



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Yellowstone National Park

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Yellowstone National Park News Release

Modest Increase In Yellowstone Oversnow Holiday Visitation

Oversnow visitation to Yellowstone National Park was up slightly in December 2010 compared to December 2009. The number of people who entered the park on guided snowmobile and snowcoach trips was 9,409, up 1.2 percent from the 9,298 oversnow visitors in December 2009.

The number of snowcoach passengers entering the park was 5,059, up 5.7 percent from 4,786 in December 2009. The number of people entering the park on guided snowmobile tours dropped 3.6 percent from 4,512 in December 2009 to 4,350 this year.

An average of 181 snowmobiles and 41 snowcoaches a day operated in the park from the December 15 start of the winter season to the end of the month. The daily snowmobile average is down 9 from the same period a year ago, with the daily snowcoach average up 5 from December 2009. The peak day for snowmobiles was December 27 when 280 snowmobiles were in the park. The peak day for snowcoaches was December 28, when there were 68 snowcoaches operating in Yellowstone.

Snowmobile and Snowcoach Visitation

	Dec. 2010	Dec. 2009	Dec. 2008	Dec. 2007
Snowmobiles - Daily Average	181	190	233	365
Snowmobiles - Peak Day	280 (12/27)	293 (12/29)	426 (12/29)	557 (12/28)
Snowcoaches - Daily Average	41	36	39	45
Snowcoaches - Peak Day	68 (12/28)	58 (12/27)	53 (12/27)	60 (12/26)

These peak and daily average figures are based on daily park entries as well as snowmobile and snowcoach travel originating from Old Faithful. Only the daily park entry figures are recorded online at <http://www.nature.nps.gov/stats/>.

Access to the interior of the park is restricted to oversnow travel from December 15 through March 15. The North Entrance and the road from Gardiner, Montana, through Mammoth Hot Springs on to Cooke City, Montana, outside the park's Northeast Entrance, is open to wheeled vehicle travel all year.

Overall, December 2010 visitation to Yellowstone National Park was down slightly when compared to the previous year. Overall recreational visits were 17,388, down 4 percent from the 18,107 recorded in December 2009. This reflects a decrease in the number of people who entered the park by automobile, RV, or bus, down 9.35 percent from 9,484 to 8,678.

Limited, managed motorized oversnow travel over groomed, snow-packed park roads is permitted again this season under the same temporary plan as last year, which allows up to 318 commercially guided, Best Available Technology (BAT) snowmobiles, and up to 78 commercially guided snowcoaches a day into the park.

Work is progressing on a new long-term plan to guide future management of winter use in Yellowstone. The National Park Service is preparing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement, which will analyze the effects of a wide range of winter use alternatives on the park and its resources. This study is expected to be released in late winter or early spring for a 60-day review and comment period. The National Park Service intends to finish the plan and issue any new winter use regulations before the start of the 2011-2012 winter season.

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