

Survey of Traveling Anglers' Attitudes Toward Tipping

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By *The Angling Report*

The Newsletter For Anglers Who Travel



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Contents

I. Introduction

II. Survey Form That Was Used

III. Some General Responses

IV. Response Charts

V. Additional Comments



Facts About The Angling Report

This survey was published by *The Angling Report*, the newsletter for anglers who travel. Not a booking agency or an affiliate of any booking agency, guide service or lodge company. Provides news and where-to-go information on domestic and international fishing. Also operates "The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly," – the world's only unbiased, completely uncensored subscriber Trip Report program. To subscribe, or to inquire about Trip Reports, write: *The Angling Report*, 9200 South Dadeland Blvd. Suite 523, Miami, FL 33156. Tel. 305-670-1376. E-mail: Mail@AnglingReport.com. Or visit our web site at www.AnglingReport.com. A one-year subscription costs \$49. Add \$11 in Canada/Mexico. Add \$29 overseas.

Part I Introduction

By Don Causey

This survey was conducted among subscribers to *The Angling Report* who voluntarily filled out either a postage-free response card included in the August 2008 issue of the newsletter or an online questionnaire e-mailed to E-subscribers, also in August 2008. In all, 306 subscribers filled out at least a portion of the card or questionnaire. The vast majority identified themselves as fishing clients (296). The balance of the respondents were outfitters/guides (5), booking agents (4), or unspecified (1). This survey should not be considered a scientifically accurate measurement of attitudes toward tipping on fishing trips, but rather a guide as to what some of the most experienced international anglers consider proper tipping practices. Keep in mind that the base of respondents (306 *Angling Report* subscribers) is too narrow for a definitive scientific study of anglers overall. Moreover, the methodology involved in conducting this study required respondents to take action on their own, which assuredly means those with strong feelings about tipping are over-represented. Still, there are some noteworthy insights here into traveling anglers' attitudes toward tipping, not only in the charts, which reveal patterns of behavior, but also in the individual comments expressed in Section V.

One of the most striking things that emerges from this survey is the fact that most subscribers say they tip a fairly moderate amount for most angling services. The general impression one gets that tipping is "out of control" on fishing trips, especially where Americans predominate, may not be true after all. What may be out of control is anglers' worries about how their contributions stack up against other anglers' contributions. For sure, there is a fairly large gap between the actual behavior of clients and the behavior guides, lodge owners and others are trying to elicit from clients by the posting and articulating of ever-higher tipping guidelines. Whether it's wise for the industry to continue to try to push tips higher is an open question. The comment section of this survey indicates that a growing minority of clients don't like this. They don't want the industry to use higher tips as a way of masking price increases; and, just as important, they don't want to see their current right to reward good performance and punish bad performance with their tips supplanted by the imposition of industry standards or posted guidelines.

Another striking thing that emerges from this survey is the fact that some anglers do currently tip far outside the norm. Take a look at the chart relating to a day of flats fishing in the US. There is remarkable general agreement that \$50 is a decent tip for this service, but one subscriber feels \$5 is sufficient; two think \$10 is sufficient; and seven (five percent of the total) think \$25 is enough. On the other hand, 23 (16 percent of the total) think \$100 is more appropriate. Three think \$150 is the right amount. To cite another example, the range of tips for a day of trout fishing in Europe varies between \$5 and \$100. The tip gap is even wider (\$5 to \$1,000) when it comes to the amount *Angling Report* subscribers say they tip for guide service during a five-day stay at a fishing lodge out West. It's wider still (\$5 to \$2,500) when it comes to guide service on a five-day lodge stay in the Bahamas. In defense of lodge owners, guides and other professionals, it's not hard to understand why they react to this kind of chaotic cash flow by posting tipping guidelines or forcing guides to pool tips.

Ultimately, there is probably no solution to the "tipping problem" as it manifests itself on fishing trips. The process itself – tipping – is rooted in cultural attitudes that vary internationally and even by region and class. Our goal, when we created this survey, was not to solve this complicated problem, but merely to elucidate it and spark fruitful discussion. Perhaps what is needed now is a survey of fishing professionals? For sure, our door is open to that possibility. In the meantime, anyone with additional thoughts on the subject of tipping on fishing trips is urged share them. You can reach me at the e-mail address below
- *Don Causey*.

doncausey@msn.com



Part II

Survey Form That Was Used



Supplement to The Angling Report

No Postage
Necessary if
mailed in the
United States

A Survey of Attitudes

How Much To Tip On A Fishing Trip?

Ever been confused... angry... embarrassed about tipping on a fishing trip? As an angler who travels you have likely experienced all three emotions because there are no clear guidelines as to how much one should tip a guide or lodge personnel. This means clients tend to tip all over the lot – from way too much, to way too little. Importantly, within those variations, national attitudes about tipping vary greatly, with Americans widely viewed as being “idiots” for tipping too much and Canadians being viewed as “cheap.” On top of that, the US dollar has plunged against most currencies, eroding the value of US dollar tips. Where does your own personal tipping behavior fit into this overall scheme? To find out, and to help us publish a report on attitudes toward tipping, please take a moment to fill out the questionnaire below. Once you have done so, simply drop the survey in a mail box. No postage is necessary in the United States. Thank you. – *Don Causey.*

Background Information

- 1.) What is your primary status in the angling field: Client Outfitter Booking Agent Other _____
- 2.) Where do you live: US Canada Europe Latin America New Zealand Australia Other _____
- 3.) Top two places you fish (US West, Caribbean, etc.) _____
- 4.) In general, do you think people tip (please check one): Too Much Too Little About The Right Amount
- 5.) Is uncertainty about tipping a problem that troubles you? No Yes, a little Yes, a lot

How Much Do You Tip (In US Dollars)?

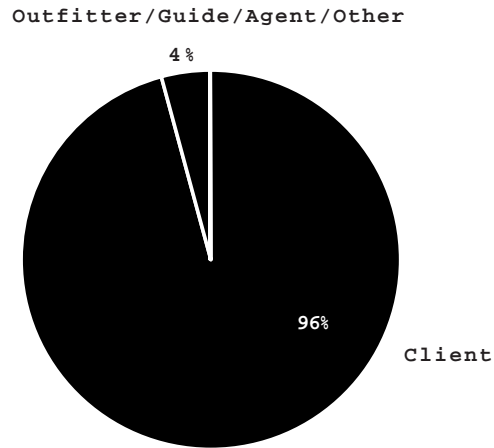
Please indicate how much you currently tip for the following angling services, assuming a good effort was made to insure your success, safety and satisfaction. Provide input only about trips you are familiar with. And please be candid. There are no “right” answers.

One-Day Trips	Multi-Day Trips	Multi-Day Trips (continued)
One-day US trout fishing \$____ Guide	Western US Lodge Stay (5 days fishing) \$____ Guide \$____ Staff	Patagonia Sea Run Trout (5 days fishing) \$____ Guide \$____ Staff
One-day US flats fishing \$____ Guide	Bahamas Bonefishing (5 days fishing) \$____ Guide \$____ Staff	Amazon Peacock Bass (5 days fishing) \$____ Guide \$____ Staff
One-day US striper fishing \$____ Guide	Xmas Island Bonefishing (5 days fishing) \$____ Guide \$____ Staff	Kola Peninsula Salmon (5 days fishing) \$____ Guide \$____ Staff
One-day US redfishing \$____ Guide	Chile Trout Fishing (5 days fishing) \$____ Guide \$____ Staff	Iceland Salmon Fishing (5 days fishing) \$____ Guide \$____ Staff
One-day NZ trout fishing \$____ Guide	Alaska daily fly-out (5 days fishing) \$____ Guide \$____ Staff	Belize Mothership Trip (5 days fishing) \$____ Guide \$____ Staff
One-day Europe trout fishing \$____ Guide	Guatemala Sailfishing (5 days fishing) \$____ Guide \$____ Staff	Yucatan Lodge Stay (5 days fishing) \$____ Guide \$____ Staff
One-day steelhead fishing \$____ Guide	Canada Trout Fishing (5 days fishing) \$____ Guide \$____ Staff	Argentina Trout Fishing (5 days fishing) \$____ Guide \$____ Staff
One-day US offshore fishing \$____ Captain \$____ Mate		
One-day Non-US offshore fishing \$____ Captain \$____ Mate		

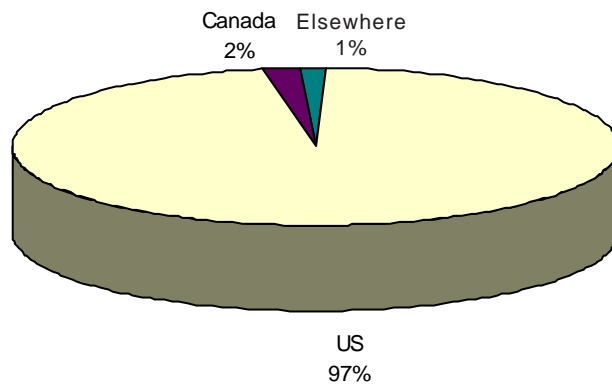
(Want to comment further on tipping? E-mail Don Causey at: doncausey@msn.com)

Part III Some General Responses

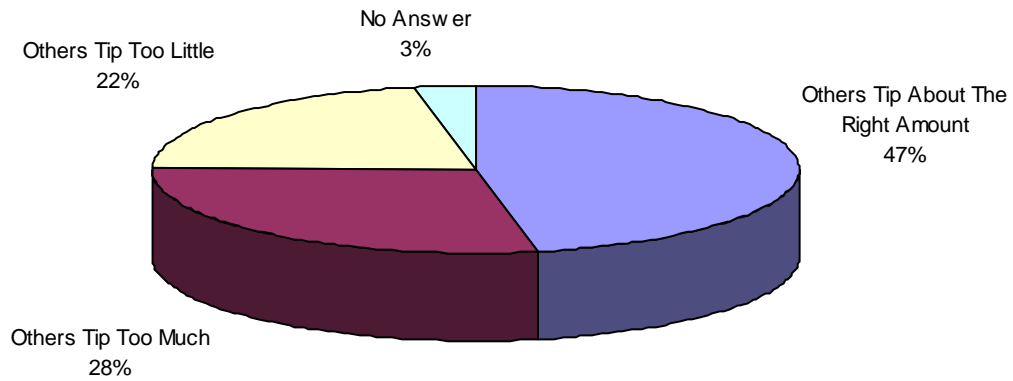
Survey Participants Who Took Part In The Survey (306 Total Responses)



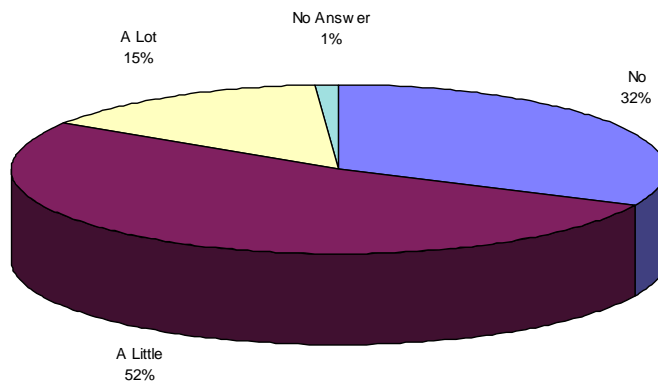
Where Do Respondents Live



What Do Respondents Think About Other's Tipping Behavior



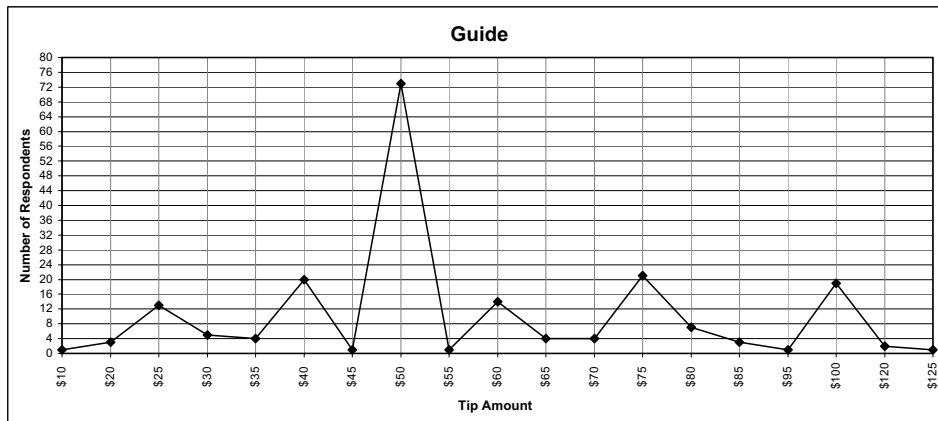
Is Tipping A Problem That Troubles Respondents?



Part IV Response Charts

The following charts (39 in all) indicate how much respondents tip for a variety of guide/outfitters services. Each chart visually represents how much all respondents thought was an appropriate tip for each angling service. See below each chart for the important numbers that underlie it – including Number of Respondents, Highest Suggested Tip, Lowest Suggested Tip, Range of Tip Suggestions, Median Suggested Tip and Average Suggested Tip. The median tip amount is the amount that is equidistant between the two extremes – that is, one half of the suggested tips are higher and one half of them are lower. The average suggested tip is calculated by adding all of the tip suggestions and dividing that total by the number of suggestions. If you are trying to determine how your tipping behavior compares to that of a cross section of your peers, you may want to look at both figures.

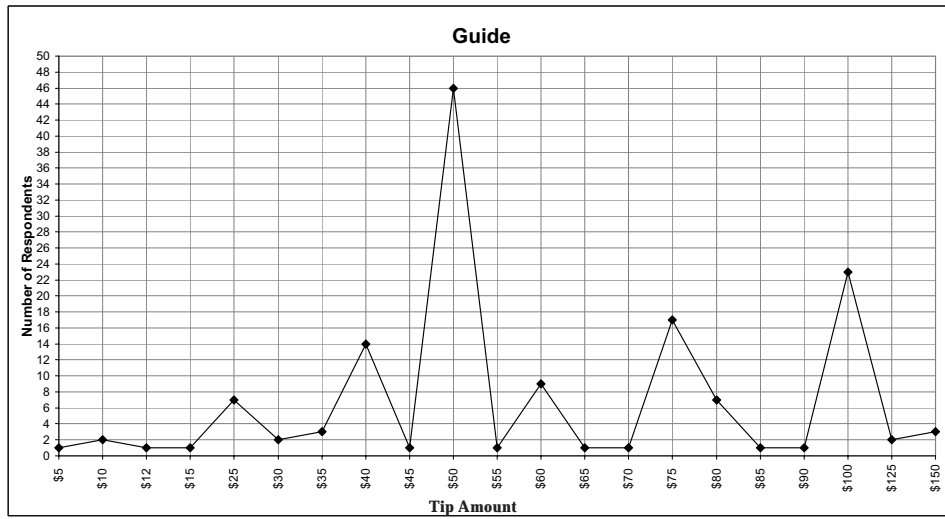
**Tips
One-day US Trout Fishing**



Number of Respondents: 197
 Highest Tip: \$125
 Lowest Tip: \$10

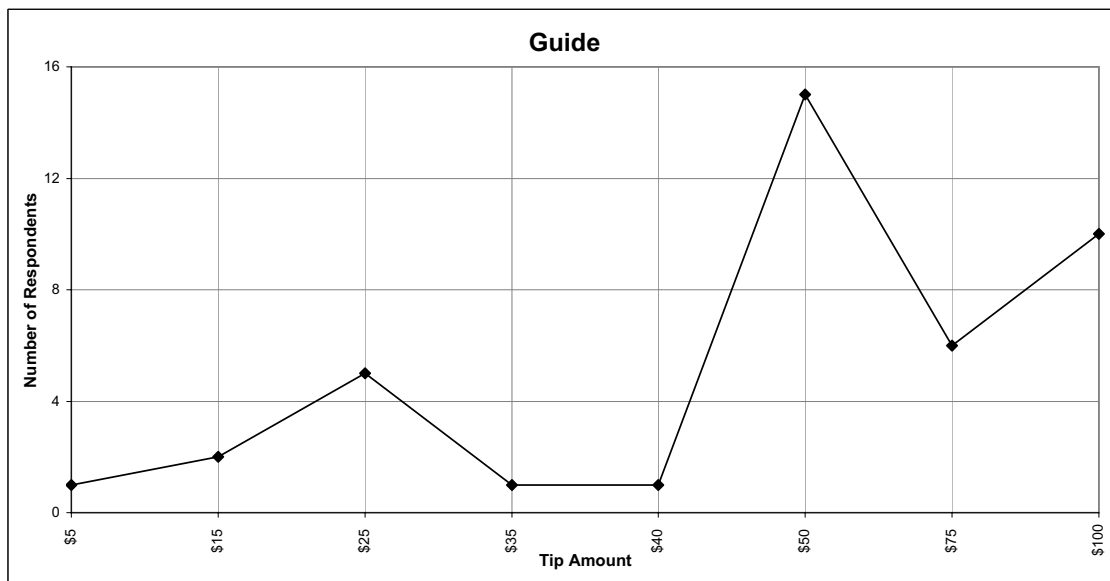
Range of Tips: \$10 to \$125
 Median Tip: \$50
 Average Tip: \$57

Tips One-Day US Flats Fishing



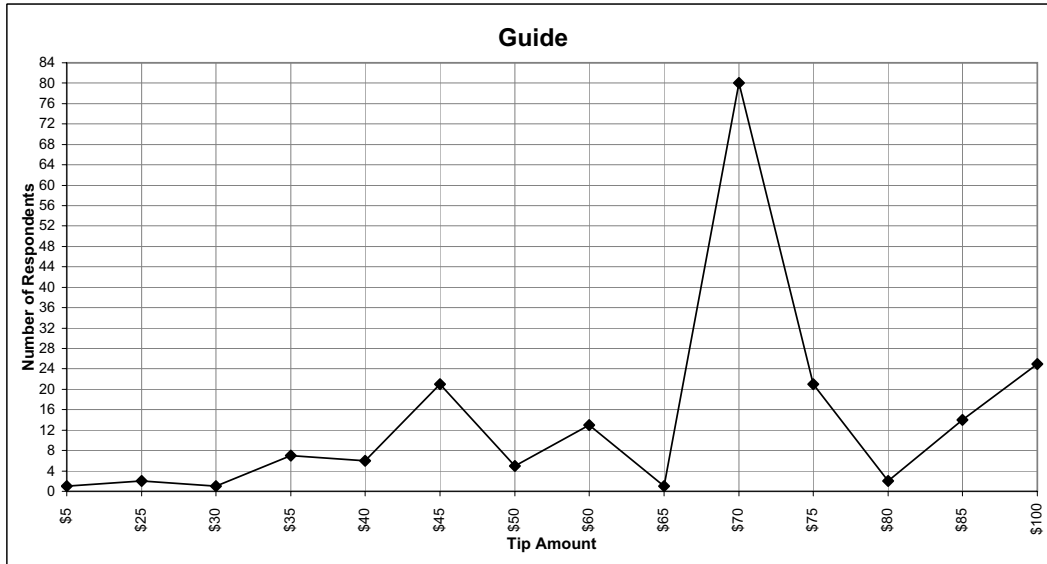
Number of Respondents:	144	Range of Tips:	\$5 to \$150
Highest Tip:	\$150	Median Tip:	\$50
Lowest Tip:	\$5	Average Tip:	\$62

Tips One-Day New Zealand Trout Fishing



Number of Respondents:	41	Range of Tips:	\$5 to \$100
Highest Tip:	\$100	Median Tip:	\$50
Lowest Tip:	\$5	Average Tip:	\$59

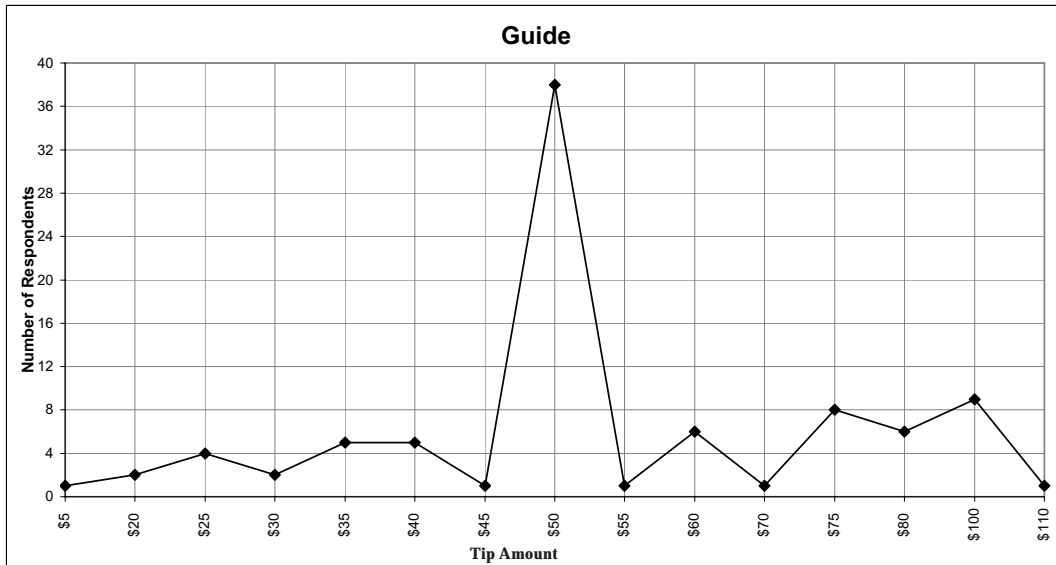
Tips One-Day Steelhead Fishing



Number of Respondents: 199
 Highest Tip: \$100
 Lowest Tip: \$5

Range of Tips: \$5 to \$100
 Median Tip: \$70
 Average Tip: \$69

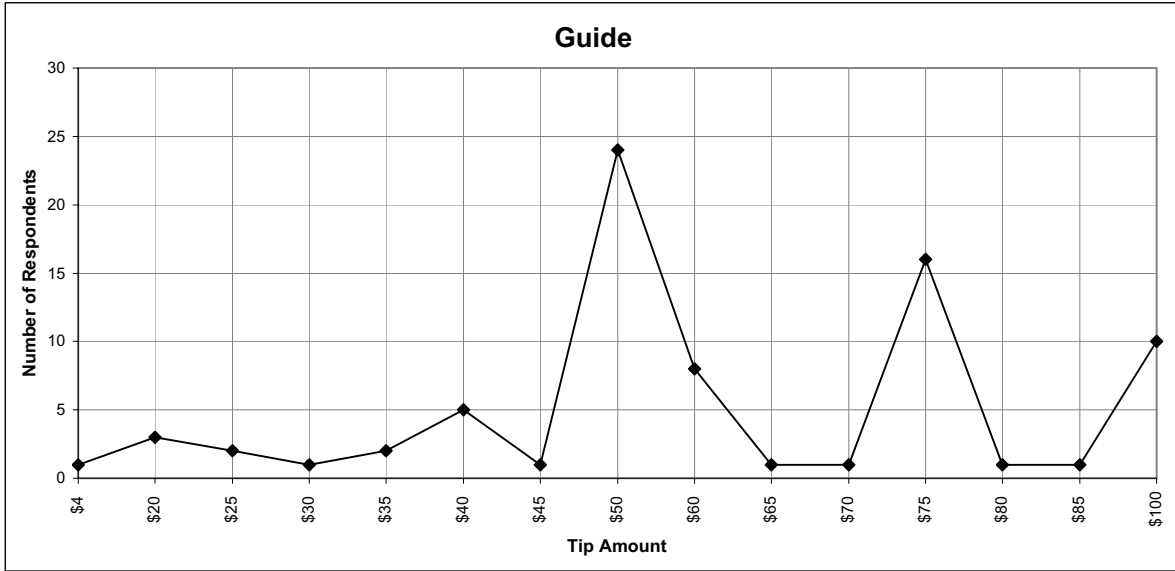
Tips One-Day US Redfishing



Number of Respondents: 90
 Highest Tip: \$110
 Lowest Tip: \$5

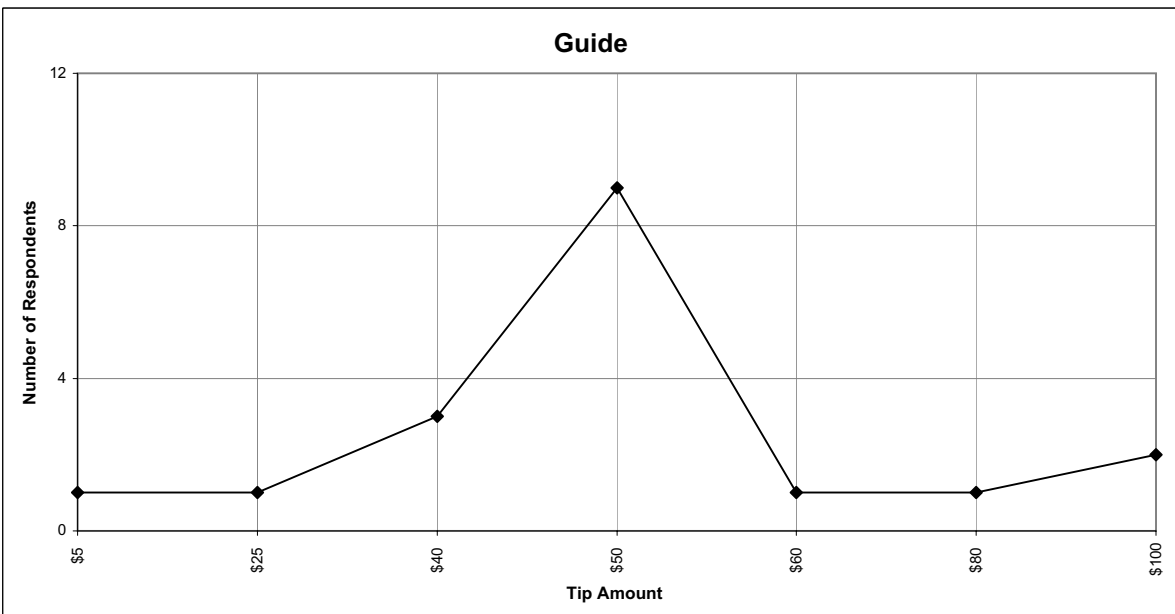
Range of Tips: \$5 to \$110
 Median Tip: \$50
 Average Tip: \$56

Tips One-Day US Striper Fishing



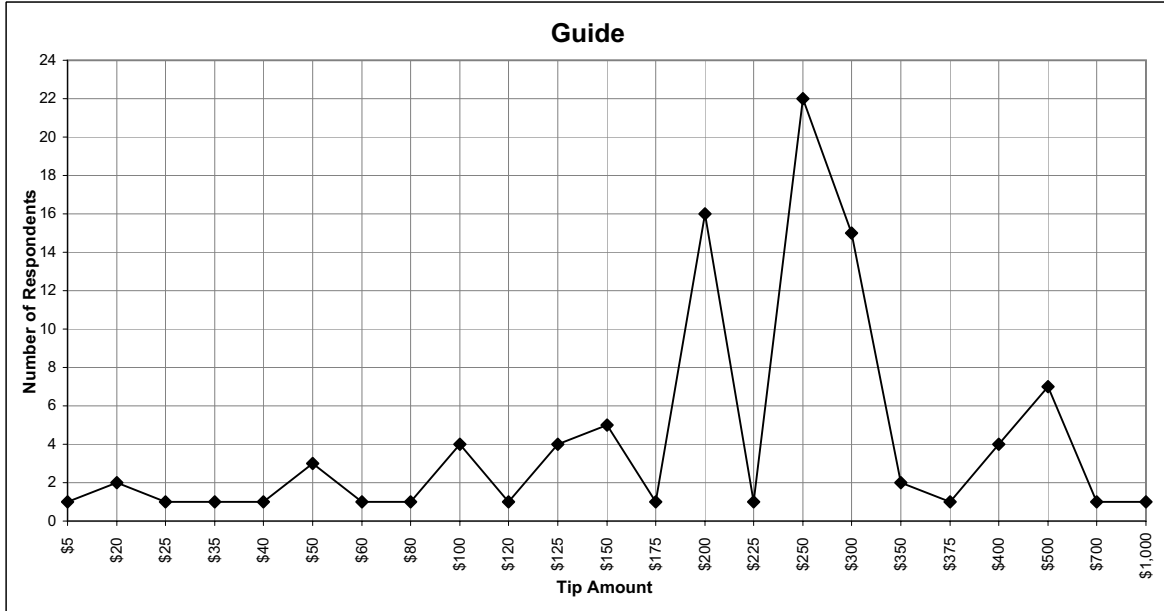
Number of Respondents:	77	Range of Tips:	\$4 to \$100
Highest Tip:	\$100	Median Tip:	\$50
Lowest Tip:	\$4	Average Tip:	\$60

Tips One-Day Europe Trout Fishing



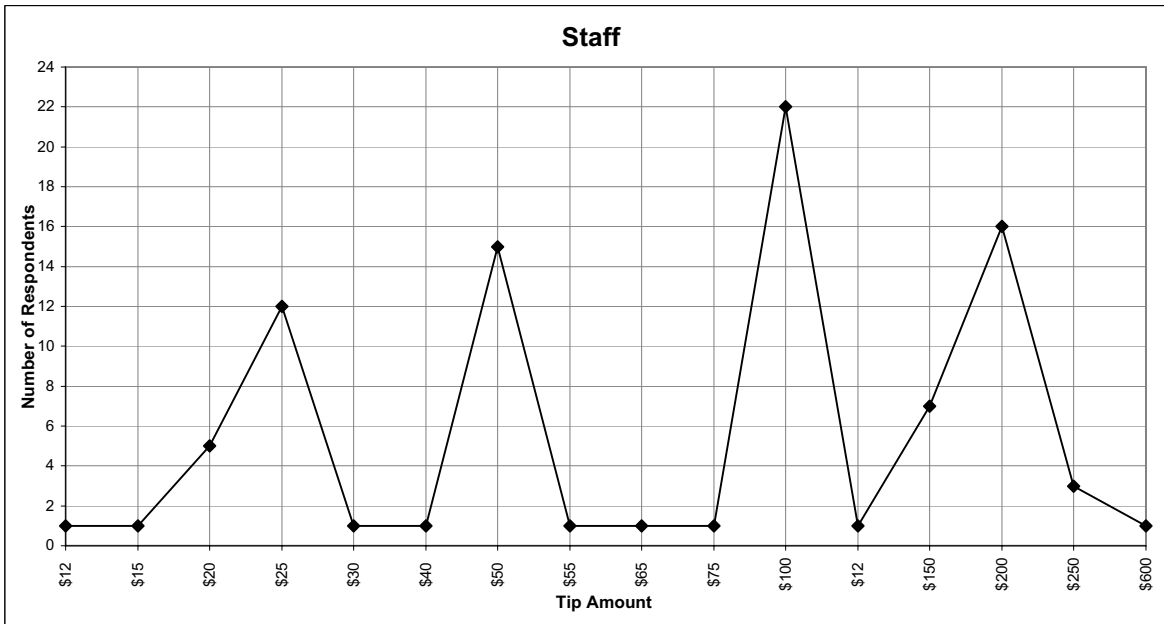
Number of Respondents:	18	Range of Tips:	\$5 to \$100
Highest Tip:	\$100	Median Tip:	\$50
Lowest Tip:	\$5	Average Tip:	\$52

Tips Western US Lodge Stay (5 Days Fishing)



Number of Respondents: 96
 Highest Tip: \$1,000
 Lowest Tip: \$5

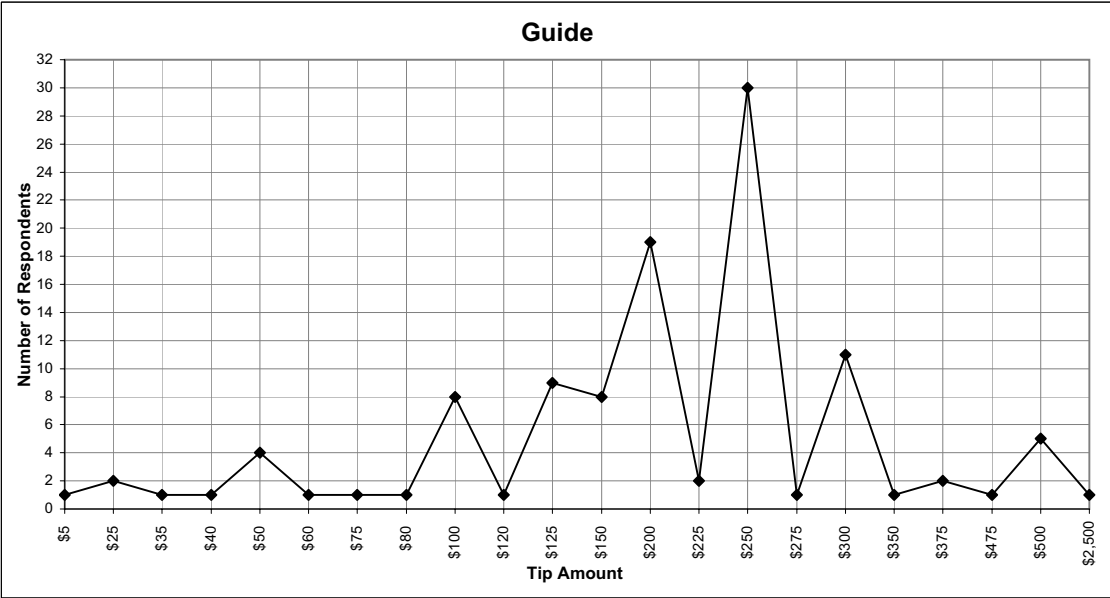
Range of Tips: \$5 to \$1,000
 Median Tip: \$250
 Average Tip: \$247



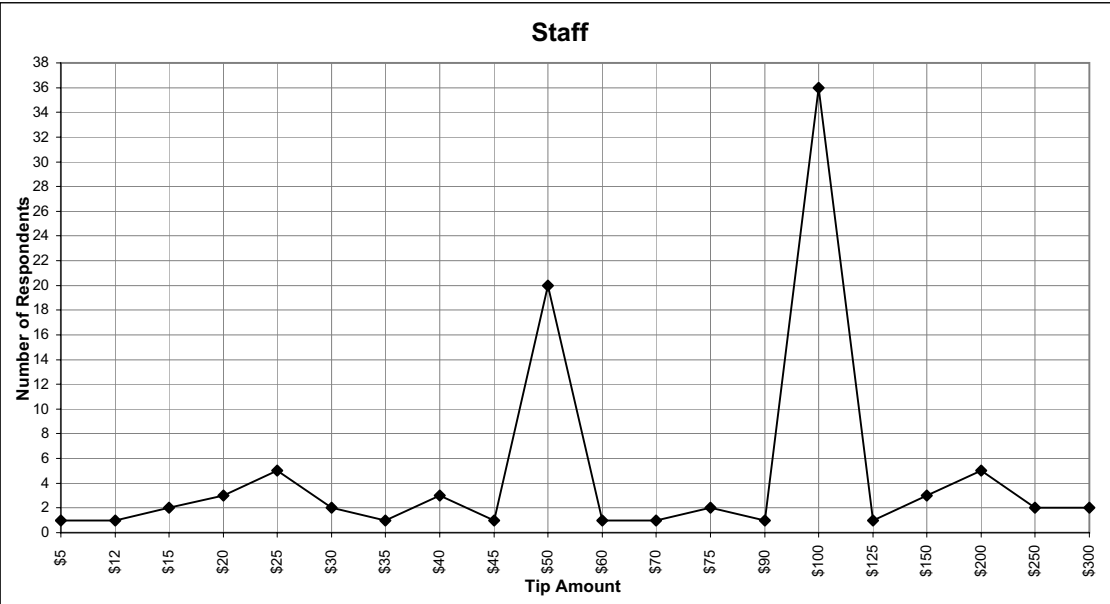
Number of Respondents: 89
 Highest Tip: \$600
 Lowest Tip: \$12

Range of Tips: \$12 to \$600
 Median Tip: \$100
 Average Tip: \$104

Tips Bahamas Bonefishing (5 Days Fishing)

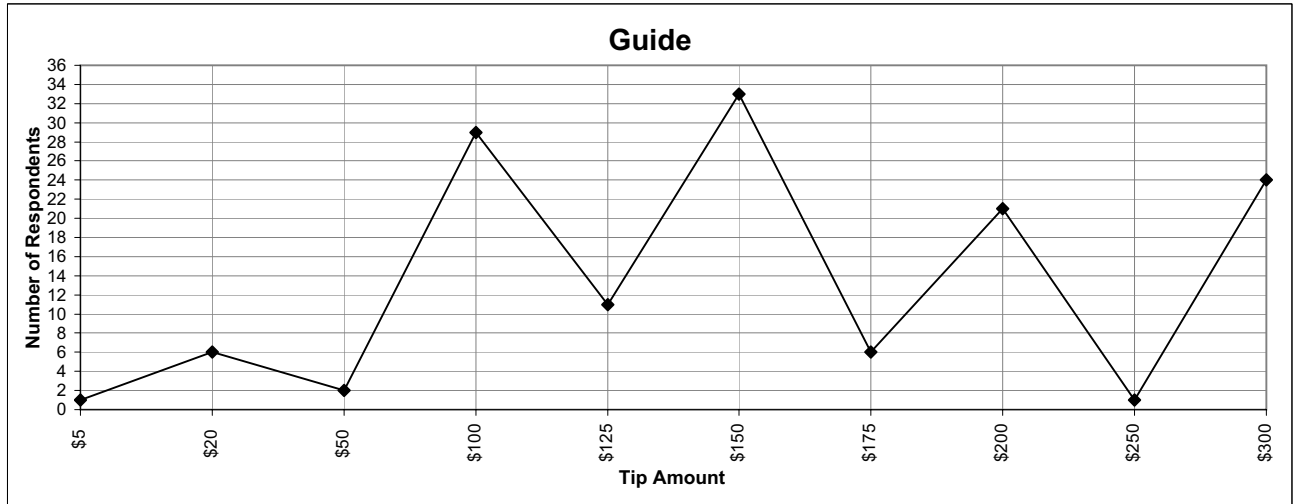


Number of Respondents: 111	Range of Tips: \$5 to \$2,500
Highest Tip: \$2,500	Median Tip: \$200
Lowest Tip: \$5	Average Tip: \$231



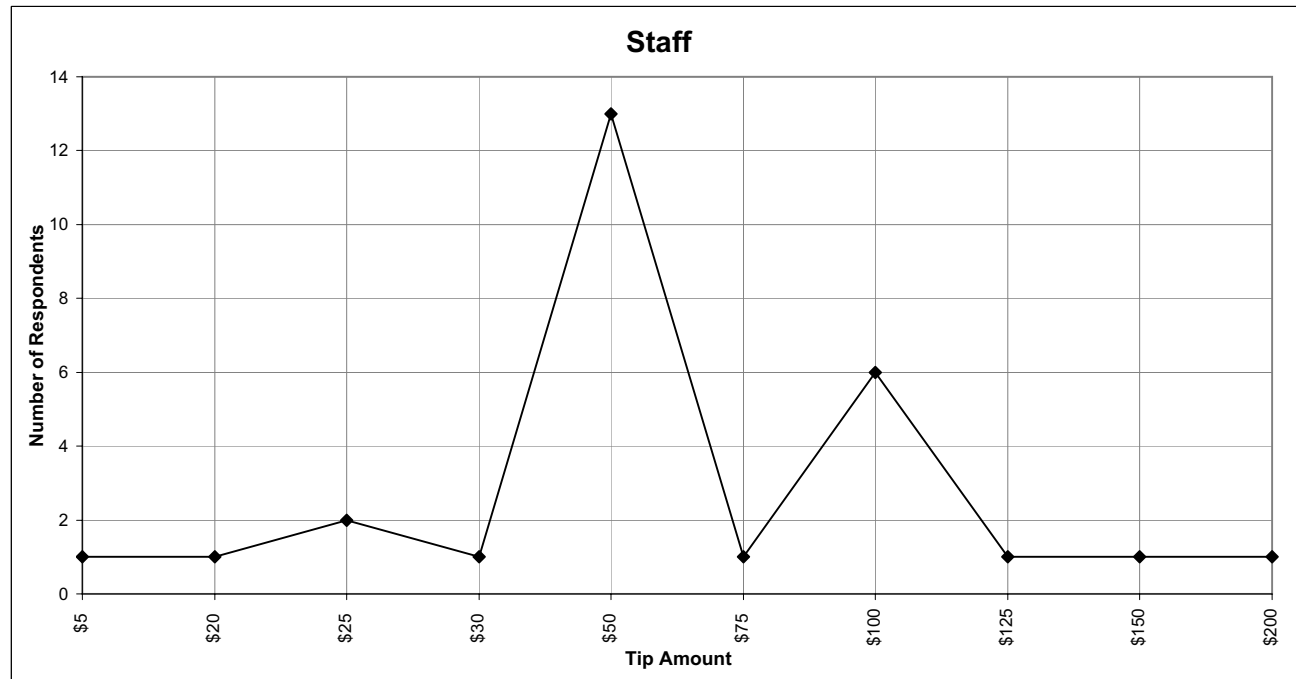
Number of Respondents: 93	Range of Tips: \$5 to \$300
Highest Tip: \$300	Median Tip: \$100
Lowest Tip: \$5	Average Tip: \$87

Tips Christmas Island Bonefishing (5 Days Fishing)



Number of Respondents: 134
 Highest Tip: \$300
 Lowest Tip: \$5

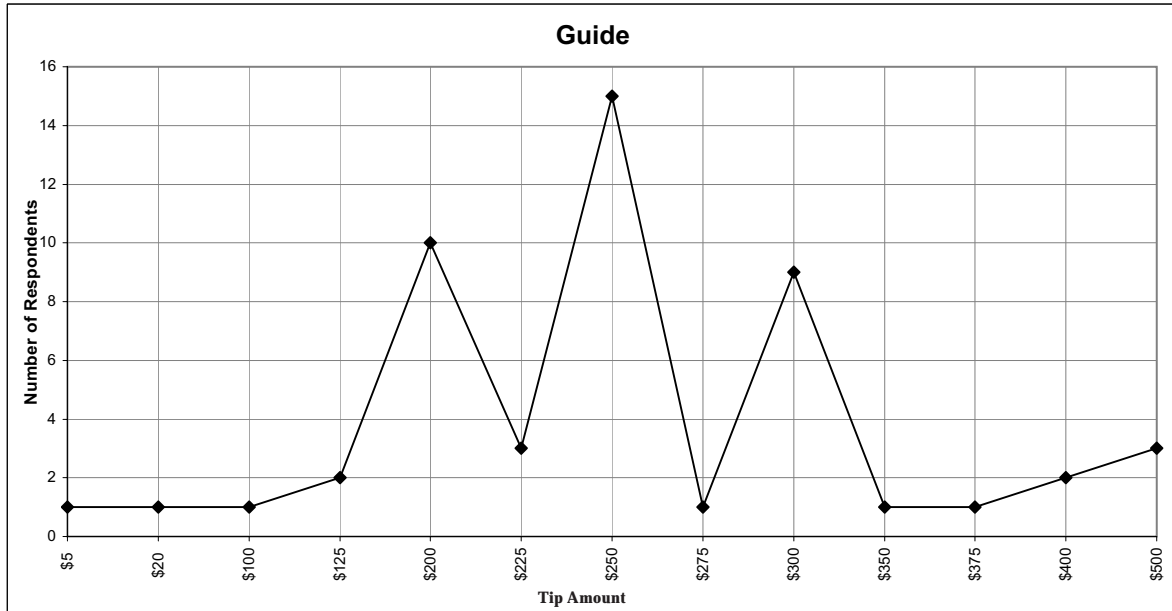
Range of Tips: \$5 to \$300
 Median Tip: \$150
 Average Tip: \$165



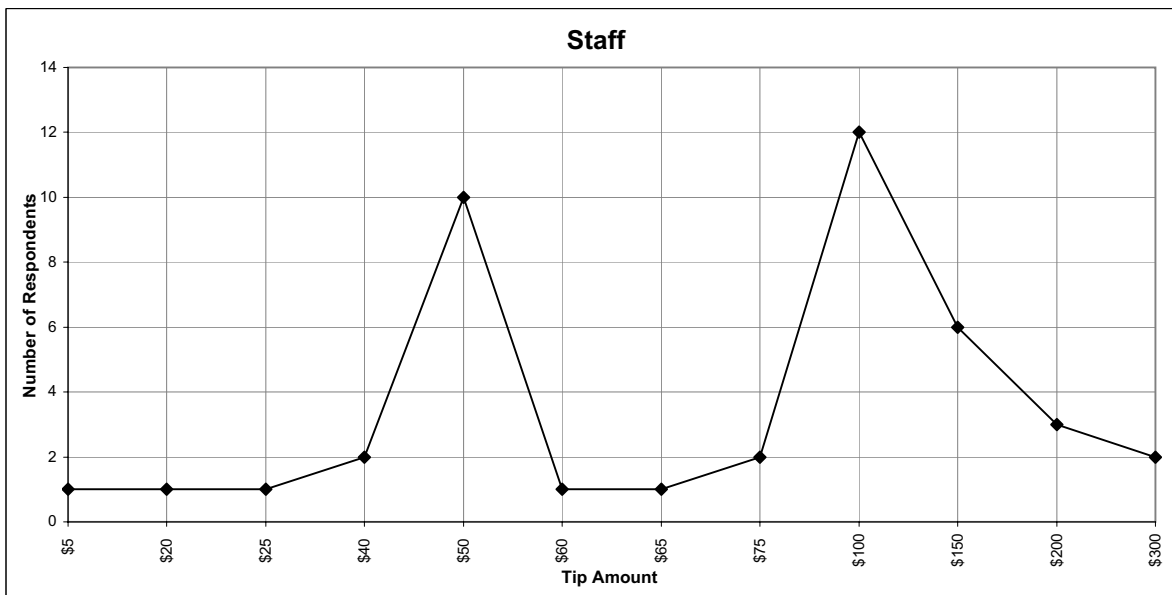
Number of Respondents: 28
 Highest Tip: \$200
 Lowest Tip: \$5

Range of Tips: \$5 to \$200
 Median Tip: \$50
 Average Tip: \$68

Tips Chile Trout Fishing (5 Days Fishing)

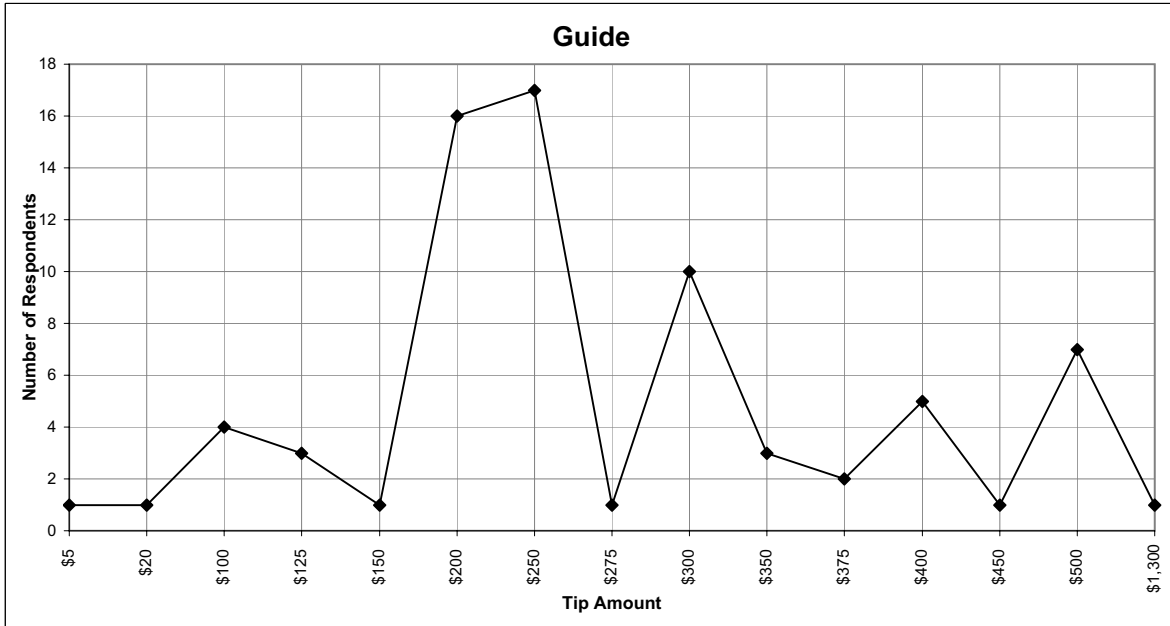


Number of Respondents:	50	Range of Tips:	\$5 to \$500
Highest Tip:	\$500	Median Tip:	\$250
Lowest Tip:	\$5	Average Tip:	\$256



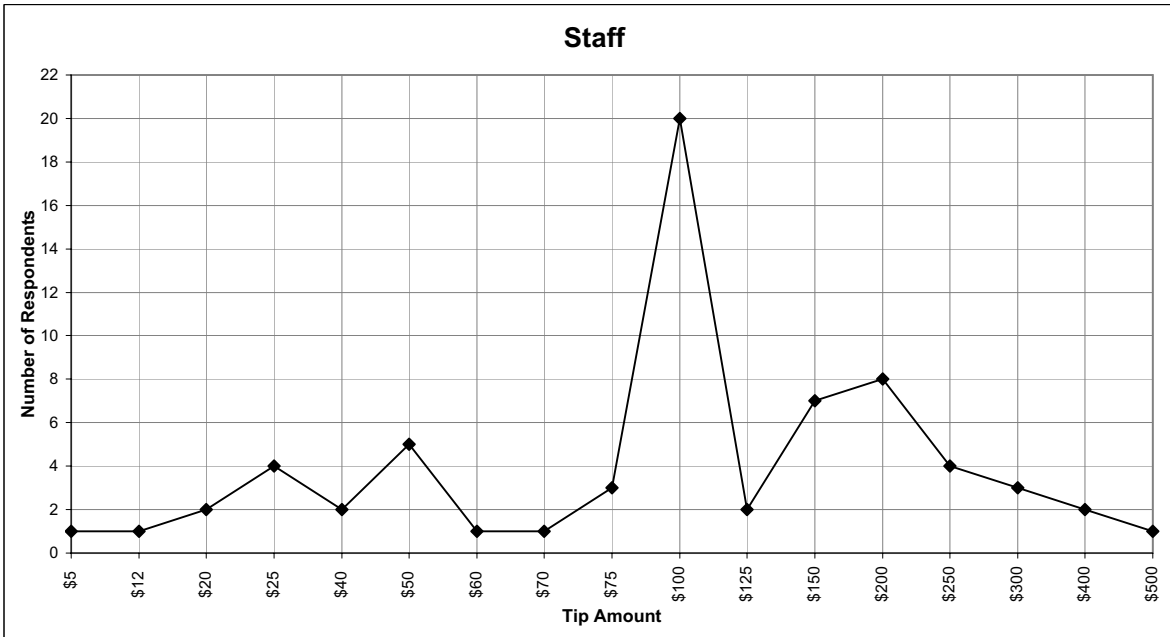
Number of Respondents:	42	Range of Tips:	\$5 to \$300
Highest Tip:	\$300	Median Tip:	\$100
Lowest Tip:	\$5	Average Tip:	\$100

Tips Alaska Daily Fly-Out (5 Days Fishing)



Number of Respondents: 73
 Highest Tip: \$1,300
 Lowest Tip: \$5

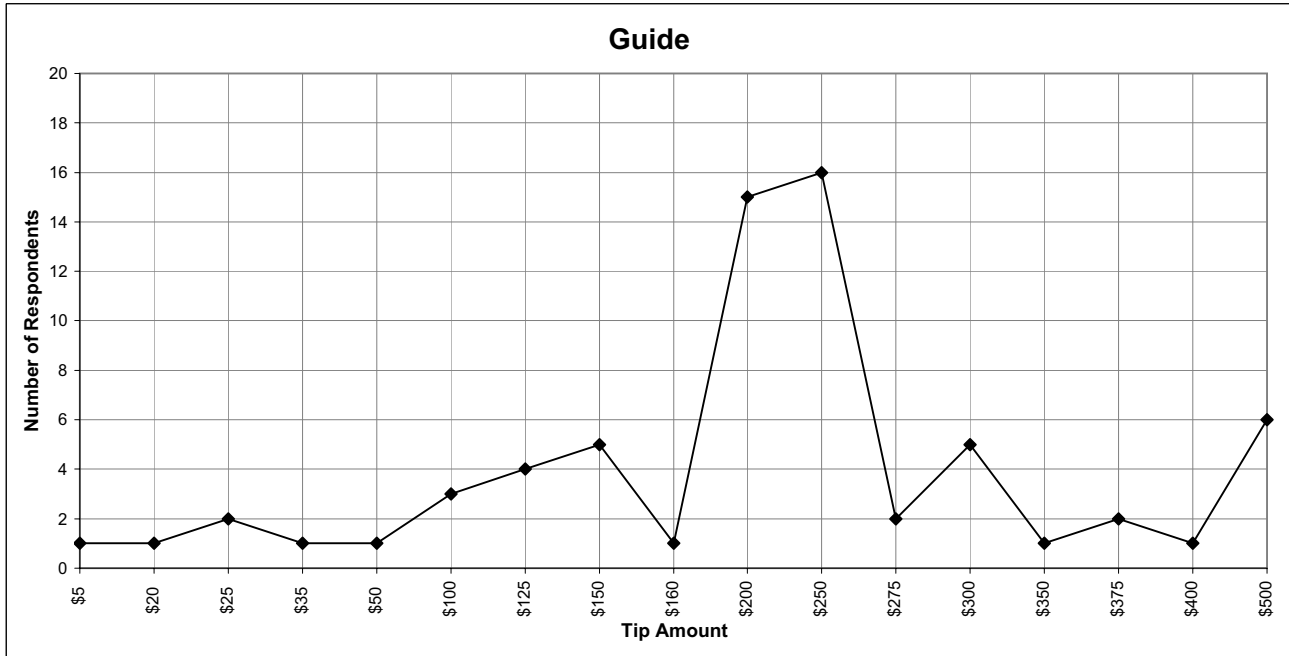
Range of Tips: \$5 to \$1,300
 Median Tip: \$250
 Average Tip: \$284



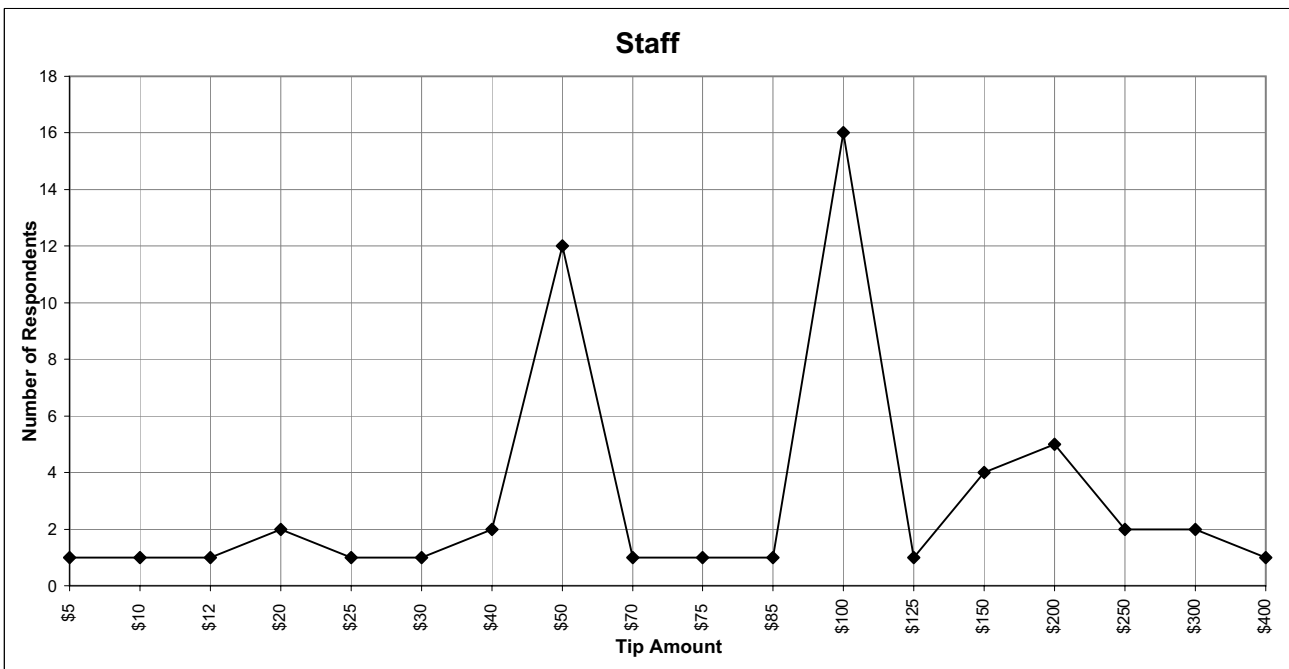
Number of Respondents: 67
 Highest Tip: \$500
 Lowest Tip: \$5

Range of Tips: \$5 to \$500
 Median Tip: \$100
 Average Tip: \$133

Tips Canada Trout Fishing (5 Days Fishing)

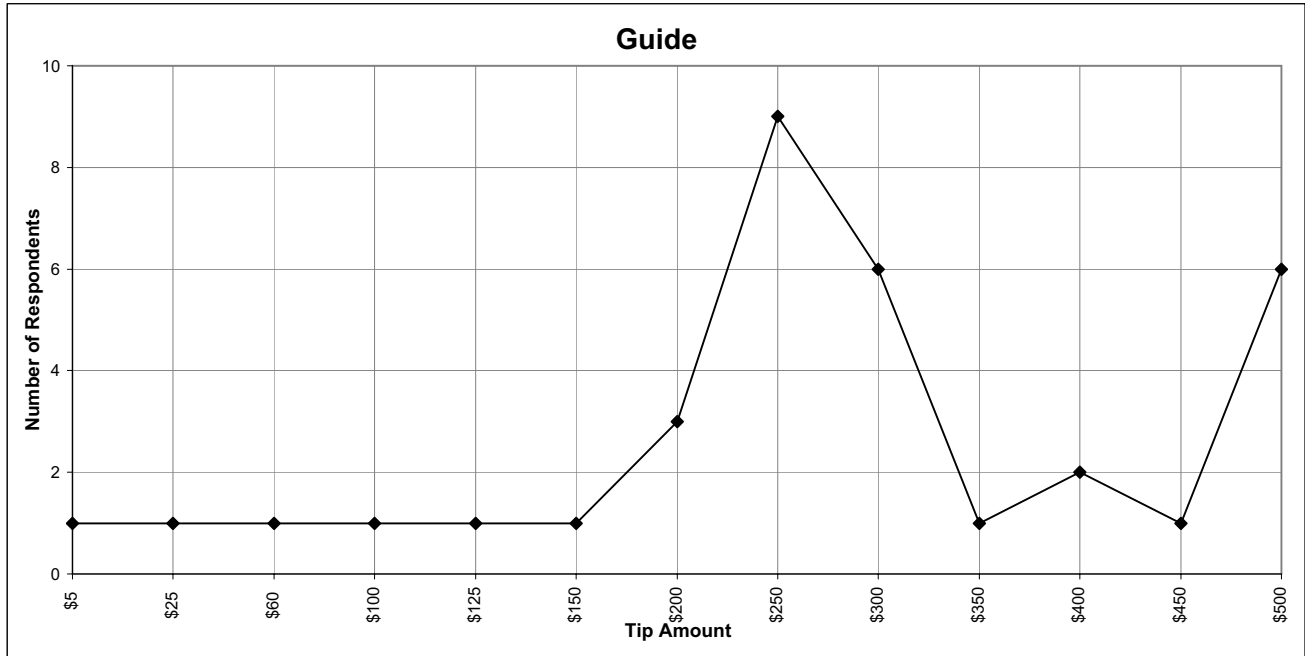


Number of Respondents:	67	Range of Tips:	\$5 to \$500
Highest Tip:	\$500	Median Tip:	\$200
Lowest Tip:	\$5	Average Tip:	\$230

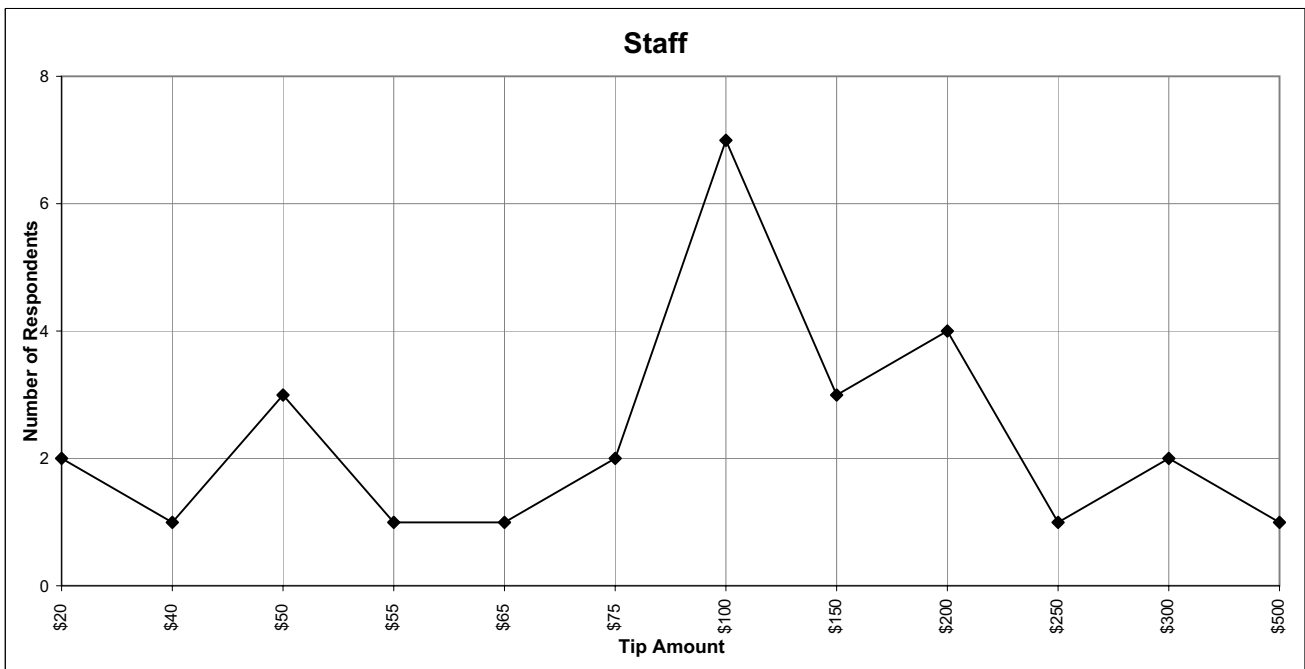


Number of Respondents:	55	Range of Tips:	\$5 to \$400
Highest Tip:	\$400	Median Tip:	\$100
Lowest Tip:	\$5	Average Tip:	\$106

Tips Patagonia Sea-Run Trout (5 Days Fishing)

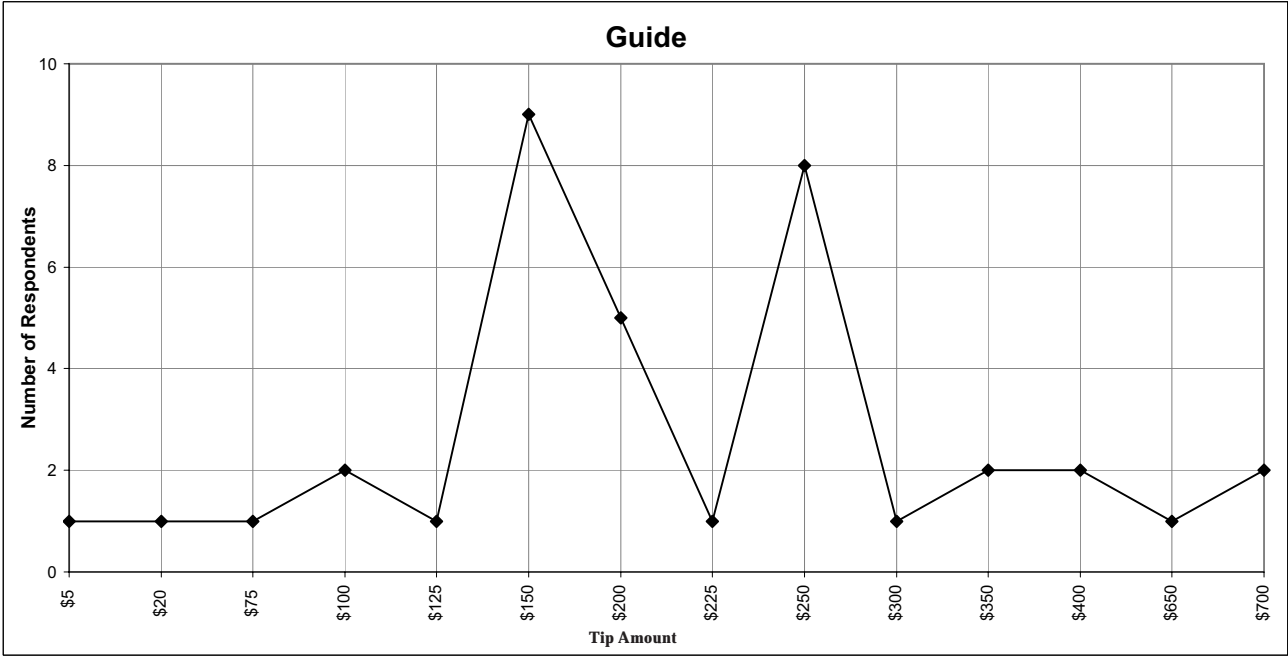


Number of Respondents:	34	Range of Tips:	\$5 to \$500
Highest Tip:	\$500	Median Tip:	\$250
Lowest Tip:	\$5	Average Tip:	\$285

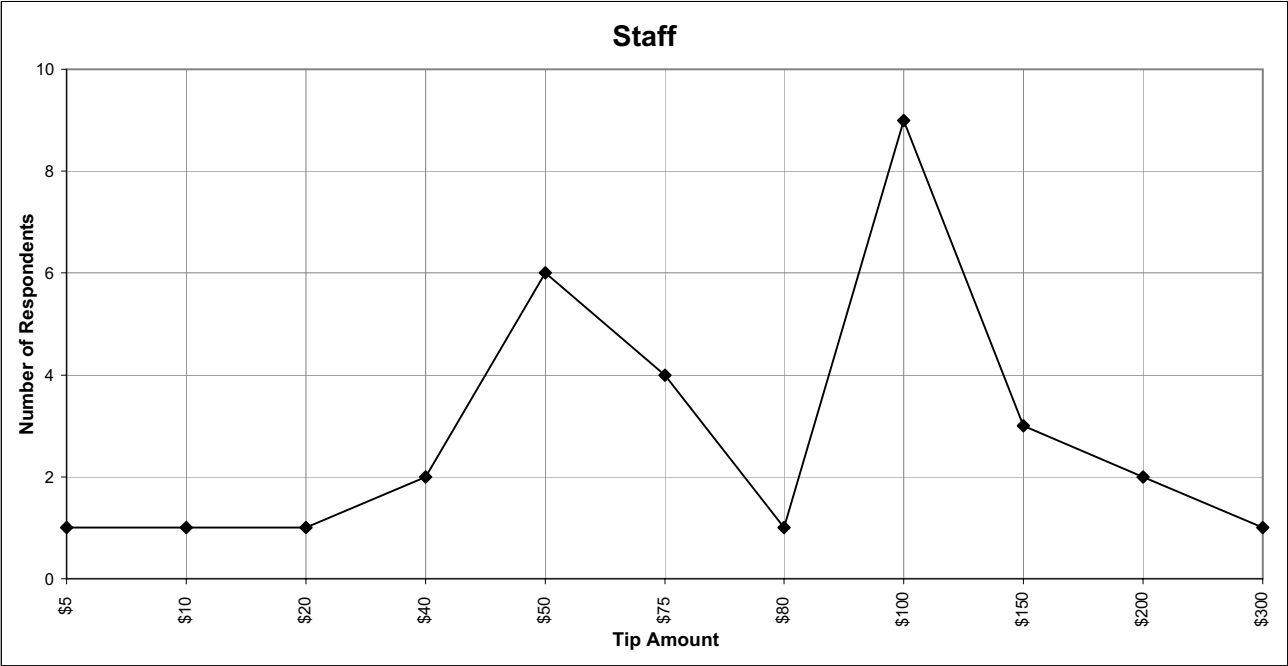


Number of Respondents:	28	Range of Tips:	\$20 to \$500
Highest Tip:	\$500	Median Tip:	\$100
Lowest Tip:	\$20	Average Tip:	\$136

Tips Amazon Peacock Bass (5 Days Fishing)

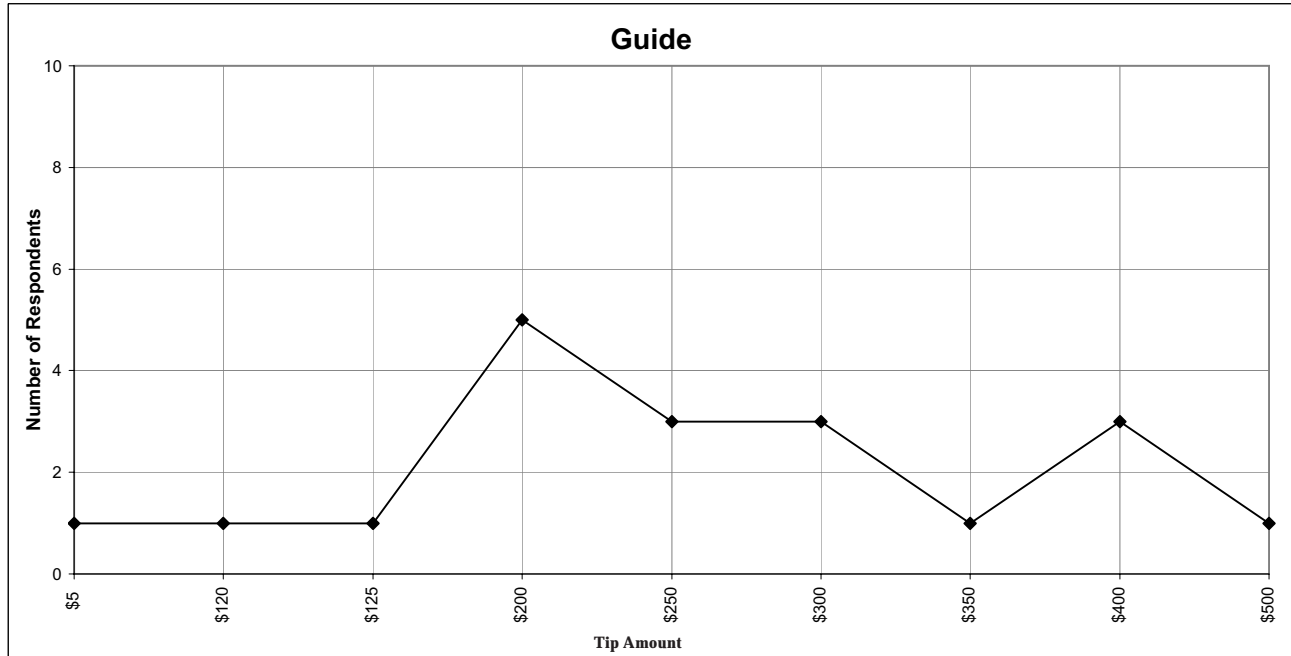


Number of Respondents: 37	Range of Tips: \$5 to \$700
Highest Tip: \$700	Median Tip: \$200
Lowest Tip: \$5	Average Tip: \$239

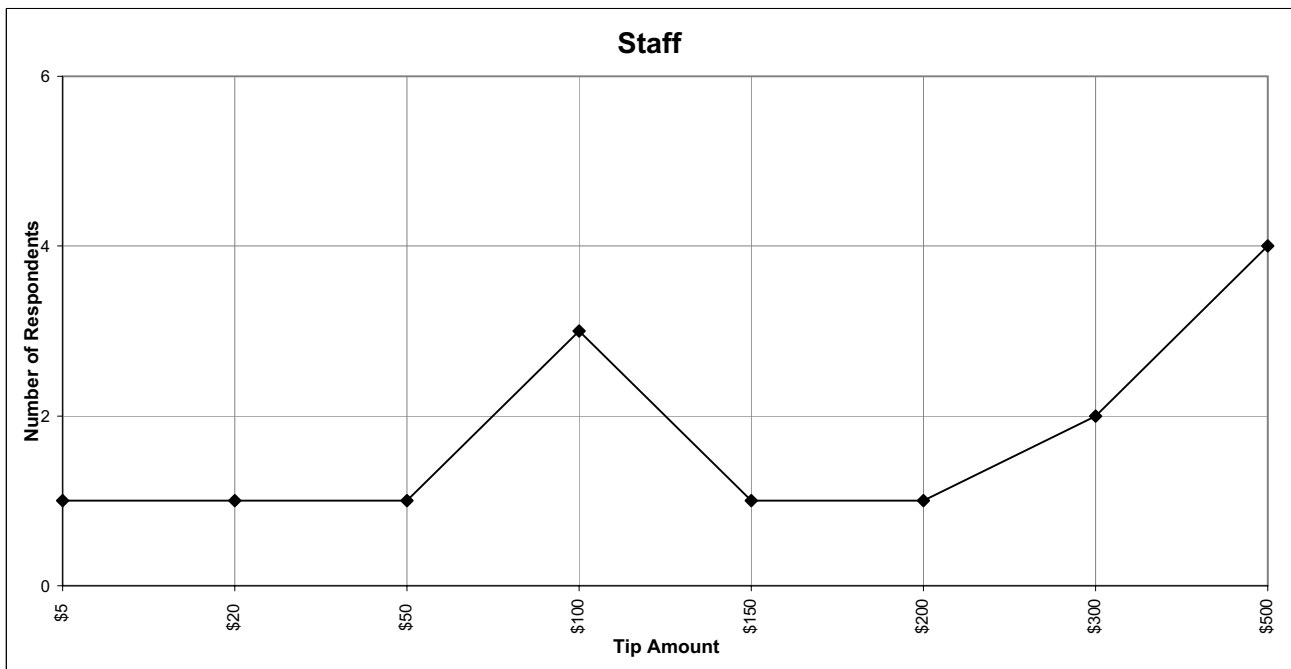


Number of Respondents: 31	Range of Tips: \$5 to \$300
Highest Tip: \$300	Median Tip: \$75
Lowest Tip: \$5	Average Tip: \$92

Tips Kola Peninsula Salmon (5 Days Fishing)

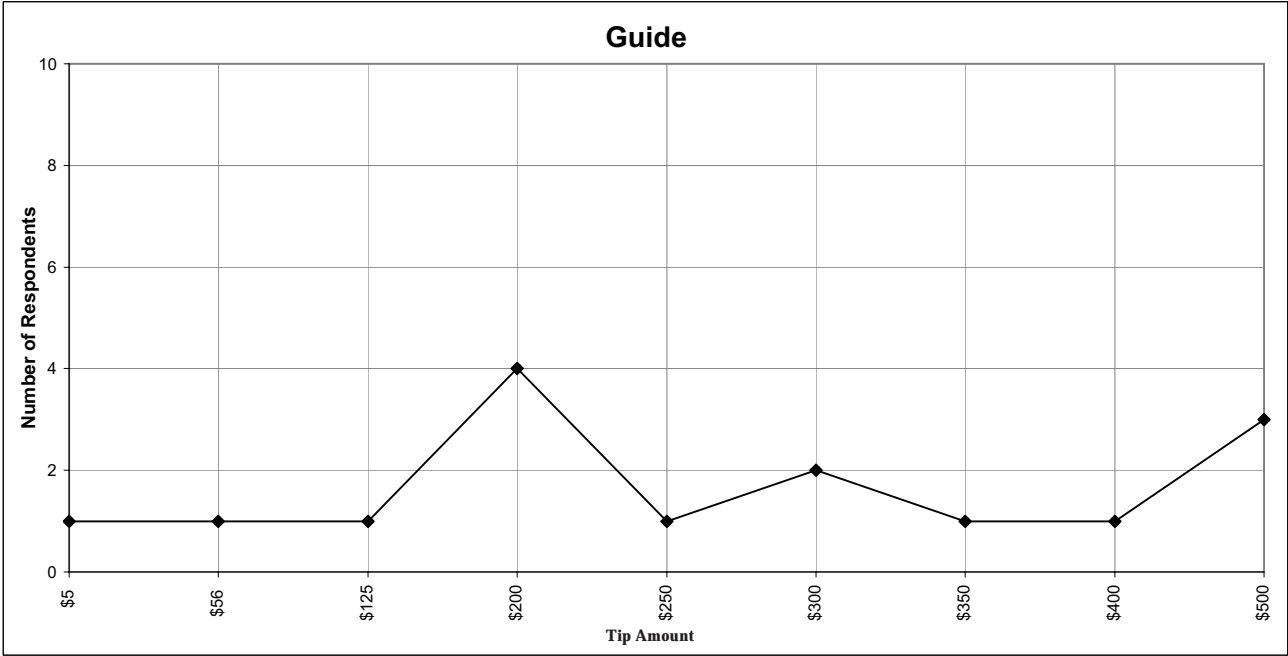


Number of Respondents:	19	Range of Tips:	\$5 to \$500
Highest Tip:	\$500	Median Tip:	\$250
Lowest Tip:	\$5	Average Tip:	\$261

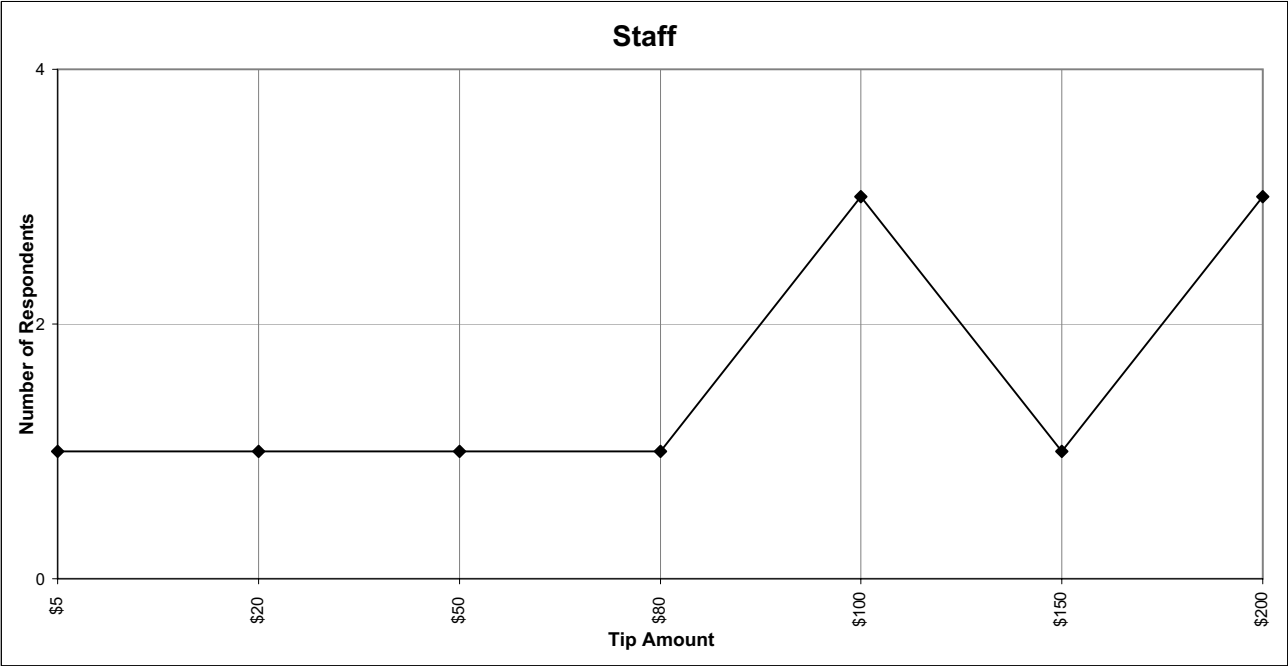


Number of Respondents:	14	Range of Tips:	\$5 to \$500
Highest Tip:	\$500	Median Tip:	\$150
Lowest Tip:	\$5	Average Tip:	\$238

Tips Iceland Salmon Fishing (5 Days Fishing)

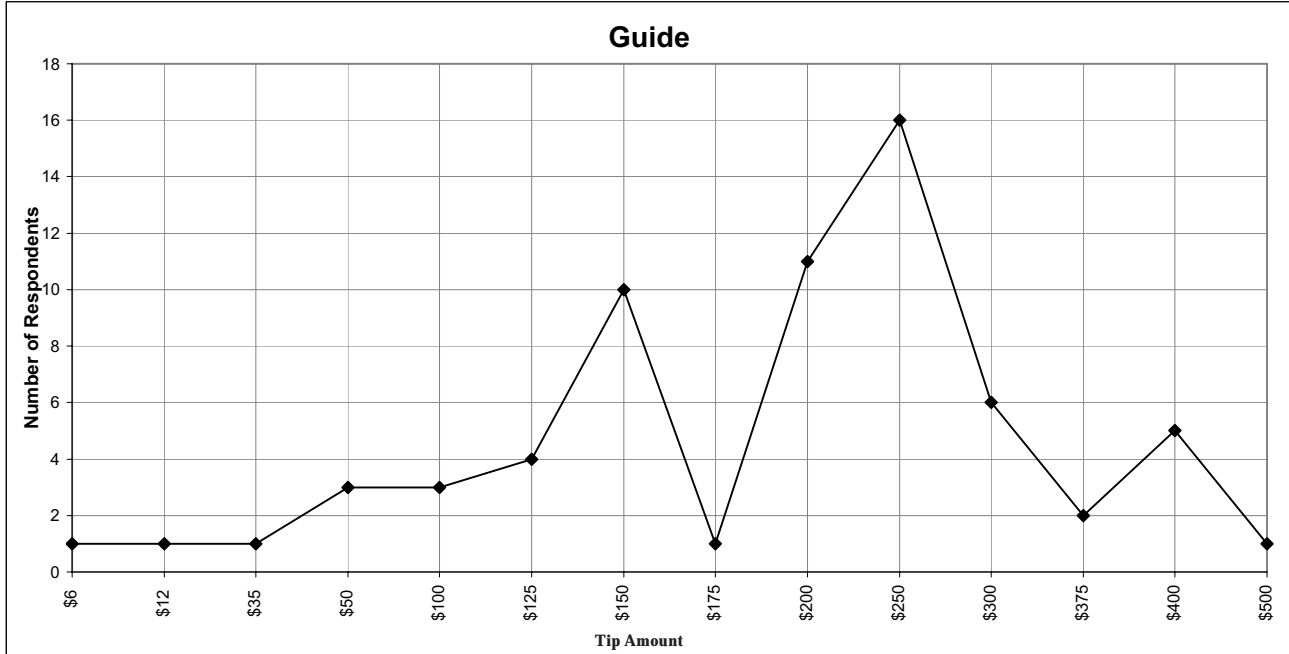


Number of Respondents:	15	Range of Tips:	\$5 to \$500
Highest Tip:	\$500	Median Tip:	\$250
Lowest Tip:	\$5	Average Tip:	\$272



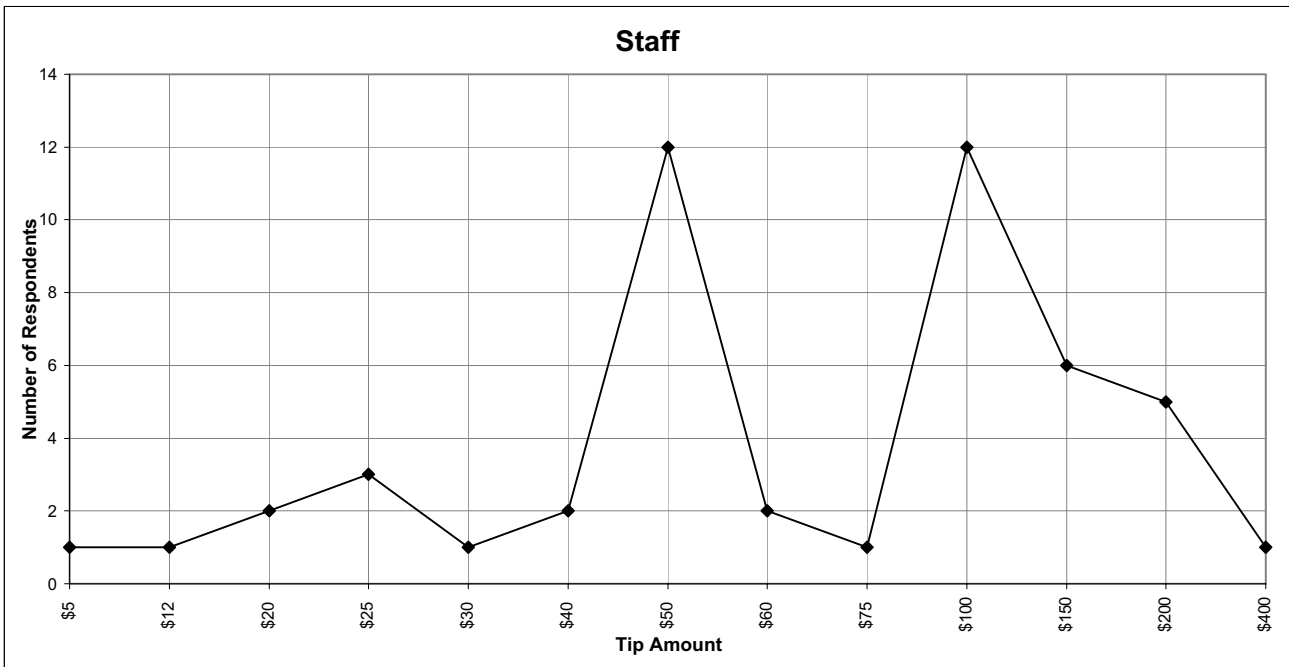
Number of Respondents:	11	Range of Tips:	\$5 to \$200
Highest Tip:	\$200	Median Tip:	\$100
Lowest Tip:	\$5	Average Tip:	\$110

Tips Yucatan Lodge Stay (5 Days Fishing)



Number of Respondents: 65
 Highest Tip: \$500
 Lowest Tip: \$6

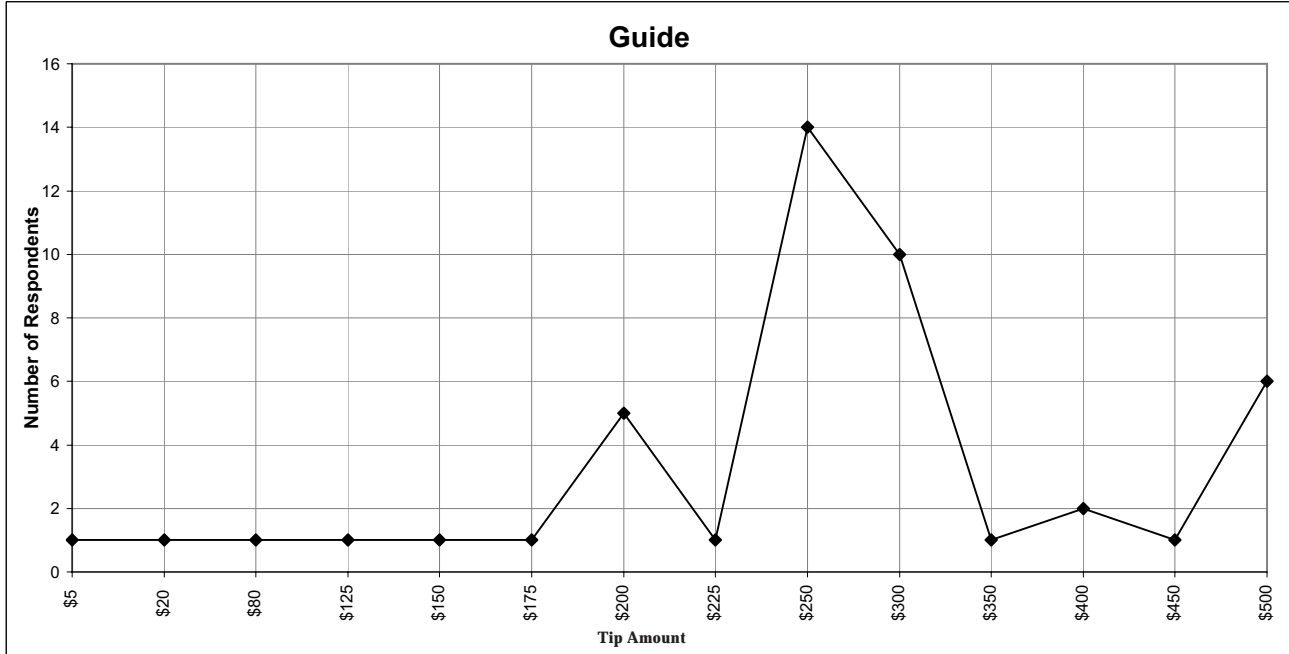
Range of Tips: \$6 to \$500
 Median Tip: \$200
 Average Tip: \$214



Number of Respondents: 49
 Highest Tip: \$400
 Lowest Tip: \$5

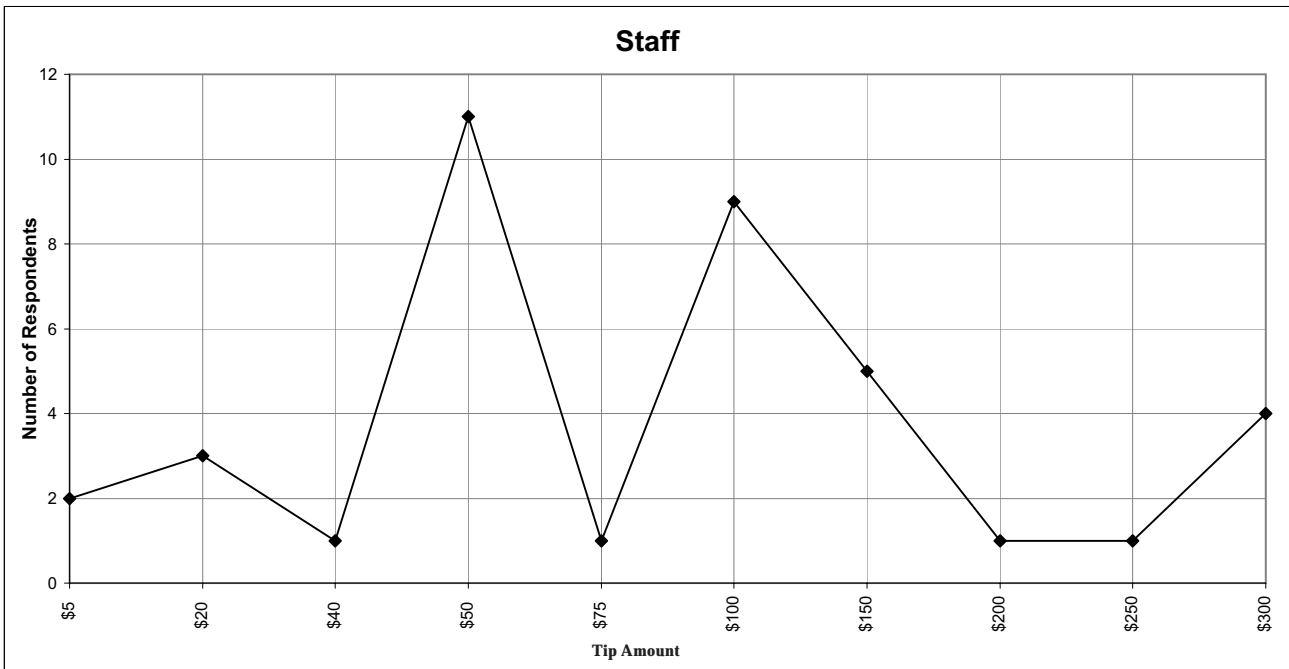
Range of Tips: \$5 to \$400
 Median Tip: \$75
 Average Tip: \$93

Tips Argentina Trout Fishing (5 Days Fishing)



Number of Respondents: 46
 Highest Tip: \$500
 Lowest Tip: \$5

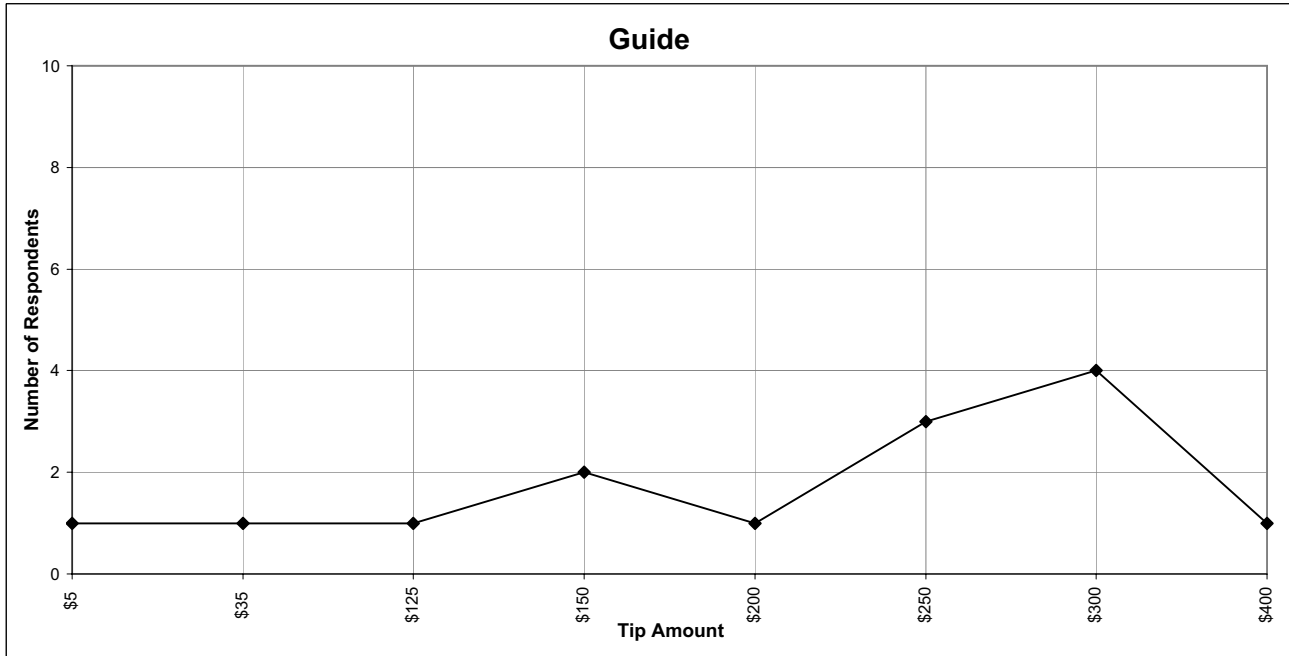
Range of Tips: \$5 to \$500
 Median Tip: \$250
 Average Tip: \$280



Number of Respondents: 38
 Highest Tip: \$300
 Lowest Tip: \$5

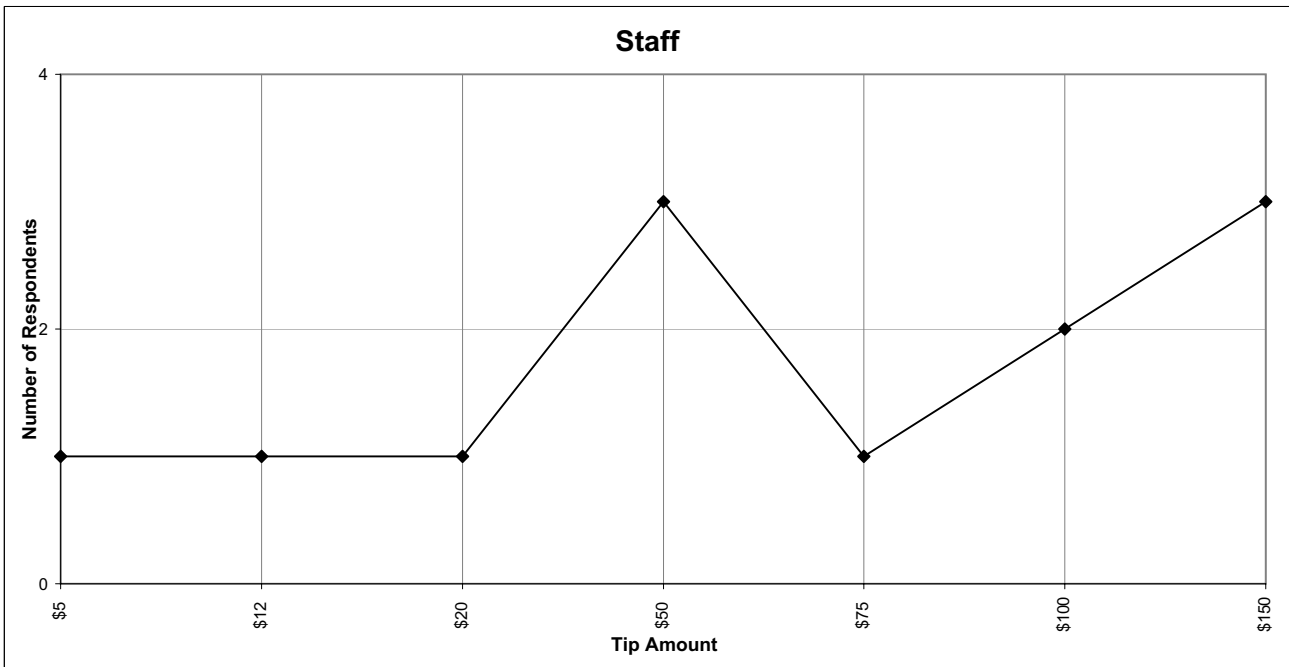
Range of Tips: \$5 to \$300
 Median Tip: \$100
 Average Tip: \$106

Tips Belize Mothership Trip (5 Days Fishing)



Number of Respondents: 14
 Highest Tip: \$400
 Lowest Tip: \$5

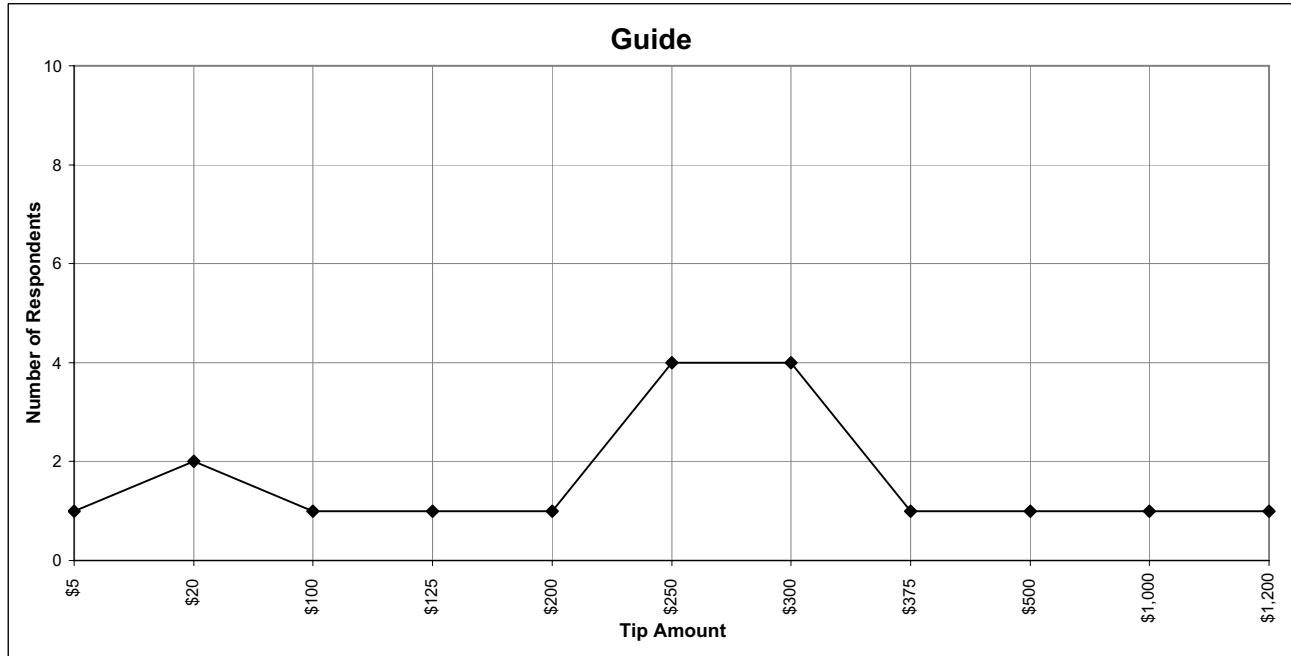
Range of Tips: \$5 to \$400
 Median Tip: \$250
 Average Tip: \$215



Number of Respondents: 12
 Highest Tip: \$150
 Lowest Tip: \$5

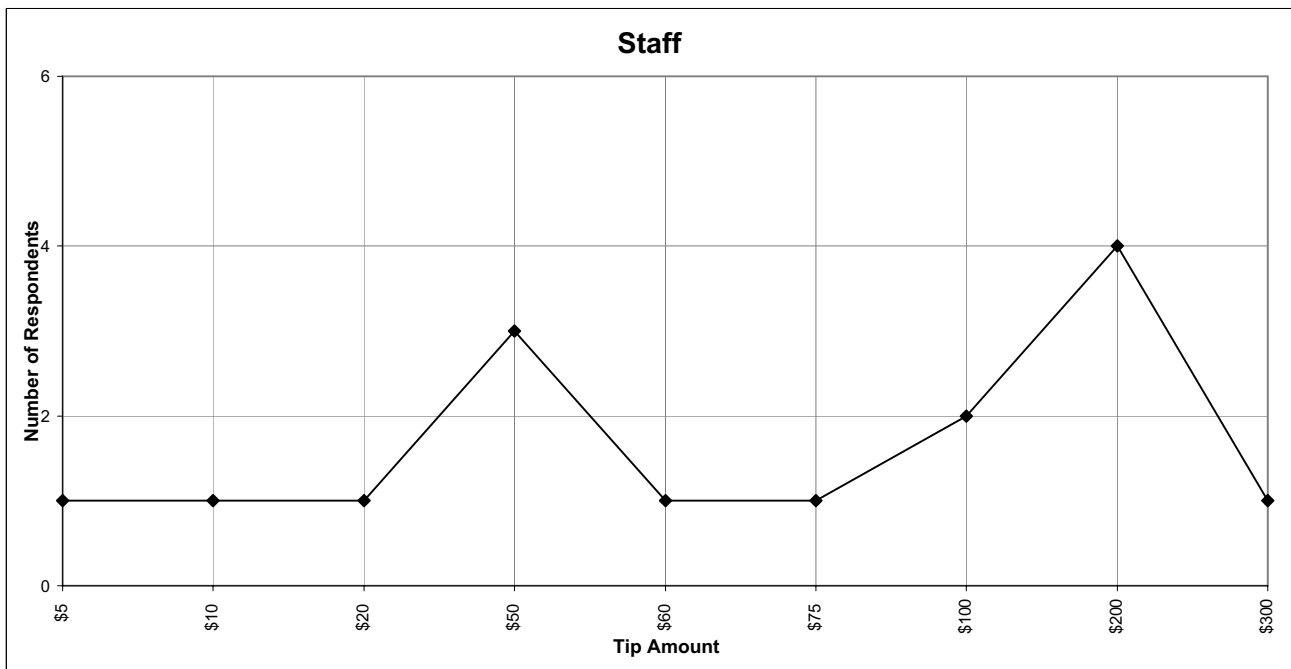
Range of Tips: \$5 to \$150
 Median Tip: \$50
 Average Tip: \$76

Tips Guatemala Sailfishing (5 Days Fishing)



Number of Respondents: 18
 Highest Tip: \$1,200
 Lowest Tip: \$5

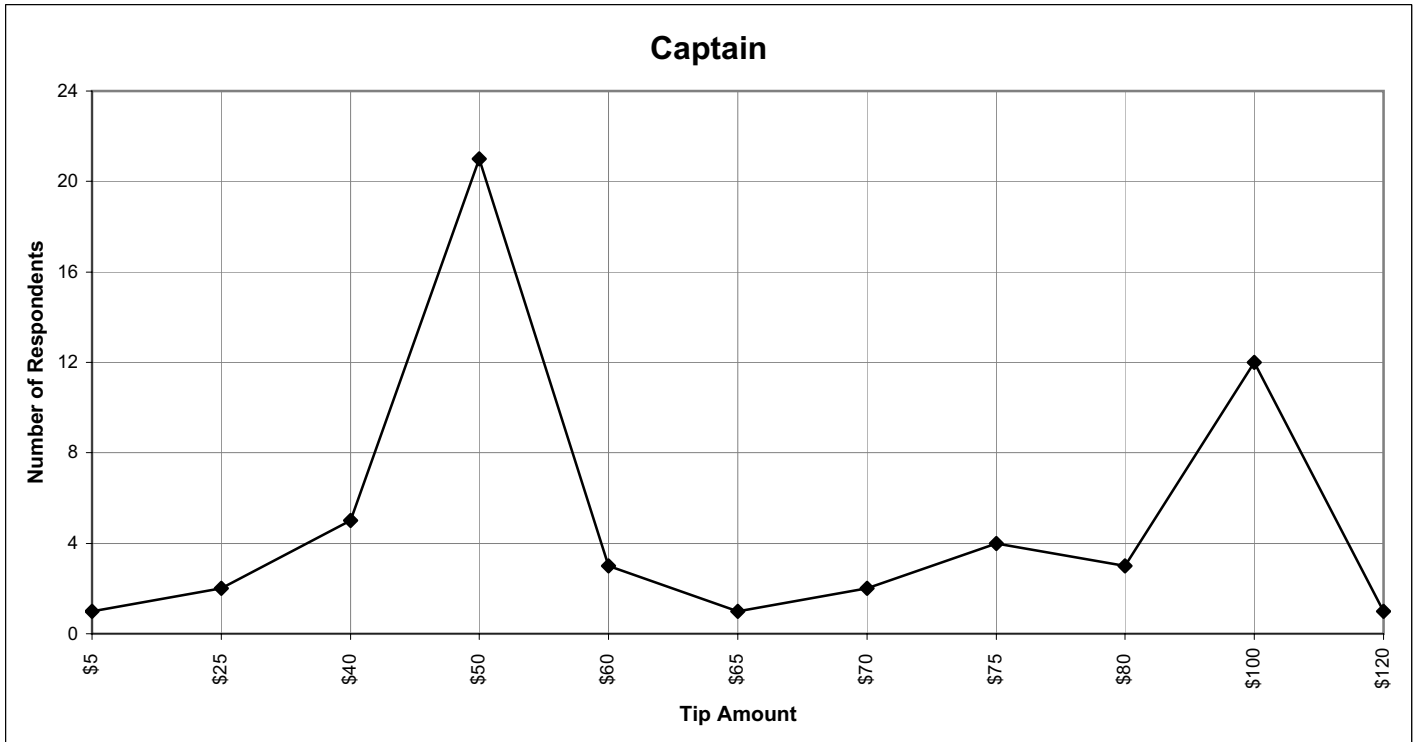
Range of Tips: \$5 to \$1,200
 Median Tip: \$250
 Average Tip: \$319



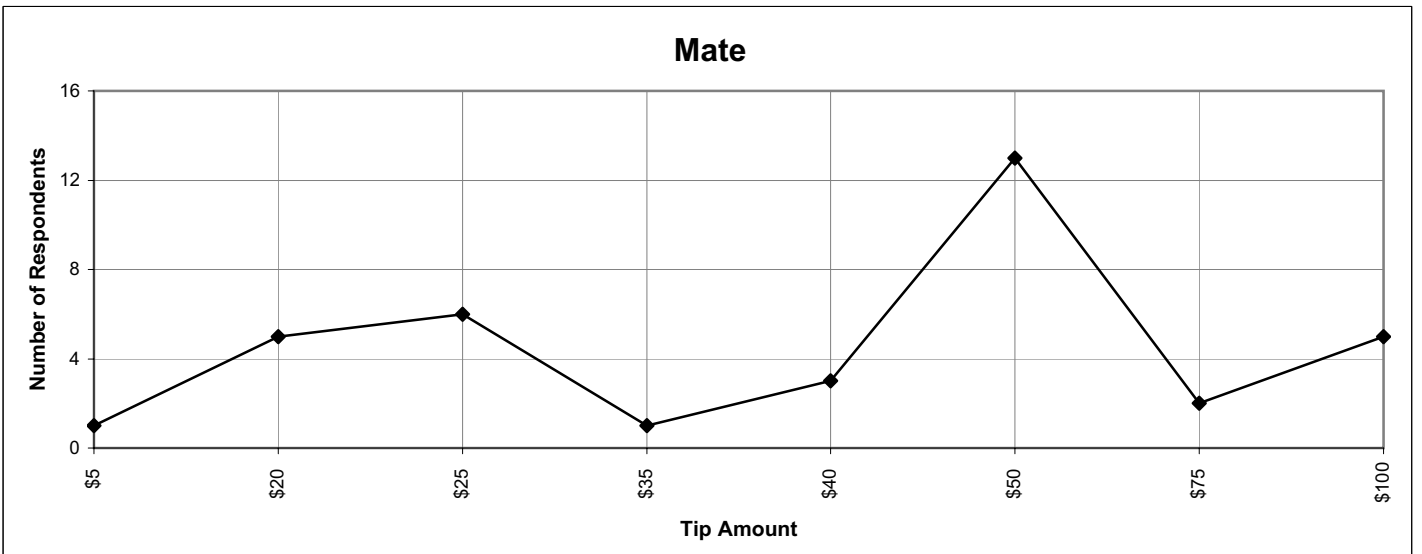
Number of Respondents: 15
 Highest Tip: \$300
 Lowest Tip: \$5

Range of Tips: \$5 to \$300
 Median Tip: \$75
 Average Tip: \$108

Tips One-Day US Offshore Fishing

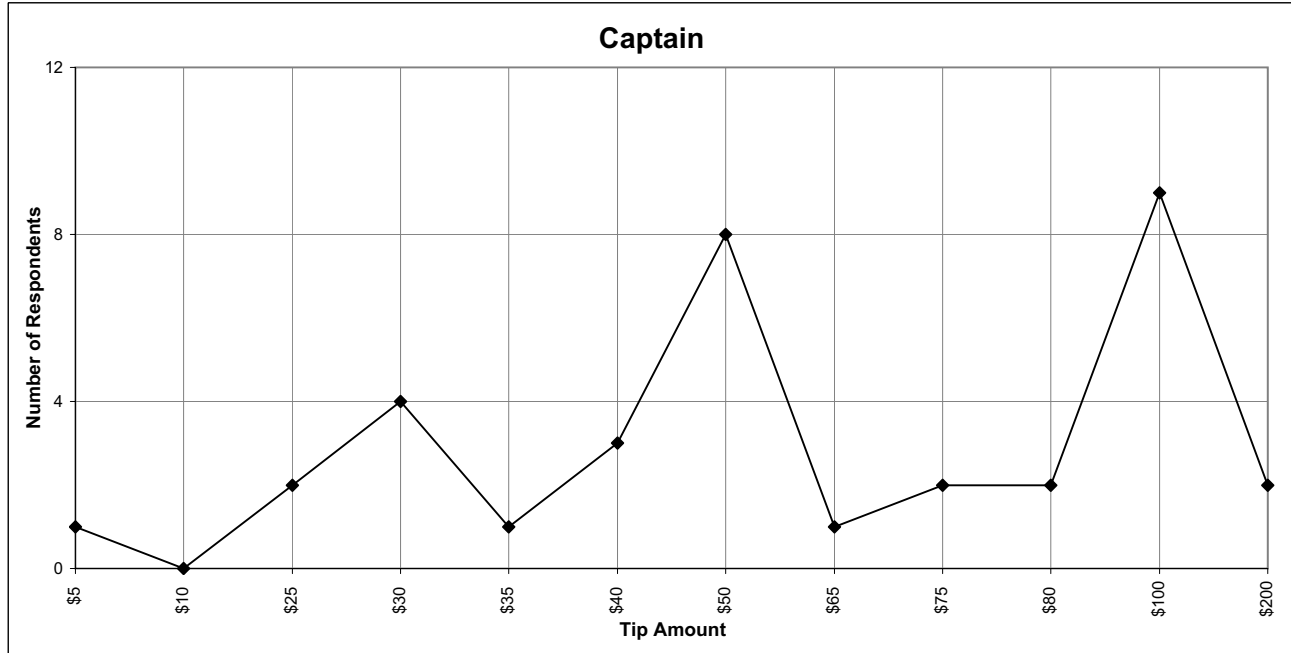


Number of Respondents:	55	Range of Tips:	\$5 to \$120
Highest Tip:	\$120	Median Tip:	\$50
Lowest Tip:	\$5	Average Tip:	\$65



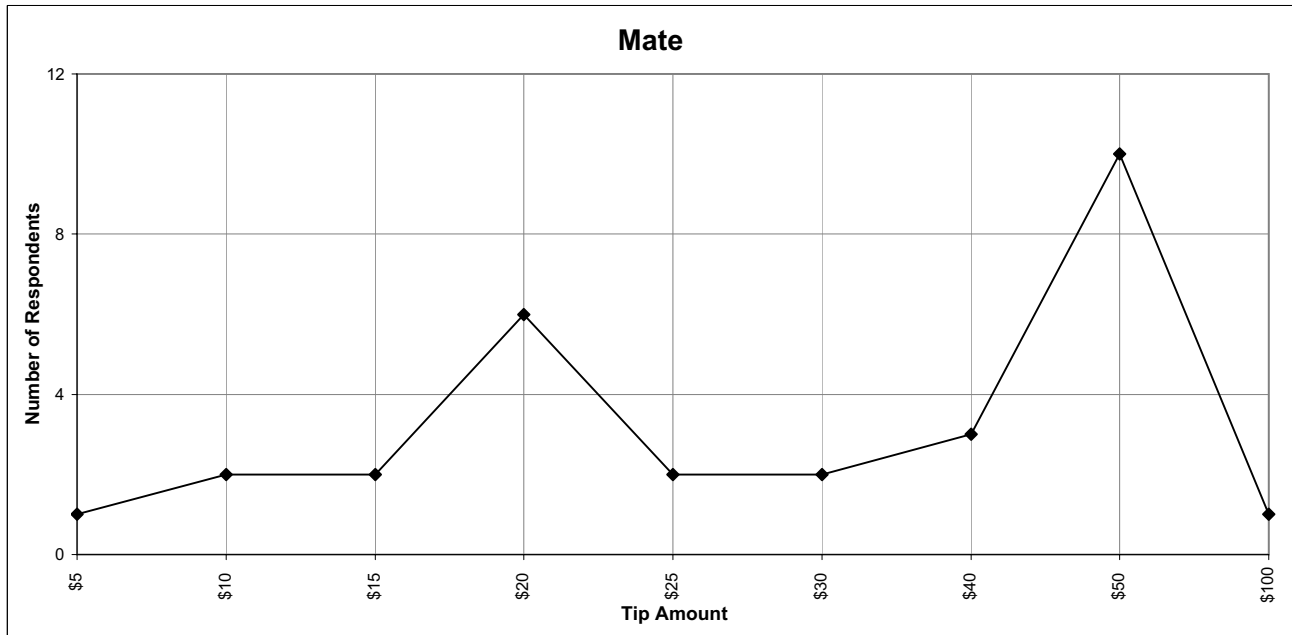
Number of Respondents:	36	Range of Tips:	\$5 to \$100
Highest Tip:	\$100	Median Tip:	\$50
Lowest Tip:	\$5	Average Tip:	\$47.50

Tips One-Day Non US Offshore Fishing



Number of Respondents: 35
 Highest Tip: \$200
 Lowest Tip: \$5

Range of Tips: \$5 to \$200
 Median Tip: \$50
 Average Tip: \$69



Number of Respondents: 29
 Highest Tip: \$100
 Lowest Tip: \$5

Range of Tips: \$5 to \$100
 Median Tip: \$30
 Average Tip: \$35

Part V

Additional Comments

A number of the respondents to our “Survey of Tipping Attitudes” volunteered additional comments on the subject of tipping. Others were downloaded to our web forum on this subject. Herewith, in no particular order, is a digest of those comments. A few have been edited for readability. We’ve withheld the names of all respondents, as tipping behavior is a very personal matter. We knew the only way we could get candid comments was to guarantee everyone anonymity.

...

It’s sad to see Europeans spending five days in Panama, having great fishing and tipping nothing while we lay out hundreds.

...

I wish there was a standard, as in restaurants. Deciding how much to tip is very difficult. I don’t want to be cheap, but right now I feel abused.

...

I tip \$100/day no matter where I am – guide and staff.

...

I have been in the hair business for 43 years. Tipping is for great service. Period!

...

I tip \$10 to \$20 less if a guide works for himself and I pay cash.

...

I am asked by someone on every trip – how much? Even when there are guidelines posted in rooms.

...

Most lodges pool tips. 10 percent of trip less transportation is standard.

...

Is uncertainty about tipping a problem that troubles me? Yes, a lot. It causes friction among friends.

...

Tipping should be discontinued, as it’s always a hassle to figure out what to give. New Zealand is the best. If you hire a guide directly and he gets all of the money, there is no tip.

...

How do you factor in the increased cost of gas? This is a large part of the guide’s variable expense. I buy a tank when appropriate.

...

Whenever I use a guide, I begin the day by describing my skill level (low to moderate), and I set out clearly my expectations. I tell about the best guide I have ever had, and the poor ones, and what makes for a grand day. I also ask a guide to describe his favorite guests and his nightmare guests. I never, never tip more than 15 percent of the guide fee, and I never, never DON’T tip... 5 percent is as low as I would go. All this is hard to do when language barriers come into play. Cultural barriers can also play a role. Now, for a story: While I was visiting a Caribbean island nation (name not to be mentioned) not so long ago, I was informed that a daily tip of \$20 or more was expected for each guide, plus more for the boatman. Furthermore, these tips were to be paid daily. I pointed out it was MY custom to pay at the end of the trip based on how long the guide worked, his patience with my skill level, his attentiveness to flies (takes, refusals, etc.) and any creative effort such as shore lunches, quality of lunch (if any!) and communication skills. This discussion led to some surly behavior on the part of my guide, so I did not ask him to fish again. Instead, I tried another young man. My point of view, I think, was widely discussed among the guides, and the guy who came forward on day two was fabulous. We fished together four days, very happily. I was told I could expect tires on my car to be slashed!! No such thing happened, and at the end of the stay, everyone was happy, except perhaps for the initial guide I had hired. I think the whole tipping business is really only an issue for Americans. Go with your heart, and your pocketbook, and just be sensible about it. If the dude gives you a great day, and you are in fish heaven, dig deep and share your joy!

•••

Generally, I tip 20 percent of the cost of a trip. At lodges in Argentina, I tend to tip the staff the recommended amount. If I have an extraordinary day or experience, I may tip more than 20 percent. I fish all over the world, and I look to outfitters for tipping recommendations in most places outside the US.

•••

I live in Switzerland, love your work and your professionalism.... I was going to fill out your questionnaire on tips, but it is not possible because I tip (usually) after asking for local guidance. So, my tips can run from \$50 up to \$100 for five days fishing in Cuba, or 15 percent of daily cost if fishing in Florida. The real reason I'm writing you is that, in my experience, tipping has become a MUST even if you feel that your guide did not do all he could to show you fish. In addition, I have noticed that where Americans go fishing the tipping expectation has increased exponentially. You guys are exporting your habits as opposed to adjusting to local custom. I hope these comments did not hurt anyone's feelings.

•••

My tip varies with the quality of the guide, and we all know there are differences. My usual tip for two guys in a boat would be \$100 for the guide (per day). Above average would be \$120, and the most highly skilled guide at my favorite lodge gets \$150. Most of my experience is in the US West. I feel comfortable with what I pay in the US. The biggest problem I have had is in South America, at lodges that charge an arm and a leg then ask for 15 percent of the weekly fare for tipping for the staff. That may or may not include guides. On the luxurious Chilean mothership, *Nomads of the Sea*, they suggested 10 to 15 percent. That seemed like a very high dollar amount given what a week on that boat costs. (Editor Note: The web site for *Nomads of the Sea* gives the 2008/9 prices for a week-long fly fishing adventure, single lodging, deluxe (not premium) accommodation, twin bed as \$22,313. A ten percent tip would be \$2,223. A 15 percent tip would be \$3,346.)

•••

I filled out your survey based on a typical day of fishing, but if a guide has taught me something new, has gone the extra mile or, especially if he has stayed out way past the usual end of day, I always respond with a better tip. I look forward to the results of your survey.

•••

I am very pleased to see you take up this topic and help us try to set some reasonable standards. I am submitting the survey separately, but want to make some additional comments. I have observed lately that fishing travel agents (including those at local fly shops that do travel booking) are suggesting higher and higher tips. Guide tips alone are moving a bit higher than I think is reasonable, but the really crazy recommendations are the ones I am seeing for all-in trips. For example, I just got a booking packet from a travel company for a \$7,000 week I am doing in September in Alaska. They suggest in the paperwork a tip of 10 to 15 percent on the whole trip price (that's \$700 to \$1,050). I would have been inclined to do my usual daily guide tipping (maybe about \$50/day) and leaving something at the end of the week for the lodge staff to share (maybe \$250 in this classy venue). I don't understand why I should be tipping for the lodge capital cost, other fixed operating costs and even their profit margin. In Campeche and Holbox last fall, I was up against the same thing and never felt comfortable about following my traditional guide and staff tip pattern and leaving out the lodge or local general manager. I am anxious to get the survey results. I particularly want to see what kind of recommendations people have for all-in trips.

•••

I must say it never occurred to me that there might be different tipping standards in different parts of the country and different parts of world. For whatever it's worth, I generally tip between 10 and 15% of the cost of a guided trip, depending on my level of satisfaction. Given the rapid increase in the costs of trips over the last couple of years, the dollar amounts have changed, but that's the general principle.

•••

We Europeans tend to think you Americans tip too much! More than 10 percent of the relevant value would be pretty exceptional here in the United Kingdom. If a ghillie/guide is employed and already receiving a salary, we might tip \$20 a day if he is looking after several rods. If he is self employed, we might tip as much as 10 percent. It depends on the number of clients he is handling at one time. On your side of the pond, one tends to feel one

has to match the 15 percent that is widely expected. I think most Europeans would prefer that a trip be priced accurately in the first place. There is less cash to handle that way. And, if the service is poor, you just don't go back, and you file a Trip Report with *The Angling Report*.

•••

The main problem with tipping is that lodges structure their tipping recommendations as part of their overall guide compensation package. This leaves individual rods with very little flexibility in their tipping behavior. That has an especially important impact on one's ability to under-tip for poor performance.

•••

I tip fishing guides substantially less in New Zealand. This is because, the first time I fished there, I perceived that the guides were actually uncomfortable about being tipped. The second time I went, I brought some spools of Grand Max Tippet in 2X, 3X and 4x sizes, and I gave each guide one of each. That stuff was selling for about \$40 NZ per spool while I was there. No one seemed uncomfortable about being tipped, as opposed to being tipped. On the odd chance that you publish this note, don't use my name. I am sure I was guilty of smuggling, and I hope to return in the winter of 08/09.

•••

I believe tipping has gotten out of control with mostly American guides expecting large tips. Foreign guides try harder, work longer hours, are not egotistical, and they appreciate the business. Local guides are charging high charter rates, rarely go out for more than eight hours (regardless of best fishing in prime times), and many show frustration with their client's abilities. At the end of the day, they give you a dirty look if you don't tip them generously. What happened to rewarding (tipping extra) only when extra effort is put forth, or when one has an exceptional fish-catching experience brought about by one's guide? Florida Keys guides are the worst I have had in this regard, except for two guides I encountered in Costa Rica and Laredo, Baja. When you travel with a group nowadays, there is almost always a confused discussion of 'What should we tip our guide....' I would like to see a consensus formed around a set of standard tipping fees. (*Postscript*: Just so I don't sound totally negative, I should mention that I have had a few very good guides in the US. In truth, though, they are a small minority of the guides I have fished with in this country.)

•••

My philosophy, when it comes to tipping is - keep it simple. I think 10 to 15 percent is a good general guideline wherever you are. Like in a restaurant, however, if the service is very bad, zero tip is also an option, or something in between. In terms of the skipper-mate breakdown, I prefer to leave that up to the skipper, but I always tell him the total I'm giving him should include the mate. I know this raises trust issues, so I try to do my tipping in such a way that skipper and mate can see the transaction. Another thing: I always verbalize my catch and release philosophy on blue water charters, while expressing respect for the fact that the skipper has the right to make the final call. How reasonable and enlightened he is with respect to catch and release may wind up a factor in my tipping. (Editor Note: The subscriber filing this report resides in Hong Kong.)

•••

I usually tip a good guide 20 percent when I hire him on my own. At lodges, I rely on advice from the management to decide how much to tip guides and staff.

•••

I am generally a 20-plus percent tipper, depending on the day.

•••

You invited more comment on your tipping survey. With all due respect and appreciation for your effort, I don't think you are asking the right questions. Your survey focuses only on the amount tipped for guide and staff in numerous typical situations. I think there are a lot of factors that go into the tip decision and also a lot of cultural differences and differences in expectations from country to country. I am not sure how to construct a survey that would get at all these issues, but I think it could be done. Some of the factors that need to be included are: 1. How good the fishing was, regardless of guide effort (if I get a big one or a lot of fish, I always give the guide a big tip, usually 20 percent); 2. How much is expected by the locals for guide and for staff. In New Zealand, guides really don't expect a tip, but I always surprise them with a tip of 10 to 15 percent, which is probably out of line; 3. Forget trying to come up with an amount one typically tips for a given type of trip and

focus instead on the percentage of the guide fee that one usually earmarks for a tip. I usually tip 15 percent, dropping to 10 percent if the guiding was below par and rising to as high as 20 percent if I had a spectacular day. I wish your survey had focused on percent instead of amount. I will be keenly interested in the results of your survey and hope it gives us some good insights. I have fished in over a dozen different far-reaching locales in the past year and I will continue to travel to fish in the coming year. The information in your survey will be helpful. I want to do right, but not too much right, by the guides and staffs I come in contact with.

•••

Tipping should depend completely on service. After all, the word “tips” is an acronym for To Insure Prompt Service. If extra effort is made or a guide knows his stuff while being personable, supportive and helpful, I think a 15 percent tip is appropriate. On the other hand, if a guide works a fixed number of hours (union-like), just doing the basics, and makes no special effort I give no tip. Typically, I do not stay in lodges. But the basic same rules apply: Tipping should depend on service and quality of experience.

•••

I think many anglers just do not have any idea what the tipping protocol is nowadays. A good friend of mine (an internationally recognized steelhead guide) tells me many of his clients just don't know what to do regarding tipping. An informal survey of friends/colleagues on a recent group trip indicated they indeed did not know the tipping protocol or rules. I hope your survey gives us all some guidance.

•••

As a frequent overseas fisherman from the United Kingdom, I find myself frequently having to tip up to US levels, which to a Brit. are much too high. Lodges apparently rely on high tips to satisfy their staff, which is something I think they should achieve through the rates they charge. Expectation of excessive tips makes the published cost for trips in the US very short of their true cost. This problem is not confined to fishing trips but is also true for other kinds of trips put together in the US.

•••

When a day of fishing costs several hundred dollars and guide rates are increasing faster than their fuel bills, I believe a 10 percent tip is very adequate. When guides start expecting 15 to 20 percent and more on top of their daily fees, that starts reaching the breaking point for many anglers of more modest means. Those with more money than good sense who try to buy “better fishing” with bigger tips should instead try to improve their angling and people skills instead. As a former guide, I can tell you guides like to fish with good anglers who are nice guys. They will go the extra mile sooner for someone like that rather than Mr. Money bags!

•••

Your tipping survey is a great idea. When you go into a restaurant, tipping is generally suggested at 15 percent. At least you have a basis to work from in measuring if the service was average, above average or below average, and you can adjust your tip accordingly. I have checked with other anglers to see what is normal for tipping in an area. They have been as perplexed as I am. I always end up tipping based upon what I feel is appropriate based upon my trip experience, always wondering if it is in line with what is normal. I went to Cancun twice this year on family vacations and had the opportunity to get away for a day trip both times to Ascension Bay (at Pesca Maya). Both were excellent trips that yielded eight and 16 bonefish respectively, along with numerous chances to cast to permit. As guides on both trips did a great job for me, I tipped them accordingly (or at least I hope I did). Your survey results hopefully will answer many questions about this topic.

•••

I do all my tipping based on the suggested rate of the lodge manager, but I give myself room to adjust my tips depending on how well the day went and how hard my guide worked. If no guidance is available, I tip about 10 percent of the daily rate.

•••

It seems tips have become a major part of the salary for guides and lodge staff. This lets agents and others advertise trip prices as lower than they really are. It would be nice to return to the days when a tip represented a compensation for excellent service. I do not have much recent experience with this, but based on my last trip, you are correct that tipping has become an extremely sensitive subject.

•••

Tipping is a real problem for me, as I tend to go with my wife who doesn't always fish. This means I have to tip for two people even though only one of us fishes. I have fished all over the world and the norm is 10 percent of the cost. But with the US dollar in the tank and prices going up each year, this is getting very expensive.

•••

I am surprised you did not attempt in your survey to include a measure of the quality of service provided when you ask for tip amounts. It is not too hard to give a one to five metric to service/success and THEN ask for the tip amount. In my view, tipping should be done daily while the day's event are fresh in one's mind. When a very special day has happened, I double my tips. If a day sucks, I tip much less. To be sure, luck is always an element in catching fish, and a good day of catching might be as much about luck as about good guiding. Tipping more on a big-fish day and less on a bad-fish day is not always fair. Sometimes skill and hard work on the part of the guide just don't produce results. Why shouldn't a guide be embraced by the whim of good and bad fortune, just as anglers always are?

•••

I live in Glenwood Springs, Colorado, and my fishing experience includes days of guided fishing in the Rocky Mountain West, as well as four trips to Alaska. On one-day guided float trips in the Rocky Mountains (which typically costs \$350 to \$500 for two people), what I have been doing is tipping \$50 total for my wife and I for an ok effort by a guide and up to \$100 for a great effort, especially if the guide fished us more than the usual eight hours. Our Alaska trips have not been to fly-out lodges (they are too fancy for our taste), but rather to river tent camps or they have been float trips. In all cases, our experiences have been extremely positive. For a \$4,500 per person trip, I have been tipping \$1,000 for my wife and me, which amounts to about 10 percent. I do not have a clue as to the suitability of our tips other than the fact that no one seems to refuse return business from us. Also, here in the Rocky Mountains, where we have been tipping \$100 at the end of a day, our return trips seem to get longer and longer as to fishing time. We just finished one, and we were on the water 12 full hours. I can only attribute that to the guide feeling they were going to get at least a \$100 tip for the day.

•••

I wish you had asked respondents to your tipping survey to say what percent of trip cost they tip rather than the amount they tip for various kinds of trips. Daily rates vary greatly depending where you fish. I might say I tip \$30 for such and such trip, but that would not necessarily mean I tip 10 percent, 15 percent or some other percent of the daily rate.... That issue aside, it will be great to have more information on this topic, as you hate to over-tip and likewise feel bad if you discover you under-tipped.