

# Visits to the Natural Environment



## Monthly update – May 2011

6<sup>th</sup> July 2011

During May 2011, the adult population in England (aged 16 and over) took an estimated 226 million visits to the natural environment. This is three percent lower than the 232 million visits in May 2010, and 17 percent lower than the 273 million visits in May 2009. On average, 44 percent of the adult population visited the natural environment in the previous seven days during May 2011. A total of 2.46 billion visits were taken between June 2010 to May 2011.

Figure 1 illustrates the monthly volume of visits taken to the natural environment in the 12 month period from June 2010 to May 2011.

- Visits were lowest in November and December 2010 (178 and 168 million respectively) and February 2011 (180 million).
- Visits were highest in April 2011 and May 2011 (230 million and 226 million respectively).
- The volume of visits in May 2011, although large relative to other recent months, was lower than in April. This reflects the Easter holiday period and a number of public holidays, such as the Royal Wedding, that fell during April.

Figure 1 - Volume of visits to the natural environment by month and type of place visited, Jun 2010 to May 2011 (millions of visits). Base: Minimum of 3,400 respondents per month

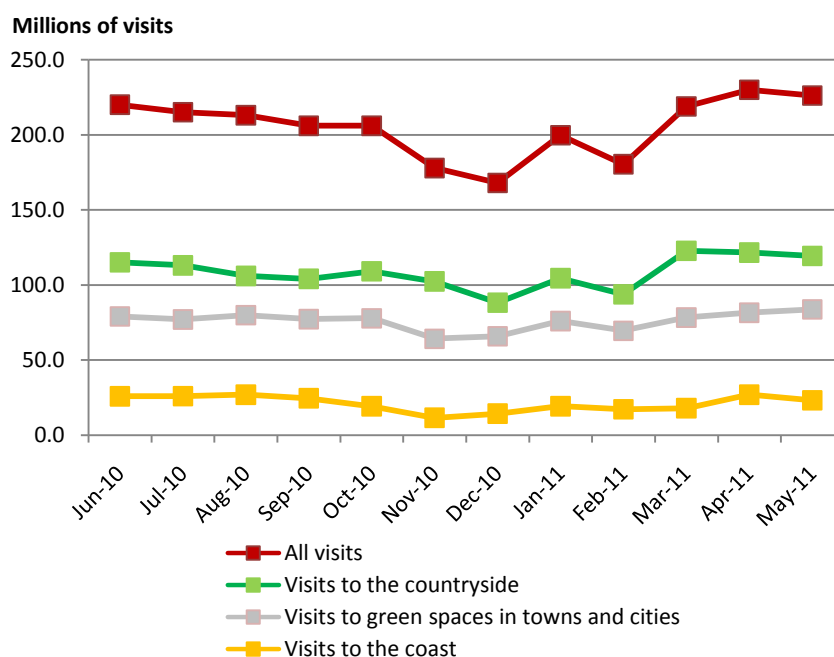


Table 1 illustrates the estimated volume of visits by type of place visited in May 2011 and over the 12 months from June 2010 to May 2011.

- In May 2011, just over half of visits were taken to places in the countryside (53 percent), an equal proportion to that recorded across all visits taken in the 12 months from June 2010 to May 2011.
- 37 percent of visits were taken to open spaces in towns and cities and one in ten visits (10 percent) were taken to the coast in May 2011.

Table 1 - Volume of visits to the natural environment by place visited (millions of visits).

	May 2011	Jun 2010 – May 2011
<b>By general type of place</b>		
Countryside	119.3	1299.0
Town and city	83.7	910.0
Coast	23.1	252.3
<b>By specific type of place</b>		
Park in a town or city	55.8	557.1
Woodland/forest	33.6	325.3
Path, cycleway, bridleway	32.7	350.9
River, lake, canal	28.7	253.9
Another open space in the countryside	26.1	299.5
Another open space in town or city	19.7	192.8
Playing field or other recreation area	17.5	195.3
Farmland	15.7	214.4
Country park	15.6	176.2
Beach	13.0	153.9
Village	12.8	157.1
Mountain, hill, moorland	9.5	60.7
Other coastline	9.4	89.2
Children's playground	6.1	77.7
Allotment/community garden	1.6	15.6

Respondent base: May 2011 (N=3,710), Jun 2010 to May 2011(N=45,883)

Table 2 shows the volume of visits by type of activity undertaken.

- During May 2011, 48 percent of visits involved walking with a dog, while three in ten visits (29 percent) involved walking without a dog.
- Other significant activities included playing with children, eating or drinking out and watching wildlife.
- A higher proportion of the visits taken in the June 2010 to May 2011 period involved dog walking (51 percent) and slightly less walking without a dog (27 percent).

**Table 2 - Volume of visits to the natural environment by activity (millions of visits).**

	May 2011	Jun 2010 – May 2011
<b>Activity</b>		
Walking, with a dog	107.9	1247.0
Walking, not with a dog	65.8	656.2
Playing with children	21.1	216.4
Eating or drinking out	14.1	144.1
Wildlife watching	8.0	73.7
Informal games and sport	7.9	65.8
Visiting an attraction	7.7	86.8
Running	6.6	70.6
Road cycling	5.5	50.2
Picnicking	5.3	47.8
Appreciating scenery from your car	5.0	49.4
Horse riding	3.7	28.5
Visits to the beach, sunbathing, paddling in the sea	3.0	48.8
Off road cycling/mountain biking	3.0	27.8
Fishing	1.4	15.9
Watersports	1.4	15.3
Fieldsports	0.9	10.4
Swimming outdoors	0.5	12.9

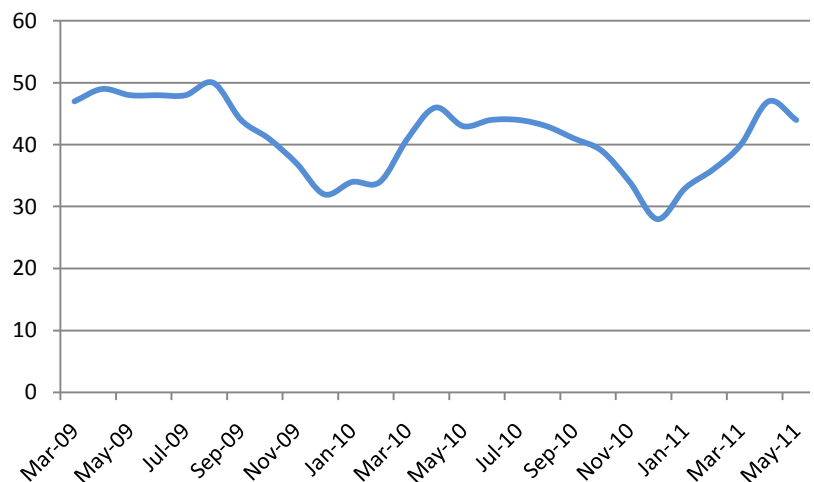
Respondent base: May 2011 (N=3,710), Jun 2010 to May 2011(N=45,883)

Figure 2 shows how the proportion of adults taking visits in the last 7 days has varied since March 2009.

- During May 2011, an average of 44 percent of the adult population reported taking one or more visits to the natural environment in the previous 7 days.
- This is the same proportion as that recorded during the summer months of June and July 2010 (44 percent each).

**Figure 2 - Percentage of adult population taking visits to in the previous 7 days by month, Apr 2010 to Mar 2011.** Base: Minimum of 3,200 respondents per month

**Percentage of adult population**



**Table 3 - Visit duration, distance travelled and expenditure during visits**

	May 2011	Jun 2010 - May 2011
<b>Average duration of visits</b>	2 hours 04 minutes	1 hour 59 minutes
<b>Average distance travelled to reach visit destination</b>	6.1 miles	6.4 miles
<b>Percentage of visits involving any expenditure</b>	27%	26%
<b>Average expenditure per visit (excluding visits with no spend)</b>	£21	£27

Respondent base for distance and duration: May 2011 (N=3,710), Jun 2010 to May 2011 (N=45,833), Respondent base for expenditure: May 2011 (N=929), Jun 2010 to May 2011 (N=10,608)

The average duration of visits in May 2011 was 2 hours and 4 minutes and the average distance travelled was 6.1 miles. The average duration of visits is higher than for the June 2010 – May 2011 period reflecting the longer daylight hours and milder weather compared to the autumn/winter months.

Around a quarter of visits (27 percent) in May 2011 involved any expenditure and the average spend per visit was £21. The latter value was lower than the 12-month average (£27).

The Monitor of Engagement with the Natural environment (MENE) survey is undertaken weekly across England. It focuses on people's use and enjoyment of the natural environment, defined as the green open spaces in and around towns and cities as well as the wider countryside and coast. It excludes time spent in private gardens. To find out more about the survey visit: <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/research/mene.aspx>