

# ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF ARTIFICIAL REEFS

## Southwest Florida



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 Southwest Florida artificial reef systems by residents, visitors, private boaters and for-hire clients.
- On a daily basis, an average of more than 5,600 persons in Southwest Florida – residents and visitors included – use artificial reefs.
- Fishermen and divers who use Southwest Florida’s artificial reefs sites spend over \$253 million in the region annually.
- Survey results document that artificial reefs help support the for-hire fishing sector (guides, charter and party boats) with clients spending nearly \$90 million on artificial reef-related trips.
- Expenditures on artificial reef-related activities generated almost \$227 million in economic outputs that supported over 2,500 full- and part-time jobs.
- Visitors bring new money into local economies (\$117.58 million), accounting for almost half of artificial reef expenditures.

### 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?

County	Non-Reef Users			Reef Users		
	Oppose	Neutral	Support	Oppose	Neutral	Support
Pinellas	3%	26%	71%	2%	9%	89%
Hillsborough	3%	31%	66%	5%	5%	90%
Manatee	7%	32%	61%	1%	6%	93%
Sarasota	5%	27%	68%	1%	4%	95%
Charlotte	7%	30%	63%	0%	17%	83%
Lee	7%	24%	69%	5%	9%	86%

### Annual Use of Artificial Reefs

**614,110**  
Boat Days

**2,070,592**  
Person Days

### Annual Artificial Reef Related Expenditures By Users

**\$253.35**  
Million

**\$135.77**  
Million  
(residents)

**\$117.58**  
Million  
(non-residents)

-- OR --

**\$163.61**  
Million  
(private boaters)

**\$89.74**  
Million  
(guide, party, charter clients)

### Annual Economic Impacts

**Economic Output** **\$226.93**  
Million

**Total Income** **\$121.72**  
Million

**Business Taxes** **\$16.60**  
Million

**Full/Part-time Jobs** **2,595**



The study was conducted by Florida Sea Grant and University of Florida researchers with funding provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Program through a grant to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; the West Coast Inland Navigation District; and by participating counties. Information was collected using a variety of survey techniques that asked private boater and for-hire operators and clients about their artificial reef use during 2009. For more information, contact: Bob Swett, Florida Sea Grant Extension, (352) 392-6233, rswett@ufl.edu. Reviewed October 2017. SGEF 186