

Fisheries' recreation and conservation activities are huge economic drivers for nation.

The fisheries program of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in association with state agencies and other conservation organizations, contributes \$3.6 billion to the nation's economy and supports 68,000 jobs across the country, according to a new report issued by the agency.

"The report confirms once again that fishing, hunting and other outdoor recreational activities are an economic engine for our country," said Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar. "When we invest in restoring fish and wildlife habitat and creating opportunities for people to enjoy outdoor recreation, we are investing in economic growth and jobs for the American people."

Overall, hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation contribute an estimated \$730 billion to the U.S. economy each year, Salazar noted. One in 20 U.S. jobs are in the recreation economy—more than there are doctors, lawyers, or teachers.

The report, *Conserving America's Fisheries, An Assessment of Economic Contributions from Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Conservation*, shows that each dollar invested in the Service's Fisheries Program, combined with its partners, generates about \$28 in economic contributions and value.

The economic contributions generated are evidenced at sporting goods stores, marinas, guides and outfitter services, boat dealerships, bait shops, gas stations, cafes, hotels, and many other enterprises.

"Since 1871, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fisheries Program has been a leader in managing species, conserving habitat and sustaining the biological health of America's aquatic resources," said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe. "These resources are inextricably tied to the health and wealth of our nation. These benefits are ecological, scientific, aesthetic, recreational, commercial, subsistence, social, cultural – and economic in nature."

The report—the first time that service economists have analyzed the economic contributions of the nation's fisheries programs—finds that a total of 68,000 American jobs are associated, directly or indirectly, with the fisheries conservation programs and projects.

The report also shows the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Fish Hatchery System alone generates \$900 million in industrial output and \$550 million in retail sales. National Fish Hatchery programs generate 8,000 jobs and \$256 million in salaries and wages.

Meanwhile, the National Fish Passage Program works with partners to reopen an average of 890 miles of river habitat annually, which has a economic value of \$483 million and supports 11,000 jobs. That is more than \$542,000 in economic benefit per stream mile restored.

The service's fisheries program plays a vital role in conserving America's fisheries, along with key partners from states, tribes, federal agencies, other service programs, and private interests.

The fisheries program consists of almost 800 employees nationwide, located in 65 Fish and Wildlife Conservation Offices, 70 national fish hatcheries, nine fish health centers, seven fish technology centers and a historic national fish hatchery and archives.

The program supports the only federal fish hatchery system, with extensive experience culturing more than 100 different aquatic species.

These employees and facilities provide a network that is unique in its broad on-the-ground geographic coverage, its array of technical and managerial capabilities, and its ability to work

across political boundaries and embrace a national perspective.