



2025 OUTDOOR PARTICIPATION TRENDS REPORT

**OUTDOOR
FOUNDATION**

**OUTDOOR
INDUSTRY
ASSOCIATION**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Outdoor Participation Trends Report goes beyond the data – use it to stay on top of trends, allocate resources, and inform your overall marketing strategy.

In 2024, the outdoor recreation participant base grew 3% to a record 181.1 million participants, or 58.6% of all Americans aged six and older. There were significant increases in the number of youth and seniors, participants with more than \$100K in annual income, participants in the South, participants with a high school diploma and no college education, and Black and Hispanic participants. Additionally, the number of “core”—or most frequent—participants increased by 5.7% (five million participants). Participants are most attracted to walking, hiking, fishing, camping, bicycling, and running outdoors and each of those major activities gained an average of 2.1 million participants. Nearly every signal in the 2024 participation data is positive for prolonged growth. Despite weakening economic conditions, the prospect of growth in the number of Americans who participate in outdoor recreation is very strong.

IN 2024,

**THE OUTDOOR
RECREATION
PARTICIPANT BASE
GREW 3%**

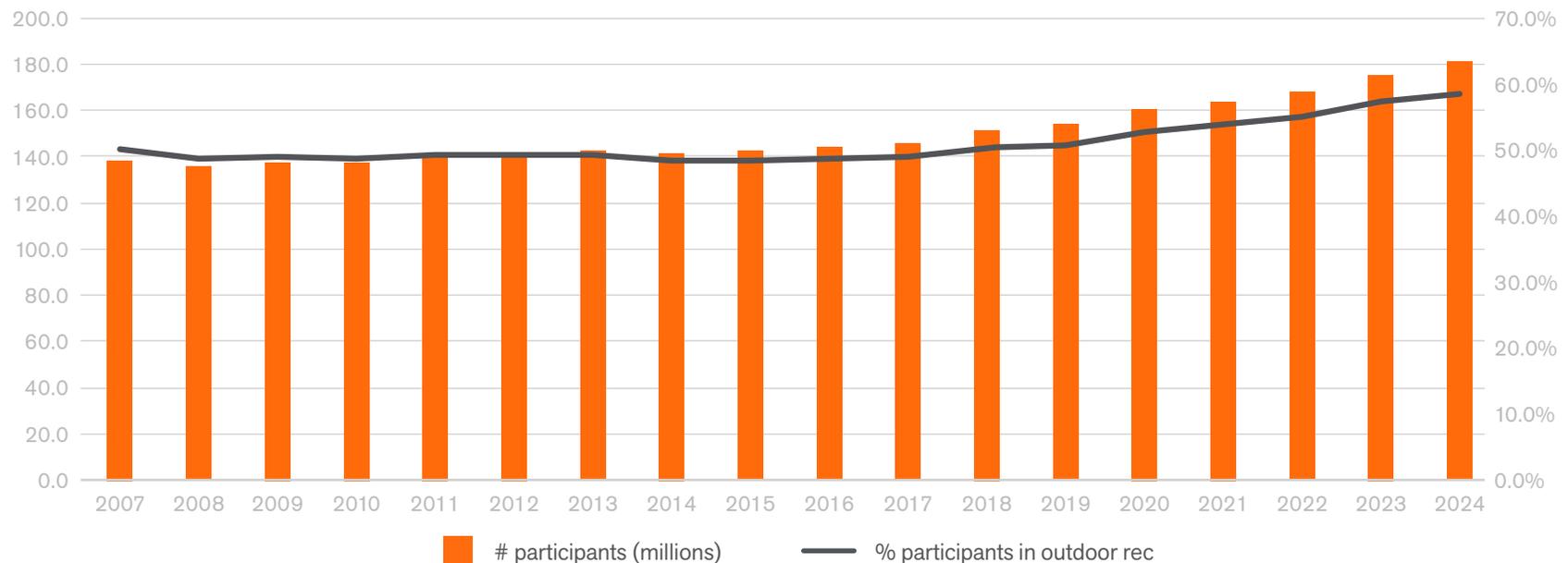
**TO A RECORD
181.1 M
PARTICIPANTS:**

**58.6%
OF ALL AMERICANS
AGED SIX
AND OLDER.**

About this Report

For over 15 years, the Outdoor Participation Trends Report has served as the most trusted and comprehensive source of insights and narratives around who's doing what, when, and how outdoors. The Outdoor Foundation and Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) fund the research that produces the Outdoor Participation Trends Report and publishes the findings every year. For the second year in a row, the report goes beyond the data—use it to stay on top of trends, allocate resources, and inform your overall marketing strategy.

Outdoor Recreation Participation Rate and Count Trends 2007 to 2024



WHY DOES THIS DATA MATTER?

In today's rapidly evolving outdoor economy, understanding who participates in outdoor recreation—and how, where, and why—is essential for everyone working to grow and sustain the outdoor movement. For outdoor brands, manufacturers, and retailers, this data provides critical insights into market size, participant demographics, and activity trends that inform product development, marketing strategies, and resource allocation. Knowing, for example, that trail running is growing among women in the Mid-Atlantic region allows for more targeted innovation and outreach. The data also helps companies understand levels of engagement, revealing opportunities to deepen connections with core participants and reengage casual users.

But the value of this data extends far beyond the business sector. For community-based nonprofits, public agencies, school systems, and health advocates, outdoor participation data is a foundational tool. It helps identify and close equity gaps, strengthen grant proposals and strategic plans, monitor progress on inclusion, and design programs that reflect the interests and demographics of changing communities. These insights support efforts to expand access, promote health, engage youth, and ensure that the benefits of the outdoors are shared equitably—especially among those historically underrepresented in outdoor spaces.

The demographics of outdoor participation are changing—and that's a good thing. Young and new participants are significantly more diverse than the total participant base, signaling a promising trajectory for a more inclusive outdoor future. Industry-wide initiatives like the [Outdoor Foundation's Thrive Outside Initiative](#) are helping lead this shift, supporting place-based partnerships that break down barriers and build lasting connections to the outdoors.

Whether you're designing gear, managing public lands, mentoring young people, or shaping local policy, this data empowers you to act strategically, inclusively, and effectively. By understanding who is getting outside and how their needs are evolving, we can create an outdoor culture—and economy—that truly welcomes all.



A high-angle photograph of two people kayaking down a narrow, rocky canyon. The water is a vibrant turquoise color, contrasting sharply with the brown and tan rock walls. The kayakers are positioned in the center of the frame, moving away from the viewer. The canyon walls are rugged and layered, showing signs of erosion. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

KEY INSIGHTS

KEY INSIGHTS

OVERALL GROWTH

- In 2024, the outdoor recreation participant base grew 3% to a record 181.1 million participants, or 58.6% of all Americans aged 6 and older.
- Since 2019, the participant base has grown by 27.5 million participants, but the average outings per person has decreased by 5 outings/year, signaling more casual participation.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

- Significant Growth Cohorts:
 - › Youth (aged 6–12): +5.6%
 - › Seniors (aged 65+): +7.4%
 - › High-Income Households (\$100K+): +10.7%
 - › High School Graduates (no college): +11.2%
 - › Black Participants: +12.8% (2.3 million more)
 - › Hispanic Participants: +11.8% (2.8 million more)
- Declines:
 - › White Participants: -1.1% (1.3 million fewer)
 - › Asian/Pacific Islander Participants: -382,000
 - › Participants aged 45–54: -1.5%

HOUSEHOLD PARTICIPATION

Families with Kids

66% of households with children participate, the highest rate on record.

Kids as Influencers

Children's high participation rates (>70%) appear to encourage parental participation.



CORE PARTICIPANTS

Core Base

Gained 5 million participants in 2024, reversing a decade-long decline.

Total Core Participants

93.4 million, about one-third of all participants.

Core Growth Drivers

- Participants aged 18–24: +6%
- Participants aged 65+: +4.2%
- Black Core Participants: +11.4%
- Hispanic Core Participants: +5.7%
- Asian/Pacific Islander Core Participants: +2.1%

Core Declines

- Participants aged 6–12: -4.3%
- Participants aged 45–54: -4%
- Income <\$50K: -5.9%
- White Core Participants: -2.9%

POPULAR ACTIVITIES

Most Popular

- Walking for fitness: 115 million participants (not counted in the core “outdoor” definition)
- Hiking: 63 million participants (most popular outdoor-specific activity)

Gateway Activities

Hiking, camping, fishing, bicycling, and running added an average of 2.1 million participants each to the total outdoor participant count.

Cross-Participation

91% of campers and 85% of hikers also engage in other outdoor activities.

Campers and Backpackers

Most likely to engage in multiple outdoor activities.

INDOOR VS. OUTDOOR PARTICIPATION

Younger Americans

More likely to participate in outdoor vs. indoor recreation.

Older Americans (Especially Women)

Prefer indoor recreation, though this trend may be reversing as older adults return to outdoor activities.

Seniors Getting Outdoors

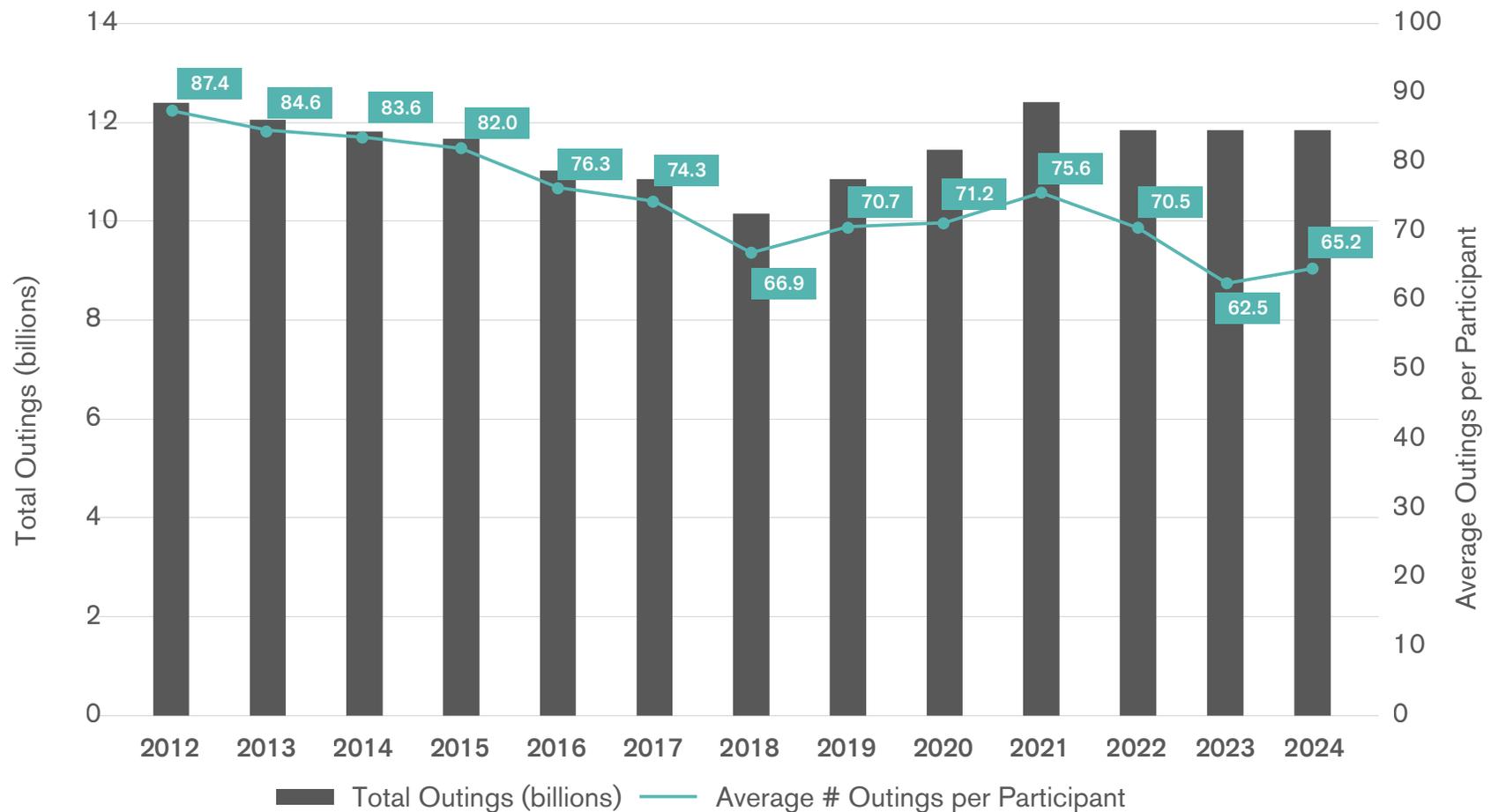
Participation in the 65+ age group has more than doubled over the past decade, driven by health and lifestyle factors.



OUTDOOR PARTICIPATION IN 2024: A HIGH-LEVEL OVERVIEW

Since 2019, the participant base has grown by 27.5 million participants and the total number of outings has increased by about 900 million, but the average participant experiences 5 fewer outings per year. The relatively low growth in the number of outings compared to the growth in the number of participants demonstrates the transition to a more “casual” (less frequent participation) participant base overall.

Total Outings and Average Outings per Participant 2012 to 2024

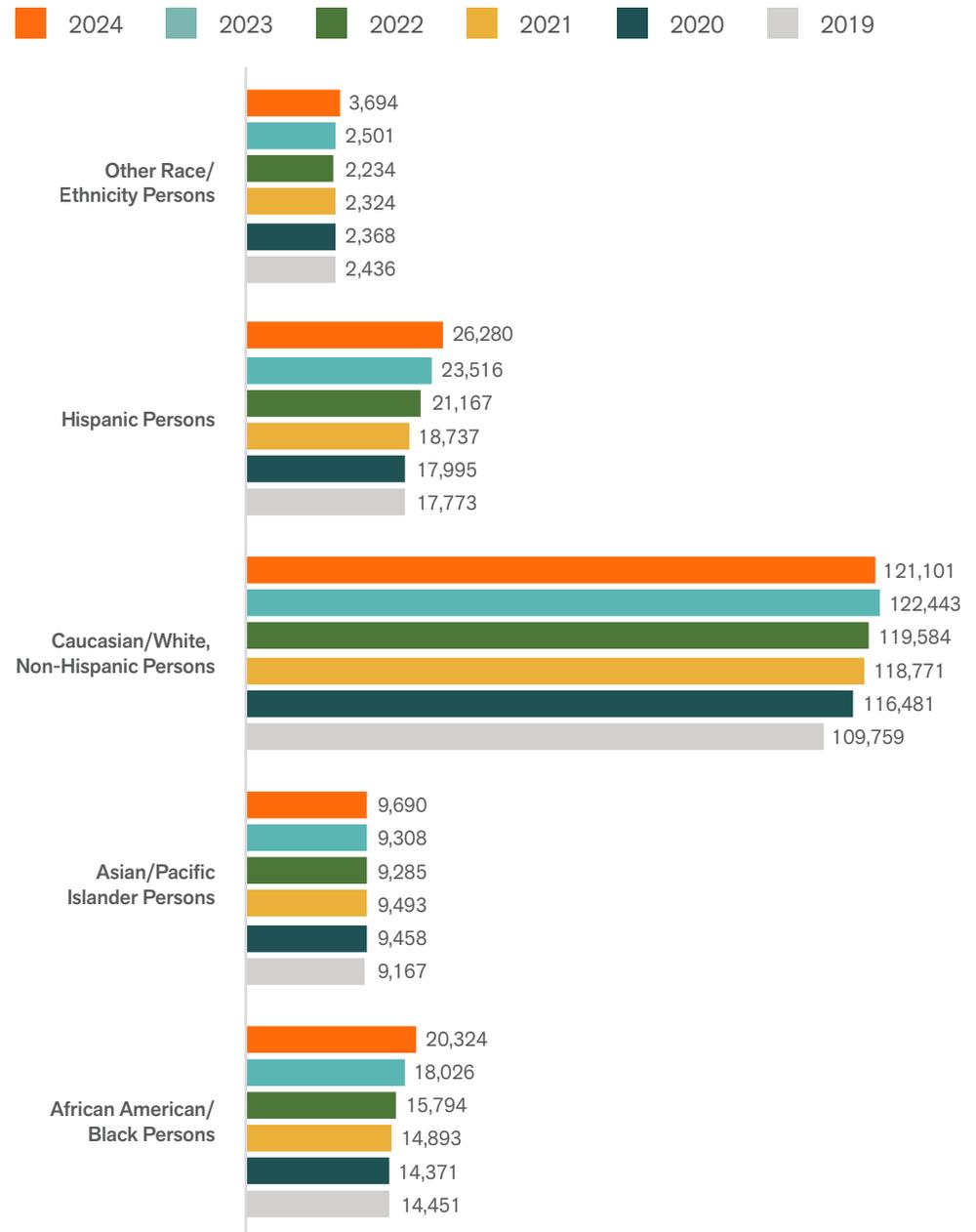


WHICH DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS FUELED THIS GROWTH?

The outdoor participant base gained 5.3 million participants between 2023 and 2024. Specific groups across demographics drove significant growth, including a 5.6% increase in youth aged 6 to 12, a 7.4% increase in participants aged 64 and older, a 10.7% increase in participants from households with \$100,000 in annual income or more, an 11.2% increase in participants with a high school diploma (without college education), a 12.8% (or 2.3 million) increase in Black participants, and an 11.8% (or 2.8 million) increase in Hispanic participants. The number of White participants fell 1.1% in 2024 to 121.1 million, which is 1.3 million fewer participants than 2023. Additionally, there were 382,000 fewer Asian/Pacific Islanders participating in 2024. Households with children have a 66% participation rate in outdoor activities, which was a record high in 2024. Overall, the bulk of the growth came from outside of the white, middle-aged, bachelor's degree-carrying cohort.

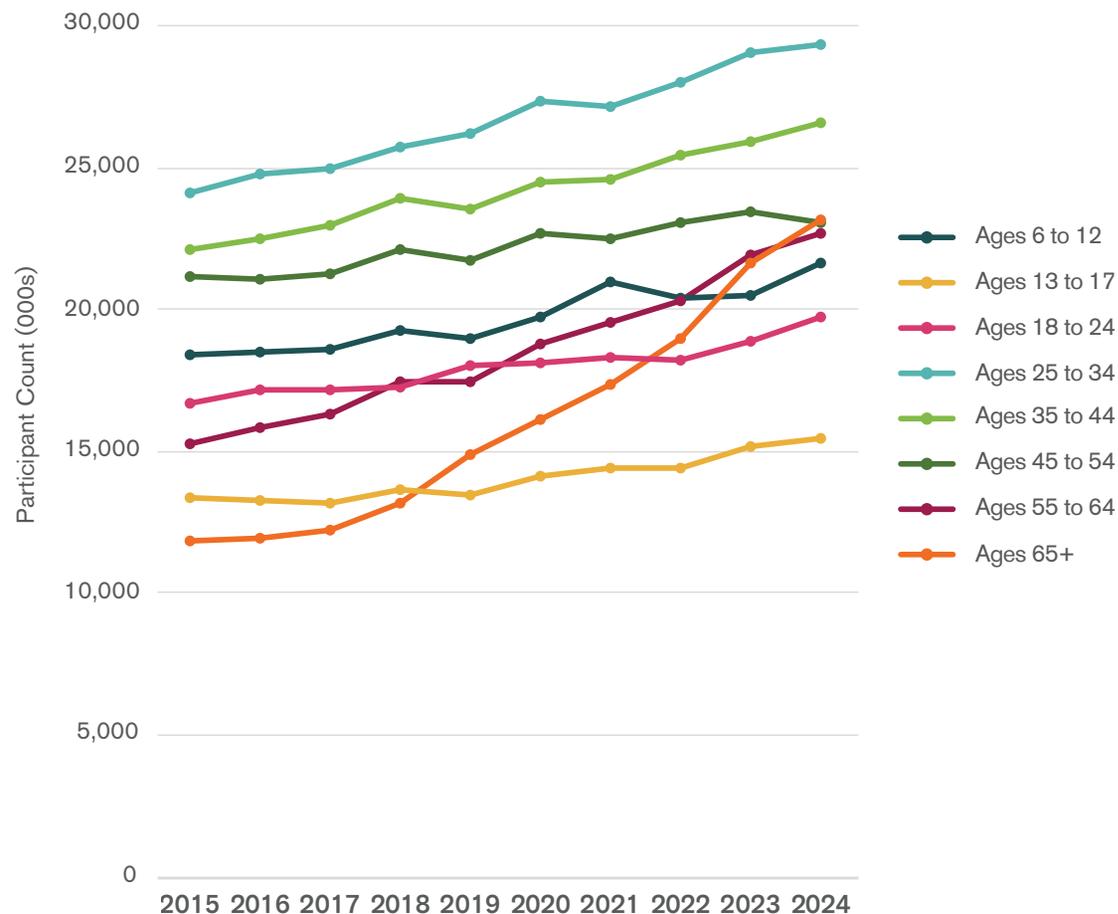


Participant Counts by Race/Ethnicity ('000s) 2019 to 2024



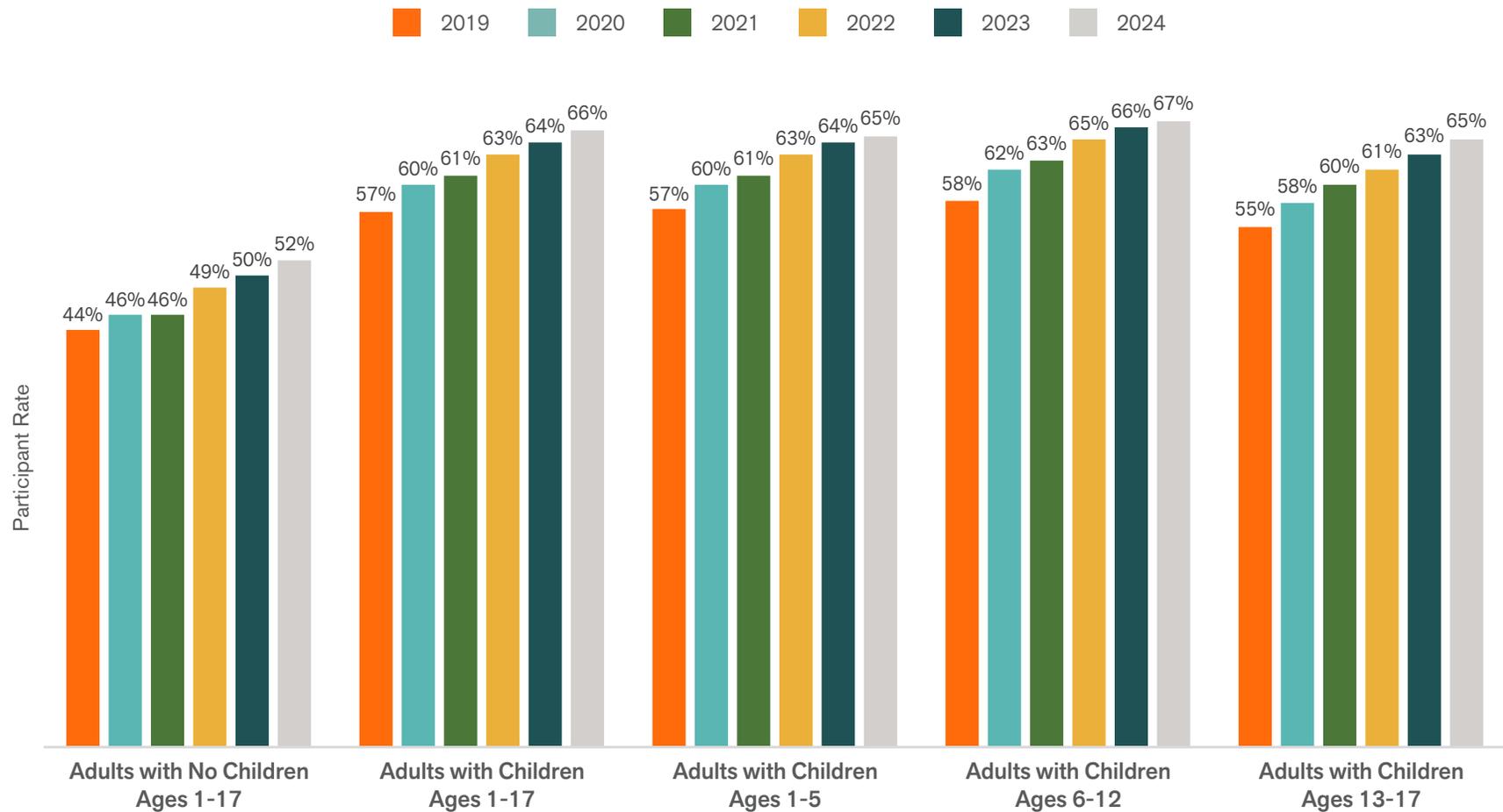
Participation in outdoor activities is soaring among seniors. In 2024, 23.1 million Americans who were born before 1959 participated in outdoor activities, which amounts to 1.6 million more than in 2023 and an astounding 11.3 more than participated just a decade ago in 2015. Low impact activities, including hiking, wildlife viewing, birding, and fishing, are the main beneficiaries of the growth in the senior participant base. Just six years ago, the 65+ age group was the smallest age cohort in outdoor recreation participation, but in 2024 it exceeded the 55 to 64, 45 to 54, 6 to 12, and 18 to 24 age cohorts. In fact, there was participation growth in every age category except the 45 to 54 age cohort, which experienced a 1.5% decline in 2024. If we can determine what spurred this growth, we may find tactics to help keep the overall participation base healthy indefinitely.

Participant Count by Age Group 2015 to 2024



Two out of three U.S. households (66%) with children participate in outdoor activities. Families with youth of all ages increased their participation in outdoor activities, and their participation rates are about 12% higher on average than households with no children. Considering that the participation rate for children is above 70%, children appear to be the reason their parents participate. The record-breaking rate at which households with kids participate in outdoor recreation is a win that the outdoor industry should celebrate! Youth who participate when they are young, especially with their families, are more likely to participate throughout their lifetimes.

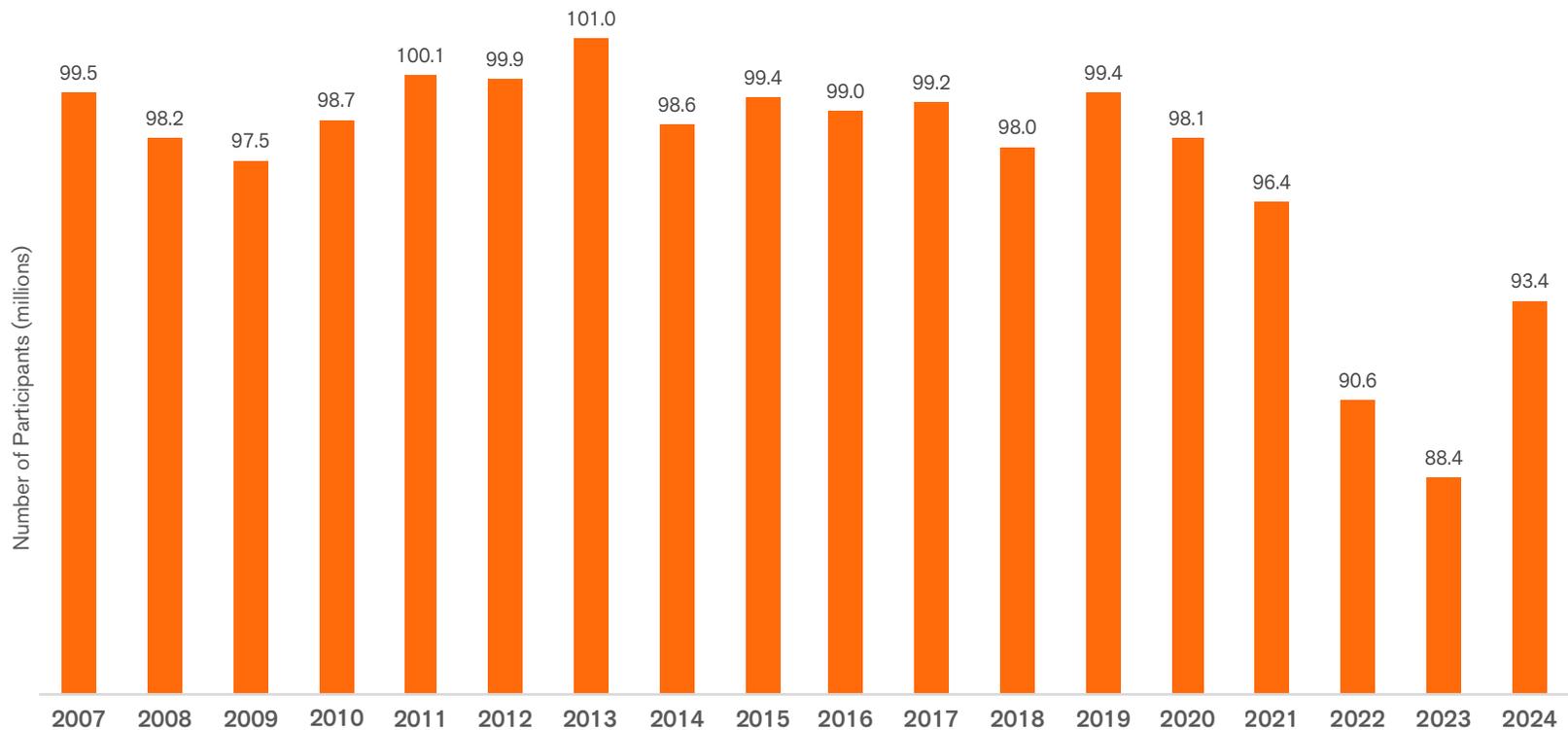
Participation Rates for Households with Children and Without Children 2015 to 2024



OUTDOOR CORE GAINS 5 MILLION PARTICIPANTS IN 2024

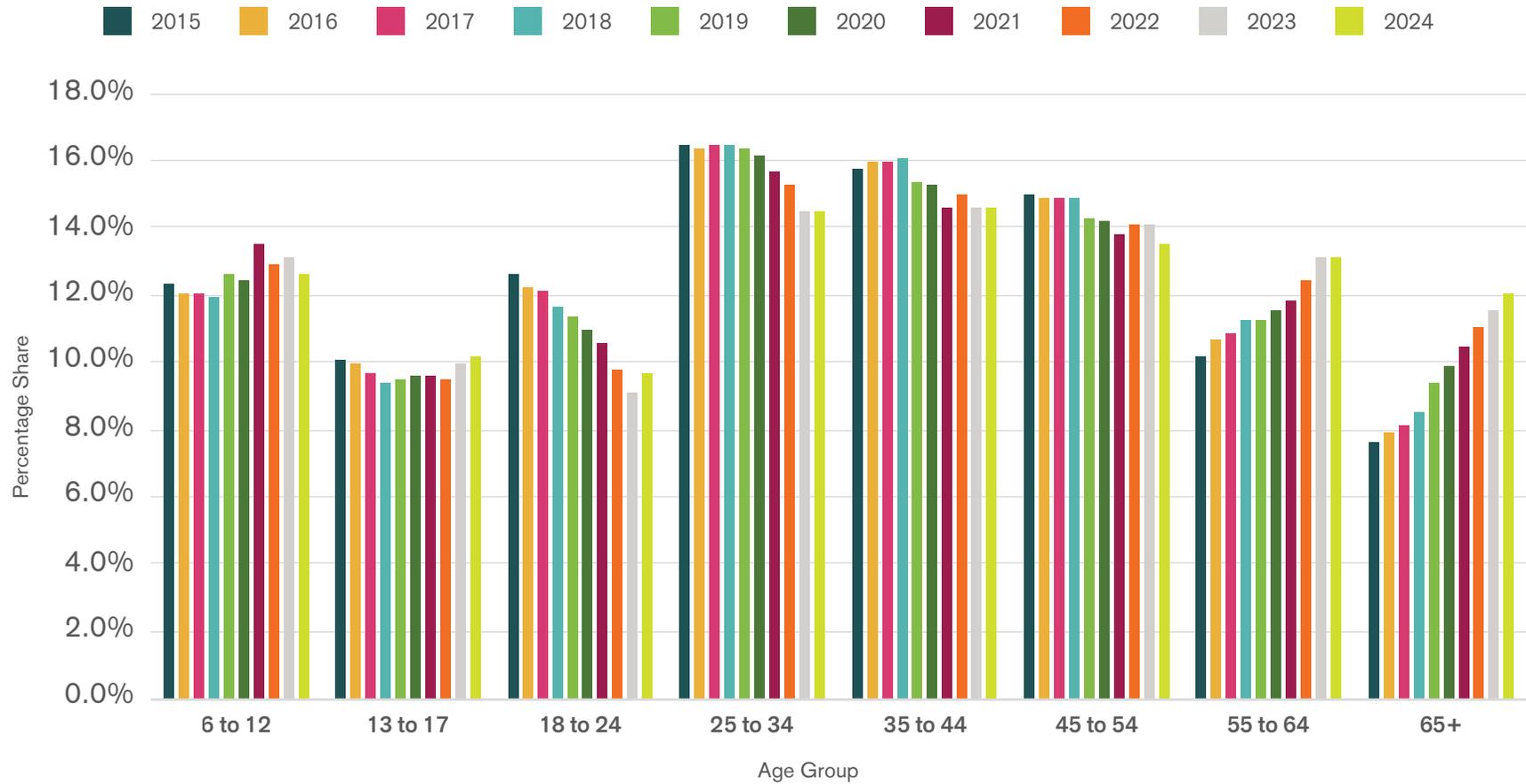
The “core” consists of our most frequent participants and represents about one-third, or 93.4 million core participants out of the 181.1 million total outdoor participants. Each of the 51 activities we count in outdoor recreation, from adventure racing to wakeboarding, has a core frequency threshold. The highest is road running, where participants must run 51 times or more to be considered core, and the lowest is adventure racing, where participants who have raced three times in a year are considered core participants. The number of core participants and the share of core participants has been falling for more than a decade. In fact, the number of core participants has consistently declined since its peak in 2013, up until 2024 when the core base gained 5 million participants.

Count of Core Participants (millions) 2007 to 2024



The growth in core participants in 2024 was driven by a few specific cohorts, including a 6% growth in participants aged 18 to 24 and 4.2% growth in participants aged 65 and older. Growth in the 18 to 24 age group represents a one-year reversal of a long-declining trend and may be cause for short celebration, but more engagement is needed in this age category to increase the frequency of their participation. However, record growth in the older age groups appears more durable as a trend and is a positive sign considering these older cohorts have more time and more money than younger cohorts.

Percentage/Share of Total Core Participants by Age Group 2015 to 2024



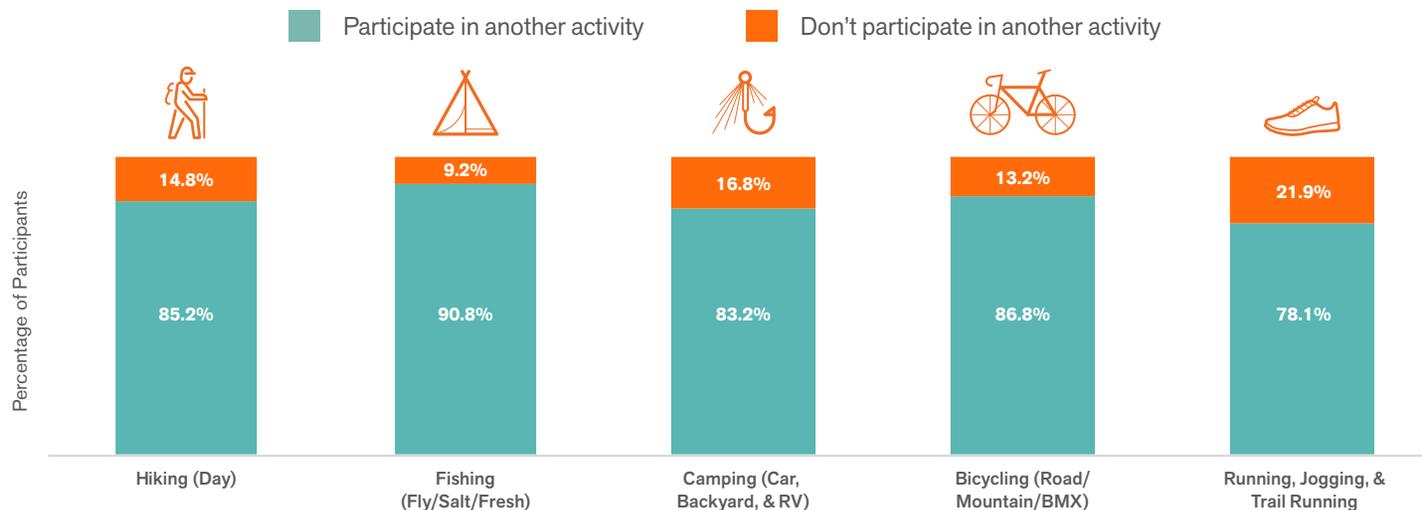
MOST POPULAR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES – GATEWAYS TO THE OUTDOORS

Hiking continues to be the most popular outdoor recreation activity with more than 63 million participants. Technically, walking for fitness (with its 115 million participants) is the most popular activity, but we only count human-powered outdoor activities in natural environments, such as on trails or in bodies of water, in the outdoor participant base. In short, at a minimum, a person must walk on dirt to be counted in the outdoor participant base.



Participation in the most popular, or “gateway,” outdoor activities tends to lead to participation in additional outdoor recreation activities. Note that 91% of campers and 85% of hikers participate in other outdoor activities. The participants who spend the night camping and backpacking in the outdoors are most likely to participate in more than one outdoor activity. One effective tactic to increase the breadth of participation in outdoor recreation may be encouraging people to spend the night outdoors.

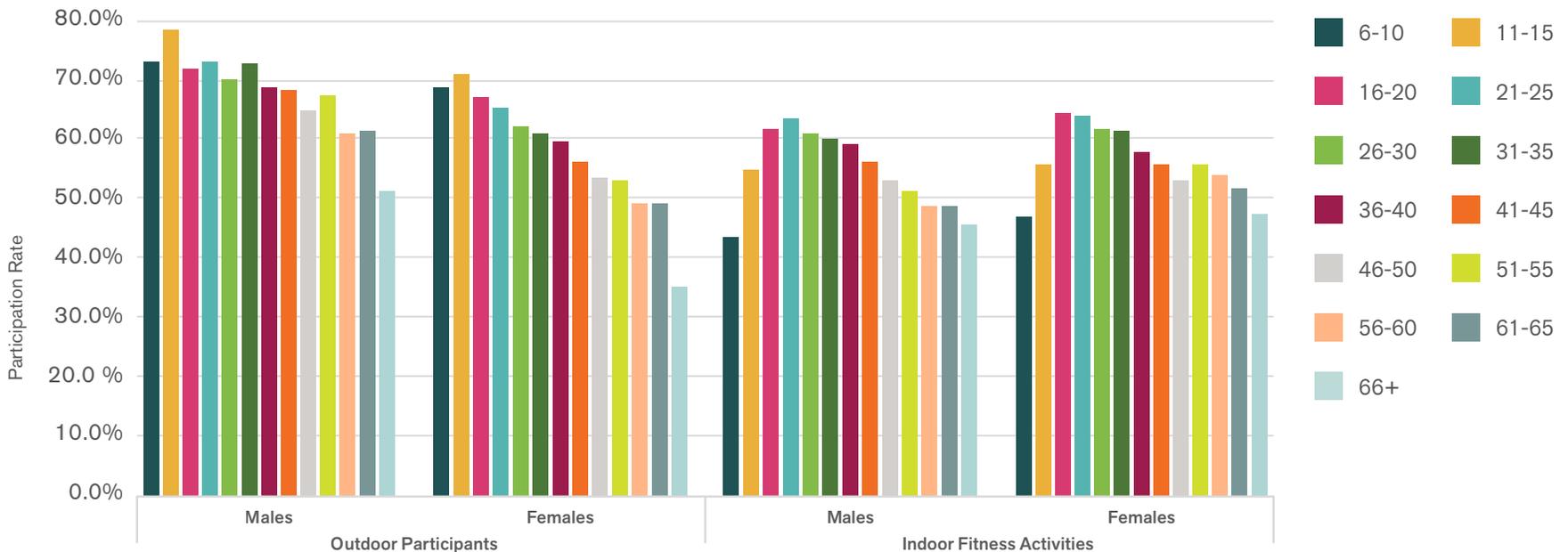
Getaway Activities in Outdoor Recreation



COMPARING OUTDOOR AND INDOOR RECREATION

Young Americans participate in outdoor recreation more than indoor recreation, but older Americans (especially women) participate more in indoor recreation than outdoor recreation. In fact, it appears that when participants reach the age of fifty, their participation skews more towards indoor activities than outdoor. The growth in participation among older Americans may signal a reversal of this trend of heading indoors as we age. Studies that indicate seniors who spend more time outdoors have better mental and physical health help to inspire more seniors to get back out in the sun.

Outdoor Participation by Age Group Compared with Team Sports and Indoor Fitness Activities



CONCLUSION

The 2025 Outdoor Participation Trends Report highlights a record-breaking year of growth and diversification in outdoor recreation, underscoring a dynamic shift in who is getting outside and how often. With a broader and more inclusive participant base, including significant increases among youth, seniors, high-income household participants, and participants of color, the data signals robust momentum for the future of outdoor engagement. Most notably, the resurgence of “core” participants for the first time in over a decade, and the rising popularity of gateway activities like hiking and camping, indicate a strong foundation for deepening and sustaining engagement. While average outings per person may have declined, the expansion of the participant base and increased involvement across age and racial demographics point to lasting opportunities for the industry to evolve, adapt, and thrive.



IN PLAIN LANGUAGE: DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

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outdoors / ,aut' dôrz/

the natural world : the places outside of areas developed by humans

participant

A survey respondent who reported participating in at least one outdoor activity in calendar year 2024. Participants often reported undertaking multiple activities multiple times throughout the year.

participation rate

The proportion of a group that participated in outdoor recreation or in an outdoor activity. For example, if 6 in 10 teenagers bicycled in 2024, their bicycling participation rate was 60%.

core participant

A person who participates frequently in specific outdoor activities, including hikers who hike 13 times or more, runners and birders with 50 or more outings, or anglers who fish 8 times or more. Each activity has a threshold set in 2007 at the beginning of the study. Please refer to the appendix for a comprehensive list.

casual participant

A person who participates infrequently in specific outdoor activities, including hikers who hike less than 13 times, runners and birders with fewer than 50 outings, and anglers who fish less than 8 times during the year. Each activity has a threshold set in 2007 at the beginning of the study. Please refer to the appendix for a comprehensive list.

outing

A single trip during which an outdoor activity was undertaken.

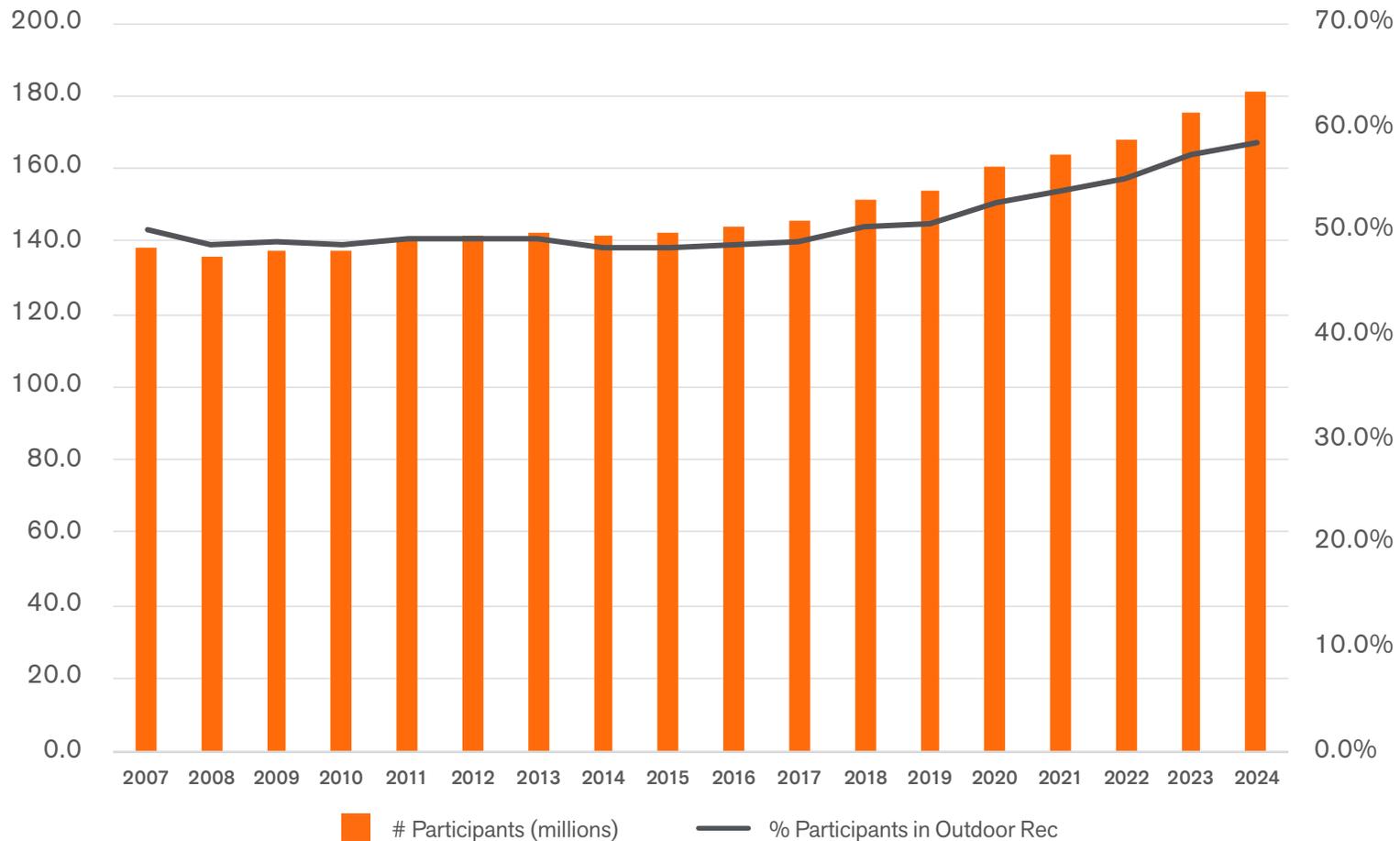


PARTICIPATION COUNTS AND RATES

PARTICIPATION COUNTS AND RATES

In 2024, the outdoor recreation participant base grew 3% from 175.8 million participants in 2023 to a record 181.1 million participants in 2024. In fact, in 2024 58.6% of all Americans aged 6 and older participated in outdoor activities. This includes 73% of all American children ages 6 to 17, 66% of all families with children, 64% of all male Americans, and a record 53% of all female Americans. Participants were most attracted to walking, hiking, fishing, camping, bicycling, and running in the outdoors and each of those major activities gained an average of 2.1 million participants each. Despite weakening economic conditions, the prospect of growth in the sheer number of Americans who participate in outdoor recreation is very strong.

Outdoor Recreation Participation Count and Rate 2007 to 2024

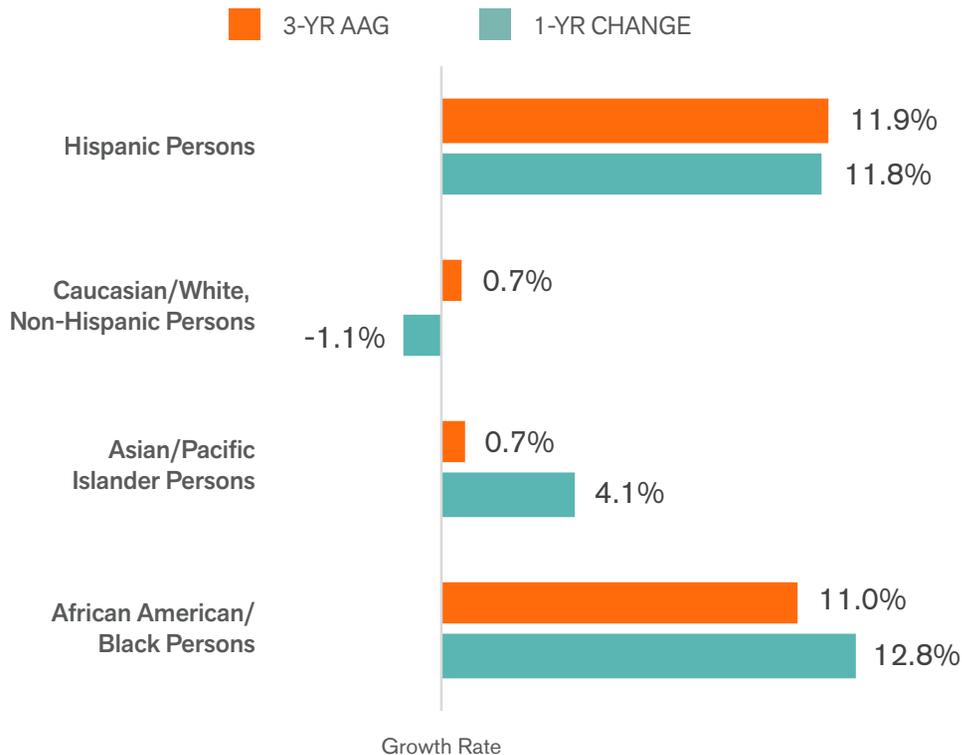


OUTDOOR PARTICIPATION BY RACE/ETHNICITY

Participants of color are driving growth in outdoor recreation. For outdoor companies, there is an opportunity, and a responsibility (to your bottom line), to connect with multicultural communities.

The percentage of outdoor participants who are Black persons increased 12.8% in 2024, from 10.3% in 2023 to 11.2% in 2024. Note that Black participants made up just 6.2% of the total participant base as recently as 2011. The percentage of Hispanic persons in the outdoor participant base increased 11.8%, from 13.4% in 2023 to 14.5% in 2024. In 2024, the percentage of outdoor participants who are White, Non-Hispanic persons decreased 1.1%, from 69.7% in 2023 to 66.9% in 2024. Growing ethnic/racial diversity in the overall population is mirrored in growing diversity in the outdoor recreation participant base.

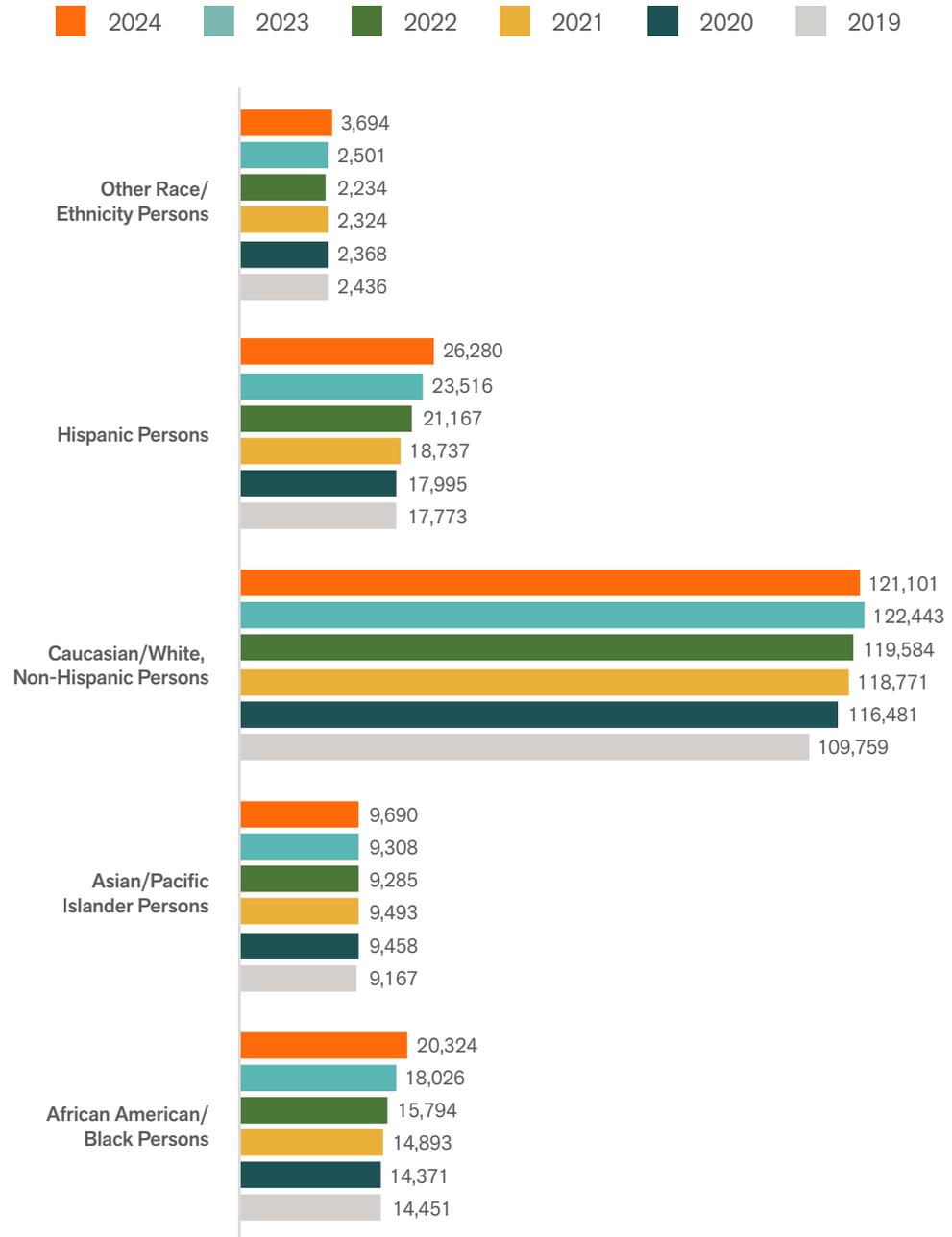
One Year and 3-Year Average Annual Growth by Race/Ethnicity 2024



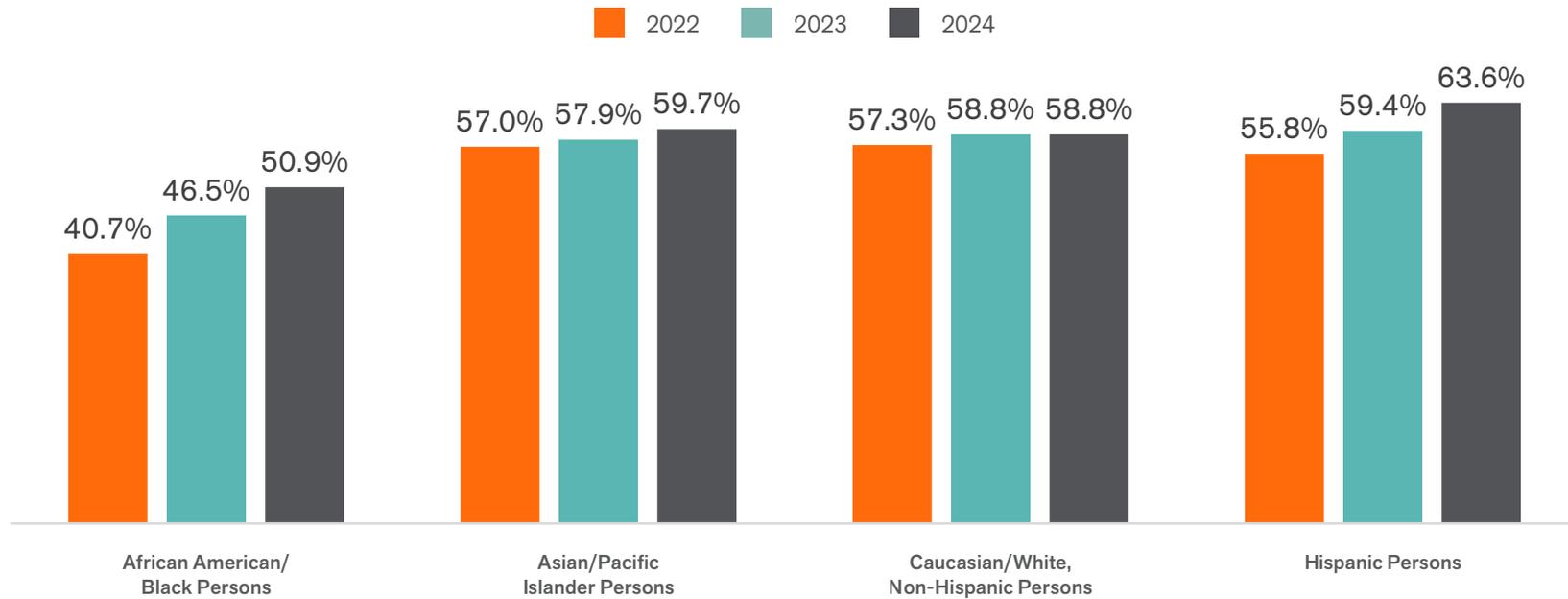
The increase in the number of People of Color and the increasing share of Communities of Color in the outdoor recreation participant base reflects overall demographic shifts in the U.S. population. In fact, the U.S. population consisted of 58% White/Non-Hispanic persons, so the outdoor participant base has fallen behind overall population demographic trends. In 2024, outdoor participation growth was driven exclusively by People of Color, as the number and share of the participant base is declining for White participants.



Participant Counts by Race/Ethnicity 2019 to 2024

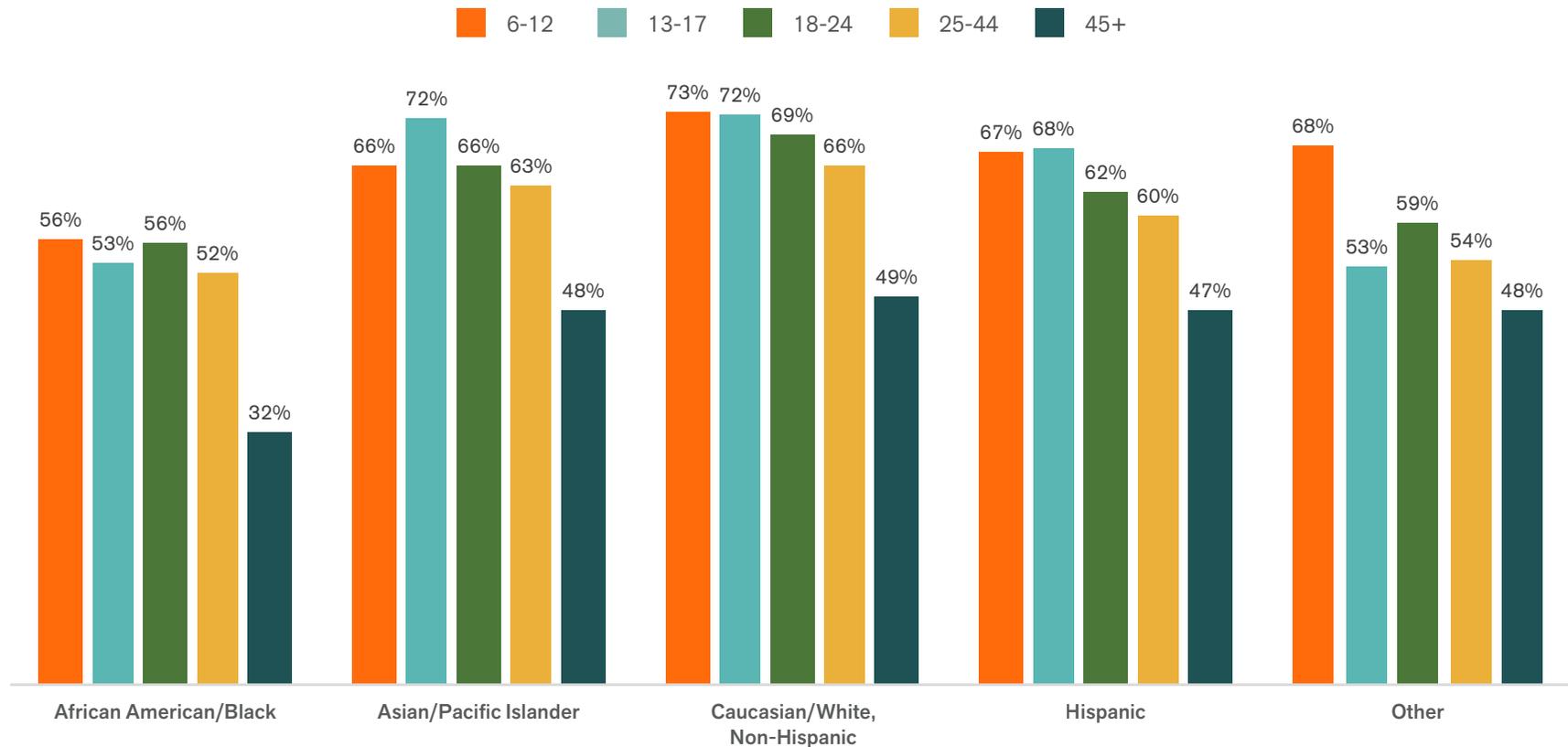


Participation Rates by Race/Ethnicity 2022 to 2024



Despite a drop in the number of White outdoor participants in 2024, the participation rate for White persons remained stable at 58.8%. The participation rate is the percentage of a given subset, in this case White persons that participate in outdoor recreation. In 2024, the participation rate for Black persons aged 6 and older in America grew from 46.5% to 50.9%, the participation rate for Hispanic persons aged 6 and older in America increased from 59.4% to 63.6% (the highest of any ethnic/racial cohort), and the participation rate for Asian/Pacific Islander persons aged 6 and older in America dropped slightly from 57.9% to 57.7%. One interesting aspect of participation rates across ethnic/race demographics appears when we further parse it by age--more White children participate, but by the time we all hit 45 years and older, the participation rates are relatively even across ethnicity and racial demographics. Participation increased by 2.3 million participants in the 55 and older age groups in 2024, explaining 44% of the total 5.3 million additional outdoor participants between 2023 and 2024.

Participation Rate by Age and Race/Ethnicity

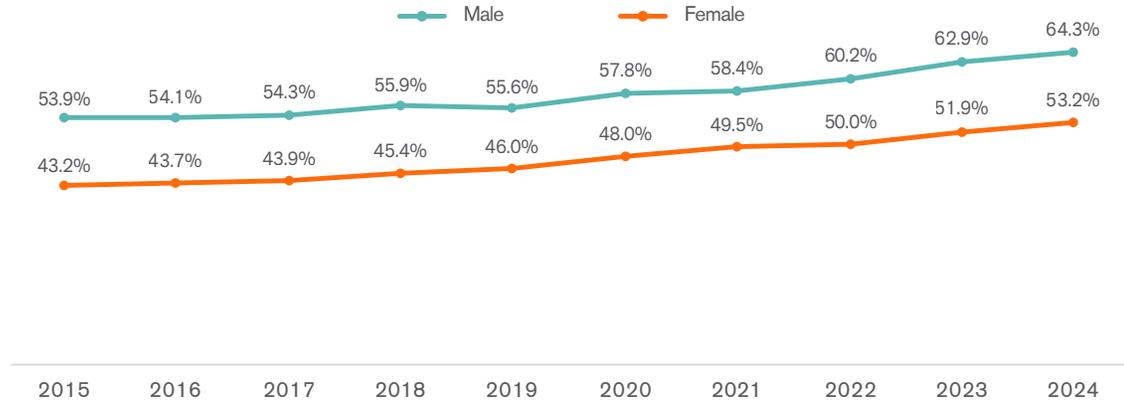


Growing ethnic/racial diversity in the outdoor participant base attracts new participants, new ideas, new ways to consume the outdoor experience, more support for outdoor policy and regulatory issues, and more dollars into the outdoor recreation market. When a person sees someone that is relatable to them participating in outdoor recreation and notices that they are finding happiness, community, balance, and excitement, then they are more likely to participate themselves. We have seen the phenomena in the data over the past decade--when more People of Color participate, it has a multiplying effect when friends invite more friends on outdoor adventures.

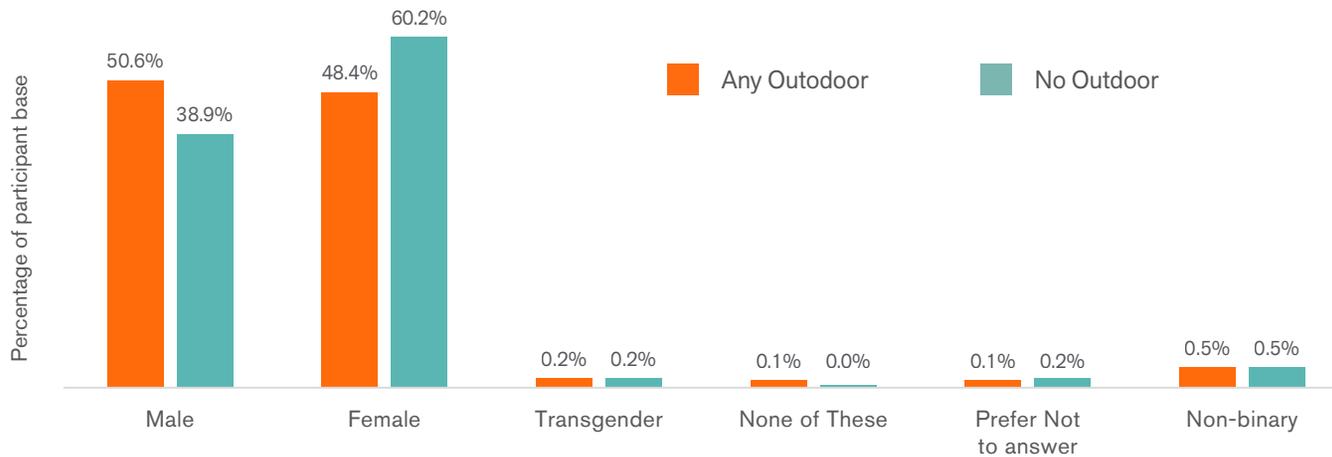
OUTDOOR PARTICIPATION BY SEX

We measured participation by sex (male and female), determined at birth according to physical determinates, and found 97.5 million males and 83.5 million females participating in outdoor recreation activities. In 2024, a record 53.2% of American females participated in outdoor recreation activities. American males made a high-water mark in their participation rate too, at 64.3% participating in 2024. Note that 66% of girls (aged 6 to 17) participate in outdoor activities, while 72% of boys participate (so, more women than men stop participating as they age).

Participation Rates by Sex 2015 to 2024



Adult Outdoor Recreation Participants and Non Participants by Gender 2024

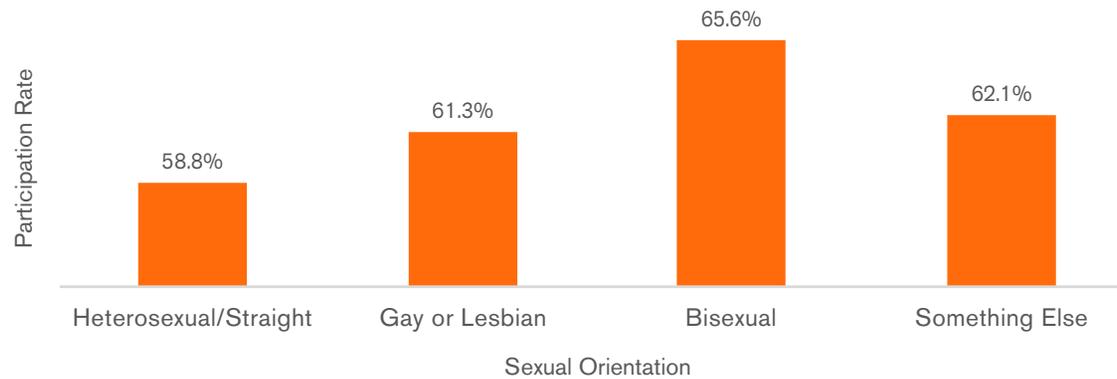


In addition to measuring outdoor recreation participation by sex, we also measured overall participation by gender. Gender is a social construct that refers to the characteristics of women, men, boys, and girls in societies, including norms, behaviors, roles, and relationships. While a total of 11% of outdoor participants identify as LGBTQ+, fewer than 1% of participants identified their gender outside the male and female gender categories. We looked at outdoor recreation participants and non-participants and simply found that more females identify as non-participants—a non-finding on examinations of relationships between gender and participation in outdoor activities.

OUTDOOR PARTICIPATION BY SEXUAL ORIENTATION

The LGBTQ+ community brings more than 20 million participants to outdoor recreation in 2024. Participants who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning are the most active adult cohort in outdoor recreation. Members of the LGBTQ+ community make up 11.4% of the outdoor participant base (20.6 million) in 2024, an increase of 700,000 LGBTQ+ participants since 2023. Members of the LGBTQ+ community also continue to be the most active adult cohort in outdoor with total participation rates above 60%. Persons that identify as bisexual had the highest participation rate at 65.6%.

Adult Cohort Participation Rates by Sexual Orientation 2024



The LGBTQ+ community is very active in outdoor recreation, and with more than 20 million members, is a significant contributor to the outdoor community. Considering the high participation rates and size of the LGBTQ+ outdoor participant base, this group is a rich target for expanding participation, increasing the frequency of participation, or selling more outdoor gear and apparel.



OUTDOOR PARTICIPATION BY INCOME LEVEL

Every year, millions of Americans—even those at lower income levels—open their wallets and engage in outdoor recreation. That's good news, but the data tells a more nuanced story.

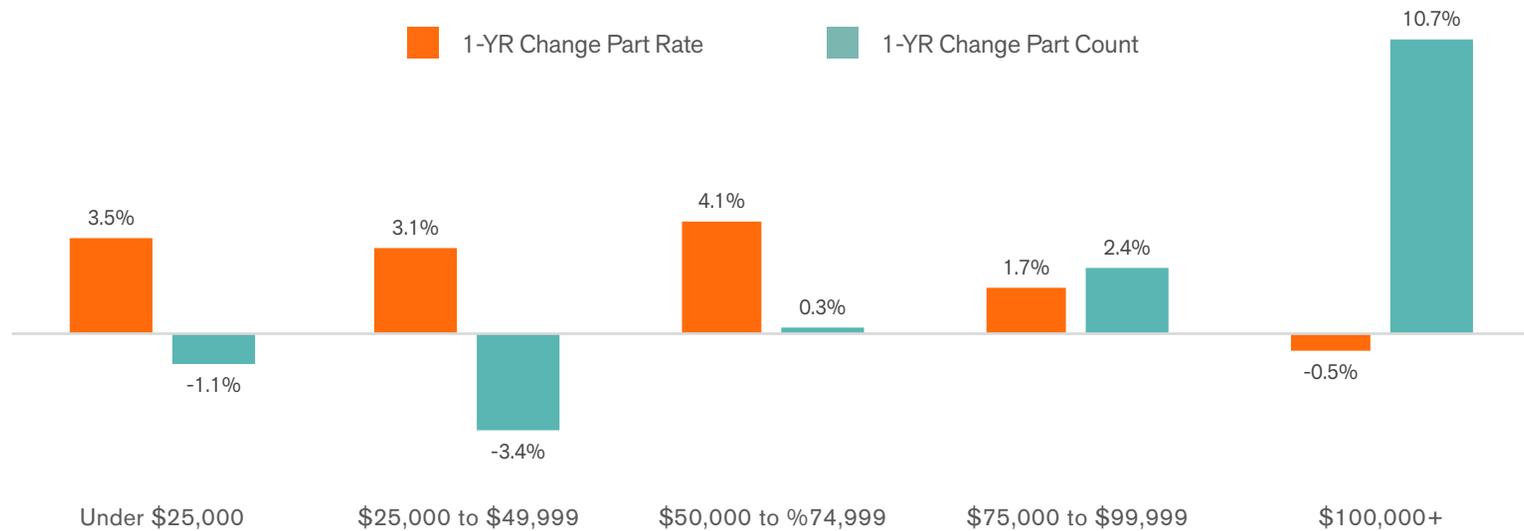
Participation by income may be something to consider when designing and pricing products, developing marketing campaigns, or measuring access to recreation. Outdoor recreation participants' household income levels are unremarkable in the sense that they match the overall distribution of household income in America's general population. In 2024, the median household income in the U.S. was \$77,540, and 49% of outdoor recreation participants live in households with \$75,000 in annual income or more. The gains made in the \$100,000 income or more bracket may be considered, at least in part, an effect of the overall increase in American households with more than \$100,000 rather than a significant increase in interest in outdoor activities by wealthier Americans.

Outdoor Recreation Participants Household Income Levels 2020 to 2024



In 2024, 35% of all outdoor participants had a household income of \$100,000 annually, up from 32.6% of all participants in 2023. The 10.7% growth in the number of participants from households with \$100,000 or more in annual income was contrasted by a 0.5% decline in the percentage of people in that income group that participate in outdoor recreation activities. That happens when the influx into an income group overall exceeds the influx into the outdoor participant base. The same is true in lower income categories in 2024, but in reverse – the number of participants dropped but the participation rate in the group increased.

Participation Count and Participation Rate by Income Level Change from 2023 to 2024 Compared



Despite the normal distribution of outdoor participants by income, the percentage of persons (or participation rate) tends to increase with income, at least until household income reaches the median household income of about \$75,000 or more annually. The percentage of people participating has grown in the lowest household income level (<\$25,000 to \$49,999), but the participation rate increased most in the middle income level (\$50,000 to \$100,000). More than 10 million participants joined the \$100,000 club over the same three-year period even as the participation rate in that income bracket had the lowest growth.

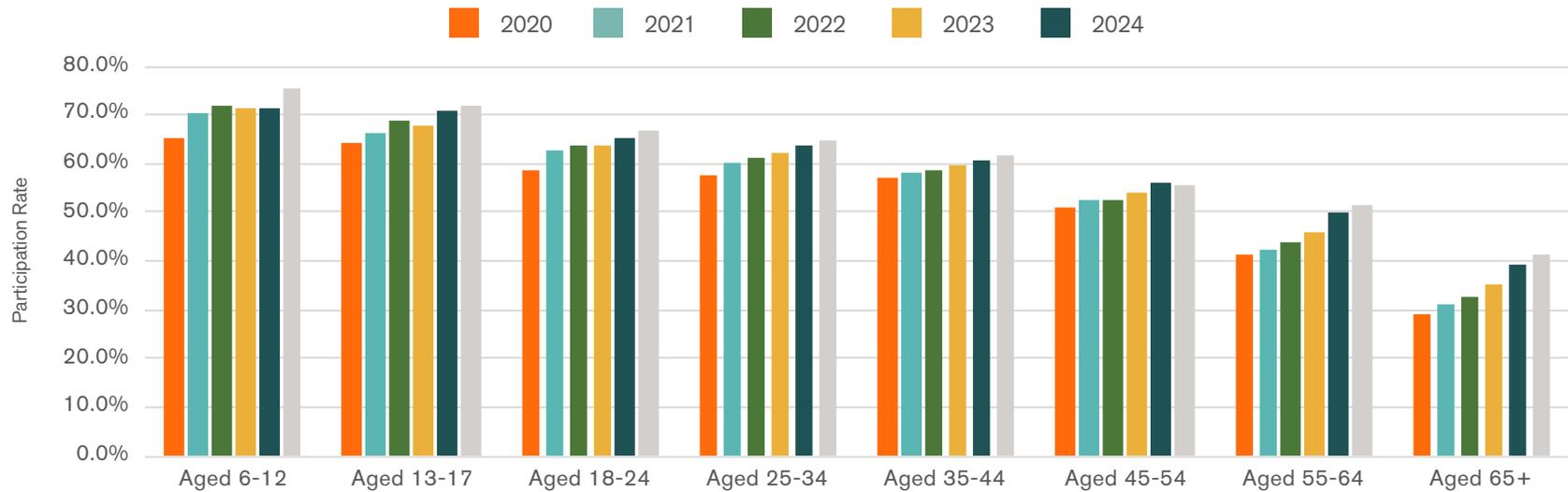
People in the \$75,000 to \$99,000 household income category are most likely to participate in outdoor recreation (by participation rate), but make up the smallest income cohort by number of participants. One third of all outdoor recreation participants live in households with \$100,000 or more in annual income, and 62.1% of people in that income cohort participate in outdoor recreation. As tariff-driven inflation pinches the budgets of American consumers in 2025, outdoor recreation has opportunities to sell participation as a cost-effective activity that is fun, healthy, and affordable at a time when everything, including food, housing, fuel, and healthcare, is consuming the bulk of American's budgets.

OUTDOOR PARTICIPATION BY AGE

Forget knitting, stamp collecting, and playing bridge—older Americans are driving growth in outdoor recreation participation to the oldest average age on record, 38.8 years.

The participation rates for Americans aged 55 to 64 increased from 41.2% in 2019 to 51.6% in 2024, the first year more than half in that age group participated in outdoor activities. Participation in the 65 and older age group increased from 28.8% in 2019 to 41.1% in 2024. The participation rate for American aged 65 and older grew 7.4%, adding 1.6 million participants between 2023 and 2024 alone.

Participation Rates by Age Group 2020 to 2024

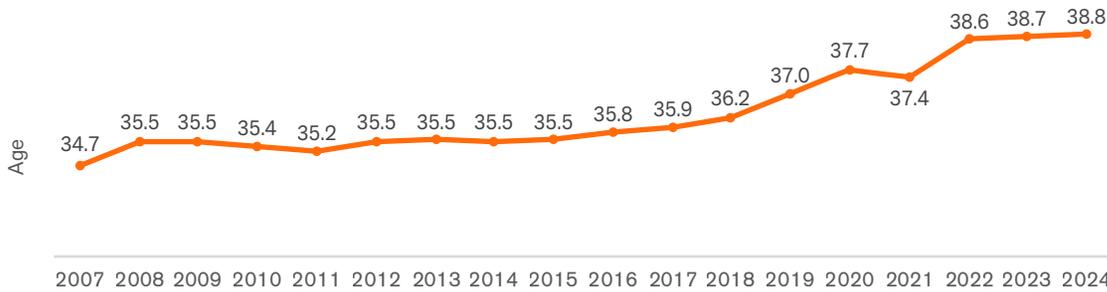


At the other end of the age distribution, we find significant year-over-year growth in youth age groups. The 6 to 12-year age group grew 5.6% in both participation count and rate, rising to a record 75.5% of kids in that age group and adding 1.1 million new participants to the base. In the middle, we find Gen Xers in the 34 to 45 and 45 to 54 age groups struggling—possibly overwhelmed by their young adult children, aging parents, economic instability, and approaching retirement. The industry may consider marketing outdoor activity to this age group as a welcome escape from their day-to-day routines.

The average age of an outdoor recreation participant rose 0.1% in 2024 to 38.8 years old. High growth in older age groups had been driving the average age of outdoor participants up for more than a decade. This year, high growth in the youngest age groups nearly neutralized the trend even though there was high growth in the oldest age groups.

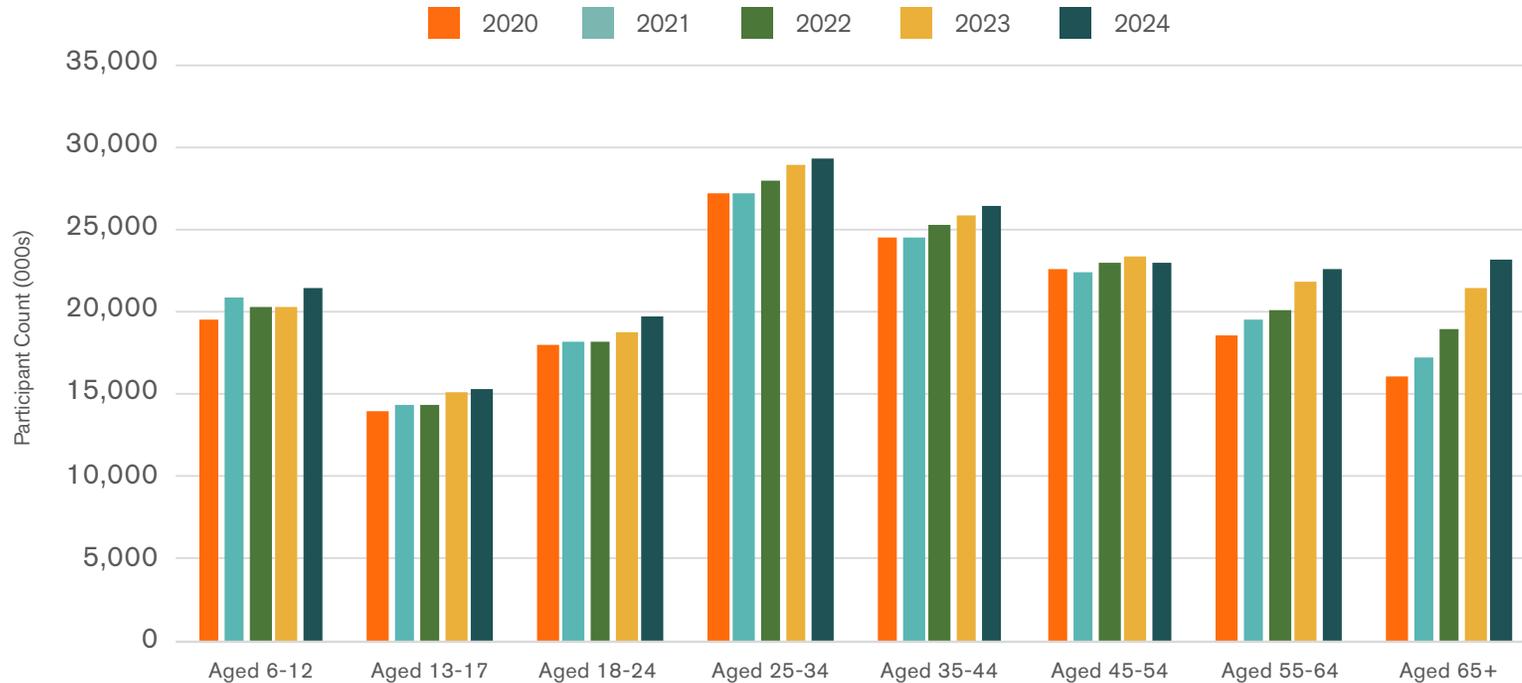


Outdoor Recreation Participants' Average Age 2007 to 2024



The age groups for 25 to 34 and 35 to 44 had the most participants representing their age groups in 2024, but most of the action is at either end of the age distribution.

Participant Count by Age Group 2020 to 2024



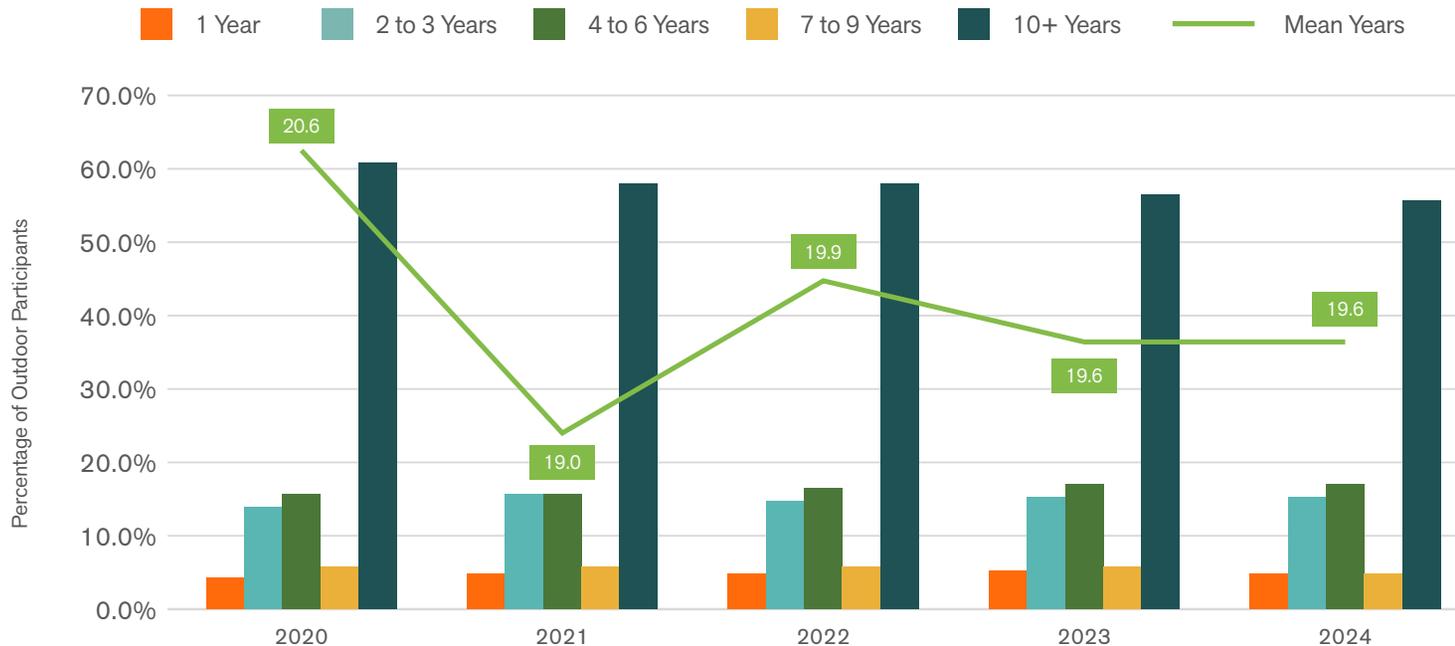
Last year, 23.1 million Americans who were born before 1959 participated in outdoor activities, 1.6 million more than in 2023 and an astounding 11.3 more than participated just a decade ago in 2015. Low impact activities, including hiking, wildlife viewing, birding, and fishing, are the main beneficiaries of this growth. Just six years ago, the 65+ age group was the smallest age cohort in outdoor, but in 2024 it was bigger than the 55 to 64, 45 to 54, 6 to 12, and 18 to 24 age cohorts. At the far left-hand side of the age distribution in the 6 to 12-year age group, note the 5.6% burst of growth in both count and rate.

THE TENURE OF OUTDOOR PARTICIPANTS

More than 27.5 million new participants since 2019 had a negative impact on the average tenure in outdoor recreation activities. But there is a bright spot: More than half have 10 years or more experience in outdoor activities.

In 2024, participants' average number of years of experience in the outdoors was 19.6 years, unchanged from 2023. More than half (55.5%) of outdoor participants have 10 years or more experience in outdoor activities and 5% have a year under their belts. The stable nature of this data over the past three years indicates that this will be the normal pattern for the next three to five years, and brands and retailers developing marketing campaigns that target specific experience groups can rely on this data.

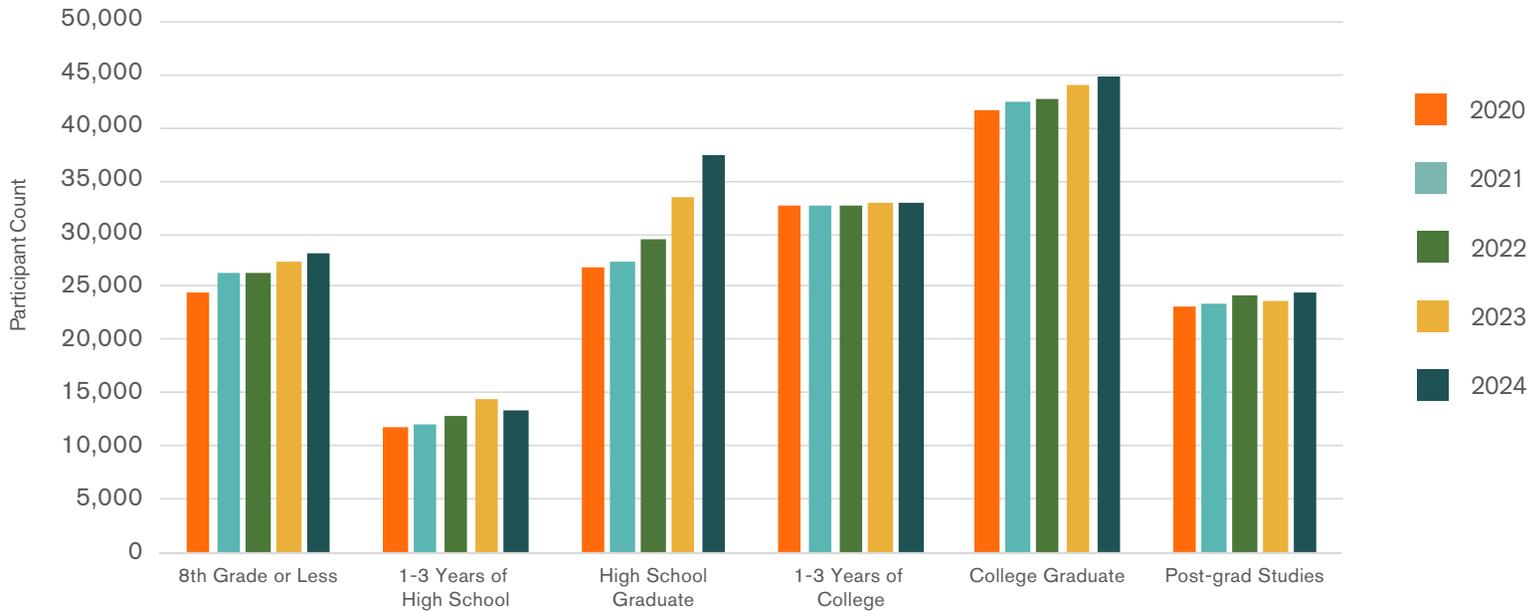
Number of Years Participating in Outdoor Recreation 2017 to 2023



OUTDOOR PARTICIPATION BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Outdoor Recreation is gaining popularity among Americans with a high school diploma and no further education. The number of participants with a high school diploma increased by 11.2% between 2023 and 2024, making it the fastest growing education category. In fact, all education categories grew in 2024 except for participants with “some college.” The data indicate that outdoor activities are increasingly attractive to blue-collar Americans and their families. This could impact the way outdoor businesses position marketing campaigns, prioritize pricing strategies, change product distribution strategies, and drive product design. This uptick in participation by blue-collar Americans is an excellent opportunity for outdoor brands and retailers.

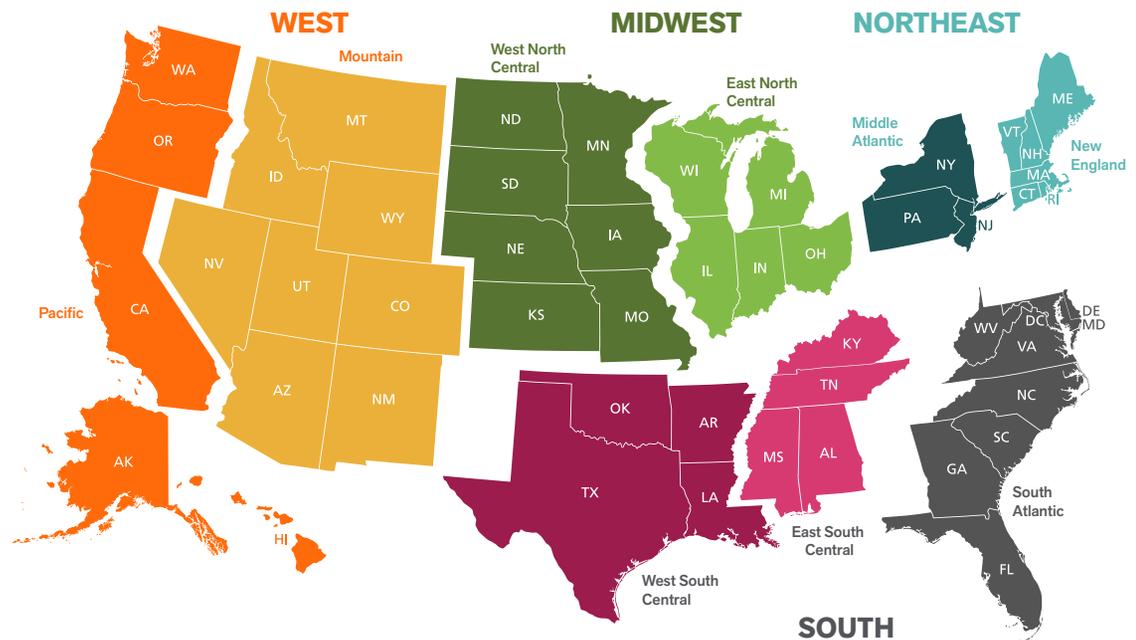
Outdoor Recreation Participant Count by Education Level 2019 to 2023



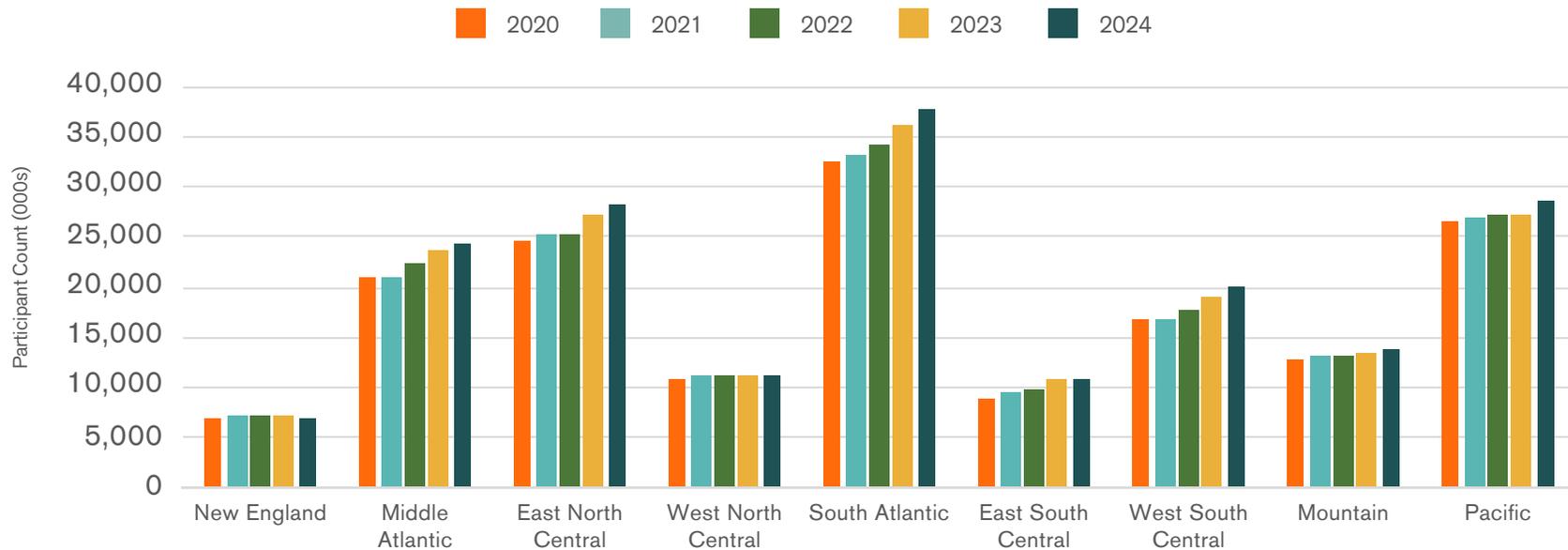
OUTDOOR PARTICIPATION BY REGION

Analyze regional trends to gain insights into consumer behavior and preferences to inform your marketing strategies.

The South Atlantic region, which includes states on the Atlantic seaboard from Delaware to Florida and West Virginia, has the most outdoor recreation participants by count. But New England and the West North Central region, which includes The Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, Missouri, and Minnesota, have the highest outdoor recreation participation rates. In 2023, the regions with the highest participation rates had the lowest growth rates.

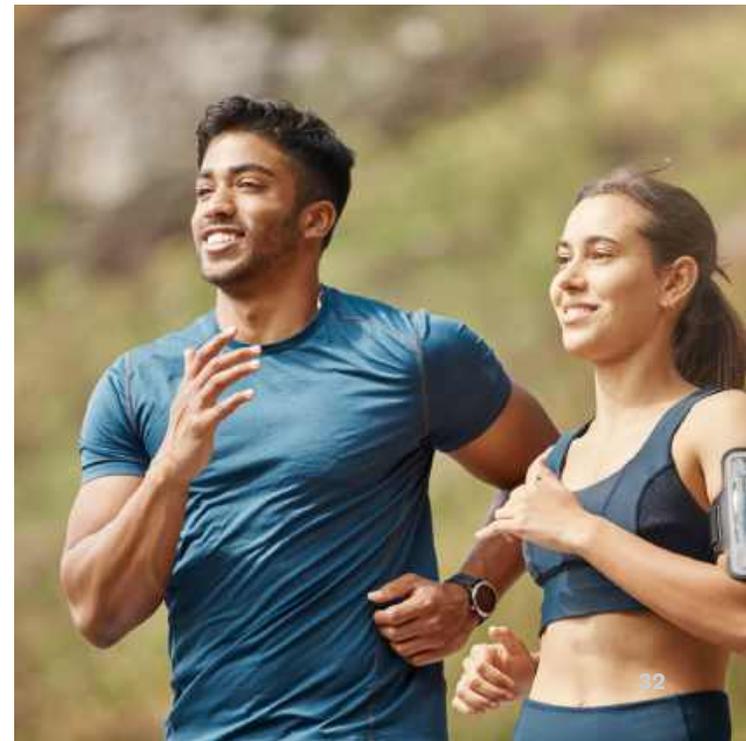


Participant Counts by Region 2020 to 2024

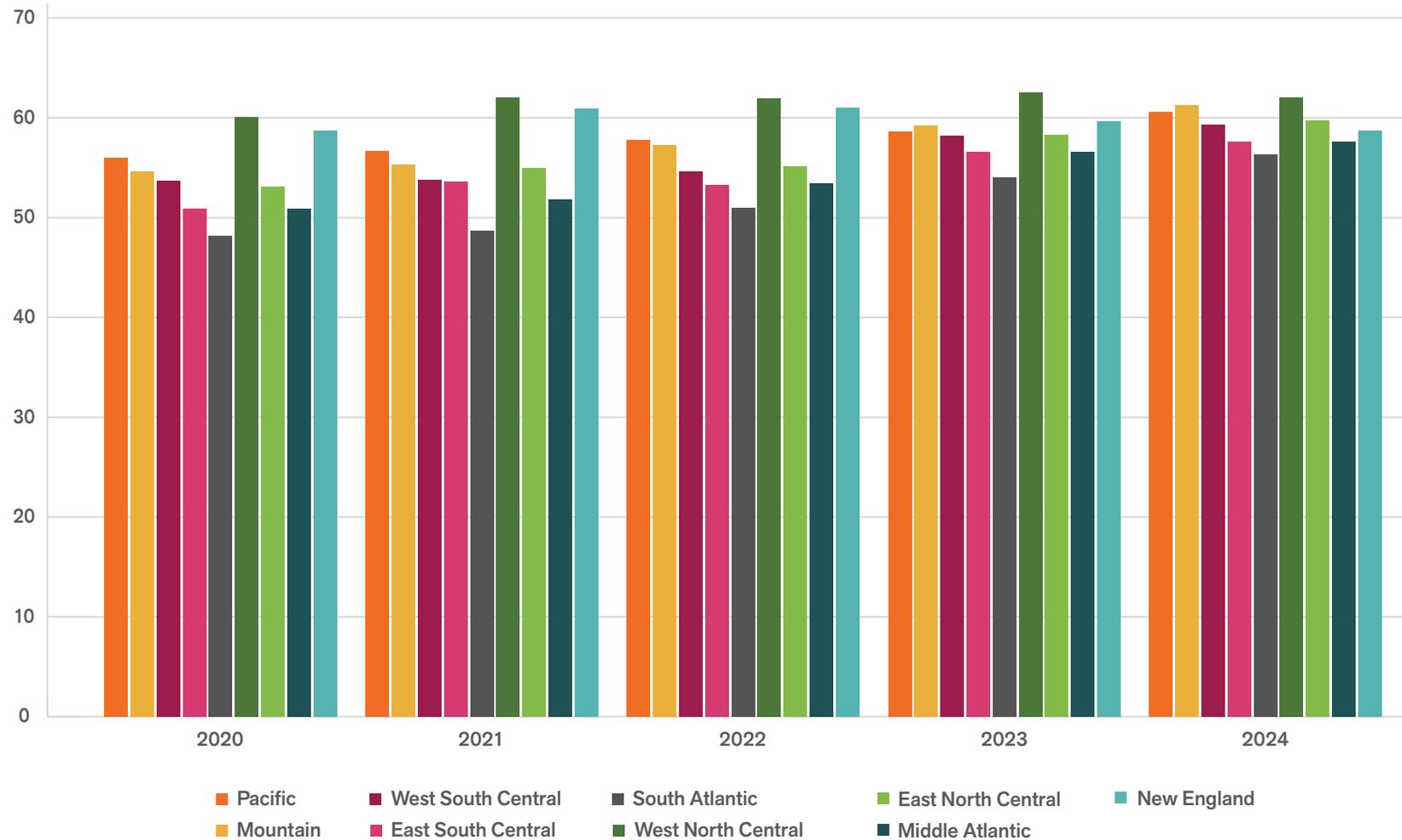


The West South Central region's participant base grew 5%, the highest growth rate of any region between 2023 and 2024, adding nearly a million participants to the region's total of 19.9 million participants in 2024. The Pacific region enjoyed 4.5% growth and added 1.1 million participants to its 28.5 million-person base. The South Atlantic region grew 4.1%, adding an additional 1.6 million participants for a total of 37.7 million participants in 2024. New England was the only region with a significant decline in participants, with a 2.7% drop that subtracted 190,000 participants from the region. The East South Central region that includes Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Alabama saw a slight 0.6% drop in participation to about 10.8 million in 2024.

With its 62% participation rate, the West North Central region, which includes the states of Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Iowa, North and South Dakota, and Minnesota, had the highest percentage of their population participating in outdoor activities. People in the West South Central region that includes Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas are just behind at 61.2%. and the Pacific region takes the number three spot with 60.1% participating in outdoor recreation in 2024.



Outdoor Recreation Participation Rates by Region 2020 to 2024



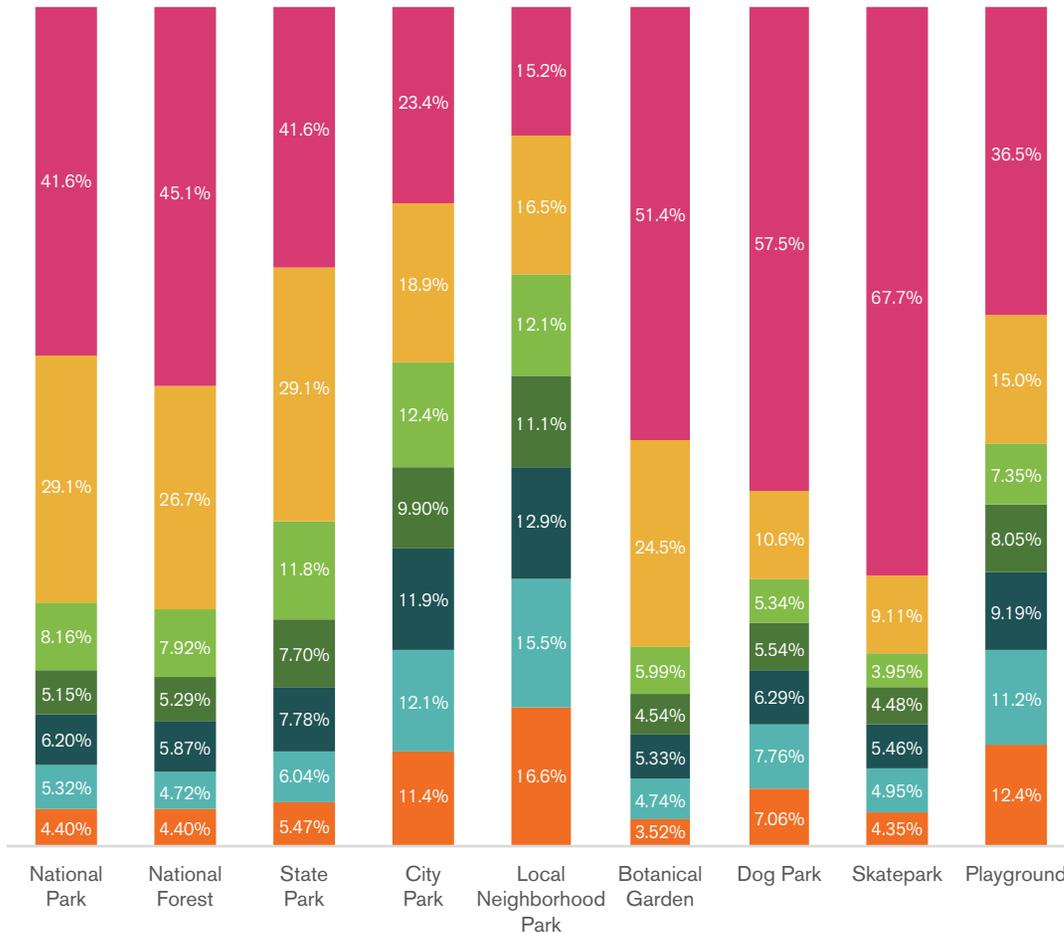
Regional participation trends are important considerations in marketing and advertising efforts that are designed for the highest Return on Advertising Spend. For example, businesses looking to reach the most outdoor consumers might target regions with the most participants (like the South Atlantic), but businesses aiming to reach the most active outdoor participants might consider targeting participants in New England. Additionally, vernacular matters--consumers in the East South Central are likely to use different words than people in the Pacific region to describe outdoor experiences and may have different issues and needs based on climate.

OUTDOOR PARTICIPATION BY VENUE

Local parks and playgrounds are the most popular places for outdoor recreation, indicating that there are barriers to harder-to-access venues. Green spaces that are easy to access, close to home, and safe are the gardens of outdoor participation and the most popular venues to participate in outdoor recreation.

Participation by Frequency of Visits to Outdoor Venues

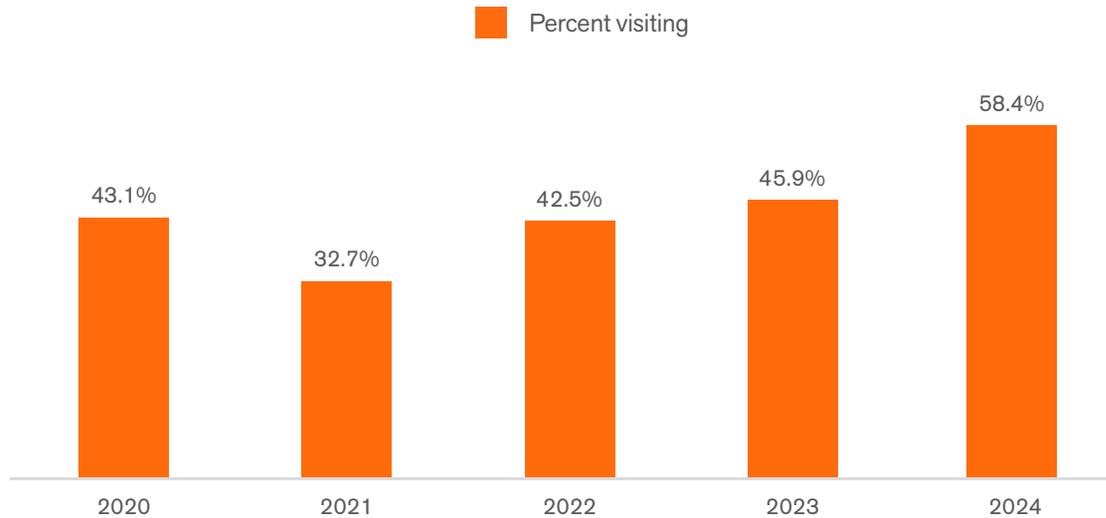
■ More than Once a Week
 ■ Once a Week
 ■ Three Times a Month
 ■ Twice a Month
■ Once a Month
 ■ Less than Once a Month
 ■ Not in the Last 12 Months



The least popular venue is skatepark, but 32% of outdoor participants visited a skate park in the past twelve months. Eight out of ten participants visited the local neighborhood park and 75% visited a city park at least once in the past twelve months. It's clear that venues that offer easy access are critical to outdoor participation growth. Major barriers to access to outdoor recreation activities include transportation, time, cost, safety, and a participation companion. Outdoor venues close to home do much to mitigate barriers to participation and lead to higher participation at venues that are more difficult to access, including National Parks and National Forests.

Visiting a National Park is gaining popularity year over year. In fact, in 2024 when the National Parks Service announced a record 323 million visits, a record 58% of Americans visited at least one park, one time in 2024—that's a new record. 2024 was the first time in which more than half of Americans reported visiting a National Park.

Percentage of Outdoor Participants that Visited National Parks 2020 to 2024



Although local venues are the most popular, participants take longer, more intentional trips to National Parks and Forests where they spend the night outdoors. On those trips, participants are camping, hiking, climbing, and fishing for longer periods of time and becoming more immersed. Trips to National Parks and National Forests are aspirational for outdoor participants, while the local parks are where everyday participation happens. Both types of venues are key to the health of outdoor recreation and play critical roles in attracting participants, keeping them engaged, and providing something to aspire to in the outdoors—whether that is the waterfall trail in Catocin Mountain Park or the Teflon Corner on El Cap.



A person with grey hair, wearing a brown and red plaid shirt and a large grey backpack, is looking through binoculars in a lush green forest. The person is positioned in the center-right of the frame, looking upwards and to the left. The background is filled with dense foliage and trees, creating a natural, outdoor setting. The lighting is soft, suggesting a shaded forest environment.

CORE PARTICIPATION

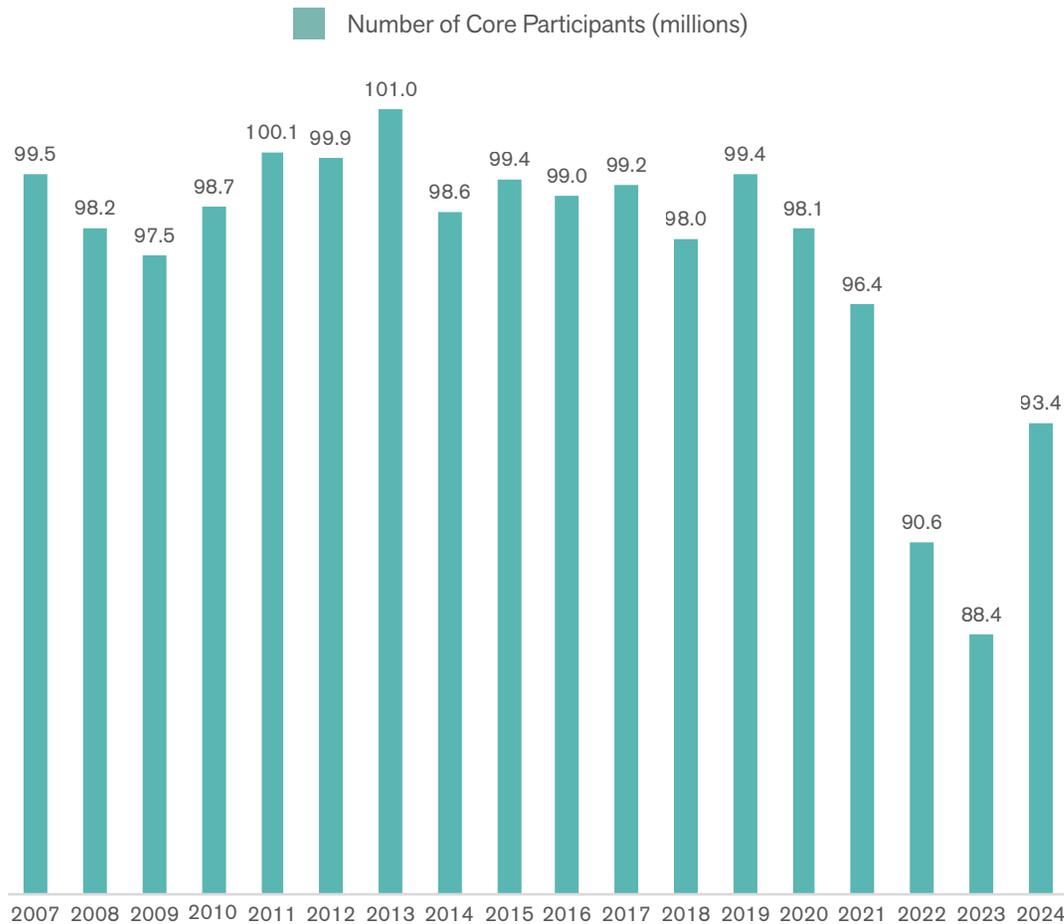
CORE PARTICIPATION

More people than ever are going outside to run, fish, hike, bike, camp and participate in all sorts of outdoor activities. But not all is rosy — “core” outdoor participation has been falling. The definition of core varies by activity, for example, a “core” road runner participates 51 times or more in the year, a core adventure racer competes in two or more adventure races in the year, a core hiker heads to the trail 13 times or more in the year. A complete list including participation by frequency is included in the Appendixes of this report. Recent proprietary research from OIA on consumer behavior suggests that more frequent core participants spend 30% more on outdoor gear and apparel than their more casual participant counterparts. Core participants are the most frequent participants in outdoor activities. Despite significant gains in the number of Americans participating in outdoor recreation over the past four years, the frequency of participation has been on a long declining trend, until this year when the core participant base grew 5% to 30.2% of the total outdoor participant base.



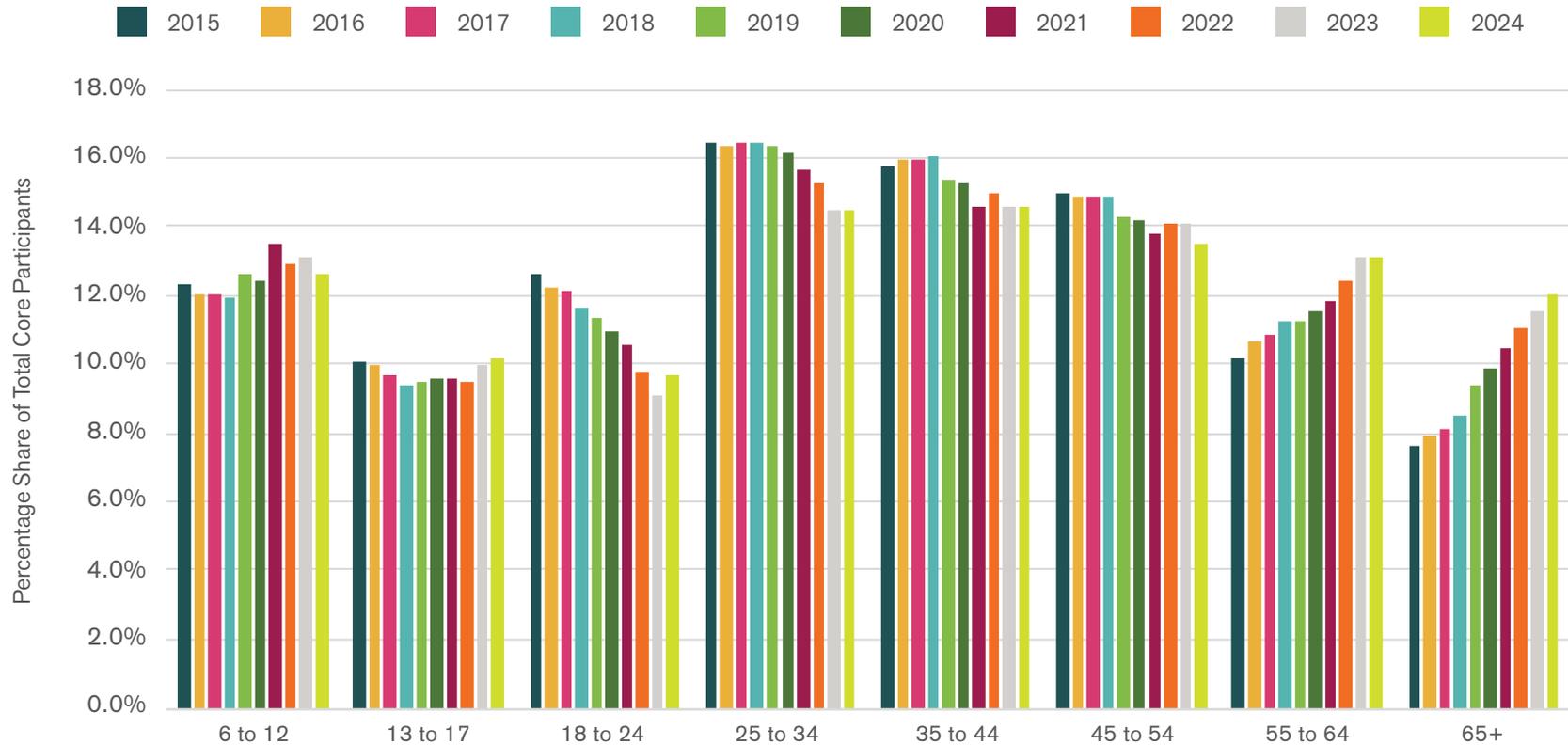
The outdoor participant base core consists of our most frequent participants and represents about one-third, or 93.4 million participants out of 181.1 million total participants. Each of the 51 activities we count in outdoor recreation, from adventure racing to wakeboarding, has a core frequency threshold. The highest is road running, where participants must run 51 times or more to be considered core, and lowest for adventure racing, where participants who have raced three times in a year are considered core participants. The number of core participants and the share of core participants has been falling for more than a decade. In fact, the number of core participants had declined from a peak in 2013 until 2024 when the core base gained 5 million participants.

Count of Core Participants (Millions) 2007 to 2024



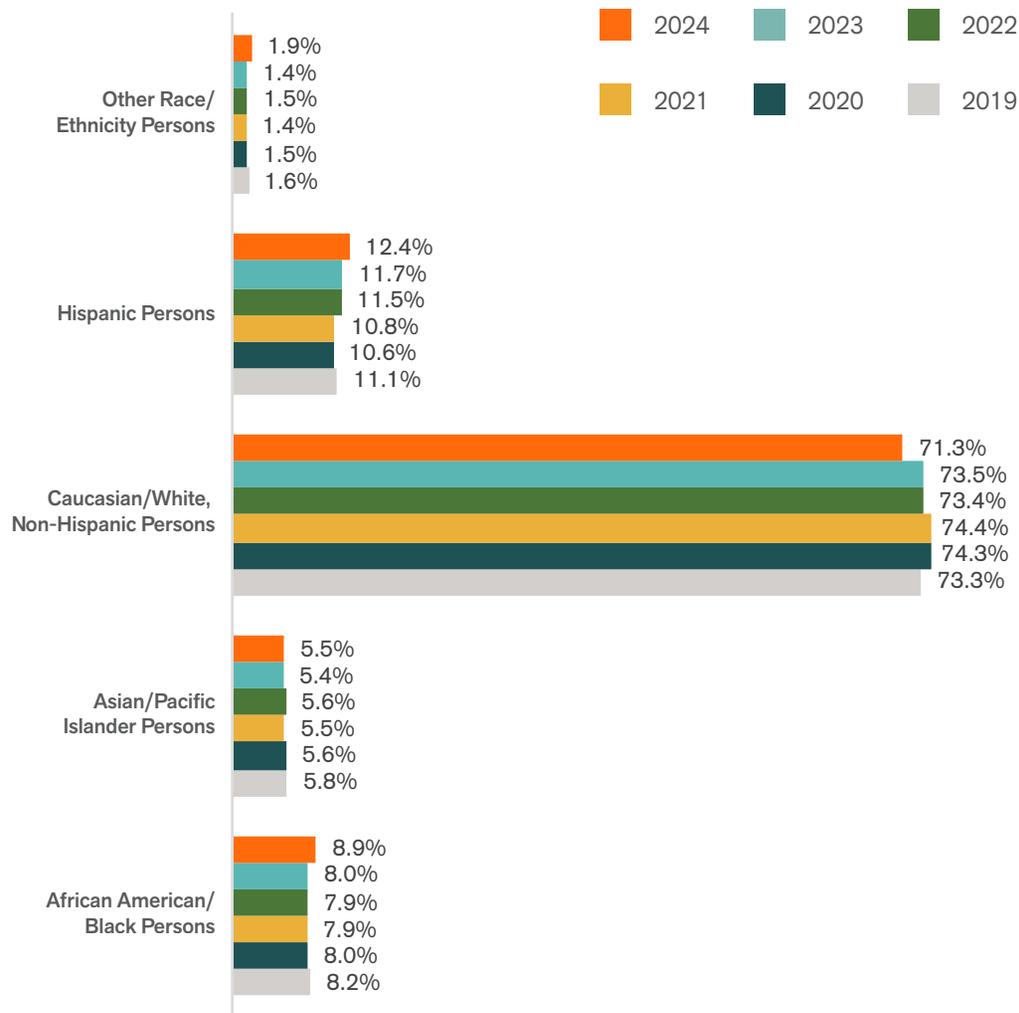
The growth in core participants in 2024 was driven by a few specific cohorts, including 6% growth in participants aged 18 to 24 and 4.2% growth in participants aged 65 and older. Growth in the 18 to 24 age group represents a one-year reversal of a long-declining trend and may be cause for short celebration, but more engagement is needed in this age category to increase the frequency of their participation. However, record growth in the older age groups appears more durable as a trend and is a positive sign considering these older cohorts have more time and more money than younger cohorts.

Percentage/Share of Total Core Participants by Age Group 2015 to 2024



Significant declines in “core” participation in 2024 included a 4.3% drop in the 6 to 12 age group, a 4% decline for 45- to 54-year-olds, 5.9% decline in participants with household income under \$50,000 annually, and a 2.9% decline for white “core” participants who make up 71% of the “core” participant base. Although all growth in “core” participation in 2024 is attributed to People of Color “core” participant is most likely to be white, but not necessarily male.

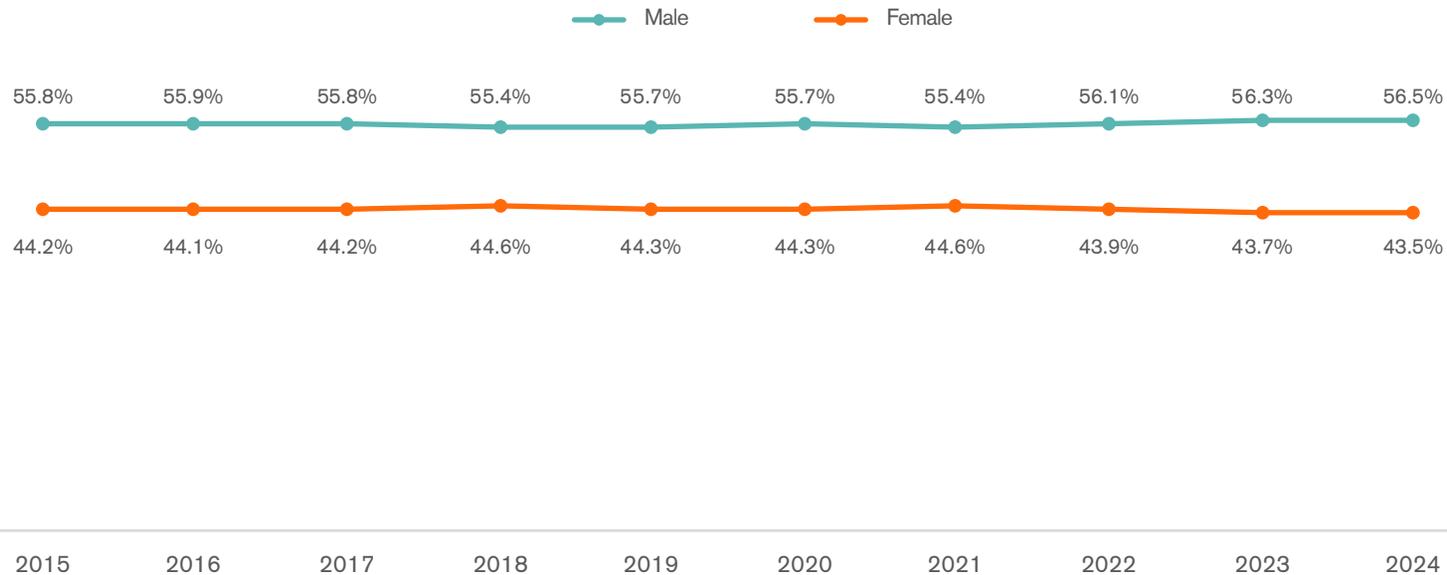
Core Participants by Race/Ethnicity 2019 to 2024



When we looked at core participants by race/ethnicity, we found 11.4% growth in core Black participants, a 5.7% increase in core Hispanic participants, and a 2.1% increase in core Asian/Pacific Islander participants. Conversely, we saw a 2.9% decline in core White participants. In fact, all growth in core participation in 2024 is attributed to People of Color.



Share of the Core Participant Base by Sex 2007 to 2024



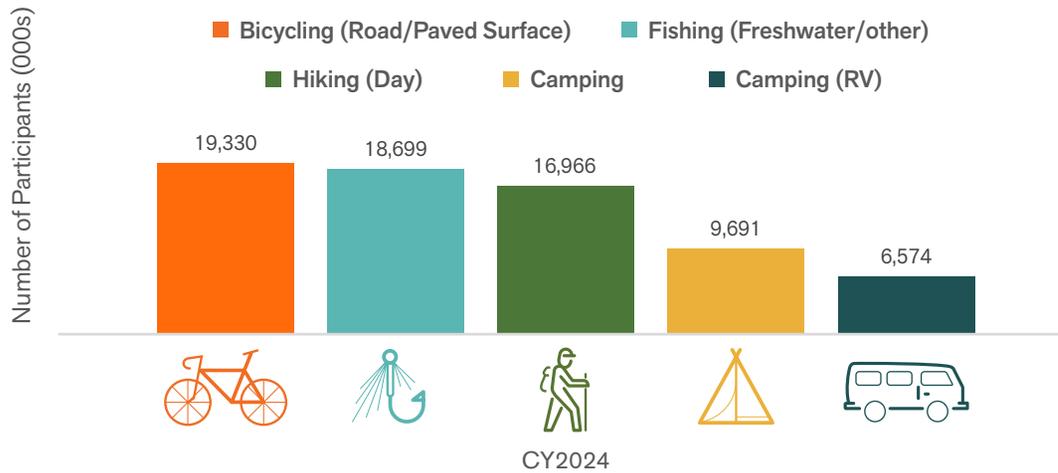
Twenty years ago, the ratio of males to females in the core participant base was reliably 60% to 40%, but for the past ten years it has reliably been 56% male and 44% female; the female share of core participants is growing incrementally. The typical core participant in 2024 was a person with passion for their outdoor activities that drive more aggressive approaches, but sex plays only a marginally significant role in core participation.

Despite the surge in overall outdoor recreation participation, core participation has declined over the past decade, until the 5% rebound in 2024 reaching 93.4 million participants, or 30.2% of all participants. The 2024 growth was driven by notable increases among 18 to 24-year-olds, adults 65+, and People of Color, especially Black (11.4%), Hispanic (5.7%), and Asian/Pacific Islander (2.1%) participants, while participation declined among White individuals, lower-income groups, and children aged 6 to 12. While the core base is still predominantly White and slightly more male, gender gaps have narrowed over the last decade, and future growth may hinge on sustaining engagement among youth and diverse communities.

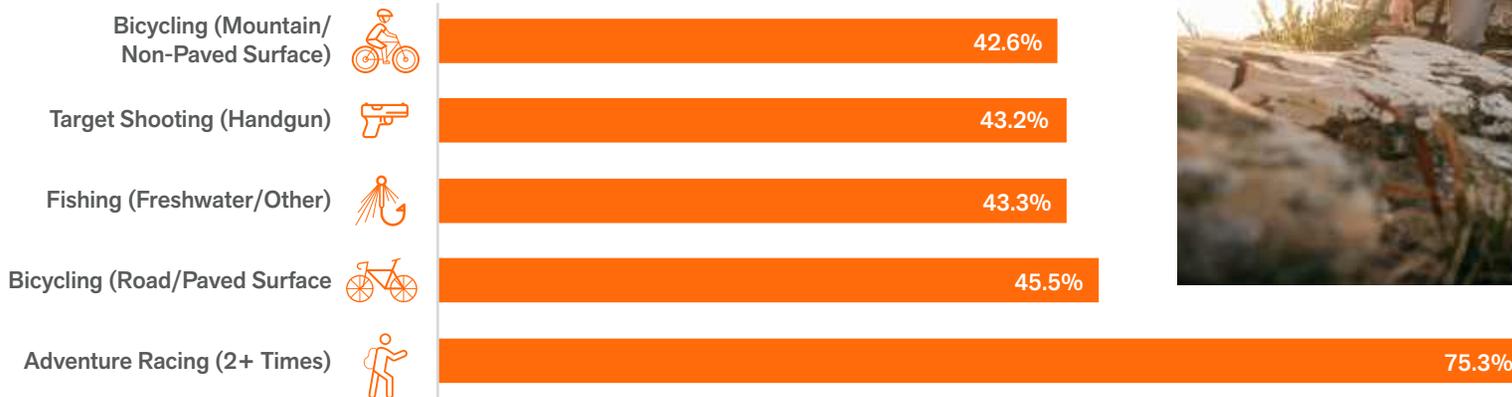
CORE PARTICIPATION IN OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Not surprisingly, the activities with the highest total numbers of participants tend to produce the highest numbers of core participants. Bicycling on paved surfaces, hiking, fishing, and camping (tent and RV) deliver the highest numbers of core participants. These participants are the backbone of the outdoor participant base who reliably show up for activities, buy the gear, and support outdoor causes.

Outdoor Activities with the Highest Number of Core Participants



Outdoor Recreation Activities with the Highest Percentage of Core Participants in 2024

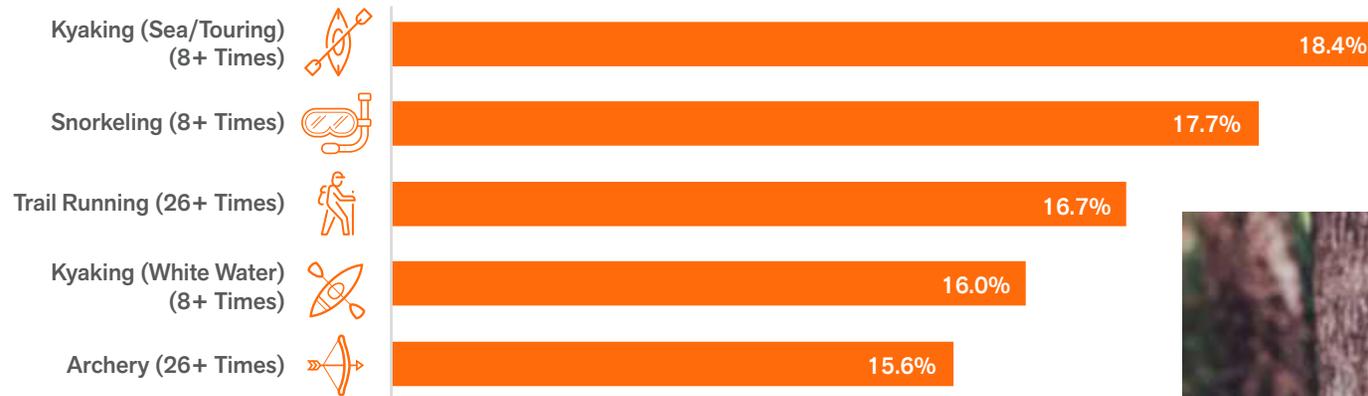


Outdoor activities with the highest percentage of core participants in 2024 are activities focused on overall fitness and keeping critical skills up to date. Activities with the highest percentage of core participants in 2024 were mountain and gravel biking, target shooting (handgun), freshwater fishing, cycling on paved surfaces, and adventure racing.



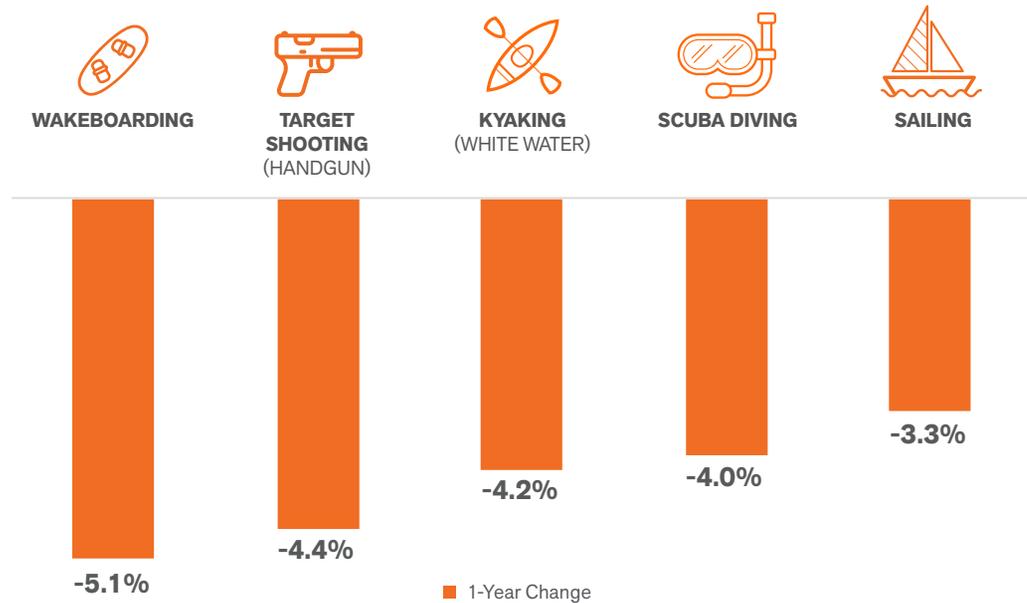
Outdoor activities with the lowest percentage of core participants are activities more focused on experiences overall, like recreational kayaking, snorkeling, whitewater rafting, and archery. However, trail running slipped in because many runners do not exclusively run on trail. Cross-participation data (available for each outdoor activity) for trail running indicates that 1 in 3 trail runners also runs on paved surfaces. It's possible that trail running is experiential for road runners and the frequency of participation is lower. Archery's threshold for core is set high at 26 times because the metric was created before the influx of participants who became interested in archery from watching The Hunger Games movies. The process of viewing the data and asking more questions is critical to gaining a comprehensive understanding of participants.

Outdoor Activities With the Lowest Percentage of Core Participants in 2024



Outdoor activities with the sharpest decline in core participants between 2023 and 2024 include wakeboarding, target shooting, white water kayaking, SCUBA, and sailing. Is it a coincidence that these are among the most expensive activities?

Outdoor Recreation Activities That Lost the Highest Percentage of Core Participants from 2023 to 2024



A photograph of two hikers standing on a rocky mountain peak. The hiker on the left is wearing a light blue jacket and yellow shorts, with a backpack. The hiker on the right is wearing an orange jacket and dark shorts, also with a backpack. They are both looking out over a vast landscape of rolling hills and valleys under a dramatic sky with large, white and pinkish clouds. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden light. The overall scene is one of adventure and natural beauty.

FREQUENCY OF OUTDOOR RECREATION PARTICIPATION

FREQUENCY OF OUTDOOR RECREATION PARTICIPATION

FREQUENCY IS UP IN 2024

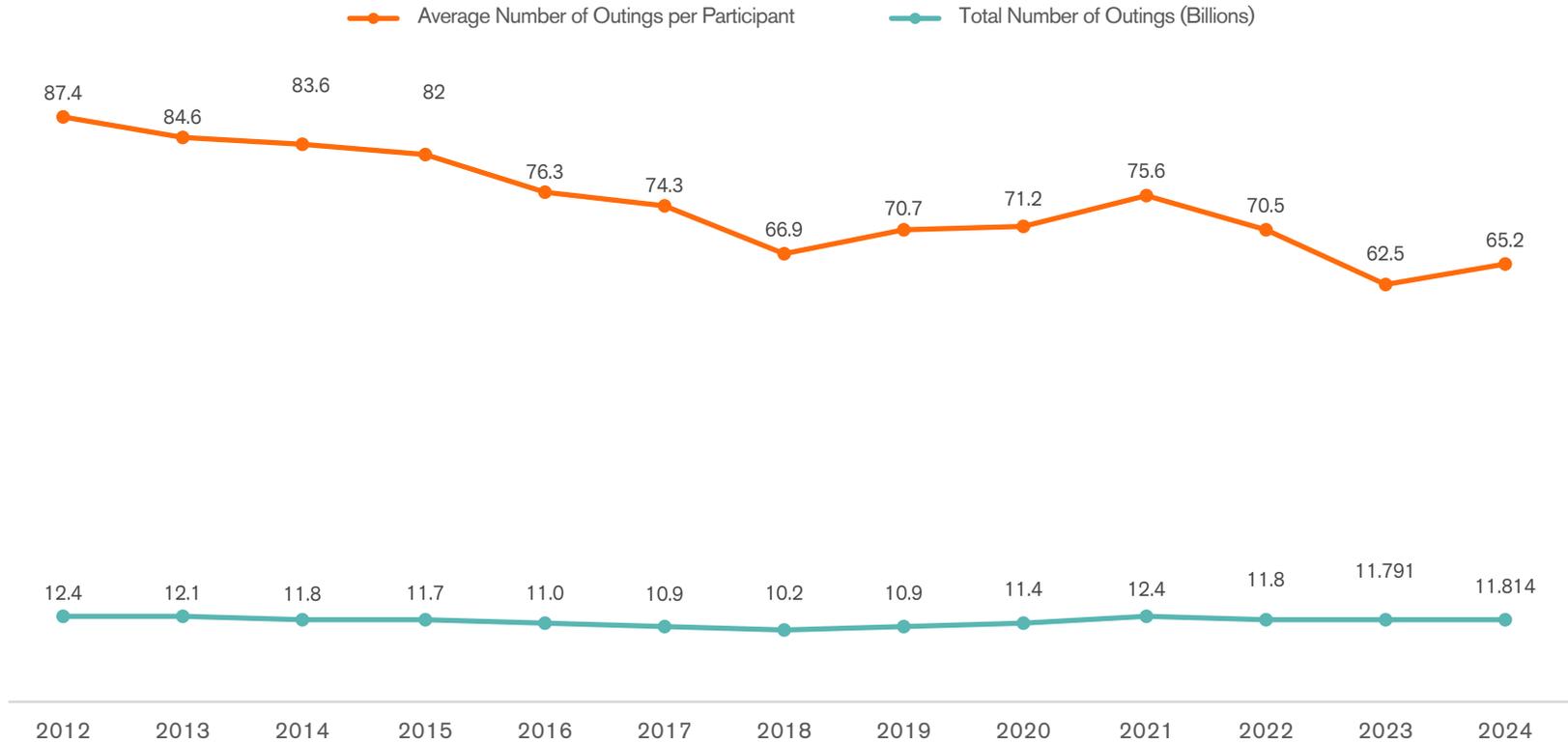
The decades-long downward trend in the average number of outings per participant is troubling because people who participate less frequently tend to be less committed to their activities' communities, less committed over the long-term to participating in the activity, and less likely to spend on outdoor gear and apparel. In the not-so-distant past, common wisdom in the outdoor market dictated that core participants bought 80% of all the goods sold in the outdoor market. Today's market research gives a more empirical look and indicates that modern core participants spend about 30% more per participant on outdoor gear and apparel. Additionally, we know that more frequent participants tend to be more engaged with endemic media, influencing and engaging their outdoor communities through social media. The core may be smaller, but it is strong. And this year, it is strong enough to drive up the overall average outings per participant by 4.3%.

What's causing the decline? Does it matter? Is there nothing we can do to stop it? The declining frequency of participation in outdoor activities is an issue frequently discussed around outdoor industry fires. Wise voices consider issues like increasing screen time, microscopic attention spans, social media, and even a perception of laziness among young Americans as culprits in the theft of attention from outdoor recreation. Maybe, in 2024 we saw some participants refocus their attention on outdoor activities to stay balanced and calm in a very chaotic day-to-day world?

In 2024, the total number of outings increased slightly (0.2%) to 11.84 billion outings. The average number of outings per participant increased from an all-time low of 62.5 in 2023 to 65.2 in 2024.

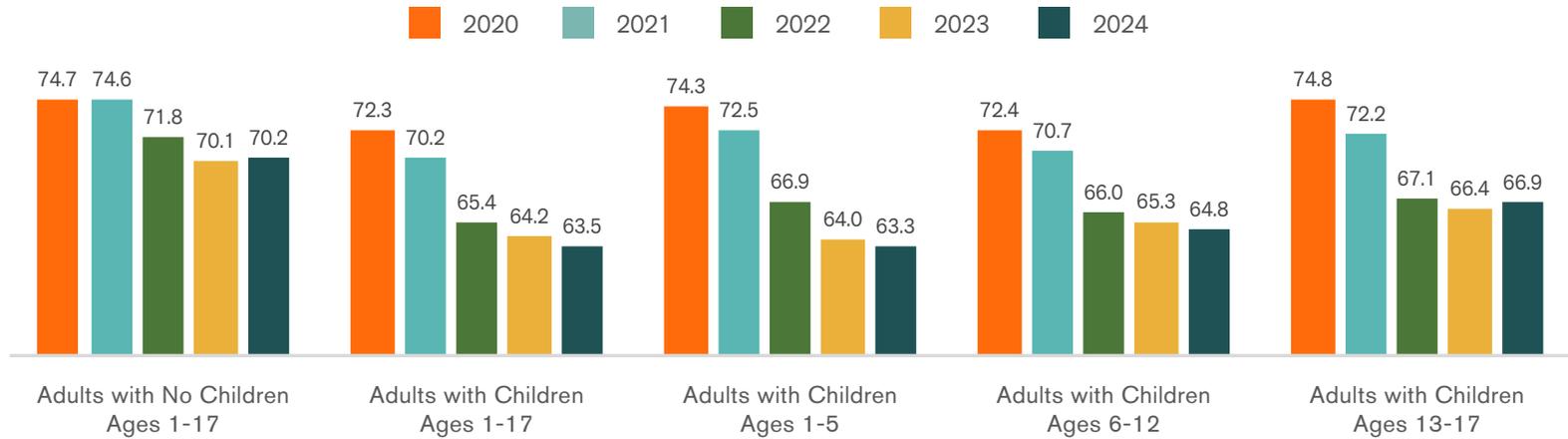


Total Outings and Average Outings Per Participant 2012 to 2024



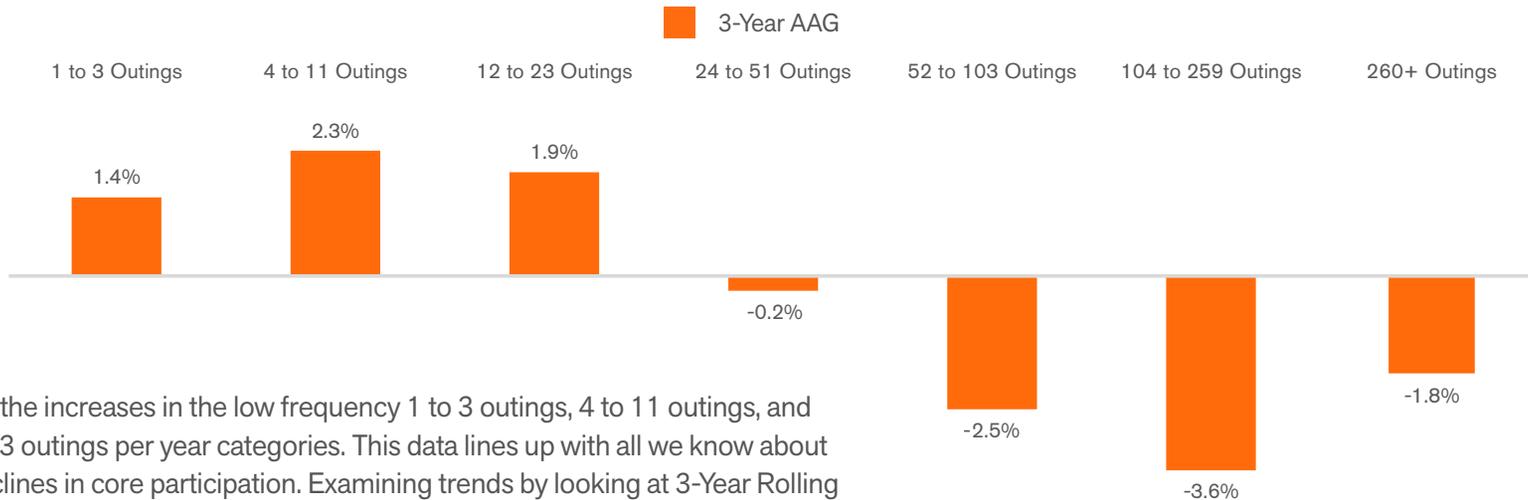
Outdoor Recreation participation habits are rooted in outdoor activities that the whole family can enjoy. The frequency of participation of household units, consisting of adults with kids, is predictive of youth participation patterns and future participation patterns of both adults and children in the household over time. Despite some growth in the overall frequency of participation, the declining frequency of outings in households with children aged 1 to 5 and 6 to 12 in 2024 is an indication that our fight to increase the frequency of participation is likely to be a long-term affair.

Average Number of Yearly Outings of Adults with Children (Households) 2020 to 2024



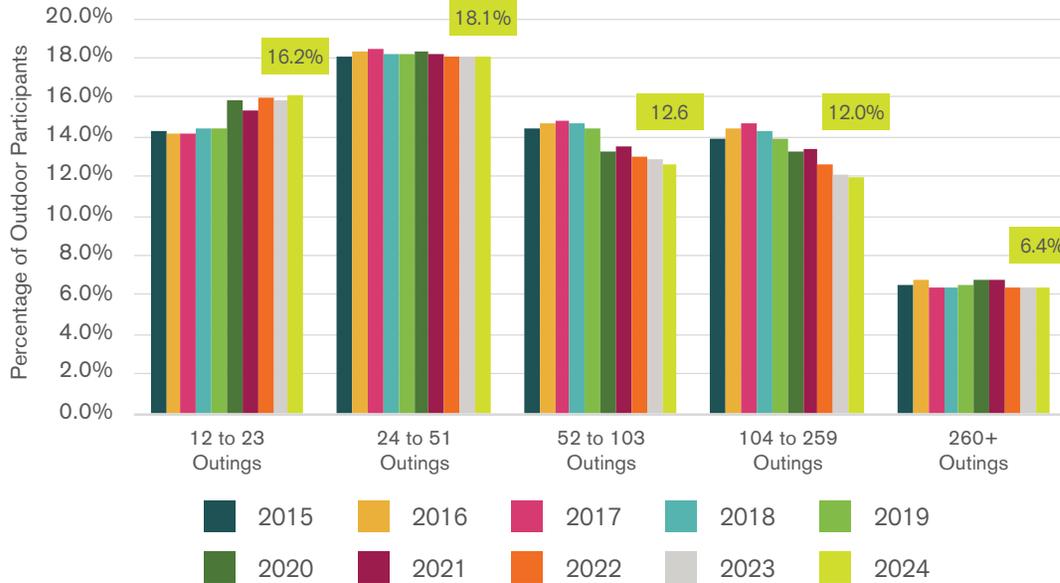
The decline in the frequency of outings is concentrated in the higher frequency outings categories, but not in the highest. Declines begin showing in the 24 to 51 outings per year category, with the sharpest declines in the 104 to 259 outings per year category and a little less in the 260 or more outings category.

3-Yr Average Annual Growth [AAG] by Number of Outings



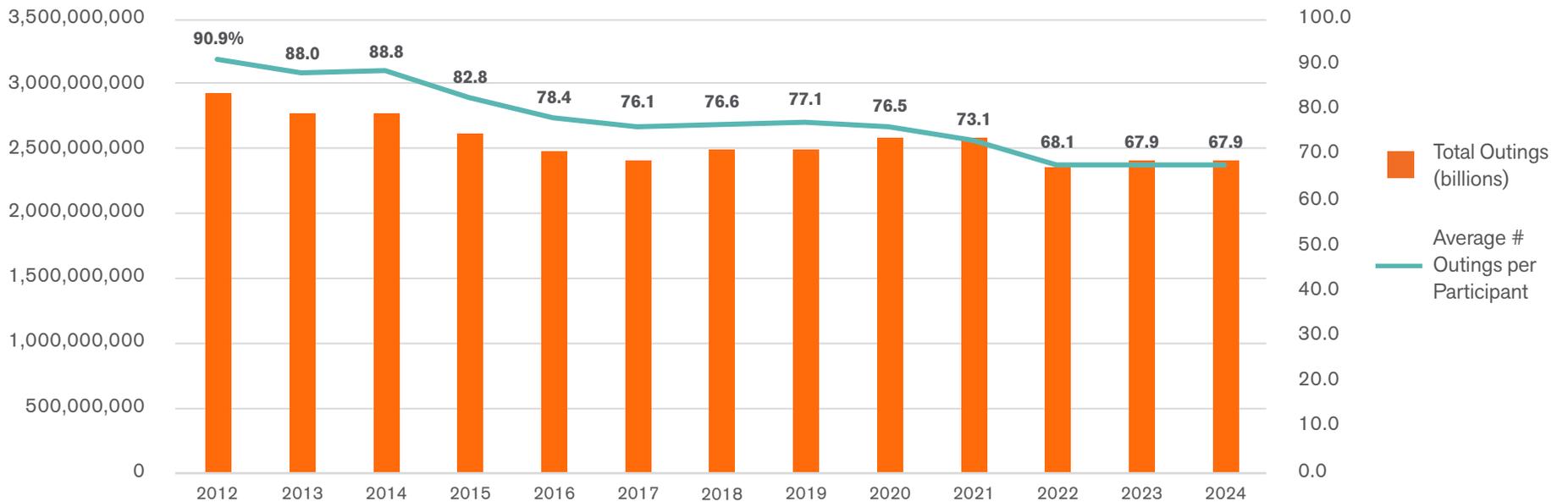
Notice the increases in the low frequency 1 to 3 outings, 4 to 11 outings, and 12 to 23 outings per year categories. This data lines up with all we know about the declines in core participation. Examining trends by looking at 3-Year Rolling Average Annual Growth/Change provides a view of trends that are less affected by year-to-year spikes like we see in participant numbers 2020 and 2021.

Participants by Average Number of Outings 2015 to 2024



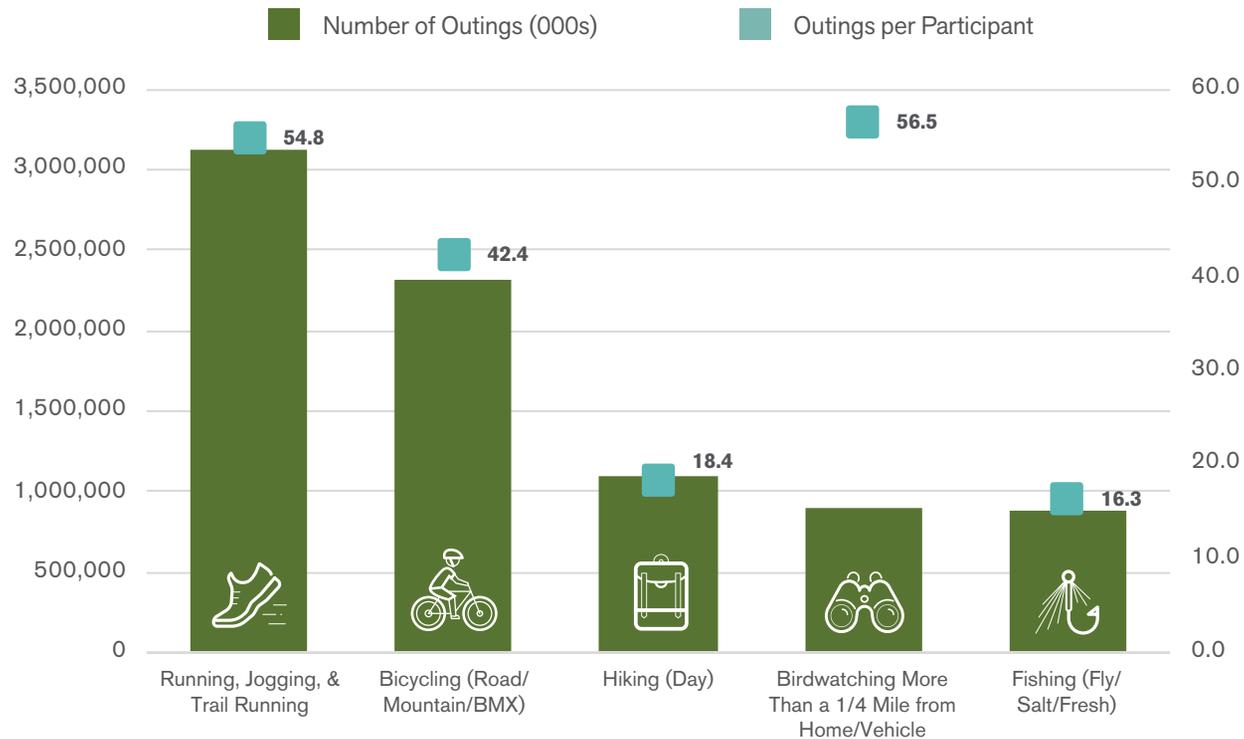
The number of youth outdoor outings has been on a long declining trend, but total youth outings were flat at 2.4 billion in 2024. There are 35.5 million kids aged 6 to 17 participating in outdoor activities, just barely up 0.2% in 2024. The average number of outings per participant remained at 67.9 per child, down from an average of 91 outings per kid in 2012.

Youth Outings and Average Outings per Participant Age 6 to 17 Years 2012 to 2024



Some outdoor activities like running, cycling, and birding are everyday outdoor activities, often done close to home, as part of a normal routine. These everyday activities dominate high frequency participation in outdoor recreation. The activity with the highest overall average outings per participant was birding at 56.5 outings, running/jogging at 54.8 outings, and bicycling with 42.4 outings per participant on average. Hiking is the largest outdoor activity with 61 million participants averaging 18.4 hikes a year. Note that 26.2% of hikers participate 13 times or more, the top 20% of the hiking frequency distribution is pushing the average frequency up. That happened to some degree in every activity. Maybe next year we will have a “super-core” category to describe the very high frequency participants who skew the average frequency. There will always be skiers with more than 100 days in a season, an avid hiker who through-hikes the PCT in a year, and other frequency icons in the participant base.

Activities with the Highest Frequency of Participation – Total Outings and Average Outings per Participant 2024



Increases in the number of participants have mitigated the impacts of long-term declining participation frequency in outdoor recreation. Increasing engagement to drive up average outings per participant could have significant positive impacts across the outdoor industry. Particularly when considering the impacts of core participants not only on the bottom lines of outdoor brands and retailers, but also on their outdoor communities as role models and influencers.

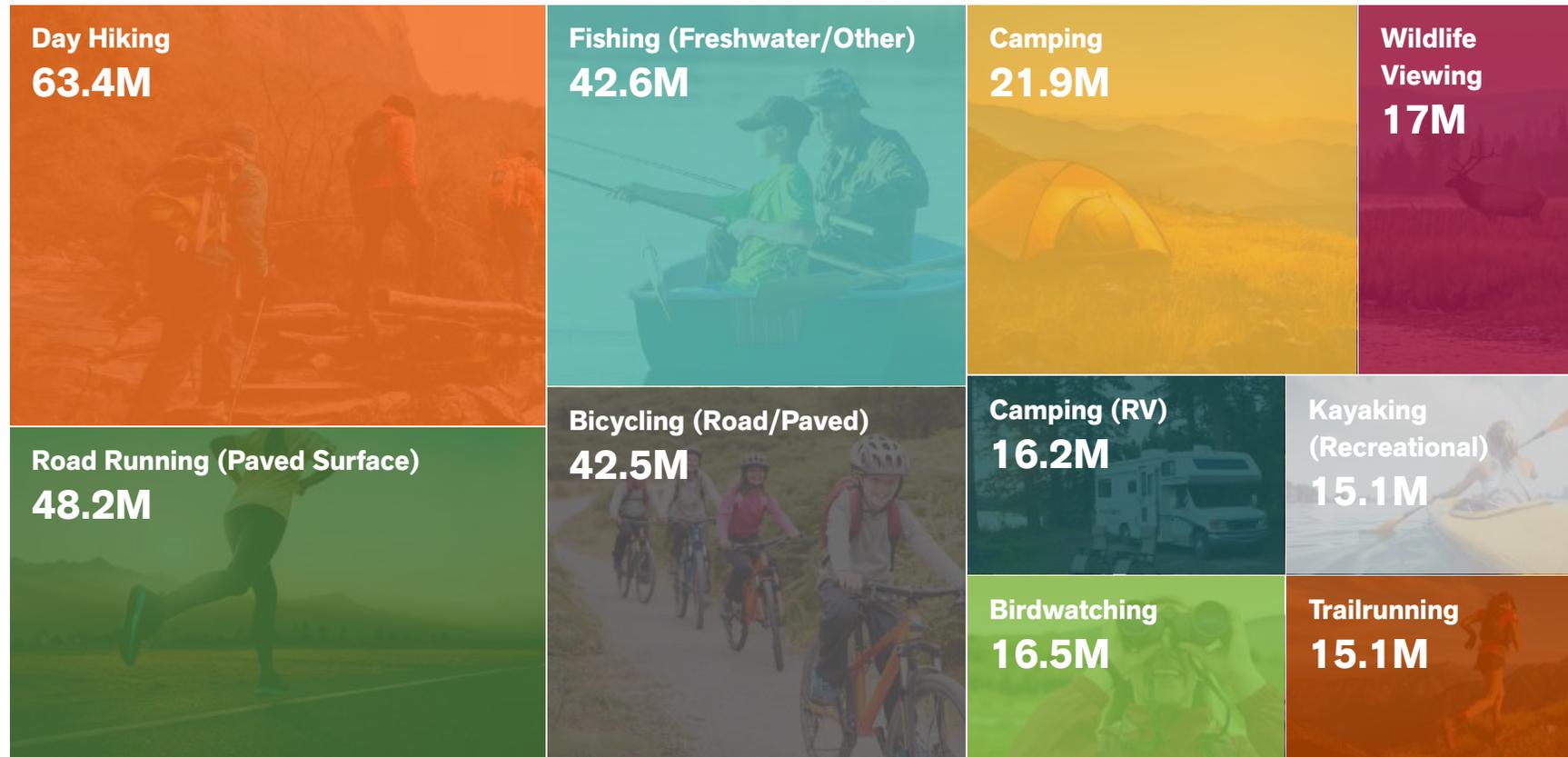


OUTDOOR RECREATION ACTIVITIES

AMERICA'S FAVORITE OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

The most popular outdoor recreation activities are a list of classics: hiking, riding bikes, running, fishing, and watching birds and wildlife top the most popular list. Participant counts increased in 2024 in all the most popular outdoor activities (shown below), including 1.7 million more campers, 605,000 more birders, 2 million more hikers, 580,000 more freshwater anglers, 1.3 million more trail runners, and 227,000 more road runners and joggers.

MOST POPULAR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES BY NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS 2024



In 2024:

- One in every five Americans aged 6 years or older hiked at least one time
- 58 million Americans tried to catch a fish
- 53 million Americans, or 18%, went for a run on the road, on the trail, on the track, or in backcountry conditions
- 56 million Americans went camping in their cars, in their backyards, and in RVs across the country
- 54 million Americans ages 6 years or older pedaled a road/mountain/gravel/BMX bikes





1 Year Growth/Change in Participation by Activity 2024



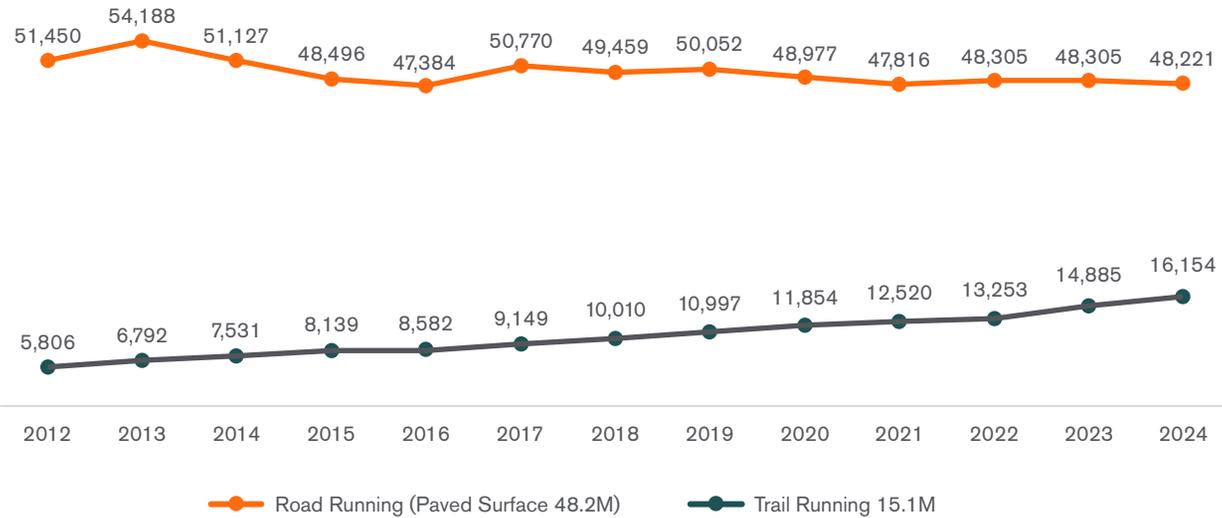
Participation increased in most outdoor recreation activity categories in 2024. Some activities, including trail running, sport/boulder climbing, and stand-up paddleboarding (SUP), had excellent one-year increases in participation while others, including indoor climbing, fly fishing, and target shooting with a rifle, experienced small declines. No activity in outdoor recreation experienced more than a 1.6% decline in participation in 2024.

Trail running has enjoyed high year-over-year increases in popularity for more than a decade. An 8.5% increase in trail running between 2023 and 2024 indicates that the trend is accelerating as road runners sample the trail or switch to trail only. Considering fewer than 20% of trail runners are core trail runners, it appears that more and more road runners are trying to run on a trail occasionally for a literal change of pace.

Note that the three-year AAG for running/jogging on paved surfaces is down 1.6%, while trail running participation increased 10.7% per year on average. The transition to trail may be attributed to several major factors that include safety (from distracted drivers), a growing community with engaging events, and more accessible and safe venues.

Each outdoor activity has a unique community of participants with varying motivations for participating. Understanding growth and change trends, what and who drives them, the length of trends, and their overall impact are key to taking advantage of burgeoning trends and avoiding fading trends in the marketplace.

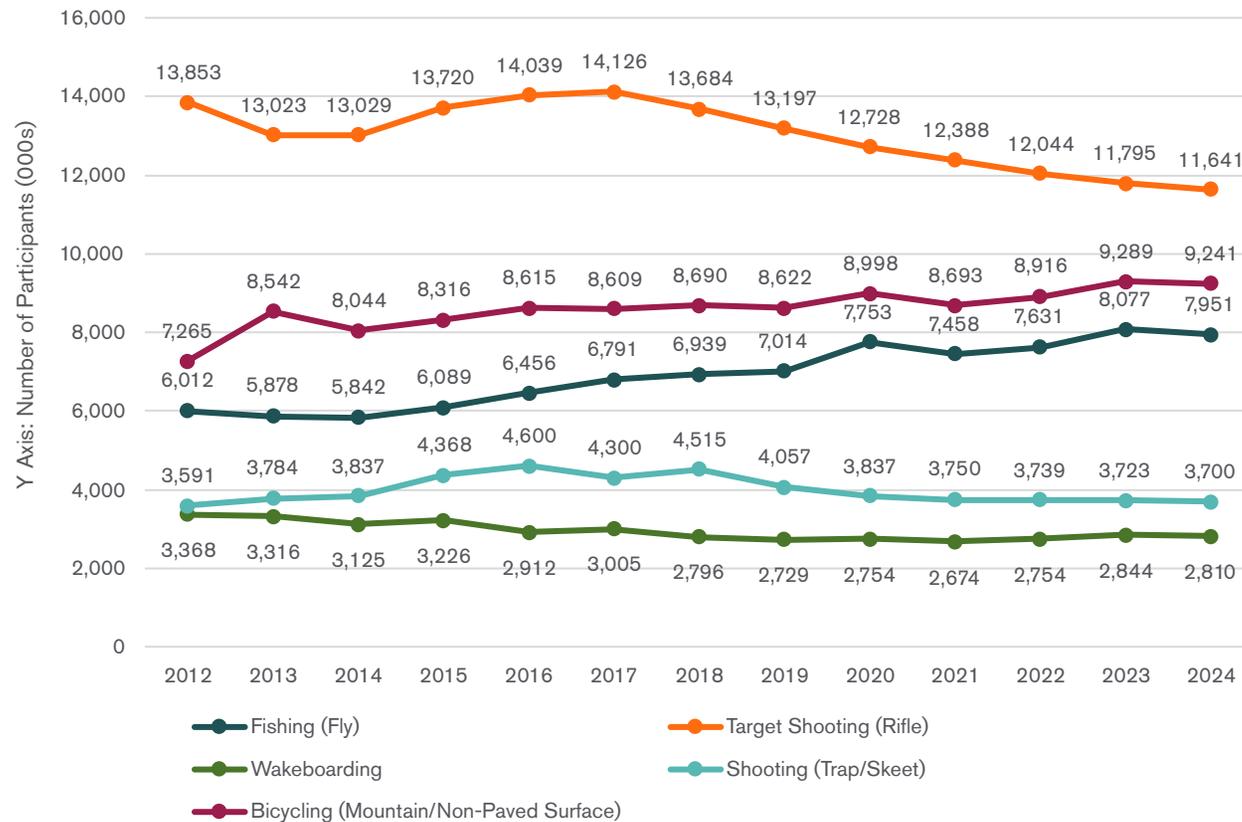
Road Running and Trail Running Participation 2012 to 2024 (000s)



For example, note the shift in running from the minimalist footwear trends driven first by the popularity of the Nike Free line of running shoes in 2005, and accelerated by the book *Born To Run* by Chris McDougall published in 2009, to the market disruption created by the introduction of Hoka in 2009 and the subsequent acquisition of the brand in 2012. Minimalist (unpadded), zero-drop footwear dominated the market in 2013 as Hoka found traction with ultra-runners and trail runners who were ready to find some cushioning and more protection from overuse injuries. Note that road running participation fell from 2013 to 2016 as more runners expanded to trail running. Road running has not exceeded the popularity enjoyed in 2013 while trail running continues to grow at one of the highest rates across outdoor activities.

Understanding downward trends in outdoor activities is equally important to tracking growth trends. Fly fishing's 1.6% decline from 2023 to 2024 was the worst across all outdoor activities. Note that fly fishing and biking on unpaved surfaces (down 0.5% and considered more “stable” than “down”) have enjoyed long and significant increases in participation over the past decade. The other three activities at the bottom of this inauspicious list of activities with a participation decline between 2023 and 2024, including target shooting with a rifle, trap/skeet shooting, and wakeboarding, are suffering from long-term declines in participation.

Outdoor Activities with the Largest Drop in Participation 2023 to 2024 Trended from 2012 to 2024



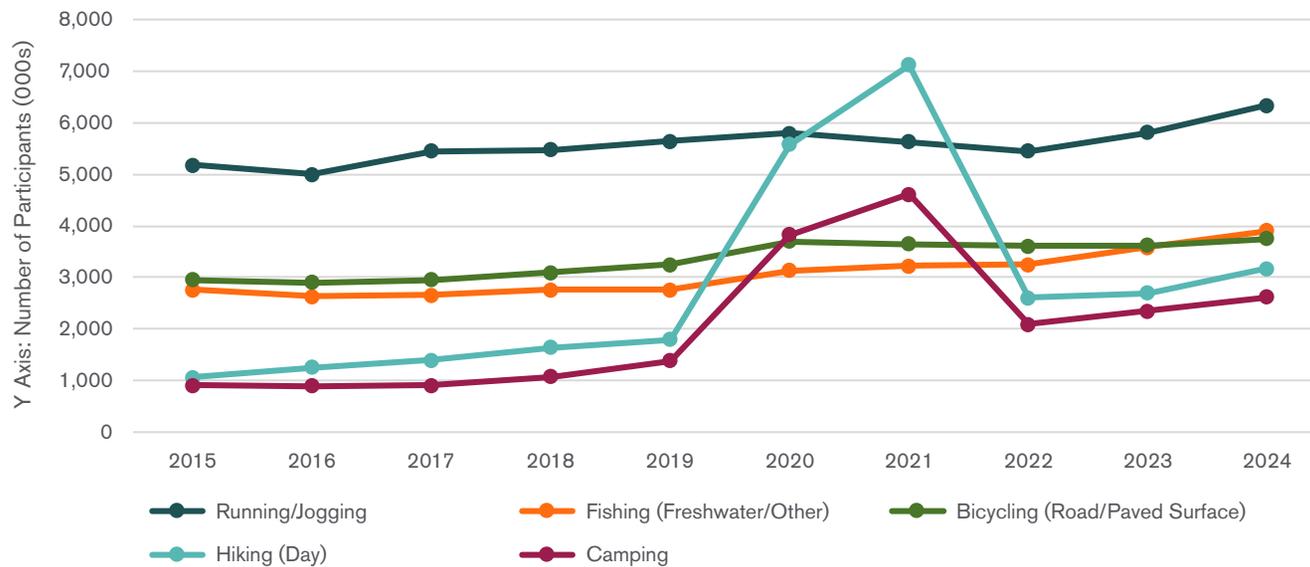
Note that hunting with a shotgun, rifle or handgun and sport/clay shooting participation grew from 2023 to 2024. It's possible that hunters are spending a little less time at the range and a little more time in the field in 2024.

FAVORITE OUTDOOR RECREATION ACTIVITIES BY ETHNICITY/RACE

If we are going to be responsive to the changing needs and values of an increasingly diverse participation base, we need to understand the patterns of participation by race and ethnicity.

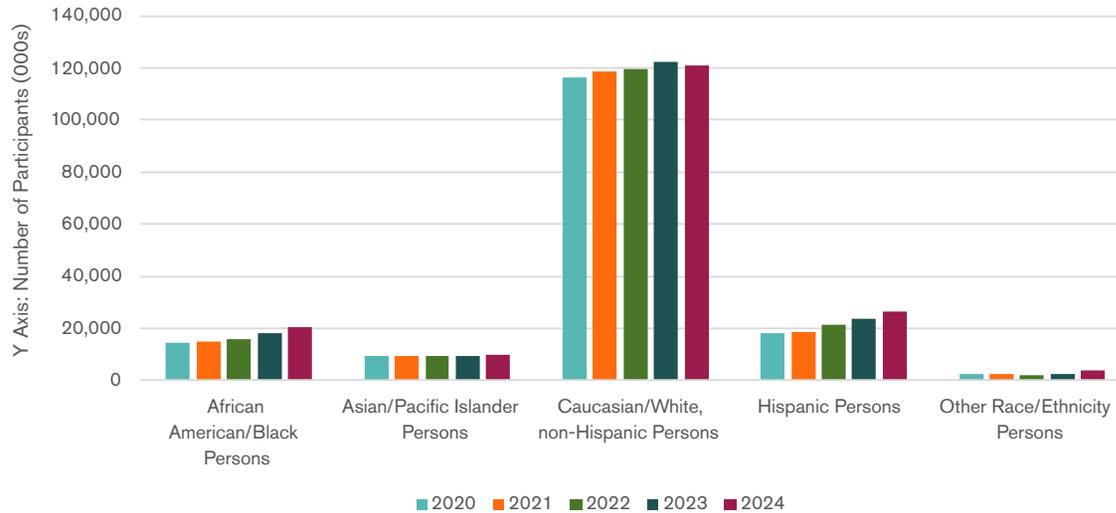
Understanding the patterns of participation by race and ethnicity improves understanding of community preferences and barriers to participation in specific communities. The Outdoor Foundation has learned through research with Thrive Outside partners that access, safety concerns, and transportation are major barriers to participation for many People of Color. Notice that hiking is the number one outdoor recreation activity enjoyed by White participants. In fact, about one in four White Americans who participate in any outdoor activity hiked in 2024. By contrast, hiking was 4th in rank by participant count for Black participants with 3.2 million (7.9%) Black participants hiking. We have learned that safety is a major concern, and there are historical, heuristic reasons for this perception in Black communities. Lack of transportation and access to green space in economically disadvantaged communities also limits outdoor activity. The insights available in this participation data and deeper dives into why participation varies across ethnic/racial groups can uncover opportunities to expand access and welcome new participants into outdoor spaces. The Outdoor Foundation is doing exactly that through the Thrive Outside program that includes 13 communities around the country serving more than 110,000 kids in 2024.

Black Participants' Top Five Outdoor Activities by Count 2015 to 2024



Black persons' participation in hiking and camping surged during the pandemic but quickly dropped back into the previous (upward) trend lines. This pandemic pattern disruption was most acute among Black persons.

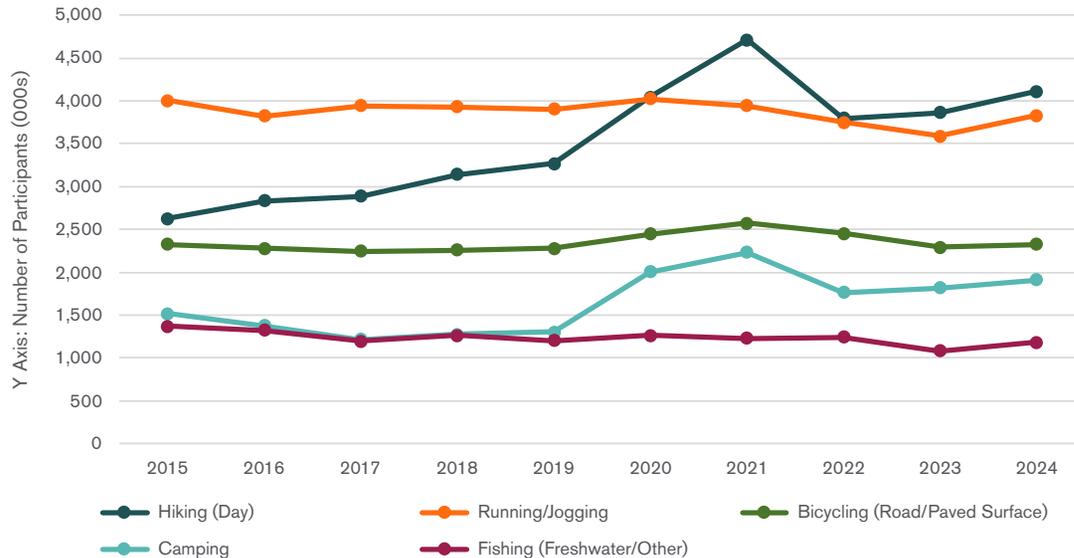
Participation by Ethnicity/Race 2020 to 2024



Note that the count of Black participants in outdoor activities was up 12.8% in 2024 compared to 2023 to 20.3 million Black participants – the largest increase across ethnic/racial participant groups.

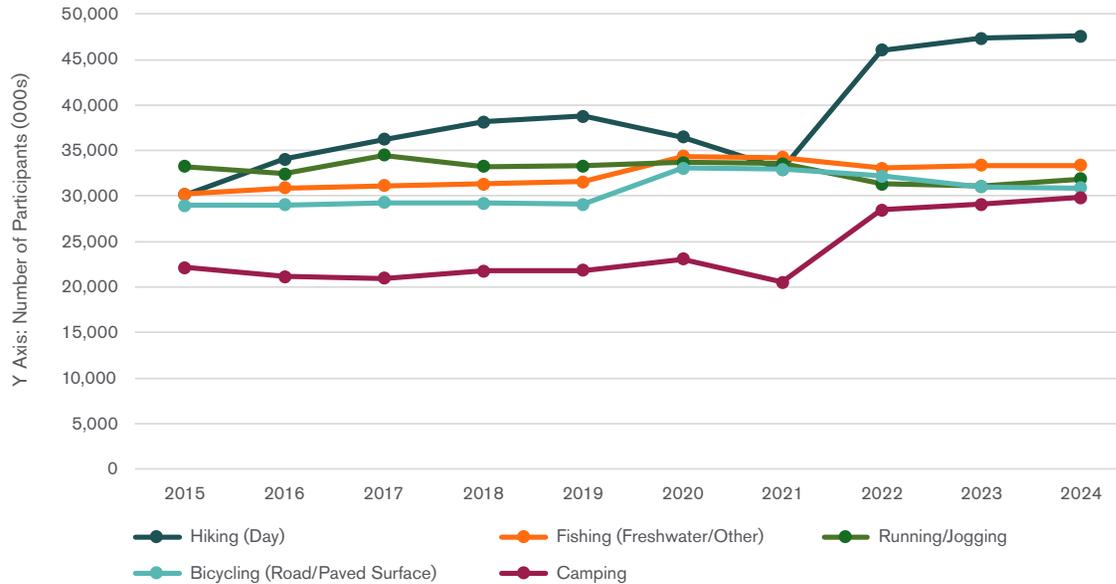
Hiking was the most popular activity among Asian/Pacific Islander participants in 2024, with 4.1 million participants and a participation rate of 25.3%. The same pandemic patterns show up in this community for hiking and camping that we see most acutely in the Black outdoor community. In both communities, after an initial burst and crash between 2021 and 2022, the previously fueled growth trends returned.

Asian/Pacific Islander Participants' Top Five Outdoor Activities by Count 2015 to 2024



Mountain and gravel biking is growing faster in the Asian/Pacific Islander participant group than its more popular cousin, road biking. In fact, biking on unpaved surfaces grew by 4.7% while biking on paved surfaces, enjoyed by 2.3 million Asian/Pacific Islander participants, only grew by 1.5% in 2024.

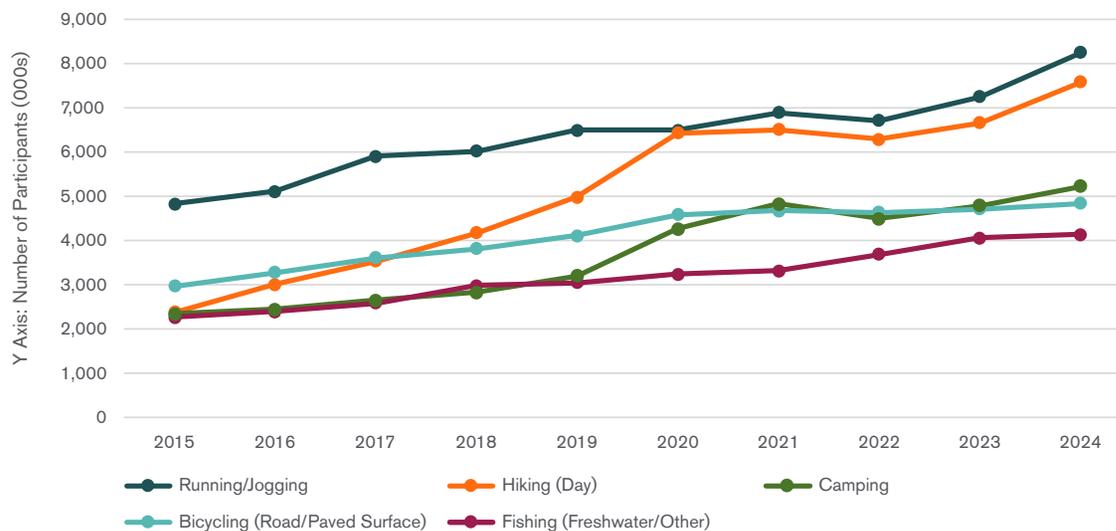
White Participants' Top Five Outdoor Activities by Count 2015 to 2024



The pandemic participation pattern was different for White outdoor participants, as participation in camping and hiking participation fell during the pandemic. Participation in hiking by White participants fell 10% between 2020 and 2021, and camping fell by 11%. Both activities recovered quickly with outsized growth starting in 2022 that has continued at about 1% growth in the number of white participants each year.

The other three most popular outdoor activities for White Americans, including fishing, running/jogging, and bicycling on paved surfaces, remain very popular, but the number of White participants is stable (not growing or declining significantly).

Hispanic Participants' Top Five Outdoor Activities by Count 2015 to 2024



In contrast to what other ethnic groups, Hispanic participants did not surge into the outdoors because of Covid--their growth curve was already headed up, and with a slight dip in 2022, participation just kept expanding to include more Hispanic American people.

Hiking and running are the most popular outdoor activities for Hispanic participants, and the growth trend suggests, all things being equal, that participation in those activities will continue to increase for the next several years.

A woman wearing a yellow long-sleeved shirt, black leggings, a yellow helmet, and purple gloves is standing on a wooden platform high in a forest. She is holding onto a rope that is part of an outdoor recreation course. The background is filled with tall, thin trees and dense green foliage. The overall scene is bright and natural.

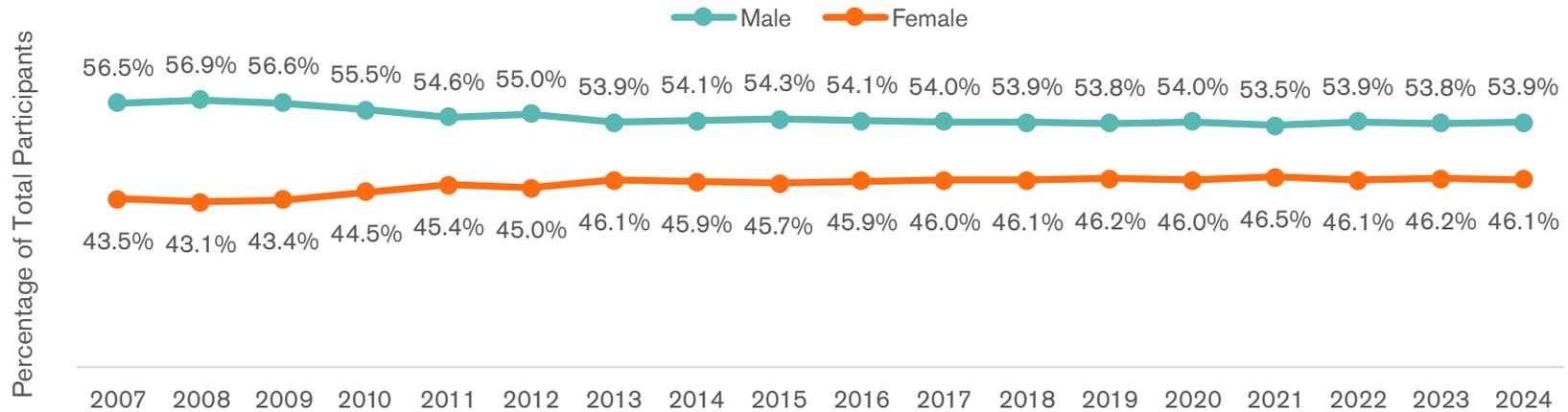
RATES OF PARTICIPATION IN OUTDOOR RECREATION

FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN OUTDOOR RECREATION

For the second year in a row—and the second year ever—more than half of American females participated in outdoor recreation activities. It's more than a trend – it's redefining the industry.

While the percentage of males in the total outdoor recreation participant base was very very slowly declining and in 2024, female participants lost a tiny bit of ground going from 46.2% in 2023 to 46.1% in 2024, or 83.5 million of the total 181.1 million total participants.

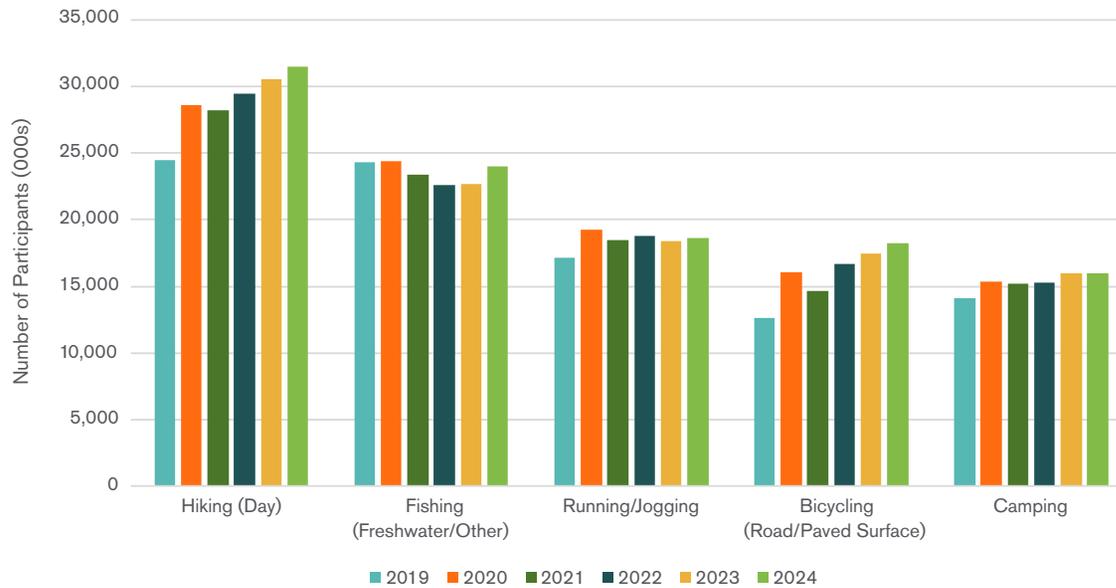
Share of the Outdoor Participant Base by Sex 2015 TO 2024



In 2024, the female outdoor recreation participation rate (participants/total population) increased to 53.2%. Additionally, 52.3% of 2024's new outdoor recreation participants were female. Female participation is trending up and will be more important than ever considering other variables like increasing economic and social power.



Female Participation Trends 2019 to 2024

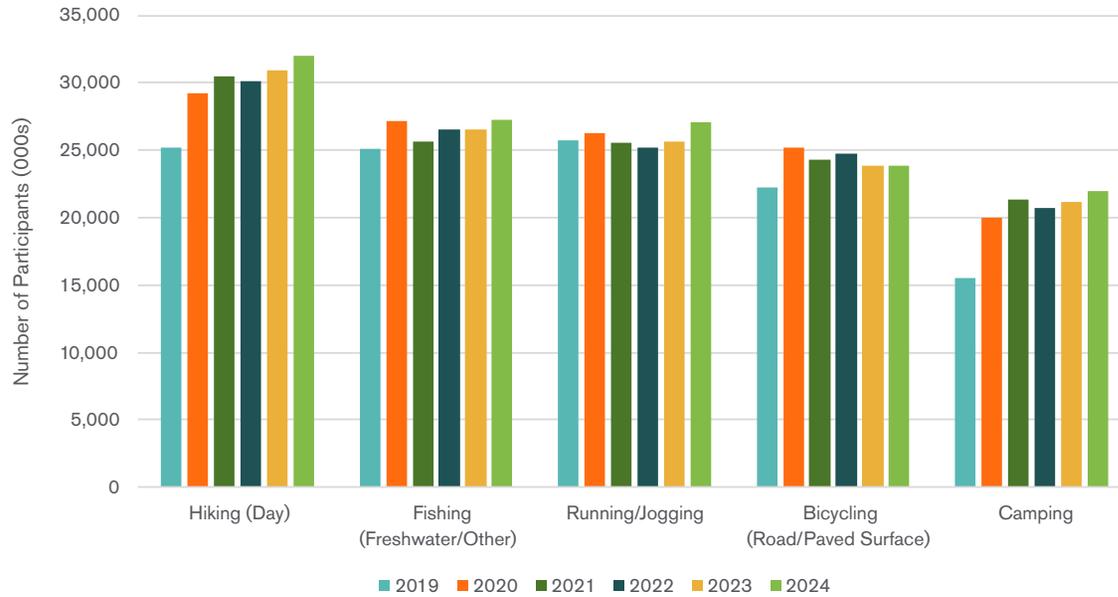


More than one million more females hiked in 2024 compared to 2023, further solidifying hiking’s position as favorite activity for females with 31.4 million female participants. An additional one million males joined them on a trail in 2024.

In 2023, there were 704,000 more new female anglers and 63,000 more male anglers, a very large variance. In just one year, fly fishing lost 63,000 female participants and freshwater lost 40,000 female participants. The loss of female anglers in 2024 doesn’t negate the gains made in 2023, but it does indicate that thousands of new female anglers did not feel engaged enough to continue their fishing adventures.



Male Participation Trends 2019 to 2024

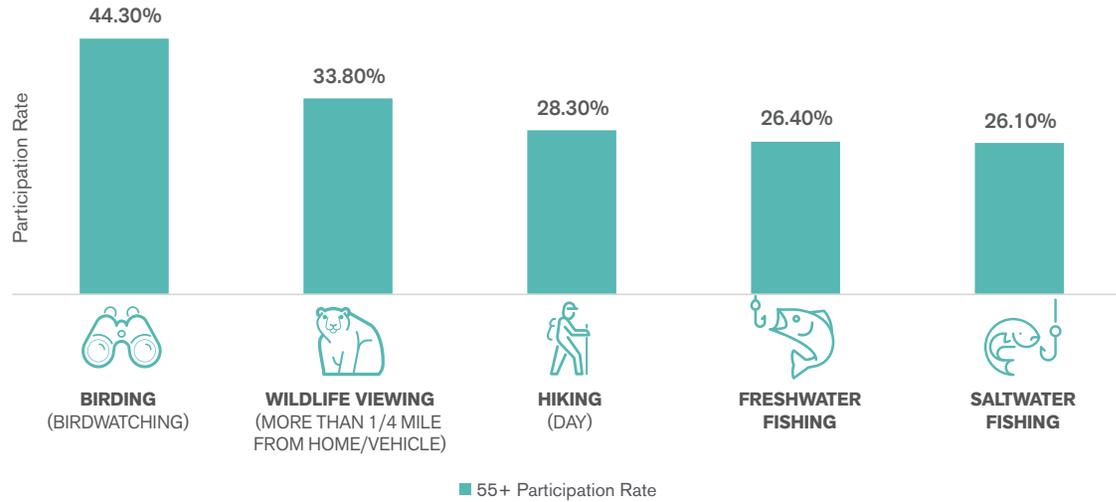


Overall, the patterns in participation between male and female participants have remained relatively steady (compared to spikes in overall participation) over the past four years. Hiking, running (road/paved), freshwater fishing, bicycling on roads, and camping have topped the list of outdoor favorites for both sexes for the past decade. The trends to watch in this category of data are high growth/low growth activities, particularly if you are interested in designing gear, or selling gear directly to consumers via brick-and-mortar or direct-to-consumer.

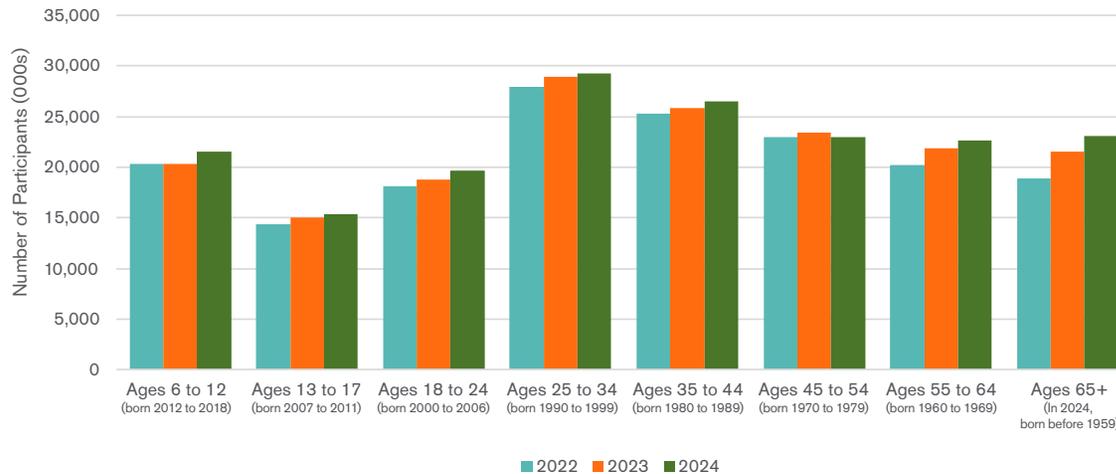


SENIOR PARTICIPATION IN OUTDOOR RECREATION

Top Five Activities for Participants Age 55 and Older



Participant Count by Age Group 2020 to 2024



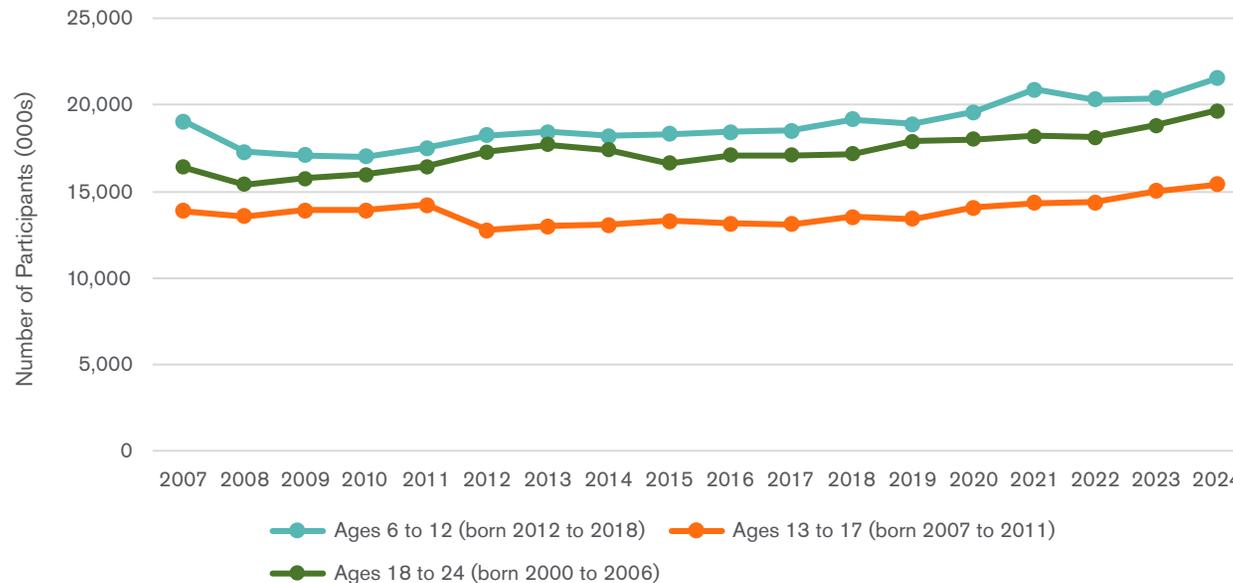
Older Americans made up a greater share of the outdoor recreation participant base than juveniles (aged 6 to 17) in 2024 and participation growth was highest of any age cohort at 12.6% for 55 and older participants. In fact, an additional 2 million Americans over 55 years old joined the outdoor participant base in 2024. The mature outdoor participant has significant advantages as target customers--they have more time and more money and they tend to share their outdoor pursuits with grandchildren, including purchasing gear, making outings memorable, and ensuring future generations have the skills and knowledge to enjoy the outdoors (just where we need more growth in frequency of participation).

YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Youth participation in outdoor recreation is at the highest level since we began measuring in 2007, but they're participating less frequently. If the frequency of outings becomes a lifelong pattern, the industry could lose billions of visits and potentially billions of dollars.

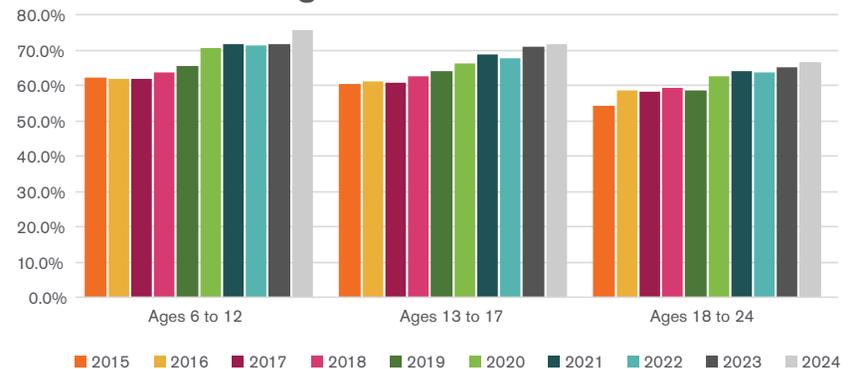
In 2024, slightly more than 20% of the outdoor recreation participant base were kids aged 6 to 17 years old for a total of 36.9 million juvenile participants, the highest number of kids to participate in outdoor recreation since we began measuring in 2007.

Children and Young Adult Participation by Count 2015 to 2024



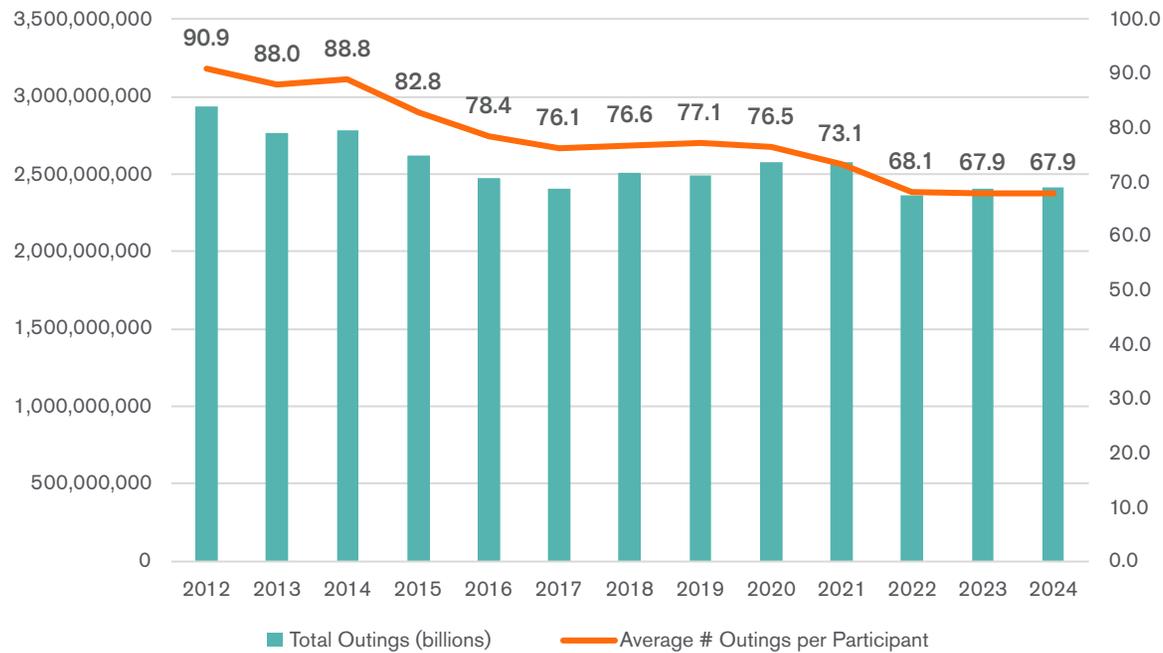
Youth participation rates in outdoor recreation activities have been on the rise for the past decade and only slightly accelerated during the Covid pandemic that struck in early 2020. Despite this momentum, kids are participating less frequently; the number of outings and the average number of outings per child have dropped as the percentage of America's children participating continues to grow. Focusing on increasing the frequency at which kids participate in outdoor recreation may be a key to expanding the outdoor market and support for issues key to outdoor recreation well into the future.

Participation Rates for Children and Young Adults 2015 to 2024



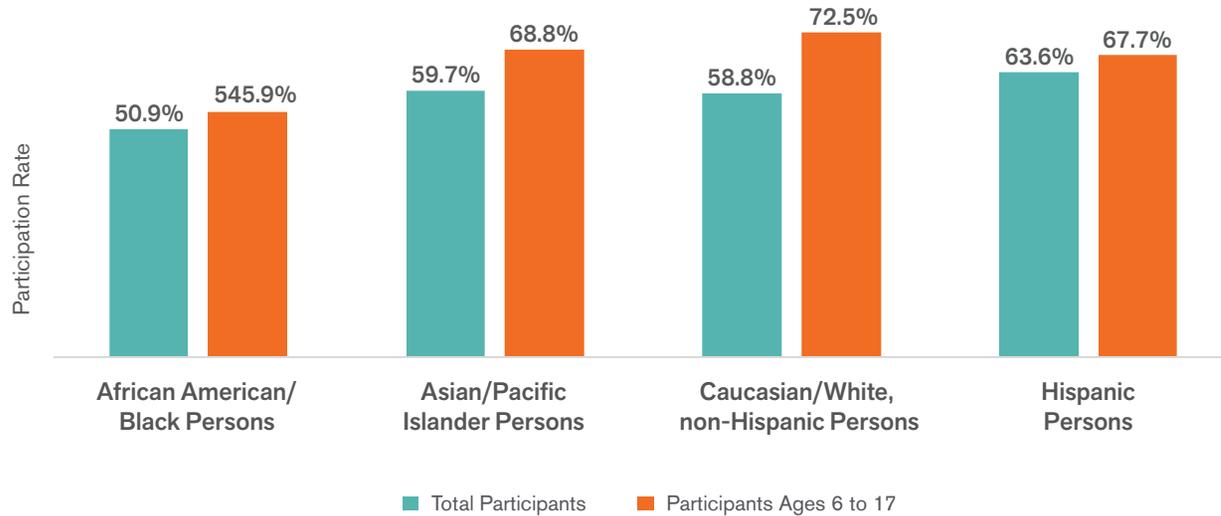
Despite growing numbers of American kids participating in outdoor recreation activities, they are participating less frequently every year. In 2014, just a decade ago, the average number of outings for juveniles was 88.8 per year; in 2024, that sunk to 67.9 outings per year on average. Youth outings are critically important because they predict lifetime behaviors in outdoor recreation. There are many reasons why the frequency of participation has fallen that include screen time, gaming that satisfies opiate receptors in manner similar to addictive behaviors including drugs and alcohol, and more demands on personal time of kids and parents, and inflation to name a few.

Youth Outings and Average Outings per Participant Age 6 to 17 Years 2015 to 2024



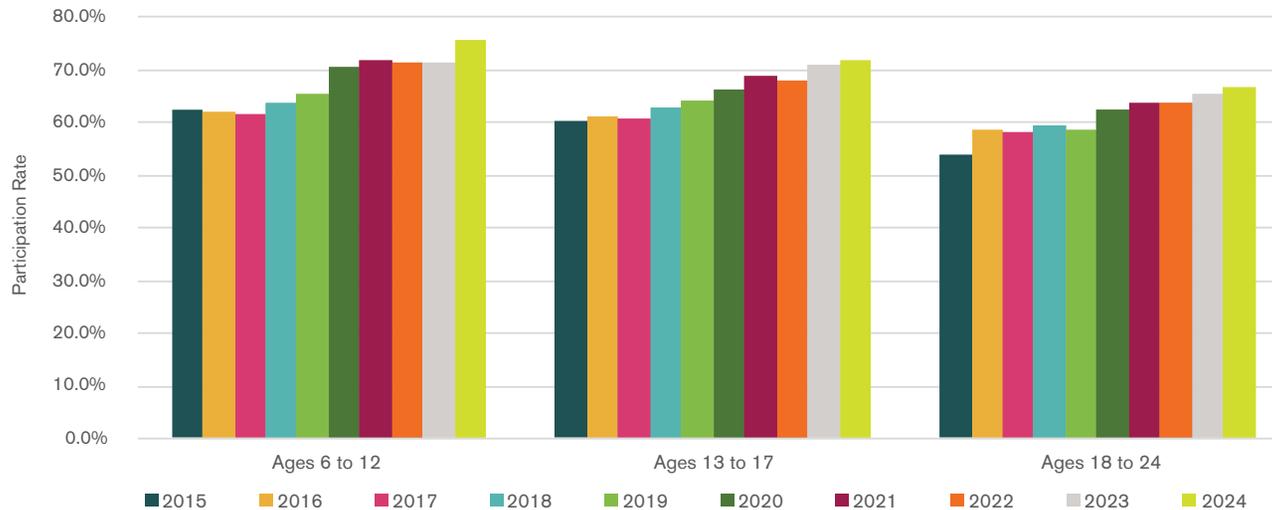
The juvenile participant base in outdoor recreation was more diverse than the overall participant base in 2024, but progress is concentrated on increases in the number and percentage of Hispanic kids. Considering that 15% of America’s population under 18 are Black children, more work is ahead to better engage Black kids and adults like the work the Outdoor Foundation’s Thrive Outside program is doing in 13 communities around the country.

Participation Rates for Youth Compared To All Participants by Race/Ethnicity 2024



The youngest kids have the highest participation rates in outdoor recreation. In 2024, 71.7% of boys and 66.4% of girls aged 6 to 12 years old participated in outdoor recreation activities. In fact, kids' participation rates in outdoor recreation have been growing at fairly stable rates (as shown below) since 2018. Unlike adults, there were not huge spikes in participation rates driven by the pandemic, most likely because the rates were high and increasing on a long trend unrelated to the Covid pandemic.

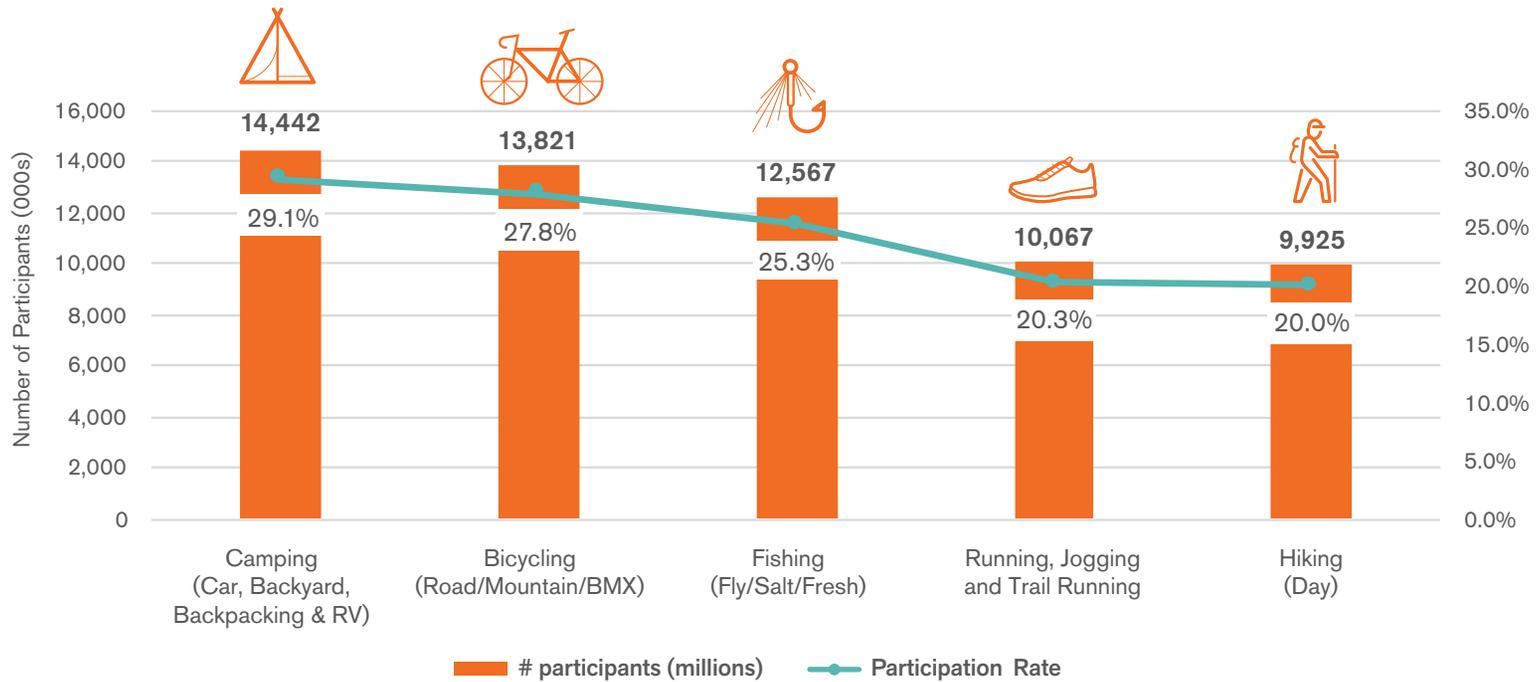
Participation Rates for Children and Young Adults 2015 to 2024



Because participation rates are so high, focusing on increasing the frequency of participation in outdoor recreation could have more impact on both sales in the outdoor market and future outdoor participation habits of today's juvenile participants ten and twenty years in the future.

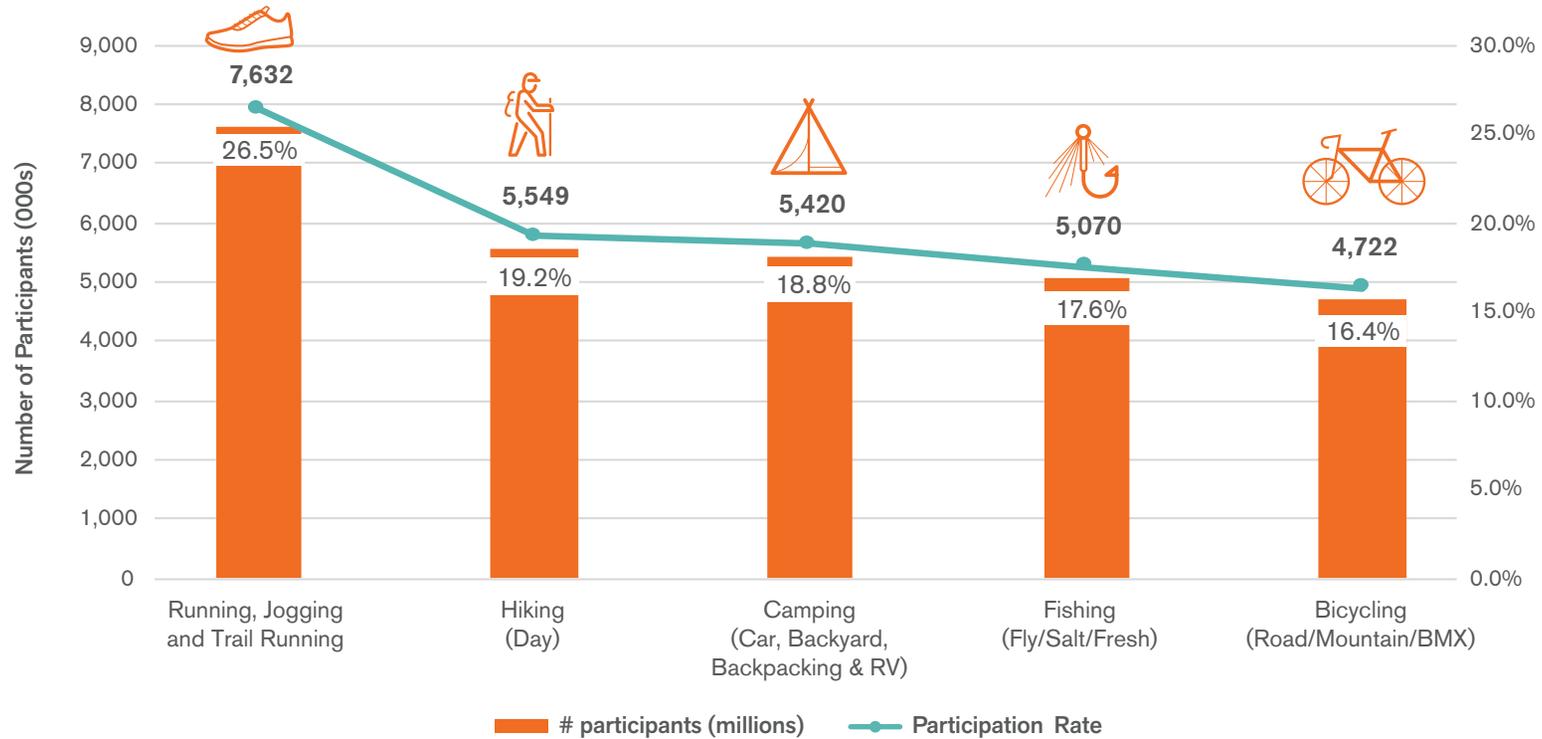
The list of the most popular outdoor recreation activities for kids was not significantly different than the most popular list for adults. It's not a mystery; kids participate most often in these activities with their parents.

Most Popular Outdoor Activities for Youth Ages 6 to 17 by Frequency of Participation 2024



Camping, ridings bikes, fishing, running, and hiking are most popular with kids and young adults and serve as “gateway” activities that lead to participation in a broad array of outdoor activities, from adventure racing to wake surfing. These activities are great places to start for both kids and adult participants new to outdoor recreation.

Most Popular Outdoor Activities 2024 for Young Adults Ages 18 to 24 by Participation Rate (% of the Population Participating) and by Count of Participants



For young adults, running is the most popular and most important outdoor activity. Running is important because it keeps busy young adults engaged; whether it's a trail run for calmness or a five-miler in the morning to stay fit, running keeps young adults connected to outdoor activities. This information might be of particular interest to the footwear industry, who might wonder when running habits start and specifics about the young adult core of their running market. Note that this information is available in OIA's Single Sport reports that summarize participation trends, including core and casual (by frequency), demographics, and cross participation with 117 different physical activities.

A man with dreadlocks, wearing a grey jacket and a blue plaid vest, is sitting and smiling warmly at a young girl. The girl is wearing a grey jacket over a green and white plaid shirt and is also smiling broadly. They are outdoors, possibly at a camp or festival, with a green building and other people in the background. The man has his hands on the girl's hands, and she has her hands on his lap. The overall mood is joyful and affectionate.

THE NEW OUTDOOR PARTICIPANT

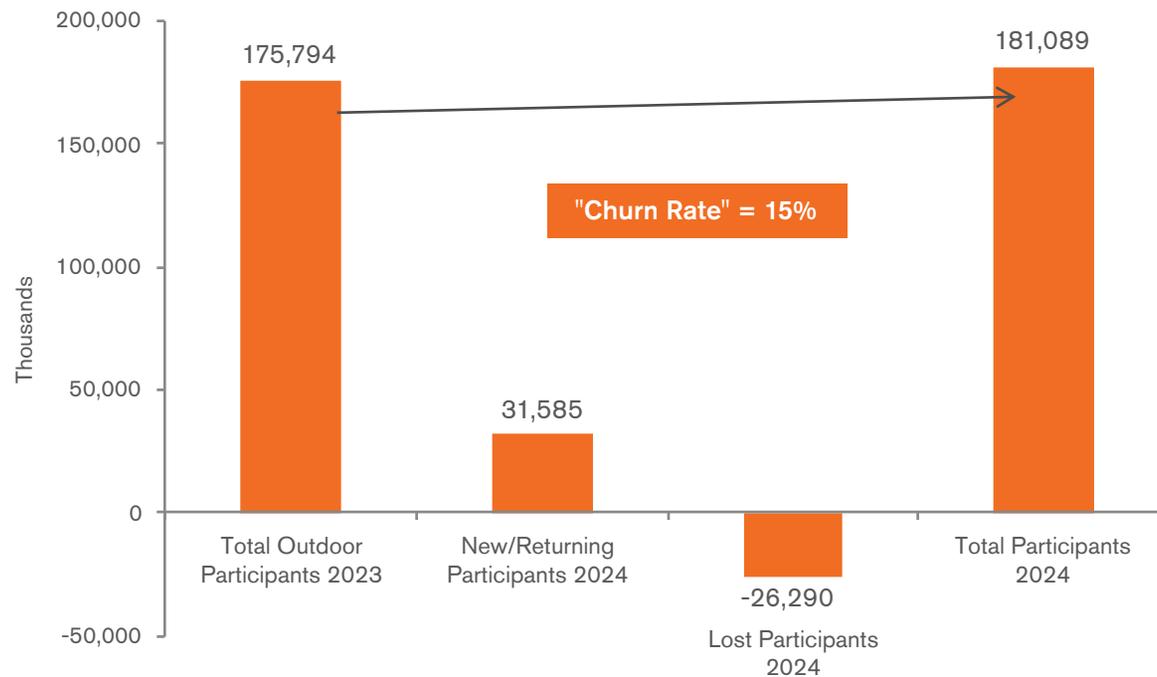
WHO'S SHAPING THE FUTURE OF OUTDOOR RECREATION?

Let's dive into the intersection of several cohorts and factors to help paint a picture of the trends that will impact the future of outdoor recreation.

THE LEAKY BUCKET – CHURN RATE IN OUTDOOR PARTICIPATION

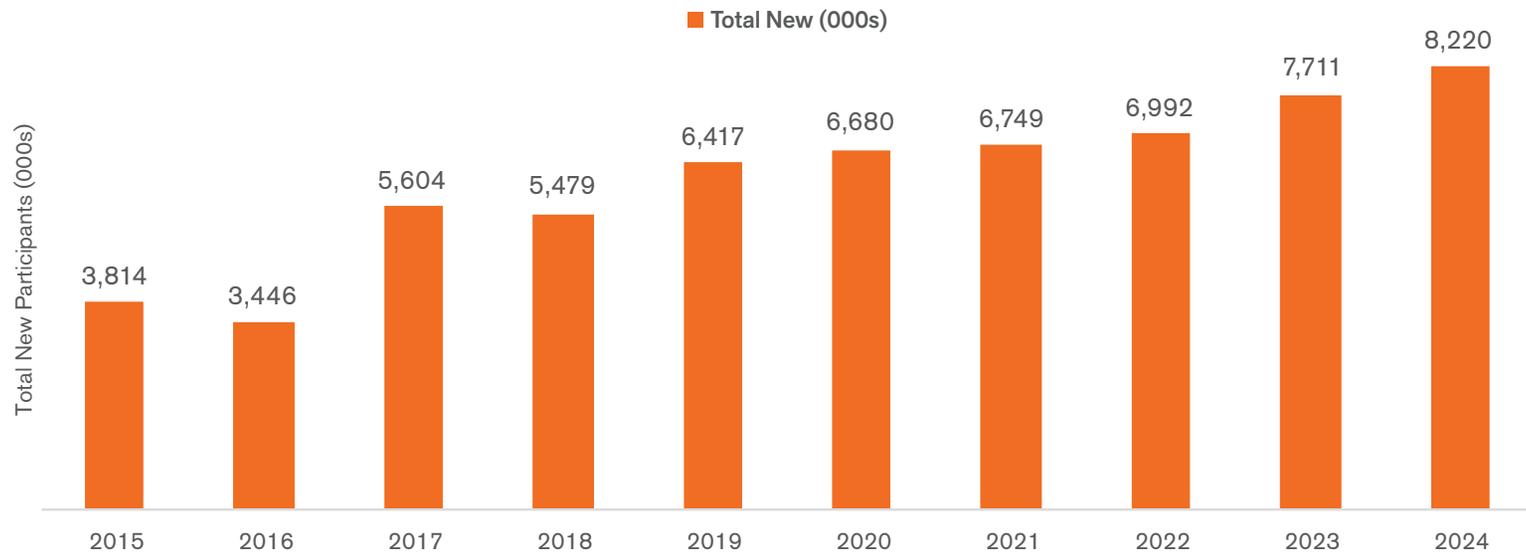
In 2024, there were 31.6 million participants who were either brand new to outdoor recreation or returning after a three-year or longer absence from outdoor activities. We lost 26.3 million participants for a net gain of roughly 5.3 million participants in 2024. Among the 31.6 million, 8.2 million were new to outdoor recreation.

New/Returning and Lost Outdoor Participants 2023 to 2024



The number of new participants has increased significantly over the past decade from about 3.5 million ten years ago to more than 8 million in 2024.

Total New (000s) Outdoor Recreation Participants 2015 to 2024

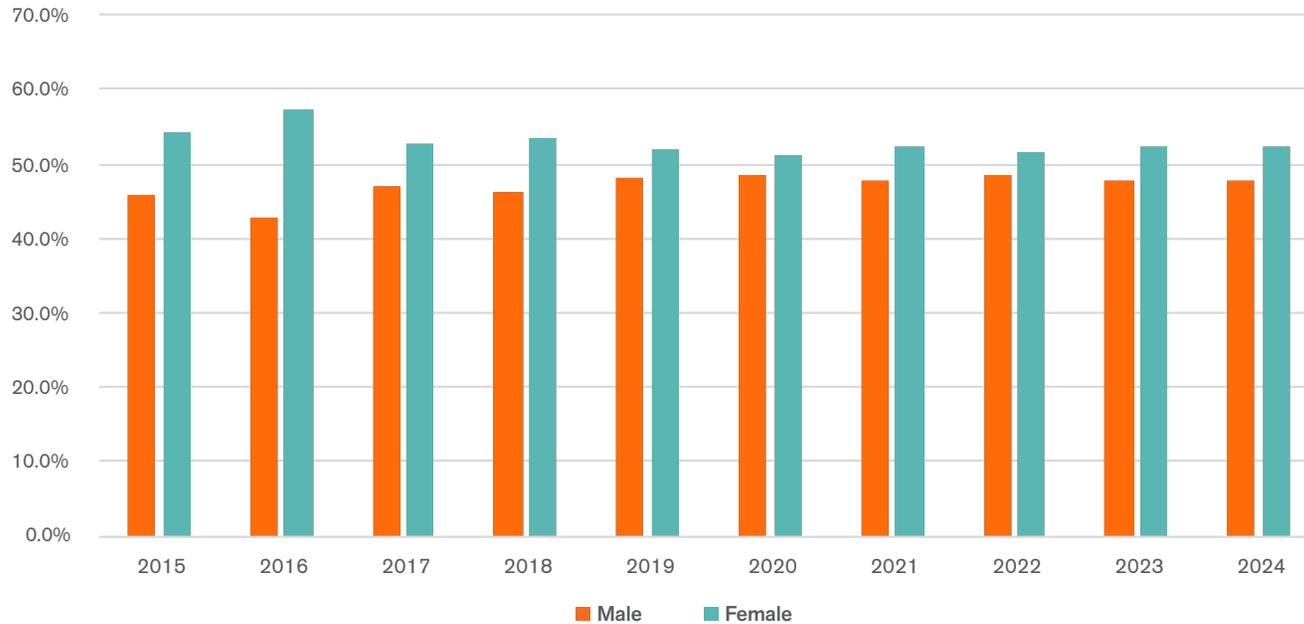


Overall, the 2024 class of new outdoor participants is significantly more diverse across demographic categories, including by gender, ethnicity/race, and age group, than the participant base overall.

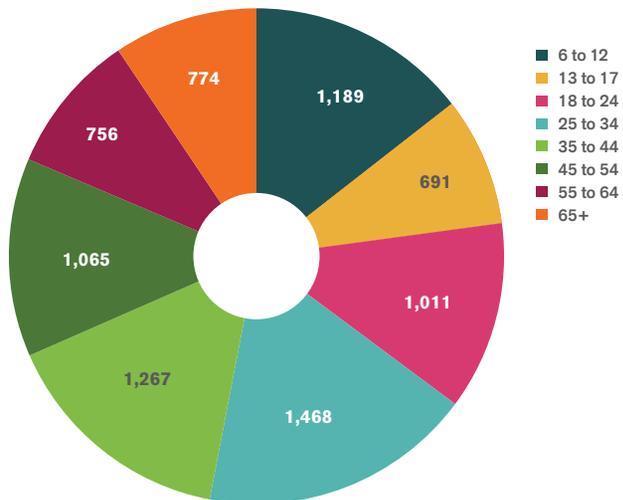
The cohort of new participants is majority female, as the new participant cohort has been for the past decade. In 2024, the percentage of female new participants was 52.3%—just below the ten-year average of 52.9% female participants. The influx of female participants, both girls and women, is likely to increase demand for women's-specific gear and apparel with some attention paid to sizing for the average American woman, who is a size 16.



New Outdoor Recreation Participants by Sex 2015 to 2024

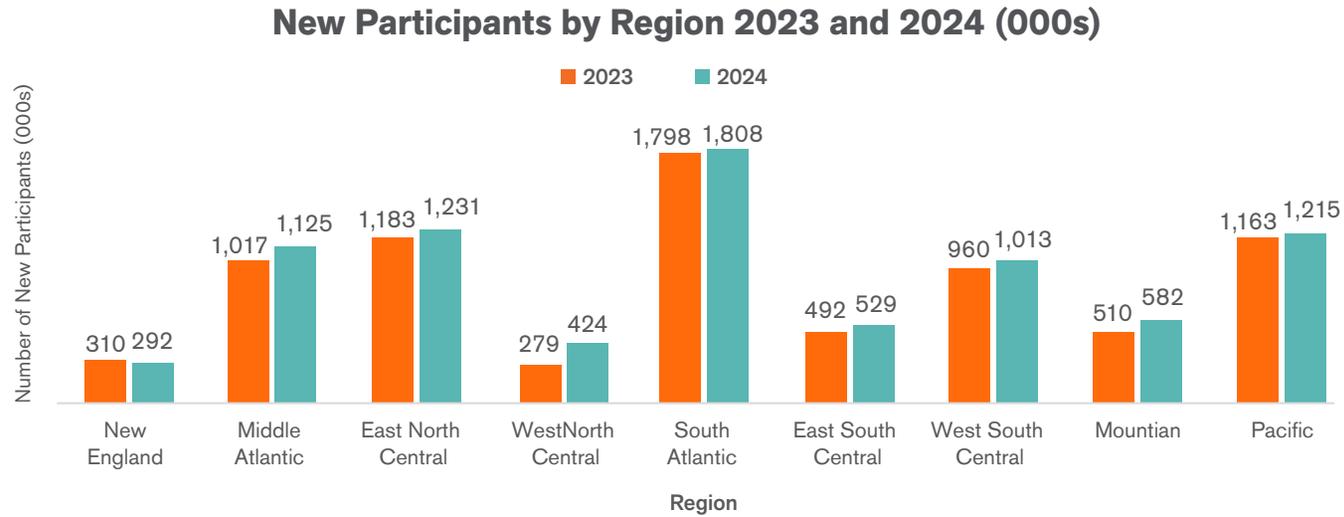


New Participants by Age Group 2024 by Number of Participants (000s)

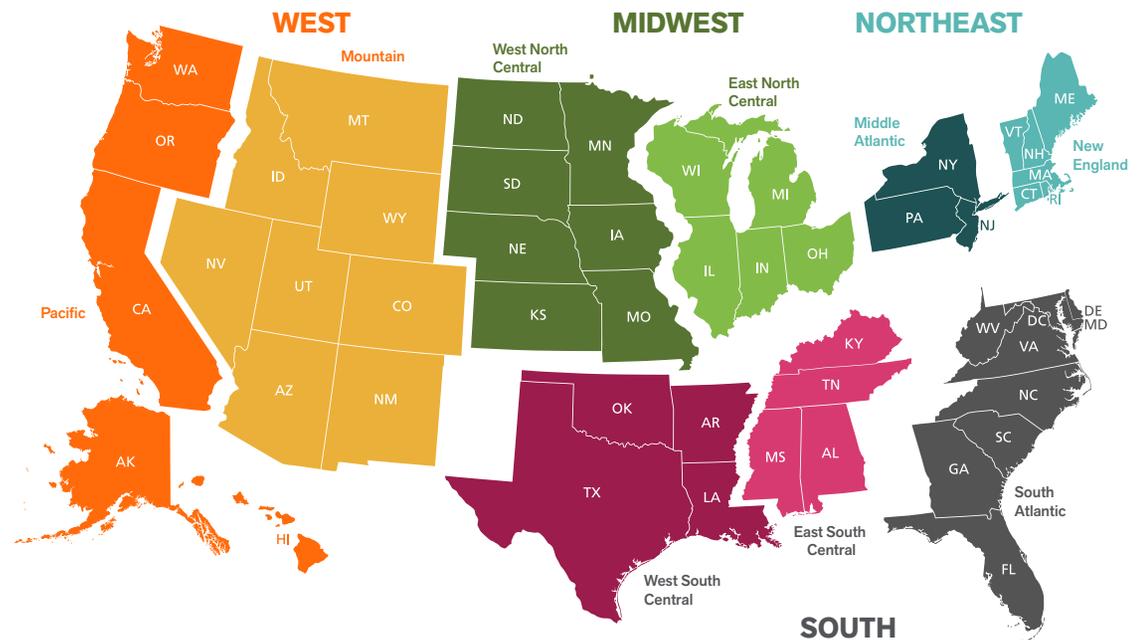


The mix of ages of new participants in 2024 was surprisingly even. The 25 to 34 age group added the most new participants at 1.5 million, followed by members of the 35 to 44 year age group with 1.3 million, and the 6 to 12 year age group with an impressive 1.2 million new participants.

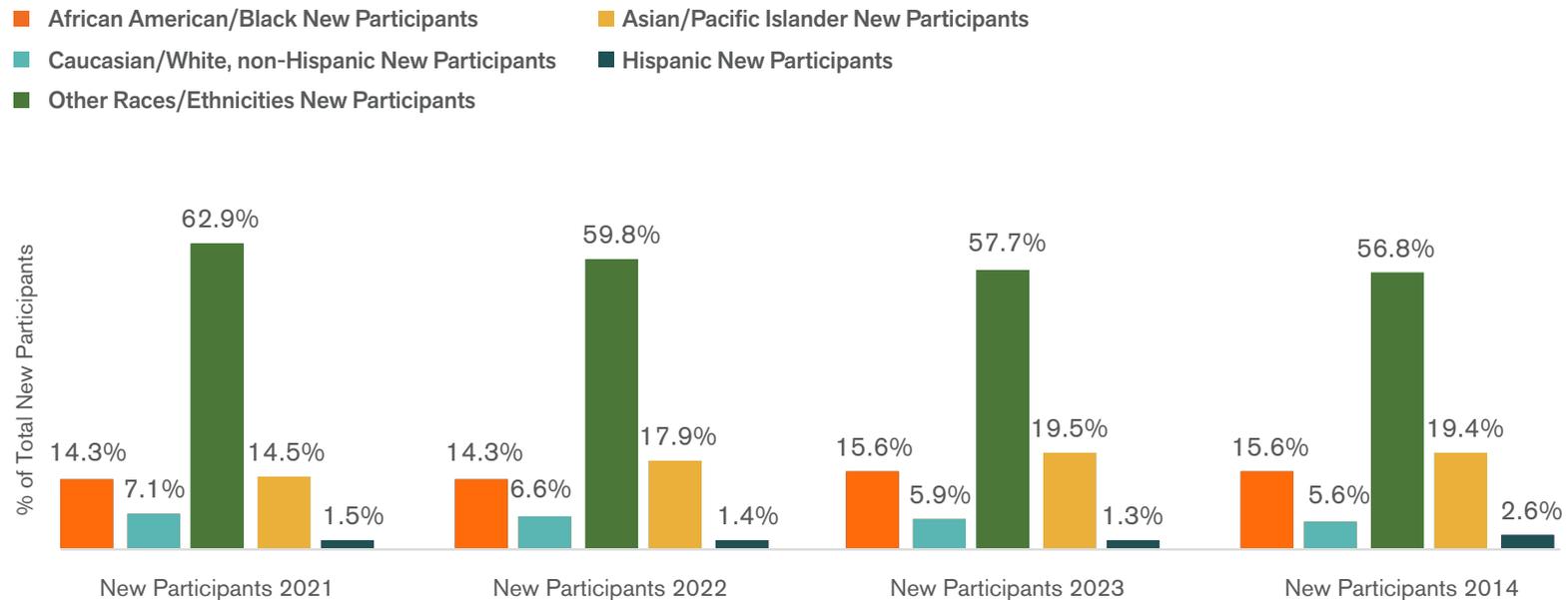
Once again in 2024, the South Atlantic region that includes all Eastern Coastal states south of Pennsylvania (see map) contributed the most new participants to the outdoor participant base. The distribution of new participants by region is directly correlated to the size of the population in the region.



The new participant cohort is significantly more diverse than the overall outdoor recreation participant base where 69.7% of participants are White persons. The Outdoor Foundation is a good example of an organization working to increase participation for kids who lack access, education, and gear to begin their outdoor recreation journeys. When people see other people who look like them and who they can relate to participating in activities like camping, hiking, running, and fishing it can open the door to that activity for them.



New Outdoor Participants 2021 to 2024 by Race/Ethnicity % of Total



Considering the data on both new and young outdoor recreation participants, it's probable that growth in overall participation will be most impacted by increases in participants who are People of Color. The percentage of new Black participants in outdoor recreation is significantly higher in new participants than it is for young participants and for the participant base as a whole. Growing diversity in the population means that growing diversity in the participant base will keep outdoor recreation healthy far into the future.

Trends in new participants and youth participation are harbingers of the future for outdoor recreation. The data on both new participants and youth participation shows growing diversity. While the outdoor participant base is still less diverse than the overall U.S. population, that trend is swiftly changing. Growing diversity across all measures including race/ethnicity, age, geographic location, and sex will require effort to understand the evolving profile of the outdoor participant. The new face of outdoor will be less white and less male--not because of a loss of these men and boys in the participant base, but because of an influx of people that are more often female and People of Color. Learning to effectively market outdoor recreation to these new participants with innovative product design, engaged communities, and a welcoming atmosphere will help nurture their growth into core participants.



CONCLUSION

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The 2024 Outdoor Participation Trends Report reveals a pivotal year of growth and diversification, marking a renewed momentum in outdoor recreation. The resurgence of core participants—those most deeply engaged—for the first time in over a decade, alongside rising participation among seniors, young adults, and Communities of Color, reflects a more inclusive and engaged outdoor community. Although average outings per person have declined, the expansion of the participant base and the popularity of accessible activities like hiking and camping lay a strong foundation for long-term engagement. These trends signal meaningful opportunities for the outdoor industry to evolve, embrace new audiences, and build a more resilient future.





METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

All participation statistics are from a nationwide study conducted during the 2024 calendar year by Sports Marketing Surveys USA (SMS). Under the guidance of the Outdoor Foundation, the Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) and six other sports industry associations that make up the Physical Activity Council (PAC), the participation study was designed and launched by Digital Research (DRI). All other data is attributable to the SFIA/SMS research partnership. This survey began in 2007.





SAMPLE SPECIFICATION

SAMPLE SPECIFICATION

During 2024, a total of 18,000 online interviews were carried out with a nationwide sample of individuals from U.S. proprietary online panels representative of the U.S. population for people aged six and older. Strict quotas associated with gender, age, income, region, and ethnicity were followed to ensure a balanced sample.

The 2024 participation survey sample size of 18,000 completed interviews provides a high degree of statistical accuracy. All surveys are subject to some level of standard error - that is, the degree to which the results might differ from those obtained by a complete census of every person in the U.S. A sport with a participation rate of five percent has a confidence interval of plus or minus 0.32 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

A weighting technique was used to balance the data to reflect the total U.S. population ages six and above. The following variables were used: gender, age, income, ethnicity, household size, region, and population density. The total population figure used was 304,745,039 people aged six and older.

Activity reported is based on a rolling 12-month participation rate. All charts represent data from US populations ages 6 and over, unless otherwise specified.

If you have specific questions regarding the methodology, please contact Sports Marketing Surveys at info@sportsmarketingsurveysusa.com.





APPENDIX

APPENDIX

See the attached Excel Companion.

Topline Participation with Core and Casual

Total Participation with General Demographics

Top 5 Outdoor Activities with Full Demographics

Core Participation with General Demographics

Youth Participation with General Demographics

Male and Female by Outdoor Activity

New Participant Demographics



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