COMMON SENSE INSTITUTE

SEPTEMBER 2026

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF HUNTING AND FISHING AND ITS CONNECTION TO AMENDMENT 83

THE FIRST IN A TWO PART SERIES

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ABOUT COMMON SENSE INSTITUTE

Common Sense Institute is a non-partisan research organization dedicated to the protection and promotion of Colorado's economy. CSI is at the forefront of important discussions concerning the future of free enterprise and aims to have an impact on the issues that matter most to Coloradans. CSI's mission is to examine the fiscal impacts of policies, initiatives, and proposed laws so that Coloradans are educated and informed on issues impacting their lives. CSI employs rigorous research techniques and dynamic modeling to evaluate the potential impact of these measures on the economy and individual opportunity.

TEAMS & FELLOWS STATEMENT

CSI is committed to independent, in-depth research that examines the impacts of policies, initiatives, and proposed laws so that Coloradans are educated and informed on issues impacting their lives. CSI's commitment to institutional independence is rooted in the individual independence of our researchers, economists, and fellows. At the core of CSI's mission is a belief in the power of the free enterprise system. Our work explores ideas that protect and promote jobs and the economy, and the CSI team and fellows take part in this pursuit with academic freedom. Our team's work is informed by data-driven research and evidence. The views and opinions of fellows do not reflect the institutional views of CSI. CSI operates independently of any political party and does not take positions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Colorado voters may be asked this November to consider Amendment 83, an effort to enshrine into the state constitution the right to hunt and fish. About half of U.S. states already protect this right.

This report, the first in a two-part series, estimates the current economic impact of hunting and fishing in Colorado and provides context on Amendment 83's proposed constitutional right to hunt and fish.

Each year, millions of visitors flock to Colorado to experience its beautiful landscapes, which offer world-class hunting, fishing, skiing, and other outdoor activities. For example, of the approximately 975,000 anglers who will have fished in Colorado in 2026, about 37% (358,000 individuals) will have been nonresidents.[i] The almost 1 million individuals fishing in Colorado this year is complemented by the approximately 305,000 hunters, of which about 89,000 will be nonresidents.[ii] Depending upon what the final figures show at the end of 2026, Colorado may, for the first time, see over 1 million fishing licenses issued in a year.[iii] Although hunters generally spend more money than anglers annual, participation is only about a third of fishing participation.

FIGURE 1.

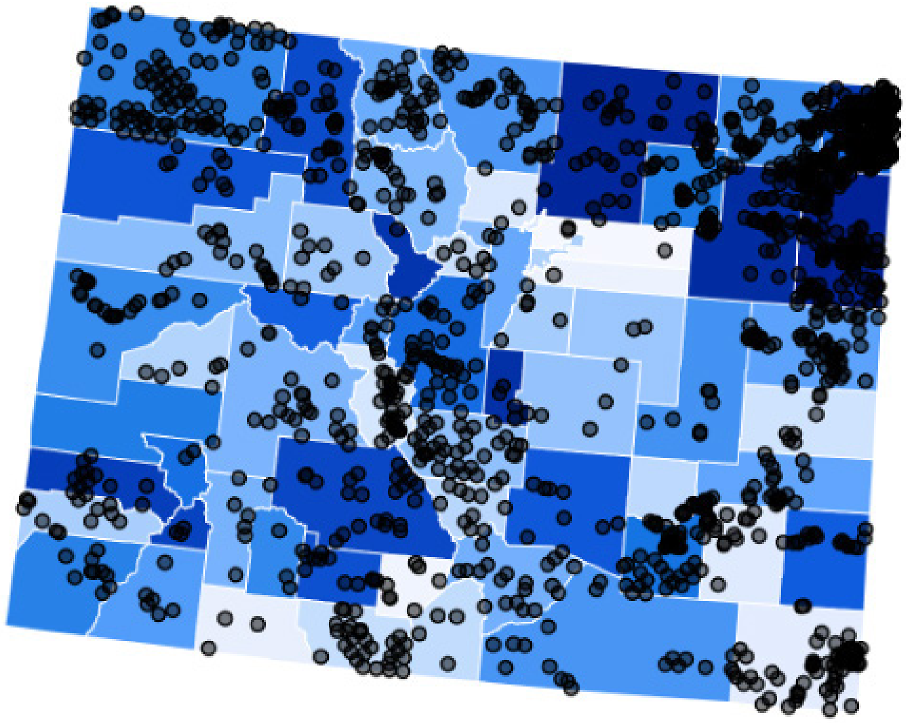
Hunting and Fishing Participation and Licenses, 2026

Angler residency	Hunting licenses, Est 2026, CPW	Fishing licenses, Est. 2026, CPW	Coloradans, Hunting Participation, in-state and out-of-state	Coloradans, Fishing Participation, in-state and out-of-state	Hunting in Colorado	Fishing in Colorado
Resident	202,352	635,534	240,263	648,918	216,237	616,472
Nonresident	83,313	369,129			89,029	358,057
Total	285,664	1,004,663			305,266	974,530

Source: Common Sense Institute, Research and Analysis, CPW, ArcGIS Business Analyst

FIGURE 2.

Hunting and Fishing Locations per CPW



Source: Colorado Parks & Wildlife Service • This is not every place where hunting or fishing is legally possible in Colorado. It omits most federal, municipal, county, and private lands and waters unless represented in these CPW access layers.

Residents enjoy these activities across the state. As Figure 2 shows, according to Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), the Centennial State is home to 1,519 state-operated hunting and fishing access areas. While that number is significant, it does not take into account federal, municipal, county, and private lands and waters unless represented in CPW access layers.

This report examines the overall economic impact of hunting and fishing (i.e., the landscape of hunting and fishing and the spillover effect it has on Colorado's economy), covering adult and youth, resident and non-resident interest in big and small game hunting, along with ice, fly, fresh water, and river fishing, among other types of hunting and fishing. The report also looks at the important impact these activities have on the businesses that help meet demand for Colorado's unique outdoor experiences.

KEY FINDINGS

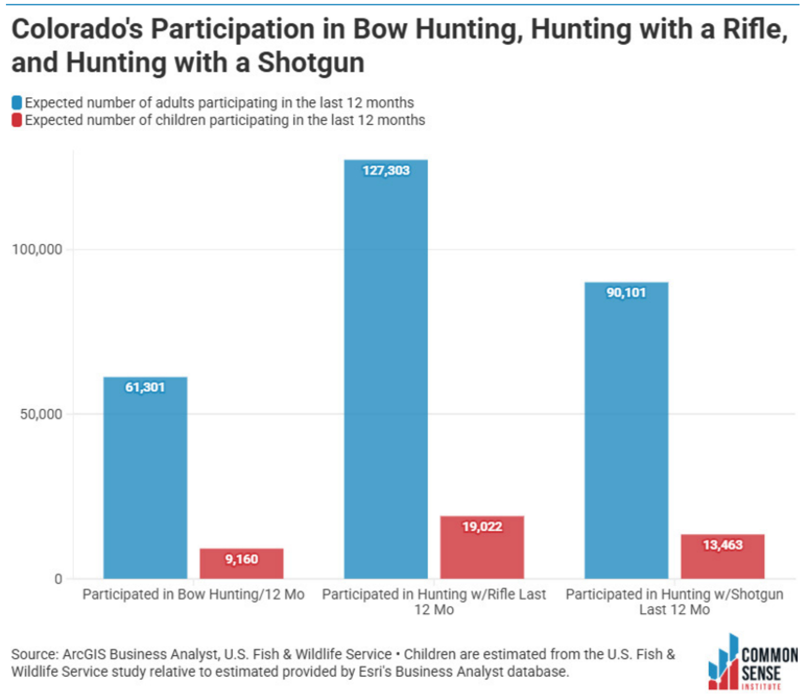
- CPW's "Wildlife Revenue" generated $220 million in fiscal year (FY) 2024-25 primarily from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses, permits, passes, and fees.
  - > Depending upon the growth in fishing licenses in 2026, Colorado may, for the first time, see over 1 million fishing licenses in a given year.
- In Colorado, hunting produces:
  - > $1.2 billion in **direct** business and service provider sales annually (economic output), employ approximately 8,800 individuals across about 960 business/service providers.
- In Colorado, fishing produces:
  - > $1.2 billion in **direct** business and service provider sales annually (economic output), employ about 5,500 individuals across approximately 715 businesses/service providers.
- When including the spillover effects from hunting and fishing, the total economic impact is:
  - > Over 25,000 employees, including over 23,000 private sector employees.
  - > Over $6.1 billion in business revenue (i.e., output) to companies/service providers.
  - > Over $1.5 billion in personal income, including over $1.3 billion in disposable personal income.

COLORADO: A HUNTING AND FISHING PARADISE

Hunting in Colorado and Coloradans' Interest Overall in Hunting

Between July 2025 and July 2026, 61,301 Colorado adults participated in bow hunting, 127,303 hunted with a rifle, and 90,101 hunted with a shotgun.[iv] When adding individuals under 18, estimated at around 13% of total hunters, the number of participants grows to 70,461 Coloradans participated in bow hunting, 146,325 hunted with a rifle, and 103,564 hunted with a shotgun.

FIGURE 3.



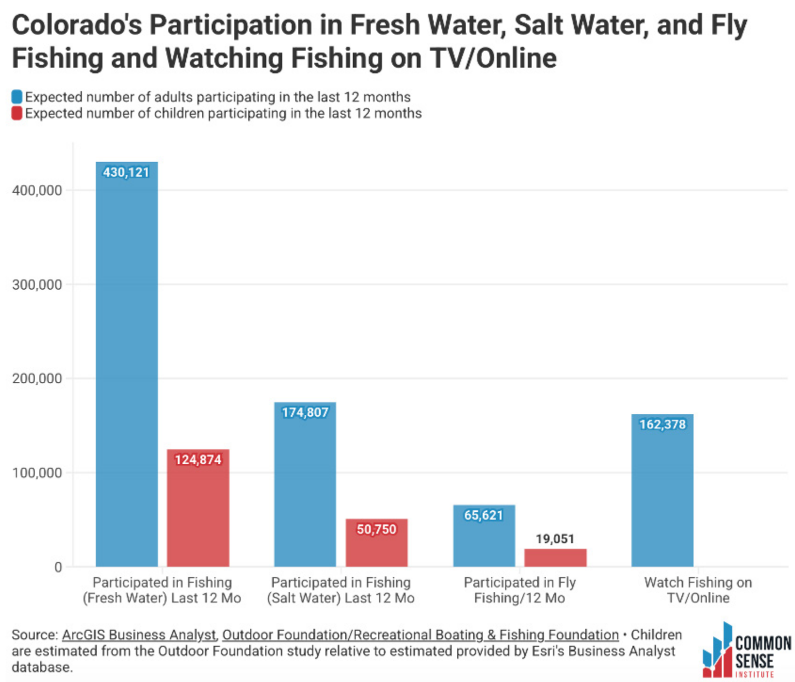
Fishing in Colorado and Coloradans' Overall Interest in Fishing

Colorado's inland fishing economy spans more than 6,000 miles of streams and more than 1,300 lakes and reservoirs, linking anglers to guides, tackle and boat businesses, hospitality, hatcheries, access infrastructure, and aquatic conservation.[v]

Hatcheries are part of both the recreation product and the conservation system. CPW operates 19 hatcheries and reports producing more than 90 million fish annually for sport fishing opportunity and native species recovery. Private ponds, fee fishing waters, bait production, and aquaculture are related production activities, and also contribute to Colorado's vibrant fishing business ecosystem.

Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (Esri) reports 430,121 Colorado adults participated in fresh water fishing in the last 12 months as of July 2026, 174,807 participated in salt water fishing (out of state) , 65,621 participated in fly fishing, and 162,378 adults watched competitive fishing in the past year.[vi] When adding youth under 18, estimated at around 22% of all anglers, the number of Coloradans participating grows to 554,995 for fresh water fishing, 225,557 for salt water fishing , and 84,672 for fly fishing. These are just the resident Coloradans participating in fishing. When adding non-residents, the number of anglers participating *in* Colorado grows to about 975,000 in 2026. **In 2027, the number of individuals participating in angling in the state may surpass 1 million.**

FIGURE 4.



Hunting and Fishing Dollars Support Businesses

The broad participation and demand for hunting and fishing leads to a supply network important to Colorado's economy. Because hunting and fishing are economic activity satisfying consumer demand directly, the direct flow of hunting and fishing-related dollars to large and small businesses acts as a direct effect multiplier, generating thousands of jobs for residents directly and many thousands more indirectly through the network of suppliers and service providers. These direct and indirect employment effects also produce economic gains for households, and a cycle in which the realized household income induces the formation of more households, which in turn buy homes and set up permanent retail and wholesale demand across the state's economy.

Using direct employment of service providers, wholesalers, retailers, equipment manufacturers, and conservation activities and their associated direct revenue, we estimate hunting and fishing in Colorado directly support almost 15,000 employees (full-time, part-time, contractors, self-employed) and generates more than $2.4 billion annually for nearly 1,700 firms in revenue to small, medium, and large businesses, and as mentioned above, many thousands more indirectly. When adding the spillover effect from hunting and fishing, the total economic impact of hunting and fishing is over $6.1 billion, including 25,000 jobs, and $1.5 billion in personal income.

THE ECONOMIC FOOTPRINT AND CONNECTED IMPACT

The overall economic impact of hunting and fishing is the sum of the direct activity plus the indirect and induced impacts. The following is an analysis of the direct hunting and fishing activities and the businesses, mostly small businesses, that provide services to individuals and groups hunting and fishing in Colorado.

The Demand and Supply: Hunting Activities and the Businesses that Support Them

THE DEMAND SIDE: CONSUMER HUNTING ACTIVITIES

TABLE 1.

Category	Item	Description
Activity	Big game hunting	Elk, mule and white-tailed deer, pronghorn, moose, black bear, mountain lion, Rocky Mountain and desert bighorn sheep, and mountain goat
Activity	Wild turkey hunting	Spring and fall turkey seasons on public and private land
Activity	Upland game bird hunting	Pheasant, quail, dusky grouse, mountain sharp-tailed grouse[4], greater sagegrouses[5], ptarmigan and chukar
Activity	Waterfowl hunting	Ducks, geese and coots on reservoirs, rivers, wetlands and agricultural lands
Activity	Migratory bird hunting	Dove, band-tailed pigeon, sora and Virginia rail, snipe, crow and sandhill crane where authorized
Activity	Small game hunting	Rabbit, hare, squirrel and other regulated small-game species
Activity	Predator and furbearer hunting	Coyote, bobcat, fox, badger, beaver, muskrat, raccoon and other regulated furbearers

4 *The plains sharp-tailed grouse is state endangered (https://cpw.state.co.us/sites/default/files/dam/dmimiqhw2j/ch-w-10-as-approved_may-2022.pdf).*

5 *The Gunnison sage-grouse is currently not huntable (https://www.sos.state.co.us/CCR/GenerateRulePdf.do?ruleVersionId=7043).*

Category	Item	Description
Activity	Trapping	Regulated take of eligible furbearers using legal trapping methods
Activity	Falconry / hawking	Licensed hunting of eligible game using trained raptors
Activity	Archery / bowhunting seasons	Method-restricted seasons spanning big game, turkey and some small game
Activity	Muzzleloader seasons	Primitive-firearm big-game seasons and related preparation
Activity	Youth, novice and apprentice hunting	Youth seasons, outreach licenses, hunter education and apprentice certificates
Activity	Limited-license draws and preference points	Primary/secondary draws, applications, preference points, leftover and reissued licenses
Activity	Private land access programs	Ranching for Wildlife, Walk-In Access, Bighorn Sheep Access and private leases[6]
Activity	Public land and state wildlife area hunting	Hunting on federal lands, state wildlife areas, participating state trust lands[7] and selected state parks
Activity	Recreational and target shooting	Rifle, pistol, shotgun, trap, skeet, sporting clays and archery practice
Activity	Shed antler gathering	Seasonally regulated collection of naturally shed antlers on public lands

THE SUPPLY SIDE: BUSINESSES/SERVICE PROVIDERS TO HUNTERS

As noted in a previous section, a wide range of small to large Colorado-based businesses support hunters and anglers in the state. The extensive network extends far beyond guides and sporting goods retailers. Hunting-related revenue flows to outfitters, backcountry packers, shooting ranges, firearms and ammunition manufacturers, wholesalers, archery and optics companies, taxidermists, game processors, lodging providers, restaurants, fuel stations, apparel retailers, vehicle dealers, and hunting-dog services.

Hunting also supports rural landowners through access fees and leases, along with real estate professionals, insurers, outdoor media companies, mapping and technology providers, and wildlife-diagnostic laboratories. Habitat contractors, conservation nonprofits, and public wildlife agencies contribute access, research, education, habitat management, licensing, and enforcement.

6 *Colorado resident only (https://cpw.state.co.us/sites/default/files/dam/erjzbk48be/colorado-big-game-hunting-brochure.pdf).*

7 *Around 973,000 acres of state trust lands are enrolled in the CPW access program (https://cpw.state.co.us/stl-finder).*

TABLE 2.

Category	Item	Description
Business sector	Hunting guide and outfitter services	Registered outfitters, guides, trip planning, camps and field services
Business sector	Pack animals, livestock and backcountry support	Horse/mule rental, packing, farriers, feed, veterinary and stable services
Business sector	Shooting and archery ranges	Practice, sight-in, hunter education, competitions and instruction
Business sector	Sporting goods and firearms retail	Firearms, ammunition, archery gear, packs, optics, calls and hunting supplies
Business sector	Firearms manufacturing	Rifles, shotguns and other small arms
Business sector	Ammunition manufacturing	Small-arms ammunition and components
Business sector	Sporting goods wholesale distribution	Wholesale distribution of hunting equipment and supplies
Business sector	Taxidermy services	Preparation, preservation and mounting of game trophies
Business sector	Custom meat and game processing	Cutting, wrapping, freezing, sausage-making and storage of harvested game
Business sector	Lodging and hunting camps	Hotels, motels, cabins, ranch stays, campgrounds and short-term rentals
Business sector	Restaurants, groceries, fuel and convenience retail	Meals, provisions, gasoline and diesel purchased during hunting trips
Business sector	Hunting apparel and footwear retail	Camouflage, technical layers, boots, gloves and weather protection
Business sector	ATV, UTV and off-road vehicle dealers and service	Vehicles, trailers, parts, repair and rentals used for access
Business sector	Hunting dog training, boarding and veterinary care	Training, kennel, breeding, boarding and animal-health services
Business sector	Private land access and ranch recreation	Fee access, leases, trespass fees and ranch-hosted hunting
Business sector	Commercial hunting, trapping and game preserves	Market-oriented hunting/trapping and commercial preserves
Business sector	Wildlife habitat, forestry and land management	Habitat improvement, invasive-plant treatment, water development and consulting
Business sector	Archery equipment manufacturing and retail	Bows, arrows, broadheads, targets and accessories
Business sector	Optics, mapping and outdoor electronics	Riflescopes, binoculars, rangefinders, GPS, satellite communicators and mapping subscriptions

Category	Item	Description
Business sector	Conservation and wildlife nonprofit organizations	Habitat projects, access, research, education and advocacy
Business sector	Wildlife agency administration and research	CPW wildlife management, licensing, enforcement, biology, access and federal restoration programs
Business sector	Hunting property real estate and land services	Brokerage, appraisal and management of ranch and recreation properties
Business sector	Outdoor media, publishing and digital services	Hunting publications, video, podcasts, apps, maps and subscription content
Business sector	Guide, outfitter and event insurance	Liability, property and commercial coverage
Business sector	CWD testing and wildlife diagnostic services	Sample collection, laboratory testing, transport and related services

THE DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT OF HUNTING

Based upon the share of economic activity of relevant North American Industry Classification (NAICS) codes, revenue to employer and nonemployer businesses directly connected with Colorado-based hunting will likely reach more than $1.2 billion in 2026 and grow to $2.1 billion by 2035. The table in Appendix B presents a full breakdown of the revenue, jobs, and wages for hunting-related activity. The following figure offers a summary.

FIGURE 5.

Colorado-Related Direct Economic impact of Hunting, 2026

Colorado-Related Direct Economic Impact - Hunting, 2026	Jobs	Business Revenue to Companies and Service Providers	Firms
Total Direct Jobs, Revenue, and Firms	8,879	$1,210,091,864	963

Source: Common Sense Institute, Research and Analysis

The Demand and Supply: Fishing Activities and the Businesses that Support Them

THE DEMAND SIDE: CONSUMER FISHING ACTIVITIES

Colorado fishing encompasses a wide range of individual and group activities across rivers, streams, lakes, reservoirs, and private waters. Anglers fish for coldwater species such as trout and kokanee salmon, as well as warmwater and coolwater species including bass, walleye, crappie, perch, catfish, and pike. Participation ranges from fly fishing, ice fishing, bowfishing, and shoreline or accessible fishing to motorboat, kayak, canoe, float tube, and paddleboard angling. Organized activities include guided and instructional trips, youth and family clinics, fishing tournaments, derbies, and community events. These recreational opportunities are supported by public hatcheries and fish stocking programs, native species recovery work, and private ponds, fee fishing waters, and aquaculture operations.

TABLE 3.

Category	Item	Description
Activity	Coldwater lake and reservoir fishing	Trout, kokanee salmon, Arctic char and other coldwater species
Activity	River and stream trout fishing	Wade, bank and float fishing in freestone and tailwater systems
Activity	Warmwater and coolwater fishing	Bass, walleye, saugeye, crappie, perch, catfish, pike and other species
Activity	Fly fishing	Artificial-fly angling in rivers, streams, lakes and reservoirs
Activity	Ice fishing	Winter angling through lake and reservoir ice
Activity	Boat-based reservoir fishing	Fishing from motorboats, pontoons and other watercraft
Activity	Kayak, canoe, float-tube and paddleboard fishing	Human-powered and small-craft fishing access
Activity	Bank, pier and accessible fishing	Shoreline, fishing-pier and universally accessible angling
Activity	Guided fishing and instructional trips	Commercial walk-wade, float, lake and reservoir fishing trips
Activity	Youth, family and learn-to-fish programs	Free fishing events, clinics and mentored angling
Activity	Fishing tournaments and derbies	Organized bass, walleye, trout, ice-fishing and community events
Activity	Bowfishing	Archery-based take of eligible nongame fish
Activity	Fish stocking and hatchery production	Public propagation, rearing and stocking for sport fisheries and native recovery
Activity	Private pond, fee-fishing and aquaculture operations	Privately managed fishing water, stocking and fish production

THE SUPPLY SIDE: BUSINESSES/SERVICE PROVIDERS TO ANGLERS

Colorado's fishing economy supports a broad network of businesses and organizations serving anglers before, during, and after their trips. These businesses include fishing guides and outfitters, fly shops and tackle retailers, equipment manufacturers and wholesalers, marinas, boat and paddlecraft dealers, rental companies, repair services, electronics suppliers, and fishing-apparel retailers. Angler travel also generates revenue for lodging, campgrounds, restaurants, grocery stores, fuel stations, and other businesses near fishing destinations.

Additional activity flows to hatcheries, bait and private fish producers, habitat restoration contractors, access infrastructure builders, conservation nonprofits, event organizers, insurers, media and mapping services, real estate firms, and public agencies responsible for fisheries management, stocking, research, enforcement, and aquatic-nuisance-species control.

TABLE 4.

Category	Item	Description
Business sector	Fishing guide and outfitter services	Guided walk-wade, float, lake and reservoir trips plus casting instruction
Business sector	Fly shops, bait and tackle retailers	Tackle, flies, bait, licenses, clothing and local information
Business sector	Fishing tackle and equipment manufacturing	Rods, reels, flies, lures, line, nets and related gear
Business sector	Sporting goods wholesale distribution	Wholesale supply of tackle, boats and related recreation goods
Business sector	Marinas, docks and launch services	Slips, storage, launching, rentals and marina services
Business sector	Boat, paddlecraft and trailer dealers	Sales of fishing boats, kayaks, canoes, pontoons and trailers
Business sector	Boat building, repair and marine service	Watercraft construction, engines, maintenance and winterization
Business sector	Watercraft and fishing-equipment rental	Boats, kayaks, canoes, paddleboards and fishing gear
Business sector	Marine electronics and specialty outdoor technology	Fish finders, sonar, trolling motors, GPS and navigation systems
Business sector	Fishing apparel, waders and footwear	Waders, boots, technical clothing, gloves and weather gear
Business sector	Lodging and campgrounds near fishing destinations	Hotels, motels, cabins, guest ranches, campgrounds and short-term rentals
Business sector	Restaurants, groceries, fuel and convenience retail	Food, provisions and transportation fuel for angler trips
Business sector	Fish hatcheries and stocking contractors	Public and private propagation, rearing, transport and stocking

Category	Item	Description
Business sector	Live bait and private fish production	Minnows, worms and other bait; pond and stocking fish
Business sector	Aquatic habitat, river restoration and environmental consulting	Stream restoration, habitat structures, water-quality and fisheries biology
Business sector	Boat ramps, fishing piers and access construction	Construction and maintenance of ramps, docks, piers and access facilities
Business sector	Aquatic nuisance species inspection and decontamination	Watercraft inspection, cleaning equipment and seasonal staffing
Business sector	Fishing conservation nonprofit organizations	Habitat, access, native-fish recovery, education and advocacy
Business sector	Fisheries agency administration, science and enforcement	CPW licensing, hatcheries, stocking, surveys, access, enforcement and federal restoration programs
Business sector	Waterfront and recreation-property real estate	Brokerage and management of river, lake and reservoir-area property
Business sector	Outdoor media, publishing, mapping and digital services	Fishing publications, video, apps, maps, forecasts and subscription content
Business sector	Guide and outfitter insurance	Liability, property and commercial policies
Business sector	Tournament, event and club services	Event administration, permits, timing/weigh-in, sponsorship and venues

THE DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT OF FISHING

A prior study done by the American Sportfishing Association looking at the economic impact of Colorado's fishing industry showed an estimated 686,390 resident and nonresident anglers, $2.0 billion spent while fishing, 15,406 jobs supported, $861 million in income, $1.4 billion in GDP, $215 million in state and local taxes, and a $2.5 billion total multiplier effect.[vii, viii]

This study takes a micro approach, starting from the detailed activities' employment, revenue, and firms in 2026, CSI estimated the overall direct impact of hunting and fishing from the details identified in Appendix B. A summary of our findings follows in the figure below. Overall, using this approach CSI estimates that fishing in Colorado supports nearly $1.2 billion in direct revenue to 718 companies that sustain 5,495 direct jobs. These are just the direct revenue and employment figures, which are not directly comparable to the previous study by the American Sportfishing Association. In the "Total Economic Impact" section that follows, it presents the direct impact plus the positive spillover effects from hunting and fishing. These results would be more comparable to the prior study.

FIGURE 6.

Colorado-Related Direct Economic impact of Fishing, 2026

Colorado-Related Direct Economic Impact - Fishing, 2026	Jobs	Business Revenue to Companies and Service Providers	Firms
Total Direct Jobs, Revenue, and Firms	5,887	$1,197,824,965	718

Source: Common Sense Institute, Research and Analysis

Total *Direct* Economic Impact from Hunting and Fishing

Overall, just the direct economic impact from hunting and fishing together is over $2.4 billion when measured by company and service provider revenue for 1,681 firms and 14,766 jobs. The second part of this analysis, detailed in the following section, presents the broader economic impact from the linkages hunting and fishing creates in the state.

FIGURE 7.

Colorado-Related Direct Economic impact of Hunting and Fishing, 2026

Sector	Jobs	Revenue	Firms
Hunting	8,879	$1,210,091,864	963
Fishing	5,887	$1,197,824,965	718
Total	14,766	$2,407,916,829	1,681

Source: Common Sense Institute, Research and Analysis

Total Economic Impact – Direct, Indirect, Induced, Amenity, and Quality of Life from Hunting and Fishing

Up to this point, the focus has been on the direct economic impact. When someone comes to Colorado to hunt, they not only are committing to purchasing a hunting license, but are buying from a fish and tackle shop in Craig or a hotel owner in a rural area. This has a disproportionate impact on rural areas of the state.

OVERALL ECONOMIC IMPACT

When accounting for this spillover effect on businesses providing service/equipment/material to hunters and anglers, the total economic impact is much larger. Using REMI Tax PI+ as the modeling system, CSI modeled the complete economic impact of hunting and fishing. Appendix C contains details of the modeling assumptions. Overall, hunting and fishing:

- Generate over 25,000 jobs in the state, including over 23,000 private sector employees.
- Result in over $6.1 billion in revenue to businesses/service providers.
- Boost personal income by over $1.5 billion, including over $1.3 billion in disposable income.
- Bring almost 8,000 people to Colorado to live permanently.

FIGURE 8.

Total Economic Impact from Hunting and Fishing in Colorado, 2026

Category	Total Employment	Private Non-Farm Employment	Population	Output	Personal Income	Disposable Personal Income
Economic Impact in 2026	25,304	23,233	7,790	$6,108,137,275	$1,539,160,110	$1,328,028,227

Source: Common Sense Institute, Research and Analysis

JOBS ECONOMIC IMPACT

As wide as the hunting and fishing sector is, it touches many job types. Unsurprisingly, the two top impacted sectors from hunting and fishing are conservation and fishing/hunting workers. Other highly impacted occupations include motor vehicle operators (i.e., drivers to hunting and fishing locations), construction trade workers (i.e., infrastructure), material moving workers, business operations specialists, other management occupations, other office and administrative support workers, and top executives. The count of top executives may seem odd, but the hunting and fishing has many small, often sole proprietor companies whose only employees is – top executives.

FIGURE 9.

Top 10 Impacted Occupational Titles from Hunting and Fishing

Occupation	2026
All Occupations	25,304
Forest, conservation, and logging workers	3,785
Fishing and hunting workers	2,318
Motor vehicle operators	1,827
Construction trades workers	1,074
Material moving workers	908
Business operations specialists	773
Other management occupations	755
Other office and administrative support workers	634
Top executives	623

Source: Common Sense Institute, Research and Analysis

Direct Payments to State/Local Governments for Hunting and Fishing Licenses and Fees

In addition to the economic activity mentioned up to this point, governments generate revenue for conservation and oversight activities from hunters and anglers. In fact, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) gets 68% of its annual wildlife revenue from licenses, passes, fees, and permits. The total wildlife revenue in FY 2024-25 was $220 million, as shown in figure 10.[ix]

The number of hunting and fishing license holders has generally trended up in recent years. In 2025 there were nearly 874,000 fishing license holders and more than 378,000 hunting license holders.

FIGURE 10.

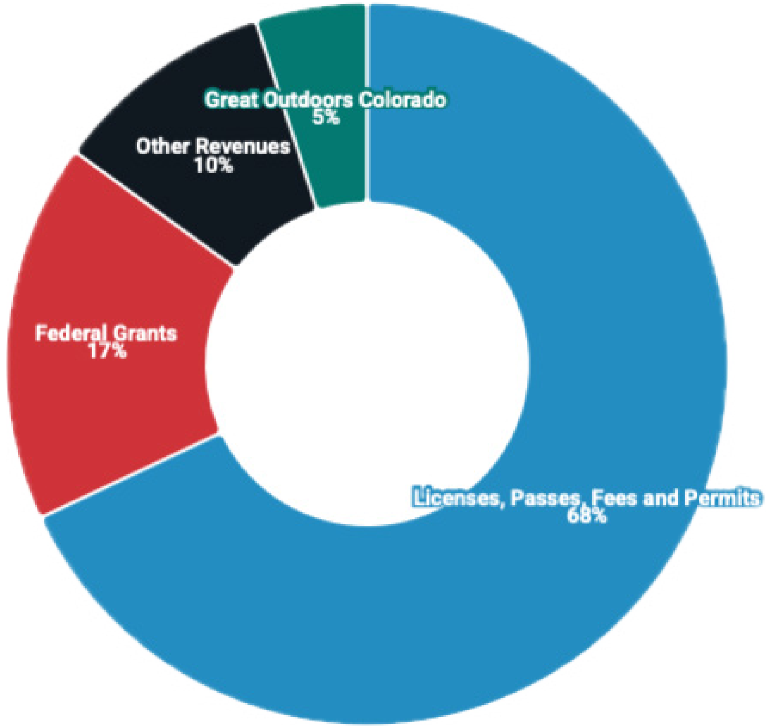
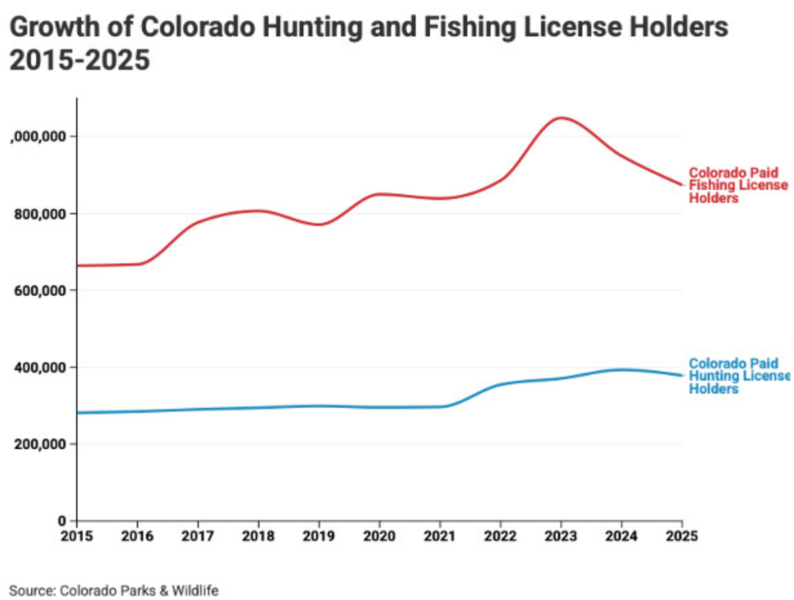


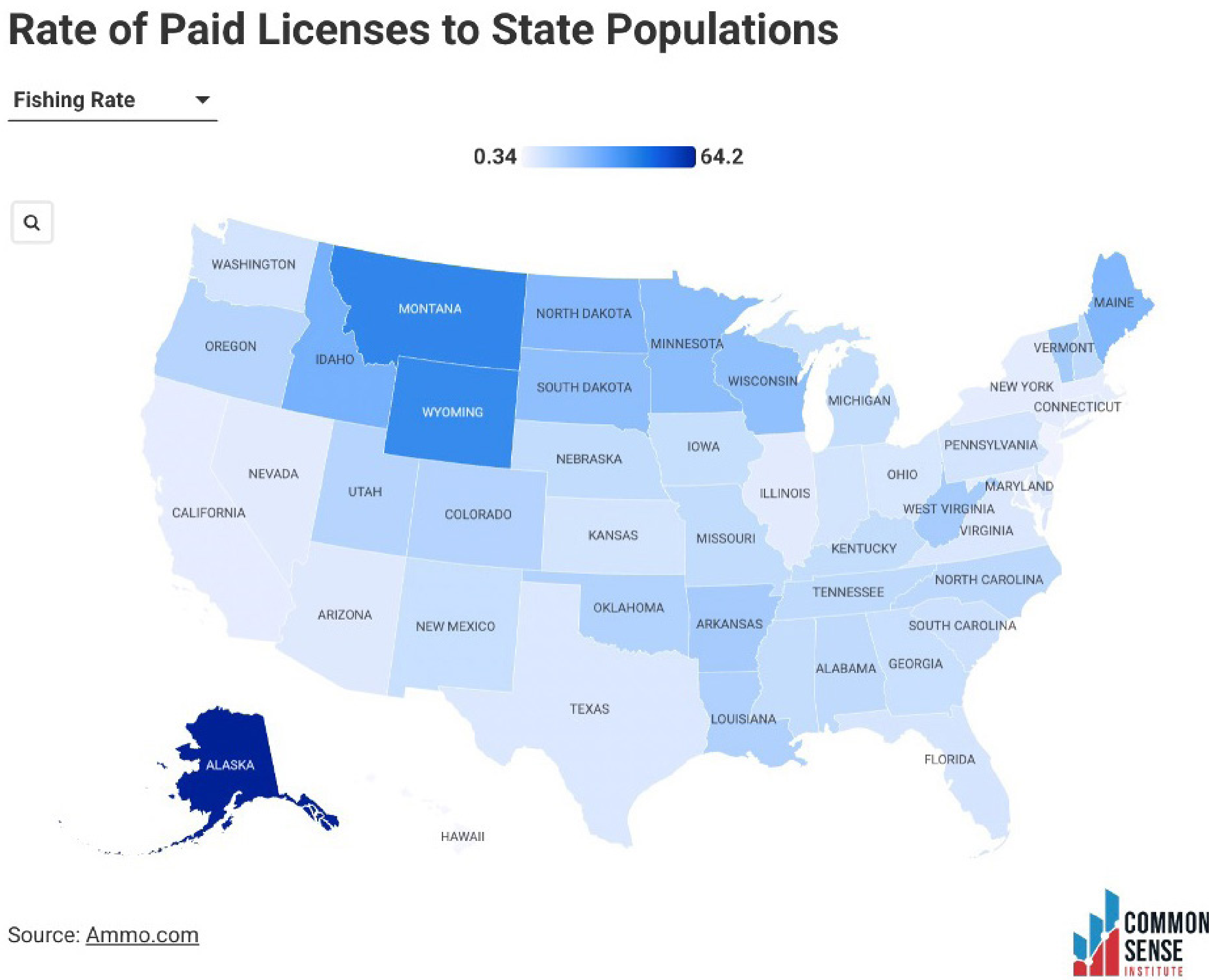
FIGURE 11.



Prevalence of Hunting and Fishing Compared to Other States

More than 14,000 Coloradans work in hunting and fishing to meet the needs of consumers. Colorado ranks in the top 20 nationally for the sales of both hunting and fishing licenses. According to Ammo.com, for 2026 Colorado ranked 19th in hunting licenses sold and 11th in fishing licenses sold.[x] The following map compares the rate of hunting and fishing licenses sold per state compared to that state's population.

FIGURE 12.



Amendment 83

Given the importance of hunting and fishing to Colorado's economy, conservation group International Order of Theodore Roosevelt (IOTR) qualified Amendment 83, formerly Initiative 302, to be on this year's statewide ballot.[xi] The initiative seeks to codify the right of residents to fish and hunt into the Colorado state constitution.

This initiative arises during an era of debate around wildlife management in the state. Prior proposals, such as Initiative 91, aimed to ban the hunting and harvesting of mountain lions, while others, like Ordinance 308, attempted to ban the sale of fur products in Denver. Although neither initiative passed, they received significant public attention, leading to the current effort to prevent such perennial attempts to change hunting and fishing laws.

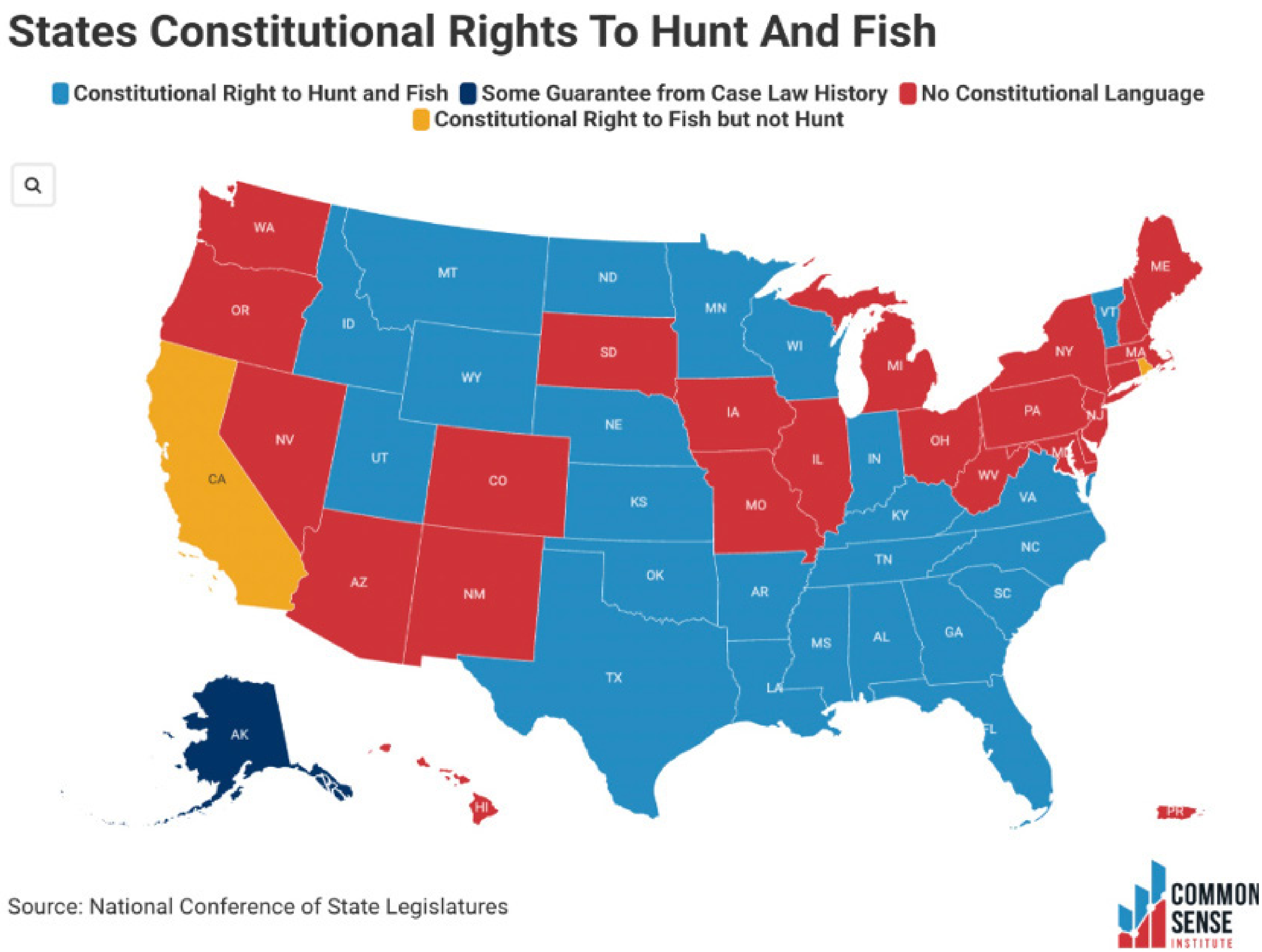
The initiative is broken down into four main components[xii]:

- Establish a constitutional right of the people of Colorado to hunt, fish, and take fish and wildlife.
- Specify hunting and fishing as the preferred means of managing fish and wildlife populations.
- Ensure no trespass on private property or changes to property rights.
- Maintain the authority of state agencies to manage and regulate wildlife.

Where Would Amendment 83 Place Colorado Among Other States?

Currently, residents in 24 states have the constitutional right to hunt and fish, including many of the states neighboring Colorado.[xiii]

FIGURE 13.



Recent Proposed Hunting and Fishing Protections Around the Country

During the 2025–26 legislative and election cycle, proposals concerning hunting and fishing rights advanced in Maine, Michigan, and Oregon, but none of these three proposals is currently scheduled for a statewide vote in 2026.

Maine and Michigan lawmakers proposed constitutional amendments protecting the right to hunt and fish. Oregon Initiative Petition (IP) 28, by contrast, proposed removing animal cruelty exemptions in a manner that would prohibit or substantially restrict hunting, fishing, and other uses of animals. Maine's proposed constitutional amendment, L.D. 820, died when the legislature adjourned on April 29, 2026.[xiv] Michigan's proposal, House Joint Resolution C, remains pending in a House committee.[xv] Oregon officials determined in July 2026 that IP 28 lacked enough valid signatures to qualify for the November ballot.[xvi]

BOTTOM LINE

Amendment 83 aims to constitutionally ensure the ability to hunt and fish in the state. Even though it is challenging to measure the full economic impact, the hunting and fishing industry provides thousands of jobs in Colorado, billions in revenue to businesses, and millions in revenue to state and local government. Hunting and fishing are also an important part of the state's culture and have been central to the management and maintenance of healthy wildlife populations since statehood.

APPENDIX A: STEPS FOR DIRECT ESTIMATES

Because hunting and fishing activity crosses numerous statistical categories (known as NAICS classifications), CSI took steps to eliminate potential double counting and arrive at a reasonable share of a NAICS-sector economic activity measure for the given hunting and fishing-related activity. The steps were as follows:

1. Download the 2017 Economic Census for Colorado
2. Download the 2022 Economic Census for Colorado
3. Combine the 2017 and 2022 Economic Censuses
4. Project forward to 2026 using the growth rate between 2017 and 2022.
5. Left join the Economic Census data with the activities and business sector delineation presented in the main body of the report.
6. Estimate the share of the NAICS-sector activity associated with the identified hunting of fishing activity or business service. Estimating the share of NAICS-sector level estimates was done via the methods detailed below (Appendix A – Estimating Shares).

Assumed Shares / Dollar Values

Because most of the NAICS-level detail for jobs, revenue, and firms includes activity not directly connected with hunting or fishing, a share of these total figures were estimated or assumed to be related to hunting and/or fishing. The assumptions are detailed in Appendix B. Further research may change these estimates.

APPENDIX B: DETAILS BEHIND DIRECT HUNTING AND FISHING ECONOMIC ACTIVITY (JOBS, REVENUE, AND NUMBER OF FIRMS)

Hunting Direct Economic Impact Estimates

Colorado-Related Direct Economic Impact - Hunting, 2026				
NAICS/ activities and business service providers	Jobs	Revenue	Firms	Notes
114210 - Hunting and Trapping	2,539	$66,031,019	749	Direct sector estimates
713990 - Youth/novice hunting services, recreational and target shooting, hunting guide and outfitter services, shooting/ archery ranges/taxidermy services	924	$50,259,910	42	The sum of jobs/revenue/firms providers across multiple activities/ providers. Assumed to be 5% of total for the sector.
924120 - Administration of Conservation Programs	1,242	$95,000,000	No estimate	State/local government. Direct jobs estimated using REMI from projected $95 m 2026 revenue. A separate estimate from Revelio Labs (https:// www.reveliolabs.com/companies/cpw/ employees) suggests the total is 917.
531190 - Private land access programs and ranch recreation	14	$9,580,947	No estimate	Estimated at 1%. Most of this NAICS sector is dominated by unrelated property leasing. Revenue is fee revenue, not transaction volume upon which the fee revenue is based.

Colorado-Related Direct Economic Impact - Hunting, 2026				
NAICS/ activities and business service providers	Jobs	Revenue	Firms	Notes
459110 - Sporting goods retailers	1,762	$368,305,650	95	Estimated at 15%. Hunting is a meaningful part of sporting goods and firearms retail.
332994 - Firearms manufacturing	8	$3,819,518	5	Estimated at 15%. Most of the sector is assumed to be manufacturing for non-hunting purposes, including policy, security, and out-of-state demand.
332992 - Ammunition manufacturing	2	$1,801,500	No estimate	Estimated at 15%. Most of the sector is assumed to be manufacturing for non-hunting purposes, including policy, security, and out-of-state demand.
423910 - Sporting and recreational goods and suppliers merchant wholesalers/hunting supplies	270	$167,639,445	16	Hunting supplies are estimated at 10%. Because companies in this sector are wholesale suppliers, they are excluded from the direct impact estimate because they show up as indirect (supplier network).
311612 - Custom meat and game processing	123	$155,088,768	2	Estimated at 5%. Wild game cutting is seasonal and small relative to commercial livestock slaughtering and meat processing.
721110 - Lodging associated with hunting camps and hunting generally	686	$157,324,938	21	National surveys put the figure at 2%. The number of firms is a share of total firms at 2%, although no lodging provider specifically only serves hunters.
722511 / 722513 / 445110 / 457110 - Restaurants, groceries, fuel and convenience retail	18	$36,039,440	No estimate	Assumes $150 per hunter per trip. The number of individuals hunting stems from Esri Business Analyst reported earlier in this report. Direct employment is derived from a REMI simulation on revenue for the sectors. The model assumes 25% of the hunters are involved in more than one type of hunting activity (https://www.fws.gov/program/national-survey-fishing-hunting-and-wildlife-associated-recreation-fhwar).

Colorado-Related Direct Economic Impact - Hunting, 2026				
NAICS/ activities and business service providers	Jobs	Revenue	Firms	Notes
458110/459110 - Camouflage, technical layers, boots, gloves, and weather protection	951	$120,131,466	No estimate	Assumes $500 per hunter per year. The number of hunters is derived as detailed above. https://www.fws.gov/program/national-survey-fishing-hunting-and-wildlife-associated-recreation-fhwar and https://www.fishwildlife.org/afwa-informs/national-survey. Modeled employed are derived from a REMI Tax PI+ simulation.
441227 - ATV, UTV and off-road vehicle dealers and service	2	$33,658,260	No estimate	Assumes 3% with most ATVs and UTVs supporting non-hunting use.
812910 - Hunting dog training, boarding and veterinary care	244	$10,210,320	16	Assumes 2% of pet grooming/training, boarding, and sitting is related to hunting.
541620 - wildlife habitate, forestry, and land management	103	$32,536,632	12	Assumes 3% of sector revenue is related to hunting.
339920 - Archery equipment manufacturing and retail	83	$10,874,896	7	Assumes 15% related to Colorado-specific demand.
334511 - Optics, mapping, outdoor electronics, riflescopes, binculars, rangefinders, GPS, satellite communicators, and mapping subscriptions	7	$2,173,740	No estimate	Assumes 1% of sector measures are Colorado-specific hunting demand related.
813312 - Conservation and wildlife organizations, habitat projects, access, research, education, and advocacy	173	$30,880,842	14	Assumes 5% based upon the fact that some environmental and conservation groups focus on habitat and access related to hunting.
513120/516210 - Outdoor media, publishing and digital services	No estimate	$26,030,830	No estimate	Assumes 1%. Hunting media and mapping are niche products within brand periodicals and digital media activity.
Total Direct Jobs, Revenue, and Firms	**8,879**	**$1.2 billion**	**963**	

Fishing Direct Economic Impact Estimates

Colorado-Related Direct Economic Impact - Fishing, 2026				
NAICS/ activities and business service providers	Jobs	Revenue	Firms	Notes
114110 - Coldwater lake and reservoir fishing, river and stream trout fishing, warmwater and coolwater fishing, fly fishing, ice fishing, boat-based reservoir fishing, float-type (kayak, canoe, paddleboard) fishing, guided fishing, youth and family fishing programs, bowfishing	1,650	$28,973,143	487	Direct sector estimates
112511 - Fish stocking and hatchery production, private pond, fee fishing, and aquaculture operations	29	$24,586,680	No estimate	Uses 2023 Census of Aquaculture for the United States with the share related to to Colorado at 3%, which is above the population share because of Colorado's wider reach of its outdoors sector.
713990 - Fishing guide and outfitter services	924	$50,259,910	42	The sum of jobs/revenue/firms providers across multiple activities/providers. Assumed at 5% of total for the sector.
459110 - Fly shops, bait and tackle retailers	1,762	$368,305,650	95	Estimated at 15%. Fishing is a meaningful part of sporting goods retail.
339920 - Fishing tackle and equipment manufacturing	111	$14,499,861	9	Assumes 20%. Includes rods, reels, lures, and related gear. Most sporting goods manufacturing is non-fishing related.
423910 - Wholesale supply of tackle, boats, and related recreation goods	270	$167,639,445	16	Assumes 10%. Because companies in this sector are wholesale suppliers, they are excluded from the direct impact estimate because they show up as indirect (supplier network).

Colorado-Related Direct Economic Impact - Fishing, 2026				
NAICS/ activities and business service providers	Jobs	Revenue	Firms	Notes
713930 - Marinas, docks, and launch services, covering slips, storage, launching, rentals, and marinas services	22	$4,052,998	4	Assumes 25% of sector activity. Marinas directly enable boating and fishing, but many slips, launches, storage services, and rentals service non-angling boating.
441222 - Boat, paddlecraft and trailer dealers.	33	$51,124,028	10	Assumes 15% as fishing motivates some boat and paddlecraft purchases.
336612 / 811490 - Boat building, repair and marine service, including watercraft construction, engines, maintenance and winterization which supports reservoir and river-based fishing	32	$8,560,960	3	Assumes 15% of boating building sector and 1% of maintenance and repair (811490) sector.
532284 - Watercraft and fishing equipment rental, such as boats, kayaks, canoes, paddleboards, and fishing gear	96	$15,793,906	28	Assumes 5% of the sector.
334511 - Marine electronics and specialty outdoor technology, such as fish finders, sonar, trolling motors, GPS and navigation systems	13	$4,347,481	No estimate	Assumes 2% for fish finders and trolling systems because the sector is focused much more on aviation, defense, surveying, industrial, and scientific uses.
458110 - Fishing apparel, waders and footwear, including waders, boots, technical clothing, gloves, and weather gear	51	$11,240,140	No estimate	Assumes 0.25% since fishing apparel is a niche sector to much broader consumer demand captured in the sector.
721110 / 721199 / 721211 - Lodging and campgrounds near fishing destinations	426	$91,160,313	14	Assumes 1% of the sector.[KR1.1]

Colorado-Related Direct Economic Impact - Fishing, 2026				
NAICS/ activities and business service providers	Jobs	Revenue	Firms	Notes
722511 / 722513 / 445110 / 457110 - Restaurants, groceries, fuel and convenience retail for angler trips	No estimate	$405,175,039	No estimate	Assumes 0.8% of the sector.
112990 - Live bait and private fish production, including minnows, worms and other bait, pond and stocking fish	No estimate	$1,946,755	No estimate	Assumes $3 per fishing participant and a 25% overlap among participants by type of fishing.
813312 - Fishing conservation, habitat, access, native-fish recovery, education and advocacy	346	$61,761,684	28	Assumes 10% of the sector.
513120/516210 - Outdoor media, publishing and digital services	No estimate	$26,030,830	No estimate	Assumes 1% of the sector.
924120 - Administration of Conservation Programs	392	$30,005,588	No estimate	State/local government. Direct jobs estimated using REMI from projected $30m 2026 revenue. A separate estimate from Resilio Labs suggests 917 for CPW (https://www.reveliolabs.com/companies/cpw/employees)
Total Direct Jobs, Revenue, and Firms	**5,887**	**$1.2 billion**	**718**	

APPENDIX C: MODELING THE SPILLOVER EFFECTS FROM THE HUNTING AND FISHING INDUSTRY

To model the spillover effects of Colorado's hunting and fishing industry, CSI employed the following sectors/assumptions with the REMI Tax PI+ version 3.3.0 (build 6856).

1. The model began with the direct estimates for revenue and jobs, which are reported in Appendix B.
2. For simplicity, the final model presented in this report uses REMI's employment variable for the "Fishing, hunting and trapping" subindustry as the most closely representative sector for this study. REMI's industry detail for "Fishing, hunting and trapping" does not completely match the sector breakdown shown in Appendix B. Because it is impossible to make REMI's default assumptions match the micro estimates in Appendix B, this study used the simplest form – employment in the "fishing, hunting and trapping" sector.
3. The amount entered into REMI was not the full 14,766 employment estimate in Appendix B. Two reasons for this:
   i. First, only a portion of the hunters and anglers in the state are bringing money into the state. The model assumes 29% of hunters and 37% of anglers are nonresidents.
   ii. Second, fishing and hunting are demanded by residents. If fishing and hunting were to be prohibited, residents' demand would be met by going out of state, taking their spending power with them. The model assumes 50% of residents would continue to hunt and fish, but do so out of state.
   iii. For these two reasons, the direct employment effect entered into REMI was 29% of hunting employment and 37% of fishing employment to account for nonresidents and 50% of hunting and fishing employment for residents.

SOURCES

i. Common Sense Institute (CSI) analysis based on data from Esri ArcGIS Business Analyst and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW). **33**

ii. *Ibid*

iii. Common Sense Institute (CSI) forecast based on licensing information reported in Colorado Parks and Wildlife's (CPW) annual report.

iv. Esri, "ArcGIS Business Analyst," accessed August 24, 2026, https://www.esri.com/en-us/arcgis/products/arcgis-business-analyst/overview.

v. Colorado Parks and Wildlife, "Fishing," accessed August 24, 2026, https://cpw.state.co.us/fishing.

vi. Esri, "ArcGIS Business Analyst."

vii. American Sportfishing Association, "Economic Impacts of Recreational Fishing: Colorado," accessed August 24, 2026, https://asafishing.org/state-reports/economic-impacts-of-recreational-fishing-colorado/.

viii. Southwick Associates, *Colorado Sportfishing Economics.*

ix. Colorado Parks and Wildlife, "Funding Colorado Parks and Wildlife," accessed August 24, 2026, https://cpw.state.co.us/funding-colorado-parks-andwildlife#4257225834-2043701162.

x. Ammo.com, "U.S. Hunting & Fishing Statistics (2026 Data)," accessed August 24, 2026, https://ammo.com/research/hunting-fishing-statistics.

xi. Colorado Secretary of State, *Proposed Initiative 2025–2026 #302: Final Text* (April 2, 2026), https://www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/elections/Initiatives/titleBoard/filings/2025-2026/302Final.pdf.

xii. *Ibid*

xiii. National Conference of State Legislatures, "State Constitutional Right to Hunt and Fish," updated November 11, 2025, https://www.ncsl.org/environment-and-natural-resources/state-constitutional-right-to-hunt-and-fish/quot.

xiv. Maine Legislature, L.D. 820 (H.P. 527), *Resolution, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish the Right to Hunt and Fish*, 132nd Leg., 1st Reg. Sess. (2025), https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP0527&item=1&snum=132.

xv. Michigan Legislature, H.J.R. C, 103rd Leg., Reg. Sess. (2025), https://www.legislature.mi.gov/Bills/Bill?ObjectName=2025-HJR-C.

xvi. Oregon Secretary of State, Initiative Petition 28, *People for the Elimination of Animal Cruelty Exemptions (PEACE) Act* (2026), https://sos.oregon.gov/admin/Documents/irr/2026/028text.pdf.