

To All Concerned.

I feel that you should be made aware of some FACTS.

Did You Know...

..... That Jacksonville alone has more CRITICAL habitat within its city limits than any other city in North America.

.....That Jacksonville has approximately 46,000 acres of salt marsh, tidal zones and estuaries within its city limits.

.....That the salt marshes rank among the least disturbed on the southern Atlantic Coast.

.....That is important because 80% of ALL offshore species, off northern Florida, depend on estuaries and the surrounding salt marshes for growth, habitat or sustenance.

.....That more than 225 species of fish, and crustaceans use this area as a nursery.

.....That Florida is known as the "Sport Fishing Capital Of the World"

.....That one out of twelve houses in Florida have a Boat 16 foot or larger.

.....That Florida has 2,276 Miles of tidal shorelines.

.....That Florida is ranked FIRST in the nation in the number of adult anglers, with California second and Texas third.

..... That Florida has over 700 certified world record catches registered with the International Game Fish Association.

.....That Florida is ranked NUMBER ONE in boat sales with Michigan second and Texas third Minnesota fourth and California fifth.

.....The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration says in a report released **Monday, January 13, 2009**. That **Florida** makes up more than **\$16 Billion** of the total economic impact of recreational fishing in the United States.

(*From the U.S. Department of Agruculture the 2005 TOTAL Wheat production was worth \$5.9 Billion dollars.*) In other words, Florida fishing alone is worth MORE to the Gross National Product, than all the Wheat producing states!

..... The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration says in a report released Monday that saltwater anglers spent \$5.8 billion nationwide on expenses related to their fishing trips, such as ice and bait. Another \$25.6 billion was spent on fishing equipment.

Florida anglers led the nation by spending more than \$16 billion. Texas fishermen came in second with just over \$3 billion spent, followed by California, Louisiana and North Carolina.

The report says the money spent nationally supported nearly 534,000 jobs.

..... That Red Drum (Redfish) provide 8.3 million days of fishing fun in Florida per year.

..... That if sport fishing were a "Corporation" it would rank 13th in the Forbes

500 list of America's largest businesses in terms of revenue, larger than Texaco or DuPont.

.....There are more than 80,000 jobs in Florida related to recreational fishing.

Florida Sport Fishing Magazine - March / April 2007

..... There are over 90,000 Boats registered in St. Johns County! (I tried to get Duval Co. Figures but they were too busy to look it up

Here is another fact that you should take note of. In the State of Florida,
Anglers outnumber Golfers by two to one!

The News gives Golf the lions share of news time for the major tournaments like the TPC, with news anchors out there reporting "Live from....."

The city provides buses to transport people from parking to the TPC tournament.

I know, you are going to say that they bring in lots of money to the area.

FISHING MAKES WHAT THEY BRING IN LOOK P U N Y !

The AT&T Greater Jax Kingfishing tournament (One of the largest fishing tournaments in the world!) has between 600 and 800 boats entered in the general tournament. (There is also a Junior Angler tournament.) Are there 900 golfers entered in the "Players"? I don't think so. On top of that each boat has an average of 4 fishermen per boat, and they all have family's that come stay in motels, eat at restaurants, and shop locally. For the year, 2006, There were over 35,000 people that visited the Sisters Creek Boat Ramp during The AT&T Greater Jax Kingfishing Tournament.

The economic impact for the Jacksonville area from 1 (one) AT&T Greater Jax Kingfishing Tournament, 2008 was found to be approximately \$14.8 Million Dollars!

The Jacksonville Offshore Sports Fishing Club puts on a tournament in February each year called the "El Cheapo". It is, again, the worlds largest Sheepshead fishing tournament. It has over 300 boats every year, and has fishermen coming from New York, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, North Carolina, Mississippi, and Tampa, Key West, Orlando, Tallahassee and all over Florida, all spending money locally!

From the "Shallow Water Angler" fishing magazine (April / May 2008):

In 2006, FLORIDA was the number # 1 state in attracting the highest number of NON-RESIDENT anglers. Just think how big our share could be if local government actually paid attention to and supported sportfishing.

The area from Fernandina Island to Cape Canaveral represents 70% of ALL recreational fishermen on the entire Atlantic Coast of the US!

Sport fishing really delivers, consider that the nearly 1 million jobs

supported by recreational anglers alone are three times the total number of people working for the United Parcel Service. Every time you see a UPS truck, think the next three cars are FISHERMEN, spending money locally!

If you converted all the money spent by SPORT anglers, into dollar bills, and placed them end to end, that money trail would reach to the moon and back NINE times.

The amount of **federal tax revenues** generated by angler spending in 2006 was \$8.9 Billion

While many industries are struggling, or disappearing altogether, the average amount that anglers spent on fishing tackle increased 16% from 2001 to 2006.

According to the American Sports Fishing Association, Florida leads the nation in impact from recreational fishing. What's more, if you take NE Florida's share of that, (Gorga Border to St. Augustine, but not south of St. Augustine.) you come up with about \$600 million in annual economic impact. That number is about 600 times the best estimates for economic impact related to Jacksonville's hosting the Superbowl! That is \$600 Million to the local economy **EACH AND EVERY YEAR**

I would argue this makes a compelling case for increasing boating access to the St. Johns and Ocean. It also makes a very compelling case for the local Governments to support sport fishing, and fight the bad "Data" that the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council is using to try and shut down sport fishing. The SAFMC has admitted that off Jacksonville the Red Shapper fishery is increasing. The reason for that is that the JOSFC has, over the last 50 years, created over 250 artificial reefs, increasing the biomass to support growing fish populations. From the Caroliana's and Georgia, they have created 16, Sixteen reefs, and declared it was not working, they need to shut down fishing They are wrong, and we have proven it.

Local government need to start catering to the fishermen and women of the area, instead of saying: "They don't count for much, go ahead and take that money for the boat ramp and use it for "whatever" project."

Thank you,
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