

Puerto Rico Coral Reef Ecosystem Valuation: Recreation Activities and Uses Among Visitors



523,700
sightseeing
participants



369,500
diving/
snorkeling
participants



1,964,600
beach going
participants



28,500
fishing
participants



75,200
paddlesport
participants



253,900
boating
participants

A 2018 analysis of socioeconomic survey data provides new insight into the types of recreational activities in Puerto Rico among reef using recreational visitors. The report, **Visitor Profiles: Reef Users**, is the result of a partnership with NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS), the Environmental Protection Agency, and Puerto Rico University, Sea Grant. The report estimates the amount of time people spend recreating in the area and the activities they enjoy in the summer and winter seasons. The summer season was May-October of 2016 and the winter season was November 2016 to April 2017.

How are reef using visitors using Puerto Rico?

Puerto Rico visitors reported engaging in over 20 different activities in Puerto Rico. Some of the most common activities are beach going, hiking/biking, camping, sightseeing, and watching wildlife from the shore. Less frequently reported recreational activities include surfing, fishing, and photography. The images to the left show number of participants for activities on the reefs, shoreline, and further inshore.

Visitor trips to Puerto Rico in the summer lasted an average of 8.5 days, while in the winter they lasted an average of 8.9 days. Among all visitors to Puerto Rico there were 1.67 million person-trips in the summer and 1.74 million person-trips in the winter season.

When considering only reef using visitors, there were 843,651 person-trips in the summer and 327,717 person-trips in the winter season. The surveyed coral reef users spent more than 7.1 million "person-days" recreating in the summer and about 2.9 million person-days in the winter. A person-day is the number of days a person spent on their trip, so one trip where a person stayed for five days would be five person-days. If there were three people on the trip, then that would be 15 person-days. On an average day in the summer there were roughly 4,600 visitors using reefs and in the winter there were roughly 1,800 visitors using the reef for recreation.



Map of Puerto Rico



Photos: Environmental Protection Agency

What are visitors doing in Puerto Rico?

Across all of the visitors to Puerto Rico (both reef and non-reef using), 1.9 million participated in beach going activities that include both water and non-water based activities. The next most popular activity among all visitors was wildlife viewing, with roughly 523,700 participants. Camping, backpacking, hiking and picnicking were also common activities with about 432,000 participants. There were 852,600 participants in cultural, historical, and other tourist attractions such as attending special events, visiting historical sites, reading roadside exhibits, and visiting museums. Less common activities included fishing and boating, outdoor sports, and bicycling. The table below shows participation rates for reef using activities only. For reef-related activities, swimming and diving had the highest participation rates across both the winter and summer seasons.

More Information:

A complete copy of the report is available at:

https://www.coris.noaa.gov/activities/projects/pr_reef_ecosystem_valuation/

Dr. Vernon R. (Bob) Leeworthy
Chief Economist
Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
Bob.Leeworthy@noaa.gov

Dr. Danielle Schwarzmann
Economist
Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
Danielle.Schwarzmann@noaa.gov

Table: Visitors and Participation Rates by Reef Using Activity

Activity	Summer		Winter		Weighted Annual Average	
	Number of Visitors	Participation Rate (%) ¹	Number of Visitors	Participation Rate (%) ¹	Number of Visitors	Participation Rate (%) ¹
All Diving	277,925	32.94	91,559	27.94	369,484	31.54
Snorkeling	270,871	32.11	89,874	27.42	360,745	30.8
SCUBA Diving	16,224	1.92	6,449	1.97	22,673	1.94
Reef Fishing	9,876	1.17	3,428	1.17	13,304	1.14
Viewing Nature & Wildlife	147,427	17.47	62,743	19.15	210,171	17.94
Surfing	10,581	1.25	19,113	5.83	29,694	2.54
Swimming	761,120	90.22	264,625	80.75	1,025,745	87.57
Paddle boarding, wind surfing, or kite boarding	55,726	6.61	19,520	5.96	75,246	6.42

Summer Reef User Participation Rate

