

Recreational Boating is Big Business

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Trip related expenditures

- ▶ **\$173 million** associated with trips to and in regions bordering the Great Lakes and Finger Lakes
- ▶ **\$53 million** associated with trips to and in the Hudson River area
- ▶ **\$162 million** associated with trips to and in the New York City/Long Island Metropolitan Area

Non trip related expenditures

- ▶ **\$661 million** associated with the economic regions bordering the Great Lakes and Finger Lakes
- ▶ **\$194 million** associated with the Hudson River region
- ▶ **\$907 million** associated with the New York City/Long Island Metropolitan Area

Total economic impact by region

- ▶ **\$600 million** associated with the economic regions bordering the Great Lakes and Finger Lakes
- ▶ **\$184 million** associated with the Hudson River region
- ▶ **\$843 million** associated with the New York City/Long Island Metropolitan Area

Boating in New York means business – big business. A New York Sea Grant-funded study conducted by Cornell researchers found that the state’s recreational boaters spent a whopping \$2.4 billion in 2003 despite the poor summer weather. The study was the first attempt to directly measure expenditures related to recreational boating and their impact on the state’s economy. Using questionnaires sent to a sample of New York’s half a million registered boaters, researchers estimate that in 2003, recreational boating had a total statewide economic impact of \$1.8 billion, accounted for approximately 18,700 jobs, and contributed \$728 million to labor income.

Researchers Nancy Connelly, Tommy Brown and David Kay of Cornell University’s Department of Natural Resources found that for boating trip related expenditures such as launching fees, lodging, food, and gas, boaters spent over \$431 million statewide. The survey also tabulated how much boaters spent on boat purchases, equipment, boat repair, insurance, and annual fees associated with the use of marinas and yacht clubs. Overall in 2003, almost \$2 billion was spent statewide on these non-trip related expenses. Of this figure, \$1.2 billion was for boat purchases.

“With these research findings, it is clear that recreational boating is big business and an important economic generator for the people of New York State,” said Jack Mattice, New York Sea Grant Director. The intent of the study was not only to quantify the impact of boating, but also to provide information that will help managers, planners, and other decision makers make more informed decisions regarding coastal resource use and development.

As one of the nation’s major boating states, boating is a key recreational industry in virtually all areas of New York, especially the marine waters, Hudson River, Great Lakes, St. Lawrence River, the Finger Lakes, and



Lake Champlain. The economic data are being used to develop tools that will allow managers to better evaluate the impact of boating on a regional scale.

The report broke out expenditure and economic impact figures by boating region and major water body.

The study was conducted with the aid of an advisory panel of agency and boating industry experts from around the state. The estimates were based on a mail survey of 6,000 boaters registered in New York State in 2003. These figures may be conservative for the marine region since data indicate boating activity may have been suppressed due to the weather that year. In 2003, June was one of the wettest months on record and the threat of Hurricane Isabel striking New York’s marine coast in September resulted in many people pulling their boats early, further shortening the season. In addition, the figures do not include spending by transient boaters and others who are not registered in the state. Additional expenditures are most likely made in water bodies bordering other states, especially around Long Island and New York City. Non-motorized boaters, such as kayaks, canoes and small sailboats, are also likely to have made economic contributions throughout the state, but were not included in the study since they are not registered by the state.

You can download a copy of the report from New York Sea Grant’s website at <http://www.seagrantsunysb.edu/CoastalGeo/BoatingReport-FINAL.pdf> or contact Jay Tanski at (631) 632-8730 or email jjt3@cornell.edu

Submitted by New York Sea Grant