

# ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF ARTIFICIAL REEFS

## Charlotte 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 Charlotte County artificial reef system by residents, visitors, private boaters and for-hire clients.
- On a daily basis, an average of nearly 700 persons in Charlotte County – residents and visitors included – use artificial reefs.
- Fishermen and divers who launch from Charlotte County to use artificial reef sites spend almost \$28 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 \$7 million on artificial reef-related trips.
- Visitors bring new money into the local economy (\$14.75 million), accounting for more than half of artificial reef expenditures.
- Expenditures on artificial reef-related activities generate nearly \$23 million in net economic impacts annually that support 306 full- and part-time jobs.
- Charlotte County government’s artificial reef development activities rely entirely on annual grant funding provided by Local Boating Improvement Funds. Supplemental construction funds are provided by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission statewide artificial reef program and other grant programs.
- With over 830 miles of shoreline, including mangrove-lined aquatic preserves, river passages and white sand beaches, and 270 square miles of protected marine estuary, Charlotte County possesses some of the most pristine and productive coastal areas in the state.

### 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	83%	63%
Neutral	17%	30%
Oppose	0%	7%

### Annual Use of Artificial Reefs

**81,549**  
Boat Days

**270,036**  
Person Days

### Annual Artificial Reef Related Expenditures By Users

**\$27.96**  
Million

**\$13.21**  
Million  
(residents)

**\$14.75**  
Million  
(non-residents)

-- OR --

**\$21.21**  
Million  
(private boaters)

**\$6.75**  
Million  
(guide, party, charter clients)

### Annual Economic Impacts

**Economic Output** **\$22.65**  
Million

**Total Income** **\$11.82**  
Million

**Business Taxes** **\$1.66**  
Million

**Full/Part-time Jobs** **306**

