

Is Florida the Fishing Capital of the World?

Question: What is the economic impact of freshwater fishing in Florida?

Answer: In 2006, the US Census Bureau did a "*National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Related Recreation*" to determine the amount of participation and economic impact of these outdoor activities nationwide. The study was conducted under a grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Service and is the benchmark for this type economic analysis and allows unbiased state comparisons. The specific data on Florida is a wealth of information. Southwick Associates has provided a summary of the top fishing states in various categories that again justify Florida's status as the Fishing Capital of the World and published "*Sportfishing in America, an Economic Engine and Conservation Powerhouse* (Rev. Jan 2008)".

Based on the 2006 National Survey, Florida again ranks number one in:

- In-State Anglers (2.8 million vs. #2 Texas with 2.5 million),
- Angler Expenditures in State (\$4.4 billion vs. #2 Texas with \$3.4 billion),
- Angler supported jobs (75,068 vs. #2 Texas with 59,938),
- State and local taxes generated by sportfishing (\$440 million vs. #2 Texas with \$392 million).
- Non-resident (tourists) anglers (885,000 vs. #2 North Carolina 395,000).
- Non-resident expenditures (\$1.0 billion vs. #2 Wisconsin \$0.6 billion).

Anglers averaged 17.2 days per year fishing in Florida, for a total of 46.3 million days of quality outdoor recreation. Of those, 24.4 million days were spent in fresh water by 1.4 million anglers and, 23.1 million days were spent in saltwater by 2.0 million anglers.

Non-Resident anglers spent over \$1 billion in direct retail sales in Florida--not mentioning the other dollars they spent on tourism while in Florida. The next highest state for non-resident angler spending was Wisconsin with less than \$0.6 billion.

No wonder Florida is the "Fishing Capital of the World." A further breakdown based on the detailed economic analysis by Southwick and Associates includes the multiplier or ripple effect on the community caused by these sales and visitors.

- Saltwater Fishing - \$5.1 billion, 51,588 jobs
- Freshwater Fishing - \$2.4 billion, 23,480 jobs
- Total Fishing - \$7.5 billion (some anglers don't specify fresh or salt so the total is less than the sum of freshwater and saltwater), 75,736 jobs
- Generated \$558 million in Federal tax revenues
- Generated \$443 million in state and local tax revenues

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Fast Facts

Our Mission

Managing fish and wildlife resources for their long-term well-being and the benefit of people.

Our Staff

1,883 full-time employees, including, more than 700 sworn law enforcement officers; more than 500 scientists

Locations

Headquarters in Tallahassee

Five regional offices; Panama City, Lake City, Ocala, Lakeland and West Palm Beach.

Fish and Wildlife Research Institute in St. Petersburg
73 field offices

Our Territory, Florida has...

53,927 square miles of land

5,983 square miles of water

More than 34 million acres of public and private land, including 5.8 million acres of wildlife management areas (one of the largest public-hunting systems in the country).

Our Fish and Wildlife

The FWC protects and manages more than 575 species of wildlife, more than 200 native species of freshwater fish and more than 500 native species of saltwater fish. Balancing these species' needs with the needs of more than 18 million residents and the millions of visitors who share the land and water with Florida's wildlife

Annual Economic Impact

Hunting - \$719 million, 10,300 jobs

Saltwater Fishing - \$5.2 billion, 51,500 jobs

Freshwater Fishing - \$2.4 billion, 23,500 jobs

Total Fishing - \$7.5 billion (some anglers don't specify fresh or salt), number one in the nation (Texas, the next highest state, generates \$6.1 billion)

Total Nonresident Economic Impact (Tourism) - \$1.0 billion, number one in the nation (Wisconsin, the next highest state, generates \$0.6 billion)

Wildlife Viewing - \$3.2 billion, 34,500 jobs

Commercial Fishing - \$576 million, 9,800 jobs

Boating - \$18.5 billion, 220,000 jobs

Hunting, Fishing and Wildlife-Watching Participation

Number of hunters - 239,000

Number of freshwater and saltwater anglers - 2,767,000

Freshwater - 1,417,000 (1,155,000 resident and 262,000 nonresident)

Saltwater - 2,002,000 (1,286,000 resident and 716,000 nonresident)

Nonresidents (freshwater and saltwater) - 885,000

Days of Fishing - 46,311,000 (24.5 million freshwater, 23.1 million saltwater, 4.8 million nonresident)

Number of wildlife watchers - 3,287,000

Sources

Florida Handbook 2005-2006, 30th Biennial Edition

Atlas of Florida, Revised Edition 1996

U.S. Census Bureau

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service 2006 National Survey on Hunting, Fishing and Wildlife-Associated Recreation

Fla. Department of Environmental Protection 305b Report and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Tidal shoreline, detailed - takes bays, sounds and other bodies either to the head of tidewater or to a point where such waters narrow to 100 feet.