

## Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary Socioeconomics Factsheet



Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary is a center for biodiversity and supports recreational ventures. Its value reaches far beyond the water.



In 2002, a survey of charter fishing boat owners/operators identified 15 charter boats that utilize Gray's Reef as one of their fishing locations. Their gross revenue, in 2010 dollars, was \$1.41 million, translating to a total profit of \$614,000. Approximately 40 percent of their fishing activity took place in Gray's Reef, resulting in gross revenue of \$565,000 and total profit of \$245,000 occurring within this small sanctuary.



A recent study<sup>1</sup> estimated that expenditures related to private-boat recreational fishing in the sanctuary total approximately \$1.5 million annually. The majority (over \$800,000) of these expenditures are made by Georgia residents.



Several major sportfishing tournaments occur off Georgia every year with Gray's Reef being a premier target for participants. An estimated \$700,000 is spent annually by tournament fishermen targeting Gray's Reef.

*If our goal as a society is to both conserve and sustainably use marine biological diversity, we need areas that are closed to human use and in which we can measure ecological conditions and contrast those to areas open the wide range of human uses, such as fishing, mining, etc. The Research Area at Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary is such a place.*

- Peter J. Auster

Research Professor, Department of  
Marine Sciences, Department of  
Natural Resources and the  
Environment, University of  
Connecticut at Avery Point

<sup>1</sup>Ehler, R., 2009. Economic Analysis of the Proposed Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary Research Area. Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, NOAA, Silver Spring, MD.