

PRESS RELEASE

SOUTH AFRICAN DEEP SEA ANGLING ASSOCIATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ERA PROJECT : PRESS RELEASE [FOR PUBLIC / GENERAL NEWS MEDIA]

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF RECREATIONAL ANGLING BIGGER THAN COMMERCIAL FISHING AND GOLFING IN SOUTH AFRICA?

Studies in several other countries have found that recreational angling has a larger overall economic impact for a country than commercial fishing. Also, according to knowledgeable spokespersons, the sport of e.g. bass angling in the USA has a bigger economic impact than all golf activities in that country – which is significant. In South Africa, some sources estimate the number of ‘serious’ anglers to be about 1 million individuals, while the ‘social’ anglers are estimated to be in excess of 1 million. This might seem surprising at first, but entirely logical when one considers the number of people, activities and stakeholders involved in the many forms of recreational angling in South Africa, with its extensive coastal and inland water features, and the significant resulting direct and indirect economic impacts of water-based recreational angling activities.

The SA Deep Sea Angling Association has commissioned a comprehensive study of the economic impact of recreational angling in the Republic of South Africa – known as the ‘ERA-project’. Recreational angling includes sport angling – as opposed to commercial angling/fishing – as well as a range of activities such as deep sea angling, coastal and river estuary (boat and bank) angling, flyfishing and lure angling, freshwater angling (boat and bank), underwater angling, and casting (land and water). As such, both salt water and fresh water activities are involved, as well as some land casting activities.

Recreational angling has a significant impact on the economic activities of a country and its regions – both inland and coastal. This is due to international and local competitions, wide-spread and diverse recreational activities, and resource uses, through its *direct impacts* on e.g. equipment, vehicles, boats, accommodation, provisions and fuel, and *indirect impacts* on infrastructure investments, town and

regional development, job provision and creation, government tax revenue, and manufacturing and services.

Recreational angling also has a significant bearing on a country's fish resources (e.g. species, quantities) and their wise use and conservation, environmental impact, and socio-cultural impacts (e.g. access, equity, safety, participation). Furthermore, it has a significant impact on the international image of a country in terms of responsible and sustainable biodiversity management, tourism, and economic potential optimization. Consequently, wise policies and management by both government and the private sector, and equitable participation by citizens and communities, would be enhanced by the results of an economic impact study, to the benefit of the entire country and its peoples. Although the ERA project focuses on the economic impacts of recreational angling, the wider systemic nature of the industry and its stakeholders makes the inclusion of socio-cultural and bio-environmental dynamics necessary and important.

The ERA (Economic impact of Recreational Angling in the RSA) project commenced on 1st August 2007, with completion date scheduled for 29th February 2008. It is being conducted by a team of professionals of Stellenbosch University, in liaison with relevant international and local scientific and economic experts. The benefits of such a project and its results will be nationally significant, as evidenced by several studies of the economic importance and impacts of the recreational angling industry in countries such as the U.K., Germany and the U.S.A. In such countries the benefits of the information have been reflected in sound industry, environmental and community policies and measures, to the optimum benefit of all stakeholders.

Economic impact studies of recreational angling (as well as commercial fishing, of course) have been conducted in many other countries, and their results have been important in guiding government policies and regulations, business practices, and responsible entrepreneurial and recreational activities. While some valuable information has been forthcoming about recreational angling in South Africa over the years, *no recent comprehensive and reliable economic impact information basis exists currently*. This is disadvantageous to the industry in view of many causes and critical issues, and of course also its image.

Although SADSAA (SA Deep Sea Angling Association) has commissioned the project, its scope includes all recreational angling activities, as embodied in affiliation to the SA Sport Angling and Casting Confederation (SASACC), which has four major sub-sectors, i.e. SAFBAF (freshwater angling), SAFALFA (lure & fly-fish angling), SACSCA (casting & surf angling), and SAFSSA (sport and salt water anglers). SASACC is affiliated to many international and local stakeholder groups - such as maritime, sports, recreation and environmental groups, and it also relates closely with relevant public and private sector organizations. Since much recreational angling activity takes place on a non-affiliated (informal) basis, the project also includes such informal activities. This makes it a valid comprehensive study of the economic impact of all recreational angling in the RSA.

While further press releases will be made as the project progresses, questions concerning the project can be directed to Hyman Steyn of SADSAA, at telephone number 021-976 4454.