

Tourism economy on public conservation land and waters

Purpose

To estimate the economic value of tourism on public conservation land and waters (PCLW) across regions.

Context

Tourism industry: National tourism expenditure grew from \$35 billion in 2015/16 to \$42 billion in 2019/20, and then fell to \$38 billion in 2022/23 (year ending in March).¹

Tourism on PCLW: Around 2,000 tourism concessions on PCLW contribute to the New Zealand economy. The Department of Conservation (DOC) also manages the recreational network of Great Walks, campsites and huts on PCLW.

Economic value of the tourism industry on PCLW

| Indicator | Economic value ² | | National insights |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------|--|
| | 2015/16–2018/19 | 2019/20–2022/23 | |
| Value added (VA) ³ from tourism industry | \$20.4 billion | \$17.2 billion | Fall in tourism VA reflected the loss in international tourism expenditure and decline in share of VA from tourism expenditure. |
| VA from tourism on PCLW ⁴ | \$4.3 billion | \$3.4 billion | Tourism VA on PCLW declined from 21% to 20% of tourism VA. ⁵ |
| DOC's tourism ⁶ concessions fees | \$16.5 million | \$9.0 million | DOC waived tourism concession fees from March 2020 to December 2021. ⁷ |
| Ratio of tourism concession fees to VA from tourism on PCLW | 0.4% | 0.3% | The fall in tourism expenditure had a chain effect on tourism concession fees. |
| DOC's total recreational revenue | \$155.7 million | \$185.6 million | Tourism concession fees and recreation and tourism charges decreased, while Crown revenue (excluding concession fees) increased. |

Regional insights⁸

- The Southern and Eastern South Island region was the largest contributor to the tourism economy, providing 52% of the total value added of tourism on PCLW. The Northern North Island region contributed the least value added of tourism on PCLW with 1%.
- Auckland contributed 5% of the total tourism economy value on PCLW.
- The North Island contributed 33% of the total tourism economy value on PCLW, and the South Island and Rakiura/Stewart Island contributed 67%.
- In the Northern and Western South Island region, 51% of tourism activity was on PCLW, contributing an estimated \$0.5 billion to the economy.
- Although the Auckland and Northern North Island regions contributed \$4.9 billion of value added of tourism, little of this was on PCLW. In the Auckland region, only 4% of tourism activity was on PCLW.

Notes

¹ Stats NZ publishes total and components of national tourism expenditure data. Among the components, value added (VA) measures the net contributions of tourism expenditure to the broader economy (or gross domestic product).

² The economic values are annual averages for years ending in June.

³ This is based on MBIE's monthly regional tourism expenditures (MRTE). This excludes tourism expenditure of international students on education, air passenger transport and imputed rental on holiday homes.

⁴ These are indicative estimates, which were completed in two steps: (i) estimated tourism industry VA for regions by applying proportion of VA on corresponding MRTE, and (ii) estimated VA for tourism on PCLW for regions by applying the share (proportion) of tourism concessions on PCLW area in total land area.

⁵ The number and land areas of geospatial locations of tourism concessions fell in 2024 compared to in 2019. The reduction was primarily in vehicle transport and aircraft land concession locations.

⁶ Tourism on PCLW covers eight concession categories (tourism occupations, guiding, aircraft landings, ski areas, boating, residential/recreational, vehicle transport, and sporting and special events).

⁷ Tourism concession fees fell from \$14.5 million in 2019/20 to \$3.2 million in 2020/21 and recovered to \$14.6 million in 2022/23 and \$19.8 million in 2023/24.

⁸ Insights are based on averages from 2019/20 to 2022/23. Regional boundaries are as per DOC's six partnership groups, which connect and align conservation efforts of public and private stakeholders at the regional level.

⁹ Northern North Island (NNI) partnership region consists of land areas above and below Auckland. Tourism expenditure shown for NNI covers only Northland for NNI as available from MBIE data.

¹⁰ Values are based on annual averages from 2019/20 to 2022/23.

Tourism activity value added on PCLW by region¹⁰



| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| First, we start with Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) estimate of regional tourism expenditure | Then, we separate the VA component, which is the economic contribution to gross domestic product | The share of the region's land allocated to tourism concessions acts as a proxy of share of tourism on PCLW | DOC's tourism-related concession fee revenue by region is provided for a comparison |

| Northern North Island | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Tourism expenditure | Estimate of VA from tourism expenditure | Tourism concessions on PCLW | Tourism VA on PCLW | DOC's tourism concession fee revenue |
| \$1,060 million | \$726 million | 6% of land area | \$45 million | \$0.06 million |

| Auckland | | | | |
|---------------------|---|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Tourism expenditure | Estimate of VA from tourism expenditure | Tourism concessions on PCLW | Tourism VA on PCLW | DOC's tourism concession fee revenue |
| \$6,147 million | \$4,208 million | 4% of land area | \$166 million | \$0.04 million |

| Central North Island | | | | |
|----------------------|---|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Tourism expenditure | Estimate of VA from tourism expenditure | Tourism concessions on PCLW | Tourism VA on PCLW | DOC's tourism concession fee revenue |
| \$5,776 million | \$3,955 million | 15% of land area | \$588 million | \$1.31 million |

| Northern and Western South Island | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Tourism expenditure | Estimate of VA from tourism expenditure | Tourism concessions on PCLW | Tourism VA on PCLW | DOC's tourism concession fee revenue |
| \$3,311 million | \$2,266 million | 15% of land area | \$329 million | \$0.17 million |

| Lower North Island | | | | |
|---------------------|---|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Tourism expenditure | Estimate of VA from tourism expenditure | Tourism concessions on PCLW | Tourism VA on PCLW | DOC's tourism concession fee revenue |
| \$1,454 million | \$996 million | 51% of land area | \$509 million | \$1.76 million |

| Northern and Western South Island | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Tourism expenditure | Estimate of VA from tourism expenditure | Tourism concessions on PCLW | Tourism VA on PCLW | DOC's tourism concession fee revenue |
| \$7,391 million | \$5,059 million | 35% of land area | \$1,753 million | \$5.61 million |

| Southern and Eastern South Island | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Tourism expenditure | Estimate of VA from tourism expenditure | Tourism concessions on PCLW | Tourism VA on PCLW | DOC's tourism concession fee revenue |
| \$7,391 million | \$5,059 million | 35% of land area | \$1,753 million | \$5.61 million |

