**Money on the water: Florida's recreational boating business by the numbers**

Recreational boating supports nearly 110,000 jobs in Florida and more than 7,100 businesses

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The 2024 Miami International Boat Show kicked off Wednesday with tens of thousands expected to attend.

The [Miami International Boat Show](https://www.nbcmiami.com/news/local/2024-miami-international-boat-show-kicks-off-with-tens-of-thousands-expected-to-attend/3234029/) is wrapping up this weekend, as tens of thousands of people have been checking out the latest and greatest nautical offerings.

The boat show means big business for South Florida, with organizers estimating an economic impact of more than $1.3 billion.

The boat show brings in big bucks one week out of the year, but the boating industry as a whole is a major money generator for the entire state of Florida.

**Florida No. 1**

According to the National Marine Manufacturers Association, Florida is the top state in the country when it comes to recreational boating economic impact.

The association estimates an annual economic impact of $31.3 billion in Florida from recreational boating, a good chunk of the estimated $230.3 billion impact across the U.S.

For perspective, the next closest state, California, has an annual economic impact of $17.3 billion.

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An estimated $5.4 billion is spent in Florida annually on new boats, engines, trailers and accessories, the association said.

Recreational boating supports nearly 110,000 jobs in Florida and more than 7,100 businesses, according to the NMMA.

Florida also boasts more than 1,004,000 registered boats.

**Recent Growth and the Future**

Industry insiders say recreational boating popularity soared during the COVID-19 pandemic as Americans prioritized being outdoors and spending time with family and friends.

A 2023 NMMA study said recreational boating saw a 36% increase in annual economic activity from 2018.

“Recreational boating and fishing are a major economic engine in the U.S. and the latest economic analysis underscores the extraordinary growth and demand our industry has experienced coming out of the pandemic,” said Frank Hugelmeyer, NMMA president. “The profound impact the past few years have had on our industry cannot be denied as we’ve seen Americans seek out boating and fishing in record numbers, driving significant economic output and supporting tens of thousands of small businesses and nearly a million jobs.”

Although new powerboat retail sales were expected to be down slightly in the past year, manufacturers are hoping new technologies ranging from hydrogen-fueled marine engines to boats powered fully by sustainable marine fuels can help the industry.

With some 1,350 miles of coastline, Florida will likely continue to lead te nation when it comes to recreational boating for a long time.