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Cover Page Footnote

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Impacts of COVID-19 on Tourism in Bar Harbor, Maine

by Todd Gabe

Abstract

This paper examines the effects of COVID-19 on tourism in Bar Harbor, Maine. The analysis considers four channels by which the pandemic affected Bar Harbor: (1) reduction in overnight visitors, (2) decrease in Acadia National Park users, (3) cancellation of the 2020 cruise ship season, and (4) a national effect related to trends in overall US restaurant sales. The relative impacts of these four factors on Bar Harbor restaurant sales varied widely by month: the reduction in overnight tourists explains 40 percent of the overall decline; the national effect is associated with 35 percent of Bar Harbor's decline; the cancellation of all cruise ship visits in 2020 explains 11 percent; and the reduction in the number of Acadia National Park users is responsible for 14 percent of the decline in restaurant sales in 2020. Knowing more about the channels by which COVID-19 affected hospitality sales in Bar Harbor can help state and local officials with recovery efforts and support tourism along the Maine coast.

economic impacts of the pandemic varied widely across regions. The economic summary areas (ESAs) of Portland (43 percent reduction), Kennebunk (39 percent), Bar Harbor (37 percent), Camden (36 percent) and Kittery (34 percent)—all coastal areas—had the five largest percentage declines in annual hospitality sales between 2019 and 2020, whereas a few small ESAs (e.g., Dover-Foxcroft and Lincoln) had declines of less than 10 percent. In terms of the dollar amounts of “lost” sales in restaurants and lodging businesses, the five ESAs with the largest declines between 2019 and 2020 were Portland (\$325 million decrease), Kittery (\$153 million), Bangor (\$84 million), Bar Harbor (\$83 million) and Portland “Suburban” (\$74 million).

INTRODUCTION

Along with its serious impacts on health and overall wellbeing, the COVID-19 pandemic led to very large economic declines in most regions of the world. Between April of 2019 and 2020, total private nonfarm US employment decreased by 15 percent, with a 16 percent reduction in Maine over this period.¹ The measures used to halt the spread of COVID-19 (e.g., social distancing, prohibiting the assembly of large groups, restricting visitors from out of state) had particularly severe impacts on leisure and hospitality businesses (Gabe and Crawley 2021; Gabe and Florida 2021). In Maine, leisure and hospitality industry employment fell by 50 percent at the start of the pandemic (i.e., April 2019 to 2020), compared with a 47 percent decline nationally.² Similarly, Maine experienced a 62 percent reduction in taxable hospitality (i.e., restaurant and lodging) sales between April 2019 and 2020.³ Over all of 2020, Maine taxable hospitality sales were 28 percent lower than in the previous year.

Although most everywhere in Maine experienced declines in hospitality sales due to COVID-19, the

Bar Harbor is among the top five ESAs in terms of the percentage decline and dollar value of reduced hospitality sales between 2019 and 2020. As one of Maine's biggest tourism draws and the gateway community to Acadia National Park, Bar Harbor welcomes millions of visitors per year, with a large share of annual hospitality sales occurring during the peak summer months of July and August.⁴ In addition, Bar Harbor is a popular cruise ship port-of-call on autumn New England cruise itineraries. The number of cruise passengers scheduled to visit Bar Harbor increased from just over 225,000 guests in 2017 to about 300,000 visitors in 2020.⁵ Whereas the largest numbers of overnight tourists visit Bar Harbor during the summer, the majority of cruise ships and passengers come to town in September and October.

This article examines the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism and hospitality sales in Bar Harbor. Along with an overview of the reduction in lodging sales and the “lost” economic impact due to the cancellation of the 2020 cruise ship season, the analysis focuses on the

factors that contributed to lower restaurant sales in Bar Harbor between 2019 and 2020. Restaurant sales are an excellent barometer of the amount of people—both visitors and local residents—spending money in an area.⁶ That’s because overnight tourists eat meals in restaurants as part of their vacations (Smith 1983; Sparks et al. 2003), and day visitors and local residents spend money in restaurants as well. Specifically, the analysis considers the relative importance of four channels by which COVID-19 reduced Bar Harbor’s restaurant sales: (1) fewer overnight tourists, (2) fewer Acadia National Park users, (3) cancellation of the 2020 cruise ship season, and (4) the broader national trends (e.g., recession) of lower restaurant sales during the shutdown and pandemic.

The rest of the article is organized as follows. The next section provides an overview of tourism and hospitality in Bar Harbor in 2019, which was before the COVID-19 pandemic. This overview includes a statistical analysis of the factors that influence restaurant sales, as well as a discussion of the importance of Acadia National Park to local tourism and the economic impacts of cruise passengers. After our look at how things were prior to the pandemic, we examine the effects of COVID-19 on tourism and hospitality in Bar Harbor. Here, we decompose the impacts of COVID-19 into the loss of restaurant sales associated with the reduction in overnight tourists, the decline in Acadia National Park users, the cancellation of the 2020 cruise ship season, and the broader trends affecting restaurant sales nationally. The final section provides a summary of key results and examines the recovery of tourism and hospitality in Bar Harbor and across all of Maine through July of 2021.

BAR HARBOR TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY BEFORE COVID-19

Bar Harbor’s tourism and hospitality economy is driven by large numbers of overnight tourists and activity during the peak summer season, especially July and August, and cruise ship visits during the autumn months. In 2019, the Bar Harbor Economic Summary Area generated \$225 million in hospitality sales, with 22 percent and

TABLE 1: Factors Affecting Monthly Taxable Restaurant Sales in the Bar Harbor Economic Summary Area, January 2000 to December 2019

Variable	Estimated coefficient	Standard error
Lodging sales	0.371*	0.027
Cruise ship passengers	21.83*	4.22
Acadia National Park users	6.13*	0.671
US restaurant sales (\$millions)	153.1*	48.6
Constant	-508.5	7,827
ARMA L1 (monthly lag)	-0.388*	0.050
ARMA L2 (monthly lag)	-0.162*	0.061
ARMA12 L1 (seasonal lag)	-0.583*	0.051

Notes: Empirical results are from a time-series regression model, which is appropriate given the use of monthly data. The superscript * denotes statistical significance at the 1 percent level. ARMA = autoregressive moving average.

24 percent of the sales in July and August. These patterns closely match the annual cycle of Acadia National Park use, which had 22 percent of its 2019 users in both July and August.⁷ As a way to track the spending of people—both tourists and local residents—we analyzed a time-series regression model of monthly taxable restaurant sales with data from January of 2000 to December of 2019. This 20-year period provides a sufficient time frame for determining how restaurant sales in Bar Harbor are related to the presence of overnight visitors, the impacts of Acadia National Park users, the numbers of cruise passengers that get off the ships, as well as the general ups and downs of restaurant sales nationally.

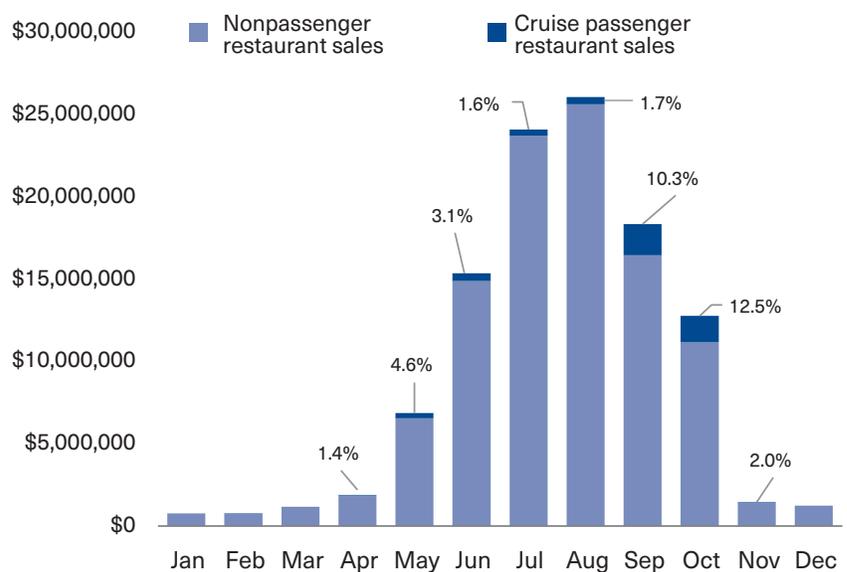
Table 1 shows time-series regression results on the factors affecting monthly restaurant sales, which are adjusted for inflation to December 2020 prices.⁸ The analysis shows that every dollar spent at hotels in the Bar Harbor area is associated with an additional \$0.37 spent at restaurants (and bars) in the area, and each cruise passenger spends an average of \$21.83 on food (and drinks) while in port.⁹ The regression result corresponding with the number of Acadia National Park users suggests that, holding constant the effects of overnight visitors and cruise passengers (as well as broad trends and cycles in US restaurant sales), each additional user contributes \$6.13 in restaurant sales. Since the influence of overnight tourists (who use the

park) and cruise passengers (who visit the park) are accounted for by their own variables, the effect of Acadia National Park users picks up the spending of day visitors and even Bar Harbor residents while recreating in the area. Finally, the results show a positive relationship between restaurant sales in Bar Harbor and US restaurant sales, which means that Bar Harbor’s restaurant sales are influenced by the sector’s performance nationally.

In 2019, which was prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, the Bar Harbor ESA generated \$116 million in taxable sales at lodging establishments, \$109 million in restaurant sales, and \$41 million in “other” retail sales.¹⁰ The overnight visitors who come to Bar Harbor (and spend money in hotels, restaurants, and local shops) are drawn to the Maine coast and the area’s proximity to Acadia National Park. The closure of Acadia National Park in 2013, during the US government shutdown from October 1 to 16, revealed its importance to tourism in and around Bar Harbor. The 16-day shutdown led to 76 percent and 13 percent reductions in the number of park users and tourism-related sales, respectively, during October of 2013 (Gabe 2016). Overall, the park’s 16-day closure in 2013 led to a \$2.7 million reduction in tourism-related spending. The result that an estimated 17 percent of the potential park users, who planned to explore Acadia in October of 2013, actually cancelled their visits to Bar Harbor underscores the park’s impacts on the region’s tourism and hospitality economy.

Moving to an analysis of restaurant sales, Figure 1 shows monthly restaurant sales in 2019 and the estimated percentage of this activity that is accounted for by cruise passengers. A combined 45 percent of annual restaurant sales happened during the peak summer months of July and August, when only a small share of sales is attributed to cruise passengers. Based on the estimated number of cruise passengers that got off the ships in each month and the estimated restaurant spending of \$21.83 per passenger, cruise ships have their greatest relative impacts in September

FIGURE 1: 2019 Monthly Restaurant Sales in the Bar Harbor Economic Summary Area



(10 percent of restaurant sales) and October (12 percent of sales). These figures are not surprising because Bar Harbor has its highest number of cruise passengers in these months and overnight tourism slows down in the fall.

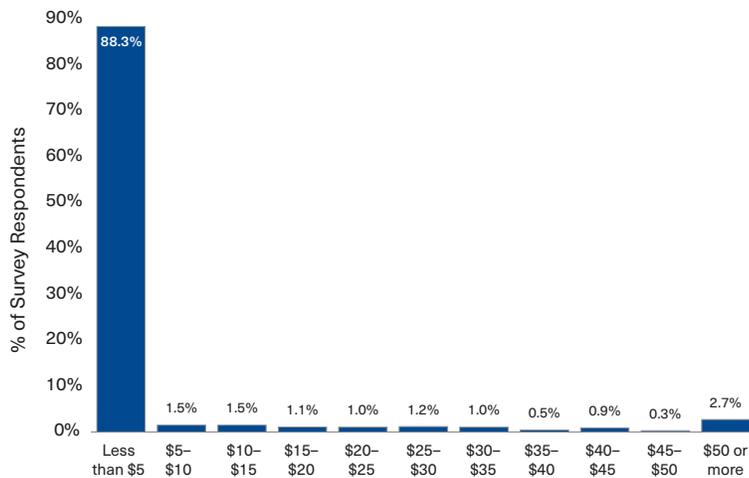
Across all of 2019, the record number of cruise passengers that visited Bar Harbor generated an estimated \$5.2 million in taxable restaurant sales, which is about 4.7 percent of total restaurant sales over the entire year. The overall economic impact of cruise passengers, which includes spending at restaurants and other purchases, prior to COVID-19 is shown in Table 2. These 2019 economic impact figures are based on the \$21.83 in restaurant spending per passenger, as well as expenditures on clothing, books and paper goods, and art and jewelry. The spending amounts in these other categories are from a cruise passenger survey conducted in 2016 (Gabe and McConnon 2018), after removing outlier observations where passengers spent more than \$150 in a given category. As an example of the data collected from the 2016 survey, Figure 2 shows the distribution of passenger spending on art and jewelry. The majority of cruise passengers spend very little on art and jewelry, whereas a small number of spenders account for most of the economic impact. Although these spending figures are from a survey of cruise passengers, they likely reflect the expenditures of all types of tourists

TABLE 2: Economic Impact of Bar Harbor Cruise Ship Passengers in 2019

	Direct impact	Multiplier effects	Total impact
Spending	\$15.2 to \$23.2 million	\$8.3 million	\$23.5 to \$31.5 million
Employment (# jobs)	480	74	553
Labor income	\$5.8 Million	\$2.5 Million	\$8.3 Million

Notes: The direct spending figure is based on the regression result of \$21.83 in restaurant spending per passenger, and other expenditure (e.g., souvenirs, art and jewelry, clothing) data are from a 2016 survey of Bar Harbor cruise passengers (Gabe and McConnon 2018). The direct employment and labor income figures—and the multiplier effects—are based on an input-output model (IMPLAN) of the local region. The range of spending values has a low end that does not count passenger spending on tours and a high end that accounts for tours, of which an unknown amount is kept by the cruise lines. The direct employment of 480 full- and part-time jobs is adjusted in the analysis to account for the fact that cruise ships visit over a six-month period of the year. Economic impact figures are based on the estimated numbers of passengers that got off the ships in Bar Harbor.

FIGURE 2: Distribution of Bar Harbor Cruise Passenger Spending on Art and Jewelry



that come to Bar Harbor. That is, visitor spending of all sorts is often heavily skewed to the right (i.e., mean value is much higher than the median).

In the economic impact results shown in Table 2, the direct passenger spending numbers have a range of \$15.2 million (not counting cruise-line-sponsored tours) to \$23.2 million (counting spending on cruise-line-sponsored tours), and this amount of spending supports 480 full- and part-time jobs over the cruise ship season, and

\$5.8 million in labor income. The multiplier effects are the additional economic activity supported by the spending of businesses and workers connected to cruise passengers. The multiplier effects are estimated using a county-level economic impact model (IMPLAN) because of the large commuting flows between workers in Bar Harbor and places of residence across Hancock County. Overall, the 2019 cruise ship season—prior to the pandemic—generated an economic impact, including multiplier effects, of between \$23.5 million and \$31.5 million in spending, 553 full- and part-time jobs, and \$8.3 million in labor income.

To put these economic impact figures into perspective, Zip Code Business Patterns data from the US Census Bureau show a 2018 annual payroll in the Bar Harbor area (zip code 04609) of \$226 million.¹¹ The direct impact of \$5.8 million in labor income (2019 cruise ship season) is equivalent to about 2.5 percent of the area’s annual payroll as of 2018. This 2.5 percent impact relative to Bar Harbor’s overall payroll, which does not include the multiplier effects shown in Table 2, differs from the 4.7 percent of restaurant sales attributed to cruise passengers for a couple of reasons. First, and most important, the \$226 million in payroll covers the entire Bar Harbor economy (and about 45 percent of local businesses, included in the Zip Code Business Patterns data, are outside of the tourism- and hospitality-related sectors of retail trade; arts, entertainment, and recreation; and accommodation and food services). Second, the \$5.8 million counted in the direct impact on labor income is supported by cruise passenger spending of all sorts, not just on food and beverages.

IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON BAR HARBOR TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in very large impacts on tourism and hospitality in the Bar Harbor region. Between 2019 and 2020, the area saw a \$39 million reduction in lodging sales (a 34 percent decrease)

and a 768,000 person decrease in the number of Acadia National Park users (22 percent). The cancellation of the Bar Harbor cruise ship season meant the loss of the cruise passenger impact from 2019, and the broader nationwide COVID-19 shutdown at the beginning of the pandemic affected the Bar Harbor region as well. We can use information on these impacts along with the regression results presented in Table 1 to investigate the channels by which COVID-19 lowered restaurant sales in Bar Harbor.

Figure 3 shows the sources of reduced Bar Harbor restaurant sales in the months of April, July, and October, as well as for the entire year of 2020.¹² The height of each bar represents the total reduction in Bar Harbor restaurant sales during the selected period (e.g., July, annual) between 2019 and 2020. For example, the bar for April represents a \$1.5 million reduction in restaurant sales between this month in 2019 and 2020. The shaded segments of each bar indicate the percentage of the reduction in restaurant sales that is associated with a given factor.¹³

Although the analysis highlights the different channels by which the pandemic impacted the Bar Harbor area, it's important to keep in mind that all four of these impacts were ultimately caused primarily by COVID-19. In April, during the COVID-19 shutdown, restaurant sales in Bar Harbor fell by \$1.5 million between 2019 and 2020. Results of the analysis suggest that 90 percent of the reduction in Bar Harbor restaurant sales in April is associated

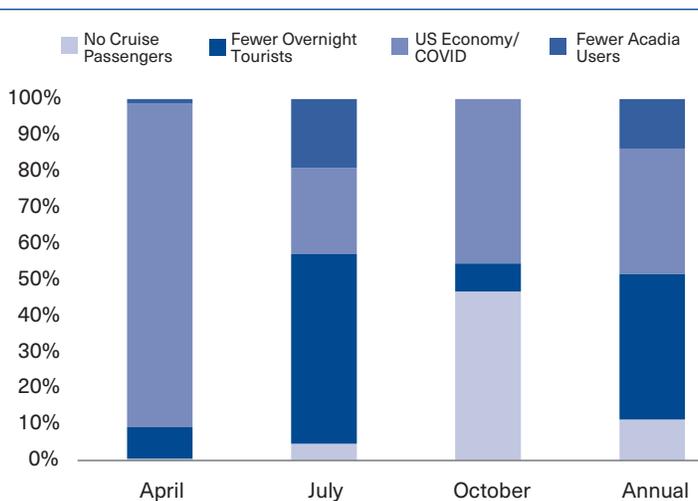
with changes to the industry nationally and the broader COVID-19 shutdown. Although Bar Harbor experienced a decline in lodging sales between April 2019 and 2020, the reduction in overnight tourists was a relatively modest contributor to the decrease in restaurant sales at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which happened a few months before Bar Harbor's peak season for overnight tourists.

The channels by which COVID-19 affected Bar Harbor restaurant sales changed dramatically between April and July, with the latter month being part of the state's peak season for tourists. In July, a \$12 million reduction in lodging sales (\$15 million in 2020, compared with \$27 million in 2019) accounted for 52 percent of the loss in restaurant sales, and the decrease in Acadia National Park users (494,000 in 2020, compared with 756,000 in 2019) explains 19 percent of the 2019 to 2020 reduction in July restaurant sales. The broader impacts of COVID-19 nationally continued to have an effect on Bar Harbor restaurant sales in July (accounting for 24 percent of the reduction) but this national effect was proportionally far smaller than the one felt during the April shutdown (90 percent of Bar Harbor's reduction in restaurant sales).

The impacts of COVID-19 on Bar Harbor restaurant sales changed yet again between July and October. In October, the impact of fewer Acadia National Park users disappeared altogether as the park actually saw an increase in users (481,000), compared with October of 2019 (436,000). Likewise, the impacts associated with the reduction in overnight tourists declined from July to October, as the year-over-year impact on Bar Harbor taxable lodging sales was proportionally much smaller in October (4.3 percent decrease) compared with July (44 percent decrease).¹⁴ In October, which is a peak month for cruise ships, the loss of cruise passengers from 2019 to 2020 accounted for 47 percent of the decrease in Bar Harbor restaurant sales. Likewise, the broader impacts of the decline in US restaurant sales accounted for 45 percent of Bar Harbor's year-over-year reduction in October restaurant sales.

The far-right bar of Figure 3 shows the channels by which COVID-19 impacted Bar Harbor's restaurant sales across the entire year of 2020. The reduction in overnight tourists in the region, notably during the summer months, explains 40

FIGURE 3: Sources of Reduced 2020 Bar Harbor Restaurant Sales Due to COVID-19



percent of the overall reduction in annual restaurant sales. Likewise, the broader declines in restaurant sales nationally, particularly during the shutdown at the beginning of the pandemic, is associated with 35 percent of Bar Harbor's decline in 2020 restaurant sales. The cancellation of all cruise ship visits in 2020 explains 11 percent of the lost restaurant sales between 2019 and 2020 and the reduction in the number of Acadia National Park users, which is a proxy for the recreational activities of local residents and day visitors, is responsible for an additional 14 percent of the decline.

LOOKING BACK AND MOVING FORWARD

The COVID-19 pandemic had very severe impacts on health and the economy, leading to especially large reductions in leisure and hospitality sales. For example, Maine experienced a 28 percent decrease (\$1.2 billion reduction) in restaurant and lodging sales between 2019 and 2020. The coastal town of Bar Harbor, which was among the hardest hit regions in the state, lost \$83 million in hospitality sales due to the pandemic. Using restaurant sales as a barometer of the number of people spending money in the area, this article separated the impacts of COVID-19 on Bar Harbor's tourism economy into the amounts related to the reduction in overnight visitors, the cancellation of the 2020 cruise ship season, the decrease in the number of Acadia National Park users, and the overall decline in activity nationally (e.g., recession) due to the pandemic and shutdown.

Focusing on the impacts related to the reduction in overnight visitors, Bar Harbor experienced a \$39 million reduction in lodging sales in 2020 compared to the amount in 2019, which is a 34 percent decrease. The impacts of having fewer overnight visitors on local restaurants ranged from 52 percent of the reduced taxable sales in July to 8 percent in October. The dramatic reduction in overnight visitors led to large impacts on retail stores in and around Bar Harbor and it is responsible for 40 percent of the Bar Harbor ESA's decrease in restaurant sales across all of 2020.

Turning to the impacts of the cancelled cruise ship season, the loss of cruise passengers is responsible for 11 percent of Bar Harbor's reduction in restaurant sales from 2019 to 2020. These impacts were greatest in September and October, when most of the ships visit Bar Harbor, and

largest in the areas of town close to where passengers enter port. An analysis of the businesses visited by cruise passengers, based on a survey conducted in 2016, shows a negative relationship between the number of passengers visiting a store or restaurant and its distance from where they enter port (and favorable online ratings attract more cruise passengers) (Gabe [2021a](#)). Likewise, an analysis of the number of people encountered on Bar Harbor's sidewalks suggests that the impacts of cruise ships on sidewalk pedestrian traffic peter out at greater distances from where passengers enter Bar Harbor (Gabe [2021b](#)). Both these studies suggest that the loss of cruise passengers from 2019 to 2020 had its greatest impacts on stores and restaurants located near the passenger point-of-entry.

The broader economic impacts of COVID-19 nationally and a reduction in Acadia National Park users also contributed to the decline in Bar Harbor's restaurant sales that happened between 2019 and 2020. For example, the impacts of COVID-19 nationally (e.g., shutdown) accounted for 90 percent of the year-over-year decline in Bar Harbor restaurant sales in April, which was when the United States (and Maine) had the strictest COVID-related restrictions and prior to Bar Harbor's peak seasons for overnight tourists and cruise ships. The reduction in the number of park users, which in our analysis is a proxy for the recreational activities of local residents and day visitors to the area, had relatively larger impacts in the summer. By fall, however, the numbers of Acadia National Park users in 2020 exceeded the levels from one year earlier (prior to COVID-19).

When thinking about the results presented in this article, it is important to keep in mind that the impacts of COVID-19 are measured relative to the economic activity that happened in 2019. These values are, thus, conservative estimates of the actual impacts of COVID-19 because, in all likelihood, the economic activity in and around Bar Harbor would have increased between 2019 and 2020 "if not" for the pandemic.¹⁵ This means that a comparison of the actual sales that occurred in 2020 to the sales that would have happened without COVID-19 would likely be considerably larger than the impacts (reported in this article) measured by comparing actual sales in 2020 to the sales that occurred in 2019.

The trends in taxable sales through July of 2021 suggest that tourism and hospitality in Bar Harbor and the entire state are recovering from the impacts of COVID-19.

Across all of Maine, lodging sales in July 2021 were 109 percent higher than lodging sales 12 months earlier and 26 percent higher than lodging sales in July 2019, prior to the pandemic. Statewide restaurant sales increased by 57 percent between July 2020 and July 2021, and by 11 percent from July 2019 to July 2021. In Bar Harbor, July 2021 lodging sales were 37 percent higher than lodging sales two years earlier, while restaurant sales increased by 11 percent between July 2019 and July 2021.

Although the number of Acadia National Park users and the amount of Bar Harbor lodging sales are at (or above) levels that might have been expected if not for COVID-19, the number of cruise passengers and ships will not return to prepandemic levels in 2021. The loss of cruise passengers will have its largest impacts in September and October, when most ships in past years visited Bar Harbor. Looking forward, the exact timing and scale of the return of cruise passengers to Bar Harbor will likely depend on the state of the cruise industry in the northeastern United States (and Atlantic Canada) and the attitudes of local businesses and residents regarding cruise ships.

A comparison of surveys conducted in 2003 (Morris and Gabe [2004](#)) and 2021 (Pan Atlantic Research [2021](#)) shows a widening polarization of local opinions about cruise ships. Although the surveys had different purposes and used different questions, the percentage of Bar Harbor residents with neutral attitudes about the local cruise industry decreased from 29 percent in 2003 to 7 percent in 2021.¹⁶ The percentage of residents with the most positive response to the Bar Harbor cruise industry increased from 14 percent in 2003 to 19 percent in 2021, while those with the most negative attitudes rose sharply from 16 percent to 34 percent. This reduction in the percentage of residents in the middle and increase of those with the most extreme views—both positive and negative—could pose a challenge to local policymakers as they make decisions about cruise ships in the postpandemic period.

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NOTES

- 1 US and Maine employment figures are from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- 2 The economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were initially felt in March and April of 2020, which are off-peak months for tourism in Maine. Statewide leisure and hospitality employment decreased by 35 percent between August 2019 and 2020, which represent Maine's peak summer tourist season.
- 3 Taxable hospitality sales data used throughout this article are from Maine Revenue Services.
- 4 According to Maine Office of Tourism figures from 2019 (prior to COVID-19), 7.2 million tourists visited the Downeast and Acadia region of Maine, which includes Bar Harbor and surrounding areas.
- 5 The passengers scheduled to visit Bar Harbor in 2020 did not come to town due to COVID-19 and the cancellation of cruise ships.
- 6 The Maine Office of Tourism's *2018 Visitor Tracking Research Annual Report* shows that 96 percent of overnight and day visitors to Maine spend money on food.
- 7 Acadia National Park use statistics are from the National Park Service.
- 8 The three "lag variables" (i.e., ARMA L1, ARMA L2, ARMA12 L1) are used to account for monthly and seasonal trends, which are common in time-series regression models.
- 9 In addition to the model shown in Table 1, we considered an additional 15 versions of the regression model that differed in terms of the variables and methods used. The results presented in the table are similar to the average impacts across 16 versions of the model. For example, the average impact associated with the lodging sales variable is 0.394, with a standard deviation of 0.046. Likewise, the average impact associated with the cruise ship passengers variable is \$25.71, with a standard deviation of \$4.32.
- 10 The "other" retail category is used by Maine Revenue Services to report taxable sales data in, among other businesses, gift shops, jewelry stores, bookstores, and antique dealers.
- 11 The Zip Code Business Patterns data from 2018 are the most up-to-date figures as of when this article was written.
- 12 The regression results were used to estimate the year-over-year reduction in restaurant sales, which does not exactly match the actual loss. The information shown in Figure 3 is the estimated amount of lost restaurant sales due to a given source, divided by the estimated overall reduction in year-over-year restaurant sales.
- 13 In April, at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the relative effects of the reduction in Acadia National Park users and loss of cruise ship passengers are so small that the bar segments (related to these factors) are tiny.
- 14 Between July and October of 2020, many of the COVID-related travel restrictions in Maine had lessened.

- 15 Over the 10 years leading up to 2020, the average annual growth rate of nominal restaurant and lodging sales in Bar Harbor was 6.3 percent.
- 16 The question from the 2003 survey asked, in the context of local strategies to promote a year-round economy, whether the person supported an option to “Attract more cruise ships during the spring and fall seasons.” The six possible responses to the 2003 survey question were “strongly support,” “somewhat support,” “neutral,” “somewhat against,” “strongly against” and “don’t know.” The survey question from 2021 asked the person to rate the “overall perception of cruise ship tourism for the Town of Bar Harbor.” The six possible responses to the 2021 survey question were “very positive,” “somewhat positive,” “neutral,” “somewhat negative,” “very negative” and “don’t know/no response.”

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