

6. Economic Contributions of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Watching

Outdoor recreation includes a diverse set of activities that participants pursue in Colorado. Of particular interest for this study are the contributions of fishing, hunting, and wildlife watching. These three activities together produce over \$5 billion dollars of economic output, which supports nearly 40,000 jobs within the state. Fishing alone contributes \$2.4 billion dollars in economic output per year, supporting over 17,000 jobs in Colorado (Table 5).

Table 5. Total Economic Contributions of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Watching by Region

	Northwest	North Central	Metro	Northeast	Southeast	South Central	Southwest	State
Economic Output (\$millions)								
Fishing	\$239	\$691	\$512	\$29	\$109	\$353	\$120	\$2,445
Hunting	\$136	\$221	\$166	\$20	\$24	\$93	\$55	\$843
Wildlife Watching	\$161	\$762	\$682	\$23	\$55	\$277	\$86	\$2,436
Salaries & Wages (\$millions)								
Fishing	\$74	\$194	\$165	\$9	\$33	\$97	\$39	\$757
Hunting	\$50	\$65	\$53	\$8	\$8	\$28	\$22	\$280
Wildlife Watching	\$49	\$184	\$191	\$7	\$17	\$72	\$28	\$637
GDP Contribution (\$millions)								
Fishing	\$122	\$321	\$261	\$13	\$53	\$162	\$61	\$1,227
Hunting	\$77	\$113	\$90	\$11	\$12	\$46	\$31	\$457
Wildlife Watching	\$88	\$310	\$320	\$10	\$28	\$121	\$45	\$1,071
State & Local Taxes (\$millions)								
Fishing	\$17	\$40	\$28	\$2	\$12	\$29	\$11	\$143
Hunting	\$9	\$11	\$8	\$2	\$2	\$6	\$5	\$44
Wildlife Watching	\$11	\$33	\$31	\$2	\$5	\$14	\$7	\$111
Federal Taxes (\$millions)								
Fishing	\$18	\$47	\$40	\$2	\$8	\$22	\$9	\$180
Hunting	\$12	\$16	\$13	\$2	\$2	\$6	\$5	\$66
Wildlife Watching	\$12	\$44	\$47	\$2	\$4	\$16	\$6	\$154
Jobs								
Fishing	1,930	4,919	3,355	284	1,298	3,368	1,185	17,114
Hunting	1,488	1,885	1,238	368	443	1,213	869	7,937
Wildlife Watching	1,283	3,936	4,313	191	569	1,916	825	13,243

Pursuing big game is the most popular form of hunting in Colorado among both residents of the state and those traveling from other locations. Residents make up a majority of days spent hunting in the state at 69.8% (CPW, 2013a). The average non-resident big game hunter spends more money per day, and the economic output contributed by non-resident big game hunters makes up nearly 40 percent of the total (Table 6).

Table 6. Total Economic Contributions of Big Game Hunting in Colorado

	Output (\$millions)	Labor Income (\$millions)	GDP Contribution (\$millions)	State/Local Taxes (\$millions)	Federal Taxes (\$millions)	Jobs
Resident	\$374.3	\$124.5	\$197.4	\$21.3	\$29.1	2,999
Non-resident	\$228.2	\$95.1	\$138.6	\$13.0	\$21.3	3,305
Total	\$602.4	\$219.6	\$336.0	\$34.4	\$50.4	6,304

7. Hunting Economic Contributions by Destination County

Hunting is a popular form of outdoor recreation in Colorado, with participants that are typically active over many years. The type of hunting that Colorado residents and visitors engage in varies greatly by location. Through extensive surveys of hunters, CPW has been able to characterize hunting effort by destination county within the state over a range of species pursued (CPW, 2013). Using these survey results allowed us to estimate hunter effort by county of activity for three species groups; big game, small game, and waterfowl. Pursuing big game is the most popular hunting activity in Colorado, and the Northwest region includes the largest contribution of hunting effort by a fairly large margin (Table 7).

Table 7. Hunting Effort by Region in 2017⁶

	Northwest	North Central	Metro	Northeast	Southeast	South Central	Southwest	State
Hunter Days per Year								
Big Game	760,237	110,277	28,392	43,840	85,998	237,109	342,758	1,608,611
Small Game	113,185	69,838	4,500	123,235	39,273	47,007	40,378	437,417
Waterfowl	16,701	76,185	958	32,842	15,826	8,028	6,704	157,244

(CPW, 2012 Big Game, Small Game & Waterfowl Hunter Days by County, 2013)
(CPW, 2017 Big Game Hunter days by County, 2018)

⁶ Note that small game and waterfowl days estimates were not available in 2017. We increased the 2012 days by 7.9% to produce a corresponding 2017 estimate. This percentage equals the observed change in Colorado big game hunter days over that time period.