

Department of the Interior  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Pacific Regional Office  
911 NE 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Portland, Oregon 97232-4181  
Phone: 503/231-6121  
Fax: 503/231-2122  
<http://pacific.fws.gov>



# News Release

DATE: 7/15/2009

9-78

CONTACT: Amy Gaskill, APR (503)231-6874

## **Birdwatchers No Featherweights in Contributions to Economy**

A new report released today by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service shows one of every five Americans watches birds, and in doing so, birdwatchers contributed \$36 billion to the U.S. economy in 2006, the most recent year for which economic data are available. The report – [Birding in the United States: A Demographic and Economic Analysis](#) – shows that total participation in birdwatching is strong at 48 million, and remaining at a steady 20 percent of the U.S. population since 1996.

Participation rates vary, but are generally greater in the northern half of the country. The five top states with the greatest birding participation rates include Montana (40 percent), Maine (39 percent), Vermont (38 percent), Minnesota (33 percent) and Iowa (33 percent). The participation rates of the Fish and Wildlife Service's Pacific Region include Washington (31 percent), Idaho (28 percent), Oregon (27 percent) and Hawaii (10 percent).

The report identifies who birders are, where they live, how avid they are, and what kinds of birds they watch. In addition to demographic information, this report also provides an estimate of how much birders spend on their hobby and the economic impact of these expenditures.

The report is an addendum to the [2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation](#). The 2006 survey is the eleventh in a series of surveys conducted about every 5 years that began in 1955. The survey, conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in partnership with state wildlife agencies and national conservation organizations, has become *the* reference for participation and expenditure information on fish and wildlife recreation in the United States. The survey helps quantify how enjoyment of the outdoors and wildlife contributes to society and promotes a healthy economy – and further strengthens the Service's commitment to conserve the nation's wildlife for the enjoyment and benefit of the American people.

A copy of the *Birding in the United States: A Demographic and Economic Analysis* can be downloaded here:

[http://library.fws.gov/Pubs/birding\\_natsurvey06.pdf](http://library.fws.gov/Pubs/birding_natsurvey06.pdf)

In conjunction with the release of the birding report, the Service also issued another similar addendum to the 2006 Survey entitled, [Wildlife Watching Trends: 1991–2006 A Reference Report](#). This report shows similar trends in wildlife-watching, a broader category that includes large and small-mammal viewing.

An overview of the Survey, and a wealth of other information, can be found online at:  
[http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/Subpages/NationalSurvey/National\\_Survey.htm](http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/Subpages/NationalSurvey/National_Survey.htm)

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).