

Many residents of and visitors to Lee County know that fishing and boating is popular but calculating a value for these activities is a different story. Scientists who study values of things often look at economic impact analyses which try to determine the contribution that a specific activity such as recreational fishing makes to a region. According to Dr. Daniel Stynes from Michigan State University, the analysis looks at the flow of money associated with the activity through a given region looking for changes in sales, tax revenues, income and jobs as a result of that activity. Below is a snapshot of marine recreational industries and activities in Lee County – their economic consequences and impacts.



Recreational Saltwater Fishing Activities

- In 2010, 35,932 recreational saltwater fishing licenses were purchased in Lee County resulting in over \$985,000 dollars in sales. This does not include any special endorsements like tarpon tags or crawfish stamps (source: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission – FWC).
- Charter captains in Lee County purchased 260 units of fishing licenses for either the captain or vessel in groups of 4 or less, 6 or less, 10 or less or 11 or more passengers resulting in over \$65,000 in sales (source: FWC).
- In Florida, recreational fishing resulted in over \$5 billion in economic impact and supported approximately 50,000 jobs during 2009 (source: FWC).
- In southwest Florida (Manatee, Sarasota, Charlotte, Desoto, Lee and Collier counties) recreational fishing activities resulted in \$1.3 billion in sales and supported 14,530 jobs in 2007 (source: FWC and NOAA Marine Fisheries).
- In Lee County, artificial reef activity resulted in \$51.8 million dollars in economic output and supported 575 jobs in 2009 (source: Florida Sea Grant).

Commercial Saltwater Fisheries Activities -

- 379 commercial fishermen held saltwater products licenses in Lee County during 2008/09. There
- were 61 wholesale dealers, 8 processors and 128 retail dealers over the same period (source: FWC and NOAA Marine Fisheries Service -MFS).
- Total dockside value in 2010 for Charlotte County landed products was over \$10 million (source: FWC).

Finfish	Invertebrates
Mullet	Pink Shrimp
Red Grouper	Stone Crab
Ladyfish	Blue Crab
Top 3 Val - \$798,062	Top 3 Val - \$8,270,866
Tot Val - \$1,165,862	Tot Val - \$9,087,106

- San Carlos Island Shrimp harvesting and processing resulted in \$54.9 million in economic impact for Lee County and supported 1,555 jobs in 1998 (source: Florida Sea Grant).
- In Florida commercial fishing and seafood production resulted in \$12.9 billion in sales and supported 64,744 jobs during 2009 (source: NOAA Fisheries of the US).

Boating Activities

- 44,524 vessels were registered in Lee County in 2010 (source: Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles).
- In Florida, boaters spent \$3.4 billion on boating trips in 2007 and \$5.2 billion in watercraft expenses, which together supported 97,000 jobs. The economic effect of these same activities in Charlotte County was \$303 million direct effect on sales supporting 3704 jobs (source: FWC).



Economic Summary

Recreational fishing and boating are not the only reasons healthy coasts contribute to Lee County's economic well being. Florida's coastal counties account for 79% of the state's overall economic productivity (source: National Oceans Economic Program, 2010). In 2004, there were 16,747 coastal and ocean related firms in Lee County supporting 213,961 jobs, over \$6.7 billion in wages and over \$13.4 billion in gross domestic product (source: NOAA State of the Coast). While our economic situation has changed since 2004 it is clear that the value of accessible boating and fishing opportunities, pristine beaches, excellent water quality and viable fish habitats is vitally important to Lee County and Florida's economic wellbeing.

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