

ALASKA VISITOR VOLUME

Summer 2024



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Visitor Volume: Summer 2024

Total Volume

An estimated 2.7 million out-of-state visitors traveled to Alaska between May and September 2024, 66% of whom were cruise visitors, 31% were air visitors, and 3% were highway/ferry visitors.

Cruise visitors include any visitor that overnighted on a cruise ship within Alaska. Air visitors flew both in and out of Alaska, and exclude cruise passengers. Highway/ferry visitors entered and/or exited the state via highway or ferry.

Table 1. Alaska Visitor Volume, Summer 2024, by Transportation Market

Transportation Market	# of Visitors	% of Total
Cruise visitors	1,785,000	66%
Air visitors	839,600	31%
Highway/ferry visitors	78,300	3%
Total visitors	2,702,900	100%

Note: Cruise passengers traveling in the "winter" months of April and October are included.

The total visitor volume of 2,702,900 represents a 2.1% increase from summer 2023. The increase is largely attributable to a 3.8% growth in cruise passenger volume. Air visitors were down by 1.5%, while highway/ferry visitors were up by 1.6%. The share of cruise passengers out of all visitors grew from 65% in 2023 to 66% in 2024.

Table 2. Alaska Visitor Volume, Summers 2023 and 2024, by Transportation Market

Transportation Market	Summer 2023	Summer 2024	% Change
Cruise visitors	1,719,000	1,785,000	+3.8%
Air visitors	852,500	839,600	-1.5%
Highway/ferry visitors	77,100	78,300	+1.6%
Total visitors	2,648,600	2,702,900	+2.1%

Cruise Visitors

Three-quarters of 2024 cruise passengers (74%) were on round-trip itineraries, while the remaining 26% were on cross-gulf itineraries, sailing between Whittier or Seward and ports outside of Alaska, mostly Seattle and Vancouver. This ratio was similar to 2023 (76/24).

Table 3. Alaska Cruise Passenger Volume, 2024, By Cruise Type

Cruise Type	# Passengers	% of Total
Round-trip passengers	1,324,000	74%
Cross-gulf passengers	461,000	26%
Total passengers	1,785,000	100%

Sources: Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska and non-CLAA lines.

Twelve Alaska ports received at least 10,000 cruise passengers in 2024, with the top three receiving over 1 million each (Juneau, Ketchikan, and Skagway). The top five ports each experienced modest (2% to 5%) growth in 2024 with the exception of Ketchikan, which was flat. Ports with fewer passengers tend to see more fluctuations in traffic, most pronounced in Dutch Harbor (+79%), Kodiak (+61%), Valdez (-39%), and Wrangell (-27%).

Table 4. Alaska Cruise Passenger Volume, 2023 and 2024, by Port (>10,000 pax)

Port	2023	2024	% change
Juneau	1,669,500	1,732,000	+3.7%
Ketchikan	1,497,200	1,497,700	0.0%
Skagway	1,195,100	1,257,000	+5.2%
Glacier Bay	677,100	702,200	+3.7%
Sitka	588,400	602,600	+2.4%
Icy Strait Point	484,200	541,200	+11.8%
Whittier	223,500	240,800	+7.7%
Seward	191,500	220,200	+15.0%
Haines	73,200	87,700	+19.8%
Valdez	44,900	27,500	-38.8%
Wrangell	23,000	16,900	-26.5%
Kodiak	12,600	20,300	+61.1%
Dutch Harbor	7,600	13,600	+78.9%

Sources: Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska and non-CLAA lines.

Air Visitors

Air visitor volume is largely based on passenger enplanements for flights exiting the state. Air exits are measured in terms of five major airports, an “other airports” category, and international. In summer 2024, 72% of visitor air exits were attributable to Anchorage; 11% to Fairbanks; 7% to Juneau; 4% to Ketchikan; 3% to Sitka, and 1% to other. (These exits include some cruise passengers.) Visitor exits via international flights represented 1% of total air exits.

Note that “visitor exits” are not equivalent to the “air visitor market,” which is adjusted to account for cruise passengers exiting via air as well as highway/ferry visitors who exit the state via air.

Table 5. Air Visitor Exits Share by Airport, Summer 2024

Airport	% of Total
Anchorage	72
Fairbanks	11
Juneau	7
Ketchikan	4
Sitka	3
Other	2
International	1

Sources: Airports and airlines; MRG estimates.

Highway/Ferry Visitors

An estimated 78,300 visitors entered and/or exited Alaska via highway or ferry in summer 2024. The main component of highway/ferry visitors are highway travelers in personal vehicles. The Klondike Highway (outside of Skagway) is the most common border crossing for these travelers, representing 43% of all personal vehicle crossings, followed by Alaska Highway (at Beaver Creek) at 36%, Haines Highway at 14%, and Top of the World at 7%.

Ferry passengers represented only 4% of highway/ferry visitor exits (and 0.1% of statewide visitor exits).

Table 6. Highway Personal Vehicle Crossings Share by Border, Summer 2024

Border	% of Total
Klondike Highway	43
Alaska Highway	36
Haines Highway	14
Top of the World Highway	7

Sources: Department of Homeland Security; MRG estimates.

Indicators

The following indicators help illustrate how the most recent summer season fared compared to the previous year in terms of tax revenues, fishing/hunting license sales, and hotel statistics.

Bed tax revenues in summer 2024 were up in all cities except Ketchikan, with increases ranging between 5% and 13%. Ketchikan saw a modest 1% decrease over the same time period. Anchorage vehicle tax revenues were down by 5%, while RV rental tax revenues were down by just 1%. Meanwhile, state vehicle tax revenues were up: +5% from vehicle rentals and +7% from RV rentals. Note that changes in tax revenues can reflect changes in rates as well as volume.

Non-resident sportfishing/hunting license sales were up less than 1%. (While this reflects full year and not summer-only sales, nearly all non-resident license sales occur in the summer months.)

According to hotel statistics provided by STR, Anchorage showed the highest occupancy in 2023 among the three largest markets at 81%, followed by Fairbanks at 79% and Juneau at 70%. Compared to summer 2023, occupancy was down by between -2% and -7% in all three reporting communities.

Average daily rates (ADR) were highest in Anchorage (\$269) followed by Juneau (\$248) and Fairbanks (\$241). Compared to the previous summer, ADRs were up by between 8% and 10% in the three communities.

Table 7. Tax and Hotel Indicators, Summers 2023 vs. 2024

		% Change
Bed Tax Revenues		
Fairbanks (inc. City & Bor.)		+13%
Denali		+11%
Sitka		+6%
Anchorage		+5%
Juneau		+5%
Ketchikan (City)		-1%
Vehicle Tax Revenues	Alaska	Anchorage
Vehicle	+5%	-5%
RV	+7%	-1%
Sportfishing/Hunting Licenses		
Total sales to non-residents		+<1%
Hotel Occupancy		
Anchorage	81%	-4%
Fairbanks	79%	-2%
Juneau	70%	-7%
Hotel ADR (Average Daily Rate)		
Anchorage	\$269	+8%
Juneau	\$248	+9%
Fairbanks	\$241	+10%

Sources: Municipality of Anchorage, Explore Fairbanks; Alaska Department of Revenue; City and Borough of Juneau, City of Ketchikan, City and Borough of Sitka, Denali Borough, Alaska Department of Fish & Game, STR.

Note: Not all hotel properties participate in STR reporting; 78% of Anchorage properties, 72% of Fairbanks properties, and 66% of Juneau properties contributed data.

Long-Term Trend

Alaska’s summer visitor volume has completely recovered from the COVID-related downturn in 2020-21. The 2024 total was 22% up from 2019, and 63% up from a decade earlier (2014). The growth in the last decade has largely been driven by the cruise market, which grew by 84% between 2014 and 2024.

The air market grew by 33% over that same time period. The highway/ferry market saw more fluctuations, growing by 42% between 2014 and 2018, then dropping by 19% between 2018 and 2024. (See following page for more detail.)

Figure 1. Visitor Volume to Alaska, Summers 2006-2024

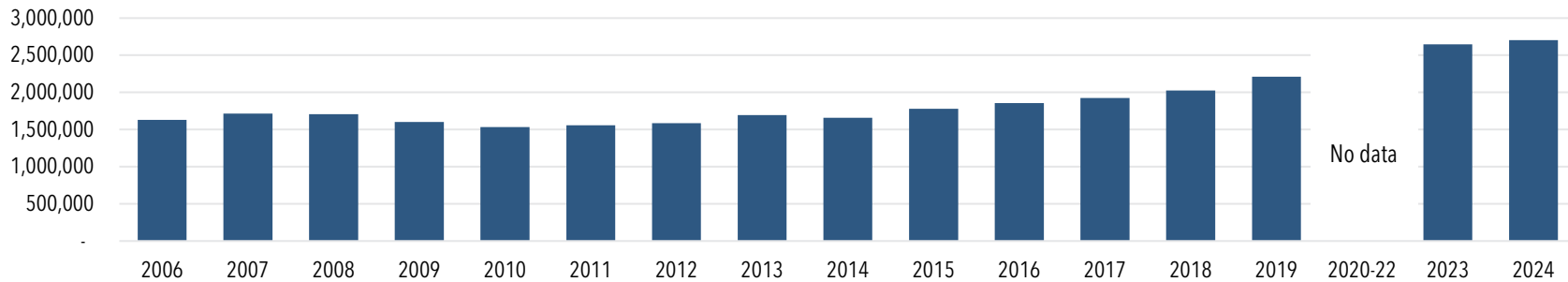


Figure 2. Visitor Volume to Alaska by Transportation Market, Summers 2014-2024

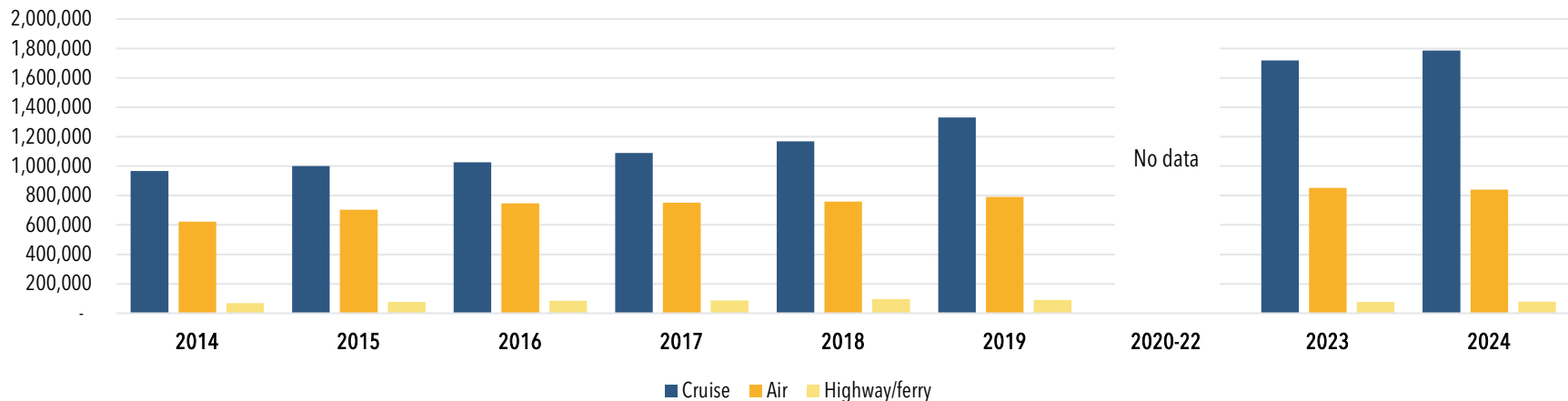


Table 8. Visitor Volume to Alaska by Transportation Market, Summers 2014-2024

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020-22	2023	2024	% change 2014-24
Cruise	967,500	999,600	1,025,900	1,089,700	1,169,000	1,331,600		1,719,000	1,785,000	+84%
Air	623,600	703,400	747,100	750,500	760,100	790,900	No data	852,500	839,600	+35%
Highway/ferry	68,500	77,000	84,500	86,100	97,200	90,500		77,100	78,300	+14%
Total	1,659,600	1,780,000	1,857,500	1,926,300	2,026,300	2,213,000		2,648,600	2,702,900	+63%
% change YOY	-	+7.3%	+4.4%	+3.7%	+5.2%	+9.2%	n/a	+19.7%*	+2.1%	

*Change from 2019.

Methodology

The study team collected traffic data for Alaska’s major “points of exits”, by month and location:

- **AIR:** Enplaning passengers at five major airports (ANC, FAI, JNU, KTN, SIT) who were on outbound flights i.e., flights exiting the state. A fifth “other airports” category covered passengers flying out of smaller airports where outbound flights occur (WRG, PTB, YAK, CDV).
- **CRUISE:** Cruise passengers, counted both in total and as passengers exiting the state (sailing southbound, both on round-trip and cross-gulf itineraries).
- **FERRY:** Ferry passengers disembarking at Bellingham.
- **HIGHWAY:** Highway travelers crossing the border into the U.S. from Canada at four border stations. For purposes of this visitor volume estimates, “entries” into Alaska are assumed to be equivalent to “exits.” Bus passenger crossings at the Skagway border are adjusted to reflect the large number of cruise passengers that cross the border on shore excursions.

A visitor “ratio” was applied to each of the above exit modes and locations to arrive at the visitor volume. Ratios are largely based on 2019 ratios¹ with some adjustments made for population changes in the five airport hub communities. One exception for summer 2024 was Anchorage air exiters. A new survey of Wi-Fi users at the

Anchorage Airport, conducted by MRG for Visit Anchorage, allowed for ratios to be updated to reflect 2024 survey results. (Respondents who were exiting Alaska that day provided their origin.)

The highway ratio reflects “last exit” visitors, who are not planning to re-enter Alaska. AMHS provided 2024 data on residency of passengers disembarking at Bellingham, allowing for up-to-date ratios.

Visitor volume by exit mode was adjusted for “transportation market” in the following ways:

- **AIR:** Cruise passengers exiting the state via air were removed, as were visitors who entered via highway or ferry but exited by air.
- **CRUISE:** The cruise total includes all visitors who traveled by cruise ship in Alaska, whether they were on a round-trip cruise; cross-gulf cruise (flying one way and cruising one-way); or an in-state cruise (small cruise ships starting and ending their cruise in Alaska, whose passengers fly both in and out of the state). Note that all cruise passengers are included in the “summer” total, even though a small percentage travel in April or October.
- **HIGHWAY/FERRY:** Highway/ferry exits were combined, then adjusted upwards slightly to account for travelers who enter the state by highway or ferry, then exit by air.

¹ 2019 ratios were mostly based on 2016 ratios which resulted from nearly 50,000 “tallies” conducted at airports and on the highway. Some adjustments are made to

reflect the changing number of cross-gulf cruise passengers flying out of the Anchorage and Fairbanks airports.

Sources

CRUISE VISITORS

- Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska (CLAA)
- Non-CLAA lines (UnCruise, Alaskan Dream, American Cruise Line)

AIR VISITORS

- Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) for Anchorage and Fairbanks enplanements
- Alaska Air for outbound enplanements by airport
- Delta Air for Ketchikan and Sitka enplanements
- Juneau Airport for Delta enplanements

HIGHWAY/FERRY VISITORS

- Alaska Marine Highway System
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection

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