

## 12. Visitors to Port Campbell National Park

### Aim

Students interpret data and draw conclusions about the trends in visitor numbers and visitor activities in Port Campbell National Park.

### Materials

- Resource sheet: Visitor statistics.
- Resource sheet: Notes on visitors to Port Campbell National Park.

### Activities

1. Referring to the data in the Resource sheet, draw a graph to show visitor numbers to the park over time. Explain possible limitations of the data collection that should be taken into account when interpreting the data.

2. According to the visitor statistics data collected by Parks Victoria surveys, which category of visitor is:

- the main visitor group?
- the smallest visitor group?

3. Interpret the data from a visitor survey to determine the main type of visitor travelling party for Port Campbell National Park. How do the results compare with the average for other parks? Suggest reasons for the differences.

4. What does the data suggest about the main reasons people choose to visit Port Campbell National Park?

5. What are the most popular activities in Port Campbell National Park? How do these compare to other parks? Suggest reasons for any differences.

6. Suggest any implications for promotion and management of the park based on these visitor survey results.

### Links to Section 1

See also Section 1 of this education resource kit, in particular: Parks and SOSE

7. How many people visit Victoria's national parks?
8. What do people do in areas managed by Parks Victoria?



## 12a. Visitor statistics

### Visitor numbers to the park over time

Year	Number of visitors to Port Campbell National Park	Data collection notes
1979/1980	235 840	Day visitors *
1989/1990	357 065	Day visitors
1999/2000	1 894 417	Visit days **
2008/2009	3 500 000	Projected number of visit days

Source: Parks Victoria

\* Day visits = The number of visitors during a day.

\*\* Visit days = The number of days spent in the area.

### Where do visitors come from?

Category of park visitor	% of visitors to PCNP
Regional day tripper	18 %
Victorian intrastate	48 %
interstate	26 %
international	8 %

Source: Parks Victoria

### Description of visitor party

Question asked: How would you describe your travel party?

Respondants	% of visitors to PCNP	% of visitors to other parks
Travelling alone	6 %	5 %
With a partner or spouse	48 %	21 %
A group of immediate family members – parents and children	15 %	30 %
Friends or relatives travelling together with children	4 %	23 %
Friends or relatives travelling together without children	23 %	20 %
Other	5 %	1 %

Source: Parks Victoria

**Main reason for visiting Port Campbell National Park**

Question asked: What made you choose to visit this particular park?

<b>Respondants</b>	<b>% of visitors to PCNP</b>	<b>% of visitors to other parks</b>
<b>Icon</b>		
Heard about the park and wanted to see what it was like	52 %	12 %
Good place to take visitors from outside the local area	7 %	4 %
<b>Convenient</b>		
Driving through the area	5 %	6 %
Live nearby	2 %	14 %
<b>Regular visitor</b>		
Tradition	3 %	7 %
Come here a lot	2 %	10 %
<b>Natural beauty</b>		
I like this particular park for its scenery	20 %	15 %
I feel an inner peace here / spiritual connection	1 %	1 %
<b>Ease of access</b>		
Park is easy to get to	1 %	4 %
<b>Remote / wilderness</b>		
Get away from people	2 %	4 %
Amount of open space	1 %	1 %
Peace and quiet	-	4 %

Source: Parks Victoria

**Main reason for current visit to park**

Question asked: How is the main reason for you being in the park today?

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>% of visitors to PCNP</b>	<b>% of visitors to other parks</b>
Enjoy nature	63 %	33 %
Relax	18 %	38 %
Learn (outdoors)	6 %	2 %
Be active / stimulated	5 %	12 %
Other	5 %	3 %
No particular reason	3 %	2 %
Socialise	1 %	9 %
Be creative	1 %	0 %

Source: Parks Victoria

**Activities undertaken on this visit to the park**

Question asked: What activities did you undertake on this trip?

<b>Respondants</b>	<b>% of visitors to PCNP</b>	<b>% of visitors to other parks</b>
Scenic driving / sight seeing	88 %	36 %
Walk	70 %	74 %
- Short walk (up to an hour)	59 %	54 %
- Medium walk (1 - 4 hours)	10 %	24 %
- Long walk (more than 4 hours)	8 %	12 %
- Walking the dog	1 %	1 %
Painting / drawing / photography	59 %	13 %
Visiting a special site	41 %	14 %
Relaxing / getting away from it all	36 %	60 %
Swimming	23 %	34 %
Picnicking	22 %	33 %
Visiting café / restaurant	19 %	8 %
Showing visitors from overseas / interstate	14 %	5 %
Reading	13 %	27 %
Camping in a campsite	11 %	22 %
sunbathing	9 %	14 %
Courting / romancing	7 %	4 %
Camping in a wilderness area	5 %	5 %
surfing	5 %	10 %
caravanning	4 %	3 %
Outdoor activity with / for children	4 %	23 %
supervising children	4 %	17 %
Diving / snorkelling	3 %	5 %
Caving	3 %	2 %
Commercial tour	3 %	0 %
Cycling / mountain bike riding	3 %	7 %
Fishing	2 %	22 %
Boating / sailing	2 %	5 %
Social / informal sport	2 %	8 %
Rock climbing / absailing	2 %	5 %

Source: Parks Victoria

## 12b. Notes on visitors to Port Campbell National Park

Most visitors come as couples or family groups of three to six. In school holidays the proportion of family groups increases. Bus groups are common. Long distance bus tours between capital cities are becoming more popular now. Visitors with physical disabilities are not uncommon.

The park attracts a large proportion of interstate visitors compared with other parts of Victoria; more than a quarter of the total visitors to the park are from outside the State. In comparison with Otway National Park, Port Campbell National Park attracts a relatively small proportion of Melbourne based visitors.

Most overnight visitors stay in regional centres such as Warrnambool and to a lesser extent Apollo Bay and Camperdown. Others stay overnight in Port Campbell or Peterborough, staying in the caravan park, youth hostel, motels or units.

About 10 per cent come direct from Melbourne. There is little difference between the characteristics of day visitors and campers staying in the caravan park.

Many visitors are travel weary when they reach the park. Some have not left enough time to fully appreciate the sites, and many remain in their vehicles for much of their visit. Seventy five per cent of visitors plan to stay no more than half a day in the park.



### What do visitors do?

Most visitors stop at the major visitor sites, the Twelve Apostles, the Loch Ard Gorge area, London Bridge and Port Campbell beach.

Many also stop at the Grotto and the Arch. Visitors in cars usually drive to the end of all or most of the bitumen access roads. They usually leave their cars at the first few sites and walk the short distances to nearby viewing sites. At subsequent sites visitors may or may not leave their cars depending on the weather conditions and whether they expect to see anything remarkably different from sites already visited.

Most sites are visited for a short time only. A survey in 1985 found that 90 per cent of visitors to the Loch Ard Gorge area stayed less than two hours and 60 per cent less than one hour.

Bus tour groups generally follow a schedule including visits to the main sites.

When the weather, sea and tide conditions are suitable, especially during holiday periods, some visitors engage in swimming, surfing, fishing, snorkelling and scuba diving. Land based activities include walking, some horse riding and car touring.

Visitors enjoy the interpretative and environmental education services provided through the Port Campbell Information Centre and summer interpretation programs. Activities including Mutton-bird and Little Penguin viewing and beach activities. Outside school holidays a high proportion of visitors are school children on organised educational tours.