



# SPORTFISHING IN AMERICA

## An Economic Force for Conservation



2018 EDITION



# SPORTFISHING IN AMERICA

Recreational fishing is a rich American tradition as old as the country itself. **Each year, more than 49 million<sup>1</sup> people—more people than live in the states of Texas and New York combined<sup>2</sup>—escape to cast a line or drop a hook in hopes of reeling in a fish.**



Old or young, male or female—fishing is enjoyed by people from every segment of society and all walks of life. But while these millions may share in their love for fishing, their reasons for doing so are many.

For some, fishing is a retreat from the hectic pace of day-to-day work life. For others, it's a chance to experience the ultimate outdoor thrill, whether cranking a heavy bass from the dark underside of a pier or fighting a trophy from the ocean's depths.

For many others, it's a chance to share something special with a loved family member or friend. Regardless of what brings them to the water, with

**49 million anglers strong, recreational fishing is a formidable economic force in our nation's economy. This trend shows no sign of slowing down.**

<sup>1</sup> The Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF): <http://news.takemefishing.org/fishing-participation-2018>

<sup>2</sup> United States Census Bureau: <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2016/demo/popest/state-total.html>

## DID YOU KNOW?

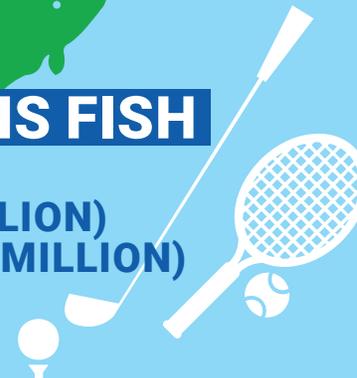
U.S. ANGLERS  
**OUTNUMBER  
THE POPULATION  
OF EVERY U.S. STATE<sup>3</sup>**



RECREATIONAL FISHING  
IS THE NATION'S  
**SECOND MOST  
POPULAR OUTDOOR  
ACTIVITY  
AFTER JOGGING<sup>4</sup>**



**MORE  
AMERICANS FISH  
THAN PLAY  
GOLF (23.8 MILLION)  
& TENNIS (18.1 MILLION)  
COMBINED<sup>4</sup>**



ANGLERS ARE NEARLY  
**2.5 TIMES AS  
NUMEROUS AS  
ANNUAL VISITORS TO  
DISNEY'S MAGIC KINGDOM,  
THE WORLD'S MOST POPULAR  
AMUSEMENT PARK<sup>6</sup>**



MORE PEOPLE GO  
**RECREATIONAL  
FISHING**  
*(BOTH FRESH & SALTWATER COMBINED)*  
THAN BOWL OR PLAY  
BASKETBALL, SOFTBALL  
OR SOCCER<sup>4</sup>



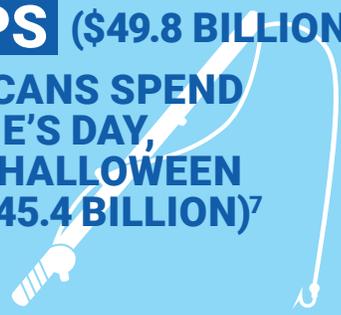
THE NUMBER OF  
ANGLERS IS NEARLY  
**THREE TIMES  
GREATER**  
THAN THE NUMBER OF ACTIVE  
DOWNHILL SKIERS AND  
SNOWBOARDERS COMBINED<sup>4</sup>



OVER  
**TWICE AS MANY  
PEOPLE FISHED  
IN 2016**  
THAN ATTENDED EVERY  
NFL GAME COMBINED<sup>5</sup>



ANGLERS SPEND MORE ON  
**FISHING GEAR  
AND TRIPS** (\$49.8 BILLION)  
THAN AMERICANS SPEND  
ON VALENTINE'S DAY,  
EASTER AND HALLOWEEN  
COMBINED (\$45.4 BILLION)<sup>7</sup>



<sup>3</sup> United States Census Bureau: <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2016/demo/popest/state-total.html>

<sup>4</sup> Outdoor Industry Association's Outdoor Participation Report, 2017: [https://outdoorindustry.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/2017-Outdoor-Recreation-Participation-Report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://outdoorindustry.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/2017-Outdoor-Recreation-Participation-Report_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> ESPN: [http://www.espn.com/nfl/attendance/\\_/year/2016](http://www.espn.com/nfl/attendance/_/year/2016)

<sup>6</sup> Themed Entertainment Association's 2016 Global Attractions Attendance Report: [http://www.teaconnect.org/images/files/TEA\\_235\\_103719\\_170601.pdf](http://www.teaconnect.org/images/files/TEA_235_103719_170601.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> National Retail Federation: <https://nrf.com/resources/consumer-research-and-data/holiday-spending>



# SPENDING POWER

**A great day on the water most often begins with shopping.**  
To achieve fishing success, anglers must often first purchase fishing gear, bait, sunscreen, fuel, snacks, drinks, ice and more.



Whether fishing from a high-dollar center console boat or wearing out the grass along a favored spot on a river bank, a successful day of fishing isn't just measured in the amount and size of fish caught, but also in the essentials that make a day more fun and comfortable.

**LUCKY FOR RETAILERS,  
THESE PURCHASES ADD UP**  
IN 2016, THE AVERAGE ANGLER SPENT  
**\$1,392, or \$130 per trip.**



While \$1,392 may not seem all that significant in and of itself, with  
**MILLIONS OF ANGLERS**  
ACROSS THE UNITED STATES  
it's easy to see how the amount quickly adds up:  
**\$49.8 BILLION**  
IN ANNUAL RETAIL SALES WITH  
**35.8 MILLION**  
ANGLERS AGES 16 AND OLDER  
spending this amount each year



**THAT'S QUITE AN ECONOMIC FORCE**

# NATIONAL ECONOMIC IMPACTS

**While the \$49.8 billion spent annually by anglers is impressive, it's only part of the economic picture painted by anglers.**

When recreational anglers spend money on goods, retailers need to restock their shelves to replace the items purchased. Wholesalers respond, and manufacturers then produce more product. This economic activity multiplies the effect of anglers' spending.

*In the end, the billions of dollars spent by anglers changes hands over and over and, in the process, **supports a wide variety of jobs and generates tax revenue** for localities, states and the federal government.*



IN 2016,  
MORE THAN  
**800,000**  
PEOPLES'  
LIVELIHOODS WERE  
ENHANCED BY  
**RECREATIONAL  
FISHING**



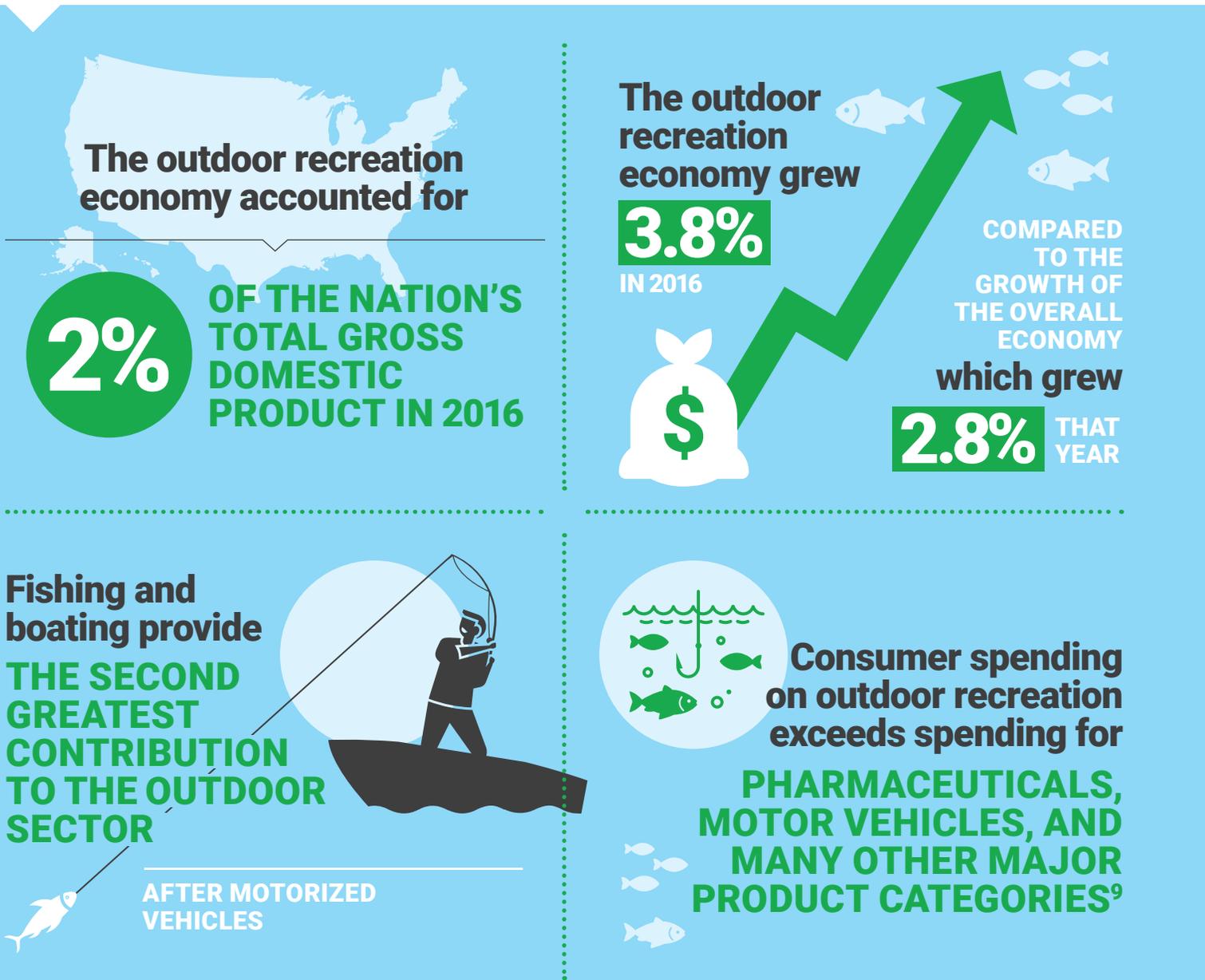
From people working directly in the fishing industry, such as tackle shop employees, guides and boat builders, to people who may not even know they benefited from recreational fishing, such as truck drivers, store clerks and hotel staff.



# ANOTHER ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE

In 2018, for the first time, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis—our country’s official source for analyzing U.S. economic data—examined the contributions of outdoor recreation to our nation’s overall economic health.

The results were remarkable.<sup>8</sup>



<sup>8</sup> Bureau of Economic Analysis, Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account  
<sup>9</sup> Bureau of Economic Analysis, Personal Consumption Expenditures by Type of Product

# FISHING ACROSS THE U.S.

From salmon in the American Northwest to trout feeding among the eddies of a cool Appalachian stream, fishing provides countless diverse opportunities, literally, from sea to shining sea.

Whether fishing a freshwater lake in the Southeast, trolling the Gulf of Mexico or working the cold depths of the Great Lakes, each form of fishing is a virtual industry unto itself, generating retail sales, jobs and additional benefits for the local communities where fishing takes place.

## DID YOU KNOW?

The contribution from **freshwater fishing** to the United States' Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is

**\$41.9 BILLION**

which is more than the economic contribution of the transit and ground passenger transportation industry in 2016.<sup>10</sup>

The contribution from **saltwater fishing** to the United States' Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is

**\$18.3 BILLION**

which is more than double the revenue of all Major League Baseball teams combined.<sup>11</sup>

The contribution from **Great Lakes fishing** to the United States' Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is

**\$3.1 BILLION**

which is more than the total value of the Los Angeles Lakers in the NBA.<sup>11</sup>

SINCE 2011  
freshwater fishing participation grew

**11%**



SINCE 2011  
the number of anglers fishing the Great Lakes grew

**9.5%**



Spending for saltwater fishing

**\$14 BILLION**

IS MORE THAN TWICE THE \$5.8 BILLION

Americans spent on services for their pets (grooming, boarding, walking and training)<sup>12</sup>



State and local taxes (\$352.6 MILLION)

generated by Great Lakes fishing would pay the salaries of over

**5,950 SCHOOL TEACHERS IN 2016<sup>13</sup>**



<sup>10</sup> Bureau of Economic Analysis: <https://bea.gov/iTable/iTable.cfm?reqid=51&step=51&isuri=1&5114=a&5102=1#reqid=51&step=51&isuri=1&5114=a&5102=1>

<sup>11</sup> Forbes, *The Business of Baseball* 2016

<sup>12</sup> American Pet Products Association: [http://americanpetproducts.org/press\\_releasedetail.asp?id=173](http://americanpetproducts.org/press_releasedetail.asp?id=173)

<sup>13</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics: <https://www.bls.gov/oes/2016/may/oes252021.htm>



# A CONSERVATION FORCE

Anglers may just enjoy their days on the water with no thought of their impact on the resource. However, just by fishing, anglers are investing in their sport to ensure that there will always be opportunities to fish.



Anglers' support of conservation work comes in many forms. Most obviously is through license sales as recreational anglers between the ages of 16 and 65 years must often buy a fishing license each year. **Funds raised through these license sales support the efforts of the fish and wildlife agencies tasked with managing rivers, lakes and coastal waters, including stocking programs and resource management.**

Through the 1950 Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act (also known as the Dingell-Johnson Act), manufacturers pay a federal excise tax on all fishing tackle. In addition, a portion of motorboat fuel taxes also go to fisheries conservation and other programs such as new boat ramps.

By law, these funds can only be spent on fisheries and habitat conservation and restoration and are distributed to states for those very purposes. Additionally, many anglers belong to conservation organizations that collect annual membership dues and contributions, and use this money to fund important projects. Since 1951, anglers have contributed over \$38 billion to conservation, more than any conservation group or other government program has been able to do.

# ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION\*

## BY TYPE OF FISHING

	ALL FISHING	FRESHWATER	SALTWATER	GREAT LAKES
Percentage of anglers**	100%	84.1%	24%	5.1%
Retail Sales	\$49,753,200,000	\$33,264,000,000	\$14,046,400,000	\$2,340,600,000
Total Multiplier Effect	\$124,992,700,000	\$82,674,400,000	\$36,386,200,000	\$5,648,700,000
Value Added (GDP)	\$63,515,700,000	\$41,922,200,000	\$18,326,300,000	\$3,119,100,000
Salaries and Wages	\$38,351,900,000	\$25,334,600,000	\$11,037,300,000	\$1,884,200,000
Jobs	802,000	526,600	228,700	44,800
State and Local Tax Revenues	\$6,534,200,000	\$4,286,000,000	\$1,882,500,000	\$352,600,000
Federal Tax Revenues	\$9,429,300,000	\$6,218,600,000	\$2,723,400,000	\$464,500,000

\*Economic contribution figures are based on spending by the 35.8 million anglers ages 16 and older.

\*\*These percentages sum to more than 100% because anglers can participate in more than one type of fishing.



# ECONOMIC IMPACT\* OF FRESHWATER FISHING BY REGION\*\*

REGION	RETAILS SALES	TOTAL MULTIPLIER EFFECT	VALUE ADDED (GDP)	SALARY & WAGES	JOBS	STATE & LOCAL TAX REVENUES	FEDERAL TAX REVENUES
New England	\$784,400,000	\$1,393,800,000	\$738,700,000	\$498,800,000	10,400	\$76,800,000	\$121,500,000
Mid-Atlantic	\$1,628,900,000	\$2,868,200,000	\$1,559,100,000	\$1,014,900,000	19,900	\$191,300,000	\$245,100,000
East North Central	\$5,456,400,000	\$9,645,900,000	\$5,067,400,000	\$2,949,500,000	75,300	\$633,300,000	\$727,800,000
West North Central	\$4,579,200,000	\$7,173,500,000	\$3,471,400,000	\$2,099,600,000	47,100	\$370,000,000	\$499,700,000
South Atlantic	\$3,094,200,000	\$5,465,600,000	\$2,809,400,000	\$1,741,600,000	41,000	\$282,300,000	\$418,900,000
East South Central	\$1,566,900,000	\$2,512,000,000	\$1,442,600,000	\$646,300,000	19,400	\$117,300,000	\$175,500,000
West South Central	\$5,977,300,000	\$1,064,500,000	\$5,681,800,000	\$3,656,300,000	92,200	\$581,700,000	\$852,600,000
Mountain	\$5,711,700,000	\$10,320,100,000	\$5,247,800,000	\$3,229,000,000	79,200	\$589,500,000	\$777,200,000
Pacific	\$4,407,800,000	\$7,874,300,000	\$3,881,000,000	\$2,369,300,000	48,000	\$474,100,000	\$594,600,000
United States	\$33,264,000,000	\$82,674,400,000	\$41,922,200,000	\$25,334,600,000	526,600	\$4,286,000,000	\$6,218,600,000

# ECONOMIC IMPACT\* OF SALTWATER FISHING BY REGION\*\*

REGION	RETAILS SALES	TOTAL MULTIPLIER EFFECT	VALUE ADDED (GDP)	SALARY & WAGES	JOBS	STATE & LOCAL TAX REVENUES	FEDERAL TAX REVENUES
New England	\$1,020,200,000	\$1,825,600,000	\$991,700,000	\$632,500,000	15,500	\$124,500,000	\$160,100,000
Mid-Atlantic	\$1,229,500,000	\$2,228,200,000	\$1,349,700,000	\$783,800,000	17,200	\$157,800,000	\$201,300,000
South Atlantic	\$6,474,500,000	\$11,874,100,000	\$5,974,400,000	\$3,614,200,000	83,900	\$592,400,000	\$890,400,000
West South Central	\$2,741,300,000	\$5,097,600,000	\$2,554,700,000	\$1,569,000,000	34,200	\$257,700,000	\$376,900,000
Pacific	\$2,192,200,000	\$4,087,100,000	\$2,137,400,000	\$1,340,800,000	28,200	\$247,300,000	\$330,800,000
United States	\$14,046,400,000	\$36,386,200,000	\$18,326,300,000	\$11,037,300,000	228,700	\$1,882,500,000	\$2,723,400,000

# ECONOMIC IMPACT\* OF GREAT LAKES FISHING BY REGION\*\*

REGION	RETAILS SALES	TOTAL MULTIPLIER EFFECT	VALUE ADDED (GDP)	SALARY & WAGES	JOBS	STATE & LOCAL TAX REVENUES	FEDERAL TAX REVENUES
Mid-Atlantic	\$304,600,000	\$548,400,000	\$314,800,000	\$207,400,000	4,300	\$36,700,000	\$49,300,000
East North Central	\$1,931,500,000	\$3,470,900,000	\$1,960,100,000	\$1,120,800,000	34,600	\$282,600,000	\$283,100,000
United States	\$2,340,600,000	\$5,648,700,000	\$3,119,100,000	\$1,884,200,000	44,800	\$352,600,000	\$464,500,000

\*Economic impact and expenditure figures are based on spending by 35.8 million anglers ages 16 and older.  
 \*\*Regional divisions used here are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau.

# U.S. ANGLER

## EXPENDITURES\* BY CATEGORY

U.S. ANGLER EXPENDITURES* BY CATEGORY	ALL ANGLERS	FRESHWATER	SALTWATER	GREAT LAKES
<b>TRAVEL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$21,729,800,000</b>	<b>\$13,516,800,000</b>	<b>\$6,150,600,000</b>	<b>\$2,062,400,000</b>
Food	\$4,759,400,000	\$3,155,700,000	\$1,275,200,000	\$328,500,000
Lodging	\$3,089,600,000	\$1,952,400,000	\$992,000,000	\$145,200,000
Airfare	\$360,100,000	\$169,100,000	\$186,700,000	\$4,300,000
Public transportation	\$182,800,000	\$68,500,000	\$110,000,000	\$4,300,000
Private transportation	\$4,505,700,000	\$3,383,200,000	\$825,100,000	\$297,400,000
Guides	\$925,000,000	\$354,300,000	\$521,200,000	\$49,400,000
Public land use fees	\$305,400,000	\$224,500,000	\$63,200,000	\$17,600,000
Private land use fees	\$494,000,000	\$376,000,000	\$64,200,000	\$53,700,000
Bait (live, cut, prepared)	\$1,517,900,000	\$1,173,300,000	\$283,500,000	\$61,100,000
Ice	\$585,400,000	\$409,000,000	\$141,700,000	\$34,600,000
Heating & cooking fuel	\$159,800,000	\$134,100,000	\$13,400,000	\$12,300,000
Equipment rental	\$308,200,000	\$183,300,000	\$92,400,000	\$32,400,000
Boat fuel	\$1,747,400,000	\$796,100,000	\$666,000,000	\$285,300,000
Boat launching	\$837,200,000	\$464,800,000	\$63,900,000	\$308,600,000
Boat mooring	\$1,952,100,000	\$672,400,000	\$852,100,000	\$427,500,000
<b>FISHING EQUIPMENT EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$7,430,700,000</b>	<b>\$4,453,000,000</b>	<b>\$2,750,400,000</b>	<b>\$158,200,000</b>
Rods, reels & components	\$2,463,500,000	\$1,431,400,000	\$948,500,000	\$61,400,000
Lines & leaders	\$782,800,000	\$511,200,000	\$228,000,000	\$33,600,000
Lures, flies & artificial bait	\$1,078,900,000	\$837,100,000	\$203,500,000	\$22,600,000
Hooks, sinkers, other terminal tackle	\$584,300,000	\$369,200,000	\$199,000,000	\$14,500,000
Tackle boxes	\$296,900,000	\$84,300,000	\$200,800,000	\$8,400,000
Creels, strings, landing nets, etc.	\$146,500,000	\$73,800,000	\$69,700,000	\$3,000,000
Bait buckets, minnow traps, etc.	\$137,400,000	\$77,700,000	\$55,900,000	\$3,700,000
Depth finder, fish finders, other electronics	\$1,092,300,000	\$455,100,000	\$630,400,000	\$6,800,000
Ice fishing equipment	\$181,900,000	\$179,900,000	--	--
Other fishing equipment	\$666,100,000	\$433,300,000	\$214,700,000	\$4,300,000
<b>AUXILIARY PURCHASES FOR FISHING</b>	<b>\$3,413,300,000</b>	<b>\$3,048,000,000</b>	<b>\$333,300,000</b>	<b>\$22,200,000</b>
Camping gear	\$2,834,500,000	\$2,710,000,000	\$119,100,000	\$1,400,000
Binoculars	\$70,300,000	\$39,000,000	\$31,300,000	--
Special fishing clothing, foul weather gear	\$508,500,000	\$299,000,000	\$182,900,000	\$20,800,000
<b>SPECIAL EQUIPMENT PURCHASES FOR FISHING</b>	<b>\$13,544,400,000</b>	<b>\$9,390,600,000</b>	<b>\$4,132,400,000</b>	<b>\$19,700,000</b>
Bass boats	\$2,389,700,000	\$2,380,300,000	\$9,400,000	--
Other motorized boats	\$1,188,500,000	\$874,200,000	\$314,300,000	--
Canoes, non-motorized boats	\$624,800,000	\$265,100,000	\$358,000,000	--
Boat motors, trailers, hitches, etc.	\$2,042,900,000	\$695,100,000	\$1,347,800,000	--
Pick-ups, campers, motor homes, etc.	\$6,404,200,000	\$4,406,100,000	\$1,978,400,000	\$19,700,000
Cabins	\$444,000,000	\$444,000,000	--	--
4x4 and off-road vehicles	\$353,100,000	\$282,700,000	\$70,400,000	--
Other special equipment	\$97,300,000	\$43,200,000	\$54,100,000	--
<b>OTHER MISCELLANEOUS FISHING EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$3,597,300,000</b>	<b>\$2,836,800,000</b>	<b>\$667,600,000</b>	<b>\$71,300,000</b>
Taxidermy & processing	\$6,700,000	\$6,700,000	--	--
Books & magazines	\$180,600,000	\$101,200,000	\$63,300,000	\$15,900,000
Dues and contributions	\$274,700,000	\$144,700,000	\$116,500,000	\$13,400,000
Fishing licenses	\$1,298,100,000	\$1,242,300,000	\$50,800,000	\$5,000,000
Tags, permits and other special licenses	\$1,060,700,000	\$808,100,000	\$252,700,000	--
Land purchased for fishing	\$627,600,000	\$458,900,000	\$115,900,000	\$32,500,000
Land leased for fishing	\$51,700,000	\$31,800,000	\$14,200,000	\$4,400,000
Other misc. fishing expenditures	\$97,300,000	\$43,200,000	\$54,100,000	--
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>49,753,200,000</b>	<b>33,264,000,000</b>	<b>14,046,400,000</b>	<b>2,340,600,000</b>

Southwick Associates. Sportfishing in America: An Economic Force. 2018.

Methodology: Data was obtained from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. Impacts were developed using IMPLAN™ from IMPLAN of Huntersville, NC.

The expenditures reported here may be higher than those reported by the USFWS. This is due to expenditures made by an individual for both fishing and hunting. In such cases, the USFWS reports these separately and not part of their hunting-only estimates. In this report, such expenditures are pro-rated into hunting and fishing portions based on the individual's total days of hunting and fishing, and then assigned to each activity as appropriate. Either approach, the USFWS's or the method used here, is acceptable. Spending information is not available for angler younger than 16.

2018 Edition.

**FOR MORE INSIGHTS, VISIT [ASAFISHING.ORG/FACTS-FIGURES](http://ASAFISHING.ORG/FACTS-FIGURES)**



## **AMERICAN SPORTFISHING ASSOCIATION**

**1001 North Fairfax Street, Suite 501, Alexandria, VA 22314**

**[www.ASAfishing.org](http://www.ASAfishing.org)**

The American Sportfishing Association (ASA) is the sportfishing industry's trade association committed to representing the interests of the sportfishing and boating industries as well as the entire sportfishing community.

We give the industry and anglers a unified voice when emerging laws and policies could significantly affect sportfishing business or sportfishing itself. ASA invests in long-term ventures to ensure the industry will remain strong and prosperous, as well as safeguard and promote the enduring economic, conservation and social values of sportfishing in America.

ASA also gives America's 49 million anglers a voice in policy decisions that affect their ability to sustainably fish on our nation's waterways through Keep America Fishing®, our national angler advocacy campaign.

America's anglers generate more than \$49 billion in retail sales with a \$125 billion impact on the nation's economy creating employment for more than 802,000, people.



**SOUTHWICK**  
ASSOCIATES

### **QUESTIONS AND INQUIRIES**

**Rob Southwick**

*[rob@southwickassociates.com](mailto:rob@southwickassociates.com)*

### **RESEARCH AND AUTHORSHIP**

**Tom Allen, Eric Olds,  
Rob Southwick, Ben Scuderi,  
Lorna Caputo and Doug Howlett**

### **LAYOUT AND DESIGN**

**Kivvit**

### **PRODUCTION**

**Produced for the American Sportfishing Association via Multistate Grant #F17AP00082 awarded by the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2018.**