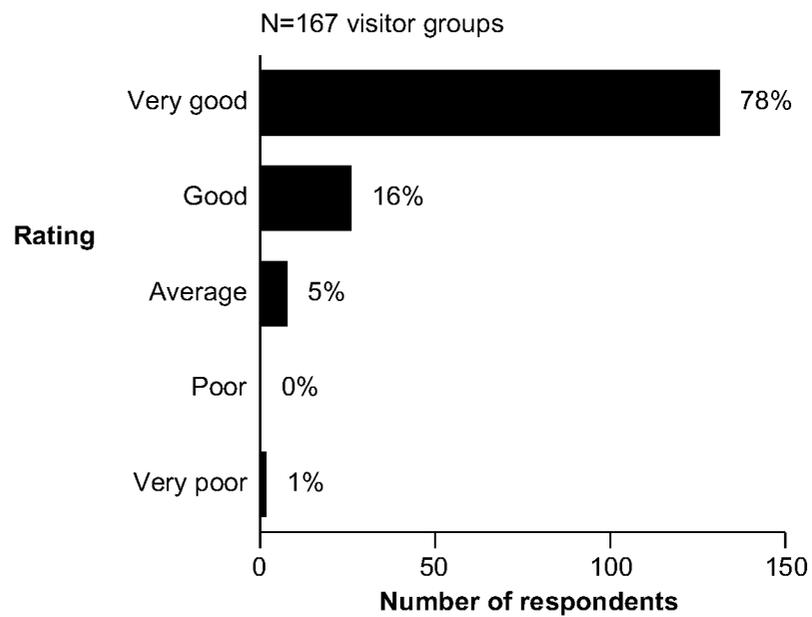


Figure 81: Quality of trails

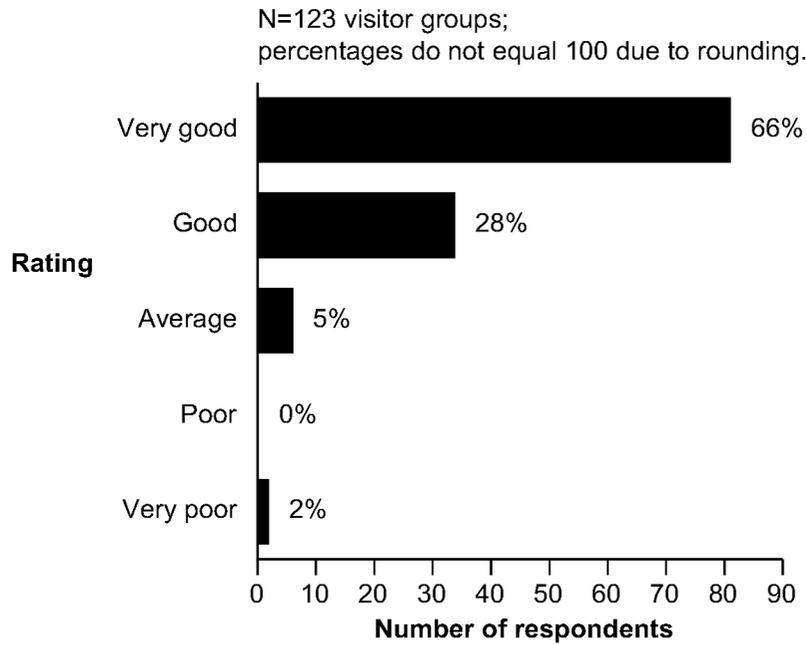


Figure 82: Quality of roads

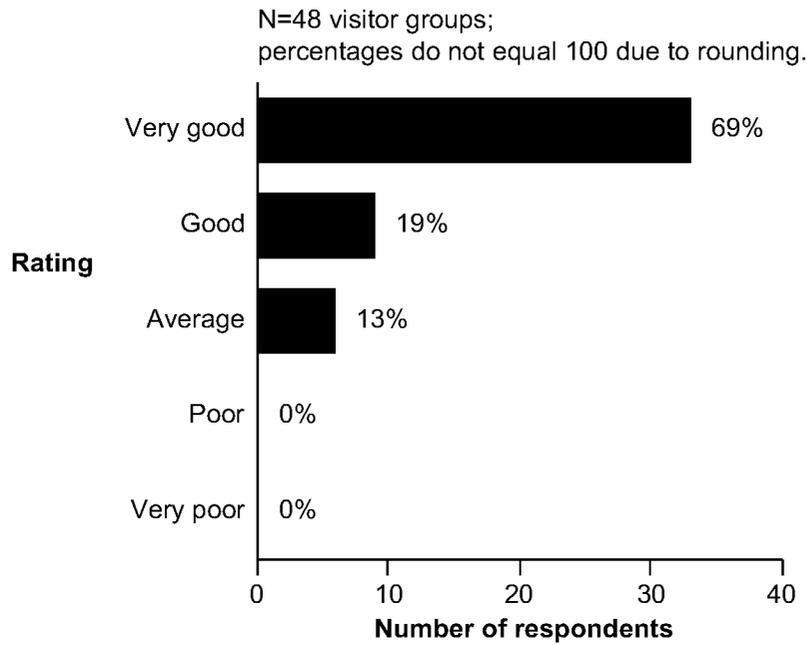


Figure 83: Quality of picnic areas

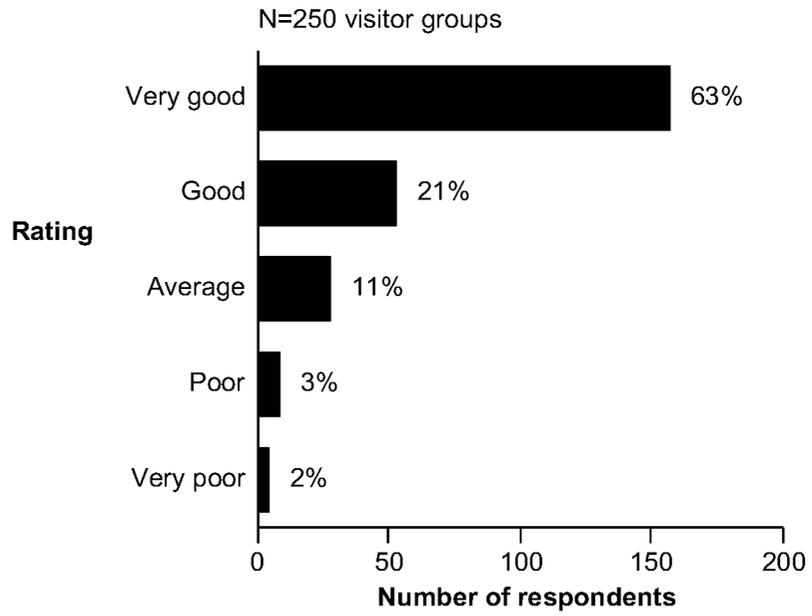


Figure 84: Quality of parking

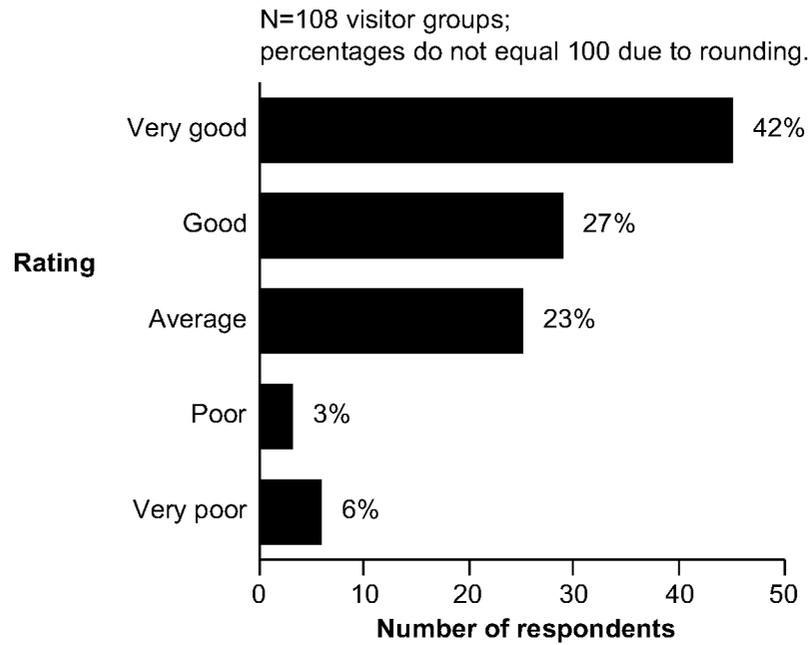


Figure 85: Quality of highway signs

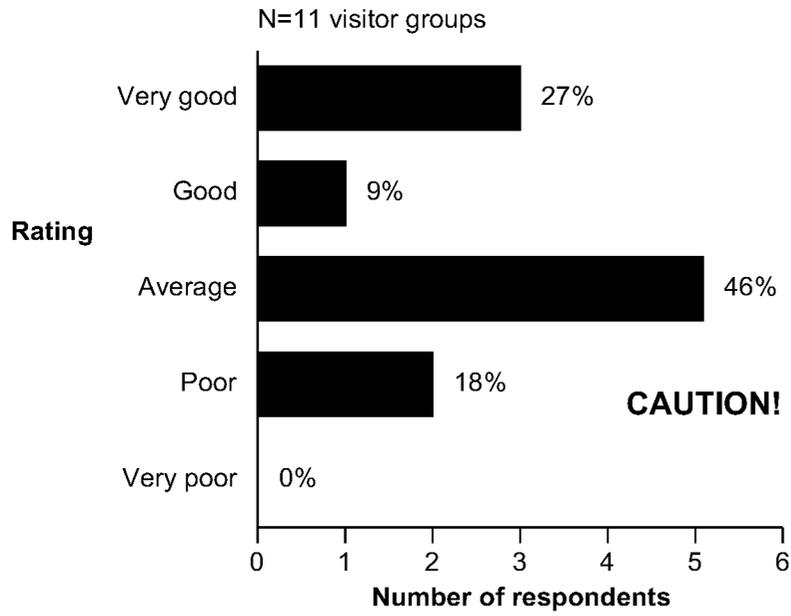


Figure 86: Quality of canoe launch

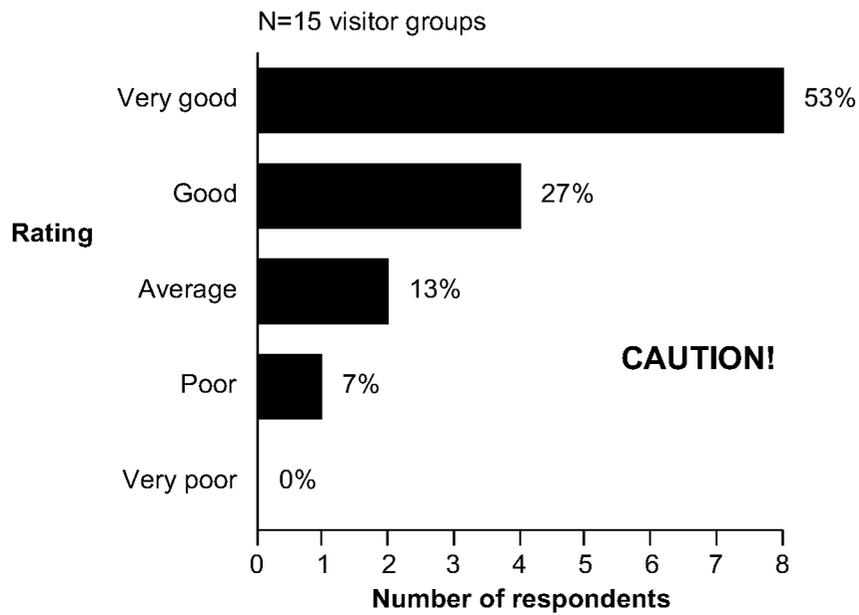


Figure 87: Quality of handicapped accessibility

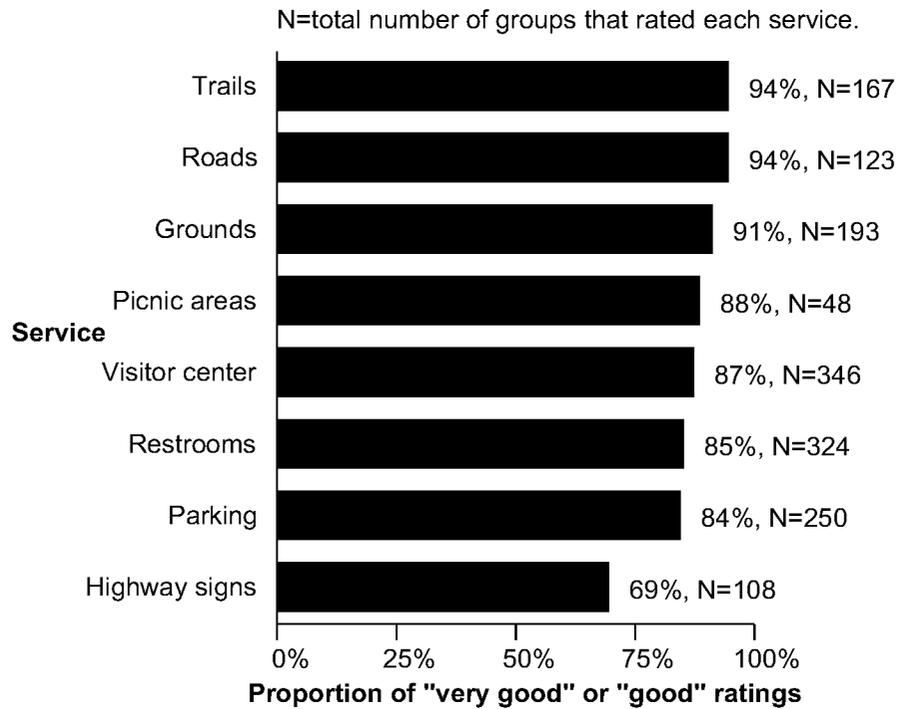


Figure 88: Combined proportions of "very good" and "good" quality ratings for facilities

Visitor groups were asked to list the items (e.g. books, video tapes, crafts, etc.) that they would like to have available to purchase in visitor center bookstores on a future visit to Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. Fifty-eight percent of visitor groups listed at least one item that they would like to have available for purchase. The most common items were books, crafts, and video tapes (see Table 14).

Preferences for bookstore sales items

Table 14: Items at bookstores

N=510 comments;
many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
Books	116
Crafts	60
Video tapes	50
Postcards	23
Items currently provided	23
Maps	22
History and culture books	16
Wildlife books	15
Audio tapes	12
Local/native plant and animal information	10
Posters	8
Musical tapes	8
Cookbooks	8
Compact discs	7
Nothing	7
Cards	6
Children's books	6
T-shirts	5
Brochures	4
Snacks	4
French books	4
Guide books	3
Drinks	3
Cajun music	3
Flowers	3
NPS info	3
Bumper stickers	3
Pamphlets	2
Creole and Cajun heritage books	2
Plant books	2
Other comments	72

Overall quality of visitor services

Visitor groups were asked to rate the overall quality of the visitor services provided at Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve during this visit. The majority of visitor groups (95%) rated services as "very good" or "good" (see Figure 89). Only one visitor group (less than 1% of respondents) rated services as "very poor."

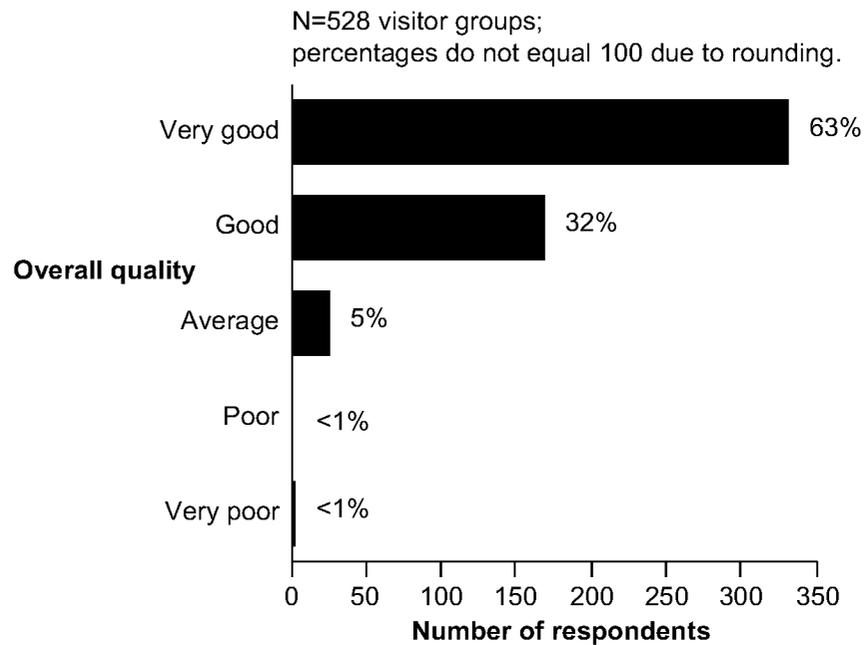


Figure 89: Overall quality of visitor services

Visitor groups were asked to indicate the level of safety that they felt during their visit to Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. Sixty-four percent of visitor groups felt “extremely safe” while 14% felt “very safe” (see Figure 90). Eleven percent of visitor groups felt “extremely unsafe.” Those groups that felt unsafe were asked to note the reasons they felt unsafe. As is shown by Table 15, the most commonly listed reasons for feeling unsafe were warning signs about car theft, snakes, and being approached by people wanting money. Comments about safety were made by eleven percent of visitor groups.

Perceived level of safety

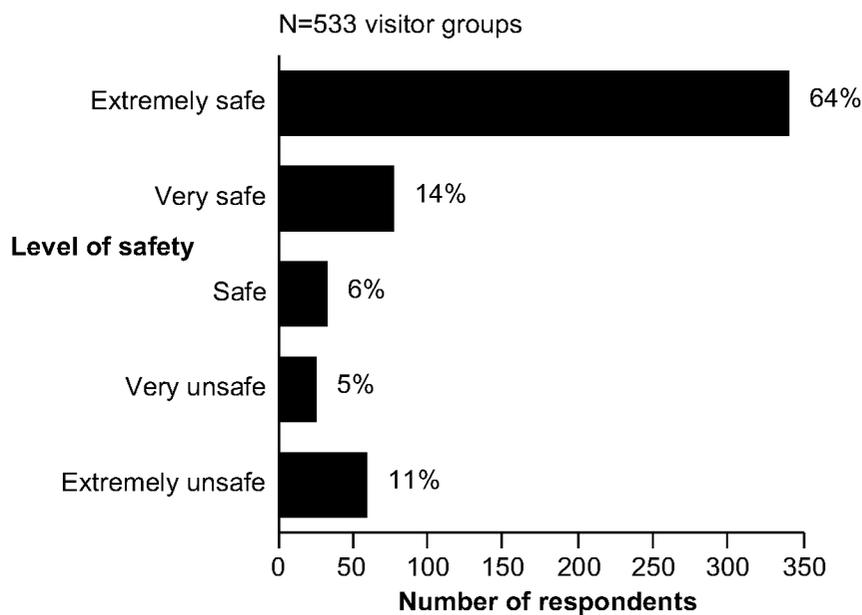


Figure 90: Perceived level of safety

Table 15: Reasons for feeling unsafe

N=60 comments;
many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
Car theft warning signs	10
Snakes	6
Being approached by people wanting money	3
Being alone	3
Isolated	2
Lack of police presence	2
Threatening men	2
Alligators	2
Trails not patrolled by rangers	2
Dogs not leashed	2
Could not have my dog with me	2
Dangerous looking people on streets	2
People sleeping on sidewalks	2
Other comments	20

Visitor groups were asked to indicate if there was anything they expected to see or do but were not able to while visiting Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. As is shown by Figure 91, 83% of visitor groups said there was nothing that they expected to see or do but were unable to while visiting the park and preserve. Visitor groups who said they were unable to see or do anything specific were asked to note what they were unable to see or do. Seventeen percent of visitor groups indicated that there was something specific that they wanted to see or do but were unable to. The most common things that visitors were unable to see or do included seeing alligators and taking a guided tour (see Table 16). Finally, visitor groups were asked what it was that prevented them from seeing a specific feature or doing a specific activity. As is shown by Table 17, lack of time was listed as the most common reason that prevented visitor groups from seeing a specific feature or doing a specific activity.

Visitor expectations

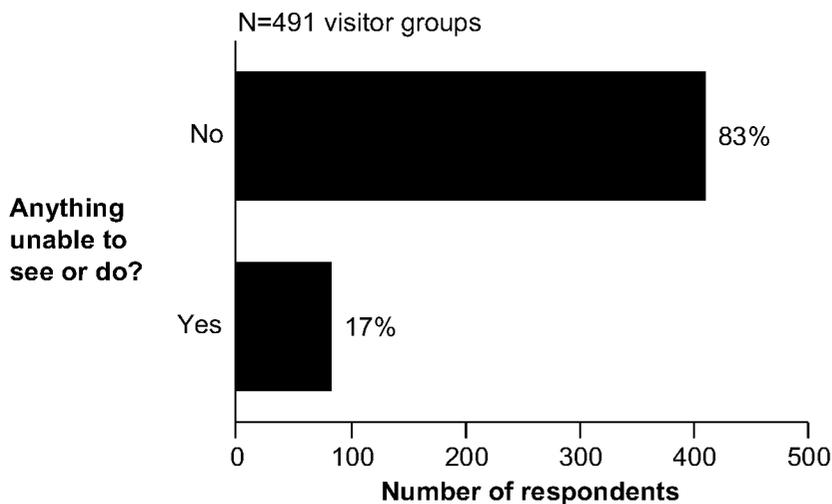


Figure 91: Anything visitors were able unable to see or do

Table 16: What visitors were unable to see or do

N=96 comments;
many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
Take a guided tour	24
See alligators	19
See wildlife (besides alligators)	11
Tour swamps	8
View irises	4
Canoe	4
Visit Chalmette battlefield	2
Other comments	16

Table 17: What kept visitors from doing or seeing what they wanted to

N=70 comments;
many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
Time	18
Not available	13
Not enough tickets issued	8
Park was closed	6
Weather	5
Did not have enough information	3
Insufficient staffing	3
Other comments	14

Visitor groups were asked what subjects they would be most interested in learning about on a future visit and what types of interpretive programs and folklife demonstrations they would like to have available. As is shown in Figure 92, visitor groups were most interested in learning about Cajun culture (69%) and natural history (53%). "Other" subjects visitors were interested in learning about included wildlife, birds, and native Americans. Forty-three percent of visitors would like to have pontoon boat/swamp tours and 37% would like to have temporary exhibits (see Figure 93). "Other" programs and demonstrations that visitors would like to have available included canoe trips/rentals, battle reenactments, poetry and literature sessions.

Exhibit and program preferences

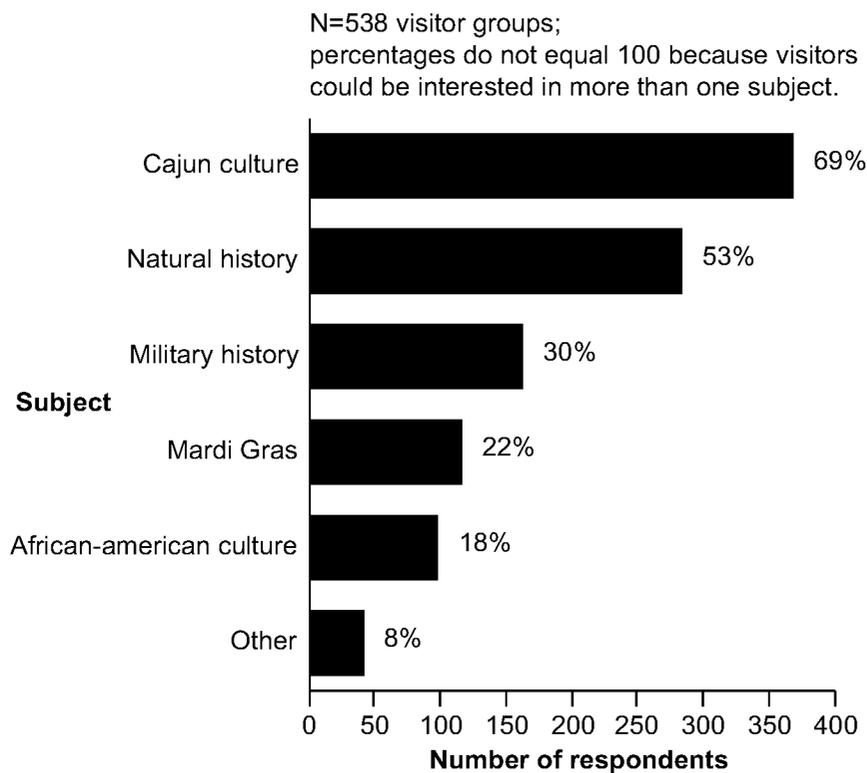


Figure 92: Interested in learning about on a future visit?

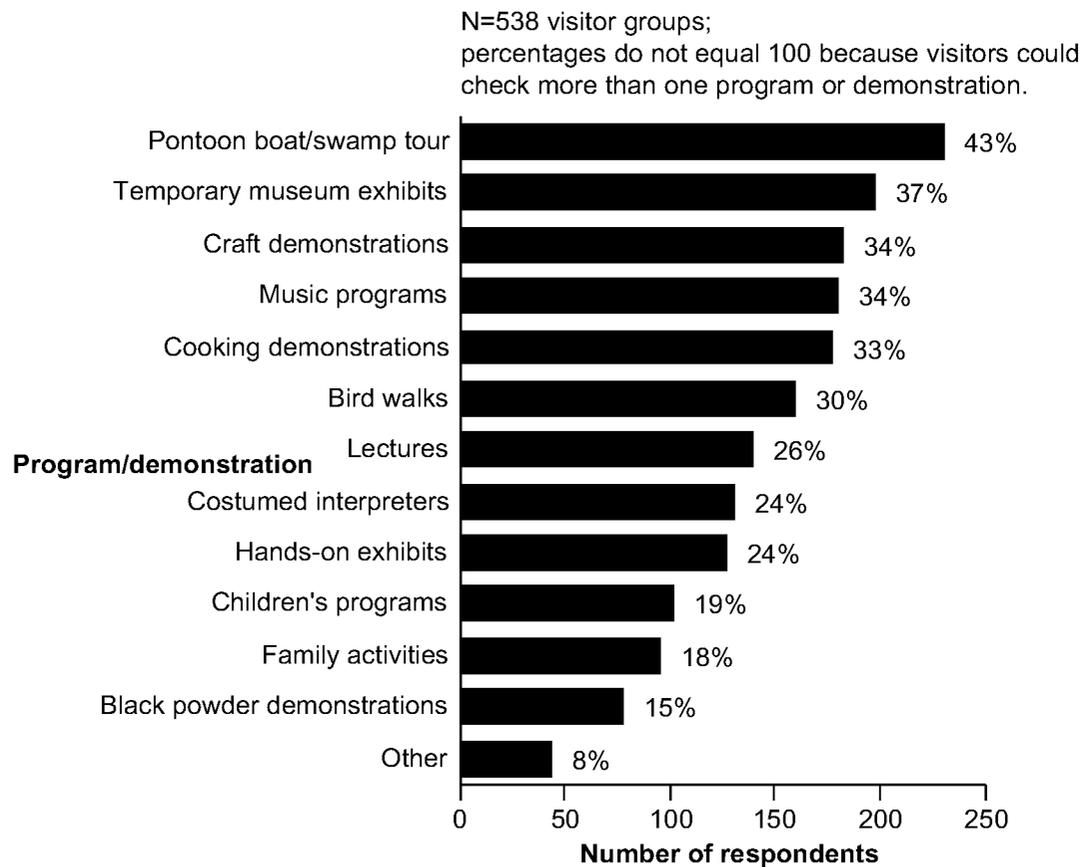


Figure 93: Interpretive program preferences

Visitor groups were asked, "What did you like most about your visit to Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve?" Fifty-nine percent of visitor groups (327) responded to this question. A summary of their responses is listed below in Table 18 and in the appendix.

What visitors liked most

Table 18: Visitor likes

N=385 comments;
many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
Helpful, courteous rangers	16
Knowledgeable rangers	9
Nice staff	5
Friendliness	4
Excellent attitudes of staff	2
Other comments	2
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Video/movie	21
Ranger programs	15
Exhibits	15
The great explanation of Cajun/Acadian culture	13
Ranger-led tours	10
Music	7
Lecture on the battle	6
French Quarter walking tour	4
Museum	3
Visitor center	3
Demonstrations	2
Information about the area	2
Educational environment	2
Other comments	13
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE	
Park is clean and well maintained	26
Swamp boardwalks & walkways	16
Library	3
Battlefield reconstruction	3
Upkeep of grounds and cemetery	3
Condition of trails	2
French Quarter	2
Clean restrooms	2
Other comments	19

Number of

Comment	times mentioned
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	
Enjoyed seeing wildlife	12
Enjoyed seeing wild irises	11
Enjoyed seeing wildflowers	7
Nature & access to nature	7
Naturalness	6
Seeing wildlife and plants in natural environment	5
Quiet	5
The swamp	4
Alligators	3
Trees	2
Other comments	1
GENERAL IMPRESSIONS	
Beauty	22
Peacefulness	22
Historical	8
Scenery	3
Everything	3
Ability to take walks	3
Being outdoors	2
Other comments	23

Visitor groups were asked "What did you like least about your visit to Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve?" Thirty-seven percent of visitor groups (206) responded to this question. A summary of their responses is listed below in Table 19 and in the appendix.

What visitors liked least

Table 19: Visitor dislikes

N=177 comments;
many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
Poor attitudes of rangers	3
Other	1
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Insufficient number of ranger-led tours available	11
Lack of ranger knowledge concerning wildlife/plants	3
Visitor center at French Quarter needs more exhibits	3
Need more exhibits	2
Museum needs new exhibits	2
Too little printed material on the park	2
Map wasn't clear	2
Other comments	19
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE	
Lack of parking (lack of RV parking)	4
Need more benches for resting along trail	3
Lack of restrooms in French Quarter	3
Poor directional signs	3
Grounds need more maintenance	2
Bad roads	2
Other comments	12
POLICIES	
Gate closing at 5pm	3
People littering/trash in the swamp	3
Lack of safety/trail security	2
Loose dogs in the park	2
People smoking	2
Other comments	6
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	
Crowds	4
Noisy visitors	3
Ant hills	3
Mosquitoes	3
Snakes	3
Poison ivy	2
Other comments	4

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

Nothing was bad/everything was good	20
Not enough time this visit	19
The weather	4
Other comments	17

Visitor groups were asked if there was anything else they would like to say about their visit to Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. Thirty-six percent of visitor groups (198 groups) wrote additional comments. Their comments about Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve are summarized below in Table 20 and in the appendix. Some comments offer specific suggestions on how to improve the park; others describe what visitors enjoyed or did not enjoy about their visit.

**Comment
summary**

Table 20: Additional comments
N=303 comments;
many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
---------	------------------------------

PERSONNEL

Employees friendly, helpful, courteous, and/or knowledgeable	28
Comforting to know help is available	2
Other	2

INTERPRETIVE SERVICES

Great ranger-led tour	13
Learned much in a short time	4
Excellent exhibits	3
Would like to learn more about other sites in Louisiana	3
Park themes should include people of color	2
Great source on Cajun history	2
Good movie on Cajun culture	2
Made me want to learn more about the area	2
Informative	2
Need warning signs (poison ivy, alligator behavior, spiders, snakes...)	2
Just stopped briefly at visitor center	2
Other comments	20

FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE

Park very clean and well maintained	10
Boardwalk trails are great	5
Signs to park are insufficient	4
Found park by accident	4
Need more restrooms	3
Need more benches for resting	2
Need more water fountains	2

Comment	Number of times mentioned
---------	------------------------------

FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE (con't)

Need telephone by visitor center	2
Lovely facility, but exterior needs cleaning & paint	2

Mileage markers on trails would be helpful	2
Other comments	11

POLICIES

Need to advertise park	6
Enjoyed FREE programs	4
Stay open later in evenings for walking	3
Enjoy walking in park in the evenings	2
Need to host more "jam sessions," poetry/literature readings	2
Theater & library are great parts of community	2
Need to advertise upcoming events in local communities	2
Other comments	9

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Enjoyed seeing wildlife	8
Enjoyed quiet, peaceful nature of the park	6
Enjoyed seeing wild irises/plants	4
Barataria Preserve impressive – great management	3
Feel park is being encroached upon by developments	2
Try to buy more land for wildlife	2
Other comments	5

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

Great park – enjoyed visit	28
Thank you	19
Would like to return	18
Didn't have enough time this visit	9
I am a frequent park visitor	8
You're doing a great job	4
I bring visitors to this park	4
This was a return visit for me	4
I play music here on Mondays	2
Park is a good use of federal money	2
Many locals exercise here	2
Other comments	13

Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve Additional Analysis VSP Report 101

The Visitor Services Project (VSP) staff offers the opportunity to learn more from VSP visitor study data.

Additional Analysis

Additional analysis can be done using the park's VSP visitor study data that was collected and entered into the computer. Two-way and three-way cross tabulations can be made of any of the characteristics listed below. Be as specific as possible--you may select a single program/ service/ facility instead of all that were listed in the questionnaire. Include your name, address and phone number in the request.

- Sources of information
- Hours spent in park
- Days spent in park
- Hours spent in area
- Days spent in area
- Visitor activities
- Sites visited
- Order of sites visited
- Did visitors hike?
- Where visitors hiked
- Group size
- With guided tour group
- Preferences for reducing congestion
- Size of tour group
- Group type
- State of residence
- Country of residence
- Visits past twelve months
- Visits past five years
- Ranger program attendance
- Preferences for program times
- Information service use
- Information service importance
- Information service quality
- Visitor facility use
- Visitor facility importance
- Visitor facility quality
- Park qualities that were a reason for visit
- Park quality importance
- Satisfaction with park qualities
- Age
- Income level
- Education level
- Fees paid
- Opinions of fee amount
- Willing to pay new fees
- Opinions about new fee amount
- Expenditures in area
- Did visitors feel crowded?
- Level of crowding by people
- Level of crowding by vehicles
- Time of day when crowded
- Did things detract from park qualities?
- Overall quality rating

Database

A database has been developed which contains all the VSP visitor study results from 1988 through the present. The database became operational in April, 1996. In order to use the database it will be necessary to have a database catalog, which lists the information contained in the database. Queries to the database will be accepted by phone, mail, cc:Mail, e:mail or fax, and the same forms of media will be used to return the answer to you. Through the database, you can learn how the results of this VSP visitor study compare with those from studies held at NPS sites across the nation, with those within a specific region or type of NPS site, or with those that meet criteria that are of importance to you as a park manager, researcher or other interested party.

Phone/send requests to:

**Visitor Services Project, CPSU
College of Forestry, Wildlife, and Range Sciences
University of Idaho
Moscow, Idaho 83844-1133**

**Phone: 208-885-2819
FAX: 208-885-4261
cc:Mail: VSP Database NP- -PNR
e-mail: vspdatabase@uidaho.edu**

QUESTIONNAIRE