



## Marine Recreational Fishing's Economic Impact Rivals Commercial Sector

**Recreational fishing is an economic powerhouse despite overall lower impact on fisheries**

A report released last year by the American Sportfishing Association makes a powerful case that from an economic perspective, recreational fishing is just as important as commercial fishing, despite a much lower overall impact on the resource. According to the report, anglers landed just two percent of the total saltwater landings compared to ninety-eight percent caught by the commercial fishing industry.

This first-of-its-kind analysis - Comparing NOAA's Recreational and Commercial Fishing Economic Data, May 2013 - provides an apples-to-apples comparison of recreational and commercial marine fishing from an economic perspective using NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Services (NOAA Fisheries) 2011 economic data. The report was produced for ASA by Southwick Associates.

"It's something we've suspected for some time, but NOAA's own data clearly shows that recreational saltwater fishing needs to be held in the same regard as commercial fishing," said ASA President and CEO Mike Nussman. "The current federal saltwater fisheries management system has historically focused the vast majority of its resources on the commercial sector, when recreational fishing is found to have just as significant an economic impact on jobs and the nation's economy."

Among the findings are:

- Anglers landed just two percent of the total saltwater finfish landings compared to ninety-eight percent caught by the commercial fishing industry.

- **Saltwater landings by anglers contributed three times more** to the national gross domestic product (GDP, or value-added) than commercial landings.

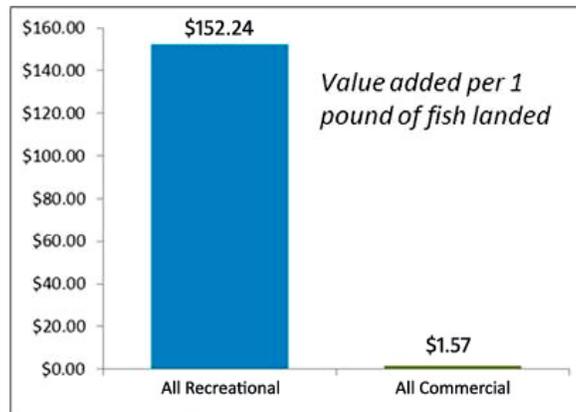
- The recreational sector added \$152.24 in value-added, or

GDP, for one pound of fish landed, compared to the commercial sector's \$1.57 for a single pound of fish.

- Within the jobs market, **the recreational sector made up fifty-four percent of all jobs**, both recreational and commercial. This amounts to 455,000 recreational jobs compared to 381,000 on the commercial side.

- **For every 100,000 pounds landed there were 210 recreational fishing jobs but only 4.5 jobs in the commercial fishing industry.**

**Economic Impact of Saltwater Landings in the United States, 2011**



Data Source: Fisheries Economics of the United States 2011, NOAA Fisheries. Produced for the American Sportfishing Association by Southwick Associates.

The Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA), the primary law governing marine fisheries management in the U.S., was originally passed in 1976 and has been reauthorized several times since. While the MSA has made significant strides to eliminate non-domestic fishing in U.S. waters and end overfishing, many in the recreational fishing community have argued that the law is written primarily to manage commercial fishing and does not adequately acknowledge or respond to the needs of recreational fishing.

"For decades federal management of recreational fishing has been like trying to fit a square peg into a round hole," said Nussman. "Perhaps the MSA was written to focus on the commercial sector because that's where 98 percent of the overall harvest is taken. But when you consider that the economic impacts of the two sectors are similar, it makes a strong case for revamping the MSA to better meet the needs of the recreational fishing community."

The MSA expired at the end of fiscal year 2013. Nussman concluded, "ASA and our partners in the recreational fishing community look forward to working with Congress to develop reasonable legislative solutions that will produce a federal fisheries management system that finally works for, not against, recreational fishing."