

Title: **Wtp for Artificial Reefs in Florida By Residents, Boat Owners, and the for-Hire Sector**

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Abstract: Many of the coastal counties in Florida have active artificial reef deployment and monitoring programs. These reef systems have been shown to be an important destination for the marine recreational boating industry, as well as for the for-hire commercial sector (i.e., six-pack charter vessels, guide boats, party/head boats, and dive charters). These reefs are used for both fishing and diving. A series of surveys were sent to private boat owners (approx. 20,000), for-hire business owners (approx. 900), and for-hire patrons (approx. 6.8 million email invitations to an online survey) on their artificial reef use in Southwest Florida (i.e., Lee, Charlotte, Sarasota, Manatee, Hillsborough, and Pinellas Counties). Respondents were also asked a dichotomous choice willingness-to-pay (WTP) question that used a trust fund payment vehicle associated with their license renewal. Four fee levels were randomized across respondents. Yes responses were followed by asking how sure are you of this decision? with a closed-ended response format with four certainty levels. Those selecting very sure of their decision were also asked to provide the maximum they would be WTP. No responses were followed by asking them to provide a lower amount they would be WTP and, if not, why. Results will be used to explain to estimate WTP and explain WTP responses that program managers can use to justify continued investment in such programs.