

Dauphin Island Estuarium  
Exit Survey of Visitors  
2005 Annual Report

CBER Research Report #65

Prepared by  
Helena Cowan  
Center for Business and Economic Research  
Mitchell College of Business  
University of South Alabama

February 7, 2006

The Estuarium at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab distributes Exit Visitor Surveys to their visitors throughout the year. The surveys were created by the Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) and then modified by The Estuarium to add more questions of rank. Each quarter, The Estuarium's managers collect the completed surveys and mail them back to CBER for processing, where the data from each survey is compiled into quarterly summaries. A PowerPoint presentation is also created each quarter and is available for viewing on the web. At the end of the year, the quarterly summaries are combined to form an Annual Report. The following report is a total summary of all responses to The Estuarium's Exit Visitor Surveys for the year 2005. The number of surveys collected by The Estuarium for each quarter is as follows:

January – March:	20
April – June:	44
July – September:	31
October – December:	0

A total of 95 surveys were collected during 2005.

## Table of Contents

---

### SECTION:

#### 1. TABULAR SUMMARY

Rankings based on experience visiting The Estuarium	1
Primary residential states/countries	2
Primary reason for trip to the Mobile area	3
Number of people in group	3
Length of stay in Mobile	3
Information sources used in deciding to visit Mobile	4
Other information sources used	4
Attractions visited or planned to visit	4
Other attractions visited or planned to visit	4

#### 2. VISITOR COMMENTS

January – March	1
April – June	1
July – September	1

#### 3. POWERPOINT SUMMARY

Primary residential states	2
Reason for visiting Mobile	3
Number of people in group	4
Length of stay in Mobile	5
Information sources used	6
Other attractions visited or planned to visit by Estuarium visitors (table)	7
Other attractions visited or planned to visit by Estuarium visitors (graph)	8

#### 4. CROSS TABLES, BY REASON FOR TRIP

Responses from 58 visitors on a vacation/pleasure trip	1
Responses from 14 visitors visiting friends/relatives	2
Responses from 12 visitors in a tour group	3
Responses from 4 visitors on a business trip	4

#### 5. CROSS TABLES, BY LENGTH OF STAY

Responses from 23 visitors on a day-trip only	1
Responses from 3 visitors staying one night	2
Responses from 8 visitors staying two nights	3
Responses from 53 visitors staying three or more nights	4

SECTION 1.  
TABULAR SUMMARY

Responses from all visitors to The Estuarium at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab

---

Rankings based on experience visiting The Estuarium

<u>Courtesy of staff &amp; docents</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1	1	1.19
2	1	1.19
3	7	8.33
4	7	8.33
5	68	80.95
Total	84	100.00
Average Ranking	4.67	

<u>Knowledge of staff &amp; docents</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1	3	3.95
2	0	0.00
3	4	5.26
4	14	18.42
5	55	72.37
Total	76	100.00
Average Ranking	4.55	

<u>Ability of view and study exhibits</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1	0	0.00
2	0	0.00
3	0	0.00
4	11	12.94
5	74	87.06
Total	85	100.00
Average Ranking	4.87	

<u>Cleanliness</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1	0	0.00
2	0	0.00
3	2	2.35
4	10	11.76
5	73	85.88
Total	85	100.00
Average Ranking	4.84	

<u>Educational experience</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1	1	1.18
2	0	0.00
3	5	5.88
4	13	15.29
5	66	77.65
Total	85	100.00
Average Ranking	4.68	

<u>Entertainment experience</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1	1	1.22
2	2	2.44
3	7	8.54
4	15	18.29
5	57	69.51
Total	82	100.00
Average Ranking	4.52	

<u>Gift Shop selection</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1	1	1.54
2	2	3.08
3	8	12.31
4	20	30.77
5	34	52.31
Total	65	100.00
Average Ranking	4.29	

<u>Overall visit</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1	1	1.20
2	0	0.00
3	3	3.61
4	13	15.66
5	66	79.52
Total	83	100.00
Average Ranking	4.72	

<u>Primary residential states/countries</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Alabama*	19	21.59
Missouri	8	9.09
Mississippi	6	6.82
Indiana	5	5.68
Florida	4	4.55
Kentucky	4	4.55
Michigan	4	4.55
Minnesota	4	4.55
Tennessee	4	4.55
Texas	4	4.55
Arkansas	3	3.41
Georgia	3	3.41
Wisconsin	3	3.41
Colorado	2	2.27
Louisiana	2	2.27
South Dakota	2	2.27
Alaska	1	1.14
Delaware	1	1.14
Illinois	1	1.14
New Jersey	1	1.14
New Mexico	1	1.14
Ohio	1	1.14
Pennsylvania	1	1.14
Utah	1	1.14
Washington	1	1.14
United Kingdom	2	2.27
Total	88	100.00

\*Includes 6 residents from Mobile and Baldwin Counties

Responses from non-residents of Mobile and Baldwin Counties only

---

<u>Primary reason for trip to the Mobile area</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
vacation/pleasure trip	58	65.91
visiting friends/relatives	14	15.91
tour group	12	13.64
business trip	4	4.55
convention	0	0.00
Total	88	100.00

<u>Number of people in group</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1	2	2.38
2	18	21.43
3	12	14.29
4	9	10.71
5	7	8.33
6	11	13.10
7	7	8.33
8	1	1.19
9	1	1.19
10	1	1.19
12	4	4.76
21	2	2.38
23	2	2.38
25	1	1.19
29	1	1.19
33	2	2.38
34	1	1.19
70	1	1.19
72	1	1.19
Total	84	100.00
Average Group Size	8.56	

<u>Length of stay in Mobile</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
day-trip only	23	26.44
1 night	3	3.45
2 nights	8	9.20
3 or more nights	53	60.92
Total	87	100.00

<u>Information sources used in deciding to visit Mobile</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
friends/relatives	43	40.95
internet/web site	21	20.00
other	17	16.19
brochures	12	11.43
welcome center	7	6.67
magazine/newspaper	2	1.90
travel agency	2	1.90
billboards	1	0.95
television/radio	0	0.00
Total	105	100.00

<u>Other information source used</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
School	6	60.00
Previous visit	2	20.00
Research	1	10.00
Scouts	1	10.00
Total	10	100.00

<u>Attractions visited or planned to visit</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Fort Gaines	42	25.77
USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park	30	18.40
Bellingrath Gardens and Home	28	17.18
Gulf Coast Exploreum & IMAX	15	9.20
The Museum of Mobile	12	7.36
Fort Conde Museum & Welcome Center	7	4.29
Mobile Museum of Art	5	3.07
Other attractions/festivals/special events	5	3.07
Conde-Charlotte Museum House	4	2.45
Bragg-Mitchell Mansion	3	1.84
Mobile Greyhound Park	3	1.84
Oakleigh Period House Museum Complex	3	1.84
Wildland expeditions	3	1.84
Cruise ships	2	1.23
Richard-DAR House Museum	1	0.61
Total	163	100.00

<u>Other attractions visited or planned to visit</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Rodeo	1	33.33
Shell Mound	1	33.33
Shell Park	1	33.33
Total	3	100.00

SECTION 2.  
VISITOR COMMENTS

## January - March

---

- Movie was a bit boring.
- Wonderful
- I think it was an okay trip
- We enjoyed ourselves very much and will be back with our grandchildren
- You need more advertising
- Great! Wow!
- Very nice—some fish were missing!
- Fish and animals need more natural rocks, grass, caves, logs for hiding and sleeping, like in the ocean. they love to hide and relax to sleep like us, feels like home, even the big fish!
- Most enjoyable

## April - June

---

- Thanks so much
- Well done – Enjoyed the Estuarium greatly. Thanks
- It is pretty and a lot of fun
- Loved the octopus and fishies
- It was great!
- I love this place
- Good for kids
- Very well organized. No other comments needed
- Everything was wonderful; keep up the good work!
- Wish the photos of fish, etc. were clearer, better color, etc.
- I would like to have seen the giant sun fish that washed up here a few years ago.
- There are very few signs to direct people to this place. Then once you're here, you walk around in a circle to look at a few fish and its over! Wow! – waste of time/money.
- Very nice

## July - September

---

- More specific info on animals. Any sea snakes in the Gulf?? Please respond: Carey.blanchard@thomson.com
- It was great, I loved it.
- I love the turtles
- The only place we came back to see again—Thanks
- It was very exciting and awesome!!
- Would liked to have seen dolphins
- Keep up the good work
- I love Mobile, AL! P.S. Under the Mobile Bay sign that you walk under, Mobile is misspelled. You left out the e!
- Great job
- Could be more exhibits
- Eel and puffer fish view were excellent
- Can the nurse shark see?
- Brian was great. He told us all about the fish. Very happy visit! =)
- I think this is a wonderful place to vacation and would recommend it to others
- Brian gave us a personal tour and we learned a lot from him. He was excellent and so was this place. Thank you
- Very good

**SECTION 3.**

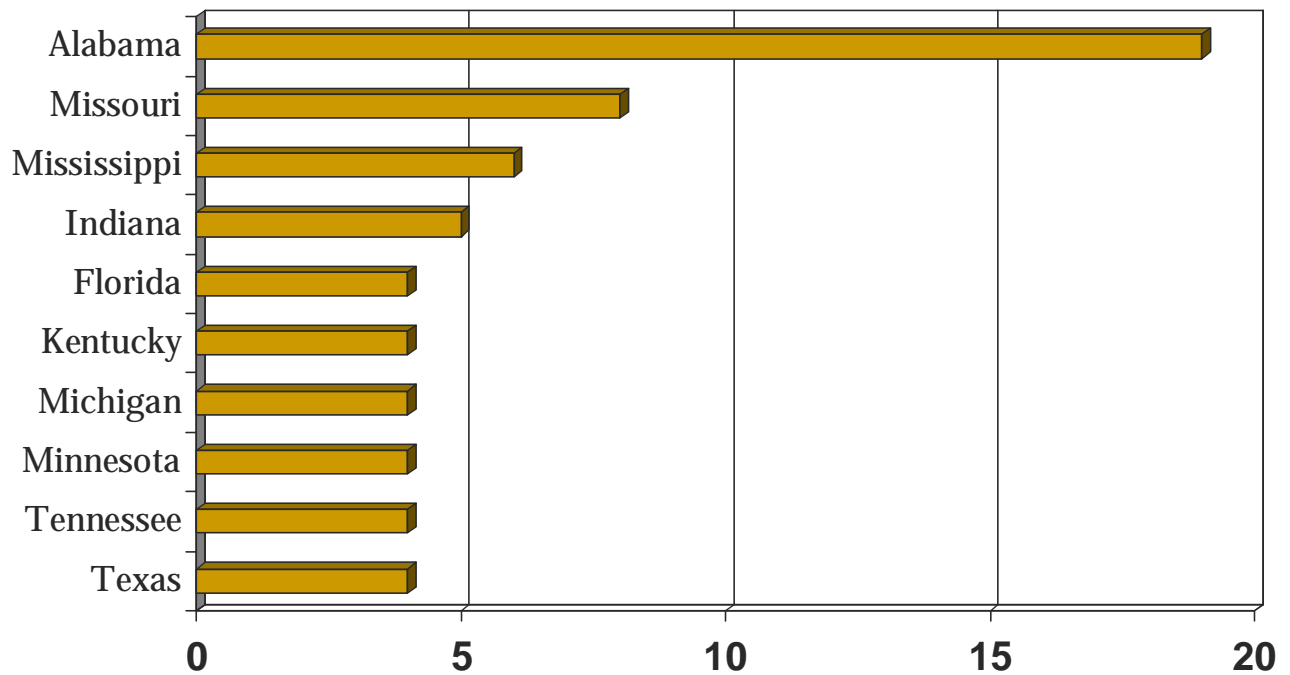
**POWERPOINT SUMMARY**



The Estuarium at the  
Dauphin Island Sea Lab

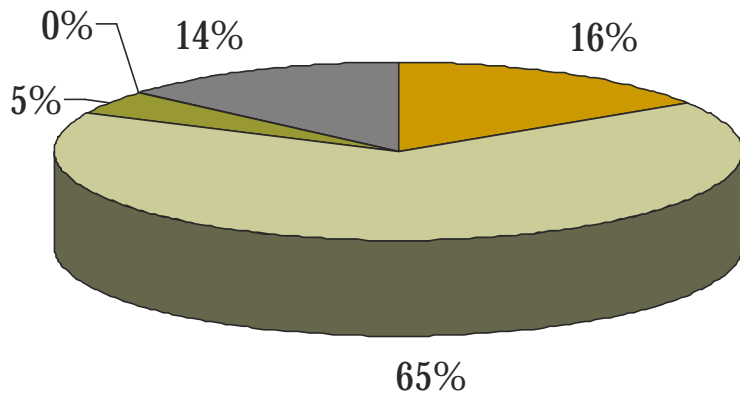
Exit Survey Summary  
2005 Annual Report  
Total surveys: 95

# Primary Residential States



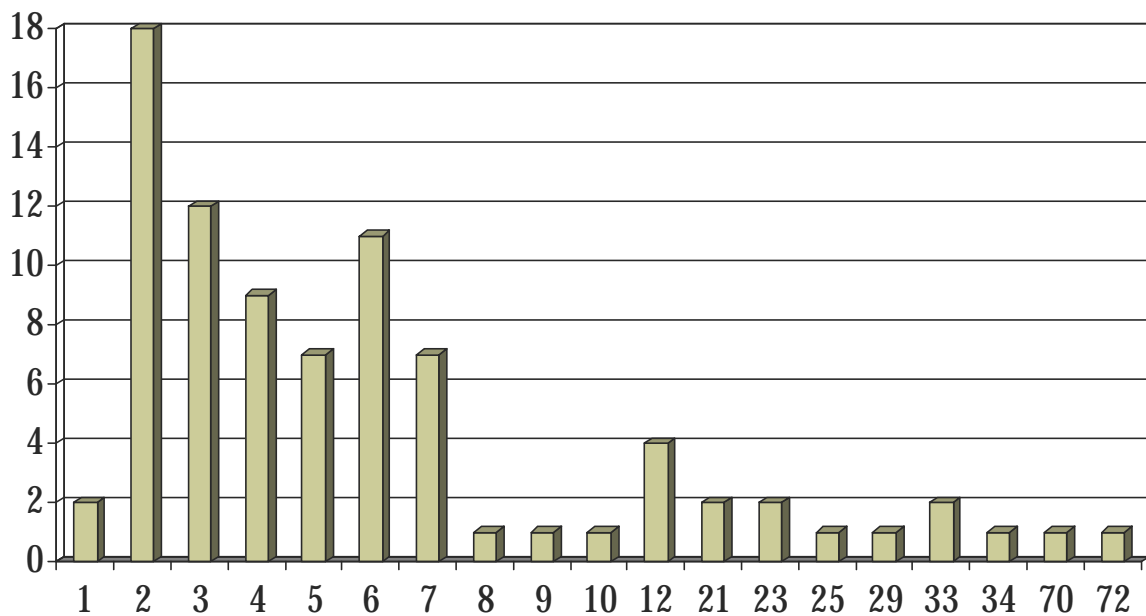
Alabama total includes 6 residents from Mobile and Baldwin Counties.

# [ Reason for Visiting Mobile ]



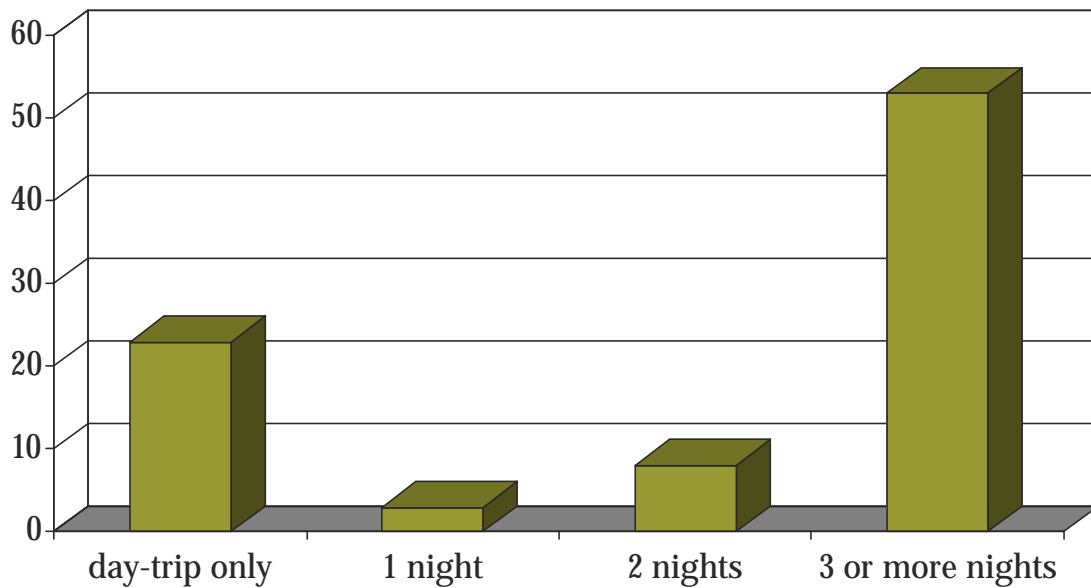
- visiting friends/relatives
- vacation/pleasure trip
- business trip
- convention
- tour group

# Number of People in Group

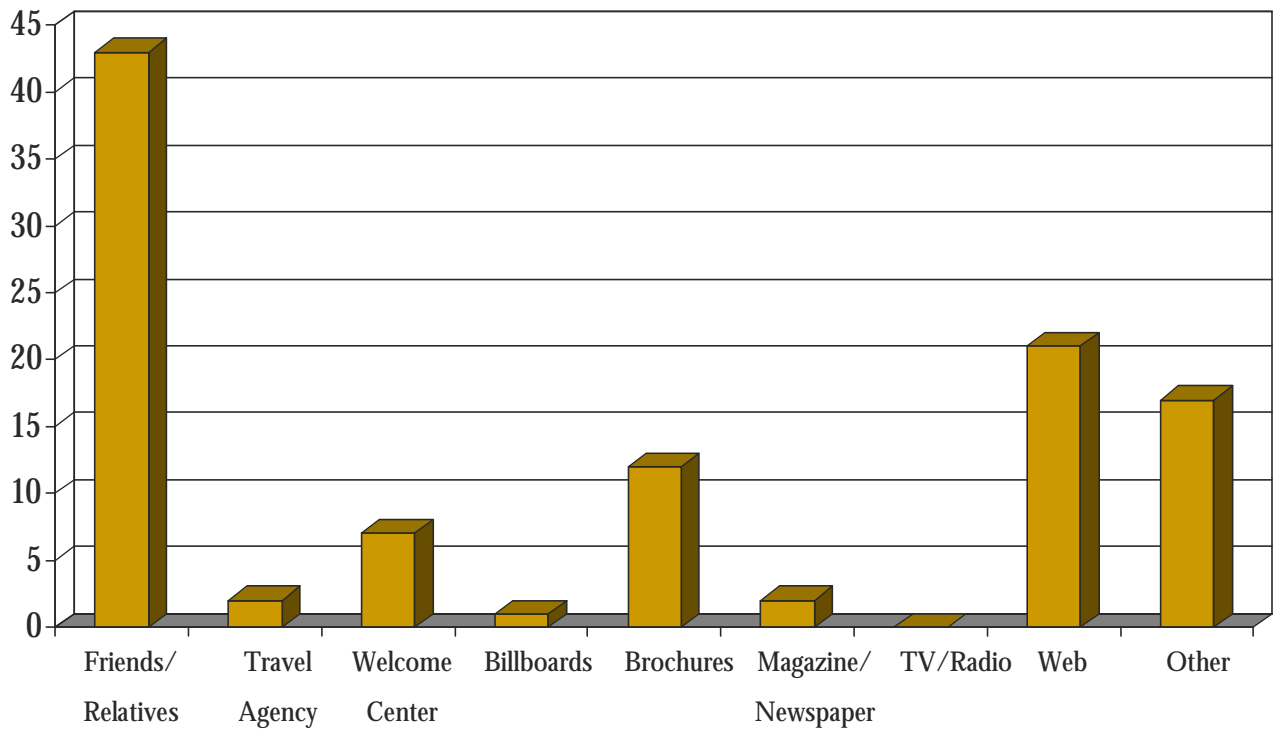


Average Group Size: 8.56

# [ Length of Stay in Mobile ]



# Information Sources Used

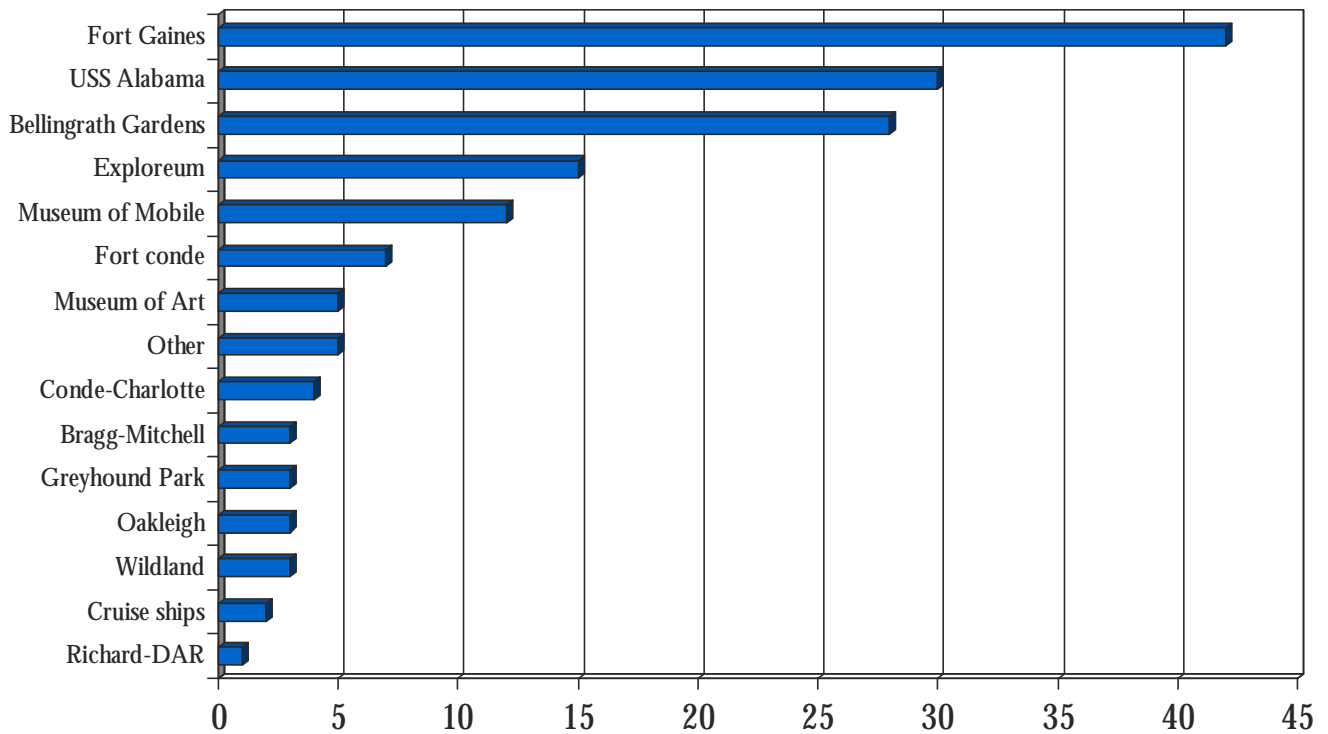


## Other Attractions Visited or Planned to Visit by Estuarium Visitors

Bellingrath Gardens and Home	28
Bragg-Mitchell Mansion	3
Conde-Charlotte Museum House	4
Cruise ships	2
Fort Conde Museum & Welcome Center	7
Fort Gaines	42
Gulf Coast Exploreum & IMAX	15
Mobile Greyhound Park	3

Mobile Museum of Art	5
The Museum of Mobile	12
Oakleigh Period House Museum Complex	3
Richard-DAR House Museum	1
USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park	30
Wildland Expeditions	3
Other attractions/ festivals/special events	5
TOTAL	163

# Other Attractions Visited or Planned to Visit by Estuarium Visitors



SECTION 4.

CROSS TABLES, BY REASON FOR TRIP

Responses from 58 visitors on a vacation/pleasure trip

---

<u>Length of stay in Mobile</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
day-trip only	13	23.21
1 night	2	3.57
2 nights	7	12.50
3 or more nights	34	60.71
Total	56	100.00

<u>Information sources used in deciding to visit Mobile</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
friends/relatives	23	33.33
internet/web site	18	26.09
other	12	17.39
brochures	7	10.14
welcome center	5	7.25
magazine/newspaper	2	2.90
billboards	1	1.45
travel agency	1	1.45
television/radio	0	0.00
Total	69	100.00

<u>Attractions visited or planned to visit</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Fort Gaines	29	26.85
USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park	25	23.15
Bellingrath Gardens and Home	17	15.74
Gulf Coast Exploreum & IMAX	9	8.33
The Museum of Mobile	7	6.48
Fort Conde Museum & Welcome Center	5	4.63
Conde-Charlotte Museum House	3	2.78
Other attractions/festivals/special events	3	2.78
Bragg-Mitchell Mansion	2	1.85
Mobile Greyhound Park	2	1.85
Mobile Museum of Art	2	1.85
Wildland expeditions	2	1.85
Cruise ships	1	0.93
Oakleigh Period House Museum Complex	1	0.93
Richard-DAR House Museum	0	0.00
Total	108	100.00

Responses from 14 visitors visiting friends/relatives

---

<u>Length of stay in Mobile</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
day-trip only	4	28.57
1 night	0	0.00
2 nights	0	0.00
3 or more nights	10	71.43
Total	14	100.00

<u>Information sources used in deciding to visit Mobile</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
friends/relatives	13	76.47
internet/web site	2	11.76
brochures	1	5.88
welcome center	1	5.88
billboards	0	0.00
magazine/newspaper	0	0.00
television/radio	0	0.00
travel agency	0	0.00
other	0	0.00
Total	17	100.00

<u>Attractions visited or planned to visit</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Fort Gaines	10	27.78
Bellingrath Gardens and Home	7	19.44
Gulf Coast Exploreum & IMAX	4	11.11
Fort Conde Museum & Welcome Center	2	5.56
Mobile Museum of Art	2	5.56
The Museum of Mobile	2	5.56
Oakleigh Period House Museum Complex	2	5.56
USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park	2	5.56
Bragg-Mitchell Mansion	1	2.78
Conde-Charlotte Museum House	1	2.78
Mobile Greyhound Park	1	2.78
Richard-DAR House Museum	1	2.78
Other attractions/festivals/special events	1	2.78
Cruise ships	0	0.00
Wildland expeditions	0	0.00
Total	36	100.00

Responses from 12 visitors in a tour group

---

<u>Length of stay in Mobile</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
day-trip only	5	41.67
1 night	0	0.00
2 nights	1	8.33
3 or more nights	6	50.00
Total	12	100.00

<u>Information sources used in deciding to visit Mobile</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
friends/relatives	5	33.33
other	4	26.67
brochures	3	20.00
internet/web site	1	6.67
travel agency	1	6.67
welcome center	1	6.67
billboards	0	0.00
magazine/newspaper	0	0.00
television/radio	0	0.00
Total	15	100.00

<u>Attractions visited or planned to visit</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Fort Gaines	3	21.43
The Museum of Mobile	3	21.43
Bellingrath Gardens and Home	2	14.29
Gulf Coast Exploreum & IMAX	2	14.29
Cruise ships	1	7.14
Mobile Museum of Art	1	7.14
USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park	1	7.14
Wildland expeditions	1	7.14
Bragg-Mitchell Mansion	0	0.00
Conde-Charlotte Museum House	0	0.00
Fort Conde Museum & Welcome Center	0	0.00
Mobile Greyhound Park	0	0.00
Oakleigh Period House Museum Complex	0	0.00
Richard-DAR House Museum	0	0.00
Other attractions/festivals/special events	0	0.00
Total	14	100.00

Responses from 4 visitors on a business trip

---

<u>Length of stay in Mobile</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
day-trip only	1	25.00
1 night	0	0.00
2 nights	0	0.00
3 or more nights	3	75.00
Total	4	100.00

<u>Information sources used in deciding to visit Mobile</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
friends/relatives	2	50.00
brochures	1	25.00
other	1	25.00
billboards	0	0.00
internet/web site	0	0.00
magazine/newspaper	0	0.00
television/radio	0	0.00
travel agency	0	0.00
welcome center	0	0.00
Total	4	100.00

<u>Attractions visited or planned to visit</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park	2	50.00
Bellingrath Gardens and Home	1	25.00
Other attractions/festivals/special events	1	25.00
Bragg-Mitchell Mansion	0	0.00
Conde-Charlotte Museum House	0	0.00
Cruise ships	0	0.00
Fort Conde Museum & Welcome Center	0	0.00
Fort Gaines	0	0.00
Gulf Coast Exploreum & IMAX	0	0.00
Mobile Greyhound Park	0	0.00
Mobile Museum of Art	0	0.00
The Museum of Mobile	0	0.00
Oakleigh Period House Museum Complex	0	0.00
Richard-DAR House Museum	0	0.00
Wildland expeditions	0	0.00
Total	4	100.00

SECTION 5.

CROSS TABLES, BY LENGTH OF STAY

Responses from 23 visitors on a day-trip only

---

<u>Primary reason for trip to the Mobile area</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
vacation/pleasure trip	13	56.52
tour group	5	21.74
visiting friends/relatives	4	17.39
business trip	1	4.35
convention	0	0.00
Total	23	100.00

<u>Information sources used in deciding to visit Mobile</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
friends/relatives	10	37.04
welcome center	4	14.81
internet/web site	5	18.52
other	5	18.52
brochures	2	7.41
travel agency	1	3.70
billboards	0	0.00
magazine/newspaper	0	0.00
television/radio	0	0.00
Total	27	100.00

<u>Attractions visited or planned to visit</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park	7	33.33
Bellingrath Gardens and Home	5	23.81
Fort Gaines	4	19.05
Gulf Coast Exploreum & IMAX	2	9.52
Wildland expeditions	2	9.52
The Museum of Mobile	1	4.76
Bragg-Mitchell Mansion	0	0.00
Conde-Charlotte Museum House	0	0.00
Cruise ships	0	0.00
Fort Conde Museum & Welcome Center	0	0.00
Mobile Greyhound Park	0	0.00
Mobile Museum of Art	0	0.00
Oakleigh Period House Museum Complex	0	0.00
Richard-DAR House Museum	0	0.00
Other attractions/festivals/special events	0	0.00
Total	21	100.00

Responses from 3 visitors staying one night

---

<u>Primary reason for trip to the Mobile area</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
vacation/pleasure trip	2	100.00
business trip	0	0.00
convention	0	0.00
tour group	0	0.00
visiting friends/relatives	0	0.00
Total	2	100.00

<u>Information sources used in deciding to visit Mobile</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
brochures	2	66.67
friends/relatives	1	33.33
billboards	0	0.00
internet/web site	0	0.00
magazine/newspaper	0	0.00
television/radio	0	0.00
travel agency	0	0.00
welcome center	0	0.00
other	0	0.00
Total	3	100.00

<u>Attractions visited or planned to visit</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Bellingrath Gardens and Home	1	33.33
Fort Gaines	1	33.33
The Museum of Mobile	1	33.33
Bragg-Mitchell Mansion	0	0.00
Conde-Charlotte Museum House	0	0.00
Cruise ships	0	0.00
Fort Conde Museum & Welcome Center	0	0.00
Gulf Coast Exploreum & IMAX	0	0.00
Mobile Greyhound Park	0	0.00
Mobile Museum of Art	0	0.00
Oakleigh Period House Museum Complex	0	0.00
Richard-DAR House Museum	0	0.00
USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park	0	0.00
Wildland expeditions	0	0.00
Other attractions/festivals/special events	0	0.00
Total	3	100.00

Responses from 8 visitors staying two nights

---

<u>Primary reason for trip to the Mobile area</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
vacation/pleasure trip	7	87.50
tour group	1	12.50
business trip	0	0.00
convention	0	0.00
visiting friends/relatives	0	0.00
Total	8	100.00

<u>Information sources used in deciding to visit Mobile</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
friends/relatives	3	27.27
internet/web site	3	27.27
other	3	27.27
brochures	2	18.18
billboards	0	0.00
magazine/newspaper	0	0.00
television/radio	0	0.00
travel agency	0	0.00
welcome center	0	0.00
Total	11	100.00

<u>Attractions visited or planned to visit</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Fort Gaines	5	31.25
USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park	4	25.00
Bellingrath Gardens and Home	2	12.50
Gulf Coast Exploreum & IMAX	2	12.50
The Museum of Mobile	2	12.50
Oakleigh Period House Museum Complex	1	6.25
Bragg-Mitchell Mansion	0	0.00
Conde-Charlotte Museum House	0	0.00
Cruise ships	0	0.00
Fort Conde Museum & Welcome Center	0	0.00
Mobile Greyhound Park	0	0.00
Mobile Museum of Art	0	0.00
Richard-DAR House Museum	0	0.00
Wildland expeditions	0	0.00
Other attractions/festivals/special events	0	0.00
Total	16	100.00

Responses from 53 visitors staying three or more nights

---

<u>Primary reason for trip to the Mobile area</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
vacation/pleasure trip	34	64.15
visiting friends/relatives	10	18.87
tour group	6	11.32
business trip	3	5.66
convention	0	0.00
Total	53	100.00

<u>Information sources used in deciding to visit Mobile</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
friends/relatives	28	44.44
internet/web site	13	20.63
other	9	14.29
brochures	6	9.52
welcome center	3	4.76
magazine/newspaper	2	3.17
billboards	1	1.59
travel agency	1	1.59
television/radio	0	0.00
Total	63	100.00

<u>Attractions visited or planned to visit</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Fort Gaines	30	24.79
Bellingrath Gardens and Home	20	16.53
USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park	19	15.70
Gulf Coast Exploreum & IMAX	11	9.09
The Museum of Mobile	8	6.61
Fort Conde Museum & Welcome Center	7	5.79
Mobile Museum of Art	5	4.13
Other attractions/festivals/special events	5	4.13
Conde-Charlotte Museum House	4	3.31
Bragg-Mitchell Mansion	3	2.48
Mobile Greyhound Park	3	2.48
Cruise ships	2	1.65
Oakleigh Period House Museum Complex	2	1.65
Richard-DAR House Museum	1	0.83
Wildland expeditions	1	0.83
Total	121	100.00