

ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF ARTIFICIAL REEFS

Sarasota 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 the survey show extensive use of the Sarasota County artificial reef system by residents, visitors, private boaters and for-hire clients.
- On a daily basis, an average of more than 600 persons in Sarasota County – residents and visitors included – use artificial reefs.
- Fishermen and divers who use Sarasota County’s 39 artificial reef sites spend nearly \$33 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 \$13.8 million on artificial reef-related trips.
- Visitors bring new money into the local economy (\$15.71 million), accounting for almost half of artificial reef expenditures.
- Expenditures on artificial reef-related activities generate over \$30 million in net economic impacts annually that support 338 full- and part-time jobs.
- Sarasota County government receives approximately \$60,000 annually in artificial reef construction grants. Supplemental funds are provided by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission statewide artificial reef program, the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program and donations of time and material from artificial reef manufacturing companies.
- With more than 35 marinas, the world-renowned white sand beaches of Siesta Key, and more than 109,000 acres of publicly-owned parks and conservation lands, Sarasota 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	95%	68%
Neutral	4%	27%
Oppose	1%	5%

Annual Use of Artificial Reefs

68,886
Boat Days

226,065
Person Days

Annual Artificial Reef Related Expenditures By Users

\$32.82
Million

\$17.11
Million
(residents)

\$15.71
Million
(non-residents)

-- OR --

\$19.02
Million
(private boaters)

\$13.80
Million
(guide, party, charter clients)

Annual Economic Impacts

Economic Output **\$30.27**
Million

Total Income **\$16.64**
Million

Business Taxes **\$2.26**
Million

Full/Part-time Jobs **338**

