SEASONAL RECREATION VISITATION

Project Overview

Joshua Tree and Yosemite National Parks | 2021–2025

Joshua Tree drew its largest share of recreation visits in spring, while Yosemite peaked in summer. I compared five years of National Park Service data in R to see when each park was busiest and give park teams a historical baseline for planning.

When visits peaked

Spring accounted for 33.56% of Joshua Tree visits (5,141,192), and summer accounted for 41.04% of Yosemite visits (7,901,072). March led at Joshua Tree with about 410,905 visits on average. At Yosemite, August averaged 537,020 visits and July was close behind at 535,577.

How park teams could use this

Joshua Tree teams could review staffing and visitor information ahead of spring. Yosemite teams could review service needs for both July and August. Day-level and site-specific data would be needed to make decisions about crowding at individual locations.

How I checked the results

I checked 10 annual records and 120 monthly records. For all 10 park-years, the 12 monthly counts added up to exactly the totals reported in both NPS workbooks. The 12-script R workflow produced five data tables and four charts.

Annual trends and scope

Yosemite visits rose each year, from 3.29 million in 2021 to 4.28 million in 2025. Joshua Tree reached 3.27 million in 2023, its highest annual count in the study. Counts can include repeat visits. The analysis describes patterns and did not test their causes.

National Park Service Visitor Use Statistics

See the companion Methodology and Findings PDF for definitions, charts, and rerun steps.