



Hunting and Angling – An Economic Harvest for the United States

By Thomas Baumeister

If hunters and anglers formed a corporation, it would rank number 11 among the nation's largest companies. In the United States, 38 million sportsmen and women, age 16 and older spent more than \$70 billion in 2001 in their pursuits. This is according to a new report on the economic impacts of sportsmen and women published by the National Shooting Sports Foundation, an organization promoting the interests of the firearm and shooting sports industry, and the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, a group representing the interests of sportsmen to Congress.

The economic comparisons in the report show:

- More jobs are supported by sportsmen and women nationwide than the number of people employed by Wal-Mart—the country's largest corporation.
- If all sportsmen and women had voted in the 2000 presidential election, they would have equaled 36 percent of the entire vote.
- Sportsmen and women could fill every NFL and Major League Baseball stadium as well as every NASCAR track six times over.
- Hunters spend as much on gear each year as Americans spend on Nike shoes and apparel.
- Five million more Americans fish than golf.
- More jobs are supported by anglers than the number of people employed by GM, Ford, and Exxon-Mobil combined.
- Sportfishing generates nine times more revenue than commercial fishing.
- Sportsmen and women contribute \$54 every second to conservation, \$3,240 every minute, \$194,400 every hour, and \$4.7 million every day, adding up to a \$1.7 billion contribution every year.
- Sportsmen and women's dollars make up 65 percent of all state fish and wildlife agency budgets through licenses sales and excise taxes on gear, which helps protect our natural environment and fish and wildlife for the enjoyment of all Americans.

The report, *American Sportsmen: Take and Closer Look*, draws on data from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation to compare hunters and anglers impact on the economy with that of other industries.

By any measure, these statistics are impressive. Hunters and anglers are a national economic powerhouse and very big business in the U.S.A. Sportsmen and women support thousands of jobs in small businesses and communities scattered across America. They buy food, gas, outdoor gear, hunting gear, four-wheel drive vehicles, airline tickets, hotel and motel rooms, rent cars... the list goes on and on.

Next time you admire a hunter's trophy buck or an angler's catch, think also about the economic benefit to our communities large and small, as well as the contribution to conservation these sportsmen and women are making. All in all, it is a pretty impressive harvest for the country.