8 Recreational gains and losses

Tables and figures

Table 8.1 Sources and methods of information on recreation users/beneficiaries

Source/ method		Comments
1	Long period counts using people counters	Infra-red or other counters installed over a period (at least March to September). Counters are manually calibrated to relate passages to adult visits. Mainly applied in detailed studies: in conjunction with a CV survey – see MCM, Section 8.5.3 (Penning-Rowsell et al., 2013).
2	Short period manual counts/ surveys	Manual counts/surveys over a period of days normally including the August Bank holiday. At initial stage, this method might be combined with site visits and at detailed study stage, with the CV survey.
3	CV survey data	CV survey data on the frequency of visiting by local residents in conjunction with census data on the number of adult residents and staying visitors (in conjunction with managers' estimates of occupancy rates) can be used to generate visit number estimates. However, the tendency of survey respondents to overstate their visiting frequency has to be noted - see the Corton Case Study in the MCM, Section 8.7 (Penning-Rowsell et al., 2013).
4	Old survey/ count data for the project	Planning, tourism or recreation departments of local authorities or local colleges or schools may have undertaken surveys or counts at the project site in the past, which can be updated to indicate current levels of use.
5	Inferred estimate	The number of visits to a coastal or river site is inferred from counts of visits to a related site nearby such as: Car and coach parks multiplied by the average adult car or coach occupancy rate (Hengistbury Head), funfair, cafe, visitor centre, historic site or museum (Hurst Spit and Hurst Spit castle). This requires estimating the proportion of all visitors to the project site who also use the counted site and vice versa. At detailed level, this can be done in conjunction with the CV survey.
6	Visitor equations	A number of equations have been developed which predicts-distance-frequency functions so that from census data on the population in different zones a prediction can be made as to the number of visitors generated by the site.
7	Estimates from an informed persons or source	Written, telephone or personal contacts with: Car park attendants, park rangers/wardens, visitor centre staff, staff at associated visitor attractions, local authority tourism, sport and recreation or planning staff, regional or local offices of organisations such as the English Tourist Board, National Trust or English Heritage and their Welsh equivalents, the Environment Agency's recreation and fisheries staff, managers of general recreation or staying visitor facilities or tourism business organisations that may have information on bedspaces and occupancy rates - see the Corton Case Study in the MCM, Section 8.7 (Penning-Rowsell et al., 2013); both commercial and club managers of specialist facilities (e.g. sailing, boating/sailboarding, fishing, birdwatching) and specialist organisations at national regional and local level for information on the availability of alternative sites e.g. for caravans or sailing.
8	Average number of visits to equivalent sites	This benefit transfer approach is only suitable for initial and strategic studies. The number of adult visits to the project site is estimated as being of the same order as the number of visits made to an equivalent site. However, there are few sites for which good data are available and little research to enable reliable identification of an equivalent site.

Table 8.2 Examples of visit numbers used for benefit assessment purposes

Site*		Annual visit numbers	
Name	**Characteristics**	**High estimate**	**Low estimate**
Undeveloped coastal sites			
Hengistbury Head, Christchurch, Dorset	Natural headland, a SSSI, with nature, geology and archaeology sites	609,000	584,000
Hurst Spit, Hampshire	Undeveloped shingle spit with heritage site, Hurst Castle	107,000	880,000
Developed coastal sites			
St Mildred's Bay, Westgate, Kent	Small resort with promenade and sandy beach	212,000	-
Cliftonville, near Margate Kent	Small resort with clifftops and a mainly sandy beach	146,000	136,000
Corton, near Lowestoft, Suffolk	Small village resort with cliffs and partly sandy beach	97,000	75,000
River sites			
Local park	Park drawing visitors from 800m radius with no special attractions	30,000	60,000
'Honey pot' site, country park	Site drawing visitors from a 3 km radius	60,000	250,000

* At all these sites, both coastal and riverine, almost all the visits involved informal use of the site for activities such as sitting, sunbathing and picnicking, strolling, dog walking, and, at coasts, playing informal games, playing in the sand and swimming or paddling. Very few visits involved specialist uses such as angling or boating or sailboarding.

Table 8.3 £ gains and losses per adult visit with coastal protection scheme options at coastal sites

		£ per adult visit updated to 2024	
		Mean gain with options	Mean loss with 'Do nothing'
Beach and promenade erosion			
Yellow Manual Standard data: 4 sites	Nourished beach and promenade	4.06	9.77
Lee-on-Solent	(a) Shingle beach renourishment	2.33	5.03
	(b) Rock groynes with shingle beach renourishment	2.28	
Herne Bay Visitors Centre	(a) Reef or jetty with no boat facilities	6.84	9.40
	(b) Reef or jetty with boat facilities	3.55	
	(c) Higher seawall, and promenade, rock groynes	-4.38	
Cliftonville	(a) Concrete lower promenade	6.10	9.40
	(b) Rock lower promenade	3.60	
Corton	(a) Hold the line for a limited period. Short term protection to cliff, limited access to beach and along seawall	3.50	3.52
	(b) Hold the line for a longer period >50 years. Full access along renewed seawall and onto all the beach from village	15.66	
	(c) Managed retreat. Sea defences and seawall removed to leave a 'natural' seafront', direct access from village to beach	2.45	
St Mildred's Bay	Improved beach and promenade	3.82	14.08
Hastings	Beach improvement	0.00	9.96
Breach Scenarios			
Hengistbury Head	(a) 5 rock groynes full cliff protection	0.05	5.87
	(b) 3 rock groynes partial protection	-3.29	
	(c) Beach nourishment Annual disruption	-4.94	
Hurst Spit	Slightly enlarged shingle spit	0.91	8.84

NB. This is Table 8.7 in the MCM 2013

Table 8.4 £ value of losses and gains per visit for various changes at river sites

Site	£ mean value of loss: updated to 2023	£ mean value of gain: updated to 2023
River Misbourne: Low flows		
Visitors	6.22	3.63
Residents	6.20	3.08
River Wey: Low flows		
Residents		3.52
River Ravensbourne: Full River restoration		
Visitors and residents		3.25
River Skerne: River restoration		
Residents		4.12

NB. This is Table 8.8 in the MCM 2013