

WHO IS VISITING LAKES IN IOWA?

A Summary of the Iowa Lakes Survey Demographics

Iowa State University, Department of Economics and
Center for Agricultural and Rural Development

The lakes of Iowa are popular destinations for single- and multiple-day recreational trips among Iowans. In 2002, approximately 62 percent of Iowans visited a lake in Iowa at least once, with an average of about eight unique visits a year per resident. Yet, while the frequency of visits by residents to Iowa lakes is significant, usage does vary across different groups. Here, lake visitation habits are presented based upon several key demographics, including the following:

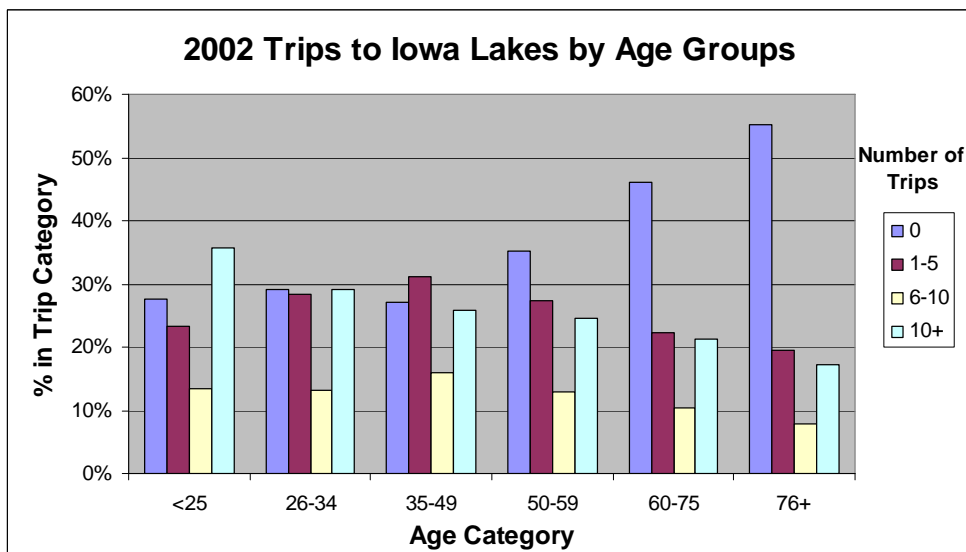
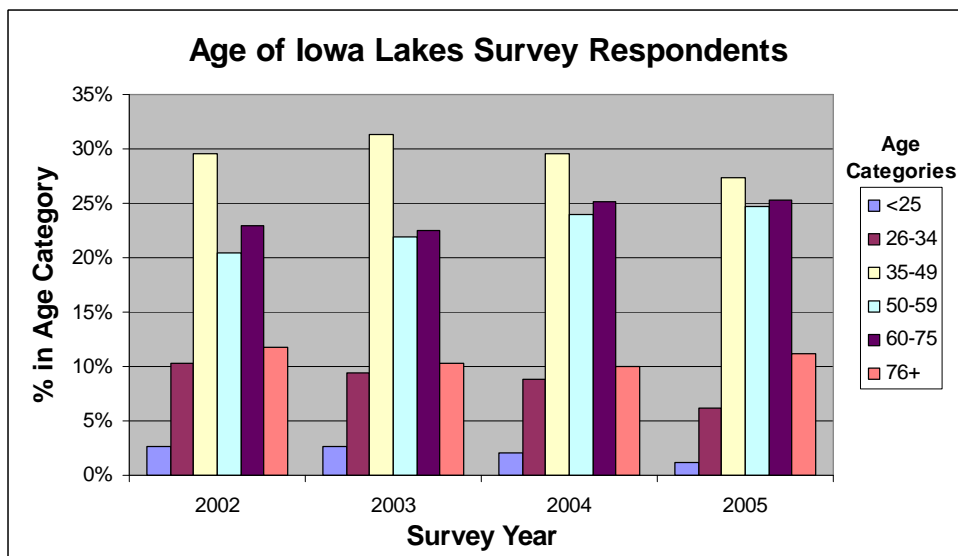
- Age
- Education
- Gender
- Income
- Number of Children in Household

Two graphs are presented for each of the demographic categories. The first graph is a summary of the respondents to the Iowa lakes survey. The second graph presents the percentage of individuals in each demographic category based upon the number of trips to Iowa lakes they took in 2002. This gives an illustration, for each demographic category, of which individuals more or less frequently visit Iowa lakes. Overall, a diverse spectrum of Iowans visit Iowa lakes.

Age

Key Findings

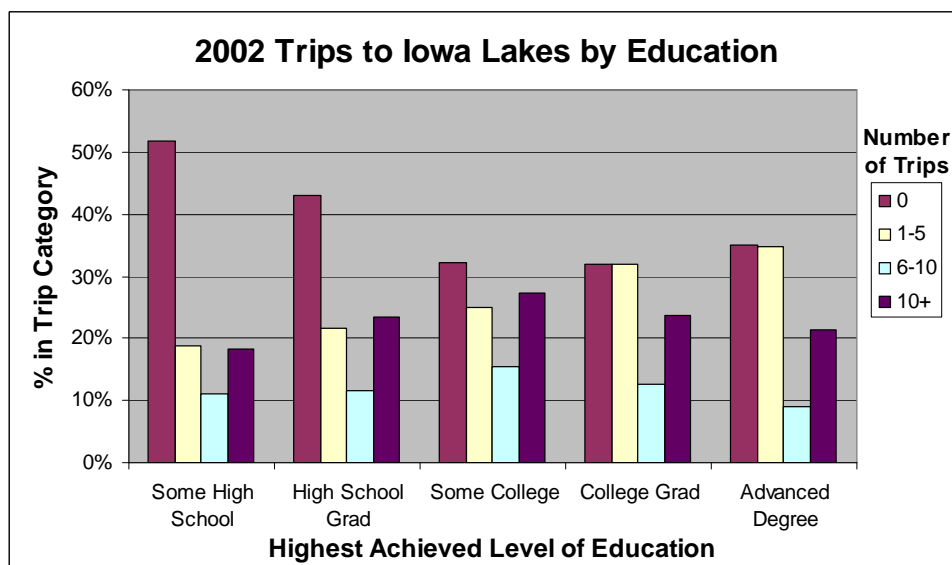
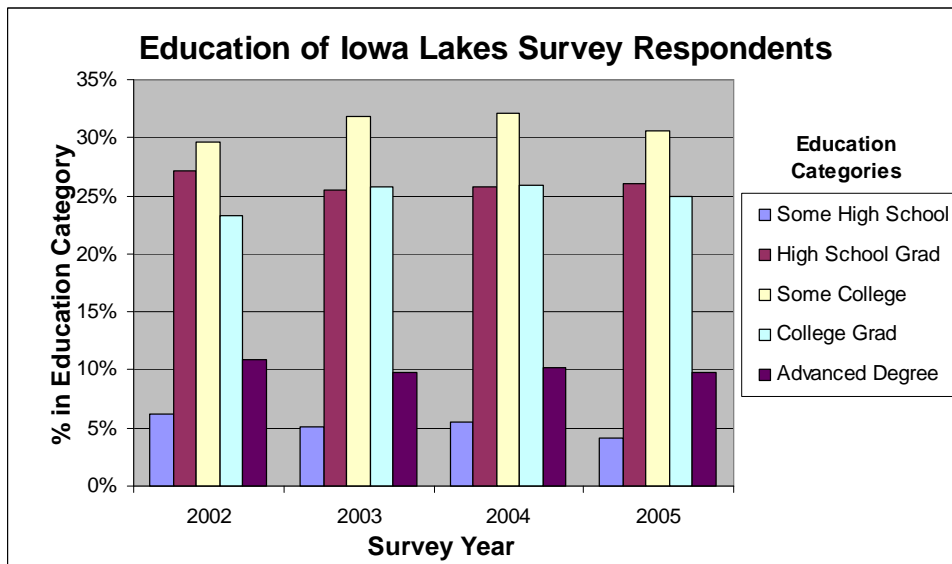
- The most common age group of respondents to the Iowa lakes survey was individuals between 35 and 49 years of age.
- Individuals under the age of 25 have the highest percentage of 10 or more visits to Iowa lakes. The percentage of individuals who visited lakes 10 or more times is decreasing in age.
- Individuals over the age of 76 have the highest percentage of 0 visits to Iowa lakes. The percentage of individuals who visited lakes 0 times is increasing in age.
- Overall, a large percentage of individuals in each age group visited lakes in Iowa at least once during the year, but individuals under the age of 60 more frequently visit Iowa lakes.



Education

Key Findings

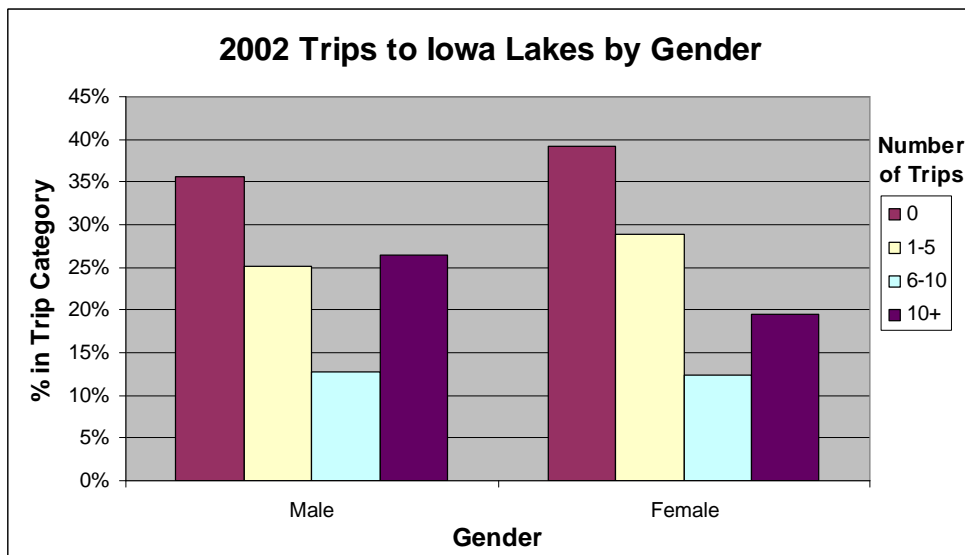
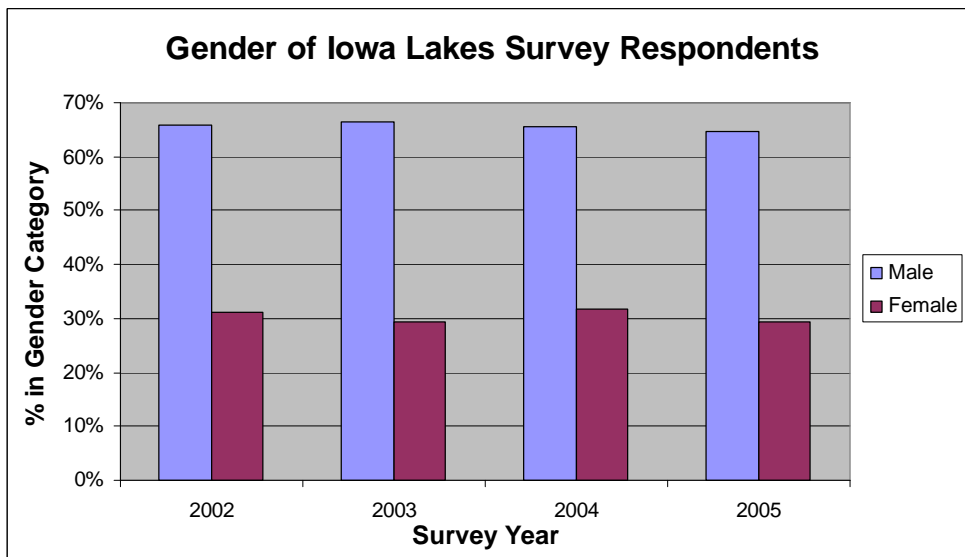
- The highest level of education achieved by the majority of respondents to the Iowa lakes survey was “some college.” A slightly smaller percentage of respondents have either completed high school or graduated from college.
- Individuals who completed some college had the highest percentage of 10 or more visits to Iowa lakes. But similar percentages are found for individuals who completed high school or graduated from college.
- Individuals who completed only some high school had the greatest percentage of zero visits to Iowa lakes. The percentage of individuals who did not visit lakes in Iowa decreases among those with more completed education.



Gender

Key Findings

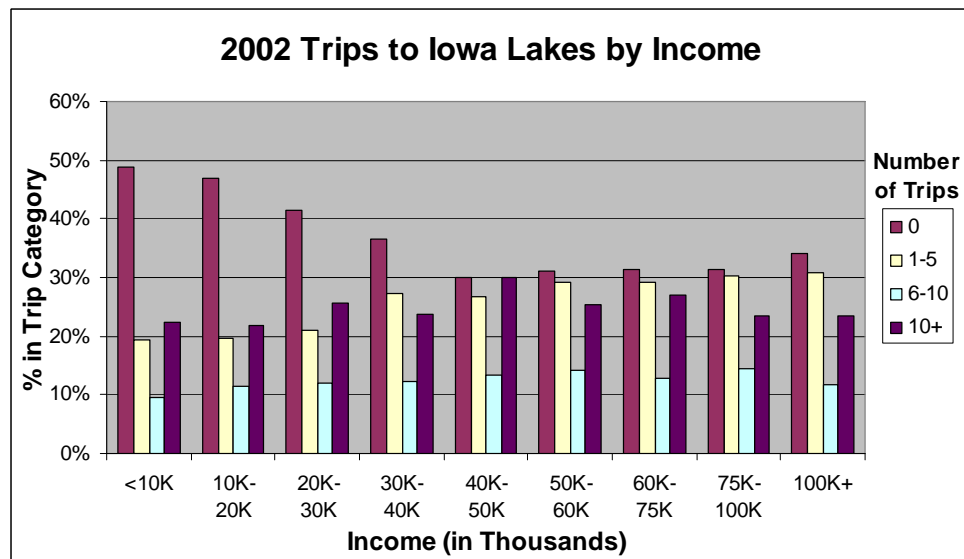
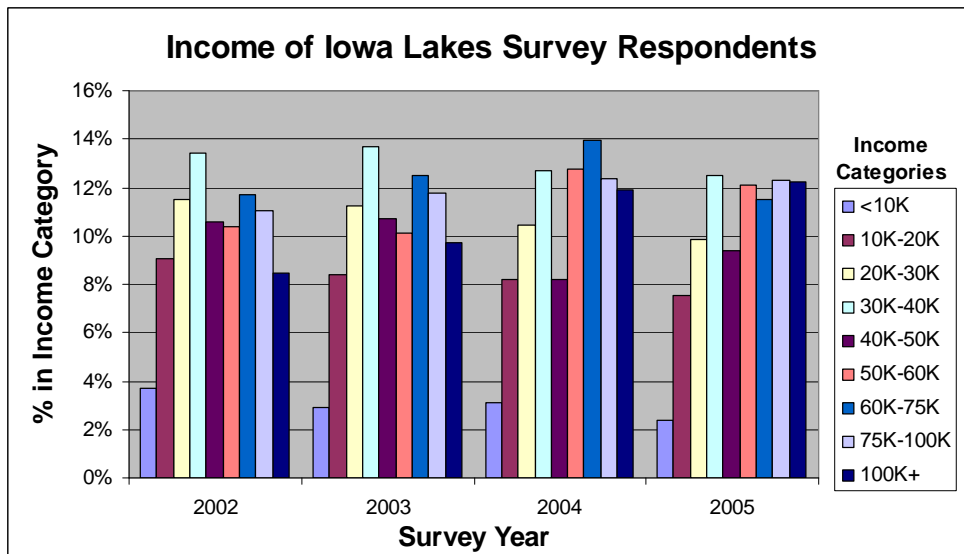
- The majority of respondents to the Iowa lakes survey were males (approximately 65 percent in each year).
- Males responded that they, by a small margin compared to females, more frequently visited Iowa lakes more than 10 times.
- Females responded that they, by a small margin compared to males, more frequently did not visit any lakes in Iowa.
- Overall, the frequency of trips by males and females are quite similar.



Income

Key Findings

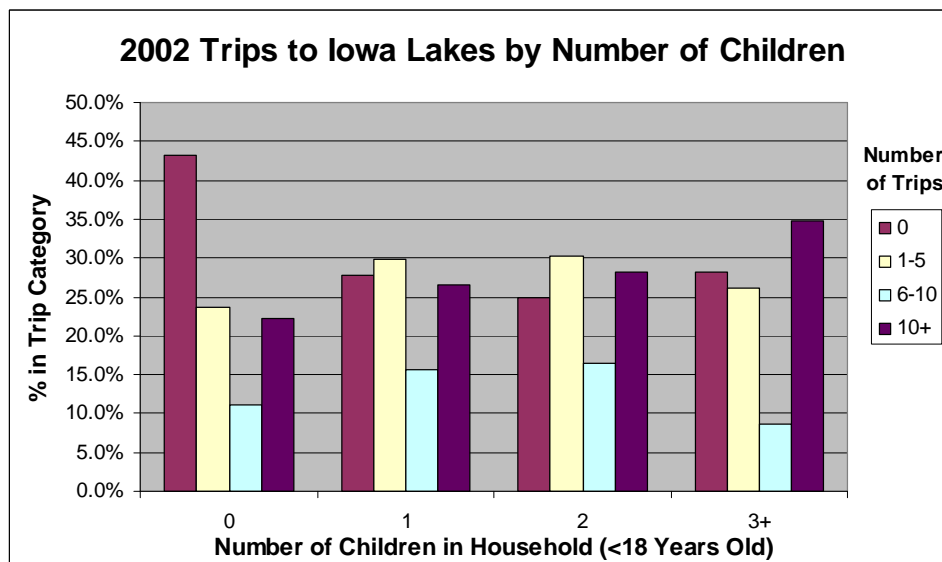
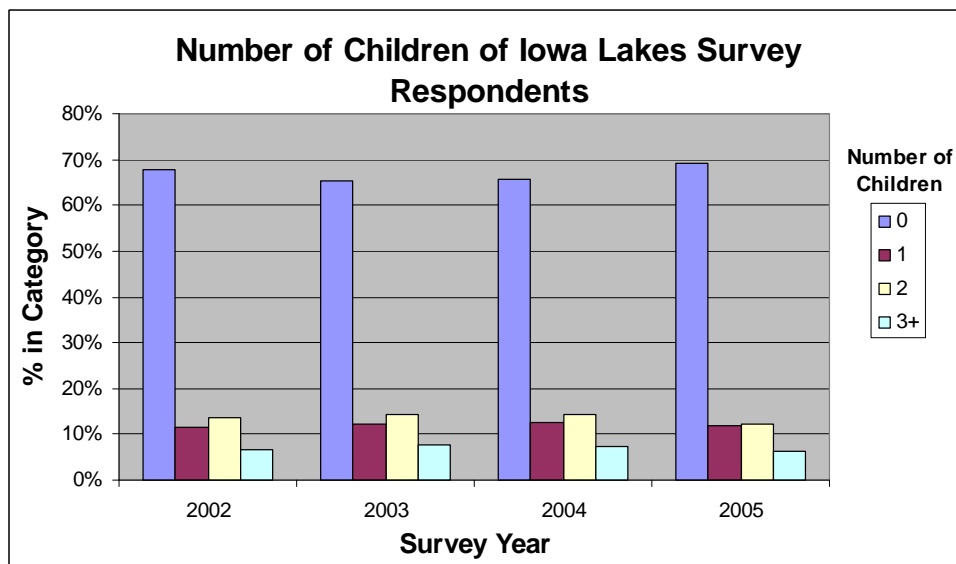
- The percentage of respondents to the Iowa lakes survey in each annual income category is similar. This indicates that the survey had an even distribution of respondents over the range of incomes in Iowa.
- The percentage of individuals who visited lakes in Iowa 10 or more times is highest for those in the 40K–50K income range. Over 20 percent of individuals in each income category visited Iowa lakes 10 or more times.
- The percentage of individuals who did not visit any lakes in Iowa is highest for those in the lowest income category. As income increases, the percentage of individuals who did not visit any lakes in Iowa decreases.
- Overall, it was found that usage of Iowa lakes is common over all incomes but is more frequent among those with middle and higher incomes.



Number of Children

Key Findings

- The majority of the respondents to the Iowa lakes survey have no children under the age of 18 in their homes. Approximately 35 percent of respondents have at least one child at home.
- The percentage of individuals who visited lakes in Iowa 10 or more times is highest for those with three or more children. The percentage of individuals who visited Iowa lakes 10 or more times is increasing in households with more children.
- The percentage of individuals who did not visit any lakes in Iowa is highest among those with no children.
- Overall, it was found that usage of Iowa lakes is common for households with and without children, but households with more children more frequently visit Iowa lakes.



What Activities Do Visitors to Iowa Lakes Participate In?

Iowans engage in a number of different activities at lakes in Iowa. The following chart summarizes what activities visitors to Iowa lakes in 2002 regularly engaged in during their visits. For each recreational activity, the percentages are broken down by the total number of visits during the year.

The data collected through the Iowa lakes survey shows that the most popular activities at Iowa lakes are fishing, picnicking, nature appreciation, boating, and swimming. The least common activities are sailing and winter recreation (for example, snowmobiling). As well, the data shows that individuals who visit lakes many times during the year (10 or more visits) typically participate in the same activities as individuals who do not visit Iowa lakes as often (1-5 visits).

