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NEW REPORT SHOWS ECONOMIC VALUE OF RECREATIONAL FISHING IN CALIFORNIA

**ANGLERS IN CALIFORNIA SPEND OVER \$2 BILLION ANNUALLY ON
FISHING-RELATED EXPENSES; REPORT COVERS N. CAL, S. CAL,
CENTRAL VALLEY AND DELTA REGION**

Findings indicate that healthy aquatic ecosystems are important to the economic strength of communities, particularly those relying on recreational activities and tourism

San Francisco, CA – A report released today describes the economic impact of recreational fishing in California, detailing specific examples throughout the state. The report finds that anglers in California generate billions of dollars in direct and indirect revenue in the state, which supplies an important economic boost, particularly for rural communities. The report also recommends that a high priority be given to habitat protection and maintenance, which would increase present and future economic benefits to the state's economy.

The report was conducted by Dr. Carolyn Alkire of Environmental Economics and Policy Consulting and was released by the advocacy group California Trout to develop a deeper understanding of the factors that determine fishing's economic effects, expanding the study of this important relationship for the benefit of decision-makers and policy-makers in the state.

“We knew that fishing was important to California's economy, but now we know just how important,” said Brian Stranko, CEO of California Trout. “The findings of this report make it abundantly clear that people all over the state depend on the financial infusion caused by recreational fishing, and that this beneficial effect could be increased even further by better protecting and maintaining the streams and surrounding habitats that make fishing possible. Also, by encouraging young people to get involved in fishing, the people of California can maximize the long-term value of this healthy, sustainable activity.”

Research for the report identified recent studies of inland fisheries and direct trip-related expenditures—fishing gear, bait, boats, parking fees, license fees, food, lodging, gas, etc.—and their local economic impacts. It was found that direct spending by anglers in the state on fishing-related items and activities come to well over \$2 billion each year.

The report notes that tourism is one of California's largest and fastest-growing industries, and that it helps diversify and stabilize rural economies. Efforts are growing nationwide to promote recreational fishing and other types of tourism in the name of economic development, and California is especially well-positioned to take advantage of this growing source of revenue. After its beaches, California's rivers draw more users than any other location, with fishing the most popular of all river recreational uses.

Regional analysis makes up a major component of the report, and specific findings for each region are described and put into the larger context of the state's recreational economy. The regions were divided into Northern, Central, and Southern, and the revenues are detailed for fishing activity in each of these. Additionally, the potential for additional value to be generated by habitat restoration is described, for example:

- If salmon populations were increased in the Klamath River, each additional fish caught by anglers would be worth \$200 to the economy. Approximately every 1,000 fish caught recreationally generates four jobs in the area.
- In the Ventura River, the population of steelhead has been reduced to fewer than 200 from an historical run of at least 4,000 adult fish per year. One study showed that a single steelhead may be worth \$75 to \$300 in increased sport fishing revenues. Increasing the sport catch in the Ventura River by 2,000 adult fish could generate as much as \$600,000 per year for local businesses.
- In the Central Valley, potential economic benefits of increased recreational catch of chinook and coho salmon and steelhead were estimated to generate an average expenditure per fish of \$140.
- Fish populations in the Eel River have declined substantially over the last 100 years as Potter Valley Project dams have blocked salmon and steelhead habitat on the river. The Department of Fish and Game estimates that 75 miles of spawning habitat in the Upper Eel River and its tributaries is blocked by Scott Dam alone, resulting in the loss of 3,000 steelhead trout and 2,500 chinook salmon.
- In a study estimating the impact of salmon from Clear Creek caught recreationally along the Sacramento River and in the ocean, it was found that recreational fishing results in \$17.3 million total spending, and a total economic impact of \$32 million, based on both direct and indirect spending.
- At the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge in north central California, over \$2 million is generated in recreational expenditures, which in turn leads to over \$350,000 of local tax revenues.

The report recommends that increased state funding be targeted to activities that sustain and restore fisheries and habitats for their ecological values and benefits to people. It states that restoration of compromised fisheries would result in improved economic opportunities from fishing and other water-based recreation, as well as other benefits such as ecosystem health and biodiversity.

About California Trout: Founded in 1971, California Trout was the first statewide conservation group to focus on securing protections for California's unparalleled wild and native trout diversity. Working with local communities, business, partners and government agencies, California Trout employs conservation science, education, and advocacy to craft effective solutions for California's water resources and fisheries. Among its many current initiatives, California Trout is now leading the effort to save the official state fish, which is the California golden trout.

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