

Profile of 2008 International Festival of Owls Attendees



Prepared for:
The Friends of the Houston Nature Center
and
The Houston Chamber of Commerce

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2008, the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) provided funding to profile visitors to the International Festival of Owls in Houston, MN. Several visitor characteristics were of interest beyond demographics, including information sources for the festival, spending habits, festival experience and economic impact to the community. To that end, a visitor questionnaire was developed and administered to the International Festival of Owls visitors.

Methods

An on-site questionnaire was administered to attendees. A systematic sample was implemented with sampling throughout and across the event. A total of 124 parties were contacted and 115 questionnaires completed which resulted in a 92.7% completion rate. Completed questionnaires were entered, cleaned and checked in SPSS version 15.0.

Results

Demographics

Most often respondents were female, non-Hispanic Whites, and reported an average age of 53.3 years. The most frequently cited income was between \$50,000-74,999 (29.4%). The most frequently cited level of birding experience was beginner (41.6%).

2008 International Festival of Owls experience

On average, respondents spent more than eight (8.05) hours at the International Festival of Owls, predominately with family (55.7%) and reported spending the most on lodging (\bar{M} =\$113.26). About half (49.1%) of the respondents had previously attended the International Festival of Owls. Respondents attended the International Festival of Owls an average of three (\bar{M} =3.3) times previously, most often (67.3%) as recent as 2007. Most often, respondents learned of the Festival through 'other' sources than those listed as well as friends.

Respondents indicated they most enjoyed the live owl element of the International Festival of Owls. Among the options presented, respondents most frequently cited they enjoyed the Live Owl Programs (48.7%). Also enjoyable by about 10 -15% of respondents were the kid's activities (13.3%) and banquet (9.7%).

Discussion

The 2008 International Festival of Owls attracted a range of visitors from both the local area and tourists who found a variety of the events enjoyable. Results indicate that the International Festival of Owls provides an enjoyable experience among visitors, as evidenced by return visitation and by interest in receiving information on future owl festival events.

The range of activities and offerings serve as an important draw but scheduling changes may be considered to enhance enjoyment, ensure target audience satisfaction, as well as extend stays. The live owl programs, kid's activities and banquet all served as enjoyable attributes for festival attendees. Expanding live owl presentations, sightings and opportunities to interact with owls is encouraged. Adding additional sessions with live owls or including owl sightings at other festival events besides the high school may attract more participants.

Information from family and friends, or word of mouth, was an important vehicle for event marketing and mirrors previous state and national findings (Schuweiler, Schneider, Salk, 2007; Salk & Schneider, 2006; Salk, Schneider, & Monson, 2005). The newspaper, family and friends and the internet are also important information sources for wildlife viewers and, as such, considering these marketing avenues may attract more wildlife viewers.

With regard to visitor spending, lodging accounted for the highest expenditure. To maximize visitor spending, efforts to increase visitor length of stay and product offerings are suggested. Efforts to increase overnight stays and the use of lodging facilities in Houston, MN will increase spending at the festival as well as benefit the community through lodging, services and local restaurant expenditures. Expanding and improving souvenirs and food and beverage choices at the festival will also increase expenditures.

The International Festival of Owls increased the knowledge of the offerings of Houston, MN. To promote engagement in future activities in Houston, MN and increase the likelihood to return increasing onsite promotion of future activities is recommended. For example, the International Festival of Owls brochure includes a list of events that take place in Houston, MN throughout the year; adding an incentive to return to a future event (such as a discount on admission or coupon to a restaurant) may increase the likelihood to return for one of these events.

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Profile of 2008 International Festival of Owls Attendees

INTRODUCTION

Wildlife viewing in the United States has increased by about twelve percent from 1996 to 2006 with 71.1 million viewers in 2006. Birds attracted the largest following of wildlife watchers in the U.S. with 47.7 million viewers in 2006. Twenty million wildlife viewers enjoyed bird watching while away-from-home (U.S. Department of the Interior, FWS, et. al., 2006). Among Minnesotan wildlife viewers, birds were the most frequent wildlife observed, fed or photographed as well as the most enjoyable type of wildlife to observe, feed or photograph (Schneider & Salk, 2002). Northern Wintering Owls were among the birds Minnesota wildlife viewing respondents indicated interest in viewing (Schneider & Salk, 2002).

A bird festival attracts the interests of wildlife viewers, particularly bird watchers, while providing benefits to the community. Festivals and special events benefit both local communities and visitors. Community festivals of short duration contribute to the celebration of local culture, identity, and place. Festivals also enhance exposure, awareness, profitability and image of the host community, as well as serve as a vehicle for other development (Felenstein & Fleischer, 2003; Hall, 1992; Nicholson & Pearce, 2001). To maximize benefit and enhance events, organizers need to continually assess and evaluate their event and its market.

In 2008, the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) supported a profile of visitors to the International Festival of Owls in Houston, MN. The festival began in 2003 as a celebration of the hatch day of the great horned owl of the Houston Nature Center, Alice. Currently in its sixth year, the festival has grown to a full-weekend event. To understand the visitors and enhance marketing and positive festival impacts, a visitor profile was conducted. Several visitor characteristics were of interest beyond demographics, including information sources for the festival, as well as spending habits, festival experience and economic impact to the community. The study methods and results are presented below and followed by a discussion.

METHODS

An on-site questionnaire was administered to visitors during the 2008 International Festival of Owls. The methods for the questionnaire administration are presented in the following sections: study setting, questionnaire, approach, response rate, and analysis.

Study Setting

The 2008 International Festival of Owls was held Friday, February 29th thru Sunday, March 2nd. The festival attracts more than 400 visitors and is located in southeast Minnesota in Houston, Minnesota. Festival activities take place throughout the town of 1000 people, including the high school, nature center, local churches and library. The event includes live owl programs, kid's activities, pellet dissection, nest box building, owl photography and owl prowls.

Questionnaire

An on-site questionnaire was developed based on previous event research and with the assistance of the primary festival organizer, Karla Kinstler. Questionnaire sections included event participation, enjoyable attributes, information sources, expenditures, group composition, community familiarity, and demographics (Appendix A).

Approach

A sampling plan was created to reach the range of International Festival of Owls attendees. A systematic intercept sampling approach was implemented where every third visitor was approached and asked to complete the questionnaire. Sample schedules incorporated both time and spatial considerations to ensure coverage across festival activities and grounds. However, the festival traditionally attracts the most visitors on Saturday during the high school based activities so collection efforts were concentrated during that time.

Based on estimated attendance from preceding years, a sampling quota target was set at 100 visitor contacts (95% confidence interval; $\pm 10\%$ sampling error rate). Trained volunteers and the author administered the questionnaire.

Response Rate

Throughout the event, a total of 124 parties were contacted and 115 questionnaires attained. Thus, this resulted in a 92.7% compliance rate (Appendix B; Table 1). More than three quarters (75.7%) of respondents were contacted on Saturday. The remainder was contacted on Friday and Sunday (22.6% and 1.7%, respectively; Appendix B, Figure 1). Among those who did not agree to participate, the most frequently specified reason was lack of interest.

Analysis

Completed questionnaires were entered, cleaned and checked in SPSS version 15.0. Extreme outliers were winsorized to bring highly skewed variables into usable ranges. Descriptive analysis provided means, standard deviations, and frequencies to describe the sample and provide information on variables of interest.

RESULTS

Respondents

Demographics

More than half (55.3%) of respondents were female and reported an average age of 53.3 years (Appendix B, Table 2). A majority of respondents were white (97.4%) and of non-Hispanic or non-Latino background (98.1%). The highest percentage (29.4%) of respondent's reported an

annual household income of between \$50,000-74,999 (Appendix B, Figure 2), with the remainder relatively evenly distributed across all other income categories.

Primary Residence

Respondents predominately resided in and around Houston, MN, as indicated by their stated zipcode. A majority (53%) of respondents' primary residence was zero to 25 miles from Houston, MN (Appendix B, Figure 3). One fifth (18%) of respondents resided 26 to 100 miles from Houston, MN. One quarter (24%) of respondents indicated that they resided 101 to 250 miles from Houston, MN. Fewer than 10% (6%) of respondents indicated that they resided 250 or more miles from Houston, MN (Appendix B, Figure 4). Three respondents indicated that their primary residence was in a foreign country; the countries indicated were the Netherlands, Ethiopia and Jamaica.

Birding Experience

Almost half (41.6%; Appendix B, Figure 5) of respondents identified their level of birding experience as beginner. One quarter (24.6%) of respondents identified themselves as intermediate birders and less than a fifth (15.0%) identified themselves as advanced birders. About one fifth (18.6%) of respondents indicated that they were not birders.

International Festival of Owls Experience

About half of respondents had previously attended the International Festival of Owls (49.1%; Appendix B, Figure 6). Of those who previously attended the International Festival of Owls, they attend an average of three (\bar{M} =3.3) times, most often (67.3%) in 2007. On average, respondents spent about eight hours (\bar{M} =8.05) at the festival, with a range of one to twenty-six hours. Almost all (92.2%) of the respondents attended the festival on Saturday, over half (52.2%) attended the festival on Friday and one quarter (27%) also attended the festival on Sunday (Appendix B, Table 3). Of the respondents that indicated the days they attended the festival, almost half (43.0%, Appendix B, Figure 7) of respondents attended the festival only on Saturday. Another quarter (23.7%) attended the festival on Friday and Saturday and one fifth (21.9%) attended the festival on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Sources Informing about the International Festival of Owls

Respondents heard about the International Festival of Owls most frequently from 'other' sources (33.0%). Among those who specified 'other' sources, the most frequently cited 'other' sources were Karla (22.9%), TV (11.4%) and the radio (11.4%). Respondents also heard about the International Festival of Owls through friends (23.5%), the newspaper (20.9%), family (20.0%), the internet (17.4%) and through a previous visit (13.9%; Appendix B, Table 4). Very few respondents indicated that they heard about the event through a bird club (3.5%).

The information sources for those new to the International Festival of Owls in 2008 did not differ significantly from the respondents as a whole. They reported their primary information sources as 'other' (36.2%), friends (25.9%) and the newspaper (20.7%). Returning festival respondents'

information sources did vary slightly from the respondents as a whole. They reported their primary information sources as 'other' (32.1%), previous visit (26.8%) and family (25.0%).

Attributes of Enjoyable Experience

The top cited most enjoyable attributes of the International Festival of Owls were the live owl programs (48.7%), kid's activities (13.3%), and banquet (9.7%; Appendix B, Figure 8). Fewer than ten percent of respondents indicated they most enjoyed the owl prowl (8.8%), the pellet dissection (5.3%) and 'other' activities (5.3%). Fewer than five percent cited the most enjoyable attributes included the food and beverages (3.5%), nest box building (3.5%) and photography sessions (1.8%).

The most enjoyable attribute of the International Festival of Owls differed across the days of completion (Appendix B, Figure 9) and across level of birding experience (Appendix B, Figure 10). Respondents who completed the questionnaire on Friday indicated the live owl programs (50.0%) and the banquet (26.9%; Appendix B, Figure 9) as the most enjoyable attribute whereas respondents who completed the questionnaire on Saturday indicated the live owl programs (49.9%) and the kid's activities (15.3%) as the most enjoyable attributes. While all respondents of all bird level experiences enjoyed the live owl activities, those that are not birders, beginning or intermediate birders also enjoyed the kid's activities most, whereas advanced birders also enjoyed the banquet and the owl prowl most. The non birders also enjoyed the food and beverages.

Group Composition

Most frequently, respondents attended the International Festival of Owls with family (55.7%; Appendix B, Figure 11). Less than one fifth (15.7%) attended with family & friends, while slightly less of the respondents attended alone (12.2%) or with friends (10.4%). A small portion of respondents attended the International Festival of Owls with an organized group (6.1%). Among respondents who specified the actual number of people in each category, groups averaged three people (\underline{M} =3.11) consisting of two adults (\underline{M} =2.21) and one child (\underline{M} =.81; Appendix B, Table 5).

Expenditures

On average, respondents spent the most on lodging (\underline{M} =\$113.26; Appendix B, Table 6). Respondents spent an average of \$43.69 on 'other' expenditures, \$34.00 on surrounding businesses, \$30.13 on food & beverages, and \$17.45 on admissions. Respondents reported spending a total of \$8352. Of this \$2605 was spent on lodging, \$2501 was spent on food and beverages, \$1396 was spent on admission, \$1136 was spent on 'other' expenditures and \$714 was spent on surrounding businesses.

The majority (86.9%) of respondents purchased food during the International Festival of Owls. Respondents most frequently purchased food from the festival (66.4%; Appendix B, Table 7). Respondents also purchased food from establishments in Houston, MN including the German

Restaurant (17.8%), a grocery store (12.1%), A Little Looney (12.1%), Crossroads Café (10.3%) and a convenience store (10.3%).

One quarter (31.8%) of respondents indicated an overnight stay while at the International Festival of Owls. (Appendix B, Figure 12). Overnight visitors primarily stayed at someone's home (34.3%) or a facility outside of Houston (31.4%). One quarter of respondents with an overnight stay indicated that they were staying at a lodging facility in Houston. Most respondents stayed at the Sawmill Inn (22.9%) and the rest stayed at Addie's Attic (8.6%). Very few respondents indicated that they were staying at a cabin (2.9%).

Houston, MN Experience

More than one quarter (29.6%) of respondents indicated that they are residents of Houston, MN. Among non-residents, the majority (67.5%) of respondents had previously visited Houston, MN for reasons other than the International Festival of Owls. Among those who had previously visited Houston, MN, the most frequently cited reasons were for nature activities (59.3 %; Appendix B, Table 8) and other events (51.9%). One quarter (25.9%) also visited Houston, MN for restaurants. Less than one tenth of respondents indicated they visited Houston for services (9.3%) or to shop (7.4%). A majority (74.7%) of non-resident respondents intend to return to Houston, MN in the next twelve months (Appendix B, Figure 13). Among respondents who indicated no previous exposure to Houston, MN, half (52.0%) indicated an intention to return.

International Festival of Owls Email Request

Respondents were asked to list their email address to be notified of future International Festival of Owls activities. Nearly one half of respondents listed their email addresses (45.2%, Appendix C). Of those emails listed, nearly all (95.1%) appear to be valid.

Comments and Suggestions

Although the survey did not provide space for comments and suggestions, respondents provided comments on the surveys, vocally and through email (Appendix D). Comments provided offered suggestions to improve the event such as increasing the owl learning opportunities and removing side activities from the gym to improve acoustics. Respondents also offered praise for the event: "I think this is wonderful for Houston and for Owls."

DISCUSSION

The 2008 International Festival of Owls attracted a range of visitors from the local area as well as tourists. Results indicate that the International Festival of Owls provides an enjoyable experience among visitors, as evidenced by return visitation and by interest in receiving information on future owl festival events. The degree of return visitation suggests that visitors will continue to be drawn to the event and the level of attendance will continue, barring major weather events, competition or major political events.

Respondents of the International Festival of Owls questionnaire are demographically similar to wildlife viewers in Minnesota. Like Minnesota wildlife viewers, festival respondents are mature, Anglo and possess average to high incomes (Schneider & Salk, 2002). Both Minnesota wildlife viewers and Owl Festival respondents are more likely to take a day trip than an overnight stay, although wildlife viewers do take an average of 1.9 overnight trips per year (Schneider & Salk, 2002). Due to the similarities in wildlife viewers and International Festival of Owls attendees, advertising to the wildlife viewing market through wildlife viewing magazines and wildlife brochures may increase visitation rates.

The range of activities and offerings serve as an important draw but scheduling changes may be considered to enhance enjoyment, ensure target audience satisfaction as well as extend stays. The live owl programs, kid's activities and banquet all served as enjoyable attributes for festival attendees. Expanding live owl presentations, sightings and opportunities to interact with owls is encouraged. Adding additional sessions with live owls or including owl sightings at other festival events besides the high school may attract more participants. The prevalent enjoyment of live owl programs, along with findings that wildlife viewers in Minnesota are interested in Northern Wintering Owls, suggests that increasing interactions with these owls will increase visitor satisfaction (Schneider & Salk, 2002).

Depending on the event goals, considering programming by birding expertise may be advisable. For example, 41.6% indicated they were beginning birders. Programming ideas for new or newer birders might include sessions on basic owl anatomy and ecology as well as information on different types of owls and their habitats. Similarly, about one fifth of respondents indicated they were not birders and considering their motivations for attendance would be an interesting next research step. Non birders did indicate that they enjoy food and beverage, which is similar to other festivals not focused on owls, so perhaps more food and beverage opportunities will enhance their experience (U of M Tourism Center, 2007). Ensuring that activities beyond birding, such as general nature activities and program information, are available could also increase group satisfaction. However, a portion of attendees are also self identified as advanced birders and some verbal requests for more advanced birding opportunities, particularly on Saturday, were indicated. Certainly it is difficult, if not impossible, to satisfy all birding levels, but program tracking by specialization would be one option. Further refinement of bird knowledge and expertise among respondents may increase target marketing and festival activity opportunities.

Information from family and friends, or word of mouth, was an important vehicle for event marketing and mirrors previous state and national findings (Schuweiler, Schneider, & Salk, 2007; Salk & Schneider, 2006; Salk, Schneider, & Monson, 2005). Early planning is crucial to maximize the effects of word of mouth, as it increases the likelihood of event dates, scheduled programmatic information, and new additions to circulate. Print media was also an important information source amongst respondents as newspapers were an information source for one fifth of participants. The newspaper, family and friends and the internet are also important information sources for wildlife viewers and enhancement of marketing in these areas may attract more wildlife viewers. Wildlife viewers also use magazines and brochures/pamphlets as information sources (Schneider & Salk, 2002). Efforts to publish information about the

International Festival of Owls in wildlife watching magazines and distributing brochures and pamphlets may reach more wildlife viewers. The radio and TV appear to be positive media opportunities as a number of specifications in 'other' were the TV news and the radio. Efforts to increase media through more TV and radio news events around the festival may increase attendance.

With regard to visitor spending, lodging accounted for the highest expenditure. These dollars provide direct and indirect economic impact to the area, as do the rest of the expenditures. To maximize visitor spending, efforts to increase visitor length of stay and product offerings are suggested. Just more than a quarter of respondents indicated an overnight stay and just over a quarter of them indicated using lodging facilities in Houston, MN. Efforts to increase overnight stays and the use of lodging facilities in Houston, MN will increase spending at the festival as well as benefit the community through lodging, services and local restaurant expenditures. Expanding and improving souvenirs and food and beverage choices at the festival will also increase expenditures. For example, souvenirs such as t-shirts with the International Festival of Owls logo on them will increase the uniqueness of the souvenir as well as act as event marketing.

The International Festival of Owls played a role in the enhancement in knowledge of the offerings of Houston, MN. To promote engagement in future activities in Houston, MN and increase the likelihood to return increasing, onsite promotion of future activities is recommended. For example, the International Festival of Owls brochure includes a list of events that take place in Houston, MN throughout the year; adding an incentive to return to a future event (such as a discount on admission or coupon to a restaurant) may increase the likelihood to return for one of these events. Since the greatest percentage of respondents had been to Houston before for nature activities and the International Festival of Owls attracts wildlife viewers, promotion of future wildlife viewing opportunities in Houston may attract these respondents. At least one quarter of the attendees were tourists, by any account. If attracting more visitors is of interest, possible package deals with local hotels, restaurants and other attractions should be investigated. Promoting other cultural venues and heritage areas around Houston, MN with the International Festival of Owls may be a successful way to attract more visitors as well as extend their stay.

While visitor surveys have the ability to better understand the festival market, they do not capture other information of potential use to event organizers such as actual visitation, the overall economic impact of the International Festival of Owls and how the event compares to other festivals in the region. Future research to capture this useful information is advised.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

2008 International Festival of Owls Survey

Have you been to the International Festival of Owls before (check ONE)? Yes No

If yes, how many years have you attended the festival? _____ Years

What was the last year you attended the festival? _____

Where did you hear about this event? (check all that apply)

Newspaper Friends Family Internet Bird Club Previous Visit

Other (Specify: _____)

Which days do you plan to attend the event? (check all that apply)

Friday Saturday Sunday

About how long do you intend to be at the event? _____ Hours

Have you ever been to Houston, MN for any reason other than the International Festival of Owls? Yes No

If yes, what was the purpose? (check all that apply)

Shopping Restaurants Nature Activities Services Resident

Other Events

Do you intend to return to Houston, MN in the next 12-months (check ONE)?

Yes No

What do you enjoy most about the International Festival of Owls (check ONE)?

Live Owl Programs Kids Activities Food & Beverages Banquet

Owl Prowl Pellet Dissection Nest Box Building

Photography Sessions Other (Specify: _____)

Please list your level of birding experience.

Beginner Intermediate Advanced Not a Birder

Who are you with (check ONE)?

Alone Friends Family Family & Friends Organized Group

Other (Specify: _____)

How many in your group are of the following ages (specify NUMBER):

0-12 years 13-17 years 18+ years old

How much did YOU spend during your time at the Festival?

\$ _____ Food & Beverages \$ _____ Admission \$ _____ Surrounding Businesses

\$ _____ Lodging \$ _____ Other

Where did you purchase food during the festival (check all that apply)?

- Festival German Restaurant Crossroads Café
 Grocery Store Convenience Store A Little Looney
 Did not purchase food

Where are you staying during the festival?

- Sawmill Inn Addie's Attic Lilac & Lace
 Cabin Facility Outside of Houston Someone's Home
 Not Staying Overnight/Own Home

What year were you born? 19____

What is your zip code? _____

What is your gender? Female Male

What is your annual household income (before taxes)?

- Less Than \$5,000 \$5,000-9,999 \$10,000-14,999 \$15,000-24,999
 \$25,000-34,999 \$35,000-49,999 \$50,000-74,999 \$75,000-99,999
 \$100,000-124,999 \$125,000-149,999 \$150,000 or more

What is your ethnic origin (check one)? Hispanic/Latino Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino

What is your race? (check all that apply)

- American Indian/Alaskan Asian Black/African American White
 Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Other

Please list your email address for future information on the International Festival of Owls.

THANK YOU!!

APPENDIX B

Tables and Figures

Table 1. Response rate among visitors to the International Festival of Owls, 2008.

Total parties contacted	124
Respondents	115
Refusals	9
Compliance rate	92.7%
Unusable Questionnaires	0
Usable Questionnaires	115

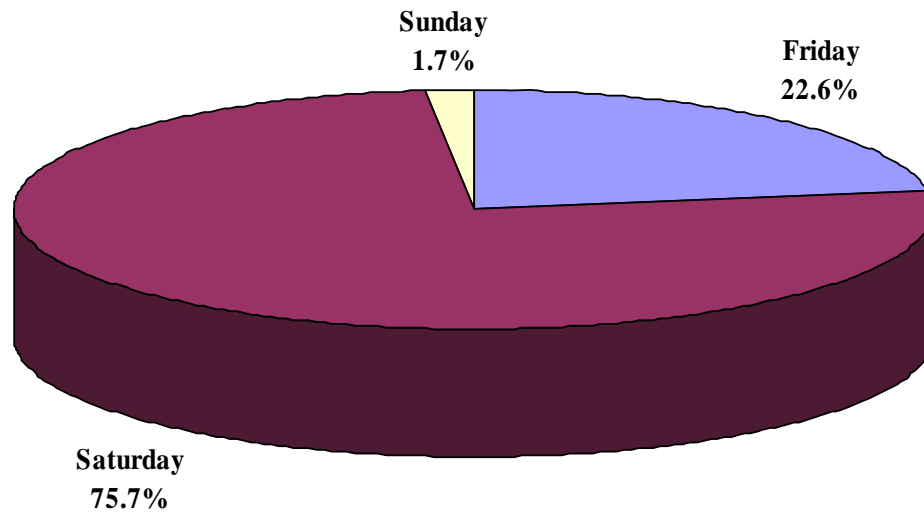


Figure 1. Day when respondents completed questionnaires regarding the International Festival of Owls, 2008 (n=115).

Table 2. Demographic characteristics among respondents to the International Festival of Owls questionnaire, 2008.

	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Female	63	55.3
Male	51	44.7
Total	114	100.0
Ethnicity		
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	102	98.1
Hispanic/Latino	2	1.9
Total	104	100.0
Race		
White	112	97.4
Asian	2	1.7
Black/African American	1	0.9
Other	1	0.9
American Indian/Alaskan	0	0.0
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0.0
Total	N/A ¹	N/A ¹
Age ($M=53.3$; $S.D.=15.0$)		
18-30	6	5.4
31-40	21	18.9
41-50	23	20.7
51-60	24	21.6
61-70	23	20.7
71 or older	14	12.6
Total	111	100.0

¹ Due to possible selection of multiple categorical responses.

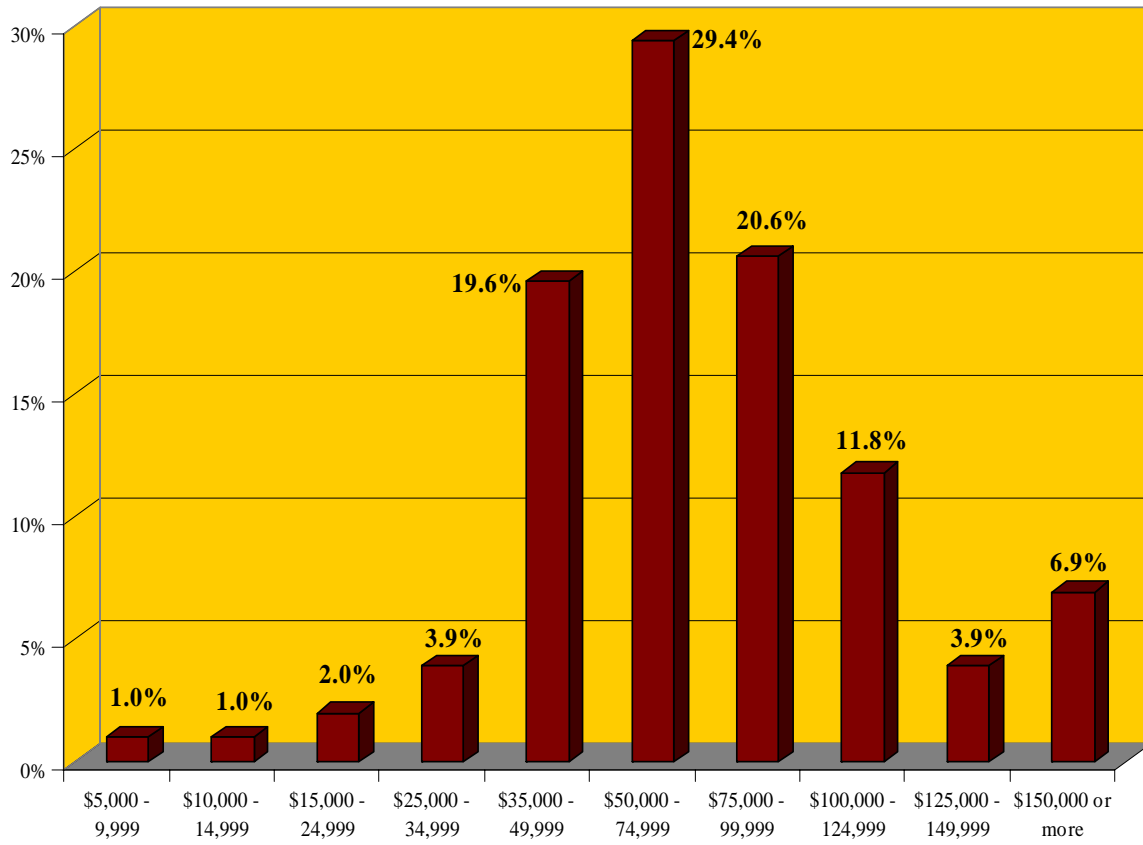


Figure 2. Percentage of annual household income among respondents to the International Festival of Owls, 2008 (n=102).

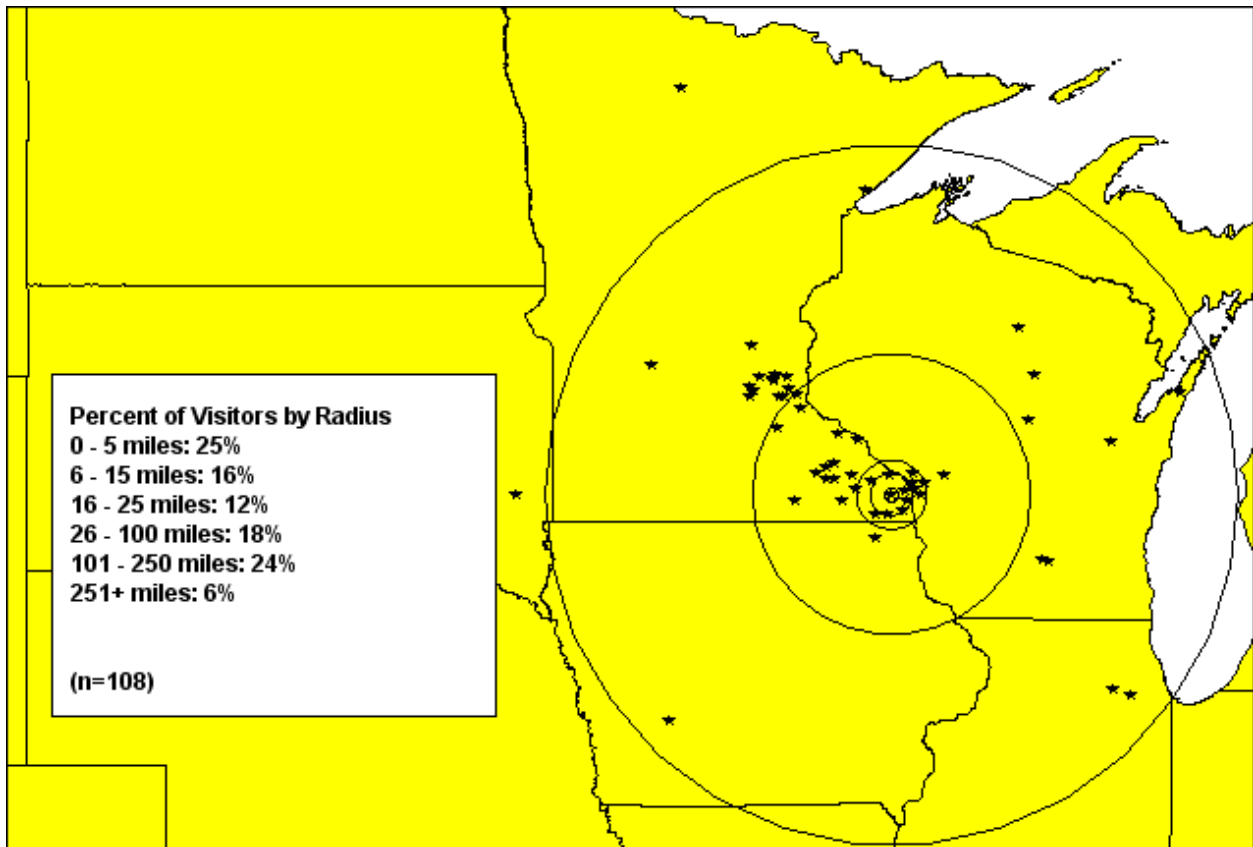


Figure 3. Regional map of respondents to the International Festival of Owls, 2008 (n=108).

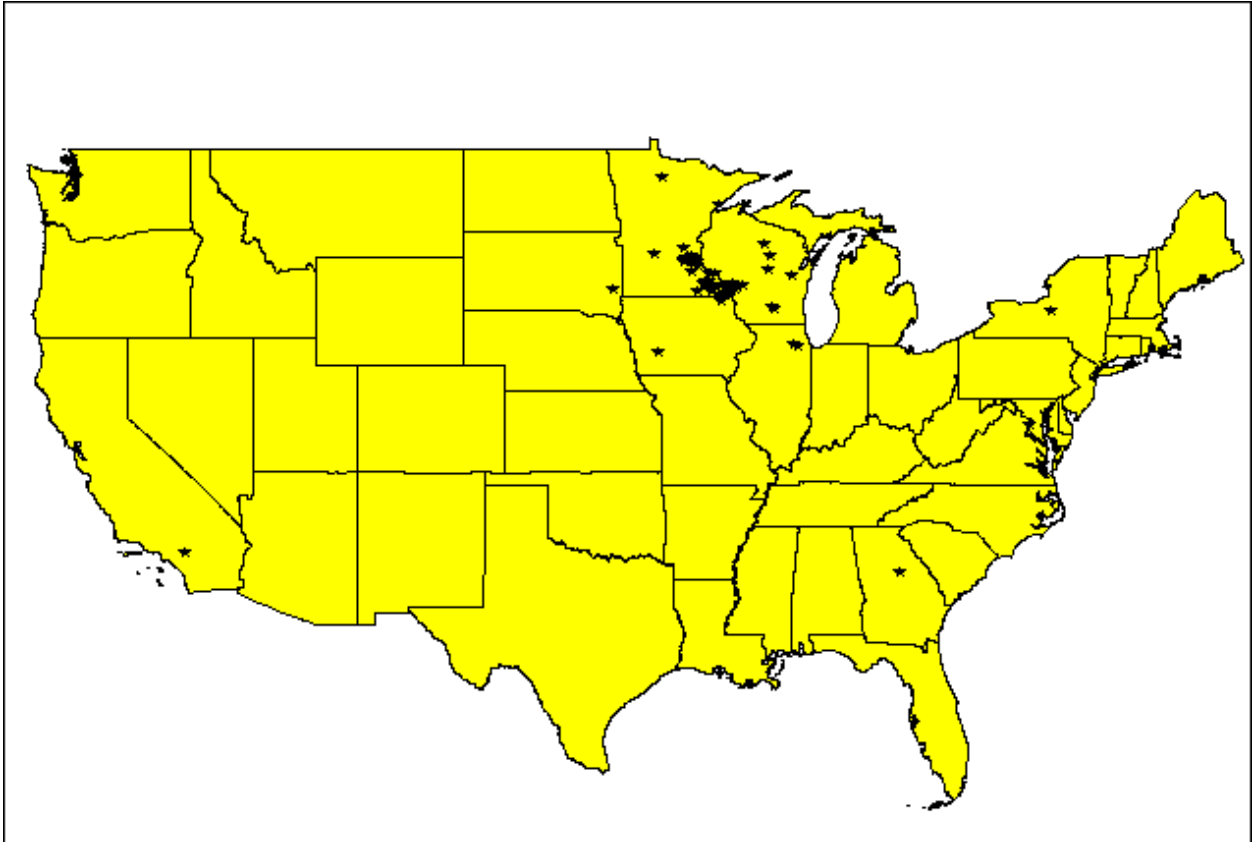


Figure 4. US geographical distribution of respondents to the Owl Festival questionnaire, 2008 (n=108).

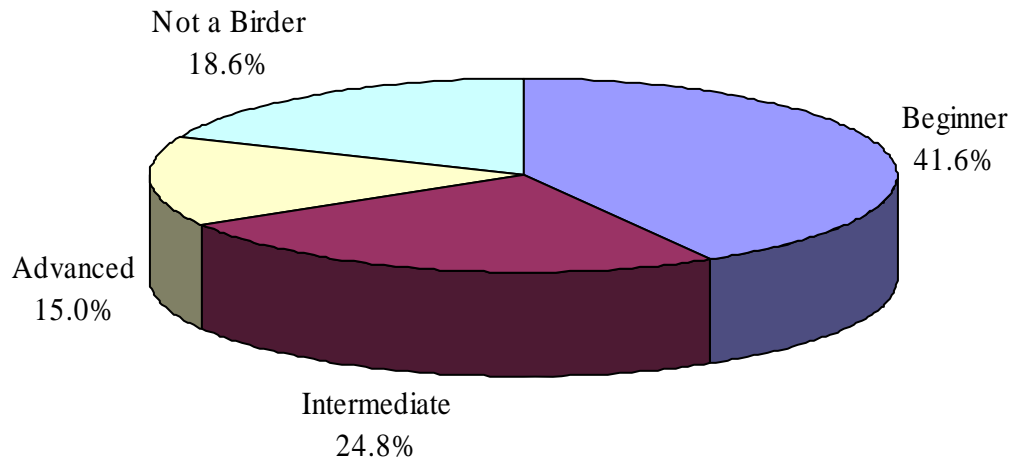


Figure 5. Level of Birding Experience among respondents to the International Festival of Owls questionnaire, 2008 (n=113).

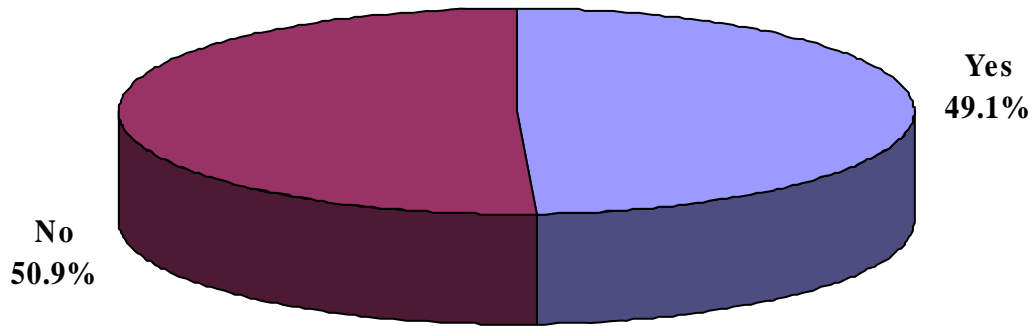


Figure 6. Previous Owl Festival attendance among respondents to the International Festival of Owls questionnaire, 2008 (n=114).

Table 3. Indicated attendance by day among respondents at the International Festival of Owls questionnaire, 2008.

	Frequency	Percent
Friday	60	52.2%
Saturday	106	92.2%
Sunday	31	27.0%

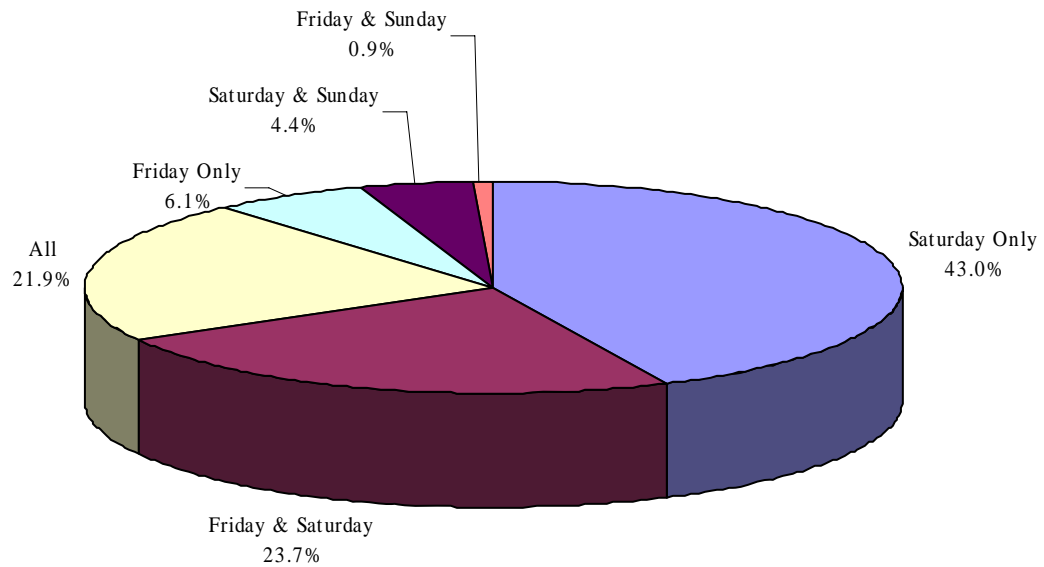


Figure 7. Daily attendance at the International Festival of Owls among questionnaire respondents, 2008 (n=114).

Table 4. Information sources among visitors to the International Festival of Owls questionnaire, 2008.

	Frequency	Percent
Other	38	33.0%
Friends	27	23.5%
Newspaper	24	20.9%
Family	23	20.0%
Internet	20	17.4%
Previous Visit	16	13.9%
Bird Club	4	3.5%

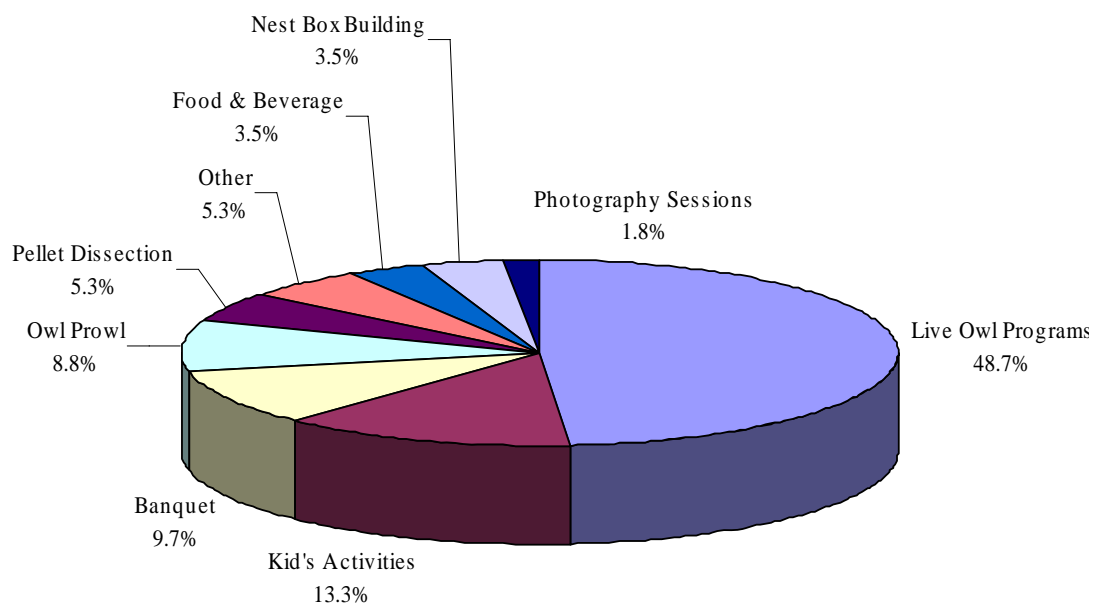


Figure 8. Most enjoyable attribute of the International Owl Festival among questionnaire respondents, 2008 (n=113).

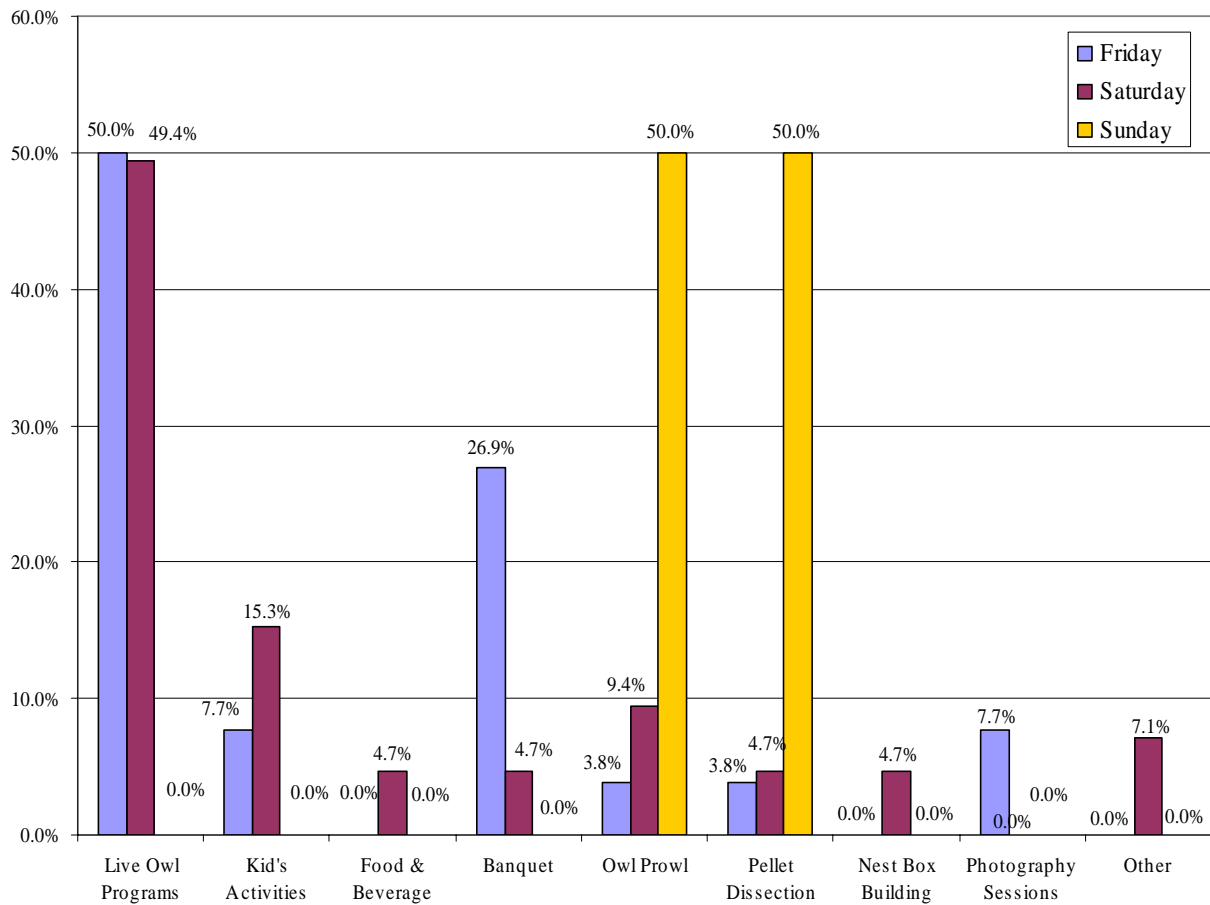


Figure 9. Most enjoyable attribute of the International Festival of Owls based on day of questionnaire completion among International Festival of Owls questionnaire respondents, 2008 (n=113).

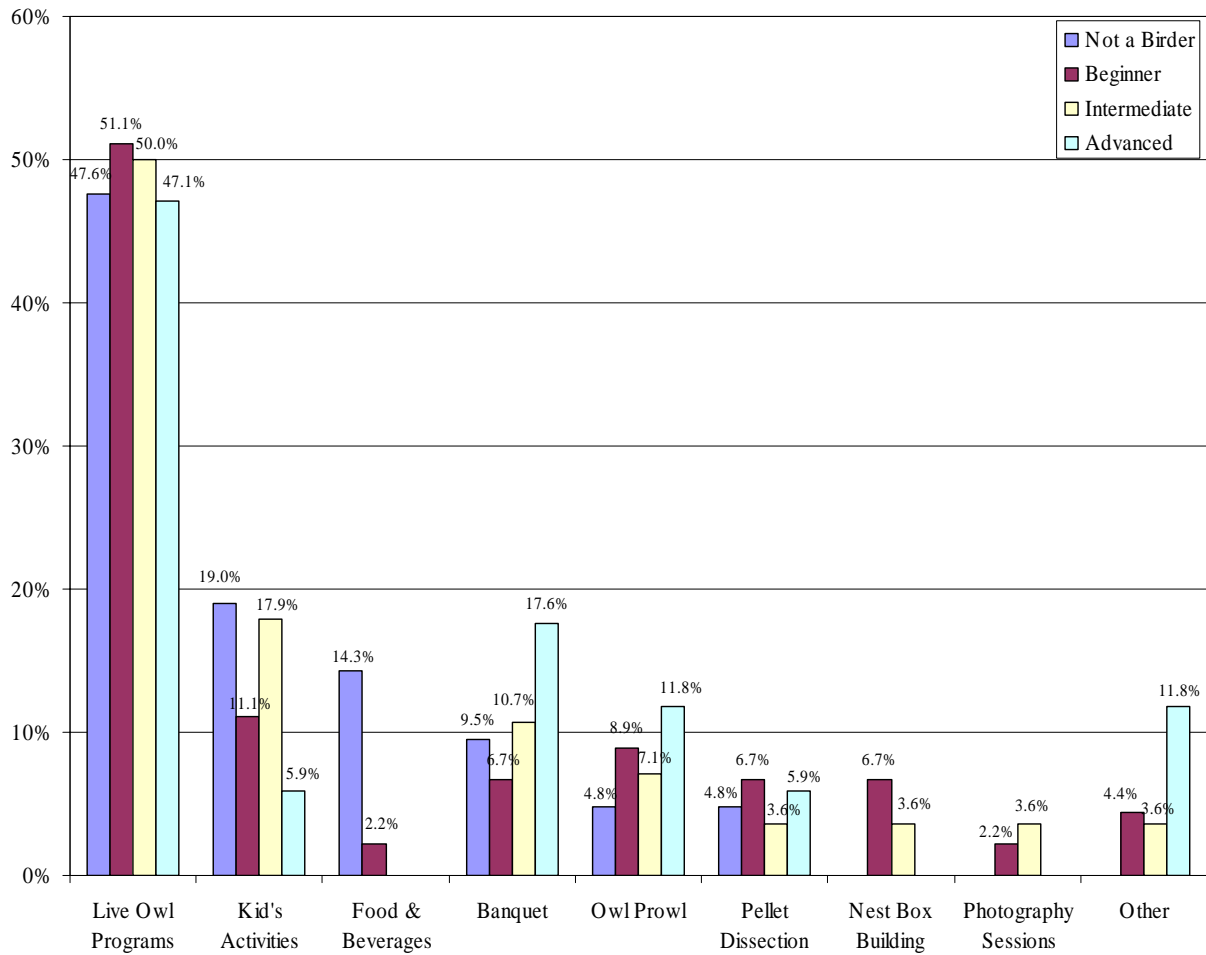


Figure 10. Most enjoyable attribute of the International Festival of Owls based on level of birding experience among International Festival of Owls questionnaire respondents, 2008 (n=111).

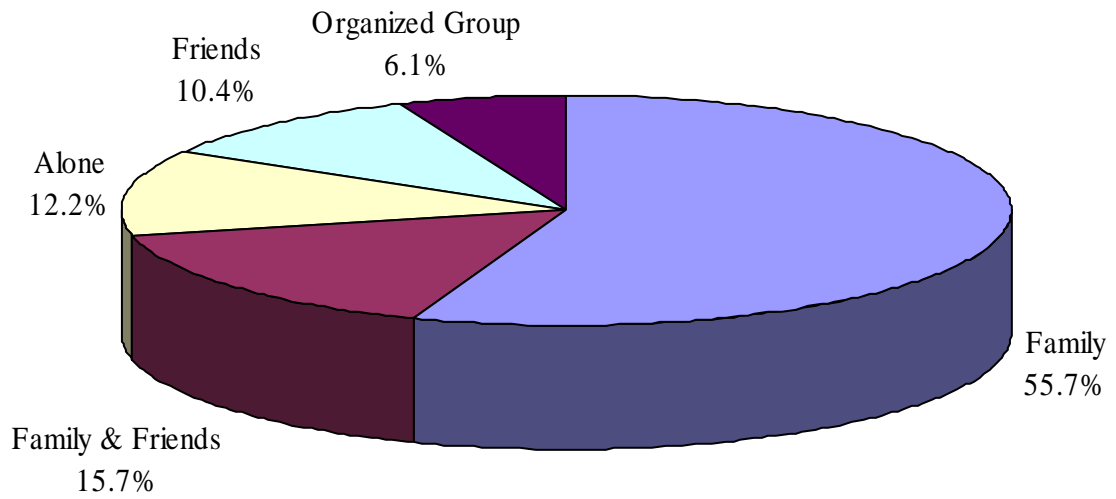


Figure 11. Group composition among respondents to the International Festival of Owls questionnaire, 2008 (n=115).

Table 5. Average group size and composition based on age categories among respondents to the International Festival of Owls questionnaire, 2009 (n=100).

	Mean	Range
Child (0-12 years) (n=41)	0.8	1-6
Teenager (12-17 years) (n=8)	0.1	1-2
Adult (18+ years old) (n=100)	2.2	1-5

Table 6. Average expenditures at the International Festival of Owls among festival questionnaire respondents, 2008.

	M	S.D.	Range
Lodging (n=23)	\$113.26	\$77.60	\$0-250
Other (n=26)	\$43.69	\$45.75	\$0-150
Surrounding Businesses (n=21)	\$34.00	\$24.02	\$0-90
Food & Beverages (n=83)	\$30.13	\$26.46	\$0-100
Admission (n=80)	\$17.45	\$16.85	\$0-75

Table 7. Food expenditure locations among International Festival of Owls, 2008 questionnaire respondents.

	Frequency	Percent
Festival	71	61.7%
German Restaurant	19	16.5%
Grocery Store	13	11.3%
A Little Looney	13	11.3%
Crossroads Café	11	9.6%
Convenience Store	11	9.6%

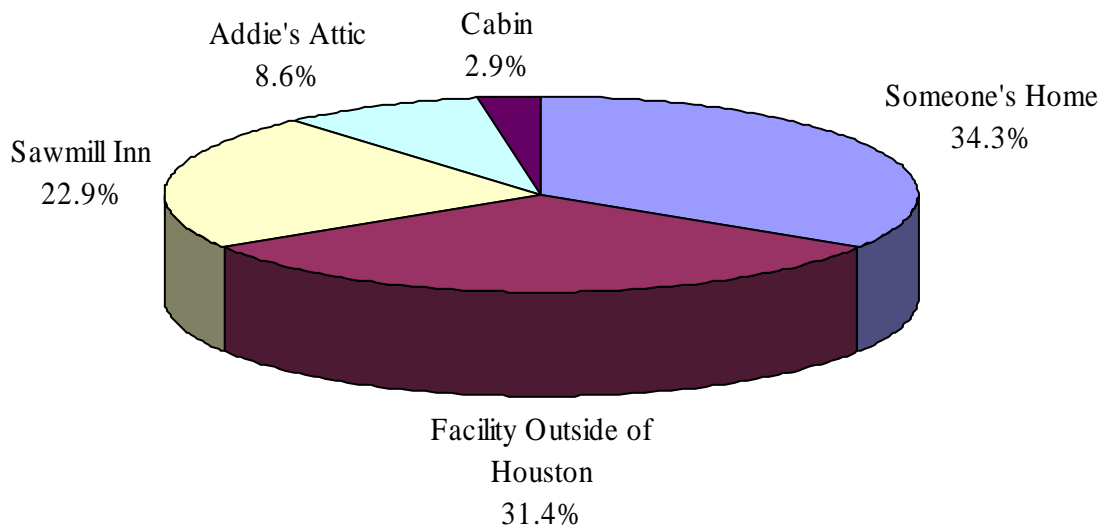


Figure 12. Lodging among respondents to the International Festival of Owls questionnaire, 2008 (n=35).

Table 8. Purpose of previous visit to Houston, MN among respondents to the International Festival of Owls questionnaire, 2008.

	Frequency	Percent ¹
Nature Activities	32	59.3
Other Events	28	51.9
Restaurants	14	25.9
Services	5	9.3
Shopping	4	7.4

¹Totals more than 100% as respondents indicated all purposes for prior visit.

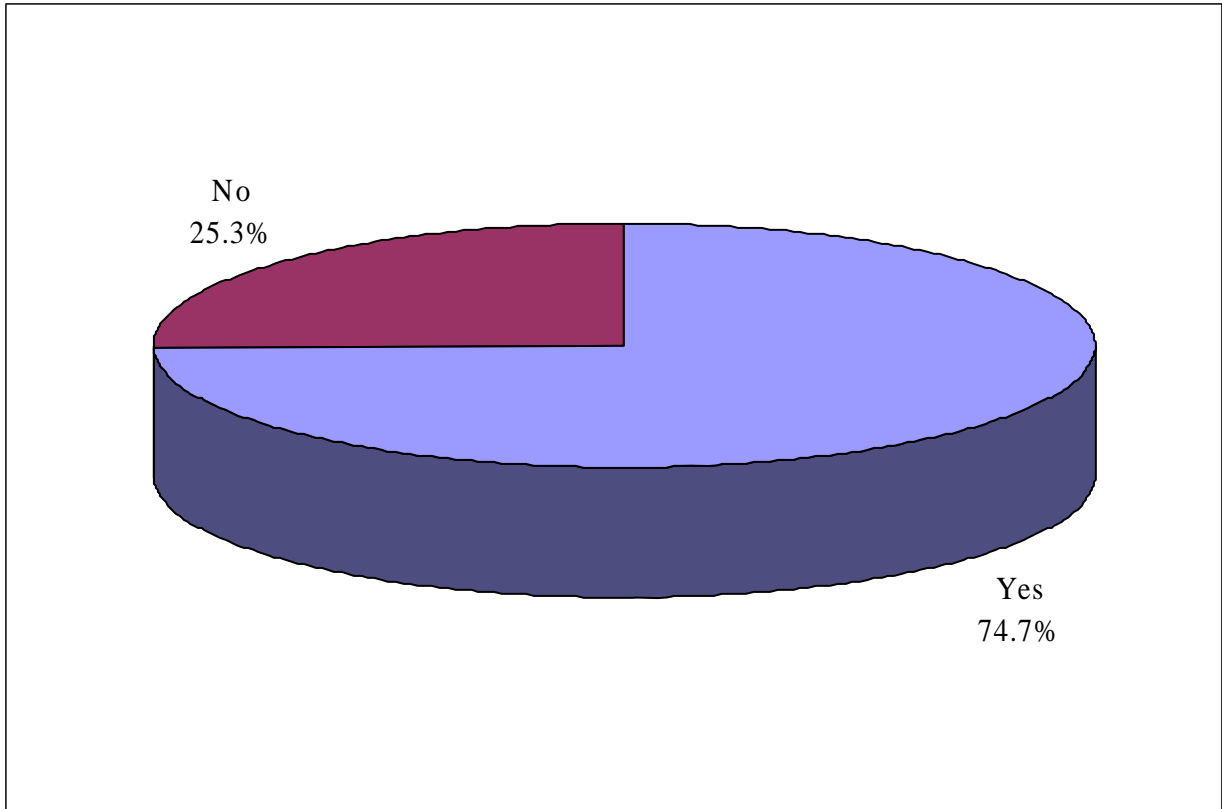


Figure 13. Intention to return to Houston, MN in the next twelve months among non-resident respondents to the International Festival of Owls questionnaire, 2008 (n=79).

APPENDIX C

Respondents Email Addresses

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Appendix D

Comments and Suggestions

Comments on Surveys

I think this is wonderful for Houston and for Owls. Will check at Nature C. about a owl box in my yard.

“real birds for real people”

Vocal Comments

Need more adult activities for serious birders.

Email Comments

My wife and I attended the Owl Festival on 3/1. We brought some friends with us who are real birders, traveling the world to see exotic birds, etc. Everyone had a good time. I hope your work can help spread the word on this event. We especially like Alice and the video about her life with Karla.

We had some suggestions for improving the event. We talked about this in the car going home. Sorry to be slow in getting this to you. I've been swamped and am just catching up. I hope this has some value to your work.

1) The website was tough to follow. Lots of stuff, but it didn't help us plan our day. The overall schedule was hard to find. Looked to me like most folks were gone by 3:00 on Saturday (a surprise to us). Big gap until the owl prowl. Maybe, if we did it again, we'd come down Friday night for the banquet and leave for home earlier Saturday. But a 5:30 start would have meant losing a 1/2 day of work from the Twin Cities.

2) It seemed like there was a nice children's component; face painting, decorating, looking at owls. This was not obvious from the publicity, at least not for me. I might have brought grand children if I'd known. I liked that it was consolidated into a few hours, because that's about right for attention spans. Need to focus a publicity component on this.

3) Looking at my above comments, I'm envisioning some rescheduling of events that would make it a more compelling experience for folks from the Twin Cities. I don't have clear about how that would look, esp given a small town's desire to keep Sunday AM open for church. Could the banquet be Saturday night? We feel bad we missed the owl pellet

dissection, but that would have meant a 6:30 AM departure from Minneapolis. Maybe they are OK with a local audience. Maybe it's a matter of bundling activities for different audiences. For folks like us driving down for the day, this would mean a nice batch of activities from 10:30-3:30, including a more compelling lunch. Our birder friends would have liked the Sat night prowling, together with the next day's photography; they had a commitment Sunday AM and could not do that. If we brought grandchildren, we'd have been happy with Sat AM activities, but would not take them to the Banquet.

4) Get the side activities out of the gym. The acoustics were not great anyway. That extra activity made hearing hopeless.

5) We were a bit disappointed by the meals. We were looking for more substantial meals, so took lunch in town and dinner on the road home. Our lunch at the German Restaurant in town took so long we missed programs back at the school. Lunch in the gym did not seem esp owl-themed as advertised. I would have paid a big price to have a good dinner at a small-town church, but it sounded too basic. The Owl Face breakfast sounded good, but (again) this would have required a very early start.

Looks good to me too. You might compliment them on the cookies/baked goods with owl theme, which I thought were a nice touch (maybe done by volunteers?).

Would have liked a large display with good photos on the different kinds of American owls, their habitat, how to identify them, etc.

I liked the owl buttons we got.

I strongly echo your comments on bad acoustics. And it seemed like some of the people were "listening" to the presentations (that is, talking to each other, etc.) just because their kids were in the room, and there wasn't anything else to do.