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CHANDLERTHINKS

FINAL REPORT

Currituck County Department of Travel and Tourism

First-Time Visitor Study

April 2021

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PURPOSE & METHODOLOGY



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PURPOSE & METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to understand the Currituck Outer Banks first-time visitor.

Methodology

The quantitative survey consisted of approximated 15 questions targeted to individuals who have inquired about Currituck Outer Banks in the past 24 months. The survey was designed to understand travel intent and planning.

An email was sent to over 39,000 inquiry records. Approximately 13,500 travelers opened the email and a total of 511 completed the survey equating to a 4% participation rate. The 511 completes provides a margin of error of +/- 4.42% at the 95% confidence level. The survey's were completed from March 26, 2021 through April 8, 2021.

Objectives

The survey was designed to measure:

- Visitation
- Party composition
- Trip planning habits
- Future visitation to Currituck Outer Banks
- Travel intent in 2021
- Demographics
- And more

This report is divided into two sections: overall respondents and first-time visitors.

KEY INSIGHTS

There was a lot of research to sift through; however, this process was designed so the big themes, challenges and ideas continue to surface multiple times. This creates a sense of strong attention and builds confidence as determining an insight to be a key factor in moving forward successfully in identifying and reaching the Corolla visitor.

Key Insight #1 - Corolla meets and exceeds expectations of first-time visitors

Corolla is highly rated and first-time visitors are very satisfied with their experience. Corolla met and exceeded the expectations of first-time visitors (4.47 on a 5 point scale).and they are extremely likely to recommend Corolla to a friend or colleague (4.70 on a 5 point scale).

Being satisfied and having a great experience equates into future visitation. Ninety-four percent (94%) of first-time visitors plan to return to Corolla for a vacation in the future and sixty-five percent (65%) plan to make it an annual vacation.

First-time visitors plan to return during the “travel season” between May and September.

Key Insight #2 - Visitors plan travel to Corolla in advance.

Over one-half (57%) of the first-time visitors plan their travel at least six months in advance and twenty-nine percent (29%) three to five months in advance.

Key Insight #3 - Corolla is a family drive destination.

The Corolla travel party composition is primarily families (75%) and travel with six or more people (43%).

All of the first-time visitors traveled more than 100 miles to visit Corolla. Eighty-one percent (81%) said they are more likely to visit drive destinations for vacation versus zero percent saying they will more likely to visit a destination that require air travel.

Key Insight #4 - Fear of travel appears to be loosing a bit.

First-time visitors to Corolla are willing to travel receiving a 4.66 rating on a scale of one to five with one being “Not at all willing” and five being “extremely willing.”

OVERALL DATA



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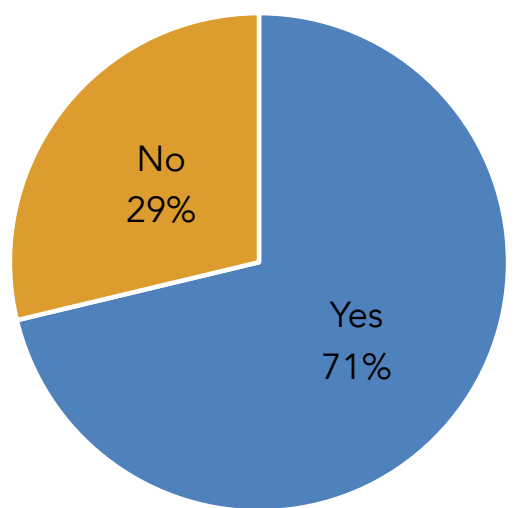
IMMERSION AND ASSESSMENT

OVERALL DATA

Visitation to Corolla

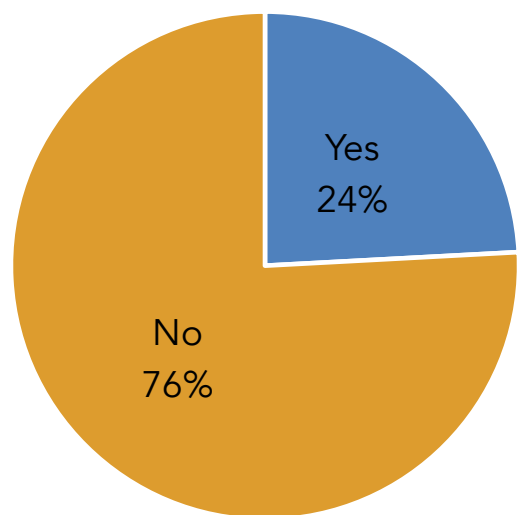
Seven in ten respondents have visited Corolla in the past 12 months.

Visited Corolla, NC past 12 months



Of those who have visited Corolla in the past 12 months, one in four were first-time visitors.

First time visitor

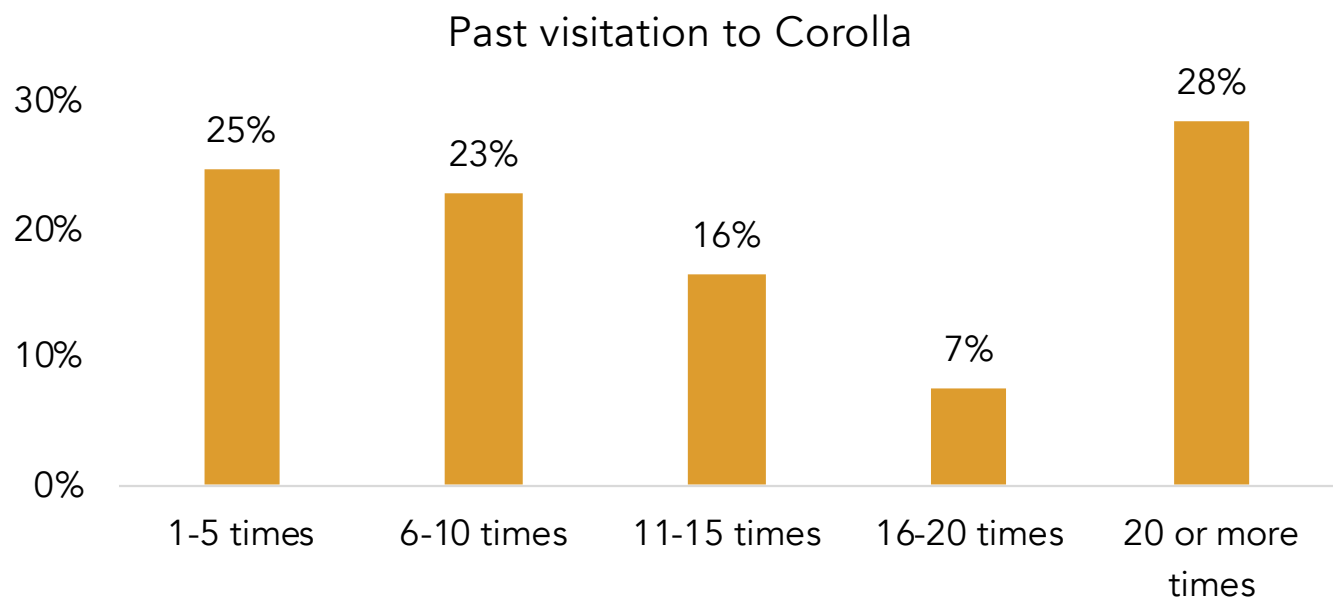


IMMERSION AND ASSESSMENT

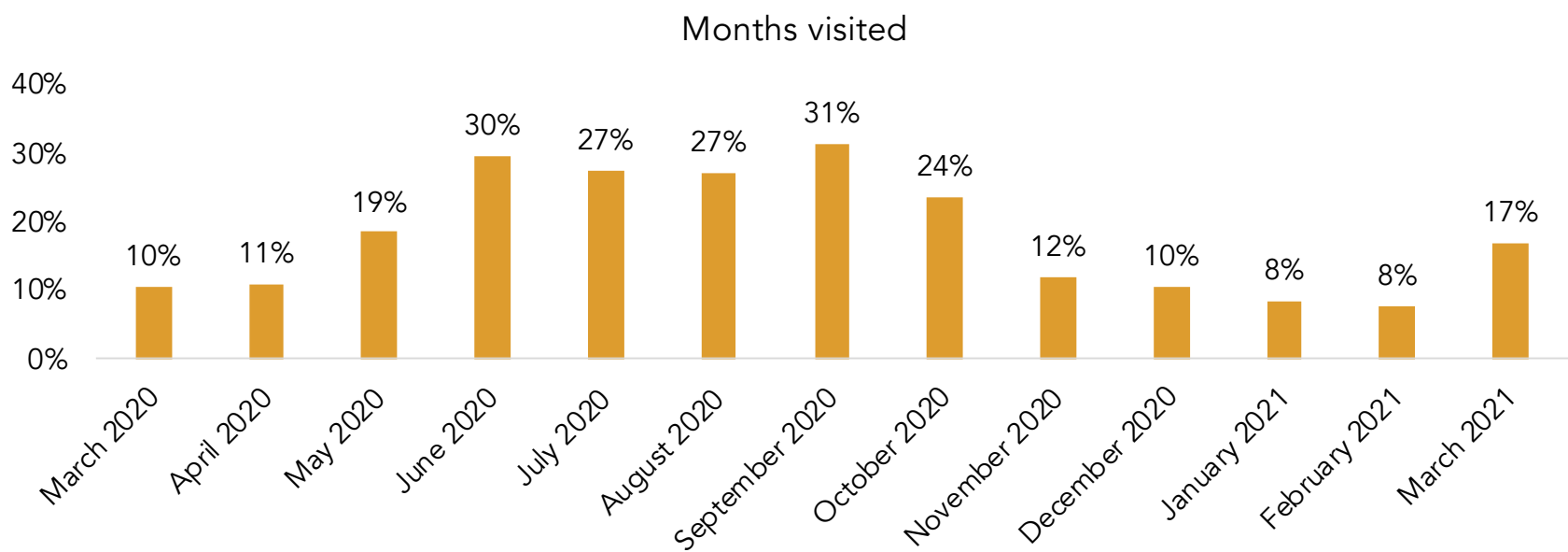
OVERALL DATA

Past Visitation

Corolla is definitely a place the visitors like to make repeat visits. Twenty-eight percent (28%) have visited the area 20 or more times.



May to October are the primary months visited

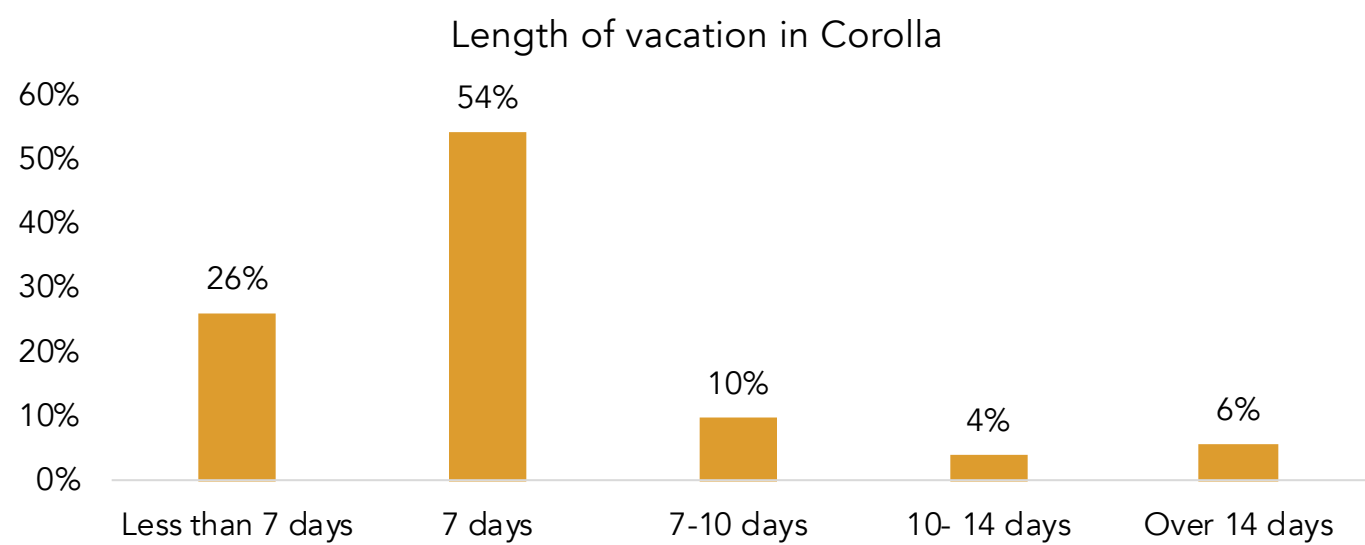


IMMERSION AND ASSESSMENT

OVERALL DATA

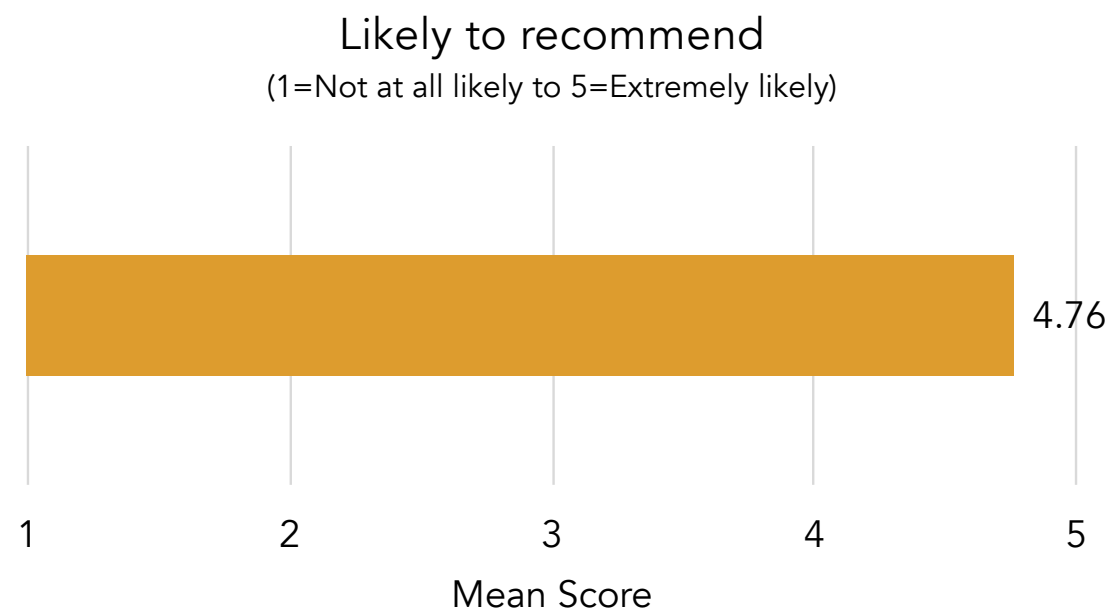
Length of Vacation

Seven days is the primary length of a vacation stay in Corolla. One in four stay up to seven days.



Likelihood to Recommend

Visitors are highly likely to recommend Corolla as a vacation destination to a friend or colleague.



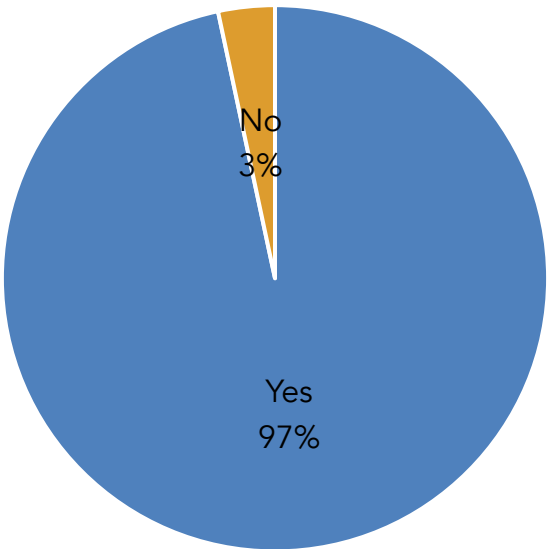
IMMERSION AND ASSESSMENT

OVERALL DATA

Future Visitation to Corolla

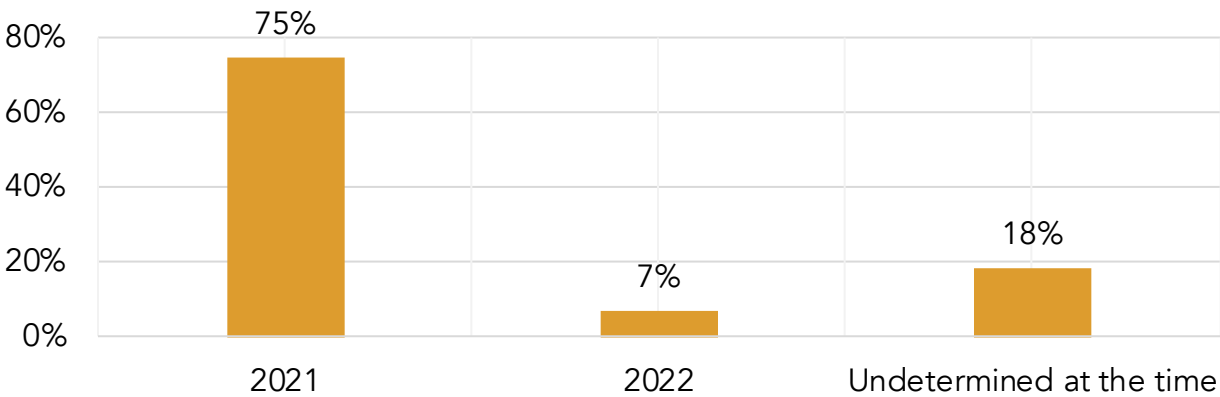
Corolla definitely makes an impact on visitors with ninety seven percent (97%) plan to visit the area in the future.

Plan to return to Corolla in the future



The majority plan to travel to Corolla in 2021. Just under twenty percent (20%) have yet to determine what they will return.

Plan to return



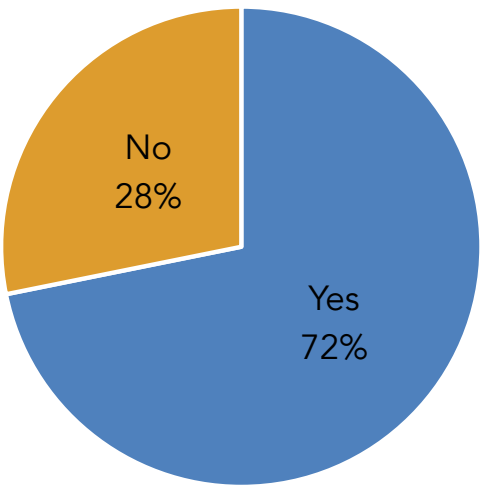
IMMERSION AND ASSESSMENT

OVERALL DATA

Travel Booking and Planning

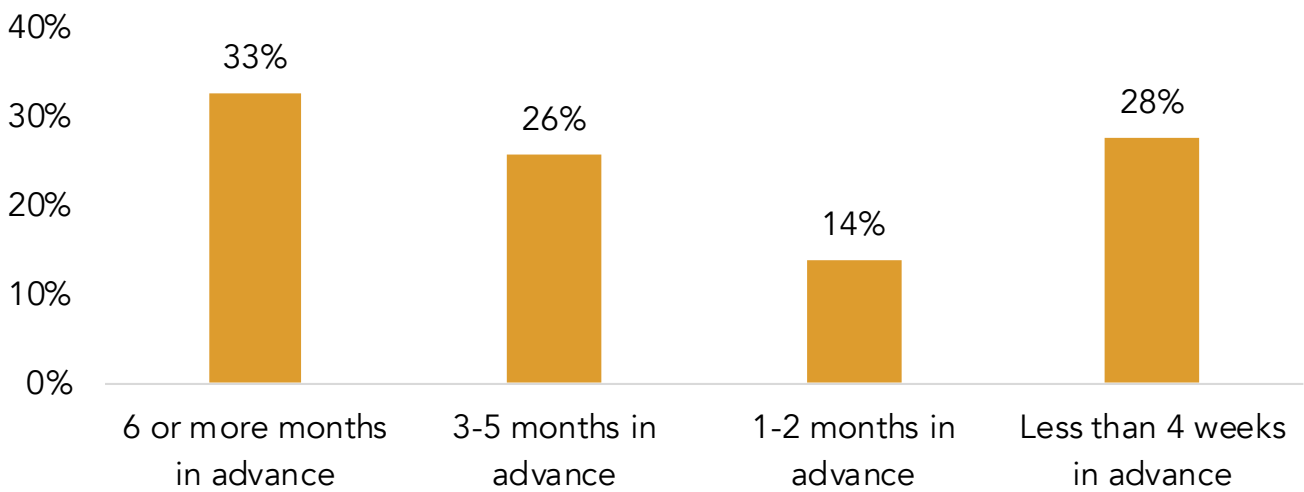
At the time of the study, approximately three-quarters of those planning to return to Corolla had already booked travel.

Already booked travel to Corolla



One -third of the respondents plan their travel to Corolla at least 6 months in advance. Just under one-third planned their travel less than 4 weeks in advance.

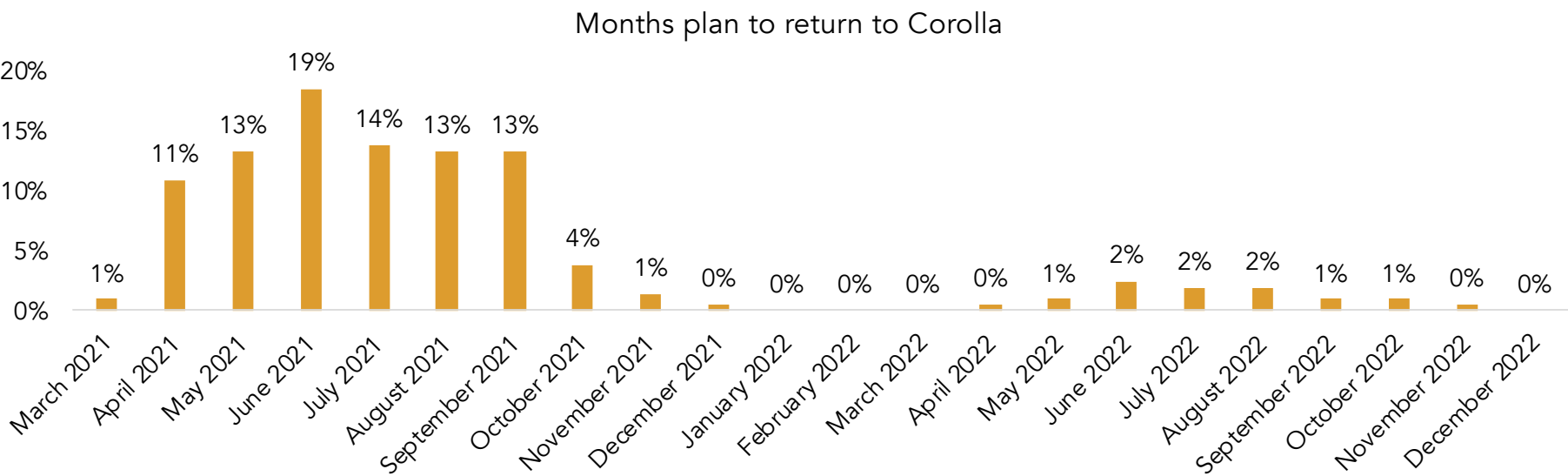
Travel planning time frame



IMMERSION AND ASSESSMENT

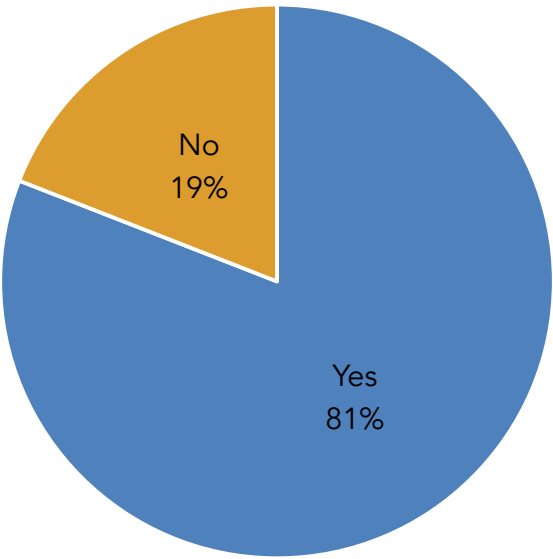
OVERALL DATA

April through September 2021 are the primary months for return visits to Corolla.



Eight in ten visitors to Corolla plan to make Corolla an annual vacation destination.

Make Corolla an annual vacation destination

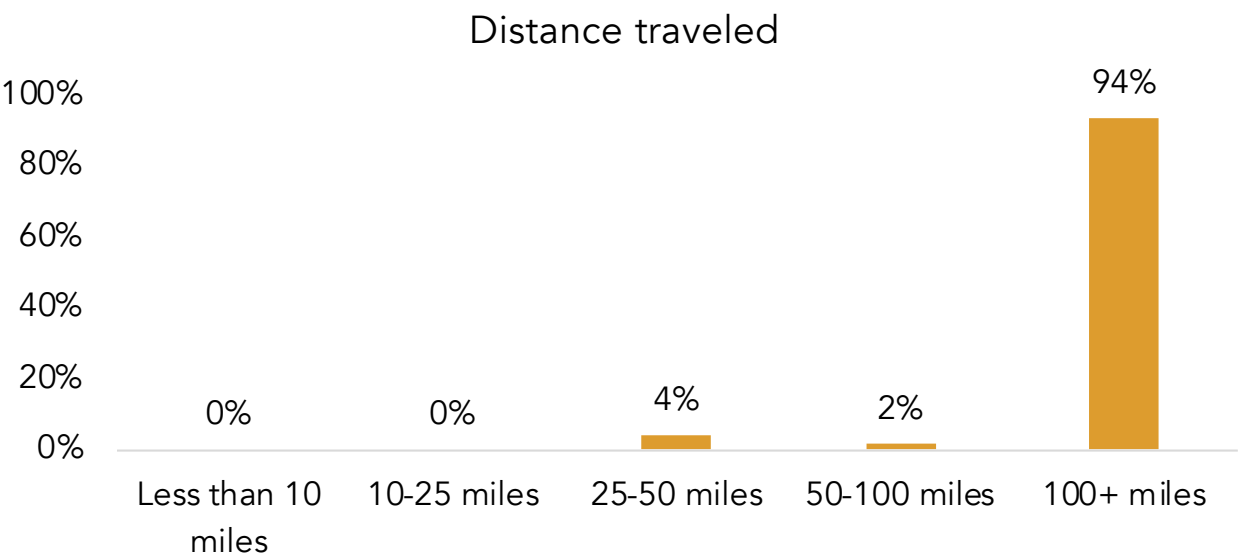
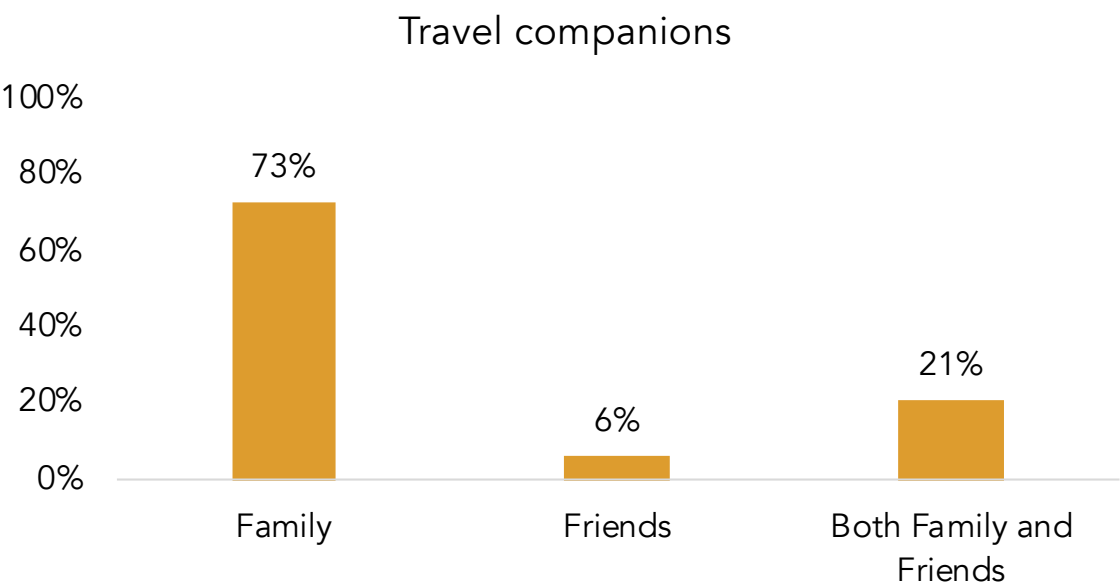
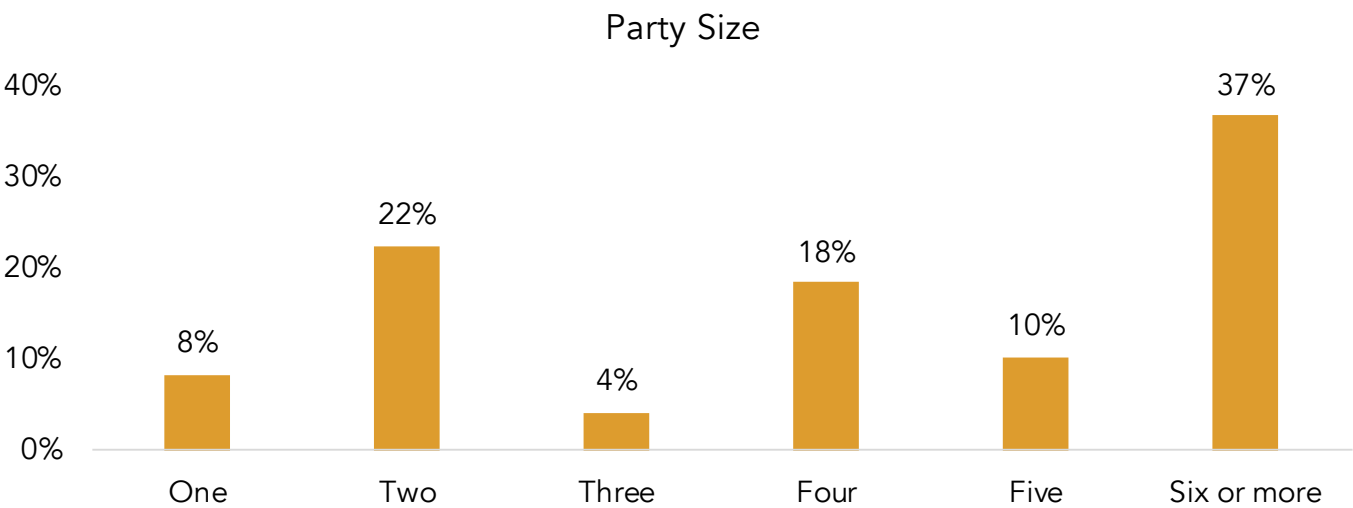


IMMERSION AND ASSESSMENT

OVERALL DATA

Party Composition

Corolla visitors are families traveling with a party size of 6 or more and travel more than 100 miles.

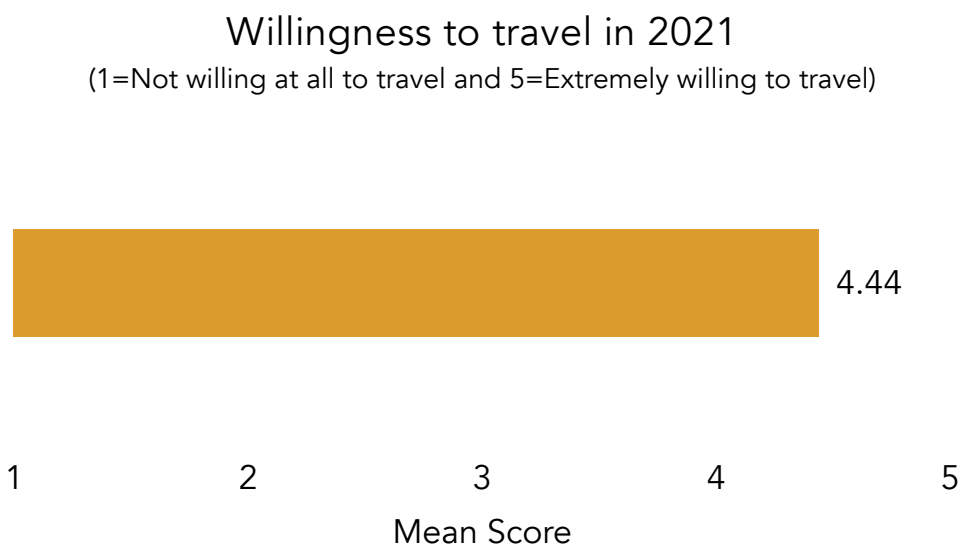


IMMERSION AND ASSESSMENT

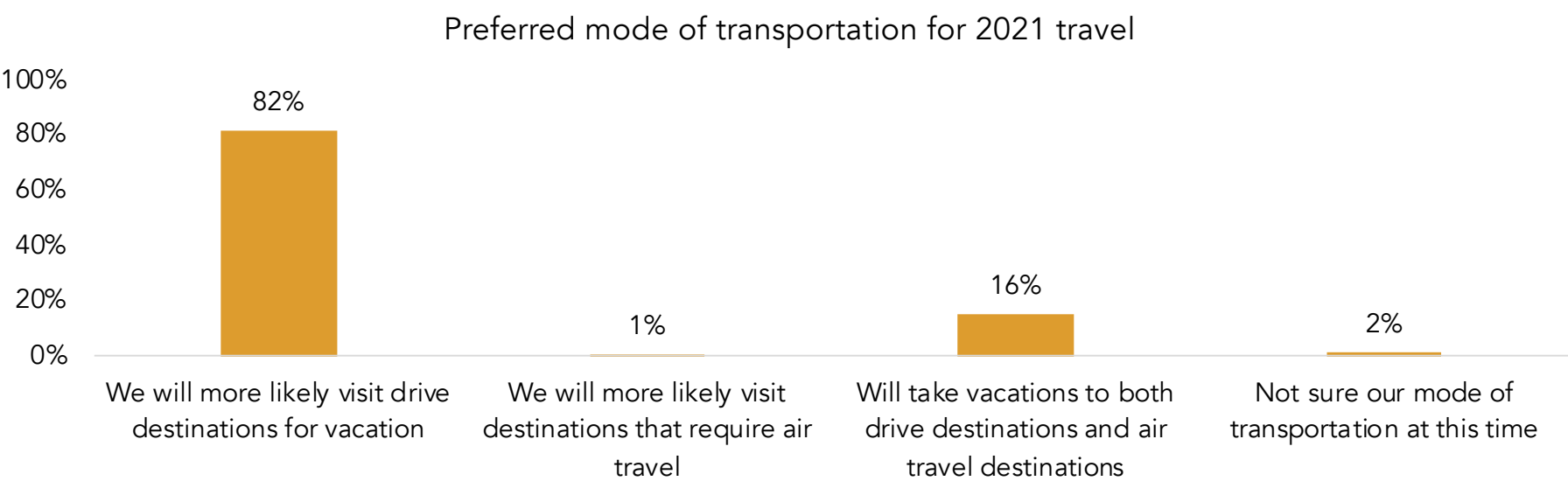
OVERALL DATA

Willingness to travel in 2021

Overall, respondents are willing to travel in 2021.



Corolla is definitely a drive destination, with eight in ten more likely to visit drive destinations for vacation.



FIRST-TIME VISITOR DATA



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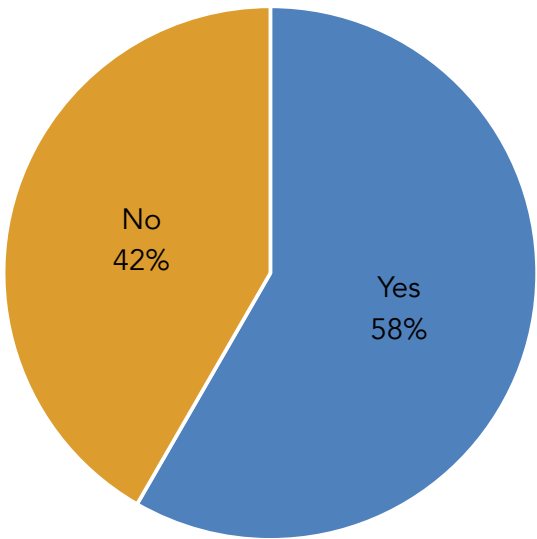
IMMERSION AND ASSESSMENT

FIRST-TIME VISITORS

Considered Corolla in the Past

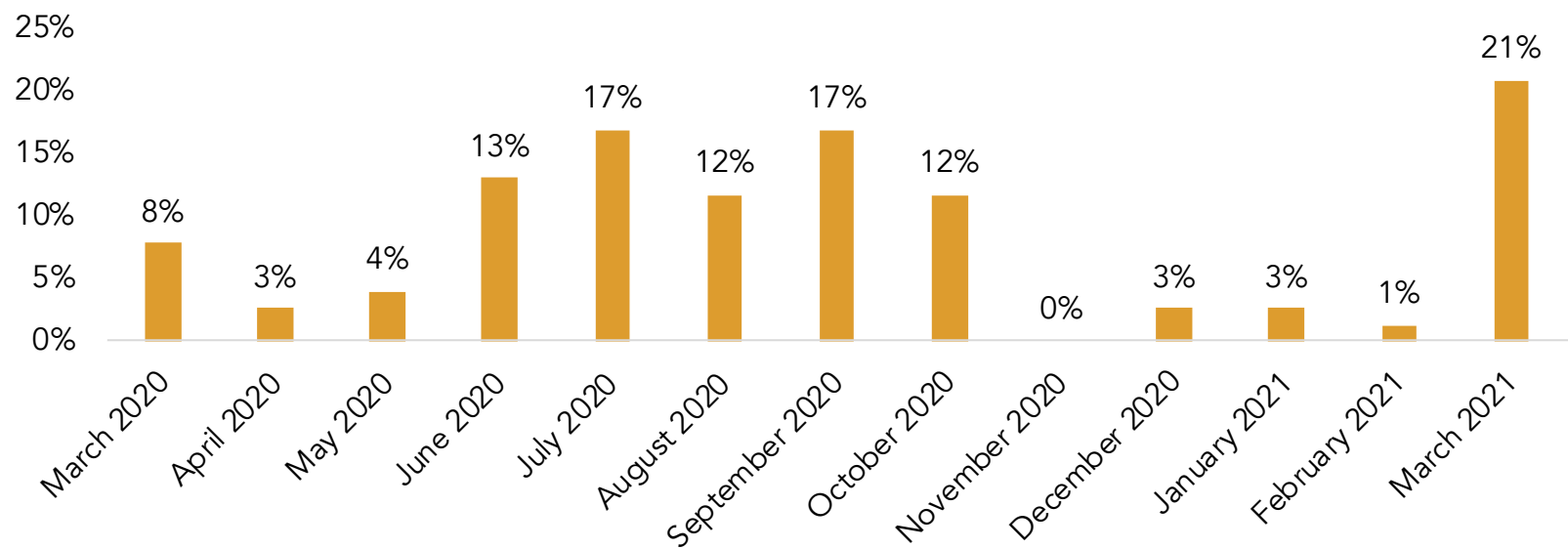
Over one half (58%) of the first-time visitors had considered vacationing in Corolla in the past.

Considered vacationing in Corolla in the past



First-time visitors primarily traveled to Corolla between June and October 2020. It is worth noting that twenty-one percent traveled to Corolla recently (March 2021) which is considered the “off-season.”

Month of visit

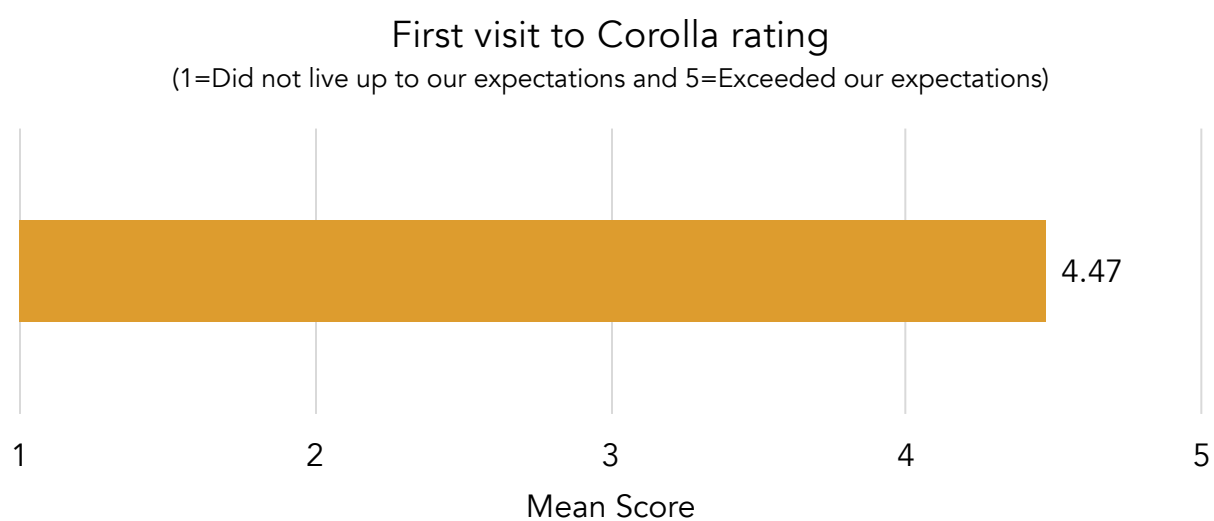
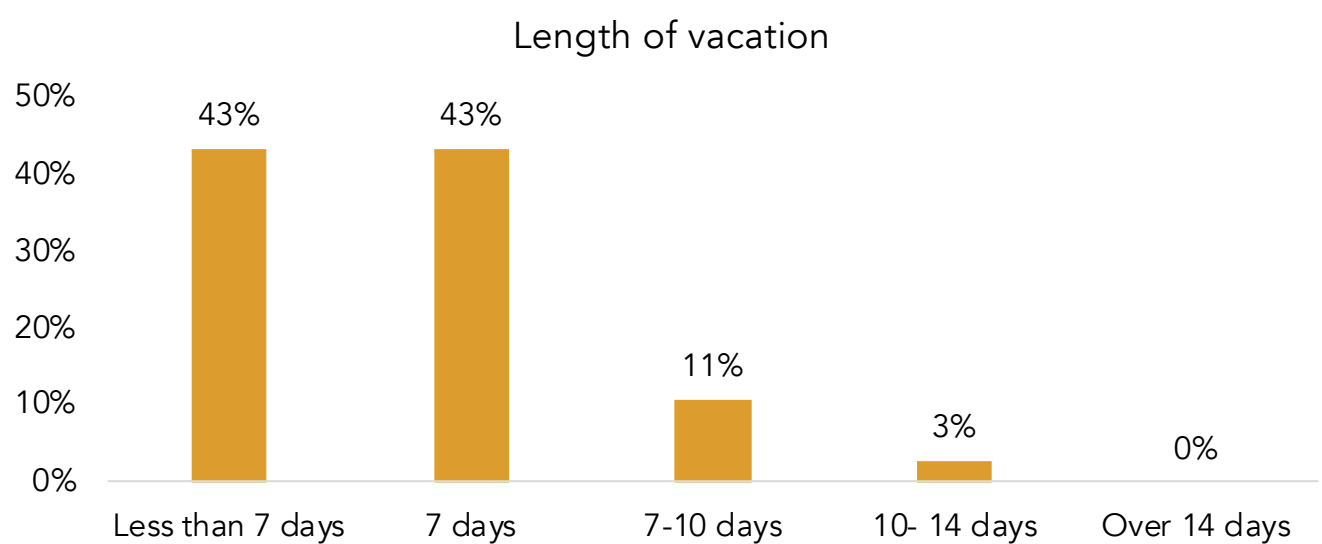


IMMERSION AND ASSESSMENT

FIRST-TIME VISITORS

Length of Vacation

First-time visitors had a vacation length of up to seven days. One in ten stayed 7-10 days.

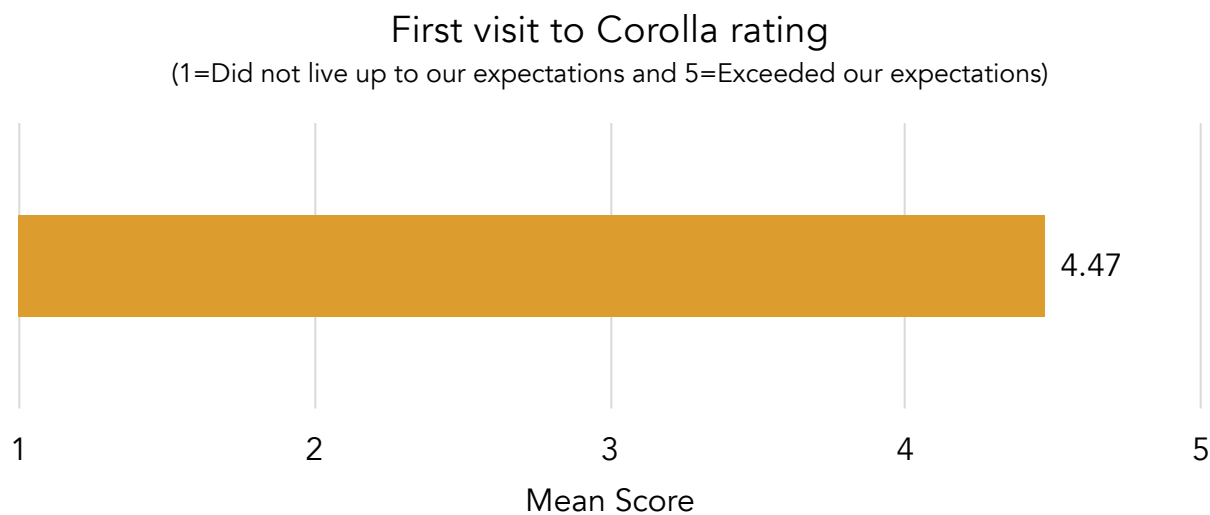


IMMERSION AND ASSESSMENT

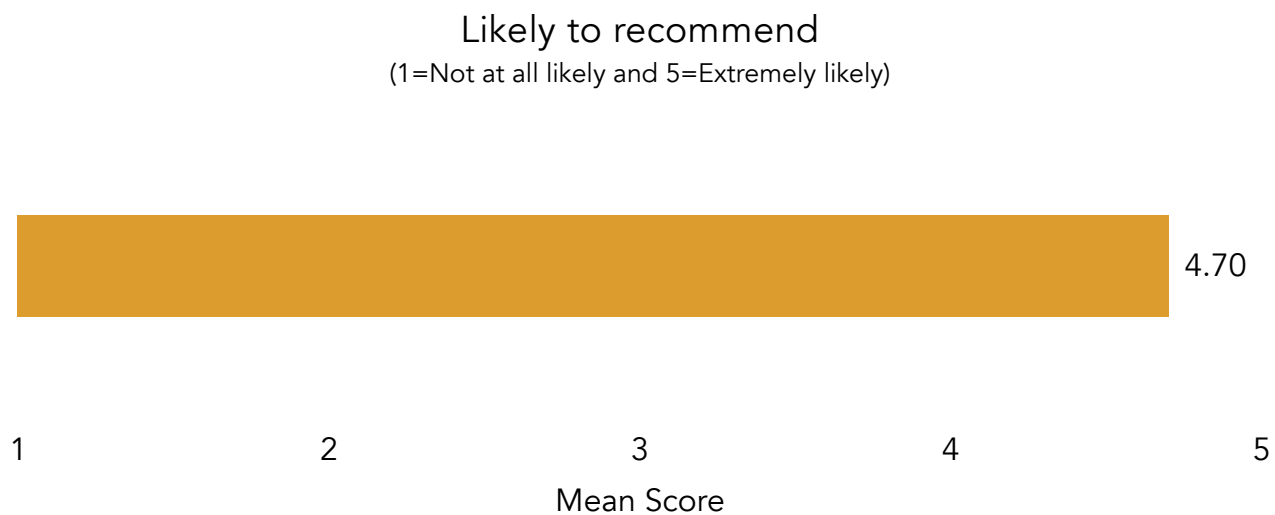
FIRST-TIME VISITORS

Experience Ratings

First-time visitors are extremely pleased that Corolla lived up to their expectations. When respondents were asked if Corolla lived up to their expectations, Corolla received a 4.47 rating on a five point scale.



Because Corolla lived up to first-time visitor expectations they are likely to recommend to friends and colleagues.

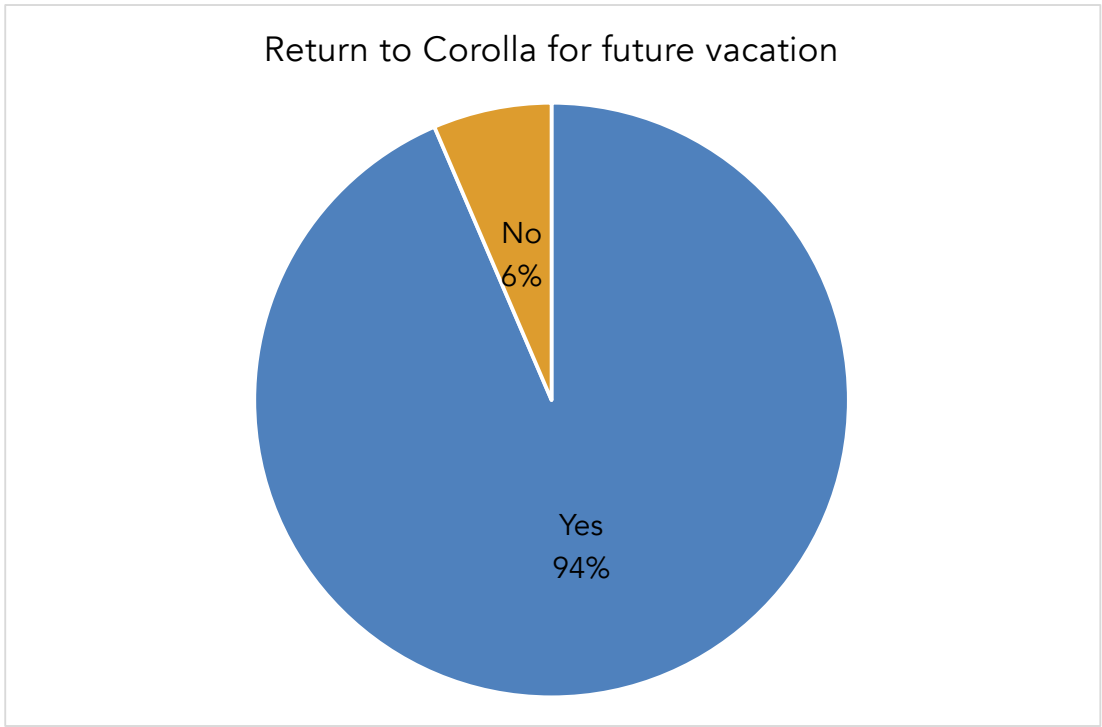


IMMERSION AND ASSESSMENT

FIRST-TIME VISITORS

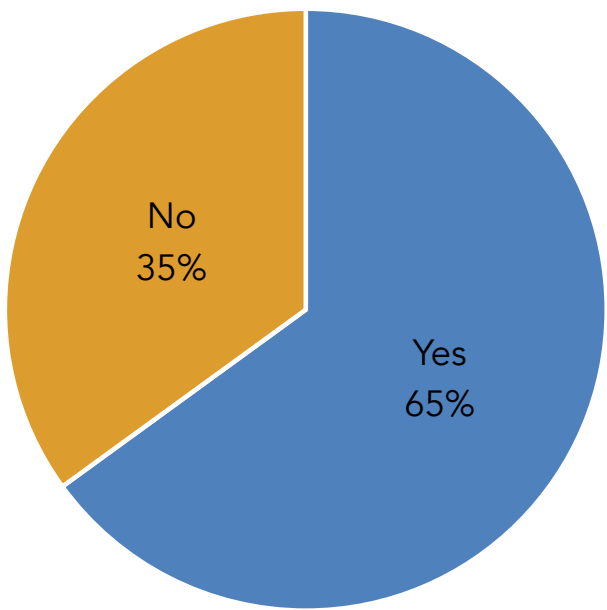
Future Visitation to Corolla

Over ninety percent (94%) of first-time visitors are planning to return to Corolla for a future vacation.



Two-thirds (65%) of firsttime visitors plan to make Corolla an annual event.

Make Corolla an annual vacation



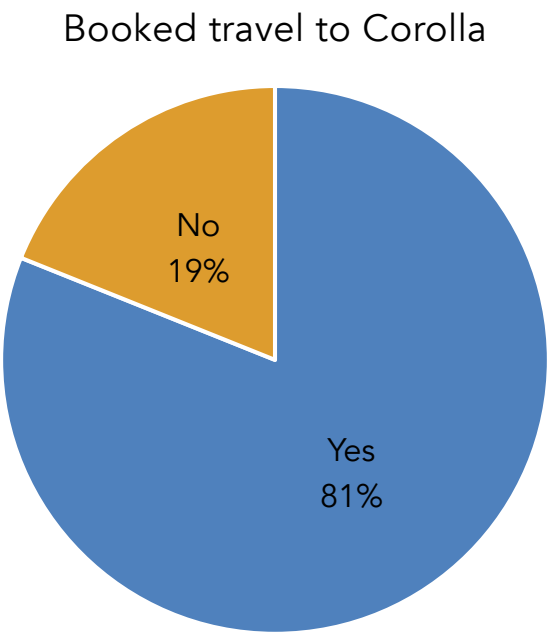
IMMERSION AND ASSESSMENT

FIRST-TIME VISITORS

Over one-half (58%) of first-time visitors plan to return in 2021. Slightly more than one-third (38%) are undetermined of their travels plans currently.



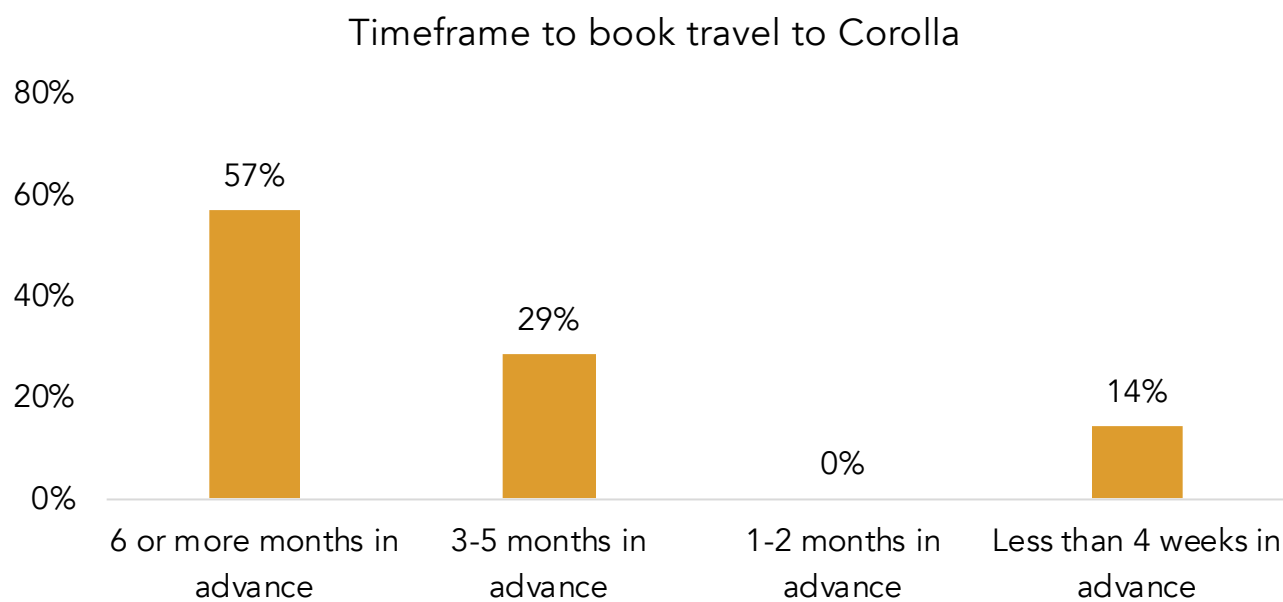
Eight in ten first-time visitors who plan to return to Corolla a second time have already booked travel.



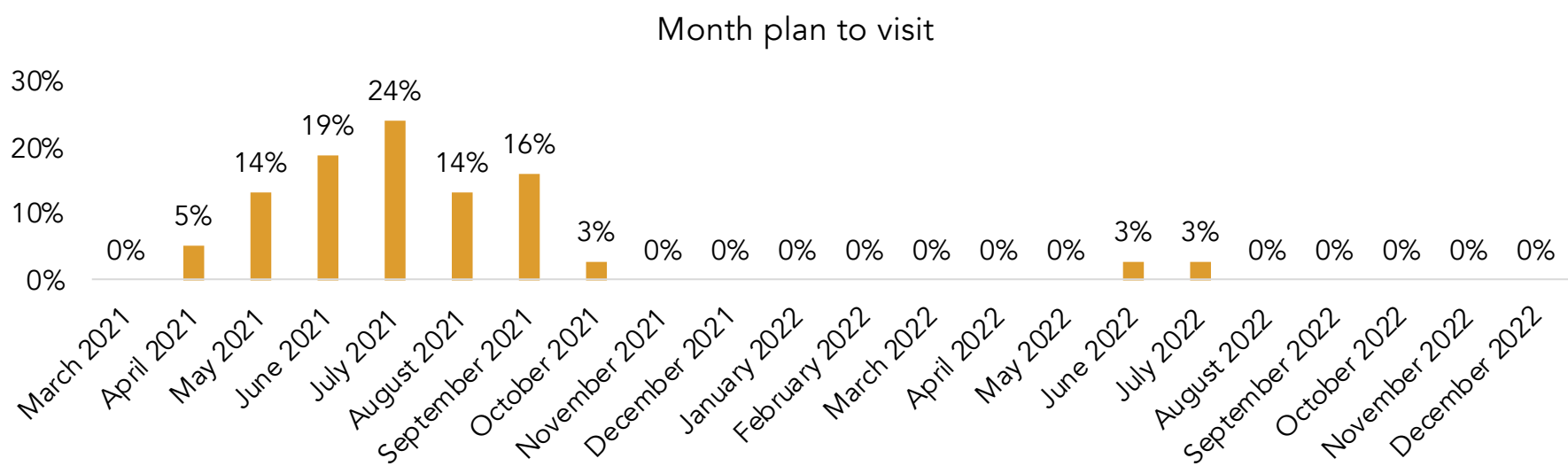
IMMERSION AND ASSESSMENT

FIRST-TIME VISITORS

First-time visitors are more likely to plan their visit in advance versus on the spur of the moment. Fifty-seven percent (57%) plan their travel 6 or more months in advance and twenty-nine percent (29%) plan travel 3-5 months in advance compared to fourteen percent (14%) planning less than 4 weeks in advance.



First-time visitors who are planning to return to Corolla for a second visit plan to visit during the popular “travel season” between May and September 2021.

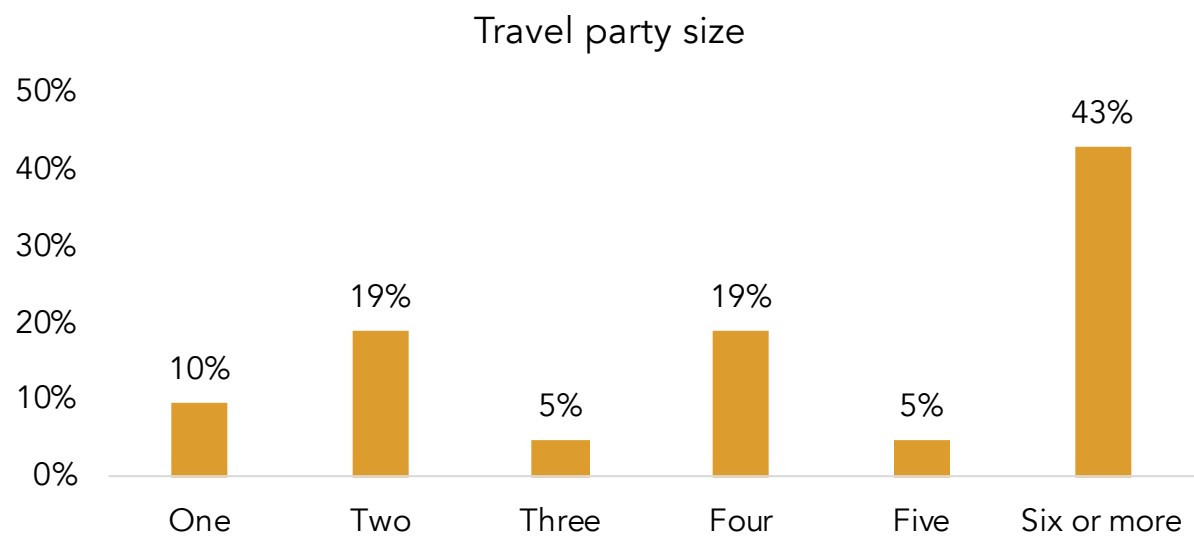


IMMERSION AND ASSESSMENT

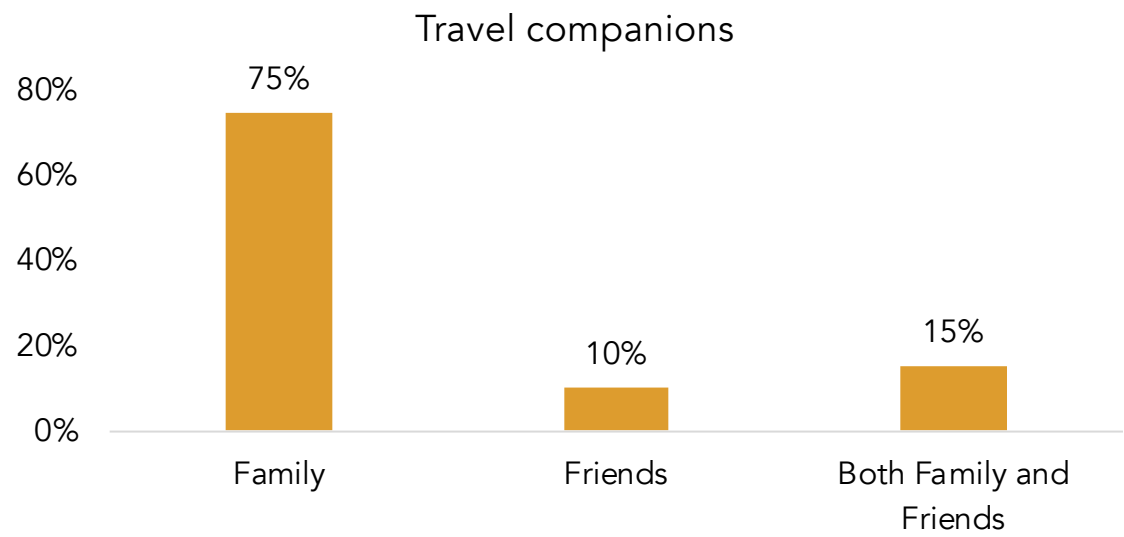
FIRST-TIME VISITORS

Travel Party Composition

Just under one-half (43%) of first-time visitors travels with six of more companions.



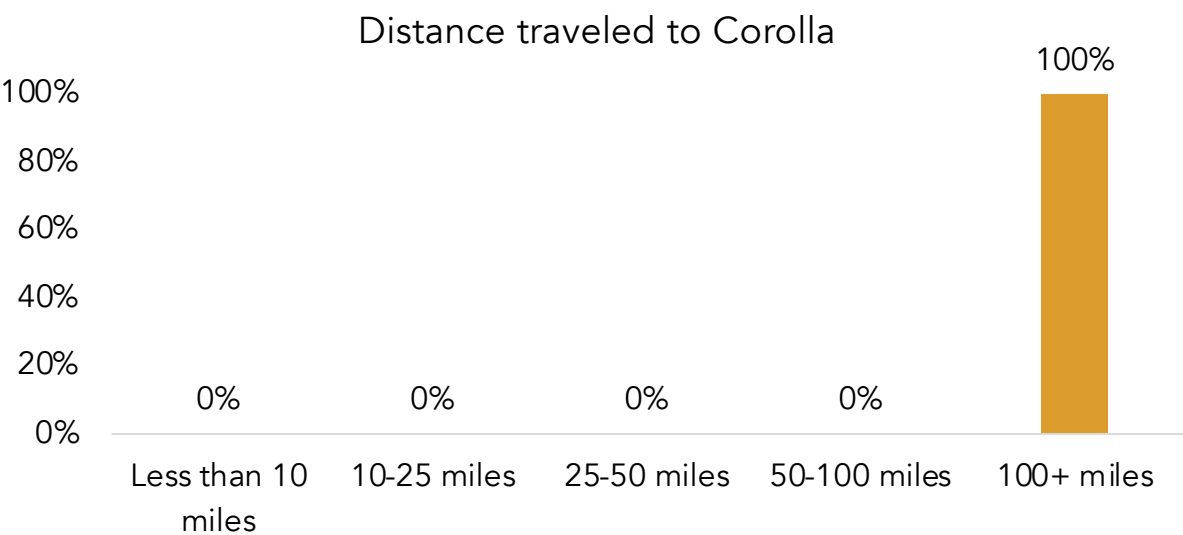
Corolla is definitely a family destination. Seventy-five percent (75%) are traveling with family compared to ten percent (10%) traveling with friends.



IMMERSION AND ASSESSMENT

FIRST-TIME VISITORS

Corolla is a drive destination. All of the first-time visitors traveled more than 100 miles to vacation in the Outer Banks, specifically Corolla. Also, eighty-one percent (81%) are more likely to visit a drive destination for a vacation compared to zero percent (0%) who are more likely to visit a destination that requires air travel.



The top five markets for first-time visitors are from:

- Pennsylvania
- North Carolina
- Virginia
- Ohio
- New York

IMMERSION AND ASSESSMENT

FIRST-TIME VISITORS

It appears that the fear of traveling due to the COVID-19 pandemic is easing a bit. First-time visitors to Corolla are willing to travel in 2021.

