

ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF ARTIFICIAL REEFS

Manatee County, FL



These are findings from a recent study of economic benefits associated with artificial reef programs in a six-county region of Southwest Florida (Pinellas, Hillsborough, Manatee, Sarasota, Charlotte and Lee counties). The full report, *Economic Impacts of Artificial Reefs for Six Southwest Florida Counties*, TP 178, is available from Florida Sea Grant, flseagrant.org.

At a glance:

- The results from a recent survey of the economic impact of artificial reefs show extensive use of the Manatee County artificial reef system by residents, visitors, private boaters and for-hire clients.
- On a daily basis, an average of more than 540 persons in Manatee County – residents and visitors included – use artificial reefs.
- Fishermen and divers who use Manatee County’s 13 artificial reef sites spend over \$23 million in the county annually.
- Survey results document that artificial reefs help support the for-hire fishing sector (guides, charter and party boats) with clients spending nearly \$7 million on artificial reef-related trips.
- Visitors bring new money into the local economy (\$11.10 million), accounting for almost half of artificial reef expenditures.
- Expenditures on artificial reef-related activities generate over \$19 million in net economic impacts annually that support 234 full- and part-time jobs.
- Manatee County government dedicates approximately \$50,000 annually for artificial reef construction projects. Supplemental grant funding is provided by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission statewide artificial reef program and the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program.
- With 43 recreational parks, 5 area marinas with over 500 total slips, and 27 miles of white sand beaches, Manatee County is an important tourist destination on Florida’s West Coast.

Public Support for Artificial Reefs

In general, what is your opinion regarding the use of public funds to provide and maintain artificial reefs for recreation in Florida’s waters?

	Reef Users	Non Reef Users
Support	93%	Support 61%
Neutral	6%	Neutral 32%
Oppose	1%	Oppose 7%

Annual Use of Artificial Reefs

58,842
Boat Days

197,522
Person Days

Annual Artificial Reef Related Expenditures By Users

\$23.18
Million

\$12.08
Million
(residents)

\$11.10
Million
(non-residents)

-- OR --

\$16.24
Million
(private boaters)

\$6.93
Million
(guide, party, charter clients)

Annual Economic Impacts

Economic Output **\$19.47**
Million

Total Income **\$10.58**
Million

Business Taxes **\$1.49**
Million

Full/Part-time Jobs **234**

