

APCO Boat Hire Survey 2011

A survey was sent out to all APCO members, and other members known to be involved in boat hire across the inland waterways. A total of 55 responded to the survey, of which 41 were hire boat operators. If more than one trading base is operated, each company responded for all boats. The survey aimed to calculate a total boat count, estimations of demand, boat nights available and used, and future expectations.

The remaining respondents were telephoned or desk researched via the internet to establish total hire boat numbers by area. This was combined with known non-members to ensure the boat count was as representative as possible.

Data was obtained for 135 companies overall, and the boat count was verified to ensure boats of operators within a group were removed to ensure there was no double counting.

Overall boat hire numbers

- In total, 1,819 hire boats are being operated this year by 92 companies within the following areas:-

North West	201
North East	1
Yorkshire	47
East Midlands	62
West Midlands	383
East of England	720
South East/London	195
South West	79
Scotland	42
Wales	89
Northern Ireland	0
Total	1,819

Comparing like for like hire boat data to the previous study (which excluded Thames, Broads and Scotland), boat hire numbers are up very slightly from 2010. Boat numbers within the same coverage area only are 1,006 in 2011 up from 990 in 2010, which is an increase of 1.6%. In previous years, boat hire numbers had been 992 in 2009, 938 in 2008, 975 in 2007 and 1,017 in 2006.

Berth numbers

- 58 hire boat operators responded to the question on berth numbers who among them they operate 1,284 boats of the 1,819 total boats
- Within these 1,284 boats, 7,145 berths are available, which is an average of 5.6 berths per boat

Occupancy

- 29 hire boat operators responded to the survey questions on occupancy, who among them operate 1,090 boats of the 1,819 total, and have 6,182 berths available.
- The average number of hire weeks achieved by these 29 operators in the 2011 season was 22.41 weeks
- The average percentage of all hire boats used during this season for these 29 hire boat operators was 73.4% and the usage of their berths was 66.9%
- Within this sample of 29 hire boat operators, usage of their 1,090 boats equates to 112,282 individual boating days from their available 162,589 (69% occupancy within their stated season). Usage of their 6,182 available berths equates to 615,494 individual bed nights from their available 916,832 (67% occupancy within their stated season).

Expectations for 2012

- Expectations for the 2012 season are perceived as average for the majority of the 33 hire boat operators answering to this question. The mean score was 6 out of 10, where 1 is very poor and 10 is excellent.
~ scores: 4 (14%), 5 (29%), 6 (17%), 7 (14%), 8 (23%), 10 (3%)
- The number of hire boats expected to be operated in the next 2012 season are the same for the majority (54%), more for 29% and less for 17%.
~ in boat numbers, 15 'more' are expected compared to 18 'less'

Other boat types

- Amongst the 37 companies answering the question, 135 day boats were reported for the 19 day hire boat operators.

North West	7
North East	0
Yorkshire	0
East Midlands	0
West Midlands	3
East of England	79
South East/London	36
South West	5
Scotland	0
Wales	5
Northern Ireland	0
Total	135

- 24 Trip/Passenger boats were reported by 11 companies (among the 135 total)
- 6 hotel boats were reported by 5 companies (among the 135 total).