

# Visits to the Natural Environment



## Monthly update – June 2011

3 August 2011

During June 2011, the adult population in England (aged 16 and over) took an estimated 233 million visits to the natural environment. This is six percent higher than the 220 million visits in June 2010, however it is eight percent lower than the 253 million visits in June 2009. On average, 46 percent of the adult population visited the natural environment in the previous seven days during June 2011. A total of 2.47 billion visits were taken between July 2010 and June 2011.

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

- Visits were lowest in November and December 2010 (178 and 168 million respectively) and February 2011 (180 million).
- Visits were highest in June 2011 and April 2011 (233 million and 230 million respectively).
- The volume of visits in June 2011 was the highest recorded in the last 12 months, reflecting the good weather and longer daylight hours during the month.

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

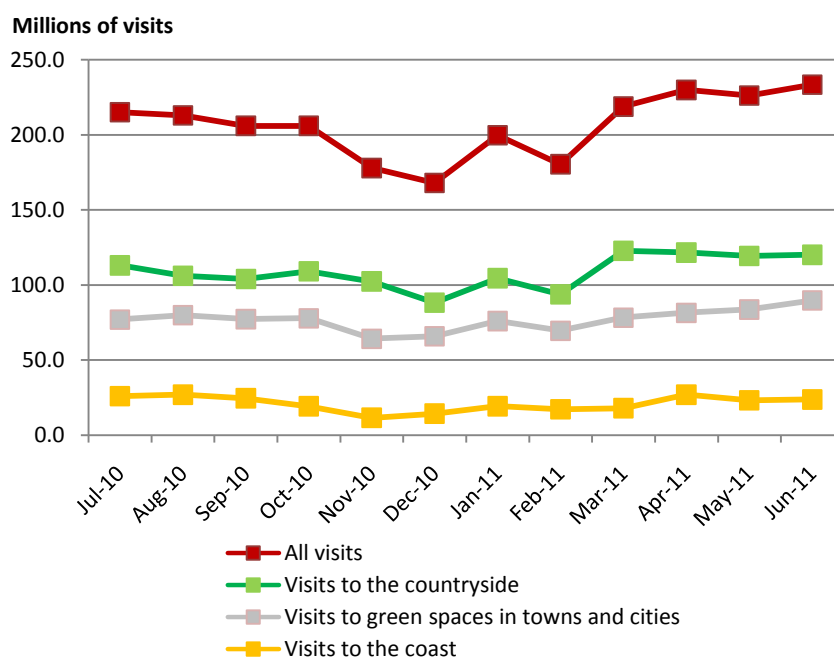


Table 1 illustrates the estimated volume of visits by type of place visited in June 2011 and over the 12 months from July 2010 to June 2011.

- In June 2011, just over half of visits were taken to places in the countryside (51 percent), a lower proportion to that recorded across all visits taken in the 12 months from July 2010 to June 2011 (53%).
- 38 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 June 2011.

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

	Jun 2011	Jul 2010 – Jun 2011
<b>By general type of place</b>		
Countryside	120.0	1304.0
Town and city	89.7	920.8
Coast	23.7	250.1
<b>By specific type of place</b>		
Park in a town or city	57.6	567.0
Path, cycleway, bridleway	34.8	359.7
Woodland/forest	24.6	325.2
Another open space in the countryside	21.1	289.6
River, lake, canal	17.5	248.0
Farmland	16.8	216.6
Playing field or other recreation area	21.1	198.3
Another open space in town or city	14.5	191.0
Country park	21.0	179.4
Village	18.8	166.6
Beach	14.9	153.0
Other coastline	8.2	86.9
Children's playground	6.0	76.1
Mountain, hill, moorland	5.8	60.3
Allotment/community garden	2.9	16.8

Respondent base: Jun 2011 (N=4,451), Jul 2010 to Jun 2011 (N=46,792)

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

- During June 2011, 45 percent of visits involved walking with a dog, while a quarter of visits (26 percent) involved walking without a dog.
- Other significant activities included playing with children, eating or drinking out and taking part in informal games and sport.
- A higher proportion of the visits taken in the July 2010 to June 2011 period involved dog walking (51 percent) whereas a similar proportion involved walking without a dog (27 percent)

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

- During June 2011, an average of 46 percent of the adult population reported taking one or more visits to the natural environment in the previous 7 days.
- This is two percentage points higher than the figure recorded during both June and July 2010 (44%) but one percentage point lower than the Easter holiday month of April 2011 (47 percent).

The average duration of visits in June 2011 was 2 hours and 10 minutes and the average distance travelled was 7.0 miles. The average duration of visits is higher than for the July 2010 – June 2011 period reflecting the longer daylight hours and milder weather compared to the autumn/winter months.

Around a quarter of visits (27 percent) in June 2011 involved expenditure and the average spend per visit was £23. The latter value was lower than the 12-month average (£26).

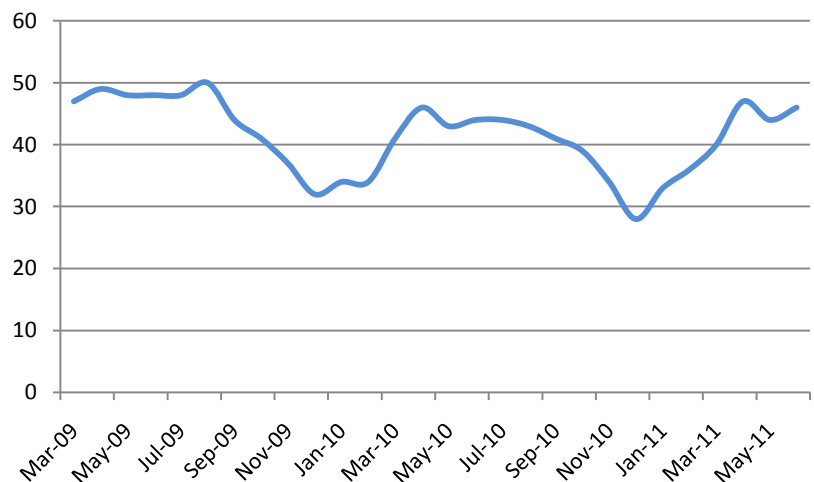
**Table 2 - Volume of visits to the natural environment by activity (millions of visits).**

	Jun 2011	Jul 2010 – Jun 2011
<b>Activity</b>		
Walking, with a dog	104.5	1254.4
Walking, not with a dog	60.9	658.4
Playing with children	22.7	218.5
Eating or drinking out	14.8	145.0
Informal games and sport	9.9	67.5
Running	9.4	74.4
Visiting an attraction	9.1	86.8
Picnicking	8.1	49.5
Road cycling	6.9	51.2
Wildlife watching	6.2	74.2
Visits to the beach, sunbathing, paddling in the sea	6.0	48.4
Appreciating scenery from your car	4.8	50.1
Off road cycling/mountain biking	2.2	27.2
Watersports	2.0	15.4
Swimming outdoors	1.7	12.6
Horse riding	1.6	27.9
Fishing	1.6	15.0
Fieldsports	0.7	10.2

Respondent base: Jun 2011 (N=4,451), Jul 2010 to Jun 2011 (N=46,792)

**Figure 2 - Percentage of adult population taking visits in the previous 7 days by month, Mar 2009 – Jun 2011.** Base: Minimum of 3,200 respondents per month

Percentage of adult population



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

	Jun 2011	Jul 2010 - Jun 2011
<b>Average duration of visits</b>	2 hours 10 minutes	1 hour 58 minutes
<b>Average distance travelled to reach visit destination</b>	7.0 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>	£23	£26

Respondent base for distance and duration: Jun 2011 (N=4,451), Jul 2010 to Jun 2011 (N=46,792)  
Respondent base for expenditure: Jun 2011 (N=874), Jul 2010 to Jun 2011 (N=10,634)

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>