



American Sportfishing Association

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New Report Highlights Recreational Fishing's Broad Economic and Conservation Impact

Anglers' expenditures have a significant impact on the nation's economy.

For millions of Americans, recreational fishing is more than just a pleasant getaway; it's a way of life. As an industry, it provides a living for countless other people in businesses ranging from fishing tackle and boating manufacturing to travel and hospitality to publications, magazines and much more.

Based on numbers in the new 2018 *Sportfishing in America: An Economic Force for Conservation* the number of anglers increased 8.0 percent since the 2011 report and fishing equipment sales grew more than 21 percent. When anglers' expenditures exchange hands, their dollars have a significant impact on our nation's economy. This fishing statistics report is produced for the American Sportfishing Association (ASA), the industry's trade association, by [Southwick Associates](#).

[Sportfishing in America: An Economic Force for Conservation](#) highlights how recreational fishing not only endures as an activity that permeates all social and economic aspects of Americans' lives, but also plays a significant role in the country's most successful fisheries conservation efforts.

According to the new study, America's anglers are estimated to spend \$49.8 billion per year in retail sales associated with their sport. With a total annual economic impact of \$125 billion, fishing supports more than 800,000 jobs and generates \$38 billion in wages and \$16 billion in federal, state and local taxes.

Substantially more than any other groups, anglers support the nation's conservation efforts through the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund Program. The excise tax on fishing gear and

motorboat fuel channeled more than \$600 million of anglers' dollars to state fish and wildlife conservation and recreation programs in 2016.

"Sportfishing has a significant impact on this nation's economy," said ASA President Glenn Hughes. "Just by enjoying a day on the water, men, women and children across the United States pump billions of dollars into this country's economy. In many ways, America's anglers are the nation's most powerful force for conserving our nation's fisheries and waters, investing more than \$1 billion dollars in fisheries management and conservation through taxes on fishing equipment and state fishing license sales."

"Recreational fishing provides numerous benefits to the overall well-being of the U.S.," said ASA Conservation Director Mike Leonard. "Policies that support healthy fisheries and angler access are critical to supporting jobs and businesses throughout the country."

The new analysis is based on data from the 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, conducted every five years on behalf of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies by the Census Bureau and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

In addition, this year, the outdoor recreation industry was included for the first time in the [Bureau of Economic Analysis' \(BEA\) U.S. GDP calculations](#). The BEA's report, issued in February 2018, found that the outdoor recreation sector makes up two percent of U.S. GDP and accounts for \$673 billion in annual gross domestic output.

This impact exceeds that of key U.S. industries such as farming and computer manufacturing. In addition, BEA found the outdoor recreation economy grew by 3.8 percent in 2016, exceeding the 2.8 percent growth of the overall U.S. economy during the same period.

Facts about Recreational Fishing

- Recreational fishing is the nation's second most popular outdoor activity after jogging.
- Nearly 1 in 7 Americans take to the water with rod and reel in hand each year.
- Since 2011, freshwater fishing participation grew 11 percent and Great Lakes fishing grew 9.5 percent.
- Spending for saltwater fishing (\$14 billion) is more than twice what (\$5.8 billion) Americans spent on services for their pets.
- More Americans fish than play golf (23.8 million) and tennis (18.1 million) combined.
- If sportfishing was its own corporation, it would rank #54 on the Fortune 500 List, ahead of Cisco Systems.
- Over twice as many people fished in 2016 than attended every NFL game combined.

