

Summary:

Holiday motoring on Norwegian roads

Holiday motoring in Norway may functionally be considered as two different types of traffic, weekend related traffic and other leisure and holiday traffic.

In the winter season, weekend traffic is mainly to and from the mountain areas, while the summer weekend traffic is concentrated to coastal areas. At certain times, concentration of tourism related traffic causes congestions.

The highest traffic density is generally found within or around the larger city areas like Oslo, Bergen and Trondheim. The road systems in and out of these areas are dominated by work related traffic (except in weekends and in holiday periods), but are also quite important for handling other inbound and outbound traffic. A typical situation occurs particularly on Friday afternoons when outbound tourism and leisure traffic may coincide with work commuting traffic and cause severe capacity problems. The leisure traffic to and from second homes is at some points also sufficient to cause congestion problems on its own, for instance Sunday afternoon.

High traffic density and congestions directly caused by tourism related traffic may be found in some areas between the larger city areas and holiday resort areas. At certain weekends, and particularly in July, the traffic may be multiplied.

Seasonal variations

As regards traffic counting, eight registration points were chosen for this project. Six of the registration points cover five directions to and from the greater Oslo area; besides this one point outside Bergen and one just south of Trondheim were chosen.

Figure S.1 shows variations in traffic per day (monthly average) for all registration points together through the year 2005. January, which is the month with the lowest traffic, is set to 1,0. In July, which is the peak month, average day traffic is more than 50 per cent higher than in January. During the winter season, the traffic is at its highest in March. The magnitude of March versus April depends, however, on in which months Easter holiday occurs (in 2005 it was in March).

The traffic peaks in summer and in winter give indications of level and concentration of the holiday related traffic. In particular, holiday and leisure traffic contributes to significantly higher traffic volumes in the summer season in many parts of the Norwegian road net.

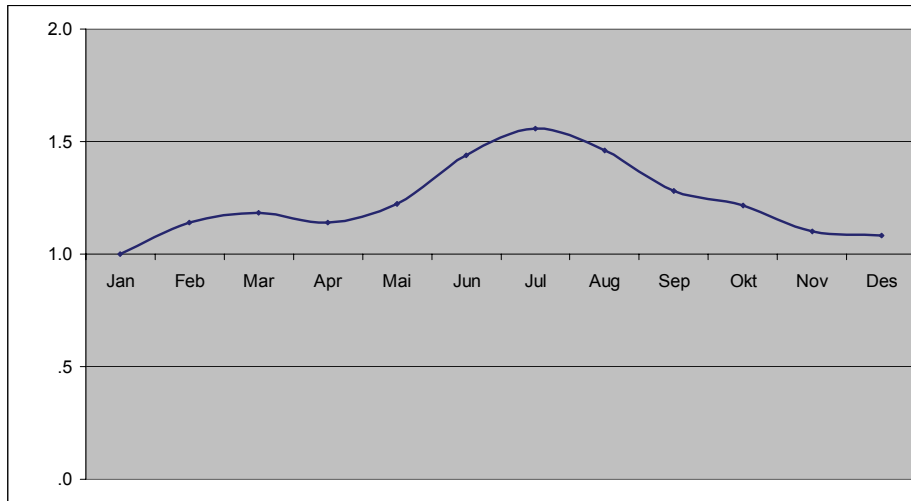
Although the seasonal profiles are somewhat varying, all eight road links examined in this analysis show increasing traffic in the summer season. Some of

The report can be ordered from:

Institute of Transport Economics, Gaustadalleén 21, NO 0349 Oslo

Telephone: +47 22 57 38 00 Telefax: +47 22 60 92 00

the links do also have significant peaks in the winter season, although not to the same extent as in the summer season. On some of the relations the winter traffic does not show any significant peaks.



TØI rapport 891/2007

Figure S.1: Seasonal variations in road traffic at eight registration points (summarised). Average day traffic by month 2005 (January = 1)

Winter traffic

Holiday and leisure travels in the winter season are relatively concentrated in time and space. In particular, the traffic between large city areas and popular mountain resorts may have significant peaks and caused reduced speed and congestions at certain points and/or certain stretches.

The car based travels in winter influence mainly the weekend traffic, causing particular concentration on Fridays (for instance out of Oslo) and Sundays (towards Oslo). This is for example seen at Espa (on E6 100 kms north of Oslo), Sollihøgda (E16 west of Oslo, main gateway to Hallingdal and Valdres) and at Herland (E16 east of Bergen).

On relations between cities and coastal areas, winter traffic is relatively low, simply because winter is off-season for the holiday resorts in those directions. Weekend leisure traffic give small increases only in traffic volumes at both E18 and E6 south of Oslo.

Summer traffic

On roads where huge traffic is observed in winter weekends, also summer weekends may show some peaks, however, not at the same magnitude as in the winter season. In the summer season, the holiday and leisure traffic peaks move to other relations, particularly those south east of Oslo (E6/E18 through Østfold) and south west (E18 through Vestfold).

On these road links weekend traffic starts to increase in June, causing significant peaks Fridays (southbound) and Sundays (northbound). This traffic comprises

several travels to popular second homes areas, also in Sweden. In June there is still considerable work related traffic (including commuting), causing traffic peaks near the city areas, particularly on Fridays.

In July the work related traffic is low, but this is the peak month for tourism related traffic. This concerns both domestic holiday traffic and foreign motor tourists on Norwegian roads. On many of the relations, the increase in tourist traffic more than compensate the decrease in other traffic (see figure S.1).

July traffic peaks also occur on Fridays and Sundays, but the traffic is more spread over the week than in other months. At most registration points in this analysis, the traffic during weekdays increase more (relatively) than in weekends.

The summer traffic to the coastal areas (through Østfold and Vestfold) is characterised by a relatively long summer season. The traffic volumes start to increase in March/April, reach a peak in July and then gradually decrease during the months of autumn.

The composition of the holiday and leisure traffic

Among the Norwegians, the frequency as regards trips longer than 100 kilometres has increased during the last years. 75 per cent of these long trips are holiday/leisure trips, and private car is the dominating transport mode. The main categories of leisure trips by car are visiting friends and relatives, travelling to second homes and other holiday trips. In addition, several trips shorter than 100 kms are undertaken, for instance to second homes. About half the number of second homes (national average) is situated in the owner's county of residence.

Shopping trips to Sweden are also quite common. On average, the trip distance is somewhat shorter than the long leisure trips within Norway.

A major part of Norwegians' leisure and holiday trips is including the weekend. During the year Sunday is included in more than three times as many trips as the ordinary weekdays (Monday-Thursday) are. Car trips to and from second homes are concentrated to Fridays and Sundays.

The frequency of second home travels is dependent on both season and distance. It is highest in the summer season, for all travel distances. Seasonal differences are highest at short distances, but are gradually declining as distance increase. Regarding distances, 94 per cent of all second homes are situated less than 450 kms from owner's place of residence.

A majority of foreign motoring tourists visit Norway in the summer season (May – September). Both number of vehicles and duration of stay are significantly higher than in the rest of the year. Tourists from Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Finland and the Netherlands constitute 86 per cent of the visitors. A majority of these are on round trips.

In the winter season foreign visitor volumes are considerably smaller, and the visits are characterised by shorter stays and more resort-orientated. Swedes and Danes constitute 82 per cent of the foreign visitor volumes in the winter season.