

RAINFOREST TOURISM QUARTERLY REPORT # 4: RAINFOREST SURVEY TNQ Region August – October 2007

This quarterly report forms part of a series of reports presented by the Australian Government's Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility (MTRSF), represented in North Queensland by the Reef and Rainforest Research Centre, and James Cook University (JCU) on rainforest tourism in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (WTWHA). The data presented in this report summarise the results from the fourth quarter of data collection in the Tropical North Queensland (TNQ) region from August to October 2007. Overall, a total of 371 surveys were returned for this quarter from rainforest locations. The results include socio-demographic characteristics, travel behaviour, alternative destinations, motivations and planning, and potential activities.



1. INTRODUCTION

MTRSF research Project 4.9.2 *Sustainable Nature-based Tourism: Planning and Management* aims to identify major issues relating to tourist motivations and behaviours for visiting the Wet Tropics and to identify key trends and drivers of Wet Tropics visitor patterns including economic contribution.



2. METHODOLOGY

The principle methodology for this research was visitor surveys distributed by staff through tour operators, tourist attractions, and visitor information centres throughout the region. The study locations and sample for this quarter are shown in Table 1.

Data is collected on rainforest visitors' socio-demographic characteristics, travel patterns, motivations, activities, travel expenditure, alternative destinations considered, and satisfaction.

Table 1: Survey Locations and sample size.

Location	Sample
Daintree	333
Atherton Tablelands	20
Kuranda	18
Innisfail	-
Mission Beach	-
Tully	-
Total	371



3. LIMITATIONS

During this period, limitations included a low visitor period during August, reported by some operators. Additionally, since the surveys were only in English, the Japanese and Chinese tourist markets were under-represented in this quarter's data.



4. FINDINGS

The sample consisted of 55.2% females and 44.8% males.

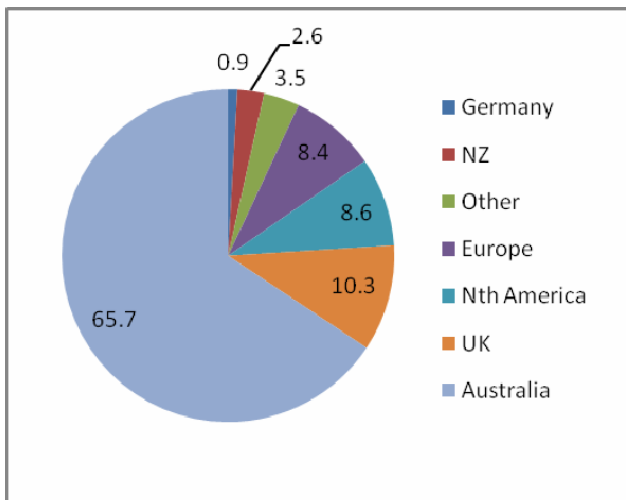
Origin of Respondents

Survey respondents originated from both within Australia (65.7%) and overseas (34.3%), as shown in Figure 1.

Australian visitors were mainly from Victoria (31.3%), New South Wales (35.6%), Queensland (12.4%) and Western Australia (9.9%).

International visitors were mainly from Europe excl. Germany (29.8%), the UK (29.0%), and North America (23.7%).

Figure 1: Origin of Respondents (N = 364) (percentage of total respondents).



Occupation

The major occupation groups of respondents were:

- Professional (27.0%);
- Retired/semi-retired (18.9%);
- Self-employed (9.7%);
- Student (7.8%); and
- Management (7.3%).

Domestic visitors' main occupations were:

- Professionals (25.4%);
- Retired/ Semi-retired (21.6%); and
- Self-employed (11.2%).

International visitors' main occupations were:

- Professionals (29.0%);
- Student (15.3%); and
- Retired/Semi-retired(14.5%).

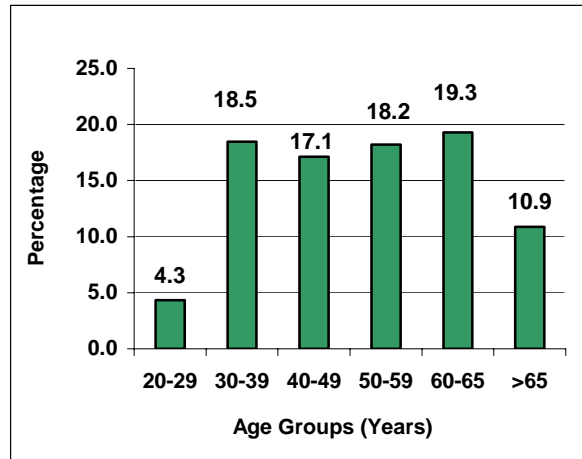
Age of Respondents

As shown in Figure 2, the main age groups of respondents were: 60-65 years (19.3%),

30-39 years (18.5%), 50-59 years (18.2%) and 40-49 years (17.1%).

Domestic visitors were mainly aged 50-59 years (21.1%), 30-39 years (20.7%), or 40-49 years (18.5%). International visitors were mainly aged 20-29 years (29.5%), 40-49 years (17.8%), and 50-59 years (15.5%).

Figure 2: Age of Respondents (percentage).



Travel Party

The composition of travel parties were:

- Couples (56.6%);
- Family with children (16.4%); or
- With friends (10.5%).

The main travel party for both domestic (61.8%) and international (48.1%) visitors was "as a couple".

Previous Visits and Length of Stay

65.6% of respondents indicated that this was their first visit to Tropical North Queensland. Those who had visited in the past had visited between one and three times (75.8%).

The overall average length of stay was 10.11 nights (minimum = 0, maximum = 90).

Domestic visitors averaged 11.24 nights in the region (Min = 1, Max = 90), while international visitors averaged 7.83 nights (Min = 0, Max = 45).

Accommodation

The most popular accommodation types were:

- Resort (27.8%);
- Hotel /motel (20.8%); and
- Holiday apartment/unit (20.3%).

Domestic visitors tended to stay mainly at resorts (31.8%), holiday apartments/units (20.6%), hotel/motels (19.3%), or caravan park/cabins (12.0%).

International visitors tended to stay at hotels/motels (24.6%), resorts (20.0%), backpackers hostels (18.5%), or holiday apartment/units (18.5%).

Transport

Overall, air transport (40.31%) dominated as the method of travel to the region. Other major forms of transport were rental cars (32.0%), private vehicles (16.6%) and bus/coach (9.4%).

Domestic visitors' main forms of transport were air (44.2%), rental cars (27.3%), or private vehicles (19.5%).

International visitors' mainly used rental cars (40.0%), air (30.8%), bus/coach (12.3%), or private vehicle (10.0%).

Information

The most popular sources of information used by visitors were:

- Friends/family (24.4%);
- Internet (17.2%);
- Tourist guide books (19.0%);
- Been before (12.8%); and
- Travel Agent (8.9%).

Domestic visitors' main information sources were friends/family (24.3%), internet (18.5%), been before (15.5%), and tourist guide books (16.8%).

International visitors mainly used the internet (24.7%), tourist guide books (24.7%), friends/family (15.5%), and advertisements in print (25.5%).

Motivations

The most important motivations (measured on a scale of 1 = not at all important, to 5 =

very important) for visiting the region are listed in Table 2 below.

International visitors had slightly higher motives than domestic visitors for visiting the reef (M = 4.53) and seeing Australian wildlife (M = 4.33). Whereas domestic visitors had somewhat higher motives for rest and relaxation (M = 4.19) than international visitors.

Table 2: Respondents' motivations to visit.

Motive	Mean		
	Overall	Dom.	Internat.
Visit the rainforest	4.37	4.40	4.34
Visit the reef	4.22	4.06	4.53
Experience the natural environment	4.09	4.09	4.13
Rest and relaxation	4.01	4.19	3.73
Climate	3.95	4.03	3.83
See Australian wildlife	3.87	3.63	4.33
Visit the beaches	3.65	3.60	3.77

Last Holiday Location

The most popular single destinations given in response to "where did you spend your last holiday?" are provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Respondents' previous holiday location.

Regions	Overall %	Domestic %	Intern. %
Australia	41.9	60.5	6.2
Europe	20.0	9.6	40.0
Asia-Pacific	13.7	15.8	11.5
North America	9.9	3.5	20.8
Other	7.7	2.6	16.2
New Zealand	4.4	5.3	3.1
UK	2.5	2.6	2.3

Alternative Destinations Considered

A large number of alternative destinations were given by respondents.

Overall, the most popular (single) alternative destinations considered when planning this trip are shown in Table 4.

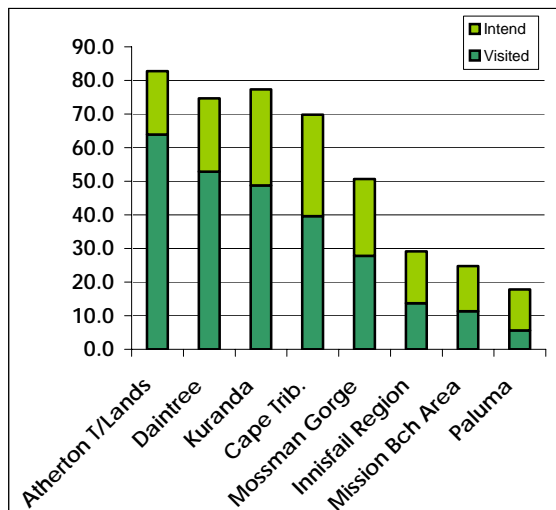
Table 4: Alternative destinations considered by survey respondents.

Destination	Percentage
AUSTRALIA	
Tasmania	3.4
Darwin	3.2
Sydney	2.8
ASIA-PACIFIC	
Fiji	3.1
NEW ZEALAND	6.5

Rainforest Locations Visited

The rainforest locations that respondents had visited or intended to visit were Daintree, Mossman Gorge, Cape Tribulation and Kuranda (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Rainforest locations visited.



Domestic and international visitor showed relatively similar rainforest location visitation patterns as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Rainforest locations as chosen by domestic and international visitors.

Location	Percentage	
	Domestic	International
Mossman Gorge	22.6	27.8
Kuranda	20.6	19.6
Daintree	17.8	19.9
Cape Tribulation	13.6	18.3
Atherton T/Lands	12.2	6.9
Mission Bch Area	5.4	4.6
Innisfail Region	5.3	2.0
Paluma	2.6	1.0

Time Spent at Rainforest Locations

Visitors tended to spend:

- Less than half a day at Mossman Gorge and in the Innisfail region;
- Half to one day at all other rainforest locations.

Importance of Visiting Rainforests

Visiting the rainforest in TNQ was considered important to respondents with a mean of 4.34, (where 1 = not at all important, and 5 = very important). Similarly, visiting National Parks while on holidays was also important (M = 3.97).

World Heritage Area Rainforest Knowledge

Overall, 67.7% of respondents were aware that these rainforests were designated World Heritage Areas before they visited the region.

81.8% of domestic visitors and 42.3% of international visitors were aware of the World Heritage designation.

When asked if they would still visit the region if the rainforests were not designated World Heritage Area, the majority of respondents said 'yes' (90.3%). A further 8.9% said they were 'unsure'.

Rainforest Experience

Respondents were asked if they had visited other rainforests elsewhere in Australia and overseas.

In Australia, 56.4% had visited other rainforests, with Tasmania being the single destination most cited by respondents (18.1%).

Rainforests in overseas locations were visited by 48.8% of respondents, mostly in New Zealand (11.6%), Thailand (9.7%), and Malaysia (7.3%).

Satisfaction Levels and Agreement

Respondents were highly satisfied (M = 8.70) with their rainforest visits during their holiday in the region (on a scale where 1 = very unsatisfactory, and 10 = very satisfactory).

Rainforest Potential Activities

Short rainforest walks were the most popular potential activity of interest to visitors when rated on a scale of 1 = not at all interested, and 4 = very interested (see Table 6).

Table 6: Potential activities.

Activities	Mean
Short rainforest walk, e.g. ½ hour to 1 hour	3.56
Self-drive along a rainforest drive/road	3.22
Up to 1 day walk/hike – with tour guide	2.56
Up to 1 day walk/hike – unguided	2.26
Overnight walk/hike – with tour guide	1.81
Overnight walk/hike – unguided	1.73

Locations Driven Through in TNQ Region

Visitors who used private or rented vehicles during their trip were asked to indicate which towns they had driven through during their holiday in TNQ.

As shown in Figure 4, the Cairns–Port Douglas, Kuranda and the Cairns–Mareeba–Atherton–Yungaburra/Millaa loops are the most popular routes taken by these drive visitors.

For further information about this project contact James Cook University:

Project Leader
Professor Bruce Prideaux
Bruce.Prideaux@jcu.edu.au
 Phone: (07) 4042 1039

Project Manager
Ms Fay Falco-Mammone
Fay.Falco@jcu.edu.au
 Phone (07) 4042 1762

For future updates, visit
www.rrrc.org.au/publications

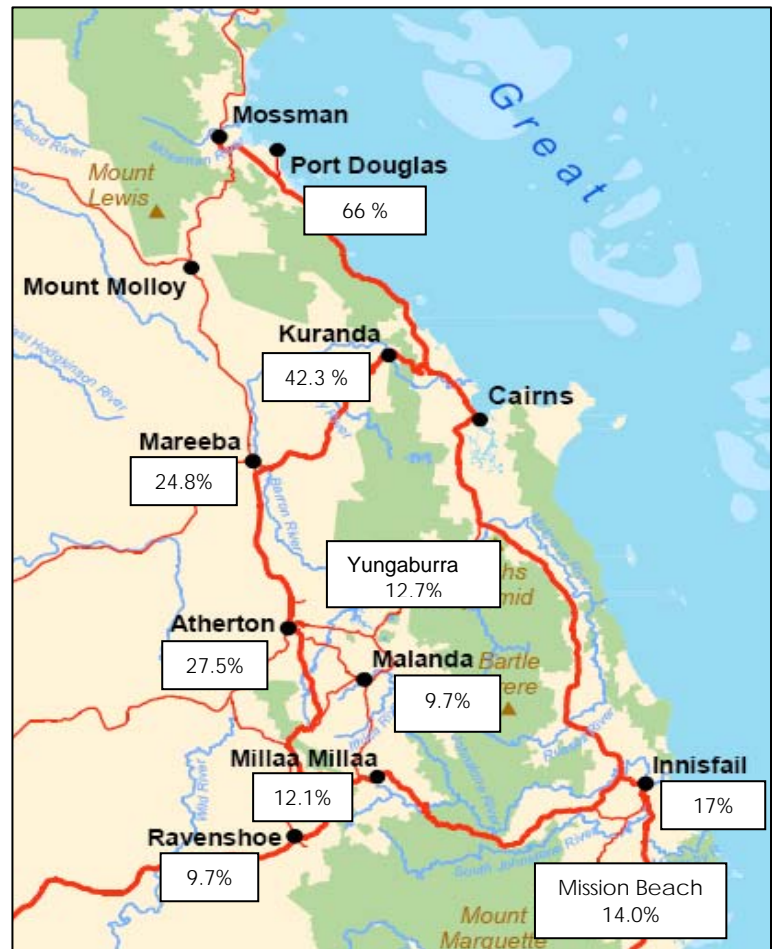


Figure 4: Locations driven through.