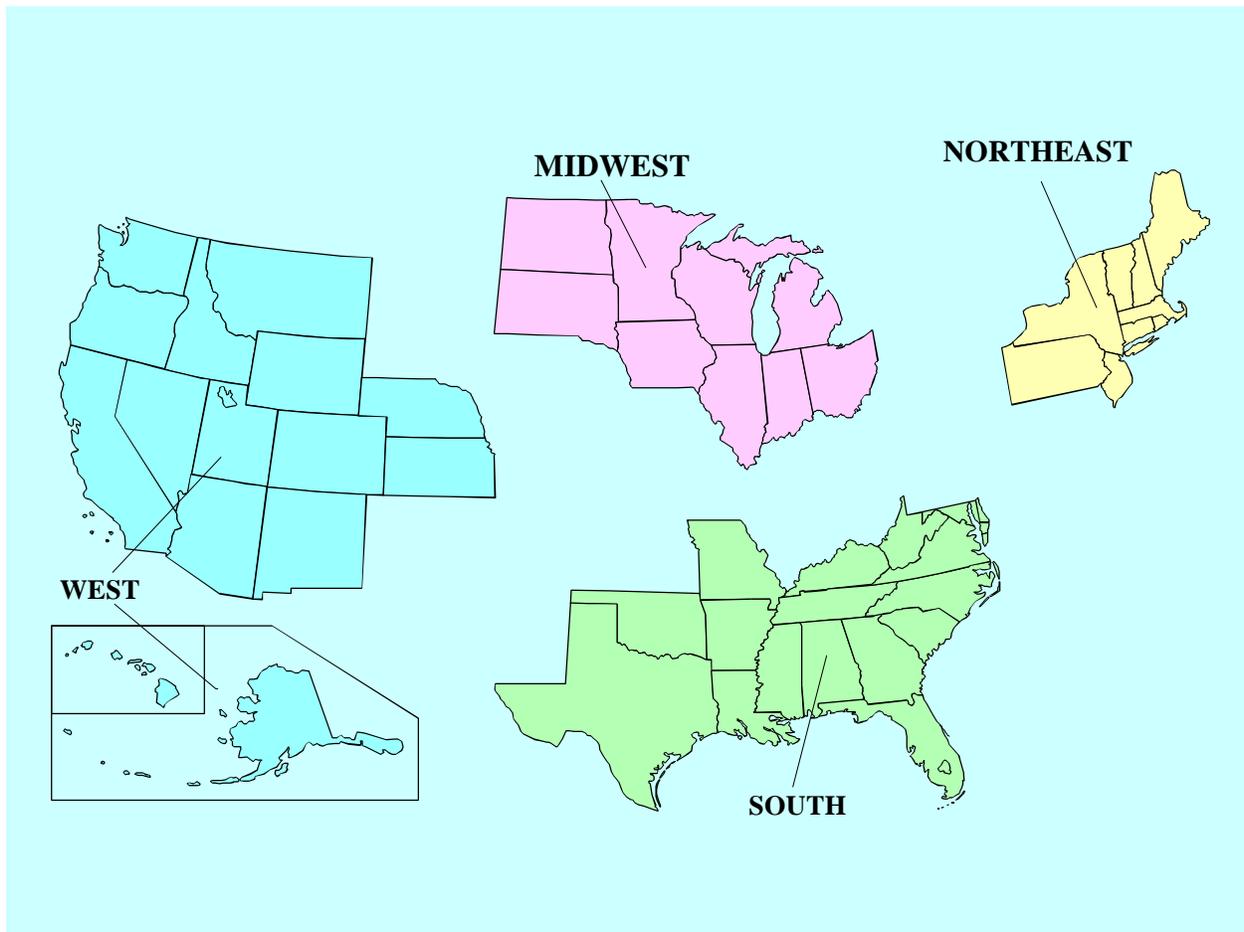


# CHAPTER 6: REGIONAL VARIATIONS



The four major regions of the United States—the Northeast, the Midwest, the South, and the West (fig. 6.1)—differ somewhat from each other in climate, topography, and culture. These differences lead to regional variations in recreation patterns. The regions also differ somewhat in total population. The Northeast has about 42 million people 16 and older, the Midwest has 48 million, the South has 69 million, and the West has 42 million.

This report contains both national and regional participation tables. Demographics at the national level were presented in chapters 2-5. Industries that market on a regional level will benefit from the greater precision that is present in regional tables which are available upon request. This Chapter highlights some of the major regional differences in outdoor recreation participation for the 13 groups of activities.

### Fitness Activities

In the South, about 66 percent of the people engage in at least one of the fitness activities—running/jogging, bicycling, and walking. The total is 3 to 4 percentage points higher in other regions (fig. 6.2). Percentages are lower for both bicycling and walking in the South. One reason for these lower values may be the concentration of retired people in the South. Another may be a small cultural difference in how physical fitness is viewed. Regional variations in participation in fitness activities are shown in figure 6.2.

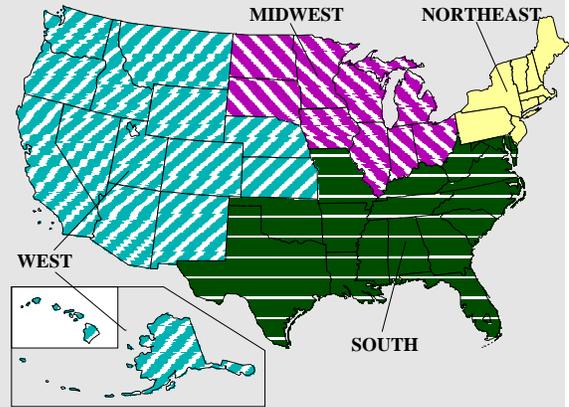
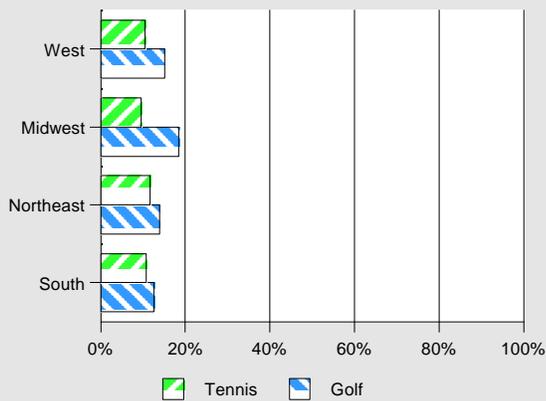


Figure 6.1– The four census regions.

*For planning at the State or regional level, regional tables are more accurate than national tables.*

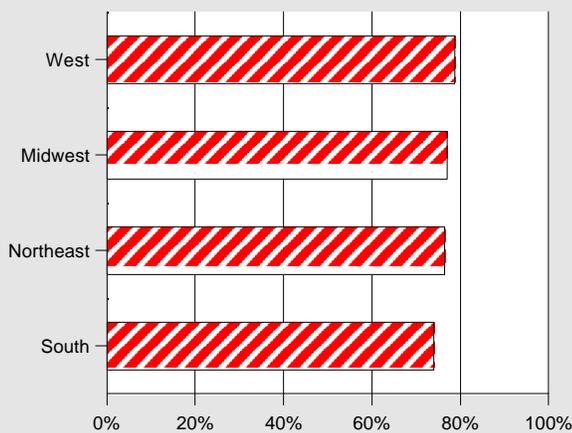


Figure 6.2– Fitness activities by region.



**Figure 6.3**– Individual sport activities by region.

*The overall participation rates for outdoor team sports range 25 percent in the West to 27 percent in the Northeast.*



**Figure 6.4**–Viewing activities by regions.

## Individual Sports

Participation in golf or tennis is lowest in the South (20 percent) and highest in the Midwest (25 percent) (fig. 6.3). Since these outdoor sports can be enjoyed over a larger proportion of the year in the South, one might have expected this region to lead rather than to trail the others. Reasons for the regional differences are not known. It may be that facilities for golf and tennis are somewhat more widely available in the Midwest.

## Team Sports

The overall participation rates for outdoor team sports range 25 percent in the West to 27 percent in the Northeast. Thus, the regional differences in the overall rates are quite small. These averages mask somewhat larger differences for particular sports, but regional participation rates are surprisingly similar.

## Outdoor Spectator Activities

Averages range from 57 percent in the South to 60 percent in the Northeast and Midwest. Some 31 percent of Southerners attend outdoor concerts, while 38 percent of the people in the Northeast go to concerts.

## Viewing Activities

Participation in one or more viewing activities ranges from 74 percent in the South to 79 percent in the West (fig. 6.4). Regional variations are somewhat larger for individual activities. For example, 43 percent of Southerners visited a nature center in 1994 while 50 percent of Midwesterners did so. Given differences in

climate, culture, and availability of viewing opportunities among regions, the regional percentages are remarkably similar.

### Snow and Ice Activities

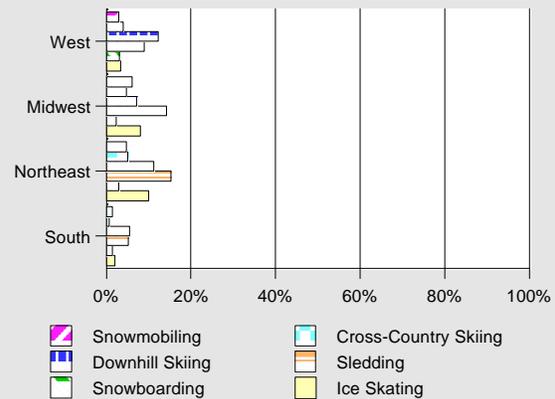
For obvious reasons, Southerners are considerably less likely to engage in outdoor snow and ice activities than are their counterparts in other regions (fig. 6.5). Regional participation rates range from 10 percent for the South to 25 percent for the Northeast. For Southerners, a skiing weekend is likely to involve a long trip at a high cost. Despite the expense, some 3.8 million people from the South enjoy downhill skiing. But many more who might ski if they lived in another region probably substitute some other form of outdoor recreation.

### Camping

Perhaps because of the vast areas of public land available for it in the West, camping is more popular there than in other regions (fig. 6.6). Some 36 percent of Westerners camp, while only about 22 percent of the people in the Northeast and South do so. One person out of 5 enjoys primitive camping in the West, while only 1 in 10 does so in the Northeast. In planning their recreation trips, people clearly are taking advantage of what is readily available to them.

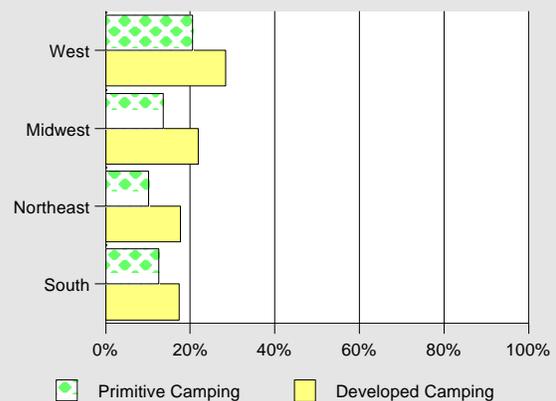
### Hunting

About 11 percent of the people in the Midwest and South hunt. Only 7 percent of the people in the Northeast and the West do so (fig. 6.7). These regional differences

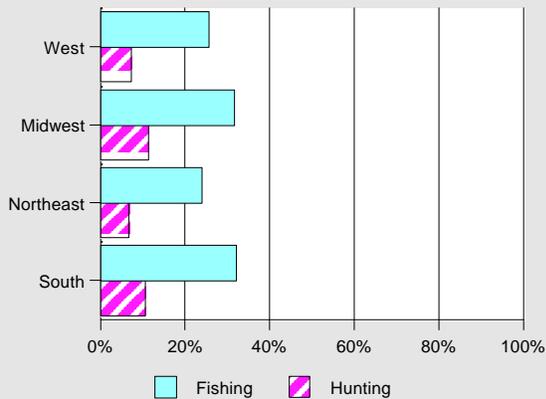


**Figure 6.5**—Snow and ice activities by regions.

*Despite the expense, some 3.8 million people from the South enjoy downhill skiing.*

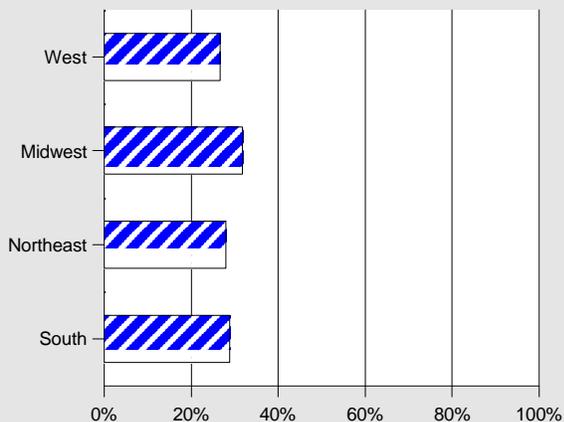


**Figure 6.6**—Camping activities across regions.



**Figure 6.7**—Hunting and fishing by region.

*Increasing numbers of Americans do not hunt and would prefer if others did not hunt either.*



**Figure 6.8**—Boating by region.

have something to do with availability of hunting opportunities, but they also represent cultural differences. Large tracts of public land in the West are open to hunting. The low proportion of Westerners that hunt is probably related to a cultural change in the country. Increasing numbers of Americans do not hunt and would prefer if others did not hunt either.

### Fishing

Regional participation in fishing ranges from 24 percent in the Northeast to 32 percent in the Midwest and the South (fig. 6.7). The individual kinds of fishing also vary considerably by region, depending largely on availability.

### Boating

The percentages of people who enjoy boating range from 17 percent in the West to 32 percent in the Midwest (fig. 6.8). Motorboating is by far the most popular of this group of activities. About 27 percent of the people in the Midwest and 24 percent of those in the South enjoy this activity. The popularity of canoeing ranges from 4 percent participation in the West to about 9 percent in the Midwest.

### Swimming

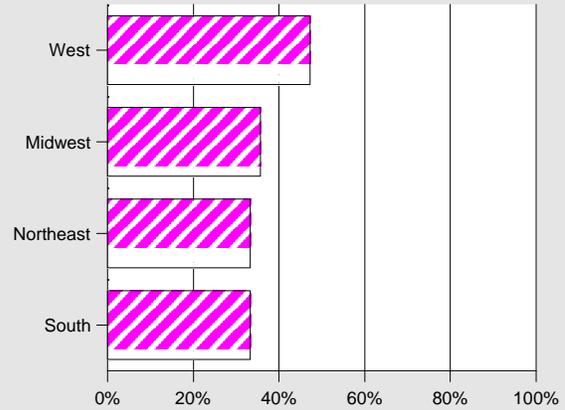
Swimming participation ranges from 53 percent in the South, Midwest, and West to 58 percent in the Northeast. One might expect nonpool swimming to be most popular in the South, where water temperatures are high. In fact, however, the popularity of nonpool swimming is highest (45 percent participation) in the Northeast.

## Outdoor Adventure

About a third of the people in the Northeast, Midwest, and South enjoy at least one of the activities we have classed as “outdoor adventure.” About 47 percent of the people in the West do so (fig. 6.9). This is a major regional difference that deserves additional study in the near future. Backpacking is about twice as popular in the West as in the rest of the country. Mountain climbing, rock climbing and caving are also more popular in the West than in other regions. Differences in regional topography and in the presence of public land explain much of the difference. We suspect, however, that these activities have been more heavily marketed in the West, and that opportunities for expansion are available in other regions.

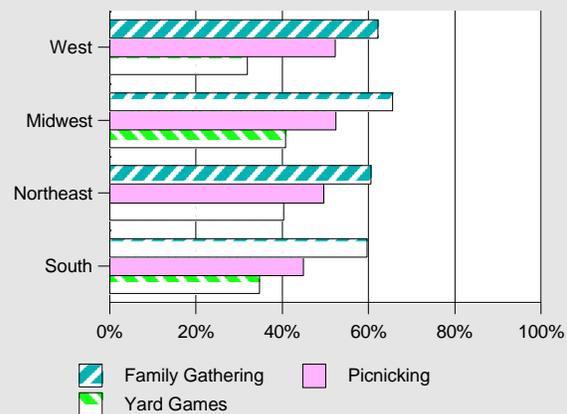
## Social Activities

Participation in one or more of the traditional outdoor social activities—yard games, picnicking, and family gathering—ranges from 65 percent in the South to 70 percent in the Midwest. Participation in yard games is highest in the Midwest and the Northeast (40 percent) and lowest in the West (32 percent). Regional variations in participation in social activities are shown in fig. 6.10.



**Figure 6.9**—Outdoor adventure activities by region.

*Backpacking is about twice as popular in the West as in the rest of the country.*



**Figure 6.10**—Social activities by region.