Fox News Wins Summer Primetime Against Cable and Network Rivals

Fox News, the **Rupert Murdoch**-owned network, was the most-watched cable network during the unofficial summer period between Memorial Day and Labor Day, finishing ahead of the big four broadcast networks in total viewers during primetime.

According to Nielsen Media Research, between 05/26/2025 and 08/29/2025, Fox News averaged 2.873 million total primetime viewers. It was ahead of ABC, which had 2.498 million total primetime viewers; NBC, which had 2.468 million; CBS, with 2.087 million; and Fox, with 1.175 million total primetime viewers.

This achievement made it the most-watched network in all of television during this period. For additional context, Fox News' cable news rivals MSNBC and CNN recorded 1.052 million and 550,000 total primetime viewers, respectively, during this same period.

Though there were major news stories over the summer, including the murders of the Minnesota lawmakers, the ICE protests in Los Angeles, the Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin summit in Alaska, and the catastrophic flooding in central Texas and Milwaukee, Fox News is crediting its viewership with consistency.

Leading the way for Fox News during that window was **Jesse Watters** Primetime at 8 p.m. ET, which averaged 3.230 million total viewers. It was followed by Hannity at 9 p.m. ET, which averaged 2.880 million total viewers, and Gutfeld! at 10 p.m.

ET, earned 2.936 million total viewers between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

The panel show The Five is Fox News' No. 1 overall program in total viewers and the Adults 25-54 demo across all dayparts. But its airing falls outside of primetime, which is defined as between 8 and 11 p.m. ET.

"The key ingredients are first-in-class talent, great storytelling, on-scene reporting by great reporters—amazing productions in and out of the studio," Fox News Media president and executive editor **Jay Wallace** told TVNewser.

Additionally, Wallace added that the network approaches its audience with the philosophy of "trying to educate and inform."

What to keep in mind about Fox News winning summer

Fox News has been dominating ratings, commanding the top 1,532 cable news telecasts post the 2024 election. However, there is additional context to consider about the network's success.

When looking at Fox's summer performance against the broadcast networks, it's important to keep in mind that broadcasters are more prone to running reruns of their popular shows over the summer, ahead of the new broadcast season coming in the fall, which can benefit more news-focused networks and live programming. Q4 is also a big sports season for the broadcasters with the return of high-profile leagues like the NFL.

However, on the other side, Fox News is also performing better with a smaller footprint.

Broadcast nets are freely accessible via digital antennas, while Fox is more limited in its availability to around 60 million homes across the U.S.

Additionally, when it comes to outperforming broadcast nets, Fox News has done it before.

In 2020, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Fox News was also the No. 1 network, finishing ahead of the broadcast nets during the unofficial summer period. The factors leading to that victory at the time were vastly different from those of today, as the country had instituted COVID-19 lockdowns.

This resulted in a surge in home viewership, boosting the ratings for all major cable news networks during this period, particularly Fox News. Plus, the network was available in more homes during that period as the effects of cord-cutting were not as devastating to the industry as they are today.

In explaining Fox News' 2020 success, Wallace told TVNewser that the period was "peak pandemic, and viewing tastes and norms were anything but normal—hello, Tiger King."

Wallace noted that, during that period, Fox News was operating as a public service operation during a time of national emergency: "We are all very proud of the special coverage of that time," he said.

Looking ahead, Fox News will try to keep its momentum going into the fall, focusing on its holistic programming that isn't limited to only coveted dayparts.

"For all the obits written about traditional television, we're delivering in all key dayparts, from mornings to various news programs, to opinion and comedy," Wallace said.

Wallace called this an "amazing feat," but not one the network belabors: "Because we are always focused on what is next."

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