

Nature Economy Values of Freshwater Recreation in NH

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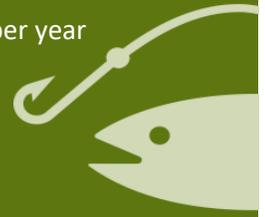
Introduction

New Hampshire's freshwater resources provide numerous values to both residents and visitors. New Hampshire has over 1,000 Lakes and 10,000 miles of rivers and streams that are part of New Hampshire's impressive "nature economy." Tourism is a large part of New Hampshire's economy and our water resources are one of the main attractions that bring visitors to our State. In 2017, visitors to NH spent over \$5 billion dollars at New Hampshire destinations. Recreation is also a part of the high quality of life residents of NH enjoy. In the following analysis, that was completed as part of larger study on the values and costs of New Hampshire's water resources with NH Lives on Water, we show select economic benefit of three types of freshwater recreation: swimming, boating, and fishing.



Key Findings:

- The economic impact of recreational fishing in New Hampshire is approximately \$215 million dollars per year
- The economic impact of visitors who came to swim in New Hampshire's freshwater state parks during the summer of 2017 is approximately \$40 million dollars
- The economic impact of non-NH registered boaters visiting New Hampshire in 2017 is estimated at over \$100 million dollars



The Economic Impact of Recreational Fishing in New Hampshire

According to the most recently available data, 228,000 people spent 4.37 million days fishing in New Hampshire and spent \$208.5 million on trip and equipment related expenditures. The majority of these anglers (over 90%) were fishing in New Hampshire's freshwater. These figures include both residents and nonresidents .

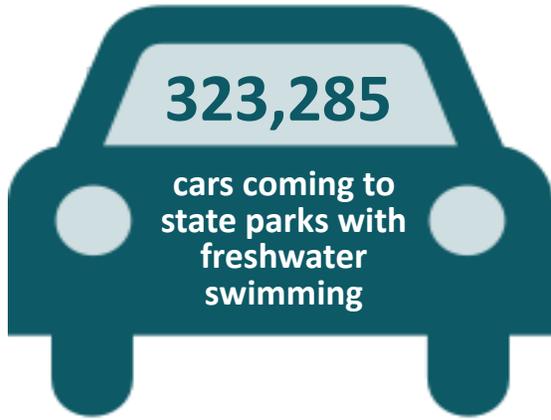
In addition to the spending by visitors and residents, the State also collects revenue in the form of fishing licenses. The State of NH collected over \$6.2 million dollars in fishing license revenue in 2017.



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Economic Impacts of Swimming by Visitors to New Hampshire's Freshwater State Parks



New Hampshire's state parks provide access to freshwater resources, especially for swimming. We were able to obtain a data set of visitors to freshwater state parks in New Hampshire for June, July, and August 2017 from the NH Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Division of Parks and Recreation that showed a total of 323,285 cars coming to state parks with freshwater swimming. In order to estimate the total number of people visiting the parks from out of state, we used a recent "license plate survey" that showed an average of three people visit per car and that 45% of cars are from out of state. Thus, we calculated 436,434 out of state visitor days at state parks with freshwater swimming. Using a common economic impact modeling tool, IMPLAN, we calculate an output of \$41 million dollars and 384 jobs results from that estimate.

Economic Impact of Non-NH Registered Boaters in New Hampshire

19,945 non-New Hampshire boats were registered in the state in 2017. This does not count smaller watercraft, under 12 feet. National Marine Manufacturers' data suggests that boat owners spend an average of 28 days per year on the water. This suggests 558,460 boating days. Finally, we use the research supported assumption that an average of two people are on a boat at any one time, resulting in a total of 1,116,920 visitor days. This is a conservative estimate and does not capture any boating for crafts under the size of 12 feet nor does it include paddlecraft. Data does not exist on these types of boats in the State. Additionally, not all non-NH boaters register their boats with New Hampshire's Department of Motor Vehicles.

Using the State's spending profile for overnight tourist visits and 1.16 million visitor days, we calculated an economic impact of \$104 million dollars and almost 1,000 jobs.

Strengthening Economy Through Nature

UNH Extension's Community & Economic Development Team aims to help communities connect natural assets with community goals to create vibrant economies and high quality of life for all. This can be in the form of assisting communities in identifying and utilizing their natural capital, such as connecting their downtowns with trails and leveraging green infrastructure to reduce or maintain costs of community services.



For more Nature Economy news and programs, please visit:

<https://extension.unh.edu/programs/nature-economy>

Opportunities for Future Research

New Hampshire's water based economy depends on clean and accessible water resources. We are grateful for the existing data that was used in this research. We did learn that there were some data gaps, especially around the types of recreation New Hampshire residents and visitors participate in as well as how they spend their money on recreation and associated services.

Sources & Resources

2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, & Wildlife-Associated Recreation. US Fish & Wildlife Service & US Census Bureau

2017 NH Fishing License Sales. Jason Smith

2014 NH Water & Watersheds Survey. Shannon Rogers & Jill Farrell

NH Department of Safety Division of Motor Vehicles

NH Travel and Tourism

2019 What Is Our Water Worth and What Does Our Water Cost? (DRAFT Report). Alison Watts & Shannon Rogers.

For more information on the NH Lives on Water Partnership, please contact Tom O'Brien tobrien@nhlakes.org

For more information on our programming and technical assistance in this area, please contact Shannon Rogers, Nature Based Economic Development Specialist, shannon.rogers@unh.edu