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BIRD-WATCHING AS A COMPONENT OF ECOTOURISM IN THE USA: A DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

A concept and essence of bird-watching are reflected as to the component of ecotourism. The analysis of demographic and economic features of watching is given birds in the United States of America, the dynamics of their development and component structure are traced. The features of allocation of tourist charges of bird-watching are investigational in the various sectors of economy of country. Economic efficiency of bird-watching and his contribution is considered to the local economy on the example of city Galveston, state Texas. The insufficient level of development of watching is marked birds as constituent to ecotourism in Ukraine.

Keywords: bird-watching, ecotourism, economic efficiency, watching birds, tourist expenses.

Олександр Бейдик, Наталія Новосад. БЬОРДВОЧИНГ ЯК СКЛАДОВА ЕКОТУРИЗМУ В США: ДЕМОГРАФІЧНИЙ ТА ЕКОНОМІЧНИЙ АНАЛІЗ. Висвітлено поняття та сутність «бьордвочинга» як складової екотуризму. Проведено аналіз демографічних та економічних особливостей спостереження за птахами в Сполучених Штатах Америки, прослідковано динаміку його розвитку та компонентну структуру. Досліджено особливості розподілу туристичних витрат «бьордвочинга» в різноманітних секторах економіки країни. Розглянуто економічну ефективність «бьордвочинга» та його внесок у місцеву економіку на прикладі міста Галвестон, штат Техас. Відзначено недостатній рівень розвитку спостереження за птахами як складової екотуризму на Україні.

Ключові слова: бьордвочинг, екотуризм, економічна ефективність, спостереження за птахами, туристичні витрати.

Александр Бейдик, Наталья Новосад. БЬОРДВОЧИНГ КАК СОСТАВЛЯЮЩАЯ ЭКОТУРИЗМА В США: ДЕМОГРАФИЧЕСКИЙ И ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКИЙ АНАЛИЗ. Отражено понятие и сущность "бьордвочинга" как составляющей экотуризма. Дан анализ демографических и экономических особенностей наблюдения за птицами в Соединенных Штатах Америки, прослежена динамика их развития и компонентная структура. Исследованы особенности распределения туристических расходов "бьордвочинга" в разнообразных секторах экономики страны. Рассмотрена экономическая эффективность "бьордвочинга" и его вклад в местную экономику на примере города Галвестон, штат Техас. Отмечен недостаточный уровень развития наблюдения за птицами как составляющей экотуризму на Украине.

Ключевые слова: бьордвочинг, экотуризм, экономическая эффективность, наблюдения за птицами, туристические затраты.

Introduction. Bird-watching, a popular hobby around the world, can present significant economic opportunities for countries through sustainable tourism. Bird watching or birding is the observation of birds as a recreational activity. It can be done with the naked eye, through a visual enhancement device like binoculars and telescopes, or by listening for bird sounds. Bird watching often involves a significant auditory component, as many bird species are more easily detected and identified by ear than by eye. Most birdwatchers pursue this activity mainly for recreational or social reasons, unlike ornithologists, who engage in the study of birds using more formal scientific methods. Birding plays a significant and growing part in the tourism industry, and creates direct and indirect economic benefits for many countries and communities, also amongst developing countries [3].

Global spending on all areas of ecotourism is increasing by about six times the industry-wide rate of growth, and underlined the potential economic benefits of bird-watching in particular. In the United States a survey by authorities puts the economic value generated every year by bird and other wildlife watchers at around \$32 billion in that country alone. This amount corresponds to the gross domestic product of Costa Rica, which is also a popular destination for US birdwatchers.

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), in 2010 there were 48 million people in the U.S. age 16 or older who watched, fed, and/or photographed birds. Relatively equal numbers of men (46%)

and women (54%) participated [1]. Almost 42 million watched, fed, and photographed birds around the home, with around 20 million traveling away from home to enjoy birds (an increase of 8% over the 2006 survey) (chart. 1).

In 2006, there were 48 million birdwatchers or birders, 16 years of age and older, in the United States—about 21 percent of the population. What is a birder? The National Survey uses a conservative definition. To be counted as a birder, an individual must have either taken a trip one mile or more from home for the primary purpose of observing birds and/or closely observed or tried to identify birds around the home. Thus, people who happened to notice birds while they were mowing the lawn or picnicking at the beach were not counted as birders. Trips to zoos and observing captive birds also did not count. Backyard birding or watching birds around the home is the most common form of bird-watching. Eighty-eight percent (42 million) of birders are backyard birders. The more active form of birding, taking trips away from home, is less common with 42 percent (20 million) of birders partaking. The average birder is 50 years old and more than likely has a better than average income and education. She is slightly more likely to be female and highly likely to be white. There is also a good chance that this birder lives in the south in an urban area. Does this paint an accurate picture of a birder? Like all generalizations the description of an "average" birder does not reflect the variety of people who bird, with millions falling outside this box. The tables and charts show numbers and participation rates (the percentage of people who participate) of birders by vari-

ous demographic breakdowns. The tendency of birders to be middle-age or older is reflected in both the number of birders and participation rates. Looking at the different age categories in Table 1, the greatest number of

birders was in the 55 plus age group. People over the age of 55 had the highest participation rates while the participation rate was particularly low for people ages 16 to 24 (tab. 1).

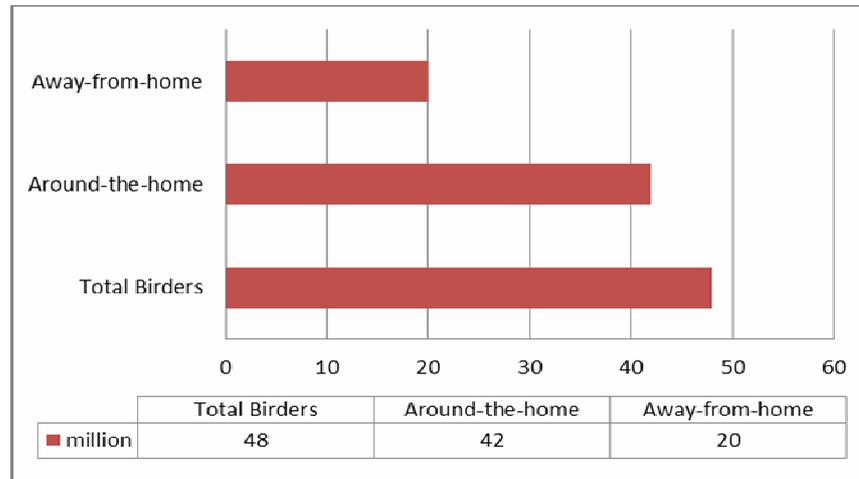


Chart 1. Birders in the United States (16 years of age older)

Table 1

Age Distribution of the U.S. Population and Birds

Age	U.S. Population, thousands	Number of birders, thousands	Participation Rate
16 to 24	31.5	2.6	8 %
25 to 34	37.4	4.8	13 %
35 to 44	45.1	10.1	23 %
45 to 54	44.2	11.0	25 %
55 plus	70.9	19.1	27 %

The higher the income and education level the more likely a person is to be a birder. Twenty-nine percent of people who live in households that earn \$75,000 or more were bird-watchers—8 percent above the national average of 21 percent (tab. 2).

Education, which is often highly correlated with income, shows the same trend. People with less than

high school education participated at 12 percent—far below the national average—while people with at least a college degree had the highest participation rate at 28 percent (tab. 3).

Unlike hunting and fishing where men were overwhelmingly in the majority, a larger percent of birders were women—54 percent in 2006 (chart 2).

Table 2

Income Distribution of the U.S. Population and Birders

Income	U.S. Population, thousands	Number of birders, thousands	Participation Rate
Less than \$20,000	26.0	3.9	15 %
\$20,000 to \$29,999	21.8	3.6	17 %
\$30,000 to \$49,999	39.2	8.7	22 %
\$50,000 to \$74,999	33.4	9.0	27 %
\$75,000 or more	50.6	14.5	29 %

Table 3

Educational Distribution of the U.S. Population and Birders

Education	U.S. Population, thousands	Number of birders, thousands	Participation Rate
11 years or less	34.6	4.3	12 %
High School Graduate	78.0	13.2	17 %
Some College	53.1	12.3	23 %
College Graduate +	63.5	17.8	28 %

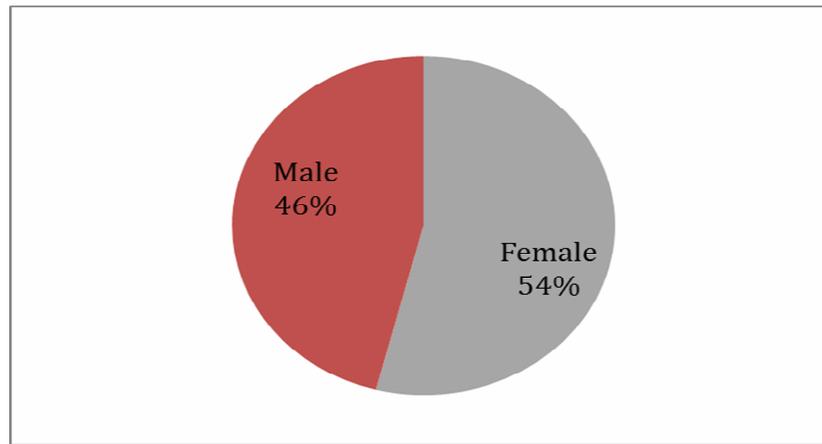


Chart 2. Percent of Birders by Gender

Birders spend money on a variety of goods and services for trip-related and equipment-related purchases. Trip-related expenditures include food, lodging, transportation, and other incidental expenses. Equipment expenditures consist of binoculars, cameras, camping equipment, and other costs. By having ripple effects throughout the economy, these direct expenditures are only part of the economic impact of birding. The effect on the economy in excess of direct expenditures is known as the multiplier effect. For example, an individual may purchase a bird house to enhance birding at home. Part of the purchase price will stay with the local

retailer. The local retailer, in turn, pays a wholesaler who in turn pays the manufacturer of the bird houses. The manufacturer then spends a portion of this income to pay businesses supplying the manufacturer. In this sense, each dollar of local retail expenditures can affect a variety of businesses. Thus, expenditures associated with birding can ripple through the economy by impacting economic activity, employment, and household income. To measure these effects, a regional input-output modeling method is utilized to derive estimates for total industry output, employment, employment income, and tax revenue associated with birding (tab. 4).

Table 4

Trip and Equipment Expenditures for Birding by Category

	\$ billion
Trip-Related Expenditures, total	12.0
Food	4.0
Lodging	2.9
Transportation	4.2
Other	0.8
Equipment, total	23.7
Wildlife-watching equipment	6.8
Auxiliary equipment	0.7
Special equipment	8.2
Other Items	7.8

Galveston Island is one of the top locations in the country for birding. It has a rich variety of habitats - beaches, wetlands, grasslands, woods, ponds, and bays - in a small area that are home to many common year-round species, as well as numerous others that visit briefly or for part of the year. Thousands of birds take wing to Galveston Island each spring during an arduous northward migration across the Gulf from Central and South America. And hundreds of tourists follow suit to see more than 200 species of brightly-colored birds strut their stuff around Galveston Island - a prime location along the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail [6].

The Island is also an important wintering ground for numerous species that spend most of the year farther north. More than 300 bird species may be seen throughout the year somewhere on the Island.

Annual FeatherFest is one of the projects of the

Galveston Island Nature Tourism Council which supports nature tourism and education, and promotes the value of area natural habitats. A record crowd of 625 birders and photographers attended FeatherFest 2013. While they came from across the United States, Canada, France and England, 82 percent of guests hailed from Texas. 55 percent were first-time FeatherFest attendees, and 38 percent had never attended a birding festival before. The annual impact on the Galveston economy is estimated at more than \$350,000.

In Ukraine, at the official level bird-watching is not developed, although there is an unofficial site <http://birdwatch.org.ua/>, where people share pictures and write about their observations. Tourist organizations and national parks of Ukraine should pay attention to the experience of bird-watching Galveston and the U.S. which give significant revenues in national and the city's

economy.

Conclusion.

1. Birding plays a significant and growing part in the tourism industry, and creates direct and indirect economic benefits for many countries and communities, also amongst developing countries.
2. Global spending on all areas of ecotourism is increasing by about six times the industry-wide rate of growth, and underlined the potential economic benefits of bird-watching in particular.
3. Tourist organizations and national parks of Ukraine should pay attention to the experience of bird-watching Galveston and the U.S. which give significant revenues in national and the city's economy.

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Summary

Olexander Beidyk, Natalia Novosad. BIRD-WATCHING AS A COMPONENT OF ECOTOURISM IN THE USA: A DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS.

Birding plays a significant and growing part in the tourism industry, and creates direct and indirect economic benefits for many countries and communities, also amongst developing countries. A concept and essence of bird-watching are reflected as to the component of ecotourism. Global spending on all areas of ecotourism is increasing by about six times the industry-wide rate of growth, and underlined the potential economic benefits of bird-watching in particular. In the United States a survey by authorities puts the economic value generated every year by bird and other wildlife watchers at around \$32 billion in that country alone. The analysis of demographic and economic features of watching is given birds in the United States of America, the dynamics of their development and component structure are traced. The features of allocation of tourist charges of bird-watching are investigational in the various sectors of economy of country. Economic efficiency of bird-watching and his contribution is considered to the local economy on the example of city Galveston, state Texas. Galveston Island is one of the top locations in the country for birding. The annual impact on the Galveston economy is estimated at more than \$350,000. The insufficient level of development of watching is marked birds as constituent to ecotourism in Ukraine.

Keywords: bird-watching, ecotourism, economic efficiency, watching birds, tourist expenses.