

ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF ARTIFICIAL REEFS

Pinellas 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 Pinellas County artificial reef system by residents, visitors, private boaters and for-hire clients.
- On a daily basis, an average of more than 1800 persons in Pinellas County – residents and visitors included – use artificial reefs.
- Fishermen and divers who use Pinellas County's 12 artificial reef sites spend more than \$79 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 \$31 million on artificial reef-related trips.
- Visitors bring new money into the local economy (\$36.40 million), accounting for more than 40% of artificial reef expenditures.
- Expenditures on artificial reef-related activities generate nearly \$76 million in net economic impacts annually that support 858 full- and part-time jobs.
- Pinellas County budgets \$60,000 annually for artificial reef-related activities. Supplemental funds are provided by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission statewide artificial reef program.
- With 588 miles of coastline, 35 miles of white sand beaches, numerous and productive ramps and piers, and the state's largest city marina, Pinellas 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	89%	Support 71%
Neutral	9%	Neutral 26%
Oppose	2%	Oppose 3%

Annual Use of Artificial Reefs

188,249
Boat Days

666,857
Person Days

Annual Artificial Reef Related Expenditures By Users

\$79.37
Million

\$42.98
Million
(residents)

\$36.40
Million
(non-residents)

-- OR --

\$48.48
Million
(private boaters)

\$30.89
Million
(guide, party, charter clients)

Annual Economic Impacts

Economic Output **\$75.84**
Million

Total Income **\$39.59**
Million

Business Taxes **\$5.34**
Million

Full/Part-time Jobs **858**



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: John Stevely, Pinellas County Sea Grant Extension, (941) 722-4524, jsmarine@ufl.edu. SGEF 183