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Part I: Press release

PRESS RELEASE
EMBARGOED UNTIL 10:00 A.M., TUESDAY, JULY 9, 2013

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Gulf Tourism Depends on a Healthy Gulf
New report shows wildlife tourism is central to Gulf Coast economy

(New Orleans—July 9, 2013) The coastal environment of the Gulf of Mexico supports a \$19 billion annual wildlife tourism industry that is highly dependent on critical investments in coastal environmental restoration, according to a survey released today by [Datu Research LLC](#).

“[Wildlife Tourism and the Gulf Coast Economy](#)” concludes that wildlife tourism is extremely valuable to the Gulf Coast economy and relies heavily on the health of the endangered Gulf Coast ecosystem in the five states of [Louisiana](#), [Florida](#), [Texas](#), [Alabama](#) and [Mississippi](#). Wildlife tourism includes recreational fishing, hunting and wildlife watching.

Key findings of the report show that wildlife tourism:

- Generates more than \$19 billion in annual spending.
- Attracts 20 million participants annually across the five Gulf Coast states.
- Delivers \$5.3 billion annually in federal, state and tax revenues.

The study also found tourism jobs can account for 20-36 percent of all private jobs in in coastal counties and parishes that are particularly dependent on wildlife activities. Those 53 counties and parishes have more than 25,000 tourism-related businesses and nearly 500,000 associated jobs.

The study reported that all forms of tourism generate 2.6 million jobs in the Gulf states, nearly five times the number of jobs provided by the region’s other three largest resource-based industries: commercial fishing, oil and gas, and shipping.

“With so many outdoor adventure opportunities, tourism is a critical industry to our coastal parishes,” [Louisiana Lt. Gov. Jay Dardenne](#) said. “Sportsman’s Paradise is more than our state’s nickname. If Louisiana is to remain the Sportsman’s Paradise, we have to ensure that funds Louisiana receives as a result of the *Deepwater Horizon* spill are properly and wisely spent preserving our paradise.”

Lt. Gov. Dardenne will speak at a press conference Tuesday, July 9, in New Orleans along with Billy Nungesser, president, Plaquemines Parish; Charlotte Randolph,

president, Lafourche Parish; John F. Young, Jr., president, Jefferson Parish; Capt. Ryan Lambert, owner of Cajun Fishing Adventures; Mark Romig, president, New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation; Alon Shaya, executive chef, Domenica, Besh Restaurant Group and Marcy Lowe, president, Datu Research LLC.

The study's findings underscore the direct connection between the health of the ecosystem and the economic health of the Gulf region and the urgency for using the pending influx of monies from the RESTORE Act and other payments resulting from the 2010 *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill to properly and effectively restore the fragile Gulf Coast ecosystems.

"The conservation solutions that last are the ones that make economic sense and consider the needs of local communities," said Scott Burns, director of the environment program at the [Walton Family Foundation](#), which helped fund the survey. "This study connects the dots between a healthy Gulf environment, abundant wildlife and the good jobs that depend on tourism. This report adds to the growing evidence that investing in real restoration in the Gulf is the best way to create jobs and build economic prosperity across the region."

Datu Research LLC is an economic research firm whose principals were part of the [Duke University Center on Globalization, Governance & Competitiveness](#). They have previously released [three analyses](#) of supply chains associated with the work of coastal restoration, showing that more than [400 businesses in 36 states](#) would benefit from such work.

This study was funded by [Environmental Defense Fund](#) with support from the [Walton Family Foundation](#).

Part II: Supporting comments

Comments from participants in release of study: Wildlife Tourism and the Gulf Coast Economy

[John Young](#), president, Jefferson Parish: "This study further supports the direct link between a healthy coastal environment and a robust economy which depends on a \$19 billion wildlife tourism industry. The well-being and continued growth of our coastal communities depend on the health of the Gulf, restoring and strengthening our fragile ecosystems, and promoting a wildlife tourism industry which can thrive, not only in Jefferson Parish but in all Gulf Coast states."

[Billy Nungesser](#), president, Plaquemines Parish: "Plaquemines Parish and Louisiana are the nation's premier delta coastline. We are strategically positioned as the fishing capital of the world, the sportsmen's paradise state and the seafood capital of the United States, and these factors which make Plaquemines and Louisiana unique depend on the health of our coast."

[Michael Hecht](#), President & CEO of Greater New Orleans, Inc.: "Tourism overall, including wildlife tourism, provides 2.6 million jobs across the Gulf States – and many of these are with small businesses. To protect this vital economic base, as well as other important coastal industries, we must prioritize large-scale coastal restoration projects that will ensure a stable coast and healthy environment."

[Mark Romig](#), President of the New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation: "New Orleans attracts the experiential discover type of tourist, one who enjoys using the city as a base to go out and explore any authentic and unique aspects of the city and region, including the natural world. For the many businesses in this region, the need to restore and preserve our coastal wetlands is not optional; it's an urgent economic necessity."

[Capt. Ryan Lambert](#), owner of Cajun Fishing Adventures: "I've grown up loving and making a living from the waters of the Louisiana coast and for more than 30 years, my business has been taking people fishing in those waters. But every year, as I see places disappearing from the map, I fear I may be part of the last generation to live off the

water.”

Ralph Brennan, President, Ralph Brennan Restaurant Group: “Family restaurants like mine depend on a healthy Gulf Coast for the fresh seafood that has made New Orleans the culinary capital of the United States. The money states are beginning to receive to repair the damages from the Deepwater Horizon spill are our best – and may be our last real chance – to reverse decades of mistakes.”

Marcy Lowe, President of Datu Research LLC.: “This study shows the vital connection between the health of the ecosystem and the economic health of the Gulf region. Wildlife tourism is a major contributor to the Gulf Coast economy, but its very survival depends on the restoration of an endangered and irreplaceable ecosystem.”

Part III: Key study findings

Report: Wildlife Tourism and the Gulf Coast Economy *Key findings for the Gulf region*

“[Wildlife Tourism and the Gulf Coast Economy](#),” a survey produced by Datu Research LLC, finds that in the five Gulf Coast states:

- Tourism generates **2.6 million jobs**, nearly five times the number of jobs created by the region’s other three largest resource-based industries combined: commercial fishing, oil and gas, and shipping.
- In Gulf Coast coastal counties and parishes where economies are particularly dependent on tourism, **20-36 percent of all private sector employment** is tourism-related.
- Wildlife tourism, which includes wildlife watching, recreational fishing and hunting, generates **more than \$19 billion** in annual spending.
- Wildlife tourism generates **\$5.3 billion annually** in federal, state and local tax revenues, divided roughly equally between local and state tax revenues and federal revenues. In 2011, Gulf Coast state and local governments received \$2.5 billion and the federal government \$2.8 billion from wildlife tourism. Recreational fishing generates the highest amount of tax revenue at \$2.2 billion followed by \$2 billion from wildlife watching and \$1.2 billion from hunting.
- Wildlife tourism attracts **20 million participants annually** across the five Gulf Coast states. The wildlife tourism industry consists not only of wildlife guide businesses that directly serve wildlife tourists, but also the lodging and dining establishments where they eat and sleep.
- Gulf Coast tourism – and wildlife tourism in particular – is highly dependent on a healthy coastal environment.
- More than **11,000 lodging and dining establishments and 1,100 guide and outfitters businesses** create business networks that depend on each other for referrals. In a survey of over 500 guide and outfitter businesses, about 40 percent of respondents said clients ask them for hotel recommendations and 55 percent said clients request restaurant recommendations. Likewise, more than 60 percent of guide businesses receive clients based on recommendations from hotels and restaurants.
- Guide and outfitting operations represent a strong network of small businesses that have a large impact on local tourism. **More than 86 percent of these businesses have one to five employees**, and nearly 60 percent host more than 200 visitors per year, with many hosting several thousand.

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