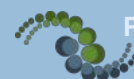




2023 Wrangell Visitor Economy

Wrangell Convention and
Visitors Bureau



Prepared by
Rain Coast Data
March 2023

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Wrangell Visitor Economy Summary

Despite the pandemic's devastating impact on Wrangell's tourism economy, the 2022 summer season showed a strong recovery, although it still fell short of the visitor trends seen in 2019. Looking ahead, the 2023 tourism season is expected to be the most successful since 2005 in terms of attracting visitors.

Tourism Employment and Earnings Trends: Despite changes to the number and types of annual tourists, the Wrangell visitors sector has a relatively stable average of 100 annualized jobs. On an annual basis, the visitor sector is responsible for 10% of all local jobs, and seven percent of workforce earnings. In 2021, the sector accounted for 103 annual average jobs with associated workforce earnings of \$3.2 million. Preliminary 2022 figures show that wages are back to 2019 levels, while jobs continue to lag slightly.

100
Annual average
Wrangell tourism
jobs

Cruise Projections: In 2023 Wrangell will receive 135 port calls from 19 ships. Wrangell's cruise sector is changing as a growing number of mid-sized ships visit Wrangell, and large cruise ships are scheduled to visit for the first time since 2005. Wrangell welcomed an estimated 16,126 cruise passengers in 2022, and that number is projected to grow by 83% to 29,510 in 2023. While the calendar is still being set for 2024, large cruise ships are scheduled to make at least three visits to the community that year. Cruise passengers are expected to make up 90% of the community's tourists in 2023.

83%
Projected
increase in cruise
ship passengers
in 2023

Total Tourist Arrival and Spending: In 2023, current projections are for 44,680 total passenger arrivals in Wrangell via airplane, cruise ship, and ferry — of which 32,930 are expected to be tourists. Visitors are likely to spend \$7.1 million in Wrangell during the summer of 2023, as long as local businesses are able to develop excursions with sufficient capacity to meet the needs of higher passenger capacity ships.

**\$7.1
million**
expected tourist
spending in
Wrangell in
2023

Visitors by Ferry: The number of ferry passengers traveling to Wrangell has been on the decline since the 1990s, but recent drops have been remarkably steep, falling from more than seven thousand disembarking passengers in 2013 to just over 1,500 in 2022. While once a focus of Wrangell's tourism sector, ferry traffic has fallen to a point that it is no longer a significant part of the local visitor economy. Federal funding could improve Wrangell's ferry service in upcoming years; however, the Alaska Marine Highway System reported it lacks sufficient crew to provide the service originally scheduled for Wrangell in the summer of 2023. Summer passenger service is expected to drop 22% in 2023.

-22%
Projected
decrease in ferry
passengers in
2023

Overall, strong tourism seasons are projected for Wrangell for 2023 and 2024.

Visitor Overview

Wrangell is a distinct and attractive visitor destination that, unlike other Southeast Alaska communities with a more mature visitor industry, includes a “working waterfront” district rather than souvenir and diamond-focused shops. Located at the tip of Wrangell Island across from the mouth of the Stikine River, the community is rich in wildlife, culture and history.

While Wrangell briefly attracted large cruise ships in the early-2000’s, the tourism sector has primarily focused on ferry, small cruise passenger, and independent travelers over the last two decades. This model is changing. Small cruise visitation remains strong; but mid-size cruise ship visitation is showing growth; large cruise ships are returning to the community; and changes to ferry service in recent years has curtailed ferry-based tourism. In 2023, port calls from mid-sized ships are expected to nearly double over 2019 levels, and in 2024 Wrangell is scheduled to receive three visits from large cruise ships.¹

Wrangell has unique opportunities for nature-based tours and wildlife viewing. The most popular visitor destination is Anan Creek, known for its world-class bear viewing. Anan is a popular place to watch the grizzly and black bears that congregate. A third of all summer tourism-related spending in Wrangell is from travelers visiting Anan. However, admission to the site is carefully managed by the Forest Service, and the number of visitors is limited to 60 per day.

Other popular visitor activities in Wrangell include visits to the Stikine-Leconte Wilderness, Chief Shakes Island, and Petroglyph Beach State Historic Park, which has the highest concentration of rock engravings in Southeast Alaska.



The focus of Wrangell tourism on higher-end, limited-entry boutique tours will need to expand and new types of shore excursions must be developed for the community to take full advantage of ships with higher passenger numbers scheduled to visit Wrangell in 2023 and 2024.

In the summer of 2022, nearly 20,000 tourists visited Wrangell. In 2023, cruise passengers are expected to increase by 83%, with an additional 27% increase already scheduled for 2024.

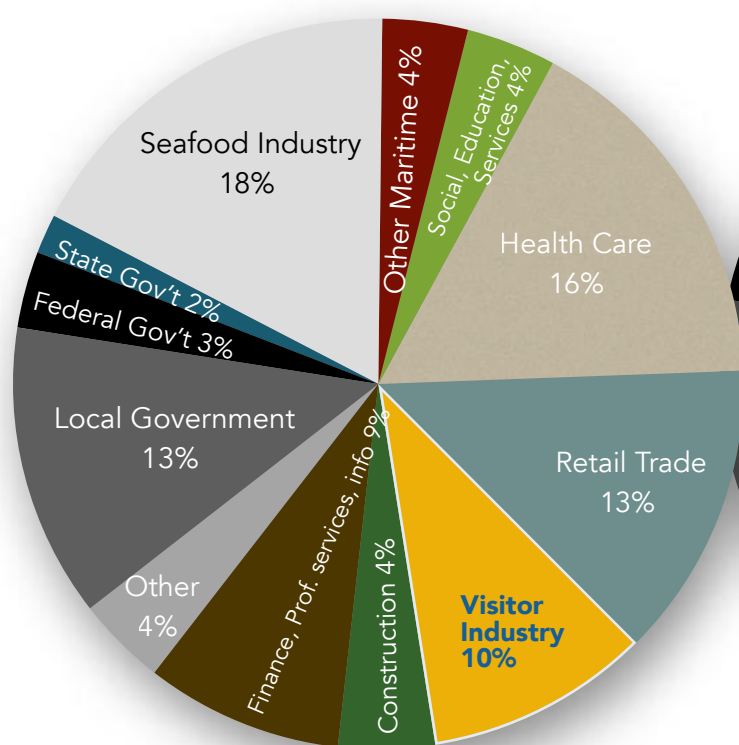
¹ For the purposes of this analysis, small cruise ships include those with 30 to 199 passengers per vessel; mid-sized cruise ships includes those with 200 to 1,299 passengers per vessel; and large cruise ships are 1,300 and over.

Visitor Employment

All four quarters of 2022 data is not yet available. In 2021, visitor industry employment made up 10% of all private sector employment in Wrangell, accounting for 103 annual average jobs with associated workforce earnings of \$3.2 million.² The visitor industry accounted for 7% of total Wrangell workforce earnings in 2018. Wrangell Alaska had 1,031 year-round equivalent jobs and nearly \$50 million in workforce earnings in 2021.

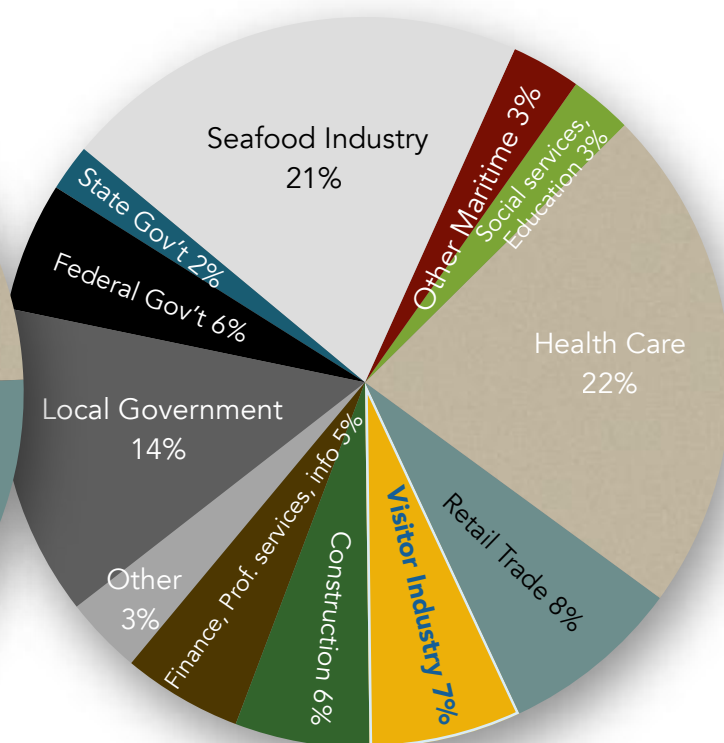
Annualized **Jobs**

103 Visitor Sector Jobs



Employment **Earnings**

Visitor Sector \$3.19 million



This sector is smaller in Wrangell than the region as a whole; the Southeast Alaska visitor industry represented 15% of all jobs and 9% of all employment earnings in 2021.

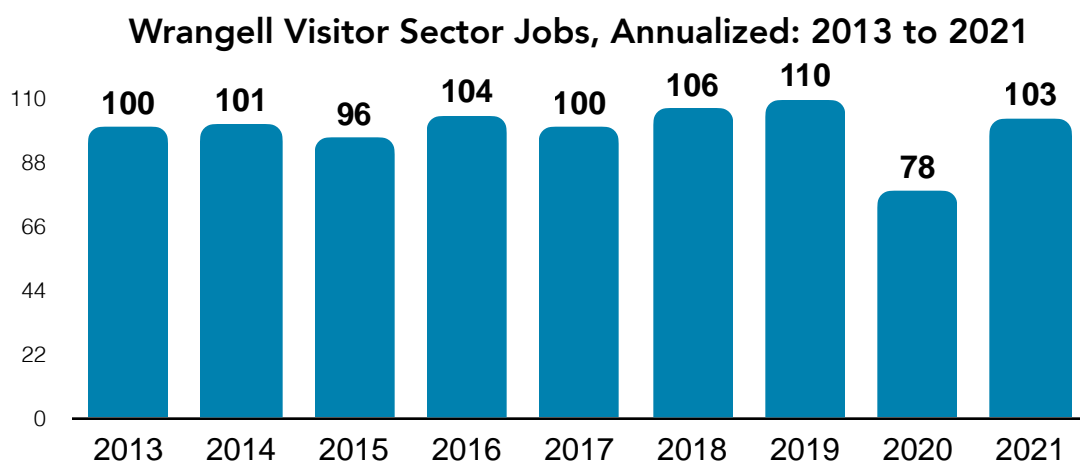
² **Sources:** Alaska Department of Labor Employment & Wage data; US Census Nonemployer (self-employment) Statistics. **Notes:** Due to data confidentiality, some figures are estimates by Rain Coast Data, based on all available inputs. Since annual average employment measures monthly jobs on an annual basis, a visitor industry job that lasts three months counts as one-quarter of an annual average job. Therefore total people employed by the visitor industry last year is a much higher number. 2022 data is not yet fully available.

Annual Visitor Industry Employment 2013-2021

With the exception of 2020, when no cruise ships arrived in Wrangell due to the pandemic, annualized visitor sector employment in the community is remarkably steady, at just around 100 annualized jobs since 2013. While peak worker count is significantly higher, using an annualized count (year-round equivalent job analysis) allows tourism jobs to be compared across sectors, and is a better way of making annual comparisons.

Total workforce earnings, on the other hand, have increased over time. The average visitor sector wage increased by 49% between 2014 and 2021, while total workforce earnings in that sector increased by 42%. While 2021 visitor sector earnings were below 2019 earnings levels, early data for 2022 show the sector has fully recovered from pandemic losses.

	Year 2014	Year 2017	Year 2018	Year 2019	Year 2021	% Change 2014-2021
Average Visitor Industry Wage	\$22,227	\$24,066	\$27,259	\$31,955	\$30,961	39%
Total Visitor Industry Employment	101	100	106	110	103	2%
Total Visitor Industry Workforce Earnings	\$2.24 million	\$2.40 million	\$2.89 million	\$3.52 million	\$3.19 million	42%



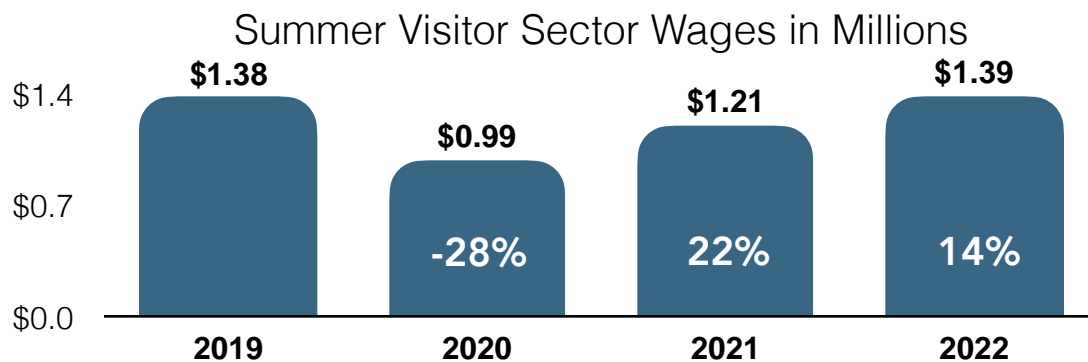
Note: Annualized employment (or year-round employment) tracks total workers each month of the year, sums the monthly total, and divides that number by twelve. **Source:** Alaska Department of Labor and US Census Nonemployer (self-employment).

2022 Quarters 2&3 Employment Figures

While 2022 data from the Alaska Department of Labor has only been released through the 3rd quarter, comparing April through September numbers (2nd and 3rd quarter data) for the last four years provides interesting information regarding how the Wrangell tourism sector weathered the pandemic. Total summer visitor sector wages fell by 28% in 2020, increased by 22% in 2021. In 2022, wages increased again by 14%. Generally these figures tell the same data story as the rest of the analysis: employment is not yet back to 2019 levels, although workforce earnings surpassed 2019. Self-employment is excluded from the numbers below.

Wrangell Jobs and Wages Visitors Sector April-September

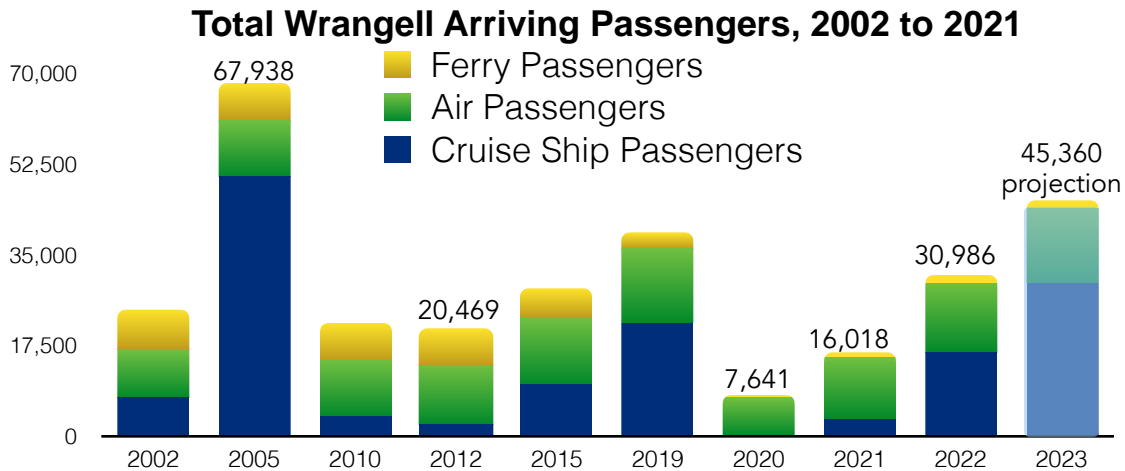
Total Air, Cruise, Ferry Passenger Arrivals	2019	2020	2021	2022	Change 2021-2022	Change 2019-2022
Tourism Retail Jobs	5	5	6	6	0%	10%
Tourism Retail Wages	\$35,279	\$29,897	\$38,529	\$49,641	29%	41%
Transportation Jobs (primarily scenic and sightseeing)	36	23	27	31	15%	-15%
Transportation Wages	\$578,754	\$424,818	\$501,262	\$569,059	14%	-2%
Food and Beverage Jobs	19	16	18	17	-6%	-11%
Food and Beverage Wages	\$187,747	\$158,162	\$141,728	\$154,959	9%	-17%
Other Visitors Sector jobs (includes accommodation, recreation, tours, etc)	37	23	30	40	33%	8%
Other Visitors Sector wages	\$580,099	\$378,467	\$530,691	\$613,151	16%	6%
Total April-Sept Jobs	97	67	81	94	16%	-3%
Total April-Sept Wages	\$1.38 million	\$0.99 million	\$1.21 million	\$1.39 million	14%	0%



Change in the Visitor Industry

Total Passenger Arrivals

In 2023, 45,360 passengers of all types are expected to arrive in Wrangell. The visitors sector primarily serves tourists, but also serves all travelers, and thus encompasses all hotels, restaurants, travel industry workers, and all arriving passengers.

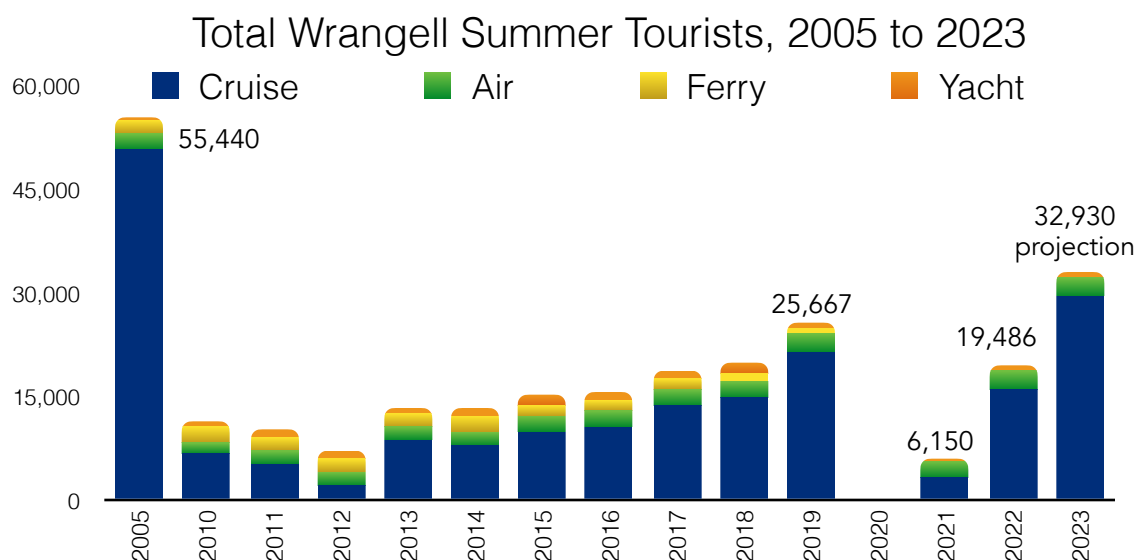


Total passenger arrivals peaked in 2004 and 2005 with nearly 70,000 passenger arrivals when large cruise ships visited the community; falling to just over 20,000 in 2012. Between 2013 and 2019, total visitation gradually increased, before dropping due to the pandemic. In 2020, passenger arrivals fell by 80% to less than 8,000 total arriving. In 2021, arriving passenger numbers more than doubled. Numbers nearly doubled again between 2021 and 2022. Cruise passenger arrivals for 2023 are expected surpass 2019 levels by 37%.

Wrangell Passenger Arrivals

Total Air, Cruise, Ferry Passenger Arrivals	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 projection	Projected Change 2022-2023
Cruise Ship Passengers	21,540	-	3,350	16,126	29,510	83%
Air Passengers	14,637	7,367	11,897	13,347	14,670	10%
Alaska Marine Highway System	2,907	274	771	1,513	1,180	-22%
Total Passenger Arrivals in Wrangell (via Air, Cruise, Ferry)	39,084	7,641	16,018	30,986	45,360	46%

Total Tourist (only) Arrivals



In 2023, Wrangell is projected to host 32,930 tourists in the community.

Wrangell receives tourists from small and mid-sized cruise ships, airplanes, ferries, and yachts.³ In 2005, more than 55,000 tourists visited Wrangell, which was the last year Wrangell was visited by a large cruise ship. Wrangell would not see another large ship scheduled for 19 years.⁴

In the intervening years Wrangell developed a boutique tourism sector, with approximately 100 annualized jobs. A primary reason for the lack of tourism industry growth is a cap on the number of people allowed to visit Anan each year, and limited accommodation during July and August, Anan's prime time for visitation. Anan represents the crown jewel of Wrangell's draw as a tourist destination. With constraints on this visitor attraction it is difficult to grow the visitor sector as a whole. The community had focused on ferry tourism—visitors who would spend multiple days and nights in the community, taking several high-end tours—but reduced and unattractive ferry schedules due to budget cuts have all but eliminated ferry tourism.

Wrangell's current challenge is how to monetize growth once the boutique tours are fully booked.

³ Due to non-uniform counting, a more in-depth yacht analysis was excluded from this edition of the Wrangell Visitor Economy. Since Heritage Harbor was completed, there has been an increase of yachters to the community.

⁴ While in September 2022 the 1,918-passenger Holland America Noordam made a single visit to Wrangell, it was not on the original schedule.

Summer Tourists to Wrangell 2010-2023

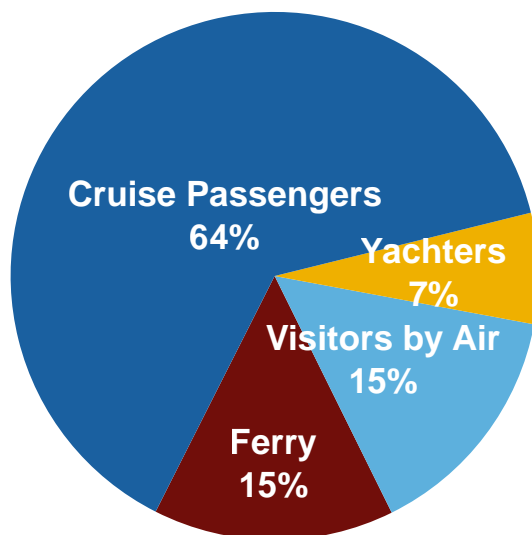
Summer Visitors to Wrangell	2010	2014	2022	2023 est.	% Change 2010-2023	% Change 2022-2023
Total Visitors	11,907	13,256	19,486	32,930	177%	69%
Cruise	6,779	8,096	16,126	29,510	335%	83%
Yachters*	960	1,052	462	500	-48%	8%
Air	1,768	2,008	2,618	2,700	53%	3%
Ferry	2,000	2,100	280	220	-89%	-21%

Air: US Bureau of Transportation Statistics RITA arriving passengers. **Cruise Passengers:** Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska. Small cruise ship schedules with research regarding total capacity. **Alaska Marine Highway System:** Annual Traffic Volume Reports and direct data request. ***Yacht** counts provided by City and Borough of Wrangell. "Summer tourists" are calculated in a variety of ways. All yacht and cruise passengers are considered "tourists." Air and ferry passengers are calculated by subtracting October to April average passenger arrivals from monthly summer passenger arrivals. From this number total seafood processing workers in Wrangell per summer is subtracted.

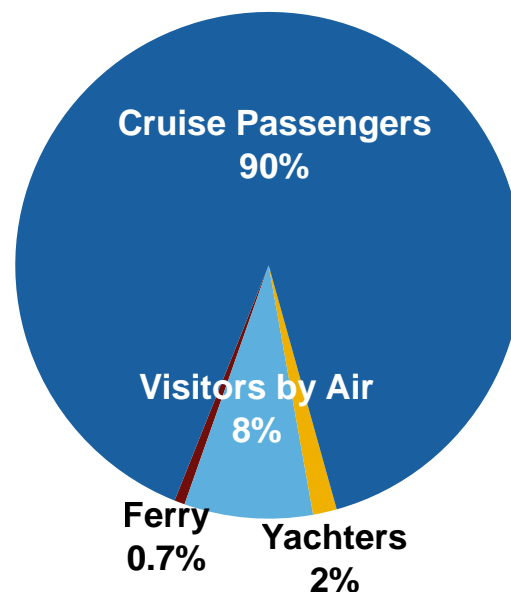
Summer Tourists by Mode of Arrival

In 2023, 90% of all tourists are expected to arrive via cruise ship, while 8% will arrive by air. Yacht arrivals may be higher than the 2% projected, due to data limitations. Based on current ferry schedules, less than one-percent of all tourists will arrive via ferry. In 2013, two-thirds of all tourists were off cruise ships.

Summer Tourists by Mode of Arrival in Wrangell 2013



Summer Tourists by Mode of Arrival in Wrangell 2023



Summer Visitation and Spending Analysis

Since 2021 and 2022 were still unusual cruise ship years, due to cruise ships not being full, the robust 2018-analysis was used to forecast 2023 visitor spending. Using the 2018 analysis, and increasing dollar values for inflations, and multiplying by the projected total of tourists by mode, Wrangell tourists are expected to spend \$7.1 million in the summer of 2023. However, there is a huge caveat in this assumption. Since more than half of 2018 spending was on excursions, the visitor sector will need to make sure it has the capacity to provide sufficient tours to visiting cruise ship passengers.

Summer Tourists by Mode of Arrival and Expenditures in Wrangell 2023 Projections

	2023	Total Estimated Summer Visitor Spending 2023	Total Estimated Spending Per Passenger
Total Tourist Projections	32,930	\$7,061,460	\$214
Cruise Passengers	29,510	\$5,252,780	\$178
Visitors by Air	2,700	\$1,533,600	\$568
Yachters	500	\$184,000	\$368
Ferry	220	\$91,080	\$414

Note that overall per passenger spending decreased from the 2018 analysis, due to the projected arrival of more cruise passengers.

In 2018 a full accounting of visitor spending was conducted. Total visitor spending per category was calculated in two ways. First it was developed using estimates of how many days each type of visitor stayed, depending on mode, and how much spending per person occurred per visit per spending category. Those figures were then cross-referenced with City and Borough of Wrangell sales tax receipts for businesses serving visitors. Total sales tax receipts for winter months were subtracted from summer months to determine "visitor spending." Summer hotel spending was determined by bed tax records for May to September. Rooms paid for with a government rate were subtracted, save for six percent that participated in local excursions. Total campground and RV payments were estimated.

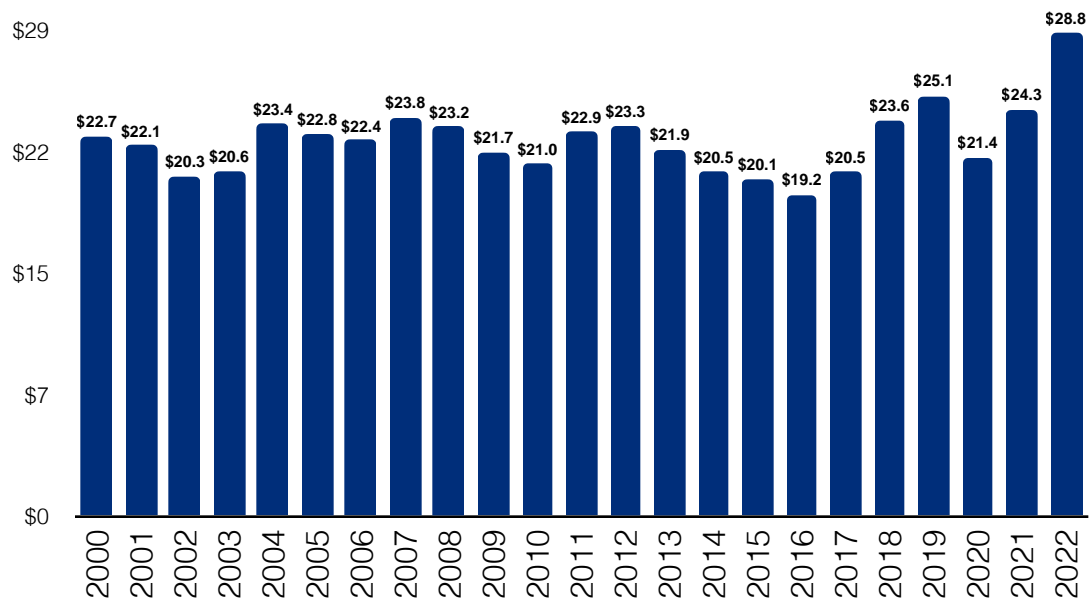
Total Summer Tourist Spending, 2018

Summer Spending by Visitors by Category	2018
Total estimated summer tourist spending	\$5,116,591
Excursions	\$2,694,747
Food, Alcohol, Coffee	\$1,452,121
Retail Spending and Transportation	\$416,155
Hotel	\$553,568

Tax Revenue

Sales tax represents the largest source of annual revenue for the municipality of Wrangell, estimated at 40% for FY2023. The City and Borough of Wrangell's 7% sales tax generated revenues increased significantly in recent years due to the 2018 Supreme Court decision to collect tax from online retailers. In 2018, tourism spending represented 21.6% of total summer sales tax collections. Summer sales were up significantly in 2022.

Summer (Taxable) Spending in Wrangell 2000-2022
adjusted for inflation

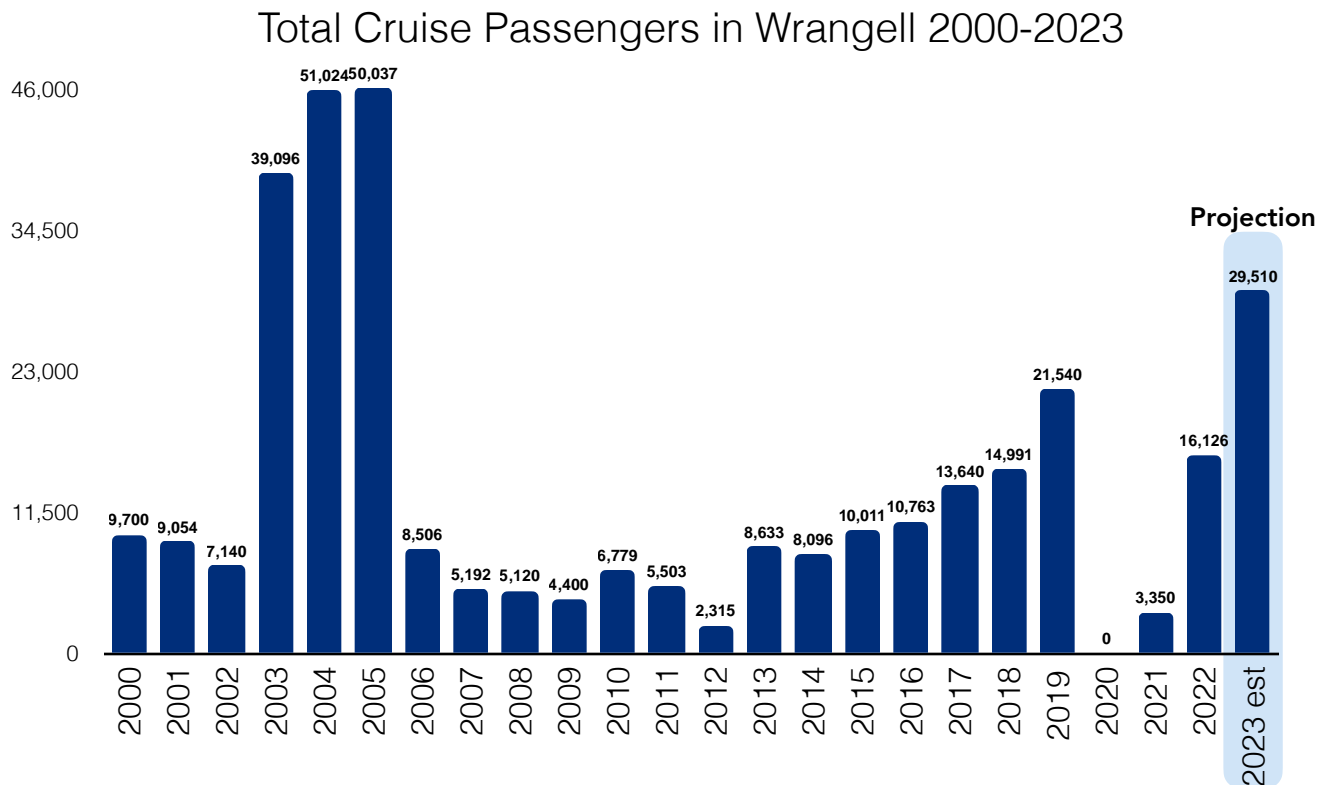


Cruise Passengers

As Alaska's popularity as a visitor destination grows, Southeast Alaska has become more attractive to cruise ship visitors. Cruise passenger arrivals hit a new regional record in 2019, and has recovered quickly following the 2020-2021 pandemic tourism seasons.

This trend is evident in Wrangell. The number of cruise passengers arriving saw more than a nine-fold increase — from a low point in 2012 of 2,315 cruise passengers to 21,540 passengers in 2019 — visiting Wrangell on small to mid-sized cruise ships.

For the purposes of this analysis, small cruise ships include those with 30 to 199 passengers per vessel; mid-sized cruise ships includes those with 200 to 1,299 passengers per vessel.⁵



Source: Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska; City and Borough of Wrangell. Projections are for 100% capacity. Ships in Southeast Alaska in 2021 and 2022 were not full, and vacancy percentages were applied to estimates for arriving vessels in Wrangell during those years for mid-sized vessels.

⁵ Mid-sized cruise passenger actuals were provided by Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska. All other cruise passenger data are estimated totals based on small cruise ship schedules and research regarding total capacity.

The schedules for cruise ships visiting Wrangell in 2023 includes the following:

Cruise Ship Projections 2023

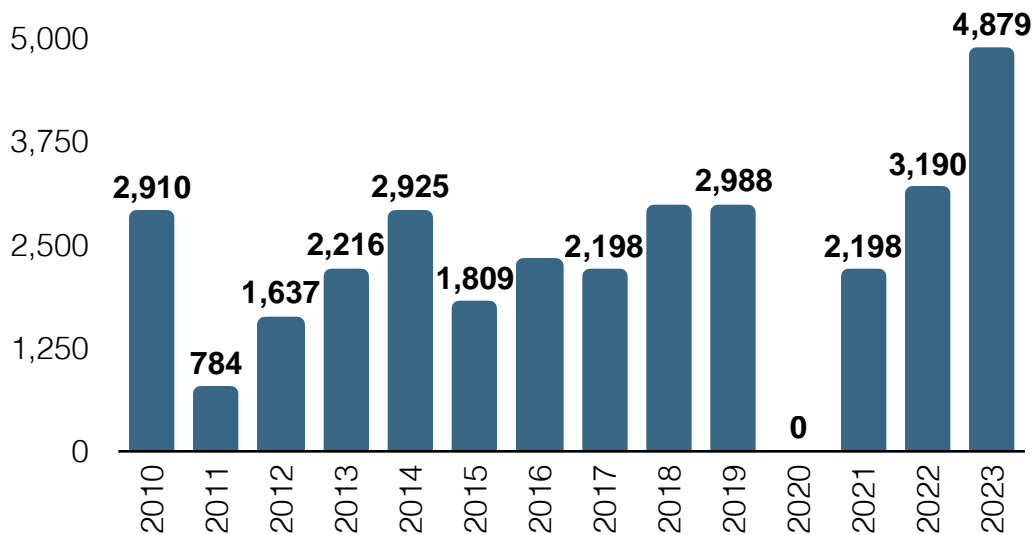
2023 Ships	Port Calls	Passenger Capacity	Total Visitors
Small Ships	74	523	4,879
Alaskan Dream	17	40	680
Baranof Dream	15	49	735
NG Sea Bird	9	62	558
NG Sea Lion	10	62	620
American Constellation	11	170	1,870
Kruzof Explorer	6	12	72
Admiralty Dream	5	54	270
Chichagof Dream	1	74	74
Mid-Sized Ships	61	5,093	24,631
Ocean Victory	14	200	2,800
Seabourn Odyssey	12	450	5,400
Silver Whisper	8	382	3,056
Star Breeze	8	312	2,496
Roald Amundsen	7	530	3,710
Regatta	6	684	4,104
Hanseatic Nature	2	530	1,060
Viking Orion	1	930	930
Fridtjof Nansen	1	530	530
Scenic Eclipse	1	228	228
Seabourn Venture	1	317	317
Grand Total	135	5,848	29,510

Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska; City and Borough of Wrangell.

Small Cruise Ships

In 2023, 8 small cruise ships with a combined capacity of 523 passengers are expected to make 74 port calls, potentially bringing 4,879 passengers to Wrangell if the ships are full. This represents a significant increase in the total number of visitors on small cruise ships.

Wrangell Small Cruise Capacity 2010 to 2023



Note: For consistency, 2021 capacity numbers are included for small cruise ships, although actual travelers were likely lower. For the purposes of this analysis, small cruise ships are defined as those with 30 to 199 passengers per vessel.

Wrangell's small cruise ship sector experienced disruptions in 2010 when Cruise West ceased operations at the end of the summer season, and again during the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021.

Mid-Sized Cruise Ships

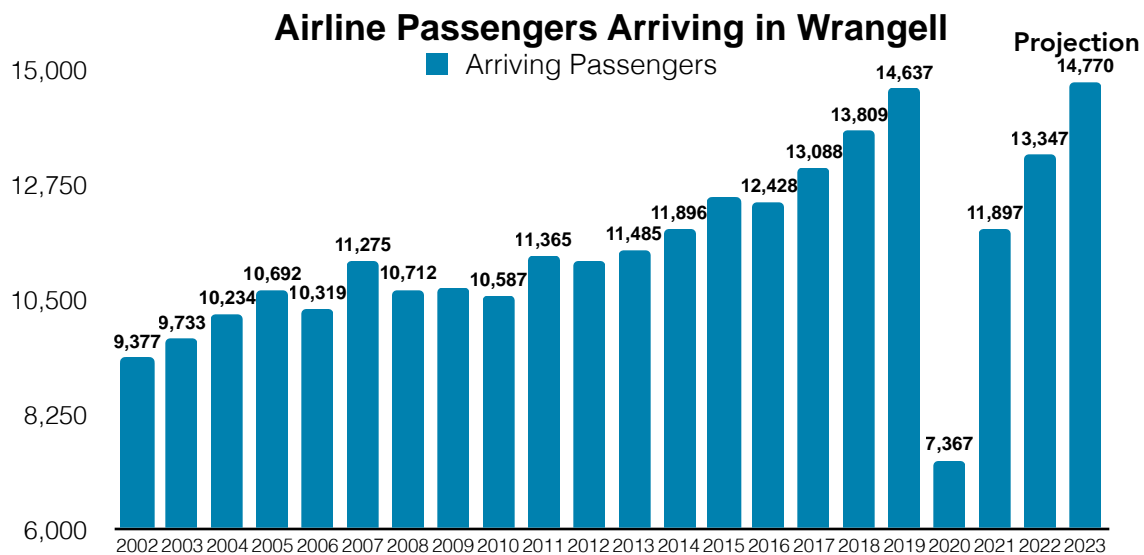
In 2023, 11 mid-sized cruise ships with a combined capacity of 5,093 passengers are expected to make 61 port calls, potentially bringing 24,631 passengers to Wrangell if the ships are full. For sake of comparison, in 2019 mid-sized ships visited just 36 times, with a total capacity of 18,552 visitors, so this represents a significant ramp up from previous years.

Large Cruise Ships

Norwegian visited Wrangell regularly in the early 2000's, but its final visit was in 2005. Analysis showed that the community did not have sufficient capacity at that time to provide visitor programming for a 2,000-passenger vessel. While the Noordam made a visit to Wrangell with 1,664 passengers in September 2022, it was not originally part of the schedule; the first scheduled large cruise ships since 2005 are on the calendar for 2024. The 2,092-passenger Queen Elizabeth will make two visits, while the 1,848-passenger Westerdam will visits once.

Air Passengers⁶

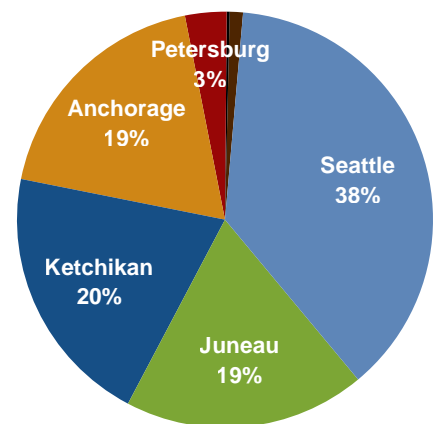
The number of air passengers arriving in Wrangell gradually increased through 2019. Passenger traffic fell steeply, and then rebounded strongly following the 2020 pandemic. Further growth is projected in 2023 as Trident Seafoods restarts local operations, and cruise tourism grows. In 2022, there were 13,347 air passengers arriving in Wrangell.



To estimate how many of these summer travelers were tourists (rather than locals traveling home or people traveling to work in Wrangell), average off-season monthly travel numbers were subtracted from high-season monthly travel numbers, along with summer labor estimates. Just over 2,600 summer air travelers are estimated to have visited Wrangell for the purpose of recreation in 2022.

Looking at a full year of passenger data, the greatest percentage of passengers arrived in Wrangell via Seattle (38%), while a fifth of passengers arrived from each of the following locations: Ketchikan, Juneau, and Anchorage. Since Wrangell's largest seafood processing plant will operate in 2023 for the first time since 2019, and tourism is on the rise, total air passenger numbers are projected to rise to just above 2019 levels in 2023, an 11% increase over 2022 air passenger numbers.

Passengers Disembarkments in Wrangell by City 2022



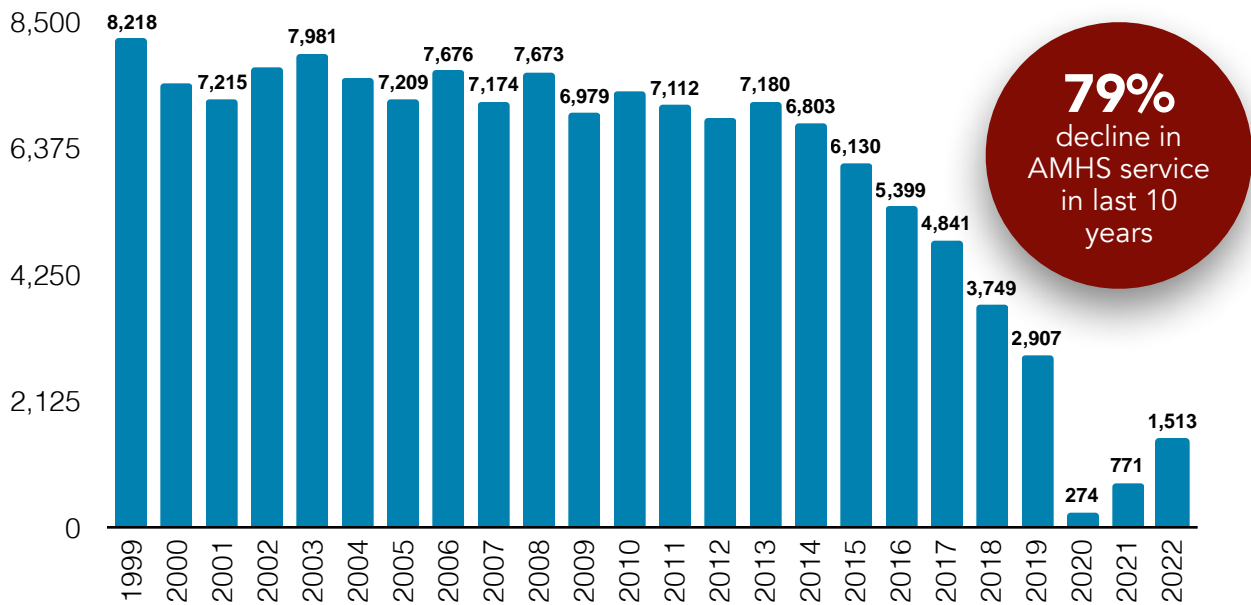
Year	Total Passengers	Total Estimated Tourists
2022	13,347	2,618

⁶ Bureau of Transportation Statistics T-100 Market data.

Ferry Passengers⁷

In 2022, just over 1,500 Alaska Marine Highway (AMHS) ferry passengers arrived in Wrangell; of these, 52%, about 800, arrived during the summer (May through September). Since 2013, the number of passengers disembarking in Wrangell has decreased significantly. Total arriving passengers are less than half of the levels of 20 years ago. Further cuts are expected in 2023.

Ferry Passengers Arriving in Wrangell 1999 to 2022



AMHS has been hit hard by state budget cuts. Service and port calls have been cut significantly, and Wrangell has been disproportionately impacted. The unreliability of the ferry scheduling and the increase in costs to travel have impacted ferry users and those who have built their businesses around serving ferry passengers.

The pandemic decimated already diminished ferry service, and while it had come back incrementally in 2021 and 2022, new staffing challenges appear poised to stymie further recovery. While the original 2023 summer schedule proposed by AMHS offered a similar level of service to 2022, the state reports that it lacks the crew needed to operate the Kennicott in 2023, leaving Wrangell with summer weekly service from a single vessel. For summer traffic this means reducing port calls by 22%, from 55 in 2022 to 43 in 2023, and reducing summer passenger traffic from nearly 800 in 2022 to a projected 620 in 2023. Tourist ferry traffic would fall to just over 200 in 2023.

⁷ Alaska Marine Highway System Annual Traffic Volume Reports. Direct data requests.

Ferry Passenger Arrivals

Year	Total Arriving Ferry Passengers	Summer Tourist Passengers (Estimated)
2022	1,513	280
2021	771	143
2020	274	NA
2019	2,907	815
2018	3,749	961
2017	4,841	1,364
2016	5,399	1,365
2014	6,803	2,094
2010	7,325	1,969
Change 2010-2022	-79%	-86%

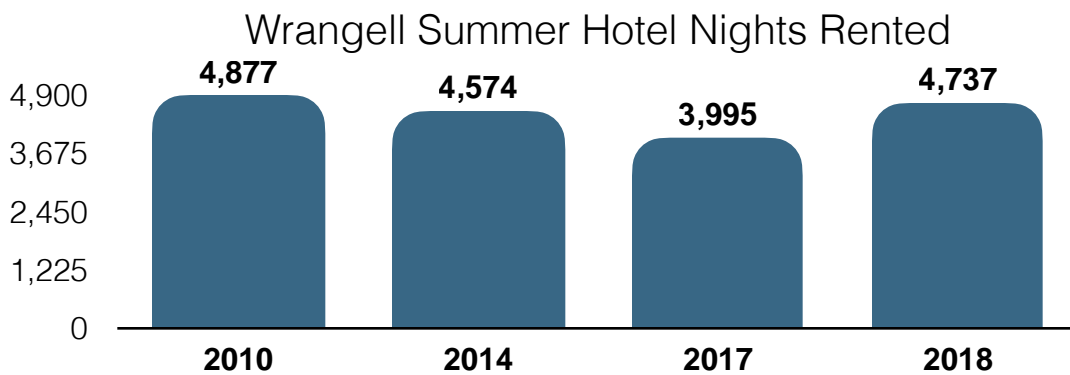
Projected Summer Ferry Passenger Arrivals 2023

Month	2022 AMHS Port Calls	2022 Disembarking Passengers	2023 Scheduled Port Calls	2023 Projected Disembarking Passengers
May	11	117	9	96
June	12	179	8	119
July	11	225	9	184
August	11	141	9	115
September	10	132	8	106
Total	55	794	43	620
Change 2022-2023			-22%	-22%

Hotels and Bed and Breakfasts

Wrangell summer visitors use an average of 4,500 hotel room nights, although room tracking is currently unavailable. In 2023, Wrangell has 13 overnight accommodation businesses, with 69 total rooms.

In 2018, Wrangell had 14 accommodation businesses also with 69 total rooms for rent, although 10 of those establishments that hosted travelers have closed, including Ava's B&B, Armstrong Rents, Little Bitty, Off the Hook, H14, Rooney's Roost, Tans Place, the Squawking Raven, and Zimovia B&B. Significantly, the Cedar House Inn, formally known as Alaskan Sourdough Lodge, both opened and closed in the last year. It is an 18-room facility, although just a portion of those had been available for rent. In 2012, Wrangell had 80 rooms available, including the Sourdough.



Wrangell Overnight Rentals Inventory by Rooms/Units

	2012		2018		2023
Ava's B & B	1	Ava's B & B	1	Apartment in Wrangell	3
Alaskan Sourdough Lodge	16	Armstrong Rents	3	A Suite Spot	5
Beaver Connections	2	Dockside Wrangell	1	ARED LLC	2
Benitz B&B	2	Grand View B & B	3	Forget Me Not	3
Diamond C Hotel/Thunderbird	6	Hertiage Harbor	3	Grand View B&B	3
Fennimore's B & B	6	Little Bitty Getaway,	1	Heritage Harbor	3
Grand View B & B	3	Off the Hook	2	Mt. Dewey Sunset B&B	2
John Taylor	1	H14	2	Northstar Reflections	1
Mt. Dewey Guesthouse	1	Rooney's Roost B & B	6	Reeves Guesthouse	2
Rooney's Roost B & B	6	Stikine Inn	34	Reliance Harbor Front	2
Stikine Inn	34	Tans Place	1	Stikine Inn	34
Zimovia B & B	2	Squawking Raven	2	Vacation Rental	1
	80	Extended Stay	8	Extended Stay	8
		Zimovia B & B	2		69
			69		

Anan, Stikine, LeConte Tours Analysis

Anan Wildlife Observatory

The most important visitor attraction in Wrangell is Anan. Anan Creek is a historic Tlingit Native fishing site located on the mainland on the south end of Wrangell Island. The area has the largest pink salmon run in Southeast Alaska, attracting large numbers of black and brown bears during July and August. The Anan Wildlife Observatory is managed by the Wrangell District of the Tongass National Forest and is only accessible by boat or plane. There is a half-mile trail leading to the observation deck, strategically allowing visitors to view bears while they fish for salmon in cascading waterfalls. During peak season, which is July 5 through August 25, visitors can only visit with a US Forest Service permit. There is a high demand for the daily passes. Admission to the site is carefully managed by the Forest Service, and the number of visitors is limited to 60 per day. Passes are not required outside of the peak season.

Stikine River, LeConte Glacier Tour Analysis

There are two additional water-based tours that are very popular in Wrangell. These are the Stikine River and the LeConte Glacier.

Stikine River: Wrangell is known for being the gateway to the Stikine River, a name that translates to “the great river” in Tlingit. The Stikine extends 400 miles from headwaters in British Columbia to its mouth near Wrangell and encompasses 27,200 acres of delta flats. Local operators provide jet boat tours, which are the most popular way to access the Stikine River. There is a wealth of history and unique geological elements, as well as spectacular scenery and wildlife opportunities. The Stikine River and tributaries comprise the Stikine-LeConte Wilderness area. For the more advanced adventurer, canoes, kayaks, and rafts are available locally.

LeConte Glacier: The LeConte Glacier is North America’s southernmost tidewater glacier and is part of a massive glacial system that stretches 120 miles. It resides in a 12-mile-long fjord at the head of LeConte Bay, approximately 20 miles from the mouth of the Stikine River. It is an active, advancing glacier with frequent calving. Shakes Glacier on the Stikine River is part of the same glacial icefield. Tours are generally via jet boat and take about four hours.

Anan Bear Viewing Economic Impact 2017 Analysis

Combining the total spending by independent visitors to Anan, as well as cruise visitors who partake in Anan bear viewing, the total estimated economic impact of Anan bear viewing in Wrangell was \$1.9 million in the summer of 2017, meaning that more than a third (36%) of all summer tourism-related spending in Wrangell was made by travelers who visited Anan on a guided trip. 84% of the total economic impact of Anan visitors in Wrangell was due to independent travelers, while cruise passengers contributed 16% of the larger economic value realized by the attraction.

One finding from the analysis is that the number of cruise ship visitors going to Anan has been increasing over time. Since the number of permits allotted for Anan are fixed and have not been increasing, this means that the overall economic benefit of Anan to Wrangell is actually decreasing.