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## **Report: Fishing puts \$346 million into local economy**

(Lincoln County, Ore) A comprehensive look at fishing's place in Lincoln County's economy reveals a growing impact on the area's earned income through 2019.

The Resource Group, LLC, of Corvallis, took a deep dive into the financial indicators surrounding both commercial and recreational fishing, as well as related and connected activities, and produced a clear picture of the pre-pandemic seafood scene.

"Fishing Industry Economic Activity Trends in the Newport, Oregon Area" was commissioned by the Lincoln County Commission and Midwater Trawlers Cooperative (MTC), which represents 29 vessels, most of which are homeported in Newport. The effort was viewed as an update to an economic study performed by the same firm in 2012, which focused more broadly on the county economy.

That historic information gave researchers a good point of comparison and what they found was that, in 2012, commercial fishing accounted for 9.9 percent of Lincoln County's earned income. By 2019, that figure had grown to 14.2 percent.

Lincoln County Commissioner Kaety Jacobson said an up-to-date look at the industry was what motivated the county to back the study.

"Unlike a lot of other economic data, commercial fishing data can change rapidly from year to year and especially in a five year or more period. Changing regulations, changing ocean conditions, a lost market and many other variables can drastically shift catch rates and price," she explained. "Having updated information allows us and the community to better understand where the industry is at and what it is currently facing," Jacobson noted.

Combining commercial and recreational fishing, the study estimated the total economic contribution to the local economy at \$176 million in income in 2019, but there was even more to take into consideration.

Report author Shannon Davis and his team looked at more than just the immediate income of those working directly with fishing boats. They also looked at marine-related businesses and reports from past years that documented the impact of those activities connected to fishing and adjusted them for 2019 dollars. The total related and connected economic contribution is estimated to be an additional \$170 million in income.

The combination of fishing industry income and the adjusted figures for related and connected activities income resulted in a total income of \$346 million, according to the report. This represents 7,400 jobs, according to Davis.

Documenting tangible impact and real figures was important to the report's sponsors.

"Newport has always been very fishing oriented but more so than ever we are becoming the only one-stop authentic working waterfront," said Heather Mann, MTC executive director. "With three shipyards in Lincoln County, multiple gear and marine supply shops, the net shop, and both large and small seafood processors, this area is not only a hub for all things fishing, we are a tourist destination because of it. We thought there was a real lack of understanding by some former port officials, state legislators, and others about the importance of our fishing fleets as a critical piece of the rural economy," she added.

Those who are interested in commercial fishing will find a number of fascinating factoids in the report. For instance, in 2019, the total harvest value was \$59.3 million, of which Dungeness crab accounted for 42.1 percent of value, followed by Pacific whiting at 14.4 percent, pink shrimp at 11.7 percent, groundfish (other than sablefish and whiting) was 8.4 percent, followed closely by sablefish and Albacore tuna – both making up 8.3 percent of the harvest value. Salmon, Pacific halibut, and other species make up the balance.

The contribution of recreational fishing was also a part of the study. Total ocean and lower river spending in the Newport area, which includes Depoe Bay and Alsea Bay, was estimated at \$23 million in 2019, and that did not include touring.

The report's sponsors say the document should serve as a useful resource. Mann envisions a number of ways in which it might be helpful.

"By making the report and its findings available, others can use the data for local economic development opportunities. For instance, ports could use the information to help support grant requests, legislators can use it to justify investment opportunities, banks and lenders can use the information to help informing lending, and county commissioners and city councils of Newport and Toledo can use the information to support decision making and investments," she noted.

Jacobson said she is hopeful that the report will be widely read and understood, since it sheds light on an industry that is not well known by some.

"The tourism industry, our second largest identified earned income sector, is visible when you see tourists in town, at restaurants, and on the beach. But commercial fishing, which is our largest identified earned income sector, is largely invisible to the community. Understanding the numbers helps people realize the industry's worth and how it benefits our community," the commissioner commented.

A website to host the report and supporting downloadable elements is in development, but those who are interested now can find a copy of the completed report and an executive summary at [www.midwatertrawlers.org](http://www.midwatertrawlers.org) or at [www.co.lincoln.or.us](http://www.co.lincoln.or.us).

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