



2023 Noise Complaint Summary



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Did you know?

“Noise complaints” aren’t just about noise. They are complaints associated with aircraft and concerns about the aircraft’s location, sound, pollution, altitude, etc.

2023 Noise Complaint Summary



The Airport received 1128 noise complaints in 2023, a 28% increase from 2022.

The number of individual commenters submitting noise complaints decreased 26% in 2023 to 108 from 145 in 2022, including 72 individuals who were classified as infrequent callers (1-2 complaints during 2023). The three most- frequent commenters accounted for 632 (56%) noise complaints, and the ten most- frequent commenters accounted for 939 (83%) of noise complaints received.

Though noise complaints were generated throughout Sonoma County, the majority were received from residents in Sebastopol (607 complaints or 54%), Santa Rosa (338 complaints or 30%), and Windsor (109 complaints or 10%). Their complaints largely involved airlines, other jets, and less frequently, propeller aircraft and helicopters. Along with concerns regarding excess noise other concerns expressed included low altitudes and flight paths. Noise complaints steadily increased through the year, peaking in December.

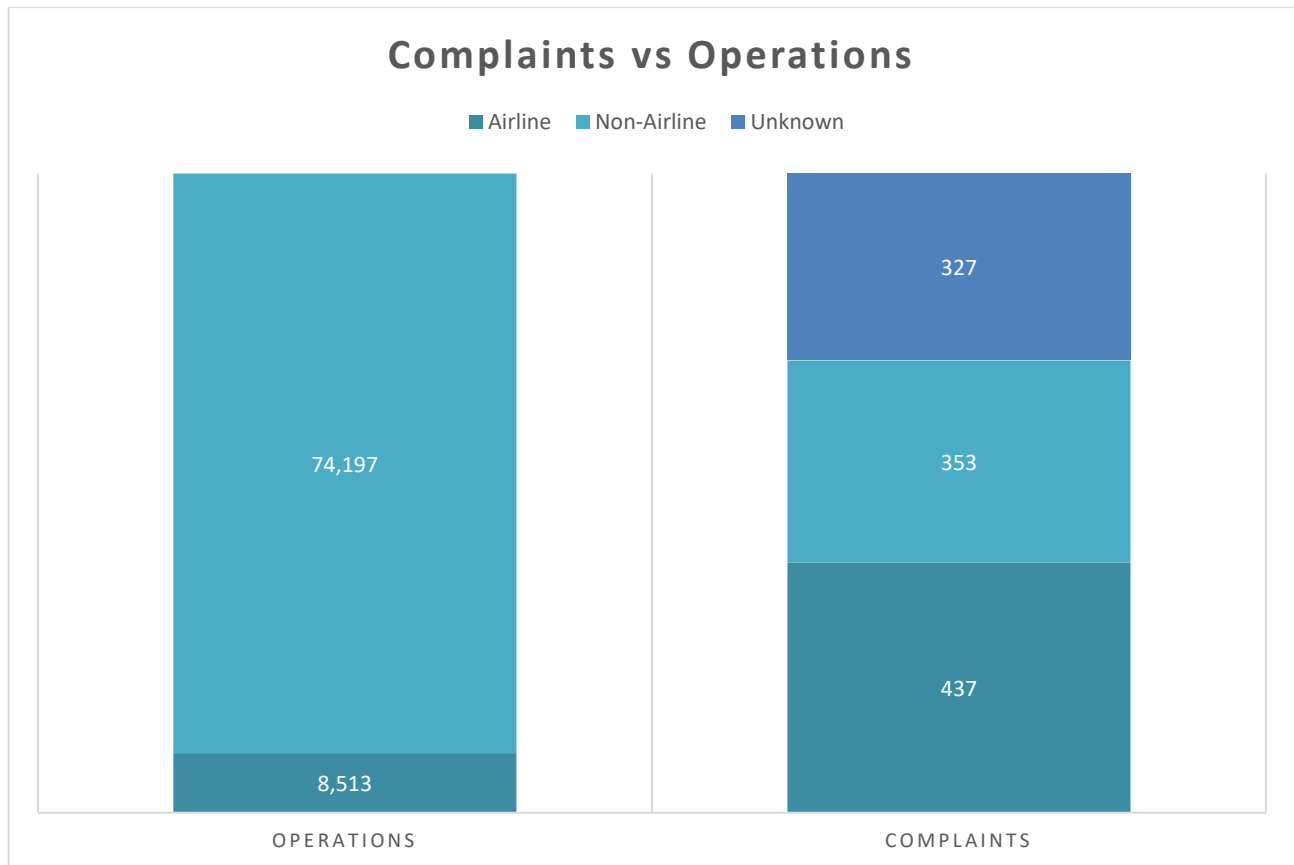


2023 at a Glance

82,710 Operations | 1,128 Noise Complaints

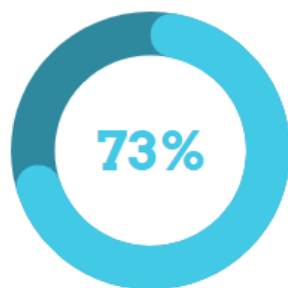
The majority of noise complaints received were:

- Submitted via webform (952 complaints or 84%)
- From residents in Sebastopol (607 complaints or 54%)
- Regarding airline flights (437 complaints or 39%)
- Daytime flights (892 complaints or 79%)

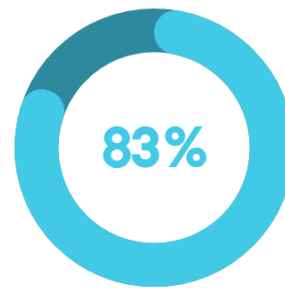


2023 Noise Complaint Overview

- 79 (73%) of the commenters submitted 1-2 noise complaints in 2023 (82 complaints or 7% of complaints submitted).
- 19 (18%) of the commenters submitted 3-10 noise complaints in 2023 (109 complaints or 10% of complaints submitted).
- 10 (9%) of the commenters submitted 11-348 noise complaints in 2023 (937 complaints or 83% of complaints submitted).



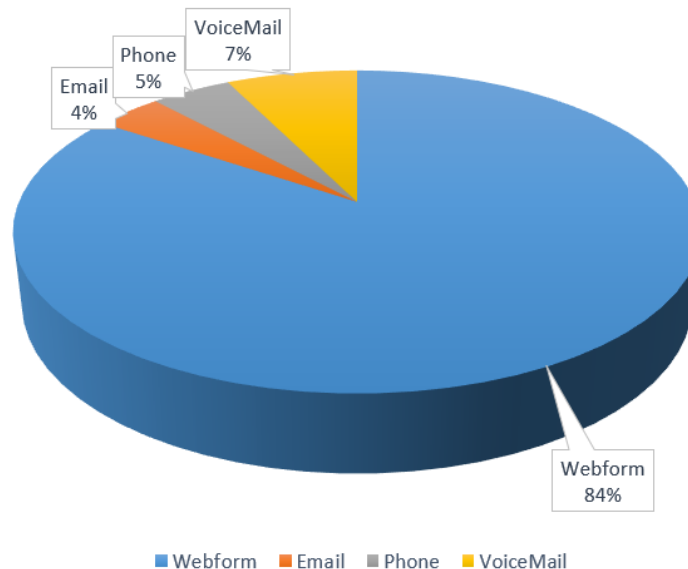
of households
making complaints
submitted 1 or 2
complaints



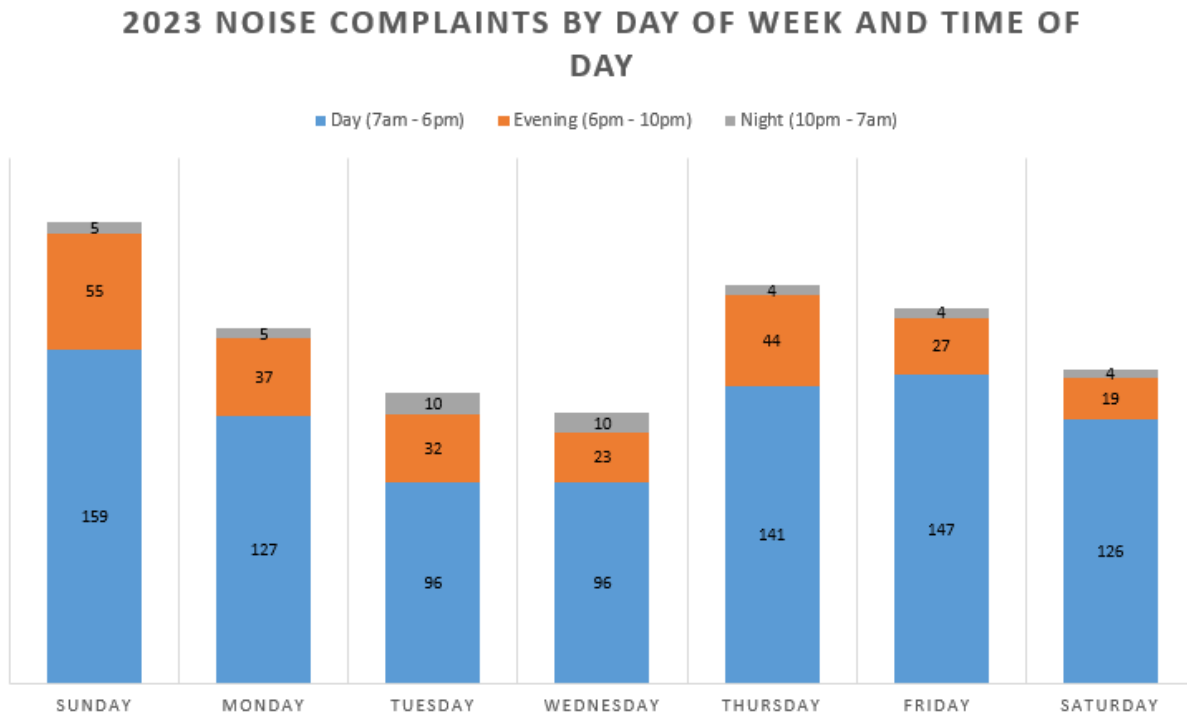
of noise
complaints were
submitted by 10
households

952 of the 1,128 noise complaints were received through the webform portal on the Airport's Good Neighbor webpage. STS encouraged the public to utilize the webform to increase efficiency and capture more data.

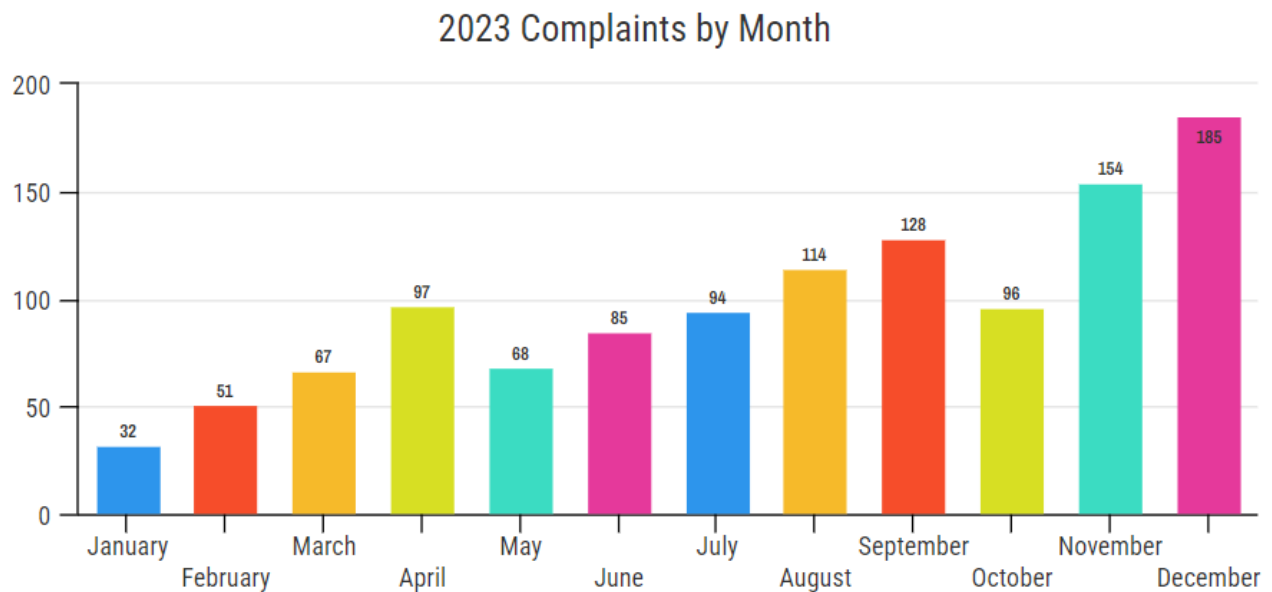
2023 Noise Complaints by Method Received



The majority of noise complaints were made during the day (892 or 78%), and on Sundays (219 or 19%) and Thursdays (189 or 17%).

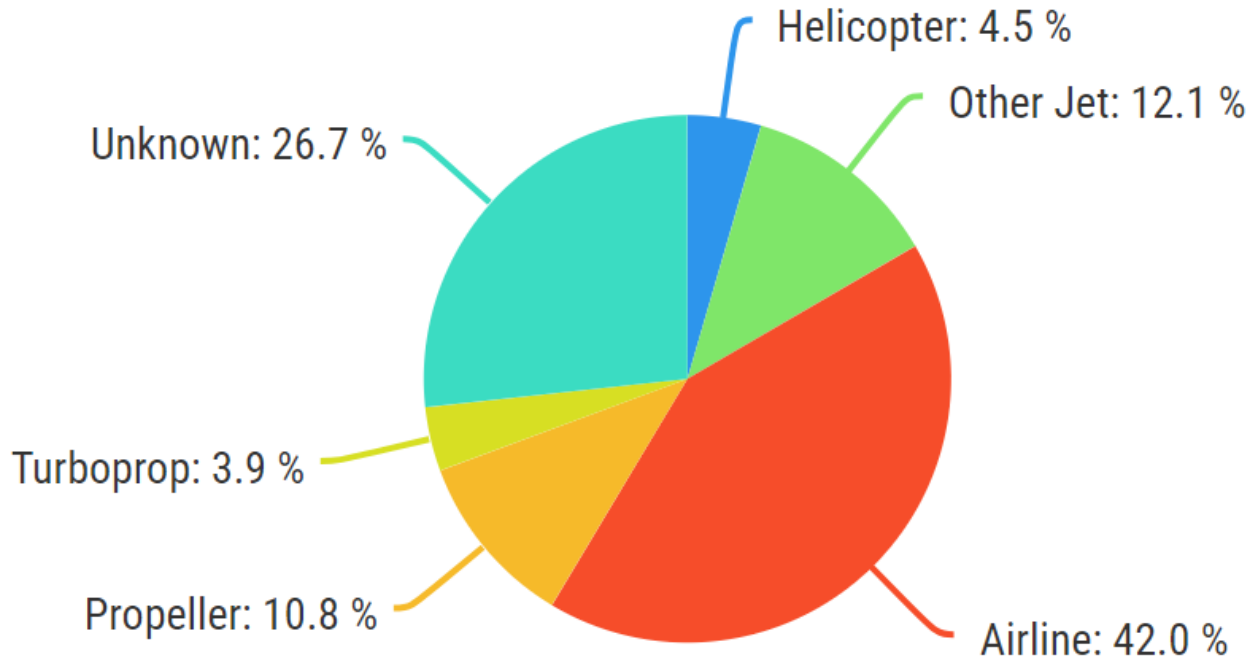


In general complaints grew steadily through the year, ending with a peak of 185 complaints in December.



Jets (airline and non-airline) received the most noise complaints with 563 (54%) in 2023.

2023 Noise Complaints by Aircraft Type



Unknown aircraft refers to flight activity where aircraft data was incomplete or missing when correlated.



Noise Complaints by Altitude

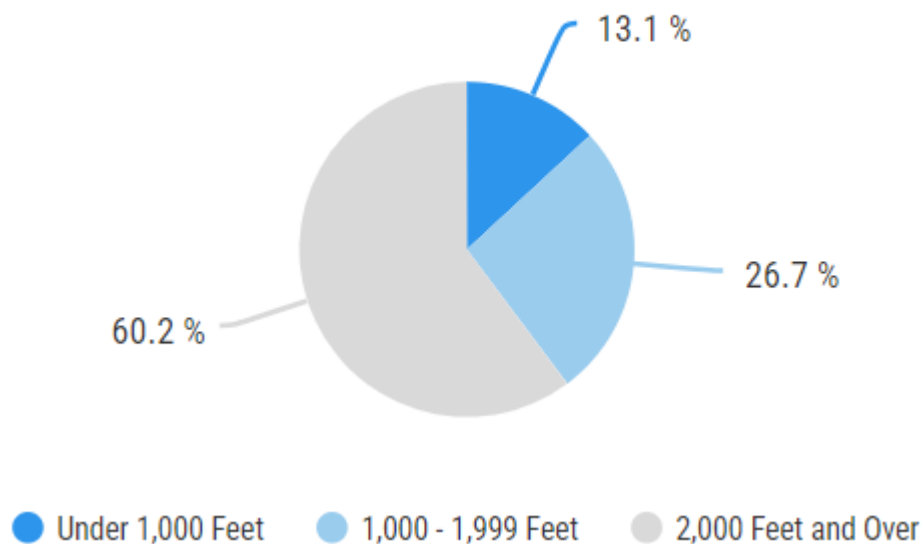
Aircraft Flying Over 2,000 Feet Generated Most Complaints

There were 754 aircraft with tracked altitudes identified through complaints made in 2023. The altitude was recorded (in feet) at the point of closest approach (PCA) to the commenter's address. In some cases, the altitude cannot be determined because there is not enough information or because the plane is an overflight*.

- 454 noise complaints (60%) were received for aircraft identified as flying at an altitude of over 2,000 feet.
- 201 noise complaints (27%) were received for aircraft identified as flying at an altitude of between 1,000 and 1,999 feet.
- 99 noise complaints (13%) were received for aircraft identified as flying at an altitude of under 1,000 feet.

*An "overflight" is a plane that flies over the area but does not land at or originate from the Airport.

2023 Complaints by Altitude

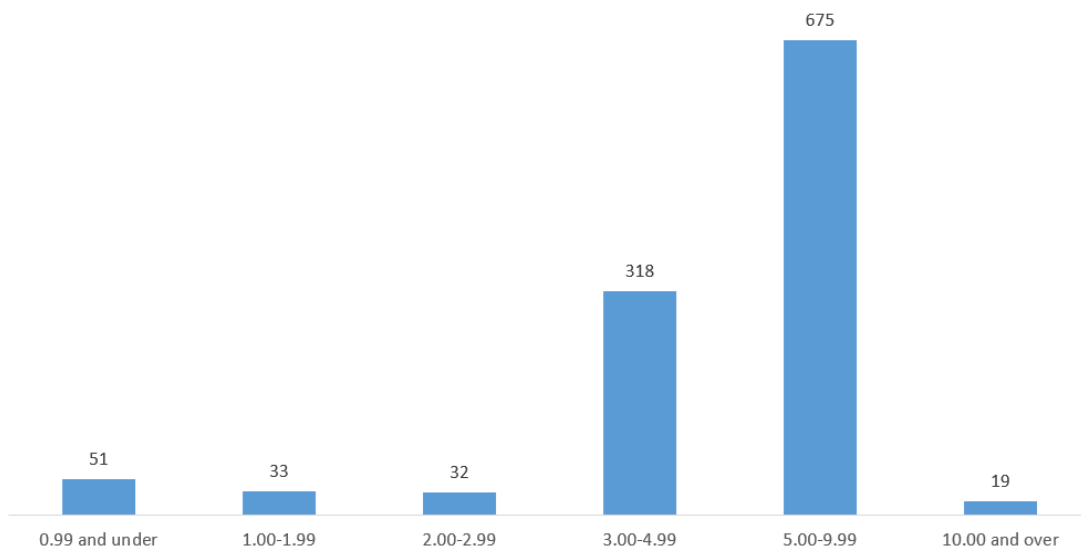


The traffic pattern altitude (TPA) for STS for small aircraft is 1,000 feet above ground level and the TPA for large aircraft is 1,500 feet above ground level. TPA is the minimum recommended altitude a plane must operate at during flight for the pattern for landing and in touch and go operations. The Airport's standard TPA is the highest allowed by the FAA. Under FAA regulations, altitude restrictions are not applicable during landing and takeoff. The FAA has exclusive sovereignty of airspace in the United States (49 U.S.C. Section 40103(a)).

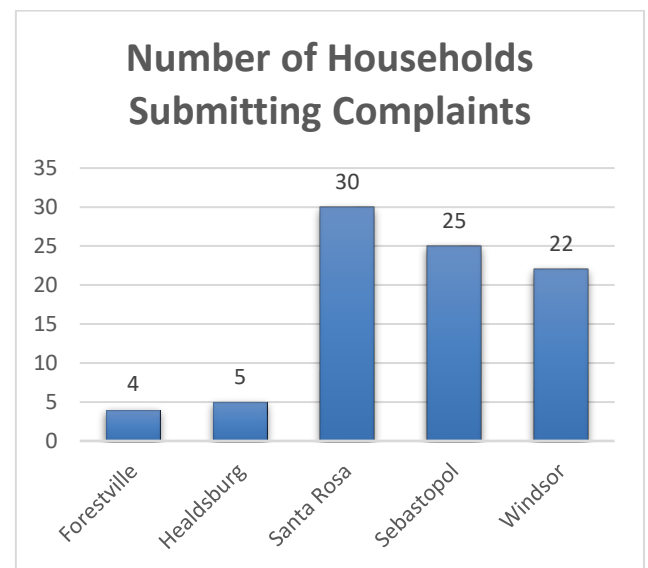
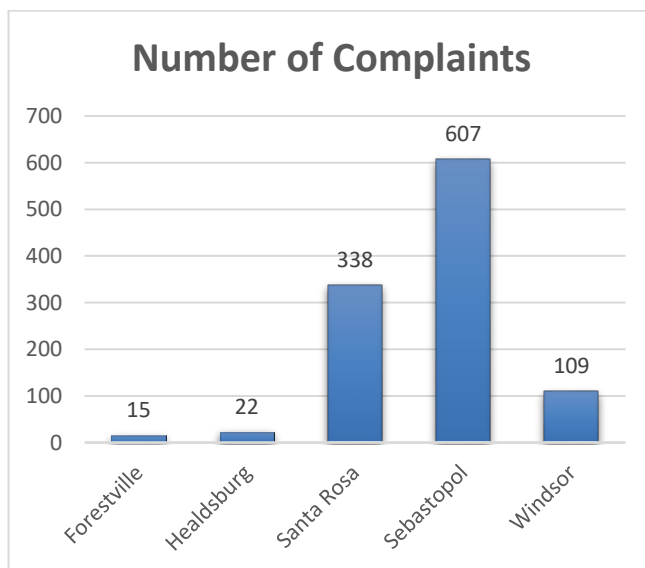
Noise Complaints by Nautical Miles (NM)

Of the 1,128 noise complaints, 434 (38%) were received from addresses located under five (5) nautical miles of the Airport. STS received 84 complaints (7%) from addresses located under two (2) nautical miles of the Airport.

2023 Noise Complaints by Nautical Mile Range from the Airport

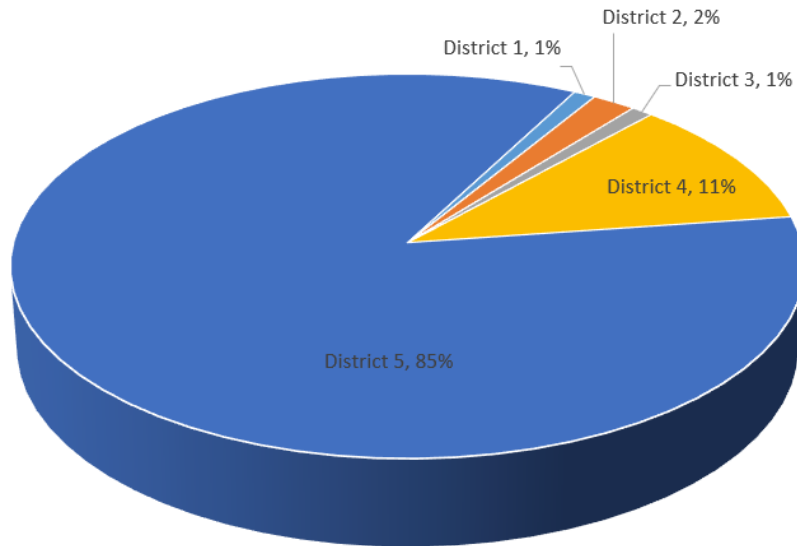


Snapshots of the most active communities submitting complaints

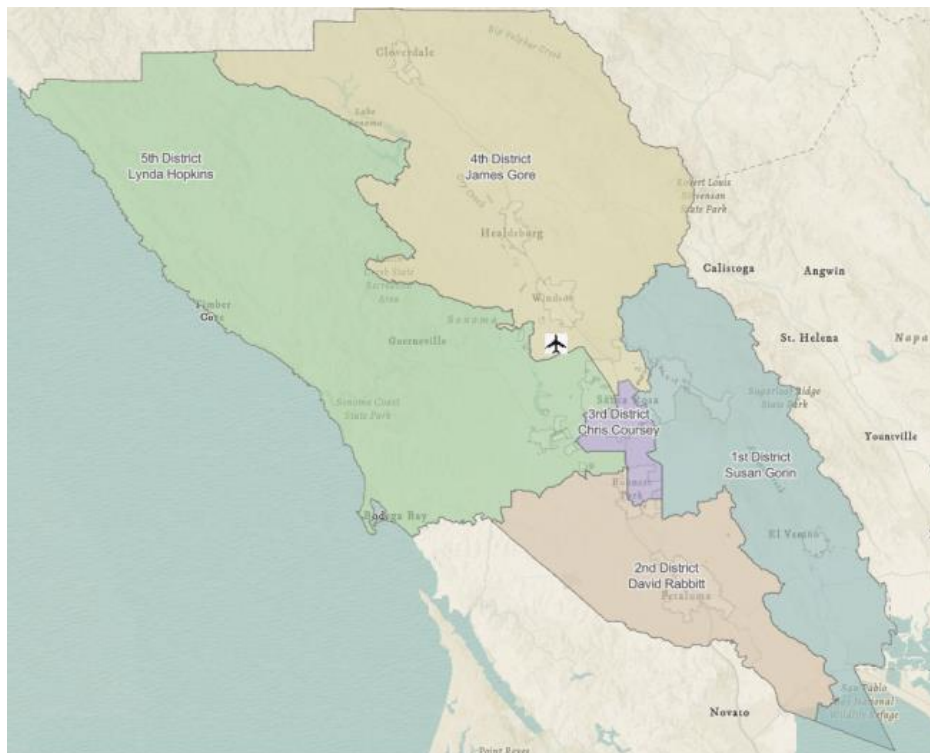


Noise Complaints by Sonoma County Supervisor Districts

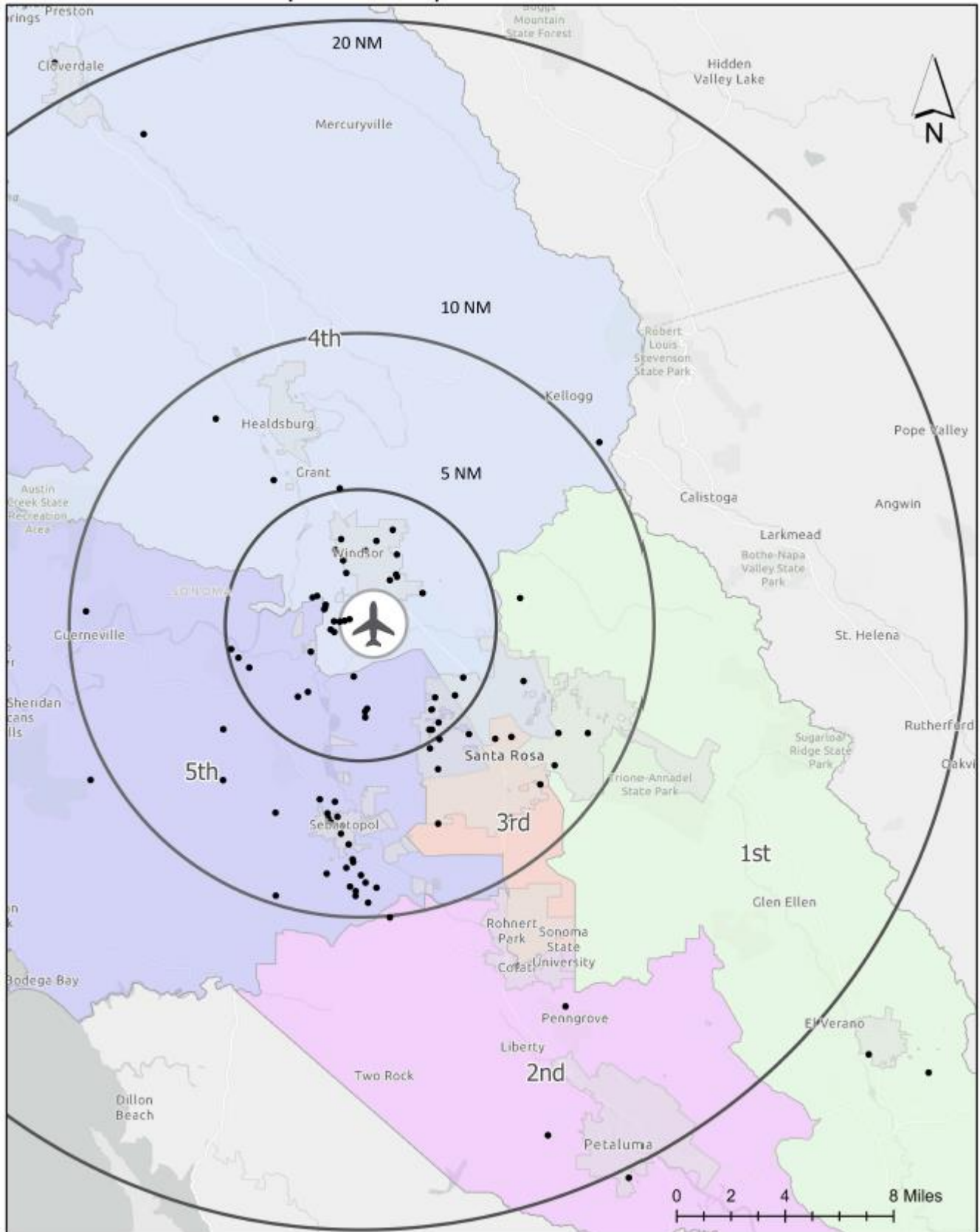
In 2023 85% of the complaints were received from District 5, with 11% of the complaints from District 4. The remaining 4% were from other districts.



*Supervisory districts are based on the district map located on the Sonoma County [website](#).



Noise Complaints by Location



2023 Summary

2023 Airport Noise Complaint Summary			Complaints by Aircraft	
			Complaints	Percent
Number of Noise Complaints Received	1,128		Helicopter	47 5%
Number of Households that Submitted Complaints	108		Jet	563 54%
Number of Flight Operations per Complaint	73		Airline	437 42%
			Other Jets	126 12%
			Propeller	112 11%
			Turboprop	41 4%
			Unknown	278 27%
Frequency vs Infrequent Complaint Submissions			Complaints by Airline Operator	
	# of Households	Percent	Complaints	Percent
Frequent (3 or more)	36	33%	Total Airline Complaints	437 100%
Infrequent (1 - 2)	72	67%	Alaska Airlines	279 64%
			American Airlines	74 17%
			Avelo Airlines	84 19%
Complainant Households by Nautical Miles from Airport			Complaints per Airline Operation	
Nautical Miles	Complaints	Percent		
0.99 and under	5	5%	Alaska Airlines	20
1.00-1.99	11	10%	American Airlines	23
2.00-2.99	13	12%	Avelo Airlines	13
3.00-4.99	17	16%		
5.00-9.99	41	38%		
10.00 and over	21	19%		

2023 Noise Complaint Findings

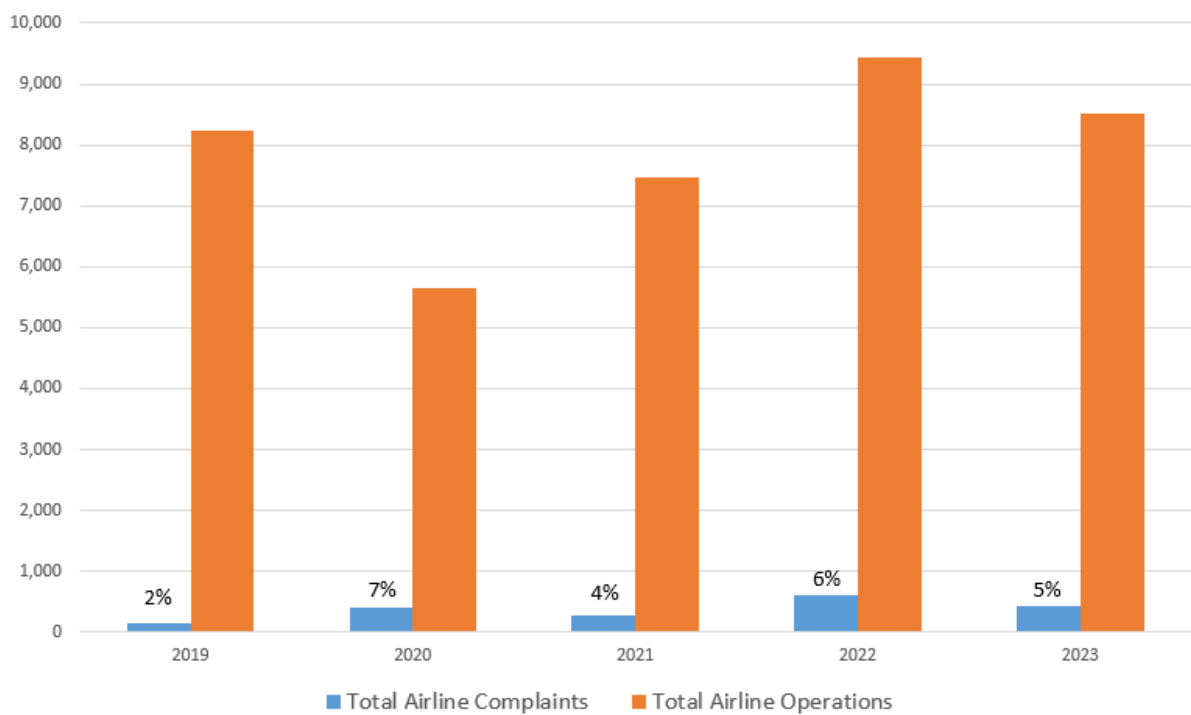
The Airport had an increase of 28% total complaints received in 2023 compared to 2022. At the same time, there was a decrease in the number of households submitting complaints by 26%. This may be due to the introduction of a new flight procedure that takes aircraft over Sebastopol and the less populated surrounding communities.

The number of complaints from west county neighbors increased by 156% in 2023. However, there were 2 fewer individual households that submitted complaints from that area. The increase in number of complaints from fewer households may be indicative of the frustrations felt by those who have been impacted by the FAA changes in flight paths. One household in Sebastopol submitted 348 complaints in 2023, 31% of the total for Sonoma County.

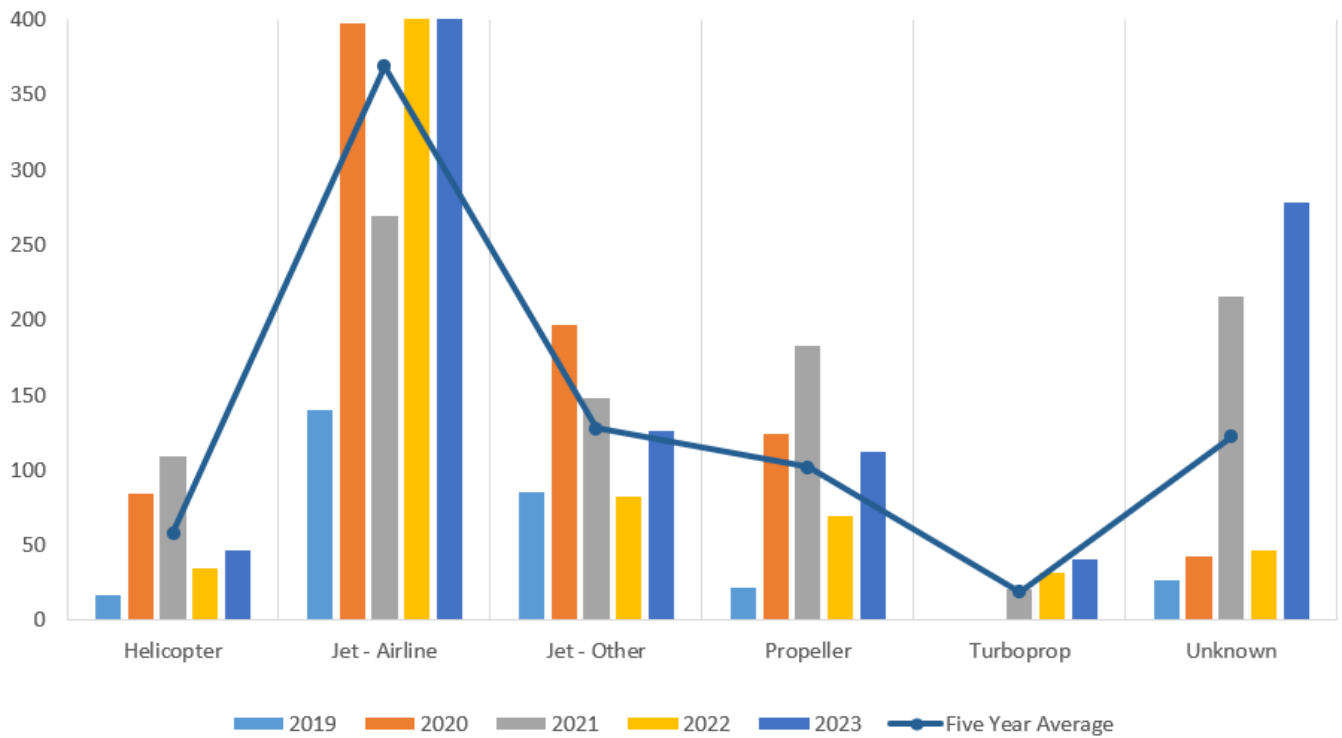
Five Year Summaries

Year	Noise Complaints	Individual Commenters	Infrequent Commenters	Total Operations	Operations per Noise Complaint	Total Airline Operations	Airline Operations per Noise Complaint
2019	294	116	93	83,734	285	8,245	28
2020	845	153	137	66,566	79	5,637	7
2021	946	209	159	90,580	96	7,470	8
2022	886	145	132	90,742	102	9,447	11
2023	1,128	108	72	82,603	73	8,513	8
Average	820	146	119	82,845	127	7,862	12

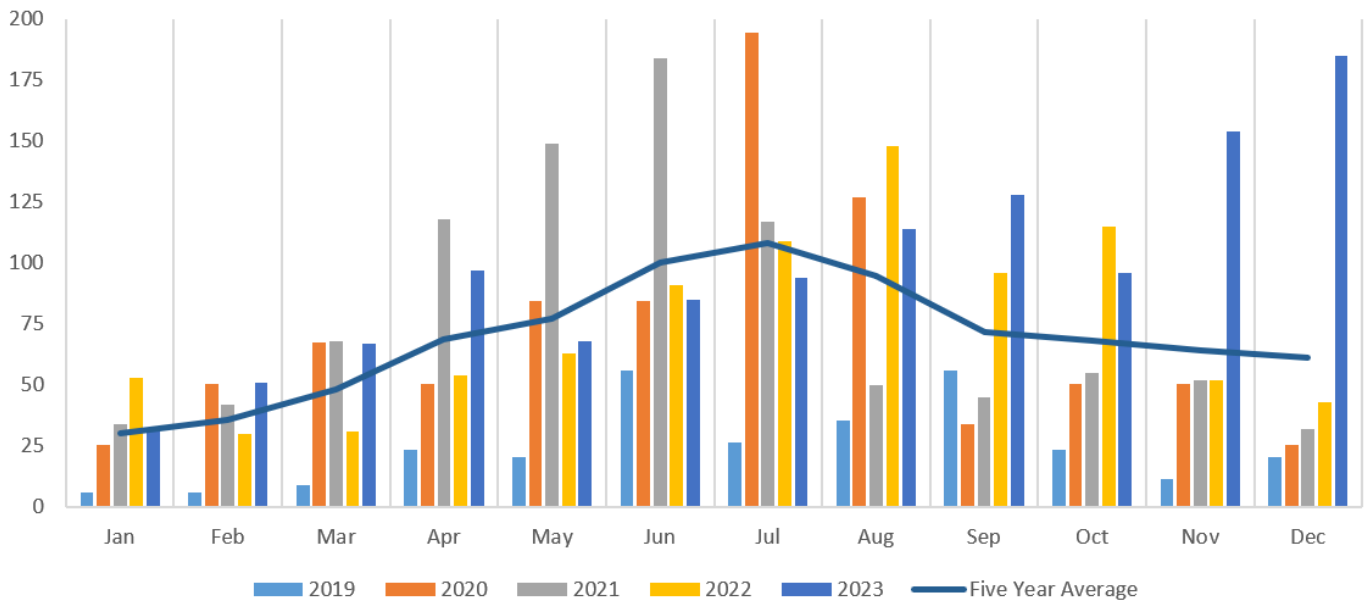
5 Year Percentage of Complaints to Airline Operations



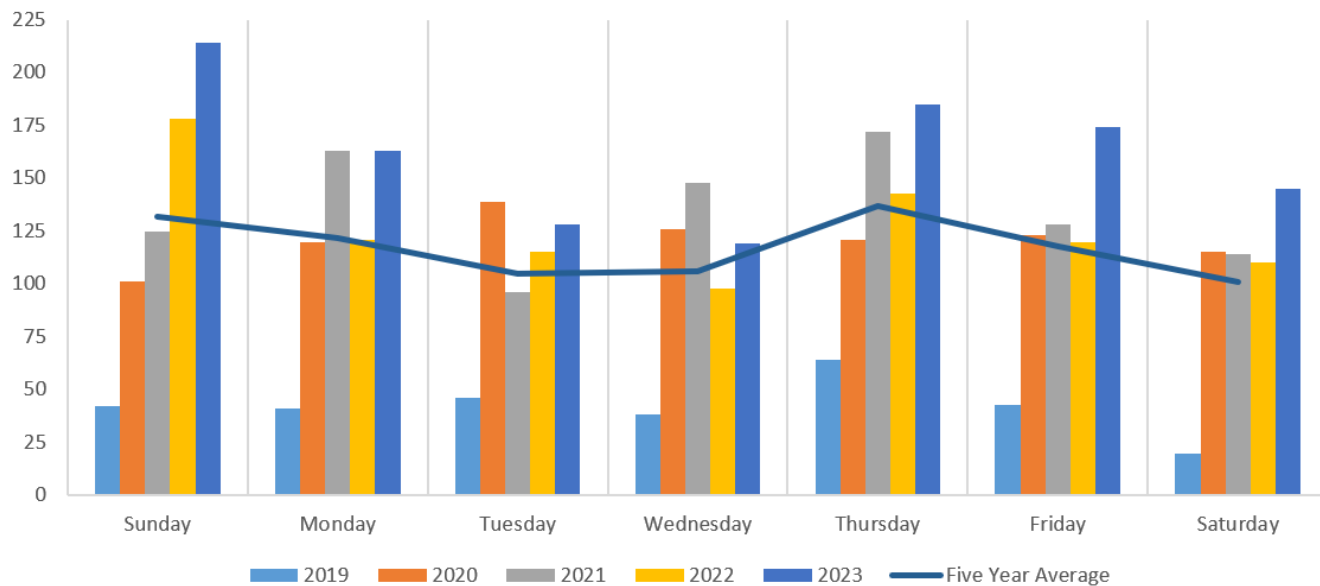
Complaints by Aircraft Type 5-Year Summary



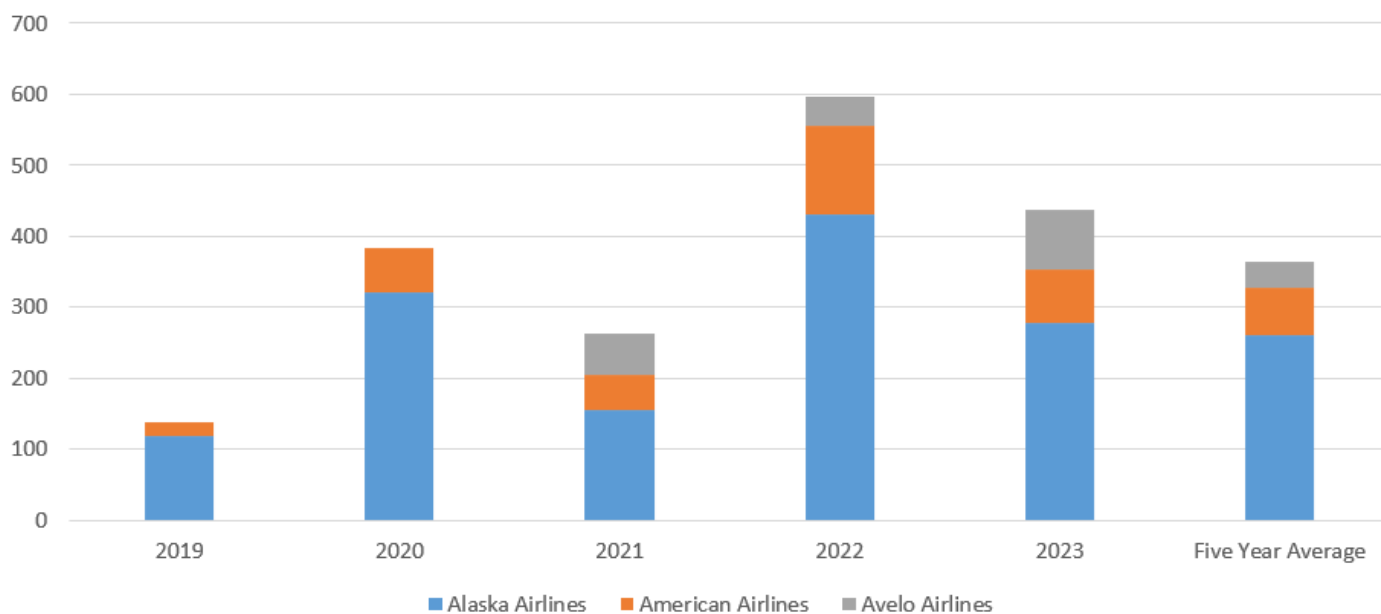
Complaints by Month 5-Year Summary



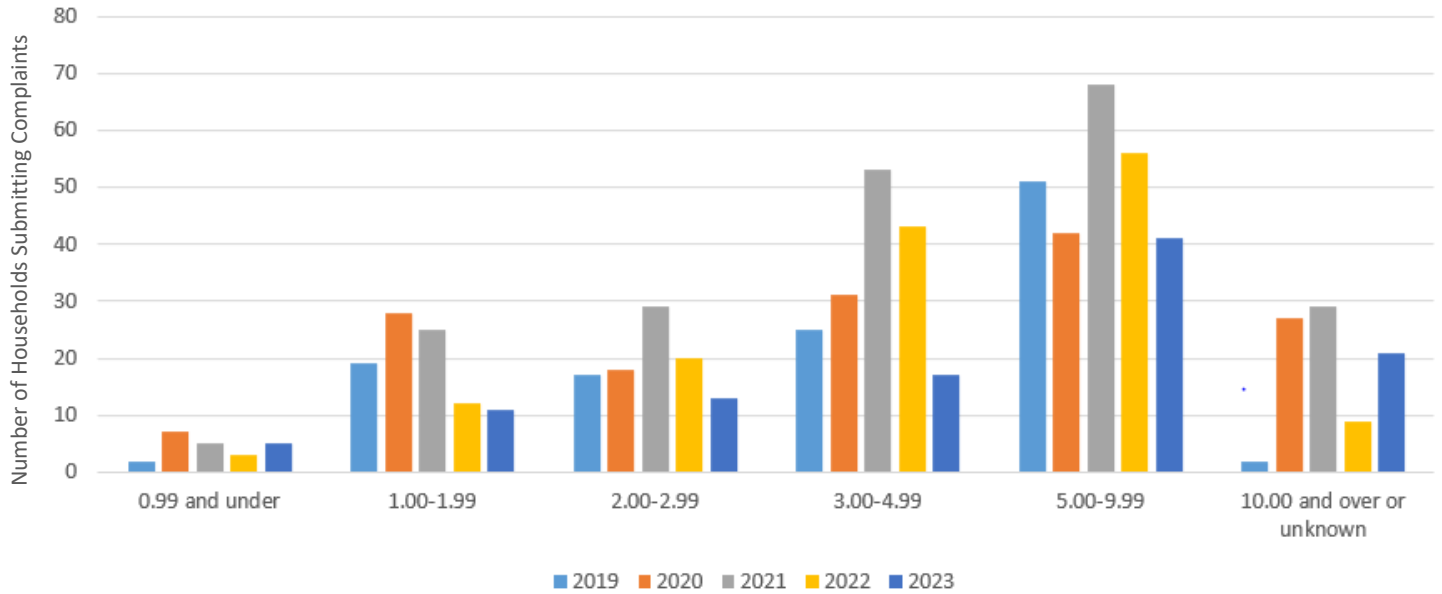
Complaints by Day of Week 5-Year Summary



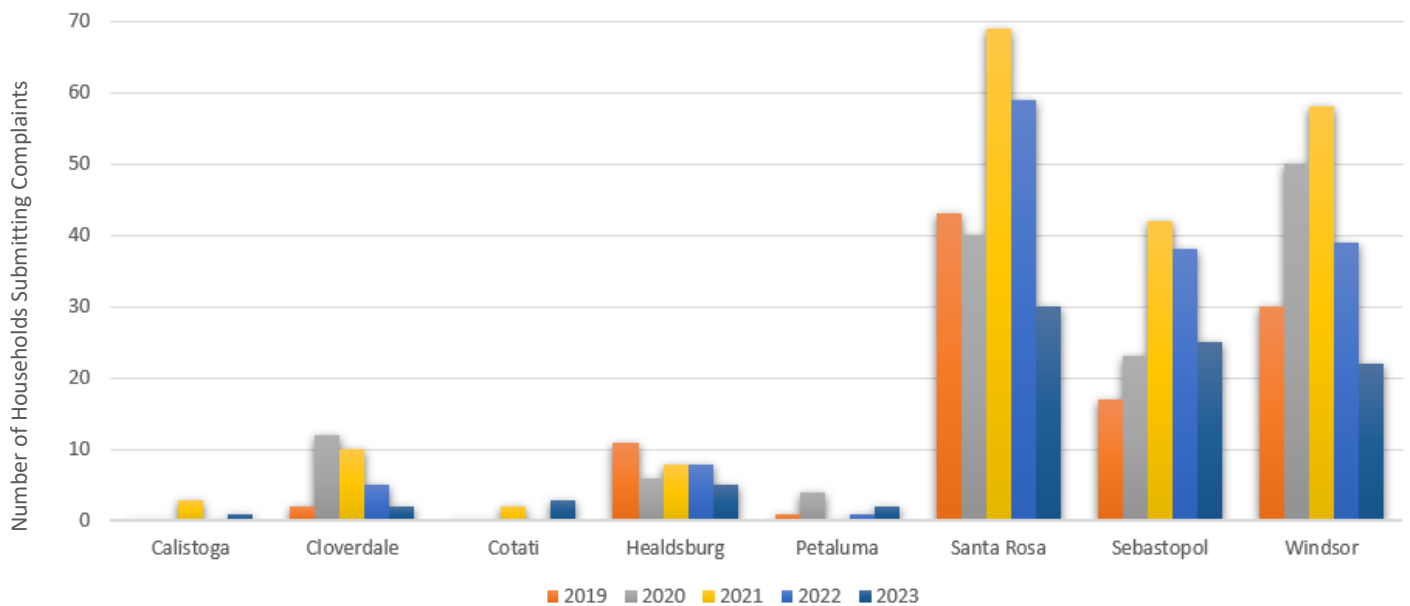
Complaints by Airline 5-Year Summary



Individual Household Addresses Submitting Comments 5-year Summary



Cities With the Most Active Feedback 5-Year Summary



Noise Abatement in 2023 & Beyond

The Airport is committed to working with our neighbors in Sonoma County, our airline partners, and our general aviation operators to address noise concerns and continue to evaluate noise abatement procedures. Upcoming and ongoing projects include:

Develop and implement new procedures for arrivals and departures

The Airport is working with Cignus Consulting to evaluate the approach and departure procedures with the goal of abating noise and emissions. At the completion of this evaluation, new instrument approach and departure procedures will be published including visual approach and departure paths. This process is expected to be completed in 2025 following evaluation of current procedures, creation of the report which will include findings and recommendations, FAA review, and publication for use.

Creation and implementation of a Fly Quiet Program

STS is in the early stages of developing a fly quiet program that will establish voluntary guidelines in conjunction with the findings and recommendations from the Approach Feasibility Study for airlines and pilots to encourage them to operate with noise reduction and surrounding communities in mind. Guidelines may include considering quieter aircraft, utilizing preferred procedures, and other ways to lessen impacts over noise sensitive communities.

Continued refinement of the STS Good Neighbor website

In 2021, STS launched the Good Neighbor website to increase visibility and accessibility related to our noise abatement program. This website offers monthly noise reports, frequently asked questions, a portal for the public to submit noise complaints, and updates on the approach and departure feasibility study. The site is currently under evaluation for improvements to enhance the information sharing interface and experience.

