

Wildlife Tourism and the Gulf Coast Economy

Economic Study by Datu | July 2013

Mississippi



Wildlife tourism is a vital component of Mississippi's economy

Millions of tourists come to Mississippi every year to experience the natural wonders of our state. The tourism industry – which includes hotels, restaurants, retail and tour guides catering to these tourists – provides more than **26,000 jobs** in Mississippi and wildlife tourism generates nearly **\$2 billion** in spending every year.

Tourism depends on a healthy environment

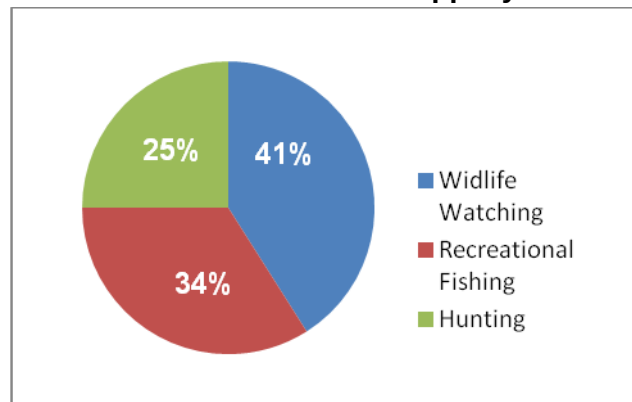
Wildlife tourism relies on the natural beauty of Mississippi, which in turn relies on thriving ecosystems. Repairing the damage to these ecosystems caused by the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill and the channelization of the Mississippi River is critical to maintaining and growing this critical sector of Mississippi's economy.



Wildlife tourism matters to Mississippi

- Mississippi's three coastal counties host **875 wildlife tourism-related businesses**.
- State and local governments generate nearly **\$200 million in tax revenue** from tourism, a sum that could pay salaries of more than 6,700 firefighters.
- Over **1.9 million wildlife tourists** visit Mississippi every year.

Wildlife Tourism in Mississippi by Sector



Restoring Our Environment Restores Our Economy

The RESTORE Act dedicates fines paid by parties responsible for the oil spill to restoration in Mississippi and the other Gulf states. This is an unprecedented opportunity to bolster our state's natural resources and the industries that depend on them.